STRATEGIC PLAN
2015 - 2020
Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

www.sonomalibrary.org/strategicplan
From the Chair of the Sonoma County Library Commission

I am pleased to present the 2015 Sonoma County Library Strategic Plan that will guide us into the year 2020 and beyond. This is an exciting time for the library and our commission – we have a dedicated, new library director, and in 2014 63% of Sonoma County voters expressed their commitment to expanding our financial sustainability through a tax measure. Also, during our strategic planning process, over 2,000 Sonoma County residents, representing all population sectors and geographic areas, voiced their opinions on the library’s future through focus groups, public meetings, and surveys. This level of community participation has convinced me that this strategic plan represents the community’s vision for our library’s future.

Our plan recognizes that the heart of our work is the service we provide to you, the residents of Sonoma County. We succeed in providing exemplary customer service by establishing a positive organizational climate and by providing welcoming facilities and resources with a professional and approachable staff, and taking a collaborative approach to serving all members of our community. As we move forward, we will become an ever more exciting place of discovery and education, providing a wide universe of information and a welcoming place to learn, conduct research, and play. We envision the library as a bridge that connects all Sonoma County residents with diverse opportunities to become a part of a vibrant community. We will become innovators who embrace technological advances to shape our county’s future while maintaining our quality collection of books and materials. And by focusing on our priorities and the needs of our constituents, we will secure a sustainable financial future for our library system.

I would personally like to thank everyone who dedicated their time and talents to the creation of this plan, including Director Brett Lear and the entire library staff, the members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Staff Workgroup, our Friends groups, the Library Advisory Boards, the Sonoma County Public Library Foundation, Library Commissioner Paul Grill, and The Results Group consulting team. Most of all, I wish to thank the residents of Sonoma County who shared their passion and visions for ways that the Sonoma County Library can reflect the county’s values and become a national leader in providing innovative library services.

Sincerely,

Tim May, Chair
Sonoma County Library Commission

From the Director of the Sonoma County Library

I’ve enjoyed participating in this strategic planning process over the past several months. As someone who is fairly new to Sonoma County, it’s given me an opportunity to work closely with members of the community and library staff to learn how important our libraries are to them as residents, employees, parents, and students.

As I began sketching out the path we’d take to develop our strategic plan, I knew that it was vitally important to give our residents ample opportunities to inform me of what they wanted from their library system now and in the future. So, this overall process was driven by community input.

As you’ll see as you read the pages that follow, this planning process has clarified our vision, mission, and priorities. The plan describes the library system our community aspires to create. Meanwhile, our day-to-day mission remains as vital as ever: To bring information, ideas, and people together to build a stronger community. Our five priorities will guide the work that we do and the services that we deliver over the next few years. I can’t wait to get started!

Sincerely,

Brett W. Lear, Director
Sonoma County Library
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 21st Century has been called the Knowledge Age. Innovation, growth, learning, communication, and connection are key to supporting this integrated, world community. Residents who are informed, innovative, creative, knowledge-seeking, and entrepreneurial are, in turn, the foundation of thriving, healthy communities.

This is what libraries are all about. Ever-evolving organizations, libraries are dedicated to connecting users with the kinds of knowledge and skills that make people happier, healthier, more informed, and more engaged. Since the first libraries opened in Sonoma County in the 1800s, county residents have been enriched, enlivened, and educated on their own time, at their own pace, and on topics of interest to them. In 1975, when our many city libraries came together to form the Sonoma County Library system, the power of those libraries was multiplied.

For nearly 40 years, learners of all ages have walked through our doors for information and research assistance. That information—once confined to the printed page—has expanded to include printed books and ebooks, print and online magazine subscriptions, music CDs, DVDs for entertainment and instruction, downloadable audiobooks, public access computers and Wi-Fi, and hands-on workshops and classes.

This expansion of resources is part of a natural evolution, as the Sonoma County Library fulfills its commitment to connect all residents with equitable, free access to information. As a community partner in this Knowledge Age, Sonoma County Library is committed to connecting residents with resources, with organizations, and with one another. To that end, the library began a strategic planning process in 2014.

