



Public Safety Operations and Training Facility

City of Georgetown Bond Election on May 14, 2011

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Why is a new Public Safety Operations and Training Facility on the May 14 ballot?

Answer: The Police Department and Fire Administration were identified as five-year capital improvements in the 2003 City Facilities Plan that was developed by the City. Currently, most police operations are housed in a 100-year-old building that was constructed as the city power plant. Police Department operations are currently split into three buildings with 18,000 square feet of space. Fire Administration is housed in a 119-year-old structure that has served as the City's first fire station, City Hall, jail, and Water Department. The Police Department and Fire Administration have space requirements for offices, training, parking, conference rooms, and storage that exceed their current facilities.



Rendering of proposed public safety facility

2) The estimated size of the Public Safety Operations and Training Facility is 70,000 square feet. How was that size determined?

Answer: The facility is being sized to accommodate growth through 2030. In that year, the projected staffing in the Police Department and Fire Administration is 337 employees. This compares with 113 employees currently for the Police Department and 8 employees currently in Fire Administration.

3) Could the Public Safety Operations and Training Facility be built in phases to accommodate future growth?

Answer: The 16-member Citizen Task Force that developed a recommendation for the city council on the Public Safety Facility considered a phased plan. However, after exploring options and costs, the Citizen Task Force recommended that the facility be built in one phase with room for growth. Factors considered included the current cost of construction and the potential cost of a phased versus non-phased plan.

4) The estimated cost of the proposed Public Safety Operations and Training Facility is \$29.5 million including debt issuance costs. Why would it cost more than the Public Library?

Answer: The Public Safety facility will have more interior walls, more physical and electronic security features, and more employee and department vehicle space requirements than the Library. Water detention infrastructure will be greater since the Library could use an existing downtown-area detention system and did not require an on-site structure. Since the emergency operations center and 24-hour emergency communications center will be located in this facility, there are additional electrical and grounding requirements, as well as a reinforced exterior building shell to reduce potential risks from severe weather. Communication infrastructure includes a microwave link for the County-wide communications system and redundant fiber-optic lines.



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5) *The vacant former public library across the street from the current Police Department is a 17,000 square-foot building. Why don't the police use that building?*

Answer: A space assessment and 20-year projection for the Police Department conducted by an outside architect showed that using the old library would not provide room for growth as staffing increases. Using the old library also would split up police operations among four separate buildings. The old library does not provide the required staff and vehicle parking, does not have space for outdoor training, and does not provide space for planned indoor training facilities.



Current police facility - 809
Martin Luther King Jr Street

6) *The Police Department's Emergency Communications Center (9-1-1 dispatch) moved into the Georgetown Communication and Technology Building in 2008. Will Emergency Communications move to the new Public Safety Operations and Training Facility or stay in their current building?*

Answer: The 24-hour Emergency Communications Center will move to the new facility in the proposed plan. The Emergency Operations Center on the first floor of the Georgetown Communication and Technology Building will be used as a conference room and back-up Emergency Operations Center.

7) *The City currently owns the former Albertson's grocery store building, which is 55,000 square feet. Why doesn't the City use that building as the public safety facility?*

Answer: Last year, the city council voted to sell the Albertson's grocery store building for use as retail space. Currently a developer has an option to purchase the building and will make a \$25,000 payment to the City if he does not exercise that option by the end of 2011. The Albertson's property does not have outdoor space for training facilities currently planned for the Police Department. The retail building is not configured for uses such as offices, evidence storage, emergency communications, or conference rooms. According to a 2008 estimate, the cost to renovate the building for use as the police station and municipal court is approximately \$17 million.

8) *What will happen to the current Police Station, Old Fire Station/Fire Administration, old public library, and first floor of the Georgetown Communication and Technology Building if the public safety facility is built?*

Answer: The City has not determined a final plan for these facilities, but if the voters approve the bonds, the City is considering converting the current Police Department on Martin Luther King, Jr. Street to an arts center. Proposals for uses for the old fire station at 816 S. Main Street have included a Visitor Information Center or leased retail space. The old truck bays next to the historic fire station are slated to be renovated and become leased space for a winery. The old library building would be renovated for Municipal Court. Vacant space on the first floor of the Georgetown Communication and Technology Building could be used by City departments that will soon exceed



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their available space, including Planning and Development, Inspections, Finance, or Economic Development.

9) *The estimated property tax rate impact of the Public Safety Operations and Training Facility bonds is 5 cents. What factors can affect that estimate?*

Answer: Bonds for the facility would likely be issued in two or three phases to match funding with cash flow needs as the facility is being built. Changes in the tax base, as well as changes to existing property valuations, can affect the tax impact each year either positively or negatively. Lengthening the term of the bonds from 20 to 25 years also could lessen the maximum one-year tax impact. Georgetown's current property tax rate is 35.6 cents per \$100 valuation.



Current fire administration facility
- 816 S. Main

10) *If the Public Safety Operations and Training Facility bond passes, will it increase the property taxes paid by homeowners who are 65-or-older or disabled?*

Answer: Homeowners who are 65-or-older or disabled whose City taxes are frozen when the bonds are issued will not have their property taxes increased if the bonds are approved, under current City taxing procedures.

11) *Will the location of the Public Safety Operations and Training Facility on DB Wood Road reduce emergency response times for the east side of Georgetown?*

Answer: No. Police officers respond to calls for service from five designated patrol sectors in the City. Those sectors will not change as a result of a new facility. Fire response is from fire stations, not the administration building. Georgetown currently has four fire stations and a fifth fire station is scheduled to begin construction later this year.

12) *Why are a fire training tower and training classroom included in plans for Fire Station 5, which is not included on the bond election?*

Answer: Georgetown has historically funded fire operation facilities with certificate of obligation bonds that do not require voter approval. These facilities can be constructed and available sooner to meet the increased demand for training by the fire department if included in the current certificate of obligation bond issue.

13) *The proposed facility includes a tactical training building for the Police Department. Why doesn't the Police Department continue to use other training facilities in the state?*

Answer: The proposed police tactical training building would be approximately 4,000 to 10,000 square feet, depending on design options. This building is a small portion of the projected cost for the whole facility. The proposed tactical building will address the Police Department's current training needs and support long-term training goals.



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The on-site tactical training building would allow officers to move from a classroom immediately to reality-based training exercises where critical thinking and decision-making skills are honed under stressful conditions in a controlled environment. An on-site training building reduces problems with travel costs to other facilities, lack of availability at other facilities, and lack of integration into a regular training regimen.

14) Why can't police officers train at the City Recreation Center?

Answer: The proposed Public Safety Training and Operations Facility will have space for fitness equipment. The Recreation Center is not open at night for officers who work the night shift and it does not have secure storage for weapons. Public safety personnel, currently over 100 in Police and Fire Administration, compete with the public for use of Recreation Center equipment. The Police Department is initiating a fitness/wellness program requiring officers to work out while on duty, a program designed to work effectively with fitness equipment at the proposed Public Safety Facility. As a public facility, the Recreation Center does not include space for various kinds of training in law enforcement tactics, weapons, or vehicle maneuvers.