

Sustaining Excellence

Plan for Service to the Middlebury Community 2007-2011

Board of Trustees
Ilsley Public Library

December 2006

Isley Public Library

Sustaining Excellence

Plan for Service to the Middlebury Community 2007 - 2011

I. Introduction

A. Planning Process

The trustees of Isley Public Library authorized a long-range planning process to address the period 2007 – 2011, using the Public Library Association's Planning for Results model.¹ The process is based in an examination of community vision and needs, and draws heavily on the thoughtful participation of a representative community planning committee. The board engaged a facilitator to assist them and the library staff in planning and conducting meetings and focus groups. This work was from June through September, 2006, as follows

- ❑ Community Planning Committee: July 13, August 24, and September 21
- ❑ Staff planning retreat: August 31
- ❑ Focus groups (4): July 6 and 7

The plan document developed from these meetings and was written as a group effort by library staff and board, with review and input from Planning Committee members.

Planning Committee Members

Laura Adams, National Bank of Middlebury

Brian Ashley, Counseling Service of Addison County

Claire Ayer, State Senator

Barbara Blodgett, Isley Public Library Board Chair

Carol Chatfield, Isley Public Library Youth Services Head

David Clark, Isley Public Library Director

Ann Crocker, Vermont Adult Learning

Barbara Doyle-Wilch, Middlebury College Libraries

Fred Dunnington, Town of Middlebury Planning Officer

Helen Freismuth, United Way of Addison County

¹ The standard public library planning model, used throughout the United States by public libraries of all sizes and governance structures. Described in *The New Planning for Results: A Public Library Transformation Process*, by Sandra Nelson. Chicago, American Library Association, 1996.

Barbara Harding, Addison County Chamber of Commerce
Diane Hermann-Artim, Community College of Vermont
Bruce Hiland, Battell Associates
Doug James, Ilsley Public Library Board Member
Mike Kiernan, MD, Porter Hospital
Chris Kirby, Ilsley Public Library Adult Services Head
Peg Martin, former Select Board member and state representative
Jason Mittell, Chair, Middlebury Community Television
Martha Molpus, East Middlebury Friends of the Library
Louise Mosher, Friends of Ilsley Public Library
Victor Nuovo, Middlebury Select Board
Michael Rainville, Maple Landmark
Gary Rodes, Building Contractor
Alyce Schermerhorn, Mary Hogan School
Laura Scott, former bookstore owner
Lee Sease, Addison Central Supervisory Union
Jamie Stewart, Addison County Economic Development
Eric Winter, Timberline Interactive, Inc.

Library Board of Trustees

Barbara Hooker Blodgett, President
Christopher Cartwright
Peter DeGraff
Robert Champlin
Doug James

B. Middlebury region profile²

Middlebury is the shire town for Addison County, Vermont. Set in the Champlain Valley, it is on Route 7, the major north-south artery in western Vermont. It is the home of Middlebury College, and values its rich cultural and historical resources.

Estimated population of the Town for 2005 is 8,152. This is slightly fewer than the 2000 census figure of 8,183, while the 36,965 2005 estimate for the County is 2% higher than the 2000 census figure of 35,974. Growth rates for the 1990 – 2000 decade were 1.85% for the Town; 9.17% for the County. The 2004 average gross income per capita was \$22,738.05 for the Town, higher than \$20,959.06 for Addison County and \$21,676.68 for Vermont as a whole.³ Of the approximately 2660 total households, 239 (8%) receive food stamps.

The population of Town is predominately white, with 7,714, or 94 %; compared to 96 % in the County and State. In the 2000 census, 17 % (1,431) of Middlebury residents were under the age of 18, 13 % (1,088) were 65 or older. These compare to county wide proportions of 24% for people under 18 and 11.3% for people 65 and over. There are slightly more females than males in both the Town and the County; the 2000 census counted 4,292 females (52 % of the population) and 3,891 males in Middlebury; 18,198 females and 17,776 males in the county.

