



# San José Public Library

FACILITIES & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PLAN  
EXECUTIVE BRIEF



San José Public Library  
Foundation



# Letter from Matt Mahan Mayor, City of San José



Dear Community Members,

San José has always been a place where innovation and community come together to shape the future. From our agricultural beginnings in the Valley of Heart’s Delight to our role today as the Capital of Silicon Valley, our strength has always come from our people — and the institutions that help them succeed.

Libraries are central to that mission. Across our neighborhoods, they offer welcoming, accessible spaces where residents can learn, connect, and grow. Students rely on them as places to study and explore new ideas. Families depend on them for access to technology and educational resources. And community members use them to collaborate, build skills, and pursue new opportunities. From supporting entrepreneurship to advancing digital literacy and civic engagement, our libraries help ensure every resident can fully participate in our city’s economy and civic life. As San José continues to grow, we must make thoughtful, strategic investments in the spaces that serve our community. The Library’s Facilities and Customer Experience

Plan provides a clear, forward-looking roadmap to modernize and expand our library system over the next twenty years. Grounded in community input and careful analysis, this plan positions us to better serve a diverse and dynamic city of more than one million residents — while maximizing the long-term value of public investment. It also creates opportunities for flexible, adaptable spaces that can evolve alongside changes in technology, learning, and community needs. By investing in our libraries today, we are investing in the future of San José — strengthening the foundations of education, workforce readiness, and economic opportunity that will keep our city innovative, inclusive, and thriving for generations to come.

Thank you,

**Matt Mahan**  
Mayor, City of San José

# Letter from Jennifer Maguire City Manager, City of San José



Libraries are more than buildings - they are trusted public infrastructure that supports learning, workforce development, and digital access for all San José residents. With 25 neighborhood branches and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library serving more than one million people, the library system plays a critical role in supporting our city’s long-term economic vitality.

The Library’s Facilities and Customer Experience Plan reflects the City’s commitment to maintaining high-quality public services while planning responsibly for the future. Developed through extensive engagement with residents, community partners, and library staff, this plan establishes a strong framework to ensure library facilities remain responsive to its community needs. It identifies opportunities to modernize spaces, integrate new technology, and expand programming.

Libraries today support a wide range of services - from early learning and student success to workforce preparation, digital access, and learning programs for adults. They serve as hubs for collaboration, innovation, and civic engagement, helping residents build the skills and knowledge they

need to thrive. As San José continues to grow, ensuring that our library spaces can support these services requires thoughtful coordination, long-term planning, and careful stewardship of public resources.

At the City of San José, we approach this work through a shared commitment to One City, One Team. This plan reflects the collaboration of City departments, community partners, and library staff working together to deliver high-quality services and ensure that San José’s libraries continue to effectively serve residents for years to come.

I am grateful for the leadership of the Library team and the many partners whose contributions help ensure our libraries remain strong, responsive, and accessible community resources.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer Maguire**  
City Manager, City of San José

## Letter from Jill Bourne City Librarian, San José Public Library



San José Public Library is one of our city’s most powerful community anchors, cultivating connection, learning, and opportunity. Every day, our libraries provide welcoming spaces where residents discover new ideas, develop skills, access technology, and connect with one another. They are places where curiosity is encouraged, learning is lifelong, and community comes together.

As San José continues to grow, so will our libraries. The Library’s Facilities and Customer Experience Plan represents an important step in preparing our library system for the future. Over the past year, we engaged thousands of residents, local organizations, and City staff to understand how libraries are used today - and how they can continue to serve the needs of our city’s diverse population.

Through this process, we heard clearly that libraries are deeply valued community spaces. At the same time, our branch libraries face increasing demand for modern learning spaces, access to enhanced technology, and programming that reflects the wide range of

interests and needs in our community. This plan provides a long-term strategy to guide reinvestment across the library system, ensuring that every neighborhood benefits. By aligning facility improvements with the needs of our city and service priorities, the plan helps ensure that our libraries continue to inspire exploration, foster innovation, and strengthen community for generations to come.

Investing in our libraries is an investment in San José’s future. I am deeply grateful to the many residents and partners who helped shape this vision and who continue to support libraries as places of shared knowledge, creativity, and empowerment.

Sincerely,

**Jill Bourne**  
City Librarian, San José Public Library





# LIBRARY AS THE SOUL OF SAN JOSÉ

**As the Valley of Heart’s Delight has transformed into the Capitol of Silicon Valley, this Plan positions the Library as a steward of shared history and community expression, reinforcing belonging, civic pride, and the social fabric that underpins strong and equitable library outcomes.**

Throughout 2025, the San José Public Library (SJPL or Library) embarked on a complex 20-Year Facilities and Customer Experience Plan (Plan). Led by Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS), this highly collaborative co-creation process was customized to enhance the strengths of a nationally leading library system, while bringing the most innovative methodologies in the industry today. The process ensures that SJPL’s impactful work in the realms of social, cultural, educational, and digital equity is supported by best-in-class facilities and human-centered activation strategies that MSS has developed in collaboration with leading and peer libraries throughout the country.

Building on the future-forward capital improvement plan in 2000, which resulted in an expanded system with libraries distributed throughout San José, this Plan incorporates an inclusive design process to ensure that library facilities support SJPL’s evolved educational strategies, deepen the expansion of cultural, civic, and social services that the community relies upon, address the innovative aspirations the process elicited from community members, and honor the creativity and imagination of the staff. This dynamic Plan is designed to be responsive, flexible, and adaptable to

the community’s interests, support long-term capital investment and sustainable facility stewardship, embrace technological advancements to enhance operations, leverage partnerships to optimize facility usage, and take advantage of a variety of City and County-wide development opportunities as they form.

Positioning the San José Public Library as a partner to the City, community, and economic development efforts, this Plan enables SJPL to grow with the City in times of prosperity. Conversely, this work positions the Library to be an essential partner to activate, expand, and synergize with community assets when financial uncertainties inevitably arise.

Most essentially, this Plan strengthens and elevates San José’s rich cultural stories, past, present, and future, which emerged through this process as one of the City’s greatest assets. Home to residents from around the world and a wide range of languages, San José is defined by its diversity, creativity, and lived experiences. Through thoughtful facility investments and service strategies, SJPL will support cultural placemaking that reflects the communities it serves, creating welcoming spaces that celebrate local identity, foster connection, and support civic life.

# A Demonstration of Stewardship and Ongoing Investment

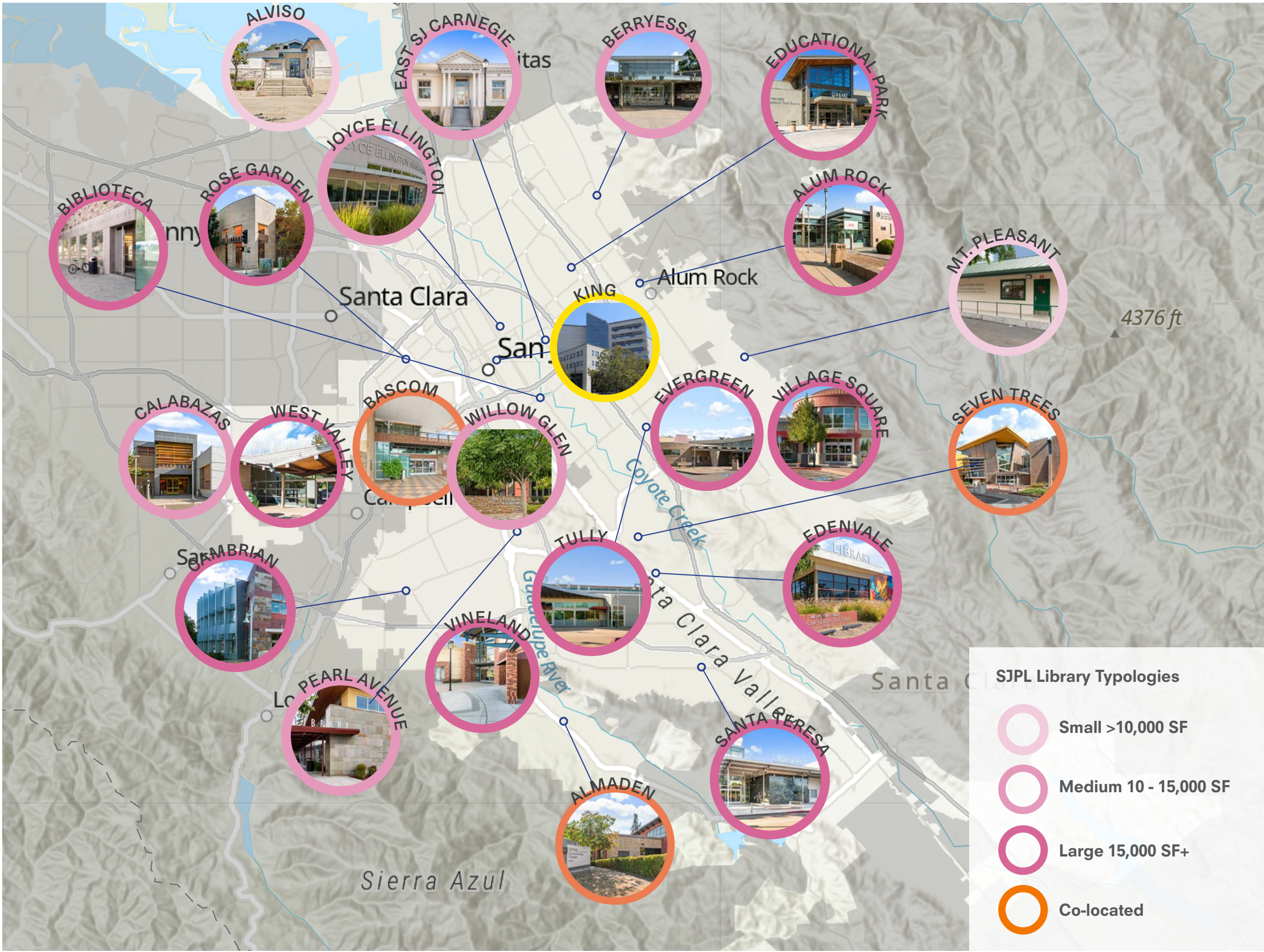
San José Public Library (SJPL) is one of California’s largest and most heavily used library systems, serving one of the state’s most diverse cities. As a trusted civic institution supporting education, digital access, and community life, SJPL plays a critical role in advancing opportunity across San José’s neighborhoods. Over the past year, the Library engaged residents, staff, partners, and civic leaders in a community-driven process to define the future of library facilities and services. The result is a 20-year Facilities and Customer Experience Plan outlining a responsible, equity-driven strategy for reinvestment, expansion, and long-term system growth.

This Plan builds on the success of the 2000 Library Bond Program, which expanded access to literacy, learning, and neighborhood library services across San José. However, the City’s growth and increasing demand for programs, technology access, and community space have placed new pressures on facilities designed for a smaller population.

The system’s central facility, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, serves as San José’s main library through its joint-use partnership with San José State University and continues to support residents citywide in that role.

**As a result, this Plan focuses primarily on the performance and long-term sustainability of the neighborhood branch network. Analysis of service demand, geographic access, and facility capacity found that almost all of SJPL’s branches are not currently positioned to fully serve San José residents today or over the next 20 years.**

Today, SJPL operates 24 branch libraries and the joint-use Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, totaling approximately 434,500 square feet across the branch system and 475,000 square feet at King Library, totaling about 909,500 square feet systemwide. This study establishes a long-term strategy to address facility deficiencies and bring the branch network closer to industry best practices for square footage per population served. Guided by branch service area populations and anticipated hyper-local population and demographic shifts over the next 20 years, the Plan recommends expanding the branch system to approximately 834,800 square feet, an increase of roughly 400,000 square feet, to support best-in-class library service in the decades ahead.



# A Community and Data-Driven Case for Growth & Expansion

Libraries in San José are essential and increasingly overextended. While this Executive Brief focuses on the facilities investment needed across the system, the broader Facilities and Customer Experience Plan aligns this growth with long-term operational sustainability. Librarians noted that the ambition of SJPL’s programs has surpassed the ability of many existing buildings to adapt.

Staff identified a growing program gap across the system where services, partnerships, and community programming cannot expand due to space limitations. Systemwide evaluation also found that a majority of SJPL’s branches fall below best-practice square-footage benchmarks (0.75 square feet per capita).

Community engagement reinforced these findings through more than 4,400 touchpoints, including nearly 3,000 survey responses, engagement with 180+ partners, focus groups, workshops, and citywide outreach. Across communities and demographics, the message was consistent:

**Libraries are trusted, loved, and heavily used. Facilities are undersized relative to demand.** All libraries lack adequate and adaptable space for the current Education and Digital Literacy

Strategy programs and efforts. Partnerships identified opportunities for increased impact through additional community meeting rooms and programmatic variety.

Community members expressed strong appreciation for their libraries and identified clear opportunities to expand the types of spaces available within branches. Engagement findings highlighted strong demand for community gardens, reading gardens, outdoor learning areas, dedicated maker spaces, art galleries and studios, and flexible wellness and movement rooms. Partners also noted the importance of spaces that support nature-based learning, youth creativity, and shared community experiences. These findings reinforce the need for library facilities that can evolve to support contemporary roles while strengthening synergies among nearby public amenities and community services throughout San José.

Data analysis and equity mapping confirmed geographic disparities in service levels, identifying the need for approximately 400,300 additional square feet of library space to address current deficiencies and support community needs over the next 20 years. These findings demonstrate a clear need for SJPL to invest in the future of its library system.



# A Strategic, Equity-Driven Growth Framework

This Plan does not propose growth for growth’s sake. It establishes a disciplined framework for aligning facility investment with:

- Strategic alignment with the Education & Digital Literacy Strategy, City and partner impact goals, and the San Jose Children and Youth Services Master Plan
- Service equity based on population growth and demographic shifts
- Equity Index data identifying areas of highest need for all San Joséans to achieve social and economic mobility
- Community partner capacity and co-location opportunities with existing public amenities
- Long-term SJPL operational sustainability including increased capacity needs

The growth strategy includes multiple potential pathways: reinvestment in existing branches, targeted expansions, new neighborhood libraries, co-location with other community centers, and strategic repositioning of the relationship between King Library and the branch network.

Under the recommended long-term strategy, the system grows to approximately 834,800 square feet, meeting the 0.75 square foot per capita benchmark and ensuring that library facilities align with current and projected service demand.

### Strategic Roles for the Next 20 Years

Building on SJPL’s **City as Classroom** framework, this Plan maximizes the role of library facilities to effectuate the San José Children and Youth Services Master Plan and serve as:

- City as Connected Communities** – strengthening neighborhood cohesion
- City as Cultural Connector** – celebrating San José’s diverse identities
- City as Civic Activator** – advancing participation, safety, and civic vitality

These roles directly support six measurable focus areas: Educational Success, Economic Wellness, Personal Health & Well-Being, Trust and Belonging, Cultural Identity, and Civic Vitality.



# Why Now?

San José stands at a pivotal moment. Development patterns are shifting, and community needs are intensifying. As neighborhoods grow and diversify, demand for accessible spaces that support learning, connection, and opportunity continues to increase. At the same time, SJPL has demonstrated operational excellence, strong fiscal stewardship, and deep community trust, positioning the library system as one of the city's most valued and effective public institutions.

This Plan positions library facilities as essential civic infrastructure supporting educational outcomes, economic mobility, neighborhood safety, cultural vitality, and digital inclusion.

Alignment with the **San José Children and Youth Services Master Plan** strengthens the City's priorities in Early Learning and Childcare, Learning and Empowerment, and Meaningful and Sustaining Jobs. By expanding and modernizing library spaces, the system can continue to provide safe, welcoming environments where residents of all ages can access knowledge, technology, and community resources. Strategic capital investment will ensure the library system remains equitable, resilient, and capable of serving San José's next generation.

The proposed Plan represents an opportunity to build on past success, close documented service gaps, and secure a sustainable, community-driven future for San José Public Library.



TEEN HQ  
own SJ's  
spot for Teens

GAMER LOUNGE

MAKER SPACE  
RECORDING STUDIO



# A CASE FOR INVESTMENT

# Alignment Maintenance & Vision Investments

Every 30 years, public libraries require an investment that is two thirds the cost to build new. This is based on an industry standard Facilities Condition Index (FCI) to measure maintenance and operations investments due to infrastructure demands.

The FCI is a benchmark in the facility industry to objectively assess the current and projected condition of building assets and anticipate future infrastructure investments in relation to maintaining the buildings for health and safety. FCI is calculated by the total cost of the existing

maintenance of a facility divided by its current replacement value. In evaluating the age of the buildings, nearly two thirds of the facilities will require significant investment in the next 10 years.

Anticipating future facilities needs (as shown on the right), it is both responsible and prudent for the City of San José and SJPL to align maintenance investments with the Plan. Thus, SJPL has the potential to increase impact for all residents of San José with a greater return than the cost of investment.



## Every 30 years, facilities need substantial investment.

| Branch                              | Year Built | Last Renovated | Years Since Intervention |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Library   | 1998       | 2019           | 7                        |
| Village Square Library              | 2016       | -              | 10                       |
| Bascom Library                      | 2013       | -              | 13                       |
| Educational Park Library            | 1976       | 2013           | 13                       |
| Seven Trees Library                 | 1967       | 2013           | 13                       |
| Santa Teresa Library                | 1984       | 2010           | 16                       |
| East San José Carnegie Library      | 1911       | 2009           | 17                       |
| Joyce Ellington Library             | 1975       | 2008           | 18                       |
| Pearl Avenue Library                | 1971       | 2008           | 18                       |
| Willow Glen Library                 | 1937       | 2008           | 18                       |
| Calabazas Library                   | 1966       | 2007           | 19                       |
| Edenvale Library                    | 2007       | -              | 19                       |
| Hillview Library                    | 1965       | 2007           | 19                       |
| Almaden Library                     | 1971       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Cambrian Library                    | 1961       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Evergreen Library                   | 1976       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Rose Garden Library                 | 1960       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Berryessa Library                   | 1968       | 2005           | 21                       |
| Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Library  | 2005       | -              | 21                       |
| Tully Community Library             | 2005       | -              | 21                       |
| Vineland Library                    | 2004       | -              | 22                       |
| West Valley Library                 | 1964       | 2003           | 23                       |
| Alviso Library                      | 1934       | 1999           | 27                       |
| Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library* | 1978       | 1999           | 27                       |

■ Good Condition  
 ■ Plan Updates Soon  
 ■ Needs Intervention  
 ■ Act Now

\*Biblioteca design update underway

# Room for San Joséans to Learn and Grow

To gauge how SJPL’s facilities are performing, the Plan evaluated the system’s facilities against industry best practices and national standards for library systems serving comparable populations and service areas. This benchmarking research examined peer library systems across the country to establish

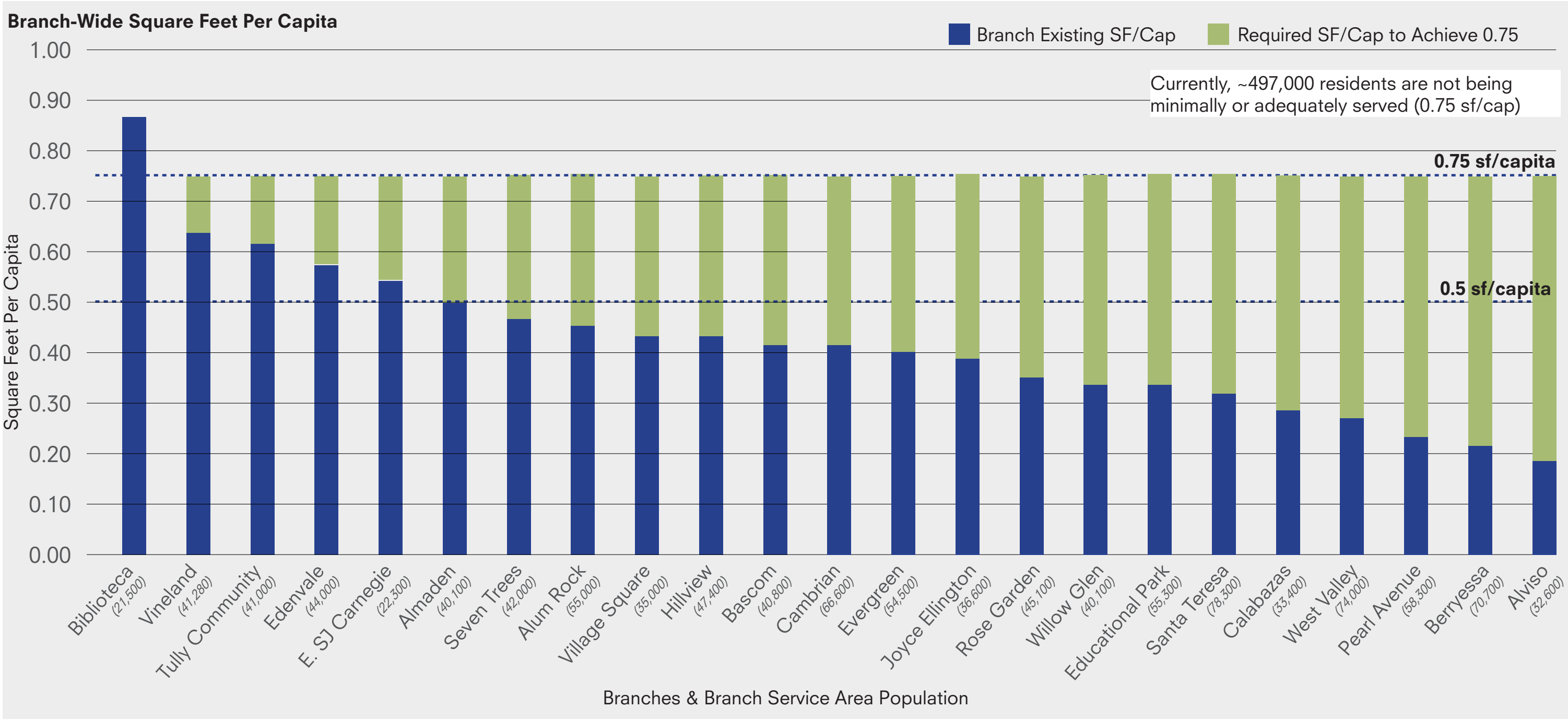
baseline metrics for square footage per population served, distribution of facilities relative to service area geography, and optimal branch sizing for effective service delivery. Square footage per capita measures how well physical library space aligns with the size and needs of the communities served. By comparing

each branch’s total square footage to its service area population, this metric reveals whether residents have sufficient access to space for reading, studying, gathering, programming, and other core services.

This analysis uses two benchmarks:

- **0.5 sf/capita** = residents are minimally served
- **0.75 sf/capita** = residents are adequately served (SJPL’s 20-year goal)

**As illustrated below, nearly 500,000 residents are not being adequately served with library services. Within this plan, 400,000 square feet would be intentionally added to the system.**

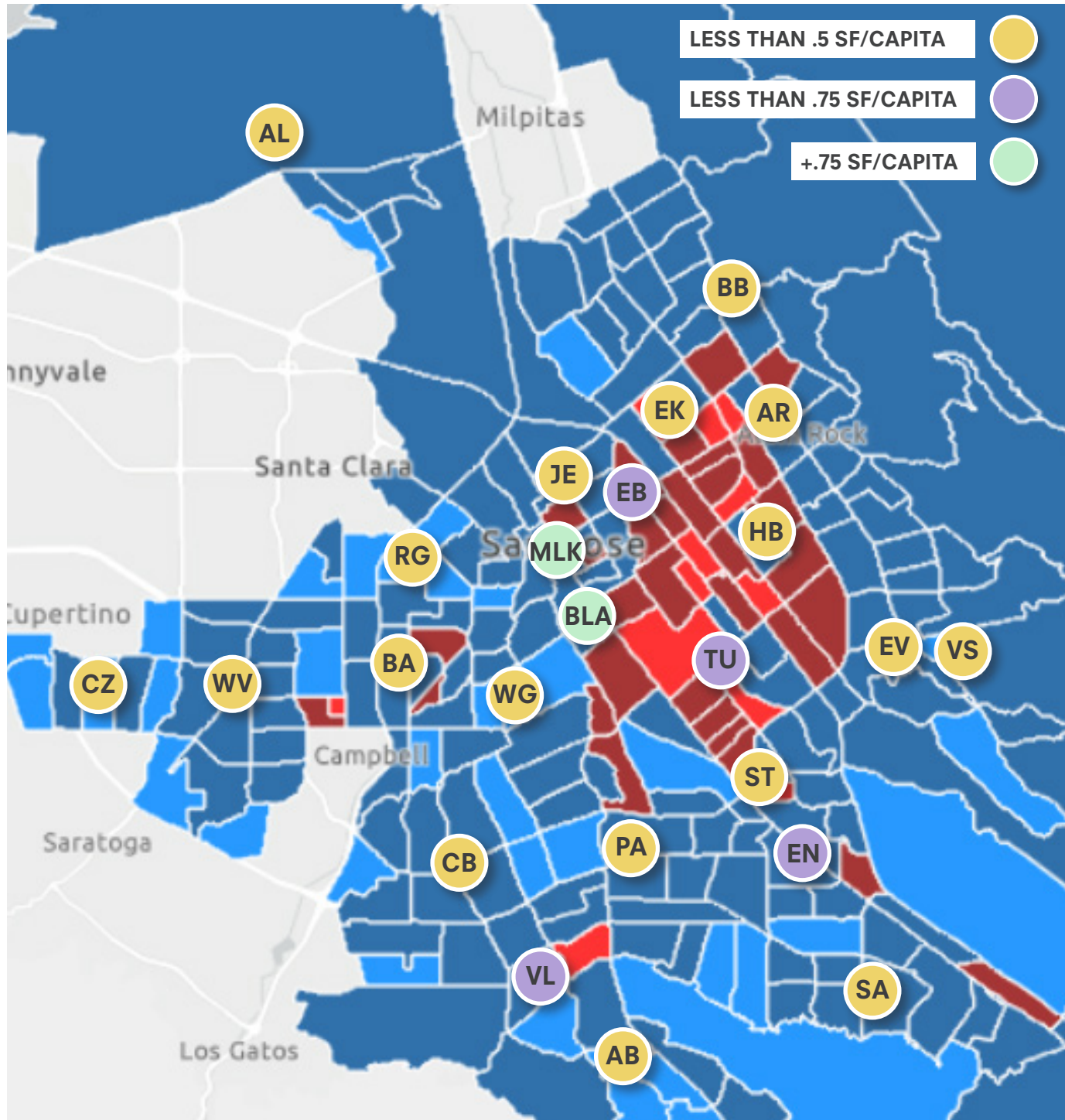


# Benchmarks and Equity Analysis

Based on an assessment of the current service area populations, two-thirds of the Libraries are not meeting the recommended benchmark of 0.75 square feet per capita to achieve the goals of a best-in-class library system that will include providing a variety of program spaces to support strategic goals, to create adaptability and flexibility, and to serve the projected 20 year growth.

In San José's diverse neighborhoods, this analysis identifies where investment is needed to right-size facilities, especially in high-growth or high-equity areas where spatial limitations constrain service delivery.

As shown on the map on page 14, the square feet per capita benchmarks by branch are layered with SJPL's Equity Index Map. This combined analysis helps illustrate how existing library space aligns with the social, economic, and mobility characteristics of surrounding neighborhoods. By evaluating facility capacity alongside the Library's established equity measures, the Plan identifies areas where additional investment can strengthen access to services and better support community needs. The analysis also highlights how factors such as transportation access, pedestrian connectivity, and broader neighborhood conditions influence how residents are able to reach and benefit from their local libraries.



