

Staunton Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

April 13, 2023

Topics to be Addressed

1. Legal Considerations
2. Timeline and History of Actions to Date
3. Assessment & Evaluation of Potential Sites/Buildings
4. Next Steps

Current Joint Facility



Address: 6 E Johnson St.

- **Owned by Augusta County**
- **Is not sufficient as a court facility**

Legal Considerations

15.2-1643

Applicable to 6 East Johnson Street

15.2-1638

Different Requirement Applicable to All Cities & Counties

Legal Considerations

Court Orders

September 13, 2021-Show Cause

February 15, 2022-Space Needs Assessment, Schematic Concept, Description and Schedule of Work

March 31, 2023-Schedule Established for Schematic Drawings, Final Design Development Drawings, Final Construction Drawings

- Actual Construction Begins by April 18, 2024 (18 ½ months)

Timeline/History of Actions

December 9, 2021

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) considered:
 - For \$1, City would acquire five properties owned by Augusta County, including both court facilities.
 - City would support legislation to relocate the County's courts to Verona.
 - Majority of City Council tabled the MOU at this meeting until their November 10, 2022 meeting, following the November 8, 2022 potential County referendum.

January 11, 2022

- Special City Council meeting called to discuss December decision, and to include a public comment period.
- No quorum was present; meeting could not occur.

Timeline/History of Actions

January 13, 2022

- During the City Council meeting, the J&DR court facility was discussed; a public hearing was held.

January 18, 2022

- Staff engaged Thompson & Litton to perform a Space Needs Assessment for Staunton J&DR court facility; **cost = \$7,302.**

February 10, 2022

- City Council held a closed meeting to discuss the show cause concerning the J&DR District Court.

Timeline/History of Actions

February 15, 2022

- Court Order jointly filed by the City and Commonwealth to address Show Cause.
- Court Order required City Council to provide a plan to correct non-compliance, including a Space Needs Assessment, to be submitted by April 12, 2022, followed by a schematic plan and schedule.

March 28, 2022

- Space Needs Assessment from Thompson & Litton is provided to the Commonwealth; study included 20-year projections (Submittal #1).

May 2, 2022

- Commonwealth submitted first comment letter to the City, addressing items in the Space Needs Assessment (Comment Letter #1).

Timeline/History of Actions

May 27, 2022

- Thompson & Litton submitted revised Space Needs Assessment to the City, responding to Comment Letter #1 from the Commonwealth.

June 3, 2022

- Thompson & Litton provided the City additional information, including acknowledgement that site selection is required before all Commonwealth comments can be addressed.

June 9, 2022

- City Council held a closed meeting to discuss the show cause concerning the J&DR District Court.
- Subsequent to the closed meeting, staff began to explore potential downtown sites.

Timeline/History of Actions

June 22, 2022

- The City engaged Thompson & Litton to perform an assessment for two potential sites; **cost: \$4,756.**

July 14, 2022

- Thompson & Litton submitted a site assessment report conducted on two properties. The report deemed each site unsuitable, based on the Space Needs Assessment.

July 22, 2022

- With no suitable site identified, Thompson & Litton submitted to the City a conceptual floor plan of a generic non-specific court site.

Timeline/History of Actions

August 1, 2022

- City submitted a revised Space Needs Assessment to the Commonwealth, including the generic conceptual floor plan and estimated site development schedule (Submittal #2).

August 3, 2022

- Commonwealth addressed items of non-compliance in second submittal, including the need for more detailed schematic plans and an accelerated development schedule (Comment Letter #2).
- City response is required by December 1, 2022.

Timeline/History of Actions

August 16, 2022

- City Engineer and Public Works Director conducted a technical review of the Augusta County Circuit and District Court buildings under the authority of the County.
 - Review deemed each site unsuitable based on the Space Needs Assessment.

August 25, 2022

- City Council held a closed meeting to discuss the show cause concerning the J&DR District Court.
- Held a discussion regarding potential downtown sites.

Timeline/History of Actions

September 16, 2022

- To meet the Commonwealth's concerns, the City engaged Thompson & Litton to provide a more detailed floor plan and speculative preliminary design for a non-site-specific court facility; **cost: \$9,500.**

October 13, 2022

- During the City Council Work Session, a discussion was held to take a position on Augusta County's referendum to relocate its courts.
- The majority of City Council determined that the City would take no position on the referendum.

Timeline/History of Actions

October 21, 2022

- Thompson & Litton submitted to the City:
 - More detailed schematic plans of non-specific site with cover letter in response to Comment Letter #2
 - Estimated site development schedule

October 31, 2022

- City submitted the revised Space Needs Assessment to the Commonwealth (Submittal #3)

November 8, 2022

- Augusta County conducted a referendum.
- County voters overwhelmingly elect to move the County court facilities to Verona.

Timeline/History of Actions

November 9, 2022

- Commonwealth submitted a letter addressing items of non-compliance in Submittal #3, including the need to address minimum space needs determined in assessment, security/circulation issues, site layout, and building appearance (Comment Letter #3).

November 10, 2022

- City Council held a closed meeting, post-referendum, to discuss next steps.

