

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

2.6 Detailed Description of the Proposed Central Firehouse

The proposed new Central Firehouse would be 36,483 square feet in size. It will comprise a full first story and partial second story. Approximately 40 off-street parking spaces are also proposed. The project layout superimposed on the three affected properties (the existing shopping center, 1137 Main Street and 1141 Main Street) is provided in Figure 2-7. Figures 2-8a and 2-8b provide representative elevations of the proposed Central Firehouse. A rendering of the facility is provided in Figure 2-9. Floor plans for the first and second floors are shown in Figures 2-10a and 2-10b, and 2-11.

As shown on Figure 2-10a, a total of eight (8) bays are proposed which can accommodate fire-fighting apparatus of varying lengths. Other equipment storage, office and meeting space, and training and kitchen space are located on the first floor as shown on Figures 2-10a and 2-10b.

As shown on Figure 2-11, the second floor provides living accommodations for 16 as well as locker, exercise and recreational space.

A breakdown of the proposed facility by operational area is provided in the Table 2-3. below:

Office Spaces		1,844	
Public Meeting, incl. Kitchen			
	Meeting / Training & Kitchen	4,656	
	Lobby	2,520	
	Kitchen	441	
			7,617
Firefighters			
	Bunk Rooms	1,288	
	Exercise Room	1,013	
	Day / Rec. rooms	2,062	
			4,363
Apparatus Bays & Firematic Support Spaces		8,557	
	Mezzanine	2,566	
			11,123
Storage			1,200
Bathrooms			1,291
Utility/Mechanical			516
Miscellaneous			3,000
	Net Area		30,954
	Corridors & Walls (Approx)		5,529
	TOTAL BUILDING		36,483

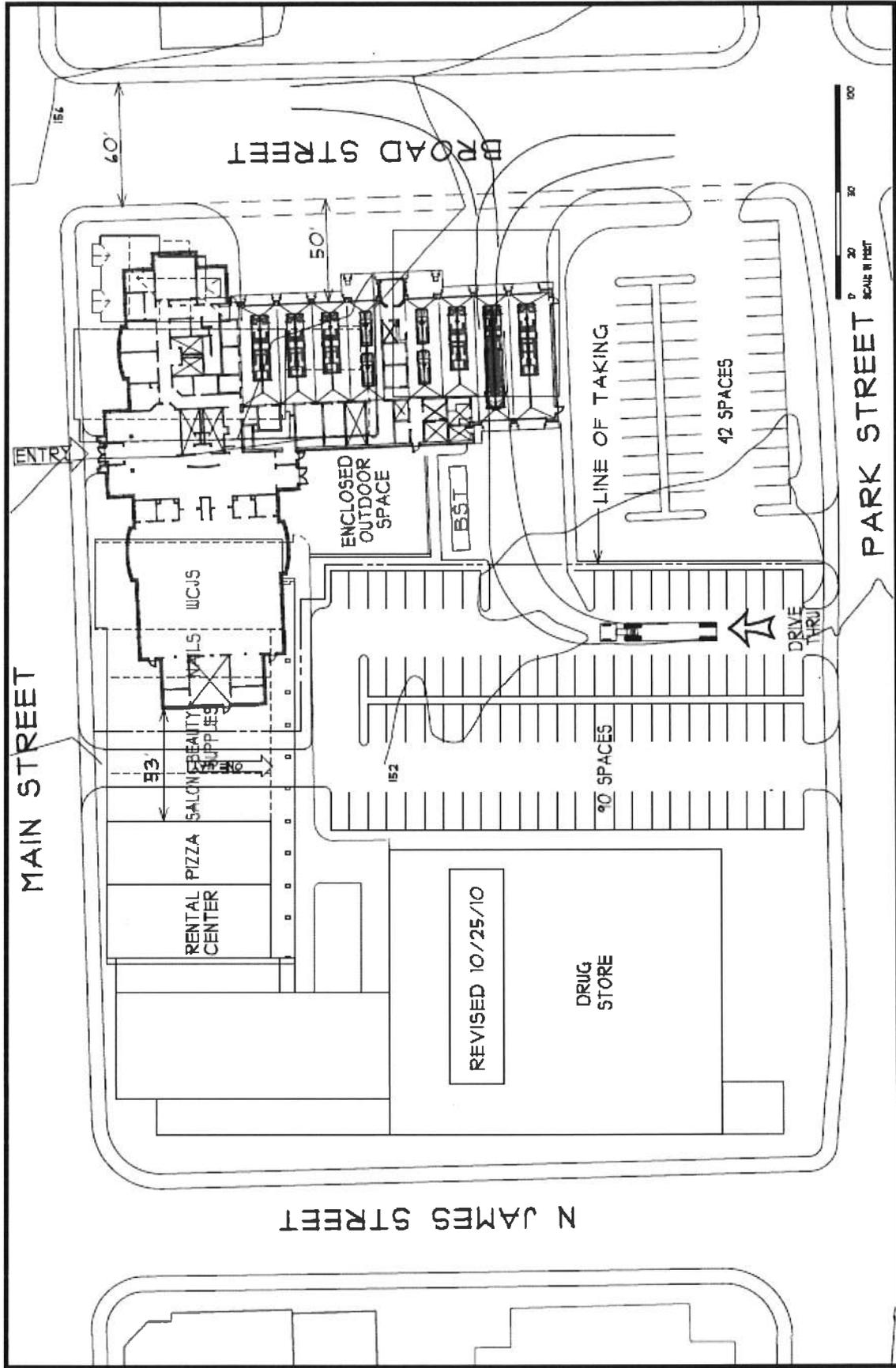
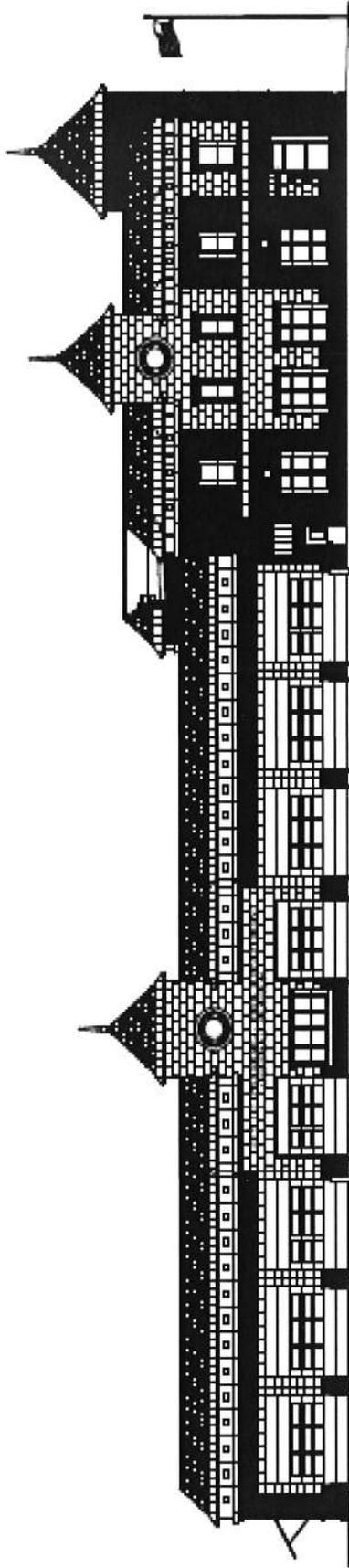
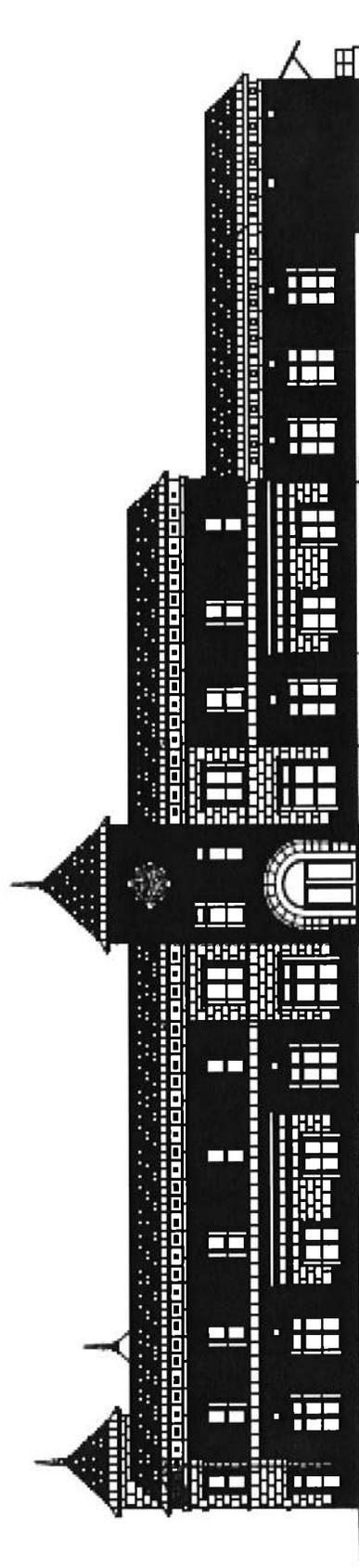


