



Office of
THE COURT EXECUTIVE
Superior Court of the State of California
County of Kings

TODD H. BARTON
Clerk of Court
and
Jury Commissioner

JEFF LEWIS
Chief Deputy Court
Executive Officer and
Assistant Jury Commissioner

September 22, 2011

**Re: Moving Forward with SB 1407 Projects – Option 4 Selected:
Purchase Some Properties and Move Forward on Working Drawings
Allows the Highest Number of Projects to Move Into Working Drawings**

In response to your request for input related to our Court construction project, the following information summarizes the basis and motivation our Court has in seeing our project move forward into the next phase.

Value of This Project to Our Court:

- **Improving the Juror Experience**

One goal is to create a more positive experience for jurors summoned to appear. Currently, the design of our Courthouse does not allow us to accomplish this.

Inadequate parking is the first major obstacle encountered when jurors arrive at our Courthouse.

The second obstacle is insufficient queuing space for Court staff to check jurors in after their arrival.

Jurors are required to wait outside the building in line, and oftentimes in inclement weather to be processed through security screening first.

The Jury Assembly Room is too small to accommodate jury pools and has been known to have standing room only, further compounding the negative juror experience.

The new Courthouse will resolve all of these concerns.

- **Improving Safety and Security**

The Superior Court of California and the Kings County Sheriff's Office are committed to providing the safest possible Court environment to its Judicial Officers, Court staff and members of the public who conduct business in our facilities.

Security improvements would be achieved with the new Courthouse when only one entry point exists and all visitors are required to go through security screening. Currently, our Court services three (3) State prisons, all of whom have different security levels. It is not unusual for the prisoners to share hallways or common public areas.

The implementation of AB109 will cause our Court to assume an influx of Parole Hearings which makes Courthouse security even more essential. In the new Courthouse, State prisoners would no longer share common areas frequented by Court staff or the public such as elevators or corridors into the courtrooms.

Completion of the inmate transportation tunnel between the Jail and the new Courthouse will provide a more secure environment for the Public and Court staff. The Kings County Sheriff's Office will realize a substantial savings on their transportation costs as they will no longer be required to bus inmates from the new jail to the old jail and then into Court facilities.

The Sheriff's Department currently has a sally port configuration that is not large enough to efficiently accommodate the delivery of State prisoners to Court nor was it designed to handle the frequent incoming and outgoing rotation of State vehicles, which vary in size from cars to vans and large buses. The new Courthouse design will provide a more secure and efficient sally port area to receive State prisoners and to accommodate a variety of State vehicles transitioning in and out of the area. A secure lot has also been included for CDCR's use in parking their vehicles once prisoners have been delivered.

The new Courthouse would also be designed to include an intrusion alarm system for safeguarding Court property and records, something this Court currently does not have.

- **Increasing Office Space**

We have outgrown our existing Court facility. Court staff has increased over the years and Court space has been relinquished to other agencies.

Currently occupying Court spaces are entities such as the Kings County Grand Jury, Kings County Sheriff's Bailiff Division, Kings Court Reporters, Private Security Services, and Aleut Facilities Management (AFM).

The Court has also lost use of many Attorney Conference Rooms adjacent to courtrooms by converting them into much needed office space for housing the Family Law Facilitator and Self Help Center Services, Department of Child Support Services, and Court Management personnel. Jury rooms are consistently used by Court staff as training rooms or conference rooms and the Jury Assembly Room doubles as a courtroom for Traffic, Unlawful Detainer, and Small Claims matters.

The new Courthouse will address our space deficiencies.

- **Increasing Court Storage Space**

Information Technology requires a great deal of storage space and currently uses various closets throughout Court buildings to house their communication equipment. Currently, the Court has contracted with Kings County to provide storage space for Court records which is very costly each year.

The new Courthouse will have more storage which includes space for both Information Technology equipment and Court records storage. Having Court records on site will not only make it easier and quicker for staff to process record requests, the cost savings to the Court will be tremendous since record storage and retrieval fees charged by Kings County will no longer apply.

Implications of Project Delay or Cancellation:

- Land has been acquired by the Administrative Office of the Courts and an enforceable agreement has been signed by the Superior Court and Kings County acknowledging Courthouse construction would have to take place or the land ownership will revert back to Kings County. Costly penalties may be imposed upon the Court should the construction project get delayed or canceled.
- Current Court Executive Officer who is committed to assist Engineering Firms in Courthouse project and has expertise in Courthouse design and space programming may be retired when project resumes at a later date.
- Other key Court personnel assisting with the project may not be around when project resumes are the Chief Deputy Court Executive Officer, five current Judicial Officers up for re-election in 2012, and the County's Administrative Officer.
- Existing security risks to the public as well as Judicial Officers and Court Staff would be prolonged.

Cost Savings:

- **Inmate Transportation**

The inmate transportation tunnel from the jail to the new Courthouse would save Kings County Sheriff's Office substantially on their transportation costs as they would no longer be required to bus them from the new jail to the old jail.

- **Consolidation of Court Buildings**

The new Courthouse project would consolidate five Court facilities into one building creating a single entry point. One entry point into the Courthouse warrants less security equipment and less security personnel to manage.

- **AOC-Provided Security Funding**

As a result of one entry point into the new Courthouse, cost savings would be significant to the Administrative Office of the Courts who will begin to provide security funding to the Kings County Sheriff's Department beginning next fiscal year 2012.

- **Contracted Services Discontinued**

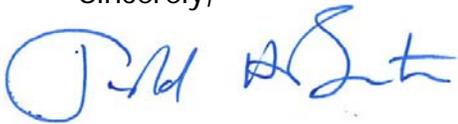
Consolidation of Court buildings would yield many cost savings to our Court when specialty services are no longer required such as:

- Courier services delivering Court files to the Lemoore Court
- Renting warehouse space from Kings County for Court records storage will be reduced or eliminated
- Janitorial service contracts for outlying Courts
- IT expenses to Kings County will be eliminated once separated from the County's mainframe

Potential Cost Increases:

- Schematics will be completed in mid-April of 2012. Delays could escalate costs related to finishing our existing phase and moving forward into the construction phase. As inflation occurs, the existing estimation of the Courthouse project will need to be adjusted to account for the increase in building material costs, which could include technology changes and services rendered by contractors.

Sincerely,



Todd H. Barton
Court Executive Officer

THB/mmn