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UPGRADING CITY HALL: BUILDING AND RENOVATING CITY AND COUNTY CENTERS

Building or renovating a city hall is not just about replacing an old building with a new one. In the process, local governments can improve the way they do business. Sound planning, teamwork, and a thorough needs assessment are key to a successful project. New communication tools that allow staff to work more efficiently and effectively are usually part of any construction or renovation. Many designs use environmentally friendly materials, optimizing resource efficiency and creating cleaner and healthier workplaces. Citizen access can be improved.

Renovation and building projects are not everyday tasks for local governments, and the project manager often has little or no direct practical experience. Drawing on the lessons learned by experienced local government officials, this report provides guidelines for planning. Case studies highlight key aspects of successful efforts.

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Upgrading City Hall: Building and Renovating City and County Centers

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A photo gallery of city and county administration buildings is available on ICMA's Web site at <http://icma.org/wherewework>

When it is clear that a city hall, county courthouse, police station, or other local government building must be replaced, the local government manager and elected officials work toward project solutions.

A THREE-STAGE PLANNING PROCESS

Before the longer and significantly more complicated design and construction phases, a facility planning process usually passes through three stages:

Service identification. The local government determines what services will be provided by the government agency or agencies in the facility to be planned, quantifies those services, and converts service-level requirements to staff, equipment, and space needs. This process should consider both current and future needs, capitalizing on opportunities for a new facility to improve the efficiency and quality of service delivery.

Space allocation. Planners for the new facility apply space standards to calculate current and future space needs.

Design criteria. Qualitative and quantitative information is added to the space allocation criteria, and performance characteristics and design criteria for the facility are identified.

The result is a fairly lengthy and detailed document, which can be used for a traditional design or a design-build process, that outlines the criteria for making decisions during the subsequent design. It may take from four months to a year to complete the planning, depending on specific project characteristics.

The key to a successful construction or renovation project is sensible planning with clear goals and objectives and a realistic and workable schedule. Questions to be answered during the first phase include:

- In what way is the current facility lacking?

- Why is a new facility needed?
- What services will the new building accommodate?
- What are our equipment needs?
- What will our space and equipment needs be in the future?
- How can we use the new building to better serve the community and improve the work environment for staff?
- How can we best use space that is available?

To answer these questions, some local governments hire a consultant to undertake a formal needs assessment, while others assign agency staff to gather the needed information. Focus groups, written surveys and questionnaires, and a detailed inspection of the existing space and its limitations can be used to help guide the project.

A COMMUNITY PROCESS

Regardless of the approach taken, all stakeholders—local government elected officials, staff, and citizens—should be involved in crafting objectives for the initiative.

Elected officials. The support of elected officials is key to any facility construction or renovation project. Because elected officials will play a critical role in determining the amount of money expended and how the project should be paid for, they must be brought into the decision making at the outset and should participate actively in defining the general project requirements, helping to determine, for example, what type of building should be constructed and where. In addition, as liaisons to the community, elected officials play an important role in making sure that the facility meets the needs of citizens.

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Establishing a vision and goals

The local government must begin with a vision of what it plans to accomplish and communicate that vision to others who are involved. A project vision clearly states the intended result of the project. Planning principles provide the objectives and approach for reaching this result.

The vision

- Defines the social, political, and cultural values to be achieved in the project
- Guides the identification and selection of consultants and contractors
- Provides a rallying point for the design and development team
- Establishes the parameters under which the work will be undertaken
- Provides a values check when tough decisions need to be made
- Communicates essential elements to various constituencies, including customers, citizens, and the press.

The planning principles

- Identify key objectives that should be achieved through the design and planning process to reach the vision
- Define the methods by which the internal project team and external design and/or construction teams work together.

Employees. Employees can often determine how to make the most efficient use of space. Interviewing employees about their needs, developing a questionnaire that helps make decisions about trade-offs, and holding focus groups of key work units can help ensure that the space accommodates the tasks and the needs of employees. Studies indicate that making a change as simple as having more windows or better lighting can make a significant difference in productivity.¹ Feedback from employees about what they like and do not like about their current space can improve the future use of space and increase productivity.

Citizens. Citizens should be involved from the initial planning phases and kept apprised of the project's development. When citizens are to vote on funding (e.g., through a bond referendum) or to approve site selection, they will need to be even more involved. Some local governments engage a citizen committee to provide input into how to meet the expansion needs of the local government or how the design can better accommodate the needs of the community.

In Springfield, Missouri, for example, a citizen committee appointed by the city manager was convened to review and recommend options for meeting the city's space needs. For its city hall renovation project, Claremont, California, used eight employee-based sub-

committees, working under the direction of a four-member steering committee, to tackle issues ranging from coordination of the temporary relocation of city hall functions to furniture/interior design to customer relations. Subcommittee recommendations were taken to the steering committee, which upon approval sent them on to the city manager. If approved by the manager, the committees' recommendations and decisions were forwarded to the architect and engineers for incorporation into the design.

THE PROJECT TEAM

Most local governments use a team approach to coordinating a facility construction effort. The team includes representatives from various stakeholders—the council, affected employees, and citizen groups—and works to establish a vision and goals for the project. Feeling a part of the process will go a long way toward assuring satisfaction later on.

The project team should be small enough to make decisions expeditiously but big enough to represent key segments of the local government and the affected community. Depending on the size of the project, the team can include between 15 and 25 individuals.

Team meetings will be frequent to promote common understanding among all interest groups. The preliminary schedule should cover the three phases of the project (service identification, space allocation, and architectural design) and include target dates for hiring an architect, construction manager, and other key individuals. The project team will work with the implementation team to develop realistic milestones for various phases of design and construction.

The project team often meets for the duration of the project: to review its development, discuss the future steps, and refine the project direction if needed. If the project architect, construction manager, and/or other key members of the implementation team are not on the project team at the outset, they should be brought in as soon as possible after the initial plans have been made. Including these outside professionals as integral members of the project team can facilitate open and ongoing communication.

The Internal Project Manager

After the manager and elected officials determine the general scope of the project, they often turn the project over to an employee who is assigned to see the project through to completion. The local government facility manager, public works director, or a staff engineer may serve as the project manager. In small communities, this task may fall to the local government manager.

During construction, the local government project manager serves as a coordinator and liaison to the project team, which will be engaged in the planning and construction of the facility. The project manager brings in experts when needed and acts as liaison be-

tween staff and local officials and the community. To be successful, the project manager must have a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the construction or renovation and should have the time, authority, and leadership skills to position the project appropriately within the organization and to oversee it to completion.

The project manager should be responsible for meeting the goals and objectives established at the outset, have the authority to make decisions, be charged with keeping the architect focused on the mission, keep elected officials and employees informed of progress, and stay on budget and on schedule. When construction begins, the project manager should visit the construction site regularly.

