

## I. Overview

### A. Background

The Public Safety Building (PSB) on 33<sup>rd</sup> street has been operating as the Boulder Police Department's primary facility since 1989. In 2013, the Boulder Police Department Master Plan was updated to provide a five-to-seven year plan to evaluate and provide recommendations related to service delivery and business operations. The Master Plan identified as a priority, the necessity to "evaluate size and design of police facilities for effectiveness and efficiency" as a part of the overall FAM master plan. In 2014, the City of Boulder hired Trestle Strategy Group to conduct a facility evaluation and space needs assessment. The space needs assessment evaluated the shortages, quantified current space needs, identified opportunities to maximize the current facility, and evaluated alternative sites for relocation or expansion.

### B. Current Conditions

The PSB houses multiple departments and functions including the two main divisions of the Police Department, the Operations Division and the Support and Staff Services Division, as well as the administrative offices for the Fire Department. The PSB includes space for training rooms, firearms range, locker and workout rooms, a communications center, Colorado Bureau of Investigation DNA lab, as well as employee lounge, meeting rooms and storage space for equipment, evidence, and vehicles. The majority of the Police Department services are located at the PSB.

The PSB is currently operating beyond its functional capacity and is undersized based on existing standards. The building has been remodeled and expanded extensively to accommodate growth in staff, changes in public safety needs, and to provide space for complementary support services that aren't City

owned and operated, but are vital services to the community and are required to be located immediately adjacent to the Police Department (i.e. DNA Lab). Boulder Fire Department administrative offices are also housed inside the PSB. Current deficiencies include office and meeting space, locker and gym accommodations, storage space including property and evidence, special equipment and vehicle storage, and parking and safety for fleet and civilian vehicles. The central location of the facility within the city of Boulder is a great benefit to the department and allows the response time for services to remain low.

Like many buildings in Boulder, the PSB is located within a 500-year flood plain. As a Critical Facility within the City of Boulder, the PSB is limited to its potential expansion opportunities and is subject to specific regulations with respect to building design, flood plain engineering and emergency management.

#### Quick Facts

<b>Facility Size</b>	71,000 square feet
<b>Lot Size</b>	4.09 acres
<b>Staff</b>	282.5 employees (178 sworn, 104.5 civilian)
<b>Parking</b>	228 surface spaces
<b>Zoning</b>	Public (P)
<b>Flood Plain</b>	500-year

**C. Methodology**

To gain a full understanding of both the specific needs of the Boulder Police Department and also industry standards we conducted several types of research. We started by interviewing every unit that operates out of the PSB including: Dispatch, Records, Property and Evidence, Watch 1 2 and 3, Code Enforcement, Animal Control, Detectives, Crime Analysts, Criminalists, Traffic, Operations, Training, Support Services, Administrative Staff, and Victim Advocacy. The interview questions were intended to find space constraints, inefficiencies, anticipated growth, and affinities within the building and units. We also examined the existing floor plans to calculate the square footage allocations by unit and per person in order to quantify the space constraints.

After conducting the interviews we visited three recently constructed police stations including: the Boulder Sheriff's Department, Fort Collins Police Department, and Arvada's West Woods Community Station, which supports a decentralized policing model by creating community stations with officers operating out of the sector to which they are assigned. Along with touring and interviewing the deputy chiefs of the other facilities, we conducted external research to find industry standards for police station design. We aggregated and summarized the research to determine the amount of square footage the PSB would need to operate more effectively, efficiently, and to be prepared for future growth. Lastly, using our space needs projections we analyzed several options that could potentially work for the PSB expansion including determining cost and timeline of each option.

