



County Administrator

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MEMO

TO: County Commissioners
FROM: Robert W. Wilson
DATE: December 2, 2021
SUBJECT: Ratify Building Committee Recommendations

On Monday November 15th the Cass County Building Committee considered two projects and recommended approval to the County Commission.

The first is to engage TL Stroh Architects & Interiors to review and update the 2016 space needs study of the Cass County Annex Building. Needs of the Annex workspace have changed in the last five years and the county and the Human Service Zone will be well served with an updated review and recommendations. In 2016 the goal was to maximize workspace efficiency to accommodate a growing workforce that required dedicated office space.

The current workforce has a greater ability to work remotely and needs hoteling space and areas that are more flexible and can accommodate a variety of work groupings. This is not a 2022 budgeted project, but CARES funding is available if authorized by the Board. For your reference I have included sections of the 2016 space needs study focusing on the Annex.

The second project is also to engage TL Stroh to update a 2018 study that provided remodel and expansion options at the County Highway Administration facility. Facility improvements may include a simple refresh of the current office space which has not been updated since 1997. Another option may be an update and expansion of the current facility to provide additional space for additional Highway staff and the potential for office space for Fargo Moorhead Flood Diversion Authority staff, Cass County Joint Water Resource District staff, and other public and non-profit organizations focused on water management. I have included information County Engineer Jason Benson provided to the Building Committee.

I have discussed updating these studies with TL Stroh, and they have indicated an interest in engaging in these projects.

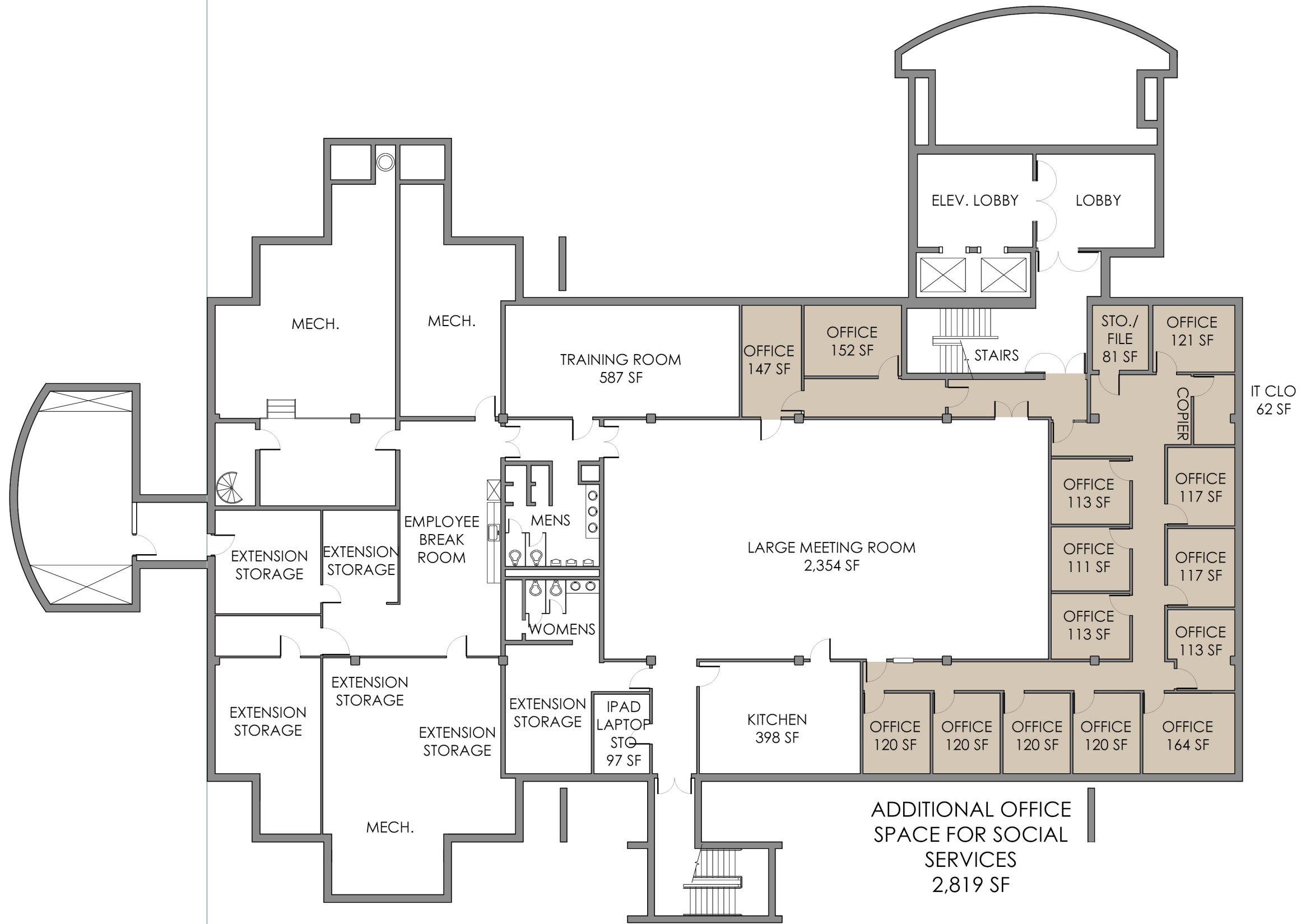
SUGGESTED MOTION: Authorize the County to engage TL Stroh to update the 2016 Annex Building Space Needs study to include a recommended scope of work and potential budget and to update the 2018 Highway Administration Building Study to include a recommended scope of work and potential budget.


