



ADDISON COUNTY
Economic Development Corporation
Great starts here.

February 22, 2024

The Honorable Peter Welch
United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Welch:

On behalf of the Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC), I am writing to express our support for the FY25 Congressionally Directed Spending request submitted by the Ilsley Public Library in Middlebury for their expansion and modernization project.

As Addison County's regional development corporation, ACEDC's mission is to increase the economic health and vitality of our region. Improving and modernizing key public amenities and services, such as the Ilsley Public Library – one of the most utilized libraries in Vermont – helps to attract and retain families and individuals to our area and is critical to the economic success of Addison County. This project also increases access to a critical public facility. ACEDC supports entities bringing transformative change that will benefit the community at large.

Following a multi-year planning and public engagement process that involved consideration of four options, the Ilsley 100 Project Team recently completed a schematic design, cost estimate and funding plan to renovate and expand the library on its current site. The Middlebury Select Board recently approved the proposed plan, as well as a public Special Bond vote for capital funding.

The project includes addressing several building deficiencies such as energy efficiency, overall access upgrades including a new elevator and third floor egress, remediation of groundwater leakage into the basement, and HVAC upgrades. The project would also add space for programming and collections, expand staff space, and improve sight lines for safety purposes. Their vision for the improved library is a welcoming, accessible, safe community hub, with the ability to enrich the community in a flexible and sustainable manner into the future.

The option selected has an estimated \$17 million cost. The project team has identified eight competitive grants they will apply for totaling about \$2 million, has embarked on a \$6 million capital campaign, and hopes to raise \$4.5 million through the Special Bond vote in May.

ACEDC strongly supports the efforts of the Ilsley 100 Project Team to provide a safe, modern, accessible Library for Addison County's shire town. Ilsley's commitment to serving the community will benefit the region and Vermont. ACEDC respectfully urges you to consider a CDS request to help ensure the completion of this important project.

Sincerely,

Fred Kenney
Executive Director



STATE OF VERMONT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 26, 2024

Dear Senator Welch,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Town of Middlebury's request for congressionally directed spending to renovate and expand the Ilsley Public Library. Public libraries are critical for our communities in so many ways:

- Libraries provide free resources that are accessible to all citizens, regardless of income. People who don't have the ability to own a computer or don't have internet where they live can come to the library to do research, write resumes, find jobs, etc. They receive help from friendly, knowledgeable staff. And of course, people can take out books for themselves and their children at no cost. In Middlebury, which has a surprisingly high percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced school meals, this access is particularly important.
- Libraries provide neutral spaces where government representatives can meet with their constituents and where local and state government can host informational meetings. As a State Representative, I have held constituent meetings at the library for many years. It is a place where all people feel welcome, and I am able to connect with constituents. It makes a difference to me and to my constituents.
- Neutral spaces extend to many non-government organizations as well. Our community meeting room is used regularly for all sorts of lectures, writers, classes, and training – for individuals and even small businesses. It is a wonderful gathering space that strengthens our community.
- Libraries are an important, safe space for children of all ages. When my children were young, they and many other students would head to the library after school for reading and to do homework. When my daughter was in elementary school, she volunteered in the children's library for a year. The children's librarian gave her increasingly more (age-appropriate) responsible

work and my daughter loved it. In fact, she got a master's degree in Instructional Reading and now works in the education field at a national level. I believe that her experience volunteering at the Ilsley played a role in her career choice.

Our beloved Ilsley Library building is failing. If we want library services to continue to evolve and expand (or even to keep meeting the same benchmarks!) the building as it stands it is not a safe or sustainable option. This renovation and expansion is truly critical to carrying out the library's mission.

Libraries literally transform lives, and this is an opportunity to create a 21st century library that will support our rural community for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Robin P Scheu
State Representative
Addison – 1
Middlebury, Vermont



SENATOR RUTH HARDY

VERMONT STATE SENATOR
ADDISON DISTRICT

STATE OF VERMONT
SENATE CHAMBER
115 STATE STREET
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CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON
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February 26, 2024

Senator Peter Welch
124 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Welch,

I'm writing to enthusiastically support the request of the Ilsley Public Library in Middlebury for funding for its much-needed building renovation and expansion project. The Ilsley Library is a beloved and well-used community resource. In 2023, there were over 91,500 visits to the Library and nearly 126,000 collection uses. The Ilsley Library is a vital resource for members of our rural community including toddlers and grandparents, college professors and migrant farm workers, the tech-savvy and old-school bookworms. Regardless of the circumstance, libraries are here for everyone, and no library more than the Ilsley Public Library in Middlebury.

