

Evaluation of Courthouse Needs for Southampton County Southampton County, Virginia



February 23, 2016

1.0 Assessment of the Existing Courthouse

The existing courthouse facility has evolved over the past two centuries as Southampton County has grown and the operational and space requirements of the county courts system have increased and become more complex. The courtrooms are located in the historic courthouse building and were altered in the mid 1990's to add witness rooms and provide accessibility required for disabled users. An addition was built at that time at the rear of the building to add a prisoner holding area, prisoner elevator and expand the District/J&DR Clerks space and provide Judge's Chambers and a Jury Deliberation Room. Adjacent to the historic courthouse is a two-story portion of the building that was built in the 1960's as the County administration office. The first floor now houses the majority of the offices for the Commonwealth's Attorney in addition to providing restrooms and an evidence room for the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The second floor of this portion of the building provides an office space for the Commonwealth's Attorney, witness/interview rooms for the Circuit Court and a jury assembly room for the Circuit Court. The Clerk of the Circuit Court is located in a 1960's era office and records room which connects to the former administrative space by connecting exterior sidewalks and a ramp as well as an interior stair.

The existing courthouse facility does not adequately meet the standards established by the Supreme Court of Virginia¹ in terms of compliance with current building codes, provision of separate circulation for the public, court personnel, proper functional floor plan layout for operational efficiency, access control, security and accessibility. Further, the facility lacks a fire sprinkler system and modern fire alarm (both required in courthouse facilities under current codes). In addition, the current building does not fully meet current building code requirements for proper life safety. The HVAC system is obsolete and in need of complete replacement. The electrical service and panels are located in the basement of the historic building which floods periodically when weather events occur that cause high water levels in the river. The parking for court personnel should be separate from the public parking with a separate entrance that is secure and located near personnel entrances that provide proper security for court personnel. In order to overcome these deficiencies, the existing building will need to be thoroughly renovated and expanded in order to be able to meet the space and functional requirements established by the Supreme Court for adequate court facilities.

2.0 Evaluation of Space Needs for the Courthouse

Space needs for the courts have been identified as part of this study to quantify the building space that is required to meet the Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines at this time and into the foreseeable future. A statement of space needs was developed by Courtworks, Inc. in collaboration with architects from PMA Architecture. Interviews were held with the Circuit Court Judge, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Clerk of the District and J&DR Courts and the Commonwealth's Attorney to discuss the specific needs of each of the primary users of the courthouse. Based on information provided in these interviews and

¹ See Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines, 2015, <http://www.courts.state.va.us/courts/vacourtfacility/complete.pdf>

examination of the existing conditions at the Courthouse, a statement of space needs was developed indicating the space that is needed for the Circuit Court, District Court, Juvenile & Domestic Relations (J&DR) Court, Clerk of the District/J&DR Court, and the Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office. A summary of the space needs is presented below in Table 1 – Space Needs Summary for Southampton County Courthouse. Appendix A provides a detailed listing of the space needs analysis.

Component	Component Gross SF
CIRCUIT COURTROOM	3,483
GENERAL DISTRICT COURTROOM	3,520
J&DR DISTRICT COURTROOM	3,410
JURY ASSEMBLY	1,316
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE	913
GENERAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE	418
J&DR COURT JUDGE	418
CIRCUIT CLERK	5,300
DISTRICT/JDR COURT CLERK	2,407
PRISONER HANDLING	682
COURT SECURITY	604
COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY	3,146
PUBLIC SUPPORT	660
BUILDING SUPPORT	1,738
Total Net Area	
Total Component Gross Area	28,014
Building Gross @ 10%	2,801
Total Building Gross Sq. Ft.	30,815

Table 1 – Space Needs Summary for Southampton County Courthouse (January 2016)

Southampton County currently combines the clerk functions for the District and J&DR Court under one clerk office and utilizes one courtroom for both District and J&DR cases. A more typical arrangement in small counties in Virginia is to provide a separate District Courtroom and a separate J&DR Courtroom in order to schedule cases with more flexibility. It is also typical to have separate clerks for the District and J&DR Courts. Although there is not plan to separate the Courts and Clerk functions at this time, it is important that the courthouse needs envision that this may happen in the future and sufficient space will be necessary at that time to accommodate this adequately in the courthouse.

Discussions with the Circuit Court Judge and Clerk revealed the need for an additional courtroom capable of holding civil jury cases at the same time that a criminal case may be occurring in the Circuit Courtroom. At this time the Circuit Court cannot schedule a civil case the same week that a Criminal trial is set on the docket because only one courtroom is available. Considering this need and the future likely need for a separate J&DR Courtroom, it is recommended that space be included for a future J&DR Courtroom and J&DR Clerk. It should be plausible to equip this courtroom with room for a civil jury box

and an adjacent small hearing room/jury deliberation room to satisfy this need without adding a fourth courtroom.

