Middletown Public Library strives to be the heart of the community by inspiring curiosity, connecting people, and enriching lives.

Mission Statement:

Middletown Public Library provides a safe and inclusive space that serves our community by providing free access to information, materials, and programs, both within and beyond our walls, delivered by a welcoming and knowledgeable staff.

Middletown
PUBLIC LIBRARY

700 West Main Road
Middletown, RI 02842
middletownpubliclibraryri.org
(401) 846-1573
staff@middletownlibraryri.org

Our Priorities
2025-2028

Middletown PUBLIC LIBRARY

A Safe and Inclusive Space

The building at 110 Enterprise Center will be renovated based on the needs of the community as detailed in the Library Building Program completed in 2024, including:

- Environmental sustainability & climate resilience
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Safety and security
- Improved and expanded space
- After-hours services
- Outdoor space for programs and play
- Community amenities

Free Access to Information

Resources, materials, and programs are free for everyone.

- Collections
- Programming for all ages
- Meeting and collaboration spaces

Welcoming and Knowledgeable Staff

Staffing levels and expertise are appropriate to the community's needs.

- Expanded staff as determined by operational needs of the new facility
- A healthy organizational culture
- Workplace wellness
- Professional development

Services Within and Beyond Our Walls

Patrons enjoy a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere in the library building as well as services in the community - meeting people where they are.

- Outreach to
  - Schools and daycares
  - Seniors
  - Military families
- Community Partnerships
  - Town departments, committees, and boards
  - Schools
  - Local organizations & groups

Priority	Goal	Action Items
A Safe and Inclusive Space		
Environmental sustainability & climate resilience	The renovated building will prioritize sustainability and resilience in the design.	• The library building will include as many sustainable and resilient features as possible during construction and operation, including reduced water use fixtures and low-energy lighting. • The library will develop and implement policies and practices for reducing ongoing use of paper and plastic, and to recycle all waste possible.
Accessibility and inclusion	The renovated building will be 100% accessible and welcoming to all.	• An accessibility/inclusivity audit will be conducted during the schematic and design development phases. The completed building will be reviewed for alignment with the audit. • Assistive devices to aid mobility, vision, and/or hearing will be made available for use in the library.
Safety and security	The building will be designed for maximum safety of patrons and staff.	• The building will be designed incorporating optimal sightlines. • Security cameras will be placed as needed to monitor all areas. • The design will be reviewed by public safety and fire department officials during the schematic and design development phases. • An emergency/disaster plan will be developed in cooperation with the Town of Middletown. • Staff training in emergency management and active shooter response will be conducted at least annually.

Improved and expanded space	Adequate space for collections, meetings, study, and programs is provided for various age groups.	• The building will align with the Library Building Program and be designed for maximum flexibility.
After-hours services	The building includes the ability to provide services outside of regular library hours.	• The meeting suite, including the large meeting room, a conference room, and restrooms, will be designed to be locked off and accessible outside of regular library hours.
Outdoor space for programs and play	The library includes adjacent outdoor spaces for programs, children's activities, and community events.	• A shaded outdoor space with seating will be included in the design. • The library's wireless internet coverage will extend into the parking lot and all outdoor program areas. • Access to an outdoor programming area is provided, with infrastructure to support music events and movie nights. • A secure place for outdoor children's activities is provided adjacent to the children's room. • The existing community garden is relocated and improved at the new site.
Community amenities	Space and equipment for non-traditional services is available.	• The lobby/vestibule is designed to include amenities such as a community fridge/pantry and a necessities closet. • Space for the existing hydroponic garden is allocated in the design. • The makerspace room is designed with maximum flexibility and ample storage, and designed with the ability to host cooking, technology, and fiber arts classes.

Free Access to Information

Collections	A fresh and relevant print collection is tailored to the community.	- The existing physical collections are assessed for retention or discarding before relocation. - The assessment includes a diversity audit, classification review, and relabeling. - Shelves are filled to the standard of 2/3 full, with accurate, flexible signage. - Displays are relevant and frequently refreshed. - A local author section is located in a prominent place.
	Digital offerings expand and evolve with technological advances and community needs.	- Digital collection management is made a specific part of a professional staff member's duties. - A digital collection policy is developed and implemented.
	The Library of Things responds to demand.	- The number of items in the Library of Things collection is doubled. - The policies, procedures, and promotion of the Library of Things are evaluated and revised.
Programming for all ages	Program offerings expand with community need.	- Library patrons are surveyed to help staff understand what programs are wanted. - Library staff research maker programming in peer libraries for ideas and tips. - At least 10 new programs are piloted in the first year after opening the renovated library.
	Staff build greater capacity for programming through training and support.	- At least 5 hours per week are allocated for program planning. - Training for all new maker equipment is provided for relevant staff. - Existing and new programs are evaluated and adjusted to promote diversity and inclusivity.

