

San Rafael Pickleweed Library

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Needs Assessment

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Appendix

2. Overall Executive Summary

San Rafael's Canal Library Center is located in the densely populated, multi-cultural and low-income Canal area community of more than 11,679 people. The library is one room of the 11,000 square foot Pickleweed Park Community Center (PCC) located within a seven acre developed park on a 17 acre piece of property. A recommendation for expansion of the PCC was presented to the City Council in August 2000, based on six public meetings, 16 outreach contacts with organizations and groups, and responses to a written survey. The City has authorized the expansion of the Community Center, including adding more space for library services. The findings herein validate the need for the 526 square foot Canal Library Center to mature into the 2,185 square foot San Rafael Pickleweed Library.

2.a. Narrative of Overall Findings

Why the Project Is Needed

Overall, the Canal area is characterized by high density, great cultural diversity, low school performance, high poverty, low literacy, low educational attainment, and a prevalence of other socioeconomic risk factors. Related demographics and findings include:

Population Density. The 2000 Census counted 11,679 people in the Canal area. This figure is anticipated to grow by 10% according to the Association of Bay Area Governments. At 526 square feet, the current library is too small to serve the current and growing population.

Cultural Diversity. According to the Marin County Consolidated General Plan, Marin City and the Canal area of San Rafael are areas of minority concentration, defined as Census tracts where the non-white percentage of the population is notably greater than the countywide percentage. Over 20 languages are spoken in the Canal area, according to the Canal Community Alliance. In the 1990 Census, 53% of Canal area residents were foreign born. The languages spoken at home were Spanish for 40.5% and Vietnamese for 5.2% of the population. Census data from 2000 shows that the Canal area is 70.1% Hispanic.

Educational Factors: Elementary school students in the Canal area are among the lowest achievers in the state according to 2001 California Department of Education Academic Performance Indexes. The Canal area's Bahia Vista Elementary School ranked in the lowest 30th percentile statewide, with an API of 598. San Pedro Elementary, serving a high number of Canal area children, ranked in the lowest 10th percentile in the state, with an API of 514. The state goal is a score of 800. The 1990 Census showed that 24.4% of Canal residents age 18 and over had less than a 9th grade education, a higher proportion than in California or the nation. The National Adult Literacy Survey of 1993 stated that 18% of San Rafael adults were at the lowest level of literacy. It appears a greater proportion of individuals from the Canal area contribute to this citywide low rate of literacy, based on a 2001 report by the Marin Literacy Program (MLP) that 44% of their participants are Canal area residents.

Economic Factors: According to the Marin County Consolidated Plan, the County has three areas of low-income concentration: Marin City, San Rafael's downtown area, and its Canal area. In the 1990 Census, the percent of persons below poverty level for the Canal area was 20%. This rate was considerably higher than the state or national levels of 12.5 % and 13.1%, respectively.

What Services Are Needed

The overall need is *to expand neighborhood-based library services in the Canal area to meet the needs of its community*. Specific expansion needs include:

- 1) Need to help children in the Canal area with school readiness and school success
- 2) Need to promote children's recreational reading, especially over the summer, so they do not lose skills they have gained during the school year
- 3) Need to meet the informational and recreational needs of adults in the Canal area
- 4) Need to provide bilingual library services in the Canal area, especially Spanish but also Vietnamese
- 5) Need to provide literacy training in the Canal area
- 6) Need to help close the digital divide for residents of the Canal area

How the Project Fits into the Rest of the Library Jurisdiction

The San Rafael Public Library serves a population of 54,400 people, with a circulation of 326,902 items in 2001. The City has the highest ratio of books to library area (8.66 books per square foot) among comparable cities in California. The circulating collection is housed mainly at the downtown San Rafael Public Library. In north San Rafael, the Marin County Free Library system serves the majority of residents. San Rafael also provides a reservation, pick-up and drop-off service at City Hall at a mall in north San Rafael.

Because of its size, the one-room Canal Library Center is home to only a small circulating and reference collection and provides limited programming and other services. Except for a small elementary school library, there are no other library services in the Canal area. Due to the fact that the Canal area is isolated from downtown by a lack of direct public transportation routes and the physical barriers of the Canal and Highway 101, most east San Rafael patrons do not use the downtown library.

Expanding the Canal area library is the next logical step in improving library and related services to local residents. This conclusion is based on the following:

- (1) Local government and citizens, even those living outside of the Canal area, feel the area needs a larger, enhanced library. This project is supported by the community's Pickleweed Advisory Board, the Library's Board of Trustees, the Friends of the Library, government officials, schools, and community groups.
- (2) The Canal area's demographic profile demonstrates a need for library and related services, many of which cannot be met by the existing facility.
- (3) Authorized through the 2001-03 City capital budget, steps for expanding the Pickleweed Community Center, including fundraising and building design, are already underway. Within this authorization, the City has allocated funds for expanding the Canal library, including matching funds for this grant.

3. Needs Assessment Methodology

3.a. Executive Summary

The City of San Rafael is committed to community-based governance. City leaders support activities that bring many people into the decision-making process. Findings of library needs, as well as support for improving the Canal area's library resources, was provided through citywide and area-specific information gathering efforts.

Who and How Many Were Involved

Individual residents, including non-library users and library users of all ages, community leaders, community organizations, special interest groups, local agencies, and schools were involved in the needs assessment for this project. Efforts were led by City staff, neighborhood residents, and a joint advisory group. The City-initiated Canal Voice efforts engaged over 300 individuals, families, community groups, neighborhood groups, businesses and others. In the WE CAN! effort, a small group of parents initiated a community-wide effort, involving several families, the library and other City departments and Bahia Vista school. Through the City and the Pickleweed Advisory Board needs assessment processes, over 1,200 San Rafael residents, including those in the Canal neighborhood, provided information. Key informant interviews involved the children's librarian; staff of the Canal Community Alliance, a 20-year old multiservice agency in the Canal neighborhood; and staff from Bahia Vista and San Pedro elementary schools.

How They Were Involved

Methods used to elicit community input included focus groups, community meetings, telephone and written surveys, key informant interviews, and the collection and analysis of archival data. Telephone interviews and written surveys were administered as part of an effort for the City to elicit residents' opinions on many issues as well as an effort to collect opinions about library needs. Written surveys were conducted as part of area- and library-specific information gathering efforts. Focus groups and community meetings were area-specific efforts led by City staff, local residents and the local advisory group. Key informant interviews and archival data research and analysis also focused on collecting information relevant to the expansion of the Pickleweed Park Community Center and the library.

3.b. Methodology Details

The types of people and groups and how they were involved are summarized in the table below. This is followed by a discussion of the different methods used to engage these parties.

Types of People and Groups and How They Were Involved

A range of people were involved in the needs assessment processes that resulted in the decision to plan for expanding the Canal area’s library resources.

Types of people and groups involved	How they were involved			
	Phone Surveys	Written Surveys	Focus Group/Community Meetings	Key Informant Interviews
Longtime and more recent residents	x	x	x	
Homeowners and renters	x	x	x	
Children and young adults			x	
Parents	x	x	x	
Senior citizens	x	x	x	
Business owners and employees		x	x	
Local business patrons		x	x	
European, Latino, African and Vietnamese heritages	x	x	x	x
Differently-abled individuals (deaf, blind, limited mobility)			x	
Low-income individuals and families	x	x	x	x
Community-based organizations			x	x
Government agencies and elected officials	x	x	x	x
Schools (elected officials and staff)	x	x	x	x

Method: Telephone and Written Surveys

Between 1999 and 2001, the City contracted with professional research firms to conduct telephone polls and analyze the results. Townsend, Raimundo, Besler, and Usher conducted telephone polls in February 1999 and February 2001 for the City. In May 2000, they conducted a poll on behalf of the San Rafael Public Library. J. Moore Methods tabulated all of the data.

The two city surveys took 17 to 20 minutes to complete. The Library’s survey (see Appendix) took 13 to 15 minutes. For each of the three surveys, 400 registered voters representing the geographic and demographic composition of the community were polled by telephone. All polls had a margin of error of plus or minus 5%.

In April 2000, the library put together an informal written survey (see Appendix) for patrons to complete on a voluntary, self-selected basis. During National Library Week, 210 individuals using the San Rafael Public Library completed the survey.

Method: Focus Groups and Community Meetings

The keys to involving people in the decision-making process in the Canal area proved to be active outreach, listening, and being responsive to diversity. When the City leaders were ready to focus on the problems of the Canal, they were faced with a challenge: eliciting input from people speaking a variety of languages, some with reservations about interacting with public officials, and many with no experience of civic involvement. Additionally, there were few organized community groups to aid in the process.

The Canal Voice

The Canal area of San Rafael had a history of problems and challenges that needed to be addressed, including crime, poverty, school crowding and lack of local resources. During the late 1990s, with the election of new city government officials and the involvement of influential local business and civic leaders, a concerted effort began to revitalize and enrich the Canal area. “The Canal Voice” document was the end result of a process the City initiated to elicit comments from Canal neighborhood residents. A series of meetings was conducted in fall 1996 and spring 1997. Small groups of friends, neighbors, and relatives met with facilitators and recorders to share concerns about their city, their neighborhoods, and their quality of life. The conversations were conducted in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The 31 sessions elicited nearly 2,000 comments from 303 participants. All comments were merged into one 75-page document sorted by topic. Even with the many other challenges facing area residents, the need for library services, homework support, and computer training were concerns.

The purpose of Canal Voice was to begin a dialogue about community development strategies in the neighborhood; to reach out to residents by providing a means for them to express their needs, wants, and concerns; and to make a difference in the community by involving residents in programs, projects, and services.

Groups represented included:

- Homeowners and renters
- Longtime and more recent residents
- Children from the two elementary schools
- Young adults from the middle and high schools
- Parents of elementary students
- Parents of middle and high school students
- Employees and business owners
- Those from European, Latino, African, and Vietnamese heritages
- Differently-abled individuals

The results of Canal Voice included:

- A description of the primary issues in the neighborhood.
- Agreement on initiatives to address those issues.
- Action-oriented partnerships to improve the quality of life in the community.

WE CAN!

People in the Canal neighborhood reacted to the City's attention through the Canal Voice process with new hope for change. A group of 10 women with young children got together to discuss how they could improve their children's educational and career prospects. In May 1997, with the assistance of the San Rafael Public Library's children's librarian, their group, WE CAN! completed a three-page document describing the priorities and needs for library services in the Canal area. The development of the original Canal Learning Center was prompted by the document this alliance produced (see Appendix).

Pickleweed Advisory Board

The Pickleweed Park Community Center has a community-based governance authority, the nine member Pickleweed Advisory Board (PWAB) established in 1982. The PWAB is representative of the Canal area's diversity and performs outreach to the community in Spanish, Vietnamese, and English. On behalf of local residents, PWAB advocates for needed services, many of which are related to the San Rafael Pickleweed Library's goals.

The Board receives frequent input about the community's needs and concerns during its monthly public meetings. Its individual members live and/or work in the area. By early 2000, it became evident to the PWAB that the Pickleweed Center had reached its capacity for use and needed to be expanded (*Pickleweed Center Expansion Report*, July 2000). The Board believed it was crucial to work with the community in assessing their priorities before making recommendations to the City about expansion. At two retreats in March 2000, the PWAB designed a community outreach process that combined the conversations approach of Canal Voice with a survey distributed throughout the community. Sensitive to the needs of the community, the PWAB ensured that the surveys were printed in Spanish, Vietnamese, and English.

Members of the PWAB and library staff also made presentations to small groups, including talks at the local school, outlining options and asking for input on service priorities for an expanded Community Center. They solicited community comments at four facilitated meetings held at Pickleweed Park Community Center in May and June of 2000. On July 11, the PWAB sponsored a Celebrations Meeting to present the results of the survey and other community input. The findings from these needs assessment efforts are described in Section 6 of this document.

Methods: Key Informant Interviews and Collection and Analysis of Archival Data

Key informant interviews evolved as a means to amplify and support the analysis of information collected through other means (focus groups, surveys, archival research). While not formally structured, impromptu and scheduled conversations were held with the San Rafael Public Library's Children's Librarian, staff at the Canal Library Center, officials at Bahia Vista Elementary School, the Supervisor of Pickleweed Park Community Center, and staff at the Canal Community Alliance. Included were conversations with the Project Management Team

spearheading the Community Center expansion, members of the Library Board of Trustees and the nonprofit Friends of the Library. Those most intimately involved are very aware of the problems arising from lack of space at the existing downtown library and the need for community-based library services in San Rafael's Canal area.

Facts and data were gathered from a number of local, regional, state and national sources, including the US Census, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), California Department of Education, newspapers, community agency informational materials, and electronic research databases. In addition to validating information gathered through other means, these sources helped identify and highlight what is unique about the San Rafael Canal area in relation to California and the U.S. while demonstrating the need for an expanded library in this neighborhood.

4. Community Analysis

4.a. Executive Summary

The interaction of various regulatory, oversight, operational and service delivery organizations within the service area is an important factor in the development of the San Rafael Pickleweed Library. The Pickleweed Library is part of the Pickleweed Park Community Center Expansion Project (Center and Library Expansion Project). The library will have dedicated space in the renovated and expanded community center. The library's expansion plans are being developed by an Expansion Project Management Team consisting of City of San Rafael Library, Recreation, Public Works and Planning staff along with members of the community-based Pickleweed Advisory Board. This team is working closely with one another and with consultants such as Group 4 Architects, the company that was contracted to produce this project's expansion designs. The Marin Literacy Program is also providing input on the project.

The Project Management Team must ensure that the development of the library and community center facilities are in compliance with government regulations and standards. It must also analyze community factors in order to create an expanded library that will best serve the Canal area from the date of its construction to 2020 and beyond.

The area's socio-demographic profile demonstrates a need for library and related services, many of which cannot be met by the existing facility. The most outstanding feature of the Canal area is its striking difference from the surrounding Marin County communities. Overall, the Canal area is characterized by a prevalence of socioeconomic risk factors, including: high density, great cultural diversity, high poverty, low school performance, low literacy rates, and low educational attainment. With a population density that is the equivalent of 25,000 people per square mile, it is an area of apartment buildings and other multi-unit rental housing and an island of low-income working families in a sea of wealth.

An Evolving Community

Historically, the Canal area has been a place for new beginnings. Apartment buildings in the area were first constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, serving young families saving for down payments on houses in the suburbs. Asian immigrants, mostly from Vietnam, settled in the Canal area during the 1970s. In the 1980s, Latinos from Central and South America began arriving, many fleeing war-torn countries. In recent years, this ethnic mix has been joined by Haitian refugees.

The Canal Community Alliance (CCA) is a 20-year old social service organization located in the heart of the Canal area. Their published statements discussing the history of and changes to the Canal area in 2001 said:

... When the Canal Community Alliance (CCA) started, the population in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael was primarily white and black. Then, Vietnamese people began arriving after the end of the Vietnam War. Not too far behind were Central Americans, fleeing wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Daily, clusters of immigrants arrived, almost all of them needing services and assistance in starting life in a new land...

The population ballooned and today, the Canal is the most densely populated area in Marin County. For the most part, the residents are low-income, working families from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The Canal has a more grounded group of residents now than 20

years ago. The Canal has grown into a bustling neighborhood of hard working families. Many refugees have stayed, married and are raising children in the neighborhood...

While the Canal neighborhood is an area of great need, it is also an area of great strengths. It is home to a vibrant mix of people who hope for a better future, and work for it. There is a strong sense of community, and there is great natural beauty close at hand. The wetlands between the park's soccer fields and the San Rafael Canal support a variety of wildlife. Providing open vistas across San Rafael Bay, the recently developed Shoreline Park is only a few steps away from the Pickleweed Park Community Center. In addition to the hills across the Canal, Marin's most famous landmark, Mt. Tamalpais, is visible from several viewpoints in the park.

The very best of the community comes together at the Pickleweed Community Center, the cultural, social, and civic center of the area. It is the ideal home for a library.

4.b. Factors that Affect the Plan of Service

Factors that affect the Plan of Service include the government agencies that regulate and influence what occurs in the service area, school agencies including the local elementary school and the school district, community organizations, and the demographics of the area. These factors are discussed below.

4.b.1. Government Agencies

The City of San Rafael has the primary influence over what takes place within its boundaries. The Marin County government, regional organizations and federal agencies also have an influence over development, particularly for projects that abut the San Francisco Bay as this one does. For the most part, however, these entities channel their influence through liaisons with city government. Therefore, we will focus this discussion on city-related agencies, with a few non-city entities discussed as well.

Background

Government agencies were involved in the various needs assessment activities as summarized in the chart in section 3.b. In August 2000, based on six public meetings, 16 outreach contacts with organizations and groups and responses to a written survey, City staff recommended expansion of the Pickleweed Park Community Center (PCC) to the City Council. City staff determined that the area has no other developable land for park, recreation, or library facilities. City project teams of Library, Community Services, Public Works and Planning staff worked closely with consultants and community advisory board members to analyze the current use and condition of the PCC and Library, and to make plans for expansion.

In April, the City Council held a study session and reviewed conceptual designs and funding strategies. A cost analysis was completed in May and the project team revised the plan based on the estimates. A new building configuration was devised and cost analysis conducted in June. The City Council then approved the final conceptual plan and cost estimate in August 2001.

San Rafael Public Library

The San Rafael Public Library is the lead agency in the development of the San Rafael Pickleweed Library. This City department will manage and operate the new Library. Vaughn Stratford, Library Director, is the Project Manager for the Library portion of the Center and Library Expansion Project. Key people involved are Vaughn Stratford, Library Director; Hollie Stanaland, Children's Librarian; and Mireya Renteria, Library Assistant. Library staff also attend meetings of the Pickleweed Advisory Board, the community-based advisory group for the Community Center.

San Rafael, Community Services Department

The Community Services Department (parks, recreation, and childcare) is at the forefront of the Center and Library Expansion Project. Community Services and Library Staff work closely with the architect to make required decisions regarding the Library expansion. Community Services staff also work with the Pickleweed Advisory Board.

Carlene McCart, Director of Community Services for the City of San Rafael, is the Project Manager for the non-library portion of the Center and Library Expansion Project. David Donery, is the Supervisor and day-to-day manager of the Pickleweed Park Community Center. Donery works closely with McCart and Library staff in making decisions about the Library facility and its relationship to other programs and services within the Center and Library Expansion Project.