Space needs in Table 1 indicate the current space needed for each of the current users of the Courthouse as well as the anticipated future needs for a separate J&DR Court and Clerk. The projected space need of approximately 31,000 square feet represents the space needed for the next 20 years for the courts and courts related uses.

It is estimated that there will need to be approximately 200 parking spaces to serve the courthouse and personnel. Parking for the public should be located in proximity to the main public entrance of the building and should be separated from the driveway entry and parking area for courthouse personnel. Parking for courthouse personnel should be screened, have a security gate to limit access and be under video surveillance for security purposes.

3.0 Meeting the Courthouse Needs

PMA has examined two options for meeting these needs for the county courts, one involving renovation/expansion of the existing historic courthouse and the other alternative is construction of a new courthouse. The purpose of examining these options is to determine if an adequate plan arrangement can be achieved by renovation of the existing facility without excessive cost and construction uncertainty when compared to a new building.

Option 1-Renovation/Expansion of the Existing Courthouse – A review of the existing facility by architects from PMA concluded that the following components of the existing courts facility are not suitable for reuse due to physical condition, code issues, construction type and or configuration.

- a) Mechanical/Electrical systems must be upgraded
- b) Clerk office and Records room must be demolished to allow room for personnel parking
- c) 1960's Administrative wing should be demolished due to height issues and configuration
- d) Existing public elevator will need to be relocated for better plan layout
- e) Existing Courtrooms need to be renovated and remodeled to achieve proper circulation
- f) Parking lot will need to be reduced in size to allow building expansion
- g) The colonnade would need to be removed

Given these assumptions, the Historic Courthouse and the rear portion of the 1990's addition (which houses the prisoner holding cells, prisoner elevator, District/J&DR Clerks office, Judges Chambers and Jury Deliberation Room) can be retained. A two-story addition to the Historic building can be built toward the east to meet the space of the court and courts related users as shown in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 2, the Clerk of Court and the Circuit Court are re-located at the east end of the expanded facility with the District Courtroom and J&DR Courtroom located in the Historic Court building. As noted previously, it is not practical to reuse the existing 1960's Administrative wing structure due to the fact that the floor to floor height is inadequate to construct the expansion to accommodate ductwork, sprinkler piping and structural systems. Also, the second floor of the existing Administrative wing does not align with the second floor of the Historic courthouse which causes unwanted ramping and circulation issues. It is possible to adjust this conceptual layout such that the Circuit Court remains at its current location and the Clerk of Court can be located on the same level upstairs. To arrange the plans to achieve the proper courtroom layout for public access at the back of the courtroom, the existing colonnade will have to be removed in order to locate an interior hallway/lobby area along the front of the expanded building.

This option presents several issues that factor into its practicality and cost-effectiveness. An obvious complication option will force a shutdown of the court operation at this location, the need for temporary office accommodations and impose cost and logistics burdens on the County. Discussions with the Circuit Court Judge indicate that cases could be heard in or Suffolk if needed, however this would require transportation costs and other costs to transport jury members, witnesses and prisoners from Courtland to Suffolk in order to continue hearing cases. Hiring buses to transport jury members would be expensive and prisoner transport would involve additional costs for deputies and van costs.

