

Press Release
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PRESS RELEASE

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Laying the Foundation: New Police Station and City Services Annex Ceremony

The City of Gulf Breeze celebrated its new public safety project Wednesday, September 6th, by hosting a ceremony at the construction site of the Police Station and City Services Annex on Fairpoint Drive. The new Police Station will include space for dispatch and a city services annex for utility billing and customer service operations. The Public Safety Campus currently includes the fire station, which was redeveloped in 2005.

In February 2020, Mayor Cherry Fitch and City Council reached a consensus to combine two municipal needs by constructing the Police Station and City Services Annex. Relocating utility customer service to Fairpoint Drive allows the Finance Department and Community Service Department more meeting space for residents and businesses. For many years, employees have shared 3 to 4 desks per office. Since the mid-90s, prior City Councils have wrestled with where to locate a new Police Station and a new, larger City Hall. Locations for a new Police Station included behind Gulf Breeze Elementary School and at the corner of Highway 98 and Daniel Drive. Locations for a new City Hall were addressed in the 2012 Most Livable City Master Plan and included Shoreline Park South and Highway 98.

Mayor Fitch said, "The Council is excited to see this project finally come to fruition and are happy to be a part of this momentous occasion. We are also pleased to report that no local tax dollars were spent on the project." The project is primarily funded by the America Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Chief Hawthorne said, "The new Police Station and City Services Annex will ensure a continuation of high-quality police services well into the future. The police station was built in 1985 to house twelve full-time officers and two support staff. The force currently has twenty-five officers. The structure was slightly renovated in 1993 and again in 1999 to add space as the department added a communication center and additional officers. This new building will give the officers and staff a sense of pride."

David Alsop, Sam Marshall Architects, said, "The current Gulf Breeze Police Station has met or exceeded its useful life span. Importantly, the building is pre-ADA and pre-updated Florida hurricane codes, the finishes are worn and dated, the holding cells are utilized for storage, the technology infrastructure is outdated, and the facility looks like a residential

home and not the image of a modern law enforcement building with hardened construction.”

“The opportunity offered to include utility customer service into a new building allows for enhanced security while freeing up much needed space in City Hall. This new Police Station paired with the Fire Station creates a modern public safety complex.”

The Morette Company said, “The Morette Co. Team is proud to continue to serve our community through leadership of the construction of the new Gulf Breeze Police Station and City Services Annex building. Law enforcement and other civil services are more critical than ever before, and we are excited to be a part of providing a new state of the art facility to the city that will serve our community for generations to come. The Morette Co. Team will work closely with the rest of the project team to ensure that we successfully deliver the highest quality project safely, on time, and within budget”.

The new Police Station and City Services Annex is slated for completion in late Fall 2023. A full ceremony and tour will follow the completion of the project.