San Rafael, Public Works Department

The City's Public Works Department brings technical expertise and support to the Project Management team. The Public Works Department supervises various consultants involved in the project and provided a parking and traffic analysis of the site. Public Works staff also provided valuable analysis of figures developed by a professional cost estimator. The key Public Works staff person is the Administrative Supervisor, Richard Landis.

San Rafael, Redevelopment Agency

The Redevelopment Agency is contributing \$1 million of the total cost of \$4.6 million for the Center and Library Expansion Project. The key Redevelopment Agency staff person is Stephanie Lovette, Economic Development Coordinator, who is overseeing the agency's involvement in this project.

San Rafael, Community Development Department

The Community Development Department is providing Ulla-Britt Jonsson, an experienced planner, to the City team working on the Center and Library Expansion Project.

County of Marin and City of San Rafael, Marin Literacy Program

From the start of the expansion project, the Marin Literacy Program has been a key partner with the Library in planning the scope of service and designing the use of space. The key staff person is Robin Levy, co-director of the Marin Literacy Program.

Canal Community Development Team

All of the City's actions are coordinated through the Canal Development Team. The Canal Development Team meets regularly to discuss programs and services to the Canal area. The Team includes all City Departments with programs in the Canal, non-profit organizations serving Canal residents, and representatives from the San Rafael School District.

MARINet

The mission of the Marin Automated Resources and Information Network (MARINet), a consortium of publicly funded libraries, is to enable members to share resources and use information technology to fulfill their missions of serving the public. The San Rafael Public Library participates in MARINet and its expanded Library in the Canal area will have a greater role in MARINet. MARINet participants are aware of the proposed Library expansion and have provided input and recommendations. MARINet members share an online library catalog through a contract with Innovative Interfaces Inc. of Emeryville, California.

4.b.2. School Agencies

School agencies were involved in the Center and Library Expansion Project through participation in the different needs assessment activities as summarized in the chart in section 3.b. Jocelyn Robertson, City Schools Librarian, is frequently consulted regarding school-age children's needs. Frank Gorman, former Principal of Bahia Vista school, has been involved in planning for library services needs in the Canal area. Wendy Feltham, Principal of San Pedro School, works with Hollie Stanaland, the Children's Librarian for the City of San Rafael. Staff from both Bahia Vista and San Pedro elementary schools were involved in the implementation of the original Canal Learning Center, which later became the Canal Library Center.

Schools serving the Canal area will further influence the Plan of Service by providing ongoing input at Pickleweed Advisory Board meetings and through discussions with members of the Center and Library Expansion Project. School entities will provide valuable feedback on how the Library should be structured in terms of collections, services and programming, school success, lifelong learning, and supporting school readiness for children and youth.

San Rafael has two public elementary school districts, the San Rafael Elementary School District and the Dixie School District (in north San Rafael). The City has two high schools, Terra Linda High and San Rafael High. The City also has several private schools, but none are in the Canal Library service area.

The San Rafael Elementary School District has seven elementary schools (grades K-5) and one middle school (6-8). The only San Rafael elementary school physically in the Canal neighborhood is Bahia Vista, which is far too small to meet community needs. Hence, many Canal neighborhood students must travel by school bus to attend San Pedro, Gallinas, Laurel Dell, and Coleman elementary schools.

The following list of schools includes those that serve Canal area students. These schools and their Canal area students will benefit from the proposed expanded library services. Except where noted, the source for the demographic data is San Rafael City School's *Demographics October, 2000* publication. With the exception of Laurel Dell, the schools listed have school libraries. All schools have adequate technology infrastructure. Service needs for schools are provided in Section 6 of this document.

- ***Bahia Vista Elementary School***

Located two blocks from the Pickleweed Park Community Center. 450 students:
76.2 % Hispanic, 10.9% Asian, 6.9% African American, 6% white

- ***San Pedro Elementary School***
Approximately 86% of the students are English Language Learners. 381 students:
93.2% Hispanic, 1.3% Asian, 2.1% African American, 3.4% white

- ***Gallinas Elementary School***
This is the only school with bilingual classroom instruction. 610 students:
46.4% Hispanic, 3.4% Asian, 4.1% African American, 45.4% white
21% of the students are from the Canal (*Marin Independent Journal*, 3/31/02.)

- ***Laurel Dell Elementary School***
A small school in a downtown neighborhood. 145 students:
60.7% Hispanic, 2.1% Asian, 12.4% African American, 24.1% white

- ***Coleman Elementary School***
Located in the upscale community surrounding Dominican University. 301 students:
39.9% Hispanic, 6.3% Asian, 9.6% African American, 43.5% white
19% of students come from the Canal area (ibid.)

- ***Davidson Middle School***
808 students: 43.2% Hispanic, 8.0% Asian, 1.6% African American, 46.3% white

- ***San Rafael High School***
955 students: 42.0% Hispanic, 9.0% Asian, 4.4% African American, 42.9% white

4.b.3 Community Organizations

Community organizations have also been involved in the needs assessment process, as summarized by the chart in section 3.b. Management staff from community organizations attend the Pickleweed Advisory Board meetings, and thus are able to add input about the Center and Library Expansion Plans on a regular basis. Management is also involved in participating in meetings about the overall revitalization plans for the Canal area, including plans for dealing with the high cost of living in San Rafael, getting affordable housing and improving transit options and school opportunities.

Community based organizations conduct services and programs at the Pickleweed Park Community Center, including services within the small Canal Library Center. The Community Center is home to social, recreational, cultural, educational and governing programs and activities sponsored by the City of San Rafael and 67 organizations and service providers. For example, the Canal Community Alliance provides English as a Second Language and Early Childhood Education classes. The following table lists some of the local organizations and programs that will benefit from the Library's expansion. Service needs for community agencies are provided in section 6 of this document.

Agencies and Services for Children and Teens

- Canal Child Care Center (Community Action Marin)
- Canal Community Alliance
- Canal Ministry Homework Group (elementary)
- Girl Scouts
- Kids Club
- Making Waves (tutors from a private high school)
- Marin Headstart
- Pickleweed Children's Center – Preschool (city operated)
- Pickleweed Children's Center – School Age (city operated)
- Soccer Academy (private recreation group with academic component)
- Teen Center (Canal Community Alliance)
- Teen Young Women's Club (for young mothers)

Agencies and Services for Adults and Families

- Teen Young Women's Club (for young mothers)
- Canal Ministry
- Canal Community Alliance
- ESL classes at Pickleweed Park Community Center (various organizations)
- Limited English Action Program (LEAP)
- Vietnamese American Friendship Association
- Marin Literacy Program
- Women's Club
- Women's Health Services

Pickleweed Advisory Board

The Pickleweed Park Advisory Board (PWAB) was formed in 1982, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of San Rafael and the Canal Community Alliance. It has been involved in the Center and Library Expansion Project since the beginning. The PWAB recommends to the City's Park and Recreation Commission on items affecting the Park including use of the Center's facilities; policies affecting the Center, and programs at the Center. The PWAB consists of up to nine members, five appointed by the Canal Community Alliance and four appointed by the City Parks and Recreation Commission. Canal residents constitute a majority of the members. The Board welcomes input from Canal neighbors, Library staff, and other community members. Meetings are held monthly. The Library's Plan of Service is subject to an advisory review by this entity.

4.b.4. Demographic Data and Analysis

The Canal service area is in the east residential portion of San Rafael. The area is bounded on the north by the San Rafael Canal and San Rafael Bay, on the South by East Francisco Boulevard and Bellam Boulevard, and on the west by Harbor Street. Census tract 06041112200 is used as the identifier for the "Canal area" in the majority of the demographic descriptions below. Much of the census tract is wetlands or zoned for commercial use, and 93% of the area's total population is concentrated within a few square blocks.

There are several key demographic factors that will influence the Library project. The table and discussion below summarizes these factors within the categories of population growth, diversity, education and economic factors. Within these categories we provide the demographic data required by the Proposition 14 Library Bond Act. *Some data is not yet available from the 2000 Census or other sources, including:*

- Year 2000 unemployment rates for the Canal area tract
- Literacy rates for 2000 in the Canal area
- Population by occupation after 1990 in the Canal tract
- Post-1993 poverty rates for the Canal tract

Demographic Data Table			
Indicator	Project Service Area	State	Nation
Population Density per square mile (Census 2000)	25,779	217	80
Percentage of Hispanic Origin (Census 2000)	70.1%	32.2%	12.5%
Percentage Asian (Census 2000)	8.4%	11.4%	3.8%
Percentage Foreign Born (1990 Census)	53%	22%	8%
Gender-Percent Male	56%	49%	49%
Gender- Percent Female	44%	51%	51%
Percent of Population Younger than 35 (Census 2000)	68%	52%	50%
Occupations (see table in text)			
Educational Level (1990 Census)			
Less than high school	33.7%	24.8%	24.6%
Less than ninth grade	24.4%	10.7%	9.4%
Academic Performance Index (CA State Dept. Education)			
Bahia Vista (in the Canal area)	598 (30%-ile)	Target=800+	N/A
San Pedro (students bused from Canal)	514 (10%-ile)		N/A
Population by Educational Level (see table in text)			
Literacy Rate in 1993 (National Adult Literacy Survey)	18% city	24%	21-23%
Poverty Rate in 1989 (1990 Census)	20%	12.5%	13.1%
Per Capita Income in 1989 (1990 Census)	\$13,130	\$16,409	\$14,420
Unemployment Rate March 2002 (California Employment Development Department)	5.0% city	6.5%	6.1%
Median Property Values, 2000 (City service area)	\$562,500 (home) \$270,000 (condo)	\$216,063 (2000 Supplement to US Census 1990)	\$166,000 (U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development)
Population in Renter Occupied Housing Units (Census 2000)	84%	42%	

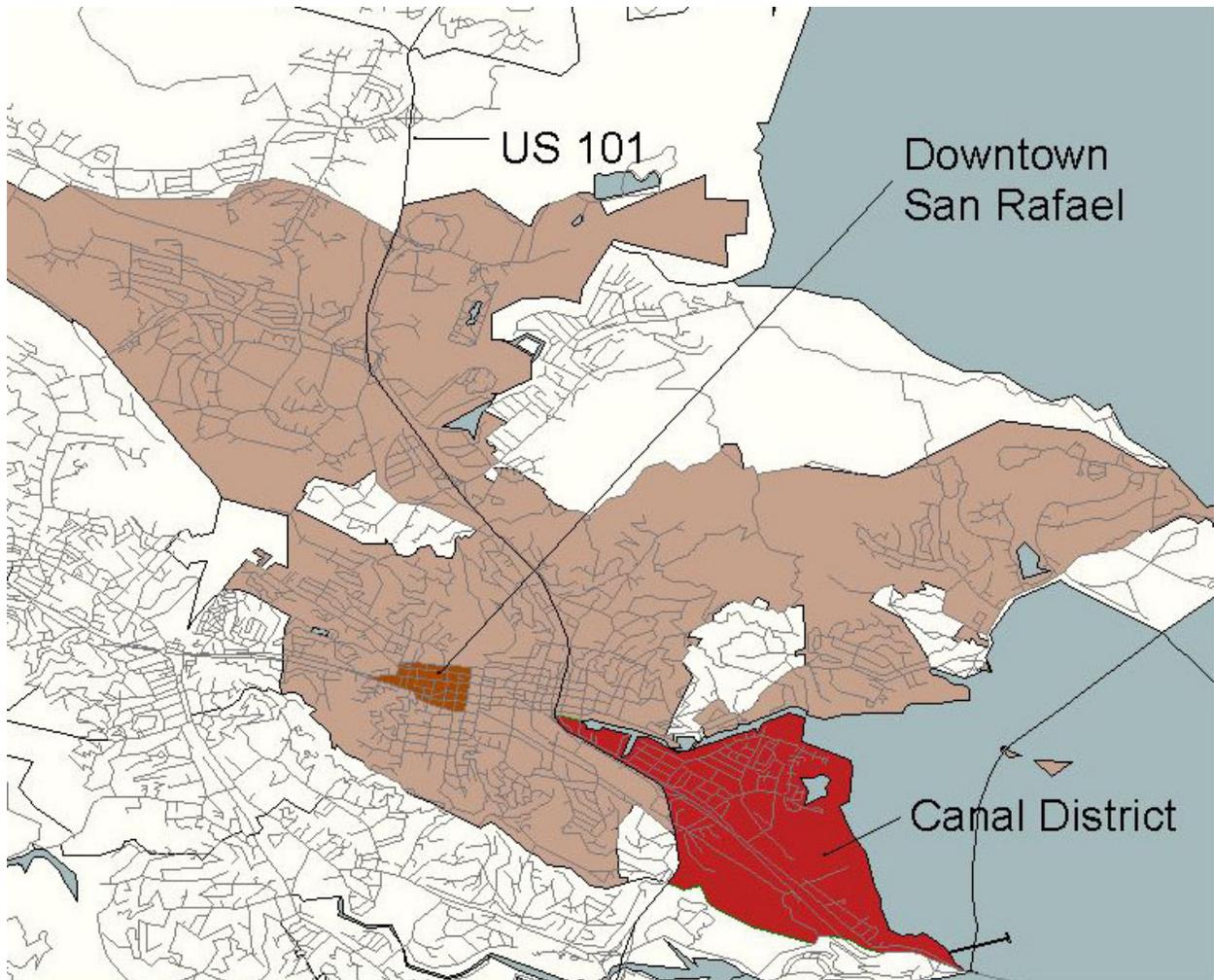
Except where noted otherwise, the service area demographics in the first column reflect data specifically regarding the service area Census tract 06041112200. In the narrative that follows, if Canal area data is not available we utilize the demographic information for local jurisdictions in which the project's census tract is located

Population Growth

In *Projections 2000*, the Association of Bay Area Governments predicts that the population of San Rafael will only grow 10% over the next 20 years, a slower rate than the rest of the Bay Area. Even with this slower growth rate, greater San Rafael will continue to be home for 27% of Marin County's population. The population in the Canal area is expected to stabilize in the 12,000 to 14,000 range, with limited growth anticipated due to the almost non-existent opportunities for housing development.

Due to natural boundaries and land use restrictions, housing in the Canal area is concentrated in a small neighborhood. The map below shows the Canal area census tract within the City of San Rafael. The subsequent chart and map establish population density at the equivalent of 25,000 people per square mile.

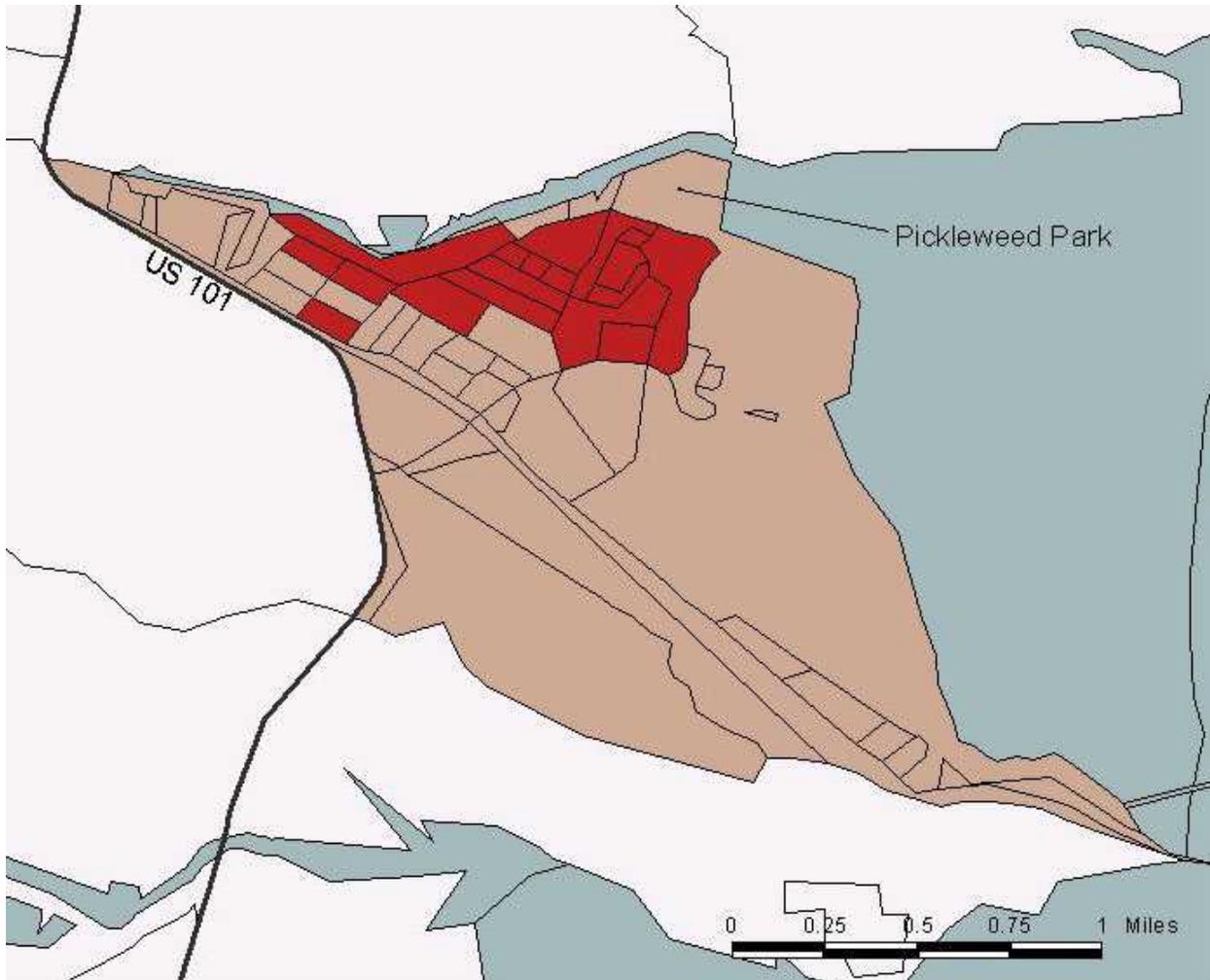
The Canal Area Census Tract within the City of San Rafael



Population Density, Census 2000					
Density per square mile of land					
	Population	Housing Units	Land area (sq. miles)	Population Density	Housing Density
U.S.	281,421,906	115,904,641	3,537,438	80	33
California	33,871,648	12,214,549	155,959	217	78
Marin County	247,289	104,990	519.80	476	202
San Rafael	56,063	22,948	16.6	3,377	1,382
Census Tract	11,679	3,053	1.68	6,952	1,817
Canal area*	10,827	2,613	.42 (est.)	25,770	6,221

NOTE: *The Canal area is estimated to be one-fourth of the total land area of the census tract 06041112200. See map below.
 SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (American FactFinder); GeoLytics Census CD 2000 Short Form Blocks; Association of Bay Area Governments (based on U.S. Census, PL94-171, DP-1 and SF1). Figures are rounded to nearest whole number. (See also Appendix, for population by Census blocks within tract 06041112200.)

