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Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Voting Session_ (Date) Work Session____July 23, 2009_____ (Date)

I. A. Request made by:__Rodney Rhoades_____ Phone # 854-8679
Signature of Elected Official/Appointed Official/Executive Manager/County Attorney

B. Requested Text:

Discuss and take appropriate action on the results of the Travis County Central Campus Needs Analysis and Master Plan Visioning Session held June 23, 2009.

C. Approved by: _____
Signature of Commissioner(s) or County Judge

II. A. Backup memorandum and exhibits should be attached and submitted with this Agenda Request (Original and eight copies of agenda request and backup).

B. Please list all of the agencies or officials names and telephone numbers that might be affected or be involved with the request. Send a copy of this Agenda Request and backup to them:

Christian Smith, Special Assistant to the Commissioners Court	854-9465
Honorable John K, Dietz, 250th District Court	854-9312
Honorable Bob Perkins, 331st District Court	854-9443
Honorable Lora Livingston, 261st District Court	854-9309
Honorable Brenda Kennedy, 403rd District Court	854-9808
Honorable Eric Shepperd, County Court-at-Law #2	854-9248
Honorable David Crain, County Court-at-Law #3	854-9243
Sheriff Greg Hamilton	854-9770
Dolores Ortega-Carter, Travis County Treasurer	854- 9365
Susan Spataro, Travis County Auditor	854-9125
Cyd Grimes, Travis County Purchasing Agent	854-9700
Danny Hobby, Executive Manager Emergency Services	854-9367
Alicia Perez, Executive Manager Administrative Operations	854-9343
Roger Jefferies, Executive Manager Justice & Public Safety	854-4415
Sherri Fleming, Executive Manager Health & Human & Veterans' Services	854-4100
Joe Gieselman, Executive Manager Transportation & Natural Resources	854-9383
Deece Eckstein	854-9754
Belinda Powell, Strategic Planning Manager	854-9106
Leslie Stricklan, AIA, Sr. Project Manager	854-4778

III. Required Authorizations: Please check if applicable:

Planning and Budget Office (854-9106)

____ Additional funding for any department or for any purpose

___ Transfer of existing funds within or between any line item budget

____ Grant

Human Resources Department(854-9165)

____ A change in your department's personnel (reclassifications, etc.)

Purchasing Office (854-9700)

____ Bid, Purchase Contract, Request for Proposal, Procurement

County Attorney's Office (854-9415)

_ Contract, Agreement, Policy & Procedure

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: This Agenda Request complete with backup memorandum and exhibits should be submitted to the County Judge's Office no later than 5:00 PM on Tuesday for the following week's meeting. Late or incomplete request may be deferred to the next subsequent meeting.

PLANNING AND BUDGET OFFICE
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

314 W. 11th Street
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

MEMORANDUM **July 14, 2009**

TO: Members of the Commissioners Court
FROM: Belinda Powell, Strategic Planning Manager
Leslie Stricklan, AIA, Sr. Project Manager

SUBJECT: Briefing on the Internal Visioning Session held June 23, 2009

Proposed Motion:
Receive briefing and take appropriate action on the results of the Travis County Central Campus Needs Analysis and Master Plan **Visioning Session** held June 23, 2009.

Summary and Staff Recommendations:

On June 23, 2009, Broaddus and Associates, along with their sub-consultants, conducted a Visioning Session with various Elected and Appointed Officials and key staff of Travis County. This session was a part of the initiation phase of the Travis County Central Campus Needs Analysis and Master Plan project. Broaddus and Associates is under contract with Travis County to develop a Needs Analysis and Master Plan for the Central Campus, located in downtown Austin.

The Visioning Session was held at the Legislative Conference Center at the State Capitol Extension. The session was a six hour event attended by over 80 participants including the Broaddus and Associates team. The day started with an introduction of the project team and a brief overview of what the day would hold. Topics discussed over the course of the day included the following:

- What Austin will look like in 2030
- The Project Context
- A Government Campus in the City
- Operational Relationships and opportunities
- Building and Site Utilization
- Public Accessibility and community connectivity
- Public Safety and Campus Security
- Information Technology and the Data Center

Attached is a summary of the results of the day. Staff recommends the Commissioners Court acknowledge the receipt of the summary as a basis for the development of guiding principles for the Travis County Central Campus Needs Analysis and Master Plan. These guiding principles will continue to be developed and refined as we enter Phase Two of the project, the development of the Master Plan.

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Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Voting Session_ (Date) Work Session_ **July 23, 2009** (Date)

I. A. Request made by: Rodney Rhoades _____ Phone # 854-8679
Signature of Elected Official/Appointed Official/Executive Manager/County Attorney

B. Requested Text:

Discuss follow up programming questions from the Broaddus and Associates Team concerning the needs analysis for the Commissioners Court Offices and Courtroom for the Central Campus Master Plan.

C. Approved by: _____
Signature of Commissioner(s) or County Judge

II. A. Backup memorandum and exhibits should be attached and submitted with this Agenda Request (Original and eight copies of agenda request and backup).

B. Please list all of the agencies or officials names and telephone numbers that might be affected or be involved with the request. Send a copy of this Agenda Request and backup to them:

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III. Required Authorizations: Please check if applicable:

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Human Resources Department(854-9165)

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AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: This Agenda Request complete with backup memorandum and exhibits should be submitted to the County Judge's Office no later than 5:00 PM on Tuesday for the following week's meeting. Late or incomplete request may be deferred to the next subsequent meeting.

