



Town of Winthrop
Proposed Fire Station Facility



F.A.Qs and Information Booklet

This document serves as a guide to the proposed new fire station building in the Town of Winthrop. In the following pages, you'll find information detailing the background, rationale, considerations, and community involvement related to this crucial endeavor. We recognize the significance of a modern, efficient, and well-equipped fire station to ensure the safety of our community. As we embark on this journey together, we invite you to explore the details of the project, including the selection process for the new fire station location, its impact on local businesses, and the steps taken to address concerns and ensure a positive outcome for all stakeholders. Your engagement and understanding are paramount as we work toward creating a facility that meets the needs of our town today and for generations to come.

— The Fire House Building Committee



Fig. 1— Shirley Street Fire Station w/ Horse-drawn steam engine. Built in 1905.



Fig. 2— Pauline Street Fire Station w/ Horse-drawn ladder. Built in the 1880s.

Q: Why is there a need for a new Fire Station in the Town of Winthrop?

A: The two current Fire Stations are outdated, undersized, and incapable of supporting the needs of a modern Fire Department. They have exceeded their usable lives and require immediate action. For over 118 years, the Town of Winthrop has not built a new fire station.

Q: Have there been previous studies on this issue?

A: Yes. Several studies have been conducted as far back as 1969, 1993 and 1997 to address the need for a new Fire Station in Winthrop.

Q: What were the findings of the older studies regarding the existing Fire Stations?

A: The older studies recommended either significant renovation or construction of a new central station. Renovation of the existing stations was discouraged due to their outdated designs and insufficient space for current and future needs.

Q: What does the 1997 study recommend?

A: The 1997 study recommended the construction of a new central fire station to accommodate the needs of the Winthrop Fire Department now and in the future. The study emphasizes that the existing facilities are inadequate for the department's needs. See Fig.1 and Fig. 2 showing the original intent to house horse-drawn equipment. Our modern equipment simply cannot fit, nor can it be serviced, within these outdated structures.

Q: Were there any plans for a combined Public Safety Building?

A: Yes, in 2018, the Town contracted Kaestle Boos Architecture to determine the best location for a combined Public Safety Building. Several possible locations were evaluated.

Q: What was the outcome of the evaluation of possible locations for the Public Safety Building?

A: The "A" Field and Golf Club locations were eliminated due to shortcomings, while the Winthrop St location emerged as the focus. However, this site had challenges, including property acquisition and construction

disruption.

Q: What decision was made in late 2022 regarding the Public Safety Building?

A: The decision was made to prioritize the immediate need for a new Fire Station and address the Police Department's needs in Phase 2. The focus shifted to the location of The Wadsworth Building and Maurice W. Kirby Funeral Home. When it was proposed, in public forum, both property owners were willing to sell.

Q: What benefits does the proposed location for the new Fire Station offer?

A: The chosen location at 214-224 Winthrop St provides ample space for current and future needs, and it's centrally located. It also has the potential to connect the existing Police Station in Phase 2, which would then create a Public Safety Building.

Q: Why is there urgency in addressing the public safety building needs?

A: Delayed action would lead to increased costs, risk to firefighters' safety, vulnerability of residents during emergencies, and reduced efficiency in meeting the community's needs.

Q: How old are the current Fire Stations in Winthrop?

A: The Pauline St Station was built in the 1880s, and the Shirley St Station was constructed in 1905.

Q: What were the reasons for deciding against renovating the existing Fire Stations?

A: Renovation was discouraged because even with necessary repairs, the combined square footage of the stations was barely adequate for the department's present equipment, let alone future needs.

Q: Why was the single-station concept chosen over a two-station concept for the new Fire Station?

A: The single station concept provides a coordinated service under one roof. It's expected to achieve better construction value and be less expensive to operate due to economies of scale. At it's newly proposed

location, our new station would meet NFPA 1710 response time requirement of 5 mins and 20 seconds.

Q: How will this proposal affect the Winthrop Fire Department's response times?

