



County Executive Office

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BOARD WORKSHOP MEMO

MEETING DATE: January 25, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Nevada County Courthouse Re-Use

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the presentation from the Joint Courthouse Re-Use Committee and discuss recommendations for 2023.

FUNDING:

Consider allocating \$300,000 in ARPA funds in FY 23/24 to conduct a “highest and best use” study to evaluate reuse alternatives and building needs.

BACKGROUND:

The Nevada County Courthouse will be moving from downtown Nevada City to a new site within the next five years. The County and the City are committed to working collaboratively with the Courts to ensure a smooth transition that includes the ongoing maintenance and re-use of the facility for the community’s benefit.

The “Joint Courthouse Re-Use Committee” (Committee) has been formed to engage the City and County in a coordinated plan for the reuse of the facility. The Committee will seek to take all necessary steps to ensure a timely and seamless transition from the Court’s operation to a new use, and to prevent the facility from degrading and standing vacant.

Note: The project ownership is split between the buildings, land, and parking lot. On average, the State owns 51% of the facility, and the County owns the other 49%.

Project Scope:

The scope of this project is focused on the re-use of the Courthouse facility in downtown Nevada City after the Courts vacate the premises. The Committee is not taking on issues related to the Courts’ relocation. The Committee seeks to develop and present a unified position on the future reuse of the Courthouse facility.

Scope deliverables may include:

- a. “Highest and best use” study to determine alternative and realistic reuse options
- b. Financial study to determine costs associated with reuse, and identification of funding sources
- c. Implementation of an outreach and education campaign that culminates in community engagement and identification of preferred re-use options (may be part of the “highest and best use” study process)
- d. Engagement with the County and the Courts to address the maintenance of the facility, the transition process, and related funding needed to ensure health and safety (e.g. repair the roof, etc.)
- e. Advocacy with state and federal agencies to secure funding for the reuse the facility
- f. Issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to private sector developers to generate conceptual ideas/interest in facility reuse
- g. Timeline for communication with Board of Supervisors and City Council, including key updates and decision points (e.g. communications/outreach, planning studies, etc.)

Workgroup members – Roles & Responsibilities:

Team Member Name	Org/Department	Roles/Responsibility
Supervisor Heidi Hall	County	Co-Chair of Committee
Councilmember Doug Fleming	City	Co-Chair of Committee
Caleb Dardick, Assistant CEO	CEO	Project Manager/coordinator
Sean Grayson, City Manager	City	Lead City representative
Steve Monaghan, IGS Director	IGS	County facilities rep
Justin Drinkwater, Facilities Director	IGS	County facilities rep
Budget Analyst – Martin Polt, CFO	CEO	Fiscal analysis
Communications Representative – Taylor Wolfe, PIO	CEO	Outreach and education lead
Amy Cobden	CEO	grant opportunities
Kimberly Parker	CDA	economic development opportunities

Timing:

According to the State budget memo (attached), the new courthouse project has a 7-year timeline (2023-30) from acquisition to completion:

- June 2023 – State Final Budget adoption (may determine if Courts moving forward)
- July 2023 – September 2025 – Courts “Acquisition” schedule
- November 2025 – June 2025 – Courts “Performance Criteria” schedule
- July 2026 – August 2030 – Courts “Design-Build” schedule

Risks:

Unknowns include exact timing of the court's relocation, reuse funding sources, needs for ongoing facility maintenance, community participation and support for realistic, alternative uses, etc.

Assumptions include that realistic, alternatives re-uses of the building exist, and that these re-use alternatives address the community's architectural and design concerns, including the desire to preserve the historic facade and other building elements. Community concerns also include development of the parking area adjacent to the Courthouse. Note that the community has expressed interest to date in reuse ideas including affordable housing, an arts college, law school, hotel, museum, etc.

Communication and outreach plan:

Key deliverables include:

- Draft work plan and timeline for communication with stakeholders and the public
- Develop communication tools such as a dedicated web page with FAQs, etc.
- Develop media relations plan (quarterly or bi-annual updates, Op-Eds, etc.)
- Plan community workshops at key points (e.g. launch of the "highest and best use" study, which would include stakeholder engagement with residents, businesses, Grass Valley stakeholders and others to solicit community ideas)

Item Initiated by: Caleb Dardick, Assistant CEO

Approved by: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer