

# CITY OF NORWALK

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

CHIEF JOHN SOISSON  
DIVISION OF FIRE  
(419) 663-6790

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Norwalk, OH 44857  
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August 26, 2015

As we move forward with the new Fire Station Project, it is important that we present a clear and factual message to the electorate of the City of Norwalk. The need for the project has been discussed since the 1960's. Since 2008, the Blue Ribbon Committee has spent countless hours discussing, debating, and formulating a plan to best accomplish our goal.

The enclosed packet contains the many talking points and facts regarding the need, design, and financial challenges that come with the construction of a new fire station for our community. In addition, preliminary drawings of the exterior appearance, interior layout, and plot plan are included. The purpose of this packet is to provide you the discussion points that have been addressed, and to supply consistent, factual information to the public.

Thank you to the many community leaders for serving on the Blue Ribbon Committee. I am grateful for your hard work and commitment in moving this project forward.

Sincerely,



John Soisson, Chief  
Norwalk Fire Department

**Construction of a New Fire Station**  
**Blue Ribbon Committee Recommendation**  
**Norwalk City Council**  
**September, 8 2015**

1. To construct a one-story fire station facility, approximately 16,500 square feet consisting of 5 double bays, administrative offices and living quarters on the property currently owned by the City of Norwalk located on Whittlesey Avenue, commonly referred to as the Home Lumber Property.
2. That the City submit to the electors of the City of Norwalk, the question of utilizing monies, not to exceed \$3.5 million, in the Capital Investment Trust Fund (CITF) for the purpose of acquiring, constructing and equipping a new fire station.

**Blue Ribbon Committee Members**

Wayne Babcanec  
Don Ballah  
Dave Bleile  
Tom Bleile  
Denny Camp  
Dave Caprara  
Joe Centers  
Mary Kay Cillo  
Dennis Doughty  
Rob Duncan  
Diane Eschen  
Steve Euton

Jay Ewell  
Ralph Fegley  
John Flickinger  
Jim Gerken  
Greg Graves  
Sharon Harwood  
Kevin Hipp  
Don Hohler  
Lisa Kaiser  
John Lendrum  
Tonia Maxwell  
Ed McClendon

Mike Meinke  
Bob Patusky  
Virginia Poling  
John Riley  
Tom Secor  
Jeff Smiley  
John Soisson  
Lorna Strayer  
Sheri Thomas  
Dwight Tkacht  
Fred Wiechers

**Station Design Committee**

Chief John Soisson  
Lt. Jamie Starcher

Lt. Aaron Lynch  
Firefighter Curt Stang

Firefighter Ben Luxon



## **FIRE STATION PROJECT 2015** **City of Norwalk, Ohio**



### **SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

#### **STATION DESIGN AND LOCATION**

The current fire station was built in 1912, with an addition constructed in 1970 for a total 9,376 square feet.

- Current station does not meet ADA, EEOC, NFPA and OSHA standards.
- Replacement apparatus won't fit in the doors.
- Purchases over the last 30 years have been altered to "fit" the building, not the community's needs.
- Proposed station is approximately 16,500 square feet consisting of 8,000 sf of apparatus area, 4,250 sf of administrative space, and 4,250 sf of living space.
- Station to be constructed at 108 Whittlesey Avenue (former Home Lumber Property) on five acres currently owned by the City of Norwalk.
- Current plans have cut over 4,000 sf off previous proposals to lower costs.

#### **COSTS TO BUILD AS DESIGNED**

Preliminary drawings as prepared by Architect Dan Frederick present a design using contemporary interpretation of Greek revival building. The layout is symmetrical and open, making efficient use of all spaces while limiting costs.

- Preliminary cost estimates are between \$175 and \$200 per square foot.

#### **REPURPOSING EXISTING FIRE STATION**

The City of Norwalk plans to use the existing station to support storage needs and parking for the Police Department and City Hall.

- Inside parking for police cruisers and undercover vehicles during inclement weather.
- Records storage on the second floor. Currently, many of the older files are being stored at the old rec center where there are problems with moisture damaging files.

#### **IMPACT ON OPERATING COSTS**

The new station will be far more efficient than the existing station.

- Energy efficient heating and cooling systems, doors, windows, and design will greatly improve efficiency. It is impossible to accurately project the utility costs until mechanical engineering is completed, however it is our hope that the costs won't increase dramatically due to the efficiency of the new building compared to the inefficiency of the current facility.
- New station will meet ADA, EEOC, NFPA and OSHA requirements requiring diesel exhaust removal system, isolated gear room, bathroom, and bedroom facilities.

