SOUTH METRO FIRE DEPARTMENT
1650 Humboldt Avenue • West St. Paul MN 55118
Phone: (651) 552-4176 • FAX: (651) 552-4195
www.southmetrofire.com

AGENDA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECEIAL MEETING

Meeting Date: February 1, 2023, at 6:00 PM
Meeting Place: South St. Paul, Training Room

I. Roll Call
Board Members: Berry, Francis, Napier, Seaberg, Wippermann

II. Adopt Agenda

III. Agenda Items
a. Updated Station Study Presentation
b. South Metro Evaluation Recommendations

IV. Public Comment

V. Adjourn

Next Regular Meeting – February 22, 2023, West St. Paul

Badging Ceremony to Follow the March Meeting

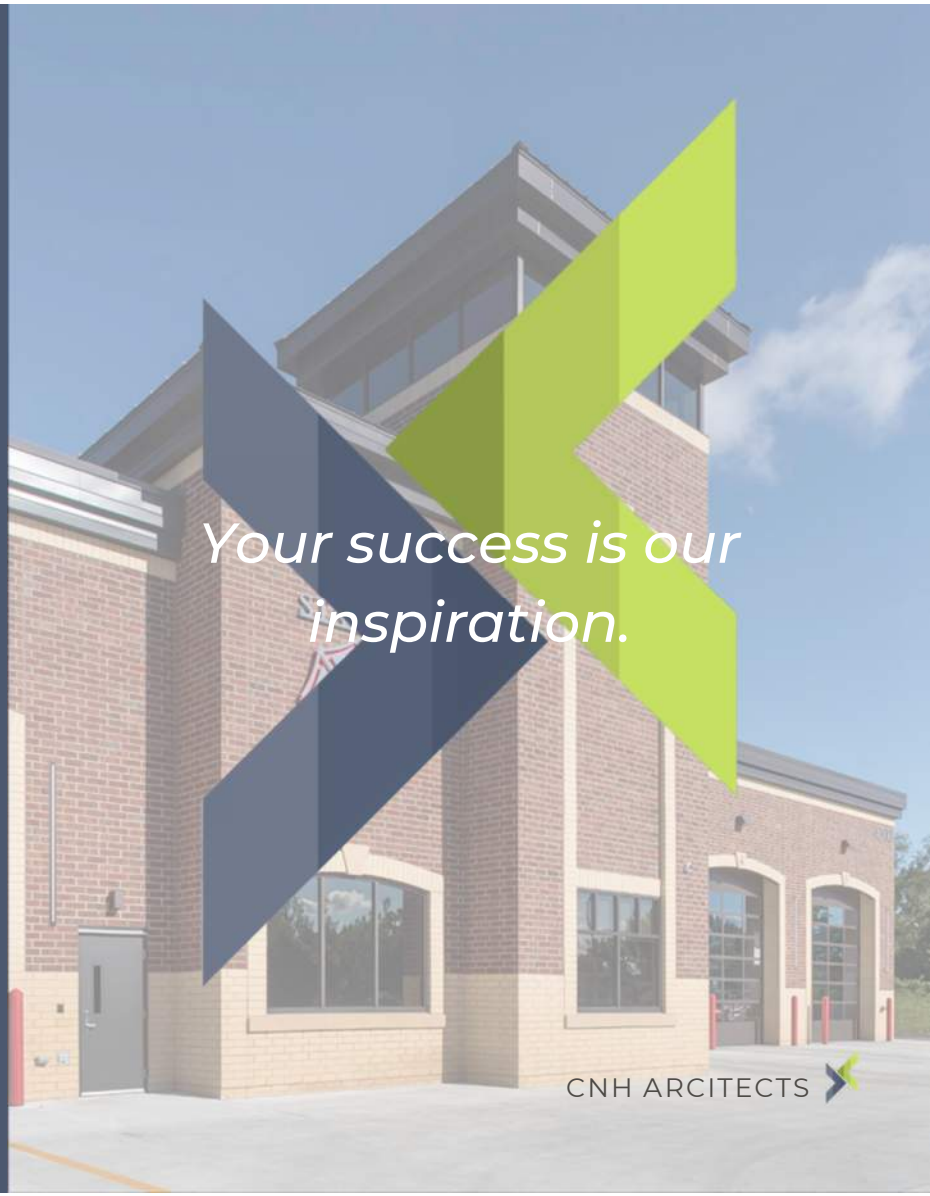
December 21, 2022

South Metro Fire Department Assessment Study

Quinn Hutson, AIA – Principal
Brooke Jacobson, AIA – Principal

Who We Are

- *Full service, mid-sized firm*
- *50+ years of experience*
- *Leaders in public safety design*
- *Strong design; quality work throughout*
- *Engaged representation*



Information Gathering

- Staff interviews
- Site & Building review
- City ordinance
- Fire station design standards

CNH ARCITECTS

Station 1 Building History

Built	1974
Remodeled	1999
Age	48 years
Total Area	14,897 SF
Apparatus	5 back-in apparatus bays

Station 2 Building History

Built	1960
Remodeled	2007
Age	62 years
Total Area	9,486 SF
Apparatus	4 back-in apparatus bays

CNH ARCITECTS

Station 1 & 2 Existing Conditions

Firefighter Health

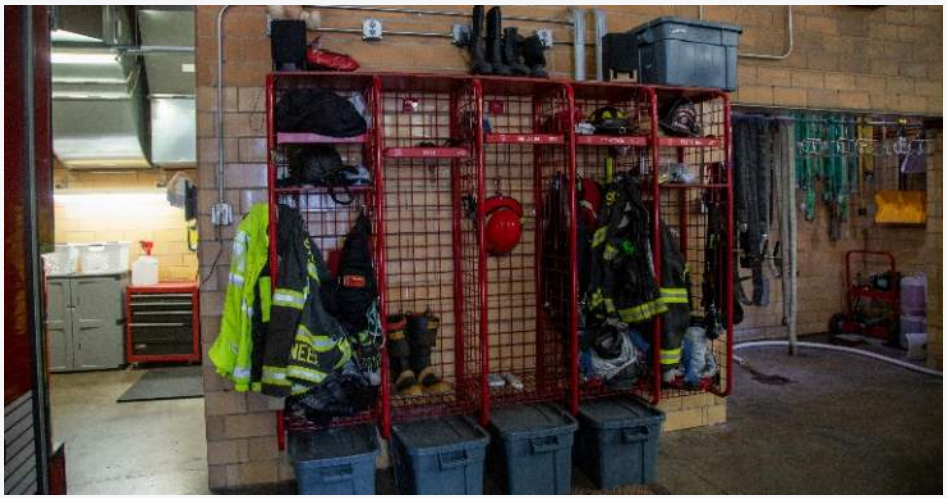
Does Not Meet Need For:

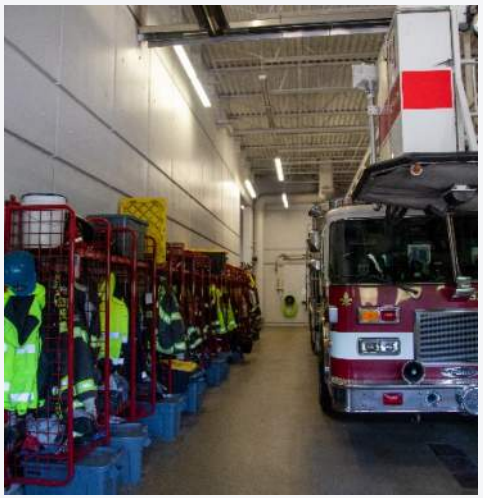
- Carcinogen separation
- Vehicle exhaust extraction

Firefighter Health

Does Not Meet Need For:

- Adequate decontamination
- Separate turnout gear space





Firefighter Health

Does Not Meet Need For:

- Mental health support
- Outdoor fitness space

Firefighter Health

Does Not Meet Need For:

- Sound separation at dorms
- Controlled lighting transitions

Safety

Does Not Meet Need For:

- Safe parking spaces
- Drive-through bays
- Separation of apparatus & public traffic

