EL CERRITO LIBRARY

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

October 2006

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El Cerrito Library
Contra Costa County Library
Community Needs Assessment

October 2006

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I. Introduction and Executive Summary

El Cerrito needs a new library. The current 6,500 square foot building[1], located on Stockton Avenue in central El Cerrito, opened in 1948 and was expanded to its present size in 1960. The facility is owned and maintained by the City of El Cerrito. The Contra Costa County Library operates the library and provides both staffing and materials, with supplementary funding provided by the City of El Cerrito.

The existing facility's size and age prevent it from providing the services the community needs and should expect to receive. The collection is too small and yet cannot be developed due to space constraints. Seating capacity and computer access are deficient. The meeting room is too small and is not enclosed. Staff work space is cramped and awkward.

By 2030, the El Cerrito population is projected to reach 25,000. The current space and service deficits will be even more glaring than they are today. El Cerrito's population is changing, becoming younger and more culturally diverse. The Library must change and grow to meet community demand. Already, the Library shows signs of being marginalized as young families and teens go elsewhere for books, study space and programming. The Library must be transformed into a facility with the space and services that the public wants and needs if it is to remain a viable community resource.

The City and its consultants conducted a thorough library services needs assessment during the Winter and Spring of 2005/2006. The assessment included a community survey, a teen survey, several focus groups and interviews with key community representatives. Community demographics were analyzed, Library staff was interviewed, Library collection and usage statistics were studied and existing spaces and collections were compared to spaces and collections planned for comparable new libraries.

A new 21,626 square foot Library is recommended for El Cerrito. The new facility will enable the Library's collections to grow over time to 75,700 books and media items, shelved on appropriate shelving. It will accommodate a seating capacity of 126, distributed throughout the facility and providing a variety of seating options. It will provide 54 public access computers, 42 in open access spaces and 12 in a computer training room. It will provide an acoustically enclosed meeting room that can accommodate audiences of 100 people, three group study rooms and a separate children's programming area. Space dedicated for teens and for literacy tutoring would also be available.

[1] This building size excludes 1,360 square feet of basement space that is used for storage and as a book sorting area used by the Friends of the Library.

II. Assessment Methodology and Community Input Findings

A. Executive Summary

The City and its consultants assessed and analyzed community needs, building on strategic planning by the County Library, to identify El Cerrito's library service needs through 2030. Through a widely distributed community survey, several community focus groups and input meetings, interviews with key community representatives, a special survey of teens, a profile of community needs was developed. These findings were supplemented by analyses of community demographics and library usage statistics and were compared to service levels planned for similar communities. Summaries of community input are provided in this section of the assessment.

B. Planning Effort

1. County Library Planning Activities

The Contra Costa County Library has undergone an in-depth strategic planning process over the past three years. The draft Strategic Plan, published in January 2006, will guide the Library over the next twenty years as it plans and implements improved services and facilities throughout the County. Joan Frye Williams, library and information technology consultant, led the planning process. Key findings of the process are outlined below.

There is a consistent countywide need and preference for the Library to provide:

- An emphasis on services to children and teens
- Leadership and advocacy for reading
- Information support for lifelong learning
- Support the "library as place" in the community
- Support easy, independent exploration of Library resources
- Emphasize collaboration with museums, art centers and other art-based community organizations

These needs and preferences have led the Library to identify four top priority strategic initiatives for the coming years:

- Reading
- Information for lifelong learning
- Collaboration
- Branding

To accomplish these initiatives, the Library needs to realign its services into a new service delivery model based on peer libraries throughout the County, supported by countywide public services and countywide administrative and shared services. This new service model encompasses several concepts and service approaches, including:

- Community Libraries will be responsible for outreach in each community.
- A new approach to Customer Service, with emphasis on self-service and fewer fixed service points.

- A new approach to Reference Service, with emphasis on completed transactions at the first point of contact and increased dependence on online reference backup.
- A new approach to Collection Development, with priority assigned to online and circulating materials, outsourcing, floating collections and centralized/decentralized collection planning.
- A new approach to Staff Development and Deployment, with increased diversification among staff specialties, continued use of volunteers where appropriate and continuous retraining and retooling of staff skills.
- A new approach to innovation, with emphasis on sharing ideas countywide, incubating ideas at test locations, taking full advantage of new technologies, developing tools for technology transfer, identifying and evaluating best practices and establishing a recognizable countywide Library brand.

A central principle to evolve from these new approaches will be community library service based on a peer library model, providing faster, one-stop service at each location. These principles are being incorporated into new County Library facilities in Hercules, Lafayette and elsewhere. They will become the standard for planning throughout the Contra Costa County Library.

2. El Cerrito Library Planning Activities

The City of El Cerrito has been aware of the existing library facility's limitations for some time and has wanted to upgrade and expand the building, although funding for capital projects has been extremely limited. In 2004, a developer approached the City to propose including a new library in a mixed-use project planned for Fairmount Avenue, adjacent to El Cerrito Plaza. The City eventually declined the proposal, since the project location, at the extreme south edge of town, was considered inappropriate.

In September 2005, the City engaged the library planning firm, Page + Moris, to conduct a community needs assessment and prepare a building program for a new library for replace the existing facility on Stockton Avenue. A project committee was formed to coordinate the work of the project. The committee members included:

Karen Pinkos, Assistant City Manager
Anne Cain, Contra Costa County Librarian
Rose-Marie Westberg, Deputy County Librarian
Laura Martinengo, El Cerrito Library Manager
Kathryn Page, Page + Moris

David Ross, with the firm of BSA Architects, and architect for the Library/Senior Center project, and City Manager Scott Hanin, also participated in some project meetings.

The project kickoff meeting was held on November 3, 2005, at which the group discussed the project overall and scheduled the community input process, the consultant requested library statistics and additional dates for interviews and tours were made. Over the course of the needs assessment process, the group held three additional meetings, to advise the consultant and resolve issues as they emerged.

C. Community Input Strategies

1. Community Survey

The project committee developed a community survey, designed to identify El Cerrito residents' priorities for library services and current library usage patterns. The City included the survey in a City newsletter that was distributed to all El Cerrito households and businesses in January 2006. The survey was also mounted on the City of El Cerrito website and copies of the survey were distributed at the Library. A total of 330 surveys were completed and returned, 226 responses from the City newsletter and 104 responses from the website. The survey findings are summarized below. The complete tabulated survey results are included in *Appendix A.*

2. Focus Groups and Interviews

Six community focus groups were held between December 2005 and April 2006. In addition, several individual interviews with key community representatives were conducted during the same time period. The focus groups and group interviews are listed below. Summaries of each session are included as *Appendix B.*

Friends of the El Cerrito Library
El Cerrito Arts and Culture Commission
El Cerrito City Council
El Cerrito Committee on Aging
El Cerrito High School Leadership Class
Parents of School-Age Children
Teachers at El Cerrito Public Schools

The following key community representatives were interviewed:

Mayor Janet Abelson, Mayor of El Cerrito
Scott Hanin, El Cerrito City Manager
Janet Hildebrand, Pleasant Hill Library Manager and former El Cerrito Library Manager
Laney Johnson, El Cerrito High School Librarian
Lloyd McGrady, El Cerrito representative, Contra Costa County Library Commission
Ann Mielke and Velta Rutkowskis, Portola Middle School Library staff
Marilyn O'Brien, El Cerrito High School Career Center Coordinator
Jennifer Rader, El Cerrito High School Community Service Coordinator
Susan Wittenberg, Executive Director, West Contra Costa Education Fund

3. El Cerrito High School Survey

Students in the High School leadership class completed a library services survey, as follow-up to the class input session. This input expanded the information available on teens' priorities and supplemented the input received through the community survey. The survey findings are summarized below. The complete tabulated survey results are included in *Appendix C.*

D. Community Input Findings

1. Community Survey

Surveys were received from 330 individuals, two-thirds (68%) from individuals who filled out the survey that was inserted in the City newsletter and one-third (32%) from the City website. Almost all respondents (97%) live in zip code area 94530. Most respondents (85%) said that they use the El Cerrito Library, although less than one-third (28%) reported that they use the Library at least on a weekly basis. Adults were the primary respondents to the survey, with 10% in the 20 - 34 year range, 32% between 35 – 54, 24% 55 – 64 and 36% 65 years or older. The preponderance of older adult respondents led the project committee to distribute a second survey to teens, the findings of which are summarized below.

Over two-thirds (70%) of respondents noted that they also use another library. The most frequent other libraries used are the Albany Library (63%), Berkeley (33%), Kensington (19%) and Richmond (12%).

Respondents gave numerous reasons for not using the El Cerrito Library, including its small size, inadequate parking, limited open hours, limited collections and resources, the perceived poor physical condition of the building and the lack of an inviting atmosphere.

Survey respondents use the Library primarily to check out materials for home use – 83% said they borrow books and 57% said they borrow videos, CDs or tapes. They reported much lower use of the facility for in-library activities, such as reading newspapers and magazines (31%), conducting research (27%) or studying (5%). Only 15% of respondents indicated that they access the Internet on the Library's computers. Five % attend Library programs and 2% buy books from the Friends' ongoing book sale.

Respondents showed modest but noteworthy interest in the Library's collection of materials in languages other than English – 9% said they are interested in reading in Spanish, 7% in Chinese, 5% in French and 4% in Japanese. Seven other languages were noted by 1% or fewer of respondents.

Survey respondents' top priorities for increased and improved collections and services focused on the adult book collection – nonfiction, fiction and bestsellers - DVDs and books on tape and CD, quiet space to read and study, magazines and newspapers, computers to access the Internet, children's books, music on CDs and program for children, families and adults. There was remarkable consistency in respondents' selections for first, second and third highest priorities, with a total of only twelve collections and services included among the top ten for each.

Table 1
Community Survey Responses to Question #10
(Ten Highest Responses for the Three Highest Service Priorities)[2]

	Priority #1	Priority #2	Priority #3	Total
Nonfiction books	47	37	38	122
Fiction books	35	36	26	97
Bestsellers	51	13	19	83
DVDs	19	25	33	77
Books on tape and CD	26	12	19	57
Quiet space	24	13	18	55
Magazines	12	24	18	54
Computers for Internet	26		12	38
Children's books	24	13		37
Music on CDs		14	17	31
Children's programs	16	10		26
Adult programs			13	13

These priorities were repeated, to a large degree, in the responses to another question regarding the most important features desired in the new building. A larger book collection was ranked by far as the most important desired feature, with an increased media collection ranked second in importance. Increased parking capacity ranked third, followed by increased seating, computer access, improved acoustical control, an enclosed meeting room, separate space for teens, a computer lab and enclosed group study space.

Table 2
Community Survey Responses to Question #11
(Top Ten Responses for Top Three Categories)

	Most Important	2nd Most Important	3rd Most Important	Total Score
Larger book collection	148	44	17	209
Larger media collection	12	57	28	97
Increased parking	30	40	21	91
More lounge seating	25	24	34	83
More computers	20	19	29	68
More table and study seating	11	22	28	61
Better parent/child reading space	25	18	13	56
Better acoustical control	12	15	23	50
Enclosed meeting room	11	14	12	37
A separate space for teens		13		13
A computer lab			11	11
Enclosed group study rooms	6			6

Many respondents expressed their opinions on the current Library and their feelings about library service in general in forthright terms, praising the quality of customer service while they were candid in their criticism of the facility. Many respondents offered

[2] Categories are ranked according to their overall score for priorities 1, 2 or 3

useful suggestions regarding specific issues and secondary topics. A complete report on the survey results is included in *Appendix A*.

2. Focus Groups and Other Group Interviews

a. Friends of the El Cerrito Library

Sixteen members of the Friends of the El Cerrito Library met to discuss the new library. Attendees emphasized that the comfortable atmosphere of the current facility should be preserved in the new library. Important features would include a separate meeting room for audiences of at least 50 to 75 people, a computer training lab and separate space for children. Additional shelving is needed to allow the collection to grow. The group discussed options for providing an ongoing book sale in the new facility and agreed that visits to new libraries in the Bay Area is advisable to observe various approaches to providing this service.

b. El Cerrito Arts and Culture Commission

The six Commissioners offered many suggestions, and cited the Albany Library several times as a possible model, especially for the efficiency of its design and increased space for programs and events. Recommendations included dedicated space for rotating art displays, emphasis on the library as a learning institution for all, especially youth, the need to tie the facility to its site context and the need for quiet study rooms in addition to group study areas. Commissioners underscored their observation that the community demographics are changing. More young families are moving into El Cerrito. The designers were admonished to not “build a dinosaur – look to the future.” Other suggestions included providing gallery space, “lots of light and lots of glass”, using durable materials that reflect the East Bay region and its architecture, ensuring acoustical buffering from the nearby BART tracks. As a closing comment, one commissioner summed up his advice by asking for “a building with charisma”, to strengthen the community’s sense of identity.

c. El Cerrito City Council

City Council members noted that they no longer use the El Cerrito Library due to its limited resources. Their suggestions focused on making the facility more relevant to the entire community, including children and youth. Council members whose children have grown up in El Cerrito commented on the need to expand student support resources as well as create space within the Library to which teens are drawn. This may include allowing food and drink, as currently offered at the Barnes & Noble bookstore at El Cerrito Plaza, which is the favorite study location for teens in the community. Other suggestions included wireless access, public art and community art displays, and increased service hours. The Council urged the designers to explore program and service collaboration between the Library and the Senior Center, perhaps with joint computer training or programming.

d. El Cerrito Committee on Aging

Committee members made several useful suggestions regarding how the new library could address seniors’ needs, including mobile seating, space for grandparents and grandchildren to read together, training classes for seniors and a previewing area for

videos and DVDs prior to checkout. Attendees were in favor of a refreshment service and advised the designers that “baby boomers are the future – plan accordingly”.

e. Parents of School-Age Children

A small group of parents met to provide input on how the new Library could serve their families. Each of these families had lived in El Cerrito for the past two to six years. Suggestions included a children’s restroom adjacent to the children’s area, expanded children’s book and media collections (this was more important to them than more computers), comfortable parent/child seating, larger programming space for children’s events, an outdoor reading area a parenting collection, college preparation materials for older kids and their parents, after-school homework help space and coaching, separation of the adult and children’s areas (while maintaining some visibility for parental supervision), varied timing of children’s programs, more visibility for the new children’s books, offer volunteer opportunities for seniors to read to children, quiet rooms for studying, increased hours .

f. Teachers at Portola Middle School

Portola Middle School is 0.75 miles from the existing Library. Teachers reported that the most important services for their students include Internet access, access to the book collection, assistance from a reference librarian, a large, separate teen collection, Black literature and biographies of African Americans, graphic novels, hip hop music and books and Library staff who can attract teens to the Library and show them how to use it.

Complete summaries of each focus group session are included in *Appendix B*.

3. El Cerrito High School Survey

The consultant spent time of the El Cerrito High School campus, meeting with the Leadership Class, touring the campus library and interviewing several faculty members. Students in the Leadership Class surveyed a cross-section of students to get feedback on students’ current public library use and their priorities for library services. Only 4 of the 33 students surveyed reported that they use the EL Cerrito Library. Reasons given for not using the Library included its limited collection, insufficient seating and computers, lack of wireless access, distance from their homes (some students are Richmond residents), limited hours and lack of interest. Students noted that they study after school at home (88%), at a friend’s home (39%), at a store or restaurant (24%) or elsewhere (6%). Only one student reported using the El Cerrito Library for this purpose.

Students ranked the following services and features in the new Library as most important to them. While computers for Internet searching and word processing and plentiful study seating received the most first priority votes, the ability to buy and eat food and drinks received the most votes overall in the top three priority categories. The complete summary of survey responses is included as *Appendix C*.

Table 3
Teen Survey Responses to Question #4
(Top Ten Responses for Top Three Categories)

	Priority #1	Priority #2	Priority #3	Total
A place to buy food and drinks		5	5	10
Computers to search the Internet	5	1	2	8
Music CDs		5	3	8
Plenty of study seating	4	2	1	7
Computers for word processing	4	1	1	6
Fiction books for teens	1		3	4
A separate space for teens	3			3
Comfortable lounge chairs	2		1	3
Computers with other software	1		2	3
Library programs for teens		2	1	3
Graphic novels	1	1		2
Places to plug in laptop computers		2		2
Group study rooms		2		2
DVDs			2	2
Nonfiction books for research and study	1			1
Magazines for teens	1			1
Career prep books		1		1

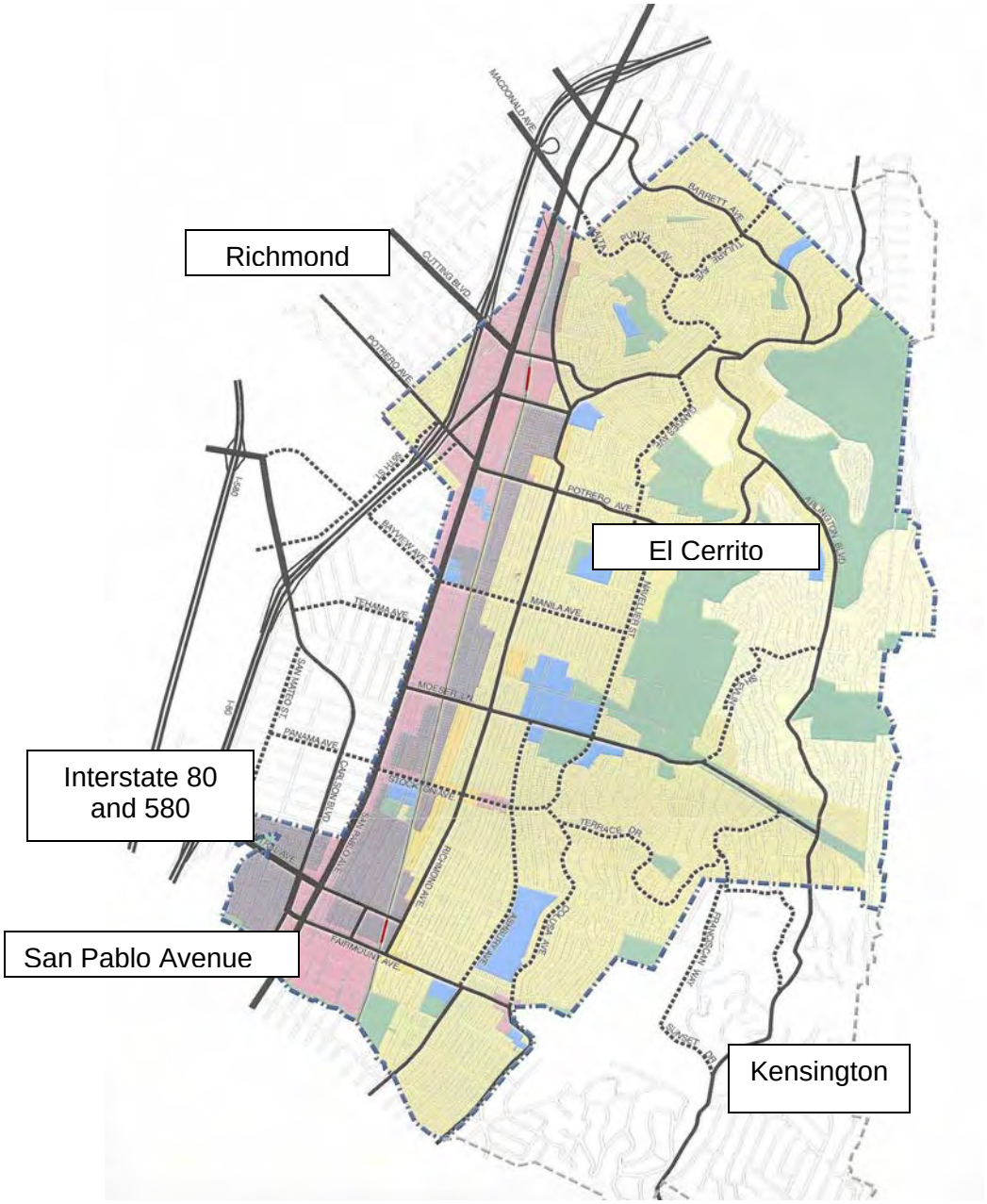
III. Community Analysis

A. Executive Summary

El Cerrito is a community in transition. Young families are moving into a city that for years was characterized by its aging population. Housing values are rising, as they are throughout the Bay Area, although homes in El Cerrito are considered more affordable than in other cities. Increasing ethnic and cultural diversity is noticeable in the schools, on city streets and at public meetings. The city is a regional transportation hub, with two BART stations and easy access to freeways and major surface streets. Many residents are well educated and are enthusiastic readers, with many adults employed in management or professional occupations. Public and private school in the city support a combined enrollment of over 4,800 students in kindergarten through grade 12. Older adults continue to make up an important part of the population. Social responsibility and environmental activism are important community values, demonstrated by many community volunteer activities. The city is working create cultural and social institutions that add to its identity.

