

The following information was obtained from 2 previous studies done to evaluate the use of the existing Courthouse building. 2001: Hurst and Enrichs – Fargo, ND and 2012: Collaborative Design Group – Minneapolis, MN and Steen Engineering – Crystal, MN.

The courthouse has served Traverse County since its initial construction in 1891, but has undergone several additions, remodeling's and renovations. These include removal of the tower and replacement with a 20 foot addition to the south in 1928; the addition of a county jail and sheriffs building in 1974; extensive second floor court facility remodeling and the installation of a HVAC systems in 1980 and 90s and the addition of an elevator and a fire escape to the second floor level in 1994. A Courthouse Annex building was constructed to the west and a County law enforcement center and jail was constructed to the east.

The exterior of the building is deteriorated and in need of major repairs, while the interior finishes on the first floor of the courthouse date from the 1950s. The building interior is of combustible wood framed construction and it does not have fire alarm or fire sprinkler protection. With the exception of the remaining 1892 façade, very few exterior or interior historic elements remain.

The 1974 addition roof slope east and west and has caused water damage to the existing courthouse masonry and electrical components. The lower level, former jail, is below the existing parking lot grade and is currently empty due to water infiltration and flooding. Mold remediation has taken place, but the floor remains unusable do to water problems. The interior mainly consists of concrete block partitions and currently houses county departments.

Building Assessment – relevant key observations

- Settlement issues with the fieldstone foundation caused by no concrete footing below the walls and a footing depth of only 3 feet below grade, well above the frost depth.
- Metal tie rod supporting the north wall in the east west direction.
- Unprotected wood framing construction of the interior bearing walls, floors, attic and roof framing.
- Deteriorated metal trim and wood soffits pulling away from the exterior walls.
- Continued settlement cracking at the exterior masonry walls due to foundation settlement.
- Sagging of the 1974 addition roof and required roof replacement.
- Basement water infiltration in the 1974 addition.
- Unprotected wood floor structure and wall framing do not meet current codes.

The building has two levels over a crawl space, plus an unheated attic mechanical space. The exterior is comprised mainly of a red pressed brick with limestone accent bands, lintels and sills. The existing masonry, windows, and architectural metal are all in mostly poor condition, with need of preventive maintenance, repair and/or replacement.

Roof

The roof of the 1974 addition has been recommended for replacement. The soffits are constructed of wood boards with galvanized sheet metal rafter trim, they are deteriorated and need repair or replacement. There is no insulation in the rafter spaces; however insulation has been placed in the ceiling joists. The existing painted galvanized metal trim, appears to be in poor condition with evidence of rusting and gaps between the trim and the masonry.

There are no existing gutters or downspouts and rainwater runoff flows from the roof to the parking lot on the north and west and to the walks and landscape areas on the east southwest and south. Uncontrolled roof water from the 1974 addition has damaged the masonry and electrical equipment at several locations.

Windows

The existing windows were predominantly wood. Extruded aluminum replacement sashes have replaced the original wood windows and in other areas the existing windows have been replaced with painted plywood panels or masonry infill. The aluminum replacement windows throughout the building appear to be in average to poor condition. Plywood window closure panels have deteriorated and require repainting or replacement.

Brick/Stone Walls

The courthouse is comprised of red pressed brick with limestone accents banding, sills and lintels. The limestone bands are starting to deteriorate in select locations. There is cracking evident at a significant number of brick and stone joints on the east and west elevation of the 1892 Courthouse walls. The cracks in brick joints have been repaired previously, leading to the assumption that they are a continuing source of movement in the wall. Cracking of the brick joints at Courthouse seems to be more prevalent on the east and west portions of the walls near where the tower was removed and replaced with the 1920s addition. The existing courthouse continues to settle due to deterioration of the stone footings, roof runoff and groundwater issues.

Settlement of the grade around the building, especially the 1974 addition has caused damage to the stone foundation and added to the water infiltration problems at the 1974 additions lower level.