Population Concentration within the Canal District



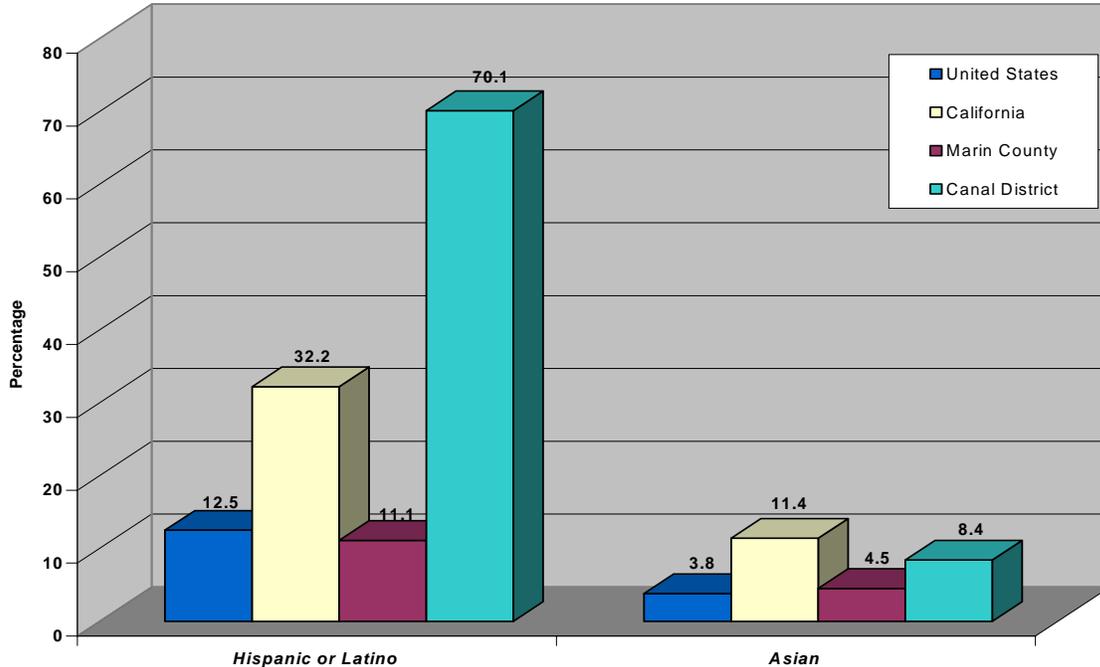
Diversity

Ethnicities. The Canal area is 70.1% Hispanic as compared with 32.2% for the state of California and 12.5% for the United States. The Hispanic population includes people from many different places of national origin. While the relative size of the Asian population in the Canal, 8.4%, is less than for California (11.4%), it is high for Marin County, which is 4.5% Asian. By race the Canal area breakdown from Census 2000 is: 43% white, 3% Black, 1% American Indian, 8% Asian, 36% “some other race,” and 7%, two or more races.

Hispanic or Asian Origin, Census 2000				
	U.S.	California	Marin County	Canal Census Tract
Total Population	273,643,274	33,051,894	247,289	11,679
Hispanic or Latino	34,334,480	10,653,560	27,351	8,192
Asian	10,418,131	3,763,844	11,078	977
% Hispanic	12.5%	32.2%	11.1%	70.1%
% Asian	3.8%	11.4%	4.5%	8.4%

Sources: U. S. Census Bureau, QT-01. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 for geographic areas United States and California; Association of Bay Area Governments based on U. S. Census, PL94-171 (March 2001).

Ethnic Origin Comparison



Country of Origin. Another striking difference in the Canal area is the high proportion of people who were foreign born. An article in the *Pacific Church News* (Feb/Mar 1999) characterizes the Canal area as having the largest immigrant community of any Marin city. In the Canal Census Tract, 53% were foreign born in contrast to 8% in the U.S. and 22% in California (Table 7, Appendix).

Languages Spoken at Home. The languages spoken at home in 1990 were Spanish for 40.5% and Vietnamese for 5.2% of the population, respectively (Table 8, Appendix). According to a 2000 U.S. Department of Transportation Environmental Impact Report on changing Highway 101, since the 1990 Census the nature of the neighborhood has changed and 24 languages are now spoken in the Canal area. (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/mrn101gapclosure/response.pdf>)

Gender Distribution. One of the most striking ways that the Canal area differs from both national and state norms is by gender distribution. While both the United States and California are 49% male and 51% female, the Canal area is 56% male and 44% female. The gender imbalance is especially pronounced for people aged 20 to 44, with 59% being male and only 41% female.

	United States		California		Canal Census Tract	
Male	133,551,361	49%	16,346,328	49%	6,565	56%
Female	140,091,913	51%	16,705,566	51%	5,114	44%

Age Distribution. The population in the Canal area is younger than the population as a whole in the United States or California. While half of the U.S. population and 52% of California's people are younger than 35 years old, in the Canal area, 68% are younger than 35. The big difference in the Canal is the concentration of people who are 20 to 34. The data from the following two tables was extracted from the 2000 U.S. Census.

Population 20-44 Years of Age- Census 2000			
	United States	California	Canal Census Tract
Total age 20-44	100,404,903	12,654,253	6,011
20-24 yrs.	6%	7%	12%
25-34 yrs.	14%	15%	25%
35-44 yrs.	16%	16%	14%
% of age 0 to 85+	36%	38%	51%

	United States	California	Canal Census Tract
Total Population	273,643,274	33,051,894	11,679
Under 5	7%	7%	9%
5-9 yrs.	8%	8%	8%
10-14 yrs.	8%	8%	6%
15-19 yrs.	7%	7%	8%
20-24 yrs.	6%	7%	12%
25-34 yrs.	14%	15%	25%
35-44 yrs.	16%	16%	14%
45-54 yrs.	14%	13%	9%
55-59 yrs.	5%	4%	3%
60-64 yrs.	4%	3%	2%
65-74 yrs.	7%	6%	2%
75-84 yrs.	4%	4%	1%
85 yrs. +	1%	1%	0%

Education

Education factors described below include the Academic Performance Indexes for the area schools, the level of education attainment for service area residents and the literacy rate. Collectively, in comparison with other areas of the city, the state and the nation, these factors demonstrate a relatively low level of school performance, educational attainment, and literacy.

California Academic Performance Index. In terms of statewide ranking, San Rafael schools range from San Pedro Elementary in the lowest percentile with a base score of 514 to Sun Valley Elementary in the top percentile with a base score of 853. The following table illustrates the 2001 Academic Performance Index Base Report for the high school, middle school, and seven elementary schools in the San Rafael City Schools District. The first five elementary schools serve a significant number of students who live in the Canal area; the other two are included for contrast.

	STAR 2001 % Tested	# of Students included in 2001 API	2001 API (BASE)	2001 State- wide Rank	2001 Similar Schools Rank	2001- 2002 Growth Target	2002 API Target
Public Schools Serving Canal Area Students							
High School							
San Rafael	95	644	633	5	2	8	641
Middle School							
Davidson	95	753	705	6	5	5	710
Elementary							
Bahia Vista	99	258	598	3	9	10	608
San Pedro	100	218	514	1	4	14	528
Gallinas	99	409	693	6	4	5	698
Laurel Dell	100	100	571	2	2	11	582
Coleman	100	181	729	7	7	4	733
Public Schools with Few Canal Area Students							
Glenwood	100	236	838	9	5	A	A
Sun Valley	100	230	853	10	3	A	A

The impact of students from the Canal area on San Rafael schools is significant and challenging for the District. The following information excerpted from a March 31, 2002, article in the *Marin Independent Journal* gives a snapshot of some of the issues arising related to the Canal area students' low API scores.

...Today, only a few children who live nearby are enrolled at San Pedro. The rest of the school's 220 students are bused from their homes [in the Canal area] several miles away. The students are mostly economically disadvantaged, have limited English-language skills and because of that do not score well on national standardized tests.

San Pedro – with an enrollment that is 92% Latino – had the lowest rank in Marin County on the state's Academic Performance Index. In addition, scores on the Stanford 9 annual test fell this year from last year...most of the white children who lived nearby were sent by their parents to private schools or the public Glenwood School...

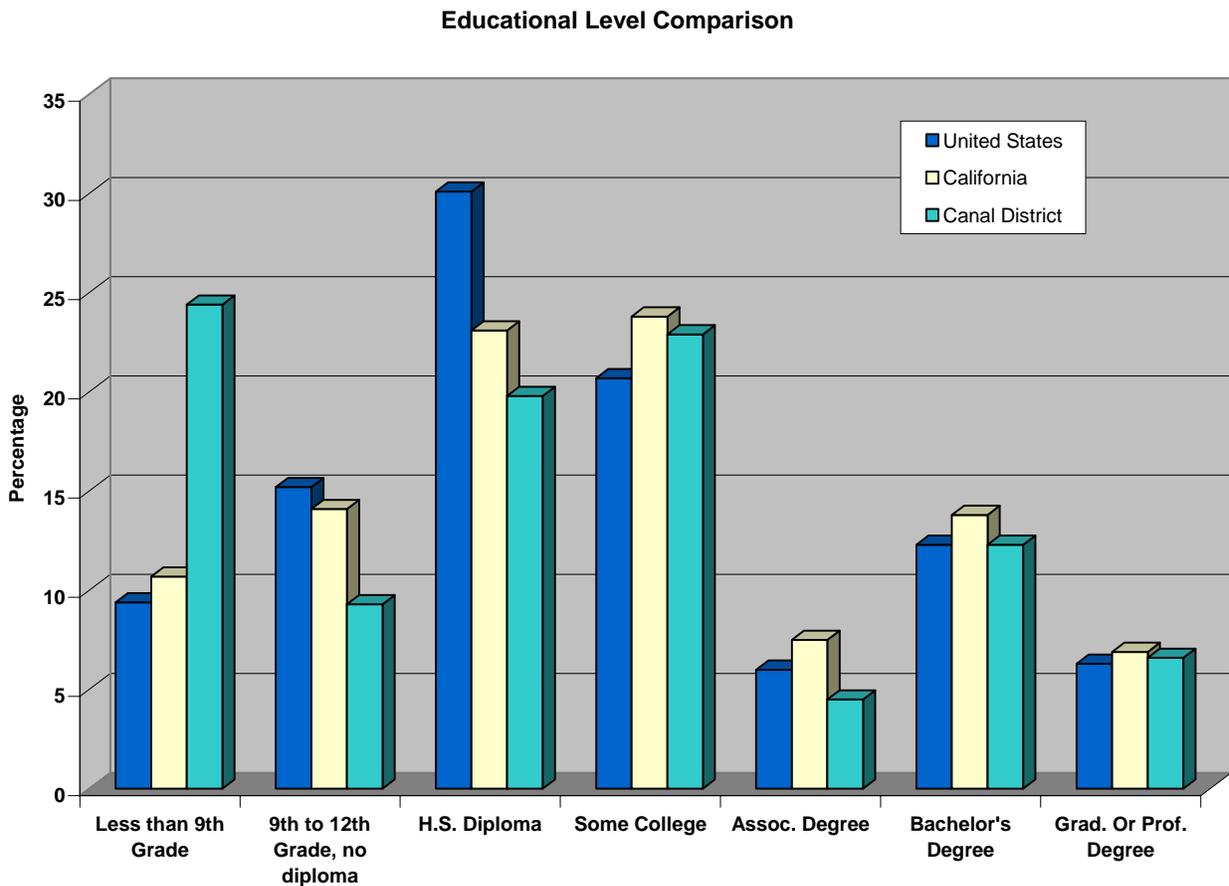
Those who once dreamed of a model of diversity are now proud of a school that is better known for turning Spanish-speaking children into English-proficient students within a few years of enrolling. Whether they start in kindergarten or in later grades as newcomers to the United States, the children have a difficult task before them and administrators say that even though standardized test do not show it, students are learning and progressing.

San Pedro's API score of 514 was well below the state target of 800 or better... The school ranks among the bottom statewide ... Meanwhile, Glenwood – only minutes away from San Pedro and drawing just 6 % of its 376 students from the Canal – is the San Rafael district's [second] highest performing elementary school.

...At Gallinas, 21% of the 574 students are from the Canal. At Coleman...19 % of 332 students live in the Canal. Sun Valley, where just 1% of students come from the Canal, is the only school in the district with fewer Canal students than Glenwood. All of the schools with significant percentages of English-language learners have devoted reading programs to bring children up to grade-appropriate reading levels as quickly as possible...

San Pedro's poor 2001 API ranking was not a surprise to school officials. Because Bahia Vista is filled to capacity, virtually all newcomers to the United States, most with limited or no English, are sent to San Pedro. In addition, Wendy Feltham, principal at San Pedro for the past seven years indicated that the significant number of new faculty in 2001 meant that many teachers did not yet have time to master the classroom and curriculum. According to Feltham, assessments in 2001 showed that many students were lagging below grade level, particularly because they were still struggling with English-language skills. In 2002, internal school testing indicates students are back on track and chances of improving their STAR performance are promising.

Population by Educational Level. Lacking much formal education, many Canal area residents have little hope of substantially improving their employment, income, or housing. However, they do have hope for their children to succeed in school and in life. The table illustrates 1990 U.S. Census data regarding Canal tract-specific population by educational level.



	US	California	Canal
Total universe (all ages)	248709873	29760021	8014
Total reported	185103329	22020542	6104
Less than 9th grade	9.40%	10.70%	24.40%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	15.20%	14.10%	9.30%
High school graduate	30.10%	23.10%	19.80%
Some college, no degree	20.70%	23.80%	22.90%
Associate degree	6.00%	7.50%	4.50%
Bachelor's degree	12.30%	13.80%	12.30%
Graduate or professional degree	6.30%	6.90%	6.60%
Total	100.00%	99.90%	99.80%
Of the total, those with:			
--Less than high school graduate	24.60%	24.80%	33.70%
--High school or more	75.40%	75.10%	66.10%

Literacy Rate. Many Canal residents demonstrate low literacy rates both in their native language and in English, according to the Marin Literacy Program. Much of the work of Marin Literacy Program is to improve participants' English as well as teach reading skills. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey conducted in 1993, 21 to 23% of adults in the United States are at Literacy Level 1, the lowest of the five levels of literacy. These adults, said to be "functionally illiterate," have difficulty with everyday tasks like completing bank deposit slips or reading bus schedules. "Literacy," according to the National Institute for Literacy in 1998, is defined as the ability to read, write and compute, and increasingly, to possess computer skills.

In 1993, the National Adult Literacy Survey found that 24% of California's adult population is at Literacy Level 1. In Marin County, the figure fell to 13% and the City of San Rafael was at 18%. Overall, Marin County has an affluent, well-educated populace. However, there are pockets of need in various locations within the County, most notably in the Canal area. That San Rafael has a higher percentage of adults at Literacy Level 1 than the county as a whole can be attributed in large part to the Canal area. Since 1985, the Marin Literacy Program has served more than 6,500 adult students with nearly 5,000 adult tutors. Some 85% of their students are second language learners, and 44% of the students in this countywide program come from the Canal area.

Economic Factors

According to the Marin County Consolidated Plan, the County has three areas of low-income concentration: Marin City, a predominantly African-American community, the San Rafael's downtown area, and its Canal area. The area has a greater poverty rate than Marin County as a whole, based on 1990 Census figures. It has a lower per capita income than other areas in Marin County. While median property values are high, few Canal area residents can afford a home – 84% of residents are in rental housing, compared to 42% for the state.

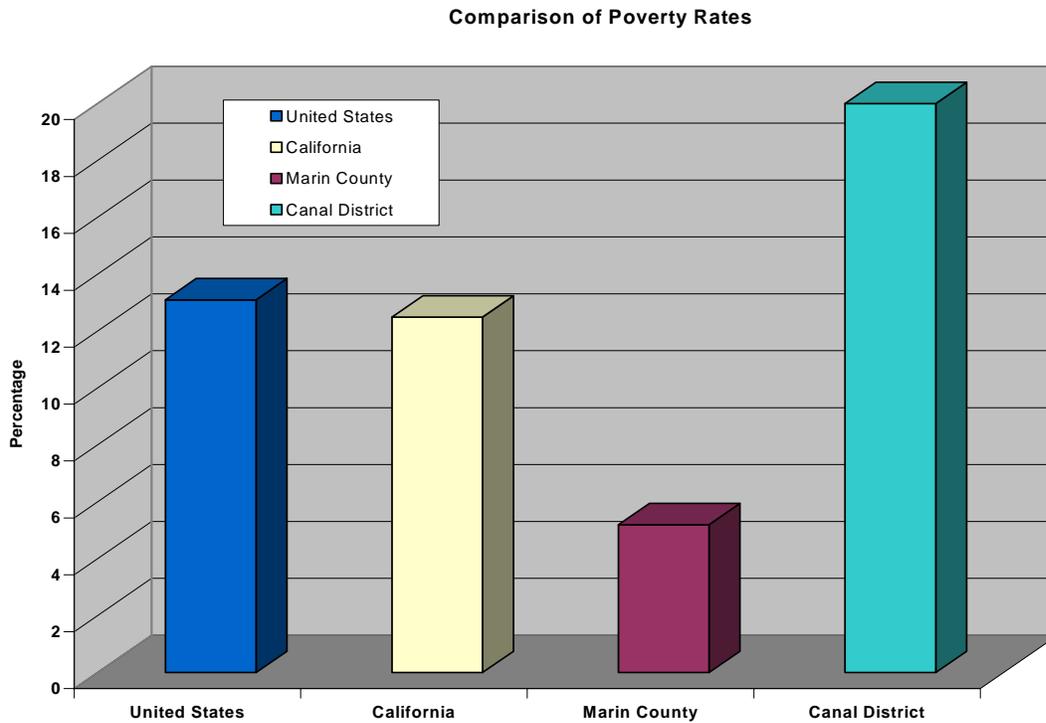
Poverty Rate. The area to be served by the Pickleweed Library is primarily composed of low-income, working families. There are a significant number of day laborers in the neighborhood as well, according to an April 2000 article in the *Coastal Post*. Within affluent Marin, the Canal neighborhood is a pocket of the working poor. In the 1990 Census, the percent of persons below

poverty level for the Canal area census tract was 20%. This rate was considerably higher than the national or state levels of 13.1% and 12.5 %.

