FACILITIES REVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

April 2017
# Report of Mitchell Associates Architects & the Selkirk Fire District Facilities Advisory Committee to the Board of Fire Commissioners

Submitted April 2017

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1. **Mission Statement**

The District’s facilities are aging. All three of the stations were constructed and renovated before improvements in equipment and apparatus increased space requirements and before today’s new understanding of the difference a facility can make in firefighter training, health, safety. We are now well into the 21st century operating out of 20th century facilities that do not meet the needs of volunteers and the community. After more than a decade of discussion, the Board of Commissioners established the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) to update our understanding of District needs and to develop recommendations for taking action. Therefore, the Committee’s mission is to:

1. Analyze current and future facility needs of the Fire District.
2. Analyze building conditions of the three existing stations, and determine their future roles.
3. Make recommendations for next steps to the Board of Commissioners.

2. **Acknowledgements**

The effort to address the facility needs of the Selkirk Fire District has taken place over more than ten years and has involved the hard work of many Department members. The current Facilities Advisory Committee is grateful for the contributions of former and current Fire Department Members and District Commissioners who have participated over the years in the process of examining our facilities and making recommendations including the following:

**Facilities Advisory Committee Members:**
The FAC membership consisted of firefighters from each station & district commissioners:

- Stewart Burnham
- Robert Burns (Commissioner)
- William Collins
- Robert Messenger
- Brian Pugsley
- Edward Ward
- Charles Wickham (Commissioner)

Thank you to Department members for attending the FAC Information Sessions and who provided assistance in better understanding the current condition of our three stations by completing the *Station Deficiencies List*.

Thank you to Auxiliary members from Stations One, Two, and Three for attending information sessions and responding to the *Needs Questionnaire*.
Thank you to Selkirk Fire District members Charles Wickham & William Asprion and other members who provided information, ideas, and support for the Manitou Report: Bethlehem Fire Districts Collaborative Planning Task Force (2011)

Thank you to Doug Ophardt and Terry Ritz of Selkirk Fire Company One, and Board of Fire Commissioners members Dale Richter and Paul Miller, for providing assistance in the compilation and analysis of data, and to the chiefs and members from each of the District’s three companies for providing useful information and making suggestions concerning needed improvements to buildings and grounds that resulted in the Selkirk Fire District 2010 Report (2005).

3. Executive Summary

The Facilities Advisory Committee has engaged in an 18 month step-by-step process to review the conditions of the District’s facilities and to make recommendations that reflect current and projected operational and administrative needs related to those facilities. To carry out this work the Committee reviewed previous reports and recommendations and worked closely with Mitchell Associates Architects to do the following:

1) Conduct a needs assessment describing current and future facility needs (also known as programming);
2) Review the current conditions of the three stations; and
3) Make recommendations and outline options including preliminary cost estimates and a possible phasing plan.

The Committee visited recently renovated and constructed fire stations in the region in order to see firsthand a sampling of facilities that meet current and recommended standards for proper operational and firefighter safety. With the goal of keeping the Department and the wider community informed, the Committee has conducted outreach by posting updates of its work on several websites, inviting members to participate in station tours, and presenting updates at Department meetings.

The Committee is very aware that this has been a lengthy process that comes at the end of years of discussion about the need to improve the District’s facilities. The Committee is also aware that recommendations for change will impact the membership at the three stations differently. We recognize that each of the stations has a unique and proud history of service to the community. At the same time, the Committee’s aim is to consider the needs of the District as a whole.

As the Committee tackled its work, four considerations were frequent topics of discussion: 1) condition of the current stations and operational/administrative needs; 2) health and safety of volunteers; 3) location and response time; and 4) cost considerations and phasing.
Current Station Conditions and Operational/Administrative Needs:

As described in Section 5 of this report and in earlier reports, all three stations are inadequate to meet current and projected future operational and administrative needs. While physically sound, all three buildings have outlived their usefulness in terms of size of apparatus bays, firematic support space for decontamination, maintenance and storage of equipment, training and meeting facilities, and office and storage space. In addition, all three sites have space limitations related to possible future renovation/expansion and have aprons that prevent safe egress.

Regarding needs, the Committee worked with Mitchell Associates to develop a detailed description of the spaces and equipment that are currently required by the District to provide safe and efficient fire service to the community. This resulted in the Program (see Appendix), a list of functional spaces and required square footage that became a tool to analyze space at the existing stations and to forecast spaces that would be needed at a new station. The Program makes clear that the existing facilities are inadequate and that improvements and expansion at those sites would not address all the District needs without additional new construction at a new site.

Health & Safety:

Safe Spaces: It is well understood in the fire service that the fire station plays an essential role in supporting and enhancing firefighter health and safety. This is accomplished through site planning, room layout and construction, and having proper equipment to ensure safe movement, decontamination, and efficient operations. There must be adequate space to house and maintain apparatus. This means adequate space to move safely around vehicles and to move vehicles safely in and out during a call and when carrying out routine maintenance.

Firefighter Exposures: There is now a clearly documented connection between cancer and exposure to diesel exhaust and to smoke and toxins released during fires from today’s man-made materials. Responding to Motor vehicle accidents and HAZMAT calls also exposes volunteers to toxins. There must be designated areas and equipment that allow firefighters decontaminate themselves and to clean, care and store their Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and equipment after returning from a fire scene. Given that health and safety are paramount, it is recommended that installing exhaust capture equipment in all three stations becomes an immediate priority. Given the importance of decontamination, maintenance, and clean storage of firefighter PPE, consideration should be given to how best to care for personal gear at the stations.

Training: The safety of the firefighters and the community is directly tied to the level of training that each firefighter receives. The Department of Labor’s Public Employees Safety and Health Bureau (PESH) requires fire departments to provide training and education commensurate with
duties and functions members are expected to perform. (1910.156 (c)). The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires initial, and annual thereafter, safety and health component training for firefighters. (27-a). Emergency Escape Systems “Bail Out” training is required, as per NYS 12NYCRR 800.7. Ongoing training at the fire station, as well as at designated training facilities is common and necessary to maintain and demonstrate skill and proficiency. With the inherent dangers of firefighting, there is a clear understanding of the particular risk to firefighters of heart attack and other associated injuries, underscoring the importance of access to training and exercise that build skills, strength, and stamina. For facilities, this means built-in training spaces and exercise areas. These are the type of building features seen again and again as the Committee toured more up-to-date stations.

