

CUSTER COUNTY /  
**COUNTY  
BUILDING  
ASSESSMENTS**



COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

Colorado Center for Community Development

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT + JAIL

This building has been converted from a repair shop and as such is found lacking in many areas of safety and procedural accommodation. It is difficult, therefore, to look at improvements to the courthouse, notably prisoner transport, when that transport would be to and from a facility that itself needs serious upgrades. It would be far better to think of the entire Justice Center as a whole, and therefore might be best to integrate a new jail and sheriff's department into a new Courthouse construct. It is also worth noting that any improvement to the existing facility would necessitate relocating the offices and jail, an all but impossible task given the specialized program of such a building.

Any examination of the present facility must start with safety—both for the prisoners as well as those that work in the building. Presently, the accused party is brought into an area that is actually a lobby for the office personnel. Access to the coffee machine, restrooms, filing cabinets and other offices is gained through an area which is about 12' x 18'. The prisoner, who may be hostile, intoxicated or perhaps violent is handcuffed and left sitting in this lobby, exposed to civilian staff, and other officers, as well as perhaps the general public in the building on other matters. There is no provision for differential treatment of minors and no way to sequester a prisoner who might contaminate the area with blood, bodily fluids or chemicals. In truth, a sally port for prisoner drop off, with a booking area where fingerprinting, photos, and exchange of personal effects takes place in an area which is intended to be easily cleanable is most desirable if not a basic requirement. An area for minors taken into custody, away from adult prisoners should be provided and a secure restroom, not intended for public or staff use should be provided. There should also be an area for evidence processing. None of this can easily be accommodated in the existing facility. Properly addressing these issues would require an addition to the building and a significant reworking of the interior spaces.

The jail itself has some issues which are likely remediable...a lack of proper ventilation, blind spots with regard to video surveillance and other potential safety hazards exist within the cell area, but the facilities serving the jail are well below standards. A proper hood, with proper fire suppression is lacking and the kitchen is not up to institutional quality and would require significant overhaul in food storage, food preparation and cleanup, and is really little more than a poorly equipped residential kitchen. It does not seem possible to renovate the kitchen to meet current codes without taking the jail off line for some period of time (several weeks to a few months).

There are also some ADA violations, that, if they were the only problems could be addressed in some manner, but compared to the life safety challenges they are a sidebar. There are also drainage and condition issues (a failing overhang/eave which is allowing pests to enter the building) which need to be addressed. IN summary, the building serves its purpose but only minimally. It is not well suited for remodeling or renovation without determining a place

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

for these services to be temporarily housed, and without some sort of significant renovation, it is only a matter of time before the building's shortcomings lead to some sort of injury, or other avoidable incident.

### COURTHOUSE + COUNTY SEAT

As with the Sheriff's Department, the present building is found wanting in many areas, in this case due to age, the need to modernize and more current regulations regarding the safety of various personnel as it pertains to courtroom proceedings and prisoner transport. The building has been thoroughly assessed in a study by Anderson Hallas Architects and common issues like energy use, ADA compliance and various maintenance issues are also noted. However, the building itself is an historic structure, and remodeling and expanding the building poses some challenges with regard to aesthetic as well practical outcomes. The building does feature an addition completed some time ago (albeit with different size bricks), and that could certainly be contemplated again, as there does seem to be ample room about the site for some sort of expansion. However, just as was mentioned at the Sherriff's Department, such an undertaking poses great challenges with regard to temporary location of county services, courtroom functions, and the related staff that currently is housed in the building.

One challenge facing any renovation plan will be the need to provide ADA compliance to all three levels, which do not provide an easy alignment for an elevator to service each floor. There are methods to address this condition, but not without compromising some of the existing spaces. The introduction of the elevator and related equipment, along with whatever space is needed to provide access to all levels will likely add to the need for expansion. It may be possible to create an addition that somehow includes the elevator and also connects to all three levels, but that might impact where the addition could go.

The courtroom does not meet the criteria adopted by the state. Proper jury rooms and judge chambers with emergency egress, along with better prisoner holding and transport facilities are among the laundry list of issues that need to be addressed. Security measures and screening for those entering the courthouse will need to be integrated at various places around the building.

The County Administration offices are also found wanting. Though some offices are more or less happy with the space they have now, they will most likely be impacted by the addition of such things as security screening, elevators or even expanded restrooms. Other offices are undersized and need more storage or better access to one another or to the public. The election facilities will need a significant upgrade to stay abreast of state and federal regulations.

