

TELL ME!

TOUR

RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

WHY HAVE THE TELL ME! TOUR?

- **I wanted to meet residents, introduce myself, and get to know Middlebury.**
- **I wanted to learn from the community about their values, goals, and aspirations. This information will be used to ensure the direction and goals of the library are in alignment with the community's needs.**

TELL ME! OVERVIEW

- **I met with fourteen focus groups over five months**
- **Over one-hundred individuals participated**
- **Groups focused on three main topics of discussion:**
 - What kind of community do you want to live in? What are the qualities that are important to you in this community?
 - What aspirations do you have for the Middlebury community? What goals should the community pursue together?
 - What input or advice do you have for the library?

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY QUALITIES

- **A community that is welcoming, open, inclusive, and friendly.**
- **A community that honors its diversity (social, cultural, economic), and would like to be more diverse.**
- **A community that supports lifelong learning and intellectual engagement for all ages.**
- **Residents consider Middlebury a safe place to live.**
- **Residents value the natural beauty of Middlebury and the historic buildings downtown.**
- **Residents share a concern for the environment and sustainability.**

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

- Building a vibrant downtown
- Creating opportunities for intergenerational gatherings
- Filling in the gaps for less served parts of our population
- Making Middlebury more affordable
- Increasing connections and breaking down silos

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

How can the library help build a vibrant downtown?

- Complement downtown cultural destinations by planning performances and exhibitions in the library
- Serve as a welcome center with information for new residents or tourists
- Attract increased foot traffic by becoming more accessible to non-residents
- _____
- _____

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

How can the library create opportunities for intergenerational gathering?

- **Organize conversations and activities that attract diverse audiences**
- **Provide more spaces for planned meetings**
- **Create library spaces that promote spontaneous gathering and serendipitous meetings**
- _____
- _____

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

How can the library fill in gaps for less served parts of our population?

- Provide space, resources, and programs for teens and tweens
- Develop culturally and intellectually rich programs for people in their 20s and 30s
- Offer opportunities for all ages to participate in activities other than sports
- Increase outreach to those who cannot visit the library
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- _____

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

How can the library help make Middlebury affordable?

- Partner with local institutions to support Early Literacy
- Provide services for people experiencing homelessness
- Offer trainings that prepare residents to apply for jobs and work with new technology
- Build a more diverse circulating collection
- _____
- _____

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

How can the library increase connections and break down silos in Middlebury?

- Continuously reach out to solicit input and collaborations with community members and institutions
- Increase outreach to college students and create opportunities for them to participate in library programs
- Make sure everyone knows that the library is here for them, regardless of their reason for visiting
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- _____

FEEDBACK FOR THE LIBRARY

“I love the collection. You do a great job getting new books and bestsellers.”

Our community values the circulating collection and loves physical books.

“I know lots of people use Kindles and e-books, but I personally love holding an actual book in my hands.”

“Please don’t ever stop buying real books!”

FEEDBACK FOR THE LIBRARY

“If I had known you offered that program I would have attended!”

The library needs to increase their communication and promotion.

“The website can be difficult to navigate.”

“I didn’t even know you had a newsletter. How can I sign up?”

FEEDBACK FOR THE LIBRARY

“The library should have a café.”

The library plays an important role as a place of social gathering in the community.

“Lots of people essentially co-work at the library already; you could do more to facilitate that.”

“There should be a better space for cooking together. The current kitchen limits opportunities.”

FEEDBACK FOR THE LIBRARY

“Don’t be afraid to
take risks.”

Middlebury wants a library that is responsive to the community’s needs and is active in helping the community grow and develop.

“I want a library that
surprises me!”

“Be forward thinking
and outward facing.”

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The majority of focus group participants felt that...

- ...a library renovation and expansion was necessary and that they wanted to see the library pursue an expansion.
- ...the \$9.6 million price tag for the Gossens Bachman Architects plan was too expensive for Middlebury and made the project unrealistic.
- ...they had not been given ample opportunity to participate in the development of the current plan and/or felt that they were uninformed about the plans for library expansion in general.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

**TELL ME
MORE!**