

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS:

- **Notification (or lack thereof) to neighbors about the SEPA process; notification in 500 ft radius of property:** The proposed firestation site is within the rural portion of Thurston County, therefore the Notice of Application and the SEPA threshold determination is sent to all property owners within 500-feet of the project site (TCC 20.60.020(2)(d). If the project site was within an urban growth area, notice would be sent out to all property owners within 500-feet of the site. Notices are sent out by Thurston County Resource Stewardship Department.
- **Separation and screening between firestation and Olson's property:** The Olson Purchase Agreement provides for a combination of fencing and shrubbery on the south border of the property. The District plans to involve a group of neighbors to provide input for the exterior design of the firestation as well as landscaping in order to "blend into" the neighborhood.
- **Availability of list of neighborhood associations in District:** The contact information for the known organized neighborhood associations in the District are public information and available from the District Secretary.
- **Training center: included in new property?** There is no plan to include outdoor training facilities at the new site; the *District Strategic Plan* provides for a training facility at the location of its property at 3349 South Bay Rd NE.
- **What will the impacts be on neighboring property values?** It is not possible to ascertain what, if anything, will happen to neighboring property values with the addition of the firestation. There is a possibility that fire insurance premiums could be reduced with the added service capability. We don't believe property values will drop, and there is a possibility that they may even appreciate.
- **What is "Phase 2" expansion at the new firestation?** There is no current "phase 2" plan for the north-end firestation project; this refers to an early-stage consideration of building the facility in a multi-phased approach. Based upon input by the Citizens' Advisory Task Force, this idea was discarded.
- **"Mandate" for locating the firestation?** There are no Federal, State or local "mandates" for locating and developing the site for a new firestation; factors for locating firestations are based on strategic considerations including travel time, historical & predicted call volume in a given area, distances for reach (for insurance rating purposes) and fire deployment practices.
- **What is the percentage of EMS for all responses?** In 2010, the District responded to 623 calls including mutual aid calls; 485 (79%) were for EMS calls.
- **Can alternative methods be used for using smaller fire apparatus?** The District has evaluated options for smaller apparatus, primarily for firefighting. Limitations to this include the amount of firefighting equipment that must be carried, requirements for capacity of water flow for firefighting, limited funding & staffing that precludes a wider & more specialized variety of apparatus types, unknowns in responding to fire calls that may require apparatus pumping capacity & equipment. Certain types of apparatus are required to help maintain public fire protection classifications for the lowest possible fire insurance premiums. The District continues to monitor fire service industry experiments with alternative apparatus types.

- **Will there be a marketing campaign for the funding for the new firestation?** The District will not use publicly funded resources to promote a ballot issue. An independent citizen based committee has been established to provide pro-bond issue information to voters.
- **Want to preserve the rural nature of the neighborhood:** the District also desires to be a good neighbor and “fit” into the neighborhood; it is proposed that a task force of District staff and neighbors examine options for firestation exterior design elements and landscaping.
- **What are the design parameters required based on the Olson property purchase contract?** Re: Olson *Purchase & Sale Agreement*, (Sec 2, Building Character) “...The District plans on constructing an approximately seven thousand (7,000) sf single-story building that will house apparatus, quarters for firefighters, office areas and public meeting space. The proposed design is intended to resemble the design for Lacey Fire District 3’s Station 3-5, a single-story block masonry architectural style that is semi-residential in character. No out-building shall be more than thirty (30) feet in height.” It is important to note that because of cost considerations and recommendations from the Citizens’ Advisory Task Force, the current District plans provide for a 5,662 sf “footprint”, substantially lower the original plan.
- **Explanation of the South Bay volunteer program:** The current District Incident Readiness & Response (IR&R) Program is staffed with volunteer firefighters and EMTs. The primary IR&R organization is made up of teams of a Captain and 5 responders assigned to each of nine rotating shifts; other volunteers provide office administrative & clerical work, and other responders (generally senior members) may not be assigned to a shift, but, do respond on calls when available. The District is also in the process of developing a volunteer Battalion Chief position, which will provide a senior command level presence at incidents.
- **Is this a waste of money?** The project will replace two current non-occupied sub-stations with a single more centrally located staffed firestation. This will allow the District to reduce the numbers of facilities and equipment, thus saving up to \$1 million in equipment costs every twenty years. It will also allow for more efficient and effective staffing and equipment deployment, significantly reducing the response times in the Johnson Point & Marvin Road areas. The current District response times to the Johnson Point and Marvin Road areas are 10 to 12 minutes. With these changes, the District expects to reduce response times to approximately 6 to 7 minutes. In the case of a cardiac arrest patient or a fire, the 4 to 6 minute difference is crucial in saving a life or a home.
- **How is the proposal being reviewed by regulatory agencies?** The District is subject to, and complying with, all of the regulations set forth by Thurston County and the State of Washington for public firestation type occupancies.
- **The SEPA process may not be objective (weighed toward support for firestations):** It is important to remember that Thurston County staff will not be making the final decision on this Special Use Permit application -- that is the responsibility of the Hearing Examiner. All applications are reviewed under the standards of Thurston County codes and other relevant regulations/laws (including SEPA) to evaluate each application. A firestation is an essential public facility so that does factor into the analysis. A Special Use Permit requires that staff analyze the potential for adverse impacts of the project. County staff will make a recommendation on the relative merits of the Special Use Permit application, including that

