



Catawba County, North Carolina

Presentation of Findings & Recommendations:

# **Justice Center Space Needs Study & Public Safety Center Facility Program**

Solutions for Local Government, Inc.



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## “Space Needs Study”

aka/ “Needs Assessment”, or “Feasibility”

- Government funded projects commonly require the need for a proposed facility to be thoroughly documented
- Provides the *general* assessment of the physical requirements for a building project
- it is broad-brush in nature with enough information for a banker, project manager, developer, or elected official to make the “go” or “no-go” decision

## “Facility Program”

***“A statement of the requirements for a building project”***

- This “statement”, includes operational and facility objectives descriptions of what will happen in the building, user needs, and various problems to be addressed during design.
- It serves as the formal communication of the owner’s project requirements to the designer and/or builder.
- It involves the primary facility users in its development.
- The document developed addresses not only operational and facility *design* objectives, but *human* objectives as well.

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**SECTION 5 - OPTIONS**

## Current Courthouse Occupants

- District Court
- Clerk of Court
- Superior Court
- District Attorney
- Sheriff's Department
- Register of Deeds
- NC Probation & Parole
- Repay
- Family Court
- Communications Center
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

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## Space Standards

In North Carolina there are currently no published or otherwise provided uniform space standards for local government buildings.

At the State level several agencies will provide assistance to a limited degree;

- The Administrative Office of the Courts in Raleigh does provide some general guidelines regarding Courtroom and Court Support activity space
- The Governor's Crime Commission (1998) in conjunction with the NCACC published the "Court Security Guidelines"

Currently, the most prominent guidelines available with regards to Court facilities are:

- *The Planning & Design Guide for Court Facilities*, published by the National Center for State Courts

## Methodology

- **Observation of work activities in progress and a personal audit of existing Justice Center, including all accessible internal spaces.**
- **Physical measurements of individual spaces and activity areas for assessment, comparison, and determination of options and space standards wherever applicable.**
- **Application of space requirements suggested by the National Center for State Courts for judicial and court/courtroom related spaces.**
- **The consultant's personal experience in having evaluated the functional requirements and corresponding office/work space requirements of over 700 local government buildings and the resultant data base acquired during same.**

## Current Space

Clerk of Court	8,523	Register of Deeds	4,912
District Attorney	3,943	Sheriff	15,628
District Court	13,400	Superior Court	13,400
<hr/>			
Total Current Space Assigned:		59,806	

## Current Conditions

This section addresses current conditions observed having to do with existing spaces ( or lack of spaces) that effect work flow, performance, service delivery and/or efficiency of operations, personal security, and general safety.

The results of these findings will result in a quantifiable **“space deficit”** assignable to each of the major occupant spaces studied.

## Current Conditions

Agency	Current Space	Conditions Found
District Court	13,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The most significant space needs among the Justice Center's current occupants are:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Space to accommodate the numerous programs and variously assigned responsibilities statutorily assigned to District Court is desperately needed</li> <li>▪ There is an inadequate number of private attorney/client meeting rooms</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There is an inadequate number of private attorney/client meeting rooms</li> <li>▪ There is no designated waiting area for either attorney's or law enforcement personnel</li> <li>▪ Public waiting areas are not large enough to accommodate the number of individuals scheduled for court</li> <li>▪ Dual Hickory-Newton Court locations are inefficient both in terms of time and cost</li> </ul>

## Current Conditions

<p><b>Clerk of Court</b></p>	<p><b>8,523</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall space generally is very crowded for the number of State personnel assigned</li> <li>▪ Public access and circulation is inefficient</li> <li>▪ Existing space offers little in terms of secure work</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Overall space generally is very crowded for the number of personnel assigned</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Public access and circulation is inefficient</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Existing space offers little in terms of secure work space for employees</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Individual, open, employee workstations are inadequate; w/extent of crowding potentially hazardous</b></li> </ul>	
		<p>employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The area that is publicly accessible is too small for the number of people visiting and the records stored and available within</li> <li>▪ Dual Hickory-Newton Court locations are inefficient both in terms of time and cost</li> </ul>	

## Current Conditions

Superior Court	13,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Access to Judge's offices and related support areas is not secure</li><li>▪ Circulation is very poor with regards to inmate, Judge, attorney, and visitor "cross-traffic"</li><li>▪ Additional private attorney/client meeting space is needed</li><li>▪ Grand Jury witnesses should be provided with a separate, secure waiting area</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Grand Jury Room/area should have a secure entry vestibule and adjacent Bailiff's work station to control and monitor access</li></ul>

## Current Conditions

District Attorney	3,943	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public reception/waiting area is much too small to accommodate number of visitors who must now line up in the hallway</li><li>A separate area for public visitors to complete</li></ul>
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- Private interview rooms convenient to public reception are needed
- Acoustics in the internal work areas adjacent to Reception are poor
- Additional secure space(s) are needed within for evidence, computer server, and various equipment
- Inadequate number of private offices for the number of professional personnel who must use the space
- Available "Victim/Witness" space does not comply with statutory requirements

		<p>with existing Life Safety codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Additional unassigned meeting space is needed within the office</li></ul>
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## Current Conditions

<p><b>Sheriff's Office</b></p>	<p><b>15,628</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current area lacks staff support and training space</li> <li>▪ Secure evidence storage space is inadequate</li> <li>▪ Administrative area adjacent front counter is crowded for assigned employees</li> <li>▪ Additional common and easily accessed work space is needed for administrative activities</li> <li>▪ Circulation within and between office areas is poor</li> <li>▪ Accessibility to private office spaces is not secure</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gun permit process is inefficient due to location of office and size of space</li> <li>▪ Public Lobby/reception area lacks an administrative or otherwise separate waiting area with seating for visitors</li> <li>▪ Additional storage space is needed for required records retention</li> </ul>	

## Current Conditions

<p>Register of Deeds</p>	<p>4,912</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Office is statutorily charged with the recording and secure retention of all original vital records documents filed in the County</li> <li>▪ While current space is <i>generally</i> adequate; additional space will be needed, beginning within the next 3-4 years</li> <li>▪ Despite technology, realtors, surveyors, paralegals, and other visitors will continue to personally visit and manually search original records maintained within the Office; as well, specific types of space will be needed to accommodate them</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Genealogy and the relevant vital records and land deed data needs to have more space available within the office</li> <li>▪ A construction specific vault/room is needed</li> <li>▪ The official receipt, recording, and formal filing of records received will continue to be a manual requirement of the Office personnel</li> </ul>	

## Current Deficit

Clerk of Court	10,295	Register of Deeds	2,591
District Attorney	3,441	Sheriff	7,493
District Court	14,648	Superior Court	5,498
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total Identified Space Deficit:		43,966	