PLANNING AND BUDGET OFFICE
TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

314 W. 11th Street
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

MEMORANDUM **July 14, 2009**

TO: Members of the Commissioners Court
FROM: Belinda Powell, Strategic Planning Manager
Leslie Stricklan, AIA, Sr. Project Manager

SUBJECT: Follow-up with Broaddus Consulting Team on Commissioners Court Program Planning Guide

Summary and Staff Recommendations:
At a work session on May 28, 2009 the Commissioners Court discussed the attached Program Planning Guide, (PPG). This guide has been provided to Broaddus and Associates to inform the planning consultants, on the Central Campus Needs Analysis and Master Plan, regarding some basic information about the Commissioners Court. The attached document discusses the Commissioners Court offices as a series of individual office suites, as well as, the needs of the Commissioners Court related to the Courtroom and supporting rooms. This discussion will be led by the consulting team and move forward on the issues high-lighted for further discussion and development. Additionally this is an opportunity for the consulting team to make sure that they clearly understanding the Commissioners Court perspective on the needs for their respective offices and the Commissioners Courtroom.

Cc;

Rodney Rhoades	Christian Smith	Dolores Ortega-Carter	Susan Spataro
Cyd Grimes	Danny Hobby	Joe Gieselman	Sherri Fleming
Alicia Perez	Roger Jefferies	Deece Eckstein	

BROADDUS & ASSOCIATES
INNOVATIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

RICCIGREENEASSOCIATES

WIGINTON HOOKER JEFFRY
ARCHITECTS

MEETING: Phase One Needs Assessment: Programming Interview

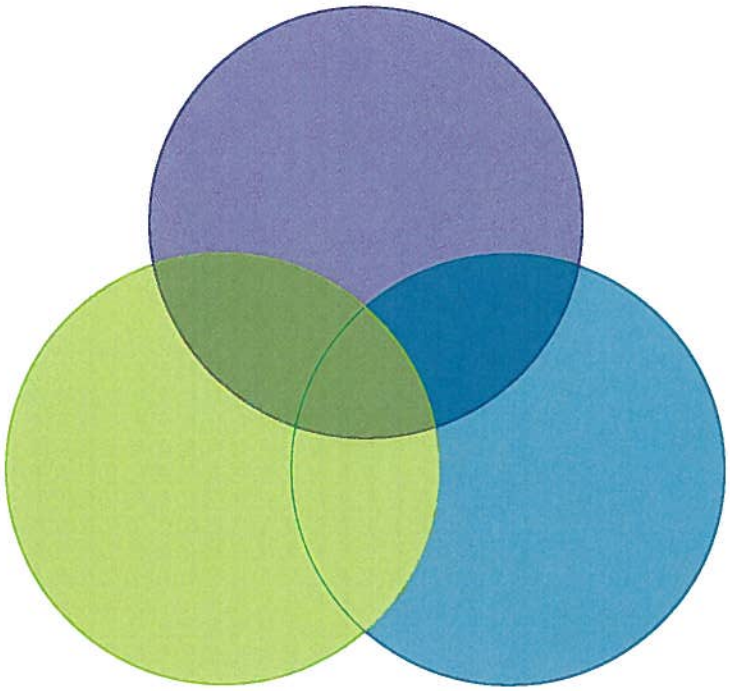
CLIENT: Travis County
PROJECT: Central Campus Master Plan
DATE/TIME: July 23, 2009 / 1:30pm
LOCATION: Travis County Administration Building, 314 W. 11th Street
Commissioners Courtroom, 1st Floor
Austin, Texas 78701

AGENDA:

1. Tour Existing Department Spaces
2. Review Organization Chart, Staff Trends & Projections
3. Discuss Critical Adjacencies
   a. Review provided Bubble Diagrams
   b. Discuss interactions with Public
   c. Discuss interactions with Other Departments
   d. Departmental Dynamics: How consolidated do you need to be? What are the dynamics of day to day operations?
4. Determine Space Needs
   a. Office Space: Private Offices, Cubicles
   b. Storage Needs: Long-Term, Short-Term, Archives
   c. Support Areas: Security, Fire Safety, Climate Control
   d. Shared Spaces: Common work areas, conference rooms
5. Explore Additional Needs
   a. Security Issues: Card Access, Cameras, Monitoring, Recording, Bullet-Proofing, Physical/Visual Access
   b. Long-term Data Needs
   c. Access Flooring
   d. Vehicles
   e. Valuables & Vaults
6. Questions from Attachment

PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE

TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT OFFICES & COURTROOM



JUNE 2009

Introduction

This document is a planning guide for the Travis County Commissioners Court members. It is intended to assist with the planning, implementation and monitoring of the space allocation and office environment created for the Commissioners Court members and their Courtroom. This has been developed to enhance the communications with any design professional who may be tasked with developing specific space allocations and floor plans to construct or renovate office space. For brevity, the phrase "Court" and "Commissioners Court" will be used interchangeably in this document.

Any new construction or renovation undertaken should meet the "Guidelines for Executing the Master Plan" adopted by the Commissioners Court in January, 2002 as part of the Capital Facilities Strategic Plan. These guidelines outline general planning parameters to use when assisting offices with the development of expansion plans. The adherence to these guidelines has been assumed. Also, all space allocations should be consistent with "General Office Space Standards" approved by the Commissioners Court in February, 2009.

Furthermore, only "bubble diagrams" are provided here, to outline basic relationships among different functions and programs, along with estimated square footage allocations. It is understood that the particular footprint of a building will impact both the square footage needed and the adjacencies that can be achieved. The information provided in this guide is intended to reflect the ideal arrangements for the office so the impact of any compromise necessary due to building constraints can be evaluated, and then decisions made as to which layout will best serve the Court members' offices.

There are five elected officials that comprise the members of the Court, as follows

County Judge Sam Biscoe
Commissioner Precinct One, Ron Davis
Commissioner Precinct Two, Sarah Eckhardt
Commissioner Precinct Three, Karen Huber
Commissioner Precinct Four, Margaret Gomez

These five officials were each interviewed separately along with members of their staff in order to identify their separate and unique space needs. The outgoing Commissioner Precinct 3, Gerald Daugherty and his staff were also interviewed in December, 2008 due to their recent years of experience within the office spaces provided in the Ned Granger Administration Building (Granger Building) and their willingness to share their perspectives.

