



Joint Powers Authority Operations Committee

George Rodericks, Atherton
Afshin Oskoui, Belmont (Vice Chair)
Christina Fernandez, Brisbane
Melvin Gaines, East Palo Alto
Stefan Chatwin, Foster City
Matthew Chidester, Half Moon Bay

Hannah Moran, Millbrae
Kevin Woodhouse, Pacifica (Chair)
Darcy Smith, Portola Valley
Crystal Mui, San Carlos
Justin Mates, San Mateo County
Jason Ledbetter, Woodside

**San Mateo County Library Joint Powers Authority
Operations Committee Agenda
September 9, 2025 1:30 p.m.**

Meetings of the Joint Powers Authority Operations Committee will be held in-person and by teleconference pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(b). Members of the public are able to join this hybrid meeting remotely via the Zoom platform by using the link below or in person at a meeting location identified below.

<https://SMCL.zoom.us/j/95747698676?pwd=FMtNUKka1Pv4VTPFHTpT25LWsoWEKO.1>
Or Telephone: +1 669 900 6833 Meeting ID: 957 4769 8676 Password: 407922

Meeting Location:

Library Administration, 125 Lessingia Court, San Mateo, CA 94402

Members of the public may email written public comments in advance of the meeting to Chelsea Quintanilla at quintanillac@smcl.org. Your email should include the specific agenda item on which you are commenting or note that your comment concerns an item not on the agenda. The Committee will make reasonable efforts to read into the record all emails received before the meeting. All emailed written comments, regardless of when received, will be included in the administrative record.

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the County will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If possible, please give three (3) business days advance notice of any accommodation needs by contacting Chelsea Quintanilla at quintanillac@smcl.org or call the California Relay Service (711).

If you believe the County has not met your rights under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact Anne-Marie Despain at (650) 684-0711 and/or despain@smcl.org or call the California Relay Service (711).

I. Call to Order	Action
II. Public Comments	Information
III. Consent Agenda	Action
A. Approval of the June 10, 2025 Minutes	
B. Unapproved Minutes of the June 16, 2025 Governing Board Meeting	
C. Investment Report for FY 2024-25	
D. Grant and Fundraising Report for FY 2024-25	
E. Summer Learning Report	
F. Atherton Library Children's Garden Project	
IV. Approval of the Final FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget	Action
V. Proposed Uses of Restricted Library Funds	Action
VI. Director's Report	Information
VII. Operations Committee Members Announcements	Information
VIII. Adjournment	Action

2025 Operations Committee Meetings: October 28

2025 Governing Board Meetings: September 15, November 3



San Mateo County Libraries Joint Powers Authority
Operations Committee Meeting
Minutes of June 10, 2025

Board Members Present:

George Rodericks, Atherton (Chair)
Afshin Oskoui, Belmont
Christina Fernandez, Brisbane
Melvin Gaines, East Palo Alto
Stefan Chatwin, Foster City
Matthew Chidester, Half Moon Bay
Hannah Moran, Millbrae
Kevin Woodhouse, Pacifica (Vice Chair)
Jason Ledbetter, Woodside

Staff Present:

Anne-Marie Despain
Mary Abler
Danae Ramirez
Carine Risley
Lindsey Freeland
Priscilla Bermudez

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- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m. by Chair Rodericks.
- II. Public Comments. None.
- III. Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda included the Approval of the May 13, 2025 Minutes, Proposed Uses of Restricted Library Funds, Belmont Library Improvement Project and the Director's Report. Member Oskoui inquired whether this was the first time the Proposed Uses of Restricted Library Funds appeared on the June Agenda. Director Despain responded that this item is typically presented to the JPA in September, however, a request was submitted at this time due to the Town of Woodside's request for additional funding to address an emergency mainline repair that impacted the Woodside Library.

Motion: Approve the Consent Agenda without changes. Passed (MSP: Oskoui/Chidester).

- IV. Adoption of the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget. Finance Director Freeland provided a brief overview of the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget that was presented at the May meeting. Total Revenue is \$46,178,540 and Net Appropriations, or the total operating budget, is \$54,270,419. Operating Reserves total \$5,863,392 and Capital Reserves total \$32,029,751. Projects highlights include the San Carlos Library makerspace, enhanced outreach tools, privacy pods, digital literacy hubs, tutoring and homework help, and exploring AI applications. Nine new positions are recommended to advance strategic plan goals and support our work focused on partnerships, public service, human resources and administration.

Motion: Adopt the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget. Passed (MSP: Chatwin/Woodhouse).

- V. Election of Library JPA Operations Committee Members. Chair Rodericks nominated Vice Chair Woodhouse for Chair; no other nominations were received. Chair Rodericks nominated Member Oskoui for Vice Chair; no other nominations were received.

Motion for Vice Chair Woodhouse to serve as Chair. Passed (MSP: Rodericks/Chatwin).
Motion for Member Oskoui to serve as Vice Chair. Passed (MSP: Rodericks/Chatwin).

- VI. Operations Committee Members Announcements. Chair Rodericks encouraged members to explore the Atherton Town Center and visit Mademoiselle Colette during their visit. Member Ledbetter introduced himself, followed by a round of introductions from all attendees. Member Moran shared the success of the joint Juneteenth celebration co-hosted by the City of Millbrae and the City of San Bruno, noting the library booth was a crowd favorite. Member Gaines provided an update on the new East Palo Alto Civic Commons development project which includes a new library.

- VII. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.



San Mateo County Libraries Joint Powers Authority
Governing Board Meeting
Minutes of June 16, 2025

Board Members Present:

Rick DeGolia, Atherton (Vice Chair)
Julia Mates, Belmont (Chair)
Mark Dinan, East Palo Alto
Art Kiesel, Foster City
Deborah Penrose, Half Moon Bay
Reuben Holober, Millbrae
Mary Bier, Pacifica
Helen Wolter, Portola Valley (Alternate)
Sara McDowell, San Carlos
Lisa Gauthier, San Mateo County

Staff Present:

Anne-Marie Despain
Carine Risley
Danae Ramirez
Mary Abler
Lindsey Freeland
Priscilla Bermudez

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- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 8:19 a.m. by Chair Mates.
 - II. Public Comments. None.
 - III. Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda included the Approval of the February 3, 2025 Minutes, Proposed Uses of Restricted Library Funds, Belmont Improvement Project and the Director's Report.

Motion: Approve the Consent Agenda without changes. Passed (MSP: McDowell/Kiesel).

- IV. Adoption of the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget. Director Despain introduced the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget. Deputy Director Risley shared a system overview and the new Strategic Plan. Deputy Director Ramirez highlighted major accomplishments from the past year, and Deputy Director Abler shared performance highlights. Finance Director Freeland outlined the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget and annual priorities. Total Revenue is \$46,178,540 and Net Appropriations, or the total operating budget, is \$54,270,419. Operating Reserves total \$5,863,392 and Capital Reserves total \$32,029,751.

Projects highlights include the San Carlos Library makerspace, enhanced outreach tools, privacy pods, digital literacy hubs, tutoring and homework help, and exploring AI applications. Nine new positions are recommended to advance strategic plan goals and support our work focused on partnerships, public service, human resources and administration. Director Despain thanked the board for their ongoing guidance and support and recommended approval for the FY 2025-26 Budget.

Chair Mates thanked staff for meeting with members to review the budget since the May meeting was unexpectedly cancelled and encouraged questions from the board. Member McDowell noted mention in the press of Supervisor Speier providing funds for libraries and inquired if our libraries will benefit. Director Despain explained that the funds will be directed to PLS and all city and county libraries will receive them. Member Wolter shared her enthusiasm for the library's bicycle programs and efforts to decrease transportation emissions. Member Holober asked about federal funding recently lost and a way to address this. Director Despain shared that the changes to the IMLS have been concerning for all libraries, but actual federal funding cuts will not impact our current budget, and we do not rely heavily on any state or federal grants. Member Bier commented on how refreshing it is that the library has strong funding in place. She also mentioned on her ongoing concern about the availability of excess ERAF Funds. Director Despain reminded the board that the recommended budget includes budgeting 50% of ERAF in ongoing revenue. Chair Mates reminded everyone that staff are always available to answer any questions.

Motion: Adopt the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget. Passed (MSP: Kiesel/Bier).

- V. Election of Library JPA Governing Board Officers. Director Despain provided an overview of the item stating that Chair Mates and Vice Chair DeGolia were elected on February 3, 2025, to serve the remaining FY 2024-25 term, making them eligible to serve a second term. Supervisor Gauthier proposed that chair and vice-chair assignments remain the same and nominated Chair Mates and Vice Chair DeGolia for a second term; no other nominations were received.

Motion for Chair Mates to continue to serve as Chair and Vice Chair DeGolia to continue to serve as Vice Chair. Passed (MSP: Gauthier/Holober).

- VI. Governing Board Member Announcements. None.
- VII. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 a.m.



To: JPA Operations Committee
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services 
Paniz Amirasiri, Interim Director of Finance and Performance
Date: September 3, 2025
Meeting: September 9, 2025
Re: Investment Report for FY 2024-25

Background

On September 12, 2009, the Governing Board adopted the Library Joint Power Authority (JPA) Investment Policy. The purpose of the Investment Policy is to provide guidance and protection to the Library JPA's cash and investments and promote prudent financial stewardship. It is also the policy of the Library JPA to diversify its investment portfolio to ensure the maximum safety of the Library's assets. The Library JPA shall have funds not required for immediate expenditure invested in compliance with state law and this policy.

The criteria for selecting investments in order of priority are:

- Safety of Principal
- Liquidity
- Yield

In order to minimize risk, the Library JPA's portfolio includes:

- The San Mateo County Investment Pool (SMCIP)
- The State of California Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF)

As outlined in the Library JPA Investment Policy, the Library Director shall submit an annual investment report to the Governing Board on the status of the Library JPA's investment portfolio. The report will provide information as to the types of investment, the amount of money invested within the two investment instruments, maturity dates, and interest rate yield on investments in accordance with the Government Code. The report shall also state if the Library JPA investments are in compliance with this policy and able to meet its cash flow obligation. The investment policy is reviewed periodically and was last approved by the Governing Board on September 18, 2023.

Discussion

The Library JPA is a voluntary participant in the San Mateo County Investment Pool which is regulated by California Government Code Section §53600 under the oversight of the County Treasurer. Included in SMCIP's investment portfolio as outlined in its [Investment Policy](#) are: U.S. Treasury Securities, U.S. Government Agency/Government Sponsored Enterprises, Commercial Paper, Negotiable Certificates of Deposit, Bankers Acceptances,

Collateralized Certificates of Deposit, Mortgage and Asset Backed Securities, US Instrumentalities, CA Municipal Obligations, Repurchase Agreements, Local Agency Investment Fund, Mutual Funds and Local Government Investment Pools.

