

Ector County Courthouse Visioning Workshop

May 2025



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Executive Summary



Workshop Structure & Outcomes

DLR Group facilitated a Visioning Workshop with Ector County Stakeholders. The stakeholders identified the following guiding principles for the new Ector County Courthouse project :

1. **Maximize safety and security for all users**
2. **Anticipate future growth**
3. **Design for space and flow efficiency**
4. **Create a community hub**

These guiding principles result from a series of collaborative exercises, starting with a broad prompting question about stakeholders' expectations for the future courthouse building. The answers we received fell into 5 primary categories or themes: **customer experience, staff experience, security, civic presence, and TCO/adaptability/durability**. We then asked stakeholders to engage with each of these themes in more detail and identify specific priorities. The outcome of this exercise was a large list of ideas – some very specific (e.g. secure exhibit storage) and some more general (e.g. flexible space). Many ideas overlapped across multiple categories, and we found that customer experience and staff experience could reasonably be combined into a universal theme of **user experience**.

Guiding Principles

- 1. Maximize safety and security for all users** – *This principle reflects the identified theme of **security**. Stakeholders were particularly concerned with secure parking for staff and judges, and emphasized the importance of separating public, private, and in-custody circulation.*
- 2. Anticipate future growth** – *This principle reflects the identified theme of responsible **TCO/adaptability/durability**. The priority with the most votes in this category was that the “structure anticipates growth,” but we also saw many similar variations including longevity, flexibility, and ease of maintenance.*
- 3. Design for space and flow efficiency** – *This principle reflects the theme of **user experience**. Stakeholders’ priorities for both staff and customer experience focused on space efficiency, wayfinding, and convenience. Although these were initially two separate themes, the priorities in these categories can largely be addressed with thoughtful design solutions and layouts that benefit all users.*
- 4. Create a community hub** – *This principle reflects the theme of **civic presence**. The top priority in this category was to create a “gathering place for community events,” and stakeholders emphasized the importance of the future courthouse as a welcoming, accessible, and attractive anchor of downtown Odessa that inspires pride in the community.*