## **IMPACT ON PERSONNEL AND PROGRAMS**

Our design objective is to be cost effective with a floorplan that isn't excessive, but will meet the needs of the City of Norwalk for the foreseeable future.

- Room in the apparatus bays for expansion to include additional heavy rescue, EMS, HazMat, and water rescue equipment.
- Currently we staff 18 full time firefighters; the new station can expand to support 28 to 30 full time staff.
- If ever called on to provide full EMS emergency services, we would have the necessary space to accommodate the apparatus and personnel.

## **IMPACT ON SAFETY OF COMMUNITY**

The primary mission of the Fire Department is the safety and welfare of the Citizens of the City of Norwalk, Bronson Township, and Norwalk Township. Providing emergency services requires the right equipment, proper maintenance of the equipment, and on-going training.

- The new station will allow for equipment purchases without limiting the available options due to lack of space.
- The new facility will have a dedicated training room and space within the bays to train on equipment. The better trained and equipped our firefighters are, the safer our citizens will be.
- The new station is centrally located within our response area from a population standpoint. The location allows for response time to a majority of our incidents to fall within the standards of NFPA 1710. This standard requires a response within four minutes for an engine company on a fire response or a basic life support unit on a medical emergency. If the demand for fire department services grows beyond the capability of the new station, small satellite stations will be used to reduce response times of first arriving units.

## **OTHER POTENTIAL BONUSES FOR THE COMMUNITY**

The benefits of a new station will be felt immediately throughout the community.

- City infrastructure is paramount to attract and retain business and industry. The safety and security provided by the City through the police, fire and EMS services impact our citizens daily. Having a new fire facility delivers on our commitment to public safety.
- Fire departments are judged and rated by the *Insurance Service Office (ISO)*. Departments are rated based on manpower, training, equipment, and response times. The ISO class determines insurance rates for most insurance companies. The new station will help maintain the City of Norwalk Class 4 ISO rating. As an example, the Class 4 rating and fire protection was important to meet the community standards Borger USA required when selecting Norwalk for a \$60 million investment.

## **OPTIONS FOR FUNDING A NEW FIRE STATION**

### **DECISION MAKING TO BUILD/FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS**

In 2008, a Blue Ribbon Committee of local business and community members was established to research and make recommendations to Norwalk City Council regarding the need for a new fire station in the City of Norwalk.

- In 2008, the committee recommended that a single central station be constructed to replace the current station, with a bond levy placed on the ballot in 2009 to finance the project.
- In 2009, the committee returned to council with a recommendation to table the project until the economy stabilized. The Blue Ribbon Committee, the Fire Chief, and Mayor have historically tried to position this much needed project within the parameters of what is best for the community.
- In January 2015, the Blue Ribbon Committee reconvened to revisit the project. After several meetings, additional research and lengthy discussion, the committee presented the following recommendations to city council:
  1. To construct a one-story fire station facility, approximately 16,500 square feet consisting of 5 double bays, administrative offices and living quarters on the property currently owned by the City of Norwalk located on Whittlesey Avenue, commonly referred to as the Home Lumber Property.
  2. That the City submit to the electors of the City of Norwalk, the question of utilizing monies, not to exceed \$3.5 million, in the Capital Investment Trust Fund (CITF) for the purpose of acquiring, constructing and equipping a new fire station.
  3. That the City, by ordinance, establish a policy of replenishing the Capital Investment Trust Fund.
- After a thorough review, Norwalk Law Director Stuart O'Hara removed council legislation pertaining to the recommendations prior to any vote due to the following:
  1. Ohio Revised Code section 5705.13 does not allow replenishment of reserve balance accounts.
  2. ORC section 57015.13 severely limits the ability of the city to establish other specified balance accounts for the purpose of saving towards future capital purchases. This determination was supported by the law firm of Squires, Patton, & Boggs.
- The Blue Ribbon Committee revised its recommendation to council to exclude provisions to replenish the fund.