B. Service Area

The El Cerrito Library serves the residents of the City of El Cerrito, an incorporated city located in western Contra Costa County, California. The City boundaries enclose approximately four square miles of land along the Interstate 80 corridor. The city of Richmond is adjacent to the west and north. The city of Albany and the unincorporated community of Kensington border the City to the south, with Berkeley just beyond. On the east, El Cerrito lies adjacent to Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, part of the East Bay Regional Park District.



C. Government Agencies and Officials

Two governmental entities are responsible for developing and implementing plans for a new library in El Cerrito – the City of El Cerrito and Contra Costa County. The roles and responsibilities of these entities and their respective elected bodies and staff are summarized below.

El Cerrito City Council/El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency

El Cerrito, incorporated in 1917, is organized as a council-manager form of government, with a five-member City Council elected at large for four-year, overlapping terms. The Mayor and Council provide community leadership, develop policies to guide the City in delivering services and achieving community goals. The Council also serves as the governing body of the El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency.

Current City Council members are:

Janet Abelson, Mayor
Letitia D. Moore, Mayor Pro Tem
Jan Bridges
Bill Jones
Sandi Potter

El Cerrito Planning Commission

The Planning Commission and the Design Review Board will participate in the entitlement process.

City Staff

Scott Hanin, El Cerrito City Manager, has led the planning effort within the City. Mr. Hanin has championed the project in the community and with the City Council and coordinated the Library/Senior Center project with the City's other civic development projects, including a new City Hall and Department of Public Safety building.

Karen Pinkos, Assistant City Manager, is the City's lead staff member for the project. She serves on the Project Committee, coordinated the community survey distribution, scheduled community input meetings and acted as project liaison between the Project Committee and all City Departments.

Bruce King, El Cerrito Maintenance Manager, oversees repair and maintenance of all City buildings. He provided information on the physical condition of the current library facility and data on that building's maintenance needs.

Monica Kortz, El Cerrito Recreation Director, directs the services and programs of the City's Recreation Department. She provided information on the recreational and cultural activities offered and historical and current trends of resident use of these services.

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors is a non-partisan board with five members representing five districts within the County, each of whom serves a four-year term. The Board governs the County Library and supports the El Cerrito Library project.
The current Board members are:

John Gioia, District I, Chair
Gayle Uilkema, District II
Mary Piepho, District III
Mark DeSaulnier, District IV
Federal Glover, District V

County Library Commission
The Library Commission is composed of 28 members, 18 of whom are appointed by and represent cities and towns in the County. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors and County Librarian on the goals, operations, services to meet needs, and the adequacy of funding. El Cerrito is represented by Lloyd McGrady. The alternate commissioner for El Cerrito is Joy Brown.

Contra Costa County Library
The Contra Costa County Library operates 23 branches throughout the County, including the El Cerrito Library. Consistent with the Library's mission, it provides collections, resources and services to meet the cultural, informational, recreational and educational needs of the County's diverse population.

County Library staff has worked closely with the City of El Cerrito to plan the new library facility. Rose-Marie Westberg and Laura Martinengo serve on the Project Committee. County Library will be responsible for managing library public service provided within the facility.

Anne Cain, County Librarian, has led the County Library strategic planning process and has advocated for improved library services in El Cerrito. She serves on the Project Committee and has ensured that key Library personnel and relevant statistical data are made available to support the project.

Rose-Marie Westberg, Deputy County Librarian, serves on the Project Committee. She has coordinated collection of library usage statistics, has reviewed all draft community input materials, helped develop the community survey instrument, provided historical background on Library services and operations and participated in reviewing needs assessment findings and recommendations.

Laura Martinengo, El Cerrito Branch Librarian, serves on the Project Committee. She has coordinated on-site site visits, tours and interviews, helped develop the community survey instrument and participated in reviewing needs assessment findings and recommendations.

D. School Agencies

The Library serves the students, faculty and staff of six public schools and five private schools located within the city limits of El Cerrito. The public schools, listed below, are administered by the West Contra Costa Unified School District. The District serves more than 34,000 students enrolled in 63 schools, preschool through grade 12, located in El Cerrito, Richmond, Hercules, Pinole, San Pablo and other communities in western Contra Costa County.

The District is undergoing a massive, multi-year facilities renovation program. A new El Cerrito High School facility is currently under construction. The high school's 1,363 students have been moved into portable structures adjacent to the construction site. The new school facility is projected to open in 2010, which means that for the next four years, the high school will remain in its current situation.

Two elementary schools, Harding and Madera, have been remodeled and reopened. Castro Elementary will be remodeled in the next round of the District's bond funded projects and Fairmont is slated to be remodeled during a subsequent phase of the project. Progress has slowed on renovation of Portola Middle School due to the discovery of seismic problems on the site.

The school libraries have been significantly impacted by the construction projects ongoing at each campus. The high school library is housed in a portable trailer that provides 625 square feet of space, about one-half the amount of space that it formerly occupied. This has forced a reduction in seating capacity from 64 to the current 32 seats and long-term storage of over 50% of the book collection and the entire magazine back file collection.

District staff assisted the Project Committee during the needs assessment process, providing statistical information and facilitating interviews with students and faculty. Susan Wittenberg, Executive Director of the West Contra Costa Public Education Fund, provided the consultant with additional information and guidance regarding El Cerrito schools and education personnel.

El Cerrito is home to five major private schools. Two schools, St. Jerome Catholic and St. John the Baptist, are administered by local church parishes. Prospect Sierra School, draws enrollment from throughout the East Bay region. Windrush School and Tehiyah Day focus enrollment more locally although both have student bodies that extend beyond El Cerrito. Combined enrollment in 2005/06 at these five schools was 1,588 students, covering grades K through 8. Many private school students commute from other communities to school each day and participate in after-school programs provided by the schools.

Table 4
El Cerrito Schools

Public Schools
Castro Elementary School
Fairmont Elementary School
Harding Elementary School
Madera Elementary School
Portola Junior High School
El Cerrito High School
Private Schools
Prospect Sierra School
St. Jerome Catholic School
St. John the Baptist School
Tehiyah Day School
Windrush School

There are fifteen preschools in El Cerrito. Enrollment at these schools varies from as few as twelve to close to sixty students. Some schools report that they are at capacity and have waiting lists while others report that they can accommodate additional students. It is difficult to draw inferences about population trends from preschool enrollment since all schools contacted report that they draw students from throughout the area.

E. Community Organizations

Two community organizations are closely associated with the Library:

Friends of the El Cerrito Library is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting library services in El Cerrito. Through membership dues and book sale revenues, the Friends provide funding to purchase books and other materials to supplement the collection, subsidize programming for children and adults. The Friends sponsor an annual book sale and maintains a small display of books for sale in the Library. The Friends Board of Directors meets monthly. The Friends occupy space in the basement of the Library in which they store and sort book sale material. The book sale also takes place in this space.

El Cerrito Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to locating and preserving local history materials, including books, printed documents, photographs and memorabilia, pertinent to El Cerrito and its environs. The Society meets quarterly and publishes a newsletter, “The Forge”. The Society’s collection is stored in the basement of the current Library and in various members’ homes. Storage, work and display space for local history materials will be included in a new El Cerrito City Hall, scheduled to start construction in Fall 2006. Construction is expected to be complete in twelve to eighteen months.

The following community organizations are active. All need meeting room space and several have collaborated with the Library to provide displays or programs.

Albany/El Cerrito Exchange Club
Albany/El Cerrito Kiwanis Club
American Association of University Women
American Legion
Bayview Aerie #2323, Fraternal Order of Eagles
B.E.R. Unit Bridge
Children’s Home Society
El Cerrito/Albany Access Group
El Cerrito Art Association
El Cerrito Bridge Club
El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce
El Cerrito Democratic Club
El Cerrito Flying Dons – Model Airplane Club
El Cerrito Garden Club
El Cerrito High School Archiving Project
El Cerrito Lions Club
El Cerrito Plaza Merchants Association
El Cerrito Tennis Club
El Cerrito Toastmasters
El Cerrito Youth Baseball

El Cerrito Youth Soccer Club
Friends of El Cerrito Trees
Friends of Baxter Creek
Friends of Five Creeks
Friends of the El Cerrito Theatre
Heritage Roses Group
Kensington/El Cerrito Congress of Republicans
League of Women Voters
Native Daughters of the Golden West
Our Club
Rotary Club of El Cerrito
Soroptimists International of El Cerrito
Sustainable El Cerrito

F. Demographic Profile

1. Population – Current and Trends

When El Cerrito was incorporated as a city in 1917, its estimated population was 1,500. Hardly more than a village during the 1920s and 1930s, the town grew from 7,000 in 1940 to almost 17,000 by the end of World War II. Population peaked in 1960 at 25,437. Over the past four decades, the number of residents has decreased somewhat, to 23,171, according to the 2000 Census. Population has started to climb once again, however, as young families have begun moving into El Cerrito and residential in-fill development increases existing housing stock. The estimated population in 2005, according to the State Department of Finance, was 23,407 – the city's first increase in population in thirty years. This trend will continue, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments. By 2030, El Cerrito is projected to include some 25,257 residents, an 8% increase from 2005.

Table 5
Population Projections

Year	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
1990	22,869	803,732	29,760,021	248,718,302
2000	23,171	948,816	34,043,198	281,423,231
2005	23,407	1,020,898	36,810,358	295,507,000
2030	25,257[3]	1,244,800	48,110,671	363,584,000

Source: ABAG Projections
U.S. Census Bureau
California Dept of Finance
Statistical Abstracts

2. Age Breakdown

El Cerrito's population is getting younger, reversing a thirty-year trend. The number of children and teens is growing. Residents under the age of 19 grew from 16.0% in 1990 to 17.5% in 2000, while seniors over the age of 55 declined from 32.0% in 1990 to 30.4% in 2000.

[3] El Cerrito Sphere of Influence increase applied to City of El Cerrito population

El Cerrito's youth population is significantly lower than the County's overall percentage, which makes up 29.0% of Contra Costa County residents overall. Observers report a growing presence of young children in the community, as families with children move into the city. Recreation Department programs for toddlers and elementary school age children are increasingly popular, enjoying unprecedented attendance. There are 15 preschools and day care centers in the city. Some report at-capacity enrollment and waiting lists, although it is difficult to infer meaningful trends from this information since all preschools contacted draw students from throughout the area.

At 30.4% over the age of 55, the senior population continues to represent a substantial portion of the population, compared to 20.2% for Contra Costa County as a whole. El Cerrito residents' median age in 2000 was 42.7, more than six years higher than the median age for Contra Costa County. Local officials anticipate that older adults will remain a major constituency within the City for years to come, although the percentage of seniors is expected to decrease over the next twenty years as young families continue to move into El Cerrito.

Table 6
Population by Age: 2000

Age Group	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
0 - 4	1,079	66,128	2,486,981	19,175,798
	4.7%	*7.0%*	*7.3%*	*6.8%*
5 - 9	1,008	73,031	2,725,880	20,549,505
	4.4%	*7.7%*	*8.0%*	*7.3%*
10 - 14	1,001	72,017	2,570,822	20,528,072
	4.3%	*7.6%*	*7.6%*	*7.3%*
15 - 19	956	63,124	2,450,888	20,219,890
	4.1%	*6.7%*	*7.2%*	*7.2%*
20 -24	1,203	50,696	2,381,288	18,964,001
	5.2%	*5.3%*	*7.0%*	*6.7%*
25 - 34	3,454	126,387	5,229,062	39,891,724
	14.9%	*13.3%*	*15.4%*	*14.2%*
35 - 44	3,772	163,755	5,485,341	45,148,527
	16.3%	*17.3%*	*16.2%*	*16%*
45 - 54	3,645	141,988	4,331,635	37,677,952
	15.7%	*15.0%*	*12.8%*	*13.4%*
55 - 59	1,268	48,758	1,467,252	13,469,237
	5.5%	*5.1%*	*4.3%*	*4.8%*
60 - 64	1,052	35,660	1,146,841	10,805,447
	4.5%	*3.8%*	*3.4%*	*3.8%*
65 - 74	2,039	54,722	1,887,823	18,390,986
	8.8%	*5.8%*	*5.6%*	*6.5%*
75 - 84	2,026	39,179	1,282,178	12,361,180
	8.7%	*4.1%*	*3.8%*	*4.4%*
85+	668	13,371	425,657	4,239,587
	2.9%	*1.4%*	*1.3%*	*1.5%*
Median Age	42.7 years	36.4 years	33.3 years	35.3 years

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 7
Population by Age Summary: 2000

Age Group	% of Population El Cerrito	% of Population Contra Costa Co.	% of Population California	% of Population U.S.
0 - 19	17.5%	29%	30.1%	28.6%
20 - 24	5.2%	5.3%	7.0%	6.7%
25 - 44	31.2%	30.6%	31.6%	30.2%
45 - 64	25.7%	23.9%	20.5%	22%
65+	20.4%	11.3%	10.7%	12.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

3. Students, Schools and Academic Performance Index Scores

There are 3,253 students enrolled in El Cerrito's six public schools, 1,456 of these students – 45% - live in El Cerrito. The rest of the combined student body lives in neighboring communities. These students are driven to school by their parents or take public transportation. This mix of residents and non-residents is indicative of the fluidity with which the West County population flows between communities as well as the way that the West Contra Costa Unified School District is organized. An elementary school is adjacent to the existing library, the public middle school and a major private school are a short walk from the library and the high school is a short drive away. Regardless of where they live, hundreds of public school students walk or ride past the existing public library every day, on their way home or en route to catch a bus on San Pablo Avenue.

Private school students are less likely to use the existing public library for several reasons. Frequently, they travel from well beyond the West Contra Costa region, from homes in central or eastern Contra Costa or even farther distances, and tend to use the public libraries in their hometowns. Several of the private schools have their own school libraries and after-school homework programs that are available to students. Students at the two Catholic parochial schools are more likely to patronize the public library than other students enrolled in private schools.

Table 8
Students in El Cerrito Schools: 2005-06 Academic Year

School	Enrollment	Total
Public Schools		
Elementary Schools		
Castro Elementary (K-6)	316	
Fairmont Elementary (K-6)	276	
Harding Elementary (K--6)	289	
Madera Elementary (K-5)	351	1,250
Middle School		
Portola Junior High	640	640
High School		
El Cerrito Senior High	1,363	1,363
Sub-total		3,253

Private Schools		
Prospect Sierra (K-8)	482	
St. Jerome (K-8)	235	
St. John the Baptist (K-8)	298	
Tehiyah Day School (K-8)	330	
Windrush School (K-8)	243	1,588
Total		**4,841**

Source: California Department of Education, 2005-06
Private Schools: 2005-06 (per phone calls to individual schools)

The Academic Performance Index (API) has become the standard evaluation tool for measuring California public school students' academic achievement. The Index assigns a numeric point value between 200 and 1,000, with 800 set as the interim score that schools should strive to meet. Targets are set each year for each school. El Cerrito schools improved their scores in 2004/05, with five out of six schools meeting their goals. Improvement is still needed, however, since only one school, Madera Elementary, met or exceeded the statewide goal of 800.

Table 9
El Cerrito Public Schools
Academic Performance Index Growth Report: 2004-05

Schools	Academic Performance Index					Met Growth Target		
	STAR							
	2005	2005	2004	2004-05			Comparable	Both
School Type for 2004 API (Base)	Percent Tested	API (Growth)	API (Base)	Growth Target	2004-05 Growth	School-wide	Improve-ment (CI)	Schoolwide and CI
Elementary Schools								
Castro Elementary	100	762	677	6	85	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fairmont Elementary	100	722	680	6	42	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harding Elementary	100	671	671	6	0	No	No	No
Madera Elementary	100	872	849	A	23	Yes	Yes	Yes
Middle Schools								
Portola Junior High	99	675	655	7	20	Yes	No	No
High Schools								
El Cerrito High School	98	653	605	10	48	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: California Department of Education
Note: "A" means the school scored at or above the statewide performance target of 800 in 2004.

El Cerrito students who took the California High School Exit Exam fared better than students in West Contra Costa Unified School District overall, but less well than students countywide or statewide. Fifty-four % of the 516 El Cerrito High School students who took the math skills exam passed and 65% passed the English language arts exam.

Table 10
California High School Exit Exam Results: 2005

Subject	% passing	El Cerrito Senior High	West Contra Costa USD	Contra Costa County	California
Math	% passing	54%	48%	69%	63%
English	% passing	65%	54%	73%	65%

Source: California Department of Education

4. Educational Attainment and Adult Literacy Rate

Many El Cerrito residents are well educated, with 56.0% of the adult population over the age of 25 possessing an undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate degree, compared to 35.0% of adults in Contra Costa County and 26.5% in California. Many adult residents attended the University of California at Berkeley and moved to El Cerrito as they married and started families. The University employs many El Cerrito residents, to the extent that some local observers refer to the City as a "suburb of Berkeley".

Table 11
Population by Educational Attainment for persons 25+: 2000

Education	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
Less than 9th grade	537	32,804	2,446,324	13,755,477
	3.0%	*5.2%*	*11.5%*	*7.5%*
9th to 12th grade (no diploma)	791	49,063	2,496,419	21,960,148
	4.4%	*7.8%*	*11.7%*	*12.1%*
High school graduate/GED	2,335	123,956	4,288,452	52,168,981
	13.0%	*19.8%*	*20.1%*	*28.6%*
Some college, no degree	3,169	152,680	4,879,336	38,351,595
	17.6%	*24.4%*	*22.9%*	*21%*
Associate degree	1,089	48,090	1,518,403	11,512,833
	6.1%	*7.7%*	*7.1%*	*6.3%*
Bachelor's degree	5,453	142,909	3,640,157	28,137,792
	30.3%	*22.8%*	*17.1%*	*15.5%*
Graduate or professional degree	4,625	76,139	2,029,809	16,144,813
	25.7%	*12.2%*	*9.5%*	*8.9%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 12
High School and College Graduates: 2000

	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
% high school graduate or higher	92.6%	86.9%	76.8%	80.4%
% bachelor's degree or higher	56.0%	35%	26.6%	24.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

The number of college graduates may obscure, however, a less positive reality. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that 13% of American adults are functioning below basic literacy skill levels and an additional 29% are functioning at the most basic level. Individuals in the first category can perform only the simplest literacy tasks, such as signing a form. They are often low income, unable to participate in their children's education. Those with basic literacy levels, can perform simple tasks, such as finding a TV program listing or comparing two tickets to a sporting event. They are unlikely, however, to compete in our complex, information-driven society and unable to perform many jobs. These estimates include native English speakers only, and exclude English language learners, which would significantly increase the percentage.

While there are no current statistics available that provide specific adult literacy for El Cerrito residents, if the estimates for the American population at large are applied to El Cerrito, there are some 2,487 adults over 19 years old functioning below the basic

literacy level and another 5,547 functioning at the most basic level. Even if these figures are looked at conservatively and reduced to a fraction of the national estimates, the extent of adult illiteracy in the community is sobering. For example, if it is assumed that El Cerrito's adult literacy rate is twice that of other communities, an estimated 1,244 adults who live in the community are functioning below basic literacy skill levels.

