[ms-0398.039.010.008]

County of San Diego

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JAN 27 1992
Ans'd. DJA

December 12, 1991

TO: Judith McConnell, Presiding Judge
Superior Court

Edwin Miller, Jr.
District Attorney

Cecil Steppe, Chief Probation Officer

Jim Smyth, Project Manager
Citizens Law Enforcement Review Board

FROM: Bob Griego,
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

POSSIBLE COST SAVING MEASURES FOR THE DOWNTOWN COURT/OFFICE BUILDING

As you are aware, on November 5, 1991, the Board directed that staff develop potential cost saving measures for the Downtown Court/Office building. This effort was to consider a variety of factors including the results of the consultant's analyses, input from the building occupants, and policy direction from the Board of Supervisors. While it may appear that the savings from some of the measures are relatively small, the collective impacts may be significant. Please be advised that there has been no final decision on which one of these measures will be implemented in the new facility.

It is our intent to have a professional cost estimator prepare cost estimates for both the program that was presented to the Board in November, and an alternative program which incorporates cost saving measures. In the development of these cost cutting measures, we attempted to eliminate those that would have a negative impact on maintenance and operating costs. As a part of the evaluation of these cost savings measures, it is also our intent to consider ongoing maintenance and operating costs.

In addition we intend to present to the Board the estimated dollar value associated with each one of the potential cost saving measures. Presumably, at the workshop that will be scheduled on this subject, the Board will provide some policy direction regarding which measures should be included in the building.

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Summarized below are the possible cost saving measures which have been identified:

1. Elimination of space related to Criminal Courts.

   Comment: This would consist of holding areas, the sallyport, and some of the attorney/client conference space associated with the courtroom module. A small holding area could be provided for those civil cases which have incustody defendants/witnesses.

2. Provide on site parking for VIP employees only.

   Comment: The costs of providing on site parking can vary between $10,000 (above grade)-$20,000 (underground) per space. Since underground parking is likely to be provided, the cost per space is more likely to be near $20,000. It is suggested that parking be provided for judges (16), District Attorney, Assistant District Attorney, Chief Deputy District Attorney, Special Assistant to the District Attorney, Superior Court Executive Officer, Assistant Superior Court Executive Officers (2), the Grand Jury (19) Marshal Lieutenant, Probation Director-Adult Supervision, and Senior Probation Officer. This amounts to 45 parking spaces. The balance of the parking could be provided in an off site parking structure or by a surface lot. This would result in only one level of underground parking for a typical city block.

3. Varying the size of the courtrooms.

   Comment: The Board of Supervisors clearly wants to have this reviewed. We will need input from the Courts on how this may be accomplished without negatively impacting operations.

4. Elimination/Reduction of hearing rooms related to the courtroom module.

   Comment: These hearing rooms, which include a toilet, are not now provided for in most existing courtrooms. It is our understanding that these rooms would primarily be used for attorney/judge conferences. It is believed that such conferences could occur in chambers.

5. Cluster support staff for the independent calendar courts (eg. research attorneys) on the same floor.

   Comment: Rather than have the research attorneys and the calendar clerk immediately adjacent to the courtroom it may be possible to increase the efficiency of the building (net to gross floor area) by clustering these functions on the same floor.

6. Elimination of one of the restricted circulation corridors associated with the courtroom module.

   Comment: No existing courtroom has a separate circulation corridor for attorneys, court related agencies, and jurors and another corridor just for judges and staff. The extra corridor adds at least 210 square feet per courtroom module. It is believed that adequate security could be provided without such a corridor.

7. Reduction of the number of interview rooms associated with the courtroom module.

   Comment: There are currently two attorney/client interview rooms associated with every courtroom module. It is believed that these rooms would be used much more frequently for criminal cases. If criminal matters are not heard in the building then this space could be reduced. It is suggested that several small conference areas be provided on each court floor.

8. Use existing furniture, fixtures and equipment for the new facility.

   Comment: The cost estimate for the facility developed by staff assumed all new furniture would be provided. It is recommended that each proposed building occupant identify existing FFE's that could be used in the new building.

9. Elimination of pro-tem offices.

   Comment: The current program calls for two pro-tem judge's chambers for every ten courtrooms. It is suggested that the pro-tem use the existing judge's chamber when the judge is absent.

