

# Investing in Justice: Courthouse Complex

May 2026



# Our Commitment: Vision & Mission

**WE ENVISION...** A welcoming and adaptable Courthouse Complex that embodies justice, equity, safety, and community well-being and addresses the holistic needs of the public, systems-involved individuals, and staff now and in the future.

## **PROJECT MISSION**

Our mission is to create welcoming Courthouse Complex facilities that prioritize equity and the needs of the Milwaukee community. We will do this by fostering safety, accessibility, efficiency, and restorative practices through an adaptable design that is informed by stakeholder engagement and accommodates state-mandated services and comprehensive resources that uphold justice and fairness for everyone.

# The Challenge

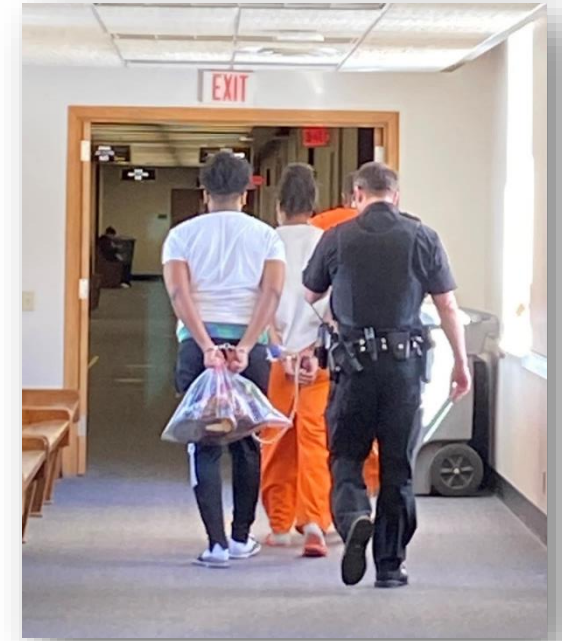
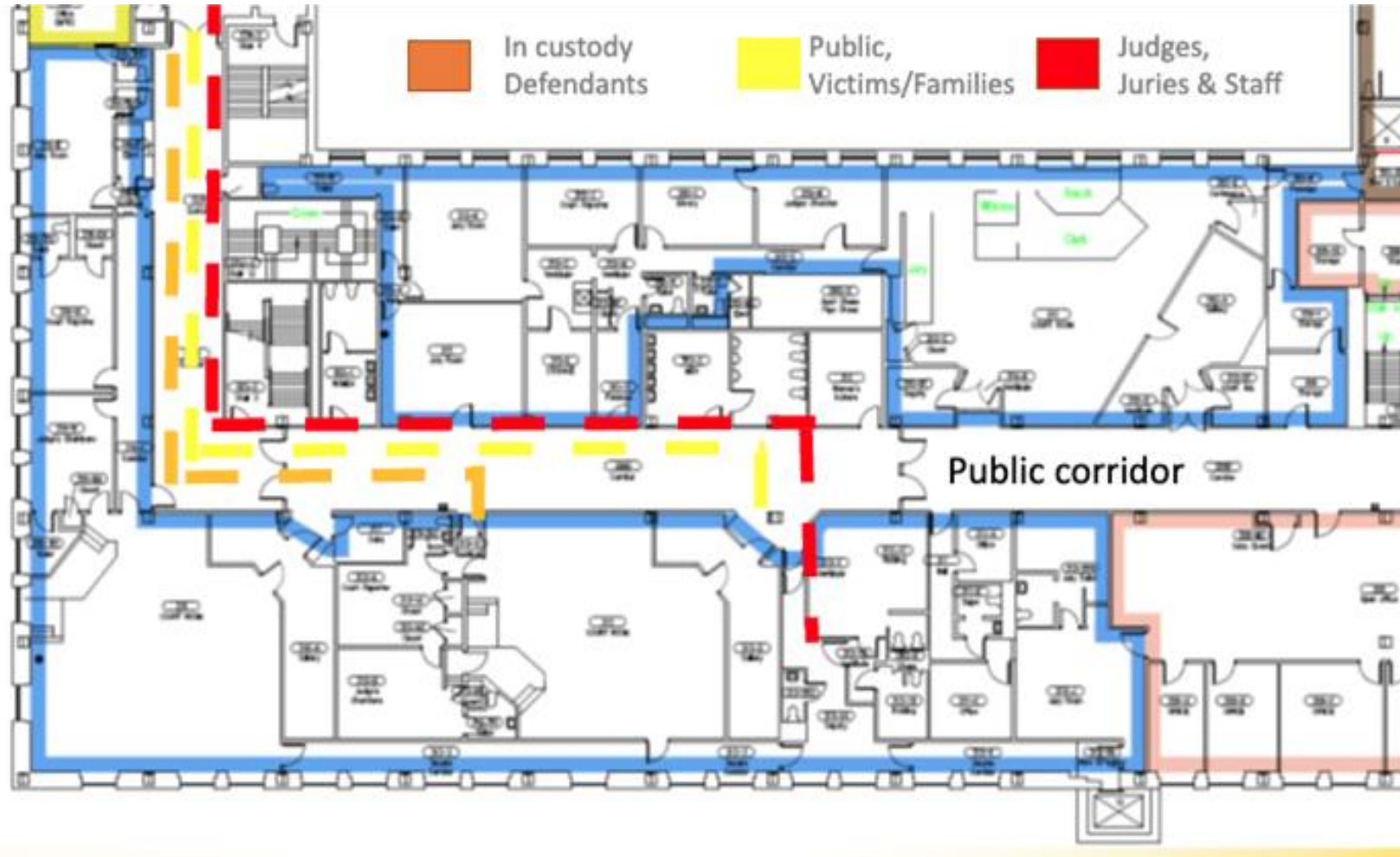


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# Risks to Public Safety, Justice

- The Public Safety Building does not meet modern needs or Wisconsin Supreme Court standards; it is severely outdated and functionally obsolete.
- In 2025, Milwaukee County conducted more than 6,500 in-custody transports, all through public hallways and elevators.
- Safety incidents can cause delays in court and additional costs.
- In 2025, each felony case took an average of 255 days to clear through Milwaukee County, compared to the state average of 243 days.

