

Dear Commissioners,

As a parent and member of our community, we wanted to make a personal plea about how important this issue is to our family and our community. I also want to raise some very concerning issues about the location as well as the purchase of the property.

The ELC is where all children go after they age out of Early Intervention, so this school houses our youngest and most vulnerable students, aged 3-6, many who have an IEP or 504 for a disability or special need. Our son, who has Down Syndrome, currently attends this school (attachment 1). Children at the Prairie Middle School will also be negatively impacted.

The building of this firehouse would have many detrimental impacts on our children. Some of the children who go to this school have sensory and anxiety issues. Upset children will derail the entire class, taking valuable time away from instruction and therapies children receive at school.

The proposed construction site is so close to the school that the playground would have to be closed for up to 20 months. There is also a risk of children getting hurt from straying. All it takes is one accident for this to have an irreversible impact on a family's life.

There are also logistical issues. Dundee is a 2 lane road, with one road going each direction with little to no room to pull over on the shoulder, resulting in possible road blockages by confused drivers, and possibly causing traffic accidents. The exit from the ELC has 20-30 feet of visibility from the direction of the fire station due to a steep bend in the road, which poses additional risks. Having a station sandwiched between 2 schools would also delay emergency vehicles during high traffic times at the start and end of each school period as the ELC has 2 half day sessions. Prairie also has different start and end times.

There is a fire station just 4-6 minute away (attachment 2), quite capable of serving these schools and surrounding areas. From my understanding, the volume of calls come much further west and south. So this location would not have as much impact as other options.

We also know that the fire department had paid way over market value. If you see attachment 3, the price paid per square foot is \$342, which is hefty for a 1955 house that hasn't been updated, especially in this area. We question the principles behind this purchase, not only that it wasn't a wise purchase, but that it came at such a high cost to our children's emotional and physical well being.

Even though we may not be your local constituents, families with children who have special needs live all over, including in your jurisdiction. I would like you to think of them and their children, as well as the logistical nightmares that this fire station would have. In addition, there is the questionable purchase of this property, which represents not only a reckless spending of tax dollars, but at a significantly adverse cost to our children.

The Countryside Fire Department has the budget to purchase a much better suited location elsewhere as this \$500k purchase was only one quarter of their budget. For them to choose this location is just baffling and upsetting to the community. Because this location is the worst option I can think of. The social economic costs on our children are far too great.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Best,
Sybil Kestler, mother and advocate of 2

(Encl: Attachments 1-4, including Speaker Form for this to be spoken at the 3/20 meeting and included in public record)