THE ESCONDIDO PUBLIC LIBRARY

SUMMARY
In 1980 a new library was constructed in Escondido to serve a population of about 64,000 residents. By 2015, that same library was serving a population of approximately 147,000 residents.[1] Since 2000, questions have been raised concerning the adequacy of the library to serve the community. Questions included: the ability of the library to support the substantial increase in population with aging facilities, decreasing circulation, and decreasing number of registered uses.

In response to a complaint, the 2016/2017 San Diego County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) interviewed City of Escondido and library officials and reviewed statistics starting in the fiscal year 2008/09 to find current trends regarding the adequacy of the Escondido Public Library.

The 2016/2017 San Diego County Grand Jury found the following:
1. The Escondido Public Library is inadequate to serve the community.
2. The Escondido library's programs do not meet the community needs.
3. Unused allocated funds from the Escondido Library operating budget are not used to benefit the library.
4. An effective marketing plan is not being employed to attract more people to the library's resources, programs, and activities.

The Grand Jury recommends that the Escondido City Manager and the Escondido City Council, in conjunction with the Escondido Public Library Administration and interested civic organizations, review methods of increasing the number of library programs. The Grand Jury also recommends that the Escondido City Manager and the Escondido City Council, in conjunction with the Escondido Public Library Administration consider creating a subcommittee to investigate methods of improving their marketing plan. The Grand Jury further recommend that the Escondido City Council and the Escondido City Manager investigate methods of dedicating a portion of any excess funds from money allocated but not spent in the library budget to a special or existing fund to benefit the library.

PROCEDURE
The Grand Jury used the following procedures to substantiate the information in this report:

- Collected statistics about the Escondido Public Library from the California State Library Statistics website
- Collected statistics from the Escondido Mayor's New Library Task Force report
- Examined the following documentation:
    - City of Escondido, City Council meetings minutes.
    - Escondido's Annual Operating Budget: 2008/09 to 2014/15.
    - Escondido Public Library Board of Trustees meetings minutes.

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[1] City of Escondido Demographics, City of Escondido, http://www.escondido.org/demographics.aspx (accessed 11/3/2016).

- Interviewed City and library officials

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, a report published by the Escondido Mayor's New Library Task Force described the need for a new library. Citing increases in population, card holders (registered users), daily visits, items checked out (circulation), reference questions asked, and collection size, the task force stressed the need for a new library.[2] In 2010, the City Council heard a concept presentation for the development of a new library from the Escondido Library Board of Trustees and the Escondido Library Endowment Foundation.[3]

The purpose of the Grand Jury's report is to review important statistics, beginning in 2007, regarding the current library and make recommendations about its future.

DISCUSSION

For this report, the statistics the Grand Jury gathered from the California State Library website included registered users, total circulation, number of programs, program attendance, internet use, total expenditures, and total income. Statistics were available from 2008/09 through the fiscal year 2014/15. Escondido library staff gathers and reports data to the California State Library for the fiscal year 2015/16 during September and October of 2016. Data for fiscal year 2015/16 were not available for this report.
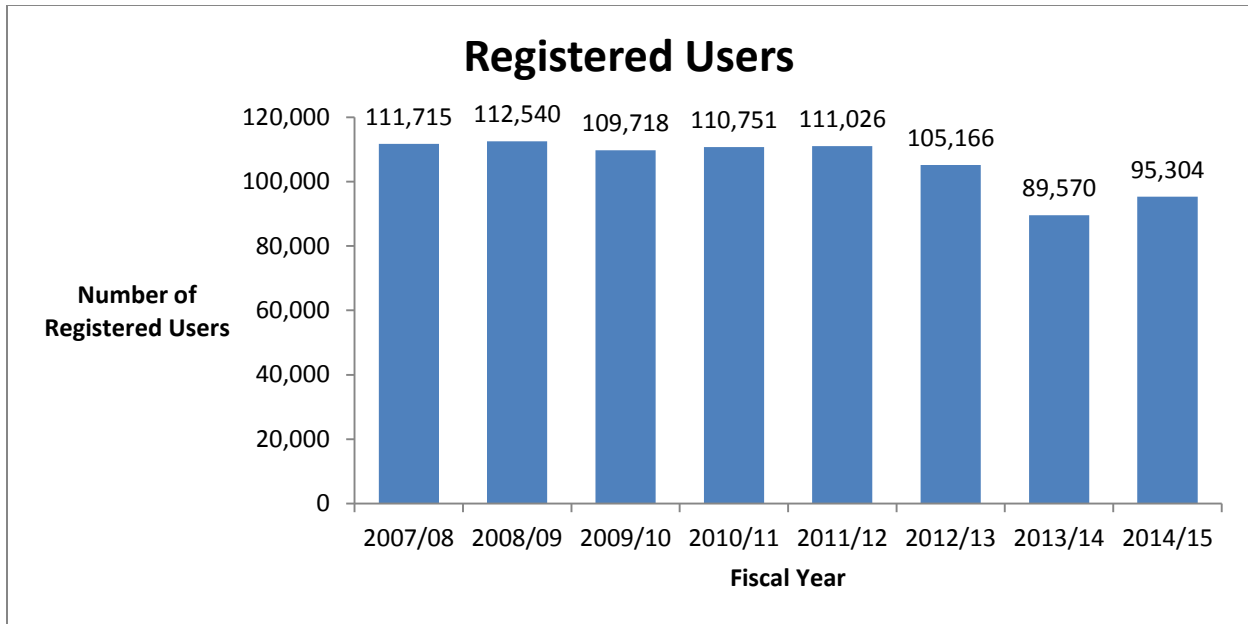
Registered Users

