




**MEETING OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION**  
**A G E N D A**

DATE: Thursday, March 21, 2019  
TIME: **7:00 p.m. LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING**  
LOCATION: **CONCORD LIBRARY MEETING ROOM**  
**2900 Salvio Street, Concord, CA 94519**

- Electronic agenda packet viewing is available at: <http://guides.ccclib.org/commission>
- Hard copy agenda packets are available for viewing at each [Contra Costa County Library](#)

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Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the Contra Costa County Library Commission to a majority of members of the Library Commission less than 96 hours prior to that meeting are available for public inspection at Contra Costa County Library Administration, 777 Arnold Drive, Suite 210, Martinez, CA 94553.

Library Commissioners, please **call Library Administration**, at (925) 608-7700 by 5 p.m. **Wednesday, March 20, 2019 if you will NOT be at the meeting**. A quorum must be established before a meeting can be held. A record is maintained of Commissioner's attendance.

- 1. 7:00 p.m. (5 mins.)** **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**  
The Library Commission Chair will call the meeting to order. Commissioners will introduce themselves for the record.
- 2. 7:05 p.m. (5 mins.)** **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**  
Visitors will have an opportunity to introduce themselves; self-introductions are voluntary.
- 3. 7:10 p.m. (5 mins.)** **PUBLIC COMMENT –**  
Speakers from the audience may address the Library Commission on any relevant issue that is not scheduled for the agenda. Public comment can be made on agenda items when the item is discussed. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per speaker and speakers may fill out a speaker card. Public comment on agenda items can also be e-mailed to the Library Commission at [ccclibcommission@ccclib.org](mailto:ccclibcommission@ccclib.org) to be received one day prior to the Library Commission meeting.

**PRESENTATION**

- 4. 7:15 p.m. Discussion (15 mins.)** **CCC LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS– *Agenda Attachment 1***  
Deputy County Librarian Gail McPartland will present a written report regarding the dispensation of the special collections currently held at the Pleasant Hill Library.
- 5. 7:30 p.m. (20 mins.)** **ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
Commissioners or library staff may report on any Work Plan activities and make announcements regarding the Library Commission and Library or Friends group activities of interest to other Library Commission members.

**NEW BUSINESS**

6. **7:50 p.m.**  
**ACTION**  
**(20 mins.)**      **STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFT / Second Reading – Agenda Attachment 2**  
Deputy County Librarian Gail McPartland will present the draft and analysis of the updated Strategic Plan which the Commission **will vote to adopt.**

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

7. **8:10 p.m.**  
**ACTION**  
**(35 mins.)**      **WORKING COMMITTEE REPORTS - Agenda Attachments 3 and 4**  
A. Commissioner A. Smith will report on the activities of the Legislative Working Committee. **(20 minutes)**  
B. Commissioner Wilson will report on the activities of the Work Plan & Annual Report Working Committee. Commissioners will report on their activities that support the 2019 Work Plan **(15 minutes)**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

8. **8:45 p.m.**  
**ACTION**  
**(5 mins.)**      **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES - Agenda Attachments 5 and 6**  
Commissioners will approve or amend the minutes for the meetings of November 15, 2018 and January 17, 2019.
9. **8:50 p.m.**  
**INFORMATION**  
**(5 mins.)**      **COUNTY LIBRARIAN REPORT - Agenda Attachment 7**  
County Librarian Melinda Cervantes submits a written report on items of interest to Commissioners.
10. **8:55 p.m.**  
**ACTION**  
**(5 mins.)**      **AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING and FUTURE TOPICS**  
Commissioners will suggest items for future meetings.
11. **9:00 p.m.**  
**ACTION**      **ADJOURNMENT TO THE May 16, 2019 LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING, to be held at the Concord Library, 1900 Salvio Street, Concord 94519.**

**ITEMS TO CALENDAR**

1. The July 18, 2019 Commission meeting will be held at the Brentwood Library.
2. **“TENTATIVE”** The annual Library Forum event will be held at the San Ramon Library on October 26, 2019 from 8:30 am until 1pm.

