



Office of the Mayor

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 2

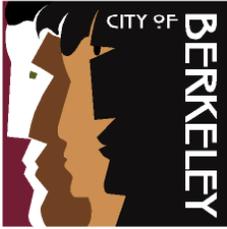
Meeting Date: December 11, 2018

Item Number: 21

Item Description: **Send a Letter to Sutter Health Requesting a Plan to Retrofit/Rebuild Alta Bates Hospital or sell to another operator**

Submitted by: **Mayor Jesse Arreguín**

The item is revised to provide more information on what the details of the letter should entail, along with a request to set up a series of meetings to discuss the future of Alta Bates and/or providing an existing level medical care in the City of Berkeley.



Office of the Mayor

REVISED
CONSENT CALENDAR
December 11, 2018

TO: Members of the City Council

FROM: Mayor Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember Sophie Hahn, Councilmember Kate Harrison, and Councilmember Lori Droste

SUBJECT: Send a Letter to Sutter Health Requesting a Plan to Retrofit/Rebuild Alta Bates Hospital or sell to another operator

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to send a letter to, and follow-up with, Sutter Health requesting: ~~that~~

1. Information on their current plans for the future of the Alta Bates Summit Ashby Campus, and whether they are willing to retrofit and rebuild the facility by 2030 to maintain emergency and acute care, or sell it to another operator who will maintain a full-service, acute care hospital in Berkeley. ~~a plan to retrofit and rebuild Alta Bates to state regulations by 2030 or agree to sell Alta Bates hospital to an operator who will maintain a full-service, acute care hospital in Berkeley. The letter should also~~
2. Aquest a series of meetings with Sutter Health to develop a plan to maintain existing medical care provided at the Ashby Campus at a new rebuilt hospital, or at other Sutter owned sites in the City of Berkeley. ~~The letter should~~
3. request That Sutter provide an answer by the end of February 2019.

It should also express The City of Berkeley's ~~expresses its~~ strong desire to work in collaboration with Sutter Health to develop a plan to keep a full-service, acute care hospital in Berkeley. The City of Berkeley is committed to looking at all options to maintain Alta Bates Ashby Campus as a full-service hospital and to maintain emergency acute care in Berkeley or at other Sutter owned sites in Berkeley, including changes to land use regulations and possible financing options.

The letter shall reference the findings from the Health Impact Assessment completed by the University of California, Department of Public Health, dated September 2018 and state that the closure of Alta Bates would:

- Create a harmful cascade effect on remaining hospitals and emergency services, exacerbating already overcrowded ERs
- Lengthen wait times for hospital beds
- Reduce the ability of first responders and emergency service vehicles to respond due to increased transport times through the East Bay's congested roadways
- Disproportionally affect marginalized communities
- Impact acute care services in this region that need to be expanded, not consolidated.

BACKGROUND

Alta Bates, originally Alta Bates Sanitarium, was founded as an eight-bed hospital for women and their infants in 1905 by Nurse Alta Alice Miner Bates. Alta Bates has always cared for its community in times of crisis: the 1906 and 1989 major earthquakes, the devastating flu epidemic of 1918, and two catastrophic urban fires in 1923 and 1991.

It has been providing “full service - acute care” hospital services in Berkeley, providing care to communities of the greater East Bay and along the Interstate 80 corridor since 1955. In 2017, Alta Bates had 5863 births and 45,336 ER patient visits, and as the only non-Kaiser hospital serving the I-80 corridor between Vallejo and Oakland, plays a critical role providing services to women and infants.

The number of hospitals in California has declined by almost 20% since 2001 while population, especially in urban centers has increased by over 13%. Additionally, with people are living longer, Berkeley's aging population is increasing. This demonstrate a steadily rising demand for inpatient hospital services in the region.

Sutter stated in 1999, when bidding for public approval of a hospital merger between Sutter Medical Center and Alta Bates Hospital, that healthcare services would be “enhanced” by having two locations. -However since the completion of the merger, Alta Bates has lost many services including the pulmonary sub-acute unit, cardiac catheterization lab, and the inpatient oncology unit.

Sutter announced that it would be closing Alta Bates by 2030, due to seismic retrofit requirements and stated that “Operating two full service hospitals less than 3 miles apart is inefficient and inhibits our ability to be most affordable to patients;” (Attachment A: internal memo from Sutter Health to employees and medical staff)

Sutter Health's decision to cease operating Alta Bates Hospital as a full service acute care hospital is a complete reversal of their “Ten Community Commitments” submitted

to the City of Berkeley on April 20, 1999, when bidding for support for their merger of Alta Bates Hospital and Summit Medical Center. These Commitments stated, in part: “1. Summit and Alta Bates will continue to operate as full-service community hospitals,” and “7. The hospitals will remain modern and safe, and the [Sutter, Summit and Alta Bates] partnership will cover operating losses while we are recovering and rebuilding and working our way out of this crisis”, (Attachment B- Ten Community Commitments).