In FY 2024-25, Library JPA funds averaging \$47,331,722 were invested with the San Mateo County Investment Pool, producing an average yield of [3.97](#) percent. Interest earnings in FY 2024-25 totaled \$1,856,566.

The Library JPA is a voluntary participant in the Local Agency Investment Fund, which is regulated by California Government Code Section §16429 under the oversight of the Treasury of the State of California. Included in LAIF's investment portfolio as outlined in its [Investment Policy](#) are: U.S. Treasury Securities, Federal and Supranational Agency Securities, Bankers Acceptances-Domestic/Foreign, Certificates of Deposit, Collateralized Time Deposits, Commercial Paper, Corporate Bonds/Notes, Repurchases and Reverse Repurchases, and Negotiable Orders of Withdrawal.

In FY 2024-25, Library JPA funds averaging \$2,417,163 were invested with the Local Agency Investment Fund, producing an annual average yield of [4.41](#) percent. Interest earnings totaled \$108,617.

Both SMCIP and LAIF maintain a large percentage of their investments in U.S. Treasury Securities representing obligations issued by the U.S. Government for which the full faith and credit of the United States is pledged for the payment of principal and interest. Neither SMCIP nor LAIF invest in derivative products. In order to minimize risk, the average length of maturity of the funds with the pools (duration a financial asset is held) is limited and outlined in their respective Investment Policies. As a participant in both SMCIP and LAIF, Library JPA funds are always liquid and available.

On an ongoing basis, cash flow requirements are reviewed to ensure that the investment portfolio remains sufficiently liquid to enable the Library JPA to meet all reasonably anticipated operating requirements. Library JPA investments are in compliance with the Library JPA Investment Policy, and the portfolio contains enough liquidity to meet expected expenditures.

Fiscal Impact

Combined SMCIP and LAIF interest earnings for FY 2024-25 totaled \$1,965,182. Library JPA investments are in compliance with the Library JPA Investment Policy, and the portfolio contains enough liquidity to meet expected expenditures.

Recommendation

Recommend JPA Operations Committee accept the Investment Report for FY 2024-25 and review and approve the Investment Policy with no revisions.

Attachment

Investment Policy

INVESTMENT POLICY

The purpose of this investment policy is to provide guidance and protection to the San Mateo County Library Joint Powers Authority's (Library JPA) cash and investments and promote prudent financial stewardship.

The basic premise underlying the Library JPA's Investment Policy is to ensure that money is always available when needed. It shall also be the policy of the Library JPA to diversify its investment portfolio to ensure the maximum safety of Library JPA assets. The Library JPA shall have funds not required for immediate expenditure invested in compliance with state law and this policy.

Investment Criteria

The criteria for selecting investments in order of priority are:

1. **Safety of Principal:** Safety of principal is the foremost objective of the investment program. Cash and all investments should be undertaken in a manner that seeks primarily to ensure the preservation of capital.
2. **Liquidity:** Sufficient cash balances and investments amounts shall remain liquid to meet the required timing of all operating requirements that may be reasonably anticipated including cash outflows for operating expenses and funding of capital projects.
3. **Yield:** The cash investment portfolio shall be designed with the objective of attaining a reasonable or market rate of return, taking into account the primary objectives of safety and liquidity.

Prudent Investor Standard

The Library JPA adheres to the guidance provided by the "prudent investor standard," which obligates a fiduciary to ensure that investments shall be made with the exercise of that degree of judgment and care, under circumstances then prevailing, which persons of prudence, discretion and intelligence exercise in the management of individual business matters, not for speculation but for investment. Exercise of prudence considers the probable safety of capital as well as the probable income to be delivered.

This standard of prudence shall be applied in the context of managing an overall portfolio. Investment officials acting in accordance with written procedures and the investment policy and exercising due diligence shall be relieved of personal responsibility for an individual security's credit risk or market price changes, provided that the deviations from expectation are reported in a timely fashion, and appropriate action is taken to control adverse developments.

Acceptable Investment Instruments

Investments will be made in several instruments to lessen risk by diversifying the Library JPA's portfolio. The Library JPA's investment portfolio may include the following instruments:

1. The San Mateo County Investment Pool (SMCIP)
2. The State of California Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF).

Reporting

The Director of Library Services shall submit an annual investment report to the JPA Governing Board on the status of the Library JPA's investment portfolio. The report will provide information as to the type of investment, the amount of money invested with various institutions, purchase and maturity dates and interest rate yield on investments in accordance with the Government Code. The report shall state if the Library JPA investments are in compliance with this policy and able to meet its cash flow obligation.

Delegation of Authority

Pursuant to Government Code 53600 et. Seq., with the annual adoption of this Investment Policy, the JPA Governing Board assigns the responsibility of determining the portion of surplus funds to invest in the State of California Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) to the Director of Library Services. Daily management responsibility of the investment program may be delegated to the Financial Services Manager, who shall establish procedures for the operation consistent with this investment policy. Business controls shall be established within the organization that utilizes adequate signature controls, separation of duties and adequate audit trail of cash disbursements and transfers of cash balances.

Adoption

This policy shall be reviewed periodically with the JPA Governing Board to ensure adequacy related to the objectives of safety, liquidity and yield and its adherence to applicable laws. The JPA Governing Board will review and approve all changes to this policy.

Approved by the Library JPA Governing Board on September 16, 2024



To: JPA Operations Committee
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
Masha Kennedy, Development Manager
Date: September 3, 2025
Meeting: September 9, 2025
Re: Grant and Fundraising Report for FY 2024-25

Background

On February 6, 2006, the JPA Governing Board authorized the Library Director to approve the acceptance of grants as stated in Article II of the Bylaws for the Library Joint Powers Authority.

Article II states that the JPA shall "Authorize the submission of applications for federal, state, local, and private grants and approve acceptance of such grants as are received, and allow for the delegation of this responsibility to the Library Director" and "Accept contributions, or authorize the Library Director to accept contributions, of money or property to the Library system and make appropriations in accordance with any limitations imposed by the contributors on the appropriate distribution and use of such gifts, and the Library JPA budget."

An annual report is provided to the Library JPA Operations Committee and Governing Board summarizing grants awarded during the fiscal year.

Discussion

Grant opportunities present themselves throughout the year and range from small grants designed to support activities at one library to larger grants that support systemwide initiatives.

While we actively seek grant support for existing and approved major initiatives, as a matter of practice, the organization does not apply for grants that establish new programs that will require ongoing funding requirements.

During the period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, the Library JPA was awarded three grants:

- \$83,602 from California Library Literacy Services to support adult and family literacy services across our communities. Adult literacy, which offers free one-on-one reading and writing tutoring, grew 26% over the previous year. 122 volunteers provided 4,135 hours of tutoring to 167 adult learners across 11 libraries and online. Family literacy funding supported nine events that engaged 460 participants.

- \$80,414 from Library Services and Technology Act Sustainable California Libraries grant. In partnership with Canopy, a local urban forestry nonprofit, we offered 17 bilingual programs focused on environmental, climate, and food justice, engaging 485 participants. Activities included listening sessions, nature and wellness walks, hands-on workshops on tree planting and care, and speaker events on climate justice, held at our East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, Millbrae, Atherton, and Portola Valley Libraries.
- \$72,869 from California State Library to support our Lunch at the Library programs in Brisbane, East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks. In addition to free summer meals, the program offered books to build home libraries, hands-on STEAM activities, enrichment programs, and seven educational field trips to places like Monterey Bay Aquarium and the California Academy of Sciences. We also expanded teen summer internships, providing leadership experience, food-handling certification, and opportunities to lead programs at their local libraries.

The total grant revenue awarded in FY 2024-25 was \$236,885.

As outlined in the Library JPA Agreement, the Governing Board is authorized to form and appropriately associate with one or more nonprofit organizations devoted to developing additional resources and funds to enhance operations and support San Mateo County Libraries. San Mateo County Libraries is fortunate to have support from our 10 Friends of the Library groups. In FY 2024-25, the Friends donated \$241,799 to support local programs and services and the launch of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program in San Mateo County.

The Foundation for San Mateo County Libraries was established to complement the work of the Friends and focus on supporting systemwide initiatives and capital projects. In FY 2024-25, the Foundation focused on supporting the Imagination Library and developing a fundraising strategy for raising funds in support of the new library in East Palo Alto.

In FY 2025-26, we will be collaborating with Friends and the Foundation to continue to support the globally recognized Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, makerspaces in Belmont, Foster City, and San Carlos and to focus on increased support for library projects in East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks and Pacifica.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with accepting this report.

Recommendation

Recommend JPA Operations Committee accept the Grant and Fundraising Report for FY 2024-25.



To: JPA Operations Committee
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
Carine Risley, Deputy Director
Date: September 3, 2025
Meeting: September 9, 2025
Re: Summer Learning Report

Background

San Mateo County Libraries' summer enrichment approach provides essential opportunities for youth to create and thrive. We know how important learning enthusiasm and quality out-of-school-time experiences are to achieve necessary changes in third grade reading proficiency and summer learning losses. 45% of third graders in San Mateo County are not reading at grade level and the average child loses about 2 months of learning over the summer.

Our library summer initiatives have focused on increasing opportunity, empowering young learners, and helping youth return to the academic year more inspired and prepared to learn than they were before.

Discussion

We have two key approaches to summer: an enrolled summer camp at partner school sites and open experiences offered all summer long at all libraries and out in our communities.

Inspiring Summers Camp

This year we celebrated our 10th anniversary of The Big Lift Inspiring Summers, our full-day summer program for rising kindergarteners to third graders at eight school sites in returning school districts: Cabrillo Unified School District, La Honda Pescadero Unified School District, San Bruno Park School District and South San Francisco Unified School District, as well as



three new school districts that serve children in our service area: Bayshore Elementary School District, Millbrae Elementary School District and Pacifica School District.

928 youth participated in our 4 and 5-week programs infused with critical academic literacy instruction with certified teachers as well as hands-on, child-directed STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) and mindfulness activities.

The Big Lift is a collective impact effort led by San Mateo County funded by Measure K to support some of our youngest community members to read by third grade. This year, our district partners used children's school year reading scores from newly required evidence-based assessments to prioritize Inspiring Summers enrollment. Also new this year—summer testing was eliminated to increase program time. Instead, school year literacy testing data will be used to measure growth for children participating in Inspiring Summers.



Enriching summer experiences on and off-campus continue to be an Inspiring Summers highlight. Our library MakerMobile visits ensured hands-on maker exploration. Library field trip destinations allowed kids opportunities to check out books with their library cards and become more comfortable accessing different activities at the library.

