OUR VISION FOR PALO ALTO

A flourishing city where people achieve their dreams.

OUR MISSION

PACL connects our diverse community through knowledge, resources, and opportunities.

We nurture innovation, discovery, and delight.
CITY OF PALO ALTO VALUES

Quality
Superior delivery of services

Efficiency
Productive, efficient use of resources

Innovation
Excellence in creative thought and implementation

Courtesy
Providing service with respect and concern

Integrity
Straight-forward, honest and fair relations

AS A LIBRARY, WE VALUE

• Providing free and open access to collections, resources, and services to all.
• Learning and being a learning organization.
• Embracing differences and diversity.
• Challenging the norm.
• Fostering an engaged community and staff.
• Our relationships with one another and with our community.
INTRODUCTION

For the past 15 years, the City of Palo Alto and its Library department have been engaged in building or renovating the five city library branches. As a result, the Mitchell Park Library was rebuilt and the Downtown, College Terrace, Children’s, and Rinconada libraries were remodeled and modernized. These new and renovated buildings provided space and opportunities to offer innovative services that satisfied the needs of the Palo Alto community.

Library Director Monique le Conge Ziesenhenne, the Library Advisory Commission (LAC), and staff members worked with Library Consultant Jane Light to develop a Strategic Plan in 2015 that enabled the library to focus resources on the important goals, services, and activities needed by the Palo Alto community. Following the development of the Strategic Plan, the library staff has been working hard to create and present interesting collections, services, and programs based on the mission, values, and goals of the strategic plan. Appendix A lists the significant achievements made between the years 2015-17.

In the second half of 2017, as part of their regular planning cycle, the library began working on revising the Strategic Plan. In December 2017, Library Consultant Jane Light led a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) exercise in which library staff provided valuable insights regarding library resources. Following the exercise, library managers met together to create a Strategic Plan revision draft using data as presented in Appendix B. The draft was reviewed by the LAC in early 2018, who provided comments and suggestions. The draft version that was made available for community feedback in April 2018 garnered more than 800 community comments. Library staff analyzed and incorporated many aspects of the feedback to the Strategic Plan revision. In September 2018, the Library hosted an Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries funded by a grant from the California State Library. Comments and discussions from this process were likewise incorporated and reinforced the goals and strategies presented here.

The revised Strategic Plan will function as an able guide that enables library staff to develop, and prioritize projects and initiatives, and to remain relevant amidst the ever-changing political, economic, social, and technological landscape.
GOALS

A  Be the place where everyone can learn anything.

B  Be the partner of choice for community organizations.

C  Connect community members to exchange and share stories, interests, and skills, with particular emphasis on intergenerational opportunities.

D  Leverage technology to integrate the library into the lives of community members.

E  Provide a richer library experience for our community because of the expertise and effort of our dynamic staff.
GOAL A  Be the place where everyone can learn anything.

STRATEGIES
- Provide and promote opportunities to read for learning and for pleasure.
- Create learning opportunities for community members to be able to make sense of and succeed in our changing society.
- Provide a portal to American culture, language, and civic life.
- Ensure that the library’s collections, technology, and buildings support the evolving requirements of 21st Century lifelong learning.
- Provide tools for improving all types of literacy.
- Provide early childhood literacy programs based on current research in child development and learning.
**GOAL B**

Be the partner of choice for community organizations.

**STRATEGIES**

- Support Project Safety Net’s programs to promote youth well-being and implement the 41 Developmental Assets.
- Increase collaboration with Palo Alto’s public and private schools and their school librarians.
- Support library stakeholders in their advocacy and fundraising activities.
- Connect staff to community organizations in order to support their goals and collaborate in their activities.
- Encourage relationships with community organizations that enhance library services and programs.
- Develop partnerships to enhance customers’ digital experiences.
GOAL C

Connect community members to exchange and share stories, interests, and skills, with particular emphasis on intergenerational opportunities.

STRATEGIES

- Provide a forum to explore current events and issues of community interest.
- Engage community members in library services as volunteers and program advisors.
- Connect community members to exchange and share stories, interests, and skills.
- Encourage reading, writing, and other forms of creative expression among community members.
GOAL

Leverage technology to integrate the library into the lives of community members.

STRATEGIES

- Enhance and preserve unique and local collections.
- Plan and implement a social media strategy.
- Produce web content that is relevant to the needs and interests of our diverse audiences.
- Facilitate access for library users to resources that enable them to create content.
- Provide staff training and technology infrastructure to support digital projects.
- Keep abreast of emerging technologies and trends and of library-specific applications.
GOAL

Provide a richer library experience for our community because of the expertise and effort of our dynamic staff.

STRATEGIES

- Attract and retain the most skilled and knowledgeable staff.
- Motivate and recognize staff through opportunities to innovate and be creative.
- Create opportunities for staff members to bring their talents and interests to work.
- Explore opportunities for improving employee work-life balance.
- Support and promote efforts to make it possible for staff to live in or near Palo Alto.
Appendix A: 2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan

GOAL A
Create a variety of opportunities for learning and provide effective tools for improving all types of literacy.

STRATEGIES:

A
Provide early childhood literacy programs based on current research in child development and learning.


Staff trained in “Mind in the Making” to understand the need for executive skills; trained child-focused staff at Palo Alto Art Center (2016).

B
Create opportunities for community members to acquire the necessary skills to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

Introduced 3D printing services at the library (2016).

Piloted use of technologies through grant-funded programs, such as robots for teaching coding and participating in storytime, virtual reality hardware for 3D design (2017).

C
Provide a portal to American culture, language, and civic life. Ensure that the library’s collections, technology, and buildings support the evolving requirements of 21st Century lifelong learning.