November 15, 2022

- City issued Request for Proposal (RFP) for realtor services with a submission deadline of December 9, 2022.

Timeline/History of Actions

November 29, 2022

- City submitted Thompson & Litton's revised schematic plans for a non-specific site, with cover letter in response to the Commonwealth's Comment Letter #3 (Submittal #4).

December 9, 2022

- RFP deadline for realtor service proposals expired with no submissions.

December 21, 2022

- Commonwealth submitted letter addressing items of non-compliance in Submittal #4, including additional space needs and security concerns (Comment Letter #4).

Timeline/History of Actions

December 21, 2022

- City re-issued Request for Proposals for realtor services with a submission deadline of January 4, 2023.

January 17, 2023

- Contract for realtor services was awarded to Cottonwood Commercial, LLC.

January 19, 2023

- City submitted Thompson & Litton's revised schematic plans for non-specific site, in response to Commonwealth's Comment Letter #4 (Submittal #5).

Timeline/History of Actions

January 31, 2023

- City submitted to the Commonwealth a revised estimated site development schedule, from advertising for design through final construction (Submittal #6).
- No further comments were received from the Commonwealth.

January/February 2023

- Realtor explored potential sites and engaged with city staff.

March 9, 2023

- City Council held a closed meeting to discuss ten potential sites.

Timeline/History of Actions

March 23, 2023

- City Council held a closed meeting to discuss potential sites.

March 29, 2023

- City announced intent to procure design services for a J&DR District Court facility on the Hardy Lot and posted a Request for Proposal (RFP).

March 31, 2023

- City submitted a Court Order that included a location (Hardy Lot) and final schedule to the Attorney General's Office (deadline for submission).

April 5, 2023

- City Council held a special closed meeting to discuss the Show Cause and next steps, including reviewing additional sites.

Expenditures To-Date

Date	Amount	Vendor	Description
Jan. 18, 2022	\$7,302	Thompson & Litton	Space Needs Assessment
June 22, 2022	\$4,756	Thompson & Litton	Site Assessment (two properties)
Sept. 16, 2022	\$9,500	Thompson & Litton	Speculative Preliminary Design for court facility (non-specific site)

Proposed Expenditures To-Date

Date	Amount	Description
FY 2023	\$2,300,000	Cash on hand earmarked for J&DR District Court Facility (ARPA funds); none of these funds have been spent to date.
FY 2024	\$10,000,000	FY 2024 Manager Proposed Budget includes a debt service payment to finance \$10M over 20 years – can be earmarked for J&DR District Court Facility.

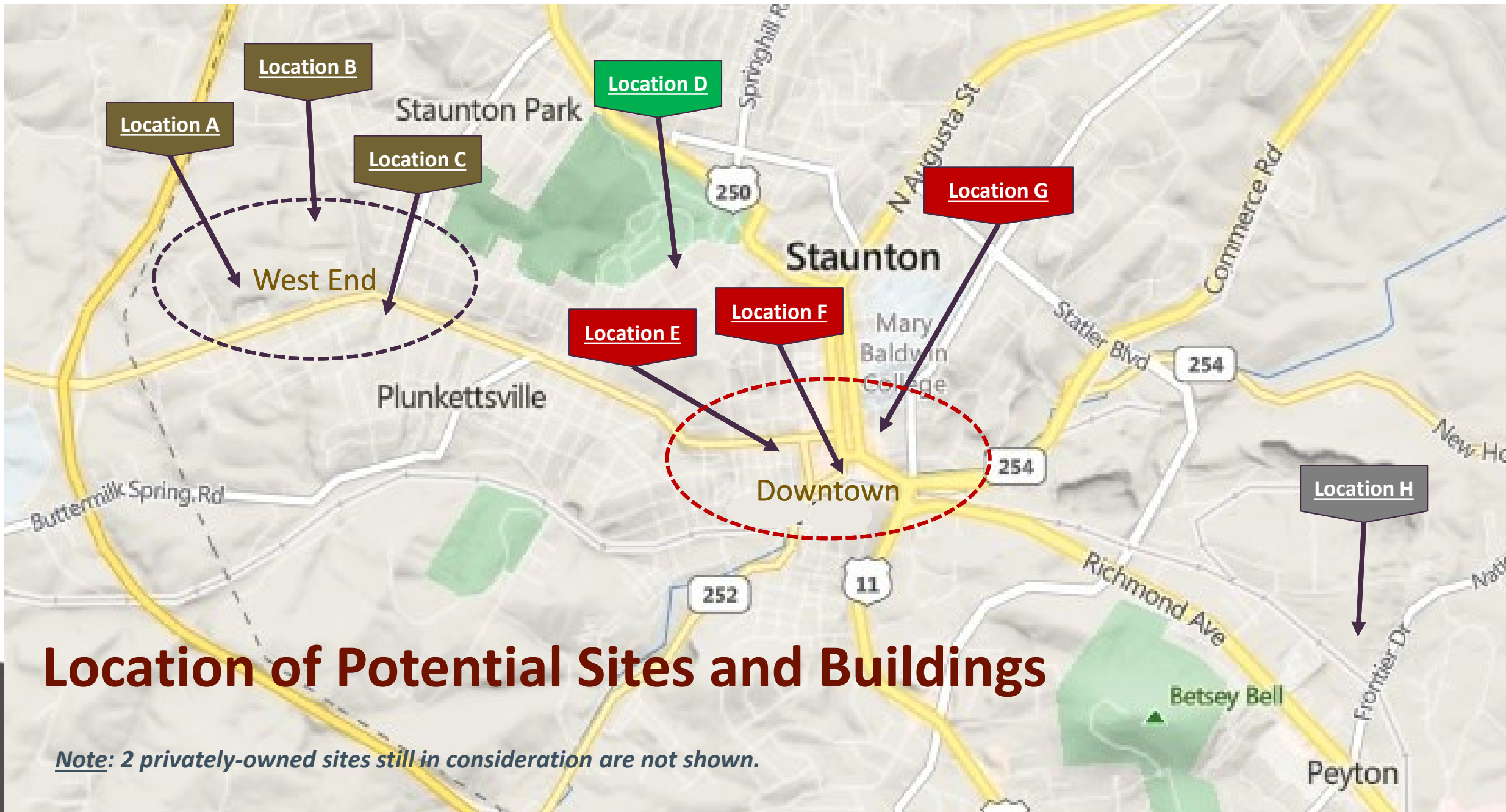
Assessment & Evaluation of Potential Sites and Buildings