Because the percent of persons below the poverty level increased for both California and Marin County between 1989 and 1993, as shown on the table below, it could extrapolated that the number increased in the Canal area as well.

Percent of Persons Below Poverty Level	1989	1993
California	12.5%	17.4%
Marin County	5.2%	6.4%
Canal Census Tract	20.0%	Data unavailable

Source: USA Counties, 1998, <http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org:80>



Per Capita Income. The per capita income figures for the Canal census tract are cited below. While still lower than the state and the nation, these figures may reflect the concentration of people of working age, and people working more than one job. The difference in per capita income may be more marked in the 2000 Census, which reached people in the Canal area who did not participate in the 1990 Census.

Per Capita Income in 1989	
United States	\$14,420
California	\$16,409
Canal Census Tract	\$13,130

Source: 1990 US Census Data, Databases C90STF3C1, C90STF3A

Population by Occupation. In the Canal area, the concentration of people in service occupations is compatible with the evidence of people working in jobs classified as unskilled labor, including childcare and restaurant work. There is also a higher percentage of people employed as handlers, helpers, and laborers in the Canal neighborhood in contrast to Marin County as a whole. The following table depicts occupation data for the Canal area, for California and for the nation.

Occupation, 1990 Census					
	US	California		Canal	
Executive, administrative, managerial	1,4227,916	1939417	13.80%	453	10.50%
Professional specialty	16,305,666	2057087	14.70%	426	9.90%
Technicians	4,257,235	527367	3.70%	110	2.50%
Sales	13,634,686	1690007	12.10%	410	9.50%
Administrative support, clerical	18,826,477	2319459	16.60%	456	10.60
Private household	521,154	95059	0.07%	94	2.20%
Protective service	1,992,852	235799	1.70%	38	0.09%
Service, except protective and household	12,781,911	1402919	10.00%	1000	23.20%
Farming, forestry, fishing	2,839,010	382369	2.70%	154	3.60%
Precision production, craft, repair	13,097,963	1548625	11.10%	518	12.00%
Machine operators, assemblers, inspectors	7,904,197	797300	5.70%	221	5.10%
Transportation and material moving	4,729,001	480057	3.40%	95	2.20%
Handlers, helpers, laborers	4,563,134	520844	3.70%	331	7.70%

Source: 1990 US Census Data, Databases C90STF3C1 and C90STF3A

Unemployment Rates. Unemployment rates for March 2002 were 6.1% for the U.S. as a whole, 6.5% for California, 3.6% for Marin County and 5.0% for San Rafael. While the unemployment rate may be relatively low in San Rafael, many local jobs are low-paying service jobs, as seen in the table above. According to the Marin County Consolidated Plan, job growth has significantly outpaced growth in the affordable housing supply. Persons working locally tend to commute from less expensive outlying areas.

Median Property Value. Marin County has one of the most expensive housing markets in California. Its desirability comes in large part from its proximity to San Francisco as well as its abundant natural beauty. Housing is also in demand due to limits on development such as traffic counts and preserved open space. The growth rate of housing in San Rafael over the past 10 years has been less than one percent a year, and is one of the slowest in the Bay Area. The slow rate of growth is projected to continue, as San Rafael has little remaining vacant land for new housing, according to a report prepared by the City for meetings in the Canal area (Summary of Options Regarding Rising Rents, 2001).

Median Property Value, 2000		
	Single Family Homes	Condominiums
San Rafael	\$562,500	\$270,000
Marin County	\$599,000	\$315,000

Source: John Childres, Assistant Assessor, Marin County Assessor, phone interview

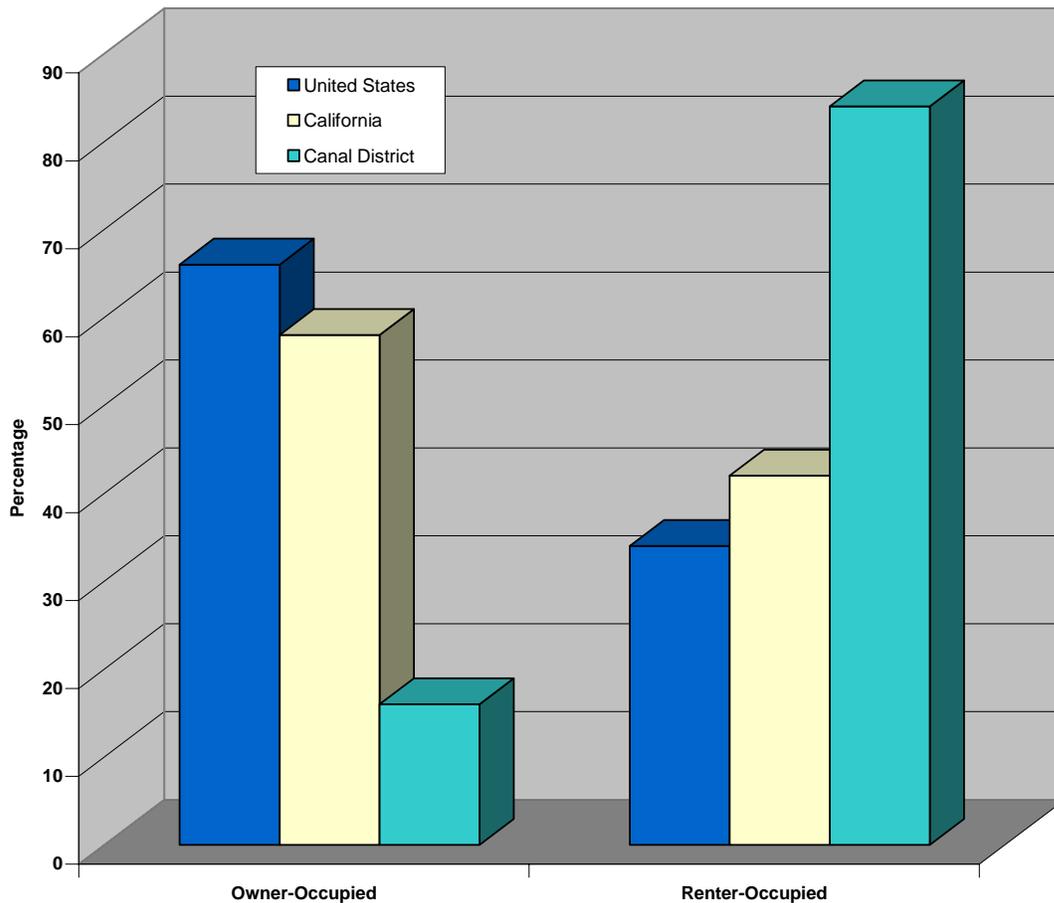
Home ownership is well beyond the reach of most Canal area residents as shown by the high percentage of renters. The value of property has the adverse affect in the Canal of causing high rents. The City is currently trying a program of voluntary rent control.

Total Population in Occupied Housing Units by Tenure, 2000	United States	%	California	%	Canal	%
Population in occupied housing units	105,408,101		33,051,984		11,542	
Population in occupied housing units: Owner occupied	69,815,753	66	19,203,261	58	1,824	16
Population in occupied housing units: Renter occupied	35,664,348	34	13,848,633	42	9,718	84

Source: GeoLytics CensusCD 2000 Short Form Blocks; U.S. Census 2000

Lack of Affordable Housing. Within Marin County, there is an affordable housing crisis. Affordable housing is that capable of being purchased or rented by a household with very low, low or moderate income, based on a household’s ability to make the necessary monthly payments, typically 25 to 33 percent of gross income.

Homeownership Comparison



According to the *Marin Countywide Plan 2002-2004*, this housing crisis is especially severe for the county's highest growing household types — younger households (under 34), senior households (65+), and special needs populations. Younger households comprise about 15% percent of all households and senior households comprise about 20% of all households in Marin County. More than 53% of younger households are low income or below, and about 44% of the senior households are low income or below.

A study conducted under the Marin Continuum of Housing and Services in 1999 found that 4,266 households equaling 11,090 people were at imminent risk of losing their homes in that year. Nearly half of the at-risk households were families with children. Over half of the at-risk households were working families, whose incomes averaged \$947 per month -- 20% of the median income and 31% of the "living wage" in Marin County.

According to a website on rental housing entitled "Marin and Sonoma Apartment Market Outlook 2002," Canal area rental rates are not dropping. The site states, "In San Rafael, where the majority of apartment complexes are located, rents have dropped an average of 8.5-10% with the exception of the Canal area, where rents are still increasing as demand continues." (<http://www.khiggins.com/newsletter.html>)

Overcrowded Housing. In 1994, Dr. Viorica Petrescu, a Romanian doctor doing an internship in Marin County, was asked how she experienced working in a very wealthy county, with pockets of poverty. She had this to say:

I saw many large and elegant homes. Then I made home visits with the public health nurse to the Canal community in San Rafael where a lot of the clients from the clinic live. I was surprised to see the over-crowded housing. Several women, each with several children, live in a two or three room flat. When they all gather in the evening, assuming they have husbands, there could be 15 to 18 people in a small flat. I saw poverty in these living conditions. (<http://www.holysmoke.org/sdhok/abo013.htm>.)

“Three families in a two-bedroom apartment is normal around here,” said a Canal Community Alliance member in a May 22, 2002, *San Francisco Chronicle* article. The article goes on to state, “The average Marin County renter is paying \$1,500-\$1,800 a month for a two- bedroom apartment.” By day, a majority of Canal area residents work as maids, gardeners and baby-sitters in an area with a median home price of \$600,000. Each night, many return to the crowded Canal district, where several families often share tiny apartments that command exorbitant rents.

Homelessness. The following excerpt from a November 12, 2001, article in the *Marin Independent Journal* gives a historical perspective of homelessness issues in Marin County. It includes a reference to the Canal area’s homeless shelter.

“In the mid-1970s, the homeless were barely visible in Marin.... By the mid-80s, young women joined the ranks of the homeless – single mothers with small kids but no housing. The feminization of poverty had begun; today, more than half of the homeless are families... But now, after two decades and a long string of stopgap measures, Marin homelessness has entered a new phase, and a new period of hope.

Hard work and commitment from hundreds of Marin residents has paid off in the opening of the New Beginnings Center at Hamilton Field, an 80-bed facility dedicated to helping people move from homelessness into productive society. Meanwhile, the Marin Housing Center, predecessor of the agency now called Homeward Bound, took over operation of the flophouse on Mission Avenue, which evolved into a family center, and opened a second shelter for individuals on Harbor Street in the Canal Area. Both are still active, though the Harbor Street facility now is known as Mill Street.”

According to agency literature, the Mill Street Center offers round-the-clock counseling, case management, and encourages job- and housing-related action plans. Mill Street Center serves 40 homeless individuals. Twenty-five men and 15 women share the facility and sleep in separate quarters. This center provides a safe clean and sober environment for people in need who would otherwise be on the street.

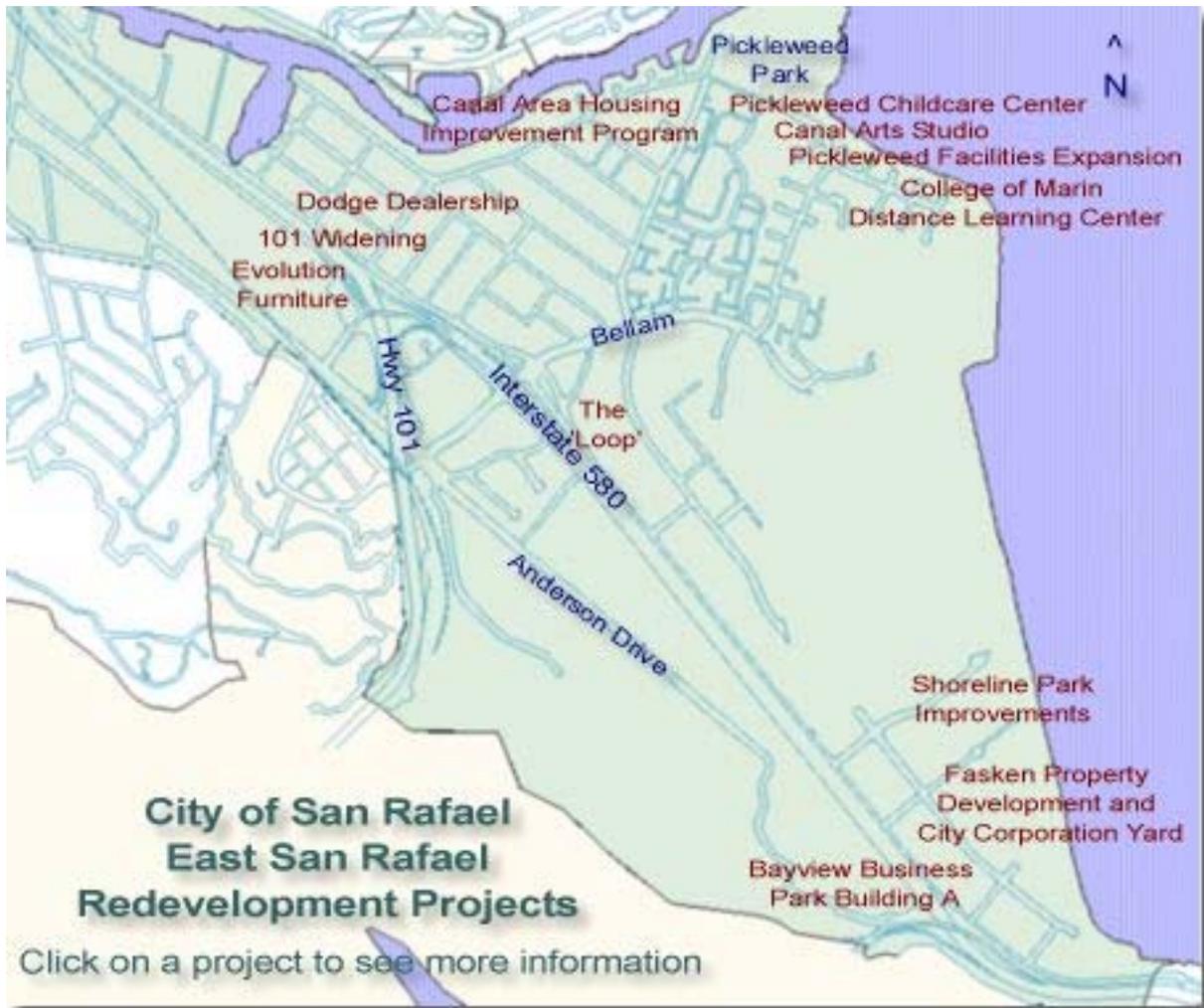
Other Economic Factors. The following “tidbits” help reinforce that the Canal area is economically challenged. This section is followed by a summary of some of the efforts the City of San Rafael has made to alleviate this situation and improve the neighborhood.

- The Healthy Marin Partnership conducted a Collaborative Community Assessment in 1997. The survey of 260 women living in the Canal District found that 47% had no health insurance.
- Federal Block Grant geographic target areas (for low income child care resources) are Marin City, West Marin, the Canal area of San Rafael, Miwok Village in Mill Valley and North Marin, according to the Marin Child Care Council.
- “A shortage of jobs is provoking cutthroat rivalry among immigrant day laborers in San Rafael’s Canal Area, where some [legal immigrants] are getting ahead by turning in their undocumented peers to the INS, authorities say.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, May 14, 1994)
- Marin seniors may not be able to find care workers to allow them to "age in place" because care workers can't afford to live in Marin, except in Marin City or the Canal area. (Rotary Club talk by Equal Access to Housing, January 15, 2002)
- ABAG calls the Canal area an “impoverished neighborhood,” defining this as “census tracts with 100 or more people with household income below 80% of the county median. In their “Projections 2020” report, the following table is provided.

Marin County	2000	2020
Total population:	247289	275400
Total households:	100650	111430
Total jobs	123510	150510
Average commute distance	16.0	16.5
Land area (square miles):	520	520
Protected open space (% total land):		51%
Impoverished Neighborhoods	Canal Area, San Rafael, Central San Rafael, Portion of Marin City, Portion of Novato	

(Source: Smart Growth Strategy Regional Livability Footprint Project Briefing Book, ABAG)

Redevelopment Efforts. The Canal neighborhood is a Targeted Neighborhood Improvement Area according to the San Rafael Redevelopment Agency, part of the City's Economic Development Department. (See map, following.)



Source: Redevelopment Agency, City of San Rafael, Last updated, Thursday, March 14, 2002

The amount of activity instituted by the City in this area is demonstrative of the great need for improvements. According to documentation provided by City staff on June 8, 2002, the list below is a summary of the City and Redevelopment Agency's expenditures and funding commitments specifically targeted to the Canal community.

