The Assignment

- In late 2009, the Houghton County Commissioners asked their Law Enforcement Committee to conduct a study of the current county jail and court facilities and recommend needed changes, including:
- What needs to be done to assure that Houghton County’s criminal justice facilities meet current laws and regulations?
- If new facilities are needed, what are they and where should they be located?
- A committee of citizens and officials from throughout the county, assisted by expert consultants, has studied the issue and prepared this report.
The Current Situation – Main Jail

- The main Houghton County Jail is nearly 50 years old; a jail has been in this neighborhood for the last 120 years.
- The standards for safe and humane incarceration have changed drastically over the years.
- The county’s demographics have changed greatly over that time and will continue to change over the next 30 to 50 years.
- Virtually nothing at the jail concerning staff and inmate safety, legal affairs, rehabilitation, etc. meet current standards and requirements.

The Main Jail and Sheriff's Office
Main Jail Problems include:

Lack of visual contact and control

Lack of privacy for visitors and attorneys

Lack of space for activities and education

Roof leaks

Difficulty in segregating maximum and minimum security inmates

Main Jail
Problems include:

Inadequate safety and security for staff

Frequent plumbing, wiring, mechanical and HVAC trouble

Lack of adequate fire control system

Jail does not provide adequate number and mix of beds to meet current and future needs.
The Main Jail

The main Houghton County jail is outmoded, outdated, undersized, and not compliant with legal and ethical standards.

Sheriff's Offices

The Sheriff's offices are located in old Sheriff's Residence, adjacent to the Jail.

This former bedroom serves as the meeting room, interview room, evidence processing room, armory, training room. Proper storage space is very inadequate throughout the building.
The Current Situation
97th District Court

District Court Facilities

Present court room is only about 1/3 the size of modern standards

Court room is often standing room only

Defendant, Defense and Prosecuting attorneys share one table

Jury box and judge's bench not handicapped accessible
District Court Concerns

Congestion

Privacy

District Court Concerns

Safety

Work Flow