The Sonoma County Library developed this strategic plan to provide a cohesive, inspiring vision and to set priorities that determine which services the library will provide over the next five years. This plan emerged through a series of community meetings with residents, Friends, Library Advisory Board members, Library Foundation members, Library Commissioners, and library employees and volunteers. With the help of The Results Group, we also conducted a series of focus groups, targeted to educators, nonprofits, government and elected officials, children, and others. These community conversations and focus groups concentrated on high-levels questions and issues: What makes Sonoma County unique? How can the library contribute to the quality of life in Sonoma County? These questions and conversations ultimately led to the creation of the five priorities highlighted within this plan.

Conducted over a 12-month span of time, the strategic planning process sought extensive community feedback. We asked how the library can best meet the needs of the County and of its residents. More than 1,600 people took the online survey, attended a visioning session, sent an email or letter, or called.

From this extensive input, clear priorities emerged, and these priorities grouped into five distinct areas: the customer experience, education and discovery, innovation, community engagement, and financial sustainability. The customer experience is defined by putting people first and by creating a welcoming culture—both inside and outside our library buildings. Education and discovery is about connecting people with information, resources, and skills; developing an environment that supports learning, experimentation, and play; growing strong partnerships with educators and educational institutions in Sonoma County; and providing health resources, education, and life skills to our County’s most vulnerable populations. Innovation encompasses the way we deliver services and the technology that supports this; the development of a culture that allows both library users and library staff to contribute ideas, and our commitment to environmentally-sound practices in our work and in our buildings. Community engagement is about building partnerships with individuals and organizations in our community, becoming recognized as a vital community asset, supporting engagement through volunteer and service opportunities, and cultivating relationships with local leaders to serve as mentors and instructors to library customers. Financial sustainability means ensuring that the library’s financial strategies are sound, thoughtful, and sustainable; that we continuously work to improve the ways we provide service to library customers; and that we develop financially savvy leaders who are deeply in touch with Sonoma County and its residents.

As a vital, evolving organization, we understand that you—our Sonoma County residents—are our top priority. We continually interact with the people of Sonoma County, remaining aware of cultural and technological changes. We are in touch with our communities and make adjustments as those communities grow and change. Our vision, mission, and priorities will guide the library as it becomes your place to discover, to learn, and to engage.

Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

1. THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
   - Provide an outstanding library experience for everyone.

2. EDUCATION AND DISCOVERY
   - Connect people to information, experiences, and experts that help them learn and grow.

3. INNOVATION
   - Embrace technologies that improve our libraries and empower our communities.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
   - Bring people together to share ideas and engage in collaborative community projects.

5. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
   - Secure the future of our libraries through sound financial policies and a diversified funding strategy.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Literally hundreds of people contributed to the creation of this strategic plan—community members, library staff, Friends, Library Foundation members, library commissioners, and others. In October 2014, the Library Director formed a Strategic Planning Steering Committee. This committee worked with The Results Group to develop a comprehensive community-centered planning process that included multiple opportunities for county residents to offer input and guidance. This community input eventually led to the formation of our five priorities. A Staff Workgroup then received these priorities and worked over the course of several months to develop the goals and objectives that specify the work that we, library staff, will perform in the years ahead to support these priorities.

The members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee were: Rebecca Forth (Assistant to the Director), Paul Grill (Library Commissioner), Brett Lear (Library Director), Ken Nieman (Chief Financial Officer), Kiyo Okazaki (Public Services Manager).

The members of the Staff Workgroup were: Charity Anderson, Jaime Anderson, Donale Chastain, Phil Hoeft, Rachel Icaza, David Lightell, Kate Nicholson-Willard, Kiyo Okazaki, Katherine Rinehart, Mathew Rose, Cathy Signorelli, and Geoffrey Skinner.

Thanks to everyone, including those who responded to our online survey, for your contributions! We really couldn’t have done it without you.