Figure 2-7: Proposed Project Layout

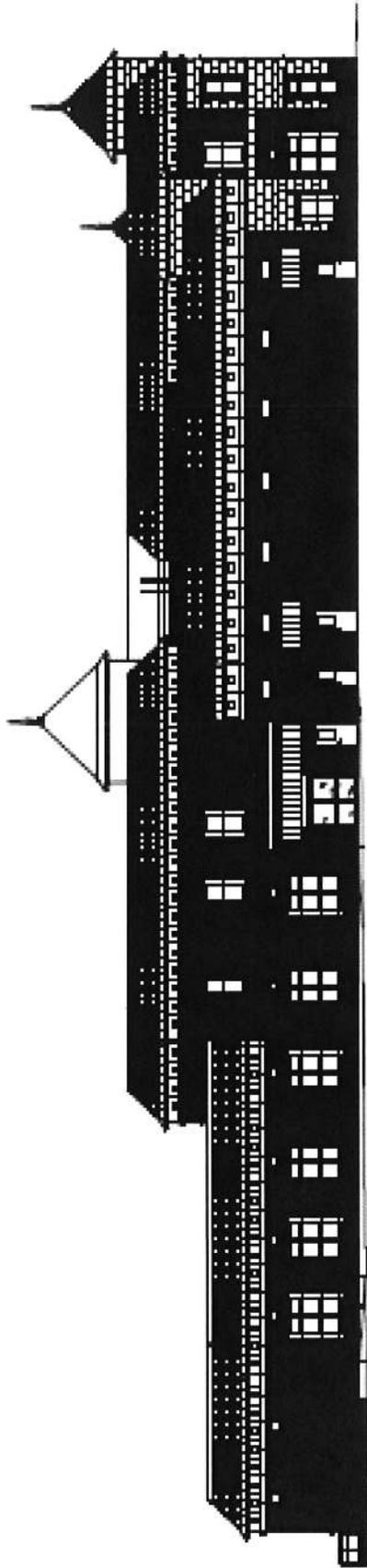


EAST ELEVATION

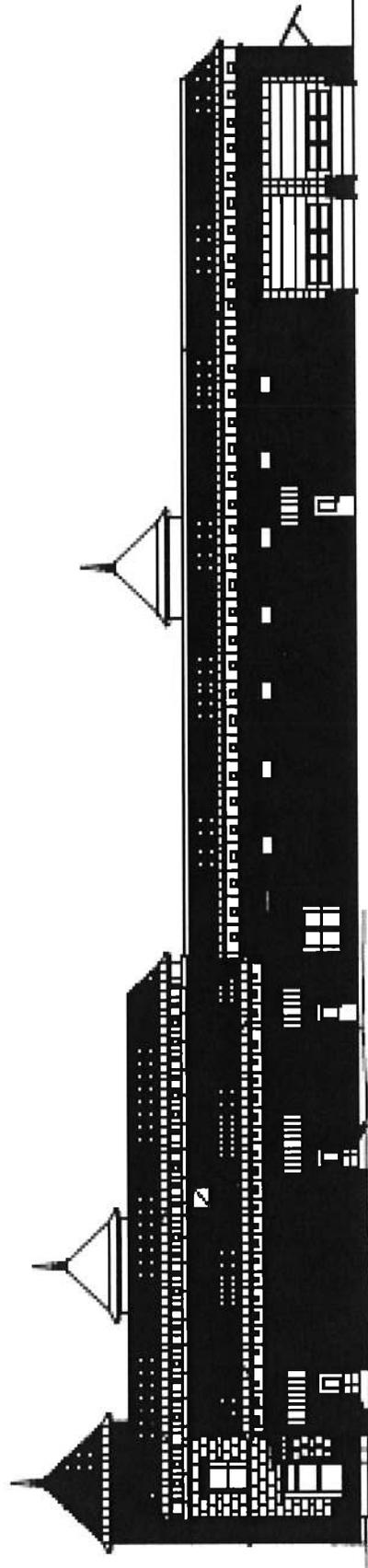


NORTH ELEVATION

Figure 2-8a: East and North Elevations

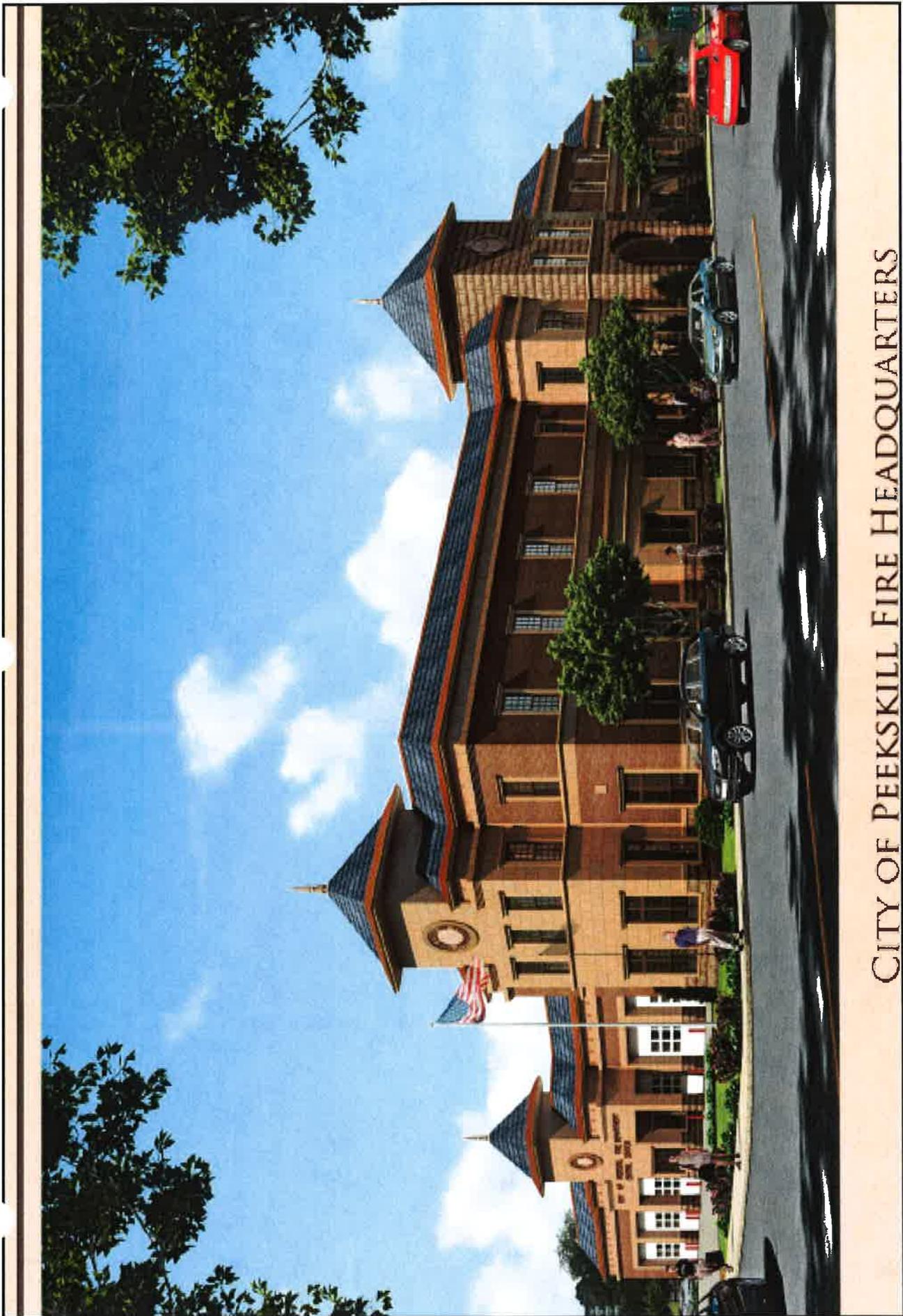


SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

Figure 2-8b: South and West Elevations



CITY OF PEEKSKILL FIRE HEADQUARTERS

Figure 2-9: Architect's Rendering

Note: Final bay door color to match building tone.

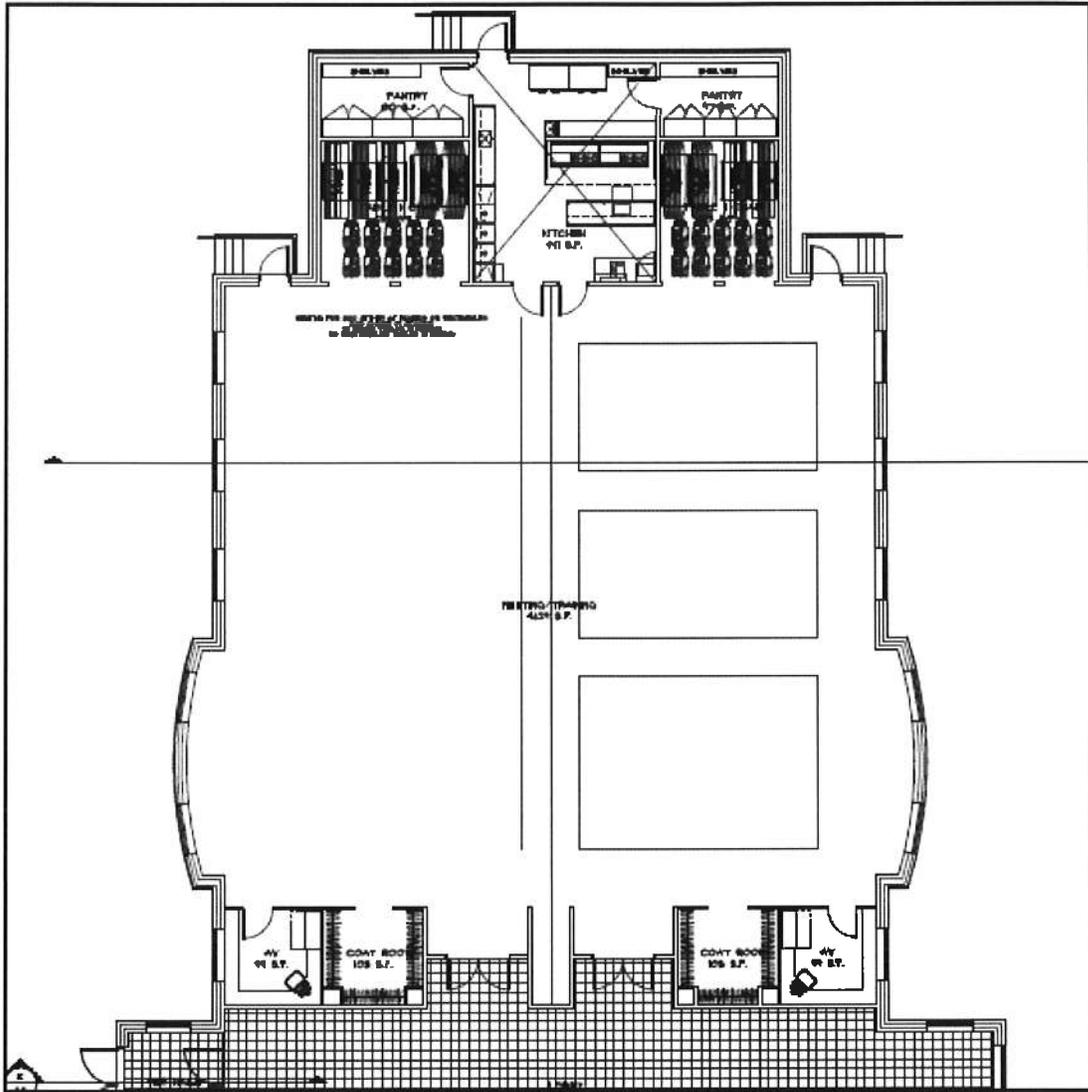


Figure 2-10b: Illustrative First Floor Plan (Western Main Street)

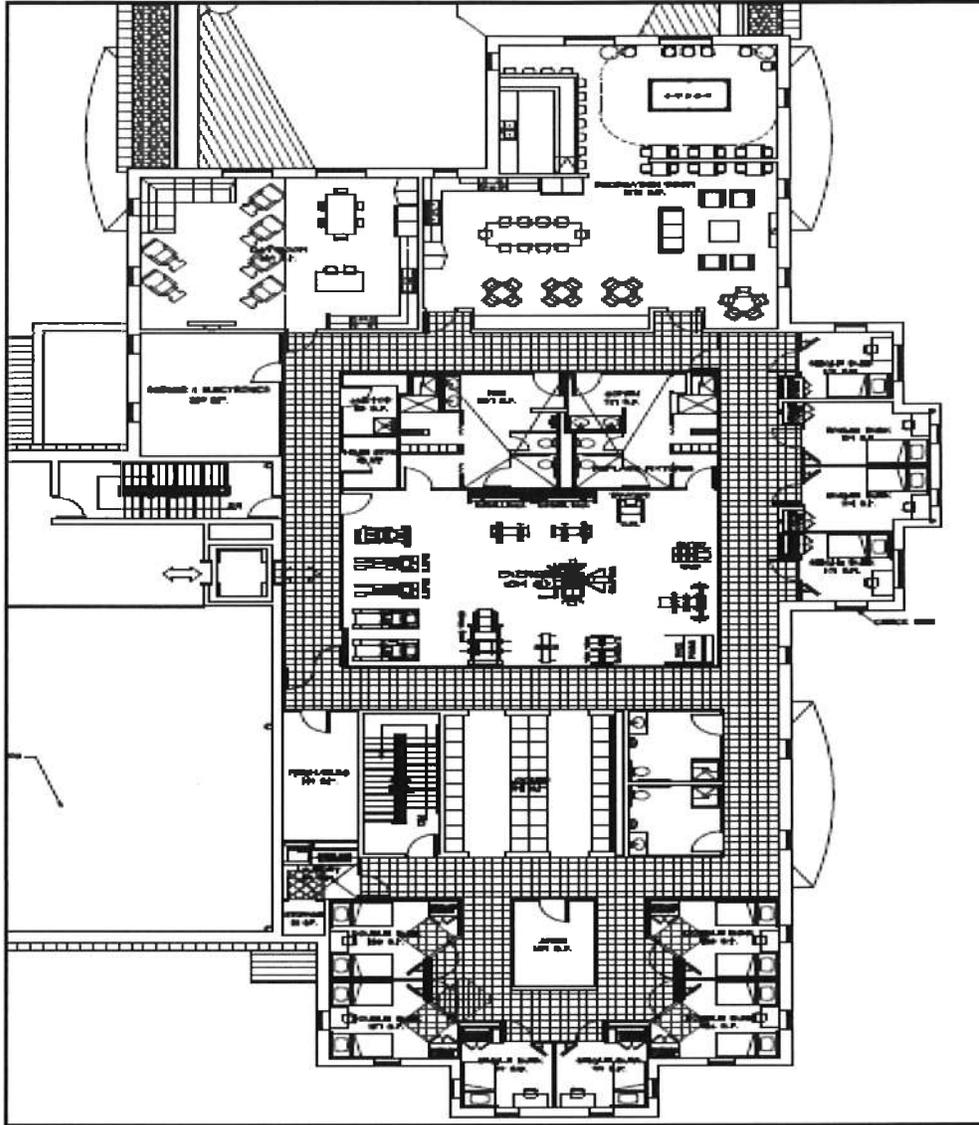


Figure 2-11: Illustrative Second Floor Plan

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

The proposed Central Firehouse would also include public amenities such as a meeting room for the public, a fire department museum, and kitchen facilities.