5. Ethnic Breakdown

El Cerrito reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Bay Area, with an increasing Asian and Hispanic population. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of Asian residents increased from 22.5% to 24. 5% while Hispanics increased from 6.6% to 7.9%. At 57.8%, White residents remain the largest ethnic group, although that group decreased from 67.6% since 1990. At this rate of decline, Whites will cease to be the majority of residents by the next decennial census.

Table 13
Ethnicity: 2000

Ethnicity	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
White	13,391	621,490	20,170,059	211,460,626
	57.8%	*65.5%*	*59.5%*	*75.1%*
Black or African American	1,978	88,813	2,263,882	34,658,190
	8.5%	*9.4%*	*6.7%*	*12.3%*
Am Indian & Alaska Native	116	5,830	333,346	2,475,956
	0.5%	*0.6%*	*1.0%*	*0.9%*
Asian Indian	366	11,683	314,819	1,678,765
	1.6%	*1.2%*	*0.9%*	*0.6%*
Chinese	2,981	28,948	980,642	2,432,585
	12.9%	*3.1%*	*2.9%*	*0.9%*
Filipino	394	34,595	918,678	1,850,314
	1.7%	*3.6%*	*2.7%*	*0.7%*
Japanese	1,063	7,867	288,854	796,700
	4.6%	*0.8%*	*0.9%*	*0.3%*
Korean	271	5,142	345,882	1,076,872
	1.2%	*0.5%*	*1.0%*	*0.4%*
Vietnamese	156	5,168	447,032	1,122,528
	0.7%	*0.5%*	*1.3%*	*0.4%*
Other Asian	418	10,590	401,606	1,285,234
	1.8%	*1.1%*	*1.2%*	*0.5%*
Native Hawaiian & other Pacific Islander	59	3,466	116,961	398,835
	0.3%	*0.4%*	*0.3%*	*0.1%*
Some other race	708	76,510	5,682,241	15,359,073
	3.1%	*8.1%*	*16.8%*	*5.5%*
Two or more races	1,270	48,714	1,607,646	6,826,228
	5.5%	*5.1%*	*4.7%*	*2.4%*
Hispanic (of any race)	1,838	167,776	10,966,556	35,305,818
	7.9%	*17.7%*	*32.4%*	*12.5%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

The ethnic and cultural diversity of the school-age population echo the diversity of the overall population. Asian and Filipino students in El Cerrito public school represent

10.7% to 28.0% of the student body on each campus, African American students 20.1% to 45.4% Hispanic students 14.4% to 28.6% and White students 8.6% to 34.5%. Almost 500 public school students, or 35.3%, are English language learners, the majority of which speak Spanish. Altogether, ELL students speak over 26 languages other than English at home.

Table 14
El Cerrito Public Schools Ethnicity: 2004-05

School	Am Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	African American	White
Castro	1.5%	21.9%	1.2%	6.1%	24.5%	23.3%	17.5%
Fairmont	0.0%	13.9%	0.0%	1.1%	28.6%	41.4%	8.6%
Harding	0.3%	10.4%	0.3%	0.3%	25.8%	35.6%	17.4%
Madera	0.6%	21.0%	0.6%	3.3%	16.2%	20.1%	34.5%
Portola Middle	0.0%	17.1%	0.8%	1.5%	18.7%	45.4%	16.1%
El Cerrito High	0.1%	18.6%	0.5%	1.3%	14.4%	41.5%	22.4%
District	0.2%	10.6%	0.7%	5.4%	40.5%	27.4%	13.0%

Source: California Department of Education

Table 15
El Cerrito Public Schools
English Language Learners by Language: 2004-05

Spanish	235		Khmu	8
Cantonese	37		Hindi	6
Portuguese	20		Khmer	4
Urdu	18		Tongan	3
Mandarin	17		Russian	3
Arabic	16		Farsi	3
Lao	16		Thai	2
Japanese	13		Italian	2
Korean	12		Burmese	1
Vietnamese	11		German	1
Filipino	10		Turkish	1
Punjabi	9		Indonesian	1
Mien	9		Gujarati	1
			All other non-Eng	22
Total				481

Source: California Department of Education

6. Household Characteristics

Close to 60% of El Cerrito's 10,208 households are family households, according to the 2000 Census. Over 2,000 of these were families with children under the age of 18 living at home, a percentage that is growing as more young families move into the city. Sixty-one % of El Cerrito's housing units are owner-occupied, while the remaining 39% are rental units. The average number of people in each household is 2.25, somewhat less than the countywide average of 2.72 people. The average household size is expected to increase, however, as more young families with children move into the City.

Table 16
Households: 2000

	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
Total # of households	10,208	344,129	11,502,870	105,480,101
	100%	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*
Total # of people in households	22,995	937,479	33,051,894	273,643,273
	99.2%	*98.8%*	*97.6%*	*97.2%*
Total # of family households	5,970	242,333	7,920,049	71,787,347
	58.5%	*70.4%*	*68.9%*	*68.1%*
Total # of family households w/children under 18	2,114	121,884	4,117,036	34,588,368
	20.7%	*35.4%*	*35.8%*	*32.8%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 17
Average Household Size: 2000

Year	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
2000	2.25	2.72	2.87	2.59

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 18
Occupied Housing Units by Type of Occupant: 2000

	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
Total occupied housing units	10,208	344,129	11,502,870	105,480,101
	100%	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*
Owner-occupied housing units	6,228	238,449	6,546,334	69,815,753
	61.0%	*69.3%*	*56.9%*	*66.2%*
Renter-occupied housing units	3,980	105,680	4,956,536	35,664,348
	39.0%	*30.7%*	*43.1%*	*33.8%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

7. Income Levels and Poverty Rate

El Cerrito per capita income is somewhat higher that the county average, although household income is somewhat less, suggesting a community of medium economic means. The relatively low people-per-household ratio and the higher than average number of seniors living in the community have an impact on these measures. The percentages of individuals and families living in poverty are lower than the countywide percentages.

Table 19
Per Capita Income: 1999

El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
$32,593	$30,615	$22,711	$21,587

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 20
Median Household Income: 1999

El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
$57,253	$63,675	$47,493	$41,994

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 21
Population Percent below Poverty Level: 1999

	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
Individuals	6.7%	7.6%	14.2%	12.4%
Families	3.5%	5.4%	10.6%	9.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

8. Employment and Unemployment

Over one-half (58.2%) of the El Cerrito work force is employed in management or professional occupations and an additional 24.2% work in sales and offices. For every person employed by a business in El Cerrito, two El Cerrito residents travel outside the City for work[4].

The unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the West Contra Costa County/North Alameda County region, in part due to the relatively high number of retired people. Although the recently renovated and expanded El Cerrito Plaza has brought new jobs into the community, residents must continue to continue elsewhere for managerial, professional and office positions.

Table 22
Population by Occupation: 2000

Occupation	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
Management, professional, and related occupations	7,052	185,100	5,295,069	43,646,731
	58.2%	*41%*	*36%*	*33.6%*
Service occupations	1,048	60,299	2,173,874	19,276,947
	8.6%	*13.4%*	*14.8%*	*14.9%*
Sales and office occupations	2,931	126,183	3,939,383	34,621,390
	24.2%	*28%*	*26.8%*	*26.7%*
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	7	937	196,695	951,810
	0.1%	*0.2%*	*1.3%*	*0.7%*
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	490	40,341	1,239,160	12,256,138
	4.0%	*8.9%*	*8.4%*	*9.4%*
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	592	38,497	1,874,747	18,968,496
	4.9%	*8.5%*	*12.7%*	*14.6%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

[4] City of El Cerrito Market Assessment, February 2006, Chabin Concepts Team, Chico, CA

Table 23
Unemployment Rate

Year	El Cerrito	Contra Costa Co.	California	U.S.
2000	3.1%	3.6%	4.9%	4.0%
September 2005	4.1%	4.6%	5.0%	5.1%
February 2006	4.0%	4.5%	5.4%	4.6%

Source: California EDD (not seasonally adjusted)
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

G. Community Characteristics Analysis and Discussion

El Cerrito is a community of 23,400 residents placed strategically along Interstate Freeway 80 in western Contra Costa County. The city occupies an oblong-shaped, 3.9 square mile area that starts on flatlands bordering the City of Richmond and the San Francisco Bay and extends eastward to the edge of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. El Cerrito is Spanish for “the little hill”, a name that reflects its topography, a gently rising slope that affords panoramic views of the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge.

By 1917, when El Cerrito was incorporated, its population had grown to approximately 1,500. This growth was in part due to the 1906 earthquake and fire, which drove many San Franciscans to find new homes in the East Bay. The city grew slowly until World War II, during which the population rose from 7,000 in 1940 to close to 17,000 in 1945, in response to wartime industry. Between the two World Wars, the city became well known for its gambling houses, dog races and other clubs that were conveniently located along the main road. In 1945, a group of residents determined to change the face of El Cerrito established the Good Government League and adopted a new slogan – “El Cerrito, City of Homes”. After three City Council members were recalled, the city established limits on gambling and redirected civic focus to building housing stock and a sense of community that has carried through to the present day. Within two years, the city adopted a council-manager form of government and set about the task of improving the community infrastructure, establishing parks (there are now 45 acres of public park land within the city), improving streets and creating a safe, attractive community that endures to this day.

El Cerrito has been shaped by its location and is a regional transportation hub. The original village formed around commercial businesses that grew up along the Oakland-Martinez road during the 1880s. From the very beginning, El Cerrito was adjacent to a regional transportation corridor, a characteristic that remains central to the city’s personality today. San Pablo Avenue, also known as State Route 123 and the descendent of the original Oakland-Martinez road, is El Cerrito’s “main street” and a major thoroughfare for surface street vehicular travel in North Alameda County and West Contra Costa County. Interstate 80 parallels the City’s western boundary. Interstate 580 splits off toward the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge just to the southwest of El Cerrito’s city limits. Two Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations, one at each end of town, carry passengers throughout the Bay Area.

Ready access to transportation makes for a mobile population. Residents travel among the various communities in West Contra Costa County in a constant flow. Parents drive from one community to another to deliver their children to school. Workers drive or take public transportation to jobs throughout the Bay Area. Consumers routinely travel outside their home cities to shop. Many community activities are jointly sponsored by two

or more communities and draw participants from several jurisdictions. Many people are unaware of the political boundaries that separate their city from neighboring towns.

For all its access to transportation, El Cerrito is a surprisingly residential city. Over 10,000 households were counted in El Cerrito in 2000, almost 60% of which are family households. To the west and north, the highly urbanized city of Richmond wraps around El Cerrito's borders. Some segments of San Pablo Avenue, in fact, mark the boundary between the two cities. Albany and the unincorporated community of Kensington lie to the immediate south. To the east, the city bumps up against the western edge of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park.

El Cerrito is experiencing generational transition, as young families begin to move into the community, drawn by the opportunity to find homes located within easy access to Bay Area urban centers. Local observers note that the community appears to be coming full circle, completing a cycle that began in the 1960s and 1970s, when recent college graduates migrated from Berkeley to El Cerrito as they married and began having children. These families' children have now grown and many have moved elsewhere, leaving an aging population. Evidence of this shift is seen in rising demand for toddler programs at the Community Center, full enrollment and waiting lists at preschools and increasing visibility of parents with strollers on city streets.

Seniors are still a major part of the community, at 30.4% of the total. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage fell from 32.0%. Indications are that the shift toward a younger population will continue, and local officials await confirmation of the trend in the 2010 U.S. Census. Meanwhile, children and youth under the age of 19 represented 17.5% of the population in 2000, up from 16.0% in 1990.

El Cerrito is a magnet for education. Its six public schools (four elementary, one middle and one high school) are considered among the best in the West Contra Costa Unified School District and attract many students from neighboring communities. In 2005/06, a total of 3,253 students attend public schools in the city. The ratio of El Cerrito resident to non-resident enrollment varies from 32% (residents) at Fairmont Elementary to 65% (residents) at Madera Elementary. Overall, the public schools' combined enrollment is 45% El Cerrito residents. The city also contains several private schools with regional reputations, including the Prospect Sierra School and Windrush School. The private schools' combined enrollment this year is 1,588 – one-third of the total K-12 student population.

El Cerrito is a diverse population. Asian and Hispanic residents are increasing. In 2000 these two groups represented 24.5% and 7.9% of the city population. White residents were 57.8% and African Americans 8.5%. The ethnic makeup of the community is expected to become even more diverse over the next decade.

Income levels for El Cerrito residents are higher on a per capita basis but lower for households than the rest of Contra Costa County, probably due in part to the high number of retired individuals. Close to 60% of El Cerrito residents in the work force are employed in management or professional occupations. Another 24.2% work in sales and office positions.

Many El Cerrito residents are well-educated - 56.0% of the over-25 population holds a degree from a four-year college or a graduate degree. Many lifelong learners make El

Cerrito a “city of readers”. Signs of this included the remarkably high priority that survey respondents gave to the need for a larger book collection, the popularity of book-related adult programming at the current library, the large numbers of high quality book donations that the Friends of the Library receives, even the city-wide popularity of a used book exchange at the local recycling center.

Adult literacy specialists who are familiar with West Contra Costa County warn that need remains for literacy tutoring in the community. Citing the recent National Report on Adult Literacy, the County Library’s Project Second Chance staff warned that an estimated 1,244 to 2,487 El Cerrito adults are functionally illiterate. An opportunity exists in El Cerrito to connect literate adult tutors and adult literacy learners, particularly with so many literate, retired individuals living in the community.

The prospect of a new public library in El Cerrito offers many possibilities for voluntarism, beyond adult literacy tutoring. The community has a fifty-year-plus tradition of civic activism and participation that could be tapped to extend the Library staff’s effectiveness. Programming assistance, coordinating book and art displays, technology coaching, graphic art assistance – these are but a handful of the potential areas in which community members could support the Library’s service programs, in addition to organizing and maintaining book sales at the Library.

El Cerrito is a city in transition. Almost built-out, the City is exploring mixed-use, urban-in fill projects to increase affordable housing stock. El Cerrito Plaza, a shopping center at the south edge of the city, has recently been transformed into a major destination shopping mall. The City is embarking on an economic development action plan to reshape San Pablo Avenue into a more community-friendly environment, create transit-oriented development around the BART stations and pursue several initiatives to improve the community.

IV. Library Service Needs

A. Executive Summary

El Cerrito needs the following library services:

- A strong collection of books, magazines and newspapers, media and electronic resources that contains at least 75,700 items, to provide 3.0 volumes per capita to the 2030 population. Collections for adults, teens and children must be increased and developed, as well as audio and video collections. A collection to support adult literacy tutoring is especially needed.

- Varied and plentiful public seating, including table and group study seating, individual lounge chairs and parent/child seats, for a total seating capacity of 126 seats or 5.0 seats per 1,000 people served.

- Fifty-four public access computers, 42 in open access areas and 12 in a computer training room.

- Four express self-checkout machines.

- Access to current, reliable information both in print and online sources, accessible 24/7 through the Library's online system, with knowledgeable assistance form the Library's staff, when needed.

- A dedicated, acoustically enclosed, multipurpose meeting room that can accommodate audiences of 100 people.

- A separate children's programming space for groups of 30 children and their parents or caregivers.

- Homework support space and service for students in grades K-12.

- Literacy tutoring services for functionally illiterate adults.

These services were identified through analysis of community demographics, input from community surveys and focus group input, analysis of library statistics, input from community representatives and current library staff and observation of current library use.

B. Overview of Current Library Service

The El Cerrito Library is one of twenty-four libraries operated by the Contra Costa County Library, with the twenty-fifth library opening in Hercules on November 11, 2006. The facility opened on Stockton Avenue in central El Cerrito in 1948. In 1960, the building was expanded to its current size, which provides 6,500 square foot on the main level[5].

[5] An additional 1,360 of ADA inaccessible square feet are located on a basement level.

The Library is open five days per week for a total of 35 weekly service hours. The service hours were increased in 2002/03 from 29 to 35 hours per week, when the City of El Cerrito started contributing funds to supplement the Library operating budget. This increase has resulted in significant additional usage – from an estimated 81,726 visitors in 2002/03 to approximately 107,021 visitors in 2005/06 - a 31% increase in visits over three years' time.

Service hour cutbacks in the 1990s sharply curtailed access to the facility. With the exception of 1999-2000, the number of visitors decreased until 2001-02, with library visits increasing steadily since that time.

Table 24
El Cerrito Library Current Service Hours

Monday	12 noon – 8 p.m.
Tuesday	12 noon – 8 p.m.
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Friday	1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sunday	closed

Table 25
El Cerrito Library Visitors

Fiscal Year	Number of Visitors
1995/96	108,583
1996/97	117,552
1997/98	104,276
1998/99	92,422
1999/00	122,417
2000/01	82,158
2001/02	75,691
2002/03	81,726
2003/04	99,383
2004/05	102,362
2005/06	107,021

Source: Contra Costa County Library

The staff includes a Branch Librarian, two half-time librarians, two part-time library assistants, 2 part-time library clerks and four part-time library student assistants, for a total staff of 5.1 FTE (full time equivalent positions).

Table 26
Current Staffing

Number of Staff	Position	FTE

1	Branch Librarian	0.8
1	Adult Services Librarian	0.5
1	Children's Services Librarian	0.5
2	Library Assistants	1.3
2	Library Clerks	1.0
4	Library Student Assistants	1.0
11	Total	5.1

El Cerrito's book and media collection contains 37,062 items, 91% of which is books and 9% media. The book collection is 66% adult and teen titles – 21,173 items – and 34% children's titles – 11,599 items. There are 3,290 audio and video media items in the collection, 75% in adult materials and 24% in children's.

Table 27
El Cerrito Library Collection Size, as of June 30, 2006

Collection Component	Number of Items	Percent of Total
Adult Books	22,173	66% of books
Children's Books	11,599	34% of books
Total Books	33,772	91% of collection
Adult Media	2,480	75% of media
Children's Media	810	24% of media
Total Media	3,290	9% of collection
Total Books and Media	37,062	
Magazines Subscriptions:	65	
Newspaper Subscriptions:	10	

Source: Contra Costa County Library

El Cerrito Library's circulation has risen steadily for the past three years, after several years in which circulation hovered between 84,000 and 95,000 items annually. With supplemental funding by the City of El Cerrito for increased service hours and additional programming, library circulation has increased each year since 2003/04. The cumulative increase between 2003/04 and 2005/06 is a remarkable 43%.

Table 28
Circulation Trends: 1995-96 to 2005-06

Fiscal Year	El Cerrito	County Library
1995/96	119,600	3,795,557
1996/97	105,167	3,658,195

1997/98	85,803	3,669,522
1998/99	83,520	3,796,072
1999/2000	86,680	3,620,087
2000/01	95,183	3,819,549
2001/02	94,064	4,036,417
2002/03	90,294	4,253,135
2003/04	110, 645	4,522,958
2004/05	120,742	4,736,101
2005/06	129,474	4,929,783

Source: Contra Costa County Library

The media collections are by far the most popular components of the collection. Collection turnover represents the average number of times each item in the collection is checked out over the course of a year. Turnover rates in 2005/06 for videos and DVDs were extremely high – 22.0 for adult videos and DVDs labeled "fiction" and 20.8 for children's "fiction" videos and DVDs. Most other categories of video/DVD materials follow close behind. Music and spoken word compact discs were also popular with a turnover rate of 9.9 and books on tape at 4.3. The only book categories that matched the media turnover rates were new books – adult new books and children's new books both turned over at the rate of 14.4 last year, while Young Adult new books experienced a 7.1 turnover rate.

The total collection circulated somewhat less than what would be expected, at 3.1. Turnover rates for both adult and children's collections overall were moderate – 2.8 for adult materials and 4.1 for children's material. the City's supplemental funding will enable the collection to grow, especially in popular areas, which will push turnover rates higher.