Decade-by-decade projections to 2030 for the State of Vermont predict significant shifts in the proportion of older people. For example, between 2000 and 2030, the number of people over 65 will increase by 96,400, or 124%, while people under the age of 18 will decrease by 8,564, or 5.8%.⁴ It is likely that the Middlebury area will reflect this statewide trend, with perhaps a small mitigating effect of the College presence.

The Town is home to Middlebury College, which clearly has a defining impact on the entire region. The College has 2,100 students, with plans to grow to 2,200 and 220 faculty. In addition to the 225-acre main campus, the College owns more than 4,000 acres in the region, including woodlands, farms, and research sites. In its recent Plan, the College expresses a commitment to work closely with the Town to minimize unfavorable impact and nurture constructive relationships.⁵

C. Ilseley Public Library and the library landscape

IPL in Context

Ilseley Public Library (IPL) is one of 11 fully independent public libraries in Addison County, one of 189 in the State of Vermont. IPL operates as a two-unit system, including the main building (Ilseley), and the branch Sarah Partridge Library in East Middlebury, the former comprising 14,700 square feet and the latter 600 sq. ft. The main building is open 53 hours per week; Sarah Partridge 10. IPL's technological infrastructure and library automation system, shared with Sarah Partridge, is part of the larger Middlebury College Library system, but with an independent online and web presence.

² For detailed information on the Middlebury region, the reader is referred to three documents:

1. Addison County Regional Plan, available at http://www.acrpc.org/pages/publications/reg_plan.htm, the web site of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission.
2. Town of Middlebury Plan, available at the Town web site, http://www.middlebury.govoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={E2F00758-FC74-445D-AD90-341146960471}&DE={5E9F000E-13CE-4F06-8362-B86E4D233591}
3. Addison County Economic Development Strategy, available at the web site of the Addison County Economic Development Corporation, http://www.addisoncountyledc.org/ceds/pdfs/CEDS_080104.PDF

³ Data source for income: Vermont Department of Taxes. Data source for population: Vermont State Data Center, online at <http://maps.vcqi.org/indicators>

⁴ US Census Bureau data, available from the Vermont State Data Center at <http://crs.uvm.edu/census/projections/state/>

⁵ The complete approved 2006 plan is available at http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/planning/final_plan/

IPL has a hybrid form of governance – it is administered as a Town Department, but an independently elected five-person Board of Trustees has significant authority over planning, policy, and budgeting. More than 98% of its operating income comes from local property taxes. IPL participates in the Vermont Automated Library System (VALS), the statewide interlibrary loan and resource sharing network administered by the Vermont Department of Libraries. IPL has cordial informal relationships with the other public libraries in Addison County. An active Friends group provides programming, enhancement funding and helps build community awareness of the library and its services.

IPL's legal service area is the Town of Middlebury, and it provides residents and taxpayers of the Town with all services free of charge. A significant number of its patrons, however, come from surrounding towns and pay an annual fee for services (currently below the per capita tax appropriation of Town residents). In addition IPL provides free membership to students K-12 in the school district and to CCV Middlebury students. IPL provides, for \$85, a special membership for teachers in outlying towns. In May 2006, 66% of registered borrowers were Middlebury residents; 34% from other towns. Further, of the items loaned 56% were borrowed by Town residents, 44% by residents of other towns, notably Cornwall (7%); Weybridge (7%), New Haven (5%), and Salisbury (4%).

IPL provides a broad array of library services, including lending books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and tapes; providing reference and information services; programs and lectures; book discussion groups; children's programs; online databases and public use computers; and providing space for meetings and gatherings, both formal and informal.

IPL leads the state and region in many of the standard measures of public library performance. For example, in FY 2005, IPL was the number one library in Vermont in the annual HAPLR ratings, a national index; first in the state in circulation per capita; third in the state in visits per capita, and in the top 10 in per capital funding.

Focus Group Summary

Four focus groups were held as part of this planning process, with groups representing young families (8 people); newly-retired or about-to-retire seniors (7); high school students (8), and business people (6).

