LIBRARY HOURS AND STAFFING: BY IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF ITS STAFFING MODEL, THE LIBRARY CAN REDUCE THE COST OF EXTENDING SERVICE HOURS

Office of the City Auditor
Sharon W. Erickson, City Auditor

March 13, 2014

Honorable Mayor and Members
Of the City Council
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113

Library Hours and Staffing: By Improving the Efficiency of Its Staffing Model, the Library Can Reduce the Cost of Extending Service Hours

The last decade has brought extensive change to the San José Public Library. The Branch Library Bond Measure, approved by voters in November 2000, allotted $212 million to the construction of six new and 14 expanded branches. Soon thereafter, the Library Department implemented its innovative approach to library services, the San José Way, which reshaped the look of and customer experience in branch libraries. However, since FY 2009-10, the department's budget and staffing have fallen, leading to dramatic reductions in service levels at branch libraries. Community satisfaction fell with library open hours, as measured in the City's biennial Community Survey. The objective of this audit was to assess the impact of budget reductions on library hours and staffing, and to identify opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of scheduling and staffing.

Finding 1: By Adjusting Open Hours, the Library Department Could Achieve More Usage per Hour. To maintain service at each of its open branches while cutting its budget, the department reduced the number of hours each branch was open per week. Branch library open hours fell from 47 hours per week in FY 2009-10 to 39 hours per week in FY 2010-11, and then fell again in FY 2011-12. The latest reduction left branches with 33 or 34 open hours on four days of service on Wednesdays to Saturdays, or Mondays to Thursdays. While the decline in total open hours has been steep, library usage fell even further, suggesting remaining open hours do not meet community needs as well as they could. And while adding more hours is the obvious solution, adjusting hours may also yield a positive result.

Based on current and historical usage patterns, residents appear to most utilize branch libraries on Tuesdays and Saturdays; yet only one branch (Evergreen) regularly offers services on both of these days, and it does so with temporary funding designated by City Council for FY 2013-14. Additionally, the department has not offered regular Sunday hours at any branch since July 2010, but Sundays were exceptionally well-utilized when offered. Residents appear to least utilize library facilities on Thursday and Friday mornings, with the exception of storytime programming, yet all branches offer Thursday morning hours and half of them offer Friday morning hours as well. We recommend that the department adjust its hours of operations based on an evaluation of branch usage. Namely, it should augment hours on the most utilized days of the week—Tuesday and Saturday—while reducing hours at lesser used times, such as certain mornings, as needed. As the Library adds back service hours, it should continue to monitor and evaluate branch usage to ensure additions serve community needs.

Additionally, some branches are structurally larger, house larger collections, and provide service to a greater number of residents. However, they have the same number of hours as that of a smaller branch serving far fewer individuals. Other jurisdictions have longer service hours for some branches than for others, taking into consideration the geographical location of branches and resident access to facilities. In our opinion, the Library Department should evaluate the benefits and challenges of creating a regional service model that similarly adjusts operating hours to capitalize on the physical capabilities of its branches and the variety of services they provide to San José's diverse neighborhoods.

Finally, although demand for digital materials has increased dramatically, it has not offset the need for branch library hours. Demand for eBooks is expected to continue rising; however, public libraries face difficult challenges in acquiring popular eBook titles. The effects of eBooks on library patron usage remain unclear, as well as the workload associated with increased usage of digital materials. In preparation, the Library Department should develop a strategy that specifies how it will monitor eBook impacts on staff workload, and what could trigger adjustment to its branch staffing model.

Finding 2: By Realigning its Staffing Model, the Library Department Could Deploy Staff for Extended Service Hours. Since FY 2003-04, the Library Department has added five branch libraries, but now operates with fewer authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) staff resources than it had in FY 1997-98. To cope with reductions, the Library has made greater use of part-time and hourly employees who provide greater flexibility to staff reduced hours. Because a majority of staff time at branches is spent on routine activities, the department can further modify its staffing model to match the requirements of its core activities. Specifically, more material check-in, sorting, and shelving hours should be assigned to Library Aides, and more customer service time should be assigned to Library Pages. We offer several options for reassigning activities that could enable the department to redeploy an estimated $775,000 in annualized staff resources—more if the department determines that other discussed changes are possible—to extend branch library service hours. While the department can make some improvements now, fully implementing our proposals would take time if accomplished through attrition.

Finding 3: By Increasing the Efficiency of Routine Activities, the Library Department Could Redeploy More Staff. The Library Department has made significant changes to its service delivery model over the last decade. Most significantly, it introduced the *San José Way*, which has a goal to decrease staff time spent in the backroom and increase time on the public floor. As such, the department has centralized certain functions, applied Lean principles to the check-in process, and installed self-check-in and automated materials handling (AMH) machines at a number of branches.

Further efficiency gains are possible. Some branches assign more staff hours to checking-in and shelving returned materials than others (even when accounting for the volume of materials), and may be able to reduce time spent on these activities. Branches with AMH are noticeably more efficient at checking-in returned materials, but the benefits of automation have not yet been fully realized and more branches may warrant AMH installation. Additionally, we believe guidelines for how much time to assign to customer service may be helpful for staff schedulers, and that the department should reconsider the necessity of greeters. Finally, going cash free at branches, as the Washington, D.C. Public Library did, would enable staff to better use time now spent handling cash and preparing cash counts. These efficiency suggestions could allow an estimated $730,000 of annualized staff resource to be redeployed to extend service hours.
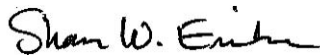
Finding 4: Enhanced Flexibility in Deploying Staff and Volunteers. Reassignment and redeployment of an estimated $1.5 million in staff resources will require that the Library Department propose budget changes to the City Council, including the type and number of employees allocated to branch libraries. In addition, regionalized management of branches (i.e., increasing the number of

branches for which Branch Managers are responsible) could also enhance scheduling flexibility and free some Senior Librarians to support system-wide services as vacancies arise and/or to extend service hours. Also, library class specifications should be updated since they were last revised in 2004 and may not reflect current business practices.

Lastly, volunteers play an important role in both high-impact and routine activities at the library, and additional opportunities exist for volunteers to help improve service. However, the use of volunteers varies greatly across branches, potentially creating disparities in services. Thus, we recommend the Library Department create a volunteer strategy that strengthens recruitment, increases outreach, targets volunteerism levels comparable to other jurisdictions, and focuses on improving volunteerism at those branches that have the fewest volunteers.

This report includes 15 recommendations that could reduce the cost of extending service hours by improving staff efficiency and volunteerism. We will present this report at the March 20, 2014 meeting of the Public Safety, Finance, and Strategic Support Committee. We would like to thank the Library Department, City Attorney's Office, and City Manager's Office for their time and insight during the audit process. The Administration has reviewed the information in this report and their response is shown on the yellow pages.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon W. Erickson
City Auditor

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SE:lg

Audit Staff: Avi Yotam
                 Cheryl Hedges
                 Linh Vuong
                 Brandon Camhi (Stanford Summer Fellow)

cc: Jill Bourne   Norberto Duenas   Jon Worona
     Ed Shikada   Jennifer Maguire   Neil Rufino
     Rick Doyle   Katie DuPraw   Kary Bloom
     Patricia Deignan   Angie Miraflor

This report is also available online at www.sanjoseca.gov/audits/

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Introduction

In accordance with the City Auditor's fiscal year (FY) 2013-14 Audit Work Plan, we have completed an audit of the City of San José's library hours and staffing. We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We limited our work to those areas specified in the "Audit Objective, Scope, and Methodology" section of this report.

The Office of the City Auditor thanks the management and staff from the Library Department, City Attorney's Office, and City Manager's Office for their time, information, insight, and cooperation during the audit process.

Background

The San José Public Library system consists of a main library and 22 branch libraries within the City of San José. Per its mission statement, it "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." The Library Department does so by providing members of the public access to printed material, including books and magazines, media in various forms, and eBooks. Additionally, the department offers access to computer terminals, and free courses and programs on a variety of topics.

The Library Department has partnered with San José State University to operate the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library (King Library), the City's main library, which serves university students and members of the public. The King Library is home to a City-owned collection of popular materials, the university's academic collections, along with the City's special collections (i.e., the California Room's local history collection) and the Library Department's administration. Soon after the King Library's opening in August 2003, the Library Department received the 2004 Library of the Year award from Thomson Gale/Library Journal; the 2004 Helen Putnam Award of Excellence from the League of California Cities; the 2004 Circle of Excellence Silver Award from the Council for Advancement and Support for Education; and the 2005 James C. Howland Gold Prize for Municipal Enrichment from the National League of Cities.

Most San José library usage happens at branch libraries, as discussed in Finding 1. According to the California State Library, a branch library is an extension of a main library that houses its own collection of library materials, and is staffed

during regular hours open for service. In November 2000, voters approved San José's Branch Library Bond Measure, which allotted $212 million to the construction of six new and 14 expanded branches. Bond-funded construction projects are nearly complete: the City currently operates 22 branch libraries and anticipates opening the last remaining site, the unnamed Southeast Branch, in FY 2015-16. Exhibit 1 shows the City's branch libraries.

Exhibit 1: Map of San José's Branch Libraries

1 – Almaden
2 – Alviso
3 – Bascom
4 – Berryessa
5 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana
6 – Calabazas
7 – Cambrian
8 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main
9 – Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock
10 – East San José Carnegie
11 – Edenvale
12 – Educational Park
13 – Evergreen
14 – Hillview
15 – Joyce Ellington
16 – Pearl Avenue
17 – Rose Garden
18 – Santa Teresa
19 – Seven Trees
20 – Southeast (expected to open during FY 2015-16)
21 – Tully
22 – Vineland
23 – West Valley
24 – Willow Glen
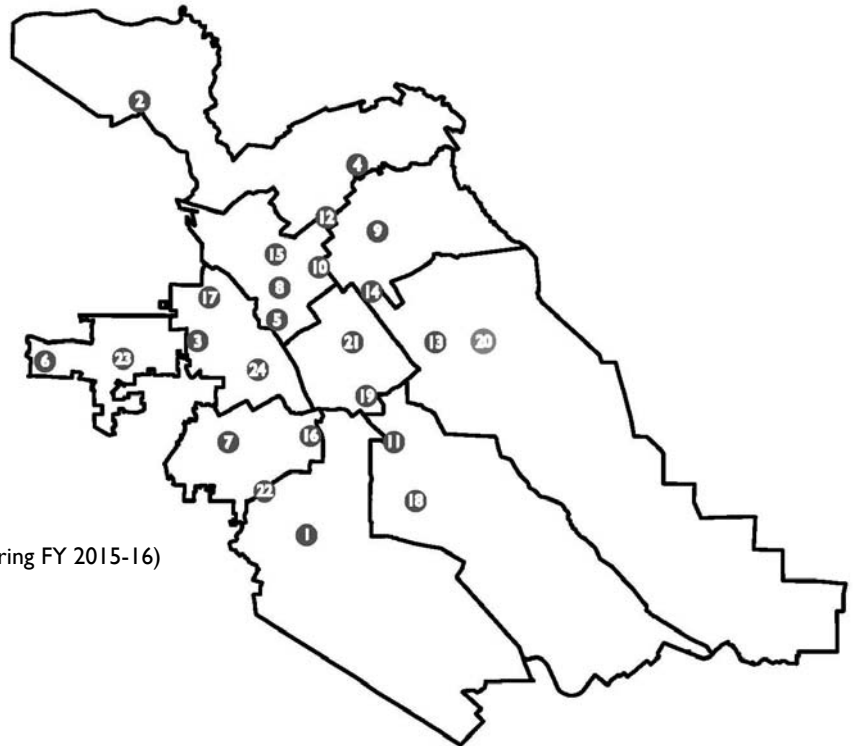
Source: Department of Public Works geographic information system database

The San José Way

A decade ago, the Library Department introduced an innovative service model, which became known as the San José Way, guided by four principles:

1. Customers First – making decisions that are customer-driven, shifting focus from transactions to customers, and adopting an entrepreneurial mindset

2. Teach Customers – helping customers help themselves, enabling self-service, and building customer expectations

3. Reinvent Environments – reinventing the library environment, merchandising the collection like a marketplace, and creating easy-to-use spaces

4. Enable Staff – aligning staff skills with customer expectations, using staff more effectively, and adopting a team approach to branch operations

Generally, it is an approach to library service that deemphasizes traditional concerns—transactions and the staff that processes them—and emphasizes customers and their needs. These principles manifest themselves in San José's new and expanded branch libraries. Since 2000, the City has renovated and expanded 14 branches and opened six new ones.[1] San José's branches bear the hallmarks of the San José Way: a marketplace of popular materials by the entrance (merchandising the collection), self-check-out and check-in machines, single-service points (a combined circulation and reference/information desk that customers know to find), and roving staff who seek customers to help as they browse library materials (referred to in Finding 2 as "zoning").

The San José Way's customer-centric approach also informs the department's programs and services. According to the department, staff determines which programs to offer based on a community's profile and need. Programs cover a wide-array of topics, including literacy, technology, personal finance, health, and nutrition. Like those of other jurisdictions, San José's storytime programs regularly attract the most attendees.

The Library Department's focus on serving its diversity of customers was cited by the Institute of Museum and Library Services when it awarded San José the National Medal for Museum and Library Service in 2011.

Budget and Staffing

As with many City departments, the Library Department's operating budget and authorized staffing grew for the first half of the last decade, peaking in FY 2009-10, and fell during the recession. Exhibit 2 shows the department's adopted operating budget and authorized staffing levels for the last 10 years.

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[1] One more branch, Southeast, is in the design phase.

Exhibit 2: Library Department Adopted Operating Budget and Authorized Staffing
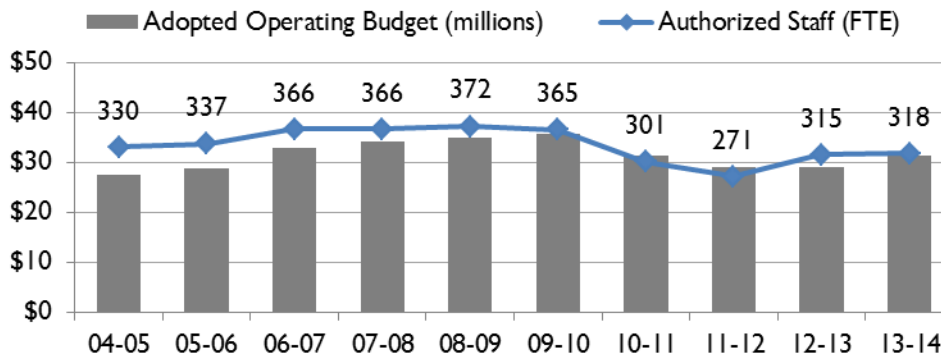
Source: Library Department adopted operating budget for FY 2004-05 to FY 2013-14

As shown above in Exhibit 2, the Library Department's authorized staffing declined 25 percent from FY 2009-10 to FY 2011-12 before increasing in FY 2012-13 with the opening of four branches.[2] Around 85 percent of the operating budget goes towards staffing.

As with other City departments, turnover has recently been higher for the Library Department than in the past. In the last few years, the department has filled nearly all key leadership positions, including the City Librarian (Department Director), Division Managers, and Administrative Officer. Recent turnover at the staff level has also been higher, with staff departures increasing between 2008 and 2011.[3] Department management noted that staff's morale fell during this period.

Despite substantial cuts in recent years, the Library Department weathered the recession better than some City departments in part because its budget has been supplemented by dedicated funding sources. The Library Parcel Tax, which was approved by voters in November 2004 and began in FY 2005-06, replaced the Library Benefit Assessment District, which provided 13 percent of the department's operating budget until FY 2004-05. Exhibit 3 charts the department's operating budget by source from FY 2004-05 and FY 2013-14.

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[2] In 2012, the City released a Request for Information for operating the four library branches. The City received a response from one vendor, but determined that operating the branches with City staff was less expensive than the vendor's proposal. We verified that the $2.7 million ongoing budget increase to staff the new branches in FY 2012-13 and beyond was higher than the $2.5 million staff estimated when considering the outsourcing proposal, but still less than the vendor's proposal of $3.5 million.

[3] In *Ten Years of Staffing Reduction at the City of San José: Impacts and Lessons Learned*, published in November 2012, we reported that the Library Department experienced typical rates of employee "bumping" (i.e., moving into lateral or lower class positions) and below average fulltime employee separations (i.e., resignations, retirements, layoffs, etc.) from 2010 to 2012, and had a below average vacancy rate at the end of FY 2011-12.

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**Exhibit 3: Library Department Adopted Operating Budget Funding
Sources**
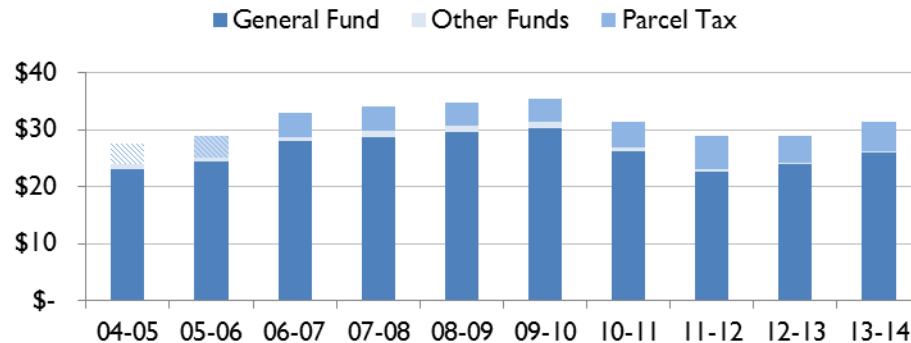
Source: Library Department adopted operating budget for FY 2004-05 to FY 2013-14

Note: Other funds include capital and grant funds. In FY 2004-05, the Parcel Tax's predecessor, the Library Benefit Assessment District Fund (hashed blue bars in the above chart), supplemented General Fund sources. The Parcel Tax began in FY 2005-06, but money remaining in the Library Benefit Assessment District Fund was also used (hashed blue bars with light blue shading).

Over the last 10 years, the department's dedicated funding sources have become more important to operations: the Parcel Tax funded 20 percent of the Library Department's operating budget in FY 2011-12.[4] The Parcel Tax, which will sunset in FY 2014-15, has also funded a large portion of the department's materials acquisition budget. The City Council voted to place the Library Parcel Tax on the ballot in June 2014 for renewal.

The Library Department also receives limited, but highly valued support from "Friends" groups that fundraise for specific branches ($100,000 in FY 2012-13), and from the San José Public Library Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that accepts grants and donations on the department's behalf ($350,000 in FY 2012-13). These funds are generally dedicated for specific uses, such as programs or materials.

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[4] It should be noted that, when placing the original Parcel Tax on the ballot in August 2004, the City Council adopted a resolution stating its intent to maintain funding support for the library. Specifically, the Council resolved that its intention was for the base General Fund level of funding support for the Library Department to not fall below 3.79 percent of the City's General Fund budget. As noted in the FY 2010-11 adopted operating budget, the General Fund level of funding support fell below 3.79 percent in that year. It was as low as 3.34 percent in FY 2011-12 before rising back to 3.59 percent in FY 2013-14. According to the City Attorney's Office, the Council's August 2004 resolution was a non-binding statement of intent.

Service Reductions

To maintain service at each of its open branches while cutting its budget, the Library Department reduced the number of weekly open hours and delayed the opening of new/renovated branches. Since FY 2011-12, branch libraries have been open either 33 or 34 hours per week, depending on their days of service. Exhibit 4 shows library days and hours of service since FY 2003-04.

Exhibit 4: Branch Library Days and Hours of Services Since FY 2003-04

Fiscal Years	Days of Service	Total Service Hours	Open Branches
FY 2003-04 to FY 2009-10	Monday to Saturday*	47	16-18
FY 2010-11	Tuesday to Saturday**	39	18
FY 2011-12 to Present	Monday to Thursday, or	34	18-22
	Wednesday to Saturday	33	

Source: Auditor compilation of budget documents

* Branches were open on Mondays only in the afternoon. Additionally, during this period, the Library Department opened some branches on Sundays; however, most funding for this ended in FY 2008-09.

** In FY 2010-11, branches were open on Fridays only in the afternoon.

As a result of decreased hours, the Library Department paired each of its 22 branch libraries with another branch (which has different service days) for management and staffing purposes. Specifically, since FY 2011-12, each pair of branches has been overseen by one Branch Manager and, as discussed in Finding 2, has a single allocation of staff to run both branches. According to Library management, the branch pairing model is common in the industry when branches offer fewer than 40 hours of service per week (to ensure 40-hour per week staff is not underemployed and to cover more service days for the public). Exhibit 5 lists the branch pairs.

Exhibit 5: Branch Library Pairs

Monday to Thursday Branches	Wednesday to Saturday Branches
Alum Rock	Bascom*
Evergreen	Berryessa
Biblioteca Latinoamericana	East Carnegie
Cambrian	Almaden
Calabazas*	West Valley
Educational Park*	Hillview
Edenvale	Santa Teresa
Joyce Ellington	Alviso
Vineland	Pearl Avenue
Rose Garden	Willow Glen
Tully	Seven Trees *

Source: Library Department website
* Branch opened during FY 2012-13.

Exhibit 6 shows open hours for branch libraries, by day of the week, since the department adopted the branch pairing service model in FY 2011-12. As shown, every branch has the same open hours each day; according to staff, consistent hours are easier for the public to remember and ensure equity across branches. Further, only half of branch libraries are open on Saturdays. The branch pairing and service hours were designed to allow residents to visit a branch library in their area, though not necessarily their home branch, six days a week. Further, the service hours enhanced work-life balance for staff (morale fell when staff was required to work every Saturday, as was the case in FY 2010-11).

Exhibit 6: Branch Library Open Hours by Day of the Week

	Monday to Thursday Branches	Wednesday to Saturday Branches
Sunday		
Monday	10 am – 6 pm	
Tuesday	11 am – 8 pm	
Wednesday	11 am – 8 pm	11 am – 8 pm
Thursday	10 am – 6 pm	10 am – 6 pm
Friday		10 am – 6 pm
Saturday		10 am – 6 pm

Source: Library Department website

During FY 2013-14 budget deliberations, City Councilmembers proposed extending branch library service hours. In response, the Library Department prepared a cost analysis that showed returning to 39 weekly open hours—the FY 2010-11 service level—would require a $2 million annual budget increase, and that returning to 47 weekly open hours would require $3.6 million. The City did not increase library hours in FY 2013-14, with the exception of a one-time budget augmentation to add Saturday hours specifically at Evergreen branch library, for one fiscal year, because it was the only branch in Council District 8.

Resident Satisfaction Declined

In its Report of Findings from the City's October 2013 Community Survey, the City's consultant wrote that "perceptions of the library system's hours of operation and the variety and availability of its books have dropped steeply in the past four years." As shown in Exhibit 7, the consultant wrote that the "*hours local branch libraries are open* is viewed as 'excellent' or 'good' by only 44 percent of respondents, down...19 points from 2009. Fifteen percent see library hours of operation as 'poor' or 'extremely poor,' up from seven percent in 2009."

Exhibit 7: Resident Ratings of the "Hours Local Branch Libraries Are Open"
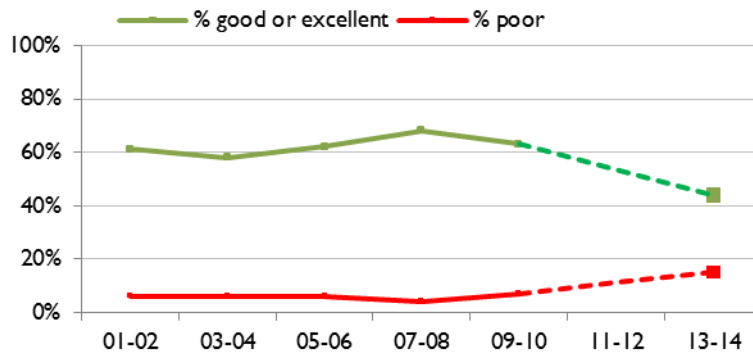
Source: 2013 Community Satisfaction Survey Report of Findings by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates – FM3

Note: The Community Survey was not administered in FY 2011-12.

Similarly, Exhibit 8 shows that resident satisfaction (measured by the percent of "good or excellent" responses) with other aspects of library service also declined.

Exhibit 8: Resident Ratings of the Condition of Library Buildings, the Overall Library Service, and the Variety/Availability of Books and Materials
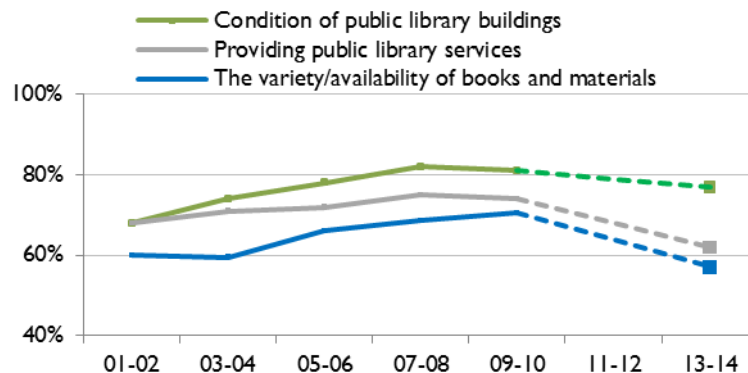
Source: 2013 Community Satisfaction Survey Report of Findings by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates – FM3

Note: The Community Survey was not administered in FY 2011-12.

Comparison to Comparable Library Systems

The Library Department collects and compiles usage data and reports annual statistics to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee of the City Council and, as required by the California Education Code, the California State Library. The California State Library aggregates reported data into statewide reports that allow for comparison across jurisdictions. Because the California State Library collects data from library systems well after the end of a fiscal year, its reports lag, and the most recent available statewide data are for FY 2011-12.