10. Consolidate/Reduce kitchenettes.

    Comment: There are six kitchenettes proposed for the facility. They are programmed at 50 square feet per kitchenette. It is suggested that these be consolidated on one or two floors and or perhaps integrated into open office areas, or reduced to simply a sink and refrigerator.

11. Reduction in the amount of on-site file space.

    Comment: It is suggested that each user agency reevaluate the amount of file space that must be provided in this facility. Perhaps microfilming or off-site storage for inactive files could be explored. The current program has the following proposed file space: District Attorney (35,770 square feet), Superior Court (4,310 square feet), Adult Probation (250 square feet), and Grand Jury (50 square feet).

12. Reduction/Elimination in the size of the staff lounge.

    Comment: The current program has a 1,500 square foot staff lounge for the Superior Court. Perhaps these requirements could be accommodated by a cafeteria within the facility.

13. Limit the Amount of Private Office Space.

    Comment: Private office should be provided consistent with County space standards.

14. Elimination of children's snack room in the District Attorney-Family Support Division.

    Comment: This could perhaps be combined with the children's waiting area.

15. Eliminate/reduce the urinalysis testing space.

    Comment: The current program statement has 1000 square feet for a urinalysis testing area.

16. Consolidation of Grand Jury and Law Enforcement Review Board hearing space.

    Comment: The Grand Jury currently has hearings during the day and the Citizens Law Enforcement Review Board meets at night. This consolidation could pose problems if the Review Board subsequently decides to meet during the day.

17. Elimination of the need for all senior attorneys/judges to have outside windows.

    Comment: The requirement to have windows for all these employees reduces the flexibility in design.

18. Eliminate the requirement that each courtroom must have a separate heating/air conditioning units.

    Comment: It is our intent that each courtroom still have an individual heating/air conditioning control.

19. Eliminate the requirement that the entire courtroom including spectator and jury seating must have 14 foot floor to ceiling span.

    Comment: Perhaps the well/bench area could be full height with the spectator and jury seating being in standard office height space. This could save on the amount of exterior "skin" of the building. The duct work for heating, air conditioning, etc. for the courtroom could be included in a drop ceiling over the spectatory/jury seating area.

20. Reduce the number of judge's libraries.

    Comment: The current program has one library for each six courtrooms. It is suggested that one library be conveniently provided per court floor.

21. Consolidation of lounges and lunchrooms.

    Comment: The current program has a number of lounges/lunchrooms.

22. Supply one soundlock entry for every two courtrooms.

    Comment: The current program has a soundlock entry for each courtroom.

23. Limit the amount of shower/locker room space.

    Comment: It is suggested that this space be reduced from 1200 to 400 square feet in the Marshal's area.

24. Reduce quantity and quality of millwork.

    Comment: We should consider reducing the quantity and quality of millwork by the use of alternative less expensive materials in portions of walls, etc. We may wish to use frame/convential construction in lieu of continuous cabinentry.

25. Reduce the grade of carpet in the low traffic areas.

    Comment: The existing program contains minimum yarn requirements of 26 ounces for offices, 40-42 ounces for courtrooms and lobbies, and 32 ounces for the judges chambers.

26. Suggest thin set floor tiles in office/public areas and restrooms.

    Comment: The current program calls for mortar bed setting of floor tiles.

27. Eliminate the requirement that a z-spline acoustical system will be used in areas which do not require access.

    Comment: This may be provided in the building but should not be a requirement.

28. Provide drinking fountains without refrigeration.

    Comment: The current program requires that drinking fountains be provided with chilled water between 48-52 degrees fahrenheit.

29. Eliminate the requirement to have lavatory set in counters.

    Comment: Lavatory counters could be wall hung.

30. Eliminate the requirement that there be a full length mirror in each bathroom.

    Comment: An individual mirror could be provided.

31. Eliminate the need for vinyl wall coverings in the jury deliberation rooms.

    Comment: It is suggested that the walls be painted.

32. Eliminate the need for jury lounge cabinets to be have a plastic laminate finish.

    Comment: The cabinets could be stained.

33. Eliminate the requirement that 50% of the wall area in the courtroom be wood finish.

    Comment: It is suggested that a combination of materials be considered in lieu of wood finish.

34. Eliminate the requirement that the judge's executive swivel chair have leather surfaces.

    Comment: The chair could have high quality fabric which is less expensive than leather.