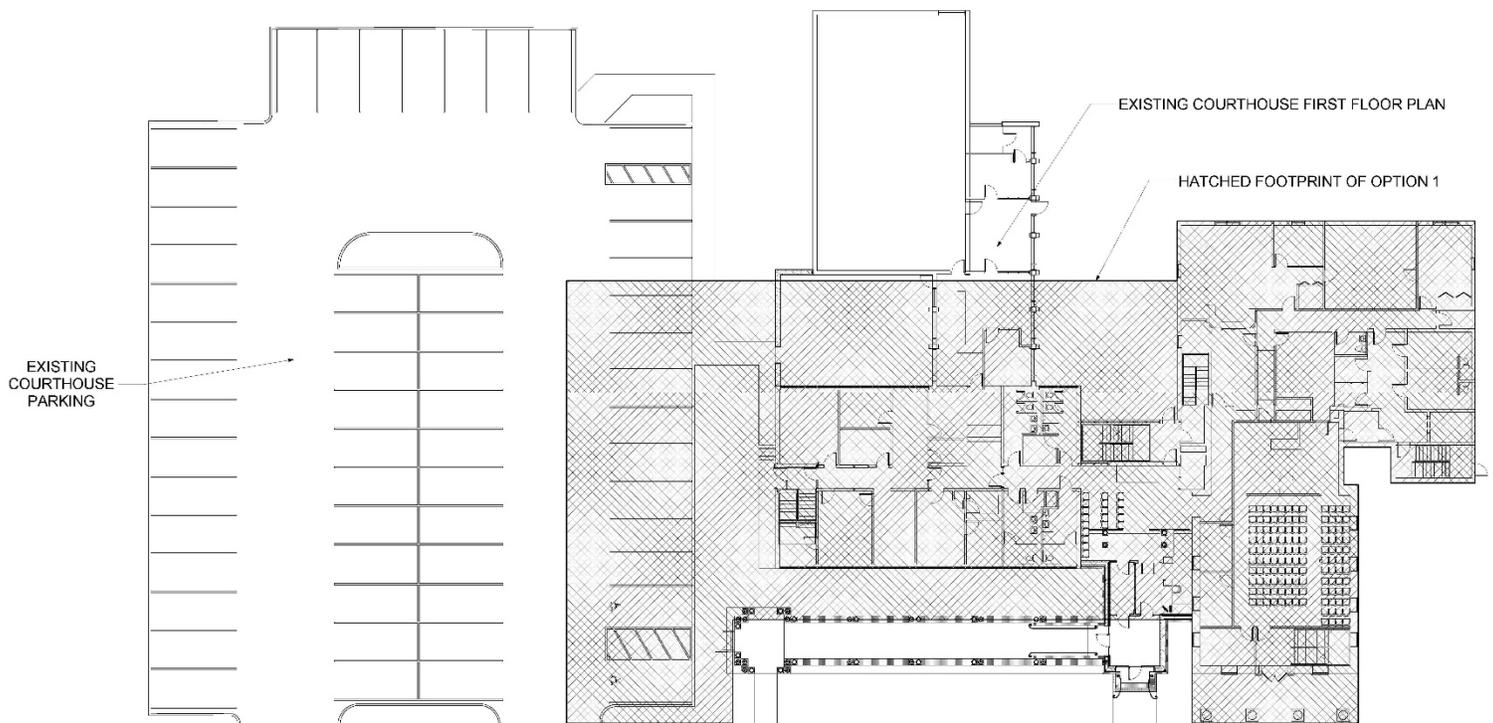


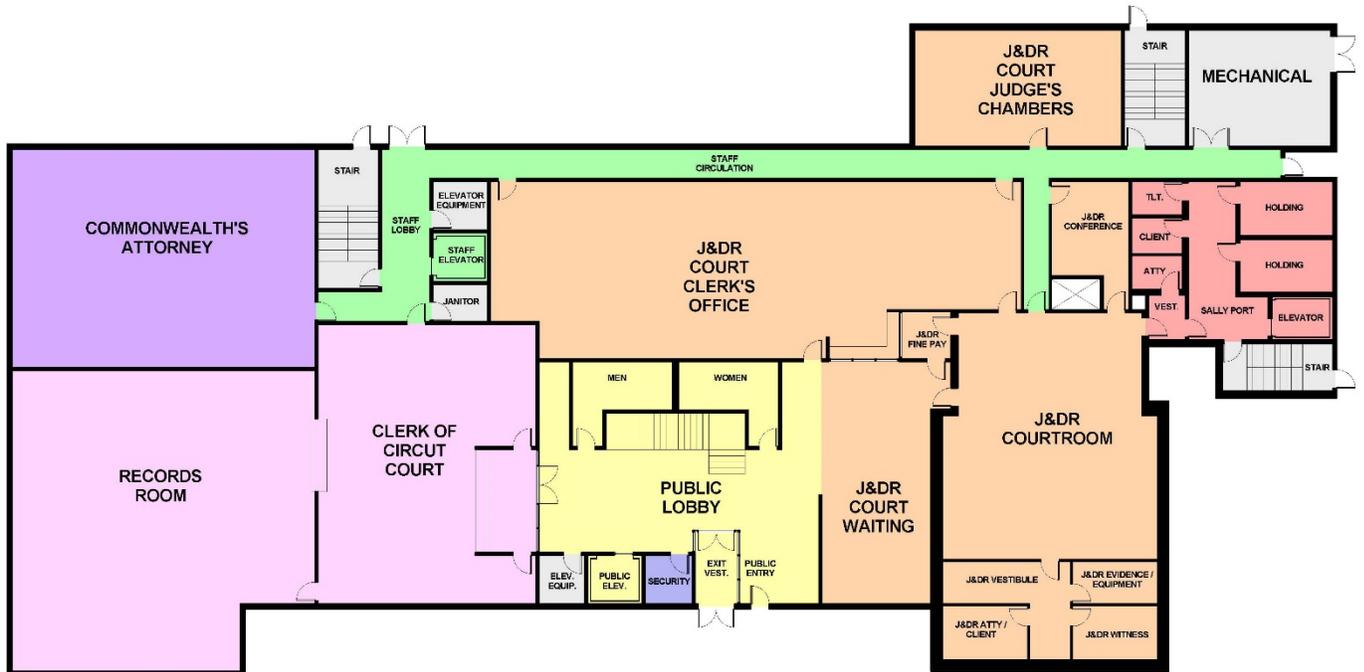
Figure 1-Expansion/Renovation Option 1- Site Plan

