



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

---

**Department:** COUNTY MANAGER

**File #:** 19-841

Board Meeting Date: 9/17/2019

---

**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Adam Ely, Director of the Project Development Unit

**Subject:** Request to Increase Budget for San Mateo Health Campus Project

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution increasing the budget for the San Mateo Health Campus Upgrade Project from \$120,000,000 to \$145,000,000 to address the Coroner's Office and Morgue relocation and to increase Project contingency.

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### A. San Mateo Health Campus Project

In March 2017, this Board held a study session to consider multiple capital projects that were recommended in County feasibility and master plan studies as efficient and responsible long-term responses to, among other things: (1) the County's significant use of leased space; (2) the County's reliance on increasingly aged and outdated facilities; (3) costly mandatory seismic retrofitting compliance work required for existing facilities; (4) public accessibility and navigational challenges in utilization of County services and facilities; and (5) locational, service, and programming improvements necessary to better serve County residents.

At the conclusion of the 2017 study session, this Board directed staff to pursue several capital projects, including the San Mateo Health Campus Project (Health Campus Project). The Health Campus Project includes demolition of the Campus Administration Building, originally built in 1954, which houses, among other things, the County Coroner's Morgue.

In August 2018, the Board authorized a budget of \$120,000,000 for the Health Campus Project. When this budget was set, it did not include funds for relocation of the Morgue because staff had not yet determined where it should be located.

The Health Campus Project is now proceeding in multiple phases. Construction on the early phases commenced during December 2018 and demolition of the 1954 Administration Building is

currently slated for 2021.

## B. Coroner Operations and Facilities

The County Coroner's Office investigates and determines the mode, manner, and cause of death of certain decedents under its jurisdiction. The Coroner's operations are currently divided across two campuses. Certain necessary post-mortem physical examinations (including autopsies), are performed at the Morgue, located within the 1954 Administration Building, which, as noted, will be demolished in 2021. The Coroner's administrative offices, which include a public waiting area, shared conference room, and staff work space, are located within the County Sheriff's Forensic Laboratory, at the Tower Road Campus.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Following approval of the Health Campus Project, a multi-departmental work group that included staff from the Coroner's Office, the Project Development Unit (PDU), Real Property Services, and the County Manager's Office thoroughly evaluated potentially available locations for a new Morgue. Following substantial and extended due diligence that included evaluation of multiple alternate County-owned and private locations, this group determined that relocation to private facilities was not viable, that alternative County locations were not suitable or cost-effective, and that consolidating all of the Coroner's facilities at the San Mateo County Health Campus would result in substantial cost savings, operational efficiencies, and construction efficiencies.

The PDU solicited conceptual designs for consolidation of the Coroner's facilities from the Taylor Designs, the architect of record for the Health Campus Project, which has substantial experience designing morgue facilities. Taylor Design produced and presented early conceptual designs to the Coroner, County Manager's Office, and the PDU.

The conceptual designs reflect morgue facilities that would occupy a portion of the ground floor of the new administration building. These new Coroner facilities would have specialized equipment meeting prevailing industry standards and would utilize specialized mechanical, air, and plumbing systems suitable for coroner operations. The Coroner's offices, family grieving area, and reception spaces would be located on the same campus in a building linked to the administration building, allowing for more efficient operations and single point of contact for law enforcement and decedents' families. This proposed facilities consolidation would allow the Sheriff's Office to occupy the entirety of the Forensic Laboratory, as was intended when the building was originally constructed, as desired by the Sheriff's Office.

The combined total square footage for the proposed consolidated Coroner's Office and Morgue is approximately 10,000-13,000 square feet, divided between Morgue and administrative functions. Early test-fit planning conducted by Taylor Design, who will collaborate with specialists in forensic morgue design, indicates that through efficient space-planning, this space can be made suitable for current and future Coroner operations and functions.

Based on the current preliminary design, project timing, and projected construction and materials costs, including costs of installing modernized specialty forensic facilities equipment, including a digital x-ray imaging device, staff estimates that the cost of incorporating the Coroner's facilities into the Health Campus project is approximately \$16,000,000.

The additional funding requested through this Resolution would provide general Project contingency needed due to steadily escalating construction costs, the likelihood of encountering concealed or

unknown conditions as construction progresses, and the necessity for providing increased owner's bid-contingency in this construction market.

Therefore, staff recommends that this Board approve the attached resolution to increase the budget for the Health Campus Project by that amount, to fund the design and delivery of the Coroner's Facilities and to provide additional general project contingency.

Consistent with the County Municipal Green Building Policy, the Health Campus Project upgrades, including the Coroner's Facilities, will be designed to achieve LEED Certification.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

Approval of these actions will contribute to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of Collaborative and Safe Community by advancing this project that will provide regional benefits to San Mateo County residents.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Funding for this amendment is to be included in the proposed September Revisions to the Fiscal Year 2019-2021 Recommended Budget and will be added to the San Mateo Health Campus Project.