Fire Alarm & Detection

The 1974 addition is covered by a fire alarm and detection system that is outdated. The elevator in the Courthouse is provided with Code required elevator recall smoke detectors that are connected to this outdated system. No other detection or alarm devices are present in the Courthouse Building.

Heating/Cooling

The Courthouse, with the exception of the Courtroom, is heated and air conditioned by 7-propane fired, high efficiency condensing furnaces each with DX cooling coils and condensing units. The one in the basement shows rust due to basement flooding. All of these units have operated more than half of their life expectancy and consideration should be given for eventual replacement. The second floor court area is heated and air conditioned by an attic mounted fan-coil unit. The attic is a very dusty environment and there are potential air quality issues with this unit. Supplemental heat is provided throughout the entire upper and main levels with electric baseboard heat. Electric heat is an expensive way to heat in comparison to propane gas systems. Consideration should be given to replace the second floor courtroom system. Energy cost savings could be realized utilizing propane rather than electric heat. Outside air ductwork should be extended to the outside to introduce true outside air to fully utilize the economizer system. To reduce energy cost, electric baseboard heating could be limited, but with the old perimeter windows and poor wall insulation, drafty conditions could occur during winter months. In this case, high-efficiency hot water boilers and a hot water baseboard heating system could be provided.

Plumbing

Water heaters are electric and are in satisfactory condition. Consideration should be given for water heater replacement to propane gas to obtain energy cost savings. Due to flooding, a perimeter drain tile system and sump pump is recommended for the lower level of the 1974 addition.

Building/Life Safety and accessibility code issues

There are numerous building code and accessibility code shortcomings that will require correction to bring the building into compliance with current building and accessibility codes. Any major restoration of the Courthouse may trigger the requirements to make these code improvements.

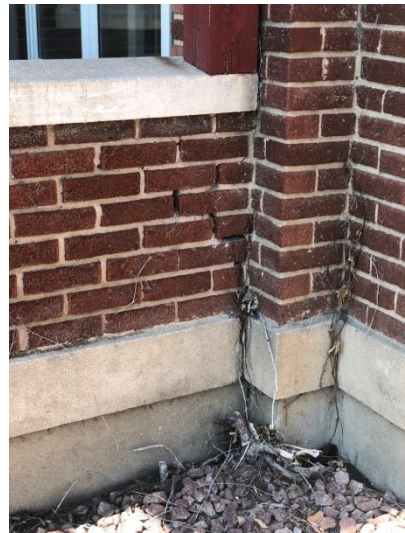
- The existing fire escape stair should be removed and replaced with a code compliant stair as a second means of egress from the second floor.
- Access to the second exit (fire escape) stair and other egress doors should be improved as a part of the future renovations. This includes door swinging in the direction of exit travel and fire rating improvements of the existing doors; including the hatch to the attic.
- Stair handrails do not meet current code standards for extensions.
- Dead end corridors exceed 20 feet in length exist at the second floor corridors.
- The corridor walls and openings from offices into the corridors are not fire rated.
- 1 hour fire rated occupancy separation of the courtroom from the office areas is required due to the courtroom being classified as an assembly space.
- Emergency lighting and exit lighting using light fixtures equipped with battery backup should be provided as a part of any remodeling.
- The continued use of the attic for mechanical equipment is permitted as it would be classified as unoccupied space, however the stored county record books and other materials should be removed.
- Other building code deficiencies include the lack of addressable fire alarm, fire sprinkler systems and emergency lighting.

Existing accessibility code conditions

The goal of meeting accessibility requirements is important in public buildings like the courthouse. The following are accessibility code shortcomings observed. They will eventually need to be brought into compliance as part of a future remodeling project or when public comment or the hiring of a disabled employee would trigger improvements.

- Existing wall handrails at all stairs do not meet current code standards for height, grip and extension.
- Most existing doors have knobs rather than accessibility compliant lever handles.
- Public service counters do not have a counter at the accessible height.
- Repairs required for concrete stoop, railings and sidewalk on exterior.
- New high-low drinking fountains on first and second floors.
- Any new fire alarm system should have both audible and visual notification.