“Google can bring you back 100,000 answers; a librarian can bring you back the right one.”
—Neil Gaiman
VISION

The Sonoma County Library is the heart of our community. We are known nationally for our innovation and locally for our connection to our residents and communities. Our libraries are destination places because of our friendly, knowledgeable staff and our welcoming, comfortable spaces. We are a community hub where learning, the arts, technology, and people intersect and thrive. We care about our residents and we talk with them every chance we get! We help people and organizations develop, learn, and connect. Children inspire us, and we work tirelessly to educate and improve the quality of life of children in Sonoma County. We love books and reading and exploration and we want to ignite that passion in others. Our staff is known throughout the community for being engaged, empowered, energized, and ubiquitous! We use technology to make things easier, more accessible, and more fun. If we don't have what you need now, we’ll find it and get it soon. Come visit us today… and you might catch a performance of the Santa Rosa Symphony in our forum room. After you visit, you’ll be eager to come back!

MISSION

Our mission is to bring information, ideas, and people together to build a stronger community.
People are our top priority. We offer welcoming, personalized service to everyone who visits us in person, online, and by telephone.

Goal A. People First

The library’s positive organizational culture, commitment to customer service, and collaborative approach to serving all members of our community results in an outstanding library experience for everyone.

Objectives

1. Provide opportunities for library staff to become knowledgeable about their local communities and establish local partnerships that benefit our residents.
2. Create a positive, pro-active work culture exemplified by all staff working collaboratively with their peers and management to continuously improve the library system and provide the best possible experience to every customer.
3. Provide a comprehensive customer-service program that gives every staff member the knowledge and authority needed to consistently deliver outstanding customer service.
4. Develop a customer-service survey that allows our residents to give us detailed input about their library experience.

Goal B. Welcoming Places and Spaces

Inside and outside, the library’s facilities and grounds exemplify our mission and enhance the customer experience with functional, appealing, creative, and fun design.

Objectives

1. Develop and implement a Facilities Master Plan to update and expand library facilities, resulting in welcoming spaces that are easy to navigate and that provide opportunities for flexible, informal interaction.
2. Design public spaces that offer exciting, enticing opportunities for exploration and discovery.
3. Determine the need for library services in underserved areas such as Roseland, West County, and the Springs, and seek financial opportunities and partnerships to provide library services in those areas.
4. Provide library services beyond the existing branch libraries into flexible and temporary locations throughout Sonoma County to meet local community needs.
5. Work with the community and library staff to clarify the role of the Central Library and its unique collections and services.
The library provides our residents with the educational and recreational experiences needed to succeed as citizens, students, and parents.

Goal A. A World of Information
Library staff connect our residents to information, experiences, and experts that help them learn, relax, and interact with others.

Objectives
1. Provide information, resources, and educational opportunities that align with our community’s needs and preferences.
2. Expand current print and digital collections that reflect the needs of all of our community members, including youth, families, seniors, and Latinos.
3. Develop a public technology-training program that gives people of all ages an opportunity to acquire new digital literacy skills and explore a variety of computers, handheld devices, and software applications.
4. Become a first-stop clearinghouse for residents looking for volunteer opportunities, internships, and job opportunities within the county.

Goal B. A Place to Learn and Play
The library’s events, programs, and services educate and entertain our residents, promote lifelong learning and community engagement, and create shared experiences that forge stronger communities.

Objectives
1. Provide educational and recreational experiences that spark lifelong learning, and help people succeed as citizens, students, and parents.
2. Create a coordinated, comprehensive literacy services program—including reading, financial, information, health, and digital literacy—to increase literacy levels countywide.
3. Develop classes and workshops that prepare parents and their children for entry into the K-12 school system.
4. Link library events and classes for youth to the school systems’ core curriculum.

Performance Measures

Output:
50% of our youth events and classes will focus on topics and skills intended to help children succeed with Common Core curriculum in the schools.

Output:
Library staff at each location will develop two to three new partnerships with community-based organizations that lead to new or enhanced services for our vulnerable populations in areas such as healthy living and affordable housing.

Outcome:
Based on evaluation forms from our computer and technology classes, 80% of the respondents will report that the classes improved their confidence and skills with computers.
Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

**Goal C. A Partner in Education**

The library is an integral part of the K-12 and post-secondary educational system in Sonoma County. Our partnerships with academic and other libraries ensure our success as an educational institution.

