



TOGETHER O'FALLON
BE A PART OF WHAT'S NEXT
O'FALLON PUBLIC LIBRARY

FINAL REPORT
JUNE 8, 2026





INTRODUCTION

Beginning in late summer 2025, the **Together O'Fallon** community engagement program was developed to gather input from a broad base of residents regarding the future of the O'Fallon Public Library. The process was initiated by the Library Board to support long-term planning and ensure that future decisions reflect community priorities.

Together O'Fallon was designed to engage residents in meaningful dialogue, gather feedback, and inform a plan for the library's future.

Through a series of workshops, outreach efforts, and community events, participants were invited to learn about the current state of the library, discuss challenges and opportunities, and help shape a shared vision for what comes next.

Over the course of three community engagement workshops, nearly 150 residents, staff members and Engagement Team members heard informational presentations and worked together to provide input on questions and options for the library's future. Participants shared their thoughts on:

- **The library's current strengths, challenges, barriers, and desired programs and amenities.**
- **Key topics and questions to guide future library planning.**
- **Future library options based on amenities, costs, and community priorities.**

The participants' ideas and suggestions were collected at each workshop and provided important information for the Together O'Fallon Engagement Team's final recommendations. Data from these events can be viewed on the [Together O'Fallon website here](#).

As part of its efforts to hear from everyone in the O'Fallon community, a community online survey was conducted in April and May of 2026.





PARTICIPANTS

Community participation occurred through multiple engagement opportunities, including:

- Community workshops held on **November 6, 2025, February 5, 2026, and March 19, 2026**
- An open house held on **April 23, 2026**
- Tours of the library during **March and April 2026**
- A community survey conducted **April 23 through May 11, 2026**

In addition to a variety of other communication efforts (detailed later in this report), community volunteers from Together O'Fallon circulated in neighborhoods and at local events to invite the community to join the process, and a postcard was mailed to all O'Fallon households to invite them to participate in the community survey.

Across the workshop series, more than 130 residents participated in small-group discussions and interactive activities. An additional 25 residents took part in a library tour, while approximately 30 community members attended the open house to review project information and provide feedback. In total, more than 540 residents completed the community survey.



PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

ENGAGEMENT TEAM (ET)

This team facilitated the Together O'Fallon process. The team met a total of nine times – four times before the community engagement workshops, twice between workshops and three times after to help plan the open house, review workshop and survey data, and prepare recommendations.

As is so important in engagement programs, community members provided the leadership for the Engagement Team and the entire Together O'Fallon process. Administration and staff members were also members of the Engagement Team and served as resources. The primary role of the Engagement Team was to lead and coordinate the entire process. The group helped with decisions regarding process strategy and communications.



FACILITATING TEAM MEMBERS

SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Process Chairs:

Lexi Baysinger
 Todd Reichelt

Door-to-Door Co-chairs:

Rebecca Corless
 Cari Schaefer

Community Outreach Chair:

Sara Belvin

Communications Co-chairs:

Emily Fieker
 Cathy Green

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Lexi Baysinger
 Rebecca Corless
 Melissa Doetsch
 Melissa Fanning
 Emily Fieker
 Diane Gederman
 Jennifer Goetz
 Cathy Green
 Regina Ireland
 Ankur Patel
 Eric Pratum
 Todd Reichelt
 Allison Schaal
 Cari Schaefer
 Larry Strube
 Gabriella Wells

O'FALLON PUBLIC LIBRARY REPRESENTATIVES

Sara Belvin
 Ryan Johnson



PROCESS

The **Together O'Fallon** process followed a structured approach to community engagement.

STEP 1: PROCESS AND GOALS

The Library Board initiated the process to gather community input and guide future planning decisions.

STEP 2: BUILDING THE ENGAGEMENT TEAM

A community-based Engagement Team was formed to lead the process, facilitate workshops, and support outreach.

STEP 3: PROCESS IDENTITY

The process was given an official name — Together O'Fallon — and a project logo. This logo was used on all communication and meeting items.

STEP 4: INFORMING THE COMMUNITY

A coordinated communications effort was implemented to raise awareness and encourage participation across the community.

STEP 5: THE SCHEDULE

After thoroughly inviting the public to participate, it was time to plan the community engagement workshops and begin the engagement effort.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE



Thursday, Aug. 14	Engagement Team Meeting (ETM) #1
Thursday, Sept. 4	ETM #2
Thursday, Sept. 25	ETM #3
Thursday, Oct. 9	ETM #4
Wednesday, Oct. 15	Communications Begin
Saturday, Oct. 25	Door-to-Door Canvassing
Thursday, Nov. 6	Community Engagement Workshop #1
Thursday, Nov. 13	ETM #5
Tuesday, Jan. 27	ETM Zoom Check-In
Thursday, Feb. 5	Community Engagement Workshop #2
Thursday, Feb. 26	ETM #6
Thursday, Mar. 19	Community Engagement Workshop #3
Wednesday, Apr. 8	Community Library Tours
Saturday, Apr. 11	Community Library Tours
Monday, Apr. 13	Community Library Tours
Thursday, Apr. 16	ETM #7
Thursday, Apr. 23	Open House
Thursday, Apr. 23	Community Survey Opens
Monday, May 11	Community Survey Closes
Thursday, May 20	ETM #8
Wednesday, May 27	ETM #9
Monday, June 8	Board Meeting - Together O'Fallon Presentation to the Board

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

The team developed and implemented several strategic communications tools regarding Together O'Fallon to create awareness and encourage participation from the entire community. A strong recruitment effort by Engagement Team members and staff was also conducted.

