

Staunton and Augusta County Conceptual Design for Consolidated Courts Facilities

August 11, 2015



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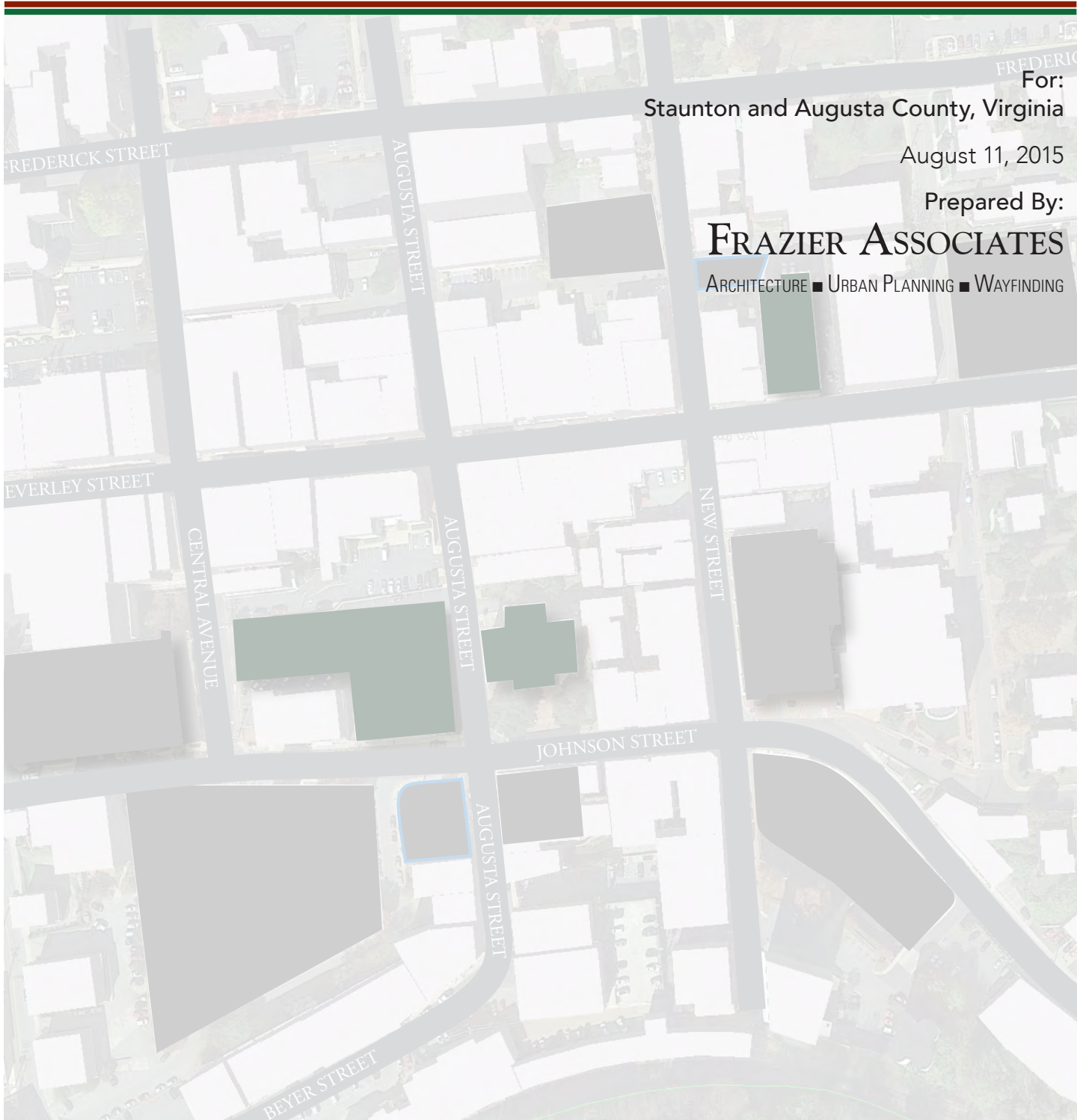
For:
Staunton and Augusta County, Virginia

August 11, 2015

Prepared By:

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This study examines the feasibility of a downtown location for a consolidated courts system utilizing the existing historic courthouse, the Cochran Judicial Center and a new courts building. The site for the proposed new building is the present Union Bank property directly across Augusta Street from the historic courthouse.

This new facility would house two new circuit courts along with three general district courts and judges' chambers. It would also include a combined clerks and staff offices and records, along with storage areas for the circuit and general district courts. A combined Commonwealth Attorneys' office would occupy the top level. There would be expansion space on the top level for two or three more future courts.

A new pedestrian bridge will provide courts staff a secure passage and the public a separate corridor between the new building and the historic courthouse. Security would be housed within the new courts building.

The historic Augusta County Courthouse would be restored and used for two circuit courts along with two judges' offices and support facilities. Both the new facility and the historic courthouse could be used for criminal trials with the necessary security and prisoner spaces and circulation.

The Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts and related facilities would be moved to the Cochran Judicial Center, initially with three courtrooms.

Secure parking for judges would be provided in the lower level of the new facility and in enclosed spaces behind the Cochran Judicial Center. Staff parking for the new courts facility would be in a reserved level of the Johnson Street Parking Garage. Additional reserved parking for courts staff would be in other lots and garages. General parking for the public using the courts facilities would be free in nearby lots and garages and based on a validation system. Handicapped parking would be provided in the parking lot across from the new

facility and on additionally designated spaces near the other facilities. Enhanced signage, streetscape elements and cross walks will improve pedestrian circulation in areas around these new or revised courts facilities.

Due to the short time frame of this study, and in order to have consistency between the earlier county study completed by Moseley Architects, this report uses similar case projections and related future growth of space needs as the Moseley report. This study, like the Moseley study, also uses similar square footage sizes from state court standards in most instances and similar square footage costs for cost estimating as well.

The general sizes of the buildings are as follows:

Augusta County Courthouse:	16,000 sq. ft.
Cochran Judicial Center:	30,000 sq. ft.
New Courts Facility:	84,000 sq. ft.
TOTAL SQ. Ft.	130,000 sq. ft.

The square footage for the county facility according to the Moseley report is approximately 120,000 sq. ft. This scope of this report did not include studying the space needs and costs for a separate City courts system if the two localities create totally separate facilities.

The projected costs for a consolidated courts system in downtown Staunton is estimated to be approximately \$47 million vs. \$44 million for a separate county facility. City costs would need to be determined and added to the county figure to calculate the total costs to the localities if they create separate facilities.

One possible way to calculate how to divide the costs for any such consolidation could be to examine the caseloads percentages for each locality. This ratio would then be used to calculate each locality's contribution to the consolidation.

Retaining and consolidating the county and city courts downtown will continue the presence of these facilities in the same setting where they have been for over 265 years. This location offers judges, attorneys, courts staff, and the public using the courts, a wide variety of additional activities when downtown. Opportunities for dining, shopping, banking, visiting cultural attractions and using facilities such as the post office, library and other service businesses are present in this historic heart of the greater Staunton/Augusta County community.

If this option moves forward, additional research would be needed to determine the legal steps needed to consolidate the courts and more detailed design studies, cost estimates, and operating costs are recommended to provide more detailed information to decision makers.

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY



A. Context of Study

The general arrangements of the courts in Augusta County and the City of Staunton reflect the historical pattern of two separate systems. The County and the City each have their own general district and circuit courts and they share a clerk for the juvenile and domestic relations (J&DR) court.

Serving the Commonwealth through 31 judicial circuits, the circuit court is the general jurisdiction trial court with authority to try all types of civil and criminal cases.

Serving the Commonwealth through 32 judicial districts, the general district court is a limited jurisdiction trial court that hears civil cases involving amounts in controversy up to \$25,000, and conducts trials for traffic infractions and misdemeanor offenses.

Serving the Commonwealth through 32 judicial districts, the juvenile and domestic relations district court is a limited jurisdiction trial court that hears cases involving children and families.

The City General District and Circuit courts are presently located in the Cochran Judicial Center on Beverley Street. The County Circuit Court is housed in the Augusta County Courthouse and the County General District Court is in the former Augusta County Office Building on Johnson Street, where the shared Juvenile & Domestic Relations (J&DR) courts are also located.

In recent years, as court cases increased and facilities became more crowded, the two localities have continued discussions on expansion options. The Presiding Circuit Judge, Victor Ludwig, has the responsibility to ensure adequate facilities in this district and began to encourage the development of a plan.

In 2012, Frazier Associates architects in Staunton completed a study for Augusta County to upgrade the historic courthouse to better meet state standards and security requirements. The

County entered into discussions with the City to assist in funding these projected improvements of \$10.5 million or, if no agreement could be met, to construct a new county circuit courts facility in Verona.

The Judge informed the county that any such study to move the courts facilities must include all of the Augusta County courts, and the City of Staunton would then retain separate courts in the downtown. The J&DR courts would no longer be shared, and each locality would have its own facilities in this new arrangement.

In the spring of 2015, the County retained the architectural firm of Moseley Architects of Richmond to conduct a feasibility study of moving all of the Augusta County courts to Verona into a new facility. In order to move these Courts, the County must conduct a referendum in November 2015 in which the public votes on this \$44 million move.

The City offered to split the proposed cost of renovating the existing historic county courthouse with a \$5 million contribution. However, with the new circumstances of moving all of the courts, that offer was no longer relevant. In further discussions with both localities, an alternative plan was suggested. This concept would consolidate both court systems in downtown Staunton, combining the reuse of existing buildings and building a new courts facility.

What follows is a feasibility study for a consolidated court system reflecting this concept.

B. Subject Buildings and Future Site

This concept blends the continuing or reuse of existing courts buildings with the construction of a new facility to provide for the needed expansion in the next 20 year period.

1. Augusta County Courthouse (NE Corner of Augusta & Johnson streets)

The historic courthouse currently houses the Augusta County Circuit Court, Clerk, records and judge's offices.

2. Cochran Judicial Center (113 East Beverley Street)

This building currently houses the Circuit Court and District Court for the City of Staunton.

3. Site of Union Bank (NW Corner of Augusta & Johnson Streets)

The bank would relocate and the existing building would be demolished to clear a site for the new courts facility. This new structure would house expanded and consolidated circuit and general district courts with judges' chambers. It would also contain the consolidated circuit and general district court clerk offices and records as well as combined Commonwealth Attorneys' offices.

The existing bank building is not considered a contributing building to the historic district because of its age, and its demolition would not have an adverse impact on the historic district.