**Equity Index Score**

- 70 to 120 = higher priority
- 60 to 70 = high priority
- 40 to 60 = aligns with most of SJ
- <40 = lower priority

- Legend**
- |                         |                          |                        |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. AB- Almaden          | 10. EK- Educational Park | 19. SA- Santa Teresa   |
| 2. AL- Alviso           | 11. EN- Edenvale         | 20. ST- Seven Trees    |
| 3. AR- Alum Rock        | 12. EV- Evergreen        | 21. TU- Tully          |
| 4. BA- Bascom           | 13. HB- Hillview         | 22. VL- Vineland       |
| 5. BB- Berryessa        | 14. JE- Joyce Ellington  | 23. VS- Village Square |
| 6. BLA- Biblioteca      | 15. MLK- King            | 24. WG- Willow Glen    |
| 7. CB- Cambrian         | 16. MP- Mt. Pleasant     | 25. WV- West Valley    |
| 8. CZ- Calabazas        | 17. PA- Pearl            |                        |
| 9. EB- East SJ Carnegie | 18. RG- Rose Garden      |                        |



2830 SURVEY RESPONSES

180

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

representing thousands of San José residents

9 FOCUS GROUPS

6 1:1 STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

3 LEADERSHIP & STAFF WORKSHOPS

1 COMMUNITY PARTNER BREAKFAST

1000+ VIVA CALLE COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED

# Learnings From The Community

The Plan undertook an ambitious community engagement process, with inputs from an extraordinarily broad range of community members. Through three staff workshops, staff co-designed service concepts revealed consistent priorities: strong interest in skills exchange between generations, desire for large intergenerational community living rooms, emphasis on maker spaces and hands-on learning across all ages, wellness programming and sensory-rich celebrations of cultural diversity, and adaptable spaces with open layouts and portable equipment.

Cross-cultural and multi-generational themes emerged prominently, reinforcing the need for environments supporting San José's immigrant communities. Partners and stakeholders, including City and County leadership, emphasized positioning libraries as opportunity hubs embedded in all frameworks moving forward. This inclusive approach ensures the Plan reflects authentic community voice, needs, and aspirations across San José's diverse populations.



# A Targeted Approach to Services

The purpose of the Facilities and Customer Experience Plan is to align organizational capacity and operational sustainability with facilities investment and expansion. Successful customer experiences depend on the effective activation of library buildings, referred to as “placemaking” and “placekeeping” in community economic development work.

With that guiding principle, this document supports recommendations for investment and expansion that are responsible within citywide operational budgets, coordinated with the broader portfolio of public amenities, and informed by a long-term public library capital improvement strategy.

The Facilities and Customer Experience Plan outlines a flexible framework for reinvestment, expansion, partnerships, and long-term system evolution. It presents multiple pathways for growth that can be implemented over time as funding opportunities, development patterns, and community priorities evolve.

This Executive Brief focuses on one central objective: closing the documented square footage deficit across the San José Public Library system over the next 20 years. The recommendations center on achieving the 0.75 square feet per capita benchmark and addressing service gaps in identified neighborhoods.

This Plan uses San José’s current population as a baseline while evaluating service needs based on the service area populations served by each branch library. When considered collectively, these service areas represent a planning population of approximately 1.1 million residents, reflecting both current demand and anticipated growth across the City. The strategy reflects a targeted approach that accounts for projected development patterns and localized demographic shifts. Specifically, the Plan: (1) establishes a long-term strategy to bring the branch system into alignment with industry best practices for square footage per population served; (2) uses service area populations for each branch community to guide the equitable distribution of library space; and (3) anticipates hyper-local population growth and demographic shifts over the

next 20 years. Together, these factors inform the recommendation to achieve the 0.75 square feet per capita benchmark across the system.

**These square footage targets represent a measured, needs-based expansion strategy designed to align the library system with projected service demand, best-practice standards, and operational excellence.**

While the Plan includes broader strategies related to partnerships, co-location opportunities, placemaking, operational innovation, and phased investment models, this Executive Brief focuses on the capital investments required to close the facility capacity gap. It clarifies the scale of investment needed to meet service benchmarks while maintaining the flexibility embedded in the larger Plan.

Grounded in documented service gaps and realistic planning assumptions, this Executive Brief reflects a fiscally responsible, data-driven approach to capital planning. It establishes a clear target for right-sizing the system while preserving flexibility to respond to future growth and evolving community needs.



# The Aspirational 20-Year Vision

## Investment and Development Possibilities

The table (right) illustrates the development possibilities and recommendations for each of San José Public Library’s branch sites. It identifies development opportunities across three strategic pathways:

- **Renew & Sustain (\$800/sf):** branches can be modernized through interior renovations and strategic reconfiguration of current space,
- **Growth on Site (\$1,200/sf):** Branches with available land, structural capacity, or underutilized outdoor/parking areas can accommodate physical additions without land acquisition costs.
- **Co-Locate (\$1,200/sf):** Branches in urban growth areas can grow in and with future development in the area through co-location.
- **Build New (\$1,200/sf):** Full replacement of select facilities where lifecycle performance, resilience, and long-term efficiency warrant new construction.
- **Potential to Build New (\$1,200/sf):** Some existing library sites have Public-Quasi-Public (PQP) zoning that allows significantly larger buildings than currently exist. While not required to achieve this Plan’s square footage targets, these sites could accommodate larger development if community needs or opportunities warrant.

FF&E (\$50 per square foot) is not included in these scenarios.

## Investment Scenarios to Guide Decision-Making

To support thoughtful phasing and funding alignment, the Plan outlines scalable investment scenarios:

**Short-Term Reinvestment** – Renovation and modernization of existing facilities (no added square footage) to address deferred maintenance and improve functionality.

## Recommended Long-Term Growth –

Renovations, targeted expansions, and five new branches, bringing the system to approximately 834,800 square feet plus King Library.

These scenarios are not mutually exclusive. The Plan provides a flexible framework that allows the City to align investment levels with funding availability, development timing, and community priorities.

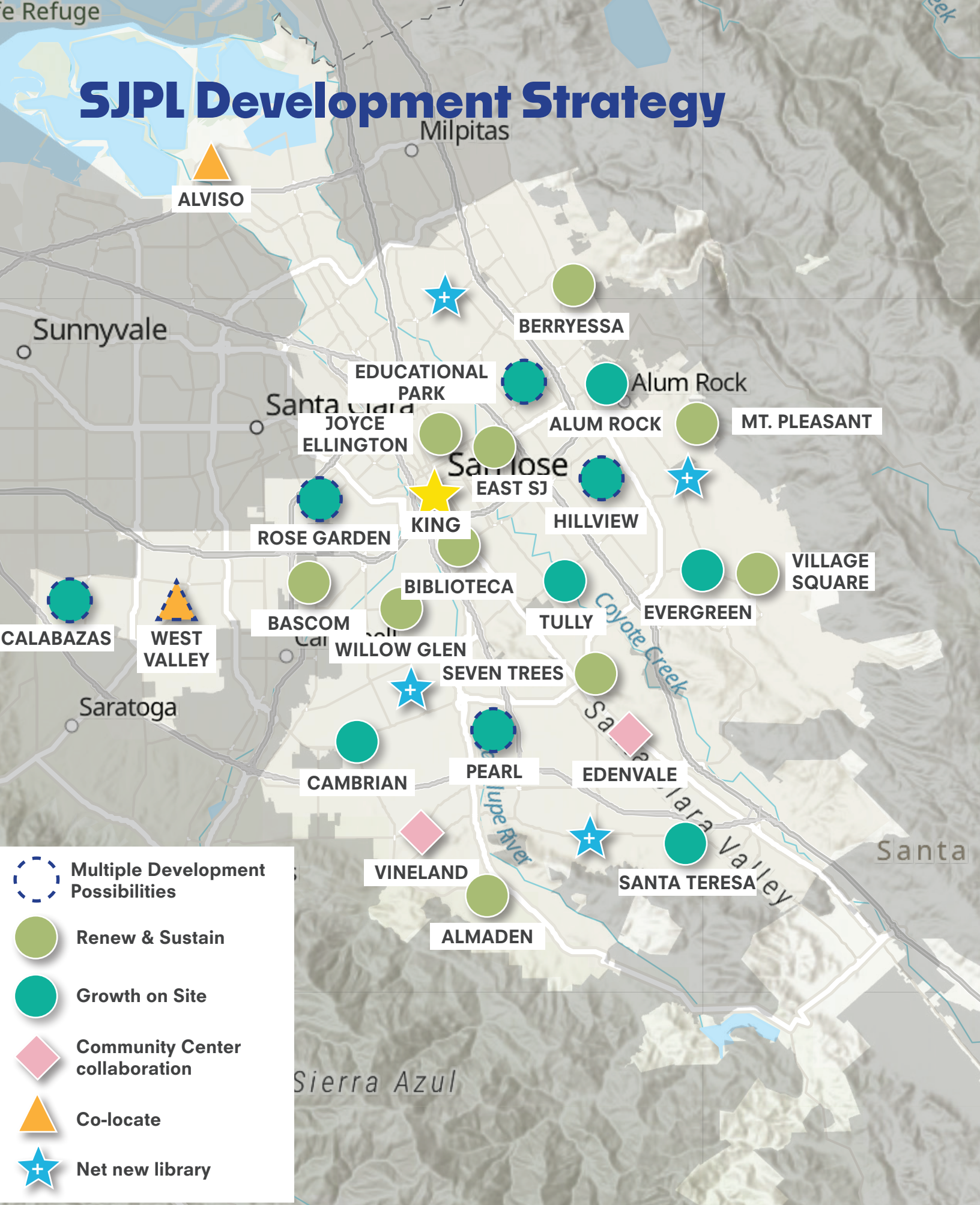
*SJPL Branches in the chart on page 21 are in order of the recommended project phasing, further detailed on starting on page 26.*



*SJPL’s first branch: East San Jose Carnegie Library*

| Branch                             | Renew & Sustain | Growth on Site                          | Co-Locate | Build New | Potential to Build New |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------|-----------|------------------------|
| Alviso Library                     |                 |   | ✓         |           |                        |
| West Valley Library                | ✓               | ✓                                       | ✓         |           | ✓                      |
| Vineland Library                   | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           |                        |
| Tully Community Library            | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Library | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| Berryessa Library                  | ✓               |   |           |           | ✓                      |
| Rose Garden Library                | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| District 4 Net New Library **      |                 |   |           | ✓         |                        |
| Evergreen Library                  | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| Cambrian Library                   | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| Almaden Library (co-located)       | ✓               |   |           |           |                        |
| Hillview Library                   | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| Edenvale Library                   | ✓               |   |           |           | ✓                      |
| Calabazas Library                  | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| Willow Glen Library                | ✓               |   |           |           |                        |
| District 8 Net New Library **      |                 |   |           | ✓         |                        |
| Pearl Avenue Library               | ✓               |   |           | ✓         | ✓                      |
| Joyce Ellington Library            | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| East San Jose Carnegie Library     | ✓               |   |           |           | ✓                      |
| Santa Teresa Library               | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           | ✓                      |
| Seven Trees Library (co-located)   | ✓               |   |           |           |                        |
| District 6 Net New Library **      |                 |   |           | ✓         |                        |
| Educational Park Library           | ✓               | ✓                                       |           |           |                        |
| Bascom Library (co-located)        | ✓               |   |           |           | ✓                      |
| Village Square Library             | ✓               |   |           |           |                        |
| Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library | ✓               | <i>Renovation planned for 2026-2028</i> |           |           |                        |
| Mt. Pleasant Bridge Library        |                 |   |           |           |                        |
| District 10 Net New Library**      |                 |   |           | ✓         |                        |
| District 5 Net New Library**       |                 |   |           | ✓         |                        |

\*\*Identify new site



**SJPL Development Strategy**

As illustrated in the map on page 24, the development strategy for SJPL is intentionally designed to remain adaptable and responsive to future conditions. While the Plan outlines clear recommendations for each of the 24 branches and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, it also acknowledges the importance of flexibility in facility planning over a 20+ year horizon.

Several library locations are marked with a dashed blue circle, indicating multiple development possibilities. This Plan considers factors such as changing neighborhood needs, land use decisions, partnerships, and future infrastructure development. Each branch is further explored in the individual Branch Profiles, which detail the rationale for each recommendation and scenario. This flexible approach allows SJPL to:

- Respond to community growth and shifting demographics over time, ensuring services remain equitable and accessible.
- Adapt to land availability and real estate changes, allowing for recapture, expansion, or relocation when more favorable opportunities arise.
- Pursue innovative co-location opportunities, such as collaborations with community centers, schools, or housing developments.
- Pilot new models for library design and use, particularly in areas with overlapping needs or where new service delivery methods (outdoor spaces, flexible interiors) could have greater impact.

By allowing multiple development paths for several locations, SJPL preserves its ability to stay nimble and user-focused in a rapidly evolving urban environment.

This vision for SJPL’s future creates new and dynamic collaborations with San José’s libraries and community centers, encourages innovative facility growth alongside future development, envisions new opportunities for SJPL’s existing parcels, identifies where library interiors can improve for their communities, and recaptures outdoor space for a more exciting library experience.

**Expanding the System**

As part of SJPL’s long-term vision, this Plan recommends the addition of five net new library facilities to serve areas of San José with growing populations, underserved communities, and limited library access. These new libraries aim to address gaps in service and provide innovative and inclusive spaces that respond to the unique character of each community.



*West Valley Branch, Recommended to grow with new development or expand on existing site*

# Phasing Strategy

|                         | Existing SF | New SF | Renew & Sustain* | Growth on Site | Co-Locate/ Build New |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| ALVISO                  | 6,050       | 24,350 | \$4.84M          |                | \$21.96M             |
| WEST VALLEY             | 21,000      | 55,500 | \$16.8M          |                | \$41.4M              |
| VINELAND                | 26,000      | 41,000 | \$20.8M          | \$32.8M        |                      |
| TULLY COMMUNITY         | 25,500      | 31,000 | \$20.4M          | \$27M          |                      |
| ALUM ROCK               | 26,000      | 41,000 | \$20.8M          | \$38.8M        |                      |
| BERRYESSA               | 15,000      | 23,000 | \$12M            | \$18.4M        |                      |
| ROSE GARDEN             | 18,500      | 34,000 | \$14.8M          | \$33.4M        |                      |
| District 4 New Library  | 0           | 25,000 |                  |                | \$35M                |
| EVERGREEN               | 21,500      | 41,500 | \$17.2M          | \$41.2M        |                      |
| CAMBRIAN                | 27,000      | 50,000 | \$21.6M          | \$49.2M        |                      |
| ALMADEN                 | 20,000      | 20,000 | \$16M            | \$16M          |                      |
| HILLVIEW                | 21,000      | 35,500 | \$16.8M          | \$34.2M        |                      |
| EDENVALE                | 25,000      | 25,000 | \$20M            |                |                      |
| CALABAZAS               | 10,400      | 25,400 | \$8.32M          | \$26.32M       |                      |
| WILLOW GLEN             | 13,500      | 13,500 | \$10.8M          |                |                      |
| District 8 New Library  | 0           | 25,000 |                  |                | \$35M                |
| PEARL AVENUE            | 14,000      | 44,000 | \$11.2M          |                | \$52.8M              |
| JOYCE ELLINGTON         | 14,500      | 27,500 | \$11.6M          |                |                      |
| EAST SJ CARNEGIE        | 12,000      | 12,000 | \$9.6M           |                |                      |
| SANTA TERESA            | 25,000      | 39,500 | \$20M            |                | \$37.4M              |
| SEVEN TREES             | 20,000      | 20,000 | \$16M            |                |                      |
| District 6 New Library  | 0           | 25,000 |                  |                | \$35M                |
| EDUCATIONAL PARK        | 18,000      | 41,500 | \$14.4M          | \$42.6M        |                      |
| BASCOM                  | 18,000      | 18,000 | \$14.4M          |                |                      |
| VILLAGE SQUARE          | 16,000      | 16,000 | \$12.8M          |                |                      |
| BIBLIOTECA**            | 18,350      | 18,350 | \$14.68M         |                |                      |
| District 10 New Library | 0           | 25,000 |                  |                | \$35M                |
| District 5 New Library  | 0           | 25,000 |                  |                | \$35M                |

**Phase 1**  
**\$298.512M**  
 (total project cost)

**Phase 2**  
**\$279.264M**  
 (total project cost)

**Phase 3**  
**\$194.88M**  
 (total project cost)


**Phase 4**  
**\$185.376M**  
 (total project cost)

**\*Renew & Sustain  
 An Explanation of "Quick Wins"**

These are targeted investments in existing facilities to realign interior space and recapture underutilized areas, optimizing buildings for current public use without adding square footage. These improvements also focus on activating existing outdoor spaces for programming and community use. At \$800 per square foot of existing library space, this approach emphasizes interior renovation and reconfiguration to enhance functionality, flexibility, and program delivery. Distinct from the broader phasing strategy and the SJPL development strategy, it illustrates the level of investment required to modernize and better utilize each library within its current footprint.

As illustrated in the legend below, the grey dollar amounts show the cost for quick wins in each branch, while 8 branches will show in the phasing colors as the recommendation for the development strategy.

**Legend**

-  Quick Wins
-  SJPL Development Strategy

# Budget & Phasing Strategy

The Plan organizes recommended projects into a clear investment framework that prioritizes both immediate needs and long-term system growth. Projects are grouped to reflect where investment will have the greatest impact, beginning with targeted improvements to existing facilities and extending to strategic expansion opportunities across the system.

The Renew & Sustain category represents targeted reinvestment in existing facilities, focused on realigning interior spaces, recapturing underutilized areas, and activating outdoor spaces for programming. These improvements optimize buildings for current use without adding square footage and reflect a cost-effective strategy to enhance functionality and service delivery across the system's existing footprint. The Growth on Site category includes expansions

and additions at existing branch locations where capacity can be increased to better meet community demand. The Co-Locate / Build New category identifies opportunities to deliver new or expanded library facilities through partnerships, co-location with other civic amenities, or new construction in underserved or high-growth areas.

Together, these investment categories represent a comprehensive, systemwide approach to improvement. Project costs are based on a dollar-per-square-foot methodology, with an additional 20% applied to account for soft costs. This framework provides a practical and flexible roadmap for implementation while reinforcing the study's central conclusion: that a strategic, system-wide investment is necessary to enable SJPL's libraries to meet the needs of San José residents today and over the next 20 years.

### Quick Wins

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Renew & Sustain<br>(All existing branches) | <b>\$415,008,000</b> |
|--|----------------------|

### SJPL Development Strategy

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Renew & Sustain<br>(Recommendation for select 8 branches) | <b>\$131,856,000</b> |
|   | <b>+</b>             |
| Growth on Site  | <b>\$431,904,000</b> |
|   | <b>+</b>             |
| Co-Locate/ Build New                                      | <b>\$394,272,000</b> |
| <b>Overall Cost</b>                                       | <b>\$958,032,000</b> |



# Acknowledgements

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This Plan also recognizes the San José Library and Education Commission for its leadership in advancing SJPL’s strategic initiatives through an equity-driven lens, and for its role advising City Council on library facilities, programs, services, and future-forward investments. The San José Youth Commission’s thoughtful and challenging perspectives strengthened the Plan’s focus on civic engagement and long-term community impact.

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 Jose L. Abastida  
 Karina Solano  
 Kristen Brown  
 Marvin McCrary  
 Patricia Mendoza  
 Ramnik Saandal  
 Sharon Holt  
 Westley Baker  
 José Magaña  
 Patricia Gardner  
 Melanie Sellar  
 Janice Allen

## San José Youth Commission:

Akshadha Babu  
 Anushka Deshmukh  
 Dali Guerrero Fernandez  
 David Huynh  
 Edwin Sanchez  
 Fiona Canfield  
 Jingru (Ruby) Yu  
 Jinyoung (Kyle) Park  
 Marian Kucharewski  
 Micah Chung  
 Neyha Pradeepkumar  
 Aanya Mishra  
 Genesis Arroyo  
 Andrew Lieu  
 Amiya Bansal  
 Peter Vu  
 Aldojoell Gonzalez-Muñiz  
 Agam Singh  
 Nolan Mascarenhas

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|               |                     |                  |
|---------------|---------------------|------------------|
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| Dawn Coppin   | Elizabeth Castañeda | Michelle Amores  |
| Ann Grabowski | Elizabeth Nolan     | Paul Wilson      |
| Jenny Choi    | Karla Alvarez       | Rebekah Gonzalez |
| Anh Rodrock   |                     |                  |

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|                 |                |                   |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
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| Afsaneh Nasiri  | Josh Castro    | Moises Moreno     |
| Ana Fabela      | Juvenal Flores | Monique Garcia    |
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| Ben Fernandez   | Lee Pendleton  | Nari Ferderer     |
| Bill Bynum      | Lee Tran       | Penelope Gomez    |
| Cassidy Pham    | Lisa Molson    | Renee Bettencourt |
| Dionisa Perez   | Marly Young    | Romano Rivera     |
| Eboni Harris    | Mayra Cerda    | Sal Telly         |
| Eric DeBold     | Megan Maloy    | Sharon Fung       |
| Howard Yeilding | Mia Korman     | Stephanie Budros  |
| Jean Herriges   | Michele Rowic  | Vidya Kilambi     |
| Jeff Brenion    |                |                   |

## The following organizations for their support and participation:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| AACI  | Luna   |
| Ainak                                       | Moreland School District                     |
| Campbell Union High School District         | NorCal Public Media                          |
| Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County    | Office of Racial and Social Equity           |
| City of San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs | Parents Helping Parents                      |
| City Year Bay Area                          | Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services |
| Comcast                                     | Rocketship Public Schools                    |
| Employment Development Department           | San Jose City College                        |
| Escuela Popular                             | San Jose Sharks                              |
| Gardner Health Services                     | Somos Mayfair                                |
| Georgian Heritage Foundation                | Sourcewise Digital Link                      |
| Grail Family Services                       | Spartan Keyes Neighborhood                   |
| Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley       | Study Smart Tutors                           |
| ICAN  | Tech Exchange                                |
| International Rescue Committee              | The Tech Interactive                         |
| Latino Education Advancement Foundation     | YMCA Project Cornerstone                     |
| LEAD Filipino                               |  |
| Local Color                                 |  |





# San José Public Library

FACILITIES & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PLAN  
April 2026



San José Public Library  
Foundation



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## Letter from Matt Mahan Mayor, City of San José



Dear Community Members,

San José has always been a place where innovation and community come together to shape the future. From our agricultural beginnings in the Valley of Heart's Delight to our role today as the Capital of Silicon Valley, our strength has always come from our people — and the institutions that help them succeed.

Libraries are central to that mission. Across our neighborhoods, they offer welcoming, accessible spaces where residents can learn, connect, and grow. Students rely on them as places to study and explore new ideas. Families depend on them for access to technology and educational resources. And community members use them to collaborate, build skills, and pursue new opportunities. From supporting entrepreneurship to advancing digital literacy and civic engagement, our libraries help ensure every resident can fully participate in our city's economy and civic life. As San José continues to grow, we must make thoughtful, strategic investments in the spaces that serve our community. The Library's Facilities and Customer Experience

Plan provides a clear, forward-looking roadmap to modernize and expand our library system over the next twenty years. Grounded in community input and careful analysis, this plan positions us to better serve a diverse and dynamic city of more than one million residents — while maximizing the long-term value of public investment. It also creates opportunities for flexible, adaptable spaces that can evolve alongside changes in technology, learning, and community needs. By investing in our libraries today, we are investing in the future of San José — strengthening the foundations of education, workforce readiness, and economic opportunity that will keep our city innovative, inclusive, and thriving for generations to come.

Thank you,

**Matt Mahan**  
Mayor, City of San José

## Letter from Jennifer Maguire City Manager, City of San José



Libraries are more than buildings - they are trusted public infrastructure that supports learning, workforce development, and digital access for all San José residents. With 25 neighborhood branches and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library serving more than one million people, the library system plays a critical role in supporting our city's long-term economic vitality.

The Library's Facilities and Customer Experience Plan reflects the City's commitment to maintaining high-quality public services while planning responsibly for the future. Developed through extensive engagement with residents, community partners, and library staff, this plan establishes a strong framework to ensure library facilities remain responsive to its community needs. It identifies opportunities to modernize spaces, integrate new technology, and expand programming.

Libraries today support a wide range of services - from early learning and student success to workforce preparation, digital access, and learning programs for adults. They serve as hubs for collaboration, innovation, and civic engagement, helping residents build the skills and knowledge they

need to thrive. As San José continues to grow, ensuring that our library spaces can support these services requires thoughtful coordination, long-term planning, and careful stewardship of public resources.

At the City of San José, we approach this work through a shared commitment to One City, One Team. This plan reflects the collaboration of City departments, community partners, and library staff working together to deliver high-quality services and ensure that San José's libraries continue to effectively serve residents for years to come.

I am grateful for the leadership of the Library team and the many partners whose contributions help ensure our libraries remain strong, responsive, and accessible community resources.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer Maguire**  
City Manager, City of San José

# Letter from Jill Bourne City Librarian, San José Public Library



San José Public Library is one of our city’s most powerful community anchors, cultivating connection, learning, and opportunity. Every day, our libraries provide welcoming spaces where residents discover new ideas, develop skills, access technology, and connect with one another. They are places where curiosity is encouraged, learning is lifelong, and community comes together.

As San José continues to grow, so will our libraries. The Library’s Facilities and Customer Experience Plan represents an important step in preparing our library system for the future. Over the past year, we engaged thousands of residents, local organizations, and City staff to understand how libraries are used today - and how they can continue to serve the needs of our city’s diverse population.

Through this process, we heard clearly that libraries are deeply valued community spaces. At the same time, our branch libraries face increasing demand for modern learning spaces, access to enhanced technology, and programming that reflects the wide range of

interests and needs in our community. This plan provides a long-term strategy to guide reinvestment across the library system, ensuring that every neighborhood benefits. By aligning facility improvements with the needs of our city and service priorities, the plan helps ensure that our libraries continue to inspire exploration, foster innovation, and strengthen community for generations to come.

Investing in our libraries is an investment in San José’s future. I am deeply grateful to the many residents and partners who helped shape this vision and who continue to support libraries as places of shared knowledge, creativity, and empowerment.

Sincerely,

**Jill Bourne**  
City Librarian, San José Public Library



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Jinyoung (Kyle) Park  
Marian Kucharewski  
Micah Chung  
Neyha Pradeepkumar  
Aanya Mishra  
Genesis Arroyo  
Andrew Lieu  
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Vidya Kilambi

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Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County  
City of San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs  
City Year Bay Area  
Comcast  
Employment Development Department  
Escuela Popular  
Gardner Health Services  
Georgian Heritage Foundation  
Grail Family Services  
Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley  
ICAN  
International Rescue Committee  
Latino Education Advancement Foundation  
LEAD Filipino  
Local Color

Luna  
Moreland School District  
NorCal Public Media  
Office of Racial and Social Equity  
Parents Helping Parents  
Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services  
Rocketship Public Schools  
San Jose City College  
San Jose Sharks  
Somos Mayfair  
Sourcewise Digital Link  
Spartan Keyes Neighborhood  
Study Smart Tutors  
Tech Exchange  
The Tech Interactive  
YMCA Project Cornerstone

# LIBRARY AS SOUL OF THE CITY

Throughout 2025, the San José Public Library (SJPL or Library) embarked on a complex 20-Year Facilities and Customer Experience Plan (Plan). Led by Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS), this highly collaborative co-creation process was customized to enhance the strengths of a nationally leading library system, while bringing the most innovative methodologies in the industry today. The process ensures that SJPL's impactful work in the realms of social, cultural, educational, and digital equity is supported by best-in-class facilities and human-centered activation strategies that MSS has developed in collaboration with leading and peer libraries throughout the country.

Building on the future-forward capital improvement plan in 2000, which resulted in an expanded system with libraries distributed throughout San José, this Plan incorporates an inclusive design process to ensure that library facilities support SJPL's evolved educational strategies, deepen the expansion of cultural, civic, and social services that the community relies upon, address the innovative aspirations the process elicited from community members, and honor the creativity and imagination of the staff. This dynamic Plan is designed to be responsive, flexible, and adaptable to

the community's interests, support long-term capital investment and sustainable facility stewardship, embrace technological advancements to enhance operations, leverage partnerships to optimize facility usage, and take advantage of a variety of City and County-wide development opportunities as they form.

Positioning the San José Public Library as a partner to the City, community, and economic development efforts, this Plan enables SJPL to grow with the City in times of prosperity. Conversely, this work positions the Library to be an essential partner to activate, expand, and synergize with community assets when financial uncertainties inevitably arise.

