



Joint Public Safety Facility Project

PRESS RELEASE



DATE: February 18, 2022

PORT ANGELES CITY COUNCIL APPROVES SITE EVALUATION FUNDING

On February 15, 2022, the Port Angeles City Council approved funding that will allow geotechnical and environmental evaluation of a potential site for the location of a proposed Joint Public Safety Facility. The proposed site is a two acre athletic practice field, currently owned by the City and located southwest of the intersection of W. 18th Street and S. L Street in Port Angeles. The Council emphasized that its decision does not constitute a final selection of the site, but rather only authorizes funding that will allow City staff to conduct a more detailed evaluation of the site's potential suitability.

BACKGROUND:

For several years, the City and County have been jointly pursuing a project to build a Joint Public Safety Facility. Initially, the Facility will house the County's Emergency Management Division of the Sheriff's Office, including the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and the City's 911 emergency telephone answering system and public safety dispatching facility, known as PenCom. Eventually, the Facility may also house a City West Side Fire Station. Since the project's inception in 2019, the City and County have strongly agreed that a joint 911 and EOC facility would be best in terms of achieving efficient operation and funding value for our citizens. Conceptually, this "shared vision" would be the most efficient and cost-effective way to manage emergencies, especially during large scale earthquake and pandemic disease events.

To date, the City and County have focused on developing a preliminary design for the Facility and selecting a site for its construction. Several potential sites have been evaluated since the project began, two of which were rejected due primarily to location, inadequate infrastructure and seismic unsuitability. An additional site located southwest of the intersection of 19th and O Streets remains under consideration as a potential location, but is not favored due to lease cost considerations. At the November 16, 2021, City Council meeting, staff recommended that the parties evaluate a new proposed site, located on City-owned property at 18th and L Streets. Council agreed, and the

—Continued—

CITY CONTACT: Jessica Straits
360.417.4550 | Jstraits@cityofpa.us

COUNTY CONTACT: Ron Cameron
360.460.4303 | rcameron@co.clallam.wa.us

parties subsequently completed an evaluation of historical records, aerial photographs, and maps of the site. That effort has not revealed anything that would disqualify the property.

The Council action on February 15th, 2022, will allow City staff to participate in a contract with the County that hires an engineering firm to perform technical field work. The firm will characterize the 18th and L Street site's geological, seismic and environmental suitability as a location for the Joint Public Safety Facility. This engineering technical work is only the first of several steps in making an actual site selection. The City and County will jointly contract for this work and equally share the costs.

When considering the 18th and L Street property, the City and County recognize the importance of mitigating impacts to recreational user groups. During the February 15th City Council meeting, a discussion took place regarding the concern for the recreational loss the proposed site may present if it is the site selected for the new Facility. Council and staff discussed the importance of working with the community and assuring user groups that the main field (Volunteer Field) would not be displaced. Discussions included previously mentioned mitigating elements, such as a secondary practice field, and placing synthetic field turf and athletic field lighting at the adjacent Volunteer Field.

As the project develops, the City and County are committed to working with stakeholder groups, and welcome community participation during public meetings. Upcoming meeting information, as well as meeting recordings, can be found on the City's website: www.cityofpa.us/583/Meetings-Agendas.

Both the City and County look forward to building the new Joint Public Safety Facility at the best available location, and providing efficient, cost-effective emergency management to the community.

###