

Friday, February 12, 2021

Dear Council President Bas,

There has been strong reaction on behalf of our neighbors opposing the build-out of a fire station in San Antonio Park. This is, in part, because we had no advance notice that a fire station was under consideration for the Park. On the San Antonio Master Plan Project website under FAQ's, a July 2020 Council meeting is referenced as approving the Project as well as executing a contract with Loving Campus Associates Architect (LCAA) in December of 2020. Please refer us to that documentation.

As the San Antonio Park Steward, a long-term resident (34 years), and representative of our neighborhood association, I have agreed to list the many important questions that we want answered before ANY decisions are made regarding the use of our precious park land. We would like to see documentation on a number of the responses already posted on the project website's FAQ's. We found those responses inadequate.

Because a profound change to this longstanding park and community center is being proposed, the City should not be in a rush, but rather make sure it gets the careful scrutiny it deserves. We need additional information to understand why this project is under consideration. We also need ample time to review all of the details and documentation. We suggest a moratorium while these issues are addressed, and the community is better informed about ALL of the impacts of locating a Fire Station in the San Antonio Park.

1. OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION, AND RECREATION (OSCAR)

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/government/o/PBN/OurServices/GeneralPlan/DOWD009017>

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/webcontent/oak035249.pdf>

A. One of the key stipulations of [OSCAR](#) was that **there should be no net loss of public open space in the city**. (Chapter 2, Open Space, page 2-2.) OSCAR is part of Oakland's General Plan. We have emailed these links to Denise at LCAA.

B. As you noted in your presentation about the Master Plan, San Antonio Park serves one of the city's densest neighborhoods. Our current percentage of open space by population density is 5.4%, already one of the lowest ratios in the City. This proposal permanently repurposes even more open space. We are very concerned that this is counterproductive to the goals outlined by OSCAR.

As a stakeholder, the City's Planning Department will be providing guidance such that adherence to OSCAR is fulfilled as part of the Master Plan.

2. THE CURRENT FIRE STATION, #4, at 1235 INTERNATIONAL BOULEVARD - OFD

What we need to know about the current structure in comparison with other Oakland Fire Stations, and why it is no longer capable of serving our area.

- A. Size
- B. Area Served
- C. Response Time for Service Calls
- D. Frequency of calls as compared with other local fire stations
- E. Can other nearby stations pick up some of the calls if response capability is an issue. Why is this issue coming to the fore now, and why the hurry?
- F. Where is the money coming from to fund this new construction project? Is it a grant? What is that dollar amount?
- G. If the station is relocated, will the current property be sold? Which City budget would receive that financial windfall? Would a percentage of that profit be re-invested in San Antonio Park?
- H. Is it correct that LCAA is scheduled to show preliminary plans for the proposed station at the next zoom meeting schedule for March 14?
- I. We insist that the many issues we are raising here are addressed before a design plan for the building is presented for community review. It is premature at this stage of the decision-making process.

The existing Station 4 is approximately 7100 square feet, encompassing two floors for apparatus, equipment, living quarters, and a hayloft that has been converted to a small kitchen and dining area. Current space allows for one Fire Engine and one Ladder Truck, serving the area as shown in the Service Area Map (refer to pdf in Project Documents). Station 4 is the fifth busiest fire station in the City and has an

average total response time of 7 minutes for all service calls, including medical calls, structure fires, outdoor/encampment fires, and more. It is also the first unit on scene for medical and fire related incidents at homeless encampments in the East Lake area and along East 12th street corridor between 15-19th avenues. In 2020, Station 4 received a total of 4,355 calls; in 2019, a total of 4,272 calls. Oakland Fire Stations are strategically placed to ensure that department response times are compliant with national standards set by the National Fire Prevention Association and it is already standard procedure that when Station 4's Fire Engine and Ladder Truck is already responding to calls within the service area, other stations and crews assist with "cover-ins".

The existing Fire Station 4 is over 110 years old and has been facing the following challenges, not only jeopardizing the health and safety of San Antonio area residents, but also the capacity to properly respond in the event of a catastrophic event:

1. The size, design and layout have drastically fallen behind modern fire service standards.
2. The Structure lacks adequate design and facilities to accommodate a mixed gender workforce.
3. The narrow width of the building barely fits a modern fire engine, and the lack of distance between the street and the firehouse doors creates traffic safety and other related hazards for OFD personnel, neighbors, drivers, and pedestrians.
4. The building is poorly heated and lacks basic climate controls.
5. Station 4 does not meet ADA compliance, or align with NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standards.
6. The kitchen area was built into an old hayloft for horses, which dates back to the earliest days of the department.
7. Deferred maintenance of a century-old building has resulted in a multitude of structural issues including extensive dry rot and leaks around windows, failing exterior walls, failing plumbing, and has exposed potential health risks, including cancer.
8. The building is incapable of meeting the range of community response and resilience needs and is unable to serve as a hub for mutual aid and related disaster recovery activities due to limited available training/storage/meeting space.