**SECTION 7.09. CAPITAL INVESTMENT TRUST FUND.**

*Council shall create and maintain a Capital Investment Trust Fund. The balance of all monies received by the City from the sale of any public utility or real estate or interest in real estate owned by the City, after payment of any obligations of the City required to be paid from such monies, shall be paid into the Fund. Monies in the Fund may be expended, upon approval of a majority of the electors of the City voting at an election for such purpose, for which Council may provide by ordinance, to construct or acquire permanent improvements.*

*Any income resulting from the Fund shall be paid into the General Fund. (Amended November 5, 1991)*

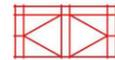
- Financial considerations before the electorate:
  1. Removal of \$3.5 million from the CITF will cause the loss of interest earnings payable to the general fund. At current interest rates, the estimated amount would be \$45,000 to \$70,000 annually.
  2. Inflationary times could create more interest income from CITF, however building costs and interest costs would rise proportionally.
  3. If a fire levy was proposed to the voters instead of using the CITF monies, interest for the 20 year bond would add approximately \$1.4 million dollars to the project.
  4. A fire levy would raise taxes by \$38.50 per \$100,000 property value.
- Pursuant to passage of legislation, the issue will appear on the ballot March 15, 2016, and requires a majority to pass.

# NORWALK FIRE DEPARTMENT

MAY 2015



WEST ELEVATION

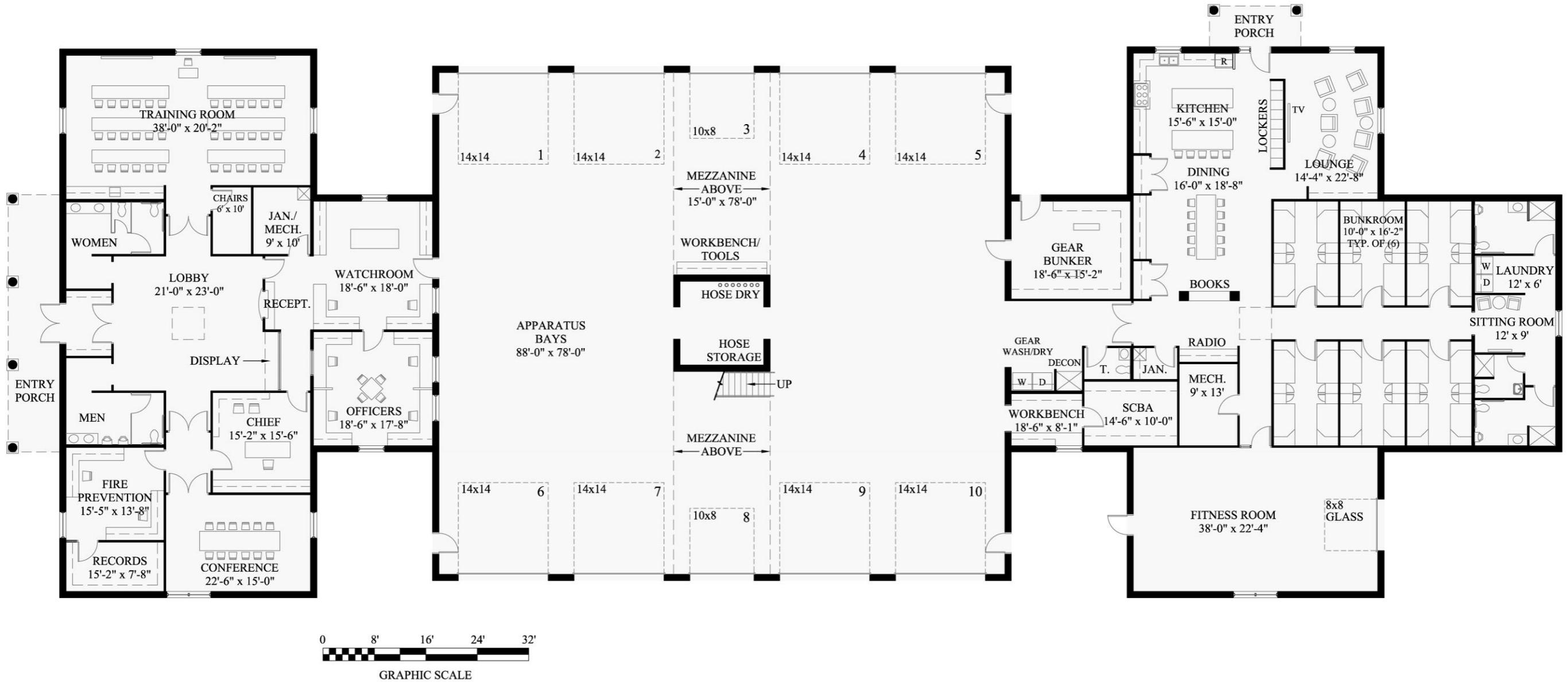


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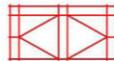
# NORWALK FIRE DEPARTMENT

