



**ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA**  
Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission  
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July 10, 2016

David Morrison  
Staff Liaison

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Suite 300  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

**Subject:     Subject: Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission Review of the  
Report and Recommendations of the Fire Station Eight Task Force**

**Reference:   Fire Station Eight Task Force Report**

Dear County Board Members:

**1. Purpose.** At the County Board Chair's request, the Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC) participated in the deliberations of the Task Force created to assess impacts and make recommendations regarding replacement and potential relocation of Fire Station Eight (FS8). As the County Board's principal advisory group on emergency preparedness and public safety matters, this letter includes a summary of the EPAC's observations regarding the Task Force's report and provides the Commission's recommendations with regard to siting of the new station.

**2. Summary of Recommendations.** In September of 2015, the EPAC provided and published a recommendation that the replacement station be located at the Old Dominion Drive and North 26th Street site (currently occupied by the salt storage facility). As appointed by the Board, member representatives of EPAC attended all of the Task Force meetings and deliberations. After consideration of the Task Force findings and review of available information from the County (Tri-Data study, visits to sites, etc.), the EPAC upholds its prior recommendation to locate the new Fire Station Eight at the North 26th Street site. As elaborated below, the EPAC makes this recommendation for the following reasons:

- The recommended site provides the best response time coverage to the largest possible portion of the station's coverage area.
- Rebuilding on the current site would increase costs more than \$3 million to build on a site sub-optimally sized and would require displacement of station personnel and equipment to a temporary site for an extended period.
- The EPAC's recommended site would provide adequate response times for future growth in the service area population while accommodating future station needs.
- The EPAC agrees with the Task Force's recommendations to build a 4 bay station and the need to enhance the tracking, analysis, and conduct additional review regarding response time issues.

**3. Background.** The focus of EPAC representatives on the TF was aimed at assessing impacts to public safety and county emergency preparedness as it pertains to site and configuration (e.g. 3 versus 4 bays) selection of the new station. The TF reduced the list to two acceptable sites when it was determined that a 4 bay fire station could be built at the current site and at the earlier proposed 26th Street and Old Dominion site. A new facility, at either site will provide the county with improved public safety and increased emergency preparedness capacity. The Old Dominion site will however, barring unforeseen site conditions or events, provide the county the greatest capability for each dollar spent. It should be noted that rebuilding at the current site was determined to serve the highest number of residents with a 4 minute response time (as measured from station departure to arrival on scene), but moving the station north to the Old Dominion site would put the largest number of residents within a 6 minute response time while improving excessive response times to the most northern residents of the county.

**4. Discussion.** The following are EPAC's post Task Force feedback and observations for the County Board's consideration.

**Fire/EMS Performance Metrics, Standards, and Goals:** One of the most significant challenges for the Task Force was the ability to understand the key metrics bearing on the problem (response times, incident loss, etc.). TF deliberations spent significant time on all aspects of a Fire/EMS response time as well as discussions on NFPA standards and what other jurisdictions are able to sustain. What became clear to all was the need for a common set of metrics and standards for Fire/EMS response and perhaps just as important a strategic goal to assist with future planning. As a result, the TF has recommended that the County study Fire and EMS response metrics, standards, and future goals to develop better comparative data and uniform metrics. EPAC highly supports this recommendation and asks that the County Board adopt this specific recommendation and act upon it soonest. In addition to the analyzing the need for improving metrics, standards, and future goals, a great deal of attention was placed on density and call volume (present and future) to specific areas of the County impacted by the alternative sites considered for Fire Station Eight. Our representatives identified two items we think warrant more detailed analysis by the Board. A brief discussion of each follows.

**Fire/EMS Response Calls to the Virginia Hospital Center (VHC) Area:** The higher volume of calls (mainly emergency medical units) coming from this area was a particular point of discussion. Specifically, there was concern that moving FS8 north would move the station farther away from VHC (Fire Box) and would increase travel time to that area. Currently this fire box does have a large number of EMS responses, due to the nature of the population. Therefore, EPAC recommends the County Board focus on this area to better understand the nature of the calls as EMS calls to this, as well as other service areas. We believe that EMS availability and support is a major community concern in the Northern areas; therefore, understanding the fire and EMS support to this fire box and perhaps considering other options to manage the EMS calls in the hospital fire box could improve unit availability and response times to other parts of the County. Regarding FS8, EPAC recommends the County Board reviews EMS response times in the affected areas and assesses the risks of moving FS8 north to the Old Dominion location.

**Lee Highway Corridor Growth:** This was another area of particular attention and concern by the TF that would benefit from a more detailed assessment by the County Board. TF members were concerned about future growth along Lee Highway and expect negative impacts will result from moving FS8 farther away from Lee Highway. EPAC recommends the analyzing the impacts of projected growth on response times, which should include the impact of increased traffic along Lee Highway on site selection.

**5. Conclusions and Recommendations of the EPAC.** In September 2015, the EPAC shared and published an initial statement, which recommended that the 26th Street North and Old Dominion Boulevard as the preferred location. This conclusion was primarily based on an extensive review of two Tri-Data studies. After participating in the FS8 TF, the EPAC agree with the Task Force that there are still gaps in the current response time data and projections regarding the following: population type, density, and coverage of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> dues are lacking. However, based on the information that we have been able to obtain, the Old Dominion site will provide the county the greatest capability for each dollar spent.

Respectfully Submitted on Behalf of EPAC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim E. Klingler', written in a cursive style.

Kim E. Klingler  
Chairman, EPAC