



**ILSLEY 100 PROJECT TEAM
UPDATE FOR MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD
SEPTEMBER 27, 2022**

DEVELOPMENT OF SITE EVALUATION MATRIX

The Project Team has continued to refine our Site Evaluation Matrix. This will be used to evaluate our possible conceptual options based on criteria such as fulfillment of the desired square footage program, suitability of site and location, alignment with stated community aspirations, and funding viability.

As part of this work, the Team has reduced the potential conceptual options from five to four, eliminating the possibility of constructing a new facility on land not currently owned by the town. The remaining options are [A] to renovate interior spaces for better utilization and repair the obvious defects such as the elevator, HVAC system, and leaks in the basement, but not to expand the footprint; [B] to renovate and expand the current building, along the lines suggested in the 2017 feasibility study; [C] to renovate the current building, but house some programs and activities in a non-adjacent annex for more square footage (one example might be the Ben Franklin building); and [D] to build a new library on the EDI site (the lower parking lot behind the library) while finding an adaptive re-use for the current building. The new construction under consideration in option D could be the library alone, or could be developed with a private partner to include additional elements such as housing. In either case, a parking structure would likely be required to accommodate new uses.

No decision on which option to pursue has been made at this time. The Team remains open to a variety of possibilities and looks forward to engaging with the community, town administration, the Infrastructure Committee, and the Selectboard for input on its decision-making.

USE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

As word of the library project has spread in the Vermont community, Director Dana Hart has begun to receive inquiries from architecture and construction-related firms who are eager to offer advice and suggestions. So far the team has been cautious about meeting with any design/construction professionals in a desire to ensure a level playing field when an RFP is issued for these services.

The Team has spoken with some advisors who would not be in the running for the larger project and has engaged the services of cost-estimator Henry Erickson. Erickson has been briefed on the four potential concept options the Team is considering. He will provide ball-park or "order of magnitude" estimates of the four options. This guidance will be taken into consideration along with public input and the results of the decision matrix as the Team works on choosing a conceptual direction to pursue.

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Jim Gish has so far published four [blog](#) postings to keep the community informed about the progress of the Team. Jim's goal is to explain to townspeople the thinking behind the project, the steps

involved, and to offer some insight into the planning process. Beginning with the next issue, the blog will be published via the Town's email list.

At the town-wide block party on August 4th, members of the Project Team and library staff elicited responses from the public about aspects of the library that they like as well as possibilities for improvement.

To keep citizens apprised of the work of the Project Team, the library has developed a [web site](#). This site includes information about the charge to the committee, a list of its members, notifications of upcoming meetings, and [minutes of past meetings](#). The web site also links to a [document repository](#) and to [reports to the Selectboard](#) such as this one. For those with a deep and abiding interest, the website also links to the previous work of the [2021 Renovation/Expansion Working Group](#) and to documents from the earlier [2014-2017 Library Building Committee](#).

Joe McVeigh, Amy Mincher, and Dana Hart deliver regular updates to the Ilsley Library Board of Trustees at their monthly meetings.

Dana Hart has continued her series of op-ed pieces in the Addison Independent called "Building the Library of the Future." In these opinion pieces, Dana articulates benefits of the library to the community. A Middlebury resident writes a similar piece from their own point of view. [Four such pieces](#) have been written so far.

The Project Team remains keen to explore possible partnerships with organizations with similar missions. Such partnerships might result in shared spaces that would lead to lower costs for the library and participating groups.

PLANNED PUBLIC KICK-OFF MEETING

The Project Team plans to hold a public kick-off meeting to inform interested townspeople about steps taken so far and the programmatic vision for "the new Ilsley." The first meeting is tentatively planned to be held late October with a possible follow-up meeting in early November. At the initial meeting, the Team plans to focus on the ingredients for an improved library facility. The Team will present aspects of the proposed library building square-footage program, highlighting those spaces that would be new or would be significantly expanded, and solicit input from the community on what they would like to see included. At the subsequent meeting, the four possible conceptual options will be shared in greater detail and the public will be invited to share their views.

