

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## Time to modernize police facilities, too

With the mayor's recent ribbon-cutting at the modernized Anacostia High School and the unveiling of the new design for Ballou High School, and as plans for updating Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library get under way, it has become glaringly clear that the D.C. government needs to jump-start the same endeavor for our police facilities. The legacies of Mayor Williams and Mayor Fenty are both highly burnished by having launched the revitalization process for our library and school facilities, and residents today are reaping the benefits of

these efforts. Any inspection of where our safety officers are now stationed shows the need for the same focus, creativity and high standards for our police force.

The headquarters at 300 Indiana Ave. NW is a historic building, but it's a warren of poor user flow and antiquated systems and a leader of lost costs in energy consumption and maintenance. The same can be said for a number of the dated, poorly designed district headquarters. To look at the 2nd, 3rd and 4th District headquarters, their top design goal seemed to be provision of surface parking space! These sites are certainly large enough that their modernizations might well lend themselves to additional mixed uses — possibly housing libraries (desperately needed for the Adams Morgan, Dupont Circle

and U Street areas), neighborhood-related retail, housing or even educational uses. The 2nd District site might well accommodate a new middle or high school, which would relieve the tremendous enrollment pressure on Deal Middle or Wilson High.

In any case, it is time to engage neighborhood and civic leaders to help in the goals and designs for modernized police facilities. Our front-line officers and their leaders deserve smart, effective, green buildings that can enhance their efforts. The nation's capital city should be setting the standard of smart, user- and community-friendly police headquarters, much as it is trying to do with its schools and libraries.

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