

Sonoma County Library Facilities Master Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*"The library staff are wonderful!"
– library customer*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sonoma County Library is an independent public agency established by the County of Sonoma and its incorporated cities through a joint powers agreement nearly 50 years ago. Today, SCL is a high-performing organization whose commitment, service, and positive impacts are cherished by the communities it serves. The library strives to provide opportunities for all Sonoma County residents to contribute, interact, and participate; to support community resiliency; and to foster racial equity, social justice, and inclusion for everyone.

In 2021, SCL adopted a Reimagining Plan to guide its services, partnerships, and organizational development. It then initiated a Facility Master Plan (FMP) process to develop a shared vision of 21st century library spaces and facilities that support its strategic goals. Project objectives for the master plan included assessing SCL's facilities in terms of condition, accessibility, and ability to support 21st century library service; and recommending strategies to guide improvements over a 10 year timeframe.

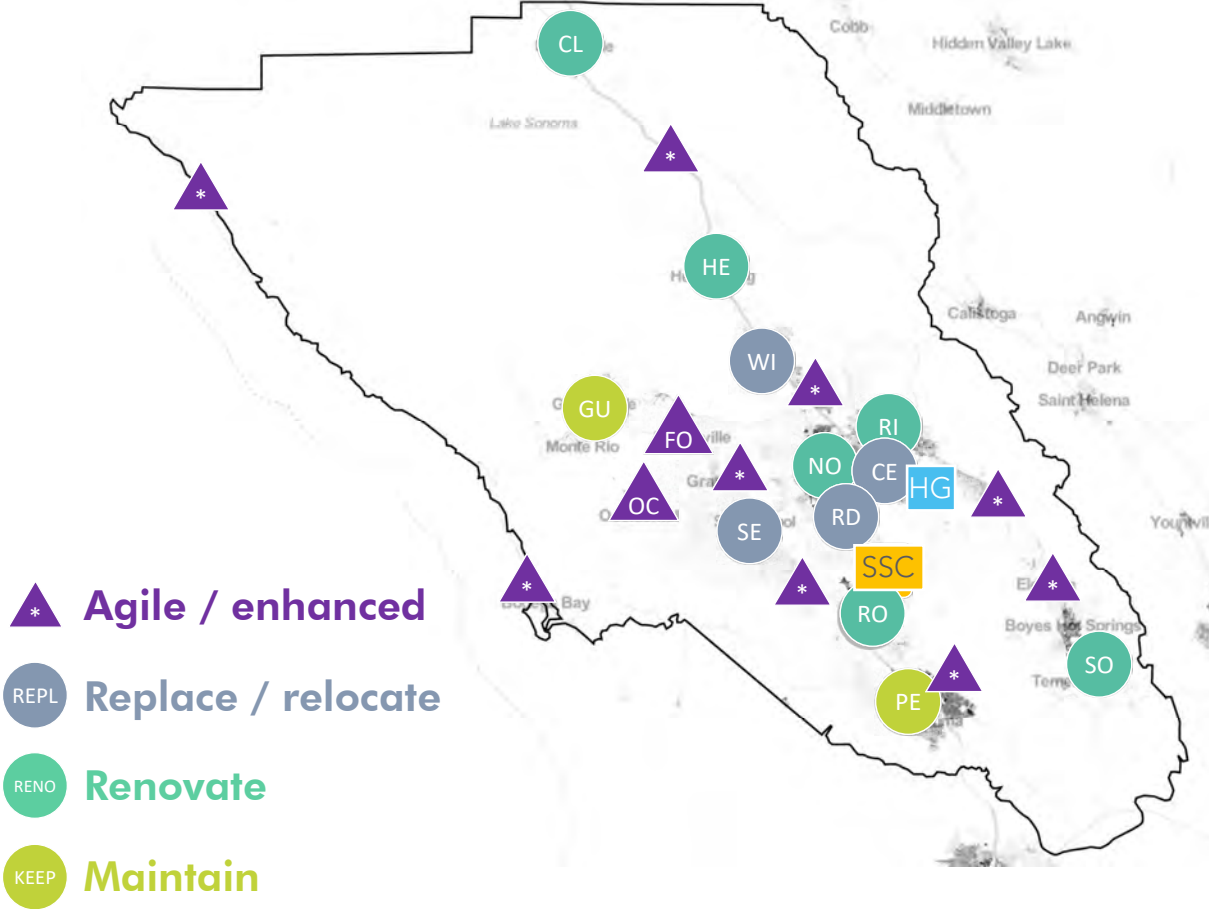
The approximately 10-month FMP process included assessments of the maintenance conditions, ADA compliance, and modern library service in 11 of SCL's facilities (Occidental, Forestville, Roseland community libraries, and the History and Genealogy Annex were not assessed). The process built on the engagement and outcomes of SCL's recent strategic and technology planning efforts. Although most FMP engagement was virtual due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the process had robust participation of staff, stakeholders, and Sonoma County residents – including nearly 5,000 responses to a community survey.

The process revealed that most of SCL's facilities are currently in good condition, and many have good bones that will enable them to serve their communities for many years to come. However, as a result of their age and high levels of use, many will be due for moderate to significant maintenance over the next decade. Through renovation, most of SCL's branches can be reimagined to meet Sonoma County communities' vision for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable libraries with plentiful, comfortable, and inspiring spaces for people, programs, and technology.

However, some Sonoma County Library branches will need to be replaced or relocated because their current buildings cannot meet community demand. These replacements and relocations offer the opportunity for expanded space to better serve local community needs while also supporting higher performance for SCL's network overall.

For each recommended project, next steps include working with each jurisdiction to confirm the budget, timeline, and funding for construction. Branches recommended for replacement/relocation will require assessment and acquisition of potential new sites; SCL and its jurisdiction partners can evaluate opportunities for adaptive reuse of existing buildings, joint-use facilities, public-private partnerships, and other alternative strategies as well as all-new standalone construction.

VISION FOR SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY FACILITIES



KEY

- | | |
|--|--|
| CL Cloverdale Regional Library | RO Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library |
| HE Healdsburg Regional Library | PE Petaluma Regional Library |
| GU Guerneville Regional Library | SE Sebastopol Regional Library |
| WI Windsor Regional Library | SO Sonoma Valley Regional Library |
| RI Rincon Valley Regional Library | ▲ FO Forestville Community Library |
| NO Northwest Regional Library | ▲ OC Occidental Community Library |
| CE Central Santa Rosa Library | HG History + Genealogy Library |
| RD Roseland Regional Library | SSC Support Services Center |

* Locations of agile strategies shown are illustrative only.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

| Facility | Currently Owned by | Recommendation |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Central Santa Rosa Library | City of Santa Rosa | Relocate/ Potential Expand |
| Northwest Santa Rosa Library | City of Santa Rosa | Renovate |
| Rincon Valley Santa Rosa Library | City of Santa Rosa | Renovate |
| Roseland Regional Library | SCL (leased) | Relocate/ Expand |
| Cloverdale Regional Library | City of Cloverdale | Renovate |
| Guerneville Regional Library | County of Sonoma | Renovate |
| Healdsburg Regional Library | City of Healdsburg | Renovate |
| Petaluma Regional Library | City of Petaluma | Renovate (in progress) |
| Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library | City of Rohnert Park | Renovate |
| Sebastopol Regional Library | City of Sebastopol | Replace/ Expand |
| Sonoma Valley Regional Library | City of Sonoma | Renovate |
| Windsor Regional Library | Town of Windsor | Expand/ Relocate |
| Forestville Community Library | Public School (leased) | Upgrade/ Relocate |
| Occidental Community Library | Private (leased) | Upgrade/ Relocate |
| SCL History + Genealogy Library | SCL (owned) | Relocate |
| SCL HQ Support Services Center | SCL (leased) | Relocate/ Expand |

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Because of the nature of SCL's partnership with each JPA member, the timing and funding of most master plan-recommended projects will require collaboration with each jurisdiction that owns the facilities. Considerations that will influence the library's preferred project timing include:

- Improving service and equity for communities underserved by existing facilities.
- When lifecycle maintenance will be needed for branches to be renovated.
- Avoiding simultaneous closure of branches close to each other.
- Availability of capital funding for improvements.
- Needing to replace libraries on sites slated for redevelopment.
- New and evolving opportunities for funding, sites, and partnerships.

Renovation of the Petaluma, Healdsburg, and Rincon Valley libraries and planning for a new, expanded Roseland Library are included in the list of priority projects for SCL in the first three years of this FMP.



INTRODUCTION

*"It's my library home. Many great memories."
- library customer*

BACKGROUND

The Sonoma County Library provides more than 485,000 urban, suburban, and rural residents of Sonoma County with diverse programs, services, and resources. SCL is a Joint Powers Agency governed by a Library Commission whose 11 members are appointed by the County of Sonoma and each JPA member city. The majority of SCL's ongoing operating revenue comes from property taxes, supplemented by a voter-approved sales tax (which will sunset in 2026), grants, donations, and other sources.

SCL's public service facilities include 12 regional libraries, two community libraries, the History + Genealogy Annex, and the Wine Library. Except for the Roseland Community Library and the History + Genealogy Annex, all of these buildings are provided by the JPA members. The JPA members are responsible for the capital maintenance of the buildings they own as well as for renovation, expansion, relocation, or replacement as appropriate. SCL is responsible for facility maintenance and tenant improvements to support library service and operations.

In November 2016, County voters approved Measure Y, a 1/8th of one cent sales tax measure that generates more than \$12 million in additional revenue for SCL a year. Measure Y has enabled SCL to:

- significantly boost library programs and collections, update technology, restore and expand hours of operation, and add staff;
- address a significant amount of deferred and lifecycle maintenance needs in the branches;
- lease space for the new Roseland Regional Library (which has been needed for decades); and
- move systemwide operations and administrative functions out of the Central Santa Rosa Library and into more functional space.

Perhaps most importantly, Measure Y provided the library with the opportunity to think strategically and comprehensively about the future of library service in Sonoma County. In 2019, SCL completed an assessment and strategic plan for technology. In 2021, SCL wrapped up a strategic planning process to reimagine its future services, operations, and community impacts. In 2021, the library initiated a year-long process to reimagine its facilities for 21st century library service.

FACILITY MASTER PLAN METHODOLOGY

The master plan process for SCL's facilities began in the summer of 2021. The scope included detailed technical assessments of facility conditions and accessibility at all of SCL's branches except for the leased Roseland Regional Library space. These facilities were also assessed for their alignment with SCL's 21st century library vision in terms of service, operations, and customer experience.

The planning process incorporated information and data from a variety of sources, including:

- Sources for community demographics and population projections include the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the State of California's Department of Finance, US Census 2020, and OrangeBoy (a library market analytics firm).
- Service metrics and use data provided by SCL were combined with data compiled by the California State Library. Due to the extensive COVID-19 service interruptions and shutdowns beginning in early 2020, this analysis relied primarily on data from prior years. Except where noted, all service metrics and statistics in this report are from 2018-2019.
- Staff, stakeholder, and community engagement from SCL's recent planning efforts, including the strategic planning process for the Reimagining Plan adopted by the Library Commission in 2021.

Engagement methods for this facility master planning process included a community survey with nearly 5,000 participants from throughout Sonoma County; meetings and workshops with library staff and advisory boards; meetings with representatives of the library JPA's member jurisdictions; and presentations to the Library Commission. A core team of Library Administration representatives provided project oversight.

This FMP was developed during a time of rapid escalation in the construction market, and it is difficult to predict what additional escalation might still be ahead. For this reason, budgets for the FMP-recommended projects are not provided with this report. As SCL and the JPA members confirm the scope, feasibility, and timeline for each improvement project, capital budgets can be developed with a higher level of confidence.

PARTICIPANTS

Thousands of people provided insight and input into the development of this Master Plan — far more than can be recognized by name here. Below is a partial list of people who participated in the development of this plan.

SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION

- Rachel Parker, City of Cotati
- Andy Elkind, City of Healdsburg
- Paul Heavenridge, City of Petaluma
- Barbara Mackenzie, City of Rohnert Park
- David Cahill, City of Santa Rosa
- Karen Schneider, Joint City of Santa Rosa/ County Board of Supervisors
- Fred Engbarth, City of Sebastopol
- Thomas Haeuser, City of Sonoma
- Deborah Doyle, Town of Windsor

SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARDS

- Caryl Sherman, Rohnert Park-Cotati
- Cynthia Denenholz, Santa Rosa
- Erroll Stevenson, Petaluma
- Faith Adam, Rohnert Park-Cotati
- Mike Neely, Windsor
- Rebecca Goodsell, Healdsburg
- Sarah Laggos, Santa Rosa
- Susan Clark, Cloverdale
- Yanell Velasquez, Sonoma

CITY AND COUNTY STAKEHOLDERS

- Cindy Bagley, Community Services Director, Rohnert Park
- Chris Rogers, Mayor, City of Santa Rosa
- Dennis Pocekay, Councilmember, City of Petaluma
- Diana Rich, Councilmember, City of Sebastopol
- Eddie Alvarez, Councilmember, City of Santa Rosa
- Esther Lemus, Councilmember, Town of Windsor
- Gus Wolter, Councilmember, City of Cloverdale
- Jon Davis, Parks & Recreation Director, Town of Windsor
- John C. Moore, Mayor, City of Cotati
- Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director, City of Sebastopol
- Larry McLaughlin, City Manager, City of Sebastopol
- Mandolyn Agrimonti, Mayor, City of Sonoma
- Mark Themig, Community Services Director, City of Healdsburg
- Susan Harvey, Councilmember, Cotati City Council

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SCL VISION

***"I love the library and really appreciate all of the services. It is such a great joy."
– library customer***



21ST CENTURY LIBRARY VISION

The Sonoma County Library is a high-performing organization that is cherished by the communities it serves. For generations, SCL has provided information, resources, and programs to improve Sonoma County residents' quality of life. Participants in the community survey shared stories of the difference that SCL has made in their families' lives and in their communities

GREAT STAFF

SCL's ability to provide great service is rooted in its talented staff. Their agility and innovative spirit was particularly evident during the COVID-19 closures, when SCL staff quickly pivoted to providing new services such as online programming and curbside pickup of materials.

More than 30% of community survey responses included spontaneous mentions of staff – frequently paired with the terms “friendly” (14%) and “helpful” (22%). To quote a few:

“The staff are helpful, friendly, and welcoming.”

“Staff are experienced, knowledgeable, helpful and intuitive too!”

“The electronically knowledgeable staff keeping the community informed has been impressive!”

“Staff works hard.”

STRONG FACILITIES NETWORK

SCL has taken great care of the buildings it operates. During tours by the consultant team, SCL's branches were observed overall to be clean, tidy, and well-kept. Detailed facility assessments for this master planning process found that the library's buildings are generally in good condition, with a low maintenance backlog. (That said, a notable amount of maintenance and lifecycle building system upgrades will be coming due over the next decade – particularly in the older facilities that haven't been renovated recently.) With continued good maintenance, these buildings should have many years of useful life ahead of them.

In most populated areas of Sonoma County, residents have access to at least one SCL branch. Mapping of SCL circulation data show that Sonoma County residents do not exclusively visit the branch library closest to home; many visit the branch – or branches – that best suit their needs at the time (see page 14).

The community's mobility and library use patterns support the finding that SCL's branches function as a strong network in which each branch has influence and reach well beyond its immediate locale. Improvements at one branch for special services, expanded space, and/or streamlined service has ripple effects and benefits for the other branches as well – particularly those in the same area of the county.

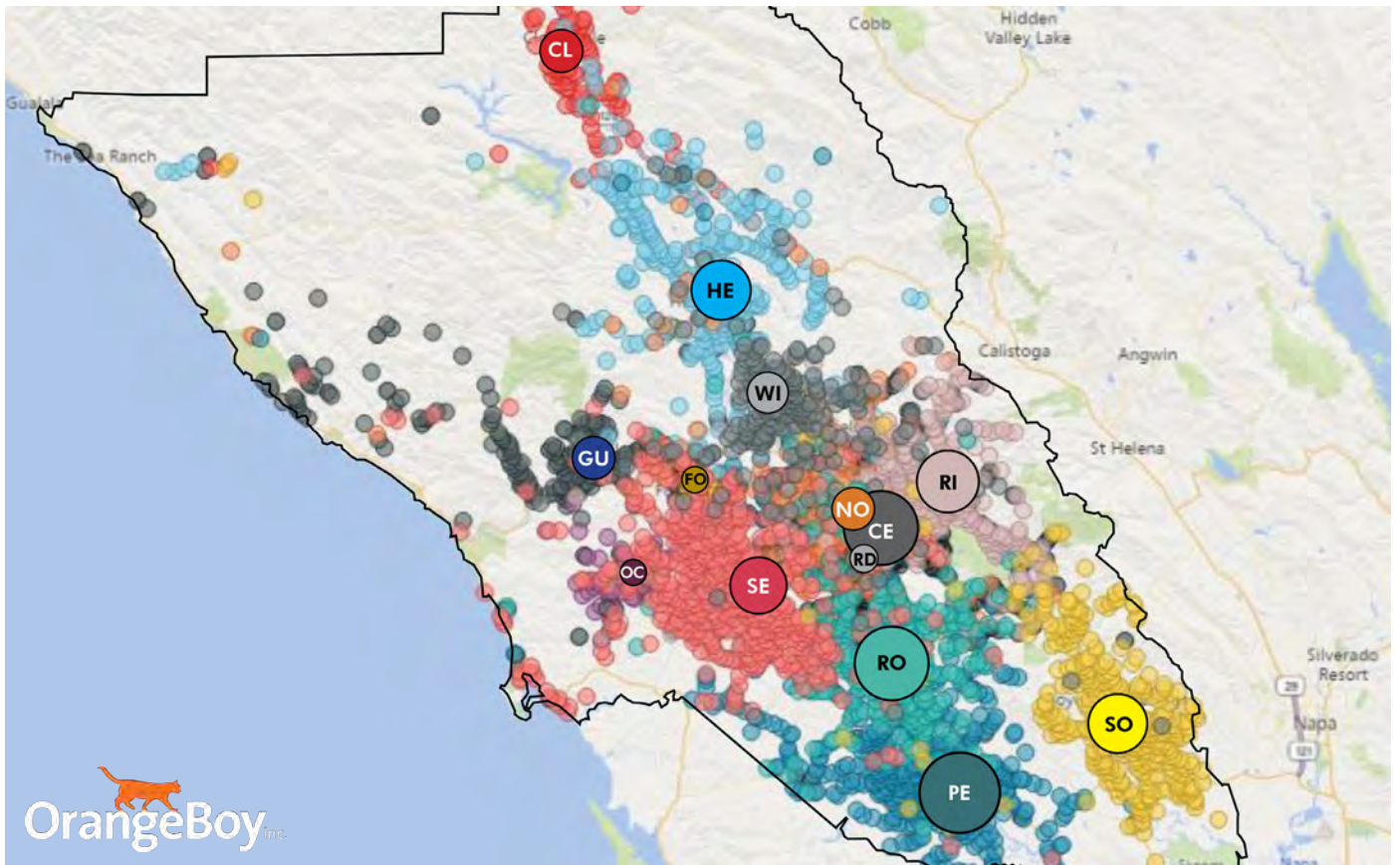
Until 2018, SCL's administration and support services were spread across all three of the Central Santa Rosa Library's operationally challenging and incompletely accessible floors. Like many of its library peers, SCL has seen the benefits of moving its systemwide support functions to a more suitable location. However, these functions are already outgrowing the current leased space; SCL will need to decide whether to stay or go before the lease is up for renewal next year.



Cloverdale Regional Library front entrance



Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library interior



Geographic Patterns of Library Use in Sonoma County

Data supplied by OrangeBoy were used to assess how SCL's facilities provide access to library service at the network level. The library subscribes to OrangeBoy's Savannah data platform, which among other things tracks what library services customers use – and where. For this master plan, OrangeBoy prepared maps based on its "last branch visited" dataset, which marks the last checkout location for each active library cardholder, color-coded to the cardholder's address. The maps were generated in the fall of 2021, after the new Roseland Regional Library opened and before Petaluma and Guerneville closed for renovation in 2022.

The maps of this dataset demonstrated that SCL customers do not exclusively use the branch closest to their home. In fact, most SCL branches attract customers from a wide geographic area. It also showed that residents of all areas of Sonoma County are able to access at least one branch.

Sonoma County does have rural areas that are remote from its urban centers, and even some of its populated areas are separated from other communities by distance and geography. This analysis is not to suggest that branch libraries all have equally close access to branches. What it does suggest is that SCL's customers make decisions about which branch to visit based on multiple factors (not just proximity to home). It supports the practice of strategically locating certain services and collections (such as the local history/genealogy materials) rather than diluting or duplicating them at multiple locations.



BEYOND THE BRANCH

Measure Y has enabled SCL to reinvest in and expand its mobile and outreach services in recent years. The 2021 Reimagining Plan establishes specific priorities for increasing service outside of SCL's branches, including to boost library service in underserved areas and to build partnerships for increased reach and impact.

SCL's community libraries in Forestville and Occidental were conceived as one way to provide enhanced access to physical materials and a limited number of services outside of the branch libraries. Although these tiny facilities may have been less expensive to build than many of SCL's branch libraries, they are disproportionately more costly to operate than the branches. Mostly they are used for checking out physical materials; indeed, in such small spaces it is difficult to do much of anything else except access WiFi (which nearly every visitor to the Occidental Community Library did in 2019, on average). These all may help explain why SCL never added any more of these very small facilities to its network. Their small size also makes them challenging to operate while maintaining any safe social distancing requirements, as was the case with COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021.

"I LOVE the library. I have had my library card since the mid-80s. I am a retired teacher. When I taught the elementary grades, I was at the library every week getting a new stack of primary level books for my classroom. Back in the day I used to get the books and tapes for my classroom as well. On my own I often reserve books on-line and come in to pick them up. Thank you so much for the COVID pickups in the back of the library. I was there a lot!"

– community survey respondent



21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES ARE PLACES FOR:

“[The library has] helpful staff; opportunities to meet students for tutoring; engaging children’s section; areas for students to gather after school and get schoolwork done; bilingual area and selections; availability of historical materials; used book shop (pre-COVID)”

– community survey respondent

LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The Sonoma County Library promotes lifelong learning and literacy for community members of all ages with nearly 70,000 children’s program attendees in 2019 and more than 2.2 million items circulated annually. Programs, services, and collection materials are provided for all ages – with a particular emphasis on engaging youth and teens as described in the Reimaging Plan. SCL also provides robust services and materials for Spanish speakers – who represent at least 20% of Sonoma County’s population, according to US Census 2020 data.



Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library

The community clearly values and loves the library's learning and literacy programs and materials, which will always be core to its services and service model. SCL's current collection includes more than 780,000 physical items – each of which was checked out almost three times during 2019.

Even at that rate, however, a lot of space is required for the items remaining on the shelf. Particularly in some of SCL's smaller branches, shelving is tall (or very tall) in order to accommodate the collection. In the Sebastopol Regional Library, for example, some materials are shelved so high as to be out of reach of all but the tallest customers. And even there, the shelving still is a constraint on space for other functions – including seating and technology.



Very tall shelving is used in order to accommodate the Sebastopol Regional Library's collection within the small building.



TECHNOLOGY

Libraries in the 21st century play a significant role in connecting communities with technology. They provide computers, software, and support customers with diverse needs – kids playing learning games, teens using special software for homework, adults applying for jobs online, and seniors keeping in touch with family and friends in faraway lands. Particularly in marginalized communities, the library is an essential bridge across the digital divide. Providing technology and associated resources and support is a core library service for SCL in creating a stronger and more equitable future for Sonoma County communities.

Library visitors today also bring more devices than ever before, hoping for fast WiFi and access to power within a cord's length from a comfortable place to sit. Like SCL, many libraries have had to upgrade their facilities' power and data infrastructure, increase their internet capacity and speed, and extend WiFi access in order to support customer devices as well as their own technology programs and equipment.

