



**Staff Report**

City Council Pre/Post Briefing Meeting  
December 12, 2022



Strategic Priority: Proactive Public Safety

Enhance public safety to emphasize both prevention and enforcement, engage the community through education and outreach and provide the resources necessary to ensure safety and well-being throughout Westminster.

**Subject:** Future of the Westminster Municipal Court Building

**Prepared By:** Dana Kester, Construction Projects Specialist  
Brian Grucelski, Facilities Manager  
Chris M. Lindsey, Assistant City Manager  
Jason Lantagne, Presiding Municipal Judge

**Recommended City Council Action:**

- Receive a briefing on the Municipal Courthouse Building Assessment, Programming, and Facility Modernization Study.
- Direct Staff to design a new Municipal Court building and return with a financing strategy.

**Summary Statement:**

- In January 2022, Anderson Hallas Architects (AHA) was selected to conduct a Municipal Court study, focusing on assessing the Court's physical condition and functional aspects including security, accessibility, space needs, and adjacencies.
- The assessment identified many conditions throughout the building that are inconsistent with accepted standards for court security, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, and best practices for municipal court space adjacencies.
- AHA prepared three design alternatives for renovating the existing courthouse to meet modern standards, including cost estimates for each alternative.
- AHA also prepared a fourth design alternative for a new building on the existing site, including cost estimates.
- AHA and Staff will present the key findings of the study, offer recommendations, and answer questions from City Council.
- Staff is seeking City Council direction to design a new Municipal Court building and return with a financing strategy.

**Fiscal Impact:**

\$0 in expenditures.

**Source of Funds:**

Not applicable.

**Policy Issue(s):**

Does City Council wish to receive a presentation on the Westminster Municipal Courthouse Building Assessment, Programming, and Facility Modernization Study?

Should City Council direct Staff to design a new Municipal Court building and return with a financing strategy?

**Alternative(s):**

City Council could choose to not receive the presentation on the Westminster Municipal Courthouse Building Assessment,

Programming, and Facility Modernization Study. This is not the recommended option as the presentation will provide valuable information about the Municipal Court.

City Council could choose not to direct Staff to design a new Municipal Court and return with a financing strategy. This is not recommended due to the building assessment that will be discussed.

**Background Information:**

The Municipal Court is one of the oldest City facilities, with the oldest portions built in 1961. The current facility was originally two smaller buildings, which served as City Hall and the Police Station. Over multiple renovations and additions, the two buildings were merged to form the existing facility. The site was repurposed for its current use as the Municipal Court approximately 30 years ago.

In 2016, AHA performed a study to assess the existing and future space needs of the Municipal Court, plan for a new, safe secure, and efficient municipal court, evaluate potential site locations, and develop an opinion of probable costs for a new facility. A new-build scenario was determined to be cost-prohibitive and was not pursued at that time.

In January 2022, the City asked AHA to conduct a new study of the Municipal Court to assess the current conditions and evaluate options for renovating the existing facility. A summary of the assessment findings is as follows:

- **Security:** The security assessment found security issues, including points of entry, back-of-house areas for Staff and judges, and other conditions that do not meet best practices for Staff or the public;
- **Accessibility:** Conditions non-compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were documented throughout the building, including the lack of fully compliant restrooms, courtrooms, stairs, circulation pathways, and facilities for disabled in-custody defendants due to the absence of an elevator;
- **Space:** While a majority of operations have remained the same, the physical space needs have decreased slightly due to a transition to electronic filing and a shift to virtual court hearings during COVID. While some of the hearings remain virtual, space deficiencies, and inefficiencies between the workgroups still exist; and
- **Building Systems:** An evaluation of the major building systems, including mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and envelope, found that many of the systems are nearing or have surpassed the end of their expected useful life and will need to be replaced in the near future.

AHA was originally tasked with providing three renovation options that would meet modern standards and the needs of the City. As the study proceeded, it became clear that the modifications required to meet these goals utilizing the existing structure would be extensive. For comparison, a fourth alternative was added to the study to provide the City with pricing for a new courthouse built on the existing Municipal Court site.

The high-level professional construction cost estimates were prepared for the three renovation options and the new build option. AHA and Staff will present a summary of the potential options and the associated costs for the City Council’s consideration.

Staff recommends that City Council direct Staff to design a new Municipal Court building and return with a financing strategy to complete full construction. Funding is available to complete full design in the *New Municipal Court Facility* capital project. Any design contract will be returned to City Council for action and will take a period of 12-24 months to complete design. This will allow Staff to return to City Council with a financing strategy for full construction of a new Municipal Court facility.

The discussion on the Westminster Municipal Courthouse Building Assessment, Programming, and Facility Modernization Study meets the City’s strategic goal of Proactive Public Safety by providing the knowledge and resources necessary to make decisions that will ensure safety in Westminster’s public facilities.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark A. Freitag  
City Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

| Description  | Upload Date | Type       |
|--|-------------|------------|
| GS - Municipal Courthouse Building Assessment Presentation | 12/7/2022   | Attachment |
| GS - Municipal Courthouse Building Assessment              | 11/23/2022  | Attachment |

# **FUTURE OF THE WESTMINSTER MUNICIPAL COURT BUILDING**

**December 12, 2022**

**Jason Lantagne, Presiding Judge**

**Chris M. Lindsey, Assistant City Manager**

**Wells Squier, Anderson Hallas Architects**

**Norm Haubert, Interim Police Chief**

**General Services Department Staff**

# OBJECTIVES

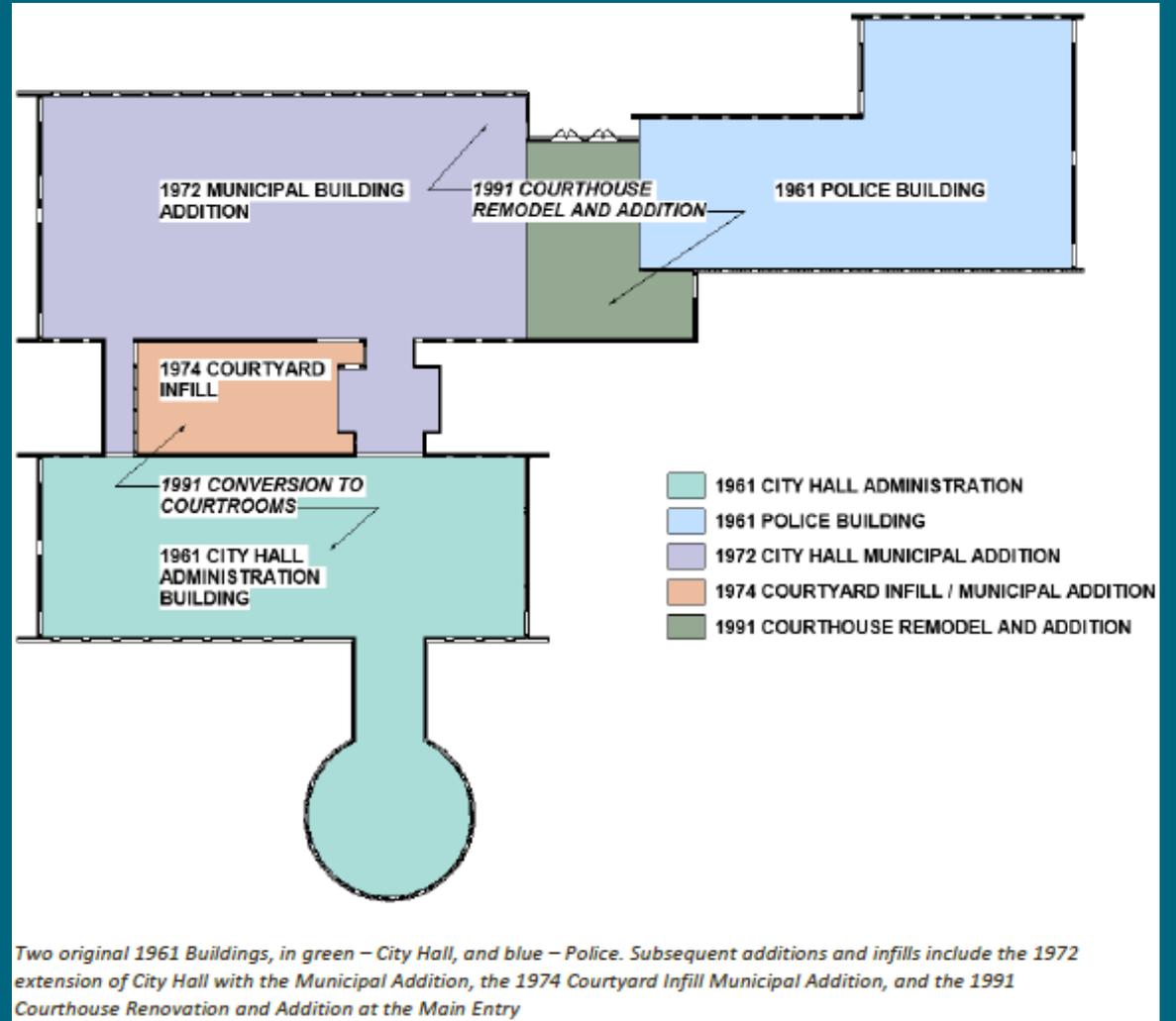
- Understand the current state of and discuss the future of the Municipal Court building
- **Recommendation:**  
Make a financial decision to design a new Municipal Court building and direct Staff to return with a financing strategy.



**Focused Objective 5.3.c:** Develop recommendations and an associated action plan for addressing deferred maintenance on infrastructure, roads, facilities, and equipment throughout the City.