## Contra Costa County Library

### Pleasant Hill Library Collection Assessment and Recommendations Spring 2019

In November 2016, the residents of Pleasant Hill approved Measure K which provides for a new library for the City of Pleasant Hill. The new Pleasant Hill Library is scheduled to open in 2021. The current building will be demolished and a temporary facility will be established at an offsite location. This move requires Contra Costa County Library to distribute the collection of approximately 135,000 items to the other 25 county libraries or into other community resource centers.

The Pleasant Hill Library was opened in 1961. The physical size of the library and its adjacency to the then Library Administration for the then library organization which was a large central library with satellite branches. The intent of the central library was to support patrons with in-depth reference or collection needs while also serving as a repository of special collections. In 2006, Contra Costa County Library made the strategic decision to transition from a central library organization to a peer library system where a full range of library services are intended to be delivered at the first point of contact rather than referring the patron to a central library location. This meant that the Pleasant Hill Library was no longer considered the main central library but a peer library that focused on the needs of the local community rather than the broader county needs.

The peer library model has continued to develop since 2006. Local collections are designed to meet local community needs. Patrons are able to place holds on library items in any branch library and it will be shipped to the patron's preferred location. Contra Costa County Library also participates in Link+ which allows patrons to request items from libraries throughout California and Nevada for temporary loan at the library of choice. Since the advent of the Internet, the Library has sought to make a variety of resources available throughout the community including from home or work.

With the peer library organization well established and the Pleasant Hill Library to be transitioned to a new building, this creates an opportunity for Contra Costa County Library to reevaluate those collections still stored at the current location. Collections of local history, genealogy, newspaper microfilm, and a depository for Federal, State, and local government documents. As a result of the move of the Pleasant Hill Library to a new location, the library will be determining how and where to house these special collections. Listed here are the various collections held in Pleasant Hill Library and information on their depth as well as recommendations for possible dispensation.

#### Local History

Collection Size: 3,050

Description and Discussion:

Items in this collection pertain to the history of the county and its cities and localities. This collection is an invaluable and unique research resource. Many of the items are rare and irreplaceable. Although there is controlled access to the material, most of the materials, due to age and fragile condition, need preservation. Preservation requires maintaining the items either in their original form or having their content transformed into a more permanent and usable format, such as a digitized file or format. Ongoing maintenance and development of this resource is highly desirable to retain its historical and research value.

The collection consists two areas, the Vault Collection, which contains items of relating to Contra Costa County history, including towns and cities, people, and events, with an emphasis on uniqueness and the Baldwin Collection, a smaller, secondary collection consisting of Californiana and a limited selection of materials focusing on Northern California. The material includes books, pamphlets, newspapers in hard copy and microform formats, vertical files of clippings from newspapers and other print sources, maps, photographs, city directories, telephone directories, high school yearbooks, census microfilm, and other archival historical material.

The Vault collection is located in a small temperature controlled room with a humidity monitor. The Baldwin collection is located in an enclosed locked cabinet in the public area. Patrons are able to retrieve the materials with the assistance of staff. Patrons are not allowed to check out the materials and research must be done onsite during open hours. Accessibility and preservation of the collection are of the utmost importance. It is essential that any future location is able to accommodate these needs. The library does not have a comparable space in size or environmental controls in any other locations. To keep the collection as a library resource, the collection would have to be dismantled and distributed among several libraries.

The Library recommends working with the Contra Costa County Historical Society's History Center in Martinez, CA as a possible location for the collection. The mission of the Contra Costa County Historical Society is to preserve, protect, and provide public access to the records and heritage of Contra Costa County. The Center is an archive specifically open to the public for the purpose of research. It is currently open 21 hours a week and one Saturday a month. The History Center is partially funded by County funds and has a large volunteer base. It is centrally located in in the County seat. The History Center offers a climate controlled space that is equipped with a monitored fire detection system and burglary alarm. Perhaps the most valuable advantage is that the materials would remain a single cohesive collection rather than parceled out to individual libraries that may lack preservation standards.

#### Recommendations:

1. Investigate, and if feasible, relocate the collection to the Contra Costa County Historical Society.
2. Investigate, and if feasible, change of ownership from Contra Costa County Library to the Historical Society.

