



Planning Director Tina Wehrmeister contributed a column to the *Pacifica Tribune* to connect with local residents and keep Pacificans informed on issues that are of current interest in the City of Pacifica. Below is the submission for the September 11, 2019 edition of the *Pacifica Tribune*, which focuses on the Pacifica Library Project.

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### **Fall: A Time for Great Books, and Even Better Libraries**

With September upon us, it's hard to believe that fall is almost here. This time of year has always been special to me, because it brings the opportunity to get cozy, spend more time with family, learn a new skill, and dive into my favorite new book.

One of my favorite places to spend a crisp autumn afternoon (when I'm not at work) is at the library. And, in looking at the number of people who visited or borrowed from San Mateo libraries in 2018, I know I'm not alone! Last year, there were more than 137,000 library visits, 229,000 check-outs of materials, 1,400 checkouts of laptops, and 600,000 materials checked out throughout the San Mateo Library system. Our libraries are also where our community gathers for a variety of events, including the (very popular) children's story hour and senior book club.

Libraries remain incredibly important to our community - but it's no secret that Pacifica's libraries need work. Yesterday, I walked over to the Sharp Park Library to return a book. As I headed up the hill, I was struck by how difficult it must be for a person with a stroller or mobility challenges to make their way to the front door. And when I stepped inside, I was again reminded just how many repairs our facilities need. In fact, both the Sharp Park and Sanchez libraries need so many repairs that without them, both libraries could soon become unusable.

This is why, as Planning Director, I'm excited to be leading a Pacifica Libraries Modernization project that would repair and upgrade both facilities for all Pacificans – including our community's children, families, and seniors. The project envisions a brand new, full-service Sharp Park Library with 7-day availability, and transforms the Sanchez Library into a 7-day "Open Access" library and community center.

In addition to being ADA accessible, a new Sharp Park Library will boast modern amenities, expanded digital and physical collections, increase access to the latest technologies, dedicated teen and children's gathering spaces, group study rooms, community meeting spaces, and a collaboration/maker space. The transformed Open-Access Sanchez library would provide Pacifica community members with 7-day access to library books, materials via vending machines and self-service kiosks, as well as to tools such as computers, online resources, and printing, and expansions to programming.

If you have visited Pacifica's Libraries and have also seen newer facilities in the county, including the brand new Half Moon Bay Library, you have no doubt seen for yourself that Pacifica's libraries are the oldest – and smallest – in the San Mateo County Library System. I know we can do better for our community.

All of this is why the City has embarked upon a library modernization project. You can learn more about the exciting plans we have for the future of our libraries, and sign up for project updates, at [www.pacificalibraryproject.com](http://www.pacificalibraryproject.com).

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