Unfortunately, the Library's infrastructure is failing and its space is inadequate for a shiretown's 21st century library needs. Its heating, ventilation, electrical, and plumbing systems are all faltering, making the building, even prior to the COVID pandemic, an unhealthy facility in which to spend extended time. The building is also not sufficiently accessible, and lacks appropriate community meeting and library programming spaces.

As you know, libraries are the hub of many small towns in Vermont, and the Ilsley Library is no different. It also serves residents of all the surrounding towns and is home to Middlebury Community Television, an important tool for promoting local democracy and broadcasting community meetings, events, and programming. Annually, Ilsley also provides internet service to hundreds of local residents – nearly 11,700 internet uses in 2023 – who would be cut off from work, school, or health services without the assistance of the Library.

As Susan Orlean writes in The Library Book, “All the things that are wrong in the world seem conquered by a library’s simple unspoken promise: Here I am, please tell me your story, here is my story, please listen.” Now more than ever, Vermonters need the promise of conquering things that are wrong in the world. They need the hope of a new and improved library.

Thank you for your consideration of this important community project. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have questions. I look forward to attending the re-opening of a new Ilsley Public Library with you soon.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Hardy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Ruth Hardy
Vermont State Senator



State of Vermont
Department of Libraries
60 Washington Street, Suite 2
Barre, VT 05641

Tel: 802-636-0040

Agency of Administration

February 28, 2024

Office of Senator Welch
199 Main Street, 4th Floor
Burlington, VT 05401

To the Office of Senator Welch:

I am writing in support of the Town of Middlebury's submittal of a Congressionally Directed Spending "Save America's Treasure" Request for fiscal year 2024 to support the renovation and expansion of the Ilsley Public Library. This capital improvement project has an anticipated cost of \$17 million.

The Ilsley Public Library lacks mechanical ventilation. It has significant leaks in the lower level, where the children's area is housed. The library cannot house a children's collection large enough to serve the needs of the community due to limited storage space. The current facility is difficult for staff to oversee due to its disjointed layout and poor sightlines, which poses public safety concerns. The dated wiring limits public computing and illumination within the library.

The planned renovation of the Ilsley Public Library will significantly improve the staff's ability to provide 21st Century library services to residents of Middlebury and the rural Addison County communities it serves.

The renovated Ilsley Public Library will have improved library spaces dedicated to youth and to public computing. It will include an expanded media lab with recording equipment, and multiple community meeting rooms to support increased public programming and community gatherings. The renovated and expanded Ilsley Public Library will feature improved paths of travel and sightlines making access easier for individuals with limited mobility and to families with strollers. It will feature areas for teens and pre-teens and improved library spaces to support the use of the facility by families- including a new space for nursing parents and family workstations. It will incorporate an assortment of spaces for quiet reading and small group meetings. The renovation and expansion will provide easier access with at-grade entrances and a modern, efficient elevator. Importantly, after this capital project, the Ilsley Public Library will be structurally flexible and better able to adapt to the changing service needs of the community in the future.

To achieve their vision for an improved public library facility, the Town of Middlebury plans to completely remove the 1977 and 1988 renovations and create new additions to the original historic 1924 building. Through an extensive planning process, it was determined that this comprehensive approach will best position the Ilsley Public Library to continue providing library services for decades to come. Working with Working with ReArch Company and Wiemann Lamphere Architects, the town has completed schematic design and cost estimating.

In support of the completion of this project, the Town of Middlebury is pursuing all available funding avenues. In addition to having embarked on a \$6 million capital campaign, the town has identified and is applying for \$2 million in of grant funds. Additionally, a special bond vote to support the project will be on the ballot vote on May 7th.



