

## MIDDLETON LIBRARY

### Question-Based Planning: Question discovery outline

November 19, 2014 (rev. December 5, 2014)

This is an outline of important questions Middleton Library's managers have about the organization's future. Though facility planning is on everyone's minds, in this session we sorted the questions by their managerial implications, to avoid creating assumptions about building features, locations and costs. This will help ensure long-term thinking.

The questions have been edited for clarity and concision, so please report if the meaning of a question seems altered.

There are several basic types of questions—for information, discussion and decisions—and the next step will be to prioritize them. But for now the planning team should consider:

- What's missing?
- Are the questions categorized right? (see [www.iimtp.org](http://www.iimtp.org) for definitions and standards)
- What do the *patterns* of questions suggest?

#### Planning team

- Faherty, Brendan
- Hartman, Sarah
- Hetzler, Svetha
- Ramsey, Jim
- Perry, Amy
- Van Dan, Rebecca
- Westby, Pamela
- Williams, Patrick
- Jim Gersich, Jim (facilitator)
- Van Mell, Derrick (facilitator)

#### Prioritizations

The team identified individually what they feel are the 15 most important questions. Questions with 1 or 2 votes are **boldface**; those with 3 or 4 are **in yellow**; those with 5 or 6 are **in blue**. It can be interesting to see how many questions were selected by subsection (in parentheses after the heading).

#### Next steps

- Prioritize the questions and discuss the implications
- Ask the keystone question about important trends

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#### BUSINESS STRUCTURE

##### *Ethics and the law (2)*

- 1. Are we transparent enough within the staff and to the public?**
2. Do patrons feel we're protecting their privacy?
- 3. What ADA laws do we need to follow?**

##### *Identity (15)*

- 4. What feeling do we want people to have when they come to the library?**
- 5. What are the community's aspirations?**
- 6. How do we stay unique?**
- 7. How can we be a destination, like the Seattle library?**
8. How would we change the ways people use our library?
- 9. What will the transformation of public libraries look like (i.e., trends)?**
10. Can we do something like the Discovery Center education model?
- 11. What can we offer to set us apart in our community, from retailers and other libraries?**
- 12. Who are our competitors for patrons' attention and time?**
- 13. What other options do patrons have for meeting, recreation, etc.?**
14. How can we ensure we're helpful to those with dementia?
15. Can we expect to be selling used books 10 or 20 years from now?
16. Are we a garden library?

##### *Service mix (10)*

- 17. What do we need room for that we don't have now?**
- 18. Are maker spaces a trend or an evolution?**
19. What level of service should we provide for early literacy?
- 20. Are we duplicating any services (with other organizations)?**
21. How big a group would we like to accommodate?
22. What's the role of the image library? Of history information?
23. Should we have outdoor learning?
24. Should we continue or expand our role as a cooling shelter?
25. Should we have a café? Kitchen services?
- 26. How can we support distance learning and tutoring?**
27. Is there enough demand for Reference services?
28. What programs could we offer in a performance space?
29. Would performance space compete with the high school or others?
30. Should the library take the lead in health and wellness?
31. Should we have a nurse?
32. Can we offer bike-lending?
33. What other objects would be popular to lend (e.g., tools, art)?

##### *Planning (2)*

- 34. How much stock do we put in library standards?**
- 35. Can this feasibility process seed a strategic plan?**
36. How can we support reading in general, including Little Libraries?

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#### *Partners (6)*

**37. Who are our partners?**

- 38. How could we partner with small businesses? What would they want in return?
- 39. How could we partner with Hubbard Street Diner?
- 40. How should we partner with large employer?
- 41. How can we continue our relationship with the Arts Board?
- 42. How can we collaborate with other agencies to make a project more feasible?**
- 43. How can we include the Historical Society in our plans?
- 44. What other agencies could we partner with in literacy efforts?**

#### *Facilities: Design features (15)*

- 45. How do the building's location, design and financing affect efficiency and morale?**
- 46. What kind of spaces will we need for our collections in 20 years?**
- 47. How could we have a lot more natural lighting?**
- 48. How many study rooms is enough?**
- 49. How can the director's office be more visible?
- 50. How can we incorporate dedicated maker space?**
- 51. We can incorporate book sales rooms?
- 52. Should we consider a drive-up book drop?**
- 53. How can we separate noisy from quiet areas for staff (e.g., conveyor belt)?**
- 54. How is signage and wayfinding in the library?
- 55. What building finishes will help with maintenance?
- 56. Will our building systems (e.g., HVAC) keep up with changes?**
- 57. How can we avoid a leaky roof?