### Genealogy – Heritage Collection

Collection Items: 3,300

#### Description and Discussion:

The Heritage Collection is a collection of genealogical materials that includes books, pamphlets, newsletters, magazines, microfiche files, and internet resources. The original collection was established in the Pleasant Hill

Library by members of the Contra Costa County Genealogy Society. The organization's Heritage Collection Committee continues to contribute material to the collection. Library staff perform cataloging and processing of donated materials for the collection. This symbiotic arrangement has worked well and is expected to continue to enhance the collection. The current collection consists of 3,300 titles that emphasizes American genealogy and includes genealogies for specific geographical regions, family histories, military members, immigration/passenger records, and church records.

In order to provide continued access to the collection after the eventual construction of the new Pleasant Hill Library, the Library met with local genealogy societies to discuss possible locations for the collection. The Walnut Creek Library was selected because of its central location, access to public transportation, number of open hours and available space. The collection was moved in early 2018 and has experienced an increase in use. Volunteers monitor and shelve the collection, and are available to assist patrons with genealogical research.

Remaining at Pleasant Hill Library is a small genealogy pamphlet and periodical collection. Volunteers have expressed interest in having these items moved to augment the collection already in place.

Recommendations:

1. Keep the collection at the Walnut Creek Library.
2. Move remaining items from Pleasant Hill Library to Walnut Creek Library.

## Microfilm Magazines, Newspapers, and Census

Collection Size: Approximately 20,000 items

Description and Discussion:

The Pleasant Hill Library houses an extensive microfilm collection consisting of magazines, newspapers, and census information. A majority of the information is now duplicated through online resources and the microfilm collection can be narrowed down to focus on historical newspapers specific to Contra Costa County and local census information. The result would be a collection of 5,500 reels. There are also two smaller microfilm collection located in east county, Antioch, and in west county, Pinole. Each collection has unique information pertaining to local communities and duplicate some of the local history found in the collection located in the Pleasant Hill Library.

It is recommended that the collection be distributed between the three regional collections focusing on local history. All information pertaining to East County historical newspapers would move to the Antioch Library and all West County newspapers would move to the Pinole Library. The Walnut Creek Library is able to house the collection pertaining to the central county. It is also recommended that the census information be moved to Walnut Creek Library to support the research in the Genealogy – Heritage Collection.

Recommendation:

1. Keep the regional collections at the Antioch and Pinole Library.
2. Move remaining items pertaining to Central County from Pleasant Hill Library to Walnut Creek Library.

## Federal Depository Library Program Documents

Collection Size: Approximately 4,200

### Description and Discussion:

The Contra Costa County Library was designated as the Federal Depository Library for the Tenth Congressional District in October 1964. As a designated selective federal depository, the Library's mission is to make government publications freely available for the use of the general public and to meet the government information needs of the people who live and work in greater Contra Costa County.

In 2008, the Library began to subscribe to Marcive's Documents without Shelves. The service ensures the library maintains Depository status by providing open access to federal documents through the Library catalog. The online electronic format maximizes both accessibility to government publications and cost effectiveness in Library collection development and replaces the need to collect a physical collection. The Library is now recognized by the Federal Depository Library Program (FDPL) as an electronic depository with a small collection of historical government information in print format.

Items duplicated in the online format may be removed from the collection using procedures defined by the Federal Depository Program. Specifically, a library may remove items once items are offered and claimed by other libraries in the program.

### Recommendation:

1. Transition to a completely Digital Federal Depository.
2. Remove items using Federal Depository Library Program procedures.

## State and Local Government Documents

Collection Size: Approximately 4,700

### Description and Discussion:

Contra Costa County Library is considered a State Depository Library. The collection houses publications in several formats: print, microform, CD-ROM, and online resources for State, Regional, and local county and municipal agencies. The collection emphasizes reference, statistical and popular materials over those for instructional or research purposes. Several items in the collection have been superseded with newer information and should be removed according to State Depository Library Program procedures. The Library creates online access when available. Electronic access is preferred as it ensures patrons are able to access the most current information at any time from any locations.

### Recommendation:

1. Continue to link materials to available online resources.
2. Remove superseded and duplicate items using State Depository Library Program procedures.

## Storage and Magazine Collections

Collection Size: Approximately 7,500

### Description and Discussion:

These two collections were developed through the past practice of sending last copies of titles to the central location for collection archiving. The library moved away from this practice when the peer library organization was adopted. These items should have been de-selected according to the current de-selection guidelines as noted in the Collection Development Plan.

