

LEHIGH ACRES FIRE & RESCUE
General Infrastructure Program Application
Station 106

Project Description

Overview

Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District (LAFCRD) is seeking funds to build a new fire station in the North Central area of the District on Sunshine Boulevard at 17th Street W., which is an area that is becoming more developed.

LAFCRD is the largest unincorporated special fire district within Lee County, Florida. Serving an ethnically and racially diverse community of an estimated 2.8 million residents, LAFCRD regularly provides mutual aid to surrounding fire districts, cities, and counties for large-scale commercial, residential, and wildland fires as part of the Regional Team for the State of Florida for Region 6, which includes Hendry and Glades counties.

Lee County is a HUD-determined Most Impacted and Distressed (MID) county. Hendry and Glades are state-determined MID counties.

In 2016, a fire on Sunshine Boulevard destroyed four homes. To prevent a recurrence of such a loss requires a shortened response time, which requires strategically locating equipment and personnel. There are five fire stations in this District now. The population of Lehigh Acres is estimated to be in excess of 120,000. To currently meet the standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710), LAFCRD would need a minimum of at least eight fire stations with an estimated thirteen to fifteen stations as the population grows.

Population growth has not generated a proportionate increase in revenue. In the past ten years, Lehigh Acres has had the most extensive property value decrease in Lee County. LAFCRD cannot rely on mutual aid to make up for our shortfall. All other Lee County fire districts have had reductions as well, though not quite as severe, and they must also deal with cutbacks. Showing great foresight, LAFCRD purchased a two-acre lot on the corner of Sunshine Boulevard and 17th Street W. in anticipation and recognition of the growing population of Lee County and increasing demand for protective resources.

Purpose

LAFCRD is seeking funds to build a new fire station; Station 106 is a critical facility essential for the functionality of the community and houses operations that, if interrupted, will cause a negative impact. During normal circumstances, and more so in the event of natural disasters, continuity of operations is essential for public safety. This Project is in response to a disaster. In 2018, Hurricane Irma did extensive damage to two fire stations requiring LAFCRD to purchase trailers to house the firefighters to maintain operations. The Fire District has spent almost 7.5 million dollars to date to rebuild and harden to Stations 101 and 102 and remodel Station 103. The resources used to rebuild and harden the existing

stations damaged by Irma has adversely affected our capital improvement budget and our ability to address the life safety and welfare needs of our growing community.

The LAFCRD assessed the critical unmet needs for long-term disaster recovery to be responsive to the types and locations of actual needs on the ground specific to fire and emergency services and buildings.

Many areas of Lehigh Acres have response times in excess of 20 minutes. Response times of 4-6 minutes are needed to reverse critical medical emergencies. To meet our response times and meet our essential duties, we will have firefighters living and working out of a trailer at the Station 106 site waiting for the funding to construct the new station. Providing a hardened station is the only financially responsible way to mitigate and ensure continuity of operations and public safety.

This Project was selected because it is an essential services building, and it will benefit low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons through job creation during the construction of the new station. Additionally, local minority and female business enterprises will have an opportunity to serve as sub-contractors on the Project, many of which have a workforce that is LMI.

Risks

The proposed Project will ensure public safety year-round, not just during times of natural disasters. At one time, prior to Hurricane Irma, our capital reserves might have been sufficient to meet the cost of adding a station. Insurance proceeds have not covered the actual cost of station repairs damaged by the hurricane.

The Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District serves an emergency responder, as designated in the County's local mitigation strategy (LMS) plan and resilience plan. LAFCRD is essential to provide public alerts and notifications, lifesaving responses, and prevention and protection activities that all contribute to lessening the impact of disasters. The department also conducts educational seminars for residents to spread awareness on emergency preparedness, through our Stations. The Location of Station 106, which is strategic to serve its underserved population and is a necessity that will facilitate the department's ability to execute its mission before, during, and following disasters. The facility significantly impacts the local economy, and community resiliency by providing community-level Public Safety

To maintain response times identified in NFPA Standard 1710, which applies to substantially all fire departments and provides the MINIMUM requirements for resource deployment for fire suppression, EMS, and Special Operations while also addressing firefighter occupational health and safety. Failure to establish a station in this zone would leave the community and the District without enough resources to respond to emergency calls safely, efficiently, and effectively.

The proposed Project's design loads will be compliant with today's Florida Building Code (FBC) 5th Edition - High-Velocity Hurricane Zone, and built to sustain a minimum 3-second gust, with ultimate wind speeds of 175 mph. The Project will be designed for a 500-year flood event and with planning for sea-level rise impacts.

Low- and moderate-income families in the neighborhood will benefit when the station is built and fully operational. The structure will serve to represent a neighborhood improvement and potentially contribute toward new housing construction, economic revitalization, and growth, impacting LMI families with housing needs.

Team

The Design-Build Team selection and the award were completed through CCNA competitively-bid processes. The design phase is being performed by a local design professional licensed in the State of Florida. The construction administration phase will be managed by a licensed construction company

Funding/Budget Requirements

The Fire District staff has been working with the design-build team through organized workshops. It has developed a series of budgets and estimates, along with value engineering studies, throughout the design phase as the construction documents are completed. By doing so, costs have been continuously monitored, allowing the project team to aggressively pursue value engineering options, value-added coverage, and minimize periodic/routine maintenance (maintainability).

The Cost estimate for the Project is \$5,000,000. Funds will be expensed based on grant-dollars disbursed and/or ACH draw-downs by LAFCRD

Maintenance

Upon completion of the Project, the building will continue to undergo routine inspection and maintained by LAFCRD's Facilities Maintenance Section staff.