It is worth noting that at this point we are currently in the pre-design phase. We are carefully avoiding a discussion of aesthetics, which tends to bring out strong feelings. We are still gathering the base data upon which an eventual architectural design will be based.

FUNDING OPTIONS

Members of the Team are considering funding from a variety of sources including state and federal funds, grants, and private fund raising. Non-profit funding consultant Christine Graham is advising the Team on how to lay the groundwork for a capital campaign, including acquiring a donor management database, budgeting for administrative support during the height of the campaign, and identifying a fiscal agent to receive donations.

CONTINUED BACKGROUND RESEARCH

To ensure that our future recommendations for facility design options will be solidly based on best practices in library design, the Project Team has continued to review designs from library buildings and renovations elsewhere in the country as highlighted in the [American Library Association's 2022 Design Showcase](#) and in the [ALA/AIA Library Building Awards](#). In August, five members of the team traveled to visit the [Manchester \(VT\) Community Library](#) where they received an informative tour from the Facilities Director, who pointed out many potential pitfalls to avoid, with detailed information on restrooms, HVAC systems, storage, and flooring considerations. Individual team members have also visited public libraries in [New York City](#) (Joe McVeigh) and [Banff, Alberta, Canada](#) (Dan Brown.)

REFINEMENT OF SQUARE FOOTAGE PROGRAM WITH ADJACENCY DIAGRAMS

Dana Hart, Judith Harris, and Barbara Doyle-Wilch have continued to refine the square footage program as described in the report to the Selectboard of June 28, 2022. New efforts have included the creation of adjacency diagrams—that is, visual representations of library functions that work best when in close proximity to each other.

An additional diagram has been created illustrating the proposed growth from current square footage to projected needs to provide a graphic representation.

As a reminder, the overall optimum square footage program is assembled without assumptions as to the ultimate design direction. That is—it does not make any assumptions about whether the ultimate recommendation will be renovation, expansion, or a new structure. As is best practice, the data are assembled in the abstract without regard to form.

NEXT STEPS

The Team will continue to move forward on pre-design, community engagement, and funding.

Were there to be strong support for design option D (building new on the EDI site, while finding an adaptive reuse for the existing building) the Team would welcome advice from the Selectboard and Town Administration on necessary steps to be taken, and what entities should be involved.

The Project Team welcomes questions from the Selectboard, the Town Administration, and the public and reminds everyone that all of its meetings are open to all for community participation.

CHARGE. MEMBERSHIP. MEETINGS.

The Ilsley 100 Project Team is charged with guiding development of design options with a team of professionals to fulfill the vision statement in its charge. The Team is further charged with coordinating funding strategies and community engagement efforts to bring the project to fruition. The [charge](#) and the full [report of the previous working group](#) are available online.

The voting members of the Project Team include two members of the Selectboard (Dan Brown, Farhad Khan), two members of the Ilsley Public Library Board of Trustees (Joe McVeigh, Amy Mincher), and three members of the public (Barbara Doyle-Wilch, Jim Gish, Ken Perine) and an alternate member (Ruth Hardy.) There are two non-voting members (Dana Hart, Library Director; Judith Harris, Town Administration Project Team Liaison.)

Since June 28 the Project Team has held 7 meetings. Those are in addition to the 8 meetings held between March 24 and June 24. All meetings are open to the public and meeting times and agendas are warned in advance. Apart from meetings in the field, all meetings are available to the public in real time via Zoom. Regular meeting times are the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month¹ at 10:00 a.m. generally in the Jessica Swift Community Meeting Room in the library. [Minutes](#) of all meetings are available to the public online as is the Team's previous [June 28, 2022 Report to the Selectboard](#).

¹ In fact, the Team meets on the Thursday following Selectboard meetings. Due to peculiarities in the calendar, this can occasionally be the 3rd and 5th Thursdays. Check the library website and town meeting list for details.