AGENDA DATE: September 17, 2019

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Engineering Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Review Of Santa Barbara Police Station Alternative Sites And Designation Of A Preferred Site Alternative For Review Under The California Environmental Quality Act; Direct Staff To Initiate Conceptual Project Design And Environmental Review

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council designate the Cota Commuter Parking Lot as the preferred site alternative for the new Santa Barbara Police Station for the purposes of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act, and direct staff to initiate environmental review and conceptual project design.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Santa Barbara Police Station Project (Project) was reinitiated after the passage of Measure C in 2017. The concept for a new police headquarters was last considered and tabled following the dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency in 2012 at which time $20 million had been earmarked for a new Police Station. Measure C is a one-cent sales tax that provides funding for streets infrastructure, other public improvements, and specifically this Project. Staff began the site selection process with Council authorization in 2018. Periodic updates have been presented to Council throughout the site review and public engagement process.

In March 2019, Council directed staff to examine the site selection criteria more thoroughly and further analyze the sites considered for the Police Station. Since then, staff has analyzed 20 discrete sites, of which five have been carried forward as potential sites: the Louise Lowry Davis/Spencer Adams Park, the Cota Commuter Parking Lot, the Cota Commuter Parking Lot with a portion of the adjacent Employment Development Department (EDD) parking lot, the Earl Warren Showgrounds, and the Sears property at La Cumbre Plaza.
Based upon the site selection criteria and preliminary environmental assessments, staff recommends that Council designate the Cota Commuter Parking Lot as the preferred site alternative for the purposes of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for a new Police Station. In addition, staff recommends that Council direct staff to initiate environmental review and conceptual project design for the preferred site.

DISCUSSION:

Existing Police Station

The existing Police Station, located at 215 East Figueroa Street and constructed in 1959, is a concrete and steel structure that operates as an essential facility for the City but does not meet current building code and accessibility standards. A new building is required to house all Police Department operations in one place and to ensure uninterrupted public safety services to the community.

Currently, there are four separate locations for police officers and administrative staff, which number approximately 212 sworn and non-sworn individuals, along with approximately 40 volunteers and part-time employees. The existing Police Station is in operation 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The building serves as the main administrative office for police services and also includes a jail and shooting range. The building houses chemical and special weapons, tactical equipment, criminal records, and crime scene evidence. In case of a disaster, the building also serves as the City’s backup Emergency Operations Center. The Police and Fire Combined Communications Center that handles 911 calls and all radio communication is located at the nearby Granada Garage. The annex building adjacent to the Police Station, located at 222 East Anapamu Street, serves as office space for several divisions. Additionally, Animal Control is located in a smaller building behind Fire Station 3, at 415 East Sola Street.

Several prior initiatives studied retrofitting the existing station and/or constructing a new station on the existing Figueroa Street site. While these prior efforts all agreed upon the inadequacy of the existing station, in each case the funding was never secured to proceed beyond the pre-conceptual level.

Request for Qualification Process

The passage of Measure C in November 2017 provided a secure funding source to resume efforts to establish a new Police Station. Accordingly, a Request for Qualifications soliciting consultant teams for services during site selection and design was released in February 2018, and a contract was awarded in June of 2018. The consultant team included Cearnal Collective, a local architect, and McClaren Wilson & Lawrie, an architect specializing in the programming and designing of police facilities. Jim McClaren, Principal Architect with McClaren Wilson & Lawrie (McClaren) was selected for the programming
phase, described below. McClaren has designed over 300 police stations nationwide and is eminently qualified to be the technical architect for this Project. In the last 12 months, staff and the design team have assisted in defining the site selection process for the new Police Station.

Process Summary

The project team established several overarching objectives for a new Police Station. They include providing a single, seismically fit and resilient building for the 24/7/365 essential services delivered by the Police Department. Other objectives are to create a sustainable and efficient building, streamlined for coordination and communication between key policing services. Objectives further include the capability to provide in-service training opportunities and close proximity to court buildings and to the service demands of the Downtown corridor.

The process began by determining what was needed for the new Police Station, a process called programming. The programming process collected data from a series of questionnaires and interviews with police officers and personnel, and it evaluated the needs and operations through the lens of industry standards and experience. The programming effort resulted in a Needs Assessment, which evaluates operational and space requirements for a new facility that would accommodate the needs of the community. This report is available for review on the Project website at SantaBarbaraCA.gov/PoliceStation.

The programming produced the operational and space requirements commensurate with the existing police force and accounted for the 1% projected future growth as well. The programming phase concluded with a recommendation to pursue a single, strategically located Police Station. Substations were not recommended because the City has a relatively small response area and travel times are limited, even to the most remote areas. Substations are also not cost-effective for a city the size of Santa Barbara.