This planning guide is intended to identify the common themes among the five members of the Commissioners Court, along with highlighting those areas where there is a diversity of opinion. In addition, members of the Court provided their perspectives and vision about the physical characteristics and needs of the Commissioners Courtroom in which they meet on at least a weekly basis. Topics which will likely need further discussion among the full Court are highlighted and summarized at the end of this Program Planning Guide.

Mission, responsibilities, and staffing

The basic mission and responsibilities of the Commissioners Court is described in the Adopted Budget under "Preface for Readers Unfamiliar with the Structure and Role of Texas County Government", as follows.

> *"Texas County government focuses primarily on the judicial system, health and social service delivery, law enforcement, and upkeep of County maintained roads.... The state's 254 counties have similar organizational features: a governing body (the Commissioners Court) consisting of one member elected County-wide (the County Judge), and four Commissioners elected from geographically unique precincts. The County Judge is so named because he or she often has actual judicial responsibility. In urban counties, the County Judge is primarily an executive and administrator, in addition to being the presiding officer of the Commissioners Court... The Commissioners Court serves as both the legislative and executive branch of county government, and exercises budgetary authority over virtually all county departments, including those headed by other elected officials."*

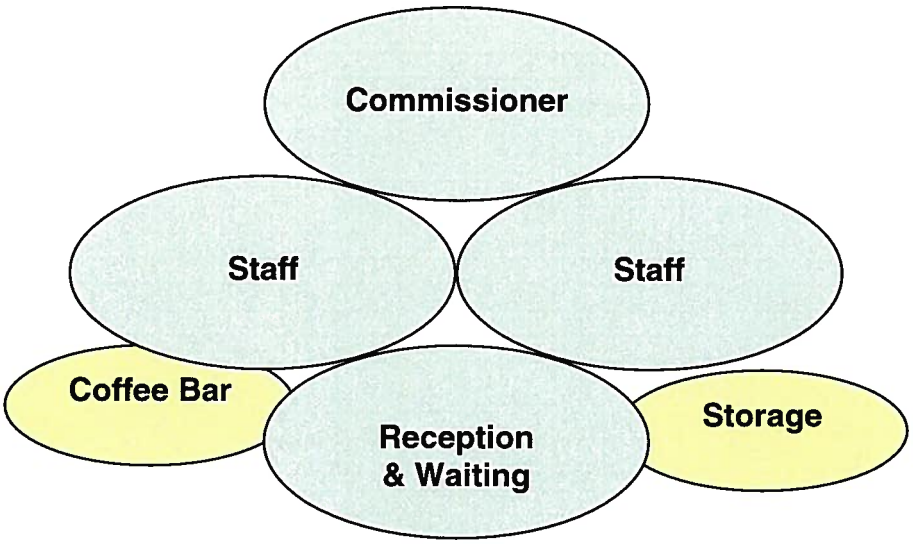
The Commissioners each act as representatives of County government to their constituents, they have full budget and taxing authority over the $661 million County budget, and have executive and policy responsibility over six Executive Managers who report directly to the Commissioners Court.

Each member of the Commissioners Court has a private office suite. Except for the County Judge, each Commissioner's office has three staff members. The County Judge has four staff. Typically, one staff member is focused on traditional receptionist, administrative assistant or secretarial duties. Each of these staff members sit in a small lobby area, visible to those who enter the office suite.

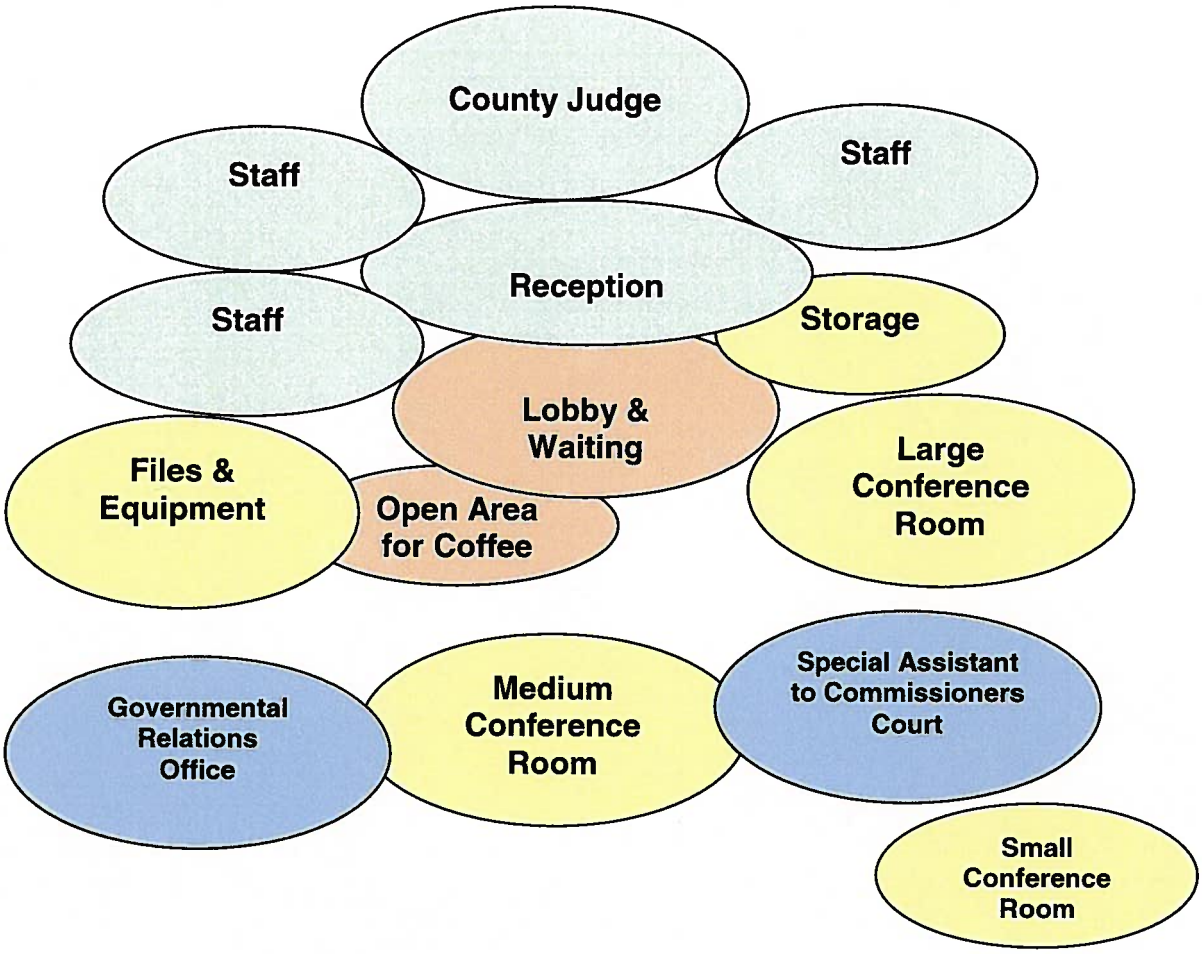
Each Commissioner has two other staff persons reporting to them, located in private offices immediately adjacent to the office of the Commissioner. Typically, one of these staff persons is focused more externally on constituents in the community, while the other is more focused internally within the County on specific management issues that arise. These internal/external distinctions, however, are not fixed nor firm. There is frequent overlap and sharing of responsibilities among these two staff members, depending upon the circumstances and the individual Commissioner's style of management and public service. Indeed, one Commissioner reports that all staff in the office share responsibilities for policy research, constituent relations, internal county issues and phone work.

