



SIERRA VISTA COURT FEASIBILITY STUDY

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

NOVEMBER 12, 2024



LUIS CORDOVA / ETHAN BURKE
ROUNDS CONSULTING GROUP



INTRODUCTION

Rounds Consulting Group is a leading economic and public policy consulting firm specializing in **feasibility studies, economic impact analysis, research, and forecasting** .

- Support **public, private and nonprofit organizations** throughout Arizona and the Southwest.
- Provide **data -driven insights** that help guide strategic decision-making and help optimize project outcomes.

INTRODUCTION



Luis Cordova
Vice President



Ethan Burke
Economic Analyst



BACKGROUND

- **Sierra Vista currently shares municipal court services with Cochise County** (Justice-of-the-Peace Court, Precinct 5)
- The shared model results in **Sierra Vista paying an annual fee based on its share of court costs.**

The purpose of the study: *Assess the feasibility of establishing a standalone municipal court.*



STUDY METHODOLOGY

- **Document Review** : Collected and analyzed relevant data, including historical court studies, current operational costs, and comparable municipal court structures.
- **Needs Assessment** : Evaluated Sierra Vista's current and future court requirements based on population growth, caseload trends, and facility needs.
- **Revenue and Expenditure Analysis** : Analyzed potential revenues (fines, fees) and projected operating costs for a standalone municipal court using data from Sierra Vista and comparable Arizona cities.
- **Financial Feasibility Evaluation** : Compared the costs and benefits of a standalone court vs. the existing co-location model.



KEY FINDINGS

- **Space Needs** : A minimum of **4,900 square feet** is required for a new courthouse.
- **Staffing Needs** : A minimum of **9 full-time** equivalent (FTE) positions, including a judge, court clerks, bailiffs, and administrative staff.
- **Construction Costs** : The total construction cost for the 4,900 square foot courthouse is projected between **\$2.3M and \$2.9M**.



FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

- **Annual Savings** : The city would save approximately **\$280,700 annually in co-location court fees** by establishing a standalone court.
- **Revenue Comparison** : Sierra Vista generates around **\$174,700 in annual court-related revenue** , significantly lower than similar cities (62% less).
- **Operational Costs** : A standalone court would require an estimated **\$1.4M annually for staffing, maintenance, and operations** .



Standalone Municipal Court Key Findings Summary	
Municipal Court Requirements	
Minimum Square Footage Requirements	4,900
Court FTE Employees Requirements	9
Average FTE Wage	\$51,900
One-Time Costs and Savings	
Annual Co-Location Court Fee Savings	\$280,700
One-Time Construction Expenditures	(\$2,597,000)
One-Time Construction Taxes	\$46,700
Projected Annual Operating Expenditures and Revenues	
Annual Operating Expenditures	(\$1,364,200)
Employee Salaries & Benefits	(\$467,500)
Prosecution & Defense Costs	(\$289,600)
Operations & Maintenance	(\$607,200)
Annual Operating Revenue	\$179,400
Fines, Fees, and Other Related Fees	\$174,700
Recurring Tax Revenues	\$4,700
Annual Net Operating Surplus or (Deficit)	(\$1,184,800)

Note: May not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source: Rounds Consulting Group, Inc.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- Maintaining the current co-located court model is more cost-effective for Sierra Vista.
- The projected costs of a standalone court far exceeds the financial benefits.
- The annual increase in costs of a standalone court vs. the current co-located court is estimated at about \$1M annually.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation : Continue utilizing the co-location model with Cochise County to optimize resources and avoid increased financial burden.



THANK YOU!