Safety

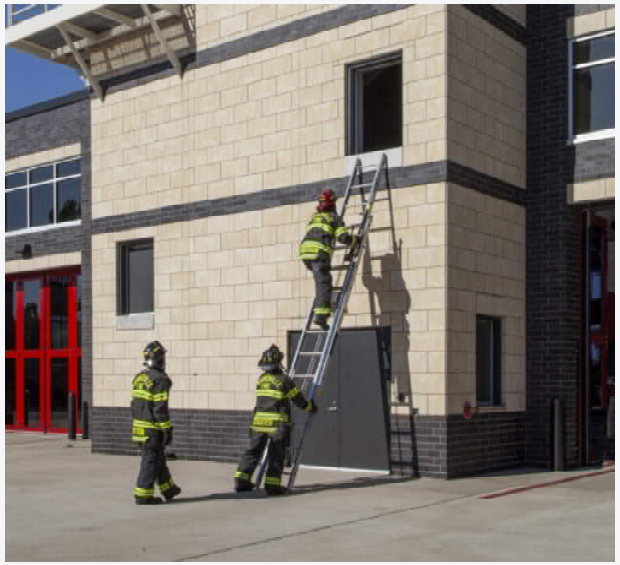
Does Not Meet Need For:

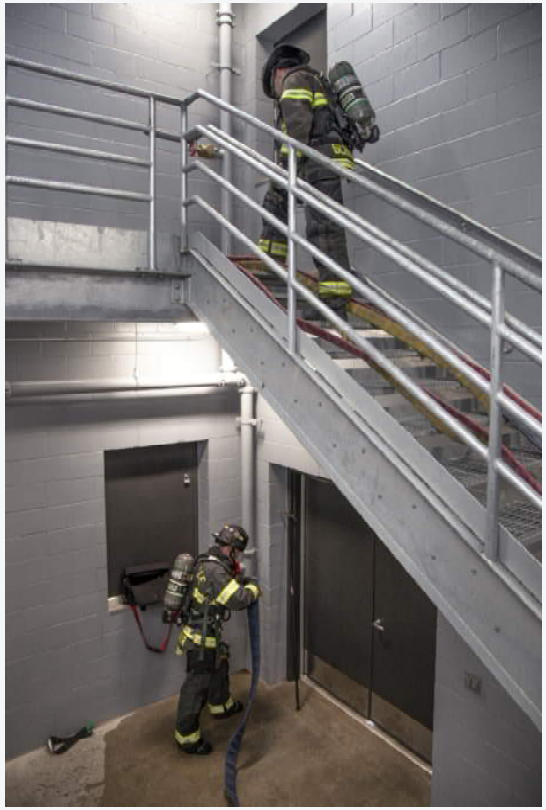
- NFPA Station Design standards
- Current building codes
- Sufficient clearance around apparatus

Training

Does Not Meet Need For:

- Ground ladder training/evolutions
- Hose advancement/stair evolutions





Training

Does Not Meet Need For:

- Confined space rescue
- Search + rescue maze

Training

Does Not Meet Need For:

- High rise training
- Wall/floor breach

Training

Does Not Meet Need For:

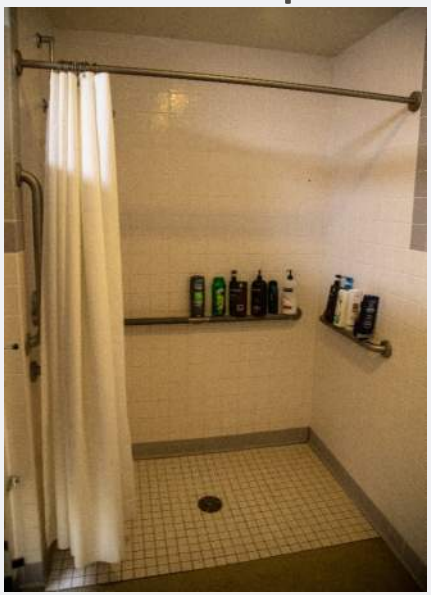
- Advanced technical rescue (rope rescue/rappelling)
- Alarm panel/sprinkler system

Shortage of Space

- Does not allow for all current & future needs
- No flexibility incorporated for current uses

Shortage of Space

- Site & building not functionally organized
- Not ADA compliant
- Inefficient operational flow



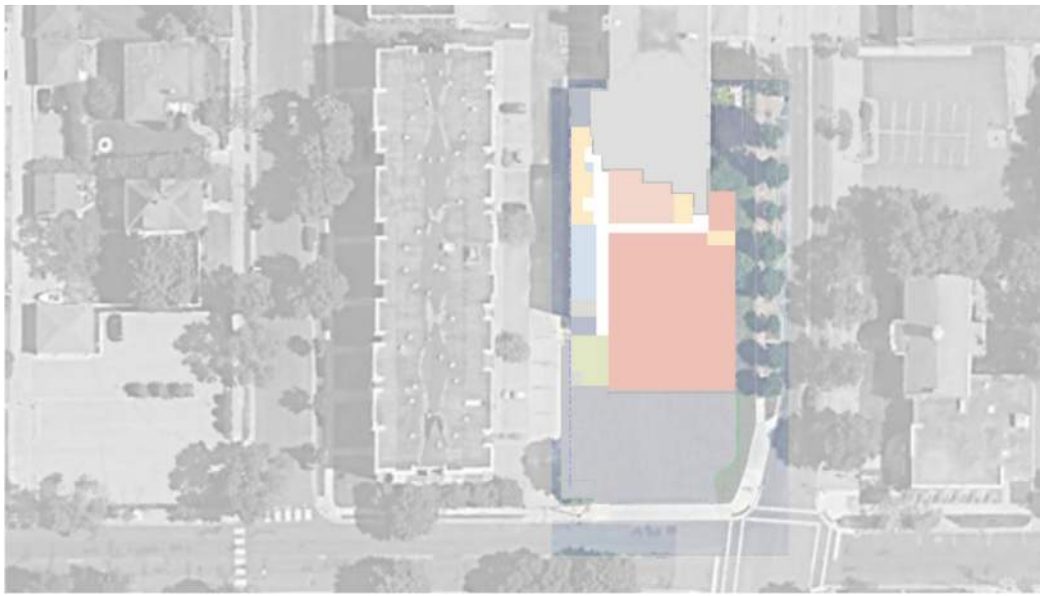
Sustainability

Does not meet current LEED strategies

- Low-efficiency mechanical systems
- Lighting not fully LED or controlled
- Poor thermal exterior envelope
- No stormwater treatment
- Poor indoor air quality

High energy use

New Station Options

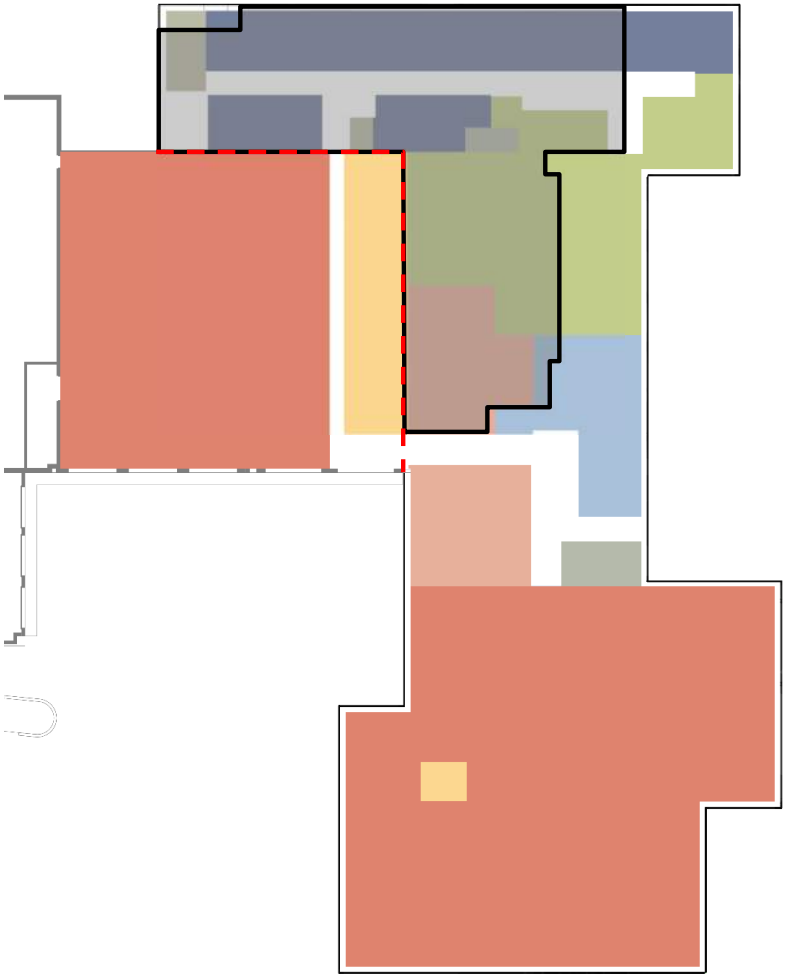


Station 1 – Option 1 Proposed Site Layout

- Adequate space to meet primary needs
- Separate parking from apparatus flow
- Some drive-through apparatus bays
- Public space
- Public entrance not visible from street