District Court and J&DR cases would have to be relocated as well. The Commonwealth's Attorney, Clerk of Court and Clerk of the District/J&DR Court would need temporary offices which would have to be available to the public. This could be provided through rental of temporary office trailers which are an added monthly expense. Temporary office trailers would need access ramping, parking, electrical, sewer and water provisions as well. The costs for temporary space and transportation will probably last for 18 months while the renovations are completed. There would be additional moving costs for the Clerk's records, furniture and other items, the need to provide telephones and other incidental expenses in moving the operations.

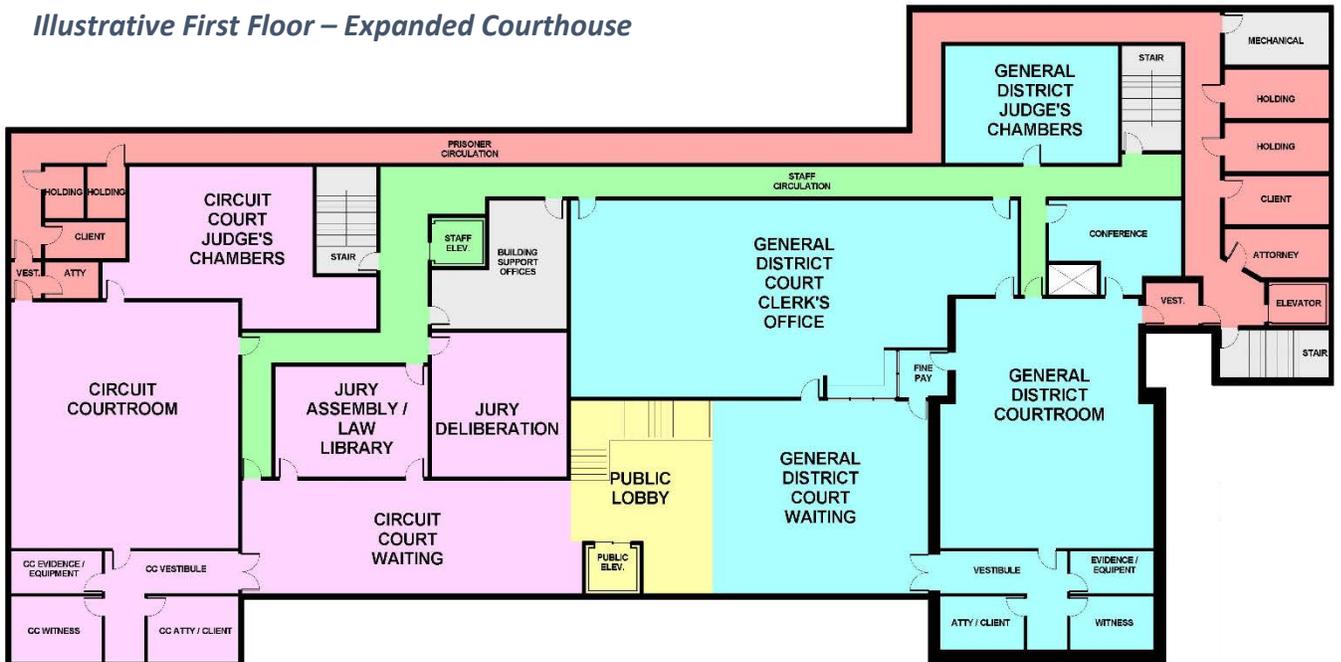
Option 1 will require a total gross floor area of 38,000 square feet of building area. This will involve renovating approximately 12,000 square feet of the existing building and construction of approximately 26,000 square feet of new building area.

Expansion of the building would occur toward the east into the existing parking lot of the current site. As a result the parking lot will be reduced to approximately 22 spaces and this layout will allow approximately 8 spaces behind the building addition for Judges, Clerks and the Commonwealth's Attorney. This will require creation of additional parking near the courthouse. This will require examining where parking can be added and possibly acquiring property to construct new parking. It is not uncommon for Historic courthouses in towns and cities to lack sufficient parking adjacent to the courthouse. However, an expanded courthouse facility with additional courtrooms will allow the Circuit Court to place more cases on the docket. If the District and J&DR Combined Court is ever separated, then it would be possible that all three courts could be in session at the same time dramatically increasing the need for parking.