The project manager's first key to success is soliciting the advice and opinions of representatives from all departments of the local government and sectors of the community that will be involved or affected by the new or renovated building. Early interaction among elected officials, employees, and citizens may prove crucial. Representatives from various groups will bring different and valuable perspectives to the planning process. Early and broad communication can also lead to cost-saving coordination of building or renovation projects.

The Architect

In some modest renovation projects, local governments prefer to work directly with a general contractor who provides design-build services, but most construction projects require an independent architect. Talented architects provide a pleasing structure, a floor plan that accommodates the needs of the users, and a project that fits the topographic features of the site and the architecture of surrounding buildings.

In most projects, architects provide assistance in site planning; selection of building materials; exterior color, style, and coordination; and interior design. Many local governments rely on the architect to oversee—or at least monitor—the construction of the facility.

The hiring decision can be made by the local government project manager or by the project team. It is important that the elected body and key members of the local government management team concur with the choice of an architect, which is not always an easy one. Depending on local procurement laws, several sets of qualifications and proposals may be needed to make a final decision. It is important to build sufficient time into the planning schedule to hire an architect, which could take three months or longer.

A number of criteria can be used to select an architect, including experience designing similar buildings, availability, and production capacity. A good architect also should be budget conscious and willing to work with contractors, the local government's project manager, and others to ensure the design will fit within budget. It is important to review candidate qualifications, check references, evaluate costs, and visit similar projects the architect has designed.

Building community support

Involving the community from the beginning helps build bridges to the users to be served, resulting in a better and more efficient building design. Consider the following approaches to working with the community:

- Hold meetings, focus groups, or roundtable discussions with key groups of customers and citizens
- Invite community groups to visit the site and review building plans; a representative from the local government and the architect or general contractor should be available to answer questions, address concerns, and incorporate feedback to possibly modify the plans
- Make a special effort to reach out to underrepresented groups within the community.

The Construction Manager

Most local governments hire a third-party agent to serve as a construction manager who is responsible for handling all the physical aspects of construction and who serves as a liaison between the local government and the architect.

The construction manager should be chosen carefully and should serve as the local government's representative, first and foremost protecting the local government's interests in all situations. The local government project manager or team needs to work closely with this person to ensure clear communication and to resolve promptly any problems or issues that come up during construction. The initial expense of searching for and hiring an experienced construction manager can save substantial money by reducing change orders, reducing the number of instances when work must be rejected because it is not in accordance with specifications, and minimizing delays.

Some local governments have found it to be an advantage to hire a construction manager as a temporary employee instead of as a consultant. The construction manager should be hired for the duration of the project plus an additional six months or one year after notice of substantial completion to assist with warranty claims and initial maintenance issues.

If the agent is hired as a consultant, fees may be charged on a per-hour or per-diem basis or be based on the total percentage of the project. It is important to clearly define in the contract the consultant's responsibilities and decision-making authority. When Peoria County, Illinois, constructed an \$18 million jail addition and juvenile detention center, the county hired an on-site project manager, which cost \$210,000 in salary and expenses over two and one-half years. "He's saved us that much in change orders and more in rejecting work that was not in accordance with specs," says Jack

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Manahan, who was the county administrator at the time. “It’s worth the money.”

On projects of 25,000 sq. ft. or more, a full-time construction manager will be needed. Larger projects may require a construction management team composed of many individuals with varying specializations. The city of San Diego, California, is currently undertaking two facility construction projects and has dedicated a different level of support to each. Its animal shelter and adoption center project (40,000 sq. ft.) is managed by a full-time, on-site construction manager with part-time consultant assistance. At the other end of the spectrum, the city is developing a convention center expansion (1 million sq. ft.) with five full-time city employees supplementing two full-time, on-site representatives of the architect and a 25-person design-build contractor administrative staff—a level of support the city has used for the past three years.

Other Consultants

A number of other professionals may help the local government plan, design, and build a facility. Consultants may be brought in at the formative stages to help develop a strategic plan, identify current or future needs through statistical analysis, and/or work with the local government to prepare documents that define the program, interior and/or exterior design criteria, performance specifications, and facility management guidelines.

Often cities and counties decide that a strategic long-range facility master plan that looks 10 and 20 years into the future needs to be developed as a precursor to developing design criteria for a particular facility. The local government might then be able to identify future projects to be incorporated into a long-range capital budgeting process. Because of the complex nature of strategic planning and facility design, many local governments opt to engage consultants who specialize in this area.

Sarasota County, Florida, for example, has been experiencing steady population growth for several decades. The city’s long-range master plan has identified more than a dozen specific development projects that might be necessary over the next 20 years to accommodate the resulting increase in service requirements. Specific building programs, design criteria, and capital budgeting requirements can then evolve from the strategic facility master plan.

Design-build can eliminate problems that often develop in the traditional scenario of design-bid-build.

Similarly, when Mason, Ohio, outgrew its existing administrative space, it engaged an architecture firm to perform a space-needs assessment that projected needs for all city departments 10 to 15 years in the future and provided the city with a number of options

that varied according to growth projections. A programming assessment report included schematic building master planning and design development options.

For consultants, again look for professionals who have planned and carried out similar projects, often in the public sector, because they may be better able to anticipate the political issues that can arise. Consultants should report weekly or bimonthly to the local government project manager or team.

The following consultants can serve as valuable members of the project team:

Landscape architects. If you are constructing a new facility on an undeveloped site, the landscape architect may play a critical role in the planning of the project. Landscape architecture includes integrating the elements of a site (e.g., the buildings, circulation routes, and vegetation and other physical features), creating open spaces around buildings, and determining what types of vegetation should be used and the placement of trees and plants, which can help save future energy and maintenance costs.

Contractors. Contractors are licensed professionals who construct a project in accordance with plans and specifications developed by the architect. General contractors assemble and organize materials and labor, supervise construction in the field, and hire and manage subcontractors. They are responsible for controlling quality, managing construction schedules, and maintaining construction costs. Some projects may also need contractors for associated infrastructure work, including utilities and street development.

Finance specialists. People who understand the financing alternatives available for a local government’s capital expenditures and the techniques of financing can help determine the appropriate combination of funding sources and identify at what phases of the project funds will be needed.

Engineers. Engineers test the soil and furnish topographic maps, detailed data, and working drawings needed to establish grades, street improvements, and utilities. Some projects may require engineering specialists in the fields of seismology, soils, ecology, hydrology, or flood protection.

Attorneys. Attorneys should draft and review contracts made with the architect and other consultants, as well as any covenants, conditions, or restrictions on the property.

Design-Build

Some jurisdictions advocate the use of design-build contracts. Under such an arrangement, only one contract is issued for the entire project. This contract is always with a general contractor or developer but may be with an architect or engineer as long as the contracting entity is bonded and licensed to construct a building. The design-build contractor is then responsible for

hiring and overseeing the rest of the construction team, including the designers and subcontractors. Subcontractors are paid directly by the design-build contractor, not by the local government.

