

# Pantops Public Safety Station Stakeholder Work Group

Final Recommendations – January 2017

## A Message to the Board

As per its stated mission, the Stakeholder Work Group (SWG) is eager to develop and support strategies for effective volunteer recruitment and retention, establishing productive partnerships, and engaging the broader Pantops Community in an effort to realize the vision of Pantops Station 16 as a community-supported station. The body of this report identifies areas for immediate focus around volunteer recruitment and retention and areas for ongoing support through partnerships once the station is operational. Our goal was to carve out roles for a cross-section of the Pantops community – large employers, small businesses, area employees, seniors, and families. We support this station and see an ongoing role for the community in partnering to identify and generate resources for volunteers and for enhanced programs and services. The SWG would like to convey the following high-level remarks:

- We value the on-site provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) offered at the new station for the Pantops community and understand the significant benefits this will bring to our residents and businesses. However, we urge the Board of Supervisors to fund the station as a fully-functioning, 24/7 fire rescue facility as soon as possible. Our rationale for this request is provided in Section 4 of this report.
- We recognize the value of volunteer staffing to support the Pantops Station 16 and embrace our role in supporting volunteer recruitment and retention efforts, being mindful not to detract from the volunteer functions of other stations.
- We believe Fire Rescue is a core public service, meaning that the basic operations of the Pantops Station 16 should be fully funded through Local Government. However, we see a role for the community in partnering to identify and generate resources for enhanced programs and services, beyond a basic level of service provision.

The broad strategies contained in this report have been identified by the Stakeholder Work Group as concepts that will have a positive impact on the success of the station, that have strong community support, and are able to be implemented on a reasonable timeline.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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The Pantops Public Safety Station will fill a critical gap in Albemarle County's Fire Rescue system by providing a permanent home for emergency response from within the Pantops development area. The success of the Pantops Public Safety Station depends on the support of the Pantops community. To successfully achieve that, the Pantops Public Safety Station needs to become woven into the fabric of the Pantops community – by engaging local business and residents, leveraging local knowledge and skills, and fostering partnerships.

When the Board of Supervisors approved the design for the Pantops Public Safety Station in Summer 2015, it expressed a strong interest in forming a work group to creatively partner with stakeholders from the Pantops community on initiatives related to the new facility, including volunteer recruitment and retention, community support and ownership, and future public safety needs and initiatives.

## 2 PANTOPS PUBLIC SAFETY STATION STAKEHOLDER WORK GROUP

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The Pantops Public Safety Station Stakeholders Work Group was convened to explore volunteer recruitment and retention, community support and ownership, and future public safety needs and initiatives and produce recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding mission alignment, community outreach and partnership opportunities related to the new Pantops Public Safety Station. Specific strategies and actions will be developed by the Work Group to correspond with significant project milestones.

### 2.1 WORK GROUP CHARGE:

This work group, comprised of community representatives, will work with staff and the Board to align mission and objectives and to help identify broad goals, framework and strategies for partnerships to maximize the positive impact of the new station. This group's work is separate and distinct from the Pantops Public Safety Station Coordinating Work Group, which is a group of FEMS Board and staff charged with guiding the staffing and operations strategy for the new station. Specifically, the Stakeholders Work Group is charged with developing strategies/recommendations in the following three areas:

- Establishing productive partnerships that will maximize the positive impact of the station
- Effective volunteer recruitment and retention strategies
- Best ways to communicate with and engage the general Pantops community

## 2.3 WORK GROUP MEMBERSHIP & OPERATION OF THE WORK GROUP:

The Work Group is made up of ten community representatives from the Pantops Community to support a station embedded in the community through intentional partnerships.

Work Group Members	Affiliations
Jen Alvarez	State Farm
Diane Berlin	Pantops Community Advisory Committee
Olivia Branch	Pantops Community Advisory Committee
Jonathan Davis	Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital
Norman Dill	Board of Supervisors
Andrew Dracopoli	Worrell Land & Development
Marta Keane	JABA
Rick Randolph	Board of Supervisors
Gary Selmeczi	Westminster-Canterbury

Appointments were made by the County Executive with input from the Board of Supervisors. The Work Group is considered a public body and all meetings are open to the public. A web site has been established that provides public access to all agendas, presentations, background materials and other work of the Work Group – [www.albemarle.org/pantopspublicsafety](http://www.albemarle.org/pantopspublicsafety).

Primary support was provided to the Work Group by staff from the County Executive's Office, Facilities & Environmental Services, and Fire Rescue. Other departments provided support and information to the Work Group as needed.

