

FIRE STATION 31 SITING - RESPONSES TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Interim Station on Former Station Site

The former Fire Station 31 site was considered as a possible home for the interim station but was eliminated from consideration for a number of reasons:

- At 18,000 square feet, the former Fire Station 31 site is over 1,200 square feet smaller than the 10503 Interlake Avenue North site, which is 19,216 square feet. The temporary structures, plus required circulation and code-required separation between buildings for the interim station would not fit on the former fire station site.
- Additionally, a flat site is required for the interim station. Two options to create a flat site at the former Fire Station 31 site would be:
 - Flat site at alley level: Would require creating high structural retaining walls and guardrails to shore up three sides of the site. Along N. 105th Street, a 9' high wall would be required. This configuration of the site is unworkable for the Fire Department because it would require responding with the large vehicles through the alley, which is too narrow to accommodate the large turning radii of the rigs.
 - Flat site along N. 105th Street level: This option would require at minimum, a 9' high retaining wall on all four sides of the site, plus structural fill or a structural slab to infill the void and make it useable.
 - The combined cost of the former building demolition, plus the new construction required to make this site essentially flat, was untenable, when combined with the compromises Seattle Fire Department would need to make in order to use this smaller site.

The use of the Interlake Avenue North site works particularly well because not only is it largely flat, but it has access from both the Interlake Avenue North side and the alley, which facilitates circulation into and around the site.

Interim Station on other sites, including several sites or empty lots along Aurora

The proposed interim site was selected based on criteria assembled by SFD and Finance and Administrative Services staff. A central location at the heart of the FS 31 response area was a key operational goal. While there are currently many vacant properties right on Aurora, these were not found to be viable sites as they compared poorly to the 10503 Interlake Ave North site as too far south or west in the response area to meet target SFD response times, particularly in the future with increasing density, area growth and traffic congestion. Newly proposed alternative sites on Aurora including an empty parcel at 88th and Aurora would not work for the same reason, they do not meet the operational goal for a new site at a central location. Additionally, Aurora Avenue itself is a navigational challenge for SFD vehicles due to the configuration of the roadway, center median, signal timing and peak hour traffic congestion.

List of properties reviewed for interim and permanent site

Outside of the former Fire Station 31 site, the search team looked at 7 commercial, industrial and residential properties for consideration as both interim and permanent sites. Sites reviewed were:

- Cash America Building – 10524 & 15026 Aurora Ave N.
- Cash America & Psychic Palm Reading – 10512 Aurora Ave N.
- Quiring Properties - 9608 Aurora Ave N.
- Quiring Midvale – 9615 Midvale Ave. N.
- Warehouse – 1137 N. 96th
- Northgate Urban Center – 11302 Meridian Ave N. (proposed permanent site)
- Epic Life Church Parking - 10503 Interlake Ave North (proposed interim site)

In addition, the search team considered 4 other residential sites with large land area and minimal improvements that were off the market in Fall 2019.

Zoning:

- Fire stations and interim fire stations are an allowed use in any land use zone in the City.
- Current zoning for both the proposed permanent station site and the proposed interim station site was enacted on March 18, 2019. The rezone was not related to siting the new or the interim fire stations. It was related to Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA). Public comment on the rezoning was sought for two years prior to enacting the rezone. More information about MHA can be found at: [https://www.seattle.gov/hala/about/mandatory-housing-affordability-\(mha\)](https://www.seattle.gov/hala/about/mandatory-housing-affordability-(mha))

Traffic, Noise and Construction Impacts

- The design teams for both the proposed interim and proposed permanent station sites will work with the Seattle Fire Department to coordinate traffic signalization at both stations. The focus of this work will be to minimize delays in response time to the extent possible, limit traffic impacts, and ensure the protection and safety of pedestrians and oncoming traffic.
- The exact configuration and type of signals and related pavement striping will be determined during the design process.
- State law directs when lights and sirens are required when apparatus leave the station on a response ([RCW 46.61.035](#)) including when discretion is allowed.
- Seattle Noise Ordinance places restrictions on when construction can occur and further when loud impact noise can occur. The ordinance can be found here: <https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/common-code-questions/noise-codes>
- Seattle Code has requirements for dust control during construction. These requirements and others outlined in the Code are enforced in all City projects. View code here: [https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-\(a-z\)/building-code#2015seattlebuildingcode](https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/building-code#2015seattlebuildingcode)

