

**ILSLEY 100 PROJECT TEAM**  
**REPORT TO MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD – NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

**DESIGN RECAP**

At its August 22, 2023 meeting, the Selectboard [voted in favor of accepting the recommendation](#) of the Ilsley 100 Project Team to have Wiemann Lamphere/ReArch become the preferred schematic design service provider for the Ilsley Public Library renovation and expansion project.

At its September 5, 2023 special meeting, the Selectboard [authorized Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay to enter into negotiations](#) with Wiemann Lamphere/ReArch and bring it back to the Board for approval. The board further voted to approve continuing work by the Ilsley 100 Project Team.

At its September 12, 2023 meeting, the Selectboard [voted to approve the transfer of \\$14,100](#) in the library's capital budget for use in schematic design purposes.

At its September 26, 2023 meeting, the Selectboard [authorized the Town Manager to sign](#) a proposed Agreement with ReArch for preconstruction and schematic design services for the Ilsley Public Library Renovation and Expansion Project. ReArch will serve as the primary contractor with Wiemann Lamphere contracted to them. The board further voted to approve the Vermont Historic Preservation grant application for the Ilsley Library, to the State of Vermont's Agency of Commerce and Community Development for \$20,000.

On October, 2, 2023 the agreement between the town and ReArch was signed for the amount of \$155,000. As recommended by Town Counsel, the contract is AIA A141-2014 – Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Design-Builder. Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay appointed Judith Harris to serve as Clerk of the Works during the schematic design phase.

**DESIGN ACTIVITIES**

On September 19th Judith Harris and Library Director Dana Hart had a preliminary meeting with Chris Huston of ReArch and Steve Roy from Wiemann Lamphere, to talk about alternate approaches to reduce cost and size of the building, the possibility of replacing the parking that would be lost in their original conceptual design, the possibility of staying within the existing property lines, and the implications of the second-floor outdoor programming space.

On October 4, 2023, ReArch personnel, Wiemann Lamphere architects, and associated engineering firms met for a tour of the library. This tour included engineers from the following firms: Otter Creek Engineering (Civil), Engineering Ventures (Structural), Engineering Services of Vermont (Mechanical & Electrical) Subsequently a planning meeting was held with ReArch, Wiemann Lamphere, Judith Harris, Dana Hart, and Ilsley 100 Project Team Chair, Joe McVeigh.

On October 6, 2023, Christ Huston, Steve Roy Judith Harris and Dana Hart [met with Elizabeth Peebles and Caitlin Corkins from the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation](#) to discuss possible design approaches.

On October 26, 2023, Wiemann Lamphere architects and library consultant Dennis Humphries [met with the IIsley 100 Project Team](#) to describe design work to date.

Humphries and WLA architects also facilitated group discussions with library staff, library trustees, MCTV staff, and the Friends of the Library. Humphries then shared his insights with the WLA design team.

Throughout this period, Judith Harris, working primarily with Chris Huston of ReArch and Steve Roy of WLA have been at work on the following initial refinements to the July conceptual design:

- Reducing the project square footage and estimated total project budget while counterbalancing the effects of interim inflation on the stated IPL target
- Exploring the possibility of reducing the rear ground level to avoid loss of parking
- Considering separation of younger program spaces as needed to help with ground level footprint reduction
- Exploring changing the existing Main Street entry to functional use e.g. as a porch accessible only from interior; lower-level landscaped garden area for sitting and studying
- Exploring the possibility of pulling the conceptual design's Main Street entry back to reduce competition with grandeur of 1924 structure
- Engaging with program details via meetings with staff, including focus on staff spaces
- Exploring more meaningful and efficient uses of the original 1924 building

## **DESIGN ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The following issues, concerns, and changes have been raised from the original conceptual design.

### **Two-story design**

The original conceptual design calls for a two-story addition with no basement (in the addition.) The Project Team endorses this approach and [requests approval in principal from the Selectboard to continue with this two-story design](#) for the following reasons, the first three of which are direct pillars of the library Trustee's original vision for the building:

- Welcoming. The two-story design allows for extra space on the ground floor making it possible to have a primary entrance in the "back" of the library, angled toward the parking lot from an improved connector sidewalk between the Town Offices and the library . The majority of library visitors currently enter through this promenade as do almost all library visitors with mobility issues. A proper entrance here lets everyone feel that they are welcome and valued and makes for a proper entry experience.
- Accessible. The two-story design minimizes the number of levels in the building, making it easier for parents with strollers and for visitors with mobility impairments to navigate the different floors. An important component of this program is that certain spaces (the Community Meeting Room, a Conference Room, and an Activity Room) need to be accessible for after-hours use. In order to facilitate this after-hours access, these spaces need to be on the first floor and having a larger footprint allows us to keep other essential spaces (e.g. the children's room) on the main floor.