Most essentially, this Plan strengthens and elevates San José's rich cultural stories, past, present, and future, which emerged through this process as one of the City's greatest assets. Home to residents from around the world and a wide range of languages, San José is defined by its diversity, creativity, and lived experiences. Through thoughtful facility investments and service strategies, SJPL will support cultural placemaking that reflects the communities it serves, creating welcoming spaces that celebrate local identity, foster connection, and support civic life.

# INTRODUCTION

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Executive Summary

The result of an ambitious, nine-month community-driven, co-creation process, the San José Facilities and Customer Experience Plan is an aspirational vision for re-alignment, growth and activation in the San José Public Library system over the next 20 years. Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS) led the process in partnership with the SJPL Leadership Group, SJPL staff, community partners, and San José community members. This Plan creates a comprehensive city-wide approach to investment and expansion to elevate the impact San José Public Library will have to foster increased quality of life initiatives as an equity-driven development partner for the city, county and region.

This Plan builds on the success of the San José Public Library Bond Program which was approved by voters in 2000. This Program which launched 25 years ago to expand access to literacy and learning opportunities and extend reach to serve the city's exploding population. As the city expands to over one million residents, this Plan is designed to build on the SJPL's current strengths, and position SJPL for responsible future growth. Since the last Bond Program, SJPL has evolved its service model to be one of the leaders in providing outcomes-based educational and digital equity strategies with robust data-driven assessments. SJPL staff members have also developed a competency to listen, learn and respond to community's interests as a part of their daily culture. As a result, SJPL's library professionals need the facilities to adapt, flex and work hard for their community members. This work also has identified that the library must grow its real estate portfolio to be on par with national best practice benchmarks. The proposed growth strategy will be sustainable, smart and coordinated. This moment provides an exceptional opportunity for SJPL to leverage these investments and their resulting efficiencies for all of its branch locations over the next 20 years.

Furthermore, this Plan will enable SJPL to more effectively foster culturally-rooted social, learning, and civic engagement experiences



for this incredibly diverse city. Building on the library facilities' existing strategic role as City as Classroom, this Plan expands the strategic roles to be City as Connected Communities, City as Cultural Connector and City as Civic Activator.

SJPL will also utilize the Plan's findings and knowledge of local community conditions, cultural diversities, and civic assets to deliver place-based programs and services that result in enriched quality of life experiences. Backed by a dynamic, robust set of qualitative and quantitative data, the Plan not only proves that library services are essential, but it also demonstrates that community needs, partner opportunities, and city and county development alignments best inform an effective library growth plan. It is in this context that the libraries are being re-imagined to provide experiences that activate Key Focus Areas: Educational Success, Economic Wellness, Personal Health & Well-Being, Trust and Belonging, Cultural Identity, and Civic Vitality.

The Plan acknowledges that funding and development strategies for capital improvements in the future must be innovative, strategic and diversified. With a variety of investment strategies beyond what SJPL's capital work has typically utilized, the Plan delivers recommendations for a nationally recognized library system that leverages co-location and co-funding models, programming integration models, and synergistic partnership activation strategies, among others.

Highlights of this Plan include:

### **An Aspirational 20-Year Vision:** **Elevates SJPL's Role in Anchoring San José's Soul**

Foundational to this Plan is a vision that positions

SJPL facilities as active anchor institutions catalyzing neighborhood community development and fostering an inclusive, vibrant San José. The Plan achieves this by connecting SJPL’s facilities and programs to amplify the city’s greatest assets: diverse cultural communities, innovative partnerships, collaborative city government, and the rich agricultural and immigrant heritage that defines San José’s identity. Through intentional cultural placemaking, libraries become places where residents develop emotional attachment to their neighborhoods while building cross-cultural connections that strengthen the city’s collective soul

**Amplifies Strategic Outcomes**

The Plan builds directly on SJPL’s existing strategic priorities and industry-leading Education and Digital Literacy Strategy that has transformed San José as “a place for every resident to learn, explore, connect, and grow.” Building on SJPL’s successful City as Classroom framework, this Plan expands to include City as Connected Communities, City as Cultural Celebration, and City as Civic Activator. These strategic roles also align with the Mayor’s priorities of community safety and neighborhood vitality, advancing the City’s Digital Inclusion and Broadband Strategy and coordinating with regional development goals. Six key focus areas – Educational Success, Economic Wellness, Personal Health & Well-Being, Trust and Belonging, Cultural Identity, and Civic



Vitality – provide an operational framework for delivering measurable outcomes that advance both library excellence and citywide quality of life.

**Applies Equity-Driven Data**

Backed by dynamic qualitative and quantitative data including equity index mapping, comprehensive community engagement across 200+ partners, citywide surveys, staff workshops, and branch-specific assessments, this Plan demonstrates that community needs, partner opportunities, and development alignments best inform effective library growth. The equity-driven approach ensures that facility investment prioritizes neighborhoods with greatest need while maintaining system-wide service excellence.

**Activates Partnership Potential**

Community partners have identified SJPL as essential civic infrastructure for achieving their missions. This Plan creates frameworks for strategic co-location, shared programming, and coordinated service delivery that multiply community impact. From educational institutions to cultural organizations to social service providers, partners need both the physical spaces libraries provide and the collaboration opportunities that libraries uniquely enable as trusted community anchors.

**Utilizes a Community-Driven Approach**

The Plan undertook an ambitious community engagement process, with inputs from an extraordinarily broad range of community members. Over 4,400 unique touchpoints were generated through 2,830 survey responses, 180 community partners representing thousands of San José residents, 9 focus groups, 6 one-on-one stakeholder conversations, 3 leadership and staff workshops, 1 community partner breakfast, 1000+ Viva Calle community members engaged through street-level conversations and creative visioning exercises, and 300 ice pops distributed. This inclusive approach ensures the Plan reflects authentic community voice, needs, and aspirations across San José’s extraordinarily diverse populations.

**Aligns with Population Growth and Needs**

The Plan incorporates frameworks and an understanding of where growth is anticipated

from San José’s 2040 General Plan and Plan Bay Area 2050. San José’s General Plan is instrumental to ensuring library expansion meets communities where growth is planned. Strategic facility investment aligns with civic infrastructure development, public transit expansion, affordable housing initiatives, and neighborhood revitalization efforts to maximize public benefit and operational efficiency.

**Employs a Comprehensive Growth Strategy**

The growth strategy employs multiple pathways: strategic reimagining at existing sites, optimization of King Library SJPL space, co-location with community centers and civic facilities, or the consideration of new facilities. This multi-strategy approach ensures sustainable, smart, and coordinated growth that responds to changing community conditions. As an additional lens, SJPL could utilize their Equity Index Tool, to prioritize investment in areas with higher need.

**Repositions King and SJPL Branches’ Relationship**

The Plan recognizes that King Library, as the unique San José State University (SJSU) partnership and downtown anchor, requires differentiated strategic treatment from the neighborhood branch network. Rather than a hierarchical model, this Plan positions King and the branches as complementary parts of an integrated system, each serving distinct but coordinated roles. King Library’s assessment and recommendations are addressed separately to honor its complexity, while ensuring that the entire system – downtown anchor and neighborhood branches – works collaboratively to deliver equitable, excellent service citywide. This repositioning strengthens both King’s specialized role and the branches’ capacity to serve as authentic community anchors.

**Provides Staff with a Placemaking Activation Strategy**

Library staff have demonstrated programmatic excellence that deserves facilities supporting their innovation. The Plan delivers placemaking components, facility typologies, and culturally-responsive design frameworks that enable staff to activate spaces with intention. From flexible programming rooms to outdoor activation

strategies to partnership infrastructure, these tools empower staff to transform facilities into vibrant community anchors that reflect neighborhood identity and cultural assets.

**Integrates Investment Opportunities and Scenarios**

This Plan recommends a collaborative approach to identifying resources, stakeholders, partnerships, and development opportunities comprehensively – recognizing that capital and programmatic funding must be considered synergistically to achieve sustainable impact. Over the next 20 years, the Plan establishes a variety of investment strategies that remain responsive to annual budget cycles while maintaining high community impact regardless of scale. Funding scenarios range from major measures for system-wide transformation, to increased philanthropic investment addressing programmatic aspirations throughout the system, to small-scale strategic improvements aligned with Friends of the Library support. This flexible framework ensures SJPL can advance its vision through multiple pathways – from comprehensive co-location and co-funding models with city partners, to targeted grant opportunities, to incremental improvements that accumulate into transformative change. By diversifying funding strategies and aligning capital investment with operational capacity, the Plan positions SJPL to seize opportunities as they arise while maintaining steady progress toward equitable, excellent service citywide.

**Exemplifies a Decision-Making Model for Ongoing Success**

This Plan is designed to promote ongoing best outcomes for San José’s diverse communities and the Library’s ability to catalyze economic development. SJPL not only achieves this through its continued work in literacy and access to information and technology, but also by leveraging the city’s network of community-based organizations and establishing an ongoing communications structure with community partners. Branch-specific assessments, partnership evaluation criteria, space utilization standards, and equity metrics create decision-making infrastructure that guides SJPL leadership through the next 20 years of growth and transformation with consistency and community accountability.

# A Demonstration of Stewardship and Ongoing Investment

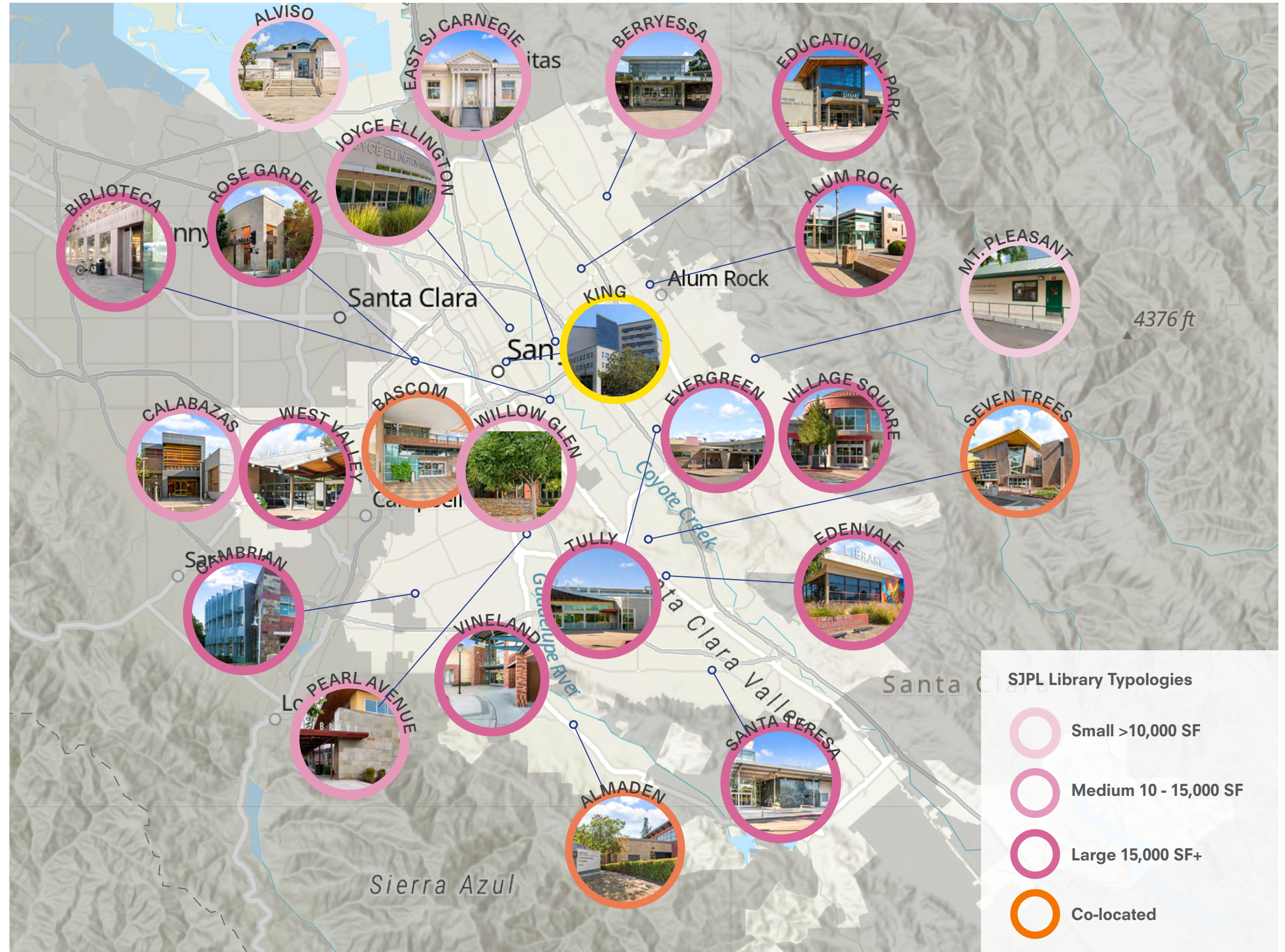
San José Public Library (SJPL) is one of California’s largest and most heavily used library systems, serving one of the state’s most diverse cities. As a trusted civic institution supporting education, digital access, and community life, SJPL plays a critical role in advancing opportunity across San José’s neighborhoods. Over the past year, the Library engaged residents, staff, partners, and civic leaders in a community-driven process to define the future of library facilities and services. The result is a 20-year Facilities and Customer Experience Plan outlining a responsible, equity-driven strategy for reinvestment, expansion, and long-term system growth.

This Plan builds on the success of the 2000 Library Bond Program, which expanded access to literacy, learning, and neighborhood library services across San José. However, the City’s growth and increasing demand for programs, technology access, and community space have placed new pressures on facilities designed for a smaller population.

The system’s central facility, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, serves as San José’s main library through its joint-use partnership with San José State University and continues to support residents citywide in that role.

**As a result, this Plan focuses primarily on the performance and long-term sustainability of the neighborhood branch network. Analysis of service demand, geographic access, and facility capacity found that almost all of SJPL’s branches are not currently positioned to fully serve San José residents today or over the next 20 years.**

Today, SJPL operates 24 branch libraries and the joint-use Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, totaling approximately 434,500 square feet across the branch system and 475,000 square feet at King Library, totaling about 909,500 square feet systemwide. This study establishes a long-term strategy to address facility deficiencies and bring the branch network closer to industry best practices for square footage per population served. Guided by branch service area populations and anticipated hyper-local population and demographic shifts over the next 20 years, the Plan recommends expanding the branch system to approximately 834,800 square feet, an increase of roughly 400,000 square feet, to support best-in-class library service in the decades ahead.





# AN ASPIRATIONAL 20-YEAR VISION

# ASPIRATIONAL 20-YEAR VISION

- 1 Elevates SJPL's Role in Anchoring San José's Soul
- 2 Amplifies Strategic Outcomes
- 3 Applies Equity-Driven Data
- 4 Activates Partnership Potential
- 5 Uses a Community-Driven Approach
- 6 Aligns with Population Growth and Needs
- 7 Employs a Comprehensive Growth Strategy
- 8 Repositions King Library and SJPL Branches' Relationship
- 9 Provides Staff with a Placemaking Activation Strategy
- 10 Integrates Investment Opportunities and Scenarios
- 11 Exemplifies a Decision-Making Model for Ongoing Success

## **SJPL'S MISSION**

San José Public Library enriches lives by fostering lifelong learning and by ensuring that every member of the community has access to a vast array of ideas and information.

## **SJPL'S VISION IS TO PROVIDE:**

Library services that are known and valued by the culturally diverse community, resulting in use from the broadest base of the public.

A welcoming and lively cultural and lifelong learning center for the community.

Timely and accurate information assistance that will inform and empower the public.

Services and collections that are relevant to community needs, readily accessible, and easy to use.

A well-trained and highly capable staff that reflects the diversity of San José and works well together to provide quality service to all users.

Appropriate facilities which are inviting and well maintained.

Technology that appropriately expands and enhances service.

Defense of intellectual freedom and the confidentiality of each individual's use of the library.

A close working relationship with other libraries, community agencies and organizations that foster cooperation, making the most efficient and effective use of the taxpayer's resources.



# Enriching Silicon Valley Through Cultural Placemaking

Over the next decade, San José Public Library will transform from a collection of neighborhood service points into a living network of cultural anchors that deepen the soul of Silicon Valley. This Plan also envisions a future where each library branch becomes an authentic expression of its community’s identity while contributing to a City-wide ecosystem of learning, connection, and opportunity.

In a region that has mastered technological innovation and economic opportunity, our libraries will amplify these strengths by adding the human infrastructure that makes innovation sustainable and inclusive. This means creating

spaces where Silicon Valley’s diverse workforce can connect across cultural and generational lines, where emerging technologies serve community-identified needs, and where economic opportunity extends beyond traditional tech pathways to include the full spectrum of skills and talents our residents possess.

Through culture-driven and partner-driven strategies, this vision will build upon SJPL’s proven success in education and community programming, expanding the definition of what a library can be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.





# BACKGROUND & OPPORTUNITIES

# Background & Opportunities



San José Public Library’s (SJPL) story begins with the first dedicated library building funded by Andrew Carnegie and constructed in 1901. The cornerstone was laid on February 17, 1902, with the Classical Revival-style building designed by architect William Binder opening its doors on June 6, 1903. Initially located on the San José State Normal School campus, this Carnegie Library served the public until 1937 before becoming the Student Union and eventually being demolished in 1960. Its legacy, however, endures – the current Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library stands on the site of this original Carnegie building, connecting past and present in San José’s commitment to public access to knowledge.

While SJPL grew steadily throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it wasn’t until the 2000s that the system truly flourished. As San José’s population boomed and the City expanded through annexation, it transformed into the heart of Silicon Valley, and a comprehensive capital improvement program emerged that revolutionized the branch network. After voters approved Measure O: Branch Library Bond Measure in November 2000, the branch network grew through a \$212 million fund to build 6 new branches and expand or renovate 14 existing branches. This reinvestment created the contemporary SJPL system – expanding from a handful of aging facilities to 25 locations

employing innovative design, sustainable building practices, and the “San José way” of customer-centered service delivery.

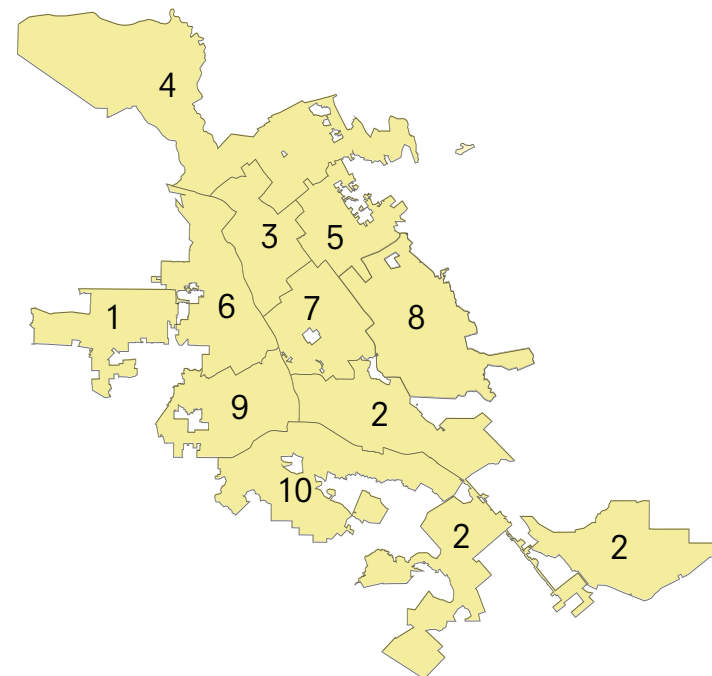
Today, SJPL stands at another inflection point. The facilities that revolutionized library service in the early 2000s require strategic reinvestment, and the role of public libraries has evolved to address broader socio-economic conditions beyond traditional information access. This Plan positions SJPL to lead the next evolution of library facilities – from civic amenities to essential civic infrastructure anchoring healthy, connected, culturally-vibrant communities.

### City Council Districts

The City of San José is divided into ten council districts as shown in the map below (2021). Each district is represented by an elected council member. Following every decade’s census, the district council boundaries are adjusted to meet specific criteria.

### Library and Education Commission

The Library and Education Commission is an advisory body to the City Council that provides guidance on policies, planning, and funding related to library and educational services across the City. The Commission helps advance equitable access to learning resources and supports the continued development of SJPL.



### The Youth Commission (YC)

The City of San José has a Youth Commission that is overseen and managed by SJPL. Mirroring the City Council, each council district has a representative allowing for diverse perspectives and equity throughout the City. Equity between the districts is important, with the City actively providing and advocating for comparable levels of service in each district.

### Current Portfolio: Challenges

San José Public Library oversees 25 locations distributed throughout the nation’s tenth-largest City – a network that stands as testament to the transformative expansion in the early 2000s that revolutionized library service delivery and established SJPL as a national leader. This bold reinvestment created the contemporary system spanning from 6,050 square feet (Alviso Branch) to the innovative 475,000 square feet Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library co-located with San José State University (of which 110,000 square feet serves as SJPL space for public use). SJPL’s 545,000 total square feet of public space serves a 2024 population of approximately 1.1 million residents through programming excellence and creative facility use to serve growing community participation – a tribute to staff commitment to creativity and responsive, culturally-grounded programs and services.

The system reflects San José’s evolution from agricultural to global technology capital, with each branch telling its own story of community connection through architecture spanning nearly a century of civic investment. Demonstrating robust community engagement, total circulation exceeds 1.8 million items and program attendance reaches over 200,000 annually –

success proving that SJPL’s facilities are well-loved and that staff have maximized every square foot to deliver services the community values.

Today, however, the system stands at an inflection point. San José’s continued growth, projected to serve significantly larger and increasingly diverse populations, will require strategic facility investment that matches staff excellence with infrastructure capable of sustaining it. Challenges facing SJPL locations include a lack of square footage to minimally or adequately meet their service area populations, aging infrastructure and technology obsolescence, spatial configurations designed for earlier service models, and needed updates to fully support contemporary service delivery aspirations. This Plan takes a strategic approach to expanding capacity, optimizing facility utilization, and positioning SJPL’s next chapter of facilities innovation to effectively serve San José residents while synergistically collaborating with the City, County, and community partners.

### Infrastructure Age and Deferred Maintenance

Many facilities are approaching or have exceeded typical 20-30 year renovation cycles. While SJPL has reduced deferred maintenance from \$43 million in 2021-22 to approximately \$20 million, significant infrastructure needs persist. Outdated HVAC and fire alarm systems, obsolete lighting fixtures (30-60% non-functional in each building), worn furniture, cosmetic deterioration, and 22 roofs requiring repair or replacement create compounding operational challenges. Facilities generally need paint, carpet replacement, and deep cleaning but lack dedicated budgets for these items. Carpet proves unsustainable for high-traffic public spaces, with newer libraries showing better performance through mixed carpet and hard floor configurations

### Misalignment Between Facility Design and Contemporary Service Models

Built environments designed for 20<sup>th</sup>-century library service models focused on book circulation and quiet reading struggle to accommodate contemporary demands for collaborative spaces, technology access, maker programming, multilingual services, and community gathering. Built-in furniture limits

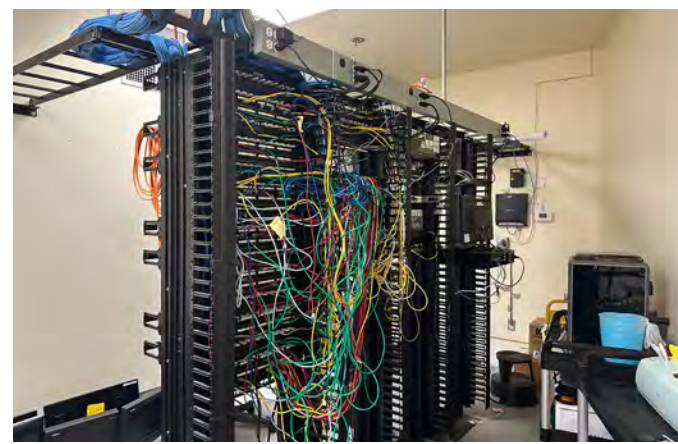
spatial adaptability, front desk configurations designed for traditional checkout now sit unused as the “San José way” emphasizes self-guided experiences, and many facilities lack proper multipurpose programming rooms, maker spaces, or outdoor activation areas that are increasingly preferred and requested by residents.

### Technology and Security Infrastructure Fragmentation

The system operates on fragmented, outdated technology with decentralized security systems, incompatible building management systems – with many of the locations being incompatible with the City’s Building Management System – and cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Bringing older buildings up to current building management system compatibility requires approximately \$800,000 in server and equipment upgrades, while cybersecurity improvements face escalating costs – what was \$400,000 in 2022 has increased to \$650,000. Rather than centralized badge systems at every access point, only King Library has badge access with all other locations relying on manual lock codes. Additionally, security officers must physically visit branches to download footage rather than accessing centralized monitoring.

### Shared Facility Operational Constraints

Several branches operate in shared facilities with varying success. King Library’s SJSU partnership provides residents of San José with a destination library that is able to offer spaces and programs not available in other locations. The generous amount of square footage and positioning within the building allows for an impressive Children’s area, Teen HQ, AI Center, the California Room, and all the spaces shared with SJSU including many meeting rooms and the Center for Digital



Humanities. While there are physical and operational considerations around programming flexibility and community identity, there are many opportunities to strengthen SJPL’s impact. Facilities co-located with Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS) include Almaden, Bascom, and Seven Trees. All three of these libraries could better serve their communities through more intentional, inter-department collaboration and sharing of spaces that are currently limited for Community Center use only.

There are many benefits to these facilities partnerships, including collaborative programming for expanded community reach, reducing operating costs and enhancing strategic resource-sharing. While collaborations with shared facilities partners offer numerous points of engagement, adopting a City-focused partnership strategy is essential. This approach will ensure a holistic and balanced approach to partnership opportunities across a diverse range of entities, reflecting broad community needs and maximizing collective impact.

### Climate Resilience and Long-Term Viability

Some facilities face location-specific challenges requiring broader strategic conversations, such as Alviso’s position in a 50-year flood plain that raises fundamental questions about long-term accessibility and climate resilience in an era of increasing environmental uncertainty with unprecedented extremes.

### Refresh Investments

Public facilities require continued public investment for basic maintenance and operations. Facilities that are as highly utilized as San José Public Library’s branches continually need to renovate and replace well-loved furniture pieces, refresh worn carpet areas and transition to more sustainable flooring solutions, repaint walls, and upgrade lighting for increased sustainability standards.

Over the past several years, SJPL has implemented strategic refresh investments that have had meaningful impacts on community experience. Grant funding has enabled cosmetic improvements at select branches, LED lighting upgrades have been completed at



several locations demonstrating commitment to sustainability, and critical HVAC system replacements have maintained operational continuity during extreme weather. At older facilities, Public Works have implemented patchwork repairs to extend equipment life while more comprehensive system replacements are planned.

These small-scale and mid-scale renovation projects bring pride to community residents and demonstrate the library's commitment to maintaining facilities that honor the diverse communities served. Each refresh project allows branches to better express the unique character of their neighborhoods while maintaining system-wide service standards. Even with this demonstrated commitment to maintenance and operations, all public buildings should be evaluated for larger infrastructure investments at their 30-year mark.

**Alignment Maintenance & Vision Investments**

Every 30 years, public libraries require an investment that is two thirds the cost to build new. To better understand expected maintenance and investment costs, this Plan applied the

Facilities Condition Index (FCI) to SJPL's facilities portfolio.

The FCI is a benchmark in the facility industry to objectively assess the current and projected condition of building assets and anticipate future infrastructure investments in relation to maintaining the buildings for health and safety. FCI is calculated by the total cost of the existing maintenance of a facility divided by its current replacement value<sup>1</sup>.

In the Plan, the FCI illustrates that even without implementing a community-driven vision, SJPL's facilities will require an investment due to routine public facilities maintenance over the next 20 years. This investment maintains the facilities at their current standards by providing basic building safety and functionality.

Anticipating future facilities needs, it is both responsible and prudent for the City of San José and SJPL to align maintenance investments with the Plan. Thus, SJPL has the potential to increase impact for all residents of San José with a greater return than the cost of investment.

