

# Administrative Office of the Courts

Supreme Court of New Mexico

Arthur W. Pepin, Director



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Capitol Buildings Planning Commission  
FROM: Artie Pepin  
DATE: December 10, 2019  
RE: Proposal for New Administrative Office of the Courts Building

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is the single administrative agency serving the New Mexico Supreme Court in the administration of the Judicial Branch. Responsibilities extend to 2,000 employees of which almost 200 are elected judges in 68 court facilities which are owned or leased throughout the state's 33 counties. AOC has 120 employees although about one-half are in the Judicial Information Division which is expected to continue to be located separately from the rest of the AOC personnel.

Approximately 60 non-technical AOC personnel currently occupy space in five different facilities in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. AOC has a pending request for funds to lease space in downtown Santa Fe in order to comply with a request from the Legislative Council Service to vacate space in the Capitol North Annex owned and managed by the Legislature and to consolidate disparate operations under one roof. The leased space is temporary with AOC expecting to return to space much closer to the Supreme Court in order to properly execute its mission in to support the Supreme Court. AOC asks the Capital Buildings Planning Commission (CBPC) to add to its Master Plan construction of a new AOC facility proximate to the New Mexico Supreme Court within the Capitol complex in Santa Fe.

The request is in the very early stages of planning but going forward requires a commitment from the CBPC. AOC proposes consideration of a new building of three stories in what is now the east end of West DeVargas Street, across Don Gaspar from the Supreme Court building. A map of the area is attached. The building could be two stories but it is noted that the south end of the Jerry Apodaca

Education Building uphill and just south of this site is three stories. Planning would give due consideration for any setback and encroachment restrictions for the Apodaca Building as well as the Santa Fe River. More detailed planning would involve a request to the City of Santa Fe to vacate two-thirds of West DeVargas Street between Don Gaspar and Galisteo Street. Vacation of part of a city street is provided for under the Santa Fe Municipal Code, Chapter XXIII, Section 23-1.2. AOC would explore with the City of Santa Fe rental of up to 50 parking spaces during the week at the City's Sandoval Parking Garage for AOC personnel who would occupy the new building.

AOC has undertaken preliminary estimates to construct a building in Santa Fe of approximately 40,000 gross square feet with 30,000 usable square feet. That estimate was provided in June 2019 for a magistrate court facility to be built in the southwest part of the city. However the size of that facility is comparable to the proposed AOC building. Excluding land acquisition the construction estimate is \$22,945,503. A copy of that estimate can be provided. Differences between a magistrate court and an administrative building as well as differences in the location will affect the estimate for the proposed AOC building. For now, an estimate of \$30 million could be a working figure for the proposed AOC building.

There are many steps to be taken before the proposed AOC building could be constructed. However, inclusion in the CBPC master plan is a critical first step.

AOC will need to move from its temporary leased space to be closer to the Supreme Court. Daily in-person interactions between AOC personnel and the Supreme Court Justices and staff occur. The ability to meet the needs of the Supreme Court will be affected by the current move which must be reversed as soon as practicable. If it is not possible to plan for an AOC building on West DeVargas Street or very near to the Supreme Court, AOC asks the CBPC to include in its Master Plan the movement of AOC into state-owned space as near as possible to the Supreme Court.

W De Vargas St - Google Maps

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