REGIONAL PRIORITY PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

PROJECT INFORMATION FORM

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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
Organization Email	
Organization Phone	

Contact info for the person submitting project information:

Name	Dana Hart
Title	Library Director
Mailing Address	75 Main Street, Middlebury
Email	dana.hart@ilsleypubliclibrary.org
Phone	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 - Provide a brief (2-3 sentence) description of the project. (500 character limit):

This project is a major renovation and expansion of the existing Ilsley Public Library in downtown Mi

DETAILED 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, and in 2023 retained the team of ReArch Company and Wiemann Lamphere Architects to develop a plan to renovate and expand the library building. Schematic design is now complete, and the team is working on construction documents.

The plans for addressing the Library's facilities needs include adding 8,000 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 can be considered as a series of concentric rings. The innermost circle is Middlebury and Weybridge – all residents of Middlebury and Weybridge qualify for a free library card and about half of all residents have one.The second circle is composed of the other 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, 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, including Vergennes, 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 branch, the Sarah Partridge Library in East Middlebury, is the first area of internet service travelers are can access at the base of the Middlebury

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 economic development or community development, builds capacity in the region for improved economic and community development, and/or advances the goals and objectives of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and/or regional plans, and addresses the most pressing needs of 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 library 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, 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 within the project timeline and what work remains.

This project started off with years of community input on the library's needs and the scope and location of the project (2014-2017; 2021-2022). In 2022, pre-design was completed. In 2023, we held a design competition to both choose a conceptual design and select a design team (ReArch Company and Wiemann Lamphere Architects). In spring of 2024, schematic design was completed and the town passed a bond vote to support the project. In the summer of 2024, design development was completed. At this point, the professional design team is working on construction documents and the permitting process, with a plan to put the project out to bid in January of 2024.

Before that can happen, we need to raise the remaining $2 million in private donations and secure the $1.5 million in grant funding from the Dept. of Libraries. If we can do that, then there is only a gap of $500k, and we would hope to close that gap in late 2024 or early 2025 with either the NBRC, MERP, or possible congressionally directed funding requests.

PROJECT PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE/PARTNERSHIPS (3000 Characters):

Describe project principals' experience managing federal or state grants, and/or successfully developed similar business models, their ability to complete the project, and describe any partnerships that will help ensure success.

Ilsley Public Library is a municipal library, owned and operated by the Town of Middlebury. 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, waste water treatment plant), 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.

To coordinate this project, the Selectboard created the Ilsley 100 Project Team, a task force comprised of two members of the Middlebury Selectboard (Dan Brown and Farhad Khan); two members of the Ilsley Public Library Board of Trustees (Joe McVeigh and Amy Mincher); four members of the community with public relations and finance expertise (Jim Gish, Vermont State Senator Ruth Hardy, Ken Perine, and Barbara Doyle-Wilch); and the Library Director (Dana Hart) and a Town staff liaison (Beth Dow). In addition, the Project Team is supported by a Clerk of the Works (Judith Harris).

To ensure that this project is completed by December 31, 2026, the Project Team has retained a professional design team consisting of ReArch Company and Wiemann Lamphere Architects, both of whom have experience working on complex, multi-year projects. The Project Team has also retained a fundraising consultant (CPG Enterprises) to guide fundraising efforts. Finally, recognizing the number of hours the library director has and will continue to need to direct
towards this project, the town of Middlebury funded an additional part-time library position. This allows the library director to focus fully on the project, increasing the library's organizational capacity.

PROJECT SUPPORT AND REGIONAL NEED (4000 Characters):

Describe how the project is consistent with identified local and regional goals, advances regional needs identified in the region's CEDS and/or regional plans or is supported by reports or public forums. Describe the community support for the project and any community engagement that has occurred. Include reference and link to region's CEDS, the municipal and/or regional plan, and reports, or forums identified. Also describe how the project leverages regional human, social, financial, cultural, and/or physical capital, and supports, compliments, or enhances existing efforts.

This project has tremendous support from the local community. In May, the town of Middlebury passed a bond vote to support the project by a 5 to 1 margin.

In 2019, the Library conducted a series of focus groups, during which the community identified key aspirations that will be supported by a renovation/expansion:

1. Building a vibrant downtown.
2. Creating opportunities for intergenerational gathering.
3. Providing services to underserved populations in our community.

Since then, the Project Team has continuously engaged the community through:

• Focus groups on the square foot library program (Nov. 2022)
• Focus groups on the scope and cost for the project (January 2023)
• A public meeting presenting three competing conceptual designs (August 2023; over 200 attended); opportunities to submit feedback on the conceptual designs (over 120 responses submitted)
• Open house to view schematic design and discuss with the architects (December 2023; over 100 attended); opportunities to submit feedback on the designs in person and online (over 20 responses)

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: $ 17,000,000

Sources:

Source	Amount
Capital Campaign	$ 4,000,000
Public Bond	$ 4,500,000
Local Option Tax	$ 4,000,000
Grants	$ 0
Federal Rebate	$ 500,000
Total Sources:	$ 13,000,000

Uses:

Use	Amount
Professional Fees, Sitework, C	$ 14,367,605
Inflation to Spring 2025 Construction S	$ 983,070
Owners Costs	$ 1,644,324
Total Uses:	$ 16,994,999

Funding Gap: **$ 3,994,999**

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. Also, identify the type of resource (cash, grant, loan, sponsor in-kind, third party in-kind, etc.) and describe which resources can serve as a match, noting that, for example, some grant sources do not allow matching federal funding with other federal funds. Clearly identify any funding gap and identify the state or federal resources that you expect might help fill the gap.

This project will be funded by a mix of grants ($2 million); donations ($6 million); Middlebury local option tax ($4 million); public borrowing ($4.5 million) and federal rebates ($500k). To date, the bond vote has passed, the use of the local option tax has been approved, and we have raised $4 million in private donations. That leaves $2 million in grants, and a remaining $2 million to fund raise. Given the results of our fundraising feasibility study, and our early successes in the campaign, we are confident that we will reach the $6 million goal.

As for the grant funding, we have applied for $1.5 million from the VT Dept. of Libraries, and expect to hear back in August 2024. We plan to apply for two separate grants of $500k each: the NBRC Catalyst Grant, and the Municipal Energy Resilience Program grant. Our hope is that these state and federal resources will close the gap.

JOB CREATION (4000 Characters):

Provide an estimate of the number of permanent and temporary jobs to be retained and/or created by the project, including the period of time over which new jobs will be created.

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