



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

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## OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

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**Date Issued:** October 19, 2015

**IBA Report Number:** 15-37

**Public Safety & Livable Neighborhoods Committee Meeting Date:** October 28, 2015

**Item Number:** 7

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# Police Department Traffic Division Facility Needs

## OVERVIEW

The San Diego Police Department Traffic Division currently operates out of a 19,323-square foot modular facility located on City-owned land adjacent to Eastern Division at 9265 Aero Drive. Traffic Division also includes the Special Events Planning Office, which shares the facility. Other units within Traffic Division include Abandoned Vehicle Abatement, Accident Investigations, Commercial Enforcement, the DUI Team, Motors, Parking Enforcement, Traffic Investigations, the San Diego Traffic Offender Program (STOP) Team, and the Traffic Community Relations Office. The facility, originally built in 1999, is composed of a series of trailers joined together to form a temporary modular building. The building has deteriorated with time and heavy use and has significant maintenance needs. Additionally, the Police Department has indicated that the building lacks the functionality necessary to meet its operational needs.

During the FY 2016 Budget Process, a majority of City Councilmembers requested in their budget modification memoranda that \$700,000 in one-time expenditures be added to the FY 2016 Budget to fund the design of a permanent facility for Traffic Division. In IBA Report #15-22 (Proposed Revisions to the Mayor's FY 2016 Budget) our office provided information on this concept but did not recommend it for approval at that time. Ultimately, funding was not provided for this purpose in the FY 2016 Budget and such a project is not currently included in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

At the request of the Chair of the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee, we have conducted further analysis of the facilities needs at Traffic Division. This report provides an overview of the building's condition, the Police Department's operational needs and facilities priorities, logistical challenges at the site, potential construction costs, and recommendations for Council consideration including options for funding a feasibility study and establishing a CIP for a permanent replacement facility.

# FISCAL/POLICY DISCUSSION

## Current Facility Condition

As part of its ongoing work to assess the City’s infrastructure and develop the Multi-Year Capital Plan (MYCP), the Public Works Department presented the FY 2014 Facilities Condition Assessment report to the Infrastructure Committee in June 2015. The report identified the Facility Condition Index (FCI) for 274 City-occupied non-leased General Fund facilities assessed in FY 2014, including the Traffic Division facility. The FCI signifies whether a facility is in good, fair, or poor condition. As shown below, the FCI is a ratio based on the total cost of a building’s capital backlog divided by its current replacement value.

$\text{FCI} = \frac{\text{Backlog of Deferred Maintenance and Capital Projects}}{\text{Current Replacement Value}}$	<b>Condition Scale:</b> Good – FCI of 0-20 Fair – FCI of 21-29 Poor – FCI of 30 or greater
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The FCI for the Traffic Division facility is 27, which indicates fair condition. For perspective, the average FCI for all assessed buildings was 39, which is poor condition. However, while Traffic Division is not among the City’s worst-condition facilities, it is nonetheless below Public Works’ recommended service level for public facilities. The table below illustrates Public Works’ recommended service level for City-occupied non-leased General Fund facilities based on FCI (which has been presented to the City Council but not formally adopted as policy).

**Staff-recommended Service Level:**

**Public & Semi-Public Facilities:** FCI - 15 (Good)  
**City Office/Work Yard/Operations:** FCI - 29 (Fair)

**FY 2014 Condition Assessment:**

**Traffic Division Facility:** FCI - 27 (Fair)

Based on a Public Works-recommended FCI service level of 15, the Traffic Division facility (FCI of 27) is a candidate for repair. Alternatively, the Council may wish to consider funding a permanent replacement facility rather than invest in a temporary structure with an indefinite expected service life. Options for exploring the construction of a permanent facility are discussed later in this report.

## Police Department Operational Needs

In addition to evaluating the Traffic Division facility’s *condition*, it is also important to consider its operational *functionality* for the Police Department. In this regard, the facility is currently lacking. The Department has expressed that, apart from the building’s disrepair, Traffic Division has outgrown the temporary structure and needs a permanent facility.

The current structure was designed to accommodate the needs of Traffic Division in 1999. Since that time, the demands placed on the facility have grown. Unlike our other area commands, Traffic Division is used by many other Police Department employees who are not specifically assigned to Traffic, such as Special Events operations staff. Approximately 320 employees are assigned to Traffic Division, including 100 sworn officers, 147 Special Event Traffic Controller staff, 64 Parking Enforcement staff, and 10 support staff. The majority of these employees report to the facility before and after their shifts but perform their daily work in the field. On a daily basis, approximately 130-140 staff work at the facility. Additionally, the site is used on a weekly basis for special events such as Chargers games, Padres games, and community events. On these occasions, sworn and civilian staff not specifically assigned to Traffic Division work out of the facility, further increasing the operational demands on the site.

Given the high number of employees who use the Traffic Division facility on a 24-hour basis, the Department has indicated that the space is not as fully functional as would be desired. The Department has outgrown the aging modular facility. A new, permanent facility would enhance the Department's ability to serve the community in a more professional manner and enhance the morale of the employees assigned to Traffic Division.

### **Site Challenges:**

It is important to note that the Traffic Division facility is located on City-owned land that has significant restrictions placed on it by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Due to its location adjacent to Montgomery Field, a large portion of the site is subject to a Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). Within the RPZ, only the current temporary structures may remain. Immediately adjacent to the RPZ, permanent structures must receive an airspace determination ("hazard" or "no hazard") from the FAA based on the location and height of the proposed structures. The City Airports Department has noted that the FAA typically provides airspace determinations within 30 days of receipt of required documents.

