

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY JUSTICE COURT CONSOLIDATION FEASIBILITY STUDY



TOWNS OF EDWARDS, HERMON, AND RUSSELL

February, 2014



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In partnership with the Rockefeller Institute of Government

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FEBRUARY, 2014

Prepared by:



In partnership with the:



THE NELSON A.
ROCKEFELLER
INSTITUTE
OF GOVERNMENT



The State University
of New York

*This report was prepared with funds provided by the New York State Department
of State under the Local Government Efficiency (LGE) Grant Program*



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Laberge Group Project Number 2012055

Acknowledgments

The St. Lawrence County Court Consolidation Advisory Committee would like to recognize and thank the many people and organizations whose assistance has made the completion of the Justice Court Consolidation Feasibility Study reality.

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This report was prepared with funds provided by the New York State Department of State under the Local Government Efficiency (LGE) Grant Program.

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I. Introduction

Purpose

St Lawrence County, and the Towns of Edwards, Hermon, and Russell have jointly agreed to study the feasibility of consolidating justice court functions. Funded by a grant from the NYS Department of State, Local Government Efficiency (LGE) grant program, this study is intended to aid government officials and the public in determining the feasibility of consolidating functions and/or facilities and discovering potential future cost savings as well as the most beneficial relationship to serve each community's justice court needs. The study will help the Towns of Edwards, Hermon, and Russell to gain a better understanding of their common interests and how they can together provide essential court functions while, maintaining the quality of life for their respective communities, by examining restructuring options that improve the court environment and create efficiencies. This project is the second phase of analyzing the justice court functions and needs in St Lawrence County and it is anticipated that a successful justice court functional consolidation among the neighboring towns of Edwards, Hermon, and Russell could become a model for similar partnerships in the county, leading to future cost savings and efficiencies. Although this feasibility study is specifically geared toward the needs of Edwards, Hermon and Russell, as a part of this planning process, the county developed an updated Countywide Justice Court Profile that assessed the nature of case loads, cost and revenues as well as the exiting monthly justice court schedules (see **Appendix F**). This profile, along with other concepts included in this study, is intended to be used by the county and interested communities as a tool to identify other potential shared services or justice court consolidation opportunities throughout the county in the future.

Study Methodology

In order to determine feasible shared service and court restructuring options, the consultant team examined local justice court issues and conditions, gathered information about specific costs and operations, and discussed the needs of the courts with town officials and justices. The following data sources were used to provide baseline information for the study:

- **Primary source data:** The source data included budget documents provided by participants, countywide caseload and financial data acquired from the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC), census data, legal memoranda, annual reports and documents that provide the statutory framework for justice courts.

- **Document review:** The team reviewed recent justice court audits issued by OSC, security audits by the Office of Court Administration, and legislation pertaining to justice courts.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Town Supervisors, Justices and county professionals whose departments regularly serve in justice courts. i.e., County Sheriff, District Attorney, Public Defender, Conflict Defender, and Probation Department. These interviews were summarized and incorporated into the analysis of options.

Overview of the Justice Court System

This section describes the justice court environment in New York State, recent changes that affect local courts, and restructuring options within state statutes.

Domain and Case Activity of the Justice Courts in NYS

Justice courts adjudicate offenses under penal, vehicle and traffic (V&T), civil and other laws, where the charges fall below the level of felony. Justice courts also conduct arraignments for felony offenses occurring anywhere in the county, and can handle arraignments on lesser offenses, but only for adjacent municipalities.

Typically, vehicle and traffic violations are the most numerous cases heard in a justice court, followed by penal law cases. Caseload data show that in 2010-2011, vehicle and traffic cases comprised nearly 77% of the overall court activity in the Towns of Edwards, Hermon, and Russell. Case distribution is largely a function of municipal characteristics, dependent on such things as population density, roadway design and function, and commercial concentrations. Justice courts interact regularly, at times on a daily basis, with county officials, including the district attorney, conflict defender, probation department, sheriff's department, and the public defender's office, and with a variety of service providers. Justice court cases have different levels of complexity and county involvement, and accordingly require varying amounts of court time and resources. Justices report that a fully adjudicated penal case can easily absorb 3-4 times as many work hours as a traffic case.¹

Justice Court Finance and Governance

Local justice courts are entities of their sponsoring municipalities, which are responsible for funding the courts, providing adequate facilities, and staffing them. Local justices are elected by

¹ Justice Most Local. The Special Commission on the Future of the NYS Courts, 2008.

the voters of the town or village in which they reside. In addition, the sponsoring locality has responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of court financial records. This leaves justice courts functionally independent from the State, even though Office of Court Administration (OCA) exercises oversight responsibility over judicial matters.

Funding and oversight of justice courts are dispersed among state authorities and local governments. While municipalities have chief funding responsibility for the courts, the Legislature provides resources through the Justice Court Assistance Program (JCAP) under OCA. OCA also provides security and facility consultations, and periodically audits justice courts. The Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) also audits justice courts, and its Justice Court Fund (JCF) collects case data and financial information each month. The Commission on Judicial Conduct (CJC) investigates alleged judicial impropriety, but is not a proactive body like OCA and OSC.

Governing boards are required to audit justice courts on an annual basis or outsource a private audit. Officials may request information on financial matters and caseload at any time they wish. OSC has repeatedly urged local governing board members across New York State to more actively oversee their justice courts, citing frequent audit findings of financial mismanagement and weak internal controls.

Governing boards provide and maintain justice court facilities and decide on staffing levels and compensation (however, towns are statutorily required to have two justices, unless they follow procedures for increasing or decreasing justice levels). And while the state does provide a variety of supports to justice courts through OCA, it does not set minimum standards on compensation, facilities, security, or general administration. Governing boards may also set court hours of operation, but those decisions are often left to the justices. The constitutional and statutory laws governing justice courts, and court consolidation, can be found in **Appendix A**.

Changes in the Justice Court System

Justice courts work in a system that is constantly in flux. The use of technology in the courts is widespread, thanks to court reform efforts carried out by OCA. These efforts have made the work easier but also introduce new processes and skill sets into court operations. Reporting requirements are frequently increased or amended, and fee schedules revised. But perhaps the most constant source of change has been introduced through changes in the statutes and rules that the courts enforce.

Shifts in state policies and rules generally introduce new procedures into the justice courts, and sometimes create unintended policy problems for municipalities (and the state). While the State Legislature and OCA have worked to avoid unfunded mandates and the imposition of minimum requirements, a number of recent changes have resulted in new administrative work for the

justice courts and new costs.² Two significant examples of such change illustrate how state policy changes impact local court process and workload, sometimes leading to unintended consequences: 1) rulemaking changes in vehicle and traffic law, and 2) more stringent penalties for misdemeanor DWI offenses.

In late 2006, the New York State Police began enforcing an agency rule in some regions of the state preventing state troopers from negotiating plea bargains on tickets they have issued. The stated reasons for the ban were to avoid actions that dilute deterrence around traffic safety and an ethical dilemma for troopers as enforcers of state law. When tickets are reduced, the charged offenses disappear from the driving record of the defendant, and the fines for the lesser charges accrue to municipalities rather than the state. In some instances this action has produced a net financial gain for municipalities and a net loss in income for the state. Justice courts, and their sponsoring municipalities, have adopted a number of responses. In some cases, local officials have hired a special prosecutor to handle the cases previously handled by state or local police, in other cases the District Attorney has assumed responsibility. Many local officials see this as an unfunded mandate for municipalities. Some observers fear that municipalities may put pressure on special prosecutors to pursue charge reductions that will bring income to municipalities, potentially compromising fairness and judicial independence. The reduction of charges may also compromise public safety by reducing the costs (fines, insurance) associated with breaking the law and speeding, and reducing a judge's ability to detect patterns of risky behavior.

With the passage of Leandra's Law in 2009, the sanctions associated with DWI misdemeanor convictions have grown more stringent. Justice courts are now responsible for ensuring that those convicted of DWI misdemeanor offenses install ignition interlock systems, which test a driver's blood alcohol content before a vehicle can be started. Justice courts must also handle paperwork offenders submit to receive a waiver on paying for the interlock systems, and determine if offenders are eligible for a financial waiver, given that the state has set only vague guidelines.

These examples represent only a few of the policy and administrative changes that have demonstrably affected justice courts. They serve as a reminder that the burdens on justice courts continue to grow, and must be factored into restructuring decisions.

² Statutory changes to the handling of vehicle and traffic violations have also introduced new processes and administrative work for the courts. The State Legislature required that justice courts schedule pre-trial conferences as the first step in adjudicating tickets. Prior to this, courts were able to schedule defendants for a trial only. If a resolution cannot be found, a court date is then set, resulting in more time and costs not only for the court, but also defendants. Some justice courts have scheduled trials immediately after the pre-trial conference if an agreement is not reached in the pre-trial phase. Given that justice courts primarily adjudicate vehicle and traffic cases, the cost of this statutory change has been considerable.

II. Court Operations Review

Municipal Characteristics

The Towns of Edwards, Hermon, and Russell are located in St. Lawrence County New York, just south of the county seat in Canton. According to the 2010 Census, the Towns of Edwards and Hermon have similar population sizes, with the Town of Russell being slightly larger in population and land area. In terms of population density, all three towns are similar at about twenty persons per square mile. As illustrated in **Table 1**, the median household income of the Towns of Edwards and Hermon is about the same, at \$45,625 and \$46,250 respectively, with the Town of Russell being slightly lower at \$42,679.

Table 1: Municipal Characteristics Summary

Municipal Indicators	Town of Edwards	Town of Hermon	Town of Russell
Total Population (2010 Census)	1,156	1,108	1,856
Land Area (square miles)	50.5	53.2	96.7
Population Density	22.89	20.83	19.19
Median Household Income	\$45,625	\$46,250	\$42,679
Justice Court Staff			
Justices (part-time)	2	1	1
Court Clerks (part-time)		1	1

Source: US Census 2010, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, NYS Comptroller, Level 1 Data, FY 2010 and 2011.

Court Operations Overview

Court Personnel

As illustrated in **Table 1**, the Town of Edwards has two (2) part-time justices, but no court clerk. Both justices were elected in 2011 and their term expires on December 31, 2015. The Town of Hermon and the Town of Russell have one (1) part-time justice and one (1) part-time court clerk each. The Hermon justice was also elected in 2011 and his term expires on December 31, 2015. The Town of Russell justice was elected in 2009, and is up for re-election in November 2013.

According to the Report on the Justice Court Fund, “state law generally requires each town in New York State to have two justices and allows each village up to two. However, a town may, by resolution subject to permissive referendum, reduce the number of justices to one, and

villages with only one justice are required also to have an additional “acting” justice who will serve when requested by the village justice, or in the absence or inability of the village.”³ Elected locally, town justices do not need any specific legal degree or background, and are not required to have any formal legal training before running for office. Prior to taking the bench, newly elected non-attorney justices are required by law to successfully complete a basic training program, which is provided by the NYS Office of Court Administration (OCA). Each municipality fixes its court’s hours, personnel practices, facilities protocols, security apparatus and operational procedures.

The core function of the justices is to conduct arraignments and other proceedings, preside over and render decisions under penal, vehicle and traffic (V&T), civil and other laws. Accordingly, justices are present primarily for actual court sessions outside of normal business hours, but may also conduct legal research outside of court session. Local justices may structure their court nights, with some reserving different court nights for different types of cases as they see fit. Justices also conduct arraignments and preliminary hearings for felony offenses which are then referred to a superior court. Justices are allowed to conduct arraignments countywide for felony charges, and for neighboring municipalities on lesser offenses. Justices also have the power to issue bench warrants and orders of protection, and to grant motions.

Key Issues

- *More consistently available court clerks with regular office hours would improve court effectiveness and improve the effectiveness of County staff serving the justice courts.*
- *Supporting and enhancing training opportunities for justices and court clerks as well as facilitating more open information exchange on legal best practices among all players is in the best interests of justice for local citizens and for improving the cost effectiveness of the local justice courts.*

As shown in **Table 1** the Town of Edwards has no court clerk, and the Towns Hermon and Russell have the equivalent of 1 full-time court clerk combined. Court clerks are responsible for a variety of critical, complex, and often stressful tasks. They have an integral role, accepting and processing case documents, providing information to citizens, managing court finances and preparing and submitting reports to OSC. The clerks also schedule court sessions, coordinate arrangements with anyone appearing in court (including pertinent local and county stakeholders), and manage and record court procedures. Court may also staff the court office for public access during the day, and are present at day and night court sessions. Justices in each town emphasized the importance of having sufficient support from a knowledgeable clerk. The record keeping duties of the courts increase every year, as do the coordinating tasks for appearances and court sessions.

³ Report on the Justice Court Fund. Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, 2010.

Court Schedules

The Town of Edwards justice court is held every Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM; the Town of Hermon justice court is held on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 5:30 PM; and the Town of Russell justice court is also held on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 PM. While the towns of Hermon and Russell have recently changed their court schedule to save time for county personnel, overlapping or conflicting justice court schedules in the county at large continue to place operational burdens on county public defenders, conflict defenders, prosecutors and law enforcement agencies that must transport prisoners and otherwise provide staff to the other 32 town, village and city courts in St. Lawrence County. For the 2013 calendar year, the court schedule for these three municipalities alone is equal to seventy two (72) court nights (excluding holidays). Conflicting court schedules in a single county directly impact essential public services as well as county and local budgets. The situation can result in delays, potentially adding costs for counsel to defendants and adding administrative chores to the courts. As caseloads continue to rise, scheduling conflicts can be expected to constrain these already limited court-related resources.

Court Locations

As illustrated on the **Project Location Map**, the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell justice courts are located within close proximity to one another. The round trip distance between Hermon and Edwards is 22.8 miles, the round trip distance between Edwards and Russell is 18.4 miles, and the round trip distance between Hermon and Russell is 10.4 miles. The average round trip distance between the three towns is 17.4 miles, with an average round trip travel time of approximately 30 minutes. The round trip distance between the local courts and Canton is as follows: Edwards (46 miles), Hermon (24 miles), Russell (26 miles). **See Map 1: Project Location Map and Map 2 Aerial Map.**

Geographic proximity is an important factor when considering consolidation. The proximity of facilities provides an opportunity for sharing existing facilities, as well as opportunities for better coordination and communication. In less densely populated regions like St. Lawrence County, where distances to county court facilities may be significant, and effective public transportation is lacking, access to a local court in town can considerably improve access to justice and reduce litigant cost in terms of time and money. In contrast, “when two or three courts are located within a few miles of one another, significant unnecessary costs are imposed on a variety of government agencies, which results in not only higher local taxes, but in increased county and state tax burdens as well.” Municipal costs related to operating duplicative justice court facilities,

judicial and non-judicial salaries, security arrangements and all of the other less apparent costs are also felt by county and state agencies.⁴

In rural St. Lawrence County, where district attorneys and public defenders have just a few attorneys assigned to cover the justice courts across a large region, such personnel are sometimes unavailable during the times set aside for criminal cases, leading to potentially long delays in case resolution. Similarly, the county sheriff's office is required to devote personnel, vehicles and other resources to transport defendants to justice courts dispersed throughout the county on multiple court nights throughout the week. This practice not only leads to a high cost to all county taxpayers, but when law-enforcement resources are tied up in court, they are unavailable to perform duties relating to public safety and crime prevention.

Local Views on Justice Court Restructuring Options

Elected officials in the towns, and a justice from each court, were asked their views on options for sharing services across the justice courts or restructuring operations in some way. In summary, there was a clear consensus among those interviewed in both Russell and Edwards that there is no critical need or priority to change the status quo in terms of daily operations; however, both communities recognize that their facilities are in need of improvements to meet minimal standards of access and basic security safeguards for handling serious felonies, domestic violence cases, and other crimes that often involve highly emotional matters (see **Appendix B: Best Practices for Justice Court Security**). The Town of Hermon has an immediate pressing need to find a new alternative for their court facility. Hermon has received a \$30,000 JCAP grant to address their own local needs for an improved court facility to support core judicial activities.

There was a clear consensus among those interviewed that there is a need for more consistently available court clerks, but most believe that the current environment, with three separate courts and strained budget resources, limits this option. The local justices observed that a shared facility might make it easier to share staff and equipment so that each court could have more hours of clerical support and improved efficiency. While there is reservation about the cost and tax burden associated with a single new or renovated facility, there is recognition that in the long run a joint investment could benefit the county as a whole. The local representatives also recognize that co-location may be a preferred option to three (3) new or expensively renovated court facilities that may be required by future state-determined building specifications and mandates. Town representatives would like to see a cost savings or cost neutral option to avoid raising property taxes and still meet the service needs of residents. This scenario is explored further in **Section V** (see **Appendix C: Summary of the Town Key Personnel Interviews** for more details).

⁴ Justice Most Local. The Special Commission on the Future of the NYS Courts, 2008.

Interviews were also conducted with seven county professionals whose departments regularly serve in justice courts. As previously discussed, since a number of county offices have significant expenses related to staff time and travel to service the local courts, the county has a vested interest in justice court restructuring options that will produce efficiencies and cost savings for all county tax payers (see **Appendix C: Summary of the County Key Personnel Interviews** for more details). There was a clear consensus among those interviewed that the following options would benefit the county:

- Holding court for the three (or more) towns at a single facility on the same day/night.
- Improved court facilities with adequate space for attorney conferences and attorney/client consultation and other general court safety and security enhancements.
- Knowledgeable and available court clerks that have regular (day time, but not necessarily full time) office hours would improve court effectiveness of county staff serving in local courts.
- Improved management practices and technology that would enhance county resources and improve court service, i.e., video conferencing for inmates from the county jail to reduce the cost of inmate transport, mail and email plea agreements, improved court docket management, with for example, a more specific court calendar of activities, specific tracking dates for cases, adjournment to specific dates, etc. Where knowledge and management are better, the cost to the county in serving these courts is lower and justice is better served for all citizens.

III. Fiscal Conditions

Justice Court Costs

Local Cost

In order to illustrate the existing fiscal condition of operating the justice courts in Edwards, Hermon and Russell, budgetary fiscal data was collected over three separate years to rule out inadvertently selecting a single atypical year. There are two data sources that can be used to make these calculations, fiscal reports provided by the Office of the State Comptroller, and budgetary information supplied by each town. The use of expenditure and revenue information from local budget documents permits examination of more detail level information than is provided by the OSC's standard reporting formats for year end reporting of revenues and expenditures. For example, the OSC data are limited to three categories of information: personal services, equipment and capital outlays, and contract expenditures, and do not contain fringe benefit information or facility costs. While year end actual revenue and expenditure data often differ from budget figures, the difference would not lead to material differences in the calculations, results or findings provided in this report.