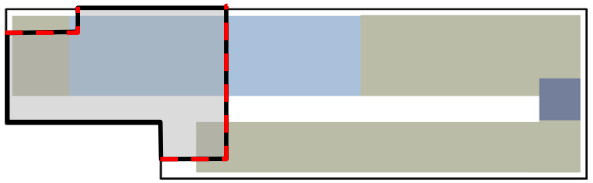
Station 1 – Option 1

- Apparatus/Training
- Decontamination
- Support
- Public
- Station Offices
- Administration
- Residence
- Common
- Circulation



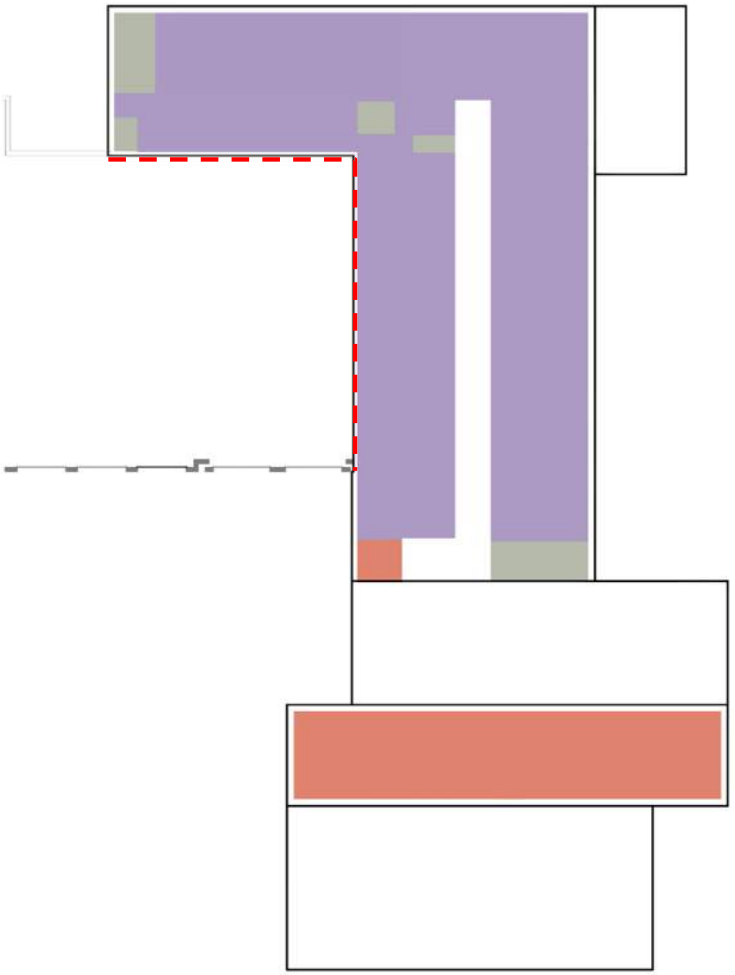
First Floor

Station 1 – Option 1



Basement

- Apparatus/Training
- Decontamination
- Support
- Public
- Station Offices
- Administration
- Residence
- Common
- Circulation

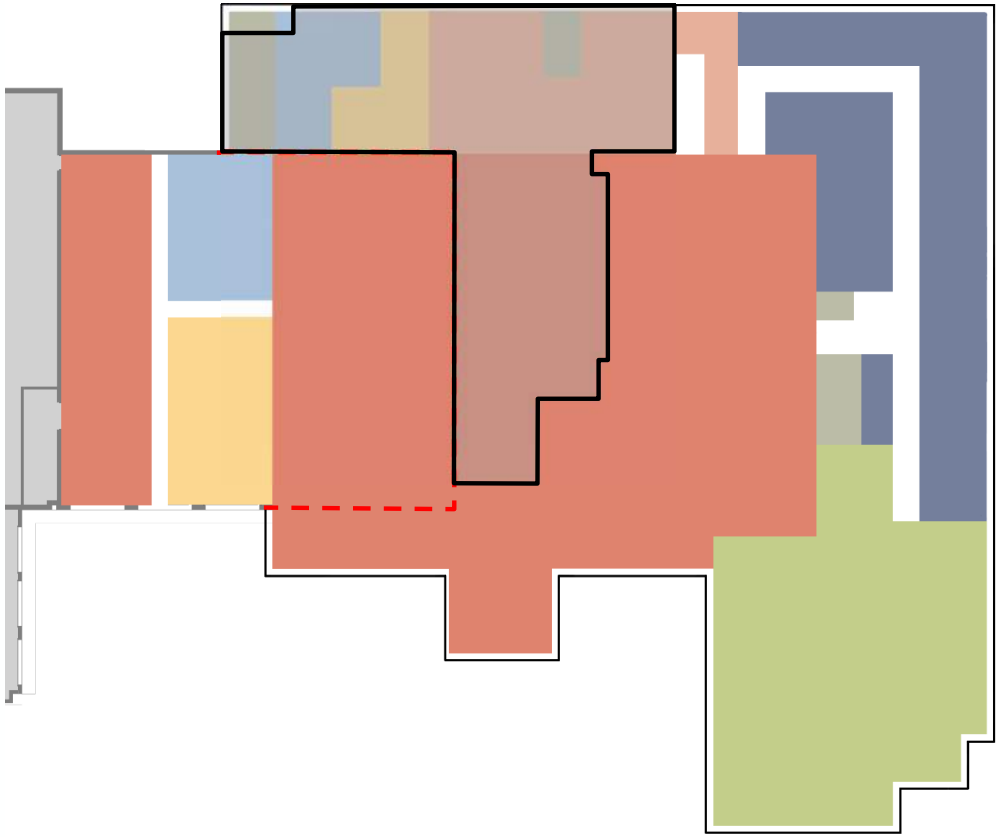


Second Floor

Station 1 – Option 2 Proposed Site Layout

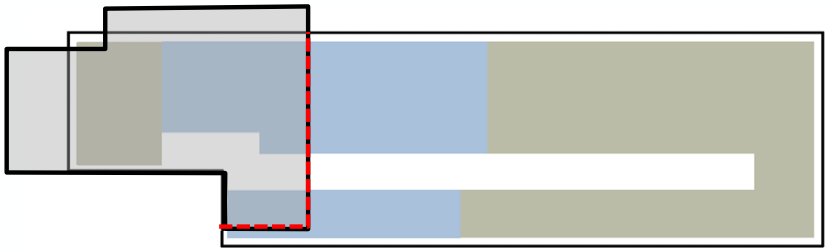
- Adequate space to meet primary needs
- Separate parking from apparatus flow
- Back-in apparatus bays
- Public space
- Visible public entrance