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ANNEX
Social Services Expansion
Basement

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 **BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN**
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

ANNEX
Juvenile Court
First Floor

12

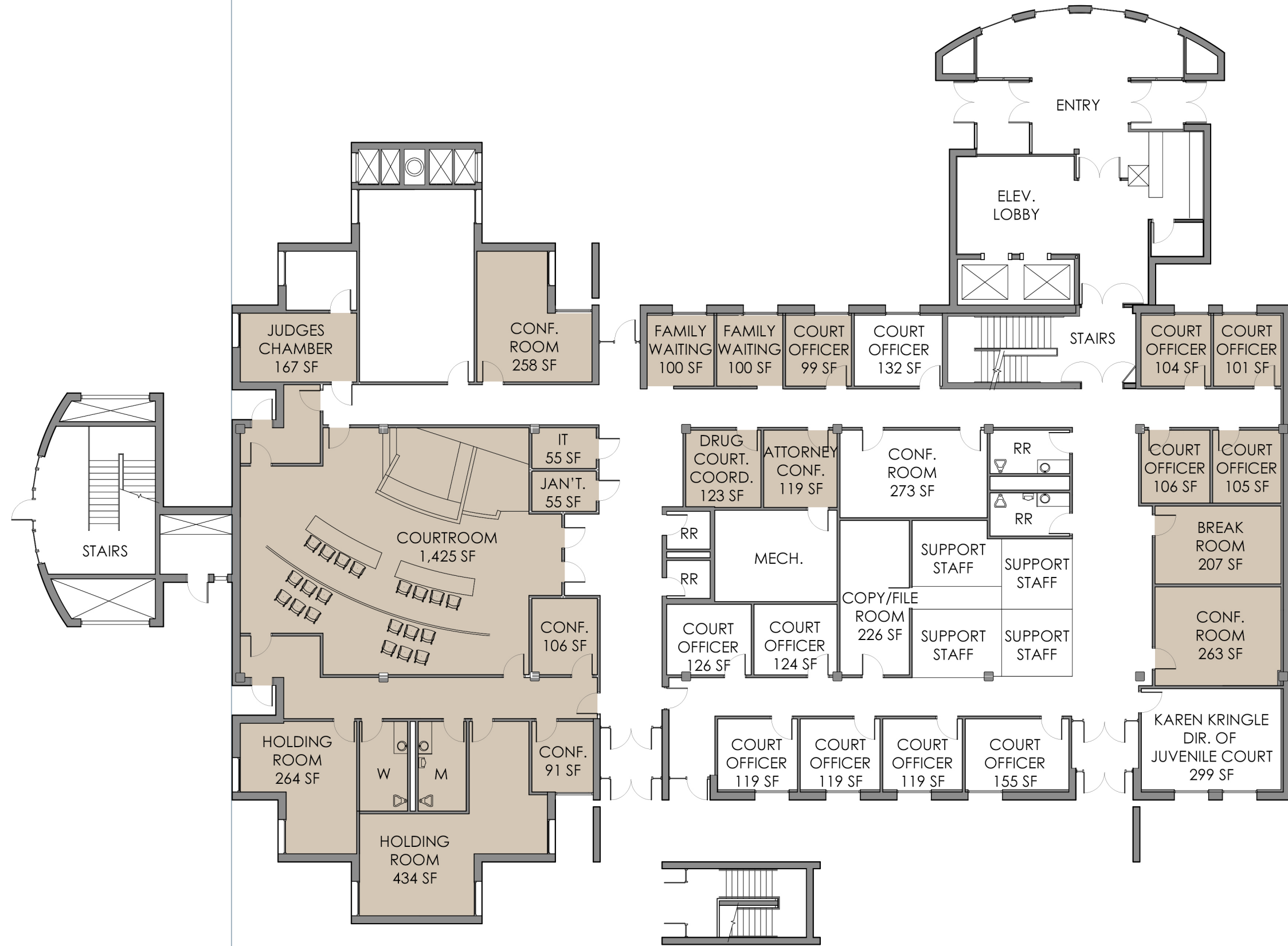
Juvenile Court:

Meeting Notes:

1. Juvenile Court currently has 12 staff (9 court officers & 2 admin staff & 1 attorney) with a projected number of 15-16 in the next 5-10 years.
2. Each court officer has between 40-60 juvenile cases. They go into homes and schools and have some meetings in their office.
3. The Juvenile Court offices and courtroom should not be located in the same space as it causes security and privacy issues for the offenders and public. On arraignment day an offender could arrive escorted by parents or guardians and enter thru the same security that the public enters thru. (i.e. someone they know from school going to Extension in the lower level)
4. The current waiting area doesn't work well when there is Juvenile Court or arraignments as there is no separation between victims, offenders and the public. and Security is an issue. Two waiting areas are needed-one for the public and one for offenders that is secure from the public. On Tuesdays (arraignment day) they could get up to 20 offenders arriving at 8:30, 10:00, and up to 15 offenders at 11:00 and 2:30. Besides the offenders, there is security and parents in the waiting area which is very noisy for the Juvenile Court office staff and any public in the waiting area. The noise and lack of privacy prevents the office staff in the 3 open office workstations from making any phone calls.
5. Juveniles:
Juveniles are committing more serious crimes.
Some juveniles are big...some over 6' and some well over 200 and 300 pounds.
A mother with a toddler or infant in a car seat in the same vicinity as these juveniles is not safe.
Holding cells for juveniles are needed.
6. One uni-sex restroom just for drug-testing is needed. When drug-testing is done, the offender and court officer enter a public restroom in front of the waiting area which is not private for the offender or any waiting public.
7. Current courtroom is too small; Not enough space for 3 parents with attorneys; Tables are too close together; the court room should be wider; need microphones; need less 'audience' space.
8. More attorney conference rooms are needed. They currently have one, and need to have 3...sometimes each parent (of the offender) has an attorney and one for the victim.
9. Judges Chamber Needs: desk/phone; current size is larger than needed; secure space
10. Each court appearance by a juvenile is private; the court has to be completely cleared out after each juvenile's court appearance.

Observations and Comments:

- Expanding into the juvenile holding area to create a new juvenile court works well because it utilizes the existing security walk-thru for parents and juveniles instead of having to add a second security walk-thru.
- The new court room adds much needed space for juveniles, attorneys, and parents without using any of the juvenile justice office space.
- Utilizes existing restrooms .
- The new layout:
 - adds security for the juvenile justice staff
 - increases office and support staff space
 - adds attorney conference rooms
 - provides separate juvenile waiting room space away from the general public waiting area
 - allows continued use of the sally port for bringing in juveniles
 - provides for larger, separate holding areas with new restrooms that would accommodate drug testing away from the general public waiting area



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

ANNEX
Social Services
Second, Third, & Fourth Floors

13

Social Services:
2nd floor-Economic Assistance

Meeting Notes:

1. Social Service currently has 154 staff today with a projected number of 170 in the next 5-10 years. They will need 16 more office staff to meet the anticipated case load which significantly depends on the growth of the community.
2. Social Services averages 225 clients visits per day on second floor.
3. Lobby size is currently not sufficient to accommodate the number of clients.
4. Remodeling to Second floor (plans from earlier this year) will help with privacy and noise issues for the economic assistance case managers (EACM) that are located in the waiting area. The proposed added door by the reception/scanning area will help with security so clients cannot directly go into an EACM's office unattended. The remodeling of the mail room and Food Stamps office will give a better layout and more space to each.
5. Technology/Security: Add 'panic button' for EACM's.
6. Add white noise to Waiting Area to mask sound/noise coming from the Waiting Area to nearby offices and 'Reception/Scanning' work station.
7. Revising the Reception and Copy/File Room into one 'Reception' work area that is large enough for 4 workers is needed to accommodate more clients. Each work station needs division between clients similar to a teller station for better privacy...staff frequently have to raise their voices to talk over each other in order for clients to hear them. The height of the work surface between worker and client needs to be the same height for passing documents and conversations and puts both the worker and the client at the same level. Having the work surface at the same height would also help to alleviate ergonomic issues with the staff. Workers need space for 2 monitors. Right now they have 2 staff in the receptionist area and 1 staff in the 'scanner' area. They have been approved to add 1 support staff position for scanning in 2017 and they do not have a work space for this additional support staff.
8. Storage: Filing and storage is adequate for the most part since most files have been converted to electronic files. Filing and storage space in the basement is not easily accessible because of the distance from 2nd floor to the basement, however, it is carpeted and well lit.
9. Currently there are no designated break rooms on Floors 2, 3, or 4 for 154 employees. The break rooms they had have been converted to offices.
10. One conference room is on this floor, they could use one additional conference room. Other conference rooms have been converted to 2 shared offices.
11. Shared EACM's offices do not work for client consults. The client needs more privacy; often one EACM has to leave the office when the other EACM has a client (& family) in their office.