Table 29
El Cerrito Library Collection Turnover Rates: 2005-06

Collection Component	Turnover Rate
Adult Video/DVD – Fiction	22.0
Adult New Books	14.4
Adult Video/DVD – Biography	13.1
Compact Discs (music and spoken word)	9.9
Adult Video/DVD – Nonfiction	6.7
Books on Tape	4.3
Adult Fiction Books	3.2
CD-ROMs	2.1
Adult Foreign Language	2.3
Music Cassettes	2.3
Adult Large Type	2.0
Adult Nonfiction Books	1.4
Adult Collection Overall	2.8
Young Adult New Books	7.1
Collection Component	Turnover Rate
Young Adult Books	3.4
Children's Video/DVD – Fiction	20.8
Children's Video/DVD – Nonfiction	18.2
Children's New Books	13.8
Children's CD-ROMs	12.0

Children's Fiction Books	5.0
Children's Compact Discs	4.4
Children's Cassettes	3.8
Children's Video/DVD – Biography	3.0
Children's Foreign Language	2.0
Children's Nonfiction Books	17
Children's Collection Overall	4.1
Total Collection	3.1

Source: Contra Costa County Library

As of June 30, 2006, 38% of El Cerrito residents were registered County Library borrowers. Not surprisingly, El Cerrito residents checked out materials mostly at the El Cerrito Library – 59.1% of the items circulated to El Cerrito residents were at their home library. Another 20.6% of the materials they checked out came from the Kensington Library. The remaining items were checked out at 13 different County Library facilities. Clearly, most El Cerrito residents prefer to use the library in their hometown.

Table 30
El Cerrito Resident Use of County Libraries: 2005-06

Items Checked out to El Cerrito Residents at:	Number of Items Checked Out	% of Total
El Cerrito Library	88,156	59.1%
Kensington Library	30,719	20.6%
El Sobrante Library	2,182	1.5%
Pinole Library	1,568	1.1%
Walnut Creek Library	902	0.6%
Orinda Library	891	0.6%
Pleasant Hill Library	838	0.6%
San Pablo Library	600	1.1%
San Ramon Library	326	0.2%
Martinez Library	315	0.2%
Moraga Library	212	0.1%
Lafayette Library	167	0.1%
Pittsburg Library	106	0.1%
Concord Library	102	0.1%
Antioch Library	101	0.1%
Use of other libraries was less than 100 items each, or less than 0.1% at each facility		

Online renewals by El Cerrito residents	18,850	12.6%
Telephone renewals by El Cerrito		

residents	2,879	1.9%
Total	127,936[6]	99.9%

Source: Contra Costa County Library

The El Cerrito Library serves primarily a local clientele. Circulation records for 2005/06 show that 68.1% of the books and media that were checked out last year were borrowed by individuals with El Cerrito addresses. Richmond residents represented close to 20% of the Library's circulation. The remainder was checked out to borrowers from throughout the County, most representing 1% or less of the total circulation.

Table 31
Geographic Distribution of El Cerrito Library Users: 2005-06

Residence of Borrower	Items Borrowed	% of Total Circulation[7]
El Cerrito	88,156	68.1%
Richmond	25,342	19.6%
San Pablo	2,827	2.2%
Kensington	2,412	1.9%
Orinda	1,060	0.8%
El Sobrante	881	0.7%
Hercules	646	0.5%
Walnut Creek	481	0.4%
Pinole	362	0.3%
Concord	186	0.1%
Martinez	140	0.1%
Pittsburg/Bay Point	130	0.1%
Rodeo	112	0.1%
Pleasant Hill	97	0.1%
Danville/Blackhawk	95	0.1%
Lafayette	78	0.1%
Crockett	61	0.0%
San Ramon	55	0.0%
Antioch	53	0.0%
Moraga	18	0.0%
Brentwood	11	0.0%
Port Costa	4	0.0%
Clayton	4	0.0%
Oakley	2	0.0%
Other[8]	6,261	4.8%

Source: Contra Costa County Library

The Library has 70 seats – 44 are four-person tables, 8 lounge chairs, 15 chairs in the meeting area and 3 benches. There are five Internet computers and four WebPAC workstations[9].

Until recently, programming at the Library was limited almost exclusively to events for children and their families. In 2003/04, staff began to offer programs on a regular basis

[6] An additional 88 items were circulated to El Cerrito residents at other County Library branches, each representing less than 0.1% of the total.

[7] Percentages calculated from year-end statistical reports and may vary from other circulation data

[8] Transactions for which the zip code is not recognized, because out of Contra Costa County or inaccurate data entry

[9] Access on WebPAC workstations is limited to the Library's online catalog.

that are targeted toward adults. Community response has been very positive. Some of the programs offered are:

How To Care for Aging Parents
Chinese Culture
Local History
Bay Area Travel
Starting a Business
Feng Shui
Tax Saving Strategies
San Francisco Earthquake of 1906
Decluttering Your Life

An ongoing book discussion group has attracted steady participation, as well. Free beginning Internet workshops are also offered. Last year, 143 programs were held at the Library, 50 for adults, 8 for school age children, 84 for preschoolers and 1 for teens.

Staff at the Library's reference desk track the number of reference transactions that they handle. The recent increase in business, during the past three years, is also reflected in these figures, although level of reference transactions appears to be leveling off. This reflects the general trend in public libraries, as users become more likely to use the Internet for simple information needs and rely on reference librarians for more complex, difficult questions.

Table 32
El Cerrito Library Reference Questions: 1996-97 – 2005-06

Fiscal Year	Reference Questions
1996/97	20,644
1997/98	19,019
1998/99	17,498
1999/2000	13,780
2000/01	15,288
2001/02	14,820
2002/03	16,497
2003/04	20,345
2004/05	21,372
2005/06	18,535

Source: Contra Costa County Library

C. Collections and Shelving

The El Cerrito collections overall are too small to support the community's needs. The current collection contains 37,062 books and media items, which provides 1.58 items per capita. The collection should provide roughly twice as many items - approximately 3.0 items per person served. To serve the community in 2030, when the population is projected to reach 25,256, a collection of 75,700 books and media items will be needed. This service level will provide more than twice the current number of books and media. The expanded collection is a solid, middle of the road recommendation, in keeping with the level recommended by traditional planning sources such as the widely used State of Wisconsin Library Planning Standards.

Evidence abounds of the current collection's limits. Staff report that on a regular basis they must request books from other libraries on basic subjects because there are no pertinent titles in the El Cerrito collection. The adult nonfiction collection is particularly undersized. It needs to be developed to include an appropriate quantity of recent titles that are pertinent to the community's varied interests – current events and politics, energy conservation and natural history, art, gardening and a wide range of other topics. The sciences, medicine and health are particularly deficient, due to the critical need in those areas for currency and constant replacement of titles.

There is a strong need for a wide range of new fiction and nonfiction titles, available for browsing on retail display shelving units. Numerous community members spoke of the Barnes & Noble bookstore in El Cerrito Plaza as the new "community gathering place", and expressed a desire to have access to a browsing collection that "you don't have to buy a cup of coffee to use".

The young adult collection is growing and needs to continue to grow, to attract teens and preteens who do not use the Library. Additional magazines for teens and audio media titles popular with this age group should also be added.

The reference collection needs to be expanded in selected areas, such as consumer information, career guidance and college preparation, and financial investment advice. Overall, however, the reference collection can be reduced in size as Library provides an increasing number of reference sources in electronic format.

The children's collection needs to grow to better meet preschoolers' and school-age children's needs for pleasure reading and for homework support. The school library collections that serve El Cerrito's public schools are deficient in both size and currency. The public library is the only school assignment resource for many students. The growing number of young families with children under the age of five also needs access to a vibrant collection of toddler and picture books and easy readers.

Audio and video materials are extremely popular. Many community members use these collections regularly, quickly exhausting the Library's resources. There is a brisk volume of interlibrary borrowing of this material. Additional media titles for all age groups – adults, teens and children - are needed locally to improve the Library's ability to meet community demand. Larger collections are especially needed in these formats: feature film and documentary DVDs, international language audio and video titles, books on CD and music CDs.

Additional subscriptions to current magazines are needed for both adults and teens, displayed on slanted display shelves with recent issues shelved directly underneath the current issue. Magazines and newspapers in languages other than English should be made available and displayed adjacent to the international languages books and media.

A special collection of books, photographs and other local history materials should be displayed in an area devoted to the history of El Cerrito.

A literacy collection is needed to support an adult literacy tutoring program based in the Library.

A collection of books, magazines and media items for parents and teachers is also needed in the Children's area.

Book shelving heights should be appropriate to the population served. Children's shelving ought to be 45" for materials targeted toward younger children and 66" high for older children. Adult collections should be placed on shelving that is neither too high nor too low for comfortable access. Popular, high turnover collections need to be placed on sloping, retail-type shelving that encourages browsing.

D. Public Seating

Library seating needs to increase and to become more varied. The Library's current 70 seats provide the current population with 3.0 seats per 1,000 people served. That ratio of seats to population needs to increase to 5.0 seats per 1,000 people served. By 2030, when the population will reach 25,256, a total of 126 seats in the open access area will be needed.

In addition, the Library should provide a minimum of three group study rooms, for students working together on a school project and for the public at large, as well as seating for 12 students in a homework center space.

This recommendation for seating is based on seating capacity levels proposed by Joseph Wheeler, library planning authority. It is also in line with the seating capacities planned for facilities that will serve other Contra Costa County Library communities, such as Hercules (4.75 seats per 1,000 people) and Lafayette (6.62 seats per 1,000 people).

The seating should be a mix of study table seating, lounge seating - both for single adults and for parents and children – and two-place tables.

E. Technology

The Library's nine public access computers, five with Internet access, four with access only to the County Library online catalog, are totally inadequate to meet community need. The quantity of public computer workstations needs to increase substantially – 42 for open access and 12 for computer-based training are recommended.

Many El Cerrito residents have no access to computers at home, or if they do have a computer, they have no Internet access or no printer. School age children are particularly impacted by limited at-home computer or Internet access. For these residents, the Library is their only available access to technology.

The Library needs also to provide wireless access to the Internet, for customers who bring laptop computers into the facility, as well as convenient electrical outlets at all or most seating, both table and lounge chairs.

Four express self checkout units are needed, to enable the Library to promote self-service checkout.

A separate training room is needed that can accommodate twelve computer workstations for computer-based classes. This space needs to be visible from the main

public space, though a glass wall or similar partition, to allow its use by individuals when training is not in session.

The recommended total of 54 computers for public use is based on current best planning practices rather than any recognized “standard”. By comparison, the new Hercules Library will provide 55 computers and the new Lafayette Library will provide 42 computers. The recommendation is made with the assumption that the Library will have in place a software-based, self-regulating sign-up procedure for computer use, allowing customers to manage their computer time independent of Library staff.

F. Information Services

El Cerrito residents of all ages need access to current, reliable information both in print and online sources, accessible 24/7 through the Library’s online system. The El Cerrito Library’s collections and technology resources, described above, must support this access. In addition, the Library staff must be well-trained, responsive to community needs and immediately accessible to the public, when needed.

The County Library’s strategic planning initiative emphasizes staff development and greater local staff responsibility to meet the community’s information needs. A well-designed public service area and a high visibility service desk are needed that allow staff to be alert to customers’ needs and to move quickly to help.

G. Programming and Meeting Room Space

The El Cerrito Library needs dedicated, multipurpose meeting room space for a wide variety of needs, including children’s and family programs, teen programs and a growing demand for programs for adults. Enclosed, acoustically separate space is needed to accommodate audiences of as many as 100 adults. The meeting room should be accessible from the building lobby, to enable attendees to come and go without being forced to walk through the Library public space and to allow events to occur while the Library is closed.

Space for smaller children’s programs and school class visits is needed, in addition to the primary meeting room, located within or adjacent to the Library’s children’s services space. This space will provide a convenient, child-friendly venue for storytime programs and similar events, wit floor seating that will accommodate 30 children and their parents.

H. Student Support

Over 3,200 students attend kindergarten through the twelfth grade in El Cerrito public schools. Their teachers and other local school personnel have commented that many students live in households with several other family members and little personal space. Test scores confirm that many students struggle to meet academic performance standards. These students need access to up-to-date, relevant book and media collections, appropriate study space, computers and homework assistance. Students at every grade level need access to research materials, both print and online, as well as solid, well-developed collections of fiction and nonfiction titles for sustained, independent reading.

Many students lack home access to the Internet or a printer. The Library needs to provide plentiful access to computer technology to assist these students to prepare school assignments.

Group study space is needed as well as appropriate quiet study space for individual study. The Library can also provide computer training classes for students to improve their information literacy skills.

The Library's role in addressing these needs is especially important over the next ten years, as the School District proceeds with a capital improvement program that has required the use of portable structures on several campuses. The high school library, for example, has placed one-half of its book collection and 100% of its periodical back file collection in storage for the next five years.

I. Literacy Tutoring

An estimated 1,200 to 2,400 adults in El Cerrito are functionally illiterate. The Library needs to provide space for literacy tutoring as well as space for a collection of books and media for adult new readers.

The need for literacy tutoring is significant in West Contra Costa County. Estimates for adult functional illiteracy in the region far exceed the estimate for El Cerrito. Service cuts in nearby Richmond, for example, have severely reduced that city's ability to provide adult literacy tutoring. Space is needed in the Library to enable the County Library Second Start Literacy Program to re-establish a presence in the region. El Cerrito's population of older adults, many of whom are retired, would provide many tutors.

V. Service Limitations of the Existing Library

A. Overview and Executive Summary

At 6,500 square feet, the El Cerrito Library is too small to meet community needs. The facility opened in 1948 and was expanded to its current size in 1960. It provides the current population with 0.28 square feet per capita of building space – less than one-half the space considered adequate, according to standard library planning practices. By 2030, when El Cerrito's population will reach over 25,000 residents, the building will offer only 0.26 square feet per capita. The building's age also blocks or inhibits the use of new technologies. Computer access for individual use and for computer training is severely limited, as is self-service checkout.

Lack of space erodes every aspect of library service. Collections cannot be developed to the size needed. There is no opportunity for browsable collections of new books or audiovisual media. Public seating capacity is deficient. There are too few computers, located inappropriately. Programming for all ages cannot be supported. Needed special services, such as literacy tutoring or group study space, are unavailable. Staff work spaces are cramped, with poor ergonomics and diminished productivity.

B. Collections

The new books display is limited to six low shelves adjacent to the Information Desk. Browsers need to sit on one of the two benches placed in front of this shelving to read the titles of the books shelved there, all spine-out.

Parts of the collection must be housed on shelving that is too high. The Easy Reader collection, for example, should be on low 45" high shelving rather than 66" high shelves so that children can reach the top shelf.

Audio and video collections have been placed on a variety of shelving types, some of which are scattered and in hard-to-find locations. The mix of shelving types and patchwork shelving order is confusing to the public and lacks visual appeal.

Shelving for children's media is especially disjointed, with different formats located in widely separated shelves because space happened to be available at those locations. Media materials in languages other than English are also scattered and difficult to locate.

Shelving for most collections is at capacity. The adult collection cannot be developed beyond its current size without filling even the highest shelves. Staff tries to keep materials in the adult area shelved within a reasonable height, although some shelving, such as adult fiction, must be filled completely for the collection to meet community demand.

Repeatedly, customers ask for basic material that should be in the immediate collection but is not and must be requested from another

library. This occurs most frequently in the adult nonfiction collection, especially to fill requests for computer books, theoretical and applied sciences, health and medicine.

Shelving for magazines and newspapers is totally inadequate. Magazine current issues are displayed on a compact unit that holds 76 titles and does not allow face-out browsing of magazine covers. Newspaper back files are stored in metal vertical file cabinets placed in the lounge area.

The Library is building a young adult book collection, but lacks a discrete space within the building to create a distinctive teen area. Not surprisingly, the collection is under-used by community teens.

C. Public Seating

Seating in the public areas is limited and lacks appropriate types of seating. The children's area seating consists of four adult-height four person tables and one round toddler table. There is no comfortable parent-child seating in the picture book area or anywhere in the children's space. Parents may use one of the toddler-size chairs or sit on the vinyl flooring adjacent to the picture book shelves.

The children's table seating is often used by adults, because 1) it is the first visible seating area as one enters the facility, 2) the adult area seating is at capacity or 3) there is nothing to differentiate the seating as suitable for children.

There is no seating within or near the Foreign Languages collection, which diminishes browsability of the collection. Customers often move low stools into this area from other spaces throughout the building.

The adult study table seating area has low lighting levels and no task lighting.

Lounge seating is not distributed through the building. The only lounge seating is in the central area adjacent to the fireplace.

D. Staff Offices, Workstations, Visual Supervision

The exterior-access materials return drop is noisy and inappropriately sloped, so that materials returned there are sometimes damaged or spill out of the bin. The force with which items drop into the bin has forced staff to lock the drop during open hours to eliminate noise and prevent damage or possible injury to bystanders.

The circulation desk has a return slot built into the side that faces the public entrance. It is designed in such a way that visitors mistake it for a service counter. They stop at this point, block traffic and divert staff from the actual service counter. This disrupts traffic at the entrance and interrupts the flow of service at the desk.

The area behind the circulation desk is congested. There is no appropriate stacking area for delivery shipments. By necessity, delivery bins are unloaded at the entrance to the workroom. This creates a pinch point between the service desk and the staff work area, as book trucks are maneuvered through the space and staff moves between the public space and the work area.

Material on reserve is held on eleven shelves behind the desk. The Library would like to place these in the public space so customers may retrieve their own holds, but there is no suitable space for this. Six sections of shelving are needed – a total of 30 shelves.

The staff workroom is too small. The space cannot accommodate the staff that needs to work in this area. The workroom has two computers that are shared and inadequate usable work surfaces. The Branch Manager and two other staff share space in what was formerly the Manager's office, a room 9.5 x 11 feet, in which they share one computer. Staff is constantly trading places at workstations, negotiating time on one of the computers, balancing work on their laps or taking materials to an open table in the public area to complete their work.

The staff break room is another 9.5 x 11 feet space, located between the office and the common work space. It contains a sofa and a table with two chairs, but is not conducive to rest and relaxation due to the crowded conditions and the fact that approximately half of the space it used as circulation space between the shared office and the workroom.

E. Technology

The building's size and electrical distribution have made the placement of computers and other technology problematic. The facility cannot accommodate more than the current nine public workstations, some of which have been located in awkward or inappropriate places due to the limited availability of electrical outlets. The primary cluster of Internet access workstations is at the entrance to the children's area, adjacent to the public entrance. Adults regularly use these computers and by their presence, prevent many children from accessing the Internet. Conversely, during times that many children are in the Library, either working independently or attending a children's program, adults are reluctant to use the computers. Only one workstation offers application software, although the demand for this service is substantial.

Electrical outlets are unavailable to bring power to laptop computers, with one exception – there is an outlet in one corner of the meeting area. Library customers bring their laptops to this location, and place their equipment on a chair or their lap, because there is no table available in the area.

Only one self checkout station can be accommodated although multiple units are needed. The self checkout equipment location and orientation prevents staff from being able to conveniently assist customers who need help using the equipment.

F. Meeting Rooms

Children's programs attract as many as 100 children and their families while audiences for adult programs can reach 70 people. These events must be scheduled during hours that the Library is closed or during off-peak hours while the Library is open, because there is no separate, acoustically enclosed meeting room. Larger programs are held in the children's space, after furniture is moved out of the way. Smaller programs are held in a 14 x 17 square foot area in the far corner of the public space that serves as the Library's meeting area.

The meeting area is adjacent to the adult book stacks. A vinyl accordion wall partition is installed around the perimeter of the space, to separate the meeting area from the general public area. The partition does not have any acoustical properties, however, so speakers' remarks and audience discussion are audible throughout the nearby public spaces. The meeting area has acoustical problems, as well, due to its location along the

perimeter wall that is adjacent to the overhead BART tracks that run within 40 feet of the Library's east wall. When trains pass, speakers often stop talking until it has passed.