**Location and Response Time:**

The third consideration was location and response time. As has been well documented in the Manitou Report (2011), the location of stations in the Selkirk District and adjacent districts is based on historic development and is not optimal for coverage. Recommendations of this Committee are guided by the idea that any changes and improvements should consider the District as a whole and projected patterns of mutual aid from the neighboring districts. As it stands currently, the northern end of the Selkirk District where Station Two is located has significant mutual aid coverage due to the proximity of stations in Elsmere and Delmar. Further, at the time of this report, the Committee understands that Elsmere is considering construction of a substation that would provide additional mutual aid coverage. It is hoped that further discussion will take place with neighboring districts in order to coordinate the impact of station location and improvements on coverage. The Selkirk’s District’s 2010 Report (2005) noted that any improvements and expansion of Station Two should consider the presence of mutual aid.

The 2011 Manitou Report identifies the midsection of the District as an area that needs to be addressed, given that the stations are currently located in the north and south sections of the District only. It is clear that district-wide coverage would be improved with the addition of a station in the midsection, as this is an area that has seen, and will continue to see significant growth, for example in the Clapper Rd. and Wemple Rd. areas. Such a new station could provide a centralized location, provide coverage for the midsection of the District, and fulfill district-wide operational, administrative, and meeting/training needs as described by the Program. Land acquisition and building could take place as two separators phases of a long-term plan.

Stations One and Three are located in the southern section of the District. It is important to maintain apparatus in this area; however, it is the conclusion of the 2011 Manitou Report and this Committee that two stations are not necessary in that part of the District. Most apparatus currently located in these two stations could be relocated to a new station that is more centrally located in the midsection of the District. Station Three could be retained to house a single apparatus. Station One could initially be used as storage and could eventually be sold, with
proceeds used to defray the cost of construction of a new station. Such changes could take place over time based on a phasing plan that considers cost.

**Cost Considerations and Phasing Plan:**

The Committee reviewed a cost analysis completed by Mitchell Associates Architects that compared several options including:

1. Making minimal modifications to the three existing stations,
2. Making major modifications to the three existing stations, and/or
3. Building a new station based on the program/needs assessment, in conjunction with various approaches to modifications and/or sale of the existing stations.

The Committee carefully reviewed the *Program* to find ways to reduce space needs estimates while maintaining efficiency and outlined three size options for a fourth station. It was determined that the plan that would be the most operationally efficient and the most cost effective would phase in changes and improvements over time (See Sections 6 & 7). The following scope is recommended:

- Immediately install engine exhaust removal system in all three stations.
- Seek and acquire land on which to build a new headquarters station.
- Build a new headquarters station to consolidate resources currently located at Stations One, Two, and Three and house apparatus, administrative space, district-wide and public meeting space, and training.
- Retain Station One for storage until such time that it is deemed not needed, at which time it will be sold.
- Reduce activity at Station Three to a single apparatus station and use for District storage as needed.
- Renovate Station Two to comply with current code and safety standards.
- Form two committees to carry out a project plan as determined by the Board: Building Committee and Public Outreach Committee.

### 4. Project History

#### 4.1 Overview

The Selkirk Fire District Board of Commissioners created the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) in 2015 to review the current conditions of the District’s three fire stations and to make recommendations to the Board. The Committee has worked closely with Mitchell Associates Architects (MAA) with whom the District entered a consulting agreement in 2014. Mitchell Associates is located in Voorheesville, NY, and is a firm that specializes in fire station and public safety design. The FAC membership consists of firefighters from each station since a unified, thorough, and unbiased review of existing facilities, emergency services needs of different
portions of our expansive district, apparatus housing issues, district-wide firefighter safety concerns, and moving toward twenty-first century emergency services facilities are all key to making recommendations to improve our facilities.

The FAC has held eleven sessions at alternating station sites with architects Bob Mitchell and Peter Signorelli from November 2015 to date. Many of these sessions lasted for three to four hours; none were completed until all issues on our joint agendas were thoroughly discussed and considered. Two of the fall 2016 sessions served as presentations to the membership to update them on the Committee’s work. In addition, Auxiliary members attended several sessions and completed a questionnaire that was distributed to the three Auxiliaries to learn more about their needs. The Committee also sent a letter to emergency fire, ambulance and police in neighboring districts in 2015, alerting them that we were planning for improvements and asking for input. Further the Committee published three newsletters that appeared on the Fire District website and in the Town of Bethlehem e-newsletter.

Guided by MAA the methodology we employed in our deliberations was as follows:

1. Based upon the historically established and anticipated future operational needs of our entire Department, the FAC worked with MAA to determine operational needs for the District as a whole and programmed space in a single station to accommodate all such needs considering adequate apparatus, equipment, training, meeting maintenance, administrative, line and civil officer, auxiliary, storage, public access, and every other conceivable space and functionality need of our entire department. We, collectively and without regard to location, described the square footage that would be required for such a single building.

2. Members of the FAC and Department members visited seven fire stations which had been constructed or renovated in the recent past to accommodate the functional and safety needs of other fire departments in the Capital District. It would be safe to say that we all learned an enormous amount about the glaring inadequacies – on many, many levels – of our stations in comparison to each and every station we visited. No such station was over-designed or over-built; each simply and efficiently met the present and future needs of a twenty-first century fire department. The difference between those stations and ours was so substantial it would be difficult to quantify.

3. The FAC engaged Peter Signorelli of MAA to do a very thorough, very detailed analysis of our present facilities and found how these facilities were inconsistent with structural and functional standards of contemporary emergency services buildings, inconsistent with minimal safety standards, and how they might be renovated or rehabilitated to meet our present and future needs.

