

INTRODUCTION

For different generations of both young and old, the experience of visiting the Sacramento Public Library and its many branches means different things.

Children come to hear stories or pick out a book. Teens come to check the library's music and DVDs, socialize, collaborate on projects or just hang out. Adults browse the shelves of books, maybe sit in comfortable chairs or take that first quiet break of the day. Students read or listen to books on CD, study or finish their homework. Business people meet associates in community meeting rooms or do special research. Seniors gather to plan events and socialize. Everyone, it seems, comes to use the computers.

What the Library means to different people evolves and changes as demographics shift, behavior changes, culture evolves or technology advances. The dynamic environment of the greater Sacramento region presents many challenges as Library leaders actively examine how to meet them and enhance the Library system.

An examination of the current environment illustrates the point. Not only is Sacramento the 8th largest county in the state, but Elk Grove was recently named the fastest growing city in the nation. Now consider the diversity in Sacramento communities that will expand with increased population, with whites of European descent becoming an ever-smaller minority between 2000 and 2050, while other ethnic group percentages rise (in-depth demographics can be found in the Trends and Projections section).

Sacramento Public Library leaders recognize that these changes impact customer's usage patterns and expectations. **If the Library is to remain a vital and successful part of its respective communities, it must continually change and improve its services.** Meeting this challenge means augmenting existing strategies, creating new visions, and taking different directions. It requires taking best practices and applying them to create libraries where all customers feel comfortable and welcomed. It also means looking outside of the library system at, for example, the private sector where large chain bookstores have transformed customer expectations. Many bookstores changed the act of purchasing a book into an experience with comfortable reading spaces, café service, personalized attention, and access to varieties of media.

This *Facility Master Plan* recognizes the value of upgrading or renovating existing libraries and building new ones that support a full range of services. It also envisions focused-service facilities to supplement the full-service branches to meet the needs of specific populations.

A system-wide vision for the Sacramento Public Library system embraces a key strategy that understands that one approach, one size and one concept does not fit all libraries. This strategy balances service area population to building sizes and designs. It provides accessibility to all residents and creates different facility sizes to meet each community's needs. It also creates flexible facilities to accommodate rapidly changing, diverse environments that address community needs in the next 10 to 20 years.

All of the information gathered and analyzed shaped this vision and resulted in the *Facility Master Plan* recommendations (see The Recommendations section). Library leaders understand the value of these recommendations and will use them to shape ideas and plan for the upgrade, renovation or construction of new 21st century library facilities and services.

It is also a step toward meeting the goals of a service philosophy that states: **Customers enjoy a seamless and successful library experience as defined by their expectations and choose their own methods of interaction – staff assisted, self-directed or virtual; and staff understand service through the lens of the customer, deliver service with respect, and make decisions that support successful customer interaction.** This philosophy combined with the *Facility Master Plan* provide two successful aids to guide Library leaders as they help shape libraries of tomorrow.