Design-build can eliminate problems that often develop in the traditional scenario of design-bid-build. Only one request for proposals and bidding phase is required, streamlining the process. Furthermore, because the local government has only one place to look for contract compliance, quality, schedule, and other questions, design-build will help avoid disputes during the construction process. Design-build also can help avoid costly change orders, construction delays, and other problems. Design-build is relatively new in government facility construction, and its acceptance and use are growing rapidly.

THE FUNCTIONAL PLAN AND DESIGN

First, define the services to be provided in the proposed facility. After the services are quantified and converted to staff-level requirements and equipment needs, the team can begin to define space needs.

Both present and future needs of the facility must be addressed during this planning phase. It is important to develop a program that clearly documents the requirements—circulation, workflow, internal operations, building code issues, accessibility for the public (including disabled persons), and security—to be accommodated in the building initially and also to support future expansion.

This program should then be extended to include facility management guidelines and interior and exterior design criteria. Interior design criteria will reflect the quality of the space where staff will work and where customers will be greeted and served. Exterior design criteria should take into account the surrounding neighborhood. In many instances, a government building serves as a focal point for a community. Exterior design and urban planning principles may be important to accommodate the current character of the community and shape the message the building is intended to project. A good design will provide:

- **Sense of place.** The message that the local government building sends through its design and architecture should be considered carefully
- **Functionality.** Form follows function; look at the services that will be provided in the facility and plan the space to accommodate these services
- **Citizen access.** Remember that the customer comes first
- **Employee satisfaction.** The way a space is configured can have a profound impact on productivity
- **Technology and innovation.** Technological advances can make for more efficient and effective service delivery

Space standards

Firm and complete space allocation standards are key ingredients in facility planning. Identifying the bases upon which space is assigned helps to ensure that employees view the space allocation system as fair.

The majority of government employees (an estimated 85 percent to 92 percent) are assigned to modular furniture systems. Space standards for a typical workstation are between 48 and 144 sq. ft., depending on the nature of the job and the supervisory or management level of the employee. The vast majority of staff are usually accommodated in systems work stations of 64 sq. ft. (8 ft. by 8 ft.). Staff dealing with confidential matters (legal, personnel, audit) are usually assigned small private offices, usually between 120 and 160 sq. ft. Middle and senior management are often assigned offices in the 140–280 sq. ft. range.

In larger communities, city and county administrators and full-time elected officials may be assigned offices in the 280–400 sq. ft. range. Rarely are offices this large required, but they may be useful for ceremonies, such as the signing of an important bill, that attract media attention. Larger offices can double as a meeting or conference room for the department's management staff.

- **Energy efficiency and the environment.** Considering maintenance costs during planning can lead to substantial cost savings.

It is important to involve users—both customers and employees—in reviewing the project criteria and building design. In some cases, the first design may accommodate most major concerns. In others, the architect might have to design four or more floor plans before everyone is satisfied, and the final design may bear little resemblance to the initial proposal. Be flexible during the design phase to allow for as many changes as needed.

Sense of Place

Every building communicates a message through its design and architecture. A large, square building with little ornamentation and few windows, for example, looks imposing and uninviting. Consider carefully the message you want to convey to the community, and work with the design team to consider how the landscape, architecture, approaches, and interior design of the building can help convey this message.

A local government facility should accommodate its surroundings and reflect the character of the community. Many citizens today lament the lack of a sense of place in their communities—urban sprawl and the rise of national chains have resulted in the loss of community character. Using local building materials and

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following the style of the region can help preserve a community's sense of place. In many communities, the city hall or county courthouse provides a focal point for the downtown district. The local government should be careful to work with area businesses and residents to ensure that the building projects the intended image.

In keeping with the principles of new urbanism, many local government buildings are being designed to enrich and enliven the surrounding community. For example, city halls are being designed to provide an all-purpose community meeting place. Some municipal centers incorporate cafes and retail shops on the ground level. Most include a number of multipurpose rooms available to the public for training, conferences, hearings, public meetings, outreach groups, and private gatherings. Often these facilities are open evenings and weekends.

Renovation can signal a new commitment to downtown or spark a revitalization of a formerly dilapidated area. At the recommendation of a citizens' committee charged with reviewing the city's possibilities for expanding its city hall, Springfield, Missouri, purchased and renovated the one-time Jewell Station Post Office and Federal Building to signal a renewed commitment to the downtown. Similarly, the city of Mankato, Minnesota, and the Mankato area public schools renovated an unused downtown building as the new Intergovernmental Center, recycling old materials and bringing new life to the downtown. Since the center was completed in 1998, numerous private businesses have relocated to the downtown corridor. The city of Edna, Texas, likewise has had success in revitalizing its downtown district by relocating city services to a newly renovated downtown building.

The space-planning process should take community and government vision and goals and translate them into a workable and effective layout.

When older buildings are replaced or redesigned, preserving the tradition and history embodied in the original building are often important goals. For example, if a city hall is destroyed, the bricks, stairways, moldings, lighting fixtures, or any other number of features can be saved and incorporated into a new design.

When growth forced the village of Algonquin, Illinois, to build a new village hall, for example, the city felt it was important to design the building in keeping with the tradition and history embodied in the original village hall, which had been the home of the village government since 1907. The new building "borrowed" features from the old, such as Romanesque arches over the windows and an illuminated tower, but at 33,000 sq. ft. the structure is six times larger than the former village hall and provides space for the police department, community development, and administrative offices.

Algonquin preserved its heritage by renovating the

original building to serve as a community center, providing meeting rooms for citizen groups and offices for several local nonprofit organizations. The village was careful to ensure that these renovations were made in accordance with the original architectural style of the building.

Landscaping can help provide a sense of place. Many local governments choose low-maintenance plants and shrubs that will beautify the building's surroundings, create a friendly atmosphere, and provide a sense of security. Landscaping should define spaces, create places for varied activities, and reinforce relationships among built and natural features of the environment. In addition to saving on water and maintenance, native plants reinforce a sense of place and respect for the local landscape.

Most new city and county centers should include:

- Local building materials and architectural design
- The best building and finishing materials the jurisdiction can afford for public spaces
- Public art, such as a mural, fountain, or sculpture, in both the exterior and interior design; sometimes art is used to tell about the community's history
- Community goals in the design; for example, downtown revitalization efforts
- Maximum space for parking.

Functionality

The space-planning process should take community and government vision and goals and translate them into a workable and effective layout. Depending on the project, the space-planning process can take from two to five months.

New ways of operating, such as incorporating new services, combining work groups, or outsourcing some jobs, should be included in the functional plan for the local government facility. Consider an economic evaluation of various alternatives prepared by a specialist or a consultant. Some local governments also conduct a statistical projection of future services and needs based on population forecasts and demography.

