

September 20, 2022

Honorable Judge Wendy Getty
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano County Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533
Sent Via Email: cdclower@solano.courts.ca.gov

RE: 2021-2022 Grand Jury Report Entitled: Delays in Relocation of Vallejo Police Department Are Costly

Dear Judge Getty:

This letter contains the City of Vallejo's response to the Solano County Grand Jury Report of June 30, 2022, regarding the relocation of the Vallejo Police Department.

Finding 1: In 2019, the City of Vallejo purchased the former State Farm Insurance building at 400 Mare Island Way specifically for the new location of the Vallejo Police Department. The cost of the move continues to rise as the city continues to delay the move.

Response: Agree, in part. The estimated cost in 2019 to bring the 400 Mare Island building into compliance with current code was \$24 million dollars. As of May 2022, the proposed cost of rehabilitating the 400 Mare Island building was estimated to be approximately \$30 million dollars. While the costs have risen approximately 25% in 3 years, that increase is not substantially greater than the general inflation rate. Time associated with the planning and financing of any large project is inherently likely to result in increased costs in an inflationary market. As the City has explored alternatives demanded by the public, the JFK Library site has been looked at as an alternative to become the relocated police facility. The cost to renovate the JFK Library site for a relocated police facility is preliminarily estimated to be between \$38 million and \$53 million dollars depending on the level of desired improvements ultimately determined to be appropriate.

Recommendation 1A: Vallejo City Council take the steps they need to relocate the police department.

Response: Agree in part. Per City Council direction, City staff are currently engaged in ongoing feasibility assessments to determine a new location or a strategy to refurbish an existing facility to meet current police department needs.

Recommendation 1B: The city seeks and applies for federal and state infrastructure grants to pay for retrofitting the chosen building to meet the needs of the police department.

Response: Agree in part. The City continues to seek federal and State grants for infrastructure. However, grant funding specific to facilities has not been readily available, so it is likely that a local funding source will be required.

Finding 2: Current police headquarters has deteriorated and is inadequate for the city's needs. The building has been neglected for too long. Continually repairing the current facility is not fiscally responsible policy.

Response: Agree in part. Ongoing facility maintenance is required regardless, until a new location or another alternative is determined.

Recommendation 2 A: The city needs to move the police department as soon as possible to a location that will help ensure a well-run police department in Vallejo.

Response: Agree in part. The City needs to address an improved police facility that meets the current and future needs of the department. However, a determination as to whether such action properly includes a new location or a rehabilitated location has not yet been fully analyzed and no decision has yet been made.

Recommendation 2 B: Since the proposed JFK Library site is not ADA compliant, the city must find a new facility that guarantees access to all.

Response: Disagree. The JFK Library building has two elevators. ADA compliance relating to the Library overall are part of the City's draft ADA Transition Plan. The West Elevator is fully operational, has been replaced and brought into compliance. The East Elevator is currently being evaluated for compliance issues identified in the draft ADA Transition Plan and is scheduled to be in compliance by December 30, 2022.

Finding 3: A significant portion of the existing Vallejo Police Department building at 111 Amador is no longer useable because of asbestos and lead contamination. The City is spending thousands of dollars quarterly to pay for testing and cleanup of areas contaminated with asbestos and lead. In addition, after each rain, the building floods and the city has to send in a crew to address water damage as well as the removal of mold.

Response: Disagree. Roughly 2000 square feet (roughly 10% of the original facility) constituting the former indoor shooting range is currently closed to employee access with shooting range activities currently occurring offsite. Lead and asbestos abatement and cleaning in those areas was completed and is monitored to ensure employee safety.

Recommendation 3: Relocate the Vallejo Police Department as promptly as possible.

Response: Agree in part. The City needs to address an improved police facility that meets the current and future needs of the department. However, a determination as to whether such action properly includes a new location or a rehabilitated location has not yet been fully analyzed and no decision has yet been made.

Finding 4: In 2008, the City of Vallejo filed for bankruptcy and cut its police force by about half. The police department is still understaffed. Although the Police Chief has initiated a stronger recruiting effort, the working conditions in the Amador facility prove to be a deterrent to successful recruiting. The current building has been described as “deplorable” by city officials and others who have toured the facility. The Amador Street structure is a deterrent to the department’s ability to attract and hire new employees.

Response: Agree in part. A new or refurbished modern police facility would certainly be a positive element to support the recruitment and retention of new employees and improve overall morale within the department. However, there are a range of other factors including, compensation, workload, training, diversity and community support that also impact law enforcement recruitment. In addition, there is a nationwide challenge in the ability of local governmental entities to attract and hire new employees. The City is actively working to continue to improve and work to employ strategies to recruit and retain department employees.

Recommendation 4A: Relocate the police department to provide a more attractive, healthy working environment, which will enhance recruitment efforts.

Response: Agree in part. The City needs to address an improved police facility that meets the current and future needs of the department. However, a determination as to whether such action properly includes a new location or a rehabilitated location has not yet been fully analyzed and no decision has yet been made.

Recommendation 4B: In addition to moving the Police Department to a new building, Vallejo seek funding through federal and state grants to augment the pay for police officers.

Response: Agree, in part. City staff continue to look for grant opportunities to augment staffing. However, in general, federal and State grants are one time moneys that are not reliable for ongoing costs. The is however looking at ways to incentivize recruitment monetarily.

Finding 5: The Amador building is an inappropriate environment for the CARE Center's work.

Response: Agree. The CARE Center is currently located at 400 Mare Island Way.

Recommendation 5: The CARE Center continue to provide services at the 400 Mare Island Building, where the environment is separate from the business of the police department. It is a trauma-centered, calming environment for victims, primarily children, seeking help.

Response: Agree in part. The City has no immediate plans to move the Care Center. However, depending on the long-term choice for a new or rehabilitated police facility, it may be appropriate to relocate the CARE center at that time.

Please let us know if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Michael Malone
City Manager