Additional excursions included visits to San Mateo County Parks and CuriOdyssey Science Museum. Family engagement peaked during a Pescadero Elementary School outing, with over 20% of participating youth bringing a family member to

explore child-directed science exhibits, learn about native animals, and create lifelong memories together.

"My daughter has grown immensely independent and confident this summer. She has had a great time, and we appreciate all the fun activities and field trips. Thank you!" –Pescadero parent

"She is happy to be surrounded by peers, learning to navigate a new environment with new people and embracing changes with ease and excitement." – Millbrae parent

- 93% of Inspiring Summers families said they found more joy for learning and exploring during the program.
- 98% of families said they felt valued as a partner in their child's program experience.



Summer Adventure

Our choose-your-own-adventure program encourages youth to keep learning in fun and engaging ways. 142 exciting drop-in experiences featured bugs and reptiles, bilingual music, yoga and dance, magic, giant bubbles, and cave exploration.



This year, we made over 150 visits to local schools to spread the word and get kids excited about participating. Participants are asked to complete at least five reading and learning activities to be entered to win amazing prizes.

Along with tickets to San Francisco Giants Games and passes to CuriOdyssey, one youth in each city won the grand prize \$1000 college scholarship to help them fulfil their future educational goals.

Over 44,000 books were distributed to kids and families to help kickstart their reading over the Summer Adventure and to build home libraries.

Finally, our Lunch at the Libraries program provides additional resources for families relying on library lunches while school is out of session and

"It was really fun doing the activities and being active this summer!" -North Fair Oaks teen

"I did the summer adventure with my kids, and we enjoyed it. It really challenged us to read every day and to keep learning throughout the summer." -Foster City parent

"Thank you for encouraging different activities and getting us out to explore! We had so much fun and looking forward to continuing adventures and visiting all the libraries in our community!" -Brisbane family



Workforce Development

We promote workforce development through our annual summer internship opportunities. This year 22 local high school students made a difference by supporting library programs and engaging youth in our libraries and out in our communities. We also hired 122 Inspiring Summers interns, mostly college aged, to lead research informed STEAM activities developed by San Mateo County Libraries and the Center for Childhood Creativity. Facilitators received robust professional development including training in healthy boundaries with CORA (Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse) to model and build skills to develop and recognize healthy relationships.



"I love giving back to my community and being able to be involved all summer. This internship has provided me with great work experience and the opportunity to connect with my community more deeply. Thank you so much." –Summer Intern

"Inspiring Summers came at such an important time for the Pacifica community. The program provided a joyful, welcoming space where students and families could build new relationships and feel a sense of belonging. Several families shared heartwarming

sentiments about how much their child(ren) grew as a reader through Inspiring Summers. Some were initially hesitant—worried that we wouldn't be able to meet their child's needs or that their kids wouldn't want to attend. But by the end, those same children were saying they wished school could be like this all the time." - Kate Snyder, Pacifica's Big Lift Literacy Lead

- 98% of Inspiring Summers staff said the support they received from program leaders helped enhance their instruction.
- 98% of Inspiring Summers staff said that they established caring and consistent relationships with youth in the program.

Conclusion

Whether in our enrolled program or dropping into opportunities offered at our libraries, we offered a variety of experiences to expand horizons and expose youth to new opportunities.

Our summer programs are designed to spark excitement and learning, ensuring children in San Mateo County grow and thrive through unforgettable summer experiences. These efforts are essential to prevent summer learning loss and increase access to enriching summer opportunities for all youth. This summer, children and their families engaged in valuable learning adventures inside and outside of our library spaces; met new people, explored new places, learned new literacy skills and built strong family and community bonds.



Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with accepting this report.

Recommendation

Recommend JPA Operations Committee accept the Summer Learning Report.



To: JPA Operations Committee

From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
Danae Ramirez, Deputy Director

Date: September 3, 2025

Meeting: September 9, 2025

Re: Atherton Library Children's Garden Project

Background

The Atherton Library, completed in June 2022, is a thoughtfully designed example of modern civic architecture — a warm, light-filled single-story space that has quickly become a cherished hub for the community. The library is widely praised for its architectural beauty, environmental sustainability, and inclusive and innovative programming.

The 9,601 square foot library building, adjacent 625 square foot Heritage Room, outdoor areas, and surrounding land are owned and maintained by the Town of Atherton and operated by San Mateo County Libraries under the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Agreement.

During the planning phase for the new library, community members expressed interest in a children's garden that would echo the charm and function of the children's garden at the former library. While the idea was well-received, it was ultimately not included in the original construction plans due to budget and timing constraints.

We are pleased to share that the vision for a Library Children's Garden has been revisited. Design plans have been developed and approved by the Town Council. First approved as a project in FY 2024-25, and in alignment with our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan goal to enhance and update facilities to create inviting and flexible spaces, the Children's Garden is now actively progressing, with completion anticipated in Spring 2026. This report provides an update on the project, including a summary of key activities and an estimated timeline for completion.

Discussion

San Mateo County Libraries contracted with Miller Company Landscape Architects (Miller) to conduct a community engagement process, evaluate potential garden sites, and develop a final design and cost model for approval. The goal of the project is to

create a developmentally appropriate outdoor learning environment where children and their families can connect with and explore nature through open-ended play.

The garden design was developed following a community engagement process that included early input from the Atherton community, library neighbors and the Friends of the Atherton Library. In addition to a series of public workshops, input was gathered onsite by displaying the design presentation boards in the library, allowing community members who could not attend the meetings to view the concepts and leave comments.

Beyond the public engagement activities, the project team also coordinated directly with the Friends of the Atherton Library and adjacent property owners to review feedback and discuss design ideas. Based on this collaborative process, Miller created conceptual designs that reflect the input and priorities of key stakeholders, including the community, neighbors, Friends, staff and Town.

The final design for the reimagined 6,500 square foot Children's Garden places it just outside the existing makerspace deck. Thoughtfully integrated with the site's mature redwood trees, the garden will feature a whimsical willow hut, boulder mound, natural branch tunnel, and an accessible tree house structure that will invite social interaction and imaginative play. Visitors will be able to explore the garden along an accessible engineered wood fiber pathway system that connects each of these playful elements. Native plantings will be woven throughout the space, enhancing the natural beauty and ecological value of the garden.

On February 19, 2025, the Atherton Town Council reviewed the project design and layout. Since then, the Planning Commission has approved the plan and permits. The project is currently in the bidding phase with three bids submitted. Approval of the construction contract will be presented to the Town Council on September 17, 2025.

As the facility owner, the Town will oversee construction of this Atherton Library Children's Garden. Funds to support this project are allocated through the Library JPA as part of the Library Restricted Excess Funds. The preliminary cost estimate completed in November 2024 was \$415,000 for construction (market dependent) and \$60,000 for Town-contracted construction management and inspection services. Actual prices will be determined based on contractor bids obtained through a competitive process.

In coordination with Town of Atherton staff, a project construction plan and timeline are currently being established. During construction, the Makerspace deck will not be available for use. Despite the temporary closure, the Makerspace will remain open with active programming. Any programs that are held on the Makerspace deck will be moved to temporary locations at the Town Center or Holbrook Palmer Park.

We look forward to opening and celebrating the new Atherton Children's Garden this spring.

Fiscal Impact

Staff recommends approval of \$600,000 to support the estimated project cost, as reflected in the Final FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget and Proposed Uses of Restricted Library Funds, included in this agenda.

Recommendation

Recommend Operations Committee acceptance of the Atherton Library Children's Garden Project.

Attachment

[Atherton Town Council Report](#), Provide Feedback and Direction Regarding the Atherton Library Children's Garden Project, February 19, 2025, [ATT 1 - Atherton Library Children's Garden Layout and Images](#)



Item No. 7 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT - REGULAR AGENDA

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER**

FROM: ROBERT OVADIA, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2025

**SUBJECT: PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND DIRECTION REGARDING THE
ATHERTON LIBRARY CHILDREN'S GARDEN PROJECT**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council provide feedback and direction to staff regarding the Atherton Library Children's Garden design and the potential for the Town to provide assistance through construction including management and oversight of the bidding process and construction management and inspection services for the project.

BACKGROUND

The Town and the San Mateo County Libraries (SMCL) Governing Board approved the use of restricted library funds for an Atherton Library Children's Garden and project management in 2024. SMCL contracted with Miller Company Landscape Architects (Miller) to reimagine the space behind the Atherton Library to provide a developmentally appropriate outdoor learning environment for young children and their families to connect with and explore nature through open-ended play.

The garden design was developed after a community engagement process, which included input from the Atherton community and the Friends of the Atherton Library. Input was gathered by holding a series of public workshops and collecting comments on-site by leaving the design presentation boards up in the library so that people who weren't present at the community meetings could leave feedback.

In addition to the public workshops and feedback, SMCL coordinated with the Friends of the Atherton Library (Friends) and adjacent property owners regarding the input received and improvement concepts and ideas. Through this engagement process, Miller developed conceptual designs that incorporated the feedback and input from the Friends, neighbors, and community stakeholders.

ANALYSIS

The reimagined 6,500 square foot garden will complement the existing mature redwood trees, incorporating a whimsical willow hut, boulder mound, natural branch tunnel, and an accessible tree house structure that will invite social interaction and imaginative play. The design provides for full accessibility throughout. A new ramp with handrails connects the existing northwest paved pathway to the existing deck area. New paving will provide an extended area adjacent to the library staff room and replace the existing decomposed granite paving that is currently degrading the building's siding. Community members will navigate through the ground level garden area on an accessible engineered wood fiber pathway system that connects the various elements. The garden will have native plantings throughout, adapted to grow in the context of the existing Redwood trees and be placed away from existing Oak trees. All new plants will be irrigated with a drip system.

The design is approximately 90% complete and prior to finalization, SMCL is seeking Council feedback on the project design and layout. Following Council feedback, the design team will prepare plans for submittal to Planning for review and for any variances (fence height, structure location [setbacks from property lines and existing buildings], height, etc.) that may be required for project approval, then to the Building Department for any required building permits. The design team and SMCL are finalizing some details regarding operational aspects, including hours, security (with PD), and fence height and access type from the Ashfield Road side of the garden.

Under the Library JPA Agreement, San Mateo County Libraries is responsible for library operations including staffing, services and programs, collections, furniture, fixtures and equipment, etc. Member cities are responsible for maintenance and repair, which includes utilities, janitorial, facility improvement costs including capital projects, etc. Library restricted funds may be used for these items.

The preliminary construction cost estimate for the project is approximately \$415,000, not including contingencies, construction management and inspection services. Actual prices will be determined based on contractor bids obtained through a competitive process. Funds for the project are allocated through the Library JPA as part of the restricted funds approval process.

