



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

File #: 24-174

Agenda Date: 3/18/2024

Agenda #:

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Patrick O'Neill, Director, Facilities and Fleet Management

Prepared By:
Patrick O'Neill, Director, Facilities and Fleet Management

Presenter: Patrick O'Neill, Director, Facilities and Fleet Management, and Chief Judge Amico, 18th Judicial District

Subject:
1:15 PM *Arapahoe County Justice Center Courthouse Facilities Update

Purpose and Request:

This study session was scheduled to allow Facilities and Fleet Management (FFM) an opportunity to address recent feedback related to ongoing facility conditions at the Arapahoe County Justice Center (ACJC), and to allow the Chief Judge of the 18th Judicial District (18th JD) an opportunity to brief the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on the needs of the 18th JD with respect to the Courthouse facilities so that they can continue to effectively serve the public, and to request BOCC approval for immediate funding in the amount of \$2.9 million for the construction of one additional courtroom at the 3rd floor of Courthouse II.

Background and Discussion:

ACJC Campus Facilities (original construction)

Detention Facility: Constructed in 1986

Courthouse I: Constructed in 1986

Courthouse II (previously known as Admin II): Constructed in 1991

ACJC Link: Constructed in 2014

Background of Major Improvements

In 2006, the County completed a Master Plan analysis of the ACJC campus which led to a multi-year improvement plan that added 13 new courtrooms (and space for two more) in the last 15 years enabling the 18th JD to keep pace with forecasted caseload demand. As of today, the following major initiatives have been implemented since the original Master Plan:

1. 2008-2009: Relocated the District Attorney's Office to a new building to free up space at ACJC for expansion of courtroom and office space and added three (3) new courtrooms at the 1st floor of Courthouse II.
2. 2010: Reconfigured one (1) courtroom in Courthouse I, added six (6) new courtrooms at the 2nd floor of Courthouse II, and remodeled the Littleton County Court at Arapahoe Plaza for additional clerk support space.
3. 2011: Moved the Aurora court operations from Altura Plaza to ACJC and relocated Judicial Services to Lima Plaza to free up space for one (1) additional future master planned courtroom at Courthouse II.

4. 2013: Added one (1) new large courtroom at the 1st floor of Courthouse II.
5. 2014: Added connecting corridor (Link) between ACJC courthouse buildings and one (1) new small courtroom at the 3rd floor of Courthouse II.
6. 2016: Moved Probation Offices from ACJC to Lima Plaza to free up space for two (2) additional future master planned courtrooms.
7. 2021: Completed major elevator modernization project for Courthouse I, including new controllers, motors, geared machines and ropes, guides, fixtures, and code upgrades.
8. 2022: Completed numerous safety and operational improvements projects with a dedicated fund in collaboration with 18th JD including elevator interior finish remodels, jury room millwork replacements, exterior wall and landscape repairs, roof repairs at both Courthouse buildings, misc. painting and interior window installations, and some carpet replacement.
9. 2022: Added one (1) new courtroom and adjacent Problem-Solving Courts space at the 3rd floor of Courthouse II.

FFM updated the 2006 Master Plan in 2018, proposing two options to address the long-term needs of the 18th JD, the first of which would include an addition and system upgrades to the existing facilities at a cost of \$250 million, while the second option would construct a new courthouse at a cost of \$350 million. This information helped inform the county's long-range planning activities, determining how best to address all needed capital improvements that could not be funded within the County's existing budget. In 2019, the Board referred a ballot measure to seek additional revenue of 3.4 mills to replace and operate the detention center, which voters declined to support.

The growing caseload and aging infrastructure needs still remain within the 18th JD, even with the changes to a single-county judicial district. Advancement of larger improvements identified within the updated master plan require additional revenue; they cannot be completed within the County's existing budget.