Other buildings currently in use that would be vacated in a downtown Staunton consolidated plan include:

4. Johnson Street Building (6 East Johnson Street)

Formerly the Augusta County office building, this building currently houses the J&DR shared courts, Augusta County District Court and clerk, and the Commonwealth's Attorney. This building would be vacated and could be retained for future office expansion or offer for sale to a private party or other government entity.

This building is considered a contributing historic building in the downtown historic district and any changes to its exterior will be subject to review by the local historic preservation commission. It also would be eligible for historic tax credits if it were substantially renovated.

5. City of Staunton Commonwealth Attorneys' Offices (21 North New Street)

This building would be vacated and could be retained for future office expansion or offered for sale to a private party or other government entity.

This building is considered a contributing historic building in the downtown historic district and any changes to its exterior will be subject to review by the local historic preservation commission. It also would be eligible for historic tax credits if it were substantially renovated.

C. Project Goals

1. The Courts

- a. Create a physical plan to consolidate Augusta County & City of Staunton court system using a concept of reuse and new construction.
- b. Follow the Virginia Court Standards and use the Moseley plan as much as possible for caseload projections and programming.
- c. Reuse the historic Augusta County Courthouse for circuit courts and judges' chambers.
- d. Reuse the Cochran Judicial Center for J&DR courts and judges' chambers.
- e. Design a new courts facility to house additional circuit courts, general district courts, judges' chambers, and consolidated clerks' offices and records, along with storage, consolidated Commonwealth attorney offices, secure judges' parking and consolidated security facilities.
- f. Connect the new building by a new pedestrian bridge to the historic courthouse that would allow one entry point for security and provide separate pathways for the public and judges.

2. Historic Buildings

- a. Follow the Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings when renovating the existing Augusta County Courthouse and the Cochran Judicial Center.
- b. Apply for historic rehabilitation tax credits for the renovation of Augusta County Courthouse and the Cochran Judicial Center.

- c. Follow the existing City of Staunton Historic Guidelines and seek approval from the City of Staunton Historic Preservation Commission for the design of the new building and the exterior rehabilitation of the existing buildings.

3. Public Improvements

- a. Add new streetscape enhancements to improve pedestrian circulation and safety.
- b. Add additional wayfinding signs to parking for Courts.
- c. Follow the existing standards of the Staunton Downtown Streetscape Plan when designing new streetscape elements and areas.
- d. Reconfigure existing parking areas and/or modify existing parking policies to better accommodate courts' related parking needs.
- e. Avoid the designated flood way areas as much as possible when designing the new building and additions to the existing structures.

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II. A BRIEF HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS IN CONSOLIDATION PLAN



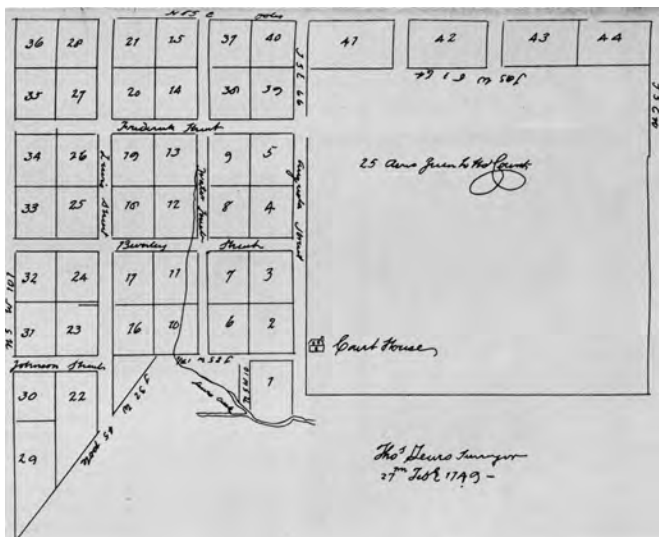
A. The Augusta County Courthouse

1. Early Settlement

John Lewis is traditionally thought of as the first permanent settler in Augusta County as he established a homestead about two miles east of present-day downtown Staunton in 1732. In the next few years, more than sixty families made the trip from Pennsylvania on the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road to settle in what would become Augusta County.

At the same time, however, William Beverley of Tidewater saw the benefits of speculation in land in the Shenandoah Valley, and in 1736 obtained from Lt. Gov. William Gooch a land grant of 118,491 acres. Near the center of this tract, Beverley established what would be referred to as his Mill Place. He sold portions of his landholdings to those early settlers who came from Pennsylvania and to new immigrants from Ireland.

As the population grew, Augusta County was created from part of Orange County and was formally organized in 1745. The following year, William Beverley offered to the justices of the newly formed county a log courthouse and 25 acres of land at his Mill Place. The colonial government in Williamsburg accepted Beverley's gift and the town was platted in 1747.



This 1749 of Staunton shows the original layout with the first courthouse location.

2. Previous Courthouses

An account of the first courthouse was recorded in Grand Jury proceedings on May 21, 1748 as described below:

It was thirty-eight feet three inches long, and eighteen feet three inches wide in the clear, built with logs hewed on both sides, not layed close, some of the cracks between the logs quite open, four or five inches wide and four or five feet long, and some stopped with chunks and clay but not quite close, two small holes cut for windows, but no glass or shutters to them; the inside not furnished or fitting for his Majesty's Judicatory to sit.

(Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, pg. 52)

In 1755, therefore, a second courthouse was constructed and the first courthouse converted to a residence. Little is known about the construction of the second courthouse except that it was furnished with a chimney and fireplace.

Staunton continued to grow throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century and in 1788 county commissioners sought a new courthouse that would symbolize the county's transition from frontier to a more stable and prosperous



This late 19th C. photo is of the fourth courthouse on the present site - designed by Thomas Blackburn in 1835.

community. Completed in 1789, the third courthouse on the site required that the two earlier courthouses “be put out of the way.”

Built of stone, this structure was square in plan, two stories high, and placed near the center of the lot. Entrances were located on the north and south sides and the courtroom was on the first floor. Jury rooms were located on the second floor and were supported by wooden columns.

In 1835, “the old courthouse of Augusta, and other buildings in the yard, were taken down, and the present courthouse and clerk’s offices were erected.” This quote speaks to the fourth courthouse on the site, the structure that preceded the present 1900 courthouse.

The architect for the 1835 courthouse was Thomas R. Blackburn, who had learned the practice of architecture under Thomas Jefferson during construction of the University of Virginia. Drawings and photographs of this courthouse, “unquestionably the finest building of its kind in any county in the state” as well as its footprint recorded on fire insurance maps serve as valuable documentary evidence of this structure.

3. Present Augusta County Courthouse

By the spring of 1900, the County Board of Supervisors established a building committee and sought an architect for the remodeling of the 1835 courthouse. With plans by noted local architect T. J. Collins, bids were sought and in September of 1900, A. F. Withrow was chosen as the contractor. The board decided to build a new structure instead of remodeling the Blackburn courthouse during the design phase. The cornerstone was laid on December 27, 1900 and the final cost of the building was \$55,257.32.

By 1938 the supervisors decided to expand the courthouse and awarded the design to S. Daley Craig, an architect from Waynesboro to create a rear addition. The Board received bids for general construction totaling \$54,071 and sought funds through the Emergency Administration of Public Works to aid in financing the addition. The County received this federal funding and contributed \$35,491 toward project costs.

Bids for redecorating the courtroom with a design by Sam Collins were authorized in 1949 and the contract awarded to J. S. Mathers including new plasterwork, woodwork, removal of fireplaces, addition of air-conditioning and new lights and furnishings.



This early 20 C. postcard view shows the main facade of a design by T. J. Collins. It is the fifth courthouse on the original site. The building is a Virginia Historic Landmark and individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Since the courtroom remodeling in 1949, there have been several changes to the courthouse. The coal boiler has been replaced with a gas furnace, a chair lift has been installed on the east stair to facilitate handicap accessibility to the courtroom along with general maintenance and cosmetic upgrades. In 2004, Joe Johnson, the great nephew of the original architect T. J. Collins and the principal of the firm, was hired to remodel a series of three small offices in the rear addition on the second floor to become a secondary courtroom.

In 2012, Frazier Associates, architects in Staunton were retained to complete a feasibility study to determine the needed renovations to update the courthouse to more modern standards and state requirements. This report recommended a major rehabilitation of the entire building and the addition of two small wings on the rear corners of the structure. All new mechanical, electrical, plumbing, communications, technology and security equipment was also recommended, along with the restoration of the exterior and a new roof. The total costs for this work updated to 2015 is estimated to be in the range of \$10.5 million dollars. (Note: The plan has been updated since the 2012 report to better comply with State standards. The plan was independently graded by Fentress and received an "A" for security.)

B. Cochran Judicial Center

The building has served a variety of purposes since its original construction in the 19th century including an opera house, city council chambers and city offices, and more recently, court facilities. It presently houses the City of Staunton's General District and Circuit Courts. In the 1920s, the City of Staunton remodeled the building and Sam Collins was the architect who designed a new classically inspired façade that remains today. In 1993, dB Associates, Charlottesville architects, redesigned the interior to provide various courts facilities when

Staunton used the same firm to convert the former Leggett's department store into a new city hall several blocks down Beverley Street. The City continues to maintain this building today and recently has installed a new boiler and chiller as well as other maintenance items.



This late 19th C. sketch shows Staunton's Opera House where the City Hall was also housed. It was remodeled as seen below.



Sam Collins designed this new facade for the City Hall in 1929 and it was remodeled into Staunton courts in 1993, now known as the Cochran Judicial Center.

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III. DOWNTOWN AND SITE SPECIFIC DESIGN PARAMETERS





Downtown Staunton's revitalization with its historic ambiance and cultural attractions has resulted in national recognition and awards by a wide variety of organizations and publications.

A. Central Business District Overview

Downtown Staunton consists of approximately ten gridded blocks bounded by Market Street on the east, Frederick Street on the north, Lewis Street on the west and the CSX Railroad tracks and Woodrow Park on the south. There is an additional section of downtown along the Central Avenue spine that continues from Frederick Street north to Churchville Avenue. Other commercial and service businesses also extend along the corridors that connect to other sections of the City and beyond.

The downtown area currently serves all the Courts addressed in this study and has a variety of amenities enjoyed by citizens of both the City and Augusta County, including dining locations, shopping, cultural and entertainment attractions, services such as banks and the Post Office, as well as accountants, attorneys and other specialized businesses.

B. General Regulations Impacting the Consolidated Courts Locations

1. Zoning

The site for a new Courts building at Johnson and Augusta Street is located in a B-2 (General Business) zoning district. The B-2 district permits 100% lot coverage and has no side or rear yard setback requirements. The height limit for new construction is six stories. Permitted uses include "public buildings."