The proposed Central Firehouse will be classified as an “essential facility” under the NYS Building Code. “Essential facilities” are intended to remain operational in the event of extreme loading whether from flood, wind, snow or earthquakes.

Streetscape Changes / Landscaping

Foundation plantings along the north (Main Street) façade and the east (Broad Street) facade of the proposed Central Firehouse building will be installed in a bed at the base of the building. The remaining area between the planting bed and the street curb will consist of pavers and concrete sidewalk. All plant species will be selected to minimize maintenance (watering, pruning, fertilizing), meet available sunlight levels and conform to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. It is intended that the plant beds will be fully vegetated with woody plants, perennials and ground covers. Species will be selected to restrict height to three to four feet except for occasional accent plants.

A summary of potential plants to be selected and diagrams of a representative sidewalk, building entry and planting area, the treatment at the corner of Main Street and Broad Street, and a solar access analysis for the planting beds is provided in Appendix C.

The final design will include a monument / flagpole feature at the corner of Main and Broad Streets.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

2.7 Proposed and Future Fire Department Operations

The City proposes to construct a Central Firehouse at the intersection of Main and Broad Streets to house five of the City's six volunteer fire companies: Columbian Engine Co. #1, Cortlandt Hook & Ladder Co. #1, Washington Engine Co. #2, Columbian Hose Co. #1, and the Peekskill Fire Patrol.

Equipment that would be housed at the proposed Central Firehouse includes the following seven vehicles:

1. 95-foot aerial ladder truck (diesel)
2. rescue truck (diesel)
3. 1,750 gallon per minute (GPM) pumper (diesel)
4. 1,250 GPM pumper (diesel)
5. 1,500 GPM pumper (diesel)
6. Advanced Life Support Ford Explorer (gasoline)
7. utility vehicle (gasoline and located at Chief's discretion)

As noted above, a gasoline-powered Advanced Life Support (ALS) vehicle for the Peekskill Emergency Medical Service (EMS) would be housed at the Central Firehouse. The Department has seven Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and eight Paramedics on its career staff. The EMT's provide basic life support services to supplement the Peekskill Volunteer Ambulance Corps and the Paramedics provide advanced life support as partners in the Cortlandt Regional Paramedic program.

The Centennial Hose Co. #4 would remain in the 701 Washington Street sub-station.

The proposed Central Firehouse would house equipment and personnel associated with the five companies that are currently dispersed throughout the City. A total of eight (8) bays are proposed which can accommodate fire-fighting and public safety apparatus of varying sizes. Other equipment storage space, office and meeting space, and training and kitchen space are located on the first floor. The second floor provides living accommodations for 16 as well as locker, exercise and recreational space.

The majority of the Fire Department's career staff of 25 would be assigned to the Central Firehouse.

Future Operations at Central Firehouse

Currently, equipment is dispatched to incidents based on the type of incident, geographic proximity of stations to calls, and equipment availability.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

An analysis of Fire Department responses for February of 2011 reveals that over the 28-day span, the vehicles to be housed at the proposed Central Firehouse were dispatched as follows:

1. 95-foot aerial ladder truck	38
2. rescue truck	88
3. 1750 gallon per minute (GPM) pumper	27
4. 1250 GPM pumper	25
5. 1500 GPM pumper	19
6. Advanced Life Support Ford Explorer	157*
*Many of these dispatches occurred while the vehicle was already outside of its fire station.	
Note: The utility vehicle is typically not sent out on emergency calls.	

An additional 34 dispatches of fire equipment occurred from the Washington Street fire station. Of the 34 dispatches only two were responded to by fire equipment only (a 1,500 GPM pumper). The remaining 32 responses were by the Advanced Life Support (ALS) vehicle.

The incident summary for the Peekskill Fire Department for the month of February 2011 lists a total of 241 events (incidents); of this amount 183 responses were for emergency medical service and 58 were fire calls.

As can be seen in Table 2-4 above, the greatest number of dispatches is by the Advanced Life Support vehicle. The vehicle that was sent out with next greatest frequency was the rescue truck which is used to supplement the Peekskill Community Ambulance Corps with a firefighter / emergency medical technician (EMT).

There are four types of alarms that the Fire Department responds to. A response to a "general alarm" would require the ladder truck, two (engines) pumpers, and the rescue vehicle. A "company call" would require one piece of apparatus. An "EMS Assist" call would require one apparatus only when needed to supplement the Peekskill Community Volunteer Ambulance Corps with an EMT. An "ALS Response" would require a paramedic in the fly car (the Ford Explorer).

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

After relocation of five of the City's six fire companies to the Central Firehouse, equipment will be dispatched similarly as it is currently. Thus, based on information provided by the City's Fire Department, over a typical week, public safety vehicles are expected to be dispatched from the Central Firehouse an average of eighty eight (88) times. Of this number, 70 to 80 percent, or between 62 and 70 dispatches, would be responses to emergency medical calls, which typically involve the ALS vehicle and/or the rescue vehicle, and sometimes an engine. The remaining 20 to 30 percent of calls (between 18 and 26) would be fire calls which involve between one and four pieces of equipment depending on the nature of the call.

On average it is expected that there will continue to be at least 70 to 80 dispatches of equipment to fires per month City-wide. The majority of these would be expected to be made from the Central Firehouse.

Future City Growth

The Central Firehouse has been designed to provide for growth in Fire Department and EMS operations if needed. Peekskill's 1990 population of 19,536 grew to 22,441 in 2000 and to 23,583 in 2010, an over twenty percent (20%) increase during that 20-year period. If the growth rate observed between 2000 and 2010 continues, Peekskill's population will grow to almost 25,000 in 2020.

The total number of housing units in the City increased from 8,401 in 1990 to 9,053 in 2000 and to 9,709 in 2010. The increase in the number of housing units since 1990 represents a 15.6 percent increase.

In addition to growth in the overall population, the population of the City of Peekskill is aging. Between 2000 and 2010, the fastest growing segment of the City's population was between the ages of 55 and 64; between 2000 and 2010 this segment grew by over 1,000 persons. The number of calls is expected to continue to increase as the average age continues to increase, and the population over 55 continues to grow.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

2.8 Acquisition and Eminent Domain Process

Federal and State government agencies, and local municipalities such as the City of Peekskill, have the power to acquire real property for public use. The most common acquisition purpose is for roadway construction activities (typically widening). Lands are also acquired for public buildings such as government offices, courts, public works facilities, schools and public safety buildings.

Where eminent domain is being considered, agencies seeking to site a facility such as the proposed Central Firehouse typically accomplish four activities prior to the start of demolition or other site work. The first is to complete project planning sufficiently enough to identify a need for the facility or proposal, and to identify a specific site and development plan. This activity is typically done whether or not eminent domain is used for the acquisition of property or not. However, a need for the project must be established before the eminent domain process can proceed. Likewise a project plan including an acquisition plan must be developed and the public must be afforded an opportunity to comment on that plan. In New York State, the effects of the acquisition by eminent domain must also be identified.

The second activity is to acquire the property needed by making an offer to purchase and proceeding through negotiations to arrive at mutually satisfactory terms for a purchase agreement. If negotiations fail to produce an agreement (or negotiations foresee it), property acquisition by eminent domain may be pursued. This is the point at which the Central Firehouse project is.

The third activity which occurs as part of the negotiations, and again as a formal part of the eminent domain process is property valuation. This includes studies of the title of the property, and preparation and review of appraisals of a property's value.

The fourth and final activity involves relocation. This part includes providing advice and services to affected property owners and tenants, locating new home and business locations, and payment of monetary compensation for costs and expenses involved in the relocation.

In New York State, General Municipal Law Section 74-b outlines the responsibilities of localities in administering property acquisition by eminent domain and relocation procedures. Specifically General Municipal Law limits the amount that can be authorized to cover moving expenses for owners and tenants of residential property to no more than \$1,000, and no more than \$25,000 for owners and tenants of commercial property. The specific text of excerpted portions of the regulation is below:

§ 74-b. Payment of moving and relocation expenses of residential and commercial owners and tenants of appropriated property.

1. The chief fiscal officer of every municipal corporation shall establish and may amend rules and regulations authorizing the payment

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

of reasonable and necessary moving expenses of occupants of property acquired by condemnation or agreement, such payments not to exceed one thousand dollars in the case of an owner or tenant of residential property and twenty-five thousand dollars in the case of an owner or tenant of commercial property. Such rules and regulations may further define the terms used in this section. Application for such payment shall be made to the chief fiscal officer of such municipal corporation upon forms prescribed by him and shall be accompanied by such information and evidence as he may require. Upon approval of such application, the chief fiscal officer of such municipal corporation shall deliver a copy thereof to the treasurer of the municipal corporation or other officer of such municipal corporation exercising corresponding functions together with a certificate stating the amount due thereunder, and the amount so fixed shall be paid out of the municipal corporation treasury after audit by the comptroller of the municipal corporation or other officer of the municipal corporation exercising corresponding functions from moneys appropriated for the acquisition of such property. As used in this section "commercial property" shall include property owned by an individual, family, business concern (including the operation of a farm) and a nonprofit organization.

2. In addition to the authorization of subdivision one of this section, the governing body of any municipal corporation may adopt and amend rules and regulations authorizing the payment of relocation assistance allowances, related and other necessary expenses as described in the uniform relocation assistance act to owners or occupants of property or any interest therein acquired or to be acquired by such municipal corporation by condemnation, agreement or otherwise and for which federal funds shall be used toward the cost of such acquisition.

Application for such payment shall be made to the officer of such municipal corporation designated by the governing body, upon forms prescribed by him and shall be accompanied by such information and assistance as may be required to substantiate entitlement thereto. Payment shall be made as provided in such rules and regulations from moneys appropriated for the acquisition of such real property or interest therein.

All residential and commercial tenants, and the property owners must be notified of public hearings required under the NYS Eminent Domain Procedure Law (EDPL), and the NYS State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

Relocation services

The City of Peekskill intends to provide relocation services and payments to all residential and commercial tenants displaced by the proposed project.

The City of Peekskill Department of Planning and Development will administer relocation services and payments. In addition to providing relocation services and payments, the City of Peekskill will assist with identifying satisfactory accommodations for residential and commercial tenants in locations of their choice in the City of Peekskill.

As a general guide to the logistics of the relocation process, the following activities are expected to occur after the City's Common Council determines that acquisition of property for the Central Fire House by eminent domain is appropriate:

1. A City representative will contact the affected residential or commercial tenant within ten days of the determination to acquire the properties by eminent domain, to set up a face-to-face meeting to determine their needs. The representative will be available as needed throughout the relocation process. The representative will also be available as needed to explain the tenant's rights, benefits, and obligations and may assist in explaining legal notices received from the City.
2. Residential tenants will be relocated to comparable or better replacement rental housing that is decent, safe, sanitary, and functionally equivalent to the displaced dwelling. Every effort will be made to house residents in neighborhoods of their choice in the City of Peekskill, including their current neighborhood if possible. The maximum relocation payment made to each of the two (2) residential tenants shall be one thousand (\$1,000.00) dollars.
3. For commercial tenants, the representative will conduct an analysis of the business' location requirements and other relevant considerations to find a comparable site for business relocation. The representative will work with the commercial tenants to address commercial issues such as negotiating comparable square footage costs and rent and getting the same phone number transferred to a new location. The maximum relocation payment made to each of the seven (7) commercial tenants shall be twenty-five (\$25,000.00) dollars.
4. The City representative will provide relocation support for the duration of the settlement or condemnation.

