

Defining Atherton's Library

Context

Atherton desires a public library that reflects the scale and intimacy of its community, and also tailors its services to the unique needs and wants of its users. The people here value a library that continues its focus on children and early literacy, has popular reading materials in digital and print, tailors its collection to the interests of residents, and serves as one of the few public places where people come together and converse in Atherton. Residents have articulated that they want library spaces that are properly sized to remove conflicts that arise as a result of different uses – active programming and quiet reading, for example.

Updating the 2010 Needs Assessmentⁱ to reflect the impacts of recent changes, especially in digital resources and device use, is a necessary first step. The information received via the survey, group conversations, and key informant interviews, as well as the existing facility assessment and benchmarking research continues to be relevant and accurate. Comparable library research provided a benchmark, and Atherton chooses to design a public library of the appropriate size for community use.

We now need to reconsider population and recognize emerging patterns of library usage in moving forward with new recommendations.

The key fundamentals to library planning that we address in this update are:

- service population and demographics
- impact of digital resources and devices
- trends shaping the information society
- strategies for designing a flexible library that can morph over time in adaptive use

service population and demographics: balance, solid and shifting

Atherton's residents value the scenic, rural, residential lifestyle characterized by the low population density they currently enjoy. Unless the developmental goals and general plan of the town radically change, the area will maintain this context into the foreseeable future.

Atherton's history shows significant growth from the 40's until 1970, with slower growth through the 90's and stalled growth at about 2000. By 2010, Atherton experienced an almost 4% loss in population from the year 2000 with 6,920 people. The latest ACSⁱⁱ data show that the 2012 population rebounded by almost 4% to 7,191. Long term projections for growth are less than 4%; change in this community and its surrounding areas will happen in the demographic mix and age distribution.

The median age of Athertonians is historically higher than California as a whole – currently by more than 3 years, and almost 23% of current residents are above 65 years of age (almost double the figure for California). Two significant factors are changing the demographic of Atherton: longevity and the influx of families with young children. Thus, Atherton has more generations in existence at the same time.

People, and generations, use the library differently, and at different times in their lives. The most told story is remembrance of going to the library as a child and delighting in discovery, becoming

busy with academics and extracurricular activities as a teen, going away to college or career as a young adult. Later years find us returning to the library with more discretionary time to rediscover reading for pleasure and finding ways to reconnect with our neighbors and community. That cycle holds as true today for many, although certainly not all, people in this community, as it has over time. The well-attended children's programs suggest that in the near future, the Atherton Library has an opportunity to serve this increasing population.

For planning purposes that affect the square footage of the Library, we have identified the number of current cardholdersⁱⁱⁱ at the Atherton Library to be 8,290. This is comprised of approximately half Atherton residents and half locally adjacent county residents. With the advent of a new library, the expectation for planning purposes is that there will be an increase in that number by 15%, arriving at a service population of 9,534.

digital resources and devices

The impact of e-books and e-readers has changed the face of reading in a very short time. Interestingly, the change is multifaceted. It actually results in an increase in reading across the board in both print and digital titles and for all generations. In exploring digital books, people are discovering and rediscovering titles that are only available in print – and reading them.

Use of public libraries has changed significantly since 2010, due to the explosion in digital resources available and rapid adoption of the technological devices to read and listen to these books.

Digital is another option, and people can and do choose to consume content and access information across many media. In tracking our daily activities, it is common to find that we might read a bit from a print newspaper or magazine, watch some television, listen to a radio program, read an ebook and listen to an audiobook. We likely pick up a pen and jot a note at some time, and also likely use a device and type our input.

For planning purposes, we assume that audio/visual media formats other than digital (CD, DVD) will begin to taper down in the future. The new library should still plan for some use of these physical media, but not to the extent they currently do. These materials are and will become increasingly available through downloads or streaming.

We do anticipate a desire for print materials for some time, and will plan for a print collection that is the size of the current collection at the Atherton Library, with some growth in print media as the audio/visual materials taper down. The Library will constantly gauge use of these books over time and adjust the collection to reflect its use. We must also remember that not all titles are yet available in digital formats, and the publishing industry is still developing its strategy for conversion, which means that some older titles may never be available digitally.

trends shaping the information society

Larger trends that stem from new technologies and the digital realm are surfacing, and as citizens of this digital society we'll want to stay knowledgeable and be intentional in our actions. IFLA^{iv} has established a trend report project, creating a forum for conversations, research, and information sharing on the subject:

- [trend 1](#) New Technologies will both expand and limit who has access to information.
- [trend 2](#) Online Education will democratize and disrupt global learning.
- [trend 3](#) The boundaries of privacy and data protection will be redefined.
- [trend 4](#) Hyper-connected societies will listen to and empower new voices and groups.
- [trend 5](#) The global information environment will be transformed by new technologies.

The public library continues to play a role in helping people navigate these trends with data, search, and information technology.

Strategies

Activities

- Zone activities that might conflict with each other (e.g. children's programming and quiet reading)

Technology

- Provide robust Internet access and computing anywhere in the library
- Provide training, one-on-one and group, to those who wish to use technology
- Leverage the number of PC workstations with additional portable technology choices, including laptops and tablets

Collections

- Begin to phase out (but do not eliminate) collection of physical media for digital information (A/V formats, such as CDs, DVDs). Instead focus on gaining use of these digital sources through customer's own device, or borrowed devices
- Print, with usage monitored and space repurposed appropriately (maintain current collection volume count, with no net growth, other than what may replace A/V formats, focusing the collection on children, popular materials, and business, but supplementing dramatically with digital sources
- Develop collections in response to specific interests articulated by Atherton residents

Seating

- Increased as recommended in the 2010 Needs Assessment; should be distributed to create conversational spaces, quiet zones for reading and study, co-working and learning spaces, etc.