Registered users and card holders include all persons registered with the library for circulation and other services. Chart 1 displays the number of registered users from fiscal year 2008/09 to 2014/15.[4] Data for 2007/08 is from the Report of the Escondido Mayor's New Library Task Force.

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[2] Report of the Escondido Mayor's New Library Task Force, 2007,
www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/pdfs/NewLibraryTaskForceReport.pdf (accessed 10/17/2016).
[3] City of Escondido, Council Meeting Minutes, March 23, 2016,
http://www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/agendas/Council/3-23-16CCAgendaPacket-Updated.pdf?v=2 (accessed 10/25/2016).
[4] California State Library, http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/librarystats.html (accessed 9/22/2016).

Registered Users

Number of Registered Users

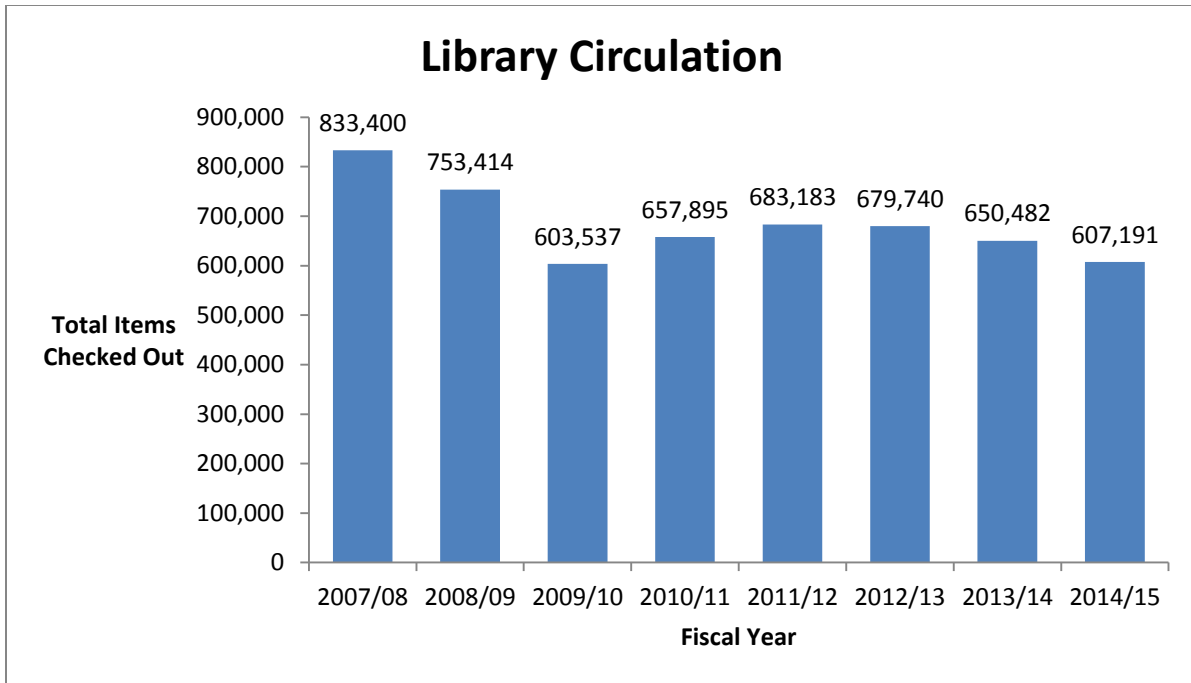| Fiscal Year	Number of Registered Users
2007/08	111,715
2008/09	112,540
2009/10	109,718
2010/11	110,751
2011/12	111,026
2012/13	105,166
2013/14	89,570
2014/15	95,304

