

# MEMORANDUM

**Date:** August, 2000  
**To:** Legislative Space Study File  
**From:** Mark Willemssen  
Legislative Facilities Manager  
**RE:** Explanation of the goals established by the Capitol Projects Workgroup for the Legislative Branch Space Analysis

The Capitol Projects Workgroup feels that the General Assembly needs to address three critical issues concerning the General Assembly and the Iowa State Capitol Building.

1. Improve the safety and efficiency of spaces for the General Assembly.
2. Increase the educational opportunities for the public on the legislative process as well as the history of the Iowa State Capitol Building.
3. Create an appropriate environment to properly greet and meet with foreign dignitaries and business leaders from around the world.

The following goals were established by the Capitol Projects Workgroup to address these three critical issues:

- Address life safety code deficiencies
- Address overcrowding of the General Assembly staff
- Provide an efficient working environment for the General Assembly and its staff
- Allow for appropriate historic restoration of all Capitol Building spaces
- Create public reception and educational areas for all visitors

**Life safety code compliance (including the Americans with Disabilities Act) of the Iowa State Capitol Building.**

- **Mezzanines** – The mezzanines in the Iowa State Capitol Building were built in the mid-sixties to early seventies. Most of the mezzanines were constructed of wood and other combustible materials. To keep the mezzanine levels would mean that the existing structures would have to be demolished and new structures built from non-combustible materials. Keeping the mezzanines and developing several small rooms in the attic will mean that the Capitol Building increases from a four-story structure to a seven-story structure by code. That moves us into different building code requirements. The following is a partial list of code requirements that will need to be completed if the building grows beyond a four-story structure.
  - Close the rotunda openings between levels.
  - Enclose the existing stairs between ground, first, and second floors
  - Removal of all glass in doors and windows between the corridor and office spaces on all floors.
  - Remove the original doors and add new fire rated doors along all corridors.
  - Exterior windows need to be removed at the mezzanine levels for the floor system.
  - The addition of an emergency generator for a new smoke exhaust system.

- New smoke exhaust system that would probably require replacing the windows around the main dome with louvers.
- The sprinkler system in the renovated areas will need to be revised.
- Elevators will need to be installed for access to the mezzanine areas. This will require projections through the first floor ceiling spaces for a required elevator pit area.

Even with these changes, the State Fire Marshal has stated that the building still would not be completely code compliant.

- **Cafeteria** – Life safety codes require that hazardous areas such as kitchens and dumpsters be separated from exit corridors with fire rated enclosures. Also, each cooking area needs to have an exhaust hood installed and ducted to the exterior of the building. Each duct needs to be sloped to prevent the accumulation of grease, and needs to have access at each level of the building for cleaning and maintenance. Each duct is required to be in a fire resistive enclosure and the enclosure shall be separated from the duct by at least 3 inches, but not more than 12 inches. The physical requirements needed for the exhaust duct system would be prohibitive in keeping the kitchen on ground floor.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act** – In February 1996, the United States Department of Justice commenced an investigation of a complaint against the State of Iowa alleging violations of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act with regard to accessibility in and around the Iowa State Capitol Building. In connection with the investigation of this complaint, the Iowa General Assembly and the Department of General Services, on behalf of the State of Iowa, represented to the Department of Justice the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility study. This accessibility study indicated that all occupied areas of the Capitol Building shall be made accessible to individuals with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible. Based on these representations, the Department of Justice closed its investigation of the complaint.

#### **Overcrowding of the General Assembly staff.**

- **Office square footage** – The current office for a Legislative Branch employee in the Capitol Building is, for the most part, cramped and very inefficient. Because of cramped office space, files and other storage areas that should be located within individual offices have been located away from the offices, creating inefficiencies. The Legislative Branch currently has approximately 78 square feet of office space per employee. Included in that 78 square feet per employee is square footage for the chambers, all committee and conference rooms, and all storage areas. That is compared to the square feet per office space for the following Executive Branch departments:
 

• Department of Human Rights	133 square feet per employee
• Attorney General	143 square feet per employee
• Department of Public Health (Lucas)	140 square feet per employee
• Treasurer of State (Ola Babcock Miller Bldg.)	157 square feet per employee
• Board of Regents	239 square feet per employee
• Secretary of State (Lucas)	135 square feet per employee

These figures are taken from the "Operation Bold Move" 1998 programming for office space. These numbers include actual office size, conference rooms, and storage spaces. They do not include any circulation space.
- **Corridor storage** – General Assembly storage in corridor areas is estimated at over 2000 square feet. This storage needs to be removed from the corridor areas for the Capitol Building to meet life safety codes. Storage has been created in corridors because of the lack of proper office areas.
- **Removal of mezzanines** – As required by life safety codes, the mezzanines need to be removed. This involves over 7000 square feet of floor space that needs to be relocated.

- **Accessibility codes** – Office space square footage will be lost to comply with accessibility codes. Until designs are allowed to proceed, that exact number is not known.