□ **Economic Development Efforts (over \$3 million in capital commitments)**

- Funded business assistance program for small firms in the area
- Funded and implemented Mercado business start up training
- Implemented first phase of traffic improvements to assist in business development

- **Improvements in Public Safety (over \$100,000 spent in capital improvements)**
 - Initiated community-policing program to help apartment managers and business owners reduce opportunities for criminal activity on their property
 - Improved police beats and hours
 - Constructed and staffed neighborhood police office at Pickleweed Community Center
 - Hired more Spanish speaking police officers
 - Passed an ordinance to voluntarily reduce drinking and loitering on private property
 - Installed new outdoor lights at Pickleweed Community Center
 - Increased street lighting

- **Improvements in Housing (annual commitment over \$550,000)**
 - Implemented an aggressive code enforcement program for apartment buildings
 - Hired Spanish speaking code enforcement officer
 - Provided funds for apartment rehabilitation in exchange for affordable rents
 - Provided funds to help buy, rehabilitate and manage apartments to make rents affordable
 - Working with Marin Recycling Center and Conservation Corps to increase recycling in apartments and reduce overflowing dumpsters and blowing trash
 - Implemented tenant education and property management program

- **Increases in Programs at Pickleweed Community Center (annual commitment of approximately \$150,000 and capital commitments of over \$3 million)**
 - Revitalized the Pickleweed Advisory Board to increase community oversight
 - Committed partial funding for the expansion the Pickleweed Community Center
 - Provided funds for new playing fields
 - Installed new play equipment in the park
 - Approved funds for new outdoor bathrooms
 - Expanded Community Center hours
 - Eliminated rental charges for community serving classes and organizations
 - Reduced fees for other programs
 - Provide ongoing free and low cost programs for children and adults
 - Established a learning/literacy center with computer classes and internet access
 - Created a homework center and reading club for children
 - Funded College of Marin's distance learning center for adults
 - Established a mini branch library with book reservation system
 - Assisted Marin Arts Center in the establishment of the Canal Arts

- **Community Events (\$20,000 annually and \$10,000 in capital improvements)**
 - Initiated and fund a summer Mercado with food, entertainment and shopping
 - Provide support for Dia de los Muertos and associated activities
 - Provide public safety staff, equipment and decorations at events
 - Provide technical assistance for all community events
 - Increased information on Canal events and programs on the City's website

- **Improve in Quality of Life (over \$300,000 in capital improvements and over \$200,000 in annual commitments)**
 - Expanded the City's childcare facility
 - Subsidize childcare operations
 - Improved the Bay Trail along Shoreline Park
 - Doubled the number of sidewalk trashcans
 - Contracted for weekly hand sweeping of the streets through court diversion program
 - Installed new bus shelters and relocated bus shelters to safer locations
 - Received planning grant for improvements to Canal-Medway area infrastructure
 - Coordinated implementation of Baby Track immunization tracking program
 - Assisted in creation of Kaiser's Healthphone in English, Spanish and Vietnamese at Pickleweed Community Center
 - Provide CPR classes to the community

5. Analysis and Discussion of Community Characteristics

To understand San Rafael's Canal neighborhood in a modern context, it is important to have an understanding of its history. San Rafael was first established in 1817 as a small hospital-mission and the original settlement became a city in 1874. Throughout the 19th century, San Rafael supplied foods, hides, and tallow to San Francisco. The San Rafael Canal, located on the northwestern shoreline of the San Francisco Bay, was an important aspect of the trading activities, allowing access for ships picking up and dropping off supplies and merchandise. At the turn of the century, the Canal was becoming a gathering area for swimmers and recreational boaters (Stafford, 1999). It was dug out and widened in 1923.

Currently, San Rafael is the largest city in Marin County. The San Rafael central business district, industrial buildings, and dense residential areas surround the Canal, and today, the area is associated with a neighborhood unlike any other in Marin County. Demographics indicate that the isolated, yet densely populated neighborhood is the most ethnically diverse area in Marin County (Census 2000), with more than 11,700 people living in the 1.68 square mile census tract that includes the Canal neighborhood.

Housing ranges from slum-like conditions to quality waterfront homes, with the majority of residents being apartment dwellers. Apartment buildings were first built in the 1950s and 1960s, targeted toward young families saving for down payments on houses. After the Vietnam War, Asian immigrants, mostly from Vietnam, settled in the Canal neighborhood during the 1970s. In the 1980s, Latinos from Central and South America began arriving, many fleeing war-torn countries.

Population increases, combined with lack of new housing construction, resulted in severe overcrowding by 1990. At that time (February 12, 1990) the *Marin Independent Journal* reported, "In an unprecedented attempt to reduce overcrowding in San Rafael's Canal Area, city officials are considering an ordinance to limit the number of people living in each apartment. The new law would be directed at the neighborhood's many apartment buildings, where 10 or 12 people have been found living in small one- or two-bedroom units. Many of the Canal residents share space with uncles, cousins, brothers, friends – or even another family – because splitting rents is the only way they can afford them. In some apartments, tenants resort to sleeping in shifts when there aren't enough beds."

In the late 1990s, City leaders became more focused on alleviating the problems of the Canal, but they were faced with a challenge: eliciting input from people speaking a diversity of languages, some with reservations about interacting with public officials, and many with no experience of civic involvement. Additionally, there were few organized community groups to aid in the process. Under Mayor Albert Boro and strengthened by Canal advocates, City Council member Cyr Miller and new City Manager Rod Gould, the City Council decided to make the Canal a priority.

The City initiated a series of meetings leading to a document entitled, "The Canal Voice." The Canal Voice conversations were conducted in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese in the fall of 1996 and the spring of 1997. Small groups of friends, neighbors, and relatives met with facilitators and recorders to share their concerns. In 31 sessions, nearly 2,000 comments were gathered from 303 participants. The City of San Rafael responded to the community's greatest

concerns by locating a police substation and building inspector at the Pickleweed Park Community Center. The City is currently responding to the increased recreational and educational needs of the area's residents.

People in the Canal neighborhood reacted to the City's increased attention to their needs with new hope for change. The women with young children who formed the group WE CAN! is evidence of the neighborhood's growing involvement with community issues. One of the members, Deborah McCrea, recalled that the 10 WE CAN! women were intrigued to discover that their families represented eight different countries. The group's long-term goal was to establish public support for an east San Rafael public Library. Their short-term goal was to create a satellite library to function as an outreach center for the San Rafael Public Library.

These goals and planning became reality when the Canal Learning Center was established at the Pickleweed Park Community Center in the fall of 1997 and later upgraded to the Canal Library Center. However, the Center is so crowded and physical space is in so much demand that further expansion of space and collections is imperative.

At the same time the Library's planning efforts were underway, the Community Services Department accomplished its own outreach process to assess expansion of the Pickleweed Park Community Center. In the months following, the Library and Community Services Department worked together to devise a plan that responded to community needs. The two departments plan to share space in the renovated Pickleweed Park Community Center. In addition, they will collaborate on public programming and a computer center.

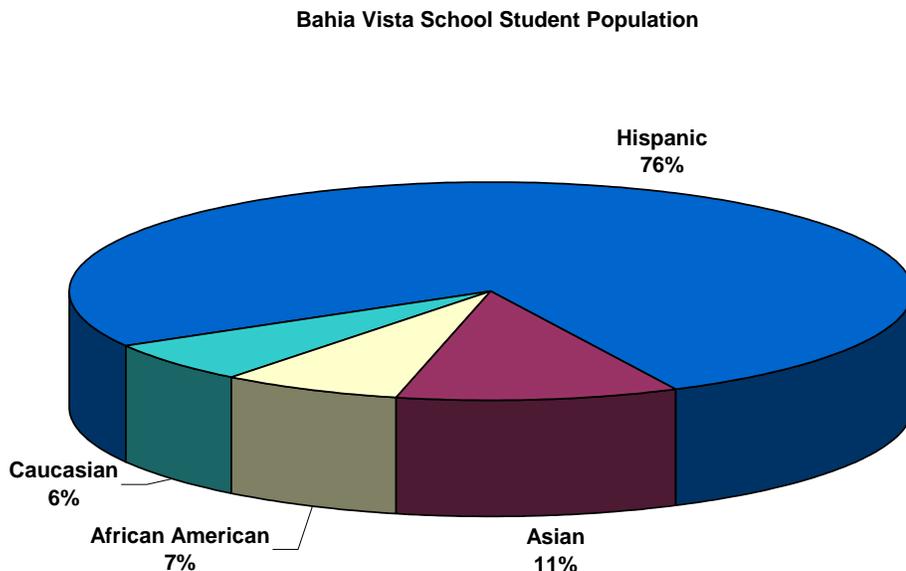
The 2000 Census reported that 11.1% of Marin County residents are Hispanic or Latino. The percentage jumps to 23.3% for the City of San Rafael, and in the Canal neighborhood, the figure leaps to 70.1%. Countywide, Asians comprise 4.5% of the population, while that figure is 8.4% in the Canal area. In response to the Census results and input from the community, the City Council approved hiring a full-time, bilingual, Spanish-speaking librarian. The City of San Rafael has demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of life in an area that once suffered from the benign neglect of the larger community. Library services are key to progress – *más que libros, más que nunca*. More than books, more than ever.

Two key organizations in the Canal area are the Canal Community Alliance and the Canal Ministry. These agencies offer assistance in job training, legal matters, citizenship, English language training, literacy programs, housing, and basic needs such as food and clothing. The Marin Institute and Marin Conservation Corps have provided career and educational opportunities to Canal residents over the years while contributing to the safety and beautification of the neighborhood. A collaboration between the Marin Institute and the Women's Health Services brought about the creation of Compañeras, a program that trained young mothers to be doulas and help pregnant women, many of whom found themselves alone in a strange culture where they could not understand the hospital environment during child deliveries. They were also involved in literacy programs and career-training opportunities that helped women earn their licenses to be childcare providers.

The people of the Canal are characterized as "low-income, working families from diverse ethnic backgrounds" by the Canal Community Alliance. The Alliance also states that "The Canal has a more grounded group of residents now than 20 years ago." Although there is a "grounded group"

of stable families living, working, and attending school in San Rafael, there is a steady influx of newcomers as well.

The impact of the Canal area is especially profound on the public school system. Bahia Vista Elementary, the local school, is filled to capacity. Data shows that Bahia Vista comprises 76.2% Hispanic children, while 10.9% are Asian, 6.9% are African American, and 6.0% are Caucasian. Newcomers are bused to San Pedro Elementary where 86% of the students are English language learners, and 93% are Hispanic, according to the District’s school descriptions.



While Marin County has an aging population, the Canal is youthful. Half of the U.S. population and 52% of California’s people are younger than 35 years old. In the Canal area, 68% are younger than 35, according to the 2000 Census. Significant percentages of the students at five of San Rafael’s seven elementary schools come from the Canal.

The numbers tell part of the story – high density, low literacy, high poverty, low educational attainment, high percentage of renters, low school performance. But what the numbers do not capture is the vibrancy and excitement of the area.

There are many neighborhoods in Marin County where one can drive for blocks without seeing a single human being. The Canal area, on the other hand, is teeming with activity – children and adults on bicycles, mothers pushing strollers with bags of groceries hanging from the handles, children playing soccer at Pickleweed Park, conversations going on in several languages simultaneously. It is an ideal environment for library services matched to the needs of the community.

“The new Canal Learning Center in San Rafael is a symbol of how government and communities are supposed to work together,” wrote *Independent Journal* reporter Zenaida A. Gonzales in November, 1997. The Canal Library Center will continue to serve a great need for education and recreation in the community as it evolves into the expanded San Rafael Pickleweed Library.

6. Analysis of Library Service Needs

6.a. Executive Summary

The following summarizes key Canal area library services needs and how they correspond to the needs assessment findings. Except where noted, the citations for these findings have been provided earlier in this document.

- ***Need to expand neighborhood-based library services in the Canal Area***

With only 526 square feet of library space, the Canal Library cannot serve the more than 11,000 people living in the area. Getting to the downtown San Rafael Public Library is not convenient for Canal area residents, even though it is only 2.6 miles away. San Rafael is home to half of the citizens in Marin County who do not own vehicles, with the Canal area having more bus riders than any other area in Marin County.¹ The bus ride can take up to 45 minutes, including transfer time. Even if people from the Canal neighborhood could get to the downtown library, that facility does not have the room to provide needed services to an expanded patron base.

- ***Need to help children in the Canal area with school readiness and school success.***

- ***Need to promote recreational reading for children in the Canal area.***

A majority of the Canal area residents live in crowded rental housing, thus many children lack places to do homework or quiet reading. WE CAN! identified the first priority for the Canal Library as providing academic support materials for students in grades 4 through 10, including homework support, basic skills training, and research capabilities. The second priority identified by WE CAN! is to encourage the enjoyment and habit of reading for children in preschool and through the middle grades. They specified a collection of picture books, easy readers, and books for reading aloud to children. API scores in two of the elementary schools serving the area are considerably lower than state averages. Encouraging the enjoyment and habit of reading for children is particularly important as is the need to reinforce the habit over the summer so children do not lose skills they have gained during the school year.

- ***Need to provide bilingual library services, especially Spanish and Vietnamese***

The Canal area is 70.1% Hispanic as compared with 32.2% for the state of California, according to the 2000 Census. The Vietnamese community is a smaller, well-established group in the area. In the 1990 Census, the home language was Spanish for 40.5% of persons five years and over, and 5.2% Vietnamese for the same age group. Current users of the Canal Library Center express the need for more books in Spanish, Vietnamese, and English, as well as bilingual materials. While the majority of Vietnamese children speak English, parents advocate for books to help them maintain their home language. Due to severe space constraints at the San Rafael Public Library, the Spanish collection is small – 30 shelf feet of Spanish books for adults.

¹ *Trends in San Rafael*, City of San Rafael Planning Department, August 21, 2000.

• ***Need to provide literacy training in the Canal area***

Within the countywide Marin Literacy Program, 44% of the participants reside in the Canal area. In the 1990 Census, 24.4% of Canal residents 18 and over had less than a ninth grade education, compared to 9.4% for the United States and 10.7% for California.

• ***Need to help close the digital divide for Canal area residents***

The number of home computers in the Canal area is estimated to be insufficient, due to the poverty rate as well as local interest in having computers in community settings. In the Pickleweed Advisory Board's community survey, the highest priority was given to "computer programs" as a service needed in the Pickleweed Center.

The following narrative will describe entities involved in the San Rafael Pickleweed Library Project as well as those whom will benefit from the Project. Based on current use of the Canal Library Center and other Needs Assessment data, the priority service and materials needs are:

1. Print and online collections to support school curriculum and information needs
2. Picture book collection
3. Homework center with tutors
4. Weekly preschool story time
5. Bilingual staff
6. Print, audio and video ESL materials
7. Recreational and informational materials for adults
8. Recreational reading
9. Summer Reading Program
10. Introduction to library services
11. Introduction to computers
12. Fiction and nonfiction collections in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese
13. Enrichment and entertainment programs
14. Meeting places

6.b. Findings of the Community Needs Assessment

The narrative below amplifies reasons why the Canal Library should expand to become the San Rafael Pickleweed Library. The data summarizes needs of schools, students, community organization and their clients. This is followed by a chronological description of the various needs assessment efforts. The section closes with a discussion of library staff's perspectives on library needs.

Service Needs of Schools and Students

According to a May 1999 Marin County Grand Jury report entitled, "Marin County Public School Libraries," within 19 school districts surveyed, 23% of the school libraries received no school district funding. Of those that did receive district funding, 73% reported that the funding had remained the same or actually decreased in the past five years.

The report goes on to indicate that most schools are lacking a credentialed librarian, even though such expertise is considered essential to the quality of a school library. School libraries are not replacing their collections frequently -- 80% of Marin County school libraries are replacing 5% or less of their collections each year. The study reports that California is listed as 51st in librarian to student ratio in a comparison with the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The dearth of school library resources is evident in the Canal area. The only school that is actually in the students' home neighborhood is Bahia Vista and its library is only open during school hours of operation – not evenings, weekends, or in the summers. The San Rafael City School District has one half-time librarian assisted by library clerks to serve six elementary schools and Davidson Middle School. This level of staffing limits her ability to conduct library instruction, programming, and collection development activities, according to Hollie Stanaland, San Rafael Public Library children's librarian. The proposed San Rafael Pickleweed Library will be able to provide homework support and library instruction for children when their school library is inaccessible as well as promote reading for fun through the Summer Reading Program and other programming.

According to key informant interviews with the Canal Library Center staff and the San Rafael Public Library's children's librarian, the elementary schools share these service needs for their students who live in the Canal neighborhood:

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Homework center with tutors
- Summer Reading Program
- Enrichment and entertainment programs
- School visits for library instruction
- Staff visits to classrooms to promote Summer Reading Program
- Staff outreach at parent group meetings for library card sign-ups
- Bilingual staff

The middle and high school students need:

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Summer Reading Program
- Homework center with tutors
- Meeting places
- Bilingual staff

Service Needs of Community Organizations and Their Clients

This list is based on actual experience as derived from key informant interviews with library staff at the Canal Library Center and the San Rafael Public Library. The list describes the needs for each of the community organizations in the Canal District and reflects the diversity of needs in the community:

—————Children and Teens

Canal Child Care Center (Community Action Marin)

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Summer Reading Program
- Homework center with tutors

Canal Ministry Elementary School Homework Group

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Summer Reading Program
- Homework center with tutors
- Enrichment and entertainment programs

Girl Scouts

- Recreational reading space and materials
- Meeting place

Kids Club (no-cost after school program at Pickleweed Park Community Center)

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Summer Reading Program
- Homework center with tutors
- Enrichment and entertainment programs

Making Waves (tutors from a private high school)

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Summer Reading Program
- Homework center with tutors
- Meeting place

Marin Headstart

- Picture book collection
- Weekly preschool story time
- Bilingual staff

Pickleweed Children’s Center – Preschool (city operated)

- Picture book collection
- Weekly preschool storytime

Pickleweed Children’s Center – School Age (city operated)

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Summer Reading Program
- Enrichment and entertainment programs
- Homework center with tutors
- Meeting place

Soccer Academy (private recreation group with academic component)

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum
- Recreational reading space and materials
- Summer Reading Program
- Homework center with tutors
- Enrichment and entertainment programs
- Bilingual staff

Teen Center (Canal Community Alliance)

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum and information needs
- Recreational reading space and materials

Teen Young Women’s Club (for young mothers)

- Print and online collections to support school curriculum and information needs

- Recreational reading space and materials

—————*Adults*

Canal Ministry

- Introduction to library services
- Introduction to computers, including word processing and the Internet

ESL classes at Pickleweed Park Community Center (various organizations)

- Introduction to library services
- Print, audio and video ESL materials
- Meeting place
- Bilingual staff

Limited English Action Program (LEAP)

- Introduction to library services
- Print, audio and video ESL materials
- Meeting place
- Bilingual staff

Marin Literacy Program

- Introduction to library services
- Introduction to computers, including word processing and the Internet
- Meeting place
- Bilingual staff

Vietnamese American Friendship Association

- Fiction and nonfiction collections in Vietnamese
- Print, audio and video ESL materials
- Meeting place

WIC Program (Marin County Department of Health and Human Services)

- Introduction to library services
- Materials for recreational and informational needs
- Meeting Place
- Bilingual staff

Women's Club

- Introduction to library services
- Materials for recreational and informational needs

- Meeting place

Women's Health Services

- Introduction to library services
- Materials for recreational and informational needs
- Outreach
- Bilingual staff

Chronological Summary of Needs Assessment Efforts

The following section provides details of the findings of needs assessment activities that took place between 1996 and 2002. Many of these findings were summarized in earlier sections of this document.

The Canal Voice Findings. The Canal Voice process involved 303 residents in 31 facilitated sessions that elicited nearly 2,000 comments about issues and concerns in the neighborhood. As a result of this process, trends became clear. Residents were eager to improve safety in homes and on the streets, increase opportunities for recreation, and initiate and support community development efforts to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. The City responded positively with added code enforcement, neighborhood cleanup efforts, and an office for a police officer and code enforcement officer at the Pickleweed Park Community Center. Pickleweed Park Community Center's hours of operation were increased and the Canal Learning Center was opened.