Chart 1

The drop in registered users in 2013/14 was due to the removal of nonusers (registered users who had not checked out materials in two years) prior to the creation of a new database in 2014.[5]

Total Annual Circulation
Total annual circulation consists of all checked-out materials (including renewals) to registered users including electronic materials such as eBooks. Chart 2 displays the total circulation.[6] Data for 2007/08 is from the Report of the Escondido Mayor's New Library Task Force.

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[5] Interviews with City and Library officials on September 15, 2016
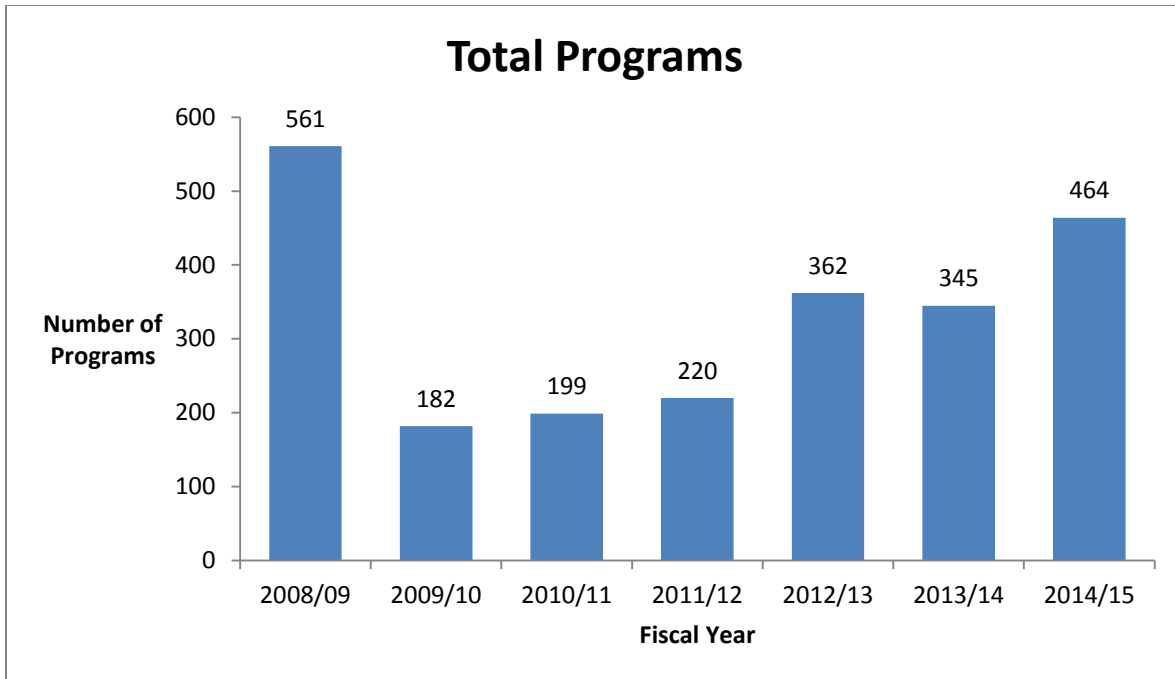[6] California State Library, http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/librarystats.html (accessed 9/22/2016).