As noted earlier, all residential and commercial tenants, and the property owners will be notified of public hearings required under the NYS Eminent Domain Procedure Law (EDPL), and the NYS State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

Relocation costs to be covered by the City of Peekskill will include:

- Actual moving expenses, which may include but not be limited to packing expenses and moving expenses), storage of personal property, the cost of dismantling, disconnecting, and reconnecting machinery and utilities, loss of personal property caused by the move, the expense of searching for a substitute business site, moving insurance, advertising related to the move, and related expenses.

As noted earlier, NYS's General Municipal Law limits the amount that can be authorized to cover moving expenses to no more than \$1,000 for each residential tenant, and to no more than \$25,000 for each commercial tenant.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

2.9 Closure and Demolition of Onsite Structures

Activities at the proposed Central Firehouse project site are expected to begin in late 2012 or early 2013 after final approvals have been received, and the property has been acquired.

The proposed project would be constructed over approximately 18 months from start of demolition to installation of final finishes. Demolition of existing buildings and pavements is expected to occur during the first two months. Site preparation and construction activities are expected to occur over an approximate 16 month timeframe. Installation of landscaping and fixtures and finishes in the Central Firehouse building are expected to occur during the last six months.

The proposed project site currently supports structures and pavements and small landscaped yard areas. The major portion of the project site was disturbed by construction as part of the Academy Street Urban Renewal Project in the 1970's; this portion now supports Crossroads Plaza. The remainder of the project site has supported structures for many years as well. As such, with respect to grading activities and the construction of a foundation the site is expected to require relatively little preparation to support the proposed Central Fire House.

Prior to the start of demolition, the parking area that will remain open and protected from the adjacent construction activities will be delineated. A construction fence will be erected around this area to delineate the limit of construction and safe areas for patrons and employees of the existing businesses. Passenger vehicle and pedestrian access from Park Street will be limited to the existing westerly parking lot entrance. The existing northerly entrance along Main Street will be utilized for construction vehicles. A new entrance along Main Street will be built and used for construction vehicles only during construction. (This driveway can be made useable for shopping center traffic by the end of the third month of construction). Signage will be erected around the site and adjacent roadways to direct and inform patrons and employees of the new traffic and walkway patterns.

It is anticipated that the sidewalks along Main Street and Broad Street on the block of the proposed construction activity will be closed to pedestrian access during demolition of the existing buildings. Approximately four on street parking spaces on Broad Street (southbound) will be eliminated for the duration of construction and after the project is complete. A reduced sidewalk width may be provided during construction of the new building, however it is likely that this sidewalk will remain closed for the entire construction duration. Pedestrian access on Main Street will be directed to the north side of the street; pedestrian access on Broad Street will be directed to the easterly side of the street.

It is expected that at least 54 parking spaces within the existing shopping center parking area will be kept available for parking at all times during construction of the proposed Central Firehouse. It is noted that the existing driveway to Main Street primarily used by

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

exiting traffic from the Crossroads Plaza will be closed early in construction; as noted earlier, a new access drive will be constructed but will not be open until construction is substantially complete. This may be accelerated to be made useable by the end of the third month, if conditions warrant.

Demolition will not proceed until protective measures around the portions of the shopping center to remain are approved by the Engineer and City staff.

Demolition of existing buildings and pavements is expected to occur within the first two (2) months of construction. The contractor will field verify the location of all existing utility service connections to be abandoned to confirm that no cross connections exist between buildings to be demolished and buildings to remain. The contractor will identify and verify service connections to ensure lines are distinctive so that continuity of service will be provided throughout construction.

The greatest potential for disruption will be when changes to the easterly wall of the shopping center are implemented. The business at this location is the pizzeria which may need to close briefly during demolition and reconstruction of the easterly wall of the shopping center. Disruption will be minimized as much as possible. Brief disruptions to remaining shopping center businesses may occur during demolition as well; these will be minimized as much as possible.

It is anticipated at this time that the buildings will be removed in one phase – all debris will be sorted and recycled or disposed in accordance with applicable waste handling procedures of the receiving waste handling transfer station. The majority of the construction and demolition debris will be recycled.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

2.10 Project Approvals, Involved Agencies and Public Participation

Project funding and site acquisition and decisions on project construction expenditures will be made by the City's Common Council.

The Common Council will continue to act as Lead Agency for the purposes of SEQRA. The City is conducting a coordinated review of this Type 1 action. The proposed project is a Type 1 action since the north side of Main Street opposite the proposed project site is within a designated National Register District.

In August of 2011, the City's Common Council amended the City Code to exempt public safety uses from review by the City's Historic Landmarks Preservation Board (HLPB). This action exempts public safety uses including the Central Firehouse, the City Police station, the Washington Street Fire sub-station, and the fire stations to be closed from City HLPB review, if applicable.

The proposed facility complies with the yard, coverage and FAR requirements of the City's C-2 regulations. While not restricted in the City's Central Commercial C-2 District, the maximum 53-foot height and overall average height of the proposed facility would be in character with surrounding commercial buildings in the downtown area.

Off-street parking for the proposed Central Firehouse would be provided in a parking area to be provided on the project site. It is expected that the number of spaces would be adequate to serve firefighters and any other personnel that would be at the Central Firehouse at most times. During training, or at times that public functions are to be held at the Central Firehouse, it is expected that most visitors to the Firehouse will park on surrounding streets and parking facilities such as in the James Street municipal garage.

The City Building Department will review project construction plans for compliance with the NYS Building Code as part of the building permit application.

Approval of variances is not needed for City of Peekskill government buildings.

Final site plan approval by the City of Peekskill Planning Commission for the Central Firehouse project is not needed since, in August of 2011, a determination of public need based on the balancing of interests test was made by the City's Common Council.

Subdivision and Amended Site Plan approval will be required for the portion of the Crossroads Plaza shopping center that would not be acquired as part of the proposed activities. In addition, exterior changes to the shopping center would be reviewed by the City's Historic Landmark Preservation Board (HLPB). The details of the Amended Site Plan and approvals will be finalized as negotiations with the owners of the Crossroads Plaza shopping center proceed.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

It is noted that a small amount of demolition activities will affect a five-foot portion of the Crossroads Plaza shopping center building that represents a small portion of the building to be acquired and demolished. This five-foot portion is intended to ultimately support a grassed area and walkway along the future driveway from Main Street into the shopping center. During construction, the City would be responsible for demolition of this portion of the building, reconstruction of the building wall, installation of utilities and infrastructure, signage, lighting, curbing, paving, etc. This five-foot area lies outside of the acquisition area and will be retained as part of the shopping center.

The Westchester County Health Department would review aspects of the proposed kitchen facility. In addition, realty subdivision approval would be needed from the Westchester County Health Department due to the change in lot lines which will create two (2) new lots from the existing three (3) lots, with different lot areas.

The proposed project site is located along Routes 202 and 35 (Main Street and Broad Street). Main Street is also designated as US Route 6. As such, work on both thoroughfares requires approval from the Westchester County Department of Public Works and Transportation.

The project location along County-administered roadways also requires referral to the Westchester County Planning Board.

The Westchester County Department of Public Works and Transportation operates Bee-Line routes 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 in the area of the project site (primarily along Main Street). A major transfer point is located at Main Street and Broad Street. The County Department of Public Works and Transportation will be provided opportunities to comment on the proposed project plans, and will be contacted during construction as necessary to minimize effects to bus operations.

The NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) will be provided information regarding the proposed facility since Main Street and Broad Street are designated as State roadways.

The NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) will be provided information regarding the proposed facility since the north side of Main Street opposite the proposed facility is within a designated National Register District. The project site itself is located in a locally-designated historic district.

Construction sites requiring over one acre of disturbance are subject to NYS DEC requirements regarding the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and notification prior to the commencement of construction. The proposed project site comprises 1.5 acres, the entirety of which will be disturbed and would be subject to these requirements.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

Public Participation

The City's Common Council has held public meetings which were noticed in the local newspaper and broadcast to the community (via cable television and the Internet) at which the City's public safety needs were discussed. Six (6) public meetings were also held specifically on the renovation needs of the existing firehouses and the Central Firehouse proposal. Prior to the meetings, a newsletter was sent to City residents providing background on the conditions at the existing firehouses and to solicit public feedback on the available solutions.

A memorandum from the City Manager dated July 8, 2010 summarized the comments received at the public meetings and provided responses to specific questions raised. The memo and accompanying attachments is included herein as Appendix L.

A public hearing was also held by the City's Common Council in August of 2011 on the Environmental Assessment Form prepared for the project. That public hearing was also held to solicit public feedback on the nine factors of the balancing of public interests test and to hear public comment on proposed amendments to the Historic and Landmarks Preservation Code to exempt public safety uses from the requirements of such Code.

As noted earlier, the City's Common Council determined in August 2011 that the proposed facility meets a public need based on the balancing of public interests test, and therefore final site plan approval by the City Planning Commission is not needed. Also, in August of 2011, the City's Common Council amended the City's Historic and Landmarks Preservation Code to exempt public safety uses from the requirements of such Code.

Copies of the resolutions adopted in August of 2011 are included in Appendix B.

A public scoping hearing was held in March of 2012 for this Draft EIS.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

2.11 Acquisition Costs and Funding

The proposed Central Firehouse is currently projected to cost \$15,685,024, which includes \$2,750,000 in estimated land acquisition costs. This amount will be funded through issuance of bonds, with debt service to be primarily funded through the City's deed transfer tax and property taxes.

Fiscal effects of the project are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.2.

Peekskill Central Firehouse Project Description

2.12 Use and/or Disposition of Remaining City Firehouses

As noted earlier, the Washington Street firehouse will be retained for use as a sub-station to serve the southern portion of the City. This station will continue to house the Centennial Fire Company. Renovation of this building has not been planned at this time; however moneys not expended for construction of the Central Firehouse, if any, will be used for the future renovation.

Depending on their disposition, a SEQRA determination(s) will be made at a future date for the four (4) City-owned firehouses that would be vacated when the fire companies relocate to the Central Firehouse. Any sale of the firehouses would be completed in accordance with the City Charter.

It is anticipated that the Cortlandt Hook & Ladder firehouse will continue to house the City's Youth Bureau. A portion of this firehouse has been used for this purpose for several years.

No decision has yet been made as to the future use or disposition of the Peekskill Fire Patrol building on Highland Avenue, the Columbian Engine Co. #1 firehouse on Crompond Road or the Washington Engine Company #2 on South Division Street.

As noted earlier, the rented firehouse on Dayton Lane housing Columbian Hose Co. #1 will no longer be leased by the City.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

3.1 Land Use, Zoning and Economic Conditions

3.1.1 Existing Land Use and Zoning Conditions

As noted in the Chapter 2.0, the proposed Central Firehouse project site is located at the southwest corner of Main Street and North Broad Street in downtown Peekskill. Broad Street and Main Street are designated as NYS Routes 202 and 35. Main Street is also designated as US Route 6.

The proposed project site comprises approximately 1.5 acres and currently supports a portion of an existing one-story shopping center (1101-9 Main Street and known as Crossroads Plaza)), a one-story commercial building (1137 Main Street) and a 2.5-story structure that currently is divided into two commercial spaces and two apartments (1141 Main Street). One of the commercial spaces at 1141 Main Street is now vacant as is one apartment. The City acquired 1137 Main Street in 2011 and is currently in contract to purchase 1141 Main Street.

In addition to retail and personal service stores, the shopping center currently includes a community mental health clinic operated by Westchester Jewish Community Services, in one of the two former bank spaces. Five of the existing commercial spaces at the center are currently vacant; four of these spaces are located in the space that will not be acquired for the proposed project. The one vacant space within the proposed acquisition area was most recently used by the City of Peekskill Youth Bureau.