The CBD contains two locally designated H-1 historic districts: the Beverley Historic District consisting of Staunton's Main Street and side streets branching off of it, and the Wharf Historic District consisting of the warehouse district located south of Beverley Street and arranged around the local train station. Any alteration, new construction or demolition of a building within these districts must be

reviewed by the local historic preservation commission. These districts are also listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places that, in general, protects them from the adverse effect of state and federal projects and qualifies them for state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits.

2. Flood Areas

There are flood plain regulations and the map (see pg. 3.6) shows the flood way and the flood plain in the downtown area. Existing historic buildings are exempt from these regulations to a certain extent. However, new buildings constructed in the flood plain need to be built at least one foot above the flood level. New construction within the flood way is discouraged, and any new structure would have to be designed to meet very stringent regulations if allowed. The flood way is on parts of the potential site for the new Courts facility but the building can be constructed out of the floodway, thereby eliminating the concern for flood regulations.

3. Parking

There are no requirements for off-street parking for new buildings within the central business district (per zoning code section 018.125.011). Parking in the CBD is accommodated by two public garages and several public lots along, with on-street parking totaling over 1,700 spaces. For further information on parking, see Section V.

C. Augusta County Courthouse Site

1. General Setting and Orientation

This courthouse is centrally located in downtown Staunton between Main (Beverley Street) and the Wharf (former warehouse district). Johnson Street to the



The steps and main plaza of the Augusta County Courthouse have been enhanced with brick pavers, new metal railings and historic granite plaques in recent years.

south and Augusta Street to the west are two of the major thoroughfares in the central business district and provide ready access to the building.

The "Lawyer's Row" buildings to the east are separated from the courthouse by a concrete sidewalk and help to frame the court square plaza on the front side. The one-story "Barrister's Row" buildings directly to the north (rear) of the courthouse, are separated from it by an alley bearing the same name.

2. Retaining Walls, Plaza and Walkways

Along Johnson Street, poured concrete retaining walls flank brick steps centered on the courthouse façade. Each side of the retaining wall terminates in a limestone pier with a poured concrete cap. Similar piers are found near the front and rear of the courthouse. It does not appear that they have served anything other than a decorative purpose, although they have a pipe running through them that could be used to provide power to mounted lighting.

Additional low poured concrete walls border the sidewalk on the Augusta Street elevation and appear to provide a deterrent to pedestrian approaches to basement windows and a coal chute cover.

The plaza area in front of the building is raised up several feet above Johnson Street retaining walls. The parged surface of these walls has seen numerous repairs and has incidental cracks and spalling that will need further repair.

The mortared brick paving is laid in a basket weave pattern. Its condition varies with one section heaving up near the steps leading to the sidewalk. Flood lights located at the top of the steps illuminate the front facade.

The historic approach to the building is from the Johnson Street sidewalk. While historic images show that the stairs and walkway were originally poured concrete, they were later clad in brick. A stone monument is inscribed with a map and information related to the origin of Augusta County and how it once extended to the Mississippi River. A brick planter is located behind the monument.

There are poured concrete pads on either side of the rear addition that are used as a location for HVAC equipment. Future plans to upgrade the HVAC systems should include efforts to find a better location

that does not detract from the pedestrian experience around the building. The concrete sidewalks on this side of the building are severely deteriorated.

3. Parking

Three spaces are reserved at the rear of the building for the judge and court staff and a row of parallel parking is available along the Barrister's Row alley that includes two handicapped spaces. Other public parking options are available nearby on the street, in the Wharf Parking Lot and in the two municipal parking garages approximately one block away.

4. Plantings

A lawn bordered by the retaining wall at the front of the building and the brick walkways on the site is planted with deciduous trees and low shrubs. Elm trees are located at the center of the two grassy areas on either side of a brick plaza. The grass on the west side of the plaza is not in good condition, having trouble competing for resources with the larger tree on that side.

5. Accessibility

Handicap accessibility was addressed as part of the 2012 Feasibility Study. As proposed, a handicap ramp into the building would provide access to an elevator so that all floors of the building are accessible.

Handicap parking spaces would be reserved in the alley and the corner County Parking Lot and connected to the building through accessible routes.

D. Cochran Judicial Center Site

1. General Setting and Orientation

This courts building is located on the north side of E. Beverley Street between New and Market Streets. The main entrance is accessed from the sidewalk on Beverley Street. The lot is L-shaped and includes a parking area and landscaped garden that are accessed from New Street. A two-story building is built directly adjacent to the building on the east side. There is a pedestrian alley on the west side. The vehicular alley and off-street parking along the north side provide access to a rear staff entrance and prisoner entrance.

2. Retaining Walls, Plaza and Walkways

There is a concrete retaining wall at the south edge of the parking area behind the building. A landscape garden is located below the retaining wall.

3. Parking and Accessibility

There are fourteen off-street spaces accessed through the alley behind the building that are reserved for staff. Currently there are no secure parking spaces, but a new sally port is proposed as part of the project as well a secure parking for two judges.

There is an on-street handicap designated space on New Street that ties into an accessible route to the west side of the building via a sidewalk that passes through the garden.

E. New Consolidated Courts Building Site

1. General Setting and Orientation

The new facility could occupy most of the current bank site at the northwest corner of Johnson and S. Augusta Street. It would need to be set back from Augusta Street approximately 40 feet and Johnson Street approximately 20 feet in order to avoid the flood way.



The Cochran Judicial Center with its 1929 redesigned facade by Sam Collins retains its classical design. A side garden and walk lead to a handicapped entrance. (not shown)

2. Entry and Walkways

A new driveway with a drop-off area could be created within the flood way where no building will occur. This area could also contain the handicapped access for the building. This entry plaza could contain brick pavers, historically styled light fixtures, granite curbing and other elements that match current streetscape standards from the downtown plan.

A new mid-block pedestrian pathway could be created north of the building to connect Augusta Street with Central Avenue. It could contain similar streetscape elements as the rest of downtown along with lighting and landscaping.



Since the Union Bank is not using much of its interior space in its current downtown location, the site offers the opportunity for a possible new courts facility directly across from the Augusta County Courthouse.

3. Parking & Accessibility

Eighteen secure spaces are feasible in the basement of the new building accessed from Central Avenue. These would be reserved for use by the judges, security and key courts staff. Secure Sally ports and related holding facilities would also be provided in the basement level of the new building. Eight handicapped spaces could be provided in the parking lot on the SE corner of Augusta and Johnson streets directly across the street from the new facility.

4. Plantings

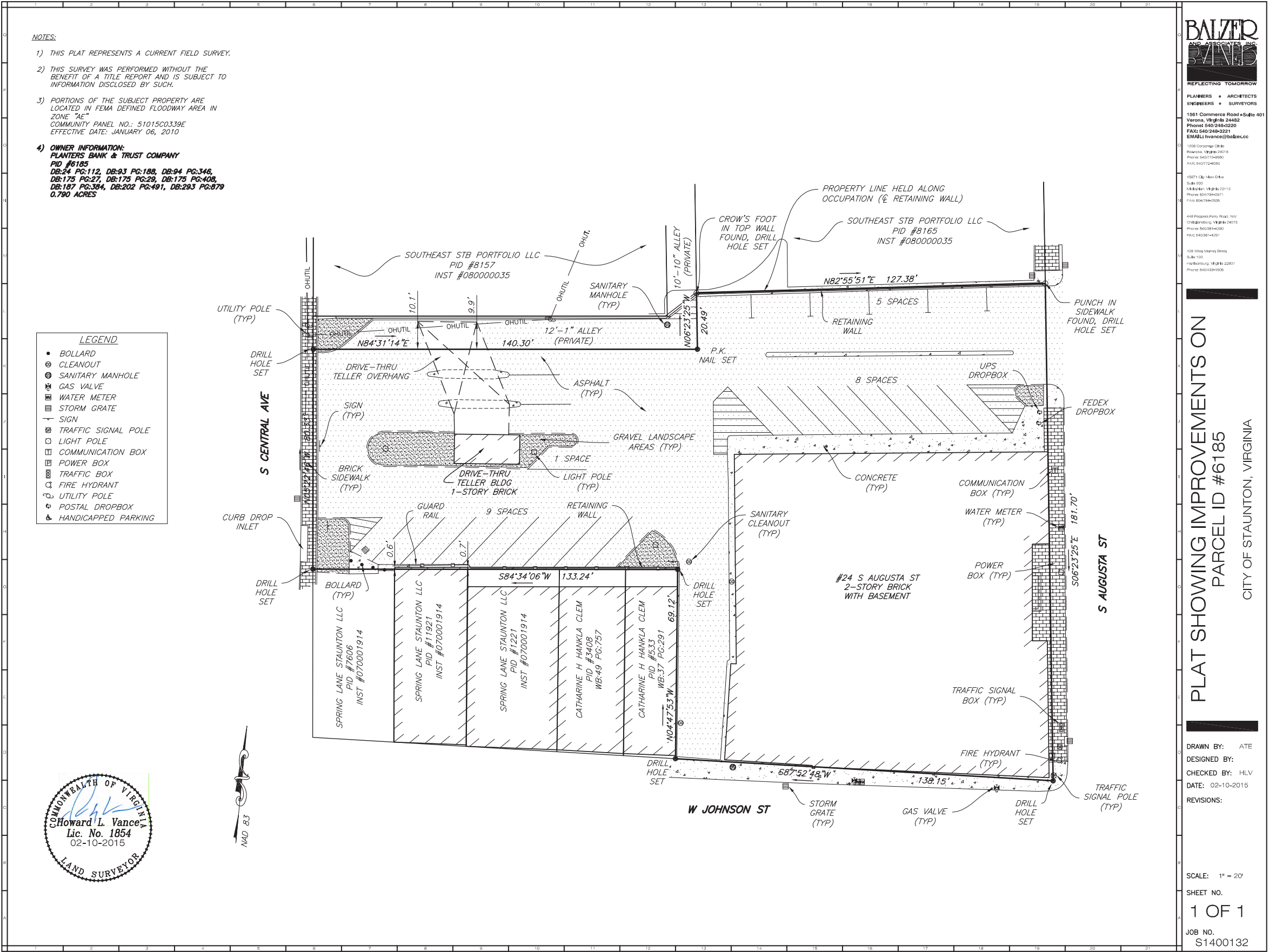
Foundation plantings could be located along the Augusta Street façade of the building and a landscaped plaza could be created at the south end of the building on the NW corner of Augusta and Johnson streets.