Chart 2

Number of Programs

A program is any planned event that the library sponsors. The program may include the use of the library, library services, library tours, or cultural, recreational, or educational information. Programs may be on the library site or off-site. Excluded programs include non-library groups using the library facilities.[7] Chart 3 displays the total number of programs.[8]

[7] California State Library, http://www.countingopinions.com/pireports/report.php?df083b867174e4765840ca003119990a&live (accessed 9/28/2016).
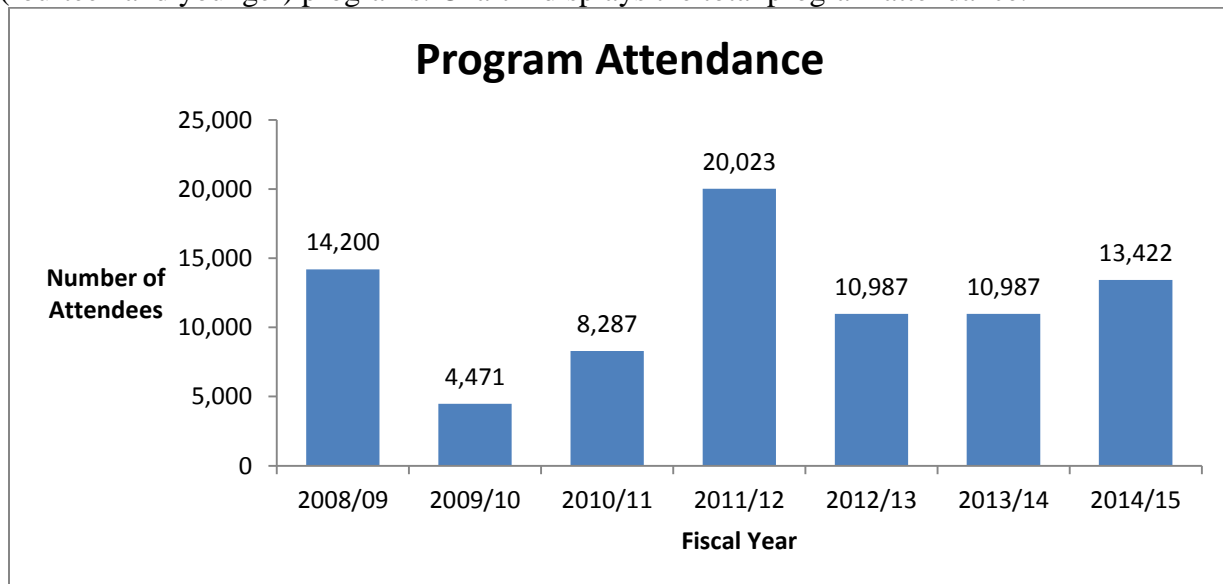[8] California State Library, http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/librarystats.html (accessed 9/12/2016).

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Total Programs

Chart 3

Program Attendance

Total program attendance is the sum of the attendance from adult, young adult, and children's (fourteen and younger) programs. Chart 4 displays the total program attendance.[9]
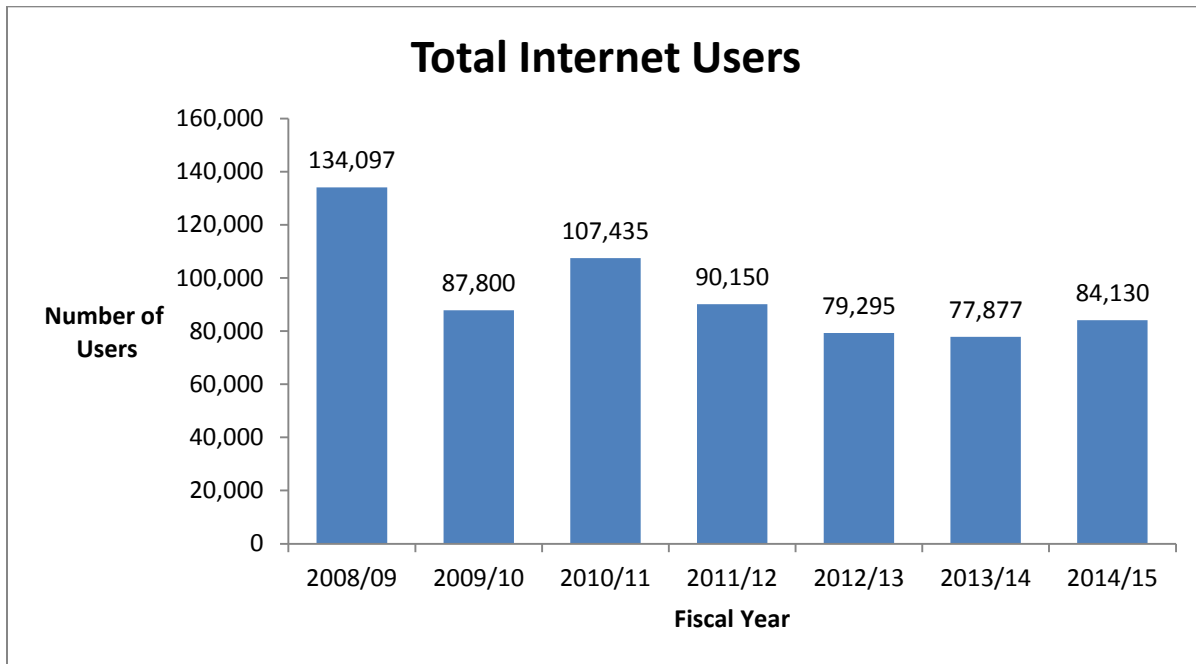