SCL's 2019 Strategic Technology Plan was completed during a time of rapid change both for the library and in society at large. It recognized the upgrades that SCL had been able to make in some facilities with Measure Y funds, and identified areas still needing improvement to support 21st century technology. The 2021 Reimagining Plan includes priorities for expanded technology teaching and lending as well as broadband access. Renovations of SCL's facilities will provide opportunities to make many of these still-needed changes at the branch level.

CREATIVITY

SCL's Reimagining Plan proposes "Embody a culture of creativity for quality of life" as a key library objective, including by providing programs, resources, and encouragement to help community members create and contribute library content.

SCL is in good company with other 21st century libraries across the nation that are also embracing the potential for creative programs and services to benefit their communities. For children and teens, active learning and collaboration has been linked to improved learning outcomes. Hands-on DIY programs provide opportunities for workers to build skills and learn how to use special tools and technologies that may be required for jobs in emerging industries. Collaborative making can enhance people's social and intellectual lives – with both individual and societal benefits.

Some hands-on, DIY-type programs require specialized equipment, space, and/or staff. Examples of specialized space for creative library programs include woodworking shops, broadcast/podcast studios, sewing and textile work spaces, and art studios. These types of specialized programs tend to be located strategically (often centrally) within a library system's network. The E Street Studios program at the Central Santa Rosa Library – providing classes, equipment lending, and space for digital recording and production – is one such example.

Many creative learning programs can be held in flexibly-designed meeting rooms as well as in available outdoor spaces during pleasant weather. Most SCL branches have a small to medium meeting room, and some do have usable outdoor space. Not every meeting room is well-suited for different types of creative programs – which often benefit from surfaces and finishes that are easily cleaned, flexible furnishings, and copious storage.



"I like the 3-D printer capability and the eStudio at Central... The fact that everything is free, including WiFi and Chromebooks, is an excellent service...."

– community survey respondent



"[I want to see] group collaboration space with technology (useful for small group collaboration work, presentation practice)...."

– community survey respondent

"I think that having space for more community activity would be nice - especially musical events."

– community survey respondent

PEOPLE

The Sonoma County Library seeks to bring people of different ages, cultures, and interests together through programs, activities, and inclusive spaces. Especially given the magnitude and long tail of the COVID-19 disruption, SCL has a big role to play in reducing social isolation and increasing connectedness – with benefits for physical, socioeconomic, and even community health. In a survey facilitated for SCL's Reimagining Plan process, nearly two-thirds of teen respondents said that they wanted more opportunities – including through programs and activities – to renew their friendships and build new social connections.

Providing low-cost and no-cost space for community collaboration and gatherings is an important library service that's increasingly in demand. In a 2013 national survey by Pew Research, respondents – particularly respondents of color – said that access to free public meeting space is "very important." In the community survey, Sonoma County residents agreed:

"I love the extra events they sponsor in the meeting room... one evening my daughter and I went to an art night where we created a painting." – community survey respondent



Meeting rooms in most of SCL's branches are small to medium in size. In many cases, inadequate storage space means that furniture and equipment cannot be completely cleared out of the room. The Guerneville Regional Library's already-small meeting room tries to do double-duty as the Friends of the Library's sale area – compromising both functions. The Northwest Santa Rosa Library has no meeting room at all.

The Central Santa Rosa Library does have a large meeting room that can accommodate big events. The SCL network would benefit from additional spaces that can accommodate large library programs and community gatherings.

"I would love more comfortable seating options (like couches or deeper chairs) to facilitate a more relaxing, sit-in environment."

– community survey respondent

"I am grateful the library has a public meeting room."

– community survey respondent

"I think our town would love a library space that is more spacious, offering more comfortable seating/reading/power access options and places for tutoring and such that is more private/quiet."

– community survey respondent



21ST CENTURY LIBRARY FACILITIES ARE:

“Please consider all disabilities as well as overall health of staff and patrons, especially as you remodel. Wheelchair access and Braille and other mainstream accommodations are super important, but they don’t meet the needs of most disabled people or health issues for many people with and without disabilities.”

– community survey respondent

ACCESSIBLE

The Americans with Disabilities Act established national guidelines for accessible design in 1990. Although ADA is not a true building code, compliance is required for buildings in California. Generally speaking, buildings are not expected to be continuously updated to meet evolving building code requirements over time. However, ADA is not a true building code, and there is not the same “grandfathering” for accessibility barriers as there is with building codes.

Detailed accessibility reviews found gaps between the current state of most of SCL’s facilities and the latest version of the ADA guidelines. Some of the gaps will be easier to fix than others; some can be addressed by SCL’s own facilities crew, which has already gotten started. Other gaps – such as the lack of a publicly-accessible elevator at the Central Santa Rosa Library – could require major retrofitting and structural upgrades.



INCLUSIVE

Removing barriers to access for people with physical disabilities is just one consideration for designing libraries that are inclusive. Inclusive libraries seek to provide visitors of every age, ethnicity, gender, and ability with a welcoming experience and space that accommodates their needs, preferences, and priorities. They reflect and celebrate the diverse cultures and unique characteristics of the communities they serve.

To name just a few, examples of inclusive library design characteristics include:

- intuitive wayfinding and signage that are easily understood by people who don't speak or read English well;
- attractive and comfortable spaces for social gathering where people feel they can talk without disturbing others around them;
- quiet spaces where customers can find relief from sensory overload; and
- spacious, comfortable places where customers can accomplish diverse goals during their visit – whether focusing on work, socializing with friends, or curling up with a book.

SCL's 2021 *Reimagining Plan* includes priorities for becoming a more inclusive library through programming and public services as well as through staffing and internal development. And the library's customers are ready for it; one community survey respondent sees the library as a place for "...Environmental studies, cultural studies, justice issues... a place to meet and discuss a wide variety of issues."

SUSTAINABLE

Modern libraries are designed with the environment in mind. Through new construction, SCL can add high-performing, environmentally-responsible facilities to its network that not only minimize ecological harm but can even have net positive community benefits.

New construction is not the only path to more sustainable buildings. Maintaining existing facilities is a fundamentally sustainable strategy – particularly for conserving their inherent embodied energy and carbon. Renovation of SCL’s existing branches will provide opportunities to improve energy efficiency, water conservation, air quality, and more.

Sustainability is also essential for 21st century library operations. With Measure Y, Sonoma County communities enabled SCL to expand hours of operation as well as to enhance programs and services. If Measure Y is not renewed in 2024, SCL may not be able to maintain current hours and levels of service. Even if Measure Y is renewed, SCL will need to expand operations at the larger branches recommended in this master plan. Operationally-efficient libraries are designed for intuitive and independent use by the public, with streamlined materials flow, and to maximize the ability of staff to spend time with customers.

“I would make [the Healdsburg Library] a green, environmentally conscious building that produced no waste and used clean energy.” – community survey respondent

RESILIENT

The Urban Land Institute defines resilience as “the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events.” In this context, the term “resilient” certainly applies to 21st century libraries – particularly in Sonoma County where communities are facing ever-more-frequent extreme temperatures, power and internet outages, wildfires, and other disruptions. Resilient library buildings that can continue operating in the face of such challenges will enable SCL to provide even more value to the community – a place to warm up or cool down, escape smoky air, recharge cell phones and access WiFi, and more.

But “resilience” can also be used to describe a library building’s ability to change and adapt to evolving programs, services, and technologies. Characteristics of libraries that support resilient service include robust power and data infrastructure, flexible spaces, and building systems (e.g., HVAC, lighting) that can be easily adjusted – to name just a few. From hour to hour and day to day, SCL’s most flexible library buildings can more easily provide more programs and services to more customers. Over time, they will also more readily adapt to changing community demographics, needs, and priorities.



NORTHWEST
REGIONAL LIBRARY



REIMAGINING

*"Our family adores the whole library and loves to spend time there. If I can't find something, the inter-library loan program is fast and awesome."
– library customer*



REIMAGINING LIBRARIES IN SONOMA COUNTY

This section summarizes the strategies and recommendations for improving SCL’s network of service delivery points. More detail about each current and proposed SCL facility appears later in this report.

AGILE SERVICE DELIVERY

The 21st century has seen significant evolution and expansion of agile strategies for enhancing community access to specific library services. Options include:

- Library lockers, which offer more location and time options for picking-up (and returning) holds.
- Vending-type machines, which can offer a browsing experience and more spontaneous opportunities to discover a new favorite book or movie.
- Partnerships to deliver more library programs and services in non-library spaces.
- Expanding bookmobile service to more locations and more frequent visits.
- Computer kiosks offering public access to SCL’s website and digital resources.
- Library card swipe-in access to unstaffed library spaces outside of normal staffed hours of operation.



SCL has installed its first book locker system at the Sonoma Valley Library (see artist's rendering on the opposite page), which will enable customers to pick up holds outside of regular library hours.

Over time, SCL also plans to install more lockers and/or other extended-access strategies at other branch locations. Branches that have been suggested for installation of lockers over the next couple of years include the Cloverdale, Guerneville, Rohnert Park-Cotati, and Petaluma libraries. The timeframe for implementation at these branches and other community locations will depend on available funding for equipment purchase and installation; the desire to maintain access to materials during branch renovations; new opportunities; and other considerations.

Book lockers may not be the right strategy for every location, and SCL should explore different strategies that would be most manageable and cost-effective for delivering specific library services.



Central Santa Rosa Library



Central Santa Rosa Library

BUILDING BIGGER BRANCHES

Sonoma County's population more than doubled between 1970 and 2000, and new libraries were built in response. A library branch construction boom between 1968 and 1981 resulted in new Northwest Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Sebastopol, Sonoma Valley, Cloverdale, and Guerneville libraries. Another push between 1988 and 2003 saw the construction of the Healdsburg, Rincon Valley, Windsor, and Rohnert Park-Cotati libraries.

After 2000 Sonoma County has continued growing (although more slowly). The California Department of Finance projects that the county's population will reach nearly 530,000 by 2035. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) expects that much of this growth will be in the southern parts of the county. This additional population growth will continue to increase demand for library services and pressure on SCL's facilities.

Due to a variety of factors, several of SCL's facilities will need to be replaced in the coming years. It is recommended that they be replaced with larger facilities where feasible. Larger facilities support more programs and services as well as more efficient and cost-effective operations – with benefits for local communities as well as the county as a whole.



Sebastopol Regional Library

The following SCL branches are candidates for relocation/replacement:

- **Central Santa Rosa Library** – The Central Santa Rosa Library (shown on opposite page) accounts for more than one-fourth of all library space in Sonoma County. When its downtown site is eventually redeveloped, it will be important to replace this building with one of a comparable size (at least) and location that can continue its local and countywide role.
- **Windsor Regional Library** – Currently one of the smallest branches in Sonoma County, the Windsor Regional Library will need to expand in order to provide more services, resources, and space for this growing community.
- **Roseland Regional Library** – Southwest Santa Rosa has been identified as an underserved community for decades. Measure Y enabled SCL to develop the new Roseland Regional Library in leased space, which – although a big improvement, is still much too small to meet community needs. A full-size branch library is needed for this community.
- **Sebastopol Regional Library** – The Sebastopol Regional Library (pictured above) is beloved by the community and is busier than most other SCL branches of its size (and even some that are significantly larger). Replacement with a larger building on either its current site or an alternate location nearby would support expanded and enhanced library service.

Standalone new construction is not necessarily the only option for expanded library facilities. SCL and its jurisdictional partners are encouraged to also explore the feasibility of adaptive reuse, joint-use, and public-private partnership opportunities as well. It will be important to select highly visible, well-located sites that are easily and safely accessible by transit, cycling, and walking as well as by private vehicle.



Petaluma Regional Library

MODERNIZING SERVICE AND EXPERIENCE

All buildings require maintenance in order to keep them in good working order. Although SCL's facilities are generally in good repair thanks to excellent maintenance, additional work will be needed over the next decade. The facility condition assessments (FCA) conducted as part of this master planning process projected when repair or replacement of various building systems, materials, and equipment will be needed over the next 10 years based on factors such as current condition and number of years until their anticipated end of useful life.