WE CAN! (Women Educators of the Canal). Anita Wah, who led the action committee WE CAN! describes the genesis of the Canal-based group by saying: "We were just a group of people who really wanted to bring educational issues into the community." At the time, Ms. Wah was working for the Canal Ministry where she helped start a story hour and after school program enthusiastically supported by parents. The Canal Ministry organized a field trip to transport parents and children to the San Rafael Public Library. The children's librarian introduced the visitors to the Library, presented a puppet show, and read a story. This was the catalyst for the inception of WE CAN! The parents were overwhelmed. At that point, they knew they wanted a library presence in the Canal neighborhood. "Instead of relying on charity, we wanted to take our place in the public life of the city," said Ms. Wah.

The document produced by WE CAN! served as an initial blueprint for the Canal Learning Center project. WE CAN! articulated their goals as follows:

- Our long-term goal is to establish interest in and demand for a branch library in east San Rafael. A branch library in this neighborhood would be within walking distance of 25% of the San Rafael population.
- Our short-term goal is to create a library "satellite" as an outreach center for the San Rafael Public Library. It will serve as a bridge to the San Rafael Public Library, creating interest in the downtown library and providing information about how to use it. The Pickleweed Library will help the neighborhood get into the "library habit."

The group's long-term goal will remain unrealized with this present proposal. Due to space

constraints and community needs assessment, the plan of service emphasizes a homework center and Computer center over traditional branch library services. At the outset, WE CAN! service priorities underestimated future needs for computer access. This is not surprising as public Internet access was not available in most area libraries at the time, including San Rafael. These are the priorities they identified:

- The first priority is to provide materials for academic support (homework, basic skills, research information) for students in grades 4 through 10. Since this will largely be a non-circulating collection, we will choose research materials suitable for in-library use.
- The second priority is to encourage the enjoyment and habit of reading for children in preschool and through the middle grades through increased staffing and outreach.
- The third priority is to provide a place for seniors to gather to read newspapers or magazines in their own language. [In the Pickleweed Park Community Center and Library Expansion plan, this function will be served in a lounge area separate from the Library.]

Initially, WE CAN! thought that volunteers could be recruited and trained to staff the facility. This did not prove to be practical given the high rate of employment among Canal residents, including many individuals working more than one job. People simply did not have the time. Though not slated to provide staffing, the Marin Literacy Program was able to provide assistance in the homework resource center and supervision of computer instruction for one evening a week. Children's librarian Hollie Stanaland spends one morning a week at Pickleweed to present storyhour and oversee the program. In the City's 1999-2001 budget cycle, the Library was able to create a 20-hour per week position for a library assistant to staff the Canal Learning/Library Center. Mireya Renteria has been in that position since July 1999, and Ms. Stanaland continues her Monday morning commitment.

WE CAN! was a grassroots effort in the truest sense. The group was undoubtedly responsible for getting the City to develop the Canal Learning Center in response to their assessment of a community need. Their timing was critical, coming on the heels of the Canal Voice process when City leadership was focused on efforts to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. Ms. Wah says that with the new City Manager and a fresh sense of openness from the City, her group felt that anything was possible.

Citywide Customer Satisfaction Polls. The City of San Rafael contracted for professional telephone polls in February 1999 and February 2001. Results from these polls show that voters consider library services to be important, and are satisfied with how elected officials are handling the library. To provide some context, the results below include three city issues and respondent ratings. Offering library services was deemed "very important" to 77% of respondents in 2001 and 79% in 1999.

Do you consider [one of 43 variables] to be a very, somewhat, or not too important issue in San Rafael?

	Library Services		Police Protection		Street Maintenance	
	1999	2001	1999	2001	1999	2001
Very important	79%	77%	87%	90%	75%	76%
Somewhat important	16%	17%	10%	8%	22%	21%
Not too important	4%	5%	2%	1%	2%	2%

Among the 43 variables on this question, the range of “very important” was from 31% on “providing community events” (in 2001, down from 39% in 1999) to 95% on “providing fire and paramedic services” (in 1999 and 2001). The range on “not too important” was from a low of 1% to a high of 34%. Three variables were considered “not too important” by more than a quarter of the respondents: providing sufficient cable TV options at a reasonable cost (34%), providing community events (29%), and allowing second dwelling units on parcels (27%).

Are you satisfied with how elected officials are handling this issue?

	Library Services		Police Protection		Street Maintenance	
	1999	2001	1999	2001	1999	2001
Satisfied	81%	81%	87%	91%	56%	68%
Dissatisfied	13%	14%	10%	5%	41%	29%

Among the 43 variables on this question, the range of “satisfied” was from a low of 30% on “the high cost of housing” in 2001, and “providing youth and teen services” (30% in 1999, improving to 42% satisfied in 2001) to a high of 91% on “providing police protection” in 2001. Dissatisfaction with elected officials ranged from 3% on “providing fire and paramedic services” in 2001 to 62% on “managing traffic” in 1999. From the point of view of elected officials, the community is satisfied with the library. A third telephone poll, exclusively on library services, was conducted in May 2000. Across all three professional polls -- two citywide, one library specific -- satisfaction with the library was at 81%. The library poll asked, “Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with how the San Rafael Public Library is performing their job?”

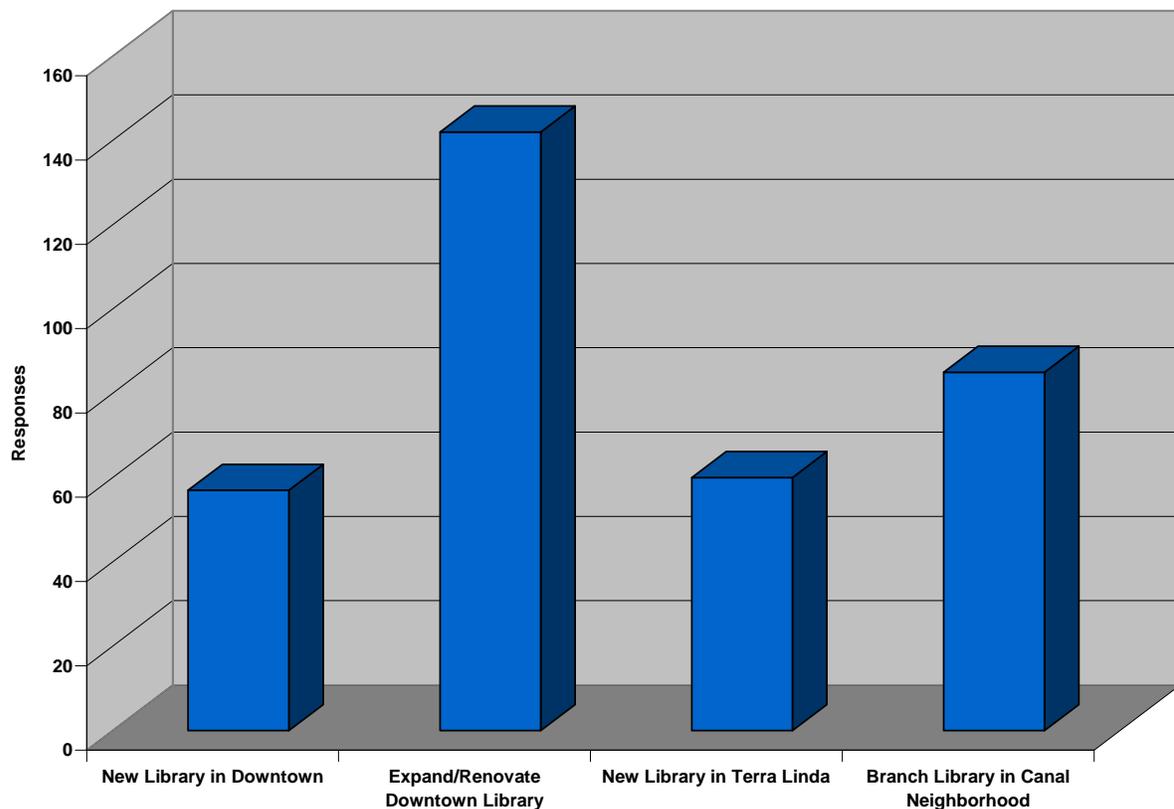
From the library staff’s point of view, this high customer satisfaction presents a dilemma. The staff works hard to provide outstanding customer service under adverse conditions, and the patrons are satisfied. San Rafael Public Library has long emphasized collection development, which, along with staff service, has kept circulation high. However, the library’s collection has more than twice as many items per square foot than comparable California libraries, which leads to potentially hazardous conditions, limited seating and lack of room for public computer stations.

Even if people from the Canal neighborhood could overcome transportation issues to get to the downtown library, at 14,000 square feet, there is no room to provide the services they need. Due to severe space constraints, the Spanish collection at the downtown library is small – 30 shelf feet of Spanish books for adults and 63 shelf feet of Spanish books for children. The library has

two small outlets: City Hall at the Mall in north San Rafael, used only as a pick-up and drop-off point for reserved materials by 50 to 75 people, and the Canal Library Center.

Library User Survey Findings. In April 2000, the library put together an informal user survey that was available in the library during National Library Week. When asked, “What would you support to improve library service in San Rafael?” responses of 210 survey respondents, were as follows:

- Constructing a new library in downtown San Rafael (57 responses)
- Expanding and renovating the existing downtown library (142 responses)
- Building a new library in Terra Linda. [north San Rafael] (60 responses)
- Opening a branch library in the Canal neighborhood. [east San Rafael] (85 responses)



It was anticipated that library users would want to expand the downtown library — the strong support for opening a branch library in the Canal neighborhood was surprising. The library survey was administered to patrons of the downtown library. Since only a small number of Canal area residents use the downtown library, it is highly unlikely many of them were among the 85 respondents supporting a Canal neighborhood library. This result speaks to a growing citywide commitment to improve the quality of life in the Canal neighborhood. One respondent commented, “People in the Canal have less available transportation and community services than Terra Linda where people usually have cars and/or access to other community services and the Civic Center Library [a branch of Marin County Free Library].”

Among 10 service options, the top four “vote getters” were:

- Expanded Children’s Room with space for story times and class visits. (118 responses)
- Technology Center with Internet stations, and laptop hookups. (108 responses)
- Homework Center to help children succeed in school. (108 responses)
- Small study rooms for use by literacy tutors and students and other tutors. (105 responses)

The library’s informal user survey preceded a more in-depth effort and generated similar results in areas where the questions coincided. The library survey was a user survey, whereas the professional survey was a sampling of the community as a whole. However, 71% of respondents to the phone survey had visited a public library in the past 12 months.

Citywide Library Interest Survey. In between the two citywide surveys, in May 2000, the library engaged the services of professional pollsters Townsend, Raimundo, Besler, and Usher to determine community support for library tax options. Four hundred registered voters representing the geographic and demographic makeup of the community were polled by telephone, with a survey requiring 13 to 15 minutes to complete. The survey provided information on:

- Use of the library
- Use of the Internet
- Priorities for library service
- Satisfaction with the library, the City, and the schools

The community’s top five priorities for library service, based on a combination of high and medium priority responses, were:

- 93%: Purchasing new books and other print material
- 88%: Providing story hours and programs for children
- 82%: Offering literacy tutoring at the library
- 80%: Providing a technology center where staff help people with the Internet
- **76%: Providing a branch library in the Canal neighborhood**

Using the raw survey data, J. Moore Methods, Inc. prepared cross-tabulations of the complete data set on a variety of demographic and library use criteria. Two of the more interesting analyses relevant to the Pickleweed library project are the cross-tabulations by age and zip code. Before looking at those data, some general outcomes provide a backdrop for the discussion.

The community is unlikely to support a measure to increase local taxes to expand or renovate the current library or to construct a new library.

While 68% of the respondents in the community survey said they were willing to increase taxes to support improved library services, when asked if they would support any of several different methods of taxation to pay for library improvements, the support decreased significantly, as the number who were strongly opposed increased.

San Rafael residents are very satisfied with the San Rafael Public Library.

81% of the respondents to the community survey said that they were generally satisfied with the San Rafael Public Library. This compares with 63% who were satisfied with the City Council, and 42% who were satisfied with the school district.

San Rafael residents are big users of the public library.

71% of the respondents to the community survey had used a public library in the last year.

San Rafael residents are big users of the Internet.

At the time of the survey, May 2000, 76% of the respondents had home computers and 69% used the Internet daily.

San Rafael residents are well educated.

68% of the community survey respondents were college graduates. Of those, 35% had post-graduate training.

The City of San Rafael comprises three distinct areas: Central San Rafael which includes downtown; east San Rafael which includes the Canal neighborhood and about 20% of the City's population; and north San Rafael which includes Terra Linda and about 30% of the City's population. Both north and east San Rafael are isolated from downtown by lack of public transportation and by physical barriers -- Highway 101 in the case of east San Rafael and Puerto Suelo Hill in the case of north San Rafael. North San Rafael is also bisected by Highway 101, with the majority of the homes and population to the west of the highway. The area is primarily served by the Civic Center Library, part of the Marin County Free Library. However, the Civic Center Library is on the east side of Highway 101 and has other accessibility issues, including its location on the fourth floor of the Marin County Civic Center. While east and central San Rafael share the same zip code, 94901, north San Rafael has its own zip code, 94903.

When asked if they had visited a public library in the previous year, 74% of those surveyed in zip code 94901 (east and central San Rafael), said, "yes" as did 67% of respondents in north San Rafael. Those surveyed were also asked, "How often have you been to the public library in downtown San Rafael in the last twelve months?" Of respondents in zip code 94901 only 6% said "not at all," compared to 35% of north San Rafael people surveyed giving this response. The respondents were also asked how often they had been to the public library at the Marin Civic Center in the past 12 months. Not surprisingly, with good access to the downtown San Rafael library, 56% in zip code 94901 had not been to the Civic Center Library at all in the previous year. Only 18% of those in zip code 94903 -- respondents from north San Rafael -- had not been to the Civic Center Library.

When asked to rate the priority of providing a branch library in Terra Linda, 37% in zip code 94901 stated that this was a “high priority,” 30% said, “medium” and 28% said, “low.” In the 94903 area, 50% rated the priority of a Terra Linda branch library as “high,” 15% said “medium,” and 32% rated this as a low priority (Table 1, Appendix).

Given that neither the downtown San Rafael Public Library nor the Civic Center Library is easily accessible to the people of north San Rafael, it is interesting to note that respondents placed a higher priority on providing library service in the Canal neighborhood than in their own area (55% high priority, 18% medium priority) (Table 2, Appendix). This is another indication of strong support throughout the entire community for improvements in east San Rafael.

Support for a branch library in the Canal neighborhood was especially high among survey respondents aged 18-49. In fact, 61% of 18-34 year olds, 60% of 35-49 year olds and 53% of those age 50-64 and 43% of those over 65 gave a high priority to providing a branch library in the Canal neighborhood. The strongest explanation for this result seems to be the presence of children in the home, as 22% of those aged 18-34 and 52% of those 35-49 years old had minors living in their homes (Table 5, Appendix).

Another factor that varies by age group is length of residence in San Rafael (Table 6, Appendix). People age 18 – 49 had less longevity as residents in San Rafael than people age 50 and over. The pattern was clear: San Rafael had a large new, young population and a smaller, steadfast older population as well. Many of the newer city residents have children, and are people within the childbearing years. These seem to be the individuals that more often gave responses indicating a need for community-based library service and for improving the quality of life in the Canal neighborhood.

Pickleweed Advisory Board’s Community Outreach. The Pickleweed Advisory Board designed a community outreach process that combined the conversations approach of “Canal Voice” with an informal survey and four facilitated meetings to assess the community’s wishes for expansion of the Center. The results of this process were presented at a “Celebrations Meeting” in July 2000. From that time on, the recommendations made their way through approvals by the Pickleweed Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the City Council. Based on community input, the Pickleweed revitalization plan will expand the facility.

Services in the revitalized space will include:

- Expanded classes in technology and computer training
- Health, indoor sports and wellness programs
- Community and family gatherings for more than 250 people
- Full-scale arts program
- Expanded Kids Club after-school programming
- Library and literacy center
- Lobby and café for community gathering

The primary features of the revitalized center are:

- 2,185 square foot library and learning center
- Three new classrooms
- Teen center
- Computer center
- Art rooms
- Lobby lounge and café
- Entrance plaza and expanded parking

Although the survey was not the only community input, it is the most readily quantifiable. Considering the survey distribution points (restaurants, bar, bowling alley), educational services fared well. The overall results from 349 surveys counted are provided in the table below.

Number of respondents agreeing on the importance of service	Service types and categories
167	Computer programs
163	Arts and crafts
163	College of Marin classes
150	Live music/public dances
142	Job training programs
139	After-school tutoring
139	Basketball/volleyball
135	Child care
134	Films
127	Employment education
124	Performing arts (music, dance)
123	ESL classes
123	Physical fitness
122	Homework/tutoring
118	Cultural events
117	Martial arts
113	Health services
112	Citizenship classes
111	College preparation
108	Expanded library
107	Theater performance
107	Indoor soccer
98	Parenting classes
96	Housing services
94	Babysitting education classes
91	Small business development
83	Snack bar
80	Video classes

Number of respondents agreeing on the importance of service	Service types and categories
80	Teen/youth game room
74	Card and game room
72	Forums on neighborhood issues

The following table illustrates the breakdown by language of surveys showing the top 5 choices (7 variables, with 2 tied for second and fifth places) as well as “expanded library.”

Community Responses by Language Used on Survey

Preferred Services								
Survey Language	Computer Programs	Arts & Crafts	College of Marin classes	Live Music/dances	Job Training	After-school tutoring	Basketball/Volleyball	Expanded library
Spanish N=178	(50%)	(42%)	(41%)	(40%)	(39%)	(26%)	(34%)	(25%)
English N=142	(42%)	(51%)	(51%)	(46%)	(41%)	(46%)	(47%)	(34%)
Vietnamese N=29	(62%)	(55%)	(62%)	(45%)	(48%)	(93%)	(48%)	(55%)
TOTAL N=349	(48%)	(47%)	(47%)	(43%)	(41%)	(40%)	(40%)	(31%)

While there is a general consistency between the three language groups surveyed, there is a definite tendency for greater support for educational programs by Vietnamese respondents. This is most noticeable in the response to “after-school tutoring,” which was selected by 93% of Vietnamese respondents and 26% of Spanish-speaking respondents. Since they are not the primary users of current after-school tutoring programs, perhaps this reflects the Vietnamese community’s viewpoint of what is needed by the community as a whole. The Vietnamese families are longer-term residents of the neighborhood and probably have seen how important education is for “getting ahead” in the United States.

