



## Fire Station No. 01

**300 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, CA**

### Project Description

#### History

Menlo Park Fire Protection District Fire Station 1 is located at 300 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025. This station is located in the County of San Mateo and the authority having jurisdiction is the City of Menlo Park. The two-story fire station was built in 1955 and was seismically retrofitted in the 1990s. The station requires replacement to address its deteriorating infrastructure, to make it compliant with updated building codes, to address fire safety requirements, to incorporate advancements in technology and safety enhancements, and to provide additional space for staff, apparatus, and storage. Fire Station 1 staffs an engine and a squad which is operated by five personnel. In addition, the training division's office staff works out of the second floor of the fire station. The site includes an emergency diesel fueled generator, a 5-story training tower that is attached to the station, and an ancillary building comprised of a multi-purpose room for board meetings and training, a small mechanic shop used for storage, and an exercise room. In 2009 the District completed the remodel of the District owned office building at 170 Middlefield Road. Upon completion of this remodel the District relocated the administration and fire prevention office personnel to this new building. In 2016 the District procured 114 Santa Margarita in order to provide additional office space for its employees. In 2018, the District acquired 1.01 acres adjacent to Fire Station 1 from the Roman Catholic Church. The lot acquired has been merged with the existing lot to form a 1.96-acre lot. The property acquisition provides the District with the ability to develop the site to include a new fire station, training facility, an office building for administration, training, and fire prevention staff, a storage building for equipment and supplies and a multipurpose room that can be used as a board room, trainings and a district operations center.

#### Scope of Work

Menlo Park Fire District has since outgrown the existing site as well as their headquarters. MPFD intends to utilize 300 Middlefield Road as their new headquarters. The existing site and its features will be completely demolished and make way for 3 new buildings and new code compliant site features. The site will house a new Fire Station, District Administration/Storage building with a District Operation Center, and Training Tower. A temporary facility will be established at 114 Santa Margarita Ave to allow the fire station to remain fully operational during construction of the new facility.



### **Fire Station**

The project includes a new 16,300 square foot, two-story Fire Station with enough room for future growth of the fire district. The Fire Station sits in a similar footprint to the existing station and has an approximate height of 32 feet. The new station will house four drive-through apparatus bays each capable of accommodating a tiller truck or multiple fire engines parked in tandem. The main entry drive for the drive-through bay would be accessed off of Santa Monica Avenue with a secondary entry accessed off of Middlefield Road, while the apparatus bay would exit onto Middlefield Road. In addition to the apparatus space, the first floor of the new fire station would include a public lobby showcasing an antique apparatus as well as historical firefighting equipment, offices, a fitness room and utility space. The second floor of the new fire station would be composed of living quarters for on-duty personnel, including a second story patio deck. The proposed staffing of the fire station would remain at five on-duty firefighters for each rotation. The fire station would include living and sleeping quarters to accommodate up to thirteen firefighters and one Battalion Chief to address future growth. The Fire Station designed in contemporary architectural style. Black metal panels and wood tone fiber cement plank is intended to be used. Glazing will be utilized as much as possible.

Fire Station 1 staffs an engine and a squad which is operated by five personnel. Staffing at this station is not expected to change. The Fire Station will just be staffed by emergency response personnel and its primary and only function is to serve as a fire station.

### **Office/Storage/District Operations Center Building**

Building B will serve as an office building as well as a storage building. Upon completion of the proposed Station 1 project, the administration and fire prevention staffing of approximately 25 personnel will be relocated back to Station 1 from 170 Middlefield road and 114 Santa Margarita. In addition, the training division consisting of 4 personnel, which currently occupies Station 1 will also be relocated to the new office building. The storage portion of the building will contain spare equipment and consumables which will be used District wide as well as additional space for reserve and/or training apparatus. On the first floor of the building will be storage space, office space for the training division and also shared spaces which include locker room space, a breakroom and a multi-purpose room. The multi-purpose room will serve as a training room, a space for Board meetings and as a District Operations Center.



On the second floor of the "L" shaped building at the rear of the lot is proposed to provide office space for the administration and fire prevention personnel. This building is designed in contemporary architectural style which matches the Fire Station. Black metal panels and wood tone fiber cement plank is intended to be used.