The projected schedule of maintenance needs identified in the FCA studies can be used in prioritizing potential renovation projects for early or later implementation. That said, there are other considerations – such as availability of funding – that will also factor in the sequencing of renovation projects. Depending on individual needs and specific circumstances, SCL and each owning jurisdiction can evaluate opportunities for earlier renovation than suggested in the FCA or for later deferral.

Renovation projects to address maintenance needs – particularly those that may require temporary library closure – provide opportunities to modernize at SCL's facilities for 21st century service and customer experience at the same time.



Rincon Valley Regional Library

SCL libraries where a significant amount of maintenance and modernization work is anticipated within the next three to five years include:

- **Petaluma Regional Library** – Major renovation of the Petaluma Regional Library (pictured opposite page) is pending as of the date of this report to take care of major accessibility and lifecycle maintenance needs (including a new roof) as well as to modernize and reimagine interior library spaces for people, technology, and programming.
- **Guerneville Regional Library** – Renovation of the Guerneville Regional Library for modernized service has been completed.
- **Healdsburg Regional Library** – The Healdsburg Regional Library has not had a major renovation since it first opened in 1988. Moderate to major renovation will provide opportunities to rebalance space and modernize library service while also addressing water seepage and other maintenance issues.
- **Rincon Valley Regional Library** – Upcoming maintenance needs at the Rincon Valley Regional Library (pictured above) include a new roof, general lifecycle renovations, and ADA updates. There is also an opportunity to improve space and service; for example, expanding the children’s area to address crowds and implementing more adult-focused programs.



Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library



Cloverdale Regional Library



Northwest Regional Library

Other SCL libraries whose upcoming lifecycle maintenance work is anticipated between 2027 and 2032 include:

- **Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library** – Built in 2003, this is the youngest building in SCL’s fleet. It will be due for renovation in the next five to 10 years to address lifecycle maintenance needs (such as a new roof section, interior and exterior finish replacements, and replacement of rooftop units). At that time, SCL can also evaluate opportunities to modernize the building for services that were not anticipated at the time its original design – such as expanding convenience power for customer devices.
- **Cloverdale Regional Library** – Measure Y enabled SCL to address many of the Cloverdale Regional Library’s deferred maintenance needs in 2017; however, these improvements did not include much modernization for 21st century library service. When Cloverdale is due for additional maintenance work during the next five to 10 years, SCL should include a more complete update of the branch for library service, operations, and customer experience.
- **Northwest Regional Library** – Renovation of this branch in 2018 took care of many of its anticipated maintenance needs through the next five to seven years. However, given the age of the building and the lack of a community room, it is expected to require more maintenance work toward the end of the next decade.

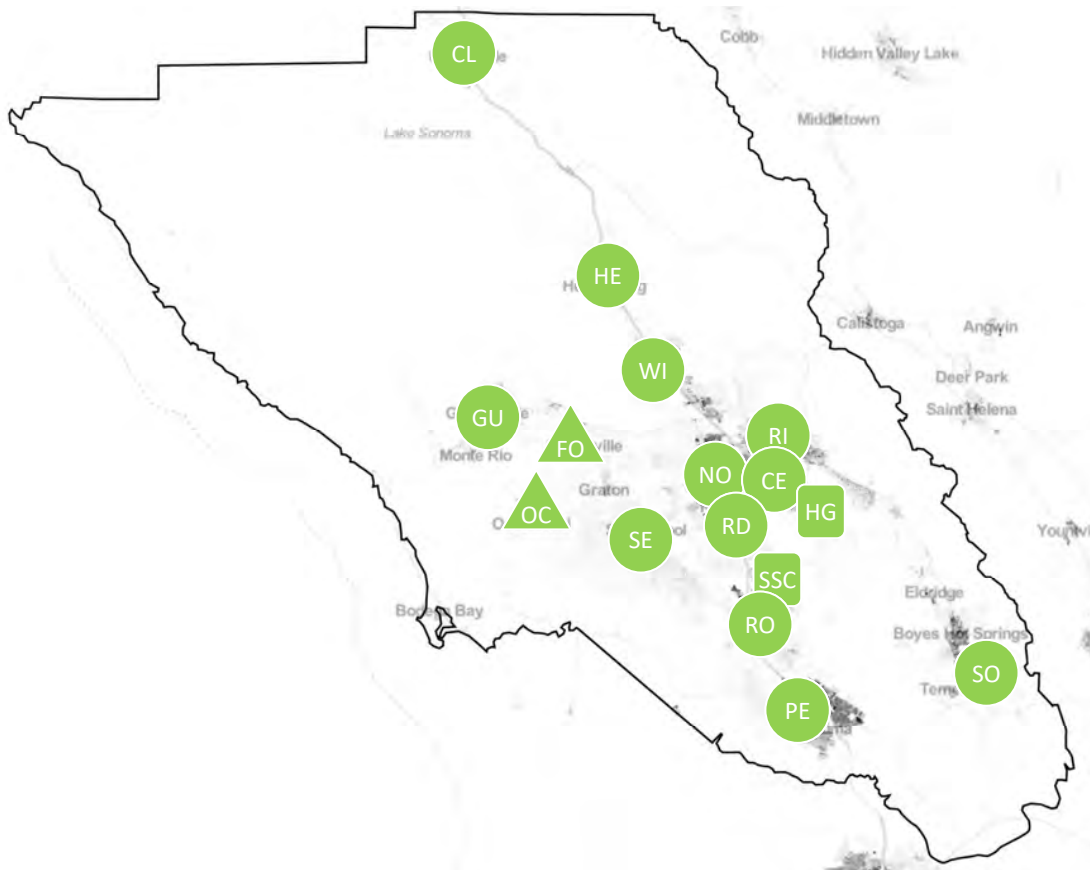
It should be noted that the renovation projects are not anticipated to include expansion. Most of SCL’s libraries are on small sites without much room to grow. On a case-by-case basis, the design process for renovation projects can consider the costs and benefits of a small expansion versus other ways to accommodate specific community needs and priorities.



FACILITIES

*"I love the library! The way the Central Library adjusted to the pandemic was fabulous. I really appreciate you."
– library customer*

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FACILITIES

This section includes highlights of the assessment findings and recommended improvement strategies for each of Sonoma County Library’s facilities listed below. Population and library service data sources in this section include US Census 2020, OrangeBoy (library community and market research data), California State Library (FY2019 dataset unless otherwise noted), and SCL.

Facility Condition Index

Other than the community libraries and the History and Genealogy Annex, each facility in this section also has two Facility Condition Index (FCI) scores based on Bureau Veritas’ detailed assessments. FCI is calculated as the simple ratio of the estimated cost of a building’s maintenance needs to the assumed replacement cost of the entire building. Because maintenance needs are periodic and ongoing, each FCI score is connected to a defined point in time.

The current FCI scores indicate the amount of maintenance backlog observed at the time of Bureau Veritas’ site visit. The current FCI scores for SCL’s facilities are all quite low — reflecting its care and good stewardship of the buildings.

The 10-year FCI scores indicate the general magnitude of maintenance that is expected to be due over the next decade.

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CLOVERDALE REGIONAL LIBRARY

401 North Cloverdale Boulevard,
Cloverdale, CA 95425

Owner: City of Cloverdale

Gross square feet: 7,200

Built: 1979

Last Remodeled: 2017

Facility Condition Index*

1.3%

Current

20.5%

10-year

The northernmost branch in SCL's fleet is also one of its smallest and busiest. The 7,200 square foot Cloverdale Regional Library serves the community with a collection of about 29,000 items, 12 computers, more than 30 reader seats, and a 3-D printer for public use. Programs offered at this branch include book discussions, book sales, and Lawyers in the Library – a program that offers free legal information for library customers and community members.

Community members are enthusiastic about their library. The Cloverdale Regional Library has the highest rate of library visits and program attendance per local area population in Sonoma County. Community survey respondents reported that access to internet and satisfactory reading and workspaces are some of the reasons they return time and time again. That said, respondents reported the need for more computers, more space for community activities, more acoustic separation between active and quiet activities, and updated restrooms.

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



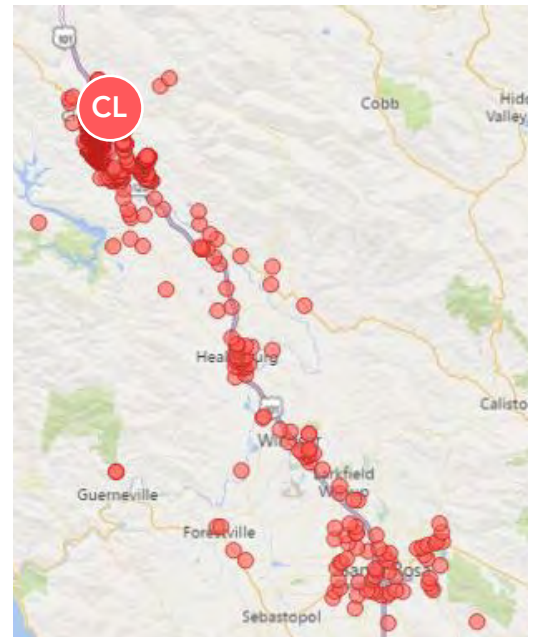
"[The Cloverdale Library is] Close to home, [has] access to most resources available through the library, staff is knowledgeable and friendly. I enjoy the person-to-person interaction." – community survey respondent

The Cloverdale Regional Library's last renovation in 2017 included an interior refresh and reorganization to modernize service and the customer experience. It also include seismic retrofit of the building and accessibility improvements to the parking lot. A new roof was installed in 2018.

Given the building's age and level of use, it is not surprising that the Facility Condition Assessment found that more lifecycle maintenance (such as replacing mechanical system components) will be due over the next five to 10 years.

RECOMMENDATION

The current renovation should address many of the maintenance and modernization needs of the current Cloverdale Regional Library building. Through continued proactive maintenance, the Cloverdale Regional Library should be able to serve the public well into the future.



*The Cloverdale Regional Library is visited by residents of Healdsburg, Windsor, Santa Rosa, and beyond as well as by local customers.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology

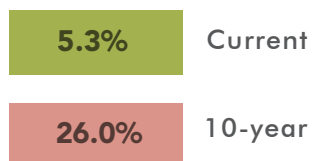


GUERNEVILLE REGIONAL LIBRARY

14107 Armstrong Woods Road,
Guerneville, CA 95446

Owner: Sonoma County
Gross square feet: 6,200
Built: 1981
Last remodeled: 2022

Facility Condition Index*



Nestled in the lower Russian River community is the Guerneville Regional Library. Built in 1981, it is the smallest library in the SCL network except for the temporary Roseland Regional Library and the Forestville and Occidental Community libraries. It offers a collection of about 29,000 items, 17 computers, and more than 40 reader seats. According to OrangeBoy data, the Guerneville Library has one of the highest circulation rates per local area population. OrangeBoy data also show that while the Guerneville community has one of the highest rates of high school graduation in Sonoma County, it also has one of the highest rates of poverty – 50% higher than the Santa Rosa-Petaluma Metro Area average.

As of the date of this report, the Guerneville Regional Library recently completed a renovation, including an interior refresh as well as maintenance and accessibility upgrades. The results should be welcomed by the community survey respondents who remarked on the dated appearance of the finishes (but also emphasized that service is more important than aesthetics).

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



“The Guerneville Regional Library... seems well-organized & inviting. The Children’s area is especially inviting! The Community Room provides space for readings, performances, community meeting, the wonderful book sales presented by the Russian River Friends of the Library, etc.” – community survey respondent

RECOMMENDATION

Following on the current renovation, the FCA identified additional maintenance that will be required over the next decade, including a new roof and upgrades to the HVAC and fire suppression systems. Through ongoing proactive maintenance, the Guerneville Regional Library should continue to serve its community well into the future.



