

# Staff Report

## Measure A Citizens' Oversight Committee



Item Title	Agenda Date:
Confirm use of Fund Balance for a Fire Department Training Facility is in Compliance with the Provisions of Measure A	April 22, 2024

Department: Fire

### Recommended Action

Citizens' Oversight Committee to confirm the use of Fire Department Measure A fund balance to acquire property and develop a purpose-built training facility is in compliance with the provisions of Measure A.

### Discussion

Co-located at Fire Station 4 (850 Paseo Ranchero) is the Fire Department Training Facility. At the fire station, there is one engine company on duty each day providing service to the Rancho Del Rey neighborhood and surrounding community. Fire Station 4 can house one fire engine and consists of two apparatus bays, four dorms, two bathrooms, an office, a kitchen, and a dayroom configuration. The Training Facility is located on the same property and includes a five-story training tower, a 24-person classroom, a women's and men's locker room, and office space for four permanent staff members. Combined, this joint facility sits on approximately 1.5 acres. Both facilities have no further capacity beyond the engine company's firefighters and the four-person year-round training staff.

Adjacent to the Fire Station 4/Training Facility property is an approximately 4-acre unimproved lot that was originally slated for an additional branch of the City Library (Rancho Del Rey Site). This site was anticipated to satisfy a 60,000-square-foot library gap identified in the City's Library Master Plan. Since the approval and ongoing construction of the Millenia Library anticipated to open in 2025, the City's Library programming requirements have been satisfied as detailed in the Library Master Plan. The Fire Department has expanded its training operation onto this unimproved lot to accommodate the increased need for space required for the ongoing training requirements for our increasing number of personnel and specialized and technical training. Ensuring a long-term resolution for a suitable training facility is of utmost importance, as it enables the maintenance of optimal staffing levels to meet service demands while fulfilling ever-increasing mandatory continuing education requirements to preserve personnel safety.

The current size of the training facility has limited the number of Fire Recruits that can be in any one academy, impacting the City's ability to hire.

The current use of the Training Facility includes:

- Academies for fire department personnel (Sworn Firefighters & Non-safety Ambulance Transport System; a minimum of 20-40 personnel per year).

- Annual mandatory and ongoing continuing education requirements for Firefighters & Ambulance Transport System personnel (Live Fire Training, Firefighter Rescue, EMT/PM Continuing Education & Skills Verification, Hazardous Materials Response, Technical Rescue Response, Emergency Response Vehicle Operation).
- New hire testing capabilities.
  - Written Exam (appropriate space capacity).
  - Physical Ability Exam (appropriate space/equipment capacity).
- Probationary Firefighter & Ambulance Transport personnel testing (4, 8, & 12-month tests; a minimum of 20-40 personnel per year).
- Annual promotional exam processes (ATS Paramedic, Firefighter Paramedic, Fire Engineer, Fire Captain, and Fire Battalion Chief).
- Preparation for annual promotional exams (Fire Engineer, Fire Captain, and Fire Battalion Chief).
- Annual hose and ladder testing (350' X 75' space requirement with a hydrant within 200').
- Regional Training & Exercises.
- Regional Certification Course Offerings.
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) academy
- CERT community-based skills training, including fire extinguisher training, CPR, and first aid. Urban Search and Rescue initial and ongoing training/continuing education.

Over time temporary classrooms and training props have been assembled on the land that was anticipated to be used for a library to accommodate the needs described above. With these temporary improvements, the on-site utilities (water, sewer, and electricity) and official land use are now the limiting factors for additional needs beyond what is currently in place and a permanent solution with funding is now available..

The Fire Department has identified the following as gaps that need to be addressed in the short term:

- Formal land use amended to be for Fire Department Training Facility; or, the acquisition of a different and suitable property for this purpose.
- Contract for an engineer/architect to develop an architectural site study to maximize the use of the property.
- Contract for a biologist to support a preserve land swap to allow the full site usable for improvement.
- Four classrooms. One with a 60-person capacity and three with a 40-person capacity. It can be used as a community space. Used for fire academy, EMS training/academy, in-service training, regional/certification training, class offerings, and City Emergency Operations Center.
- Four conference rooms with a 15-person capacity. Use for workgroup meetings, promotional exams/training, probationary testing, in-service training breakout rooms, and regional/certification training breakout rooms.
- Office space for 12 Training Division full-time staff, academy (suppression & ATS) cadre, instructor workspace (in-service training, regional/certification training).
- Restroom, locker room space (uniform), and showers for 40. Use for a 24-person fire academy, 4-person fire academy cadre, 4-person instructor group (fire academy support, in-service training, regional/certification training), and 8-person training division staff.
- Lunchroom and kitchen space with a 40-person capacity.
- Parking for 40-60 passenger vehicles, 12 staff vehicles, 20 vehicle surge plan, and six fire apparatus surge storage spaces.

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) storage, decontamination, and maintenance for 40. This requires a storage area with racks and proper ventilation, extractors (washing machines), and dryers.
- Two training/academy engines and one training/academy truck.
- Heavy equipment to operate the facility.
- Storage areas totaling 12,000 square feet for apparatus, equipment, and training supply storage.
- 1,500 square foot shop for maintenance and repair of tools and equipment used in training and course offerings.
- Wellness/Exercise space for 40. This space will require 2000 square feet of interior air-conditioned space, 500 square feet of storage space, and 1,600 square feet of exterior covered space.
- Training tower that mimics modern mid/high-rise structures in or planned in the City.
- Commercial/residential burn props that provide live fire training for a multi-unit response.
- Space and roadways for emergency vehicle operations.
- Water recycling hydrant system and spray wall(s).

The estimated property size to accommodate the overall needs of the Fire Department is between eight and 12 acres. This land would need to be relatively flat, developable, and ideally located in a western or central location within the City to accommodate the needs described above. Costs associated with acquiring this type of land are estimated at \$1,000,000 per graded and unrestricted acre (approximately \$8 - \$12 million).

Land acquisition is a critical factor for this project to be successful. The Fire Department needs to perform further due diligence on identifying and pursuing a piece of property that would meet the needs described above. A viable solution would include the former Rancho Del Rey Library site, but this would also require swapping approximately eight additional preserve acres with comparable habitat space that is city-owned to create the necessary sized lot. This option would require a land acquisition from the library public facilities development impact fee fund as the general fund does not own this property.. Additional options will be evaluated to determine the most suitable and cost-effective location for this project. Other options would also include a land acquisition cost and would most likely require demolition and or abatement expenses to build this type of project.

Establishing a permanent Fire Department Training Facility presents a unique opportunity to bridge various public safety goals and objectives across the City, Fire Department, and Emergency Management. This facility could serve as a dedicated City Emergency Operations Center, and double as a public safety learning center for grade school children. Modeled after the Chula Vista Library's Innovation Station, a "Safety City" program would provide a learning environment for children to learn about (but not limited to...) calling 911, pedestrian & bicycle safety, burn prevention, fire safety, car seats/seatbelts, weather emergencies and other natural disasters/hazards, and household chemical safety.

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### Current-Year Fiscal Impact

Establish a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) line item for the development of a permanent Fire Department Training Facility. Appropriate \$15.2 million from the Fire Department Measure A fund balance and continue to move future year's fund balance into the newly established CIP budget.

### Ongoing Fiscal Impact

Ongoing fiscal impacts will be an annual transfer of available excess fund balance above the required reserve balance until there is sufficient funds to design and build the training center.

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### Attachments

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### Staff Contact

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Harry Muns, Fire Chief