

(The following is an example of a correspondence between the Board Chair and the community)

July 2015

Dear Community Members:

Thank you for attending the meeting regarding the future of Fire Station #8 on June 25. As you may recall, we will be repeating the meeting on July 9 at 7 pm at St. Mary's; I hope you will encourage your neighbors who could not attend to join us for that meeting.

Thanks to all of you for your questions. One of the main goals of the sessions on June 25 and July 9 is to elicit as many of your questions as possible. We hope to provide some answers at the July 9 meeting and will be distributing additional answers electronically to the June 25 and July 9 attendees, as well as posting them on the [County webpage](#) associated with this process.

We also appreciate the thoughtful table conversations on potential sites and additional criteria. Residents identified several "land swap" or co-location suggestions that involve privately-owned properties north of Lee Highway that will require more study and conversation. We will be using that information as we plan and do the analysis necessary for our July 30 meeting. We hope you will consider joining us for that meeting.

We heard some important feedback at the June 25 meeting and I want to highlight some of it here:

- * Attendees were not supportive of any relocation that increases response time to residents who currently are served within 4-6 minutes
- * Residents near the 26th/Old Dominion site want green park space maximized and nearby residents who attended the meeting were not generally supportive of adding a fire station to that location
- * Residents near the existing site of Fire Station #8 have concerns about the relocation of the fire station but - should the station relocate - want an inclusive community planning process to consider any reuse or redevelopment of that site to ensure that what comes next respects and honors the heritage of the African Americans who established the station and served as fire fighters
- * Residents who live outside the current 4-6 minute response time area are supportive of a new location that would offer them quicker service
- * Regardless of whether the fire station is relocated to 26th/Old Dominion or not, nearby residents want a robust and inclusive planning process for the site that analyzes environmental impacts, traffic, noise and other potential impacts and evaluates potential mitigations

Next steps

Here's what to expect following July 9:

- On July 30 staff and residents will reconvene to review the results of the analysis of the possible alternatives (including the existing location of Fire Station #8) using the four primary criteria, as well as others suggested by residents. In addition, the community will have an opportunity to provide qualitative information on the sites that can be incorporated into the report to the Board. The opportunity to provide additional feedback on those ratings will take place both at that meeting and subsequently via email. Should there be additional community questions, they will be gathered and responses developed to be shared in September.

- On September 9, staff and residents will reconvene to review the DRAFT staff report to the Board, as well as consider whether appropriate mitigations can be designed to allow an alternative that does not meet the criteria to be considered as a solution by the County Board.
- The Board may choose to hold a work session on September 22 to discuss in depth the recommended next steps.
- The Board will consider the recommendations at its October meeting; the public will have an opportunity to provide public comment at the Board's October meeting.

In closing, let me remind you that this siting process needs to move forward in a timely manner. As all are aware, the salt dome needs replacement and until a decision is made on the fire station location, the County cannot commence master planning which must consider the full set of facilities, including a park to be ultimately located on the County parcel at 26th/Old Dominion. The Board is committed to the current process as the best way to achieve this overall master planning objective and initiate the salt dome facility construction project, which is fully funded, as soon as possible.

Thank you again for joining us on June 25. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this siting process.

Mary Hynes
Chair, Arlington County Board

Siting Process Background

As you are aware, County staff did recommend relocating Fire Station #8 to the County-owned property at 26th Street and Old Dominion Drive that is currently home to the Leaf Mulch and Salt Dome facilities as part of the Manager's proposed 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Plan. Based on a study previously done by an outside consultant, this site offers an improvement in response times to a substantial portion of the County without compromising current response times anywhere else. The County Board agreed with residents in July 2014 that a siting process was needed prior to making a decision on the best location for the fire station.

The purpose of this siting process is to identify alternative sites, using local community knowledge, that most closely align with the County's key criteria. Sites that do not meet these criteria can also be suggested and staff will include them in the final report and recommendations to the County Board who will ultimately make the decision about the future location for Fire Station #8.

There are four important criteria driving this site selection process:

- * Potential to achieve 4-minute response times in parts of North Arlington where we currently do not meet the standard
- * Minimum of 1.5 acre site
- * Currently owned County land (or land immediately available from a willing seller at low cost)
- * Adjacent to a major arterial street

While the Manager's 2015-2024 CIP proposed that 10,000 square feet of space be provided for the Office of Emergency Operations at the 26th/Old Dominion location in addition to the fire station, the County Board has removed that project from this siting process. Based on other Arlington fire station layouts, approximately .8 acres would be needed for the fire station building and its associated parking and driveways; approximately .7 acres of buffer around the fire

station building is desirable because it helps create a good neighbor situation for adjacent property owners.