### Recommendation:

1. Review items using established Collection Development Plan standards.
2. Distribute essential titles to Branch Libraries.

## Circulating Collection

Collection Size: 92,533

### Description:

Countywide, Contra Costa County Library has a collection of 1.4 million items. The Contra Costa County Library Collection Development Plan specifies guidelines for selection, retention, and de-selection of all materials both physical and virtual. In keeping with the Collection Development Plan, staff is committed to reviewing all items in Pleasant Hill Library to ensuring all items meeting collection guidelines are kept and, if possible, available to the entire county. At this time it is unknown if the volume of materials can be absorbed by the other branches. The alternative is storing the collection until the new library opens. Past experience with storing collections has not proved favorable since items are not immediately available for patrons. The Library has started and will continue reviewing each item for disposition to another county library or the Pleasant Hill Library temporary facility.

### Recommendations:

1. Continue reviewing circulating collection to meet Collection Development Plan standards.
2. Distribute collection to other branch libraries, where feasible.
3. As a last resort, consider storing remaining collection if items are considered viable for the new library opening in 2021.

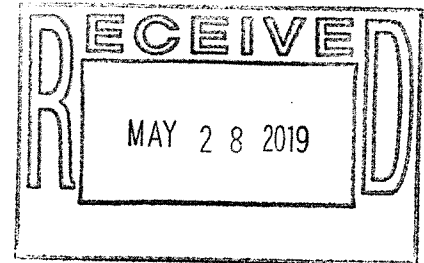
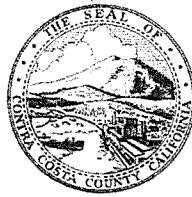
Appendices – inventory of special collections

Grand Jury

Contra  
Costa  
County

725 Court Street  
P.O. Box 431  
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

May 21, 2019



Mr. Kenneth Carlson  
Mayor  
City of Pleasant Hill  
100 Gregory Lane  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Mayor Carlson,

Thank you for your letter regarding Grand Jury Report 1903, "Safeguarding the Library's Local History Collection." I apologize for the incorrect attribution for the entity responsible for the decision to close the Pleasant Hill library before a new facility is opened.

We have removed the current report from our website and will replace it with a corrected copy indicating the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors as the responsible party. However, I would like to remind all parties that the ongoing issue is what is being done to preserve the irreplaceable historical collection currently housed in the Pleasant Hill library's vault?

I apologize if the attribution error created any inconvenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard S. Nakano".

Richard S. Nakano  
Foreperson, 2018-2019 Civil Grand Jury

Cc: Honorable Anita Santos  
City of Pleasant Hill City Council  
June Catalano, City Manager  
Janet Coleson, City Attorney  
Karen Mitchoff, Contra Costa County Supervisor

**A REPORT BY  
THE 2018-2019 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
725 Court Street  
Martinez, California 94553

Report 1903

**Safeguarding the Library's Local  
History Collection**

APPROVED BY THE GRAND JURY

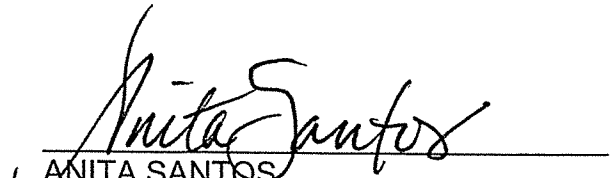
Date MAY 21, 2019



RICHARD S. NAKANO  
GRAND JURY FOREPERSON

ACCEPTED FOR FILING

Date MAY 21 2019



ANITA SANTOS  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Contact: Richard Nakano  
Foreperson  
925-522-6941

Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report 1903

**Safeguarding the Library's Local History Collection**

**TO: Contra costa county Board of Supervisors,  
Contra Costa County Library**

**SUMMARY**

In its efforts to modernize its operations to serve patrons' needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Contra Costa County Library system (the Library) could lose important and irreplaceable remnants of the county's rich history and heritage.

Libraries today are more than repositories of books and records. They are community centers providing patrons of all ages and backgrounds with programs and activities, promoting literacy, and enabling access to technology and the unlimited opportunities available on the World Wide Web.