A: Fire Department response time standards are defined in NFPA 1710 "Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, EMS and Special Operations in Career Fire Departments." Due to Winthrop's population density, NFPA 1710 classifies the Winthrop Fire Department as an Urban Fire Department. Operational standards dictate a response time of under 5 minutes and 20 seconds, 90% of the time, from the time of alarm to the time of arrival. A single, centrally located station will not have an effect on our ability to meet this standard.

Q: Why were the "A" Field and Golf Club locations eliminated as options for the Public Safety Building?

A: These locations had shortcomings that made them unsuitable for the project, such as flood zones, wetlands, and other limitations.

Q: What were the considerations in choosing the Winthrop St location for the new Fire Station?

A: The Winthrop St location was evaluated based on a comprehensive set of factors, taking into account various aspects such as its central position within the town, the potential for future expansion, and the opportunity to create a unified Public Safety Building in the future by connecting it to the existing Police Station. Consequently, costs and the efficient utilization of taxpayer money were significant considerations in the decision-making process. The goal was to identify a location that not only aligned with the community's immediate needs but also ensured responsible fiscal management to make the best use of available resources for those needs while allowing for future expansion.

Q: Why did the decision shift from a combined Public Safety Building to a two-phase process?

A: As explained above, the focus shifted due to a decision to prioritize the more immediate needs of the community, namely a new Fire Sta-

ute to a better ISO rating. Additionally, the strategic central location of a new fire station, especially if it can provide improved response times to different parts of the town, can have a positive influence on the ISO rating. Faster response times are often associated with better outcomes in fire-related emergencies, which ISO takes into consideration when determining the rating. Most fire departments are rated a 5. Winthrop's Fire Department is rated a 4 (the lower the better). Moving away from outdated facilities and into a modern one will help us maintain our rating if not improve it.

Q: Why should a homeowner care about the ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating of their town?

A: Homeowners should care about their town's ISO rating because it directly impacts their property insurance premiums. Insurance companies often use the ISO rating to determine the level of fire protection in an area. A good ISO rating can lead to lower insurance premiums, while a poor rating may result in higher premiums. Therefore, homeowners in areas with better fire protection, as reflected in a favorable ISO rating, can potentially save money on their insurance policies, making it a crucial consideration for cost-conscious homeowners.

Q: There's concern about the new fire station being located nearly across from the For Kids Only (FKO) school. How does this compare to past fire station locations near schools in Winthrop?

A: The concern about the proximity of the new fire station to the For Kids Only school is understandable, but it's worth noting that Winthrop has a history of fire station locations near schools. The Shirley Street Station existed for years next to the Shirley Street School, and the Pauline Street Station has been located across from various schools over the years (Center School, EB Newtown and Old Jr. High School and now Cummings School). While there may have been challenges related to traffic during school drop-off and pickup times, the presence of fire stations near schools hasn't raised significant safety or operational concerns.

Q: Why not consider the Old Middle School as the site of this project?

tion, while addressing the Police Department's needs in Phase 2. The proposed location not only provides flexibility for potential future expansion but also makes the project's costs palatable by breaking it into manageable phases. This approach ensures that the community can efficiently address its critical needs while being mindful of financial considerations.

Q: How was the process of evaluating possible fire station locations conducted?

A: In November 2020, public forums were held to discuss several sites, then in subsequent public forums in 2021, updated pricing and two specific sites (the seventh hole at the golf course and the Little League A field) were discussed.

Q: How will the town address concerns about business displacement as a result the Fire Station project?

A: The council and town expressed a commitment to retain local businesses, such as the Meat Market, and to assist them in finding suitable new locations.

Q: How will the Town Council and the Town Manager address the concerns of the Meat Market?

A: The Town Council and Town Manager have acknowledged the value of the Meat Market and have expressed a commitment to assist the tenants of The Wadsworth Building with relocation and transition. The Town Manager has already begun discussions with owners of Meat Market and those discussions will continue.

Q: How could the construction of a new fire station impact the town's ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating?