## MARKETING & SALES

#### *Market research (17)*

- 58. Who are our patrons?**
- 59. Is our patron base expanding?
- 60. Who aren't we serving and why?**
- 61. What are the demographics that matter to us?
- 62. Are we going to see an influx of professionals?
- 63. What's the future mix of the under-represented?
- 64. Do people perceive us as we perceive ourselves?
- 65. What would our patrons say about our performance?
- 66. What does the community want from our building(s)?**
- 67. How have patrons changed how they use the library over the past few years?
- 68. What is the variety of patrons' needs?**
- 69. Is there a homeless shelter in Middleton?
- 70. How many book clubs can the community support?

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#### *Distribution of services (i.e., channels of distribution; 2)*

71. Where would branches be?
- 72. Would a branch affect traffic at the main library?**
73. Would a branch be a miniature version of the main library?
74. Should we consider satellites?
75. Could a bookmobile or 3-wheel bike be an alternative to a branch?
76. How would bus routes affect hours and our location choices?

#### *Brand and marketing communications (9)*

- 77. How does our architecture affect how people think about us? (e.g., modern charm)**
78. How can we be more of a landmark?
- 79. How can we increase circulation?**
- 80. Should we do more circulation outreach?**
81. How do we increase overall attendance?
82. How can we get more teens to attend?
83. How can we get adults to show up (e.g., to Techno-minutes)?
- 84. How can we increase Friends membership?**
85. What incentives or perks would increase library use?
- 86. Would participation increase if we had a café?**
87. How can we reach out to the homeless and low-income?
- 88. Where do people learn about library services?**
- 89. How do patrons want to hear from the library?**
90. How can we avoid putting donor or sponsor names on everything?
91. How can we get people to realize Middleton has many homeless and poor?

#### *Customer service (1)*

92. Does the public want us to greet them?
93. Are our patrons satisfied with our hours of operation?
- 94. How can we apply lessons from the Ambassador project?**

## OPERATIONS

#### *Quality (3)*

95. Does staff feel safe in this building?
- 96. How can we make sure our building is safe (inside, parking, etc.)?**
97. How do we address continuous improvement?

## INFORMATION (6)

- 98. Is our technology adequate for staff and patrons?**
- 99. How can we support more digital and mobile needs, devices and printing?**
100. What communication technology should we have?
101. Will downloads replace CDs for music and film?

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#### *Workflow (12)*

**102. How flexible can our space be?**

**103. How can we get staff grouped correctly?**

**104. Can we get adult collections on one floor?**

105. How can we fix the floor plan?

106. Can there be more than one entry and exit?

**107. What would we consider ideal staff work spaces?**

108. How can we allow for new and different display formats?

109. Can we have 24-hour holds pick-up?

**110. Should we consolidate the Help Desk?**

**111. How can we best create quiet areas?**

112. How do we balance community and program use of meeting rooms?

113. If we stay, what can we eliminate?

114. If we stay, what could we reorganize?

## HUMAN RESOURCES

#### *Management (2)*

115. Are our annual performance reviews enough?

**116. Do we work as a team and support each other?**

#### *Organizational design (7)*

**117. Does the current level of staffing allow us to meet the desires of the community?**

**118. Does our organizational structure get the best from our staff?**

119. Do we need an electronic media specialist?

120. How would a branch library be staffed?

**121. Do we need a communications coordinator?**

**122. Do we need an outreach coordinator?**

123. Do we need a volunteer coordinator?

124. Could we have a policy for tele-commuting and hoteling?

#### *Employee and volunteer relations (2)*

125. Is our work fulfilling to us?

126. Do we feel appreciated and challenged?

**127. Is the library a desirable place to work?**

128. How do we communicate among the staff?

129. How can we increase camaraderie?

130. How can we better use the talents and enthusiasm of volunteers?

131. How do we keep jobs at the library desirable?

#### *Training & development (1)*

**132. Are we cross-trained?**

133. What staff training needs to be provided and to whom?

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FINANCE

*Managerial accounting (5)*

134. What's all this going to cost?

135. How will our operating budget be affected by growth?

136. Does the staff have the information they want about operating and capital budgets?

*Financing and fundraising (7)*

137. What will happen to our share of taxpayer funding?

138. What will be the balance of taxpayer and private funding?

139. Will we need to have a referendum?

140. Do we need a grant/fundraiser/donor development person?

141. How should we deal with naming rights?

142. Could we abandon this building and build new?

143. Can we adequately manage a capital campaign?

144. Does the board know what to expect in a capital campaign?

145. What can we learn from other capital projects?

*Cost management (3)*

146. Can we continue to defer late fees?

147. What sustainability elements can we incorporate?

148. Is the building a good energy user?

149. Can we put solar panels on the roof?