

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING – PROPOSED COURTHOUSE
PROJECT PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Plymouth Senior Center

Plymouth, NH

October 8th, 2025

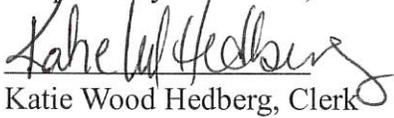
PRESENT: See attached attendance sheet.

Commissioner McLeod called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The Commissioners, CA Libby and Superintendent Oakes reviewed the following PowerPoint (* see attached). They answered questions from the public.

9:00 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Wood Hedberg", written over a horizontal line.

Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk



Courthouse Info Session - Plymouth

October 8th, 2025

Sign In Sheet ~ **PLEASE PRINT**

1 PAUL REGAN
2 TRACEY Blagott
3 Deborah Parker
4 Kathy Timbony
5 Theresa Lottell Smith
6 Linda Franzy
7 Omar C. Aheem, Jr.
8 HEATHER T. BALDWIN
9 Bev Newton
10 Isaac DeWeser
11 Aubrey Freedman
12 Bill Olson
13 BRIAN LEWIS
14 Debra Mikkelsen
15 GREGORY H MIKKEISEN
16 Terence Murny
17 Erik Piper
18 Katie Badelak
19 Robert Patterson
20 Karen Lukeman
21 JOE Lukeman
22 Julie Libby
23 Sam Norcross
24 Martha McLeod
25 Wendy Piper
26 Katie Ward Hedberg
27 Jim Oaves
28 John Sellers
29 Janet Lucas
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GRAFTON COUNTY PROPOSED COURTHOUSE PROJECT



Agenda

Introduction

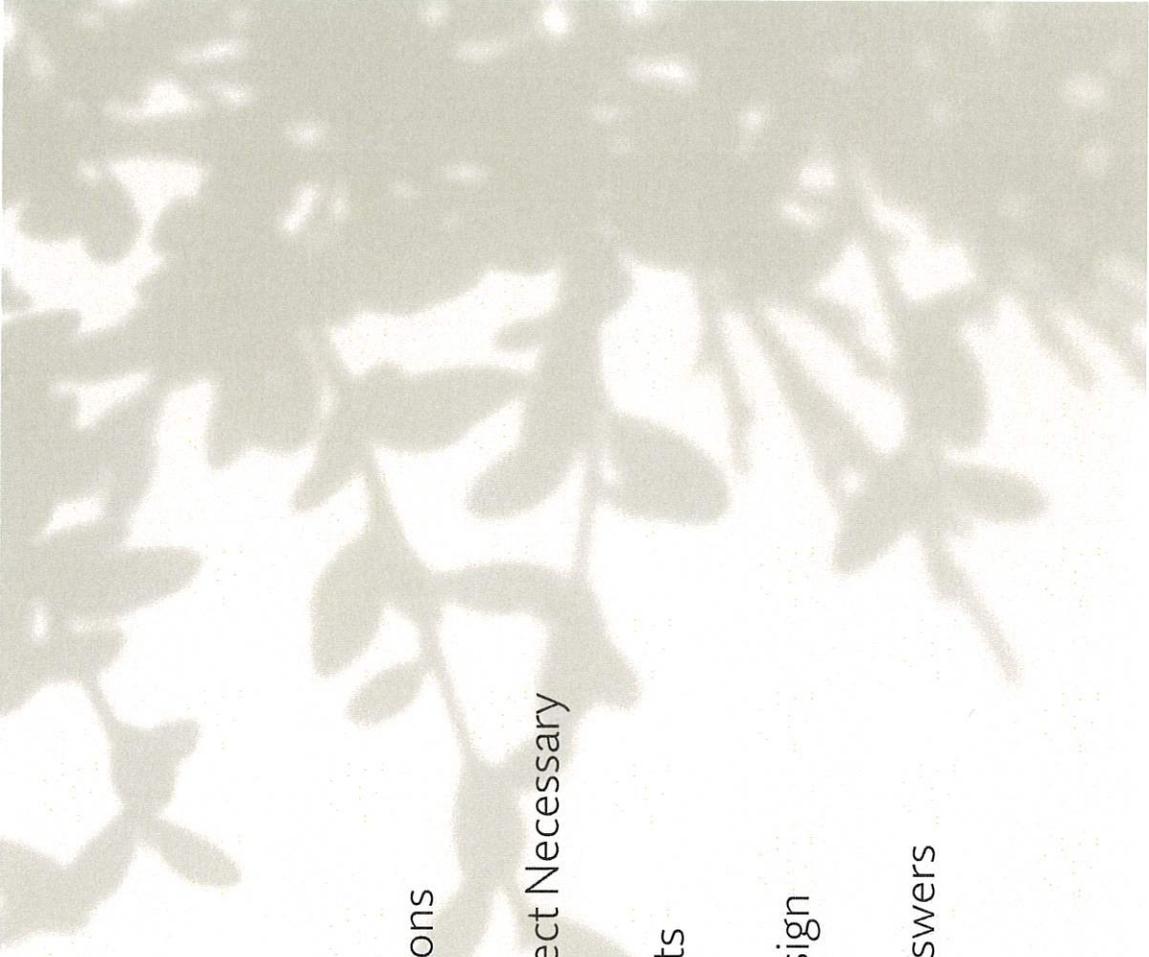
Existing Conditions

Why is the Project Necessary

Financial Impacts

Conceptual Design

Questions & Answers





Existing Courthouse

- The Grafton County Courthouse, located on Route 10 in North Haverhill, New Hampshire, was designed by E. Verner Johnson, Robert N. Hustvedt & Associates, Inc. of Boston, Massachusetts in 1970 and constructed in 1971 by H.P. Cummings Company of Woodsville, NH.
- In 2021 the Grafton County Commissioners hired EH Danson Associates PLLC, to conduct an assessment of the Grafton County Courthouse to evaluate the various issues raised by the Maintenance Superintendent and, if corroborated, ultimately determine whether would be more economical to meet the program needs in the existing facility through renovation and/or addition or construct a new courthouse facility on the same property.
- The full EH Danson Report is available on the county website. <https://grafton-county.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/EH-Danson-Report.pdf>

Evaluation of Existing Building

- EH Danson's study included evaluation of the building space based on program requirements identified through meetings with each department currently operating in the building, including Superior and Circuit Courts, County Attorney (including Victim/Witness Program), Public Defenders Office, DMV, Probation and Parole, the Sheriff's Department, and the Sheriff's Department Dispatch. Existing space and required space for each department's program were determined based on current and proposed use and growth projected out ten years.
- Representatives from each of the engineering consultants retained by EHD, including Civil, Structural, Mechanical, and Electrical disciplines, met with the facilities staff to review each of the systems. The review included HVAC systems, electrical systems, and plumbing. Security was given consideration related to physical security and electronic surveillance, particularly as it relates to the lack of secure transport for detainees and the cross traffic between the public, staff, and prisoners. Ancillary spaces, including maintenance, restrooms, commons spaces, and mechanical/electrical, and housekeeping areas were evaluated as well.
- The Architectural portion of the team met with facilities operations and department heads to review existing spaces and establish future needs. We also evaluated the physical facility for code compliance related to life safety, egress, code compliance, accessibility, and functionality.

Why Is a New Building Necessary

- The following is all information taken directly out of the EH Danson Report:
- Overall, the building is sound and serviceable but in need of significant improvements to provide an adequate, safe, and healthy environment for the public, staff, and litigants.
- The systems that form the bulk of the infrastructure of the building, including mechanical, electrical, fire alarm and security are in outdated and poor condition.
- There are numerous code compliance issues in some of the systems. For the type of use, this building is required to have an NFPA 13 compliant automatic fire suppression system (sprinklers).
- Mechanical systems are well past their serviceable life.