The District currently holds public events such as Board meetings, classes, and a couple large events at Fire Station 1. The District plans to continue to hold these events post construction and has no plans to hold additional events at this time. These events include the following:

- CPR classes - one Saturday a month from 9 am-5 pm
- Stop the Bleed class - one Monday a month from 6:00-7:30 pm
- Red Cross Ready class - one Wednesday a month from 6:00-7:30 pm
- CERT Academy twice per year- each is about 20 hours of instruction spread across either Thursday evenings or Saturday full days. In the spring, we do 5 Thursday evenings from 6-9 pm plus one Saturday 9-1. In the fall, we do 3 Saturdays from 9-4.
- We also would have periodic meetings with our CERT team and community groups, about 2-3 times a year that each last around 1-2 hours.
- We have our annual Pancake Breakfast in October from 7:30-11:00.
- Fire Board meetings monthly. Third Tuesday every month from 7pm – 10pm (approximately)

### **Training Tower**

The proposed training facility is anticipated to provide high-rise training, elevator rescue, high-angle rope, center hallway construction, confined space, firefighter survival and rapid intervention crew training, and class B (propane) fire training. This building will be comprised of a 5-story concrete masonry unit structure that is 50' in height along with a smaller 1 story residential training prop. There is also a basement to allow for additional training opportunities. The existing Training Tower has an antenna at the top of the building. This antenna will be removed and relocated to the Temporary Fire Station at the beginning of construction. Once construction is complete, the antenna will be relocated and mounted to the top of the new Training Tower.



The training building has no office space and will have no personnel operating out of it. The building will be comprised of several rooms which contain miscellaneous training props. The building will be used to train the District's emergency response personnel. Typical training consists of 1-2 crews at one time (3-7 personnel) however larger trainings such as cadet training (which we currently perform at Station 1) can include around 15-20 personnel. The number of personnel to be trained at the site would stay consistent with current training practices.

Training activities and hours will remain consistent with the existing training schedule. Training activities include all aspects of fire suppression and rescue training. Training hours are 0900-1700, with occasional evening drills. Trainings are conducted weekly in the classroom or on the drill ground.

The new facility will have class B (propane fueled) props that run on a dead man switch. They will turn off when the instructor takes their hand off the button. These will be located in rooms inside the tower and not visible from the exterior. The building is non-combustible and no smoke is generated by the propane props. Theatrical smoke will be used to simulate fire conditions but is non-toxic and white in color. The smoke will not be visible on the exterior. The fire district currently uses the theatrical smoke often at the current facility.

Training is both indoors and outdoors, depending on the topic. Much of the training will be in the classroom or inside the training tower, some will be on the drill ground surrounding the tower.

The training tower will be constructed of CMU block and intended to be dark in color.

### **Temporary Facility**

In order to allow Station #1 to remain fully operational during the construction of the new site, crew will be housed down the street at 114 Santa Margarita Ave at a Temporary Facility. The site currently houses an existing house and is used as an admin building for Menlo Park Fire Protection District. The existing building will be demolished to allow for the following temporary structures: apparatus tent, living quarter trailer, laundry/fitness trailer, connex box, and the existing shed that will remain. Office staff currently occupying the building will be relocated to leased office space. Once construction is completed the office staff will be relocated to the new office building at 300 Middlefield Road.

The site will have a concrete apparatus driveway and 7 uncovered parking stalls. An existing Coast Redwood, that has significant defects and high risk of breakage, will be removed to allow for the apparatus driveway. A new Silver Linden will be planted as a replacement tree at the plan north-west corner of the site.



The existing building at 114 Santa Margarita was originally located at the corner of Middlefield & Willow, it was moved to its' current location in 1960, and greatly modified. The house was originally constructed in Classical or Colonial Revival style. The building is a box form with hipped shingle roof. The exterior is wrapped in horizontal lap siding. The front door is covered by a hipped shingle roof with pilasters. The building is very simple architecturally and does not have any prominent features. It is our opinion this building does not represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values.

Once the construction of new Fire Station #1 is complete, crew will move back there. The structures at the Temporary Facility will be moved at that time. The site will remain as parking for Menlo Park Fire Protection District until there are plans for future development, or the property is sold.

### **Purpose of Submittal**

For this submittal, we are requesting review for Architectural Control, Heritage Tree Removal, Environmental Review, Zoning Amendment to P-F, Use Permit, Signage Review, and an amendment to the General Plan to allow 80% FAR.

#### **A. Architectural Control**

This project request Architectural Control to review the proposed buildings, design, site layout, etc.

#### **B. Heritage Tree Removal**

Due to the limited size of the site, it is necessary to remove all existing trees in order to develop the site to meet the needs of the Fire Protection District. The design team explored multiple site layouts to determine if it would be possible to retain any trees while still meeting the Fire District's needs. After a comprehensive analysis, it was determined the Fire District needs to re-develop the entire site. The Site Plan exhibit on AP1.2 demonstrates that all trees are in conflict with the proposed development of the site, making the removal of all trees mandatory. Please see alternate design and cost analysis for additional information.

The team paid special attention to retaining Tree #1. After investigation, it was ultimately determined it is not feasible to retain Tree #1. The arborist noted 15' clearance around the entire tree is required to protect its' existing structure. The clearance requirements around the tree does not allow for the (2) required storm



drain placement. The storm drain would need to be placed in the public right of way to avoid disrupting the tree, which is not allowed by the City.