Started the New Americans Program, which includes English as a Second Language discussion group, Citizenship classes, an American Culture series, and web resources (2015).

GOAL B
Strengthen the community and the library through effective partnerships.

STRATEGIES:

A
Support Project Safety Net’s programs to promote youth wellbeing and support the 41 Developmental Assets.

Provide facility support to the monthly Project Safety Net meeting (2015).

Expand the practice of tying library programming to 41 Developmental Assets.

B
Increase collaboration with Palo Alto’s public and private schools and their school librarians.

Began planning for the Student Library Card Initiative with PAUSD (2017).

Introduced online resources to teachers and librarians through hands-on training opportunities (2017).

C
Support library stakeholders in their advocacy and fundraising activities.

Provided various analytical reports to Library Advisory Commission in support of efforts in promoting electronic books and international languages use.

Provided support for Library Advisory Commissioners to attend professional conferences.

D
Connect librarians to community organizations in order to support their goals and participate in their activities by bringing library resources and services directly to them.

Established the BikePALS program through a grant-funded innovation program (2016).

Collaborated with the Palo Alto YMCA and Avenidas to provide facilities for senior wellness programs and technology training.

*Note: achievements without dates are either multiple presentations or opportunities, or were implemented in stages over multiple years.
Appendix A: 2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan

GOAL C
Facilitate civic participation and effective community engagement.

STRATEGIES:

A
Provide a forum to explore issues of local interest and current events.

Developed the “Celebrating Cultures” initiative, to highlight events celebrated by our New American communities (2017).

Organized several community conversation sessions based on the Harwood Institute training on such topics as technology in libraries (2016).

B
Engage community members, with particular attention to teens and seniors, in library services as volunteers and program advisors.


Began to partner with the Friends of the Palo Alto Library (FOPAL) to recognize all volunteers whose work benefits the library (2015).

GOAL D
Expand virtual customer experiences.

STRATEGIES:

A
Make the library e-branch as usable and useful on mobile devices as on PCs and laptops.

Researched and tested search and discovery alternatives to current library system.

Provide feedback to vendors regarding their products and how they perform on different types of devices.

B
Grow digital collections to a robust level to meet increasing demand.

Introduced twelve popular electronic services, in English and other languages, including Hoopla, Enki, Zinio, Kanopy, and Kono.

Added early childhood digital learning resources for parents and caregivers to check out and use at home.

C
Make discovery and use of library collections, services, and resources simpler.

Implemented a new discovery tool, reaching the goal set by the Library Advisory Commission (2017).

Implemented Niche Academy for staff and the public to learn how to access digital resources (2016).
Appendix A: 2015 – 2017 Strategic Plan

GOAL E
Foster a culture of excellence, continuous improvement, and risk-taking.

STRATEGIES:

A
Attract, develop, and retain the most talented employees.
Recruited highly skilled librarians to handle complex work in civic initiatives, early literacy, graphic design, web design, robotic programming, analytics and infographic presentations.

B
Provide opportunities and resources for all employees to continue developing their skills and knowledge.
Staff were sent to national, regional, and local trainings to gain knowledge about best practices in public libraries, new resources for materials and technology, and to develop specialized skills.
Staff are participants on professional committees and governing boards and councils.
Small-group hands-on training was introduced to regularly update staff knowledge of customer service, technology, and collections (2017).

C
Embrace and reward creativity and innovation.
Many staff members developed new programs in diverse topics, ranging from World War I history to virtual reality.
Staff were recognized through “kudos” e-mails and annual social events.
In preparation for the revision, the following demographic and planning information sources were reviewed:

Palo Alto is a city of nearly 70,000 residents within Santa Clara County, which has a population of 1,938,180. According to the City of Palo Alto’s official data set, the majority of the residents are between 25–54 years old, with the largest percentage in the 45–54 age category. According to the California State Department of Finance, the proportion of seniors in Santa Clara County is projected to grow significantly between 2015 and 2030. More specifically, according to this projection and cited in the recently approved Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan, "Palo Alto has, and is projected to continue to have, a higher percentage of persons over 60 years of age than almost any other city in Santa Clara County" (Section C-11 of Comprehensive Plan).

The Population and Housing element of the recently approved Comprehensive Plan provides the following data and forecasts on Palo Alto population and number of households:

**Number of Households Versus Population of Palo Alto**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>26,493</td>
<td>64,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>28,478</td>
<td>68,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>30,108</td>
<td>73,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Palo Alto draws an additional population during working hours that doubles its size as people from all over the area commute to work at large institutions like Stanford, the VA Hospital, and many tech companies. With close proximity to other towns such as East Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Los Altos, Palo Alto is a destination city for work, education, and leisure activities for nearby residents and longer distance commuters. Data in the OrangeBoy platform shows PACL library patrons with a home zip code outside of Palo Alto range up and down the peninsula from San Carlos down to San Jose.
Cardholder Information

[Bar chart showing the number of cardholders and Palo Alto residents by age group.]

Appendix B: About Palo Alto and PACL
Palo Alto has many distinct neighborhoods and over thirty neighborhood associations, with an umbrella organization called Palo Alto Neighborhoods, which include:

- **Barron Park / Green Acres**
- **Downtown North / Crescent Park**
- **Midtown North / Palo Verde / Charleston Gardens**
- **Midtown South / Ventura / Charleston Meadow**
- **Professorville / Old PA / Duveneck / St. Francis**
- **Stanford**
Other sources of data included:

- FY18 and FY19 City of Palo Alto and Library Departmental Budgets
- 2017 City of Palo Alto Performance Report
- National Citizens’ Survey, City of Palo Alto 2017
- Edge Report
- Library Technology Report