Programming also informed the development of the site criteria checklist by which each site was evaluated for viability, which include criteria such as lot size, location within a flood zone, annexation, and Santa Barbara Charter limitations. Each of the 20 sites considered has its own evaluation sheet, which is available in the Clerk’s office and on the website at SantaBarbaraCA.Gov/PoliceStation.

It was challenging to find sites that met all, or most, of the site criteria, but a few, at varying levels of viability, were identified:

- the Louise Lowry Davis/Spencer Adams Park/1235 Teen Center (LLD), located within the block of Victoria Street, Chapala Street, Anapamu Street and De La Vina Street;
- the Cota Commuter Parking Lot, located at Cota Street and Santa Barbara Street;
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- the Cota Commuter Parking Lot with a portion of the Employment Development Department (EDD) parking lot;
- a portion of the Earl Warren property, and
- the former Sears property at La Cumbre Plaza.

Each of the five sites were studied in depth for viability and are the focus of the preliminary environmental review described below.

Potential Sites

Staff considered all possible sites citywide that could potentially meet some or all of the needs identified during the programming phase. From that universal search, 20 total sites were identified as potentially suitable for a new Police Station. A comparative analysis of each site against the site criteria was conducted and is included as Attachment 1. Each site is summarized on a separate evaluation sheet in Appendix 1, which is available for review on the Project webpage as listed above and at the City Clerk’s Office.

Site Selection Process

Each site was evaluated to determine if it met enough of the established criteria to warrant further investigation. Staff identified six key criteria as being the most likely to influence site selection. These primary selection criteria are listed below and described in more detail in Attachment 1.

- Downtown Corridor (defined as the Central Business District)
  - The Central Business District (CBD) was determined to be a key criterion as the overwhelming majority of calls for service originate within the CBD. The CBD also provides convenient proximity to the Santa Barbara County Courthouse.
- Lot size and configuration
- Flood Hazard Zone and sea level rise limitations
- Land use constraints or suitability of existing structures for Police Station use
- Control of property - City ownership
- City Charter constraints and General Plan designation

The following is a brief description of the five sites that met most or all of the criteria and were recommended for further evaluation.

- Louise Lowry Davis Center/Spencer Adams Park/1235 Teen Center: This site meets all the programming and Project objectives for location, size, flood hazard zone, and ownership. The City-owned site is 3.2 acres, allows access to all four surrounding streets, and has two buildings of historic nature on site that would need to be retained and possibly relocated. The site is zoned Parks and Recreation
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(P-R) and, per the City Charter, would require a vote of the people to change the use from a Park to a Police Station. In conjunction with the Charter Amendment, the environmental impacts associated with the change in land use would require evaluation. The site also includes a lawn bowling facility that is in use 7 days per week, with over 120 members actively using the facility. Lastly, the surrounding land uses are primarily residential to the north, west, and south. Some of these residents rely on the use of the facility throughout the week for neighborhood activities and parking. This option also presents potential Land Use policy inconsistencies with the General Plan and the Municipal Code with respect to policies directing continued park uses.

- **Cota Commuter Parking Lot**: This site meets all the programming and Project objectives, including the critical site criteria. The site is 1.6 acres in the Downtown area, has no existing structures on site, and allows access to two primary thoroughfares: Cota and Santa Barbara Streets. The site is used five days per week as a parking lot for permit-holding commuters, and public parking during evenings and weekends. The Santa Barbara Farmers’ Association Farmers’ Market uses the lot on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The site has mature trees throughout the parking lot.

- **Cota Commuter Parking Lot with EDD Segment**: This site meets all the programming and Project objectives, including the most critical criteria, and includes a portion of the adjacent property to the north owned by the EDD of the State of California. The proposed portion of the EDD property is approximately 5,440 square feet (0.125 acres), constituting the last row of parking on the southern end of the EDD parking lot. This additional area would allow the design for the Police Station to expand to the north for access and surface parking, and expand the square footage of the bottom floor of the building. This additional area is not required to make the Cota Lot viable; however, it would provide a significant benefit to the site design. This could be a beneficial arrangement with the EDD through either a purchase or a long-term lease arrangement. This possibility is currently under consideration by the State of California.

- **Earl Warren Showgrounds**: This site meets the programming and Project objectives for size, flood hazard, and land use. The site is located northwest of the City center and adjacent to Highway 101 and Las Positas Road, is in the unincorporated County of Santa Barbara, and is owned by the State of California. Annexation into the City jurisdiction would likely be necessary to utilize Measure C funding for lease and construction costs. The likelihood of obtaining state consent to annex is unknown and would be assumed for purposes of CEQA analysis. The site, which is only a portion of the overall property, is currently used as an equestrian corral, an un-enclosed hockey rink, and has some surface parking and storage. The site presents challenges to the Police Department for access to the City center for court obligations and patrols that involve walking or biking. In 2019,
the state published a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a long-term lease and development of 4.16 acres of the 33.9 acre property, located along the western border with the Santa Barbara Golf Club. The RFP had an application due date of August 2019, with a proposed lease commencement of December 2019. While it was not possible for the City to meet this timing, it may be possible to meet another round of proposals if the site remains available. Therefore, this site was recommended for continued consideration.

