REGIONAL PRIORITY PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

PROJECT INFORMATION FORM

IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED FOR ANY RESPONSE OR YOU WANT TO SUBMIT ADDITION DOCUMENTS , CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE DOCUMENTS WITH THE PROJECT NAME AND EMAIL THEM TO FKENNEY@ADDISONCOUNTYEDC.ORG.

DOWNLOAD AND SAVE THIS DOCUMENT TO YOUR COMPUTER, COMPLETE THE FORM, THEN CLICK THE SUBMIT BUTTON.

PROJECT NAME:

Ilsley Public Library Renovation and Expansion

TYPE OF PROJECT:

- [x] Infrastructure:
  - [ ] Water
  - [ ] Wastewater
  - [ ] Broadband
  - [ ] Transportation
  - [x] Public Facility
  - [ ] Other
- [ ] General Development:
  - [ ] Industrial
  - [ ] Commercial
  - [ ] Residential
  - [ ] Mixed
- [ ] Site/Facility Development for Specific Business
- [ ] Workforce Development
- [ ] Business Development
- [ ] Other:

PROJECT SPONSOR:

Organization Name	Town of Middlebury
Organization Mailing Address	77 Main Street, Middlebury VT 05753
Organization Email	kramsay@townofmiddlebury.org
Organization Phone	(802) 458-8000

Contact info for the person submitting project information:

Name	Dana Hart
Title	Library Director
Mailing Address	75 Main Street, Middlebury VT 05753
Email	dana.hart@ilsleypubliclibrary.org
Phone	(802) 388-4098

PROJECT PRINCIPAL(S) (if different than above):

Person 1:

Name	
Title	
Organization	
Mailing Address	
Email	
Phone	

Person 2:

Name	
Title	
Organization	
Mailing Address	
Email	
Phone	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (5000 Characters):

Ilsley Public Library is an essential public facility, providing people with free access to diverse informational and recreational books and media, high-speed internet, community gathering spaces, and other crucial resources The Library also often serves as a safe and welcoming lifeline for underserved populations in both Middlebury and surrounding towns. The Library consistently ranks as one of the most used libraries in the state: in 2021, Ilsley served 94,000 visitors and circulated 92,000 library materials. The library has a collection of 55,000 physical items, the 7th largest collection in the state. Our total collection use per capita was 10.5, the fourth highest in the state. And in 2019, before the pandemic altered our program plans, Ilsley program attendance was 18,000, the second highest in the state, second only to the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington. It also houses Middlebury Community Television (MCTV), which provides cable access and online programming for local government and community organizations. The Ilsley Library building is the beating heart of Addison County, welcoming children, youth, and adults of all ages to explore, create, and connect with their community.

Unfortunately, the Library's facilities are in a state of serious disrepair and in desperate need of renovation and expansion. The current building is unsafe and inaccessible and has multiple failing mechanical systems. Major concerns include:
1. No handicap-accessible entrance on Main Street;
2. An elevator over forty years old, resulting in regular, and terrifying, entrapments of visitors;
3.Lack of sightlines throughout the library pose serious safety concerns. The majority of spaces, including restrooms located directly next to the children's library, are unsupervised. This has led to significant health and safety concerns, including vandalism and alcohol consumption and illegal substance use in the Library;
4. A single means of egress on the third floor, which houses Middlebury Community Television, which poses a serious safety concern.
5. The heating system, which runs on fuel oil, is 30 years old and unreliable. The system does not allow for any air exchange, which has led to significant mold and air quality issues. During the pandemic, this lack of ventilation and circulation has limited our ability to continue operations as usual.
6. Significant programmatic shortcomings. There are no distinct spaces for elementary, middle, and high school students, and inadequate space to hold multiple group meetings or programs at once. Storage and staff workspaces are woefully insufficient. Countless pillars and steel trusses make spaces inflexible and prevent reconfiguring as library services and collections evolve.

The Library's activities have long outgrown the spaces that were originally designed to contain them and we have reached a point where our facilities limit our ability to further our mission. The Town of Middlebury and the Library Board of Trustees have been working together to renovate and expand the Library building for well over a decade. Most recently, preliminary feasibility studies and assessments laid solid groundwork in 2018. Project planning paused during the pandemic, but the crisis underscored exactly how much the community relies on the Library. A dedicated committee, the Ilsley 100 Project Team, is currently determining whether a major renovation and expansion of the current building or design and construction of a new library building in an adjacent lot would better meet the needs of the community. The Project Team expects to make this decision in December 2022 and is preparing to move forward with an RFP for a professional design team in early 2023.