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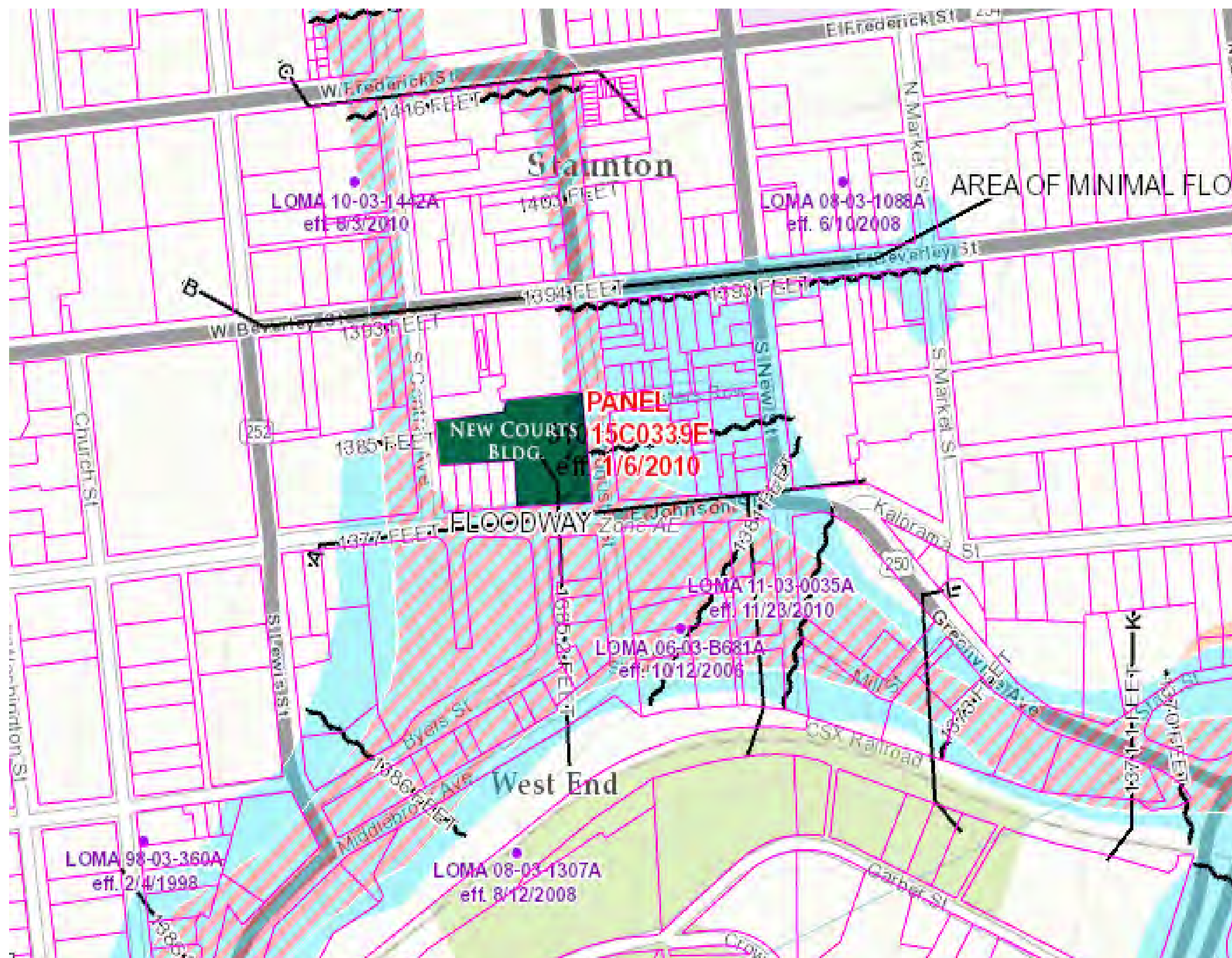
Downtown Property Uses Map



Plat of New Courts Building Proposed Site



Floodway and Floodplain Map



IV. ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAM



Staunton and Augusta County Conceptual Design for the Consolidated Courts Facilities

A. Methodology & Assumptions

The program for this study is to examine consolidating and expanding Augusta County and City of Staunton courts within the proximity of the existing Augusta County Courthouse located in downtown Staunton. This includes the Circuit Courts, General District Courts and Juvenile and Domestic Relations (J&DR) Courts, along with supporting spaces.

The program of uses used in this study follow the recommendations in the "Augusta County: Space Needs Analysis & Conceptual Design for New Courts Facility" report by Moseley Architects dated July 10, 2015. That study included a "Courts Facility Space Need Analysis" that was used to program the relevant space requirements for all of Augusta County's court needs through the year 2035.

Additionally, all of the relevant existing court allocations for Staunton were included in the program. Given that the population projections for Staunton are flat, and interviews with Staunton courts judge and staff confirmed a lack of significant growth, provisions for any significant additional space needs were not anticipated. Existing allocations were reviewed with Staunton judges and clerks.

Once the programs of the City and County courts were combined, consolidating the courts for the purpose of creating better efficiencies was incorporated into the program as follows:

- 1. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts are currently shared but require additional space. (Note that the Moseley Study assumes that the City and County J&DR courts would be separated). The consolidation results in three total courtrooms for the J&DR courts with a future possible fourth courtroom.
- 2. The consolidated Circuit Court staff equals the existing County staff plus the existing

Staunton staff, less one staff position. The consolidation results in four total courtrooms for Circuit courts (two in the historic courthouse and two in a new courts building).

- 3. The consolidated General District Court staff equals the existing County staff plus the existing Staunton staff, less one staff position. The consolidation results in three total courtrooms for District courts.
- 4. The consolidated Commonwealth Attorney's staff equals the City plus the County court programs with no assumed additional positions.

B. Summary of Consolidated Courts Space Needs

The following is a preliminary assessment of square footage allocations for consolidated courts for Staunton and Augusta County. These numbers are based on the Moseley Study and Virginia Court Facility Guidelines. These square footages are through 2035.

Circuit Courts (4)	20,622
Circuit Courts Clerk	19,182
Commonwealth Attorney	10,682
General District Court (3).....	14,647
General District Clerk.....	4,127
J & DR Courts (3).....	14,754
J & DR Clerk	5,254
Court Services.....	5,600
Magistrate	297
Sheriff.....	3625
Net Total	98,789
75% Net to Gross Factor	32,930
Total Gross Square Footage	131,719



These diagrams show the existing courts for the County and the City on the left and the combined courts on the right. The Cochran Judicial Center can accommodate one additional J&DR Court if Court Services is relocated. The New Courts Building can accommodate an additional floor level and up to three future courts.

AUGUSTA COUNTY NEW COURTS BUILDING - SPACE NEEDS

SUMMARY

SUMMARY	CURRENT SPACE & PERSONNEL*		CURRENT NEEDS**	2020 NEEDS		2025 NEEDS		2035 NEEDS	
	NET SQ FT (NSF)	PERS	NSF	PERS	NSF	PERS	NSF	PERS	NSF
CIRCUIT COURT	5,600	4	12,510	6	12,510	6	12,510	7	15,534
CIRCUIT COURT CLERK	11,310	12	11,476	12	12,049	14	12,611	14	13,514
COMM ATTORNEY/ VICTIM WITNESS	7,445	16	6,110	18	7,012	20	8,008	22	8,373
COURTS - SHARED			504		504		504		504
GENERAL DISTRICT COURT	4,090	1	5,896	1	5,896	2	11,017	2	11,017
GENERAL DISTRICT COURT CLERK	2,890	6	2,665	7	2,777	8	3,054	8	3,418
J&DR COURT	4,012	2	8,286	3	12,408	3	12,408	3	12,408
J&DR COURT CLERK	4,310	8	3,241	11	3,748	16	4,287	17	4,449
J&DR COURT SERVICES UNIT	2,775	10	3,703	13	3,719	17	4,316	20	4,867
MAGISTRATE	335	1	297	1	297	1	297	1	297
SHERIFF - COURT SECURITY	1,410	7	3,625	10	3,625	13	3,625	13	3,625
TOTAL PERSONNEL / NSF	44,177	67	58,313	82	64,544	100	72,637	107	78,004
CURRENT / REQUIRED GROSS SQ FT	67,965		89,712		99,298		111,750		120,007
Required gross square footage calculation above is determined using an efficiency of 65%.									

This chart is from the [Augusta County Space Needs Analysis & Conceptual Design for a New Courts Facility](#) prepared by Moseley Architects for Augusta County, July 10, 2015. These numbers were the basis for this study to determine courts needs in a consolidated plan.

V. PARKING



Staunton and Augusta County Conceptual Design for the Consolidated Courts Facilities

Parking is a perceived issue in downtown Staunton; however, according to a City of Staunton Downtown Parking Plan, there is a total of more than 1700 existing parking spaces in the downtown area. These spaces include parking decks, parking lots and on-street parking. Downtown currently accommodates all the parking needs of the courts – both City and County; however, recommendations are made here for creating a more efficient parking management plan for the consolidated courts.

A. Existing Court Parking in Downtown Staunton

As part of this study, current courts parking was reviewed and what follows is a summary of current parking conditions. This information was gathered through interviews with staff and from information provided by the City. It was clear in these interviews that there is a perceived need for parking but, again, this perceived need could be addressed with better parking management. Currently there are reserved spaces for judges, security and staff in various locations.

1. Augusta County Circuit Court (Augusta County Courthouse)
 - a. There are four parallel parking spaces on Barristers Row behind the Courthouse. The Clerk, Judge, and security generally use these spaces and one is a handicapped space.
 - b. More than half of the staff has passes for the New Street Parking Garage or the Wharf parking lot.
2. Augusta County General District Court and Staunton/Augusta County J&DR Court (Johnson Street Building)
 - a. Judges, Clerks and senior staff park in the Augusta County lot on the corner of Johnson and Augusta Street (18 spaces) and enter the building through public spaces.
 - b. Security and Judges also have parking in spaces behind the building at a lower level.

c. There are 10 reserved on-street parking spaces for police.

d. Other staff have passes to park in the Wharf Lot off Johnson Street.

3. Staunton Circuit Court and Staunton General District Court (Cochran Judicial Center)

- a. There are 14 reserved parking spaces behind the building for Judges, Security and Staff.
- b. There are nine (9) reserved spaces behind the Temple House of Israel on Market Street.
- c. Additional spaces are available in the Hardy Lot.

B. Proposed Parking for Consolidated Courts

Parking for the consolidated courts is provided on the site of the new building along with better-managed existing public parking.

1. Staunton/Augusta County Circuit and General District Courts and Commonwealth's Attorney (New building and existing Augusta County Courthouse)
 - a. The western portion of the basement level of the new building is proposed to be secure parking for judges and clerks along with security, sallyports and holding area for prisoners (18 parking spaces).
 - b. Augusta County Corner Lot would be converted to a handicap accessible lot.
 - c. The top level of the Johnson Street Parking Garage would be reserved as needed for the remainder of courts staff in the new courts facility (up to 82 spaces available).

