

Mountain View Library

Service & Spending Overview 2017

Prepared for the Mountain View Library Board of Trustees
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4/24/17

SUMMARY

This report provides statistics for Mountain View and our nearby benchmark libraries. It focuses on the three key issues for evaluating the library:

- Do our benchmark libraries offer the service?
- How do our service/funding levels compare with those of benchmark libraries?
- What is the 5-year impact to the public?

For the two most important library service elements:

- Mountain View is open two hours less per week (3%) than average
- Mountain View invested 5% less on materials per capita than average in FY16-17
 - o On a 5-year basis, it invested 11% less on materials per capita

Because books are used and re-used for many years, materials spending has a cumulative impact on collection quality. The best assessment of collection quality is a 5-year comparison, and on that basis Mountain View remains below average by \$71K/year.

Except for materials, Mountain View has reasonable comparisons to its benchmark libraries, offering similar services at roughly the same costs. Mountain View is the only city library in the Bay area that provides bookmobile service.

Library Board reports from prior years, along with other library comparison details, are available online at:

<http://sites.google.com/site/mvlibraryinfo>

KEY LIBRARY SERVICE COMPARISONS

Regular Operating Hours

	Hours/Week (2017)	Days Closed (2017)	Ann. Hours Open FY15-16
Mountain View	64	14	3,194
Sunnyvale	66	14	3,307
Palo Alto	68	14.5	3,248
Pleasanton	62	17	3,224
Redwood City	63	17.5	3,276
Los Altos	71	15.5	not in CSL report
Average w/o MV	66.0	15.7	3,264

Mobile Library Service (Bookmobile)

Only Mountain View offers a city mobile library service. County service for Los Altos.

Access to Materials at Other Libraries: Link+ / ILL

All libraries offer free Link+ or similar free access to materials in a multi-library system.

Los Altos also offers traditional inter-library loans and charges \$4. The other libraries do not offer traditional ILL.

Access to Popular Materials at the Local Library: Holds/Reserves

All libraries offer holds on books, eBooks, audio books, music CDs and DVDs, insuring all patrons have an opportunity to borrow items even if they cannot get to the library frequently.

All holds are free. Sunnyvale does not allow holds on some DVDs/CDs. Palo Alto and MV charge \$1 if you do not pick up your item.

Access to Online Materials (Internet Terminals for General Public Use)

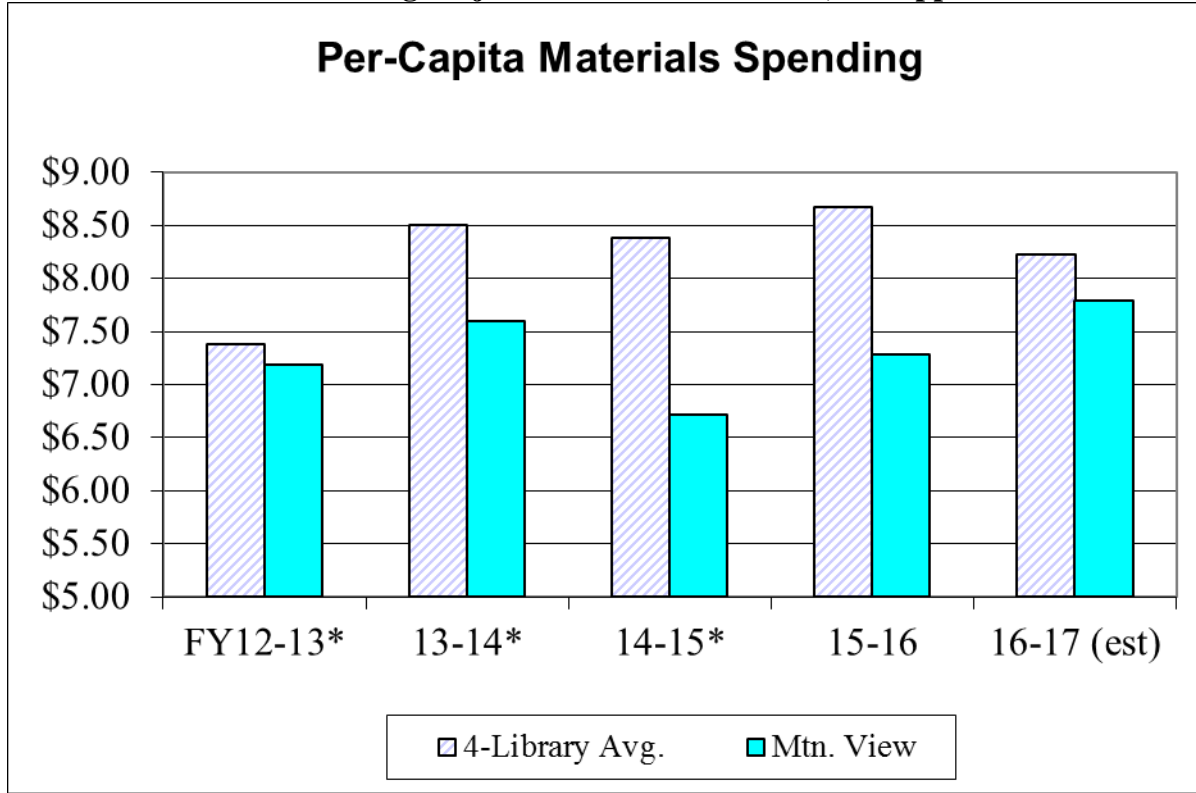
All libraries offer free Wi-Fi and Internet terminals. Terminals at some other libraries might be restricted to training only, so figures may not be directly comparable.

