



Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Lara Biggs, City Engineer
Subject: Civic Center and Police/Fire Headquarters Relocation Feasibility Study Discussion
Date: January 22, 2024

Recommended Action:

Information regarding the findings and status of the existing Civic Center and Police Fire Headquarters (PFHQ) will be presented for the purposes of discussion. The staff is requesting feedback on the next steps.

Council Action:

For Discussion

Summary:

The Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center is a 112,000 sq ft building that was constructed in two phases, beginning with the east-west wing in 1901 as a catholic parish boarding school. In 1915, the building was sold to the Sisters of Providence, who named the school the Marywood Academy. In 1924, the north-south wing was constructed, and the school continued to operate until 1970. The City of Evanston acquired the building in the 1970s and relocated its city hall from downtown Evanston to the location at 2100 Ridge Avenue following minimal rehabilitation.

Beginning in 1998, the building was experiencing significant challenges operating as a city hall, and the City began investigating a significant renovation of the building vs. relocating the city hall functions to another location. No actions were taken as a result of these studies, and the issues surrounding the Civic Center remained unresolved. Fueled partially by the building's failing roofing system, internal discussions about relocation or repair were terminated in 2010 when the roof and inlaid gutter system were replaced for approximately \$1.7 million.

Over the past decade, a number of moderate investments have been made in the facility, including partial asbestos abatement, hallway carpet tile installation, fire pump replacement, third and fourth-floor men's washroom renovations, boiler building apartment renovations, parking lot lighting upgrades and resurfacing, boiler feed water tank replacement, elevator

modernization, and boiler burner replacement. A number of smaller interior renovation projects have also been completed, mostly by Facilities Management staff. No other renovations to major building systems have occurred.

Currently, the following building systems have been identified as close to failing or in failure:

- Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling (HVAC) - A study completed by Grumman-Butkus in 2017 identified a number of significant challenges with the building's heating and cooling systems. The building heating operates on a boiler system. This system has undergone numerous emergency repairs since 2017, but they have not impacted the need to complete a full replacement of the system. In particular, the steam and condensate piping has experienced significant corrosion and is at the end of its useful life. The air conditioning is provided by a separate system of over 100 heat pumps located throughout the building. The piping in this system has also experienced significant corrosion and needs to be replaced. Most of the heat pumps, with a typical life of 15-20 years, are over 40 years old; some of them have been rebuilt several times in order to stay in operation. Because of debris from corrosion of the piping, they often have to be disassembled and cleaned even if they would otherwise be working properly. They are a non-standard design, with only one identified vendor manufacturing most of the sizes installed at the Civic Center. There is no forced air ventilation in the building; instead, it was intended to provide ventilation by opening windows, but many of the windows are not operable. This impacts the air quality in the building and is non-compliant with modern building codes.
- Electrical - The main switchgear and distribution panels are at capacity and are unsuited to meet the needs of a modern office building. The main switchgear has also experienced corrosion. Much of the electrical wiring is original to 1904 and 1914. The switchgear and panels are installed in such a way that they do not meet current building code requirements.
- Plumbing - The original piping and valves are aged and need to be replaced, although small sections of piping have been replaced in order to maintain water pressure in upper floor restrooms.
- Building Envelope - Sections of the building façade need repointing. Water continues to leak into the building's brick walls, and although this item has not been completely studied, the sealant around the building's windows has failed and is likely one of the sources of water leaking into the walls in many places. Emergency repairs to rebuild a small section of the wall were completed in 2022. Most of the building's windows are not fully operable.

The building continues to experience operational challenges. The lack of a central lobby coupled with multiple entrances on different floors makes security a challenge. Even with a dedicated security guard, members of the public regularly access the third and fourth floors, designated as staff only. The building does not comply with modern building codes, including those related to occupant fire safety, both staff and the public. Restrooms are unevenly located, especially for women, and there are few ADA-compliant restroom options on the ground, first and second floors, which happen to be the public floors. The building is not compliant with state and federal ADA requirements, which do not align with the City's goals of delivering programs and services with equity. Because of the classroom layout and wide hallways, much of the space (approximately 40,000 sq ft) is wasted; although the City is still required to heat, condition, operate, and maintain these areas, a significant resource

investment. The building does not align with the City's Climate Action Resilience Plan (CARP) and will require substantial, thoughtful changes in order to make the necessary improvements for it to come into compliance.

There are additional concerns. Any significant renovation work will likely trigger a requirement to conform the entire building to modern building codes. Similarly, any substantial construction will require Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) to be remediated. Other critical building, health, and safety codes would require additional restrooms to be installed and ADA improvements, such as replacement of office doors, installation of ADA access ramps on entrances, and interior signage improvements. All of these items are feasible to manage, but with a 112,000 sq ft building, they will significantly drive up the cost of any construction.

