

New Lake Oswego City Hall FAQ



1. Where will the new police facility and city hall be located?

The new building will be constructed in downtown Lake Oswego next to the existing city hall (between 3rd and 4th street and A and Evergreen Avenues). The City Council, acting as the Lake Oswego Redevelopment Agency, purchased the properties adjacent to city hall for building a safe and secure facility for police and 911 dispatch services. Then, after reviewing new studies on the condition of the existing city hall building and the options to address the issues, the council decided to replace the building rather than reinforce and repair the existing structure.

The community and City Council studied different options for the site, including building a larger civic center on the block. However, the cost estimate for the civic center exceeded the project budget, so the council decided to build a new city hall/police facility on the property adjacent to the existing city hall. The existing building will be demolished and replaced with parking and plazas.

2. Why isn't the City repairing or remodeling the existing City Hall building?

The Lake Oswego City Hall building has significant structural and maintenance issues that are costly to repair. The building was constructed in 1986 for \$5 million. A significant issue is that the building's envelope system is EFIS (exterior insulation and finish system) that was engineered and constructed without an adequate drainage system. As a result, rainwater penetrates the exterior cladding and has damaged the underlying components of the building's exterior wall. The building's issues and deficiencies have been studied and analyzed numerous times over the years without a simple resolution to be found.

The most recent structural analysis conducted this year concluded that the building was designed for the light weight EFIS system and other siding systems (such as brick or metal panels) would require extensive changes to the structure of the building to support the change in weight. Furthermore, the structural analysis again confirmed that the building would not perform well in an earthquake.

Lastly, the building's systems such as the heating and cooling units, elevators, flooring, and generator are in need of replacement or repair. So replacing the EFIS siding with a new generation of an EFIS-like exterior with drainage was an option, however, just replacing the siding would not address the maintenance or structural issues. Making the costly repairs to the exterior siding without seismic repairs could be a risk since the building would likely not be usable following an earthquake.

After studying the options and costs associated with the siding replacement, seismic upgrades, and maintenance issues, the Council decided that it was more effective to rebuild City Hall as a high performing, structurally sound, and secure building for the community.

3. What other options were considered for locating a new Police Facility?

The City has studied a new facility for Police and emergency dispatch services since at least 2001. The existing building cannot be adequately secured, there is both insufficient and inadequate space for police operations, and the building does not meet current seismic standards for “essential services.” In 2011, a site selection study analyzed ten different locations around the city that could possibly accommodate a new facility for Police, 911, and Court services. Based on specific criteria and input from the City Council, the sites were narrowed down to two: the City Hall block and the West End Building property. With the sale of the West End Building in 2015, that site was removed from further consideration. Also, there was no readily identifiable funding source for a new facility on that site other than a voter-approved General Obligation Bond.

4. What will the new city hall include?

In addition to a larger, more secure facility for the police department, the new city hall will also house a larger emergency operations center, and include space for retail/nonprofit organizations. The Council identified the Arts Council of Lake Oswego and the Lake Oswego Booktique as the preferred tenants for the retail spaces in the new building. The Arts Council manages the public art collection and programs for the City. The new space would include a visual arts gallery space for exhibitions and display of public art. The Lake Oswego Booktique is a used bookstore operated by the nonprofit Friends of the Lake Oswego Public Library. It is the primary fundraising operation for the nonprofit in their support of the Lake Oswego Library.

5. What will be the size of the new building or buildings?

The new city hall is conceived to be a 3-story building with 53,000 square feet of space with one level of secured parking for police vehicles. The police department will occupy one level with city hall services occupying the two stories above. Retail spaces will be situated on the first floor along A Avenue.

6. When will the project be completed?

Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2019 with completion in 2021.

7. How much will it cost and how is it being paid for? Will my property taxes increase?

The total budget for the project is \$40 million.

The project will be primarily funded by urban renewal dollars. No new or increased taxes will be needed for the project. Urban renewal is a public financing tool that directs property taxes on growth in assessed value within an established urban renewal area toward projects that will improve conditions in that area. Urban renewal does not increase property taxes, it simply allows for the reallocation of growth on taxes to the urban renewal area rather than the overlapping taxing districts.

The Civic Center project (“Project O”) is an identified project in the City’s East End Redevelopment Plan:

“Project O Civic Center. Future development on Block 135 should consider the changing needs for public services together with the changing mixed-use nature of downtown. The City of Lake Oswego is the downtown’s largest employer. It benefits the urban renewal area to retain City operations at their current location because they contribute to the area’s economic vitality. Further, maintaining an updated public safety facility and a welcoming civic presence are key components to ensuring a safe and thriving downtown. Private/public partnership proposals that incorporate ground floor retail, restaurant or service uses, provide separate police and court functions, improve the City's emergency dispatch capabilities, provide adequate public parking, and allow for increased public participation in civic functions should be considered. The design and character of any project should address the space and use needs for city offices and should also demonstrate that the city is an active participant in the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown. Additional property acquired, including tax lot 9200 and the abutting alley to the west could be used for structure expansion, parking, and landscaping.”

For more information about urban renewal, tax increment financing, and how it works, please visit <http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/lora/urban-renewal-faq>

8. Can't that money be used to fix our roads and infrastructure?

No, urban renewal funds can only be used for identified projects that are listed in the redevelopment plan in the established urban renewal area. Generally, road and infrastructure repairs are not eligible for urban renewal funding but street improvements, upgrades, and beautification projects can be eligible projects because they are important for encouraging private development. For example, just repaving a street in comparison to adding sidewalks, street trees and landscaped medians, and other amenities such as street light poles and benches.