The justice courts involve direct costs for court personnel. **Table 2** below includes annual direct court costs for each of the study towns for the 2011, 2012, and 2013 budget years. Direct costs for each of the three towns have grown over the three budget years. While the Town of Hermon's total direct costs have grown the most substantially over the three years, it remains the lowest of the three towns. Adjusting the total direct costs by justice court revenues, the Town of Edward's justice court has the lowest impact on the town budget, projecting the collection of almost \$10,000 dollars in excess of costs in the 2013 budget year. The Town of Russell also has a limited overall budget impact after adjusting for court revenues, with only \$1,546 of court costs in excess of court revenues.

The final three columns of **Table 2** convert annual court costs for 2011, 2012 and 2013 to per capita costs. In 2013 these costs or net expenses vary from \$12.64 per capita in Hermon to \$0.83 in Russell and a net revenue of \$8.17 per capita in Edwards.

Table 2: Budgeted Costs for Justice Courts

Budget Account Description	Account Code	Year			Per Capita		
		2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Town of Edwards							
Salaries	A1110.1	\$13,673	\$14,357	\$14,357			
Contractual	A1110.4	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,200			
Sub-Total Direct Costs	A1110.0	\$16,173	\$17,357	\$17,557			
Local Court Revenues	A2610	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$27,000			
Direct Costs less Court Revenues		\$6,173	\$6,357	-\$9,443	\$5.34	\$5.50	(\$8.17)
Town of Hermon							
Justice	A1110.1	\$7,100	\$7,100	\$7,400			
Justice Clerk	A1110.1	-	-	\$3,600			
Equipment	A1110.2	\$2,200	\$3,200	\$5,500			
Sub-Total Direct Costs		\$9,300	\$10,300	\$16,500			
Local Court Revenues	A2610	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500			
Direct Costs less Court Revenues		\$6,800	\$7,800	\$14,000	\$6.14	\$7.04	\$12.64
Town of Russell							
Personal Services: Justice	A1110.1	\$9,350	\$9,490	\$9,680			
Justice Clerk	A1110.1	\$4,780	\$4,852	\$5,095			
Contractual Expense:	A1110.4	\$2,522	\$2,472	\$4,052			
Sub-Total Direct Costs	A1110.0	\$16,652	\$16,814	\$18,827			
Retirement Contributions		\$1,583	\$2,237	\$2,719			
Tier 3&4 rate (age based plans)		11.2%	15.6%	18.4%			
Sub-Total With Retirement		\$18,235	\$19,051	\$21,546			
Local Court Revenues		\$17,723	\$20,000	\$20,000			
Direct Costs less Court Revenues		\$512	-\$949	\$1,546	\$0.28	(\$0.51)	\$0.83
Grand Total Operating Costs less Revenues for 3 Town Courts							
		\$13,485	\$13,208	\$6,103			
3 Year Average of Total Cost				\$10,932			

Source: Budgetary figures in this table were taken from the annual budgets for the three towns for consistency purposes.

The justice courts also incur indirect costs for providing court space, insurance, etc. **Table 3** shows the indirect costs related to justice court facilities for 2011-2013. Only a portion of these costs would accrue to court management; however, since each of the justice courts share space with other municipal functions, it is difficult to assess facility costs by user.

Table 3: Indirect Costs Related to Justice Court Facilities

	Account Code	2011	2012	2013
Town of Edwards				
Buildings	A1620.0	NA	\$18,250	\$18,250
Special Items:	A1910.4	NA	\$25,000	\$30,000
Town of Hermon				
Buildings	A1620.4	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500
Unallocated Insurance	A1910.4	\$19,000	\$20,250	\$20,250
Town of Russell				
Operation of Buildings	A1620.0	\$38,120	\$103,239	\$44,222
Unallocated Insurance	A1910.4	\$31,040	\$27,000	\$28,200
Total		\$93,660	\$199,239	\$146,422

Source: Budgetary figures in this table were taken from annual budgets for the three towns.

County Costs

Table 4 summarizes county spending to service the three town justice courts. The estimates of county cost were developed from information obtained in key personnel interviews, county budget data, and the Office of the Public Defender's 2011 Annual Report. The total costs for county agencies (adjusted for departmental revenues) to support local justice courts in 2011 is \$26,130. This figure almost double the 2011 combined direct costs of the three town courts (after adjustment for town court revenues) of \$13,485.

Table 4: County Costs to Support the Justice Courts in the Three Study Towns

Department	2011 Budgeted		County Cost	Annual Costs for 3 Study Towns
	Total Spending	Department Revenues		
Sheriff ¹			\$927	\$2,427
Probation ²	\$3,399,050	(\$653,207)	\$2,745,844	\$500
District Attorney ³	\$1,445,723	(\$336,326)	\$1,109,397	\$8,745
Indigent Defense ⁴				
Public Defender	\$892,486	(\$3,162)	\$889,324	\$7,286
Conflict Defender	\$528,456	(\$810)	\$527,646	\$4,159
Assigned Counsel	\$714,855	(\$332,748)	\$382,107	\$3,012
Total	\$2,135,797	(\$336,720)	\$1,799,077	
Total County Costs for 3 Towns				\$26,130

Notes:

1. Sheriff: “County Cost” figures are for 2012 and based on departmental records of transports to the three towns and calculation of per trip costs based on personnel and vehicle transport costs and personnel communication with the sheriff on total costs (reported figure is a very conservative estimate of annual prisoner transport costs).

2. Probation: County costs are an estimate provided by the Probation Director, irrespective of case load.

3. District Attorney: Percent (0.8%) established by Public Defender annual report (see below) was applied to “County Cost” for District Attorney. (See indigent defense below)

4. Indigent Defense: The Public Defender’s 2011 Annual Report calculated the costs for service all municipal courts in the county. The total for the three study towns was used in Column 4. For Public Defender costs, this total was used to calculate the percent (0.8%) of total public defender costs used to support the three study courts. This percent was used to develop an estimate for Conflict Defender, Assigned Counsel and the District Attorney’s costs in the three study towns for 2011.

Sources: 2011 budgeted figures taken from County Multiyear Budget Summary on St. Lawrence County web site).

Caseload Comparison

Table 5 presents a summary of the justice court caseload data for 2010 and 2011 which were taken from records provided by the New York State Office of Court Administration and are derived from reporting filed by the three local courts. The cases are divided into the following types:

- Vehicle and Traffic Law (V&T)
- Penal Law (PL)
- Civil Law (Civil)
- Environmental Conservation Law (ECL)
- Other (includes a variety of additional types of cases that come before the court in limited numbers)

Some of these cases include individuals that have had multiple charges brought against them; therefore, this is the aggregate number of charges/suits, not the number of individuals that cases have been brought against. Thus the use of the term “case” below may over state the number of cases and understate the cost per case in comparison with data that permitted the aggregation of those instances where a single case before the court reflected multiple charges. As a consequence, for the sake of clarity, charges are sometimes referred to as cases in the summary and analysis below.

In each of the three study towns, over 75% of the case load is in the Vehicle and Traffic category. Penal Law cases comprised the next largest category in all three towns with between 10 and 15% of all cases, followed by Civil and Environmental Conservation Law cases which combined represent 5% or less of all cases in each the three towns. The relative percentage of cases by category in **Table 5** is fairly typical for town justice courts. While there are significantly

fewer Penal Law cases than Vehicle and Traffic cases, penal cases can consume proportionately more court resources. According to a comprehensive study of New York State Town and Village Justice Courts, penal cases absorb 3-4 times as much staff effort as vehicle and traffic cases.⁵

It is important to note some of the inherent variation represented by the case load data. For example, some of these cases are tried “in-house,” some are dismissed, and others are transferred to or arraigned for other judicial venues for actual adjudication. The dismissals, transfers and arraignments no doubt take less processing time and administrative resources, but are nonetheless handled by the reporting courts to some degree and represent some measure of workload. However, because the data were provided by OSC in a manner that made data coding, filtering and manipulation impractical, entailing manual counting, these details are not assessed.

Additionally, the coding scheme does not indicate, when applicable, if the case included a charge(s) that was a violation, misdemeanor, or felony. To do so would require a prohibitive degree of legal research, and coding.

Table 5: Court Case Loads for the Three Study Town by Type of Case

Cases by Type	2010	2011	Percent
Town of Edwards			
Vehicle and Traffic	358	300	81%
Penal	40	57	15%
Civil	8	4	1%
Environmental Conservation	3	1	0%
Other *	15	9	2%
Total	424	371	100%
Town of Herman			
Vehicle and Traffic	165	184	63%
Penal	36	72	25%
Civil	5	4	1%
Environmental Conservation	12	21	7%
Other *	4	11	4%
Total	222	292	100%
Town of Russell			
Vehicle and Traffic	417	326	85%
Penal	23	38	10%
Civil	2	7	2%

⁵ Justice Most Local. The Special Commission on the Future of the NYS Courts, 2008.

Cases by Type	2010	2011	Percent
Environmental Conservation	28	12	3%
Other *	6	0	0%
Total	476	383	100%
Combined Three Town Total			
Vehicle and Traffic	940	810	77%
Penal	99	167	16%
Civil	15	15	1%
Environmental Conservation	43	34	3%
Other *	25	20	2%
Total	1,122	1,046	100%
Notes: The “other” category includes a variety of additional types of cases that come before the court in limited numbers.			

Source: New York State Office of Court Administration

Cost per Case

Table 6 illustrates the local cost in relation to caseload. As previously noted, some types of cases tend to use more court resources than others. For example, some justices note that prosecuting criminal cases and some vehicle and traffic cases has become more complex over time as statutes and procedures change. As a result, the amount of time that the justices invest in preparing for these cases varies substantially. This kind of detailed information on the variable amount of resources for different cases is not available for this study; therefore, total costs are divided by the number of cases to determine simple average costs per case. This comparative data is provided with the understanding that it does not necessarily give a comparative measure of cost efficiency for the three courts, but it does provide one more metric for comparing the three courts and their financial operation.

For 2011, the three towns had over eleven hundred cases combined, with the Town of Hermon handling roughly half as many cases as Russell and Edwards. The Town of Hermon had the highest average cost per case followed by Edwards and Russell. It is assumed that the growth of court revenues relative to court costs for Russell and Edwards could lead to a decrease in average cost per case in 2012 and 2013, but at the present time, case load data for these budget years is unavailable.

Table 6: Three Town Court Costs, Total Cases and Cost per Case for 2011

	Town of Edwards	Town of Hermon	Town of Russell	Combined
Total Court Costs	\$16,173	\$9,300	\$18,235	\$43,708
Total Cases	424	222	476	1,122
Average Cost Per Case	\$38	\$42	\$38	\$39
Court Revenues	\$10,000	\$ 2,500	\$17,723	\$30,223
Net Court Costs	\$6,173	\$6,800	\$512	\$13,485
Average Net Cost Per Case	\$15	\$31	\$ 1	\$ 12

Similar average costs per case have been calculated for other court studies in other parts of New York State; unfortunately, there are no studies of towns with comparable population size range to the towns in this study. Previous studies involved either much smaller towns or much larger suburban towns. In addition, the average cost per case in these previous studies was based on total court costs (not total costs less court revenues). For comparison purposes, the Ulster County Shared Municipal Services Study on Justice Courts showed a broad range of average justice court costs from a low of \$22 per case in a larger suburban town with population of over 11,000 to a high of \$285 per case in very rural town with a population of around 500 persons⁶. It is important to recognize that the Ulster County study used 2008 cost and caseload data, a three year difference when comparing average cost per case figures to the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell. However, despite the time lag, the average cost per case for the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell are in the lower end of the range observed in the comparable justice court study.

⁶ Ulster County Shared Municipal Services Study on Justice Courts. Intergovernmental Studies Program Rockefeller College, 2010.

IV. Court Facilities Assessment

Methodology

As a part of the inventory of existing justice court services, a NYS Licensed Architect was given a guided tour of the existing court facilities of the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell. The overall purpose of the facility tours was to get a general impression of each facility's current condition, potential lifespan, capacity, safety needs, and expansion opportunities. Each facility was photographed and a preliminary conditions analysis was prepared (see **Appendix D: Building/Site Assessment Checklist**). The results led to the identification of facility needs and an estimated budget for rehabilitation and/or expansion of each existing facility. The key facility issues and observations identified are based upon consistency with the Building Code of New York State and all of its internal references to the Uniform Fire, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical and Life Safety Codes, including the accessibility requirements of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as the best practices for justice court security recommended by the Office of Court Administration.⁷

Key Facility Issues

- *The following apply to each of the three of the existing justice court facilities in varying degrees:*
 - *Lack sufficient area to adequately house all court functions/activities.*
 - *General Building and Fire Code (fire ratings, mechanical/electrical, and alarm systems) issues.*
 - *Deficient file storage and crowded office space.*
 - *Handicap accessibility issues and lack of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act in varying degrees.*
 - *Separation of public, municipal, and police activities.*
 - *Security and safety issues for staff and public, i.e., raised bench for the Justice, rails separating defendants from court staff or juries, presence of courtroom furniture is moveable and capable of being used as a weapon by an irate defendant.*
 - *Lack of private phone lines and sound-proof meeting space for Justice, attorney client conferences, and jury deliberations.*

⁷ Action Plan for the Justice Courts, State of New York Unified Court System, 2006

Facility Observations

The following general observations were made during the guided tours of existing justice court facilities.

Town of Edwards

- The existing justice court facilities are in reasonable condition but lack sufficient space for court functions, security, privacy, and storage. Accessibility (external and internal) is reasonable in its current condition.
- The ability to expand the current space to meet court standards is significantly limited internally (unless other Town functions are relocated) and/or externally (due to lack of sufficient perimeter site area).
- There appears to be sufficient parking space available both on-site and on the street to handle justice court operations.
- The existing justice court facilities lack sufficient space or location to handle the security needs of both court and law enforcement personnel.

Town of Hermon

- The existing facility (approx. 600 sf) is totally inadequate in size to conduct justice court operations (i.e., judicial operations, security, privacy, mechanical/electrical infrastructure).
- General Building and Fire Code (fire ratings, exiting systems, and alarm systems), security (staff and public), and accessibility issues are prevalent throughout the structure.
- The expansion space needed to accommodate solutions to the various deficiencies would have to be provided internally (since a building addition is not feasible). Such an expansion would displace all or most of the current Highway Department's area in the facility. If deemed appropriate, the Highway Department operations could move to the alternate location instead of the court operations; however, there is no indication of local support for such action.
- An alternate justice court location has been identified across the street in a building currently owned by the Town. There appears to be sufficient space within this facility to accommodate all court functions if sufficient budget for the required improvements is provided. The Town has received grant funding and is in the process of developing building improvement plans for the relocation of court operations.

Town of Russell

- There is sufficient space within the existing building to handle justice court operations, but improvements need to be implemented to bring the facility into compliance with the Building Code and OCA standards. The US Post Office is located immediately adjacent to the court/meeting room and could provide valuable space to accommodate the justice court's physical and security needs if it relocated however, there is no indication of local support for such action.
- Public access to the justice court is reasonable but some improvements would be needed to comply with building codes (slope, material, location and number of accessible parking spaces, and building access).
- Private access is also reasonable but improvements in this system are also recommended to improve accessibility and security for court and law enforcement officials.
- If exterior expansion is required, the building is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places making exterior additions challenging, although sufficient site area exists.
- The Town owns a single story structure across the street from this building, and currently rents the space as a medical clinic. The Town has identified this structure as having potential for a consolidated court facility in the future. From the exterior, there appears to be sufficient land area, building size and accessibility to accommodate a consolidated court location. A building assessment was not prepared for this structure.

Suggested Improvements to Existing Facilities

As a part of the court facility assessment, a NYS Licensed Architect developed preliminary cost estimates for rehabilitation and/or expansion of each existing facility. Keep in mind, the following tables illustrate estimates for future improvements that assume each municipality will maintain the status quo and continue to operate their justice courts independently without consolidation or changes in court operating procedures. The budget information presented in these tables is based on the cost of renovating existing space to comply with current building codes and regulations, as well as the best practices for justice court security recommended by the Office of Court Administration as well as professional application of other guidelines and

recommendations found within other pertinent resources (see **Appendix B and G**).⁸ The information presented in **Tables 7-11** is for illustrative purposes only.

Town of Edwards

Table 7 provides an estimate for future improvements to the Town of Edwards justice court facility. To maintain the status quo of court operations, it is estimated that the Town of Edwards would need to invest approximately \$23,780 for necessary facility upgrades (see **Table 7**). This estimate reflects improvements to existing space only. Improvements identified will enhance the facility, but will not necessarily bring the existing court facility in line with best practices, since in order to do so would require additional space. **Table 8** shows an estimate for additional facility renovation needs which can only be accommodated through facility expansion into adjacent space which is currently used for other municipal purposes. It is estimated that such facility expansion will cost approximately \$118,900. Please note, the estimate is for illustrative purposes and is built upon the assumption that the Edwards justice court cannot be upgraded to best practices without building expansion. It is assumed that it is possible to capture adjacent square footage that is currently occupied by the Historical Society. This concept is for discussion purposes only, and there is no indication of local support for this action.

Town of Hermon

As previously mentioned, the existing court facility of the Town of Hermon is totally inadequate in size to conduct justice court operations. It has been determined that investing funds into the existing Town Hall for the purposes of expanding the space for court operations is not an option. The Town has identified an alternate justice court location across the street from Town Hall within the old Hermon fire house on Church Street. At approximately 4,000 square feet, there appears to be more than enough space within this building to accommodate all court functions. As illustrated in **Table 9**, the Town of Hermon would need to invest approximately \$315,208 for necessary improvements to the old fire house to convert the building to a justice court facility and bring the facility in line with best practices.