Chart 4

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[9]California State Library, http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/librarystats.html (accessed 9/28/2016).

2016/2017 San Diego County Grand Jury (filed March 21, 2017)

Public Internet Computers

Total uses of public internet computers is defined as the total number of patrons who have used internet computers in the library during the last year.[10] Chart 5 displays the total internet users.[11]

Total Internet Users

Fiscal Year	Number of Users
2008/09	134,097
2009/10	87,800
2010/11	107,435
2011/12	90,150
2012/13	79,295
2013/14	77,877
2014/15	84,130

Chart 5

Total Library Operating Income and Total Library Operating Expenditures

Total operating income is the sum of all income from local government (excluding gifts and donations), library fines, fees or grants, state funds, federal governmental funds from federal programs, and other income such as corporate private donations and grants. Operating expenditures include total operating staff expenditures such as salary, wages and benefits, collection expenses, computer services, online databases, postage, telephone, print materials expenditures, serial subscription, and microform expenditures.[12]

Table 1and Chart 6 display the total income and expenses.[13]

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[10] California State Library, http://www.countingopinions.com/pireports/report.php?df083b867174e4765840ca003119990a&live (accessed 9/28/2016).

[11] California State Library, http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/librarystats.html (accessed 9/28/2016).

[12] California State Library, http://www.countingopinions.com/pireports/report.php?df083b867174e4765840ca003119990a&live (accessed 9/22/2016).

[13] California State Library, http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/librarystats.html (accessed 9/28/2016).

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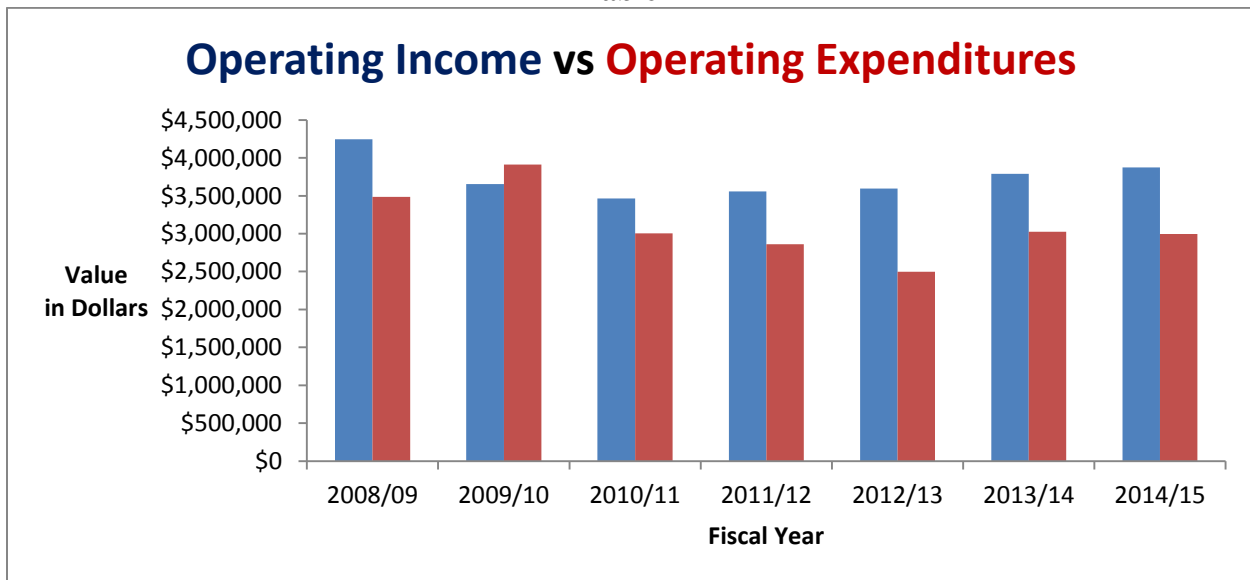| Date	Total Operating Income	Total Operating Expenditures	Difference Income - Expenditures
2008/09	$4,245,860	$3,483,717	$762,143
2009/10	$3,654,339	$3,911,064	($256,725)
2010/11	$3,465,805	$3,002,025	$463,780
2011/12	$3,558,454	$2,862,061	$696,393
2012/13	$3,595,443	$2,499,092	$1,096,351
2013/14	$3,789,189	$3,026,503	$762,686
2014/15	$3,872,778	$2,994,878	$877,900

