

**FACTSHEET
NEW U.S. COURTHOUSE
HUNTSVILLE, AL**

Project Summary

Public Law 115-141, the 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act, passed on March 24, 2018, appropriated \$110,000,000 to Courthouse Construction in Huntsville, AL. Of that \$110,000,000, GSA determined that \$86,463,000 would be needed to construct the new courthouse and the balance of the appropriation would be used to renovate and backfill the existing building.

On September 24, 2018, the General Services Administration (GSA) submitted a prospectus (PAL-CTC-HU18) to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Senate Committee on Environment and Public works that proposed the design and construction of a new U.S. Courthouse of approximately 123,100 gross square feet, including 26 parking spaces, in Huntsville, AL that would meet the 10-year space needs of the court and court-related agencies and the site could accommodate the anticipated 30-year needs of the court. At that time, part I of the Federal Judiciary's Courthouse Project Priorities list (approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States on September 12, 2017) included a courthouse project in Huntsville, AL. At the time that the original requirements were developed, no exceptions to the U.S. Courts Design Guide were expected and the prospectus noted the same.

At its September 2019 meeting, the Judicial Conference of the United States approved an exception to the U.S. Courts Design Guide to include a special proceedings courtroom and additional clerk space in the program of requirements for the new courthouse in Huntsville, Alabama. The special proceedings courtroom and clerk space is approximately 825 usable square feet larger than a district courtroom and will replace one of the two district courtrooms previously identified within the approved prospectus. Additionally, the Judiciary has reduced other programmed space to offset the difference between a district courtroom and larger special proceedings courtroom and additional clerk space so the total GSF of the project does not change. The total number of courtrooms and chambers identified in the original prospectus, five and six respectively, will remain the same.

The Judiciary will provide the funds to support this request and no appropriations of Federal Buildings Funds are required. In accordance with the existing prospectus and resolutions, GSA has not included a special proceedings courtroom as recently requested by the Judiciary in the design of the new courthouse. The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure resolution passed on December 12, 2018 included the following provision:

- *Provided Further*, that the design of the new courthouse shall not deviate from the U.S. Courts Design Guide.

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Other resolutions passed at the same time, such as the resolution approving the construction of a new courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Florida address exceptions to the U.S. Courts Design Guide. The Fort Lauderdale Courthouse project had an approved special proceedings courtroom listed in the prospectus as an exception and the subsequent resolution from the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure states:

- *Provided Further*, that, except as provided in the prospectus, the design of the new courthouse shall not deviate from the U.S. Courts Design Guide.

In order for GSA to proceed with the design of the courthouse with a special proceedings courtroom, the Committee would need to remove or modify the existing restriction.

Justification

The Judicial Conference of the United States approved a request from the 11th Circuit for a special proceedings courtroom in lieu of a standard district courtroom during its September 2019 meeting. The special proceedings courtroom was justified due to the anticipated multi-attorney civil cases, multi-defendant criminal cases, and naturalization ceremonies.