



City of Colusa California

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 1, 2026

TO: City Council – Public Hearing Regarding Wastewater Control Plant Annexation

FROM: Jake Morley, Planning Consultant

AGENDA ITEM: Public Hearing for the Public Safety Facility – Police Station Project, which includes a General Plan Amendment, Rezone, Site Plan Review for a new 11,707 square foot structure, and Use Permit to convert a static billboard to an electronic reader and adopt an Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration (State Clearinghouse No. 2026061002)

Report in Brief:

In 2024, the City of Colusa purchased 3.66 acres (APN 002-120-037) of vacant land along Highway 20 with the express desire to develop the site with a modern police station (See **Attachment A – Preliminary Site Plan**). The property is currently designated High-Density Residential on the General Plan Diagram and is located in the M-U-B Mixed Use Bridge Street and R-4 General Apartment zoning districts, with a C-3 Secondary Traffic Pattern Airport Overlay.

The Project includes the following components:

1. General Plan Amendment – designation of the property from High Density Residential and Mixed Use to Public Facilities.
2. Rezone the land from M-U-B Mixed Use Bridge Street and R-4 General Apartment zoning districts to P-F Public Facilities zoning district.
3. The review and approval of the Site Plan, which illustrates an approximate 11,707 square foot structure, with associated vehicle access and site improvements.
4. A use permit for the conversion of two static billboards into electronic displays.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the City Council hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments and adopt the Resolution (**Attachments B, C and E**) and introduce the Ordinance (**Attachment D**) by reading its title only:

A resolution of the City Council of the City of Colusa approving the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program that were prepared

in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act for the Public Safety Facility – Police Station (“Project”) (State Clearing House Number 2026061002).

A resolution of the City Council of the City of Colusa approving a General Plan Amendment (GPA 26-01).

Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Colusa amending the zoning of property identified as Assessor Parcel Number 002-120-037 within the City of Colusa as part of the Public Safety Facility – Police Station Project.

A resolution of the City Council of the City of Colusa approving Site Plan Review (SPR 26-01) and Use Permit (26-02) for the Public Safety Facility – Police Station.

BACKGROUND:

Planning Commission

On August 5, 2026, the City of Colusa Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and voted (5-0) to forward a recommendation to the City Council to adopt a resolution recommending the City Council adopt a mitigated negative declaration and approve General Plan Amendment, Rezone, and Site Plan Review. The Planning Commission motion expressly removed Use Permit from the recommended project approvals. The omission should not automatically be characterized as either approval or denial, but rather as taking no action and making no recommendation on the Use Permit.

The discussion around the electronic billboard ranged from whether it was a board owned by a vendor with a lease on city-owned land vs. one owned by the city, what it would mean for who can advertise on it, and the cost to construct. The conversation also covered placing the board as a gateway feature to the city, noting that it was north of Colusa Industrial Properties (CIP) and the golf course and may be viewed as too far north to be a gateway element. The Commission said such a board could be viewed as a community asset, advertising local businesses and events that typically may not be available in the monthly water bill, as water bills do not go to all tenants, but rather property owners. Discussion also included the final design of the board and the architectural elements that could be placed upon it and the Commission expressed a desire to be apart of that review. The topic also included light from the billboard and its location near residential land uses.

Colusa County Airport Land Use Commission

At the May 4, 2024, the Colusa County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) the proposal to amend the General Plan, Rezone the property, and subdivided the site into residential lots was found to be in compliance with the 2014 Colusa County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) in that the proposed changes are consistent with the C1 and C3 Compatibility Zones subject to ALUC conditions of approval.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS:

Since 1977, the City of Colusa Police Department has operated at 260 6th Street, the Carnegie Library, constructed in 1906. Previously, the building was converted in 1965 from the library to City Hall. In 1986, structural stabilizers for seismic safety were implemented by reinforcing the floors and tying the roof to the iron along the side walls. The structure lacks modern police department facilities, such as a secure lobby, accessible restrooms and parking, evidence rooms of significant size, offices, storage, and internal security storage and locker rooms. This facility, being outdated and undersized, no longer meets the department's operational needs or the city's growing needs.

The Project site is 0.08 miles south of the Town & Country shopping center and 1.4 miles north of the Colusa Municipal Airport. The site is 0.77 miles east of the Sacramento River. The property is not located in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone.

There are currently two static billboards at its southwest corner, and as part of the recent Department of Transportation (Caltrans) improvement project, new curb, gutter, and sidewalk were installed, along with a Class II bicycle facility. Communication poles run along the eastern side of the property, behind the existing sidewalk. Storm drainage, electrical, and water services are located on Highway 20 right-of-way

General Plan

Currently, the subject property is designated both High Density Residential (HDR) and Mixed Use (MU) on the 2007 General Plan Diagram, with MU along the site frontage and HDR on the balance of the property. HDR designations allow apartments, condominiums, and townhomes at a density of 12 to 20 units per acre. The MU designation provides for relatively high-intensity development with the intent to emphasize a mix of land uses, specifically tailored to its respective locations, generally providing a pedestrian-oriented live/work/play environment.

