

As we studied the space needs of the County Safety Center, we interviewed all of the department heads to see what they currently have and what they would need into the future. The State's Attorney, the Clerk of Courts, the Court Services and the Courtrooms, Judges Chambers and Judicial staff occupy about 40,000 gross square feet. The current Jail, EMS and Highway patrol occupy about 17,000 SF on each of two floors or 34,000 square feet. After studying the needs of the county it was determined that most of these spaces could double in size over the next 20 years. This would result in a facility that would be about 150,000 square feet. The total square footage of the proposed safety center, including the basement storage and mechanical space is 140,745 square feet. The Jail component of the project becomes more complicated since the goal is to provide a safe and efficient jail with segregation of different inmate populations and safety for the staff a high priority. Also it is well known that the staffing of jails is the highest cost of the facility over time. Therefore, in looking at the existing courthouse and jail facilities in the study, we found the following issues to contend with:

- There is not enough space on the east side of the site where the existing jail facility stands to fit a jail that will be safe, staff-efficient and provide for the growth of 20 years. There is simply not enough land to the east of the courthouse to put the expansion in.
- The existing jail facility is inefficient and inflexible. Trying to add on to that facility is a difficult job. Adding to the facility by putting a second floor on it is an expensive notion and would not be functional at all.
- **The existing courthouse has bearing walls and columns that prevent much flexibility.** In trying to provide corridors for prisoners and corridors for the public, we found that it was next to impossible. Therefore if we were to attempt to use the existing courthouse for courts and add onto it, we would be violating safety and accessibility standards from the start. Also substantial changes to the interior would be difficult to sell to the historic preservation group.
- Adding the new courtroom and court-related facilities to the west of the courthouse then take up the historic lawn space on the west side. The jail to the east and south of the courthouse would then end up covering three sides of the historic building while not even meeting the space requirements, the accessibility requirements and the parking requirements of a modern, safe and accessible safety center facility.

For these reasons we abandoned the downtown site and focused on other sites for the safety center.

Consulting Architect's Narrative Summary Assessment of Existing Facilities

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