



OFFICE OF THE  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor  
Naomi M. Kelly, City Administrator

MEMORANDUM

October 16, 2017

**To:** Members of the Board of Supervisors

**From:** Naomi Kelly, City Administrator *N. Kelly*

**Copy:** Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board

**Regarding:** Plans to vacate staff and prisoners from the seismically and otherwise unsafe, Hall of Justice at 850 Bryant Street and permanently close the Bryant Street wing of the building.

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The Hall of Justice (the Hall or HOJ), located at 850 Bryant Street, has well-known seismic and other safety issues. Each day more than 800 staff work in the Hall, and approximately 300-350 prisoners are incarcerated on the 7th floor in County Jail #4. The building's systems are failing at an accelerating rate, and it presents a hazard on multiple fronts for the people who work, appear, visit, and live there. It is imperative that we get San Francisco's staff and prisoners out of the building as quickly as possible.

Exiting the Hall has long been a San Francisco priority, but while plans for relocating staff and prisoners have been refined and adjusted over the years, the building's condition has dramatically worsened. This year most of the public employee unions with staff in the Hall filed grievances, and there has been a complaint to Cal/OSHA as well. In recent months, the Hall has experienced a frequent series of sewage overflows, which originate in the jail on the top floor. In the last year, the sewage overflows reached staff and clients in offices below. These sewage overflows have a major, adverse impact on building-wide operations, compromising security and personal health and safety. Some repairs involve breaking into the asbestos-laden walls, creating an even more toxic situation to be abated. From November 2, 2016, through August 21, 2017, there were 110 flood-related for County Jail #4, 15 in the most recent month alone. Numerous repairs and preventative measures have been made, to no avail. These problems are in addition to the failing elevators, HVAC, and other subsystems, all of which are well beyond their useful life.

The building's seismic risk is just as great as its life/safety risks. The Hall registers as one of the city's most dangerous buildings on the HAZUS analysis. That analysis, run most recently in 2017, shows that a 7.9M earthquake on the San Andreas Fault would bring to the Hall a probability of greater than 100 casualties, economic impact of greater than \$50 million, operational losses of greater than \$5 million, and greater than 70% building damage. In the event of such a disaster, the building will likely be red-tagged—uninhabitable until structural repairs can be made. This result would be a crisis situation, especially for the prisoners who would be unable to flee but also unable to remain.

As you know, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is moving into a new facility in November 2017. SFPD Forensic Services Division and Traffic Company are scheduled to move into a new Mission Bay facility by the end of 2020. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, in January 2017, the City Administrator set a target exit date of 2019 for the remaining occupants of the Hall of Justice. It is the shared position of the Mayor, the City Administrator, and the Sheriff that we should not invest more tax dollars into the building and should exit as quickly as possible.

The City Administrator has identified a plan for an expedited administrative exit from the Hall of Justice. The need for expediency does not allow for a capital construction project, and a broad search for a Courts-proximate building or even multiple buildings for purchase identified no appropriate sites. The most expedient and recommended course of action is to lease office space so that the staff of the District Attorney, San Francisco Police Department, and Adult Probation Department can conduct their business elsewhere. The District Attorney and most of the Police staff can be relocated to 350 Rhode Island; Police Storage can be moved to an existing storage facility at 777 Brannan Street; and Adult Probation can be relocated to 945 Bryant Street. The leases have staggered start dates beginning as early as July 1, 2018, and they require immediate action.

Relocating prisoners is the greatest challenge. Several interventions currently underway are intended to reduce the jail count, including expanded retrial diversion and electric monitoring, LEAD, bail reform, police reform, rebooking, conservatorship beds and treatment beds. These efforts may not be effective to lower the jail population enough to close County Jail #4 permanently. Over the summer, the Sheriff and Capital Planning studied options for exiting the jail in the near term.

The Mayor, the City Administrator, and the Sheriff agree that the safety of the prisoners should not be an afterthought in this process; their security and well-being should be front and center in the exit planning process. The time-sensitivity of the lease options does not allow for deferral until the prisoner exit plans are finalized, however. The Sheriff will bring the plan for prisoner exit before the Board soon.

Once all the non-Court related occupants exit the HOJ, the plan is to demolish the Bryant Street side of the Hall, allowing the Courts to remain. Thank you for your attention to this matter of utmost importance for our city.