Expanding and renovating the building will involve great expense and dislocation of services. In the end, unless done sensitively, some of the

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

historic character of the building could be lost. Some of the costs (ADA compliance, energy upgrades, communication and infrastructure modernization) will be needed regardless of whether the building is expanded, while others (courtroom safety, security, election offices upgrades) will require expansion and reworking of the interior spaces.

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### SEARCH + RESCUE BUILDING

The Search and Rescue Building faces two issues that will need remediation at some point, but do not presently render the building unsafe or unusable. The primary issue is the lack of ADA compliance (access to the second floor offices and storage area). An elevator would be an expensive fix, and perhaps some sort of "lift" installed at the railing might suffice, though they are somewhat unsightly. The upstairs area may be less than 400sf and might therefore qualify as a "mezzanine" but the use of some of that space as an office for the administrator of the SAR for Custer County could invite a lawsuit if a person was denied the position based on their physical abilities. The county should assess how likely that might be and also assess whether or not the inclusion of a lift either if/when the need arises or prophylactically makes the most sense.

The other issue is the depth of the garage which will not accommodate the large vehicles to be stored there. Expanding the garage would involve the relocation of the exterior wall of either some or the entire wall with the rollup doors installed within. The doors could be reused, but the wall relocation does have some potential structural implications. The troubling issue is that the additional depth needed is only a few feet (or less) and it is a significant expense for such a minor problem.

Finally there are some infrastructure needs (communication, electrical outlet locations) which should be addressed for a more efficient facility. Presently, this is dealt with by using extension cords and such. Not an ideal remedy, but serviceable for now. One or all of these issues could be addressed without disrupting the use of the building, and in truth, given the other priorities faced by the county, these issues are minor and could be put off until the other issues are dealt with.

### SUMMARY

The county faces a challenge of assessing priorities. The Jail and Sherriff's department is serviceable until someone gets hurt, at which time all will ask why it was allowed to remain unaddressed. A similar challenge awaits in the courtroom, where inadequate egress, security and prisoner handling could lead to an incident that might have been avoidable had the facility

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

been upgraded. There also remains the issue of ADA compliance and access throughout both facilities. They can be put off, but it is only a matter of time before an employee, customer or other user lodges a complaint that will require immediate attention. It is always better to anticipate and address these matters, rather than be forced to do so under duress.

Solutions requiring major renovation and expansion also create the challenge of how to continue to operate with important public services while a building is uninhabitable while undergoing construction. However, there is a solution that might address all the problems, though not without some challenges as well.

The county might consider instead the development and construction of a new Justice Center that incorporates the Sherriff's Department, the jail facilities as well as the courtrooms and related spaces. There is ample room on the county services campus (especially if the truck scales are relocated), and this simplifies the need for prisoner transport and creates a secure state of the art building suitable for now and many years into the future. This approach also allows the existing services to remain where they are until the new building is done, saving the cost of relocation, and rent/purchase/remodeling of the temporary facility.

Following completion of the new building, the existing county building could become dedicated to only county services. Without the courthouse function housed within, security measures would not be so onerous, and though it would need some sort of overhaul, it might not be as pressing. The primary issue would be the elevator, but with the courthouse leaving the building, the Board of County Commissioners could move to the courtroom, and elections could move to their chambers, freeing up space for the elevator without contemplating an addition. When the budget allows for such things, the county services could move temporarily to what is now the sheriff's department building, and energy upgrades, further ADA work and better infrastructure and workflow could be addressed in the historic building which could most likely retain the historic nature of the exterior. After renovations are complete, the existing Sherriff's Department could be sold or used for some other county service in need.

Further study is needed, and some preliminary plans should be prepared in order to establish accurate construction costs, but building a new state of the art facility allows the county to control unforeseen costs (renovating existing buildings is always fraught with some peril since it often uncovers issues that need attention that no one had anticipated). The new building will be energy efficient, ADA compliant and designed to suit the county needs for several decades, whereas renovating the existing buildings will almost always involve tradeoffs that are less than ideal (aesthetically or practically). In addition, adding to the courthouse in a responsible manner will involve the use of materials and construction techniques that will be more expensive (in order to be compatible with the historic nature of the building). A new building can be somewhat free of such constraints and hence more cost effective.