2. Staunton/Augusta County J&DR Court (Cochran Judicial Center)

- a. New sallyport parking for judges and prisoner delivery is provided at the rear of the building.
- b. Remainder of onsite parking at the rear of the building (approximately 10 spaces) reserved for staff.
- c. Currently there are 9 spaces available behind the Jewish Temple for courts staff. Additional reserved spaces could be provided in the Hardy Lot.
- c. Added security gates at each end of the parking area are recommended to be added to provide more security during business days. These gates could be opened on weekends for general public parking when courts are closed.

3. General Parking

As noted in the interviews, the public currently uses parking in existing public parking facilities including on-street parking, the New Street Parking Garage the Johnson Street Parking Garage, the Hardy Lot and the Wharf Lot.

The accompanying map shows that there are over 800 parking spaces in City owned garages and lots (not including on-street parking) within a 1-2 minute walk from the proposed courts buildings. Based on the overall current level of utilization

of public parking as calculated by City staff, the available parking is adequate to accommodate the current and projected courts needs.

Attendants man the two parking decks and the Wharf parking lot while several of the nearby lots use 10-hour meters. A modification to parking policies could improve the parking experience for the Courts. These improvements could include:

- a. Better wayfinding signs to courts parking and parking lot identification signs;
- b. Validation for free parking by the public using courts facilities and monthly passes for courts staff for attendant operated lots;
- c. Reserved spaces in public lots in place of meters as needed to accommodate the courts.

Downtown Parking Map and Walk Times



COURTS PARKING	
CJC - COCHRAN JUDICIAL CENTER	
ACCH - AUGUSTA COUNTY COURTHOUSE	
PUBLIC PARKING SPACES	
1 AUGUSTA LOT	
30	General
2	Handicap
2 HARDY LOT	
60	General
2	Handicap
3 RMA LOT	
52	General
4 WHARF LOT	
180	General
6	Handicap
5 JOHNSON STREET GARAGE	
206	General
6	Handicap
6 NEW STREET GARAGE	
263	General
9	Handicap
TOTAL SPACES	
791	General
25	Handicap
816	

VI. CONCEPTUAL COURTS DESIGNS



A. Augusta County Courthouse (approx. 16,000 sq. ft.)

The 2012 study to rehabilitate this historic structure has been updated to improve and separate security for judges and prisoners. Since record storage is proposed to be moved to the new building, the updated plan for this building provides two circuit courtrooms and two judges' chambers. A new courtroom and associated spaces are created by converting the existing circuit court staff and record areas on the main level. The small existing courtroom in the rear addition has been converted to judge's circulation and small witness/conference spaces. The basement may contain some equipment in the consolidated plan but is no longer being used for record storage.

The exterior of the Classical Revival styled courthouse will be restored and repaired as needed following historic preservation standards, and compatible additions will be designed on the rear as needed for new functions. This building is a separately listed historic landmark on state and national registers in the downtown historic district and any changes to its exterior will be subject to review by the local historic preservation commission. It also would be eligible for historic tax credits if it were substantially renovated.

B. Cochran Judicial Center (approx. 33,000 sq. ft.)

This building currently houses the Staunton District and Circuit Courts, along with a Bankruptcy Courtroom and spaces for the clerks and records. In this new plan, it has been reconfigured to provide three J&DR courts along with witness conference rooms and three judge's chambers, as well as public waiting areas.

Some alterations will be needed to better accommodate the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts. These trials do not have large attendance so the gallery areas can be small. Additional spaces for witness waiting and attorney conferences are needed. As a result, some of the gallery areas will

be converted to waiting and conference spaces. A new floor inserted into the double-story circuit court space is proposed to provide additional office space on the third floor, without sacrificing an adequate court space below. This space could be converted to a fourth courtroom in the future if needed.

Substantial improvements are proposed to increase the security of the building. A divided sallyport structure is proposed for the rear of the building that will accommodate parking for two judges and prisoner delivery. An option would be to provide a drive through sallyport and not provide the enclosed judges' parking. New holding areas and cells are provided along with an additional elevator. It will provide separate lockout doors that will allow judges (and some staff) to circulate through the building without going out into public spaces. It will be keyed to allow for separate secure prisoner circulation as well.

The exterior of this historic building was remodeled in the classical Georgian Revival style by Sam Collins in 1920 and no changes are recommended to be made to it. The central corridor of the first floor retains its unique colored tile floor and wainscoting elements that would be retained as well. This building is considered a contributing historic building in the downtown historic district and any changes to its exterior will be subject to review by the local historic preservation commission. It also would be eligible for historic tax credits if it were substantially renovated.

C. New Courts Building (approx. 84,000 sq. ft.)

A new courts building is proposed to be built directly west of the historic courthouse on the site of the present Union Bank across South Augusta Street. This three-story building will house two new circuit courtrooms and two new district courtrooms along with necessary judges' chambers and associated spaces. The City and County district and circuit court records and clerks' offices and staffs will be housed in this facility as well. A basement level will provide 18 secure parking spaces for judges and

key staff. It will also house offices for security and holding areas for prisoners. The third floor will be used by a consolidated Commonwealth Attorneys' offices and staff.

A secure pedestrian bridge with separate corridors for the public and for judges will extend across Augusta Street to connect to the second level of the historic courthouse.

This new building is in the historic district and will be designed to complement the historic courthouse across the street. Its traditional design reflects

proportions of its neighbor and its restrained brick and cast stone façade is meant not to compete with Collins's design. A new pedestrian bridge to connect the new facility with an addition to the historic courthouse offers the opportunity to introduce an exiting new element in Staunton's historic downtown. The new building would be designed to take advantage of energy conservation techniques and technology in order to lower operating costs.

Note: As currently conceived, the New Courts Building can be expanded with one additional floor of Courts and thereby adding 2 - 3 future courts.

**Consolidated Courts Program through 2035
Based on State Standards and Moseley Report**

**Total Space Provided in
Consolidated Plan 2035**

		ACCH	CJC	NCB	
Circuit Courts (4)	20,622	11,895		10,635	22,530
Circuit Courts Clerk	19,182			21,500	21,500
Commonwealth Attorney	10,682			11,250	11,250
General District Court (3)	14,647			*10,250	10,250
General District Clerk	4,127			4,550	4,550
J & DR Courts (3) (2035)**	14,754		8,258		8,258
J & DR Clerk	5,254		5,745		5,745
Court Services	5,600		4,820		4,820
Magistrate	297			250	250
Sheriff	3625		4,087	2500	6587
Net total	98,789	11,895	22,910	60,935	95,740
73-75% Net to Gross Factor	32,930	3965	**10,020	23,372	37,357
Total Gross Square Footage	131,719	15,860	32,930	84,307	133,097

ACCH = Augusta County Courthouse

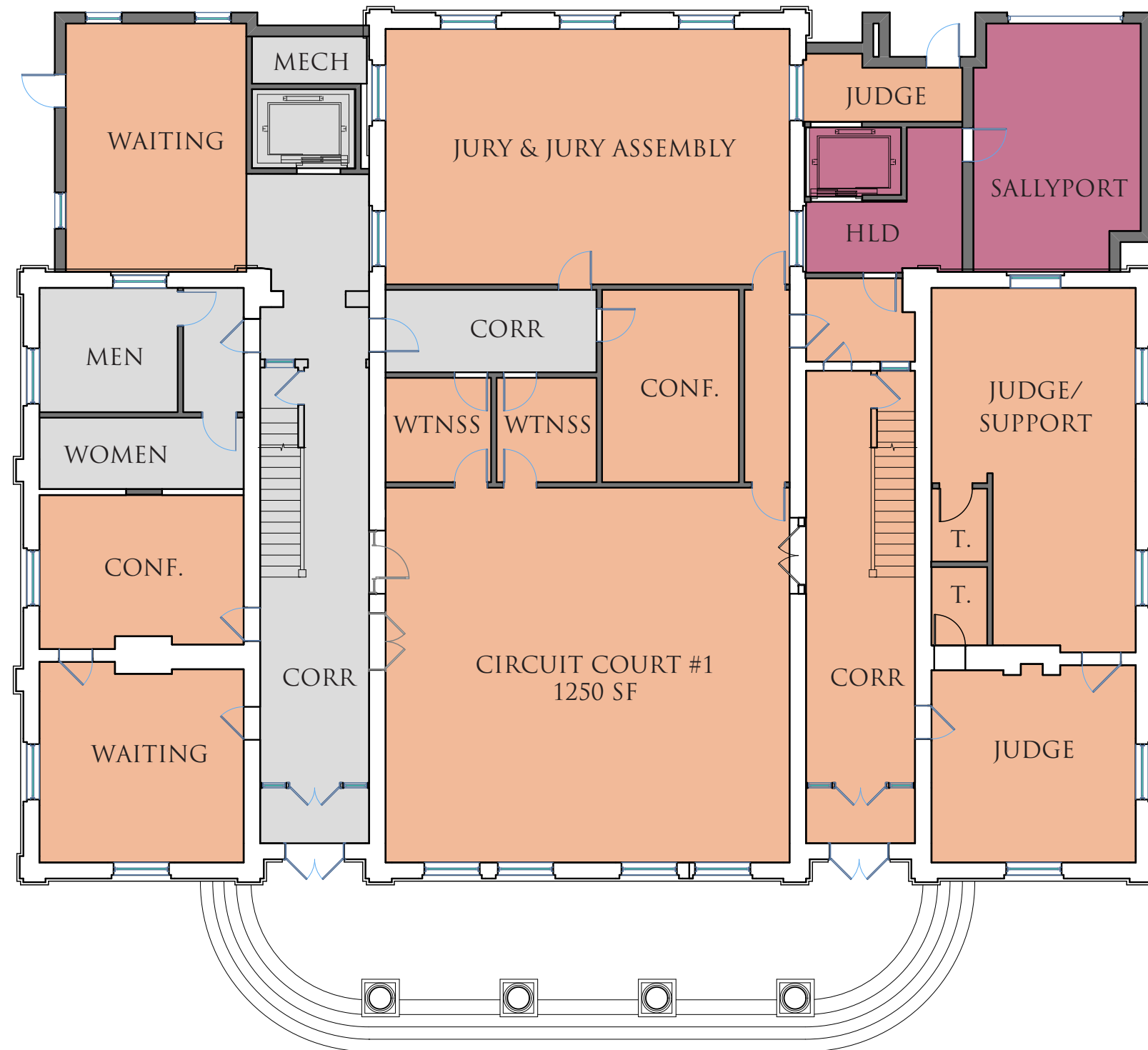
CJC = Cochran Judicial Center

NCB = New Courts Building

*Courtroom sizes have been reduced but meet Virginia Courthouse Facilities Guidelines.