Some local governments consolidate offices or services at this time. Sterling, Colorado, constructed a new city service complex that consolidated city facilities from twenty-three buildings into three. Arvada, Colorado, brought together under one city hall roof departments previously scattered over 17 sites.

Some municipalities also work with the school board or other organizations to plan combined facilities. The site of the new municipal facility under construction in Mason, Ohio, will also house a new recreation center and a high school. Adopting space allocation standards at the outset can help ensure that cubicles and office space are allocated fairly and efficiently. Team members should develop guidelines, and policies should also be developed to deal with a variety of space allocation issues: for example, coffee fa-

ilities, conference room allocation, shared use of common facilities, private office assignment, and location policies.

Design criteria can cover everything from acoustical quality of ceiling and floor systems to electrical and data cable distribution, to lighting quality and levels, to ceiling heights and wall coverings. Experienced builders recommend that documents setting out the program, design criteria, performance specifications, urban design guidelines, and facility management guidelines be developed before the budget is approved and the architect is hired. In some projects, this information can also help during site selection. The following can create an efficient design:

- Group similar functions in one area
- Consolidate several departments into suites with joint reception areas
- Locate photocopiers, fax machines, and other major pieces of office equipment in a reorganized arrangement that makes it easier for various groups to share equipment
- Plan meeting rooms of various sizes or use movable walls to provide flexibility for department meetings, public meetings, and conferences.

Employee Satisfaction

Local government employees who will work in a new facility should help determine how best to design their workspace. Find out which individuals and departments other individuals and departments interact with on a regular basis, so that employees who work together can be situated near each other. Studying an employee's typical day may provide insights about the best location for supply rooms; faxes, photocopy machines, and other shared equipment; file drawers; bookshelves or minilibraries; and other resource areas.

Some local governments at the beginning establish an employee committee charged with getting input from their peers. The committee may have authority over color selection, furnishings, new equipment, and other specific items. The local government manager, finance director, or project manager must work closely with the employee committee to ensure that its members understand the budget for such items.

Employees should be informed of the progress of the new facility and consulted at key times. When the city of Summit, New Jersey, designed a new city hall, all employees were informed throughout planning and construction and were involved in any decision, large or small, that would affect their location, work area, and access to facilities. The city posted proposed room, furniture, and other layout ideas in each department so that employees could "walk through" the building during the planning phase. Employees were encouraged to make suggestions about where to locate various elements. The city manager emphasized employee involvement as key and recommends that managers

spend "twice as much time as you think necessary" working with staff on layout issues because it can save significant costs for modifications later.

In Springfield, Missouri, an employee committee was charged with selecting office furniture; committee members used ergonomic comfort as the primary criterion. The top choices were then set up in a warehouse for all employees to try out. To ensure that proposed work space met the requirements of employees, employees went through the empty building and discussed their job functions with the architect and designers. They were later shown the blueprints and were able to approve their office locations and layouts. Other employee perks incorporated into the building's design included at least one equipped kitchen area on each floor and a lower level, exclusively for employee use, that includes an exercise area, a break room, and a hallway designed as a walking track. Today the city credits the new building for improved employee morale and productivity.

Local government employees who will work in a new facility should help determine how best to design their workspace.

To enhance employee satisfaction with the building design:

- Cluster the workstations and offices of employees who routinely work together
- Include employee amenities such as a cafeteria or snack room, an exercise room, and a break room; also consider kitchens on each floor or in department suites
- Use landscaping to enhance the exterior of the building; provide picnic benches and tables, walking trails, and other outdoor spaces that employees can use during lunch or breaks
- Provide ample natural light indoors.

Citizen Access

To be helpful to the users of a new government facility, more and more local governments are designing facilities to provide one-stop service. Claremont, California, for example, included in its city hall redesign a central public counter where all city services can be provided. In addition, many municipalities are locating their main facilities or branch offices on public transit lines easily accessible to the public.

Local government offices that are visited by the public should be easily accessible and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which may mean installing ramps, elevators, automatic door openers, and other features. Incorporating them into the design at the outset will save money because retrofitting is expensive. Even more can be gained from going beyond

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the letter of the law and embracing its spirit: make the reception area accessible and inviting to people of all ages, make signs easy to read and to follow, and make public spaces easily accessible to people in wheelchairs.

In addition, some local governments are using new technologies to make information and services more accessible to customers. Mankato, Minnesota, for example, has placed an electronic informational kiosk in the foyer of its new Intergovernmental Center to help citizens quickly locate the information they need. The touch-screen computer guides users through many of the features of the city administration and the public school system. At the kiosk, citizens can access a map of the governmental complex, find information on their council zone, print out a snow route emergency map, and find answers to many other questions.

To maximize citizen access, the design of the building should:

- Group public meeting rooms and other public space in one area of the building
- Keep public and information offices on the first floor, if possible
- Make information booths and/or receptionists easy to locate
- Provide attractive and comfortable waiting areas for visitors
- Provide adequate parking and ample lighting in the parking lot, along pathways to the building, and at all entrances.

Technology and Today's Smart Building

New technology is changing the economics of building construction and maintenance. Incorporating the latest communications technology, for example, may require increased investment in a building's wiring and cable infrastructure. Although including new technology can add significantly to up-front costs, technology can also generate significant savings by increasing operational efficiency.

An increasing number of local governments are choosing to build "green buildings."

In the 1980s, the term "smart building" generally referred to the automation and integration of the hidden elements of construction and design, including heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical wiring, sprinkler systems, lighting, and telecommunications. Today's smart buildings (often called intelligent building systems) make possible occupant safety, security, and comfort; high levels of energy efficiency and sophisticated telecommunication systems for voice, data, and video transmission; and ease of building maintenance, operation, and control. Such an integrated tech-

nical system can provide cleaner interior air and lower energy consumption as well as cost savings in day-to-day operations and long-term maintenance.

The project team or program manager should explore opportunities to incorporate technology in the local government renovation or construction project. Because local governments are increasingly dependent on technology, telecommunications and Internet access are important elements of a new building's design. Local area network (LAN) connections for computers and e-mail are now standard in new buildings and should be incorporated into older structures.

Videoconferencing is also being used by more local government facilities, especially in council chambers, other meeting rooms, and court facilities. Planning ahead for videoconferencing may influence room layout, lighting options, and a host of other interior design features.

Although high-speed communication links may add to the project's bottom line, employee productivity requires that cabling must be considered in renovations or new construction. Internet-based communication has the potential to improve customer relations, save staff time, and reduce the amount of space that must be devoted to facilities for customer service.

Telecommunications and the Internet also enable governments to provide offices throughout the city or county to provide services closer to where people live. New communications technology can easily connect branch office staff to the central office.

Some local governments have found it helpful to incorporate a training center where local government staff and people in the community can come to get hands-on experience with new technology.

