



ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Biennial Report, 2017 - 2018

A. Ilsley welcomes all

Planning to improve an aging facility is a top priority for making the library more welcoming.

Parking adjacent to the library is at or near capacity according to the town's 2012 parking study and has worsened in recent years. Potential development of the lower municipal parking lot as well as the upcoming railroad tunnel project could further reduce parking.

Ilsley's Main Street entrance provides an attractive exterior for a historic library. Even so, the library's side entrance accounts for 70% of foot traffic into the building and is unmonitored and too small. Both entrances require the use of stairs or an elevator. A level sidewalk entrance would provide safer and more welcoming access. Additionally, the current elevator is old and unreliable. Ilsley definitely needs a safe, at-grade entrance.

Tables and chairs on the first and second floors are currently adequate, but the bulk of Ilsley's furniture suffers from wear and tear. Furniture and infrastructure updates are overdue in the community meeting room and reference room. Staff work areas—especially in Children's—need to be made more functional and comfortable.

The HVAC system is piecemeal in nature, consisting of 10+ separate A/C units, two different heating systems (steam and dry ducted heat) and no building ventilation. The boiler is approaching the end of its lifespan.

Signage throughout the building needs updating in order to meet current guidelines for ADA compliance and accessibility.

In the Children's library, shelving is stuffed so tightly that still circulating older books must be removed to make room for newer titles. Much of the shelving is also too high for young children. The children's library lacks sunlight, ventilation, and clear lines of sight for staff and parents. Furnishings for private and small group reading are inadequate. Additional space that fosters imagination and discovery—as do the train table and puppet theater—is needed to facilitate active learning, especially for pre-literate children.

Although Ilsley's walls are re-painted and its carpets are cleaned on a regular schedule, both show wear and tear. Fluorescent lighting in the book stacks is too harsh for reading, energy inefficient, and expensive to maintain.

Shelving in the 1988 addition is both too high and too low for many patrons to reach, and its height blocks natural light. Lower, more functional and attractive shelves that complement the historic wood finishes elsewhere in the building would improve both the ease-of-use and

appearance of the library. In the children's library, low ceilings, poor ventilation, exposed plumbing, support-posts, and inadequate natural light are unacceptable. Windows throughout the building cannot be readily opened and are inadequately insulated.

Ilsley has two unsafe restrooms on the lowest floor which, because they are unmonitored and can be locked, are vandalized regularly. Both require modernization. The library would be considerably more welcoming if it had at least one bathroom on the 2nd or 3rd floor.

Libraries have traditionally offered adults space for quiet study and solitude. Modern libraries preserve this tradition while also offering spaces for group activities and collaboration. The library needs separate spaces to accommodate these distinct uses.

Ilsley Library lacks quiet spaces for silent study, such as: carrels and tables for one or two people with adequate lighting, ventilation, power supplies, and Internet access.

Children need large areas for story times, playgroups, and library programs; small group spaces to assemble and share books, crafts, and hands-on activities; and individual quiet spaces to do homework or read independently.

Recognizing Middlebury's economic and demographic diversity, Ilsley Library strives to serve all. Providing materials and programming that can be easily accessed by the elderly and individuals with special needs is one way the library strives to be inclusive. Identifying and reaching out to those who do not currently use Ilsley's services—whether because of financial, time, or mobility constraints—is another way to spread the library's services to all residents.

Goals for Section A.: *Ilsley Welcome All*

- 1. Goal #1 – Work with architects to develop plans that will solve the library's current and future space needs.**
- 2. Goal #2 – Work with a consultant to evaluate the capacity for private fundraising in the community.**
- 3. Goal #3 – Implement a capital campaign to raise funds for space improvements.**

B. IIsley is a hub for reading, technology & community

IIsley Public Library is committed to providing books and media that serve the educational and recreational needs of all our citizens. Library collections must be continuously updated to suit changing interests and preferences—from pre-literate children to senior citizens.

The growth of digital, networked resources available via the Internet means that, in order to stay relevant to patrons, libraries must provide printed books and magazines, as well as electronic databases, DVDs, eBooks, and digital downloads. Materials must be available in a variety of formats and regularly re-evaluated to ensure that they provide popular choices.

Technology is a major part of people's lives. It is an essential tool for job searches, resume writing, social networking, continuing education, and research. Library staff should be readily available to assist the public with technology. Adequate staffing and continuous training related to technology and digital media production are needed to keep pace with this demand.

It is critical that IIsley expand its number of public computers and digital media facilities. Many members of our community have no other access to technology. Public computers provide high-speed Internet connections (thanks to Middlebury College's generosity) and printing. Wireless access allows patrons with their own devices to utilize the library's network and databases.

Looking to the future, spaces and technology for patrons to work independently will extend the reach of IIsley to entrepreneurs, the self-employed and small businesses. Libraries have always purchased items for the public that individually would be cost-prohibitive, but collectively make sense. Reconfigurable spaces, state-of-the-art equipment and training on using such equipment makes sense as the library looks to support local job creation.

IIsley offers a variety of free educational and entertaining programs as a center of learning and recreation in Middlebury. Programs must be responsive to changing community interests, such as presentations by authors, experts and scholars; book discussions; and social networking for professionals. Educational programs may include both single and multi-session classes. Tutorials and one-on-one instruction promote the use of the library's collections and resources.