Why Is a New Building Necessary

- Life-safety systems, including fire protection, fire suppression and fire detection systems, are insufficient or non-existent. There is currently no sprinkler system in the building.
- The electrical system is composed of outdated and unserviceable panels (Federal Pacific), which are in poor condition. Ground wiring is lacking. Wiring is inaccessible in some areas, but where visible, it showed evidence of code deficiencies and poor condition. The emergency generator does not have sufficient capacity to support the building and does not provide power for important elements such as the sewer pumps.
- Reports indicate that the textured drywall ceilings and above ceiling pipe joint contain asbestos. Several areas of the building have been abated but the majority of the mitigation remains to be completed. The exact amount of above ceiling asbestos containing pipe insulation to be removed is unknown. Remediation of ACMs in occupied spaces, while common, is often very difficult due to the sensitivity to air quality concerns among occupants.

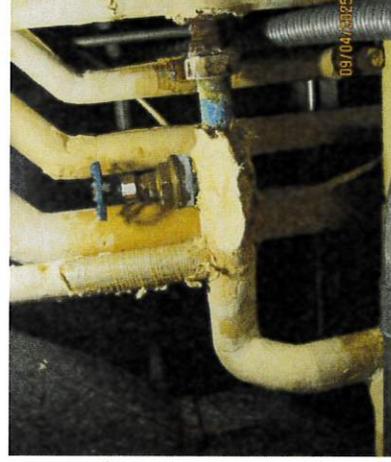
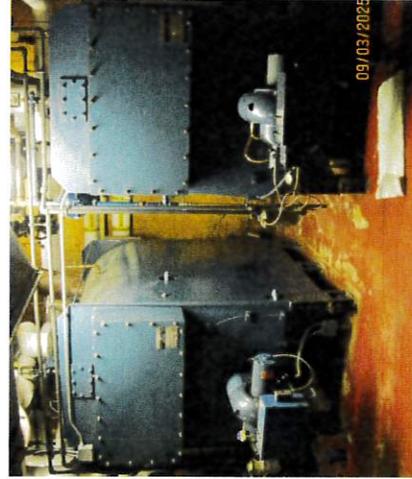
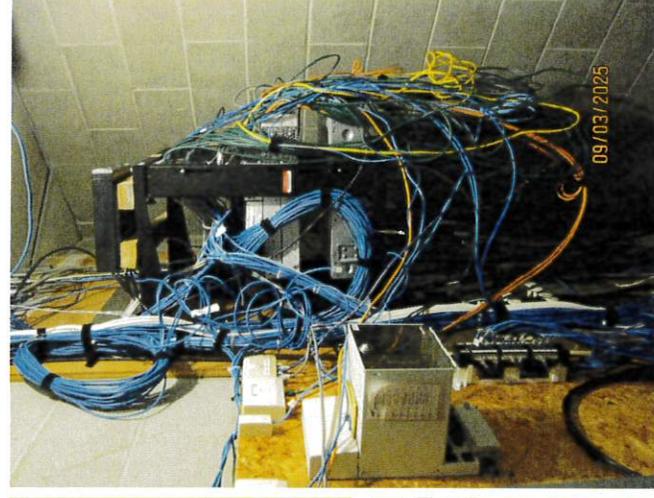
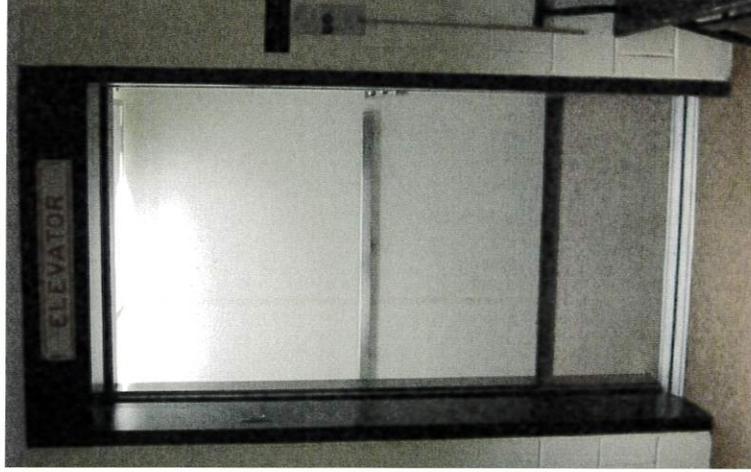
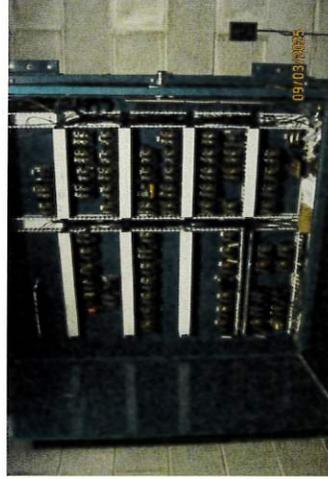
Why Is a New Building Necessary

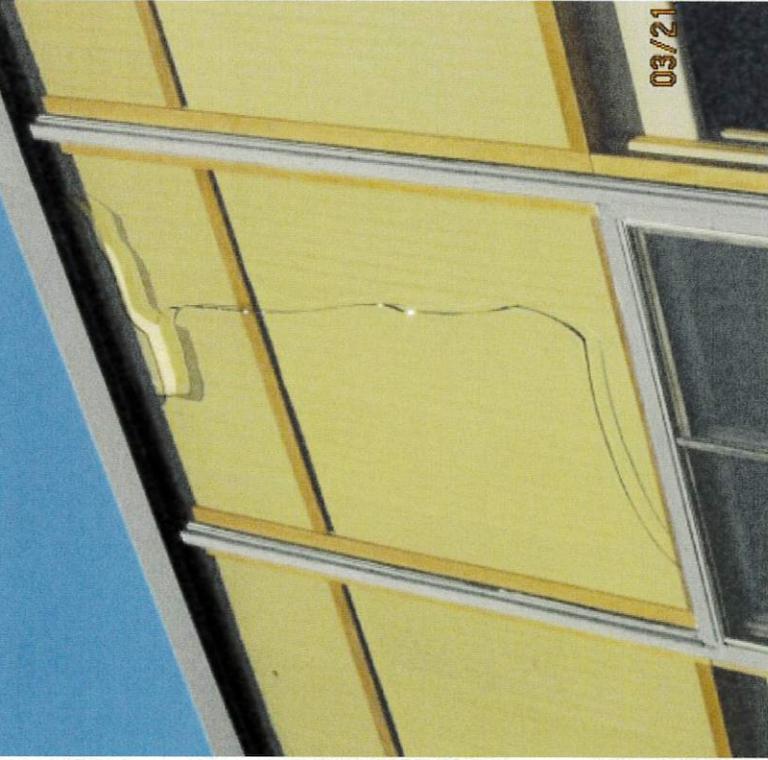
- The hydraulic public/staff elevator manufactured by Dover was installed when the building was constructed and has remained largely the same. The elevator operates at a slow rate of 85 fpm and is rated at 3,500 lb capacity on the inspection certificate. Replacement parts are unavailable for the controls. There are no firefighter controls or security controls to restrict access during prisoner transport. The elevator is lacking hands-free communication in case of emergencies. The elevator and its controls have reached their service life and should be replaced.
- Security and communications systems are limited and in need of improvement due to age. Access to wiring is limited which is a challenge for adding new technology or improving/repairing existing systems. Door access controls, surveillance systems, motion detectors and metal detectors have been installed in various places but have been noted by staff as inadequate and incomplete.

Why Is a New Building Necessary

- The parking area is consolidated in a large area on the east side of the building. There are a few vehicle spaces on the west side of the building for staff, but the number is insufficient. The parking lot itself is in poor condition and needs to be replaced. Additional segregated parking should be provided for staff for security and safety. There is limited lighting for the parking area, making security at night a concern.
- The exterior building envelope has little to no capacity to resist heat gain or loss. Almost half of the exterior vertical enclosure is single-pane glass in steel frames and is failing. The lack of insulation in the perimeter enclosure creates an unhealthy and uncomfortable work environment.

Pictures representing some of the issues within the existing building - refer to the Facilities Concerns document for more detailed descriptions of the pictures.

