



PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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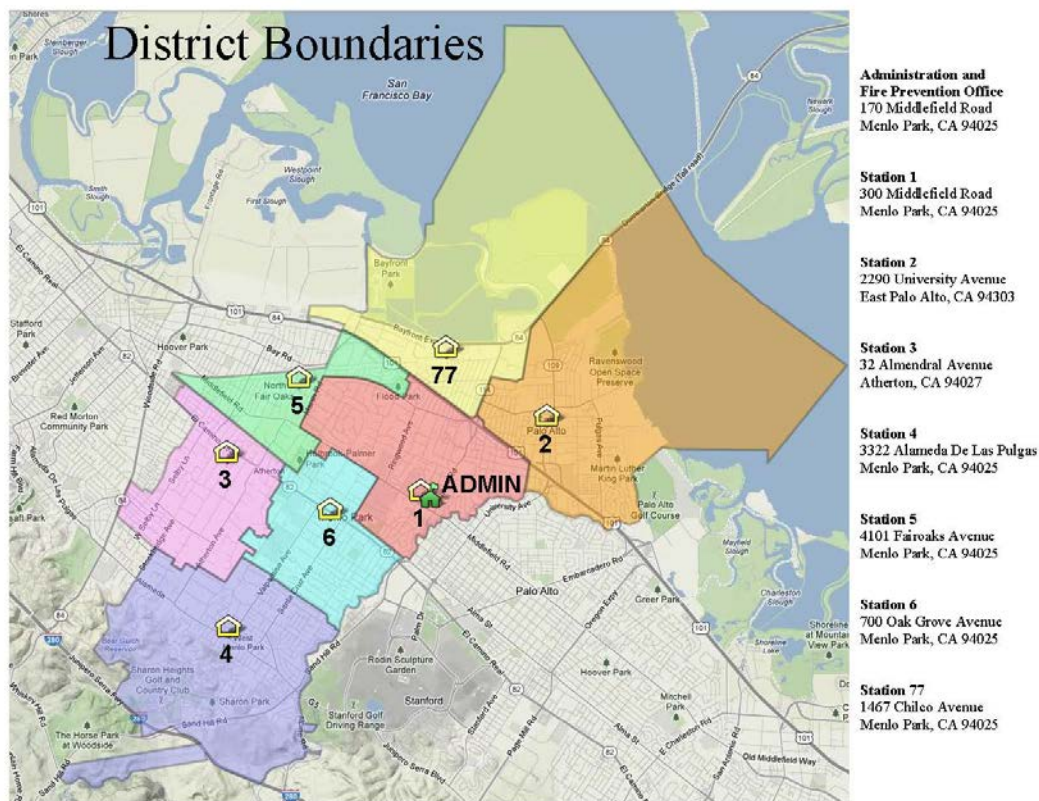
Fire District to rebuild its oldest Station that Provides Emergency Services to Atherton, County Areas and Menlo Park with existing funds and under cost projections!



The Menlo Park Fire Protection District's Station No. 4 was built in 1949 and is an outdated. The single story, 3,800 square foot structure with its back in apparatus bays, non-fire sprinklered wood design, small 4-bedrooms, limited two response unit configurations, is an essential emergency services fire station that is located at 3322 Alameda De Las Pulgas, or at the corner of Valparaiso Avenue.

After years of preparation, the Fire Board at its December 2020 meeting, authorized the Fire Chief to replace the 72-year-old facility with an efficient, seismically resilient and expanded 13,200 square foot modern two story, three bay drive through structure with ten bedrooms, space for up to four response units (including a Tiller Ladder Truck) a backup emergency power generator and a new revolutionary Drone Aerial Port.

Fire Station 4 has one of the largest and most unique areas in the Fire District. 37% of its response area is located in the Town of Atherton (upper Atherton), 44%, is in the City of Menlo Park (Sharon Heights), 18% is in the Unincorporated County Areas including West Menlo Park, the Sequoia Tract, Stanford Weekend Acres and 1 square mile of Stanford Lands that includes the SLAC National Accelerator and Laboratory, which is on contract for Fire and Emergency Services.



The lowest responsible bid for construction came in at \$11,046,275, and was provided by Sausal Corporation, located in Concord, California. Sausal has performed numerous public works projects that include schools, hospital projects, civic centers and specifically the Dublin Public

Safety Complex, Moraga-Orinda Fire Station 43, San Jose Fire station 21 and currently, the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Station 25, which is 75% complete.

The District requested that the bidders provide alternate pricing for American made materials if their bid did not already include American made construction materials for steel, brick siding, framing, gyp board, sure board, and glazing. **Fire Chief Schapelhouman said** “*we believe that public tax dollars used for public construction projects should always try to support and bolster American manufacturing*”.