**This building has a 70% Net to Gross Factor in this calculation but better efficiency is possible with further study. The total also includes a potential new rear addition that includes sally ports, holding cells, etc.

Augusta County Courthouse:
First Floor Plan



LEGEND

	CIRCUIT COURT
	CIRCUIT COURT CLERK
	COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY
	GENERAL DISTRICT COURT
	GENERAL DISTRICT COURT CLERK
	J & DR COURT
	J & DR COURT CLERK
	J & DR COURT SERVICES UNIT
	COURT SECURITY
	BUILDING SUPPORT

1 FIRST FLOOR

Augusta County Courthouse:
Second Floor Plan

LEGEND

CIRCUIT COURT

CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT CLERK

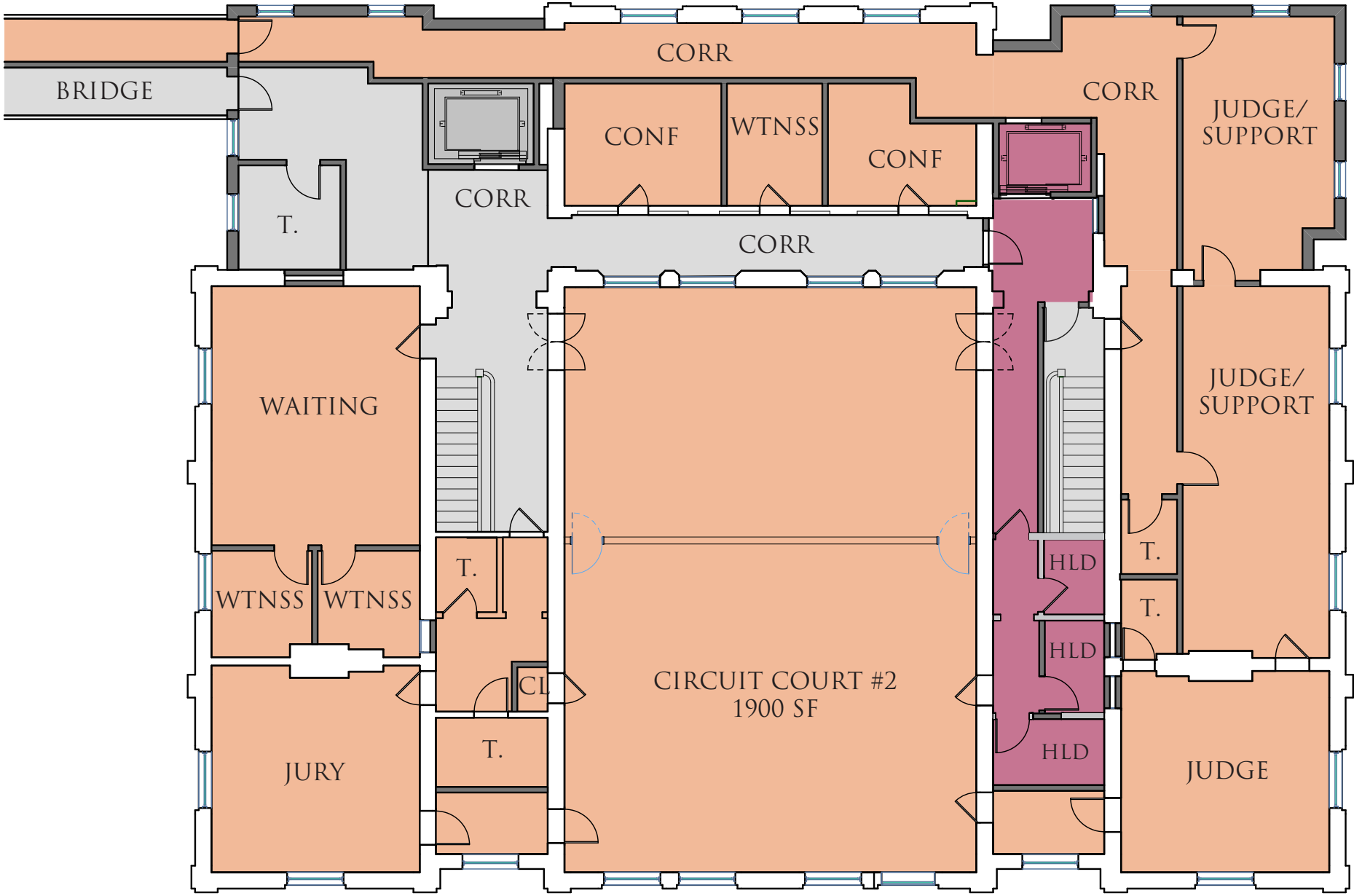
