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STATEMENT FOR THE PROVO POLICE, FIRE & CITY FACILITIES BOND // PROVO CITY COUNCIL

Approving the Provo Police, Fire & City Facilities Bond provides much-needed replacements of the police, fire, emergency dispatch, and city facilities in downtown Provo and Fire Station 2 in north Provo and enhances our sense of community, increases business and economic vitality, and ensures a safe and responsible city.

After lengthy assessment of space and safety needs, consideration of various options, and consultation of the public, the City Council determined that delay in building new facilities would put public safety at further risk and would be financially unwise due to rising construction costs. The Council voted unanimously **to ask you to authorize** a \$69 million bond to construct new facilities for the operation and administration of Provo's police, fire, emergency dispatch, and other city departments downtown and Fire Station 2 on Canyon Road.

Replacement facilities at these locations are needed for four main reasons:

- 1) Seismic Safety - The current buildings do not meet the seismic safety standards necessary to keep emergency and vital communication services operational after even a moderate earthquake. *Proposed new facilities will be built to required seismic standards and will improve our ability to support the community in and after a disaster.*
- 2) Space Needs – Provo's population has more than doubled since the City Center opened in 1972; likewise, public safety and other staffing levels have expanded to support our growing community. Consider the Police Department – in 1972 the department was staffed by 42 officers; current operations require 107 officers and 50 civilian support staff. Meeting these needs has required repurposing facilities to the degree that storage closets now serve as offices. *Proposed new facilities will provide the space necessary for public safety needs.*
- 3) Aging Buildings – Built to serve the City's needs for 25 to 40 years, the City Center complex is 46 years old and has been failing structurally and operationally for decades. Converted from a house in the 1960s, Fire Station 2 is similarly in disrepair and no longer serves the community's needs. *Proposed new facilities will be built to today's standards, providing the safety and longevity necessary for Provo's citizens and employees.*
- 4) During public consultation, residents and business owners said the City should do the project right and do it downtown. Other options involved repurposing or remodeling existing buildings elsewhere and would have been initially cheaper, but they couldn't guarantee the same durability, energy efficiency, and lower cost of maintenance of a new building; nor would they have provided the security needed for a police headquarters. The cost difference amounts to less than \$3 per month for the median homeowner. The replacement of the City Center complex in the downtown area will be a significant investment in the downtown, one which also leaves space for further redevelopment of the current city center block. *This bond allows Provo to provide maximum safety, longevity, and downtown vitality for future generations.*

Please **support the Provo Police, Fire & City Facilities Bond** by voting FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS.

Argument FOR the Provo Police, Fire & City Facilities Bond – written by Gary Winterton et al

Provo's core community values include:

- Our strong sense of security and well-being
- Our safe neighborhoods and public places
- Our responsive and proactive approach to public safety and emergency preparedness
- Well-trained and equipped safety professionals (Vision 2030, Provo Core Values)

The Provo Police, Fire & City Facilities Bond is needed now to support our crucial need for emergency services. We must provide adequate, safe facilities, and room to grow. The Police Department has outgrown their space. We believe providing the Police Department with adequate space will serve as a tremendous recruiting and retention tool. And we must replace Fire Station 2 before it fails completely.

In the event of an earthquake, the existing City Center is not equipped with seismic standards to withstand a disaster. If this happened, emergency services and communication would be hampered, along with most City services. If approved, our new police, fire, and city facilities would be built to appropriate seismic standards giving us the ability to keep our City functioning and providing assistance in any unplanned event.

Going through this process we hired the best, most knowledgeable professionals to analyze our situation and provide insight and detail regarding how we'll meet current and future needs. Building new provides us the ability to plan for, and build, something for which Provo can be proud of now, the next 50 years, and beyond. We know that \$69 million is significant. We own property in Provo. We, too, pay property taxes on our homes and businesses. We understand the impact that this bond places on individuals and businesses. Yet, as our fellow residents have come to open houses, tours, and meetings and become informed, they see the tremendous needs of our current facilities. While these residents also feel the crunch, they see it as absolutely necessary.

As involved citizens we have seen the great work our city employees do; they are prudent in the use of our tax dollars. Our current City Center is just one example—it was built to serve a population of up to 80,000, and yet we surpassed that mark in the 1980's. As our population has grown, so have the needs of our residents. We've added a Customer Service Department, an Information Systems Division, GIS mapping, and other services. Our dedicated employees continue to make do with this space but it is increasingly inadequate for the services they provide. So, addressing the need for newer, larger facilities, we ask, "If we don't do it now, when will we do it?" Construction costs continue to grow, outpacing inflation; the cost to build will never be cheaper. We invite you to take time to see the current state of facilities, see the conditions and need for repair. If you do this, we believe you'll see—as we have—the time is now to vote for Provo (voteforprovo.com). Please VOTE FOR the Provo Police, Fire & City Facilities Bond.

Gary Winterton
Bill Fillmore
Austin Taylor
Karl N Snow Jr.

