



VERMONT STATE POLICE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PRIORITIES

MARCH 11, 2016

VERMONT STATE POLICE

Compiled by Major William D. Sheets

VERMONT STATE POLICE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PRIORITIES

HISTORY:

The Vermont State Police is halfway through the replacement of its aging facilities through the Capital Budget funding process. New state police offices have been built in Derby, Royalton, New Haven and St. Albans. The Westminster office is nearly complete (consolidating the Rockingham and Brattleboro offices) and is due to open in June of 2016.

That leaves the following state police offices that need to be replaced or remodeled to meet current demands.

1. Williston
2. Middlesex
3. Rutland (we have identified land in Clarendon)
4. Shaftsbury
5. St. Johnsbury
6. Bradford*** we are in the process of consolidating the St. Johnsbury and Bradford office.

VSP PRIORITIES:

The priorities are listed in the following order with brief outlines.

1. **WILLISTON:** This facility, located just off Exit 12 in the Town of Williston, houses a full Vermont State Police office as well as a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP/dispatch facility). In addition, all marine division personnel, as well as the extensive list of equipment inventory such as snowmobiles, boats are located here. The facility also houses many of the agencies special response vehicles, such as the command post, tactical service unit response vehicles, scuba response vehicle, and the bomb squad.
2. **MIDDLESEX:** This facility, located just off Exit 9 in the Town of Williston, remains one of our highest priorities as it is in significant need of replacement. The VSP has conducted numerous site searches for viable land in the areas of Exit 7, 8 and 9 with no luck. The current location does not have enough acreage to make demolition or remodeling on site a reasonable alternative. Past estimates to upgrade the existing structure, absent several accreditation requirements, would be estimated at nearly two million dollars.
3. **RUTLAND:** This current facility, located on Route 7 in the Town of Rutland, will be relocated to land in the final stages of the acquisition process at the intersection of U.S. Route 7 and VT Route 103 in the Town of Clarendon. This site is ideally located to replace the Rutland office which was impacted significantly during Tropical Storm Irene, leading to a short-term evacuation.
4. **SHAFTSBURY:** This facility, located at 96 Airport Road in the Town of Shaftsbury, is our last remaining location that is not owned by the State of Vermont. The VSP has been renewing a long-term lease for this location every two to three years. It is a small, older converted ranch house with limited functionality to consider expanding based on the fact that it is leased and based upon the footprint and usable acreage at that location. The VSP has completed a feasibility assessment for the replacement of this facility but based upon other more critically pressing facility needs we have not pursued this further.

ST.JOHSNBURY/BRADFORD: At one point the VSP completed a feasibility study that resulted in the proposal of combining both of these offices into one facility that would have been located off Interstate 91 in the Town of Barnet. The VSP has since changed its position and believe that we can convert the Bradford office into an outpost office and have the overhead management for both offices be out of the St. Johnsbury office. Those programmatic changes have already begun and the VSP will be working with BGS to determine if the Bradford Police Department would like to co-locate at the current VSP Bradford office. That discussion also includes whether the State of Vermont will continue to own the building or sign over the rights to the building to the town, allowing the VSP to remain in perpetuity, while the town absorbs the costs of ownership. Instead of requiring multi millions for the cost of a new combined facility the VSP believes that we can make the change by making improvements to the existing St. Johnsbury facility. The proposed costs of those improvements have not yet been determined.

SUMMARY: The VSP is just past the halfway point for VSP building replacements, with four remaining that require replacement (Williston, Middlesex, Rutland and Shaftsbury) and one facility that will require an upgrade (St. Johnsbury). Based upon the new prioritized order the VSP wish to move forward on one of the following three projects during the front end of the next biennium. While the order is the VSP preferred order we are mindful that many mitigating factors can and likely will arise, that might alter the order of the top three.

VERMONT STATE POLICE TOP THREE PRIORITIES

WILLISTON: In the most recent feasibility study to replace Williston the VSP found that there were limited available land options. The best possibility was located on Route 2 just south of Exit 11 in the Town of Richmond. The main portion of that property has since been sold.

It is well known that the VSP Williston office is an aging re-purposed facility that has required significant maintenance in the past and faces immediate needs that are significant cost factors. The current layout is restrictive and does not fully meet CALEA accreditation criteria. There are security concerns based upon the fact that what was once farmland is now heavily populated, surrounding the office with commercial and industrial office space. This heavily developed area also causes significant traffic issues when Troopers and members of the public are exiting and entering the office. Past efforts to install a traffic control signal at this location has been rejected by town officials.