Thus, of the four staff in each of the Commissioners offices, three have private offices (two staff and the Commissioner) and one serves as a receptionist in an open office or lobby layout that opens to a public corridor.

All Court members agreed that their office's receptionist should be located in an open office arrangement with adequate seating for visitors. Most of the Commissioners' lobbies are relatively small, with space for seating only a few visitors. Given estimated visitor loads, increased seating for at least 5 or 6 visitors at a time would be appropriate. There was unanimity that the individual staff aides needed to have private offices due to the sensitive nature of the conversations that sometimes occur. Good soundproofing within and between office suites was also mentioned as an important feature to ensure privacy.



The only exception to this staffing pattern is the County Judge, who has three staff persons plus a receptionist serving as an administrative assistant. The third staff person is primarily focused on developing and managing the Court's weekly agenda, which is the unique responsibility of the County Judge as the Court's presiding officer. The County Judge's office suite has four private offices (3 staff plus the County Judge) along with the staff person who serves as a receptionist in a lobby that opens to a public corridor.



Outstanding Discussion Item:
There was a difference of opinion among members of the Commissioners Court about whether their office suite should open onto a public corridor (which is the present arrangement). Some felt that having their offices open onto a corridor is a perfectly reasonable configuration, and they would not want to change it. Others felt that there were public safety and public service benefits from having one receptionist for all five members of the Commissioners Court who could serve as an information source, a place for visitors to wait, and a modest security screen. Such a receptionist might also alleviate the need for more Court support staff in the future as the County's population grows. A few suggested alternate exits to the Commissioners offices, other than one door leading to a public corridor. This is a general area where further discussion among Court members should occur, since it will make a considerable difference in the layout of future spaces.

Staff Growth
There has been no growth in the FTE for each of the five members of the Commissioners Court over the last ten years, which is the standard period of time that Program Planning Guides have been using for historical growth in staff. It is revealing to note, however, that records dating back twenty years, to 1989, also reflect no growth in staff for members of the Commissioners Court, even through population growth has grown from 565,000 to 979,000, and increase of 73%.

For comparison purposes, over the last 10 years (since 1998) the County's population has grown from 761,000 to 979,000, an increase of 28.6%. The County's FTE has grown from 3,629 in FY 98 to 4,532 in FY 08, a slightly smaller increase of 24.8%. Most of the Commissioners' workload is driven by population served.

Every ten years the Commissioner Court engages in a redistricting exercise, based on the new census numbers. Typically, the Court reviews geographic precinct lines and may change them in accordance with population shifts and consistent with federal guidelines issued by the Department of Justice. Future changes in precinct boundaries may therefore change the population served and the potential need for additional staff in each office.

Each member of the Court had different perspectives on the likelihood or the need for adding staff persons over the short term of five to seven years. Some believe that the growth and economic development in certain precincts and/or disproportionate population growth between precinct redistricting initiatives will argue more strongly for another Commissioner's aide over the next few years. Increased workload will also be likely due to increased land use authority. Others were less sure about the short-term need. Some suggested that the annexation by the City of Austin of unincorporated area throughout the County over the next decade will likely counteract some of the workload related to population growth, while others pointed to a disproportionate workload between precincts that will likely need to be addressed during redistricting.

Most Court members indicated that for planning purposes, the Commissioners Court should assume that one more staff member will be added to each Commissioner's office by the end of the next five to seven years. Some members suggested that this need is currently more pressing than others. Therefore, office layout in future space should accommodate that growth of one more staff person. In addition, a number of Court members indicated that they either do or wish to utilize short-term interns and that there are no permanent office locations for them. Comments were made that convenient space for such interns should be made available within each office suite. The extra office for a future staff aide could be used to accommodate one or more interns until such time as the office is needed.