Terminals: MV: 45; Sunnyvale: 55; Palo Alto:42; Pleasanton: 27; Redwood City: 58

Fines

	Std. Fines	DVD Fines
Mountain View	\$0.25	\$0.25
Sunnyvale	\$0.30	\$0.30
Palo Alto	\$0.30	\$0.30
Pleasanton	\$0.20	\$1.00
Redwood City	\$0.25	\$0.25
Los Altos	\$0.25	\$0.25
Average w/o MV	\$0.26	\$0.42

ACCESS TO LOCAL LIBRARY MATERIALS
[benchmark average adjusted down for Palo Alto; see Appendix 1]



Source: *California Library Statistics*; CLS Reports FY2015-16; Director est. 16-17

All years include donations by the Friends; roughly \$40K-\$50K/year in recent times

* MV 1-time funding includes \$60K in FYE14 & ~\$10K/yr. the last 3 years; also
see Appendix 1 for Palo Alto adjustment & methodology notes

Materials Spending Based on Mtn. View Population

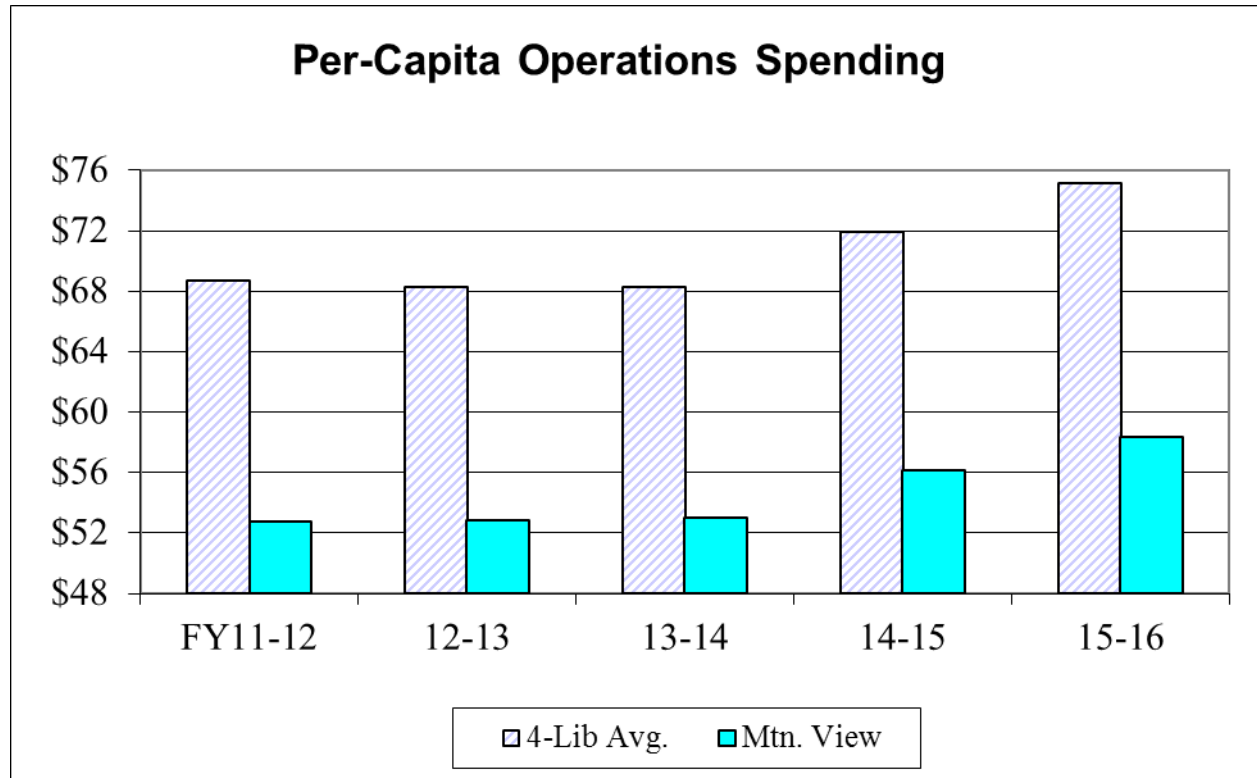
	12-13*	13-14*	14-15*	15-16	16-17 (est)
4-Lib. Avg.	\$562,786	\$653,406	\$652,929	\$676,292	\$640,562
Mtn. View	\$547,688	\$582,962	\$523,583	\$567,523	\$607,000
MV Shortfall	\$15,098	\$70,444	\$129,346	\$108,769	\$33,562
5-Yr. Short					\$357,220
MV / 4-Lib	97%	89%	80%	84%	95%