Table 1

Chart 6

Conclusions

The New Library Task Force in 2007 stated the library was inadequate and proposed the building of a new, modern, up-to-date library. Later, in 2010, the City Council heard another presentation. For a variety of reasons, neither renovation nor construction of a new library happened. After many talks, in March 2016 the City Council directed city staff to study the feasibility of the plan to build a new library.[14] The feasibility report was presented to the City Council in October.

Troubling downward trends have been seen in total registered users, circulation, and public use of internet computers. The lack of updated facilities may be a contributing factor to this decline. Public internet use, number of programs, and program attendance are showing a downward trend, although some show subsequent modest increase in growth. Especially encouraging is the increase in the number of library programs and program attendance. Nevertheless, the downward trends indicate that the library is not adequately serving its patrons.

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[14] Escondido City Council Minutes, http://www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/minutes/Council/3-23-16CCMeetingMinutes.pdf (accessed 10/25/2016).

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The library has a number of programs for children, young adults, and adults such as Shakespeare Saturdays, bilingual book clubs, literacy programs, and adult book reading clubs. However, library programs decreased sharply to 182 (2009/10) and increased slowly to 464 in 2014/15. When compared to other San Diego county libraries, the number of Escondido library programs was the lowest.[15] Yet they are well attended, implying the programs are in line with the needs of the community. With the significance of good programming to ensure high-quality libraries, more programs are necessary. Library officials expressed an interest in offering more diverse, quality programs; however, they cited problems in space and staffing. Clearly there is room for improvement.

Data pertaining to operating income and operating expenditures are shown on Chart 6. Since 2008/09, budgeted operating income exceeded operating expenditures every year except for one, 2009/10. When budgeted operating income is greater than operating expenditures, money allocated but not spent remain in the City's general fund. This excess can become extensive over a period of years (see table 1). Since unspent allocated funds can be viewed as a surplus, it could be allocated to a special or existing fund that would directly benefit the library.

The Grand Jury found that a cohesive marketing plan for the library does not exist. Current advertising efforts include brochures, ads such as those in Escondido's Community Services Recreational Guide, and press releases about library programs. Further, the library does have some effective marketing ideas. For instance, the library recently partnered with some local restaurants so that the restaurants could offer discounts to library cardholders. Nevertheless, an effective marketing plan could be created and implemented to better inform the community of the library's resources, programs and activities.

Is the library inadequately serving the community of Escondido? City and library officials are slow to agree, stating that library staff works hard to serve the community's needs. But they are hindered by lack of space and often by the low number of staff. The lack of space, a problem often repeated by library officials, is demonstrated by the downward trend of many library statistics. There was general agreement in interviews with City and library officials that the library was not adequately serving the community.

