



# Sandy City Council Office

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## MEMORANDUM

February 10, 2026

To: City Council Members

CC: Shane Pace, CAO  
Dustin Fratto, Council Executive Director

From: Council Member Kris Nicholl, District 3

Subject: Proposal for New Sandy City Police Department Public Safety Building

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### Executive Summary

As our city continues to grow and the complexities of modern law enforcement evolve, the infrastructure supporting our Sandy City Police Department must keep pace. I am proposing that the Council begin the process of planning for a new, purpose-built Public Safety Building to serve as the headquarters for our police department.

This proposal suggests that we target the 2027 General Election ballot, utilizing a General Obligation (GO) Bond to ensure the community has a direct voice in this investment. I recommend that we aim to begin construction in 2028.

### The Importance of a High-Quality Facility

A police station is the nerve center of community safety, and its quality directly impacts our service levels:

- **Recruitment and Retention:** In a competitive market for law enforcement talent, providing a professional, up to date work environment is a critical tool for attracting the best officers.
- **Mental Health and Wellness:** Modern designs prioritize natural light, decompression zones, and fitness areas, which are vital for officers who deal with high-stress situations daily.
- **Operational Efficiency:** A building designed for 2028 and beyond allows for integrated technology, efficient evidence processing, and secure, streamlined operations that an older, repurposed building simply cannot offer.

### New Construction vs. Retrofitting

While it is tempting to look for a "deal" on an existing commercial building, retrofitting often becomes a money pit for public safety.

- **Specialized Needs:** To best promote community safety and to manage suspects and evidence in the most secure way possible police departments require highly specific infrastructure—hardened exteriors, secure "sally ports" for prisoner transport, specialized evidence ventilation, and secure IT server rooms.

- **Long-Term Savings:** A new building allows us to build to our exact specifications from day one, avoiding the "square peg in a round hole" frustration of a retrofit that inevitably requires constant, expensive modifications.

**Preliminary Cost Estimate**

To give the Council a sense of the scale for this project, we can look at our recent success with Fire Station 31. That facility set a benchmark cost of approximately \$634 per square foot for construction of the main facility and furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE). For my proposal I'm relying on that benchmark number plus an additional ~10% for recent inflation.

Based on current Police Department needs, a facility of approximately 47,000 square feet is the preliminary recommendation.

Metric	Estimate
Estimated Square Footage	47,000 sq. ft.
Benchmark Cost (per sq. ft.) + Inflation	\$700
<b>Total Estimated Construction/FFE Cost</b>	<b>\$32,900,000</b>

This figure is a **rough estimate** intended to spark discussion. It does not include specialized equipment nor future inflationary adjustments. **A formal needs assessment and professional architectural study will be required to determine a final "hard" number.**

**Funding: The General Obligation (GO) Bond Process**

I propose we fund this project through a **General Obligation Bond**. I believe that, in Utah, this is the gold standard for major municipal projects for several reasons:

- **Voter Approval:** It requires a ballot initiative. This ensures that the citizens of Sandy are partners in the decision-making process.
- **Lowest Interest Rates:** GO bonds are backed by the "full faith and credit" of the city, meaning we can secure the lowest possible interest rates, saving taxpayer dollars over the life of the loan.
- **Transparency:** The process involves public hearings and a clear explanation of how property taxes will be impacted.

The GO bond process is governed by the **Local Government Bonding Act**, which includes several key milestones:

1. **Council Resolution:** The Council must pass a resolution at least 75 days before the election to place the bond on the ballot.
2. **Public Hearing:** The city must hold at least one public hearing to receive input on the bond and its economic impact.
3. **Publish Arguments:** Any Pro and Con arguments for the bond must be published publicly
4. **Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP):** The City must mail a pamphlet to every residence containing information on the proposed bond.
5. **Election Notice:** Formal notice of the bond election must be published for a set period of time leading up to the vote.

6. **Voter Approval:** The bond requires a simple majority of voters to pass.

### **Site Selection: Synergy with Justice Services**

I propose we explore locating the new facility in the immediate vicinity of the Sandy City Justice Court (210 West Segoe Lily Drive). Specifically, the parking lot located to the west of the Justice Court building warrants a feasibility study as a potential site.

Placing the Police Department and the Justice Court in the same complex creates a "Justice Campus" that offers significant advantages:

- **Logistical Efficiency:** Reduced transport time and increased security for officers moving between the station and court appearances.
- **Public Access:** A centralized hub for residents to oversee all public safety and legal matters in one recognizable location.
- **Land Utilization:** Utilizing existing city-owned property or adjacent lots could significantly streamline the acquisition phase of the project and prevent additional land purchase costs.
- **New Opportunities:** Creating a new building opens additional opportunities to meet the office space needs for other city departments.

### **Timeline and Strategy**

I am not looking to rush this onto the ballot this year. Instead, I am proposing a November 2027 target. This timeline provides us with a critical 18-month window to:

- **Conduct a Formal Study:** Hire experts to verify space needs and costs.
- **Public Education Campaign:** Launch a transparent initiative to show residents the current conditions of our facilities and the benefits of a new facility.
- **Gather Community Input:** Ensure the building reflects Sandy's aesthetic and community values.

### **Building Study Findings (Timeline 10-20 years)**

Police Department **can** relocate into Courts building with a new addition. This solution will require the Justice Court to vacate the building and relocate to another location. Refer to executive summary page 8 and the summary cost at the end of the study for additional information. The estimated cost listed at the bottom of this summary page does not include the associated costs for relocation of the Justice Court.

Estimated Cost: \$14,749,351

### **Stakeholder comments**

1. Chief wants to bring all police operations into the same space.
2. The current evidence storage area is too small and spread across three locations.
3. The training room is too small and allows unauthorized access to the PD. Exercise gym, lockers and changing areas are too small and not very functional, also allows city staff to enter PD as it is a shared space.
4. The squad room is too small, need space for patrol report writing.
5. Need a larger breakroom.
6. Gear storage/ SWAT/ Quarter Master areas need more space.

**In Conclusion**

My proposal for a new Public Safety Building is a commitment to the long-term resilience and professionalism of Sandy City by choosing a purpose-built facility over a retrofit—and strategically locating it to create a centralized justice campus—we ensure our police department has the tools necessary to protect our community into the future. Meets the PD needs in a shorter period (2-4 years vs 10-20). Moving forward with a 2027 GO bond allows us the necessary time to be transparent, thorough, and fiscally responsible, ultimately letting the residents decide on a legacy project that will define Sandy's commitment to safety for the next generation.