The following security issues have been obtained from a court security assessment done in 2016 by the National Sheriff's Association.

There is neither a fire alarm nor fire suppression system in the complex. This presents a significant safety issue since the courthouse is wood frame construction and much of the interior furnishings are flammable. Additionally, there are many paper files that are stored in various locations in the complex.

Currently there is not a separate circulation system for prisoners, nor is there a true private circulation system. The judge's chambers, jury room and a conference room are in a secure area, but the judge must use the public entrance and public hallways to get to chambers. Prisoners are brought into the court through a private entrance, but must cross a public walkway going from the jail to the courthouse and then once inside use public hallways to get to the courtroom. This is one of the most dangerous situations that can exist in a court environment.

Prisoners enter the courtroom through the same door as is used by the public and then are seated in the last row of the spectator area until their case is called. They then move to the defense counsel table and are seated next to their attorney.

There is currently nowhere to hold the prisoners in the courthouse.

The area immediately outside the courtroom is very small and does not provide adequate space for people waiting to go to court or allow for separation of antagonistic parties, such as in domestic cases. Also, in the area individual chairs are lined up for the public to use while waiting to go to court.

Prisoner movements cause special concern, especially to employees working on the first floor, because it is most often one Deputy moving multiple prisoners who are only secured by handcuffs.

All of the offices on the first floor of the courthouse have serious safety and security shortcomings. Additionally, many of the doors separating the office areas from the public hall are not very secure with locks that could easily be forced open. In multiple offices on the first floor, it was discovered that the windows do not open or are difficult to shut if they are able to open.

Should there be an active shooter situation or the like, most employees of the courthouse do not have anywhere secure to hide.

There are no secure areas around the government complex and vehicles could easily drive right up to any part. This poses a number of threats, such as someone wanting to attack a prisoner or assist in an escape. It also means all of the exterior mechanical equipment could easily be compromised.

The judge parks on the street in front of the courthouse and comes and goes through the main door.

The finding of this assessor is that replacement of the Courthouse presents the best opportunity to have a safe and secure court environment.

**Traverse County, Minnesota
County Courthouse Project
Estimated Annual Tax Impacts**

		<u>G.O. Bonds</u>
Par Amount		\$5,317,000
Repayment Term		20 Years
Estimated Interest Rate		3.50%
Estimated Annual Principal & Interest Payment		\$374,110
Residential Market Value (a)		Property Tax Increase
\$25,000		\$3.32
\$50,000		\$6.64
\$70,000		\$9.30
\$85,000		\$12.26
\$100,000		\$15.88
\$150,000		\$27.95
\$175,000		\$33.98
\$200,000		\$40.01
\$225,000		\$46.04
\$250,000		\$52.07
Apartment Market Value		
\$100,000		\$33.20
\$150,000		\$49.80
\$250,000		\$94.07
\$500,000		\$204.74
Commercial/Industrial Market Value		
\$50,000		\$13.83
\$75,000		\$20.75
\$100,000		\$27.67
\$200,000		\$55.33
\$500,000		\$138.34
\$1,000,000		\$276.67
Seasonal/Recreational Market Value		
\$30,000		\$6.64
\$40,000		\$8.85
\$45,000		\$9.96
\$50,000		\$11.07
\$75,000		\$16.60
Agricultural Homestead Market Value (b)		
Value Per Acre (b)	\$5,100	\$0.56
Agricultural Non-Homestead Market Value		
	EMV of	
<u>Acres</u>	<u>Land (d)</u>	
1	\$5,100	\$1.13

(a) Estimated market value is the basis from which property taxes are calculated. This value is not necessarily the price the property would bring if sold.

(b) Estimated value per tillable acre is \$5,100.00

Note: Changes in interest rates, timing or size of the bond issue may cause significant alterations of this information.

New Traverse County Courthouse Plan