# Unsafe by State Supreme Court Standards



**Judges, juries, families, the public and defendants share corridors and elevators**

# Repairs, Renovations not Enough

- Deferred maintenance and upkeep needs alone **exceed \$300 million.**
  - Does not solve structural problems.
  - **10 floors** of former jail space **unused and unable to be retrofitted.**
- Current building **cannot be made compliant.**



**Crumbling exterior of the Safety Building fell on a police car**

# Re-envisioning Justice in Milwaukee County



# **There is a critical need to re-envision and invest in Courthouse Complex facilities**



**Protect taxpayers  
from continued band-  
aid fixes**



**Address significant  
safety and  
constitutional concerns**

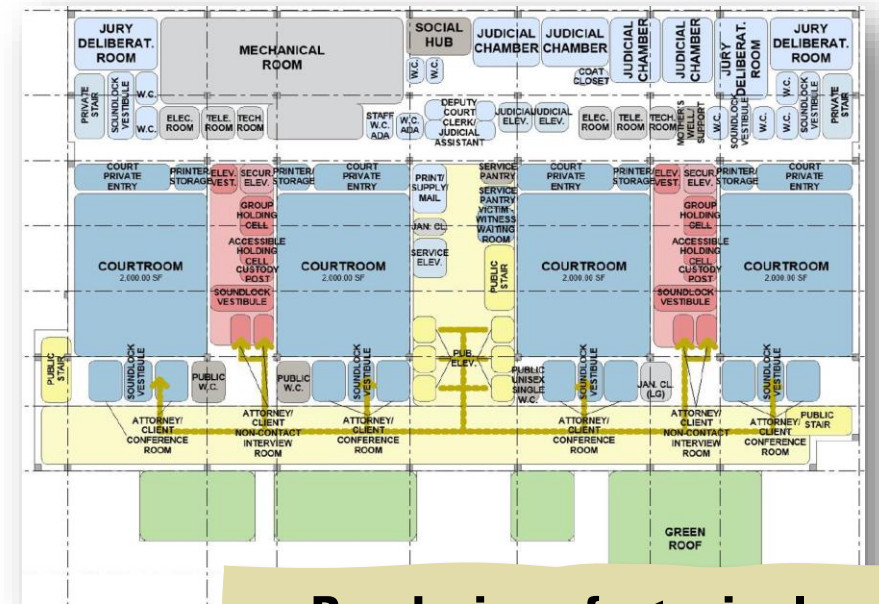


**Ensure safe and  
efficient justice**



# Designing for System Outcomes

- Problem Solving Court floor
- Respite spaces
- Improved visitor experience and wayfinding
- Three-way separation efficiency
- Space for supporting services
- Attorney/Client meeting rooms
- Efficient courtroom configuration
- Process improvement for court scheduling



**Rendering of a typical court configuration with three separate hallways.**

**The National Center for State Courts engaged with system leaders and translated feedback into tangible design and operational decisions.**

# Problem-Solving Courts



## Justice Policy and Programs

Prioritize and lead improvement efforts in the justice system

IJCC aims to improve justice system outcomes, not simply construct courtrooms. Problem-solving courts are central to that mission. This is where **design, operations, and policy intersect.**

## WHY A DEDICATED PROBLEM-SOLVING COURT FLOOR?

Improves participant experience and dignity

Supports collaboration across justice partners

Reinforces continuity, accountability, and treatment access

Creates flexibility for evolving court models

## WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE COUNCIL'S ROLE?

The CJC leads the Justice Policy & Programs work and is uniquely positioned to:

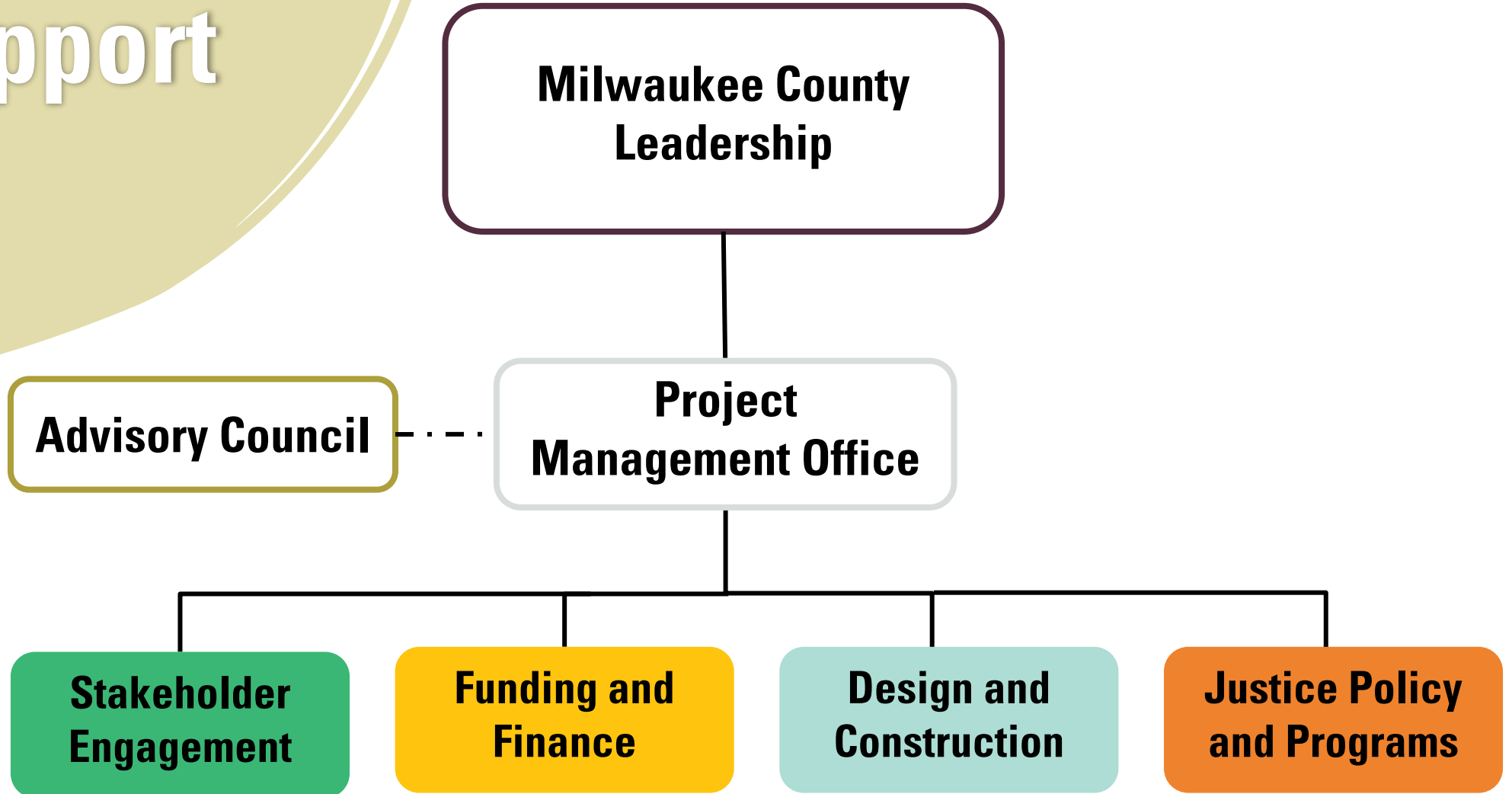
- Help define problem solving-court program goals
- Inform operational and service-delivery needs
- Shape a long-term strategy for problem-solving courts in Milwaukee County

