



# Memorandum

**TO:** MAYOR REED  
**SUBJECT:** FIRESTATION 33

**FROM:** Councilmember Madison P. Nguyen  
**DATE:** May 21, 2009

Approved

Date

*Madison Nguyen* LM

5/21/2009

## RECOMMENDATION

That the following recommendation be enacted.

## BACKGROUND

On August 9, 2006, City staff had a groundbreaking ceremony for Fire Station 33 on Communications Hill. It is approximately 6,200 square feet, two-story, two-bay apparatus, single company fire station on a half an acre site. It was completed and opened in September 2007.

Fire Station 33 was built through an agreement between KB Homes, developer of Communications Hill and the City. According to the report from San Jose Fire Department Chief Darryl Von Raesfeld, KB Homes paid a total of \$5,773,450 to build Fire Station 33. An additional \$622,000 was paid to purchase furniture, equipment and a fire engine. Residents on Communications Hill paid a special tax of about \$6,988.54 per household unit to build the fire station.

Fire Station 33 is located in a fairly new and relatively small development. The primary reason why this fire station was built on top of Communications Hill is due to its unique location. The top of the hill is windy almost every day. If a structure fire were to occur in a building equipped with sprinklers, the fire still has the potential to spread very rapidly. This type of wind-driven fire can be very dangerous to both residents and firefighters. There have been many firefighter deaths in wind-driven fires across the country. This is one more reason to keep a strong firefighting force on top of the hill. A rapid response will make a difference in containing even a small fire.

Fire Station 33, like other fire stations in the City of San Jose is designated a "Safe Place" and "Safe Surrender" site, and also utilized for bicycle licensing, voter registration applications, voting, ride-along access, and station tours. These activities not only affect the residents of Communications Hill but the entire City.

The 2008-2009 Adopted Operating Budget discussed the addition of Fire Station 33 as a step to improve the San Jose Fire Department's response time performance in more densely populated areas experiencing infill development. Multiple emergency incidents happen across the City at the same time, such as car accidents, heart attacks, fires, and many other life threatening events. Fire Station 33 is constantly being used for coverage when larger incidents happen within the City of San Jose. Fire fighters drive the engine off the hill and park it at another Fire Station, such as Fire Station 13 while the trucks from Fire Station 13 and trucks

from other stations respond to a three-alarm fire. Fire Station 33 is in an important position of providing coverage to the unprotected part of the city.

Fire Station 13, the nearest station to Communications Hill would take approximately 8 minutes to go up the hill without the use of sirens or flashing lights. If an incident occurs on Communications Hill while Fire Station 13 is busy responding to another call for service, the residents would have to depend on the next nearest fire station which may come from a farther part of the City which could take an additional 5 minutes of travel time. This additional time to respond to an emergency on the hill could be detrimental to the life of one person, family or community.

This request is intended to retain the flexibility to access funds for the operation of Fire Station 33 in the amount of \$1,718, 000. This funding request would allow the continued public safety coverage of Communications Hill as well as surrounding areas.

### **City-Council Initiated Neighborhood Improvement Reserve Fund/Other Budget Proposals**

#### **Reinstatement**

Program/Project Title: Fire Station 33 Temporary Engine Company

Amount of City Funding Required: \$1,718,000

Fund Type: General Fund

Anticipated Outcomes: Requested funding changes would affect benefits or services for San José residents, businesses, community groups, etc., as described below:

Requested funds would affect public safety services for San Jose residents particularly those that reside within the boundaries of Communications Hill. These funds would ensure the continued operation and service delivery of Fire Station 33.

#### **Funding Sources**

Program/Project Title: Neighborhood Improvement Reserve Fund

Amount of City Funding Change: \$500,000

Fund Type: General Fund

Anticipated Outcomes: Requested funding changes would affect benefits or services for San José residents, businesses, community groups, etc., as described below: (Use as much space as required.)

The Mayor's Budget Message provides for a Neighborhood Improvement Reserve Fund for important services. This recommendation allocates \$500,000 from that fund.

Program/Project Title: General Fund Encumbrances

Amount of City Funding Change: \$1,218,000

Fund Type: General Fund

Anticipated Outcomes: Requested funding changes would affect benefits or services for San José residents, businesses, community groups, etc., as described below:

The City Council has received information that San Jose has encumbered funds to a much greater extent than other jurisdictions. This recommendation calls for spending \$1,218,000 from those encumbrances in cases where the funds are no longer needed.

Department or Organization Contact (Please list contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation.)

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Name: Geoff Cady, Acting Deputy Director, Bureau of Support Services

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This change is:

One-time       Ongoing

The City Service Area to which the change best relates:

- Community and Economic Development Services
- Environmental and Utility Services
- Neighborhood Services
- Public Safety
- Strategic Support
- Transportation and Aviation Services