



CITY OF IOWA CITY COUNCIL ACTION REPORT

September 16, 2025

Resolution supporting further pursuit of a partnership with Johnson County to meet long-term public safety needs of the community through a joint law enforcement facility aimed at maximizing cost and operational efficiencies for both the City of Iowa City and County of Johnson County.

Prepared By: Geoff Fruin, City Manager
Reviewed By: Eric Goers, City Attorney
Fiscal Impact: N/A
Staff Recommendation: Approval
Commission Recommendations: N/A
Attachments: [Johnson County Resolution](#)
[2024 City Space Needs Analysis](#)
[Resolution](#)

Executive Summary:

The City's Strategic Plan called for the completion of a City Hall and Public Safety Headquarters space needs study and directed action to create a plan for implementation. As part of the implementation plan, City Council authorized a joint study with Johnson County to determine potential cost savings associated with a joint facility. Preliminary results of the joint facility study indicates that a joint facility could save taxpayers approximately 10 million dollars in construction costs compared to building two standalone facilities. This resolution expresses continued support to move forward in partnership with Johnson County and directs the City Attorney and City Manager to work collaboratively with Johnson County to develop draft articles of incorporation for a joint law enforcement authority in such a manner that preserves City Council decision-making authority throughout the joint facility planning and execution process.

Background / Analysis:

In 2023, the City hired OPN Architects to complete a space needs analysis of our public safety headquarters and city hall operations. The City Council received those findings in July of 2024 and concurred with OPN and staff on an overall strategy and implementation plan. That included prioritizing the relocation of both Police and Fire operations off of the Civic Center campus and eventually allowing City Hall operations to be expanded into a new building that would be sited on the current location of the Police and Fire Departments.

Currently police operations encompass 14,000 square feet of a building that was built in 1959 and expanded in 1989. The analysis firmly concluded that the space is undersized for the current scope of the operation and that it fails to meet modern accessibility, functionality and healthy workplace standards. For context, the study highlighted that recently constructed

police stations from much smaller communities in Iowa all contained more square footage than the Iowa City Police Department. The size constraints of the current facility and substandard workplaces are a detriment to the organization and the associated negative impacts will compound and become more costly in time.

As part of the next steps, in February 2025 the City Council authorized an agreement to assess a joint law enforcement facility with Johnson County. Shive Hattery and OPN combined to produce that analysis and the preliminary results show significant cost savings would be anticipated with a joint facility compared to two standalone facilities. In addition, the Johnson County Sheriff and Iowa City Police Chief have expressed their belief that a joint law enforcement facility can additionally provide long-term operational efficiencies that would benefit the community.