12. Space is needed for educational meetings for families and Economic Assistance applicants for groups of 20-24. This educational meeting space could also be used for training for clients as well.
13. Lobby size is currently not sufficient to accommodate the number of clients.

3rd Floor-Family Services

1. Visitation spaces:
 - a. Location is good as the surrounding employees provide security. If Visitation was relocated, security cameras would have to be installed.
 - b. Noise from visitation kids and parents is an issue for the workers in the open office area adjacent to visitation.
 - c. Security is an issue
 - d. If Visitation is relocated, the small visitation room could be an office and the large visitation room could be a break room or second conference room.
2. Daycare Licensing Office space is shared by 4 workers. Space is too small.
3. One conference room on this floor, they could use one additional conference room.
4. Shared caseworker offices do not work for Social Services client consults. The client needs more privacy; often the other caseworker has to leave the office when the other caseworker has a client (& family) in their office.
5. Would like Parent Aides to be on 3rd Floor-currently on 4th Floor
6. Lobby/Waiting Area needs better acoustics-when lobby is full, it's very loud for workers in adjacent offices

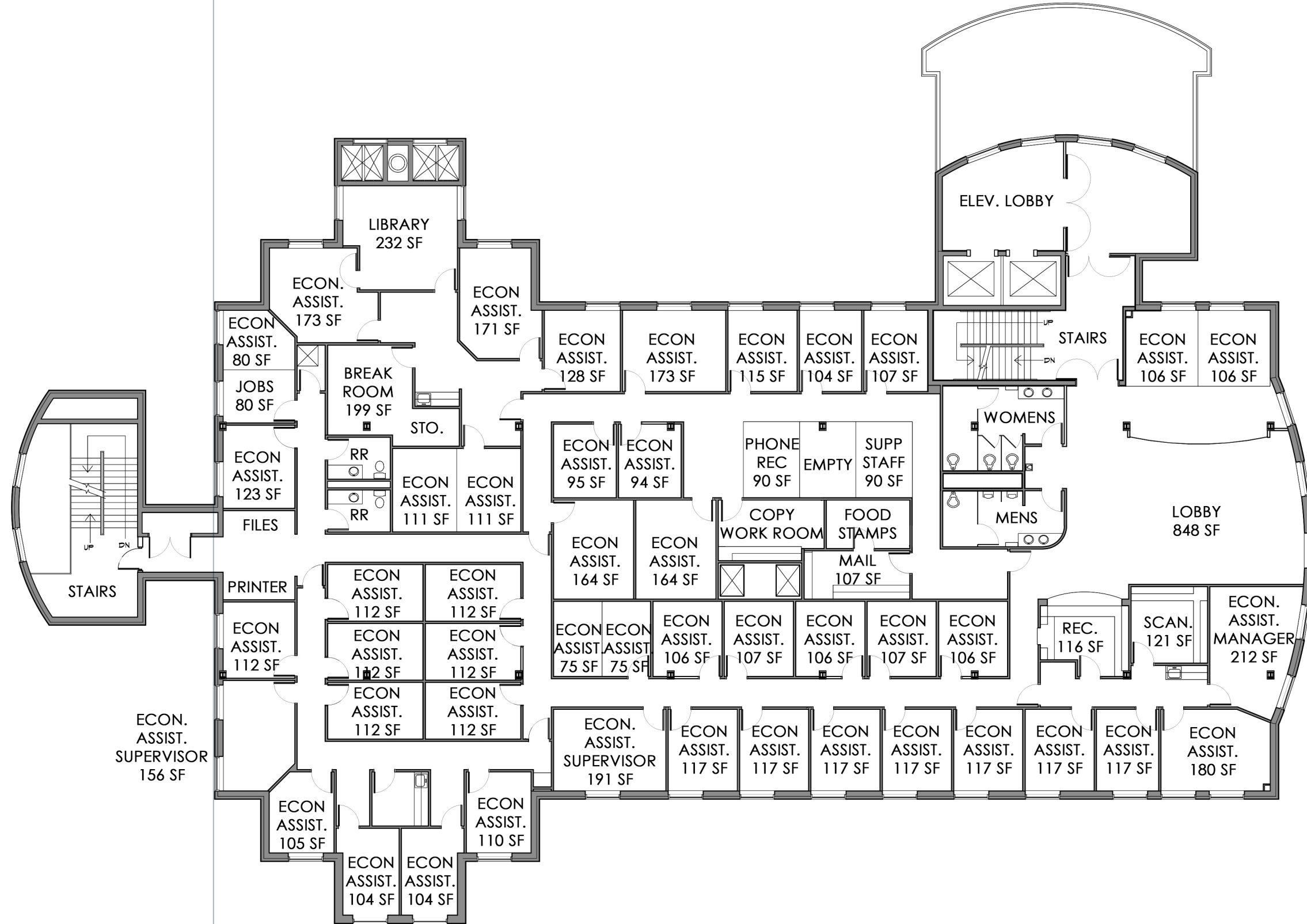
All- will be adding four more people in next several years.