Take the following steps to make the best use of technology and technological advances:

- In cost-benefit analyses, consider the life span of the building and its systems; investing in new technologies up front may result in considerable savings over the life of the building
- Provide wiring for high-speed Internet access
- Design council chambers and other meeting rooms to accommodate videoconferencing
- Plan wiring and other infrastructure so that it will accommodate changes in the floor plan; for example, install multifunction (voice, data, and electrical) wiring distribution boxes at regular intervals throughout the building, reaching to the entire electronic infrastructure in the building's core.

Energy and Environmental Efficiency

Because of the growing importance of resource conservation—including reduced use of all materials and increased emphasis on recycling—an increasing number of local governments are choosing to build "green buildings." A building is considered green if it requires substantially fewer resources for construction and operation

and provides a healthy workplace. A green building incorporates natural systems: for example, daylight and fresh air. The green design process also recognizes that building materials—and the energy required to extract or create those materials—are not unlimited and therefore must be carefully considered during all aspects of design, construction, and building operation.

Green buildings are sometimes costly to construct, but they are economically practical over the long term. Green materials last longer and require less maintenance than other materials. High-tech buildings consume less energy, which translates into lower operating costs and greater asset values. More daylight and better indoor air quality lead to increased productivity and reduced employee sickness.² New features such as individual HVAC units promote both energy efficiency and employee satisfaction. Recycled gray water—water that has been used and not repurified—for irrigation and low-flow delivery saves water. Other green strategies help minimize stormwater runoff and sustain the neighborhood's ecosystem.

Environmentally friendly building design also means siting the facility so that it requires less energy to heat and cool. Exposure to sun and wind, the ratio of above- and below-grade areas, and shading all need to be considered.

An important way to reduce a project's environmental impact is to use existing buildings. Hamilton County, Ohio, made this a priority when several historic buildings were recently combined into a new social services building consisting of five floors of about an acre each. An old, unused, art deco train station was transformed into a center for the local natural history, historical, and children's museums; a vacant building that formerly housed a local newspaper office and production facility was upgraded for use for court functions; and another office building was saved from demolition and converted to county administrative offices.

The project team can help identify specific steps that enhance the green aspects of a building. The building's exterior, materials used for glazing and windows, air filtration, and a host of other factors affect energy efficiency and maintenance needs:

Building size. Keeping size to a minimum conserves resources and energy by requiring fewer building materials as well as less energy in heating and cooling and fewer materials in maintenance. Use space efficiently.

Building shape. A long, narrow floor plan brings more natural light into a building than a large, square floor plan and allows more workers to be close to windows.

Building placement. Buildings should be situated to blend in with the natural environment and to preserve landscape features (native vegetation, stream valleys) and hydrologic functions (water supply, wastewater, and stormwater).

Building orientation. In a hot, arid climate, buildings should be placed to avoid large expanses of unshaded

windows, particularly on southern and western exposures.

Building materials. Use high-quality building materials for the building's exterior, especially around windows and doors; use high-performance, low-emissivity glass for windows.

Landscaping. Use natural landscaping to provide shade and shelter. Landscape improvements should require little or no water and maintenance.

Windows. Because windows can account for up to 25 percent of a building's heat loss and 30 percent of its cooling load, the design of windows should vary according to the direction each window faces. Glazing and low-emissivity coatings are important for insulation.

Shading. Shading can help promote use of daylight for interior lighting, minimize heat transfer, and save energy. Eaves that extend outward shade windows in summer but admit full sunlight in winter.

Lighting. Large windows, atriums, or skylights can help to direct light into the interior of the building. Light shelves can be located in a window to bounce natural light onto the ceiling to bring light deep into a space. The concave underside of the curvilinear roof at the new international terminal of the San Francisco International Airport, for example, reflects sunlight to illuminate the interior of the departure hall with natural light.

Circulation. Use operable windows and fans, and select a layout that allows for cross ventilation.

Future use. The building should be designed to allow for future expansion or adaptive uses to accommodate changes in demographics, technology, and other factors that may influence the programs of the local government.

A long, narrow floor plan brings more natural light into a building than a large, square floor plan.

Green design needs to be considered at the outset of the project and built into the facility's mission and goals. Some local governments are not only writing policies and regulations to promote green buildings but are also leading the way by making their own facilities resource efficient. The New York City department of design and construction has developed *High Performance Building Guidelines* to mainstream this approach in public projects. The city of Seattle, Washington, has declared its intention to build all public buildings that are larger than 5,000 sq. ft. to meet or exceed the silver rating of the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System.

The following strategies can help reduce the environmental impact of your project:

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- Consider renovating an existing structure rather than building from scratch
- Consider building on brownfields or already developed land instead of on undeveloped properties
- Choose an architect, developer, and contractors who have experience in building environmentally sensitive structures
- Integrate green objectives into the goals of the project and share these with all contractors; invite all contractors and subcontractors to share ideas about how to make the facility more environmentally friendly
- Request the use of recycled, recyclable, and local materials whenever possible
- Consider energy efficiency and maintenance costs when selecting interior furnishings and fixtures.

FINANCING

Like other capital improvements projects, a major renovation or the construction of a city hall often requires bond proceeds or enterprise funds. To ensure voter approval, the local government may have to undertake a significant cost-benefit analysis. It is often cost-effective for a government to own its facilities instead of lease them from the private sector. Several factors contribute to this benefit:

A team effort—Edna, Texas

When the city of **Edna, Texas**, decided to purchase and renovate an old, vacant downtown building to meet its space needs, it saved money by using the skills of its employees. The city manager got the project off the ground and oversaw the construction. Employees in police, emergency medical services, public works, and other departments helped wire and frame the building and constructed the council chamber furniture.

Inmates from the county jail worked on the project. One inmate designed the mural that covers one wall of the city council chamber. The mural captures the history of Edna by depicting the train station and shopping district in 1908, when the building was originally built.

Construction took about six months. Most of the renovation took place during the winter—Edna's slack time—which made it possible to engage employees who would be repairing roads or performing other outdoor duties at other times of the year. An estimated 2,800 hours of city staff time and 2,100 hours worked by county jail inmates contributed to the project.

- Governments use tax-exempt financing to construct buildings, which results in an actual interest rate that is generally 60 percent to 70 percent of the taxable borrowing rates of the private sector. This results in annual debt or lease payments that are correspondingly 60 percent to 70 percent of private sector financing for similar structures.
- After the financing has been paid off and without an annual cost of a lease, the long-term residual value of a building is at least 30 percent to 40 percent of the future replacement cost of that building.
- Facilities built specifically for government operations can be designed to accommodate the local government's needs, with a configuration that is more functional and efficient than is typically found in general-use, speculative office buildings. Thus the government gets more net usable area as a percentage of gross building area in a custom-designed facility than it would if it leased space in a commercial building.
- The government might be able to consolidate departments that would otherwise be located in various leased spaces. Diffused or scattered leases for agencies in several buildings require the duplication of support services (such as reception areas, conference rooms, training facilities, copiers and fax machines, employee lunch or break rooms, and storage or filing areas) that can be shared if a number of agencies are consolidated in a building that is owned by the government. Thus the total space required in a single building designed for and owned by a government might be less than the space needed in a number of different leased locations.