Exhibit 9 provides profiles for San José and several other large library systems in California.

Exhibit 9: Comparison of San José and Comparable Library Systems for FY 2011-12

	Sacra-mento	San Diego	San José	San Francisco	Oakland	Santa Clara County
System profile						
Service population (million)	1.3	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.4	0.4
Branches*	22	35	18	27	17	8
Library square footage (million)**	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.3
Registered borrowers (million)	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4
Materials (million)	1.6	5.4	2.1	3.1	1.2	1.9
Budget and staffing						
Operating expenditures (million)	$30	$33	$30	$93	$22	$33
Librarian FTE	74	112	73	205	80	70
Total FTE	268	408	271	679	216	254
Annual usage						
Open hours (thousand)	43	66	34	67	29	22
Visits (million)	4.1	5.6	6.2	7.2	2.3	3.1
Circulation (million)	7.2	7.0	11.5	10.9	2.7	9.7
Reference questions (million)	0.2	1.3	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.4
Programs (thousand)	5	14	10	11	5	4
Program attendance (thousand)	118	310	291	390	159	160

Source: California State Library public library data for FY 2011-12

* To the extent possible, the Sacramento figures exclude "stations," which are library sites smaller than a typical branch and with fewer weekly open hours than branch libraries. Additionally, although the San José's branch libraries were not open "some part of each of at least five days a week," as the California State Library calls for in defining a "branch library," the Library Department included each open site in its statistical report.

** San José's King Library is nearly 475,000 square feet; excluding it, San José had 350,000 square feet of branch library space, before the opening of 4 branches in FY 2012-13. Other main libraries ranged from 80,000 square feet for Oakland to 360,000 square feet for San Francisco. Santa Clara County does not have a main library because it is a Joint Powers Authority to meet the library needs of Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Saratoga, and unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County.

By normalizing these statistics as shown in Exhibit 10, we see that San José's library system achieved high circulation and visitation in spite of being mid-range in terms of operating expenditure per open hour and per capita. However, it had fewer open hours per capita than most of the other jurisdictions in the below chart.

Exhibit 10: San José and Comparable Library System Metrics for FY 2011-12

	Sacra-mento	San Diego	San José	San Francisco	Oakland	Santa Clara County
Operating expenditure per capita	$23	$25	$31	$114	$53	$79
Operating expenditure per open hour	$700	$500	$900	$1,400	$800	$1,500
Operating expenditure per visitor	$7	$6	$5	$13	$10	$10
Operating expenditure per item circulated	$4	$5	$3	$9	$8	$3
Square feet of library space per capita	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.7
Population served per open hour	30	20	29	12	14	19
Open hours per 100 capita	3.3	5.0	3.5	8.3	7.0	5.3
Open hours per FTE	160	162	126	99	136	86
Librarian FTE as % of Total FTE	28%	27%	27%	30%	37%	28%
% of service population registered	58%	57%	57%	53%	68%	93%
Visits per open hour*	95	85	181	108	80	144
Visits per capita*	3	4	6	9	6	8
Circulation per open hour*	168	106	339	162	91	447
Materials per capita	1	4	2	4	3	5
Circulation per capita*	6	5	12	13	6	24
Material turnover	5	1	6	3	2	5
Reference questions per Librarian FTE	3,000	12,000	9,000	5,000	9,000	5,000
Attendance per program	24	22	28	35	30	45

Source: California State Library public library data for FY 2011-12

* San José's library visitors per open hour were much higher than other jurisdictions because of the King Library collaboration with San José State University. If the King Library's 2.5 million visitors and 3,700 annual open hours were excluded, San José would have experienced 122 visitors per open hour. San José would have had 4 visits per capita if the King Library were excluded. The King Library does not have as profound an impact on circulation per hour or capita as it does on visit metrics.

Audit Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of our audit was to assess the impact of budget reductions on library hours and staffing, and to identify opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of scheduling and staffing.

To assess the extent to which current hours reflect community demands and how those demands have changed with reduced hours and services, we reviewed customer service and resident satisfaction survey results, and analyzed the Library Department's data on patron usage, including:

- Visitation (gate count)

- Circulation (number of materials and borrowers)

- Program attendance

- Reference question

- Computer usage

To the extent possible, we analyzed these data by branch, day of the week, and hour of the day, and normalized results by the number of branches open and hours of service in certain years. Such data were not available for program attendance; thus, we compiled attendance information for programs by day of the week, hour of the day, and program type for all branches for March 2013.

We interviewed management and staff from the Library Department, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, the City Attorney's Office, and the City Manager's Office.

Additionally, we obtained demographic (Census) statistics for each branch library's service area (as defined by the Library Department), and created Geographic Information System maps to portray community profiles and usage patterns.

We also obtained California State Library statistics for 2011-12, and conducted benchmarking comparisons of San José with several other large jurisdictions, including document reviews and interviews with public library managers from:

- Sacramento County, California

- San Diego, California

- San Francisco, California

- Seattle, Washington

Further, we analyzed San José's eBook statistics, and compared them to other local and similar library systems.

To determine whether staffing could be changed to extend service hours, we compiled and performed detailed analyses of branch library staff schedules for the weeks of July 22 to 27, 2013 and October 7 to 12, 2013. Specifically, we evaluated, by branch and in total, staff assignments by position to branch library activities such as circulation and customer service. Because the sampled week in October 2013 provided a more detailed breakdown of staff time assigned to activities, we relied more extensively on that week's staff schedules for our analyses. We compared staff assignments by branch to workload requirements, based on branch circulation and visitation, to determine whether any branches had better or more efficient practices for staffing. We also asked management in the benchmarked jurisdictions for best practices they have implemented.

Further, we analyzed budgetary changes over the last decade, including process improvements and service delivery changes, staff reductions and their impacts on management span of control, and the ratio of professional to clerical staff and of full-time to part-time employees.

Finally, we evaluated the Library Department's utilization of volunteers by branch and system-wide, and compared that to other jurisdictions, to determine what types of programs and services volunteers currently provide, and how they can be further utilized.

We did not audit the City's compliance with the terms of its agreement with San José State University to operate the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, or its centralized operations, including staffing of the King Library or support services.

Finding 1 By Adjusting Open Hours, the Library Department Could Achieve More Usage per Hour

Summary

Since FY 2009-10, the Library Department's budget and staffing have decreased. To maintain service at open branches, the department reduced weekly branch open hours in FY 2010-11, and then again in FY 2011-12. The latest reduction left branches with 33 or 34 open hours on four days of service on Wednesdays to Saturdays, or Mondays to Thursdays. While the decline in total open hours has been steep, library usage fell even further, suggesting remaining open hours do not meet community needs as well as they could. And while adding more hours is the obvious solution, adjusting hours may also yield a positive result.

To determine if a different mix of hours would impact library usage, we analyzed current and historical usage patterns. Overall, residents appear to most utilize branch libraries on Tuesdays and Saturdays; yet only one branch (Evergreen) regularly offers services on both of these days, and it only does so due to temporary funding. Additionally, the department has not offered regular Sunday hours at any branch since July 2010, but Sundays were exceptionally well-utilized when offered. Residents appear to least utilize library facilities on Thursday and Friday mornings, with the exception of storytime programming, yet all branches offer Thursday morning hours and half of them offer Friday morning hours as well. We recommend that the department adjust its hours of operations based on an evaluation of branch usage. Namely, it should augment hours on the most utilized days of the week—Tuesday and Saturday—while reducing hours at lesser used times, such as certain mornings, as needed. As the Library adds back service hours, it should continue to monitor and evaluate branch usage data to ensure additions serve community needs.

Additionally, some branches are structurally larger, house larger collections, and provide service to a greater number of residents. However, they have the same number of hours as that of a smaller library serving far fewer individuals. Other jurisdictions have created tiered-service models with extended service hours for larger branches, taking into consideration the geographical location of branches and resident access to facilities. The Library Department should evaluate the benefits and challenges of creating a regional service model that similarly adjusts operating hours to capitalize on the physical capabilities of its branches and the variety of services they provide to San José's diverse neighborhoods.

Finally, although demand for digital materials has increased dramatically, it has not offset the need for branch library hours. Digital materials were 4 percent of the Library's circulation in FY 2012-13, and the demand for eBooks is expected to

continue rising. However, public libraries face difficult challenges in acquiring popular eBook titles. The effects of eBooks on library patron usage remain unclear, as well as the workload associated with increased usage of digital materials. In preparation, the Library Department should develop a strategy that specifies how it will monitor eBook impacts on staff workload, and what could trigger adjustment to its branch staffing model.

Budget Cuts Led to Dramatically Reduced Branch Hours and Less Library Usage

As branches opened or re-opened from FY 2004-05 to FY 2009-10, the Library Department's budget and staffing grew. However, since then its budget and staffing have decreased and the department reduced weekly branch open hours in FY 2010-11, and again in FY 2011-12, to maintain service at open branches. Over the last five years, weekly branch open hours have been reduced 29 percent.

Library Usage Fell Further Than Service Hours

Since FY 2008-09, total hours of service at the King Library and branch libraries declined 22 percent, from 46,000 to 35,000. During the same period, usage declined as well: visitation fell 28 percent, from 8.1 million to 5.8 million visits; and circulation fell 30 percent, from 15.4 million to 10.7 million materials.

However, branch library usage has decreased far more than open hours. Exhibit 11 shows that, since FY 2008-09, aggregate branch visitation and circulation fell 36 percent and 33 percent, respectively. This means that, as shown, branch usage per hour declined (the King Library, where annual service hours were reduced only five percent, was less affected by change).

Exhibit 11: Branch Library Open Hours, Visitors, and Circulation Since FY 2009-10

Annual Branch Totals	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Change From 2008-09 to 2012-13
Open hours*	42,000	41,000	36,000	30,000	32,000	-24%
Visitors (million)	5.4	5.1	4.3	3.7	3.5	-36%
Circulation (million)	13.3	13.1	12.0	9.8	9.0	-33%
Visitors per hour	129	125	120	122	109	-16%
Circulation per hour	319	319	331	322	282	-12%

Source: Library Department statistics
* Annual branch open hours fell only 22 percent from FY 2009-10 to FY 2012-13, even though weekly open hours fell 29 percent from 47 to 33 (or 34), because four branches were opened in FY 2012-13.

For the first six months of FY 2013-14, branch library visitation and circulation increased 11 percent and 3 percent, respectively, compared to the first six months of FY 2012-13. However, since the paired-branch service model was implemented in FY 2011-12, total branch open hours have increased 20 percent while circulation and visitation declined 5 percent.

Despite the fall in usage at branch libraries, they were still the site of 60 percent of San José's library visits and 80 percent of its circulation in FY 2012-13.

Current Library Hours Are Not Optimal

Analyses of the Library Department's extensive aggregate data on branch library usage revealed that library customers appear to most utilize branch libraries on Tuesdays and Saturdays and least utilize them on Thursday and Friday mornings (with the exception of storytime programs). Additionally, late afternoons (3 pm to 6 pm) tended to be busier than early afternoons (noon to 3 pm) and mornings.

Visitation

Library staff records the daily number of visitors who enter each branch library (a gate count). As shown in Exhibit 12, in FY 2012-13 the busiest day of the week was Tuesday, and the least busy days were Thursdays and Fridays. The exhibit also shows that the relative popularity of certain days was true in prior years.

Exhibit 12: Average Branch Library Visitation by Day of the Week
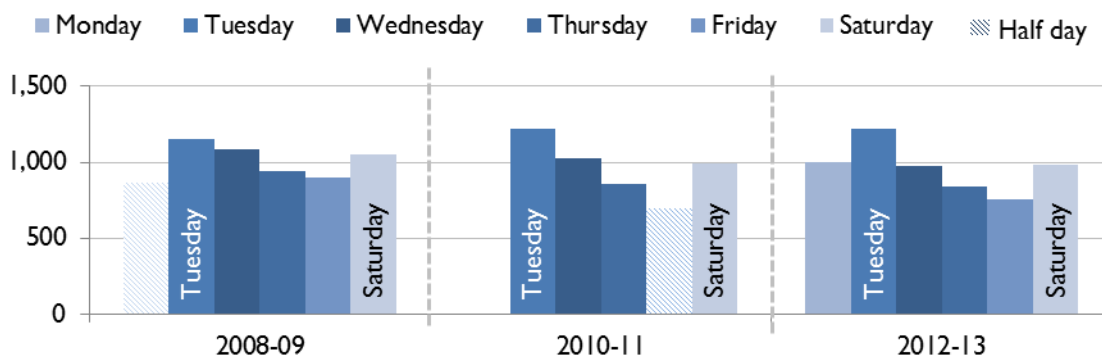
Source: Auditor analysis of the Library Department's gate count records for FY 2008-09 to 2012-13

Finally, by dividing average daily branch visitation by the number of open hours on each day, Exhibit 13 below presents the relative intensity of visitation by day of the week. Tuesdays and Saturdays had the highest average hourly visitors in FY 2012-13 and in the past. It also makes clear that on half days of service, such as Mondays in FY 2008-09 and Fridays in FY 2010-11, patrons accommodated the limited open hours offered those days by visiting in higher relative density.

Exhibit 13: Average Hourly Branch Library Visitation by Day of the Week
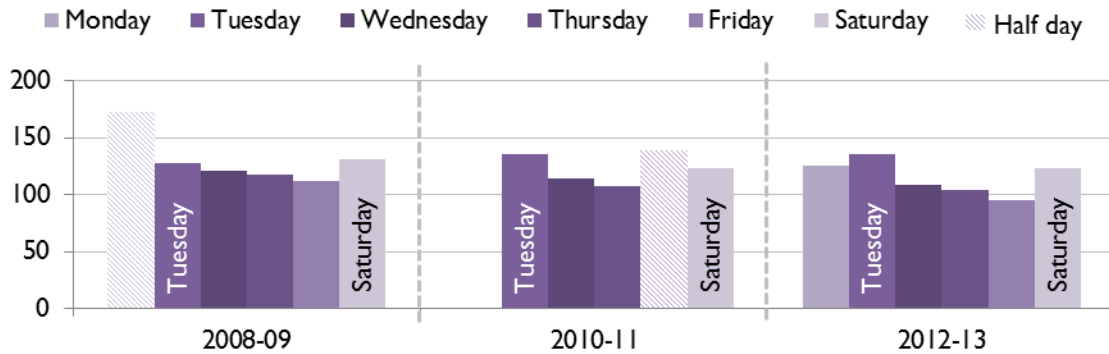
Source: Auditor analysis of the Library Department's gate count records for FY 2008-09 to FY 2012-13

Borrowing

The Library's circulation software records the branch where, and date and time when materials are borrowed. Exhibit 14, which charts borrowing by time of the day and day of the week, shows that borrowing activity, like visitation per open hour, peaked on Tuesdays and Saturdays both under the current four-day service model and under the prior 39-hour per week model. Branches also experienced high borrowing rates on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Exhibit 14: Borrowing by Day of Week and Time of Day for an Average Branch

Monday to Thursday Branches
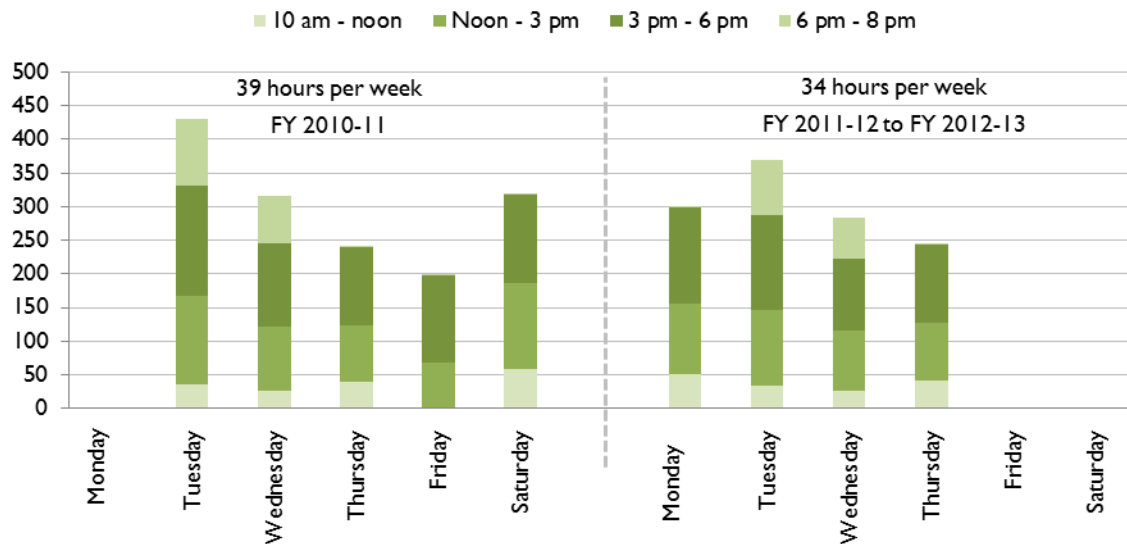
Wednesday to Saturday Branches
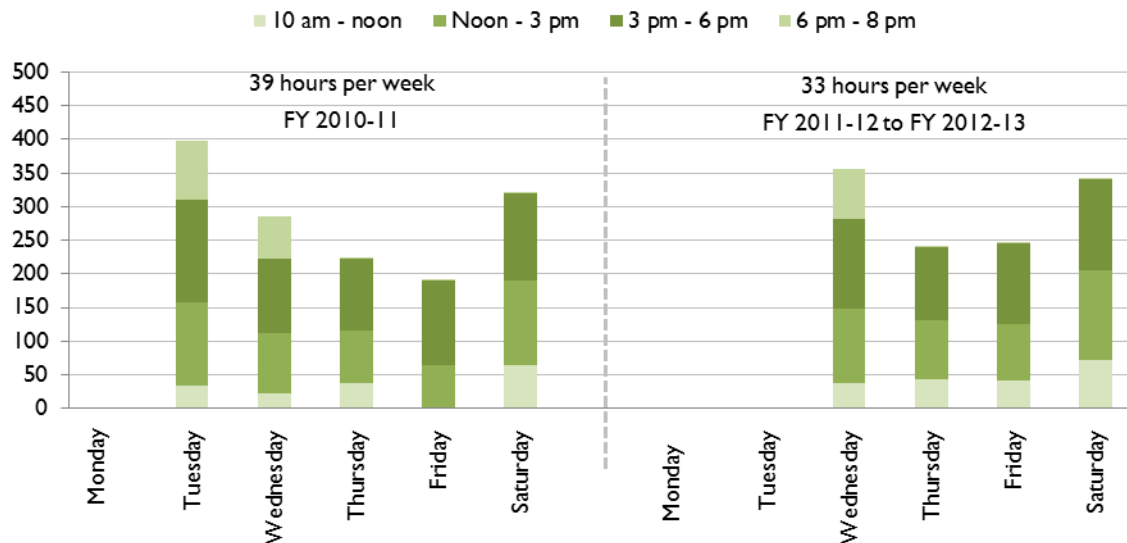
Source: Auditor analysis of the Library Department's checkout data for FY 2010-11 to FY 2012-13

As shown above, late afternoons attracted more borrowers than early afternoons or mornings. Additionally, mornings were not created equal: Tuesday and Wednesday mornings on which branch libraries offered one open hour (11 am to noon) were not much less busy than Thursday or Friday mornings which offered two open hours (10 am to noon) since FY 2011-12. These patterns, aggregated system-wide for presentation, held true at the branch-level as well. Examination of computer usage data and reference question statistics also showed that afternoons were typically busier than other times of the day.

Further, library statistics show that customers adapted, to a degree, to changing service hours: Wednesdays drew 30 percent of weekly visitation and borrowing activity for Wednesday to Saturday branches, but less than 25 percent for Monday to Thursday branches. Staff believes this reflected pent-up customer demand from the long weekend (Sunday to Tuesday) when some branches were closed. Similarly, Monday to Thursday branches saw higher total and hourly borrowing on Mondays, their first open day of the week, than on Wednesdays and Thursdays, though Tuesdays still had the highest total and hourly borrowing.

Program Attendance

We sampled program attendance records for the month of March 2013 and found Tuesday- and Friday-morning programs received the most participants on average. Exhibit 15 shows the average number of program participants by day of the week and time of the day. Nearly half of program attendees were for programs beginning from 10 am to 11:30 am (largely storytime).

Exhibit 15: Average Attendance per Offered Program During March 2013

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Before noon	25	40	24	32	48	21
Noon to 3 pm	12	6	7	10	9	21
3 pm to 6 pm	18	22	13	18	14	7
6 pm or later	20	21	20	15		

Source: Auditor analysis of branch library program records for March 2013

It must be noted that storytime is the most well attended of the Library's programs, and Librarians choose when to offer it. Friday morning program offerings may be well attended because those programs tend to be storytime (Librarians may also schedule storytime for Friday morning based on demand).

Saturday Visitation at Evergreen Steadily Increasing

Although the King Library offers weekend hours, no San José branch library is open on Sundays and only half of the branches offer Saturday hours.

In September 2013, the Library added an additional day of service at Evergreen branch library, as a result of a one-time FY 2013-14 budget action to address the lack of Saturday library hours in Council District 8. Exhibit 16 shows Evergreen's average daily gate count by month. Notably, Saturday visitation has increased 35 percent since September, and is nearing averages for the busiest day (Tuesday).

Exhibit 16: Average Daily Visitation at Evergreen by Month and Day of the Week, July to December 2013
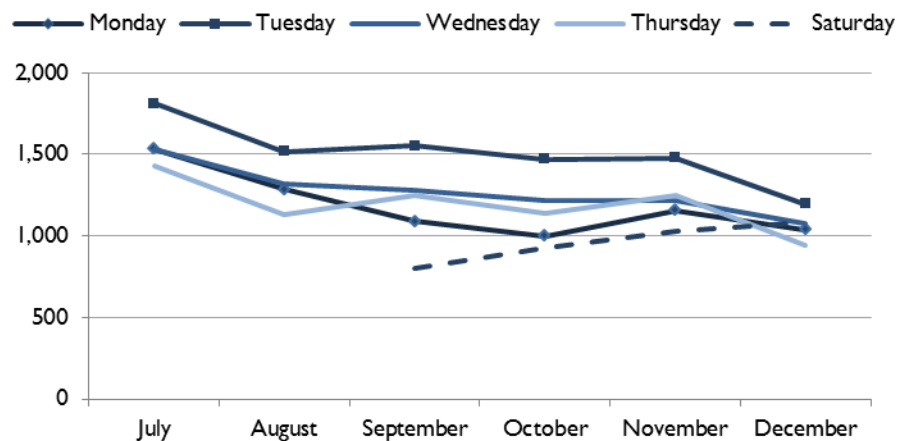
Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department gate count records

During FY 2013-14 budget deliberations, there were several proposals to add Saturday open hours at branch libraries. The Evergreen branch's experience suggests to us that there is demand for more Saturday hours. The same may be true for Sundays: although the department has not offered regular Sunday hours at any branch since July 2010, Sundays were exceptionally well-utilized when offered. Specifically, the Tully Branch had 250 visitors per open Sunday hour in FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10, far more than a typical day. Additionally, working parents likely desire more evening and weekend hours.

Taking into consideration its extensive data on customer visits, borrowing activity, and more, the Library Department should adjust hours of operation to improve usage of branch facilities. Namely, it should extend hours of service and specifically augment hours on the most utilized days of the week—Tuesday and Saturday, reducing hours at lesser used times such as certain mornings as needed.

Recommendation #1: To improve branch library usage, the Library Department should adjust hours of operation based on an evaluation of usage by day and by hour at the branch level (i.e., adding more heavily trafficked hours). As it adds back hours of service, the Library should continue to monitor and evaluate branch usage patterns to ensure additions serve community needs.

Optimal Service Hours Will Vary by Branch

The capacity of San José's branch libraries varies. Exhibit 17 compares each branch's service population to the number of hours it is open weekly (33 or 34 hours). That is to say, if every person in West Valley's service area were to visit the branch once per week, it would need to provide service to 2,100 people each hour on average. Alviso, on the other hand, would service just over 500 individuals per hour. Under the current service model, branches are expected to meet differing population demands within the same number of hours.

Exhibit 17: Comparison of Branch Service Populations and Facility Size

Branch	Service Population	Population per Weekly Hour	Square Feet	Square Feet per Person
Evergreen*	101,600	2,400	21,000	0.21
Alum Rock	74,600	2,200	26,000	0.35
West Valley	68,400	2,100	20,000	0.29
Cambrian	56,600	1,700	28,000	0.49
Santa Teresa	54,500	1,700	22,000	0.40
Almaden	52,200	1,600	20,000	0.38
Pearl Avenue	50,400	1,500	14,000	0.28
Berryessa	50,100	1,500	24,000	0.48
Edenvale	49,300	1,400	22,000	0.45
Tully	49,200	1,400	24,000	0.49
Educational Park	42,500	1,200	18,000	0.42
Willow Glen	38,700	1,200	13,000	0.34
Joyce Ellington	38,300	1,100	15,000	0.38
Hillview	33,800	1,000	21,000	0.62
Vineland	33,600	1,000	24,000	0.71
Rose Garden	29,500	900	19,000	0.64
Biblioteca Latinoamericana	28,200	800	16,000	0.56
Seven Trees	25,500	800	21,000	0.82
Bascom	25,300	800	22,000	0.87
East Carnegie	22,800	700	10,000	0.45
Calabazas	20,200	600	10,000	0.52
Alviso	17,500	500	6,000	0.35

Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department data

* Since September 2013, Evergreen has been open 42 hours per week. Its service population includes residents who the Library expects will visit the Southeast Branch once it is constructed.

