

**Office of the City Clerk  
M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: February 14, 2005

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Mayor Burch and Council Members Beecham and Cordell

SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF CALIFORNIA AVENUE SITE AS ALTERNATIVE TO  
CIVIC CENTER FOR NEW POLICE BUILDING

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Recently, the City Council directed staff to move forward with conceptual design to reconstruct the current police wing of the Civic Center in order to address serious safety concerns and meet the Police Department's critical space needs. While it is imperative the Council move forward expeditiously on a police building, we feel the need to re-examine our earlier decision in light of several factors.

A site on California Avenue, currently City-owned parking lots, was considered in the 1999 site options study. Council did not direct staff to pursue this site because of opposition from some California Avenue area merchants and nearby residents. This site, however, has the potential to serve the Police Department and community more fully, as well as eliminate the need to spend as much as \$5-6 million of taxpayer dollars on temporary relocation and additional costs associated with the disruption of City operations and temporary lease expense.

The first issue to consider is the expense and disruption of having to rebuild on the present site. Expanding the police facility at its current location would mean that police operations would have to be relocated during construction for as much as two years. This would mean finding a facility to relocate to, either by finding a place to put down portables, or leasing office space. With either alternative, modifications associated with prisoner and evidence security would have to be completed, as well as the need to purchase and install all the equipment for a new 911 dispatch center. These temporary relocation costs would be one-time and would have no permanent benefit for the City.

A second issue is the adequacy of allowable space at the current site. In order to fit the facility on this current site without going underground or going up more than an additional story, the Police Department would have to reduce its space requirements to 50,000 square feet. Besides eliminating a community room, training room and other areas, this plan does not allow space for an onsite property/evidence warehouse, requiring ongoing lease expense of approximately \$110,000 per year.

Building a new building to the required essential facilities standards would be significantly less expensive (as much as 25 percent less) than retrofitting the current building. Additionally, almost \$5 million will be required to be paid to the University Avenue Parking District for the new square footage created and for replacement of current parking.

For these reasons, we believe the Council would be well served to look one more time at the California Avenue site before moving ahead on this very large project. In addition to avoiding significant costs, the site would be more centrally located to serve the entire community.

We would like to solicit our colleagues' support in directing staff to bring back more information on the California Avenue site. That information should include:

- Comparison of the pros and cons of the California Avenue site, compared to the Civic Center site, including temporary and ongoing costs.
- Analysis of issues raised by California Avenue merchants regarding surface parking and disruption to businesses during construction.