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Supervisors Will Discuss Potential for New 20-Year Orange County Civic Center Master Plan

An ambitious 20-year master plan that proposes to revamp and reorganize County government services within the Orange County Civic Center in Santa Ana will be presented for review on Tuesday, February 23, during a special study session before the Board of Supervisors.

The proposal was developed by a working group that includes Supervisor Andrew Do, First District, and Supervisor Shawn Nelson, Fourth District, as well as County Executive Officer Frank Kim and members of his executive team. Representatives from consultant Griffin Structures (Griffin) also participated.

Griffin was chosen by the Board in August 2012 to design, develop and construct a new Building 16, which was built in the 1950s for a welfare office but is currently unused. The Board also asked Griffin to examine and address the County's future real-estate needs in the Civic Center, including the condition of 22 County owned and leased buildings with an average age of 46 years, as well as space plans, parking, occupancy costs and energy use.

Among the issues to be discussed by the Board at the February 23 study session are results from the multiple studies conducted by Griffin, whether to proceed with the plan as envisioned by the working group and how the plan would be financed—with County financing or structured through a public-private partnership.

The first phase of the plan proposes concentrating core County agencies and staff within a new "super block" of County facilities between Broadway and Ross streets, and Civic Center Drive and Santa Ana Boulevard. The area currently houses Building 10 (Hall of Administration—Board of Supervisors, County Counsel and County Executive Office), Building 11 (Hall of Records—Clerk-Recorder), Building 12 (Hall of Finance—Assessor, Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector), Building 14 (Public Defender) and Building 16 (empty).

If ultimately approved, the 20-year master plan recommends demolishing several aging County buildings in the Civic Center while constructing some new buildings and renovating others.

The goals of the restructuring proposal include:

- Improve the delivery of services to the public with a “one-stop” counter in a new six-story Building 16 along Ross Street;
- Improve space use by reducing per-employee square footage from 375 feet to 260 feet, resulting in lower operating costs;
- Improve efficiency by moving affiliated agencies adjacent or near each other, to be accomplished over four phases to create Public Safety, Judicial, Administration and Public Health “neighborhoods”;
- Capitalize on the use of the County’s Central Utility Facility in the Civic Center for reduced energy costs;
- Focus on owned versus leased space to achieve savings, as County owned buildings cost \$1 per space foot compared to \$1.50 per square foot for leased facilities;
- Improve and replace aging infrastructure, reducing the average age of the County’s overall real-estate portfolio from 66 years to 30 years.

Among the new occupants of Building 16 as proposed would be OC Public Works, OC Waste & Recycling and Treasurer-Tax Collector, as well as a public counter for one-stop access for many public needs. The building would be six stories with two levels of subterranean parking and about 251,000 gross square feet. The approximate construction and affiliated costs are estimated at \$150 million.

Phase 1 of the plan also contemplates renovating the current OC Public Works building at 300 N. Flower Street to house the District Attorney, a new wellness center and eventually the Public Defender. Renovation and affiliated costs have not yet been determined.

The Board meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 23, in the Board Hearing Room at the Hall of Administration, 333 W. Santa Ana Blvd., in Santa Ana. The Civic Center Master Plan study session will be one of many items to be discussed on the public agenda.

For more information, click here for copies of agenda materials. The Civic Center Master Plan will be discussed as Item 26 on the February 23, 2016, agenda:

http://cams.ocgov.com/Web_Publisher/agenda02_23_2016.htm

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