



## NEW CASTLE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1

Serving since 1925

# Proposed Fire Station Improvements Project Fact Sheet

### Background

The New Castle Fire District No. 1 covers an area approximately 23.4 square miles with a population of about 17,600. Two fire stations serve the District. Our Headquarters is located at 491 King St. at Bedford Rd, and the old station is located at 11 Senter St. We respond to calls from the Bedford Road Headquarters. The Senter St. facility is used for equipment and apparatus storage.

The Board of Fire Commissioners began discussions about modernizing the Fire District's facilities in 2007. Over time it has been determined that the Bedford Road Headquarters is aging and requires improvements. Built in 1954 with an addition completed in 1979, the firehouse has tight space constraints, physical building deficiencies, ADA and OSHA violations, inadequate training spaces, and other limitations. A feasibility study was conducted in 2008 when the District explored preliminary plans for expansion. Because of the high cost of the property needed for expansion and a stall in contract negotiations, those plans did not proceed. Since then the District has developed a new plan for renovations and an addition and has successfully negotiated a contract to expand the site. The Board has been performing with due diligence as it seeks to improve the Headquarters station while keeping the interests of District taxpayers and safety of our firefighters in the forefront.

### Apparatus Bays

When originally built, the bays were sized to accommodate the trucks of that era. Today, the height and size of the apparatus bays are inadequate. Modern trucks are bigger due to improved safety and environmental regulations. Firefighters are required to ride inside, seated & belted with gear on, so the cab needs to be bigger. Improvements in fire equipment mean more specialized equipment to bring to the fire – requiring additional storage space on the truck. Increased emissions control standards results in more pollution equipment housed on the underside of the truck – raising the height. Inadequate size of the bays results in the following:

- ◇ Limited space to inspect, clean and maintain equipment and safely move around vehicles
- ◇ Inadequate space for support functions including a needed decontamination shower, a laundry for contaminated gear, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) maintenance and fill station
- ◇ Inadequate space for storage of equipment such as hoses, SCBA, water, and turnout gear
- ◇ The necessity of purchasing specially designed low-height replacement trucks

### Health & Safety

There is increasing evidence that relates firefighting and health risks, including cancer. The chemicals used in today's building materials, furniture and household objects release high levels of toxins during combustion. According to the International Association of Firefighters, (IAFF) occupational exposures to toxins and carcinogens at the fire scene and exposure to diesel exhaust pose a significant threat through inhalation and skin absorption, even with specially designed protective gear. Because of this, it is essential to have a correctly



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planned facility and equipment. Concerns that need to be addressed include:

- ◇ Unsafe clearances around vehicles
- ◇ Inadequate laundry facilities to control contamination
- ◇ No separate decontamination shower
- ◇ No separation of ventilation systems between the “clean” and “dirty” side of the building
- ◇ Inadequate separation between the public and fire service sides of the building

### **Administrative, Meeting and Training Space**

The Department and the District have administrative requirements related to incident and equipment reports, training documents, finances, personnel records, and governance. Deficiencies in administrative space include: limited secure records storage, inadequate space to work on reports and documents in accordance with HIPPA privacy requirements, and limited space where sensitive conversations regarding incidents can take place.

The current facility has limited accessibility for the public. Walking through the station to the meeting space requires stepping up and down as floor height changes violating ADA. There is no elevator. The secondary means of egress from the meeting room is an exterior stair, with inherent safety risks due to snow & ice.

Training standards have changed over the years. Today’s volunteers are required to give many more hours each year to training, with much of the training required to take place at a local facility. Currently there is inadequate space for meetings & training and a lack of storage space for training materials.

### **Proposed Renovations and Addition**

Renovations will include an upgrade of utility systems in the current building. The three-bay area will house less frequently used vehicles including assets currently stored at Senter St. The original two-bay area and meeting room will be converted to museum space and bunking for fire fighter use during inclement weather or other emergencies.

A two-story, 16,500 square foot addition with 3 double deep drive-through bays is planned. When the renovations and additions are complete, our headquarters facility is expected to meet district needs for the next 100 years. The first floor will house apparatus bays with a training/storage mezzanine, radio room, standby room, decon room, firematic storage, mechanic’s room, SCBA fill station, janitor closet, general storage and bathrooms. The second story, with ADA mandated elevator access, will include office space, personnel space (shower/locker room, day room, and exercise room), and meeting and training space available to the public.

The planned addition will be made of durable, low maintenance materials designed to maximize the useful life of the building. The facility will meet, and in some cases exceed, all relevant health, safety, energy, and building codes and will provide gender equity and ADA required accessibility. The improvements will also bring the Department’s communication and technology up to today’s standards.

For more information visit our website at [www.ncfd1.org](http://www.ncfd1.org)