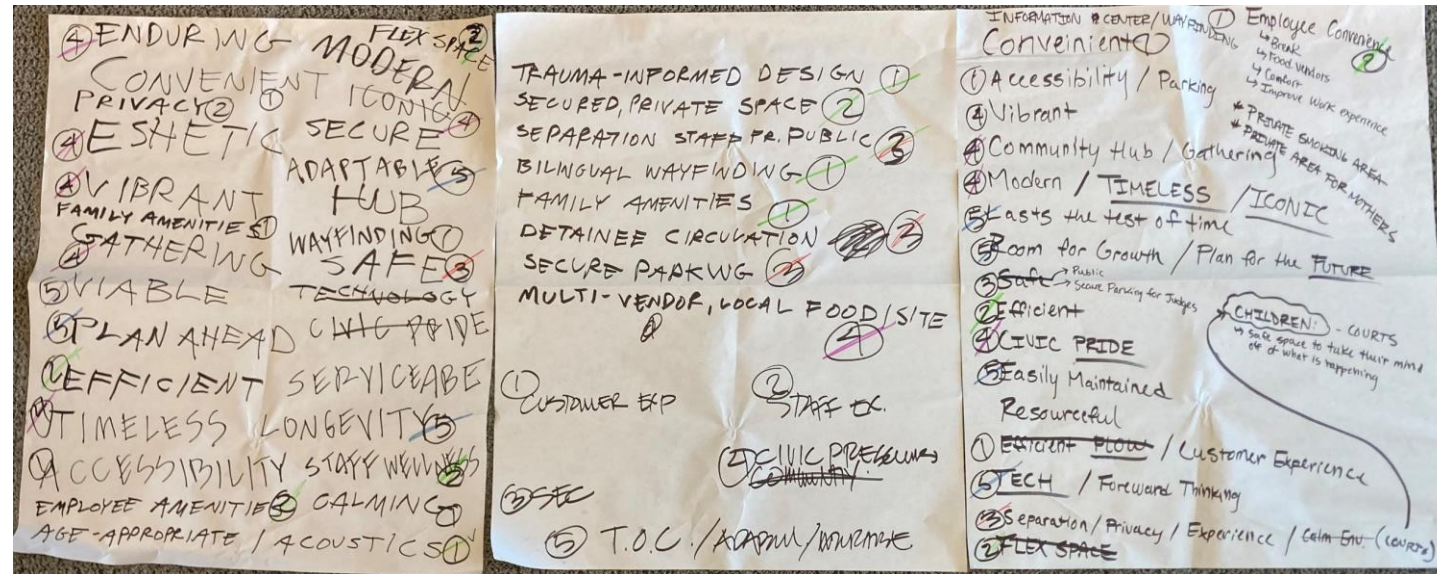
Large Group Exercise



Prompt Question

Ten years from now, what do you want the community to say about the courthouse building?

Prompt Responses – Organized by Theme



| Customer Experience | Staff Experience | Security | Civic Presence | TCO / Adaptability / Durability |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Accessibility | Flex space | Separate circulation | Multi-vendor | Viability |
| Wayfinding | Wellness | Secure parking | Enduring/timeless | Plan ahead/future-thinking |
| Family amenities | Private space | Safe | Aesthetically pleasing | Longevity |
| Trauma-informed | Convenience | | Vibrant | Adaptable |
| Calming | Efficient | | Hub | Last the test of time |
| Age-appropriate | Amenities | | Gathering | Futureproofing tech |
| Convenience | Resourceful | | Iconic | Easy to maintain |
| | | | | Room for growth |

Identify Individual Priorities



Place Priorities

- Each participant was asked to identify their top three priorities for the future building and write them on sticky notes.
- Participants then placed their sticky notes with the themes identified in the large group exercise.



IDENTIFY INDIVIDUAL PRIORITIES

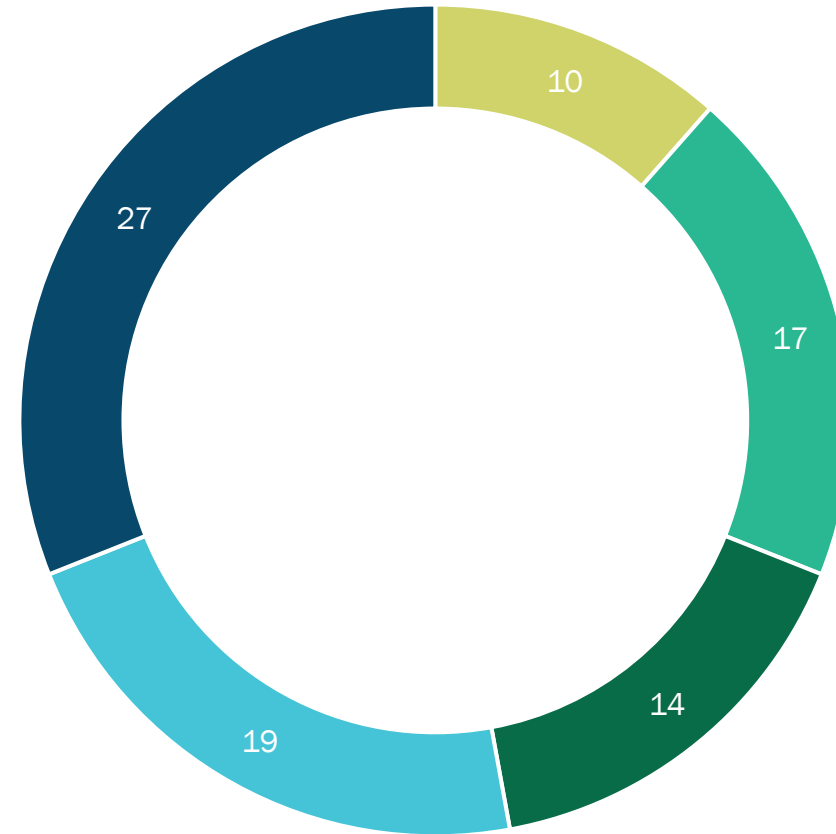
Organize & Discuss Priorities



The DLR team organized sticky notes within each theme and walked through each priority with the participants.