The plans for addressing the Library's facilities needs include adding 6,000 square feet, doubling the space for children in the library and allowing for new spaces designed to meet our community's current demands: conference room, community living room, specifically-designed for children's programming space, and a family restroom. Quiet study and co-working spaces will be expanded, staff and storage spaces will be expanded and reconfigured, and a new shelving plan for the collection will increase accessibility. Efficient HVAC systems will reduce the town's reliance on fossil fuels. Most importantly, the building will be safe, welcoming, and flexible enough to accommodate shifting programmatic needs in the future.

PROJECT LOCATION (3000 characters):

Provide the physical location of the project and/or the area to be served by the project

The Ilsley Public Library is located in downtown Middlebury at 75 Main Street. The Library literally and metaphorically anchors the downtown, sitting proudly at the beginning of Main Street and forming a civil service campus with the adjacent municipal building at 77 Main Street.

The area served by the Library serves a series of concentric rings. The innermost circle is Middlebury – all residents of Middlebury qualify for a free library card and about half of all Middlebury residents have one.The second circle is composed of the towns in the Addison Central School District – all students and teachers in ACSD qualify for free library cards and Ilsley librarians make regular visits to area schools to forge connections with students. As a result, many students and their families from Bridport, Cornwall, Ripton, Salisbury, Weybridge, and Shoreham have library cards and make regular use of the library's collections and programs.

A third circle comprises all of Addison County. The Library's spaces, internet, and programs are free to everyone, regardless of residence or library card status. The Library is regularly visited by residents of surrounding towns and participates in Homecard, a cooperative lending program of 23 Vermont libraries, includingVergennes, Bristol, New Haven, Orwell, and Monkton, who can make use of Ilsley's collection of over 50,000 print materials.

The fourth and final circle comprises, in small but significant ways, all of Vermont. The Library works closely with Middlebury's shelter for people experiencing homelessness, serving many of unhoused individuals who traverse the corridor between Rutland and Burlington. The free wifi at our

PROJECT PURPOSE AND BENEFITS (3000 Characters):

Describe the purpose and benefits to the region of the project. Describe if/how the project builds capacity within the region for improved regional development/economic development/ community development, including: advancing workforce development; expanding entrepreneurship efforts; supporting or enhancing existing business clusters, or other economic impacts within the region.

This project will provide the community with a library building that is a welcoming, accessible, and safe community hub with the flexibility and sustainability to enrich community members' lives now and into the future. Public libraries have proven themselves, time and time again, to be an investment worth making. An engaging and attractive library will draw visitors to Main Street, bolstering Middlebury's downtown economy and contributing to a vibrant community.

Libraries are vehicles for economic and workforce development. Ilsley Public Library recognizes that workforce development starts with early childhood learning. Ilsley supports early literacy and numeracy with story times; prevents summer slide with a summer reading program for PK-12 students; and ensures all students have access to free high-speed internet. Renovating and expanding the Library will increase our capacity to support our community's youngest learners: a 2021 study found that library capital investment results in an increase in children's attendance at library events by 18% and increased children's checkouts by 21%; that same study found that library use translates to improved test scores in the local school district (Gilpin, Gregory; Karger; and Nencka. "Returns to Public Library Investment." Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, April 2021.)

In addition, libraries are a gateway to employment opportunities for adults. Many high school students get their first job at the Llibrary through our annual page program, and job-seekers of all ages can access employment and professional development resources offered by the Library. Community members use the library to explore employment opportunities, submit applications, and learn new skills. Library staff offer tech support and basic computer training on demand, as well as support filling out applications and writing resumes. In addition, the Library offers free access to a comprehensive selection of academic and career-related training resources, including practice college admissions exams, preparation of occupational licensing tests, workplace skills improvement tutorials. Many adults use the library as the space for their remote schooling and librarians even proctor exams upon request. Addressing the library's facilities would allow us to meet these growing educational and training demands and better support regional economic development.

Although the economic benefits cannot as easily be quantified, developing community connections is absolutely essential to the health and wellbeing of our town and our county. The Library is the one place in Middlebury where everyone is welcome, for free, for as long as they would like to stay. We have the opportunity to reinvest in a community center in downtown Middlebury, bringing people together. Residents of all ages, abilities, and income levels will have a beautiful space to enjoy cultural enrichment, education, and connection.

PROJECT TIMELINE, MILESTONES, AND STATUS (3000 Characters):

Describe the project timeline, the current status of the project, and impediments to proceeding. Include factors such as site control, engineering and design, financing/funding identification and commitment, and permitting. Clearly identify where the project is in the timeline and what work remains.

During Fall 2021, the Ilsley Public Library Renovation/Expansion Working Group reviewed the work of the previous Library Building Committee (2014-2017) and made recommendations on how to move the project forward. Based on those recommendations, in March 2022 the Middlebury Select Board formed the Ilsley 100 Project Team, charging them with guiding the development of design options, coordinating funding strategies, and ensuring effective community engagement throughout the process.