To increase seating capacity, individuals are allowed to use the seats located in the meeting area, to read or study when meetings are not being held. This space also has the only electrical outlet in the public space that can be used to plug in a laptop computer. This forces the Library to schedule the meeting area sparingly to give the public greater access to seating. Community organizations, therefore, are not allowed to book the space for recurring meetings.

D. Special Purpose Spaces

Space to display brochures and free materials is inadequate. Staff places handouts on low shelves at entrance, positioned a few inches off the floor. Wall space is inadequate to accommodate the number of bulletin boards needed for community interest postings. Handouts and brochures for families and children are stacked on top of low shelving since it is the only available display area. This material becomes messy and disorganized constantly and requires repeated straightening.

VI. Physical Limitations of the Existing Library

A. Executive Summary

The existing library building opened in 1948 and was expanded to its present 6,500 square feet in 1960. It is located at 6510 Stockton Avenue, in central El Cerrito, approximately forty feet west of the Richmond/Bay Point BART train elevated railway. Although the City of El Cerrito owns the building and the land on which it is situated, the building is maintained by the County. The building sits on a sloping site that drops ten to twelve feet from street level along Stockton Avenue to a parking lot behind the building. A city-owned senior center is located to the south of the library, directly across the parking lot. Fairmont Elementary School is located to the west of the parking lot.

Public space and staff office space are located on the main level, which is accessible from a covered entryway that faces Stockton Avenue. A basement level is used for storage and for the Friends of the Library sponsored book sale. The basement is accessible via a door the fronts onto the parking lot.

The existing library has served El Cerrito for 58 years. Visual evidence of this long-term service abounds. Interior finishes and furniture are worn and dated. Furniture includes miscellaneous items that do not match, often placed in a somewhat hodgepodge arrangement, wherever it can fit. A building assessment report performed for the City by MACTEC Engineering & Consulting in 2004 noted that “the facility shows hard use and minimum investment in maintenance.” Building systems are over twenty years old and need replacement. Seismic reinforcement upgrades have been identified, including additional shear walls and lateral bracing in some areas. ADA compliance work has been completed in some areas, such as providing accessibility to the restrooms. There remain, however, several outstanding disabled access compliance items.

The building has become increasingly crowded over time as collections have grown and computer technology has been introduced. Clarity of function has been sacrificed as more materials and technology have been introduced. Adults sit at computers located in the children’s area, within a few feet of storytelling programs with 25 to 30 attendees. Popular features such as a new books browsing area are shoehorned into small pockets of space directly in the main path of travel. Some collections, such as newspaper back files, are housed in inappropriate storage due to lack of space. Staff work areas are undersized and ergonomically inadequate.

B. Structural

The roof is a flat, built-up asphalt roof that was last replaced in 1990. A replacement was recommended after an assessment in 1997. The 2004 MACTEC report noted that “a flat asphalt roof of this size – approximately 8,000 sq. ft. – is quite unusual and prone to leak. This is undoubtedly the cause of the frequent flooding of this facility”. The report recommended that when the roof is next replaced, a slanted roof should be introduced as a long-term cost-savings measure.

A new drop ceiling was installed on the main level in 2002 to replace a badly stained ceiling.

Library staff reported that the basement has been subject to flooding in the past during the rainy season. A lingering moldy smell is noticeable on this floor.

Work was recently performed in the basement level mechanical room to eradicate a rodent infestation that represented a fire hazard.

Painted interior wall surfaces are in fair condition and need repainting. The floor coverings include resilient sheeting, vinyl tile and some carpeting. All floors are in fair condition, with considerable wear evident, although immediate replacement is not necessary.

Aluminum frame windows line the east and north walls. Several of the north-facing windows no longer open and several are etched with graffiti.

C. Energy Conservation/Building Systems

The furnace was last replaced in 1984. Building systems generally are over twenty years old and at the end of their useful life cycle.

The existing fluorescent light fixtures were replaced with new standard fixtures in 2002 and were re-lamped at that time.

Flooding and drainage problems in the basement have been improved by replacement of a sump pump located in the basement mechanical room.

Air circulation is poor on the main level. Staff opens public entrance doors in the afternoon in an attempt to improve airflow, which allows traffic and noise from passersby to enter the building, compounding acoustical problems within the facility.

D. Health and Safety

A preliminary seismic reinforcement assessment in 2004 by MACTEC Engineering identified the following deficiencies:

- Lack of lateral bracing for the stone wall at the public entrance along the northwest corner of the building.
- Lack of shear walls along the north side of the structure.
- Insufficient anchor bolts and hold-downs between sill plates and foundation.

Lighting levels in the public area are low, especially in the adult table seating area on the north side of the building.

Students from middle and high school congregate on the front steps and building entryway, creating a physical and psychological barrier for people who wish to enter or leave the building.

Elderly visitors who park in the lot behind the building report that the pathway to the public entrance is difficult to maneuver, especially in the evening or during rainy weather.

There is no staff restroom. Staff use the public restroom designated for handicapped access.

A structural evaluation of the library shelving in 1997 identified several significant deficiencies:

- Most shelving units, both freestanding and wall-mounted, are not anchored to the concrete floor.
- Most shelving units are installed with an insufficient number of cross-braces.
- The cross-bracing that is in use is the hooked type rather than bolted type, which is less secure.
- Top-ties are installed using undersized components.

The study recommended that:

- All shelving units should be anchored using ¼" x 2" minimum embedment expansion anchors on each side of each base.
- A bolted-type cross-brace be installed in every third shelving section.
- For wall-mounted shelves, install a 12-guage angle without slotted holes at each vertical shelving standard, using a #10 tek screw.
- Ensure proper backing at locations where metal studs are not apparent.
- Confirm that existing angles are adequately anchored.

E. Disabled Access

Sloping areas in the parking lot exceed the maximum acceptable gradient. There are no van-accessible parking spaces nor access aisles in the parking lot. Curb ramp slopes exceed maximum acceptable gradient. The basement entry has no ADA access.

Emergency exit doors in basement are too narrow. Stair treads between main level and basement are not a uniform depth. Stair handrails are not continuous nor are ends rounded at the bottom of the stairs.

Some interior doors are too narrow. The exterior book return depository is too high.

F. Acoustics

The public area is essentially one rectangular block of space with the children's area on one side and the adult area on the other. Noise from the children's space is audible throughout the space. The relatively low ceiling height and hard floor covering over much of the area exacerbates intrusive noise levels throughout the library.

The meeting area is not acoustically separate from the main public space, with only a non-acoustical accordion partition in place to baffle noise.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit elevated railway tracks run only forty feet from the north edge of the building. Every train that passes the building is clearly heard within the building.

There is inadequate acoustical separation between the public space and the staff work area. Conversations at the circulation desk and reference desk cannot be confidential, as other Library visitors are close at hand, using a computer, browsing the new books shelf or simply waiting to speak with a staff member.

G. Space Flexibility and Expandability

The existing site is small – 0.33 acres – and the existing building cannot be expanded without loss of parking. Flexibility within the building is limited, particularly due to the low number and lack of distribution of electrical outlets. The placement of computers and other public equipment has been difficult due to the dictates of the building's electrical power distribution.

H. Functional Spatial Relationships

Years of increasingly crowded conditions have eroded the building's functional spatial relationships. Examples of this include:

- The area in which library programs are held is not acoustically buffered from the rest of the building and is adjacent to the adult book stacks. This space is also not adjacent to the public entrance. Program attendees must traverse the entire length of the public space to reach the meeting area.

- The meeting area is located on the edge of the building that is directly adjacent to the BART elevated track. During programs, speakers routinely stop talking while trains go by the building due to the noise.

- The major cluster of public access Internet computers is located in the children's area because that is where the electrical power access is located. Adults use these computers on a daily basis. Children are often intimidated by their presence and are deterred from using the computers. Conversely, children's storytelling programs are held within a few feet of the computers. The noise these events generate disrupts computer users' concentration.

- One sit-down computer workstation is located adjacent to the reference desk. Staff reports that conversations at the desk can be clearly overheard by anyone sitting at this workstation, making confidentiality impossible.

- A teen collection and seating space has been created in a shelving area directly in front of the reference desk. The space needs more physical distance from the desk and main path of travel in order to be effective.

- The system delivery is loaded and unloaded in the only open space available in the circulation desk area. This space is also the walkway between the staff workroom and the circulation desk. On a regular basis, the stacks of incoming and outgoing delivery bins are stacked in this space, blocking the path to and from the workroom.

- The circulation desk is adjacent to the public entrance with an L-shaped counter. Only one arm of the "L" is intended to be used for service transactions. The other arm, however, is the first apparent service point within the building and draws the

public to stop and ask questions and drop off materials. This results in confusion at the circulation desk, bottlenecks at the entrance and the possibility that items being returned will be lost or misplaced.

- Three staff members occupy the branch librarian's office, each of whom has a desk in this space. Staff walks between the office and the staff work room frequently, cutting through the staff lounge and effectively reducing its usable space by 50%.

I. Site

The site area is 0.33 acres. It consists primarily of hardscape, the parking lot and sidewalks, which are in fair to good condition. There is landscaping around the perimeter of the building. A landscaping project that focuses on California native plants was installed by volunteers within the past five years. This feature is popular with the community and adds interest to the exterior of the library.

VII. Space Needs Assessment

A. Introduction and Space Needs Summary

El Cerrito needs a library facility that provides a total of 21,626 square feet, in a single-level structure that is at least 75% efficient. A preliminary summary of the spaces and services is outlined below, with the recommended square footages for each space noted. A facility of this size will be able to house the collections, seating, technology, meeting and programming spaces, special purpose spaces and staff work spaces recommended in the report.

Table 33
Spaces Summary

Space		Square Feet	
1.1	Public Entrance/Lobby	84	
1.2	Community Meeting Room	1,200	
1.3	Refreshment Prep Kitchen	76	
1.4	Meeting Room Storage	180	
1.5	Public Restrooms	IN GSF	
1.6	Friends' Booksale / Donation Sorting Space	215	
1.7	Community Information	36	1,791
2.1	Express Checkout and Reserves	290	
2.2	New Books / Bestsellers / High Interest	612	
2.3	Media Collection	359	
2.4	Service Desk	312	1,573
3.1	Adult Public Access Computers	642	
3.2	Reference Collection	440	
3.22	El Cerrito History	261	
3.31	Adult Circulating Fiction Books	872	
3.32	Adult Circulating Nonfiction Books	1,650	
3.33	International Languages Collection	351	
3.41	Magazine + Newspaper Browsing	522	
3.42	Refreshment Area	95	
3.51	Literacy Center	317	
3.52	Literacy Office	299	
3.61	Group Study/Tutoring Room A	100	
3.62	Group Study/Tutoring Room B	150	
3.63	Group Study/Tutoring Room C	200	
3.7	Teen Area	489	
3.8	Homework Study Area	370	
3.9	Computer Training / Additional Public Computers	535	7,292
4.1	Children's New Books + Media	210	
4.2	Children's Public Access Computers	455	
4.31	Children's Circulating Books	1,129	
4.32	Children's Reference Books	31	
4.41	Family Space	331	

Space		Square Feet	
4.42	Picture Books and Easy Readers	675	
4.51	Storytelling and Class Visits Area	336	
4.52	Storytelling and Programming Storage	81	
4.6	Parents and Teachers Collection	81	
4.7	Family Restroom	IN GSF	3,329
5.11	Branch Librarian's Office	174	
5.12	Staff Workroom	683	
5.13	Sorting and Returns	455	
5.14	Mail and Deliveries	136	
5.15	Supplies and Equipment Storage	170	
5.16	Computer/Telecom/Server Room	146	
5.21	Staff Entrance / Lockers / Coat Closet	54	
5.22	Staff Lounge	294	
5.23	Staff Restrooms	IN GSF	
5.3	Custodial / Maintenance Services	123	2,234
	Net Assignable Square Feet:	16,220	
	Gross Square Feet @ 75% Efficiency:	21,626	

B. Collections and Shelving

The Library's shelving recommendations assume that three heights will be used for most of the collection – 90", 66" and 45" high standard, steel-frame shelving. Media formats will be housed on format-specific media shelving that is interchangeable with book stack shelves, including media browsing bins and other specialty units, as needed. Browsing collection shelving is assumed to be retail-type merchandising display units, approximately 3 feet wide by 6 feet long. These units are allocated 50 square feet for a double-sided unit. Magazine current issue display is assumed to be on slanted shelving with flat shelves below for recent issues.

Shelving aisle widths are assumed to be 42" wide generally, with some high-use areas requiring 48" wide aisles. Each single-sided shelving section is allocated 10.3 square feet.

Assumptions regarding the number of items per linear foot of shelving and per shelving unit vary by type of material, height of the unit and type of shelving. See *Appendix E. El Cerrito Library Collection Growth Plan* and *Appendix F. El Cerrito Library Collection and Shelving Needs* for a detailed summary of the collection allocations and shelving assumptions. The square footage allowance for shelving is taken from Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space, a recognized facilities planning guide published by the American Library Association.

C. Public Seating

Most public seating has been allocated 25 square feet, for table seating, or 35 square feet, for lounge seating. Seating at toddler tables is slightly less, at 20 square feet per chair. Casual seating for teens is assumed to be even less, at 16 square feet per seat,

for bean bag chairs or similar floor-level seats. Two-person love seats in the children's area for parent/child seating have been allocated 40 square feet.

See *Appendix G. El Cerrito Library Public Seating Needs* for a detailed summary of the seating allocations for the Library. These square foot allowances are also based on recommendations found in Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space.

D. Technology

Public access computers at sit-down workstations have been allocated 35 square feet per workstation. Computers at stack ends have been allocated 16 square feet per unit. Self check-out machines and photocopy machines have been allocated 40 square feet. Public access printers and print release and payment stations have been allocated 12 square feet each. Space for receipt printers at stack-end computers is included in the computer allocation. See *Appendix H. El Cerrito Library Computers and Other Public Equipment Needs* for a detailed summary of the public computer allocations for the Library.

E. Staff Offices and Workstations

An office of 174 square feet is recommended for the Branch Librarian to accommodate that person's desk, computer, task chair, shelving and lateral files, and a small conference table and guest chairs.

Other Library staff will be assigned a modular office workstation, 8 x 7 or 6 x 6 feet, for their off-desk work space. These workstations have been allocated either 70 square feet or 45 square feet. Eight modular office workstations are projected for the staff work space.

The service desk's three staffing point have each been allocated 50 square feet. This includes the counter space as well as space on either side of the counter for staff and public to interact. Queuing space is counted separately.

F. Meeting Room and Programming Spaces

The meeting room seating has been allocated twelve square feet per seat. This allocation is in line with the allocation recommended in Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space. Seating in the storytelling space and class visits area has been allocated 10 square feet per person. This allocation seems reasonable since the children will sit on the floor of the storytelling space and will require less space than if seated on chairs.

G. Special Purpose Spaces

The Literacy Center shelving, seating, computers and other components assume the same square footage allocations as the rest of the Library. The total of 312 square feet is recommended for this space. The Literacy Center Office will accommodate one staff workstation of 8 x 7 feet, an intake table and chairs, shelving and lounge seating. A total of 339 square feet is recommended for this space.

H. Non-Assignable Space

This report recommends a Library building of 21,626 square feet, on one level. A 75% efficiency ratio is assumed for the building - 16,220 net assignable square feet that will be available for seating, shelving, computers, service desks and staff work areas. Twenty-five percent of the gross square footage - 5,407 square feet - has been set aside as non-assignable space. This includes the building's mechanical systems, electrical closet, storage spaces, restrooms, circulation space throughout the facility and other elements of the building not listed in the Space Needs Summary (Table 33) as one of the building's assignable spaces. This net-to-gross square footage ratio is identical to the ratio proposed in Building Blocks for Planning Functional Library Space.

Table 34
Square Footage Allocation Conversion Factors

Item	Conversion Factor
Shelving, single-sided section, 3' wide	10.3 SF / section
Display shelving, double-sided, retail-type, 6' long x 3' wide	60 SF / item
Volumes per Linear Foot:	
Books, adult, fiction and nonfiction	8 volumes / linear foot
Books, reference	7 volumes / linear foot
Books, new and display	4 volumes / linear foot
Books, adult, international languages	8 volumes / linear foot
Books, paperback, on spinners inset into regular shelving	16 volumes / linear foot
Books, children's, fiction and nonfiction	10 volumes / linear foot
Books, children's picture books	15 volumes / linear foot
Videos/DVDs	12 volumes / linear foot
Compact discs in AV browse bins	20 volumes / linear foot
Books on tape and on CD	6 volumes / linear foot
Language learning audio material	6 volumes / linear foot
Magazines, current display	1 title / linear foot
Magazines, back files, in pamphlet boxes	2.5 boxes / linear foot
Newspapers, current display	1 title / 1.5 linear foot
Seating:	
@ 4-place table	25 SF / seat
Lounge chair	35 SF / seat
@ 4-place round table	22 SF / seat
@ 4-place round toddler table	20 SF / seat
Meeting room seating	12 SF / seat
Storytelling seating	10 SF / seat
Computers and other equipment:	
Public access computer, sit-down	35 SF / workstation
Public access workstation, stand-up	16 SF / workstation
Computer Training workstation	35 SF / workstation
Self checkout workstation	40 SF / workstation
Staff office system workstations, 8' x 7'	70 SF/ workstation
Staff office workstations, 6' x 6'	45 SF / workstation

APPENDIX A
El Cerrito Library
Community Survey Results

The survey elicited 330 responses. The City newsletter resulted in 226 responses and 104 were received via the City website.

Percentages are based on the total of survey responses rather than the total of responses to individual questions.

1. Do you use the El Cerrito Library?

280	Yes	85%
50	No	15%

2. If so, how often?

93	At least once a week	28%
94	At least once a month	28%
96	Less often than once a month	29%

3. Do you use any other libraries?

232	Yes	70%
96	No	29%

4. If so, which other libraries do you use?

209	Albany	63%
108	Berkeley	33%
64	Kensington	19%
38	Richmond	12%
14	UC Berkeley	4%
11	Oakland	3%
7	San Francisco Main	2%
6	Orinda	2%
4	Pinole	1%
3	El Sobrante	1%
3	Marin Co.	3%
3	Alameda	2%
2	Walnut Creek	2%
2	Mechanics' Institute, SF	2%
2	British Library, England	2%
All others:		1%

5. If you do not use the El Cerrito Library, why not?

51	The open hours are not convenient	15%
45	Library does not have what I need	14%
29	Lack of parking:	9%
23	The location is not convenient	7%
11	Have no time to use the library	3%

Other:
Too noisy
Small collection
Too cramped/crowded
Doesn't like "feeling"
Uses interlibrary loan

Other Comments:

It's an unpleasant library – too small – not enough computer facilities. However, I know that the Contra Costa system has an excellent choice of books because I recently used the Pinole Library on an almost daily basis.
This library is lagging behind in all respects.
Frankly, the Albany Library is more comfortable, has better parking and more resources.
Parking is bad at times.
I don't like the feel of the library. I prefer Berkeley or Richmond.
Though we are 65, we are both still working so evenings and weekends would be the times we would use the library.
Library not very inviting or comfortable.
I didn't know where the Library was till now. I need to be able to use it late on weekdays
(after 7:00 p.m.) and on weekends. Would like more fiction.
I would use the library more frequently if it has what I needed. It's convenient and has a pleasant little lounge area.
Ambience is not very attractive; seems shabby, dark, old; also not very good selection of books, videos, DVDs; and many pieces you do have are not in good shape.
Not a large selection for browsing and taking books home right away. If I am interested in a subject, I usually have to order it, wait a week or two, and then come back at a day/time that is not convenient.
If I feel I've exhausted the resources of the Contra Costa County library system on a subject, then I go to Albany to see if they have anything else. Ninety-nine percent of the time, Contra Costa has what I need.
Not enough open hours. It is presently closed all day Wednesday and Sunday. Also
hours are not uniform – please be consistent.
A small collection of browsing books is often a good way of discovering new information.
The El Cerrito collection is small; i.e., it seems like all the County's youth soccer books are in Orinda.
The poor condition of the library. I am a grad student and use libraries a lot. I wish I could use the El Cerrito Library since it is close to my home. It really NEEDS updating!
The location is convenient with plenty of parking. Fairmont location would be better.
Other libraries mentioned have larger children's book collections. Kensington kids' books are better organized.
Not accessible by BART for those who do not drive.
Not accessible for working people; need to be open on Saturday and Sunday and evenings.
Prefer the choice and variety at the Richmond Library.
Am disabled. Better ADA services at Berkeley. Use this library rarely when Berkeley does not have what I want.
Not a welcoming or quiet space to search for books. Also, it's too crammed with books, furniture, etc.
Limited selection; un helpful staff; stiff late fees.
Can get information using PC at home.
Even though I do use the library, I have to plan much more carefully than I would like to vis a vis the open ours. Parking used to be VERY difficult before I received my DMV disabled parking permit.
I live close to the Kensington Library and prefer the atmosphere there.
No sense of community; ugly; no idea of what's going on; children's events aren't interesting.
The location is convenient with plenty of parking. Fairmont location would be better.
Kensington Library closer to kids' school – easier to use on a regular basis.
I mostly use the libraries for technical journals. These are searchable online. Other information I need is also readily available online.
Parking could be improved.
It is rather small – the collection of books too limited.
Collection is too small and dated.
Both El Cerrito and Kensington Libraries are closed on Wednesdays; suggest alternate days for closure.