The project site is located at the eastern edge of the City's downtown area, very nearly at the geographic center of the City.

The area surrounding the project site is primarily non-residential in character with retail stores, offices, and institutional uses, particularly to the west and south. A church and residences most of which are historic in character are located along Main Street opposite the project site and along Main Street heading east, and along Broad Street heading north. Some of these residences include non-residential uses.

A mix of residences and light industrial uses lie along Sparrow Lane and other streets east of the project site. A Walgreen's drug store and associated parking area recently opened on the east side of Broad Street across from the project site. A new mixed use structure has also recently been constructed across from the project site on the east side of Broad Street and Sparrow Lane. Multi-family apartments lie at a slightly higher elevation to the south of the project site. An office building and adjacent vacant lot lie between the project site and these multi-family buildings.

The surrounding land use pattern is shown in Figure 3.1-1. Land use (i.e., existing non-residential tenants) on the project site is summarized in Table 2-1 on page 2-5 of chapter 2.0: Project Description. A diagram of the project site is provided as Figure 2-6, also in chapter 2.0: Project Description.



Figure 3.1-1: Land Use / Project Site and Environs

Peekskill Central Firehouse

Historic land use up to the beginning of the twentieth century at the project site was predominantly residential. Historic mapping is provided in Appendix H. The area became increasingly commercial after the turn of the twentieth century.

The project site is zoned C-2 Central Commercial as are surrounding blocks to the west, and partial blocks to the north and east. The C-3 commercial district is mapped to the south and southwest. The C-3 District allows similar retail commercial, service and office, and restaurant uses as the C-2 District, although with different bulk regulations. Additional non-residential uses are also permitted in the C-3 District.

Zoning

The City's generalized zoning for the site and surrounding area are shown in Figure 3.1-2: Generalized Zoning.

The C-2 District has no minimum lot area, no minimum frontage and no minimum lot depth requirements. Yards are not required but if provided shall not be less than six (6) feet. The maximum lot coverage permitted is 90 percent (90%). The maximum floor area ratio is 2.5, with increases of 0.1 up to 2.0 above 2.5 when coverage is reduced by five percent.

Off-street parking must be provided at the following ratios:

- retail businesses: 1 space for each 300 square feet (sf) of gross floor area
- service businesses: 1 space for each 200 square feet of customer service area
- banks: 3 spaces for each teller
- restaurants: 1 space for each 100 sf of patron use area
- professional or business offices: 1 space for each 300 sf of gross floor area, excluding storage and utility areas, or 1 per employee, whichever is greater

Off-street parking ratios are not specified for government uses or firehouses in the City Zoning Code.

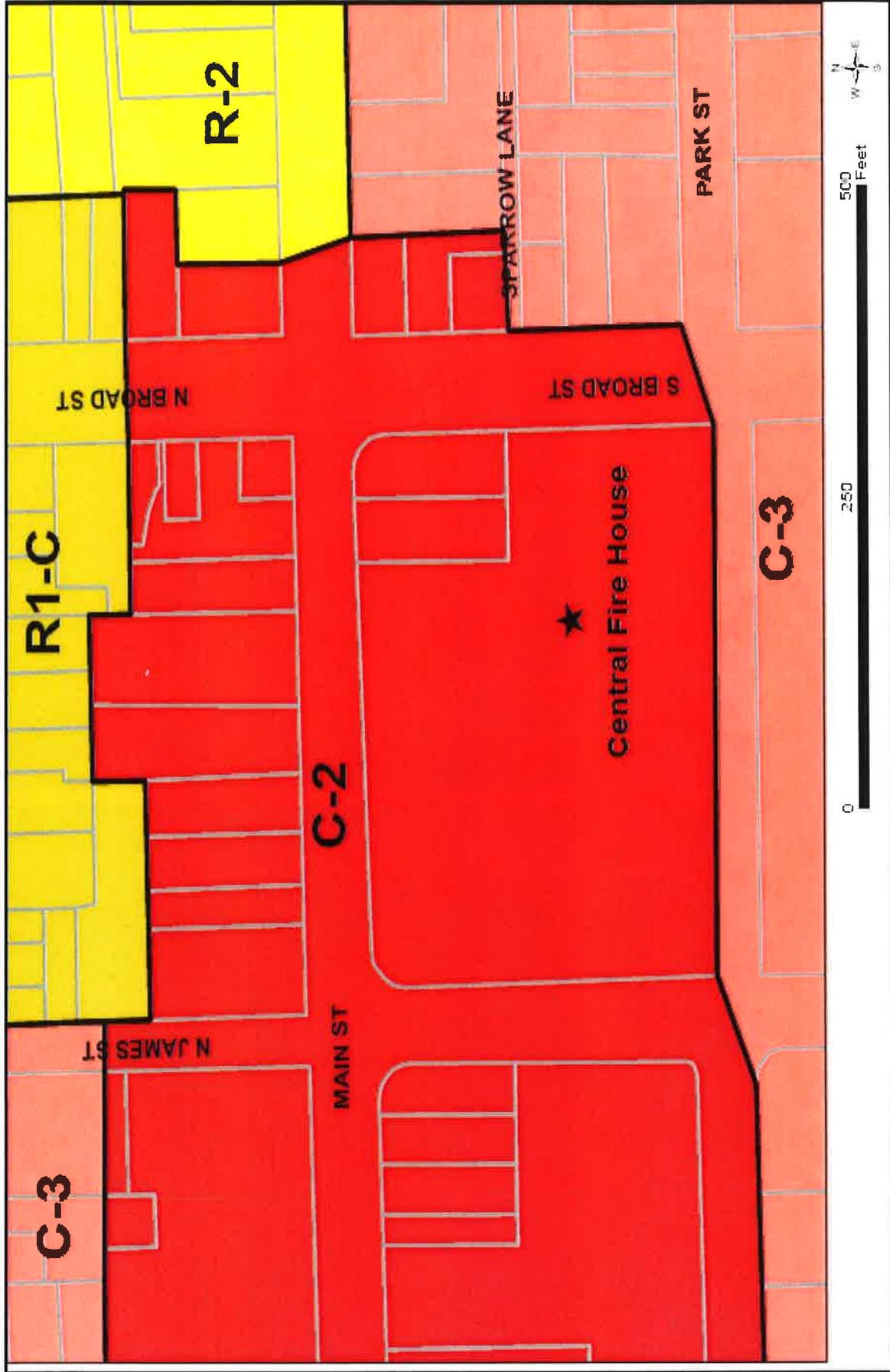


Figure 3.1-2: Generalized Zoning, Central Firehouse Project Site Area

Peekskill Central Firehouse

3.1.2 Historic Background

Urban Renewal Designation

In 1960, the project site area was designated as part of the Academy Street Urban Renewal Area; the majority of the project site was later acquired and redeveloped as the Crossroads Shopping Center. A fire station was planned on the subject block at that time; a station was constructed at the corner of Broad Street and Crompond Road / South Division Street which currently houses two fire companies. In 1960 the area supported a mix of residential and commercial uses and structures.

The Academy Street Urban Renewal Plan expired in 1991. The proposed Central Fire House site is not part of any designated urban renewal area or plan at this time, nor are any proposed.

Figure 3.1-3 shows an Illustrative Site Plan for the Academy Street Renewal project. Prior to 1960 the area supported a mix of residential and commercial uses and structures.

Background of Existing Structures to be Acquired

The existing Crossroads Plaza shopping center was constructed in the mid 1970's. Based on its layout and configuration, the plaza initially was intended to serve as a community shopping center. Historically such centers have been anchored by supermarkets, and a review of City records indicate this was the case for the first few years when Crossroads Plaza first opened in the mid-1970s. More recently due to the increase in the average size of supermarkets and changes in retailing, many spaces formerly occupied by supermarkets or groceries (and also smaller variety stores) are now occupied by drug stores. This is the case at Crossroads Plaza, where Rite-Aid, a drug store chain has been a tenant in the main portion of the largest commercial space for many years.

Banks were also typically sub-anchors of community shopping centers; Crossroads Plaza has two spaces that appear to have been outfitted for banking tenants. These spaces have long been either vacant or occupied by community institutional uses. One is currently occupied by Westchester Jewish Community Services.

The remaining smaller commercial spaces at the Crossroads Plaza would typically house smaller retail establishments, personal service establishments such as barbers and beauty salons, and small storefront offices such as those for insurance and real estate agents and brokers and restaurants.

Vacancy and turnover of the retail spaces at the Crossroads Plaza has long been observed. Typically, spaces in a relatively recently constructed planned shopping center would be more attractive to businesses and would carry a premium over similar free-standing or existing ground-floor space nearby. The long-standing vacancies at Crossroads Plaza reflect the overall weakness in demand for retail space in and around downtown Peekskill.

ACADEMY STREET RENEWAL PROJECT

City of Peekskill

New York

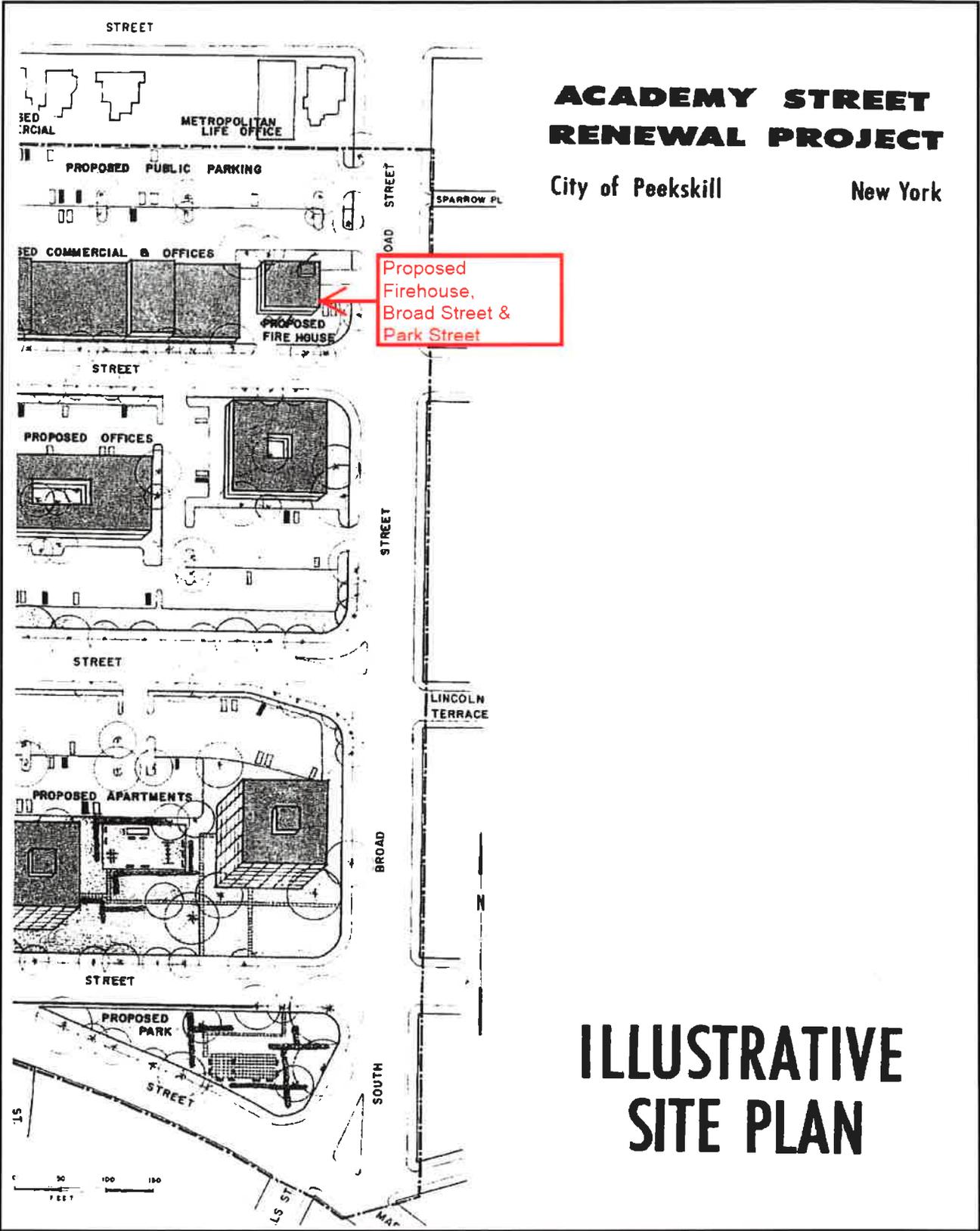


Figure 3.1-3: Academy Street Urban Renewal Project, Illustrative Site Plan

Peekskill Central Firehouse

In the case of Crossroads Plaza, high vacancy is likely to also be a function of the Plaza's design, its appearance from the highly trafficked Main Street, and the manner in which it has been integrated into the downtown pedestrian environment. The Center was designed as zero lot line structures (along Main, South Broad and South James Streets) with separate entrances to satellite retail spaces along the store frontage on the street and from the parking lot side. No doubt this was intended to allow ease of access for both those walking along the street and arriving by car, and it may have been a selling point when the spaces were initially offered.

