

Goal:

Your building's design and flow should cater to your processes and procedures, making operations easier and more efficient.

Community Oriented:

Community engagement has become a central focus in policing. The premise is to build relationships with members of the community and involve them in public safety efforts to strengthen the department's presence and relationship with the community it serves and the community's trust in the agency.

Public entrance and lobby (Professional, comforting, safe, and inviting) Does the lobby create a welcoming and inviting environment, so community members feel safe to engage with the officers and the department? Many PD lobbies are not very friendly places. They openly display security and protective elements but give little thought to how it welcomes the public to put people at ease. Something as simple as a well-designed welcome sign expresses hospitality. A rug, a lamp and a couple of chairs can do the same.

Does the lobby have entry procedures and safe spaces that can be used by the community in case of an emergency?

Does the building welcome the public, or does it have a "fortress" look and feel?

Space to meet with community members or groups (Space to meet with community groups or members Police Academy, EOC, volunteers, youth programs, and collaboration and training with other agencies.)

Investigative Considerations:

Forensics (Processing) labs - Evidence processing must be meticulous. Therefore, an area specifically designed for this can help ensure that there is no cross-contamination.

Evidence areas can be messy (fingerprinting) and should be separated from other areas.

Evidence storage (lockers, refrigerated) should be built specifically for the task. (Chain of custody, security, etc.)

Location:

It is advantageous to have the PD as close to the heart of the city as possible. This is both geographically and socially beneficial. It is easier for most stakeholders to access.

Morale

A place for ceremonies or department recognition events is important to engagement and morale.

Kitchen or café area (safe place to eat and take a moment to recharge) As policing cultures moves closer to peer support and outside mental health clinicians, the need for spaces within the workplace environment to include space to decompress or reflect will increase. A little-used nook, break area, or storage room may be transformed into a unique quiet zone.

Workout facilities (Mentioned on multiple surveys, tied to officer well-being and morale) are mentioned often by officers and civilian staff. Community center facilities are a great perk as well; however, the ability to workout or exercise without interruption is welcomed.

More access to natural light. Countless studies confirm that sunlight is important to mood, decreased absenteeism, improved memory functions, and a host of other benefits. Removing a wall to give access to windows may be a solution or installing strategic sky lights.

Prisoner Processing:

A well-thought out facility can lower liability and increase officer and civilian safety.

Holding cells (Safer for arrestee and officers) Keeps officers in Odessa.

Interview rooms (Victim and suspect) Providing the officers with multiple settings for the interview can help put victims at ease or even put a suspect in a more relaxed state.

Interview rooms settings and audio/visual recordings can make a case.

Sally port and secure inmate transfer. Fencing helps keep an arrestee from leaving the PD and adjoining area.

If someone were unrestrained for fingerprinting, photographs, or BAC testing, they would not be able to do as much damage to themselves or the facility. If they got loose in the current PD, they could damage a lot of equipment. Plus, it puts the officers at a higher risk of injury.

Is there a lobby space for bonding agents or individuals to wait?

Safety and Security:

There is a fine design balance required in creating open, inviting spaces for the public, while still protecting officers, staff and secured areas within the building. With recent attacks to officers and facilities, staff safety is of paramount importance.

Secure areas for police and tactical vehicles to park reduce vandalism and increase safety.

Processing arrestees at their desks is dangerous and a liability.

Training and Collaboration:

A training area can facilitate lowering a department's overall liability and increase the overall safety of the public and officers alike.

Large or small group instruction (POST training, department and outside training, department training cuts cost and builds morale by providing roles for officers, outside trainers usually offer free and discounted seats to the host agency.

Roll call and staff meeting space is great for collaboration space.

Tactical training areas increase proficiency. (First aid, CPR, MILO)

An Emergency Operations Center is easier to add with a new build. (Can be wired for computer and phones)

Technology Needs:

It is advantageous to plan technology and future needs in a new structure that is build specifically for a police department.

It is easier to add surveillance technology (CCTV) to a new facility instead of retrofitting it on an older one.

Remember:

If something happens and investigators or attorneys come to the PD, is it going to show a professional, squared away agency or one that is outdated with minimal building resources.