Meetings with Others and Traffic Patterns

Court members report a fairly wide range of meeting frequencies and number of visitors per day, depending upon the official. Some have a greater tendency to have meetings outside their immediate offices and consciously try to meet constituents within their precincts in places such as churches, schools and precinct-based County facilities such as TNR offices or HHS community centers. Others tend to use their offices or the conference rooms in the Granger Building as the primary location for meetings.

The four Commissioners report receiving between 7 to 30 visitors per day, with an average of 17 visitors per day. The County Judge's Office reports an average of 60 visitors per day. These figures are rough and not generated through door entry counts. However, assuming general reliability, the total reported visitor count for all five officials is 129 visitors per day. Naturally, these figures will change in accordance with the issues of the moment and the time of year. As elected officials change over time, they each bring with them their own unique brand of public service, management style, and approach toward constituents. In addition, the Judge's Office is likely to always receive more visitors than the other four Precinct Commissioners, simply due to the nature and responsibilities of this County-wide position. Therefore, it is appropriate to anticipate the need for a smaller but comfortable and gracious waiting area (5 to 6 people) with

each Commissioners Office and a slightly larger waiting area (6 to 8 people) for the County Judge's office. This might change if subsequent direction is given to have a centralized waiting and general reception area for the floor. Should this occur then a small reception space for up to 4 people should be available for each of the five individual suites.

A similar disparity exists in the reported number of meetings per day for members of the Court. Some Court members reported an average of five meetings per day, although others reported a much lower number of 1 or 2 meetings per day. Most reported that the average size of meetings ranged from three to four individuals, with the largest being from 6 to 8 persons.

Almost all Commissioners report that their focus and meeting time is primarily oriented toward external matters rather than internal issues within the County. The majority of Court members reported an 80-20 split between meetings dedicated to external matters (80%) versus those dedicated to internal County issues (20%), although these percentages did vary somewhat depending upon the Commissioner. The type of individuals mentioned as involved in such external issues included constituents, other governmental officials, private sector representatives, and leaders in the community. Thus, the vast majority of foot traffic is received from external visitors rather than by internal county staff. This suggests that easy public access and parking will be very important to consider when deciding the location of the Commissioners Court members' offices.

Most of the meetings noted can be accommodated in the elected official's office. However, larger meetings need conveniently located conference rooms sized to accommodate 15 to 20 people configured in a fashion to support audiovisual and white board set ups. Most court members thought that there was a shortfall of conference rooms. At least one large sized conference room large enough to accommodate 20 people along with one medium-sized conference room large enough to accommodate 10 to 15 people should also be provided on the floor. These conference rooms should be located conveniently for the Commissioners Court members' use. One or two small conference rooms for 10 people should also be located nearby.

Each Commissioner completed a questionnaire asking them to reflect upon the amount and type of interaction occurring with different offices and constituencies. The combined results of this data did not reveal any consistency among Court members' offices. Some reported at least daily contact with various Executive Managers or their staff while others reported only weekly or bi-monthly contact with various Executive Managers or their staff. There was a tendency, however, to report more frequent contact by phone or email with Executive Managers than in-person contact.

Data reported by the Court members about in-person traffic to Court members' offices revealed that offices such as the Auditor and Purchasing and the Executive Managers offices do not have frequent daily (or in some cases even weekly) in-person contact with Court members' offices. The same is true for the Treasurer, Governmental Relations Officer and Special Assistant to the Court. This fact could easily mean that such officials do not necessarily have a compelling operational requirement to be housed close to the Commissioners Court members' offices. On the other hand, these other officials often monitor the Court's formal discussions on Tuesdays and some suggest that considerable benefit can accrue from their being able to quickly come to the Courtroom for a discussion item as it unfolds. Others suggested that increased future use of technology and teleconferencing could alleviate some of the need for offices to be adjacent or nearby one another.

Thus, in an ideal world, the offices of Auditor, Purchasing, Planning and Budget and Administrative Operations would be nearby the Commissioners Court offices and the Courtroom. The same is true for the Governmental Relations Officer, Treasurer and the Special Assistant to the Court. Some Court members suggested they could be moved at a future date, however, as the justice system grows and future space was required downtown. In addition, as computer and telecommunications technology improves and becomes more sophisticated over the next decade, this benefit of in-person contact may prove to be less compelling than it is now. These offices currently comprise approximately 27,976 square feet of space, with the Auditor's office and Purchasing comprising the largest amount of this, totaling 21,619 square feet. The square footage of various offices presently located close to the current Commissioners Courtroom is shown in the table below. These square footage figures do not necessarily reflect the current space needed by the departments and offices.

Office	Current Square Feet	Sub-Total	Location
Commissioner Pct. One	838		Fifth Floor Granger
Commissioner Pct. Two	968		Fifth Floor Granger
Commissioner Pct. Three	912		Fifth Floor Granger
Commissioner Pct. Four	858		Fifth Floor Granger
County Judge	1,049	4,625	Fifth Floor Granger
Commissioners Courtroom	1,717	1,717	First Floor Granger
Planning and Budget (including cash investment mgt.)	2,739		Fifth Floor Granger
Auditor	16,370		Second Floor Granger
Purchasing	5,249		Fourth Floor Granger
Treasurer	2,106		First Floor Granger
Executive Manager, Ad Ops (includes Govt. Relations)	1,361		Fifth Floor Granger
Special Assistant to the Court	151	27,976	Fifth Floor Granger

Interviews with Court members revealed a general attitude (with one exception) that there was no compelling need for Executive Managers to have primary offices near the Court members, especially in light of the fact that four of their six Executive Managers already have their main offices outside the Granger Building and have large, diverse and widely dispersed staffs in multiple locations. (These four are Emergency Services, Transportation and Natural Resources, Health and Human Services, and Criminal Justice Planning). There also was an acknowledgement that these four had management responsibilities for operations that serve a county-wide constituent base, while the two that are housed near the Commissioners Court offices, Planning and Budget and Administrative Operations have more internal county-wide responsibilities. One Commissioner suggested an increased need for TNR staff to be nearby due to the number of meetings that involve such staff. Alternatively, it was acknowledged that such a need for adjacency could be reduced or eliminated through a more robust technical network of communication to allow good communication between the Commissioners office and TNR staff through electronic or video capabilities.