## 3 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

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The Stakeholder Work Group believes these general strategies will have a positive impact on the success of the station, have strong community support, and are able to be implemented on a reasonable timeline.

### 3.1 IMMEDIATE FOCUS - EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STRATEGIES

This SWG believes that the single greatest contribution the Pantops community can make to the success of the station is by coming together to support volunteer recruitment and retention. The SWG believes the Pantops community can support this effort in the following ways:

#### Direct Circulation of Recruitment Materials

Large and small employers, management companies, and homeowners associations will be activated to circulate recruitment materials to staff, tenants, and neighbors through email and/or direct dropoff. Together, these entities have access to thousands of Pantops-area employees and residents. Recruitment materials that are responsive to area-demographics should be created by the County.

### In-kind support

In-kind support looks different for the different entities on Pantops, but together create a package of immediate and long-term volunteer incentives. Examples of this include:

- Recruiting businesses to donate professional services and expertise for resume writing/critique sessions and career support/counseling. This provides young volunteers with the know-how to translate the skills they develop and hone as volunteers into career opportunities.
- Establishing Job Shadowing & Mentorship opportunities to show volunteers how their training and experience with their service can be translated into career prospects in the health, senior care, and insurance fields can provide mutually beneficial networking experiences.
- Administering a Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP) to offer discounts to volunteers on things like food and entertainment. These types of programs may supplement discounts already offered to uniformed personnel.
- Informing employers about the concept of paid volunteer time, which allows staff to be on-call for Fire Rescue while at their primary employer and to respond to calls for service without sacrificing pay or leave.

### Highlighting Community

Because of the urban amenities in Pantops, the station itself does not need to be a center – the community can be the center for the station. Intentionally creating opportunities to highlight this will foster community and showcase the area's assets. A close connection between Pantops residents and the Station can build a pipeline that will result in increased volunteer support. This can be achieved through:

- **Community Events** that area businesses can co-host that create opportunities for residents to build relationships with volunteers. Examples identified include a Community Day event at a shopping center or other seasonal events at Darden Towe Park, like an Easter egg hunt or outdoor movie nights.
- **Identifying community meeting space** - training rooms at fire stations have traditionally served to provide meeting space for volunteers and the community. Turning this around, the community has identified existing meeting spaces to fulfill this need for Fire Rescue and community engagement. Westminster-Canterbury and Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital have offered meeting space for volunteer trainings in their buildings. Community meeting space has been identified at Broadus Memorial Baptist Church. A list of meeting rooms by size will be developed to share with the community.

## 3.2 ONGOING SUPPORT - ESTABLISHING PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

Once the station is operational, the community of commercial partners at Pantops see a series of mutually-supportive strategies to partner for positive impact. The complementary knowledge and expertise in the area provides opportunities for professional collaboration. The following opportunities were identified through the SWG:

### Community Paramedicine

Community Paramedicine is defined as “the practice by an emergency medical services provider primarily in an out-of-hospital setting of providing episodic patient evaluation, advice and treatment directed at preventing or improving a particular medical condition, within the scope of practice of the emergency medical services provider as specifically requested or directed by a physician”. It is an emerging strategy to reduce reliance on emergency services for non-emergent care. Given the demographics in Pantops, a community paramedicine initiative could both drive down costs to both Fire Rescue and area care providers.

### Pantops Community Risk Assessment

Convening ACFR, the major employers, and homeowners associations on Pantops to develop a community risk-assessment will help determine what types of events Pantops is most at-risk for, but also proactively and collaboratively develop a resource inventory and response plan. This exercise will not only enhance the resiliency of Pantops, but further build partnerships in the community.

### Shared Training Opportunities

Staff and volunteers alike benefit from training experiences that enhance professional development. In-house training resources in the Pantops area that access to could be shared with the volunteers of the Pantops Station, for example, a skills laboratory at Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital and opportunities at Westminster-Canterbury.

### Collaborative Grant Writing

Grant funding can provide one-time money, typically for a specific capital project, program, or staff position. The SWG believes that grant funds could be secured for training opportunities, capital purchases, and/or a risk assessment, particularly where two or more partners collaborate on a project together.

