

# INVESTING IN JUSTICE: COURTHOUSE COMPLEX PROJECT OVERVIEW

Milwaukee County's nearly 100-year-old Public Safety Building is crumbling, inefficient, and puts public safety and justice at risk. Construction of a new building is critical and urgent.

## IDENTIFYING & INCORPORATING COMMUNITY GOALS

The timely need for construction creates a once-in-a-generation opportunity to think beyond buildings.

## COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED PROJECT PRIORITIES

A collaborative values-setting process, including a public survey and more than 45 workshops and 40 additional meetings with justice-system stakeholders, community partners, and expert consultants, identified what the community believes this project should address and accomplish.

- Ensure safety and security
- Enhance operational efficiency
- Design for systems outcomes and future adaptability
- Support community well-being
- Promote accessibility and inclusivity
- Plan for financial responsibility and cost efficiency
- Continue stakeholder engagement and communication
- Advance the County's climate policy



**MILWAUKEE  
COUNTY**

## WHAT IS THE COURTHOUSE COMPLEX?

Milwaukee County provides core services, including public safety and court services, out of three facilities at the Courthouse Complex in downtown Milwaukee: the Historic Courthouse, the Criminal Justice Facility, and the Public Safety Building. The Historic Courthouse and Criminal Justice Facility also need renovations, but will not be replaced.

## ACCESSING SERVICES: 800,000+ VISITS ANNUALLY

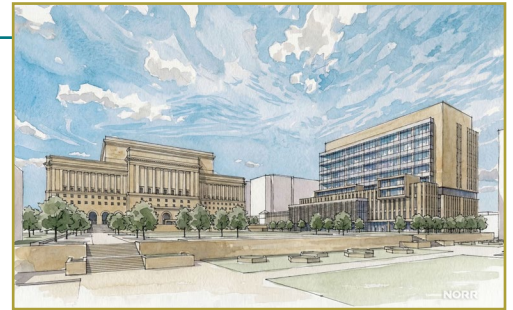
Community members visit hundreds of thousands of times per year. Sometimes visits are by choice or in celebration, other times there is no choice but to visit.

- Secure marriage license or birth certificates
- Attend public County Board meetings
- Participate in jury duty
- Request restraining orders
- Attend or testify in trial
- Do an important civic job as an employee
- Access many other services

# DESIGNED TO IMPROVE SAFETY, REDUCE DELAYS, MEET MODERN NEEDS

In a new building, Milwaukee County can improve service delivery and outcomes. Conceptual designs have incorporated the community's priorities, including with:

- **Secure corridors that align with State Supreme Court standards** by establishing three paths of travel – one for the public; one for staff, judges and jurors; and one for in-custody defendants
- **All criminal courtrooms moved into the new building**, instead of being distributed across the Complex, and dedicated spaces for attorney / client meetings
- **Expanded space** for problem-solving courts, early-intervention programs, and flexible future programming or service delivery
- **Dedicated spaces where families or victim witnesses can step away** from court to find respite and reduce trauma
- **Centralized, efficient energy system** that reduces emissions from the Courthouse Complex and lowers annual utility costs



Design efforts will continue through 2028. Plans will include improved wayfinding, signage, and accessibility features throughout the Courthouse Complex, social hubs and meeting spaces, and technology and virtual resources that can improve court operations.

## ANNUAL SAVINGS ON COSTS\* MOVING FORWARD

Eroding infrastructure and aging systems have led to expensive emergency repairs, and the Courthouse Complex is the single largest cause of deferred maintenance liability in the Milwaukee County capital project backlog. Construction can wipe out deferred costs and save:



**\$1.25M ON ANNUAL UTILITY COSTS**



**\$3.5M IF MILWAUKEE COUNTY REDUCES  
IN-CUSTODY CASE PROCESSING TIMELINES  
TO MEET STATEWIDE AVERAGES**



**\$2.2M BY REDUCING SHERIFF OVERTIME  
COSTS TIED TO INMATE TRANSPORTS**

\*Estimates based on trends and available data in 2026 from the Budget Office.

## LIMITING COST IMPACTS

**Milwaukee County  
cannot afford to wait.** 

The project cost is now estimated at \$897 million. Delays to the project are anticipated to increase the total cost between \$3 and \$4 million *per month*.

Rather than having local taxpayers absorb the full impact, Milwaukee County can save taxpayers more than \$400 million by continuing to direct dollars made available through a State budget win in 2025.