

FAQ 7 Public Engagement:

What is the status of public engagement, and how will the City engage the public going forward?

In 2016, the Middleton Public Library Board approved a [Space Needs & Building Study](#). The study was conducted by Dimension IV Architects and noted deficiencies in the current size of the library, calling for almost doubling the square footage to accommodate the preferred collection size alone. To accommodate 20-year projected space needs and growth in collections, technology, classes, events, study and meeting rooms, services, and exhibit spaces, the study recommended a 97,000 square foot library. This library study led to the City Council’s initiative to conduct a complete Community Campus Plan.

In 2019, the original scope of work for the Community Campus Plan included a community engagement strategy at project kick-off:

1. Community Campus Committee – The Mayor and Common Council formed a Community Campus Committee to guide the process. The Committee was formed with the following stakeholder groups:
 - i. Common Council Appointment
 - ii. Plan Commission Appointment
 - iii. Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Commission
 - iv. Library Board
 - v. Commission on Aging
 - vi. Chamber of Commerce representative
 - vii. Three Mayor Appointments from different aldermanic districts (confirmed by Common Council)
2. Sunday Strolls – The consultant team used a “go to them” approach, bringing a wagon to locations in Downtown Middleton, Lakeview Park, and Middleton Hills with idea boards and gathered input. [A summary of the Sunday Strolls can be found here.](#)



3. All Our Ideas – The consultant team hosted an All Our Ideas survey on the City website to encourage ideation and allow stakeholders to cast their votes on crowdsourced ideas. [A summary of the All Our Ideas survey can be found here.](#)
4. Stakeholder Survey – The consultant team hosted a stakeholder survey for Community Campus Committee members, City staff, and other key stakeholders to provide input. [A summary of the stakeholder survey can be found here.](#)

5. Workshops – The consultant team held a community planning workshop at the Middleton Senior Center, allowing participants to explore ideas and provide input to the planning team using: building massing exploration, images of building design elements, and scale model kits. This exercise led to the development of the options for consideration by the Community Campus Committee.

The primary engagement methods for the 2016 Library Space Needs & Building Study included:

1. Four in-person listening sessions to gather community ideas about desired library services
2. Online surveys targeting the public, staff, and stakeholders
3. Stacking and blocking workshop where participants physically manipulated paper blocks representing library areas to explore different spatial arrangements
4. Visual listening and design workshop featuring approximately 100 images of other libraries and municipal buildings for public feedback, plus presentation of five design concepts.

This is found at <https://www.midlibrary.org/Feasibility>

In 2018, the library re-engaged the public for strategic planning purposes. This was done through 3 focus groups and one survey led by [WILS](#). Findings from this engagement resulted in the [current strategic plan](#). The following key findings were consistent from the 2016 engagement:

Facility Assessment

- Upper Level viewed as welcoming and inviting
- Lower Level consistently criticized as claustrophobic, dark, windowless, and uninviting, with split adult collections
- Entrance lobby seen as congested with poor acoustics
- Parking universally needs improvement, along with traffic flow and pedestrian and ADA access

Service Demands

- High demand for additional meeting rooms, including a 200-person multipurpose room
- Strong need for study/tutorial rooms and flexible performance spaces
- Increasing demand for technology integration
- Desire for innovative learning spaces like media labs and community learning commons
- Library as polling place and space to support accessible voter participation
- More options for reserving spaces

Additionally, post-COVID-19 patron surveys conducted in 2021, informally and in-person at the library, indicated continued demand for more study rooms.

The next steps in the Community Campus Plan public engagement process will not begin until the Common Council has refined the options for consideration and recommended a public engagement strategy. Staff anticipates starting the next phase of public engagement upon the Council's direction, and for engagement to be continuous through the end of 2026.