SMCL is seeking Town support to assist in bidding the project and for construction management and inspection (CM&I) services. Staff solicited a proposal from Interwest Consulting Group for CM&I services for the project. The estimated cost of CM&I services is approximately \$60,000. Restricted funds would support these services.

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time, however, next steps would incur additional costs.

Project construction costs, including CM&I would be funded through SMCL library restricted funds as noted above – approximately \$415k for construction (market dependent) and \$60k for construction management and inspection.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

This Report and its contents are in alignment with the following Council Policy Goals:

- Goal Area B – Preserve Small Town Character and Quality of Life
- Goal Area C – Create and Expand the Town Center/Library
- Goal Area F – Be Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, and Well-Planned

POLICY ISSUES

The policy focus for this item is regarding Council direction regarding the proposed children's garden at the Atherton Library and Town assistance in implementation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the item is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL

This item ____ has or X has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- ____ Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- ____ Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- ____ Civic Center Advisory Committee (meets as needed)
- ____ Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- ____ Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- ____ Planning Commission (meets each month)
- ____ Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- ____ Transportation Committee (meets every other month)

ATTACHMENT

- Attachment 1 – Project Layout and images
- Attachment 2 – Construction cost estimate

ATHERTON LIBRARY

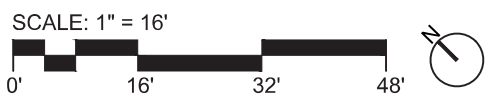
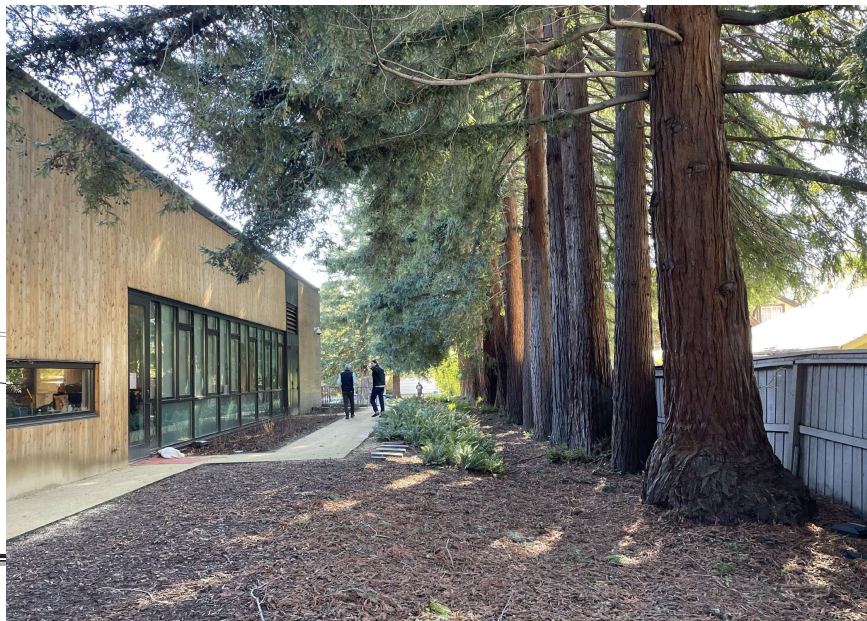
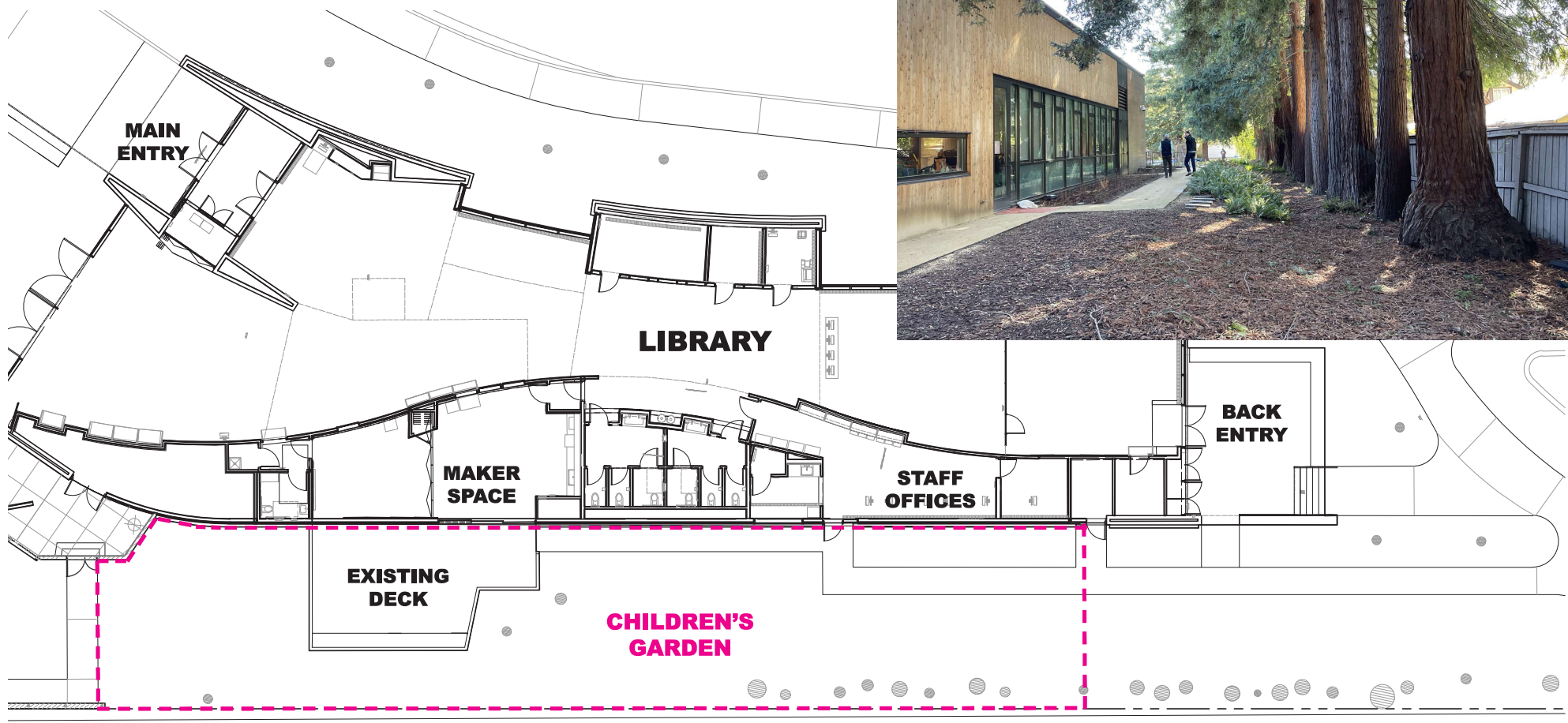
CHILDREN'S GARDEN