There has been discussions with the City who have expressed desire to underground utilities along Santa Monica Ave. Recology has also expressed desire to underground the utilities so they do not provide a potential conflict with their service to the trash enclosure. The Fire District has agreed to underground (2) of the utility poles along Santa Monica. With needing to maintain the 15' clearance from the Saucer Magnolia #1, it wouldn't be feasible to underground the utilities without disrupting the tree.

In addition, the tree and its' necessary clearances conflicts with building layout and design. Due to the restricting size of the site it is not feasible to relocate the portion of the proposed building that Tree #1 is in conflict with. The overhang of window shading impedes with tree canopy.

Please note that the Fire District intends to plant new trees within the planter area located south of the existing Saucer Magnolia. This landscaping enhancement will provide foliage along the Fire Station frontage and a more attractive streetscape for pedestrians and passersby on both Middlefield and Santa Monica.

At 114 Santa Margarita, we are requesting the removal of While reviewing the Arborist Report, tree #24 has a significant structural deficiency at the main trunk bifurcates into codominant leaders, this union is weak and there is a high risk of breakage. Even trying to address this defect would result in significantly affecting the trees height which will dramatically affect its appearance. This tree only has a moderate suitability for preservation. As a result, Menlo Park Fire Protection District believe it is best to remove the tree.

Tree #24 location impedes with the proposed Apparatus Drive aisle. Although the team has explored above grade paving to keep Tree #24 intact, the heavy weight of the apparatus driving daily over the roots may be impacted. Above grade paving is costly as it will require grade beams or piers. The above ground paving will also result in steep grades along the driveway which is not desirable.

As a result of the removal of Tree #24, a replacement tree will be planted on site, this project proposes the planting of a 36" Box Tilia tomentosa 'Sterling' : Silver Linden. This new tree will be planted on the plan north-west corner of the site in an existing planter area.

### **C. Environmental Review**

Since this project is not exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), it requires an Environmental Review. We respectfully request that the City retain an independent consultant to prepare an Initial Study for the project. Given that the



project involves an existing site currently occupied by Fire Station No. 01, we believe that the Initial Study will support the issuance of a Mitigated Negative Declaration. However, if the Initial Study determines that a Mitigated Negative Declaration is not appropriate, the project should proceed to the next applicable stage of the CEQA process in accordance with State guidelines.

#### **D. Zoning Amendment**

The current zoning does not align with project type or use. As part of this project we request for the property to re-zoned from R-1-S to P-F. The Fire Station and District Operation Center will be able to be accessed and utilized by the public and utilized to service the community. Since the project will be a public facility, this project requests a zoning amendment for this property to be zoned as PF, Public Facility, zone.

#### **E. Use Permit**

This project requests a use permit to allow for the use and storage of hazardous materials including a diesel emergency generator and large propane tank which will be utilized for training purposes by the Fire District. This project also requests a use permit to allow the maximum allowable floor area ratio to exceed the 60% FAR that is currently allowed by the Planning Commission Approval. This project requests to allow for 80% FAR. 60% FAR does not allow the Fire District adequate space to fulfill their current needs, 80% allows them to meet their current needs and allow for future growth in order to properly service the Menlo Park community.

Prior to the demolition of existing Fire Station No. 01 a temporary facility will be constructed at a different MPFD property, 114 Santa Margarita. This site will house temporary trailers and an App Bay tent. The facility will be utilized until the completion of the new Fire Station No. 01. This temporary facility is being submitted to the City and is included in this application.

#### **F. Signage Review**

This project is submitting proposed signage for the Fire Station and Administration Building, there will be no signage at the Training Tower. This project request review of signage and ultimately to receive a signage permit from the City.

#### **G. Amendment to General Plan**

As part of this project, we are requesting the property to be re-zoned to PF zone. Properties within the P-F zoning district are allowed: *The floor area ratio shall not exceed thirty percent (30%), except that sixty percent (60%) may be allowed with*



use permit approval on sites with a lot area of two (2) acres or less. In order to meet the needs of the Fire Protection District, FAR above 60% is required.

Due to the extensive programmatic needs of the Fire District to serve their community, approximately 75% FAR is required. This allows for a state of the art training tower to be utilized by the entire Fire District to train their staff and prepare for emergencies. The

height required of the Training Tower adds gross square footage to the FAR that is vital for the Fire District and their community members. Since this project will serve as a training center, administration headquarters, and Fire Station, ample space is needed simply to house and protect the Fire Apparatus. Substantial square footage is dedicated to Apparatus Bays which are vital for prompt emergency response.