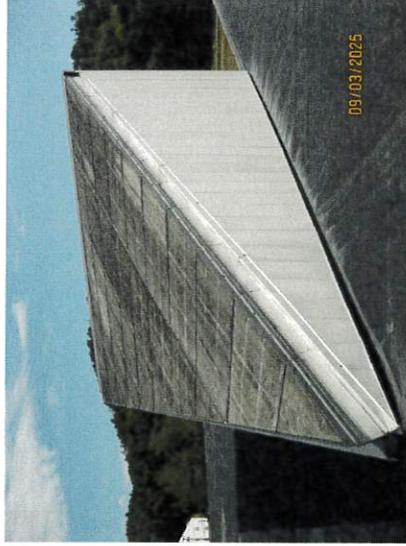




Glass curtain walls – The steel frame interiors are rusting, and the pressure from the expanding rust leads to cracking of these massive windows. The windows then break into large jagged shards, unlike today's safety glass, which is designed to break into small pieces to mitigate injury. Replacement glass must be safety glass, and thus, it can be problematic to procure the large sizes we need due to tempering oven size limitations. Lastly, replacement glass is quite expensive. For example, in April 2019, it cost \$21,570 to replace one pane of glass at the main entrance.



Kalwall Translucent panels (fiberglass) – The front entrance curtain wall and atrium roofing over the lobby are made up of Kalwall translucent panels. UV rays have degraded the panels to the point where they are thin and brittle. They are well beyond their life expectancy and sometimes leak during a driving rain.



The EH Danson Report Provided 2 Options: Option 1 – Renovations & Additions

- In order to meet the program needs and to correct the deficiencies in the infrastructure systems (mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection - MEP/FP), a significant renovation with several additions/infills of open areas will be required. This will trigger the removal of ceilings and the remediation of asbestos containing materials (ACM's). A significant quantity of interior brick masonry walls will need to be demolished. The exterior envelope will require the removal of the glass and some sort of cladding to provide a thermal barrier.

- Because of the sensitive nature of court proceedings, the security requirements for moving the public, staff, and litigants, it is inconceivable that the building could remain occupied during construction. We anticipate for a project of this magnitude a construction period of two years at the least. Facilities will need to be leased during that time period for housing the various departments. There will be a loss of income to the County from the departments that currently lease space in the building. Moving expenses to and from temporary facilities for the County departments will also be incurred.

- Given the age, code deficiencies and poor conditions of most of the infrastructure systems, correction, expansion, and modernization of those systems will require a comprehensive remodeling affecting virtually every area and element. Very little of the existing construction is likely to remain without impact.

Option 2 – New Building

- There is space on the site in the parking lot to the east to accommodate the construction of a new facility. This would allow the existing courthouse to remain online during construction.
- Current state-of-the-art infrastructure can be incorporated with a view to modification and expansion in the future. A significantly improved building envelope and efficient modern electric-mechanical equipment should greatly reduce operating costs. It is estimated that a new courthouse 62,414 square feet in this region should use 45% less energy than the existing 44,662 square feet courthouse, based on national surveys of energy use.
- Renewable Energy systems will be investigated to optimize operational cost savings.
- Cost related to moving expenses would be reduced from two moves to one move, and expenses for leased spaces will not be incurred. The loss of lease income to the County will be avoided in this scenario.

Why Was the New Building Option Selected

- Cost – In 2021, when the report was completed, it was determined that Option 1 to Renovate and Add would cost approximately an additional \$2M over building a new building.
- Magnitude and Disruption of Option 1 made it less desirable, and since it was determined it would also be more expensive, the Board of Commissioners at that time believed that it made sense to move forward with new construction.
- Please see the document titled: Facility Concerns available as a handout and on the website, which further highlights the current conditions. <https://grafton-county.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Facility-Concerns.pdf>
- We want to emphasize that the significant issues that exist today are NOT from a lack of maintenance over the years. In fact, we would point out that because the infrastructure has lasted as long as it has (well beyond its life cycle), excellent preventive maintenance has been done over the years.

Potential Energy Savings

- Formal Energy Modeling has not been completed at the Conceptual Design phase of the project.
- The County currently has a Biomass Plant that the new building would be tied into.
- Other methods of renewable energy sources will also be reviewed for potential use and savings.
- National surveys suggest that a new building of 62,414 square feet will use 45% less energy than the 44,662 square feet existing building.
- Electricity and fuel costs continue to rise for the existing building, with today's costs being over \$180,000 annually; this would create significant savings. Without addressing the building's inadequacies, energy costs will continue to rise.



State of New Hampshire

- March 2024 ~ County Officials met with Executive Councilors Cinde Warmington and Joe Kenney, Commissioner of Administrative Services for NH, Charlie Arlinghaus, Chief Justice Gordon MacDonald, and Sarah Lineberry, DAS Bureau of Courts. The State of NH has 38 courthouses throughout NH. They own 20 of those, and they lease space in 18. The state's priority for capital expenditures is with the buildings it owns first. Every two (2) years, the courts conduct a facilities assessment, and it looks at the top twenty (20) or thirty (30) most pressing needs across the State, and Grafton County has not been on the radar. The state selects the top concerns to request funding for in the State's budget.
- See the Commissioner Meeting minutes from 3/5/24 on our website – <https://grafton-county.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/3.5.24.pdf>

State of New Hampshire

- During this meeting, Commissioner Arlinghaus stated that the State has no intention of leaving the Grafton County Courthouse.
- From that meeting, the Board of Commissioners decided to move forward with planning a new building that would include space for the Superior and Circuit Courts. A new lease will be negotiated if/when a new building is decided upon. This new lease will be based on current market rates and square footage.

Planning Process

- 3/26/24 – Commissioners established a Courthouse Building Committee
- 6/17/24 – Executive Committee of the Delegation approved ARPA funds in the amount of \$761,130 to be used for Architect & Engineering Fees for a proposed new building.
- 8/29/24 – A Request for Qualifications was released to find a qualified Architect for Phase 1 of the project.
- 11/19/24 – After a competitive bidding process, Lavallee Brensinger Architects of Manchester, NH, was selected to complete a Space Needs Assessment and a Conceptual Design.
- 6/24/25 – Lavallee presented their final Conceptual Design and cost estimate to the Commissioners.
- 8/26/25 – A majority of the Board of Commissioners voted to accept the Conceptual Design and bring the project forward to the Delegation to request a bond vote.

Financial Impacts from Proposed Bond

	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Taxes	\$ 30,487,410.00	\$ 30,487,410	\$ 30,989,460	\$ 33,003,210	\$ 33,898,835	\$ 33,786,710
Additional Debt Service		\$ 502,050	\$ 2,013,750	\$ 895,625	\$ (112,125)	\$ (112,875)
Taxes		\$ 30,989,460	\$ 33,003,210	\$ 33,898,835	\$ 33,786,710	\$ 33,673,835
% Increase		1.65%	6.50%	2.71%	-0.33%	-0.33%

Assumes a \$30,000,000 Bond Issue on 7/1/26 for 25 years @ 4.1431350 and a \$17,000,000 Bond Issue on 7/1/27 for 25 years @4.1431350

Total increase in tax obligations from bond costs 10.86%

Final Payment on the Existing Jail Bonds is - July 1, 2031

Tax Impact to Residents

The average assessed value of a single-family home in Grafton County in 2025 is approximately \$400,000.

Based on the most recent available data from DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) regarding equalized valuation and town tax rates and **assuming that those rates were not to change (which they will change) This analysis represents a current snapshot.**

The home with the average assessed value of \$400,000 would see an increase in the **County portion** of the tax bill of on average \$59.24 over a three (3) year period. It will take three (3) years to build the repayment of the bond into the county budgets.