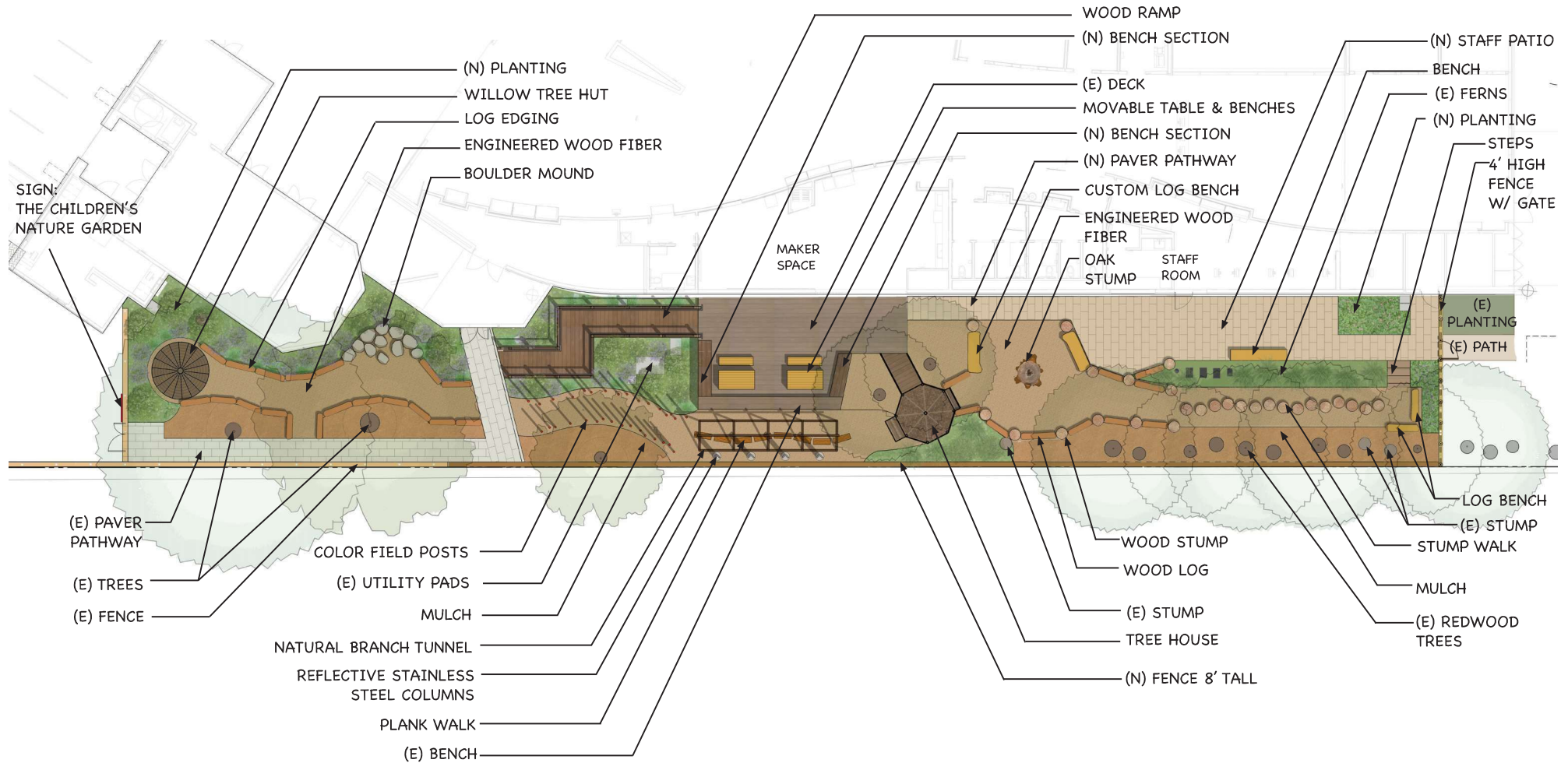
02.04.2025

MILLER COMPANY
landscape architects

CHILDREN'S GARDEN SITE MAP



CHILDREN'S GARDEN DESIGN - ILLUSTRATED PLAN



CHILDREN'S GARDEN - STRUCTURES



WILLOW HUT



TREE HOUSE

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - BOULDERS



BOULDER MOUND

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - STRUCTURES

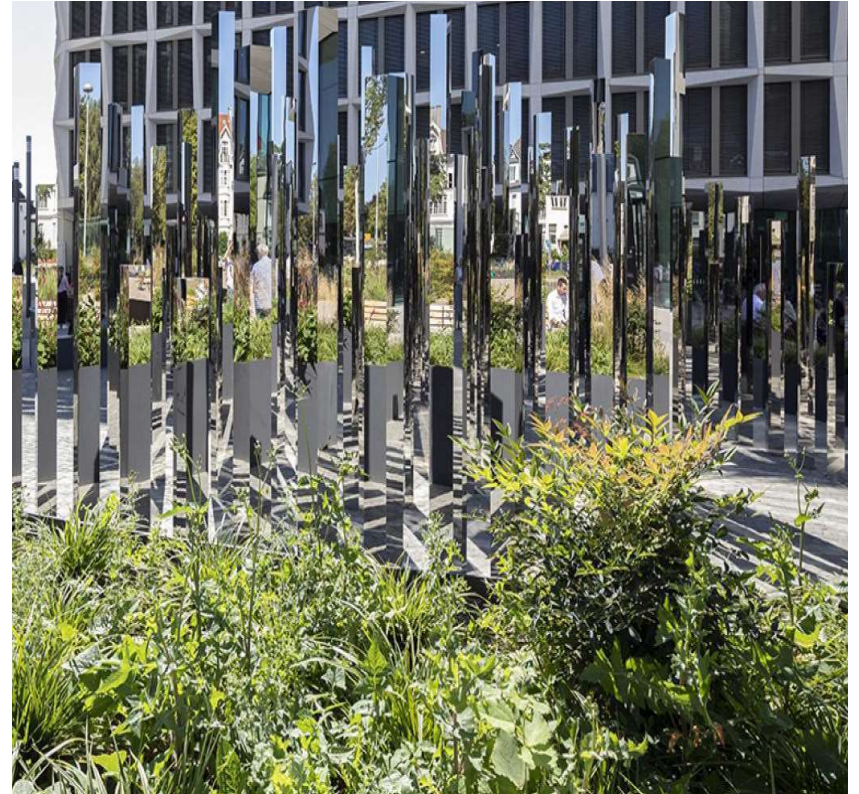


NATURAL BRANCH TUNNELS

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - COLUMNS



COLOR FIELD POLES

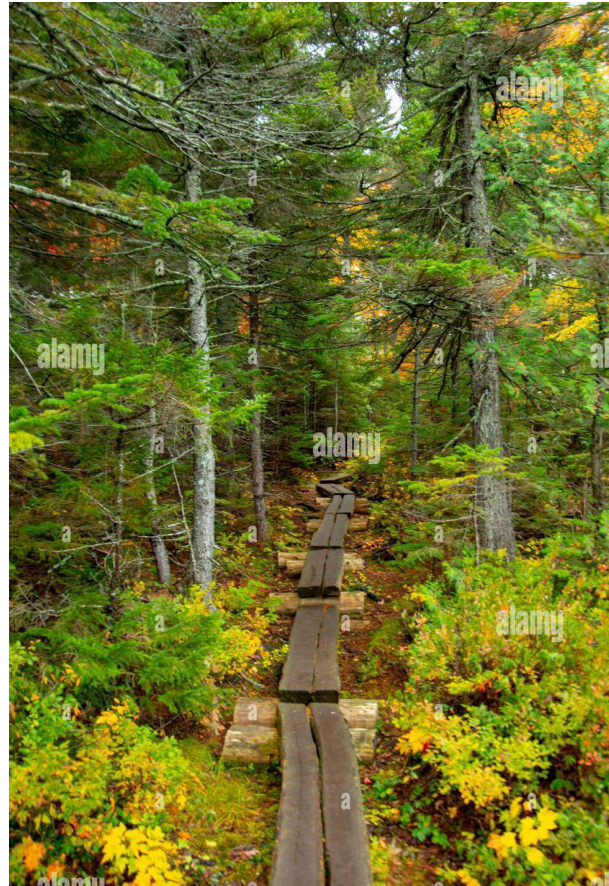


REFLECTIVE STAINLESS STEEL COLUMNS

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - WALKWAY



STUMP WALK



PLANK WALK



BOULDER WALK

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - SEATS



CUSTOM LOG BENCH



LOG BENCH

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - FENCES



8 FEET TALL FENCE



4 FEET TALL FENCE

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - WOOD MATERIALS FOR REUSE



OAK BRANCHES



COAST LIVE OAK STUMP

*** MATERIALS SALVAGED FROM COAST LIVE OAK IN ATHERTON CITY HALL PLAZA

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - PERSPECTIVE IMAGES



CHILDREN'S GARDEN - PERSPECTIVE IMAGES



BOULDER PLAY

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - PERSPECTIVE IMAGES




TUNNEL VIEW

CHILDREN'S GARDEN - PERSPECTIVE IMAGES



TREE HOUSE VIEW



To: JPA Operations Committee
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services 
Paniz Amirasiri, Interim Director of Finance and Performance
Date: September 3, 2025
Meeting: September 9, 2025
Re: Approval of the Final FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget

Background

The San Mateo County Library JPA Budget serves as the annual financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications tool. On June 10, 2025, the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget was approved by the JPA Governing Board.

The table below outlines activities associated with the budget process:

Budget Process Key Dates	
December	Budget Development Begins
February	Mid-Year Report is Submitted to the Library JPA Governing Board
May	Recommended Budget is Submitted to the Library JPA Governing Board
June	Recommended Budget is Approved by the Library JPA Governing Board
September	Final Adopted Budget is Approved by the Library JPA Governing Board
September	Final Adopted Budget is Approved by the County Board of Supervisors

The proposed FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget includes final adjustments to distribute resources and support our key priorities this year, which are to:

- Implement our new strategic plan and respond to the priorities identified through community and stakeholder outreach and engagement efforts.
- Reach more community members through intentional outreach and marketing efforts.
- Prioritize cultural programming in our libraries to ensure everyone feels welcome and represented in our spaces.
- Elevate adult and youth literacy efforts and develop responsive programs to empower and cultivate a community of learners.

- Establish new and deepen existing community partnerships to expand and enhance supportive services.
- Increase access to technology and hands-on learning to advance digital literacy.
- Create and update libraries to include vibrant, welcoming spaces that inspire creativity, collaboration, and exploration.
- Develop and implement performance metrics and system targets to track progress and inform ongoing improvements.
- Support the well-being and growth of our library champions and amplify their talents.

Discussion

The FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget approved by the JPA Governing Board on June 10 and implemented on July 1 totaled \$92,163,562. Based on fiscal year-end closing activities and updated information, the proposed FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget now totals \$99,071,733. Below are the most significant changes in FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget:

Sources:

- Fund Balance (\$45,985,022 to \$52,893,193): Fund Balance reflects the carry forward of reserves, unanticipated revenues, and unspent appropriations at the close of the fiscal year. After year-end close, Fund Balance is increased by \$6,908,171. The increase is partly due to revenues exceeding budgeted amounts, including Excess ERAF, Interest Earned, and repayment of an advancement of funds from the Town of Atherton. Unspent appropriations attributable to project delays and staffing vacancies also contributed to additional Fund Balance.

Requirements

- Salaries and Benefits (\$29,500,704 to \$29,620,070): There is an increase of \$119,366 due to health benefits cost increases and the reclassification of two vacant positions to better support operational needs.
- Services and Supplies (\$19,414,090 to \$19,626,317): There is an increase of \$212,227 primarily due to budgeting rollover of unspent Friends and other donation funds from prior years.
- Other Charges (\$4,007,356 to \$5,358,335): There is an increase of \$1,350,979 due to added funds for the Foster City Makerspace and the Atherton Children's Garden as well as minimal increases to County service charges.

- Fixed Assets (\$1,306,205 to \$1,666,205): There is an increase of \$360,000 due to added funds for the purchase of nine outreach vehicles to expand services to our communities.
- Reserves (\$37,893,143 to \$42,758,763): There is an increase of \$4,865,620 which represents the additional rollover from FY 2024-25 Fund Balance that is not allocated to one-time expenditures. Operating Reserves total \$5,874,774 and meet the JPA Fund Balance policy of setting aside 15% of Net Appropriations, net one-time expenditures. Capital Reserves total \$36,883,989. Capital Reserves are assigned to anticipated projects that are financially significant. Currently, \$16.2 million are assigned, including \$7 million for furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) for future new libraries in East Palo Alto (\$2.5 million), North Fair Oaks (\$1.5 million), and Pacifica (\$3 million). Future refinement of these assignments may occur to ensure sound fiscal management and responsiveness to evolving service needs.

Key projects for FY 2025-26 include procuring a new bookmobile, adding a children's garden at Atherton, creating new makerspaces at the Foster City and San Carlos Libraries; purchasing assets to enhance outreach efforts; installing privacy pods in our libraries; exploring artificial intelligence service applications; establishing digital literacy hubs; and providing reading tutoring and homework help.

Staff appreciate the leadership and guidance provided by both the JPA Operations Committee and Governing Board in pursuing high quality, innovative library services and look forward to implementing the activities funded in the FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget.

Fiscal Impact

The proposed Adopted Budget for FY 2025-26 is balanced and totals \$99,071,733. Changes from the Recommended Budget approved in June to the proposed Adopted Budget are described above and in the attached FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget Summary.

Recommendation

Recommend JPA Operations Committee approve the Final FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget.

