



MADISONVILLE LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY

April 23, 2019

6:30-8:00 PM

Madisonville Recreation Center (5320 Stewart Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45227)

Facilitated and compiled by Design Impact

SUMMARY

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County hosted their first listening session for the Madisonville branch on April 23, 2019. Twenty-seven community members participated in the event. Over half the participants lived in Madisonville.

The listening session at Madisonville Recreation Center is part of the Next Generation Library Initiative, which includes community engagement to gather input on their upcoming Facilities Master Plan. The library is concurrently addressing critical needs at branches in Price Hill, Walnut Hills, and Madisonville to address ADA accessibility.

The community engagement session is the first of several community engagement sessions to share feedback and learn about the Madisonville branch renovations. The 94-year-old facility has never undergone a significant renovation and is not designed for the needs of today's community - the branch is not accessible for people with mobility challenges and lacks adequate electric and off-street parking. Construction is estimated to begin in early- to mid-2020.

During the session, attendees shared feedback at interactive stations and small group discussion. Participants shared their visions of what they wanted to see in Madisonville, generated a list of their community's assets, strengths, and skills, and discussed what they liked about the library as well as aspects they wanted to change and barriers to using the library. The summary's appendix includes photos and worksheets from the event.

PRIORITIES AND KEY IDEAS

PROGRAMMING & SERVICES

- **Activities for kids** and teens to keep them engaged.
- **Renovate and utilize the branch's basement** - The basement needs significant improvements to be accessible, but participants also saw opportunities for more utilization. The basement's poor air quality in the basement prevents customers from using the meeting room.
- **Update the library collection** - The library's collection overall is old and outdated. The library is used more as a place to pick up holds rather than browse collections because the library lacks new and popular authors. Customers have to typically order the materials they want or go to another location.



- **Friendly staff** – Participants listed Madisonville branch’s friendly staff as a positive element of the branch

COMMUNITY

- **Retain the diversity and unique identity of Madisonville** – participants care deeply about preserving the neighborhood’s diversity. Participants listed several other strengths and important assets in the neighborhood, including John P. Parker school, Madisonville’s numerous churches; outdoor spaces like the neighborhood’s 500 gardens, the basketball courts by the library, Bramble Park, Murray Trail, and Duck Creek Trail.
- **Leverage Madisonville’s walkability** – Participants wanted the library and other community amenities located within proximity to each other to increase access.

BUILDING RENOVATIONS / PHYSICAL SPACE

- **Create a truly accessible building that welcomes all patrons** – Residents appreciated that the library is welcoming to everyone, including young kids, older adults and families. One small group emphasized that the building’s renovations should not only increase accessibility but should be designed so that all feel welcome. The group suggested that the building should have one entrance for all customers that is ADA-accessible rather than have a separate entrance for people with physical disabilities.
Increased library space – Participants wanted more library space and brainstormed ideas like creating additions on the south side of the building or purchasing the adjacent fire station. One group reached consensus that if they were given the choice between more library space and a parking lot, more library space would be the preferable option.”
- **Modern technology services** – the library currently lacks modern technology; participants wanted to see more modern services like a Makerspace.
- **Family-friendly renovations** – participants wanted to see separate spaces for kids; one group suggested a developmentally-appropriate play area with a puppet stage and rotating toy selection. Another group wanted to see wider aisles to accommodate strollers
- **Facilities upgrades** – included onsite parking, upgraded ADA-accessible bathrooms, and improved lighting.
- **Accessible meeting spaces to meet different needs** – Participants wanted to see both large and small meeting spaces for community members. One Madisonville resident mentioned that her neighbors have to leave the neighborhood to host meetings because Madisonville lacks meeting space.
- **Defined spaces to meet different needs** including quiet spaces for tutoring and separate spaces for kids.
- **The historic architecture** – While some participants wanted to tear down the existing library and start from scratch, other participants recognized the historic value of the building and want to retain the building’s beauty while increasing its functionality. Participants appreciated the building’s skylight in particular.
- **Cozy, comfortable spaces** – Participants wanted more upholstered chairs, lamps, and more natural light.

APPENDIX