As time went on, it became clear that most patrons would arrive by car and some would walk to the center as a destination (that is, they would not be window-shopping) and these patrons could just as easily enter the stores from the parking lot side. Moreover, keeping two access doors open in the relatively narrow store spaces compromised the selling floor and storage space available to merchants, especially those merchants needing the floor space to sell goods. As of this writing, every retail space takes its pedestrian access if not exclusively then almost so from the entry door on the parking lot side.

The chronic underutilization at Crossroads Plaza is also evidenced by its relatively deteriorated and out-dated appearance. Common areas such as the parking lot have not been updated in many years. It is noted that parking lot repaving was completed recently however.

Pictures of the shopping center are provided in Appendix G.

Without a broader change in the market for retail space in downtown Peekskill, a significant population increase in the immediate surrounding area and / or a redesign of the shopping center, vacancy and underutilization at Crossroads Plaza will continue for the foreseeable future.

The commercial structure at 1137 Main Street was constructed in 1956. This structure most recently housed Peekskill Furniture and Electronics and is now owned by the City of Peekskill, and houses a recreational boxing use temporarily. Prior to the furniture store the La Placita Market was located here for several years; prior to that a social service agency was housed there. The building was vacant for a number of years as well. La Placita Market's growth necessitated a move to a larger space on Park Street. Pictures of 1137 Main Street are provided in Appendix G.

The structure at 1141 Main Street was constructed circa 1880 and subsequently remodeled for professional use on the first floor in the 1930s. This structure was part of Doctors' Row prior to approximately the 1970s and housed doctors' and dentists' offices on the first floor with residential use above. Most recently the two first-floor spaces were occupied by a salon (now relocated) and a money transfer center. Two apartments are located on the second floor one of which is vacant. The third floor is unused. This structure was inventoried as part of the City's Cultural Resource Survey prepared in support of the local designation of the Downtown Historic District. Pictures of 1141 Main Street are provided in Appendix G.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

It is noted that additional detail regarding the properties to be acquired and the locally-designated historic district of which the entire project site is part, and the National Register-designated downtown historic district (mapped on the north side of Main Street opposite the project site) is provided in chapter 3.3 of this report.

All pictures provided in Appendix G were taken from the Appraisals for each of the subject properties prepared by Lane Appraisals, Inc. in January 2011. The Appraisals are incorporated herein by reference.

Environmental Incidents Review, Property and Surroundings

Except for petroleum storage information which was requested and received from the Westchester County Health Department, the following information is publicly available on US EPA, NYS DEC and Westchester County web-sites. The information provided below is not intended to replace a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment.

A review of Westchester County's online mapping in April of 2012 revealed that neither the project site nor any sites within a mile of the site are listed on the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) list. The TRI contains information about more than 650 toxic chemicals that are being used, manufactured, treated, transported, or released into the environment.

Westchester County's mapping also provides an inventory of hazardous waste sites. Such sites typically include sites at which hazardous materials are used or stored and often include dry cleaners and auto body establishments, and other locations where hazardous substances are stored in bulk. No establishment at the project site is listed on the inventory of hazardous waste sites. The nearest such sites are located to the west and southwest within the downtown area and consist of dry cleaners and automobile establishments.

A review of EPA's Superfund and CERCLIS (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System) databases also in April 2012 revealed no sites in Peekskill.

A review of NYS Department of Environmental Conservation spill incidents database, chemical bulk storage database and the Environmental Site Remediation Database (again in April 2012) revealed no sites at the proposed project site or in the blocks surrounding the site. The nearest spill was noted to be on the block between James and Broad Streets to the northwest of the project site.

Westchester County maintains records on petroleum storage in the County. A review of Westchester County Health Department records performed in April of 2012 revealed no records of petroleum storage at 1107-09 Main Street, 1137 Main Street or 1141 Main Street.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

It is noted that in 2005 an underground oil storage tank was removed at 1141 Main Street. Soil testing completed at that time indicated fewer than 20 parts per million of total petroleum hydrocarbons. Certificate of Compliance No. 1169 was issued by the City of Peekskill Building Department.

Historic mapping from 1867 and 1893 is included in Appendix H. The subject block was composed of primarily residential properties as shown on both maps. Park Street was known as Centre Street at the time.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

63.1.3 Potential Effects of the Proposed Action

Compatibility with surrounding land use and zoning

As a government use, the proposed project would be generally consistent with the predominant non-residential land use in the surrounding downtown area.

The Common Council has conducted a balancing of interests analysis. Please refer to chapter 3.9 for the entire analysis. In making this determination the Common Council considered factors including the availability of project information, the opportunities afforded residents, property owners and municipal boards, and Westchester County and New York State agencies to review and comment on the proposed project plans, the proposed project's compliance with City zoning use and bulk standards and the City's interest in providing for the health, safety and welfare of persons and property. The Common Council determined that the proposed Central Fire House project is exempt from compliance with the approval procedures outlined in Chapter 575: Zoning of City Code.

The proposed Central Fire House facility complies with the yard, coverage and FAR requirements of the City's C-2 regulations. While not restricted in the City's Central Commercial C-2 District, the maximum 53-foot height (at turreted roof peaks) and overall average height of the proposed facility would be in character with surrounding commercial and residential buildings in the downtown area.

If the project were subject to the requirements of the City of Peekskill Zoning Code, no variances would be needed for the proposed action.

On-Site Uses

The proposed Central Firehouse would affect a number of the uses onsite directly. Construction may necessitate the involuntary displacement and relocation of four (4) businesses and a not-for-profit agency at the Crossroads Plaza shopping center. Information on the specific businesses to be affected is provided in chapter 2.0.

An existing business and the tenant or tenants within one existing apartment at 1141 Main Street would also be displaced; the City is currently under contract to purchase this property. An existing commercial space and a second apartment at this location are currently vacant. The displacement and property acquisition is also discussed later in this chapter.

The following on-site uses would not be displaced but would also be affected by the proposed activities. These include:

1. Rite-Aid Drug Store
2. Antonio's Pizzeria
3. #1 Chinese Restaurant (take-out)
4. Mercado Azteca deli

Peekskill Central Firehouse

Every effort will be made to minimize disruption to businesses. However, access to these businesses may be affected by demolition and construction activities at times. These effects would be short in duration and would be likely to involve changes in parking locations for owners, workers, and customers, and potentially changes to pedestrian routing through the Crossroads Plaza common areas from on and off-site vehicle parking areas and the stores.

In addition, patrons, workers and others at the commercial establishments will be in proximity to a major construction project with the attendant temporary effects on noise and air quality involved in such a project. Noise from project activities will include motors and engines from equipment and vehicles, movement of equipment and vehicles, the demolition, site preparation and construction activities themselves, removal of construction and demolition waste, delivery of and movement of materials onsite, delivery and installation of equipment and fixtures, improvements to outside yard and parking areas, and demolition and construction work to the façade of the shopping center, among others. Construction workers and trades workers will be on the project site for the duration of construction.

Parking on the Site and in Surrounding Area

Parking on the Crossroads Plaza site will be affected by construction of the proposed project, and it is expected that between 15 and 20 of the existing angled permit parking spaces along Park Street will be temporarily eliminated during project construction. With regard to Crossroads Plaza, the specific areas of the parking lot to be closed during construction will depend on property acquisition and business and tenant relocation, and if necessary site testing and preparation activities.

Construction activities will also necessitate temporary closure and use of a portion of Park Street. In addition if warranted the City may enter into an agreement to use the vacant site adjacent to One Park Place between Park and Brown Streets for a construction trailer, and storage of materials and equipment.

It is expected that a minimum of 54 off-street parking spaces will be able to be maintained at the Crossroads Plaza during demolition and construction. This represents less than half of the 137 spaces at the center at this time. Based on recent peak usage patterns, this number of spaces is expected to be sufficient during most times. Parking is discussed in more detail below.

At times when the number of patron visits to the center is higher (weekday afternoons, primarily) or parking is limited in other parts of the downtown area, some patrons are likely to need to find parking on local streets in the area. This may involve payments (if at metered spaces) and will not be generally as convenient as onsite parking. Patrons may adjust their schedules and shopping patterns. Some patrons may park illegally in permit or loading spaces also.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

A review of the occupancy of parking spaces at the Crossroads Plaza at midday and afternoon hours (when most visits to the center occur) on typical weekdays -- most recently on April 12, 2012 -- indicate that between 40 and 60 percent of parking spaces are typically vacant at both midday and late afternoon times. This relatively low rate of use reflects the vacancies at the center, the fact that some patrons walk to the center and that the social service agency occupying one of center's spaces typically has fewer visitors as compared to a bank or retail store.

Municipal metered spaces on the surrounding streets were observed to be used at a level below fifty percent at the time of the review. A large number of on-street permit parking spaces were available on the date of the review, although the spaces along Park Street are typically highly used during the workday. Additional (non-metered) parking was also available on streets such as Howard and Cortlandt to the north of Main Street, and along Broad Street, primarily north of Main Street.

The review of parking indicates that on typical week-ends when permitted parking spaces along Park, Brown and James Streets are available for use, there is likely to be ample parking in the area surrounding Crossroads Plaza to account for the reduced number of spaces onsite during construction of the Central Fire House.

If however a major downtown weekend event occurs, and parking at Crossroads Plaza is unavailable due to construction, the parking supply in the area of Crossroads Plaza will be limited, more limited than it is currently at those times.

On weekdays, the availability of metered parking in lots and on streets in the area surrounding the Crossroads Plaza will make up a portion of the shortfall in spaces. However, the number of metered spaces in the surrounding area may be inadequate at times of heavier visitor traffic (typically afternoons). The closest spaces along Main Street and James Street will be the most used and most frequently occupied, and the metered spaces closest to the area of construction will be temporarily lost. Because of this it is likely that some patrons will need to travel further from the center to park their vehicles or adjust the time of their visits to the center.

Surrounding Streets

The only street to be affected by construction activities throughout the majority of the period of demolition and construction is Park Street which is currently one-way westbound with angled (permit) parking spaces on the south side of the street. As described earlier, the removal of between 15 and 20 angled permit parking spaces is expected during construction. This represents approximately half of the 32 angled spaces currently striped along Park Street. The street will remain open to traffic and the approximately 15 angled permit parking spaces that will remain at the west end of the street for the duration of construction.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

It is also expected that Main Street eastbound and Broad Street southbound will be affected at times during demolition and construction activities. Closures of lanes would not be expected to exceed more than a few hours.

Users of permit spaces would be expected to relocate to spaces along James and Brown Streets and in the James Street Ramp Garage for the duration of construction. A review of permitted parking spaces done in mid-April of 2012 indicates that more than 100 unused permit parking spaces were located along Brown Street and in the James Street Ramp Garage. The removal of spaces along Park Street will however remove at-grade spaces located conveniently to the office uses at One Park Place and other retail and office uses in the surrounding area.

