



City to Hold Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Portsmouth Judicial Center

The City of Portsmouth will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Portsmouth Judicial Center **on Wednesday, September 8th at 12:30 p.m.** at 415 Port Centre Parkway.

The Portsmouth Judicial Center will replace the courts complex located on Crawford Street.

The new Portsmouth Judicial Center, for all courts and related administrative offices for: Circuit Court, General District Court, and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court; will incorporate state-of-the-art courthouse design and amenities, in compliance with the Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines. The facility will provide 12 new courtrooms including six Circuit Court, three General District, and three Juvenile and Domestic Relations. Offices for the Commonwealth's Attorney, Juvenile Court Services, and the Portsmouth Sheriff will also be located in the facility.

HBA Architecture and Interior Design, Inc. is the design firm for the facility which is scheduled to be completed September 2012. The new courts facility includes the complete renovation of an existing one- and two-story office building (approximately 103,700 square feet), along with a new three-story addition (approximately 103,000 square feet). The site, which is about 12 acres, is located on Port Centre Parkway, just south of I-264, in downtown Portsmouth.

The exterior of the existing building will be renovated so that the entire facility will appear new. The architectural design of the new Portsmouth Courts facility presents a bold, dignified, judicial appearance that conforms to the traditional images of justice.

The challenge of adapting an existing office building for a court facility has been answered successfully by the design team at HBA. Providing secured in-custody defendant circulation in the one-story portions of the existing building has been accomplished by taking advantage of high bay roof areas and creating mezzanine access corridors from central holding areas to the courtroom holding areas. The design includes three separate and distinct circulation paths for the public, judges and staff, and in-custody defendants for all courts. A central public corridor connects the two entries to the building and serves as a public circulation space from which all of the courts are accessed.

The \$78 million investment in the Portsmouth Judicial Center will serve as a catalyst for new employment and significant private sector reinvestment. It is expected to encourage the demand for ancillary uses such as new office space for attorneys and other support uses.

In addition, since the courts will no longer be located on the current waterfront property site on Crawford Street, this property will be available for redevelopment or new development which will contribute to Portsmouth's economic growth and Downtown Master Plan and Waterfront Strategy.

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