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Population & Demographics

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for this 21st Century Library Plan also prescribed a scope of work requiring the Consultants to develop a thorough understanding of the greater Santa Fe community and its needs, in addition to an understanding of the Santa Fe Public Library (SFPL) system. The contents of this Section begin to document the process and findings of that effort.

As a portion of the scope of the Library Master Plan, the Consultants were charged with documenting community needs and desires. In response, the Consultants designed and implemented a community needs assessment process, in order to identify specific library service needs of the community served by SFPL. This process included identifying conditions in the community that indicate a current or potential need which the Library may be well-positioned to fill.

The *City of Santa Fe Community Services Department Core Values* advance the concepts of Equity, Fairness, and Collaboration in everyday dealings with residents and visitors. Adhering to these values means that participants are partners in planning and implementing community initiatives. So, the community was actively engaged in the process. The ensuing needs assessment process identified specific library service needs of the community, through:

- Engagement, involvement, and input from Library customers, Library staff, City staff, and key stakeholders;
- An understanding of the characteristics of Santa Fe residents; and
- Identification of community priorities and goals for the Library.

Population & Demographics

Before delving into specific characteristics of the Santa Fe Public Library and its users, the Consultants sought to become thoroughly acquainted with the greater Santa Fe community.

Santa Fe Population Trends

The Consultants analyzed historic and estimated 2018 U.S. Census data for the City of Santa Fe population in a number of categories:

- Total population;
- Population by age cohort;
- Education attainment;
- Ethnicity;
- Households with children;
- Housing and home ownership; and
- Income and employment.

Santa Fe Demographic Data. The Consultants commissioned data from DecisionWhere, Inc., a Demographics Consultant based in Laguna Niguel, California. For consistency, sources for the commissioned data were Scan US for 2023 estimates, and U.S. Census for 2000, 2010, and July 1, 2018 estimates.

As SFPL serves residents outside of Santa Fe city limits, the Consultants looked at City and County demographic findings and drew conclusions about any apparent differences between the two populations. Tables 3.1 through 3.8 summarize this data, to allow readers to compare and contrast metrics from Santa Fe City and Santa Fe County, beginning with overall population figures for each.

Table 3.1

population by year	City	County	difference
2023	86,011	152,748	66,737
2018	84,198	149,081	64,883
2010 US Census	80,979	144,170	63,191
2000 US Census	76,015	129,291	53,276
% change, 2000 to 2023	13.15%	18.14%	4.99%

Age Cohorts. There are no substantive differences between City and County populations concerning age. 15.2 percent of both City and County population is ages 0 to 14. At the other end of the age spectrum, the 65 + City population is 23.8 percent compared to 23.5 percent for Santa Fe County.

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The City median age is 44.8, County is 46.3.

Table 3.2

age cohorts	City %	County %	New Mexico %
0 to 14	15.2	15.2	
15 to 19	5.4	5.5	
20 to 34	18.1	16.6	
35 to 64	37.5	39.2	
65 +	23.8	23.5	17.5
Median Age	44.8	46.3	

Educational Attainment. Again, City and County traits are similar, with 41.2 percent of the City population having a Bachelor's degree or higher, same as the County population. Just under 12 percent (11.8) of the City population age 25+ does not have a high school diploma, versus 11.0 percent in the County.

Table 3.3

education (ages 25+)	City %	County %	New Mexico %
No HS Diploma	11.8	11.0	
HS Diploma	22.5	22.2	
College No Diploma	18.6	19.5	
Associate Degree	5.8	6.1	
Bachelor Degree	21.1	21.2	26.9
Graduate	20.1	20.0	

Ethnicity. Here we see a minor deviation. Hispanic Origin is 54.4 percent in the City and 50.9 percent in the County.

Table 3.4

ethnicity	City %	County %	New Mexico %
White	75.6	75.1	82.0
Black	1.5	1.3	2.6
Asian	1.8	1.6	1.8
Other	21.1	21.9	13.6
Hispanic Origin	54.4	50.9	49.1

Households with Children. 44.8 percent of City households are married couples with children, 41.8 percent in the County.

Table 3.5

households with children	City %	County %	New Mexico %
Families & Non-Families	44.8	41.8	

Vehicles in Home. Average number of vehicles in the City is 1.76 whereas 1.93 percent in the County.