Between March and October 2022, the Project Team has focused on pre-design work and project scope evaluation. Pre-design work has resulted in a preliminary building program, including square foot proposals and adjacency diagrams. The scope evaluation has considered four distinct project directions: renovating the existing building, renovating and expanding the existing building, renovating the existing building and creating an annex, or building a new library on an adjacent lot. The Project Team has completed an evaluation matrix of the four options and engaged an estimator to provide order-of-magnitude estimates for each option. The Project Team plans to select a project direction by January 2023.

The Project Team will issue an RFP in early 2023 seeking a professional design team that can create a feasibility study and present several schematic designs. The Project Team will work with the design professionals, the Select Board, and the community to select a schematic design in mid-2023. This will allow the Project Team to pursue a bond vote in March of 2024; private fundraising will begin in summer 2023, and other government/grant funding identification and application will continue throughout the process. Design development may continue through winter 2023-24 and, pending passage of a bond vote, the project will move into the construction document and permitting phase in spring of 2024.

PROJECT PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE/PARTNERSHIPS (3000 Characters):

Describe project principal(s) experience, ability to complete the project, and describe any projects partnership(s) and how the partnership(s) will help ensure success.

Ilsley Public Library is a municipal library, owned and operated by the Town of Middlebury. The community, Library Board, and Select board are deeply invested in addressing the Library's facility needs. To that end, they created the Ilsley 100 Project Team, a task force comprised of two members of the Middlebury Selectboard; two members of the Ilsley Public Library Board of Trustees; three members of the community with public relations and finance expertise; and the Library Director and a Town staff liaison. This Project Team is committed to working toward broad support for a new or expanded Town Library, and members bring experience from past local and state projects of similar magnitude and import. Experienced Town and Library leadership and staff are advising and supporting the Project Team.

The Town of Middlebury has successfully executed many large scale projects in the past, including renovations of existing structures (fire stations), new construction projects (police department, town hall & gym), major infrastructure projects (Cross Street bridge), and complex federal-state-local partnerships (rail tunnel project). Town leaders and staff have the experience, energy, and dedication to ensure this project's success.

There is significant potential to expand existing partnerships and create new ones, with Middlebury College, Community College of Vermont, Addison Central School District, Middlebury Community Television, theVermont Children's Museum, VT Book Shop, Marquis Theater, and numerous other local community organizations and businesses. As outreach about the project continues, the Project Team will be soliciting community testimonials, letters of support, and pledges for financial contributions.

PROJECT SUPPORT AND REGIONAL NEED (4000 Characters):

Describe how the project is consistent with identified local and regional goals, advances regional needs identified in plans, reports or public forums, and describe the community support and engagement. Include reference and link to the municipal and/or regional plan, report, or forum identified. Also describe how the project leverages regional human, social, financial, cultural, and/or physical capital, and supports, compliments, or enhances existing efforts.

In 2017 the Library conducted a series of focus groups, during which the community identified key aspirations (https://d1xsgv5rnouql9.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Tell-Me-Presentation-2.27.2019.pdf) that will be supported by a renovation/expansion:

1. Building a vibrant downtown. The new library facilities will contribute to downtown vibrancy by increasing space for exhibitions, performances, and other cultural events which are free to all; serving as a welcome center for new residents or tourists; and attracting increased foot traffic to the downtown area.
2. Creating opportunities for intergenerational gathering. The expanded library building will feature a Community Living Room that will promote spontaneous gatherings between members of different generations. The Library is one of the few places in Middlebury that attracts all ages, but the current building silos age groups.
3. Providing services to underserved populations in our community. The renovation/expansion will double the space for children and will create a separate space for high school students. A more accessible building will allow community members with varying mobility levels to visit the library and engage with the community.

The renovation/expansion project has also supports the 2020 Middlebury Downtown Master Plan 9https://cms5.revize.com/revize/middlebury/departments/planning_zoning_office/Downtown%20Master%20Plan/Middlebury%20Master%20Plan%20FINAL%20Draft%20Nov-30-2020.pdf). The first guiding principle of that plan is to foster "inclusivity/gathering places and destinations for all" and to make Downtown a welcoming and enjoyable destination for all. The Library is a crucial component of this goal. Shops and restaurants—the traditional downtown spaces—are often not accessible to community members who are low-income, differently-abled, or struggling with mental health issues. What is there for these community members downtown? The only answer is: the Library. If Middlebury truly wants a downtown that welcomes all, the library must be a welcoming, accessible, and safe space. Our current facility falls short. A renovated and expanded library will send the message that Middlebury values and welcomes all members of our community.