Location and building are not attractive nor are the seating and table areas. Very small and when attending evening meetings, sale of El Cerrito books/history, my asthma acted up – either due to chemicals or mold – and I had to leave.
Many people with families of young children will use most of their leisure time at home or in outdoor pursuits when the weather is fine.
School-based library programs will probably encourage young people to appreciate their local library more – and use it!
It's ugly, uncomfortable, small and crowded. I do not use the library.
Environment is very unpleasant and looks like not too many good new books
We live in El Cerrito, but are closer to the Kensington branch. Also, the parking is inconvenient at El Cerrito due to Fairmount School and the Senior Center. During late morning or early afternoon there is rarely any parking spaces available.
The collection is not extensive enough and the space is cramped.
crowded and noisy; unable to concentrate when reading
On visiting the library, I found the collection to be out of date, there to be too few computer/internet terminals, and the lay out unappealing, lacking an inviting workspace.
Very old and not inviting for children
Albany has more selection....
When I worked at Fairmont School during the summer, I used it a couple times a week. The Richmond Main Library has more books; The San Pablo Library is on the way home for me and next to San Pablo Supermarket where I sometimes shop.
I was not aware of the online catalog.
Albany Library should be the model for EC.
Don't have the need to use it.
It has a lousy feel. I know that this sounds weird, but I would rather drive to Berkeley at Rose where the library has some energy and talking is acceptable. The El Cerrito library has a very hush-hush negative feel. I am there with my children and I need to be able to talk.
It does not have a nice, lively energy. It's too quiet.
The building is disgustingly filty and the staff are unfriendly.
I use it only rarely because the facility is dismal and uninviting. They used to make you sign up in advance for storytime, the only library I've ever heard of that does that.
I used to live in Berkeley, so am used to the libraries there. In addition, there are more and bigger libraries in Berkeley than in El Cerrito
Building condition
We live near the Kensington Library
It is too small and stuffy. They need to have more books, computers, places to sit and relax.
You've gotten rid of too many of your older books, which I need for reference.
We attend Toddler reading occasionally Sat am & once on Mon pm. The previous EC children's librarian was more 'fun & outgoing' (she left ~3 yrs ago), so we attend Kensington mostly. I work during day, so am interested in more eve & w/e activities.

6. What is your zip code?

319	94530	97%
4	94804	1%

Others (less than 1%):
94043
94547
94706
94707
94803

7. What is your age group?

12	0 – 14 years	4%
3	15 – 19 years	less than 1%[1]
32	20 – 34 years	10%
105	35 – 54	32%
78	55 – 64	24%
120	65+ years	36%

8. How do you use the El Cerrito Library? Please check the services you use.

273	I borrow books from the library.
189	I borrow videos, CDs or tapes from the library.
102	I read newspapers or magazines.
90	I do research for myself or for my business.
48	I access the Internet on the library's computers.
16	I study or work on school assignments.
16	I attend library programs or storytelling events.
25	I bring my children or family members to the library so they can check out material and use the library.
Other Comments:	
I buy books and magazines from the in-library on-going book sale.	
I would use it more if hours were longer and if there were more resources there.	
Have more evening programs. Travel speakers would be great now that Easy Going Travel closed; other cultures – excellent Chinese painting demonstration.	
I work with the Friends so most of my library time is spent in the basement.	
I buy books sold by the Friends of the El Cerrito Library and I volunteer for various projects to make money for the Library and I serve on the Friends' board.	
Quiet study areas would be great!	
I glance at the community brochures and flyers to see what's going on.	
I volunteer at book sales and other functions to raise money.	
I use the online catalog database and hold/delivery service.	
Pick up books from other Contra Costa libraries through inter-library loan	
I check the Contra Costa County Library online catalog sometimes for books and sometimes I use their online databases.	
I order from the web, which is very convenient for me.	
I like to go to the music class (every wed, free) in Albany Library with my 2 yr old.	
In Berkeley I borrow books and tapes for both myself and my family.	
Convenient restroom	
As I stated previously, I don't use the El Cerrito library. The few times I did in the past, was for research purposes.	
We drop-off books	
I spend several volunteer hours each week working on internet book sales for the Friends	
For information such as job announcements, community activities, etc.	

[1] A separate survey of teens at El Cerrito High School was conducted in March 2006.

9. Do you read books and magazines or watch videos in languages other than English? If so, which languages? Please check the languages you are interested in.

29	Spanish	9%
23	Chinese	7%
15	French	5%
12	Japanese	4%
5	Italian	1.5%
3	German	1%

Other Languages: (less than 1%):
Russian
Latin
Tagalog
Thai
Finnish

Other Comments:

I study languages so would be interested in all of the above, from the point of view of a language learner--many new residents are East Asian that's interesting too
Watch many foreign movies, but need subtitles.
Spare me. I don't want the library to be an instrument of the social justice wackos.

10. Would you like the library to offer more of any of the following collections or services? Mark in priority order up to five categories that you would like to see expanded. (1 = first priority, 2 = second priority, etc.)

	Priority #1
51	Bestsellers
47	Nonfiction books
35	Fiction books
26	Computers for Internet
26	Books on tape and on CD
24	Children's books
24	Quiet space to read and study
19	DVDs
16	Children's and family programs
12	Magazines and newspapers
9	Large print books
4	Computers for word processing
3	Teen programs
3	CD-Rom software
1	Career guidance materials
1	Increased hours
1	Manga
1	Science fiction
1	Physics
1	Science
1	Greek classics
1	Old books
1	Videos
1	Sheet music and scores
1	More consistent hours
0	Homework materials
0	Books for teens
0	Materials in languages other than English
0	Music on CDs
0	Adult Programs

	Priority #2
37	Nonfiction books
36	Fiction books
25	DVDs
24	Magazines and newspapers
14	Music on CDs
13	Bestsellers
13	Children's books
13	Quiet space to read and study
12	Books on tape and on CD
10	Children's and family programs
9	Computers for Internet
9	Adult Programs
7	Large print books
7	Computers for word processing
4	Materials in languages other than English
3	Teen programs
3	CD-Rom software
2	Career guidance materials
2	Homework materials
1	Increased hours
1	Mysteries
1	Videos
1	More Internet access to library databases
1	Local history materials
0	Books for teens

	Priority #3
38	Nonfiction books
33	DVDs
26	Fiction books
19	Bestsellers
19	Books on tape and on CD
18	Magazines and newspapers
18	Quiet space to read and study
17	Music on CDs
13	Adult Programs
12	Computers for Internet
10	Children's books
9	Children's and family programs
7	Materials in languages other than English
7	Homework materials
4	Computers for word processing
3	Large print books
3	Teen programs
3	CD-Rom software
2	Career guidance materials
1	Info on stocks (Valueline)
1	Inviting environment
1	Mysteries
1	Books for teens

	Priority #4
30	DVDs
23	Quiet space to read and study
21	Books on tape and on CD
20	Nonfiction books
19	Music on CDs
18	Magazines and newspapers
13	Bestsellers
11	Fiction books
11	Computers for word processing
10	Large print books
9	Adult Programs
9	Children's books
9	Children's and family programs
7	Materials in languages other than English
6	Computers for Internet
5	Books for teens
4	Career guidance materials
3	Teen programs
2	Homework materials
2	CD-Rom software
1	Cafe
1	Homework materials

	Priority #5
22	Adult Programs
17	DVDs
14	Bestsellers
14	Magazines and newspapers
14	Quiet space to read and study
12	Children's and family programs
11	Books on tape and on CD
9	Nonfiction books
9	Large print books
8	Materials in languages other than English
7	Teen programs
6	Fiction books
6	Music on CDs
6	Career guidance materials
4	Computers for Internet
4	Children's books
4	Computers for word processing
1	Homework materials
1	CD-Rom software
1	Science fiction
1	Expanded Friends bookstore
1	Books for teens

Other Comments:

More Internet access to library's databases – not the catalog – the ones with recent periodicals, etc.
Volunteer opportunities (teaching biology, tutoring)
Please, fewer mysteries and more general fiction, classics and nonfiction on tapes and CDs (unabridged). I listen in car and at home.
A large meeting room for adult and children's programs, craft programs, Friends' Book sales and annual meeting.
Meeting room able to open to library like a school multi-purpose room.

What this library lacks, I find elsewhere, such as music scores in Oakland.
Open on Sunday.
Poetry slam night for teens.
Homework mentoring program after school one or two days a week. Kids from Portola or El Cerrito High to help elementary kids.
Jazz café?
Have more groups/meetings (small businesses) in El Cerrito.
This may sound overly ambitious, but a small café offering (for sale) coffee, pastry and sandwiches would be lovely.
More consistent hours; longer hours – more days and evenings (3)
Access to the library's journal, etc. on the Internet from home using my library card as user ID.
I find nothing lacking at the library now. We buy used books from the shelf and donate them back to the library.
Keep new books in central area so stack would not need to be searched.
Connection to County Library to request books which are not available at El Cerrito.
Private area for literacy tutoring such as Albany Library's quiet rooms.
Books for adults with low literacy levels.
Talks by librarians about the general use of the library targeted at specific groups – clubs, seniors, etc.
I don't feel computer education belongs in the library.
Finance and investment material.
Fewer tattered paperback titles in current fiction.
Videos for foreign travel.
Literature discussion evenings; book club.
Used book shop/café
Place to read aloud to child without disturbing others

11. The City is planning to build a new library building. What are the most important features that you would like to have in a new library? Mark the features below, in priority order, that you consider most important (1 = first priority, 2 = second priority, etc.).

Priority #1	
148	Larger book collection
30	Increased parking
25	More lounge seating
25	Better parent/child reading space
20	More computers
12	Better acoustical control
12	Larger media collection
11	More table and study seating
11	Enclosed meeting room
6	Enclosed group study rooms
6	A separate space for teens
5	A computer lab
3	Better lighting
1	Extended hours
1	Solar panels on roof
1	A beautiful building
1	Enhanced website with more refined search engine
1	A community information center
1	Natural light
1	Bigger building

Priority #2	
57	Larger media collection
44	Larger book collection
40	Increased parking
24	More lounge seating
22	More table and study seating
19	More computers
18	Better parent/child reading space
15	Better acoustical control
14	Enclosed meeting room
13	A separate space for teens
8	A computer lab
6	Enclosed group study rooms
1	Wireless Internet access
1	Access to public transit
1	Automated checkout
1	Better child exploration space
1	Improved space for local history material

Priority #3	
34	More lounge seating
29	More computers
28	Larger media collection
28	More table and study seating
23	Better acoustical control
21	Increased parking
17	Larger book collection
13	Better parent/child reading space
12	Enclosed meeting room
11	A computer lab
9	A separate space for teens
8	Enclosed group study rooms
1	Better lighting
1	Art or other interest display space
1	Music scores and sheet music

Priority #4	
25	Increased parking
25	More lounge seating
19	More table and study seating
13	Larger media collection
13	Enclosed meeting room
13	A separate space for teens
12	More computers
12	Better acoustical control
10	Enclosed group study rooms
9	Larger book collection
9	A computer lab
8	Better parent/child reading space
1	An inspiring building

Priority #5	
22	Increased parking
14	More table and study seating
13	More computers
13	Better acoustical control
12	More lounge seating
11	Better parent/child reading space
8	Larger book collection
8	A separate space for teens
6	Larger media collection
6	Enclosed meeting room
6	Enclosed group study rooms
6	A computer lab
2	Extended hours
1	Proximity to BART
1	More evening programs
1	More business periodicals

Other:

I would renovate the current library – the location is great! It needs a meeting room, which could be added. Location is central and has parking. If you must, tear it down and rebuild in same location.
Thanks for asking. A new building sounds great. Please keep the native plant garden.
Enclosed meeting room to allow place for a piano for musical programs. Some music groups might be tapped to donate/raise funds; i.e., Alameda County Branch of Music Teachers Association of California.
More hours (11)
I have a computer online at home, but maybe many others don't. We should offer access to the information highway with machines and with guidance.
The Orinda Library has a used bookstore that is staffed by volunteers and resells used books that are donated to the store. The funds go to help the Library procure new books and services.
Nice landscaping that is maintained all year round.
Space for Friends of El Cerrito Library activities.
I love our El Cerrito Library! Be accessible – don't move to the hills!
More periodicals, including additional business papers such as *Investors' Business Daily* and *London Financial Times.*
More comfortable tables for studying. I am an adult and not short. I can barely reach the table tops for reading or writing.
Larger book collection, more newer books on a wider variety of subjects.
I feel the present location is ideal except that the library turns into a day care center for kids from Fairmont after 2:00 p.m. I would oppose any location involved with the Plaza and associated congestion on Fairmont Ave. I would also oppose any location west of the BART tracks such as along San Pablo Ave. with all the associated traffic congestion and criminal element.
Children's area in an "L" or somehow a little removed. I know it can't be another room because of staffing problems.
Retain the reference book collection – do not rely on the Internet.
Richmond, Oakland and Berkeley will always furnish the more esoteric items I look for. How could this library compete with Cal?
More evening programs; book clubs with various choices.
Enclosed meeting room with small kitchen so groups can serve coffee, tea and light refreshments.
I think El Cerrito needs to concentrate on helping seniors get their finances straight and also what kind of insurance they need. Seniors need help in lots of ways.
Small groups could use a meeting room that is not part of a church or in a restaurant.
Display areas for art.
More restrooms.

More convenient central location; maybe in the El Cerrito Plaza.
I think dual-paned windows are needed for energy efficiency and noise reduction; also carpet to reduce sound. There needs to e some separation between the adult section; also a separate computer area rather than having them scattered around.
Proximity to BART.
I love the current location. If the Senior Center moves, can't the library be re-built at that site? I don't think parking is an issue. The location by the Greenway encourages biking and walking to the library.
Love the large windows of current library. Keep light and airy feeling in new building!
Not so dark!
Natural light, good calm environment.
It would be great to save the native plants at the current library.
Space is essential – more children's books, teen programs
Same location or Fairmont Blvd. or El Cerrito Plaza would be best.
Increased lighting (2)
Make it easier for patrons to use interlibrary loan.
Automated checkout.
Accessible to BART. This is why I use the Berkeley Library instead. Also I found your collection of travel guides not current since the majority of research done is travel (international) related.
Accessibility: accessible restrooms; accessible ADA computers; priority use for disabled users.
The books and resources are the focal point, but the space should be comfortable with good seating areas and study areas so groups can quietly work together or others can read on their own.
Better child exploration space.
Wireless Internet access
Please! Much better lighting in study and lounge areas than now.
Library is not a place for parents to read to their children! If you insist on having this, it should be a separate room with a door.
Would prefer expansion of present building to construction of a new one elsewhere – OR, having both with simple interlibrary loan of books fro one to the other.
Central location
Lots of natural light.
A beautiful building.
No traffic bottlenecks to get there or park!!!
Present library is comfortable and pleasant and comfortable, just a little small.
Adult programs with different speakers would bring me in more.
Better lighting in adult reading area.
A building to inspire us to visit it.
Media rooms for viewing DVD, CD or video at stations with headphones.
Close to public transit
Welcoming, cozy, uplifting
My children and I tend to browse for a short time and the check out our books, videos, DVDs and computer games.
Please design the new building with good lighting and a warm feel. Current library is poorly lit and cold – not an environment we want to spend much time in.
A community information center.
A community room.
A bigger building. El Cerrito is growing and we need more space.
A library is a "LIBRARY" a place for books! It is not a gathering place for noisy teens and creaming babies and it is most definitely not a computer place!
More space for all the Fairmont kids who need to hand out until the get picked up – seems like the library provides day care as well as library services.
Photovoltaic panels on the roof to generate electricity from the sun.
Improved materials and space for local history collection (perhaps in partnership with Historical Society).
Natural light via windows – views to courtyard, greenery, etc.

Please include space for photographs and art exhibits!
Separate noisy kids from lounge area.
Automatic renewals.
Clean restrooms.
Use the Albany Library as an example of what would be a good plan.
Wonderful! Need to have easy street parking/lot NOT on a major street. Stockton is way too busy. Senior members need SAFER neighborhood parking, traffic direction. Looking forward to a light, cozy well-stocked library!
Please use the same location. Space should be planned for flexible (multi-purpose) use and the incorporation of new facilities and services when they are needed in the future. The Senior Center next door is probably a good source of volunteer help and also of library users who can read there too.
Longer hours, especially in the morning.
Spaces that allow separation, are inviting, relaxing with a book or magazine; encourage a variety of patrons, kids of all ages, adults, etc.
Increased hours.
Near center of City
Increased hours of operation, continued proximity to public transit
Quiet space to relax
Adequate space for the Friends & volunteers to process donated books for sale in order to supplement the library's budget
Aesthetically beautiful
Better lighting
I do not often spend time in the library; borrow and take home.

12. Other comments:

Location is fine. I don't use it because of lack of materials.
I believe what would make a great library is if snacks/ vending machines are offered - something like Barnes & Noble in El Cerrito.
Street, driving ease needed for parking and drop-off of children. Stockton is too busy.
Personally I love the information desk where I can ask volunteers all kinds of questions. And I like the friendly clerks.
The Library and the tennis courts are the El Cerrito service I use the most.
Lighting needs improvement. Light from windows is good; keep open feeling with a lot of windows.
Believe library has done remarkably well with its limited space. Glad it will grow!
You're right. The present library has a paucity of books as well as space. It's a disgrace!
The current location is great as it is between a school and the Senior Center for easy student and senior access. I would not like to see it separated from these sites. Please keep student access in mind when choosing a new site.
Would like puppet shows and a schedule of events published in this newsletter and/or Recreation Center brochure.
Wonderful service. Any possibility of extending hours? If choice between hours and books, choose books.
The staff is very helpful, pleasant and informative. Had exhibits in art and political buttons and badges, etc.
The current location is very good. The past proposal for Fairmont Ave. was very stupid on the part of City officials. It needs to be safe, convenient. Anything around that ridiculous Plaza is NOT a good idea.
Brand new building and new and better collection needed for a successful of any community.
When I lived on the Peninsula, I used the Burlingame Public Library. It is a very warm and welcoming library. The space is well-designed, particularly the children's book area.
Need a quiet place to read.
I support expansion of the Library. It needs more and more pleasant space.