**Provide an efficient working environment for the General Assembly and its staff.**

- **Proximity of offices** - In the fall of 2000, the General Assembly will have staff offices located in four separate buildings spread across the Capitol Complex. Much efficiency is lost when personnel and equipment are not centralized. Examples would be the need for additional copiers, fax machines, printers, etc.; travel time for personnel between buildings to deliver items and talk with other staff members and legislators; inefficiencies to manage staff; etc.
- **Quality of space** – By providing a pleasing and efficient working environment for the General Assembly and its staff, job satisfaction will increase. A 1999 survey conducted by the American Society of Interior Designers indicates that office environment is usually one of the top three factors that will influence an employee's decision to accept or stay at a job. By making improvements to work space in order to provide an efficient working environment, worker satisfaction and productivity will increase, and turnover rate for Legislative staff positions would probably decrease.
- **Maintenance efficiencies** – As the interior Capitol renovation progresses, new mechanical systems are being installed in such a way to provide a comfortable office environment, but not take away from the historic nature of the rooms. Space must be provided in front of such items as electrical panels, fan coil units, etc. to provide routine and emergency maintenance. Every square foot of floor space in the offices can no longer be occupied with furniture. Appropriate furniture designs are essential as the renovated spaces become occupied.

**Allow for appropriate historic restoration of all Capitol Building spaces.**

- **Removal of mezzanines** – The life safety code requirement to remove all mezzanine floors will help restore the affected areas to their original grandeur.
- **Removal of the cafeteria from the rotunda area** – The life safety code requirement to remove the cafeteria from the rotunda area will keep grease and smoke from depositing on the recently restored stenciled walls and artwork throughout the Capitol Building. This will also restore space once part of the original circulation for the rotunda. This space will potentially be used for improvements to greet visitors and educate the public with displays.
- **Other opportunities** – Reorganization of space to increase efficiencies among staff will provide an opportunity to restore each of the spaces to their original configuration and finish.

**Create public reception and educational areas for all visitors.**

- **Tourist destination location** – With the Capitol Restoration and Legislative Space Study, the opportunity has been created to develop the Iowa State Capitol Building into a more interesting destination for students and tourists. An orientation space can be developed where the tour guides can speak to a group or individuals before beginning a tour. Or, it may be an area where a group can watch the newly created Iowa Public Television video concerning the Capitol Restoration. The displays located in the first floor rotunda can be moved and redone to make them more self-explanatory and educational.
- **Gift shop** – An area can be created for a gift shop. Items that pertain to both Iowa and the State Capitol could be purchased. Items that are brought back to other parts of the country, or other parts of the world, may entice others to visit and learn more about our state and the Capitol Building.

- **Capitol reception area** – Create an area within the Capitol Building to properly greet national dignitaries, foreign dignitaries, corporate leaders, etc. Not only does the area need to be created, but also the path leading to this area needs to be of proper stature. All entrances to the Capitol Building should be upgraded to receive visitors at all times. To do this, the “loading dock” and dumpsters should be moved away from the west ground floor entrance of the building, and the cafeteria needs to be removed from the ground floor rotunda. Relocation of service areas for the building should be incorporated into the design of legislative spaces and restoration of the Capitol Building.

**Cc: Capitol Projects Workgroup  
Secretary of the Senate  
Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives  
Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck  
RDG Bussard Dikis**

### **2.43 General supervision over legislative facilities, equipment, and arrangements.**

The legislative council in cooperation with the officers of the senate and house shall have the duty and responsibility for preparing for each session of the general assembly. Pursuant to such duty and responsibility, the legislative council shall assign the use of areas in the state capitol except for the areas used by the governor and the courts as of January 1, 1986 and, in consultation with the director of the department of general services and the capitol planning commission, may assign areas in other state office buildings for use of the general assembly or legislative agencies. The legislative council may authorize the renovation, remodeling and preparation of the physical facilities used or to be used by the general assembly or legislative agencies subject to the jurisdiction of the legislative council and award contracts pursuant to such authority to carry out such preparation. The legislative council may purchase supplies and equipment deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the legislative branch of government.

In carrying out its duties under this section, the legislative council shall consult with the director of the department of general services and the capitol planning commission, but shall not be bound by any decision of the director in respect to the responsibilities and duties provided for in this section. The legislative council may direct the director of the department of general services or other state employees to carry out its directives in regard to the physical facilities of the general assembly, or may employ other personnel to carry out such functions.

The costs of carrying out the provisions of this section shall be paid pursuant to section 2.12.

### **18.8 Capitol buildings and grounds -- services.**

The director shall provide necessary lighting, fuel, and water services for the state buildings and grounds located at the seat of government, except the buildings and grounds referred to in section 216B.3, subsection 6.

The director shall establish, supervise, and maintain a central mail unit for the use of all state officials and agencies located at the seat of government. All state officials and agencies located at the seat of government shall be required to dispatch first and second class mail and parcel post mail, at the mail unit for the purpose of having the mail sealed, metered, and posted.

The director shall allow a department to seal, meter or stamp, and post mail directly from such department if it would be more efficient and economical.

Postage shall not be furnished to the general assembly, its members, officers, employees, or committees.

Except for buildings and grounds described in section 216B.3, subsection 6; section 2.43, unnumbered paragraph 1; and any buildings under the custody and control of the Iowa public employees' retirement system, the director shall assign office space at the capitol, other state buildings and elsewhere in the city of Des Moines, for all executive and judicial state agencies. Assignments may be changed at any time. The various officers to whom rooms have been so assigned may control the same while the assignment to them is in force. Official apartments shall be used only for the purpose of conducting the business of the state. The term "*capitol*" or "*capitol building*" as used in the Code shall be descriptive of all buildings upon the capitol grounds. The capitol building itself is reserved for the operations of the general assembly, the governor and the courts and the assignment and use of physical facilities for the general assembly shall be pursuant to section 2.43.

The director shall appoint a superintendent of buildings and grounds, who shall serve at the pleasure of the director and is not governed by the merit system provisions of chapter 19A.