

Development Principles. Open Hearth is approaching development of the property with the following guiding principles:

- Establish strong collaborative partnerships with other community organizations who can play key roles in helping to develop and manage a successful community center (e.g. Mad River Valley Rotary Club, Valley Arts, Valley Players Theater, the Mad River Valley Recreation District, and others)
- Take a phased, cohesive, planful approach beginning with a master plan that integrates other local important community assets
- Manage an open & inclusive process, while quickly narrowing focus to an achievable plan
- Promote public understanding, enthusiasm, and broad Valley-wide community support
- Ensure fiscal viability and sustainability with detailed business and financial plans for up-front development and ongoing operating expenses

Survey Results. Numerous surveys have been conducted by Open Hearth and others over the years that demonstrate a clear need and strong demand for a community and recreation center in the Mad River Valley.

Mad River Valley Economic Summit (2014)

Numerous write-in mentions for:

- 78% indicated tourism and recreation needs to be more weather neutral
- 56% indicated tourism/recreation defines the Valley
- Numerous write-in mentions signaling demand for:
 - More indoor recreation, community center (6)
 - More arts, craft opportunities (maker space/activities) ceramics classes, open studios, art festival (6)
 - An indoor recreation center for kids/teens to hang out, more places to go with young kids, indoor kid play space, more resources for kids – recreation room, basketball courts, skate park (5)
 - More support for local music, music events, music performances, concerts, theater (5)
 - A multi-purpose gym with exercise classes, large multi-functional indoor and outdoor facility (4)

Open Hearth Youth Survey at Harwood Union Middle/High School (2013)

- 43% response rate overall, 90% in the middle school, 307 total surveys completed
- 49% said a community center was very or extremely important, with nearly 90% saying it's important on some level
- 39% would use a community center at least once/week, 66% would use it at least 2-3 times/mo.
- Facilities ranked the highest include a small café, outdoor athletic fields, a computer/tech center, a lounge area, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a gymnasium, and a recreation/game room
- Programs ranked the highest include movie nights, parties & dances, game competitions, art classes, summer camps, open mic nights/poetry slams, music instruction & performances, and cooking classes

Open Hearth Adult Survey (2004)

- 8% response rate Valley-wide, 469 total surveys completed
- 63% said a community center was very or extremely important, with nearly 90% saying it's important on some level
- 53% would use a community center at least once/week

Other Community Surveys

- Flemer Barn Task Force Survey (2013): 4 out of top 5 mentions were related to aspects of a Community/Arts Center (Recreation/Play Area, Teen Center, Community Gathering, Arts Center)
- Open Hearth Youth Activities Forum (2006): "Teen hangout space" voted the highest priority among approx. 75 participants in a Valley-wide meeting to discuss how to better support our local youth
- Mad River Planning District Valley Vision 2020 Forum (2004): "Community/wellness center" voted the second most important need in the Valley
- Waitsfield Planning Commission Survey (2002): a majority of respondents said the four valley towns should create a teen center funded by local tax dollars