

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** CHRIS SEARS, MAYOR  
**CC:** DAIRAIN BURKE, ACTING TOWN CLERK  
**FROM:** THOMAS HAROWSKI, AICP, PLANNING CONSULTANT  
**SUBJECT:** POLICE STATION/FIRE STATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
**DATE:** AUGUST 7, 2017

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As you requested I have developed a summary of actions related to the construction of a new police station for the Town in conjunction with a new fire station to be provided by Lake County. The Lake County program for construction of the replacement fire station anticipates a five year lead time to reach the point where construction is anticipated, so this report will assume a five-year lead time for both facilities. This report is designed to set out a pathway to construction by looking at site options, the specific facility needs for police and fire services, the development of a joint use agreement between the Town and Lake County, and options for re-use of the current Town police station.

In a meeting with Lake County fire service personnel, the Mayor determined that there was interest on the part of the County in doing a joint project that could be mutually beneficial to both parties. The key initial determination from the fire service is that a fire station location close to the core area of Howey-in-the-Hills would meet the service requirements in terms of response times for fire and EMT services. Typically fire station locations are constrained to some degree by the need to reach the most remote points in the station's service area within a designated response time. Apparently, a location in Howey-in-the-Hills is within the service area standards for the proposed fire station. The police station location has more locational discretion as police calls for service typically respond from a patrol zone rather than a fixed central point.

The following sections provide some detail on potential sites, the planned development program, the interlocal agreement for the site, and potential re-use for the current police station site. The recommended steps to proceed from this point are listed below, and these items need to begin concurrently as some of the decisions are interlocking.

### SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

1. **Initiate review and discussion on potential sites** with the initial effort to include:
  - Number Two Road

- Venezia
- Lake Hills

The key item for the Number Two Road site is the purchase price. The key item for the Venezia site is to determine if the site can accommodate the needed public safety facilities. The key item for the Lake Hills site is the willingness of the owner to make the site available and the potential cost of the site.

2. **Work on the site development program.** This effort includes developing a building program for the fire service and police use and determining what common facilities can be included. Ultimately the Town may want to prepare a concept design for each of the sites under consideration. The site development program will be an important input to the potential for the Venezia site to be used. The Venezia site has the advantage of no acquisition cost, but it still must be able to accommodate the planned development program.
3. **Begin negotiations on an interlocal agreement between the Town and Lake County.** The parameters included in this agreement will be important in determining who will take the lead in site acquisition, site planning and building design.

## POTENTIAL PUBLIC SAFETY SITES

The initial step in finding a site for a public safety facility is to determine the minimum size requirements for the facility. The initial discussions with Lake County fire service personnel is that they anticipate a site of approximately 2.5 acres. At this point we do not have information regarding the site improvements included in this site size estimate. The estimated site may include items such a stormwater retention, parking and other site elements which may be jointly used resulting in a somewhat smaller minimum site size. The County likely has a standard fire station design which should be obtained by the Town so that the specific building program can be identified. The police station needs are less well developed at this point. A previous analysis using a population standard yielded a station size of approximately 3,000 square feet to support a population of 4,700. The addition of another acre to the 2.5-acre fire station estimate should allow for a police station of 3,000 to 5,000 square feet plus parking, landscaping and stormwater retention. Going forward, this report will assume an estimated site size of 3.5 acres until a more refined estimate can be prepared.

### Site Options

The initial discussion at the Town Council focused on three potential sites for a replacement police station. These sites included the current police station location, the two-acre public parcel reserved in the Venezia South development, and the approximately nine-acre site located on Number Two Road at Mare Avenue. The minimum size needs outlined above likely excludes the current police station site. The Venezia site might be considered depending on the specific design for the property. The City of DeBarry recently opened a facility which includes a 3-bay fire station, and sheriff's

substation, parking and stormwater on a site that is just under two acres. This site does not use a combined building, but both facilities are on the parcel. Experience suggests that the Venezia site should remain in consideration.

The Number Two Road site will meet the minimum site needs even after deductions for wetlands, right-of-way dedication on Number Two Road and right-of-way dedication on Mare Avenue. There are, however, other site options that might be considered. One site option is the Lake Hills development at SR 19 and CR 48. The project has an approved development plan which includes a 19-acre institutional site located at the northwest corner of the project. The Village Mixed Use land use classification requires multiple types of land use be included in a project and institutional use could be one of these. Other VMU projects including The Reserve and Mission Rise could be additional site options. Before settling on the Number Two Road site, it might be prudent to examine these VMU projects to determine if there are options that exist within these projects.

