



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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First District

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Third District

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Fourth District

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Fifth District

DATE: January 28, 2025

09

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

GENERAL SERVICES – APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO LEASE SPACE FOR PUBLIC DEFENDER’S CENTRAL BRANCH (DISTRICT: 1)

OVERVIEW

The San Diego County Public Defender (PD) has operated their Central Branch at 451 A Street (formerly 450 B Street), San Diego, since 2010. The existing lease for space totaling approximately 92,303 square feet expires on September 30, 2026.

In Fiscal Year 2022-23, PD added 90 positions increasing staffing in all branches with a large allocation of new staff assigned to the Central Branch. The current leased premises at 451 A Street cannot accommodate the additional staff and is no longer sufficient to meet departmental needs as currently configured. The Department of General Services conducted a space validation study that supports the need for approximately 113,638 square feet of space to support Central Branch operations.

Today’s request is for approval in principle to search for expanded lease space for the Public Defender Central Branch. Upon successful negotiation of a lease agreement, staff will return to the Board to request approval of the transaction.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Find that the proposed approval in principle is not an approval of a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378 (b)(5) of the State CEQA guidelines.
2. Approve in principle the lease of approximately 113,638 square feet of space for the Public Defender Central Branch.
3. Authorize the Director, Department of General Services, to conduct a site search, negotiate a lease, and upon successful negotiations, return to the Board for approval of the lease agreement.

SUBJECT: GENERAL SERVICES – APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO LEASE SPACE
FOR PUBLIC DEFENDER’S CENTRAL BRANCH (DISTRICT: 1)

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Public Defender Central Branch office is lacking critical elements to support the community in its current location. A larger facility would benefit the community that has been traditionally underserved due to the lack of space for adequate programs, and resources providing equitable access to legal resources.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Implementing effective sustainability objectives is crucial to ensuring safe and healthy communities and contributing to the overall success of the region. The approval in principle for a larger facility for the Public Defender Central Branch supports the County’s Strategic Initiative of Sustainability to ensure the capability to respond to immediate needs for individuals, families, and the region.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the requested approval in principle to negotiate for additional space in the existing building or at a new location. The lease costs resulting from this action will be determined during lease negotiations and will be considered only if the rates and conditions are as or more favorable than the present lease and further, the Public Defender’s office will repurpose existing General Purpose Revenue to cover any increased costs resulting from lease negotiations. Should a favorable lease term, conditions, and cost that can be absorbed by the Public Defender without compromising their budget be negotiated, staff shall return to the Board to request approval of a new lease agreement. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The San Diego County Public Defender (PD) has operated their Central Branch at 451 A Street (formerly 450 B Street), in San Diego, since 2010. The existing lease for approximately 92,303 square feet was approved by the Board on June 25, 2019 (11) and is set to expire on September 30, 2026.

Effective Fiscal Year 2022-2023, PD added 90 positions increasing staffing in all branches with the largest allocation of staff assigned to the Central Branch. The current leased premises at 451 A Street cannot accommodate the additional staff and is no longer sufficient to meet departmental needs.

Department of General Services conducted a space validation study that supports the need for approximately 113,638 square feet of space to support Central Branch operations. The new location needs to be in the Downtown San Diego area near the Central Courthouse similar to the existing space.

SUBJECT: GENERAL SERVICES – APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO LEASE SPACE
FOR PUBLIC DEFENDER’S CENTRAL BRANCH (DISTRICT: 1)

Today’s request is for approval in principle to search for expanded lease space for the Public Defender Central Branch. Staff will negotiate a new lease to align with expiration of the existing lease at 451 A Street. Depending on various factors such as availability of space and proposed rent, the new lease will either be for additional space in the building located at 451 A street or in a new location. Upon successful negotiation of a lease agreement, staff will return to the Board to request approval of the lease.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors’ (Board) approval in principle to lease office space for the Public Defender is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Board’s action does not commit the County to a definite course of action with respect to any project. Once a property is identified for lease, staff will return to the Board with the appropriate environmental finding.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The requested action supports the Community Initiative in the County of San Diego’s 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by providing programs that promote engagement and enhance the quality of life throughout the community.

Respectfully submitted,



EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A