### Resource Support

While the SWG believes operations must be fully-funded through Local Government, there are opportunities to provide support for capital expenditures that support volunteers or provide clear community benefits. The SWG believes the following strategies could be used as needs are identified:

- ***In-kind donations*** can be more cost-effective for a corporation or business to support a program or service and it can also provide a more rewarding experience for staff members involved, as they can share in the experience of giving. In particular, the SWG believes furnishings donations would have community support. Worrell Land & Development<sup>1</sup> Company will contact the station about office furnishings that become available when tenants turnover.
- ***Sponsorship*** by neighborhoods or corporate entities through a “wall of gratefulness” or for naming rights, particularly where there is alignment between the corporation’s and facility or program’s mission.
- ***Civic crowdfunding*** is an emerging strategy to fund capital projects that may have popular support from a segment of the population using online platforms like Kickstarter and IOBY. This could be applied to turnout gear for volunteers or a vehicle. A capital campaign using crowdfunding could additionally build community awareness and support for the station.

## 4 RATIONALE

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The Stakeholder Work Group focused intently on its charge to maximize the positive impact of the station - by establishing productive partnerships, devising effective volunteer recruitment and retention strategies, and developing ways to communicate with and engage the Pantops community.

Throughout our meetings, staff reiterated that this project is approved as a “public safety station”, with Emergency Medical Services (EMS) during daytime hours. We value the on-site provision of EMS offered at the new station for the Pantops community and understand the significant benefits this will bring to our residents and businesses. During our due diligence process, we sought information on the state of Fire Rescue in our community, including data on response times and demographic trends, with an eye towards understanding how well the present and future needs of the community are being met by this project. Given this information, we as stakeholders feel strongly that to truly maximize the positive impact of the station, it needs to be operated as a fully-functioning Fire Rescue station as soon as practicable and encourage the Board of Supervisors to institute a reasonable timeline for supporting fire service at Pantops.

Pantops is a major center for Albemarle County and a growing community. Its location, amenities, and infrastructure has made it an attractive area for both residents and businesses, as evidenced by its sustained, strong growth. The average annual growth rate of the County population since 2000 is around 2%. During that same period, Pantops has had an average annual growth rate of approximately 7%, and new residential units continue to be permitted and built. The senior population here is also outsized, with 28.5% of Pantops residents age 65 or older, compared to 15% of the county population as a whole. Pantops is also home to both the third and fourth largest employers in Albemarle County, Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital and State Farm, which employ several thousand people. Commercial, medical office, and retail development continue to expand, bringing employees, patients, and customers to the area at all hours of the day. Several major roadways traverse Pantops, including Route 20, Route 250, and Interstate 64. These high-volume, high-speed roads generate emergency calls for service that also tax the Fire Rescue system at Pantops. The needs at Pantops are varied and great.

Pantops has been designated as a Development Area since the first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1971. The County’s Adopted Comprehensive Plan states the service expectation for Development Areas will be an average response time of 5 minutes or less for fire calls and 4 minutes or less for rescue calls. It also states that fire and rescue stations “be located where the largest number of people can be served and where response time can be the quickest”. According to data from ACFR, emergency calls to Pantops have an average response time of 7 minutes, 40% longer than the goal for fire calls. Further, Pantops is the only Development Area in the County where first due fire response comes from the Rural Areas into the Development Area. A study undertaken in 1998 showed the gaps in urban areas of County, and over time, ACFR has been able to address those gaps through the development of new stations at Monticello, Hollymead, and Ivy (Figure 1). The final remaining gap in service covers the Pantops Development Area, shown in yellow shading in Figure 2 below – operating this station as a Fire Rescue Station will position Pantops to be served as called for in the Comprehensive Plan, and as Development Areas throughout the County already are.

We recognize the value of volunteer staffing to support Pantops Station 16 and embrace our role in supporting volunteer recruitment and retention efforts. At the request of the SWG, ACFR estimated

operating the station as a Fire Rescue station with 24-hour, 7-day service, would require 110 trained volunteers to fill five “seats” across nine weekly shifts (evenings and weekends). Balancing the need for realistic staffing without detracting from the volunteer functions of other stations in the system presents a challenge – one we look forward to planning for as the County continues to evaluate system-wide needs.