### **Site Comparisons**

To examine these site options, I have developed a matrix of site criteria to serve as an initial site assessment. As design needs become more specific, the individual site considerations could change, and there is still information to be gathered about the sites. A brief discussion of each criterion is offered below along with some considerations regarding the individual sites.

**Future Land Use:** The Village Mixed Use Parcels require a combination of land uses based on residential development but also requiring non-residential activity as part of the development program. The Lake Hills PUD includes both commercial and institutional development sites and The Reserve includes commercial development on the SR 19 frontage. The Mission Rise project does not propose commercial development, but it does offer the opportunity to look at sites on both SR 19 and Number Two Road, although both locations are at the extreme end of the Towns development area. The comprehensive plan defines institutional uses as including police and fire stations, so the institutional use designated in the Lake Hills PUD fits the comprehensive plan definition. The Number Two Road site is Medium Density Residential which allows community facilities and elementary schools in addition to residential uses. To be absolutely sure the Number Two road site is consistent with the comprehensive plan, the site should be changed to Institutional land use on the future land use map.

**Zoning:** Any of the sites other than possibly the Lake Hills and Venezia sites will require some zoning work. Since the Lake Hills PUD designates a 19-acre institutional use site, and public safety complex could be located within this area without a zoning change. The Venezia site is reserved for a public use. The Number Two Road site will need to be rezoned to Institutional (INS) to support a public safety complex. For the other two potential sites, the approved PUD agreements will need to be reviewed to determine if revisions are necessary.

CRITERION	NUMBER TWO ROAD	VENEZIA	LAKE HILLS	MISSION RISE	THE RESERVE
Future Land Use	Med. Density	VMU	VMU	VMU	VMU
Zoning	MDR-2	MPUD	PUD	PUD	PUD
Parcel Size (4 ac.+)	Yes	No	Yes	TBD	TBD
Access	Minor Collector	Minor Arterial	Major Collector	Minor Arterial Minor Collector	Minor Arterial
Water Available	Yes	Yes	Extend	Extend	Yes
Sewer Available	Extend	Yes	Extend	Extend	Extend
Cost	TBD	None	TBD	TBD	TBD
Meets Time Frame	Yes	Yes	Yes	TBD	TBD
Meets Service Area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Parcel Size:** This criterion simply establishes a threshold of 4-acres that can be made available to support the public safety complex. The Lake Hills and Number Two Road sites clearly meet this requirement. Mission Rise will require a re-work of the proposed residential development areas to support a public safety site, but the land is available. The Reserve plan calls for commercial uses along the SR 19 frontage, and some of this area could be re-designated for public safety use. As noted earlier, research has identified a public safety complex built on a two-acre site.

**Access:** Access identifies that the site is accessible from an arterial or collector road. All the sites have this access.

**Water Available:** This criterion notes whether potable water is available to the site. The extension of water to the Lake Hills site is relatively short, and The Reserve may also require some extension depend on where the specific site is located along SR 19. The Venezia site already has the services available.

**Sewer Available:** this criterion notes that sewer service will need to be extended to any of these sites. To the extent that the sewer extensions can be done in conjunction with other site development may help reduce some cost.

**Site Cost:** The Number Two Road site is on the market and there is a sense that the site can be purchased for less than \$90,000 but a purchase price will still need to be negotiated. Discussions with the owners of the other properties will be needed to determine the cost parameters of these sites. Since these projects are still in the early development stage, the Town does the option of seeking a site dedication in exchange for other modifications to the PUD agreement or overall development program. The presence of an institutional use contributes to the compliance of these projects with the Village Mixed Use land use

requirements and that factor may add some value to the inclusion of a public safety facility within the project. The Venezia site is already subject to conditional dedication.

**Meets Time Frame:** this criterion tests whether the site can be made available within the projected 5-year time frame. As a practical matter, the site will need to be chosen sooner in the anticipated time frame to allow time for site planning and building design.

**Meets Service Area:** As noted in the discussion above, the fire station component needs to be located so that it provides the necessary response times to meet the fire/EMT response standards. We believe these sites meet this test, but as only the Number Tow Road site has been specifically discussed with the County fire service, this factor needs to be confirmed.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The public safety development program requires the assembly of information on the specific space and site configuration for fire service and police services, including those elements which can serve both uses. This analysis assumes the Lake County Fire Service has a standard fire station floor plan that can be adapted to the joint use site. The design will need to be based on the number of bays required and the support facilities that will be required based on the staff expected to be assigned to the facility by Lake County. The Town should obtain any information Lake County may have available regarding the floor plan for a fire station so that we will have information on floor area allocations that can be used as an input to site design.