**II. FINDINGS**

**A. Summary**

- The current public safety building houses 282.5 employees and is approximately 71,000 square feet in size
- According to our interviews and spatial assessment, the Police Department requires approximately 25,000 additional square feet
- The department staff will grow by approximately 8 officers and 4 civilian staff in the next 5 years

**B. Space Demands**

We utilized two methods to identify the space shortage at the PSB. The first method utilized industry standards and peer research to identify a space standard for a facility of this type. The industry standards range from 300-350 square feet. Currently, the PSB operates at 246 square feet per person, which is when space issues begin to arise. Using this method, the current facility needs are 96,950 square feet, which results in a 25,950 square foot shortage. The second method was a space analysis of the current facility using data gathered in interviews as well as an evaluation of the floor plans and space allocations. Based on this method the facility is lacking approximately 22,000 square feet. In aggregating the methods we believe a minimum of 25,000 additional square feet is needed to serve the current needs as well as projected future demands. Our future growth

projections are based on past department growth (5% per year). A 96,000 square foot facility would adequately fulfill space needs for 30 years.

Throughout the interview process many themes appeared repeatedly. The building was originally designed to accommodate the space and use demands of Boulder's Police Department in 1989. It has been remodeled and reconfigured significantly over the last 25 years to accommodate growth, service demands and new services. Many of the original spaces intended for meetings and storage have been reconfigured as office spaces and the building has reached its functional capacity. Below is a summary of the findings.

### ***Training Rooms and Wellness***

The 2007 addition which included upper level training rooms and a below grade firing range are used very frequently and are highly valued additions to the facility. The storage and space requirements for the Wellness Program (Training, Testing, Fitness) are not met by the current space. Often times training happens in the hallways and various locations throughout the building, rather than in a designated space. The equipment used for the Wellness program is in multiple locations and must be moved significant distances when used for frequent training and testing programs.

### ***Office Space***

The building is at capacity and the building is limited by its capacity to add additional office spaces. The detective team, watch sergeants, animal control, PTT (IT), and the officers' report writing room are crowded, and are impacted by a lack of quiet workspace. Many efficiencies and opportunities for collaboration are compromised because of office size and layout. The officers shared workspace is too small for the amount of staff and workload, especially during shift changes and large-scale incidents. The crowded workspace is also noisy and officers find it difficult, at times, to make phone calls and maintain a productive workflow. The detectives, sergeants, and animal control are similarly impacted by space and noise issues.

### ***Locker Rooms***

The locker rooms are at capacity. There are no remaining male lockers for officers and only 7 available for female officers. The lockers are undersized by today's standards and do not provide adequate storage for the uniforms or equipment. Additionally, the lockers do not have charging stations for officer equipment and are not well ventilated (both of which are standards in current police station design.) Poor ventilation forces officers to dry towels and uniforms on the outside of lockers further impacting the limited space.

### ***Property and Evidence Storage***

Property and Evidence is significantly short on storage space. Currently, some evidence is stored outside in large, non-weatherized storage units, which poses safety problems for employees retrieving items as well as the potential for damage. The evidence intake room is undersized and does not provide adequate processing area.

### ***Officer Equipment Storage***

The officer equipment storage is not adequate or secure. Equipment bags are stored in hallway shelves and inside the briefing room, causing disruption and interruption to workflow.

### ***Meeting Space***

There is a significant shortage of meeting spaces throughout the building. There is a high demand for small (3-5 people) and large (10-20 people) meeting spaces. Because sergeants share office space, they do require smaller meeting rooms for personnel issues. The officer briefing room is also undersized, and does not adequately fit the entirety of the unit if all three of the watch groups are briefed together. The Department also lacks a “soft” interview room in which to meet with and interview children, families, victims and other vulnerable populations. The traditional “hard” interview rooms, which are physically designed for interrogation and observation, can be intimidating and threatening.

### ***Lab Space***

The lab grew smaller when Colorado Bureau of Investigations took over about 50% of the current lab facilities. The Police Department lab responsibilities continue to increase requiring additional space. Furthermore, the lab is not easily accessible to Property and Evidence (a unit the lab frequents).

### ***Fitness***

The workout facility is severely undersized for the usage levels and demands. The current building supports 282.5 employees; however, the gym only serves 4 to 6 people comfortably. Being in top physical condition is an important aspect of police work and providing adequate facilities is essential.

