

Triple-sized upgr

Police will have new, 92,000-square-foot headquarters

By SARA REED

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Fort Collins police will soon get a chance to stretch their legs after decades spent cramped in their headquarters at 300 LaPorte Ave.

After four years of searching and planning, the city and the department will break ground Thursday on the new \$22.5 million police headquarters at 2221 Timberline Road.

The new 92,000 square-foot building is more than triple the size of the existing building on LaPorte and will include an expanded crime lab, evidence

and property rooms, an emergency communications center, training facilities and a Fort Collins police museum, according to spokeswoman Rita Davis. The new building also allows for growth over the next 20 years, Davis said. The police department currently leases about 25,000 square feet of space at various locations around the city to augment the 26,564-square-foot facility on LaPorte, Davis said.

The east-side location was chosen primarily because it is close to the geographic center of Fort Collins, Davis said.

The District 1 station on

By the numbers

Existing building, 300 LaPorte Ave.

- Built: 1957
- Site size: 1½ acres
- Building size: 26,564 square feet

New building, 2221 Timberline Road

- Built: Will break ground Thursday, open August 2007
- Site size: 10.8 acres, 7½ net acres (subtracting space for future roads)
- Building size: 92,000 square feet

Walnut Street in Old Town will remain there when the rest of the department moves, Davis said.

The land — bought for \$1.8 million in July 2004 — was paid for using money

from the 1997 voter-approved Building Community Choices sale tax, according to City Manager Darin Atteberry. The facility is being paid through Certificates of Participa-

loan ♦

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ers next year

tion, which are similar to bonds, with the city making 22 annual payments between 2005 and 2026. Money set aside from the city's general fund over recent years will cover those payments, Atteberry said.

The total project is estimated to run about \$33 million, Davis said.

Despite deep budget cuts over the last few years, including a \$5 million cut to the 2006 budget, building the new station was a priority for the city, Atteberry said.

"The (current) building is deficient and has been for a number of years," he



Rich Abrahamson/The Coloradoan

The future home of the Fort Collins police department is shown at 2221 Timberline Road. The facility, just north of Drake Road, is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

said. "We felt this was a very high priority."

Two road construction projects currently under way in the area — including the widening of Timberline between Drake and Prospect roads and improvements at the intersection of Timberline and

Prospect — are not related to the new building, but will be completed prior to its opening, according to city engineer Don Bachman. The project, which will alleviate congestion at one of the city's worst intersections, is scheduled for completion this fall.