# Every 30 years, facilities need substantial investment.

| Branch                              | Year Built | Last Renovated | Years Since Intervention |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Library   | 1998       | 2019           | 7                        |
| Village Square Library              | 2016       | -              | 10                       |
| Bascom Library                      | 2013       | -              | 13                       |
| Educational Park Library            | 1976       | 2013           | 13                       |
| Seven Trees Library                 | 1967       | 2013           | 13                       |
| Santa Teresa Library                | 1984       | 2010           | 16                       |
| East San José Carnegie Library      | 1911       | 2009           | 17                       |
| Joyce Ellington Library             | 1975       | 2008           | 18                       |
| Pearl Avenue Library                | 1971       | 2008           | 18                       |
| Willow Glen Library                 | 1937       | 2008           | 18                       |
| Calabazas Library                   | 1966       | 2007           | 19                       |
| Edenvale Library                    | 2007       | -              | 19                       |
| Hillview Library                    | 1965       | 2007           | 19                       |
| Almaden Library                     | 1971       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Cambrian Library                    | 1961       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Evergreen Library                   | 1976       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Rose Garden Library                 | 1960       | 2006           | 20                       |
| Berryessa Library                   | 1968       | 2005           | 21                       |
| Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Library  | 2005       | -              | 21                       |
| Tully Community Library             | 2005       | -              | 21                       |
| Vineland Library                    | 2004       | -              | 22                       |
| West Valley Library                 | 1964       | 2003           | 23                       |
| Alviso Library                      | 1934       | 1999           | 27                       |
| Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library* | 1978       | 1999           | 27                       |

■ Good Condition 
 ■ Plan Updates Soon 
 ■ Needs Intervention 
 ■ Act Now

\*Biblioteca design update underway



<sup>1</sup>CIOB, BSRIA, IHBC, CIAT, ECA and APM. (2022, August). Facility Condition Index FCI. Designing Buildings - The Construction Wiki. [www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Facility\\_condition\\_index\\_FCI#Defining\\_the\\_facility\\_condition\\_index](http://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Facility_condition_index_FCI#Defining_the_facility_condition_index)

## Why Now?

San José stands at a pivotal moment. Development patterns are shifting, and community needs are intensifying. As neighborhoods grow and diversify, demand for accessible spaces that support learning, connection, and opportunity continues to increase. At the same time, SJPL has demonstrated operational excellence, strong fiscal stewardship, and deep community trust, positioning the library system as one of the city's most valued and effective public institutions.

This Plan positions library facilities as essential civic infrastructure supporting educational outcomes, economic mobility, neighborhood safety, cultural vitality, and digital inclusion.

Alignment with the **San José Children and Youth Services Master Plan** strengthens the City's priorities in Early Learning and Childcare, Learning and Empowerment, and Meaningful and Sustaining Jobs. By expanding and modernizing library spaces, the system can continue to provide safe, welcoming environments where residents of all ages can access knowledge, technology, and community resources. Strategic capital investment will ensure the library system remains equitable, resilient, and capable of serving San José's next generation.

The proposed Plan represents an opportunity to build on past success, close documented service gaps, and secure a sustainable, community-driven future for San José Public Library.





# METHODOLOGY

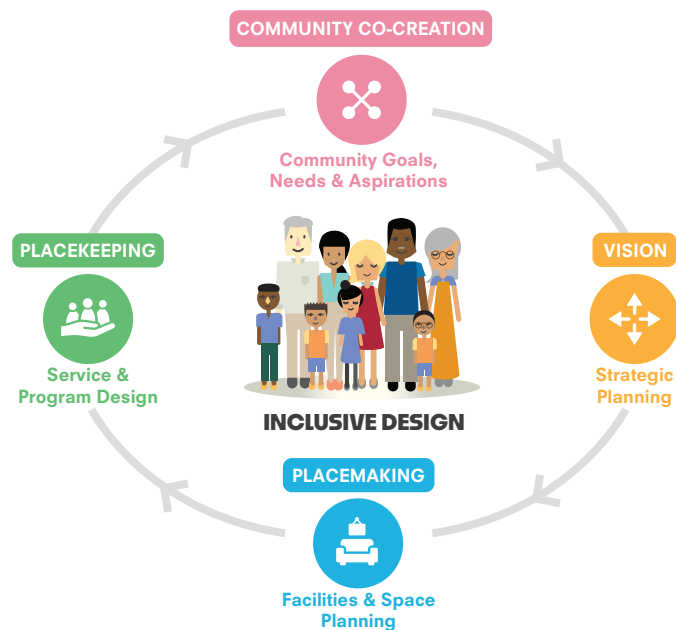


# Methodology

Over a nine-month period, this Plan employed a complex and comprehensive discovery, engagement, and planning process, utilizing a community-centered methodology focused on community co-creation and collective impact to drive development of a plan for current and future capital projects.

## Inclusive Design Process

This approach brings an iterative and participatory planning process that uses the aspirations and ideals that celebrate and center design for intentional learning experiences.



## Critical Inquiry Method

The planning process was also designed to answer the following questions:

1. How should our libraries be designed in service to our communities today?
2. Are SJPL's existing facilities able to adapt to new service models?
3. Do we need to grow our reach? How do we want to grow?
4. What are the development and philanthropic funding opportunities we can tap into?

## Robust Community Engagement and Collaborative City-wide Leadership

Margaret Sullivan Studio facilitated this planning process led by SJPL's Leadership Team. The process involved input from and engagement with over 4,400 community touchpoints including 2,830 survey responses, over 1000 community members engaged in-person at Viva Calle, 180 partner organizations representing thousands of San José residents, 9 focus groups, and 6 one-on-one stakeholder conversations with elected representatives and local educational, nonprofit, and community leaders.

The Leadership Team met regularly throughout the process, including bi-weekly calls to assess inputs and learnings, and to refine strategies for engagement. Three in-person leadership and staff workshops also brought together branch managers, frontline staff, and administrators to collaboratively design service concepts and share branch-specific knowledge. This iterative approach ensured that findings from early engagement informed subsequent activities, creating a responsive process that honored community voice while building toward strategic recommendations rooted in authentic need.

## Guiding Principles for Facilities Transformation

The team was critical in upholding guiding principles across the entire research, community engagement, assessment, and planning process. These principles derive from the vision, mission, and values foundational to SJPL, and the City of San José's priorities for quality-of-life, equity, and economic opportunity for all:

- **Center the community experience:** Design places that celebrate diversity, reinforce community pride and identities, welcome all users, and facilitate socio-economic mixing.
- **Meet the community's learning needs:** Provide learning and growth experiences and environments to accommodate all ages, backgrounds, and learning levels.
- **Amplify community social impact:** Collaborate with community partners by providing access to spaces and knowledgeable, connected staff.
- **Elevate SJPL staff to do their best work:** Provide flexible environments that enable staff to be creative, collaborative, innovative and adaptable to the community's needs.
- **Maximize SJPL's strategic goals:** Serve community members daily and expand reach and impact throughout San José to ensure its facilities continue to serve as essential anchor institutions for the next century.
- **Incorporate urban design best practices:** Provide greater visibility and more welcoming entrances, ensure ease of access promoting public transit use, and align with future growth.
- **Activate SJPL's public assets to best serve the public good:** Elevate San José's City and County assets to identify opportunities.

## New Critical Inputs

Building on SJPL's established strategic priorities, the methodology for this Plan incorporated a new Quality of Life Framework as a critical input for decision-making. This framework comprising six key focus areas, introduced earlier, was

presented to community partners, stakeholders, and staff throughout the engagement process. Encouraging partners to assess library opportunities through these lenses revealed alignment possibilities and collaboration potential that traditional library planning categories might have overlooked. This approach was designed to position libraries as comprehensive civic infrastructure addressing interconnected community needs, to integrate cross-sector best practices, and to create partnerships grounded in shared quality-of-life outcomes that reduce siloed service delivery



## Data-Driven Research

This Plan distinctively applies robust qualitative and quantitative data about life in San José and Santa Clara County, from housing and transportation patterns to socioeconomic conditions, demographics, education, and regional projections. This data-driven approach incorporated current data from multiple authoritative sources, including SJPL's proprietary Equity Index Tool, SJPL's comprehensive Programming Analysis Dashboard documenting service delivery patterns and community engagement across all branches, the City of San José's General Plan providing land use and development context, and Plan Bay Area's regional growth projections and transportation frameworks. Together, these resources generated a customized assessment framework to evaluate facilities needs, prioritize equity-driven investments, and align library expansion with regional development patterns.

SJPL's Equity Index Tool proved particularly valuable in revealing disparities between service capacity and community need, ensuring recommendations address rather than perpetuate inequitable resource distribution across San José's diverse neighborhoods.

**Benchmarks**

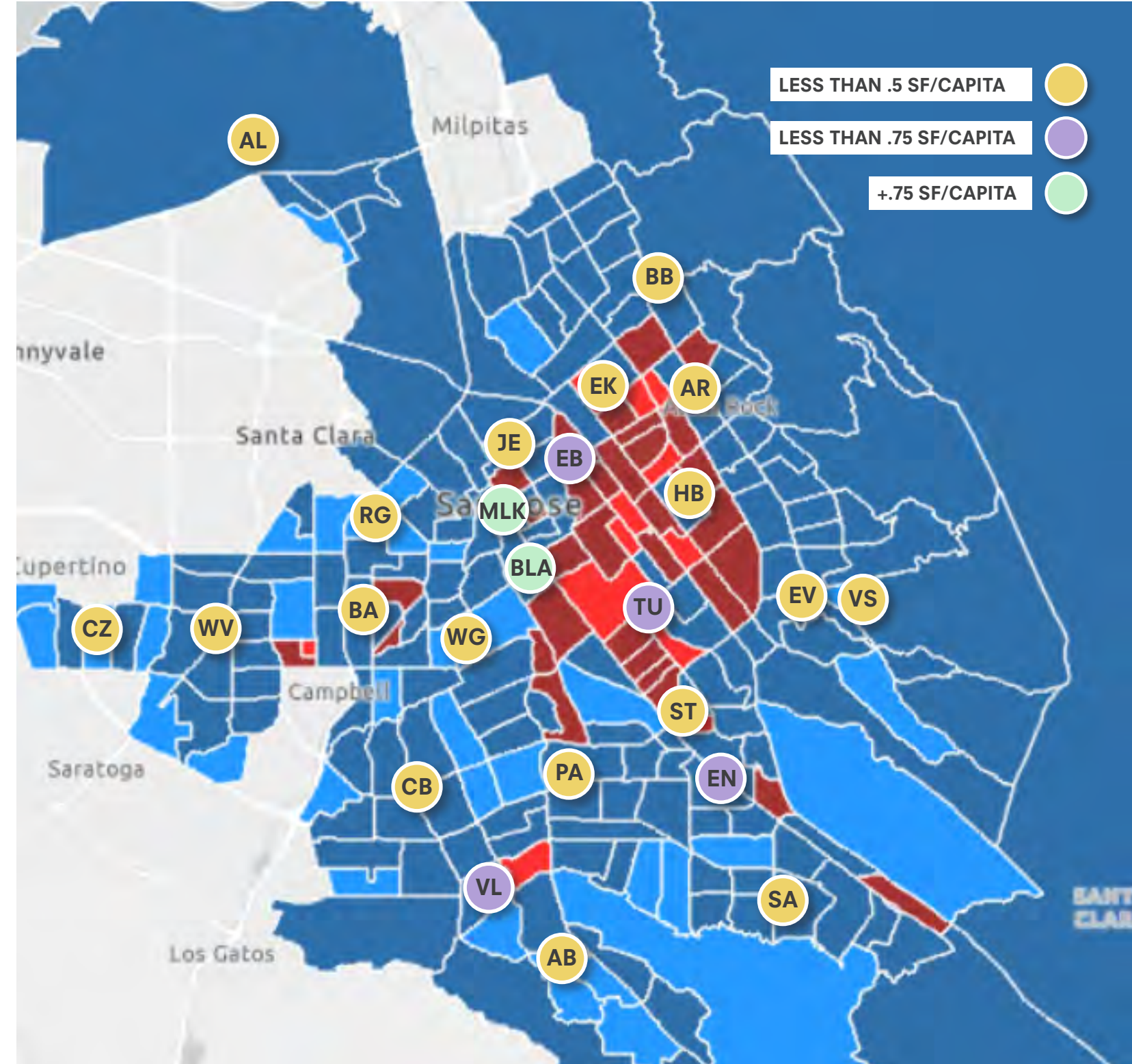
To gauge how SJPL's facilities are performing, the Plan evaluated the system's facilities against industry best practices and national standards for library systems serving comparable populations and service areas. This benchmarking research examined peer library systems across the country to establish baseline metrics for square footage per population served, distribution of facilities relative to service area geography, and optimal branch sizing for effective service delivery. Examining square footage per capita allows library systems to evaluate how well physical library space aligns with the size and needs of the communities they serve. This metric provides a foundational benchmark for understanding spatial equity across branches, revealing where facilities may be undersized relative to demand, and where they may be adequately or even generously resourced. By comparing the total square footage of each branch to the population of its defined service area, we can assess whether residents have sufficient access to space for reading, studying, gathering, programming, and other core library services. A lower square footage per

capita may indicate that a branch is operating under spatial pressure; struggling to meet demand for seating, study rooms, technology access, and flexible space for programming.

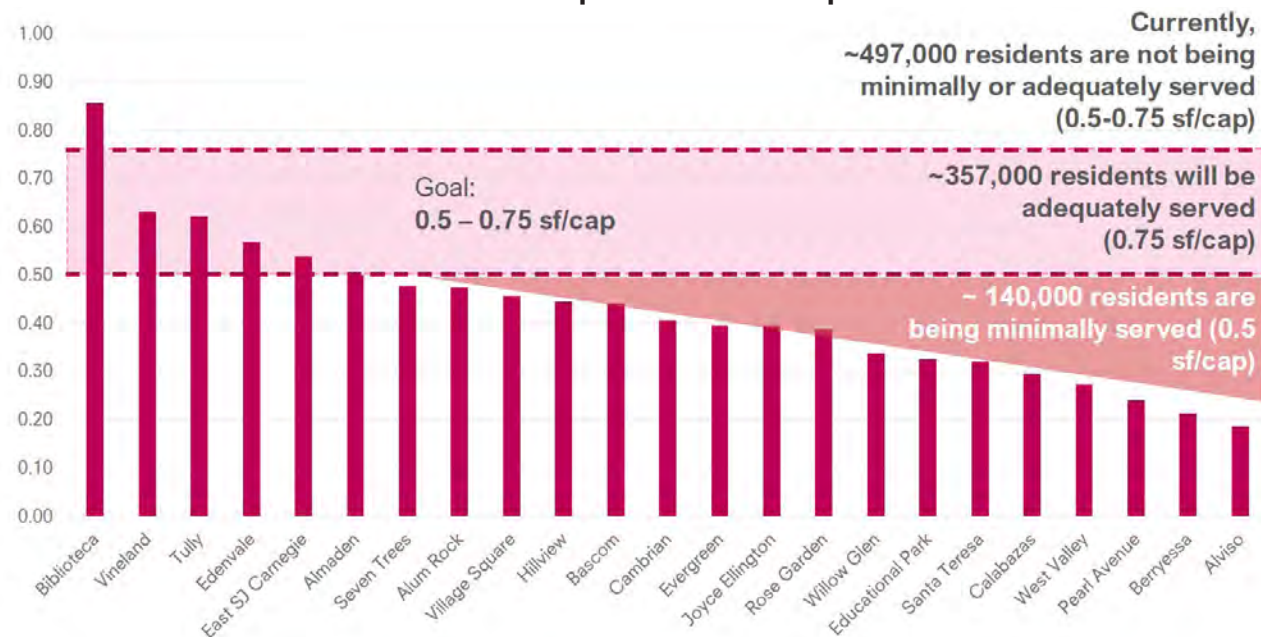
In the context of San José's diverse neighborhoods and service populations, this analysis helps to identify where future investment may be needed to right-size facilities, especially in high-growth or high-equity areas where spatial limitations may be constraining service delivery.

This study used a 0.5 square feet per capita as the threshold for residents being minimally served and 0.75 square feet per capita as residents being adequately served. This Plan mapped current capacity against need across all 23 branches and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Main Library, ensuring all San José residents receive adequate library service.

As illustrated in the chart below, square feet per capita benchmarks (by branch) are color coded on top of SJPL's Equity Index Map. We can see that there is not a clear pattern that would suggest an equity issue as there are square footage per capita deficiencies throughout the City. However, there are barriers to access in areas of higher vulnerability (red) that may include unsafe pedestrian crossings, spotty public transit service, and/or a lack of access to a personal vehicle.



**Branch-Wide Square Feet Per Capita**



**Equity Index Score**

- 70 to 120 = higher priority
- 60 to 70 = high priority
- 40 to 60 = aligns with most of SJ
- <40 = lower priority

**Legend**

- |                         |                          |                        |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. AB- Almaden          | 10. EK- Educational Park | 19. SA- Santa Teresa   |
| 2. AL- Alviso           | 11. EN- Edenvale         | 20. ST- Seven Trees    |
| 3. AR- Alum Rock        | 12. EV- Evergreen        | 21. TU- Tully          |
| 4. BA- Bascom           | 13. HB- Hillview         | 22. VL- Vineland       |
| 5. BB- Berryessa        | 14. JE- Joyce Ellington  | 23. VS- Village Square |
| 6. BLA- Biblioteca      | 15. MLK- King            | 24. WG- Willow Glen    |
| 7. CB- Cambrian         | 16. MP- Mt. Pleasant     | 25. WV- West Valley    |
| 8. CZ- Calabazas        | 17. PA- Pearl            |                        |
| 9. EB- East SJ Carnegie | 18. RG- Rose Garden      |                        |

**SMALL >10,000 SF**



Alviso



Mt. Pleasant

**MEDIUM 10,000 - 15,000 SF**



East SJ Carnegie



Willow Glen



Joyce Ellington



Calabazas



Pearl



Berryessa

**Co-Located**



Almaden



Bascom



Seven Trees

**Central**



MLK Jr.

**LARGE 15,000 - 25,000 SF**



West Valley



Biblioteca



Santa Teresa



Village Square



Tully



Vineland



Rose Garden



Evergreen



Edenvale



Educational Park



Hillview



Cambrian



Alum Rock

# Developed Framework of Branch Typologies

Understanding each branch’s growth potential requires systematic assessment of three critical dimensions: ability to grow in place through building expansion or renovation, ability to grow in community by leveraging existing civic assets and partnerships, and ability to grow through alignment with adjacent future development. This Plan applied a comprehensive assessment framework to all branches (evaluating site typologies, zoning capacity, partnership opportunities, and coordination with the City’s planned growth areas) to identify realistic expansion pathways for each facility.

## Existing Library Typologies

SJPL’s 25 locations span a wide range of facility sizes and configurations, from compact neighborhood libraries under 10,000 SF to larger community-scale facilities exceeding 25,000 SF, plus the unique King Library partnership. The Plan categorized branches by size to assess capacity, service delivery potential, and expansion opportunities based on zoning constraints, site conditions, and physical development feasibility.

**Small branches** (under 10,00 SF) provide essential neighborhood-level access but face significant constraints in programming capacity, technology infrastructure, and flexible space configuration.

Small library branches are similar to a one room schoolhouse. One service or program can be done very well, but are too small to offer a variety of spaces to support concurrent programming.

**Medium branches** (10,000-14,000 SF) offer moderate programming capacity but often struggle to accommodate concurrent activities, full service delivery, and the flexible spaces needed for contemporary library services. Many facilities in this category would benefit from strategic expansion.

Medium library branches can offer a variety of spaces but are limited in size. Planning is critical to achieving operational optimization. To facilitate frequent transformation of spaces, flexible furniture and storage are essential.

**Large branches** (14,000-25,000 SF), termed “progressive marketplace” facilities, provide the scale necessary for comprehensive service delivery including multiple programming spaces, adequate technology infrastructure, flexible configurations, and capacity for robust partnership programming. These branches demonstrate the service potential achievable when facilities match community need and contemporary library aspirations.

Larger library branches can function with greater operational efficiencies with dedicated areas that can work hard for the community with flexible, adaptable spaces to allow for concurrent and vibrant activations.

**Co-located branches** share facilities with community centers, recreation facilities, or other civic infrastructure. These partnerships offer potential benefits including shared operational costs and cross-programming opportunities, but require careful navigation to ensure library service excellence and operational flexibility.

**King Library**, as the unique partnership with SJSU, operates at a scale and complexity distinct from the branch network, requiring specialized strategic treatment addressed separately in this Plan.

## Site Typologies

Through review of all branch locations, three site typologies have been identified: infill, park adjacent, and shared. While there may be some overlapping qualities, these typologies speak to the capacity for the Library to physically expand in its current location.

**Infill** library sites are bound on multiple sides by existing buildings, development, or infrastructure. The library branches are hemmed in with little room to grow in any direction.



**Opportunities:** It is possible to capture some additional square footage through building additions. In most cases, this would not yield a significant gain and/or would require a new approach to on-site parking. Many of these sites have significant untapped zoning capacity.

**Examples:** Santa Teresa, Cambrian, Pearl, and Alum Rock.

**Park Adjacent** library sites are bound on at least one side by a park or open space.

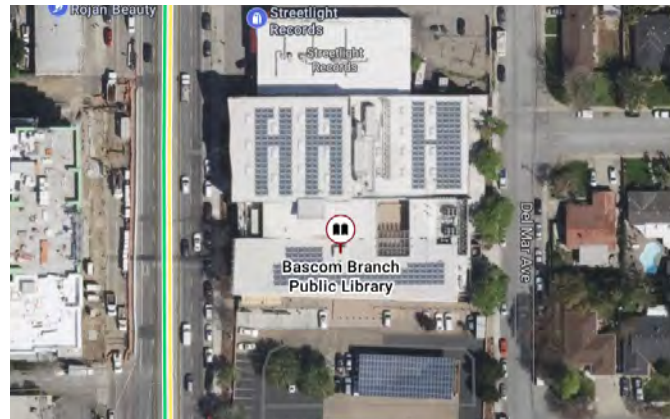


**Opportunities:** In coordination with PRNS, these branch locations have the potential to expand into the adjacent park space. It is common

that the library and the park share a lot and zoning, which would allow for potential facility additions into park space to be viable in terms of conformity with the City's zoning regulations.

**Examples:** Hillview, Berryessa, and Evergreen

**Shared** library sites are facilities with one structure housing the library and a community center that also share parking.



**Opportunities:** These sites can better share spaces and strengthen their partnerships to better serve their communities.

**Examples:** Seven Trees, Bascom, and Almaden

# Method for Assessing Development Potential

Shown below is the method for assessing development potential applied throughout this Plan to evaluate expansion opportunities at each branch location. This framework provides a systematic approach for determining how facilities can grow, whether through on-site

additions, partnerships with community assets, or alignment with future development, ensuring recommendations are grounded in realistic physical, operational, and strategic possibilities. SJPL can continue applying this method as a decision-making tool for future evaluations.



# Envision San José 2040



**GENERAL PLAN**  
Adopted November 1, 2011  
As Amended on October 24, 2024

**Urban Village:** Established in the Envision San José General Plan, these area plans are to be developed with local communities with an emphasis on mixed-use development, access to transit, and walkable. There are 60 urban villages envisioned across San José. Many of these plans have not yet been created, while a handful have already been co-created with communities, and a few are in the process of implementation. These areas could provide great opportunities for public-private partnerships to build new library facilities in mixed-use development.

### Informed Analyses for Growth

This foundation of data-rich inputs and broad engagement enabled an informed analysis of SJPL's existing facilities and library utilization to identify ideal distribution of services for optimal impact. Central to this approach is SJPL's Equity Index Tool, a data-driven assessment system incorporating weighted socioeconomic variables including race/ethnicity, income levels, educational attainment, language diversity, housing stability, and access to resources. This equity lens, combined with analysis of population density, transit accessibility, proximity to schools and community assets, and geographic service gaps, provided comprehensive understanding of where facility investment would generate greatest community benefit.

As introduced earlier, this methodology further incorporated review of local and regional planning documents to understand areas of anticipated growth and demographic change. Assessment of surrounding civic assets revealed partnership opportunities and co-location potential.

Analysis of existing branch utilization patterns, programming capacity, and spatial constraints identified where current facilities limit staff's ability to deliver services communities need and deserve.

### Development Studies

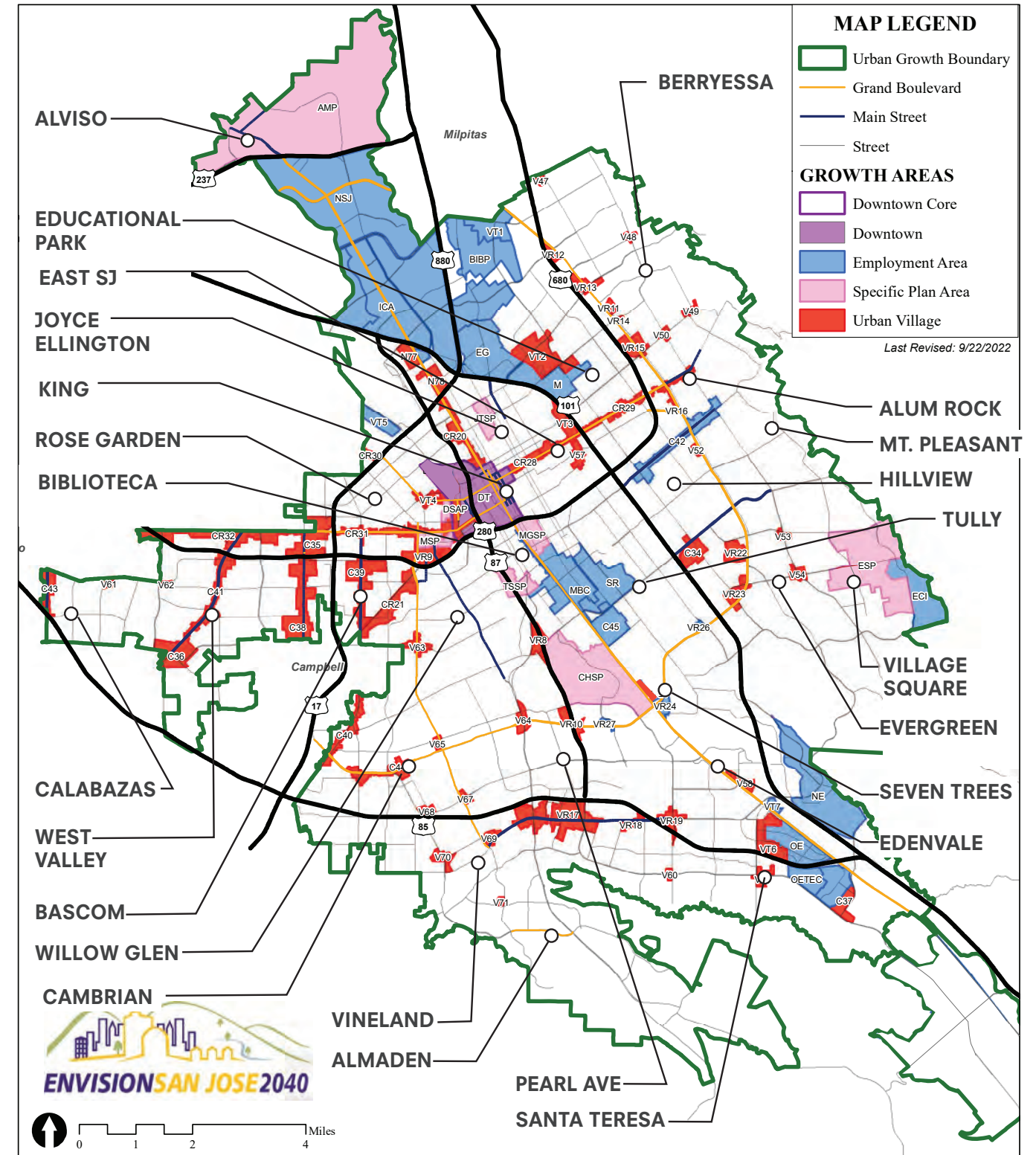
The methodology incorporates an analysis of local general plans including San José's 2040 General Plan and Plan Bay Area 2050. San José's 2040 General Plan identifies "Planned Growth Areas" shown in the adjacent diagram. Three key growth areas are identified:

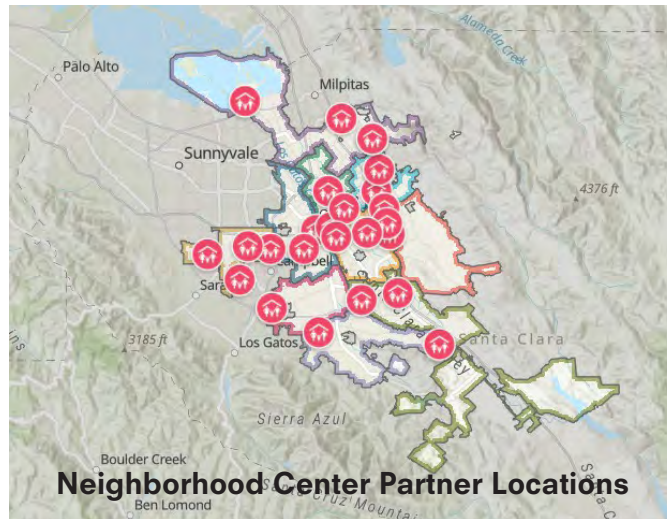
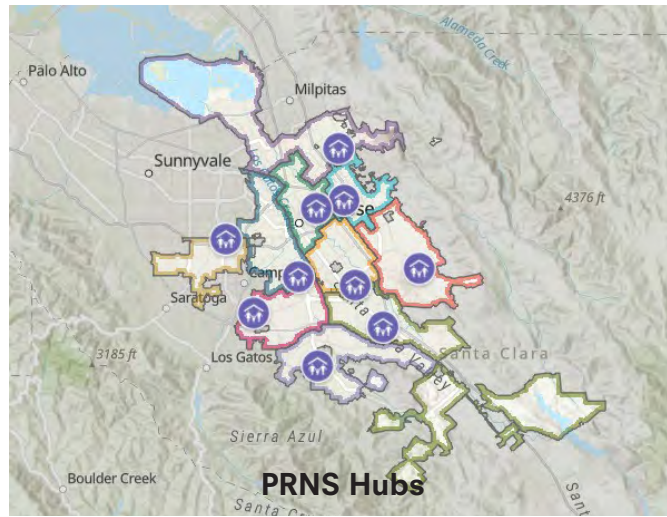
**Employment Area:** Areas where significant employment opportunities are anticipated. These areas are often a limited use of industrial and/or commercial and do not anticipate significant residential development. Adjacent library facilities could support workers or facilitate career pathways to support local industries.

