

North Fork Special Service District – Fire Mitigation Update

NFSSD Fall Community Meeting 2025

Dear Community Members,

The North Fork Special Service District (NFSSD) Board has been working diligently for many years to reduce fire risk and improve emergency response capabilities in our community. As we continue to grow and evolve, it's clear that upgrading our firefighting infrastructure is not just necessary, it's essential.

We've explored numerous options to enhance our firehouse, equipment, staffing, and partnerships with neighboring fire departments. Through this process, several critical factors have emerged that must be addressed to ensure the safety and resilience of our community.

Fire Response Time and Accessibility

- The closest Provo Fire station requires a minimum of 30 minutes to dispatch to North Fork. In a fire emergency, every minute counts—our goal to save homes and prevent spread into the woods is a 5-minute response time.
- Many roads and bridges in North Fork were built before modern fire codes existed. They lack the width and structural capacity for standard fire trucks. To address this, the NFSSD has invested in specialized four-wheel-drive apparatus with short wheelbases designed for our terrain.

Facility Limitations

- The current fire station sits on steep terrain. Expanding it would require a retaining wall, estimated at over \$2 million.
- During construction, we would need to relocate essential services—water, wastewater, garbage, fire, EMS, and administration—but no suitable alternative location exists within the required 2.5-mile radius.
- The original station was built on donated land for \$250,000, a tremendous cost savings. However, it was designed for a small volunteer crew and cannot support our current full-time staff or meet modern code requirements.

Staffing and Safety Challenges

- Fire code requires four firefighters to safely enter a burning structure. Our current facility can only house two, which limits our ability to respond effectively.
- Makeshift dorms and shared spaces with public works staff have pushed the station beyond capacity. There's no room for essential amenities or future growth due to county setback restrictions.

Community Growth and Insurance Risk

- Increased Airbnb rentals, commercial development, and new homes have expanded our service needs.
- Insurance providers require a fire station within 2.5 miles of homes in urban interface zones. Losing our station could jeopardize coverage for North Fork properties.

Public Works and Seasonal Staffing

- Our public works team shares the fire station, which has long exceeded its capacity.
- Seasonal wildland crews (15+ personnel) lack adequate facilities, only two bathrooms, one office, two bays, and a port-o-potty.
- Winter storage of fire apparatus in the Valley costs the NFSSD approximately \$4,000 annually and leaves us vulnerable during emergencies.

Traffic and Infrastructure

- Canyon traffic continues to increase, and widening roads to accommodate emergency vehicles would be prohibitively expensive.
- Limited parking at the current station has led to vehicle damage and safety concerns near the garbage compactor area.

Fire Mitigation Requires Unity

- While many residents are actively participating in fire mitigation, it must be a collective effort. One unprepared property can endanger an entire neighborhood.
- Our wildland crew plays a vital role in protecting the community, and we must ensure they have the resources and space to operate effectively.

The Board has long recognized the need for firehouse expansion and broader fire mitigation strategies. This is not just about infrastructures, but about protecting lives, homes, and the future of our community.

We are committed to making informed, equitable, transparent, and achievable decisions with input from homeowners, businesses, and residents. Together, we can build a safer, stronger North Fork community.

Warm regards,

North Fork Special Service District Board of Trustees