



# MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** December 8, 2015  
**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Mary George, Director of Library Services *MGeorge*  
**SUBJECT:** Placer County Library consolidation and closure of the Loomis and Meadow Vista Branch Libraries.

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## ACTIONS REQUESTED

1. Authorize the Director of Library Services to close the Loomis Branch Library at 6050 Library Drive and the Meadow Vista Branch Library at 16981 Meadow Vista Road on December 31, 2015 and shift the County's resources including materials, technology, and staff to the remaining libraries in the Placer County Library system;
2. Authorize the Director of Public Works and Facilities to take any and all actions necessary to terminate the lease for the Meadow Vista Branch library, Lease Agreement CN028085, as amended, as of March 1, 2016;
3. Authorize the Director of Public Works and Facilities to properly secure and maintain the building located at 6050 Library Drive after the Library has vacated the location.

## BACKGROUND

The Placer County Library system includes eleven facilities in the communities of Applegate, Auburn, Colfax, Foresthill, Granite Bay, Kings Beach, Loomis, Meadow Vista, Penryn, Rocklin, and Tahoe City. Originally, each of the eleven libraries was meant to serve a single community, functioning as the town library of its particular locale. Over the years through technology and service delivery efficiencies, these separate libraries have been brought together into a more interconnected county wide system

Due to the loss of revenues over a number of years, the Library has been required to balance annual budgets using available reserves while falling behind in its ability to offer a viable library infrastructure to its customers including plentiful popular materials in a variety of formats, adequately trained staff, inviting facilities, and convenient hours of operation in all eleven libraries. The Library is also hindered in its ability to bring on new technologies including popular e-resources and increased broadband Internet.



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Operating a static budget since 2008 has repressed the modernization of the Library at a time when libraries remain important community spaces for gathering, learning, innovation, and personal growth. While the County is seeing an increase in property tax revenues, overall funding for the Library is not returning quickly enough to reverse the erosion to its infrastructure.

The Library's Strategic Plan, approved by your Board on December 10, 2013, offers some insight into how to evaluate and distribute resources while moving toward a viable, modern, and sustainable library future.

Three initiatives are highlighted in the Plan and are providing a roadmap for future service:

- **Reverse the Erosion in Library Services** by recognizing that, like many County departments, the Library was hit hard by the Great Recession and must invest as the economy improves in its facilities, library materials, staffing, and programming in order to meet the expectations of library customers. To remain viable, the Library must move beyond the interconnected system of small town libraries to become a fully interdependent network that shares and concentrates its resources and services where customers are using them.
- **Modernize Operations to Improve Efficiency and Expand Services** by anticipating the needs of library users, reducing the unit cost of routine customer transactions, improving the library's website content, providing access while making self-service easy, fun, and preferred by customers with up to date wireless technology and equipment.
- **Build Capacity for the Future** by analyzing all potential funding streams, establishing and maintaining prudent reserves, and developing budgets that can support reversing erosion and modernizing operations with on-going and one time revenues year over year.

Library Administration continues to pursue opportunities to drive these initiatives forward. To this end, staff has recommended a consolidation of the library system and the shifting of resources. A restructuring of the interconnected system remains the most economical and viable option for the overall health of the system moving forward. Concentrated resources will allow the library to stabilize operations where patron use is



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the highest, while maintaining the outlying branches that serve rural and isolated communities.

## **MEADOW VISTA AND LOOMIS**

The Meadow Vista Branch Library was leased and opened in 2001 and was purposed as a temporary site until a permanent site could be built in response to community development and growth. Currently, library use is approximately 3% of the 1.1 million items borrowed annually from the Placer County Library system. Impacts of the recommended closure are expected to be minimal to Meadow Vista residents as there are library services within five miles of the community.

The Loomis Branch Library opened in 1980. Library use is approximately 4% of the 1.1 million items borrowed annually from the Placer County Library system. Impacts of the recommended closure are expected to be minimal to Loomis residents as there are library services within five miles of the community.

Approximately 74% of library services are delivered from the Auburn, Colfax, Granite Bay and Rocklin Libraries. It is anticipated that by closing the Meadow Vista and Loomis Libraries patrons will shift their use to another library in the Placer County Library system resulting in a reduced per-patron transaction cost. The reduced cost is realized by maintaining fewer brick- and-mortar libraries and taking advantage of existing staff. Additionally, both communities will be served by the Bookmobile which will allow for flexible and alternative programming in a variety of community locations.

Library Administration offers this consolidation plan as part of an innovative solution to a five year budgetary structural deficit necessitating the anticipated use of reserves. The consolidation plan begins a path towards improved public services, inviting facilities, current technology, and plentiful library materials. Direction from your Board has been to provide sustainable libraries. The closure of the Meadow Vista and Loomis Libraries will allow the County to stabilize the Placer County Library system for future generations to come.



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## **ALTERNATIVE TO REQUESTED ACTIONS**

Absent approval of the recommended actions, immediate system-wide service reductions will be required to prevent further erosion while moving forward with creating a modern and sustainable countywide library system. Necessary service reductions are expected to impact the following:

- Library operating hours
- Library programming
- Use of enabling technology

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The consolidation of the countywide library system is not a cost savings measure, but a shifting of resources. This shifting of resources allows the library to support the strategic planning initiatives to reverse erosion to services, modernize, and build capacity for the library's future. Library Administration will continue to work closely with the CEO's Office and your Board to make thoughtful recommendations for the use of one-time and on-going funding in support of these initiatives.

The FY 2015-16 Library Budget focuses on stabilization of the library system and staves off the continued erosion of library services which began during the Great Recession. The FY 2015-16 library budget includes a \$400,000 one-time General Fund augmentation that includes \$190,000 allocated to reverse erosion with respect to library materials; \$10,000 for a feasibility study to modernize materials handling and increase efficiency; and \$200,000 of bridge funding to minimize the use of reserves.