Overarching themes emerged from all groups:

- People appreciate Ilsley Public Library as an important town asset and resource, whether or not they use the library frequently or at all. They speak positively both of facilities and of staff and service.
- People think Ilsley should receive financial support to continue and improve services.
- People do not know everything there is to know about IPL services, particularly in the area of online services such as databases, and remote access 24/7 to circulation and information services.

Parents of young children in the group used the library very frequently, as an integral part of their weekly or even daily routines. They were especially appreciative of the library staff and volunteers who serve children, commenting "they always remember my kids' names," and "they're GREAT!" Further, they see the library as a valuable resource for family and community life, appreciated the reserves service and technological advances. While they were especially complimentary about material and services for very young kids, they would like to see more material for young teens.

"It's not stuffy; it's contemporary"

"It's a media resource"

"They are very responsive"

Business owners were aware of library services, but agreed on a sense that perhaps they didn't know everything that was available there. They felt that some library services, databases, or resources could be useful to them specifically in their business, but weren't sure what those were. This group said it bought a lot of books, but several people also used the library. They spoke favorably of the library building and its role as a downtown linchpin. They praised the Director's visibility and involvement in the community.

"That's a super building, and I like the way it's being utilized"

"I'm sensing it could provide a great service if the word got out."

"They are helpful, extremely helpful"

Young seniors knew a great deal about the IPL services, though felt they could know more. They were interested in library funding and governance, some had lived in other states where larger library systems were the rule. They particularly appreciated audio books and current popular titles, and programs such as First Wednesdays. They viewed the library as an important cultural resource for the area, with room to grow even further in that role.

"It's absolutely loaded with strengths." ... "They're very good about getting new books."

"There's a tremendous variety of options for different interest for all age groups."

"Love the center of town location"

High school students in the group were all big readers. They went to the library often, usually after school, and viewed it as a good place to be in the absence or scarcity of places for teens to gather. One wondered whether they bothered adults in the library; others said that there were places for everyone, young and old. Several said that staff were sympathetic to their needs to socialize. They wanted more materials focused on their age group and a place to be that wasn't right near the little kids' area. The group exhibited an altruistic streak – though they wished for more library space, materials, and programs for their age group, when asked about what they saw as the most important role the library might play, their responses focused on services to very young children.

"Downstairs is way too childish. Upstairs is way too adult."

"It smells good."

"I'd like more books."

"What would be cool would be if there could be a restaurant next to the library and kids could be goofy and eat. And they go to the library and be quiet and do their work."

"It's pretty safe there."

D. Community vision of the future

The following statement was developed from discussion at the first meeting of the Community Planning Committee and outlines what the Committee hoped Middlebury would be in the future.

- ⇒ A community that **preserves** its valuable resources and traditions while facing **the future creatively and thoughtfully**.
- ⇒ A small town sense of **community**, independence, and **connectedness** allowing smart and innovative responses to global and local challenges—environmental, social, demographic, and economic.
- ⇒ **People are proud** to live here. Every child understands and values his or her home town, every elder has ways to participate in community life, every teenager has plenty to do to engage his growing mind and heart. Every person feels safe and valued.
- ⇒ Assistance is widely available, and people in need of assistance know where to find it, and it is delivered in a way that is useful. **People gladly contribute** their time to government and nonprofit organizations. Community **identity and self-image** are continually renewed.
- ⇒ **Government is structured to be nimble** while still inviting the widest possible participation in decision-making, with plenty of formal and informal opportunities for discourse and communications.
- ⇒ Middlebury takes advantage of its **rich intellectual capital** and **small size as** it develops innovative approaches to the development of its economy, infrastructure, environment, as well as its educational, cultural, and social fabric. It is a **friendly hatchery for pilot and demonstration projects** that address the problems we all face. The **technological infrastructure** is not only state-of-the art but its designers also take advantage of Middlebury's small size to test new and innovative approaches to technology and communications. The community takes seriously its responsibility as a **regional center** for services.
- ⇒ A **strong transportation infrastructure includes safe pedestrian and bicycle ways**, as well as **public transportation** both regionally and locally. Dependence on fossil fuels for heat and transportation is minimal. The built environment includes respectful preservation of historic structures and districts as well as construction of green and affordable housing. Public gathering spaces are abundant.
- ⇒ **Health care** is universally available and affordable.
- ⇒ Diverse agricultural enterprise, small business, light manufacturing, and a fertile environment for creativity all ensure **plenty of meaningful work for a broad spectrum of people**; work that provides a livable wage. There is sufficient **housing** for people of all economic abilities.