The change to Public Facilities (PF) is a land use designation applicable to activities that serve the public benefit. This designation provides for a full range of public and private facilities throughout the City, including City Hall, Colusa County offices, the library, and the post office. The designation is also used for school facilities, the hospital, the cemetery, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Rezone

The property is currently split-zoned, with the M-U-B Mixed Use Bridge Street zone along SR 20, while the balance of the site is in the R-4 General Apartment zone on the eastern portion. The proposed zoning district would be P-F Public Facilities District, which would permit a Public Safety Facilities – Police Station by right pursuant to Appendix A – Zoning, Article 16 – P-F Public Facilities District Regulations.

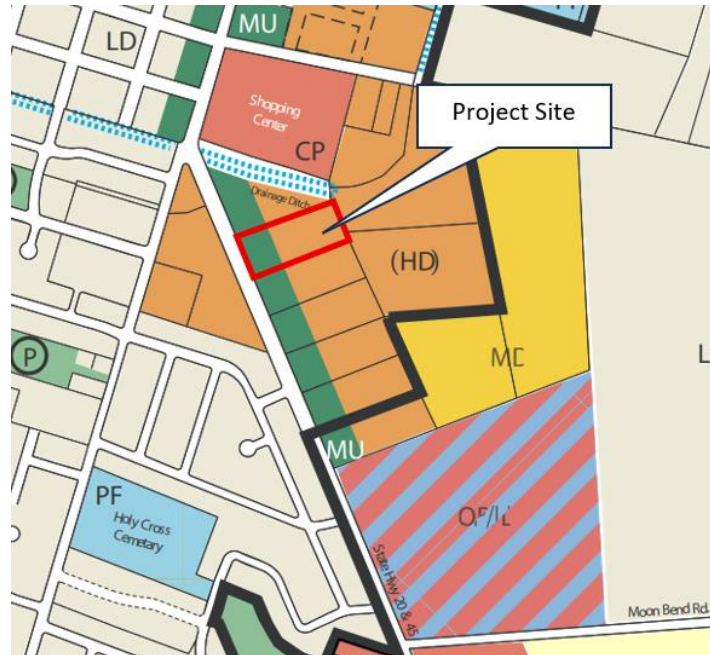


Image: Portion of the 2007 General Plan Diagram, with Mixed Use designation noted in Green and High-Density designation in Orange.

Site Review

In addition to the General Plan Amendment and Rezone, the project contains the development of an approximately 11,707-square-foot Police Station and supporting improvements, including a parking lot, landscaping, lighting, security fencing, and secure storage.

The site design allows police officers and other personnel to access the site via the main vehicle entrance, pass by the structure, and approach a secure gate leading to a rear parking lot, which then provides access to the back of the structure. This secure parking lot would allow police staff to escort individuals to/from the structure and vehicles while also securely handling evidence out of public view.

The facility is designed with two vehicle access points, which would allow safe and efficient accommodation for distinctly different functions associated with public and police operational traffic, deliveries, administrative staff, and general day-to-day access. A secondary driveway, designated as “out only,” would be dedicated to police operational vehicles exiting the site. Separating these traffic streams in accordance with acceptable public safety facilities design practices reduces conflicts between civilian vehicles and emergency response vehicles, improves internal circulation and site security, minimizes delays in officers responding to emergencies, and enhances pedestrian and public safety near public parking and building entrances.

The structure would include square footage dedicated to a variety of uses, including a public lobby and live scan room, administrative space and offices, storage rooms and lockers, training facilities, wellness space, conference room, and supporting facilities such as a fitness center, janitorial, mechanical, and electrical rooms, etc.

The structure is also designed to include an indoor shooting range in a sound-damping room, with modern safety measures to prevent ballistic material from escaping the space and proper ventilation. Dampening would include high-density construction materials finished with soundproofing products, acoustic panels, hanging baffles, soundproofing barriers, and composites. At the same time, ballistic containment would be constructed from materials such as steel, rubber, and concrete to prevent bullets from ricocheting or penetrating walls. This includes firing-lane barriers and backstops designed to absorb projectiles effectively. Ventilation systems would be designed to remove harmful airborne particles, such as lead and gunpowder residue.