*The Guerneville Regional Library is heavily — but not exclusively — used by local residents.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



HEALDSBURG REGIONAL LIBRARY

193 Piper Street,
Healdsburg, CA, 95448

Owner: City of Healdsburg
Gross square feet: 11,400
Built: 1988
Last Remodeled: never

Facility Condition Index*

1.4%

Current

19.5%

10-year

With its traditional Spanish-style roof and lush landscaping, the Healdsburg Regional Library is a staple of the Healdsburg community. Its convenient location in the northern downtown area, collection of nearly 50,000 volumes, public computers, 3-D printer, and generous seating make it an attractive destination for the local community. Healdsburg Library customers also come for a variety of different programs – book clubs, tax help, Lawyers in the Library, Spanish music and dance performances, family story time, jazz performances, and more.

The Healdsburg Regional Library is also home to the Sonoma County Wine Library, which draws visitors from a much wider area throughout and beyond the Sonoma County borders.

The current Healdsburg Library building has generally been well maintained but has not been meaningfully renovated since it first opened in 1988. Community survey respondents reported the need for more natural light, more space for children, more technology, better indoor air circulation, and an interior experience more consistent with modern library service. In addition to the lifecycle maintenance typically associated with a building of this age, the Facility Condition

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)

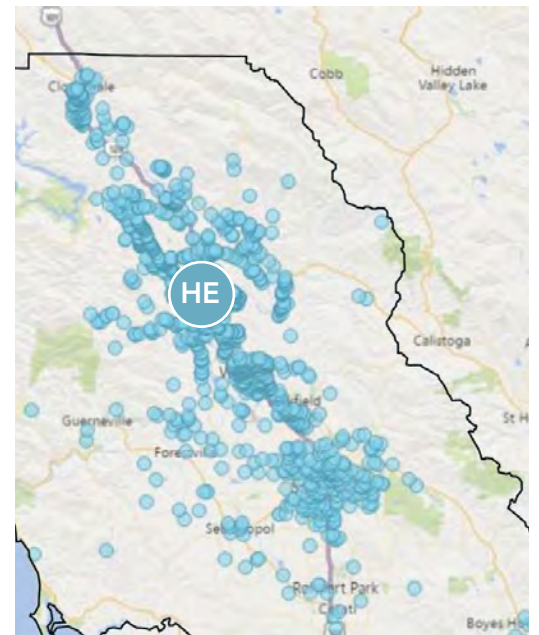


"Friendly, helpful staff and manager, great location, helpful with on-line resources and learning and acquiring books from other locations." – community survey respondent

Assessment also identified the need to diagnose and address the causes of observed water seepage and damp areas.

RECOMMENDATION

The Healdsburg Regional Library should be renovated for 21st century library service and operations as well as for deferred and lifecycle maintenance needs. This will enable the building to welcome and serve community members for many years to come.



*The Healdsburg Regional Library draws customers from a wide area of Sonoma County.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



WINDSOR REGIONAL LIBRARY

9291 Old Redwood Highway #100,
Windsor, CA 95492

Owner: Town of Windsor
Gross square feet: 7,600
Built: 1996
Last Remodeled: never

Facility Condition Index*

| | |
|-------|---------|
| 1.8% | Current |
| 25.6% | 10-year |

Positioned on the edge of the downtown Town Green, the Windsor Regional Library is an important community resource. At 7,600 square feet it is one of SCL's smaller branches. Its programs are well attended, and circulation is high for a branch of its size.

Community survey participants love the location of the library and its convenience to the Town Green. A recurring theme was that the Windsor Regional Library needs more space for reading, working, collaboration, technology, and programs. Children and teens were mentioned frequently – not a surprise in the community with the highest percentage of households with children in Sonoma County.

The Windsor Regional Library was originally designed as an office building. It was converted for use as a branch library in 1996, and has not had a major renovation since. The Facility Condition Assessment identified the need for moderate to significant maintenance over the next decade, as is to be expected in a building of this age.

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)

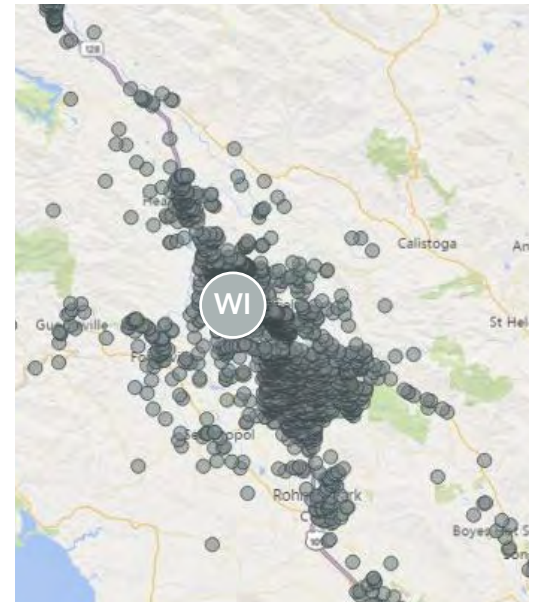


"[I love the] Multiple and varied resources — books, films, periodicals, papers, reference materials, knowledgeable and helpful staff, adequate hours of operation" – community survey respondent

RECOMMENDATION

The Windsor community would be better served by a branch library of at least 15,000 to 20,000 square feet. Expansion of the Windsor Library on its current site through either an addition or new construction may be possible; focused feasibility analysis was beyond the scope of this master plan.

If the library must relocate, a prominent, easily-accessible site with enough associated parking for a branch of this size will continue to be important. New construction is not the only option; an existing building in a good location and with enough space may be appropriate and can be considered for adaptive reuse.



*The Windsor Regional Library draws customers from throughout central Sonoma County.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



CENTRAL SANTA ROSA LIBRARY

211 East Street,
Santa Rosa,
California 95404

Owner: City of
Santa Rosa
GSF: 60,800
Built: 1967
Last Remodeled:
1999

Facility
Condition
Index*

0.6%

Current

25.6%

10-year

The Central Santa Rosa Library is the oldest and largest building in SCL's fleet. Nearly one-fourth of all of SCL's physical collection materials are housed here. In 2019 the Central Santa Rosa Library was one of SCL's most popular branches for young families, second only to the Petaluma Library in children's programs offered and attendance. Community survey respondents wished for even more space for children in the Central Santa Rosa Library.

Specialty services at the Central Santa Rosa Library include SCL's Adult Literacy program and the E Street Studio, which offers classes, equipment lending, and space for digital recording and production. Community survey respondents praised the programs offered at the Central Library overall, and asked for more space for meetings and gatherings.

For most of its 55 year life, the Central Santa Rosa Library housed SCL's administration and systemwide operations as well as providing public service. These functions moved to a more efficient and effective space in Rohnert Park, vacating significant portions of the basement and the mezzanine. These spaces have proven difficult to recapture for public space due in part to the lack of a publicly-accessible elevator.

Measure Y funds have enabled SCL to refresh and update parts of the Central Library's interior – such as replacing furniture in the main reading room and moving the Literacy program into the former Administrative offices on the mezzanine level. However, the

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



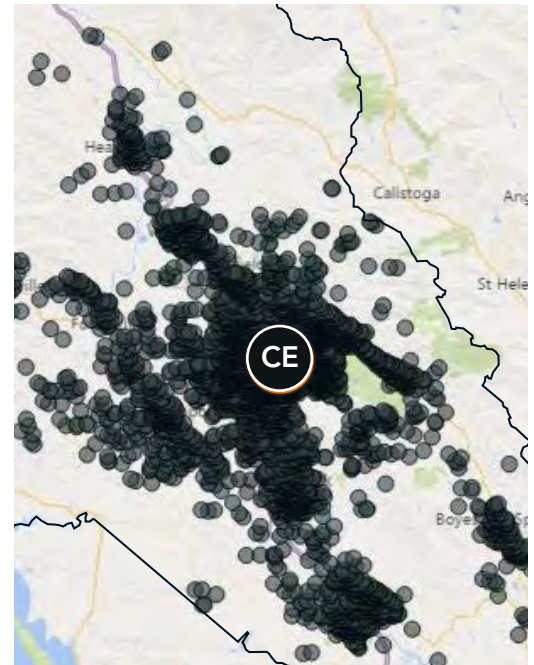
“Great resources [at Central Santa Rosa Library]. Best children’s library. Before Covid, had the best entertainment programs.” – community survey respondent

building’s last meaningful renovation was in 1999, and the Facility Condition Assessment study identified significant maintenance that will be due over the next decade (including a new roof and electrical system upgrade).

The FCA also found some visual indication that the building’s foundation may be settling; additional review by a structural engineer would be needed to identify the needs and estimate the cost for retrofit.

RECOMMENDATION

The City of Santa Rosa has plans to redevelop the Central Santa Rosa Library site and other nearby properties for housing and other uses. It will be important to find another prominent, easily-accessible site that can accommodate at least 50,000 square feet for public services as well as associated parking. New construction is not the only option; existing buildings with enough space and a good location may be appropriate and can be considered for adaptive reuse.



*The Central Santa Rosa Library is heavily used by customers throughout Sonoma County.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



NORTHWEST REGIONAL LIBRARY

150 Coddington Ctr,
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

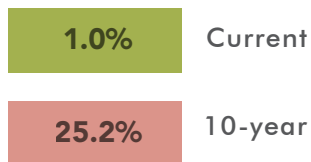
Owner: City of Santa Rosa

Gross square feet: 7,840

Built: 1968

Last Remodeled: 2018

Facility Condition Index*



Soon after the Central Santa Rosa Library opened in 1967, the Northwest Library opened in 1968 to enhance access for residents west of 101. For its size, it is one of the busiest and highest circulating branches in Sonoma County. It also generates surprisingly high program attendance despite not having a community room.

Community survey respondents appreciate the Northwest Regional Library for many reasons, including the vital access it provides to computers and the internet. (According to OrangeBoy data, 30% of northwest Santa Rosa residents don't have smartphones, and a similar proportion lack access to the internet at home.)

Survey respondents reported that they do miss having space for programs and meetings. Among the programs they mentioned wanting more of include language learning groups. According to OrangeBoy, a language other than English is spoken in more than one-third of northwest Santa Rosa households.

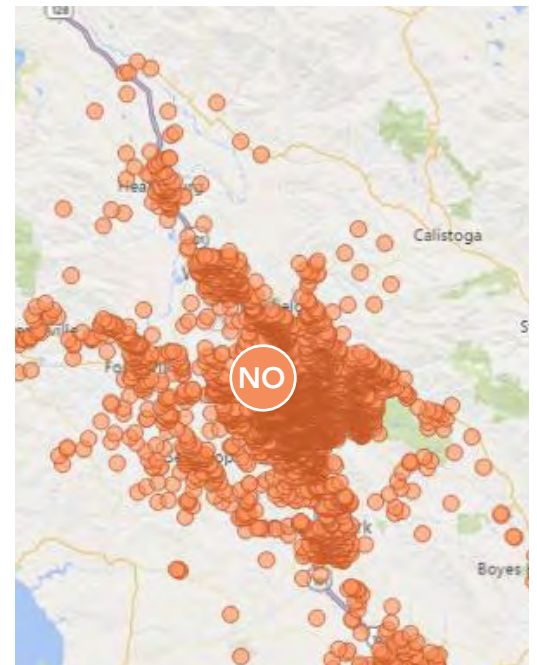
* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



"I love [the Northwest Library] and most of its activities and programs." – community survey respondent

RECOMMENDATION

Given its recent renovation, the Northwest Regional Library is not expected to need significant maintenance updates within the next three to five years. That said, given its age it will be due for some moderate to significant updates within the six to 10 year horizon. The need and feasibility of including interior updates for service and operations in the renovation project can be evaluated at that time. The feasibility of adding usable outdoor program space on the north side of the building can also be assessed.



*The Northwest Regional Library serves customers from throughout Santa Rosa and beyond.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology

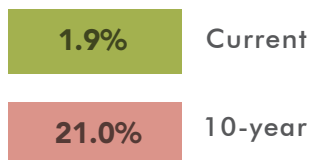


RINCON VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

6959 Montecito Boulevard,
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Owner: City of Santa Rosa
Gross square feet: 15,000
Built: 1994
Last major remodel: never

Facility Condition Index*



The Rincon Valley Regional Library was built in 1994 to serve the growing population in east and northeast Santa Rosa. Its proximity to popular community destinations including Rincon Valley Community Park and Maria Carrillo High School makes it particularly accessible and attractive to teens and families with young children. For its size, the Rincon Valley Library provides more generous seating than many other SCL branches. Its collection is also well-aligned with community interests, based on its higher than average turnover (number of checkouts per item).