Some local governments finance facilities projects by passing a dedicated sales or use tax. Richmond Heights, Missouri, for example, financed a new community center with a 0.5 percent sales tax for parks and stormwater projects.

Funding may come from one source or multiple sources. In Algonquin, Illinois, the village board avoided using property taxes to fund its new village hall; instead the board acquired money from several sources, including developer donations, a retroactive cable franchise fee payment, and transfers from the general fund. The largest portion of the \$3.8 million needed came from increased sales taxes of a recently established business district development obligation. In addition, the developer and a local business donated approximately 10 acres of land for the project. The city also kept costs down by enlisting a single architect to construct the new city hall as well as renovate the old city hall.

Douglas County, Wisconsin, is involved in a \$35 million construction project expected to be completed in 2003 that will consist of three buildings: the existing courthouse, a jail, and a city-county building with administrative offices for the city of Superior and Dou-

glas County. The project is funded in part by “selling” jail beds to other jurisdictions. The county also fast-tracked the project to save money and time; construction began before the design of the administrative offices was finalized.

Recently a number of developments have made use of certificates of participation (COPs), a tax-exempt debt document available to government and private sector developers. The certificate serves as the basis of financing a building that is designed to the specification of the government and then leased from the owner—who could be an independent developer, a government agency, a redevelopment authority, a facility development authority, or a joint powers authority formed for the purpose of financing and developing local government facilities. Some legal departments view the use of COPs as a form of debt, which may require voter approval. In jurisdictions in which COPs can be used without voter approval, they are popular because funding is readily available at tax-exempt interest rates that are very close to the interest rates that would be achieved with bond financing.

COPs are usually secured for the total cost of the project (100 percent financing) on the basis of detailed plans, specifications, and/or a contractor or design-build team bid for the project. An agency, joint powers agreement, building authority, or other not-for-profit entity is formed to serve as the owner of the project; this entity is responsible for developing it in accordance with detailed specifications and for securing financing. COPs can provide interim construction financing or permanent take-out financing. As with other types of loans, the government must identify a funding source able to make lease payments equal to the cost of the debt amortization of the COPs over a typical 20- to 30-year period (which makes it very similar to a lease payment). At the end of the amortization period for the initial level of COPs, the facility is often sold to the government for a nominal payment.

Private sector developers can form design-build teams and provide cost-effective facilities for the government as long as the government develops design criteria, performance specifications, and has a strong management team in place to oversee the project. COPs can reduce the cost of leasing the facility so that it almost equals what the annual and lifecycle cost would be if the government owned the building through tax-exempt bond financing.

Sometimes funds from federal sources can also be leveraged to help finance construction or renovation projects. Claremont, California, for example, received a \$1.2 million hazard mitigation grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the renovation of its city hall, which was designated also as its emergency operations center. In addition to the grant funds, the city used capital improvement money (\$1 million) that had been set aside for the renovation during the preceding 10 years as well as a 15-year financing arrangement (\$1.5 million). Before receiving the FEMA grant, the city was unable to finance the

Tips for success

- Plan carefully. Money spent up front can save expensive changes later on.
- Use competitive bidding.
- Take the time and trouble to find a good and experienced architect and/or construction manager whom you can trust.
- Listen to the advice of the professionals you hire.
- Maintain ongoing and open communication. Ask for monthly written reports and hold meetings at appropriate intervals. Both the construction manager and the local government project manager should visit the site as often as needed to ensure that work is going smoothly.
- Minimize change orders: the fewer the changes, the less expensive the finished project.
- Review and update the budget at design milestones.
- Perform all appropriate inspections as early as possible.
- If a contractor or subcontractor is not performing up to your expectations, replace the contractor immediately. Make sure written contracts allow the government to revoke the contract if performance is substandard.
- Carry liability, fire, and extended coverage on any building under construction.
- Ask for advice. Other local government professionals, as well as building professionals, may be able to advise you about how to handle unfamiliar situations.

much-needed renovation, but the combination of funds allowed Claremont not only to proceed but also to expand its scope.

Intergovernmental cooperation often makes facility construction and renovation more affordable and leads to an effective use of public funds. In Windsor, Ontario, several local governance organizations joined together to plan and build two facilities. The Windsor Justice Facility is a 375,000 sq. ft. building that serves as headquarters of the Windsor police services and the provincial courthouse. Another building houses an elementary school, a public library branch, a community police station, and a child-care facility.

OVERSEEING CONSTRUCTION

Each project should move along a critical path from start to finish to ensure that the required sequence of activities is completed efficiently. Individuals responsible for each task should be identified on the critical-path chart. A formal information and accounting system is also essential.

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Typical problems that can arise during construction include:

- Delays from rain and bad weather
- Incorrect building specifications because of miscommunication
- Change orders caused by design changes
- Missed deadlines and substandard work by contractors and subcontractors.

To prevent problems during construction, the scope of work, budget authority, responsibility, building materials, selection of subcontractors, and code compliance should be written into the construction contracts.

However, even the best-laid plans might need to be changed during construction. All projects should have an on-site construction manager who understands the local government's vision and ensures the integrity of the project. The construction manager should work closely with the local government team to resolve problems in a way that balances scheduling and cost goals. Ongoing meetings (weekly or biweekly) can help identify problems and facilitate a team approach to generating solutions.

VISIONS GUIDING IMPLEMENTATION

Welcoming Citizens: Springfield, Missouri

When Springfield, Missouri, outgrew its 100-year-old city hall and decided to renovate a 1930s post office and federal building, the city designed the layout with specific community goals in mind. Early in the planning, the goal was to allocate the space according to the needs of the users. The city's vision for the Busch Municipal Building, which opened in 1992, was for a space that would foster a pragmatic approach to working with the public.

One goal of the design was to break down barriers, both real and perceived, between the government and citizens. A significant entranceway that was added to the two-story, glass and aluminum atrium makes the main entry clearly visible from the parking lot and beyond, welcoming visitors inside. As the visitor enters, a directory and map clearly illustrate where to go.

High-tech voting for council

Mesa, Arizona, uses a network-based voting system from Arcatron called VoteLynx. City council members press buttons on small panels to record motions and votes. The motions and votes are immediately loaded into a database accessible by the city clerk. As each vote is recorded, it is displayed on a large video screen in the chambers as well as on Mesa's local cable TV channel.