- Safe. Sightlines are the foundation of library safety. The two-story design enables library staff to clearly view all of the entrances on the ground floor, and for the second floor to be supervised from a single circulation desk.
- Long-term cost savings. To ensure an environment that is safe for both staff and patrons, each floor of the building should be staffed. Staffing a third floor would mean adding staff to cover the 55 hours per week that the library is open, which would likely mean adding two FTE positions. Salary and benefits for full-time staff have serious long-term cost implications.
- Architectural benefits. A two-story structure doesn't overshadow the historic 1924 building, which was seen as a positive from the Department of Historic Preservation. Its scale is deferential to the original building as well as the municipal building, and doesn't dominate the other two-story structures on Main Street.
- Intergenerational mingling. Throughout the course of this project the community has communicated clearly that they want to connect with others when they visit the library. For many, this means an opportunity for intergenerational mingling. While each age needs their own distinct space for programmatic purposes, the whole community benefits when those spaces touch each other and people have a chance to interact.

### **Preserving parking**

Perhaps the biggest reservation about the two-story structure was the fact that it would require expanding the library's footprint into the upper parking lot, reducing the number of spaces. The thought of losing downtown parking spaces provoked strong reactions from the community. The professional design and construction team has developed a plan to reorient the upper-level parking lot by angling it towards the northeast. By adding a retaining wall we aim to keep the same number of parking spaces. Reconfiguring the parking lot allows us to reorient the library, making it possible to have a primary entrance to face the back lot, welcoming people walking across the bridge from local schools, and looking towards the future EDI site. In order to facilitate ongoing schematic design work, the Ilsley 100 Project Team requests that the Selectboard approve this solution in principle, which might require a future property line boundary adjustment.

### **Outdoor programming space**

An important component of the library's square footage program is the allocation of space for outdoor programming. The pandemic has emphasized for us the need to be able to hold events outdoors. The proposed second floor outdoor programming space has been maintained from the conceptual design, though scaled back somewhat to help keep a smaller footprint.

### **Historic preservation concerns**

In a meeting, representatives of the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation made it clear that their primary concern is to preserve the appearance of the Main Street façade of the original 1924 building. They objected to a new entrance that might obscure the view of the original building and also to a proposal to modify the current Main Street entrance to make it clear that it will no longer be the main entry from Main Street. They also requested minimal changes to the interior of the library's historic main lobby or reading room.

### **New entry from Main Street**

In response to community feedback and to concerns raised by the Department of Historic Preservation, the proposed new Main Street entrance from the original conceptual design will be pulled back from the sidewalk area to just behind the current façade of the 1924 building. This results in a decrease of square footage and concomitant cost savings. However, this also reveals the side of the existing building at 71-73 Main Street, which will now be immediately adjacent to the new entrance. The architects are contemplating various means of screening or otherwise providing privacy for occupants of 71-73 Main Street.

### **Existing entry from Main Street**

The Project Team, the architects, and the Project Team's Professional Advisory Group of architects have all expressed concern about the potential for confusion as to how to enter the library from Main Street if there are two possible entrances (the proposed new, at-grade entrance on the left, and the existing entrance at the top of the stairs.) Initial thoughts suggested turning the top of the stairs into a porch with a garden seating area below. The Historic Preservation Department has made it clear that the stairs and existing entry must remain as they currently appear, though it would be possible to cordon off the steps with planters or similar portable and reversible objects to make it clear that the main entry is the new one, to the left. This will likely require the replacement of the existing concrete steps. The architects are considering design features that would direct library patrons towards the new Main Street entrance on the left. One possibility envisions a curved handicapped accessible sidewalk arcing across the front of the entrance.

### **Complications with utility lines**

An engineering review of existing utility lines has identified concerns with a major utility pole just to the northeast of the current 1988 addition toward the Marquis Theater. The many utility lines on this pole will need to be re-routed. There are also buried utility lines in the green space between the 1988 addition and the Marquis Theater which serve the property at 71-73 Main Street. In order to avoid a complicated cantilever design along the theater, the architects and engineers are currently contemplating a utility tunnel that would run underneath the slab foundation of the addition. The east side of the addition would also be situated so as not to be located over underground utilities in the municipal parking lot and to provide required clearance from the utility vault behind the bollards at the north end of the municipal parking lot.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Project Team is planning a series of public engagement events to take place in December to update the community on the evolving plans and to elicit feedback on various aspects of the schematic design. Focus groups will be held with stakeholders who use the library regularly such as parents of young children, retirees, teens, people with disabilities, and partner organizations. We anticipate at least one in-person meeting open to the public and one meeting open to the public on Zoom. These meetings will be publicized on our [website](#), through social media postings on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and through postings on Front Porch Forum. We anticipate that an update on our progress will soon appear in the *Addison Independent*. As always, all public meetings of the Project Team are warned, and agendas and minutes are available on [the Project Team website](#).

