

# PETALUMA REGIONAL LIBRARY



## Service Area Map + Demographics

2000 Service Area Population: 65,617  
 2025 Service Area Population: 77,653

Population by Age:

0-4 years	5%
5-19 years	16%
20-44 years	31%
45-64 years	24%
65+	24%

Population by Ethnicity:

White	84%
Black + African-American	1%
American Indian	1%
Asian	4%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%
Other	6%
Two or More Races	4%

Hispanic or Latino\* 14%

Recommendations  
 Strategy: Improvement  
 Building Area: 36,500-40,300 sf

\*The Hispanic or Latino designation reflects a cultural heritage and not an ethnic group. Therefore, this designation is reported separately from ethnicity.

## Library Profile

The Petaluma Regional Library was constructed in 1976. Its service area includes the City of Petaluma, the north Petaluma and Penngrove area, and the surrounding rural areas south to the Marin County border.

Patrons are loyal to the Petaluma branch, with only a handful reporting that they use other libraries, such as Santa Rosa Central and Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional libraries.

## Library Needs

Shelving at Petaluma is inadequate, resulting in a smaller than recommended collection with a severely limited language selection. Program areas are small, and programs often overflow out onto the patio. Seating becomes inadequate during programs or when students visit the library after school. Technology is provided at levels below standards, and no dedicated, enclosed area is available for training groups. The parking lot at Petaluma is often full, although the neighboring fairgrounds currently allows patrons to park there.

Petaluma patrons described their library in this way...

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Liked most:</b>         | <b>Improvements needed:</b> |
| + Friendly staff           | - More books                |
| + Location and convenience | - More videos               |
| + Collection               | - More computers            |

## Recommendations

The Master Plan recommends maintaining one regional branch library on the west side of Highway 101 near the majority of commercial, recreational, and cultural institutions of downtown Petaluma. While the east side of Highway 101 has many residents, it is well connected, with three arterial streets crossing the highway. Library usage patterns indicate that Highway 101 is not a barrier to those living on the east side, likely due to the fact that a trip

Service	Current	Future
Population served	65,617	77,653
Building size	26,400 sf	36,500 – 40,300 sf
Collection	100,787 vols.	177,000 – 195,700 vols.
Computers	27	60 – 65
Seats	166 seats	220 – 250 seats
Group study area	0 seats	20 – 25 seats
Storytelling space	0 seats	40 – 45 seats
Meeting room	187 seats	200 - 220 seats

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across Highway 101 is required for most other services that city residents need. A second library is not recommended for Petaluma because it would dramatically increase the operational costs of the Library.

The Master Plan also recommends that the library remain on the current site, as it has excellent access to most portions of the city and appears to be large enough for a bigger building. Further study of the existing site is required to determine its true capacity.

### **Implementation**

The Petaluma Regional Library is in priority Group 2 because the current square footage is nearly adequate for the 2000 service population. However, the expanding service population will soon outgrow the existing facility.

The present location serves the community well. It is reasonably convenient to both the east and west portions of the service area, close to the central business district, and well-connected to Highway 101 for easy access from the southern portions of the service area. There appear to be opportunities for a larger building on the site, especially when adjacent parcels are considered for potential co-development.

The current facility and site may be suitable for expansion; however, it should be the subject of a feasibility study. Planning should begin now with an update of library service needs and a building program. The site feasibility study would then be well-informed to assess the current site as well as possible alternates. These tasks should be undertaken as part of a focused predesign study by experienced professionals setting out project requirements, budget and schedule in detail.



*Petaluma Regional Library*

What residents said:

*"Without the library, I would have no one to help me with my homework."*

*survey respondent*

*"I would be broke without the library."*

*survey respondent*

*"The library is where you can discover other worlds and people, and you can feed your brain."*

*survey respondent*