State of Vermont
Department of Libraries
60 Washington Street, Suite 2
Barre, VT 05641

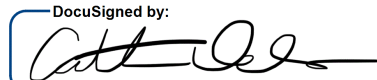
Tel: 802-636-0040

Agency of Administration

Funding through Congressionally Directed Spending would help ensure that the residents of Middlebury and the surrounding communities in Addison County will have continued and equitable access to print and digital resources and to educational and recreational programs and services. The Ilsley Public Library currently serves as an anchor institution in Middlebury, providing spaces and programs that encourage connections between community members. This renovation and expansion project ensures that the Ilsley Public Library will continue to serve in that key role and fulfill its mission to bring "people and ideas together to foster public dialogue, build community, and enrich lives" for years to come.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for considering the Town of Middlebury's request for Congressionally Directed Funding to support this important project. If you have any questions related to this project or its goals, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ilsley Public Library Director Dana Hart.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Catherine Delneo
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VERMONT HUMANITIES

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February 22, 2024

Senator Peter Welch
199 Main Street, 4th Floor
Burlington, VT 05401

Re: Save Americas Treasures Program

Dear Senator Welch and team,

As the Executive Director of Vermont Humanities and as a member of the legislative Commission on the Status of Libraries in Vermont, I am writing this letter of support in favor of the Congressionally Directed Spending Request for fiscal year 2024 to support a renovation and expansion of the Ilsley Public Library in Middlebury, a project with an anticipated cost of \$17 million.

Vermont Humanities has partnered with the Ilsley Public Library for over a dozen years on our popular Snapshot public humanities lecture series and we know firsthand the limitations of the current Middlebury library facility. This congressional investment in a new library building, combined with private philanthropic support, would be transformational for Addison County, bringing the facility into the 21st century and ensuring true accessibility for all residents and visitors.

Libraries are the beating heart of many Vermont communities, providing far more than books and other reading materials. Middlebury's Ilsley Public Library provides vital access to high-speed internet, public programming for youth and adults, resources for other local nonprofits (including a home for the Addison County public access TV station), and assistance with a range of human service needs including help applying for unemployment insurance, SSI, job hunt assistance, and medical insurance navigation. The library provides a safe and warm place for youth and adults during inclement weather. The library serves as a de facto (and free) afterschool program for many young people in the community who would otherwise have no place to go. The library is free and open to all, regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

As the state affiliate of both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress (through the state center for the book program), Vermont Humanities stands ready to assist your office in championing Vermont's public libraries any way that we can. Please let us know what we can do, both for the Ilsley Public Library specifically, and for the other 182 public libraries that help give Vermont its special character.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup
Executive Director





February 27, 2024

United States Senator Peter Welch
United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Welch,

I am writing today in support of the Ilsley Public Library's application for funding through the Save America's Treasures grant program. The Ilsley Public Library is truly a Vermont treasure and a wonderful example of a library that is the heart of the local community.

The Ilsley Public Library building is one-hundred years old this year. It was designed in the Beaux Arts style by Burlington architect Frank Lyman Austin, who designed several other downtown Middlebury buildings in the early twentieth century. It is a thoroughly Vermont building, with a slate roof and rusticated marble block exterior. The library entrance is the front porch of the community, welcoming all with four granite columns that support an ornamental pediment. On the interior, there are luminous carved oak panels between three windows on each story. Other unique features include the windows, which have slightly articulated keystones, and eyebrow dormers on the roof line.

This historic building, the gem of the Middlebury Village Historic District, is in dire need of restoration. Both the ceiling and the original building foundation leak. The plumbing in the original building has poor pitch which results in flooding in the children's room. The heating system is at the end of its life and needs to be replaced. The library has to close on a temporary basis when flooding/leaking create unsafe conditions in the building. Without a major renovation in the immediate future, the building risks being closed to public use which would adversely impact the community.

The restoration project was carefully planned by the Ilsley 100 Project Team under the leadership Library Director, Dana Hart. The Ilsley 100 Project Team has meticulously reviewed current data, collected citizen input, and collaborated with professionals to arrive at their

current plan. The Middlebury selectboard has supported the project and endorsed an architectural team to help bring an Ilesley Library expansion/renovation project to final design. The restoration will eliminate all of the current structural threats to the building. The ceiling will be repaired; the foundation will be patched and waterproofed; the plumbing will be redone; and the heating system will be replaced. This essential work will allow the building to continue to be able to continue as a public space and continue to flourish as an accessible and welcoming place for all members of the community to come together, to learn, and to dream.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oceana Wilson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Oceana Wilson
Vermont Library Association President