Town of Russell

Table 10 provides an estimate for future improvements to the Town of Russell justice court facility. To maintain the status quo of court operations, it is estimated that the Town of Russell would need to invest approximately \$28,130 for necessary facility upgrades (see **Table 10**). This estimate reflects improvements to existing space only. Improvements identified will enhance the facility, but will not necessarily bring the existing court facility in line with best practices. Similar to the Town of Edwards court facility, in order to bring the facility up to par with best

⁸ Action Plan for the Justice Courts, State of New York Unified Court System, 2006

practices, additional space would be necessary. **Table 11** shows an estimate for additional facility renovation needs which can only be accommodated through facility expansion into the adjacent occupied space, should the Post Office be relocated in the future. Such facility expansion will cost an estimated \$89,538. Again, this estimate is for illustrative purposes. It is built upon the assumption that building expansion is necessary and in the future, it may be possible to capture adjacent square footage that is currently occupied by the Post Office. This concept is for discussion purposes only, and there is no indication of local support for this action.

Table 7: Town of Edwards Facility Renovation Estimate

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	UNITS	Notes	
COURTROOM		Provide new bench fixed seating units, IT and surveillance capabilities.		LS	Seating capacity of 20 is anticipated. (4-5person benches)	\$6,000
JUDGES CHAMBERS		Improve IT and surveillance capability		LS	Improve connectivity and add camera	\$2,000
COURT CLERK		Improve IT and surveillance capability		LS	Improve connectivity (included in Judge's estimate since same space)	\$0
CONF/CONSULTATION		No work anticipated; present facilities to be used as is.		NA		\$0
HOLDING ROOM		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
LOBBY/ENTRY		No Lobby exists. Improve surveillance capability of Main entry		LS	Improve interior and exterior surveillance with (2) cameras	\$3,000
RESTROOMS		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
RECORDS STORAGE		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
MECH/ELEC/DATA		Provide upgrade of emerg. lighting/alarm, and IT system		LS	Emergency lighting.; server and software for cameras	\$5,400
SITE		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
		Public and Court Personnel parking is adequate				
Contingency (25%) + Soft Costs (20%):						\$7,380
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):						ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS: \$23,780

Table 8: Town of Edwards Facility Renovation Estimate – Option 2

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	UNITS	Notes	
COURTROOM		Provide jury box, jury deliberation, and fixed seating units			Capture adjacent space to provide; relocate other municipal services	\$30,000
JUDGES CHAMBERS		Provide separate & secure access; separate Clerk and Judge			Capture adjacent space to provide	\$20,000
COURT CLERK		Provide separate & secure access; separate Clerk and Judge			Provide separate access for Public (incl. in above)	\$0
CONF/CONSULTATION		Provide separate, secure and acoustically private consult. Room			Capture adjacent space to provide	\$7,500
HOLDING ROOM		Provide secure holding room and secure access			Capture adjacent space to provide	\$0
LOBBY/ENTRY		Provide covered public entry and H/C access				\$20,000
RESTROOMS		No work anticipated at this time			Should provide separate Court Staff restroom facilities	\$0
RECORDS STORAGE		No work anticipated at this time				\$0
MECH/ELEC/DATA		Provide upgrade of emerg. lighting/alarm, and IT system				\$4,500
SITE		Provide separate and secure Judge/Law Enforcement access			Provide at rear of building (incl. in above)	\$0
		Public and court personnel parking is adequate				\$0
Contingency (25%) + Soft Costs (20%):						\$36,900
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):						ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS: \$118,900

Table 9: Town of Hermon Facility Renovation Estimate

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	UNITS	Notes	
COURTROOM		Provide new Courtroom/Town Meeting Room. Jury Box and Jury Deliberations	600	SF	(20) person; provide fixed seating units; dual use as Town Mtg. Rm.	
JUDGES CHAMBERS		Provide new Judges Chamber	192	SF	(12x16)	
COURT CLERK		Provide new Court Clerk office	150	SF	(12x12)	
CONF/CONSULTATION		Provide new Conf/Consultation room	200	SF	(14x14)	
HOLDING ROOM		Provide new Holding room	65	SF	(8x8)	
LOBBY		Provide new Lobby	200	SF	(12x18)	
RESTROOMS		Provide new (2) Public and (1) Court Staff Restrooms	300	SF	Public (10x12); Court (8x8)	
RECORDS STORAGE		Provide new Records Storage	160	SF	(10x16)	
MECH/ELEC/DATA		Provide new Mech/Elec/Data systems	140	SF	(10x14)	
BUILDING ENVELOPE		Provide new exterior finishes and new Entry		LS	Roofing/insulation; wall panels/insulation; new covered Entry	\$105,000
SITE		Provide new separate and secure Public/Court Staff access		LS		\$2,000
		Adequate parking area exists.				\$0
		New Building Area Required: 2,007			(\$55/SF estimated construction cost)	\$110,385
					Contingency (25%) + Soft Costs (20%):	\$97,823
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):						ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS: \$315,208

Table 10: Town of Russell Facility Renovation Estimate

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	UNITS	Notes	
COURTROOM		Provide new bench fixed seating units, IT and surveillance capabilities.		LS	Seating capacity of 30 is anticipated. (6-5person benches)	\$9,000
JUDGES CHAMBERS		Improve IT and surveillance capability		LS	Improve connectivity and add camera	\$2,000
COURT CLERK		Improve IT and surveillance capability		LS	Improve connectivity and general surveillance	\$0
CONF/CONSULTATION		No work anticipated; present facilities to be used as is.		NA		\$0
HOLDING ROOM		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
LOBBY		No Lobby exists. Improve surveillance capability of Main entry		LS	Improve interior and exterior surveillance with (2) cameras	\$3,000
RESTROOMS		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
RECORDS STORAGE		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
MECH/ELEC/DATA		Provide upgrade of emerg. lighting/alarm, and IT system		LS	Emergency lighting.; server and software for cameras	\$5,400
SITE		No work included at this time.		NA		\$0
		Public and Court Personnel parking is adequate				
					Contingency (25%) + Soft Costs (20%):	\$8,730
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):						ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS: \$28,130

Table 11: Town of Russell Facility Renovation Estimate – Option 2

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	UNITS	Notes	
COURTROOM		Provide jury box, jury deliberation, and fixed seating units			Room dually used as Town meeting space	\$6,500
JUDGES CHAMBERS		No work anticipated at this time			Assume adjacent Post Office will be relocated for additional area	\$0
COURT CLERK		Relocate Court Clerk to new office space	650		Renovate 25x26 PO space (\$45/SF)	\$29,250
CONF/CONSULTATION		Provide separate, secure and acoustically private consult. Room			Incl. in renovation above	\$0
HOLDING ROOM		Provide secure holding room and secure access			Incl. in renovation above	\$0
LOBBY		No work anticipated at this time				\$0
RESTROOMS		Provide (2) new public and (1) court staff restroom facilities	300		Public (10x12); Court (8x8); (\$75/SF)	\$22,500
RECORDS STORAGE		Provide new records storage space	140		(10x14)(\$25/SF)	\$3,500
MECH/ELEC/DATA		Provide upgrade of emerg. lighting/alarm, and IT system				\$0
SITE		Provide separate and secure Judge/Law Enforcement access				\$0
		Public and court personnel parking is adequate				\$0
					Contingency (25%) + Soft Costs (20%):	\$27,788
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):					ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS:	\$89,538

See **Appendix B**: Best Practices for Justice Court Security – excerpt from the Action Plan for Justice Courts.

See **Appendix G**: Resource List for Suggested Improvements to Existing Facilities and Renovation Cost Estimates.

V. Findings & Alternatives

Overview of Options and Alternatives

Municipalities have a variety of options available to share, restructure, or revise justice court services. Many of these options can be implemented with relative ease so long as all of the players are willing and have a vested interest in making changes. Other more comprehensive options are generally subject to both public and governing board vote, and/or require the approval of the State Legislature and the Governor. Recent examples show that the Legislature and the Governor are open to justice court restructuring designs not explicitly spelled out in state justice court consolidation laws, and therefore municipalities are encouraged to examine unique configurations of staffing and facilities. In this section, the following options and alternatives will be discussed:

- The null alternative
- Co-location of justice court facilities
- Regional justice court facilities co-location
- Shared court clerk
- Coordinated court scheduling
- Technological advancements
- Additional options for court restructuring

The Null Alternative

The purpose of this discussion is to establish a base line for comparison purposes to the other alternatives to providing justice court services in the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell. Regardless of any argument for necessary changes to the current system, a null alternative does not recommend any variations to the current system; all three justice courts would continue to provide court services separately and the county will continue to serve in justice courts and meet the calendars of each of the three individual courts.

Potential Benefits: The continuation of the status quo will keep local control of the provision of justice services in the hands of the Town Board and the elected Town Justice(s). The individual municipalities will continue to manage their own personnel and procurement policies, determine administrative programs, provide facilities, fix court hours, and generally govern day-to-day

court operations without needing to coordinate with other municipalities. The amount of time spent during each court session will vary only depending on the number of local cases, and the number and nature of offenses charged. The Town Board will have full control over local priorities for capital investments without the need to negotiate or coordinate with other neighboring municipalities and the local justice facilities will remain convenient to local residents.

Potential Drawbacks: While local control and accountability are important, there are many disadvantages associated with the current system. Presently, overlapping or conflicting justice court schedules place tremendous operational burdens on county public defenders, conflict defenders, prosecutors and law enforcement agencies that must transport prisoners and otherwise provide staff to these three, as well as the other 32 town, village and city courts in St. Lawrence County. Court schedules directly impact essential public services as well as county and local budgets. As caseloads continue to rise, scheduling conflicts can be expected to cause adjournments and delays, constraining these already limited court-related resources. The county has a vested interest in justice court restructuring options that will produce efficiencies and cost savings for all county tax payers. Increased coordination of local and county justice personnel will bring greater efficiencies to the county as a whole that are not based on local needs, or political boundaries, but on regional needs to balance budgets and limit tax increases. Maintaining the status quo will continue to lead to significant inefficiencies and current issues will remain unresolved. There will continue to be duplication in services, facilities, equipment and personnel. In the longer term, if court facilities are reviewed for their adequacy by state officials or necessitated by other interventions, each of the three courts could be in a position of providing needed improvements on an individual basis leading to much higher facility investments and costs than if a joint option pursued in the short or medium term.

Co-location of Justice Court Facilities

It is recommended that the towns consider co-locating their court operations into a single facility. The Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell justice courts are located within close geographic proximity to one another. Given this close proximity and the availability of well maintained state and county arterials, a centrally located consolidated court facility is feasible.

As previously discussed, as the study began, it was immediately clear that facility issues for the justice court in Hermon required immediate attention. Officials in the Towns of Edwards and Russell also expressed concerns about the conditions of their court facilities, noting code compliance, functionality, security, privacy and ADA accessibility issues that may need to be addressed in the future. In all three cases, the existing facilities are considered inadequate for one or more court activities; however, it is clear that the individual caseloads do not warrant the exclusive use of, or the individual local investment into a new or remodeled facility if there is

another option, making a shared facility feasible and appropriate. The investment required for each town can be lessened if made jointly. While not quantifiable at this point in time, it is possible to reduce other costs through shared operations and maintenance of the building.

In addition county departments that regularly serve in justice courts expressed an interest in court restructuring alternatives that will produce efficiencies and cost savings for all county tax payers. There was a clear consensus among county representatives that holding court for the three (or more) towns at a single facility on the same day/night would have greater efficiencies than the status quo. An improved court facility will also allow for adequate space for attorney conferences and attorney/client consultation and other general court safety and security enhancements, a positive improvement for all involved.

The distance between the three municipalities, and viability of connecting roadways, make this fully practicable from a logistical standpoint. A shared facility could alternate court sessions and hours, using the same rooms and equipment to process cases. Office and consultation space, as well as space for separate records storage should pose no practical impediment. The Town of Hermon has been awarded a Justice Court Assistance Program (JCAP) grant (\$30,000) for facility improvements, and under JCAP guidelines, Edwards and Russell are eligible to receive an equal amount and pool it with the JCAP funds already reserved in Hermon. Other significant grant opportunities for facility improvements may be available through the New York State Department of State under the Local Government Efficiency (LGE) Implementation Grant Program.

Facility Cost Comparison

Utilizing the estimated budgets for rehabilitation and/or expansion of each existing facility as a base line, a comparison of cost of individual facility upgrades versus the potential cost to construct a consolidated court facility can be developed. The cost comparison is built upon the assumption that the necessary improvements to existing facilities would not be deferred, regardless of current or future economic influences. This section outlines the estimated cost of building a new joint court facility, and the estimated cost of rehabilitating an existing building for shared court use. It is important to note that the cost estimates are preliminary in nature, performed for planning purposes to identify the potential cost savings through the co-location of justice courts.

While the construction of a new court facility may be a viable option in the future, in order to minimize initial capital investments and achieve the overall goal of cost savings, the consultant team recommends maximizing the use of existing facilities. The rehabilitation of existing facilities will be less expensive than constructing a new facility because it will allow for the efficient use of existing buildings and storage space. Important considerations include:

- Strategic location of the facility
- Ability to be adapted for accommodating additional services and equipment
- Capacity and capability to accommodate expanded office space, equipment storage, equipment maintenance, and materials storage;
- Adequate space for expansion both in terms of building size and lot size

As previously discussed, to maintain the status quo, it is projected that the Town of Edwards would need to invest an estimated \$23,780, the Town of Hermon would need to invest an estimated \$315,208, and the Town of Russell would need to invest an estimated \$28,130 for facility upgrades, a collective cost of \$367,118. **See Tables 7, 9 and 10.** Although these improvements will enhance the existing Edwards and Russell facilities, they will not bring the facilities in line with current best practices, guidelines and recommendations for court facility improvements (see **Appendix B and G**). In order to bring the facilities in line with best practices, the Towns of Edwards and Russell require building renovations and/or expansion. Based upon this assumption, it is estimated that the Town of Edwards would need to invest an additional \$95,120, and the Town of Russell would need to invest an additional \$61,408, raising the expected cost of rehabilitation to a collective cost of \$523,646. **See Tables 8, 9 and 11.**

Early in the planning process, the Town of Hermon informed the consultant team that it was seeking funding and developing a renovation plan for the town-owned old Hermon fire house located on Church and Main Streets in the Village of Hermon. The consultant team considered the potential rehabilitation of this town-owned, currently vacant building for a shared court facility for the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell. This 4,000 square foot building is strategically located within a 5 to 10 mile radius of the Towns of Edwards and Russell, as well as the county seat in the Village of Canton. **See Map 3: Distance Map.** With coordinated court day scheduling, this building has the capability to accommodate a shared court facility.

It is important to note that beyond the available existing floor area, the old Hermon fire house has potential for expansion. The existing yard area on the Church Street (west) side of the building, with limited setback requirements, will allow for an estimated 2,400 square foot (30x80) building expansion for additional lobby, office, façade or other necessary building improvements. If land acquisition is pursued, further building expansion opportunities are also possible on the south side of the building, into the privately owned yard space of the Community Bank, NA. In addition, there are five Village-owned parcels located within approximately 150 feet of the building on the corner of East Main and Church Streets that could potentially be used for a parking should the Town and Village of Hermon agree to terms of use of the lot and/or acquisition costs. **See Map 4: Aerial View of Proposed new Town of Hermon Justice Court.**

Facility Option 1: Rehabilitation of the old Hermon fire house to accommodate one 60-person capacity courtroom facility for shared court purposes will cost an estimated \$551,508. See **Table 12**. Compared to the cost of individual facility upgrades, rehabilitating the old Hermon fire house for joint use will cost an additional \$27,862. The cost of renovated space was budgeted at the anticipated cost of providing the necessary building system and fire/life safety code upgrades including the structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing system deficiencies of the existing structure. The subjective complexity of the renovation or upgrade required was also taken into account. Assumptions were made that the necessary infrastructure is readily available or easily accessible and that extensions or relatively simple conversions were possible. Historically, the smaller amount of space being renovated generally equates to a higher unit of cost due to the limited area available to amortize the total cost. Please note that these budget units reflect a competitive, public bidding process which would invoke Wickes Law and prevailing wage rates.

Facility Option 2: As shown in **Table 13**, if a new stand alone joint court facility were constructed with a 60 person capacity courtroom it would cost an estimated \$1,042,739. Compared to the cost of individual facility upgrades, it is estimated that building a new facility for joint use will cost an additional \$519,093. Given the cost and magnitude of new facility construction, modifying an existing building is a more feasible alternative. The square footage costs for new construction or additions were based on bid pricing obtained over the last five years from similar facilities that were constructed. Since a specific site has not been determined, assumptions were made that the necessary infrastructure is readily available or easily accessible and that extensions or relatively simple conversions were possible. The figures were crosschecked with Means Construction Data. Please note that these budget units reflect a competitive, public bidding process which would invoke Wickes Law and prevailing wage rates.

Facility Option 3: As shown in **Table 14**, if a new larger stand alone joint court facility were constructed with two separate courtrooms, one of 60 person capacity and one of 30 person capacity court it would cost an estimated \$1,557,699. Compared to the cost of individual facility upgrades, it is estimated that building a new 90 person capacity facility for joint use will cost an additional \$1,034,053. Again, given the cost and magnitude of new facility construction, modifying an existing building is a more feasible alternative.

Service Alternative 1: Adjacent town courts may share facilities without merging municipal identities and jurisdictions. According to Uniform Justice Court Act, Section 106, “a justice may hold court in one or more municipalities that form a contiguous geographic area, including in a town and one or more villages each of which is wholly or partly contained within such town, within the same county providing there is an agreement between such municipalities pursuant to Article 5-G of the General Municipal Law to hold all court proceedings in any of the such municipalities in a courtroom or other suitable facility open to the public” (see the Lewis County Case Study in **Appendix E**).

Service Alternative 2: According to New York State Town Law, Article 4, 60a (2), a town may, by resolution subject to permissive referendum, reduce the number of justices from two to one.⁹This alternative applies only to the Town of Edwards and the change could potentially save the Town of Edwards approximately \$7,179 per year.

Service Alternative 3: According to the Uniform Justice Court Act, Section 106-a, two or more towns that form a contiguous geographic area within the same county to establish a single justice court. The single town court would be composed of one justice elected from each town. The process to establish a single court may be initiated by petition of registered voters of each town or by resolution of the town boards. The remaining justice in each town shall have jurisdiction in each town to the same extent as if each such justice was elected in each town. Each justice must keep separate sets of records and dockets and maintain separate bank accounts, and retain their respective fine revenues for each town.¹⁰ The terms of these justices may not expire during the same year (see **Appendix A**).