An aerial photograph of the current Traffic Division site, noting the approximate boundary of the RPZ, is included in this report as Attachment 1. In the photo, the RPZ is depicted as a diagonal line. The current modular building is located northeast of (above) the line, within the RPZ. It is allowed by the FAA due to its status as a temporary structure. Similarly, surface parking would likely continue to be allowable within the RPZ. Any future permanent buildings proposed for the site would be required to be located southwest of (below) the line, subject to a favorable airspace determination by the FAA. However, a detailed survey is necessary to determine the precise boundary of the RPZ. Additionally, the FAA would require the precise location and height of each corner of any proposed structure and any other object extending into the airspace, such as an antennas or temporary cranes associated with construction. The Airports Department has indicated that a new building up to two stories outside the RPZ would likely not be a hazard to air navigation, and that the Department would fully support a permanent Traffic Division facility on the site assuming FAA approval.

The Police Department has not developed a full needs assessment for a potential permanent building but has indicated that, at a minimum, a new facility would need to be approximately 25,000 square feet to house existing Traffic operations, including Special Events. Ideally,

additional square footage would be added to meet other operational needs. Examples include space to accommodate training, space for specialized units, and areas for property storage. Given the FAA restrictions on the land, a two-story facility may be necessary in order to accommodate the desired square footage within the buildable footprint.

### **Estimated Costs**

Because the Police Department has not developed a full needs assessment for a future replacement building at Traffic Division, it is very difficult to estimate potential costs. However, the FY 2014 Facilities Condition Assessment report provides a useful starting point for consideration. In that report, Public Works provided the following estimates:

<b><u>FY 2014 Traffic Division Facility Condition Assessment:</u></b>	
<b>Total Capital and Maintenance Needs:</b>	<b>\$3.1 million</b>
<b>Building Replacement Value:</b>	<b>\$11.2 million</b>

It is important to note that above estimates were intended to provide information on the extent of City's infrastructure backlog, not to plan for and design new facilities. With regard to capital and maintenance needs, the \$3.1 million estimate would, in theory, bring the existing Traffic Division modular facility into good condition similar to when it was constructed in 1999. This is not necessarily the same as meeting the proposed service level standard of FCI 15 for police stations. Similarly, the \$11.2 million estimated building replacement value noted above is based on the hypothetical cost of rebuilding the existing modular facility anew. Given the significant design challenges present at the site and the expanded operational needs of the Police Department since the facility was originally built, the potential cost of constructing a permanent replacement would likely be much higher.

### **Current FY 2016-2020 MYCP and Upcoming FY 2017-2021 Five-Year Outlook:**

The Traffic Division facility is currently not included in the FY2016-2020 Multi-Year Capital Plan (MYCP). Among the benefits of the MYCP is the comprehensive view it provides of the City's overall capital needs and priorities. Investing in a potential replacement Traffic Division facility outside the MYCP process could result in re-prioritizing needs on an ad-hoc basis. In its 2013 Five-Year Plan, the Police Department focused primarily on staffing issues rather than facility needs. For FY 2017 and beyond, the Police Chief has expressed that significantly improving all Department facilities is a very high priority. The Police Department has recently turned its focus on facility needs and has submitted several operations and maintenance items, including identifying needs at Traffic Division, to Financial Management for consideration in the Mayor's FY 2017-2021 Five-Year Financial Outlook, which is anticipated to be released on November 13.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Police Department Traffic Division currently operates out of a temporary modular facility that lacks operational functionality and does not meet recommended FCI service levels. Although many other City facilities also do not meet these service levels and are in fact in worse

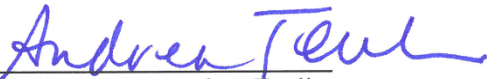
condition, the Traffic Division facility is unique in two ways. First, the Police Department has outgrown the facility, which is no longer operationally sufficient. Second, the facility is a temporary structure despite the permanent nature of Traffic Division's functions. The current facility has significant capital needs. Whether those needs are met by repairing and expanding the temporary structure or by constructing a replacement permanent building is ultimately a policy decision for the Mayor and City Council. We do note, however, that any improvements made to a temporary modular site should be considered in the context of whether the facility's useful life will be long enough to justify the investment.

Given the expanded operational needs of the Police Department, the deteriorating condition of the current Traffic Division facility, and the unique site challenges posed by the FAA, our office proposes the following two recommendations:

**Recommendations:**

1. **Fund a feasibility study for a permanent Traffic Division facility.** In order to allow Public Works to work with the Police Department to analyze property issues, operational needs, desired facility conditions, and to develop a project scope, budget, and schedule, the Council may wish to fund a feasibility study. Public Works has provided an estimated cost of \$250,000. Available options for the Council to appropriate funds for this purpose include the FY 2016 Mid-Year Budget Adjustments and the FY 2017 Budget Process.
2. **Request that the Police Department report back to the Public Safety & Livable Neighborhoods Committee on its facilities priorities.** After the release of the FY 2017-2021 Five-Year Financial Outlook and the FY 2017-2021 Multi-Year Capital Outlook in November, the Council will have more information on the Mayor's proposed capital investments for the Police Department over the next five years. It would benefit the Council and the public to have a discussion at Committee of the Department's overall priorities for facilities, including Traffic Division, in advance of the FY 2017 Budget Process.

  
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Attachment 1: Aerial photograph of current Traffic Division site

