

SANTA ROSA CENTRAL LIBRARY



Service Area Map + Demographics

2000 Service Area Population: 85,132
 2025 Service Area Population with new Southwest branch open: 72,715

Population by Age:
 0-4 years 5%
 5-19 years 16%
 20-44 years 30%
 45-64 years 26%
 65+ 23%

Population by Ethnicity:
 White 83%
 Black + African-American 2%
 American Indian 1%
 Asian 3%
 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0%
 Other 7%
 Two or More Races 4%
 Hispanic or Latino* 15%

Recommendations Strategy: Improvement
 Building Area: 80,950-97,500 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 existing Santa Rosa Central Library was completed in 1968, at a time when the city population was one-fourth its current size. The service area includes the residential areas and businesses of the downtown core, Montgomery Village, Mayette Village and Bennett Valley. The size and population of the Central Library's service area will be reduced as a result of the creation of a new Southwest branch that will serve the southwestern portion of the City, including the areas around Petaluma Hill Road.

Approximately 15% of the library's service population is Hispanic or Latino. Over one-third of patrons surveyed at the Central Library reported that they also visit other library branches -- especially Northwest Santa Rosa and Rincon Valley. The Central Library is highly accessible, with 63% of patrons reporting that they usually walk to the facility.

Library Needs

Despite a recent renovation and expansion, the Central Library still suffers from a shortage of space. The lack of space limits the collection as well as the amount of seating. The thick concrete slab makes retrofitting the building for today's technology needs impractical, even if space for more computers was available. Little parking is offered on-site, causing problems despite the library's downtown location and proximity to public transportation.

Central Library patrons described their library in this way...

Liked most:	Improvements needed:
+ Collection	- Longer hours
+ Location and convenience	- More books
+ Friendly staff	- More computers

Recommendations

Options for meeting the need for a larger Central Library include: a major renovation of and addition to the existing building; a new building on the existing site; and a new building on an alternative

Service	Current	Future
Population served	85,132	72,715
Building size	67,200 sf	80,950 – 97,500 sf
Collection	216,630 vols.	241,800 – 267,200 vols.
Computers	49	55 - 60
Seats	155 seats	210 – 230 seats
Group study area	0 seats	23 – 25 seats
Storytelling space	0 seats	38 – 40 seats
Meeting room	147 seats	145 - 160 seats

downtown site. Each of these options could be realized in a variety of configurations. Community and stakeholder input suggested bringing the Local History Collection and Genealogy together with the rest of the central library under one roof.

A more detailed Central Library master plan is needed to develop alternative options and evaluate each in terms of the functionality of public service areas, the functionality of system-wide support functions, schedule and cost. Other topics the study should address include the condition of the existing structure and building systems, upgrades necessary to meet current building codes, and the ability to integrate technology. The study should also consider options for using off-site downtown public parking to meet library needs and offset on-site parking requirements.

The existing site and its proximity to the downtown parking and commercial resources are well-suited to the role of the Central Library. Any alternate sites considered should be easily accessible by transit, have ample space for parking, and be easy to reach on foot. Site availability and cost should be examined alongside the benefits the library could derive from its site and what contributions it can make to its surroundings.

Implementation

As the Central Library supports the entire library system, it needs to expand as part of the ongoing implementation of the Master Plan. Assuming that the development of the Southwest Branch and the expansion or replacement of the Northwest proceed, the immediate service area should have adequate service in the near term. The Central Library is in priority Group 2.

The current site of the Central Library has a number of advantages and meets many of the location and site criteria in the Master Plan. However, if another site were to become available in the downtown for the library, it should be given careful consideration. Prior to proceeding with development of the library, the library service needs specific to the service area should be reexamined by experienced professionals to update the work of the Master Plan and to address the impact of other new or expanded libraries. A detailed building program should then be developed by professionals for the new building and site.

The likely development strategies would be to demolish the present Annex building, undertake a major remodeling of the eastern portions of the library, and construct an addition to the western portion of the building utilizing the eastern portion of the site. The addition would likely be two or three stories. Another approach would be to demolish the present library and build a new one. The capacity of the site should be studied as part of a separate feasibility study to identify the best development strategy.

As owner of the current library, the City of Santa Rosa would lead the effort to improve the library facility. If the system-wide support functions remain at Central, the County would also be a likely partner. The Sonoma County Library will provide technical support and guidance. Public input in the master plan process will help guide decision making and ensure that the improved library reflects community values.



Santa Rosa Central Library

What residents said:

"Libraries are modern miracles ... a blessing ... a pillar for free-thinkers and a free nation."
survey respondent

"It is a very important place because it is safe."
survey respondent

"This is the best time I have -- able to spend quality time with my daughter in a safe, free and educational way. Thank you for this service to our community."
survey respondent

"We homeschool, so much of our curriculum comes directly from library resources. We would have a much harder time without it."
survey respondent