Multiplying the per-capita figures by Mountain View's population provides these total dollar differences in spending versus the four-library average. After adjusting for population, we spent 5% below average in FY16-17 and 11% below the 5-year average.

Conclusion:

To hold an "average" collection, Mountain View needs to increase baseline city funding by \$71K and maintain that for at least five years.

OPERATIONS SPENDING / FTE / PRODUCTIVITY
(salaries, wages, benefits, and other operating expenditures)



Source: *California Library Statistics*; CLS Reports FY2015-16

MV Per Capita Operations Spending as Percentage of 4-Lib Average

	FY11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
MV / 4-Lib	77%	77%	78%	78%	78%

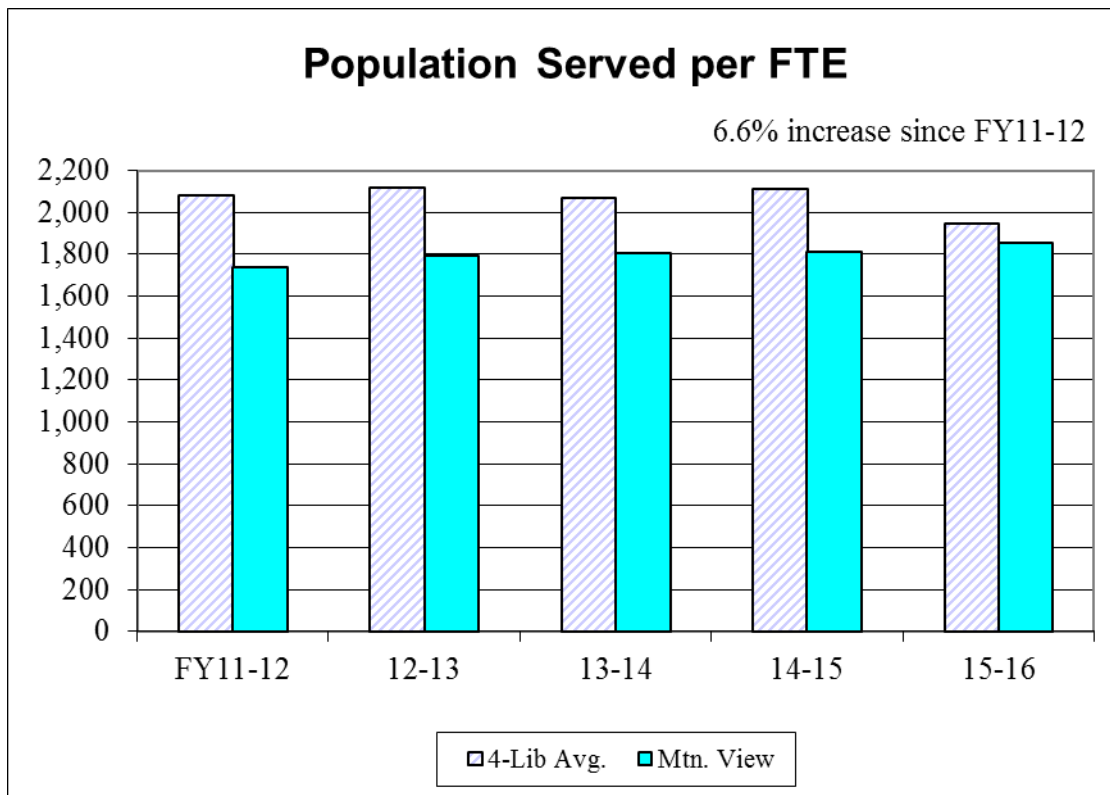
CLS shows that Mountain View spends less on operations than the benchmark libraries, but this reflects city accounting differences since Mountain View uses more FTE to serve its population (see next page).