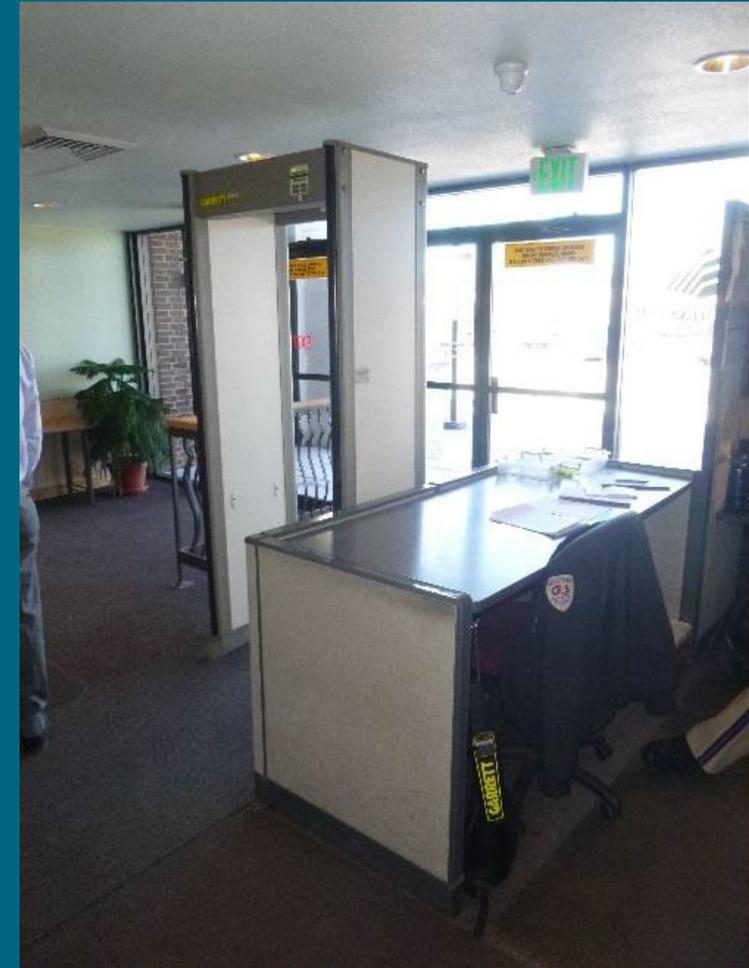
# BUILDING HISTORY & CURRENT FACILITY CONDITION

- Building History
- Physical Building Limitations
- Future Capital Improvement Projects



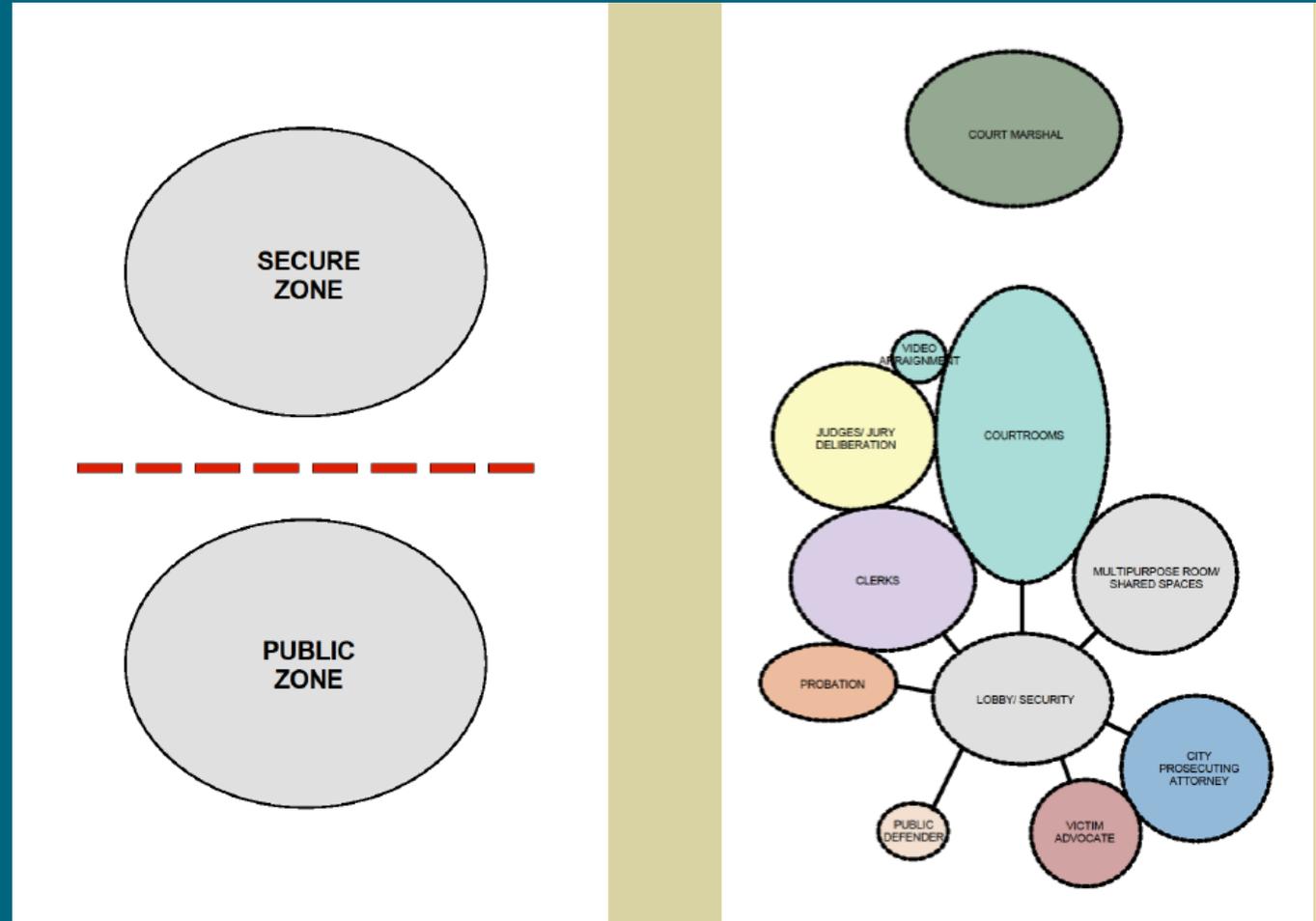
# SECURITY ASSESSMENT

- Best Practices:
  - Adjacencies
  - Points of entry
  - Common spaces including restrooms and hallways
  - Separate path of travel for in-custody defendants



# SPACE ASSESSMENT

- Secure Zone vs. Public Zone
- Functional Adjacencies
- Space Constraints



# ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT

- Compliance Issues
  - Common building
  - Circulation routes
  - Restrooms
  - Courtrooms
  - Multi-level access



# MUNICIPAL COURT COMPARISONS



City of Northglenn Justice Center

| Municipality     | Year Built | Fully ADA Compliant |
|------------------|------------|---------------------|
| WESTMINSTER*     | 1961       | X                   |
| Arvada*          | 1972       | ●                   |
| Brighton         | 2004       | X                   |
| Broomfield*      | 2001       | ✓                   |
| Colorado Springs | 1997       | ✓                   |
| Commerce City    | 2011       | ✓                   |
| Edgewater        | 2019       | ✓                   |
| Federal Heights  | 1974       | X                   |
| Lakewood*        | 1982       | ✓                   |
| Louisville       | 2003       | ✓                   |
| Northglenn       | 2018       | ✓                   |
| Thornton         | 2004       | ✓                   |
| Wheat Ridge*     | 1977       | ●                   |

\* Major renovation since original construction

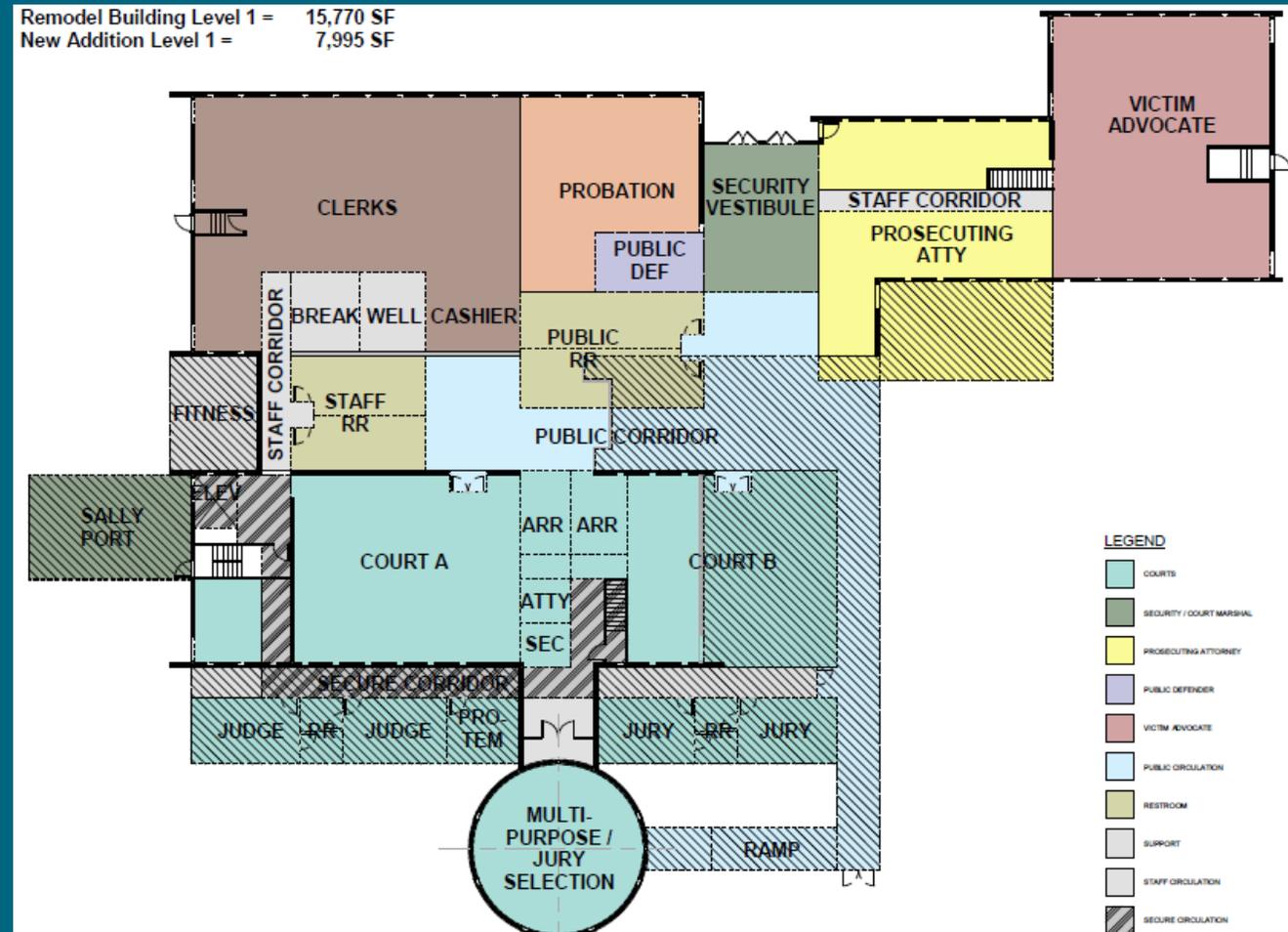
# MAJOR RENOVATION: \$24 - \$29+ MILLION