Station 1 – Option 2



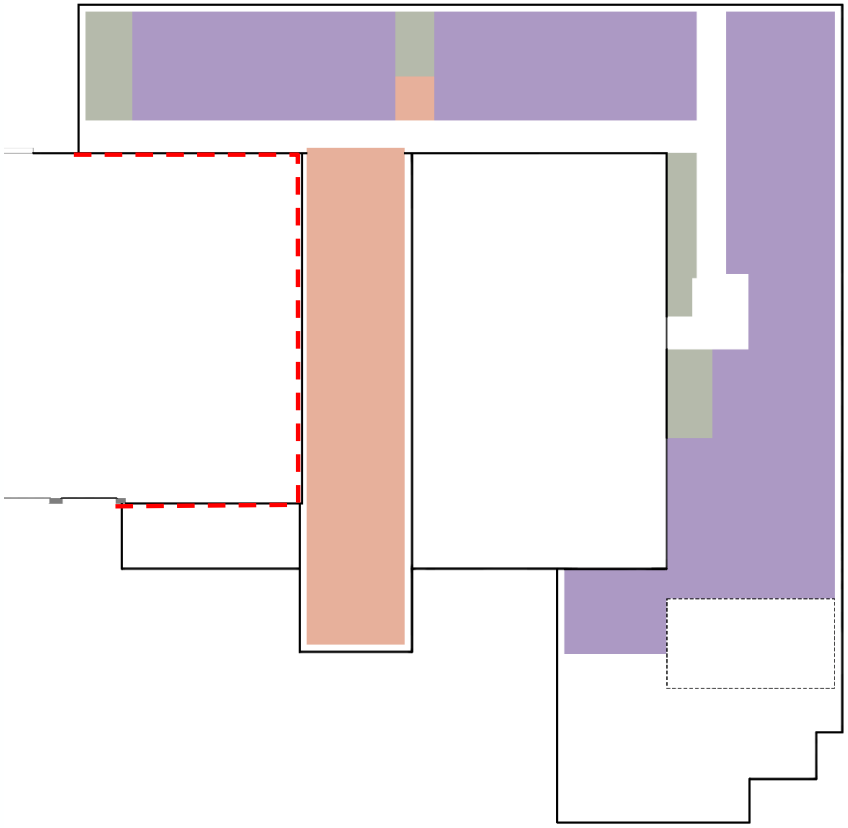
First Floor

Station 1 – Option 2



Basement

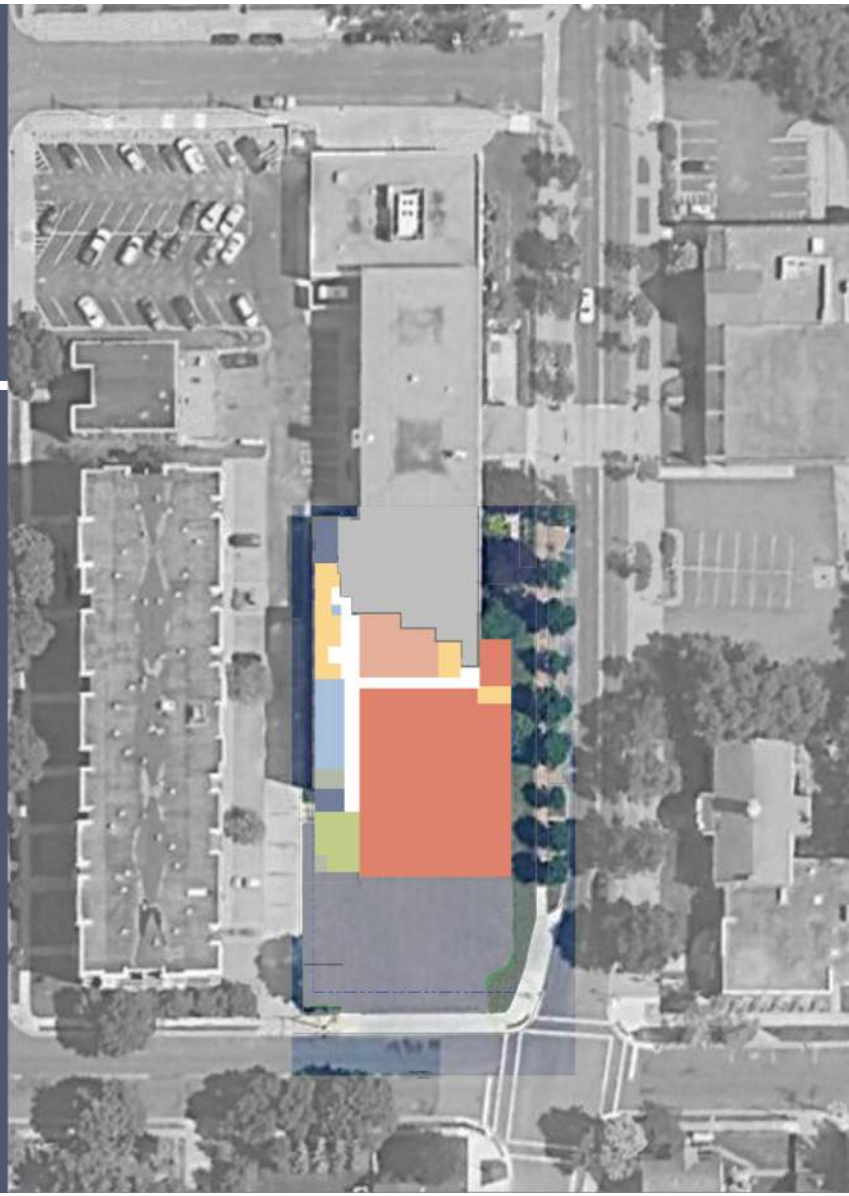
- Apparatus/Training
- Decontamination
- Support
- Public
- Station Offices
- Administration
- Residence
- Common
- Circulation



Second Floor

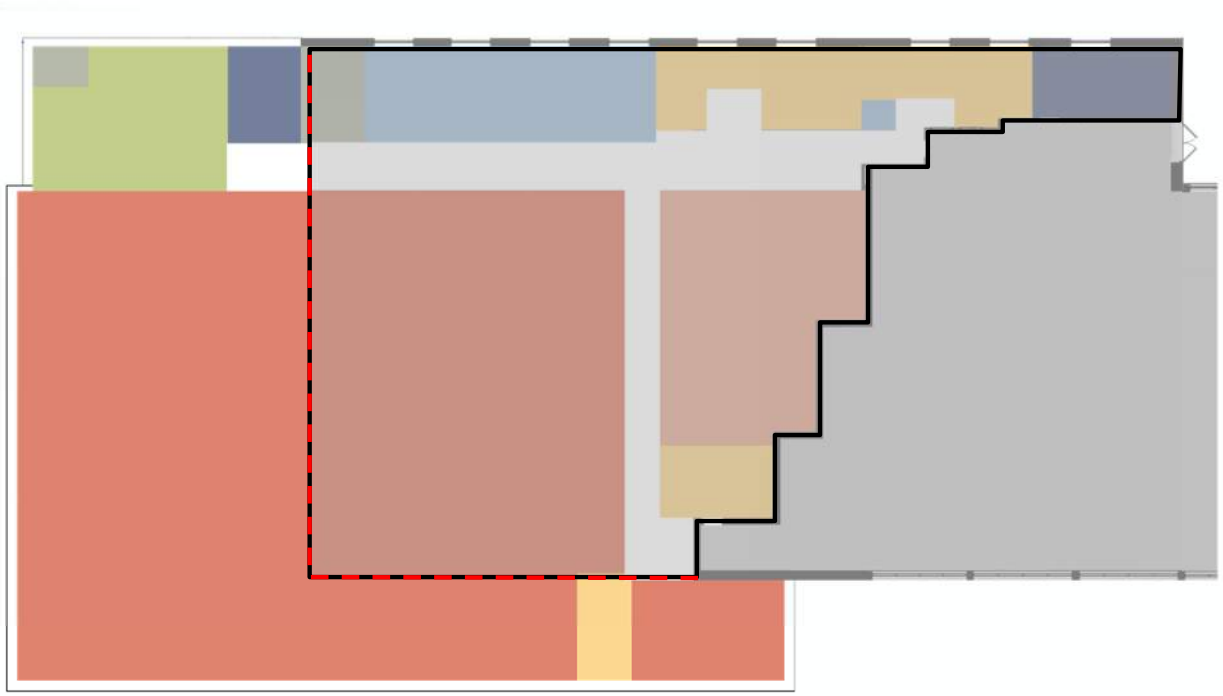
Station 2
Proposed Site Layout

- Adequate space to meet majority of primary needs
- Minimal parking in apparatus flow
- Back-in apparatus bays
- Visible public entrance



Station 2

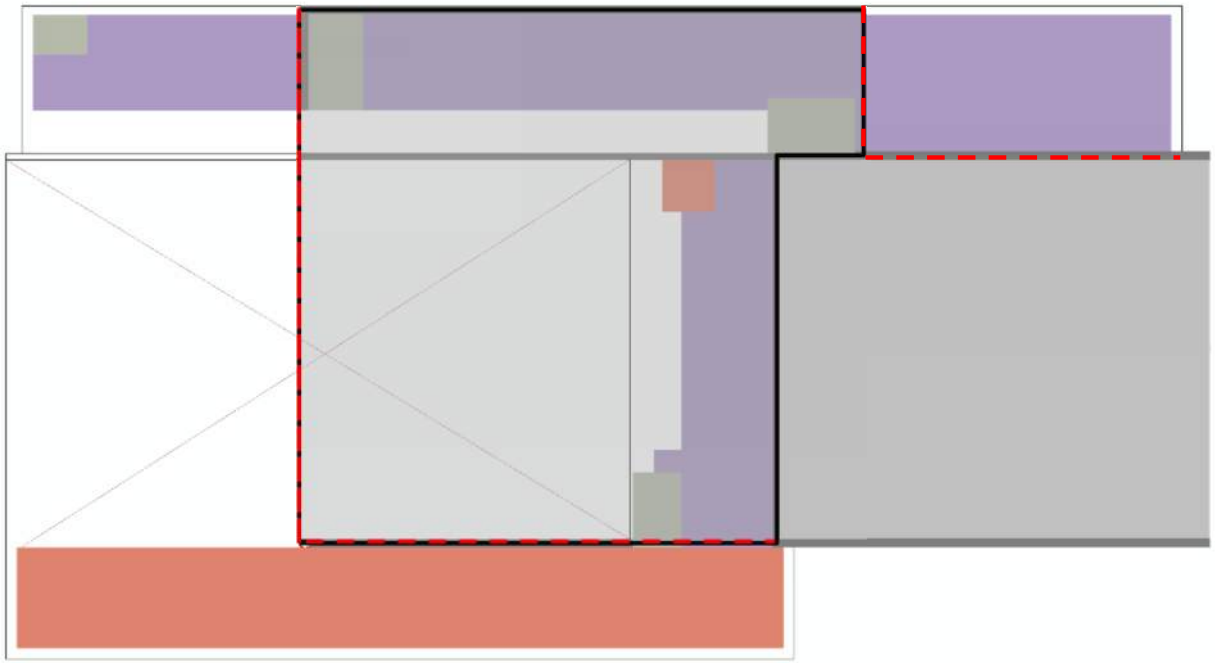
- Apparatus/Training
- Decontamination
- Support
- Public
- Station Offices
- Administration
- Residence
- Common
- Circulation



