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Station 16 Gets Closer to Breaking Ground

By Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District will shortly submit its design review application to the city of Lafayette for construction of fire station 16, moving ahead with a project long demanded by frustrated city residents.

Western Lafayette has been without its fire station since the county closed station 16 in 2012, and the city considered detaching from the fire district because of the reduced coverage. Plans to build a shared station with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District collapsed in 2015, and in May, the ConFire board approved the reconstruction of station 16. Later that month, the district conducted a neighborhood workshop and developed a station design based in part on the public comments. Once the district submits to Lafayette its design review application, which deputy chief Lewis Broschard said includes a 3-D model rendering, the city reviews the document for completeness and determines if the project complies with the California Environmental Quality Act. Because the fire station is being rebuilt at its exact location, Lafayette senior planner Michael Cass said there is a high possibility that the project will receive a CEQA exemption.

The application then moves on to the design review commission. Generally speaking, Cass said the city anticipates about five months from application submission to design review approval, but he could not comment specifically on the station 16 project as he had not seen the application.

After design review, the district submits its construction drawings and architectural plans to the city and to the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District for approval, and applies for a building permit from Contra Costa County, which, according to Judi Kallerman of the county department of conservation and development, may take four to six weeks.

"The county reviews the project to comply with building codes and regulations and the city reviews it aesthetically and environmentally," Cass said.

ConFire can begin station 16 construction once the county issues the building permit. In May, Broschard told his board that construction estimates ranged from \$3.5 to \$4 million, with work likely completed in 18 to 24 months. The station will be put back into service after the city planning department completes its final inspection.

"We will do whatever we can to expedite this because we understand the need for emergency services," Cass said.

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[back](#)

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