**Specific Plan Area:** Areas that have vision for future development with detailed plans and guidelines. These plans have multiple land uses for a mix of residential and other development. These plans were adopted in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of these plans are fully built-out /implemented while others are partially implemented. Adjacent libraries may see that they are minimally serving their communities following growth in the early 2000s.

# Growth Areas

ENVISION SAN JOSE 2040 GENERAL PLAN  
PLANNED GROWTH AREAS DIAGRAM





### Community Centers

Our conversations and research revealed significant opportunity to leverage the existing network of community centers owned by the City of San José. In the 1990s, the City constructed 30 community centers across San José in an ambitious effort to provide neighborhood-level civic gathering spaces. When the late 2000s recession hit, this proved unsustainable – many community centers closed as operational budgets evaporated, leaving facilities briefly underutilized or shuttered.

Today, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) operates 10 “Hub” community centers serving each of San José’s districts. Several library branches already successfully co-locate with community center “Hubs” at Almaden, Bascom, and Seven Trees. Other community centers are now operated by third parties through an RFP process and lease

agreements. Of varying sizes and locations throughout San José, these remaining community centers are identified as “Neighborhood Center Partner Program” (NCPP) locations which are operated by local non-profit groups.

This understanding of existing City assets suggests opportunities for library expansion:

- Could SJPL take over operation of select community centers where library presence would bridge critical service gaps?
- Would co-location in these existing civic facilities provide the square footage and programming flexibility needed to meet equity goals more cost-effectively than new construction?
- Could SJPL have greater synergies with existing co-locations?

### San José Housing

San José, like the rest of Silicon Valley, is deeply and widely affected by a housing crisis. More than half of renters are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on rent, and the City has only met a fraction of its targets for affordable housing, leaving a deficit of roughly 6,000 affordable units. County-wide, the issues continue with housing production failing to keep up with population and job growth.

Recognizing this urgency, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A in November 2016, a \$950 million affordable housing bond that funds new development, acquisition, and preservation for low and moderate-income residents. The bond has supported thousands of affordable units across the county, including projects in San José such as Alvarado Park and Bellarmino Place. The City of San José has since expanded its Housing and Homelessness Response efforts, coordinating shelter, supportive housing, and neighborhood-scale interventions. New modular housing, such as the new project on Branham Lane across from the Edenvale Library, illustrates how housing investments can take many forms and reshape the City’s civic landscape.

As the City continues to grow, libraries have the opportunity to play a more active role in San José’s housing ecosystem.





# FINDINGS & ALIGNMENTS

## Findings & Alignments

The following outlines this Plan's key findings regarding opportunities for alignment with the City of San José and San José Public Library's objectives, community aspirations for their branches, how library investments can address demographic and equity issues, and how an investment and growth plan can optimize resources for maximum impact.

### Diversity and Cultural History is San José's Strength

San José's identity is fundamentally shaped by waves of immigration and cultural transformation built upon layers of history. Before Silicon Valley's technological boom, the Santa Clara Valley flourished as the renowned "Garden City" where 4.5 million fruit trees by 1890 and specialized farming operations created not just economic prosperity, but cultural foundations built on the relationship between human labor, natural abundance, and immigrant communities working the land. This agricultural legacy established patterns of cultural diversity and immigrant entrepreneurship that continue to define the City today. San José's library system reflects and serves this extraordinary diversity. SJPL maintains collections in Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Persian, Japanese, Korean, and multiple other languages distributed throughout the network. Branches like Biblioteca Latinoamericana provide dedicated bilingual services, while Family Learning Centers at multiple locations provide specialized programs and resources to serve immigrant communities, achieving measurable outcomes; 98% of Career Online High School participants identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC), with 96% of Resilience Corps participants also BIPOC, demonstrating SJPL's capacity to reach and serve historically underserved populations effectively.

This diversity represents San José's greatest asset for the future. As captured through extensive community engagement, residents across all backgrounds expressed desire for

libraries that honor cultural identity while fostering cross-cultural connections. This aspiration is embodied in the legacy of Dr. Roberto Cruz, a nationally recognized educator, activist, and champion of bilingual education whose work helped shape San José's East Side and whose name is carried forward through the Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Branch Library.

Dr. Cruz dedicated his career to advancing educational equity, bilingual instruction, and community empowerment at a time when Spanish-language education and culturally affirming curricula helped elevate the voices, histories, and lived experiences of Latinx and immigrant communities, positioning education as a pathway to civic participation and social mobility. Libraries, like schools, served as critical access points for knowledge, language, and cultural affirmation; roles that remain central to SJPL's mission today.



The Plan positions cultural diversity not as a challenge to accommodate, but as the foundation for excellence – ensuring that every facility investment, partnership strategy, and service innovation honors the multicultural, multigenerational character that makes San José an exemplary model for 21st-century American cities navigating demographic change.



**Placemaking as Foundation for Community Impact**

A “place” connotes an emotional attachment to a piece of land – it encompasses the layered meanings, memories, and relationships that transform space into something personally and collectively significant. Placemaking, however, is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces that capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and well-being. SJPL has a unique capacity to excel at this transformation because it serves as settings for life’s daily rituals: the parent reading to a child, the student discovering new ideas, the neighbors gathering for community conversations, the immigrant practicing English. These moments accumulate overtime, creating the emotional bonds that turn a location into a cherished place – much as generations of farming families once cultivated both the land and the cultural fabric of the valley.



In an era when many accessible gathering spaces have disappeared, community members are ready to embrace libraries as places centering all aspects of life, traditional and non-traditional, recognizing that in contemporary San José, information access and community connection are inseparable. This finding informed recommendations for flexible multipurpose spaces, robust partnership infrastructure, extended hours, and design supporting both programmed activities and informal gathering.

To honor and build on San José’s strengths in diversity and cultural history, our Plan recognizes that effective libraries must behave as active placemakers – places that cultivate the emotional connections that bind communities together and to the land they share. This means designing facilities that feel welcoming to diverse cultural traditions, programming that celebrates both heritage and innovation, and partnerships that reflect the full spectrum of community assets and inspirations, continuing the valley’s tradition of nurturing growth and possibility.

**Community Members Want All of Their Resources in One Place**

A consistent finding across all community engagement activities revealed strong desire for libraries to serve as comprehensive community anchors where diverse needs can be met in one accessible location. Rather than fragmenting services across multiple institutions and addresses, residents envision libraries as recreational and social infrastructure hubs containing the full spectrum of resources supporting quality of life.

**Partners Need The Library to Expand Quality of Life Impact and Their Services**

The community partner breakfast engaging 180 organizations revealed a critical finding: partners view SJPL as essential infrastructure for achieving their missions. From educational institutions to social service providers, partners consistently identified need for physical space access and collaboration opportunities that libraries uniquely enable as trusted, universally accessible anchors.

Partners recognize that libraries reach populations they struggle to connect with independently. SJPL’s established trust across diverse communities, multilingual capacity, and commitment to barrier-free access create pathways for partners to extend their impact. Whether providing health screenings, offering legal clinics, conducting workforce training, or facilitating cultural programming, partners can leverage library spaces and relationships to serve residents who might otherwise be disconnected from specialized services.

By positioning libraries as platforms that amplify community capacity rather than standalone service providers, SJPL can multiply quality-of-



life impact far beyond what library staff alone could achieve – fulfilling the vision of libraries as connective tissue binding together the ecosystem of organizations working toward shared community wellbeing goals.

**Strategic Alignment, Redefined Standards, and Agile Spaces**

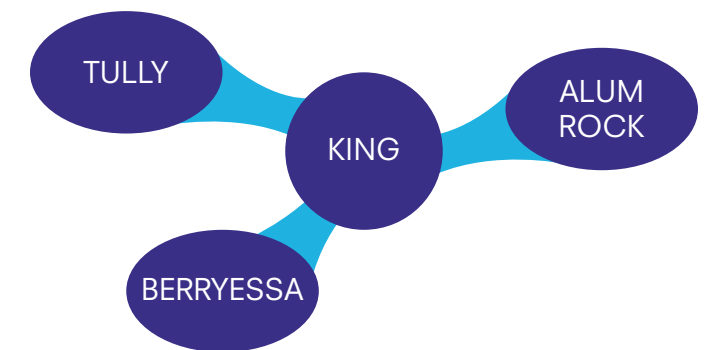
The planning process confirmed that SJPL’s facilities transformation must align with City and County development planning, redefine traditional library metrics to reflect cultural responsiveness and equity priorities, and provide the flexible, adaptable spaces contemporary service delivery demands. As San José faces uncertain growth patterns with population increases concentrated in specific districts, housing affordability displacing long-time residents, and widening socio-economic disparities, library facilities must anticipate rather than react to demographic change by coordinating with planned growth areas defined in the General Plan and Plan Bay Area projections.

Most critically, findings revealed that rigid, single-purpose spaces designed for 20th-century service models constrain SJPL’s capacity to deliver the concurrent programming, partnership services, cultural celebrations, and flexible community uses that residents expect and deserve. Buildings designed for book circulation and quiet reading must be transformed or replaced with adaptable infrastructure to

support a customized recipe of collections and technologies.

**A Unique Hub and Spoke System**

SJPL operates as a unique hub and spoke system where King Library serves as the downtown anchor while 24 neighborhood branches function as interconnected community assets. Unlike traditional hierarchies, SJPL’s system reflects how San José residents actually use libraries – fluidly moving across multiple branch locations based on convenience, programming offerings, and community connections rather than rigid service area boundaries.



Community engagement revealed that patrons do not limit themselves to their geographically closest branch; instead, they utilize multiple locations within the system based on programming schedules, after-school pickup logistics, weekend activities, and specialized services. This fluid usage demonstrates the system’s strength as an interconnected network

## Individual Branch Assessments

Through observations, interviews, and discussions over the course of the discovery and engagement processes, the Plan developed assessments for each branch location. These examine current strengths and challenges, what communities especially need from their branches, relevant demographic trends or shifts, and opportunities there might be for aligning resources to enhance services for community impact.

Neighborhood locations are valued as vibrant neighborhood hubs, and provide an infrastructure across the City and County to address equity needs such as digital access, technological proficiencies, and quality-of-life amenities.

The following outlines opportunities identified in response to how the community already uses the facilities, inputs from community surveys, and the deep knowledge SJPL staff have about the communities they serve.



**Alviso** is a small, intimate facility serving a close-knit community with deep historical roots. The branch was built in 1934 and underwent renovation in 1999. Located near the southernmost point of the Bay near the Guadalupe River in a flood-prone area, the branch faces long-term resilience questions requiring strategic conversation about its future. The community values the dedicated staff and friendly atmosphere, but the facility's size and location constraints limit programming capacity.



**Almaden**, nestled in the southern region of San José, serves a well-established community with suburban charm, scenic foothills, and a strong sense of neighborhood identity. With a diverse and engaged population, Almaden is home to top-performing schools, expansive parks, and a mix of long-time residents and growing families. The Almaden Branch has strong family participation and high circulation that reflects its affinity toward engaging their community. The facility was built in 1971 and renovated in 2006. It is currently co-located with the Almaden Community Center, with 20,000 SF dedicated solely to SJPL. Though this facility model has been successful, with 20 years since its last intervention, the library experiences some operational difficulties with changing community needs and public space expectations.



**Bascom Branch Library**, located in the heart of San José, opened in 2013 and is one of the newer facilities in the SJPL system. It is co-located with the Bascom Community Center and combined spans 40,000 SF.

Though the library has a dedicated service area population, the branch sees lower circulation

compared to other facilities in the system and is located in a high-priority area based on the Equity Index, where equitable access to learning, technology, and support services is essential.

The library's positioning on the site with the community center has created several challenges such as the separation of the library's spaces like the community room and classroom to the second floor, while the bulk of the library remains on the ground level. With strategic facility updates and stronger interdepartmental coordination, the Bascom Branch has the potential to become a more vibrant, accessible and responsive hub for its community.



**Berryessa Branch Library**, as the heart of its community, serves as a vital after-school hub for the many elementary and middle school students in the area and their families. The 15,000 SF facility was built in 1968 and last renovated in 2005. The branch boasts the highest annual gate count in the SJPL system and the second-highest circulation.

Although Berryessa is among the highest-performing branches in the SJPL system, it struggles to adequately serve its modern community demands. Because of the high number of annual visitors and large, dedicated children and family populations, the branch is in need of more space for educational resources for youth and caretakers. Despite these growing needs, Berryessa has a loyal community that love the staff and resources that keep them coming back for generations.



### Biblioteca Latinoamericana

Located in San José's Washington-Guadalupe neighborhood, Biblioteca Latinoamericana is an 18,350 SF facility that serves community with a strong focus on Latino and Spanish-speaking residents. Built in 1978 and last renovated in 1999, the branch shares its site with the Washington United Youth Center, creating a shared civic hub for youth and families.

The branch offers robust programming, yet sees low traditional library use, with circulation at 11,128 and only 1,309 annual holds, pointing to potential barriers in access or service alignment. At the time of this Plan, SJPL is advancing a design refresh to improve both the interior and exterior and increase the library's visibility and usability.



### Calabazas

The Calabazas Branch Library is one of SJPL's smaller facilities at 10,400 SF, though it efficiently serves its nearly 34,000 residents living in its service area. Located in West San José, it is across from Calabazas Park, offering a scenic and well-trafficked setting that connects the library to a vibrant outdoor space.

The surrounding neighborhood is primarily residential, characterized by tree-lined streets, established single-family homes, and a highly educated, more affluent population. Families, retirees, and long-time residents contribute to a community that values stability, education, and high-quality public amenities. The area is known for its access to good schools, clean parks, and a tight-knit community.

However, the library lacks quiet space entirely, limiting individual work and solo study opportunities within the community. Because this branch is nearly 20 years old, the facility is facing some issues such as high sun exposure and overheating in the community room and light failures throughout the branch that leave areas of the reading space in darkness.

Despite its modest size, the Calabazas Branch maintains steady use and has the potential to serve as a more integrated hub for lifelong learning, leisure, and civic connection, especially due to its proximity to the adjacent park space.



**Cambrian**

Located in a well-established residential area of South San José, the Cambrian Branch Library is a cornerstone of its community, both in footprint and impact. At 27,000 SF, it is the largest branch in the SJPL system and serves a sizable population of approximately 67,000 residents. Originally constructed in 1961 and extensively renovated in 2006, the facility continues to serve as a high-performing and high-traffic community hub.

Cambrian consistently leads the entire library system in annual circulation, with over 190,000

materials circulated annually, and maintains one of the highest gate counts across all SJPL locations. The branch also leads the system in number of total annual holds and has high program attendance. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, home to families, professionals, and retirees.

Despite its size and success, the Cambrian Branch faces some limitations due to its aging infrastructure. While the building remains functional, it is not fully optimized for modern library service delivery.



**Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock**

As a vital anchor to San José’s East Side, the Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Branch serves a vibrant and historically underserved community with deep cultural roots and strong intergenerational ties. Built in 2005, the 26,000 SF facility is the second largest in the SJPL system and serves a high-priority population of approximately 55,000 residents.

Despite its size and gate count, the branch experiences relatively low circulation and low hold activity, suggesting potential barriers to deeper engagement with the library’s materials and collections. Additionally, the facility has never undergone a significant renovation since its opening nearly 22 years ago.

Looking ahead, reinvestment in the facility through renovation, modernization, and reimagined space use offers a major opportunity to better align services with the needs of this growing and engaged community, and to honor the library’s namesake.



**East San José Carnegie**

The East San José Carnegie Branch Library is a historic landmark, originally built in 1911 as part of the Carnegie library investments and is one of the oldest public library buildings in San José. At just 12,000 SF, the small facility stands as a symbol of enduring public investment in education and success, though its age and design now present significant challenges in meeting the needs of a dynamic 21st-century community.

Serving a diverse and high-need population with a score on the high-end range of SJPL’S Equity Index, the branch is located in a vibrant neighborhood in East San José with deep cultural roots.

Though the circulation, gate count, and program attendance are lower at this location, the community’s potential and need remain strong.



**Edenvale**

The Edenvale Branch Library, built in 2007 and spanning 25,000 SF is one of the larger in the SJPL system. Serving a population of nearly 44,000 residents in South San José, the branch

plays a steady and reliable role in meeting community needs. With a mid-range Equity Index score, the area reflects moderate need, and the library has consistently provided dependable access to essential resources and services.

However, as the surrounding community grows and evolves, Edenvale will need to adjust to better provide 21st century library services. Edenvale is well-positioned to partner with the Edenvale Community Center to expand its services and reach.



**Educational Park**

The Educational Park Branch Library is a dynamic, high-engagement hub serving a richly diverse area of the City. The facility stands out in the SJPL system for its exceptional programming volume, hosting 920 programs annually that draw in nearly 19,000 attendees, the highest program attendance across all branches. It also maintains one of the largest gate counts in the system.

The branch sits on the campus of Independence High School, making it a natural magnet for students especially during after-school hours. The Equity Index Score for Educational Park’s service area indicates a higher-need population. The Educational Park Branch Library is well situated in its community to meet some of these needs, but there are opportunities to deepen the library’s reach.



**Evergreen**

Built in 1976, the Evergreen Branch Library has over 21,500 SF and is a well-utilized and high-performing facility in East San José. Like many other branches in the SJPL system, it was renovated in the early 2000s, specifically 2006. It is situated along Aborn Road, a main thoroughfare, adjacent to Aborn Park & Playground and Thompson Creek. This branch has a service population of over 54,000 residents in a largely suburban and more affluent area. Evergreen consistently ranks among the top SJPL branches for circulation, with over 108,000 annual check outs, reflecting a strong community of readers and engaged users. The surrounding Evergreen neighborhood is known for its cultural diversity, with a significant Asian American population.

number of attendees. However, its circulation remains low, indicating that the library functions more as a gathering place and service hub rather than a traditional lending center.



**Joyce Ellington**

Located just north of Downtown San José, the Joyce Ellington Branch Library is a 14,500 SF facility built in 1975 and renovated in 2008. Nestled within a historically rich and tightly knit residential area, the branch serves a well-resourced service area.

Library usage is consistent, with medium to low circulation, programming, and gate count. The branch remains well-integrated into its neighborhood and continues to meet the steady needs of its service area, though as the region grows and diversifies, Joyce Ellington’s role as a local hub will remain important within a larger strategy to ensure equitable library access across Central and North San José.



**Hillview**

The Hillview Branch Library, a 21,000 SF facility located in East San José, plays a vital role in serving a high-priority. Originally built in 1965 and last renovated in 2007, the branch is approaching two decades since its last major renovation. Hillview stands out for its extensive programming, offering 605 annual programs and drawing a high



**Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood**

The smallest branch at 2,200 SF operates as a “bridge branch” model with high programming activity (243 programs, 4,443 attendance) relative to its size, demonstrating effective neighborhood-scale service delivery. Operating under a lease agreement with the school district that owns the property, Public Works handles maintenance with focus on HVAC (many service calls to keep the building cool in summer) and ensuring sufficient lighting. The facility faces no major accessibility problems but serves as a small library bridging gaps in library access rather than a full-service branch.



**Pearl Avenue**

The Pearl Avenue Branch Library, located in South San José, is a 14,000 SF facility that has served its community since 1971 and was last renovated in 2008. With a service area population of nearly 59,000 residents, one of the largest in the SJPL system, the branch provides just 0.24 SF per capita – among the lowest across all locations.

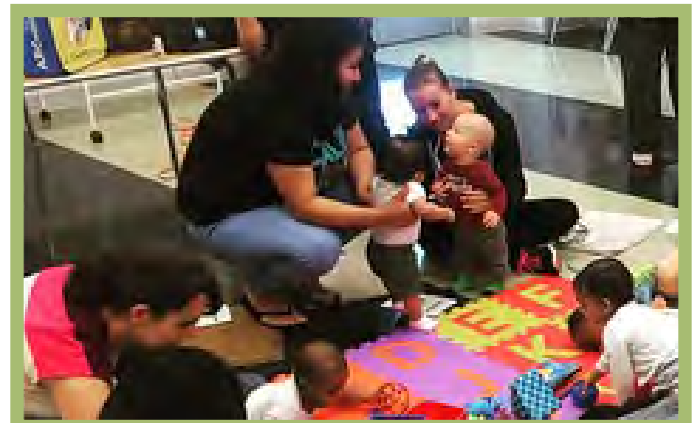
Despite this, Pearl Avenue maintains moderate circulation. However, it currently hosts a lower volume of programming, just 149 events a year, making it the second lowest in total programs systemwide.

As community needs grow and expectations for flexible, inclusive public spaces evolve, the Pearl Avenue Branch is increasingly constrained.



**Rose Garden**

The Rose Garden Branch Library, named for its proximity to the San José Municipal Rose Garden, is an 18,500 SF facility and one of the only two-story branches in the SJPL system. It was built in 1960 and renovated in 2006, serving a service population of around 45,000 residents. The layout contributes to constraints: the library’s large community room and ground-floor parking garage occupy the first floor, while the rest of the library is entirely on the second floor. These spatial limitations mean that certain services are less accessible or visible than they might otherwise be in a more optimally organized facility. As usage patterns evolve, the branch’s role could be enhanced by addressing these design and functional gaps.



**Santa Teresa**

Tucked into the foothills of South San José, the Santa Teresa Branch Library serves as a vital connector in one of the City’s most populous residential areas. Built in 1984 and renovated in 2010, the 25,000 SF facility supports the largest service area population in the SJPL system – over 78,500 residents. Though located along busy Santa Teresa Boulevard, the branch sits

back from the street and lacks sufficient signage that SJPL is actively working to address. A new hospital parking structure currently under construction next door may further shift the branch’s immediate landscape.

Santa Teresa consistently ranks among the top-performing branches in terms of circulation and holds, with some of the highest totals in the system.



**Seven Trees**

Co-located with the Seven Trees Community Center, the 20,000 SF Seven Trees Branch Library serves a high-priority community in South San José. Built in 1967 and renovated in 2013, the branch is a key neighborhood anchor, especially known for its exceptional programming, with 825 annual events drawing nearly 14,000 attendees – among the highest in the SJPL system.

While circulation and holds are modest, the branch thrives as a community gathering space, especially for youth and families.



**Tully**

The Tully Community Branch Library, built in 2005 and spanning 25,500 SF, is one of the larger facilities in the SJPL system and serves a high-priority community.

Tully is a high-traffic library with a strong gate count and is particularly known for its extensive programming (862 annual events) much of it centered around immigrant support services; including immigrant support services, digital literacy support, and workforce development programming for new Americans.

Tully’s value lies in its role as a community resource hub. Many visitors come not just for books, but for access to Wi-Fi, public computer use, and receive help navigating local services.



**Village Square**

Opened in 2016, the Village Square Branch Library is San José’s newest library facility, serving a 16,000 SF space in the heart of the Evergreen Village Square, a vibrant plaza surrounded by single-family homes, walking paths, and the adjacent Evergreen Village Duck Pond. As a branch ranking in the mid-priority equity range, the branch staddles services among a range of socio-economic groups, including the City’s more affluent and well-resourced neighborhoods.

Though the facility is modern and well-maintained, aspects of its interior layout present some functional challenges. The community room is positioned away from the main public areas, which can limit visibility and ease of access during events. Additionally, the teen space is small and underutilized, not yet meeting the full potential for youth engagement in this otherwise family-oriented community.



**Vineland**

Located along Blossom Hill Road near Dartmouth Middle School and the Almaden Winery Community Center, the Vineland Branch Library is one of the largest in the SJPL system at 26,000 SF. Built in 2004 and not yet substantially renovated, the facility continues to serve its 41,280 residents, offering ample space and strong service delivery.

Vineland demonstrates high performance across all key metrics, including 130,091 in circulation, 505 programs annually, and consistently strong gate count and holds. It has good street visibility and proximity to schools and community destinations that contribute to regular foot traffic and diverse patron use. The library successfully balances traditional lending services with robust programming, making it a reliable and well-utilized branch for this South San José community.



**West Valley**

The West Valley Branch Library, located in a dense residential area, serves the second-largest population in the SJPL system, nearly 74,000 residents, within a 21,000 SF facility. Originally built in 1964 and last renovated in 2003, the

branch remains a highly active location with a gate count of 103,674 and circulation of 132,995 annually.

Despite the age of the building, West Valley delivers consistently high performance and remains a key access point for materials, technology, and study space. Its strong metrics reflect a well-established user base and sustained demand for traditional library services, especially in a growing and well-educated community.



**Willow Glen**

Tucked in the heart of a well-resourced and family-friendly neighborhood, the Willow Glen Branch Library combines historical charm with active community use. Originally built in 1937 and renovated extensively in 2008, the 13,500 SF facility is smaller in scale but deeply valued by its patrons.

The branch is known for its shaded courtyard, a popular outdoor space for children’s programming and family seating. Storytimes are so well attended that multiple sessions (A and B) are needed to meet demand. Inside, while the interior shows signs of wear, the space remains heavily used, especially by seniors who come for tech help or to relax in the cozy living room area. Circulation is high, driven largely by children’s materials, underscoring the branch’s family-oriented focus in a tight-knit, affluent community.



