



Legislation Text

File #: 21-6309, **Version:** 1

Department: Justices of the Peace

Department Head: Judge Israel B. García, Jr.

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Investment Memo

Investment Memo Type: Final Investment Memo

Project Name: JP 5-1 Courtroom Remodeling and Security Update Project

Project ID (if applicable): N/A

Vendor Legal Name (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Participation (if applicable): N/A

Managing Entity: County Engineer

Incremental Authorization Requested: \$280,993

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$280,993

Request Summary:

Request by Justice of the Peace, Precinct 5, Place 1 for approval of the Final Investment Memo for the JP 5-1 courtroom remodeling and security update project for \$280,993 and initial commercial paper funding for the Office of the County Engineer (FPM) for the project in the amount of \$285,000.

Project Description:

On May 11th, 2021, Commissioners Court approved the Budget Office's (OMB) recommendations on Rollover requests. Of the \$69.4 million in requests, OMB recommended that \$1,410,000 go to a countywide initiative of enhancing security at Justice of the Peace facilities. The current JP 5-1 facility lacks specific security measures consistent with the operational needs of the department.

This security upgrade includes: 1) hardening the courtroom bench with ballistic material and 2) installing bullet-resistant glass at clerk counters. JP 5-1 has 1 judge's bench and will require glass and panels in the clerk area. Updating the JP facility with ballistic materials would enhance JP security and provide 30 employees at JP 5-1 a safer work environment.

The renovation project includes 4 major elements: 1) Renovate and convert the civil department window teller area to a fully functional workstation. 2) Add working stations in the civil department back office. 3) Replace projectors and upgrade video cabling. 4) Renovate employee rest area/kitchen.

The project will last approximately 6 months and is estimated to be complete in Spring 2022. The project will begin following the approval of this Investment Memo.

Project Scope:

Countywide Security Upgrade:

- 1) Judge's bench: Upgrading judge's bench with ballistic materials in the courtroom. The project will take 6 months to complete. This will benefit the safety and security of 30 employees that use the courtroom on a daily basis.
- 2) Clerk Area: Replacing all the glass and panels in the clerk areas with ballistic materials. The clerk area can host up to 8 clerks at one time. This project will allow adding 2 more window/teller stations to efficiently assist the citizens as well as provide the security and safety of 30 employees on a daily basis.

Renovation:

- 1) Civil department window teller area renovation: This renovation aims to convert the current civil clerk working stations into a fully functional work station which will allow enough counter space for a computer, scanner, and printer.
- 2) Civil department back office renovation: The civil department office needs additional workstations and also removal of walls to enhance workflow.
- 3) Replacing Projectors: Remove the existing projectors and cabling that are extremely outdated and are in non-working condition. Install new laser projectors, cabling, and duplex outlet. Install and connect Clickshare. This will benefit all 30 employees in our court, to receive training when needed as a group, as well as the officers and attorneys to present their evidence in court for trials. We currently don't have a way to do so, other than in a small laptop because our projectors are not functional. The citizens will also benefit from this, as they will be able to receive information to handle the case, prior to seeing the prosecutor in court. As well as slides with the courtroom rules and expectations during their visit.
- 4) Kitchen Remodeling: Removing the current stovetop from the kitchen, which will increase the safety of everyone, due to it being a fire hazard. Replacing the kitchen cabinets will allow for 30 employees to be able to store their belongings and food in a secure and clean place. Remove the current dishwasher that is old and causes the lunchroom to have a horrible odor and mice infestation, preventing employees from enjoying the room and storing their food in a cool and clean place.

Justification:

The JP 5-1 facility is open to the public, and duties performed at the location include civil dockets, evictions, debt claims, small claims, administrative filings, criminal dockets, and trial proceedings (some include assault and family violence type cases). The current entrance does not have a screening process; hence, security and safety issues have always been a primary concern for both employees and the public.

Upgrading the judge's bench with ballistic materials will provide a safe space for the judge, county employees, as well as the public to seek shelter if a dangerous situation breaks out at the Courthouse.

Similarly, since the clerk area has the most contact with the public, and the current glass panels are a weak point that can provide access to employee-only areas, it is crucial to set up security measures to enhance employee safety.

The renovation of the teller area is important because the current setup does not allow the use of a scanner, hence, clerks have to wait until the end of the day to scan the documents which had caused significant delays in file processing and increases the chance of clerical errors. The renovation will also help to prevent accidental damage to computer monitors and printers and allow the use of valuable scanners in the teller area by providing sufficient counter space with

a more efficient workspace.

The current civil department does not have enough space to host all civil clerks, two civil clerks are currently working in the criminal clerk area. Renovating the back office of the civil department and adding additional working stations will allow all civil clerks to be in the same area for a more efficient workflow. Removing the wall in the civil department currently behind the teller area will allow clerks and supervisors to effectively monitor the windows in order to assist the public when there's a significant influx of people.

The projectors are used to provide citizens with the necessary information for their cases as well as courtroom rules when applicable. The projectors will also be used to project any evidence for the cases presented in court during trial proceedings. Since JP 5-1 has a big court, using the projectors in the courtroom is a more efficient way to train the entire staff at the same time.

The kitchen area is a key part of the office, as it is a place for employees to refuel and refresh themselves, as well as an area for employees to build a strong working relationship. The kitchen is in need of renovation because the current condition fails to provide the employee with a comfortable resting environment.

This project supports the following Strategic Objectives:

- To provide a secure, healthy, and welcoming environment for citizens and staff conducting business at the courthouse.