Service Alternative 4: According to the Unified Justice Court Act, Section 106-b, adjacent towns may also choose to jointly elect a justice. The level of possible savings will depend on the choices made. The legal and political steps to achieve these options for court restructuring can be viewed in **Appendix A**. See also **Appendix E**.

Potential Benefits: A co-located court facility would be a means of improving the structural, compliance, and usability issues that plague the justice courts in their current locations. Investing in a shared facility that is in line with best practices will reduce the long-term liabilities associated with sub-standard court conditions (see **Appendix B** and **G**). The Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell understand that facility investments are imminent, and that it is possible that future improvements will be mandated by the State. A co-located facility will also improve county efficiencies. For example, co-location will allow for a single DA night per month, or at the very least a significant changes in the court calendar that would decrease the number of court sessions necessary for county personnel attendance leading to cost savings (logistics and travel) for county departments. Maintaining the status quo, or investing in facility improvements at each individual facility will not improve the functionality of the court system or lead to any countywide efficiencies or cost savings. Town officials expressed concern that citizens may be apprehensive about losing the community identity associated with the local justice court. A co-located facility may serve as an intermediate step toward integration between the courts. By approving and experiencing a co-located court first, citizens may grow comfortable with the

⁹ Report on the Justice Court Fund. Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability, 2010.

¹⁰ Cost-Saving Ideas: Justice Court Consolidation in Villages and Towns, Office of the State Comptroller

concept of integration with a neighboring court, enabling broader efficiencies, savings, and perhaps further professionalizing court business.

Potential Drawbacks: A shared court facility requires approval by all three boards and the board and electorate in each town. These actions may delay implementation. Citizens may also have difficulty adjusting to a new, more distant location, and may feel some loss of community identity. The costs of a shared facility would be slightly higher than providing enhanced court space separately. Unless significant grant funding is obtained, and/or other cost sharing scenarios are explored among the local governments and the county, actual cost savings could be viewed as marginal at the individual town level.

Table 12: Option 1: Estimated Budget to Rehabilitate an Existing Building for Shared Court Use

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	SF	Notes	
COURTROOM	1	(60) person capacity Courtroom	1,548	1,548	(30x32); 33sf/person; incl. Bench, Jury Box and seating	
JUDGES CHAMBERS	1	Separate/secure office space + separate Conf. Area	336	336	(12x14) Office; (12x14) Conf.	
COURT CLERK	1	Separate/secure space	150	150	(10x15)	
RECORDS STORAGE	1	Combined Records Storage for all court jurisdictions	216	216	(12x18)	
JURY DELIBERATIONS	1	Separate/secure Deliberations space	168	168	(12x14)	
STAFF RESTROOMS	1	Unisex Restroom facilities for Court Staff	65	65	(8x8)	
CONF/CONSULTATION	1	(6) person occupancy	120	120	(10x12)	
HOLDING ROOM	1	(1) person capacity	35	35	(6x6)	
LOBBY & ENTRY	1	Common to all Courtrooms	500	500	20sf/person; (25) person capacity	
PUBLIC RESTROOMS	2	(30) person capacity per gender	160	320	(10x16)	
MECH/ELEC/DATA	1		280	280	(14x20)	
BUILDING TOTAL SF:			3,738		(\$75/SF) RENOVATE EXISTING SPACE (assumes HVAC system renovations but no new systems)	\$280,350
SITE	30	Public Parking for (25) vehicles	250	7,500	(250sf per space); Utilize existing parking areas (resurface areas)	\$75,000
	8	Court Staff/Law Enforcement Parking	250	2,000	(250sf per space); Utilize existing parking areas (resurface areas)	\$20,000
		Building + perimeter space		0	Existing	
		Landscaping, site lighting and signage		0	Add landscaping, site lighting and signage	\$50,000
SITE TOTAL SF: (incl. Building footprint)			9,500		Utilize existing parking areas (resurface areas)	
SOFT COSTS		Engineering, Legal, Permitting, Surveying, Soils		20%		\$56,070
		Estimating Contingency		25%		\$70,088
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):			3,738		ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS:	\$551,508

Note: The area requirements for a 60 person capacity courtroom constructed within the existing old Hermon Firehouse have been normalized to fit within the shape of the existing building. Layout of seating, isles, and exiting requirements for seating are slightly different for an existing building vs. a new building.

Table 13: Option 2: Estimated Budget to Construct a 60 person capacity Shared Court Facility

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	SF	Notes	
COURTROOM	1	(60) person capacity Courtroom	1,800	1,800	26sf/person; incl. Bench, Jury Box and seating	
JUDGES CHAMBERS	1	Separate/secure office space; w/ separate Conf. Area	150	150	(3) 10x15 work spaces in same room	
COURT CLERK	1	Separate/secure space	100	100	(3) 10x10 work spaces in same room	
RECORDS STORAGE	3	Records & Secure Storage for all court jurisdictions	216	648	(12x18)(assumes separate Records for each Court jurisdiction)	
JURY DELIBERATIONS	2	Separate/secure Deliberations space	168	336	(12x14); dual use with Judge's Chambers as Conf. space	
STAFF RESTROOMS	1	Unisex Restroom facilities for each Court Staff	65	65	(8x8)	
CONF/CONSULTATION	2	(4) person occupancy	100	200	(10x10)	
HOLDING ROOM	1	(1) person capacity	35	35	(6x6)	
LOBBY	1	Common to all Courtrooms	200	200	10sf/person; (20) person capacity	
PUBLIC RESTROOMS	1	(30) person capacity per gender	160	320	(10x16)	
MECH/ELEC/DATA	1		252	252	(14x18)	
		BUILDING TOTAL SF:		4,106	(\$95/SF)	\$390,070
SITE	30	Public Parking for (25) vehicles	250	7,500		\$150,000
	4	Court Staff/Law Enforcement Parking (2 Court + 2 Law Enforcement)	250	1,000		\$20,000
		Building + perimeter space (20ft buffer) + Site Utilities		10,906		\$109,060
		Landscaping, site lighting and signage		0		\$50,000
		SITE TOTAL SF: (incl. Building footprint + Parking)		23,512	(approx. 6/10 acre)	\$329,060
SOFT COSTS		Engineering, Legal, Permitting, Surveying, Soils	20%			\$143,826
		Estimating Contingency	25%			\$179,783
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):				4,106		
					ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS:	\$1,042,739
					Cost per Building SF (including Soft Costs):	\$253.95

Table 14: Option 3: Estimated Budget to Construct a 90 person capacity Shared Court Facility

Major Elements	No.	Description	AREA	SF	Notes	
COURTROOM	1	(60) person capacity Courtroom	1,800	1,800	26sf/person; incl. Bench, Jury Box and seating	
	1	(30) person capacity Courtroom	1,014	1,014	37sf/person; incl. Bench, Jury Box and seating	
JUDGES CHAMBERS	3	Separate/secure office space; w/ separate Conf. Area	150	450	(3) 10x15 work spaces in same room	
COURT CLERK	3	Separate/secure space	100	300	(3) 10x10 work spaces in same room	
RECORDS STORAGE	3	Records & Secure Storage for all court jurisdictions	216	648	(12x18)	
JURY DELIBERATIONS	2	Separate/secure Deliberations space	168	336	(12x14); dual use with Judge's Chambers as Conf. space	
STAFF RESTROOMS	1	Unisex Restroom facilities for each Court Staff	65	65	(8x8)	
CONF/CONSULTATION	2	(4) person occupancy	100	200	(10x10)	
HOLDING ROOM	2	(1) person capacity	35	70	(6x6)	
LOBBY	1	Common to all Courtrooms	300	300	10sf/person; (30) person capacity	
PUBLIC RESTROOMS	2	(30) person capacity per gender	160	320	(10x16)	
MECH/ELEC/DATA	1		252	252	(14x18)	
BUILDING TOTAL SF:				5,755	(\$95/SF)	\$546,725
SITE	60	Public Parking for (25) vehicles	250	15,000		\$300,000
	8	Court Staff/Law Enforcement Parking (2 Court + 2 Law Enforce. per Court)	250	2,000		\$40,000
		Building + perimeter space (20ft buffer) + Site Utilities		13,755		\$137,550
		Landscaping, site lighting and signage		0		\$50,000
		SITE TOTAL SF: (incl. Building footprint + Parking)		36,510	(approx. 9/10 acre)	\$527,550
SOFT COSTS		Engineering, Legal, Permitting, Surveying, Soils		20%		\$214,855
		Estimating Contingency		25%		\$268,569
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILDING PROGRAM AREA (Gross Square Feet):				5,755		
					ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPROVEMENTS:	\$1,557,699
					Cost per Building SF (including Soft Costs):	\$270.67

See **Appendix B**: Best Practices for Justice Court Security – excerpt from the Action Plan for Justice Courts.

See **Appendix G**: Resource List for Suggested Improvements to Existing Facilities and Renovation Cost Estimates.

Regional Court Facility Co-location

Across St. Lawrence County, there are number of possibilities exist for reorganizing these courts to reduce the financial burden on the towns and align court operations with regional needs. This recommendation is offered as an illustration of one such possibility. A cluster of justice courts shown on **Map 3: Distance Map** share a geographic proximity and other attributes that may make them suited to consolidation or service sharing options including the contiguous towns of De Kalb, Gouverneur, Fowler, Pitcairn, Fine, Clare and Pierreport. At their farthest points, these towns are approximately 15 miles, respectively, from the Hermon court, the center point chosen for illustrative purposes. Well-maintained county and state roads run directly through these municipalities and connect them to the Village of Canton, the county seat. A new facility should be designed with consideration of future growth to accommodate other municipalities that express interest in this consolidated justice court concept.

Other surrounding towns may also be interested in sharing the facility and coordinate scheduling, leading to increased efficiencies. Two or more adjacent town justice courts, two or more adjacent city courts, or some combination of these may merge into a regional court. Towns may participate in the establishment of district courts (referred to as a regional court if it is not countywide), which unlike all other restructuring options, requires approval of the County Legislature; this option has its foundation in the Judiciary section of the New York State Constitution (see for an explanation of this option, see **Appendix A**).

Potential Benefits: The county seat in Canton is direct and accessible to each of the other contiguous municipalities mentioned above. The travel distance is reasonable and the path is relatively direct. There is the potential for significant gains in terms of court professionalism, both among justices and clerks, i.e., with the ability to select employees from a larger pool of candidates who are specifically trained and educated in the legal field. Additional savings could be gained through the phasing out of justice and/or clerk positions when terms of office expire, and/or upon retirement. Funding available through JCAP and NYSDOS LGE would ease the costs of transition and permit the necessary upgrades to a shared facility. Each town would first need to examine current court expenditures and decide if the estimated savings warrant the effort.

Potential Drawbacks: With each municipality added to an intergovernmental agreement, complexity rises and transaction costs increase. More relationships must be cultivated, and the schedules and energies of municipal leaders must be synchronized to an unusual extent. Larger, more inclusive intergovernmental designs such as the one proposed run counter to strong feelings of local control. If the municipalities have little intergovernmental history with their neighbors, significant work may need to be undertaken to develop a trusting relationship. In the future, if a cluster of justice courts within reasonable geographic proximity are identified as

suited to consolidation or service sharing, a transitional step to cultivate the relationship would be to have the local justice ‘ride circuit’ to each town, perhaps once a month, and the court would maintain separate records and accounts for each municipality (see **Appendix E**: Lewis County Court Consolidation Case Study and Shared Justice Court Plan).

The county took the initiative to establish a Countywide Justice Court Profile. The profile includes the number of justices in each municipality, their election term expiration date, justice court revenues and expenditures as of 2012, total caseload including a breakout of the number of DWI's and misdemeanors, as well as the existing court schedules (see **Appendix F**).

Shared Court Clerk

When expenditure reductions are necessary, any justice court savings are real dollars that can help ease municipal budget constraints. Governing boards can adjust the hours, salary, and number of clerks, without direct voter or external approval, subject to terms and employment contracts in place. There was a clear consensus that knowledgeable and available court clerks that have regular (day time, but not necessarily full time) office hours would improve court effectiveness. Presuming that the three courts co-located, a single shared $\frac{3}{4}$ time or full time court clerk could feasibly handle the workload of all three municipalities and be responsible for court accounts and records leading to greater internal controls and efficiencies.

This alternative would involve pooling resources for clerk support and employing only one experienced clerk with extended hours. By pooling compensation for a court clerk, the towns could reduce their total clerk compensation and benefits expenditures while increasing the salary of the single clerk. Sharing clerk support might be as simple as having each clerk work for all municipalities at their current level of employment, making it possible to handle busier times in either court without creating backlogs for the justices. Hours could be staggered to provide more coverage for each court and justice.

The current total personnel cost for the two part-time court clerks serving the Towns of Hermon and Russell is approximately \$8,695 per year, not including fringe benefits.¹¹ For illustrative purposes, if shared equally among the three towns, the total cost of one shared court clerk is estimated to be approximately \$11,564, or \$3,855 per town. This estimate assumes that clerk costs would rise by 33% to account for the additional workload of the Town of Edwards which does not currently have a court clerk on staff. It is important to recognize that the current pay for court clerks is low, and may not accurately reflect the complex administrative responsibilities that come with the position. According to the St. Lawrence County Human Resources & Civil

¹¹ Figure is based upon the Town of Hermon 2013 budgeted figure and the Town of Russell 2013 budgeted figure for Municipal Court Personal Services. The Town of Edwards does not have a court clerk.

Service Administration, across the county, the salaries of court clerks range from \$7.50 to \$19.00 per hour, and there are no minimum qualifications for the position. The three communities will have to determine the most appropriate level of compensation and method or formula for equitably allocating the cost of clerk support should a shared court clerk option be pursued.

As an example of how a shared justice court facility can operate successfully with a shared court clerk, the consultant examined the current situation in the Harrisburg Montague and Pinckney, (H-M-P) justice court. (See Appendix E) According to the Town of Pinckney Supervisor, the H-M-P joint court operates as 3 separate courts, but has only one part-time Justice and one part-time clerk that serves all three towns out of the same facility. According to the H-M-P court clerk:

- Court is scheduled twice a month, with only one DA night
- The Justice calls cases on a first come first serve basis. They have a sign in sheet for each town
- The clerk keeps three separate records and filing systems for each town. The clerk has one laptop that she uses for the recording of the proceedings. On court night, she simply opens the SEI CourtRoom Program®, the Universal Case Management System for New York State's Town and Village Courts three times. The software allows users to bounce back and forth from one town's electronic docketing system to the other while entering the necessary information in to the system. The clerk has no complaints regarding the SEI CourtRoom Program.

Opportunities for Improvement

Coordinated Court Scheduling

Overlapping or conflicting justice court schedules, place a burden on county personnel who must transport prisoners and otherwise provide staff to the 35 town, village and city courts in the county. County personnel and the town justices should continue to work together to coordinate court day/night scheduling that is more a more cost-effective use of paid personnel time and travel. For the 2013 calendar year, the court schedule for the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell equal to seventy two (72) court days (excluding holidays). Assuming that county personnel only travel to each of these communities once a month, county obligations would be equal to 36 court days per year. Through a consolidated court schedule, this obligation could feasibly be reduced to 12 court days per year if multiple courts were held on a single day in a co-located facility. For example, three court sessions could be held per day. For example, one session could be held from 1:30 to 3:30 pm, the next from 4:00 to 6:00 pm and the last from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Another alternative would be to spread the schedule out slightly, for instance by scheduling two court sessions on one day a week, and one court session on one evening in the

week. This compressed scheduling will still lead to reduced travel time and increased efficiencies for county staff. See **Appendix F**.

The Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell had a combined average of 1,090 cases between 2010 and 2011. Dividing the average cases by seventy two (72) court days, is equal to approximately 15 cases per day. If court lasts for three hours, it can be assumed that five (5) cases can be handled per hour; therefore, it can be assumed that approximately 30 cases can be handled within a 6 hour court day. When designing the joint facility, it is assumed that court room seating would be reserved for the town currently holding court, and others will be required to wait in the lobby areas or outdoors; therefore, a joint facility does not have to be designed to accommodate the maximum population of three town courts at one time.

Improved Docket Management Software:

During interviews with stakeholders, it has become apparent that an investment in advanced docket management software may improve the efficiency of the provision of services and aid in scheduling. improved court docket management, with for example, a more specific court calendar of activities, specific tracking dates for cases, adjournment to specific dates.

Use of Technological Advancements in the Court Room:

Technology advancements may enhance county resources, improve court services, make courts more efficient, and reduce the cost to the county in serving these courts. For example, many rural regions of our country utilize video conferencing for inmates from the county jail to reduce the cost of inmate transport. Further investigation is needed to determine the current conditions of each local facility and its capacity for fiber optic or internet connection, video capabilities, software ownership and knowledge as well any possible legal impediments. The Office of Court Administration (OCA) is currently facilitating a 3 year pilot study on this topic.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
RESTRUCTURING OPTIONS, PERTINENT LAWS AND
PROCEDURES
KEY CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY LAWS
ON THE JUSTICE COURTS

Appendix A

Restructuring Option	Pertinent Restructuring Law and Procedure
Village Court Dissolution	If an embedded village wishes to, it may dissolve its justice court. Once a village board of trustees has approved the dissolution of its court, the decision is subject to permissive referendum. Any resolution to dissolve a village court cannot be implemented until the current term of the village justice expires. The town justice court then assumes full adjudicative responsibilities, remitting fines from village law and ordinances to the village, but keeping fines related to vehicle and traffic law and criminal offenses.
Reduction of Justices in a Town	A town may, subject to permissive referendum, pass a board resolution and approach the State Legislature to ask that it have its number of justices reduced from two to one if there is not sufficient caseload to require two justices. In Ulster County, the Towns of Hardenburgh, Denning, and Kingston have successfully petitioned the Legislature to reduce justices from two to one.
Full Consolidation (Two or More Justices)	To begin the process, each participating town needs to either adopt a resolution or receive a public petition to hold a joint public hearing with all town boards. The petition would then need to be passed by both town boards. If the petition is passed, it must then be presented as a public referendum for passage. As noted above, each participating town must eliminate one judgeship. The municipalities must then approach the State Legislature and Governor to have approved the reduction and extended jurisdiction of their judges. This is due to the poor conception of UJCA 106. When the unified justice court is established, the remaining justices must maintain separate records for the cases originating in each town. In turn, these records are reported to OSC individually.
Joint Election of a Justice	The Legislature also permits town justice courts to share a judge. To do this, towns must be adjacent to one another and within the same county. This process is initiated when both town boards pass a resolution to conduct a study of electing a joint judge. The specifics and requirements of these studies are not explicated. If a study is approved, it must be published in an area newspaper within 30 days, and then a public hearing held in all involved towns between 20 and 30 days later. Next, town boards must approve the development of a plan to create a system of election and service of a joint judge. The adoption of this plan represents yet another step. The plan must entail the elimination of a judge's office in each town and a plan to elect this joint justice at the next general election. Involved town governments must submit a municipal home rule message to the State Legislature. This message needs to be approved by the State Legislature before any action can be taken. Once approved and a single judge elected, this judge has jurisdictions in all involved towns, but maintains different records and financial transactions (revenues accrue to town where an infraction originated).
Joint Facility Sharing	The Legislature permits town justice courts to share a facility without merging the courts. The process has not yet been standardized, and occurs through a special request to the Legislature.
Full Consolidation (One Justice for Two or More Municipalities)	Multiple adjacent municipalities may also go through the requisite preliminary steps of board resolutions and public referendum and approach the State Legislature to request that a single justice preside over the full set of participating municipalities out of a single court facility. This arrangement is being established in Lewis County among the towns of Pinckney, Harrisburg, and Montague.

