



**King County**

**Ron Sims**

King County Executive

516 Third Avenue, Room 400  
Seattle, WA 98104-3271

206-296-4040 206-296-0194 Fax

TTY Relay: 711

www.metrokc.gov

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CLERK  
KING COUNTY COUNCIL

October 15, 2003

The Honorable Cynthia Sullivan  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
COURTHOUSE

2003-472

Dear Councilmember Sullivan:

Enclosed for review and consideration by the Metropolitan King County Council is a proposal to conduct significant renovation and retrofit work in the King County Courthouse lobby. The request initiates a modification to the scope and budget of the Courthouse Seismic Project. The proposed \$6.7 million construction cost component of the supplemental ordinance funded by one-time savings addresses immediate safety concerns, improves building efficiency, and vastly improves public accessibility and wayfinding throughout the building. Additionally, the project provides for the completion of significant maintenance work that has been deferred over the course of many years. Another noteworthy benefit of the proposal is that it will allow concentration of previously approved Courthouse Seismic Project arts appropriations into the lobby area rather than scattering artwork piecemeal throughout the building. This will return some of the historic grandeur to the lobby of this historical building.

The proposal provides for safety and efficiency improvements, elimination of deferred maintenance, and art and architectural improvements at a significantly lower cost than has ever been possible. The proposed work could readily be integrated into the current Courthouse Seismic Project, achieving economies of scale, and substantial savings to King County.

### **Safety Concerns**

As you are aware, the King County Courthouse is currently undergoing a major retrofit to provide a safe structure in the event of a major earthquake. During the course of the seismic retrofit work, a previously unknown safety issue was discovered. The large concrete ("marblecrete") vertical panels that line the walls of the Courthouse lobby could pose a significant safety threat in an earthquake. The panels are attached at the top only by two metal tabs. If the tabs were to crack and break, the entire panel, similar to a long vertical sidewalk, could come down. The proposal calls for the removal of all of these marblecrete panels.

Another safety concern is the outdated nature of the security scanning equipment and layout. Under this proposal, the entrance to the lobby would be relocated to approximately where the current temporary construction entrance is. This reconfiguration will create more room for screening activities, and significantly reduce confusion at the entrance. New, more efficient



and effective weapons screening equipment will be acquired and installed. Acquisition of new equipment will resolve maintenance problems associated with the existing outdated equipment. Additionally, recent innovations in screening technology have vastly improved accuracy of screening equipment, thus improving safety.

### **Efficiency**

As mentioned above, reconfiguring the entrance will reduce confusion and eliminate bottlenecks in the screening process. In addition to improving accuracy, new screening technology allows for a much speedier screening process. Additionally, the new entrance and screening equipment will provide much improved general public and ADA accessibility.

Once inside the renovated lobby, modern wayfinding techniques will be applied. Ingress and egress paths will be clearly defined. The existing information desk will be replaced with a modern way-finding kiosk. Moving the entrance, clearing the lobby of the information desk, and providing clear paths for travel through the lobby will eliminate congestion and confusion, and improve efficiency for the public as well as King County employees.

Another important efficiency component of the proposal is a complete upgrade to the elevator system. Elevator transportation throughout the building will be improved by converting the two unused hand operated cabs to automatic controls for use by the general public. Replacement of the elevator control system will allow shorter wait times on all floors of the building, significantly reducing peak time crowding in the lobbies.

### **Deferred Maintenance**

Over the years, a significant body of maintenance work has been deferred in the Courthouse lobby. Deferred maintenance that will be eliminated includes cracked flooring and wall panels, mismatched and broken ceiling tiles, discolored materials, and general cleaning ability of the existing finishes.

### **Art and Architecture**

The project benefits from "1% for the Arts" funding from the Courthouse Seismic Project by incorporating artwork into building components in high use public areas rather than scattered throughout the building. The public art component of the project includes a new terrazzo floor, thematic wall panels, and a clock. The floor and wall panel art are to be incorporated as part of the building construction assembly. It is envisioned that the artwork in the terrazzo floor will incorporate an image of the historic Martin Luther King "I have a dream" speech. The artwork on the walls will include murals depicting King County history. There will also be a new stone clock to be located on the east wall of the elevator lobby above the corridor.