The success of the project can be measured through the following performance metrics:

- Increase employee satisfaction rate by conducting easier and more effective training in the courtroom.
- Increase satisfaction rate from attorneys and officers by allowing a more effective way to present evidence for court.
- Increase satisfaction rate from citizens by providing a more efficient way to receive important information to handle their cases, and view courtroom rules.
- Increase employee satisfaction rate by having a more comfortable kitchen area to eat, relax and refuel during lunch and/or breaks.
- Increase employee satisfaction rate with enhanced safety and security measures.

Alternatives and Engagement:

County-wide Security Enhancement Projects: The alternative would be significantly more costly or not practical in the space of the annex, the other alternative is to keep the status quo.

Civil teller and back-office renovation: We can leave the area as is, and fail to provide effective and undelayed service to our citizens, which goes against the goals that Harris County, to provide outstanding customer service. We will also fail to provide our employees with adequate space to perform their job duties effectively. The office equipment is also in danger of being damaged, which has happened before. This is an electrical hazard for the employees who can easily trip over cables hanging by the wall.

Replacing the projectors in the courtroom: We can leave it as is, and fail to provide the citizens, attorneys, employees, and officers the appropriate resources for court procedures. If we have trials by Zoom, we can only transmit it through a tiny laptop in a big courtroom making it difficult for everyone to see. There is no other known lower-cost alternative. We can leave it as is, but we will remain unable to handle large group training, as well as be able to educate and improve the Court process for our employees and the public.

For the Kitchen Remodeling: There is no other alternative. We can leave it as is, and fail to provide our hard-working employees with an adequate healthy place to eat, relax and refuel during their breaks. We received feedback from clerks, on how uncomfortable it is to have a lunchroom in the current conditions. Most of them do not use the lunchroom at all and stated they will start using it if it is renovated.

Anticipated Project Expenditures and Timeline:

| Scope of Work | Estimated Cost | Estimated Completion* |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Replacing the Projectors and Provide Presentation Device | \$13,640.17 | Spring/Summer 2022 |
| General Construction Cost (including equipment & material transportation, storage, dumpster fee, equipment cost, ect.) | \$227,444.34 | Spring/Summer 2022 |
| Wood and Plastic Material Cost | \$22,372.64 | Spring/Summer 2022 |
| Finishes (trim, paint, sealer,carpet, tile, ect.) | \$11,065.93 | Spring/Summer 2022 |
| JOC Compensation Fee (2.48%) | 6,469.90 | Spring/Summer 2022 |
| Total | \$280,992.98 | |

*The timeline is subject to change based on the county-wide JP renovation schedule.

This project will start 30 days (estimated) after authorization. Materials are currently at 12 weeks for delivery resulting in a construction start date of four (4) months after this FIM is approved. Construction is expected to last approximately six (6) months for a total project schedule of 11 months.

The cost estimate is based on the vendor's quote.

In terms of operating impact from construction, employees will not need to be out of the building during the security project but may need to vacate a portion of the construction area, depending on project size and scope.

For the projectors, they will not be moved from the current location. JP 5-1 is responsible for removing the existing projector screen and wooden frame, FPM will be patching the wall and painting the walls white, if another color was chosen, JP 5-1 will be liable for the cost. Electrical power to the 2 projectors will be reused. No control system is included in the quote. JP 5-1 will use a remote control to turn on and off.

Employees in the Civil Clerk area will relocate temporarily to the Criminal Department area, and process payments there, until the completion of the project.

No significant change in the operating expenses is expected. There might be a minimal increase in the electrical bill due to new projectors, but this increase will not have a significant impact on JP 5-1's budget.

Alignment with Goal(s):

- ☒ Justice and Safety
- ☐ Economic Opportunity
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Public Health
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Flooding
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Governance and Customer Service

Previous Court Action:

| Date | Agenda Item # | Action Taken |
|-----------|---------------|--|
| 5/11/2021 | 124 | Commissioners Court approved the projects to go through the CIP process. |
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Address: 6000 Chimney Rock Rd #102, Houston, TX 7708

Precinct(s): Precinct 3

| Fiscal and Personnel Summary | | | |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Service Name | | Civil Proceedings Service | |
| | FY 21-22 | FY 22 | Next 3 FYs |
| Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions) | | | |
| Labor Expenditures | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Non-Labor Expenditures | \$285,000 | \$ | \$ |
| Total Incremental Expenditures | \$285,000 | \$ | \$ |
| Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions) | | | |
| Existing Budget | | | |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Total Current Budget | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Additional Budget Requested | | | |
| Commercial Paper | \$285,000 | \$ | \$ |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Total Additional Budget Requested | \$285,000 | \$ | \$ |
| Total Funding Sources | \$285,000 | \$ | \$ |
| Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs) | | | |
| Current Position Count for Service | - | - | - |
| Additional Positions Requested | - | - | - |
| Total Personnel | - | - | - |

Department Approval by: Judge Israel B. García, Jr., November 08, 2021

OMB CIP Team Approval by: Amiel Chen, Nov. 11th, 2021

Commercial Paper Request *(For OMB use only):*

Receiving Department: County Engineer

Project PeopleSoft ID: TBD

Note: Commercial Paper is issued in increments of \$5,000, and the excess is not available to be spent by the department.

CP Series Description: Commercial Paper Series D-2 can be used for (1) construction of public works, (2) the purchase of automobiles, equipment, and machinery, including computers, materials, and supplies for the operation of the County's precincts and departments (3) Professional services, including services provided by engineers, architects, attorneys, auditors, financial advisors, and fiscal agents, in connection with the contractual obligations described in (1) and (2).

Commercial Paper is being requested for JP 5-1 Courtroom Remodeling and Security Update Project and is expected to be repaid within the next three fiscal years either through bonds, budgetary means, or pay-as-you-go sources.

HB 1869 compliance confirmed by: Michael James, 09/08/2021

OMB Financial Management contact: Amy Perez, Director, Financial Management, Office of Management and Budget