Furthermore, the physical size of the buildings places differing service demands on each branch. As one metric to help evaluate the availability of library resources, square feet of library facilities per capita is measured by the Library Department. The FY 2012-13 Adopted Capital Budget estimated the city-wide value, excluding King Library, to be 0.42 square feet of library space per person. As shown above in Exhibit 17, the Evergreen library has 0.21 square feet for each person in its service area whereas Bascom has 0.87 square feet per person.

Some branches are structurally larger, house larger collections, and provide service to a greater number of residents. However, they have the same number

of hours as that of a smaller library serving far fewer individuals. Finally, San José's neighborhood profiles vary significantly. The hours that may well serve one neighborhood may not be the best fit for another neighborhood. For example, 25 percent of Biblioteca Latinoamericana's service population is children, with 30 percent of those children living in poverty. According to Library management, a branch may serve as a safe place for children, so Biblioteca Latinoamericana may emphasize after-school hours over early morning hours. Further, no branch is ever open before 10 am, or before 11 am on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, which makes serving young children more difficult. (Santa Cruz Public Library explained to us that its staff offered pre-opening programs, such as Toddler Time, and would have volunteers at the door to ensure only program participants entered the library.) In our opinion, such community profiles need to be considered in establishing branch hours. Appendix A includes maps of San José that highlight the variety of neighborhoods served by the City's branches.

Other Jurisdictions Have Implemented Service Models Where Branch Service Hours Vary

Seattle Public Library has a regional, tiered-hour branch service model. Prior to 2009, Seattle operated 15 branches open 55 hours a week, and 11 branches open 50 hours a week (1,375 open hours per week). In response to budget pressure, Seattle reduced total hours open by 13 percent by transitioning to 11 branches open 60 hours over 7 days a week and 15 branches open 35 hours over 5 days per week. According to Seattle's management:

> *This model began to tailor library services to the differing physical capacity of facilities in order to deliver programs and services and deploy our staff resources most effectively. The eleven seven-day branches are geographically distributed around the city, are significant in size, public computer and meeting room capacity and workroom/support space capacity to handle a large volume of usage and programming.*

According to Seattle administrators, some patrons began using the seven-day branches, while others adjusted to the five-day branches' schedules. They acknowledged that there were likely some patrons that stopped using the library.

In addition to Seattle Public Library, San Francisco Public Library recently moved to a tiered system. It operates 27 branch libraries and one main library, all open six or seven days a week. The tiered-service model is structured such that 6 branches are open 55 hours a week, 4 branches are open 50 hours, 12 branches are open 45 hours, and 5 are open 40 hours. The impact on patron usage has yet to be determined.

The decision to increase service hours at one branch rather than others is challenging. Staff notes that equal access is an important value, and that distance and other factors (i.e., barriers such as highways, access to transportation, proximity to schools, etc.) may prevent residents from using different branches.

Nonetheless, by varying hours of operation based on the physical capacities of branches and dispersing access geographically, the Library Department can offer a variety of morning, evening, and weekend hours in order to better meet patron demands. This may be in the form of a regional service model, where larger branches offer more hours per week and support smaller, satellite branches. The Library could equalize the total open hours offered in service regions. Such a service model would help ensure library access while capitalizing on times most desired by communities.

> **Recommendation #2: To better serve individual communities, the Library Department should evaluate a regional service model for branches.**

Digital Materials do not Presently Offset the Need for Branch Library Hours, But May Impact Service Delivery in the Future

The Library Department's collection and circulation of eBooks has increased substantially since it first began tracking eBooks in FY 2006-07.[5] Exhibit 18 shows the Library Department's collection by material type from FY 2003-04 to FY 2012-13. During FY 2012-13, eBooks totaled 2 percent of the collection, up from 0.6 percent of the collection in FY 2008-09.

Exhibit 18: Library Department's Collection by Material Type, FY 2003-04 to FY 2012-13
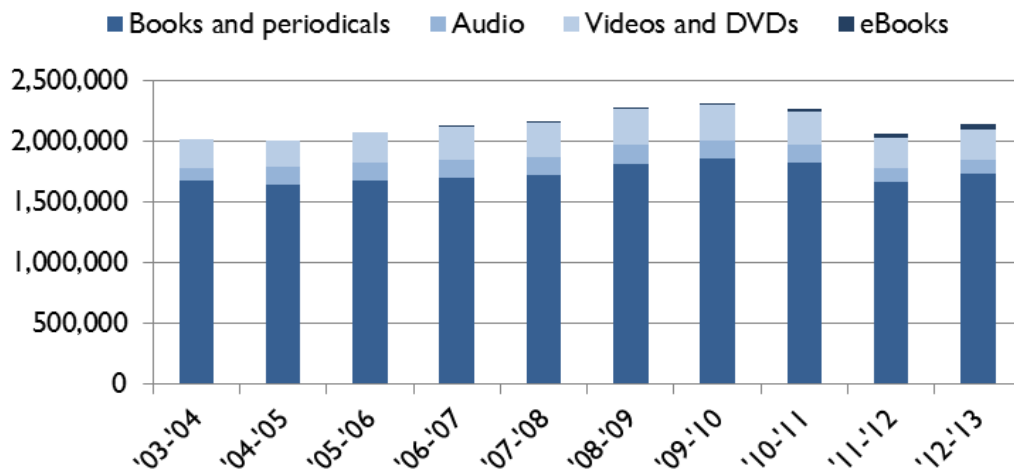
Source: Library Department collection records

Exhibit 19 shows circulation of digital materials has increased significantly, as well. Circulation more than doubled from July 2011 to July 2012, peaked in April 2012,

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[5] The department's eBook collection totaled 45,110 as of October 2013 and is based on the number of titles available.

and has since declined. In July 2013 it was 6 percent lower than a year prior, which staff attributes to no longer offering a popular music library, which accounted for 22 percent of monthly digital material circulation. In FY 2012-13, circulation of digital materials was 4 percent of the overall circulation.[6]

Exhibit 19: Circulation of eBooks and eMedia, July 2009 to September 2013
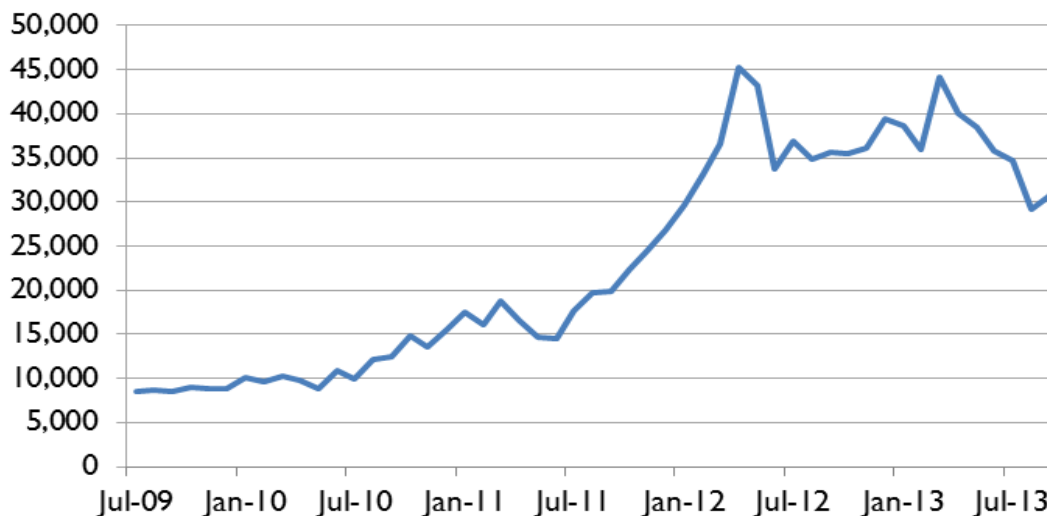
Source: Auditor Analysis of Library Department data

Comparisons to Other Jurisdictions Suggest Room for Growth

The Library Department's digital materials budget, shown in Exhibit 20, has increased 21 percent since FY 2010-11, spending 7 percent of its materials budget on eBooks and audiobooks, specifically.[7] Results from a 2012 *Library Journal* survey of 820 public libraries across the nation indicate that San José's digital materials budget was comparable to those of other large libraries.

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[6] Circulation totals include all downloadable materials, including audio.

[7] This does not include a one-time allocation for King Library eBook and audiobook enhancement.

Exhibit 20: San José Digital Materials Budget FY 2010-11 to FY 2012-14
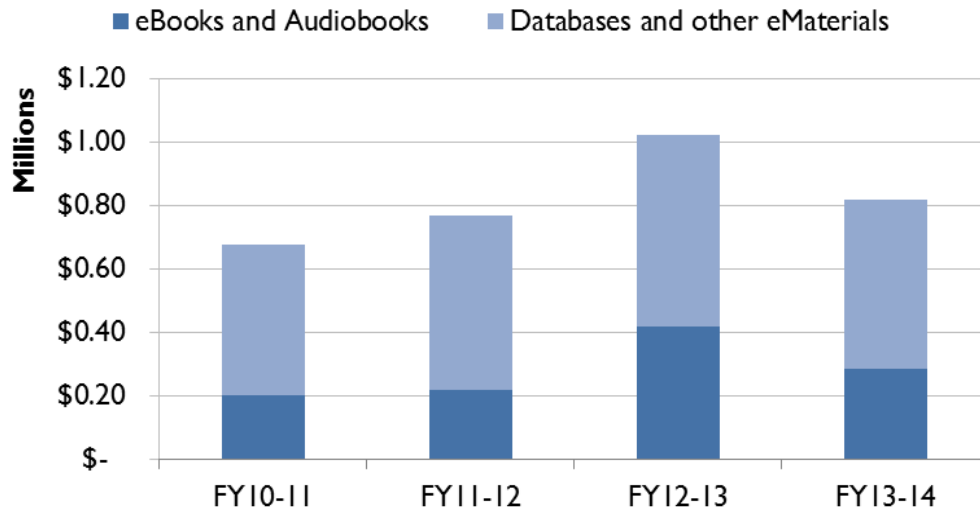
Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department budget

As seen in Exhibit 21, San José's FY 2011-12 digital materials expense per capita was higher than that of Oakland, Sunnyvale, San Diego, and Sacramento libraries, yet San José had fewer digital materials per capita.

Exhibit 21: Comparison of Digital Materials Expenses and Collection per Capita, FY 2011-12[8]

Expenditure per capita
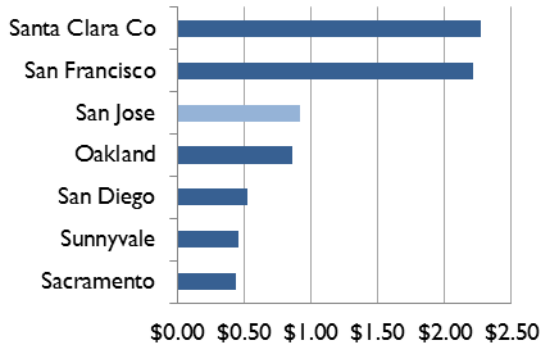
Digital materials per capita
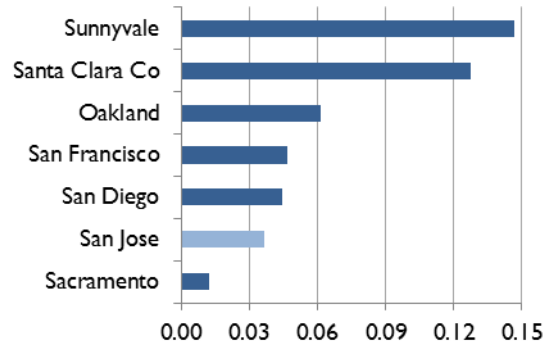
Source: Auditor analysis of California Library Statistics data

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[8] As public libraries continue to define what to include and what not to include in their digital materials budgets, it is possible that some public libraries reported database costs while others did not.

Demand for Digital Materials Is Expected to Increase, But Public Libraries Face Challenges in Acquiring Those Books in Greatest Demand

PricewaterhouseCoopers predicts the U.S. consumer eBook sales will surpass that of print by 2017. However, public libraries face significant challenges in fulfilling this demand. *Library Journal* found the two biggest issues facing public libraries with regard to eBooks to be the price and selection of digital materials. According to the survey, some major publishers have refused to license eBooks to libraries or have made it cost prohibitive. Without the most desired titles, public libraries may be unable to meet patron demands for eBooks.

The impact of increased interest in eBooks remains unclear. Increased eBook budgets may mean less purchasing of new and replacement printed titles. Circulation of printed materials may decline, which would ease workload on circulation staff. However, there may be a greater need for staff with more technical skills to help patrons with e-readers and online resources.

Recommendation #3: **As e-reader devices proliferate, the Library Department should develop and implement a digital materials strategy. This strategy should specify how the department will monitor eBook impacts on staff workload, and what could trigger adjustment to its branch staffing model.**

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Finding 2 By Realigning Its Staffing Model, the Library Department Could Deploy Staff for Extended Service Hours

Summary

Since FY 2003-04, the Library Department has added five branch libraries, but now operates with fewer authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) staff resources than it had in FY 1997-98. To cope with reductions, the Library has made greater use of part-time and hourly employees who provide greater flexibility to staff reduced hours. Because a majority of staff time at branches is spent on routine activities, the department can further modify its staffing model to match the requirements of its core activities. Specifically, more material check-in, sorting, and shelving hours should be assigned to Library Aides (Aides), and more customer service time should be assigned to Library Pages (Pages). We offer several options for reassigning activities that could enable the department to redeploy an estimated $775,000 in annualized staff resources—more if the department determines that other discussed changes are possible—to extend branch library service hours.   While the department can make some improvements now, fully implementing our proposals would take time if accomplished through attrition.

The Library Department Modified the Mix of Branch Staff to Cope with Budget Cuts

Over the last 10 years, the Library Department has seen its budget rise as it opened new branches, but staffing fall with the City's financial difficulties. Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 6 in the Introduction show the department's adopted operating budget, authorized staffing level, and number of open branches and service hours over the last 10 years.

In an attempt to maintain services, the Library Department modified the mix of staff authorized in the budget. Librarians (also referred to as professional staff in this report) have remained 26 percent of authorized staff. However, the Library has reduced full-time positions more than part-time positions since staffing peaked in FY 2008-09, as shown in Exhibit 22. According to the department, part-time staff affords greater flexibility in scheduling over the reduced library schedule.   Specifically, part-time library employees need not work the five consecutive eight-hour days and off time on two consecutive days as required for the listed full-time employees by the City's memorandum of agreement with the Municipal Employees' Federation.

Exhibit 22: Comparison of Library Authorized Staffing in FY 2008-09 and FY 2013-14

Employee Classification	08-09 FTE	13-14 FTE	% Change
Branch Managers (Senior Librarians)	23.00	19.00	-17%
Full-time Librarians (Librarian I and II)	52.00	41.00	-21%
Part-time Librarians (Librarian I and II)	24.68	22.60	-8%
Library Assistants	38.00	30.00	-21%
Full-time Library Clerks	47.00	38.00	-19%
Part-time Library Clerks	37.17	31.58	-15%
Part-time Library Pages	63.85	63.90	0%
Part-time Library Aides	19.03	19.43	2%
All other Library positions*	67.38	52.08	-23%
Ratio of Librarian I and II to Senior Librarians	3.3 to 1	3.3 to 1	0%
Ratio of Library Clerks, Pages, and Aides to Assistants	4.4 to 1	5.1 to 1	16%

Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department adopted operating budgets
* Other library positions include, but are not limited to, information technology, warehouse, and other support staff, and department management.

Exhibit 22 also shows that Page and Aide authorized staffing held steady despite budget reductions. As discussed later, Pages and Aides provide cost-effective service at branch libraries.

Additionally, Exhibit 22 shows that the span of control (meaning the average number of employees who may report to a supervisor) remained the same for Branch Managers, and increased for Library Assistants since FY 2008-09. This indicates supervisorial position reductions were proportional to reductions for professional line staff, and steeper than those for clerical line staff.

Branch Libraries Have Been Assigned a Range of Staff Resources

The Library Department assigned more than half of its staff resources—174 of 318 budgeted FTE as of late 2013—to San José's 22 branch libraries. Exhibit 23 shows the mix of these employees, and how many weekly staff hours they can provide if all full- or part-time employees are present, and allocations of hourly employees are spent.

Exhibit 23: Mix of Branch Employees

Employee Classification	FTE	Weekly Staff Hours
Branch Managers (Senior Librarians)	11.00	440
Full-time Librarians (Librarian I and II)	27.00	1,080
Part-time Librarians (24 half-time Librarian I and II)	12.00	480
Literacy Program Specialists	2.00	80
Library Assistants	22.00	880
Full-time Library Clerks	24.00	960
Part-time Library Clerks (42 half-time Library Clerks)	21.00	840
Part-time Library Pages (hourly employees)	40.85	1,634
Part-time Library Aides (hourly employees)	13.75	550
Total	**173.60**	**6,944**

Source: Library Department internal staffing document as of September 2013

Note: The difference in budgeted FTE by position in Exhibit 22 and Exhibit 23 is due to the allocation of Library staff to the Martin Luther King, Jr. main library and support services.

Allocations of Staff Resources Vary by Branch

Since FY 2011-12, the Library has allocated staff resources to paired branches overseen by a single Branch Manager and two Library Assistants (one for each branch), so that the single staff team could provide the services, programs, and customer support needed by those communities. According to Library management, the department chose pairings and distributed staff resources based on proximity to other branches, schools, and community facilities, branch size (square feet and layout), circulation, and customer mix (e.g., children, students, adults, seniors, foreign language speakers, people living in poverty, etc.). Exhibit 24 shows the Library's allocation of staff to paired branches in FY 2013-14.

Exhibit 24: Branch Pair Characteristics and Staff Allocations in FY 2013-14

Branch Pair	Combined Square Feet	Combined Circulation	FTE	Weekly Staff Hours
Berryessa & Evergreen	45,000	1,950,000	22.40	896
Seven Trees & Tully	45,000	985,000	19.80	792
Almaden & Cambrian	48,000	1,265,000	17.35	694
Alum Rock & Bascom	48,000	620,000	16.85	674
Edenvale & Santa Teresa	44,000	1,135,000	16.30	652
Pearl Avenue & Vineland	38,000	790,000	15.50	620
Biblioteca Latinoamericana & East Carnegie	26,000	200,000	14.00	560
Rose Garden & Willow Glen	32,000	540,000	13.50	540
Educational Park & Hillview	39,000	665,000	13.00	520
Calabazas & West Valley	30,000	1,080,000	12.70	508
Alviso & Joyce Ellington	21,000	325,000	12.20	488
Total	**416,000**	**9,555,000**	**173.60**	**6,944**

Source: Library Department internal staffing document as of September 2013, September 2013 circulation report, and branch library profiles

Note: Circulation totals reflect FY 2013-14 figures through September 2013 projected to a full year.

Branch Activity Assignments Vary by Position

Although San José's branch libraries have different staffing levels and serve diverse communities and needs, their core operations are similar. Circulation and customer services accounted for more than half of available staff time at branch libraries for a sample week in October 2013. During that week, clerical staff (Aides, Pages, and Clerks) logged 2,100 hours assigned on circulation services: checking-in and shelving returned materials; tidying shelves; and collecting and transferring reserved materials (holds). An additional 1,500 clerical and professional hours were assigned to customer service: greeting patrons entering the branch; staffing the information desk ("infodesk"); and approaching patrons browsing materials in different sections, or "zones" (referred to as "zoning"). Professional staff also focused on programs. Other regular activities include program planning and delivery; meetings among staff and with the community; staff training; branch opening and closing procedures; and special projects. Exhibit 25 summarizes staff assignments for one week.

Exhibit 25: Summary of Staff Hours Assigned to Activities for One Week

| | Circulation | | | Customer Service | | Other | | | | | | | Grand |
Position	CI	SH	C	Z	G	IS	PJ	M	P	T	OC	O	Total
Library Aide	229	216	58	10	8	35	6	14	1		5	13	**593**
Library Page	476	548	140	325	230	176	46	43	13	22	33	64	**2,117**
Library Clerk PT	133	4	110	177	83	72	68	26	4	3	50	27	**755**
Library Clerk FT	113	1	87	180	52	34	119	26	3	23	82	68	**786**
Library Assistant	39	2	17	78	25	39	38	61	1	56	32	151	**539**
Librarian I PT				97		19	20	6	20	12	3	24	**199**
Librarian II PT				63	6	25	3	18	41	8	2	43	**207**
Librarian I				21	3	14	5	8	26	18	2	24	**120**
Librarian II				157	3	53	40	54	88	64	7	199	**665**
Branch Manager	1			34	2	28	22	66	14	32	3	94	**294**
Literacy Specialist				2			2	5	42			2	**52**
Grand Total	**991**	**771**	**412**	**1,142**	**412**	**493**	**368**	**326**	**250**	**236**	**218**	**708**	**6,325**

Source: Auditor analysis of branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013

Key: CI – check-in and sorting (including clearing morning bookdrop); SH – shelving; C – other circulation activities such as tidying shelves and processing holds; Z – staffing the information desk or a "zone;" G – greeting; IS – in-service (quarterly training provided to all staff); PJ – special projects; M – meetings; P – program planning and delivery; T – training; OC – branch opening and closing procedures; O – other activities including supervision, computer-related activities such as online reference, travel time between branches, collection management, outreach, and reporting.

Note: Not every employee has an assigned activity for each hour of the day, particularly professional staff. The table excludes off time, including vacation and sick leave, because on-call pool employees backfill some of these absences and their hours are included.

Exhibit 26 shows which activities each position was assigned to in the library scheduling system, the percent of time assigned (each position's hours add to 100 percent horizontally), and highlights higher values. For example, Aides spent 39 percent of their time checking-in and sorting, and 36 percent of their time shelving.

Exhibit 26: Percent of Each Position's Time Assigned to Activities for One Week

Position	Circulation			Customer Service		IS	PJ	M	P	T	OC	O	Grand Total
	CI	SH	C	Z	G								
Library Aide	39	36	10	2	1	6	1	2			1	2	100
Library Page	22	26	7	15	11	8	2	2	1	1	2	3	100
Library Clerk PT	18	1	15	23	11	10	9	3			7	4	100
Library Clerk FT	14		11	23	7	4	15	3		3	10	9	100
Library Assistant	7		3	15	5	7	7	11		10	6	28	100
Librarian I PT				49		9	10	3	10	6	2	12	100
Librarian II PT				30	3	12	1	9	20	4	1	21	100
Librarian I				17	2	12	4	7	21	15	2	20	100
Librarian II				24		8	6	8	13	10	1	30	100
Branch Manager				11	1	9	7	23	5	11	1	32	100
Literacy Specialist				4		4	9	80				3	100
Grand Total	16	12	7	18	7	8	6	5	4	4	3	11	100

Source: Auditor analysis of branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013

Note: See Exhibit 25 for activity codes.

Finally, Exhibit 27 shows the percent of time assigned to each activity by position (each activity's hours add to 100 percent vertically), and highlights higher values. For example, Pages did 71 percent of the shelving.

Exhibit 27: Percent of Each Activity's Hours Assigned by Position for One Week

Position	Circulation			Customer Service		IS	PJ	M	P	T	OC	O	Grand Total
	CI	SH	C	Z	G								
Library Aide	23	28	14	1	2	7	2	4			2	2	9
Library Page	48	71	34	28	56	36	13	13	5	9	15	9	33
Library Clerk PT	13	1	27	15	20	15	18	8	1	1	23	4	12
Library Clerk FT	12		21	16	13	7	32	8	1	10	37	10	12
Library Assistant	4		4	7	6	8	10	19		24	15	21	9
Librarian I PT				8		4	6	2	8	5	1	3	3
Librarian II PT				5	1	5	1	6	16	3	1	6	3
Librarian I				2	1	3	1	2	10	8	1	3	2
Librarian II				14	1	11	11	17	35	27	3	28	11
Branch Manager				3		6	6	20	5	13	1	13	5
Literacy Specialist							1	2	17				1
Grand Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Auditor analysis of branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013

Note: See Exhibit 25 for activity codes.

The Branch Staffing Model Can be More Cost Effective

Branch Managers assign overall work schedules for their branches, and typically manage the professional staff's schedule. Library Assistants typically schedule clerical staff and assign them duties. In our opinion, the distribution of staff hours shown above can be improved by assigning activities to staff that most cost-effectively performs them.

More Shelving Should be Assigned to Aides

The Aide classification was established in August 2003 primarily to shelve returned library materials, and also help sort them. Its class specifications explain that the position supports library personnel in the "unpacking, sorting, delivering, and shelving of library books and other materials." The class specifications proceed to clarify that the Aide classification

> …differs from the next higher class of Library Page in its limited scope of duties primarily related to shelving books and other library materials; it also differs from Library Page which has more responsibility for customer service and direct interaction with library patrons…

However, as shown above in Exhibit 27, Pages actually did most of the shelving (71 percent), while Aides were assigned less than a third of those hours (28 percent). If more shelving hours in the sample week in October 2013 had been performed by Aides, the Library could have redeployed staff resources elsewhere because Aides earn less than other employees that shelved books, namely Pages. Exhibit 28 compares average hourly wages, benefits, and fully-loaded wages and benefits (total cost) for branch library employee classifications, and shows that Aides cost the City nearly $7 less per hour than Pages do.