Parking for Proposed Permanent site

- Best safety practice dictates a new station design with drive-through apparatus or vehicle bays. This maximizes fire fighter safety while minimizing impacts to response time for new calls. Early test-to-fit design work for the proposed new station site on Meridian indicates that a drive-through station with on-site parking for staff is possible. To minimize response time, the rigs would need to exit onto Meridian Avenue North and return to the station via a driveway on North 113th Street (driving forward into the apparatus bay of the station, not backing in from Meridian). The due diligence the City is currently conducting includes surveying the property and the adjacent right-of-way to inform future site design and circulation plans.
- The City will work to limit the number of curb cuts and driveways along 113th Avenue N. to less than those allowed for the five sub-platted parcels in order to minimize impacts to on-street parking.

Parking for Proposed Interim site

- Part of the lease agreement with Epic Life Church for the proposed interim fire station site at Interlake Avenue North site, includes the use of parking for the Church at the former Fire Station 31.
- The City of Seattle is also exploring on-site and nearby options to expand the parking available to Epic Life Church to minimize impacts on neighborhood streets.

Property Value and Stations Located in Residential Areas

Residential property values are determined by myriad factors and an extremely dynamic state of the market. In recent years, Seattle neighborhoods that are undergoing rapid transformation, such as Northgate, have been in high demand with buyers. Causal effects range from adjacent land uses, nearby amenities and public infrastructure. Landowners can get their property appraised before and after nearby construction projects, but it is difficult to strictly associate those property values due to any one specific factor or project, especially in locations where multiple projects are under development at once or in close succession.

The City's Capital Development staff have shared their anecdotal experience from the most recent fire station levy-funded projects. In many cases, residents have realized improved property values after construction, once the fire

station is fully operational. The City does not have specific private property value data on file. Many recently built stations have residentially zoned properties directly adjacent to them. While the character of the land and streets around these stations may not exactly match the land and streets around the Meridian property, they do have single family homes, townhouses and condominiums directly adjacent to them. The list below provides examples:

Recently Completed Fire Stations	Neighborhood	Substantial Completion Date
Fire Station 6	Central District	12/2012
Fire Station 9	Fremont	9/2013
Fire Station 20	West Queen Anne	12/2014
Fire Station 21	Greenwood	10/2011
Fire Station 22	Roanoke	10/2017
Fire Station 28	Rainier Valley	5/2010
Fire Station 30	Mt. Baker	3/2011
Fire Station 32	West Seattle Junction	8/2017
Fire Station 35	Crown Hill	7/2010
Fire Station 37	High Point	10/2010
Fire Station 38	Hawthorn Hills	1/2011
Fire Station 39	Lake City	12/2010

Opportunities for public input

The City makes every effort to collect as much community input as possible before proceeding with a project. A web page was launched and postcard with notification of the proposed interim and proposed permanent site, public meeting, and opportunity to provide input was sent by mail on Feb. 18 to 445 addresses identified as living within 300 feet of the proposed interim site and 300 feet of the proposed permanent site. A media advisory was sent on Feb. 26 to 145 members of Seattle media in an effort to help publicize the event and opportunity for community input. On the same day, a NextDoor post was shared by SFD to almost 20,000 residents as a general message about the meeting and opportunity for input. Additionally, local businesses immediately near the vicinity of the proposed permanent station were notified and invited to attend the meeting, as were three community/neighborhood groups in the immediate vicinity. The event was also publicized on the Department of Neighborhoods event website on Feb. 26.