



McClaren, Wilson & Lawrie, Inc.

8705 North Central Avenue

Phoenix, Arizona 85020

602.331.4141

July 9, 2025

A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA
City Manager
City of North Port
4970 City Hall Boulevard
North Port, FL 34286

Re: Police Headquarters Space Planning Considerations

Dear City Manager Fletcher:

This memo responds to your request for the following information:

1. Description of the process used to project future growth for the new Police Headquarters,
2. Discuss considerations between facility designs using decentralized versus centralized operational models.
3. Review / benchmark other current police facility projects in Florida.

Future Growth

Anticipating and planning for future growth was a primary guiding principle established at the outset of the new headquarters project.

As a part of the space needs assessment process MWL correlated future growth projections to assess future space needs for three planning windows: near-term (growth to year 2035), mid-term (growth to years 2050), and long-term (growth to years 2065).

Using projections from BEBR and North Port Planning and Zoning a growth rate of 3.04% / year was established. After presenting the growth windows, direction was given to plan the building using the mid-term (year 2050) 25-year building milestone.

The 2050 milestone projects North Port's resident population will roughly double from 87,542 to 174,322 by 2050. For planning purposes, the corresponding NPPD staffing increases to 416 during the same time frame.

Another guiding principle was to plan for a facility that enhances and promotes operational efficiency. At each step of the planning process planning strategies evaluated future growth against potential impacts on operational efficiency.

Architecture for Public Safety

www.mwlarchitects.com

Arizona • Virginia

Centralization / Decentralization

Most new police headquarters planning efforts consider the typical operational implications posed by implementing a strategy for centralized or decentralized facilities.

For most communities, centralized policing operational models result in streamlined communications, optimized staffing, while minimizing spatial redundancy.

Conversely, decentralized facilities typically result in the need for duplication of key spaces.

In addition to requiring redundant spaces, additional command staff are required to operate decentralized facilities.

Decentralization of police facilities is typically employed when service areas and populations served are exceptionally large.

Some MWL's examples:

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Decentralized):

When we master planned the long-term space needs for Oklahoma City (a city of 620 square miles with a population of 681,000) we concluded the physical distance from its extreme boundaries merited the costs induced by decentralization of operations to compartmentalize services areas and preserve response times.

Tacoma, Washington (Centralized):

When we master planned the long-term police space needs for the City of Tacoma (a city of 47 square miles with a population of 219,000) the City requested we assess the implementation of a new headquarters supported by 4 Patrol substations.

After assessing the options, we concluded decentralization would result in numerous (and costly) redundant spaces plus the need for additional redundant staff to operate each building.

Each substation resulted in duplicating public lobbies, conference rooms, interview rooms, holding areas, briefing rooms, and evidence intake areas. Each substation also required the addition of 4-8 new staff each.

Decentralization also negated the benefits of the optimized infrastructure (emergency generators and mechanical systems) found enjoyed using a centralized model.

Seattle, Washington (Decentralized):

When we master planned the long-term police space needs for the City of Seattle (a city of 142 square miles with a population of 765,000), we concluded that despite the need for duplicative square footage, the more costly decentralized model was indicated to offset the physical constraints induced having entire

sections of the city potentially isolated due to bodies of water served by aging drawbridges, its seven major hills, the physical separation by being bisected by one of the west coast's busiest interstate freeways (that literally slices through the heart of the city), and a major airport (Boeing Field).

Lakewood, Colorado (Centralized):

As we master planned the long-term police space needs for the City of Lakewood, Colorado (a city of 43 square miles and a population of 145,800) we concluded that decentralizing Patrol operations into 1-2 substations would require 16,500 square feet for each substation (compared to the 8,000 square footage Patrol required if it were to remain housed in the current headquarters).

So, despite of its large physical size at 104 square miles, the fact that it is well served by a rapidly developing network of modern roads and bridges, led us to conclude that the benefits associated with streamlined communications, optimized staffing, and efficient infrastructure made it advantageous to plan the year 2050 building as a single centralized building.

Beyond 2050, as the city matures and development is better defined, the option for additional future satellite facilities may well prove beneficial.

Keep in mind that even if some, if not, all Patrol units were to decentralize at year 2050, the City will remain well served by the continued operation of the core facilities included in the new headquarters' today. These include the 911/emergency communications center, forensic science and digital evidence labs, evidence, administration, the real time intelligence center, major crimes investigations, and specialized training.

Benchmarking

In response to the request to compare North Port's new facility with others currently in planning and construction we offer the following:

Fort Myers, Florida:

With a population of 97,323 (2023) and serving a geographic area of 49 square miles, Fort Myers is in the Design Development phase in its planning for a new 175,000 square foot police facility. The Fort Myers facility, which has a projected cost for construction around \$140M, has planned to support future growth through 2045, while retaining minimal presence in existing substations.

Current police staffing is 344. Fort Myer's facility will house many of the same functions contemplated by North Port except for a vehicular evidence garage police facility, which is housed in a separate off-site facility. It is important to mention, Fort Myers chose a centralized headquarters model due to the results of the Freeh Group report in 2017 which pointed out issues resulting from the, then fragmented, state of the department. (Please see the information furnished by Fort Myers attached for reference).

Bradenton, Florida:

With a population of 57,000 and serving a geographic area of 14.44 square miles, Bradenton commenced construction for a new 57,000 square foot police headquarters on May 20, 2025, with a projected construction cost of \$35M.

Current police staffing is 182. Bradenton's facility has some potential for departmental growth, however, does not include space for K9, Community Outreach, or an Alternative Light Source Lab. They plan for a single vehicle examination bay, and weather-protected exam storage for 2 vehicles. They have not included an on-site fueling components, as the department has access to fueling less than ½ mile from the new headquarters. (Please see the information furnished by Bradenton attached for reference).

In addition to the above projects, which are either in early planning or have just begun construction, we offer the following comparisons with other current Florida Police Headquarters projects.

Fort Lauderdale, Florida:

With a population of 185,000, and serving a geographic area of 39 square miles, Fort Lauderdale is nearing completion of construction for a new 191,000 square foot police headquarters, with a projected construction cost of \$140M.

Construction on the facility, however, has been impacted by the discovery of a significant engineering flaw that has required the project to be stopped for corrective measures to be developed.

Hollywood, Florida:

With a population of 158,000, and serving a geographic area of 28 square miles, Hollywood is midway through construction of a new 100,000 SF police headquarters, with a projected construction cost of \$84M.

To Summarize:

Benchmarking can be problematic. It can be an apples and oranges comparison. Each of the projects we compared have different service components, widely different service boundaries, varying staffing levels, and employ widely varying growth projections.

Most comparison cities were relatively built out and none have experienced the current and projected growth rates as North Port.

Also, it is important to note that none of the benchmarked projects included space to support regionalized policing opportunities. In contrast North Port has included spaces for allied agencies in its proposed facility (i.e. shared space in its emergency communications facility).

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James McClaren', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Lewis McClaren, AIA, NCARB
Senior Principal • Founder
McClaren, Wilson and Lawrie, Inc.