- Former Sears Property in La Cumbre Plaza: This site meets the programming and Project objectives for size, flood hazard, and does not have any City Charter restrictions. The site is 9.45 acres, is located northwest of the City center in La Cumbre Plaza adjacent to Highway 101 and La Cumbre Road, has an existing structure on it previously used by Sears, and is currently not for sale. While the site is too large for the needs of the Police Department, there is a possibility the site could be reduced in size for sale by the owner in the future. The site presents challenges to the Police Department for access to the City center for court obligations and patrols that involve walking or biking. However, it is considered a possibility due to the existing land use (parking lot) and the potential future sale opportunity with the owner.

Public Outreach

After the initial evaluation of the sites, staff conducted outreach during the fall of 2018 to engage the public in the site selection process. In addition to the updates provided to Council and the Site Selection Ad Hoc Committee, staff provided updates at public meetings of the Neighborhood Advisory Council, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Downtown Parking Committee, and the Fire and Police Commission.

Additionally, three public outreach workshops were held on November 7, 13, and 15, 2018 in three different locations. Noticing for the workshops was provided to property owners and tenants within a 1,000 foot radius of the existing Police Station, as well as the Cota Commuter Parking Lot and the Louise Lowry Davis Center/Spencer Adams Park (LLD). Staff provided additional noticing to those potentially most affected by the site selection, including the Santa Barbara Farmers’ Market Association (for the Cota Commuter Lot site) and the Lawn Bowlers Club (for the LLD site). Leading up to the workshops, staff also performed outreach at the Saturday and Tuesday Farmers’ Markets, which included distribution of Project information at the seven market days prior to the public workshops.

Staff and the design team welcomed the public at the workshops and invited participation by explaining the process and answering questions about each phase of site selection and the constraints of selecting a site. Staff presented and discussed the site criteria relative to the locations under consideration at that time. Spanish translation was provided at all outreach workshops. All public input on the Project has been catalogued and summarized. The goal of the outreach was to educate and inform the public about the
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process and to solicit feedback. The workshops were well attended and provided staff with valuable information that was used in evaluating each potential site.

The need for a new Police Station has been well established and, along with the passage of Measure C, the public feedback indicates strong community support. Most recently, staff conducted additional outreach to the community to further educate and inform as to the site selection process, the benefits a new Police Station will bring to the community, and a complete review of all the sites considered, including new sites evaluated after the March 2019 Council direction to continue investigation. This outreach was in the form of an educational and information fact sheet created by staff and Ayars & Associates, a professional public outreach and communications support firm under contract for this Project.

The website for the Police Station Project was updated in order to better explain the need for a new Police Station and the community benefits this station will provide. Staff used various media outlets to update the community and point to the updated information available online.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Review under the California Environmental Quality Act is required prior to action by the City Council to select a site and approve a public project. However, CEQA Guidelines §15004 provides that a public agency may designate a preferred site for CEQA review purposes. In order to assist with the designation of a preferred site for CEQA review purpose, staff prepared a preliminary environmental review on the five sites identified as appropriate for further consideration during the site criteria analysis; this information is summarized in Attachment 2. The comparative preliminary evaluation is designed to help inform the public and City Council regarding the choice of a preferred site alternative. The preliminary environmental review is available in its entirety on the Project webpage and at the City Clerk’s Office.

In summary, the five sites were found to have relatively similar levels of potential environmental impacts, though the Louise Lowry Davis (“LLD”) site was found to have the most potentially significant impacts.

- **Biological Resources:** Each site was found to have potentially significant impacts to biological resources due to mature tree loss, which may be mitigated to a less than significant level as determined with Project design and CEQA review.

- **Noise:** The LLD, Cota, and Cota with EDD sites were found to have potentially significant temporary construction noise impacts, which could likely be mitigated to a less than significant level as determined with Project design and CEQA review.
Heritage Resources: All sites except for the Sears property were found to have potentially significant impacts to historic and/or archaeological resources, which could likely be mitigated as determined with CEQA review.

Land Use and Public Facilities: The LLD site was also found to have potentially significant impacts to land use and public facilities/services due to potential land use policy consistency conflicts and net loss of recreation facilities, which would be determined with CEQA review. The Earl Warren Showgrounds property was found to have potentially significant impacts to public services/facilities due to loss of public facilities used for recreation, as well as potentially significant County land use policy conflicts.

Transportation: Both the Earl Warren Showgrounds and Sears sites were found to have potentially significant transportation impacts, with feasible mitigation and residual impacts determined with CEQA review.