# KEY COMMUNITY LEARNINGS

2

8

3

0

SURVEY  
RESPONSES

180

COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS

representing thousands of  
San José residents

9

FOCUS  
GROUPS

6

1:1  
STAKEHOLDER  
CONVERSATIONS

3

LEADERSHIP  
& STAFF  
WORKSHOPS

1000+

VIVA CALLE  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
ENGAGED

### Learnings From the Community

The Plan undertook an ambitious community engagement process, with inputs from an extraordinarily broad range of community members. Through three staff workshops, staff co-designed service concepts revealed consistent priorities: strong interest in skills exchange between generations, desire for large intergenerational community living rooms, emphasis on maker spaces and hands-on learning across all ages, wellness programming and sensory-rich celebrations of cultural diversity, and

adaptable spaces with open layouts and portable equipment. Cross-cultural and multi-generational themes emerged prominently, reinforcing the need for environments supporting San José's immigrant communities. Partners and stakeholders, including City and County leadership, emphasized positioning libraries as opportunity hubs embedded in all frameworks moving forward. This inclusive approach ensures the Plan reflects authentic community voice, needs, and aspirations across San José's diverse populations.

300

ICE POPS  
DISTRIBUTED

1

COMMUNITY  
PARTNER  
BREAKFAST

INFINITE MOMENTS OF JOY

# Community Inputs

This community engagement process produced a tremendous amount of inputs and insights that will help inform SJPL and the City of San José in prioritizing Library decisions and creating a mechanism for the City to apply these learnings when considering future City-wide library investments. The following pages represent select system-wide results from the community survey and Viva Calle.

## How would you describe yourself and your interest in SJPL?

Community Member (Meeting Space)    Community Member (Gardening)  
 Family or Individual    Maker/Creative    Professional  
 Volunteer    Reader    Caregiver/Parent  
 Community Member (Hangout)    Older Adult

- Reader** looking to borrow books, attend author readings and book clubs, and/or receive reading recommendations.
- Family or Individual** looking for free educational/cultural activities in the area.
- Caregiver/Parent** looking for books, tech, and programs for my kids, grandkids, or others in my care.
- Volunteer** looking for opportunities with SJPL.
- Community Member** looking for place to hangout and/or meet up with friends.
- Maker or Creative** looking for access to crafting, laser cutting, and/or 3D Lab tools; design or engineering software; and/or studio space.
- Community Member** looking for gardening resources or access to a seed library.
- Community Member** looking for meeting space.
- Older Adult** looking to build connections with other adults, learn a new skill, volunteer, or learn how to use technology.
- Professional** looking for a place to network and/or work remotely.

"I appreciate that we have a wonderful and wide-ranging library system in San José!"

"A city is only as good as its Library. The true hidden gem (Holy Grail?) of any community."

"Even if I didn't use libraries I consider them a vital part of our community."

"I've lived in 5 states and 9 cities in my adult life, and this is the best library system I've ever come across. Warm, inclusive, and provides incredible opportunities for people from all walks of life."

"I've sent postcards to all the elected officials asking them to protect our libraries. Keep fighting the good fight."

"I am especially interested in having a library of tools—sewing machines, garden tools"

## The community wants EVERYTHING in one place!



## What other spaces and places system-wide would help you achieve your personal, family, and community goals?

- Community Garden
- Reading Garden
- Center for Happiness
- Art Gallery & Studio
- Nature Center/Trails
- Wellness Center
- Quiet Study Room
- Pilates/Yoga Studio
- Children's Playground
- Outdoor Living Room

**Closest Library to Home**

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Cambrian                            | 211 |
| Berryessa                           | 199 |
| Willow Glen                         | 180 |
| Santa Teresa                        | 177 |
| West Valley                         | 175 |
| Almaden                             | 158 |
| Rose Garden                         | 126 |
| Evergreen                           | 125 |
| Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library | 111 |
| Village Square                      | 110 |
| Edenvale                            | 109 |
| Vineland                            | 106 |
| Joyce Ellington                     | 105 |
| Educational Park                    | 102 |
| Pearl Avenue                        | 97  |
| Seven Trees                         | 87  |
| Bascom                              | 83  |
| Alviso                              | 73  |
| Calabazas                           | 63  |
| Alum Rock                           | 60  |
| Hillview                            | 57  |
| Tully                               | 57  |
| Biblioteca Latinoamericana          | 43  |
| East San José Carnegie              | 23  |
| Mt. Pleasant                        | 16  |

**Preferred Library to Visit**

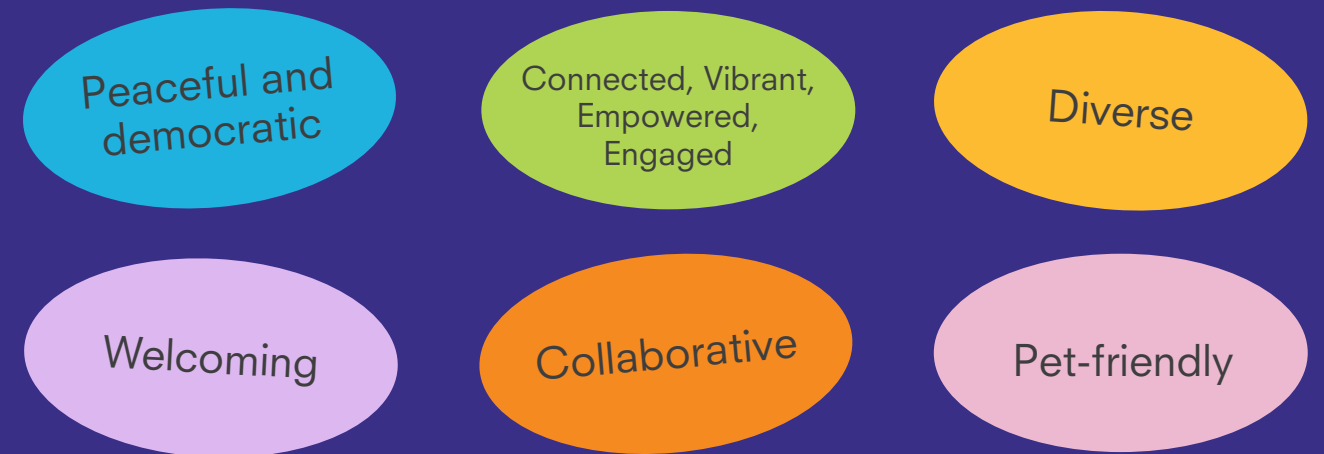
|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library | 254 |
| Cambrian Branch                     | 193 |
| Berryessa Branch                    | 188 |
| Willow Glen Branch                  | 180 |
| Santa Teresa Branch                 | 170 |
| West Valley Branch                  | 162 |
| Almaden Branch                      | 160 |
| Village Square Branch               | 122 |
| Evergreen Branch                    | 116 |
| Vineland Branch                     | 116 |
| Rose Garden                         | 112 |
| Educational Park                    | 107 |
| Joyce Ellington                     | 97  |
| Pearl Avenue                        | 90  |
| Seven Trees                         | 89  |
| Edenvale                            | 88  |
| Bascom                              | 87  |
| Alviso                              | 66  |
| Calabazas                           | 64  |
| Hillview                            | 59  |
| Tully                               | 45  |
| Alum Rock                           | 42  |
| Biblioteca Latinoamericana          | 24  |
| East San Jose Carnegie              | 13  |
| Mt. Pleasant                        | 8   |

**IN THE FUTURE, OUR LIBRARIES WILL FOSTER A MORE.....**



**.....SAN JOSÉ!**

**A Few "Other" Responses**





# CITY-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

# Strategic Framework

The following recommendations are organized around SJPL’s strategic framework – a comprehensive vision for transforming libraries into essential civic infrastructure that serves all of San Jose’s diverse communities. This framework builds upon SJPL’s existing successful initiatives while creating a more holistic approach that provides clear pathways for facility investment, programming innovation, and partner activation. At the heart of this framework lies the Soul of San José, surrounded by four strategic roles in the middle ring. These strategic roles work in tandem with six Key Focus Areas in the outer ring to create a comprehensive vision for community transformation.



## Soul of San José

At the heart of our strategic framework lies a fundamental truth: San José’s libraries are not simply repositories of information, but creators of the City’s emotional and cultural soul. The “Soul of San José” that anchors our strategy recognizes that public libraries operate in the realm of feelings as much as facts, creating experiences that evoke deep connections to place and community.

## Strategic Roles

The strategic roles are built as an active, community-building function rather than passive service delivery model, emphasizing the library’s role in catalyzing broader community transformation.

### City As Connected Communities

Positioning SJPL as social infrastructure that bridges diverse populations, fostering relationships across cultural, generational, and economic lines while strengthening neighborhood cohesion and collective efficacy.

### City As Classroom

Building on SJPL’s existing education and digital literacy strategy, the entire City becomes a learning laboratory where SJPL coordinates educational experiences beyond their walls, partnering with local institutions, business, and community organizations to create authentic, place-based learning opportunities for all ages.

### City As Civic Activator

Motivated by deep conversations that emerged from engaging with the youth commission, this strategic role/goal positions SJPL as democratic infrastructure that empowers residents to engage meaningfully in civic life through voter education, community organization support, public dialogue facilitation, and leadership development programs that strengthen participatory democracy.

### City As Cultural Celebration

SJPL actively preserves, showcases, and amplifies the rich cultural traditions of San José diverse communities while creating spaces for intercultural exchange and the emergence of new, hybrid cultural expressions. Through culturally-responsive programming, multilingual

collections, celebration of diverse cultural holidays and traditions, and facilities designed to honor multiple identities, SJPL can position cultural diversity as the City’s greatest strength and foundation for community building.

Together, these four strategic roles position SJPL as comprehensive system that addresses the full spectrum of human needs, from learning and economic opportunity to cultural identity and civic participation. Rather than operating as isolated service categories, these roles work synergistically to transform libraries from information providers into essential civic anchors where residents connect across difference, celebrate cultural heritage, pursue lifelong learning, and engage in shaping their communities’ future.

## Key Focus Areas

These four strategic roles require specific operational foundations to achieve transformative community impact. The six Key Focus Areas represent the roles and purposes that every SJPL facility must embody to support the strategic framework’s community-building vision. They encompass the heart of SJPL’s work: defining what must happen within library spaces to enable the broader City-wide transformation the strategic roles envision.

**Cultural Identity** (preserving and celebrating diverse heritage) and **Trust and Belonging** (creating inclusive spaces for all residents) provide the foundational conditions that allow libraries to serve as celebratory hubs and connected community anchors. **Civic Vitality** (strengthening democratic engagement) operationalizes the Civic Activator role through specific building programming and partnerships. **Educational Success** (fostering lifelong learning) creates the infrastructure necessary for the City as Classroom vision to extend throughout San José. **Economic Wellness** (supporting financial stability and opportunity) and **Personal Health and Wellbeing** (promoting individual and community wellness) ensure that the strategic roles advance equity by addressing the socioeconomic barriers that prevent full participation in community life.

# Placemaking Recipe

While the previously introduced strategic framework provides the “why” behind library transformation, the following Placemaking Recipe translates this framework into the “how” – demonstrating how strategic goals create experiences through the dynamic interaction of people, tools, and intentionally designed spaces. The recipe shows what tools activate meaningful experiences and what those experiences should evoke.

These experiences are then realized through specific placemaking components: 25 distinct spaces and programs derived directly from community input that will later translate differently at each branch based on size, community demand, and partnership activation opportunities.



# Placemaking Components



In the concept plans, all library locations are composed of a mix of open spaces that include a vibrant marketplace, a cafe, an intergenerational living room, a tech zone, and outdoor spaces. This is augmented by a variety of flexible meeting spaces that can be modified for specialty programs and partnerships. All locations also have a variety of core space modifiers and customized specialty spaces or destination features derived from community inputs.

## Core Spaces

All libraries are recommended to have the core spaces shown on the diagram to the right. These spaces have been proven to all be necessary, 21st-century areas that foster connection, learning, and activation amongst the community. These spaces can transform beyond their use for typical library programming with elements like modular furniture, mobile partitions, and integrated power where possible.

## Customizable Core Spaces

Not all core spaces are made equal. There are many factors of a library that can dictate the complexity of a core space, such as the building's footprint or staffing model. A customizable core space differs in that each of these zones can look different for every branch. These spaces allow for the library to have choice in what is being prioritized in their building, and/or what gaps they want to fill based on the community's needs.

## Core Space Modifiers

The customizable core spaces shown in the diagram to the right are exemplary areas that can be mix and matched when re-evaluating a library's needs and goals for their future models. By using a mix of supporting spaces, libraries can further activate their core spaces with modern and interesting program that is sought after by the San José community.

## Specialty Experiences and Destination Features

By prioritizing a specialty experience or destination feature per branch, the SJPL system has the opportunity to stand out and be a vital resource for their community members. These suggestions were evident throughout the community and staff engagement process.

## Concurrent Programming

This variety of spaces will allow for simultaneous programming for all ages.

### SOME LIBRARIES WILL HAVE THESE SPECIALTY EXPERIENCES



Wellness Center



Business & Career/Co-Working Center



Language Learning Hub



Family Learning Center



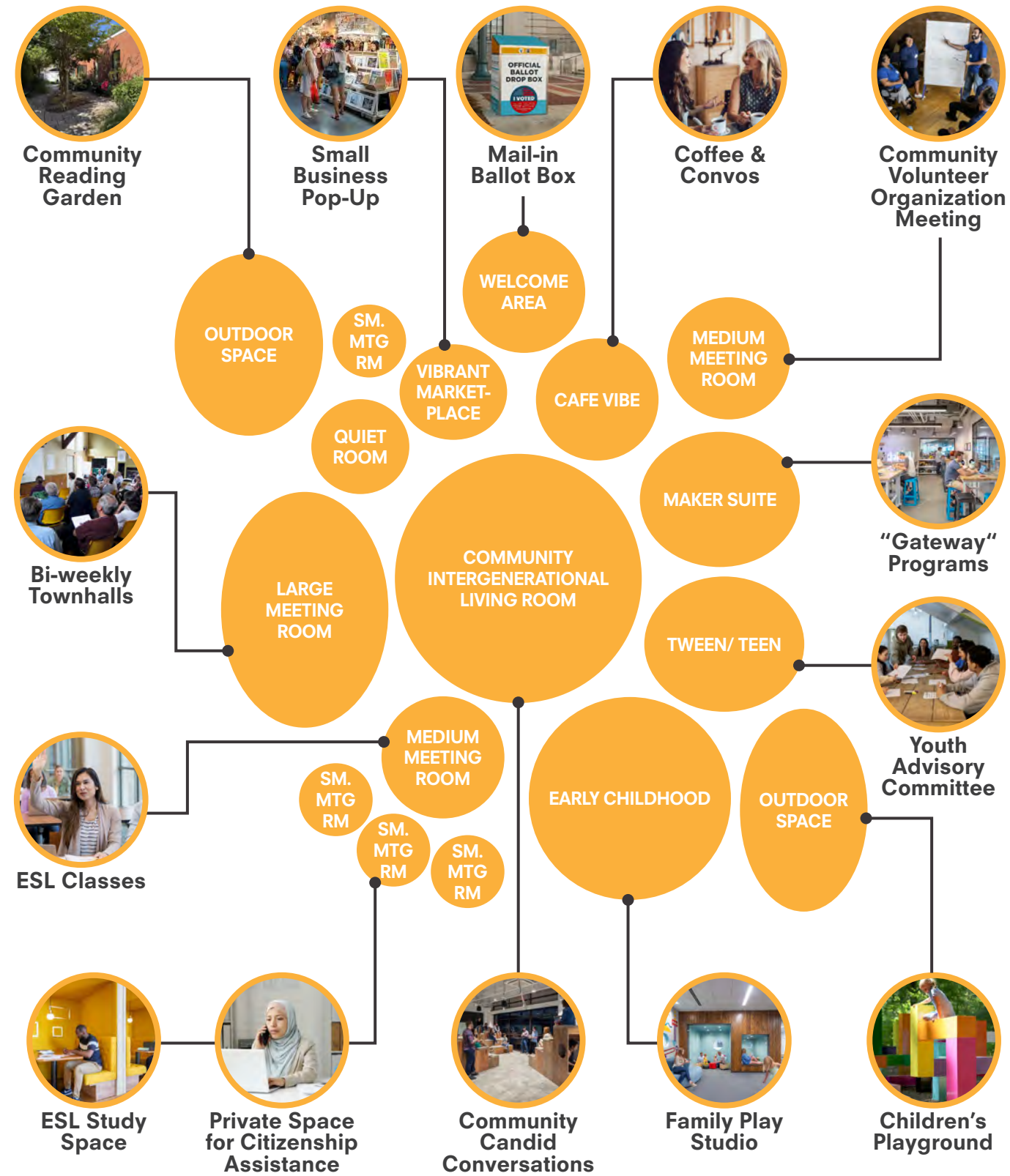
Innovation Lab

### SOME LIBRARIES WILL HAVE THESE DESTINATION FEATURES

- Culinary Kitchen
- Black Box Theater
- Woodshop/CNC
- Tiered Auditorium
- Special Collections
- Genealogy Center
- Video Gaming Hub
- Partner Spaces/Hub
- Art Gallery
- Art Studio
- Coding Lab
- Fashion Studio
- Civic Innovation Lab
- Music Studio
- Dance Studio
- Ceramic Studio
- Film Studio
- Workforce/Immigrant Incubation

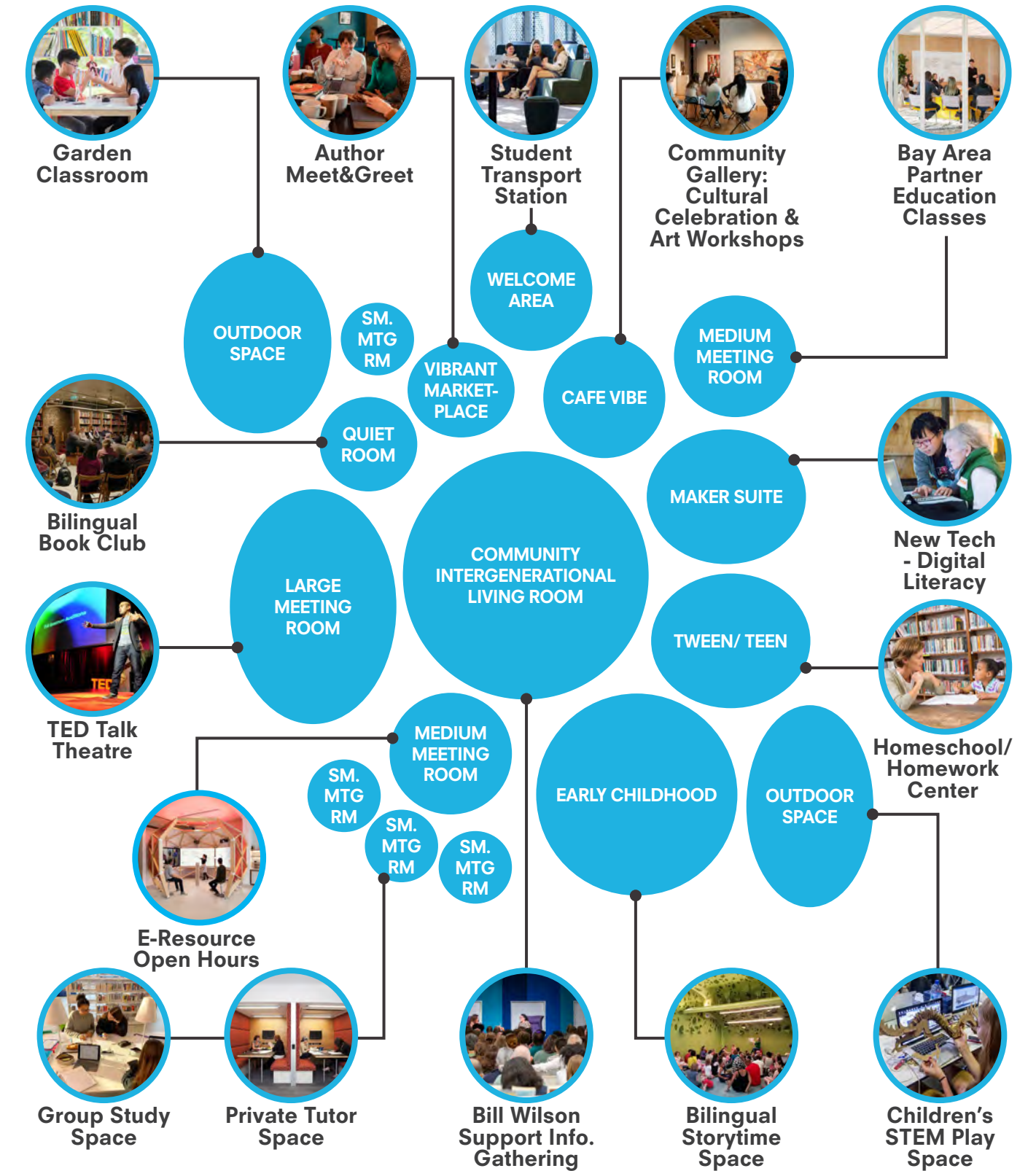
## FOCUS AREA ACTIVATION: Civic Vitality

Shown below are placemaking components that strengthen democratic engagement, community organizing, civic participation, and resident empowerment to shape neighborhood and City-wide decisions.



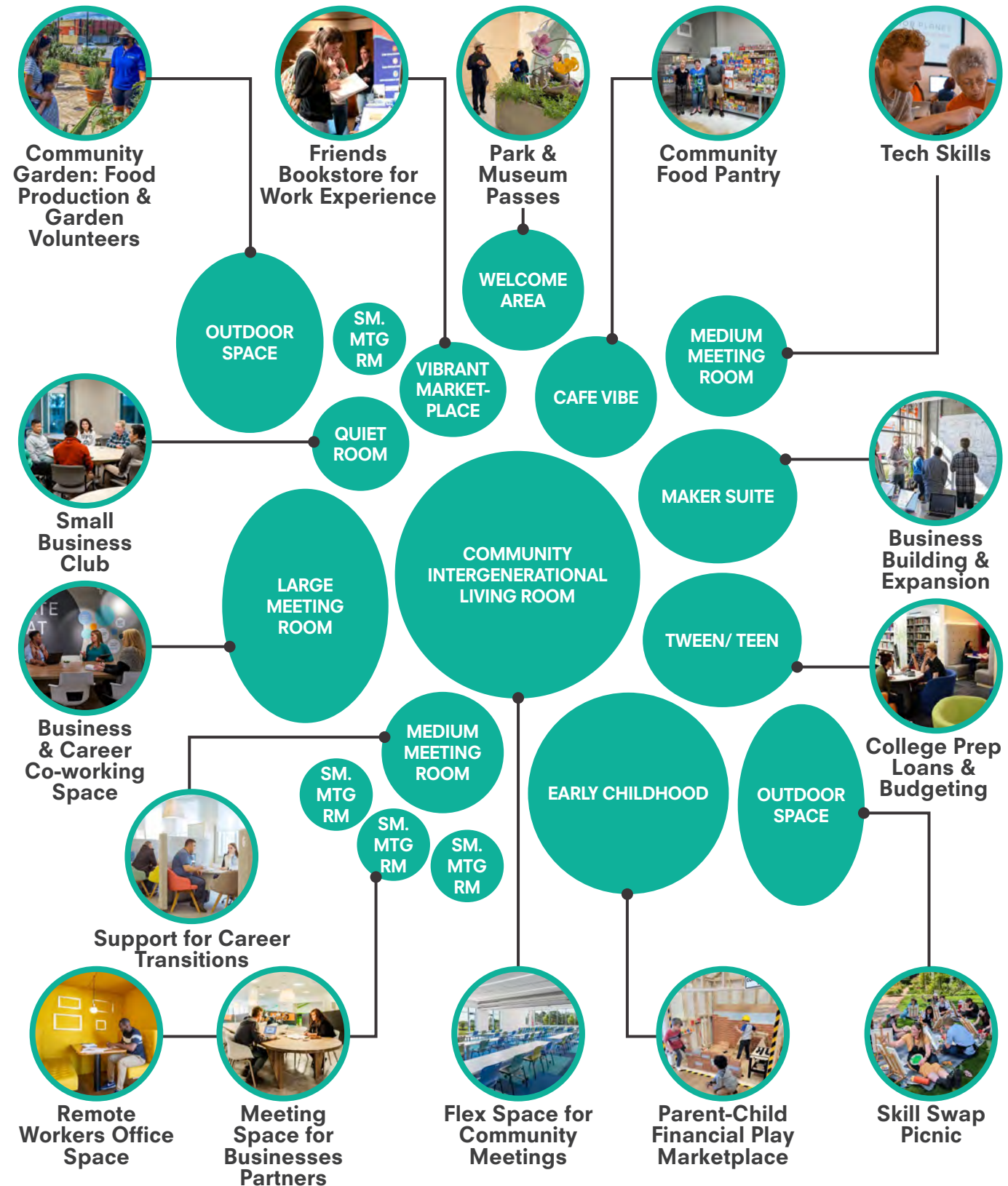
## FOCUS AREA ACTIVATION: Educational Success

Shown below are placemaking components that foster lifelong learning opportunities that support early childhood development, K-12 academic achievement, workforce readiness, and continuous skill-building across all life stages.



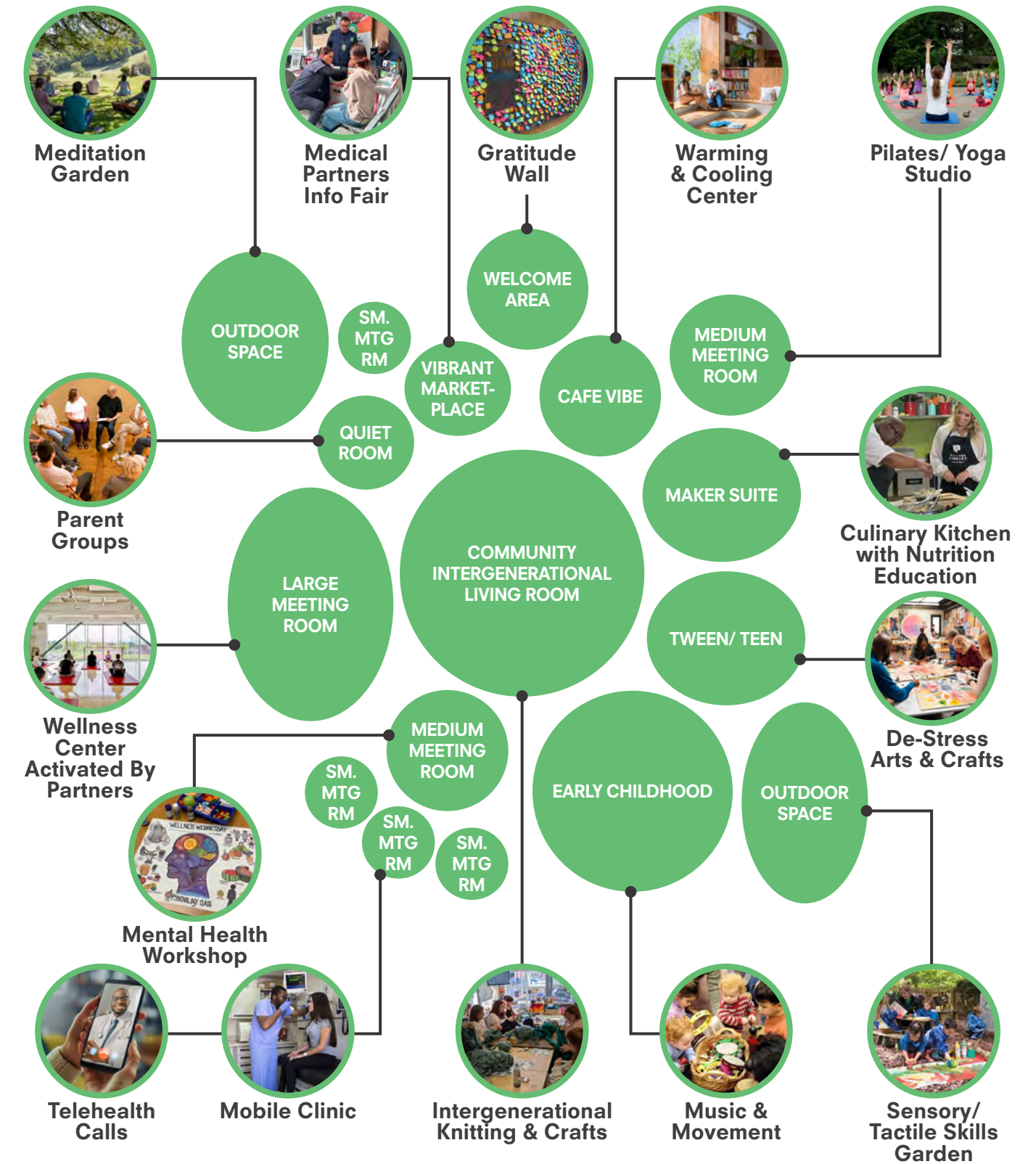
## FOCUS AREA ACTIVATION: Economic Wellness

Shown below are placemaking components that support financial stability, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and economic mobility through job resources, digital skills training, and connections to opportunity.