Key Constitutional and Statutory Laws on the Justice Courts

New York State Constitution

Article 6: Judiciary

- 16: District courts; jurisdiction; judges.
- 17: Town, village and city courts; jurisdiction; judges.
- 20: Judges and justices; qualifications; eligibility for other office or service; restrictions.
- 22: Commission on Judicial Conduct.
- 29: Expenses of courts.

New York State Statutes

Town Law:

Article 3

- 20: Town officers.
- 23: Eligibility of town officers.
- 24: Terms of office.
- 31: Powers and duties of town justices; requirements; restrictions.

Article 4

- 60 A (2): Removal of town justices from town board

Unified Justice Court Act (UJCA):

Article 1

- 106: Holding of court; place of holding; assignment of justices.
- 106-A: Reducing the number of justices in adjacent towns.
- 106-B: Election of a single town justice for two or more adjacent towns.

Judiciary Law:

- Article 21-B Justice Court Assistance Program

Village Law:

Article 3

- 300: Eligibility for election or appointment to, and continuance in office.
- 301: Village officers.
- 303: Additional village justices in certain villages.

APPENDIX B:
BEST PRACTICES FOR JUSTICE COURT SECURITY
(EXCERPT FROM THE ACTION PLAN FOR JUSTICE COURTS)

ACTION PLAN
for the
JUSTICE COURTS



NOVEMBER 2006

APPENDIX B

BEST PRACTICES FOR JUSTICE COURT SECURITY

Longstanding OCA experience managing court facilities, and nationwide experience with the security threats that courts inherently face, point to a series of steps that all court administrators should take to ensure the safety and security of their courts and all persons working in or appearing before them. The jurisdiction of the Justice Courts, and particularly their preliminary and limited trial jurisdiction over crimes, makes it essential that every locality sponsoring a Justice Court take seriously its duty to ensure the security of their courts. Threats can emerge in seconds, and as a growing spate of courthouse violence nationwide graphically has illustrated, these threats can be tragic.

Many of these threats are, however, preventable with commonsense steps that are within the means of nearly every locality to adopt. Recognizing that no two Justice Courts are alike and that the diversity of Justice Court facilities and dockets makes a one-size-fits-all approach impractical, OCA offers these guidelines to inform judges, court staff and local government leaders in securing their courts:

1. *Dedicate space exclusively for Justice Court use.* Full implementation of many court security best practices is best achieved when there exists sufficient space dedicated exclusively for the use of judges, court staff, attorneys, litigants and other members of the public with business before the court. By its nature, multi-use Justice Court facilities often must accommodate needs inconsistent with the proper security profile of a court. For that reason, the safest Justice Court is one that shares core operational space with no other governmental or non-governmental function. Municipalities with relatively large dockets and physical infrastructure for the local government already have established dedicated Justice Court facilities; other localities are strongly advised to do so. If localities must hold Justice Court proceedings in multi-use facilities, the court facility and all other appurtenant space open to the public (e.g. bathrooms, corridors, closets) should be swept for weapons and other potential threats before Justice Court proceedings begin, and all of that adjacent space should be considered part of the Justice Court for purposes of these Best Practices.

2. *Eliminate potential courtroom weapons.* Whether in a dedicated courtroom setting or a mixed-use facility, even the most seemingly innocuous object can become a weapon in seconds: a window or glass-covered table can be broken and large shards converted into knives, while a wall-mounted fire extinguisher easily can become a projectile. Experience in judiciaries nationwide proves, sometimes only in tragic hindsight, that these kinds of potential weapons must be eliminated from places where court proceedings are held. To this end, glass should be eliminated from tabletops and old windows should be either replaced with shatterproof glass or lined with inexpensive material to limit breakage. Likewise, moveable objects such as fire extinguishers should, to the maximum extent that Fire Codes permit, be mounted away from where litigants congregate. In courtrooms with microphones, portable microphones with long wires are disfa-

vored because the wires also can become weapons: these microphones should be replaced with fixed-location microphones wherever possible.

3. Create strategic barriers. The main security benefits of having a court bench are to physically elevate the judge and separate the judge from others in the courtroom, making physical contact between the judge and would-be assailants more difficult. Justice Courts should, if possible, install benches high and wide enough to confer this minimal security benefit. If benches are impracticable, then several large tables should be placed between the judge and the rest of the courtroom to create a makeshift physical barrier. Likewise, the main security benefit of having a “bar” between the audience and the working section of the courtroom is to establish a physical barrier that, even if a would-be assailant scales it, can afford precious seconds for intended victims to take evasive action. Each Justice Court should install such a bar wherever possible. Similarly, there should be a bar or other physical barrier between the judge and wherever a witness would sit to provide a zone of protection in case a witness becomes violent. If a courtroom space cannot accommodate immovable physical barriers of this nature, as much space as possible should be created between the audience seats and the working part of the courtroom. Localities using spaces too small to provide such space should identify alternative space for holding court.

4. Eliminate strategic lines of sight. Disturbing as the prospect may be, justices and court personnel could be — and have been — watched and targeted from outside courtrooms. Many Justice Court facilities have windows or other clear lines of sight between unsecured outside locations and the court bench (or table) where the judge presides, the judge’s office, the clerk’s office, etc. All of these lines of sight should be obscured. Measures as simple as tinting windows (opaque coverings can be affixed to existing windows), relocating desks (to obscure direct lines of sight to windows) and erecting inexpensive portable screens can greatly assist at minimal cost.

5. Secure courtroom furniture. An intoxicated or distraught litigant or other interested party to a contentious court action can become explosively violent in seconds, and experience reveals that such persons often can be quite strong. If a weapon is unavailable, even a table or chair can suffice to threaten or injure others. Especially in Justice Court facilities with dedicated courtrooms, all courtroom furniture (e.g. tables and chairs) should, if feasible, be bolted to the floor; in mixed-use facilities, furniture can be bolted down and then released to clear the space for other uses. In both dedicated and mixed-use Justice Court facilities, lightweight furniture (e.g. card tables that some Justice Courts provide for litigants) should be avoided in favor of heavier and more immovable wood furniture; plastic chairs and other furniture should be avoided unless physically linked together and thus made more difficult to throw.

6. Provide uniformed and armed security presence. Courts nationwide employ uniformed and often armed security personnel for two reasons: their presence can have an important deterrent effect on would-be perpetrators of courtroom violence, and their expertise can become vitally necessary if a security threat requires immediate response. These truths are as valid in Justice Courts as in State-paid courts, and yet few Justice Courts have uniformed security personnel in courtrooms to protect the court and the public. Recognizing that Justice Courts lack statutory authority to appoint officers eligible to carry firearms, localities should ensure that whenever the court

is in session, and especially when the court is hearing criminal or other sensitive cases, at least one member (and in the busiest courts, at least two members) of the local police or sheriff's department are on-site to protect the court and the public. As with regular-hour Justice Court sessions, off-hour proceedings (e.g. arraignments and emergency applications) likewise require dedicated armed presence to protect the court. Where such a police officer or deputy sheriff is armed in the courtroom, he or she generally should remain at sufficient distance from members of the public to minimize the possibility that they could lunge for the officer's pistol, and the pistol should be secured in a proper Level 3 holster (i.e. a holster with three restraints) to ensure maximum control of the weapon.

7. Provide ingress screening. One of the most important preventive security measures a locality can take for its Justice Court is to provide ingress screening for all persons seeking to enter a court facility. The most effective method is by proper magnetometer, installation of which requires sufficient space to accommodate the machine and its operators, separate secured space from unsecured spaces and eliminate direct lines of sight between the court and unsecured areas. Larger town and village halls can accommodate these adaptations with minimal changes to the space; one-room all-purpose facilities may require modest capital alterations. In either case, it should be a priority of every locality operating a Justice Court to provide some ingress screening to keep weapons out of court.

8. Secure and illuminate parking. Perhaps the most palpable threat to court security occurs after a court session, away from public view and often at night. Judges or court staff members leaving court for their cars naturally expose themselves to risk. For that reason, some localities provide escort for the judge and court staff after the conclusion of court proceedings. This practice is a good one and should be emulated throughout the Justice Court system. Localities also should, where possible, provide a secure (i.e. gated and/or patrolled) and well-illuminated place for judges and court staff to park, as well as secure access between that parking location and the court facility. Typically, this latter adjustment will require a second backdoor, key-controlled entrance to the court facility, which also would convey the secondary benefit of giving judges and court staff an alternative way to leave a court facility (and police to enter a court facility) under threat conditions.

9. Arrange armed escort for bank deposits. Especially for high-volume Justice Courts, the collection of revenue can concentrate in the court significant funds, including cash, that must be deposited in a local bank. The clerk or other personnel responsible for making these deposits thereby can be exposed to the risk of assault, particularly if that person's bank deposits are relatively routine (e.g. each Monday and Thursday afternoon after lunch). To protect the staff and the Justice Court's funds, the locality should ensure that physical deposits of Justice Court funds in the local bank be protected by armed escort, typically by the local police.

10. Secure storage of cash and negotiable instruments. Until funds are deposited in a local financial institution, Justice Court staff must keep physical custody of cash and checks paid in satisfaction of court mandates. While some Justice Courts properly store these funds in secure, immovable vaults with the double protection of key or combination access, others keep cash merely in a desk drawer or cabinet — either in a small lockbox that can be easily removed or even

in a simple envelope. At absolute minimum, Justice Courts should keep funds, and especially cash, in safes too large to move, segregated from public areas, with access limited to the minimum possible number of persons and secured by proper combination lock. Deposits and withdrawals should be conducted under as secure circumstances as possible, preferably under armed escort as described above.

11. Provide duress alarms in strategic places. When threats do arise, seconds count. Even in the presence of armed security, but especially when a court lacks such security, it is imperative that judges and staff have a fast and secret way to call for help. To that end, judiciaries nationwide are installing duress alarms at strategic locations (e.g. in judges' chambers, near benches, in back-room offices) that can be activated by push of a button. These inexpensive alarms are easily installed to provide direct 911-like notification to local police that an emergency is in progress, and thereby can make the difference between life and death or escape and apprehension. Just as New York's State-paid courts are installing these duress alarms, so too should localities make this critical investment in the security of their courts. ■

APPENDIX C:
SUMMARY OF THE COUNTY KEY PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS
SUMMARY OF THE TOWN KEY PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS

MEMORANDUM

TO: Francine Perretta, Chairperson St. Lawrence County Justice Court Consolidation Feasibility Study Steering Committee

CC: Heidi Ames, Grants Manager

FROM: Laberge Group

DATE: February 26, 2013

RE: Summary of the County Key Personnel Interviews

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH COUNTY OFFICIALS

Town Justice Courts are an important part of the local justice system. Towns incur significant costs in providing facilities and personnel support for court operations. In addition, a variety of County personnel work in these courts in serving the local justice system. Towns and Town Court Justices have general authority for the operation and management of their courts and can have a significant impact on the effective use of County personnel and County costs in serving Justice Courts.

Interviews were conducted with seven County professionals whose departments regularly serve in Justice Courts. Interviews were conducted with the following key personnel representing the offices of the County's: Sheriff, District Attorney, Public Defender, Conflict Defender, and Probation Department:

- Sheriff Kevin Wells
- Ed Guathier, Director of Probation
- Tim Le Page, Supervisor of Probation
- Amy Dona, County Conflict Defender
- Stephen D. Button, Public Defender
- Steven G. Ballan, Assistant Public Defender
- Nicole M. Duve', District Attorney

A number of key points about the County's role serving in Town Justice Courts emerged from these interviews and are enumerated below:

KEY POINTS

1. The geographic size of St. Lawrence County and the number of local courts (over 30) to serve stretches the personnel resources of law enforcement, prosecution, defense and probation in serving both defendant's and the general public in providing public safety and justice.
2. Some Justice Courts, including the three that are cooperating in this Study, are smaller with limited case loads and County personnel and travel costs in serving these courts could be reduced by certain types of court consolidation and cooperation. Specifically:
 - Holding court for the three (or more) Towns at a single facility on the same day/night (either a single or multiple courts).

- Improved court facilities with adequate space for court safety for attendees and to permit attorney conferences and attorney/client consultation.
3. Justice Courts vary in their management and the efficiency with which they use the limited resources of both Town and County personnel. It is believed that knowledgeable and available Court Clerks which have regular (day time, but not necessarily full time) office hours would improve court effectiveness and improve the effectiveness of County staff serving in Town Justice Courts.
 4. A number of other management practices were noted that could use County resources more efficiently and improve court services for defendants and all other citizens, including:
 - Video conferencing for inmates from the County Jail facility is now available (at the inmate's choice), but companion capability has to be availability in the local court facility. None of the 3 courts in question have this capability. A single court with video capability could reduce inmate transport.
 - Attorney/judge conferencing alternatives.
 - Mail and email plea agreements.
 - Improved court docket management, with for example, a more specific court calendar of activities, specific tracking dates for cases, adjournment to specific dates, etc.
 5. On the issue of the need for enhanced court security responses were mixed. Most noted that the lack of court security officers did not seem to be an issue. Several staff noted that the increase in domestic cases in local courts may lead to a need for more court security personnel. No one identified a specific incident in the three courts under study that indicated that there were high levels of risk because court officers were not present. Limited space in court facilities was considered by some to be a security concern because of close proximity of officers with the accused person being too close to other court attendees.
 6. County staff generally indicated that there is variation in the management and knowledge level of local Justice Court personnel. Where knowledge and management are better, the cost to the County in serving these courts is lower. Effective, on-time justice is better served for citizens. Supporting educational opportunities and facilitating exchange on legal and court changes and best practices among Justices and Court Clerks is in the best interests of justice for County citizens and for improving the cost effectiveness of the County departments that serve in local Justice Courts. Fostering a community of self-improvement among local Justice Courts would serve everyone well.
 7. The County expends significant resources across the departments that serve Justice Courts. Effective reporting on data that is currently maintained to identify changes in cost and performance is in everyone's best-interest. Several key personnel interviewed indicated that they were in the process of implementing new information management or tracking systems for their activities. In this environment of change, it would be valuable for the County to pull this group of key personnel together to outline an annual or multi-year approach for reporting service cost and performance for serving citizens, clients and courts. This would be valuable if there is a commensurate commitment to use this information to improve practices, management and the allocation of scarce resources.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Francine Perretta, Chairperson St. Lawrence County Justice Court Consolidation Feasibility Study Steering Committee

CC: Heidi Ames, Grants Manager

FROM: Laberge Group

DATE: February 25, 2013

RE: Summary of the Town Key Personnel Interviews

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH TOWN OFFICIALS AND JUSTICES

Town Justice Courts are an important part of the local justice system. Towns incur significant costs in providing facilities and personnel support for court operations. Interviews were conducted with the following key personnel representing the Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell:

- Kelly Reed, Supervisor, Town of Hermon
- Darrell Whitton, Justice, and Teresa Whitton, Court Clerk, Town of Hermon
- Robert Best, Supervisor, Town of Russell
- Sheree Lampheer, Supervisor, Town of Edwards

A number of key points about Justice Courts emerged from these interviews, and are enumerated below:

KEY POINTS

1. All three Towns are willing to look at sharing or consolidation of Justice Court services; however, only the Town of Hermon has a pressing need to find a new alternative court facility.
2. The Town of Hermon holds court sessions in a small shared office space with a variety of inadequacies. Court management is also limited by a single phone line that is shared by the town clerk, assessor, and court clerk. The Town has had preliminary plans developed to renovate a portion of a previous fire department facility owned by the Town. The Town Justice has applied for a grant to help renovate this facility. The Town is willing to consider joint options, but need to move on improving court facilities.
3. The Town of Edwards has a dedicated courtroom and office space for justices.
4. The Town of Russell adapts a multi-purpose space for Justice Court use. Other community groups utilize this common space multiple times per week.
5. In order to make a change, the Towns of Edwards and Russell both would need to see a plan with cost savings or other, possibly long term, benefits. For Town leaders in both Russell and Edwards this is service delivery assessment that they are willing to participate in at the County's initiative, but not one has a high need or priority.

6. All three of these rural towns have seen the loss of community assets, both public and private, over the years. The loss of a separate local court would continue that in some sense. The Towns of Edwards and Russell have a consolidated school system that was created about 20 years ago. Town leaders believe that while their communities would experience some sense of loss through Justice Court consolidation, they would adapt and under the right conditions (savings or other benefits) may support a shared or consolidated court.
7. The Town of Russell owns a medical facility across the street from the current Town Hall. This facility may become available and could be assessed as a potential Justice Court facility.
8. While there is reservation about the cost and tax burden associated with a single new or renovated facility, there is recognition that in the long run it may be preferred to 3 new or expensively renovated court facilities that have required State-determined building specifications.
9. There is also recognition of the need for more consistently available court clerks, but the current environment limits that availability.