A: The construction of a new fire station has the potential to affect the town's ISO rating based on several key factors. Firstly, if the new fire station is equipped with modern and efficient facilities, it can enhance the capabilities of the fire department. ISO assesses various aspects, including the condition of fire stations, equipment and training facilities, so upgrading to a new fire station with improved resources can contrib-

A: The Old Middle School has been considered. There are concerns about the foundation required for the new building as the Old Middle School abuts Ingleside Park. Addressing challenges on that site would require a partial change of land use at the state level. Further, the Old Middle School Site is thought to have the potential to generate income for the town. It has been discussed as a potential revenue source by several previous council terms, Town Managers, and others involved in town planning. The Old Middle School Site is approximately 92,000 sq. ft. (NOT including the rink) and the proposed Fire Station Site, which includes the Police Station, is only 50,975 sq. ft. The difference there could really help bring in more revenue for the town.

Q: What is the existing revenue generated by the Wadsworth Building and Kirby Funeral Home?

A: The properties on which the Wadsworth Building and the Kirby Funeral Home sit on, generate approximately \$28,000 in tax revenue per year.

Q: How much will the proposed Fire Station project cost?

A: The estimated cost for the entire Fire Station project is approximately \$40 million. This budget encompasses various aspects of the initiative including: property acquisition, station design, demolition of existing structures, and construction.

Q: What does the projected cost of \$40 million mean for taxpayers?

A: The financial commitment for taxpayers is anticipated to be funded through a 30-year bond. As a result, the impact on taxpayers will be approximately \$0.73 per \$1,000 of property valuation.

To put it into prospective, the average property valuation in Winthrop is \$625,000. A property of similar valuation would be paying \$456.25 in taxes per year.

$$\$625,000 / \$1,000 = 625$$

$$625 \times \$0.73 = \$456.25$$

Q: When will the financial impact of the Fire Station project be felt by tax-

payers?

A: The financial impact of the Fire Station project is not anticipated to take effect until Fiscal Year 2026.

It is important to note that while the Fire Station project will have a cost impact, there are anticipated savings for taxpayers coming ahead. The ATC School and Miller Field Projects will be coming off the tax rolls, providing relief to taxpayers in the form of approximately \$170.00 in annual savings on taxes. This helps to offset the impact of the new project. In essence the net cost of the project, is \$286.25 / year.

Q: Winthrop Street is narrow. How will the Fire Department move their large trucks in and out of the proposed station?

A: Addressing the narrowness of Winthrop Street is a crucial consideration in the proposed Fire Station concept. A 100 ft. buffer has been incorporated into the design to permit the fire trucks to completely pull out of the station before they make their turning radius. (See Fig 3.)

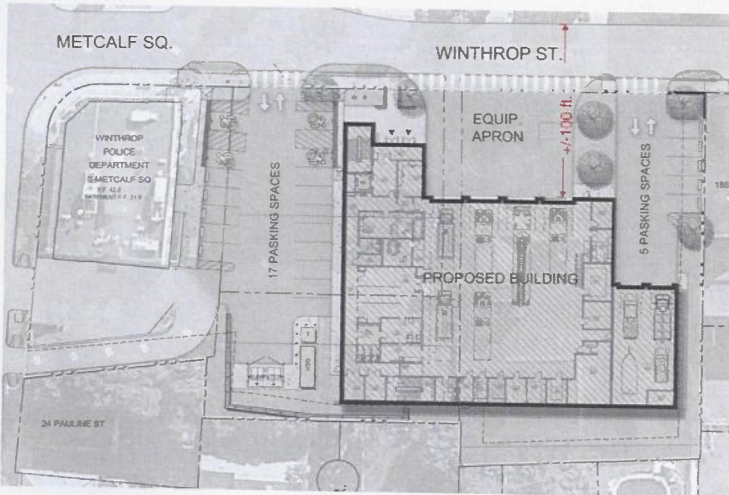


Fig. 3 — Proposed Equipment Apron buffer. Floor plan courtesy of Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc.

Q: What happens when voters vote in November regarding the Fire Station project?

A: When voters cast their ballots in November, they play a pivotal role in the future of the Fire Station project. A "yes" vote signifies approval for the project to move forward. It marks the green light for several key actions, including the acquisition of the necessary properties, the commencement of the process to hire an Owner's Project Manager, the commencement of the process to hire an Architect, and the finalization of the design and construction documents. Additionally, once the design is complete, the hiring of a General Contractor is launched through public bidding laws. A critical step in the project's progression.