



# PRESSRELEASE

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Menlo Park Fire Protection District 170 Middlefield Rd Menlo Park, CA 94025 650-688-8400 Fax: 650-323-9129

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## **For Immediate Release**

**Date:** March 2, 2018  
**Contact:** Harold Schapelhouman, Fire Chief  
**Phone:** (650)380-1006 Cellular

### **Fire District Purchases Property behind Fire Station 4 in the Unincorporated County Area**

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District has purchased a 6000 square foot residential lot with a 1980's single family, 2,050 square foot single story, three bed and two bath home directly behind its oldest Fire Station located at 3322 Alameda De Las Pulgas in the Unincorporated County Area.

The residential property, located at 2110 Valparaiso Avenue was purchased for \$3.2 million dollars. The previous owners had been trying to lease the property and were the original owners of the home. The home is located behind the existing Fire Station property which made it highly desirable to the Fire District for future expansion needs.

Fire Station 4 was built in 1949, or 69 years ago, long before most, if any, of the current homes and surrounding area existed. The older wood building is not seismically braced and is not equipped with fire sprinklers, modern electrical wiring and plumbing. The three apparatus bay back in Fire Station can only accommodate four firefighters and two Fire Engines and a smaller cross staffed Patrol unit.

The \$ 3.2 million dollar purchase is considered "strategic" by the Fire District's Chief and Board of Directors because the combined properties increase the land area owned by the District to 28,560 square feet which will allow the Fire District to rebuild a code compliant, safer, modern, larger and more functional fire and emergency services facility.

The District has contemplated this property acquisition for many years, but only after a recent study by consultants Citygate LLC, which validated that the Station location was more than adequate, did the Fire Chief propose to the Fire Board that he work with Realtor Nino Gaetano with Pacific Union Real Estate and attempt to purchase the property.

Fire Chief Schapelhouman said, "We are currently focused on finishing Fire Station 6 located in downtown Menlo Park. We recently started programming and looking at preliminary designs for Fire Station 1 and our Training Center on Middlefield Road. That project will be rebuilt in two Phases, followed by the rebuilding Fire Station 4 on Alameda De Las Pulgas. Outside of a few other smaller projects, it is currently the number two priority on the replacement list for

rebuilding Fire Stations”.

“These essential service structures are 60 and 70 years old and in serious need of replacement and modernization. It will take us about 10 years, or more, to rebuild both of these facilities. That requires that we continue to save and set-aside funds for the actual Stations and go through the design, planning, permitting and public hearing process before we can rebuild a new facility”, the Chief said.

Fire Station 4 has one of the largest and unique areas in the Fire District. 37% of its response area is located in the Town of Atherton (upper Atherton), 44%, is in the City of Menlo Park (upper Menlo and Sharon Heights), 18% is in the Unincorporated County Areas including West Menlo Park, the Sequoia Tract, Stanford Weekend Acres and 1% includes the SLAC National Accelerator and Laboratory which is on contract for Fire and Emergency Services.

Station 4 is the Fire District’s fourth busiest Station. The Engine and three person crew responded to 1269 emergency incidents in 2017, out of 9,049 emergencies District wide for all seven Fire Stations.

The Fire District has made several other strategic Fire Station property acquisitions in the last year including purchasing properties next door to its main Fire Station 1 from Saint Patrick’s Seminary located in Menlo Park and Fire Station 3 located in Atherton.

After hiring a commercial real estate agent in 2006, the Fire District realized it was far more practical and cost effective to purchase property next to existing Fire Stations, then it would be to change locations. It was also more palatable to the community.

In 2006 and 2008 the Fire District purchased two residential properties behind its Fire Station 2 in East Palo Alto. Once the recession was over, the homes were torn down and the area was used as part of an overall drive through configuration needed to modernize a much larger Fire facility that opened in 2016.

The Fire District used the same practice in 2008 when it purchased a residential lot and home behind its Fire Station 6 located in downtown Menlo Park. The house is temporarily being used to house the Fire Crew while the new Station is being finished and will be torn down once the Station is completed to make way for the drive through access, secondary structures and parking for the new building.

“Fire Station 6 wasn’t started until Station 2 was almost finished and similar to both projects, it’s taken us about ten years to acquire property, plan, design, permit, build and finish these projects but it wouldn’t have worked without the additional land and space” the Fire Chief said.

Fire Station 6 is almost finished and scheduled to re-open in the next Couple months. The house behind the Station was purchased by the District in order to expand the facility.