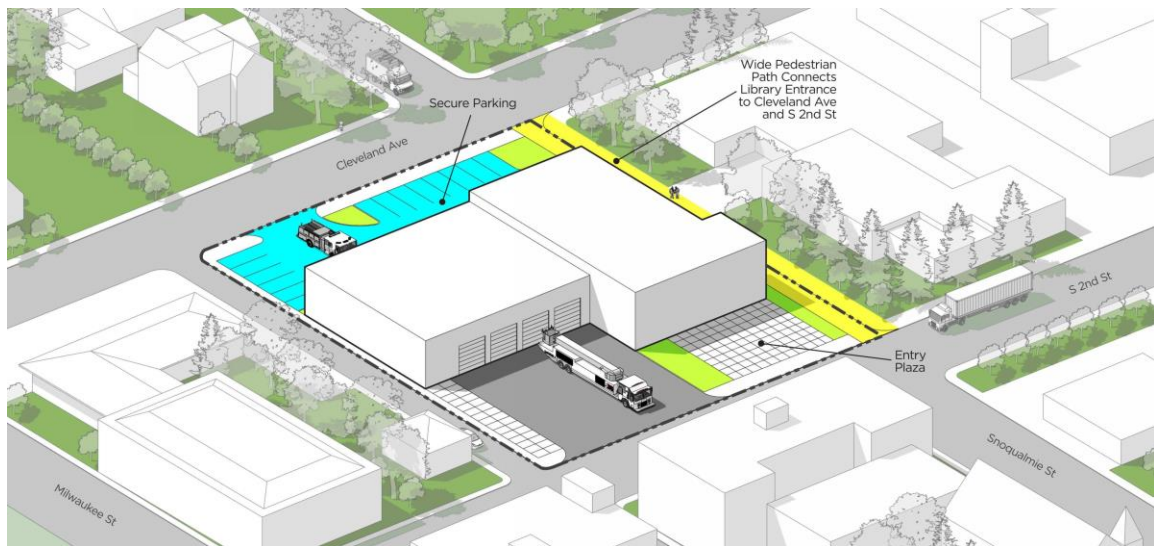


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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** Early conceptual massing diagram – provided by Mackenzie.*

Mount Vernon Fire Department Reviewing all Three Fire Stations ahead of Bond Proposal

The Mount Vernon Fire Department is in the process of analyzing all three of its existing fire stations, which are in need of upgrades to meet the increasing demands of our community, technology and fire-fighting strategies for each of the individual service areas. The goal is to put a bond proposal in front of the voters in February based on the findings of the planning process. The public is invited to an Open House on Saturday, October 13th, from 2:00 – 5:00pm, which will be held at Fire Station 1 in downtown Mount Vernon. The event is part of the annual Fire Prevention Week hosted by the Department.

All three of the fire stations were built over twenty years ago, and the neighborhoods that they protect have changed dramatically over that period of time. There is a need to adjust the personnel, equipment and technology for each of the stations to better serve

their unique service areas. In the words of the Chief, “We need the right personnel and apparatus in the right locations to protect the three distinct service areas.”

Fire Station 1 was built in 1964 when the City had a primarily volunteer agency. The current concerns are that the station lacks the space for the kind of fire-fighting apparatus that is needed for addressing the downtown community, the interstate or the railway.

Especially as the downtown core is revitalized, there is a growing need to protect the valuable historic buildings and new investment in economic growth. Similarly, the growth along the interstate to the south and the railway corridor running through the commercial and residential neighborhoods demands that the City’s fire department is positioned to respond with the right equipment as quickly as possible and to avoid loss of life and property. A new station, proposed on the site adjacent to the library, will accommodate the best apparatus for response, location of the Emergency Operations Center and Fire Administration services; include a Community Aid Room and Police substation, and provide greater safety for first responders.

Fire Station 2 and 3 have functional inefficiencies that need to be improved to allow for better response and to address the need for additional staff in both locations. Moving Administration out of Fire Station 2 allows for adding bunk rooms, firefighter work space and training space. Fire Station 3 looks to add a new bay for EMS, space for proper gear storage and a properly sized Training/Community Room.

This work also focuses on the safety and security of our first responders. Their jobs require that they are healthy, in top physical shape, are protected from outside threats, and have safe means of decontaminating after events to prevent long-term life-threatening exposure to carcinogens and other hazardous materials; newer approaches to exhausting vehicles in the bays will reduce the potential of harmful exposures. Having these facilities upgraded is critically important for recruitment and retention of the kinds of highly-skilled and proficient staff that we need to serve our Community.

These moves will allow the Department to function most effectively and efficiently in all three stations and have the ability to better flex as demands change in each of our unique service areas over time. All of these improvements are aimed at optimizing responses to events, creating a safe and secure work environment for the first responders, providing adequate equipment and training to all staff, and protecting the life, safety and welfare within the entire community.

Community members will have a chance to see and give their input on the preliminary plans for improvements at the upcoming Open House, as well as view further development of the designs and estimated costs at a second Open House in December. Pre-Bond Planning is slated to be complete in mid-December, when the Council will be asked to vote on a resolution to put the bond on the February ballot.

For more information, please contact Chief Brice at 360-336-6277.

The City of Mount Vernon Fire Department is organized into four Divisions: Administrative Staff, Operations Division, Prevention Division and the Training Division. Operations Division includes Fire Suppression and Emergency Medical Services.

Prevention Division includes Fire Marshal's and Public Education. Training Division is responsible for training firefighters, EMT's, and various other city employees. The Fire Chief is also the city's emergency manager and is responsible for any non-criminal emergency that occurs within the city.

OUR MISSION

To Protect the Lives, Property and Environment of Mount Vernon and to minimize losses when emergencies occur.

OUR VISION

Making a Positive Difference