The Town's police station needs have been calculated based on a gross floor area standard per 1,000 population. As the Town moves forward with a plan to replace the existing station, the Town should have an architect experienced in working with police operations do a conceptual floor plan that can be integrated with the fire station and shared common facilities. Developing a floor plan for anticipated department size and functions will sharpen the building needs and contribute to the understanding of the site needs.

So far as common facilities are concerned, these should be maximized for both operations and site needs. The more functions that can be incorporated in a common use area, the more cost saving will accrue to each party. A review of programs in other communities suggests that community meeting facilities are often included in public safety buildings, however, as Howey-in-the-Hills is planning to address this need in the library expansion, this is an item that would not be required. The following table lays out some functions that would be allocated to individual uses and functions that could be considered for joint use. Hopefully this listing can serve as an initial point for discussion.

Fire Service	Shared Facilities	Police Service
Administration	Public Access	Administration
Equipment Bays	Waiting Area	Operations
Equipment Storage	Conference	Equipment Storage
Staff Support	Training Rooms	Staff Support
	Fitness	Detention
	EOC	Evidence Storage
	Building Maintenance	Sally Port
Drive Through Bay Access	Public Parking	Employee Parking
Employee Parking	Storm Water retention	Police Vehicle Parking
	Landscaping	Garage
	Trash Disposal	

For police and fire functions staff support includes locker rooms, showers, break rooms, sleeping (fire), cooking (fire) and associated storage for both men and women. Other space within the police service area will depend on the functions performed locally such as detective services, youth services, victim advocacy and similar functions which are sometimes conducted as local police services. The shared facilities are intended to maximize the functions and building area that can be use by both parties. The shared facilities assume the interlocal agreement will provide for common janitorial and building maintenance functions.

## INTERLOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

A jointly developed and jointly operated public safety facility will need to be based on a clearly defined set of responsibilities negotiated at the outset of the process. Having an agreement in place that allocates functions and responsibilities will go a long way to ensuring a smoothly running facility. The discussions leading to an interlocal agreement should begin at the earliest possible point so that the agreement covers all the predevelopment responsibilities in addition to the longer-range operating responsibilities. An initial list of items to consider include the following:

- Who will be responsible for land acquisition?
- How will land acquisition costs be shared in the overall program?
- Who will ultimately own the building?
- Who will be responsible for taking the lead in the design process for both the building and for site development?
- Who will be responsible for bidding, inspection and construction management?
- What process will be used for approval of design and construction plans?
- How will construction costs be allocated?
- How will change orders and cost over-runs be managed?
- Who is responsible for ongoing maintenance of the building and grounds?

- How are routine maintenance costs shared?
- How will costs be shared for major component replacement such as the roof or air conditioning?
- Who will be responsible for daily administration of the facility common areas and scheduling for joint use facilities?
- How will the agreement be modified if necessary?

## OPTIONS FOR THE CURRENT POLICE STATION

If the Town is successful in working through a joint public safety facility, the current police station will become surplus at some point. As part of the planning process the Town should consider alternative uses for the facility. It will be very difficult to separate a parcel based on the police station from the other Town holdings in the block. The parcel is zoned Public along with Town Hall, the library and Central Park. The future land use map designates the block as Town Center Commercial. For any use other than a public use that property will need to be rezoned, and the zoning to Town Center Commercial is the classification consistent with the comprehensive plan. The TC-C dimensional requirements speak only to building height and a maximum floor area ratio. This zoning gives the Town the maximum freedom in carving out a parcel if desired, but any parcel still needs to be marketable in terms of accommodating a building, parking and stormwater retention.

Some options for re-use or replacement are discussed below. Having an existing police and fire station that can continue service while a new facility is constructed avoids the need to consider temporary relocation of these operations. However, current timelines anticipate construction of a replacement facility four to six years out. Thus, the re-use replacement discussion for the current police station is not on the critical path for the project.

- Demolish the current station and replace it with parking.
- Demolish the current police station to allow for expansion of Town Hall and some added parking.
- Demolish the current police station to allow area for park expansion.
- Modify the current police station as part of a program for the expansion of Town Hall.
- Renovate the current police station and parking area and lease the site as a private business opportunity.
- Create a parcel based on the police facility and sell it for private use.

A lease or sale of a parcel for private use will result in some additional taxable value to the Town. This potential revenue needs to be balanced against the value of the other non-revenue producing options. A private use will also have the benefit of creating some potential synergy for other core area businesses.