Distribution of Priorities by Theme

Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) was by far the most popular theme when participants were assigning their top priorities for the future courthouse. All other categories received significant interest still, and there were many duplicate responses across all themes.



■ Customer Experience ■ Staff Experience ■ Security ■ Civic Presence ■ TCO/Adaptability/Durability

Customer Experience



- Public movement
- Convenience
- Resourceful
- Serving the public
- Make courthouse visits easier (convenient) for the public
- Positive experience for all who use it
- Intelligent design
- Efficiently administer justice

Staff Experience



- Staff-friendly
- Amenities
- Staff
- Windows/natural light
- Cafeteria/onsite food kiosk
- Growth
- Safety – number of staff needed to operate
- Unfinished floor for future growth or fit out as offices and lease out until needed for department growth
- Clerk space in courtrooms
- Provide info screens for public
- Technology
- Space and office separation
- Working space
- Space
- Comfortable office space that also allows for confidential meetings
- Efficient courtrooms with correct flow
- Secure CASA space – immediately

Security



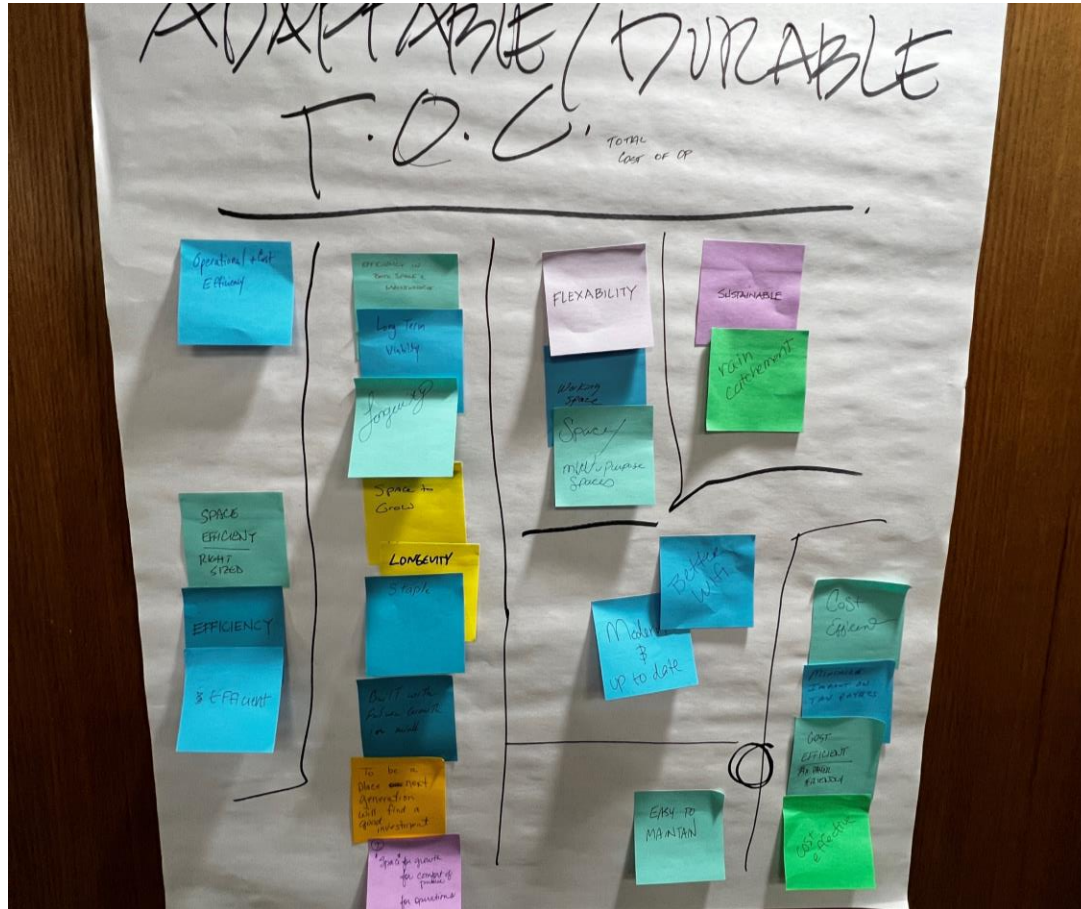
- Security
- Secure facility
- Safety
- Built with family security and safety
- Staff security
- Safety for employees and public
- Secure evidence in a locked space
- Secured place to lock up firearms and ammo
- Mass intercom system (emergencies, announcements)
- Workspace with lockable storage and secure from public