Samples of the communications tools are shown below:



EMAIL

Emails were sent inviting patrons, staff and community members to participate in Together O'Fallon community engagement workshops, open house and community survey.

WEBSITE

A section of the library's website was developed to share information at <https://www.ofpl.info/togetherofallon>. Community members were invited to visit the site to learn more about the engagement program, RSVP for events, read the FAQs, and ask questions.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Invitations and information about the process and the survey were shared through the library's social media accounts.

DOOR-TO-DOOR

Volunteers knocked on doors to circulate invitations for community members to participate in the process.

FLYERS AND HANDOUTS

Flyers were developed throughout the process and distributed to library patrons and throughout the community. A postcard was sent via postal mail to households in O'Fallon, IL, to encourage participation in the workshops and the community survey.

SIGNAGE

Posters were put up at the library to promote the events. Yard signs promoting the effort were displayed throughout the community.

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Together O'Fallon volunteers connected with community organizations face-to-face, by phone and by email to invite community members and leadership to participate in the events.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS — OVERVIEW

The Together O'Fallon community engagement workshops were designed to create meaningful opportunities for residents to learn about the O'Fallon Public Library, discuss current and future needs, and help shape a long-term vision for the library and its role within the community. The workshops were grounded in the Library Board's charge to engage residents in open dialogue, gather authentic community input, and ensure that future planning decisions reflect community priorities and values.

The workshop series emphasized collaboration, transparency, and community participation. Residents were invited to learn together, share perspectives, discuss challenges and opportunities, and help prioritize future investments in library facilities and services.

Each workshop was open to all residents and was designed and facilitated by the Together O'Fallon Engagement Team. Sessions combined informational presentations with facilitated small group discussion activities that encouraged participants to collaborate and work toward areas of shared understanding and consensus.

WORKSHOPS — KEY FINDINGS



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 NOVEMBER 6, 2025

The first Together O'Fallon workshop focused on building a shared understanding of the library's current services, facility challenges, and future opportunities. Participants expressed strong appreciation for the library's staff, programs, and role within the community.

The most consistent concern identified during Workshop #1 was a lack of space. Participants noted that the current facility no longer adequately supports programming, study space demand, meetings, or flexible community use. Residents also identified concerns related to acoustics, layout limitations, and long-term suitability of the current location.

Participants expressed a strong interest in:

- Flexible multipurpose spaces
- Expanded study and meeting rooms
- Larger children's and family areas
- Outdoor programming space
- Additional community-centered amenities and services





WORKSHOPS – KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2 | FEBRUARY 5, 2026

The second workshop focused on helping participants prioritize amenities and features for a future library facility. Residents worked collaboratively to design and prioritize future library spaces and services.

Flexible and multipurpose space emerged as the highest priority across participant groups. Expanded study rooms, collaborative workspaces, and quiet areas were also consistently prioritized. Participants continued to emphasize the importance of children's programming space, family gathering areas, and outdoor learning environments.

Additional priorities identified during Workshop #2 included:

- Comfortable and welcoming design
- Natural light and flexible seating
- Café or gathering space
- Makerspaces and creative programming areas
- Sensory-friendly and inclusive spaces

From this activity, commonalities were identified from each group's design, and the following options were created:

Option A: Base Library

Construct a new approximately 30,000 square foot library focused on addressing core space needs and expanding basic library functions. Estimated project cost: \$17.25 million.

Option B: Enhanced Multipurpose

Expand the base library concept to approximately 34,000 square feet with additional multipurpose rooms, study space, collaboration areas, and a larger children's area. Estimated project cost: \$19.75 million.

Option C: Expanded Services

Develop an approximately 38,120-square-foot facility that includes expanded services and amenities, such as a café space, makerspace areas, sensory rooms, and additional flexible programming areas. Estimated project cost: \$22.5 million.

Option D: Comprehensive Library

Construct the largest option at approximately 40,020 square feet with the full range of proposed amenities, including expanded collaboration space, memory lab, small business pop-up areas, larger teen areas, and enhanced community features. Estimated project cost: \$25 million.



**WORKSHOPS –
 KEY FINDINGS
 (CONTINUED)**

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #3 | MARCH 19, 2026

The third workshop focused on evaluating the four facility options developed during Workshop #2. Participants worked in small groups to discuss and reach consensus on how they would rank each option. They reviewed five total scenarios, including the four options from the previous workshop and a status quo option, and ranked them from most to least preferred.

Participants favored Option C, the expanded services option that addresses both current deficiencies and future growth. Residents emphasized that future planning should prioritize flexibility, long-term adaptability, and community impact.

