



Norwalk Fire Department

Headquarters Building Project

Case Statement

The current Fire Department Headquarters, located at 121 Connecticut Avenue, was built in 1963 in a different era of public safety. In the last 50 years, the population in the City has increased by 30%. The Fire Department has also grown to meet the diverse needs of the City. The services provided by the Department continue to evolve to meet the challenges of Emergency response in the 21st century. **The current Fire Headquarters at 121 Connecticut Avenue no longer meets the public safety needs of our community.**

Does the Fire Department need a new Headquarters? Yes

The existing HQ building is increasingly expensive to maintain. Fuel for heat and air conditioning is very expensive in this inefficient building. The building needs too much work to bring up to code, to make it energy efficient, to create more useable work and meeting spaces or to create a facility that will serve the city very well for the next 50 years.

Structural problems will continue to plague the existing facility. The apparatus floors will continue to settle and sink, pulling down interior walls and causing damage to building services. The electrical and plumbing infrastructure as well as the main heating plant continue to deteriorate and would be very expensive to replace.

Although a larger site would be better than the existing Volk site we decided that the city could not afford to buy commercial property to relocate the facility. In 2008, the Fire Department conducted a study to look at options for the headquarters, the study concluded that ***“A new, properly designed, low maintenance, long-life, sustainable structure is the recommendation for the most viable, cost-effective option for Norwalk to solve the inadequacies of the current Volk station”***

Is the Fire Department building more than it needs? No

The goal is to build a station that is capable of serving the Department needs for the next 50 years. When the existing HQ was built there wasn't Hazardous Materials Team. There wasn't SCBA or an air compressor/bottle filling station. There wasn't a Tactical Rescue. EMS did not require a decontamination shower. We did not have a gear washer or exercise equipment. Apparatus was much smaller and less specialized. In addition, there wasn't training spaces or an Emergency Operations Center to manage responses. The department staffing was different as well. While we cannot predict what the service needs are in 20 or 50 years, we have prudently designed in additional office, firefighter and equipment space into the building.

In 2010, the City hired architect Dennis Pacheco and David Ross, principals of Pacheco Ross Associates to design the new building. Planning for the new headquarters has involved staff from all divisions who contributed to the design of the building and helped ensure it would meet current and future needs of the Department.

WE ARE DESIGNING A NEW FIRE HEADQUARTERS TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY FAR INTO THE FUTURE.

WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND, THE NEW BUILDING WILL:

- Consolidate all administrative staff and services. Will move the Fire Marshal's office from Fairfield Ave into the new building to support easier and effective collaboration.
- Create a facility that is LEEDS Silver certified to be able to reduce the carbon footprint of the Fire Department
- Create a modern facility for training for firefighters and providing safety education for the community.
- Enable the Divisions to conduct more training and preparedness programs for community groups.
- Allow space for growth for future Department staff and programs.
- Create a modern and secure Information Technology Data center for the City and School system.

Project Budget

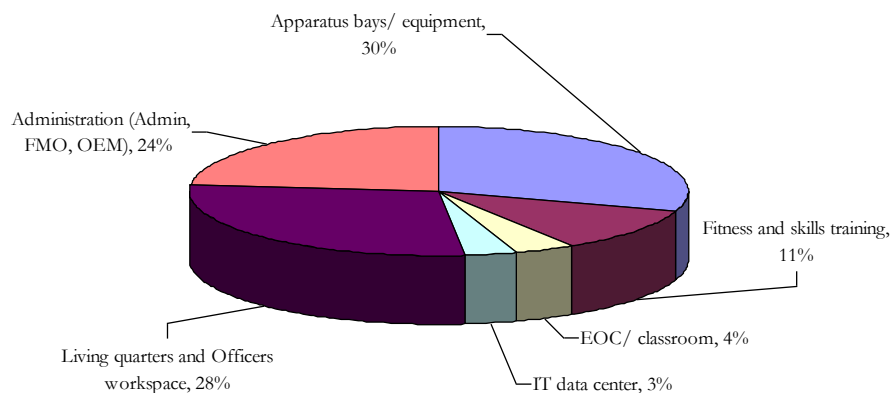
The overall budget for this project is \$14 million dollars. This building is being funded through the City's capital budget and funds have been set aside over 2 fiscal years. In addition, the City was awarded a \$1 million grant for the Emergency Operation Center through FEMA.

Project Timeline:

The plan is to complete the building in June 2013. Some of the significant milestones for the new headquarters project include:

- Hazard remediation and demolition of current Headquarters: December 2011- March 2012
- Project site preparation and Foundation: April-June 2012
- Structural envelope and exterior: July 2012- January 2013
- Interior finishes, furnishing and equipment: January -April 2013
- Project completion and move-in: June 2013

Allocation of space in new Headquarters



For questions, please contact Fire Chief Denis McCarthy at 203-854-0230 or dmccarthy@norwalkct.org