potential for adverse impacts. It is possible that not everyone will agree with this analysis. This recommendation will be made to the Hearing Examiner who will, as part of the process, hold an open Public Hearing on the application. The staff report will be available for public review prior to the hearing. Anyone who wishes to share their perspective on the application, staff report or any other aspect of the proposal may do so at that hearing. The Hearing Examiner will consider not only the staff report but also that public testimony when making a decision to deny, approve, or approve the application with conditions. Once that decision is made, there is an appeal process which starts with the Board of County Commissioners. So, if anyone (applicant, neighbors) disagrees with the Hearing Examiner's determination, they do have an avenue available to seek relief.

- **What is the public notification process for SEPA? Can the [500 foot radius] notification list be expanded?** It is the Thurston County Planning Department's policy to notify all property owners within a 500 foot radius and to add any individual to the mailing list whom requests to be added throughout the review of the project. A Public Notice sign will be posted on the property 10-days prior to the public hearing.
- **A May 10th neighborhood meeting was held; was the timing of the District letter as a result of this?** No, scheduling for the June 2nd workshop was approved at the May 5th Board of Fire Commissioners' meeting; notice for that meeting was sent thereafter.
- **Is this a good thing to do considering the current economic conditions?** The District began this planning effort over six years ago when the economic picture was more positive. However, since then, the same economic conditions that we experience today have created a very beneficial construction opportunity with costs at record lows. The District believes that long-term value and project savings can be realized by building at this time.
- **Will there be enough money for staffing & operations?** During the same planning process that evaluated project options, the District planned for financial support for building a new firestation and staffing it. All of the funds for operating needs have been budgeted for.
- **A comparison was made between this proposal and other local fire districts:** A comparison was made between South Bay FD8 and other Thurston County fire departments; the number & location of firestations must be based on the ability to respond quickly and safely. The District has determined that with the establishment of this new firestation, two other existing non-staffed stations can be eliminated. This is a ratio of one firestation per approximately 4,000 citizens.
- **Will access to the firestation be off of 78th Ave NE or Hendershot St NE?** The public & member access is planned to be routed from Hendershot St NE; fire apparatus access will be directly onto 78th Ave NE.
- **What have the project expenses to date been?** As of June 2nd 2011, total project expenses are \$747,764 which includes the identification & evaluation of sites, acquisition of real property, facility pre-design & design and permitting efforts.
- **Why weren't citizens living on 78th Ave NE contacted for participation on the Citizens' Advisory Task Force in January 2010?** Notices and information were publicized in the District Minutes, broadcast over the District web-site and displayed on its reader-board at Station 8-1 on South Bay Road. The District's Board of Fire Commissioners and Staff also made numerous contacts

soliciting interest in the workshop. A citizen residing on 78th Ave NE agreed to be a member of and did participate with the Task Force. In hind-sight, the District should have attempted to enlist more citizens in the site surrounding areas (a lesson learned).

- **Why aren't we receiving the District Newsletter?** The District has used reputable vendors for several years to assist in the mailing of correspondence to the community. The vendors use a saturation bulk-mail procedure. This process includes:
 - The vendor and the District verify the addresses within the community (district) to be delivered to. Mailings can be targeted to a "Postal Customer" generic address for all mailboxes, or, a "Residential Customer" generic address for residences only. Postage costs for this type of mailing are substantially less (\$0.14) than first-class (\$0.44).
 - The actual number & location of addresses are determined by the Postal Service, and change regularly. The vendor purchases these lists from the Postal Service, and constitutes much of the cost of the vendor's service.
 - The actual bundling and distribution of the mailings are the responsibility of the various rural mail carriers. They are responsible for placing a mailing item in each mailbox on their route.

In response to the concerns raised by the citizens at the June 2nd meeting, the District Secretary re-verified the process used by the vendors used in past mailings. Some potential reasons that citizens did not have a copy of the mailing include:

- The mail carrier may have failed to deliver the item included in their bundle;
- The item may have been inadvertently been hidden within other mail items; or
- The item could have been discarded without the resident noticing it.

The District will continue to work on strategies to ensure that citizens will receive a copy of any District mailings. Some of these options will include the option for electronic copies of mailings, modifying bulk-mailing strategies and the use of first-class mailing for key items.

- **The District has not been "transparent" during the land purchase & project development:** Project related analysis targeted a very specific geographical location, featuring a relatively small number of parcels. Owners of these parcels were contacted over a period of two years regarding their willingness to sell. The District investigated these parcels in detail, and entered into negotiations with the owner of the parcel featuring the greatest advantage. After months of good-faith negotiations, the parcel was purchased with funds set aside by the District for that purpose. Due to the rather confidential nature of land purchase negotiation, the transaction was not generally made public until after the purchase. The intent to purchase property for a new firestation and subsequent information about developing the Hendershot Rd NE site were publicized before and after the transaction in the District Minutes, District web-site and in the District Newsletter.
- **The trees along Hendershot St NE are in danger of being removed:** The trees are actually located on the Thurston County right-of-way and not under the control of the District, however, the District is working closely with URS design staff and Thurston County regulators to meet access requirements hopefully without removing the trees.
- **(Olson) would not have sold the property to the District if they knew what they know now:** Owners of parcels within the "target area" for the new firestation were contacted over a period

of two years regarding their willingness to sell. The Olson's were approached in 2007 about their interest in selling the land to the District, but they declined at that time because they were developing the site for two single-family residence sites. In 2008, the Olson's approached the District about selling the property. During the negotiation process for the purchase of the property, the District and the Olson's agreed to a fair price for the site based on current market value as determined by a jointly agreed upon appraiser. The Olson's had full knowledge of the intended use of the property, and provided substantial input into the Purchase Agreement conditions to protect their interests. The conditions for the use of the property have not changed since that time.

- **“Feel like we’ve been lied to”:** The District believes it has acted in good faith to provide proactive public notification (i.e. recorded in District Minutes, Newsletter articles, web-site information) for all of its actions related to this project. It also acknowledges that communications can always be improved upon. Based on the input the District received at the June 2nd meeting, it is making concerted efforts to improve its frequency, breadth and methodology for communicating with its citizens. The District will work hard to improve its communications. Responsible communications, like this document, will be part of that effort.
- **Is this a “done deal”? Are there options to change the outcome of the project?** The District now owns a valuable parcel of land on which it intends to develop a new firestation as part of its overall strategic plan. However, based on the input it received at the June 2nd meeting, it does plan to increase efforts to work with its citizens and alter how this project is integrated into the community. In a practical sense, as the District places the issue requesting funding for the project on the ballot, voters will have a choice.
- **NIMBY: Not In My Back Yard:** a comment made by one of the citizens at the June 2nd meeting.
- **What will the staffing be at the new firestation?** In 2009, the District began to expand its target level of staffing for volunteer responders from 40 to 60 to accommodate regular staffing of a new north-end firestation. The plan is to house two volunteer responders at the north-end location and four at the South Bay location on nights and weekends. Options for a combination of volunteer and career-based staffing of two to three responders for daytime (Monday through Friday, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm) for the new firestation are also being evaluated.
- **Issues about notification & information on the purchase of the land, the project and Citizens’ Advisory Task Force:**
 - Property purchase: The District Community Risk Analysis mitigation plan targeted a very specific geographical location, featuring a relatively small number of parcels. Owners of these parcels were contacted over a period of two years regarding their willingness to sell. The District investigated these parcels in detail, and entered into negotiations with the owner of the parcel featuring the greatest advantage. After months of negotiations, the parcel was purchased with District funds. Negotiations to purchase real property are typically handled in a confidential manner.
 - Citizen’s Advisory Task Force: It was agreed early on in the planning process for the workshop to seek a cross-section of the population of the District, both by demographics and geographical areas. Notices and information was broadcast over the District web-site and its reader-board at Station 8-1 on South Bay Road. The District’s Board of Fire