**Objectives**

1. Partner with educators and leaders within Sonoma County’s K-12 community to contribute toward the education and the overall quality of life of children in Sonoma County.

2. Partner with local post-secondary educational institutions to share resources and identify ways to collaboratively increase community impact.

3. Establish working relationships and collaborative agreements with public, academic, law, special libraries, and museums throughout the North Bay, resulting in expanded services for our library’s customers.

4. Pursue collaborative grant writing and other funding opportunities among Sonoma County education providers to better serve the needs of local students of all ages.

**Goal D. A Leader in Health**

We provide our community’s most vulnerable populations – the homeless, the unemployed and underemployed, and people with disabilities – with tools and resources that support independence, individual achievement, and equity.

**Objectives**

1. Seek out and communicate with our vulnerable populations, and develop classes and services that help people acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to secure affordable housing, healthy food, and quality employment in Sonoma County.

2. Provide library staff with the information and training needed to serve our vulnerable populations with dignity and respect.

3. Invite staff from other organizations and government agencies into our libraries to work collaboratively with our staff to deliver health-related services within the library.

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**The only card that provides you with 24/7 Access and never expires!**
We are innovators who embrace technology and understand our communities. We seize opportunities to contribute toward a healthier and more vibrant Sonoma County.

**Goal A. Service Delivery Innovation**

We develop innovative services and embrace technologies that improve our libraries.

**Objectives**

1. Develop and implement a Technology Plan that supports our strategic priorities and positions the library to meet our customers’ evolving technology needs.
2. Provide library staff with the time and training necessary to assist our residents with the technology—smartphones, tablets, laptops, apps, and software—they use to access the library's print and electronic resources.
3. Provide our residents with access to a variety of technologies in order to acquire new skills, explore new possibilities, and make informed consumer decisions with technology.

**Goal B. A Risk-Taking Culture**

We are a national leader in developing and delivering outstanding public programs and services, community engagement activities, and staff development opportunities that improve our libraries and our communities.

**Objectives**

1. Develop an organizational culture that embraces innovation and risk-taking and accepts failure as a positive learning experience.
2. Create a work environment that provides staff with the time, tools, and guidelines to develop, launch, and evaluate new ideas and services.
3. Create avenues for customers to contribute their ideas and actively engage with staff in improving library services.

**Goal C. Going Green**

We utilize proven methods and explore innovative, eco-friendly practices that move the library to the forefront of positive environmental stewardship in the county.

**Objectives**

1. Develop an environmental staff education program that engages everyone in creating a green workplace.
2. Partner with local agencies and support their environmental programs in order to improve the quality of life in Sonoma County.
3. Become a go-to community and informational resource on sustainability and green living.
The library brings people, organizations, and ideas together to build a stronger community.

**Goal A. Powerful Partnerships**

We build and maintain strong partnerships throughout the community to meet the needs of all Sonoma County residents.

**Objectives**

1. Establish an internal training program that develops staff’s skills in forming strong partnerships that result in vital community services.
2. Develop partnerships with community-based organizations and government agencies to collaboratively provide services that we would struggle to provide on our own.
3. Facilitate collaborative relationships among library staff, the Friends, the Library Advisory Boards, and the Sonoma County Public Library Foundation in order to clarify the roles of each organization and to work collaboratively to fulfill our shared strategic priorities.

**Goal B. A Visible Community Asset**

The library and its staff are a vital part of our community and are recognized by the public and our local leaders for our service and contributions to our community.

**Objectives**

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and community outreach strategy so that the community is fully aware of the range of services and events the library provides.
2. Improve outreach to the underserved regions of the county and improve communication with the residents living in those regions.
3. Become a partner of choice of other mission-aligned organizations throughout the county.

**Goal C. Citizen Engagement**

We engage community members through meaningful volunteer opportunities and community activities that contribute to the library's mission and the betterment of our community.

**Objectives**

1. Develop a system-wide library volunteer engagement program that provides a variety of meaningful experiences that lead to a stronger library system.
2. Establish a consistent volunteer recognition program to thank and recognize our committed volunteers.
3. Develop events that bring residents together to hear diverse ideas and opinions, and partner with local agencies to design events that include community service opportunities.
4. Partner with organizations and businesses to recruit community leaders to serve as mentors and instructors to our library customers.
We understand that sound financial practices, smart work processes, a comprehensive fundraising strategy, and a community-centered perspective are vital to the ongoing success of our libraries.

