



Public Information Division

Anthony Wilson, Public Information Officer
72 W. College Ave. | Office: 325.481.2727 | Cell: 325.234.0014
anthony.wilson@cosatx.us

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City purchases downtown bank property, site could become police headquarters

The San Angelo City Council today approved the conditional purchase of the First Financial Bank facility at 301 W. Beauregard Ave. for \$1,585,649. The property's location and size make it a potential site for a headquarters for the San Angelo Police Department.

First Financial Bank will continue to occupy the building for approximately 18 months as it constructs a new bank at the site of its motor bank at 222 S. Koenigheim Ave. In the interim, City officials will solidify plans for the West Beauregard site, including designing improvements, determining construction costs and possibly calling a bond election to finance the project.

Finalization of the purchase will depend upon an inspection of the property, review of the title and other such procedures.

Providing for an improved police station is one of five City Council priorities the elected body formally adopted last year. City Council members, City management and Police Chief Tim Vasquez have been exploring potential options and sites since 2011.

Vasquez is aiming to co-locate all of the SAPD's operations, except for training, under one roof. Currently, the narcotics, traffic and community services divisions work from satellite locations.

"It's no secret that, given the growth in our community, the growth of the Police Department and the demands of modern policing, our current station long ago outlived its usefulness," Vasquez said. "Citizens everywhere I go remark about the need for a bigger facility. This property purchase is an important first step toward meeting a vital community need."

City Manager Daniel Valenzuela and Vasquez agreed the property's central location, visibility and accessibility (it is bordered by three busy thoroughfares), size and parking make it a valuable asset. Valenzuela added that would be true even if it were to house other City operations – such as roomier and more professional water customer service and billing offices.

“The local real estate market is ultra-competitive,” Valenzuela said. “Almost every other site we considered for a police station over the past three-plus years was purchased before we could make an offer. We feel fortunate to have secured perhaps the best site downtown San Angelo could offer at what we believe to be a reasonable cost. The challenge now is making the best possible use of it at a cost taxpayers can support.”

The City is exploring options for funding the property’s purchase. Those include paying cash, financing the transaction or a combination of the two.

No decisions have been made regarding what might happen with the current police station, a 52-year-old building at 401 E. Beauregard Ave.

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