Hours are the #1 reason I don't use the library; too hard to remember when it's open and what days.
More open hours. (8)
I love the location of the Library and would welcome improvements.
Need volunteers?
I don't understand why parents need to read to their kids in the library.
More books on tape and CDs – older people can listen even when eyes are tired.
Present book collection and facility have been totally inadequate for years. New library is about 25 years overdue. Hours are not adequate.
I would prefer that money be spent on better library materials, not a library building.
I have responded to this survey by listing my own needs. However, although I do not have children, I think the library is a place for them – to introduce them to books and to encourage them to enjoy the idea of education throughout their entire lives.
We appreciate the librarians. They're all both knowledgeable and friendly; they're also
competent – returned books are promptly checked in; they help us locate books.
We need longer hours in evenings and on Saturdays. A lot of us work outside of town and commute – mot much free time in town.
Fairmont is a bad location for a library due to lack of parking space.
My only complaint with the El Cerrito Library in the past 25 years has been the management of the Internet computers. The new automated reservation system is a huge improvement and is probably as good as you can expect to get.
I love the Library the way it is and, since I live very close, I'd be sorry to have a new one at a distance I'd have to drive to.
Please: no overall carpet, no air conditioners (windows to open)); staff needs a larger workroom; space is needed for the Historical Society.
I am pleased the have a local library whatever its resources.
Lighting is poor.
Would like library to stay on Stockton as it is centrally located. Perhaps City can utilize or purchase Harding School property and perhaps put City Hall and Open House Senior Center there.
Please do not build the new library at the Plaza. It is already overcrowded and traffic is heavy.
At present the Friends of the El Cerrito Library have a very good work storage area. We hope for one as good or better in the new library.
The library is a real asset to the community. It is great to see children of all ages having access to good stories and information.
Remember the Friends of the Library. We need a bookstore to sell books to help with library expenses. We also need a store room/workroom.
The library bookstores at Berkeley and Orinda are nice amenities.
Thank you. We love going to the library.
The staff is very friendly and helpful. They really go the extra mile to serve the community. Manager Laura Martinengo Present book collections and facility have been totally inadequate for years. New library is about 25 years overdue. Hours are not adequate.
I would prefer that money be spent on better library materials, not a library building.
is extremely helpful and nice.
Thank you for making the El Cerrito library and interlibrary loan service available to the community.
Please have librarians enforce "quiet library voices" inside. No one is quiet in libraries anymore!
We hope the library remains on Stockton Street.
A new library would be fabulous! Looking forward to it!
Encourage or plan for small café next to Library and nice outdoor public space in front of Library to foster "building community."
It would be nice if both the Kensington and the El Cerrito branches were not closed on the same day. We would at least have an alternative to go to.
A well-designed plan must be implemented. Please involve the library-going community in this process.

Staff at the El Cerrito Library is very nice and friendly. Books are shelved promptly. Level of staffing is crucial for a good library. (Albany is understaffed.)
Need better and also more bike rack space to lock bikes.
There is a very loud librarian there who could make an effort to lower her volume. All libraries used to be very quiet!
Good luck. I pass the El Cerrito Library daily but opt to use the Richmond Library. I have
Double checkout time similar to Berkeley.
PLEASE build on Fairmont Ave. It would be a terrific unifier for the neighborhood.
When are we going to get a new City Hall? Portables have been our City Hall for years –
a poor representation of our city.
Your kids' programs (i.e., magician) are great but seldom. Can we see more? Charge a fee and fund raise!
Since Prop.13 the accessibility and hours have been pitiful. Libraries need to have long open hours and be kid and adult friendly.
Can you eliminate fines on children's materials? Please give us a library to make us proud!
Bring in more news from media outside the US such as newspapers and magazines with current news from around the world from a non-USA perspective.
Deep shelves to hold books easier.
An outdoor sign with dates of important events would be good to spread the word.
Great service at the reference and circulation desks.
Most libraries and paper book copies will very soon be outdated, replaced by computer access. IF we decide to build a new library, perhaps it should be for the indigent.
I am a new user and look forward to watching the new library progress!
Let's have a library we love to spend time in – visually pleasing, comfortable, big enough for lots of programs. (Look at SF's library!)
I don't like that the library is used as a childcare center by parents. These kids are not interested in books and library materials.
Hopefully the new library will be highly visible so people can't help but know where it is.
I'd love a closer library with fiction and music and videos.
We do NOT need a new library – there is nothing wrong with this library. A new one is just a lot of money grafting! Put that money into some GOOD BOOKS and make a few rules about library manners.
Save/enhance the California native garden and continue native plant landscaping to front of library.
I find the El Cerrito Library generally overly noisy.
I would seriously encourage you to consider a site on San Pablo Ave. near or as part of City Hall and the Public Safety building, closer to public transit. If you cannot incorporate Library in City Hall or Public Safety complex, please seriously consider one of the BART stations or near the Community Center. If it were near the CCJ pool, it would be more usable and would create an activity center. Near two middle schools up on Moeser would also be good. Current site is weak; isolated by itself and not on public transit. Create a center with some synergy.
Many people use both the Kensington and El Cerrito Libraries. Why do they have the same hours? Why are they both closed on Wednesday? I believe the current library is adequate. Money would be better spent on a larger collection and longer hours. Who has paid for buildings and expansions in East County libraries – the cities or the library district? Do we get our share of the books, etc? Most East County libraries have longer hours and more services. Would Kensington and El Cerrito be better off as their own district? Before El Cerrito spends money on a library, we should know if the Contra Costa library system favors the East County.
Our community is fortunate to have such great library employees. Kudos!
Spanish architecture in style of Castro Adobe would fit in with El Cerrito history.
Compliments to library staff; always helpful and accommodating.

Design exterior safety lighting for staff and patrons who exit at night to the parking lot area. None is available at present.
We have a great library with poor space allocation. Forget the theatre! Expand the library!
The El Cerrito Library has done a fine job so far on its limited budget and facilities – keep up the good work!
The Library is already providing excellent library advice and good facilities, which have developed to match changing requirements. The bigger the size, the more confusing it could become.
I suggest you have the City repaint the handicapped auto space (the wheelchair space) in front. We got a hefty fine because it is not clearly marked.
Great that a new library is being planned! More books, longer hours, comfortable reading areas would be wonderful. Thanks for asking!
The personnel of the El Cerrito are outstanding – please listen to what THEY need to better serve the community. My total support goes to their needs.
I primarily access the library via their Internet reservation program and go there only to pick up reserve books due to the small size of the collection in El Cerrito.
We use the El Cerrito Library primarily to check out books and videos/DVD's. (We have Internet access at home.) It would really be nice to see our library as a place where people can comfortably browse the book and media collections, and sit and read in comfortable lounge chairs.....basically, a place to 'hang-out' and not just simply go 'in and out' which is pretty much what we do these days. Thanks for doing this survey!
I would particularly like to see historical and documentary DVDs in your collection. I would like to see a diverse and broad music CD collection. Consider making ethernet ports available to those with laptops. Wireless can be put in later if needed. I would like to see the library open extended hours ... even if the extended hours have reduced service. Consider leasing an area to a cafe as an extension of semi-public space, income generation and convenience for the public.
I'm happy with the library as is, but it needs more parking. I was alarmed to read in the paper that they were considering rebuilding it on San Pablo in a location with no parking at all. I hope that that idea has been 'shelved'!
One of the reasons I love the Berkeley Public Library is that they have an online catalog I can access at home -- then I know whether the book's even there before I leave the house. They also have a service where you can request a book that's checked out and they'll e-mail you when the book is returned, holding it for you for 10 days. But the main reason BPL is so great is their collection, which is wonderful. These are all things I think El Cerrito should consider in planning the new library. I'm delighted to hear that the city is doing this and happy to see you soliciting feedback from residents. Thank you.
I really appreciate the chance to provide input into the new library-- the existing library is outdated, small, and has too few hours. We look forward to a new library with expanded services and hours.
1-If there are expanded hours and space for 'draws'-meetings of nonprofit groups, display of art and so on the non-reading public is pulled in and dragged past displays of everything the library has—shouldn't just be for diligent readers 2-Emphasis on useful information: car repair manuals, 'how to' pitched at not too high a reading level is important to pull in everyone
We live one block from the library. We love the location as we can walk to it each Saturday. The Albany Library has a book case of international folk tales for children. These are picture and text books with tales like the Baba Yaga stories, Cinderella themes from various cultures, Chinese, Mexican, Native American, folk tales etc. I'd like to see a section like that created in our library.
We hope that the city DOES NOT consider putting the library on Fairmount Ave. because it is too congested now with the increased traffic from the Plaza.
Thanks for the opportunity to participate in the needs assessment.

Having lived in El Cerrito for two years now, I see it as an emerging city in many ways like Emeryville but without the employers. Living so close to Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco, it's easy to bypass El Cerrito as a local base. But I have slowly discovered El Cerrito as a distinct community, just hard to discover, and I think the library plays a vital role in individuating a community and bringing it together. I am excited to hear that a new library is in the planning and would be very happy to participate as a local citizen (who is also a librarian.) Please feel free to contact me if you like at 510-417-0587.
I used the library alot when my child was school aged. She is now out of the house and I work full time so have little time to spend at the library. I strongly support the library and its value to young children and seniors alike. I think teens tend to use other resources, but small meeting rooms may allow them to conduct study groups there. It is important to have a strong mix of books and technology - but remember that libraries = books!!
Have coffee shop like San Leandro
We really appreciate the on-line ordering system, and often pick up books, videos and DVD's from other branches at El Cerrito. However, sometimes the DVD's we borrow are damaged. The library may wish to reconsider how they are handled.
I would like to see more library-provide, sponsor or organize activities of a cultural, educational recreational or informational nature to the residents of El Cerrito making it a more frequently used community facility.
I have been a librarian for over 25 years (mainly academic) and would be interested in participating in the planning process if input is needed.
Better staff. Staff is not customer-service oriented/helpful, or knowledgeable. They don't seem to be interested in doing any more than the bare minimum ('it's over there' instead of 'come with me, I'll show you'). More space, separate floors, comfy chairs to read, tables for students to get together and work on school projects.
Priority 1 from number 11 above is extended library hours. Libraries need to be available 7 days a week!
Please continue to place bins where patrons can drop off unwanted magazines, books, CD's, DVD's and other types media for other patrons to enjoy.
The Albany library is a really good example of a well-lit, organized, well-stocked library. I suggest talking with people there to learn more about what they're doing well.
Being on the south east corner of the city the Albany and Berkeley libraries are closer to me and in the areas I normally travel towards. I have only been in the El Cerrito library once to look up some information in the 10 years I have lived here. I work out at the Berkeley YMCA and the Berkeley Main Library is just around the corner. The North branch is on my way home. The Albany library is on my way home from the freeway.
I like the library the way it is!! I enjoy the ease of reserving books and other media on-line. We don't need a new library!
MAKE KIDS A PRIORITY-- more books, tapes/CDs, DVDs, etc. a children's librarian. more kids programs.
Main problem is lack of parking.
I think that investing in the library is a great idea. You folks did a wonderful job on the pool (I swam there this morning) and I am sure that the work on the library will be similarly beneficial. You're great.
The library doesn't have very nice, relaxing energy. It almost seems TOO quiet, suspiciously quiet. I think you should encourage a lively-er energy, while still keeping the noise level under control.
It would be great to hire a staff of individuals who not only know what it takes to be a good librarian, but also have some pretty decent public relations and communication skills. For the most part, the individuals would enjoy what they do not tolerate their job simply because they have to pay bills!

Computer area should be separated from the other parts of the library. In my experience as a librarian, large computer labs (which I'm assuming you'll be pressured to include) attract a lot of teens after school, who disrupt the library for other users. Ideally the library would be located near other things so that it is more convenient to use. Somewhere near the Plaza would be ideal.
Current location is just fine. The proposal to put a library on Fairmont was nuts.
For me the library is like a home away from home. So, I'd love to see plenty of room for seating, tables, and computers to gather information or just to read the magazine. I also like to see a larger collection of books so there would be shorter waiting time for popular books. Thank you.
Thanks
I would like to see the library offer more children's storytelling and lapsit services. The current 15-minute lapsit is not really long enough or interesting enough.
More Staff on hand would be nice, as there can often be long waits for the circulation desk, and the Staff will often have their hands full. A new, improved and easier to use Self-Check machine would be nice (so we could check out media materials as well as books). The shelves could be improved (they are not deep enough for the Non-Fiction and Children's Non-Fiction books, so they stick out too far).
A children's room (or noisy room) separate from the rest of the library...
An enclosed meeting room of adequate size & facilities is needed to accommodate the children's & adult programs currently being offered. The children's programs, especially, draw many participants.
The library is one of the most important, if not the most important, public resource in the city. It certainly deserves more attention and $$ support than, for example, a theatre (when ECHS will have an excellent theatre and we have 2 movie houses around the corner on Solano). It's clear from the theatre project (to which I'm not opposed) that the city has lots of money that it can devote to something that impacts the education of the youth of the community and that experiences such incredible daily usage.
My answers to #11 are focused on quiet and less distractions. So my priorities are: more seating in general, then a separate space for teens and more enclosed group study rooms, then more computers (both for Internet and word processing), better acoustical control and last but not least, more parking. :)
As part of the CCC Library system, I hope the residents of EC will not have to fund it all themselves. Is there some county money available?
I like the current location of the Library.
As a parent of a teenager with disabilities, I have a hard time to find information or up to date reading materials related to various disabilities such as autism, epilepsy, special education, etc. in the library. I would really like to see a special section for this purposes.
Check out the Orinda Library for a well designed user friendly modern library. Since El Cerrito has to compete with Barnes & Noble it better be good. Also, factoring the cost to keep the library open more hours is also extremely important. Thanks.
Don't get rid of your older books. There's inspiration in the past. It's nice to be able to reference an old architecture book, for example, when I'm working on a home project.
I live in a few blocks from the library, in Richmond Annex, and very much appreciate the library.

APPENDIX B1
El Cerrito Friends of the Library
Focus Group

December 13, 2005

Facilitator: Kathryn Page
Recorder: Peg McGowan

Number attending: 16 as well as Laura Martinengo, Branch Manager and Rose-Marie Westberg, Deputy County Librarian

A. AS LIBRARY USERS

1. How many of you are library users?

   All use the Library.

2. Other libraries as well as El Cerrito?

   - Albany
   - Kensington
   - Richmond
   - Berkeley
   - San Pablo
   - Santa Rosa, Rincon Valley Branch

   All have different hours and collections.

3. What do you like about the El Cerrito Library? What parts or features of the building work well?

   - Comfortable, homey, can see books
   - Staff - staff interaction with clients is very good
   - Programs but not enough space for them
   - Tables in the back of the Library

4. Is there anything about the Library that you would like to change? What parts or features of the building do not work well?

   - Need a meeting room that will accommodate at least 50 - 75
   - Prefer a meeting room, with a separate entrance lobby and restrooms, that can be used when the Library is not open - like Rincon Valley
   - More computer space - like San Leandro
   - Two in attendance use Library computers; most have own; some access Library catalog from home; time limit on Library computers is an issue for some
   - Some are interested in a computer training lab; it was noted that computer training is offered at the Senior Center (for a fee)
   - More books are needed - no room for new books - lack of space means one book in and one book out
   - Need separate space for children and their programs as well as more staff for same
   - Teens seldom come in the evenings - attributed to the fact that the Library closes at 8:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 p.m.

5. Are there successful libraries that you have visited that have features that the Library ought to incorporate?

    - San Leandro (computers)
    - Rincon Valley (lobby/meeting room/restrooms can be used when Library is closed

B. AS FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

1. Tell me about the Friends of the Library and their activities?

    - Currently have only one or two book sales a year
    - Support programming for Library
    - Annual general membership meeting

2. What ideas and hopes do you have for Friends activities in the new library?

    - Need space for receiving, sorting and storage, with temperature control
    - Discussed pros and cons of ongoing book sale if there was space for same; noted inventory would turn over frequently; mentioned Friends space in Walnut Creek Library
    - Friends space needs computer access so books can be sold on the Internet; presently done at home
    - Natural air would be a big plus in Friends space
    - Donations currently come in through the Circulation Department, the basement door and boxes left outside the building; noted that the Orinda Library has a special door for donations
    - Currently the Library is not open enough hours to accommodate the Friends

3. What about an ongoing book sale?

    - Ongoing or quarterly book sales would eliminate buildup of inventory and possibly raise more money
    - Could use Meeting Room for special book sales
    - Kathy Page suggested visiting other libraries with ongoing book sales and will provide a list so El Cerrito Friends can see what works well and what doesn't

4. What kind of environment would you like to see in the new library?

    - Open area lounge seating like present building
    - Resilient flooring; no carpeting because of fibers
    - Not in favor or coffee and snack bar (no food in drink in Library now); mentioned successful bookstores with cafes
    - Coffee and light snacks okay in meeting room which should have a small kitchen area for preparing same
    - Kathy Page referenced several new libraries with successful cafes (which are contracted out) and will provide a list of them for the Friends to visit

5. What do you like about the present Library?

    - Windows with natural light
    - Low Circulation Desk for children
    - Space for local art displays and bulletin board space - see below

6. What is lacking in the present Library?

    - Space for local art displays and bulletin board space
    - Parking is awful; shared with Senior Center and school; sometimes have to walk two - three blocks; learn when not to come to Library

7. What will make this Library successful five years from now?

    - Accessibility - so short people can reach current books
    - Best sellers
    - Top technology; i.e., computer
    - Windows with natural light and sun control so no glare
    - Tilted lowers shelves
    - Face-out display shelving
    - Low maintenance landscaping
    - Warm colors
    - Books that are accessible and visible

8. What final words of wisdom do you have?

    - Parking problem will not go away
    - Not certain school will still be here

APPENDIX B2
El Cerrito Arts and Cultural Commission Meeting
Focus Group Summary

December 21, 2005

Facilitator: Kathryn Page
Recorder: Peg McGowan

Number attending: 6 Commission members; 2 citizens; Karen Pinkos, City representative

1. How many of you are regular library users?

   Four Commissioners use the Library regularly; two occasionally.
   Both members of the public use the Library on a regular basis.

2. Other libraries as well as El Cerrito?

   - Albany
   - Kensington
   - Richmond
   - North Berkeley

3. For those who use the El Cerrito Library - which library services do you use?

   Public:
   - Checkout books
   - Reference
   - Magazines

   Commission:
   - Checkout books
   - Magazines and newspapers
   - Reference collection to do research for art work
   - Computer for ILL
   - Books on tape
   - Search the Internet
   - Read the *El Cerrito Journal*
   - Look at the art on display

4. Does the Library meet your needs? If not, what changes would you like to see?

   Commission:
   - Albany Library cited as a useful model – this commissioner can find information there more quickly than at El Cerrito Library because of more efficient set-up
   - Albany has more space for programs
   - Albany has separate lobby
   - It would be nice to have more meeting/program space, especially for teens who need a venue to express themselves
   - Would like to see space for rotating displays, computer classes, learning institution
   - There is an Orientation Center for the Blind west of the Plaza at the Albany Library; suggest making things accessible for the vision-impaired in the Library.
   - Existing Library is accessible to pubic transportation as well as close to schools, the BART trail, and the Senior Center
   - Native plants displayed in landscaping are a plus
   - Suggest having an entrance (perhaps off the BART trail) in addition to the one on Stockton Avenue.
   - Mentioned the Barnes & Noble model, particularly having a café and clustered, comfortable seats for sitting and reading.

- Question regarding the use of online resources vs. actual books. Discussion followed on the need for libraries to provide both. KP explained that the library would provide computers as well as wireless access for laptops so print material could be downloaded; this would bring more people into the library and would therefore require more people space for those using the technology as well as those using print collections. There is also need for a meeting room and group study rooms.
- Library also needs space to accommodate children waiting to be picked up by parents/caregivers.