Exhibit 28: Average Hourly Wages and Benefits Cost by Position

Employee Classification	Wages	Benefits	Total Cost
Part-time Library Aide	$10.56	$0.56	$11.10
Part-time Library Page	$16.95	$0.88	$17.83
Part-time Library Clerk	$20.00	$9.45	$29.45
Full-time Library Clerk	$21.91	$13.74	$35.65
Library Assistant	$29.86	$15.26	$45.12
Part-time Librarian I	$29.77	$9.73	$39.50
Part-time Librarian II	$35.28	$10.90	$46.18
Full-time Librarian I	$29.59	$14.19	$43.78
Full-time Librarian II	$35.31	$16.28	$51.59
Branch Manager (Senior Librarian)	$41.28	$17.10	$58.38
Literacy Program Specialist	$32.97	$16.12	$49.09

Source: Auditor analysis of PeopleSoft payroll records and Budget Office documents for FY 2013-14

Shelving, as assigned in the sample week, cost $12,300 to complete (calculated by multiplying the shelving hours in Exhibit 25 by the total hourly cost of various employees from Exhibit 28 above). By assigning shelving hours to Aides, shelving would have cost $8,550 (calculated by multiplying 771 total shelving hours from Exhibit 25 by the $11.10 total hourly cost of Aides from Exhibit 28 above). The Library Department could have redeployed nearly $3,750 in weekly savings to other activities or extended service hours. Had these redeployed resources been assigned to Aides for additional shelving, the Library could have gained 340 weekly shelving hours ($3,750 in weekly savings divided by the $11.10 total hourly cost for Aides) at no additional cost, enough to fulfill shelving needs for

nearly two additional service days. Exhibit 29 compares the actual scheduling and cost of shelving for one week ($12,300) to the possible scheduling and cost if Aides had been assigned all hours ($8,550). It also calculates the additional staff resources and shelving hours available to be redeployed.

Exhibit 29: Actual and Possible Shelving for One Week of Branch Library Service

	% of hours	# of hours	x cost per hour	= weekly cost
Actual				
Aide	28%	216	$11.10	$2,400
Page (or higher)	72%	555	$17.83	$9,900
				(a) $12,300
Potential				
Aide	100%	771	$11.10	$8,550
Page (or higher)	-	-	$17.83	-
				(b) $8,550
			(a) – (b) = Redeployable resource	$3,750
			÷ Cost of Aide per hour	$11.10
			= New hours of shelving	340

Source: Auditor analysis of PeopleSoft payroll records and Budget Office documents for FY 2013-14; branch library staff schedules for October 7 to 12, 2013

Assigning shelving to a special classification is also practiced by the Sacramento Public Library, which created a "Shelver" position to stretch resources.

Library management cautions that reassigning so many hours to Aides could be challenging because of high turnover rates. Further, because Aides work fewer hours per week than Pages and Clerks, more Aides would be needed to provide the same number of service hours, which could present logistical challenges for schedulers and supervisors.

More Check-in and Sorting Can be Assigned to Aides

Library staff also explained that additional shelving hours have not been assigned to Aides historically because shelving is a highly repetitive activity that can lead to repetitive stress injuries. As such, Aides have been limited to three- or four-hour shifts, and the assignment of extended blocks of shelving time has been discouraged. Thus, to assign more shelving hours to Aides, the Library would also need to assign them additional hours on other activities.

Check-in and sorting of returned materials (together referred to as check-in) are activities that Aides can perform. The manual check-in process follows five basic steps:

1. Staff empties return bins, which can be in the building or curbside

2. Staff inspects returned materials, especially media

3. Staff scans each returned material's barcode, which removes the material from the patron's library record and re-sensitizes it for security purposes

4. Staff places batches of scanned materials onto a sorting cart

5. Staff transfers materials, in batches, from the sorting cart onto shelving carts designated for specific materials, such as Fiction[9]

Although Aides did 23 percent of check-in, as shown above in Exhibit 27, their role in the check-in process has been limited historically. The department explained that handling confidential information, such as patron names that are accessible during the manual check-in process, is beyond the Aide class expectation. Nonetheless, Library management acknowledges that Aides could be scheduled for more hours than is current practice in the check-in process at certain branches.

Automated Materials Handling Simplifies the Check-in Process, Enabling Aides to Help

The Library Department has installed self-check-in machines with automated materials handling (together referred as automated materials handling, or AMH) at 11 branches. Exhibit 30 shows a patron's view of shelf-check-in, and staff's view of the automated materials handling.

Exhibit 30: Shelf-Check-In and Automated Materials Handling Machine
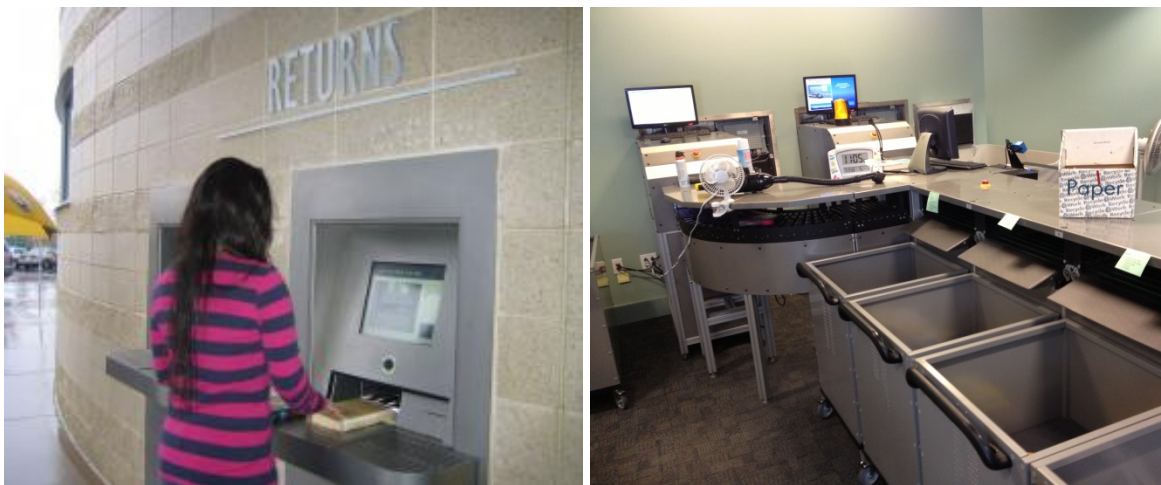
Source: San José Public Library website and auditor photograph

Overall, the installation of AMH machines has greatly simplified the check-in process at these branches. Patrons can check-in materials on their own, and the machine conveys the returned material into the appropriate bin (i.e., the media bin, the Non-Fiction bin, etc.). Staff only needs to inspect returned items, sort

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[9] Any incomplete, mismatched, or damaged materials are set aside for later processing by Clerks; all other items continue along the check-in process. Additionally, items with hold requests or that the system flags as "not ours" (i.e., it could belong to a school library) require separate processing.

the bins for shelving, and process problem items that fall to the bin at the end of the conveyor belt (including "not ours" and held items), greatly reducing staff time needed and mitigating concerns pertaining to patron confidentiality.

Although check-in has been simplified at AMH branches such that Aides could be assigned more hours, Aides were assigned 22 percent of staff hours for checking-in materials at these 11 sites. An hour of check-in assigned to a Aide is the most cost-effective, especially since higher paid Pages and Clerks perform much of this activity. Exhibit 31 compares the actual scheduling and cost of check-in hours at AMH branches to the possible scheduling cost (if Aides were assigned 80 percent of check-in hours with the remaining 20 percent assigned to Pages and higher class employees), and calculates the additional staff resources and hours available to be redeployed.

Exhibit 31: Actual and Possible Check-in and Sorting for One Week of Branch Library Service at the 11 Branches with Automated Materials Handling

	% of Hours	# of Hours	x Cost per Hour	= Weekly Cost
Actual				
Aide	22%	132	$11.10	$1,450
Page	48%	283	$17.83	$5,050
Clerk PT	14%	82	$29.45	$2,400
Clerk	12%	70	$35.65	$2,500
Assistant	4%	22	$45.12	$1,000
				(a) $12,400
Potential				
Aide	80%	471	$11.10	$5,250
Page	10%	59	$17.83	$1,050
Clerk PT	-	-	$29.45	-
Clerk	6%	37	$35.65	$1,300
Assistant	4%	22	$45.12	$1,000
				(b) $8,600
			(a) – (b) = Redeployable resource	$3,800
			÷ Cost of Aide per hour	$11.10
			= New hours of check-in	340

Source: Auditor analysis of PeopleSoft payroll records and Budget Office documents for FY 2013-14; branch library staff schedules for October 7 to 12, 2013

The above scenario reassigns 350 check-in hours to Aides that were actually assigned to Pages and Clerks, and in so doing allows redeployment of $3,800 in weekly staff resource. Had these redeployed resources been assigned to Aides, the Library could have gained 340 weekly Aide hours for check-in at no additional cost. This equates to 30 check-in hours per AMH branch per week or 15 hours

of Aide time at each of the City's 22 branches, enough to fulfill check-in needs for two additional service days across the 11 AMH branches or one service day across the entire system.[10]

Check-in at Branches Without Automated Materials Handling Can Also be Improved

As noted earlier, Library management explained that handling confidential information accessible during the manual check-in process is beyond the Aide class expectation. Nonetheless, the department can still assign these activity hours to staff with experience that better matches the activity's requirements: Pages. If most check-in hours at non-AMH branches assigned to Clerks were reassigned to Pages, the City could redeploy $1,400 in weekly staff resources.

Further, the Library can consider workarounds that enable Aides to do the check-in process at these sites, such as providing Aides with further training and/or installing AMH machines or other technologies at these branches, as discussed in Finding 3. If the Library were to enable Aides to perform more check-in and adjust staff as described above for existing AMH branches, it could redeploy $2,350 in weekly staff resource ($900 per week more than reassigning check-in hours to Pages), enough for an additional 19 weekly Aide hours for each non-AMH branch.

More "Zoning" and Greeting Can be Assigned to Pages

During our branch library visits, site managers told us that Pages, who typically work 12 hours per week, provide valued flexibility in that they can provide both backroom and public-facing services. According to class specifications, Pages have "more responsibility for customer service and direct interaction with library patrons" than do Aides. Pages are similar to Clerks in many ways, differing "in the simplicity and repetitiveness of duties, requiring limited exercise of judgment or discretion."

Not surprisingly, Exhibit 25 showed that Pages performed half of circulation service hours and a third of customer service hours. In the prior sections, we suggested that 750 weekly Page hours currently assigned for check-in, sorting, and shelving returned materials could be better reassigned to Aides. Many Page hours taken away from circulation activities could be reassigned for customer service and direct interaction with library patrons.[11]

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[10] The 20 percent of check-in hours left with Pages, Clerks, and Assistants reflect the need for more experienced staff to clear the problem bin. If the department determines that more time is needed to deal with the problem bin, the resources it could redeploy may be less than presented.

[11] It should be noted that Pages had a total hourly cost of less than $18 per hour, while other clerical staff who provide direct customer service, such as Clerks, are nearly twice as expensive.

Many Patron Questions Can be Addressed by Pages

As described earlier, the Library has several forms of proactive customer service: greeting patrons, staffing the infodesk, and approaching patrons browsing different sections, or "zones." These activities serve to welcome library users, address their needs, and create a safe environment.

Welcoming visitors and creating a safe library environment can be done by any appropriately trained staff, with the understanding that more experienced staff, such as a Clerk, Library Assistant, or Librarian, can be available while performing other tasks on site.[12]

Responding to patron reference questions can require extensive experience and training, though questions requiring Librarian attention are less frequent than basic skills-based questions and directional inquiries. Staff tracked reference questions for two weeks in FY 2012-13, and found reference questions were:

- 16 percent strategy-based (i.e., as "what are the side effects of a drug?") or consultations (i.e., as "how do I research the origin of my property?")

- 44 percent skills-based (i.e., "how do I find an author in the catalog?")

- 40 percent directional (i.e., where is the Fiction section?").

Pages could likely answer all directional questions and many basic skills-based questions. This would allow some zoning hours currently assigned to Clerks and Librarians (Librarians are addressed in detail below) to be reassigned to Pages, with the understanding that experienced staff on-site may be called upon to assist for challenging skills-based questions, strategy-based questions, and consultations. Library management notes that the "on-call" model, while not always feasible depending on a branch's typical usage patterns, may help especially in mornings or slow evenings.

Shifting assignments in this way moves the delivery of customer services from "just in case" (i.e., assigning high-level staff in the event a challenging question arises) to "just in time" (i.e., assigning staff who can address most questions, and who can call for higher-level support when required).

Had the department staffed zoning this way, it could have redeployed some staff hours. Exhibit 32 compares the actual scheduling and cost of zoning hours to the possible scheduling and cost (if roughly 2 zoning hours per branch per day were reassigned from Librarians to Pages, leaving Librarians with 20 percent of zoning hours in line with the percent of strategy-based questions and consultations shown above), and calculates the additional staff resources and hours available to be redeployed.

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[12] Aides are not trained to interact extensively with patrons.

Exhibit 32: Actual and Possible Zoning for One Week of Branch Library Service

	% of Hours	# of Hours	x Cost per Hour	= Weekly Cost
Actual				
Page	29%	325	$17.83	$5,800
Clerk PT	16%	177	$29.45	$5,200
Clerk	16%	180	$35.65	$6,400
Assistant	7%	78	$45.12	$3,550
Librarian I PT	8%	97	$39.50	$3,800
Librarian II PT	6%	63	$46.18	$2,900
Librarian I	2%	21	$43.78	$900
Librarian II	14%	157	$51.59	$8,100
Senior Librarian	3%	34	$58.38	$1,950
				(a) $38,600
Potential				
Page	42%	485	$17.83	$8,650
Clerk PT	16%	177	$29.45	$5,200
Clerk	16%	180	$35.65	$6,400
Assistant	7%	78	$45.12	$3,550
Librarian I PT	-	-	$39.50	-
Librarian II PT	-	-	$46.18	-
Librarian I	2%	21	$43.78	$900
Librarian II	14%	157	$51.59	$8,100
Senior Librarian	3%	34	$58.38	$1,950
				(b) $34,750
			(a) – (b) = Redeployable resource	$3,850
			÷ Cost of Page per hour	$17.83
			= New hours of zoning	215

Source: Auditor analysis of PeopleSoft payroll records and Budget Office documents for FY 2013-14; branch library staff schedules for October 7 to 12, 2013

During the sample week in October 2013, there were 1.5 staff zoning hours for every branch open hour. Assuming this ratio holds true, the redeployable resource shown above could fulfill basic zoning needs for nearly an additional service day for each branch.

Further, if the Library determines it can reassign some of the 360 weekly Clerk zoning hours to Pages, it could redeploy upwards of $5,200 more weekly staff resources.

Similarly, if Clerk hours assigned to greeting were reassigned to Pages, the department could redeploy $1,900 in weekly staff resource.

Clerk Assignments Should be Reconsidered

In the previous sections, we suggested that 350 hours of activity assigned to Clerks would be better assigned to Aides and Pages based on the requirements of the activities. Additionally, to the extent Clerks provide routine check-in, sorting,

and shelving, and customer service that does not draw upon their unique expertise and experience, the added cost of an hour of Clerk time compared to an hour of Page or Aide time, shown in Exhibit 28, is not warranted. At the branch level, Clerk assignments to check-in, shelving, and greeting ranged from as few as 3.5 hours to as many as 44 hours in the sample week, and averaged 17.5 hours. That is to say, branches had the equivalent of 0.5 FTE of Clerks perform activities that could be assigned to Aides or Pages.

It is worth noting that some of the 350 hours we suggested reassigning may have been supervisory, where the Clerk served as lead in the absence of a Library Assistant. One situation where a Clerk could serve as lead is for a shift of check-in and shelving scheduled for when a branch is closed. In such cases, reassigning activity hours could prove problematic, and the hours available for reassignment hours would be reduced.

Librarian Assignments Can be Clarified

Customer service—answering reference questions and providing reader advisory services (referred to as zoning)—is a significant part of a Librarian's job. However, assignments of Librarians to zoning vary widely by branch: for the sample week in October 2013, branches assigned as few as 5 and as many as 32 Librarian staff hours (in all classifications) to this activity. These assignments represented as little as 15 percent and as much as 74 percent of each branch's total assigned zoning hours, with an average of 33 percent. In other words, at one branch Librarians provided nearly three-quarters of the zoning customer service hours and at another branch they provided less than a fifth, with the remainder going to Library Assistants, Clerks, and Pages.

Approaches to Assigning Librarians for Customer Service

As noted earlier, according to the Library Department's tracking, less than 20 percent of reference questions were considered strategy-based or consultations, the categories that typically require Librarian training. Other jurisdictions have seen similar patterns, and adapted the way they deploy Librarians to zoning and other activities. We learned that the Sacramento Public Library does not have librarians offer reference service at its branches; instead, it directs customers to a centralized reference service.[13] The Seattle Public Library has eight small Gateway branches—most the size of Alviso Branch Library—where it does not always staff the information desk and does not necessarily have a librarian on site at all hours.[14]

[13] San José also has a centralized reference service.

[14] Three of the eight Gateway branches had no librarian housed at the branch while the other five had a librarian present at least 70 percent of open hours. In August 2012, Seattle voters approved a seven-year, $123 million Library levy, which assisted in adding supervising librarians at all eight Gateway branches.

One San José branch library also innovated in its deployment of librarians: it focused its assignment of Librarians to zoning during afternoon hours, which tend to be busier as noted in Finding 1. By focusing Librarian zoning hours in the afternoon, when most needed, this branch was able to assign lower-pressure, less busy zoning hours to Pages and allow more time for Librarians to plan programs, make outreach visits, train volunteers, and meet with community partners.[15] In total, the branch assigned about 20 percent of zoning hours to Librarians, a standard that we applied earlier by reassigning part-time Librarian zoning hours to clerical staff and leaving Librarians with roughly 20 percent of total zoning time.

The branch also had a buzzer installed at its infodesk that could signal staff in the backroom when support was needed to address a patron's needs. This furthered the branch's move towards "just in time" and away from "just in case" staffing.

Reassigning Librarian Zoning Hours Has Implication for Pool Usage

Part-time Librarian staff was assigned zoning for nearly 50 percent of assigned hours during the sample week in October 2013, as shown in Exhibit 26. A large contributor to this were pool librarians—on-call librarians who are sent to branches to backfill absent or unfilled positions—who were assigned zoning 75 percent of their time. In FY 2012-13, pool librarians logged 6,000 hours of paid time, at a cost of approximately $250,000. This suggests that if branches reassign some Librarian zoning hours to clerical staff, discussed earlier, the department may be able to decrease the use of pool librarians and redeploy the resources budgeted for them to extending service hours.

Significant Staff Resources Can Be Redeployed After the Staffing Model Is Improved

In the above sections, we offered several suggestions for how the Library Department can reassign branch library activities to staff that most cost-effectively performs them. Exhibit 33 summarizes the suggestions, and describes how many activity hours could be reassigned and, as a result, how much staff resource the Library could possibly redeploy to extend service hours.

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[15] The Library Department outlined the benefits of this approach to scheduling Librarians for zoning in an article submitted to the Urban Libraries Council in 2010.

Exhibit 33: Summary of Staff Reassignment and Redeployment Opportunities

Activity	Weekly Hours to Reassign	Redeploy-able Resource	Estimated Annualized Resource	Estimated Additional Weekly Hours to Redeploy	
				Total	Per Branch
Shelving					
More hours to Aides	550	$3,750	$200,000	340	15
Check-in and sorting					
AMH branches—More hours to Aides	340	$3,800	$200,000	340	30
Non-AMH branches—More hours to Pages	90	$1,400	$75,000	80	7
Zoning					
More hours to Pages	160	$3,850	$200,000	215	10
Greeting (14 branches*)					
More hours to Pages	135	$1,900	$100,000	105	8
Total	**1,275**	**$14,700**	**$775,000**	**1,080**	**n/a**

Source: Auditor analysis of PeopleSoft payroll records and Budget Office documents for FY 2013-14; branch library staff schedules for October 7 to 12, 2013

* Eight branches did not assign staff to greet patrons; infodesks may have a line of sight to their entrance.

Overall, the reassignment of activities shown above results in Aides taking on 890 more weekly check-in and shelving hours (excluding any reassignment made possible by the Library identifying a workaround for the manual check-in process); Pages performing 390 fewer weekly hours of library work (fewer check-in and shelving hours, more zoning and greeting hours); Clerks performing 340 fewer weekly hours of routine circulation; and part-time Librarians providing 160 fewer hours of zoning customer service.

The net result of these suggestions is the reassignment of 1,275 existing weekly staff hours and the potential creation of almost 1,080 additional weekly staff hours, at limited added cost (there would be some cost for hiring, training, scheduling, and supervising additional staff). Furthermore, as noted, the number of redeployable weekly staff hours would be greater if the department enabled Aides to perform more check-in at branches without AMHs, or determines a portion of existing Clerk zoning hours can be performed by Pages.

The Library Department can redeploy these resources to help add back branch service hours and days of operation. Eventually, some of these resources can be redeployed to the Southeast branch, which the department anticipates opening in FY 2015-16. While the department can make some improvements now, fully implementing our proposals would take time if accomplished through attrition.

Recommendation #4: The Library Department should reassign check-in, shelving, zoning, and greeting activity hours to staff whose training and skills sets match the requirements of the activities, and redeploy staff to extend service hours. This includes assigning:

a) More shelving hours to Aides

b) More check-in hours to Aides at branches that both do and do not have automated materials handling

c) More zoning hours to Pages

d) More greeting hours to Pages.

Finding 3   By Improving the Efficiency of Routine Activities, the Library Department Could Redeploy More Staff

Summary

The Library Department has made significant changes to its service delivery model over the last decade. Most significantly, it introduced the San José Way, centralized certain functions, applied Lean principles to the check-in process, and installed self-check-in and automated materials handling (AMH) machines at a number of branches.

Further efficiency gains are possible. Some branches assign more staff hours to checking-in and shelving returned materials than others, even when controlling for the volume of materials, and may be able to reduce time spent on these activities. Branches with automated materials handling (AMH) are noticeably more efficient at checking-in returned materials, but the benefits of automation have not yet been fully realized and more branches may warrant AMH installation. Additionally, while increasing staff time on the public floor is a goal of the San José Way, we believe guidelines for how much time to assign to customer service may be helpful for staff schedulers, and that the department should reconsider the necessity of greeters. Finally, going cash free at branches, as the Washington, D.C. Public Library did, would enable staff to better use time now spent handling cash and preparing cash counts. Altogether, these suggestions could allow $730,000 million annualized of staff resource to be redeployed to extend service hours.

The Library Department Has Implemented Process Improvements

Consistent with the San José Way, the Library Department has changed workflow to decrease staff time spent in the backroom. For instance, it centralized program planning in September 2010. The central planning team offers a menu of program choices from which branches can select to meet community needs. According to branch staff, these "programs in a box" save planning time and allow staff, particularly Librarians, to focus on community outreach—a time savings that extends across 22 branches. Similarly, the Library centralized the selection and management of the collection for the entire system, again allowing Librarians to focus on their community's needs.

Additionally, in FY 2009-10, the department adopted a floating, or revolving, collection. As a result of this change, when a patron checks out and returns library material at different locations within the San José Public Library, the item will not be returned to the originating branch. A four FTE budget reduction

accompanied this change because it freed branch staff from collecting such items for transfer, and central support staff from processing them.

Reduced Backroom Time for Increased Customer Service

Reducing staff time spent in the backroom is one element of the San José Way. To this end, the Library Department has implemented Lean process improvement to streamline the checking-in, sorting, and shelving of return materials.[16]

For example, according to the department, staff found that the return-to-shelf time (checking-in, sort, and shelving) for materials could be longer than 48 hours. Additionally, work spaces were not large enough to hold thousands of returned materials, many shelving carts, and the staff to deal with them. The department hired a consultant to review its backroom processes, and learned that it had too many carts in too many places. To address these issues, staff implemented a "direct shelving method" where returned materials are sorted for shelving when placed onto carts. Staff also rearranged backroom workspaces to enable smooth workflow, as shown in Exhibit 34.

According to staff, the Lean process improvement effort resulted in a reduction of return-to-shelf time from 23 hours to 15 hours, on average, and enabled the reassignment of staff to customer service. Lean principles have been implemented at several branches.

Exhibit 34: Lean Practices Reduced the Number of Carts in Branch Backrooms

Before Lean

After Lean

Source: San José Public Library website

The Library Department has gone further to increase backroom efficiency, installing AMH machines at 11 branches since 2006. As discussed in Finding 2, AMH simplifies the check-in process and allows less experienced staff to be assigned more hours. And, as described in the following section, it also greatly

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[16] Lean process improvement results in the elimination of non-value added processes and activities to deliver a product to the customer in the most effective way in the least number of steps.

reduces the amount of staff time required for the checking-in and sorting of return materials. The department's FY 2013-14 adopted capital budget includes $2.0 million for branch efficiency projects such as purchasing and installing additional automated materials check-in and sorting machines.

Staff continues to explore other technological improvements to libraries, including transitioning the collection to radio frequency identification (RFID). The adopted capital budget also has $2.6 million to explore and implement a RFID system for library materials. According to the budget document, "the checkout and check-in process will be improved by converting current materials to a more technologically advanced method of transfer between branches through the use of radio frequency identification tags. The outcome will enhance the availability of materials to customers and reduce repetitive handling by employees." Staff notes that the department is in the process of updating estimates on the RFID project.

Some Branches Are More Efficient at Checking-in and Shelving Returned Materials

Each branch offers checkouts and returns; however, the number of materials that patrons borrow and return varies widely by branch. Staff hours assigned to these functions vary widely by branch as well.

Exhibit 35 shows the number of materials checked out and checked in, by branch. It also provides the number of staff hours (all classifications) assigned to checking-in and shelving returned materials for a sample week in October 2013, and the number of materials checked-in and shelved per assigned staff hour. AMH branches had a median of 168 materials checked-in and 219 materials shelved per staff hour. Non-AMH branches had a median of 98 materials checked-in and 124 materials shelved per staff hour.

Exhibit 35: Weekly Checkouts, Check-ins, and Staff Hours Assigned to Checking-in and Shelving Returned Materials, by Branch

	Weekly Circulation*		Weekly Staff Hours		Materials per Hour of	
	Checkouts	Check-ins	Check-in	Shelving	Check-in	Shelving
AMH Branches						
Berryessa	13,800	13,700	81.50	57.00	168	240
Evergreen**	13,600	16,800	84.00	62.00	161	219
Tully	11,100	11,300	46.00	56.00	247	203
Santa Teresa	10,000	9,700	51.25	37.75	189	257
West Valley	8,800	8,800	46.00	39.50	191	222
Almaden	8,900	8,700	72.25	61.50	120	142
Cambrian**	8,600	6,100	56.50	44.00	152	195
Educational Park	6,900	6,700	33.00	25.50	203	263
Calabazas	6,400	6,400	34.75	26.00	184	245
Vineland	6,200	6,000	44.25	48.00	136	125
Bascom**	4,700	800	40.75	27.25	115	172
AMH, subtotal	**99,000**	**95,000**	**590.25**	**484.50**	**Median: 168**	**Median: 219**
Non-AMH Branches						
Edenvale	6,400	6,500	47.75	40.75	136	160
Pearl Avenue	5,000	5,000	40.50	38.00	123	131
Alum Rock	4,700	4,700	33.00	18.50	141	251
Willow Glen	4,600	4,600	38.00	22.50	120	203
Seven Trees	5,200	4,400	35.00	46.00	126	96
Hillview	3,600	3,500	35.50	28.00	98	124
Rose Garden	3,500	3,400	35.75	19.50	96	176
Joyce Ellington	2,500	2,500	34.75	24.00	73	105
Alviso	2,300	2,300	35.50	21.00	66	111
East Carnegie	1,700	1,700	31.75	14.25	55	122
Biblioteca Latinoamericana	1,500	1,400	33.00	14.00	43	102
Non-AMH, subtotal	**41,000**	**40,000**	**400.50**	**286.50**	**Median: 98**	**Median: 124**

Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department circulation reports for FY 2013-14 (as of September 2013), and branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013

* The listed circulation numbers are averages for the first three months of FY 2013-14, and exclude renewals, which do not create much staff burden because they are mostly completed by customers online.

** Library staff explained that the large discrepancies between checkouts and check-ins for Evergreen, Cambrian, and Bascom were likely caused by communication problems between recently installed AMH and the department's circulation software. For these branches, the checkout figures are used. Additionally, Evergreen added Saturday hours in September 2013, so those staffing needs are included in the hours above, but the weekly usage numbers mostly reflect the pre-Saturday addition.

Shelving Can be More Efficient at Most Branches

Shelving returned materials is basically the same activity whether a branch has an AMH or not.[17] According to a department presentation at the American Library Association's annual conference in 2008, the Library Department calculated shelving-hour needs by dividing a branch's total check-ins by 200. In other words, at that time, the department estimated staff shelved 200 materials per hour.

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[17] Multi-story branches, of which San José has several, may present more challenging logistics during shelving.

However, as shown above in Exhibit 35, only nine branches achieved this level of efficiency (another branch shelved 195 materials per staff hour). Branches shelved as few as 96 and as many as 263 returned materials per staff hour.

Had all branches achieved the standard of 200 materials shelved per staff hour, 132 staff hours assigned to shelving could have been redeployed elsewhere, as shown in Exhibit 36. The 132 shelving hours in excess of the department's shelving standard represent $2,100 in weekly staff resource, or $110,000 annually.[18]

Exhibit 36: Comparison of Per Hour Guideline to Actual Shelving Hours

Branch	Weekly Check-ins	÷ 200 = Shelving Hours per Guideline	– Actual Hours of Shelving	= Efficiency Savings (Hours)
Berryessa	13,700	68.50	57.00	More efficient
Evergreen**	13,600	67.75	62.00	More efficient
Tully	11,300	56.75	56.00	More efficient
Santa Teresa	9,700	48.50	37.75	More efficient
West Valley	8,800	44.00	39.50	More efficient
Educational Park	6,700	33.50	25.50	More efficient
Calabazas	6,400	32.00	26.00	More efficient
Alum Rock	4,700	23.25	18.50	More efficient
Willow Glen	4,600	23.00	22.50	More efficient
Cambrian**	8,600	43.00	44.00	-1.00
Rose Garden	3,400	17.00	19.50	-2.50
Bascom**	4,700	23.50	27.25	-3.75
East Carnegie	1,700	8.75	14.25	-5.50
Biblioteca Latinoamericana	1,400	7.25	14.00	-6.75
Edenvale	6,500	32.50	40.75	-8.25
Alviso	2,300	11.75	21.00	-9.25
Hillview	3,500	17.50	28.00	-10.50
Joyce Ellington	2,500	12.75	24.00	-11.25
Pearl Avenue	5,000	24.75	38.00	-13.25
Almaden	8,700	43.50	61.50	-18.00
Vineland	6,000	30.00	48.00	-18.00
Seven Trees	4,400	22.00	46.00	-24.00
Total*	**138,200**	**691.50**	**771.00**	**-132.00**

Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department circulation reports for FY 2013-14 (as of September 2013), branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013, and 2008 shelving expectation

* The total for shelving hours in excess of the 2008 shelving expectation excludes branches that were more efficient; this also means the math on the total row will not compute because efficient branches do not offset inefficient branches in reality.

** For Evergreen, Cambrian, and Bascom, checkout figures are used in place of check ins. Also, Evergreen added Saturday hours in September 2013, so those staffing needs are included in the hours above, but the weekly usage numbers mostly reflect the pre-Saturday addition.

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[18] The dollar amounts were calculated using the weighted average shelving hour's total cost of $16.00, which we found by multiplying shelving hours in Exhibit 25 by the corresponding position's hourly total cost in Exhibit 28 in Finding 2 and dividing by total shelving hours. If the Library Department implements the suggestion to assign all shelving hours to Aides, the 132 would represent $1,500 in weekly staff resource savings or $76,000 annually (above and beyond savings by just assigning the hours to Aides).

Check-in Can be More Efficient at Both AMH and Non-AMH Branches

As with shelving, check-in efficiency varied widely across branches, from as few as 43 to as many as 247 materials per staff hour, as shown above in Exhibit 35. Unlike shelving, check-in is not the same at every branch: 11 branches have had AMH installed whereas the remaining 11 branches check in materials manually. For the 11 AMH branches, the median materials checked-in per staff hour was 168. By comparison, for the 11 non-AMH branches, the median materials checked-in per staff hour was 98. If the Library Department were to establish performance standards for check-in, branches could assign staff more consistent with workload and workflow expectations. Exhibit 37 presents a possible check-in standard and resulting weekly staff time savings. The staff hours made available represent $115,000 in annualized staff resources.[19]

Exhibit 37: Potential Check-in Standards and Their Ramifications on Staffing

Branch Type	Goal: Median Efficiency	Weekly Hours Saved	Weekly Resources	Annual Resources
AMH	168	50	$1,100	$55,000
Non-AMH	98	54	$1,100	$60000
Total		**104**	**$2,200**	**$115,000**

Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department circulation reports for FY 2013-14 (as of September 2013), branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013, and potential check-in expectation

Whatever performance standards and targets the Library Department sets for branch check-in, shelving, and other routine activities, it should monitor and periodically report branch performance to appropriate staff to encourage improvement and ensure efficiencies are realized.[20]

> **Recommendation #5:** The Library Department should monitor performance for routine activities, such as checking-in and shelving of returned materials, for all branches (with or without automated materials handling), establish reasonable performance standards and targets, and periodically report branch performance to Library managers, supervisors, and staff.

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[19] The dollar amounts were calculated using the weighted average check-in hour's total cost of $21.00, which we found by multiplying check-in hours in Exhibit 25 by the corresponding position's hourly total cost in Exhibit 28 in Finding 2 and dividing by total check-in hours. If the Library Department implements the suggestion to assign most check-in hours at AMH branches to Aides, the 50 hours would represent $550 in weekly staff resource savings or $29,000 annually (above and beyond savings by just assigning the hours to Aides). Similarly, if the department implemented the suggestion to assign most check-in hours at non-AMH branches to Pages, the 54 hours would represent $950 in weekly staff resource savings or $50,000 annually (above and beyond savings by just assigning the hours to Pages). Thus, increasing efficiency at AMH and non-AMH branches using the potential standards provided could result in total savings of $79,000 annually beyond the savings by reassigning staff.

[20] The department can run reports from its scheduling and circulation software systems to track branch efficiency on an ongoing basis.

Branches Should Share Proven Best Practices

The wide range of materials checked-in per staff hour and materials shelved per staff hour, shown in Exhibit 35, suggests that some branches may overstaff these activities or be less productive during assigned hours. It also indicates that some branches have best practices to share, such as unique or better applications of the Lean principles the department applied to the check-in process.

Recommendation #6:   The Library Department should evaluate the effects of implemented Lean processes and implement successful approaches across all branches where appropriate.

Benefits of Automated Materials Handling Have not Yet Been Fully Realized

As shown above in Exhibit 35, the installation of AMH at branches has had a profound impact on the time needed to check-in returned library materials. Staff also noted that patrons appreciate self-service check-in because they receive a receipt to acknowledge the return of the library materials. However, the Library Department has not realized all possible benefits from this automation.

For example, AMH branches have a simplified check-in process in which Aides can be assigned more hours. But, as noted in Finding 2, Aides were infrequently assigned to check-in duties at AMH branches in a sample week in October 2013. Additionally, the Library Department has not installed AMH at all sites that may benefit it.

Some Branches Have Enough Circulation to Warrant AMH

The department's FY 2013-14 adopted capital budget includes $2.0 million for branch efficiency projects such as purchasing and installing additional automated materials check-in and sorting machines (AMH). AMH installation has cost the Library Department $200,000 per machine. To be cost-effective, AMH must result in significant efficiency gains, and it does: a typical AMH branch checked in 70 more materials per staff hour than a non-AMH branch (168 versus 98 checked-in materials per staff hour). The increased efficiency means that an AMH branch would, on average, require 6 staff hours for check-in per 1,000 materials, compared to 10 for a non-AMH branch. This difference—4 staff hours—can be significant at branches that receive thousands of returned materials each week.

Five non-AMH branches check-in at least 4,000 materials a week, roughly as many items as the lowest-volume AMH branch (Bascom, at 4,700 checked-in materials per week). One of these branches, Seven Trees, is on the second floor of a joint library-community center; presumably AMH installation would pose logistical

challenges that, while possibly surmountable, may prove costly. Exhibit 38 presents possible efficiency gains from AMH installation at the other four branches.

Exhibit 38: Potential Efficiency Gains From Additional AMH Installations

	Check-ins	Check-in Hours	Check-ins per Staff Hours	Enhanced Efficiency*	Hours Needed*	Redeployable Hours
	(a)	(b)	(a) ÷ (b) = (c)	(c) + 70 = (d)	(a) ÷ (d) = (e)	(b) – (e)
Edenvale	6,500	48	136	206	32	16
Pearl Avenue	5,000	41	123	193	26	15
Alum Rock	4,700	33	141	211	22	11
Willow Glen	4,600	38	120	190	24	14
Total	**20,800**	**160**	**130**	**200**	**104**	**56**

Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department circulation reports for FY 2013-14 (as of September 2013), branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013, and potential enhanced efficiency

* This analysis assumes AMH installation will increase check-in efficiency by 70 materials per staff hour, the system-wide average. The resulting enhanced efficiency shown is above average for AMH branches; nonetheless, we believe this is reasonable because the four branches listed were already among the most efficient non-AMH branches.

The 56 weekly hours of possible efficiency gains represents $1,200 in weekly staffing resource given the way staff is currently assigned to activities. Additionally, if the Library Department implements the suggestion to assign more check-in hours at AMH branches to lower-costing Aides, the installation of AMH would also make the performance of remaining check-in activity more cost-effective. The remaining 104 check-in hours needed at the four branches, as shown above in Exhibit 38, would cost $2,200 per week at the current cost of check-in but only $1,500 per week if assigned mostly to Aides. Thus, by installing AMH at the four listed branches and reassigning remaining check-in activity to Aides, the department could redeploy $1,900 in weekly staff resources, or $95,000 annually, to extend service hours.[21]

Branches With Lower Circulation Could Benefit From Simpler AMH Options

Library management noted that it has considered simpler and less costly AMH options for certain branches. For instance, for about $50,000, the department could install a self-check-in machine with a simple three-bin sorter that separates holds and other exceptions (such as "not ours" materials or materials with unreadable barcodes) from books and media.

It is unclear whether, or how much, staff time could be saved with these simpler AMH. These machines may necessitate more sorting time than AMH the department has installed to date, which sort returned materials into more specific categories as shown in Exhibit 30 in Finding 2. Nonetheless, AMH installation would allow lower-costing Aides to be assigned more check-in hours. Finding 2

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[21] The $95,000 in annual staff resources includes some of the $75,000 that would be achieved by reassigning check-in activity hours to Pages, as suggested in Finding 2.

noted that, by shifting check-in hours at non-AMH branches to Aides mostly, the Library Department could redeploy $2,300 in weekly and $120,000 in annual staff resource that could go towards an additional 200 weekly Aide hours of check-in to extend hours.[22]

It should be noted, however, that installing AMH is not the only way to allow Aides to do more check-in at current non-AMH branches. Finding 2 suggested that the department enable Aides to perform a larger role in the check-in process. Furthermore, implementing RFID technology, which the department is contemplating and has budgeted $2.6 million to explore and implement, could also change workflow such that Aides could check-in materials.

> **Recommendation #7: The Library Department should continue to automate materials handling, and adjust branch staffing models to reflect the simplified check-in process.**

Some Branches Assign More Staff Time to the Public Floor Relative to Customer Usage

The San José Way service model seeks, among other things, to increase direct customer service and minimize customer referrals. Direct customer service is provided on the public floor (i.e., not in the backroom) of the library. One form of direct customer service is addressing patron reference questions, the number of which varies by branch in accordance with the number of branch visitors and the characteristics of the community.

Exhibit 39 lists the number of weekly visitors and reference questions, by branch. It also provides the number of staff hours (all classifications) assigned to the public floor (zoning and greeting) for a sample week in October 2013, and the number of staff hours relative to visitors and reference questions.

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[22] The $120,000 in annual staff resources includes $35,000 in savings that would be achieved by installing AMH at the four branches listed earlier. It is $45,000 more than the savings made possible by utilizing Pages.

Exhibit 39: Weekly Visitors, Reference Questions, and Staff Hours Assigned to the Public Floor, by Branch

	Weekly Usage		Weekly Staff Hours			Public Floor Hours	
	Visits	Reference Questions	Zoning	+ Greeting	= Public Floor	Per 1,000 Visitors	Per 100 RQs
Evergreen*	5,700	628	78	39	117	20	19
Berryessa	5,700	336	64	33	97	17	29
Tully	5,500	594	82		82	15	14
Alum Rock	4,900	433	64		64	13	15
Almaden	4,900	488	29	33	62	13	13
Cambrian	4,400	677	43	37	80	18	12
West Valley	4,000	624	53	33	86	22	14
Santa Teresa	4,000	559	64	21	85	21	15
Educational Park	3,800	**	59	21	80	21	**
Edenvale	3,700	516	54	30	84	23	16
Vineland	3,000	629	44	28	72	24	11
Calabazas	3,000	**	61		61	20	**
Seven Trees	3,000	480	37	31	68	23	14
Pearl Avenue	2,800	454	32	31	63	22	14
Bascom	2,700	493	39	26	65	24	13
Rose Garden	2,700	382	30	21	51	19	13
Willow Glen	2,600	303	35	27	62	24	21
Hillview	2,500	293	62		62	25	21
Joyce Ellington	2,000	209	51		51	26	24
Biblioteca Latinoamericana	1,900	263	57		57	29	22
East Carnegie	1,600	190	67		67	43	36
Alviso	1,100	146	33		33	29	23
Total	**75,600**	**8,693**	**1,142**	**411**	**1,553**		

Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department monthly service reports for FY 2013-14 (as of September 2013), FY 2012-13 reference question statistics, and branch staff schedules for the week of October 7 to 12, 2013

* Evergreen added Saturday hours in September 2013, so those staffing needs are included in the hours above, but the weekly usage numbers mostly reflect the pre-Saturday addition.

** These branches were not open during either sample week in FY 2012-13.

Guidance May Benefit Staff Schedulers

As shown above in Exhibit 39, branch libraries drew between 1,100 and 5,700 weekly visitors who ask between 150 and 675 reference questions weekly (excluding directional questions, as defined in Finding 2). Additionally, branches provided customer service with anywhere from 33 to 100 staff hours on the public floor (excluding Evergreen because it had more weekly hours of service, 42, than other branches). This translates into an average of one to three staff on the public floor for any given open hour, though more staff is typically assigned for the afternoon when branches are busier. As a result of these dynamics, Almaden had only 13 staff hours assigned to the public floor per 1,000 visitors, while East Carnegie had 43.

It may not be reasonable for all branches to assign as few hours to the public floor as Almaden did, and Library management noted scheduling considerations

other than a branch's gate count, such as how much of a staff presence is needed depending on how safe a neighborhood is and how demanding the community is in terms of reference questions asked.

Nonetheless, in our opinion, guidance concerning the number of staff hours that should be able to serve a certain volume of customers could help staff schedulers evaluate and maximize use of public floor assignments. Staff hours no longer assigned to the public floor could go towards enhanced community outreach or be redeployed for extended service hours. For instance, Vineland assigned 72 staff hours to the public floor and had a weekly visitor count of 3,000 (24 staff hours per 1,000 visitors). If the branch was asked to achieve the system-wide average of 22 hours per 1,000 visitors, branch staff would have to identify hours where staffing could be lighter (i.e., assigning fewer staff to slow times like certain morning hours, especially those without storytime or other programs).

Recommendation #8: The Library Department should evaluate the amount of time allocated to the public floor at each branch, and determine whether staff resources assigned to those activities can be redeployed to extend service hours.

Greeters May No Longer be Necessary

When the Library Department installed self-checkout stations, it placed staff near the new self-service technology to assist customers and to greet new customers entering the branch – now commonly referred to as greeters. The department intended to educate customers and then let them use the machines. For the last several years, the department's statistical reports have shown that 95 percent of checkouts have been made using self-service. Nonetheless, 14 branches continue to assign staff to greet customers.[23]

Over time, the role of the greeter has evolved. According to the department's staffing guidelines, "guests want us to intuit if they need help before having to ask us," so a greeter's "primary role is to acknowledge each guest as they enter… either within 10 seconds or within 10 feet from the entrance." The guidelines further explain that at least one greeter "is [to be] stationed at the entrance(s) every open hour" and should be "primarily focused on easily resolved guest issues." To allow greeters to remain focused on their role, "additional zone staff should be scheduled to assist guests." Thus, the greeter role transitioned from assisting with self-checkouts to welcoming patrons and resolving basic questions.

As shown in Exhibit 39, more than 400 staff hours were assigned to the greeting activity in a sample week in October 2013. Given the fully-loaded hourly cost of staff, we estimate greeting patrons at branches cost $10,000 in that week, or the

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[23] As noted in Finding 2, the remaining eight branches have information desks that are visible from the branch entrance.

equivalent of $500,000 in a year.[24]   These resources could substantially help in increasing service hours. Namely, during FY 2013-14 budget deliberations, the department estimated that returning to FY 2010-11 open hours, when branches were all open five days and 39 hours per week, would require a budget augmentation of $2 million per year.

Given the amount of resources the activity draws, and the department's overwhelming success in educating customers on self-checkout machines, it may be time to reconsider whether greeters are necessary for branch operations. In our opinion, further consideration is warranted concerning the trade-off between using staff resources to greet customers as they enter branch libraries versus redeploying those same resources to open branches for more hours. For instance, a minimal greeting reduction of two hours per branch per day, during the slowest hours of the day, would yield an estimated $140,000 in annual resource, which can be redeployed to extend service hours. If the department determined that it needed greeters for the busiest half of the day only, it could redeploy an estimated $250,000 in staff resources to extend service hours.

An alternative, discussed in Finding 4, is to recruit volunteers for this function.

> **Recommendation #9:   The Library Department should evaluate whether assigning staff to the greet activity is still necessary, and, if greeting is deemed unnecessary, it should redeploy staff to extend service hours.**

Potential for Cash-Free Branches

No longer accepting cash at the neighborhood branch libraries may save branch staff time while retaining customer service levels. In 2010, Washington D.C. Public Library (DCPL) stopped accepting cash for fines and fees at its neighborhood locations. DCPL continued to accept cash at its main library, and checks and money orders at its neighborhood branches. Although initially concerned about the impact on service, DCPL administration told us that they had received few complaints. According to the department, the transition to cash-free neighborhood libraries was assisted by a marketing campaign and three-month amnesty period where patrons could return past-due books and settle account issues. Brooklyn Public Library also eliminated the collection of cash at circulation desks.

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[24] About a fifth of the greet hours were assigned to full-time employees whose cost (one-third of the total) may not be entirely avoidable by eliminating the greet function, but whose hours may be redeployable. Finding 2's suggestion to reassign Clerk greeting hours to Pages yielded $100,000 in redeployable staff resources annually; thus, eliminating greeting altogether would net an additional $400,000 of redeployable resource annually.

Going cash-free at San José branches has the potential to save staff time, which can be redeployed to extend hours. Currently, Clerks and higher classifications are allowed to "balance cash and prepare pay-in summaries" (referred to as "handle cash"), which typically happens during opening and closing activities. As a result, Clerks (and higher) are typically scheduled for these activities for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. If no longer required to handle cash during these hours, staff could be utilized in other capacities. For instance, some Clerks and higher classifications scheduled for branch opening and closing could be scheduled for other hours of the day and/or assigned to other activities.

DCPL staff found that no longer accepting cash saves approximately 15 minutes in both the morning and the evening, and that staff would not want to accept cash again. As shown in Exhibit 40, we estimate the Library Department could avoid 44 hours per week, or more than 2,000 hours per year (a $75,000 value), of staff time spent handling cash, which could be redeployed to further extend hours.

Exhibit 40: Hours Saved With Cash-Free Branch Libraries

Hours of cash handling per branch per open day	0.5
x # of open days per week	4
= Hours of cash handling per branch per week	2
x # of branches open	22
= Hours of cash handling per week	44
x Weeks in a year	52
= Hours of cash handling per year in San José branch libraries	2,288
x Total hourly cost of Library Clerks (average for part- and full-time)	$32.55
= Annualized cost of handling cash in branch libraries	$74,474

Source: Auditor analysis based on interviews with Washington, D.C. library staff, and PeopleSoft payroll records

While moving transactions online and/or cash free would benefit the department and many patrons, additional evaluation is needed to ensure the move would not disproportionately affect some patrons and/or require the purchase of additional equipment.

> **Recommendation #10: The Library Department should evaluate the feasibility of going cash-free in its branches.**

Significant Staff Resources Can Be Redeployed After Routine Activities Are Made More Efficient

In the above sections, we have offered several suggestions for how the Library Department can set performance standards or change workflow to become more efficient. Exhibit 41 summarizes the suggestions, and describes how much staff resource the Library could possibly redeploy to extend service hours as a result.

Exhibit 41: Summary of Opportunities to Enhance Efficiency

Activity	Estimated Weekly Hours to Redeploy	Estimated Annual Redeployable Savings
Shelving standards		
Enforce 200 materials shelved per hour*	130	$110,000
Check-in standards		
AMH sites – Enforce median materials per hour*	50	$55,000
Non-AMH sites – Enforce median materials per hour*	55	$60,000
AMH installation		
Installing AMH at 4 high circulation branches #	55	$95,000
Installing AMH at remaining 7 branches (210 hours to Aides)**	200	$85,000
Greeting reevaluation		
Reduction of greeting##	200	$250,000
Going cash free		
Elimination of cash handling	45	$75,000
Total	**735**	**$730,000**

Source: Auditor analysis of PeopleSoft payroll records and Budget Office documents for FY 2013-14; branch library staff schedules for October 7 to 12, 2013, and department usage data

* The savings shown here include $70,000 in savings made possible by assigning activities to different staff, identified in Finding 2.

The $105,000 includes some of the $70,000 in savings made possible by using Pages for check-in, discussed in Finding 2.

**The $85,000 excludes savings at the 4 branches with circulation levels that warrant installing AMH, but includes some of the $75,000 in savings made possible by using more Pages for check-in at non-AMH sites, as suggested in Finding 2.

These figures represent the mid-point between preserving the status quo, where 14 branches assign staff to greet patrons nearly every open hour, and completely eliminating the greeting function. It includes about $50,000 in savings made possible by assigning more greeting hours to Pages.

Finding 4   Enhanced Flexibility in Deploying Staff and Volunteers

Several other tools can help the Library realize the $1.5 million in staffing efficiencies identified in this report to extend service hours. Reassignment and redeployment of staff will require that the Library Department propose budget changes to the City Council, including the type and number of employees allocated to branch libraries. In addition, regionalized management of branches (i.e., increasing the number of branches for which Branch Managers are responsible) could also enhance scheduling flexibility and free some Senior Librarians to support system-wide services as vacancies arise. Also, library class specifications should be updated since they were last revised in 2004 and may not reflect current business practices.

Lastly, volunteers play an important role in both high-impact and routine activities at the Library, and additional opportunities exist for volunteers to help improve service. However, the use of volunteers varies greatly across branches, potentially creating disparities in services. Thus, we recommend the Library Department create a volunteer strategy that strengthens recruitment, increases outreach, targets volunteerism levels comparable to other jurisdictions, and focuses on improving volunteerism at those branches that have the fewest volunteers.