25 Year - 2 Issues totalling \$47,000,000
Based on Property Valuation of \$400,000

MUNICIPALITIES	2024 Total		2024 County		County Tax %		2024/2025		FY 2027 Tax		FY 2027		FY 2028 Tax		FY 2028		FY 2029 Tax		FY 2029		Total Increase in the County portion of the tax bill Over 3 Yr
	Tax Rate	Tax Rate	Tax Rate	Tax Rate	of Total Tax	Tax %	Tax %	Tax %	Tax %	Increase from Bond Costs	County Tax Increase	County Tax Increase	Increase from Bond Costs	County Tax Increase							
ALEXANDRIA	19.03	1.35	7.09%	\$540.00	0.022275	1.37	\$548.91	\$ 8.91	0.089197875	1.46	\$ 584.59	\$35.68	0.039605915	1.50	\$ 600.43	\$15.64	\$60.43				
ASHLAND	18.39	0.99	5.38%	\$386.00	0.016335	1.01	\$402.53	\$ 6.53	0.065417775	1.07	\$ 428.70	\$26.16	0.029044338	1.10	\$ 440.32	\$11.62	\$44.32				
BATH	23.43	1.27	5.42%	\$508.00	0.020985	1.29	\$516.38	\$ 8.38	0.083912075	1.37	\$ 549.95	\$33.56	0.037258998	1.41	\$ 564.85	\$14.90	\$56.85				
BENTON	8.37	0.95	11.35%	\$380.00	0.015675	0.97	\$386.27	\$ 6.27	0.062768875	1.03	\$ 411.38	\$25.11	0.027870829	1.06	\$ 422.53	\$11.15	\$42.53				
BETHLEHEM	17.18	1.11	6.46%	\$444.00	0.018315	1.13	\$451.33	\$ 7.33	0.073340475	1.20	\$ 480.66	\$29.34	0.032564683	1.23	\$ 493.69	\$13.03	\$49.69				
BRIDGEWATER	5.4	1.02	18.89%	\$408.00	0.016883	1.04	\$414.73	\$ 6.73	0.067393995	1.10	\$ 441.69	\$26.96	0.029924469	1.13	\$ 453.66	\$11.97	\$45.66				
BRISTOL	23.62	1.82	7.71%	\$728.00	0.03003	1.85	\$740.01	\$ 12.01	0.12025195	1.97	\$ 788.11	\$48.10	0.053394641	2.02	\$ 808.47	\$21.36	\$81.47				
CAMPTON	17.22	1.18	6.85%	\$472.00	0.01947	1.20	\$479.79	\$ 7.79	0.07796555	1.28	\$ 510.97	\$31.19	0.034618503	1.31	\$ 524.82	\$13.85	\$52.82				
CANAAN	29.53	1.34	4.54%	\$536.00	0.02211	1.36	\$544.84	\$ 8.84	0.0885375	1.45	\$ 580.26	\$35.41	0.039312538	1.49	\$ 595.98	\$15.73	\$59.98				
DORCHESTER	14.9	0.8	5.37%	\$320.00	0.0132	0.81	\$325.28	\$ 5.28	0.052858	0.87	\$ 346.42	\$21.14	0.023470172	0.89	\$ 355.81	\$9.39	\$35.81				
EASTON	13.91	1.61	11.57%	\$644.00	0.026565	1.64	\$654.63	\$ 10.63	0.106376725	1.74	\$ 697.18	\$42.55	0.047233721	1.79	\$ 716.07	\$18.89	\$72.07				
ELSWORTH	15.21	1.54	10.12%	\$616.00	0.02541	1.57	\$626.16	\$ 10.16	0.10175165	1.67	\$ 666.86	\$40.70	0.045180081	1.71	\$ 684.94	\$18.07	\$68.94				
ENFIELD	16.91	1.04	6.15%	\$416.00	0.01716	1.06	\$422.86	\$ 6.86	0.0687154	1.13	\$ 450.35	\$27.49	0.030511223	1.16	\$ 462.55	\$12.20	\$46.55				
FRANCONIA	15.98	1.44	9.01%	\$576.00	0.02376	1.46	\$585.50	\$ 9.50	0.0951444	1.56	\$ 623.56	\$38.06	0.042246309	1.60	\$ 640.46	\$16.90	\$64.46				
GRAFTON	30.6	1.6	5.23%	\$640.00	0.0264	1.63	\$650.56	\$ 10.56	0.105716	1.73	\$ 692.85	\$42.29	0.046940344	1.78	\$ 711.62	\$18.78	\$71.62				
GROTON	9.69	2.01	20.74%	\$804.00	0.033165	2.04	\$817.27	\$ 13.27	0.132805725	2.18	\$ 870.39	\$53.12	0.058968807	2.23	\$ 893.98	\$23.59	\$89.98				
HANOVER	17.68	1.43	8.09%	\$572.00	0.023595	1.45	\$581.44	\$ 9.44	0.094483675	1.55	\$ 619.23	\$37.79	0.041952932	1.59	\$ 636.01	\$16.78	\$64.01				
HAVERHILL	19.44	1	5.14%	\$400.00	0.0185	1.02	\$406.60	\$ 6.60	0.0660725	1.08	\$ 433.03	\$26.43	0.029337715	1.11	\$ 444.76	\$11.74	\$44.76				
HEBRON	6.99	1.38	19.74%	\$552.00	0.02277	1.40	\$561.11	\$ 9.11	0.09118005	1.49	\$ 597.58	\$36.47	0.040486046	1.53	\$ 613.77	\$16.19	\$61.77				
HOLDERNESS	8.65	0.99	11.45%	\$396.00	0.016335	1.01	\$402.53	\$ 6.53	0.065417775	1.07	\$ 428.70	\$26.16	0.029044338	1.10	\$ 440.32	\$11.62	\$44.32				
LANDAUFF	25.87	2.25	8.70%	\$900.00	0.037125	2.29	\$914.85	\$ 14.85	0.148663125	2.44	\$ 974.32	\$59.47	0.066009858	2.50	\$1,000.72	\$26.40	\$1,000.72				
LEBANON	26.28	1.3	4.95%	\$520.00	0.02145	1.32	\$528.58	\$ 8.58	0.08589425	1.41	\$ 562.94	\$34.36	0.038139029	1.45	\$ 578.19	\$15.26	\$58.19				
LINCOLN	11.68	1.53	13.10%	\$612.00	0.025245	1.56	\$622.10	\$ 10.10	0.101090925	1.66	\$ 662.53	\$40.44	0.044866704	1.70	\$ 680.49	\$17.95	\$68.49				
LISBON	19.98	0.98	4.90%	\$392.00	0.01637	1.00	\$398.47	\$ 6.47	0.06475105	1.06	\$ 424.37	\$25.90	0.02875096	1.09	\$ 435.87	\$11.50	\$43.87				
LITTLETON	24.94	1.75	7.02%	\$700.00	0.028875	1.78	\$711.55	\$ 11.55	0.115626875	1.89	\$ 757.80	\$46.25	0.051341001	1.95	\$ 778.34	\$20.54	\$78.34				
LYMAN	21.65	1.63	7.53%	\$652.00	0.026895	1.66	\$662.76	\$ 10.76	0.107698175	1.76	\$ 705.84	\$43.08	0.047820475	1.81	\$ 724.97	\$19.13	\$72.97				
LYME	27.5	1.51	5.49%	\$604.00	0.024915	1.53	\$613.97	\$ 9.97	0.099769475	1.63	\$ 653.87	\$39.91	0.044299949	1.68	\$ 671.59	\$17.72	\$67.59				
MONROE	10.66	0.93	8.72%	\$372.00	0.015345	0.95	\$378.14	\$ 6.14	0.061447425	1.01	\$ 402.72	\$24.58	0.027284075	1.03	\$ 413.63	\$10.91	\$41.63				
ORANGE	26	1.38	5.31%	\$552.00	0.02277	1.40	\$561.11	\$ 9.11	0.09118005	1.49	\$ 597.58	\$36.47	0.040486046	1.53	\$ 613.77	\$16.19	\$61.77				
PIERMONT	22.48	1.57	5.69%	\$512.00	0.025905	1.60	\$520.45	\$ 10.36	0.103733825	1.70	\$ 679.86	\$41.49	0.046060212	1.75	\$ 698.28	\$18.42	\$70.28				
PLYMOUTH	34.75	2.28	6.69%	\$628.00	0.02112	2.30	\$638.36	\$ 10.36	0.103733825	1.39	\$ 554.28	\$33.83	0.037552275	1.42	\$ 569.30	\$15.02	\$57.30				
RUMNEY	25.12	1.07	4.26%	\$428.00	0.017655	1.09	\$435.06	\$ 7.06	0.070697575	1.16	\$ 463.34	\$28.28	0.031391355	1.19	\$ 475.90	\$12.56	\$47.90				
RUMNEY	14.44	0.91	6.30%	\$364.00	0.015015	0.93	\$370.01	\$ 6.01	0.060125975	0.99	\$ 394.06	\$24.05	0.02669732	1.01	\$ 404.74	\$10.68	\$40.74				
SUGAR HILL	11.49	1.07	9.31%	\$428.00	0.017655	1.09	\$435.06	\$ 7.06	0.070697575	1.16	\$ 463.34	\$28.28	0.031391355	1.19	\$ 475.90	\$12.56	\$47.90				
THORNTON	11.37	0.88	7.74%	\$352.00	0.01452	0.89	\$357.81	\$ 5.81	0.0581438	0.95	\$ 381.07	\$23.26	0.025617189	0.98	\$ 393.75	\$10.33	\$39.75				
WARREN	22.75	1.29	5.67%	\$516.00	0.021285	1.31	\$524.51	\$ 8.51	0.065233525	1.40	\$ 578.52	\$34.09	0.037845652	1.43	\$ 593.73	\$15.14	\$59.73				
WATERVILLE VALLEY	9.04	0.93	10.29%	\$372.00	0.015345	0.95	\$378.14	\$ 6.14	0.061447425	1.01	\$ 402.72	\$24.58	0.027284075	1.03	\$ 413.63	\$10.91	\$41.63				
WENTWORTH	22.2	1.42	6.40%	\$568.00	0.02343	1.44	\$577.37	\$ 9.37	0.09382295	1.54	\$ 614.90	\$37.53	0.041659555	1.58	\$ 631.57	\$16.66	\$63.57				
WOODSTOCK	20.32	2.06	10.14%	\$824.00	0.03399	2.09	\$837.60	\$ 13.60	0.13610935	2.23	\$ 892.04	\$54.44	0.060435692	2.29	\$ 916.21	\$24.17	\$92.21				

