



Verbatim Responses

Together O'Fallon Community Engagement Workshop #1 November 6, 2025

Overview

Nearly 60 community members participated in the *Together O'Fallon* Community Workshop, held on November 6, 2025, at the O'Fallon Knights of Columbus. The sessions were led by co-chairs Todd Reichelt and Lexi Baysinger, with a library overview presentation delivered by Library Director Ryan Johnson.

Based on a charge from the Library Board, the presentation and workshop activities were designed to engage the community in planning for the library's future, to provide information about current facilities and program needs, and gather authentic feedback from stakeholders to help shape long-term facility and program improvements.

The engagement process was designed to:

- Facilitate an inclusive and transparent discussion on facility needs and priorities.
- Collect diverse perspectives through open dialogue and small group activities.
- Ensure that all community voices were heard and considered in the library's planning efforts.

Following the presentation, participants worked together in 8 small groups to complete the following tasks:

Task #1: Key Insights and Engagement

The small groups were asked to discuss the following questions:

- Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?
- What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?
- What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library? Provided answers were:

- ☐ More multipurpose space
- ☐ More study/work space

- ☐ More senior adult programming
- ☐ More children/teen programming

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| ☐ Banking | ☐ More crafting classes |
| ☐ Mailing services | ☐ More cultural events |
| ☐ Workforce support | ☐ Other_____ |
| ☐ Café/Coffee shop | ☐ Other_____ |
| ☐ Outdoor learning and event spaces | ☐ Other_____ |

- Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?
- Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?
- How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library? Provided answers were:
 - ☐ Less than \$100 annually
 - ☐ 100-150 annually
 - ☐ 151 - 200 annually
 - ☐ 200 annually
- As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?

Task #2: Key Questions

Small groups were then asked to follow the next three steps to prioritize what topics should be discussed in future community engagement meetings:

Step 1

What issues or topics should we discuss further? List the ones you feel are most important for our process.

Step 2

Take the list from Step 1 and prioritize each topic as High, Medium, or Low importance. (Include only topics your group generally agreed upon.)

Step 3

Start with your highest-priority topics.

What key questions or comments does your group want addressed for each topic?

Small Group Responses by Table

Table 1

Spokesperson: Shirley

Task 1

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?

People were surprised that there isn't enough space for all programs.

Possible use of the old library.

- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 “roses” and “thorns” of the current state of the library?

Roses:

- Love interlibrary loan system!
- Building is beautiful
- Staff is super helpful
- Most progressive think directors - staying with the times.

Thorns:

- Not enough hours open on Sunday.
- The library doesn't stay open late enough.
- Cost of heating and cooling.
- Not enough accessibility
- Not enough self-checkouts

- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?

- More multipurpose space
- More study/work space
- Cafe/Coffee shop
- More cultural events
- Other - More digital Access - Libly

- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?

Five people at our table - 3 people use the library in person, 2 people use the library online - Libby and Hoopla.

- 5) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?

One person mentioned being surprised at the large number of children's events. (he doesn't have children.)

- 6) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library? Provided answers were:

Less than \$100 annually

- 7) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?

Everyone agrees - we want longer hours. More computers. A study space for senior citizens with computers. More couches and chairs for sitting and reading. Have 2 big meeting rooms. Put the children's room on a separate floor.

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
What will be done with the existing building?		
More access to the library - a safe place to be.		
More events for adults		

Table 2

Spokesperson: Brian Keller

Task 1:

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?

The scope of the impact of the library in the community and overlap with other city services (like parks and rec)

- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?

Roses:

- Beautiful building
- Location
- Hours are good

Thorns:

- Cost to have a good library

- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?

- More multipurpose space
- More study/work space
- More senior adult programming
- More children/teen programming
- More cultural events

- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?

Yes - feel productive there, good programs, printer/computers and books (physical and ebooks)

- 8) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?

No

- 9) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library?

100-150 annually

- 10) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?

Archive/book selection inadequate

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
Cost and who pays for new library	High	How will the new library be paid for
What will happen to the existing library?	High`	
How do school libraries fit in	Medium	
Overlap with other community resources (parks & rec)	High	Has collaboration with other community resources been explored? Both space utilization and programs
Exploring expansion of library district territory	High	Has this been looked at

Table 3
Spokesperson: Andrew Ponce

Task 1:

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?

Location of the new library - too far east

Already planned location

Anyone can go to board

- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?

Roses:

- Staff is great
- Available "shares program"
- Well kept facility/very clean

Thorns:

- One limited session of overbooked
- More arch - inefficient use of space
- Poor architectural layout

- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?

- More multipurpose space
- More study/work space
- More children/teen programming
- More crafting classes
- Other: More multi sessions of events (personnel!)

- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?

Yes, borrowing materials

- 5) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?

No

- 6) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library?

Less than \$100 annually

- 7) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?

Can't get into kids programs (filled up)

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
Possible service fees - computer/DVD creator space	Low	Fees for robotics or other expensive events
Build a branch/annex library and existing	High	Separate kids space
More multi-use space	High	How much open space is planned?
Proposed tax increase	High	What is the real impact?

Table 4
Spokesperson: (blank)

Task 1

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?

The extent of community/civic services' capabilities/limitations was not well known; services for aging/senior populations were highlights.

- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?

Roses:

- Ryan
- Sense of belonging: one of the last free spaces
- How accessibility/hours keep options open

Thorns:

- Why can't spaces be shared? Parks, Katy Cavins, etc.
- Lack of continuity with mostly PT staff
- Incorporate Shiloh!!

- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?

- More multipurpose space
- Workforce support
- Outdoor learning and event spaces
- More cultural events
- Other: Tech support
- Other: Dedicated sales, civic, and cultural area

- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?

Mixed variety of answers. Most use a few times a month. Half don't use the library because nothing is there they need.

- 5) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?

Discussed in Q#1

- 6) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library?

\$100 - \$150 annually

- 7) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?

Technological hurdles; capacity limitations, both numerically (# of patrons /event) and space-wise; advertising of events/finding out about them too late.

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
Share spaces with other city facilities	medium	What capabilities does OPFL have to coordinate this?
Shiloh incorporation	medium +	
Notary services	low-medium	Can OFPL expand notary services? I9, real estate, vital records

Are services driving the building, or vice versa?	Med-high	What is the philosophy of designing this space? Is the plan in place or is it being developed along the way?
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Table 5
Spokesperson: David

Task 1:

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?

We're pleasantly surprised at the diversity of the programs and the library having to limit them due to size/capabilities.

- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?

Roses:

- Variety of programs
- Good amount of no-cost offerings
- Availability of technology/multi-media

Thorns:

- It's too hidden
- How do we make the offerings visible

- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?

- More multipurpose space
- More study/work space
- Cafe/coffee shop
- More children/teen programming
- Other: Technology outfitted rooms

- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?

Yes

- 5) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?

No but we knew many of them

- 6) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library?

\$100 - \$150 annually

- 7) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?

Study rooms book up quickly

Room for groups of 15-20 to gather

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
Physical location/visibility	High	If it's not physically accessible, then little else matters
Muliti purpose rooms	High	Having more larger rooms gives people reasons to visit

Technology access (personal access) for patrons	Medium	
Technology setup in every room/space	Medium	Even 3-4 person study rooms should have TVs for projecting

Table 6

Spokesperson: Crystal Yonker

Task 1

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?
Amount of activities available - center of community fishing, ??/telescope/eclipse
- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?
Roses:
 - Yoga - free
 - Kids program
 - Staff
 - Digital access
 Thorns:
 - Room - yoga or activities book club
 - More live sophisticated online activities
 - Outreach to tch how to use library
- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?
 - More multipurpose space
 - More study/work space
 - Banking
 - Mailing services - Amazon return
 - Workforce support - get people
 - Cafe/Coffee shop
 - Outdoor learning and event spaces
 - More senior adult programming
 - More cultural events
 - Other: Enrichment ex: British hist
- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?
1 response - No - Too busy to use...still working
4 responses - Yes, once a week
- 5) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?
No
- 6) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library? Provided answers were:
Less than \$100 annually
- 7) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?
Lack of space/location limited - difficult to find/transportation

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
Live online classes	High	
Accessibility Bus stop Transportation	High	
Space and outdoor space	High	
Tchg for low income	High	
Simultaneous activities with tax preparation	High	
Services to bring in people who would normally go to library (Amazon Return)	High	
Game/activity room with specific activities on regular basis (once a week)		

Table 7

Spokesperson: Lowell Crow

Facilitator: Gwen Crow

Task 1

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?
Not familiar w/programs
- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?
Roses:
 - E Books
 - Good Program Offered
 - Social Aspect
 Thorns:
 - Too small
 - New library - not centrally located
 - No general meeting room
- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?
 - More multipurpose space
 - More study/work space
 - Workforce support?
 - Outdoor learning and event spaces
 - More senior adult programming
 - More children/teen programming

- More crafting classes
 - More cultural events
 - Other: Public space
 - Other: Gaming space
- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?
 2/3 E Books per week
 Once a month
- 5) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?
 No
- 6) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library? Provided answers were:
 Less than \$100 annually
- 7) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?
 Traffic
 Easy access

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
How was the location chosen?		No input from citizens

Table 8

Spokesperson: Sarah Zeis

Task 1

- 1) Based on the information you learned tonight, what is your group's biggest surprise about our library?
 Amount of people who have library cards; the large number who use library services
- 2) What are the top 2 - 3 "roses" and "thorns" of the current state of the library?
 Roses:
 - Shared library
 - Digital downloads
 - Activities and services
 Thorns:
 - Parking lot/location/visibility
 - Entrance is shabby
 - Not walkable
- 3) What services, programs or amenities would you like at your library?
 - More multipurpose space
 - More study/work space
 - Workforce support
 - Outdoor learning and event spaces
 - More senior adult programming
 - More children/teen programming
 - More crafting classes

- More cultural events
 - Other: Speaker series
- 4) Do you use the library at least once a month? If yes, why? If not, why?
Yes - various reasons - investment club mtg, children's activities, checking out books
- 5) Did you know about all of the library's services before this evening?
Most but not all
- 6) How much do you think the owner of a \$275,000 (median value home in O'Fallon) home pays in taxes for the O'Fallon library? Provided answers were:
Less than \$100 annually
- 7) As the library exists now, are there barriers that limit your use of library services?
Scheduled times for senior activities are not conducive to working people.

Task 2:

Issues/Topics To Discuss	High/Medium/Low Importance	Key Questions/Comments
What will old library be used for?	Low	
Funding - how will it be paid for?	High	Grants Fundraising Burden to taxpayers - exhaust all possible options before taxing
Partnerships	Medium	Schools Parks and Rec Shiloh
Location, alternatives	High	Are there alternatives Traffic impacts
Sustainability, staffing and energy needs	Medium	Staffing increase and energy needs