Members of the Commissioners Court, however, all mentioned the advantages of having some type of satellite space nearby the Commissioners Courtroom for Executive Managers and their staffs to work on Tuesdays while the Court is in session. Most frequently mentioned was a room

with cubicles, computer hook-ups for laptops, phones and a small meeting space for other county staff and officials to conduct County business on Tuesdays. Such a space could also be used on other days of the week as a satellite office space if it were close to the Commissioners' offices. This idea should be developed further with staff as planning continues for the Commissioners Court.

A number of Court members also mentioned the benefits of having an appropriately sized coffee or break room for staff, along with an outdoor seating area if possible. This idea was also tied to a central equipment supply room for all Court members with recycling bins, paper storage, copiers, scanners and the like.

Files and File growth

Each Commissioner's office suite has various sized filing cabinets that they use for storing various materials. They report that they utilize records management retention policies and periodically send written materials to storage. These files, however, are not typically located in a central file area and are located in various locations around their office suite. A number of Commissioners suggested a much larger storage closet in the office suites, which also might allow some files to be removed from public view along with other equipment. A central file and storage room is especially important in the County Judge's office, which tends to receive and distribute many more written materials due to the central role that this office plays in county business. Additional outlets were also mentioned for computers, electrical devices and telephones that were a part of the existing County network, with sufficient capacity to allow a high speed high volume scanner.

Parking

Members of the Court indicated that for planning purposes, each member of their staff should receive a parking space and that sufficient spaces should be available for visitors and the public, especially during Tuesday Court meetings. Most Court members mentioned at least two or three parking spaces for visitors to their offices, although when these needs are combined with other Commissioners' offices, there will inevitably be economies of scale with visitor spaces. The number of such visitor spaces will need further investigation. Visitor spaces should be sized to accommodate a variety of building needs, and not necessarily any particular individual offices, since the building might accommodate multiple offices at different times during its life cycle. In addition, if the County were to charge for parking and/or control access, then visitors' spaces could be provided using parking validation coordinated at each Commissioner Court member's office.

Space relationships

These offices should be placed in the building based on traffic volume and in relation to other tenants within a proposed building. There was consensus that the Commissioners Courtroom needed to be on the first floor with easy public access. There was also a general consensus that the Court members' offices should be near or in the same building as the Commissioners Courtroom.

It should be noted that the Court has taken a formal vote that the "Seat of County Government" should be in the Central Business District in recognition that most county courthouses in Texas serve that symbolic and real public purpose. Various officials interpret this vote to mean that the Courtroom and the Commissioners Court offices are going to be downtown. Opinions differed considerably about whether the Court members' offices should be in the Central Business District or not. While the majority of Court members reported a preference for having offices and

the Courtroom downtown, this was not a universal attitude. This is a topic that will likely require further exploration with the Court members.

Security

This topic fostered a considerable disparity of opinion among Court members. Some felt that the current security provided for Court members was perfectly adequate while others indicated that they were rather concerned about various security needs. Some suggested that their offices opening onto a public hallway was fine to continue while others thought that a central receptionist for all Court members' offices could help ameliorate certain security concerns. Alternatively, a security check point at the building entrance was also mentioned as a possibility. Recently, a security check point for the Granger Building has been installed along with various other cameras and proximity card readers. These improvements will need to be evaluated to see if they alleviate the some of the concerns expressed below.

There was a tendency for staff members to express more concern over security than the Court members themselves. This may reflect more contact with inappropriate behavior or else a general attitude about being among persons who express anger or frustration about government in general or County government in particular. Some staff reported that on occasion they had to lock their door to the hallway over a fear that a dangerous and uncomfortable situation was brewing in the hallway. A suggestion was made that increased training for staff members on dealing with difficult people may help to alleviate some of these concerns. Another suggestion strongly urged was the use of reliable panic buttons at each reception resulting in a speedy response of a peace officer could be an adequate remedy. No such system presently exists for the Commissioners' offices.

Generally speaking, however, there was a sense that increased security would be beneficial as long as it was not too intrusive and did not give the public an impression that the Court members were being isolated or wanted to be hidden. There was a sense that one major receptionist location that handled the traffic for all of the Commissioners Offices could be helpful and could address some of the security issues. Such a receptionist could also delay the need for additional staff aide positions, by freeing up some of the time of the existing receptionist–administrative assistant in each Court members' office along with reducing the visitor traffic flow to the offices. But this idea did not have universal agreement among court members, and one member commented that such a central receptionist would be too restrictive.

It was noted that security should not drive the placement of the Commissioners' offices or the Courtroom in a judicial facility. A few Court members thought that the configurations, special relationships and security provided at City Hall for City Council members was a good model to follow for the County, although the amount of space provided need not be as large. (Clearly, this is another area where further discussions will be needed to discover a consensus.)

Other Court Staff Offices

Two new offices were established in FY 08 by the Commissioners Court. One is the office of the Governmental Relations Coordinator and the other is the office of the Special Assistant to the Commissioners Court. Currently the Governmental Relations office is comprised of two staff: the appointed official and an administrative support position. The Special Assistant is comprised of one half-time official, with administrative support provided through the Planning and Budget Office. Both positions are located on the same floor as the members of the Commissioners Court.