## Future Space

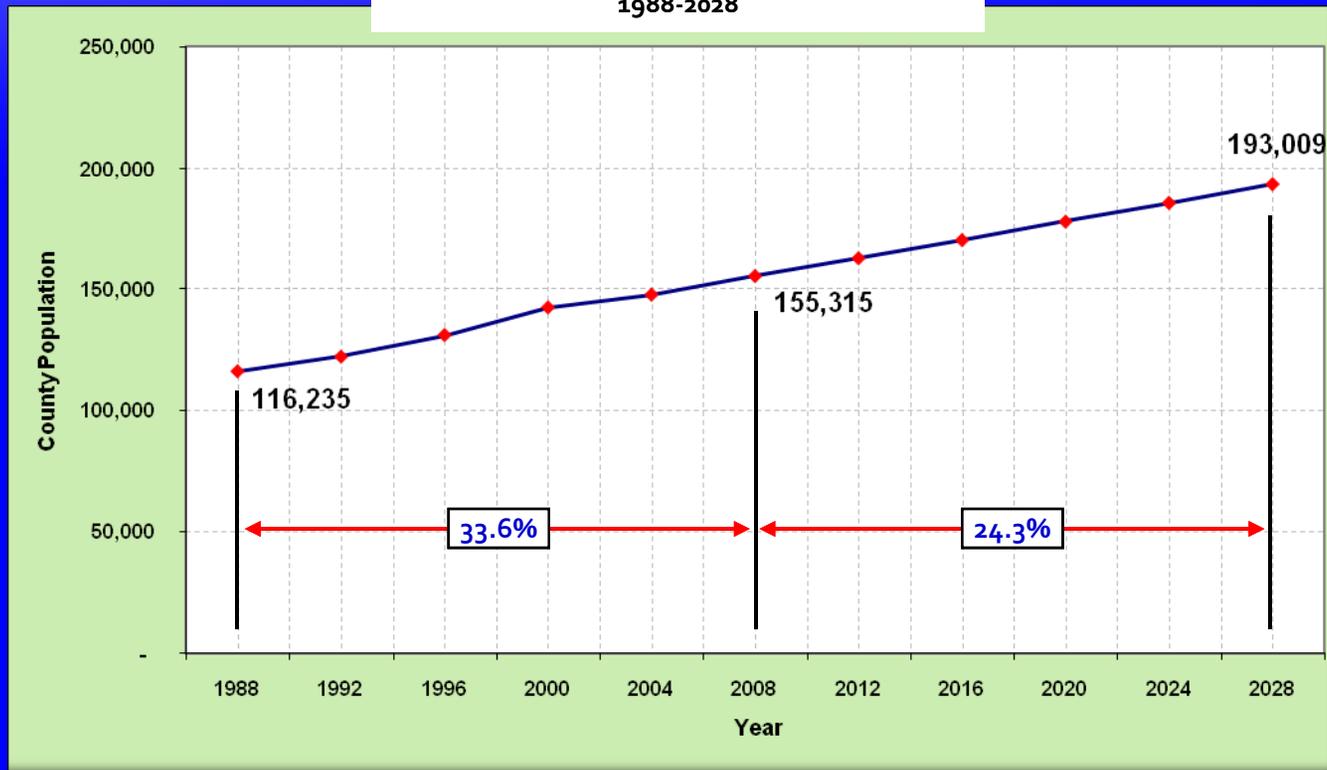
- **County Population**
- **Agency Workload**
- **Observed Trends**
- **History**
- **Good Design**

## Future Space

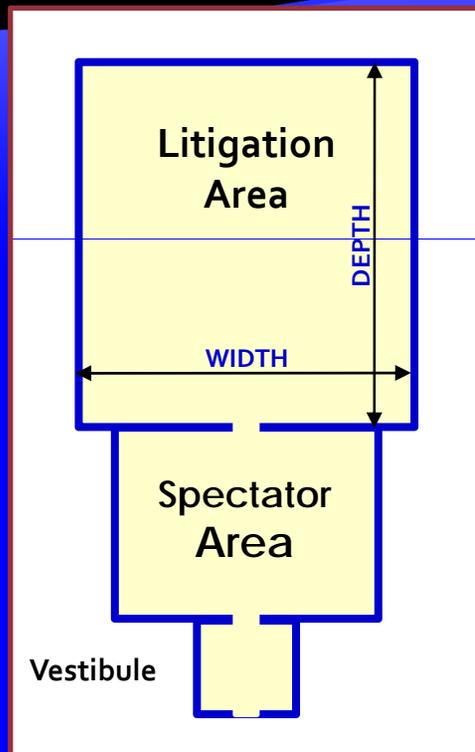
- **County Population**
- **Agency Workload**
- **Observed Trends**
- **History**
- **Good Design**

## County Population

Catawba County  
Experienced & Projected Populations  
1988-2028



## Space Standards



### Recommended Dimensions for Litigation Area In General Trial Courtrooms

Type of Courtroom	Width	Depth	Total Area
Formal Non-Jury Hearing Room	28 ft.	30 ft.	840 SF
Jury Courtroom (1-Tier Jury Box)	32 ft.	32 ft.	1,024 SF
Jury Courtroom (2-Tier Jury Box)	36-38 ft.	32 ft.	1,152-1,216 SF
Jury Courtroom (3-Tier Jury Box)	40-42 ft.	32 ft.	1,280-1,344 SF
Ceremonial/Large Jury Trial Courtroom	40 ft.	34 ft.	1,360 SF

### Spectator Area

Basis suggested: Size of Jury Panel;  
i.e. 7-Person Jury = 20-30 spectators  
Typically @ 9-12 square feet/person

Attorney Office      120-150 SF  
Open Work Space      80-100 SF  
Meeting Room      25 SF/Person

## Total Space Needs

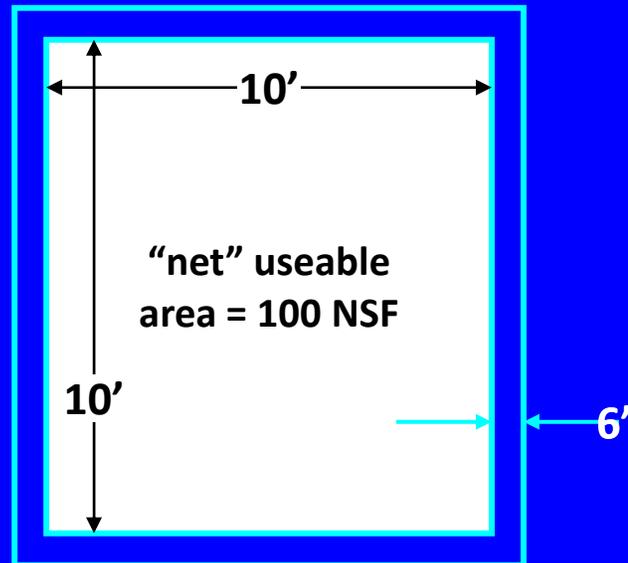
**Current Space + Current Deficit + Additional Future Need = 2028 Space Needs**

Agency	Existing Space	Current Deficit	Future Need	Total 2028 SF Need
<b>Clerk of Court</b>	8,523	10,295	6,500	25,318
<b>District Attorney</b>	3,943	3,441	2,074	9,458
<b>District Court</b>	13,400	14,648	29,197	57,245
<b>Register of Deeds</b>	4,912	2,591	416	7,919
<b>Sheriff</b>	15,628	7,493	14,450	37,571
<b>Superior Court</b>	13,400	5,498	11,297	30,195
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>59,806</b>	<b>43,966</b>	<b>63,934</b>	<b>167,706</b>