APPENDIX D:
BUILDING/SITE ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

**St. Lawrence County
Court Consolidation Feasibility Study**



Building/Site Assessment Checklist

Building/Site:	Town of Hermon, NY
Building Name:	Town Offices/Hwy Garage
Building/Site Address:	103 Maple Street
Ownership:	Town of Hermon
Year Constructed:	mid 1970's
Number of Stories:	1
General Use/Occupancy:	Town Offices, Court, Highway
Type of Construction:	CMU/Wood
Drawings available (Y/N):	NA
Original Cost:	NA
Additional Renovation Cost:	\$30,000 NYS Court Grant
Date of Renovation(s):	NA

Project No.: 2012055 p1 of 3

Date Assessed: 12/11/12



Future anticipated renovations: Across the street in the former Fire Dept. building.

Size capability for renovations and expansion: Very limited capacity for expansion unless a Highway bay is used.

Court nights are 1st and 3rd Monday, and DA night is once a month on the 1st. Court Clerk is assigned.

(1) Justices assigned (retired Sheriff's Department officer); (1) PT Court Clerk

Remarks/Notes

A	Site		Remarks/Notes
1	Size:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Use:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shared with Highway Department
3	Access:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Public:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Same access as all other functions
	Officials (Court):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Same access as all other functions
	Officials (Law Enforcement):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Same access as all other functions
4	Parking:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Public:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Limited
	Officials (Court): No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not defined
	Officials (Law Enforcement): No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not defined
5	Surface:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asphalt
6	General Environs:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Neighborhood Risks:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facility is located in an "alley" environment
	Site Security:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Poor
7	Stormwater Mgt. Date Built:	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA
	Describe:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Surface runoff
	Groundwater Pollution Risks:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate
8	Special Features: Date Built:	<input type="checkbox"/>	The former Fire Dept. facility is across the street. Renovation
	Describe:	<input type="checkbox"/>	of this building is what is being proposed in the NYS Court Grant application.

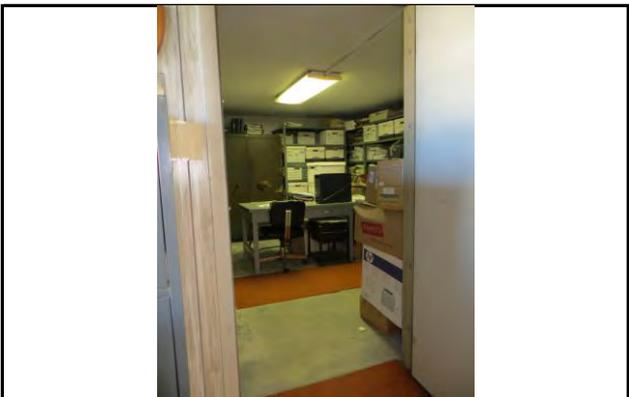
Remarks/Notes

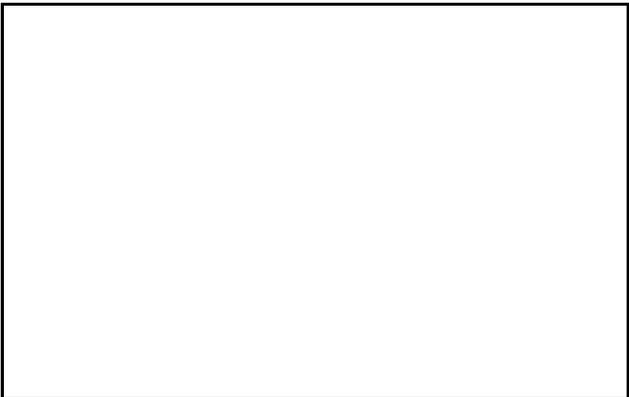
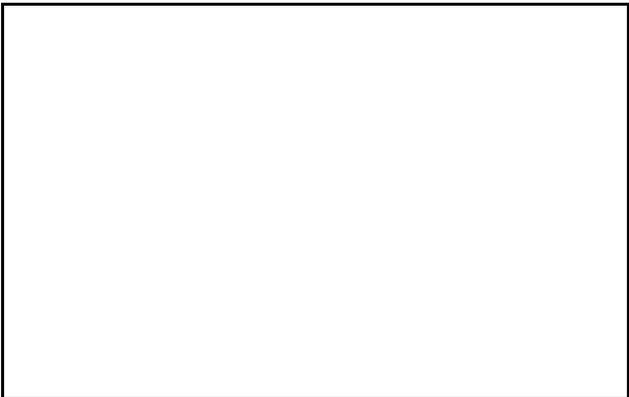
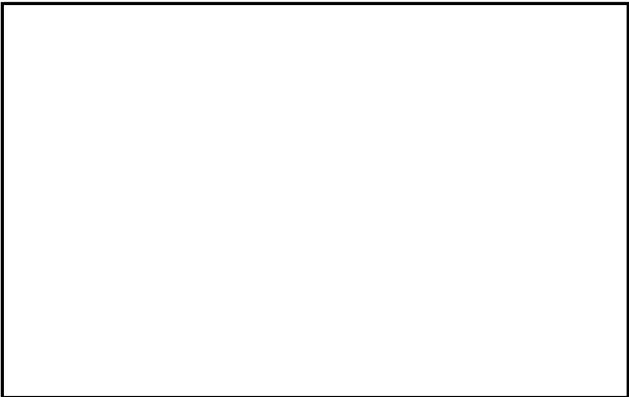
B Building:		588SF (14x42); Highway Dept. next door in same structure
1 Size:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2 Original Structure Type (Const. Type):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Concrete block/wood
3 Structure Type for each Addition:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No building additions evident
4 Record Drawings Available:	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA
5 Primary and Secondary Uses for Building(s):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary: Town Offices/Highway Garage
6 Estimated remaining life of Building(s):	<input type="checkbox"/>	TBD
7 Exits:		
Number/Arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 (due to size of space-only 1 exit is required)
Exit Enclosure Construction	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA
Accessibility (Building):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Partly available
(Public):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All functions share common entry/exit
(Court/Law Enforcement):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All functions share common entry/exit
Deficiencies Noted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No separation of any circulation, defendants or officials
Circulation (Public):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All functions share common entry/exit
(Officials):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All functions share common entry/exit
(Law Enforcement):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All functions share common entry/exit
8 Superstructure System(s):		
Type:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood truss
Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted.
9 Exterior Building Enclosure System(s):		
Roof:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Metal roofing
Exterior Walls:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Concrete masonry units
Security elements:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None noted
Deficiencies Noted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General energy efficiency is low.
10 Mechanical System(s):		
Heating System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heat pump.
Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ventilation System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None observed
Deficiencies Noted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Need to provide required ventilation.
Air Conditioning System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heat pump unit.
Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted for existing use. Upgrade necessary with change of use.
11 Electrical System(s):		
Service Size/Capacity:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No information available to determine.
Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None Noted
Emergency Power (Y/N); Size:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted
Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted.

Remarks/Notes

- 12 **Fire Alarm System(s) (Y/N):** None noted
 Deficiencies Noted: None noted
 Distance to nearest Fire Dept.:
 Distance to nearest Law Enforcement:
- 13 **Fire Protection Systems (Y/N):** None noted
 Deficiencies Noted: FA system should be installed with change of use/density.
- 14 **Security (Y/N):**
 Types of Systems: Manual
 Describe: Door locksets only
 Deficiencies Noted:
- 14 **Restroom Facilities (Y/N)** Y
 Public One common restroom to all functions.
 Officials (Court) One common restroom to all functions.
 Officials (Law Enforcement): One common restroom to all functions.
 Separation Issues (Y/N): Y
 Accessibility Issues (Y/N): Y
 Describe: Type, amount of facilities does not meet NYS regulations.
- 15 **Records Management:** There is a non-rated Records File Room,
 Describe:
- 16 **Equipment & IT:** (2) pc's were observed.
 Describe:
- 17 **Emergency Operations Capability:** None
- 18 **Additional capacity needed to support existing or future Operations:**
 A meeting/court room, office and restroom facilities are needed.
- 18 **Functional / Operational issues:** Town operations and court operations share a single space. No security. No privacy. No separation of Court staff and Public; Public and violent defendants; Court staff and violent defendants.
- 19 **Other Notes/Observations:** There are three (3) rooms that house and accommodate all Town Departments and Town Court. Building is shared with Highway Dept. Unless the Hwy. Dept. can drop a bay, there is no space for expansion or renovations to meet code compliance problems.

Town of Hermon, NY





**St. Lawrence County
Court Consolidation Feasibility Study**



Building/Site Assessment Checklist

Building/Site:	Town of Edwards, NY
Building Name:	Edwards Town Hall
Building/Site Address:	161 Main Street
Ownership:	Town of Edwards, NY
Year Constructed:	1895
Number of Stories:	2
General Use/Occupancy:	Town Offices
Type of Construction:	Masonry/wood
Drawings available (Y/N):	N
Original Cost:	NA
Additional Renovation Cost:	\$8,000 NYS Court Grant
Date of Renovation(s):	last 3 years

Project No.: 2012055 p1 of 3
Date Assessed: 12/11/12



Future anticipated renovations: None currently being planned.

Size capability for renovations and expansion: Limited expansion space.

Court nights are 1st and 3rd Monday, and DA night is once a month on the 1st. No Court Clerk is assigned.

(2) Justices assigned

Remarks/Notes

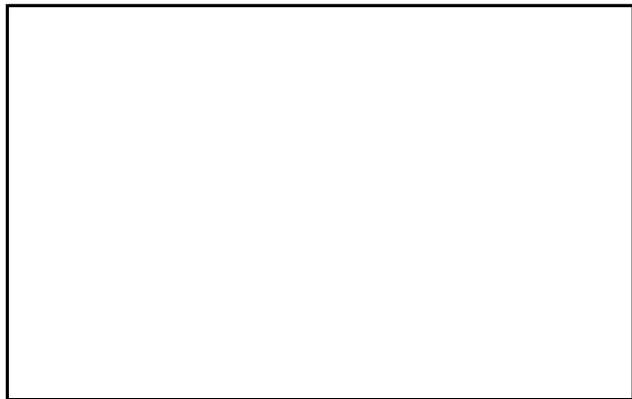
A Site			
1	Size:		
2	Use:		Town Offices
3	Access:		
	Public:		Good
	Officials (Court):		Good
	Officials (Law Enforcement):		Good
4	Parking:		
	Public:		Adequate
	Officials (Court):		Adequate
	Officials (Law Enforcement):		Adequate
5	Surface:		Asphalt
6	General Environs:		
	Neighborhood Risks:		Low
	Site Security:		None observed
7	Stormwater Mgt. Date Built:		None observed
	Describe:		
	Groundwater Pollution Risks:		None observed
8	Special Features: Date Built:		
	Describe:		

Remarks/Notes

B Building:			
1	Size:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Original Structure Type (Const. Type):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Masonry/wood
3	Structure Type for each Addition:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No building additions evident
4	Record Drawings Available:	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA
5	Primary and Secondary Uses for Building(s):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary: Town Offices; Secondary: Theater
6	Estimated remaining life of Building(s):	<input type="checkbox"/>	TBD
7 Exits:			
	Number/Arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apparently adequate from Court facilities. Deficient elsewhere
	Exit Enclosure Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Apparently adequate from Court facilities. Deficient elsewhere
	Accessibility (Building):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ok to Court; deficient to Town offices.
	(Public):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ok to Court; deficient to Town offices.
	(Court/Law Enforcement):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ok to Court; deficient to Town offices.
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	A single accessible route exists and is shared by all parties
	Circulation (Public):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate
	(Officials):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Substandard
	(Law Enforcement):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Substandard
8 Superstructure System(s):			
	Type:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted
9 Exterior Building Enclosure System(s):			
	Roof:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asphaltic shingles
	Exterior Walls:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Masonry
	Security elements:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None observed
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No significant visible deficiencies noted.
10 Mechanical System(s):			
	Heating System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forced air
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted
	Ventilation System Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None observed
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ventilation system would need improvement to comply with Code
	Air Conditioning System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11 Electrical System(s):			
	Service Size/Capacity:	<input type="checkbox"/>	No information available to determine
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted
	Emergency Power (Y/N); Size:	<input type="checkbox"/>	N
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None noted

Town of Edwards, NY





**St. Lawrence County
Court Consolidation Feasibility Study**



Building/Site Assessment Checklist

Building/Site:	Town of Russell, NY
Building Name:	Russell Town Hall
Building/Site Address:	4 Pestle Street
Ownership:	Town of Russell, NY
Year Constructed:	1917
Number of Stories:	2
General Use/Occupancy:	Town Offices/Commercial
Type of Construction:	Masonry/wood
Drawings available (Y/N):	No
Original Cost:	NA
Additional Renovation Cost:	NA
Date of Renovation(s):	NA

Project No.: 2012055 p1 of 3

Date Assessed: 12/11/12



Future anticipated renovations: No renovations/expansions (except roof replacement) noted.
 Size capability for renovations and expansion: Only internally, and only if Post Office vacates space.
 Court nights are 1st and 3rd Monday, and DA night is once a month on the 1st.
 (1) Justices assigned; (1) Court Clerk

Remarks/Notes

A	Site		Remarks/Notes
1	Size:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Use:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Town Offices/Us Postal Office/Opera House
3	Access:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Public:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good
	Officials (Court):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good
	Officials (Law Enforcement):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good
4	Parking:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Public:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate
	Officials (Court):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate
	Officials (Law Enforcement):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate
5	Surface:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asphalt
6	General Environs:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Neighborhood Risks:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low
	Site Security:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None observed
7	Stormwater Mgt. Date Built:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Catch basins observed; destination and condition unknown
	Describe:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Groundwater Pollution Risks:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low
8	Special Features: Date Built:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None observed
	Describe:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Remarks/Notes

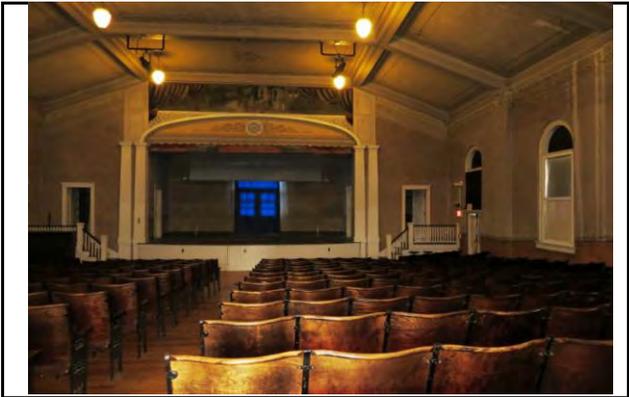
B Building:		
1	Size:	4,000Sf/FL (40x100); 2 stories
2	Original Structure Type (Const. Type):	Masonry/wood
3	Structure Type for each Addition:	None observed
4	Record Drawings Available:	NA
5	Primary and Secondary Uses for Building(s):	Primary: Town Offices; Secondary: US Post Office
6	Estimated remaining life of Building(s):	TBD
7 Exits:		
	Number/Arrangement	(6); arrangement complies with code
	Exit Enclosure Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Possibly not adequate; further investigation required
	Accessibility (Building):	<input type="checkbox"/> Complies
	(Public):	<input type="checkbox"/> Complies
	(Court/Law Enforcement):	<input type="checkbox"/> Complies
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adequate access exists but not if access is separated
	Circulation (Public):	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited
	(Officials):	<input type="checkbox"/> Back corridor allows for the separation officials.
	(Law Enforcement):	<input type="checkbox"/> Back corridor allows for the separation officials.
8 Superstructure System(s):		
	Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/> None noted
9 Exterior Building Enclosure System(s):		
	Roof:	<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingles
	Exterior Walls:	<input type="checkbox"/> Masonry
	Security elements:	<input type="checkbox"/> Manual locksets
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increased security should be an improvement item.
10 Mechanical System(s):		
	Heating System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forced air
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/> None noted
	Ventilation System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> None observed
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ventilation should be provided for compliance.
	Air Conditioning System Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> None observed
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Electrical System(s):		
	Service Size/Capacity:	<input type="checkbox"/> 200A
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Emergency Power (Y/N); Size:	<input type="checkbox"/> Y; 6kw generator
	Deficiencies Noted:	<input type="checkbox"/> None noted

Remarks/Notes

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>12 Fire Alarm System(s) (Y/N):</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Deficiencies Noted:</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Distance to nearest Fire Dept.:</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Distance to nearest Law Enforcement:</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> | <p>None observed</p> <hr/> <p>FA system should be installed if change in use/occupancy</p> <hr/> <p>200 ft</p> <hr/> <p>13 miles</p> <hr/> |
| <p>13 Fire Protection Systems (Y/N):</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Deficiencies Noted:</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p>None observed</p> <hr/> <p>If occupancy/density changes; upgrades are required.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>14 Security (Y/N):</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Types of Systems:</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Describe:</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Deficiencies Noted:</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p>None observed</p> <hr/> <p>Manual locksets</p> <hr/> <p>Security systems should be installed.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>14 Restroom Facilities (Y/N)</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Public</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Officials (Court)</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Officials (Law Enforcement):</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Separation Issues (Y/N):</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Accessibility Issues (Y/N):</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Describe:</p> | <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p>Y</p> <hr/> <p>Not adequate; common to all</p> <hr/> <p>Not adequate; common to all</p> <hr/> <p>Not adequate; common to all</p> <hr/> <p>Y</p> <hr/> <p>Y</p> <hr/> <p>Public and staff restrooms need to be separated.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>15 Records Management:</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Describe:</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p>Records Storage room available but deficient in size and constr.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>16 Equipment & IT:</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Describe:</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Pc's in use</p> <hr/> |
| <p>17 Emergency Operations Capability:</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Possibly an appropriate facility with improvements needed.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>18 Additional capacity needed to support existing or future Operations:</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No additional capacity needed for existing operation. There is no capacity to handle additional operations unless Post Office vacates First Floor space.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>18 Functional / Operational issues:</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p>Separation of public, staff and law enforcement</p> <hr/> <p>Court and Meeting Room same space</p> <hr/> <p>Opera House upstairs is used sporadically but lacks compliance with code.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>19 Other Notes/Observations:</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <p>Building is on the Historic Register</p> <hr/> <p>Renovations to use the Opera House upstairs would pose access, restroom, fire protection, mechanical, electrical and energy ingredients to renovation budgets.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |

Town of Russell, NY





APPENDIX E:
LEWIS COUNTY COURT CONSOLIDATION CASE STUDY AND
SHARED JUSTICE COURT PLAN

**CONSOLIDATED JUSTICE COURTS & SHARED FACILITY
CASE STUDY:
LEWIS COUNTY, NEW YORK**

Location: Lewis County, NY, Fifth Judicial District

Date: 1998 - 2012

Participants: Towns of Harrisburg, Montague and Pinckney

Agenda: Consolidate courts, shared facility

Status: Successful

Located in Lewis County in the Tug Hill Plateau region, the towns of Harrisburg, Montague and Pinckney cover a combined area of 146 square miles and have 844 residents combined¹. These three municipalities share a single justice and conduct court in a single facility, an arrangement that is recognized as the first multiple town court consolidation in the history of New York State. The Harrisburg, Montague, Pinckney, (H-M-P) court handles approximately 350 cases per year².