4. The Committee evaluated how we might, functionally, retrofit our existing buildings to meet our needs. In this analysis, space, structural, building and zoning code, and cost constraints were painstakingly considered.
5. The Committee focused attention on utility and costs of various alternative construction and/or renovation possibilities.

6. The FAC conducted a final review of the program with the architects to determine where space requirements could be reduced while still meeting current and future needs of the Department.

4.2 Summary of Prior Studies

4.2.1 Selkirk Fire District 2010 Report (2005)

The District conducted its own review in 2005, with a look ahead to 2010. The Report begins with the following Introduction:

In an effort to better plan for the future fire protection needs of the Selkirk Fire District, the Board of Fire Commissioners has undertaken this study of recent trends with respect to fire call and response statistics, fire service staffing, structural development, population growth, and revenue and expenditure changes occurring in the District. It is hoped that this effort will help enable the members of the Board to determine how best to allocate the available resources in order to meet the full range of anticipated fire protection needs of the District over the next several years and on into the foreseeable future.

The Report ends with the following Conclusions:

This analysis is intended to stimulate further thought about, discussion of, and planning for, the future needs of the District. It is only the first step in what will hopefully become an ongoing process of comprehensive review of current and future District operational needs, involving a variety of interested stakeholders, in a process leading to consensus on the setting of priorities and the identification of next steps to be taken in order to ensure that those needs are met. The title given to this analysis was intended to capture the sort of timeline envisioned for decision making at the outset of this project. As this analysis has progressed, however, it has become increasingly clear that there is very likely a need to commence action in the not-too-distant future in order to begin to make decisions relating to the allocation of the District’s resources in the relatively short term.

For example, if it were deemed to be desirable to acquire the acre of land immediately adjacent to Station 2 in contemplation of some future modification of that facility, then there may very well be a need to act relatively soon in order to secure that site before it is either put to some alternative commercial use or the price escalates further. Alternatively, if the costs associated with acquisition of that particular commercial site and the contemplated renovation/retrofitting of the existing facility were to be found to exceed the costs associated with the options of “starting from scratch” on some other available site, or building a supplemental facility to accommodate some of the space...
needs, then a very different, and likely less urgent, sort of action plan would be required. It is anticipated that these are the sorts of decisions that District officials will be grappling with, possibly even as soon as the very next budget cycle begins.

In contrast to the sort of uncertainty about the Station 2 situation, the plan of action that needs to be developed with respect to the necessary improvement of Stations 1 and 3 is relatively clear at present. Consequently, the Board should commence these projects in the near future with the assistance of an architectural/engineering firm or individual who can help to ascertain the feasibility, cost, and sequencing of the various improvements and modifications that have already been suggested. Of course, an expert of that sort will likely be in a good position to recommend viable alternatives as well.

Given the role that the District’s current facilities play as the de facto community centers in their respective hamlets, there is no doubt that the District needs, at a minimum, to bring its facilities up to the standards associated with current building codes and Laws, especially with respect to accessibility by the general public. In the event of a very serious emergency situation in one of these hamlets, it is very likely that the District’s facilities would form the backbone of a support structure to residents, and thus the plumbing and electrical systems and fixtures, and indeed even the kitchen facilities, must be adequate to accommodate potentially very heavy use.

With respect to OSHA and other workplace health and safety standards, the current engine room ventilation and gear storage arrangements are inadequate and thus some sort of remedial improvements will need to be made on these fronts as well.

Beyond these basic requirements for future modification, are a host of possible improvements that have already been suggested. Other ideas will undoubtedly surface as more and more interested parties begin to focus upon these matters. Of course, it will never be possible to satisfy all expectations that folks will bring to these discussions. In moving forward, however, the Board should strive to reach as broad a consensus as possible before deciding upon a given course of action.

At the outset of this process, and every step of the way, it is important to keep in mind the interests of all of the local property taxpayers, who continue to fund the operations of the District. Though the District’s share of it is small, the overall real property tax burden being borne by these taxpayers has been escalating regularly. As the Board prepares the budgets necessary to address the needs of the next several years, it should also strive to continue to maintain the lowest Fire District tax rate in Town.

The officials of the Selkirk Fire District stand ready to meet with officials from the neighboring Districts, the Town of Bethlehem, Albany County, and New York State for further discussion of any of the matters included in this study. It is hoped that we can work cooperatively to address some of the matters raised in this report for the benefit of the public we all mutually serve.
4.2.2  Christopher Bovenzi Preliminary Study (2006)

Christopher Bovenzi, Architect, P.C., analyzed the existing stations and the District’s needs in 2005 and made the following recommendations:

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<th>Existing (sf)</th>
<th>Proposed (sf)</th>
<th>Delta (sf)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Station 2</td>
<td>9,580</td>
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<td>Station 3</td>
<td>6,161</td>
<td>12,239</td>
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4.2.3  Manitou Report: Bethlehem Fire Districts Collaborative Planning Task Force (2011)

Executive Summary

The five fire districts serving the Town of Bethlehem—Delmar, Elmwood Park, Elsmere, Selkirk, and Slingerlands—jointly led and funded a study to examine opportunities for increased collaboration by and between the fire districts. This study was motivated by a genuine desire to objectively study their operations and obtain independent advice on ways to promote efficiency and to maintain services in the future. That the five districts came together voluntarily and with their own funding is exceptional. The fact that they have undertaken such a significant step is in itself a reflection of their dedication to collaborative efforts in providing services and procurement that continues today.

The five fire districts selected Manitou, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in emergency services studies from a data-driven perspective, to complete this study. The cooperation and genuine desire for considering greater inter-organizational collaboration was apparent throughout this study. This report and its appendices are voluminous and contain a great deal of detailed information and analysis. However, the key findings of the report and its ten-year perspective are summarized here.

1. First, existing service delivery within the Town is good. Expenditures are in line with general practices in New York State. There is no evidence of outrageous spending when viewed from an overall perspective. The quality of service appears to be good, and the level of cooperation between the districts is well above average.

2. The existing history of collaboration, especially in working together on this study, bodes well for support of additional efforts in the future.