## Building Space Terminology

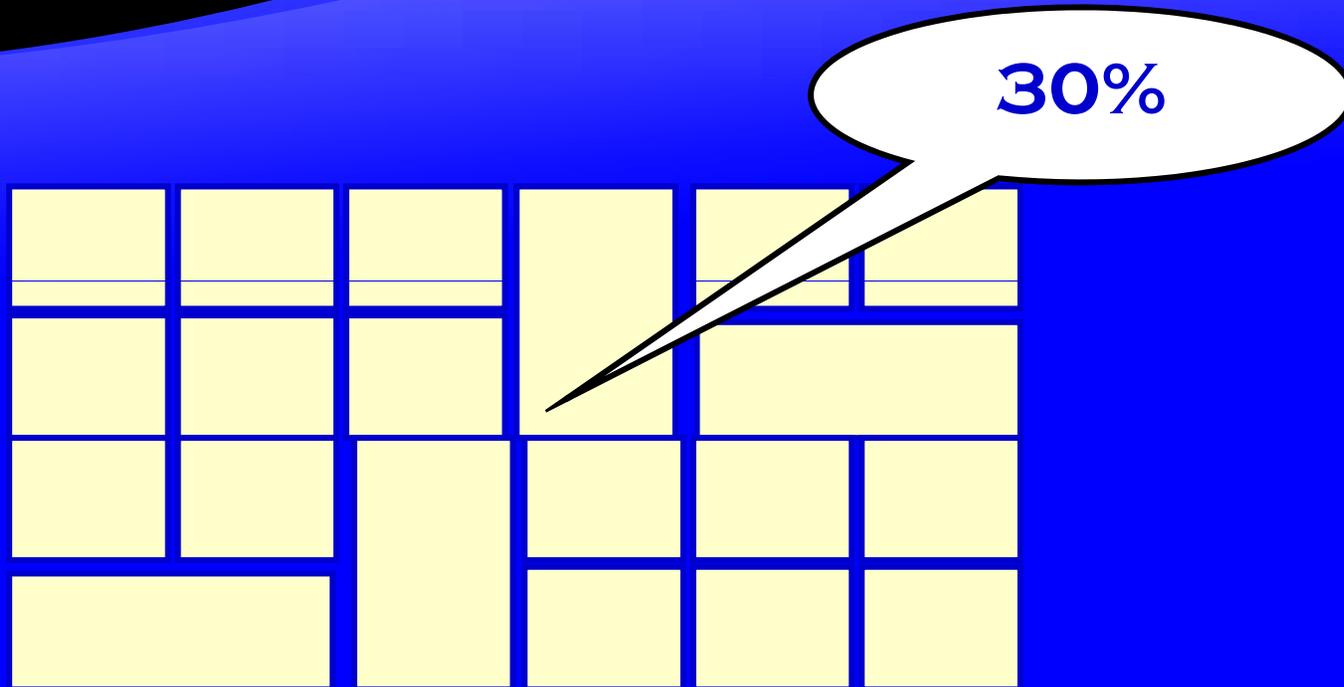
### Useable Area vs. Structure to be Built

#### Net Square Feet (NSF) vs. Gross Square Feet (GSF)



Structure to be built;  
"gross" area = 11' x 11'  
or 122 GSF

## Useable Area vs. Structure to be Built



## Useable Area vs. Structure to be Built

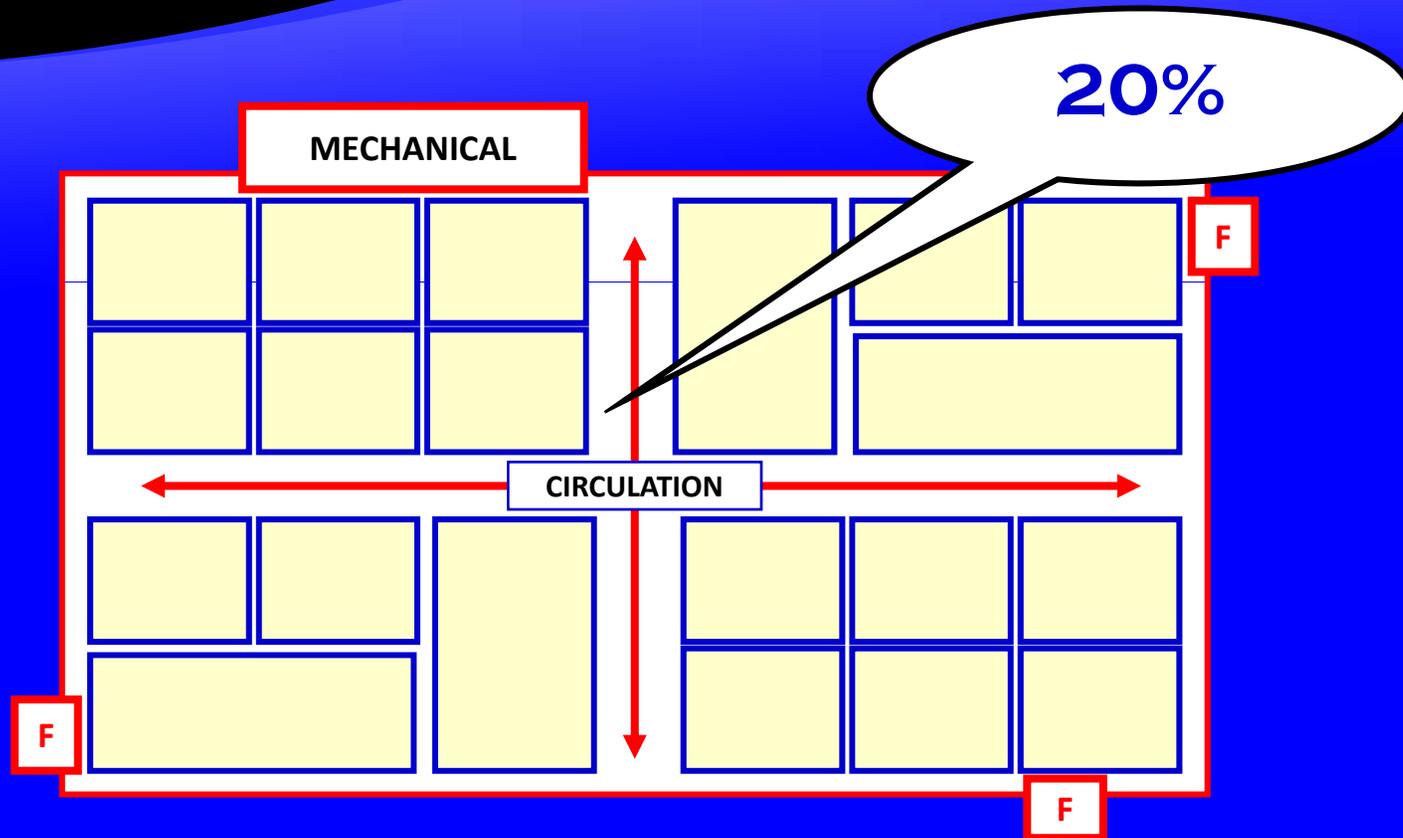
### EXAMPLE

Net Square Feet		50,000
Net to Gross Multiplier	30%	15,000

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Building Total Gross Square Feet

## Useable Area vs. Structure to be Built



## Useable Area vs. Structure to be Built

### EXAMPLE

Net Square Feet		50,000
Net to Gross Multiplier	30%	15,000
“Building” Multiplier	20%	10,000
<hr/>		
Building Total Gross Square Feet		75,000