Civic Presence



- Enhance community pride in downtown
- Resourceful
- Hub
- Make it where we can gather, aesthetically pleasing
- Community engagement
- Something the county can be proud of
- Community downtown anchor
- Iconic
- Timeless
- Community
- Representation
- Vibrant
- Versatile zone
- Convenience and efficiency for public/employee access
- Accessibility

TCO/Adaptability/Durability



- Easy accessibility to systems for maintenance
- Operational and cost efficiency
- Efficiency in both space and maintenance
- Long-term viability
- Flexibility
- Working space
- Sustainable
- Rain catchment
- Space efficient (right-sized)
- Space to grow
- Longevity
- Staple
- Built with future growth in mind
- To be a place the next generation will find a good investment
- Multipurpose spaces
- Modern and up to date
- Better Wi-fi
- Quick and easy repairs
- Quality products and good accessibility to maintenance parts
- Cost-efficient
- Minimize impact on taxpayers

Small Group Exercise





Brainstorm Solutions & Ideas

Participants were divided into small groups with a mix of user groups. Each group was assigned to one of the themes and asked to identify more specific examples and solutions for the priorities in each theme.

After the small group discussion, each group assigned a spokesperson to present to the room on their ideas.

Customer Experience

| | |
|--|--|
| High volume offices on the first floor | Calming – access to outdoor space |
| Intercom system | Electronic docket monitors (pre- and post-screening) |
| Signage/wayfinding (color coordination, bilingual, simple) | Dedicated family restrooms |
| Outdoor walkup counter | Family/child waiting spaces |
| Secure outdoor space for jurors | Private attorney-client conference areas |

Staff Experience

| | |
|---|--|
| Open, gathering | Mothers' rooms |
| Schedule and confirm training space | Adequate space for confidential conversations |
| Breakroom with option for casual meeting | Separate staff bathrooms |
| Access to see outside | Department and office adjacencies |
| Outdoor space separate from public (secure, separate smoking and non-smoking) | Accommodate people who bring lunch |
| Separate staff from public/victims | Convenient parking – separate from public and jurors |
| Secure, clearly marked parking for elected officials and judges | Ability to control temperature for comfort |
| Natural daylight | Coffee and vending |
| Fridge and freezer | Availability of technology |
| Information kiosk | Security of workspaces and printing |
| Climate resourceful | |

Security

| | |
|---|---|
| Secure elevators – inmates vs public | Outdoor jurors' break area |
| Separation of spaces by use – criminal vs public | Secure and separate parking for judges, staff, court coordinators (after hours) |
| Secure space for victims, families, children, attorney-client privilege | Secure staff entrance |
| Friendly/comfortable public spaces (open and inviting) | Exhibit security – court reporter accessibility per courtroom |
| Outdoor staff area (balcony) | Secured mailroom |