First Floor

Station 2

- Apparatus/Training
- Decontamination
- Support
- Public
- Station Offices
- Administration
- Residence
- Common
- Circulation

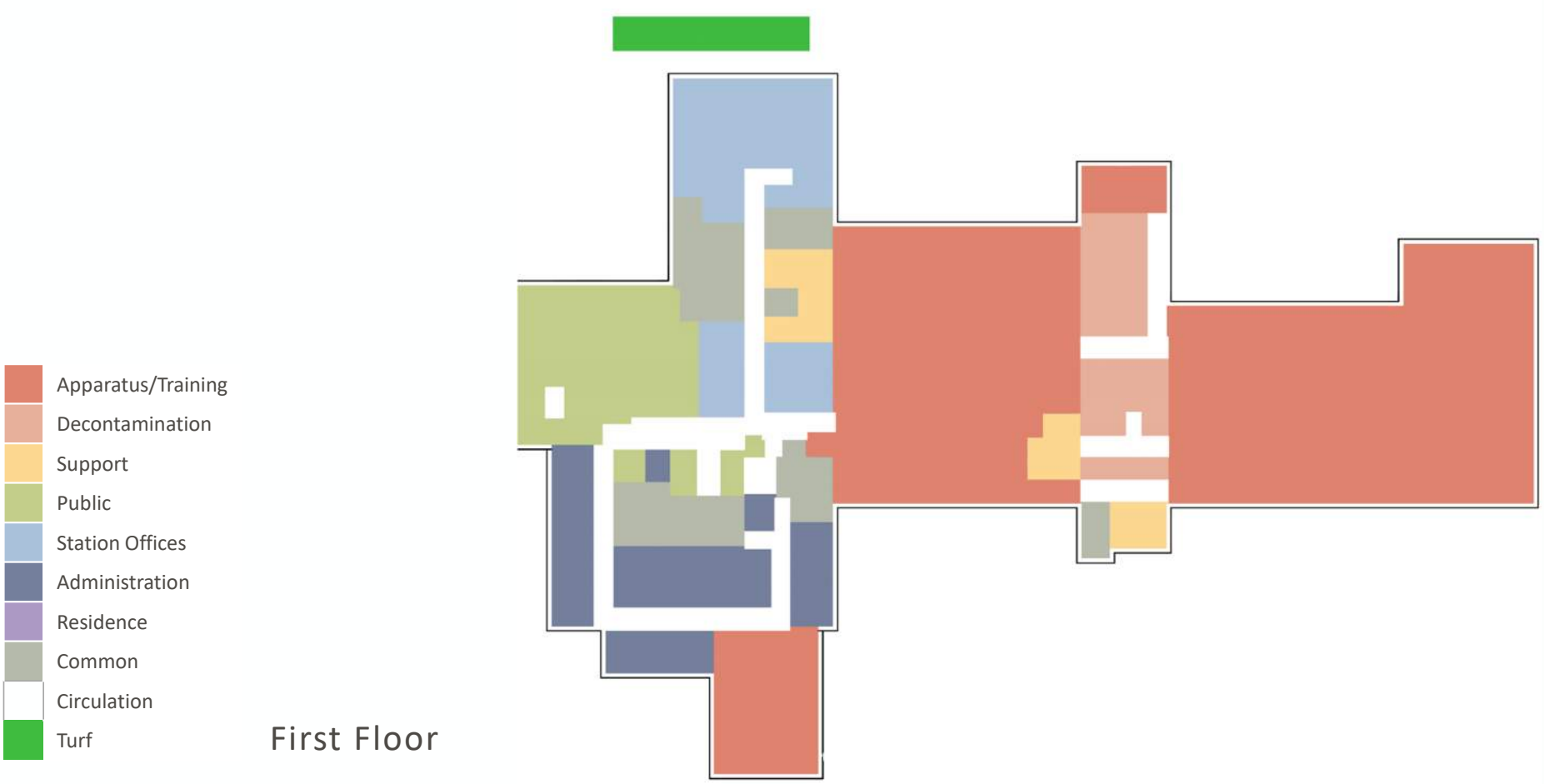


Second Floor

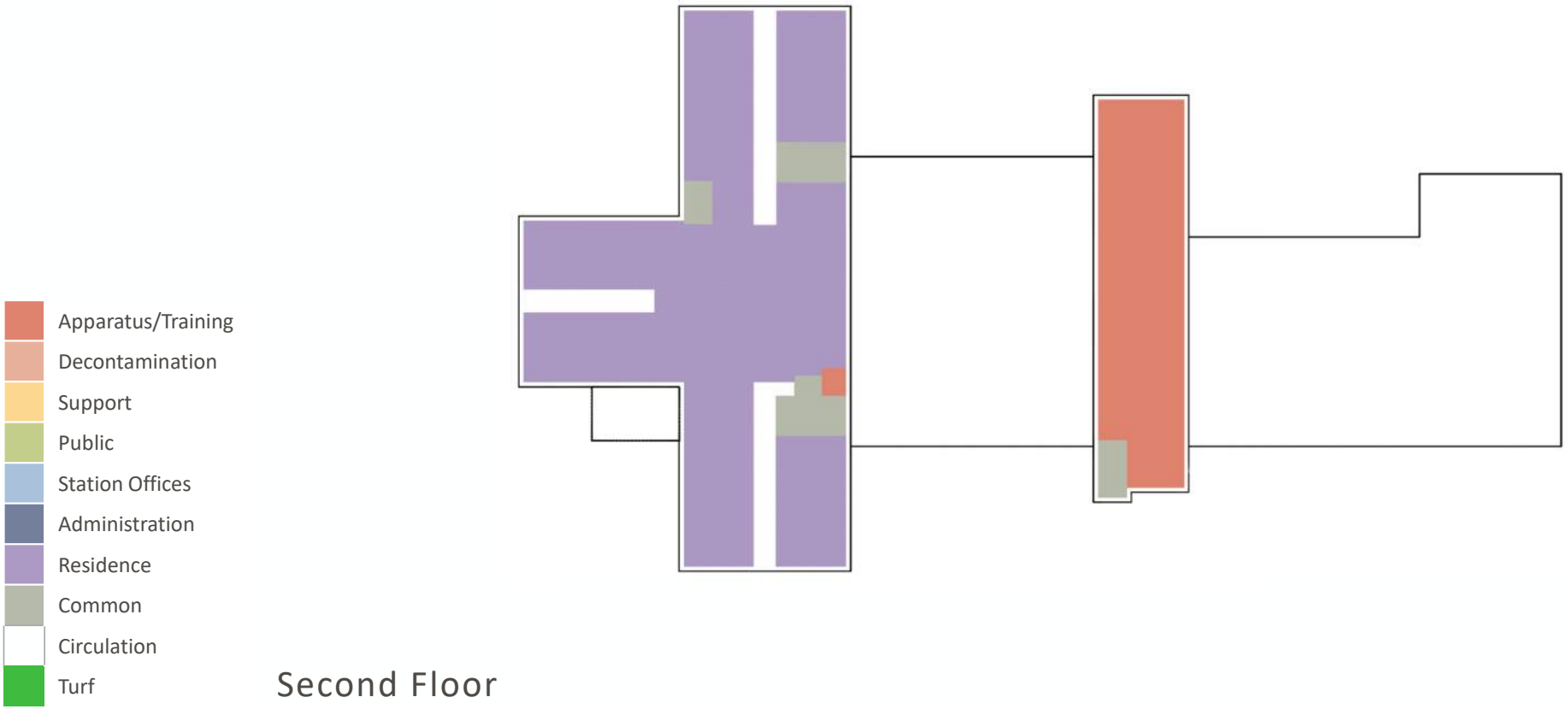
Combined Station Proposed Site Layout

- Adequate space to meet all needs
- Separate parking from apparatus flow
- Drive-through apparatus bays
- Public space
- Welcoming entrance
- Separate public & firefighter parking