3. Staffing challenges of volunteer fire services are real and are affecting every district in Bethlehem. Evidence suggests that these challenges will continue to grow. Existing resources in terms of staffing and equipment are adequate to meet the District’s needs now and in the future. However, additional efforts to collaborate and share services will be required to maintain service levels. Shared services will be crucial in order to avoid the need to hire career staff.
4. The existing District boundaries bear little relation to modern development patterns, and in some cases inhibit management and delivery of fire services. Much of this effect is mitigated through automatic aid policies and cooperation, but more can and should be done going into the future. Alternative options could include adjustment of District boundaries and/or consolidation of districts.

5. The location of stations is not optimal, but this is normal given the historical development of fire services in Bethlehem and many other locales. While some efficiencies can be gained through adjustments in station locations in the future, these should be pursued in the context of improving and upgrading facilities on a gradual basis over the next ten years. Several facilities are in need of improvement – updates to these facilities should be guided by this study.

6. The districts should move toward a goal of functional integration. Within this goal are milestones of: a.) common operating policies; b.) common training requirements; c.) closest station response to emergencies; and d.) sharing of personnel between the existing districts. There are considerable cultural and organizational dimensions to this challenge that must be recognized.

7. A large cadre of volunteers (sufficient to answer most service calls) are employed by the Town. However, they represent all five districts, and there is not a systematic plan for their utilization. This is an opportunity for the Town Government and Fire Districts to address daytime staffing issues while avoiding long-term costs.

8. External regulatory standards and industry standards will force hard choices because there are not sufficient resources to satisfy them all. Mandatory health and safety requirements must be met, but a candid discussion of tradeoffs between insurance industry ratings and sound management of fire and emergency services is required.

9. Although emergency medical services were not a part of this study, there are likely to be additional opportunities for shared services between fire services and EMS. These include shared facilities, administrative costs, and purchasing.

10. Governance of the collective fire districts is ad hoc. A group of high-ranking organizational representatives should be formed to carry collaboration efforts forward.

11. There are several critical dependencies on external organizations that are key to the fire defense system. Notably, the Town of Bethlehem currently operates water services and dispatching. Continued support by Town officials will be key to assuring that efforts to improve services will be effective and receive adequate support, particularly as fiscal pressures increase through the coming years.
To summarize, the state of fire services in the Town of Bethlehem is good. No major deficiencies in budgetary resources will inhibit the ability to maintain or improve service delivery. Some additional administrative costs may be necessary, but can likely be offset through increased efficiencies and avoidance of increased costs in the future.

The current participation in cooperative ventures by the five fire districts will be increasingly important in the future as a means of maintaining volunteer service delivery, and this moderating any increases in the cost of providing service. Assuming that the recommendations and schedule set out in this report are followed, cost savings from this study will occur gradually, and grow over time, particularly as the debt burden or costs of maintaining reserves for replacement of apparatus begin to be reduced by the reduced numbers of apparatus envisioned in this study. The sound application of these recommendations can help defer the possible need to employ career firefighters, which will greatly escalate costs and greatly change the nature of service delivery in the Town.

In short, this study will position the Districts to collectively monitor their performance and identify areas for increased sharing of resources.

**Manitou Report Section 16.2.2 - Service Level-based Fire Station Location Plan**

The modified plan reduces the number of fire stations from eight to six. The reduction is due to fire station 6 providing coverage for stations 7 and 8 in the recommended plan. The rationale for this approach is due to the current sparsely populated area in the southern region of the Town. Station 6 would house an engine and a service truck to serve the southern region of the Town. In the future fire stations 7 and 8 could be constructed if ever the area were to become more populated. The remaining northern stations and apparatus assignments would remain the same as in the original ISO-based station location plan. The plan is shown in Figure 16.2. In this plan, the stations in South Bethlehem are reduced from three stations to only one. This is a reflection of the poor location and limited membership of the current Selkirk Station #3, the limited size and marginal condition of Selkirk’s Station #1, and the very limited demand for service in the area served by Selkirk’s Station #3.
Manitou Report Figure 16.2 (Note: The original Figure 16.2 has been altered in two ways for the readers’ convenience: 1) the Manitou proposed new station location has been circled and 2) the existing Selkirk Stations 1 & 2 are shown.)

Programming is a process that describes the needs of a fire district or department in relation to its facilities. Over several work sessions with the FAC and the Architect, we described our operations and other activities within the three stations and on the sites. We identified priorities, the buildings’ potential impact on response and operational issues, training opportunities, necessary adjacencies, and areas of economy. MAA presented diagrams to explain what is typical and necessary in individual rooms to assure that the correct size has been chosen. Assumptions regarding calculated areas for ADA compliance, and corridors & walls were validated against a database of similar fire stations and then, based on the Program, space usage analysis spreadsheets were created that specified probable room and building size. As noted in the Overview of this report, our process considered the needs of the District as a whole and was then followed up using a station-by-station approach.

4.3.1 Operational needs including firematic, administrative, training & public needs

The FAC worked with Mitchell Associates to describe the operational needs of the department. In brief, these discussions focused on the following needs:

- To increase and modernize apparatus bay space to house current and future apparatus;
- To identify administrative office space requirements for District and Department personnel, including adequate storage of records including confidential records;
- To identify space requirements such that classroom training and physical training can take place in SFD facilities (i.e., classroom space equipped with up-to-date technology, bailout window built into an apparatus bay mezzanine, etc.)
- To enhance public use of SFD facilities by providing ADA accessible public space while securing firematic space and equipment

4.3.2 Health & safety considerations

The FAC worked with Mitchell Associates to describe the health and safety needs of the department as it relates to the SFD facilities. This discussion included current recommendations related to documented increases in health risks due to firefighter exposure to toxins and carcinogenic materials. This means that building design and improvements should address exhaust capture systems, ensure that toxins and carcinogenic materials do not migrate to “clean” spaces, include spaces and equipment that allow for decontamination of personnel, gear, and equipment and include space for ventilated space for turnout gear storage.
In addition, much discussion took place related to the importance of adequate space around the apparatus while in the bay to allow for rapid and safe departure and return when responding to a call. Back-in bays and adequate apron are recommended so that firefighters are not required to stand in the road to direct traffic and apparatus.