## Pros:

- Lower initial investment than new construction
- Addresses some of the existing concerns

## Cons:

- Temporary courthouse for 12-24 months
- Existing structure limits the layout options:
  - No renovation option fully meets best practices
- High risk/high contingency



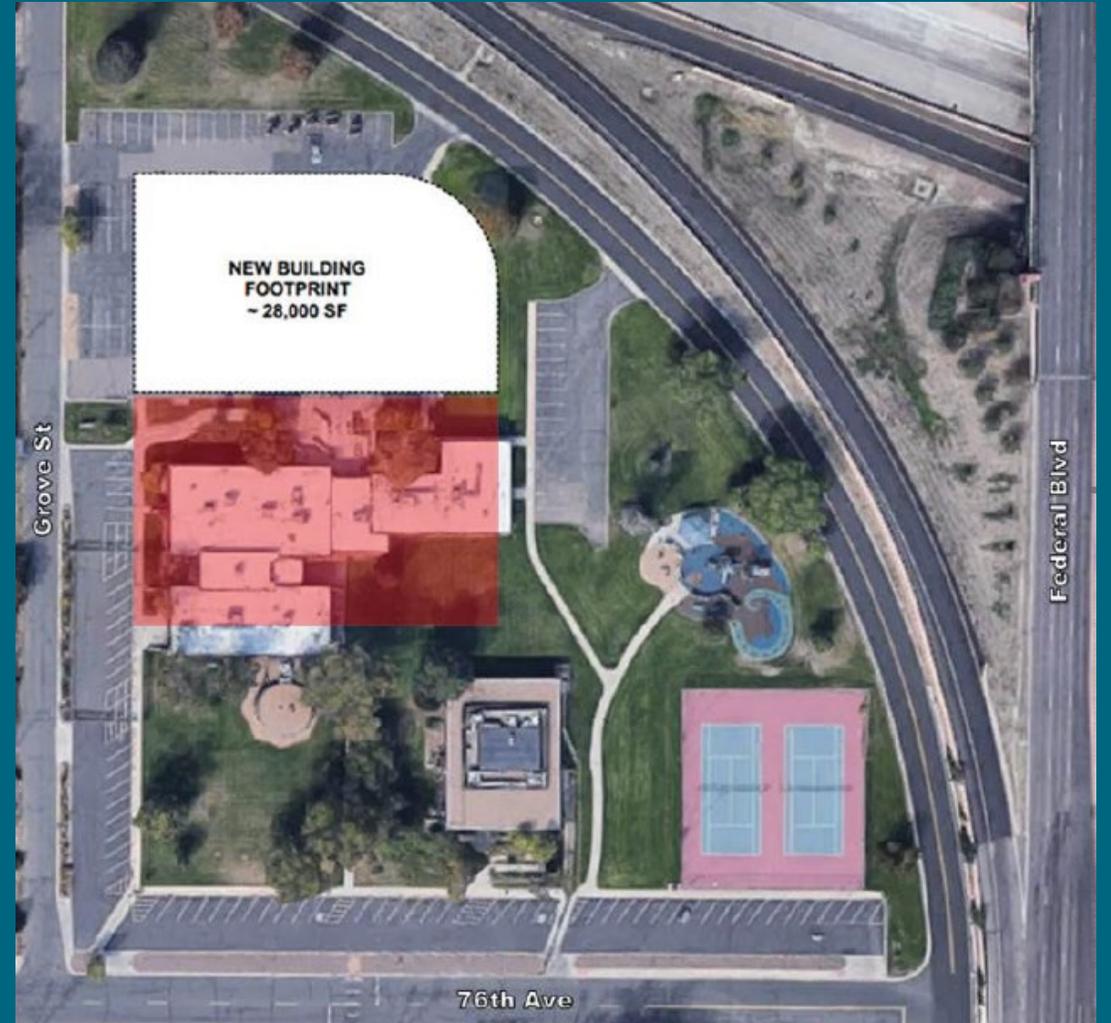
# NEW CONSTRUCTION: \$30 - 33+ MILLION

## Pros:

- Purpose-built courthouse
- Existing courthouse can operate fully during construction
- 50+ year lifespan
- Significantly less risk
- Potential for a multi-use civic building

## Cons:

- Larger initial investment



# RECOMMENDATION

Direct Staff to design a new Municipal Court building and return with a financing strategy.



# Westminster Municipal Courthouse

**Building Assessment, Programming, and Facility Modernization Study**



**September 19, 2022**

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# Foreword

This report is a compilation of work completed by Anderson Hallas Architects along with our team containing JVA Engineers (structural), 360 Engineering (mechanical/plumbing), PK Electrical (electrical), and Parametrix (cost estimating) for the Westminster Municipal Courthouse. Several functional aspects of the building were assessed, including accessibility, security, and adjacencies. The general condition of the facility was also assessed, including the building envelope, building systems, and structure. Based upon these assessments, we've prepared recommendations, facility modernization alternative design concepts, and a new building concept, along with the associated opinion of probable costs.

We appreciate the opportunity to develop and present this work. It is our intent that this report provides the City with the information to take the next steps in decision-making and planning for the future needs of its citizens.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance with your planning and design efforts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wells M. Squier II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Wells M. Squier II, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP  
Principal  
Anderson Hallas Architects

# Executive Summary

## Project Overview

The existing facility located at 3030 Turnpike Drive, near the intersection of Highway 36 and North Federal Boulevard in Westminster, Colorado, has served the residents of Westminster for over 60 years. The first structures were built in 1961 for use as the Westminster City Hall and Police Station. Over time, the original structures have had multiple additions and infill renovations to adapt the site for its current use as the City's Municipal Court. Since the facility was adapted from two separate structures originally purpose-built to serve other functions, the configuration and layout has never been ideally suited for its current use. The original design and method of construction have created significant building constraints, leading to less than desirable outcomes regarding security, accessibility, and ability to operate efficiently as a municipal court.

Anderson Hallas Architects (AHA) conducted an initial assessment of the Municipal Court, which was finalized and presented to the City Council in 2016. The goals of the 2016 study were to assess the existing and future space needs; plan for a new, safe, secure, and efficient Municipal Court; evaluate potential site locations; and develop an opinion of probable costs for a new facility. AHA was engaged in January 2022 to provide a follow-up study focused on providing a condition assessment, a security review, a functional evaluation, a review of compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations and standards, and a review of the building for other issues and/or deficiencies. In addition, the current and future programmatic space requirements were reassessed and alternative facility layouts were considered to evaluate methods for accommodating the space needs utilizing the existing building.

Throughout the interviews with staff and the professional assessment work, the difficulties and inadequacies of the building and the challenges faced by the staff were evident. Since this building has undergone a change of use from a City Hall and Police Station, most of the adjacencies and pathways are not optimal for a courthouse. There is a lack of separation between the public front-of-house and secure back-of-house areas to facilitate the safety of judges, jurors, victims, and staff.

Due to the age of the facility, numerous elements, including those that negatively impact access to public services, do not comply with current ADA regulations and standards. The changes needed to bring the building into full compliance with the ADA would require major alterations to the structure, as the space required to meet many of the standards cannot be achieved within the existing footprint.

Several of the mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and lighting systems are at the end of their usable life or are otherwise inefficient and need replacement. The structural slab of the building is sinking in several areas by as much as 1"-3", due to poor compaction and dynamic soil conditions, as determined through separate studies prepared for the City. There is repair work needed to the foundation walls in the former shooting range area in the basement of the original police station. The entire roof appears to need replacement, and because of the way the additions have evolved over time, there are many transitions and steps on the roof that result in vulnerable water intrusion areas and complicated ongoing maintenance requirements.

Through the efforts of the study, it has become clear that the needs, adjacencies, and specific configurations required to optimize safety and functional efficiencies are difficult to achieve within the existing constraints of the facility. Even with major reconfigurations and additions to the building, some of the functional and operational needs cannot be ideally solved using the existing building footprint. To renovate the building to meet modern courthouse standards, costs were initially estimated to be approximately 75% of the typical construction costs of a new courthouse. Therefore, an option to construct a new courthouse building was added to the assessment study to help guide the City's planning efforts.

A new facility would optimize the court's operations, security, and overall building energy efficiency, saving long-term costs for the City. The four alternative studies were looked at independently by the cost estimator and without cost input from the design team, except through the reports and diagrams provided hereafter. The professional cost estimator found that the probable cost of constructing a new courthouse is comparable to the significant renovation options, and could provide a better long-term solution for the City.

### **Project Goals**

- Assess the existing building in its current configuration to evaluate current and future needs, looking at a 10-15-year growth horizon.
- Identify the security concerns throughout the facility.
- Identify spaces throughout the facility for compliance with ADA regulations and standards.
- Describe the facility's functional and code deficiencies, and determine the structural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical updates that need to be accomplished to make the building operational and code-compliant.
- Provide three conceptual design alternatives for functional courthouse layouts using the current footprint with building additions as required to bring the building into full compliance with security and ADA requirements, while addressing the daily functional needs of staff and the public.
- Provide an option for a new building to consider as a fourth alternative for a cost comparison.