Option 1 illustrates how the existing facility can be renovated and expanded to overcome the problems which exist at the courthouse and meet the Supreme Court's guidelines. Prisoner circulation hallways and some court personnel hallways are longer than an ideal solution which results in additional building area and some loss of efficiency for court personnel. There will also be a need for more corridors to provide access for the court personnel to courtrooms and other staff spaces in the expanded building. Portions of the existing facility can be renovated, however the 1960's administrative wing, Clerks Office, Records Room and the colonnade connection will have to be demolished in order to accommodate the elements and arrangements of a modern courthouse.



Illustrative First Floor – Expanded Courthouse



Illustrative Second Floor – Expanded Courthouse

Figure 2- Option 1 -Renovation/Expansion Alternative

Option 2 – New Courthouse on a New Site - A new building could be designed to be more efficient than Option 1 because there would not be the limitations of the existing site, constraints of the existing building, and complications of providing the needed parking. Preliminary tentative layouts shown in Figure 3 illustrate that the space needs of the courts could be satisfied within approximately 32,000 gross square feet in a new facility.

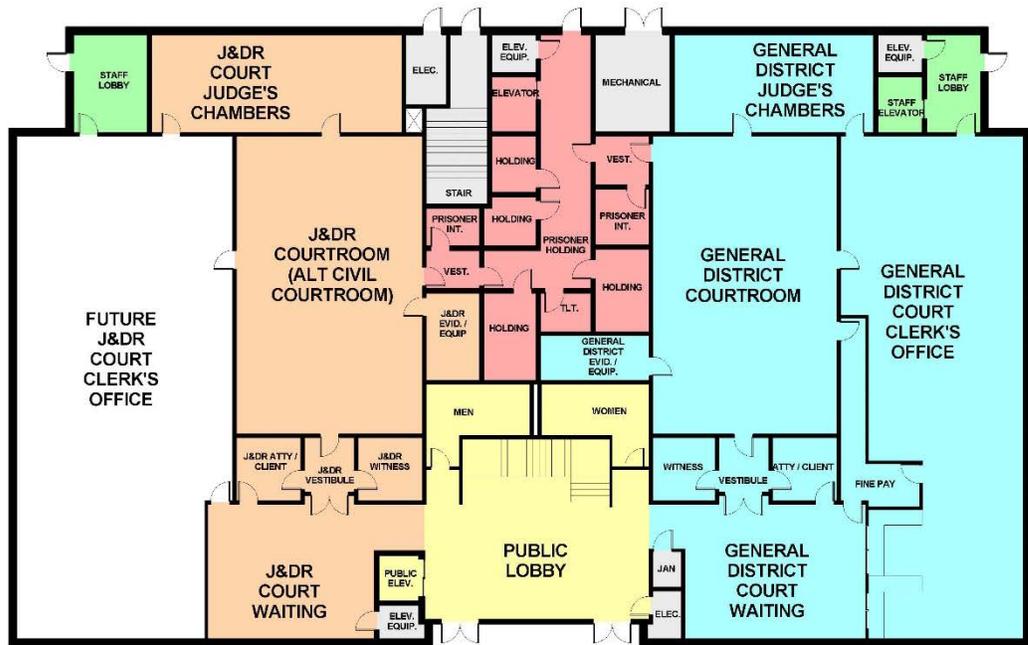
Figure 3 illustrates an arrangement where the District Court and J&DR Court are located on the first floor and the Clerk of Court and Circuit Court are located on the second floor. Option 2 shows constructing the J&DR Court at the present time so that it could be used by the Circuit Court to hear civil cases. In this scenario, it would be important to build out a jury deliberation room and a 7 person jury seating area in the courtroom adjacent to the J&DR Courtroom (not shown in the figure).

Option 2 is a more efficient layout due to the ability to locate the prisoner holding area directly between the courtrooms on each floor. This arrangement is extremely efficient because it allows vertical transport of prisoners by elevator thus reducing the amount of hallways needed.