# Structure & Timeline



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# Structure of Support



# Meeting Project Goals through Decisions

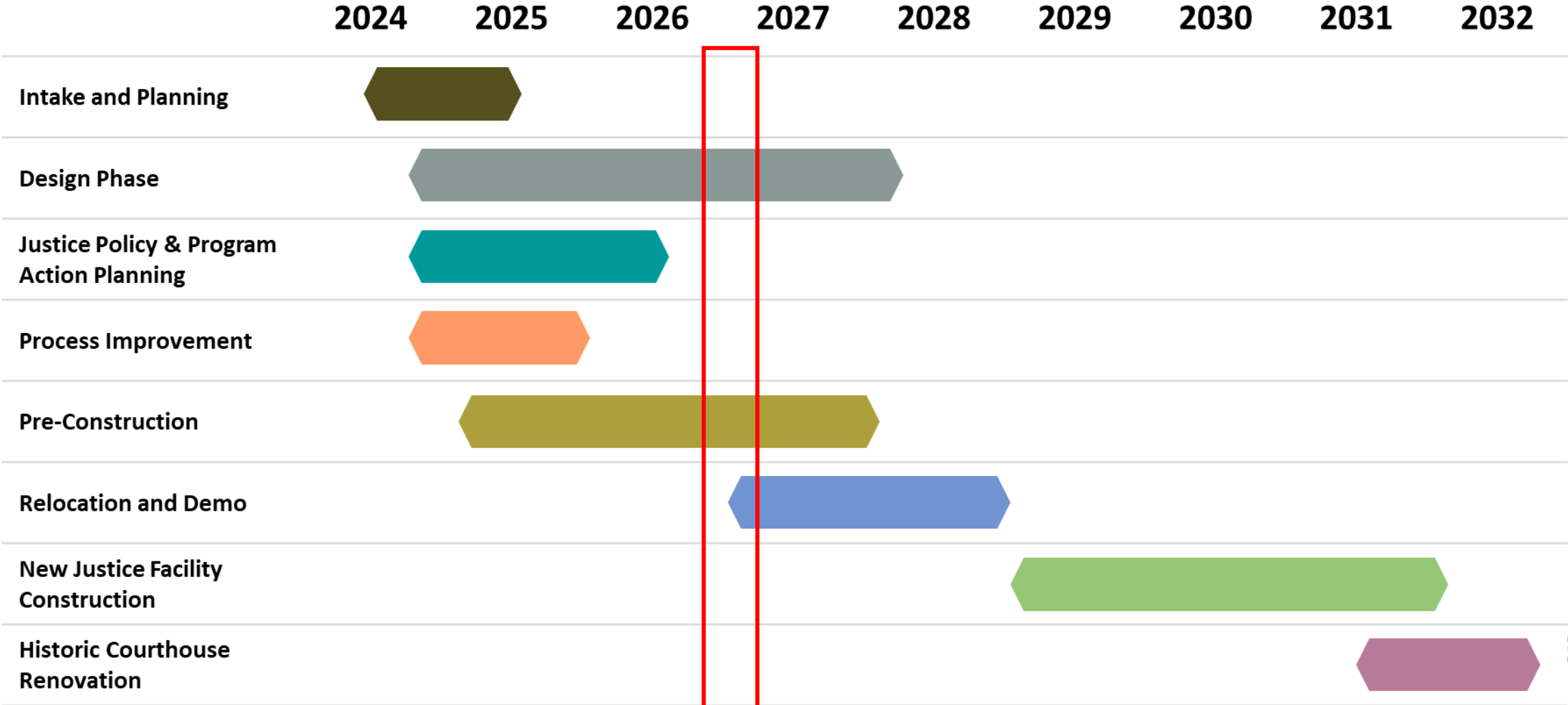
## PROJECT GOALS




## DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES



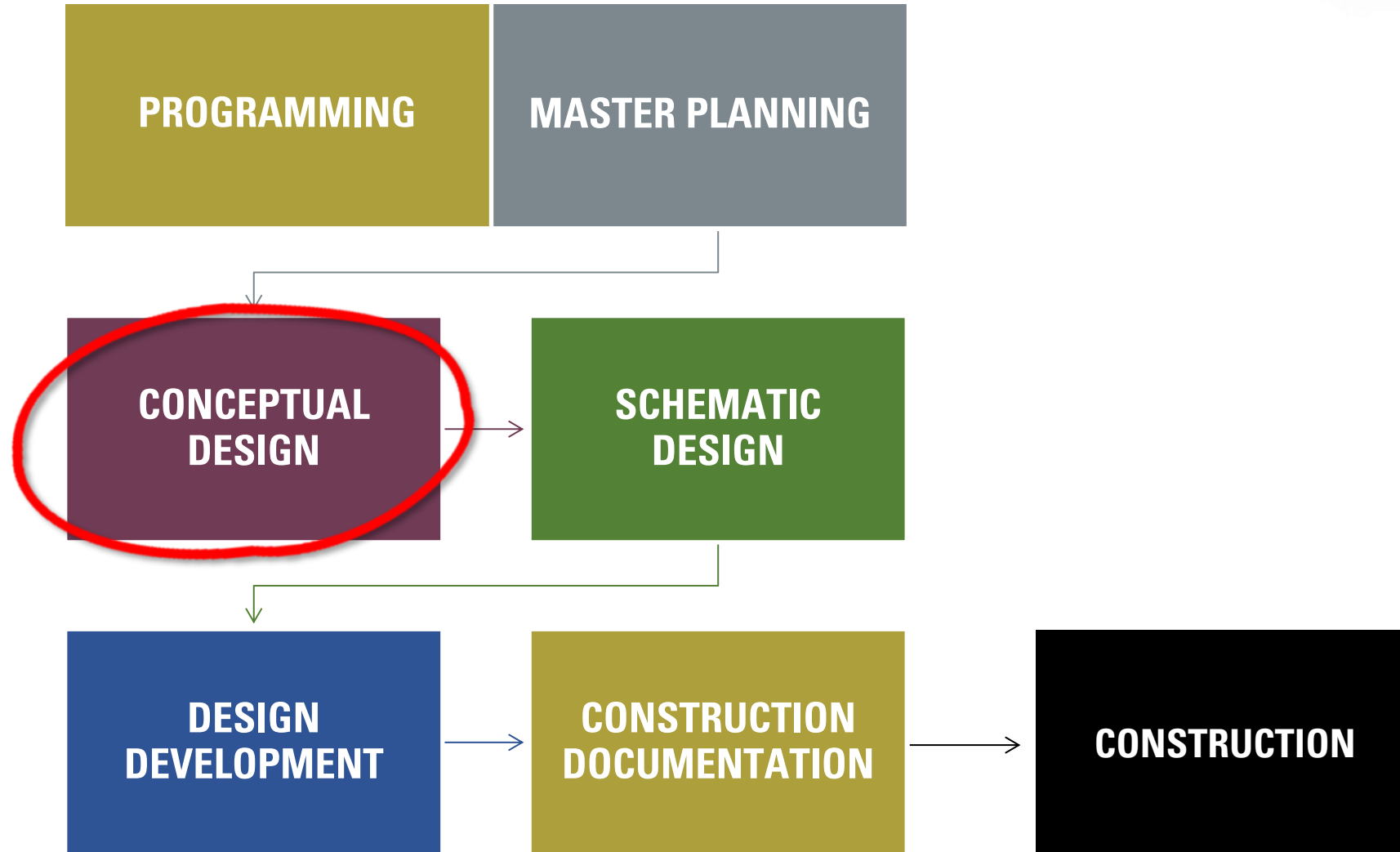
# Project Timeline



# Steps in Design Phase



**Design and Construction**  
Facilitate master planning, design and construction



# Enabling Work Overview



## Design and Construction

Facilitate master planning, design and construction

During construction, the Historic Courthouse will temporarily house all court functions: **criminal, civil, and family court.**

### ENABLING WORK PRIORITIES:

- ✓ Minimize disruption within the Courthouse Complex
- ✓ Minimize costs
- ✓ Repurpose space to maximize long-term use of the existing Historic Courthouse

### ENABLING WORK TIMELINE:

- 🎯 Now-Q2 2026: Prepare to implement, identify offsite options
- 🎯 Q2 2026-Q4 2027: Offsite build out, offsite moves, internal moves
- 🎯 Q1 2028: PSB entirely vacated; occupancy adjustments as needed

# Upcoming Milestones

The IJCC project team will focus on the following milestones and incorporate updates into quarterly reports to the County Board.

## Q1 2026

- Conceptual Design Refinement
- Enabling Space Strategy Finalization
- 75% Cost Estimate

Report to the Board

## Q2 2026

- 100% Conceptual Design
- Cost Estimate
- FY27 Capital Budget Request

Report to the Board

## Q3 2026

- Fiscal Impact Board Report
- FY27 Recommended Capital Budget
- Enabling Space Facility Modifications