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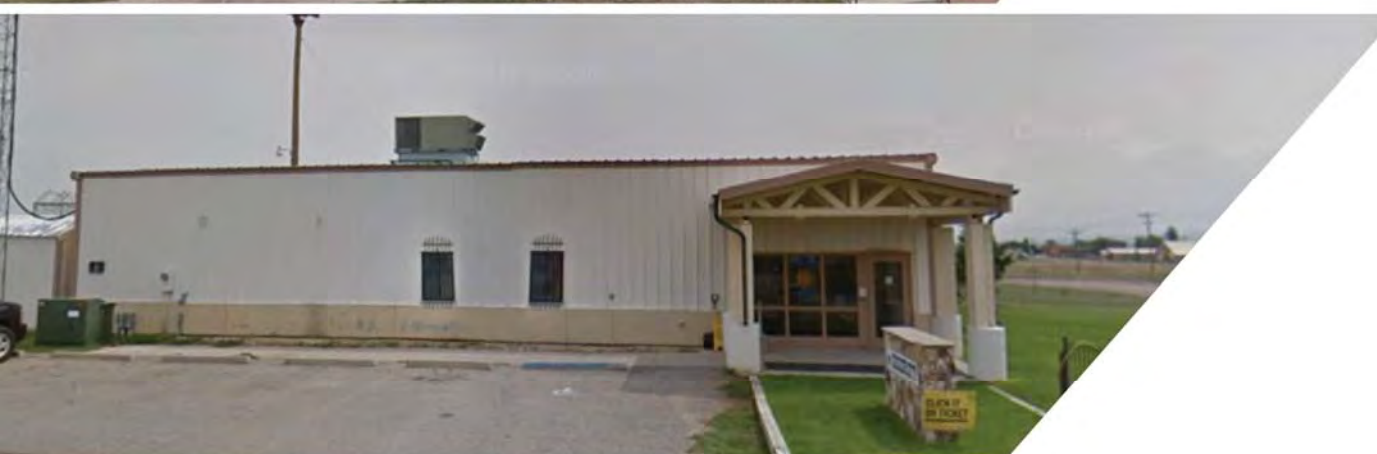




**SEARCH + RESCUE**



**COURTHOUSE +  
COUNTY SEAT**



**SHERIFF'S  
DEPARTMENT  
+ JAIL**

# SEARCH + RESCUE

- + COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT AND PROPANE EXPOSED
- + INADEQUATE POWER ACCESS FOR LARGE OPERATIONS
- + NO ADA ACCESS TO UPPER AREAS
- + GARAGE SPACE AND ACCESS







# SEARCH + RESCUE

+ ADA COMPLIANCE WOULD REQUIRE ELEVATOR/LIFT

+ GARAGE CLEARANCE WOULD REQUIRE ADDITION (STRUCTURAL IMPLICATIONS)

+ INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE (INTERNET & ELECTRICAL)

+ INADEQUATE  
ADA ACCESS  
THROUGHOUT

+ LACK OF SPACE FOR  
EXISTING STAFF &  
PROGRAM

+ OUTDATED SYSTEMS NOT  
UP TO CURRENT CODE  
REQUIREMENTS

+ SECURITY ISSUES  
AND ACCESS

## **COURTHOUSE + COUNTY**





+ ADA COMPLIANCE  
WOULD REQUIRE  
ELEVATOR/LIFT

+ SECURITY UPDATES

+ INFRASTRUCTURE  
UPGRADE (LIGHTING,  
ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL,  
PLUMBING, COMMUNICATION)

+ RESTROOMS, RAMPS, JURY  
BOX, COURTROOM VESTIBULE  
& GALLERY... ADA COMPLIANCE  
REQUIRED (REMODEL)

**COURTHOUSE + COUNTY**

SCENARIO 1 /

# PARTIAL RENO + ADDITION

1.2 MILLION

2800 SF ADDITION @\$250/SF  
2500 SF RENOVATION @\$200/SF

SCENARIO 2 /

# FULL RENO COURTHOUSE

3 MILLION

15,000 SF RENOVATION @\$200/SF  
(COUNTY OFFICES RELOCATED)

SCENARIO 3 /

# NEW BUILD COURTHOUSE

4.8 MILLION

16,000 SF NEW COURTHOUSE @\$300/SF  
(COUNTY OFFICES STAY IN EXISTING)

SCENARIO 1 /

# PARTIAL RENO + ADDITION

+ LEAST EXPENSE

- NOT A PERMANENT SOLUTION
- NEED SPACE FOR STAFF DURING CONSTRUCTION ( -72K )

