I. INTRODUCTION

This section contains recommended criteria for the selection of a site for the Homer Police and Fire Departments.

The two departments are to occupy the same site and share certain facilities.

II. SITE SIZE AND CONFIGURATION

Size for long term need

The total facility requirements for the year 2034 need, including main buildings, ancillary facilities, are described in Section _____.

Additional areas required may include:

- Open space for required landscape
- Required setbacks (which might be part of the required landscape requirement)
- Site roads
- Future growth (beyond 2034)
- Design Contingency

These areas will vary depending on zoning requirements and site configuration.

Based on the example site diagrams illustrated in Section _____, the minimum total site area would be _____ sq. ft. or approximately _____ acres.

Site Proportions

Police and fire facilities have large parking and vehicle maneuvering needs which are most efficiently laid out in rectangular patterns. Therefore, triangular, or radically irregularly shaped properties are not efficient, and should be avoided, or must be larger in size.

Generally, a square or rectangular site is preferable. An approximate proportion of 2:3 would likely be suitable. Sites much longer than 2:1 could be problematic. Such sites land locked on the long sides between other properties, even with street access at both the narrow ends should be avoided. A site with 2:1 proportions might be considered if facing two streets. The concern is the need for long street frontage in front and behind apparatus bays, and the need for police access as well as public parking and entrance. (See also Police & Fire Access).

A simple “L” or “T” shape might be acceptable if dimensions of the projections are not too narrow.

The site should be readily accessible for fire and police vehicles, and should not be in locations where outgoing or returning vehicles are long delayed by heavy traffic (or a railroad, if there were one). A site at a street intersection that is signalized or has stop signs should be deep enough so the fire or police vehicles exiting the station are not hindered by stopped traffic.

III. LOCALE

Factors that should be considered in locating a police facility or a court include:

- Operational efficiency
- Security
- Public Access
- Image
- Adjacent Uses
- Zoning

Operational Efficiency

Assuming other criteria are met, a police facility could be located almost anywhere in the city. Unlike a fire station, a central location is not necessarily required for police operational efficiency. Generally, police vehicles are on the street when dispatched. A fire station should be reasonably central to the area it serves.

Security

Fire and Police facilities should be sited to avoid, to the extent possible, harm to its occupants, damage to the facility or disruption of operations by accident or mischief.

Facilities should be located in an open easily observable area. The perimeter of the site should not be surrounded by woods, unless there is at least a clear space between the buildings or fences and the wooded area.

Preferably, facilities would not be located among tall buildings where windows or roofs look down on operations. Locations where adjoining sites have numerous or complex building footprints which create concealed or partially concealed spaces adjacent to the facility should be avoided. Similarly, the site should not be sited on ground lower than adjacent property.

Because of the potential for toxic spills, fires, and explosions, and the possibility of sabotage from a partially concealed right of way, the facilities should not be located immediately adjacent to a highway, a viaduct or other raised structure.

Public Access

Police and fire facilities should be easily found and safely accessible by the public. The concept of a shared police and fire lobby is discussed in the Project Notes under Shared Spaces and Facilities.

Image

Some communities desire to have major public facilities centrally located in a civic center. This is convenient for the public, but perhaps more importantly; it brings a sense of place and importance to the community.

The character of a building design is certainly important, but the building location also makes a statement. The government or civic center concept might represent civic pride, while a location in or near a major shopping center might suggest another attitude; perhaps that of service. A location in an industrial area probably would not be as positive a connotation.

IV. STREET ACCESS AND PARKING

The Homer fire and police facilities will have four kinds of parking, including:

- Public Parking
- Official Parking
- Staff Parking
- Fire Volunteers

Public Parking

The public parking should be easily seen and readily accessible adjacent to the building public entrance. If the building should include a large meeting room, it is desirable that the public parking lot have two points of access. This will aide access to and egress from a busy lot.

Official Parking

The official parking should be in a fenced, secure area. To avoid the congestion of the public lot, the official parking should have its own point of access. This access should be on a street not subject to

heavy traffic to the point of grid lock. The access should also be far enough from a stop signed intersection to avoid traffic backups.

In the event of blockages of the main access, due to accidental or deliberate causes, a second access is desirable for the major facilities; preferably from a second street. For this reason, a site at a corner location is ideal. If only one street is available, the two accesses should be as far apart as possible. The second access could be through the public parking.

Staff Parking

Because police employee cars are sometimes subject to vandalism; and because of shift changes during dark hours, staff parking should also be in a fenced, secure area. This parking could be contiguous with official parking. Fire staff parking could also be in a secure area.

Volunteer Parking

Because volunteer fire fighters' private vehicles could also be subject to vandalism, a fenced area is recommended.

Impound Storage

Impound storage parking should be in a secure area, and concealed from the public so that vehicles cannot be damaged or otherwise affected.

V. TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

Topography

Because it is critical that the Police and Fire Departments remain operational during floods, the facilities should be located above the flood plain or potential tsunami. This is also important to avoid costly fill or the possibility of costly foundations. The site should not be in a swampy area, or below adjacent streets. Sites which rise slightly above adjacent streets offer the possibility of a better image for the facility.

A relatively flat site is preferable, though a slight slope for drainage is ideal. A site with a steep slope should be avoided. However, a site with 2 or 3 levels separated by steep slope might be considered for a multilevel facility – though fire apparatus access and egress at both sides of the facility could be problematic.

Soils

Fire and police facility are "Essential Facilities" and have more stringent structural requirements than a typical building. Therefore, good soil bearing characteristics are important for seismic as well as gravity loading. Sites with poor fill or near known seismic faults should be avoided.

Sites with substantial rock outcroppings should be avoided if possible, because of the additional excavation expense.

VI. UTILITIES

The site should be served by the normal utilities including water, telephone, electrical power, sanitary and storm sewers and if possible, natural gas.

Redundant Systems

A police and fire facility should remain operational during and after an emergency event, whether natural or man caused.

The building code classifies these buildings as an "Essential Facilities", and stipulates more stringent requirements for construction. For example, the ability to resist earthquakes is increased. Other improved or redundant systems to be considered include:

- Electric Power
- Potable Water
- Waste Water
- Communications
- Air Handling Systems

All of these items should be addressed during design of the facilities. Potable water might be considered during site selection. A backup water system could be provided by storage tanks. However, a site offering the possibility of an independent well would be desirable.