Anticipated Report to the Board

## Q4 2026

- FY27 Adopted Capital Budget
- Enabling Moves Begin
- Demolition Preparation

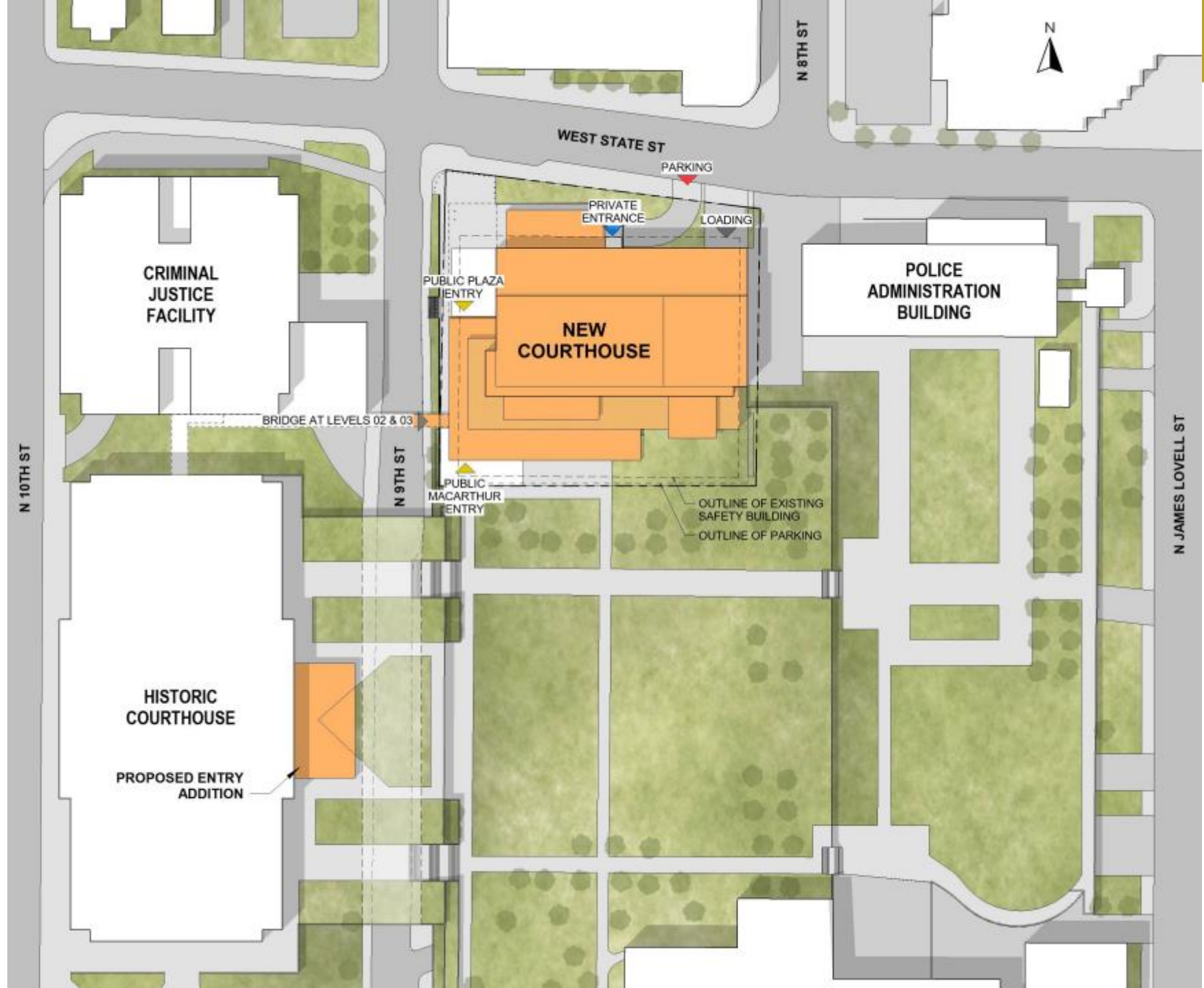
Anticipated Report to the Board

# Conceptual Design



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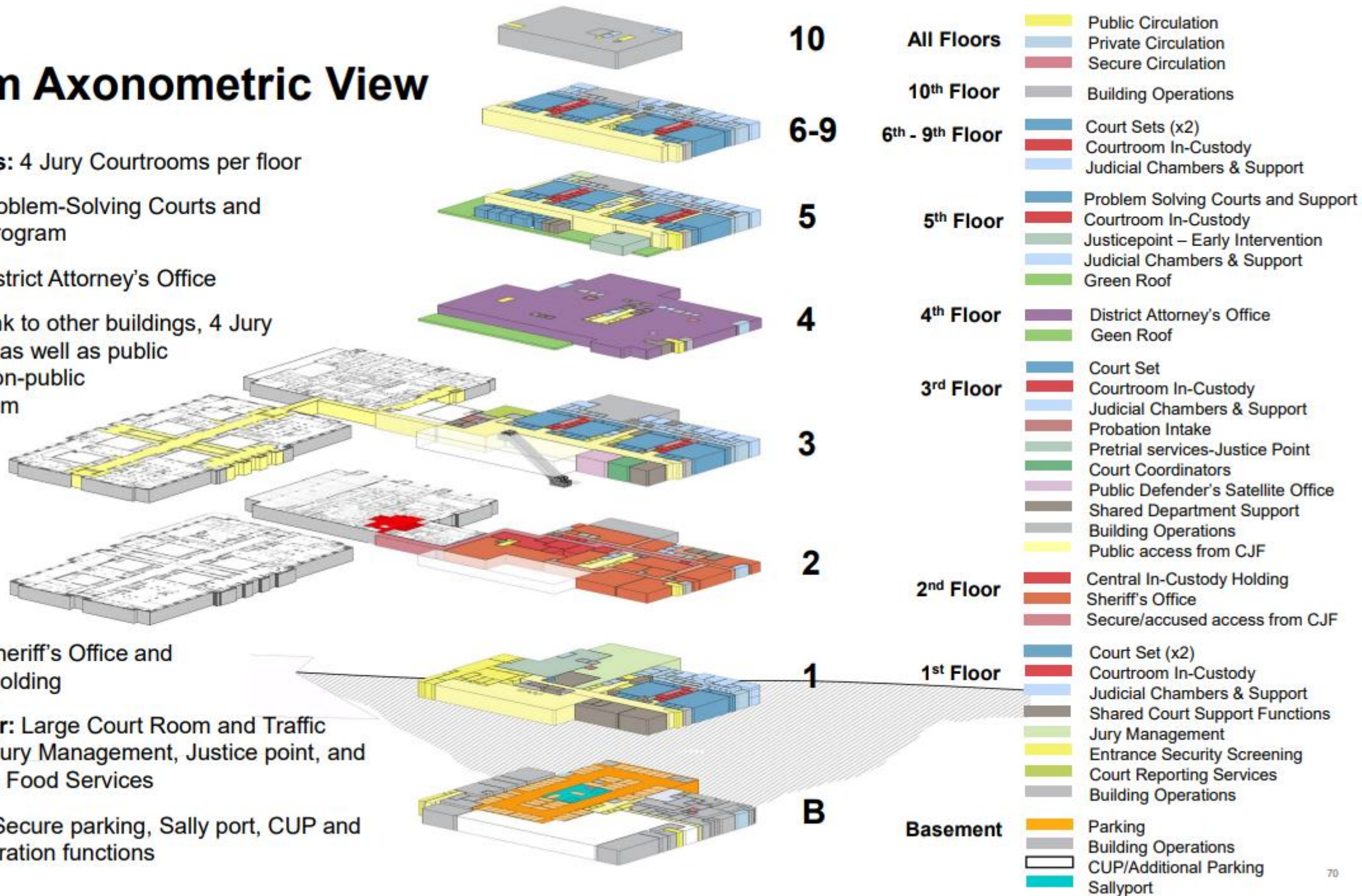
# Context Plan