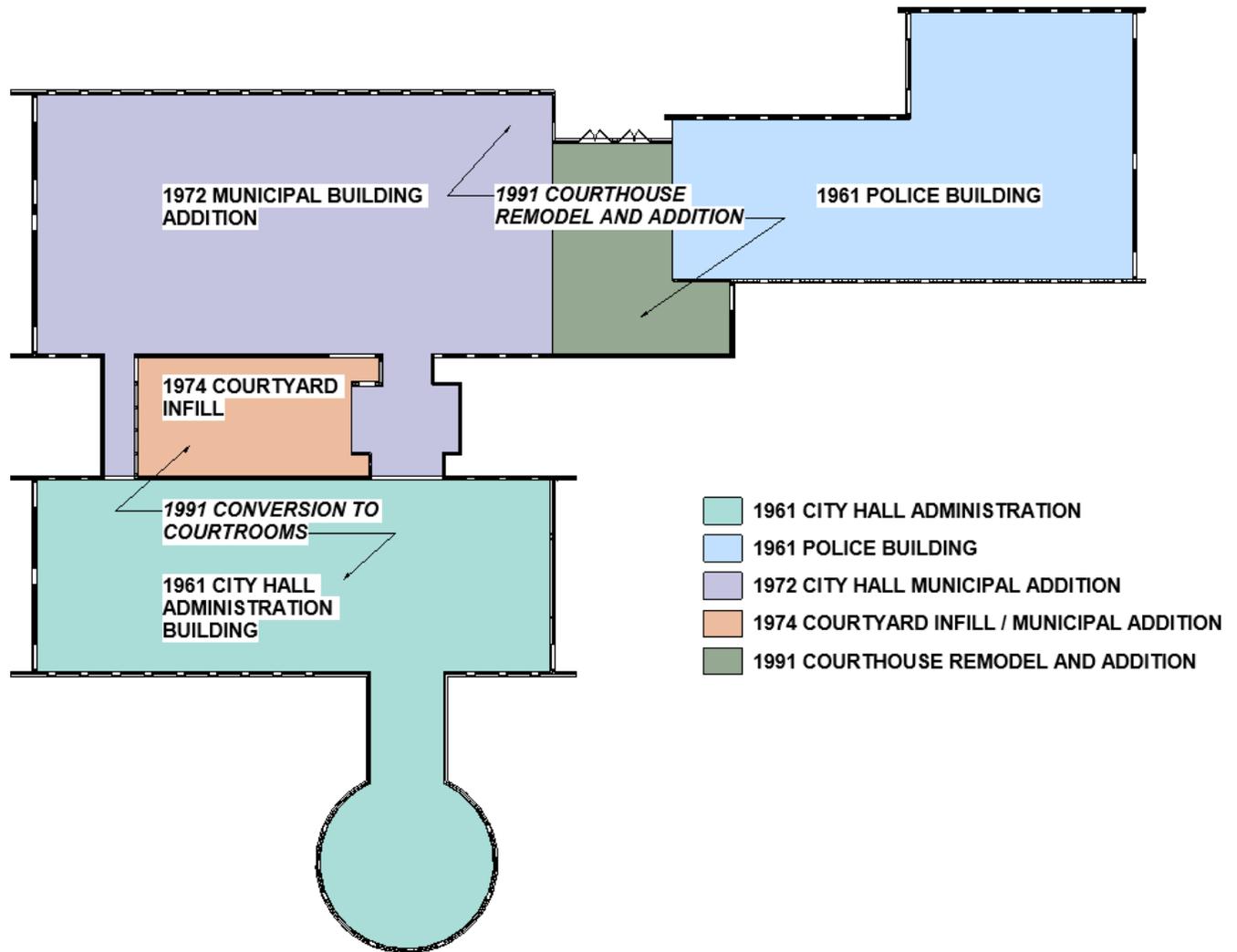
# Background



*Original Westminster Municipal Center showing original distinct buildings, c.1970. City Hall (left), Police Station (center), and Library (right). Photo courtesy of the City of Westminster.*

## **Building History**

The existing one-story concrete and brick building was converted to its current function as a courthouse during the early 1990s. Prior to that, it served as Westminster City Hall and was composed of two separate buildings, Administration and Police. Several additions have occurred over the years: the first major addition occurred around 1972 when the Municipal Building was infilled to the north of the Administration Building and the west of the Police Station. The Municipal area was connected to the Administration area by two hallways and a courtyard was formed between the two volumes. A couple of years later around 1974, the courtyard was infilled to add additional City staff offices. The major conversion to a courthouse occurred around 1991 when both the original Administration Building and the infilled courtyard areas were converted to courtrooms and holding cells were added to the basement.



*Two original 1961 Buildings, in green – City Hall, and blue – Police. Subsequent additions and infills include the 1972 extension of City Hall with the Municipal Addition, the 1974 Courtyard Infill Municipal Addition, and the 1991 Courthouse Renovation and Addition at the Main Entry*

# Current Usage

## Overview

The Municipal Court is a division under the General Services Department and is comprised of separate workgroups, including Court Administration, Court Clerks, and Probation. Other workgroups are also housed at the court, including Judges, Victim Advocates, Prosecuting Attorneys, and Court Marshals. Since AHA's previous assessment of this building in 2016, the needs of the courthouse have changed and evolved, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic forced many courts to move to a virtual platform. Although most functions have returned to in-person, many hearings continue to be virtual, particularly those for traffic court. Virtual hearings have been recognized as an ideal way to minimize the need for transport of in-custody defendants, increase efficiency for staff and law enforcement, and reduce physical space needs. The transition from physical file storage to electronic storage was expedited during the pandemic. Whereas extensive file storage was needed for most workgroups previously, much of the file storage is being phased out with new files being scanned and stored digitally, reducing the square footage needed for record storage and workrooms. Many workgroups still project growth, although they are not expecting to grow as much in the next 10 years as previously predicted. See Appendix A for the Space Needs Assessment outlining the physical space needs for each workgroup.

The structural limitations of the existing facility prevent optimal utilization of the current space. Many workgroups are significantly space-constrained, while other workgroups have more space than is needed. Reconfiguring the layout to redistribute underutilized space would require significant building modifications. A few of the deficiencies noted by staff within each workgroup are highlighted below:

- The former City Council Chambers presently called the Round Room, is now used as a multi-purpose/meeting room and for jury selection. Due to the circular shape of the room, it is not the most ideal layout for the current functions and space is difficult to optimize. The Round Room sits at a lower elevation than the rest of the first floor, which limits accessibility for individuals with mobility impairments. A wheelchair lift was recently installed to minimize this barrier.
- The Court Clerk space is slightly oversized in terms of overall square footage, but the layout separates staff and is not ideally configured. The existing layout also prevents the Clerks from continuously monitoring the transaction window at the front desk from their workstations.
- The Probation area is too small and allows for no future growth; offices are too small for meetings. Offices in this area have no windows to the outside or natural daylight.
- Public Defenders are enclosed within a former bump-out of the hallway, opposite the courtrooms. This room has a full east-facing storefront window wall and inadequate HVAC, causing overheating of the room.
- The current Fitness Room, strongly desired by many staff, is too small for the users. Some staff does not use the space because of the limited equipment available, especially during peak hours, such as lunch. Showers are not provided, which would be ideal after a workout, or for those commuting by bicycle.
- The Victim Advocates area is undersized, and offices are not ADA-compliant due to the lack of turning radius outside the desk area. Some offices have no access to daylight or views. Private and sensitive conversations with victims can be overheard since there is no separation between offices and the Waiting Room.



*Undersized Victim Advocates office*

- The Court Marshals' space and existing configuration are adequate but suffer severely from climate control issues. Retrofitted through-window wall A/C units blow directly on desks in the office area, resulting in uncomfortable conditions and irregular temperature control.
- Officers do not feel safe escorting in-custody defendants from the parking area without a fully enclosed sally port.
- The route from the holding cells to the courtrooms is unsafe and results in security exposure for the Marshals when transporting in-custody defendants for proceedings. The route requires navigation up and down stairs, which pass an exterior door, en route to the courtrooms. This poses security risks and accessibility concerns for defendants with reduced mobility due to physical impairments or restraints.
  - The location of the holding cells below the courtroom can be problematic as a defendant may make noise and disrupt ongoing proceedings.
- There is a small, non-ADA-compliant staff bathroom in the back-of-house hallway, which is a potential point of contact between prosecuting attorneys and judges outside of the courtroom. This should be avoided, as there may be a perception of impropriety where there is an ability to hold private conversations. In a modern courthouse, judges often have their own restroom within their chambers or a shared judges' restroom.



*Courtroom A*

- Courtroom A was infilled from the previous exterior courtyard in the City Hall building.
  - The courtroom is too small and the corner configuration of the bench creates line-of-site issues for the judge during proceedings.
  - The precast tee structure of the walls is constraining for additional infrastructure in the courtrooms.
  - There is no accessible judge's bench or witness stand.
- Courtroom B was carved out of the original 1961 City Hall building and generally functions well with its larger size, though the courtroom lacks an accessible judge's bench and witness stands.
  - Courtroom B does not allow the counsel or defendants to have a clear line of sight to the witness stand or the jury box.
  - Integrated A/V equipment and better viewing angles to the digital screens are needed as many caseloads remain virtual.



*Courtroom B Jury Deliberation Room with Courtroom B visible through the open door*

- The Jury Deliberation Room west of the courtroom is not soundproofed and conversations from the courtroom (or vice versa) can be heard during jury deliberations.
- Juror deliberation rooms should have a private restroom to reduce the possibility of unwanted interactions should jurors need to use publicly-accessed restrooms. Currently, jurors must leave the deliberation room and go through the courtroom to use the single restroom available to the public.

Please see the following for further reference:

- Appendix A – Space Needs Assessment
- Appendix D – Existing Building Footprint and Layout
- Appendix E – Security Assessment

# ADA Assessment

The following pages review several accessibility deficiencies observed within the existing Westminster Courthouse building that do not meet the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Legislation. The identified issues can be corrected through replacement and or reconfiguration of spaces but vary in their complexity and cost to achieve. Per the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), an existing building is not required to be brought up to code compliance unless 50% or more is renovated, which would be the case with any of the major renovation alternatives presented. The City of Westminster's ADA Transition Plan also establishes a roadmap to address these deficiencies over time, which negates the possibility of deferring the work indefinitely. In addition, the work described below may be required to provide equal employment opportunities. For example, the judges' benches in both courtrooms would not allow a judge who utilized a wheelchair to preside since there is no ramp access to the bench. There are also several doorways within the building that are not wide enough, nor do they have enough maneuvering clearance for a person in a wheelchair to pass through.