4th Floor – Adult Services & Aged & Disabled Economic Assistance & Administration

1. Lobby area needs better acoustics; it gets very noisy when the waiting area is full.
2. Economic Assistance needs extensive sign-in
3. Several Caseworkers in an open office situation which does not provide privacy to clients and noise is an issue.
4. A door needs to be added on the corridor for security.
5. One conference room is on this floor, they could use one additional conference room.
6. Parental Aides located on this floor should be on 3rd floor.

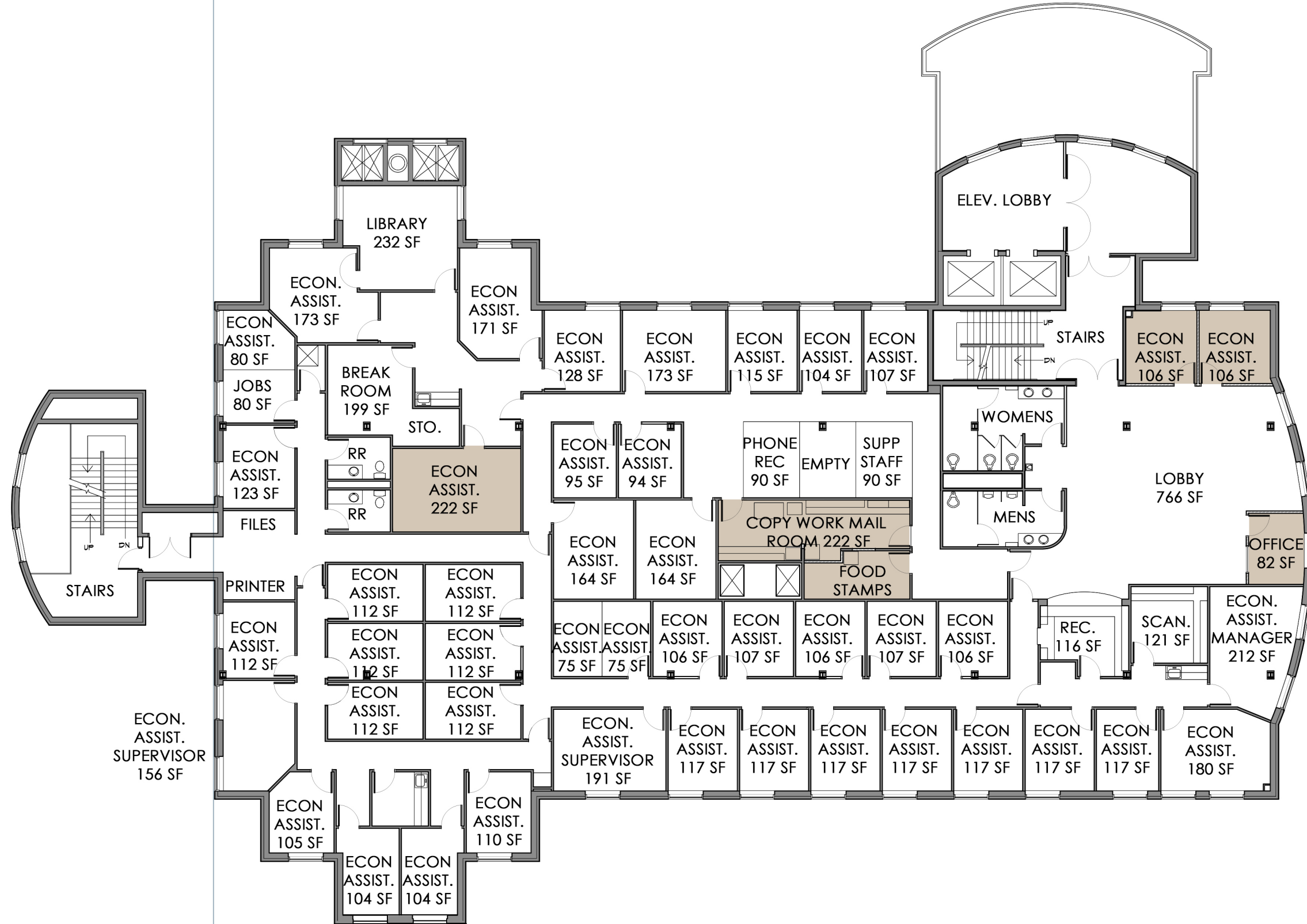
Observations and Comments:

- Moving the Extension offices to the first floor of the Courthouse would free up 2,819 square feet for Social Services. This results in 12 offices, 1 conference room, 1 storage room, 1 copy/file room, and 1-I.T. closet.
- They would like to see the proposed changes for second and third floors implemented.
- Third floor changes include a door added by the receptionist for security.
- Fourth floor-no changes.

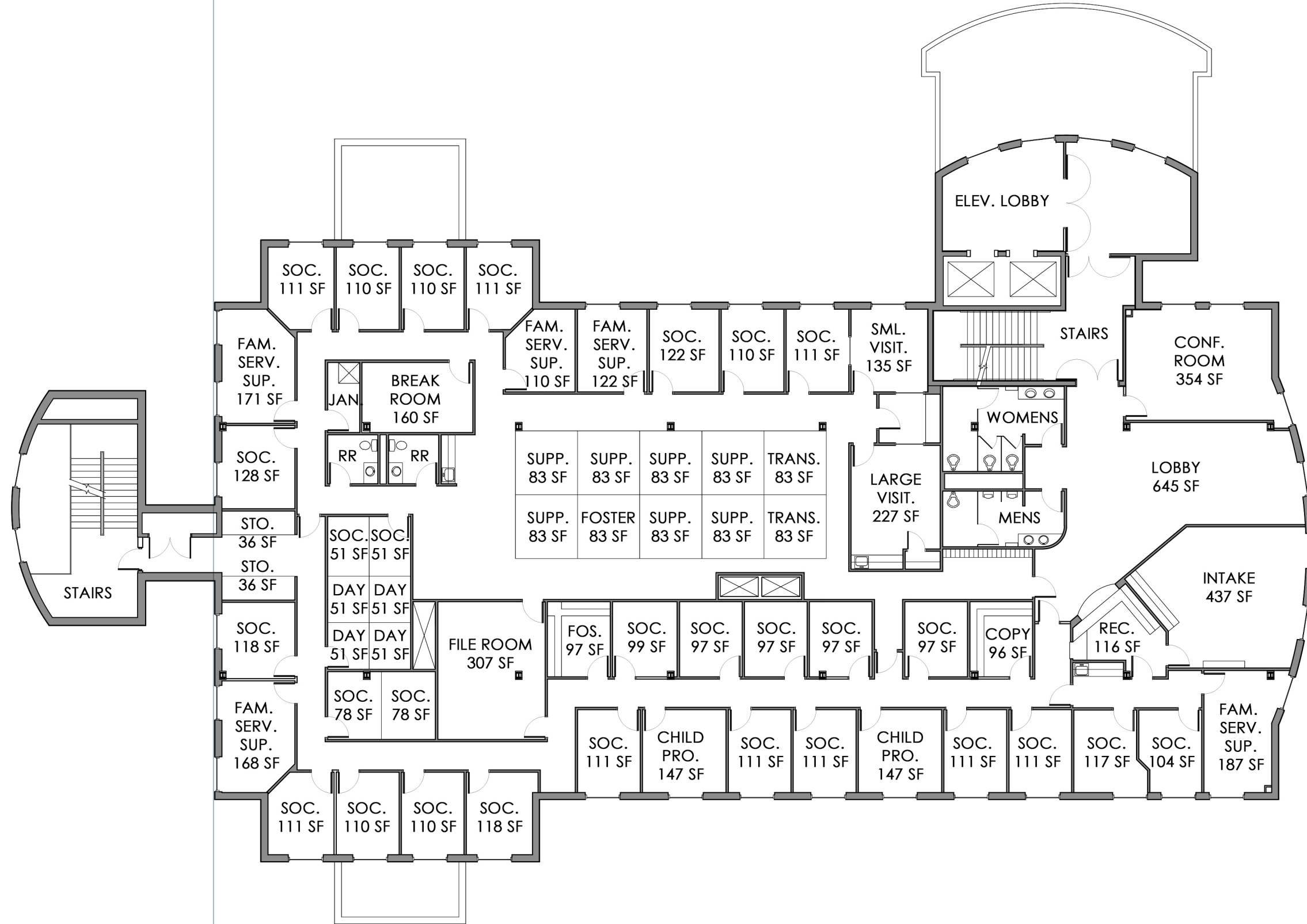


SECOND FLOOR PLAN-EXISTING

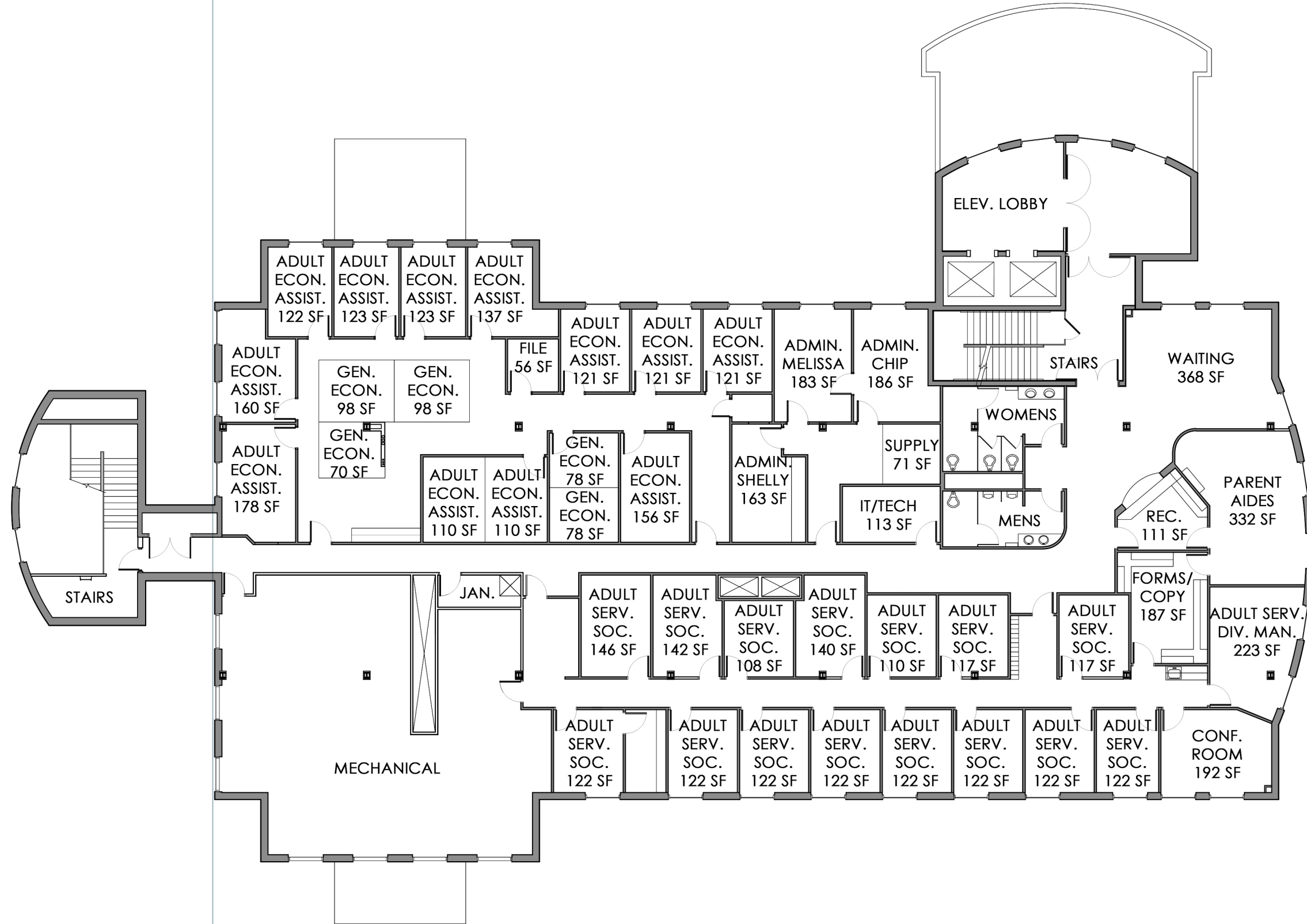
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



 SECOND FLOOR PLAN-PROPOSED
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



THIRD FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



FOURTH FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

Highway Dept Office Remodel

Challenges:

1. Last remodel was in 1997
2. Most cubicles, office furniture, and wall coverings/painting is from 1997
3. Carpet was last replaced in 2005
4. Office space is at over capacity

Opportunities:

1. COVID Funding
2. Complete a remodel rather than just updating cubicles, furniture, and painting
3. A remodel concept was developed in 2018 and can be easily modified based on current and future office space needs (estimated cost - \$1.8 million)