The finishings around the elevators and on interior structure will be compatible with the historic nature of the building. The Design Review Committee of the King County Landmarks Commission has endorsed the project, and has been working closely with FMD staff to ensure that the project is in keeping with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

There is strong support for the restoration design approach and proposed treatment of the Third Avenue elevator lobby and the introduction of new features and finishes that are as faithful to the original lobby design. FMD will continue to work with the Landmarks Commission throughout the planning phase and during construction.

### **Financing Strategy**

The funding available to support the cost of the proposed Courthouse Seismic supplemental budget is drawn from a few capital budget windfalls available in 2003 and 2004. Over half of the \$6.7 million financing package is made available due to a more favorable debt service issuance and payment schedule. The interest payment cost is \$3.7 million less than the amount reserved in the Current Expense financial plan because the bond issuance date is later than originally projected. In 2003 the interest cost for the Kent Pullen Regional Communication and Emergency Coordination Center (RCECC) is \$900,000 less than the amount reserved in the Current Expense financial plan. In 2004 the Courthouse Seismic Project and North Rehabilitation Facility debt service cost is \$2.8 million less than the amount reserved. The \$0.9 million is budgeted as a 2003 Current Expense Transfer to capital in the attached supplemental ordinance. The \$2.8 million is budgeted as a Current Expense Transfer in the 2004 proposed budget.

The remaining \$3.0 million in funding is based on the estimated proceeds from the sale of two recently vacated district court facilities and from the utilization of excess debt capacity associated with the cost savings at the RCECC. The facilities that housed the Renton District Court and the Federal Way District Court have been surplus by the County and are estimated to result in a combined total of \$2.3 million in sale proceeds for the Current Expense Fund. The remaining \$0.7 million will be financed by debt capacity that was made available when the RCECC budget was reduced by \$1.167 million in mid-2003.

On the expenditure budget side of the equation, the Courthouse Seismic Project supplemental adds \$6.74 million to the existing capital project budget. This is combined with \$500,000 of existing budget authority for the 1% for Arts Program allocated to the Courthouse Seismic Project. In addition, \$700,000 of previously approved Courthouse Seismic contingency budget is earmarked for the scope of the supplemental, particularly as it pertains to the removal of the large concrete ("marblecrete") vertical panels that pose a significant safety threat that was not identified in the original project scope. The combination of supplemental and existing budget authority amounts to \$7.94 million

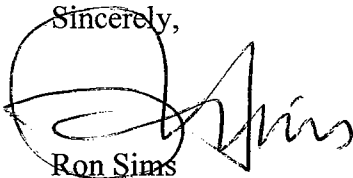
## Conclusion

This request is advanced as an immediate supplemental request because of the unique opportunity to incorporate this with existing Courthouse Seismic Project construction. The Facilities Management Division, in conjunction with its project development firm, Seneca Group, has determined that incorporating this project into the existing seismic project work schedule creates the opportunity for significant savings to King County. Using the existing contractor for the Courthouse Seismic Project will substantially reduce mobilization costs. Further, completion of this project at this time will minimize the overall disruption to building occupants and ensure that the completed overall project provides for safe and efficient operation of the King County Courthouse for the public and county employees. I certify that funds are available for this project.

If you have any questions regarding the project itself, please call Facilities Management Division Director Kathy Brown at 296-0631. If you have any questions regarding the financing strategy, please contact Steve Call, Budget Director at 296-3434.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed legislation. My staff and I look forward to working with you and council staff to reach consensus on this proposal.

Sincerely,



Ron Sims  
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: David deCourcy, Chief of Staff  
          Shelley Sutton, Policy Staff Director  
          Rebecha Cusack, Lead Staff, BFM Committee  
          Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council  
Kurt Triplett, Chief of Staff, Executive's Office  
Steve Call, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Debora Gay, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Paul Tanaka, County Administration Officer, Department of Executive Services  
Kathy Brown, Division Director, Facilities Management Division

The Honorable Cynthia Sullivan  
October 15, 2003  
Page 5

bcc: Caroline Whalen, Deputy Director, Department of Executive Services  
Dave Preugschat, Assistant Director, Facilities Management Division  
Jim Napolitano, Major Capital Projects Manager, Facilities Management  
Division  
Bud Parker, CIP Section Manager, Facilities Management Division