Rebuttal – Written by S. Asay

What is being proposed now is not ready to bond. We can't just vote on a bond without knowing a site has been selected and what those buildings will actually cost. Without careful planning, the rapid rise of construction costs could mean an inferior product. We also have no idea of the economic impact the building will have on wherever it is located. Taxpayers should not just sign a blank check for city officials to go spend. City leaders have NOT anticipated the answers to these crucial questions before proposing the bond.

In comparison, the Recreation Center was bonded after an informative, and comprehensive process. The project was incredibly detailed, and studies showed its influence on surrounding areas. Because of that, voters gave overwhelming support. That careful planning has created one of the most successful facilities in the nation.

Provo taxpayers want robust and COMPLETE information. Yes, we need a new city building and emergency services facilities, but:

- We need strong and long lasting structures planned carefully and prudently so they serve for generations.
- We deserve for our leaders to invest the time in planning a project of this magnitude before asking us to write a check for a project currently still in the dreaming phases.

A vote of NO will require the council and mayor to come back to the voters with a complete plan so that we know precisely how much this will impact our community- both in economic influence and the actual cost of the structures.

Argument AGAINST the Provo Police, Fire & City Facilities Bond – Written by S. Asay

In a June 2018 survey, eighty percent (80%) of Provo residents responded that they didn't care where Provo City offices, police and fire were located as long as the city operated efficiently. Only 13% felt strongly that Provo offices belonged Downtown. Despite the research, the elected officials did the opposite; they made the decision to place an incomplete, poorly-defined option for a bond to build a new City Offices "somewhere" in Downtown.

A healthy community prepares to replace aging infrastructure and facilities by using strong data, comprehensive market research and carefully making prudent financial sense for taxpayers.

We have many aging infrastructure needs. Provo citizens will need to replace a water treatment plant which will increase our utility rates significantly over the next several years. Fire Station 2 must be fixed but the \$4 million cost is needlessly wrapped into this bond. Our Police also need upgraded facilities. Our city building is deteriorating. Options were presented that saved taxpayers \$9 million and over \$20 million, but these options were ignored in favor of this expensive bond for a new city office building downtown. On top of this potential bond burden on residents, Provo taxpayers will probably be asked to finish the next stages of school bonds for another High School, Jr. High and elementary school next year. The reason elected officials have rushed to put this bond on the ballot is to hopefully get it passed before the School District begins their ask for more bond money for the school projects. All of these costs and future obligations should be considered in this decision.

We are being asked to address critical needs with a significantly higher price tag than needed. Representations were made in Council Meeting that the City Building should be a landmark building. However, landmark buildings require landmark materials and construction quality, but current construction pricing was determined by architects and not by construction estimators who are more familiar with the challenges of costs, labor, materials, and site prep. Plans have also not determined where it will be built in the downtown or the economic impact on the surrounding area both during and after construction. Will \$69 million even be sufficient to deliver what was promised to Provo residents who clearly expressed a strong preference (80%) that they didn't care, want, or need such a new structure?

Let's send our elected officials back to do the work we elected them to do. Vote NO on the bond and ask them for an alternative plan that addresses aging public works problems and builds a less expensive city office building. Let's ask our elected officials to do the fiscally responsible thing and reconsider how we solve this issue for millions of dollars less. A NO vote will require our elected officials to seek a more prudent solution and send the message that the citizens of Provo do not want irresponsible rush for a bond that asks citizens to pay for the most expensive "house" in the most expensive "neighborhood."

Rebuttal – Written by Gary Winterton

The discussion regarding new public safety facilities has not been rushed. For the seven years I have been on the City Council, this has been a discussion for consideration. The process has been ongoing and thoughtful. One primary reason to act now is that substantial money for maintenance is needed now. We could put that maintenance money into a new facility and save millions of dollars.

As we've engaged in this discussion, one message the Administration and City Council heard loud, clear and often, "if you are going to do this, do it right; do it downtown." We recognize the total bond price of \$69 million will require sacrifice. However, I believe the project now under consideration will be functional and meet the needs of Provo now and for the next 50 years or more. With the help of trained professionals, the process of determining construction costs has been financially conservative, prudent and in accordance with the industry's best practices.

Even those opposing this bond recognize our needs. I quote Ms. Asay. "Fire Station 2 must be fixed...Our police also need upgraded facilities. Our city building is deteriorating." These needs are critical and urgent because we have continually "kick the can down the road." Our needs will only increase as Provo grows. The longer we wait the worse the deterioration will become and construction costs are steadily increasing. Now is the time to stand and be responsible. Vote "FOR" the POLICE, FIRE & CITY FACILITY BOND.

Pursuant to Utah Code 59-1-1605, a public meeting allowing equal time for a presentation of the arguments for and against the ballot proposition and allowing interested parties to present oral testimony was held at 6:30 p.m. on September 25, 2018 in the Provo City Municipal Council Chambers. A video and audio recording of the meeting may be accessed at vote.provo.org.