E. Community needs

To approach this vision for the Middlebury community, the following are needed:

- Leadership throughout the community
- Participation by all residents in decision-making
- Education and information for everyone in the broadest possible sense
- Ongoing planning
- Nuts and bolts such as jobs, money, expertise

II. Library response

The Library is centrally positioned to participate in meeting these community needs and to be an active force in the community's ongoing efforts at approaching its vision. The Planning Committee recommended the following service responses⁶ as priority focus areas for the Library for the next five years:

- ❑ **Commons:** The library should provide a place for formal and informal gathering, a place that encourages and promotes dialogue and connections, and discourse; a place simply to hang out for residents and visitors alike.
- ❑ **Current Topics and Titles:** The library should provide a wide range of current, in demand, materials in all formats, readily available by loan, download, or other distribution measures.
- ❑ **Information Literacy:** The library should lead in ensuring that residents of all ages are comfortable and competent in identifying, finding, and evaluating information on a wide range of issues related to personal, work, and community life.
- ❑ **Lifelong Learning:** The library should provide a variety of resources—collection, programs, computer-based material, experts – for people of all ages who value continuous learning in a “knowledge society.” Further, a special focus should be on the very young and their caregivers as well as the increasing number of elders in the population.

III. Library mission

Ilsley Public Library serves Town of Middlebury residents, visitors, and residents of surrounding towns; people of all ages and all walks of life.

The library

- ❑ provides ready access to current materials in demand in all formats so that people may pursue their individual interests widely,
- ❑ seeks continuously to strengthen a sense of community by providing opportunities for formal public discourse and informal communications,
- ❑ recognizes its role in today's information society by working to ensure that all the people in its service area are capable of finding and evaluating information on a wide range of topics, and
- ❑ has the necessary people, materials, technological infrastructure, and facilities to approach this mission confidently.

⁶ These four service responses were chosen from among the 13 possible service areas that the PLA model defines. It is recommended by PLA that library planning groups choose a maximum three to five of these 13.

IV. Service Plan: Goals, objectives, and sample activities

Activities which are italicized and in bold require additional funds.

Goal #1 People Make it Happen

IPL will be an outstanding service agency made possible by competent, professional, and friendly staff.

Objectives for 2007:

1. 80% of IPL customers will rate the library as providing excellent service.
2. 80% of IPL customers will rate the staff as competent, professional, and friendly.
3. Improve management of the collection (especially check-in and shelving).

Activities for 2007	When?	Who?
1. All IPL staff will receive two one-hour training sessions on customer service.	2007	Director
2. All volunteers who assist the public will receive two one-hour training sessions to upgrade their skills and knowledge.	2007	Circulation
3. IPL will increase its accuracy in check-ins and shelving.	2007	Circulation
4. Staff members will understand their role in achieving this goal by participating in the discussion and resulting work.	2007	All staff

Activities for the future	When?	Who?
1. IPL will inventory its collections.	2008	Librarians, Circulation

Goal #2 Current Topics and Titles

IPL will have what users want when they want it.

Objectives for 2007:

1. The wait time for reserve items will decrease by 2% per year, with baseline being calendar year 2006.
2. Users will have 3 more avenues to suggest materials for purchase.

