

Fire Station #8 Relocation



Arlington County is initiating a process to select a site to **relocate Fire Station #8 (FS8) from the intersection of Lee Highway and North Culpepper Street to a location further north**. The County is requesting **community participation and input through a forum of structured public meetings between late June and early September 2015**.

The 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) identified the need to modernize and relocate FS8 to a location further north in order to increase the number of households reachable within the County's fire and EMS response time target of 4-6 minutes. While the County Manager's proposed CIP identified the corner of Old Dominion Drive and 26th Street North as staff's preferred site, in July 2014 as part of its CIP adoption, the County Board committed to conducting a public siting process to evaluate that site along with others to determine how best to meet this need. The County Board has the final responsibility for approving the site.

The criteria for evaluating site options are:

- An increase in the number of households reached in 4-6 minutes
- 1.5 acre site already owned by the County (or likely to come into the County's control expeditiously and at a feasible cost)
- Proximity to major arterial street(s)
- An appropriate distance from fire stations in Fairfax County due to regional mutual aid agreements. The County seeks to assure, to the greatest extent possible, that the majority of service from any new location is for Arlington residents and the volume of work is evenly distributed within the Arlington County Fire Department Fire House System.

The adopted 2015-2024 CIP includes funds to construct a relocated FS8. Following County Board action to approve the site for FS8, a Master Plan process with significant community involvement will be initiated for the selected site. This Master Plan process will apply applicable County plans and policies to the site and will also include review by the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) before being considered and adopted by the County Board.

For updates and latest project information, please go to the Arlington County project webpage:

<http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/fire-station-8/>

➔ Following stakeholder meetings this summer, County staff will present a final recommendation of a relocation site for FS8 to the County Board in fall of 2015, as well as the pros and cons of other sites considered.

Why Relocate?

Arlington County has studied response times across the County twice, in 2000 and 2012. Both studies prepared by the TriData division of the System Planning Corporation for the Arlington Fire Department, found that response times to parts of North Arlington were the longest in the County and significantly exceeded the County's response window target.

The County Board's overarching responsibility is to improve safety and provide the most equitable emergency response time across the County. Evaluating options with the community and then making an informed selection for this fire station site is a step forward in fulfilling that responsibility.

Next Meetings?

● **July 9 – 7-9 p.m.**
(St. Mary's Episcopal Church)
Repeat of June 25 meeting

● **July 30 – 7-9 p.m.**
(St. Mary's Episcopal Church)
County staff to review previous meeting results and opportunities, allow additional suggested sites and outline process for reviewing these sites

● **September 9 – 7-9 p.m.**
(Yorktown High School)
County staff to summarize process and share results and recommendations to be presented to County Board

Why not just update FS8?

The County could spend capital dollars to fully modernize and/or construct a brand new facility on the old site. However, this would only address the facility condition and would not address the concern to improve the level of service for residents.

The most important driver in this decision is to cover as many Arlingtonians as possible within the targeted four minute response time. No one within the current FS8 service area will fall outside the 4-6 minute response time.

How much money is available and how can it be used?

The 2015-2014 CIP included \$25.1 M for relocation of FS8 and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The cost was based on a combined facility that would house the fire station and the OEM offices with its associated Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The combined building area was estimated between 25,000 and 27,000 square feet (sf), with 12,000 sf designated for the OEM/EOC. Costs for a replacement FS8 with surface parking account for approximately \$13 M of the \$25.1 M. The remainder of this CIP authorization will be reserved for its designated purpose: relocating the OEM/EOC from its current location in the Court Square West building. The CIP's funding allocation did not include any money for land acquisition.

What other sites have been considered and why were they not chosen?

All three sites recommended in the TriData study were considered. However, only one met all siting criteria. Other County-owned sites in North Arlington were reviewed, but these sites do not meet the siting criteria.

How does this process compare with siting and planning for other recently built fire stations?

All recently constructed fire stations have undergone different siting and planning processes due to their uniqueness and specific project requirements. Fire Station #5 did not undergo a site selection process as it was built on County-owned land. A task force was formed for Fire Station #3 because there were multiple privately-owned sites under consideration.

Frequently Asked Questions

What exactly is the role of the community in this process? Will the County form a task force similar to what was done when the Cherrydale station was built?

The initial role of the community is to become informed about the issues surrounding the relocation, provide feedback on community issues and concerns, offer ideas and suggestions on siting options/locations and provide recommendations on further community engagement to the County.

The feedback will be solicited during public meetings in summer 2015, through written correspondence with County staff and the County Board, as well as social media outlets. County staff will compile and review information received during the siting process and will provide a recommendation to the County Board in fall 2015 with a compilation of the community's input.

What is the demand for service in North Arlington? Why is it so important we improve response times?

Improving response times is essential to the fire department's effectiveness. While the number of calls for service in the northern portion of the County are relatively low, any emergency can be adversely affected by a lengthy response time. For example - a person suffering from cardiac arrest must receive medical care within 4-6 minutes before irreversible brain damage occurs.

What is the proposed program and requirements for the new station?

FS8 will be modeled after FS5. Of the 1.5 acres, 0.8 acres will be used to accommodate the fire house. The building elements include four functional groupings (apparatus/equipment, administration, day residential and night residential). The remaining 0.7 acres will be used for a wrap-around drive aisle, 12 parking spots and setback requirements.

If FS8 is relocated, how many households would have improved response times of four minutes?

Approximately 1,400 Households