

TRAVIS COUNTY

CIVIL AND FAMILY COURTS FACILITY

The Travis County Commissioners Court is legally state mandated to provide a safe, secure, accessible and functional facility to house the Courts.



The Heman Marion Sweatt Travis County Courthouse was built in 1931 and hasn't been renovated in over 50 years. The facility was designed for four courtrooms. Today, it accommodates 4 courtrooms and 15 adapted spaces for court, and demand is growing. Soon the need will be 25 courtrooms.

Because the current courthouse is a historic building, the exterior cannot be modified or additions built to accommodate the growth. Even if this were possible, the repairs and renovations necessary would cause the courthouse to be shut down for years.

The building is deteriorating and overcrowded. It needs:

- Waiting areas for victims
- Adequate space for attorney-client conferences
- Adequate resources for parents and children, such as a child-friendly space for children to wait for court proceedings
- Adequate hall space and waiting areas with appropriate sight lines for security staff

Travis County is proposing to build a new courts facility between 17th and 18th streets, bounded between Guadalupe and San Antonio Streets.

The site plan includes the following:

- Community plaza
- 25 courtrooms
- A state-of-the-art Law Library and Self-Help center
- Gathering spaces for attorney-client conferences
- Space for short-term child drop-off center for those using the courts`
- Dedicated, appropriate spaces for child testimony
- 4-level underground parking garage with 390 spaces
- Secured judicial access and circulation
- Separate and secured entrance for persons in custody
- Separate and secured holding and circulation areas for persons in custody
- "Great Streets" concept, which focuses on walkability and public engagement and includes 18-foot sidewalks, tree plantings, benches and bike racks
- Accessible to people who walk, bike, drive and take the bus (15 bus routes)



New Courts Facility

What happens at the Civil and Family Courts Facility?

The facility will handle a wide range of cases, including child custody disputes, Child Protective Services (CPS) and child support cases. These courts also include cases such as divorces, adoptions, family violence protective orders, defective construction cases, business and contract disputes, land valuation and ownership disputes, personal injury cases and appeals from state agencies and state licensing boards.



New Courts Facility

How will the project meet the Great Streets Development Program requirements, Austin Energy's Green Building Program and the City's Urban Design Guidelines?

The Civil and Family Courts Facility design is incorporating the Great Streets Development Program requirements by including 18-foot sidewalks, tree plantings, benches and bike racks around the entire site, creating an inviting and walkable pedestrian area.

The architectural plan will determine the majority of the environmental elements of the building; however, to ensure a two-star rating by Austin Energy's Green Building Program, the project team is dedicated to developing a LEED Silver certified building. This will ensure a state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly structure. The team is also exploring a stormwater conservation and wastewater reuse system.

The City's Urban Design Guidelines include adequate on-site parking requirements, which will be achieved by constructing a 4-level underground parking garage and by providing separate, secured judicial parking.

The new courts facility will also include a street-level cafe in the building and should foster additional development in the neighborhood.