The partnership began in 1998, when the towns of Pinckney and Montague began sharing a justice because there were no local residents interested in serving as the Montague justice. When the Pinckney/Montague justice retired in 2007, the two towns lacked any interested candidates to run for office. In 2008, the Harrisburg justice (the late Hon. Justice John B. Woods) was asked to step in, and was temporarily appointed by the 5th Judicial District Administrative Judge to serve as justice for all three communities.

For approximately three years, the late Hon. Justice Woods acted as a circuit judge holding court in three different locations, four times per month until the three towns agreed that holding court in one centrally located facility would be more efficient for all involved. The three towns agreed that the Harrisburg Town Hall was the ideal location because it is centrally located, spacious and has wireless internet access. In order to make the court merger permanent, the towns issued separate requests to the New York State Legislature to amend the Uniform Justice Act to allow each municipality to share a justice and facility. Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2010 amended Section 106-b of the Uniform Justice Act to allow election of a single justice for two or more adjacent towns. The Act requires that the municipalities jointly undertake a study relating to the election of a single town justice who shall preside in the town courts of each such town. Upon the adoption of a joint plan the town boards shall each adopt a joint resolution providing for:

- The election of a single town justice at large to preside in the town courts of the participating towns;

¹ US Census 2010

² Based on eleven months of court cases for the

- The abolition of the existing office of town justice in the participating towns; and
- The election of such single town justice shall occur at the next general election of town officers and every fourth year thereafter.

The New York State Tug Hill Commission took the leadership role in helping the three towns develop the Shared Justice Court Plan, which was adopted by the towns in 2010. In July of 2011 the towns were authorized by the Legislature to share a justice, as a Home Rule Message pursuant to Article IX of the New York State Constitution and the Municipal Home Rule law. Pursuant to Section 106 of the Uniform Justice Court Act and Article 5G of the General Municipal Law, the towns of Harrisburg, Montague and Pinckney entered into a joint intermunicipal agreement to share a single court facility in the Town of Harrisburg.³

In 2011 Hon. Justice Woods began holding court for all three municipalities at the Harrisburg Town Hall two nights per month, reduced by two nights from his original four court nights, two at Harrisburg, one at Montague and one at Pinckney. Cases were lined up so that criminal and traffic violations could be handled on one night and civil and small-claims matters on the other. This schedule allowed representatives from the Lewis County District Attorney's office and the Public Defenders office to be in attendance for all three towns' criminal cases on only one night.

With the passing of Justice Woods in April of 2012, the three towns jointly appointed Hon. Justice Krystal A. Rupert to fill the vacancy of the part-time shared justice position. According to the court clerk, the H-M-P court is held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday with DA night held on the second session. The court essentially operates as three separate courts, but has only one part-time clerk that serves all three towns. The justice calls cases on a first come first serve basis and they have a sign in sheet for each town. The clerk keeps three separate records and filing systems for each town. The clerk has one laptop that she uses for the recording of the proceedings. On court night, she simply opens the SEI CourtRoom Program®, the Universal Case Management System for New York State's Town and Village Courts three times. The software allows users to bounce back and forth from one town's electronic docketing system to the other while entering the necessary information in to the system. The clerk finds the SEI CourtRoom Program very user friendly.

³ H-M-P Shared Justice Court Study

APPENDIX F:
COUNTYWIDE JUSTICE COURT PROFILE AND COURT
SCHEDULE

Countywide Justice Court Profile

	Town of Brasher	Town of Canton	Town of Clare	Town of Clifton	Town of Colton	Town of DeKalb	Town of Depeyster
# Justices(s)	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Justice 1 election term expiration	12/31/15	12/31/14	12/31/15	12/31/15	12/31/14	12/31/14	12/31/15
Justice 2 election term expiration	12/31/13	12/31/16	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Justice Court Revenues	\$34,902	\$79,728	\$663	\$12,393	\$46,003	\$44,859	\$1,596
Justice Court Expenditures	\$51,670	\$106,863	\$4,670	\$9,282	\$54,437	\$34,000	\$5,955
Revenues minus Expenditures	-\$16,768	-\$27,135	-\$4,007	\$3,111	-\$8,434	\$10,859	-\$4,359
Total Cases 2012	760	2,397	31	499	1,117	1,537	58
# of DWI's	27	51	1	5	23	21	4
# Misdemeanors	116	220	10	40	66	94	10
Other	617	2,126	20	454	1,028	1,422	44
	Town of Edwards	Town of Fine	Town of Fowler	Town of Gouverneur	Town of Hammond	Town of Hermon	Town of Hopkinton
# Justices(s)	2	1	1	2	2	1	1
Justice 1 election term expiration	12/31/15	12/31/15	12/31/13	12/31/13	12/31/13	12/31/15	12/31/14
Justice 2 election term expiration	12/31/15	NA	NA	12/31/15	12/31/13	NA	NA
Justice Court Revenues	\$25,985	\$14,852	\$18,091	\$65,539	\$51,224	\$2,500	\$7,390
Justice Court Expenditures	\$16,084	\$10,910	\$16,716	\$109,031	\$37,870	\$10,300	\$9,259
Revenues minus Expenditures	\$9,901	\$3,942	\$1,375	-\$43,492	\$13,354	-\$7,800	-\$1,869
Total Cases 2012	386	437	715	2,763	1,362	345	288
# of DWI's	24	13	27	54	21	41	8
# Misdemeanors	26	36	253	240	47	87	27
Other	336	388	435	2,469	1,294	217	253

Countywide Justice Court Profile

	Town of Lawrence	Town of Lisbon	Town of Louisville	Town of Macomb	Town of Madrid	Town of Massena	Town of Morristown
# Justices(s)	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
Justice 1 election term expiration	12/31/13	12/31/15	12/31/15	12/31/16	12/31/16	12/31/15	12/31/13
Justice 2 election term expiration	NA	12/31/13	12/31/16	NA	NA	12/31/14	12/31/15
Justice Court Revenues	\$15,942	\$21,409	\$29,210	\$9,535	\$23,275	\$50,905	\$62,571
Justice Court Expenditures	\$18,984	\$38,773	\$33,676	\$15,153	\$28,218	\$106,173	\$35,024
Revenues minus Expenditures	-\$3,042	-\$17,364	-\$4,466	-\$5,618	-\$4,943	-\$55,268	\$27,547
Total Cases 2012	458	1,053	1,243	182	648	2,412	1,754
# of DWI's	24	67	34	5	2	46	42
# Misdemeanors	44	167	106	48	54	243	143
Other	390	819	1,103	129	592	2,123	1,569
	Town of Norfolk	Town of Oswegatchie	Town of Parishville	Town of Piercefield	Town of Pierrepont	Town of Pitcairn	Town of Potsdam
# Justices(s)	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
Justice 1 election term expiration	12/31/15	12/31/15	12/31/16	12/31/15	12/31/13	12/31/15	12/31/14
Justice 2 election term expiration	12/31/13	12/31/15	12/31/15	NA	NA	12/31/13	12/31/13
Justice Court Revenues	\$56,703	\$93,429	\$6,767	\$22,656	\$14,442	\$10,057	\$79,771
Justice Court Expenditures	\$71,758	\$84,344	\$23,390	\$18,802	\$30,310	\$18,005	\$81,724
Revenues minus Expenditures	-\$15,055	\$9,085	-\$16,623	\$3,854	-\$15,868	-\$7,948	-\$1,953
Total Cases 2012	2,545	3,292	309	252	647	390	2,480
# of DWI's	144	146	22	7	24	3	77
# Misdemeanors	369	335	36	26	126	22	239
Other	2,032	2,811	251	219	497	365	2,164

Countywide Justice Court Profile

	Town of Rossie	Town of Russell	Town of Stockholm	Town of Waddington	Village of Canton	Village of Massena	Village of Potsdam
# Justices(s)	1	1	1	1	NA	1	1
Justice 1 election term expiration	12/31/13	12/31/13	12/31/13	12/31/15	NA	11/30/14	11/30/14
Justice 2 election term expiration	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Justice Court Revenues	\$8,431	\$13,540	\$28,385	\$70,522	\$59,979	\$49,225	\$97,190
Justice Court Expenditures	\$5,614	\$17,308	\$23,070	\$68,416	\$47,119	\$67,290	\$104,201
Revenues minus Expenditures	\$2,817	-\$3,768	\$5,315	\$2,106	\$12,860	-\$18,065	-\$7,011
Total Cases 2012	349	373	1,120	805	1,469	2,213	2,471
# of DWI's	8	26	39	22	77	73	192
# Misdemeanors	58	43	181	61	273	550	679
Other	283	304	900	722	1,119	1,590	1,600

Source: NYS Office of the State Comptroller, 2012 Annual Financial Reports via Open Book NY. NYS Office of the State Comptroller, Justice Court Fund, Monthly Justice Court Activity Reports, 2012.

Notes:

- 1) Justice Court Expenditures do not include costs for benefits. Employee benefits are listed as a lump sum for all municipal employees on local budgets and on the NYS comptroller reports. Benefits may include state retirement, fire and police retirement, social security, medicare, workers compensation, life insurance, unemployment insurance, disability insurance, hospital/medical insurance and dental insurance.
- 2) Town of Hammond - no data reported for revenue code A2610 (fines and forfeited bail).
- 3) Town of Lawrence - no data reported for revenue code A2610 (fines and forfeited bail).
- 4) Town of Rossie - no financial data at all reported in 2012 or 2011 (sourced 2010).
- 5) Village of Canton - no financial data at all reported in 2012, 2011 (sourced 2010). The Town and Village of Canton consolidated their Justice Courts in December 2012.

Countywide Justice Court Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
C/OGDENSBURG - DRUG COURT EVERY MON AT 12:30 PM	V/MASSENA EVERY TUES AT 1:30 PM	ROSSIE 1ST & 3RD WED AT 9:00 AM	GOUVERNEUR 2ND & 4TH THURS AT 9:00 AM	C/OGDENSBURG- V&T EVERY 1ST & 3RD FRI AT 8:30AM
HERMON 1ST & 3RD MONDAY AT 5:30 PM	C/OGDENSBURG - CRIMINAL EVERY TUES AT 9:00 AM	NORFOLK 1ST WED AT 7:00PM CRIMINAL & TRAFFIC	GOUVERNEUR 1ST & 3RD THURS AT 3:00 PM	V/POTSDAM EVERY FRI AT 9:30 AM
RUSSELL 1ST & 3RD MONDAY AT 7:00 PM	BRASHER EVERY TUES AT 6:00 PM	NORFOLK 2ND WED AT 9:00 AM	POTSDAM 2ND & 4TH THURS AT 9:30 AM	
	EDWARDS EVERY TUES AT 6:00 PM	NORFOLK 3RD WED AT 9:00 AM CRIMINAL ONLY	POTSDAM 1ST & 3RD THURS AT 1:00 PM	
	FINE 2ND & 4TH TUES AT 6:30 PM	NORFOLK 3RD WED AT 7:00 PM TRAFFIC ONLY	MORRISTOWN 1ST,2ND,3RD & LAST THURS AT 4:00 PM	
	CLIFTON 1ST & 3RD TUES AT 7:00 PM	NORFOLK 4TH WED AT 9:00 AM	PIERCEFIELD 1ST & LAST THURS AT 5:00 PM	
	DEPEYSTER 1ST TUES AT 7:00 PM	NORFOLK - NO COURT ON 5TH WEEK OF MONTH	CLARE 2ND & 4TH THURS AT 6:00 PM	
	COLTON 2ND & 4TH TUES AT 7:00 PM	CANTON EVERY WED AT 1:30 PM	HAMMOND 1ST,2ND,3RD & LAST THURS AT 7:00 PM	
	LISBON EVERY TUES AT 7:00 PM	CANTON - NO COURT ON 5TH WEEK OF THE MONTH	MACOMB 2ND THURS AT 7:00 PM	
	MADRID 2ND & 4TH TUES AT 7:00 PM	MASSENA 2ND, 3RD & 4TH WED AT 1:30 PM OR 5:00 PM	PITCAIRN 1ST & 3RD THURS AT 7:00 PM	
	PARISHVILLE 1ST & 3RD TUES AT 7 OR 7:30 PM	WADDINGTON 1ST & 3RD WED AT 4:00 PM		
	DEKALB EVERY TUES AT 7:30 PM	OSWEGATCHIE EVERY WED AT 5:00 PM		
	LAWRENCE 1ST & 3RD AT 1:00 OR 7:00 PM	LOUISVILLE 1ST & 3RD WED AT 5:30 PM		
		FOWLER 2ND AND 4TH WED AT 6:00 PM		
		STOCKHOLM 1ST & 3RD WED AT 6:00 PM		
		PIERREPONT 1ST & 3RD WED AT 7:00 PM		
		HOPKINTON 1ST & 3RD WED AT 8:00 PM		

APPENDIX G:

RESOURCE LIST FOR SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING
FACILITIES & RENOVATION COST ESTIMATES IN TABLES 7 – 14

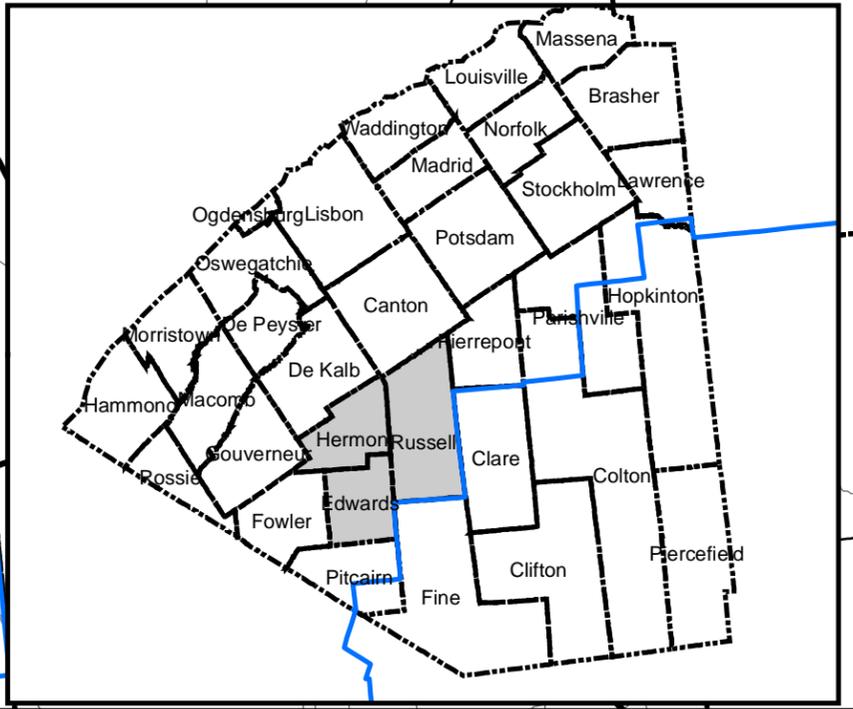
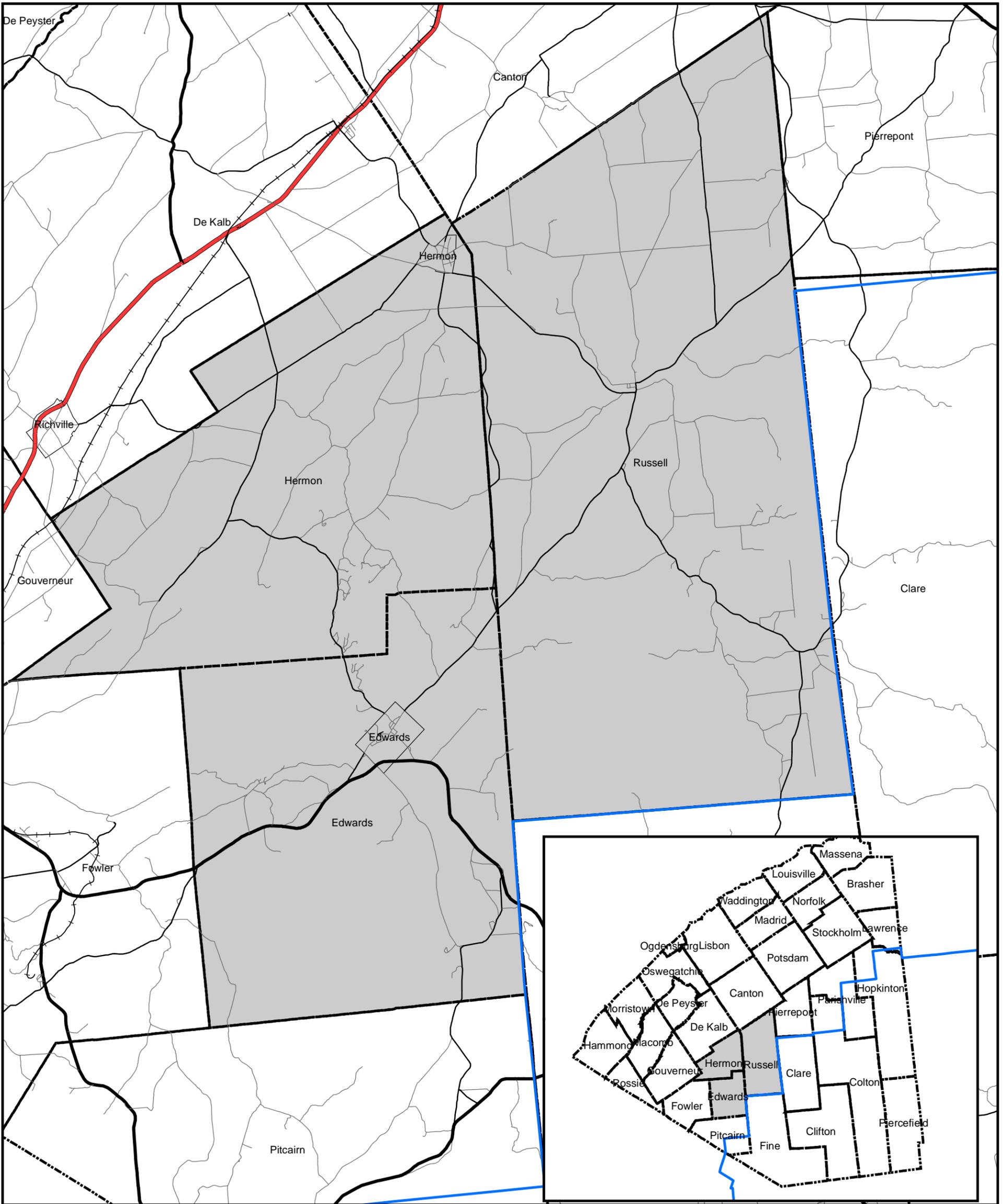
Appendix G

Resource List for Suggested Improvements to Existing Facilities and Renovation/New Construction Cost Estimates (Tables 7 – 14 herein)

The Codes, Plans, Standards, and Guidelines referenced below, have been applied to this project using our best professional judgment, and understanding of the fiscal, functional and organizational difficulties involved in the Study's goal to objectively evaluate and recommend viable alternatives to current rural judicial practices.