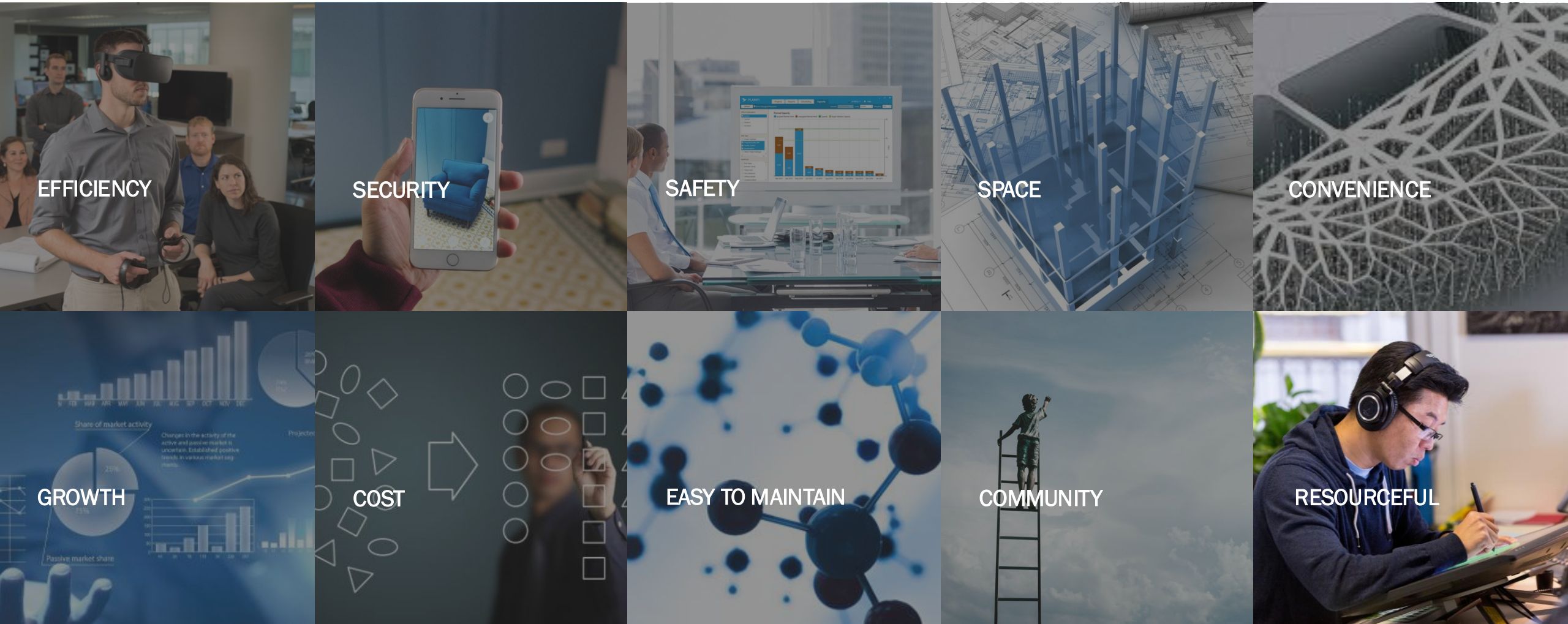
Civic Presence

| | |
|---|---|
| Multi-use community space | Ease of accessibility, convenient parking |
| Gathering place for community events (public announcements, parades, event hub) | Architectural regionalism – reflect the community it serves |
| Lynchpin of downtown revitalization | Partner with stakeholders (library, MCH/ORMC, City of Odessa, etc.) |
| Timeless | |

TCO/Adaptability/Durability

| | |
|--|--|
| Water conservation (cistern, irrigation) | Structure anticipates growth |
| Xeriscaping | Spatial efficiency – flexibility, acoustical privacy, departmental flow, security, drive-thru, secure circulation, detention zone, private and public spaces |
| Greenspace, park-like | Outdoor space (roof or courtyard) – including private outdoor for staff |
| Digital art wall with changing display | Masonry/permanent materials |
| Expandable on site (vertically) | Balance between transparency and glass maintenance |
| Old and new | Comfortable and cleanable furniture |
| Natural light | Energy efficiency |
| Flexible space | Private, semi-private, public space |
| Acoustics | Wi-fi |
| Generator/UPS – backing up data center | |