35. Eliminate the requirement that the judge's bathroom have ceramic tile floors.

    Comment: The floors could have sheet vinyl flooring with a top set base.

36. Eliminate the requirement that the judge's closet have a duplex closet and closet light.

    Comment: These are presently not provided in most courthouses.

37. Provide standard size doors/finishes rather than custom built doors.

    Comment: The current program calls for paint grade interior doors throughout the building.

38. Provide for wall hung lavatories.

    Comment: The current program calls for self rimming vitreous china lavatories.

39. Reduce the quantity and quality of cabinentry.

    Comment: The current program indicates that shelving should be adjustable.

40. Supply a residential grade sink in the jury deliberation room/kitchenette.

    Comment: The current program calls for a commercial grade sink.

41. Use paint for walls in the judge's chamber.

    Comment: The present program recommends a vinyl wall covering.

42. Provide for wall mounted counters in the judge's chambers.

    Comment: The program now calls for a plastic laminate counter top.

43. Reduce vinyl wall coverings to high use areas.

    Comment: The current program requires full height vinyl wall coverings in public areas.

In addition to these specific cost savings measures, staff will be working with your agencies to make sure that all office/support space conform with County space standards. In addition, we will be carefully reviewing the efficiency of the building (net to gross square feet) to see if additional cost savings could be achieved if circulation and public space could be reduced.

There are other possible cost savings options that will be presented to the Board. These include:

1. Seeking exceptions to the Centre City Interim Design Ordinance to the extent that the regulations impact development costs.

2. Provide for Court and office space in completely separate facilities. (Note: Under this scenario the office space could involve the acquisition of an existing building and the court space could be provided on the County owned property. It is our belief that the same developer should still be required to complete both aspects of the project.)

3. Completely Eliminate Certain Division/Departments from the scope of the project.

We look forward to discussing these options at the meeting which has been scheduled for Friday, December 13, 1991 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 303 of the County Administration Building.

BOB GRIEGO
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

BG:NM:lb

cc: David Janssen, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Jane Huston, Director, Department of General Services
Rich Robinson, Director, Office of Special Projects

The Superior Court of California

San Diego County

ARTHUR W. JONES
Presiding Judge

January 2, 1992

TO: Norman W. Hickey
Chief Administrative Officer
County of San Diego

FROM: Presiding Judge Arthur W. Jones

RE: Proposed Cost Saving Measures for the Downtown Court/Office Building

A review of the proposals from Bob Griego strikes a number of serious doubts as to the real cost savings that might be generated by various small items as compared to the qualities necessary for a building to look good and last for 50 to 70 years. The following comments reflect staff input and review by Judge Wayne L. Peterson as well as my own concerns:

Item 2: On-site parking in the course of construction may cost $20,000 per space as asserted. To consider eliminating underground parking would be ludicrous and probably would be unacceptable to CCDC. It is certainly an impossible failing in a 500,000-square-foot building. Assuming only 45 parking spaces are necessary to VIP's, I would suspect additional spaces could be rented at the current market of around $150 per month and in 12 years pay for the cost of construction. This is particularly true in light of the fact that existing parking lots will disappear as new downtown construction takes place.

Item 3: As per the Trial Court Facilities Standards recently adopted by the Judicial Council of California, the minimum mandatory size for a jury trial courtroom is 1,530 SF (34' x 45'). The recommended space allocation for a 42 spectator courtroom by the National Center for State Courts is 1,620 SF (36' x 45'). Any substandard courtroom will negatively impact the court operations.

Item 5: Separating the court support staff from the court builds in a life-long inefficiency involving staff who work constantly and closely with the court and with the parties and attorneys. The amount of demonstrated cost savings seems small in view of time loss and inefficiency.

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Item 6: The restricted circulation corridors associated with the courtroom module only involved three floors of the building and were presented for good reason. Court users and designers provide the circulation for efficiency and not for grandeur. Again, eliminating efficient quarters to achieve minimal construction cost savings at the expense of operating efficiency makes no sense.

Item 7: The two interview rooms at each courtroom module will be used as multi-purpose witness/waiting/attorney conference rooms. These rooms will be used as frequently for civil cases. The 2:1 interview room to courtroom ratio is in accordance with the Court Facilities Standards approved by the Judicial Council of California.