## Accessibility Sections:

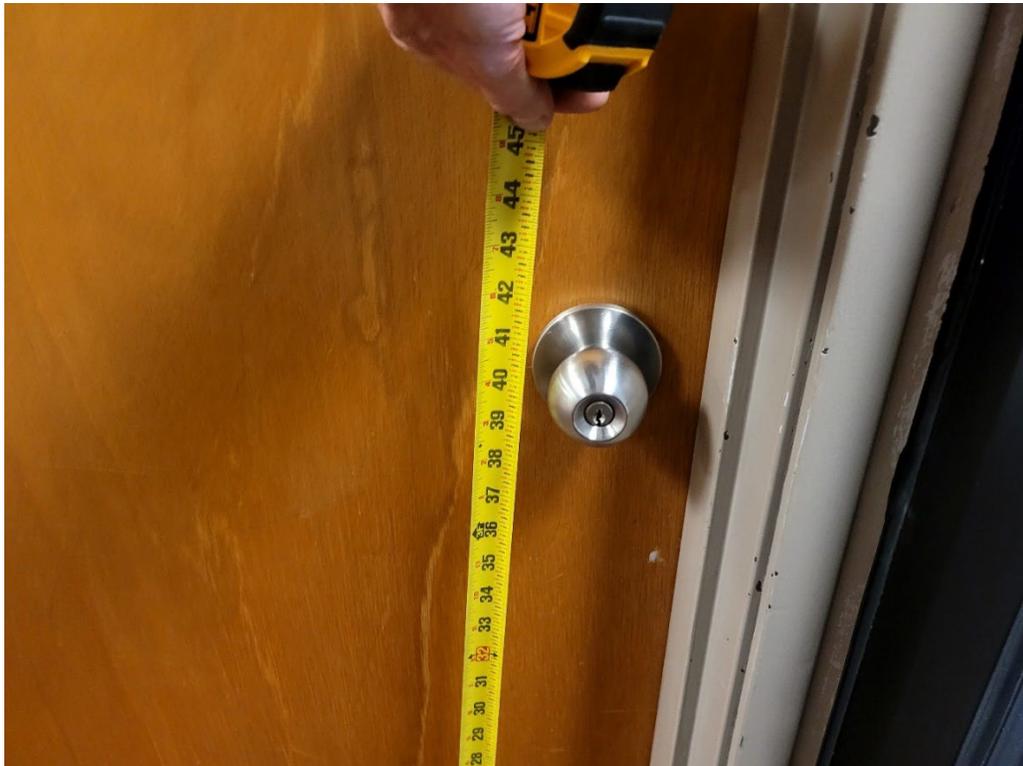
1. Building Common Issues
  - A. Door Hardware Types
  - B. Door Widths
  - C. Door Maneuvering Clearances
  - D. Hallway Widths
  - E. Countertop Heights
  - F. Drinking Fountains
  - G. Turning Radius
2. Circulation Routes
  - A. Ramp to the Round Room
  - B. Ramps and associated Guardrails and Handrails
  - C. Stair Handrails
  - D. Stair Landings
  - E. Stair Tread Depth and Height
3. Restrooms
  - A. Countertop and Sink Heights
  - B. Forward Approach to Sinks
  - C. Exposed Sink Piping
  - D. Improper Mounting Heights for Mirrors, Soap Dispensers, Dryers, etc.
  - E. ADA Stalls
4. Courtrooms
  - A. Judge's Bench and Witness Box
  - B. Gallery Seating
  - C. Holding Cells

## Building Common Issues

### A. Door Hardware Types and Heights

Onsite observation identified many instances of door hardware being round-shaped (doorknobs), which typically require users to employ “tight grasping” to operate and do not meet current accessibility requirements. This is problematic for staff and the public who may have disabilities such as arthritis and make it difficult to navigate the building.

In addition, handsets were installed at varying, non-standard heights throughout the building, though still within the code-required height range. See the image below where hardware is mounted at 40” instead of the typical 36”, hardware varied between 36” and 42” heights throughout the building.



*Example of typical non-ADA compliant door hardware and hardware height*

Solution: Replace hardware with lever-type handsets (hardware at inconsistent, yet code-compliant heights may remain unless door panels are replaced) which meet the following ANSI A117.1-2017 requirements:

**404.2.6 Door and Gate Hardware.** Handles, pulls, latches, locks, and other operable parts on doors and gates shall have a shape that is easy to grasp with one hand and does not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate. The operational force to retract latches or disengage devices that hold the door or gate in a closed position shall be as follows:

Hardware operation by a forward, pushing or pulling motion: 15 pounds maximum.  
Hardware operation by a rotational motion: 28 inch-pounds maximum.

**B. Door Widths**

Many doors located on the accessible route through the building have a clear opening of less than 32", non-compliant per 404.2.2.

Solution: Reframe walls and replace doors with 36" wide compliant doors.

**C. Door Maneuvering Clearances**

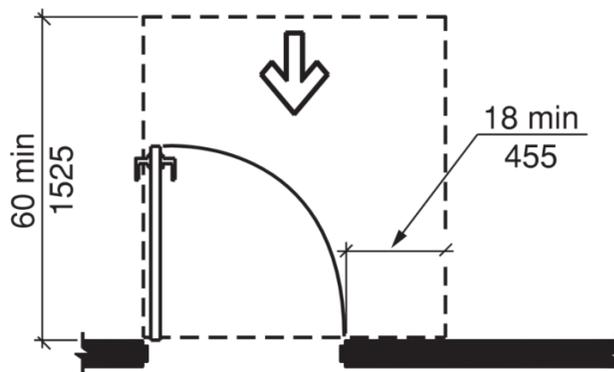
Several doors were observed without the required 18" clear maneuvering space on the pull side of the door.

Solution: Reconfigure hallway and/or restroom layouts to allow for 18" pull-side clearance at doors.

**D. Hallway Widths**

To provide the required door clear space, hallways need to be widened to provide clearances needed.

Solution: Reconfigure hallway layout to allow for 18" pull-side clearance at doors, which is important for a person in a wheelchair to be able to open a door without having it collide with their chair.



**FIGURE 404.2.3.2(A)**  
**MANEUVERING CLEARANCE AT MANUAL SWINGING DOORS**  
**FRONT APPROACH - PULL SIDE**

*Diagram depicting minimum allowable hallway width*

**E. Countertop Heights**

Several countertops, including those in restrooms, were observed to have a height of 36" instead of a required maximum of 34" for an accessible reach range to the countertop and sink controls for those in a wheelchair.

902.4 Dining Surfaces and Work Surfaces, Height. The tops of dining surfaces and work surfaces shall be 28" minimum and 34" maximum in height above the floor.

Solution: Replace casework and countertops with new 34" high counters at compliant heights.

**F. Drinking Fountains**

The water fountain and bottle filler are mounted at a height accessible-height; however, another drinking fountain must also be provided at a standing height.

IPC 410.3 Drinking Fountains, High and Low. Where drinking fountains are required, no fewer than two drinking fountains shall be provided. One drinking fountain shall comply with the requirements for people who use a wheelchair and one drinking fountain shall comply with the requirements for standing persons.

Solution: Replace with dual-height fountain within reconfigured space.

**G. Turning Radius**

A 60" diameter turning radius in existing building rooms must be provided (67" per IBC 2021) within a space to provide for a wheelchair to turn around. Currently, many of the restrooms do not provide this turning radius outside of the stalls, free of obstructions.

Solution: Reconfigure rooms and fixtures to add the required free space for the turning radius.

## Circulation Routes

### A. Ramp to the Round Room

The ramp pictured below was added to meet ADA requirements for an accessible entry to the jury selection room / Round Room. However, it created a non-equitable path of travel along with a potential security concern. Disabled persons first passed through a security checkpoint inside the main entrance on the north side of the building, and were required to exit the building to use the ramp to access the jury selection room from the south. The ramp is uncovered and does not protect from wind, snow, or rain.

The exterior ramp was the only option for direct access to the Round Room until September 2022 when an internal ADA lift installation was completed. The lift was added to provide an interior accessible route, per IBC 1104, and took place well after Anderson Hallas began their Municipal Court assessment.



*ADA ramp access to the Round Room*

**B. Ramps and associated Guardrails and Handrails**

The accessible ramp located adjacent to the main entrance on the north side of the building was observed to have a guardrail with non-compliant spacing between horizontal protective members. A 5" clear span was observed, versus the 4" opening permitted by code.