Goal A. Solid Financial Policies
The library’s financial strategies are based on sound financial policies and procedures, thoughtful decision-making, and ongoing financial sustainability.

Objectives
1. Develop policies, standards, and performance measures that result in a financially sustainable organization with a balanced approach to staffing, collections, services, and facilities maintenance.
2. Create a diversified funding strategy that includes a balanced approach to identifying and accessing new philanthropic partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and revenue enhancement opportunities.
3. Develop a recession strategy to inform our decision-making during economic downturns.

Goal B. Working Smart
We continuously improve processes and remove barriers to effective customer service.

Objectives
1. Identify and remove barriers to effective customer service and work processes and discontinue processes and services that are no longer effective or in-demand.
2. Look to other organizations and professions and review industry standards when establishing best practices for inventory control, acquisitions, and other significant library operations.
3. Develop measures and outputs that clearly define successful operations.

Goal C. A Savvy Organization
We develop financially savvy leaders within our organization who are visible in our communities and actively engaged with our residents.

Objectives
1. Prioritize community engagement and fundraising within the organization and put the necessary people in place to carry out these functions.
2. Build strong relationships with local leaders and elected officials that result in a shared vision for the library’s future.
3. Develop library leaders with the skills, confidence, and connections required to engage with our residents and seek financial support from individual donors, foundations, and corporate sponsors whose priorities match our own.
Appendix A: The Sonoma County Library

Formation of a County-Wide Library System

Sonoma County’s libraries have a long and rich history. Many cities and towns within the county established libraries in the 1800s. Petaluma established its Odd Fellows Library in 1858. The Santa Rosa Free Library opened in 1859. Sebastopol, Cloverdale, and Healdsburg also established libraries in the 19th century.

In 1916, the Sonoma County Supervisors established a County Library, and in 1945 the name changed to the Sonoma County Free Public Library. This county system consisted of a Central Library, four branches, a bookmobile, and outlets in 80 school libraries. In the 1940s - 1960s, the libraries in Guerneville, Cloverdale, Santa Rosa, and Sonoma merged with the county system, and branches were added in Cotati and Windsor. In 1965, the county system became the Santa Rosa-Sonoma County Public Library. This same year the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors designated the county library as the official archives for the county. A new Santa Rosa Central Library opened in 1967, Santa Rosa’s Northwest Library opened in 1968, and a new Sebastopol Library opened in 1974.

The creation of a countywide Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) in 1975 united all of the public libraries in the county and brought them into the Sonoma County Library system. Between 1975 and 2003, new libraries opened in Petaluma, Sonoma, Cloverdale, Guerneville, Healdsburg, Rincon Valley, Windsor, and Rohnert Park-Cotati. From 2012 to 2014, a Joint Powers Agreement Review Advisory Committee worked on revising the JPA and expanded the members from the County of Sonoma and the Cities of Santa Rosa, Healdsburg, Petaluma, and Sonoma to also include the cities of Cloverdale, Cotati, Rohnert Park, and the town of Windsor. Today the Sonoma County Library includes the Central Library, 10 branch libraries, rural stations in Occidental, Forestville, and a community library in Roseland.

Library Usage

Nearly 220,000 of our 495,000 residents have library cards.

Of these cardholders, 75 percent are adults.

Number of Cardholders by Age
“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”
— Dr. Seuss
Library staff answer over 268,000 questions from people of all ages each year. They handle over 14,000 materials each day and produce nearly 3,000 educational classes and cultural events each year. The library has over 600,000 items in a collection that now includes print books, movies and music, eBooks, and downloadable audiobooks. Approximately 4% of our collection is in Spanish.

Approximately 38,000 people visit our 14 locations each week. Over 2 million people visit our website each year to browse our online catalog, find answers to questions using our premium research resources, and explore our unique eCollections such as the Sonoma Heritage Collection, Sonoma County Author Project, and the International Wine Research Database. Nearly a third of our website activity comes from people who are exploring our eResources for the first time!