Visual: The LLD site was found to have potentially significant impacts to visual resources, as the park is a public gathering area and mountain views are visible. It is possible that the potential impacts could be reduced with feasible mitigation and residual impacts determined with CEQA review.

Geophysical: The Sears site is within a 200-foot buffer area on each side of an apparently active Holocene age seismic fault (activity less than or equal to 11,000 years ago) that crosses the Project site. Therefore, this site was found to have a potentially significant seismic impact associated with earthquake fault rupture.

Potentially significant impacts are summarized by site in Table 1 below.

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*Table 1: Summary of Potentially Significant Impacts at Potential Sites*

Next Steps in Design and Environmental Review
The next step in the design process is to proceed with preliminary design on the preferred site alternative to the extent needed for the CEQA Initial Study. In order to provide sufficient design to be able to assess environmental impacts, Cearnal Collective will provide a scope of work to bring the preliminary plans to approximately 30 percent design, including necessary technical studies, such as civil drawings and preliminary landscape plans, to be produced by sub-consultants. This level of design is necessary to complete the Initial Study and engage the Architectural Board of Review for a concept hearing. This effort would require a Council-approved amendment to the existing design contract with Cearnal Collective. This phase of work will conclude once the Initial Study is complete.

The next step in the environmental review process is to complete the technical environmental studies and reports identified in the preliminary environmental review effort, which would form the basis of the Initial Study. Technical environmental studies would be completed by an environmental consultant team selected following a Request for Proposals, which would be published after Council’s selection of a preferred site. Once the technical studies are complete, staff would complete an Initial Study focused on the preferred site alternative. If needed, the Initial Study would be used to scope further recommended environmental review and be used as a basis for a second Request for Proposals for a consultant to assist with complete CEQA review. It is estimated that the CEQA process would be completed within one year of Council’s recommendation of a preferred site alternative for the purposes of environmental review.

**PREFERRED SITE LOCATION RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the results of the site criteria analysis in Attachment 1 and the preliminary environmental review summarized in Attachment 2, staff recommends that Council select the Cota Commuter Parking Lot as the preferred site alternative for review under CEQA for location of the new Police Station and to direct staff to initiate environmental review and conceptual project design.

The Cota site would provide the Police Department with a superior location in the Central Business District, excellent proximity to the main call service area for officers, convenience for officers in attending to their court obligations and patrol areas, and provide the community with central access to the facility. The Cota Lot is City-owned and available. Moreover, the Cota site has the least potentially significant environmental impacts. The preliminary environmental review indicates that, while there are potential significant environmental impacts, they are likely subject to mitigation.

In summary, the Cota Lot is recommended as the preferred site alternative as the site meets the Project objectives and the site criteria.

**Potential Community Effects of Cota Site Selection**

Developing the Cota Commuter Parking Lot would impact existing users of the parking lot. Existing users include Downtown commuters (Monday-Friday) and the Santa Barbara
Certified Farmers’ Market Association (Saturday Market). There are 221 parking spaces in the Cota Commuter Parking Lot and 391 permit holders. The relocation of these permit holders will be a priority and part of the parking study that will be initiated as part of the environmental review for this site. Staff in the Downtown Parking Division recognize that there are multiple parking lots with available capacity, and identifying locations to relocate the daily commuters will be part of the solution. In addition, the Cota Commuter Parking Lot is also used for free of charge public parking on evenings and weekends; this would no longer be available.

In October 2018, staff initiated communication with the Santa Barbara Certified Farmers’ Market Association (Association) to inform them the Cota Commuter parking lot was being considered as the site for the Police Station and subsequent conversations and meetings were had to explore relocation options. Staff is committed to providing assistance with the selection of a new location for the Saturday Market. Should the Cota Commuter Parking Lot be the site selected for development, staff is committed to continue partnering with the Association to make the transition to a new location as seamless as possible. At this time, staff has discussed and reviewed 12 possible sites with the Association for relocation throughout Santa Barbara and will continue to support the Association to the greatest extent feasible to find a location that will provide the community with continued access to the Saturday Market.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The funding source for this Project is Measure C. There are no direct financial impacts associated with this Council action; however, pending Council’s direction, staff will seek approval for contracts associated with the next phases of environmental review and design services to support and inform that review.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

City Resolution 07-018 requires that new City building construction be designed and constructed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver classification, or where LEED is not applicable for the Project, another green building program certification level contingent on the building type. Resolution 07-018 also requires new building construction and major renovations for City-owned and operated buildings be designed to exceed State Title 24 Energy Requirements by 20 percent. In addition, the City’s General Plan calls for the inclusion of solar energy to help meet the energy demand for the structure.
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ATTACHMENTS:
1. Site Criteria Analysis
2. Preliminary Environmental Review Summary Sheets

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APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office