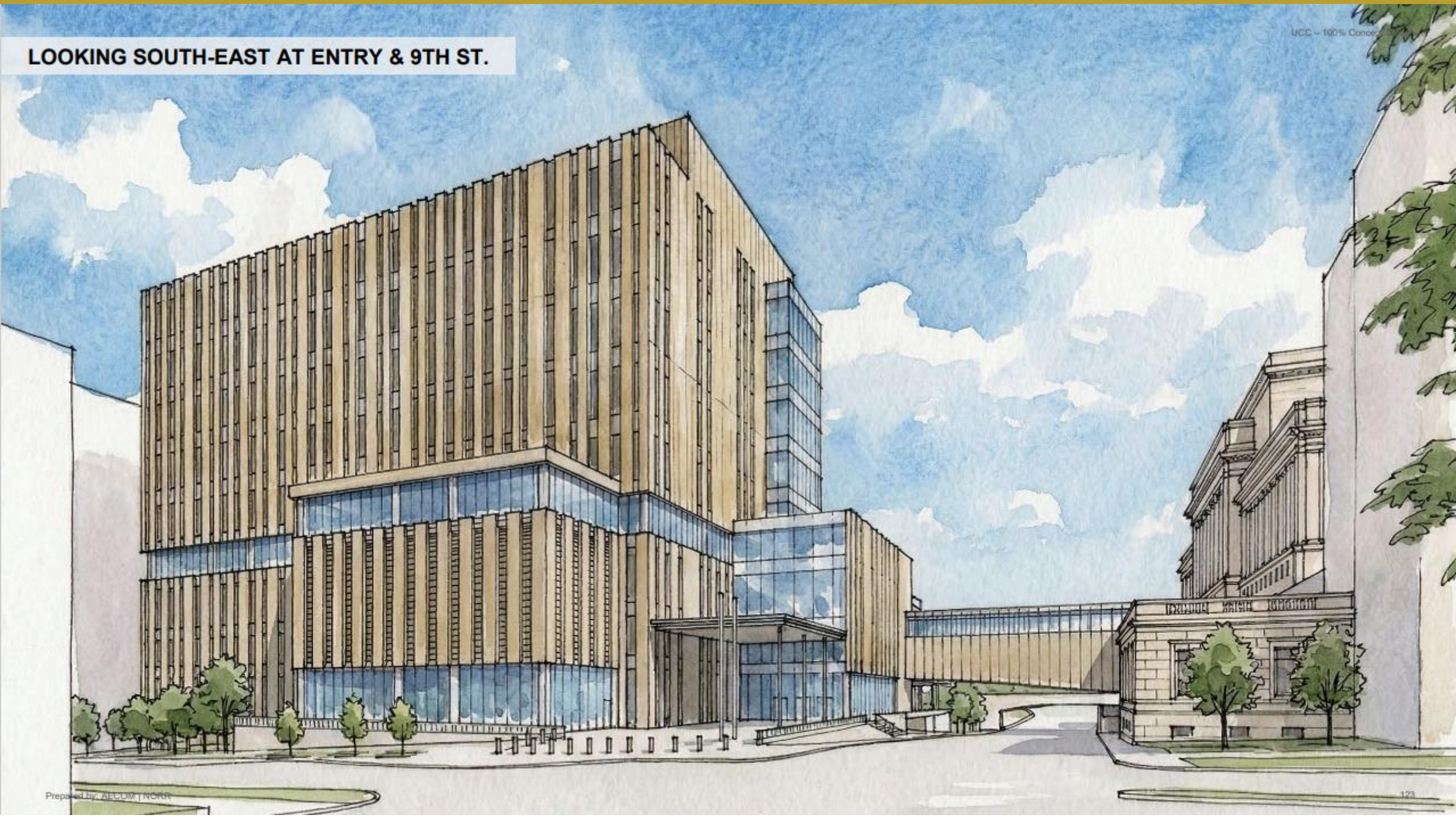
# Program Axonometric View

- **6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> floors:** 4 Jury Courtrooms per floor
- **5<sup>th</sup> floor:** Problem-Solving Courts and supporting program
- **4<sup>th</sup> floor:** District Attorney's Office
- **3<sup>rd</sup> floor:** link to other buildings, 4 Jury Courtrooms, as well as public facing and non-public facing program

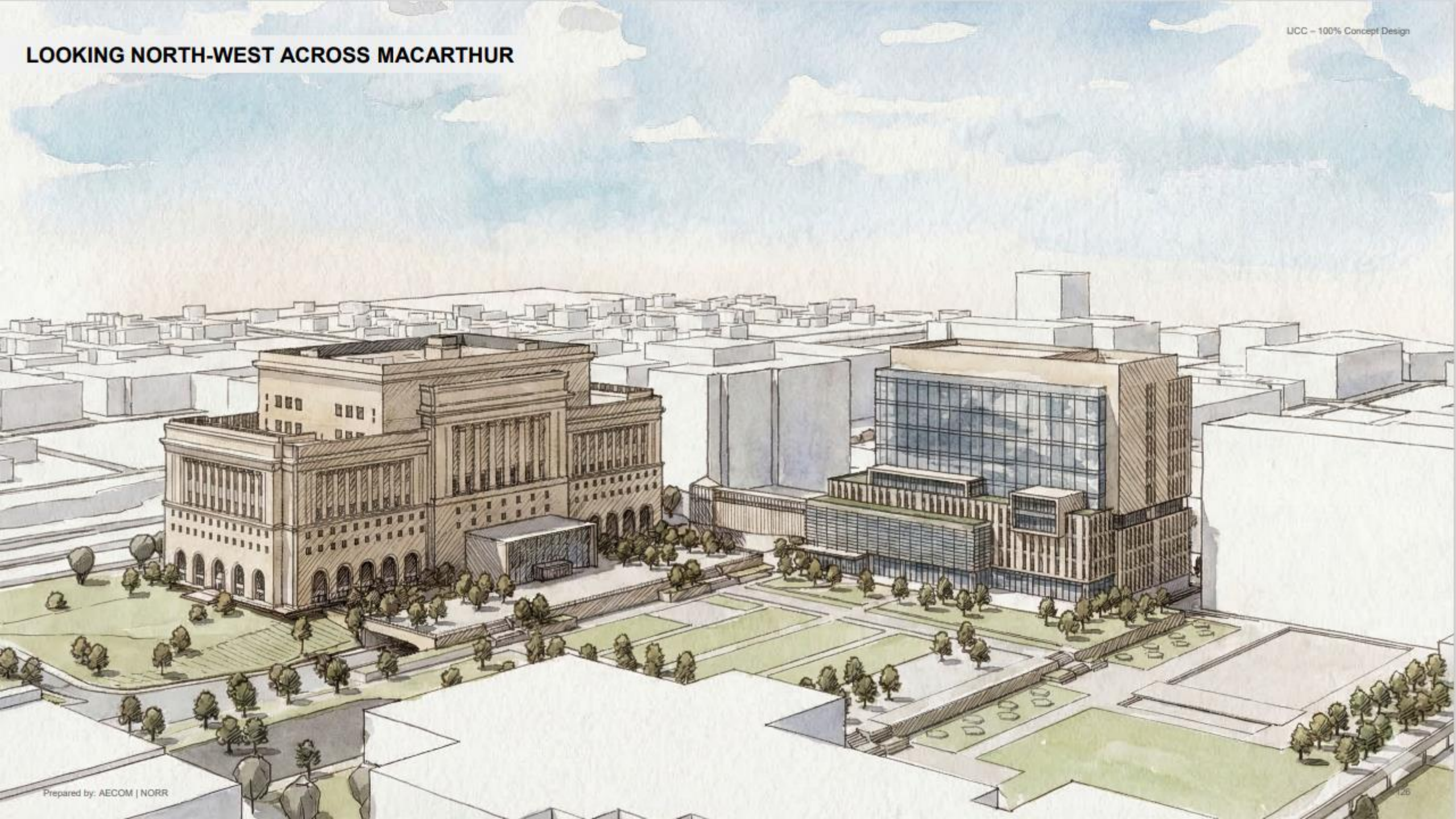
- **2<sup>nd</sup> floor:** Sheriff's Office and In-Custody Holding
- **Ground floor:** Large Court Room and Traffic Courtroom, Jury Management, Justice point, and Grab and Go Food Services
- **Basement:** Secure parking, Sally port, CUP and Building Operation functions



LOOKING SOUTH-EAST AT ENTRY & 9TH ST.