Potential Tax Impact - Town of Plymouth
 \$400,000 Value Home

	Municipal	County	State Education	Local Education	Total	County Portion of Tax Bill
Current Tax Rate	\$ 10.93	\$ 1.07	\$ 1.35	\$ 11.77	\$ 25.12	\$ 428.00
Year 1		\$ 1.09				\$ 435.06
Year 2		\$ 1.16				\$ 463.34
Year 3		\$ 1.19				\$ 475.90
Total Increase in County Portion over 3 years						\$ 47.90

Grafton County



COURTHOUSE REPLACEMENT STUDY

3785 Dartmouth College Highway, North Haverhill, NH 03774

June 12, 2025

LAVALLEE | BRENSINGER ARCHITECTS



Foley Buhl Roberts
& ASSOCIATES, INC



» Final Report Cover

LAVALLEE | BRENSINGER ARCHITECTS

Introduction

In 2024, Grafton County, New Hampshire retained Lavallee Brensinger Architects to study the replacement of their existing courthouse, as recommended in the 2021 Assessment of this facility by EHDanson Associates. This study began by assessing the county's spatial and operational needs, utilizing questionnaires and meetings for each department to be located in the proposed courthouse. These needs were then tabulated in a space program, "cost-loaded" benchmarked on similar project types, and "right-sized" with the Courthouse Building Committee. Once this program was approved, options for site design, building layout, and exterior design were developed and reviewed. Ultimately, a single option was chosen to reflect a cost-effective, secure, and contextually appropriate design, and a detailed total project budget estimate is provided for that option.

Existing Conditions Review

The existing courthouse must remain operational during construction, the new courthouse must remain as close as possible to the Department of Corrections, and the public entrance must be clear and visible from the road. The Courthouse Building Committee and the design team determined the location of the existing courthouse's parking lot balances these important criteria-effectively. Based on this information, a survey and a geotechnical report were developed for this area, and conceptual designs are based on the information gathered.

Operations & Program Validation

The proposed building includes spaces from the following: the Grafton County Sheriff's Office, Dispatch & Communications, NH DOC Probation & Parole, the Grafton County Bar Association, the Grafton County Attorney's Office, the Grafton County Register of Deeds, the Grafton County Maintenance Department, the NH DMV, and the NH Judicial Branch. Department representatives filled out a questionnaire and participated in meetings to review their current and projected needs. During this process, Lavallee Brensinger Architects and the Courthouse Building Committee challenged each department to use contemporary best practices such as dedicated prisoner paths, and to explore cost-savings opportunities such as sharing spaces. The information gathered from these questionnaires and meetings was used to develop the tabulated program included in this study.

Conceptual Design

The information gathered in the Existing Conditions Review and Operations and Program Validation was utilized to create conceptual design options. These included site design, interior layout, and exterior design options. This study concludes with a single conceptual design as selected for conceptual level cost budgeting.

The selected conceptual site design was driven, in a large part, by how the defendants travel from the Department of Corrections to the secure corridors in the proposed courthouse. The initial conceptual site options assumed a direct physical connection to the existing Department of Corrections. In all these options, a long tunnel was the only secure approach, which was determined to be cost-prohibitive. As a result, several options were developed without a direct connection to the Department of Corrections. The concept chosen has defendants entering on the first-floor level, which avoids tunnels or grading down to a basement level sally port.

Departmental block diagrams were developed to show how the interior layout would work for each conceptual site option, with the prisoner's procession highlighted. Once the preferred site option was chosen, a space plan was developed for this option, and diagrams were developed to show each department, the processions of each user type, and interior isometric renderings showing possible furniture layouts. These conceptual interior layouts were then reviewed with all departments and revisions were made based on comments prior to being approved by the Courthouse Building Committee.