Branch Libraries Tend to Assign the Staff They Have, Rather Than the Staff They Need

The Library Department's budget is set through the City's annual budget process, which the Library Department uses to establish the number and type of professional and clerical employees that will provide services at the King main library and branch libraries. Taking into consideration circulation, customer type, and the layout and square footage of the building, Library management deploys a fixed allocation of full- and part-time Librarians, Clerks, Pages, and Aides to each branch pair (see Exhibit 24 in Finding 2 for the FY 2013-14 allocation of staff to branch pairs).

Once the professional and clerical mix has been determined, Branch Managers and Library Assistants assign the staff they have to activities that need to be done. For example, a one-week sample of staff activities showed Pages performed about 80 percent of shelving hours at Almaden versus 60 percent at Evergreen. This corresponds to the allocation of staffing hours. At that time, Almaden was allocated 1 hour of Aide time for every 4.1 Page hours. Conversely, for every 1 hour of Aide time, Evergreen was allocated 2.7 Page hours.

A reassessment of staffing needs based on the suggestions outlined in this report will help ensure Branch Managers and Library Assistants have the most cost-effective staff to assign to activities, and that those activities are performed efficiently.

Altogether, the staff reassignments and efficiencies in this report could allow the department to redeploy an estimated $1.5 million in staff resources to extend service hours. The Library Department may find fully realizing these savings challenging due to mitigating factors, such as the need to hire and train more Aides, the turnover in the Aide position, and the small number of weekly hours currently assigned to Aides.

To implement the reassignment and redeployment of staff suggested in Findings 2 and 3 and below, the Library Department will need to propose a budget action to the City Council to modify the type and number of employees it has department-wide. In so doing, the department will be able to extend service hours and better meet community needs. Specifically, it may be able to augment library hours on the most utilized days of the week—Tuesdays and Saturdays—or hours of the day.

> **Recommendation #11: The Library Department should reevaluate branch staffing needs and propose budget changes to the City Council to adjust and extend service hours, redeploy staff, and increase efficiency.**

Regional Management of Branches May Be Possible

Prior to July 2011, many of the branches were overseen by a dedicated Branch Manager. In FY 2011-12, the Library Department restructured management, expanding the span of control such that Branch Managers oversaw a pair of branches with three Division Managers overseeing the 22 branches.

Seattle Moved to Regional Management of Branches

Seattle Public Library adopted a regional approach to branch management in January 2011. This move transitioned Seattle from on-site Branch Managers who oversaw a pair of branches (as San José now has), to Regional Managers that oversee four or five branches with the support of site-based assistant managers (akin to San José's Library Assistants). Coupled with a move to create gateway branches that utilized fewer librarian hours, the transition sought to:

- Achieve a budget reduction while retaining open hours.
- Provide adequate supervisory support.

- Implement a sustainable structure that is able to support current services with opportunities open for growth and innovation when resources are available.

- Allow managers to focus on higher-level management responsibilities such as program, outreach and service development and coordination, staff development, and operational efficiencies.

- Utilize a regional model to provide more operational consistency throughout branches.

By implementing the change, Seattle Public Library achieved its budget reduction goals while retaining open hours.[25] According to Seattle's senior management, they are able to more efficiently use staff compared to before the change. For instance, Librarians offer programs at two or three libraries rather than one. Such flexibility allows regional managers to deploy staff throughout their region, depending on the dynamic service needs of each community. Surveys conducted by the Seattle Public Library indicate patron satisfaction remained high (88 percent) with the quality of library service after regionalization.

The switch to regional management did present its challenges, especially for staff. According to Seattle's evaluation of its service changes:

- The workload of the regional managers has put new strains on branch operations and limited their ability to support innovation.

- There is a need to provide more holistic oversight for the program of service at each location in order to provide more consistent oversight of building, service, personnel and security concerns.

Nonetheless, Seattle met budget reductions while retaining patron satisfaction.

San José May Benefit From Regional Management of Branches as Well

Library staff explained that the size of Seattle's branch libraries (i.e., more very small branches than San José has), their usage patterns, and geographic proximity may have helped Seattle implement this model. Although San José differs from Seattle, in our opinion, San José could benefit from a similar approach. Regionalized management is not a new concept for the Library Department. In fact, Joyce Ellington, East Carnegie, and Educational Park were grouped for management purposes from 2005 to 2007.

In addition to adding flexibility to staff allocations, restructuring to regional management has the potential to free Branch Managers for redeployment to the King Library. Given the current situation in which 11 Branch Managers oversee 11 branch pairs, the annual personnel cost of branch management is about $1.3

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[25] Like many other jurisdictions, Seattle has reduced its library budget 3.5 percent since 2009.

million.[26] Currently, branches are paired based on similar characteristics: Joyce Ellington is paired with Alviso, Biblioteca Latinoamericana with East Carnegie, and Educational Park with Hillview. If these six smaller branches were restructured into two groups of three branches, each overseen by one Branch Manager, then the Library Department could assign one Branch Manager to support system-wide services (possibly as vacancies arise) and/or redirect $121,000 to extend service hours as shown in Exhibit 42.[27]

Exhibit 42: Regionalized Management Scenarios

Scenario	Detail	Branch Managers	Redeployable Resource
Current	11 managers oversee 2 branches	11	-
Group small branches into regional 3	8 managers oversee 2 branches; 2 managers oversee 3 branches	10	$121,000

Source: Auditor scenarios, and analysis of branch usage and PeopleSoft payroll records

Additionally, the opening of the Southeast Branch, expected in FY 2015-16, will present another opportunity to rebalance branch management. For instance, it may be possible that 23 branches could be overseen by the same number of Branch Managers needed to oversee 22 branches.

> **Recommendation #12: To make the best use of resources, the Library Department should preserve and, where possible, increase the number of branches under a Branch Manager's supervision.**

Job Classifications May not Reflect Current Business Practices

Library job classifications were last revised in 2004, and may not reflect changes from the implementation of:

- Self-checkout stations

- Automated materials handling machines

- The San José Way service model

As a result, current job classifications may not accurately reflect current business practices. For instance, the Page classification states that a Page "assists at circulation desk checking materials in and out" although circulation desks no longer exist at the branch libraries and about 95 percent of check-outs are done through self-checkout machines, per the department's statistics.

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[26] Fully-loaded cost of Senior Librarians is $58.38 per hour, per Exhibit 28 in Finding 2, and each Branch Manager is a full-time position (2,080 hours per year).

[27] Another possibility is unpairing these six branches and adding them to already existing pairs, creating six regional groups of three branches and two branch pairs. This would allow three Branch Managers to be redeployed to support system-wide services, and/or create $364,000 in redeployable funds that further extend hours.

> **Recommendation #13:** The Library Department should revise classifications, as needed, to reflect changes to the department's service model.

Volunteers Are an Important Component to Providing Programs and Services, and Can Be Better Leveraged to Improve Service

Since FY 2011-12, volunteers have donated 60,000 hours annually. The majority of volunteers contribute in high-impact positions, and Friends of the Library and other volunteers add significant value in San José's public libraries.[28]

San José Had Fewer Volunteer Hours Than Some Other Library Jurisdictions

The amount and use of volunteers differs greatly across library jurisdictions. Exhibit 43 compares the number of volunteer hours reported by San José to those of other large library jurisdictions. San Diego Public Library reported over 120,000 volunteer hours, or 94 hours per 1,000 population, while San Francisco Public Library reported fewer than 10,000 hours in FY 2011-12, or 12 hours per 1,000 population. If San José Public Library were to utilize volunteers to the same extent as San Diego, it would gain about 30,000 annual volunteer hours to enhance library services. Based on the amount of hours library jurisdictions are open, San José is on par with San Diego and Santa Clara County libraries, about 180 volunteer hours for every 100 open hours. In other words, an additional five hours each week at all San José branches could translate into an additional 10,000 volunteer hours annually.

Exhibit 43: Comparison of San José Public Library to Other Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Service Population	# of Branches	FY 2011-12 Volunteer Hours	Hours per 1,000 Population	Hours per 100 Open Hours
San Diego	1.3 million	35	124,000	94	187
Santa Clara County	0.4 million	8	39,000	93	177
San Jose	1.0 million	18	61,000	63	179
Oakland	0.4 million	17	25,000	59	84
Sacramento*	1.4 million	22	62,000	46	118
San Francisco	0.8 million	27	9,000	12	14

Source: Auditor analysis of California Library Statistics data for FY 2011-12

* Sacramento data is for FY 2010-11

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[28] The Library defines a "high-impact volunteer" as one that serves in a leadership role and may train and supervise other volunteers, such as adult literacy tutors, one-to-one computer mentors, trained readers to children, teachers of citizenship classes, and English Second Language (ESL) conversation club facilitators.

The success of volunteer efforts varies. Santa Cruz Public Library found use of volunteers in essential library operations to substantially slow – and in some instances stop – library services. Santa Cruz Public Library attempted using volunteers to augment its staff and meet safety levels at its smallest branches. They found volunteers were not always regularly available and as a result, they were unable to consistently open doors at advertised times. According to the department, the inconsistent hours led to decreased patron usage at the smaller branches. In addition, Santa Cruz volunteers assisted in Aide-like functions. Santa Cruz Library aimed to have books checked-in and shelved within 24 hours, but fell two weeks behind. Eventually, Santa Cruz had to hire additional Aides to replace the volunteers.

On the other hand, San Diego Public Library "has a long history of using volunteers to leverage limited resources." San Diego Public Library reported approximately 124,000 volunteer hours in FY 2011-12, about twice that of San José. According to San Diego Library management, "volunteers are an integral part of the Library's operations that help free library staff members to provide direct service to library patrons." Volunteers work closely with staff and assist in a wide range of services, from shelving to periodic storytime.

Additionally, Sacramento Library's memorandum of understanding with its organized employees specifically states that

> "…no bargaining unit member will be assigned to a work location that directly serves the public that does not have minimally two (2) responsible adults assigned and present during the hours the branch is open to the public. (**Note the responsible adult may be a volunteer** or shelver plus one (1) bargaining unit member.)" [Emphasis added.]

Library Volunteer Hours Decreased as Library Hours Decreased

The Library Department's volunteer hours have declined since FY 2009-10. The decline corresponds to the decline in branch open hours, as seen in Exhibit 44. Overall, volunteer hours decreased 25 percent from FY 2009-10 while open hours decreased about 21 percent during the same time period. It should be noted that volunteer hours for Partners in Reading, a centrally-run volunteer program, only decreased 12 percent from four years ago while all other volunteer programs declined 31 percent. One reason for this may be that Partners in Reading volunteers are not required to meet at the Library, and as a result, may not be as sensitive to open hours.

Exhibit 44: Volunteer Hours Decreased as Open Hours Decreased
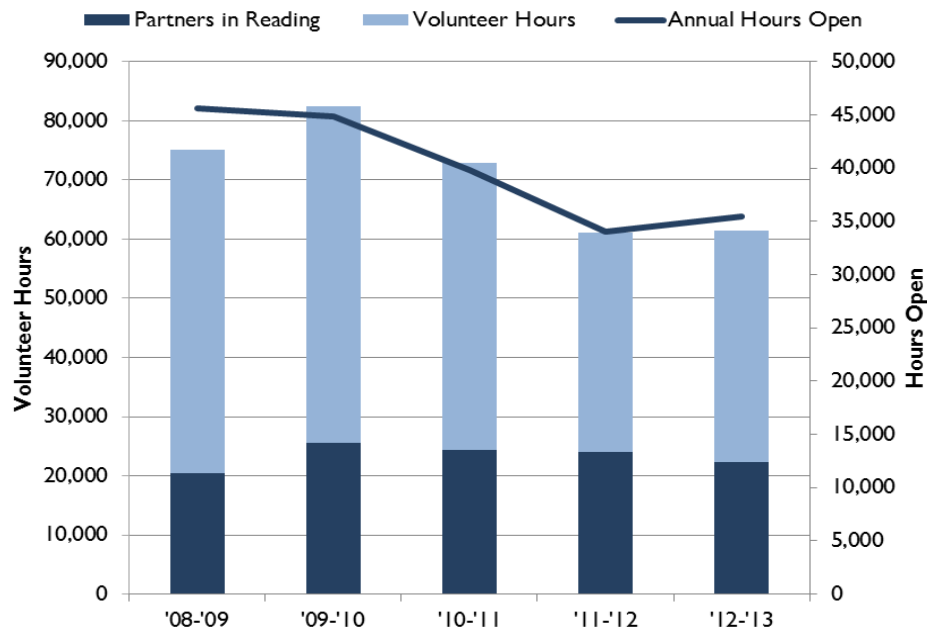
Source: Auditor analysis of Library Department's Monthly Service Reports
Note: Annual hours open includes the King Library.

Volunteer Hours by Category

In 2009, the Library Department integrated a volunteer engagement strategy to its traditional volunteer program. In an article submitted to the Urban Libraries Council titled *Volunteer Engagement: Changing Our Volunteer Culture*, the Library described this model as one where "the library defines the desired outcomes and volunteers specifically recruited for the project use their skills and knowledge to reach these goals." They described that it meant a "shift in how we [San José Public Library] thought about and worked with volunteers." As noted earlier, high-impact volunteers serve in leadership roles, such as adult literacy tutors and English Second Language (ESL) conversation club facilitators. This strategy "better meets the needs of today's volunteers, better aligns with the needs of the library, and brings enhanced and expanded library services to the community."

Exhibit 45 shows the breakdown of volunteer hours by category at the branches for FY 2012-13. As stated earlier, Partners in Reading, which was 39 percent of all volunteer hours, is a centrally-run program which is less dependent on branch libraries, so it has been excluded from this analysis. Friends of the Library and general Library Services (comprised of activities such as tidying, merchandising, shelf reading, assisting with programs, etc.) make up 47 percent of volunteer hours; teenagers (teensReach and Summer Reading Celebration) were 33 percent; and other high impact programs made up 20 percent. Although high-impact volunteering is a large component of the volunteer hours, routine tasks

(Library Services) as well as library advocacy and fundraising activities (Friends of the Library) remain significant. These volunteer programs are primarily administered and overseen at the individual branch level.

Exhibit 45: FY 2012-13 Volunteer Hours by Category
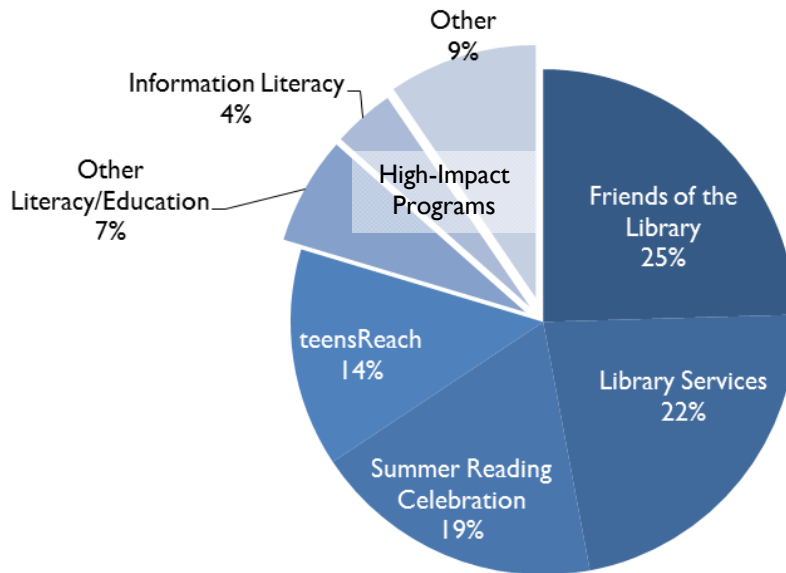
Source: Auditor analysis based on the Library Department's volunteer database. Excludes King Library and branches that opened in 2013

* Other programs include Reading to Children, Homework Clubs, Health, Finance, and Culture/Arts.

Some Branches May be Underserved

A Central Volunteer Manager housed at King Library oversees the Library's volunteer program, including, but not limited to, providing support for all volunteer activities at the Library Department as well as overseeing the administration of the volunteer management database and training volunteer coordinators. Housed at each branch is at least one Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement who works with branch staff to coordinate volunteer opportunities as well as the recruitment, training, and oversight of volunteers at their branch. According to the department, delegating the management of volunteers to the branch level allows each branch the flexibility to target the unique needs of the community and plan accordingly. In addition, the Library believes it creates ownership of volunteering at the branch level.

As seen in Exhibit 46, large differences exist in volunteerism across branches. During FY 2012-13, Evergreen volunteers reported about 5,000 hours while East Carnegie volunteers reported only 200 hours. Normalizing service populations shows that Evergreen still received five times more volunteer hours than East Carnegie. The use of volunteers at each branch also varies greatly. For instance,

Library Service volunteers made up 34 percent of the volunteer hours at Evergreen while some other branches had little or no Library Service volunteer hours.

Exhibit 46: Branch Volunteer Hours by Category[29]
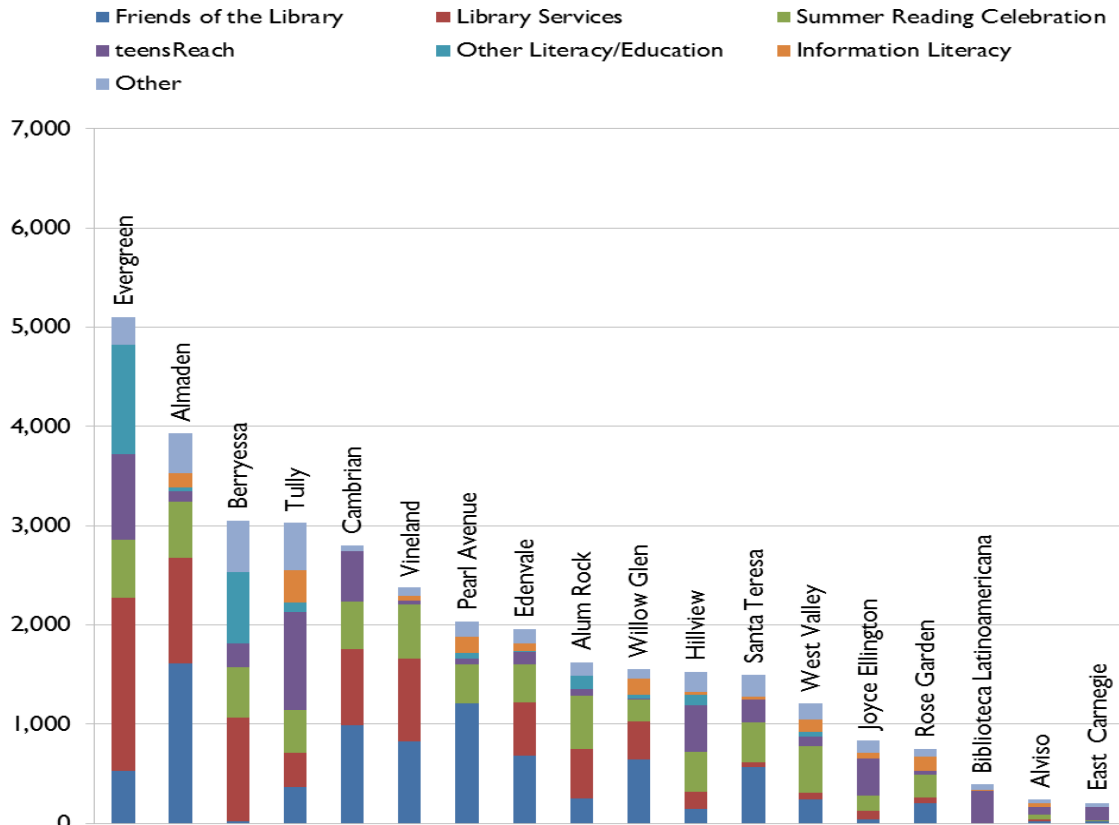
Source: Auditor analysis of Library's volunteer data, FY 2012-13

Recruitment of Volunteers Is Conducted at the Branch

At the branch level, determining volunteer opportunities appears to be more reactive than proactive. Based on our interviews, some branches wait for a patron to propose a program idea, while others may be told from staff that they need an assistant on a particular project. Both of these occurrences might trigger a branch's coordinator of volunteer engagement to search for another staff member to provide the service or recruit a volunteer for the position.

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[29] Volunteers self-report hours into the software, so not all hours may be accounted for by the database. In addition, some Friends of the Library groups may not report hours, while some reported hours may be inaccurate due to data entry errors.

In addition, individuals may approach the library wanting to provide a specific program or to gain volunteer hours. In this instance, the branch may or may not utilize the volunteer.

According to the department, branches recruit for only those positions for which they are in need. Exhibit 47 shows the online recruited volunteer opportunities for one day. As seen, more than half of the branches advertised online for additional Friends of the Library, a program which promotes and fundraises for a specific branch, whereas every branch advertised for teensReach. Only four branches advertised Library Services volunteer opportunities.

Exhibit 47: Online Advertised Volunteer Opportunities by Branch on Sample Day

Library Branch	Teens-Reach	Friends of the Library	ESL	Library Services	Homework Coach	eBooks	Other
Almaden	x		x	x			
Alum Rock	x	x	x				
Alviso	x						
Bascom	x	x					
Berryessa	x	x	x				
Biblioteca Latinoamericana	x						
Calabazas	x	x					
Cambrian	x		x				
East Carnegie	x						
Edenvale	x			x			
Educational Park	x	x		x			
Evergreen	x	x					
Hillview	x	x			x		
Joyce Ellington	x		x		x		x
Pearl Avenue	x		x				
Rose Garden	x	x		x		x	
Santa Teresa	x	x					
Seven Trees	x		x		x		x
Tully	x	x			x	x	
Vineland	x	x					
West Valley	x	x					
Willow Glen	x		x				

Source: Auditor review of volunteer postings from www.sjpl.org/volunteer

In our opinion, all branches could benefit from volunteers assisting in making libraries a more welcoming environment, especially under current budget constraints when staff workloads have increased. In addition, all branches could benefit from, and ought to actively recruit for, volunteers to assist with daily library service functions. Coordinating these branch volunteer outreach efforts will help to ensure both high-impact and routine opportunities are consistently recruited for. In addition, we believe it will improve branch accountability, identify branches needing additional volunteer support, and increase volunteer hours.

> **Recommendation #14:** The Library Department should create a strategy that seeks to strengthen volunteer recruitment and increase outreach efforts in both high-impact and routine activities (e.g., library services), set target levels, publicize library services volunteering opportunities at every branch, and focus on increasing volunteerism at those branches that have the fewest volunteers.

Additional Volunteer Opportunities Exist at the Library Department

Other jurisdictions make use of volunteers in non-essential, but nice-to-have functions, such as greeting and shelf reading.

As stated earlier, the greeting activity was originally intended to educate customers how to use then-newly installed self-checkout machines, and may be no longer necessary at the branch libraries. As such, this may be a non-essential service (i.e., one that would not need to be filled by a staff person if a volunteer was absent) that volunteers could assist with in making the library a welcoming place to visit. Other jurisdictions across the nation utilize volunteers in this capacity, such as:

- County of Los Angeles Public Library – Library Ambassador/Guide
  Role: "Greet customers, explain library procedures (such as getting a library card), assist with the use of… library technology."

- Brooklyn Public Library – Welcome Ambassador
  Role: Greets visitors and provides general information about library amenities and directions.

The Library Department could similarly have volunteers welcome visitors if it determines that it need not assign staff to the greet activity during all open hours.

Additionally, volunteers can assist with special projects, which will allow staff to focus on other assigned duties. For instance, about 115 hours of staff time were assigned to "digital content" activities for our sample week in October 2013. Calculating the cost of these hours based on the job classifications that performed those yields $4,250 in personnel costs for tending to digital content. According to the department, some of these digital content hours are for tending to social media and updating the branch library's blog. A volunteer could provide web content and blogging. Even if this freed up only 20 percent of staff hours, that represents $44,000 in annual staff time, which can be redeployed elsewhere.

Furthermore, there are opportunities for volunteers to oversee and coordinate other volunteers at the Library, which would lessen the workload on each branch's coordinator of volunteer engagement. During busy weeks, coordinators may spend up to four hours a day supervising volunteer activities. According to the department, some branches have already implemented such volunteer opportunities with success. Hillview, for example, sought a teen volunteer that

coordinated, trained, and managed Summer Reading Celebration volunteers. This volunteer alerted staff to issues as they arose (such as unfilled shifts). Similarly, a volunteer may oversee the library service volunteers that could work with staff to determine needs and schedule volunteers to tidying, shelf reading, and merchandising in order to maintain a welcoming library environment for patrons.

The use of volunteers is contemplated in the City's memorandum of agreement with the Municipal Employees' Federation. It states, *"The City agrees to meet with the Union prior to contracting out work currently performed by bargaining unit members whenever such contracting out, including the use of volunteers, would result in material reduction of work done by bargaining unit members or would have significant adverse impact on bargaining unit work. It is agreed that position reductions, which result in lay-off of employees in the bargaining unit constitute significant impact on bargaining unit work."*

Recommendation #15: The Library Department should identify branch activities, such as creating web content and serving as a welcome ambassador, which can be performed by volunteers so that staff resources assigned to those activities can be redeployed elsewhere.

Conclusion

The last decade has brought extensive change to the San José Public Library, including declines in budget, staffing, and service hours. Based on usage patterns, residents appear to most utilize branch libraries on Tuesdays and Saturdays; yet branches do not regularly offer services on both of these days. Additionally, the current branch service model with static hours does not reflect that service populations, building sizes, and material collections vary greatly across branches.

