

New Bedford breaks ground on first new public safety facility in more than 50 years

On Monday, September 9, Mayor Jon Mitchell, members of the City Council, neighborhood and civic leaders, and City officials officially broke ground on the South End Public Safety Center, the first new police and fire station to be built in New Bedford in more than fifty years. The new facility will host six municipal functions: fire, police, emergency medical services, emergency management, fire prevention and animal control. Opening the facility will allow the City to close, repurpose, or redevelop five deteriorating City buildings.

The Center will contain the City's South End police substation; consolidate the operations of two South End fire stations, Station 6 constructed in 1882, and Station 11 constructed in 1907. It will be the first fire station built in New Bedford since Fire Station 5 in the far North End was constructed in 1956.

The new Center will consolidate operations from several locations: the former Fire Station 3, which now houses the Police Department's Animal Control Division and the City's Emergency Management office, as well as 1204 Purchase Street, which houses the Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division. A 2015 study by FACETS Consulting on the Fire and Emergency Medical Services in New Bedford recommended consolidation of Stations 6 and 11. To construct four stations with the equivalent operations of the buildings being replaced would cost an estimated \$30 million in capital funding.

The new Public Safety Center will be a modern, 25,000-square-foot facility, including a four-bay fire station and South End police substation, at the site of the former St. Anne's Church in New Bedford. The church, built in the late 1940s, was closed by the Diocese of Fall River in 2004 and has remained vacant ever since in its prominent location at the intersection of Brock Avenue and Ruth Street at the northern section of the South End peninsula.

"This project is a reflection of how our city has raised the bar for itself," said Mayor Jon Mitchell. "As the first public safety center built in more than fifty years, it represents the City's commitment to modernize government for the most important of its responsibilities – keeping our residents safe."