



## Site Selection Process for New Police Station Draws to a Close

Recently the City completed a series of three public outreach meetings to inform the public of the site selection process for the new Police Station. While the meetings were well-attended and informative, it became clear that the information provided at those meetings should be more widely distributed, with the goal of describing the complex, thorough process the City is undergoing to make the best site decision for the community and the Police Department.

The key goals for the new Police Station are:

- Enable major police working groups to (once again) be housed in a single, secure, seismically resilient building.
- Allow expansions and enhancements to SBPD’s citizen volunteer programs.
- Allow new public and in-service training opportunities (CPR classes, neighborhood watch formation meetings, etc.)
- Streamline coordination/communications between key policing services (i.e., Investigations and Patrol in the same building).
- Support the delivery of 24/7/365 services from a highly sustainable building.
- Provide a modern, barrier-free environment, which will promote additional opportunities for staff recruitment/retention.

### PROGRAMMING – PHASE 1:

The Police Station project began in June 2018 with a “Programming” phase, which collected pertinent data about the Police Department’s needs through organizational charts, interviews, and surveys. Based on this information, a site criteria checklist was created as the filter through which potential sites were to be evaluated for viability. The criteria included:

Location	Flood Zone	Archaeological
Lot Size	Surrounding Uses	Utility/Fiber Proximity
Lot Shape	Setbacks	Charter Issues/Requirements
Zoning	Seismic Issues	Current Uses
Height Limitation	Water Table	Access
Ownership	Environmental	Easements

Four particular factors became more crucial as City staff began to narrow down the possibilities:

Ownership: Existing City ownership of the site is critical to avoid the high cost of a purchase. Measure C funds, which will be used to finance the Police Station, are extremely limited and must be allocated to a number of competing priority projects in the City. While the Police Station is a high priority, much of the Measure C funding will go toward streets and infrastructure improvements throughout Santa Barbara.

**Downtown Corridor:** The importance of locating the Police Station in the Downtown corridor is illustrated by the following: 1) Most of the calls for police service are in the Downtown area, and while response time is not directly correlated to station location, the efficiency of patrol shift changes and proximity to the areas of patrol is key; 2) Officers are needed at the Courthouse as part of their duties, so proximity to the Courthouse is important for efficiency and time; and 3) The Police Station needs to be available to all members of the public as a community resource; therefore, it should be centrally located to serve all areas equally.

**Flood Zone:** The new Police Station cannot be located within any FEMA-designated flood zone, 100 year or 500 year. The City also will not locate the Police Station in an area that has been preliminarily identified as vulnerable to sea level rise. The combination of flood and sea level rise vulnerability eliminates many parts of the City as viable locations.

**Size:** The site must be large enough to accommodate a 72,000 square foot building and a parking structure that can park 252 cars. Both need to be secure facilities. Some public parking will be accommodated on site, in addition to nearby public parking lots and street parking.

**SITE SELECTION – PHASE 2:**

These specific parameters make site selection more challenging. Some sites that seem like good possibilities don't, in fact, work. Below is a list of sites the public has asked about that were evaluated and determined not viable.

<b>Private Property:</b>	<b>Issues:</b>
Sears - La Cumbre Plaza	Not in City's ownership, Not Downtown
Macy's - Paseo Nuevo	Not in City's ownership, Building and parking not viable
Verizon Building - Canon Perdido/Ortega	Not in City's ownership, Cost prohibitive to renovate
Armory Property - Canon Perdido/Nopal	Not in City's ownership, Located in Flood Zone
SB News Press - 715 Anacapa St.	Not in City's ownership, Cost prohibitive to renovate
Saks Building - Carrillo/State St.	Not in City's ownership, Secured by another entity

<b>Other Government Property:</b>	<b>Issues:</b>
National Guard at McKenzie Park	Not in City's ownership, Not Downtown
Earl Warren Showgrounds	Not in City's ownership, Located in County, Not Downtown
US Post Office - Anacapa/Canon Perdido	Not in City's ownership, Property not large enough

<b>City Property:</b>	<b>Issues:</b>
Parks & Recreation/Facilities Property	Located in Flood Zone
Municipal Golf Course	Not Downtown, Requires major change to golf course
Lot 11 - Haley & Anacapa	Located in 500 Year Flood Zone
Carrillo Commuter Lot	Size is insufficient, Creek setback, Access issues
Alameda Park	Historic Park, Requires vote to change use, Mature Landscaping
Existing Police Station	Size is insufficient for new station
Lot 3 - Figueroa & Chapala	Requires back of house access, insecure

Essential services buildings like a Police Station have very specific requirements for construction and safety that must be met. California building codes have been updated many times since the original Police Station was constructed, particularly seismic specifications. There are no privately owned buildings in Santa Barbara that can be converted to a Police Station meeting today's requirements. This includes the Macy's and Sears properties, which are often suggested as options by the community. Though at face value these currently under-utilized buildings seem like good options, they are not under City ownership, not offered for sale, and would be extremely costly to demolish and rebuild. Both properties are also oversized for the Police Department's needs.

## **CONCLUSION**

This site selection process is complicated and thorough. It begins by objectively reviewing and considering the many variables of a property's viability. If a site is viable, it is reviewed for scope and scale through massing studies and layouts. If at that point the site makes sense, it is considered an option. The two locations that meet these rigorous standards are the sites of the Cota Commuter Lot and the Louise Lowry Davis/1235 Teen Center/Spencer Adams Park.

While the final decision will rest with the City Council, it is City staff's job to ensure the recommendation to City Council is the best decision for the community, meets the needs of the Police Department, resolves any resulting displacement (such as Lawn Bowlers or Farmer's Market), and provides the community with a much-needed resource.