

AGENDA

**Recommendation for Council Action**

AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting: April 26, 2018

Item Number: **086**

Office of Real Estate Services

Authorize negotiation of a lease or acquisition of an interest in real property and improvements for a municipal courthouse and return to City Council no later than May 10, 2018.

Lead Department	Office of Real Estate Services.
For More Information	Lauraine Rizer, Office of Real Estate Services, (512) 974-7078; Megan Herron, Office of Real Estate Services, (512) 974-5649; Sherry Statman, Municipal Court, (512) 974-4841; Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court, (512) 974-4690.

Additional Backup Information:

AMC's main courthouse is located at 700 East 7th Street and offices a staff of approximately 148 employees comprised of administrative, judicial and operational positions. The Criminal Prosecution division is made up of 17 staff members; the Cherry Creek substation is made of 8 staff members.

The current courthouse was constructed in 1953 and is no longer adequate for staff and customers. There is an insufficient number of offices and courtrooms, lack of circulation space for defendants, witnesses, victims, jurors, and consultation rooms for prosecution and defense attorneys. There is a large volume of customers and employees who use the court each day; the current building is located in a high crime area; the lack of parking is extremely challenging and is a significant security risk.

Funding for a new main courthouse was approved in the General Obligation (GO) bond election in 2006; however, it was not adequate to cover the expenses associated with construction of a courthouse. Since 2006, four separate efforts involving needs assessments and architectural plans have been developed, paid for by the City and not completed.

The AMC main location has deteriorated to the point that systems failures could cause a long-term closure of the facility at any time. Severe building conditions include leaking roof, poor distribution of heat and air-conditioning, basement flooding, frequent mildew, cracked flooring, mechanical/engineering failures and a disintegrated sewer line. Repair and maintenance issues are frequent and difficult to address due to the asbestos containing materials located throughout the building.

The new location should provide a stable, safe and healthy environment. The site should be accessible by public transportation and provide adequate parking and operational space needed to administer justice in a fair and efficient manner.

AMC will continue to offer off-site court services and will expand the frequency to ensure easier access to judicial and court support resources to citizens in all areas of the City. These events reduce transportation issues, support community outreach and provide higher levels of public service to individuals who have matters pending in the court.