Four existing on-street parking spaces along Broad Street (southbound) will be eliminated by the proposed project to accommodate the proposed garage bays for the Central Firehouse.

Available Commercial Property in the Downtown Area

The proposed project site comprises 1.5 acres. Use of the proposed project site for a governmental public safety use would not be expected to significantly affect the availability of land or improved space for commercial use in and surrounding the downtown area. However the 1.5 acre project site is located at a prominent location along two of the City's busiest roadways. Its value as a location for a central public safety function with visibility and easy access to major roadways in the downtown business district also makes it valuable for commercial users.

The retail commercial floor area that would be permanently removed from the downtown commercial inventory of space would amount to a total of approximately 23,000 square feet. This includes approximately 17,200 square feet at the Crossroads Plaza, 4,000 square feet at 1137 Main Street and approximately 1,700 square feet at 1141 Main Street.

The 1.5-acre proposed project site represents approximately three percent (3%) of the commercially-zoned developable land area (i.e., less the area of streets) in and immediately adjacent to downtown Peekskill. The commercial floor space proposed to be demolished represents a small percentage of the total amount of similar retail commercial space in the commercially-zoned areas downtown. The commercial space to be demolished represents a fraction of retail commercial space that is currently vacant in commercially-zoned areas in downtown Peekskill. In addition to the downtown area, vacant commercial space is also located along major roadways and in other sections of the City.

After project construction is complete and displaced businesses have relocated it is expected that the downtown area will continue to have a substantial inventory of vacant retail commercial space. Thus, little to no effect is expected on pricing or availability for such space from the removal of vacant and occupied commercial space as part of the proposed action.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

The removal of approximately 17,200 square feet of retail commercial space at the Crossroads Plaza shopping center represents a substantial portion of this type of retail commercial space in the downtown area. As compared to space elsewhere in the downtown, the shopping center's space is relatively easily outfitted for different types of users, and has readily available off-street parking, loading and waste management areas. Unlike other downtown spaces which may be in separate ownerships, vacant spaces at the shopping center can be combined more readily to serve larger single users.

The physical effects of the proposed project on the Crossroads Plaza shopping center are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. A positive effect of the proposed project is that with the decrease in total floor area at the shopping center, the overall proportion of vacant space at the center is also likely to decrease. With the changes proposed, it is expected that the retail space remaining at the shopping center will be more fully and regularly occupied.

Nearby Commercial Uses

It is noted that the proposed Central Firehouse will change the character of Main Street between James and Broad Streets. Currently the shopping center façade, 1137 Main Street façade and the commercial uses at 1141 Main Street offer the appearance of continuous retail frontage along the Main Street blockfront. While the retail frontage at the shopping center is not utilized for access to the stores or for showcasing of merchandise, signage identifying some of the businesses is located on the existing façade. With the proposed Central Firehouse this would no longer be the case; the Firehouse would occupy a little over half of the block.

This effect will be ameliorated by the changes in the shopping center's layout due to the proposed project. Removal of an approximate 100-foot portion of the Main Street-facing structure of the shopping center will open up the remainder of the center to views from Main Street, and allow for easier pedestrian access to all of the remaining stores from the north. The Main Street wall of the center will no longer completely obstruct views of the shopping center from Main Street. The addition of signage, changes to the eastern wall of the remaining structure, lighting and grass and / or landscaping along the new entry drive from Main Street will also be appealing.

It is likely that activity at the entrance to the proposed Central Firehouse (along Main Street) would be equal to or greater than what is seen today at this location. Much of the existing pedestrian activity in this area is not destined to shops but is associated with bus stops at the Main and Broad intersection. This is not expected to change. Those destined to the proposed Central Firehouse such as firefighters, City personnel, visitors and others would be expected to utilize area establishments like Walgreen's.

The City will review the street furnishings along Main Street near the intersection of Broad Street and will request that seating and / or shelters be provided for bus patrons, and will provide street furniture within the proposed memorial park area as needed.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

To the extent that the current continuous retail frontage benefits retail properties to the east (i.e., Walgreens), or along the north side of Main Street, to the north along Broad Street or to the west along Main Street, this benefit would be lost.

Compatibility with relevant plans

It is noted that the City's Comprehensive Development Plan prepared in the late 1950's envisioned a total of three firehouses; one was to be located at Broad and Park Streets. The other two were to be located near the intersection of North Division, Highland and Orchard Streets, and on Washington Street in the southern part of the City.

As noted earlier in this chapter, in 1960, the project site area was designated as part of the Academy Street Urban Renewal Area; the majority of the project site was later acquired and redeveloped as the Crossroads Shopping Center. A fire station was planned on the subject block at that time; a station was constructed at the corner of Broad Street and Crompond Road / South Division Street which currently houses two fire companies.

Property Acquisition and Displacement

The City has been in negotiations with each of the property owners of the three properties affected by the proposed project. The property at 1137 Main Street was acquired by the City in 2011.

The City is in contract to purchase 1141 Main Street. The resident(s) of an existing residential apartment and one business currently occupying this property will relocate voluntarily prior to the City taking possession of the property. One of the first floor businesses at 1141 Main Street recently relocated to a property on the east side of Broad Street. The remainder of the property is currently vacant.

The City is currently negotiating with the property owner for Crossroads Plaza (1101-09 Main Street). If these negotiations are unsuccessful, it is expected that this property will be acquired by eminent domain. This Draft Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared before a determination to use eminent domain is made by the City's Common Council.

The acquisition of property for the proposed Central Firehouse project would require displacement and relocation of:

1. four existing businesses at the center, and
2. one not for profit social service agency also at the center.

The business that had formerly occupied 1137 Main Street (a home furnishings store) vacated the property prior to the City taking possession of the property in 2011. A recreation use (a boxing establishment) is currently using this property under a temporary license agreement with the City.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

Effects on Crossroads Plaza layout and design

A portion of the Crossroads Plaza shopping center will remain on a smaller site after acquisition and demolition activities associated with the Central Firehouse are complete. This residual portion will require approval of an Amended Site Plan for the improvements and subdivision approval for the reconfigured lot as part of the proposed action.

Physical changes to the Crossroads Plaza site would involve demolition of the center's Broad Street building, changes to the structure and footprint of the center's Main Street structure, relocating off-street parking spaces and circulation aisles, removal of plantings in areas adjacent to demolition, construction of a new driveway into the property from Main Street, closure of existing driveways along Main Street and Broad Street and changes to pedestrian walkways, lighting and signage. Utilities will also be relocated and / or upgraded as needed.

The new driveway from Main Street will allow incoming traffic only.

The Amended Site Plan will also reflect changes to the configuration of occupancies at the shopping center that may occur as part of the relocation process.

The Central Firehouse layout as proposed includes provisions for two drive-through bays. These would allow for longer articulated vehicles to proceed into bays cab first and not need to back in from Broad Street. Like the site plan for the Central Firehouse, the Amended Site Plan for the Crossroads Plaza will reflect this element. As proposed, articulated trucks seeking to enter the bays would proceed along Park Street to the shopping center driveway and through the southeastern portion of its parking area to an opening that would allow access to the bays over paving on the Fire Department lot.

Use of the drive-through bays will require a permanent access easement over a portion of the property that would be retained as part of the shopping center. Issues of the effect on the shopping center's final parking layout and circulation, liability, and the appearance of the properties at the property line will be resolved as part of the review of the Amended Site Plan for the shopping center.

The Crossroads Plaza is estimated to currently have a total floor area of 50,740 square feet which is currently served by 137 off-street parking spaces. Review of the Amended Site Plan for the shopping center will include approval of a reduced number of parking spaces to serve the remaining floor area at the center. The City is committed to maintaining the same proportional relationship between the number of parking spaces to serve the modified shopping center as serve the shopping center currently. The number of spaces approved as part of the amended site plan for the Crossroads Plaza would in no event be fewer than 90. This is expected to be adequate given the Center's future reduced size of approximately 34,000 square feet and its traditional mix of retail and service uses.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

In addition to changes to the parking area, the Amended Site Plan for the Crossroads Plaza shopping center is expected to reflect a new eastern exterior wall with provision of a window (along the new Main Street driveway), signage, lawn and/or plantings, and lighting in this area, landscaping in the parking area and new and/or relocated signage (which is expected to be located in the southwest corner of the Center's newly subdivided lot along Park Street).

It is noted that relocation of any in-street utilities will be the responsibility of the City. On-site utilities will be relocated as needed and will be subject to discussions with the Crossroads Plaza property owner.

Effects on Crossroads Plaza operations

Existing Conditions

Crossroads Plaza does not function as a destination center for comparison shopping; nor does it generally serve those who are otherwise traveling through Peekskill and notice the center and stop, whether for convenience or novelty shopping. The center serves the convenience and personal service needs of the local community of residents and workers in the downtown area, and to a lesser degree, visitors to the downtown area. Without a change in tenancy, it is unlikely the types of shoppers using the center would change significantly given the current socioeconomic profile and projected growth in the surrounding neighborhood.

Historically the shopping center has had a high level of vacancy and high turnover. Two of its potential higher income spaces – which were designed for drive-thru banks – have been or are currently vacant, or house uses that typically generate much lower rental revenues. The low utilization has translated into little investment in and in the center's common areas. By any measure, rental income from leasing at the Crossroads Plaza is relatively low as compared to a comparable property elsewhere.

Proposed Conditions

As first discussed in chapter 2.0, the proposed project offers benefits for the existing shopping center. With the vacancy rates that have historically been seen at the Crossroads Plaza shopping center a reduction in the floor area and configuration of the center would offer the following benefits:

1. The reduced floor area would be more in line with the current market in downtown Peekskill and would be more easily supported by the surrounding consumer population;
2. The floor area would be concentrated nearer the center's main area of activity (i.e., the Rite Aid entrance and the walkway from Main Street);
3. The shorter building length along Main Street would open the center visually to Main Street, partially addressing a long-standing issue of the center's disconnectedness to the rest of the downtown;

Peekskill Central Firehouse

4. The change in vehicular access to include one entrance from Main Street and one from Park Street would serve to concentrate activity as compared to the current configuration which provides access from Main, Broad and Park Streets;
5. Pedestrian access will be enhanced through a new walkway along the pizzeria space, which also will be enhanced to include a window;
6. The center owner would no longer need to maintain or pay taxes on the areas that have historically been vacant (i.e., the two large former bank spaces, among others) and the relatively large parking lot;
7. Existing businesses at the center can be relocated into currently vacant space with less disruption than if they were relocated elsewhere in the City;
8. Overall investment in and improvement of the center to include signage, paving, walkways and changes to the façade along the future driveway would be made enhancing its potential for success.

The new ingress to Crossroads Plaza from Main Street will change and likely enhance the appearance of the [remaining] Crossroads Plaza shopping center. Proper and prominent signage, landscaping and streetscape improvements along Main Street near the drive will be likely to increase interest in visiting the center. Introduction of a window in the wall of the center along the entry drive would be likely to increase interest in the building façade and thence pedestrian activity along the drive; the driveway and this façade change would go a long way to re-orienting the center to Main Street and its pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This, in conjunction with the prominent architecture and appearance of the Central Fire House, would be expected to be more inviting to pedestrian traffic along Main Street than the current shopping center structure.

With construction of the Central Fire House, a potential opportunity would exist for a make-over of the shopping center that could relate to and complement the proposed Central Fire House.

As noted earlier, the portion of the shopping center to remain would be smaller and have less common area and parking area to maintain. An adjustment in its assessment and annual tax bill would be likely as a result of the changes proposed. According to an appraisal completed in 2011, after the acquisition of property at the shopping center is completed, its project market value will be reduced from \$4,660,000 to \$3,285,000; a difference of \$1,375,000. At the current equalization rate of 3.85%, the projected change in value translates into a reduction in assessed value of \$52,938. Fiscal conditions, including an analysis of changes to potential rental income for the shopping center, are discussed in detail in chapter 3.2 of this report.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

Effects on Downtown Peekskill

With the new construction and the changes to the existing shopping center the proposed project is expected to introduce a level of activity to this area that has been missing since the project site area was acquired and redeveloped in the 1960s and 70s. Future firefighters and those visiting the Central Fire House for business or pleasure would be likely to patronize the businesses surrounding the proposed Central Fire House.