Nearly 88,000 people attend library events annually.
The number of visits to our website now equals the number of people who walk through our doors – both at about 2 million per year. However, the number of checkouts—print books, movies and music—continues to exceed virtual visits, although over the past 15 years that gap has decreased.

Our residents also read more than other library users throughout the state, reading an average of 16 books per year, versus the statewide average of 11.5.
Library Revenues

While demand for library services steadily increases, library revenue is primarily dependent upon a single, volatile source – property taxes. These revenues declined during the Great Recession as property values declined.

In 2009, our annual expenditures began to exceed our revenues. This forced library staff and Commissioners to make difficult decisions, including cuts to the book budget, unpaid employee furloughs, benefit reductions, unfilled staff vacancies, and a 25% cut in library hours. These reductions in hours mean that our residents have reduced access to our libraries and materials which makes it more difficult for them to find convenient times to visit our libraries, check out books, use the public computers and Wi-Fi, and attend classes and events.

In November 2014, Sonoma County residents had an opportunity to vote on Measure M, a 1/8-percent sales tax measure that would have generated about 8 to 10 million dollars in additional revenue for our libraries each year. This additional revenue would have restored lost service hours across the county, funded educational and recreational classes and events for both children and adults, increased the books and materials budget, and funded additional technology and facilities improvements countywide. Unfortunately, Measure M did not pass. It received about 63% of the vote; it needed 66.6%. So, going forward, library staff and the Library Commission will explore what next steps are needed to ensure that our libraries have sustainable funding for years to come.

As of July 2015, the library operates with a budget of approximately $17.8 million and 130 FTEs.
Even during the lean budget years, library staff have continued to improve current library services and design new, innovative services. For example, library staff redesigned the library’s webpage and updated the online catalog in 2014. The library also launched a second eBook platform called Enki in 2014. This significantly increased the number of eBooks in our collection. Library staff have also had great success with grant writing recently, obtaining funding for such services as a computer coding (Minecraft) workshop series for teens, an oral and visual histories series for the homeless population called “Seen and Heard,” and a Books on Wheels pilot program that partners with Meals on Wheels to deliver library materials to homebound residents.
Appendix B: Community Profile

The County of Sonoma’s governing board and legislative body is a five-member Board of Supervisors. Its county seat and largest city is Santa Rosa. Other cities, towns, and communities in the county include Bodega Bay, Cloverdale, Cotati, Guerneville, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Sea Ranch, Sebastopol, Sonoma, and Windsor. Sonoma County, located 45 minutes north of San Francisco, features more than 370 wineries, over 100 organic farms, and 55 miles of Pacific coastline. According to the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, visitors (tourists) spend about $1.6 billion in Sonoma County each year. Sonoma County is also the home of Sonoma State University and Santa Rosa Junior College.

Demographics

In 2015, the population is projected to be 501,350 residents. (Source: California Department of Finance (DOF) and the US Census). According to Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) projections, the population is expected to rise about 3.3% to 509,621 by 2019.

According to the Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), Sonoma County’s Hispanic population grew by 43 percent over the last decade. Among the white and Hispanic populations, the two largest races/ethnicities in Sonoma County, the proportion of these populations at working age (ages 18-64) is similar, with 63 percent of the Hispanic population at working age compared to 57 percent of whites. Nonetheless, the Hispanic population is younger on average, with 39 percent under the age of 20, compared to just 19 percent for whites. In 2010, there were 47,535 Hispanics and 59,985 whites under the age of 20, indicative of a strong relative increase in Hispanics entering the workforce. Sonoma County is home to several Native American tribes, including the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.
The population by age in Sonoma County in 2014 and 2019 is and will be widely distributed. According to projections, the 65 and older population is expected to increase the greatest amount by 2019, with a corresponding decrease in individuals age 45-64 between 2014 and 2019.