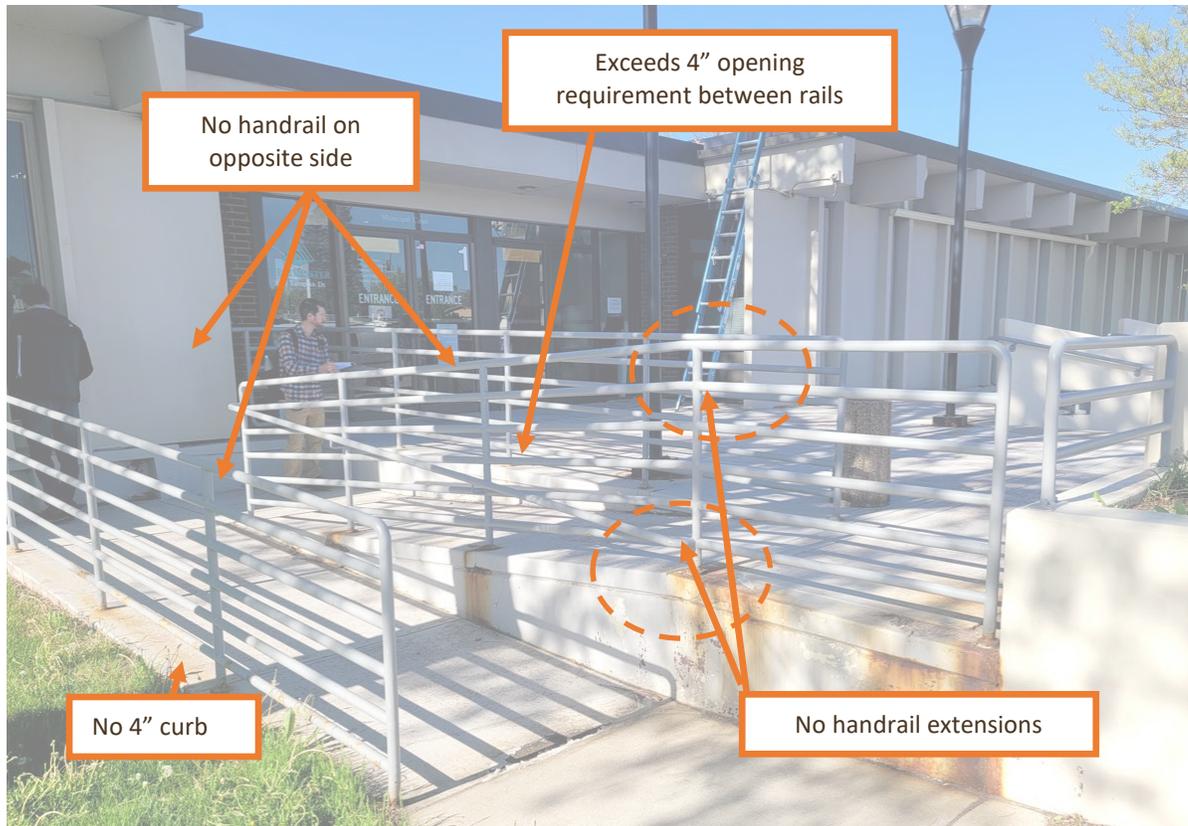


*Guardrail along the ADA ramp to the main entrance*

The guardrail pictured above does not meet the code and would need to be replaced with a new guardrail that meets the following IBC requirement:

1015.4 Opening Limitations. Required guards shall not have openings that allow passage of a sphere 4 inches (102 mm) in diameter from the walking surface to the required guard height.

Furthermore, the same guardrail has a non-compliant handrail. The handrail is only on one side of the ramp run and the handrail that is provided does not have extensions at the bottom of the run.



*Handrails along the ADA ramp to the main entrance*

Solution: The handrails pictured above would need to be replaced along with the associated new guardrail to meet the following ANSI A117.1-2017 requirements:

- 405.9.2 Curb. A curb with a minimum height of 4" shall be provided
- 505.2 Handrail Locations. Ramps with a rise greater than 6" shall have handrails on both sides.
- 505.3 Continuity. Handrails shall be continuous within the full length of each stair flight or ramp run. Inside handrails on switchback or dogleg runs shall be continuous between flights or runs.
- 505.10.1. Top and Bottom Extension at Ramps. Ramp handrails shall extend horizontally above the landing 12" minimum beyond the top and bottom of ramp runs. Extensions shall return to a wall, guard, or floor, or shall be continuous to the handrail of an adjacent ramp run.

### C. Stair Handrails

Handrails to the basement were found to be mounted at 31" high, not meeting the required 34"-38" per IBC 1014.2.

Handrails also need to extend horizontally beyond the top and bottom riser per IBC 1014.6.

Solution: Replace handrails to required heights and add extensions to aid those needing extra support while using stairs, helping prevent falls.

**D. Stair Landings**

Stair landings were observed to not meet the minimum code required depth requirement.

C1011.6 Stairway Landings. There shall be a floor or landing at the top and bottom of each stairway. Every landing shall have a minimum depth, measured parallel to the direction of travel, at a 48" minimum.

Solution: Reconfigure the building layout to accommodate deeper landings. The landings are important as they can serve as an area of refuge during a fire and they also allow important maneuvering space for everyday use.



*Non-compliant stair treads*

**E. Stair Tread Depth and Height**

Stairs should have a minimum tread depth of 11" and risers with a maximum height of 7". The stairs observed at the building department entries and the stairways to the basement are non-compliant, with 10" tread depths (too short) and 8" high risers (too high).

Solution: Reconfigure the building layout to accommodate deeper stair treads. The short stair treads are atypical for users and may cause a tripping hazard; the extra riser height can be difficult for those with mobility issues.

## Restrooms

None of the restrooms throughout the building are fully ADA-compliant. Some have ambulatory stalls with grab bars as a measure to help make the building more accessible, but none have fully accessible stalls, lavatories, or entry doors required by current ADA/ANSI 117.1 standards.

### A. Countertop and Sink Heights

The countertops and sink heights are non-ADA compliant, measuring 36" high instead of 34" high, to allow for an ideal reach range for wheelchair users to wash their hands. Cabinetry does not allow for a wheelchair to pull up to sink with the front approach as required.

606.3 Lavatories and Sinks, Height. The front of lavatories and sinks shall be 34" max above the floor, measured to the higher of the rim or counter surface.

Solution: Replace the countertops with 34" compliant heights and an apron-front sink or a wall-mounted lavatory to provide the required knee space for a handicapped user.

### B. Forward Approach to Sinks

The sinks in many of the restrooms have cabinets below them, which only allow a disabled person to approach parallel, or sideways to the sink, to wash hands, rather than a forward approach with knee space below.

606.2 Lavatories and Sinks, Clear Floor Space. A clear floor space of 30"x48", positioned for a forward approach, shall be provided in an existing building. Knee and toe clearance, complying with Section 306 shall also be provided.

Solution: Use an apron-front sink or a wall-mounted lavatory to provide the required knee space for a disabled user.

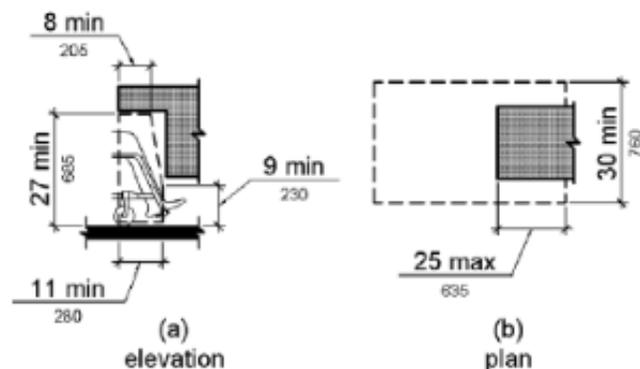


Diagram of code requirement 606.2 Lavatories and Sinks, Clear Floor Space

**C. Exposed Sink Piping**

Where wall-mounted lavatories are provided, there is exposed and uninsulated piping.

606.6 Exposed Pipes and Surfaces. Water supply and drain pipes under lavatories and sinks shall be insulated or otherwise configured to protect against contact. There shall be no sharp or abrasive surfaces under lavatories and sinks.

Solution: Provide pipe insulation for exposed piping to prevent disabled users from getting burned when pipes are hot.

**D. Improper Mounting Heights for Mirrors, Soap Dispensers, Hand Dryers, etc.**

Mirrors, hand dryers, soap dispensers, and other toilet accessories must all be mounted within an accessible reach range.

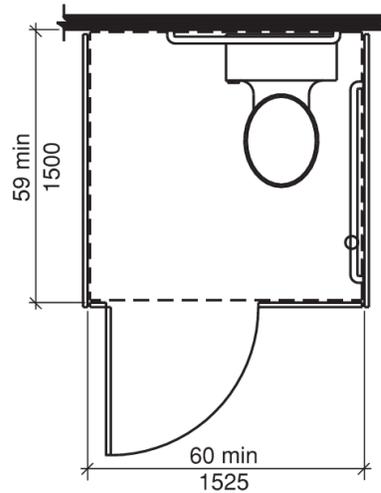


*Basement restrooms*

Solution: Move the lavatories, mirrors, soap dispensers, and shelves. Patch or replace tiles and CMU walls where toilet accessories have been removed.

**E. ADA Stalls**

While there are ambulatory grab bars within the restroom stalls, which are helpful for those with limited mobility (such as those who use crutches, canes, or walkers), there are no fully-accessible restrooms within the court for wheelchair users to pull into a stall and have full maneuvering clearance. The ADA stalls are required to be 60” in width and 59” in depth for a wheelchair to turn within the toilet stall.



**FIGURE 604.9.2(B)**  
**WHEELCHAIR TOILET COMPARTMENTS**  
**FLOOR MOUNTED WATER CLOSET, ADULT - WALL HUNG**  
**AND FLOOR MOUNTED WATER CLOSET, CHILDREN**

*Existing non-ADA-compliant stall*      *Diagram of ADA-compliant restroom stall*

Solution: Replace stalls, reconfigure restrooms and fixtures to correct stall widths, and provide self-closing stall doors. Note that these improvements could result in a loss of fixtures, reducing below the code-required minimums and requiring additional fixtures or individual-use restrooms to be added. Alternatively, the restrooms could be expanded to provide adequate clearances but would encroach into other spaces, thereby creating new building modification challenges.

## Courtrooms

### A. Judge's Bench and Witness Box

The judge's bench and witness stand are both raised platforms with non-accessible stairs and no handrails.

When a judge's bench area, clerk's station, witness box, the jury box, or other defined area is raised, that area must include wheelchair maneuvering space per ADA requirements. All parts of a courtroom must be accessible, and the space must meet general requirements for these areas.

Solution: Reconfigure the space to add ramps or lifts to reach the elevated platforms at the judge's bench and the witness box. This would allow for equal employment opportunities for judges and other staff, as well as access for disabled witnesses to testify.



*Non-ADA compliant judge's bench and jury box*

### B. Gallery Seating

Wheelchair spaces and locations in assembly areas with spectator seating shall comply with Section 802. Each wheelchair space must have an associated companion seat.

Solution: Provide ADA wheelchair spaces at each Juror's Box and in each spectator seating area.

### C. Holding Cells

At least one accessible cell must be provided to serve each courtroom to avoid moving the proceeding to accommodate a person who uses a wheelchair.

Per ICC 2017 ANSI A117.1 commentary, “The sixth and seventh amendments in the Bill of Rights guarantee all Americans the right to a public trial and trial by a jury. To guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities, courthouses must be accessible.”

Solution: Add an elevator to reach the holding cells.