Community survey respondents appreciated the strong focus on students and younger populations through summer reading programs, teen volunteer opportunities, bilingual early learning stations, and more. They noticed that the children's and teen areas of the library fill up quickly and become crowded, and suggested the need for more space for these core user groups. They also hope for more programs more geared toward adult audiences.

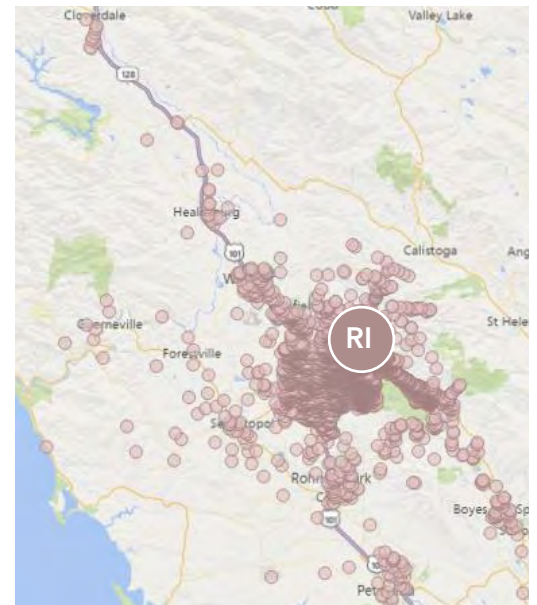
* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



"I like [the Rincon Valley Library], especially during the day when students are not there. The variety of art and culture programs they have offered was interesting. Parking is great and then it is great to also visit the park for a walk or eat lunch outside." – community survey respondent

RECOMMENDATION

The Rincon Valley Regional Library is due for significant lifecycle maintenance – which is to be expected, given its age and level of use. The Facility Condition Assessment includes a new roof, plumbing repairs, and new interior finishes among the maintenance needs within the next three to five years. Renovating for 21st century library service and operations as well as for lifecycle maintenance needs will prepare the building to welcome community members for decades to come.



Customers make their way to the Rincon Valley Regional Library from all parts of Sonoma County.**

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



ROSELAND REGIONAL LIBRARY

470 Sebastopol Rd,
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

Leased by: Sonoma County Library
Gross square feet: 4,455
Opened: 2021

For more than 20 years, the City of Santa Rosa and the Sonoma County Library have recognized the need for enhanced library services and space for the Roseland community. Following SCL's 2003 Facilities Master Plan, the City and the library initiated planning for a new joint library, recreation, and aquatic center in Southwest Community Park, but the economic downturn in the late 2000s put the concept on hold.

Despite the lack of ready funding, community visioning for a new branch library persisted. SCL was able to open a temporary Roseland Community Library in a former furniture store in 2015. Measure Y made it possible to move the branch into better-equipped – but still small and temporary – leased space in 2021.



"The staff are wonderful and very helpful. We are so happy they have their own space, FINALLY! I can't wait until the City of SR provides a permanent, spacious, location." –community survey respondent

RECOMMENDATION

The Roseland community has long deserved a full-service, permanent branch library. SCL is working with the City of Santa Rosa to find a well-located, highly-accessible site that can accommodate a branch of at least 20,000 square feet along with associated parking.

New construction is not the only option; existing buildings with enough space and a good location may be appropriate and can be considered for adaptive reuse. As of the date of this report, the City is initiating a community engagement process and needs assessment study for joint library and community facilities at another site in the Roseland area.



*The Roseland Community Library — which is significantly smaller than Santa Rosa's other libraries — also draws customers from a smaller geographic area.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



SEBASTOPOL REGIONAL LIBRARY

7140 Bodega
Avenue,
Sebastopol,
California 95472

Owner: City of
Sebastopol
GSF: 10,000
Built: 1976
Last Remodeled:
2012

Facility
Condition
Index*

1.8%

Current

21.0%

10-year

With hand-made signs and art on display just outside its entrance, it's clear that the Sebastopol Regional Library is an important part of its community. This small branch is heavily used and bustles with visitors on a day-to-day basis. In 2019, it received nearly as many visitors as the Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library – despite being less than half its size. It was the third highest circulating branch in Sonoma County that year, just behind Central Santa Rosa and Petaluma. It also offered more programs than any other SCL branch, and attracted the second-highest number of teen program attendees.

Of course these high levels of use are indicators that the Sebastopol Regional Library's services and programs are well-aligned with community needs. Another reason for the high levels of use is its location, which was one of the most appreciated aspects by community survey respondents. Its central community location, on a prominent corner adjacent to city hall and across a shared parking lot from the senior center, make it easy to access. It also serves more than just the Sebastopol community; it is the first library branch that coastal residents find along the Bodega Highway on their way into town to work and shop, and the last one they can stop at on their way back to the coast.

The 10,000 square foot building was built in 1976 and was last renovated in 2012. Although the last renovation made some significant improvements for library service, it could not address some of the fundamental challenges of the building's tight and steeply sloped site – including that the small building cannot expand to meet community needs. (Building a second story has been suggested, but retrofitting the existing structure and foundation to support is likely to be very expensive, and may not result in any meaningful savings compared to starting over with an all-new building.) Some community survey

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



"The staff are amazing! They make the library feel vibrant, welcoming, and alive!" – community survey respondent

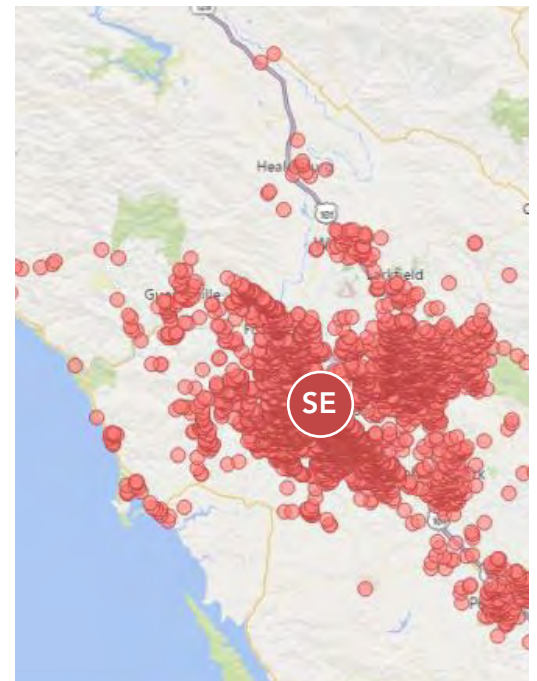
respondents also remarked that the exterior stairs from the street level up to the front door may be difficult to manage for visitors with disabilities.

The Facility Condition Assessment projects that the Sebastopol Regional Library's upcoming maintenance needs over the next decade could amount to more than 20% of the building's replacement value.

RECOMMENDATION

Given the inadequacies of the existing building, it is strongly recommended that it be replaced with a larger branch of at least 20,000 square feet. This may be possible on the existing site, either as a standalone project or as a joint development with another function (such as the senior center and/or city hall); additional study of the feasibility would be needed.

Survey respondents were positive that more space is needed to effectively deliver library services for the Sebastopol community. A larger building would have many benefits, including the potential for providing large-capacity event space that could accommodate civic and community gatherings (such as city council meetings and senior programs) as well as library programs. It would enable the Sebastopol Regional Library to both grow its collection and provide more accessible shelving.



*The Sebastopol Regional Library is an important stop for residents of Bodega Bay and other coastal communities as well as from inland areas of Sonoma County.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology

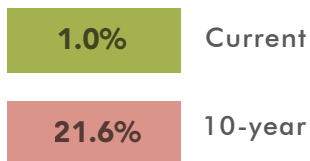


PETALUMA REGIONAL LIBRARY

100 Fairgrounds Drive,
Petaluma, CA 94952

Owner: City of Petaluma
Gross square feet: 26,400
Built: 1976
Last Remodeled: 2022

Facility Condition Index*



The Petaluma Regional Library is the largest branch in the Sonoma County Library system other than the Central Santa Rosa Library. In 2019 the Petaluma Library outperformed all other SCL branches – even Central Santa Rosa – on many measures, including overall visitor count, materials circulation, and per-event attendance at programs for all age categories. Because of its size, it can house SCL’s second-largest collection of physical materials fairly comfortably along with several dozen computers and more places to sit than any other branch.

Currently, the Petaluma Regional Library is scheduled for a much-deserved update – its first major renovation since it opened in 1976. The renovation will address lifecycle maintenance and accessibility needs as well as modernizing for 21st century library service and operations: improving interior navigation and wayfinding; providing acoustically-separate places for quiet work, group collaboration, and programs; adding new skylights; and fixing the non-ADA-compliant slope at the building’s entry, to name just a few.

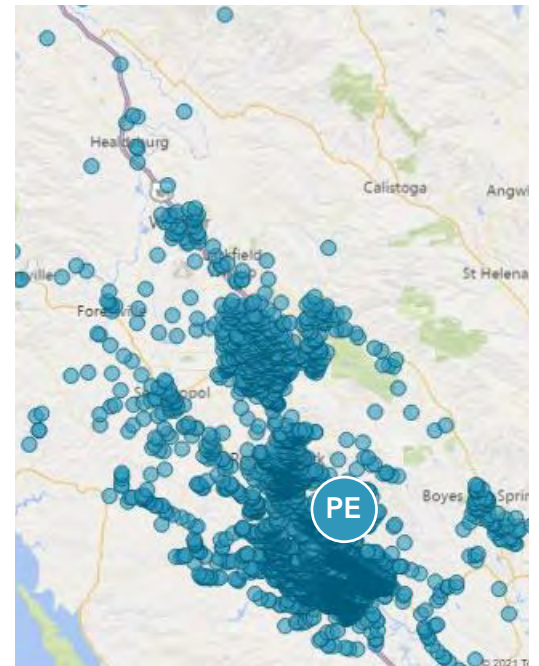
* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



“Good programs for children [at the Petaluma Library], child’s garden and playground, lots of tables to work at, friendly staff, good new book area” – community survey respondent

RECOMMENDATION

The 2022 renovation should take care of many of the Petaluma Library’s needs and prepare it for many more years of service. No additional work is recommended by this master plan other than ongoing maintenance as needed.



One of SCL’s largest branches, the Petaluma Regional Library attracts customers from throughout central and south Sonoma County.**

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



ROHNERT PARK-COTATI REGIONAL LIBRARY

6250 Lynne Conde Way,
Rohnert Park, CA 04028

Owner: City of Rohnert Park
Gross square feet: 24,000
Built: 2003
Last major remodel: never

Facility Condition Index*

| | |
|-------|---------|
| 0.6% | Current |
| 21.3% | 10-year |

At 24,000 square feet, Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library is one of the largest branches in the Sonoma County Library system. It is also one of the busiest – near the top of the list for visits, circulation, and program attendance in 2019. It provides generous seating, computers, collection of physical materials, and of course its programs and services.

Community survey respondents reported that the Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library feels up to date and welcoming, and that its size and general design are what keep them returning to the branch. Although they appreciated the openness of the design, some also wished for better acoustic separation between quieter reading areas and more active areas of the library. It was also reported that the Rohnert Park-Cotati Library isn't well-served by public transportation.