The materials and design further reinforce the feeling of openness. All offices are either completely open or have glass walls, helping to create an open and friendly atmosphere. Hanging plants, color, and cherry furniture reinforce the theme. A glass display case features city activities and historic artifacts.

Most of the community's municipal offices are located in the Busch Municipal Building, and the layout supports a one-stop approach to service delivery. Offices are spread over six floors, but the facility was designed so that most citizens never have to leave the ground floor. The offices most used by the public—building and zoning, licensing, and public works—are all within pointing distance of the main reception desk. In addition, there is a kiosk with a touch-screen computer that guides citizens through some of the features of their local government.

Security is handled unobtrusively, so that citizen customers feel welcome while employees feel safe. The two public entrances are visible from the main reception desk, which has an immediate connection to the police department in case of a problem. On each floor, a reception area visible from both sets of elevators provides both added citizen service and security.

The theme of community and cohesiveness among people with cultural and other differences is supported by the small public park that was incorporated in the landscape design. Friendship Park features a gazebo that was donated and built by craftspeople from Isesaki, Japan, Springfield's sister city. The Volunteer Wall of Fame, celebrating the community spirit of residents, serves as a site for numerous community outreach activities.

These elements targeted in the design process have made the building pleasant and functional. When it made customer service a primary goal of the renovation project, Springfield brought citizens and their government closer together.

Moving toward Electronic Government: Clark County, Nevada

When Clark County, Nevada, designed its new government center, it made sure the building's telecommunications infrastructure would be universal, flexible, and scaleable. It sought to make the municipal work accessible to all, adaptable to emerging needs, and open to new technologies. The county designed on the basis of the new technology available, with an eye on future possibilities for serving citizens and the ability to easily incorporate new technologies. For example, the new cabling in the building supports high-speed, 100-megabit communications. This includes the telephones, which feature category 5 unshielded twisted-pair cabling—a future standard for high-speed telecommunications—that enables applications such as imaging, videoconferencing, and digital telephones that demand significant bandwidth.

Multifunction wiring distribution boxes were installed throughout the building at regular intervals.

Electrical infrastructure was centrally located to allow the county to quickly and easily reconfigure the floor plan to meet future needs, without installing new conduit and wire. In addition, routers were installed to help the county manage network communications more efficiently and to increase network capacity by channeling electronic traffic directly to the appropriate device instead of through a network loop.

Building Intergovernmental Cooperation: Mankato, Minnesota

Both the city and the school district became cramped as the community of Mankato, Minnesota, grew. The city and the Mankato area public schools had worked together on several efforts and believed that they could meet their space needs and serve the public by bringing their offices together in a new intergovernmental center. Providing one building for both entities divided the costs of renovation and ongoing maintenance, enabling both the city and school district to do more at lower cost. The city and school district share space within the building, including most conference rooms and the Minnesota River Room, which is used by both the Mankato city council and the Mankato school board for their public meetings. The Minnesota River Room features state-of-the-art presentation technology, including television screens that allow citizens attending meetings to see materials being discussed.

The city believes that sharing space creates synergy that leads to the sharing of ideas and solutions. The city and school district have jointly hosted a number of events for their citizens, starting with the open house to introduce the new facility.

Combining the Best of the Past with the Best of the Present: Claremont, California

The facility that houses Claremont city hall was originally three separate buildings built from the 1920s to the 1940s. By the late 1980s, piecemeal expansion and the effects of time had resulted in a building that was inaccessible to people with disabilities, seismically unstable, and unable to keep up with the demands of modern technology. Tough economic conditions and the presence of higher-priority projects delayed the much-needed renovation work, but following a successful bid for a FEMA grant in late 1995, a broad-based renovation was able to combine the best of the past with the best of the present.

The oldest of the three parts of city hall opened in November 1925, and building systems needed upgrading. Plumbing frequently clogged, electrical wiring was inadequate for the modern technological equipment, and heating and air conditioning systems often broke down. The city hall also was an unreinforced masonry building, making it susceptible to earthquakes and other natural disasters, which was of particular concern because it is an essential services building for Claremont and designated as an emergency operations

Design milestones: One city's process

Since 1994, **Conroe, Texas**, has renovated an existing building for its city hall, built a new fire station, begun construction on a new police station, and designed a public works center. The city has developed the following process, which works well for Conroe:

1. **Architect selection.** A committee representing the city council, administration, and the user department(s) reviews qualifications of architects and recommends the appropriate architect for the project. Depending on state procurement laws, this could take one to two months.
2. **A building program.** The architect examines the current site and buildings, spends in-depth time with users discussing needs, and looks at growth trends to develop a building program. The resulting document estimates the size of the structures and site and how the space will be apportioned and positioned. This often takes one month.
3. **Site selection.** Using the program for a guideline, five to seven potential sites are identified. The architect evaluates the sites for a variety of factors and ranks them. This can take one to two months.
4. **Acquisition.** The architect's rankings are used as a guide for purchasing the desired site. The time needed for this phase is dependent on a multiple of factors and can be difficult to predict.
5. **Design.** Sufficient time should be spent on this phase to get plenty of input from everyone in the user department. Conroe considered three or four floor plans for city hall before settling on one. The final design was much different from the concept plan that was developed during the programming phase. The police station, on the other hand, kept the same basic look. Allow at least six months for this phase.
6. **Bid.** Complete the final drawings and bid the project. Allow three months.
7. **Construction.** The architect plays a key role during construction and is responsible for staying on top of the project at all times. The time needed for construction varies according to the size and scope of the project. Make sure to build in additional time to accommodate unexpected delays.

Source: Chip Vansteenbergh, assistant city administrator, Conroe, Texas.

center. In addition, city hall was spread over nine floors and conformed neither to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) nor to local building codes. Small, cramped offices, insufficient meeting rooms, and a scarcity of public counter space made it difficult to carry out the business of local government.

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The city council agreed in 1989 that a major building overhaul was needed and decided to renovate the existing city hall instead of build. It chose renovation because of the city's long-standing policies of maintaining a core of government services (library, post office, and city offices) in the village and of protecting the vitality of the area as a community social center. Also, because of their historical and architectural value, the council wanted to preserve the buildings that made up city hall.

The new plan included ADA improvements throughout the entire structure; an elevator to the second floor; walls reinforced to the highest seismic standards; a central public counter where all city services could be provided; additional conference rooms; the total replacement of fixtures, electrical systems, and heating and air conditioning; the addition of an employee break room with a kitchen; and the addition of 4,575 sq. ft. of space for city offices and public use.

During construction, which began in late 1997, all city hall staff and equipment were housed in modular units set up on vacant property owned by the redevelopment agency. Particular care was taken to notify the public of city hall's temporary location, to keep the phone numbers the same, and to ensure that city services were not interrupted by the transition.

The renovation, which was completed in early January 1999, accomplishes all its goals. The building is now seismically sound and should be able to continue operating even after the strongest earthquake. The building's infrastructure is able to meet the demands of modern technology while it provides a comfortable working environment. Thanks to the installation of ramps and an elevator, persons with disabilities can easily access all parts of the building.