Welcoming and Knowledgeable Staff

Attract & retain high-quality, dedicated staff	An optimal staffing level is determined.	• During building design, minimum and optimal staffing levels are determined for building operation using staff desk location and sightline analysis.
Promote a healthy organizational culture and workplace wellness	The existing workplace culture is evaluated.	• The MPL employee handbook is revised based on new personnel guidelines and physical space. • Staff members are offered ways to give input about existing organizational practices and suggestions for improvement. • Staff input is considered in shaping policies and practices. • The library applies for ALA SustainRT Citation for Wellness in the workplace.
Professional development	Staff are encouraged to be active in local and professional organizations and boards. Time & budget is allocated for training and conferences.	• Each full-time professional participates in one local, state, regional, or national organization, board, or committee. • Full-time librarians' memberships in professional organizations are funded by the library budget. • Full-time librarians attend at least one professional conference per year funded by the library budget. • Each full-time librarian completes at least 20 hours of continuing education during paid working hours.

Services Within and Beyond Our Walls

Welcoming and comfortable atmosphere	Everyone feels welcome in the library, regardless of age, ability, and identification.	• The library maintains spaces with varied activity and noise levels. • Spaces suited to children, teens, and adults are provided. • Genderless restrooms are available. • At least six displays and six programs that promote inclusivity are implemented each year.
Outreach	The library has a presence in schools and daycares.	• Library staff make at least 12 visits to schools or daycares each year.
	Seniors find library services in the places they regularly visit.	• Library staff offer programs in senior centers and/or senior living facilities at least six times per year.
	Outreach to military families is robust and relevant.	• Library staff offer programs at least six times per year specific to military families, either alone or in collaboration with the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Program.
Community partnerships	Middletown Public Library staff contribute to the community as a whole.	• Library staff work directly with town departments, committees, and boards. • The library partners with local organizations & groups to amplify the value of both entities.

Planning Process

The Middletown Public Library Long Range Plan for 2025-2028 was developed with input from the community, library staff, trustees, and the Friends of the Library. This plan is heavily shaped by the highly anticipated move to a new location at 110 Enterprise Center in Middletown. Significant community input and surveys were conducted as part of the development of the Library Building Program on which the design of the new library will be based, which was initially written in 2023 and revised in 2024. The following pages summarize new data collected to supplement this document in 2025 for the Long-Range Plan.

Data was collected, analyzed, and synthesized for this document by Lauren Stara, Library Consultant in collaboration with the Library Director, library staff, and the Board of Library Trustees during 2024 and 2025.

Direct Community Input

During the month of April 2025, a display was placed in the lobby of the library. Two different questions were posed to the community each week, with sticky notes provided to collect input. Over four weeks, nearly 600 responses were collected, with several common themes resulting. The following is a summary of these responses.

What's the best thing you've ever seen in a library?

- Books
- Activities/programs
- Library Pet
- Non-traditional collections (most frequently mentioned were 3D printer, craft donations, puzzles, and seeds)
- Staff
- Library Building (most frequently mentioned were indoor and outdoor playhouse/ground, teen space, and comfortable seating)

What would you like to see at MPL?
- Spaces
    - Designated Teen Area
    - Gaming area
    - Outdoor spaces – reading area, garden, playground
    - Study rooms
    - Meeting rooms
    - Café/food friendly area with vending machines
- Programs/activities
    - Teen activities & clubs
    - Parties
    - Music programming
    - Reading clubs & events for adults, teens, and kids

- - Gaming
    - STEAM activities
    - TV/movie viewing
    - Foreign language classes & meetups
    - Crafts programs, meet ups, & exchange
    - Programs for homeschoolers
    - Art programs
    - Movement programs
- Library pet
- Collections
    - More A/V options
    - Stick library for dogs in front
    - More materials in languages other than English
    - STEAM kits and games
    - Computer games

If the library was gone, what would you miss the most?

- Collections & information access
- Staff
- Events & programs
- Computers (x3)
- "A TRUSTED SOURCE of TRUTH"

SWOT Analysis

Two SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis sessions were conducted for the Middletown Public Library, one for library staff (January 21, 2025) and one for library trustees and friends (March 18, 2025). These sessions are summarized as follows:

Strengths:

1. **Staff and Community Engagement**:

   o   Knowledgeable, friendly, and supportive staff.

   o   Strong community support and engagement, including volunteers and regular patrons.

   o   Welcoming and safe environment for all, including children and families.