Further, the Committee reviewed the importance of regular physical training, in light of the NFPA Standards (NFPA 1583) on health-related fitness programs for firefighters. It was determined that space for physical training be included in building design and improvements.

5. Review of the Stations

This section of the Report is based on the findings of Mitchell Associates Architects as reported to the FAC and membership in September 2016. When this study was started, it was determined that a number of options would have to be examined. Each station and site was evaluated for code, life safety, energy efficiency, and healthy, safe environments. Plans were then developed to try to fit the District-wide needs onto the three existing sites by designing the maximum buildout each site could support with alterations to the existing buildings and additions to expand the footprint of the building. “Maximum buildout” refers to modifying the existing stations to the greatest extent to be code compliant and to meet modern firematic standards for safe and efficient operations, given site limitations.

When it became evident that not all of the District’s needs could be met on the three existing sites and that a new building would be necessary to serve as a headquarters for the District, a plan for each existing station was also designed with the least modifications that could be made while still maintaining the station as useable. “Least modifications” refers to bringing the stations up to code and addressing safety concerns by installing tailpipe exhaust capture systems and safer placement of bunker gear while mostly staying within the confines of the building footprint.
5.1 Overall Existing Conditions

### Existing Gross Area

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Station 2</th>
<th>Station 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basement</td>
<td>3,712 sf</td>
<td>2,701 sf</td>
<td>- sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Floor</td>
<td>5,872 sf</td>
<td>6,248 sf</td>
<td>4,749 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Floor</td>
<td>1,041 sf</td>
<td>1,106 sf</td>
<td>1,444 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,625 sf</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,055 sf</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,193 sf</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dates of construction and major renovations or additions:

- Station 1 – 1928/1960
- Station 2 – 1953/1964/1994

Currently, all three of the buildings in the District are of older building stock, constructed and renovated at a time before improvements in equipment and apparatus increased space requirements. The buildings were well constructed at the time and remain structurally sound today, with one exception: the floor of Station 1 has some load restrictions due to an undersized structure supporting the floor in the basement.

Based on a review of the stations by Mitchell Associates Architects and input to the Committee from members, there are several areas of general deficiencies

Bays too small for modern apparatus and equipment:

- This means that the District must purchase custom-made apparatus to fit in the bays, adding additional cost to the purchase of the apparatus.
- There is not enough space to meet recommended clearances around trucks to safely get into the trucks while they are inside of the building.
- The trucks cannot be worked on by the mechanics while they are inside. At the same time, there is not enough length to the aprons to fully pull them out to work on them.

Buildings have unsafe conditions:

- The apparatus bays do not have enough height to allow a tailpipe exhaust capture system to be installed, causing the pollutants from the exhaust to be released in the bays. (To address this critical issue, it is recommended that an interim air filtration system be immediately installed in all bays – see Section 7 of this Report.)
- There is not a proper separation between the apparatus bay and the rest of the building; therefore, the pollutants from the exhaust and off-gassing from
contaminated gear, equipment, and vehicles are also entering the rest of the building.

- The turnout gear is in the apparatus bays causing the firefighters to suit up in the same space where the trucks are pulling out. This results in two problems: danger of being struck by a vehicle and increased exposure to toxins as diesel exhaust coats gear.
- Due to short length of the aprons, moving trucks in and out of the stations requires fire fighters to stand in the road to clear traffic at Stations One and Two. For all stations, more clearance would improve safety.

The buildings do not meet current accessibility codes:
- The ADA and other accessibility codes require public buildings to be fully accessible. This includes fire stations. All three building have floors that are not serviced by elevators and are not accessible to all people with disabilities.
- Many of the existing spaces, especially toilet rooms, are not accessible.

The buildings do not meet current energy codes:
- While these buildings do not have to meet codes that were passed after the buildings were built, they perform poorly in terms of energy efficiency compared to a modern building of the same size and are costing the District more for heat and electricity.

The buildings have a shortage of storage space, resulting in overcrowding:
- Here are a few examples of tight bay space and overcrowded and conditions.
5.2 Station 1

Station 1 Existing Conditions
5.2.1 Station One Maximum Buildout Plan

For the building envelope, the required repairs and replacements would include the siding, fascia and gutter system, replacement of the doors and windows to make them more energy efficient, and insulating the walls and attic. Alterations on the interior of the building would include selective demolition of building elements to prepare the interior for renovation, including the demolition of the apparatus bays and the basement below.

With maximum buildout, the renovated spaces would provide accessible toilet rooms and additional new toilet rooms, storage space, providing firematic spaces and a vehicle fume exhaust system. The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems would be upgraded, with major equipment replaced for functionality and efficiency. A fire sprinkler system is added to the building. The addition would include space for stairs and an elevator to the second floor, a new apparatus bay, and expanded office and kitchen space. The new apparatus bay would accommodate two trucks, compared to the existing three truck bay.

The required site improvements would include replacing paving as well as providing new paved areas and a new concrete apron, moving the existing siren tower and generator and providing striping and signage for accessible parking spaces. The temporary District Office trailer would also be removed from the site.

It should also be noted, that the site was examined for the placement of an apparatus bay addition on the east side of the existing apparatus bay. This location was not feasible because the minimum width of two truck bays would push the eastern wall of the addition too close to the property line and require a code variance. Also, the minimum depth of the apparatus bays didn’t allow for a long enough apron in front of the building. Because the grade drops off at the rear of the addition, the trucks would still have to be backed into the bay from the street.
Station 1 Required Demolition for Maximum Buildout

Station 1 Maximum Buildout

Mitchell Associates Architects & Facilities Advisory Committee – Report to the Board of Commissioners
April 2017
With maximum buildout at Station One the following issues would still not be addressed:

- Existing house on the next lot is close to the gas pump & underground gas tank.
- Parking for the public and 1st responders is across a State Highway.
- The firefighters will still have to stop traffic so trucks can back in from the street.
- No day room is provided.
- There is not enough storage space.
- No bunking is provided and therefore, no showers.
- The former cook-shed, now a makeshift garage, is located behind the station and is in poor condition, has a cracked slab, and should be removed. It currently houses the 1928 historic antique truck.