Most Common Topics

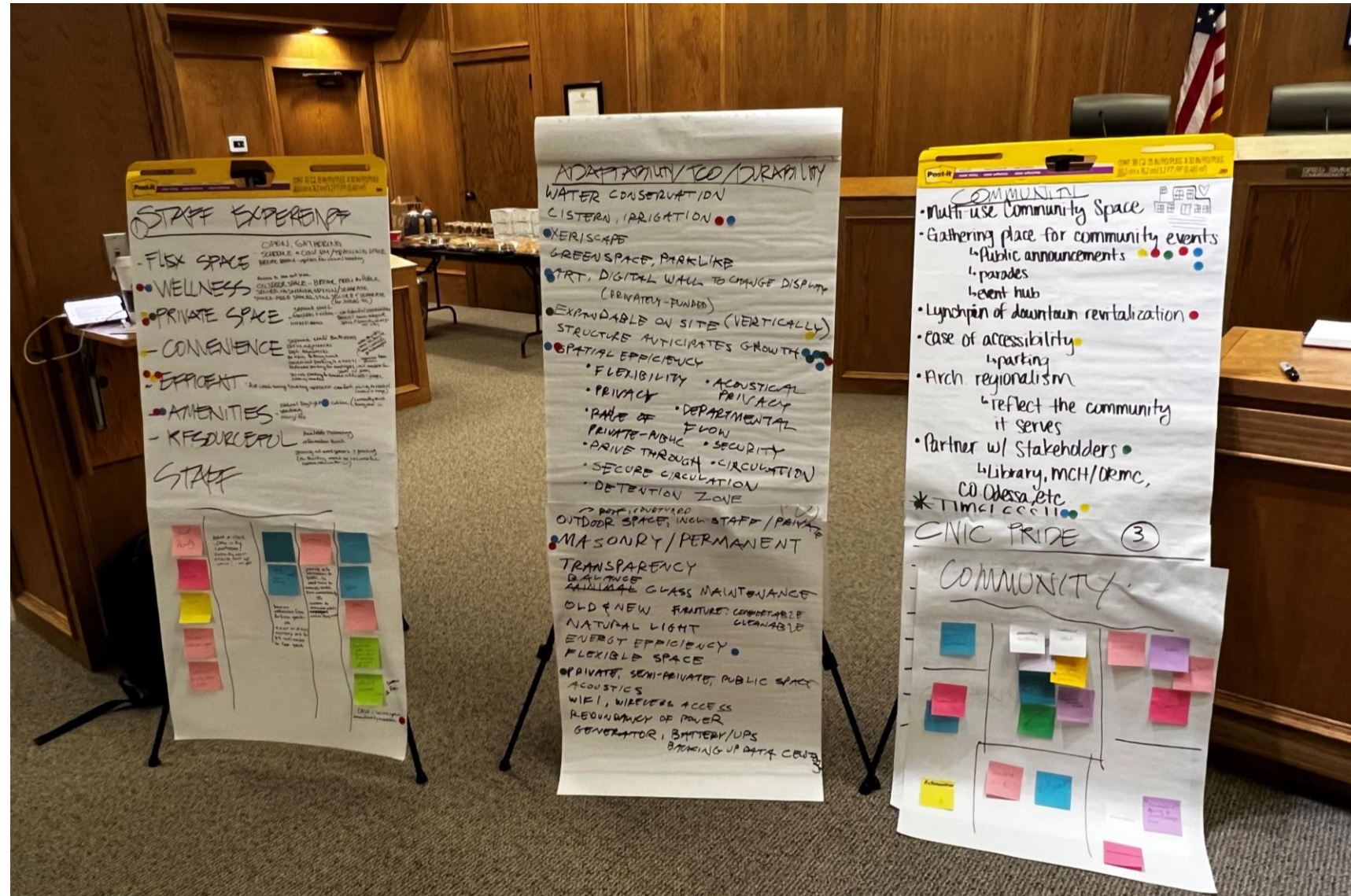


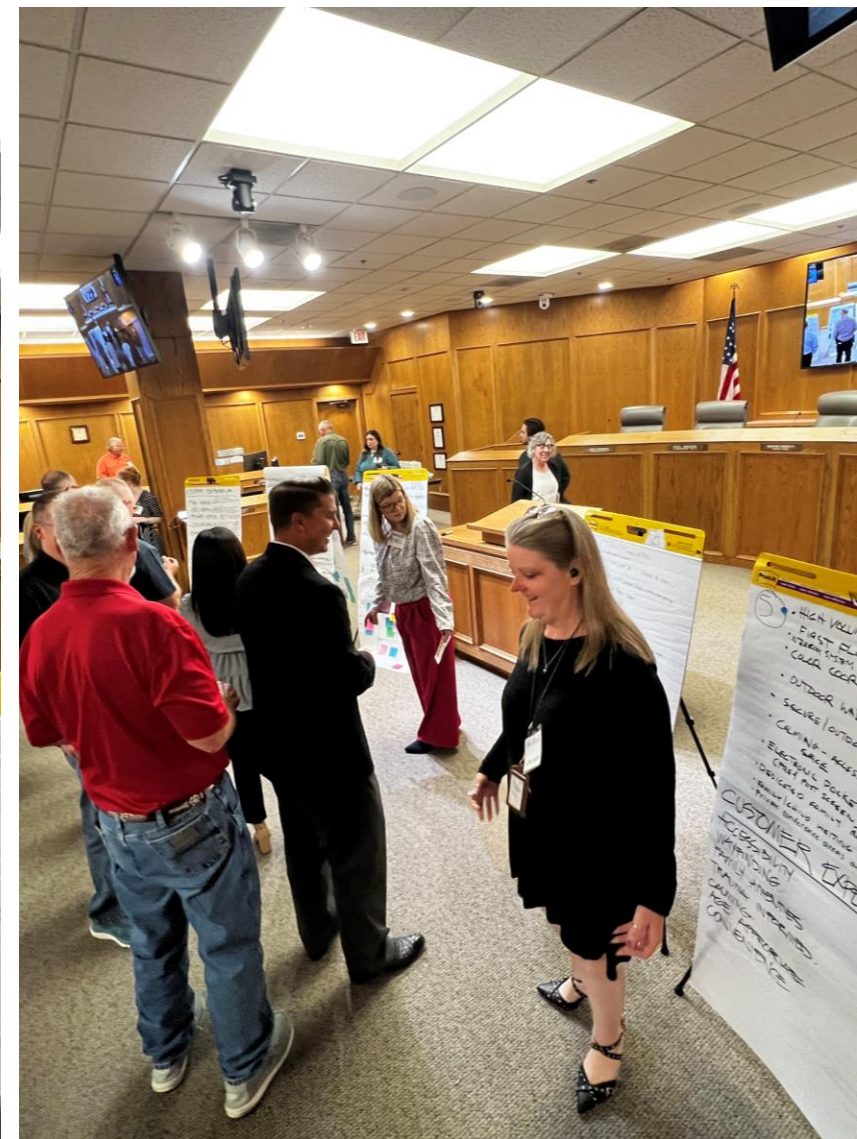
Final Priority Ranking



Final Priorities

All participants were asked to holistically evaluate the solutions and ideas that were brainstormed throughout the workshop. Each participant received three colored dots and was asked to put a dot on each of their top three priorities.





Priority Ranking

Again, TCO received the most votes in total. It was closely followed by votes for priorities related to staff experience, civic presence, and security.

Customer experience priorities received only 6 votes in total. However, many of the priorities identified for customer experience were echoed in the other themes as well – particularly efficiency, accessibility, and amenities.



Guiding Principles



Guiding Principles

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2. Anticipate future growth
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Thank You