Another guiding principle of the downtown master plan is "economic vibrancy." The Library is a significant draw and leads to increased foot traffic in downtown Middlebury: many non-residents come to Middlebury specifically to use the library, and then run errands downtown. Research has shown that libraries enjoy an increase in foot traffic of about 20% after significant capital improvements: that would mean another 32,000 visitors to downtown Middlebury every year (ibid).

A final guiding principle of the downtown master plan is "sustainability and resiliency." The library is currently heated by a 30-year-old boiler that runs on fuel oil. Transitioning to cold-climate heat pumps, as the plans for renovating/expanding the library call for, would allow the town of Middlebury to move away from a dependency on fossil fuel.

A renovated and expanded library would further several regional goals, outlined in the 2018 Addison County Regional Plan (https://acrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Regional_Plan_7_18_2018_updated_5_2019.pdf). Regional Plan Overall Goal B is to "encourage a strong and diverse economy that provides economic opportunity, satisfying and rewarding employment, improved income and economic growth." As remote work continues to rise, the Library plays an increasingly crucial role as a co-working space. To have a robust, 21st century economy people need a space where they can reliably access free high-speed internet. People and organizations also need a place to hold meetings – the renovated/expanded library will have additional meeting spaces of varying sizes available to book for free.

PROJECT COST, IDENTIFIED AND COMMITED FUNDS/FINANCING, AND FUNDING GAP:

Provide the total project cost and complete the simple sources and uses chart.

Total Project Cost: $ 13,000,000

Sources:

Source	Amount
Government Grants	$ 1
Fundraising	$ 1,000,000
Municipal Bond	$ 7,000,000
Total Sources:	$ 9,000,000

Uses:

Use	Amount
soft costs, design, permitting	$ 900,000
site work	$ 400,000
construction/renovation	$ 11,400,000
equipment	$ 300,000
Total Uses:	$ 13,000,000

Funding Gap: **$ 4,000,000**

Note: Uses must exceed sources or there is no funding gap

Budget Narrative (3000 Characters):

Describe the amount of funds/financing that have been identified and include a clear status of the funds (Received, committed, applied for, identified, etc.) including the dates of receipt, commitment, application, expected distribution, etc. Clearly identify any funding gap.

The Ilsley 100 Project Team is currently working with an estimator to obtain order-of-magnitude estimates. Until the new estimates are finalized, the tentative budget is based on a 2017 estimate of $9.6 million to renovate and expand the library. Adjusted for inflation and building costs, and factoring in moving and temporary location costs, a tentative, working budget is $13.0 million. The budget will continue to evolve as the Project Team continues with its work and engages more professional designers and project managers.

The Project Team has identified a number of grants and government funds that the project is eligible for, including a State Economic and Infrastructure Development Grant from the NBRC; Community Facilities Grant from the USDA; Community Development Program Implementation Grant from the Agency of Commerce; and a Cultural Facilities Grant and Historic Preservation Grant from the Agency of Administration. In addition, we expect funding to be available from the Department of Libraries, through both an appropriation from Sen. Leahy and ARPA money that has been designated for library facilities improvements, although at this stage the Department of Libraries has not announced eligibility, grant amounts, or application timelines. In addition, the town will pursue a bond to cover a substantial portion of the project, and the Project Team will run a private fundraising capital campaign.

While it is difficult to identify the funding gap at this stage in the process, it is clear that cost will be the single greatest barrier to achieving this goal. Given the scope of work, the limited property footprint, and the nature of renovating a historic structure, this is going to be a major project. Middlebury is a large town by Vermont standards, and the Library enjoys widespread support in the community. The project team will pursue any and all types of funding available to bring this renovation/expansion to fruition, including seeking grants, private fundraising, and, ultimately, a bond vote.

It is important to be realistic about what these traditional sources of funding can accomplish. The scope of work and cost of construction will simply be too large to be funded by conventional grants, private fundraising, and municipal bonding. In order for this project to be a success, there needs to be government grant funding.

JOB CREATION (4000 Characters):

Provide the number of full-time jobs to be created and/or retained by the project, a description of the benefits package to be offered to the majority of the new/retained jobs, and the average wage of the jobs to be created/retained.

The Library currently employs seven full-time staff, six part-time staff, and a large number of part-time temporary work-study students and substitutes. Full-time positions have full Town-employee benefits and competitive wages; three of the full-time positions are union represented positions.

All of these positions will be retained. It is likely that after the project is complete, an additional custodial position would be created. Additional programming staff may also be considered. Partners such as MCTV or businesses that might co-locate in a new Library facility (such as a cafe or gift shop) may also create new employment opportunities.

CLEAR FORM

PRINT FORM

SUBMIT PROJECT