



## KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

**DATE:** June 8, 2022

**TO:** Board of Directors  
Kensington Fire Protection District

**RE:** **Agenda Item 5d**  
Approval to Proceed with the PSB Seismic Renovation Project

**SUBMITTED BY:** Bill Hansell, General Manager

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### Recommended Action

Approve proceeding with the project as previously directed.

### Background

On April 14, 2021, the Board of Directors approved a motion to proceed with the seismic renovation of the Public Safety Building. The decision was based on studies and recommendations by geotechnical consultants, architects, structural engineers, and staff (including General Managers and Department Chiefs of both the Fire Department and Police Department) during the six-year period from 2015 to 2021. The studies cost the KFPD approximately \$300K. A Needs Assessment in 1997 by the Fire Chief and Police Chief first identified the seismic concerns as well as the operational space deficiencies for both departments. Unfortunately, PSB renovation projects in 1998 and 2005 failed to resolve the problems.

Due to the extensive seismic upgrade scope, full compliance with the 2019 California Building Code is now required, which includes Title 24 Energy Compliance and Accessibility conformance, in addition to meeting the operational needs of modern firefighting work. A public meeting was held in November 2019, explaining the complex problem, including the lack of other site locations for a new building. A renovation plan to accommodate the Fire Department only, given the lack of space for the Police Department's needs, was included in the options. Following the meeting, an additional year was spent attempting to co-locate both departments in a renovated PSB. Both agency staffs, though, reported that such a solution was not feasible, as expressed in a joint-agency public meeting in March 2021. Subsequent presentations by the Police Department in April 2021 confirmed that their space needs were greater than what the renovated building could provide.

The KFPD board's decision to proceed with the renovation was based upon the only viable alternative given the exhaustive number of options explored. It was apparent that continued delays would just increase the cost to the public. Therefore, the General Manager was directed to implement the work, which included the hiring of architects and engineers, as well as financial consultants to ensure the financial feasibility of the project.

All of the information regarding the project has been published on the district's website at <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/public-safety-building> and summarized in an FAQ, dated November 2021, published on the site.

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Underscoring the urgency of the project, the board adopted [Resolution 21-09](#) acknowledging that the seismic vulnerability and structural landslide issues continue to endanger the emergency service professionals in the building with great liability to the district and the community at large if the building were to fail in an earthquake. Beginning in May 2021, design consultants were hired through an RFP process to develop permit drawings, while financial advisors confirmed long-term planning showing that the project was viable and would not require increased tax revenue. The General Manager provided monthly progress updates to the board, which were presented and discussed in open session. Permit applications were submitted for both the renovation project and the temporary facility followed by bid packages, with bid openings pending by the end of June 2022. The FY2021-2022 Budget included capital outlay for soft costs of \$614,252 for this process. Anticipated expenditures by July 1, 2022 are estimated to be \$480,000, and the Preliminary FY2022-2023 Budget will be updated with the approved bid amounts when the hard costs are determined in the next month. A bid package was also issued for the loan-portion of the project with results pending shortly, so that the board can acquire the best rate.

During the past year, no new information has arisen that shows another viable alternative to the project, while construction costs and interest rates have continued to rise. Recent public correspondences, though, have questioned proceeding with the work. Unfortunately, the comments do not acknowledge the time and funds already expended, and more importantly the unavoidable code, professional, and legal requirements that mandate the project. Recent calls for the exploration of another site for a replacement building do not consider the substantially higher cost (estimated to be double the current renovation cost) and longer schedule, even if planning approvals and environmental (EIR) compliance were eventually obtained, which is highly speculative. In fact, the proposed site next to the Kensington Library was roundly rejected by the public in both the late 1990's, as board meeting records from the time show, as well as in the 2015 to 2021 study period.

On June 2, 2022, the attached letter from the United Professional Firefighters of Contra Costa County, AIFF Local 1230, was received by the district, expressing their concerns about the seismic liability, NFPA 1500 compliance, and prolonged study of the current conditions. The letter references the *"long overdue construction/modernization of Fire Station 65"* and concludes by stating *"...we strongly urge your continued support of this project."*

Given these facts, it is necessary for the board to re-affirm its prior findings and the current direction on the seismic renovation, and to instruct the General Manager to proceed with bringing the bids and financial proposal to the board for consideration in the July 13, 2022 regular board meeting.