

**Written Justification for La Mansion Health Clinic
ARPA-23-340-330**

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Description of Harm or Need

The Governor of Texas has an ongoing active Public Health Emergency Declaration in place. In accordance, the Hidalgo County Judge and the Emergency Director work in collaboration to implement strategies that align with the mitigation of COVID-19 and its ongoing effects to actively abide with the Public Health Emergency Declaration. The County has been in a continuous response mode for the COVID-19 pandemic since its known inception beginning in March 2020. As per the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) COVID-19 [Dashboard](#), Hidalgo County has the following cumulative data: approximately 179,833 confirmed cases, 87,803 probable cases and 3,696 fatalities due to contracting this infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It would not be improbable to state that our confirmed COVID cases are higher than other counties, and that a high number of deaths may be attributed to comorbid complications.

Justification of a Capital Expenditure

Hidalgo County Health & Human Services, along with the various County Departments and COVID healthcare partners, are actively assessing (testing), intervening (vaccinating) and providing prevention education. The COVID-19 virus has proven to be especially robust, as evident by its ever-enhancing mutations. The need for providing high quality services and care to our Hidalgo County residents is of utmost importance. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) COVID-19 [Dashboard](#), Hidalgo County has administered 2,250,682 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (Attachment A). The Hidalgo County Health Clinics continue to offer COVID-19 vaccines at all our locations to help decrease the spread of COVID-19.

The expansion of clinics and addition of new clinical locations will ensure access to COVID-19 intervention and vaccinations and advance healthcare referrals for a County of over 1.2 million residents, including an unaccounted immigrant population. In order to meet the needs of an impoverished population of 143,000, a new clinic located at 2218 Moorefield Road, Mission, TX, 78572 in the location of the Hidalgo County Precinct 3 offices, unofficially dubbed La Mansion Clinic, is being considered due to its high accessibility to indigent communities. Another

important factor is that 40 – 45% of the County’s population is uninsured or underinsured. It is in the best interest of our residents to provide a clinic with high quality services at this location because the closest County Public Health Clinic is more than 16 miles to the East.

Comparison of the Proposed Capital Expenditure Against Alternatives

Hidalgo County has partnered with Millennium Engineers Group, Inc. to assist with the best alternative for this capital investment. In making the best decision, several options were taken into consideration including renovating, leasing, and finally new construction. The most superior alternative would leverage costs and optimize service outcomes for the long haul.

Retrofitting-

Hidalgo County Health & Human Services first considered renovating an existing facility/clinic located at 211 Schuerbach Road, Mission, Texas. The building is co-located with the WIC (West Side) and Health Clinic (East Side). The Health Clinic was constructed in 2000. Millennium Engineers Group Inc. (MEG) was contracted by Hidalgo County Precinct 3 to conduct a limited observation and assessment of the current conditions of the clinic (Attachment B).

Two separate engineering firms conducted forensic investigations of the Hidalgo County (Mission) Public Health Clinic. Their findings concluded that the foundation and structural damage due to the overall weakened subsurface on which the facility was built is extensive and continues to pose an ongoing structural risk. The analysis presented recommended a new foundation structure. The engineering firms of Raba Kistner Consultants (RKC) – (2012) and Millennium Engineers Group, Inc. (MEG) – (2023) completed the geotechnical analysis and reviewed the building’s structural damage due to a weakening subsurface of the building’s foundation.

In 2012, the Hidalgo County Facilities Department staff and assigned contractors attempted an intervention to slow the substructure shifting by various means focusing on lack of drainage in the subsurface. Additionally, repairs were made to lessen the cracking/separation of the building’s brick veneer, roofing separation, and re-aligning door frames so doors could close. The sinking of the foundation had caused the floor to deteriorate and slant with a significant gradient towards the Northwest side of the building.

In 2023, “The subsurface conditions throughout the site show that the whole site contains expansive clay soils that have a high potential to experience volumetric change that are adding to the displacement of walls, roofing, and flooring”, as stated by RKC. MEG proposed and recommended a new foundation structure, “The Owner should consider the exponential increase in cost required to design and construct a structure for such soil movement.”