SCENARIO 2 /

# FULL RENO COURTHOUSE

+/- MEDIAN EXPENSE

- RELOCATE COUNTY SEAT
- NEED SPACE FOR STAFF DURING CONSTRUCTION ( -72K )

SCENARIO 3 /

# NEW BUILD COURTHOUSE

- HIGHEST EXPENSE

- + LONG TERM SOLUTION
- + DO NOT NEED SPACE FOR STAFF DURING CONSTRUCTION

# SHERIFF'S DEPT.

- + EQUIPMENT  
AND PROPANE EXPOSED
- + POOR VENTILATION, HEALTH  
CONCERNS, DETERIORATING  
EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR
- + LACK OF SPACE, SEPARATION  
AND PRIVACY FOR CURRENT  
OCCUPANTS
- + SIGNIFICANT  
SAFETY CONCERNS  
FOR PUBLIC &  
STAFF





## **SHERIFF'S DEPT.**

- + PRIVACY AND ADEQUATE PROGRAM SPACE WOULD REQUIRE AN ADDITION
- + CODE COMPLIANCE WOULD REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT RENOVATION
- + SOME SAFETY CONCERNS MAY NOT BE RESOLVED WITH ADDITION/REMODEL

SCENARIO 1 /

# PARTIAL RENO + ADDITION

950,000

1800 SF ADDITION @\$250/SF  
2500 SF RENOVATION @\$200/SF

SCENARIO 2 /

# FULL RENO + 2 PODS

2.2 MILLION

5000 SF RENOVATION @\$200/SF  
3000 SF ADDITION @\$400/SF

SCENARIO 3 /

# NEW BUILD SHERIFF DEPT.

4.2 MILLION

12,000 SF NEW SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
@\$350/SF (INCLUDES 4 PODS)



SCENARIO 1 /

# PARTIAL RENO + ADDITION

+ LEAST EXPENSE

- NOT A PERMANENT SOLUTION
- NEED SPACE FOR STAFF DURING CONSTRUCTION ( -189K )

SCENARIO 2 /

# FULL RENO + 2 PODS

+/- MEDIAN EXPENSE

- + 2 ADDITIONAL PODS, 3 TOTAL
- NEED SPACE FOR STAFF DURING CONSTRUCTION ( -189K )

SCENARIO 3 /

# NEW BUILD SHERIFF DEPT.

- HIGHEST EXPENSE

- + LONG TERM SOLUTION
- + DO NOT NEED SPACE FOR STAFF DURING CONSTRUCTION

# JAIL OPPORTUNITIES

+ CURRENTLY +\$45/DAY  
PER INMATE (+\$8500/MO)

+ CURRENT CAPACITY:  
12 MALE BEDS

+ DESIRED CAPACITY  
30 MALE/12 FEMALE

+ POTENTIAL  
INCOME  
\$30K - \$56.7K/MO  
(360K - 680.4K/YR)



HYBRID OPTION /

# JUSTICE CENTER 15K-18K SF

4.5-5.4 MILLION

15,000-18,000 SF @\$300/SF

HYBRID OPTION /

# COUNTY SEAT RENOVATION

1.5 MILLION

15,000 SF RENOVATION @\$100/SF

HYBRID OPTION /

# SHERIFF'S DEPT. REPURPOSE

POTENTIAL

SELL, LEASE, OR USE AS ADDITIONAL  
SPACE FOR COUNTY FUNCTIONS

HYBRID OPTION /

# JUSTICE CENTER 15K-18K SF

+ ALLOWS FOR COMMON  
PROGRAM COMBINATION

+ ADDRESSES SAFETY FOR  
STAFF AND PUBLIC, ADDITION  
POTENTIAL WHEN/IF NEEDED

HYBRID OPTION /

# COUNTY SEAT RENOVATION

+ LESS SAFETY UPGRADES

+ MORE SPACE FOR COUNTY  
FUNCTIONS, NO ADDITION OR  
NEW FACILITY NEEDED

HYBRID OPTION /

# SHERIFF'S DEPT. REPURPOSE

+ SELL/LEASE EXISTING  
PROPERTY WHEN STAFF MOVES  
TO NEW FACILITY

+ POTENTIALLY HOUSE  
ADDITIONAL COUNTY FUNCTIONS



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BUILDING ASSESSMENT /  
**QUESTIONS**  
+  
**COMMENTS**



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BUILDING ASSESSMENT /  
**THANK YOU!**