There are two possibilities to solve the space problem: renovation or construction. Renovation of the current library is not appealing due to the wasteful use of resources. Grand Jury interviews with City officials indicated it would be a poor use of available funds to remodel a "20th-century library" that would not last as long as a new "21st-century library."

There is interest in Escondido in building a new library. City and library officials are eager. A study, authorized by the City Council and completed in January 2016, showed strong public support for a new library.

On October 19, 2016, an initial Escondido Public Library Relocation Feasibility Report was presented to the City Council. The report, presented by the City Manager and the Director of

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[15] California State Library, http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/librarystats.html (accessed 9/22/2016).

Library and Community Services, found that construction of a new library was feasible. Three courses of action were recommended to the City Council.

The City Council directed the City Manager to prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) requesting firms that specialize in partnerships between private and public agencies develop plans for the new library. The RFQ "…would allow the market to determine the feasibility of the project and how to best maximize land values while meeting City Council objectives …"[16] Escondido is taking a first step of many on its continuing road toward a new library. The Grand Jury encourages the City Council and the City Manager to continue their progress toward construction of a new library.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

Fact: The 2007 Escondido Mayor's New Library Task Force specified problems with the Escondido library and recommended the building of a new library.

Fact: In 2010, the Escondido Library Board of Trustees and the Escondido Library Endowment Foundation made a presentation to the City Council about the building of a new library.

Fact: Library statistics indicate a downward trend in total registered users, circulation, and public use of internet computers.

Fact: There is general agreement by City and Library officials that the present Escondido library facility does not meet the needs of the community.

Finding 01:   The Escondido library facility inadequately serves the community.

Fact: Data indicates a significant drop in the number of library programs since 2008/09, then a gradual increase.

Fact: Program attendance after a spike in 2011/12 declined significantly in 2012/13, and then gradually increased.

Finding 02:   The Escondido library's programs do not meet the community needs.

Fact: The Escondido library's operating income has remained relatively stable.

Fact: The Escondido library's operating income has exceeded operating expenditures in all but one year since 2008/09.

Fact: When library operating income exceeds operating expenditures the unused allocated portion remain in the City's general fund.

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[16] City of Escondido, Council Meeting Agenda, October 19, 2016, https://www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/agendas/Council/10-19-16CCAgendaPacket.pdf (accessed 10/27/2016).

Finding 03: Unused allocated funds from the Escondido Library operating budget are not used to benefit the library.

Fact: The Escondido library publishes brochures, ads, and press releases concerning Library programs and activities.

Fact: The Escondido library does not have a marketing plan.

Finding 04: An effective marketing plan is not being employed to attract more people to the library's resources, programs, and activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2016/2017 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the Escondido City Manager and Escondido City Council in conjunction with the Escondido Library Administration and interested civic organizations:

17-08: **Review methods of increasing the number of library programs by the end of the next budget cycle.**

17-09: **Consider creating a subcommittee to investigate methods of improving their marketing plan for the library by the end of the next budget cycle.**

The 2016/2017 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the Escondido City Manager and Escondido City Council:

17-10: **Investigate methods of dedicating, by the end of the next budget cycle, a portion of any excess funds from money allocated but not spent in the library budget to a special or existing fund to benefit the library.**

REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

The California Penal Code §933(c) requires any public agency which the Grand Jury has reviewed, and about which it has issued a final report, to comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the agency. Such comment shall be made *no later than 90 days* after the Grand Jury publishes its report (filed with the Clerk of the Court); except that in the case of a report containing findings and recommendations pertaining to a department or agency headed by an <u>elected </u>County official (e.g. District Attorney, Sheriff, etc.), such comment shall be made *within 60 days* to the Presiding Judge with an information copy sent to the Board of Supervisors.

Furthermore, California Penal Code §933.05(a), (b), (c), details, as follows, the manner in which such comment(s) are to be made:

    (a) As to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

        (1) The respondent agrees with the finding

(2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

(b) As to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

(1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

(2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.

(3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

(4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

(c) If a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the Board of Supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the Board of Supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

Comments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in compliance with the Penal Code §933.05 are required from the:

Responding Agency	Recommendations	Date
Escondido City Manager	**17-08 through 17-10**	**6/9/17**
Escondido City Council	**17-08 through 17-10**	**6/9/17**