5.2.2 Station One Least Modifications Plan

For the building envelope the required repairs and replacements would be the same as the maximum buildout: siding, fascia and gutter system, replacement of the doors and windows, and insulating the walls and attic. Alterations on the interior of the building include selective demolition of building elements to prepare the interior for renovation.

With the Least Modifications Plan, the renovated spaces provide accessible toilet rooms, day room space, upgrades to the kitchen, providing bunk rooms and office space and a vehicle fume exhaust system. In order to add the vehicle exhaust system, the apparatus bay roof would have to be removed and replaced, or modified to provide higher ceiling spaces and the overhead doors would have to be replaced. The new apparatus bay would accommodate only two trucks, compared to the existing three truck bay.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems are upgraded, with major equipment replaced for functionality and efficiency. A fire sprinkler system is added to the building. The addition only includes space for stairs and an elevator to the second floor. The required site improvements include moving the existing siren tower and providing striping and signage for accessible parking spaces. The District office trailer is also removed from the site.
With the least modification plan at Station One the following issues would still not be addressed:

- The house on the next lot is close to the gas pump & underground gas tank.
- Parking for the public and 1st responders is across a State Highway.
- The firefighters will still have to stop traffic so the trucks can back into the station from the street.
- The apron is still too short to park the apparatus in front of the station & walk around the truck.
- There is not enough storage space.
- The garage behind the station is in poor condition & should be removed.
- The District Office trailer should be removed.
- The basement storage rooms cannot be affordably be made accessible.
5.3 Station Two

5.3.1 Station Two Maximum Build Out Plan

Maximum Buildout modifications for Station Two would consist of the following:

For the building envelope, the required repairs and replacements would include replacing the roofing, fascias, gutters and downspouts; replacing the louvers; and insulating the walls and attic. Alterations on the interior of the building would include selective demolition of building elements to prepare the interior for renovation. The renovated spaces would include renovating the existing apparatus bays to firematic spaces,
providing accessible toilet rooms, updating the existing toilet rooms, and enlarging and updating the meeting room and kitchen.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems would be upgraded, with major equipment replaced for functionality and efficiency. A fire sprinkler system would be added to the building.

The addition would include space for stairs and an elevator to the second floor and basement, a new apparatus bay, providing up to three, double deep drive-through bays with a vehicle fume exhaust system and more firematic spaces and storage and mechanical room. The new apparatus bay would safely accommodate two additional pieces of apparatus, compared to the existing bay.

The required site improvements would include a new parking lot and sidewalks in the front of the building for both public and firefighter use, new concrete aprons and driveways for the drive-through bays, providing striping and signage for accessible parking spaces in the existing parking lot.

**With maximum buildout at Station Two the following issues would still not be addressed:**

- No day room is provided.
- No bunking is provided and therefore, no showers.
- Access from the fair kitchen to the cooler and storage is not handicapped accessible & is not a legal egress path by NYS Building Code standards.
- The rear apparatus bay is not accessible without leaving the building.
Required Demolition for Maximum Build Out

Station 2 Maximum Buildout
5.3.2 Station Two Least Modifications Plan

Station Two occupies the only site of the three that has enough land to consider a sizable addition to the building. Because of this and the location of this station at the north end of the District, which is the most populated portion of the District, it was determined that a maximum buildout plan and an enhanced station plan were the two more relevant options. Least Modification floor and site plans were not developed. A written description of the least modifications approach was developed and is presented here.

With a Least Modifications Plan, for the building envelope the required repairs and replacements would be the same as the maximum buildout: roofing, fascia and gutter system, replacement of the louvers, and insulating the walls and attic.

Alterations on the interior of the building include selective demolition of building elements to prepare the interior for renovation.

The renovated spaces would provide accessible toilet rooms, provide bunk rooms and office space and a tailpipe exhaust capture system. In order to add the vehicle exhaust system, the apparatus bay roof would have to be removed and replaced, or modified to
provide higher ceiling. In order to make these modifications, the new apparatus bay would accommodate only one truck, compared to the existing two truck bay.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems would be upgraded, with major equipment replaced to improve functionality and efficiency. A fire sprinkler system would be added to the building.

The addition would include space for stairs and an elevator to the second floor and the basement.

The required site improvements would include providing striping and signage for accessible parking spaces and replacing the concrete apron and heavy duty asphalt paving in front of the apparatus bay.

5.3.3 Enhanced Station Plan for Station Two

As noted above, because the Station Two site can potentially allow for expansion and because of the higher population at the northern section of the District where Station Two is located, an “enhanced” plan that would include expansion of the building was also developed for consideration.

In the event of the construction of a new station in the midsection of the District, it was determined that Station Two would continue to be maintained to provide adequate coverage in the northern part of the District. In this case, the station would have to be more than the least modification plan, as more than one truck would be needed at this location, but it was determined that the maximum buildout plan was not required, as many of the functions in this plan would be handled at the new headquarters building. The Enhanced Plan would be similar to the maximum buildout plan except that the addition for the apparatus bay would have only two drive through bays and the firematic spaces would not be provided. Since there would be a district-wide meeting room in the main building, the meeting room in this building could be renovated to bunk rooms with toilets and showers and storage rooms. All of the site improvements of the maximum buildout scheme would also be provided for this building.
Enhanced Station Two Plan
5.4 Station Three

5.4.1 Station Three Maximum Buildout Plan

Modifications would consist of the following:

For the building envelope the required repairs and replacements would include replacing the siding, gutters and downspouts, replacing the louvers, and insulating the walls and attic.

Alterations on the interior of the building would include selective demolition of building elements to prepare the interior for renovation.