## Useable Area vs. Structure to be Built

Agency	Existing Space	Current Deficit	Future Need	Total 2028 SF Need
Clerk of Court	8,523	10,295	6,500	25,318
District Attorney	3,943	3,441	2,074	9,458
District Court	13,400	+ 14,648	+ 29,197	= 57,245
Register of Deeds	4,912	2,591	416	7,919
Sheriff	15,628	7,493	14,450	37,571
Superior Court	13,400	5,498	11,297	30,195
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>59,806</b>	<b>43,966</b>	<b>63,934</b>	<b>167,706</b>

43,845 sf

+ 20% =

**52,614 SF**

## Useable Area vs. Structure to be Built

Agency	Total New Space	EF	Construction GSF	Type
Clerk of Court	16,795	1.20	20,154	New Construction
District Attorney	5,515	1.00	5,515	Internal Renovation
District Court	43,845	1.20	52,614	New Construction
Register of Deeds	3,007	1.00	3,007	Internal Renovation
Sheriff	21,943	1.20	26,332	New Construction
Superior Court	16,795	1.20	20,154	New Construction

## To Accommodate Construction & Building Renovations:

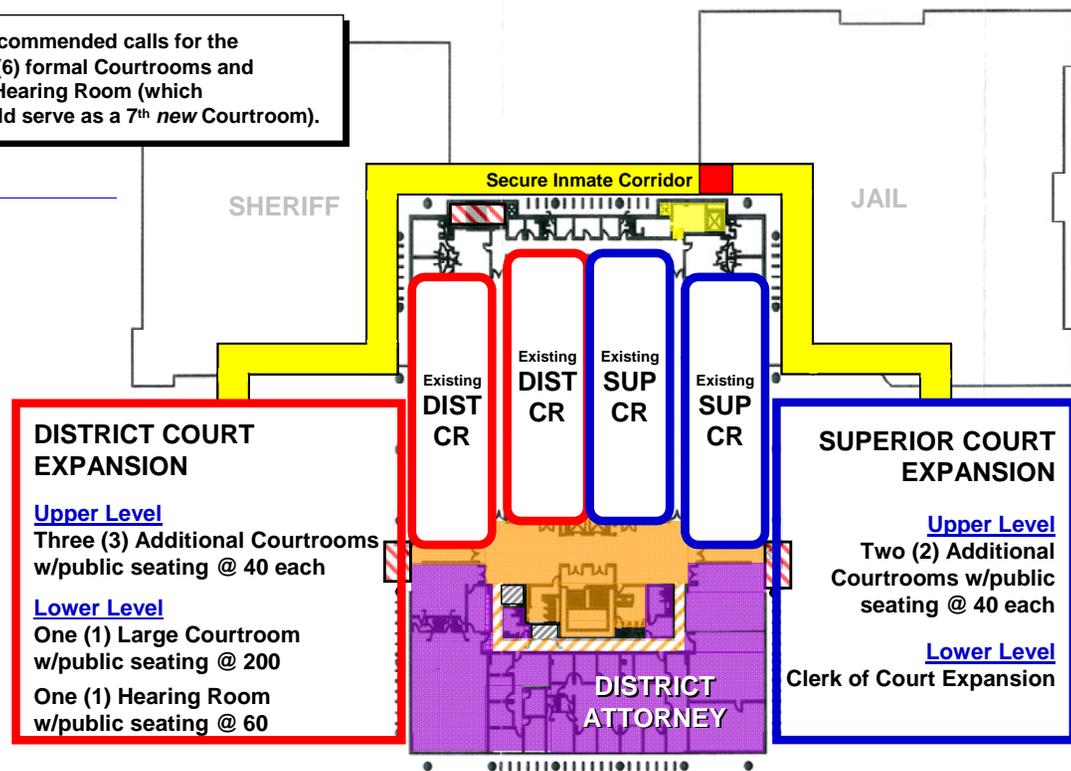
- Relocate the Communications Center and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to space in a new County Public Safety Facility.
- Relocate the NC Department of Correction/Probation & Parole offices and the Repay program elsewhere off site; for example the Repay Program may relocate to what is now the District Court Annex.
- Provide as new construction, building additions adjacent and attached to the current Justice Center for the Clerk of Court, District Court, the Sheriff, and Superior Court.
- Once current occupants of the Justice Center have been relocated, provide renovation and expansion into the areas vacated for the District Attorney and the Register of Deeds as expansion space, adjacent their existing locations.



## Development Recommendations

### Summary of Justice Center Expansion as re: Number of Additional Courtrooms

The concept recommended calls for the addition of six (6) formal Courtrooms and one (1) formal Hearing Room (which essentially could serve as a 7<sup>th</sup> new Courtroom).



#### DISTRICT COURT EXPANSION

Upper Level  
Three (3) Additional Courtrooms w/public seating @ 40 each

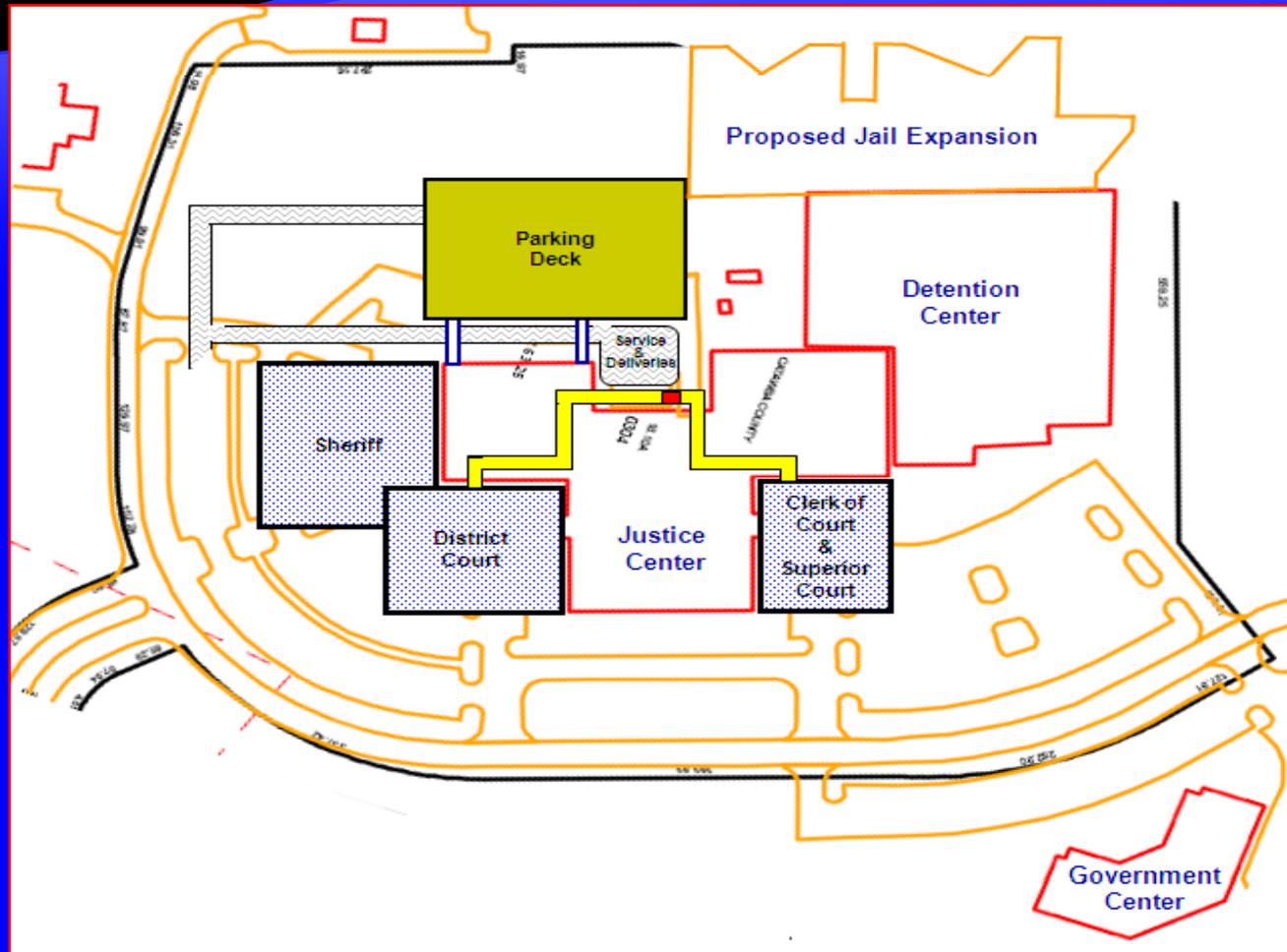
Lower Level  
One (1) Large Courtroom w/public seating @ 200  
One (1) Hearing Room w/public seating @ 60