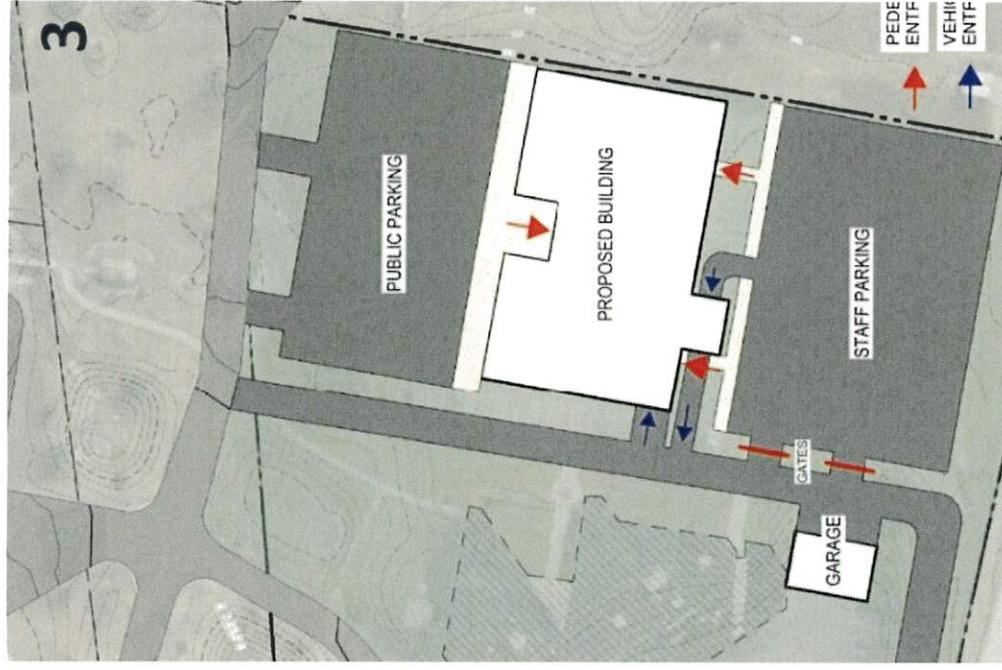
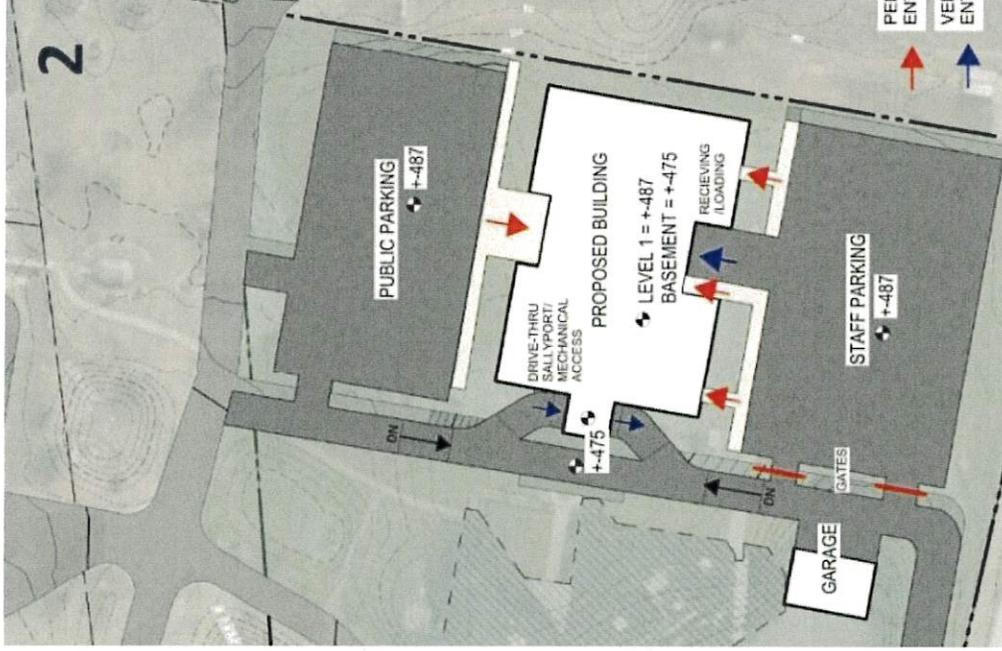
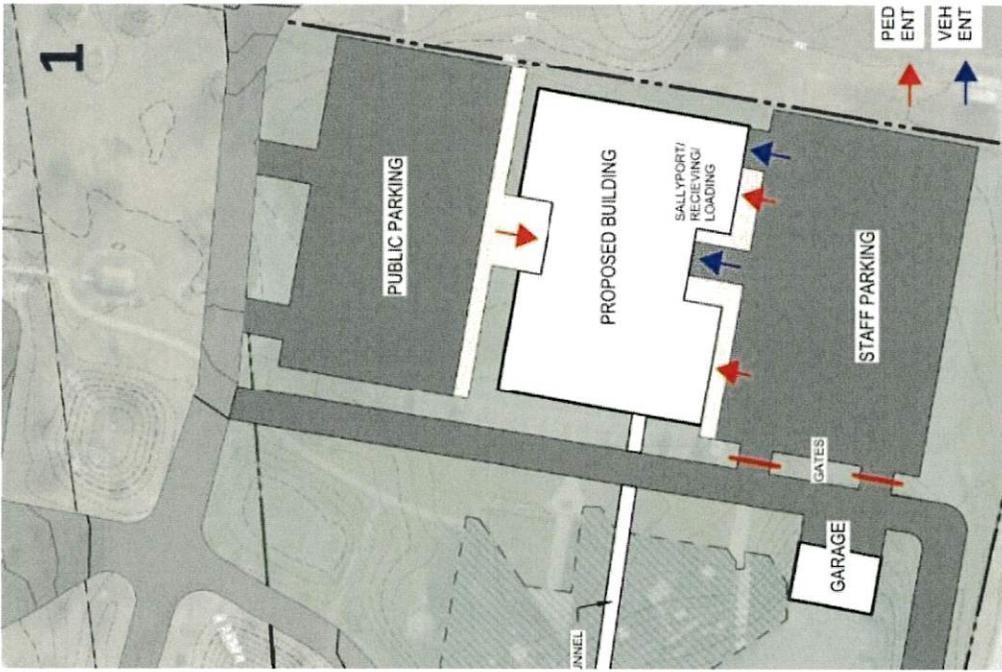
The conceptual exterior design began with a character session outlining the existing materials used in the Grafton Municipal Complex, reviewing recent state and national courthouses, and identifying what imagery is desired (and not) for the proposed building. Lavallee Brensinger Architects then presented three different strategies for the building massing, or shape, of the proposed courthouse and County offices. Based on input from the Courthouse Building Committee on the desired shape and preferred materials, a conceptual exterior design was then presented as a virtual exterior walkthrough, and revisions were based on comments before the design was approved.

As these concepts were developed, a Basis of Design was also developed to expand on the types of systems and assemblies assumed for the proposed courthouse, including Civil, Structural, Architectural, Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical Systems. The Courthouse Building Committee reviewed this tabulated document, and revisions were incorporated. Together, these conceptual documents were sent to the estimator for conceptual level cost budgeting.

