

City of Independence - Strategic Planning Project Information Sheet

Project Title: Publicly Accessible Office Space for Multiple Departments

Department: Building Dept. / Code Enforcement / Rental Inspection / Zoning Administration / Permit tech. / Flood Plain Management / Engineering / GIS – Possibly other departments as well.

Contact Person: Matt Chesmore – Building Official and Matthew Schmitz – City Manager

Estimated Total Cost: approx. \$4,800,000.00

Estimates can vary significantly depending on the office location, the extent of the remodel, or whether it involves a new building.

Project Timeline: Calendar Year 2026-2031 – 12 months to complete building.

Projected 3 years of fundraising, 1 year R&D, including acquisition of property, and 1 year to build. In a new building, this project could be phased as the shell is completed and office space is built out as needed. Start and completion dates are highly dependent on the availability of funding.

Project Description:

Construct or remodel a 5000-sf commercial building to house 5 closely related departments. Although it is not a current necessity, taking a proactive approach to planning for growth allows the City to expand into a community services building that centralizes all housing functions. In the interim, space not currently occupied by a designated department could be utilized by other departments.

The approach would be first to redesign the Building and Code department. The restructuring would see the Building Official head five separate but closely related divisions. Divisions would be restructured on a necessity basis and as the budget allows. For example, Code Enforcement would be deemed a necessary Division, possibly the first division formed in the Building Department, as the Building Official would also serve as the Building Inspector, essentially forming the Building Department. Additional Divisions could be created as needs change, and having a central building where citizens can come for a complete set of building services is an asset to the community.

Project Justification / Community Benefit:

The City does not currently have an accessible building for its citizens of all physical capabilities to access the City's services. A centralized building could provide a "One Stop" where citizens with and without physical disabilities could come and conduct

business. Many other jurisdictions have adopted this approach, and it seems to be well-received. While this project is focused on the Building Department, it could be expanded to include administrative offices, where all department heads and other administrative staff could be housed.

Key Dependencies or Potential Roadblocks:

Funding is the most significant hurdle that will be faced. Although this project focuses on the Building Department, it may become more economically feasible if we were to include other public services within the building.

Public backing of a project of this type may not be popular, as historically, building services take a back seat to more crucial services, such as emergency response departments. Secondly, selecting a location that is centralized and accessible to all citizens will be a challenge.