#### SUPERIOR COURT EXPANSION

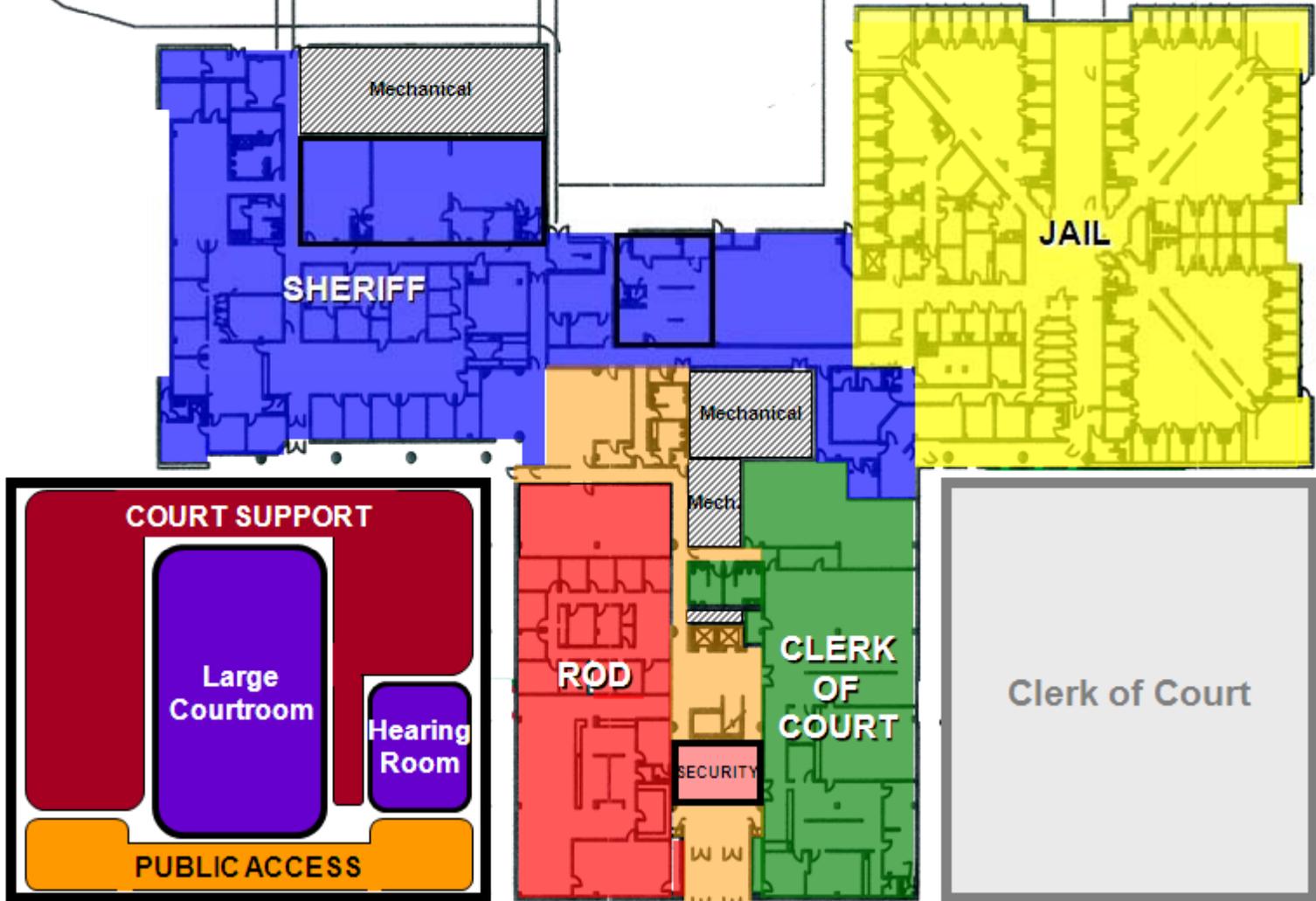
Upper Level  
Two (2) Additional Courtrooms w/public seating @ 40 each