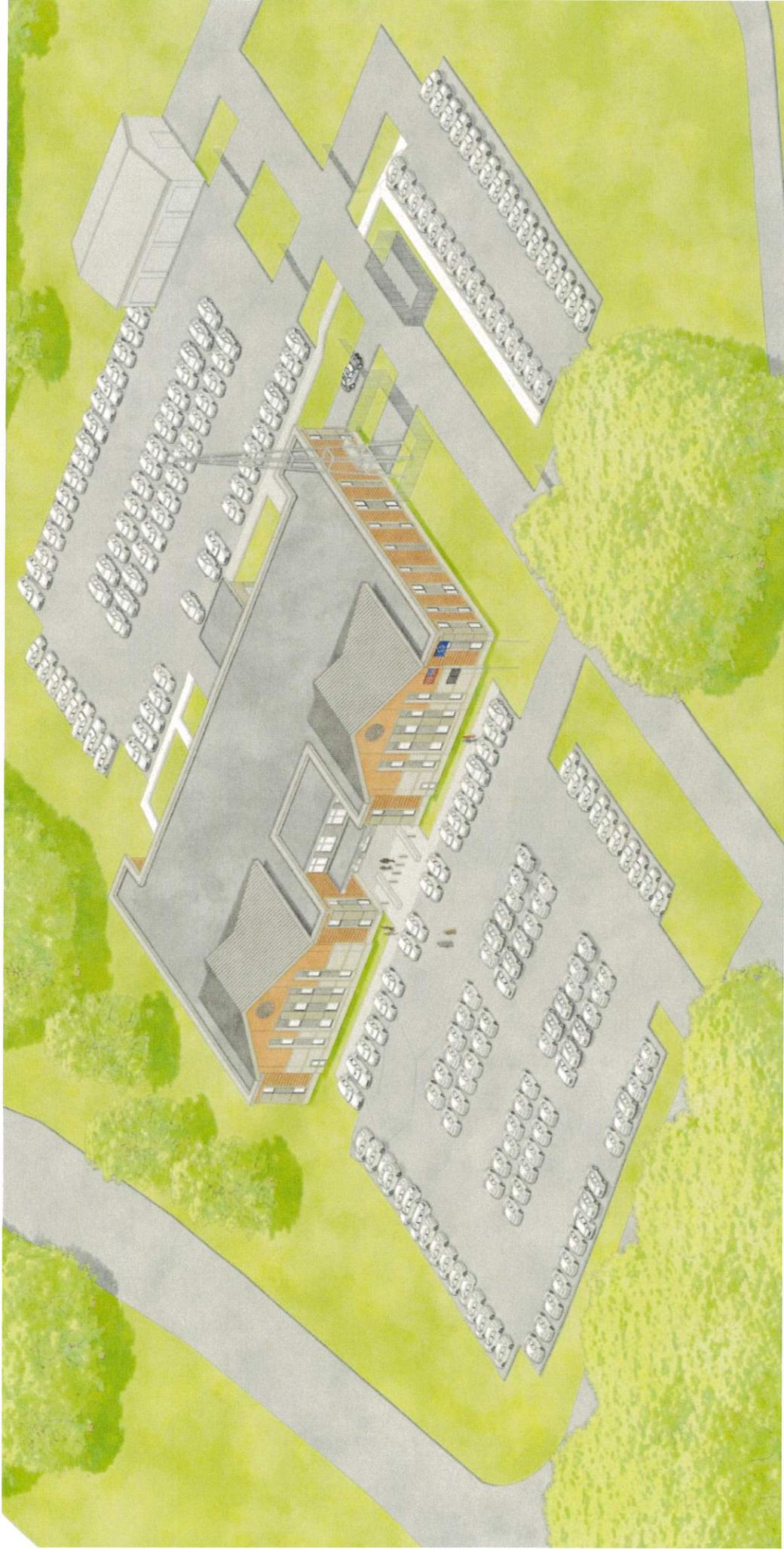
Conclusion

To meet the projected 2045 needs of the departments included in this study, Lavallee Brensinger Architects recommends a 64,668 gross square foot new building to replace the existing Grafton County Courthouse. Based on projected construction in the third quarter of 2026, the probable construction cost of this project is \$47,383,337. Lavallee Brensinger Architects thanks the Courthouse Building Committee, the representatives from each department, the Grafton County Commissioners, and, of course, the members of the Grafton County community who contributed to this study. We look forward to the opportunity to work with Grafton County when this important project is approved to move forward.