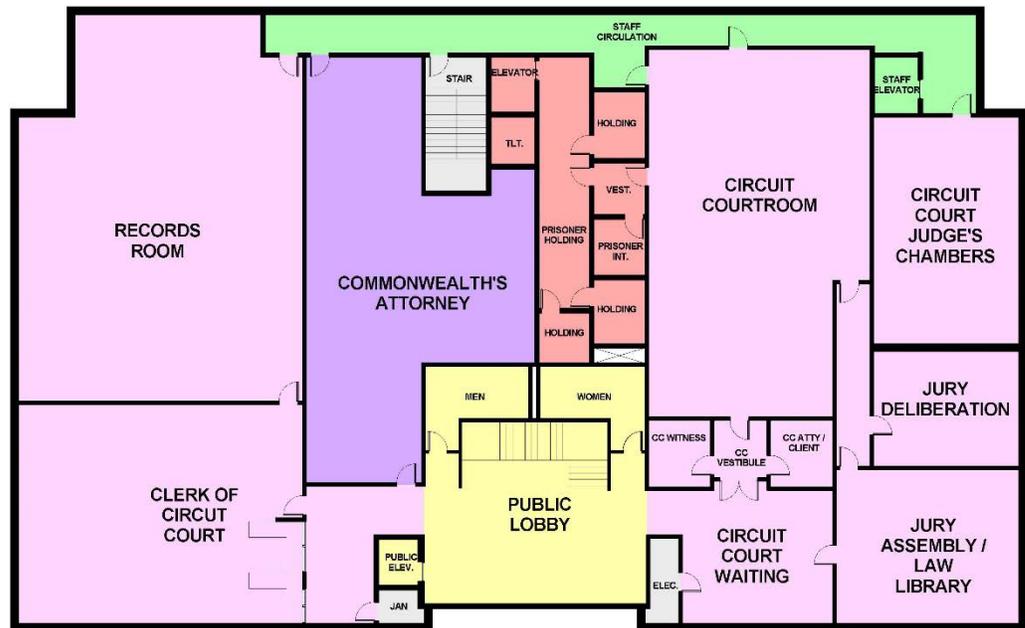
A new building would require a site with approximately 15-20 acres of useable land area which is located on a prominent publicly accessible thoroughfare. Such a site would need utilities for electrical, sewer, water (with fire sprinkler capacity) and should have sufficient means to discharge storm water. The soils of such a site should be evaluated and determined to be able to support 2 stories of construction on spread footings without piles or other geotechnical measures.

A new building on a new site would require the Sheriff to transport all prisoners from the jail to the new site for all cases. Currently, the Sheriff is able to walk them across from the jail and enter the courthouse securely. This would change the current process requiring additional prisoner vans and officers to transport prisoners. It is estimated that there would need to be at least two vans and officers to cover this additional work load.

Public parking would be located in front of the building and three separate parking areas would be located at the rear of the building to provide separate and secure parking for the court personnel and a prisoner sallyport. Access to the rear parking lots would be restricted by gate access and separate driveway access.



Illustrative First Floor – New Construction on a New Site



Illustrative Second Floor – New Construction on a New Site

Figure 3- Option 2 –New Courthouse on a New Site

4.0 Cost Comparison

A preliminary evaluation of associated costs for Option 1 and Option 2 was developed in order to compare the costs of each option. A summary of these costs appears below in Table 2 and a detailed breakdown of this evaluation appears in Appendix B. This evaluation of construction costs is based the presumption of construction starting no later than January 2017. If the project is planned and constructed beyond that time, then the costs can be expected to increase due to price escalation, inflation and other market factors. Square foot construction costs have been used to approximate the costs of renovation, remodeling and new construction ranging from \$150 (dollars) per square foot to \$300 (dollars) per square foot. Assumptions have been made for other components of the project including (but not limited to) land acquisition, soils analysis, contingencies and other factors that cannot be quantified at this time until further planning is completed. An allowance for A&E fees has been included in these figures.

Table 2 provides an additional cost in the last row of the table to represent an approximate budget range for re-purposing the historic courthouse. If a new courthouse was constructed, then the existing courthouse would need to re-purposed to a new use. In this event, it is recommended that the 1960’s parts of the building be demolished and the historic portion of the building and the 1990’s wing be renovated to a new use. The indicated budget range of 2.0 million dollars to 3.5 million dollars represents a range of cost which could perform the demolition, hazardous materials abatement and a renovation. The higher end of the range would provide for a more extensive and through historic rehabilitation.