Options:

1. Develop a remodeling plan and updated cost estimate for the 2023 Budget
2. Develop a plan for new carpet, cubicles, painting, etc. and a cost estimate for the 2023 Budget
3. Develop both Option 1 & 2 and present these options to the Commission prior to the 2023 Budgeting



OFFICE AREA

SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

6,032 SF Addition

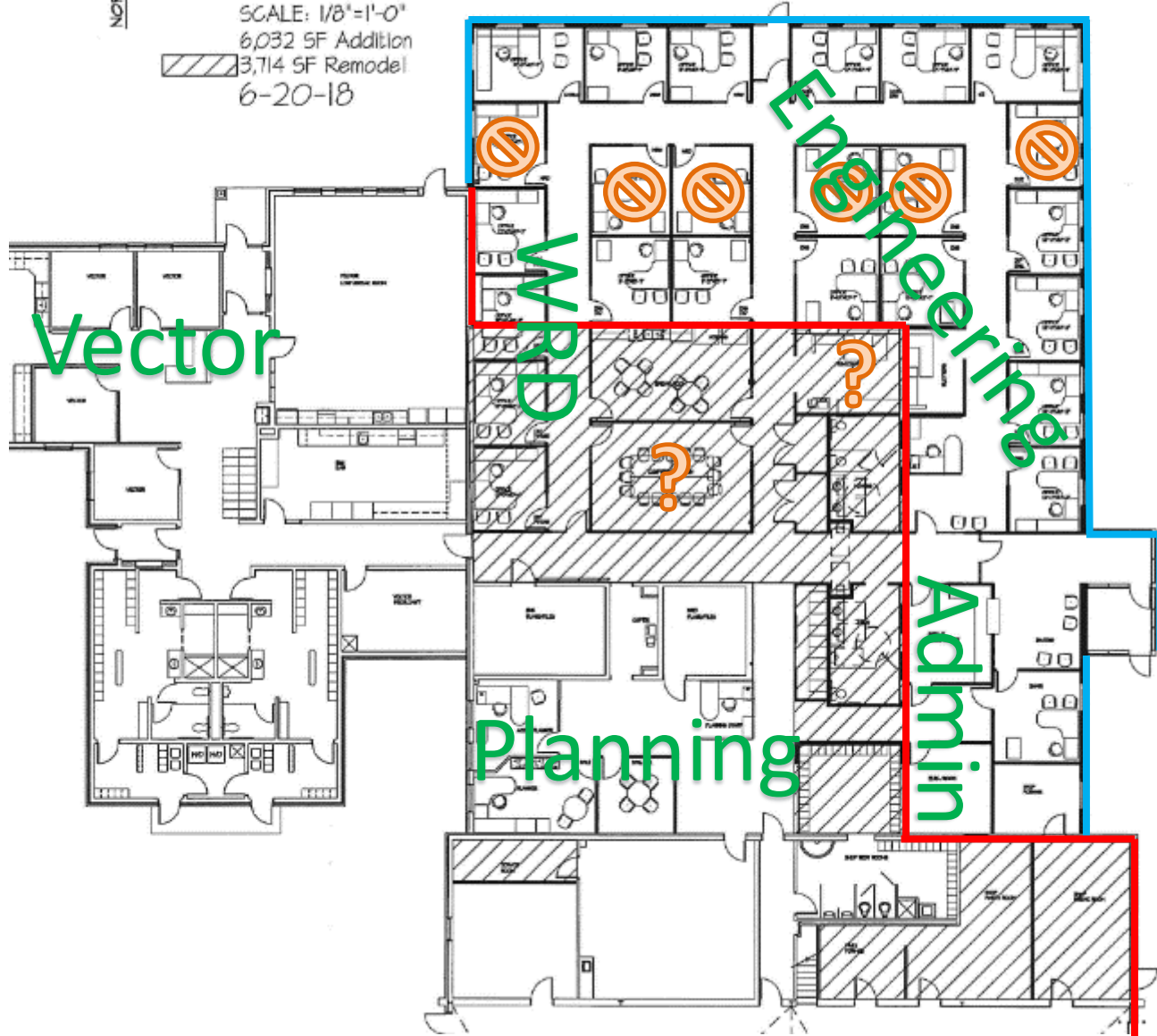
3,714 SF Remodel

6-20-18



New Addition:

1. 12 new office spaces
2. Returns Vector side to Vector Staff only
3. Could reduce the plan
 - Eliminate 6 offices which would allow for 3 additional future staff
 - Evaluate small conference room
 - Evaluate printer/plotter space



— Existing Building

— Proposed Addition