The property requirements for this location would include between 8-10 useable acres located within close proximity to Exit 11, Exit 12 or Exit 13 to ensure reasonably quick access to the Interstate. Based on past land searches the VSP is not aware of viable land options within the Exit 13 area based upon existing congested development. The VSP would like to work with BGS to immediately advertise for available land parcels, which meet this and other standard criteria historically used to search for VSP buildings.

The VSP, in conjunction with BGS, would like to immediately take the following steps and conduct another comprehensive feasibility study for the Williston office.

In concert with BGS the VSP would create a team consistent with past practice to evaluate all sites to ensure that the site would meet the criteria required. Those sites would be evaluated and rated on a number of factors until a prioritized order can be selected.

At the same time the VSP would ask that BGS contract with an architectural firm that would be able to evaluate the needs of the Williston office, to include the square footage requirements for the VSP office (with our allied agencies such as Fish and Wildlife), the PSAP and the significant square footage storage requirements of marine, special team and command response vehicles that are staged on site.

The VSP would ask that BGS assess the fair market value of the VSP Williston location to determine the amount that would offset the building of a new facility.

The VSP would ask that BGS work to identify what major maintenance costs cannot wait and to wait on the others until the completion of a feasibility study.

The VSP and BGS would be responsible for compiling the full feasibility study, with proposed potential costs for the project by the beginning of the next legislative session. Funding would be required to complete portions of the feasibility, to include but not limited to advertising, radio path connectivity assessments or fiber verification, a full architectural assessment as well as other studies in able to identify a shovel ready project with projected cost estimates to the legislature next year.

MIDDLESEX: The VSP Middlesex office has been one of the top if not the top priority for a replacement facility over the past several years. The problem has been and continues to be the search for viable land. We have searched repeatedly over the past several years and have found the options to be expensive or loaded with restrictions that have made moving forward untenable. This is the office that in terms of bricks and mortar is in the most need of replacement. Past estimates to bring the existing building up to minimal levels, that would still fail to meet accreditation standards, were nearly two million dollars.

The footprint of the existing location does not afford the ability to expand onsite or demolish and rebuild. The options for the best location for a new Middlesex office remain in the area off Exit 7 or Exit 9. The most recent feasibility study to replace Middlesex identified limited available land options. The best possibility off Exit 7 was in the vicinity of Berlin four corners with many options but with a price tag of upwards of a million dollars for a parcel the size that the VSP requires. The best possibility for a location located off Exit 9 was directly behind the current office on the other side of the interstate, but that came with many restrictions and a requirement from the landowner/developer of a build to suit.

The VSP, in conjunction with BGS, would like to immediately take the following steps and conduct another comprehensive feasibility study for the Middlesex office.

The property requirements for this location would include between 8-10 useable acres located within close proximity to Exit 7, 8 or 9 to ensure reasonably quick access to the Interstate and to remain central to the geographic area of responsibility of the Middlesex office. The VSP would like to work with BGS to immediately advertise for available land parcels meeting this and other standard criteria historically used to search for VSP buildings.

In concert with BGS the VSP would create a team consistent with past practice to evaluate all sites to ensure that the site would meet the criteria required. Those sites would be evaluated and rated on a number of factors until a prioritized order can be selected.

At the same time the VSP would ask that BGS contract with an architectural firm that would be able to evaluate the needs of the Middlesex office, to include the square footage requirements for the VSP office and our allied agencies such as Fish and Wildlife.

The VSP and BGS would be responsible for compiling the full feasibility study, with proposed potential costs for the project by the beginning of the next legislative session. Funding would be required to complete portions of the feasibility, to include but not limited to advertising, radio path connectivity assessments or fiber verification, a full architectural assessment as well as other studies in able to identify a shovel ready project with projected cost estimates to the legislature next year.

RUTLAND: This current facility, located on Route 7 in the Town of Rutland, will be relocated to land recently purchased at the intersection of U.S. Route 7 and VT Route 103 in the Town of Clarendon. This site is ideally located to replace the Rutland office which was impacted significantly during Tropical Storm Irene, leading to a short-term evacuation. BGS is currently working on unresolved issues with this site that include permit and easement requirements, such as access to municipal sewer, drilled well requirements and other related issues.