Upon reviewing the findings, MEG, recommended that all the subsurface be removed under the facility including any soils out to 8 inch from the edges of the building. The proposed method would require the following:

- Excavate all the expansive clay soil to a depth of seven (7) feet below natural ground elevation in accordance with the Site Preparation
- Condition and Compact twelve (12) inches of subgrade below excavated soils in accordance the Site Preparation
- Place a select fill, (minimum of one and half (1 1/2 foot) above natural ground, for a total of eight and half (8 1/2 feet) select fill – condition and compact up to the proposed FFE in accordance with the select fill recommendations.
- Additionally, slab grade beams may be needed where concentrated load areas are present; the grade beams or slab may be thickened and widened to serve as spread footing.
- Utility Considerations recommendations designed with some degree of flexibility or sleeves; such features will help reduce the risk of damage to utility facilities from soil movement related to shrinkage and expansion.
- Additionally, the clinic / building would have to be vacated while all this work is being completed (several weeks / months).

Upon review of these findings with the engineering teams, County Facilities Team, and the Pct. 3 administrative team, the overall repairs would be cost prohibitive and there is **NO** guarantee of this being a long-term solution to a structural need. The recommendation would be to build a new site which will have a long-term service life for our residents.

A report provided by Millennium Engineers Group, Inc. delineating the rationale for new construction being the most superior alternative is attached.

Leasing -

Prior to considering new construction, locating comparable buildings that could meet the medical and health needs of the community was attempted. Leasing was not an option as there were no buildings within the vicinity that could meet the pandemic-related need and would not be the most cost-effective option. Hidalgo County already owns the land where La Mansion Clinic will be constructed which is an advantage for managing, protecting and preserving its assets.

Attached are two properties for lease in the general area of Mission, Texas. The first property is located at 4021 N La Homa Rd, Mission, TX, 78574 and is 9,166 square feet. As per the realtor listing on www.loopnet.com, it would cost us \$14.00 per square foot per year to lease which equates to \$128,324.

The second property also listed on www.loopnet.com is located at 3401 W Mile 5 Road, Mission, TX, is 8,536 square feet and would cost \$14.00 per square foot per year to lease which equates to \$119,504 (Attachment C). With the stipulation that the price of leasing will not inflate, leasing either of the two buildings for 30 years is estimated to cost approximately \$4,000,000.00. In addition to paying the lease, we would also incur the cost to retrofit the building to code to serve as a health clinic that would meet the health needs of the community. Leasing over new construction would not be a superior alternative as already previously stated, Hidalgo County owns the land where the proposed La Mansion Health Clinic would be constructed. Hidalgo County currently has the El Paraiso Health Clinic floor plan for an 8,000 square foot facility at a cost of \$4,800,00.00, to utilize in the construction of La Mansion Clinic to provide an equitable facility for its underserved, vulnerable population (Attachment E).

New Construction -

The cost for new construction for a state of the art and up to code facility would be the best option at an estimated cost of \$4.8 million (Attachment F). We are recommending using the same floor plan from El Paraiso Clinic prepared by ERO Architecture and Engineering with the current cost projection submitted on February 3, 2023. This facility is expected to operate at full capacity for years to come by mitigating the COVID-19 virus and the ongoing public threat of developing variants. Quicker access to the clinic will facilitate prompt responses to testing and minimize delays with proper medical care and referrals as applicable.

A copy of the probable cost of construction provided by ERO Architects, Halff Associates and Brownstone Consultants is attached.

The health clinic will provide long term services for our citizens and therefore it is not financially feasible to pay a yearly lease or retrofit a facility that has structural damage due to a weakling subsurface of the building's foundation. By constructing the new La Mansion Health Clinic at the Moorefield Road Precinct 3 location, 2218 Moorefield Rd, Mission, TX, 78572, we can offer a one stop shop for our community to not only have access to health care but also to its neighboring government entities including but not limited to the Precinct 3 County Commissioner, Justice of the Peace, Head Start Program, Hidalgo County Planning Department and Texas Department of Public Safety.