

Site Selection

Why was the proposed site selected?

Over the past 20+ years, several public safety studies have determined the need for a new fire and rescue station in the southern side of the City. A total of 17 sites have been considered through the site selection process. The most critical consideration for site selection is the ability to maximize the four-minute response time coverage across the City¹. The site location must also be located to the South of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks to ensure that emergency response is not delayed by the at-grade train crossing on Godwin Drive. Other factors for site selection in addition to these primary considerations include: access and traffic; physical constraints and the ability of the site to accommodate station equipment and operational requirements; compatibility with city plans and goals; and site ownership, availability, and procurement cost.

Based on these criteria, the ideal location for Station #21 is at the intersection of Hastings Drive and Cloverhill Road. Initial attempts to purchase a privately-owned site in this vicinity were unsuccessful; therefore, the City proposed the use of Lee Manor Park as the nearest available site that could provide the response time coverage needed to ensure the safety of residents. Information on the Lee Manor Park site alternative is available at www.manassascity.org/fire21.

Based on community feedback, staff has continued to review potential alternative locations for Fire and Rescue Station #21. A technical memorandum available at www.manassascity.org/fire21 summarizes this process and various alternative sites considered. Based on this analysis, the City selected an available site on Dumfries Road (shown in Figure 1 below) as the preferred site. On July 24, 2017, City Council agreed to move forward with a purchase and sale agreement at a price of \$1.6M, subject to a 60-day due diligence period.



Figure 1. Fire & Rescue Station 21 Dumfries Road Site

¹ The 4-minute response time is calculated using ArcGIS Network Analyst. Additional information on this software can be found at: <http://desktop.arcgis.com/en/arcmap/latest/extensions/network-analyst/service-area.htm>

Property Values, Taxes, and Insurance Rates

What is the impact of the proposed station on taxes, property values, and insurance rates?

On July 25, 2016, City Council authorized the General Obligation Public Improvement Bonds in the amount of \$28 million. Station #21 is funded out of this bond issuance (\$8.6 million) with debt service covered through the fire and rescue levy.

Limited research is available on the impact of fire and rescue services on property values. A 2016 paper² on the effect of fire, police, and emergency medical services in the State of Florida found both negative and positive effects on housing values driven by the home's distance from the facility. The site design and operating conditions for Station #21 are under development to mitigate negative impacts of the proposed station.

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) collects information on municipal fire protection efforts in communities throughout the US. In each community, ISO analyzes the relevant data using the Fire Suppression Rating System (FSRS) and then assigns a Public Protection Classification from 1 to 10. Currently, the City of Manassas has an ISO rating of 4. This rating has a direct impact on insurance premiums for residential and commercial properties. Response times are a component of the data used to determine the ISO ratings for communities and is compared to the national standard of 90% with the first emergency unit arriving on the scene within 4 minutes. Station #21 will assist us in reducing our response times to the Southeastern part of the city and will contribute to the overall reduction of response times within the City limits.

Station Operations

Can you provide an estimate based on current statistics on how many calls may be dispatched from Station #21?

A specific estimate for the new station is not available; however, the two existing stations had 4,268 calls within the City limits in FY16 and 1,353 calls to the area that will be served by Station #21.

Can you provide an estimate based on current statistics on how many calls may be dispatched from Station #21 to surrounding jurisdictions?

A specific estimate for the new station is not available; however, in 2016 approximately 30% of total call volume was from other jurisdictions including Prince William County, Manassas Park, and Fairfax County.

What equipment will be assigned to Station #21?

The station will house Rescue Engine 521, Medic 521, and Battalion Chief 582, plus Ambulance or Medic 521 when the volunteers staff a unit on nights and weekends. This equipment will be re-assigned from the existing stations and will be the newest in our fleet.

What will be the noise, light, and exhaust impacts from the fire engine and equipment located at Station #21?

All of our apparatus drivers complete extensive Virginia Department of Fire Programs Emergency Vehicle Operator Training (EVOC) to include all three levels of course, complete Department internal training programs before being released as an emergency driver, and follow Code of Virginia 46.2-920 – Vehicle Exceptions. We also have internal policies that exceed the Code of Virginia 46.2-920. The Department policy mandates items such as: maximum response speed shall not exceed 15 mph above the posted speed limit, apparatus must come to a complete stop at all traffic signals that are reflection red in their direction of travel, maximum speed through any traffic-controlled intersection in which the vehicle has the right of way (green light, blinking yellow light, etc.) shall be the speed limit of the street involved, and vehicles must come to a complete stop when encountering a school bus with flashing red lights. Our drivers are well trained and maintain situational awareness when driving apparatus and adjust to the environment and conditions they face.

Our drivers only use the siren and air horns when necessary. There are many instances where the audible warning systems are not warranted when pulling out of existing stations onto very busy roadways. When using emergency lighting the apparatus driver may use audible warning “as reasonably necessary”.

² Dronyk-Trosper, Trey, “Searching for Goldilocks: The Distance-Based Capitalization Effects of Local Public Services,” <https://treyldt.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/searching-for-goldilocks-ree.pdf>

FAQs: City of Manassas Fire & Rescue Station #21



All of our apparatus must follow current EPA regulations for exhaust. We also add DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid) with every fueling to lower the nitrogen oxides produced during combustion. This makes the engine burn cleaner, eliminating the “black smoke” coming out the exhaust from any of our apparatus. All of our apparatus follows current NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) standards for initial build, inspection, maintenance and testing. Our apparatus drivers do not leave the units sitting on the fire station ramp running. They perform their daily checkouts quickly and efficiently. They will be mindful of the time of day and limit the noise as much as possible.