



Atlanta Police Foundation unveils preliminary renderings of new training center

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By Wilborn P. Nobles III, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Atlanta Police Foundation released conceptual images for the new public safety training academy.

Atlanta's proposed Public Safety Training Center will be located across 150 acres of the old [Atlanta Prison Farm](#), which is city-owned and located east of the city in unincorporated DeKalb County. Officials say the space will provide recruiting, training,

mid-career education, and practice with new technology and equipment for police and fire department personnel.



Dave Wilkinson, president of the Atlanta Police Foundation, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution the building will be ready for officers within two years. Academy renderings obtained by the AJC show a preliminary design from 2019. Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms will unveil the academy's final designs in the coming months, according to a foundation spokesman.

The renderings show the campus will house a mock city for police, fire and rescue teams to perform real world training. A large amount of land will be converted into an emergency vehicle operations course for fire and police driving training as well.

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The center will include indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, a fitness center, classrooms, an auditorium, and academy housing for public safety recruits, the renderings show. A 911 emergency center will be present to provide training to first-responders.

Space dedicated to explosion tests, a fueling station, a water tower, burning building tests, and vehicle storage were displayed in the renderings. The images also show plans for an urban farm and agricultural fields.

Additionally, the center will house stables and pastureland for mounted patrol horses, as well as a kennel with indoor and outdoor training space for canine units. Renderings also display conference rooms, auditoriums, shooting ranges and green space for rent to public safety agencies outside of Atlanta.

The center would also provide greenspace to the public, such as running trails, ballfields, and picnic areas, renderings show. The conceptual video of the center is available online.



Public Safety Training Center



Bottoms has said the new academy will improve officer morale and retention after dozens of officers previously left the force in 2020.

“If you look at the police academy in the current state that it’s in now, they don’t even have lockers for the recruits to put things in,” Bottoms said earlier this month following a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Pittsburgh neighborhood’s new community center.

“It looks as if we don’t value public safety in the city, and so I think this is going to help with our recruitment efforts.”

Bottoms recently laid [out a plan](#) to address the city’s rising violent crime numbers, which includes hiring 250 officers. The mayor is seeking re-election, and her challengers are targeting the administration’s response to crime.

Atlanta Council President [Felicia Moore](#) says she would hire a permanent police chief and fill the reported 400 police officer vacancies if she’s elected as mayor in November.

Attorney Sharon Gay, former deputy chief of staff to former mayor Bill Campbell, also entered the race because residents expressed frustration with the current mayor.



according to Gay’s campaign spokesman.

Bottoms and Wilkinson have declined to comment on the cost of the new center, but they stressed the bulk of the funding will come through a public/private partnership with the Police Foundation and the philanthropic community. The Atlanta Committee for Progress reported the funding sources include City of Atlanta bonds, new market tax credits, and private/philanthropic support.

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