J & DR COURT

J & DR COURT CLERK

J & DR COURT SERVICES UNIT

COURT SECURITY

BUILDING SUPPORT



2 SECOND FLOOR

Cochran Judicial Center
J & DR Court
Basement & First Floor



Cochran Judicial Center
J & DR Court
Second and Third Floor

LEGEND

CIRCUIT COURT

CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT CLERK

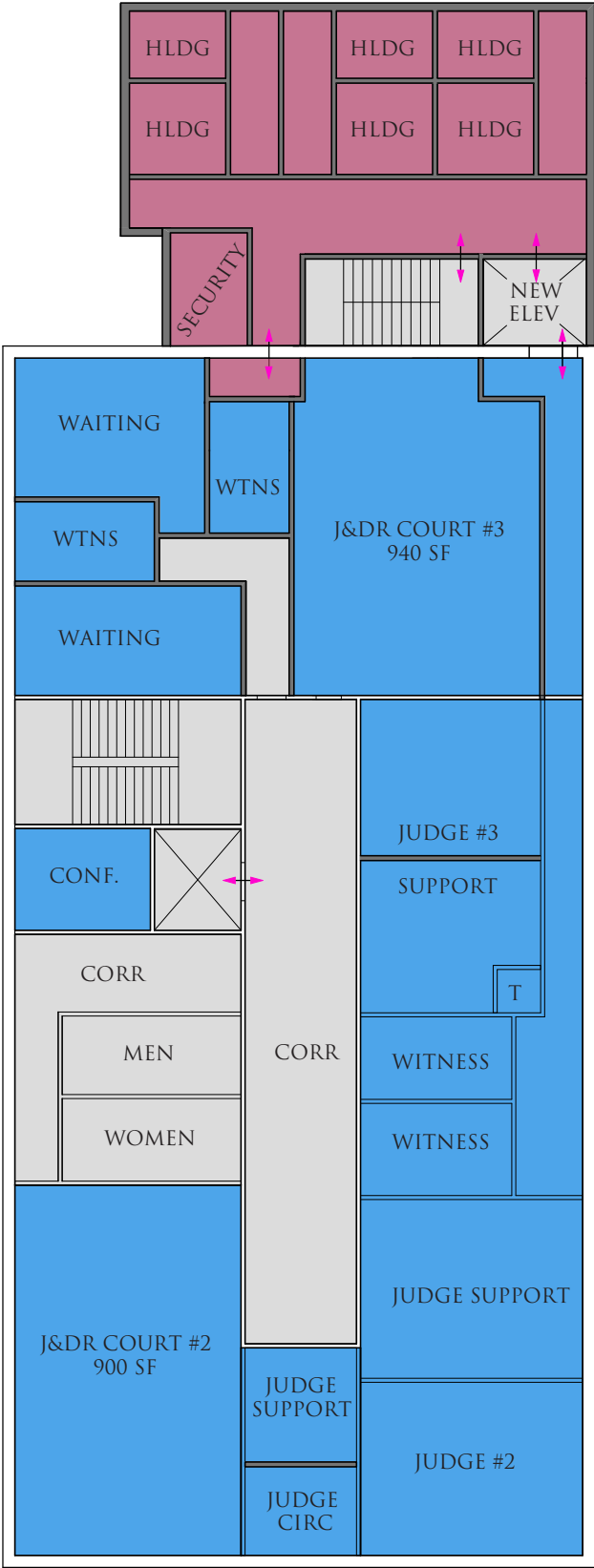
J & DR COURT

J & DR COURT CLERK

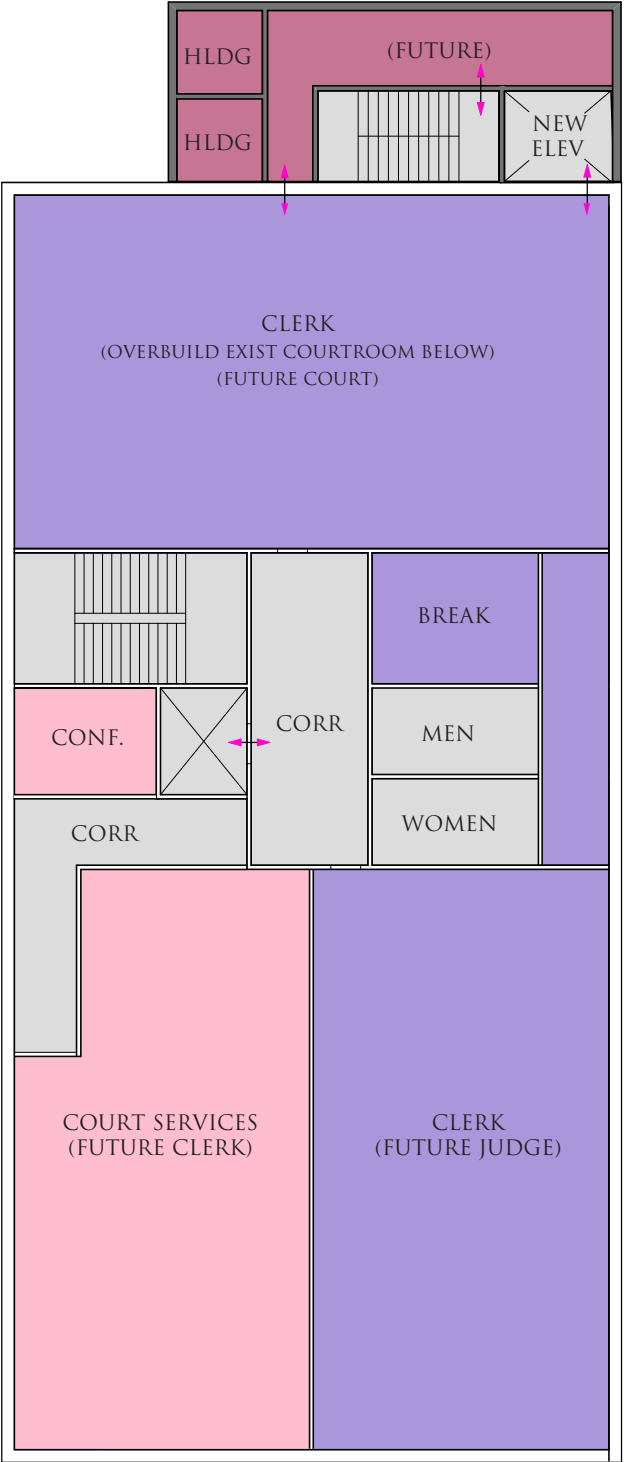
J & DR COURT SERVICES UNIT

COURT SECURITY

BUILDING SUPPORT

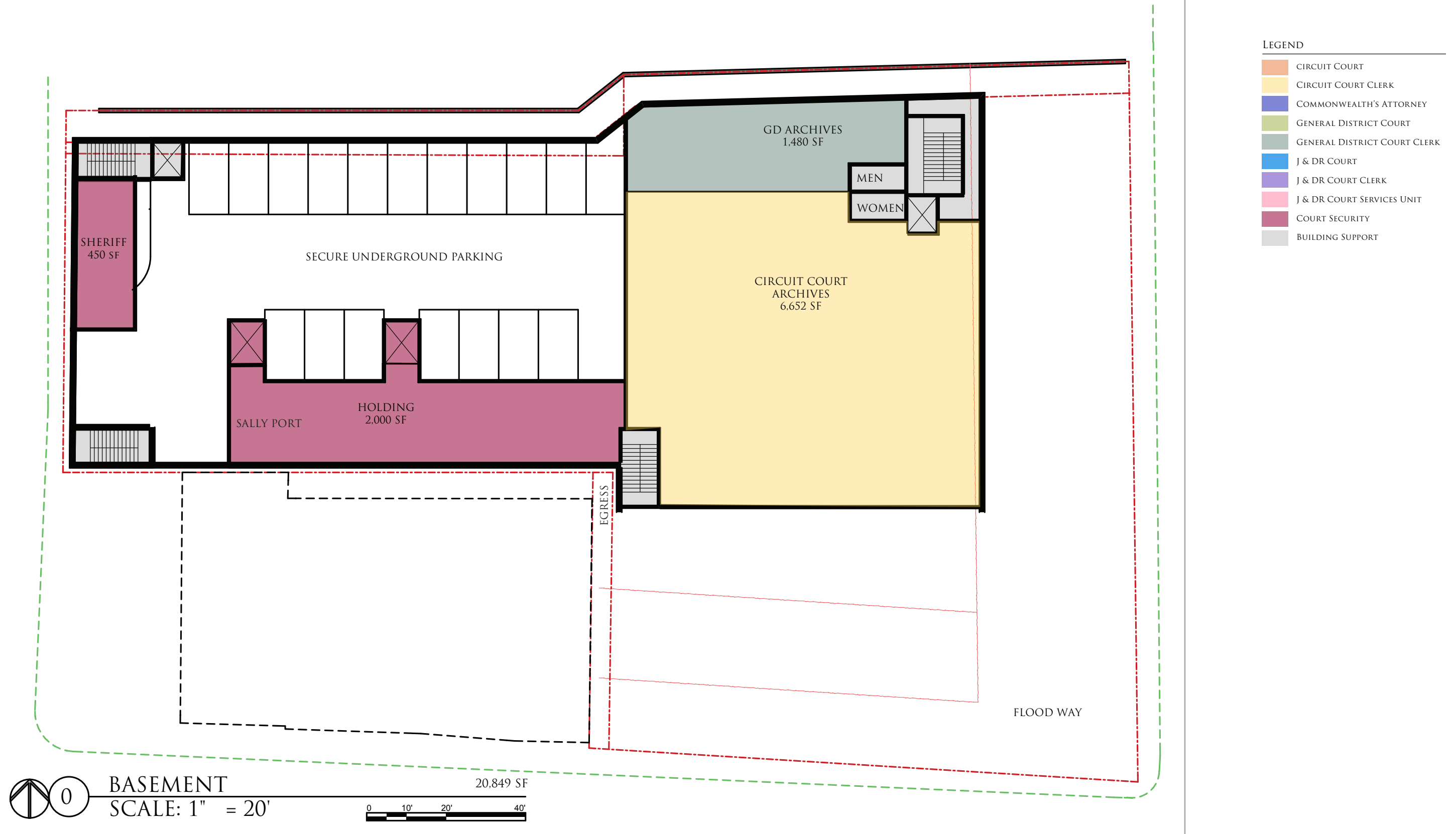


3 SECOND FLOOR



4 THIRD FLOOR

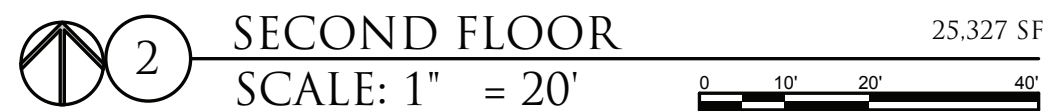
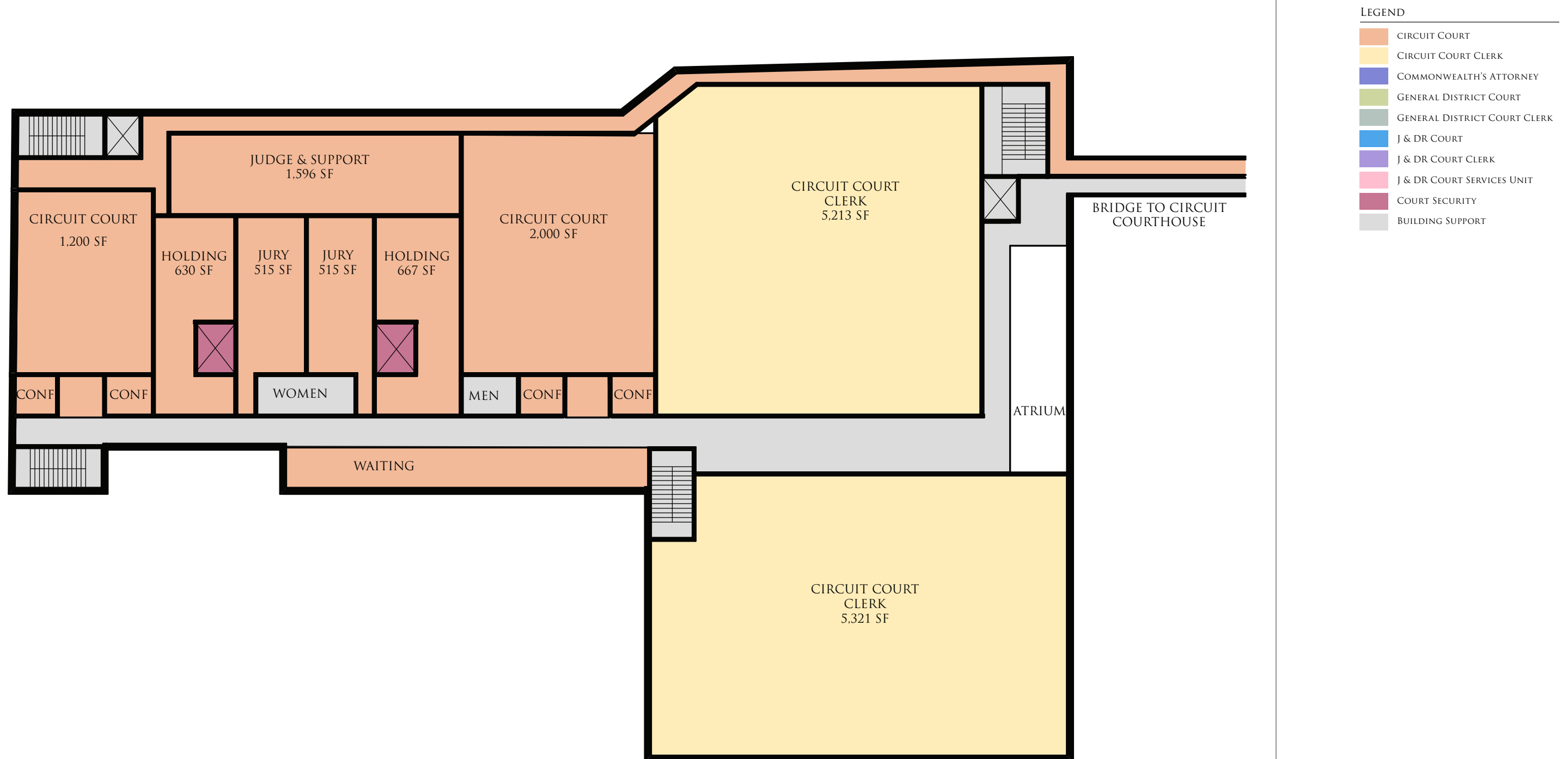
New Facility Plans:
Basement



