

TO: City Council  
FROM: Paul Simmons, City Administrator  
DATE: May 26, 2026  
SUBJECT: City Hall Space Planning

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1) Recommended Action:

This item is for work session discussion and Council direction. Staff seeks Council feedback to guide the next phase of space planning.

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2) Background:

City Hall is the operational heart of our community, but its limited space hinders efficient and safe service to residents. The City now has its largest workforce ever and continues to grow to meet the needs of the population, increasing demands on staff, public services, and community engagement.

Due to limitations in functional space, many offices are shared by two or more employees. The Parks and Recreation Department and the Water Resources and Sustainability Department have been forced to acquire off-site locations due to space limitations. Inadequate meeting space and limited parking constrain opportunities for collaboration and can limit public participation, making it more difficult to host community forums, manage crowd flow, and foster safe and inclusive civic engagement. Additionally, there is not adequate space for cubical working spaces to meet ADA standards, and the building is in need of safety and security upgrades. A final challenge is that City Hall lacks space for lactation rooms or employee wellness activities.

On March 24th, the City Council toured City Hall to see how current working conditions hinder daily operations and limit future growth. To address this, the City hired Artisans Group Architecture and Planning for space planning and to evaluate future options for City Hall. Their work includes:

**Space Needs and Programming Approach**

Senior Architect and Project Manager Lindsey Barronian initiated a structured process to document current and future space needs across departments, including:

- Department-level staffing and growth projections
- Functional space requirements
- Ancillary space needs (meeting rooms, public interface areas, etc.)

**Department Adjacency and Functional Relationships** - Artisans Group developed a programming adjacency diagram to map relationships between departments and functions.

- Identifies which teams benefit from co-location
- Helps inform floor plan layout and operational efficiency
- Supports improved internal coordination and public service delivery

**Preliminary Future Planning Options** (Presentation Overview)

The Future Planning Options Presentation delivered to City Council at this work session will provide an early look at potential directions for a new or improved City Hall facility.

Based on the outlined process, four options were identified and analyzed.

**A. The Incremental Approach (Status Quo + Addition)**

Remain in the existing City Hall and continue leasing additional space as needed, with a future plan to construct a significant addition to accommodate long-term needs.

**B. New City Hall Building**

Construct a new, purpose-built City Hall facility sized to meet projected long-term needs.

**C. New Police Station**

Construct a new, standalone police facility to address law enforcement space and operational needs, while retaining City Hall in its current location.

**D. Buy an Existing Building (Scalable Investment)**

Seek to acquire and repurpose an existing building in Tumwater. During the space planning analysis, 310 Israel Road was identified and evaluated as a potential City Hall site.

The Artisans Group's work is a key step toward resolving City Hall's space issues. The materials give Council a basis for discussion and direction. Staff request Council feedback to shape the next phase of space planning.

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3) Policy Support:

**Vision, Mission, & Values**

People:

We embrace the diversity of people in our community and strive to ensure everyone feels valued and included. We recognize the vital contributions of our staff and foster a supportive environment that promotes growth, celebrates achievements, and retains talent to serve our community with excellence.

Learning:

We learn from experience, embrace innovation, and seek new ways to enhance City services and strengthen our community.

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4) Alternatives:

- Direct staff to further re-evaluate any of the identified options or pursue a different option altogether.

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5) Fiscal Notes:

The current scope of work for the Space Planning Analysis performed by the Artisans Group is estimated to cost \$25,000.

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6) Attachments:

None