Between 2000 and 2014, the median household income in Sonoma County grew by 14.6% to $61,960. Looking into 2019, this growth is expected to continue with median income rising to $71,946, an increase of around 18% from 2014.
Sonoma County also remains attractive to business owners, with office and retail leases available at more affordable rates than elsewhere in the North Bay, according to the 2015 Sonoma County Indicators report. Two of the hardest-hit industries of the 2007-2009 recession were manufacturing and construction. However, as part of the County's economic recovery, over the past year manufacturing and construction were two of the fastest-growing industries. Also, the Government & Public Education, and the Educational & Health Services industries improved over the past year. Over the period of 2013-2014, Sonoma County experienced employment growth in all industries.

### Cost Comparison

This year the Economic Development Board has added a new feature comparing the cost of doing business in Sonoma County versus two East Bay counties, Alameda and Contra Costa. Below, the comparisons of key economic factors are shown, including lease rates, income, travel time to work, and homeownership rate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Bay</th>
<th>Contra Costa County</th>
<th>Sonoma County</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asking Lease Rates (per month rate)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Office Space: $1.76 psf</td>
<td>• Office Space: $1.78 psf</td>
<td>• Office Space: $1.57 psf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Industrial Space: $0.74 psf</td>
<td>• Industrial Space: $0.78 psf</td>
<td>• Industrial Space: $0.80 psf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Retail Space: $2.08 psf</td>
<td>• Retail Space: $1.93 psf</td>
<td>• Retail Space: $1.42 psf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payroll/Business</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Educated and Skilled workforce: 42% of People 25 years of age or older have a bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>• Educated and Skilled workforce: 39% of People 25 years of age or older have a bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>• Educated and Skilled workforce: 32% of People 25 years of age or older have a bachelor's degree or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Per Capita Income: $36,268</td>
<td>• Per Capita Income: $38,344</td>
<td>• Per Capita Income: $33,357</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commuting</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mean travel time to work is 30.4 minutes each day</td>
<td>• Mean travel time to work is 35.3 minutes each day</td>
<td>• Mean travel time to work is 24.4 minutes each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• County residents living and working in this county: 65%</td>
<td>• County residents living and working in this county: 57%</td>
<td>• County residents living and working in this county: 83%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Incidentals</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Homeownershipt rate: 51.9%</td>
<td>• Homeownershipt rate: 64.7%</td>
<td>• Homeownershipt rate: 58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Percentage of family households: 65%</td>
<td>• Percentage of family households: 71%</td>
<td>• Percentage of family households: 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People below poverty level: 12.9%</td>
<td>• People below poverty level: 10.8%</td>
<td>• People below poverty level: 12.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Air Quality Index (AQI): 38.5</td>
<td>• Air Quality Index (AQI): 40.4</td>
<td>• Air Quality Index (AQI): 30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consumer Behaviors and Lifestyles

Sonoma County Library staff interact with thousands of residents each week. Staff also meet with community partners to discuss segments of our population and the service needs of these populations. Library staff also track demographic trends, identify underserved populations, and assess the ongoing information and service needs of our residents. Local publications, such as Portrait of Sonoma County national resources, such as the Census and the American Community Survey, and consumer data tools, such as Esri, are all used to help staff understand the demographic makeup of our communities and the consumer behavior and lifestyle traits of our residents.

The consumer data tool Esri identifies “Tapestry Segments” that describe neighborhoods within a community based on demographic information, consumer data, and lifestyle traits. The five predominant segments within Sonoma County are Exurbanites, City Lights, The Great Outdoors, Pleasantville, and Bright Young Professionals.

Tapestry Segment 1: Exurbanites

Exurbanites residents are now approaching retirement but showing few signs of slowing down. They are active in their communities, generous in their donations, and seasoned travelers. They take advantage of their proximity to large metropolitan centers to support the arts, but prefer a more expansive home style in less crowded neighborhoods. They have cultivated a lifestyle that is both affluent and urbane.

