

Fire Training Facility  
3000 E. Belt Boulevard  
Richmond, VA 23234

The City of Richmond tasked Greeley and Hansen to relocate the City's aging Fire Training Facility at Richmond Airport in Henrico County and design a new facility that will be constructed at 3000 East Belt Boulevard in Richmond. The property is owned by the City of Richmond and only a portion of the property will be designated for the new facility. The proposed site is approximately 1.97 acres on abandoned recreational fields at the grounds of the Hickory Hill Community Center.

The site is bounded by the north and west by heavily wooded areas. The site can be access from East Belt Boulevard which bounds the east side of the site. Existing residences are located opposite of the proposed site across East Belt Boulevard. The existing Hickory Hill Community Center bounds the southern portion of the site. CSX/AMTRAK railroad is on the west side of the property just past the wooded area. The site is well screened by the wooded areas on the north and west side of the property.

The Fire Training Facility will consist of an approximately 1.17-acre concrete apron for fire trucks to maneuver, small training building, ornamental fence surrounding the site, site lighting, landscaping that includes tree and shrub planting, and required stormwater facilities. Details of the site are as follow:

- This is a part-time training facility
- The site will be secured with an ornamental fence and gate.
- The site will be buffered by existing wooded area and new landscape trees.

Construction is anticipated to begin in May 2023 and conclude in May 2024. This project will be funded by the City of Richmond Public Works and by a grant received for the structure on the site. Grant for funding of the building requires that the project be awarded before June 1, 2023 and construction be completed by June 1, 2024. Funding for all other work is funded by the City of Richmond Depart of Public Works.

Attached are two letters describing how the facility will operate.



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Fire and Emergency Services

November 14, 2022

Board of Zoning Appeals  
900 East Broad Street Room 108  
Richmond, VA 23219

Mr. Roy Benbow:

This letter is to provide clarification regarding the potential use of the Hickory Hill Community Center site, located at 3000 East Belt Boulevard, by the Richmond Fire and Emergency Services Department. The operations of the Fire Training Division varies greatly depending upon the type of training being conducted. Below is a breakdown of our activity levels during various training and operational evolutions.

#### **Recruit Training**

Our recruit academy typically lasts between 20 - 26 weeks, and we train up to thirty recruits at a time with six instructors supervising various activities. Training is broken into two major categories: Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Fire Training Certification. All of our training will be conducted during normal business hours 8:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday.

EMT is 11 weeks of classroom training with practical/skill evolutions being conducted in a classroom environment. At no time will any noise impact the local neighborhood. The second half of training is our Fire Training Certification Program. This typically consists of half classroom and half practical/skill evolutions. During this phase we will be conducting all required practical/skill evolution training for certification outside on the training ground two to three days per week. Most of this training will have minimal noise levels outside of the immediate training ground area and should not impact the surrounding neighborhood. Some of the fire recruit training ground activities that have minimal noise levels are listed below:

- SCBA Training – our air packs sound similar to a smoke detector going off. This occurs when our personal alert safety system device activates during training activities.
- Forcible Entry Training – there will be repetitive metal on metal striking sounds.
- Ventilation Training – there will be gasoline powered saws being used.

During the recruit training program we are required by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs

to conduct two weeks of live burns. Each week will include four days in our burn building containers. This will produce some smoke in the immediate area and the noise level will be minimal based on fire ground activities discussed above.

We also use theatrical smoke during our recruit training. This smoke is non-toxic but may be seen by the surrounding neighborhood. The use of sirens or air horns on the fire trucks will not be allowed during any of the training evolutions. The only time a resident may here sirens is if our companies are responding to an emergency from the facility. We typically only conduct one recruit training a year, but we could have more based on the city's need.

### **Incumbent Training**

The training staff attempts to conduct two department wide incumbent training programs a year. They will include multiple fire companies reporting to the facility during business hours and the noise level of these activities will be minimal. This training usually takes two months. Theatrical smoke may be used during this time when needed, but not sirens and air horns.

Each fire company is required to conduct 18 hours of training at our facility each year in order for the City to maintain the Class 1 Insurance Service Office rating. This Facility Training is typically led by the Station's Company Officer. This training can be conducted some nights and on weekends. There will be specific rules for night training that will minimize the level of noise coming from the training ground. Any training conducted on weekends could include the same level of noise as discussed above and could include theatrical smoke on rare occasions.


### **Normal Operations**

Although we do conduct a lot of training at our facility, there are plenty of days where there will be no practical/skill evolutions on the training ground. During classroom sessions, there may be occasional fire apparatus parked on the training ground while members are inside. Even when we are in the middle of recruit or incumbent training, there will typically be at least one day a week with no practical/skill evolution training being conducted on the training ground.

We will likely have several shipping containers on site to store our equipment. These containers will be located in close proximity to our burn building and training props, are kept in good repair, and will be secured nightly after use.

The Richmond Fire Training Division has always prided ourselves on being respectful neighbors in our community. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my Executive Officer at 804-564-7425.

Sincerely,



Melvin D. Carter, Chief of Fire

Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Services



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Fire and Emergency Services

November 14, 2022

Urban Design Committee  
900 East Broad Street Room 510  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Mr. Raymond Roakes:

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Sincerely,  


Melvin D. Carter, Chief of Fire  
Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Services