Attachment


FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget Summary

San Mateo County Libraries

FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget Summary

		FY 2024-25 Actuals	FY 2025-26 Recommended	FY 2025-26 Adjustments	FY 2025-26 Adopted
<u>Sources</u>					
1000	Taxes	46,569,018	44,707,104	-	44,707,104
1500	Use of Money and Property	1,980,400	371,216	-	371,216
1600	Intergovernmental Revenues	1,999,121	778,842	-	778,842
2000	Charges for Services	10,498	-	-	-
2500	Interfund Revenue	573,996	316,378	-	316,378
2600	Miscellaneous Revenue	184,430	5,000	-	5,000
	Total Revenue	51,317,463	46,178,540	-	46,178,540
3333	Fund Balance	47,309,462	45,985,022	6,908,171	52,893,193
	TOTAL SOURCES	98,626,925	92,163,562	6,908,171	99,071,733
<u>Requirements</u>					
4000	Salaries and Benefits	25,516,733	29,500,704	119,366	29,620,070
5000	Services and Supplies	16,886,876	19,414,090	212,227	19,626,317
6000	Other Charges	2,737,148	4,007,356	1,350,979	5,358,335
7000	Fixed Assets	592,975	1,306,205	360,000	1,666,205
7500	Other Financing Uses	0	42,064	(21)	42,043
	Gross Appropriations	45,733,732	54,270,419	2,042,551	56,312,970
8000	Intrafund Transfers	-	-	-	-
	Net Appropriations	45,733,732	54,270,419	2,042,551	56,312,970
8500	Operating Reserves	5,100,464	5,863,392	11,382	5,874,774
8700	Capital Reserves	47,792,729	32,029,751	4,854,238	36,883,989
	Total Reserves	52,893,193	37,893,143	4,865,620	42,758,763
	TOTAL REQUIREMENTS	98,626,925	92,163,562	6,908,171	99,071,733



To: JPA Operations Committee
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services 
Paniz Amirnasiri, Interim Director of Finance and Performance
Date: September 3, 2025
Meeting: September 9, 2025
Re: Proposed Uses of Restricted Library Funds

Background

Section VI. D. of the San Mateo County Library JPA (Library JPA) Agreement states the following:

- 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, for each fiscal year the Library service revenue allocated to libraries in each member city shall not be less than the estimated library property tax revenue attributable to property located in that city. Subject to paragraph 2, below, in the event that the allocated library service revenue for a member city exceeds the amount required to maintain the minimum library service for that member, such excess funds shall, after deduction of any activities approved by the Governing Board for library related expenditures within that city, be restricted and held by the JPA for library related activities within that member city including but are not limited to, facility maintenance, facility remodeling or expansion, increased service hours, or increased material and equipment purchases, as mutually agreed by the Library JPA and the city council of that member city.*
- 2. In the fiscal year following the completion and opening of the new Atherton Library, excess funds, after deduction of any activities approved by the Governing Board for library related expenditures within a member city, shall be split 50%-50% between the Library JPA and the member city to which those excess funds are attributable.*

In accordance with this provision and as approved by the Library JPA Governing Board, at the end of each fiscal year, Library property tax funds in excess of the amount required to operate a community library, are distributed and held by the Library JPA in separate trust funds.

Discussion

For FY 2024-25, amounts totaling \$3,355,778 were set aside in Library trust accounts: \$1,613,623 in the Atherton Library Trust Fund; \$878,175 in the San Carlos Library Trust Fund; and \$863,980 in the Woodside Library Trust Fund.

The 50:50 split first applied to excess funds identified at the end of FY 2022-23. Following the September 2024 recommendations made by the Library JPA Operations subcommittee on restricted funds, and Library JPA trust fund was established to hold the Library JPA portion of the 50:50 split. The balance in this trust as of June 30, 2025 is \$412,599.

Total restricted Library property taxes currently held in trust accounts by the Library JPA and members total \$15,547,091

FY 2025-26 Proposed Uses of Restricted Library Funds

Members that qualify and are interested in using restricted Library funds to support community library related activities in the current fiscal year must provide the proposed use of library funds to the Library JPA and obtain Governing Board approval.

Proposed uses of restricted Library JPA Funds in FY 2025-26 total \$2,664,152. Member proposals for discussion and approval include:

Atherton Library

Atherton Library Trust Funds as of June 30, 2025, total \$2,541,065 (\$260,160 held by the Town of Atherton and \$2,280,905 held by the Library).

The Town of Atherton proposes to utilize restricted Library JPA funds in an amount estimated at \$1,367,902 as detailed below:

Type/Category	Description	Proposed Use FY 2025-26
Building Maintenance	Building maintenance manager	18,852
Construction	Atherton Children's Play Garden construction	600,000
Contract Management	Contract management for building services	39,000
Custodial Services	Contract janitorial services	75,000
Facility Improvements	Aesthetic updates and pedestrian pathway, parking improvement, and solar carports/EV charging designs	375,000
Facility Maintenance	Maintenance, monitoring, repairs, vector control, locks, and landscaping	100,050
Utilities	Electricity and water	160,000
Total Proposed Expenditures		\$1,367,902

Foster City Library

Foster City Library Trust Funds as of June 30, 2025, total \$163,404. In addition, \$110,160 in excess funds are held by the Library JPA to support building a new makerspace.

The City of Foster City proposes to utilize restricted Library JPA funds in an amount estimated at \$30,000 as detailed below:

Type/Category	Description	Proposed Use FY 2025-26
Facility Maintenance	Remove old water fountain and install new filtered water fountain with bottle refill station and refrigeration	5,000
Facility Maintenance	Replace all emergency exit signs with (discontinued) metal halide bulbs with reflectorized LED exit signs	5,000
Facility Maintenance	Retrofit all lighting fixtures from fluorescent to LED	20,000
Total Proposed Expenditures		\$30,000

Portola Valley Library

Portola Valley Library Trust Funds as of June 30, 2025, total \$1,356,219 (\$14,313 held by the Town of Portola Valley and \$1,341,906 held by the Library JPA).

The Town of Portola Valley proposes to utilize restricted Library JPA funds in an amount estimated at \$75,000 as detailed below:

Type/Category	Description	Proposed Use FY 2025-26
Custodial Services	Janitorial services contract	15,000
Facility Maintenance	Annual maintenance and repairs	20,000
Overhead Allocation	Annual Town staff support	10,000
Utilities	Electric, gas, water, sewer	30,000
Total Proposed Expenditures		\$75,000

San Carlos Library

San Carlos Library Trust Funds as of June 30, 2025, total \$4,825,601 (\$1,926,142 held by the City of San Carlos and \$2,899,459 held by the Library JPA). The City of San Carlos proposes to utilize restricted Library JPA funds in an amount estimated at \$962,000.

As part of the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget an amount of \$800,000 for the San Carlos Makerspace was approved by the Governing Board in June, bringing the total amount of

restricted funds to \$1,762,000 as detailed below:

Type/Category	Description	Proposed Use FY 2025-26
Construction	San Carlos Makerspace	800,000
Facility Maintenance	Elevator Upgrades	300,000
Facility Maintenance	General Maintenance and Expenses	200,000
Facility Maintenance	Library Building Painting	300,000
Facility Maintenance	Library Front Entrance Sliding Door Replacement	36,000
Facility Maintenance	Library Parking Lot Striping	72,000
Facility Maintenance	Library Parking Lot Trellis Replacement	54,000
Total Proposed Expenditures		\$1,762,000

Woodside Library

Woodside Library Trust Funds as of June 30, 2025, total \$6,660,800, (-\$185,346 held by the Town of Woodside and \$6,846,146 held by the Library JPA).

The Town of Woodside proposes to utilize restricted Library JPA funds in an amount estimated at \$229,250 as detailed below:

Type/Category	Description	Proposed Use FY 2025-26
Contract Services	Janitorial services and landscaping	40,000
Facility Maintenance	Updates to the buildings and grounds	50,000
Overhead	Town staff support, insurance, and other	90,250
Utilities	Water, power, and sewer	49,000
Total Proposed Expenditures		\$229,250

Fiscal Impact

Proposed uses of restricted Library JPA Funds in FY 2025-26 total \$2,664,152. There are sufficient restricted Library JPA funds available to cover these requests.

Recommendation

Recommend JPA Operations Committee approve the proposed uses of restricted Library Funds in FY 2025-26.



To: JPA Operations Committee
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
Date: September 3, 2025
Meeting: September 9, 2025
Re: Director's Report

This report summarizes significant library operations and program activities that have occurred since the last meeting of the Operations Committee. Services and activities are aligned with our Strategic Plan Goals.

We listen to our community and create responsive services and spaces where everyone belongs

Makermobile Outreach

In FY 2024-25, our Makermobile rolled innovation and creativity into our communities with fun and engaging maker activities. Our focus this year included Coastside locations where residents aren't geographically close to a library, ensuring that everyone has access to our hands-on maker experiences. The Makermobile energized local elementary school arts and sciences days, engaging more than 75 students with our interactive maker carts and inspiring students to explore our library makerspaces. We also connected with farm-working families at a local food distribution event, partnered with the Boys & Girls Club to bring the Makermobile to summer camps, and joined California State Parks for the lively Coastal Wildflower Day.



Our inland adventures were equally exciting. The Makermobile starred at Library Night in China Basin Park, giving Giants fans a chance to try free-hand 3D printing with 3D pens. It made multiple stops at Big Lift Inspiring Summers enrichment camps, engaging more than 900 students in essential maker skills like tool handling and creative problem-solving. We joined the fun at Summer Fest at Coyote Point and brought playful engineering to the County's Disaster Preparedness Day.

Our Makermobile continues to showcase the library's ability to connect, inspire, and support our community. Looking ahead, we're excited to expand school visits, spark new partnerships, and keep fueling curiosity, creativity, and joy for all.

Belmont Library Reopening Celebration

On Saturday, August 23, we held a wonderful celebration to mark the completion of the Belmont Library Improvement Project with the community. Following a few months of closure, the library reopened in July, receiving enthusiastic praise from the public for the beautiful interior and exterior enhancements.

The morning was made even more special by remarks from Belmont Mayor Julia Mates, joined by all City Council members, as well as a presentation from Friends of the Belmont Library President Pat Barkett, who awarded a generous \$125,000 contribution toward the project. Once the ribbon was cut, a traditional Chinese lion dance blessed the doors to welcome this new beginning—inviting happiness, good fortune and positive energy.



With its fresh, updated look and new Makerspace, patrons were delighted to celebrate their beloved community space, while enjoying a day filled with engaging programming including a live jazz performance, henna painting, a traditional Aztec dance and maker activities for all ages.

We sincerely thank our partners, the City of Belmont and the Friends of the Belmont Library, for their invaluable support in revitalizing this beautiful library and fostering a vibrant community hub. The celebration was a wonderful success!

Foster City Makerspace Update

San Mateo County Libraries is pleased to share that progress continues on the Foster City Makerspace project, a dedicated new space inspired by community input and guided by our Makerspace Master Plan. The Makerspace will be created by converting an existing 660-square-foot teen room into a flexible, technology-rich environment. Designed to welcome learners of all ages, this innovative space will spark creativity and support learning through access to both traditional and emerging technologies. Library staff recently met with Foster City staff and architect Brad Cox to revisit the design, update the cost estimate, and define next steps to move the project forward for final plan review and permitting. Once approved, the City will begin the bidding phase in early 2026. The Foster City Makerspace will help nurture curiosity, and expand educational opportunities, and empower our communities to design, create and collaborate together.

East Palo Alto New Library Update

The City of East Palo Alto has approved a new direction for the community's long-planned new library. Originally envisioned as a standalone 24,000-square-foot facility adjacent to the EPACenter, the library will now be a cornerstone of the City's Civic Commons project at 2535 Pulgas Avenue. This centralized, four-story, 102,478 square-foot civic building will include a new library, community space, City Hall, and office space, alongside a new police station and public parkland. The library's anticipated design includes 24,000 square feet of dedicated space on the first and second floors, an outdoor children's area, and shared spaces that enhance access to civic and community resources.

