

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development

Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)

Grant Recipient: Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Federal Tax ID: 920030816

Project Title:

Project Type: New Construction and Land Acquisition

Matanuska-Susitna Borough - West Lakes Fire Service Area Station 7-3

State Funding Requested: \$4,800,000

House District: Mat-Su Areawide (7-11)

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

Construct a new public safety building in the vicinity of Johnson Road and MP 52 Parks Highway.

Prior Appropriations:

Project Title: MSB Point Mac Road-Burma to Port District			
Appropriation Amount:	\$15,350,800	Estimated Available Funding:	\$906,987
Bill: SLA 2006, ch.82, sec. 1, pg. 45, ln. 11			
Project Title: Parks Highway Connectors			
Appropriation Amount:	\$6,000,000	Estimated Available Funding:	\$2,596,663
Bill: SLA 2008, ch.29, sec. 14, pg. 129, ln. 16			

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$7,500,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$2,700,000)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$4,800,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0
<i>Funding Details:</i>	
<i>Legislative Appropriation, FY 2014, \$2,700,000</i>	

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

The West Lakes FD/FSA (WLFSA) is requesting an additional \$4.8 million to construct a new headquarters fire station at mile 52.3 of the Parks Highway. The West Lakes FSA has already purchased 9.2 acres adjacent to the Parks Highway and Spring Road. Currently, WLFSA is operating out of four fire stations, constructed in the 1980s and 1990s, and one commercial building purchased in 2007 that has been modified for temporary use. None of the five fire stations was constructed with office space or adequate training/meeting areas to accommodate the growth and increased activity the area has been experiencing over recent years. In fact, the department has had to convert storage and closet space into office space at three of its stations to provide for administrative, management, and supervisory functions. Simply put, WLFSA has outgrown its facilities.

It is the department's intent to construct a main fire station (Station 7-3) at mile 52.3 Parks Highway. This location is significant because it sits strategically close to the common boundary of the communities of Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, and

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\$2,337,000
Approved

the City of Houston. It has immediate access to the Parks Highway and will allow for quick response to all communities served primarily, as well as those assisted through automatic aid agreements. It is WLFSA's intent to move all of its administrative and management activities into one central headquarters. The West Lakes FD is currently transitioning into a combination full-time, paid on-call, fire/rescue service. The new facility will provide accommodations for 24/7 staffing. In addition to fire department activities, the new station will be big enough to accommodate large public meetings and provide the latest high-tech audio visual and internet equipment to help facilitate those meetings. It will also serve as a primary community shelter and will have stand-alone capabilities should the need arise.

The construction of a new public safety building in the vicinity of the intersection of Johnson Road and MP 52 Parks Highway will address several problematic emergency response issues in the Big Lake and Meadow Lakes areas. The new station -- which would be almost equidistant from existing stations in Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, and Houston -- would enhance response capability; address a current gap in services; provide sleeping quarters, training rooms, office space, and storage; and improve Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings.

In October 2008, the communities of Big Lake and Meadow Lakes voted to unify their two fire service areas in an effort to provide better and more efficient emergency responses and to prepare for anticipated growth. The combined population of Big Lake and Meadow Lakes is approximately 10,000, according to recent census figures, and the assessed property value of the combined service area was \$1.15 million in 2008.

One important advantage to the proposed location of the new facility is its close proximity -- and, therefore, quicker responses -- to vehicle accidents on the Parks Highway, which was designated in 2006 by ADOT/PF as a Highway Safety Corridor. The new station will house several fire trucks, ambulances, rescue trucks, and support vehicles for immediate dispatch to Fire, EMS, and Rescue calls. A quicker mobilization, or "chute time," to incidents will, hopefully, improve patient survivability.

Additionally, the stations currently located in each surrounding community were built years ago and were not designed for the 24-hour staffing and operations being conducted at this time. These older stations are small and do not have the sleeping accommodations or fire sprinklers that are required for overnight staffing. They also lack adequate training rooms and meeting areas, administrative space, and storage. There is also a lack of space inside the stations to house all rolling stock, which means that some of the apparatus are left outside, even during the cold winter months. In some instances, FSAs have had to purchase Connex trailers for equipment storage.

Lastly, it is West Lakes FSA's short-term goal to reduce the ISO rating for the communities of Big Lake and Meadow Lakes. This new station plays a significant role in that effort. ISO audits in the past have identified a coverage gap among the Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, Wasilla, and Houston fire stations. Without this new strategically located station, residents could see a significant increase in insurance premiums because of their distance from the nearest fire station. The construction of Station 7-3 will resolve this issue and should have a positive effect on the ISO ratings for FSAs in Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, Houston, and Wasilla.

In conclusion, the construction of this new public safety building is critical to providing the administrative and operational support for the continued improvement of emergency services in Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, Houston, and other surrounding communities. The West Lakes FD and FSA Board of Supervisors are extremely grateful for Legislative support last year and are hopeful the funding is completed this legislative session, so construction can commence in the spring of 2015.

Project Timeline:

Construction would commence in Summer 2014 and be completed in Fall of 2016.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No