While continuing to claim that the closure of Alta Bates Medical Center is a result of exorbitant cost of retrofitting, Sutter has not provided any evidence of the cost estimate to the City of Berkeley, despite on-going requests. Additionally, Sutter Health secured \$1.2 billion in bonds through the California Health Facilities Financing Authority in 2016 for building improvements at its facilities, yet none of that public money has been used to comply with required seismic upgrades at Alta Bates. Spokespersons have stated that Alta Bates’ neighbors prevent them from retrofitting the hospital as required by state law; yet a public letter from the immediately adjacent Bateman Neighborhood Association in October 2016 affirms “the neighborhood is overwhelmingly opposed to the closure of Alta Bates, and wants it to remain open as a full service acute care hospital”. Many California hospitals have either successfully complied or have demonstrated their commitment to comply with seismic requirements by 2030. Furthermore, Sutter Health, is a staggeringly profitable Not-for-Profit corporation that ended the year 2016 with over \$15.7 billion in assets.

Recent waves of ~~extremely costly~~ devastating fires in the North Bay and other California communities have resulted in evacuated or destroyed hospitals, raising an alarming scenario in the East Bay where we are vulnerable to wildfires, earthquakes, chemical releases, and other manmade and natural disasters. ~~have experienced earthquakes severe enough to collapse a freeway; explosions, fires and toxic vapors released at the Chevron oil refinery; and a wildfire in the hills of Berkeley and Oakland in 1991 that killed 25 and injured 150.~~ An OSHPOD report highlighted the critical role hospitals occupy when disaster strikes, stating: **Hospitals occupy a unique place in society’s survival capability**; and additionally finding: “Without functioning hospitals, it takes much longer for a community to recover from an earthquake. This prolonged recovery seriously retards the area’s economic and social renewal”. Berkeley Fire Chief Dave Brannigan confirmed at a Forum on February 3, 2018 the closure of Alta Bates would have a significant impact on Berkeley’s Emergency response services and a real threat to lives including increased transport times of 24 minutes longer and the passing on to the public the cost of ambulance services.

The public outcry demanding that Sutter keep their commitments to the City of Berkeley and this community by maintaining Alta Bates as a full service acute care hospital in

Berkeley has been loud and steadily growing since July 2016. On March 14, 2017, the Berkeley City Council voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance requiring hospital operators to provide additional notification and information to the public on community impacts before closing a hospital or reducing acute healthcare services. Since that date, hundreds of Berkeley and East Bay community members and nurses have turned out repeatedly to City Council meetings, community forums, town halls and public protests to draw attention and to take a stand against the serious threat posed to our community by a closure of Alta Bates.

Resolutions have been passed unanimously by numerous East Bay cities including Berkeley, Oakland, Emeryville, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond and San Pablo documenting substantial community use of Alta Bates Medical Center and the ongoing need for the hospital to serve the health and well-being of East Bay residents and those living along the I-80.

On March, 16, 2017 an Alta Bates Regional Task Force was convened that included East Bay cities, public health officials, UC Berkeley and EMS providers. Through that group the City of Berkeley Health Commission was tasked with completing a community Health Impacts Assessment that would study the impacts of the closure of Alta Bates Medical Center. UC Berkeley's School of Public Health has completed the study dated September 2018 (Attachment C) and validates serious concerns for the safety and healthcare needs of Berkeley and East Bay residents who depend on Alta Bates in emergencies. It includes the following and other significant findings:

- California patients displaced due to a closer hospital closure are 5% more likely to die, 10% more likely to die if they are seniors over 65; and have a 15% higher risk of heart attack, stroke and sepsis
- A minute increase in response times increases the risk of death by between 8 and 17 percent based on when the initial incident occurred
- A heightened risk of infant mortality and adverse birth outcomes corresponds to increased travel times of greater than 20 minutes
- Acute Myocardial Infarctions (heart attacks) cause ¼ of U.S. deaths and the chance of death increases with an increased driving time of 10 minutes; with one study showing 6.5 % more deaths occurring with a 1 mile increased distance

The Berkeley City Council has heard compelling testimony from nurses relating their frontline experiences as caregivers for our community – seeing firsthand the many barriers already hindering this community from accessing healthcare that should be a human right. Additionally, in various community forums community members shared their experiences of life saving interventions performed at Alta Bates and are raising the alarm about adding the potentially devastating impact that would result if it was closed.

The Council and City have been called on to intervene on behalf of this community and their right to maintain healthcare services in the community, with Alta Bates serving as its full service acute care hospital.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time to write a letter and follow-up for a response.

CONTACT PERSON

Mayor Jesse Arreguin

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ATTACHMENTS

- A. Internal Sutter Memo from CEO, Chuck Prosper, to Employees, Medical Staff and Volunteers, dated October 6, 2015
- B. Sutter Health – Ten Community Commitments
- C. Health Impact Assessment dated September 2018, prepared by Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California Berkeley 2018