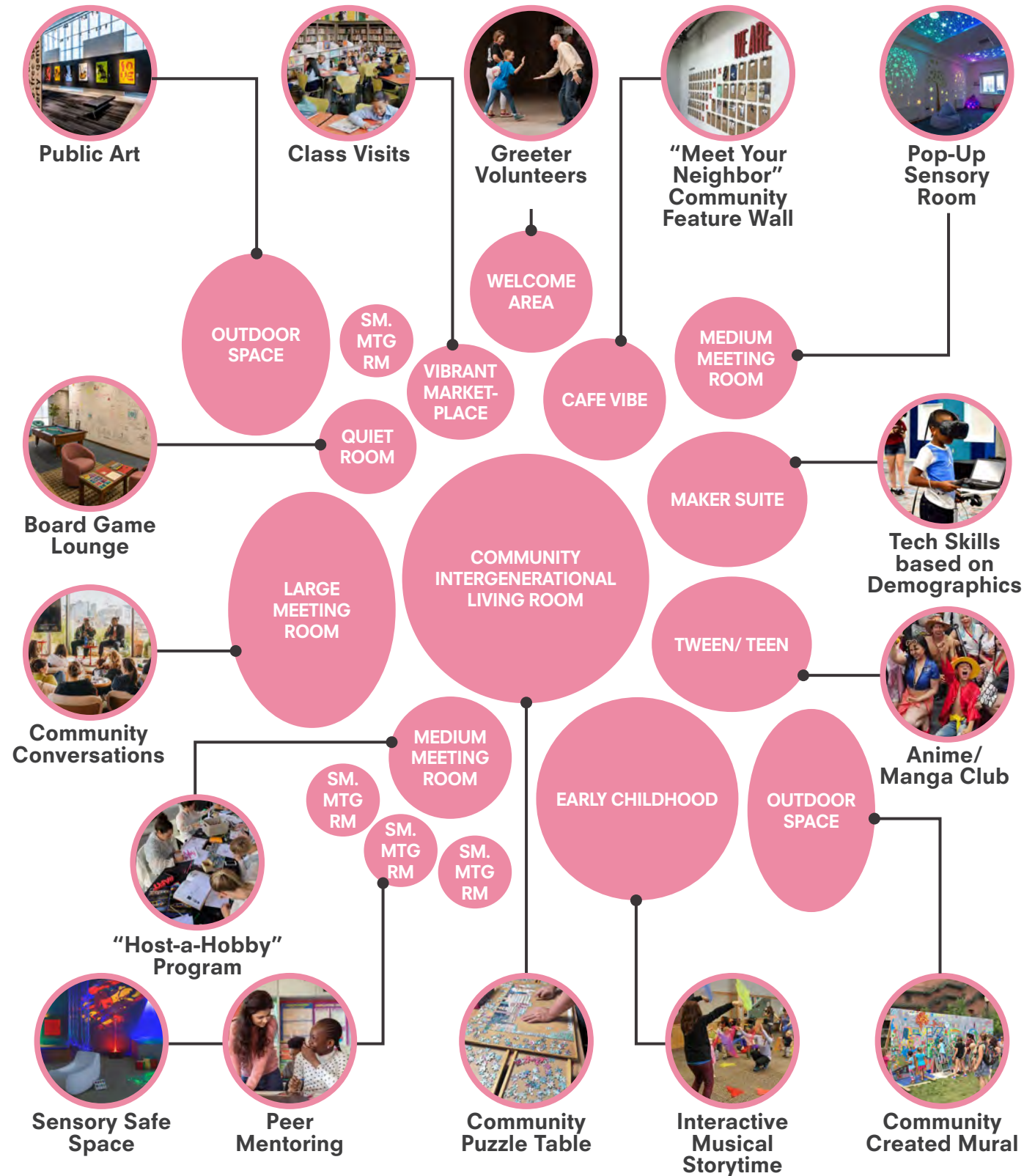
## FOCUS AREA ACTIVATION: Personal Health & Wellbeing

Shown below are placemaking components that promote individual and community wellness through programs, spaces, and resources that support physical health, mental wellness, stress reduction, and holistic wellbeing.



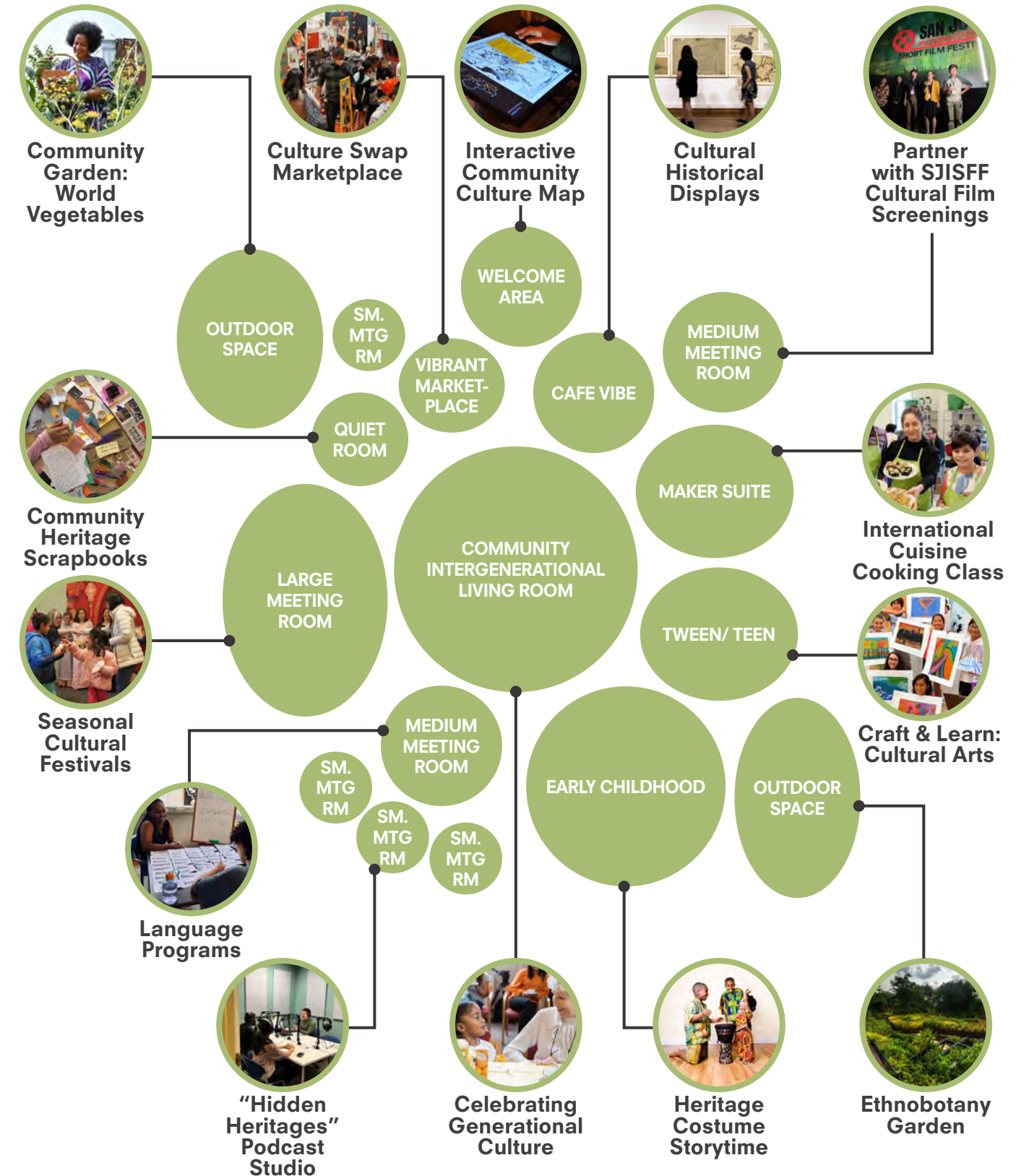
## FOCUS AREA ACTIVATION: Trust & Belonging

Shown below are placemaking components that create inclusive, welcoming environments where all community members feel safe, valued, and connected regardless of background, identity, or circumstance.



## FOCUS AREA ACTIVATION: Cultural Identity

Shown below are placemaking components that preserve, celebrate, and amplify diverse cultural traditions, languages, and heritage while honoring the multicultural character that defines San José's soul.



# Development Strategy

## Development Strategy

This Plan illustrates a development strategy approach to renovation, expansion, and growth to create the conditions for services and programs to create their greatest impact for all San José’s residents.

SJPL’s recipe for placemaking provides the Strategic Framework’s spaces and activation strategies to honor the community’s requests and support the library’s continued commitment to innovative programming.

We recommend an annual/ bi-annual facilities decision-making process be practiced with a growth and investment strategy outlined below:

### Renew & Sustain

Creative experimentation through temporary activations, flexible furnishings, or pilot projects

### Strengthen Partnerships

Deepen collaboration with surrounding schools, community centers, and other organizations to extend the library’s reach

### Growth on Site

Expand existing library buildings on their current parcels

### Growth in Existing Community Assets

Add or enhance library services within already-established civic or community facilities

### Growth in Future Development

Integrate new library spaces into planned housing, mixed-use, or civic development projects in growth areas of the City

### Untapped Site Capacity

Identifies library sites with available square footage that could support future facility expansion

Although the Bay Area Regional Plan predicts that San José could grow up to 1.3 million by 2040, this Plan is using the current population of 1.1 million - a combination of each branch’s

service area population - to assess the real estate metrics based on national best practices. It is recommended that the population growth be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

The current overall square footage of the system is 545,000 SF, including the publicly accessible SJPL areas of King. For our study, we separated King and the branches because of their key differences. The focus in this study primarily investigates the additional square footage needed in the branches, assuming that SJPL will not capture more space in King, expand, or relocate the system’s main location.

The other factor we identified in the analysis of King is that in comparison to leading central/ main peer libraries, King cannot house all of the innovative program spaces that we are seeing in peer city’s main libraries, like art studios, coding labs, dance studios, music studios, partner hubs, black box theater, a tiered auditorium, and much more.

Yet, with an already thriving branch program this Plan recommends that specialty destinations and services will allow the contemporary library services are being met complementary and



Tully Community Library Branch Interior, Teen Space



Pearl Branch Library, Exterior

system-wide. Destination “services” are rooted in the community’s culture, and will be hyper-local, yet also attract from throughout the City, county and region. This builds on how residents currently use their libraries... as a complementary network! Many community members have a connection with King as a destination and two to four branches as their “own.”

The vision for King will continue to strengthen downtown community economic development, City-wide partnerships, and the unique vibrancy that the University (SJSU)/ Public Library (SJPL) joint location offers.

The results of this will be transformative and will be a first of its kind approach to the hub and spoke system to serve with both equity and the variety that honor what residents repeatedly stated as San José’s greatest strength: the diversity of its people and the diversity of its cultural histories. It will also bring people together in unique ways, in service to the good of nurturing multi-lingual and multi-generational experiences.

The SJPL Development Strategy with a target to reach .75 SF/ person is intended to frame both needed growth based on this study, and realistic growth based on future funding and operational capacity scenarios. The national average for best practice is .5-1.0/SF.

To create the 20 year growth strategy, this Plan analyzed with a variety of approaches that toggled back and forth from a City-wide macro lens to a local library building/site assessment to create a realistic growth strategy.

The approach outlines a way of making decisions in the future, and encourages this methodology be applied ongoing to respond to changing conditions and opportunities.

Overall, this Plan recommends an approach that phases the work alongside a customer activation strategy that expands staff’s facilitation and activations for placemaking and place keeping; leverages the City’s assets to be smart with growth, bringing value to the City, partners with a responsible re-investment strategy for City-wide community assets; provides a framework for real estate growth that is responsive to development and funding opportunities.



East San José Carnegie Library, Community Room

### Capacity and Utilization Drives Growth

While the Plan lays out the growth recommended in square feet, the most important aspect of this Plan is the activation strategy that continues to right size the materials, collections, and technologies to enable flexible adaptable program areas to allow for concurrent programming and optimal utilization. This Plan recommends that optimization will be the key factor in determining growth and expansion. The play and prototype phase and the realign and recapture phases are essential first steps to validate or re-direct the long-term growth strategy (with a larger financial investment) outlined in this document.

Two metrics were used in this study to recommend square footage growth: .5 SF/capita and .75 SF/capita. The overall SF increase that gets the system to .75 SF/capita is 390,500 SF. Each of the branch's service areas are used in a per branch assessment, with 17/24 locations not meeting minimally adequate standards (.5 SF/capita). In applying this to the urban conditions of each location, the results revealed that the Plan needs a City-wide approach to growth and a customized approach to development based on the location's site constraints and adjacent community assets, as outlined in the location profiles.

What this Plan will deliver is an exciting vision for the library. This Plan sets up success in the unique conditions that SJPL has grown and leverages those strengths and acknowledges that the main library King are working for their strength, the system can not only absorb it, but be more robust as a result.



Overall, the Plan assumes the total square footage of the **branches** to be:

# 434,500 SF

... and advises to get to:

# 825,000 SF

an increase to the overall system of:

# +390,500 SF

The graphics on the following pages illustrate a 20-year growth Plan. The corresponding chart makes recommendations for each location.

The branch profiles, located in the Appendix, provide the library development approach for each location.

### Adaptable Recommendations

Because San José is an established, expansive urban area with ever-evolving needs and projected growth patterns, this Plan strives to be flexible and responsive to these conditions. For many of SJPL's facilities, there are several scenarios possible given growth possibilities and existing site capacity.



### Strategy and Structure

Represented below is this Plan’s development strategy and structure. All library strategies will first recommend that all locations placemake through different levels of intervention based on the need (play and prototype, strengthen partnerships, realign, and recapture).

Where determined, the recommendation for each SJPL branch will be to build new on site or to expand library presence or square footage either on the existing site, through growth into existing community assets, or into future development opportunities.

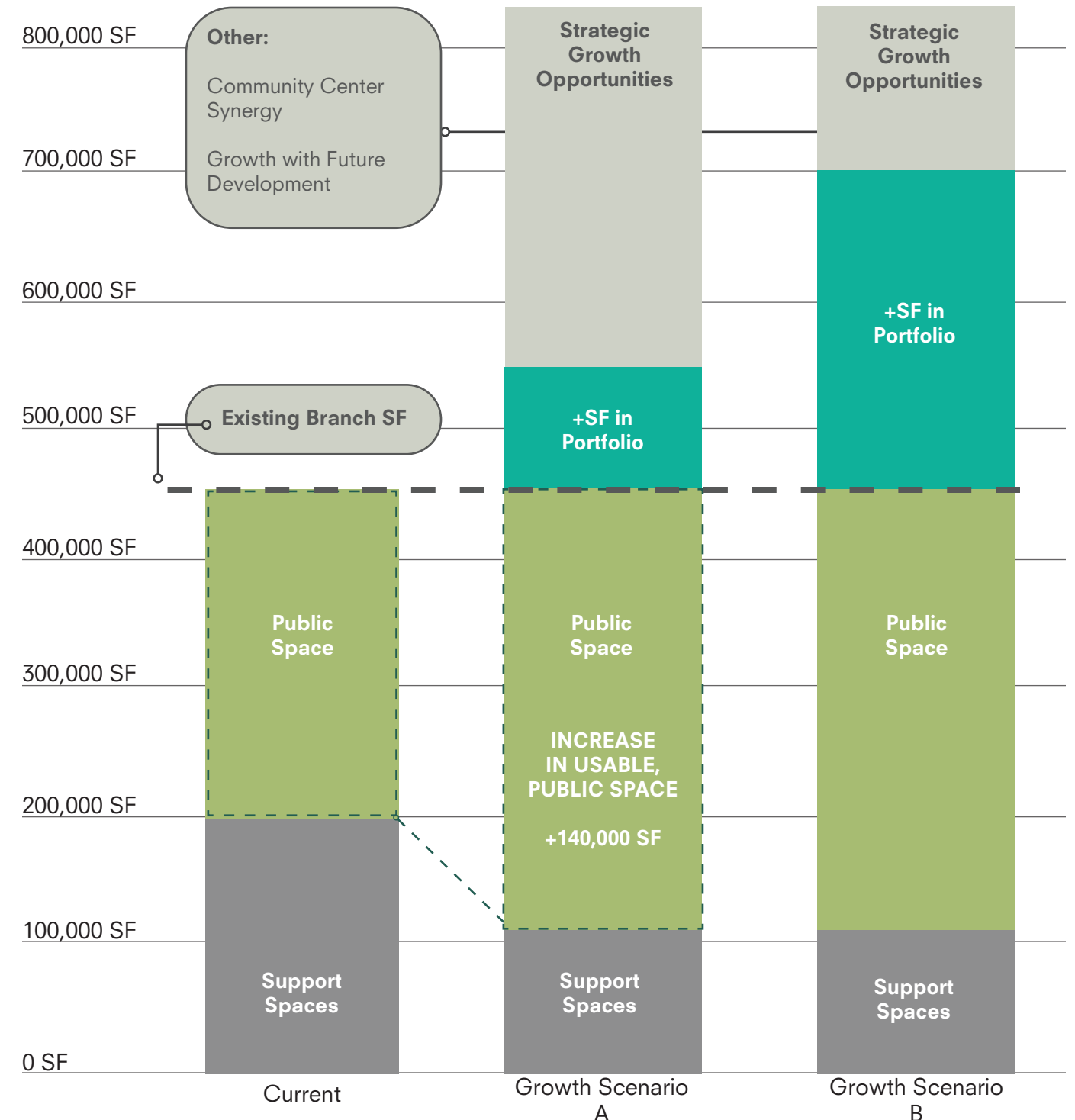


## Responsible Growth

### Growth Scenarios

By simply reimagining and realigning SJPL’s existing locations, it is possible to add around 140,000 square feet of active public space into the system. However, in order to bridge the nearly 390,500 square foot gap, further growth must occur.

SJPL’s system-wide branch growth by 390,500 square feet can be achieved either by growing with on-site additions and net new facilities, or by strengthening partnerships and building library presence in nearby community centers, growing with future development, and recapturing untapped outdoor space.



# The Aspirational 20-Year Vision

## Investment and Development Possibilities

The table (right) illustrates the development possibilities and recommendations for each of San José Public Library’s branch sites. It identifies development opportunities across three strategic pathways:

- **Renew & Sustain:** branches can be modernized through interior renovations and strategic reconfiguration of current space,
- **Growth on Site:** Branches with available land, structural capacity, or underutilized outdoor/ parking areas can accommodate physical additions without land acquisition costs.
- **Co-Locate:** Branches in urban growth areas can grow in and with future development in the area through co-location.
- **Build New:** Full replacement of select facilities where lifecycle performance, resilience, and long-term efficiency warrant new construction.
- **Potential to Build New:** Some existing library sites have Public-Quasi-Public (PQP) zoning that allows significantly larger buildings than currently exist. While not required to achieve this Plan’s square footage targets, these sites could accommodate larger development if community needs or opportunities warrant.

FF&E is not included in these scenarios.

## Investment Scenarios to Guide Decision-Making

To support thoughtful phasing and funding alignment, the Plan outlines scalable investment scenarios:

**Short-Term Reinvestment** – Renovation and modernization of existing facilities (no added square footage) to address deferred maintenance and improve functionality.

## Recommended Long-Term Growth –

Renovations, targeted expansions, and five new branches, bringing the system to approximately 834,800 square feet plus King Library.

These scenarios are not mutually exclusive. The Plan provides a flexible framework that allows the City to align investment levels with funding availability, development timing, and community priorities.



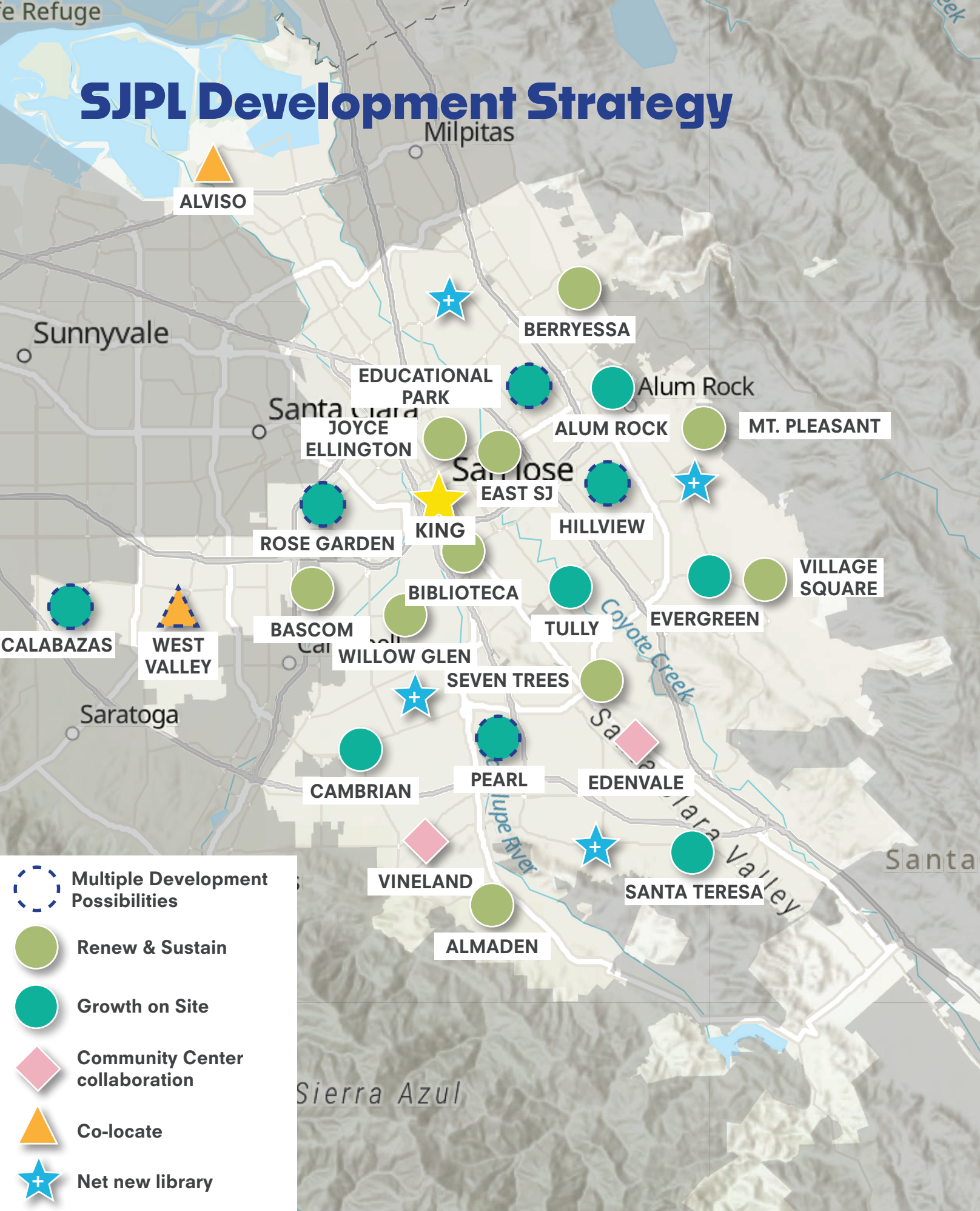
SJPL’s first branch: East San Jose Carnegie Library

| Attachment B | Branch                             | Renew & Sustain | Growth on Site                   | Co-Locate | Build New | Potential to Build New |
|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|
|              | Alviso Library                     |                 |                                  | ✓         |           |                        |
|              | West Valley Library                | ✓               | ✓                                | ✓         |           | ✓                      |
|              | Vineland Library                   | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           |                        |
|              | Tully Community Library            | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Library | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Berryessa Library                  | ✓               |                                  |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Rose Garden Library                | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | District 4 Net New Library **      |                 |                                  |           | ✓         |                        |
|              | Evergreen Library                  | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Cambrian Library                   | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Almaden Library (co-located)       | ✓               |                                  |           |           |                        |
|              | Hillview Library                   | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Edenvale Library                   | ✓               |                                  |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Calabazas Library                  | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Willow Glen Library                | ✓               |                                  |           |           |                        |
|              | District 8 Net New Library **      |                 |                                  |           | ✓         |                        |
|              | Pearl Avenue Library               | ✓               |                                  |           | ✓         | ✓                      |
|              | Joyce Ellington Library            | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | East San Jose Carnegie Library     | ✓               |                                  |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Santa Teresa Library               | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Seven Trees Library (co-located)   | ✓               |                                  |           |           |                        |
|              | District 6 Net New Library **      |                 |                                  |           | ✓         |                        |
|              | Educational Park Library           | ✓               | ✓                                |           |           |                        |
|              | Bascom Library (co-located)        | ✓               |                                  |           |           | ✓                      |
|              | Village Square Library             | ✓               |                                  |           |           |                        |
|              | Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library | ✓               | Renovation planned for 2026-2028 |           |           |                        |
|              | Mt. Pleasant Bridge Library        |                 |                                  |           |           |                        |
|              | District 10 Net New Library**      |                 |                                  |           | ✓         |                        |
|              | District 5 Net New Library**       |                 |                                  |           | ✓         |                        |

\*\*Identify new site

# Current State Recommendations

| BRANCH                             | Current SF | + | Added SF  | Total Branch SF | Recommendation   |
|------------------------------------|------------|---|-----------|-----------------|--|
| Almaden Library (co-located)       | 20,000 SF  |   | 0 SF      | 20,000 SF       | Realign to capture usable SF in Almaden Community Center       |
| Alviso Library                     | 6,050 SF   |   | 18,300 SF | 24,350 SF       | New right-sized library inside of new development              |
| Bascom Library (co-located)        | 18,000 SF  |   | 0 SF      | 18,000 SF       | Realign to strengthen synergy with Community Center            |
| Berryessa Library                  | 15,000 SF  |   | 8,000 SF  | 23,000 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library | 18,350 SF  |   | 0         | 18,350 SF       | Strengthen partnership with Washington Youth Center            |
| Calabazas Library                  | 10,400 SF  |   | 15,000 SF | 25,400 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Cambrian Library                   | 27,000 SF  |   | 23,000 SF | 50,000 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Library | 26,000 SF  |   | 15,000 SF | 41,000 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| East San José Carnegie Library     | 12,000 SF  |   | 0         | 12,000 SF       | Realign and strengthen community partnerships                  |
| Edenvale Library                   | 25,000 SF  |   | 0 SF      | 25,000 SF       | Renew and create library presence at Edenvale Community Center |
| Educational Park Library           | 18,000 SF  |   | 23,500 SF | 41,500 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Evergreen Library                  | 21,500 SF  |   | 20,000 SF | 41,500 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Hillview Library                   | 21,000 SF  |   | 14,500 SF | 35,500 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Joyce Ellington Library            | 14,500 SF  |   | 13,000 SF | 27,500 SF       | Renew and recapture untapped outdoor space                     |
| Mt. Pleasant Bridge Library        | 2,200 SF   |   | 0         | 2,200 SF        | Continue to assess bridge library model                        |
| Pearl Avenue Library               | 14,000 SF  |   | 30,000 SF | 44,000 SF       | Build new on current site                                      |
| Rose Garden Library                | 18,500 SF  |   | 15,500 SF | 34,000 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Santa Teresa Library               | 25,000 SF  |   | 14,500 SF | 39,500 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Seven Trees Library (co-located)   | 20,000 SF  |   | 0 SF      | 20,000 SF       | Renew and strengthen synergy with Community Center             |
| Tully Community Library            | 25,500 SF  |   | 5,500 SF  | 31,000 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Village Square Library             | 16,000 SF  |   | 0         | 16,000 SF       | Renew & Sustain  |
| Vineland Library                   | 26,000 SF  |   | 15,000 SF | 41,000 SF       | Grow on site and create library presence with Community Center |
| West Valley Library                | 21,000 SF  |   | 34,500 SF | 55,500 SF       | Grow on current site   |
| Willow Glen Library                | 13,500 SF  |   | 0         | 13,500 SF       | Renew & Sustain  |
| <i>District 4 Net New Library</i>  |            |   | 25,000 SF | 25,000 SF       | Build New  |
| <i>District 5 Net New Library</i>  |            |   | 25,000 SF | 25,000 SF       | Build New  |
| <i>District 6 Net New Library</i>  |            |   | 25,000 SF | 25,000 SF       | Build New  |
| <i>District 8 Net New Library</i>  |            |   | 25,000 SF | 25,000 SF       | Build New  |
| <i>District 10 Net New Library</i> |            |   | 25,000 SF | 25,000 SF       | Build New  |



**SJPL Development Strategy**

As illustrated in the map to the left, the development strategy for SJPL is intentionally designed to remain adaptable and responsive to future conditions. While this Plan outlines clear recommendations for each of the 24 branches and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, it also acknowledges the importance of flexibility in facility planning over a 20+ year horizon.