Interactive spaces

- Create co-working and co-learning spaces - gathering space rich with broadband, electricity and collaborative technologies that harness diversity in background, experience, knowledge and areas of personal interest to enrich problem solving, creativity, and innovation in both work and learning
- Consider and optional program space sized for 100 person events
- Provide a tween/young teen oriented space instead of a physical, hard-walled "Teen Zone"
- Children's reading space should be large enough to accommodate children's story time programs
- An interactive informational panel that provides information about the library and its programs should be featured in the entry

Operational Functionality

- Provide workspace for 5 staff people, with one office enclosed
- Develop streamlined spaces for work and materials flow for service delivery

Summary of Space Recommendations

Please see document entitled “Atherton Library – Library Needs Assessment Update - Projected Space Needs” for a detailed accounting of the space recommendations. Following is a summary of these recommendations, listed in nsf (net square feet) or gsf (gross square feet):

<u>Space Recommendations</u>	<u>Area</u>
Adult Collections	1,472 nsf
Young Adult Collections	93 nsf
Children’s Collections	959 nsf
Seating	1,080 nsf
Computers and Technology (fixed)	240 nsf
Entry	300 nsf
Public Restrooms	700 nsf
2 Reading Rooms	600 nsf
Heritage/Archive Room	450 nsf
Library Staff and Support Spaces	750 nsf
<u>Building Support Space</u>	<u>664 nsf</u>
Total Recommended Gross Area	7,307 gsf

<u>Optional Space Recommendations</u>	<u>Area</u>
Base Library Recommendations (<i>above</i>)	7,307 gsf
Optional Library Program Room	1,500 nsf
<u>Building Support Space (<i>with Optional Room</i>)</u>	<u>150 nsf</u>
Total Recommended Area with Optional	8,957 gsf



Endnotes

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- i For further background information, please refer to the Needs Assessment, San Mateo County Library, Atherton Library, 2010, available in hard copy at the Atherton Library or click [<http://www.smcl.org/sites/www.smcl.org/files/file/Organization/JPA/03292010/Atherton-Library-Needs-Assessment-Memo-and-Report.pdf>] to download.
 - ii ACS: American Community Survey
 - iii “current cardholders” – the Library regularly reviews cardholders, and purges those with no activity for a duration of three years. Additionally, New registrations are made daily, so this number is constantly in flux. The number used in this study is a recent number of Library cardholders after the 2013 card review.
 - iv IFLA: the International Federation of Library Associations, commissioned a trend report to surface how libraries fit in our changing society [<http://trends.ifla.org>]

Projected Space Needs

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Growth Factor</u>	<u>Net Area Proposed</u>	<u>Note</u>
Collections Spaces				
Adult	1,472	0%	1,472	1
Young Adult	93	0%	93	1
Children	959	0%	959	1
Total Collection Spaces	2,523		2,523	

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Number Proposed</u>	<u>Net Area Proposed</u>	
Seating				
Adult	18	20	540	
Young Adult	2	6	150	
Children	8	27	390	2
Total Seating Spaces	28	53	1,080	

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Number Proposed</u>	<u>Net Area Proposed</u>	
Computers and Technology (fixed)				
Adult	6	6	180	3
Children	-	2	60	3
Total Fixed Computers and Technology	6	8	240	

	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>per</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	
Defined Rooms				
Entry	1	300	300	4
Public Restrooms	2	350	700	5
Reading Rooms	2	300	600	6
Heritage/Archive Room	1	450	450	7
Total Defined Rooms	6		2,050	

	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>per</u>	<u>Net Area Proposed</u>	
Staff and Support Spaces				
1 Office	1	150	150	
4 Staff	4	80	320	8
Storage/Work/Break	1	280	280	
Total Staff and Support Spaces	6	510	750	

SUMMARY of Projected Space Needs

Net Areas Summary		<u>Proposed</u>	
Collections Spaces		2,523	
Seating		1,080	
Computers and Technology (fixed)		240	
Defined Rooms		2,050	
Staff and Support Spaces		750	
Total Net Areas		6,643	
Area Summary		<u>Proposed</u>	
Net Area Summary		6,643	
Building Grossing Factor	10%	664	9
Gross Total Area Need		7,307	
		0.77	sf per capita
Area Summary with Optional Program Room		<u>Proposed</u>	
Gross Total Area Need		7,307	
Add Optional Program Room	100 people	1,500	10
Added Grossing Factor at Program Room	10%	150	9
Gross Total Area Need with Program Room		8,957	
		0.94	sf per capita
Service Area Population			
Number of Active Cards	8290		
Growth Projection	15%		
Resultant Service Area Population	9534		

Footnotes

- 1 - Current item/volume count, with no growth
- 2 - Additional Storytelling seating assumes carpet squares on floor, with moved furniture.
- 3 - Leverage slightly increase # of stationary PC with extensive portable device usage.
- 4 - Provide for warm, friendly greeting, welcoming space at entrance
- 5 - Assume 2 fixtures per gender, plus added toilets elsewhere in Civic Center
- 6 - Quieter spaces, and may be reserved
- 7 - May double as Meeting Room
- 8 - in workstation, open office environment
- 9 - Since major "grossing" elements are prescribed above, remaining factor is limited.
This number may adjust upward, pending design layouts.
- 10 - To accommodate 100 people in chair rows