


CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM
#24-2024

DATE: July 8, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor Meredith Leighty and City Council Members

FROM: Heather Geyer, City Manager 

SUBJECT: Use of Existing City Hall as a Temporary Family Justice Center

PURPOSE

To provide City Council with information on the feasibility of utilizing the existing City Hall as a temporary Family Justice Center (FJC).

BACKGROUND

District Attorney Brian Mason made creation of an FJC for Adams/Broomfield Counties a priority three years ago. On June 26 and 27, the DA's Office hosted a two-day workshop on building the roadmap to an FJC in partnership with Alliance for Hope. Councilmembers Kondo, Nowicki and Mayor Pro Tem Lukeman-Hiromasa were in attendance along with several staff members. At the July 1, 2024 Study Session, Council directed City Manager Geyer to bring back information regarding the feasibility of utilizing the existing City Hall as a temporary FJC.

The workshop identified a two-phase approach: a temporary location within the next 12 months and a permanent location within five years. The facility's desired services have been discussed, but information on the size and scale of the desired building has not been developed. In addition to the existing Northglenn City Hall, two other locations were suggested: 1) an existing County facility near the Sheriff's Office substation in Commerce City and 2) vacant space in an existing Community Reach Center building in Thornton.

Analysis of Existing City Hall

The existing City Hall facility was constructed in 1981. The upper level consists of 20,312 square feet and the lower level consists of 20,282 square feet for a total of 40,594 square feet.

Challenges with Potential Temporary Use

1. Parking.

- Existing parking at City Hall would not be sufficient for both the new and old buildings.
- An additional 80-100 parking spaces would be required if utilization of the building as an FJC is similar to the current use.
- The current development plan does not accommodate parking for both buildings.
- The closure of the south parking lot at the existing City Hall, as part of FCI's scope of work, will further reduce available parking.
- The phased development on the Civic Center site will provide new, proximal parking spaces after the demolition of the existing City Hall, which will address concerns about accessible, close parking.

2. Civic Center Site Plan.

- A site plan modification would be necessary for temporary use.
- The existing City Hall provides 24 of the 88 required parking spaces for the new City Hall. These 24 spaces account for approximately 25% of the total required parking

for the new building and will be located on the west side of Civic Way, which is where the existing City Hall building sits.

- The \$500,000 cost (without remediation costs) for demolition of the existing City Hall is included in FCI's contract; delaying demolition will increase future costs. This is not funding that the City can recoup.
- FCI's contract would need to be amended if the scope changes, which is cost prohibitive.

3. Site Safety Issues.

- Changes to grading required with the construction of the new building have left steep and unfinished slopes on the site, which are unsafe.
- Construction fencing will be secured around the perimeter of the site to prevent people from accessing unsafe areas, but the best practice would be to eliminate the slopes as soon as possible.

4. Building Remediation.

- Scheduled asbestos testing would need to be delayed if the building is occupied after staff moves to the new building.
- The testing is planned to be scheduled as soon as staff vacates the existing building.
- The testing is scheduled when the building is vacant due to the destructive nature of the testing.

5. EPA Grant.

- The City received a \$2.75M EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant to remediate contaminated soils at the former recreation center site. The City successfully secured the grant funding in one grant cycle versus two cycles as originally planned.
- The City has 3 years from the award of the grant to complete the work.
- The City could risk losing the \$2.75M EPA grant if remediation work is delayed.
- Remediation requires removing the old recreation center parking lot.
- Phasing of development on the Civic Center site is contingent on the demolition of the old City Hall to make room for parking that will be removed as part of the remediation work at the old recreation center parking lot. Parking will be more challenging if there is not a parking solution where the existing City Hall is located when the old recreation center parking lot is removed.

6. Aged HVAC System.

- Staff has concerns that much of the building is not tenantable, especially the basement/lower level.
- The aging HVAC system not efficient or effective.
- Major tenant improvements could be required to make sure the building is suitable for occupants.

7. Building Address.

- Complications with addressing would need to be worked through since the same address is being used for the new City Hall.
- Address changes would need to be made for utility billing purposes with Xcel Energy and other utility providers.

Overall, delaying demolition of the existing City Hall would result in increased parking challenges, increased future project costs, and potential loss of grant funding.

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications include the following:

- If the remediation of the former recreation center is not performed within 3 years, then the City risks the loss of the \$2.75M EPA Brownfields Grant that was awarded this year. The implication for not performing on this grant is a high likelihood of being non-competitive for future grants.
- The annual maintenance and utility costs for this building would need to be taken into consideration. Although there would likely be some monetary compensation for the use of the facility, the City would assume the role of landlord and would assume potential maintenance costs in the future.
- There will be costs associated with ensuring that the site is stable and safe, including some over-lot grading and landscaping.
- At this time, staff cannot monetize the impact that delaying the demolition will have from a cost-perspective. However, the construction industry generally experiences 3%-6% year-over-year escalation, and in more recent years this has been even higher. This would also impact the cost for construction of any parking improvements where the existing City Hall building is located following demolition.
- Delaying the demolition of the existing City Hall would have implications on revenues that could be generated by redevelopment on the site. The existing tax increment financing (TIF) in URA Plan 2 – TIF Area 1 – Webster Lake, which began in June of 2014, will expire in 2039. Therefore, the tax increment that could be collected with redevelopment could be reduced or eliminated with further delays to redevelopment.

The most significant timeline impact to consider is the delay of the Public-Private Partnership (P3) redevelopment of the Civic Center. The most recent Council direction on May 13, 2024, was for staff to revisit the 2022 Civic Center Plan vision.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City does not pursue temporary use of the existing City Hall building as an FJC.

STAFF REFERENCE

If Council Members have any questions, please contact Heather Geyer, City Manager, at hgeyer@northglenn.org or 303.450.8706.