Table 2- Comparison of Costs between Option 1 and Option 2

Component	Projected Budget
Option 1 – Renovation/Expansion	16.5 million dollars
Option 2 – New Courthouse at New Site	14.0 million dollars
Cost to Repurpose Existing Courthouse if vacated	2.0 to 3.5 million dollars

Appendix A - SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Description	Occupants	Unit Area nsf	Units	Total Area nsf	Comments
CIRCUIT COURTROOM					
Circuit Courtroom	80	1700	1	1,700	
Courtroom Public Waiting	25	10	25	250	
Prisoner Entry Vestibule	2	90	1	90	One entry from jail and other entry to courtroom
Prisoner Holding Area	3	200	1	200	Should have 2 cells and circulation
Courtroom Entry Vestibule		90	1	90	From public circulation
Courtroom AV Closet		75	1	75	
Courtroom Storage		75	1	75	
Witness/Attorney Conference Room	4	90	2	180	
Jury Deliberation Room	14	280	1	280	
Jury Toilet		53	2	106	
Jury Coffee Bar		40	1	40	
Jury Deliberation Vestibule		80	1	80	
SUBTOTAL AREA				3,166	
GENERAL DISTRICT COURTROOM					
District Court Courtroom	120	2000	1	2,000	Should be fitted with jury box so it can be used for Circuit trials.
Courtroom Public Waiting	40	10	40	400	
Prisoner Entry Vestibule	2	90	2	180	One entry from jail and other entry to courtroom
Prisoner Holding Area	3	200	1	200	Should have 2 cells and circulation
Courtroom Entry Vestibule		90	1	90	
Courtroom AV Closet		75	1	75	
Courtroom Storage		75	1	75	
Witness/Attorney Conference Room	4	90	2	180	
SUBTOTAL AREA				3,200	
JDR COURTROOM					
District Court Courtroom	60	1400	1	1,400	
Courtroom Public Waiting	40	10	40	400	Divided into two separate areas to separate parties
Prisoner Entry Vestibule	2	90	2	180	One entry from jail and other entry to courtroom
Detainee Holding Area	3	200	1	200	Should have 2 cells and circulation
Courtroom Entry Vestibule		90	1	90	
J&DR Hearing /Conference Room	20	500	1	500	Locate adjacent to courtroom
Courtroom AV Closet		75	1	75	
Courtroom Storage		75	1	75	
Witness/Attorney Conference Room	4	90	2	180	
SUBTOTAL AREA				3,100	
JURY ASSEMBLY					
Jury Assembly/Shared Conference Room	60	900	1	900	Can be used as meeting room for community organizations
Jury Assembly Toilet		48	2	96	
Jury Assembly Closet and Storage		200	1	200	Chairs and equipment
SUBTOTAL AREA				1,196	
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE					
Circuit Court Judge's Office	4	320	1	320	
Circuit Court Judge's Closet		12	1	12	
Circuit Court Judge's Toilet		48	1	48	
Circuit Court Judicial Assistant	1	200	1	200	
Circuit Court Judge Conference / Hearing Room	6	250	1	250	
SUBTOTAL AREA				830	
GENERAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE					
Gen. Dist Court Judge Office	4	320	1	320	
Gen. Dist Court Judge's Closet		12	1	12	
Gen. Dist Court Judge's Toilet		48	1	48	
SUBTOTAL AREA				380	
J&DR COURT JUDGE					
J&DR Court Judge Office	4	320	1	320	
J&DR Court Judge's Closet		12	1	12	
J&DR Court Judge's Toilet		48	1	48	
SUBTOTAL AREA				380	
CIRCUIT CLERK					
Circuit Clerk Private Office	4	240	1	240	
Chief Deputy Private Office	2	140	1	140	
Deputy Clerk Workstation	1	64	3	192	
Probate Office	2	140	1	140	
Court Files, Active		200	1	200	
Scanning Station and Work Area	1	80	1	80	
Evidence Room		140	1	140	
Public Records Room		2000	1	2,000	
Records Room Clerk Workstation		64	1	64	
Recording Area		124	1	124	
Public Transaction Counter		40	4	160	One position should be accessible
Public Waiting at Public Counter		10	8	80	
Public Access Computer Terminals		36	3	108	Locate near public counter
General Storage, Forms, Equipment		300	1	300	Must be located within Clerk's work area
Photocopy and Workroom		160	1	160	
Staff Toilet		60	2	120	
Break Room		150	1	150	
Server Room		120	1	120	
File and General Bulk Storage		300	1	300	Must be accessible within building.