Built in 2003, the Rohnert Park-Cotati Library is the youngest building in SCL's network (other than the Roseland temporary leased space). Its design includes an open-plan interior with good visibility of most areas from the main entry. It also was designed with a very generous workroom for the Friends of the

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)



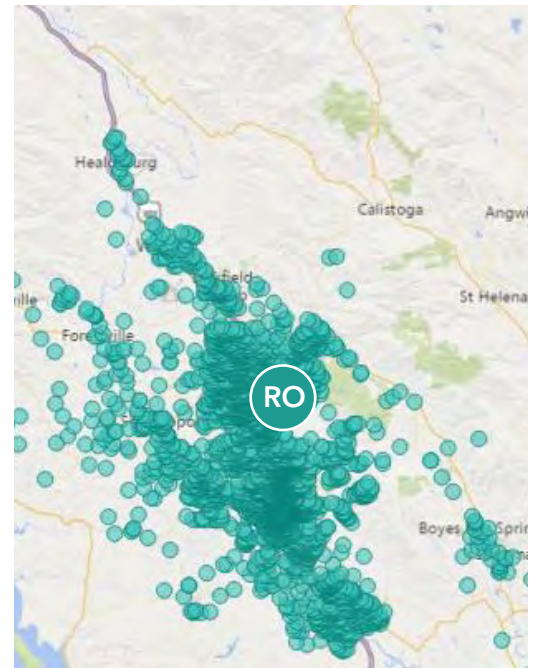
"Librarians are very helpful. Did a great job during the lockdown. Lots of masks and sanitizer available. Always willing to help us find out of our library books. It's my happy place!" – community survey respondent

Library. It is reported to have been designed for an additional 16,000 square feet on a second floor in a later phase.

RECOMMENDATION

Despite its relative youth, the Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library is coming due for capital maintenance over the next decade – including a new roof and new rooftop mechanical units as well as a general refresh of interior and exterior finishes. This is typical for a building of this age and level of use. Continuing to maintain the building in good condition will enable it to keep providing excellent service to the community.

The City and SCL should evaluate opportunities to pair updates for library service and operations with the capital maintenance work. They may also wish to evaluate the feasibility of adding the planned second story in order to provide expanded service and space for the community.



*The Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library is an easy stop for customers who live in many parts of Sonoma County.***

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



SONOMA VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

755 West Napa Street,
Sonoma, CA 95476

Owner: City of Sonoma
Gross square feet: 10,000
Built: 1978
Last major remodel: 2012

Facility Condition Index*

| | |
|-------|---------|
| 0.5% | Current |
| 22.8% | 10-year |

Located just west of the Sonoma Plaza, the Sonoma Valley Regional Library is a staple of its community. It provides generous seating and computers for a branch of its size. Community survey respondents praised it for its wide array of community programs, which are well attended. They also appreciated the access to the internet and technology classes that the Sonoma Valley Regional Library provides. Some felt that the collection size was too small.

In 2012, the Sonoma Valley Regional Library was renovated with a new roof, refreshed exterior and interior finishes, and accessibility upgrades. Community survey respondents saw opportunities for further modernization; they suggested a range of updates for the City of Sonoma and SCL to consider in the next renovation, including more space for programs and meetings.

* See page 35 for an explanation of Facility Condition Index (FCI)

FORESTVILLE AND OCCIDENTAL COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

At about 660 square feet each, the community libraries in Occidental and Forestville are tiny facilities. They are staffed locations that are very densely packed with books and other collection materials – each holding more than twice as many items per square foot as most of SCL's branches. They provide very little seating or technology, and no space for programs. They receive little foot traffic compared to the rest of SCL's network; on a typical day in 2019, the Guerneville Regional Library received twice as many visitors than the Forestville and Occidental Community Libraries – combined.

OCCIDENTAL COMMUNITY LIBRARY



*Occidental Community Library customers tend to live fairly nearby (fall 2021 dataset).***

73 Main Street Occidental, CA 95465

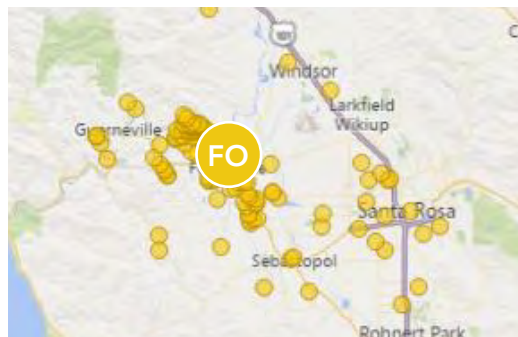
Private ownership
657 square feet

The Occidental Community Library is located in a very small tenant space on Main Street. It has nearly the highest number of collection items per square foot of any SCL location – second only to the Forestville Community Library. With so much shelving, there are fewer than 10 seats for reading, working, or using a computer; the Occidental Community Library doesn't even have a bathroom.

The Occidental Community Library is mostly used for materials pickup and dropoff. Even so, survey respondents appreciated the convenience and are happy to have it in their community.

Holds lockers and other automated strategies can be used to extend access to collection materials beyond regularly-staffed hours. There may be benefits to moving to an alternate location with more space for programs, seating, and technology – perhaps closer to other community destinations like the Center for the Arts.

FORESTVILLE COMMUNITY LIBRARY



*Map of Forestville Community Library customers (fall 2021 dataset) showing slightly larger geographic draw than Occidental's.***

7050 Covey Road Forestville, CA 95436

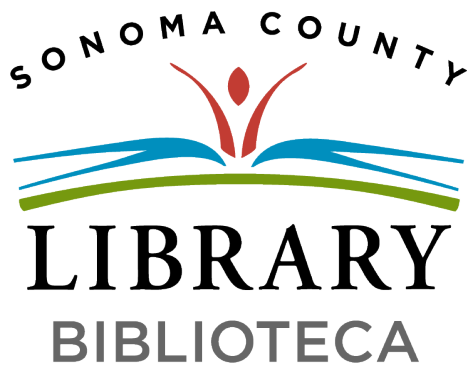
Owned by El Molino High School
660 square feet

The Forestville Community Library occupies 660 square feet of space in El Molino High School. It is closed to the public during school hours, and its campus location may deter some visitors even after school. The Forestville Community Library has the most collection items per square foot of any SCL location, and its turnover (average number of checkouts per item) is among the lowest in the network.

In the community survey, participants reported that they appreciate the convenience of materials pickup and dropoff that the Forestville Community Library provides. They wished for more technology, seating, and library programs than the current Forestville facility can accommodate.

SCL should look for alternate space in the Forestville area – perhaps shared with a local partner – where more technology, programs, and place-based services can be provided. A more central location in the village may be more suitable for community needs. Automated strategies such as holds lockers can support materials pickup and dropoff for many more hours (possibly even 24/7, depending on the location) and much more cost-effectively than in a staffed tiny library model.

** See page 14 for an explanation of customer mapping methodology



Sonoma County Library Annex Building Study

FINAL REPORT | 30 AUGUST 2023





GROUP 4

ARCHITECTURE
RESEARCH +
PLANNING, INC

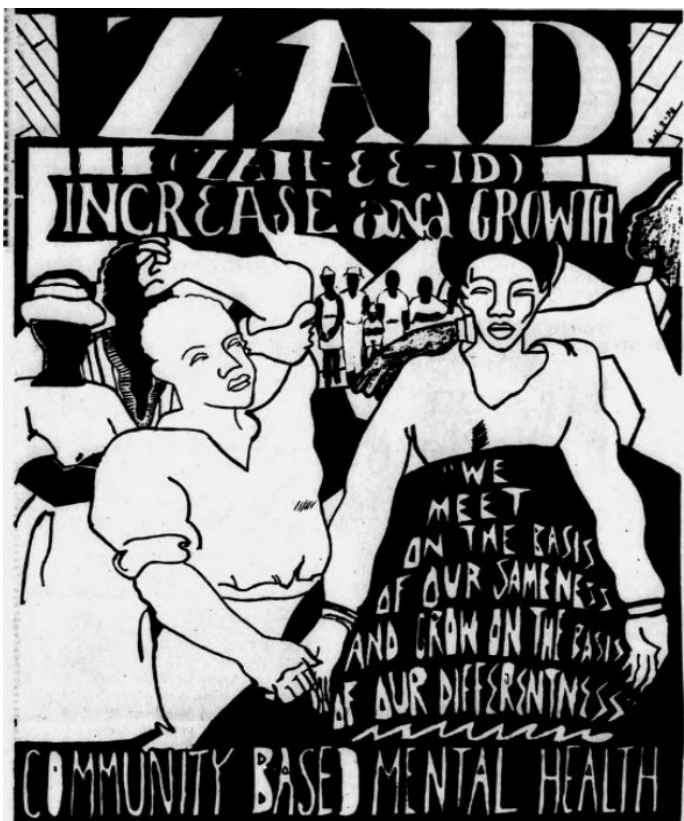
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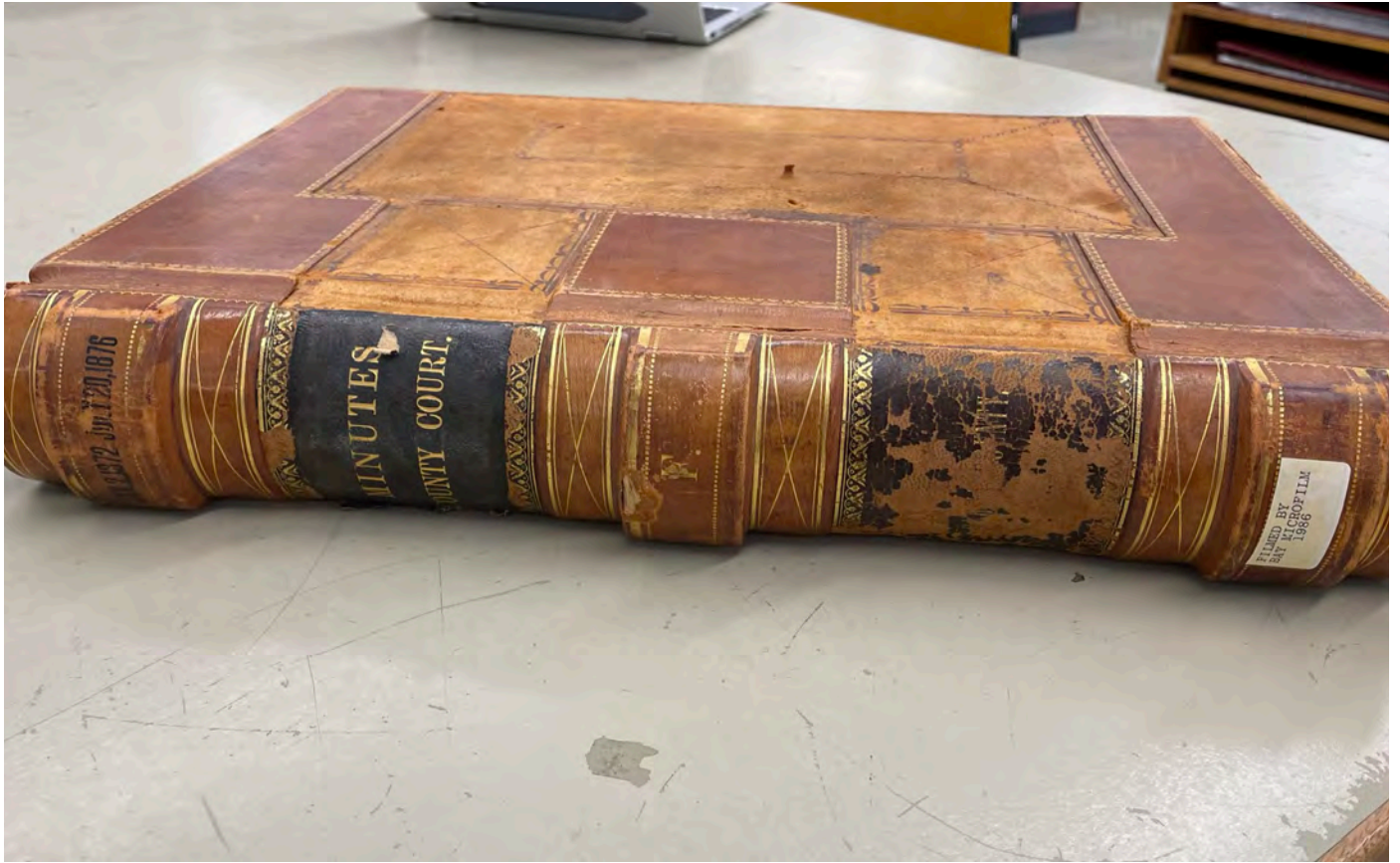
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INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the Sonoma County Library (SCL) published a new Facilities Master Plan describing the vision, guiding principles, and recommendations for its full-service regional and community libraries and its two library stations. SCL's other two facilities — its administrative headquarters in Rohnert Park and the Annex building in downtown Santa Rosa — were studied separately.

