

Printed from THE DAILY JOURNAL, dtd. 10/24/2011

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## County asks state for jail cash

October 24, 2011, 03:30 AM By Michelle Durand Daily Journal Staff

San Mateo County took the first step toward seeking \$100 million in jail construction funds from the state, money that if received could slash the project's debt service by more than half.

San Mateo County Sheriff Greg Munks and his jail planning team hand delivered to the Corrections Standards Authority on Wednesday a letter of intent to seek the funds toward a jail estimated to cost between \$145 million and \$160 million. This first step's deadline for counties was Friday.

Alerting the state does not obligate any county to apply or accept the money if awarded but is required to begin the process. Under the original state guidelines, Munks and the others would have had to wait to see if the state invited them to submit a full application. Recently, though, the state announced all interested counties can apply although it will still ask certain jurisdictions to participate.

Munks believes an invitation gives counties a big advantage and they will be considered first. The change doesn't alter San Mateo County's strategy much, said Munks, adding he is hopeful it makes the cut.

The interest statement is fairly bare bones, primarily giving the state contact information and acknowledgment the county will abide by requirements such as construction time frames and that staffing and occupying the new facility will be done within 90 days of the jail's completion. The statement also estimates the county will ask for \$100 million.

The CSA will inform Munks and the other jail officials involved on or around Oct. 26 if they are invited to apply. Either way, the county has until Jan. 11 to submit its full application and possibly a needs assessment.

Board of Supervisors Vice President Adrienne Tissier, a proponent of a new jail, particularly replacing the inadequate women's facility, is optimistic the county will be a contender because it has land, a plan and a need.

"We're in a pretty good position, with all the nuts and bolts that they want to see," she said. "I think we have a good shot."

One hindrance may be the low amount of inmates the county sends to the Department of Corrections. Counties with larger numbers receive some priority.

Tissier said county officials need to not sit passive but instead aggressively lobby state legislators to put in a good word.

"We need a full-court press. They can always say no but if we don't ask or don't try we'll never know the answer," Tissier said.

Regardless of the state funds, a new jail in San Mateo County is the goal. The board, short of Supervisor Dave Pine, voted in favor earlier this month of an unfinished 576-bed jail that allows future expansion. The jail is yet to be designed but is tentatively described as three floors topped by 40 feet of unfinished space. The county purchased land on Chemical Way in Redwood City for \$17 million specifically for construction of a new jail. The existing Maguire Correctional Facility on Bradford Street will remain open, housing inmates awaiting trial and sentencing. All bookings and releases will happen at the Bradford Street facility.

Before his dissenting vote, Pine said he is skeptical the county will receive any state funding.

After construction, annual operating costs would be roughly \$44 million.

Munks anticipates the jail opening in 2014-2015.

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