Although the Library has made greater use of part-time and hourly employees, it can further modify its staffing model to reflect that most staff time in branch libraries is spent on routine activities. Furthermore, some branches are significantly more efficient in these core activities than others, and the Library can further enhance services by increasing volunteerism and identifying more non-essential functions that volunteers may perform. Realizing the $1.5 million in staffing efficiencies identified in this report (reassigning and redeploying staff) will take time and require that the Library propose budget changes, but will reduce the cost to increase hours of service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: To improve branch library usage, the Library Department should adjust hours of operation based on an evaluation of usage by day and by hour at the branch level (i.e., adding more heavily trafficked hours). As it adds back hours of service, the Library should continue to monitor and evaluate branch usage patterns to ensure additions serve community needs.

Recommendation #2: To better serve individual communities, the Library Department should evaluate a regional service model for branches.

Recommendation #3: As e-reader devices proliferate, the Library Department should develop and implement a digital materials strategy. This strategy should specify how the department will monitor eBook impacts on staff workload, and what could trigger adjustment to its branch staffing model.

Recommendation #4: The Library Department should reassign check-in, shelving, zoning, and greeting activity hours to staff whose training and skills sets match the requirements of the activities, and redeploy staff to extend service hours. This includes assigning:

a) More shelving hours to Aides

b) More check-in hours to Aides at branches that both do and do not have automated materials handling

c) More zoning hours to Pages

d) More greeting hours to Pages.

Recommendation #5: The Library Department should monitor performance for routine activities, such as checking-in and shelving of returned materials, for all branches (with or without automated materials handling), establish reasonable performance standards and targets, and periodically report branch performance to Library managers, supervisors, and staff.

Recommendation #6: The Library Department should evaluate the effects of implemented Lean processes and implement successful approaches across all branches where appropriate.

Recommendation #7: The Library Department should continue to automate materials handling, and adjust branch staffing models to reflect the simplified check-in process.

Recommendation #8: The Library Department should evaluate the amount of time allocated to the public floor at each branch, and determine whether staff resources assigned to those activities can be redeployed to extend service hours.

Recommendation #9: The Library Department should evaluate whether assigning staff to the greet activity is still necessary, and, if greeting is deemed unnecessary, it should redeploy staff to extend service hours.

Recommendation #10: The Library Department should evaluate the feasibility of going cash-free in its branches.

Recommendation #11: The Library Department should reevaluate branch staffing needs and propose budget changes to the City Council to adjust and extend service hours, redeploy staff, and increase efficiency.

Recommendation #12: To make the best use of resources, the Library Department should preserve and, where possible, increase the number of branches under a Branch Manager's supervision.

Recommendation #13: The Library Department should revise classifications, as needed, to reflect changes to the department's service model.

Recommendation #14: The Library Department should create a strategy that seeks to strengthen volunteer recruitment and increase outreach efforts in both high-impact and routine activities (e.g., library services), set target levels, publicize library services volunteering opportunities at every branch, and focus on increasing volunteerism at those branches that have the fewest volunteers.

Recommendation #15: The Library Department should identify branch activities, such as creating web content and serving as a welcome ambassador, which can be performed by volunteers so that staff resources assigned to those activities can be redeployed elsewhere.

APPENDIX A
Maps of San José's Branch Libraries and Their Communities

The San José Public Library provides an array of services to the City's diverse population, developing programs and services specific to each community. This Appendix illustrates selected demographic community characteristics that the Library should consider when determining service hours, as well as the type and frequency of program and community outreach. For example, Biblioteca Latinoamericana serves a high number of children living in poverty, so the Library should plan accordingly. Using data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau during the 2010 American Community Survey, the following maps are provided by census tract and branch service area:

Appendix A1 – 2010 Population by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Appendix A2 – Population with Poverty Status in Last 12 Months by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Appendix A3 – Number of Children by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Appendix A4 – Children in Poverty by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Appendix A5 – Households with Children and No Stay-At-Home Parents by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Appendix A6 – Population Age 65 and Older by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Appendix A1 – 2010 Population by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Legend:
- 5 - 1,775
- 1,776 - 3,550
- 3,551 - 5,325
- 5,326 - 7,100
- 7,101 - 8,875

1 – Almaden
2 – Alviso
3 – Bascom
4 – Berryessa
5 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana
6 – Calabazas
7 – Cambrian
8 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main
9 – Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock
10 – East San José Carnegie
11 – Edenvale
12 – Educational Park
13 – Evergreen
14 – Hillview
15 – Joyce Ellington
16 – Pearl Avenue
17 – Rose Garden
18 – Santa Teresa
19 – Seven Trees
20 – Southeast (expected to open during FY 2015-16)
21 – Tully
22 – Vineland
23 – West Valley
24 – Willow Glen
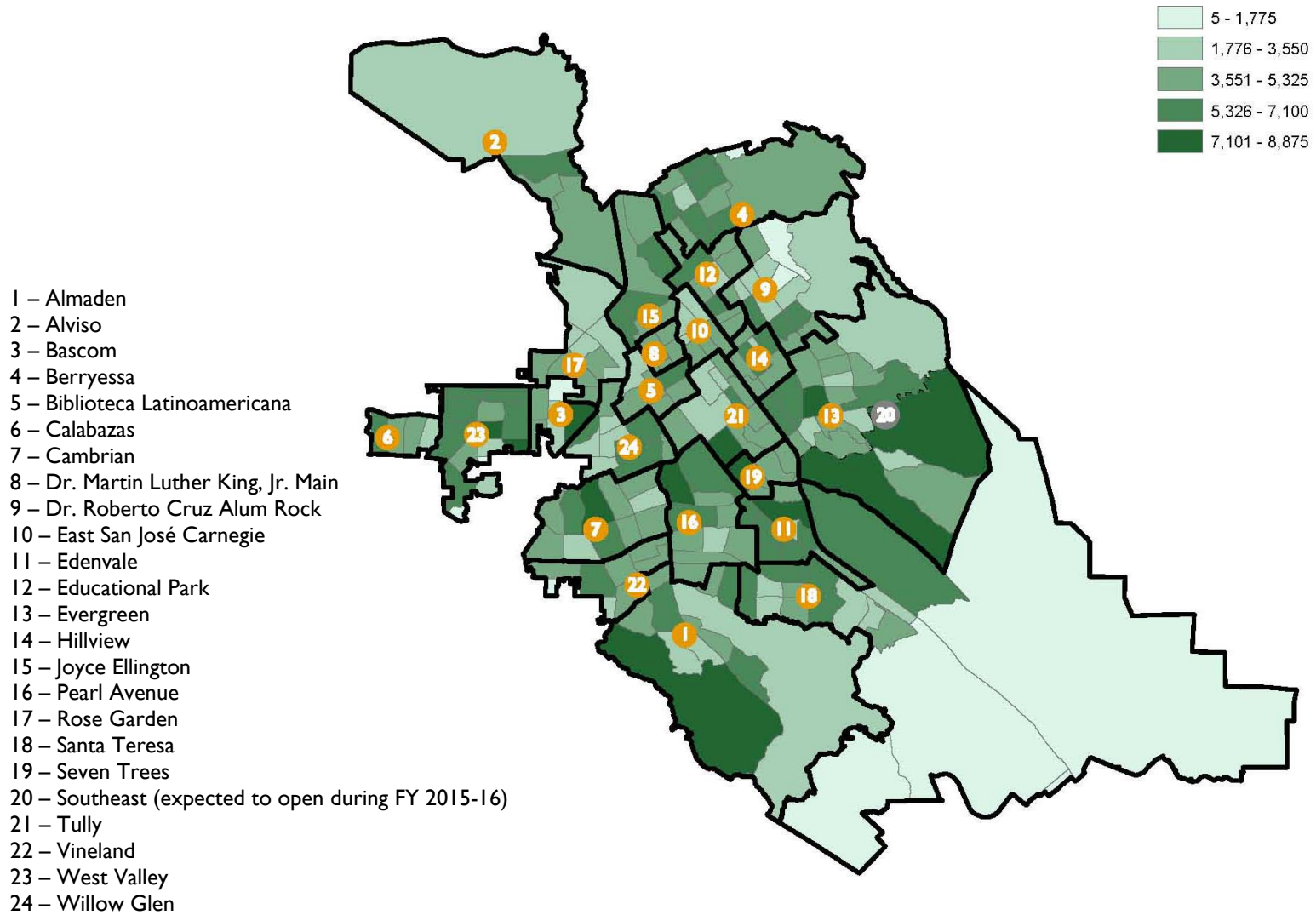
Source: Department of Public Works, "PLN.CENSUS_TRACTS" 2010 Population
Note: Areas of southern San José are part of the urban growth area and are sparsely populated.

Appendix A2 – Population with Poverty Status in Last 12 Months by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Legend:
- 0 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 1,500
- 1,501 - 2,000
- 2,001 - 2,500

1 – Almaden
2 – Alviso
3 – Bascom
4 – Berryessa
5 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana
6 – Calabazas
7 – Cambrian
8 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main
9 – Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock
10 – East San José Carnegie
11 – Edenvale
12 – Educational Park
13 – Evergreen
14 – Hillview
15 – Joyce Ellington
16 – Pearl Avenue
17 – Rose Garden
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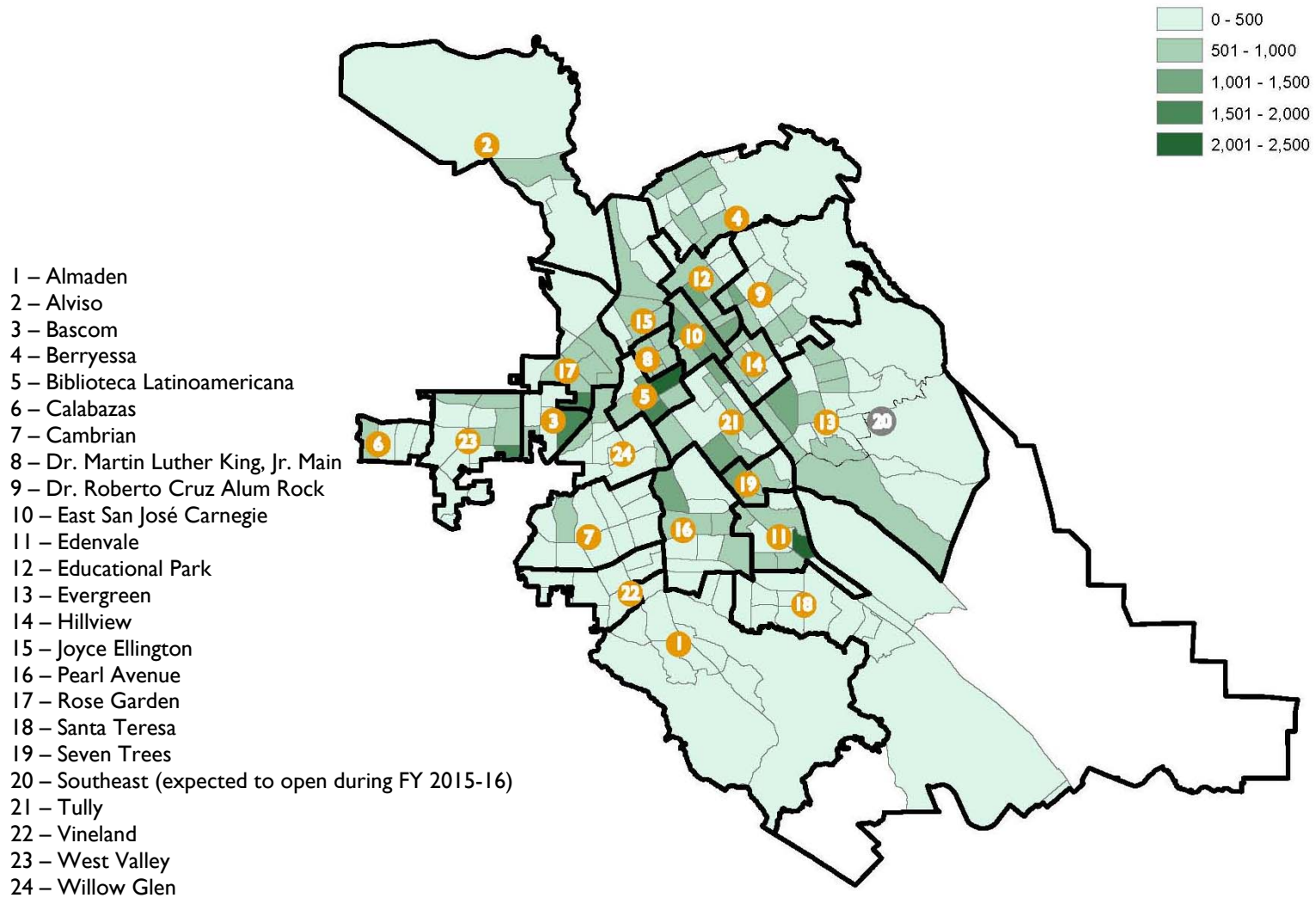
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17001
Note: Areas of southern San José are part of the urban growth area and are sparsely populated.

A-3

Appendix A3 – Number of Children by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Legend:
- 0 - 600
- 601 - 1,200
- 1,201 - 1,800
- 1,801 - 2,400
- 2,401 - 3,000

1 – Almaden
2 – Alviso
3 – Bascom
4 – Berryessa
5 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana
6 – Calabazas
7 – Cambrian
8 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main
9 – Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock
10 – East San José Carnegie
11 – Edenvale
12 – Educational Park
13 – Evergreen
14 – Hillview
15 – Joyce Ellington
16 – Pearl Avenue
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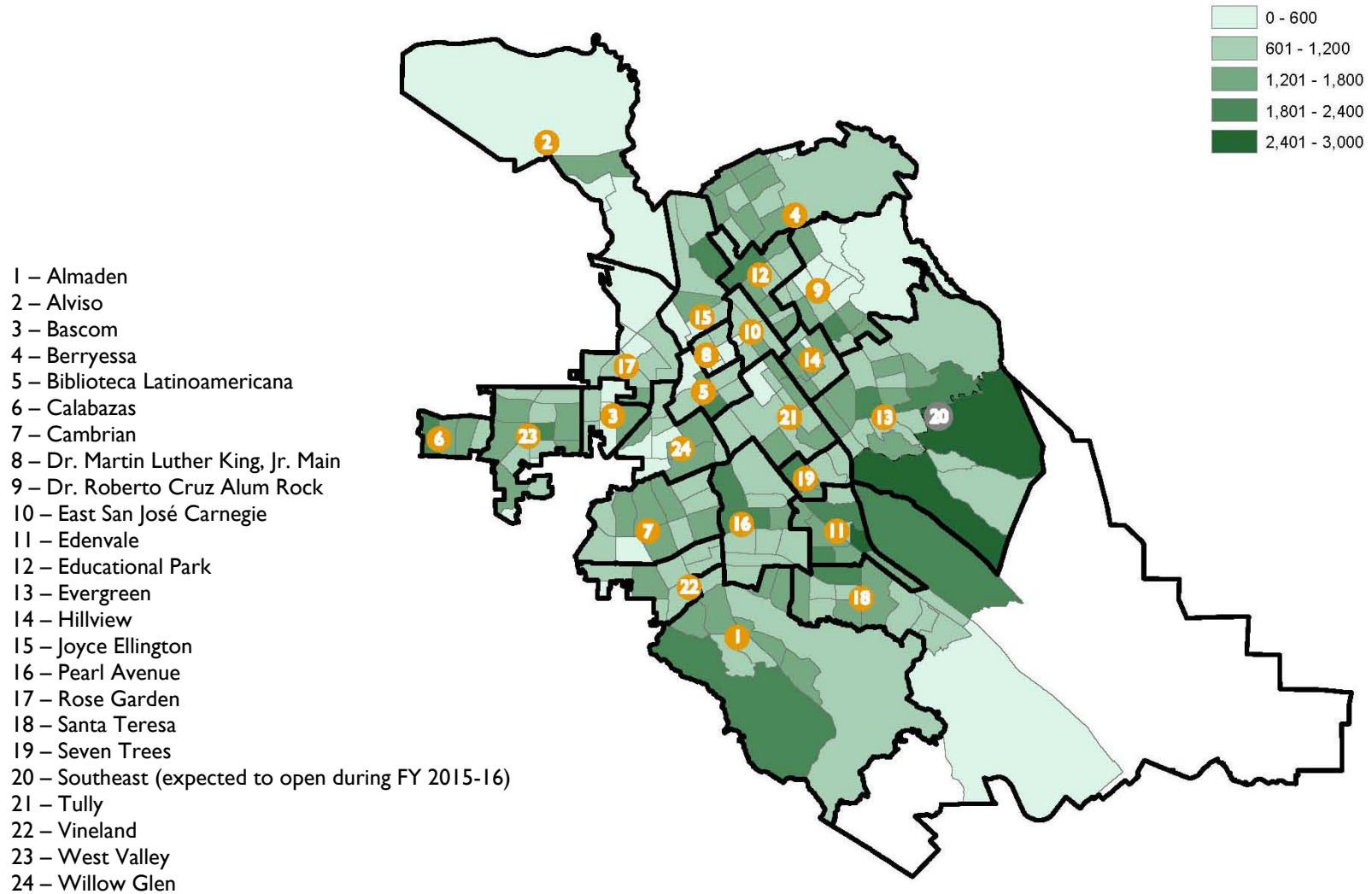
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B09001
Note: Areas of southern San José are part of the urban growth area and are sparsely populated.

Appendix A4 – Children in Poverty by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Legend:
- 0 - 250
- 251 - 500
- 501 - 750
- 751 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 1,250

1 – Almaden
2 – Alviso
3 – Bascom
4 – Berryessa
5 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana
6 – Calabazas
7 – Cambrian
8 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main
9 – Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock
10 – East San José Carnegie
11 – Edenvale
12 – Educational Park
13 – Evergreen
14 – Hillview
15 – Joyce Ellington
16 – Pearl Avenue
17 – Rose Garden
18 – Santa Teresa
19 – Seven Trees
20 – Southeast (expected to open during FY 2015-16)
21 – Tully
22 – Vineland
23 – West Valley
24 – Willow Glen

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17006
Note: Areas of southern San José are part of the urban growth area and are sparsely populated.

Appendix A5 – Households with Children and No Stay-At-Home Parents by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

Legend:
- 0 - 200
- 201 - 400
- 401 - 600
- 601 - 800
- 801 - 1,000

1 – Almaden
2 – Alviso
3 – Bascom
4 – Berryessa
5 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana
6 – Calabazas
7 – Cambrian
8 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main
9 – Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock
10 – East San José Carnegie
11 – Edenvale
12 – Educational Park
13 – Evergreen
14 – Hillview
15 – Joyce Ellington
16 – Pearl Avenue
17 – Rose Garden
18 – Santa Teresa
19 – Seven Trees
20 – Southeast (expected to open during FY 2015-16)
21 – Tully
22 – Vineland
23 – West Valley
24 – Willow Glen

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23007
Note: Areas of southern San José are part of the urban growth area and are sparsely populated.
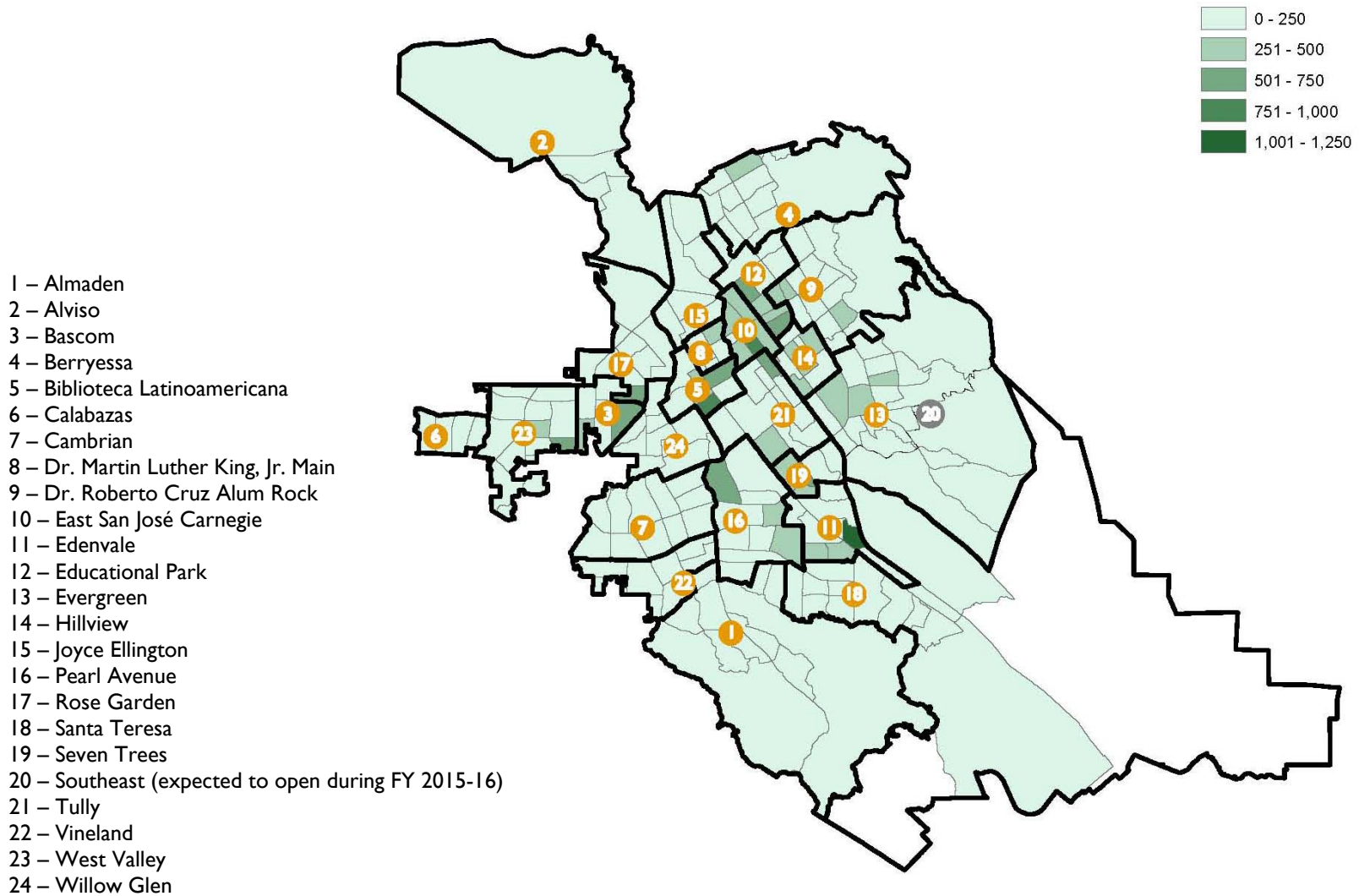
Appendix A6 – Population Age 65 and Older by Census Tract and Branch Service Area

	0 - 500
	501 - 1,000
	1,001 - 1,500
	1,501 - 2,000
	2,001 - 2,500

1 – Almaden
2 – Alviso
3 – Bascom
4 – Berryessa
5 – Biblioteca Latinoamericana
6 – Calabazas
7 – Cambrian
8 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main
9 – Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock
10 – East San José Carnegie
11 – Edenvale
12 – Educational Park
13 – Evergreen
14 – Hillview
15 – Joyce Ellington
16 – Pearl Avenue
17 – Rose Garden
18 – Santa Teresa
19 – Seven Trees
20 – Southeast (expected to open during FY 2015-16)
21 – Tully
22 – Vineland
23 – West Valley
24 – Willow Glen