Item 8: Use of existing FF&E for the new facility. I recall no one ever suggesting that we would not use existing equipment and furniture for a new building to the extent it is available. At some point in time there may be additional judges appointed, and additional FF&E will be necessary for the expanded court. This does not eliminate our desire to use everything available to us in new quarters and to economize.

Item 9: The State has currently made provisions for retired judges to sit and to be paid for their service. Members of the bar have also been willing to volunteer serving without pay and are heavily employed. The two available chambers, which could be used for alternative purposes such as settlement conferences, etc., during full court sessions when necessary, is desirable but not indispensable.

During 1991, hundreds of settlement conferences have been conducted while the courts were fully engaged using pro tems who needed space for these operations. In order to take advantage of the cost savings and good work of the pro tems, we need space for them. Pro tems settled almost two-thirds of all the cases they worked on, and we do not want to give up the benefit of their service.

Item 11: Reduction in on-site file space. We will study and review with you the Superior Court's requirements for filing space for 16 courts, considering that all current files must be maintained on site. We average 500-600 files per court running from one inch of paper to multiple volumes covering six to eight feet of file space.

Item 17: Elimination of need of all senior attorneys and judges to have outside windows. Why bother to build a worthwhile structure and ignore the sensitivities of all employees who work there by denying them natural light. This building is a 50-year affair, and we should not be short-sighted as to its planning. If the building does not have windows for the employees, it is unacceptable. Planning should assure daylight to all, if possible.

Item 18: It is not the court's desire to provide a separate heating/air conditioning unit for each courtroom. However, each courtroom should be on an individual zone and have its own thermostatic control. Heating, ventilating and air conditioning should be designed to ensure sound health and comfort standards.

Item 20: It should be noted that currently there is a library for each judge. This proposal, although requiring some additional square footage, would limit the libraries to one library for every six courtrooms. Each library would contain two full sets of required codes and reports. This would be a cost-saving measure in the ongoing cost of purchasing new editorials and updates for each judge. Additionally, the research staff would also share in using these libraries. It would be foolish to forego the one-time expense of these proposed libraries which would result in the ongoing cost savings.

Item 22: Every courtroom should have a separate sound-lock entry to minimize the noise transmission from the circulation space of the adjacent courtroom. Restricting to one sound-lock entry for every two courtrooms at this point is premature and may dictate the architectural design. Cornered courtroom entry typically requires more circulation space in the spectator area.

Items 24 and 39: The millwork should be made of quality materials and be consistent with that used in other Superior Court facilities. Adjustable shelving, in lieu of fixed shelving, should be provided to allow flexibility.

Items 25, 31 through 43: Downgrading the quality of materials to a substandard level makes no sense in a building that is expected to last 50 or more years. The selected materials should be consistent with those used in the South Bay and East County courtroom expansions.

Item 26: Thin set tile floors in public, as well as office restrooms and areas, is penny-wise and pound foolish. The courthouse is the heaviest trafficked public building in the county. The public floors, which are tiled, should be prepared for the roughest use.

Item 29: Eliminate requirement for lavatories set in counters suggesting counters be wall hung. Again, heavy use over decades will not tolerate the light wall hung construction.

Item 30: Eliminate full length mirrors in each bathroom. Sounds like a minuscule item, but if it saves money, it may be appropriate.

In general, some of the suggestions which cut down on the quality of the building can be tolerated without the appearance or serviceability of the building being depreciated, such as set vinyl flooring in the judges' restrooms, alternatives for finishes, quality of doors and hardware and cabinets. I do feel that reducing the heavy-duty quality of such things as doors, cabinets and floors in a heavily trafficked building is merely asking for an early replacement and an appearance of age before its years. Certainly in the non-public areas, such as judges' chambers and office spaces, some of these curtailments would be without much risk. We must weigh small savings in this area against the belief that decades of public use will justify quality construction.

The final analysis should be evaluation of bids for quality construction, which in these times, may demonstrate a real bargain from a developer eager to keep a company alive. Blue lining items after receipt of bids would seem to be preferential to soliciting bids on inferior quality construction.

ARTHUR W. JONES
Presiding Judge

AWJ:ps

cc: Assistant Presiding Judge James R. Milliken
Kenneth E. Martone, Executive Officer
Robert Griego, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
[redacted]