Commissioners and Staff also made numerous contacts soliciting interest in the workshop. Home-owner associations were contacted for representation; those associations selected and provided representatives. In areas with no existing home-owner associations, various individual home-owners were randomly contacted. In the process, over sixty local citizens were contacted and twenty-nine eventually participated in the process. A citizen residing on 78th Ave NE was a member of and did participate with the Task Force. Two members representing the South Bay Volunteer Firefighters' Association also volunteered to participate.

▪ **Two existing firestations versus one centrally located new firestation:**

Risk mitigation options considered: In order to mitigate the risk identified in the District's Community Risk Assessment, the District evaluated several options including:

- Volunteer staffing of either or both existing north-end firestations to reduce response time;
- Examining potential for mutual-aid response from other fire districts;
- Siting and capabilities for a variety of potential locations for one or more firestations within the northern parts of the District; or
- Do nothing.

Detailed analysis of the practicality and cost benefit of these options were performed and resulted in the proposal for a centralized north-end firestation. It is basically an option of staffing & equipping two firestations instead of three in the District.

Options for existing firestations: The facilities, built in 1965 and 1979 respectively, are basically "grand-fathered" under current zoning & code requirements. Substantial changes to the facilities, including the provision for housing of staff, would require:

- Upgrade or replacement of current on-site septic system.
- Upgrade or replacement of on-site storm water run-off retention-treatment.
- Relocation of current water well and upgrade of treatment system; the well is currently being shared with a neighbor, and arrangements would have to be made to accommodate any changes.
- The Johnson Point Road firestation currently sits on a 0.37 acre parcel, part of which uses a permanent easement for the building site. There is not sufficient area on site to accommodate any changes required to the septic, storm-water run-off and/or water well. Additional land would need to be purchased, leased or donated to accommodate these changes. Costs for procurement of additional land capacity would add significant cost.
- A remodel of either firestation would be substantial enough to require full compliance with current codes and regulations. To allow occupancy, all building systems such as seismic-structural, electrical, mechanical, fire protection and health & safety must be evaluated and upgraded to meet current codes and regulations.
- Based on preliminary project definition, a substantial remodel of either firestation would cost an estimated 50% to 80% (each) of the cost of the new centrally located firestation.

- **Issues about driving and sirens:** Whenever the District responds with apparatus to an emergency, due care and caution are used in driving, including use of audible & visible emergency signals. District policy requires use of emergency signals when necessary to request the right-of-way, and does not suggest indiscriminate use of the siren. When traffic conditions of any street do not require use of siren, it is not used. Generally, the traffic volume on 78th Ave NE is of a low traffic count, and would normally not require the use of siren, especially at night. It must also be remembered that emergency vehicles use 78th Ave NE already (from other firestations, law enforcement), and that the average call volume for the area is substantially less than one-per-day.
- **Fueling vehicles at the firestation:** There will be no fueling of motor vehicles at this site.
- **Storm-water run-off at the firestation:** All surface water will be captured and treated on site.
- **Quality of the District's consulting engineers:** In 2008, the District conducted an open competitive process for design and construction firms, wherein several firms were interviewed, checked and evaluated. URS was selected based upon their experience, depth of talent and demonstrated commitment to the project.
- **Quality and condition of 78th Ave NE: traffic, hills/curves, parked vehicles, improvements:** The quality and condition of 78th Ave NE is more than sufficient to handle the moderate amount of traffic the new firestation will present. It must also be remembered that emergency vehicles use 78th Ave NE already (from other firestations, law enforcement), and that the average fire-EMS call volume for the area is substantially less than one-per-day.
- **Did the District examine properties on Johnson Point Rd NE?** The District considered many alternative options and sites for firestation locations (including the present locations). The site selected and acquired presents the optimum location for coverage, response and buildability.

THINGS THE DISTRICT WILL DO:

- Communicate better to all its citizens
- Create an advisory task force of neighbors to provide input on the exterior design of firestation
- Check the Olson Purchase Contract for specifics about design parameters
- Check *District Newsletter* mailings
- In-person meetings
- Periodic meetings