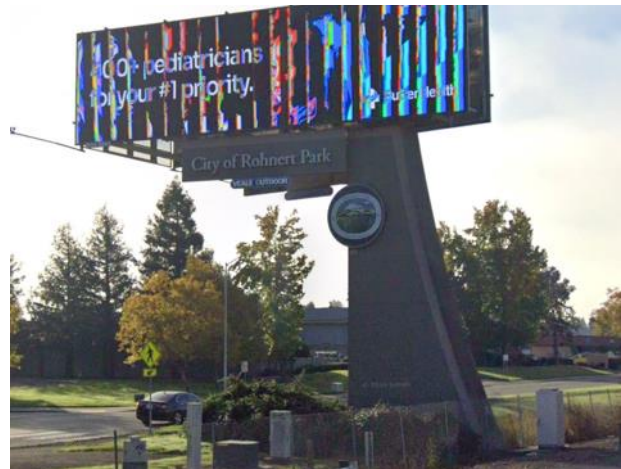
The specific design of the structure is not known at this time, as the consultant has prepared conceptual designs that can be utilized or modified based on budgetary constraints

Billboards

In addition to the new police facility, the project involves converting two static billboards at the southwest corner into electronic (digital) billboards.

Electronic billboards are primarily high-efficiency LED fixtures. Current display technology enables light control and modern control. Light and modern controls allow adjustments to mount and beam angles and support direct-light efficiency, brightness limits, and automatic brightness controls that adjust to ambient light levels. These controls also allow photocell sensors to adjust to dusk-to-dawn operation automatically.

Given the sign's location, it could double as a gateway or a welcome feature for the city. The design could also be designed to hide the billboard's structural support. Copy space could be leased to local and national brands, as well as to advertise city events and emergencies



Examples of signs that include branding of the local jurisdiction and architectural elements.

Colusa County Airport Land Use Commission

On May 4, 2025, the Colusa County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) reviewed the entire

proposal, including the General Plan amendment, Rezone, site review, and electronic billboards, and found the project to comply with the 2014 Colusa County Airport Land Use

General Plan

The entire property will receive a Public Facilities designation and the following General Plan Goals, Policies and Actions are applicable to the project:

Goal LU-5: To ensure growth occurs in an orderly, compact, and efficient manner, so that municipal services and infrastructure can be extended at the least possible cost.

Policy LU-6.3: Growth shall be managed to ensure that adequate public facilities and services are planned for and provided in a manner that protects the public's health, safety, and welfare.

Goal MFS – 1: To provide civic, community, and maintenance facilities for both new development and existing residents and businesses at a level that will maintain and improve the standard of living for the entire community.

Goal MFS – 2: To provide and maintain acceptable police protection facilities.

Policy MFS-2.1: The City shall maintain acceptable law enforcement services for City residents and businesses through the provision of adequate facilities and equipment.

Policy MFS-2.2: The City shall require that the construction and staffing of police facilities be scheduled such that they are ready to serve new development as it occurs.

Goal SAF-6: To provide police and emergency medical services in a well-planned, cost-effective, and professional manners.

Policy SAF-6.1: The City shall strive to provide high-quality police services for City residents and businesses with adequate facilities, modern technology, and current training to maximize job performance.

Policy SAF-6.4: The City shall strive to maintain its quick response time for emergency medical calls.

Goal SAF-8: To ensure a coordinated and effective response to emergencies affecting the City.

FINDINGS

The required findings for adopting the Modified Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and the proposed General Plan Amendment, Rezone, Site Plan Review and Use Permit are provided as part of the City Council Resolution and Ordinance and Resolution (**Attachments A, B, C and D**).

PUBLIC CONTACT AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

On June 26, 2026, a 20-day public hearing notice was mailed to all landowners within 300 feet of the project boundary, and a legal notice was published in the Pioneer Review. Notices were

placed at City Hall and also made available on the city's website at <https://cityofcolusa.com/public-notices/>. Tribal Consultation was completed in compliance with AB 52 and SB18 as part of the California Environmental Quality Act review. Based on the results of an Initial Study, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH Number 2026061002) was prepared for the project. As of the date of the August 5, 2026 Planning Commission report, staff has not received any inquiries or comments from the public. Due to the size of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document, it is available for review at <https://cityofcolusa.com/public-notices/>.

The public review period for the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration concluded on July 16, 2026. The City subsequently received a comment letter from the California Department of Transportation on August 21, 2026. Although the letter was submitted after the close of the public review period, staff revised the comments and included the complete letter as **Attachment F** to ensure the City Council has the information available before taking action on the project. Staff's response to comments is provided as **Attachment G**.

In response to the letter, staff recommends including an additional Mitigation Measure to address the potential for ground-nesting birds.

BUDGET IMPACT

Construction of a new police station is anticipated to be funded through a combination of grant funding and government loan programs, subject to final award and eligibility requirements. These funding sources may require a local match or other City contribution. The final funding structure, including any required match and loan repayment obligation, will be presented to the City Council before funds are committed.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Preliminary Elevation and Site Plan
- B. City Council Resolution
Exhibit I – Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP)
- C. City Council Resolution
Exhibit I – General Plan Amendment Diagram
- D. Ordinance – Rezoning
Exhibit I – Zoning Map
- E. City Council Resolution
Exhibit I – Site Plan Review
- F. Caltrans Comments
- G. Response to Caltrans Comments