



# MENDOCINO COUNTY STAFF REPORT

## GENERAL SERVICES – FACILITIES AND FLEET DIVISION

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**Date:** September 20, 2022  
**To:** The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Janelle Rau, General Services Agency Director  
**Subject:** Space Needs Assessment

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### **BACKGROUND**

As a part of the County Board of Supervisors strategic planning initiative to help guide and prioritize direction to County departments and staff, the General Services Agency (GSA) staff was directed to engage a consulting firm to evaluate the County's facility use needs and facility conditions to support future planning and decision-making regarding county facilities and department operational needs.

Last fall, GSA staff solicited proposals from Architects for space need analysis by department and facility assessment of the existing County sites and received six compelling proposals. After thorough evaluation, Nichols, Melburg & Rossetto (NM&R) based in Redding and Santa Rosa was selected thanks in part to their track record with similar efforts for other rural counties throughout northern California.

### **SCOPE AND INTENT**

The Scope of this effort includes three areas of work: Space Needs Assessment, Facility Condition Assessment, and Conceptual Planning.

- The Space Needs Assessment covers each department's individual ideal footprint based on current filled, allocated as well as future staffing headcount, operational space required for public interface, program functions, storage, etc. based on survey and interview responses received from departmental and elected official staff. This information will be a critical tool in determining next steps to plan and implement any occupancy changes.
- The Facility Condition Assessment is a foundation-to-roof analysis of each building's condition broken down to assess the useful remaining life of building systems and compliance with current standards. This tool will help staff prioritize maintenance projects as well as inform decision making when moving or consolidating departments.
- The Conceptual Planning brings together space needs and facility condition data with the County's strategic planning direction to prepare an evidence-based Capital Improvement Plan to address immediate needs and provide the tools to anticipate and prepare for future needs.

The Intent of this assessment is to prepare and advise the Board in setting their strategic goals and priorities regarding the existing facility conditions, how they may affect viable occupancy strategies, and determine whether the County's owned real property is being used efficiently from a space perspective. While NM&R continues to document the facility condition assessment, this presentation will focus on the space needs and utilization assessment.

### **RELATED FACTORS**

Concurrent with this assessment process, the Board has been considering options for addressing a variety of program and facility priorities that will tie into the analysis and recommendations presented in this report. The below factors were considered when analysing the County's owned real property:

- The Board's direction to identify adequate Emergency Operations Center space
- The Board's direction to increase staffing for Planning and Building Services and the Cannabis program

- The State's timelines to construct a new Courthouse building in Ukiah currently show estimated completion within the next four years
- Recent input from the Executive Office and Public Health to explore clinical and vaccination services in County owned properties
- Recent adoption of a telework policy for County employees

### **METHODOLOGY**

Initial outreach for the space needs was a comprehensive survey sent to department heads and managers requesting basic requirements for staff positions for each program division or work group and a second survey for other space requirements such as storage, meeting areas, public counters, or special equipment. This information was compiled and verified with in-person interviews and tours of the existing facilities and re-checked against the current position allocation table (as of July 1, 2022). To this space need data, several factors were added to account for circulation space, common spaces such as halls, restrooms, and janitorial closets as well as walls and building element to arrive at an overall space need for each program or department. These data were then compared to the current spaces occupied by each department by service location (Ukiah, Fort Bragg and Willits where applicable). Separate analysis was provided for allocated positions v. filled positions (as of July 1, 2022). Additionally, statistics regarding employees authorized for telework by department were factored into the analysis to give some indication of the possible space savings available with a work from home policy.

### **SUMMARY FINDINGS**

The Space Needs and Utilization Report will be presented by Kyle Matti of Nichols, Melburg & Rossetto that includes data and analysis describing the staffing levels, and operational space needs for each department and the approximate "fit" within the space currently occupied. High level findings are presented here:

- With the notable exceptions identified below, most County departments are underutilizing their current occupied space or are using it inefficiently. This suggests the possibility that in conjunction with implementation of the new telework policy, consolidations may be an option to reduce the occupied space of these departments and ultimately lead to the potential to surplus County owned buildings.
- Most public safety operations including the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney and Probation are operating in facilities that are not providing the necessary program space identified in the study. Further study would provide recommendations to resolve these conditions.
- Building No. 35 (880 No Bush Street, Ukiah) is currently co-occupied by multiple departments. Its size, adjacency to the Administration Center and close proximity to the Ukiah Fair Grounds lend it to be a viable location for an Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- The Child Support building at 107 S. State Street is significantly under-utilized and has a footprint that could house most of the District Attorney's office space needs and is reasonably proximate to the new Courthouse property. Whether here or elsewhere, planning for the future location for the District Attorney's offices should begin immediately.
- The Willits Justice Center is vacant except for the Willits Police Department, who has a lease with the County through 2058. The County vacated the building in 2015.
- The current co-location of Planning and Building Services with Public Health at 120 Fir Street in Fort Bragg compromises appropriate service delivery of both departments.

**BOARD CONSIDERATIONS**

It is recommended that based on the information detailed in the staff report and accompanying Space Needs Assessment Report, the Board consider the below possible direction:

Based on the findings suggesting that most public safety operational space is inadequate, direct staff to perform further analysis of public safety space allocations and future needs and to collaborate with the public safety partners on a long-term facilities plan, including Sheriff's Office Administration, Probation, District Attorney and potentially others.

Direct staff to refer to the Space Needs Assessment when new requests for space are presented by County departments.

Direct staff to proceed with specific analysis and project development for public safety partners as follows:

- Designate Building No. 35, 880 N. Bush St., Ukiah, as the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
  - Direct staff to prepare and present an agenda item creating a project to begin the analysis of improvements necessary to occupy this building as an EOC in phases. This agenda item would also include the transfer of funds from the Office of Emergency Services/PG&E settlement set aside.
  - Direct staff to assist with identifying appropriate space and relocating current occupants of this building.
- Proceed with a feasibility analysis of relocating the District Attorney operations from the current Ukiah Courthouse including the potential for relocating to Building No. 55 (Child Support Services / 107 S. State St., Ukiah).
- Research the County's obligations associated with potential reimbursement of funds utilized to purchase Building No. 55 and other possible space to accommodate the Child Support Services operations based on their current needs.

Direct staff to perform further analysis of underutilized buildings in collaboration with County departmental leadership and develop recommendations to consolidate County facilities:

- Consider possible partnerships and co-locating with other community partners.
- Present the Board with options with regarding the Willits Justice Center, including:
  - Relocate other County programs or services into the building (possibly consider relocating all or a portion of the Cannabis program staffing).
  - Surplus/sale of the building with consideration of the County's obligations under the Joint Occupancy and Court Transfer Agreement(s) and Site Lease Agreements between the County and City of Willits.
- Research and identify alternate space for the Public Health operations currently located in the Fir Street building in Fort Bragg so Planning and Building staff can meet Board direction to reduce the department's vacancy rate.
- Research options for locating clinical and vaccination services in County owned properties.