Table 3.6

vehicles in the home	City	County	New Mexico
None	4.8	3.6	
1	41.6	34.8	
2	35.2	37.0	
3 +	18.4	24.6	
Average	1.76	1.93	

Home Ownership. Housing stats are slightly lower in the City than the County.

Table 3.7

home ownership	City	County	New Mexico
Owner Occupied	60.6%	68.9%	67.9%
Median Home Value	$265,623	$279,015	$163,900

Income & Employment. County levels are slightly better than in the City. Data on poverty is segmented differently by DecisionWhere than by the US Census.

Table 3.8

Income & employment	City	County	New Mexico
Employed	58.5%	56.7%	58.0%
Median Household Income	$55,536	$60,068	$46,718
Persons in poverty	+/-16.3%	+/-15.1%	19.5%

Demographics of Importance for Library Planning Purposes

Library use in a given community can typically be linked to these characteristics of the general populous:

- ***Education Attainment Level.*** The number one predictor of library usage is the level of Educational Attainment. The more educated the community, the greater the use of the public library;

- ***Homeownership.*** A second predictor is home ownership. As a rule, persons who own their home make more use of the public library than those who rent. It may reflect a belief, or feeling, that as a taxpayer, some of the property taxes are supporting the public library; and

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- **Presence of Children in the Home.** The third significant predictor is household type, specifically families with children living at home.

These three demographics usually reflect higher use of the public library suggest that use of the Santa Fe Public Library should increase in the future if other needs described later in this report are positively addressed.

Age cohort, while not typically a predictor of library usage, is important in planning for library services and how a building should be designed and furnished. With 15.2 percent of City and County population ages 0 to 14 there is, we believe, a system-wide need for a vibrant program of service for children and their caregivers. At the other end of the age spectrum, close to one of every four residents is 65 year of age or older. This is important for both services and the physical space. For the latter, bolder and larger graphics, no more large-type books, hearing aids in gathering spaces, etc. need to be in all Santa Fe Public Library facilities.

The Consultants analyzed specific demographic data related to these three indicators, as well as other socio-economic metrics, in order to obtain a better understanding of the Santa Fe community and its needs. We used U.S. Census figures and projected future figures from other sources we have found to be reliable.

Projections of Future Santa Fe Population

Utilizing both The University of New Mexico Geospatial and Population Studies and data from DecisionWhere, Inc., the Consultants projected the population for both the City and County of Santa Fe.

Consultant Population Projections. The University of New Mexico projections are for the County from 2020 to 2040. The DecisionWhere data is for 2018 and 2023. The Consultants extrapolated 2020 and 2025 to 2040 projections for the City based on the percentage of the County population that resides in the City per the DecisionWhere data for 2018 and 2023. Table 3.9 recapitulates the Consultants' population projections for both the City and County of Santa Fe.

Population Projections by City of Santa Fe. The City of Santa Fe Facilities Master Plan, dated August 2007, contained population data developed by the City's Planning and Land Use Department, Long-Range Planning Division. It estimated the City's year 2005 population at 65,500 residents.

Table 3.9
Population Projections for the City & County of Santa Fe

year	County	% change	City	% change
2018	149,081	n/a	84,198	n/a
2020	151,767	1.8%	85,445	1.5%
2023	152,748	0.6%	86,011	0.7%
2025	157,104	2.9%	88,450	2.8%
2030	162,782	3.6%	91,483	3.4%
2035	169,142	3.9%	95,396	4.3%
2040	175,242	3.6%	100,063	4.9%

By the year 2025 it forecasted the City's population to increase to 78,500 residents. This reflected a 0.9% annual growth rate over this 20-year period, similar to the growth trend that occurred between 1980 and 2000. These population figures were only for the area within the incorporated city limits at that time.

The Long-Range Planning Division also compiled population data for the greater Santa Fe urban area. Denoted the "Urban Area," it was generally defined by the city limits to the north, National Forest to the east, I-25 to the south, and NM 599 Highway to the west. Future population growth within the Urban Area was projected to continue the decades-old trend of growth moving southwestward from Santa Fe's city limits and beyond.
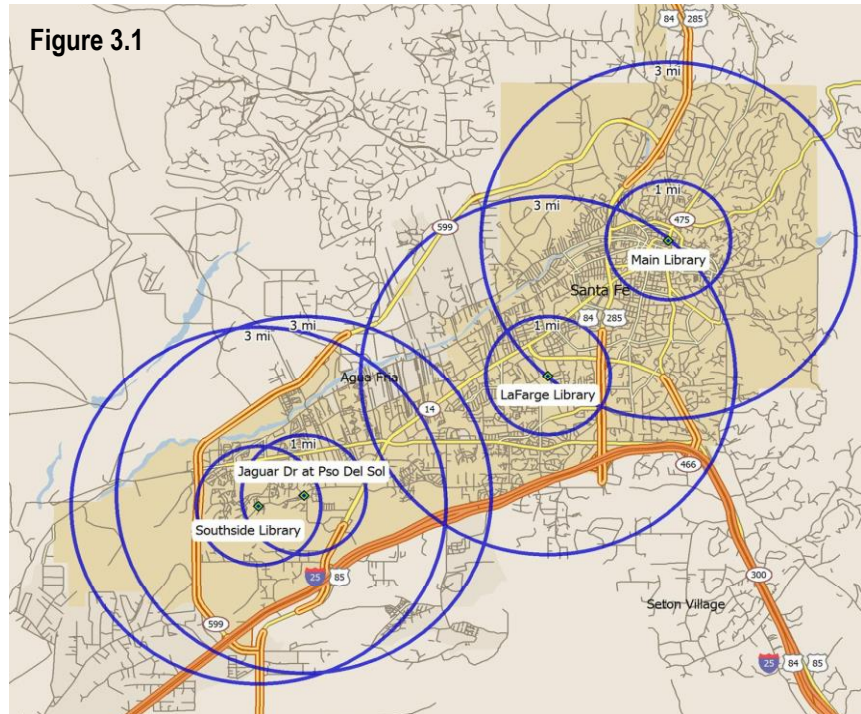
According to the Facilities Master Plan, between 1980 and 2000, the Urban Area population grew at an average annual rate of 2.0%. If this historical growth rate were to continue in the future, the Urban Area population by the year 2025 would be 111,725 residents.

17,500 residents residing within the Urban Area but outside the City's jurisdiction limits were incorporated into the Santa Fe city limits by 2008 – increasing the population from 65,500 residents to approximately 83,000 residents.

Long-Range Planning staff anticipated that the City would continue its efforts to annex all or a majority of the land within the Urban Area boundaries. If City population increases to between 99,000 and 111,725 residents by the year 2025, the annual growth rate from 2005 to the predicted 2025 population levels would be between 2.1% and 2.7%. Overall, that is a projected increase of between 50% and 70% over 20 years. Most of the projected population increase is expected to be to the southwest.

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Demographic & Population Data for the Three Libraries

In order to compare characteristics of the general population with residents living in proximity to each of the three Santa Fe Public Libraries, the Consultants requested data for the population living within a one-mile and three-mile radius of each Library location. The Consultants were able to glean insights concerning both library services and space needs from the DecisionWhere data, based on the three-mile rings around the street intersections at each facility.

Figure 3.1

For purposes of summarizing this information, only the three-mile data is presented in Table 3.10. It is important to note the three-mile rings around each Library overlap, as depicted, meaning significant household data is included under the headings of more than one Library.

The Consultants also analyzed available SFPL annual usage statistics for the four years FY2015 to FY2018 to identify any trends and/or anomalies. See the sub-section Services & Programming in Section 7 and Appendix 7.2 for usage statistics data on each of the three libraries.

Table 3.10

SFPL Demographic & Population Data Comparisons – Within a 3-Mile Radius

data	Main Library	LaFarge	Southside
2018 Population	35,021	54,399	33,440
2023 Population	36,036	55,465	34,014
Age Cohort 0 to 14	10.0%	13.1%	22.8%
Age Cohort 65+	32.2%	26.8%	11.4%
No High School Diploma	7.1%	9.7%	21.5%
High School Diploma	16.7%	21.5%	30.4%
Bachelor's Degree or +	53.0%	43.0%	24.8%
Families w/Children	32.8%	40.8%	61.4%
Owner Occupied Home	56.4%	57.7%	66.6%

Community Input

In order to gain additional insight about Santa Fe Public Library, the Consultants engaged Santa Fe residents through Focus Group discussions and community meetings across the City. We also interviewed several Library Stakeholders, including government officials and City employees. In total, 99 community residents and/or stakeholders attended a series of Focus Groups (75 attendees), one-on-one Stakeholder Interviews (8 attendees), and a Strategic Planning Workshop (16 attendees). In a few cases, Library Board, staff, and/or Friends of the Library members attended more than one forum. The Consultants estimate 92 individuals were directly engaged in the process.