This memorandum summarizes the analysis and findings of the Annex study, which was initiated in late 2022 and completed in late spring 2023. The purpose of this study was to assess its current condition and anticipated maintenance needs in order to guide decision-making about capital reinvestment and future use. The process included on-site observation of the Annex building and a review of available documentation about the building. Bureau Veritas (BV) also completed technical assessments of facility condition and accessibility.

In April 2023 the study findings were presented to the Library Commission for discussion. This final memorandum will be presented to the Library Commission in September 2023.

THE ANNEX BUILDING

Located next to the Santa Rosa Central Library, the building at 725 Third Street is popularly known as “the Annex.” It was originally built in 1966; the following year it became the headquarters of the new North Bay Cooperative Library System (NBCLS). When NBCLS moved out in the early 1990s, the Annex became the shared home of SCL’s Literacy Services and History & Genealogy (H&G) Library. H&G took over the whole Annex building in 2018.

The Annex is owned by the Sonoma County Library. It is considered to be well-located for public service. Sonoma County Transit bus routes 30 and 34 both stop in front of the Annex building, and it is less than a half mile from the Santa Rosa Transit Center.

The Annex shares a driveway and a small parking lot with the Central Library. The Central Library Branch Manager is responsible for H&G staff oversight, but there is otherwise not much day-to-day service or operational connection between the two facilities.

BUILDING CONDITION

The Annex received its last update in 2018 when Literacy Services moved out. Funded through Measure Y, this refresh included paint, lighting, and related asbestos abatement as well as some reorganization for full building occupancy by H&G. A few years ago the building experienced a leaking roof but this was repaired by SCL’s Facilities Department.

The 2022 Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) completed by Bureau Veritas (BV) described the Annex building as “well-maintained... with little or no visual evidence of wear....” The report states that “...the structure appears to be sound, with no significant areas of settlement or structural-related deficiencies observed. The exterior envelope systems and components were observed to be performing adequately.” There is an extremely low backlog of deferred maintenance.

BV’s report does describe the HVAC system as “antiquated.” BV also notes that “... much of the electrical infrastructure is original. Although no problems are reported, [this type and make of switchboard panel have] a high risk for unexpected failure.” BV recommends significant upgrades to the electrical system and a new boiler within the next three to five years.

Other notable maintenance needs over the next decade, according to the BV report, include new interior flooring¹ and paint, repainting exterior wood trim, and replacing windows. In addition, BV recommended accessibility improvements including the site and building approach, building entrance, and restrooms.

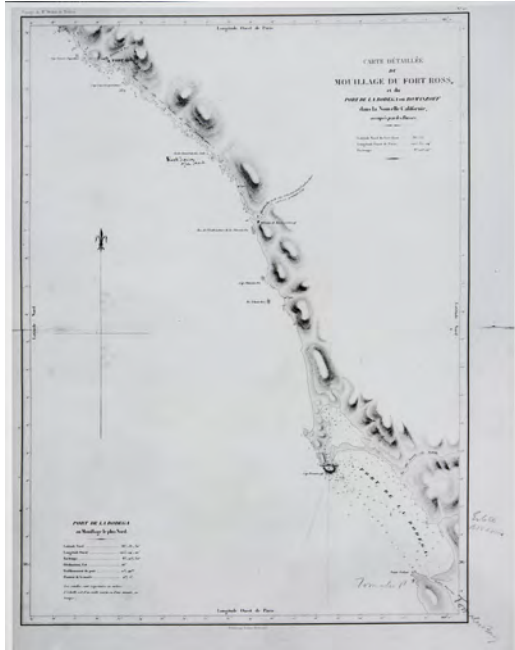
¹ According to the FCA, the existing vinyl composite tile (VCT) in the Annex is likely to contain asbestos which will require abatement.



Above: In 2018, the Annex's staff and delivery entrance was converted into the new public entry with a ramp and parking. Site and building accessibility upgrades are recommended in the Bureau Veritas report (see Appendix C).



Left: Film has been applied to the clerestory windows to reduce — but unfortunately not eliminate — exposure of H&G's collection to ultraviolet light. The UV light that still comes in limits where sensitive materials can be displayed in the main research space.



Sonoma County coastline map c. 1840

SONOMA COUNTY HISTORY & GENEALOGY LIBRARY

The Sonoma County Library's local history and genealogy collection was established in 1967 as the Sonoma County Room. It was located on the second floor of the Santa Rosa Central Library for more than 25 years before moving into the Annex in 1994. In 2002, the local history and genealogy division changed its name to the Sonoma County History & Genealogy Library.

Today, more than 200 people per month visit the Annex, and many more are served by phone or email. H&G's collection includes more than 16,000 non-circulating items, such as local city directories, school yearbooks, microfilm, newspapers, and maps as well as regional, national, and international genealogy resources. Specialty collections include the Wallace Collection and the California Indian Library Collection. H&G partners with other agencies and organizations for access to their collections, including the County's Historical Records Commission and Landmarks Commission, the Historical Society of Santa Rosa, and the Sonoma County Historical Society.

The Sonoma County History & Genealogy Library collects local experiences with recent community events such as the COVID-19 pandemic as well as historical documents from centuries past.

H&G is creative and innovative. The staff work to identify and fill gaps in the local record, such as the history of LGBTQIA+ communities in Sonoma County. It also works to collect and document local experiences related to significant community events such as the 2017 wildfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Coming soon is H&G's new grant-funded Memory Lab which will enable visitors to preserve personal, family, and community histories by digitizing their documents, photographs, negatives, slides, and VHS tapes.

H&G also offers lectures and workshops in library branches and other community locations. It welcomes class visits and supports research instruction for students from middle school through college and graduate school.

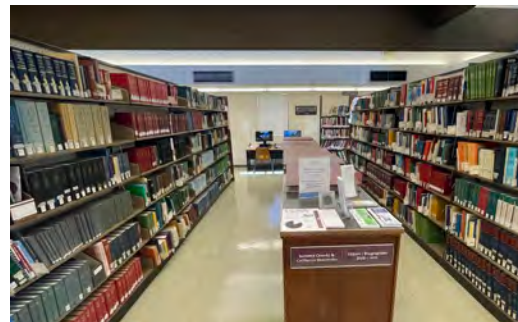


2020 – A Reflection from the Month of November by Cecelia Sullivan

H&G HAS OUTGROWN THE ANNEX

Although its 2018 expansion into the whole Annex building did give it a bit more elbow room, H&G is still constrained by lack of space. According to staff, this impacts most aspects of H&G programming and operations.

- The main research room shelves are essentially at capacity; every shelf unit is full, top to bottom. Materials on the lowest and highest shelves represent an accessibility challenge for some patrons and staff. Additional stacks cannot be added without displacing public research space. H&G will deaccession outdated and out-of-scope materials (i.e. “weed” its collection) to make room, but future acquisitions and growth may still exceed the capacity of the current shelves.
- Although each of the four-top tables in the main research room has several chairs, they are rarely used by more than one researcher at a time. A single researcher’s folios, maps, and other oversized reference materials can easily take over the entire table surface, leaving no room for others to share the table.
- Donations and new acquisitions can take a long time to process and fully incorporate into the collection. According to H&G staff, a single banker box of documents and photographs can take months to unpack, sort through, enter into the catalog system, and prepare for appropriate storage/archiving. The lack of dedicated intake space requires that these kinds of complex and detailed projects be unpacked and repacked frequently (often daily), further extending the overall processing timeline.
- Floor plan drawings show that the Annex building originally had a meeting room, but this has never been a dedicated programming space for H&G. Instead it is used for back-of-house functions, including temporary storage of paged items from the Sonoma County historical records and archives as well as staging and processing new acquisitions. All H&G programming is held off-site.
- The Annex doesn’t have the capacity or equipment for cold storage of sensitive materials such as film and acetate. H&G cannot quarantine or freeze new acquisitions suspected of having mold, silverfish, or other biotic agents that are sometimes found in old materials. Instead, H&G must turn away these potential donations, regardless of their value to the historical record and the community.
- H&G’s value is not just in collecting and archiving historical materials, but also in sharing them with the community. However, there is very limited space in the Annex for curated display of artifacts and resources.



H&G is weeding outdated materials but they need additional space and shelving to make room for new acquisitions.



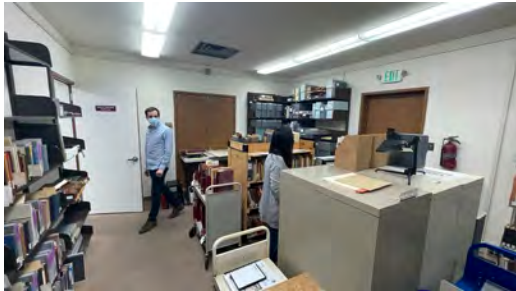
The lack of dedicated intake space extends the amount of time needed to process and incorporate new acquisitions and donated materials into the collection.



The new Memory Lab displaced materials that are now stored in the Rare Book Room, staff workspaces, and meeting room.



With shelves at capacity, rolling library book carts are used as makeshift shelving.



The new Memory Lab displaced a roomful of materials now stored in the Rare Books Room (above) and other back-of-house spaces.

H&G SPACE NEEDS

Expanded space would enhance H&G's ability to deliver programs, develop curated exhibitions, and offer enhanced research support. Not only would this enhance service to existing customers; it would also increase community awareness, access, and engagement with these one-of-a-kind resources.

For the purpose of the Annex analysis², at least double the current amount of space — and ideally more than that — would be needed to better support public research, programming, operations, and storage needs. Additional space would support enhanced capacity for curated display, exhibitions, events, and more. It could also enable the Sonoma County historical records and archives to be co-located with H&G, although this is not considered to be an essential need at this time.

It should be noted that the Annex building is not a good candidate for expansion. Any increase of the building's footprint would encroach into the parking lot's drive lane and/or the already limited parking area. A bigger footprint could also potentially interfere with staff and service access to the Santa Rosa Central Library next door. A two-story option might fit within the Annex's current footprint, but likely would be possible only through new construction.

² It was beyond the scope of this Annex study to prepare a detailed account of current and projected H&G space needs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ANNEX

The projected future lifecycle maintenance needs at the Annex offer an opportunity to update the building for service and operations at the same time. This study explored two basic options for focusing a renovation and reinvestment in the Annex:

1. **Renovate the Annex for H&G.** The Annex could be renovated for continued use as the primary location for H&G. SCL could evaluate whether the Annex could accommodate expanded public-facing services such as research space, open-access materials, and programming and exhibitions if some H&G operations and spaces were to relocate.
2. **Renovate the Annex for another Library program.** SCL could also move all of H&G to a different location and renovate the Annex for other library programs and services that would benefit from its central and accessible downtown location.

SCL's 2022 Facilities Master Plan identified a range of moderate to significant maintenance, accessibility, and modernization needs for the Central Library. Renovation of the Annex should be coordinated and sequenced with renovation work at the Central Library, particularly if programs and services may need to be temporarily relocated between the two during construction.

H&G is a popular and effective aspect of library services, and its overall usage may be significantly driven by those who value history and research. Whether H&G should expand or relocate was beyond the scope of this Annex building study, as was any identification or evaluation of potential relocation sites. A thorough and focused review of H&G's usage and role in the library ecosystem would be needed to determine whether to make a significant investment in its relocation or expansion. Such an analysis would also propose the right timing of such a project so as not to delay the expansion of branch library services needed elsewhere in Sonoma County.

APPENDIX A: ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND REFERENCES

This study was made possible through the generous participation of Sonoma County Library staff including:

- Erika Thibault, Library Director*
- Ray Holley, Public Information Officer*
- Dave Tichava, Facilities Manager*
- Zayda Delgado, H&G
- Joanna Kolosov, H&G
- Simone Kremkau, H&G
- Marshall McGraw, H&G
- Nikelle Riggs, H&G

*Project Management Team participant for this study.

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