Police-Fire Headquarters Background:

In the late 1990s, staff recommended building a new police headquarters on a different site in order to meet the needs at that time. That recommendation was not acted upon. In 2002, a portion of the building's second floor was renovated in an effort to address some of the building's operational challenges. Like the Civic Center, the Police/Fire Headquarters is woefully outdated and does not meet modern standards for holding cells, victim services support, ADA, and overall security. The building is also substantially undersized, providing only 50 - 60% of the needed space to support the current operations. Similar to the Civic Center, this building does not align with CARP goals.

Relocation Feasibility Study Background:

Neither building is adequate for its current use. On April 26, 2021, recognizing that, even with substantial capital investment, their current layouts have significant insufficiencies, the City Council authorized the City staff to issue an RFP to study the feasibility of relocating the Civic Center and Police/Fire Headquarters. On October 25, 2021, the City Council approved a contract with AECOM for the Civic Center and Police/Fire Headquarters Relocation Feasibility Study (RFP 21-27). The scope of the work includes:

1. Assessment of space needs for the two operations.
2. Identification of potential private institutional, educational, commercial, and/or affordable housing partners and feasibility of co-locating those partners through a PPP (public-private partnership).
3. Identification and evaluation of potential relocation sites.
4. Assessment of estimated costs for the relocation/consolidation and PPP, as well as potential cost savings from service consolidation.
5. Evaluation of added community value created by co-locating with private institutional, educational, commercial, and/or affordable housing uses.
6. Estimation of the possible economic benefits of a new facility and its potential to serve as a catalyst for downtown's stability and growth.

Since the original implementation of the contract, there has been a shift in focus away from exploring PPPs towards a more detailed understanding of the needs of the city hall and policing operations programming. On 6/13/22, the City Council approved Change Order 2, adding a scope item to provide a cost estimate for the renovation of the Civic Center as well as the relocating of the Police/Fire Headquarters to this site.

Options for Relocation and/or Renovations:

After evaluating the program needs for PFHQ and the existing building, it was determined that the building is not only significantly deficient in space, but the poor layout and limited onsite space make it difficult to renovate and/or expand. Therefore, it is recommended that the existing building be discontinued in use and replaced with a new building onsite or in an alternate location.

While the existing Civic Center building needs significant rehabilitation and a better layout more appropriate to its final use, the building itself could be renovated and preserved for adaptive reuse. This building is on the National Register of Historic Places, so any exterior work would require additional investment to preserve its historic aesthetic. This will require additional financial investment but would allow the building to remain as a community asset. Depending on the final usage of the building, tax credits and other additional funding may be available to offset a portion of the cost of the exterior work.

Working with the City, AECOM identified six options for the renovation or relocation of these two building operations:

1. Rebuild PFHQ on the current site, renovate the Civic Center
2. Rebuild PFHQ on the current site, lease downtown office space for city hall operations
3. Rebuild PFHQ on the Farmer's Market site, lease downtown office space for city hall operations
4. Rebuild PFHQ on the Civic Center site, renovate the Civic Center
5. Acquire 906 University Place and develop an integrated Civic Center and PFHQ
6. Acquire Farmer's Market site and develop integrated Civic Center and PFHQ

More detailed information on the potential options is included as an attachment.

Evaluation Criteria / Key Insights:

Options for identifying potential options locations were subject to consideration of the following conditions:

1. Timing - Third-party-owned sites in current use will take longer to reposition, while City-owned land is more readily available
2. City Operating Efficiencies - Proximity to other city operations to gain operational efficiencies, including the existing Civic Center, Service Center, or Library
3. Parking - Access to already built parking and associated costs of new parking
4. Transit Access - Ready access to mass transit, especially bus transit and the Davis Street Transit Hub
5. Long-term Property Tax Income - Goal to have no net decrease to the amount of property on the tax rolls at the end of the project

Next Steps:

In order to provide enough information for a final plan to be developed, the following steps are recommended:

1. Public engagement - Staff will solicit feedback from the City Council regarding additional information to be gained from public engagement. Potential topics for public engagement could include:

- How important is it for the City to support economic development by relocating city hall services and staff into downtown Evanston?
 - Is it important for city hall to be adjacent to mass transit, including train and bus services
 - Are there neighborhood concerns related to the location of the PFHQ or the city hall?
 - Are there any advantages or disadvantages to co-locating the PFHQ and Civic Center?
 - Should the City partner with a private partner in developing a site for city hall services?
 - What are other priorities for selecting a city hall location?
2. Northwestern University (NU) negotiations - three options are dependent on property owned by NU being made available for City use. NU has indicated a willingness to negotiate on these properties.