Please refer to the response for question 3 regarding funding for the Fire Station 4 project; plans for the current station are yet to be determined. The agenda for the next community engagement meeting will include a summary of the first survey results and related breakout sessions to dialogue about potential layout options for the park as a whole, including the Fire Station.

3. FUNDING FOR THE PROPOSED FIRE STATION BUILD-OUT

- A. We request a comprehensive budget including "all-in" costs: to include land, engineering and architectural design, site-construction, the building itself, operation/maintenance, etc.
- B. We object to the use of city funds for the design of a facility that has not been approved by the neighborhood.
- C. Measure KK funds should NOT be used in any way for this proposed Fire Station project. Measure KK's explicit areas of focus are (1) preserving and improving open space and (2) services to the homeless.
- D. Please confirm that the budget for NON-RELATED fire station improvements is \$1,000,000 as is indicated in the FAQ.
- E. How will you ensure that the operating expenses for the Fire Station are in no way co-mingled with San Antonio Park operating expenses? Who will be responsible for that oversight?

The costs for Fire Station 4 will be dependent on design, yet to be determined. Measure KK funds were voter-approved for Infrastructure Improvements, of which Fire Station 4 is one, and Anti-Displacement and Affordable Housing projects; in July 2020, Council approved Resolution No. 88240 C.M.S (attached) for the design of Fire Station 4, which is separate from the \$1M available for San Antonio Park. Maintenance, in general, falls under the purview of the City's Facilities Services.

4. OTHER NEARBY VACANT LOTS IN THE SAN ANTONIO AREA

- A. Under FAQs on the Project website, you mention that: "The City's Real Estate staff have researched this vacant lot, along with other potential properties within the service area of Fire Station #4 over the course of a year and a half but have found them unsuitable or not for sale."
- B. We want to see documentation listing the sites that were researched during that 18-month period.

C. The City should consider Eminent Domain as a fallback for finding a “suitable” site for this public building. As I am sure you know, we have many empty, blighted lots in the San Antonio neighborhood.

First and foremost, as it pertains to acquiring a new location for Station 4, the City of Oakland is only interested in working with willing sellers of a potentially suitable site. The City's Real Estate Division staff have researched this vacant lot, along with other potential properties within the service area of Fire Station #4 over the course of a year and a half. Of the approximately 10 parcels identified by the Real Estate Division as a possible new location for Station 4, four parcels were found to be unsuitable by Oakland Fire staff due to size limitations, and one was found to be unfeasible based on an assessment by the City's Department of Transportation. In other cases, despite outreach attempts, property owners have been unresponsive or their willingness to sell has not been confirmed. With respect to the vacant parcel across from San Antonio Park, the Fire Department has determined that the parcel is simply too small to meet the existing need.

The Fire Department utilizes a data-driven approach to assess emergency response times, and uses various predictive modeling strategies to evaluate potential changes to call volumes and its effect on service delivery. Of the sites considered most viable based on parcel size to accommodate a “double house” fire station, and the geographic and emergency response service area, San Antonio Park is the superior option due to its central location in the district, and because data shows it would reduce response times for the Truck when responding to structure fires by approximately 16 seconds, while ensuring that engine company response times stay in compliance with national standards.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECK LIST

A. What steps have you taken to evaluate the environmental impact of this building? We want to see that study.

B. We believe that an Environmental Impact Report should be required before any further actions are taken. Those findings must be made public.

The environmental requirements are directly related to the actual design, yet to be determined, but CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act) will most definitely be part of this project.

6. HISTORICAL ROLE OF SAN ANTONIO PARK

A. Although these past uses of the Park were noted in the consultant's presentation, along with visuals, there is no mention of how that history would be memorialized and honored moving forward. Building a fire station on the land hardly pays homage to its earlier significance as a meeting place. This needs to be addressed in detail.

In coordination with the City's Cultural Affairs, Question 5 of the first survey dealt with general cultural activities and will continue to be explored as a part of future community engagement meetings and surveys.

It is our impression that the City is attempting to fast track this project so that it can avoid the careful scrutiny it deserves.

For all of the reasons stated above, we request a prompt response on all six outlined items with sufficient detail, not just the general boilerplate explanations offered in the FAQs on the Project Website.

Respectfully yours,

Wendy Jung

San Antonio Park Steward

San Antonio Hills Neighborhood Association

Jung Design, Small Business Owner

Recipients:

City Council Members
Mayor
City Administrator
David Kakishiba, EBAYC
OHA
Andrew Park, TRYBE
Jenny Gerard

OTHERS?

San Antonio Hills Neighborhood Association
Tree volunteers