With 26 locations in Contra Costa County, the Library is successfully pursuing its strategic goals of:

- Ensuring easy, equitable access to library services for all county residents
- Championing adult and child literacy
- Delivering a consistent, high quality, and inviting experience for its patrons

The Library maintains special collections on subjects such as genealogy, jazz, and Russian literature that are available to patrons interested in those subjects. However, the Library's large collection of books and materials on the local history of Contra Costa County (the Collection) is another story. These materials are housed mainly in a secure and climate-controlled vault at the Pleasant Hill branch. That facility is scheduled to close in late September of 2019 to make way for a new branch scheduled to open in the Spring of 2021. If plans are not in place to safeguard the Collection before the Pleasant Hill branch closes, the people of Contra Costa County could be at risk of losing a collection of historical materials that cannot be replaced.

The Library values its total collection at nearly \$46 million for insurance purposes. That

amount does not include a replacement value for the Collection, which the Library deems irreplaceable. If your home were to burn, you could rebuild it and replace the furniture, clothing, and appliances with insurance money. But no amount of insurance could help to replace the family photo albums. The Library's Collection, with its rare books, old records, vintage photographs, letters, and other memorabilia, is the county's family album.

The Grand Jury recommends that the Library consider implementing plans for safeguarding the Collection in the short term and ensuring that it will be preserved and available for public use over the long term.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Grand Jury:

- Conducted multiple interviews with Library staff and outside professionals in the historical preservation field
- Examined the Library budgets for 2014-2018
- Reviewed the Library's inventory of its special collections
- Studied the Library's Collection Development Plan, its annual work plans, its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, and its 2017 triennial review
- Reviewed assessments of the Collection and the Contra Costa County Historical Society by outside experts
- Examined agendas, minutes, and other documents from meetings of the Contra Costa County Library Commission (2014-2018)
- Visited the vault and other locations at the Pleasant Hill branch and the Contra Costa County Historical Society in Martinez

## **BACKGROUND**

This investigation began when members of the Grand Jury learned that people in the community had raised concerns about what might happen to the Collection when the Pleasant Hill branch closes in anticipation of its move to a new facility. Patrons noticed that the Library had made arrangements to move its genealogy collection from Pleasant Hill to Walnut Creek, but had not announced plans to move the Collection, much of which is housed in a vault at the Pleasant Hill branch.

The Grand Jury began its investigation by examining agendas, minutes and staff reports of the county's Library Commission to see if this issue had been considered by that body. We found no mention of the Collection in those records dating back to 2014. In fact, we found only one reference to any of the Library's special collections during that

time period: a September 25, 2014 agenda item mentioning that, "Commissioners will discuss disposition or storage of the jazz collection during the closure of the San Ramon Library for remodel and expansion in the Fall of 2015."

The Grand Jury noted that Commission records did not reference any similar discussions of collections housed at the Pleasant Hill branch in view of its pending closure. The Jury decided to look into the Library's policies and procedures governing its special collections and how they are being applied in the case of Pleasant Hill.

### **History, Goals, and Preservation Policy**

The Library was founded in 1913 and now has 26 branches in 18 cities and unincorporated communities. The Library serves all of Contra Costa County with the exception of Richmond, which has its own city library system. The Library reports to the Board of Supervisors through the County Administrator. A 24-member Library Commission was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1991 to serve in an advisory role, providing community input on the Library's policies and operations.

The Library developed its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan following broad public input. That plan established four goals, along with objectives and strategies for addressing them. The goals are:

1. *The Library ensures easy, equitable access to library services for all Contra Costa County residents.*
2. *The Library champions personal and community engagement in literacy and reading to enrich lives.*
3. *The Library delivers a consistent, high-quality, and inviting experience at all points of contact.*
4. *The Library successfully promotes its value, programs, and opportunities to the community.*

These goals, and their accompanying objectives and strategies, were intended to drive decisions and activities through 2017. The Strategic Plan makes no mention of the handling of special collections that the Library owns. The Library's special collections policies are covered in its Collection Development Plan, drafted in 2011. The relevant section of the plan states:

*As part of this role [Preservation of Materials] the Library will preserve and conserve unique and endangered information resources that it collects and retains. The Library will actively monitor the physical conditions of its collections and take action to prevent deterioration.*

The plan lists nine special collections. Library staff is responsible for seven activities in connection with those collections:

1. *Define the criteria for unique and endangered information resources*
2. *Identify collections that meet the criteria*
3. *Secure funding to support preservation and conservation*
4. *Educate staff in techniques of preservation and conservation*
5. *Develop agreements for retention and/or exchange of materials*
6. *Identify institutions or organizations willing to accept and store preserved materials or materials in need of preservation (i.e. local history)*
7. *Participate in the California Preservations Workshops regarding Disaster Preparedness and Response*

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Preserving the Past While Building the Future**

The Library's Collection Development Plan notes that the Collection constitutes "an invaluable and unique research resource." The Plan states that, "Ongoing maintenance and development of this resource is highly desirable to retain its historical and research value." It assigns responsibility for this maintenance and development to branch librarians.

The Library's assessment of the importance of preserving the Collection as libraries modernize is widely accepted among scholars and library professionals. For example, in her 2018 book about the evolution of libraries into "information and knowledge centers rather than simply storehouses of material," author Susan Orlean acknowledges that she could not have written the book without accessing "the musty boxes of material stashed in the library's Rare Books room." (Susan Orlean, *The Library Book*, Simon & Schuster, 2018)

Today's libraries have evolved from places where people can browse and borrow books, to spaces where the public can meet, learn, mingle, and access technology. Susan Orlean's note is a reminder that libraries must also preserve the archives that document our collective past.

### **The Collection at Risk**

The building that houses the Pleasant Hill branch is more than 50 years old and has deferred maintenance needs estimated at \$10 million. In 2014, the Library and the City of Pleasant Hill began making plans for closing the Pleasant Hill branch and replacing it with a new, modernized library. In Contra Costa, branch libraries are built, owned (with

some exceptions), and maintained by the cities in which they are located. The Library owns and maintains the materials housed in the branches and provides the staff to operate the branches.

The Pleasant Hill City Council created a Library Task Force in March 2014 to explore prospects for building a new library. The city hired the architecture firm of Bohlin Lywinski Jackson and conducted extensive outreach to the local community to determine priorities, which were integrated with the Library's strategic goals. The city held a town hall meeting in November 2018 to give the public an opportunity to review the new design. Neither the design itself, nor the town hall discussion, included any mention of a vault or other climate-controlled environment, or any provision for housing the local history Collection. <http://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/1226/Library-Project>

Library staff searched for locations within the Library system that might be able to house some or all of the Collection, but no solution was found. The Library has also had preliminary discussions with external organizations that might be able to provide space for the Collection. These include the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley and the Contra Costa County Historical Society in Martinez. The Library has not entered into agreements with any of these organizations to house the Collection.

Library managers said they would begin working on a formal plan for disposition of the collection in early 2019. At the time of this report, none of the components of such a plan had been established, including a needs assessment, cost estimates, a survey of Library facilities, and a list of organizations that could potentially house the Collection.

One additional obstacle is the fact that the Library does not have anyone on staff or contract who is a professional archivist or preservationist. While this report was being prepared, the Library received a grant of professional preservationist services from the California State Library. The grant will provide access to a preservation assessment. According to a presentation to the county Board of Supervisors, the assessment will "include scope and scale of preservation needed as well as recommendations for care of the collection." The Library says this information will provide a basis for developing plans for the short- and long-term future of the Collection.

A pressing issue is that the county Board of Supervisors decided to close the Pleasant Hill branch a year and a half before the new facility is scheduled to open. This decision was made to enable the county to take advantage of the current real estate market to pursue a sale of the property. On May 3, 2019, the Board of Supervisors announced that the Pleasant Hill library will remain open until late Spring 2020. This could give the Library additional time to develop and implement a short-term plan. So far, the Library has not developed a plan to ensure the safety and security of the Collection temporarily if the building is closed or demolished before a long-term solution can be implemented.

## **Making Progress**

Despite the absence of historical preservation on its list of strategic priorities and the lack of plans for handling the Collection either temporarily or permanently, the Library has taken some steps to care for the Collection, in keeping with provisions in its Collection Development Plan described above. The California Preservation Program at UC Berkeley conducted a Preservation Needs Assessment of the Library's "Californiana" collection in May 2013, including the Collection. The study made recommendations for security and protection from damage by fire, water, and other environmental hazards. The Library has been working through these recommendations, implementing them where it could, and assessing the feasibility of implementing some of the more difficult or expensive recommendations.