Those accounting differences probably remain fairly consistent, so it's more useful to view changes over time as a percentage of the average in the table.

Note: Accounting differences could include overhead allocations and inter-departmental charge-backs such as IT services for library Internet computers and networking.

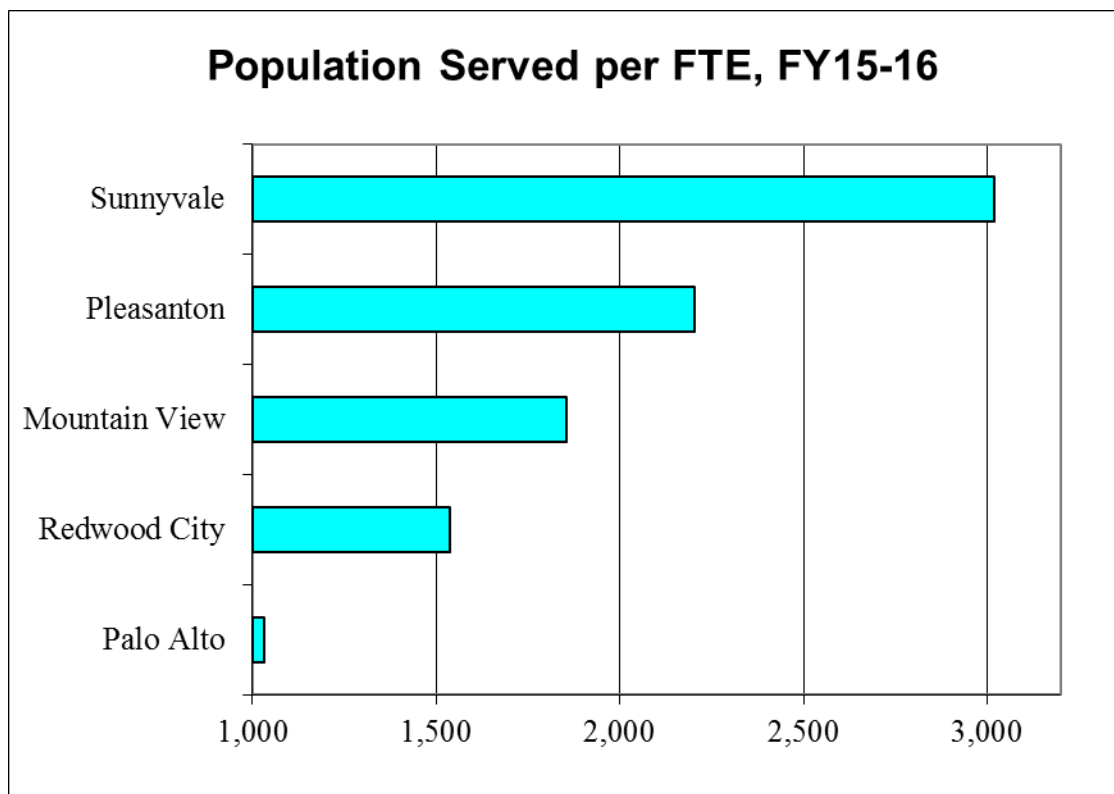
Summary:

Mountain View uses more FTE for its population than average, but its operating costs have remained in line with changes at benchmark libraries over the past five years.



