



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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SUSAN A. MAURIELLO, J.D., COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

October 25, 2001

AGENDA: November 6, 2001

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

SHERIFF SECURITY AND FACILITIES PLANNING

On June 19, 2001 during budget hearings, your Board directed the County Administrative Office to return on this date with a report addressing security of the Sheriffs patrol and special vehicles, storage of evidence and facilities planning. The purpose of this letter is to inform your Board of the actions taken to date regarding these issues and ongoing planning for the future.

Security of Deputy Patrol Vehicles

In order to provide additional security of patrol vehicles parked at the County Government Center, temporary fencing is currently being installed that will secure the patrol vehicles during non-business hours. Exterior lighting has also been significantly increased to both the facility perimeter and the parking areas. Additionally, proposals for surveillance cameras have been obtained and are currently being evaluated.

Permanent parking security measures will be considered during the course of the Government Center parking study. This study, which is funded in the Plant Acquisition budget for the current fiscal year, will focus on the collection of data relevant to improving circulation and security and will provide planning options for improvements. At this time General Services staff have completed interviews with qualified prospective consultants and are in the process of checking references. It is the intent of General Services to return with a contract for consultant services no later than December 4, 2001.

Security of Special Vehicles

The Sheriffs Department has several vehicles that are designed and outfitted for special duty. These include the Bomb Team van and trailer, the Search and Rescue Team van and trailer, the SWAT van and a soon to be purchased mobile command post vehicle. Presently, these vehicles and associated equipment are or will be stored at various locations throughout the County.

The County Administrative Office has been working with the Sheriffs Office and the Real Property Division of Public Works to identify a suitable site for covered and secure storage of these vehicles. A limited number of options have been identified that could potentially meet security needs, although there are both financial and logistical constraints associated with the various sites.

With regard to financing, due to the potential loss of the County's utility tax in March, 2002, it is very difficult at this time to recommend new general fund expenditure without offsetting savings. Towards this end we are working with the Sheriff to address these challenges. In addition, we will be reviewing other cost effective options that may address this secure storage need.

Storage of Property and Evidence

The Sheriffs Office presently stores property and evidence at two offsite locations in the County. One facility is owned by the County and provides storage and a location from which individuals can retrieve property that may be released to them as determined by the courts. The second is an older warehouse that is used for the storage of evidence and property as well as for vehicles being examined as part of investigative procedures. The older warehouse has been used for several years by the Sheriff and is a low cost storage option. The structure, however, is in need of repairs and modifications to properly store high value or sensitive information. The Sheriff has also requested additional storage space for evidence over and above the square footage provided in the current facilities and has indicated his interest in co-locating the crime investigation unit and related lab with evidence and property storage.

Consolidating evidence and property storage for the Sheriff into one secure location has logistical advantages. Although this consolidation may be optimum from an operational perspective, the associated lease costs and new equipment are unbudgeted new expenditures for the general fund. Legislation is currently under consideration that could provide some State funds through a competitive process for crime laboratories but they will be difficult to secure and would not provide financing for the evidence and property storage costs. Approximately twenty-five percent of these new costs could be offset by funds now spent on present storage accommodations.

As with the storage of special vehicles, we have been working with the Sheriffs Office and Real Property to identify the most cost effective and appropriate warehouse space. Again, several potential sites have been evaluated in terms of their cost and location and we are in the process of further reviewing these as well as offsetting savings within the Sheriffs budget.

Facilities Planning

As your Board will recall, during the recent budget hearings, the Sheriffs Department requested the development of a comprehensive department facility master plan. Although long range comprehensive facility plans are often advisable for public services, the fiscal reality is that local governments in particular find the uncertainty of ongoing revenue

sources make the full implementation of such plans extremely difficult. In addition, policy changes affecting the delivery of public services and changing community needs can quickly change the most thoughtful facility plans. As your Board will recall, a Long Range Facilities Plan was developed for the County during the early 1990's and completed as the first fiscal shoe dropped from the State in the form of ERAF property tax transfers from local governments. The Facilities Plan was intended to guide the development of new government facilities from 1991 to 2011. Since that time, however, facility and space planning efforts have utilized the Facilities Plan mainly for general guidance and as a comprehensive data base. Due to financial limitations and changing service needs, actual space and facility plans have been developed on a more individualized department basis when critical needs and resources have been identified.

With specific regard to the Sheriff's Department, the Long Range Facilities Plan was consulted as a basis for evaluating the current status of space and facility needs of the Sheriff's Office. The Plan addresses the Sheriff's offices on the third floor of the Government Center, suggesting a possible reconfiguration of that space or consolidation with other Sheriff functions to an offsite location. As your Board is aware, the County took a different approach to meeting some of the Sheriff's space needs by decentralizing the Sheriff's Department through the provision of four satellite service centers throughout the County. Although this service delivery system was not contemplated during the development of the Long Range Facilities Plan, it was the result of an expressed community need and the Sheriff and your Board's interest in promoting community based policing. In addition, the crime lab was relocated from the third floor of the Government Center in 1994 and additional space for property and evidence storage was made available at that time. These changes resulted in an increase in square footage for the Sheriff that exceeds the projections identified in the Long Range Facilities Plan for 2001 .

Current efforts are also underway to provide for a reconfiguration of the public counter area on the third floor of the Sheriff's Department to provide for additional efficiency and security for the staff and public. In addition, as discussed earlier, our office has been working with the Sheriff to locate needed space for secure storage of special purpose vehicles and additional evidence storage if offsetting savings can be found.

Summary

Managing the space needs of County departments is an ongoing process. As discussed in this report, space and facility planning will continue to address the highest priority needs for the Sheriff's Department based upon available resources. We will be working with the Sheriff and his staff during the next month to identify the most cost effective options and offsetting revenues as required. Additionally, in light of our current and future fiscal

constraints we would not recommend the development of a department master plan at this time.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board take the following actions:

1. Accept and file this report on vehicle security, evidence storage and facilities planning for the Sheriffs Office;
2. Direct the General Services Department to return with a contract for parking and circulation consulting services on or before December 4, 2001; and
3. Direct the County Administrative Office to work with the Sheriffs Office and Real Property to address the storage of special vehicles and evidence, identify potential funding sources and return on or before December 11, 2001 with a status report addressing these issues.

Very truly yours,



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

cc: Sheriffs Office
General Services