On July 29, 2025, the City Council approved moving forward with this integrated vision, streamlining public services, expanding library capacity, and creating a vibrant civic hub to serve East Palo Alto for decades to come.

- [July 29, 2025 City Council Meeting, Agenda Item 15.1, The New Civic Commons](#)
- [Despite looming deficit, East Palo Alto eyes new civic building](#), Palo Alto Online, June 20, 2025
- [Jobs' widow offers land for new city hall; she has property she wants to develop](#), Palo Alto Daily Post, July 28, 2025
- [A once in a lifetime opportunity': East Palo Alto advances plan for new civic center](#), the Almanac, July 30, 2025
- [Consortium of Private Funders' Land Offer Sparks Hope and Questions in East Palo Alto](#), California City News, August 5, 2025

Technology Enhancements and Resilience

Our IT team has been hard at work making some improvements to keep our libraries running reliably. Behind the scenes, we've improved our network by upgrading switches, servers, and Wi-Fi access points—so things run faster and more smoothly. We also updated all library computers (for staff and visitors) to Windows 11, offering improved performance and stronger security. In addition, we have deployed emergency power equipment to all library locations, strengthening our ability to maintain critical service delivery during power outages. This new system helps us keep essential services running even if the power goes out, so patrons can still count on the library during unexpected power events.

We connect people and build partnerships to achieve shared goals

San Mateo County Pride

In June, we participated in the County Pride celebration at Central Park in San Mateo, joining neighboring Redwood City Public Library and San Mateo Public Library in activating the outreach space. Isaac Fellman, a Bay Area author we brought in for the event, enthralled participants with the craft and inspiration behind his futuristic novel *Notes from a Regicide*, a trans family saga about believing in yourself to achieve the impossible. We introduced over 425 event attendees to library services, successfully registered fifteen people for new library cards, and distributed 200 celebratory books with pride representation and themes to excited and grateful families, teens, and adults.

Immigration Workshop Series

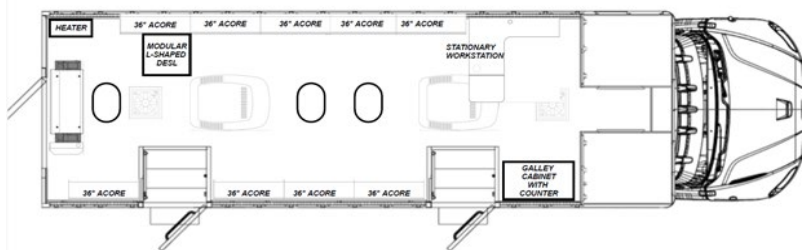
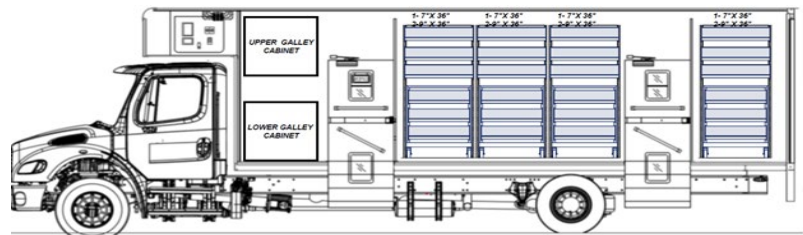
On July 25th, we hosted our third immigration workshop of 2025 at East Palo Alto Library. Over 40 community members attended, seeking legal support and guidance from an immigration attorney. Through this event, we were able to provide critical assistance on a range of immigration matters, including citizenship, U-visas, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and general consultations. This workshop is a continuation of our successful partnership with the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), as part of a broader effort that included events in Half Moon Bay and Millbrae. Together, these workshops have supported a total of 70 individuals, with 10 successfully submitting their U.S. citizenship applications as a result of this collaboration. We were also pleased to welcome the Mexican Consulate to the East Palo Alto event, where they hosted an informational table and engaged with attendees while they waited for their consultations.

We engage our communities through meaningful outreach and expanded access to resources

Bookmobile Update

Our new hybrid bookmobile combines accessibility, technology, and modern design to deliver library resources directly to our communities. The purchase of a new bookmobile to replace our aging vehicle was approved by the JPA Governing Board on February 3, 2025.

The hybrid bookmobile will be a Freightliner M2 with a 22-foot body, which allows for a well-equipped mobile library. Notable features include comfortable bench seating for interactive reading sessions and modular workstations that adapt to the diverse needs of patrons. The interior is climate-controlled, ensuring a pleasant experience in any weather. It's equipped with a versatile hybrid driveline, enabling efficient travel between communities while being environmentally conscious. To enhance the visitor experience, windows and LED lighting will warmly illuminate the space, making it conducive for all activities. Accessibility is a key focus; the bookmobile includes an ADA-compliant wheelchair lift to ensure that all community members can easily access its offerings.



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Our new vehicle is currently queued for production at Freightliner. Construction of the chassis is scheduled to begin in October with a build time of approximately four weeks. Once finished, the truck will be shipped for the installation of the hybrid system. By the end of the year, it will be sent for installation of the truck's body. In early 2026, the truck will arrive at TechOps for its full library customization and is expected to be delivered to San Mateo County Libraries in June 2026.

We champion a culture of continuous growth and discovery for all



Bestselling Author Janelle Brown

On Saturday June 7th at Atherton Library, we shared an unforgettable community experience with [Janelle Brown](#), Atherton native and the acclaimed author behind multiple national bestsellers. Brown engaged an audience of 104 attendees with a thrilling discussion of her latest page-turner, [What Kind of Paradise](#), followed by light refreshments and a book signing. San Mateo County Libraries distributed 300 giveaway copies of [What Kind of Paradise](#) across all libraries, with 100 of the copies reserved for author talk attendees. Brown touched on themes of her book that revolve around Silicon Valley, the tech world, and the rise of artificial intelligence. It was a special opportunity to celebrate a captivating storyteller in her hometown, reunite her with former community, and provide fans the chance to meet and ask Brown questions about her writing process.

Jennifer and Matthew Holm Author Visit

Best-selling authors [Jennifer L. Holm](#) and [Matthew Holm](#) visited Foster City Library for an amazing author talk, live drawing session, and Q&A for their newest novel, "[Sunny Figures It Out](#)." The sibling team are the authors of several beloved children's graphic novel series such as "[Babymouse](#)" and "[Squish](#)."



A crowd of 101 excited kids and families heard firsthand how they bring their stories to life before meeting the duo for a book signing and photos. In total, we provided the community with 150 copies of the book to keep. Jennifer Holm previously lived in Foster City and shared fond memories of bringing her children to the library. We're thrilled to have welcomed her back for this inspiring and creativity-filled event.

Culinary Author Talk Spotlight

[Zareen's Pakistani Kitchen](#), by local Bay Area restaurateurs Zareen and Umair Khan, offers an engaging introduction to authentic Pakistani cuisine, drawing on the authors' upbringing in Karachi and the culinary traditions of their community. Umair Khan and his two children, Amara and Sahlik, joined us on Wednesday, August 13, at San Carlos Library to share their stories, traditions, and the spirit of gathering around food. The warm and engaging atmosphere captivated the audience of 180 attendees from start to finish, concluding with a keepsake copy of the cookbook.

Summer Trending Titles

Readers of all ages took advantage of the summer season to engage in captivating stories, both online and in print. Adult readers soaked up the sun and stories using our digital collections to explore themes of love, resilience, and self-discovery. From beach-read

romances like [Great Big Beautiful Life](#), [The Wedding People](#), and [Funny Story](#), to learning how to make positive impacts in your life with [The Let Them Theory](#), adult readers devoured these titles on their phones, tablets, and e-readers.

Teen readers eagerly turned the pages of their most-loved YA fiction and manga series all summer long. Books that inspired television shows like [One Piece](#) and [The Summer I Turned Pretty](#), and soon to be a motion picture, [Sunrise on the Reaping](#), were big hits with young adult readers this summer.

Kids made a splash with their favorite graphic novel series on hoopla, diving into school drama and epic adventures with [The Baby-Sitters Club: Mallory and Trouble with Twins](#) and [Big Nate: Attack of the Cheez Funk Breath](#). Readers also delved into magical worlds with [The Dragonet Prophecy](#) and experienced fresh beginnings with [The New Girl](#).



Professional Development & Training

We continue to invest in the growth and development of our staff to advance innovation and service excellence. In fiscal year 2024-25, over 5,104 hours of training were completed in our Learning Management System, supporting continuous learning across the organization. Training themes included workplace safety, leadership and management, wellness and diversity and inclusion. Staff members also attended professional development conferences, bringing back new skills and insights to enhance our programs and operations. These opportunities reflect our strategic commitment to building a forward-thinking, well-equipped workforce that meets the evolving needs of our communities.

County-wide Employee Engagement Survey

At San Mateo County Libraries, we continue to build a workplace culture rooted in pride, purpose, and connection. This year's county-wide employee engagement survey revealed strong improvements in how our staff experience their work, supervisors, and leadership. More than 230 staff members participated in the survey, sharing that 92% feel proud to work here, 89% value the relationships they have with their teams and supervisors, and

87% believe in the quality of service we provide to our communities. Participation in the survey rose by over 50%, earning recognition from the County Engagement Committee as having one of the most improved year-over-year response rates County-wide. The survey also pointed to opportunities to further strengthen career growth and professional development. These results reflect our ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive, responsive, and high-performing workplace.

Celebrating Our LEAD Graduates

This February, we proudly launched a new cohort of our in-house leadership program LEAD (Leadership, Education, and Development), designed to nurture talent, strengthen succession planning, and empower staff to grow within our organization. Over the course of the program, participants engaged in monthly sessions covering essential leadership skills such as public speaking, emotional intelligence, and strategic thinking. Guided by seasoned leaders and enriched by diverse perspectives, the cohort developed the confidence, capabilities, and vision needed to take the next step in their careers.

We are thrilled to recognize the 2025 LEAD cohort for their achievements and dedication. Their growth reflects the spirit of innovation, collaboration, and service that drives San Mateo County Libraries forward, and we can't wait to see the positive impact they will continue to make in our communities.

Congratulations to Nancy Analco, North Fair Oaks Senior Librarian, Nick Hernandez, Atherton Librarian, Nicole Fernandez, Brisbane Librarian, Jenna Varden, Foster City Librarian, and Julia Wright, Pacifica Senior Librarian!

