



## Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** November 18, 2014

**Prepared By/Phone Number:**

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and

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**Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head:**

Roger Jefferies, County Executive,  
Justice and Public Safety, 512-854-4415 *RJ*

Leroy Nellis, Acting County Executive,  
Planning & Budget, 512-854-9106 *Leroy Nellis Powell*

**Commissioners Court Sponsor:** Samuel T. Biscoe, County Judge

**AGENDA LANGUAGE:**

CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON THE PRELIMINARY PROJECT BUDGET FOR THE NEW TRAVIS COUNTY CIVIL AND FAMILY COURTHOUSE.

**BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:**

On October 14, 2014, the Commissioners Court received and approved the Space Program and Judicial Forecast for the new Civil and Family Courthouse. Following that approval, on October 28, 2014, the Commissioners Court received and approved the preliminary Civil and Family Courthouse Concept based upon the 2025 build-out projections of staff and space requirements. The cost estimate and budget presented here are based on that information, as well as based on efficiencies in the operations, construction, and economies of scale throughout the proposed Program. The proposed Program includes the new Civil and Family Courthouse, the underground parking structure, and interim improvements and uses of the south portion of the block until the time a future building is developed.

The Concept for the CFCH provides for approximately 520,000 gross square feet (gsf) of building and a four level underground parking facility to accommodate over 500 spaces. The Concept suggests a building that is 14 stories, and provides 28 courtrooms with the initial build-out. Further, the Concept has been developed to allow for flexibility in use to achieve efficiencies in operation for the County as the growth in courts and departments is accommodated through 2035. Table 1 below lists all the departments, offices and types of courts included in the proposed new Civil and Family Courthouse.

**Table 1**

<b>Courts Offices and Departments</b>
Civil District and County Courts (Courtrooms and Offices)
Court Admin
District and County Clerks
Domestic Relations
Office of Child Representation
Office of Parental Representation
Law Library and Self Help Center
Sheriff Transport and Staging
Building Support
Building Amenities (incl. Children's waiting area)
IV-D Associate Judge's Courts (Child Support)
Probate Court
District Attorney and County Attorney Work Areas

**Project Cost Estimate and Budget Process**

The Civil and Family Courthouse Project budget has been developed through a collaborative and iterative process based on estimated needs for the Program. In order to develop the cost estimate, the URS and HOK Teams used industry standard methods for construction and financing pricing, recent local Austin market construction trends, and Design-Build procurement risk transfer considerations, including contractor bonding costs and historical inflation indices. In addition, previous program management and courthouse design and construction experience from both teams influenced the analysis to achieve a reasonable expectation of probable future construction costs. The project budget has been compiled to include not only the "hard costs" (physical construction, utilities, furnishings, etc.), but also the "soft costs" (inflation, bonding, financing, moving, professional services, testing, permits, etc.). The project budget has undergone extensive review both independently by HOK and URS, as well as in conjunction with the Travis County Project Managers.

The Program Estimate presented is preliminary. The estimate and budget are based on a proposed May 2015 bond referendum, as well as a projected completion date of December 2018. In addition, to protect the County from costly escalation, inflation and typical construction market variability, both URS and HOK agree that the project budget shown below in Table 2 includes sufficient protections and is reasonable to achieve the project milestone schedule.

Table 2

Courts Offices and Departments		
Construction Costs (potential bond amount)	\$	276,752,752
Owner's FF&E and Misc.	\$	17,483,099
Program Total	\$	294,235,851

In addition to direction provided by the Court, the Project Team will continue to further refine work, seek economies and efficiencies, and seek value savings over the next two months. Principally, the project team will also continue to develop the life cycle cost analysis and the annual operations budget.

Over the next two months, URS and HOK will work with the County to refine the initial project and further define the project expectations in areas most likely to impact cost drivers for the project. Continuing the process of defining the project expectations will allow the construction estimate to be refined.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Authorize the project team to continue the process of further refining the Program Cost Estimate.**

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Project Budget Comparisons – Courthouse Only**

The project team evaluated courthouses constructed in the United States within the last 10 years. The analysis focused on courthouses that were located in urban areas, and were similar in scale and function to the new Travis County Civil and Family Courthouse. Over 20 courthouse projects were evaluated. The projects determined to be most similar are grouped by region are shown below in Table 3. For comparison purposes, the costs for the projects were developed in the following manner:

1. All costs were adjusted to consider the cost of the courthouse only.
2. All costs have been projected to 2017 dollars, which is the estimated time that the Design-Build Team would be into substantial construction.
  - a. Costs were brought forward to 2013 dollars using a standard Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculator.
  - b. Costs were projected forward to 2017 dollars using CPI forecast figures developed by the Congressional Budget Office.
3. Projects costs are presented by census region to reflect regional cost differentials.

The construction costs for the new Civil and Family Courthouse were adjusted in the following manner to ensure consistency with the way costs for the selected projects have been compared.

1. Costs shown include only the secure judicial parking and inmate transport areas and do not include the additional parking structure.
2. Costs assume a build out to 2025 staffing levels and the remainder of the space will be left as shell space for future expansion.
3. Operating expenses related to moving into the building, which are not typically included in construction budgets, have been removed from the estimate.
4. Furniture, fixtures, and equipment costs (FF&E), which are not typically included in construction budgets have been removed.
5. The Construction Cost Estimate used for the comparison is **\$232,684,770**.

**Table 3**

Regional Comparison Table (Dollars per sq-ft)	
West South Central Region	\$ 451
East North Central & Mid-Atlantic Regions	\$ 353
South Atlantic Region	\$ 377
Mountain Region	\$ 360
Pacific Region	\$ 875
<b>Travis County Civil and Family Courthouse</b>	<b>\$ 447</b>

**FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING: NA**

**REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS: NA**

**ATTACHMENTS: NA**