Feedback on these two items will be used to craft a public engagement process and follow-up with NU.

Legislative History:

On April 26, 2021, the City Council approved Resolution 50-R-21, Directing City Staff to Issue an RFP to Study the Feasibility of Relocating the Civic Center.

On October 25, 2021, the City Council approved the award of a contract with AECOM for the Civic Center and Police-Fire Headquarters study.

On May 25, 2022, Change Order 1 was approved with a time extension.

On June 13, 2022, Change Order 2 was approved to authorize the consultant to prepare a cost estimate for renovating the existing Civic Center and relocating Police-Fire Headquarters to 2100 Ridge Avenue.

Attachments:

[Summary of Options for Renovation and Relocation](#)

Core Findings Sites

Scenario	A	B	C	D	E	F
Framework	Rebuild PFHQ on current site Renovate CC	Rebuild PFHQ on current site CC Lease downtown Office Space	Rebuild PFHQ on Farmers Market Site CC Lease Downtown Office Space	Rebuild PFHQ at CC Renovate CC	Acquire 906 University Place and develop integrated CC and PFHQ	Acquire Farmers Market and develop Integrated CC and PFHQ
Strengths	<p>Both sites are connected to City fiber optic networks</p> <p>Access to existing City parking lots mitigates parking requirements</p> <p>Excess Civic Center space could support partnership opportunities</p> <p>PFHQ within 1/4 mile of Davis Street Transit Hub</p>	<p>CC Parking requirement could be offset by existing downtown parking assets</p> <p>Increased City employment would support recovery of downtown Evanston</p> <p>Within 1/4 mile of Davis Street Transit Hub</p>	<p>CC Parking need met by existing downtown parking assets</p> <p>Increased City employment would support recovery of downtown Evanston</p> <p>Within 1/4 mile of Davis Street Transit Hub</p> <p>Existing CC and PFHQ would be considered surplus; net positive for tax base, as the Farmers Market site is University owned</p> <p>PFHQ construction costs assume reduced cost of demolition, utility relocation, and simplified construction sequencing, relative to existing PFHQ site</p>	<p>Immediate proximity to City Public Works should yield operating efficiencies</p> <p>Existing PFHQ would be considered surplus; net positive for tax base</p>	<p>Leverage adjacent public parking</p> <p>Existing Civic Center and PFHQ would both be considered surplus; net positive for tax base</p> <p>Within 1/4 mile of Davis Street Transit Hub</p> <p>Support for recovery of downtown Evanston</p>	<p>Site is large enough to support integrated Civic and PFHQ functions, and leverage attached public parking</p> <p>Existing Civic Center and PFHQ would both be considered surplus; net positive for tax base</p> <p>Within 1/4 mile of Davis Street Transit Hub</p> <p>Support for recovery of downtown Evanston</p>
Weaknesses	<p>PFHQ would require vacating a portion of Elmwood Ave and acquisition of one privately-owned building</p> <p>PFHQ rebuild would be more complex, multi-phase effort</p> <p>Modest support for recovery of downtown Evanston</p> <p>Civic Center is almost one mile from Davis Street Transit Hub</p>	<p>PFHQ would require vacating a portion of Elmwood Ave and acquisition of 1 privately-owned building</p> <p>PFHQ rebuild would be more complex, multi-phase effort</p> <p>City fiber optic connection to new building may be needed</p> <p>May be impact of city government lease on office building property tax revenue</p> <p>City share of any "above standard" tenant improvement costs would need to be confirmed</p>	<p>City fiber optic connection to new building may be needed</p> <p>Incremental cost for phase 1 due diligence and cost to acquire site from Northwestern and prepare it for new development</p> <p>Incremental cost for renovations to Maple Street Deck to support PHFQ secure parking needs</p> <p>City share of any "above standard" tenant improvement costs would need to be confirmed</p> <p>The Evanston Farmers Market would need to be relocated</p>	<p>Adjacent residential neighborhoods would probably experience increased city vehicle traffic</p> <p>Modest support for recovery of downtown Evanston</p> <p>More parking for City vehicles would be needed</p> <p>Civic Center location is beyond 1/4 mile of Davis Street Transit Hub</p>	<p>Uncertain cost for phase 1 due diligence, site acquisition from Northwestern and building demolition</p> <p>Uncertain timeframe for Northwestern to vacate</p> <p>Assumes only On-site secure parking for PFHQ; CC parking needs would be met by the adjacent Maple Street Deck; no costs for improvement included</p> <p>Access to City fiber optic network is unknown</p>	<p>Incremental cost for phase 1 due diligence and cost to acquire site from Northwestern and prepare it for new development</p> <p>Incremental cost for renovations to Maple Street Deck to support PHFQ secure parking needs</p> <p>Modest support for recovery of downtown Evanston</p>