Public:

- Need more parking
- Some members of the public don't feel safe on BART Ohlone Greenway trail
- Question regarding how busy and cramped the Library really is. KP noted that there are only two study areas in which to sit in the Library. Many people visit and leave without staying – the building has become a "take-out" library.
- Dedicated meeting room space is essential.
- A well-coordinated design for the library should be able to support the Senior Center and the school.
- Quiet study areas are needed in addition to group study areas, for homework and tutoring.
- Suggested exploring with school district how to work together; i.e., special programs.
- New building would require more staff and therefore more funding; need to explain this to the community. KP noted that staff would be used more efficiently in a new building and that while additional staff may be needed, the increase will be more due to increased service expectations (including longer hours) that increased square footage.
- Suggested combined use with Senior Center - perhaps a classroom wing that would be available when library is closed.
- Increased accessibility: for the handicapped and more than one entrance.
- Increased accessibility for all will require new restrooms.
- Public display area for community information.
- External posting area for public meetings.
- Space for Friends of the Library to manage book sale.
- Wireless capability for laptop computers.
- Computers for individual and group use.
- Consider larger computer monitors: horizontal instead of vertical.
- Equipment and aids for the visually impaired.
- Community meeting room with projection capabilities.
- Physical design should encourage cooperative use with school
- The City should maintain a website during design for public awareness and public input. KP mentioned that the City plans to distribute a survey to all households in its new City January newsletter, as well as make the survey available on the City website.
- The Library could "rent" meeting room space; a small kitchen area for making coffee would be necessary
- Population is changing - don't build a dinosaur; look to the future
- Keep cost in mind - no “Taj Mahal”
- Karen Pinkos explained the upcoming Library Bond ballot measure and the City's plans to submit an application if the measure passes. She also noted that design and construction costs are different from operating costs
- KP noted that a building that is significantly larger than the existing can be designed while staff increases are much less, if the design is efficient. Increased staffing is generally tied to increased hours, programming and outreach. Self-service technology will be used, such as self-checkout machines, to make staff more efficient.
- There was general discussion regarding the presence of local history materials in the Library and the role of the El Cerrito Historical Society at the Library. The new City Hall will also provide space for local history. Negotiations between the Historical Society and the City need to be completed prior to making any decisions about space at the Library for this material.

5. How could the library support the arts and the cultural life of the community?

   Commission:
   - Provide gallery space
   - Offer a separate art and music room; i.e., all Dewey 700 materials (ala the Berkeley Public Library)
   - Meeting room used for writers' workshops.
   - Albany Library was mentioned for its lobby displays: people are surrounded by what's going on in the community
   - Could library be "canine friendly?" El Cerrito residents like to “walk the dog and pickup books”.
   - Use library for student art exhibits: elementary, middle, and high school
   - Senior programs could dovetail with library programs; shared cost

6. What qualities should the new library have? What should it ambience be? What image or images come to mind?

   Commission:
   - Lots of light; lots of glass
   - Durable materials such as stone, tile, wood
   - Cozy environment
   - Not a warehouse space but separate spaces
   - Feeling of intimacy
   - Use high windows; hard to read if too much glass
   - Acoustics are critical - proximity of BART trains
   - Green building; energy efficient; durable; a living, breathing type of building
   - A building with charisma
   - Low maintenance
   - Consistent style with other civic buildings
   - El Cerrito places a high community value on the environment – the Library should reflect that
   - Lighting that doesn't hum or vibrate
   - Would like to be able to open windows
   - Design for change/flexibility
   - Warm light
   - Theatre for visual programming: Learning Channels; Discovery Channel - not everyone can read - could share with Senior Center

   Public:
   - Use building materials that reflect the region; regional architecture
   - Sturdy construction (“industrial strength”); i.e., something that looks great but will last more than five years
   - Cerritos was mentioned as a very successful library

APPENDIX B3
El Cerrito City Council
Study Session Summary

January 17, 2006

Facilitator: Kathryn Page
Recorder: Peg McGowan

Number attending: five Council members, City staff, members of the public. Questions were directed to the Council first, then to the public.

1. How many of you are regular library users?

   Council: most have used the El Cerrito Library but do not use it currently

2. Other libraries as well as El Cerrito?

   - Albany
   - Kensington
   - Richmond
   - Oakland

3. For those who use the El Cerrito Library - which library services do you use?

   - Checkout books
   - Read in library
   - Magazines
   - Home decorating books
   - Old newspapers
   - Interlibrary Loan
   - Checkout books

   Note: One Council member's husband uses Oakland Library on lunch hour for peace and quiet

   Mayor: El Cerrito provided Mayor's children with:

   - Wide range of reading opportunities at age-appropriate levels
   - Support for school projects
   - Interlibrary Loan
   - Computers

4. Why don't you use the El Cerrito Library anymore?

   - Collection does not meet needs
   - Barnes & Noble is better; also is open more hours than library
   - Limited computer time
   - Internet replaced need to go to library for research; can use Internet 24/7
   - Library has some books that Internet does not have; i.e., art books; Library also has historical and art displays

5. How could a new library serve a broader role in the community?

   - Mayor: Teen space is needed in the library for homework; i.e., group study space
   - Look at bookstore: teens do homework there
   - In favor of a food source or coffee bar in or near the library
   - WiFi
   - Seating area with fireplace could serve seniors and teens

- Jones: looking forward to the needs assessment report to help define the role of the library in the community; Council's role is to help to determine physical size and layout: formfollows function; is looking for efficiency in maintenance of building as well as efficient use of staff; would like to see Historical Society in Library; also programming – a resource for cultural research, etc.; community rooms, group study rooms: library should be technology driven for now and the future; is looking for report to help get El Cerrito ready for the State Bond Program
- Potter: would like to see public art inside and outside of the library as well as community art in the library
- Moore: would like book club advice from the librarians on what to read; also advice on parenting books and what kids should be reading; librarians are the ones to advise what to read; ability to talk to a person should not get lost in technology; would appreciate book lists from librarians; staff is inspirational
- Mayor: would like to see large print and books-on-tape collections for those with limited vision; more hours – make sure it's open; Albany has a community center adjacent to its library and would like to consider this adjacency for El Cerrito if that will help keep the Library open
- Jones: natural link to Senior Center Internet to Library; talk to restaurants and hospitals to see how they serve seniors – comfortable chairs and enough circulation space, etc.

6. What about the quality/ambience in the new building?

    - Natural light
    - Able to serve different types of clientele simultaneously; i.e., zoning
    - Comfortable chairs
    - Maximize what technology can offer today

7. What is your vision for the Library as a place in town?

    - Natural light, art, programming, comfortable chairs
    - Library needs to offer more than bookstore and more than Internet at home; not everything is on the Internet – need both
    - Mayor: online subscription services are needed and terminals to support them with no time limits (KP noted that training components would be involved here)

Public comments:

- There is a real need for a meeting/multipurpose room (library programs, children's programs, Friends book sales, etc.) that could be used when the library is closed;

APPENDIX B4
El Cerrito Committee on Aging
Focus Group Summary

January 18, 2006

Facilitator: Kathryn Page
Recorder: Peg McGowan

Number attending: 12, including City staff

1. How many of you are regular library users?

   - 6 use now; others have used in past
   - Grandchildren use when they visit

2. Why don't you use the library?

   - Transportation

3. Other libraries as well as El Cerrito?

   - Albany

4. How well does the El Cerrito serve the needs of seniors? What could it do better?

   - One would prefer evening programs (book reviews)
   - Would like audio book collection for visually impaired
   - TV and Internet take up a lot of seniors' time; 5 have computers; could use Internet training; Senior Center training is expensive; library training would be free

Mayor and staff addressed issue of temporary space for library and Senior Center while new facilities are under construction……also discussed parking……and need for larger facilities; i.e., senior population is expected to double in 20 years

   - Albany configuration of library and Senior Center is successful
   - Meeting Room/program space could be shared by library and Senior Center for author presentations and book talks
   - Seniors want to be more active – there is no space; everything is compacted

5. What works and what doesn't work?

   - Barnes & Noble has a comfortable environment – nice chairs and a coffee shop
   - In favor of a café
   - Baby boomers are the future; plan accordingly
   - Books are here to stay
   - Barnes & Noble has a kids table – this allows parents to browse
   - Zones for conversation are desirable; i.e., café for teens = group study for middle schoolers and jr. high

6. Have you visited any libraries that have features or services that we ought to consider?

   - Albany (see above)
   - Richmond: lots of help there to find what you're looking for
   - Berkeley: has entertainment; i.e., programs
   - El Cerrito needs larger foreign language collections
   - Barnes & Noble is used just like a library: comfy chairs, Starbucks coffee, etc.

KP commented that Barnes & Noble and others were designed to be just like libraries used to be.

7. Other comments

- Interlibrary loan service is appreciated
- Would like mobile seating – ottomans on wheels…….
- Referenced puppet shows at Barnes & Noble
- Nice to have a place where grandparents and grandchildren can be together
- Would like more help for older people on computers
- Suggested a viewing room for videos/DVDs

APPENDIX B5
El Cerrito Parents of School-Age Children
Focus Group Summary

March 13, 2006

Facilitator: Kathy Page
Recorder: Laura Martinengo

Number attending: Four parents attended.

1. How long have you lived in El Cerrito?

   2.5 years (2 people)
   6 years
   4 years

2. What is the community like? What is life like for families and kids living here? What is it like being a parent here? Are there any community trends or issues that we should pay attention to as we assess the library's space needs?

   - We love the compactness of the city, the fact that we know our neighbors
   - There is diversity in the community, more so as time goes on
   - The Plaza has changed things, made the town more interesting, it's great to have stores like Trader Joe's close by
   - The Library being 2 blocks from our house is a bonus – we found out after we moved in and considered it a real plus.
   - Feel safe here – walk to the Library often
   - El Cerrito is getting younger, more families with children are moving in.

3. What are your children's ages?

   - 3 years old (3)
   - 6 years old (2)

4. How do you use the Library now? Which services or parts of the Library do you use? For your children? For yourself?

   - Children's programs and story times
   - Computers
   - Check out DVDs – it's great that they are free
   - Place holds from computer at home (often do not have time to browse when I am at the Library with the kids)
   - Music CDs (Raffi, Peter and the Wolf)

5. Does anyone use other libraries? Which ones?

   - Berkeley Main
   - Kensington
   - San Francisco Main
   - Albany ("too crowded")
   - All considered El Cerrito their home library, however.

6. Are there any ways you would like to see the Library's services changed or improved?

   - A children's restroom with a changing table (Berkeley PL has this) – a restroom where we could send our kids and know they would be safe.
   - Size – the building needs to be bigger

- Quiet study rooms
- Expand the J nonfiction collection – provide more variety
- The children's programs on Saturday are crowded – need larger space for them
- We like that the computers or toys are not the main focus of the children's area, as we have seen in other libraries – we appreciate books and want this to be the emphasis for our children, too.
- Although it would be nice for older kids to have access to computers – we are not that technological yet in our family.
- Would like comfortable parent/child seating in the picture book area – I am too big for the little chairs, or a carpeted area with face-out displays of books at a child's height. This is what Berkeley PL does.
- Books on tape – we use that collection a lot and have gone through the entire collection – please enlarge the collection.
- Program idea: have a librarian show the kids how to handle and care for books.
- Increase the adult DVD and video collection.
- An outdoor reading area would be awesome – I like to take my child outdoors, with the great weather we have. It would be wonderful to do that at the Library (realize there may be security issues with this).

7. Are there any new services or features that you would like to see added?

    - College prep materials, for older kids and parents, to help them plan for school and financial aid.
    - Parenting collection
    - Provide homework help area for after-school kids – they are very present in the afternoon – find some creative ways to keep them occupied and constructive – they can be disruptive and noisy after school.
    - Maybe high school students could tutor middle school kids.
    - Kids need a place to hang out and let off energy without disrupting those wanting a quieter environment.
    - Like the separation of adult and kids' spaces – in the new building, make sure that the children's area is visible and prevents unaccompanied adults from being in the children's space without notice.
    - Hold children's programs at different times – late morning is the time that my 3 year old starts to get ready for a nap.
    - Would like to have more guidance in finding the right books for developing readers – reluctant reader lists, advice from librarians.
    - The collection is not organized intuitively - Make it easier to find each collection – for example, I missed out on the children's new books for a time because there was no special sign to highlight it.
    - Possibly recruit seniors to read to children?

8. Has anyone seen other libraries with features or aspects that would make a good model?

    - Albany has "quiet rooms" for studying, which I found useful.
    - Fireplace in Berkeley PL children's area seems cozy.

9. Do you have overall words of advice to us as we plan the new library?

    - Basically happy with the Library now. The staff is very nice. Librarians make us feel comfortable.
    - More open hours would be nice, on Wednesdays and in the evening.

APPENDIX B6
El Cerrito Teachers
Input Summary
Portola Middle School

Six teachers responded to a questionnaire prepared by Kathy Page and distributed by school librarian Velta Rutkovskis in May 2006.

1. All teachers work with students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

2. Describe your students overall – at what grade level are they reading? Are they motivated academically? What factors are obstacles to their learning?

    - Four teachers noted that their students generally read below their grade level, while two said they generally read at their grade level.
    - Academic motivation was noted across a wide range, from high to low. Some teachers felt that could not answer such a broad question.
    - Obstacles to learning included parental support or lack thereof, family attitudes toward education, lack of computers or Internet access at home, scattered, inconsistent, confusing home lives.

3. El Cerrito residents are generally one-half to one-third of most classes.

4. Some teachers noted that students living in El Cerrito tend to enjoy more parental involvement in their education or are more academically inclined.

5. Two teachers reported that they use the El Cerrito public library with their students. One sends them to the Library to do reports. The other assigns her students to go to the Library to search for books on a monthly basis. The other four teachers do not use the public library with their classes.

6. The following suggestions were made regarding services or features that the Library could provide that would be important to their students.

    - Internet access
    - Access to book collection
    - Assistance from reference librarian
    - Some students do not know to go to the library – we must teach them.
    - Huge teen section, similar to the one at the Albany Library – separate from the regular collection.
    - Biographies of African American people
    - “Black lit”
    - Graphic novels
    - Hip hop music/books
    - Library staff that the kids can relate to (young, hip, person of color) and who can develop programs that will attract many cultures of people.

7. All six teachers reported that their most of their students do not have sufficient access to a computer to do their homework.

8. Three teachers reported that lack of study space on the weekend is an issue for their students. The other three teachers indicated that they do not know whether or not this is an issue.

APPENDIX C
El Cerrito High School
Survey Results

The El Cerrito High School Leadership Class conducted a survey in March 2006 of student council representatives, which elicited 33 responses. The survey results are summarized below. The percentages shown below are based on the total of survey responses rather than the total of responses to individual questions.

1. Do you use the EL Cerrito Library now?

4	Yes	15%
28	No	85%

2. If not, why not?

10	Collection too limited	30%
2	Not enough seating	6%
4	Not enough computers	12%

Other reasons:

No WiFi
Don't live close enough.
Doesn't cross my mind.
Just never wanted to
I haven't heard anything exciting about it.
Too busy
No time to go
Too many books
Boring and it smells
Berkeley Library is brighter, easier to use, and it has a better collection.
I just don't go because I don't need help in the library.
Don't know where it is and don't live out here.
It's boring. (2)
I don't live around here.
Never needed to
I don't live near the library.
I just have other resources and I like to buy books.
I like to buy books instead.
I tend to have access to what I need at home or I go to the Albany Library.
I use other sources to get information.
Bad hours
I live in Richmond so I use the Richmond Library most often.

3. Where do you study after school or on the weekend?

1	At the public library	3%	
29	At home	88%	
13	At a friend's home	39%	
11	At school	33%	
8	At a store or restaurant	24%	(Barnes & Noble, Starbucks, Jamba Juice, Peets, Au Coquelet)
2	At some other location	6%	(Community Center, Mr. Garner's Room)

Other comments on question 3:

I don't study. (3)
Studying is a tool of the weak.

4. What spaces or services would you like the new library to provide? Please mark the five items below that would be most important to you in the new library. (1 = most important, 2 = second most important, etc.)

Priority #1	
5	Computers to search the Internet
4	Plenty of study seating
4	Computers for word processing
3	A separate space for teens
2	Comfortable lounge chairs
1	Computers with other software
1	Fiction books for teens
1	Nonfiction books for research and study
1	Magazines for teens
1	Graphic novels
1	Places to plug in laptop computers
1	Library programs for teens (poetry slams, books discussion groups, film nights
0	Career prep books
0	Music CDs
0	A place to buy food and other soft drinks
0	DVDs
0	Group study rooms to work together with other students
0	Books and media in languages other than English

Priority #2	
5	Music CDs
5	A place to buy food and other soft drinks
2	Plenty of study seating
2	Places to plug in laptop computers
2	Library programs for teens (poetry slams, books discussion groups, film nights
2	Group study rooms to work together with other students
1	Computers to search the Internet
1	Computers for word processing
1	Graphic novels
1	Career prep books
0	Computers with other software
0	Fiction books for teens
0	A separate space for teens
0	Nonfiction books for research and study
0	Magazines for teens
0	Comfortable lounge chairs
0	DVDs
0	Books and media in languages other than English

Priority #3	
5	A place to buy food and other soft drinks
3	Fiction books for teens
3	Music CDs
2	Computers to search the Internet
2	Computers with other software
2	DVDs
1	Plenty of study seating
1	Computers for word processing
1	Library programs for teens (poetry slams, books discussion groups, film nights
1	Comfortable lounge chairs
1	Places to plug in laptop computers
1	Group study rooms to work together with other students
0	A separate space for teens
0	Nonfiction books for research and study
0	Magazines for teens
0	Graphic novels
0	Career prep books
0	Books and media in languages other than English

Priority #4	
4	Career prep books
3	A separate space for teens
3	A place to buy food and other soft drinks
3	DVDs
2	Fiction books for teens
2	Library programs for teens (poetry slams, books discussion groups, film nights
2	Group study rooms to work together with other students
1	Computers to search the Internet
1	Computers for word processing
1	Magazines for teens
1	Comfortable lounge chairs
1	Places to plug in laptop computers
0	Plenty of study seating
0	Computers with other software
0	Nonfiction books for research and study
0	Graphic novels
0	Music CDs
0	Books and media in languages other than English

Priority #5	
4	Comfortable lounge chairs
3	Library programs for teens (poetry slams, books discussion groups, film nights
2	Plenty of study seating
2	Computers to search the Internet
2	A separate space for teens
2	Places to plug in laptop computers
2	Group study rooms to work together with other students
2	Music CDs
2	Books and media in languages other than English
2	A place to buy food and other soft drinks
1	Computers for word processing
1	Nonfiction books for research and study
1	DVDs
0	Computers with other software
0	Fiction books for teens
0	Magazines for teens
0	Graphic novels
0	Career prep books

Other
Large tables for studying
Newer computers
Hours extended
Better lighting and roomier
Science Fiction, please
Tutoring

5. What will make the new library a place that you would like to visit and use?

Well organized books (sections)
Comfortable and plenty of study seating
Computers to search Internet and word processing
Having food and drinks
Places to study
I don't know because there isn't really a reason to go to the library.
Maybe a more "teen friendly" environment with good young adult novels and teen or popular magazines, good seating, and snacks for sale might make a change.
If it is much more updated and contemporary
It will make is a good place to learn
Publicize it more
Computers for word processing, comfortable chairs, places to plug in laptops, group study rooms, and DVDs.
If it was more exciting and fun
For it to be more fun
More colorful and less library-looking
Longer hours and larger more separate study areas
I don't think it can be much more interesting if you don't want to read or need certain Information – it's completely pointless unless there are events or gathering such as poetry reading.
I'm not sure because I've never had to use the library. I just use my computer. With the Internet available for everyone, you really don't need libraries.
Spaces for different age groups and different genres of books; food; more programs.

Computers with Internet access are one of the most important features a library should have.
Comfortable chairs and easy Internet access.
A welcoming place with decoration, lots of computers, chairs, group discussion places, etc. as well as helpful clerks and easy-to-find books.
Having food and places to study. A group room would be great! Comfy seating is a must; inviting décor, too.
No late fees. (2)
If the library were bigger, more people could use it.
Fewer books.
Just a real open space with computers and a chance to study in peace.
A wide variety of books
More interesting and more fun things to do; not have it so serious that it makes it really boring.

APPENDIX H
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