JUNE 9, 2015



## FLOOR PLAN

16,573 SQUARE FEET



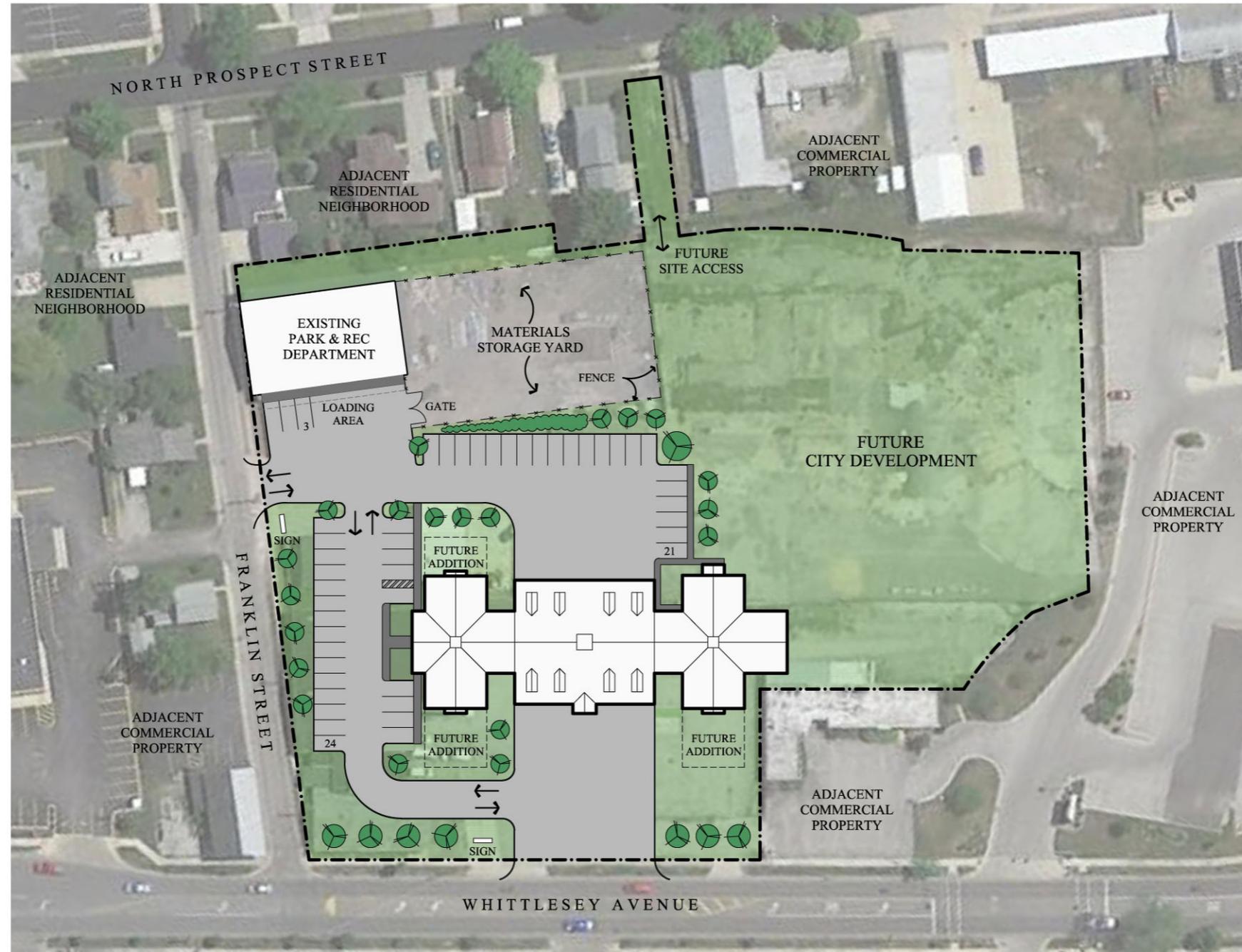
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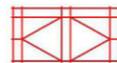
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JUNE 9, 2015



GRAPHIC SCALE

SITE PLAN



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