# Condition Assessment

## Structural Systems

General observations indicate that the foundation system is in good condition with no visually observed evidence of movement due to differential settlement or heaving within the precast bearing walls, or exposed portions of grade beams. The floor system at the first level is in poor to fair condition with moderate cracking and areas of localized settlement of the concrete slab-on-grade adjacent to the perimeter foundation. The settlement creates noticeably sloped floors in many areas of the building, which may cause a tripping hazard. The unlevel surfaces don't meet code requirements, as the degree of sloping would be classified as a ramp. This settlement is likely the result of poor compaction of fill material adjacent to the foundation elements, with some areas exhibiting settlement on the magnitude of 1 to 3-inches. Although the condition is not ideal, the building is stable according to a study of the building completed in 2021.



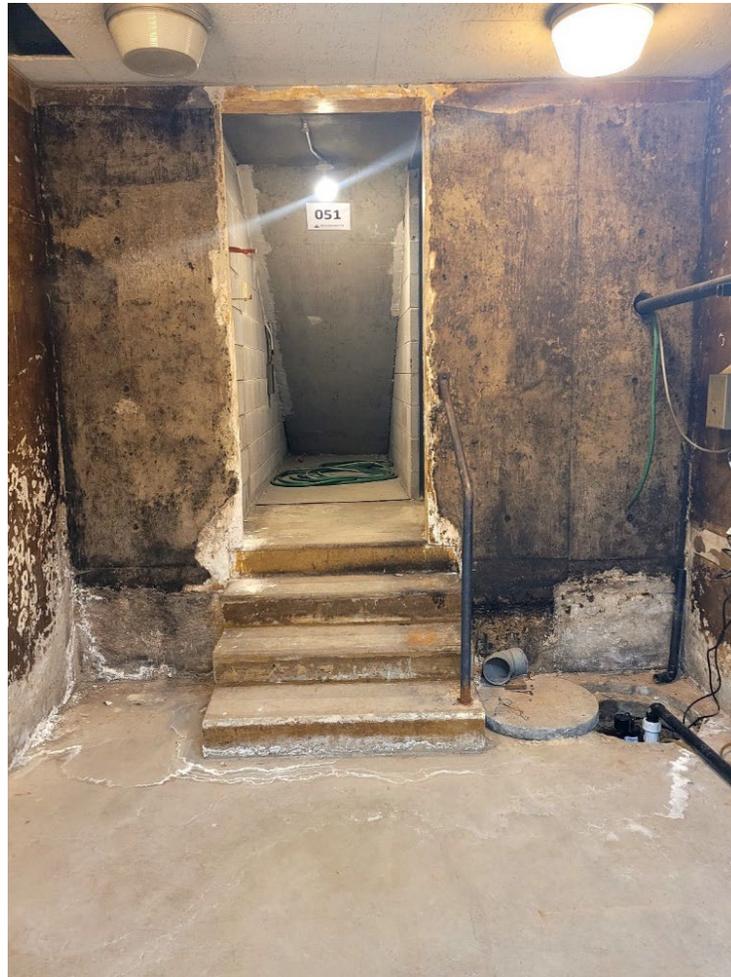
*Unlevel floor surface around the perimeter of floor slab due to differential settlement*

General observations of the wall and roof systems indicate they are in good condition. Most of the roof system was concealed by ceiling finishes, but where visual observations were possible, no large cracking or obvious areas of deflection were observed.

At the reinforced concrete slab over the shooting range, a large crack was observed at a transition; this crack appears to be related to the location of the last piece of steel reinforcement and has opened due to the corrosion of the reinforcement.

Water intrusion was observed in the former shooting range in the north basement and could further deteriorate foundations. Exterior foundation excavation is recommended to ensure adequate damp proofing and below-grade foundation drainage.

Refer to Appendix F for the full Structural Report.



*Evidence of water intrusion in the basement*

## **Architectural** Assessment

### **A. Windows and Doors**

Most of the windows and doors are aluminum double-paned and are in fair condition on the building exterior. The joints around the windows need to be re-caulked or infilled in some areas.

The exterior doors and windows throughout the building leak, which are a major source of air intrusion and should be replaced. Interior doors include solid wood-panel swing doors and hollow-core wood closet doors. Many interior doors lack code-compliant hardware and there is mismatched hardware throughout, with handles installed at varying heights from 36" to 42" (see ADA Assessment for further detail).



*Main entry doors with worn-away / missing seal*



*The door to the left of the main entrance is only 27" wide (non-code compliant) and has been sealed off for use as a door but still may be a vulnerable entry point.*



*Some original window openings have been infilled due to conflicts with the interior layout configuration.*

## B. Exterior Finishes

From an aesthetic perspective, the exterior of the original building maintains a modest low profile with an appealing character and unique brick pattern. However, the character is diminished by the various building additions, the HVAC units visible on the roof, the infilled windows due to changes in use, the aged appearance of handrails, spalling concrete, and the outdated front entry of the building. While the brick and precast finishes are durable and low-maintenance, many of the additions created less than-ideal building expansion joints and connections between systems, which is evident in the conduit routing and gutters.



*Peeling paint is observed on the foundation walls.*

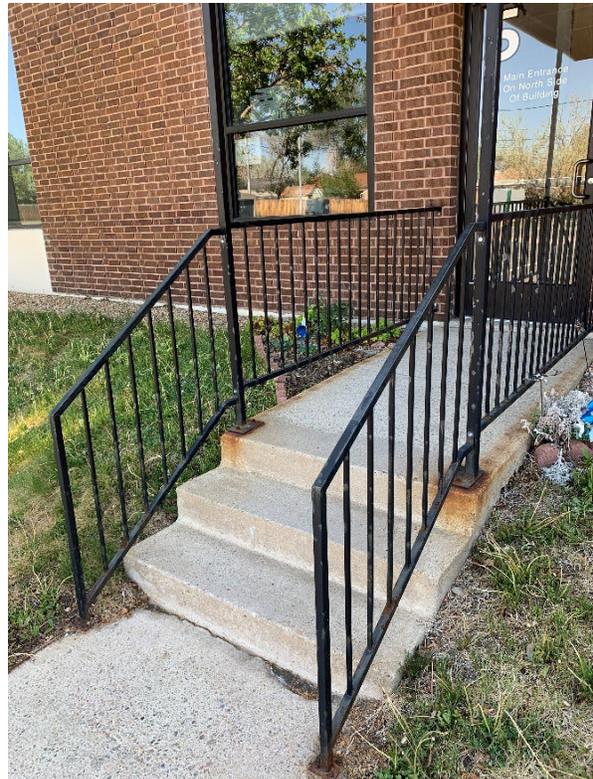


*Gaps between the top of the wall to the double tee floor structure within the holding cells in the basement were observed. Cold air leakage is likely.*



*Unsealed corner joint intersection at windows and foundations.*

Railings are in poor condition and many had rusted base connections, which could leave them unstable and prone to coming loose when the handrails are used for support. They likely do not meet the IBC section 1607.9.1.1 to bear a concentrated load of 200 pounds in this condition.



*Railings with rusted base connections*

### C. Roofs

There are two types of roofs observed onsite, including built-up roofing with ballast over the original building's Council Chambers (now referred to as the Round Room) and the associated vestibule, and a modified cap sheet with rubberized membrane coating for all other roofs. The ballasted roof appears to be in fair to good condition. However, there is no cap flashing on the parapet of the Round Room. In addition, the top of the brick at the Round Room is sealed only with an applied sealant which is cracking and could lead to water intrusion within the building. A new custom, round, pre-finished parapet cap should be added to protect from future water intrusion.

The modified cap sheet roofing seen over the majority of the other roof surfaces is showing signs of pooling water. In addition, the rubberized coating appears to have many "alligator" cracks and blisters, which are significant indicators of possible water intrusion, and need to be addressed immediately. Downspouts appear to be in fair working condition.

Because of the nature of how the additions evolved and were added over time, the roof has many transitions, steps, and various roof penetrations. The flashing conditions around the infill additions result in retro-fitted and complicated flashing and termination bar conditions, adding to the vulnerability of the existing roof.



*Blistering and cracking of the roof membrane.*



*Awkward roof-level transitions and improvised gutters are visible. No parapet cap was provided.*



*No metal cap flashing exists on the "Round Room" parapet.*

The sealant at the top of the brick is cracking and requires consistent maintenance. It is recommended that metal cap flashing be installed to better preserve the masonry.



*Masonry joint crack likely caused by moisture intrusion at top of the wall.*



*The gutters appear to be a retrofit below the double-tee of the roof.*



*A roof drain was added in front of an interior window, blocking light and making for an awkward shade installation.*



*Gutters that don't connect to a downspout were observed in some locations. These metal roofing additions were required to remedy problematic sections of the roof.*



*The ceiling tile is water-damaged from an apparent roof leak.*



*Rusted sheet metal parapet flashing was observed. Poorly routed and rusting piping exposed on the roof routed to connect between multiple building additions.*

#### D. Interior Finishes

Overall, the majority of the interior finishes are in fair to poor condition (carpeting, tiles, paint, etc.) and should be replaced. As a part of any significant renovation (over 50%) to the building, additional work will be required to meet modern codes. This will include furring out the interior side of all exterior and foundation walls throughout the building, by incorporating interior studs and adding continuous insulation to improve the building's efficiency and interior temperature regulation. This would impact all windows and would reduce the existing overall usable square footage of the building, further constraining the already space-limited functions.

Due to the age of the original building and original finishes, asbestos and lead paint are of concern. Asbestos-containing materials have been positively identified in previous investigations and many of the remaining materials are suspect. Examples of existing suspect materials include VCT floor tiles, pipe insulation, wall boards, and mastic.



*Precast stair treads are not level and are rusting and in need of replacement.*

#### E. Miscellaneous Safety Concerns

The adaptive reuse of the existing buildings and multiple additions have resulted in unique conditions that pose a potential risk. A good example of this is the basement of the former Police Station. The holding cells in the basement are intact and are currently being used for additional file storage. Though the doors are zip-tied open to prevent someone from being locked in, there is still a potential risk of improper use or accidental enclosure of staff. To provide additional square footage on the first floor, the

secondary basement stairs have been framed over at the top, but not closed off from below. This creates a potential life-safety issue if a person were to become disoriented and try to exit via this stair in an emergency. Currently, this basement is only used for storage, so occupancy is minimal, but the unsafe conditions remain.