Lower Level  
Clerk of Court Expansion

## Development Recommendations

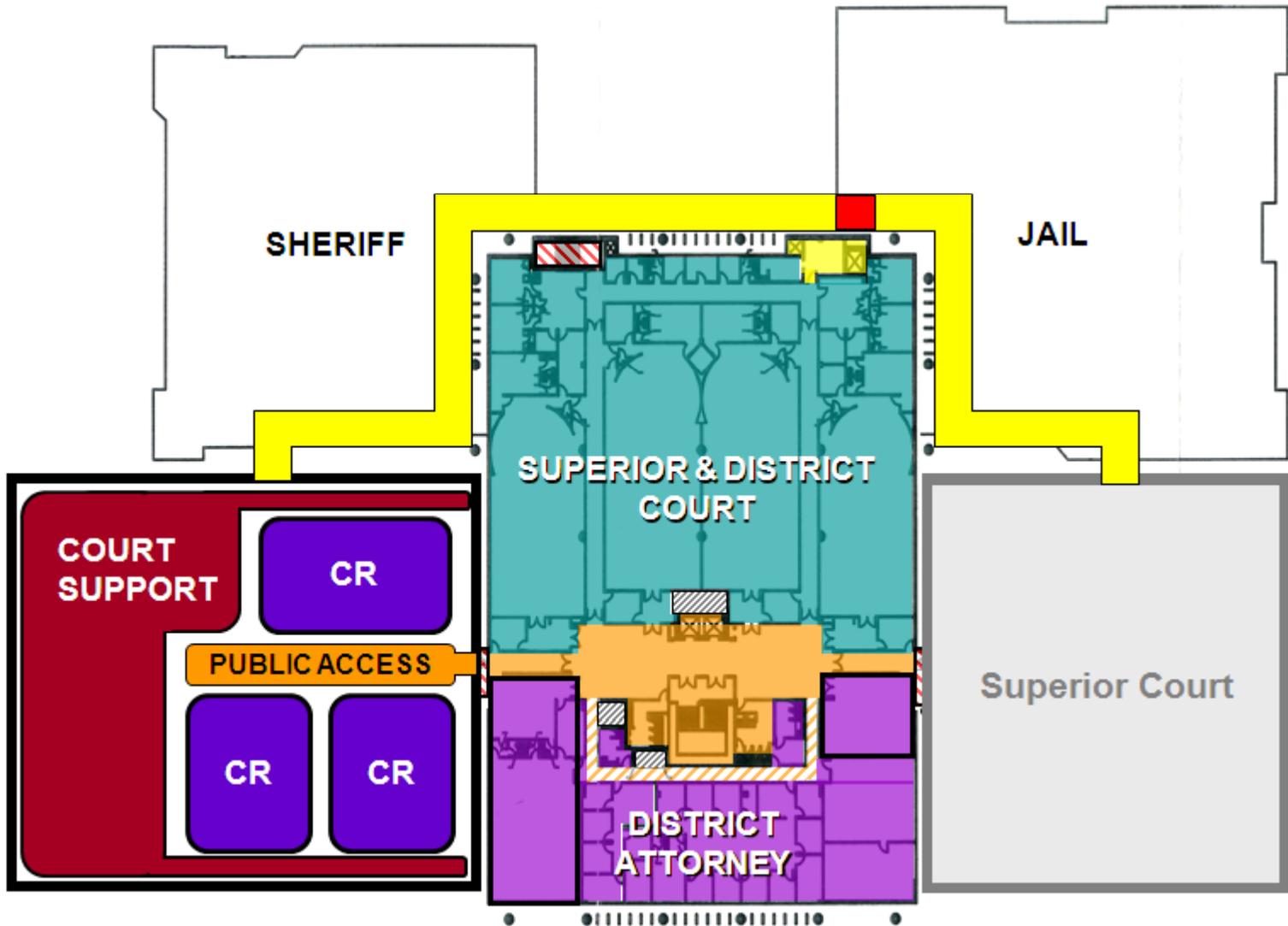


**Phase 1 IMMEDIATE Level 1**

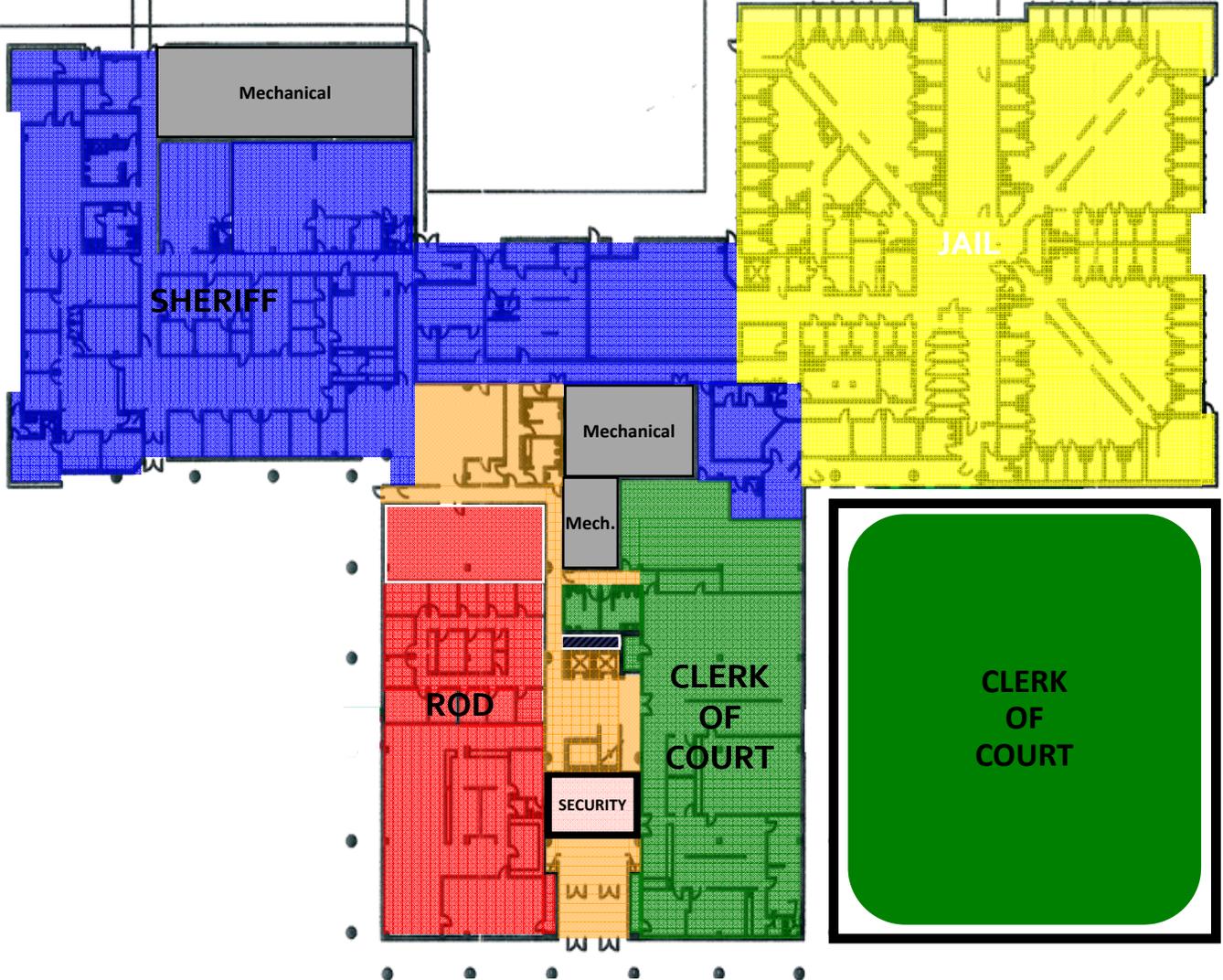


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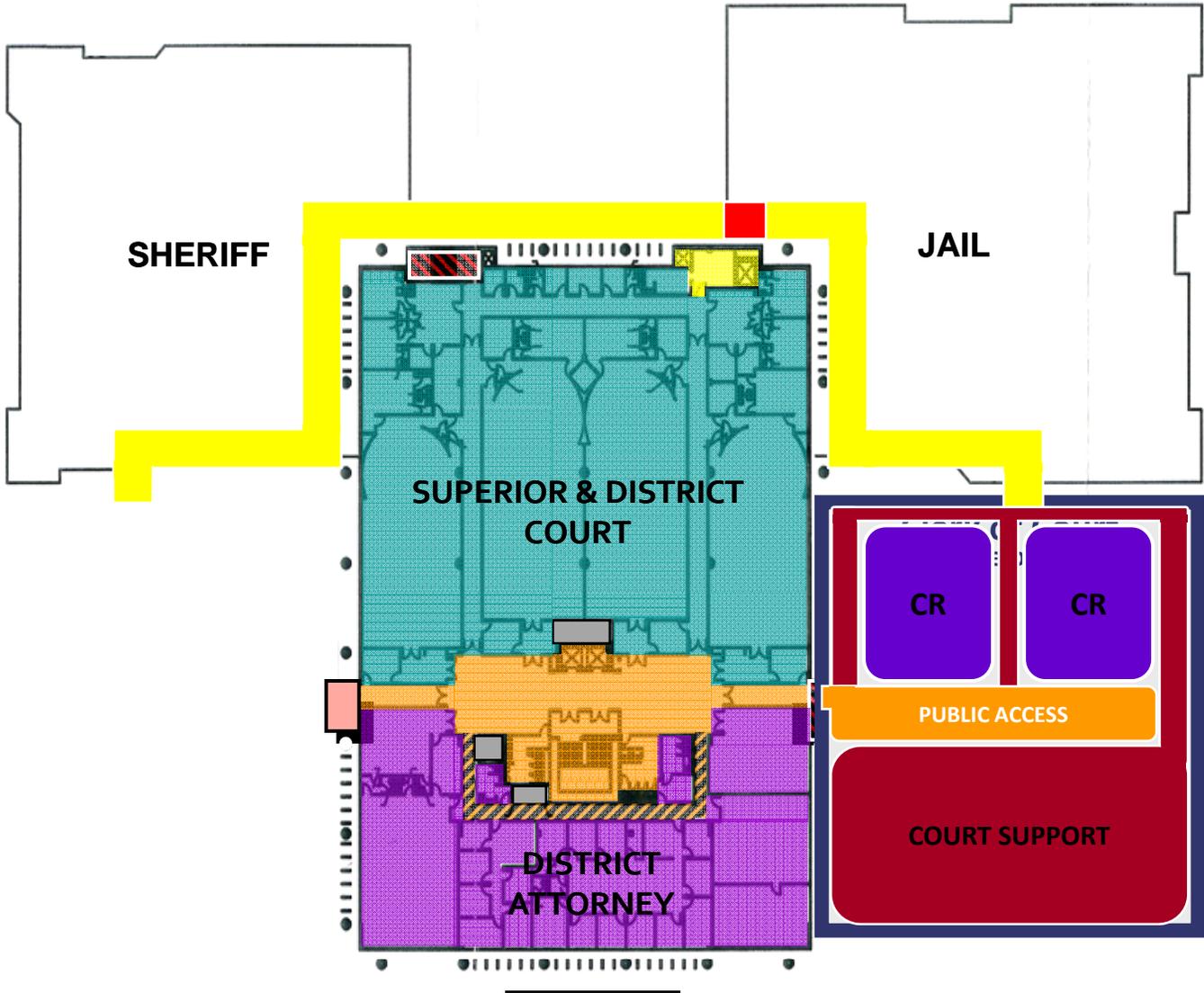
