



# The Police Credit Union

San Bruno, CA  
Corporate Space

Located in the booming San Francisco Bay Area in California, The Police Credit Union (PCU, formerly known as SF Police Credit Union) had outgrown its previous administration building in the Sunset District.

NewGround conducted a thorough market analysis on behalf of PCU, identifying new construction as the best way forward to align with the organization's growth plans. NewGround negotiated the purchase of a site in San Bruno's high-tech Bay Hill Office Park at below market price.

The new headquarters is highly visible to passing traffic, boosting the visibility of the PCU brand. A 160-space be-low-surface parking structure and a new branch location on the first floor were added to increase employee and member convenience. The design of the building improved the employee experience by providing state-of-the-art workspaces, natural light, employee cafes and collaboration areas, and great views of the surrounding area.

**68,000**  
Square Feet

**160**  
Underground parking spaces

**22,000**  
Leasable ground floor space



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## Strategy

Knowing The Police Credit Union needed to take action, they looked to NewGround as their partner to help them tackle this intricate project. NewGround performed a comprehensive market analysis and planned the credit union's growth strategy for the next decade, helping management make the right decision on the space needed to meet their growth goals. This analysis included helping PCU decide if they should build or lease. Every option was on the table, from extended leases to buying and moving into an existing office building, to custom building a new structure that fit the credit union's exact needs.

The research confirmed that The Police Credit Union needed about 45,000 square feet of space to accommodate its growth to 150 full-time employees over the next 15 years. After looking at more than 200 options, the decision by the PCU Board of Directors made the decision to own a building. This was the best decision for long-term stability and financial investment, especially because leases on comparable spaces typically run at \$50 per square foot.

The winning site was a former TGI Friday's restaurant in San Bruno's high-tech Bay Hill Office Park. The site was not on the market but was discovered by the NewGround team through their market research. NewGround located the owners of the property and negotiated a below market price for the site. The site is centrally located for employees with close proximity to retail centers, public transportation, and dining options. The site is also exceedingly visible along a highly traveled highway providing outstanding brand recognition and awareness in the market.

## Design

The master plan we developed called for demolishing the restaurant structure and putting up a three-story 68,000 square foot building with two levels of underground parking for 160 cars to maximize the site. However, the building still has more space than the credit union needs for their 15-year space requirements, so much of the first floor—22,000 square feet—was put up for lease, with a 1,500 square-foot branch as the credit union's only presence on the first floor.

This added several benefits, chief of which will be lease income to offset the project's total cost, as well as room for future expansion when needed. The Police Credit Union's program requirements will comfortably be housed on the second and third floors of the building for the next 15 years, at such time they can recapture the first-floor space.



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The design team did not want a typical traditional office park facility, so creating an exterior design that looked progressive, timeless, and unique was a top priority. Materials selected included glass fiber reinforced concrete, a Trespa panel system, and a two-story atrium at the entrance with a lot of glass to allow natural sunlight throughout the building.

Focused on creating a dynamic and collaborative employee experience, the Design Team used our proprietary employee journey mapping methodology. Creating a dynamic employee experience is especially important in the Bay Area since employees are in high demand, and employers must compete with high-tech firms and new startups. Features such as learning centers and recharge stations, as well as an open floor plan that encour-aged collaboration, were developed. We also designed 1,500 square-foot work cafés on each floor that offered plenty of opportunities for flexible meetings and joint work.

The flow of the top two floors was also important. Features include oversized windows, landings in stairwells that will help to promote impromptu conversations, and an aisle way around the exterior of the building that will also help promote employee interaction.

Finally, since there are nearly 3,000 members within five miles of the administrative building, a retail branch was designed on the first floor to provide these members with a more convenient option than they previously had.

### **Build**

NewGround took on the responsibility of managing the rezoning, permitting, and the entitlement process for the project, which in a regulation-heavy environment like California can be challenging and time-consuming. Things went smoothly, and we received all the necessary approvals within 18 months, breaking ground in the summer of 2016. The project was completed in the spring of 2019.

### **Conclusion**

The Police Credit Union wanted to create a unique administrative building that aligned their brand with the physical space, and one that would attract and retain the very best employees. Their new headquarters represents an investment in their future, and because of the appropriate amount of planning by PCU's forward-thinking leadership team and their Board of Directors, they'll have an eye-catching facility that sets them apart in their industry for many years to come.