*Framed over stairs in the north basement*



*File storage in the basement jail cells*

### **Mechanical and Plumbing Systems**

The existing building contains thirteen roof-top units with DX cooling and gas heating ranging from 3 tons to 6 tons. All of these units are either currently past their 15-year expected lifespan or will be within approximately five years. Two new energy-efficient boilers are located in the basement and supply heating water to the cabinet unit heaters located throughout the building. The boilers were installed in 2011 and are in good condition. The cabinet unit heaters and hydronic piping to the cabinet unit heaters are suspected to be original to the building with a few added during additions; these are suspected to be over 50 years old, with the newest ones being around 30 years old. With a median life expectancy of 20 years, it is recommended that all cabinet unit heaters and hydronic piping, with a life expectancy of 30 years, be replaced. The mini-split supplemental cooling equipment serving the offices is also past its lifespan of 15 years and needs to be replaced. In addition, it does not adequately cool the office spaces, likely due to being undersized. It is suspected that the majority of the ductwork is original to the building and approximately 50 years old. The median life expectancy of ductwork is 30 years, and it is recommended that it be replaced. Replacement would allow for reconfiguration of the HVAC zoning which is not ideal in the current building.



*Inefficient window air conditioning unit in basement window of the Court Marshals' office.*

The domestic water heater was replaced in 2010 and has a life expectancy of approximately 15 years, so it is nearing its end of life. The lavatories currently do not have hot water recirculation lines to them, nor do they have thermostatic mixing valves, both required by current codes. Each lavatory will need to be provided with new thermostatic mixing valves and new hot water recirculation piping will need to be run throughout the building. The current hot water, cold water, and waste lines are all expected to be original to the building and they are expected to be about 50 years old. With a recommended life expectancy of about 30 years for the hot water, cold water, and waste piping, it is recommended that all domestic water piping be replaced throughout the building.

For more detailed information on the Mechanical and Plumbing Report, see Appendix G.

### **Electrical Systems**

The utility service meter and switchboard are located in the basement electrical room and appear to be original to the building at nearly 50 years old. They are well past the typical 30-year life expectancy of similar systems. The electrical system is overdue for an upgrade and a new main switchboard is needed. The meter will require relocation to the exterior of the building, per Xcel's current standard; new feeder conductors will need to run from the new meter location to the basement. It is recommended that the City upgrade to a 480v service to increase overall building efficiency. Most of the branch circuit panels in the building are of the same age and condition as the main distribution panelboard and should be replaced. One of the smaller panels is a Federal Pacific brand which is illegal per the National Electric Code (NEC) in many jurisdictions across the state, as they are known fire hazards; however, as an existing use, the panel is grandfathered in. With the necessary electrical upgrades, the panel will require replacement; insurance will not cover damages incurred from a fire once the owner has been informed that the hazard exists.

The exterior and interior lighting are old fluorescent fixtures that should be retrofitted or replaced with LED fixtures to significantly reduce overall building energy consumption and limit future maintenance. This will also provide building occupants with optimized light distribution, which is currently very poor.

For more detailed information on the Electrical Report, see Appendix H.

# Facility Modernization Alternatives

See Alternatives A, B, and C in Appendix C, Facility Modernization Alternatives, for high-level programming and space layout/addition studies, along with the associated benefits and drawbacks for each alternative. Adding on to the existing building as required per the Space Needs Assessment outlined in Appendix A, while optimizing the size, location, and necessary adjacencies of all workgroups and functions is difficult due to the structural constraints of the building. See Appendix B, Courthouse Adjacency Diagram, for ideal courthouse adjacencies. The double tee pre-cast floor and wall systems are not easily modified to create the new openings necessary to improve the contiguousness of the various spaces.

The configurations identified in the alternatives presented, including the prospective additions, will be difficult and costly to achieve due to inherent structural limitations. Additionally, there is a desire to keep the existing Round Room as a multi-purpose meeting room and jury selection space. All three conceptual alternatives allow for this public connection but there is redundancy in the circulation pathways, resulting in the loss of efficiency in providing the necessary route from the main entry doors on the opposite side of the building.

## Alternative A

Overview: This alternative creates a new public corridor at the building's north/front side, which would create a new, fresh transparent façade for the building and modernize the look and security of the building.

### Benefits:

- A new security vestibule and covered entry create an ideal space for queuing.
- New courtrooms have a good front and back-of-house layout.
- Prosecuting attorneys are in a back-of-house position and don't need to cross the public lobby.
- Judges are on the opposite side of the parking area and isolated.
- Clerks and Probation workgroups are adjacent.

### Drawbacks:

- Probation is adjacent to the Victim Advocates area, potentially. Separate entries would need to be provided, to reduce security concerns.
- Clerks are not adjacent to judges' offices.
- Public corridor to the jury selection room crosses the back-of-house staff corridor route.
- Jury rooms and fitness and wellness rooms are interior spaces with no access to natural daylight or views of the outside.
- New openings in precast walls would be required, with costly additional structures required.

- A temporary facility would need to be acquired and improved for use as a court before the start of the renovation, presenting additional project costs.
- Multiple moves to and from a temporary facility will likely be costly and logistically challenging.

### **Alternative B**

Overview: This alternative re-uses the current main public corridor, adding a new courtroom where the current Clerks area is located.

#### Benefits:

- Main public corridor remains intact, limiting the amount of structural rework for new corridor openings.
- New courtrooms have a good front and back-of-house layout.
- Fitness area is enlarged and has natural daylighting.
- Clerks and Probation workgroups are adjacent.

#### Drawbacks:

- Judges are in a front-of-house position facing the public parking area.
- Clerks are not adjacent to judges' offices.
- Prosecuting attorneys must cross the public corridor to get to the courtrooms.
- A temporary facility would need to be acquired and improved for use as a court before the start of the renovation, presenting additional project costs.
- Multiple moves to and from a temporary facility will likely be costly and logistically challenging.

### **Alternative C**

Overview: This alternative uses the current main public corridor, adding a new courtroom where the current Clerks area is located.

#### Benefits:

- Judges' offices are in a back-of-house position with great natural daylight.
- New courtrooms have a good front and back-of-house layout.
- Fitness area has natural daylight.
- The Clerks and Probation are adjacent to each other.

#### Drawbacks:

- Amount of structural re-work is the greatest of all alternatives provided.
- Courtrooms may not have the ideal layout/proportions.
- Clerks are not adjacent to judges' offices.
- Prosecuting attorneys must cross the public corridor to get to the courtrooms.
- A long public hallway area was added to get to the jury selection room.

- A temporary facility would need to be acquired and improved for use as a court before the start of the renovation, presenting additional project costs.
- Multiple moves to and from a temporary facility will likely be costly and logistically challenging.

### **Alternative D**

Overview: This alternative replaces the existing building with a new purpose-built courthouse on the existing site.

#### Benefits:

- The City owns the existing site and residents are familiar with the Municipal Court's location in Historic Westminster.
- A new, purpose-built structure allows for the courthouse and all the workgroups, circulation pathways, accessibility, and security issues to be resolved optimally.
- Allows for the current courthouse operations to continue in the existing facility during the construction of a new building on the northern portion of the site. The temporary displacement costs and logistical challenges of moving to a temporary location for a minimum 12-month construction period would be avoided.
- The building envelope could be designed to meet energy codes and save on long-term energy costs, potentially downsizing HVAC systems.
- The HVAC, lighting, and security systems would all be new and ideally zoned, saving energy costs and maintenance costs.

#### Drawbacks:

- Higher first costs.
- More embodied carbon (no reuse of existing structural concrete).
- Loss of original City Hall building, unless adaptively re-used for more suitable programming purposes.

### **Professional Opinion**

The original scope of the 2022 study was to investigate options for a major renovation, to identify options to bring the Municipal Court up to standards in terms of security and ADA while meeting the physical space needs and allowing for optimal operations of the court. Considering the extensive renovation and additions needed to provide a safe, code-compliant, and well-functioning facility, along with the understanding that a renovation would require displacement of court staff and functions, Anderson Hallas revisited the idea of building a new courthouse facility as a fourth alternative for the City's consideration.

This option was added as an alternative, as the overall total project cost of a renovation was anticipated to be similar to constructing a new, purposely designed facility on the current campus. This scenario would allow the new building to be constructed in the existing parking lot, while the current building

could remain in use. Following completion of the new structure and transition to the new building, the existing building could be demolished, and a new parking lot constructed. This would eliminate temporary displacement costs and costs associated with multiple moves. The cost estimates were prepared for the three renovation options and a new building option, validating the assumption that costs are expected to be only marginally higher for a new building than a renovation/addition when all logistics and overall total project costs are considered.

Of course, the biggest advantage of a new building is that a purpose-built structure allows for the courthouse and all the workgroups, circulation pathways, accessibility, and security issues to be optimal. Forcing the program to fit into a renovated structure will always be difficult and require compromises, especially when considering deferred maintenance, settlement, and other identified issues. Additionally, there are significant structural limitations of opening and modifying existing load-bearing pre-cast walls, which would require substantial structural modifications to achieve, along with the associated costs

General Renovation Challenges (applies to Alternatives A, B, and C):

- Energy considerations of a renovation versus a new build.
- Risk triggered by touching any part of the building (ADA, contingency, and other unknowns); there is a very high risk of unknowns during renovation construction, especially with older buildings.
- Temporary (12 – 18 months) displacement presents a lot of unknown costs and logistical considerations: Securing a temporary location, doing tenant improvements prior to move-in, security and IT modifications, and moving costs to and from the temporary location.
- Older buildings require more effort to maintain, even with a major renovation and system replacements/upgrades
- Structure of the existing building is pre-cast concrete and difficult/expensive to modify.
- Roof, Mechanical, and Electrical systems are at the end of their useful lives.

Public buildings help to reflect a community's values, with courthouses conveying a sense of importance, pride, and respect. A major renovation to the current building would not solve all of the current issues, carries high inherent risk, and cannot elevate the building to the full potential of a courthouse building, given that it was not built for that purpose originally.

After the collection of court drawings and data, interviews with staff, an inspection of the physical building and its major systems, and careful examination of renovation options or a new building, Anderson Hallas recommends that the City of Westminster proceed with building a new Municipal Court. While building a new court will be costly, it is our professional opinion that it is a better long-term financial investment and one that will serve the residents well for the next fifty years or more.



*New Huerfano County Judicial Building, Anderson Hallas*