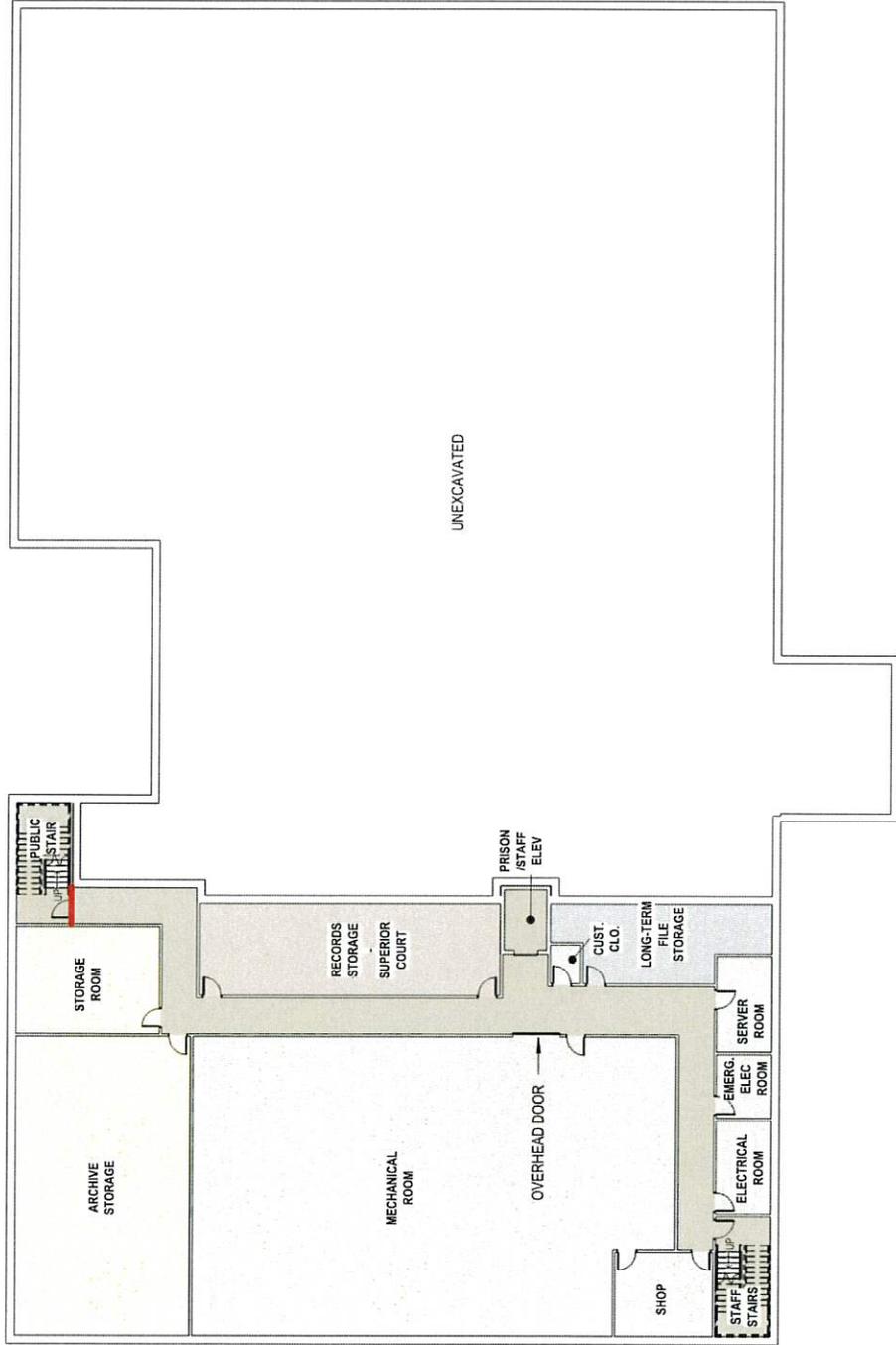
Conceptual Design



» Conceptual Site Options Analysis



» Renderings – Northeast Isometric

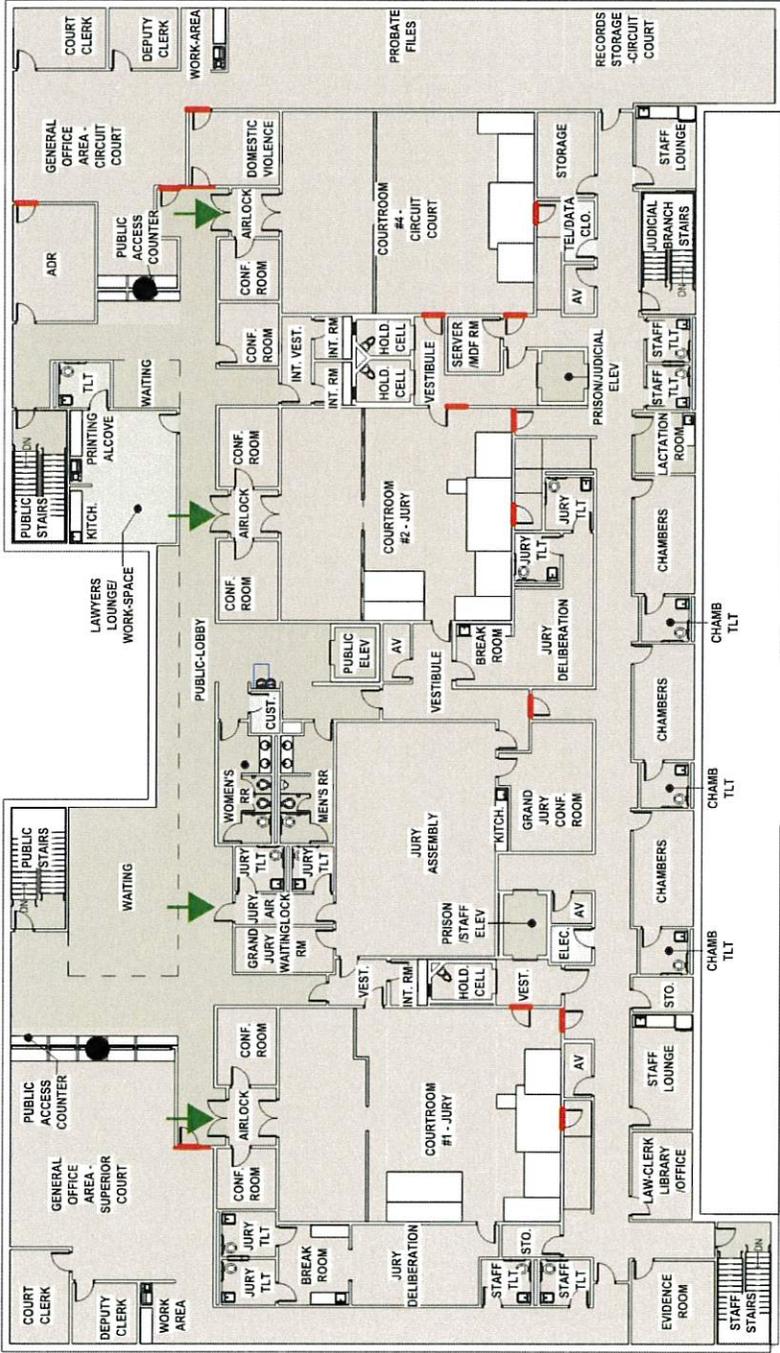


DEPARTMENT LEGEND

	Attorneys Office
	Bar Association
	Common Area
	Dispatch & Communications
	DMV
	Judicial Branch
	Maintenance
	Probation & Parole
	Register of Deeds
	Sheriffs Office
	PUBLIC LIMIT
	POINT OF SERVICE
	PUBLIC ACCESS
	STAFF ACCESS
	VEHICLE ACCESS

» Department Plans - Basement

DEPARTMENT LEGEND	
	Attorneys Office
	Bar Association
	Common Area
	Dispatch & Communications
	DMV
	Judicial Branch
	Maintenance
	Probation & Parole
	Register of Deeds
	Sheriffs Office
	PUBLIC LIMIT
	POINT OF SERVICE
	PUBLIC ACCESS
	STAFF ACCESS
	VEHICLE ACCESS



» Department Plans – Second Floor

Conceptual Budget

	Scheduled Value	Cost Per Sq. Foot
Division 1 - General Conditions		
General Expense	\$ 1,586,645	20.90
Design Services	in soft costs	
Winter Conditions	\$ 150,000	1.98
Utilities	\$ 221,750	2.92
Cleanup	\$ 407,728	5.37
Travel Expenses	\$ 45,000	0.59
Total Division 1	2,411,123	31.76
Division 2 - Sitework		
General Sitework	\$ 3,500,000	46.10
Demolition	\$ 695,000	9.15
Abatement	\$ 250,000	3.29
Landscaping	\$ 275,000	3.62
Total Division 2	4,720,000	62.17
Division 3 - Concrete		
Miscellaneous Concrete	\$ 91,400	1.20
Concrete Foundations	\$ 814,875	10.73
Concrete Floors	\$ 1,065,704	14.04
Total Division 3	1,971,979	25.98
Division 4 - Masonry		
Unit Masonry	\$ 525,000	6.92
Brick Masonry	\$ 813,000	10.71
Total Division 4	1,338,000	17.62
Division 5 - Metals		
Structural Steel	\$ 2,716,056	35.78
Miscellaneous Metals	\$ 450,000	5.93
Total Division 5	3,166,056	41.70
Division 6 - Carpentry		
Rough Carpentry	\$ 150,000	1.98
Finish Carpentry	\$ 931,000	12.26
Total Division 6	1,081,000	14.24

	Scheduled Value	Cost Per Sq. Foot
Division 7 - Thermal/Moisture Protection		
Insulation	\$ 225,000	2.96
Air/Vapor Barriers	\$ 375,000	4.94
Metal Panel Siding	\$ 330,000	4.35
Roofing	\$ 900,000	11.85
Joint Sealants	\$ 200,000	2.63
Total Division 7	2,030,000	26.74
Division 8 - Doors & Windows		
Doors & Hardware	\$ 982,900	12.95
Overhead Doors	\$ 10,000	0.13
Glass and Glazing	\$ 277,000	3.65
Windows	\$ 525,000	6.92
Total Division 8	1,794,900	23.64
Division 9 - Finishes		
Drywall	\$ 1,600,000	21.08
Acoustic Ceilings	\$ 373,340	4.92
Flooring	\$ 517,344	6.81
Painting	\$ 194,004	2.56
Total Division 9	2,684,688	35.36
Division 10 - Specialties		
Miscellaneous Specialties	\$ 248,200	3.27
Toilet Partitions	\$ 12,000	0.16
Toilet Accessories	\$ 20,000	0.26
Total Division 10	280,200	3.69
Division 11 - Equipment		
Miscellaneous Equipment	\$ 10,000	0.13
Pre-engineered Garage	\$ 1,687,500	22.23
Total Division 11	1,697,500	22.36
Division 12 - Furnishings		
Window treatments, Jury and Bench Seating	\$ 322,500	4.25
Total Division 12	322,500	4.25
Division 13 - Special Construction		
Metal detector, X-ray machine	\$ 57,000	0.75
Total Division 13	57,000	0.75
Division 14 - Conveying Systems		
Passenger Elevators	\$ 595,000	7.84
Total Division 14	595,000	7.84

» Conceptual Budget

	Scheduled Value	Cost Per Sq. Foot
Division 15 - Mechanical Systems		
Sprinkler Systems	\$ 338,340	4.46
Plumbing	\$ 1,552,032	20.44
HVAC	\$ 4,785,432	63.03
Total Division 15	6,675,804	87.93
Division 16 - Electrical Systems		
Electrical, Security, Fire alarm, IT	\$ 4,897,424	64.51
Total Division 16	4,897,424	64.51
Division 20 - Contingencies		
5% Design and 5% Construction Contingency	\$ 3,570,000	47.02
Total Division 20	3,570,000	47.02
Subtotal - Construction Hard Cost	\$ 39,293,174	517.57
General Liability Insurance	150,000	1.98
P&P and Bid Bond	\$ 175,000	2.31
Construction Management Fee	\$ 1,584,727	20.87
TOTAL HARD CONSTRUCTION COST	\$ 41,202,902	\$ 542.73
SOFT COSTS 15% of Hard Construction Costs:		
A/E Fees		
Geotechnical Fees		
Builders Risk Insurance		
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment		
Utility Connection Fees		
Third Party Inspections		
Commissioning Agent		
Relocation Expenses		
TOTAL SOFT COST:	\$ 6,180,435	\$ 81.41
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS:	\$47,383,337	\$ 624.14

This project budget is based on anticipated construction costs in the third quarter of 2026
The total project size is: Courthouse 64,668 s.f. + garage 11,250 s.f. = 75,918 s.f.

- ALTERNATES:**
- Security glazing \$ 250,000
 - Security bollards \$ 20,000
 - Radiant heating at entrances \$ 225,000

- EXCLUSIONS:**
- New dispatch consoles
 - Telephone systems and handsets
 - Computers and office equipment

Commissioners' Closing Comments

The Grafton County Commissioners have a fundamental responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer money, ensuring that public funds are used efficiently, transparently, and in ways that directly benefit the communities they serve. The majority of the Board feels that this project does just that and that the time to act is now.

The Commissioners have been good stewards of taxpayer money. Over the past several years (fiscal years 2021-2026), expenses have risen at a rate less than inflation, and in fiscal years 2021-2025, there have been slight or no increases in the county tax rate, largely due to being able to use the county's fund balance.

A majority of the Board of Commissioners feels that **we can't afford not to do this project now**. Delaying would only lead to higher costs in the future—whether through inflation, deteriorating infrastructure, or missed opportunities for economic growth. Investing now means addressing urgent needs proactively rather than reacting to crises later, often at a greater expense. Waiting will cost more; acting now is the fiscally responsible choice.

Thank you

Grafton County Commissioners

www.co.grafton.nh.us

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