The renovated spaces would include renovating the existing apparatus bays to firematic spaces, providing accessible toilet rooms, updating the existing toilet rooms, and enlarging and updating the meeting room.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems would be upgraded, with major equipment replaced for functionality and efficiency. A fire sprinkler system would be added to the building.
The addition would include space for stairs and an elevator to the second floor, a new apparatus bay with a tailpipe exhaust capture system and more firematic spaces and storage and mechanical room. The new apparatus bay would accommodate two trucks, equal to the existing two truck bay.

The required site improvements include new concrete aprons and driveways for the apparatus bay, a new septic system and striping and signage for accessible parking spaces in the existing parking lot.

**With a maximum buildout plan at Station three the following issues would still not be addressed:**

- No day room is provided.
- No bunking is provided and therefore, no showers.
- The location of the gas pump makes filling the apparatus awkward.
- The firefighters will still have to stop traffic so the trucks can back into the station from the street.
- New apparatus bay will be built in the side yard setback & may require a variance.
5.4.2 Station Three Least Modifications Plan

For the building envelope, the required repairs and replacements would be the same as the maximum buildout: siding, and gutter system, replacement of the louvers, and insulating the walls and attic. Alterations on the interior of the building would include selective demolition of building elements to prepare the interior for renovation. The renovated spaces would provide accessible toilet rooms, day room space, providing bunk rooms and office space and a vehicle fume exhaust system. In order to add the vehicle exhaust system, the apparatus bay roof would have to be removed and replaced, or modified to provide higher ceiling spaces, the front of the bays would have to be expanded outward and the overhead doors would have to be replaced. The new apparatus bay would accommodate only one truck, compared to the existing two truck bay. The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems would be upgraded, with major equipment replaced to provide improved functionality and efficiency. A fire sprinkler
system would be added to the building. The addition would only include space for stairs and an elevator to the second floor.

The required site improvements include providing striping, signage for accessible parking spaces and replacing the concrete apron and heavy duty asphalt paving in front of the apparatus bay and a new septic system.

**With a least modifications plan at Station Three the following issues would still not be addressed:**

- There is not enough storage space.
- The location of the gas pump makes filling the apparatus awkward.
- The firefighters will still have to stop traffic so the trucks can back in from the street.
5.5 Summary of Three Stations

5.5.1 Maximum Buildout: Modifying the existing stations to be code compliant and also meet modern firematic standards for safe operation is considered the Maximum Buildout that can occur given the limitations of the sites. This requires the following increases in the size of the stations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Station 2</th>
<th>Station 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basement</td>
<td>3,712 sf</td>
<td>3,092 sf</td>
<td>- sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Floor</td>
<td>8,072 sf</td>
<td>13,432 sf</td>
<td>8,979 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Floor</td>
<td>1,602 sf</td>
<td>1,497 sf</td>
<td>1,691 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,386 sf</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,021 sf</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,670 sf</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.2 Least Modifications: Modifying the existing stations to be code compliant are the Least Modifications to be considered. This requires the following increases in the size of the stations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Station 2</th>
<th>Station 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basement</td>
<td>3,712 sf</td>
<td>3,092 sf</td>
<td>- sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Floor</td>
<td>6,367 sf</td>
<td>6,638 sf</td>
<td>5,591 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Floor</td>
<td>1,602 sf</td>
<td>1,497 sf</td>
<td>1,691 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,681 sf</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,227 sf</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,282 sf</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.3 Three Station Area Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Station 1</th>
<th>Station 2</th>
<th>Station 3</th>
<th>Total of 1-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Gross Area</strong></td>
<td>10,625 sf</td>
<td>10,055 sf</td>
<td>6,193 sf</td>
<td><strong>26,873 sf</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Least Modification&quot; Gross Area</td>
<td>11,681 sf</td>
<td>11,227 sf</td>
<td>7,282 sf</td>
<td><strong>30,190 sf</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Maximum Buildout&quot; Gross Area</td>
<td>13,386 sf</td>
<td>18,021 sf</td>
<td>10,670 sf</td>
<td><strong>42,077 sf</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Bovenzi 2005 Study Area estimated 47,065 sq. ft. needed.)
For District needs based on extensive programming discussions, the maximum buildout of the existing stations would leave the following spaces still missing:

- Administrative offices
- 4,000 sq. ft. of apparatus bays
- District/Departmental meeting room
- Storage

6. Proposed Solution

(See Appendix 10.6 PowerPoint for additional comparison charts and information.)

6.1 New Station

The FAC has spent a significant amount of time evaluating how the current operational, training, social, and administrative needs of the Department can be safely and efficiently housed. From these analyses and reviews of previous studies, it was determined that it would best serve the District from an operational standpoint and be most cost effective (see comparison tables in this section) to build a new headquarters station in the mid-section of the District, while maintaining reduced operations at Station Two and Station Three.

The analysis took into account the following needs:

- Current understanding of health and safety risks to firefighters and how a station impacts this.
- How a station design can aid in best practices and physical skills training for the members.
- The role of the station in encouraging departmental camaraderie, cohesion, and recruitment and retention.
- The burgeoning responsibilities to document the Department’s operations.
- The evolving technologies incorporated in firefighting and the need to provide space for this equipment.

The analysis took into account the following deficiencies:

- Undersized bays
- Lack of exhaust capture systems
- Lack of decontamination equipment and space
- Lack of adequate storage for personal protective equipment, firematic equipment, documents and records, and members materials
- Lack of air separation between the “clean” and “dirty” side at each station
- Concerns with fire fighter safety when responding and returning
- Limited training space
The analysis took into account the following possible solutions:

- Maximum buildout at one or more of the stations
- Least modifications at one or more stations
- Enhanced modifications at Station Two
- Construction of a new station in the mid-section of the District

In addition, the Committee felt obligated to do its best to forecast future needs in order to prevent our stations and their ability to support our mission from being out-of-date within our lifetimes.

As a part of the analysis, the Committee met in a series of programming sessions to determine what a central facility would need in order to meet District needs. The program was designed to describe what the District’s overall operational needs are. The results are in the table below in the column headed “Initial One-Station Areas.” The Committee believes that if all the needs of the District were to be housed in a single station, 33,631 sq. ft. would be required. While the Committee does not believe that a single station is in the best interests of the District or that the Department members and District residents would support the cost of such a large station, this helpful exercise resulted in a detailed description of the types of spaces needed and their size and thus provided valuable information.