New Facility Plans:
First Floor



New Facility Plans: Second Floor



New Facility Plans:
Third Floor

LEGEND

CIRCUIT COURT

CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT

GENERAL DISTRICT COURT CLERK

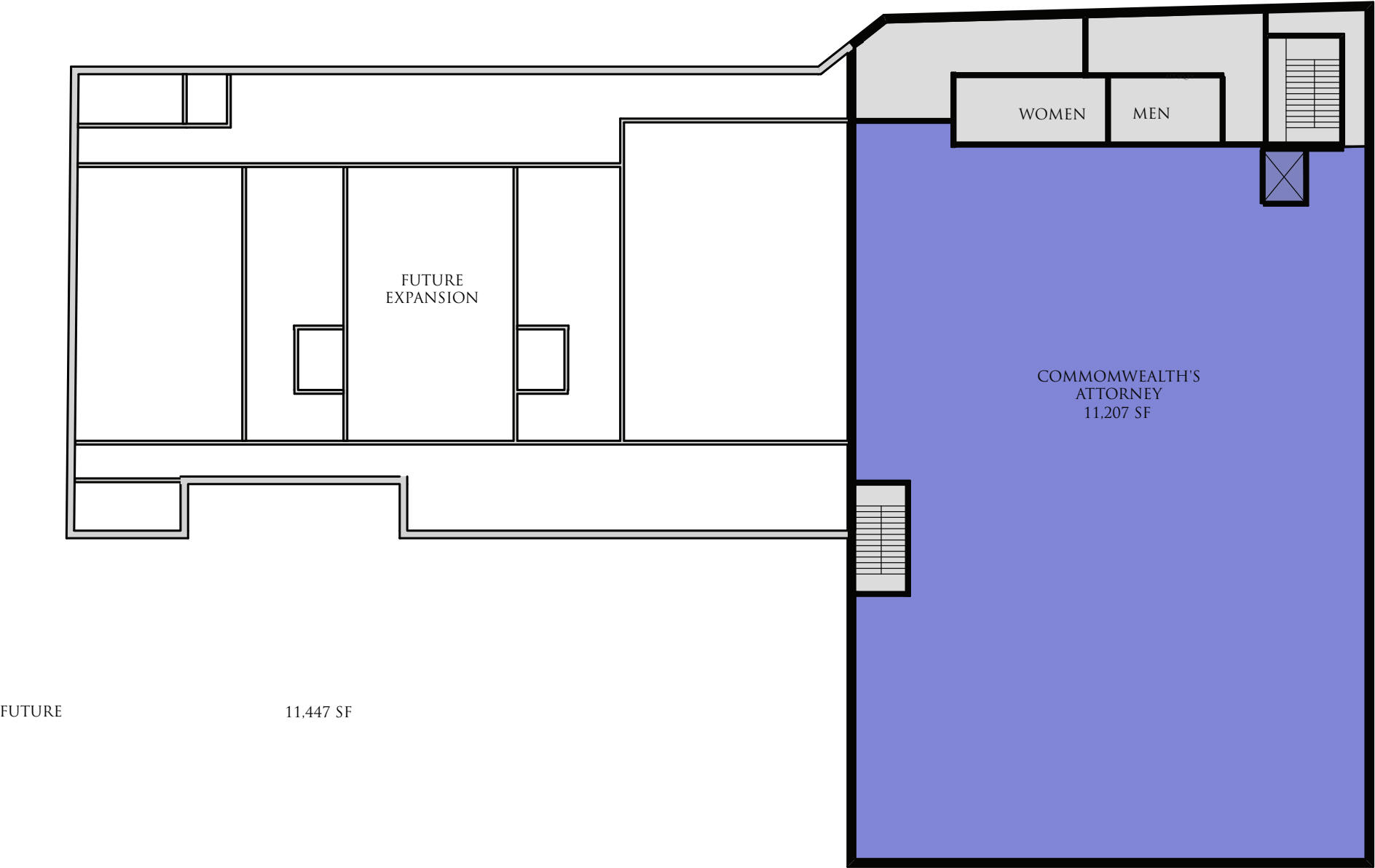
J & DR COURT

J & DR COURT CLERK

J & DR COURT SERVICES UNIT

COURT SECURITY

BUILDING SUPPORT



3

THIRD FLOOR

SCALE: 1" = 20'

0

10'

20'

40'

14,012 SF



PROPOSED STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

LEGEND

- RED BRICK PAVERS
- GREY BRICK PAVERS
- NEW ASPHALT PAVING
- EXISTING TREES
- ELECTRONIC CONTROLLED CROSSWALK
- ELECTRONIC GATE

New Courts Building and Historic Augusta County Courthouse from Johnson Street



New Courts Complex from Johnson Street



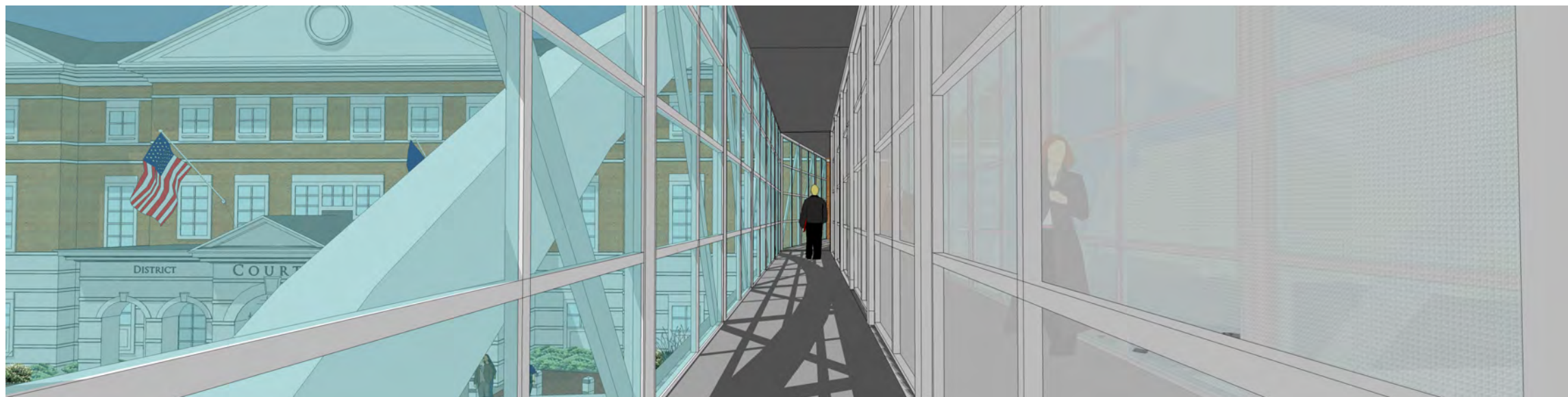
New Courts Building:
Augusta Street Elevation



New Courts Complex:
Connection Bridge over Augusta Street



View from Beverley Street



View Within Bridge with Divided Corridor

New Courts Building:
Johnson Street Elevation



VII. PROJECTED COSTS



This cost estimate was generated from a number of sources. Construction cost estimates for the new building were taken from the Moseley study for a new courts building in Verona. However, site costs were estimated to be less, as there is existing infrastructure in the downtown.

In general, the cost estimates for rehabilitating the existing Augusta County Courthouse and the Cochran Judicial Center are based on published cost estimating guides and experience with other projects of similar scope.

Estimates for public streetscape work were provided by the City of Staunton Engineering Department. The costs of the demolition and the pedestrian bridge were provided by contractor and fabricator respectively.

These estimates are intended to allow for planning and prioritization, and are not based on detailed take-offs or subcontractor quotes. Prices include overhead and profit.

The estimates are based on report and drawings dated August 2015. These costs are based on a construction start of Fall 2016. Escalation estimates due to inflation and market conditions are speculative and unpredictable and should be re-evaluated on a quarterly basis, or more frequently in an unstable market.

A design and construction contingency totaling 12% has been included in this estimate. A design contingency in the schematic design phase of a project allows for variations in the costs of details and design changes or scope increases. A construction contingency allows a reserve to cover the cost of unforeseen circumstances particular to the site.

It is recognized that neither the Architect nor the Owner has control over the cost of labor, materials or equipment, over the Contractor's methods of determining bid prices, or over competitive bidding, market or negotiating conditions. Accordingly, the Architect cannot and does not warrant or represent that bids or negotiated prices will not vary from any estimate of Construction Cost or evaluation prepared or agreed to by the Architect.

Staunton/Augusta Courts Consolidation Preliminary Conceptual Cost Estimate

New Building	\$20,912,500
New Building- Underground Garage.....	\$648,750
Cochran Judicial Center Renovation	\$2,650,000
Augusta County Courthouse Renovation	\$7,700,000
New Pedestrian Bridge.....	\$550,000
Site Work Allowance	\$500,000
Upgrade City Johnson St. Parking Deck	\$250,000
<u>Pedestrian Enhancements.....</u>	<u>\$650,000</u>

Total Building Costs \$33,861,250

Furniture	\$2,960,000
Geotechnical Study.....	\$10,000
Survey	\$10,000
Testing/Inspections	\$334,000
Data/Telephone	\$589,000
Moving Expenses.....	\$20,000
<u>A/E Fees (8.5%).....</u>	<u>\$2,878,206</u>

Other Costs Subtotal.....\$6,801,206

Project Cost Subtotal.....\$40,662,456

Recommended Contingency (12%)	\$4,879,495
Property Acquisition	\$2,400,000
Existing Building Demolition	\$450,000

Subtotal..... \$48,391,951

Less Historic Tax Credits \$1,500,000

Total..... \$46,891,951

\$361/square foot cost

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VIII. LOCATION IMPLICATIONS



Staunton and Augusta County Conceptual Design for the Consolidated Courts Facilities

A. Implications of Courts Consolidation

If Augusta County and the City of Staunton choose to consolidate their court systems in a combination of existing buildings and new facilities in downtown Staunton, there will be the possibility of the following:

1. Reduced capital costs in construction when compared with separate courts since both localities would be building new facilities or remodeling existing buildings to duplicate court functions.
2. The consolidation would be an excellent example of regional cooperation between the two localities, a trend that likely will continue in the future due to economic conditions.
3. The historic courthouse would be renovated and this historic landmark would continue to serve the county and city as a courts facility into the foreseeable future. If consolidation does not occur, the fate and future use of this important historic structure is unknown.
4. There would be a reduced number of staff when compared with separate courts.
5. There are no additional requirements for water, sewer or storm water improvements on any of the downtown sites.
6. The conceptual consolidation plan generally meets the state space standards and provides for future courts expansion in the new courts facility and in the Cochran Judicial Center. More detailed space planning can refine space sizes and gross to net factor percentages.
7. The downtown consolidation option provides convenient secure parking for judges with direct access to buildings.
8. Nearby reserved parking spaces will be provided for all courts staff. There is ample public parking in the downtown and with better signage and validation, it could be improved for court users.

B. Further Issues to Explore

While Rockingham County and the City of Harrisonburg to the north and Rockbridge County and the City of Lexington to the south have both consolidated their courts, further legal research would be needed to determine the requirements for such a consolidation between Augusta County and the City of Staunton.

Like the site of the proposed new county facility in Verona, the site for a new consolidated courts building in downtown Staunton would be subject to further geo-technic studies to better determine soil and sub-soil conditions.

Due to the extremely limited time for this study, cost estimates for the historic courthouse were updated from the 2012 study and sq. ft. costs from the county study for the new building were used for the similar new facility in downtown. Site costs were adjusted due to the different conditions and sizes of the two locations. Demolition and bridge costs were obtained from contractors and bridge building companies. Rehabilitation costs for the Cochran Judicial Center were calculated by this office's experience in rehabilitating other historic structures along with cost estimating guides. Streetscape estimates were gained from City staff experience. If the downtown option is considered viable by the judge and both localities, additional more detailed space planning and estimating is suggested to refine the present numbers.

Further study would be needed to determine more accurately the operations costs associated with the buildings. While the new structures would be more efficient than the historic buildings, there is less square footage in the consolidated option than if each locality creates its own separate system. In addition, energy conservation techniques would be added to any renovation of the existing historic buildings. All of these issues would be explored in more detail in the next revision of this report should the concept meet initial approval.

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