In its interpretation of the results, the Community Services Department states, “The most striking theme that emerged from the months of study and community dialogue was the unwavering desire among respondents to broaden opportunities for themselves and their children.” To meet the educational and recreational needs of the community, it became apparent that the Library and the Marin Literacy Program would be important partners in the Pickleweed Park Community Center’s program for revitalization. Based on needs assessment data, at this time there seems to be more need for access to computers and support for after-school tutoring than for traditional library services. The Library is addressing this in its Plan of Service for the Pickleweed Library. Consistent with the original goals of WE CAN!, the Pickleweed Library will also serve as a bridge to the San Rafael Public Library. With a small but carefully selected collection, it will act as a “demonstration library” as well as a homework center and Computer center.

Staff Perspectives Support Community Perceptions of Inadequate Service

From the beginning, it was a challenge to meet a diversity of needs in the Canal Library Center -- one small, but mighty room. It was also a learning experience for library staff, who would agree that all experience is an arch to build upon. The Canal Library Center opens at 2:30 p.m. and there is usually a line of people waiting to get in. Between 2:30 and 5:00 p.m., the pace is hectic. Students from the after-school Kids Club program are allowed into the library in shifts of 10 at a time. Other children are there with their parents. At present, the library is open one evening a week from 6 to 8 p.m. and is less busy at this time. The collection and services are geared toward children. There is a small number of adults who use the library, primarily as a location to place reserves and pick up and drop off books.

Staff report the need for more space and more materials for children and adults, including books in Spanish, English, and Vietnamese. Spanish and English speaking adults want Internet access. While Vietnamese materials were not used in the beginning, they are now circulating to a group of about eight families. Their children speak English, but parents want books to help them maintain their home language. Families new to the community primarily use Spanish or bilingual materials.

Based on experience in the community, the staff concurs with the need for homework assistance and a Computer center. The San Rafael Pickleweed Library will also be an ideal base for family literacy services as it is in the heart of an area with many young children and a strong family orientation.

7. Service Limitations of Existing Facility

Executive Summary

In the five years since its opening in 1997, the Canal Library Center has experienced an increase in patronage and proof that the community has come to value library services. The size restriction of the current library space is the greatest barrier to providing quality library services to the Canal neighborhood. Collections are extremely limited as is space for computers, patrons, and staff. The following summarizes the key service limitations of the existing facility.

- **Collections**

The current library is constantly challenged in its collection development process: collections are restricted by the size of the library center. There is no room to add to collections that are in demand, such as bilingual items and adult and juvenile videos, or to add requested items, such as compact discs.

- **Readers' Seating**

Because of the limited space, there is only room for three 36-inch round tables with 12 readers' seats. The only other seating in the library for readers is four preschool-size chairs. Not only does this make it uncomfortable for the public, it limits the number of people who can use the library at a given time.

- **Staff Offices**

There are none. This hampers staff efficiency and causes further crowding.

- **Workstations**

There is one staff workstation, large enough for only one person. This is where all check-ins, check-outs, reserves and reference questions are handled. This creates delays and other customer-service related inefficiencies.

- **Visual Supervision**

When very busy, especially during special events, overcrowded conditions hinder close staff supervision of the space.

- **Technology**

The number of computers provided for public and staff use is limited by the amount of space available in the existing library. The library has room for only two Online Public Access Catalogs (OPACs) and one PC, resulting in long waits to use the systems. Lack of computer resources limits public access to the MARINet OPAC, the Internet, helpful software, and other electronic resources.

7.a. Collections

Currently, the Canal Library has some 1,800 items in the collection. While the San Rafael Public Library has the funds to significantly expand the collection in a number of areas, the number of new acquisitions is limited by lack of space.



- The library at Pickleweed uses five sections of 90” shelving to maximize the size of the collection in such a small area. The higher-placed portions of the collection are inaccessible to children, elderly people, and people with disabilities. Other shelving is at floor level, below window seats, and in movable book carts.
- There is limited public access to electronic resources because there is room for only two Online Public Access (OPAC) workstations.

- The size of the reference collection is restricted by space constraints.

Space limits size of collection

- ESL materials are popular at the Canal Library Center, but there is insufficient space to house an adequate collection of these materials.
- The small video collection for children has proven to be very popular as has the Spanish language video collection for adults. To expand these collections further is not feasible in the current space occupied by the library.

7.b. Readers' Seating

The library should be a place where people can comfortably use books, magazines and other print material while seated at a table. The small size of the current library severely limits the number of people who can use the library as a place to read and study.



- Existing work space for students at the Canal Library Center consists of only 12 seats at three round, 36” tables. This severely limits the number of students who can do homework in the library at any one time. Students currently use the library in shifts after school due to lack of table space and seats. Participants in the Community Center’s Kids Club must be divided into groups of 10 to take turns when using the library after school.

- There are only four preschool-size chairs. This makes it difficult for parents to find a quiet, comfortable place to use and enjoy the library with their preschool children.

Inadequate seating to meet students’ needs

- The library is unable to host class visits due to lack of seating and an insufficient number of OPACs.

7.c. Staff Offices, Workstations, and Visual Supervision

There is no library staff office at the Canal Library Center. Staff have no private space to make business phone calls or store valuables. There is no place to store professional book review journals and vendor catalogs. Without an office, it is difficult for staff to conduct day-to-day business in an efficient manner. Other issues include:

- There is minimal storage space. The Children's Librarian must carry supplies and programming materials back and forth from the downtown library to the Canal Library Center.
- The staff workstation is large enough for only one staff person at a time. This is where check-outs, check-ins, reserves and reference questions are handled.
- Visual supervision is not a problem due to the small size of the current library. However, special events that fill the library, such as entertainment for the Summer Reading Program, prevent close staff supervision of the space.

7.d. Technology

Canal area residents are, for the most part, technology-poor. Currently the library does not have the space for more than two public access PCs and one dedicated public access Internet PC. Two other terminals are reserved for the Marin Literacy Program. We know that the demand for access to the Internet and other electronic information resources is much greater than we can accommodate with these three public access PCs.



more PCs. This limits the number of library users able to access MARINet and

Insufficient technological access

- There is one staff PC with a networked printer that must be used for check-out, check-in, reserving items, placing holds, and doing reference work.
- There are two Online Public Access Catalogs (OPACs) with access to MARINet as well as the EBSCO Host Magazine Index, Pro Quest Newspaper Index, Rand Database, and City of San Rafael Home Page. The small number of OPACs is due to lack of table top space for
- The Canal Library Center has one public access Internet PC. Again, there is not enough room for more PCs. This limits the number of people who can use the Internet to one at a

time. The library assistant, who has the authority as well as the respect of the regular users, controls the use of the Internet terminal during peak periods.

7.e. Meeting Rooms

The Canal Library Center has no space to have small meetings or storytimes while it is open to the public. For storytimes, tables and chairs must be moved, and the librarian must bring all of the programming materials with her from the downtown library. The library is currently unable to host class visits due to lack of seating and an insufficient number of OPACs.

7.f. Special Purpose

The San Rafael Public Library Community Library Needs Assessment conducted between 1996 and 2002 found an overall need to expand neighborhood-based library services in the Canal area to meet the needs of its community. Specific service needs to be addressed include:

- 1) The need to help children in the Canal area with school readiness and school success
- 2) The need to promote children's recreational reading, especially over the summer, so they do not lose skills they have gained during the school year
- 3) The need to meet the informational and recreational needs of adults in the Canal area
- 4) The need to provide bilingual Spanish and Vietnamese library services in the Canal area
- 5) The need to provide literacy training in the Canal area
- 6) The need to help close the digital divide for residents of the Canal area

Upon expansion, the Pickleweed Library plans to provide the following special purpose programs:

- **Homework Center:** The library will serve more students as an after-school and weekend homework center. Currently, groups of students must use the library in shifts because of overcrowding. The expanded library will include a separate Homework Center. Materials to support K-12 students' curricula and outside reading assignments will be provided.
- **Computer Center:** The expanded library will include a separate Computer Center that will offer more students the opportunity to: (1) access school and teacher homepages, the Internet, and electronic reference resources for homework assignments; (2) access word processing programs to complete homework assignments and projects; and (3) take classes in using the MARINet catalog, the Internet, electronic resource databases, and Microsoft Word.

With the Computer Center, the library can also offer small classes for adults on how to use the Internet. For new immigrants, there will be a special emphasis on communicating by e-mail to their country of origin.

- **Family Literacy Program:** The new facility will collaborate with the Marin Literacy Program to provide family literacy services. The Pickleweed Library intends to offer

small classes in computer skills to low literate adults, literacy tutors and their students as well as space for tutoring. Computers with software to improve reading and writing skills will be available for individual use. The library can offer family literacy events such as bilingual storytimes for parents and children. The Pickleweed Library plans to become a literacy tutor-training site.

- **Space for Larger Collection:** The expanded space for collections will provide: (1) a larger English as a Second Language (ESL) collection, especially materials in video, CD, and audiocassette formats; (2) increased print collections to better support the school curriculum and assist students working on homework, and (3) a larger collection of high interest paperback recreational reading for children in grades K-8.

8. Physical Limitations of Existing Library

Executive Summary

Information on the physical limitations of the existing library was drawn from the Feasibility Study (see Tab 22) prepared by Group 4 Architecture. In turn, the Feasibility Study relied on the library's community needs assessment and the technical reports of specialized consultants (see Tabs 6 and 18-21). Library program staff are well aware that the present space is inadequate and inefficient; the Feasibility Study has brought out the ways the space is ineffective and even hazardous.



Current Community Center entrance will become the dedicated Library entrance

The existing library is situated within the Pickleweed Park Community Center, which was built in 1983. In the fall of 1997, the Canal Learning Center was allotted the use of one 526-square-foot classroom as a homework center to help local children achieve academic success. In the spring of 2000, the Canal Learning Center was renamed the Canal Library Center to highlight the fact that it was becoming more than just a homework center, especially with the addition of the online MARINet catalog.

Plans are underway to renovate and expand the Pickleweed Park Community Center. The city

would like the library to expand with the Center, and there is a great deal of support for this expansion, as indicated in other sections of this document. The library will increase from 526 square feet to 2,185 square feet. It will serve in many capacities, including as a door to learning for preschoolers, a homework center for after-school tutoring, a family literacy site, and a technology center for the Canal community.

The present space is inadequate primarily due to space constraints. Homework tutoring now must be done in shifts. Storytime groups require the removal of furniture, which then blocks access to materials and computers. And the collection and public access computer resources simply cannot meet the demands of the community.

Space limitations also lead to inefficiency. For example, lack of storage means that storytime props must be brought back and forth from the main library. Only one activity can take place at any given time since the one-room library allows for no real separation of functions.

The present facility is ineffective because it lacks the telecommunications system infrastructure to support a much-needed computer center. Mechanical equipment and the electrical system need to be upgraded to be effective in meeting program needs while conserving energy. Hazardous conditions to be addressed in the renovation include fungal growth, lack of a fire alarm system, PCBs and asbestos, overcrowding, and poor exterior lighting.

The improvements planned for the new library will mitigate the existing drawbacks of the site. Lack of accessibility and visibility will be overcome by a new dedicated library entrance with signage. Cramped quarters will be addressed by an expansion that quadruples the space. Excessive noise will be dealt with through relocation and absorptive building materials. Inappropriate furniture and inaccessible high shelving will be replaced with user-friendly furnishings. With these improvements in place, the San Rafael Pickleweed Library will benefit from its location in a busy community hub.

8.a. Structural

The existing Pickleweed Park Community Center, built in 1983, is a wood-framed, shear-wall structure. Due to the age of the roofing and failure of waterproofing details at the roof, extensive water infiltration has occurred at locations where the roof intersects the exterior walls. This situation will require the replacement of all exterior sheathing, the roof and windows, and repair of dry rot.



Water intrusion at failed roof

The building is supported on continuous footings located at bearing walls and isolated spread footings with adjustable jacks. The building must be re-leveled, as the bay mud on which it rests has settled, and the jacks have been adjusted to their maximum. Generally, the structural systems appear to be in good condition. Water staining and signs of water intrusion were noted in some locations. Dry rot and deterioration of the siding was observed in several locations and there is water staining of the shear plywood. There is some deterioration of the floor gluelam beams.

All identified damage will be addressed in the building renovation and expansion.



Deteriorated floor beams

According to Group 4 Architecture, the architectural firm hired to renovate Pickleweed Park Community Center, the building needs to be repaired and the original construction flaws corrected if it is to continue operating. Upgrades to the roof, flooring, windows, electrical system, lighting, decks, and exterior finishes will extend the facility's life span.

Despite the numerous deficiencies of the building envelope, the plan of the building is efficient and well-designed. The quality of daylight in the area of the library expansion is especially appropriate to library use. The existing building will require only minor relocation of partitions to create an inviting, well lit, and efficient new library.

8.b. Energy Conservation

The Community Center's existing mechanical equipment has reached the end of its useful life. Newer equipment is far more effective and energy efficient. New high-efficiency rooftop HVAC units will replace the three existing original units.

The ductwork now located on the roof has deteriorated. It will be replaced by new ductwork located in the ceiling space of the building. Locating the ducts in the ceiling will not only reduce the energy loss of the HVAC system from having the ducts exposed to the elements, but also protect the ducts from deterioration.



Failed mechanical unit and leaking skylight

The electrical system of the building is inefficient and outmoded. The basic electrical distribution system of the Community Center has not been significantly modified since the original installation, with the exception of the addition of one small branch panel board in the janitor's closet to serve new computer-related loads in the Library Center. The entire building's electrical system will be upgraded as part of the renovation and expansion.

In the current Canal Library Center (and throughout the Community Center), windows show marked deterioration and need to be replaced with quality, commercial-grade aluminum double-glazed windows. Insulated glass windows will help conserve energy.

The current lighting fixtures are neither attractive nor effective. They provide inadequate lighting during the day and especially during the evening hours, and also produce glare on the computer screens. The expanded library is designed to make good use of natural light from skylights and windows in order to promote a pleasant atmosphere while maximizing lighting efficiency. Existing fixtures will be replaced with energy-efficient, good quality lighting specifically designed for the needs of library patrons.

8.c. Health and Safety

Mold constitutes a known health hazard. One major problem with the existing facility is moisture, both in the form of visible leaks and in areas behind wall sheathing. Water infiltration has resulted in fungal growth at some panel joints and has caused dry rot in the underlying structural sheathing in some locations. The entire building exterior – roof and walls – must be re-sheathed and re-roofed to correct for design and construction defects and to provide for the long-term serviceability of the facility.

The existing facility does not have a fire alarm system. While the original construction plans called for a system, none was installed. The planned renovations will be significant enough to trigger requirements that the building meet current code, which will include manual pullstations at all exits, smoke detector coverage in all areas without sprinklers, smoke detectors in mechanical air handling unit ducts, and alarm notification horns and visual indicating devices (for the hearing impaired) in all public areas.

A hazardous materials survey of the building revealed several problems that will be addressed in the renovation. The materials identified in the library expansion area are PCBs in the lighting ballasts and asbestos in the mastic glue affixing the resilient tiles in the classroom that will become the homework center.



Inaccessible storage

Overcrowded conditions in the one-room Canal Library Center create safety hazards such as tripping or bumping into furniture, as well as a maze-like path that could prove difficult to navigate if exiting the facility under emergency conditions. Also, library materials on high shelving are hazardous since neighboring books or videos can fall when items are removed. The new library will be more spacious, with appropriate shelving for public and workspaces for staff. In addition, staff storage is inaccessible and workspaces are not ergonomic.

Finally, the existing facility is provided with very little exterior lighting which also presents a safety hazard. Most of the parking lot and walkways have no illumination whatsoever. Existing low wattage fixtures are to be replaced with new energy-efficient light standards. Landscape lighting will also be part of the new design.

8.d. Disabled Access

The Community Center site is generally ADA compliant, with a few exceptions such as parking lot striping, ramp landings, and toilet room partitions. These items are all located in areas designated for renovation.



Non-compliant with accessibility codes

The present one-room library does not meet the dimensional requirements of state building codes and ADA. It is crowded with furniture, chairs, and book trucks, and is extremely difficult to negotiate with a walker or wheelchair. Expanding the space from 526 square feet to 2,185 square feet will greatly reduce this problem.

New parking lot, landscape, and building entries have been designed to meet or exceed accessibility guidelines. All incompliant items will be brought into conformance within the scope of the proposed project, which will strive to provide excellent access to all users.

8.e. Acoustics

Due to budget issues, certain aspects of the existing facility were not built in accordance with the original building documents. For example, acoustic insulation was omitted from the construction of floors, so that finishes were directly applied over the existing plywood subfloor. Consequently

sound is easily transmitted through the building, particularly by the vibration created by running and jumping in corridors and the multipurpose room. Library patrons' concentration can be disrupted by whatever activities are taking place in the multipurpose room, which is located right across the hall. Floors will be sheathed with acoustic insulation before the installation of carpet to help isolate the facility from extraneous Community Center noise.

Sound absorbent acoustic wall coverings were also omitted during construction, resulting in noise and echoes within spaces. At the same time, low speech within the library is difficult to hear at times. Library walls and ceilings will be provided with absorptive materials designed to limit the travel of sound.

8.f. Space Flexibility/Expandability



Storytime

The current library center is not a flexible or expandable space. Tables, chairs and equipment must be pushed aside or rearranged for program activities to take place. For example, all tables must be moved to the edge of the room, and book carts pushed out of the way, to create floor space for children during story time. The dislocated furnishings and carts then limit access to the collection, and prevent use of the online catalog and the Internet computer by other patrons.



Communications systems are obsolete

The building was designed before computer equipment was in prominent use in facilities such as this. No provisions were made for "clean" electrical outlets, local area networking (LAN), or connections to telephone lines or cable for access to the Internet. Various surface-mounted raceways, unpainted metal conduits, and many bare, exposed, and draped communications cables have been installed in numerous places in order to supply the needed power, networking, and telecommunications connections. The unsightly result detracts from the appearance of the facility while providing very limited flexibility for the relocation of equipment. The renovation will include a modernized telecommunications system infrastructure that will provide expanded capacity and flexibility, especially for the library.