**Phase 1      IMMEDIATE      Level 2**



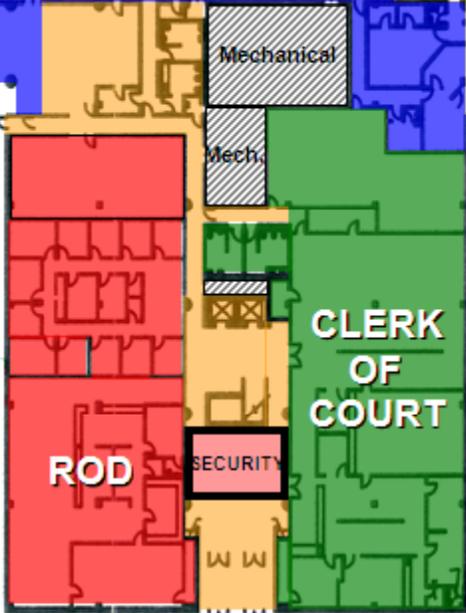
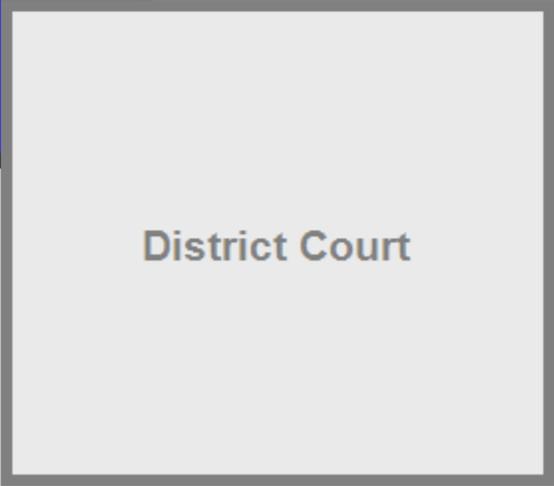
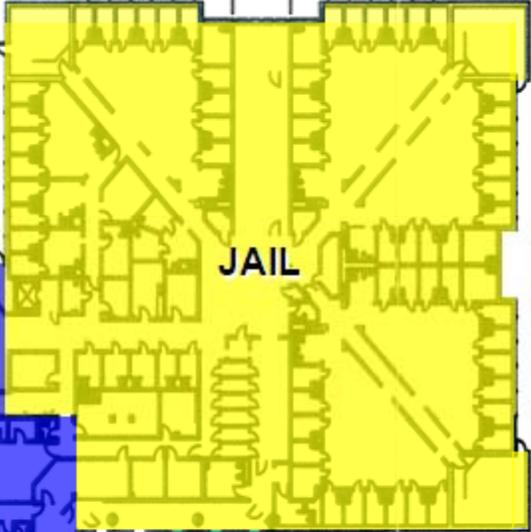
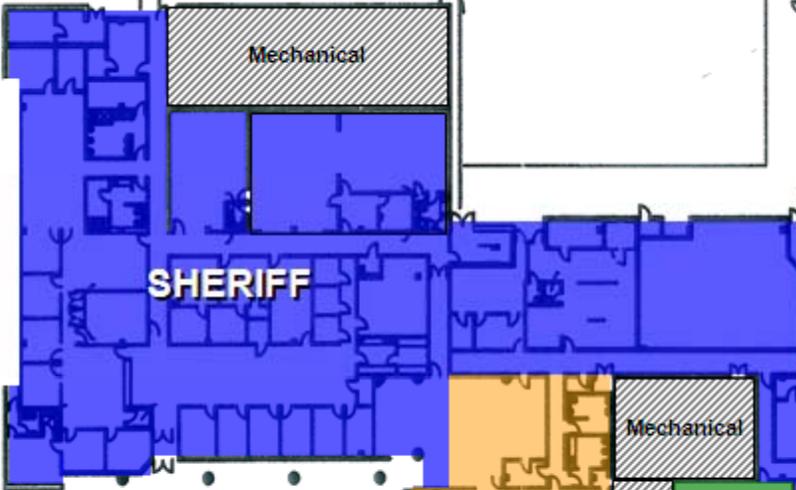
**Phase 2      NEAR TERM      Level 1**