### ***Parking***

The parking lot does not have enough spaces to accommodate the fleet and employee’s civilian cars. Currently many employees park in nearby retail parking lots, which are unavailable during certain times of year and may be limited if those parcels are redeveloped. Additionally, the lot is not secure. The combination of a lack of parking and security presents risks to the officers as they walk to their city or civilian vehicles. The city fleet and specialized equipment and vehicles are exposed to the elements and have been vandalized on several occasions.

### ***Sally Port***

The current Sally Port (garage space for vehicle evidence) is not accessible as originally intended, and has become a multi-purpose space, which causes conflicts when vehicle processing is required. The PSB needs 2 Sally Port bays that function only as evidence intake for the detectives.

### ***Public Access***

The front entry to the PSB can be difficult to find, and often times the public will attempt to enter through the secure entries requiring a key card. This is especially difficult for training room access that is on the secure side of the building.

**C. Affinities**

We found that almost every unit working from the PSB has tight affinities with at least one or more other units, and that working out of the same building is extremely useful for these relationships and for public safety service. Fire Department Administration does not have a direct affinity with the Police Department, and could be located in a different location.

**D. Themes and Trends in Police Building Design**

Through our tours of the Fort Collins, Boulder Sheriff Department, and Arvada C-Sector Station and through space standards research we found the following trends in police facilities:

- “Soft” Interview Rooms for families, children and victims
- Training Rooms
- Technology to support field work – smart phones, laptops, system syncing (data downloading from vehicle)
- Security and weather protection for vehicles (solar shades, secure parking lots, etc)
- Large lockers with ventilations systems and charging stations
- Designated sex offender registration room
- Evidence release room
- Crime lab moving regional (Fort Collins)
- Mobile work station file cabinets (each employee has their own cabinet on wheels and shares desk space)

**III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a result of our research and analysis, and in coordination with the Police Department and FAM, we recommend the following short and long term solutions:

**A. Short-Term Recommendations**

- Relocate Fire Department Administrative offices from PSB to another location and re-utilize space (approximately 3,000 square feet)
- Deploy additional technology to support flexible work and out of office productivity
- Implement white noise systems and other sound attenuation solutions to manage noise in crowded areas
- Improve ventilation systems
- Furniture and storage improvements

**B. Long-Term Recommendations**

We evaluated several long-term options to accommodate the space needs for all of the current uses in the PSB, excluding the Fire Department.

**Recommended Option: Expansion at Current Location**

**Construct a 25,000 square foot building addition with structured joint parking and remodel existing facility.**

- 25,000 square foot building addition with 3-levels of structured parking
- Secured, structured parking would create adequate parking for the fleet and civilian vehicles. One level below grade, 2 parking decks above grade. 25,000 square foot addition on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor
- Renovation of the existing facility for increased functionality and space improvements
- Building would require Site Review
- New building would be flood proof and response vehicles would be protected
- Sensitive storage and generators could be moved to a flood proof location
- Approximate cost of \$25-30 million

**Pros**

- Utilizing the existing, central location promotes the Boulder Police Department Master Plan goal to build a safer community through adjustments to service delivery (pg.15) by allowing the PD to focus on decreased response time without having to adjust to an entirely new location and facility.
- The department can maintain affinities and improve spatial proximity for the groups that interact regularly through better space planning.
- Building the parking structure will increase parking lot security and fleet protection through coverings, in turn keeping the fleet in better condition for longer.
- The department can continue to utilize the previously invested in firing range and training rooms, which were consistently mentioned as an important asset.
- Overall project cost does not include purchasing land and utilizes the current investment
- City owns the facility

**Cons**

- The property is located in the 500-year flood plain. New construction (including parking structures) will need to be either flood-proofed or raised out of the flood plain per the requirements of the Critical Facilities Ordinance
- Existing parking will be impacted during construction. Adjacent parking will be required. Potential to use County vacant lot on east side of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street during construction, but not long term.