

City of Washington All-Star Community Award Application 2021

Title of Project: Municipal Campus

- Provide a summary of the project and why it was needed:

The City of Washington had outdated and insufficient facilities for City Hall, Police, and Fire operations. The Fire Station was filled beyond overflow, with various pieces of equipment stored outside. The Police Department was located in around 1,000 square feet that was formerly the City Council Chambers. City Hall had insufficient office, storage, and meeting space. Despite several minor interior renovations since the building's original construction in 1974, no square footage had been added in that time, and the Police Department had relocated to the building in 2005, increasing the space pinch. The facility had reached the point where major action was needed.

The City Council approved the commissioning of a building study in January 2013, which was completed in 2014. The primary options for improved facilities were: 1) Renovate the former library building for City Hall (a new library had been built in 2009) and then renovate the existing building for Police & Fire; or 2) Construct a new Fire Station and renovate the existing building for City Hall & Police, known as the "Campus Plan". The City Council initially voted to pursue the former library option, but after changes in Council composition with the 2015, the new Council supported the Campus Plan, pending the sale of the former library.

Following substantial marketing, the former library was sold to Greiner Buildings, a local construction company. They invested over \$300,000 to renovate the majority of the main floor for their corporate offices in 2017-2018, and recently completed the additional renovation of an office suite for two local nonprofit entities. They still have up to 3 spaces available to renovate to suit for future commercial clients. The City also sold an adjacent lot that had housed a dilapidated building to local CPA firm AllenMitchell LLP, working with them to demolish the existing building and to construct a 10,000 square foot office complex. That \$1.4 million project was completed in 2019. These private investments in our core downtown produced over \$1.2 million in new taxable valuation for the community.

The City acquired 7 residential properties adjacent to its existing facility via voluntary sales or donations, most of which were in varying states of disrepair and were subsequently demolished to make way for the new complex. Additionally, the land on which the proposed Fire Station was to sit had the primary sewer for the central part of town crossing from northeast to southwest. The initial construction project for the site thus was the relocation of this sewer to follow adjacent rights-of-way, extension of 3 blocks of water main to allow sufficient flow for fire sprinklers to be installed in the

whole campus, and reconstruction of one block of South 3rd Avenue behind the complex. The remainder of the vision was completed over 3 additional capital projects, including: 1) A project to install a new electric service, electrical room and backup generator for the entire complex; 2) A Fire Station construction project (this was all new square footage); and 3) A City Hall/Police construction project (this was the renovation of all of the existing space). City Hall and Police were able to occupy their new square footage in October 2020, nearly 8 years after the project was originally conceptualized. The wonderful new facility increased available square footage from 9,400 square feet to nearly 25,000, and provided for a nice corridor improvement, as the facility has frontage on two legs of Iowa Highway 92 running through town. Ancillary improvements envisioned to occur in the next year or so include an LED message sign, expansion of an existing park south of the facility to provide for a beautiful continuous stretch for several blocks along Iowa 92, and tree planting on the east side of the facility near the staff parking.

The new facilities include vastly increased apparatus space for the Fire Department, and greatly improved storage and meeting space. The complex has a Training Room, a City Council Chambers, and two large conference rooms, making it capable of holding virtually any type of City meeting. The City can easily host full or hybrid Zoom meetings, and now has the capability of streaming Council meetings online.

The facilities were built in a highly energy-efficient manner, and the Fire Station was recognized by Wildan with a 2020 Excellence in Energy Efficient Design Award. The project also incorporated stormwater management best practices, with the installation of a chambered underground stormwater detention system sized to handle the increased runoff from the facility additions.

- What future impact will the project have on your community?

This is the “once in a generation”, or perhaps a number of generations chance to do this type of facility, and we are confident that we have made all the proper decisions for the long term, while being as economical & efficient as possible.

The new facilities have already shown their worth with the challenges brought by COVID. Our old facilities for City Hall were served by a long common hallway, and it would have been impossible to be open to the public while working from that facility. In the new facility, we were able to have the lobby open only, and have been able to provide personal service to the community throughout the pandemic.

While it is located outside of the core downtown area, we see this project as the continuation of tremendous investment in our downtown, including \$12 million in private investment and \$15 million in public investment since we became a Main Street

community in 2008. The visual improvement alone has been fantastic for the fringe downtown area along the highway, but various features we built in with the project seek to build public trust, including putting primarily glass overhead doors on the Fire Station so that the public can see their investment in fire equipment, especially when we run the weekly lights and siren checks (we've received lots of positive comments). We also finally have professional and appropriately-sized quarters for the Police Department, and professional meeting and office space throughout the complex. The shared-space concept of the overall facility further reinforces a professional team concept for our staffing. The Training Room serves not just the Fire Department, but also Police and City Hall meetings and trainings as needed. A workout room in the Fire Department also serves the Police Department. We made sure that all of our volunteer firefighters and all full-time staff members working in the complex were recognized on the permanent facility plaques.

We believe the exhaustive and well-organized planning process for the project and the financing approach ultimately gained us significant currency with the public. A high-profile and highly visible project was accomplished, with no impact on the City's tax rate, and with non-property tax funding sources and grants to the greatest degree possible. The G.O. infrastructure debt will be paid off within 13 years, the Fire Station revenue bond will be paid off within 15 years, and there is no long-term debt for the City Hall/Police project.

- Total Cost of Project: \$6.1 million
- Financing Sources:
 - LOSST Revenue Bond: \$1.7 million (15-year term)
 - General Fund contribution: \$1.65 million
 - Grants: \$877,000
 - Other LOSST Funding: \$857,000
 - G.O. Infrastructure Bonds: \$668,000
 - Sale of Property: \$169,000
 - All Other Sources: \$179,000
- Timeline:
 - Facility Plan completed: February 2014
 - Award of Fire Station Utilities & Grading/Phase 1 Renovation Projects (Capital Projects 1 & 2 of 4): May 15, 2018
 - Substantial Completion of City/Hall Police Renovation Project (Capital Project 4 of 4): October 19, 2020
- Pictures and further information available at: <https://washingtioniowa.gov/city-of-washington/city-hall-police-building-project/>