

MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
April 9 – 11, 2024

EXPANSION OF THE FEDERAL COURTHOUSE

ISSUE: The Inland Empire urgently needs a larger federal courthouse. The existing United States District Courthouse for the Central District of California, Eastern Division, in Riverside (“Riverside Courthouse”) has only four courtrooms, shared by six judges, to serve the 4.7 million people in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The Administrative Office of the United States Courts (“AO”) has developed a plan (“Long-Term Facilities Plan”) to expand the Riverside Courthouse (“Riverside Courthouse Expansion Project”). However, a Feasibility Study must be conducted before proceeding with the Long-Term Facilities Plan.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group urges immediately funding the U.S. General Services Administration’s (“GSA”) Phase I Feasibility Study to accelerate implementation of the Long-Term Facilities Plan to expand the Riverside Courthouse.

In order to expedite the Riverside Courthouse Expansion Project, while remaining cognizant of the importance of the other judicial districts and projects, the Monday Morning Group urges that all five GSA Feasibility Studies be funded.

BACKGROUND: Riverside and San Bernardino Counties are the 11th and 12th most populated counties in the nation respectively, with 4.7 million people. The population of the region is projected to increase to 5.4 million people by 2030. The existing Riverside Courthouse is not large enough to serve the Inland Empire, as it has only four courtrooms, currently being shared by six judges. Due to the extreme space limitations, the Riverside Courthouse is the only courthouse in the Nation requiring three Magistrate Judges to share a courtroom, and two Magistrate Judges to share chamber space.

To properly serve the Inland Empire, the AO has developed the Long-Term Facilities Plan to expand the current Riverside Courthouse. However, to move forward, GSA must first complete its Phase I Feasibility Study, which Congress must fund. Currently, there are four other courthouse projects ahead of the Riverside Courthouse Expansion Project in the funding queue for GSA Feasibility Studies. However, none of those courthouse projects impact the access to justice of so many Americans as the Riverside Courthouse Expansion Project.

The funding of all five GSA Feasibility Studies would allow the GSA to immediately begin moving forward on the Phase I Feasibility Study for the Riverside Courthouse Expansion Project. Each of the GSA Feasibility Studies is estimated to require less than \$1 million in funding, making the total expenditure for all five studies relatively modest. Expanding the Riverside Courthouse must be prioritized to ensure access justice for all residents of Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Action should be taken without further delay.