Activities for 2007	When?	Who?
1. IPL will purchase sufficient quantities of new items so that there are never more than 2 persons waiting for an item.	2007	Librarians
2. IPL will purchase multiple copies of high demand DVDs (and other formats) to meet demand	2007	Librarians
3. IPL's web site will include links to bestseller lists and reviews of current items.	2007	A.S. Librarian
4. IPL staff will create monthly displays with items of current or seasonal interest in adult and youth areas and at Sarah Partridge Library.	2007	All staff
5. IPL will review and update the collection development policy.	2007	Librarians, Director
6. IPL will provide suggestions boxes, physical and virtual, and one additional way for users to make suggestions.	2007	Director

Activities for the future	When?	Who?
1. IPL will inaugurate a downloadable audio book service.	2008	Board Director Librarians
2. PL staff will provide reader's advisory suggestions to customers in person, in print, and on the library web site.	2008	All staff
3. IPL will write monthly columns for local newspapers to keep residents advised of what's new and of interest to local citizens.	2009	Librarians, Director
4. IPL will increase the materials budget from 15% to 18% of the total budget.	2010	Board, Director

Goal #3 Lifelong Learning

IPL will enable people to self-direct their learning by providing space, materials, and staff assistance.

Objectives for 2007:

1. 50% of the eligible children in Middlebury will participate in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library by the end of 2007 and 75% by the end of 2008. (Population numbers will be the estimates made by Mary Hogan Elementary School.)

2. The number of persons attending a library sponsored program will increase 2% per year with the baseline being the calendar year 2006.

Activities for 2007	When?	Who?
1. IPL will offer three programs in partnership with three new organizations that stimulate discussion and appeal to a broad range of residents. (These organizations may be commercial or non-profit and may lead to formal courses offered in and around Middlebury.)	2007	Librarians
2. Assess and plan programs for a broad interest range of adults	2007	A.S. Librarian
3. Recognize and publicize the programs held in the library open to the public	2007	Librarians
4. Every Middlebury preschooler will enter kindergarten with a significant early literacy experience. <i>IPL will begin the Dolly Parton Imagination Library July 1, 2007.</i> (Every child in Middlebury from birth to age 4 years 11 months will receive a book each month mailed to his or her home.)	2007	Y.S. Librarian
5. IPL will seek partners to help fund the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Middlebury.	2007	Y.S. Librarian
6. IPL will seek partners to help publicize the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. (Partners might be local physicians, prenatal classes, the preschool communities, schools, etc.)	2007	Y.S. Librarian
7. IPL will work with teens to increase programming for youngsters ages 12 and up. IPL will host a film series and organize three summer events for teens.	2007	A.S. Librarian

8. IPL will spend at least 5% of the total materials budget adult and juvenile on “how-to” books and databases on topics of local interest.	2007	Librarians
---	------	------------

Activities for the future	When?	Who?
1. IPL will have signage and wall maps that enable patrons to move about the building with ease and to find materials of interest to them.	2008	Director
2. IPL will link the location codes of materials in the catalog with an electronic floor plan.	2008	A.S. Librarian Cataloger
3. Provide 4 programs for a broad interest range of adults	2008	A.S. Librarian
4. IPL will visit bi-monthly every registered home-based child care center in Middlebury (estimated currently to be 18-20).	2008	Y.S. Librarian
5. IPL will interact at least once with the providers of registered home-based child care centers in Middlebury.	2008	Y.S. Librarian
6. IPL will have additional staff time to co-ordinate volunteers, public relations, and programming.	2009	Board, Director

Goal #4 Commons

IPL will serve Middlebury as a meeting place, physical and virtual, for formal and informal gatherings and community forums.

Objectives for 2007:

1. The number of persons walking through the library door will increase by 2% per year, with baseline being calendar year 2006.
2. The number of resident members will increase 2% per year with the baseline being the calendar year 2006.

