

# Joint Legislative Budget Committee

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May 18, 2023

Mr. Joe Stephenshaw, Director  
Department of Finance  
1021 O Street, Suite 3110  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Stephenshaw:

In a letter dated May 4, 2023, you notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC), of a request from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), on behalf of Alameda County (County), of a scope change to the new Mental Health Program and Services Unit proposed for the Santa Rita Jail. The letter states that it is your intent to approve the scope change and recommend the State Public Works Board (PWB) recognize the revised scope no sooner than 20 days from the date of the letter.

In 2015, the BSCC awarded the County \$54,340,000 for construction of the new unit, with the County contributing an additional \$7,266,000—for a total project cost of \$61,606,000.

Since then, the County has revised its plans and is proposing to move the location of the project and remove all remodeling. According to your letter, the original scope included the construction of a two-story building attached to two housing units at Santa Rita Jail which would be remodeled. The revised scope includes the construction of a new standalone building and elimination of remodeling activities in the two housing units.

The new estimated total project cost associated with this scope change is \$81,003,000. The County's portion of the cost will increase from \$7,266,000 to \$26,663,000 which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on May 9, 2023.

The request for scope change is scheduled to be heard by the PWB on May 19, before the 20-day notification period expires.

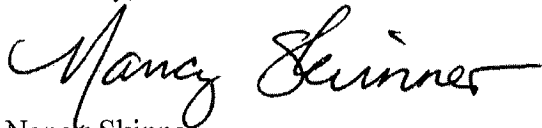
I have a number of questions that I would like the County to answer before it is heard by the PWB. To that end, I respectfully request the PWB reschedule the item to its August meeting and ask that DOF submit the following questions and obtain the County's response in adequate time for JLBC to review prior to PWB's August hearing:

1. Please provide additional background on how the new Mental Health Program and Services (MHPS) Unit helps the County meet the conditions of the Court approved Consent Decree in the case of *Babu et al v. County of Alameda*. Are there conditions in the Consent Decree that specifically require the County to construct additional mental health infrastructure?
2. Please provide the detailed design plan, identifying the different components of the MHPS Unit, that the project's cost estimate is based on.
3. How many treatment beds are planned for the new MHPS Unit? Will the new building include facilities for individuals in mental health crises? Please describe how the new facility will provide space or facilities to stabilize patients in crisis. Will there be long-term living units for people with severe or serious mental illness while they are incarcerated? How much of the new building will be dedicated to offices? Counseling rooms? Will people with serious mental illness be diverted to non-jail mental health facilities?
4. The County's original plan included remodeling of the housing units, the new plan eliminates this remodel. What is the County's intent for that housing and will the new proposal include housing units, in addition to mental health beds?
5. Since the design is not final, will the Mental Health Advisory Board and the Care First Taskforce be informed or involved in the design modification process?
6. According to the Board of Supervisors' May 9, 2023 agenda item, the County funds will be provided through a combination of sources including but not limited to the Capital Financing Plan Designation and other eligible departmental revenue sources. Please provide a breakdown of where the matching funds will come from. If any of them are bond funds, what are the annual costs on the debt service on those bonds?
7. Prior to the Board of Supervisors' approval of the County's share of cost of \$26.6 million, were any County Advisory Boards or community interest groups informed of the hearing? What community outreach was conducted before the hearing?
8. Once the new MHPS Unit is constructed, what is the estimated annual cost increase associated with the enhanced mental health services and staffing levels? Please provide a staffing plan for the new unit.
9. Will the new facility be run by the Sheriff or Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services?

10. Is there anything that prevents the County from changing the use of the new unit in the future? For example, is there anything that prevents the County from repurposing some of the new building into non-mental health housing units in the future?
11. According to the BSCC's November 18, 2021 agenda item, the County reported that the new location will result in significant savings in construction costs, however the County's new plan has a cost estimate that is almost \$19 million above the previously approved plan. Please provide information/background on how the new location is the more cost effective, given the increase in projected cost and the apparent elimination of the housing units.
12. And finally, please explain why the 20-day notification letter from the Department of Finance was sent to the JLBC five days prior to the Board of Supervisors action to approve the \$26,662,922, an addition of \$18,954,950, in County funds. The usual timing of such a notification letter would seem to be triggered after the local action was taken.

In conclusion, I have a number of questions about how the new Mental Health Program and Services Unit project will impact the operation and management of Santa Rita Jail. Therefore, I respectfully request the proposed scope change be rescheduled for the PWB's August meeting, which will give the County time to provide the requested information and time for me and my staff to review it.

Sincerely,



Nancy Skinner  
Chair

cc: Members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
Members of the State Public Works Board  
Alameda County Board of Supervisors  
Kathleen T. Howard, Executive Director, Board of State and Community Corrections  
Aaron Maguire, Chief Deputy Director, Board of State and Community Corrections  
Ryan Okimura, Manager, Board of State and Community Corrections