Some Court members commented that having these two offices nearby is appropriate and beneficial, while others mentioned that they might be located away from the Court members' offices some time in the future. Some felt It likely that the Governmental Relations office will grow over time as the County grows and relations with the State, City of Austin, other governmental agencies and cities grow more complex. For the purpose of planning over a 15 year time horizon, it is likely that at least two additional FTE will be added to this office. Court members believed that space for one Special Assistant position is reasonable to assume for planning purposes, but that further growth in this office should not be expected.

The Commissioners Courtroom

The Commissioners Courtroom contains a formal raised dais, space for tables and chairs from which testimony is given, and 55 seats for audience members. Remote television cameras are installed and connected to the television studio that coordinates the electronic public television feed of court proceedings. There are two large round columns in the Courtroom that can sometimes create limitations on the use of this space.

There is a portion of the dais located below the Commissioners Court, but still raised, that is used by the County Attorney's office. This area accommodates two attorneys. An additional extension to the dais (on grade) is proved for the Clerk of the Court, who is present for the official record of the proceedings.

Most Court members commented that there is not sufficient public seating for the Commissioners Courtroom; however this was not a universal attitude. Those that thought there was not enough seating mentioned a need for between 25 to 55 more seats, thereby increasing the capacity to 80 to 110 persons.

Some thought the one nearby Executive Session conference room was too small, but this too was not a universal attitude. Indeed, a suggestion was made that this room should remain relatively intimate so that fewer people attend these sessions. One Court member suggested this conference room should be more isolated and more secure.

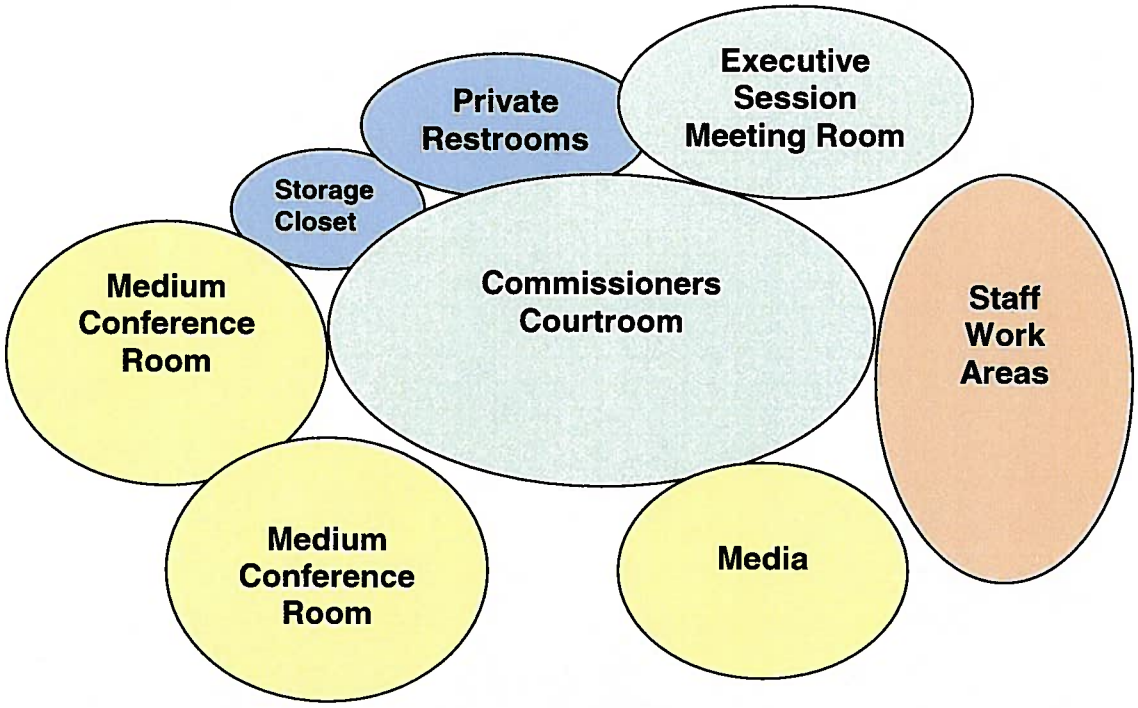
Most Court members commented that it would be beneficial to have additional multiple small or medium conference rooms immediately adjacent to the Courtroom. Such an increase in conference rooms would also be very helpful for staff and constituents to meet while the Court is meeting or to wait to testify as needed. Also mentioned was the need to have all conference rooms look professional, with extraneous materials removed, and furniture that matches.

There was almost universal observance that the Courtroom should be one large room without any structural columns or posts within the space. The current columns are an impediment to good sightlines. The Courtroom needs to be on the first floor of any building and have convenient parking nearby for the public.

Many members of the Commissioners Court believed that there are substantial advantages to having the Courtroom located in the downtown campus. This location has symbolic benefits in its proximity to the State capital and City Hall, even though access and parking can be more difficult than a more remote location. This matter will need to be discussed with the entire Court, since keeping a downtown location is not a universally held belief.

More than one Court member suggested that Travis County might follow the lead of a variety of other Texas counties and place its Commissioners Courtroom and other administrative offices within its historic courthouse. Another idea surfaced by one Court member was that Court should be on a "stage" with the public in raked seating to look down upon a "stage" for the dais, as in a small theater. This symbolically places the public above the Court dais, and could easily improve sightlines and interactions with those on the dais.

Bubble diagrams for the Commissioners Courtroom are shown below.



Electronic and Other Support Features

Many court members mentioned that all available electronic support features should be incorporated into the Courtroom, including remote television cameras, large electronic displays, directional microphones, flat screen televisions, and portable computers at the dais and on work tables. Specifically mentioned was the following list:

- the need to have television displays located in places that were not distracting and which did not require audience members to turn their heads away from the dais to watch;
- one or more lights that appear when speakers extend their testimony beyond a stated period;
- internet access with computer screens at the dais;
- wifi access for staff in courtroom and conference rooms;
- removal of the large television at the base of the dais (which causes attendees to be looking down frequently rather than up at the Court members);
- reduced glare from TV lights;
- better power point presentation capability;
- Improved HVAC and reducing the flow of air that can be annoying due to its strength;
- an electronic display outside the courtroom which tells individuals what is taking place in the courtroom along with the agenda number;

- taller ceilings;
- more space for press;
- television cameras should be less intrusive;
- lighting appropriate for meetings when the television lights are turned off.