10 Sites/Buildings

- Square Footage
- Acreage
- Location
- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Availability

Note: 2 privately-owned sites still in consideration and will not be discussed.



Location of Potential Sites and Buildings

Note: 2 privately-owned sites still in consideration are not shown.

Potential Sites and Buildings (10)

West End

Location A - Site behind Food Lion

Location B - Former Unifi Building

Location C - Former Chestnut Hills
Shopping Center

Gypsy Hill Park Area

Location D - Grace Christian School
Complex

Downtown

Location E - Former Grand Piano Furniture Store
Building

Location F - Augusta County Courts Buildings

Location G - Hardy Lot

Eastern Area

Location H - Site next to quarry

Location A – Vacant Site behind Food Lion

Address: 2311 W Beverley Street

- Large parcel (29 acres), unclear how much of it would be developable. Lengthy access road required to reach developable portion
- Street address on bus route
- \$368,650 assessed value
- Available (asking price \$400K)

Status: Owner working with realtor awaiting decision



Location B – Former Unifi Site



Address: 44 Morris Mill Road

- 20 acres zoned industrial
- Existing buildings (160,000 SF) likely unusable
- \$1.3 million assessed value
- Not too far from current bus route
- Contains residential buildings

• **Status:** Owner not cooperating with realtor
Transaction likely to be problematic

Location C – Former Chestnut Hills Shopping Center



**NOT
FOR SALE**

Address: 2040 W Beverley Street

- 9.7 Acres with 2 large buildings totaling 91,500 SF
- Room for facility and future growth
- Existing buildings may be usable
- On current bus route

• **Status:** Owner not interested in selling instead renovating buildings for retail tenants

Location D – Grace Christian School Complex



Address: 501 Thornrose Avenue

- 2, 2 story buildings, 39,000 square feet
- \$1.5 million assessed value
- Existing buildings probably usable
- On bus route

• **Status:** NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL 2025

Location E – Former Grand Piano Building



Address: 110 W Beverley Street

- Downtown location
- 3 Story, 13,800 SF building; open floorplan
- \$546,000 assessed value
- Needs extensive renovation
- Historical (and physical) restrictions on exterior modifications
- CANNOT ACCOMMODATE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

• **Status:** Not referred to realtor

Location F – Augusta County Courts



Address: E Johnson Street

- Downtown location
- Owned by Augusta County
- Needs extensive renovations

- **Status:** No interest from City Council

Location G - Hardy Parking Lot



Address: 1 N Market Street

- City-owned, no acquisition costs
- Surface area – 29,000 square feet
- Minimal site preparation
- On bus route
- Close proximity to Cochran Judicial Center

- **Status:** Available/No acquisition cost or time

Location H – Site Next to Quarry

Meigsburg, Staunton Virginia

MARTIN'S
Hot Wok

American Mini Storage

Appomattox Lime Co.
and Quarry

Address: 280 National Avenue

- 29 acre parcel industrially zoned; appears developable
- \$252,000 assessed value
- Not too far from bus route
- Surrounded by industrial parcels and railroad
- Status: Owner working with realtor

Rockydale - Staunton
Lime & Belmont Quarry

N Front

Next Steps

- Continue review of 12 potential locations
 - Two of these were previously under consideration and are still being explored
 - Ten are new suggestions
 - If an alternative location that meets same timeline is identified by City Council, the City will approach the Commonwealth about amending the March 31, 2023 Court Order
- Continue the design RFP process for the Hardy Lot
- Develop long-term financing strategy to fund capital and operating costs associated with J&DR District Court facility

J&DR District Court Facility Information

www.staunton.va.us/courthouse