

DRAFT – Developed Prior to Learning About New Timeline & Charge**Position Paper on the Proposed Relocation of Fire Station 8
Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC)**

September 16, 2015

- Commission:** Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC)
- Subject:** The Proposed Relocation of Fire Station 8
- Recommendation:** Approve the relocation of Fire Station 8 to the proposed site at Old Dominion Drive and 26th Street.

Introduction

At the request of the County Board and following internal deliberations, EPAC presents this position paper on the proposed relocation of Fire Station 8 from its current location on Lee Highway to the primary proposed location at Old Dominion Drive and 26th Street. Due to the complex nature of this discussion, EPAC only considered the Old Dominion location and only within the context of the 2012 study.¹ Although EPAC acknowledges there are concerns of a wide variety regarding the relocation, this Commission remains solely interested in an objective analysis of the potential consequences to public safety -- both positive and negative -- of such a relocation, using the data currently available. As the Commission dedicated to Emergency Preparedness, EPAC is choosing to exercise its advisory role in providing an objective, nonpartisan, and unbiased recommendation to both the County Board and the public.

Data Analysis

EPAC employed the findings of the 2012 study in order to assess the feasibility and utility of relocating Fire Station 8 to Old Dominion Drive and 26th Street. This report does not specifically focus on a relocation to the Old Dominion location, but, rather, a number of other factors pertinent to the public safety of Arlington County and its citizens. It is, however, the report most applicable to the needs of the County on this particular issue. The Arlington County Fire Department and the Office of Emergency Management have also provided substantial information and resources beyond the report itself,² in order to better facilitate the public's understanding of this issue.

The central question of this effort is whether a relocation of Fire Station 8 to the Old Dominion location is a net-positive relocation for Arlington County. In exploring this question, there must be an understanding of basic principles: a relocation will inherently affect service delivery for all associated areas. As such, EPAC's consideration of the proposed site acknowledges the importance of the net result for the County over hyper-local concerns.

¹ "Population Growth, Risk Assessment, and Fire Station Location Study" by TriData Division, System Planning Corporation. Retrieved from <http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2014/06/2012-TriData-Final-Report-FS-Location.pdf>

² Available online at <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/fire-station-8/>

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The goal of the relocation is to effectively reduce response times for underserved North Arlington without unduly increasing response times for other areas. After considering all relevant data, an objective analysis appears to indicate that relocating Fire Station 8 to the Old Dominion location would achieve this goal. In its current location, Fire Station 8's area of operations substantially overlaps with Fire Station 3,³ which results in the mis-allocation of resources in proportion to the demand.⁴ However, North Arlington is consistently unable to meet the noted performance and response time objectives,⁵ which results in an underserved and less-safe population subset. The report does not note any negative consequences for relocating Fire Station 8 to the proposed Old Dominion site, presumably as a result of the overlapping Fire Station coverage.

Recommendation

Given the over-resourced area covered by the combination of Fire Stations 3 and 8 and the under-resourced area of North Arlington, properly reallocating resources to address the needs of Arlington County in a best-fit fashion is both logical and reasonable. This is particularly true since no undue, objective, and quantifiable post-relocation consequences can be identified for the current area of operations for Fire Station 8. It would be unreasonable to withhold the improved delivery of emergency services from North Arlington for any reasons not meeting this standard.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission -- provided with full consideration of the safety and wellbeing of Arlington County -- that Fire Station 8 be relocated from Lee Highway to the proposed site at Old Dominion Drive and 26th Street.

³ TriData, Fig. 25, p. 52.

⁴ TriData, p. 61.

⁵ TriData, p. 37.