- 1) Building Code of New York State and all of its internal references to the Uniform Fire, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical and Life Safety Codes, including the accessibility requirements of American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Americans Disability Act (ADA), and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- 2) Action Plan for the Justice Courts, State of New York Unified Court System, Office of Court Administration (OCA), November 2006. Recommendations for Court Operations and Administration, Facility Security and Public Protection, Accessibility, Facility Improvements, Appendix B: Best Practices for Justice Court Security.
- 3) Action Plan for the Justice Courts, State of New York Unified Court System, Office of Court Administration (OCA), Two Year Update, September 2008. Recommendations for Upgrading Court Facilities and Security.
- 4) Guidelines for Implementing Best Practices in Court Building Security, Costs, Priorities, Funding Strategies, and Accountability. The National Center for State Courts and the State Justice Institute, 2010. Appendix Steps to Best Practices.
- 5) Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (PBS-PQ100.1). U.S. General Services Administration. http://www.gsa.gov/portal/mediaId/170711/fileName/PQ1001_-_Facilities_Standards_for_the_Public_Building_Service General Requirements and Life Cycle Cost Example.

MAPS

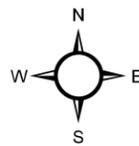
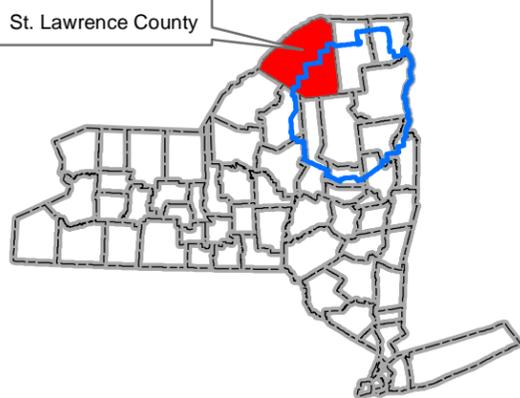


Project Location Map

Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell St. Lawrence County, New York

Legend

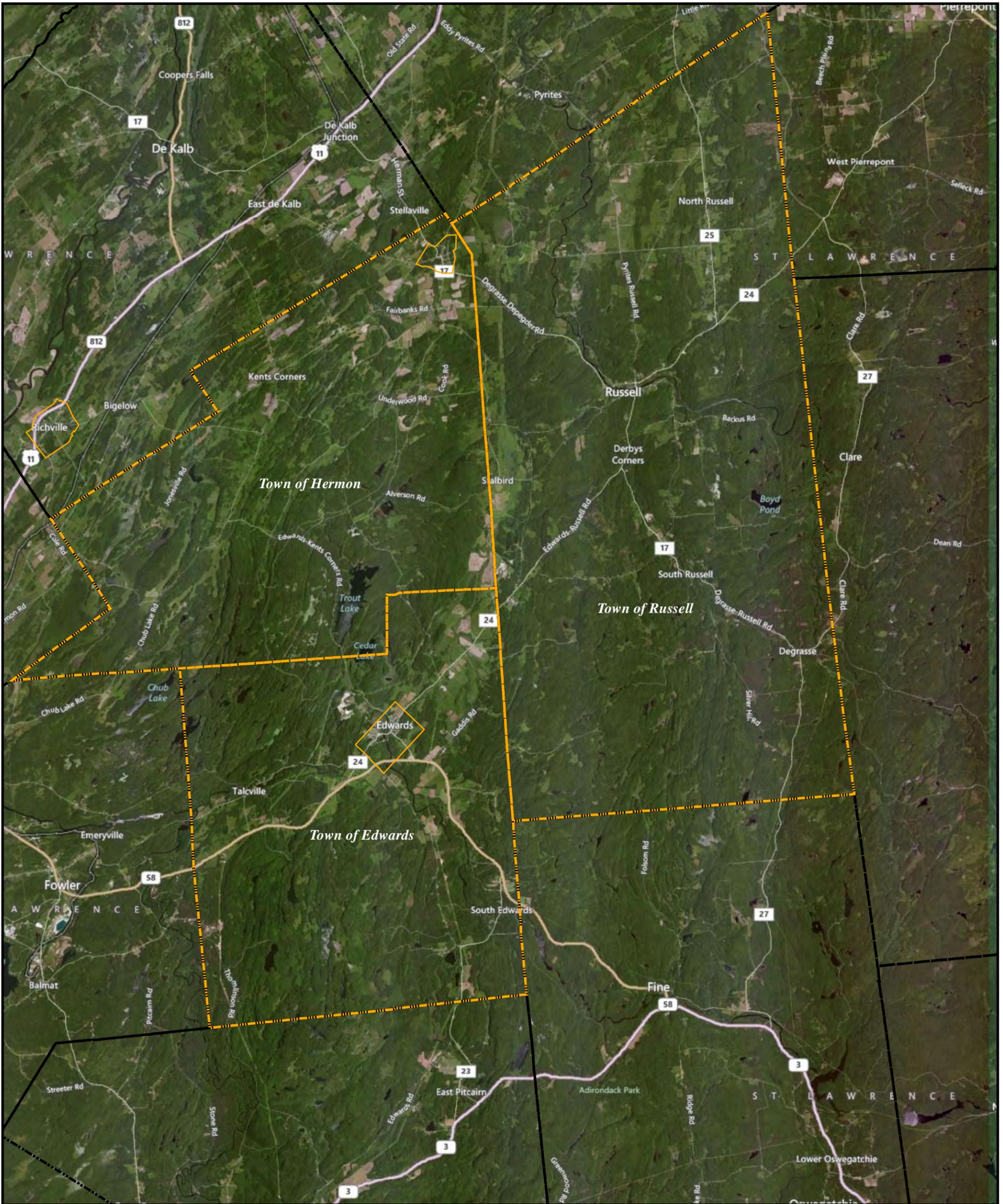
- County Boundary
- Project Partners
- Adirondack Park Boundary



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Data Source: NYS GIS Clearinghouse.
Notes: Produced for planning purposes only. Accuracy or completeness is not guaranteed.



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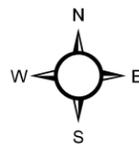
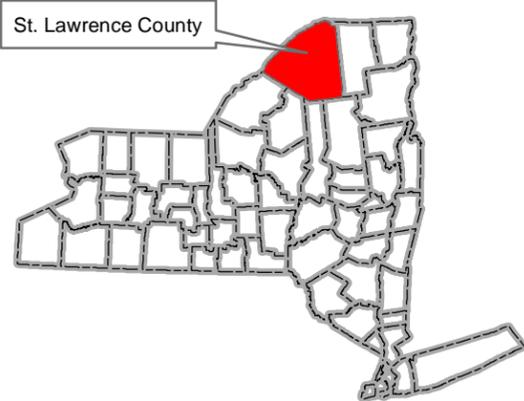


Aerial Map

Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell
St. Lawrence County, New York

Legend

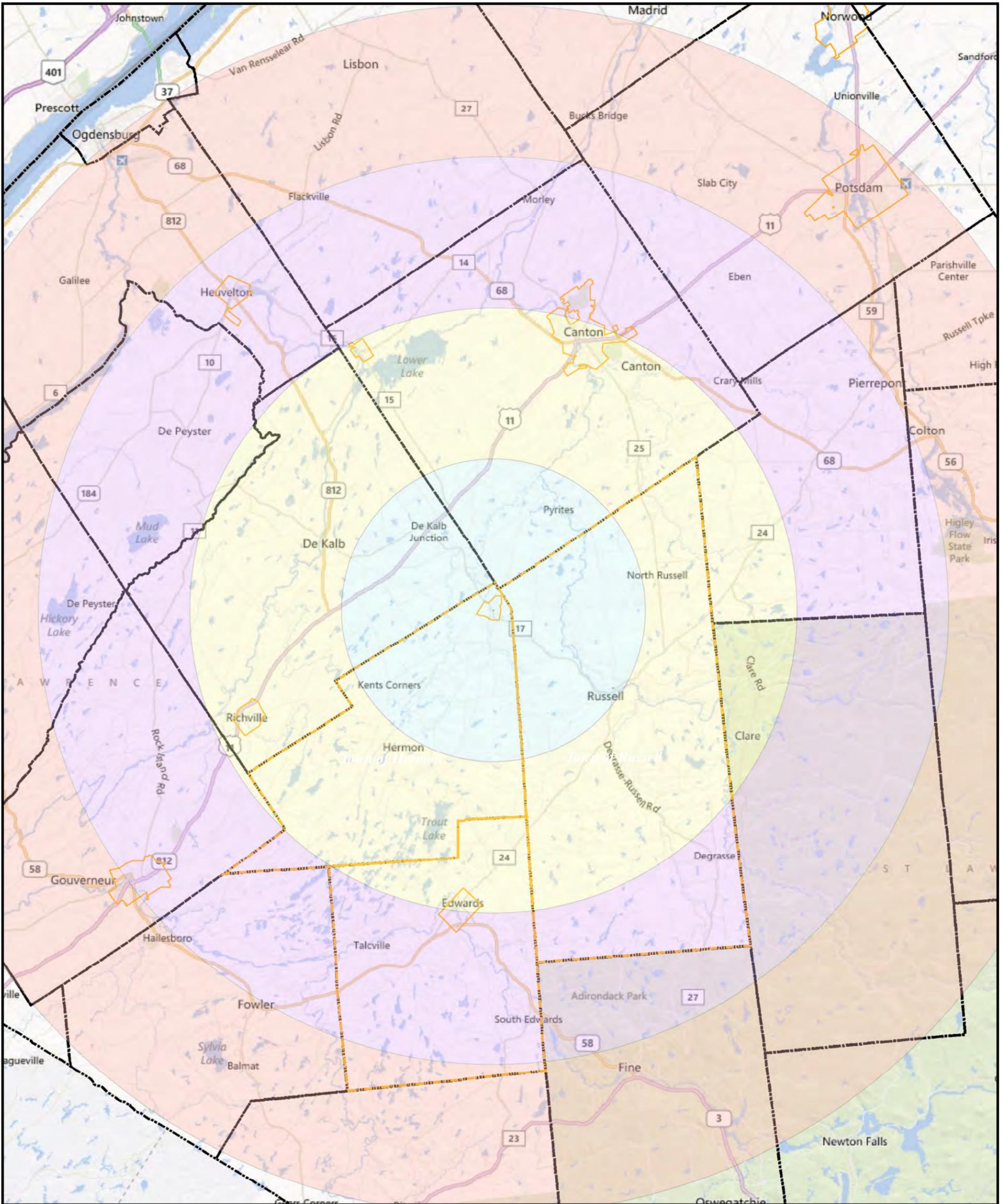
-  Project Partners
-  Villages
-  Other Towns



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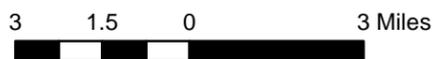
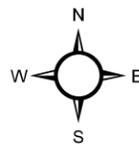
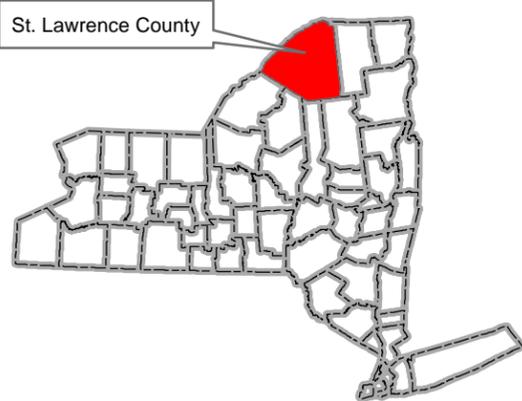


Distance Map

Towns of Edwards, Hermon and Russell
St. Lawrence County, New York

Legend

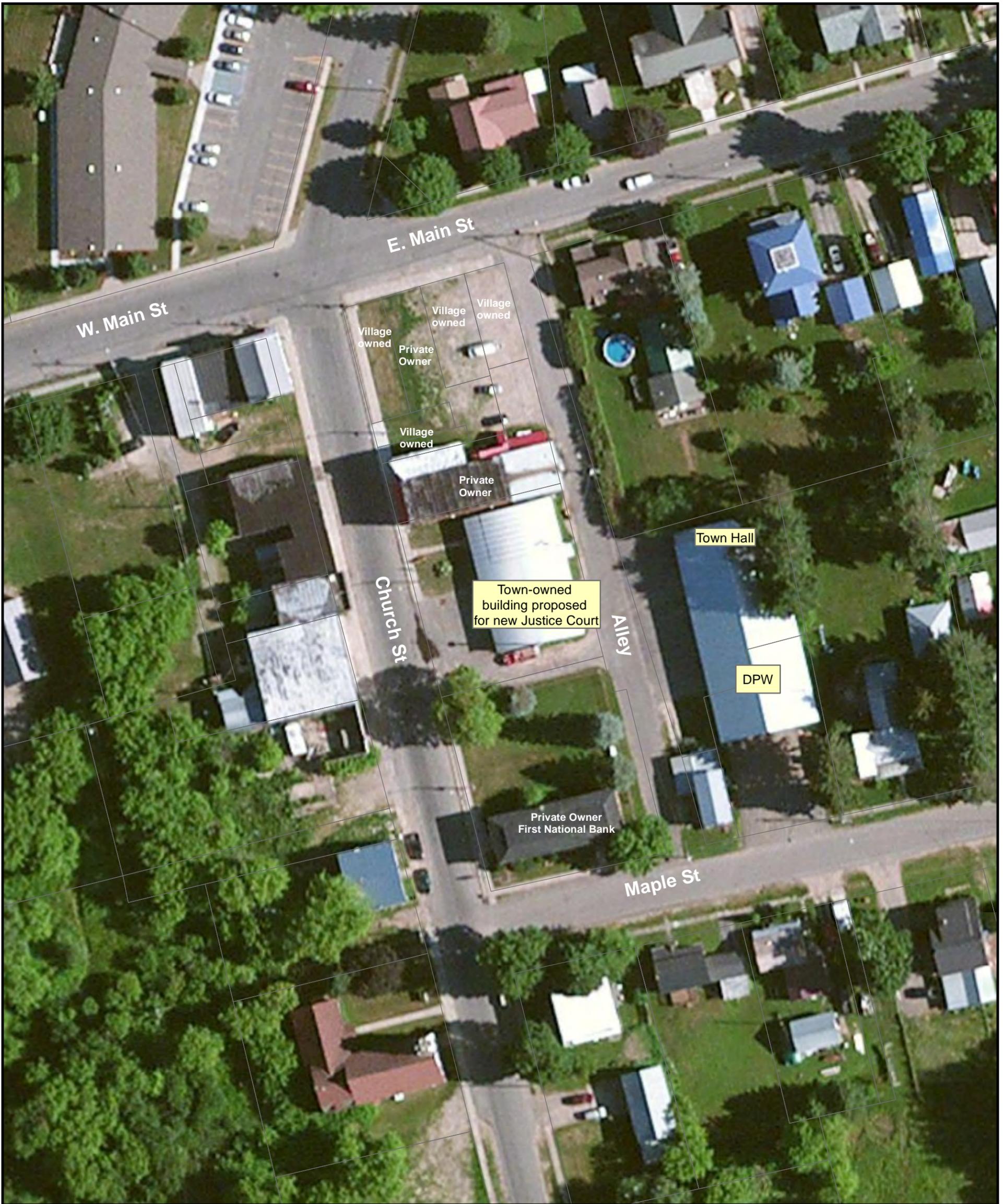
- Project Partners
- Villages
- Other Towns
- Distance Buffer
 - 5 Miles
 - 10 Miles
 - 15 Miles
 - 20 Miles



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Data Source: Bing Maps and NYS GIS Clearinghouse.
Notes: Produced for planning purposes only. Accuracy or completeness is not guaranteed. Distance buffer is measured from a central point of the existing Hermon Town Hall property.



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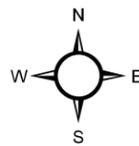
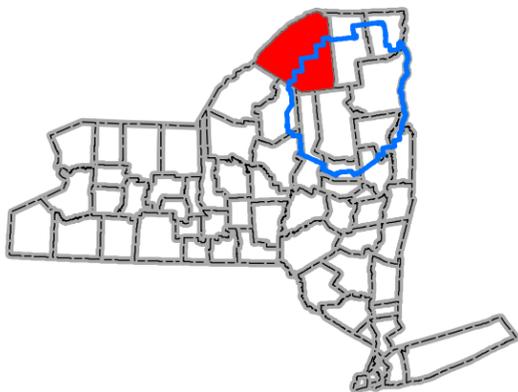


Aerial View of Proposed New Town of Hermon Justice Court

Town of Hermon
St. Lawrence County, New York

Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Tax Parcels



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