Key themes that continued to emerge included:

- Need for expanded and flexible community space
- Additional study and work areas
- Family-oriented and outdoor spaces
- Community gathering and collaboration areas
- Long-term sustainability and thoughtful planning

Across all three workshops, participants consistently described the future library as a welcoming, flexible, community-centered destination that supports learning, creativity, connection, and lifelong engagement.





SURVEY — OVERVIEW & KEY FINDINGS

To ensure everyone in the O'Fallon community had the opportunity to provide input, Together O'Fallon also conducted an online community survey. The purpose of the survey was to better understand residents' perceptions of the library, current facility challenges, priorities for future library services and amenities, and opinions regarding a possible bond proposal to support construction of a new facility. The survey was promoted to the community through a postcard mailed to all households, emails and text messages, social media and flyers.



KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from the survey are shown below.

- A potential \$22.5 million bond proposal for a new library facility was favored by a majority of respondents (56.8%), while 33.5% were opposed and the remainder were undecided.
- At the end of the survey, respondents were again asked if they favored the proposal, and support increased to 58.2%, with 29.9% strongly favoring the proposal.
- The highest-priority features for a future library facility included quiet areas for silent activities (77.1% high/very high priority), learning and play areas for children (70.6%), multipurpose rooms for community use (68.8%), flexible spaces adaptable for future needs (68.7%), and study rooms for adults and children (68.0%).
- Additional features receiving strong support included makerspaces for arts, crafts, and STEM programming (67.8%), group collaboration and workrooms (65.0%), and after-school club and activity areas for teens (62.7%).
- Large majorities agreed that “The library greatly contributes to the high quality of life found in O'Fallon” (86.6%); “Our library is a source of pride in O'Fallon” (78.3%); and “Our library should offer a full range of classes and events for all age groups, young and old alike” (77.2%).
- More than 64% agreed that with O'Fallon's population growth, the community needs a larger library, while 58.7% agreed they were willing to pay more in taxes to ensure the community has an updated and adequately sized public library.
- More than 81% disagreed with the statement that public libraries are no longer needed because of technology in homes.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE O'FALLON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Based on feedback received through the Together O'Fallon community engagement workshops, open house, outreach efforts, and community survey, the Together O'Fallon Engagement Team recommends the O'Fallon Public Library Board consider the following priorities to address current facility limitations and future community needs.

The recommendations below reflect consistent themes identified throughout the engagement process and are intended to ensure the O'Fallon Public Library continues to serve as a welcoming, flexible, community-centered destination for residents of all ages.

- **Develop a new library facility that addresses current and future space needs by:**
 - Providing adequate space for library programs, community events, meetings, and daily library use
 - Expanding flexible multipurpose space that can adapt to changing community needs over time
 - Creating additional quiet study rooms, collaboration areas, and technology-enabled workspaces
 - Ensuring the facility can accommodate future population growth and increased demand for services
- **Expand children's, teen, and family-centered spaces by:**
 - Creating larger, more flexible spaces for children's programming while expanding opportunities for family engagement, learning, and gathering
 - Providing dedicated spaces for after-school activities, collaboration, and study
 - Supporting sensory-friendly and inclusive environments for individuals with varying needs
 - Providing outdoor learning and activity space that supports youth programming and community events
- **Enhance community gathering and collaboration opportunities by:**
 - Expanding meeting and event space for public use
 - Creating flexible gathering areas that support community interaction and lifelong learning
 - Incorporating comfortable seating, natural light, and welcoming design features throughout the facility
 - Providing spaces that support remote work, small group collaboration, and technology access
 - Exploring amenities such as makerspaces, memory labs, a coffee shop or community gathering space



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE O'FALLON PUBLIC LIBRARY (CONTINUED)

- **Ensure the future library remains accessible, adaptable, and efficient by:**
 - Prioritizing accessibility and ease of use for residents of all ages and abilities
 - Designing flexible spaces that can be cost-effectively adapted over time
 - Evaluating parking, visibility, accessibility, and traffic flow as part of future planning
 - Balancing expanded services and amenities with long-term operational efficiency
 - Continuing to evaluate opportunities for technology upgrades and integration
- **Continue strengthening the library's role as a community resource by:**
 - Maintaining transparency and ongoing communication with residents throughout future planning efforts
 - Continuing to gather community feedback as planning and design efforts progress
 - Ensuring future decisions remain grounded in community priorities and needs
 - Supporting programming and services for all age groups
 - Expanding opportunities for community partnerships and collaboration

The Together O'Fallon Engagement Team will remain available to the Library Board and library leadership as needed following presentation of these recommendations.

More information on Together O'Fallon can be found online at ofpl.info/togetherofallon.

To make these recommendations a reality and address the needs identified through the Together O'Fallon engagement process, the Engagement Team recommends the Library Board:

- **Utilize available reserve funds to offset project costs.**
- **Place a bond proposal on the November 3, 2026 ballot to address the needs identified above.**
- **Continue providing regular updates and information to the community throughout the planning process.**
- **Use this final report, together with additional planning and financial analysis, to guide future decision-making regarding library facilities and services.**