- Residents are college educated; more than half have a bachelor’s degree or higher; almost 80% have some college education.
- This labor force is beginning to retire. 1 in 3 households currently receive Social Security or retirement income. Labor force participation has declined to less than 60%.
- Unemployment remains low at 5.5%; more of the residents prefer self-employment or working from home.
- Consumers are more interested in quality than cost. They take pride in their homes and foster a sense of personal style.
- Exurbanites residents are well connected, using the Internet for everything from shopping to managing their finances.
- Sociable and hardworking, they still find time to stay physically fit.
Tapestry Segment 2: City Lights

City Lights, a densely populated urban market, is the epitome of equality. The wide-ranging demographic characteristics of residents mirror their passion for social welfare and equal opportunity. Household types range from single person to married-couple families, with and without children. A blend of owners and renters, single-family homes and town homes, midrise and high-rise apartments, these neighborhoods are both racially and ethnically diverse. Many residents have completed some college or a degree, and they earn a good income in professional and service occupations. Willing to commute to their jobs, they work hard and budget well to support their urban lifestyles, laying the foundation for stable financial futures.

- City Lights residents earn above-average incomes, but lag the nation in net worth.
- Labor force participation exceeds the US average. Residents work hard in professional and service occupations but also seek to enjoy life.
- These consumers save for the future, often to achieve their dream of home ownership. They often engage in discussion about financial products and services among their peers. They earn dividend incomes from their portfolios but steer away from risky investments.
- These consumers are price savvy but will pay for quality brands they trust.
- Reflecting the diversity of their neighborhoods, residents stand by their belief in equal opportunity.
- Attuned to nature and the environment, and when they can, purchase natural products.

Tapestry Segment 3: The Great Outdoors

These neighborhoods are found in pastoral settings. Consumers are educated empty nesters living an active but modest lifestyle. Their focus is land. They are more likely to invest in real estate or a vacation home than stocks. They are active gardeners and partial to homegrown and home-cooked meals. Although retirement beckons, most of these residents still work, with incomes slightly above the US level.

- Nearly 60% have attended college or hold a degree.
- Unemployment is lower at 8%, but so is labor force participation at 60%.
- Typical of neighborhoods with older residents, income from retirement and Social Security is common, but residents also derive income from self-employment and investments.
- Residents are very do-it-yourself oriented and cost conscious.
- Many service their own autos, work on home improvement and remodeling projects, and maintain their own yards.
- They prefer domestic travel to trips abroad.
**Tapestry Segment 4: Pleasantville**

Prosperous domesticity best describes the settled denizens of Pleasantville. These slightly older couples move less than any other market. Many couples have already transitioned to empty nesters; many are still home to adult children. Families own older, single-family homes and maintain their standard of living with dual incomes. These consumers have higher incomes and home values and much higher net worth. Older homes require upkeep; home improvement and remodeling projects are a priority—preferably done by contractors. Residents spend their spare time participating in a variety of sports or watching movies. They shop online and in a variety of stores, from upscale to discount, and use the Internet largely for financial purposes.

- Education: 64% college educated, 34% with a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Low unemployment at 7.8%; higher labor force participation rate at 67%; higher proportion of households with 2 or more workers.
- Many professionals in finance, information/technology, or management.
- Median household income denotes affluence, with income primarily from salaries, but also from investments or Social Security and retirement income.
- Not cost-conscious, these consumers willing to spend more for quality and brands they like.
- Prefer fashion that is classic and timeless as opposed to trendy.
- Use all types of media equally (newspapers, magazines, radio, Internet, TV).

**Tapestry Segment 5: Bright Young Professionals**

Bright Young Professionals is a large market, primarily located in urban outskirts of large metropolitan areas. These communities are home to young, educated, working professionals. One out of three householders is under the age of 35. Slightly more diverse couples dominate this market, with more renters than homeowners. More than two-fifths of the households live in single-family homes; over a third live in 5+ unit buildings. Labor force participation is high, generally white-collar work, with a mix of food service and part-time jobs (among the college students). Median household income, median home value, and average rent are close to the US values. Residents of this segment are physically active and up on the latest technology.

- Education completed: 36% with some college or an associate's degree, 30% with a bachelor's degree or higher. Education in progress is 10%.
- Unemployment rate is lower at 7.1%, and labor force participation rate of 73% is higher than the US rate.
- These consumers are up on the latest technology.
- They get most of their information from the Internet.
- Concern about the environment impacts their purchasing decisions.

*All Tapestry Segment descriptions provided by esri.com/tapestry*
The figure below shows where these neighborhoods are located within the county.