Private bathrooms for the Court members immediately adjacent to the Courtroom should be provided to keep Court members from being confronted during the Court sessions by interested parties.

A number of Court members mentioned the need for a sound vestibule for the Courtroom. Presently, the Courtroom opens onto a public corridor and sound carries between the corridor and the courtroom, especially when large crowds congregate. Having a vestibule for people to enter before entering the Courtroom itself will help alleviate this sound transfer problem. Multiple Court members mentioned the need for improved lighting, outside of the lights used for the media. In addition, a suggestion was made to increase the bend of the dais to allow Court members to have eye contact with one another during their deliberations.

A number of members of the Commissioners Court commented that the City of Austin City Council chambers were well designed, with appropriate technical and office support spaces. However, since there are many more members of the public and staff who are typically present in Council chambers for testimony, the Commissioners Courtroom could be considerably smaller than the City's chambers. The specific size and support configurations will need to be more fully developed at a future date. There were frequent observations that the City's Council Chambers are an excellent template to use for such design discussions. One Commissioner mentioned the Bee Cave City Hall as an excellent model.

A number of Court members indicated that there should be at least two conference rooms available for ad hoc deliberations between staff and constituents while Court is in session. One conference room would be focused primarily on meetings while the other would be used more for those waiting to give testimony. The seating capacity could be in the range of 10 to 15 persons.

The issue of security for the courtroom has a diversity of opinion, just as did the question of security for the Court members' offices. A number of Court members were comfortable with the present level of security provided for the Courtroom, reflecting that it should be viewed as open and accessible to members of the public, without any sense of restricted access. One member suggested panic buttons at the dais which would reliably and quickly summon a peace officer to the Courtroom in the event of a security problem. Another Court member believed that there should be metal detectors for those entering the Courtroom similar to what exists at the historic courthouse. Clearly, security for the Courtroom itself will need full discussion with the Court as a whole.

Square footage requirements and projections for the Court member offices and Courtroom are shown below.

	Type Office	# current Positions or Areas	# positions forecast	Unit Size	Current Sq. Ft Needed	Est. Sq. Ft. Min.	Est. Sq. Ft. Max
Commissioners One through Four							
Commissioner	Closed	4	4	240	960	960	960
Existing Staff Aides	Closed	8	8	120	960	960	960
New Future Staff Aide	Closed	0	4	120	0	480	480
Receptionist	Open	4	4	100	400	400	400
Lobby for 5 visitors	Open	4	4	120	480	480	480
Storage/file Closet	Closed	4	4	100	400	400	400
SUB-TOTAL					**3,200**	**3,680**	**3,680**
County Judge's Office							
County Judge	Closed	1	1	240	240	240	240
Existing Staff Aides	Closed	3	3	120	360	360	360
Receptionist	Open	1	1	100	100	100	100
Lobby for 7 visitors	Open	1	1	150	150	150	150
Central File	Closed	1	1	120	120	120	120
New Future Staff Aide	Closed	0	1	120	0	120	120
SUB-TOTAL					**970**	**1,090**	**1,090**
Other Commissioners Court spaces							
Break room for court staff with kitchen	Closed	0	1	560	560	560	560
Central equipment room	Closed	0	1	150	150	150	150
Governmental Relations Officer	Closed	1	1	240	240	240	240
Govt. Relations Admin. Support	Closed	1	1	100	100	100	100
Govt. Relat. Professional Support		0	2	120	0	240	240
Special Assistant	Closed	1	1	180	180	180	180
SUB-TOTAL					**1,230**	**1,470**	**1,470**
Conference Rooms							
Large Conference Room – for 20	Closed	0	1	550	550	550	550
Medium Sized Conf. Rm. - for 15	Closed	1	1	425	425	425	425
Small Conference Room – for 10	Closed	1	2	300	600	600	600
SUB-TOTAL					**1,575**	**1,575**	**1,575**
Courtroom and Support Space							
Commissioners Courtroom	Closed	1	1	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Exec. Session Conf. Rm. - for 10	Closed	1	1	300	300	300	300
Managers' Work Space with Cubicles sized for 8 persons	Closed	0	1	512	512	512	512
Medium Sized Conf. Rms. for 15	Closed	0	2	425	850	850	850
SUB-TOTAL					**1,662**	**1,662**	**1,662**
SUB-TOTAL ALL AREAS (1)					**8,637**	**9,477**	**9,477**
Circulation Factor for closed spaces @30%					2,252	2,504	2,504
Circulation Factor for open spaces @ 45%					508	508	508
TOTAL Estimated Net Square Footage (1)					11,397	12,489	12,489

(1) Excludes Commissioners Courtroom whose size still needs more review.

Issues For Further Discussion Among Court Members

1. Should the Court members' office suite open onto a public corridor, or should there be one receptionist for all five members of the Commissioners Court who could serve as an information source, a place for visitors to wait, and a modest security screen?

2. Is the current security provided for Court members' offices adequate or should security measures be increased and how?

3. Is the level of security for the courtroom currently appropriate or should it be increased and how?

4. Is the Executive Session conference room too small or is it the proper size?

Issues to be Developed Further with Consulting Team

1. Should the Court members' offices and the Commissioners Courtroom be in the Central Business District or located outside the downtown region?

2. Size and configuration of support spaces needed by the Executive Managers based on their location in relation to the Commissioners Offices and the Courtroom.

3. Intern work area(s) for the Commissioners Court.