Source: *California Library Statistics*; CLS Reports FY2015-16

Note: higher numbers mean more efficient, but possibly lower quality, service



Appendix 1: OTHER COMPARISONS FOR MATERIALS

In 2016 the Board evaluated ten different ways to compare materials spending between libraries. See the Board's 2016 report and its Appendix 1 for details. The Board concluded:

1) Our 4-library per capita average provides the best benchmark

Selecting Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Pleasanton and using the per capita average provides the best metric for evaluating the Mountain View collection. It is fiscally conservative. Other metrics show even larger shortfalls by Mountain View in materials spending, and thus our benchmark is a **minimum** target for the collection.

2) Middle 8/10 per capita provides the best alternative

This uses per capita spending from the 10 cities used by Mountain View for city employee salary comparisons, and then calculates the average of the middle eight cities. That removes large 1-time anomalies (highest/lowest) and uses a larger sample size to average out other short-term variations than does our 4-library model. Because of how some cities report data, it's harder to obtain and compile this info. Since it will typically produce a higher spending benchmark than the 4-library model, the Board is using the more conservative 4-library model.

3) Other models have serious drawbacks

Other models, including various percent of library or city budget assessments, have limitations that make them less useful than our first two options. Because cities have different cost allocation and accounting practices, percentage of spend models are usually misleading.

Manual Adjustments FY13-14 and FY14-15 for Palo Alto

Palo Alto had very large increases to materials spending in these two years. That greatly improved their collection quality. However, the Board decided to take a fiscally conservative approach for benchmarking and reduced this increase by about \$1 million to limit its impact on our target benchmark.

Like with the "middle 8/10" model, this means the benchmark average in our report is lower than actual spending by others, and thus makes for a minimum target for Mountain View.

Appendix 2: Background, Data Sources, and Assumptions

The Library Board considered many factors in identifying the benchmark libraries, and re-evaluated those factors in Fall 2013. They include:

- Data available in CSL Statistics (official, reliable, low incremental collection costs)
- Proximity to Mountain View: residents expect similar services/experiences
- Population served: avoids biasing of data from scale economies
- Enough cities so that unusual 1-year changes get somewhat averaged out
- Limited number to keep data collection, analysis, and reporting manageable
- Balance of other community/library characteristics between the choices

Based on these factors, the best set to compare with Mountain View are Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, Redwood City, and Pleasanton. Los Altos is included in the “Services” section of this report due to its proximity, but it is part of the county system and does not report individual library statistics to the CA State Library for our other comparisons.

This report uses the following data sources:

- Key Library Service Comparisons information collected by Randall Stock in March 2017 from the respective library websites and phone calls
- California Library Statistics, published annually by the California State Library
- FY2015-16 Reports for California Library Statistics, provided by Bay area libraries
- FY2016-17 estimates from the Mountain View Library Director based on YTD actuals
- Internet Terminals are reported for only the main library in cities with branches

Per-capita statistics adjust for population differences between cities. We balance out other differences by using the average per-capita spending of all four benchmark libraries.

The benchmark materials spending figures are actually considerably higher than shown here. Palo Alto had special \$500K grants in both FY13-14 and FY14-15. While those grants did provide their residents with many new books, for MV budget planning we eliminated more than \$1 million in grants from our comparisons.

Materials spending and traditional operating expenses have very different characteristics. Operating expenses mostly affect service in a single year. Materials are used and re-used for many years, and thus have a cumulative impact. This cumulative impact means a \$1 cut to materials is akin to cutting \$3-\$5 from an operating expense such as programs or staffing.

Single-year statistics are thus important for operations, and five-year numbers are more relevant for materials. Most books last longer than five years, but some materials have a shorter life-span and thus five years is taken as a reasonable average.

To treat the four benchmark libraries equally, averages are calculated by summing the four library figures and dividing by four (a straight average). Library Board reports from prior years, along with other library comparison details, are available online at:

<http://sites.google.com/site/mvlibraryinfo>