



December 9, 2019

To: Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty

From: Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood District

RE: Staffing for Station 32

Dear Commissioner Hardesty,

We are writing on behalf of the residents and businesses within the assigned service area for Portland Fire and Rescue Station 23. Station 23, located at SE 13th Place at SE Gideon Street, is tasked with responding to fire and medical emergencies in an area that extends from the Willamette River to SE 30th Avenue, and from SE Holgate Boulevard to SE Hawthorne Boulevard. This includes all of Hosford-Abernethy, most of Brooklyn, the southern portion of the Central Eastside Industrial District, and segments of Richmond and Creston-Kenilworth neighborhoods.

It has recently come to our attention that Station 23 does not have a full fire engine crew to respond to calls for service in our neighborhood. While there is a fully functioning fire engine at the station, it is only staffed with two people, meaning they can only respond to medical calls. It takes a four-person crew to respond to a fire. Every other fire station in Portland is staffed with a minimum of four people. Our neighborhoods deserve that same level of fire protection.

Because they are the only two-person station in Portland, Station 23 is often tasked with attending to low acuity medical emergencies all over the city, which means they are often unavailable in our area. Despite having our own station, we are dependent on crews from neighboring engine houses and service areas, which means longer response times.

In addition to the time needed to travel from a neighboring area, crews unfamiliar with our neighborhood can be slowed by our geography. The Engine 23 service area is complex, with irregular street patterns such as in Ladd's Addition, and barriers such as the Brooklyn Yards and Powell Boulevard, which can only be crossed at certain locations. The area is bisected by the UPRR and MAX Orange Line tracks, as well as heavy rail along SE 2nd Ave; these trains block cross streets, with the heavy rail closing crossings for up to an hour several times per day. Because the MAX trains have heavy-rails style crossing arms, they can block crossings for one to two minutes, with up to 8 trains passing per hour. A team that

is at home in the area and knows the street patterns and rhythms is able to adjust to blockades and complexities more readily, reducing response time.

We are concerned that we are at risk for delayed responses to both fire and medical events, delays that could make the difference when seconds are critical. A delayed response can quite literally mean the difference between life and death.

Our population is growing quickly, and calls for PF&R service have increased since Station 23 was re-opened in 2017. With fully functioning fire engine sitting in the bay, the right thing to do is to provide PF&R with the staffing necessary to provide timely fire and EMS response to our neighborhoods. Please provide a fully-staffed four-person crew for all three shifts at Engine 23 so that we may have the same protection that other Portlanders enjoy.

Thank you,

Chris Eykamp,
Chair, Hosford-Abernethy

cc: Mayor Wheeler
Commissioner Eudaly
Commissioner Fish
Commissioner Fritz
Fire Chief Sarah Boone