The library must continue to capitalize on its strengths to offer excellent educational programs. Additional staff will be needed to reflect the growing importance of this role. Coordinating various public meeting spaces in the community so that members of the public know where they can meet is another specific unmet need that the library could fulfill.

Partnerships allow the library to better understand the needs of the community, to leverage relationships that improve our services, and to benefit from others' expertise. We maintain a branch in East Middlebury to serve that distinct community. Partnering with MCTV gives

patrons the skill and opportunity to produce sophisticated media projects. Working with other libraries and state-wide partners -- such as Green Mountain Library Consortium, Vermont Library Association, Vermont Department of Libraries, and the Vermont Digital Newspaper Project -- gives patrons access to enhanced on-line services and more resources.

Ilsey will not only maintain these partnerships but will seek new ones to further the library's mission. Of particular interest are partnerships that enhance Ilsey's standing in the community and strengthen the library's endowment. Creation of an Ilsey fund at the Vermont Community Foundation could help.

Goals for Section B: *Ilsey serves as a hub for reading, technology and community*

- 1. Goal #1 – Improve technology offerings, including upgrading community room and digital media lab equipment.**
- 2. Goal #2 – Update the library's directory of community meeting spaces and coordinate scheduling of space with various other agencies that offer it.**
- 3. Goal #3 – Evaluate all collections—physical as well as digital—to ensure optimum purchasing that is aligned with patron preferences.**

C. Ilsley enriches the lives of children and youth

Ilsley Public Library must continue to support early literacy, continuing literacy, social-emotional development, artistic expression, and exploration of the world around us with high-quality educational programs and activities. The library regularly leads the state in service to youth by public libraries. Staff must pursue numerous professional skill-building opportunities to learn best practices.

Additional appropriate spaces are necessary to meet the growing and increasingly diverse demands for children, and to utilize best educational practices. Programs must be varied to suit widespread differences in age and developmental ability. Ilsley will continue to run, and expand, programs that encourage reading, learning, and creativity among children and families throughout the summer months and school vacations.

The Children's library must continue to foster collaborative relationships with local schools and child service agencies in order to improve and promote library services. Off-site story times, informational booths, participation in school assemblies, book discussion groups, and other initiatives promote literacy as a life-long skill and remind both children and their families of the opportunities Ilsley provides.

One example is Ilsley's partnership with a local summer meals provider to offer a weekly story time and free books for children for the entire summer season. As a result, many children and parents who had not previously thought of the library as a place for them have become regular patrons. Additional staff to provide adequate outreach services are needed to sustain and expand such efforts.

Ilsley is committed to providing programs that meet the varying needs and abilities of tweens and teens. Spaces for these age-groups to study, socialize, and pursue appropriate leisure activities is grossly inadequate. As a result teenagers often occupy spaces meant for quiet reading because they have no other place to go. The library needs additional and/or reconfigured spaces to encourage the emotional, social, and intellectual development of teens and tweens and to help them build a sense of belonging, identity, community involvement, and understanding of library services. To develop and implement appropriate programs for youth of these ages, Ilsley is likely to need new spaces, new staff, and new technology.

Goals for Section C: *Ilsley enriches the lives of children and youth*

- 1. Goal #1 – Work with library building committee to plan great spaces for kids.**
- 2. Goal #2 – Participate in professional development opportunities to learn best practices.**
- 3. Goal #3 – Strengthen existing community partnerships with schools and non-profit organizations serving youth.**

D. Ilsley enriches the lives of adults, especially seniors

Over the next twenty years, the percentage of area residents aged 65 and older is projected to more than double while younger demographic groups remain about the same size. This increase in seniors, due to the aging of Baby Boomers coupled with the high quality of life in Vermont, is apparent in the growth of senior living communities such as Eastview and the Residence at Otter Creek.

Outreach to senior living communities and local senior centers is already happening, but the library will also need to explore new ways to reach homebound older seniors who have no reliable transportation and yet have the desire for library materials and services.

In order to serve Middlebury's active seniors, Ilsley will need to continue to offer collections, services and spaces—and provide great programs—that appeal to patrons 50 and older. Patrons over 50 are experiencing the so-called “2nd stage of adulthood” during which they are healthy, engaged and interested in expanding their horizons with vigorous programs and materials. Resources that appeal to those looking into second careers, travel opportunities, or learning new languages are just a few examples of what Ilsley provides to meet these users' needs.

Multiple opportunities to volunteer, including participating in a vibrant Friends group, will be important for older adults as they look for ways to share their skills and experience in order to give back to the local community.

Goals for Section D: *Ilsley enriches the lives of adults, especially seniors*

- 1. Goal #1 – Develop and implement a strategy to reach homebound seniors.**
- 2. Goal #2 – Create more services and collections targeted for active, older adults.**
- 3. Goal #3 – Encourage volunteerism through structured opportunities to give back.**

Appendix II. Statistics

	1996	2016
Circulation	144,649	172,488
Program attendance	3,649	17,348
Registered borrowers	7,422	7,322
Items in library collection	52,445	82,025
Electronic database usage	0	25,633
eBooks lent	0	11,389
Computer sessions in library	0	30,420