The proposed Central Fire House location is also one of the most prominent in the City. Located at the intersection of Main and Broad Streets the proposed building's architecture (and a monument / flagpole element at the Main / Broad Street corner) would be seen by travelers along each of the adjacent roadways. The building will provide a valuable visual identity for the main eastern entry way into the City's downtown.

Construction of a major public facility (the Central Fire House) with infrastructure and streetscape upgrades adjacent to the shopping center represents a substantial public investment that would be expected to provide dividends in spurring future non-public sector investment nearby.

The improved appearance of Main Street and Broad Street and the prominent appearance of the Fire House can be expected to attract some interest in visiting the area. Streetscape changes at the intersection including a memorial and plantings, and the inclusion of community space and a museum in the fire house would also attract attention and activity. For those who may at times feel unsafe in this part of the downtown area, the public safety function of the building will add a sense of security. With the concurrent changes at the Crossroads Plaza shopping center, visitors may also choose to visit stores or restaurants there, or elsewhere in the downtown.

Effect on property values

With the public investment in the project discussed above, the enhancement in the project site's appearance and the resulting changes to the Crossroads Plaza shopping center discussed earlier, the long-term effect of the proposed project on surrounding property values is expected to be positive.

As noted earlier, the reduction in assessed valuation for the shopping center is projected to be approximately \$52,938. This projection is based on a projected change in the market value of the shopping center from \$4,660,000 to \$3,285,000; a difference of \$1,375,000 and the current equalization rate.

Additional information relative to the effect on the shopping center's rental income is provided in chapter 3.2: Fiscal Conditions.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

3.1.4 Mitigation Measures

Relocation Services

Relocation of existing uses displaced by the proposed action would occur prior to the commencement of demolition activities. It is expected that businesses displaced by the proposed action would be relocated within the remaining area of the Crossroads Plaza or in nearby downtown areas. If space is unavailable in the Crossroads Plaza, space is currently available elsewhere in the downtown. According to information presented in the City's Downtown Retail survey and study, a total of 24 retail store vacancies existed in the downtown during the last few months of 2011. This would not be expected to have changed significantly since December of 2011.

The resident tenant or tenant(s) of the apartment in 1141 Main Street would be relocated to an appropriate location nearby within the City. Comparable apartments are available in the downtown area, and in adjacent neighborhoods.

The City Department of Planning & Development will provide assistance in identifying relocation opportunities for on-site tenants and commercial establishments as needed.

As a general guide to the logistics of the relocation process, the following activities are expected to occur after the City's Common Council determines that acquisition of property for the Central Fire House by eminent domain is appropriate:

1. A representative of the City will contact the affected residential or commercial tenant within ten days of the determination to acquire the properties by eminent domain, to set up a face-to-face meeting to determine their needs. The representative will be available as needed throughout the relocation process. The representative will also be available as needed to explain the tenant's rights, benefits, and obligations and may assist in explaining legal notices received from the City.
2. Residential tenants will be relocated to comparable or better replacement rental housing that is decent, safe, sanitary, and functionally equivalent to the displaced dwelling. Every effort will be made to house residents in neighborhoods of their choice in the City of Peekskill, including their current neighborhood if possible. The maximum relocation payment made to each of the two (2) residential tenants shall be one thousand (\$1,000.00) dollars.
3. For commercial tenants, the City's representative will conduct an analysis of the business' location requirements and other relevant considerations to find a comparable site for business relocation. The representative will work with the commercial tenants to address commercial issues such as negotiating comparable square footage costs and rent and getting the same phone number transferred to a new location. The maximum relocation payment made to each of the seven (7) commercial tenants shall be twenty-five (\$25,000.00) dollars.
4. The representative will provide support for the duration of the condemnation.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

All tenants and the property owners will be notified of public hearings required under the NYS Eminent Domain Procedure Law (EDPL), and the NYS State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

NYS's General Municipal Law limits the amount that can be authorized to cover moving expenses to no more than \$1,000 for each residential tenant, and to no more than \$25,000 for each commercial tenant.

If eminent domain is not utilized relocation assistance offered by the City of Peekskill will be determined as part of negotiations with property owner for 1101 Main Street.

Crossroads Plaza Operations and Layout

As mentioned earlier the short-term effects on shopping center parking will be addressed through the use of existing municipal metered spaces at the James Street Ramp Garage, the adjacent lot and on streets in the area surrounding the project site. Other effects such as changes to pedestrian routes will be minimized as much as practicable.

Disturbance during construction to existing business operations will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Business relocation will be completed as quickly as possible and disturbance to businesses that will not be displaced would be minimized as much as possible.

Long-term effects to the overall shopping center layout and appearance from the proposed project are expected to be positive. Permanent changes proposed at the shopping center include new paving, curbing and landscaping in the shopping center parking area. The existing loading area will be reconfigured. The shopping center would have a new eastern exterior wall with a window (along the new Main Street driveway). Also in this area would be new signage, lawn and / or plantings, and lighting. Signage along Park Street will also be relocated as necessary in consultation with the owner.

As noted earlier, the assessed valuation for the shopping center is projected to be reduced by \$52,938.

As noted earlier, approval of the amended site plan for the shopping center will include approval of the use of the shopping center parking lot by the City Fire Department's articulated vehicles, and a new permanent access easement. No adverse environmental effects are anticipated from an easement over the shopping center to accommodate this activity, and the use of shopping center circulation aisles by City Fire Department vehicles.

Figure 2-7 included in Chapter 2.0: Description of the Proposed Action illustrates the area of the future Crossroads Plaza parking lot that would be used by returning Fire vehicles.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

Negotiations between the shopping center owner and the City will address a protocol for use of the parking area, resolve issues of liability should vehicle accidents occur, resolve the aesthetics and appearance at the future property line, and finalize the layout of the parking area and number of off-street spaces to be contained within it. Final approval of the parking area layout, the final number of off-street parking spaces, changes to the loading area, the lot re-subdivision and circulation from the shopping center lot onto the Central Fire House lot will be required from the City Planning Commission.

Maintenance of Adequate Parking during Construction

During construction a minimum of 54 off-street parking spaces will be maintained for use in the Crossroads Plaza parking lot. This is roughly equivalent to three rows of spaces as currently striped.

The City is committed to providing adequate and convenient parking for the Crossroads Plaza and to all area businesses during demolition and construction. In addition to conserving a portion of the existing parking at Crossroads Plaza, additional parking is and will continue to be available at the following locations:

1. Main Street
2. James Street and James Street Ramp (Lot A)
3. Brown Street
4. Park Street Lot and Park Street

The opportunity exists to convert permit parking spaces along Park Street (that is, those 15 to 20 that will not be affected by construction activities) to metered or non-metered spaces for use by Crossroads Plaza workers and patrons. This option would be temporary and would necessarily involve directing permit parkers to use the James Street facility, or permit spaces along Brown or James Street during the construction period.

For ease of reference, Figure 3.1-4 on the following page highlights City parking facilities throughout the downtown area as presented in the Downtown Business District Parking Survey and Study completed in October of 2008. This study was completed by the City of Peekskill Parking Commission and included information on the major parking facilities in the downtown. Information not shown on this figure includes angled permit parking spaces currently striped along Brown, James and Park Street discussed in the DEIS.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

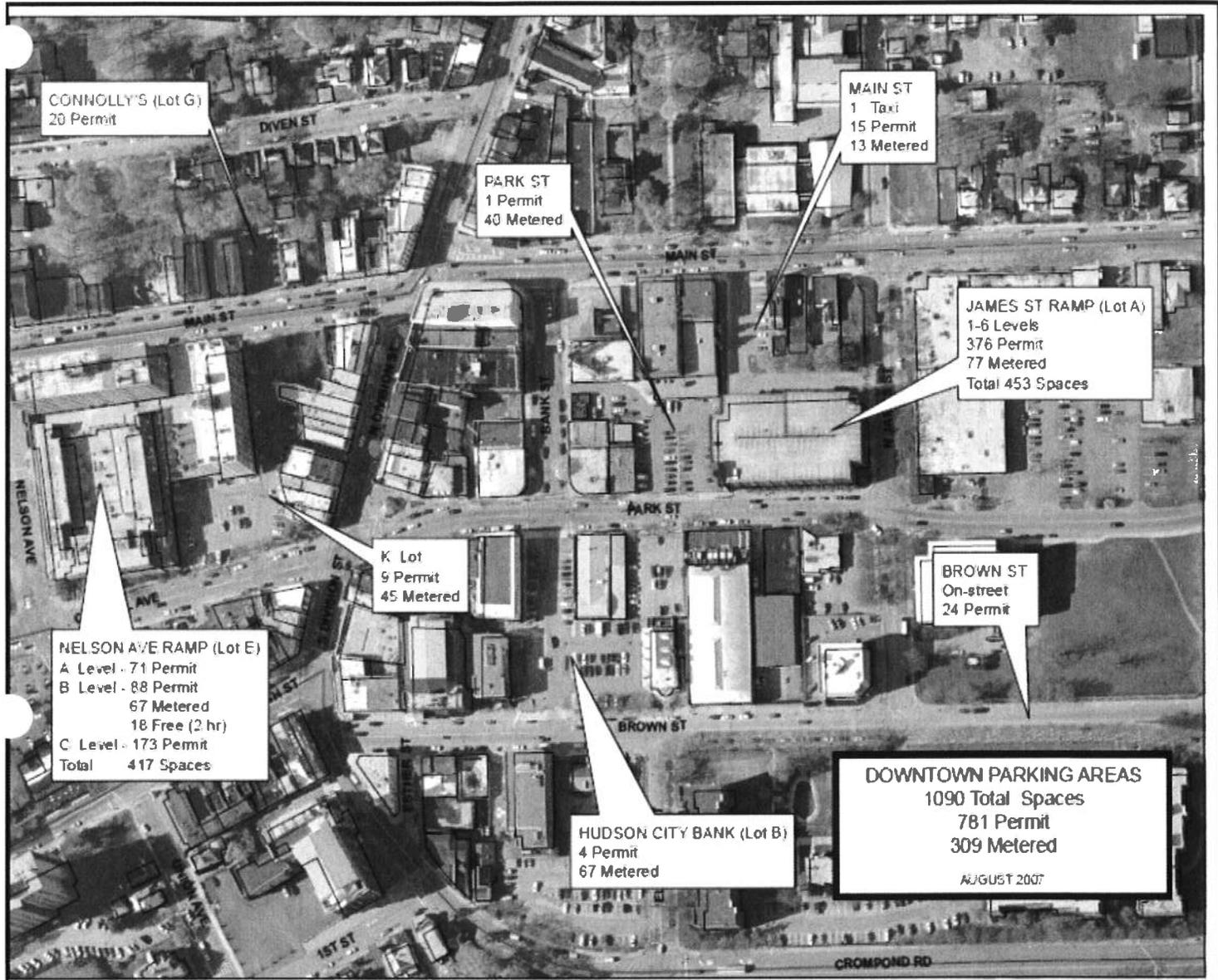


Figure 3.1-4: Major Downtown Peekskill Parking Resources

Parking by construction workers will be occurring at the project site and in adjacent areas. Construction workers will be directed not to park in spaces designated for patrons, workers and business owners at the Crossroads Plaza.

Peekskill Central Firehouse

Retail Continuity along Main Street

The proposed memorial and other streetscape changes along Main Street will ameliorate the effect of removing the existing retail uses and the small amount of associated pedestrian activity along the portion of Main Street to be used for the project. The inclusion of a destination at the proposed Central Fire House – a small museum – along with community and meeting space will also ameliorate this effect. The City will request that Westchester County place a bus shelter and / or seating at the Bee-Line bus stops adjacent to the project. The City will also install street furniture in this area to include benches and potentially a bicycle rack.