With the development of the Project, the existing station building will be demolished and replaced with an expanded modern facility consisting of a 13,200-square foot, two-story station that provides three 78’ deep drive-through emergency apparatus bays. Each bay capable of accommodating the District’s largest apparatus. The new fire station will have a separate and well vented room for firefighter bunker gear, which in recent years has become the focus cancer prevention strategies along with other areas needed to decontaminate equipment and firefighters before they enter the Stations living spaces.

The proposed station would also have ten bedrooms, six more than the existing station, which allows the District to accommodate additional personnel needed to provide service due to future growth in service population and development in the area. A meeting and trainings room, which could also be used by the public for community meetings or CERT Trainings will all be located on the first floor. The fire station will also have an appropriately sized commercial kitchen, crew dining room and day room all located on the second floor to support 24-hour emergency operations conducted every day of every year.

Fire Chief Schapelhouman said “*all four bids we received came in significantly lower than the cost estimate which we believe can be directly attributed to the current construction and economic climate here in the Bay Area, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. I was worried we would come in well over our cost estimates and at \$1,250 or more per square foot, because that’s what we were seeing just a few months ago here in the region. As it is, including all of our other real and estimated costs (listed below) our total project costs at \$15,500,000.00 and is \$1m below what we have already set aside to build this fully funded project.*”

The table below provides a comparison of the cost per square foot for Menlo Park Fire District Station 2, located in East Palo Alto, bid and rebuilt starting in 2013, and Station 6, located in downtown Menlo Park, bid and rebuilt starting in 2016. Station 4 actually came **in at \$836.46 per square foot**, closely matching 2016/2017 building prices.

	Station 2	Station 6	Station 4
Bid Date	Nov-13	Oct-16	Dec-20
Sq.Ft.	12562	9682	13200
Bid Amount	\$ 5,774,000	\$ 7,511,900	\$ 11,041,275
Cost Per Sq.Ft.	\$ 459.64	\$ 775.86	\$ 836.46

A project budget estimate of \$22 million was presented to the Board in November 2018. The

project budget is made up of both hard costs and soft costs. In August 2020, Silva Cost Consulting Inc. prepared a construction estimate based on the 95% complete drawings and estimated that the hard costs to construct the new fire station would be approximately \$16.5 million. The remaining budget includes soft costs, utility fees, equipment and furnishings, change order budget, and other miscellaneous costs. Since the lowest responsible bid came in at approximately \$5.5 million less than the cost estimate, the project budget has been reduced to \$15.5 million (\$5.5 million for general contractor fees and \$1 million for bid stage contingency and change orders). The table below summarizes the revised project budget.

Station 4	Budget Estimate
Design and Engineering	\$ 1,338,750
Plan Check & Environmental Review	106,400
Construction Management & Full Time Inspection	877,700
Construction (includes contract contingency)	11,598,589
Construction Site Improvements	195,065
Administration and Legal	25,000
Furniture, Equipment, Alerting & Signage	233,475
Special Inspection, Geotech, Arborist, Abatement	170,070
Utilities	350,000
District Contingency	604,951
Project Budget	\$ 15,500,000

After conducting a study to confirm the Fire Station was still in an ideal location, all this would not have been possible if in March of 2018 the Fire Board had not authorized the Chief to purchase of the adjacent property at 2110 Valparaiso Avenue. The 6000 square foot residential lot with a 1980's single family, 2,050 square foot single story residential structure was purchased for \$3.2 million dollars. **Fire Chief Schapelhouman said** *"the property was strategically located behind the existing Fire Station and provided the added space necessary to properly re-build a modern drive thru Fire facility."*

The Fire District used the same practice in 2008 when it purchased a residential lot and home behind its Fire Station 6 located in downtown Menlo Park. The house will temporarily be used to house the Fire Crew and Fire Engine, while the new Station is being finished. Then, it will be torn down to provide access for the drive through capability and employee parking for the new Station.

Fire Chief Schapelhouman said *"the Fire District used cash reserves it has set aside and obligated in its capital improvement account to replace Fire Station 4. In recent years, the District has come under some attack for the accumulation of reserves, but having that very fund balance allowed the Fire Board to approve this project without needing to use a debt and repayment model. The Districts policy is to live within our means and the goal is to always try and expand and update existing facilities with minimal service disruption and maximum financial benefit to our customers and tax payers without further obligating either, without the actual means to do so. We look forward to building a new facility that will last up to another 75 years to better serve this great community."*

The existing structure is scheduled to be demolished in early January of 2021 so a ground-breaking ceremony and construction can begin!



END