Employee Service Awards

Several employees are being honored by the County for reaching significant milestones in their years of service: Nineti Fanua, East Palo Alto Library Assistant (10 years), Lynne Fetter, Atherton Librarian (10 years), Susan Hoff, Millbrae Library Assistant (10 years) Rachael Hood, Portola Valley Library Assistant (10 years), Winnie Kuang-Todd, Accountant (20 years), Danae Ramirez, Deputy Director (10 years), Kelly Reinaker, Atherton Senior Librarian (10 years), and Amy Selmi, Foster City Senior Librarian (20 years).

Congratulations to these Library Champions for their many years of service and invaluable contributions to the San Mateo County Libraries!

Personnel News

We are excited to share the following personnel announcements:

Annie Malley, Half Moon Bay Library Manager, will be retiring at the end of October, after 20 years of service. Annie started her career at San Mateo County Libraries in 2005 as the Assistant Branch Manager at San Carlos and Brisbane Libraries before promoting to Library Manager of the Half Moon Bay Library. Annie's nearly 40-year career in libraries also included 18 years at the California Academy of Sciences.

Annie was instrumental in building broad community support for the new Half Moon Bay Library. Her tireless advocacy and ability to rally and inform the community were critical to the success of the project. Thanks to her leadership, the new library opened in 2018 and reflects the needs and dreams of the people it serves. Annie has a rare talent for bringing people together and is deeply valued by the community. With a keen understanding of the diversity across our coastal communities, she brings a deep and genuine commitment to reaching everyone.

Annie leads with heart. Her warmth, responsiveness, and thoughtfulness shine through in every interaction, whether she's cultivating new partnerships, responding to community needs, or celebrating the success of her team. Under her guidance, the Half Moon Bay Library has become a place where something special is always happening, innovative programs, meaningful volunteer opportunities, and a deeply engaged team that reflects the community it serves.

Julie Smith has accepted a transfer to the Half Moon Bay Library. Julie is currently the Manager of Pacifica Libraries and has been deeply involved in increasing outreach services while also serving as the library liaison to the Pacifica Library Advisory Council, focused on helping to gain support for building a new library. Prior to being promoted to Manager, Julie worked as a Senior Librarian at Half Moon Bay and Belmont Libraries. She also served as the Half Moon Bay Youth Services Librarian. Before joining SMCL, she was a Librarian at Ingrid B. Lacy Middle School, where she developed a passion for providing excellent library services to young people. Julie holds a master's in library science from San Jose State University, a Doctorate of Pharmacy from UC San Francisco, and a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from the University of Oregon.

Ismael Betancourt has accepted the position of Community Library Manager at the East Palo Alto Library. With 9 years at San Mateo County Libraries, Ismael has progressively taken on more responsibility as he has grown in his career. Ismael has held various positions including Community Technology Specialist at Belmont and Atherton, Librarian at Belmont Library and most recently Senior Librarian at Half Moon Bay Library. Ismael graduated from our Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) program in 2023. He holds a BA in Digital Media with a minor in Graphic Design and a master's in library science from San José State University. Ismael is bilingual in Spanish.

Jeff Gibson has accepted the position of Community Library Manager at the Millbrae Library. Jeff joins us from Pleasanton Library and Recreation Department, where he currently serves as a Senior Librarian, overseeing the digital resources and adult literacy divisions. His 14 years of public library experience also includes seven years with the Contra Costa County Library. Jeff holds a master's in library science from San José State University, a bachelor's in English from UC Santa Barbara, and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of San Francisco.

Francis Hébert has accepted a promotion to Library Services Manager, Access Services Division. Francis is currently the Community Library Manager at the San Carlos Library. Francis joined San Mateo County Libraries last year from Salinas Public Library where he served as the Technical Services Manager managing the library's physical and online

collections, and information technology services. Francis holds a master's in library science and bachelor's in philosophy from the University of Montreal and a Bachelor's in French Language and Literature from McGill University.

Rachel McDonnell has accepted a promotion to Library Services Manager, Facilities, Fleet and Projects Division. Rachel started as a Senior Library Assistant at the Portola Valley Library in 2007. She was promoted to Associate Management Analyst in Administration and has since served as a Management Analyst for over fifteen years, most recently as Project and Facilities Manager. Rachel holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Diplomacy and an MBA from Schiller International University in Paris, France.

Giselle Mendoza Leonardo has accepted a transfer to the position of Librarian at the Half Moon Bay Library. She previously served as a Librarian at the North Fair Oaks Library. Giselle holds a Bachelor's degree in sociology and Latin American and Latino studies from the UC, Santa Cruz and an MLIS from San José State University. She is bilingual in Spanish.

Angeles Ramirez has accepted the position of Librarian at the Half Moon Bay Library. Angeles joins us from TSA, where she worked as a Transportation Security Officer. Angeles holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from California State University, East Bay, East Bay and an MLIS from San José State University.

Grant Thompson has accepted the position of Librarian at the North Fair Oaks Library. Grant comes to us from the County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries, where he served as a Senior Library Associate – Branch Manager. Grant holds a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from San Diego State University and an MLIS from San José State University.

Leida Bocobo has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the Woodside Library. Leida previously worked as an Extra Help Library Assistant at the San Carlos Library.

Geoleen Noguera has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the Atherton Library. She previously worked as an Extra Help Library Assistant at the Foster City Library. Geoleen holds a bachelor's degree in global studies from California State University, East Bay.

Dulce Nuno has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the North Fair Oaks Library. She previously worked as an Extra Help Library Assistant at the East Palo Alto Library. Dulce is bilingual in Spanish and holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from California State University, East Bay.

Brenda Robles has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the North Fair Oaks Library. She previously worked as an Extra Help Library Assistant at the Pacifica Libraries. Brenda is bilingual in Spanish.

Best wishes to Annie on her retirement, and welcome and congratulations to all our Library Champions!

FY 2024-25 Invoices and Contracts Over \$50,000

The County's Open Data Portal (checkbook.smcgov.org) continues to provide an easily accessible view of library expenditures and activity data to both the public and policy makers and a list of invoices with a total amount of \$50,000 or more that were paid or executed between January 1, 2025 and June 30, 2025 is provided on the next page.

Vendor	Amount	Description
AMF Media	60,000	Literacy Marketing Campaign
AVI Systems	63,271	Library AV Equipment
Coupa	62,663	Procurement Software Annual Fee
CRI	55,843	Library Furniture Deposit
Dell	80,563	Annual Laptop Replacement
Dell	198,619	Annual PC Replacement
Kaseya	63,308	Windows Software Systems Management
Midwest Tape	360,000	Hoopla Digital Resources Annual Fee
Peninsula Library System	70,751	Wireless Access Upgrade
Ross McDonald Company	92,045	Library Shelving Deposit
TechOps	351,260	New Bookmobile Deposit

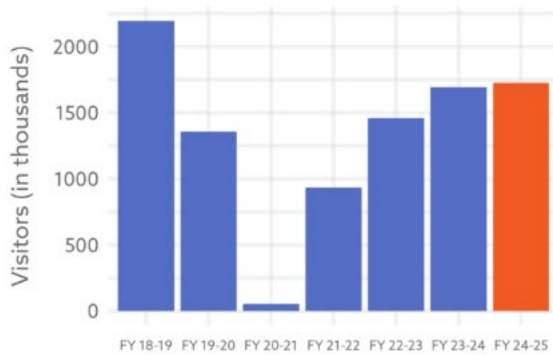
Libraries in the News

- [Summer Reading Challenges Aren't Just for Kids](#), New York Times, May 30, 2025
- [San Mateo Grant Funds go Toward Libraries](#), Daily Journal, June 12, 2025
- [Library Passes for State Parks Survive Budget](#), The Almanac, July 7, 2025
- [Parks & Rec & Libraries](#), Library Journal, July 7, 2025
- [An Unexpected Mays Museum](#), Daily Journal, July 10, 2025
- [Libraries Pay More for E-Books. Some States Want to Change That](#), New York Times, July 16, 2025
- [Public Libraries as our High Street Anchors](#), Lorensbergs, July 21, 2025
- [Why you should make the library a model for your business](#), Fast Company, August 5, 2025
- [Bay Area Libraries Have a New Strategy for Attracting Visitors](#), Mercury News, August 18, 2025
- [Maine Library of Things](#), New York Times, August 20, 2025
- [How Libraries Became 'First Responders' for America's Opportunity Gap](#), Carnegie Corporation of New York, August 21, 2025

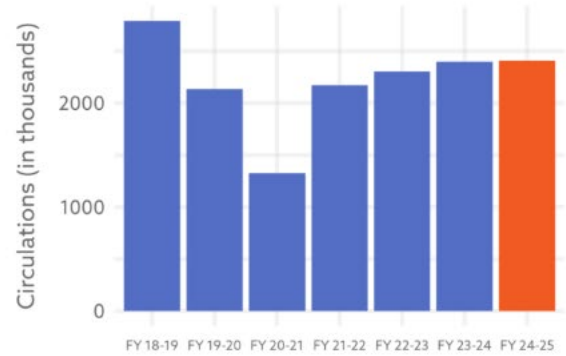
Annual Data Update for FY 2024-25

The following charts summarize full year systemwide totals for key library services from FY 2018-19 through FY 2024-25. Library visitors and physical item circulation are at parity with last year, program attendance and outreach engagement have increased slightly, and digital downloads continue to grow at a rapid pace.

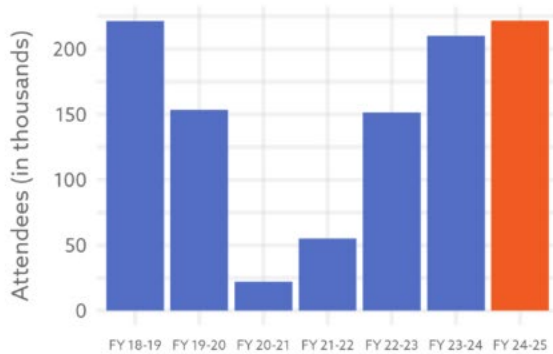
LIBRARY VISITORS



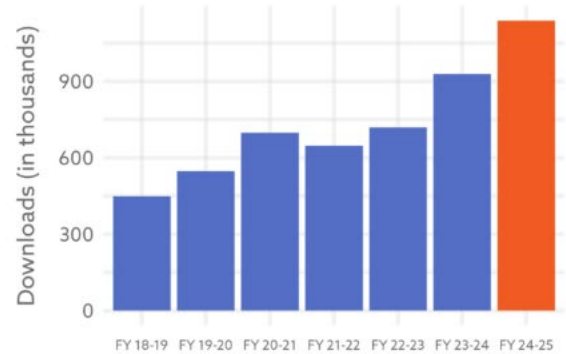
ITEMS CIRCULATED



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



DIGITAL DOWNLOADS



OUTREACH ENGAGEMENT

