

January 12, 2017

To: Mayor Knight & Valdez City Council Members
From: Lisa Von Bargen, CED Director
Jason Miles, Capital Facilities Director
Re: Proposed City Facilities Development & Related Land Acquisition

The City has been contemplating additional facility development and the need, if any, of land acquisition to accommodate this infrastructure. At the January 3rd meeting Council and staff held an initial discussion about the newly proposed option designed to maximize the use of existing City property rather than acquiring new land. The Council requested staff further vet this idea and answer a number of questions related to the four need currently “on the table” which include 1) new fire station; 2) additional storage capacity for the City and other agencies; 3) snow storage in the north Meals Avenue area; and 4) Police impound lot. The Department Directors provided background information which has been used in the development of this memo.

Fire Station

On January 3rd the Council asked for staff to consider splitting the new Fire Department from the proposed training facilities. The Fire Chief provided the following information regarding the pros and cons about splitting the facilities:

- It is preferred that the training area to be co-located with fire station, this provides for ease of training delivery and logistics. Crews are training close to the station which aides in responses. Care and maintenance of the facility is more easily managed with it being co located.
- One concern is that noise levels would be increased in the hospital area from fire engines. Small equipment noise would be included but at a much reduced interval. Noise from training operations would be in the time frames of 0800 to 2200.
- If a burn facility was co-located with the fire station, white smoke from the burning of Class A materials would be produced. Class B fires are heavily regulated and require special permits for building this type of facility as well as permitting requirements for using them. We are not interested in building a Class B facility. Currently we have other options for this type of training. A training tower would use artificial smoke and not Class A materials for smoke training.
- Building a training facility off site is not the preferred option but will work if shareholders in the close proximity of the new station/training facility have additional concerns with the training portion. With the idea of moving parts of the training facility out of the area, I would still push for the training tower and 2 acres of training area to be co-located with the new fire station. These would potentially raise our ISO Class rating.
- Burn rooms and outside burn props would be better suited outside of town, away from any residential zoned areas. A burn room would also assist in raising our ISO rating.
- Concerns with offsite training area - it takes us away from the core of town, adds to our response times back into town for emergencies. I do not have the exact figures but

approximately 70 to 80 % of our call volume is generated in town. Potential for additional over time costs related to back filling the station for emergency response coverage during extended training exercises, if located off site from the fire station.

An option for a layout on the City Hall property is also attached for consideration.

Additional City/Agency Storage

The Department Heads were asked to provide a list of their storage needs. That information has been compiled and is attached to this memo. Staff is still in the process of compiling information to determine exact square footage needs for storage, but anticipates this can be accommodated on existing City property(ies).

Snow Storage – North Meals Avenue Area

Late last fall Administration requested permission to have a parcel appraised along Meals Avenue for the purpose of potential purchase for snow storage. The Council granted permission for the appraisal and additionally gave staff permission to have the Gavora property (14.88 acres) appraised for potential snow removal and other facilities. Snow storage was requested by Public Works because the portion of the Gavora property previously used for snow removal under a “lease” agreement was terminated by the land manager. Public Works requested 3-5 acres of property in the North Meals area to accommodate both City street snow removal and the snow storage for the grocery store and other nearby commercial properties. Gavora, Inc. offered to sell their property to the City for \$1.53 ft² for the whole parcel or \$2.25 ft² for 6.8 acres. That equates to roughly \$490,050 for 5 acres at that price. The Council asked Public Works to provide information on the cost/impact of pushing snow to the area near the Dog Park currently being used to store snow. That information follows:

- The current push is approximately 1600 feet, as opposed to 860 feet previously to the Gavora property.
- This is a violation of Valdez Municipal Code Section 16.16.055 which outlines snow storage lots shall be placed such that snow is not pushed more than 1000 feet.
- The Public Works crew estimates this push requires 40%-50% more time to complete.
- It also requires a minimum of 1 hour of blower time for each major snow fall (approximately 10 per season) at \$455 per hour, or \$4,550 annually.
- As the grocery store is now pushing snow up Alatna Street to the Park Strip Public Works will need to spend more time on the Dozer in the Park Strip to make room for the increased snow.
- Two areas of concern for continued use of the location by the Dog Park include the need to remove the significant group of trees and increased noise to nearby residents.

Public Works has reviewed the initial area proposed for acquisition from the Gavora property and has indicated an area more like three acres could be sufficient. If Gavora, Inc. is willing to sell the reduced footprint at \$2.25 ft² the cost would be approximately \$294,030. Please see the map below that shows the push difference between the two areas on Meals and the reduced snow storage footprint.



Police Impound Lot

Late this fall, Administration came to the Council asking for permission to use a 1.2 acre parcel of City owned land along Loop Road for development of a Police Impound Lot and Storage Area. The Council postponed action on the request asking for staff to include this need in the overall review of City facilities potentially being placed on the 14.88 acre Gavora property. Given the new direction to maximize the use of City property, and to keep an impound lot out of the middle of downtown, staff is recommending the Council approve the use of the Loop Road property for the Impound Lot and Police Storage needs (separate from the other City storage). Money was allocated in the 2017 CIP/MM budget for this project that includes the construction of a storage/warehouse building (40 x 60 ft²), controlled access and an on-site security system. This property will be used for the following:

- Short Term Impounds - These are impounds that could result from impeding snow removal, an arrest for DUI, or driving without insurance – among other violations. These

impounds are typically done on functioning vehicles for a short period of time (less than 72 hours). Impounding of said vehicles involves taking them to a secure facility and receiving payment for the actual impound of the vehicle. It is the hope of staff that this service can be provided by a private operator in the future allowing for the PD to eliminate this function from its work load. So far this year, if an impound lot had been in place the PD would have had 48 vehicles towed for impeding snow removal.

- Long Term Impounds - For these impounds the vehicles are likely to be there for a week or more, oftentimes disabled vehicles. For instance, it might be a vehicle that is in a serious collision that was towed off of a roadway. While towed at the Police Department request (to clear the roadway), the Police Department does not take ownership of the vehicle.
- Evidentiary Seizures/Forfeitures - It is not uncommon for certain criminal investigations to require search warrants for vehicles, seizing vehicles, or –upon adjudication- the forfeiture of vehicles. Currently the space to accomplish any of these tasks is severely limited. The requests discussed thus far would accomplish all of these things: an indoor secure area to temporarily house seized vehicles and allow for the execution of search warrants as well as safe storage to meet evidentiary requirements; a secure outdoor location to store the seized vehicles (evidence) that do not require indoor storage any longer (after investigation of a fatality accident, but before adjudication); a place to house the forfeited vehicles prior to auction or re-use (currently storing 3 vehicles at the City Shop).