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B01001
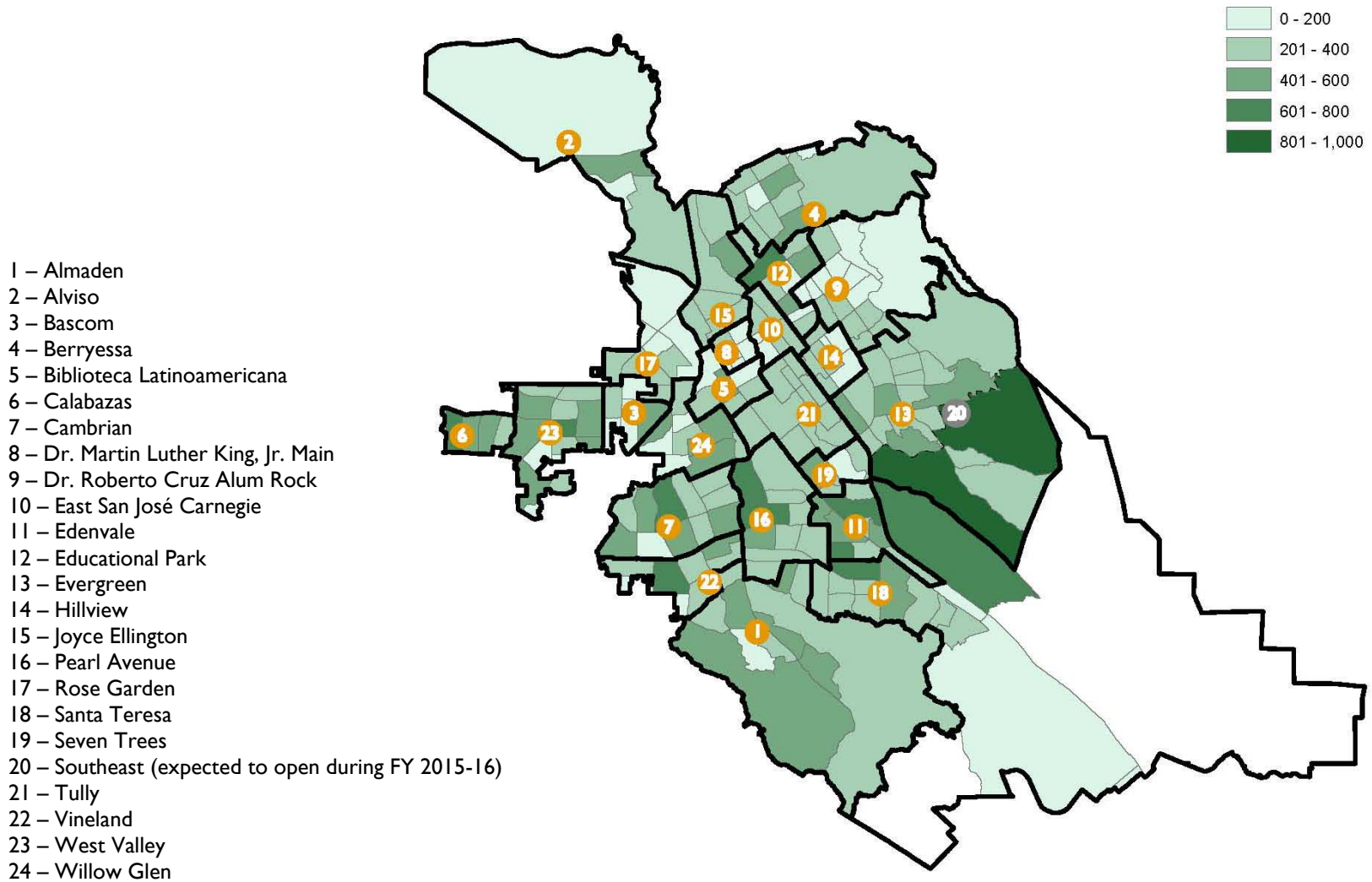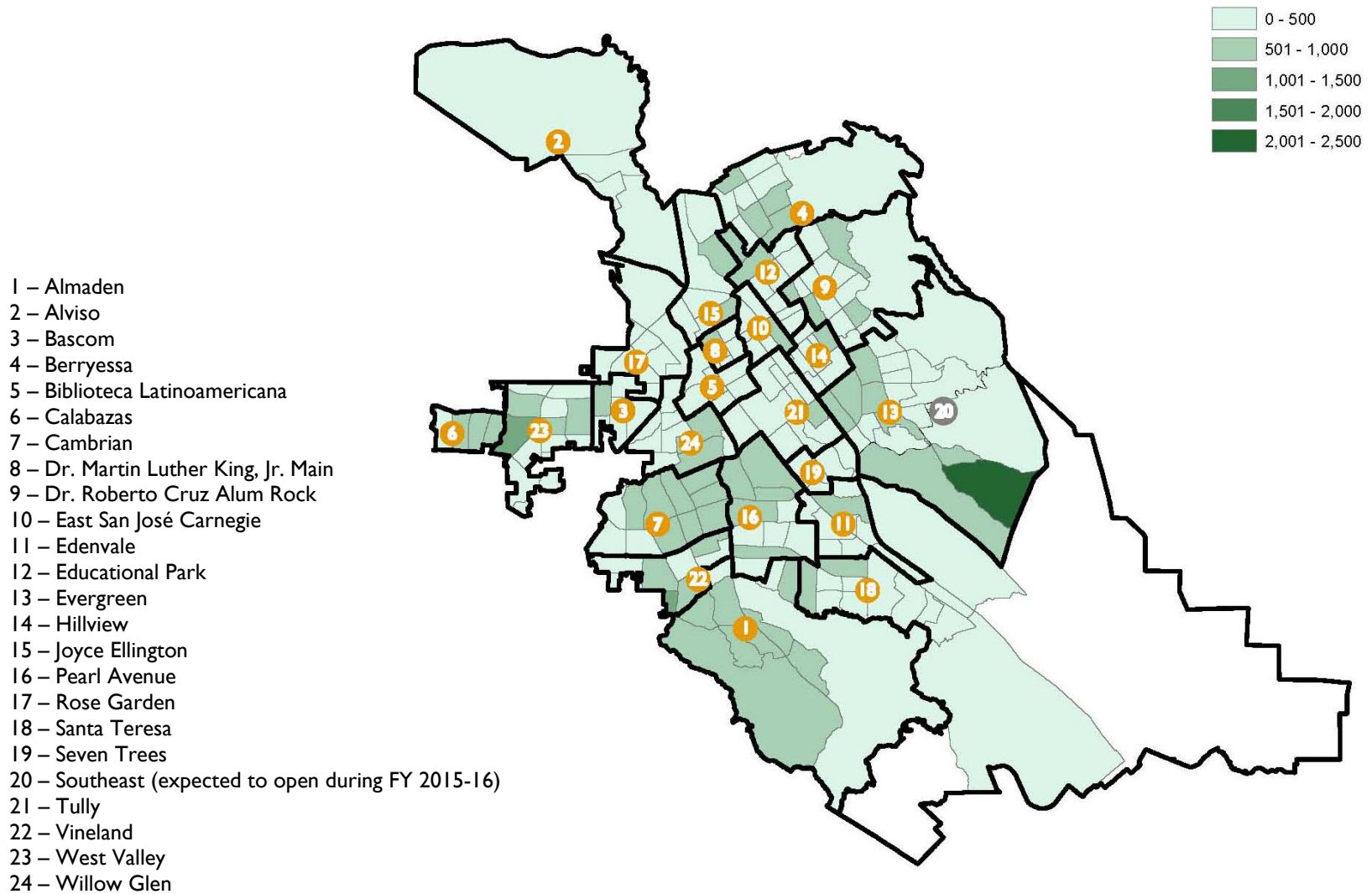Note: Areas of southern San José are part of the urban growth area and are sparsely populated.

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APPENDIX B
Basic Profiles and Usage Statistics for San José's Branch Libraries

The San José Public Library operates 22 branch libraries and one main library (not shown). The following table includes basic branch library profiles and usage statistics:

Branch	Council District	Square Feet	Service Population	Service Days	Weekly Hours	Full-Time Equivalent Profes-sional	Clerical	Total	Weekly Activity Visitors	Check-Outs	Check - Ins	RQs	Computer Hours	Volunteer Hours
Alviso	4	6,000	17,500	W-Sa	33	3.50	8.70	12.20	1,100	2,300	2,300	146	124	5
Joyce Ellington	3	15,000	38,300	M-Th	34				2,000	2,500	2,500	209	364	16
Calabazas	1	10,000	20,200	M-Th	34	4.00	8.70	12.70	3,000	6,400	6,400	n/a	176	n/a
West Valley	1	20,000	68,400	W-Sa	33				4,000	8,800	8,800	624	472	23
Educational Park	4	18,000	42,500	M-Th	34	4.00	9.00	13.00	3,800	6,900	6,700	n/a	366	n/a
Hillview	5	21,000	33,800	W-Sa	33				2,500	3,600	3,500	293	460	29
Rose Garden	6	19,000	29,500	M-Th	34	4.00	9.50	13.50	2,700	3,500	3,400	382	373	14
Willow Glen	6	13,000	38,700	W-Sa	33				2,600	4,600	4,600	303	284	30
Biblioteca	3	16,000	28,200	M-Th	34	5.00	9.00	14.00	1,900	1,500	1,400	263	381	8
East Carnegie	3	10,000	22,800	W-Sa	33				1,600	1,700	1,700	190	311	4
Pearl Avenue	9	14,000	50,400	W-Sa	33	4.00	11.50	15.50	2,800	5,000	5,000	454	291	39
Vineland	10	24,000	33,600	M-Th	34				3,000	6,200	6,000	629	335	46
Edenvale	2	22,000	49,300	M-Th	34	4.00	12.30	16.30	3,700	6,400	6,500	516	485	38
Santa Teresa	2	22,000	54,500	W-Sa	33				4,000	10,000	9,700	559	96	29
Alum Rock	5	26,000	74,600	M-Th	34	6.00	10.85	16.85	4,900	4,700	4,700	433	644	31
Bascom*	6	22,000	25,300	W-Sa	33				2,700	4,700	800	493	262	n/a
Almaden	10	20,000	52,200	W-Sa	33	5.00	12.35	17.35	4,900	8,900	8,700	488	189	76
Cambrian*	9	28,000	56,600	M-Th	34				4,400	8,600	6,100	677	384	54
Seven Trees	7	21,000	25,500	W-Sa	33	6.00	13.80	19.80	3,000	5,200	4,400	480	328	n/a
Tully	7	24,000	49,200	M-Th	34				5,500	11,100	11,300	594	663	58
Berryessa	4	24,000	50,100	W-Sa	33	6.50	15.90	22.40	5,700	13,800	13,700	336	510	59
Evergreen*	8	21,000	70,100	M-Th, Sa	42				5,700	13,600	16,800	628	411	98
Southeast	8		31,500	Expected to open in late 2015										
Total		416,000	962,800			52.0	121.6	173.6	75,500	140,000	135,000	8,693	7,909	657

Source: Auditor analysis of San José Public Library branch profiles, internal staffing document as of September 2013, and department usage data

Note: RQs refers to reference questions. Weekly visitor counts and check-out and –in volumes were based on July to September 2013 totals; reference questions were based on staff's 2-week sample in FY 2012-13 and exclude directional questions (i.e., where is the bathroom?); and weekly computer and volunteer hours were based on FY 2012-13 totals. N/A indicates that complete data were not available for the sample periods used for analysis.

* Library staff explained that the large discrepancies between checkouts and checkins for Bascom, Cambrian, and Evergreen were likely caused by communication problems between recently installed AMH and the department's circulation software.

Memorandum

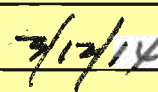**TO:** Sharon Erickson, City Auditor **FROM:** Jill Bourne

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE 2014 AUDIT OF **DATE:** March 13, 2014
LIBRARY HOURS AND STAFFING

Approved _(signature)_ Date _3/13/14_

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2014 AUDIT OF LIBRARY HOURS AND STAFFING

The Library Department (Library) has reviewed the City Auditor's report entitled "Library Hours and Staffing: By Improving the Efficiency of its Staffing Model, the Library Can Reduce the Cost of Extending Service Hours." The potential for increasing hours that branch library services are open to the public continues to be the highest priority for the Library and for our communities.

The San José Public Library is a nationally recognized library system, known as a leader for developing innovative ways of delivering quality services with a high level of staff efficiency. The "San José Way" service model principles that prioritize customer service and creative solutions for meeting residents' needs have been studied and replicated by libraries around the world. As we examine potential future changes in staffing, it will be important to continually balance efficiency gains with a high quality of services to the public and a commitment to honoring our relationship with Labor.

The audit identifies many best practices from other urban public libraries and nearby peer libraries. This work provides valuable data and analysis which the Library Department will use and integrate into ongoing staffing plans and program development. Recognizing that San José has unique demographic and geographic qualities, the Library will evaluate the recommended actions and implement, as appropriate.

The Library's response to each recommendation is presented below.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE

Recommendation #1: *To improve branch library usage, the Library Department should adjust hours of operation based on an evaluation of usage by day and by hour at the branch level (i.e., adding more heavily trafficked hours). As it adds back hours of service, the Library should continue to monitor and evaluate branch usage patterns to ensure additions serve community needs.*

Library Response to Recommendation #1: The Library is in general agreement with this recommendation, acknowledging that data provides a powerful tool for understanding customer needs for operating hours. The Department will incorporate usage data into the process of identifying and prioritizing proposed adjustments/additions of service hours. Per the audit findings, usage is highest on Tuesdays and Saturdays, with Wednesdays close behind. When offered, weekend hours have typically been the busiest per hour, while weekday afternoons, particularly after-school hours, are consistently well-used.

As the Library prepares recommendations for adjusting and adding public hours, it will be important to recognize other factors that impact a particular community's needs for library services and hours. A recent survey of likely San José voters indicated that the most compelling reasons for funding libraries included "preventing libraries from closing," "providing safe places for children after school," and "preventing the elimination of children's reading programs." Adding weekend hours is indeed a priority; weekday hours, such as afterschool and morning storytime programs, are also important to our communities and should not be sacrificed. Finally, the Library will develop a public feedback mechanism regarding preferred open hours and will implement a system of regular data review to ensure that services are best meeting the needs of the community. *Target completion: January 2015; hours adjustments would be ongoing*

Recommendation #2: *To better serve individual communities, the Library Department should evaluate a regional service model for branches.*

Library Response to Recommendation #2: The Library agrees with this recommendation. A regional service model, in which nearby branch libraries offer complementary hours that expand access for residents who are able to travel to the facilities, could be a useful part of the Library's overall strategy for increasing hours and access. In addition to circulation, visitor, and neighborhood population data, the Library will consider the following factors that may indicate the level of community need for physical branch open hours:

- Neighborhood demographic data, such as –
  - Households with members below age 18
  - Senior residents
  - Household income levels
  - Languages spoken at home and linguistically-isolated households
- Proximity to local schools
- Proximity to/type of local transit options
- Availability of other neighborhood amenities
- Distance and geography separating branch libraries

The Library will evaluate relevant data and embed this analysis in plans for adding/adjusting system-wide branch open hours. *Target completion: October 2014*

Recommendation #3: *As e-reader devices proliferate, the Library Department should develop and implement a digital materials strategy. This strategy should specify how the department will monitor eBook impacts on staff workload, and what could trigger adjustment to its branch staffing model.*

Library Response to Recommendation #3: The Library agrees with this recommendation and will develop a written digital materials strategy/collection plan in accordance with best practices in public librarianship and future innovations in the industry. The Library currently collects a variety of electronic resources that include electronic books (eBooks) and database subscriptions to full-text magazines, newspapers, journals and other periodicals, reference sources, indexes, abstracts, images, and other electronic media. With the digital collection, the Library aims to efficiently extend access to information – available anywhere with an Internet connection.

The digital materials strategy will specifically address the levels of staffing required to manage increasingly electronic collections. It is anticipated that the growth of digital collections may gradually alleviate the need to purchase, process, route, deliver, and maintain multiple hard copies of physical books and media, potentially offering some efficiencies for staff work in the future. However, as with any public technology, a shift to greater digital access may likely require more skilled staff assistance to select, manage, and teach the use of these tools. Due to constant change in the industry, the digital materials strategy will also need to be evaluated on an ongoing basis. *Target completion: June 2014*

Recommendation #4: *The Library Department should reassign check-in, shelving, zoning, and greeting activity hours to staff whose training and skill sets match the requirements of the activities, and redeploy staff to extend service hours. This includes assigning:*
  a) *More shelving hours to Aides*
  b) *More check-in hours to Aides at branches that both do and do not have automated materials handling*
  c) *More zoning hours to Pages*
  d) *More greeting hours to Pages.*

Library Response to Recommendation #4: The Library agrees with the recommendation to align skills, job tasks, and appropriate classifications. The analysis provided by the audit will help the Library ensure that regular tasks are being assigned to staff that represent the lowest operational cost and the best service impact. While some variations in staff scheduling are expected at different branch library sites, based on different community needs and use patterns, it is clear that improving the consistency of staffing levels assigned based upon expected hourly usage could yield a savings of staff hours to potentially be assigned to more hours of service.

The Library will evaluate each staffing function, as well as the quantity of work per site and per hour, and make schedule adjustments accordingly. As we review the recommendations related to reassigning tasks to Library Aides (a and b, above), we will be mindful of the potential impact on the workforce and will discuss future changes with appropriate employee bargaining groups.

Despite significant service reductions of the past few years, the quality of service provided by the Library is high and highly valued by the community. As the Library evaluates the recommendation to reassign customer service tasks to Pages (c and d, above), we will be mindful that these efforts also maintain the quality of the San José Way service model, which emphasizes the need for flexible staff roles – utilizing classifications that provide flexibility to meet patron needs. Data collected in this audit are useful and appropriate for analyzing many aspects of library work, particularly those that deal with movement and management of collection materials. Many elements of library service are more difficult to quantify, such as the reference interaction, the interview to identify information needs, and the search for appropriate resources – a process that may have many levels and qualifiable benefits. It is known in the library field that 1) any question may become a reference question and 2) the overall quantity of reference questions is declining, but the complexity of reference questions seems to increase. In a world where most factual inquiries may be resolved quickly through the use of simple Internet search tools, the questions that customers need a librarian to help with are typically complex and require more time and thought to fulfill. *Target completion: May 2014 (initial analysis); October 2014 (revised staffing plans); further adjustments would be ongoing*

Recommendation #5: *The Library Department should monitor performance for routine activities, such as checking-in and shelving of returned materials, for all branches (with or without automated materials handling), establish reasonable performance standards and targets, and periodically report branch performance to Library managers, supervisors, and staff.*

Library Response to Recommendation #5: The Library is in agreement with this recommendation. Standards and targets have been used as a measuring tool for the Library's clerical operations, with "shelf tests" routinely conducted to test the speed and accuracy of the Pages and Library Aides. Standards and expectations (carts per hour) are communicated to staff through branch meetings, training materials, and supervisory oversight. Performance is monitored at both the team and individual level.

The Library recognizes that recent operational changes that had been driven by budget reductions of the past few fiscal years - public service hours, staffing shifts, and the pairing of libraries - led to the discontinuance of some monitoring practices. Utilizing the analysis provided in the audit, the Library will reevaluate and implement those standards as needed to regain workflow efficiencies to meet customer demand. *Target completion: November 2014*

Recommendation #6: *The Library Department should evaluate the effects of implemented Lean processes and implement successful approaches across all branches where appropriate.*

Library Response to Recommendation #6: The Library is in agreement with this recommendation. As of May 2013, all branch libraries met SJPL Lean standards for check in and sorting operations. As the Library implements additional Automated Materials Handling systems (per Recommendation #7), as well as new standards, processes, and outcomes (per Recommendation #5), the Lean value streams will need to be reevaluated and updated in all

locations. This process will be undertaken in conjunction with the reevaluation of staffing, per Recommendation #7. *Target completion: June 2014*

Recommendation #7: *The Library Department should continue to automate materials handling, and adjust branch staffing models to reflect the simplified check-in process.*

Library Response to Recommendation #7: The Library agrees with this recommendation. In addition to the Automated Materials Handling systems (AMH) installed in eleven branch libraries prior to June 30, 2013, the Library will complete the installation of four more AMH machines at the Pearl Avenue, Dr. Roberto Cruz - Alum Rock, Edenvale, and Willow Glen branches, as recommended by this audit, by December 31, 2014. By the end of fiscal year (FY) 2014-2015 the Library will: 1) assess the remaining smaller branches to ensure that any additional AMH installations would be effective and cost efficient; and 2) complete an updated assessment of available Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) equipment and costs to evaluate the possible related benefits of converting to this technology, commonly used for inventory management.

Beyond installation of the AMH equipment, the Library will complete an evaluation of the staffing needed to efficiently monitor AMH systems and optimize the staff assigned at each location. While many library systems in North America have added AMH machines to their facilities to improve materials processing, relieve repetitive work stress, and improve customer satisfaction, San José Public Library will be one of the first to evaluate and determine best practices, helping to set the standard within the library field. *Target completion: June 2014 (Pearl, Alum Rock, and Edenvale Branches); December 2014 (Willow Glen); August 2015 (staffing assessment and adjustment; assessment of need in smaller branch libraries)*

Recommendation #8: *The Library Department should evaluate the amount of time allocated to the public floor at each branch, and determine whether staff resources assigned to those activities can be redeployed to extend service hours.*

Library Response to Recommendation #8: The Library agrees with the recommendation, and will evaluate the staffing assigned to customer service tasks at each branch. Similar to Recommendation #4, it is likely that establishing a revised standard for staffing based upon usage per branch could yield savings in the form of staffing hours that could be assigned to additional services. As with Recommendation #4 c and d, the Department will be mindful to maintain a high quality of service, with qualified staff to provide direct service and needed programs for the public. *Target completion: October 2014 (initial analysis); implementation would be ongoing based on available resources*

Recommendation #9: *The Library Department should evaluate whether assigning staff to the greet activity is still necessary, and, if greeting is deemed unnecessary, it should redeploy staff to extend service hours.*

Library Response to Recommendation #9: The Library agrees with the recommendation, and will evaluate the current greeter function, specifically whether it is still relevant and whether

there are hours (times-of-day) when the public floor could operate well with one fewer position assigned. Like a "greeter" in a retail environment, the library greeter is stationed in the Marketplace and is usually the first point of contact for customers entering the library. Unlike the retail "greeter," these staff do not simply welcome the customer at point of entry, they also staff the area, interacting to answer directional questions, refer customers to the appropriate staff member for assistance, resolve account issues to enable checkout, assist with locating held materials and placing holds, intervene when the gate alarms sound and resolve those issues, and may shelve collection materials in the marketplace. The Department is aware that the physical layout of some branches would make it challenging to have a large entry space completely unstaffed, but an evaluation of this function and its relation to other posts on the public floor is appropriate.

Similar to Recommendation #4, it is possible that establishing a revised standard for staffing based upon usage per branch could yield savings in the form of staffing hours that could be assigned to additional services. As with Recommendation #4 c and d, the Department will be mindful to maintain a high quality of service, with qualified staff to provide direct service and needed programs for the public. *Target completion: October 2014 (evaluation); redeployment of staff resources ongoing*

Recommendation #10: *The Library Department should evaluate the feasibility of going cash-free in its branches.*

Library Response to Recommendation #10: The Library agrees with this recommendation. The Library will complete an analysis of current cash intake and a customer impact survey by the end of FY 2014-2015 to evaluate the feasibility and impact of a cash-free system at the branches. *Target completion: December 2014*

Recommendation #11: *The Library Department should reevaluate branch staffing needs and propose budget changes to the City Council to adjust and extend service hours, redeploy staff, and increase efficiency.*

Library Response to Recommendation #11: The Library agrees with this recommendation and is committed to establishing an appropriate staffing structure that meets the public's needs and demand. As identified within the audit report, the Library will balance professional and clerical staffing patterns taking into account supervision, classification, and training issues. By implementing the staffing analysis and modifications recommended in this audit, the Library will develop a staffing model to expand operating hours within the next fiscal year, utilizing a lower cost structure than had previously been proposed. Additional funds, when available, would allow the Library to implement this model more expediently. As other audit recommendations are evaluated and implemented, the Department will recommend future budget changes accordingly. *Target completion: May 2014 (initial proposal)*

Recommendation #12: *To make the best use of resources, the Library Department should preserve and, where possible, increase the number of branches under a Branch Manager's supervision.*

Library Response to Recommendation #12: The Library agrees that spreading branch supervision to two or more sites can be an effective means of stretching management resources and prioritizing frontline positions that keep branches open more hours. Until the Library is able to expand staff resources enough to open branch facilities to the public six or seven days per week, the paired branch supervision model will need to be preserved.

As the Department considers increasing manager oversight to 3 or more branches, the experience of the Seattle Public Library (SPL) – as noted in the audit – should be taken into account. SPL identified concerns about the perceived lack of leadership and direct supervision at branches without a manager on-site and has taken steps to introduce new lower level supervisorial positions to backfill for this need. In addition, the regional model in Seattle includes grouping much smaller branches with larger anchor branches that are geographically close, allowing for a supervisor to travel easily between sites. The fact that San José Public Library branches are typically much larger and geographically spread could present challenges when considering a regionalized model in San José. *Target completion: October 2014*

Recommendation #13: *The Library Department should revise classifications, as needed, to reflect changes to the department's service model.*

Library Response to Recommendation #13: The Library agrees with this recommendation and, as part of the process of evaluating staffing allocations related to increasing public hours (per earlier recommendations), will work with the Human Resources Department and appropriate employee bargaining groups to make any changes to classifications that would help support the Library's service model. *Target completion: June 2015*

Recommendation #14: *The Library Department should create a strategy that seeks to strengthen volunteer recruitment and increase outreach efforts in both high-impact and routine activities (e.g., library services), set target levels, publicize library services volunteering opportunities at every branch, and focus on increasing volunteerism at those branches that have the fewest volunteers.*

Library Response to Recommendation #14: The Library agrees with this recommendation. The Department will establish target levels for volunteerism at all branch libraries that take into account open hours, service area demographics, branch staffing levels, and other factors that impact the Library's volunteer program. The Department will identify and employ new recruitment methods with an emphasis on outlets specific to each branch's service area. Additionally, the Library will work with those branches with the fewest number of volunteers to increase volunteerism at these branches. As more centralized volunteer recruitment and management processes are implemented, the Library recognizes that additional resources may need to be allocated to volunteer coordination. *Target completion: May 2015*

Recommendation #15: *The Library Department should identify branch activities, such as creating web content and serving as a welcome ambassador, which can be performed by volunteers so that staff resources assigned to those activities can be redeployed elsewhere.*
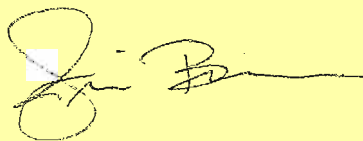
Library Response to Recommendation #15: The Library is in general agreement with this recommendation, understanding that, to the greatest extent possible, it may allow the Department to assign more staff time to tasks/services that are essential to keeping branch libraries open to the public. The Library will work with branch staff and appropriate employee bargaining group representatives to identify additional daily tasks and special projects that would provide a rewarding volunteer experience and support branch functions. Although volunteers may contribute to web content, ensuring appropriate content and quality of the Library's public communications remains a key staff responsibility. These opportunities could be branch specific or replicable throughout the system. Once identified, position descriptions and a corresponding volunteer training plan will be developed for these new opportunities. *Target completion: May 2015*

CONCLUSION

The City Auditor and staff have made extensive efforts to analyze in detail the complex and layered mechanics of a large public library system and identify potential efficiencies. As described in the specific responses above, many of the audit recommendations will be completed within the calendar year, providing the Library with guidance and options for enhancing the efficiency of our operations. Recommendations that require a re-evaluation of current staff classifications and job duties will require further evaluation and may be implemented over a longer term.

The Library Department would like to thank the City Auditor and staff, specifically Avi Yotam and Cheryl Hedges, for the great level of care and effort taken to understand and recommend improvements to Library operations.

JILL BOURNE
Director, Library Department

For questions, please contact Jill Bourne, Library Director, at 408-808-2150.