The report also calls for hiring an expert to evaluate the need for a regional local history resource and the potential for the Collection to meet that need. The justification for the recommendation notes that:

*The Californiana collection materials take up space that could be used for other Library functions, they need ongoing care to be used safely by library patrons, and they would require dedicated staff to maximize their value to the community. Insofar as the community served may extend well beyond Contra Costa County, the Library could explore opportunities to secure grant funding to hire a consultant to perform the recommended analysis.*

Given the pending closure of the Pleasant Hill branch, the Library could consider revisiting the recommendation in the context of determining the best future for the Collection.

## **A Potential Solution**

The closing of the Pleasant Hill branch creates urgency about what to do with the Collection in the short term. At the same time, it also presents potential long-term opportunities for an upgrade. Most of the Collection is housed in Pleasant Hill, but some items are scattered throughout other branches and could potentially be brought together in a single facility. In addition, if the Library were able to partner with an external organization, it could be housed in a place where preserving historical materials for public use is a priority.

One possible organization to partner with is the Contra Costa County Historical Society (Historical Society). <https://www.cocohistory.org/> The Library's and the Historical Society's collections both cover the history of the county, making them complementary. The Historical Society is housed in a secure, climate- and humidity-controlled building in downtown Martinez. The facility includes a small exhibition space, room for patrons to study, and a large state-of-the-art scanner. The scanner enables materials to be

digitized to ensure their preservation and allows the Historical Society to discard bulky items where there is little or no value in retaining the originals.

Like the Library, the Historical Society underwent an assessment by the California Preservation Program and is implementing its recommendations. In addition, the Historical Society underwent an organizational assessment in 2014 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the American Alliance of Museums. That study concluded that, "The (Historical Society) is a very professionally run organization with a strong volunteer staff, an experienced executive director, and a wealth of fascinating collections."

The Historical Society's mission is "to preserve, protect, and provide public access to the records and heritage of Contra Costa County." Acquiring the Library's Collection would align with this mission.

There are obstacles that would have to be addressed in order for a partnership between the two organizations to succeed. For example, the Historical Society might not have sufficient space to absorb the Collection. It would likely require help from the county, either with funding or building space. But if a successful agreement could be forged, a partnership between the Library and the Historical Society would provide the county with a means of permanently safeguarding the Library's irreplaceable Collection and ensuring its availability for public use.

## **FINDINGS**

- F1. The Library is transitioning from a traditional storehouse for books into a technology center, literacy advocate, and community gathering place.
- F2. The Pleasant Hill branch is closing in the Spring of 2020, to make way for a new library branch.
- F3. The new branch will not be able to house the Library's Contra Costa County history Collection, most of which is currently housed in Pleasant Hill.
- F4. The Library does not have a short-term plan for safeguarding the Collection after the Pleasant Hill branch closes, before a long-term plan can be implemented.
- F5. The Library has not developed a long-term plan for permanently housing the Collection.
- F6. The Library has received a grant of professional preservationist services that will provide a basis on which to develop short- and long-term plans for safeguarding and housing the Collection.
- F7. The Contra Costa County Historical Society is a potential repository for the Collection.

F8. The Contra Costa County Historical Society would like to house the Library's Collection.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Library should consider developing a short-term plan by September 2019 for safeguarding the Collection while a long-term plan is being developed and implemented.
- R2. The Board of Supervisors should consider directing the Library to develop a long-term plan for housing the Collection, including a budget, by June 2020.
- R3. The Board of Supervisors should consider directing the Library to explore the feasibility of an agreement with the Contra Costa County Historical Society for housing the Collection by August 2019.
- R4. The Board of Supervisors should consider providing the financial resources necessary to fund the budget for the long-term plan in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

	Findings	Recommendations
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors	F4, F7, and F8	R2, R3, and R4
Contra Costa County Library	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, and F8	R1

These responses must be provided in the format and by the date set forth in the cover letter that accompanies this report. An electronic copy of these responses in the form of a Word document should be sent by e-mail to [ctadmin@contracosta.courts.ca.gov](mailto:ctadmin@contracosta.courts.ca.gov) and a hard (paper) copy should be sent to:

Civil Grand Jury – Foreperson  
725 Court Street  
P.O. Box 431  
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