Core Findings

Cost Comparison

Scenario	A	B	C	D	E	F
Framework	Rebuild PFHQ on current site Renovate CC	Rebuild PFHQ on current site CC Lease downtown Office Space	Rebuild PFHQ on Farmers Market Site CC Lease Downtown Office Space	Rebuild PFHQ at CC Renovate CC	Acquire 906 University Place and develop integrated CC and PFHQ	Acquire Farmers Market and develop Integrated CC and PFHQ
Core Program	Rebuild 91,559 sf PFHQ @ cost of \$720/sf + building demolition & site preparation @ \$3.7 million CC renovation of 96,834 GSF @ \$634/sf	Rebuild 91,559 sf PFHQ @ cost of \$720/sf + building demolition & site preparation @ \$3.7 million Lease 62,000 sf, \$40/sf/yr at 3% inflation every 5 years; 20-year term	Rebuild 91,559 sf PFHQ @ cost of \$720/sf Lease 62,000 sf of office space, \$40/sf/yr, 3% inflation every 5 years; 20-year term	Renovate CC; 96,834 GSF @ \$634/sf Build 52,357 sf addition for PFHQ @ \$713/sf	Build 91,500 sf PFHQ; hard construction costs @ \$713/sf Build 62,000 sf CC; hard construction costs @ \$647/sf	Build 91,500 sf PFHQ; hard construction costs @ \$713/sf Build 62,000 sf CC; hard construction costs @ \$647/sf
Parking	Build secured 76,563 sf parking for PFHQ No new CC parking	Build secured 76,563 sf parking for PFHQ CC uses existing downtown parking assets	PFHQ and CC parking need met by Maple St. deck	159,688 sf of new structured parking for CC and PFHQ	76,563 sf PFHQ parking Adjacent Maple Street deck for CC parking needs	PFHQ and CC parking need met by Maple St. Deck
Assumptions	Modest PFHQ land acquisition Assumes full renovation of CC Partner to occupy additional CC space and share costs space has not been identified	Base rent includes a share of tenant improvements CC available for disposition	Potential cost to improve Maple St. Parking Deck is unknown CC and PFHQ available for disposition Assumes reduced cost for PFHQ site prep and sequencing	PFHQ site available for disposition Further study of aggregate parking need inclusive of Public Works may be necessary	Acquire roughly 40,000 sf site and demolish estimated 40,000 sf building Potential cost to improve Maple St. Parking Deck is unknown Existing CC and PFHQ available for disposition	Acquire 49,000sf site Existing CC and PFHQ available for disposition Potential cost to improve Maple St. Parking Deck is unknown
Police + Fire HQ	\$69,700,000	\$69,700,000	\$65,000,000	\$37,300,000	\$105,396,000	\$105,396,000
Civic Center	\$62,700,000	\$51,900,000	\$51,900,000	\$62,700,000		
Parking	\$13,600,000	\$13,600,000		\$26,200,000	\$13,600,000	
Sub-Total: Estimated Hard Construction	\$146,000,000	\$135,200,000	\$116,900,000	\$126,200,000	\$118,996,000	\$105,396,000
Land	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$6,100,000		\$5,900,000	\$6,100,000
A/E Design & FF&E	\$10,220,000	\$9,464,000	\$8,183,000	\$8,834,000	\$8,330,000	\$7,378,000
Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment	\$1,482,000	\$1,482,000	\$1,482,000	\$1,482,000	\$1,482,000	\$1,482,000
Estimated Total Cost (Rounded)	\$158,702,000	\$147,146,000	\$132,665,000	\$136,516,000	\$134,708,000	\$120,356,000

- All cost estimates have been rounded to thousands; while resulting total costs will vary slightly from cost estimates in appendix, unit cost assumptions are consistent
- The cost estimates include contingencies
- Land costs are estimated based on prevailing land values in downtown Evanston
- Potential costs for phase 1 environmental due diligence studies and remediation have not been included in all scenarios
- Potential costs to resolve sub-surface conditions are not included
- Construction costs for scenarios involving leased space are highly dependent on negotiations over rents and associated TI allowances offered by buildings; and are subject to change
- Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment / Audio Visual Allowance @ \$9.65/sf, on a portion of total square footage
- Land acquisition costs of \$125/sf assumed
- Acquired building demolition costs of \$15/sf assumed
- A/E Design Fee @ 7% of hard construction cost assumed
- Cost estimates assume limited restoration of historic elements (subject to change)
- Cost estimates include allowances for LEED Silver/Gold (subject to change)