This project is requesting an allowable FAR of 80%. This will allow the Fire District to construct the buildings they need to properly service the community. This will also allow for a small remaining percentage to allow for any necessary future growth.

The District explored options for keeping administration and/or fire prevention staffing at their current locations, however due to space limitations a significant renovation would be required along with a lot merger. The estimated cost to keep the office personnel at 170 Middlefield and 114 Santa Monica would exceed \$10 million and would not provide the needed space for growth. In addition, it is highly desirable to the Fire District to have all administrated personnel located at the same location with a preference to be at 300 Middlefield alongside the training division personnel.

### **Neighborhood Outreach**

On 6/24/24 the Fire District met with representatives from Saint Patrick's Seminary including Father Doherty to discuss the Fire Station 1 project. The Fire District provided and discussed initial site plans and elevations. The discussion revolved around fencing, tree replacement, project phasing, and project duration. The project was well received by the representatives of St Patrick's Seminary. We discussed the District's plan for ongoing emergency response operations during construction and the possible placement of trailers on Saint Patrick's Seminary's property as well as replacement tree planting on their property to provide screening and to reduce noise. The Team has put together a package for St Pat's review and comment which includes, architectural, civil, landscape, and electrical site plans demonstrating the proposed temporary facility. The package also includes images and information for each of the tree species proposed to be planted on their property and options for fence design. Finally, the



package includes renderings of Fire Station No. 1 from the vantage point from St. Pats. St. Pats has reviewed the information provided and has provided their initial response which was included in a prior resubmittal.

In October 2025, a project flyer (previously provided in a prior planning submittal) and invitation was mailed to properties within a 700' radius. In addition, Staff went door to door and talked with several neighbors along Santa Monica Avenue. On November 10, 2025 the District held a neighborhood meeting at Fire Station 1 to present the project to the community and to obtain feedback from our neighbors.

### **Site Improvements**

The site includes twelve secure parking spaces to accommodate the overlapping change of shift, along with five parking spaces for district owned trailers. Parallel parking will be available for public use along Santa Monica Ave. One accessible parallel stall is provided to the south of the Fire Station.

Underground parking can also be used by emergency personnel if needed. 76 total stalls (52 standard stalls, 3 accessible (1 EV), and 21 standard stalls) are provided underground for the office personnel and District vehicles, approximately 50 parking stalls are currently needed for staff. The remaining parking is available for board members, overflow and future growth. During public events the underground parking can be made available to the public in order to reduce offsite street parking. The new sidewalk along Santa Monica Ave is proposed to be located within the public right-of-way.

A new stationary generator would be located onsite in the middle of the lot which shall provide emergency power to all structures onsite in the event of a power outage. A new 1000-gallon above ground diesel fuel storage tank would be located adjacent to the emergency generator. The fuel storage tank would be used for refueling of fire engines and powering the generator. A second 1000-gallon unleaded fuel tank would be located adjacent to the diesel fuel tank for the fueling of the District's vehicles. The site would also include a 1000-gallon propane tank to fuel class B live fire training inside the training building.

To accommodate the construction of the new fire station, all 23 of the existing trees on the subject site are proposed to be removed. Twenty-one of the trees are classified as heritage trees and one is classified as a street tree. The tree inventory is comprised of



four American sweetgum, four coast live oaks, two little leaf linden, one north California black walnut, four Monterey cypress, seven olive tree, and one saucer magnolia. The trees to be removed would be replaced with new trees planted primarily along the street and property lines. Proposed trees to be planted include California buckeye,

American smoke tree, Deodar cedar, Canary island pine, Coast live oak, Cork oak, Fruitless Chinese pistache, Eastern redbud multi-trunk, California wax myrtle.

Planted areas would be mulched and irrigated with a low volume irrigation system.

### **Construction Activities**

Project construction is anticipated to occur over a four-and-a-half-year period, and the fire station would continue to operate throughout the construction process. Construction would be broken into the following seven major phases:

- ❖ Phase 1: Construct off-site temporary facility. Personnel to move out of fire station and into completed temp facility.
  - Estimated duration: 1 month
- ❖ Phase 2: Contractor to occupy site and demolish all existing buildings and site featured.
  - Estimated duration: 1 month
- ❖ Phase 3: Perform site grading and excavation
  - Estimated duration: 2 months
- ❖ Phase 4: Construct the underground parking garage
  - Estimated duration: 4 months
- ❖ Phase 5: Construct the new fire station, office/storage building and training building.
  - Estimated duration: 28 months
- ❖ Phase 6: Construct sidewalks, walkways, paving, landscaping, and install fuel tanks and generator.
  - Estimated duration: 2 months
- ❖ Phase 7: Move personnel into the new fire station, remove temporary structures, and complete site improvements.
  - Estimated duration: 2 months

END OF PROJECT DESCRIPTION