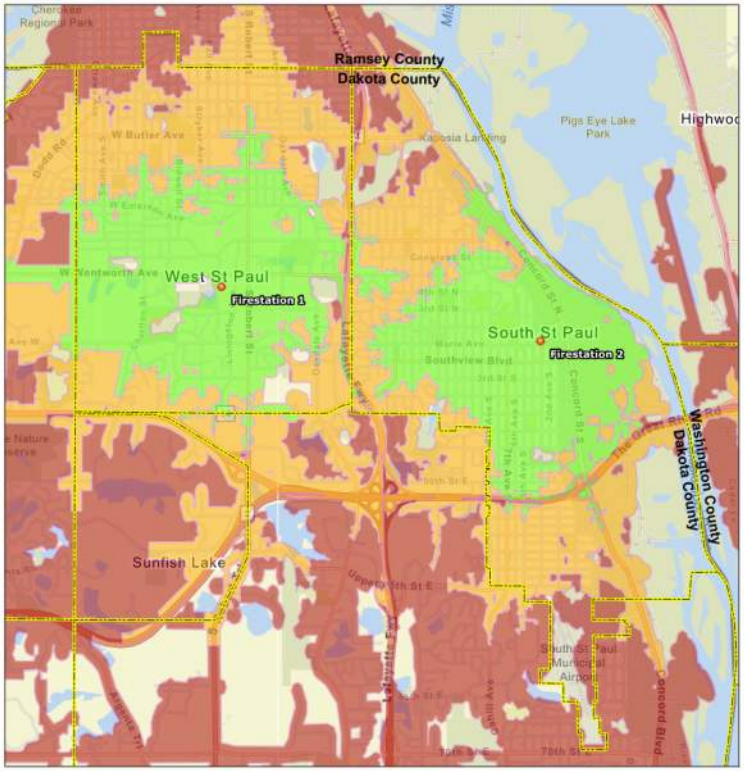
Combined Station



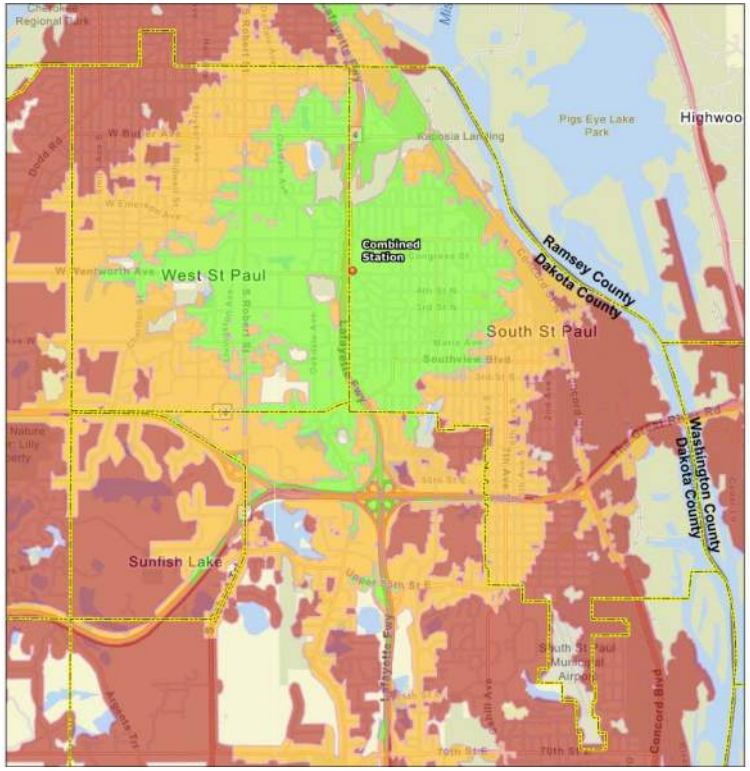
Combined Station



Drive Time Analysis



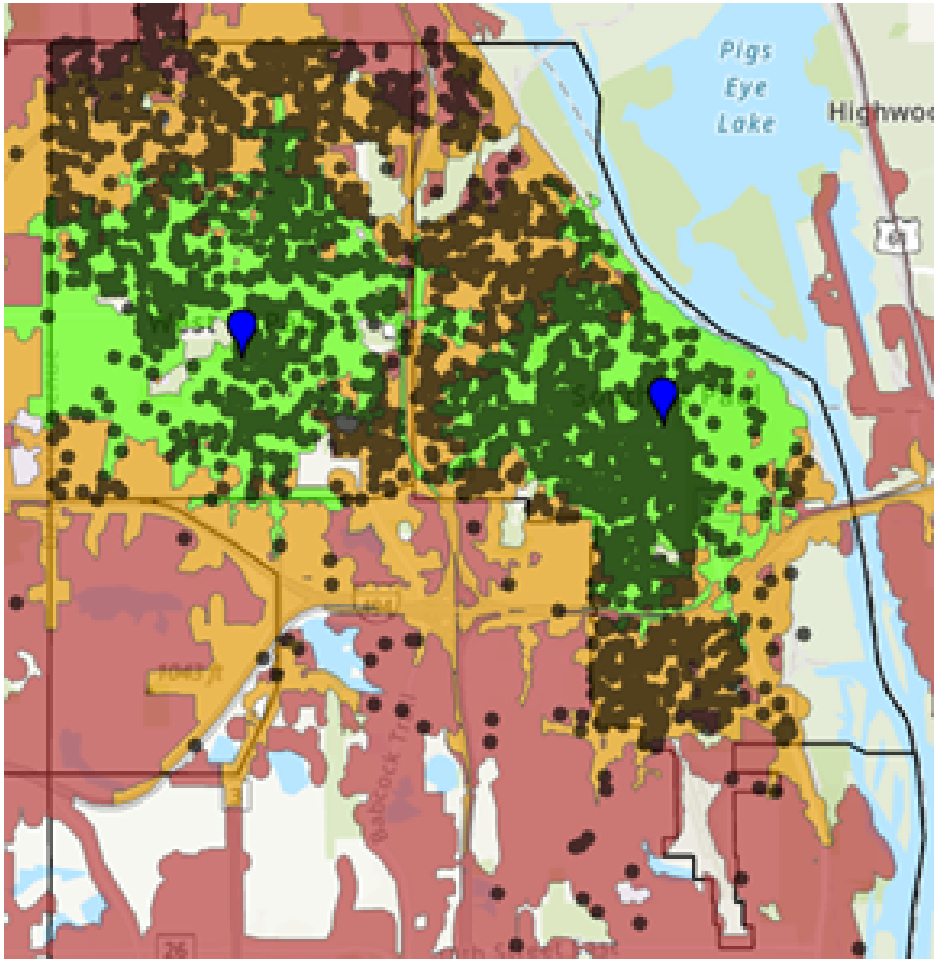
Station 1 & 2 Map
4 Minute = 44% covered
6 Minute = 79% covered