# LOOKING NORTH-WEST ACROSS MACARTHUR



ENTRANCE LOOKING SOUTH

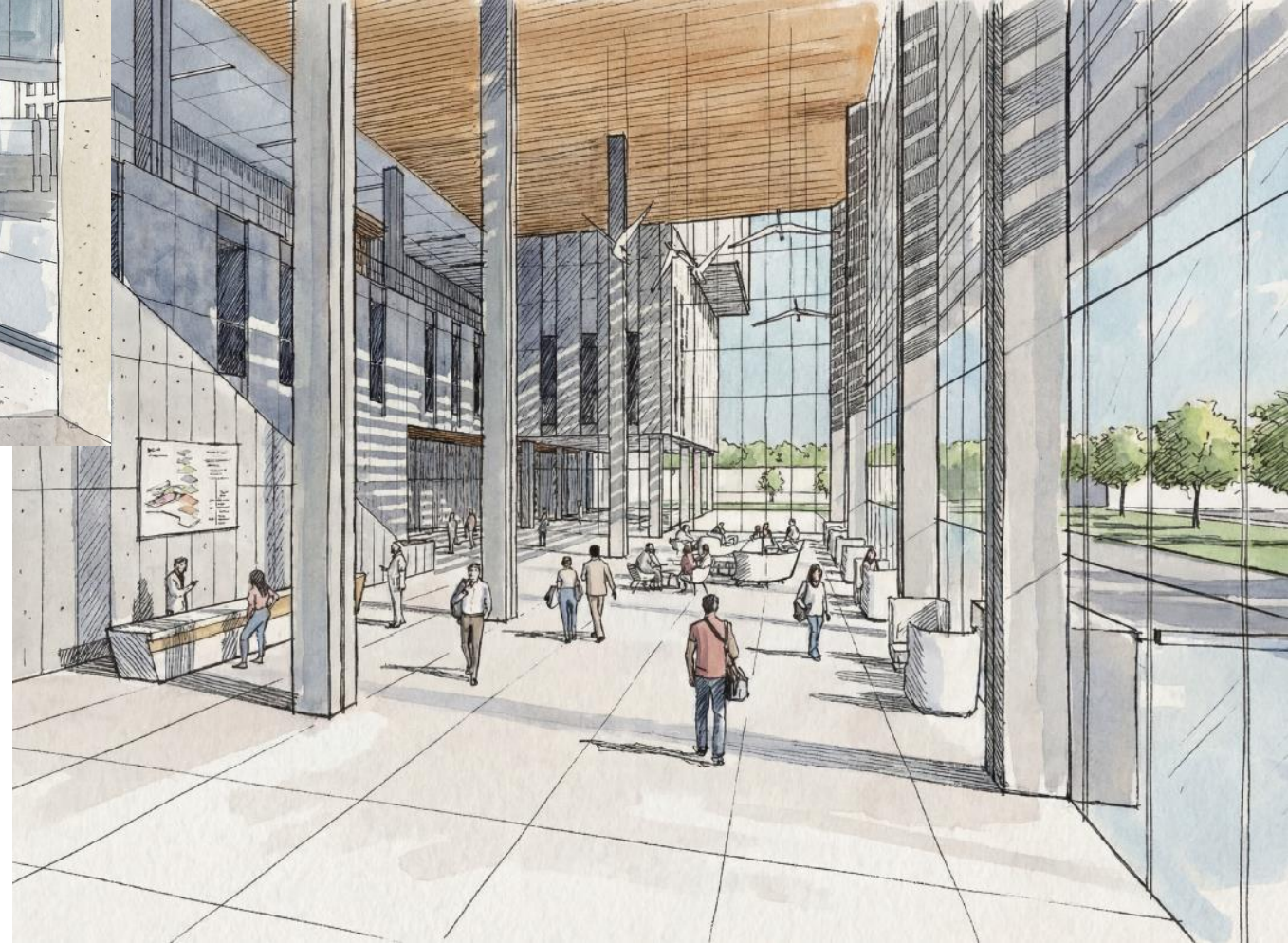


Prepared by: MCOOM | NORR

5TH FLOOR PUBLIC CORRIDOR LOOKING SOUTH-WEST



Prepared by: MCOOM | NORR



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# Stakeholder Engagement



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# Stakeholder Engagement



## What We Developed

- Decision matrix that integrates public approval
- Community engagement framework (adopted)
- State legislature letter of support signed by **170+** stakeholders
- Community presentations and roadshows
- Media opportunities, outreach materials, public email handle, video tours, website
- Courthouse experience survey (via QR code)
- Apprenticeships for those interested in design & construction careers



# Stakeholder Engagement



## What We Did

- Led 22 Courthouse Complex tours for 200+ individuals and community organizations
- Facilitated 9 community presentations, 5 roadshows, and 3 community listening sessions
- Coordinated Design & Construction meetings, surveys, and workshops with internal and external groups
- Held the Justice Policy & Programs values workshops
- Facilitating meetings and planning communications for enabling phase transitions



