

Study confirms CCPD building too small, lays groundwork for applying for future grants to pay for an upgrade

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The City Council received Oct. 19 the delayed results of a study that told them what most residents already knew — the Crescent City Police Department needs a bigger space.

City Manager Eric Wier explained purpose of the study was to evaluate the spatial needs for the CCPD building and to provide a cost estimate of either renovating the existing facility or building on a new site to meet those needs. He added the study doesn't have an opportunity component to enable the city to build the department.

"Having these studies are what have let us to past successes, applying for grant applications, such as the fire department and that rehabilitation," he said.

The city, working with then Police Chief Ivan Minsal, commissioned Medford based Ogden Roemer Wilkerson Architecture to conduct the study in 2017, using a Planning and Technical Assistance grant for \$47,380, plus required city match of \$2,500.

They looked at the existing building and found:

- No covered vehicle storage
- No emergency operations center
- Inadequate interview rooms
- Inadequate evidence storage and processing
- Inadequate workspace for staff
- No training facilities
- Inadequate meeting rooms
- No secure parking for personal vehicles

In addition to evaluating the current building, ORW looked at several potential sites for a new police department.

However, Wier said their report was delayed by personnel changeover and was further put on hold until a new building code was released. He said the updated building code sets new requirements for critical facilities taking into consideration a much higher tsunami risk level based on a 1 in 2,450 years tsunami event.

Wier said the 2019 building code tsunami hazard defines the CCPD building as a critical facility, much like a hospital. However, the new map put much of the city in the “runup zone” where new critical facilities had to be beyond. The current police department on 7th Street is right on the edge inside that hazard zone, Wier said.

“We’re anticipating new tsunami maps for Del Norte County to be out in the spring. Things are probably not going to change for the better,” he said.

The study looked at potential areas to move the station such as near the Roosevelt Annexation, near Northcrest Drive, Hoover Street, by the Washington Boulevard Fire Station or within a few small areas near 9th Street.

“Because didn’t know where maps would land, decided to look at the options before us — what size of site do we need, what are the costs of those different sites,” Wier said. “And as these sites become available, we would then be able to look toward grants and what those building costs would be.”

The study recommended a minimum of 8,550 square feet for the building, preferably on one level for maximum efficiency, and a lot size of at least 15,000 square feet including parking. Because the existing site is currently half the recommended size — about 3,500 square feet of usable space on a lot of 14,400 square feet — ORW recommended the four options:

1. Rebuild on existing site. This would build a second story onto the existing building as well as redesign the current building up to 12,000 square feet. Additional parking may be required. The construction cost was estimated between \$4.5-\$5.1 million.
2. New site, a one-story 11,000 square foot building with adjacent parking nearby. The construction cost was estimated \$3.5-\$4.1 million.
3. New site, two-story, 12,000 square foot building, with adjacent parking. Construction cost was estimated at \$4.2-\$4.8 million.

New site, with an 12,000 square foot, elevated one-story building with parking below. Construction cost was estimated \$5.2- \$6.325 million.

ORW recommended Option 2 was the preferred option.

Wier said staff investigate grants to apply for to pay for construction, such as the Community Development Block Grant, although some of their rule change from year to year.

Another route to fund the project would be through USDA loans, he added.

Police Chief Richard Griffin said his department definitely needed more space, but invited the councilors to visit any time to walk through and see what have well they've done a managing what space they do have. "Specifically with the audit we're doing in the evidence room, in time, we're definitely going be taking in more evidence and if you don't do it properly we start running into problems if we don't have that space," Griffin explained. "Given times we live in, I don't like the fact we don't have a very secure area for our people to park in."

Griffin added he'd like to see the report address the need for a locker room and showers, or something like an eye wash station in case of accidents.