



PUBLIC SAFETY AND SERVICES BOND

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE AUGUST 8, 2017 BALLOT ISSUE

What is the issue? The City Council unanimously voted to ask Grosse Pointe residents to authorize up to \$12.96 million in bonds to replace the City's Public Safety (Police and Fire) and Public Services (Public Works) facilities, and to make repairs and repurpose the existing Public Safety building for the City's Municipal Court.

Can't we just keep using the current buildings? The Public Safety building was built in 1928, and the Public Services building is more than fifty years old. Outside experts have evaluated the facilities and agree that they are obsolete and way too small. The buildings are inefficient, and do not meet current facility or worker safety standards. Repairs would be like throwing good money after bad, and still would not provide adequate space for City services to function properly. The Public Safety building's fire bays are too small to replace the nearly 30 year old pumper.

Why now? The need for improved facilities has been recognized for a long time. Addressing it is overdue. The City has been looking for more Public Works space since at least 2001. In 2005, the City had arranged to expand its existing yard by more than two-thirds through a purchase of the apartment building behind it, but backed off after the neighbors objected to the expansion of industrial type use in the middle of the residential area. In 2008-9, the City undertook a thorough study by outside public facility experts, who documented how Police and Fire had half the space it needs and how Public Works needs 30,000 sq. ft. but has a 6,000 sq. ft. building. With the onset of the Great Recession, work on addressing the identified capital needs were deferred. In the meantime, the City purchased a 'mini-pumper' to replace one aging pumper to temporarily avoid the building deficiencies.

In 2016, City Council placed addressing facilities needs as a high priority goal, as the City's operational finances had stabilized. A facilities committee worked on this for over a year. The plan calls for Public Services to be located at a warehouse owned by St. John Hospital on Canyon, and for Public Safety to be built on Mack at St. Clair. The Canyon site has long been thought of as a great potential site for Public Works but only recently has St. John Hospital been willing to consider a sale. Similarly, the family that owns Alger's Deli on Mack Avenue approached the City of Grosse Pointe and offered it to the City for a Public Safety building, before they decided acting on a private sale offer. Interest rates are still at a historic low and the City's bond rating was raised to AAA, which saves on borrowing costs.

Would privatizing garbage services help? Privatizing would not save space. Privatizing is a service delivery methodology and quality question, not really a facility issue. Without the four refuse trucks, the City would have to purchase just as many large vehicles to plow snow and pick up leaves. Privatizing would also not likely save money. The City has investigated privatizing commercial refuse pick-ups, as well as grass cutting, and both were cheaper to do in-house. The City operates very efficiently, as the garbage vehicles do triple duty as snow plows and leaf collectors. The Public Works crew are nearly all engaged in all the public services activities, not just dedicated to refuse pick-up.

With Public Works moving to Canyon, why not rebuild Public Safety on Maumee? The cost of tearing down the existing Public Safety building, and rebuilding a new one with a new Court/Council Chamber is about the same as the \$7.5 million for a new facility on Mack -- not even including cost of temporary arrangements. A new Public Safety building could be fitted into the narrow Public Works spot in the midst of the neighbors, but the City Council preferred the benefits of more visibility on a major border street, and the value of a significant public investment on Mack.

How much will this cost me? The estimated impact on your total tax bill would be an added 3.25 percent. The net millage increase needed to pay off the bonds is estimated at 1.7 mills for 22 years, taking into consideration the end of the Neff pool bond millage in three years. Take your taxable value from your Summer Tax bill and multiply it by .0017 for the approximate annual dollar amount.

Why did my Summer tax bill go up? The City's tax rates actually declined slightly in 2017 from 2016, and taxable values increased less than one percent. The change was due to the Wayne County RESA millage moving from the Winter Tax bill in 2016 to the Summer bill in 2017. In fact, the City's General and Solid Waste levies have not increased since 2010, are less than a third of your total Summer and Winter tax bills, and are at the maximum allowed under the Headlee/Proposal A amendment. The City's property tax revenue funding operations in 2017 is less than it was in 2004!

I am vacationing on August 8. Can I still vote? You may apply in person or by mail for an absentee ballot up to 2:00 pm on the Saturday preceding the election. A written request for an Absentee Ballot must include your signature. Absentee ballot applications are available at City Hall or the City website.

How do I get more information? Come see for yourself the poor conditions of the existing facilities at any time, or at the two remaining public information meetings: **Thursday, July 27 @ 7pm and Saturday, July 29 @ 10:30 am at the back of 17145 Maumee.** Or check out the background information online at www.grossepointecity.org. Feel free to contact any of your elected officials or the City Manager or other staff.