Several library locations are marked with a dashed blue circle, indicating multiple development possibilities. This Plan considers factors such as changing neighborhood needs, land use decisions, partnerships, and future infrastructure development. Each branch is further explored in the individual Branch Profiles, which detail the rationale for each recommendation and scenario. This flexible approach allows SJPL to:

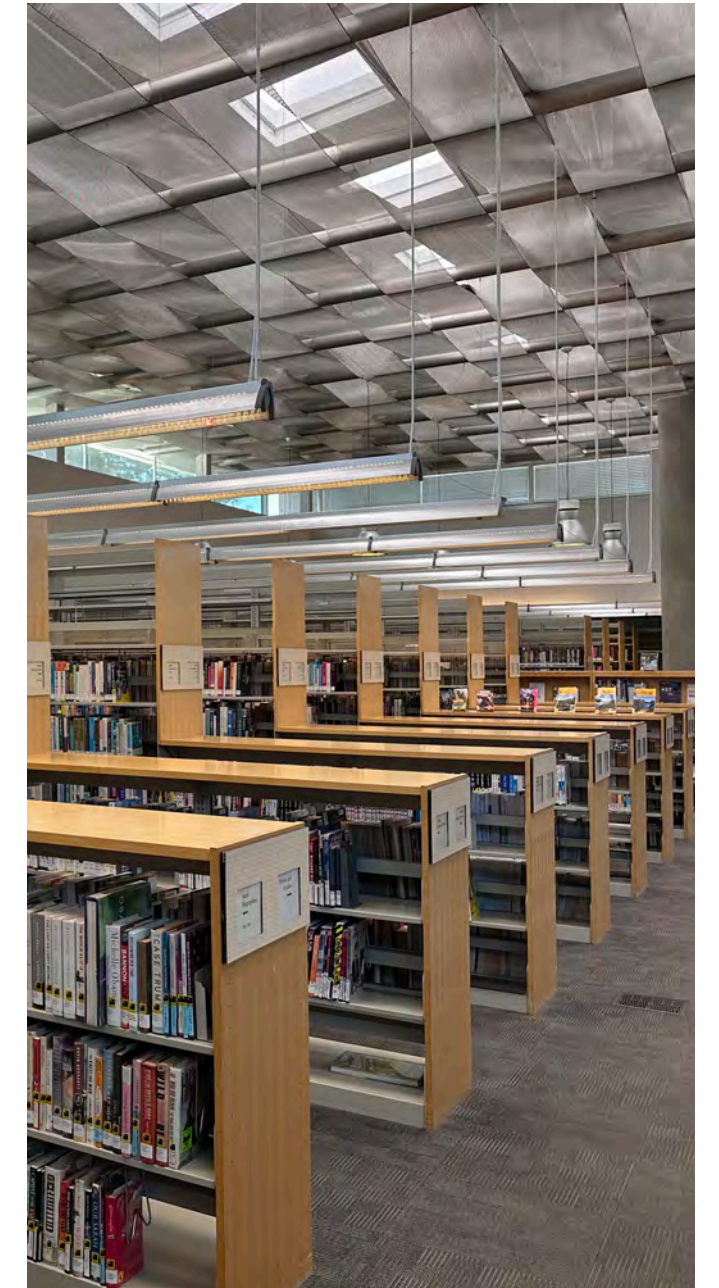
- Respond to community growth and shifting demographics over time, ensuring services remain equitable and accessible.
- Adapt to land availability and real estate changes, allowing for recapture, expansion, or relocation when more favorable opportunities arise.
- Pursue innovative co-location opportunities, such as collaborations with community centers, schools, or housing developments.
- Pilot new models for library design and use, particularly in areas with overlapping needs or where new service delivery methods (outdoor spaces, flexible interiors) could have greater impact.

By allowing multiple development paths for several locations, SJPL preserves its ability to stay nimble and user-focused in a rapidly evolving urban environment.

This vision for SJPL’s future creates new and dynamic collaborations with San José’s libraries and community centers, encourages innovative facility growth alongside future development, envisions new opportunities for SJPL’s existing parcels, identifies where library interiors can improve for their communities, and recaptures outdoor space for a more exciting library experience.

**Expanding the System**

As part of SJPL’s long-term vision, this Plan recommends the addition of five net new library facilities to serve areas of San José with growing populations, underserved communities, and limited library access. These new libraries aim to address gaps in service and provide innovative and inclusive spaces that respond to the unique character of each community.



*West Valley Branch, Recommended to grow with new development or expand on existing site*



# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES: SJPL Facilities Will...

- 1** Provide opportunities for all SJ residents to learn, explore, connect, and grow
- 2** Provide flexible spaces for the community to gather, celebrate, and share the diverse cultures of San José
- 3** Be part of a greater City-wide network in providing physical spaces for our partners and engaging with existing community facilities
- 4** Provide welcoming spaces to facilitate public forums, workshops, and curated resources encouraging civic engagement and dialogue

# Branch Profiles

Branch Profiles are customized descriptions of each location's strengths, assets, and future opportunities with corresponding recommendations for how they can better connect community members and partners and optimize their facilities for community impact. They recommend a selection of placemaking strategies, interior renovations, and neighborhood development opportunities to help specific branch locations better activate programs and partnerships.

Each Branch Profile consists of:

1. Community Served
2. Facility Utilization
3. Community Context
4. Site Context
5. Community Inputs
6. Community Inputs
7. Exemplary Programs
8. Concept Plan
9. A Day in the Life Calendar
10. Development Plan & Recommendations





# IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

# Implementation Framework

## Funding and Budgeting

Historically, funding for SJPL capital projects has come from the San José Public Library Bond Program, San José’s General Fund, San José’s Construction and Conveyance Tax, and Capital Campaign Donations. Funding for programs comes from Friend’s Group donations, higher education partnerships, corporate sponsorships and partnerships, parcel tax, and utilizes the resources and expertise of program partners. Synergistic funding sources which can be used for capital projects and programs include institutional grants and individual/corporate/foundation giving.

This plan recommends incorporating these current funding conventions with a comprehensive approach to leveraging partnerships with San José’s philanthropic community, peer agencies, private development, and partners. San José residents will benefit from this strategy and variety of programming and capital monies, optimizing facilities utilization.

The City of San José has demonstrated a significant investment in Library facilities in the 2000s, with many facilities having recently celebrated their 20th anniversary. This is the perfect time to take on this planning work as improvements will be needed soon in alignment with key building system lifespans (25-30 years).

## Funding and Investment Models

This plan will enable a synergistic approach to capital and programmatic funding by leveraging the variety of sources to create a sustainable model of increased funding opportunities, as illustrated in the Venn diagram (right).

## Opportunities

- Partnerships with peer governmental organizations for co-funded/co-located facilities
- Partnerships with community organizations to increase library presence and synergies
- Public-private partnership opportunities
- Incorporation into new mixed-use development

## Decision-Making Framework

The plan’s methodology — from its robust engagement process, to its guiding principles, locally-relevant data-centric inputs, and best practice applications — establishes a process and provides a set of decision-making frameworks for SJPL and its communities to continue to collaborate as they advance and evolve the plan over time.

The overall framework includes mechanisms for prioritizing decisions for collective impact including the dynamic Equity Index, sustaining engagement with communities, maintaining a community-centric focus, and leveraging the library’s trusted relationships with community members and partners. With an inherent community feedback structure, the plan ensures the process, research, engagement, and alignment is continually self-generated, providing an ongoing framework for investment and growth over the next 20 years.

## Measuring Success, Capturing Feedback

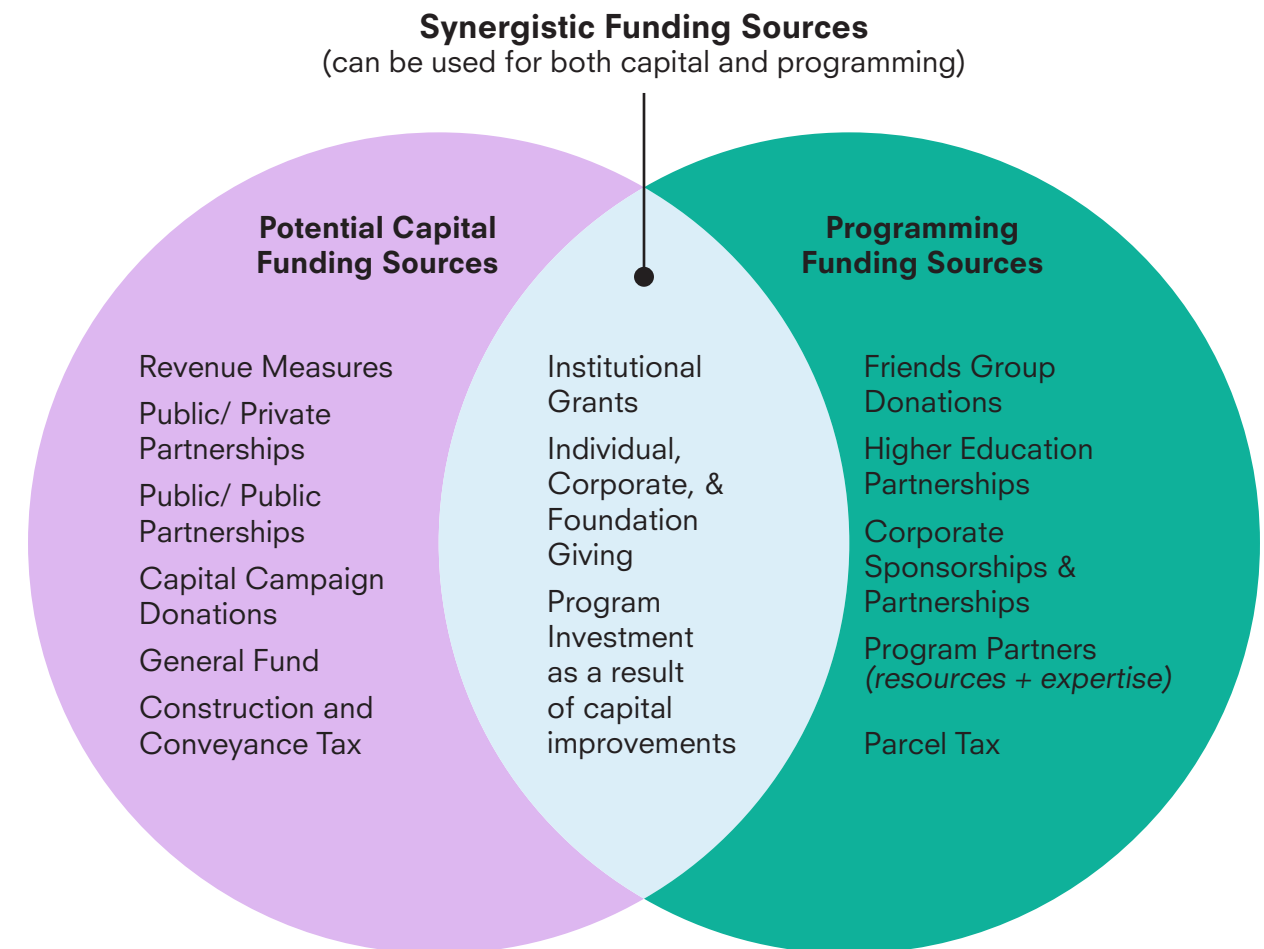
The 2025 Library Facilities and Customer Experience Plan incorporates the latest social impact and upward mobility assessment tools, positioning SJPL to apply a more sophisticated and relevant approach to assessing the success of facility transformations.

## Implementation Framework








Annually, SJPL, in strategic collaboration with the City of San José, will engage community members and community-based organization partners to evaluate community needs and opportunities.

# Next Steps

- 1 Develop an implementation and prioritization strategy based on current and future funding and development opportunities, SJPL capacity, and community needs.
- 2 At least annually, review and set goals to identify facilities projects and local funding sources.
- 3 Further develop success metrics as a City of San José and Library team.
- 4 Continue to develop the Community Partner structure for facilities development.
- 5 SJPL leadership, in partnership with the City of San José, will evolve the branch profiles in response to ongoing community, partner, and neighborhood development learnings and opportunities.



# Investment Strategy

| PLAY + PROTOTYPE<br>Friends of the Library  | REALIGN + RECAPTURE<br>SJPL Foundation  | MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS<br>/ NEW<br>Capital/Revenue Measure  |
|---|---|---|
|  <p>Community Etsy Shop</p>  <p>Idea Box</p>  <p>YouMedia Activation</p>  <p>Play</p> | <p>Reconfigure and refresh interior space, reclaim shared space, or capture unused outdoor space</p>  <p>Blackbox Theater</p>  <p>Culinary Teaching Kitchen</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow/New on Existing Site</li> <li>• Grow in Community Assets</li> <li>• Grow in Future Development</li> </ul>  <p>Imagine the Possibilities!</p> |

## Investment Strategy

To give SJPL a spectrum of budgetary options for systemwide growth, the Plan identifies small, medium, and large project investment scenarios, providing a framework for implementation that takes advantage of investment opportunities for the greatest impact. Projects can be generally framed by size and funding sources with an acknowledgement of other synergistic funding sources.

- Play + Prototype (Small): Funded by Friends of the Library
- Realign + Recapture (Medium): Funded by SJPLF
- Capital Projects (Large): Revenue Measures

This approach provides a set of impactful, innovative prototype projects to align with philanthropic investments (or Friends Group donations), and it enables an equitable systemwide approach to facilities projects rooted in community needs, partner activations, and SJPL organizational capacity. The approach is also a resource for future funding opportunities that the City of San José may incorporate.

# CONCLUSION

San José’s strength lies in its diversity, creativity, and spirit of innovation, and the San José Public Library is where those qualities come together in public life. More than a network of buildings, SJPL is a City-wide ecosystem of access, learning, and belonging. It provides every resident with a trusted space to grow, create, and connect. In a City defined by technological progress, the library remains San José’s most human infrastructure and nurtures curiosity, empathy, and collective imagination.

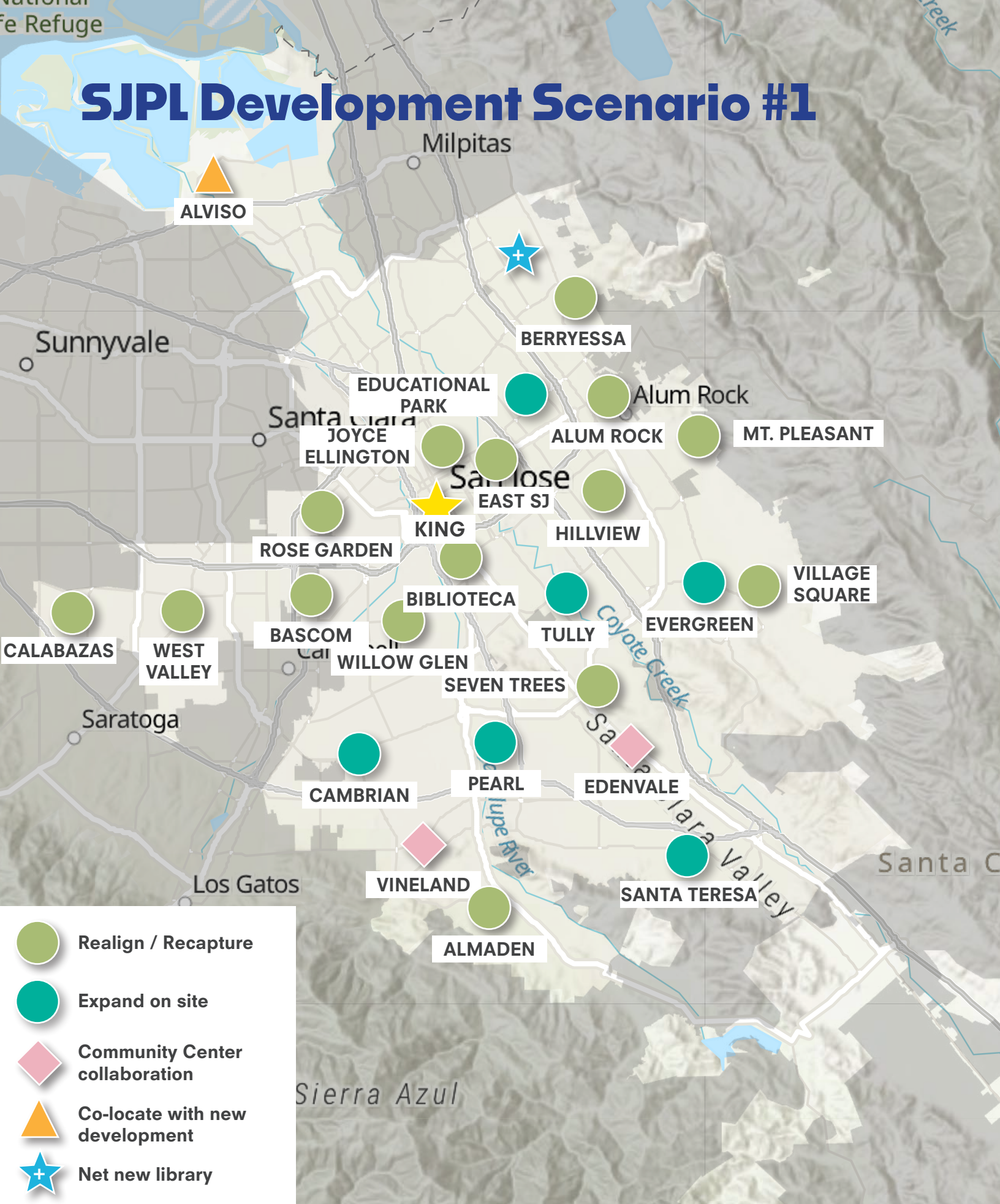
This Facilities and Customer Experience Plan envisions a library system that evolves in step with its City, expanding, realigning, and partnering to meet the needs of a changing population. Through collaboration with housing, education, and community partners, SJPL can transform underused space into opportunity and integrate libraries into the fabric of new development. Each branch becomes both a neighborhood anchor and a civic activation, supporting digital access, cultural exchange, and resilience among communities.

SJPL’s capital funding model is designed to leverage, scale, and amplify community contributions. By pooling resources through local taxes, philanthropic contributions, and strategic partnering, the San José Public Library enacts a collective impact construct. This enables residents to benefit from a return on investment greater than the sum of its parts. As an active component of its communities, San José Public Library is integral to fostering inclusivity and equity for San José residents. When optimally activated for public good, its places will strengthen community and generate powerful, positive social impact.

As San José grows, so too will its library’s capacity to shape equitable and connected neighborhoods. The library’s future is not only about new buildings but about creating new possibilities for learning and shared civic life. With this Plan as a guide, the San José Public Library is poised to redefine what a library can be in the 21st century: a dynamic, inclusive, and forward-looking engine for the City’s collective future.







**SJPL Development Scenario #1**

This development scenario focuses on the immediate, actionable steps that SJPL can take over the next 5-10 years to improve service quality, respond to urgent facility needs, and lay the groundwork for more significant long-term changes. While not every branch will undergo major transformation in this timeframe, targeted improvements, particularly through realignment, recapturing outdoor space, and strategic partnerships, can yield meaningful benefits across the system.

**Strengthening Core Service Areas**

A key focus of this scenario is to set a goal for each community to be served with 0.75 square feet per capita. This benchmark (see Methodology chapter) supports equitable access to library services across communities.

Many development recommendations for this Plan emphasize the need to realign interior space and recapture underutilized areas such as outdoor space or adjacent community spaces. These interventions allow SJPL to:

- Respond to increased community use without major reconstruction
- Improve the usability and flexibility of interior layouts
- Begin addressing disparities in access, space, and programming

Branches such as Hillview, Educational Park, Cambrian, and Calabazas are prioritized in the short-term for expansions on their current sites, as their surrounding communities show strong use patterns and growing demand for services. These early investments are essential for preparing high-performing branches to continue scaling their services.

**Partnership Opportunities**

SJPL Development Scenario #1 efforts also include building stronger collaborations with nearby community centers. This includes:

**Vineland and Edenvale**, where initial conversations can begin to identify space-sharing or co-location opportunities within existing

community center facilities. These partnerships offer potential for expanded programming, flexible use of shared space, and coordinated service deliver in underserved areas.

Similarly, **Alviso Branch** is positioned to explore opportunities to co-located within future development. While no immediate construction is planned, SJPL can begin conversations with the city to ensure SJPL is part of this process.

**Berryessa: New Library Investment**

Among the short-term priorities, the most significant investment recommendation is the development of a new library facility in the Berryessa area.

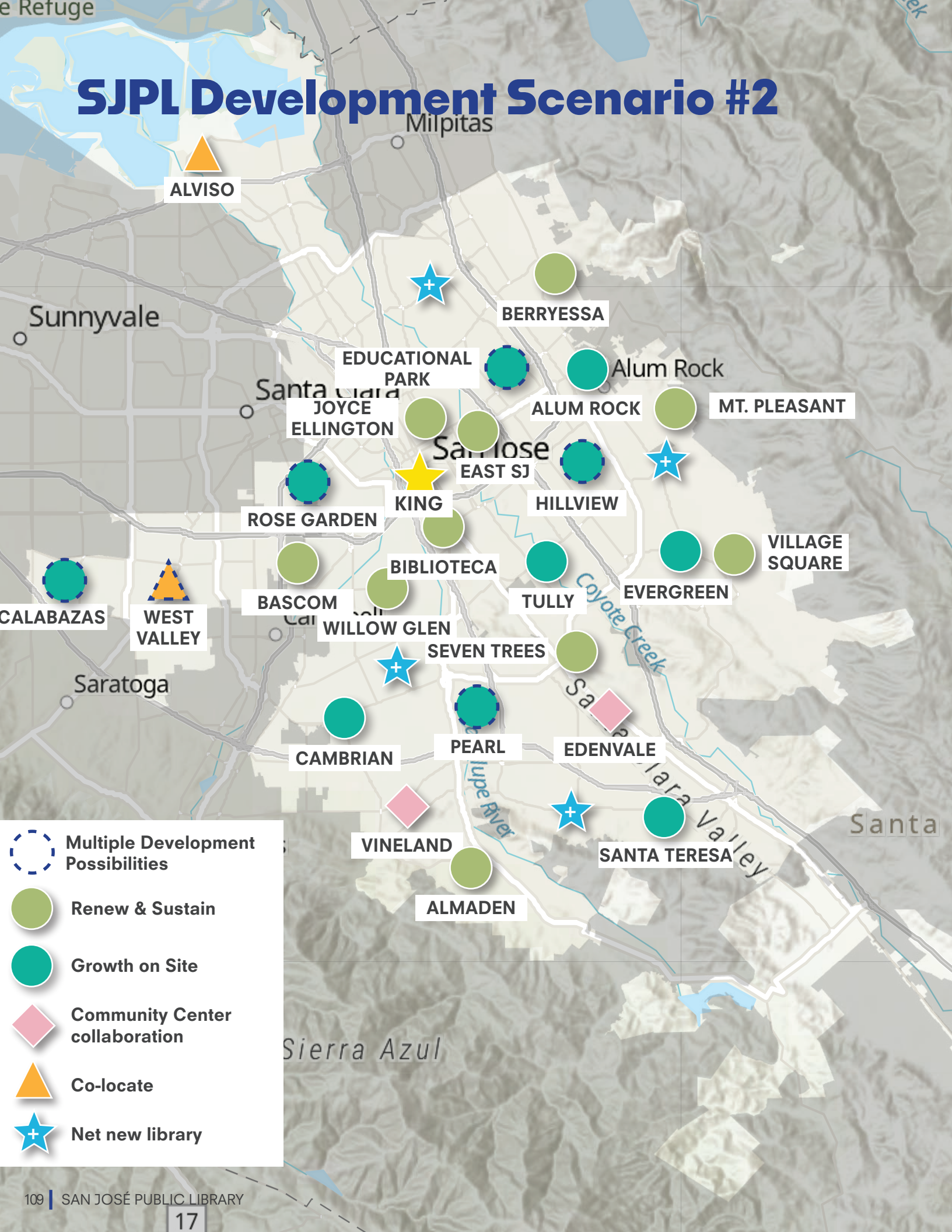
Berryessa is one of SJPL’s highest-performing branches and serves a family-centered, densely populated district. Despite this strong performance, the existing facility is undersized for its service area and unable to meet space demands.

To address this, the Plan recommends the construction of a new 30,000 square foot library within the district. This facility will relieve capacity pressure and create opportunities to expand exciting programming.



*Berryessa Branch Library, existing reading and work areas*

# SJPL Development Scenario #2



## SJPL Development Scenario #2

As illustrated in the map to the left, this development strategy for SJPL is intentionally designed to remain adaptable and responsive to future conditions. While the Plan outlines clear recommendations for each of the 24 branches and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, it also acknowledges the importance of flexibility in facility planning over a 20+ year horizon.

Several library locations are marked with a dashed blue circle, indicating multiple development possibilities. This Plan considers factors such as changing neighborhood needs, land use decisions, partnerships, and future infrastructure development. In the Appendix, each branch is further explored in the individual Branch Profiles, which detail the rationale for each recommendation and scenario. This flexible approach allows SJPL to:

- Respond to community growth and shifting demographics over time, ensuring services remain equitable and accessible.
- Adapt to land availability and real estate changes, allowing for recapture, expansion, or relocation when more favorable opportunities arise.
- Pursue innovative co-location opportunities, such as collaborations with community centers, schools, or housing developments.
- Pilot new models for library design and use, particularly in areas with overlapping needs or where new service delivery methods (outdoor spaces, flexible interiors) could have greater impact.

By allowing multiple development paths for several locations, SJPL preserves its ability to stay nimble and user-focused in a rapidly evolving urban environment.

This vision for SJPL's future creates new and dynamic collaborations with San José's libraries and community centers, encourages innovative facility growth alongside future development, envisions new opportunities for SJPL's existing parcels, identifies where library interiors can improve for their communities, and recaptures outdoor space for a more exciting library experience.

### Expanding the System

As part of SJPL's long-term vision, this Plan recommends the addition of five net new library facilities to serve areas of San José with growing populations, underserved communities, and limited library access. These new libraries aim to address gaps in service and provide innovative and inclusive spaces that respond to the unique character of each community.

The proposed new branches include:

**Berryessa Branch** (recommended in a short-term development strategy)

**Districts 6 & 9:** A 30,000 square foot branch proposed to serve both Council Districts 6 and 9. This new library aims to meet increasing community demand between the Willow Glen, Pearl Avenue, and Cambrian Libraries.

**District 4 Library:** In addition to the Berryessa Branch, another new 30,000 square foot library in Council District 4 is proposed to enhance access in North San José to address a service gap between Alviso Library, Educational Park Library, and Joyce Ellington Library.

**Santa Teresa Area Library:** A new 30,000 square foot branch in the Santa Teresa area will respond to the area's residential growth and improve geographic equity in library access.

**Valle Vista Area Library:** A new 30,000 square foot branch that will address new growth in the area as well as physical barriers to service from Downtown San José.



West Valley Branch, Recommended to grow with new development or expand on existing site