### Addressing Gaps in Urban Areas1991 – 1998 - System needs identified

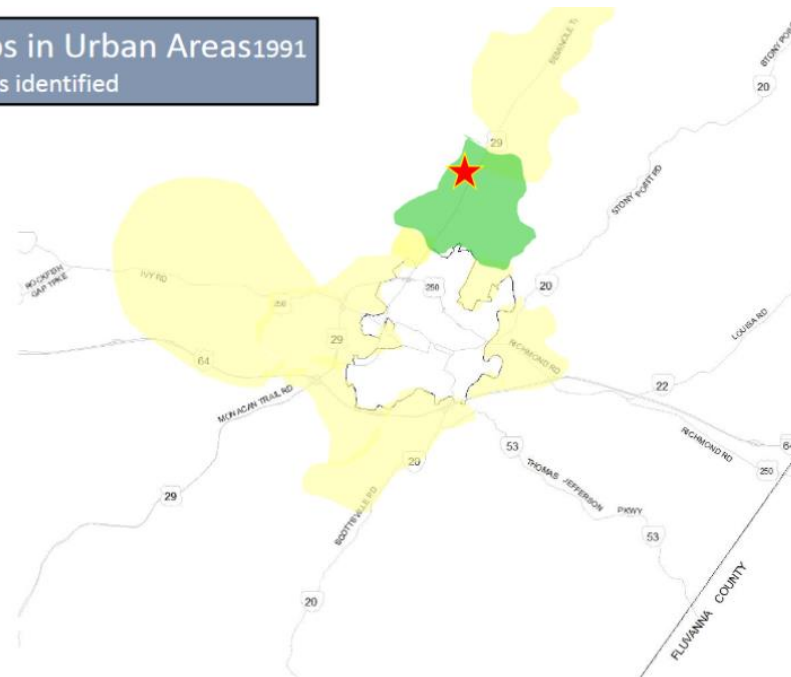


Figure 1: System needs identified through a study conducted from 1991-1998. Stars indicate a Fire Rescue station, Green shading indicates a met service need, Yellow shading indicates a gap in service.

### Addressing Gaps in Urban Areas

- ✓ 1998 - System needs identified
- ✓ 2002 – St 11 - Monticello Fire Rescue
- ✓ 2008 – St 12 - Hollymead Fire Rescue
- ✓ 2013 – St 15 – Ivy Fire Rescue

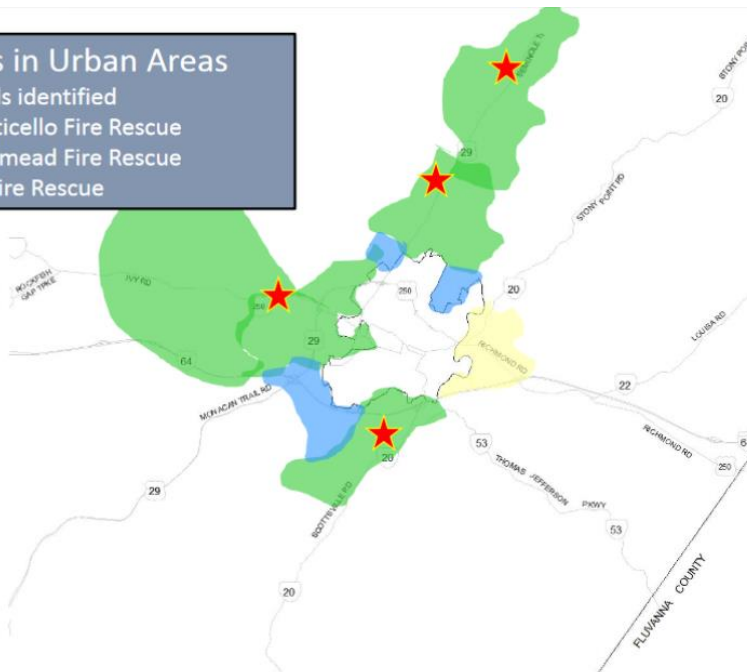


Figure 2: A series of new stations at Monticello, Hollymead, and Ivy have begun to address most gaps. Blue shading indicate areas where Charlottesville Fire Department is the first due.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

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The Pantops Public Safety Station Stakeholder Work Group held six meetings between February and July to review and discuss strategies to provide community-based support for the Pantops Public Safety Station.

The Work Group began its work by gaining an understanding of the County's Fire Rescue system and the need for more comprehensive service based in Pantops as well as the fiscal impacts of both building and operating a station. Presentations were provided and as ideas and concepts were discussed, staff provided additional research at the request of the Work Group. Full copies of all meeting materials and background information are posted at the project website – [www.albemarle.org/pantopssafetystation](http://www.albemarle.org/pantopssafetystation).

Date	Agenda
February 11	Welcome & Introductions Committee Charge, Roles & Responsibilities Project Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing EMS arrangement on Pantops</li><li>Design &amp; Construction timeline</li></ul> Committee Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Standing meeting schedule</li><li>Future topics</li></ul>
March 10	Overview of Fire Rescue System & Pantops community Committee Logistics
April 14	Budgetary Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Capital</li><li>Operations</li></ul> Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Look Ahead
May 12	Exploring Partnership Opportunities
July 14	Coordinating Work Group Crossover Developing Recommendations
August 11	Capital Update Finalize Interim Recommendations
September 7	Report to the Board
September 8	Follow-up discussion on Board meeting