2. **Programs and Resources**:

   o   Diverse programs, including children's services, military family support, and multicultural initiatives.

   o   Library of Things (LOT), interlibrary loan, and free/discounted entrance passes to museums and parks.

   o   Special collections on state and local history, and DVDs of Town Council meetings.

3. **Technology and Accessibility**:

   o   Computers, WiFi, photocopiers, and other technology available to the public.

   o   Accessibility features and convenient location.

4. **Future Planning**:

   o   Planning and funding for a new, larger library building with enhanced spaces and security.

Weaknesses:

1. **Space Limitations**:

   o Inadequate space for programs, meetings, children's services, study rooms, and quiet areas.

   o Lack of outdoor and art spaces, storage, and areas for teens to hang out.

2. **Operational Challenges**:

   o Limited hours of operation and staff support (need for more staff and better benefits).

   o Outdated workflow processes and lack of credit card payment systems.

   o Long waits for popular or niche materials and insufficient outreach to schools and the community.

3. **Awareness and Signage**:

   o People are not always aware of the library's wide range of services and materials.

   o Poor signage and wayfinding within the library.

Opportunities:

1. **New Library Building**:

   o Expanded spaces for different age groups, enhanced security, and sustainable building practices.

   o Improved parking lot lighting and renewable energy systems.

2. **Expanded Programming and Services**:

   o More diverse programming, including outdoor, after-hours, and multicultural events.

   o Career services, ESL patron services, and services for underserved populations.

- o Book delivery to the elderly, drive-up/contactless services, and home delivery.

3. **Technology and Outreach**:

   - o Assistance with technology, audio/video teleconferencing, and headsets for PC use.

   - o Greater outreach to disadvantaged groups, nursing homes, and schools.

   - o Educational programs for food literacy, languages, and tutoring.

4. **Inclusivity and Community Engagement**:

   - o Inclusivity initiatives and safe spaces.

   - o Opportunities for collaboration and achieving common goals with the community.

Threats:

5. **Funding and Political Climate**:

   - o Potential budget cuts at federal, state, and local levels.

   - o Challenges to materials, censorship, and devaluation of science-based information.

6. **Competition and Changing Trends**:

   - o Competition from e-books, other area libraries, and services that accept credit cards.

   - o Shift to digital information and new formats that may confuse patrons.

7. **Infrastructure and Accessibility**:

   - o Security concerns and potential lack of public transportation at the new library location.

   - o New state minimum public library standards.

In conclusion, the analyses highlight the library's strong community focus, diverse programs, and future potential with the new building, while addressing challenges related to space, funding, and operational inefficiencies. Opportunities for growth include expanded programming, outreach, and technological advancements.

The SWOT analyses suggest several programs and initiatives to address the weaknesses of the Middletown Public Library. These include:

Addressing Space Limitations:

1. **Teen Programs**:

   o   Technology and gaming programs to create dedicated spaces for teens.

2. **Outdoor Programming**:

   o   Utilize outdoor spaces for events and activities to compensate for the lack of usable outdoor areas.

Expanding Outreach and Community Engagement:

1. **School Outreach and Curriculum Support**:

   o   Programs to support school readiness, tutoring, and curriculum needs.

2. **Services to Underserved Populations**:

   o   Outreach to disadvantaged groups, including the poor, homeless, and nursing homes.

3. **Book Delivery Services**:

   o   Drive-up/contactless services and home delivery to improve accessibility.

Enhancing Collections and Resources:

1. **Improved Collection Development**:

   o Expand collections to meet diverse information needs and reduce wait times for popular or niche materials.

2. **Special Collections**:

   o Develop collections focused on art, music, and other specialized topics.

Increasing Awareness and Accessibility:

1. **Library User Education Programs**:

   o Conduct educational programs to inform patrons about available services and materials.

2. **Technology Assistance**:

   o Offer audio/video teleconferencing services.

Expanding Programming:

1. **Multicultural and Inclusivity Programs**:

   o Programs for ESL patrons, multicultural events, and resources for queer and women's groups.

2. **Career Services**:

   o Programs to assist with career development and job readiness.

3. **Educational Programs**:

- Food literacy, language learning, and tutoring initiatives.

Operational Improvements:

1. **Volunteer Opportunities**:

   - Expand volunteer programs to support library operations and outreach.

These programs aim to address weaknesses such as inadequate space, limited outreach, lack of awareness, and operational inefficiencies while enhancing community engagement and inclusivity.