During construction, care was taken to notify the public of city hall's temporary location, to keep the phone numbers the same, and to ensure that city services were not interrupted by the transition.

On the outside, city hall maintains its original Spanish mission-style architecture. The addition of a small fountain, park benches, and two tables (complete with inset checkerboards) has made the exterior area of city hall more inviting. Few people spent time on city hall property before the renovation, but today people sit on the benches and use the tables at all hours of the day.

The overall atmosphere is also much more open and inviting. A large, shared counter to the side of the front entrance makes it easier for the public to locate city departments and services and provides space for carrying out tasks such as initial review of building plans. The addition of more and larger conference rooms makes staff meetings more comfortable and easier to schedule.

Visitors routinely comment on how attractive the building is, and the local historical society has expressed its satisfaction with how the building has maintained its original style, both inside and out. An editorial in the regional newspaper complimented the city for successfully combining the best of the past with the best of the present.

Much of the credit for the renovation's success goes to the employee committees that worked throughout the lengthy and complex process to allow all the stakeholder groups to provide input. The exchange of ideas within and among eight subcommittees led to several design recommendations that probably would not have been made otherwise.

The finished city hall shows that gathering as much input as possible and analyzing and synthesizing the input into cohesive goals and objectives can result in a cost-effective and efficient structure.

Everything Old Becomes New Again: Genesee County, New York

Genesee County, New York, has renovated existing structures and built new ones to accommodate changing needs. Through the space-planning process, the county managed to provide several county departments with modern, functional, efficient office space while it maintained the historical integrity of the county seat's central business district.

In the late 1980s, the state of New York mandated court administration on the county level for all 62 New York counties; this would provide a first-rate, code-compliant unified court building for the state and local court systems at county expense although the state pays for most of the personnel except district attorney and public defender staff and offices.

From 1988 to 1994, Genesee County analyzed various scenarios to combine and make more efficient the various courts, which were then housed in three different buildings. The total space used was only about 25 percent of the newly mandated space. The county also acknowledged problems related to security, privacy and confidentiality, and climate control, particularly during the summer.

The county engaged an architect, an engineering firm, and a construction management firm to help develop a plan of action. The first task was to establish the space needs of the affected employees. In addition, the county sought to capitalize on the opportunity to consolidate its county and state courts with city court operations.

The final plan called for a two-story, 52,000 sq. ft. building on a parking lot adjacent to the current main county office buildings. Construction was completed at a total price of \$9.3 million in the fall of 1997.

The two court buildings that became vacant after the new building opened were renovated for reuse in 1998. They were built in 1925 and 1841, have significant historical status individually, and are part of a district on the National Register of Historic Places; but they

lacked necessary climate control, were not ADA compliant, and had antiquated heating and electrical infrastructure. Their renovation required almost no exterior facade modifications except for the replacement of entry stairs on both buildings.

The three-story 1841 county courthouse was remodeled and converted to administrative offices. The former courtroom was left intact, however, and was upgraded with a sound system installed for Genesee County legislature meetings. The Batavia city council also conducts its meetings in this room and bimonthly federal bankruptcy court hearings are held here. An interior elevator was installed; this avoided any exterior facade changes and gained the approval of the state office of historic preservation.

The final price tag on the remodeling and repair of the county office building and the old courthouse was approximately \$3.7 million. The county dedicated a 1 percent share of its local sales tax proceeds for the project's long-term debt, which kept the county from having to raise property taxes.

A Community of Choice: Mason, Ohio

The current city offices were built in 1939 when Mason had approximately 1,000 residents. Sixty years later, Mason's population numbered more than 22,000, and municipal employees were crowded into offices scattered in several buildings. The city recognized the need for a new facility and began planning with a space-needs assessment for all of the city's service operations. City leaders recognized that the development of a new city facility was an excellent opportunity to improve service efficiency, return scattered departments to a central location, and provide the rapidly growing community with a focal point.

The new building was carefully designed, keeping in mind the needs and convenience of residents, participation of employees, and demands in the future. The new municipal center brings most city departments back under one roof, facilitating better customer service. It also provides public meeting rooms and common areas as well as convenient access to both council and court chambers. A large, landscaped front plaza and center atrium provide an identity and public gathering spot for the community.

The facility's programmatic functions include offices for building and engineering, parks and recreation, city administration, and police and court functions. Reuniting department functions that had grown accustomed to being scattered was a challenge, but program planners saw it also as an opportunity to revisit and improve the city's customer service program. A service desk, which would allow the city business of most residents to be transacted at one time, became a key feature driving much of the building's design. Unique design elements such as open interior stair areas allow ease of communication among several floors and departments. This facility also incorpo-

rates the latest smart-building technology for communications and security.

Another concern with developing a building more than 16 times the size of the existing municipal building was that the camaraderie, communication, and teamwork that develop from close working conditions would be lost. Interior light and open stairwells with adjacent copying, mailing, and filing areas encourage work flow and interaction among departments and staff and improve efficiency.

Flexibility was key for an organization used to growth and change in services and expectations. Central common areas are flanked by open space to be subdivided into individual workspaces, filing space, or storage areas. The perimeter of the building is enclosed office space with ample conference and meeting rooms that could become enclosed offices in the future. Larger meeting rooms and classrooms can be subdivided to house future departments or functions. In addition, a full basement was programmed for storage, records retention, evidence processing, lockers, and so forth. Design refinements provided exterior window space to the front of this area, making its possible use for offices more acceptable.

The space-needs analysis was developed after a series of meetings among council members, senior administrative staff, and departmental staff. The city took a number of steps to involve employees; several employee committees were charged with focusing on specific issues (technology, landscaping, security, furniture, public education, and moving). Ample opportunities for employee involvement and feedback were provided both within committees and between the core committee of senior staff and subcommittees. The result is a building specifically designed to meet the needs of Mason's city government and improve service for its citizens.

Photos of the buildings in Springfield, Clark County, Claremont, Genesee County, and Mason are included in the collection of city and county center photos posted on ICMA's Web site, at <http://icma.org/wherewework>

NOTES

- 1 See Rocky Mountain Institute, *Green Development: Integrating Ecology and Real Estate* (New York: Wiley, 1998); Joseph J. Romm and William D. Browning, *Greening the Building and the Bottom Line: Increasing Productivity through Energy-Efficient Design* (Snowmass, Colo., Rocky Mountain Institute, 1994); and U.S. Department of Energy studies done in cooperation with the Center for Building Performance and Diagnostics, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa., www.arc.cmu.edu/cbpd/index.html.
- 2 See U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Fact Sheet: Ventilation and Air Quality in Offices," www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/ventilat.html; and Rocky Mountain Institute, *Green Development*, 16.

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