# COMMUNITY UPDATE: WHAT PASADENA'S AGING AND OUTDATED NEIGHBORHOOD FIRE STATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEAN FOR YOU



(As of June 29, 2012)

#### Q: What is the issue?

A: According to earthquake experts at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), the question is not if there will be a major earthquake in Southern California, but simply when. If we don't act now to prepare for the big one by repairing and upgrading our aging fire stations, bridges and City-run emergency shelters to meet California's seismic earthquake standards, our community will be unprepared to respond when Pasadena residents need help the most.

## Q: What is the current safety status of our local fire stations?

A: Structural engineers have determined that in a major earthquake, most of Pasadena's fire stations would likely be knocked out of operation, crippling the ability of fire fighters and paramedics to respond to major medical emergencies, fires and search and rescue operations. We need to upgrade outdated fire stations so that during such an earthquake, fire fighters and paramedics are responding to residents' needs rather than being in need of rescue themselves.

# Q: Why are our fire stations so outdated?

A: Unlike our surrounding communities – where fire stations were mostly built after the 1971 Sylmar Earthquake<sup>1</sup> – the vast majority of Pasadena's stations were built decades earlier and many have concrete frames. According to seismic experts, such buildings do not have the ability to withstand a major earthquake.

#### Q: What are the recommended 9-1-1 response time standards?

A: National standards call for fire engines to arrive at the scene of an emergency within five minutes, 90% of the time. Medical experts agree that the brain starts to deteriorate four to six minutes following a serious medical event, such as a heart attack. Studies also show that a fire can go from its first stage to full room involvement between four and six minutes.

# Q: What does the closure of Station 39 mean to our community?

A: The closure of Station 39 and resulting community impact is emblematic of what could happen after a major earthquake throughout our entire community, as a majority of Pasadena's Fire Stations could become unstable and forced to close.

#### Q: What about our other neighborhood fire stations?

A: Many of our neighborhood fire stations are currently operating at capacity, and do not have the room to adequately house the larger, 21<sup>st</sup> century engines & trucks that are the current standard. Neighborhood Fire Stations 31, 33, 36, 37 & 38 do not meet current seismic safety standards, which put them at risk of closure following a major earthquake. In addition, all of our stations require a variety of repairs and upgrades such as:

- Fixing exposed wiring
- Repairing leaky plumbing
- Upgrading inadequate equipment bays
- Improving overall efficiency for faster response times to an emergency

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Pasadena Star-News 7/9/2011 – Arcadia, San Marino, South Pasadena and Sierra Madre Fire Stations were all built after the 1971 Sylmar Earthquake.

#### Q: Does the City have other infrastructure needs?

A: Yes. Pasadena's bridges and community centers that serve as emergency shelters, are also aging and outdated and in need of repairs in order to withstand a major earthquake. In addition, the loss of Redevelopment funds is threatening numerous repair and upgrade projects throughout the City, including making basic repairs to sidewalks following our recent windstorm and the restoration of important historical buildings.

#### Q: How much would this cost?

A: The estimated cost of repairs and upgrades to our Fire Stations and critical infrastructure is approximately \$70 million.

#### Q: What's the solution?

- A: A local public safety funding measure is one solution we are considering, though we are soliciting community input and perspectives. Such a measure could potentially help:
  - ✓ Maintain 9-1-1 response times citywide
  - ✓ Keep all fire stations open and fully operational following an earthquake
  - ✓ <u>Bring our fire stations, sidewalks and critical infrastructure up to current seismic standards, so in</u> the event of an earthquake we're rescuing you, not ourselves!

# Q: Is there any state or federal money to upgrade our stations?

A: No. Last year's devastating windstorms resulted in \$14.5 million in damages to the City and residential and business property, but the federal and state governments refused to help. Pasadena needs a locally controlled funding source to ensure that necessary repairs are made and that the City is entirely self-sufficient and prepared for future emergencies.

## Q: What happens without these repairs?

A: The Fire Department is committed to providing the best possible service we can to our community. However, this issue isn't going away. When the next major earthquake hits our area, it is likely that some of our stations and equipment will be inoperable, and rescue operations may be impacted as a result.

#### Q: How do I learn more?

A: Contact Lisa Derderian, Emergency Management Coordinator at: 626-744-7276 or <a href="mailto:lderderian@cityofpasadena.net">lderderian@cityofpasadena.net</a>. To view a full copy of the Fire Station Safety Assessment, visit our website at <a href="https://www.cityofpasadena.net">www.cityofpasadena.net</a>