

Questions and Answers

District 6 Winthrop Area New Fire Station

1) Q. What was the cost of the Pateros Station?

A. Fire District 15 stated their cost of the Pateros Station as \$750,000.

Commentary: The cost for fire stations can vary widely depending on such factors such as type of capabilities to be provided, local and state codes, location, land acquisition, and infrastructure development.

Following is an excerpt from a MyTurn column that appeared in the MVN last year during the Bond initiative:

Recently we were asked ‘why not build a Fire Station like District 15 did in Pateros – it only cost \$750,000.’ To understand the difference, let’s look at the objective and scope of each District’s project. District 15 already owned the land and the site infrastructure (power, water, road access) was in place. District 6 needs to buy land and entirely develop the site infrastructure. This difference alone accounts for over \$1,000,000. According to the District 15 Administrator, their objective was to build a shelter for Pateros-based engines. The primary objective of District 6 is to provide a full service station that replicates the capabilities of the current Winthrop station and solves lack of space and safety standard compliance problems. This results in a difference of approximately 5,000 square feet between the stations. These differences in objectives and needs between District 15 and District 6 results in the funds requested in the Proposition 1 Bond.

The Winthrop station is designed as an “Essential Facility” while the Pateros Station is unrated and built only to meet local building codes. “Essential Facilities” are defined by the International Building Code, and adopted by the State of Washington, as “buildings and other structures that are intended to remain operational in the event of extreme environmental loading from flood, wind, snow, or earthquakes.” To meet this rating the design of the Winthrop Station uses a safety factor of 1.5, a one-hour fire rating, and interior sprinkler system versus Pateros’ standard structure safety factor of 1.0 with no one-hour rating or sprinkler system.

The Winthrop station is a critical facility in terms of the functioning of District 6 emergency response services, and your Fire Commissioners strongly believe it needs to be constructed to the ‘Essential Facility Standards’ – it is a facility that must be functional when everything else is going wrong.

- 2) Q. What happened to the \$15,000 non-refundable deposit the Fire District committed to the previous land purchase (next to Cascade Condominiums).
- A. Since the deposit was non-refundable the District forfeited that money to the property owners once the District decided not to pursue purchasing the land.

Commentary: Prior to putting down earnest money on the property District 6 representatives talked with several Town officials about the possibility of rezoning the property to allow a fire station to be built on the site. Based on these conversations the Fire Commissioners voted to pursue purchasing the land and rezoning of the property. They also decided to put down earnest money in order to secure the property for possible full purchase while the rezoning process was being pursued through the Town Planning Commission and Town Council. Once the Town Council decided not to rezone the land, thereby prohibiting the construction of a fire station on that site, the Fire Commissioners decided not to pursue the purchase, thereby saving \$19,000 in interest payments that would be incurred during the first year after closing. The Commissioners were also advised that the land would not likely be resold quickly.

- 3) Q. Has the Fire District purchased the White parcel before the Town has approved the annexation/rezoning?
- A. District 6 has purchased the property and is in the process of seeking approval from the Town for annexation. You must own the property in order to be annexed.

Commentary: Prior to making the land purchase commitment District 6 representatives addressed the Town Council to determine if the Town would provide water and sewer services to the site. They were told that the property would have to be annexed into the Town in order for the Town to provide these services. Subsequently the District was told that water and sewer service would be provided if the property was annexed.

The Town of Winthrop's comprehensive plan, in effect since 1999, includes the White property in its Urban Growth Area (UGA) designation. The UGA identifies areas that the Town has designated for possible future annexation. Further, the White property is given a land-

use designation of “industrial” in the comprehensive plan. In accordance with Winthrop Municipal Code, the “industrial” land use designation allows fire stations.

- 4) Q. Who has the responsibility for overseeing decisions made by the Fire District?
A. The Okanogan County Fire District 6 Board of Commissioners has overall responsibility for conducting the business aspects, long range planning, and budget management of District 6.

Commentary: The Board of Commissioners meets on the first Monday of each month at 7pm. The meetings are open to the public.

- 5) Q. What did the Fire District pay for the White 5-acre parcel ?
A. \$325,000.
- 6) Q. Is the site a good location for the fire station ?
A. Yes, it meets the criteria to service the fire and rescue needs of the Town as well as District 6.

Commentary: The proposed site has sufficient area to meet the current and projected needs of the District 6 for the next 50 years. Ingress and egress to the site is safe for both privately owned vehicles and the emergency response vehicles. The access road (Horizon Flats Rd.) is wide, non-congested, and well maintained year round.

The location will not adversely affect Town commercial and residential insurance rates as determined by Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB). WSRB gives the best rating if the fire station is located within 1.5 miles of commercial areas and within 5 miles of residential areas, a criteria that this site meets for both the current Town limits and Urban Growth area identified in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

A fire sprinkler system is required for the new station. Developing a water system outside of Town for a sprinkler system would be high risk and even getting a permit for a water system would be difficult. The Town would also provide sewer service to the site. Development of water and sewer services outside of Town limits would be problematic and would significantly increase the cost of the fire station.

Additionally, the site is outside the flood plain area, provides year round safe and non-congested access to Highway 20, is not situated in a

residential neighborhood, and can be developed to have low impact on the surrounding properties.

- 7) Q. Does District 6 intend to close the Carlton Station?
 A. No. There was a point when the Carlton Station volunteer level was below that which would provide the minimum personnel required for the engines to legally and safely respond to a call. That situation was rectified when 5 people recently signed on as volunteers.

- 8) Q. What is the cost of the proposed new fire station ?
 A. The projected cost of the fire station is \$4,464,338. (not including the land purchase).

Commentary: The following information was provided at the public meetings held last year and may change to accommodate the new building site, current material and labor rates, and conditions set forth by LEED and the Federal Grant.

Fire Station Construction Cost Estimates

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Building	\$2,972,409*	66.6
Site Improvements	\$390,449	8.7
Design, Permits, Inspection, Testing, Insurance	\$467,294	10.5
Contingency	\$ 333,782	7.5
Taxes	\$ 300,404	6.7
<u>Sub Total</u>	<u>\$4,464,338</u>	100.0

Land acquisition \$ 325,000

Total \$4,789,338

*Estimated building cost per square foot = \$242.84

9) Q. What is a reasonable cost for a fire station ?

A. Building costs vary widely depending on the requirements the fire station is being built to meet. District 6 looked at other comparable stations that had recently been built throughout Washington State and costs varied from \$3.3M. to \$8.0M.