Combined Station Map
4 Minute = 37% covered
6 Minute = 76% covered

4 minutes
6 minutes
10 minutes

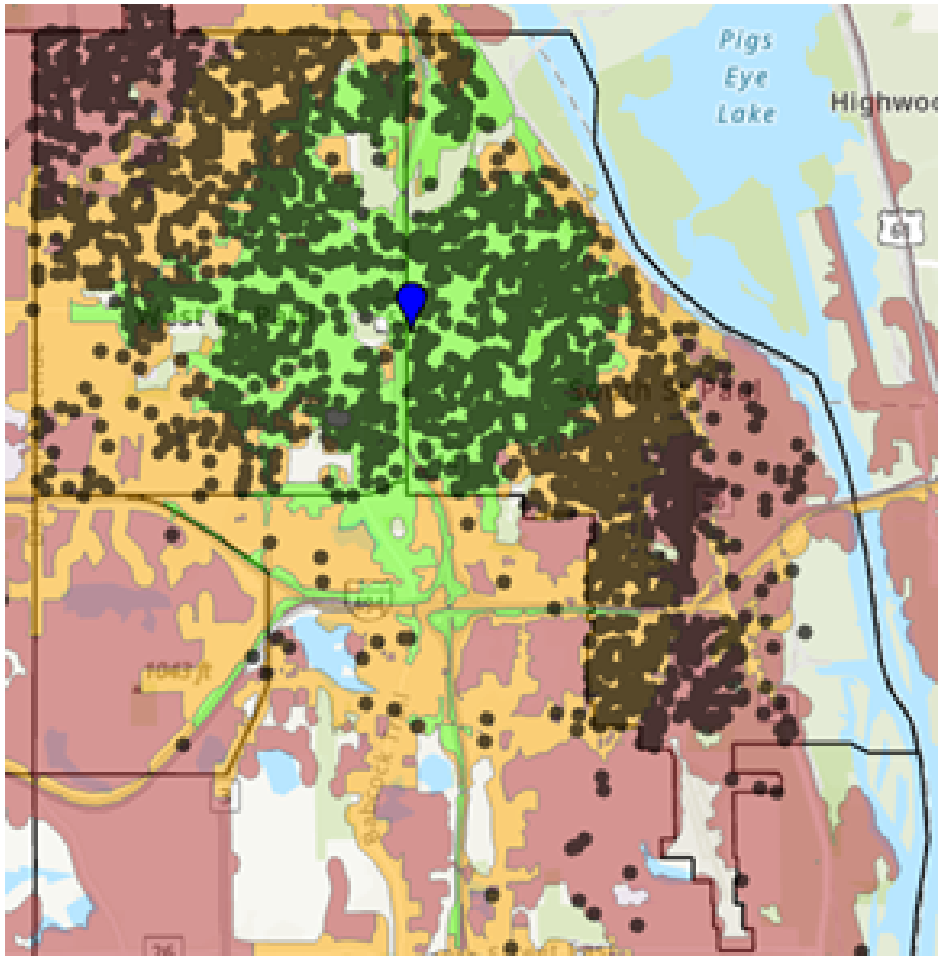
Drive Time Analysis 2022 Incidents



Two Stations

4 Minute = 44% covered

6 Minute = 79% covered



One Station

4 Minute = 22% covered

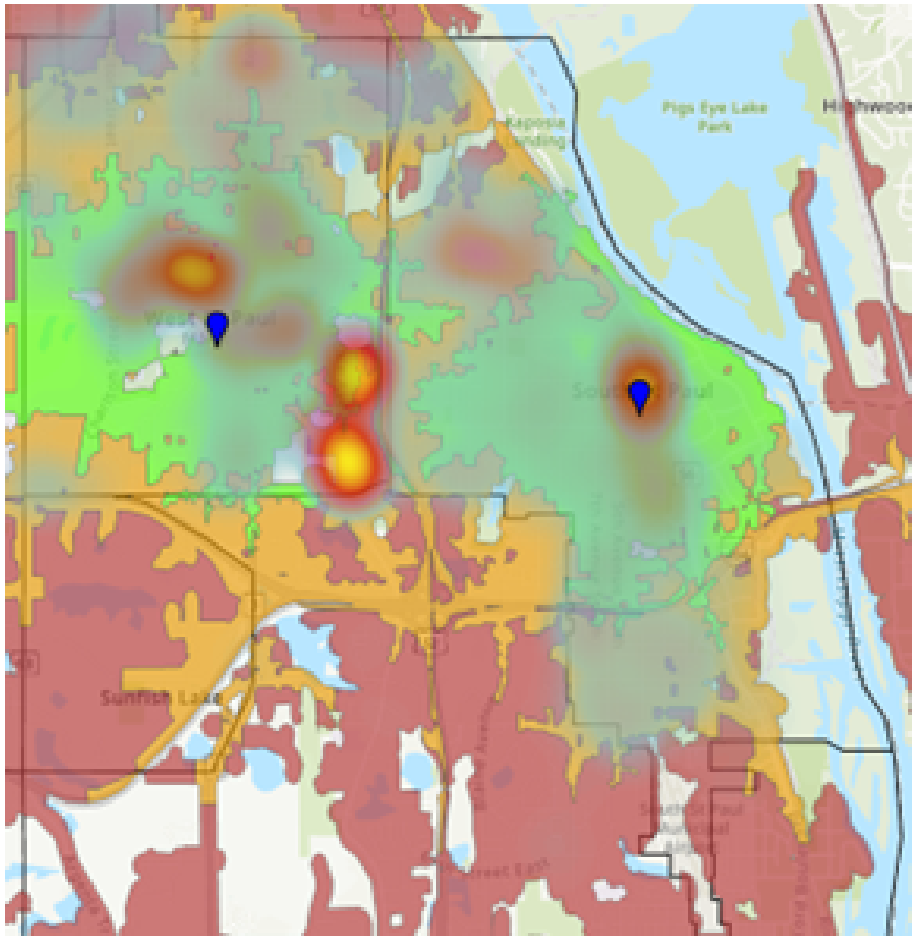
6 Minute = 47% covered

4 minutes

6 minutes

10 minutes

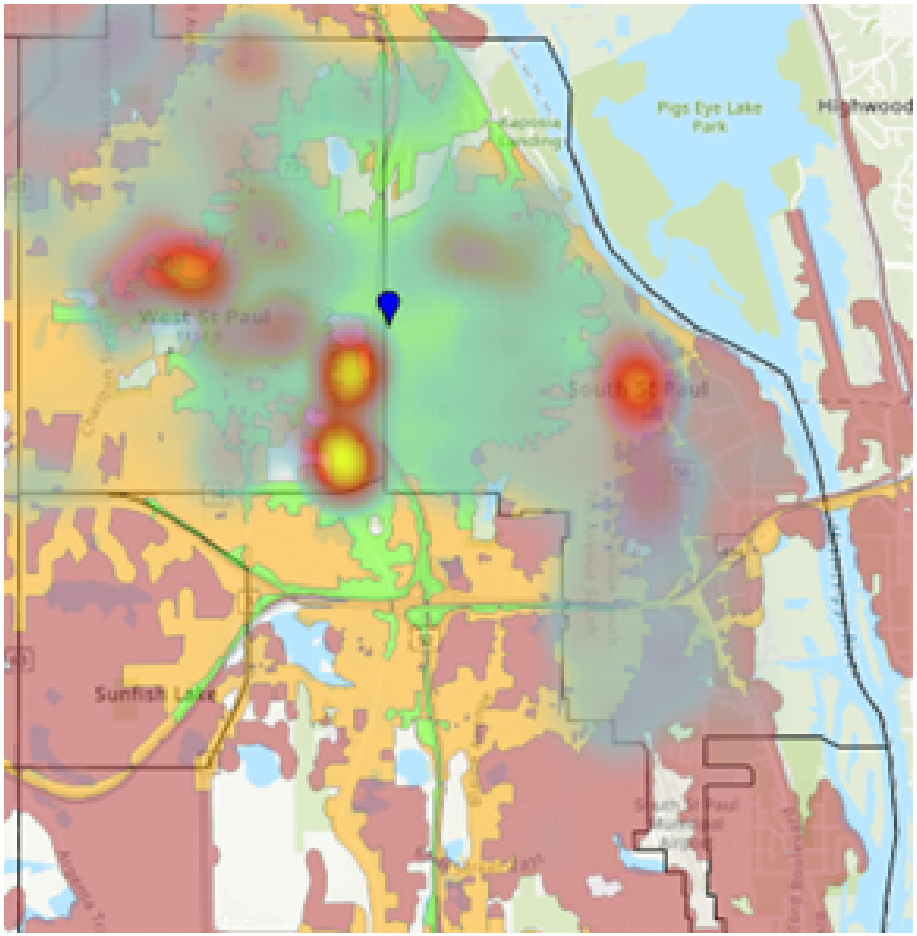
Drive Time Analysis 2022 Heat Map



Two Stations

4 Minute = 44% covered

6 Minute = 79% covered



One Station

4 Minute = 22% covered

6 Minute = 47% covered

4 minutes

6 minutes

10 minutes

Cost Estimates

Station 1 - Option 1

Hard Cost	$18,405,164
Soft Cost	$2,230,776
Land Acquisition	$0
Temporary Facility	$680,000
Total Cost	$23,131,594

Station 1 - Option 2

Hard Cost	$17,791,689
Soft Cost	$2,199,182
Land Acquisition	$0
Temporary Facility	$680,000
Total Cost	$22,450,043

Prices shown above are as of December 1, 2022. Construction cost inflation should be added to the project hard costs above from the date listed to projected project construction midpoint at a rate of 5% per year.

Cost Estimates

Station 2

Hard Cost	$6,779,965
Soft Cost	$1,095,298
Land Acquisition	$0
Temporary Facility	$680,000
Total Cost	$8,555,263

Combined Station

Hard Cost	$27,985,145
Soft Cost	$3,102,152
Land Acquisition	$900,000
Temporary Facility	$0
Total Cost	$33,386,556*

*In addition to above is any value to City for City Hall/Police expansion

Prices shown above are as of December 1, 2022. Construction cost inflation should be added to the project hard costs above from the date listed to projected project construction midpoint at a rate of 5% per year.