Numerous alternatives were evaluated, including maximum buildout renovation schemes for all three stations described in Section Five, above. Because of site and building limitations at the three stations, a maximum buildout scheme would still require more operational space, and thus a new station, and would cost even more than the single new headquarters station exercise. The least modifications scheme would offer some improvements, but would not address all the current limitations and would not address some of the significant safety concerns at the stations (see Section Five).

After all these considerations, the Committee went back over the initial Program document and reduced as much as they could while maintaining required spaces and determined that a 25,708 sq. ft. headquarters station is needed, augmented by reduced operations at Stations Two and Three. This is summarized in the table below.
6.1.1 Impact on Operations

A new headquarters station would have four double deep drive-through bays for large apparatus, and five back-in bays for smaller vehicles, with firematic and turnout gear storage, SCBA cleaning and repair, decon space, and a radio room. It would house administrative offices for the District and the Department, as well as a meeting room that could also serve as a classroom and could be available for public use. The facility could incorporate built-in training features so that members could fulfil training requirements on the premises. The station would have a members’ room and gym. As discussed in other sections of this report, it is recommended that this facility be located in the midsection the district, potentially near Route 9W in the Beckers Corners area.

6.2 Proposed Outcomes for Stations One, Two & Three

The 2011 Manitou Report examining the fire service throughout the Town of Bethlehem, noted limited membership and demand in the southern section of the District and concluded that “a consolidated station at Route 9W and Maple Avenue would serve the area currently served by Selkirk Stations #1 and #3.”

6.2.1 Station One

Station One would remain District property and be used for storage of trailers and other excess material that will not fit in the other stations. If at some future time a storage shed is built at the proposed headquarters, then Station One can be
sold. In the interim, a new, ceiling-mounted, air-handling (exhaust mitigation) system must immediately be placed in the apparatus bay and later be relocated to the headquarters when apparatus is no longer responding from Station One.

6.2.2 Station Two
At Station two phased improvements/renovations would be made. Initially, a new, ceiling-mounted, air-handling (exhaust mitigation) system must be installed as soon as possible regardless of the decision on the remainder of the facilities project. As construction proceeds, some renovation of the primary bay area and/or turnout gear location should follow as soon as it is deemed functionally and fiscally feasible. In consultation with the Town and neighboring districts, expansion of the apparatus bay at Station Two should be undertaken as a subsequent project.

6.2.3 Station Three
A new, ceiling-mounted, air-handling (exhaust mitigation) system must be installed as soon as possible regardless of the decision on the remainder of the facilities project. After completion of the new headquarters, activity in Station Three will be reduced to one active engine and storage of trailers and other excess material that will not fit in the other stations.

7. Recommendations
The following recommendations were adopted by the Selkirk Fire District Facilities Advisory Committee on December 8, 2016.

1. Immediately install ceiling-counted, air-handling, exhaust mitigation systems in all three stations.
2. Seek and acquire land on which to build a new headquarters station.
3. Build a new headquarters station to consolidate resources currently located at Stations One, Two, and Three and house apparatus, administrative space, district-wide and public meeting space, and training.
4. Retain Station One for storage until such time that it is deemed not needed, at which time it will be sold.
5. Reduce activity at Station Three to a single apparatus station and use for District storage as needed.
6. Renovate Station Two to comply with current code and safety standards.
7. Form two committees to carry out a project plan as determined by the Board: Building Committee and Public Outreach Committee.
8. Cost Considerations and Phasing Plan

It was determined that the plan that would be the most operationally efficient and the most affordable would phase in changes and improvements over time (See Sections 6 & 7). The following phases are recommended:

2017-18

- Immediately install air-handling (exhaust mitigation) system in all three stations.
- Immediately review options to store PPE in ways that limit contamination while “on the racks” and ensure decontamination after calls.
- Seek and acquire land on which to build a new headquarters station.
- Form two committees to carry out a project plan as determined by the Board: Building Committee and Public Outreach Committee.

2019-2020

- Build a headquarters station to consolidate resources currently located at Stations One, Two, and Three and to house apparatus, administrative space, district-wide and public meeting space, and training.
- Retain Station One for storage until such time that it is deemed not needed, at which time it will be sold.
- Reduce activity at Station Three to a single apparatus station and use for District storage as needed.
- Continue to operate out of Station Two and plan for improvements.

2020-2022

- Renovate Station Two to address codes and safety needs (specifics and budget to be determined separately from this project).

The overall budget for the project is estimated to be in the range of $9,850,000, including:

- Immediate installation of exhaust mitigation systems in the existing station bays.
- Land purchase (budget of $250,000)
- Construction of a 25,708 sq. ft. fire headquarters including the following:
  - Site development
  - Professional fees (architect & engineers, attorney fees, bond counsel, etc.)
  - Furniture, fixtures and equipment
9. **Proposed Public Outreach**

The Committee recommends the following to the Board of Commissioners:

Form a Public Outreach Committee in order to determine a plan of action to inform the membership and the general public about the project. This would include the following:

- Communicate with membership to gain support for the project and answer any questions they may have.
- Present the history of the Fire Department’s volunteer service to Fire District residents.
- Provide a strong rationale for the project including current condition of the three stations, recommendations from prior studies, station locations and response time, projected growth in the District, training needs, administrative needs, importance of attracting the next generation of volunteers, coordination with other fire districts.
- Describe the project’s cost and plan a project time table.

Hire a public relations firm familiar with this type of project to work with the Public Outreach Committee and assist with getting the message out. Keeping in mind that successful public outreach campaigns depend, not on PR firms, but on the efforts of the Committee, Department members, and their families. It is their project and it takes organization, persistence, and strong advocacy to get positive results.

Identify representatives from inside the Department and from the community who can speak at Department meetings and to community groups. Members of the FAC can be excellent Public Outreach Committee members and spokespersons for the project, as they are well-informed about the issues and the understand process by which the final recommendations have been determined.

10. **Appendices (see separate documents)**