8.g. Functional Spatial Relationships



Homework in shifts

Within the current one-room library, functions cannot be separated. Only one activity can take place in the room at any given time. After school, the “library as homework center” is so busy that the children must do their homework in shifts. It is difficult to attend to the needs of other patrons, adults and preschoolers, for example, when the library is filled with elementary school children needing to do homework in the afternoon. The library’s current location within the facility also eliminates the possibility of extending library hours beyond the hours of the Community Center.



Current Library Entrance

The new library will have its own dedicated entrance from the sidewalk and parking lot. The computer center will be directly adjacent to the library, separated by glass walls that will provide both a visual connection and audio separation for library staff and patrons in both areas. Adjacent to but separate from the computer center will be the homework center, in which students, tutors, and study groups may talk without disturbing other library patrons. The library also will be conveniently accessible from the main Community Center corridor, allowing the large multipurpose room and classrooms to be used for special library programs.

8.h. Site

The current site has many advantages, including a central location within the Canal community, fantastic views of Marin County and the San Francisco Bay, and plenty of room for the proposed facility expansion. Improvements planned for the new library will overcome the shortcomings of the current site design. Low accessibility and visibility will be addressed with a new library entrance with signage. The current lack of dedicated library parking will be corrected with the provision of five spaces, reserved for the use of library patrons, directly adjacent to the new library entrance. With these improvements in place, the San Rafael Pickleweed Library will benefit from its location in a busy community hub.

Popular Locale

Pickleweed Park is the heart of the Canal district. Most local residents who use the Community Center and Library either walk or bike to it. The site is directly across the street from apartment buildings and residences. Bahia Vista Elementary School is within easy walking distance, and many children go directly to the Canal Library Center from

school; in fact, the library and the Community Center function both formally and informally as after-school childcare.

Land Acquisition

The City and its Redevelopment Agency already own the Pickleweed Park site. The City purchased part of the land in 1974 and Redevelopment purchased the remainder in 1976.

Geotechnical

The building site is located in an area of San Rafael reclaimed from a tidal marsh. The soil at the site is bay mud. The ground will be prepared for the new foundation system by over-excavating for the foundations and placing a compacted lightweight fill that will match the settlement pattern of the existing building. This will mitigate differential settlement between the existing building and the expansion. A hinged expansion joint between the two building sections will accommodate any differential movement that does occur.

Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking at the Pickleweed Community Center is available in a parking lot and on the street. Total parking for the Community Center will be expanded from 65 to 85 on-site spaces, five of which will be designated solely for use by library patrons.

Pedestrians and Bicycles

The City and the Community Center have been working together to ensure that pedestrians and bicycle riders have safe, convenient access to community services. The current park setting provides plenty of sidewalk space and a safe and pleasant surrounding atmosphere.

Mass Transit

For those visitors who cannot walk or ride their bicycles to the Pickleweed Park Community Center, the current site is accessible by bus, with a stop just 400 feet from the front door.

On Site Special Events

Each year, Pickleweed Park Community Center hosts special celebrations initiated by the community and community-based groups which include *Dia de los Muertos*, *Mid-Autumn Festival*, *Spirit of the Holidays Youth Carnival*, *Asian New Year's Celebration*, and *Los Posadas*. Families and community members also use the Pickleweed Park Community Center for weddings, baptisms, quincinieras, and other family celebrations. These are only some of the things that make the Community Center a vibrant hub of community activity.

8.i. Other Considerations

The room currently occupied by the library was not intended to be a library and is significantly hampered by its small size. It is simply too crowded when filled with preschoolers or Head Start groups who come to hear storytime. Homework tutoring must be done in shifts due to space constraints. Children rotate in and out of the library space in order to use the online catalog, the Internet, and library materials. However, these are not the only compelling reasons the Canal Library Center should be expanded at the existing site. Other reasons include:

- The current library is an integral part of the community.
- The City of San Rafael has no options for siting a library on any other property in the Canal neighborhood.
- The existing site is where the people who live in the Canal congregate. Due to lack of space in their own homes, the Canal community uses the Community Center and its park as a “back yard.”
- Further expansion, if needed, would be possible in the future.



9. Space Needs Assessment

Executive Summary

The project size is based on a pro-rated share of the square footage planned for the expanded Pickleweed Park Community Center. The architect defined the space by what was the best available placement for the library within the Community Center. The result is a library that is four times the size of the existing library with an independent entrance directly off the street, with more collection space, more seating throughout the library, and added features, including a Computer Center and a Homework Center. The table below summarizes the planned square footage allocations for various aspects of the expanded library. This is followed by narrative sections that further detail these square footage allocations and describe how these figures were derived.

Assignable Square Footage Allocations	
Area of the Library	Assignable Square Footage
Public Service Area	848 sq ft
Computer Center	490 sq ft
Storage Closet	82 sq ft
Staff/ Literacy Office	110 sq ft
Homework Center	526 sq ft
Total Assignable Square Feet	2,056

9.a. Library Collections

9.a.1. *Current Status of Collections and Capacity of Proposed Building*

The current collection is approximately 1,900 items. Since the total square footage allotted to the library site within the Community Center will increase from 526 square feet to 2,185 square feet, we will be able to triple the size of the materials collection to better serve our patron population. The new library will house approximately 6,200 items with enough room for browsing space in the stacks. The following table provides detailed information regarding the current collection.

Current Collections	Number of Items
Adult Reference	38
Adult Books	57
Adult Periodical	54
Adult Spanish	229
Adult Vietnamese	115
Adult Audiocassette	27
Adult Videocassette	10
Juvenile Reference	99
Juvenile Books	481
Juvenile Picture books	111
Juvenile Periodicals	38
Juvenile Spanish	457
Juvenile Vietnamese	59
Juvenile Audiocassette	47
Juvenile Videocassette	60
Total	1882

(The above chart is based on a statistical report run from the library's online catalog as of June 5, 2002.)

9.a.2. **Collection Development and Justification**

The Service Needs Section describes how our collection should expand to better serve all library users. We have determined there must be an emphasis on resources for students and non-native English speakers. Therefore, the children's collection will more than double, and the adult collection will quadruple. Spanish and Vietnamese print collections for children and adults will increase significantly, as will audio book and video/DVD collections.

Rationale

Census demographics indicate that 70.1 % of the Canal community is Hispanic and that 8.4% is Asian. Marin Literacy Program records indicate that 44% of their literacy students come from the Canal area immediately adjacent to the Pickleweed Park Community Center.

The need for a larger English as a Second Language (ESL) collection is evident from the Pickleweed survey in which ESL classes ranked high. Based on the requests from the community, the library staff will develop an extensive and appropriate mix of instructional ESL materials to serve the needs of this adult population.

Previous Purchasing Patterns. The San Rafael Public Library eagerly encourages patrons to request books to purchase for the collection. The library will procure titles that have merit, are not too esoteric, and do not have a limited readership. If not purchased, the library will do an inter-library loan for the title requested, or submit a subject request to the North Bay Cooperative.

The most requested subject materials are on ethnic cooking, parenting, pregnancy and childbirth, pediatric medical information, and adult medical information, especially breast cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Library users also frequently request information on Vietnam, Mexico and Central and South American countries in order to gain information on current political situations as well as for recreational use.

Children at all grade levels are looking for materials to assist in completing homework assignments and doing research papers. Based on discussions with the Elementary/Middle School Librarian for the San Rafael Schools, the children's librarian purchased a complete set of the *Success for All Reading Program* in English and Spanish. This reading program is used in the San Rafael School District. Even at the middle school level, the San Rafael School Librarian encouraged the purchase of English as a second language materials.

The library purchases quality picture books in English, Spanish and Vietnamese due to the high demand from the Canal childcare providers. The limited collection of ESL materials on video, CD, and cassette tape are in high demand and are routinely requested via inter-library loan to supplement the Canal Library's holdings.

Anticipated Purchasing Patterns. We anticipate that the focus of our collection purchases will be on children's books in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and adult and children's ESL materials in Spanish and Vietnamese. The library will be adding adult books in English, in response to community demand. The library will purchase audiovisual materials for both children and adults. This will include ESL material and recreational material in video or DVD, CDs, books on cassette and CD, and language tapes, CDs, and videos. To complement our bilingual capability, the library website will include Spanish and Vietnamese translation options and language sites. The library will make it possible for Canal neighborhood residents to connect to local and global resources in their own language as well as in English.

9.a.3. Summary of All Projected Collections

The collection in the new Library must expand in order to provide the diverse population of the Canal neighborhood with relevant materials. The table below shows the number of items required at the Pickleweed Library. Shelving must be appropriate for each collection (such as low shelves for the Children’s collection) and preserve sight lines of the library space for supervision purposes.

Library staff estimate that 20% of the collection will be in circulation at any given time (except for the reference collection, which will not circulate outside the Library). Therefore, approximately 526.4 linear feet (LF) of shelving must be provided, as shown in the table below, to accommodate at least 80% of the collection at a time. However, circulation will fluctuate, and the collection will undoubtedly grow over time. As such, this linear feet requirement must be considered an *absolute minimum*, and additional shelf space is needed for flexibility and growth.

Projected Collection	Items Owned	% on Shelf	Items On Shelf	Items per LF	LF of Shelving Needed
Reference	161	100	161	8	20.1
Audio Books	422	80	338	20	16.9
Videocassettes	421	80	337	13	25.9
Children’s Fiction – English	422	80	338	10	33.8
Children’s Fiction – Spanish	516	80	413	10	41.3
Children’s Fiction – Vietnamese	205	80	164	10	16.4
Children’s Non Fiction	1,631	80	1,305	10	130.5
Adult Fiction – English	222	80	178	8	22.3
Adult Fiction – Spanish	416	80	333	8	41.6
Adult Fiction – Vietnamese	156	80	125	8	15.6
Adult Non Fiction	1,381	80	1,105	8	138.1
Periodicals/Pamphlets	33	80	26	4	6.5
ESL Materials	211	80	169	15	11.3
Homework Center Materials	61	80	49	8	6.1
Totals	6,258		5,041		526.4

9.b. Readers' Seats

9.b.1. Patron Seating

Seating in the current library consists of 12 seats at 3 tables, 4 preschool chairs, and 5 chairs to accommodate people using the computers. New seating will be age appropriate, stacking and moveable so staff can reconfigure the space as needed for programs, workshops, or class visits. Patron seating for 62 people is allotted a total of 1,170 square feet. The proposed seating plan is detailed in the table below:

Proposed Patron Seating Plan			
Space	Type of Seating	# Tables	# Seats
Public Service Area	4 place round Study table	3	12
Magazines & Newspapers	Lounge seating with 24" side table	1	2
Seating subtotal:			14
For Children			
Children's Area	4-place slanted table	1	4
Children's Area	Floor cushions	N/A	4
Children Seating subtotal:			8
Special Seating			
Homework Center	Folding tables w/stacking task chairs	8	24
Computer Center	Folding tables w/stacking task chairs		16
Special seating subtotal:			40
Grand Total			62

9.b.2. Standards Used in Determining Seating Amount

The space needed to accommodate patron seating was calculated by defining services to be provided in each area included in the library building program. The maximum number of students to be effectively served in the Homework Center room is 24 and the maximum Computer Center class will be 15 people plus an instructor. Seating in the Public Service Area is balanced with the need for shelving.

9.b.3. Calculations Used and Conversion Factors

Seating Plan Calculations			
Seating Type	Quantity	Square Feet/Unit	Total Sq ft
Chair, @ 4-pl slant table, children	4 seats	25	100 nsf
Chair, @ 4-pl table, public	12 seats	25	300 nsf
Chair, stacking/task	40 seats	15	600 nsf
Chair, lounge	2 seats	35	70 nsf
Floor Cushions, children	4 seats	25	100 nsf
Total Square Footage Allocated for Seating =1,170 nsf			

9.c. Technology

9.c.1. Number and Types of Technology Equipment

The library will have 12 laptops, 10 PCs, one server, five networked printers and a router.

Space	Equipment
Public Service Desk	2 PCs, 1 networked printer
Staff / Literacy Office	2 PCs, printing capability via network
Public Services Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)	2 PCs, printing capability via network
Computer Center	12 laptops, 3 networked printers
Computer Center OPACs	4 PCs, 1 networked printer
Electrical Closet	1 router, 1 server

All computers will run Microsoft Windows as their operating system. Staff PCs will have Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint along with anti-virus software, the MARINet Online Catalog, and the Millennium Circulation System. The public PCs will also run Windows 2000 and MS Office, plus anti-virus software, Library Online booking software, and the MARINet Online Catalog. New CAT-5 wiring will be installed throughout the Library and Community Center.

9.c.2. Calculations

The table below details the conversion factors used for technology space.

Technology Plan					
Space	Equipment Type	Area per Unit	Units	Seats	SF Needed
General Access Computers					
Public Service Desk	Computer Desktop PC	40	2	2	80
Public Computers OPAC	Computer Desktop PC	35	2	2	70
Copy Machine	Copy Machine	45	1	0	45
Staff / Literacy Office	Computer Desktop PC	40	2	2	80
Program Room Computers					
Computer Center Computers	Computer Laptops	15	12	12	180
Computer Center OPACs	Computer Desktop PC	35	4	0	140
Miscellaneous					
Computer Server		NA	1		Incl.
Phone Closet	Router	NA	1		Incl.
Printers					
Public Computers	Networked Printers	NA	1	NA	Incl.
Computer Center	Networked Printers	NA	4	NA	Incl.
Totals					
Total Public Computers			18		
Total Public Printers			5		
Total square feet dedicated to technology					595

9.d. Staff Offices and Workstations

9.d.1. Projected Staff Organization and Standards Used in Determining Staff Size

Staff offices and workstations will take up 110 square feet of the library's assignable square footage. Projected staff includes:

- 37.5 FTE bilingual Librarian I/II
- 28 PTE bilingual Library Assistant I/II
- 14 PTE book page
- On-call staff will cover sick/vacation time
- Literacy staff will be available as scheduled for intake, training and tutoring
- Program responsibilities such as bilingual storytimes and special events are to be shared

9.d.2. Number of Staff Workstations

Workstations. Public service points in the library will include the circulation desk at the Public Services Desk. The Public Services Desk will have two staff workstations with one printer, and will be networked to the two staff PCs in the office and the two online catalogs in the Public Services area.

9.d.3. Calculations Used and Conversion Factors

The table below illustrates the conversion factors we used to assign square footage to staff workstations.

Office and Workstation Needs Conversion Table			
Staff Offices and Workstations	Unit	Sq Ft. Each	Sq. Ft. Needed
Staff / Literacy Office	2 workcounters	40	80
Public Service Points			
Public Service desk/work counter	1 desk/work counter	100	100
Total square feet needed for staff			180

9.e. Meeting Room Requirements

9.e.1. Number and Capacity of Meeting Rooms

The library will have access to meeting spaces within the Community Center for scheduled events. The capacity of the meeting rooms range from 25 people in the smaller meeting room to 250 in the multipurpose room. The Homework Center may be used as a meeting room or for classes or tutoring when not in use during the morning or during the summer months when school is out.

9.f. Special Purpose: Miscellaneous Space Needs

9.f.1. Miscellaneous Spaces/Equipment

Storage will house the items charted below. It will also provide space for literacy materials needed for training sessions and Summer Reading Program materials.

9.f.2. Calculations Used and Conversion Factors

The table below describes calculations used to reach the square footage necessary for miscellaneous equipment.

Storage Room Needs Conversion Table			
Equipment	Unit	SF	SF Needed
Equipment Racks	1	10	10
Program Material Racks	2	8	16
Dolly, Table	1	12	12
Dolly, Chair	1	12	12
Total SF Needed for Storage			50 SF

9.g. Non-Assignable Space

All square footage is based on the usable area of the building. The open floor plan minimizes non-assignable square footage for walls and partitions.

9.g.1 Assumptions and Calculations

Non-Assignable Area for San Rafael Pickleweed Library	
Assignable Square Footage	2,056 ASF
Non-Assignable Square Footage	129 NSF
Total area needed for San Rafael Pickleweed Library	2,185 GSF

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MAY 2000 Professional Telephone Survey

April 2000 Library User Survey

WE CAN! Document

Total Population by Census Blocks

Tables

May 2000 San Rafael Public Library Poll

Table 1

Rating the priority of providing a branch library in Terra Linda [north San Rafael]:

Zip Code	94901	94903
High	37%	50%
Medium	30%	15%
Low	28%	32%
No opinion	5%	2%

Table 2

Rating the priority of providing a branch library in the Canal neighborhood [east]:

Zip Code	94901	94903
High	53%	55%
Medium	23%	18%
Low	21%	23%
No opinion	3%	4%

Table 3a.

How often have you been to the public library in downtown San Rafael in the last twelve months?

Zip Code	94903
94901	94903
6% not at all	35% not at all

Table 3b.

How often have you been to the public library at the Marin Civic Center in the last twelve months?

Zip Code	94903
94901	94903
56% not at all	18% not at all

Table 4**Would you give a high, medium or low priority to including providing a branch library in the Canal neighborhood in the library improvement plan?**

Age		18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Percent to Whole	100	10	32	32	25
High	54	61	60	53	43
Medium	22	17	24	19	23
High+Med	76	78	84	72	66
Low	21	20	14	22	32
No Opinion	3	2	2	6	2

Table 5**Do you have any children 18 years or younger living at home?**

Age		18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Percent to Whole	100	10	32	32	25
Yes	26	22	52	21	1
No	74	78	48	79	99

Table 6**How long have you lived in San Rafael?**

Age		18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Percent to Whole	100	10	32	32	25
Less than 5 yrs.	20	39	30	13	7
5-10 years	18	24	33	12	6
[10 years or less]	[38]	[63]	[63]	[25]	[13]
10-20 years	18	12	20	24	13
Lifetime	8	10	9	7	8
[> 20 or lifetime]	[43]	[25]	[18]	[51]	[73]

Canal District Demographics

Table 7

Percentage of Persons Who Were Foreign Born	
US	8%
California	22%
Canal Census Tract	53%

Source: 1990 US Census Data, Databases C90STF3C1 and C90STF3A

Table 8

Language Spoken at Home Universe: Persons 5 years and over			
		California	Canal Census Tract
English Only	198,600,798	18,764,213	3,137
Spanish	17,345,064	5,478,712	2,925 (40.5% of total)
Vietnamese	507,069	233,074	373 (5.2% of total)

Source: 1990 US Census Data, Databases C90STF3C1 and C90STF3A

Table 9

Civilian Labor Force Unemployment Rates		
	1990	1996
California	5.8	7.2
Marin County	2.5	3.4