Focus Group Discussions. The Consultants facilitated discussions with numerous members of the community, in groups ranging from two to over 20 individuals. Groups included educators, Teens and their parents, the Friends of the Library, Library staff, and members of the Hispanic community.

Stakeholder Interviews. The Consultants also facilitated one-on-one interviews with key City officials and government staff members. Individuals included City Councilors, City employees, and members of the Santa Fe business community.

A synopsis of the feedback, with listed priorities received from all participants:

- ***Locations.*** Public sentiment concerning existing Library buildings and sites:
  1. Midtown: Main Library, new or renovation of Fogelson.
  2. Southside: Reorganization of interior spaces is needed.

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3. Downtown: The existing Main Library could be renovated for a Cultural Center including a Library with the Southwest Collection, plus a 24/7 Kiosk for checkout and return.
4. Accessibility: Open seven days a week for total of at least 62 hours per week.

- *Education.* Library priorities should be:
  1. Strong focus on early childhood education, stressing reading aloud, partnerships with hospitals and physicians with a focus on newborn/young children and their parents.
  2. Continue the Friends of the Library program for parents and newborn with a book and library card.
  3. GED support with classes, resource materials, testing site(s).
  4. Promote literacy of all types for all ages – reading, writing, and digital.
  5. Provide STREAM programming.

- *Community Building.* SFPL has current and relevant database of resources that are accessible 24/7 via Library's website.

- *Staffing.* Library priorities should be:
  1. Multi-lingual staff presence in all facilities 75% of open hours now, with a goal of 100% in three years.
  2. Cross-training.
  3. Working for SFPL leads to a career path.

- *Multi-Cultural/Multi-Lingual.* Infused into everything:
  1. Staffing.
  2. Marketing.
  3. Collections.
  4. Programs.
  5. Explore partnerships.

- *Outreach.* Library priorities should be:
  1. Staffing: One staff member who coordinates SFPL outreach efforts.
  2. Develop partnerships to include retirement communities, day care facilities, public and private schools, Chamber of Commerce, SCORE, Santa Fe small business community, and youth/teen-serving programs.

- *Marketing.* Many people expressed a perception that the general public do not know about everything (or anything) SFPL offers. Priorities could be:
  1. Staff for marketing.
  2. People-oriented, by means of face-to-face communications via taking the library story wherever there is a gathering of Santa Fe folks.
  3. A user friendly website plus a Library app are needed.
  4. Public Service Announcements on local Radio and TV.

5. At least one Library story a week in *Santa Fe New Mexican*.
6. Interior and exterior digital signage at all facilities.
7. A concerted effort to re-register everyone with a 21st Century borrower's card.

- *Communications.* Internal to the SFPL organization:
  1. Encourage ideas up and down the organization and provide feedback.
  2. Encourage cross-pollination.
  3. Employ tools that foster better dissemination of data.
  4. Hold regular staff meetings up and down the organization.
  5. Hold annual staff development days.

- *Technology.* Important for Library operations and services:
  1. SFPL should have its own IT staff with a solid working relationship with City IT.
  2. In the future, customers will rely less on Library PCs and more on their own devices, necessitating seamless connectivity.
  3. Automated materials handling system (AMHS) at Southside and Main Library.
  4. Open access at Southside and Main Libraries with extended hours of service, unstaffed.
  5. Partnerships for classes, from the beginner to the tech-savvy.

Appendix 3.1 presents DecisionWhere's Demographic Comparison Reports for all of Santa Fe City, County, and for each of the three Library communities.

Survey Results from Library Users & Non-Users. The Consultants provided SFPL with survey questions to be used for online and in-person surveys of Library users, to be conducted by SFPL staff. An online SFPL Community Input Survey can be hosted on the SFPL webpage asking general and specific questions about respondent behavior and preferences. The survey contains 19 questions and a place to make general comments for feedback on various aspects of the Library. The same format and content is designed to be administered in paper form to Library visitors, or anywhere in Santa Fe County, if so desired.

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