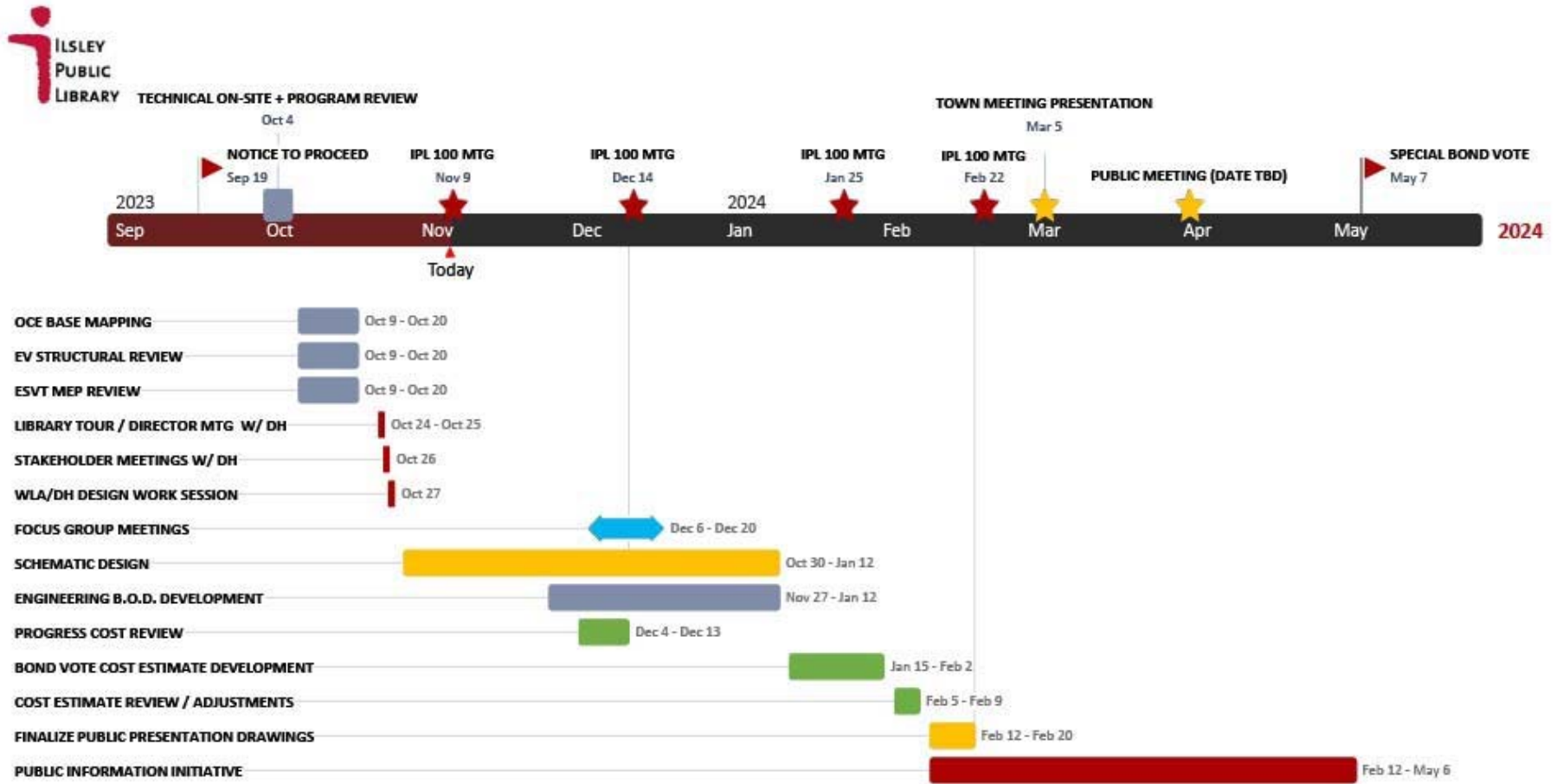
## **FUNDING**

Our independent fundraising consultants have concluded a feasibility study to give us a sense of approximately how much money we might reasonably expect to raise through private fundraising. Their full report is due shortly.

The Project Team continues to anticipate funding from three sources: state and federal grants and appropriations, private fund raising, and a municipal bond. Ilsley continues to wait for the long-delayed issuing of the application for a portion of [\\$26 million in combined ARPA funding and Congressionally Directed Spending to be distributed by the Vermont Department of Libraries](#).

The Project Team anticipates working closely with the Selectboard and town administration to gauge the impact and feasibility of a proposed municipal bond to complete funding of the project as well as to consider how we might best approach potential institutional supporters.

**ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR SCHEMATIC DESIGN**



REVISED 11-8-2023

Note: there will be additional public meetings in December. Proposed date for possible bond vote not approved by Selectboard.