Activities for 2007	When?	Who?
1. IPL will re-design its home page and update monthly announcements of library events.	2007	Librarians Director
2. IPL will publicize library events.	2007	Librarians, Director
3. IPL will maintain clean and well furnished meeting room facilities.	2007	Custodian
4. IPL will determine its space needs for the next three years within the current building, evaluate how space is currently being used for services and collections, and determine how best to re-allocate space.	2007	Librarians Director
5. Convene a task force on space use, including community leaders, appropriate town officials, and planning officials.	2007	Director Board
6. Assess future space needs in relation to other planned changes in the downtown area	2007	Task Force Director, Board

Activities for the future	When?	Who?
1. IPL will assess the hours of operation for optimum public use.	2008	Director
2. IPL will update announcements of library events on its home page weekly.	2008	Librarians, Director
3. IPL will work with the Middlebury Community Television to make Select Board meetings available over the Internet.	2008	Director, A.S. Librarian MCTV
4. IPL will implement the recommendations of the space use assessment.	2008	Board, Director
5. IPL will have additional custodial help.	2008	Board, Director
6. IPL will establish a web-based community calendar for the Middlebury area.	2009	A.S. Librarian, Director
7. The library will implement recommended changes in the schedule if finances permit.	2010	Board, Director

Goal #5 Information Literacy

Residents will have the ability to find, evaluate, and use information to attain successful and satisfying lives.

Objectives for 2007:

1. The number of persons who attend information literacy workshops will increase by 2% per year, with baseline being calendar year 2006.
2. The number of persons who use IPL databases will increase 2% per year with the baseline being the calendar year 2006.

Activities for 2007	When?	How?
1. Determine what kinds of information literacy workshops are needed by children and adults and offer them every two months at shifting times and day of the week.	2007	Librarians Director
2. Add an Apple computer with appropriate software for the public.	2007	A.S. Librarian
3. Plan for increasing the number of computers for the public.	2007	A.S. Librarian, Director
4. Offer two workshops on IPL's electronic databases, one for children and one for adults.	2007	Librarians
5. Determine how the youth services librarian, director, and one other staff member will be trained to help public with equipment and software.	2007	Librarians, Director

Activities for the future	When?	Who?
1. Add at least five computers for the public.	2008	A.S. Librarian
2. Continue instructional classes and workshops on the electronic databases.	2008	Librarians, Director
3. Train youth services librarian, director, and one other staff member to help public with equipment and software.	2008	A.S. Librarian
4. Add five more computers each year for the public.	2009, 2010, 2011	A.S. Librarian
5. Have a staff member whose primary job is to oversee the technological services of IPL.	2009	Board, Director

V. Overarching issues

In addition to specific service responses outlined above, Islesley Public Library will address the following over the next five years: *Note: Again, Sarah Partridge should be mentioned throughout; also consider differentiating between Islesley Public Library the one building and Islesley Public Library System (or Middlebury Public Library System) – a name change might be just the ticket as task force continues.*

Funding and governance

Goal: IPL will be funded at a level that will insure ongoing excellent service to its constituency. It will be governed in a way that ensures optimum use of available resources, including resource-sharing with other libraries and participation in library networks and consortia as they come of age in Vermont and the New England region.

Sample activities:

Activity	When?	Who?
<input type="checkbox"/> Convene task force to investigate funding and governance issues. Include board, staff, community leaders.	Year 1	Board; Director
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate structure for formal private fundraising effort; a foundation or a named fund in the Vermont Community Foundation; make recommendations and preliminary plan	Year 2	Board; Director; Task Force
<input type="checkbox"/> Task force work with VLA on study and recommendations of statewide library governance and resource sharing in Vermont	Year 2	Board, Director, Task Force; wider VT library community.

Facilities

Goal: IPL will have appropriate and sufficient facilities and capital infrastructure to meet its service goals and to continue to serve its community for the next 20 years.

Sample activities:

Activity	Time Frame	Who?
<input type="checkbox"/> Convene task force on space use, including community leaders, appropriate town officials; planning officials	Year 1	Director, Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Study and develop assessment of future space needs in relation to other planned changes in downtown area.	Year 1	Task Force with Director & Board

Staff Training

Goal: IPL staff will have all the knowledge and skill they need to deliver excellent library services in a rapidly changing information and community environment.

Sample activities:

Activity	Time Frame	Who?
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment and planning of employee orientation, training, and ongoing education	Year 1	Director; department heads
<input type="checkbox"/> Implement plan	Years 2 - 5	All staff