SUBTOTAL AREA				4,818	
GEN. DISTRICT AND J&DR COURT CLERK					Locate adjacent to General District Courtroom
District Clerk Private Office	3	180	1	180	
Deputy Clerk Workstation	1	64	5	320	
Court Files		300	1	300	
Scanning Station and Work Area	1	80	1	80	
Public Transaction Counter		40	4	160	One should be accessible
Public Waiting at Public Counter		10	10	100	
Public Access Computer Terminals		36	3	108	Locate near public counter
General Storage, Forms, Equipment		400	1	400	Must be located within Clerk's work area
Photocopy and Workroom		160	1	160	
Staff Toilet		60	2	120	
Break Room		140	1	140	
Server Room		120	1	120	
SUBTOTAL AREA				2,188	
PRISONER HANDLING					
Courtroom Holding Cells		70	0	-	See Courtrooms for area
Prisoner entry vestibule to courtrooms		90	0	-	See Courtrooms for area
Attorney/Prisoner Interview	2	90	3	270	One per courtroom
Elevator		200	1	200	
Entry Pedestrian Sallyport from Jail		150	1	150	
SUBTOTAL AREA				620	
COURT SECURITY					
Lobby Security Screening		240	1	240	1 x-ray machine and 1 magnetometer
Public Queuing	15	10	15	150	To be located within the building
Security Control Room	2	120	1	120	Adjacent to lobby
Security Electronics		39	1	39	
SUBTOTAL AREA				549	
COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY					
Commonwealth Attorney	4	240	1	240	
Asst. Commonwealth Atty.	2	140	4	560	
Victim Witness Coordinator	2	140	1	140	
Paralegal	1	64	1	64	
Office Manager	2	120	1	120	
Secretary	1	64	2	128	
Victim Witness Waiting Area/Interview Room	4	160	1	160	
Child Friendly victim Waiting Area	3	140	1	140	
Files / Work Room		400	1	400	
General Office Storage		200	1	200	
Conference Room / Library / Trial Prep Room	10	362	1	362	
Visitor Waiting		10	6	60	
Staff Toilets		60	2	120	
VCIN		46	1	46	
Server Room		120	1	120	
SUBTOTAL AREA				2,860	
PUBLIC SUPPORT					
Lobby	20	400	1	400	
Vending Area		200	1	200	
SUBTOTAL AREA				600	
BUILDING SUPPORT					
Public Toilets		160	2	320	
Stairway at rear		150	1	150	
Elevators		70	3	210	
Elevator equipment		50	3	150	
Janitorial		75	2	150	
Mechanical Room		400	1	400	
Electrical Rooms		100	2	200	
SUBTOTAL AREA				1,580	

APPENDIX B

Southampton County, Virginia

Courthouse Project Components	Option 1		Option 2	
	Renovate and Expand Existing Courthouse		Construct New Courthouse on New Site	
23-Feb-16	(38,000 s.f. total)		(31,657 s.f. total)	
Prepared by PMA Architecture in Association with Courtworks	<i>Renovate 12,600 s.f.</i>		<i>New Const: 31,657 s.f.</i>	
	<i>New Const: 26,000 s.f.</i>			
Site Related Costs	\$1,520,000		\$1,410,000	
Land Acquisition	\$300,000	acquire 2 lots for parking	\$500,000	allowance
Site Survey	\$15,000	allowance	\$15,000	allowance
Soils Survey	\$15,000	allowance	\$25,000	allowance
Site Development	\$100,000	allowance	\$200,000	allowance
Stormwater	\$600,000	difficult	\$100,000	allowance
Access Roads	\$25,000		\$200,000	allowance
Electrical Power	\$40,000		\$80,000	allowance
Site Contingency	\$150,000		\$150,000	allowance
Fire Sprinkling	\$175,000	More difficult	\$125,000	allowance
Archaeology	\$100,000	Unknown	\$15,000	allowance
Building Related Costs	\$13,186,530		\$11,536,337	
Planning Contingency	\$750,000	Unknowns greater	\$300,000	lesser unknowns
Building Area - New Construction	\$7,701,900	\$300 per sf	\$9,496,988	\$300 per sf
Building Area Renovation	\$2,185,000	\$150-\$200 per sf	\$0	no renovation
Parking Lots	\$900,000	Additional 200 parking sp	\$1,100,000	225 parking spaces
Prisoner Sally Port	\$0	not required	\$90,000	
Construction Contingency	\$1,649,630	5% new/20% renovation	\$549,349	5% new
Renovation Associated Costs				
Hazardous Materials	\$250,000	allowance		
Electrical Upgrade	\$250,000	allowance		
Mechanical Upgrade	\$600,000	allowance		
Other Costs	\$1,729,922		\$1,057,907	
A&E Fees (8% of building construction cost)	\$1,054,922	allowance	\$922,907	allowance
Temporary Space Accommodations	\$400,000	allowance		
Transportation Costs for Juror's/Witnesses	\$100,000	allowance		
Commissioning of HVAC	\$50,000	allowance	\$50,000	allowance
Quality Assurance Testing	\$75,000	allowance	\$35,000	allowance
Booster Pumps	\$50,000	allowance	\$50,000	allowance
Total Cost for Building and Site Related Work	\$16,436,452		\$14,004,244	