



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Frequently Asked Questions About San Diego's New Central Library Project

Why does San Diego need a new Central Library?

More than 550,000 patrons visit the current Central Library each year to use its many resources. But . . .

- The collection outgrew the building's capacity 25 years ago, and there is no room for growth.
- More than half the collection has to be stored in two basement levels, closed to the public and available only upon request.
- It has minimal space for exhibits and displays that complement and promote collections.
- The auditorium at the current Central Library has a seating capacity of 185, which is too small to accommodate popular programs.
- As a thriving and growing city, San Diego deserves a first-class Central Library for its diverse population.

What role are libraries playing in the technological age?

In our technological environment, libraries perform the same role they always have: they pool resources to increase access to information and recreational materials for everyone. As technology has improved to make many aspects of our lives easier and more efficient, it has done the same for libraries.

- Demand for print and audio-visual materials continues to increase, while technology speeds our access to these materials.
- The Library subscribes to many premier online resources, such as periodical archives and statistical databases, but many publishers will not license these for remote (home) use.
- Librarians offer professional assistance in online research.
- Contrary to popular belief, only a very small fraction of information available in book form is also available electronically. Less than 1 percent of the more than 110 million items in the Library of Congress have been electronically formatted.

Why is a Central Library essential?

The Central Library is the heart, brain and nerve center of our public library system. It provides a centralized operating system for 35 diverse branches spread over 331 square miles.

- It is the only patent and trademark depository in the region and one of the largest public resource centers on the West Coast.
- The Central Library holds a vast collection of the region's historical archives, such as the original plans for the Balboa Park buildings constructed for the 1915 Exposition, plus newspapers and government documents.
- More than a half-million unique titles, as well as in-depth collections, are housed at the Central Library. These are prohibitively expensive to duplicate at branches, yet necessary for meeting the information and knowledge needs of the San Diego community.
- Professional librarians at the Central Library provide subject expertise and collection development, which support branch libraries.

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- The Central Library is not only centrally located for the entire San Diego region, it is also downtown's branch library, serving 43 local schools within a 2 mile area, 11 community agencies and a quickly-growing residential population that has nearly doubled in the last 7 years.

Will there be parking and easy access to public transit at the new Central Library?

Unlike the current Central Library, which has no dedicated parking, the new Central Library will have 250 parking spaces on site with an additional 250 parking spaces dedicated for library visitors in a structure across the street. Over a thousand spaces will also be available within 500 feet of the building. The new library will be located on the San Diego Trolley line and close to a trolley station that serves both the Blue and Orange lines. In addition, bus lines and bus stops will be in close proximity to the new Central Library.

How will the library project be financed?

The \$185 million project will be paid for with \$80 million in redevelopment funds, \$85 million in private contributions and a \$20 million state grant.

How does the new Central Library support your local branch library?

The City's Library Building Program focuses on rejuvenating the entire library system by building not only a new Central Library, but also building or expanding other branch libraries throughout San Diego. A strong Central Library is essential to the operation of the entire library system.

- When the current Central Library was constructed in 1954, it supported 11 branch libraries in the library system. There are now 35 branch libraries that serve almost four times the population.
- It currently directs all disabled access, technology and web-based services, children and adult programming, and telephone reference questions for the entire region.
- Due to the central coordination of these services, the Central Library handled over 1.6 million reference questions, served over 26,000 children in the Summer Reading Program and helped produce more than 5,000 cultural and educational events last year.

Furthermore, branch libraries typically hold books and audiovisual materials that cater to general interest. Usually the collection focuses on the most popular titles and topics. Unlike branch libraries, a central library has staff and a collection with in-depth information about a great variety of topics. Specific sections of the current Central Library include:

- Art, Music and Recreation – Audio books, DVDs, videos, CDs, sheet music, picture files and sports.
- California, Genealogy and Special Collections – Local history, family history and rare books.
- Children's Room – Picture books, curriculum development, parenting kits, science fair resources.
- History and Travel – Biography, geography, American and world history, encyclopedias.
- Literature and Languages – Fiction, foreign languages, psychology and religion.
- Newspaper Room – Newspapers from San Diego and other major cities.
- Science and Government Publications – Health, tax forms, car repair manuals, cookbooks, patents and topographic maps.

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- Social Sciences and Business Reference – Investments, business, politics and government and wedding planning.
- Teen Space – SAT study guides, comic books, graphic novels and homework assistance.

How will the new Central Library be an improvement over the current Central Library?

The current Central Library is over 50 years old and was built for a San Diego population of only 334,000 people. Today the city has more than 1.3 million and is expected to grow to more than 2 million by 2020. More than half of the Central Library's collection is stored on two basement levels that are not open to the public. Its auditorium only seats 185 people. Also, plumbing and electrical systems are inadequate, there's no dedicated parking, and there simply is not enough public space in the building to meet the needs of today's library customers. By contrast, the new Central library will have:

- 9,141-square foot children's area, more than three times larger than the one in the Central Library.
- Outdoor plaza and café.
- 350-seat auditorium.
- Three-story, domed reading room with a view of San Diego Bay.
- 400-seat multi-purpose room.
- 3,797-square-foot teen center.
- 500 dedicated parking spaces and over 1,000 additional spaces within 500 feet of the building.
- 407 computers, more than four times the number at the current Central Library.
- 3,000 square feet of gallery and exhibit space.

For more information about the Central Library project, visit the Library on the City's Web site at sandiegolibrary.org . To support this or other library projects go to supportmylibrary.org .

The City of San Diego Public Library – Your Link to the Past and Gateway to the Future
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