# Funding and Finance



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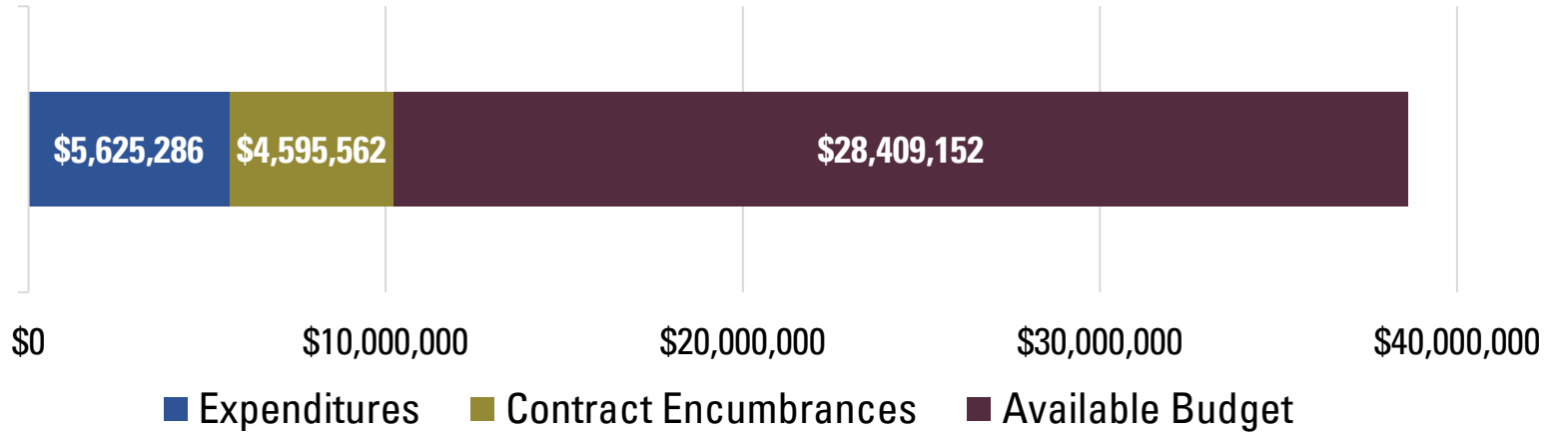
# Financial Status



## Funding and Finance

Secure, monitor and report on project funds

**Courthouse Complex Planning**  
FY24, FY25, FY26 Budget: **\$38,630,000**  
Project: WC0276011



### Existing and Anticipated Encumbrances

- Concord (owners rep)
- AECOM (design consultant)
- HGA (energy systems consultant)
- Mueller Communications (advocacy/communications)
- National Center for State Courts (justice policy & programs)
- Gilbane-Cullen (construction manager)
- Cumming Group (cost validation consultant)
- Gestra (geotechnical consultant)
- RaSmith (site survey consultant)

# Fiscal Impacts



## Funding and Finance

Secure, monitor and report on project funds

- The 2026 Adopted Budget Amendment #5 requested a report in July in the fiscal impacts of IJCC.
- To prepare, the project team anticipate a series of reports in Q2 to cover requested content:
  - Bonding Overview (May)
  - Current Capital Project Load & IJCC Considerations (June)
  - Comprehensive Fiscal Impact Report (July)
- A capital request for the remainder of the project will be requested in Q3 2026 and include a combination of bonding and state revenue.



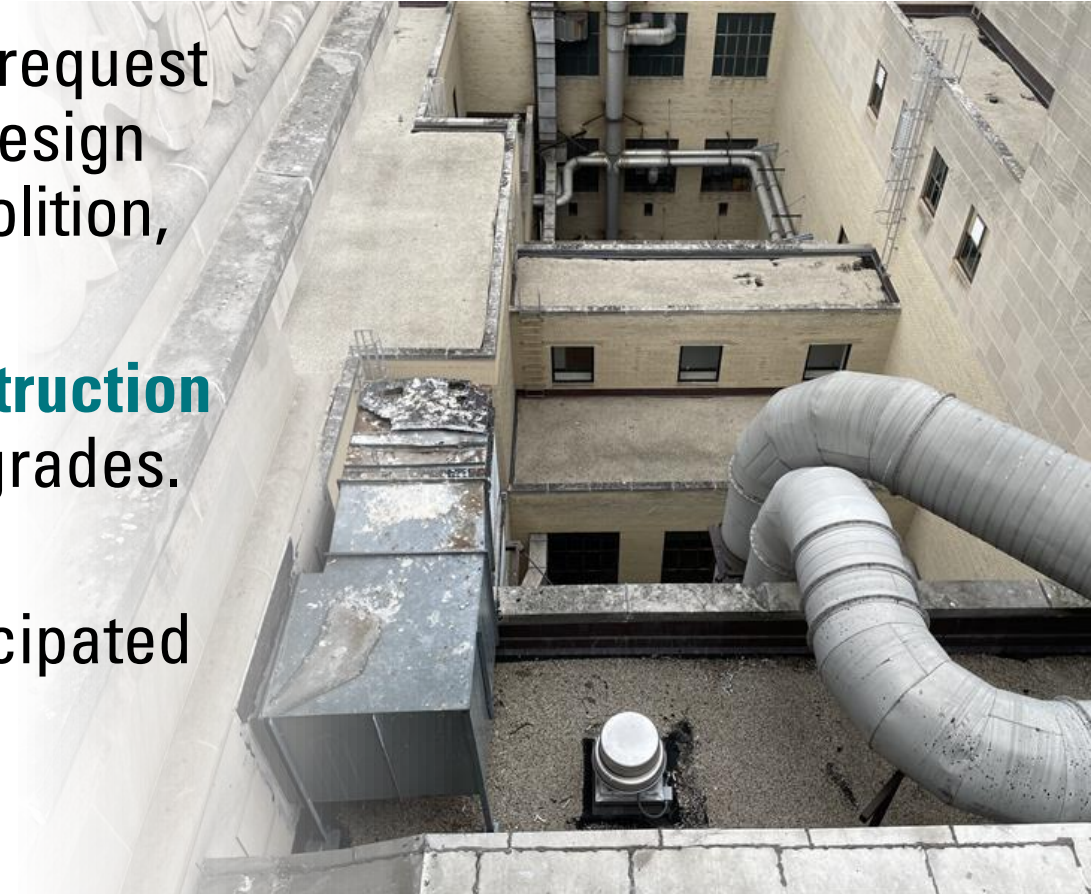
# Capital Budget Request



## Funding and Finance

Secure, monitor and report on project funds

- Currently discussing how to advance the full request for **capital funds required** to move from the design phase into pre-construction, relocation, demolition, and construction
- The budget will include the **cost of new construction and necessary enabling renovations** and upgrades. It could also embed a combination of:
  - Capital costs for the whole complex (anticipated HVAC, utility, energy, etc. upgrades)
  - Master plan items





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