Discussion

While these initiatives have enabled the 18th JD to keep pace with growing demand in caseloads through the near term, Chief Judge Amico has the following concerns about the future needs of the facility and the current building conditions:

1. Immediate need for a new Courtroom in Courthouse II - 3rd floor - one (1) Judge designated by the legislature for January 2025 - Budget request is \$2.9m to begin construction ASAP (Second courtroom buildout requested by 2026/2027).
2. Caseloads are increasing and we'll need more than the two courtrooms requested as we look ahead to 2026.
 - a. District Court Judge Weighted Caseload Study - shows need for additional Judicial Officers.
3. Building Conditions (Buildings are almost 40 years old) that need attention (categories provided by 18th JD):
 - a. Elevators
 - b. Plumbing
 - c. Electrical
 - d. HVAC
 - e. Leaks (not plumbing related)
 - f. General Upkeep
 - g. Misc. Space Planning Needs - Lastly, we had started a project at the Littleton Courthouse for repurposing of the space - not sure if that is still on the radar at all but we would like to bring that discussion back to life as well.

Facilities and Fleet Management Action Plan

In response to email sent February 9, 2024, FFM has met several times with the Court Executive and Chief Judge to discuss the identified list of items above. Given attrition within both agencies, we're collectively committed to greater proactive communication and engagement to deliver the following:

1. FFM has worked closely with the 18th JD to develop the construction documents and budget for the proposed single courtroom requested at the 3rd floor of Courthouse II and is ready to implement the construction phase of the project. The drawings are complete and ready to submit for permits, pending funding approval for construction.
2. FFM recommends a future year budget request, perhaps as early as 2025, to update the ACJC Master Plan to better understand the long-term space and operational needs of the 18th JD as they relate to the Courthouse buildings, and to develop a plan to address those needs.
3. FFM is quickly developing a game plan to review the identified building conditions and:
 - a. Address any immediate life-safety issues that can be resolved with current budget.
 - b. Determine which, if any, immediate life-safety issues cannot be resolved with current budget and request funding to resolve.
 - c. Address any non-life-safety issues that can be resolved with current budget as soon as staff resources allow.
 - d. Determine which, if any, non-life-safety issues cannot be resolved with current budget and develop budget package requests as appropriate for future year consideration.

The County's Facility Condition Assessment identified several project needs for the Courthouse Buildings. These have been incorporated in FFM's 5-year CIP Plan and total \$16.1 million:

- 2024
 - Courthouse I inmate elevators mechanical upgrades (phase 1 of 2) - \$338k
 - Courthouse II courtroom (1) remodel - \$2.9m - **CURRENT REQUEST**
- 2025
 - Courthouse I access control system low voltage rewire - \$239k
 - Courthouse I chiller replacement - \$1.5m
 - Courthouse I inmate elevators mechanical upgrades (phase 2 of 2) - \$354k
 - Employee parking lot repairs - \$247k
 - Courthouse I return fans replacement - \$63k
- 2026
 - Courthouse I and II roof replacements - \$3.8m
 - Courthouse I air handler 1 and 2 replacements - \$2.0m
 - Courthouse I basement restroom and break room - \$151k
 - Courthouse II remaining courtroom (1) and Probation remodel - \$3.5m
- 2027
 - Courthouse II HVAC upgrades - \$1.0m
- 2028 - TBD

The projects listed above for 2025-28 will be considered by the CIP Committee and the Executive Budget Committee through the County's annual budget process.

Fiscal Impact: If approved, funding for the proposed Courtroom construction in the amount of \$2.9m will have to come from the County's general fund balance. If there is consensus to update the ACJC Master Plan, a budget package request will be submitted for future-year consideration. If there is a need for additional funding to address any of the Building Condition concerns beyond what current maintenance budgets allow, FFM will

follow County processes to request such additional funding as appropriate.

Alternatives: The BOCC could elect to not fund the proposed courtroom and defer to the annual budget process as a budget package request for a future year; however, the bill that establishes the 23rd JD also allocates one (1) new District Court Judge to the 18th JD. This District Court Judge will begin working on January 7, 2025, and there is not a courtroom available for this judge. The only likely options at that time would be to allocate a magistrate to Douglas County to provide a courtroom for the new judge or consider courtroom space at the Littleton County Court.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- ☒ Be fiscally sustainable
- ☒ Provide essential and mandated service
- ☒ Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: The 18th JD recommends approval of the request to fund construction of one (1) new courtroom at the 3rd floor of Courthouse II in the amount of \$2.9m.

Concurrence: The 18th Judicial District concurs with this request.