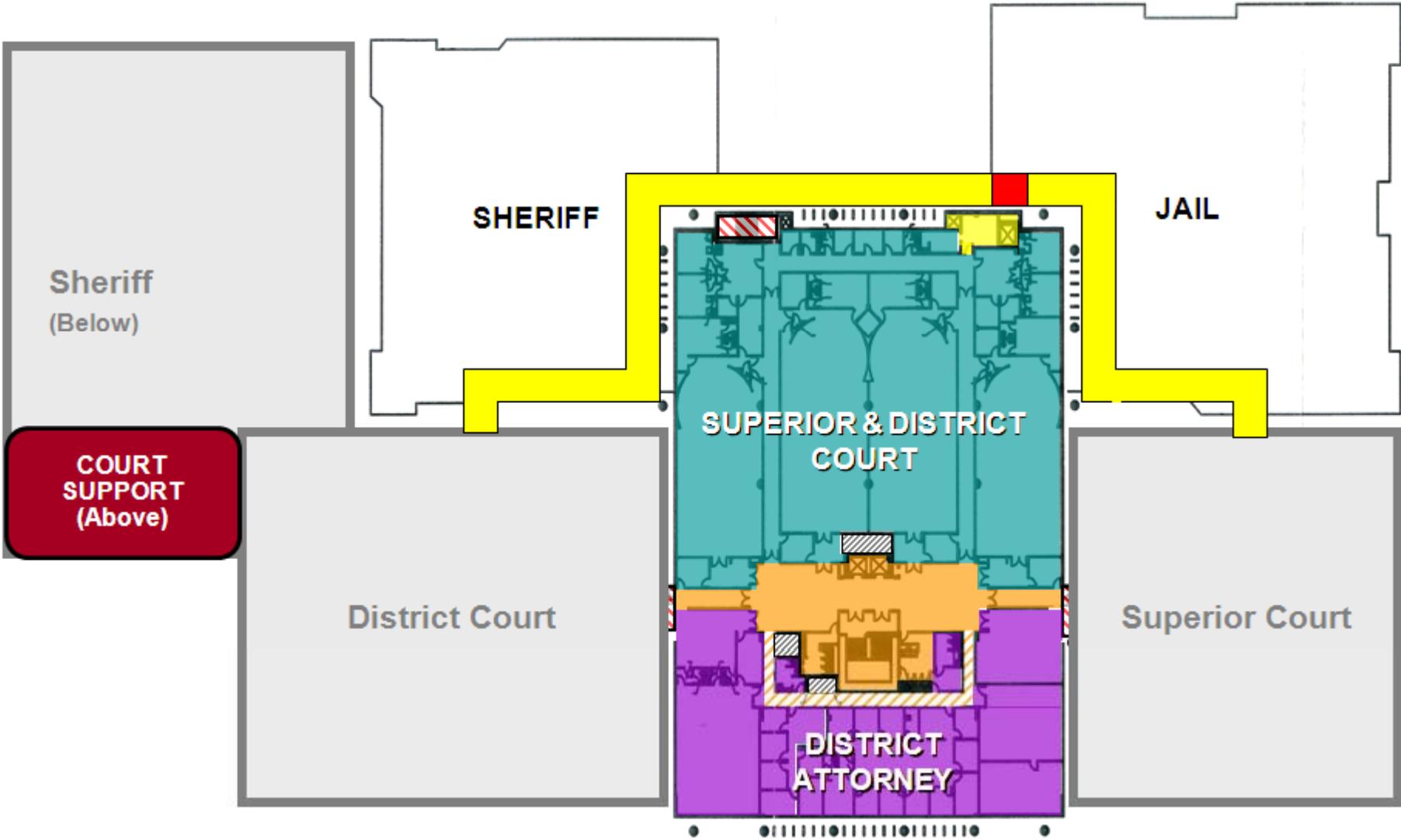
**Phase 2    NEAR TERM    Level 2**



**Phase 3 FUTURE Level 1**



**Phase 3 FUTURE Level 2**



**Probable Costs**

<b>PHASE 1-IMMEDIATE-District Court Expansion</b>				
<b>Area</b>	<b>Building Level</b>	<b>Area GSF</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Base Const. Cost</b>
District Court	First	23,400	\$ 225	\$ 5,265,000
District Court	Second	23,400	\$ 225	\$ 5,265,000
				<b>\$ 10,530,000</b>

<b>PHASE 1-IMMEDIATE-Public Safety Center</b>				
<b>Area</b>	<b>Building Level</b>	<b>Area GSF</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Base Const. Cost</b>
Emergency Services	First	22,706	\$ 170	\$ 3,859,586
Vehicles & Supply	First	28,108	\$ 115	\$ 2,908,350
Communications Center	Second	10,039	\$ 185	\$ 1,857,215
				<b>\$ 8,625,151</b>

## Probable Costs

### PHASE 2-NEAR TERM-Clerk of Court & Superior Court Expansion

Area	Building Level	Area GSF	Unit Cost	Base Const. Cost
Clerk of Court	First	20,154	\$ 225	\$ 4,534,650
Superior Court	Second	20,154	\$ 225	\$ 4,534,650
				<b>\$ 9,069,300</b>

### PHASE3-FUTURE-Sheriff & District Court Support Expansion

Area	Building Level	Area GSF	Unit Cost	Base Const. Cost
Sheriff	First	26,331	\$ 185	\$ 4,871,235
District Court	Second	5,814	\$ 185	\$ 1,075,590
				<b>\$ 5,946,825</b>

## Probable Costs

Agency	Renovation Area/GSF	Unit Cost	Total Cost
District Attorney	5,515	\$ 60	\$ 330,900
Register of Deeds	3,007	\$ 60	\$ 180,420

Agency	Existing Space	Portion Renovated	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Clerk of Court	8,523	4,262	\$ 45	\$ 191,768
Sheriff	15,628	7,814	\$ 45	\$ 351,630

## Estimated Schedule of Time/Task Requirements:

### PHASE 1-IMMEDIATE-DISTRICT COURT EXPANSION

Facility Programming	3-4 months
A&E Design	13-14 months**
Bidding	4-6 weeks
Construction	12-14 months

### PHASE 1-IMMEDIATE-PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY

Facility Programming	n/a*
A&E Design	10-11 months**
Bidding	4-6 weeks
Construction	9-10 months

### PHASE 2-NEAR TERM-CLERK OF COURT & SUPERIOR COURT EXPANSION

Facility Programming	2-3 Months
A&E Design	12-13 months**
Bidding	4-6 weeks
Construction	12-14 months

### PHASE 3-FUTURE-SHERIFF'S OFFICE EXPANSION & DISTRICT COURT SUPPORT

Facility Programming	2-3 Months
A&E Design	9-10 months**
Bidding	4-6 weeks
Construction	8-9 months

## Options

- Availability of Space Elsewhere
- Combining Projects
- “Shell Space”
- Parking; Surface vs. Deck

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## Availability of Space Elsewhere

**Court facilities are complex buildings. Circulation within a courthouse, access and egress issues, security and the management of public, staff and “secure” populations is simultaneously a planning, design, and operational challenge.**

## Availability of Space Elsewhere

### A. Adoptive reuse of existing buildings

#### Advantages:

- The space is available now
- It could be up-fitted to suite the needs of;
  - District Court support staff and programs
  - Agencies currently in the Justice Center recommended for relocation
  - Formal court proceedings/hearings of a non-criminal nature
- Parking

## Availability of Space Elsewhere

### A. Adoptive reuse of existing buildings

#### Disadvantages:

- Owner not interested in selling; i.e. “lease” vs. “buy” issue
- Considerable investment would simply repeat the inefficiencies already being experienced with Hickory Courthouse
- No vehicle access to back of building and no means of providing due to property line and existing physical site conditions
- Age of structure will require testing for and likely clean-up of lead, asbestos, and site/property environmental conditions
- This particular facility *would not* be a prudent use of tax dollars

## Availability of Space Elsewhere

**B. IF you want a quick and economical Courtroom,  
go across the street to the Historic Courthouse**

### **Advantages:**

- It has been well preserved and maintained
- It has considerable seating capacity
- Ancillary support spaces are adjacent & available
- ADA requirements can be accommodated via the elevator
- The County already owns the building



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