

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Cuyahoga Falls Fire Training Facility**

### **Q1 – Why is the City proposing a State of the Art Fire Training Facility?**

**To have the best trained department to protect the city.** A highly skilled and highly trained department is the best way to improve outcomes, whether it is saving a loved one from an EMS call or saving your house from a large structural fire. Training is the single most important task conducted by the CFFD to consistently improve service and keep our men and women in uniform safe on the job. Also, we are constantly competing with neighboring cities for new recruits who have a volume of fire departments to choose from when making employment related decisions. Knowing that we have the best training facility in our City will hopefully make the choice easy for them and their families who worry about their on-the-job safety.

### **Q2 – Wouldn't it be more practical to use someone else's facility?**

**No.** There are no facilities similar to this in Summit County. The logistics of regularly transporting crews and apparatus outside of the county make it impossible to depend on existing facilities to consistently train CFFD members. We are not the only department that realizes there is a regional critical need. Some 16 other area departments, along with the University of Akron, have expressed an interest in utilizing this new facility.

### **Q3 – Why does this facility have to be near Fire Station No. 4?**

**To Secure Public Safety.** Having this training facility next to a fire station is imperative because: 1) it gives CFFD much needed operational flexibility to keep response times down since crews will be able to train while on-duty; 2) the crews at station 4 can assist in trainings as needed; 3) it provides an additional EMS vehicle and crew for the area; 4) and this location provides additional security for the entire campus. The training facility will be a companion to the new fire station – they will operate and function together. Finally, the City will realize a cost savings due to efficiency, economies of scale and reduced construction/maintenance costs.

### **Q4 – What types of training will be conducted at the facility?**

**A Variety.** Primarily classroom and physical apparatus training (80-85% usage), along with controlled burn training (15-20% usage).

### **Q5 - Is the smoke being produced by the training tower safe?**

While generally, smoke is considered not safe, the smoke being emitted from the facility will be EPA sanctioned as safe for a specific purpose, namely training.

**Q6 - How much controlled burn smoke will be generated from the training facility?**

**Minimal.** The design of the training tower allows instructors to create a realistic training environment with minimal fire loads. Controlled training fires will consist of 2-3 normal sized wood pallets and some hay or straw. We anticipate the smoke generated to be less than that generated by a typical bonfire. Fire and smoke will be confined to 2 or 3 rooms in the 2-story component of the building, the “tower” portion will be isolated from both fire and smoke.

**Q7 – Will the controlled burn smoke negatively impact the air quality in the area?**

**No.** Permits from the EPA are required to operate controlled live-fire trainings and the CFFD will meet or exceed all applicable air quality standards. Only dry wood or straw will be used as fuel for all controlled fires built at this facility. These are the same fuels that are permitted in outdoor residential recreational fires.

**Q8 – Will controlled burn smoke enter the parks or neighborhoods?**

**No.** It is standard practice when conducting controlled live-fire trainings to postpone or cancel trainings if weather conditions will create an unsafe environment for the surrounding area. Specifically, if winds push smoke to nearby areas of concern (parks, schools, homes), controlled live-burn training will be suspended. This is an EPA rule that must be strictly followed.

**Q9 – How often will the training facility be used for controlled live-burn trainings?**

**Estimated 20-30 Days Per Year.** Although it is impossible to determine exactly how often the facility will be in use, we anticipate 20-30 controlled live-burn training days per year. It is important to note that this facility is capable of replicating all elements on the fire scene and many other rescue scenarios. We anticipate only 15%-20% of the training sessions held at the facility will be controlled live-fire based. And, the Planning Commission has enforced a maximum number of annual controlled live burn trainings that can occur on site.

**Q10 – Where will the water utilized on the training grounds go?**

A drainage system has been designed to not only capture, but also filter all of the water used on the training site. This water, that will eventually enter the stormwater catch basins, will be less harmful to the environment than the rain water that is currently captured as runoff from roads.

**Q11 – Will the training facility be available for other fire departments? Will this cause over-usage of the facility?**

**Yes.** Up to 16 area departments, including the University of Akron, have expressed an interest in utilizing the facility.

**No.** A maximum number of annual controlled live burns will be established, the CFFD will be responsible for scheduling all trainings at the facility and will not allow excessive usage. Also, a member of the CFFD will be on-site at all controlled live-burn trainings to assure the facility is not abused. Use by other area departments will generate revenue to offset the costs of the facility.

**Q12 – How will traffic be affected by this project?**

**Minimal.** A traffic study has been performed to assure that the entire project allows for safe traffic flow. The student capacity of this facility is 50, so the increase in traffic is expected to be minimal and ample parking spots will be available (78 total spots). All large apparatus utilizing the facility will be directed to park directly on the training grounds. The usage of lights and sirens is reserved for emergency responses to actual incidents and will not be a part of regular operations at this facility.

**Q13 – What will this facility look like?**

**See Attached Renderings.** The classroom portion of this project and the fire station have been carefully designed to reflect the surrounding area and complement the existing Northampton Town Hall and Northampton United Methodist Church. The training tower, while limited in design alternatives, offers many color options and features exterior components that closely resemble traditional residential aesthetics.

It is important to note that the site has been carefully designed to conceal the training tower as much as possible. Even before large trees are planted and matured, the training tower is almost completely obscured by the fire station at the street view from the intersection of West Bath Road and Woodhaven Drive.