Cost Estimates

Station 1 – New Building & Site

Hard Cost	$19,515,000
Soft Cost	$2,253,600
Land Acquisition	$700,000
Temporary Facility	$0
Total Cost	$23,44,352*

Station 2 – New Building & Site

Hard Cost	$9,835,000
Soft Cost	$1,244,218
Land Acquisition	$600,000
Temporary Facility	$0
Total Cost	$12,170,969*

*In addition to above is any value to City for City Hall/Police expansion

Prices shown above are as of December 1, 2022. Construction cost inflation should be added to the project hard costs above from the date listed to projected project construction midpoint at a rate of 5% per year.

Study Recommendations

- TBD

Questions

SOUTH METRO FIRE DEPARTMENT
1650 Humboldt Avenue • West St. Paul MN 55118
Phone: (651) 552-4176 • FAX: (651) 552-4195
www.smfdmn.org

DATE: February 1, 2023

TO: President and Board

FROM: Nate Burkett, WSP City Manager
Ryan Garcia, SSP City Administrator
Mark Juelfs, SMFD Chief

RE: SMFD Evaluation Recommendations

SUMMARY

We jointly submit this memo to the Board to discuss and make recommendations related to the long-term facility, operational and financial needs of SMFD, including the potential formation of a fire district to govern SMFD.

We understand that it is an objective of the Board to evaluate and potentially transition to a fire district model. We agree with the process of evaluation and consideration, however – to facilitate a full and complete evaluation, we recommend that the Board be able to clearly state answers to one or more of the following questions prior to advancing any decision related to transitioning to a fire district:

- Current concerns - Are there concerns with the governance or operations of SMFD under the current model that a fire district model may resolve?
- Long-term benefits - What are the clear and convincing benefits of transitioning to a fire district model – in governance, finance and/or operations?
- Reason to expedite – is there a compelling reason to expedite the evaluation of transition to a fire district sufficient to expedite the advancement of such a recommendation?

To facilitate a full and complete evaluation of SMFD's facility, operational and financial needs we recommend the Board continue with the following process:

- Facilities needs study - including evaluation of both single and multiple station models (currently in process)
- Operational/financial study - including evaluation of the operational requirements of both a multiple and single station model
- Full evaluation of the costs, benefits, risks, and rewards of transition to a fire district model

EVALUATION

Issues Raised by Initial Fire Study

The two most notable concerns raised through the phase 1 fire study related to facilities are:

Firefighter Health and Safety. Both Fire Stations 1 and 2 are lacking in space for health and safety best practices, including and most importantly, separate storage and cleaning spaces for turnout gear to protect

firefighters from carcinogens. There are several other firefighter health and safety concerns between both locations that should be resolved as quickly as practicable.

- Resolving this concern does not require transitioning to a fire district model.
- This concern may be resolved by either renovating both fire stations or constructing a single fire station.

Lack of Overall Space. Both Fire Stations 1 and 2 are lacking in overall space for storage of equipment, training, industry standard pull-through bays, and the ability to leave doors open on equipment for faster turnout times. In addition, there are less than adequate facilities for firefighter downtime (dorms and common space) and personal hygiene including individual changing rooms and locker rooms.

- Resolving this concern does not require transitioning to a fire district model.
- This concern may be resolved more economically by constructing a new single fire station.

We are unaware of any raised concerns about the current governance model or financing structure of SMFD.

Operationally, the issues that are raised through the phase 1 fire study do not require transitioning to a fire district as a solution. While some of the issues raised may be resolved in a more politically tenable or efficient manner through a fire district, additional questions should be resolved before any recommendation from the Fire Board on facility needs, operations, or governance is advanced to the city councils for consideration.

Costs and Benefits of a Fire District

Overall, we can generally agree that the public policy outcome we are all seeking related to this question is to ensure long term stability of efficient and effective fire and EMS response throughout both cities.

To this point, we have only been made aware of one potential clearly articulable benefit to transitioning to a fire district, which is that it is more transparent because of the levy authority of the district. However, questions remain related to this potential benefit in that there is no distinct line item on Minnesota property tax statements for “fire district”. Under current law property tax statements will show the fire district levy as a “special taxing district” similar to the current EMS district which could be argued to be less transparent than the current status.

To facilitate a full evaluation of the fire district model there are several questions that need to be resolved.

What impact would a fire district model have on service delivery? Both communities currently enjoy some of the fastest response times for fire and EMS. At this time there is no evidence to suggest that transitioning to a fire district model without some other change will improve service delivery. To our understanding, no other operational changes to improve service delivery have been proposed or suggested for evaluation at this time.

What impact would a fire district model have on operational and capital costs? Whether it is two stations or one we do not currently know if or how a fire district model would control costs in the long run. We have a limited understanding of the future demands on the department and the capital equipment and personnel need the department will have. By engaging in a phase 2 study that will evaluate these needs for a single and two station model we can reasonably forecast the costs both as a fire district and under the current model. Transitioning to a fire district will not control costs on its own. For example, the current operating cost spread out across WSP and SSP, whether it is levied by a fire district or the cities separately is going to have roughly the same impact on the average property taxpayer. There is no reason

to presume while operating two separate stations under a fire district model that costs will necessarily go down or moderate over time. There is a possibility that a single station model could moderate costs, but we do not have the data to evaluate that possibility.

How will the fire district model promote stability? SMFD has been operating since 2008 with strong governance stability and a good partnership between the city council and city staff of both WSP and SSP. We do not know what, if any impact transitioning to a fire district would have on this currently stable situation.

How will a fire district model help resolve the concerns raised in the phase 1 fire study? The concerns identified in the phase 1 fire study should be resolved within the relatively near future. One advantage a fire district has is that a fire district has separate bonding authority from the city partners. While this is an advantage, in that, from an accounting perspective neither city has to carry the debt, from a practical perspective the net result of the issuance of bonds by a fire district is the same as the issuance of bonds by the cities similar to the spread of the operational levy mentioned above.

Are the respective city councils willing to further separate their influence over the provision of fire and EMS services? The theory behind a fire district is that a separate board has full control over the financing (levy) of the fire district which insulates the department from political influence. The alternative side of this is that the influence of the WSP and SSP city councils becomes limited. The new Fire District Board would have the ability to levy property taxes outside of the approval of each city council unless some agreement is made prior that requires the approval of each city council. If this is the case, how is it different from the current model? Furthermore, should the fire district expand in geographic service area, each city council would be further removed from being able to influence their desired policy outcomes. If, for example, WSP represented 10% of a service area, it is likely that WSP would have 10% of the voting power in an enlarged fire district. Are both city councils and the Fire Board willing to cede that influence?

If there is interest in expanding the geographic area of the fire district, who are the potential partners and how will differences in services be resolved? The service standard in the SMFD service area is very high. Most of our neighbors and potential partners do not have as high of a level of service. How would the differences in service expectations be reconciled? Are WSP and SSP willing to lower our response time standards? Are potential partners willing to raise theirs? There are also differences in EMS service areas; some potential partners run ambulance, and some do not. Some have their own EMS service area whereas others, like SMFD, contract with a hospital system.

CONCLUSION

There are simply too many unknowns to proceed with the steps required to transition to a fire district at this time. While there may be benefits to such a model, we cannot effectively evaluate the trade-offs and risks so we may effectively mitigate them.

We see no reason to expedite the process to transition without the intermediate step of a phase 2 fire study which should evaluate, at a minimum:

- Long term staffing needs for SMFD under both a single and two station model
- Long term capital needs for SMFD under both a single and two station model
- Real world (not statistically generated) modeling of demand for emergency services and response times throughout the community under both a single station and two station model

With this information, we can effectively evaluate the true costs and benefits between a single station and a two-station model. When a clear understanding of the costs and benefits of a single station and two stations are reasonably understood we can overlay the possibility of a fire district governance model to determine if such a transition is necessary or provides a benefit sufficient to make such a change.

At this time – we do not see any reason to expedite this evaluation. The statute permitting fire districts is unlikely to change in such a way that hinders our ability to create a fire district should we so choose. The primary driving factor related to time is that we should be taking steps within the next 2-3 years to resolve the concerns raised in the phase 1 fire study. Taking the time to complete a phase 2 study will not slow that process and will likely improve the outcome of any decision made related to facilities.

Budget Impact:
The estimated cost of a phase two study is $80,000.

Recommendation:
We recommend that the Fire Board authorize a phase 2 fire study so that a full and complete evaluation of all of these important factors can be completed.