

Stockton City Hall is moving

GUEST VIEW

BY Kurt Wilson

Stockton City Manager

Between shaping our future and honoring our past, this is an exciting time for Stockton. Our City Hall's majestic architecture and noble inscriptions make the exterior an iconic part of our downtown landscape. Today we know it as City Hall, but over the years the building has also served as a courthouse and police department, and even included a holding cell and gun room. Its use adapted over time as needs evolved and the highest and best use of the property changed.

After nearly a hundred years of continual use, the building is in a state of disrepair.

Unfortunately, many of the building materials used in the 1926 construction are now known to be hazardous.

In addition to triggering ADA accessibility and seismic retrofit requirements, repairing the building would disrupt the dormant condition of those materials, requiring extensive, and expensive, mitigation efforts.

The space requirements of a City Hall use are very different than other types of uses. While the cost of different configurations would be cheaper, remodeling the building to serve the public as a City Hall would be very expensive. Beyond the cost issue, the building is too small to meet our current needs.

This was all taken into consideration when our predecessors made the decision to move out of the building.

We're currently implementing the short-term plan, that was approved by the bankruptcy court, to relocate City Hall operations to the Chase Bank building at 400 E. Main St., Stockton.

This is only a temporary solution, so we still need to identify a permanent home for City Hall in a way that addresses costs, accessibility, and ability to serve Stockton residents. We're actively evaluating options that the Mayor and Council will consider in the near future.

With that process underway, it's time to turn our attention to the long-term future of the existing building. Since we know that the building must be preserved and that there are other uses or configurations that would be far less costly to implement, the question becomes, "What would the community like to see happen with historic City Hall?"

Should it be public or private, office or residential, museum or something completely different?

The Mayor and Council recognize the historical significance of the building and the deep sentiment of many residents about the building. They want to hear from people who have thoughts, ideas, or recommendations.

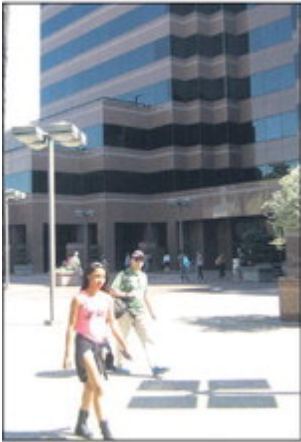
Costs will continue to be a major factor in the final decision, but the City is open to collaborative and creative solutions.

It's important that everyone has an opportunity to weigh in and that we're able to capture as many ideas as possible.

To help with that, we've set up an email address for this topic. If you would like your voice to be heard about the future of the historic City Hall building, or even if you would like to share memories of what the building means to you, please email your ideas to OurCityHall@stocktonca.gov.

This will be an ongoing process, so no cutoff dates have been identified. More information will be available on the City's website at www.stocktonca.gov.

www.stocktonca.gov/OurCityHall. We hope you'll participate and are looking forward to hearing from you.



Stockton City Hall operations are moving to the Chase Bank building on E. Main Street, while a permanent home is sought to replace the aged City Hall. [MICHAEL FITZGERALD/THE RECORD]