From the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) workshop conducted at Millis Public Library, the following key themes and trends emerge:

Strengths

1. **Welcoming and Inclusive Environment**
   - Comfortable and inviting space for patrons.
   - Friendly, approachable staff.
   - Intentional inclusivity for all ages.
2. **Community Engagement and Relationships**
   - Strong relationships between staff, patrons, and the town.
   - Essential partnerships with the external community.
   - Empowering patrons through engagement.
3. **Physical Space and Location**
   - Central location with accessibility benefits (parking, schools, town center).
   - Entertaining and engaging atmosphere for patrons.
   - Efforts to configure and reconfigure space for evolving needs.
4. **Responsiveness to Feedback**
   - Commitment to listening to patrons.
   - Strong value in feedback loops and adapting based on input.
5. **Passionate and Committed Staff**
   - Enthusiasm and pride in the library.
   - Desire to expand services and meet community needs.
   - Recognition of the library's role in community success.

Opportunities

1. **Expanded Outreach & Community Integration**
   - Stronger connections with local schools (K-12, public and private).
   - Expanding bookmobile and outreach services.
   - Increasing engagement with high school students (senior projects, volunteer groups).
2. **Innovative Programming & Services**
   - New study spaces and collaborative areas (pods, reconfigurable spaces).
   - Dedicated book group resources and themed collections (e.g., binge boxes for movies).
   - Human Library and cross-generational programming.
3. **Enhanced Promotion & Communication**
   - Stronger efforts in patron communication (newsletters, town calendar).
   - Avoiding program overlap with other town events.
   - Expanding promotional efforts to reach new patrons.
4. **Technology and Learning Expansion**
   - Information literacy initiatives for different demographics.
   - ELL (English Language Learner) programs.

- o Exploring emerging space concepts (3D spaces, new technology).

Aspirations

1. **Growth in Patron Base & Community Impact**
   - o Expanding reach to new patrons and demographics.
   - o Creating more volunteer opportunities and engagement for seniors (55+).
   - o Strengthening cross-generational programs.
2. **Sustainable and Impactful Programming**
   - o Aligning book group popularity with larger program development.
   - o Fostering stronger mentorship opportunities (e.g., new residents meet-and-greet).
3. **Town-wide Coordination & Collaboration**
   - o Developing a shared town calendar to reduce program overlap.
   - o Enhancing collaboration with local businesses.

Results (Desired Outcomes & Impact)

1. **Enhanced Community Connection**
   - o Strengthened sense of belonging among patrons and staff.
   - o Increased participation and engagement in library programs.
2. **Increased Access & Resources**
   - o Expansion of materials and access to specialized resources.
   - o Greater availability of flexible study and collaboration spaces.
3. **Library as a Hub for Learning & Innovation**
   - o Growth in literacy programs and lifelong learning initiatives.
   - o Integration of new and emerging technologies for patron use.

Final Takeaways

The Millis Public Library is seen as a **community-driven**, **adaptive**, and **engaging space** that values relationships and inclusivity. There is a strong focus on **expanding outreach**, **enhancing programming**, and **improving patron engagement** while **maintaining the core strengths** of a welcoming environment and responsive staff. The SOAR workshop identified clear aspirations around growing patron engagement, leveraging town-wide collaborations, and ensuring the library remains a **dynamic and accessible** resource for all.

Observations from the SOAR Workshop at Millis Public Library

The **Millis Public Library** is deeply rooted in its role as a welcoming and inclusive space for the community. Patrons recognize it as a comfortable environment where they feel valued and supported. The **staff's friendliness and approachability** are key strengths, fostering a sense of belonging that extends across all ages and demographics. This intentional inclusivity ensures that everyone—from young children to seniors—can find resources, programs, and opportunities tailored to their needs.

The library's **location** is another notable strength, offering convenient access near schools, town resources, and parking. The physical space itself is valued, with ongoing efforts to reconfigure and enhance its usability. There is an **emphasis on patron experience**, with the library actively seeking and responding to feedback. This commitment to listening and adapting is a crucial part of its identity, reinforcing a strong relationship between staff and the community.

A clear theme emerging from the discussion is the **importance of community relationships**. The library does not function in isolation; rather, it thrives through its **connections with patrons, town organizations, and external partners**. Staff members and community members alike take **pride in the library**, seeing it as an integral part of local life. Enthusiasm for its success is evident, with an ongoing desire to increase services and engagement opportunities.

At the same time, the workshop highlighted **several opportunities for growth and outreach**. Expanding connections with local schools—both public and private—presents an avenue for increased collaboration, particularly in areas such as **high school senior projects, literacy programs, and volunteer engagement**. There is also an opportunity to **extend outreach through the bookmobile and targeted programming** for underrepresented groups, such as English language learners and seniors.

In terms of **programming and service innovation**, the library is exploring new ways to better serve patrons. Ideas such as **dedicated study pods, reconfigurable spaces, and thematic resource collections** (e.g., book groups and binge boxes for movies) reflect a commitment to evolving alongside community needs. Additionally, the library is considering more **cross-generational programming**, such as the **Human Library initiative**, to foster deeper connections between patrons of different ages and backgrounds.

One key challenge identified is the **need for better coordination and communication across town events and programs**. The creation of a **shared town calendar** could help minimize scheduling conflicts and maximize participation in library initiatives. A **more robust promotional strategy**—including newsletters and enhanced communication channels—would further support outreach efforts, ensuring that more patrons are aware of the library's offerings.

Looking ahead, the library's aspirations center on **growth and sustainability**. There is a collective vision to **expand the patron base, increase engagement, and develop impactful, long-lasting programs**. Strengthening partnerships with local businesses, schools, and

volunteers will be key to achieving these goals. The focus remains on **maintaining the library's core identity as a welcoming space while innovating to meet the evolving needs of the community**.

Ultimately, the SOAR workshop reinforced that **Millis Public Library is not just a resource— it is a dynamic, responsive hub for learning, connection, and community engagement**. The insights gathered provide a strong foundation for shaping its future direction, ensuring that it continues to serve as a vital asset to the town.