

MONTEREY COUNTY

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Carl P. Holm, AICP, Director

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MEMORANDUM

Date: August 28, 2018

To: All Tenants and Interested Parties

From: Neville Pereira, PE, CBO *NP*
 Interim RMA Deputy Director for Public Works, Parks and Facilities

Subject: UPDATE: Seismic Safety of structures at 1200 Aguajito Road, Monterey, CA

On August 23, 2017, the Resource Management Agency (RMA) issued a memorandum in response to information released by the State courts on May 17, 2017 regarding “Seismic Risk Rating of California Superior Court Buildings Summary of Findings” (attached). That memorandum determined that, based on current building data, the facility is safe to occupy. Following that report, the County engaged the professional services of RIM Architects and FZA Structural Engineers to perform a site specific Seismic Evaluation Report for the Monterey County Courthouse, Annex & Parking Garage at 1200 Aguajito Road, Monterey, CA (“RIM Report”). The Final Report was submitted to RMA on June 30, 2018.

This memo is written based on the more detailed, site-specific information provided in the RIM Report that included on-site inspection of the Monterey Courthouse facilities. The RIM Report is an objective Seismic Risk Rating for these buildings based on the American Society of Civil Engineers publication (ASCE) 41-13 Standard for Seismic Evaluation and Retrofit of Existing Buildings, Tier 1 and Tier 2 Evaluations. This independent report was requested by the County to coincide with the State's planned investigation into similar court facilities that would be conducted independently under purview of the Judicial Council of California.

Based on the technical information provided in the RIM Report, the Monterey Courthouse buildings meet state standards for occupancy per code. These buildings were constructed, inspected and attained legal occupancy under the building code in effect at that time (Annex/1965, Courthouse/1966, Parking Structure/1973). The premise of the building code is that buildings do not have to be upgraded to current codes unless specifically identified as seismic risks by the current Building Code or current Existing Building Code. Some of the non-compliance ratings in the RIM Report are based on viewing the existing building structures through the lens of current codes and standards as well as basing building performance on as-built drawings. The non-compliance ratings identified in the RIM Report study don't necessarily equate to poor building performance. Through on-site inspections, no structural defects were

identified in the RIM Report. In addition, since construction, these facilities have withstood multiple earthquake events with the most significant event being the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 at a 6.9 magnitude. As such, RMA believes there is no indication of an immediate threat, nor does the current building code require any seismic retrofits to the building unless new renovations are proposed that could impact structural conditions. To date, no such renovation plans are currently proposed that would instigate such a retrofit. In regard to implementing seismic retrofits to bring the facility to current code standards, the RMA will continue to coordinate with Judicial Council of California to identify funding for such purposes.

Cc: Monterey County Courthouse
Board of Supervisors
Lew Bauman, County Administrative Officer
Nick Chiulos, Assistant County Administrative Officer
Carl Holm, RMA Director

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MEMORANDUM

Date: August 23, 2017

To: All Tenants of 1200 Aguajito Road, Monterey, CA

From: Donald D. Searle, RMA-Acting Chief of Public of Facilities 

Subject: Seismic Safety of 1200 Aguajito Road, Monterey, CA

cc: Lew Bauman, Board of Supervisors, Carl Holm, Steve Mauck, Les Girard

This memo is issued in advance of an August 30, 2017 Budget Committee report regarding a Seismic Assessment Project proposed for 1200 Aguajito Road, Monterey. The proposal is in response to a Superior Court of California release of information through the Judicial Council of California (JCC)/Operations and Programs Division-Capital Programs on May 17, 2017 regarding Seismic Risk Rating of California Superior Court Buildings Summary of Findings that included the Monterey County Courthouse at 1200 Aguajito Road. The information disseminated by the JCC indicated that the 1200 Aguajito Road facility is one of approximately 145 court buildings at seismic risk and ranks seventh out of the top twelve courthouses in the State that are at “very high risk” of collapse in the event of a large seismic event. Further, the findings attributed a cost of \$26 million to remediate 1200 Aguajito Road.

The findings presented on May 17, 2017 are not new. The State has been conducting and assessing seismic risk at public facilities since 1990 following the Loma Prieta Earthquake. In 2002 the passage of the *Trial Court Facilities Act* (SB 1732) transferred responsibility for trial court facilities from Counties to the Administrative Office of the Courts at which time seismic evaluations were established attributing a Risk Level to the 1200 Aguajito Road facility as a V (Substantial damages).

The Judicial Council Capital Program Office updated its court building database in 2015, recognizing that the hazard posed by Risk Level V categorization (principally risk of collapse or major risks to life) needed further classification. This new process created a Seismic Risk Rating (SRR) of Very High Risk (VHR) for twelve of one-hundred sixteen buildings previously evaluated. The 1200 Aguajito Road facility is one of the twelve Very High Risk (VHR) category facilities and is part of the highest priority for mitigation of risk. The JCC will be conducting more thorough structural analysis in the next year restricted to State-owned Court facilities that will not

include 1200 Aguajito Road. Therefore, RMA staff recommends that an independent seismic study be funded and conducted by the County to coincide with the State's planned investigation into similar Court facilities. The State's previous assessments are conjectural based simply on the age of the building and type of construction; they are not a holistic or exhaustive assessment based on engineering analysis of actual conditions. The forthcoming proposed County seismic assessment will look at the factual accuracy of the structural conditions from existing documents and non-destructive field inspection in a comprehensive manner by independent, qualified and experienced structural consultants to ascertain actual building seismic conditions and investigate potential mitigation/remedial options with associated project costs.

Based on current building data, the County believes the facility is safe to occupy. The building at 1200 Aguajito Road was constructed under the building code in effect at that time and was permitted as compliant. The RMA is not aware of any structural defects indicating an immediate threat, nor does the current building code require any seismic retrofits to the building unless necessitated by renovations impacting structural conditions. No such renovation plans are currently proposed that would instigate such a retrofit.

The Budget Committee report identified above will be an opportunity for the County to investigate the need for gathering more information to ascertain the full extent of seismic risk to the facility and plan accordingly.