

Gearhart Public Safety Project FAQ

Your Questions, Answered

Welcome to the FAQ page for the future Gearhart Public Safety Project. We aim to answer your questions while designing a project that reflects the community's needs and values. We understand your concerns, and we're here to address them thoughtfully.

Why Gearhart Needs a New Public Safety Building

Why can't Gearhart rely on Seaside's facilities for public safety?

While Seaside provides excellent services to its community, they are not equipped to handle Gearhart's growing needs in addition to its own. To join with Seaside, multiple legal, operational, and financial hurdles would need to be overcome, including:

- **Eight separate ballot measures** across four jurisdictions require approval for tax rate changes and service reorganization.
- Seaside's existing infrastructure would require an additional \$1–1.5 million annually to absorb Gearhart's call volume, which their leadership has already indicated is unfeasible.
- Gearhart's current and future needs deserve dedicated, local services. We must take care of ourselves and ensure that emergency response times and quality of care meet our standards.

2. How is the project addressing tsunami risks?

We take tsunami risks seriously and are planning with the highest safety standards in mind. The future building design will include:

- Compliance with Oregon's strict [Essential Facility standards](#) for tsunami-resistant structures.
- Strategic design to minimize vulnerability, including structural reinforcements and location planning.

While the building is within a tsunami zone, we are working with engineers and geotechnical experts to ensure it is as resilient as possible, prioritizing the safety of the community and first responders.

Project Costs and Funding

3. How are costs being managed responsibly?

We know that cost is a significant concern. This project will be designed with community feedback to balance functionality and affordability. Here's how we're doing this:

- Exploring **multiple funding sources**, including grants, to minimize the taxpayer burden a bond will create.
- Creating a functional yet efficient design, focusing on **shared spaces** and avoiding unnecessary features.

- Using local and regional resources wherever possible to keep costs manageable while supporting our economy.

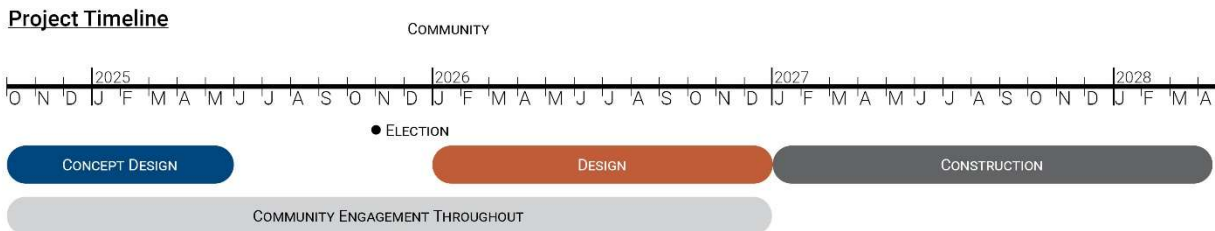
4. How will this project impact my property taxes?

Property taxes may see a modest increase to fund this project, but we are committed to minimizing the burden. Here's how:

- **Offsetting Costs:** Additional funding sources, such as grants, are being pursued to help reduce the reliance on taxes.
- We are working to ensure the facility's design and funding provide long-term value for the community.
- **General Obligation Bonds** will be the primary funding source for this project, supported by a slight tax increase. As the project's cost estimate is finalized, we will communicate the expected increase per \$100,000 assessed property value.

Project Timeline and Benefits

5. What is the anticipated timeline for the project?



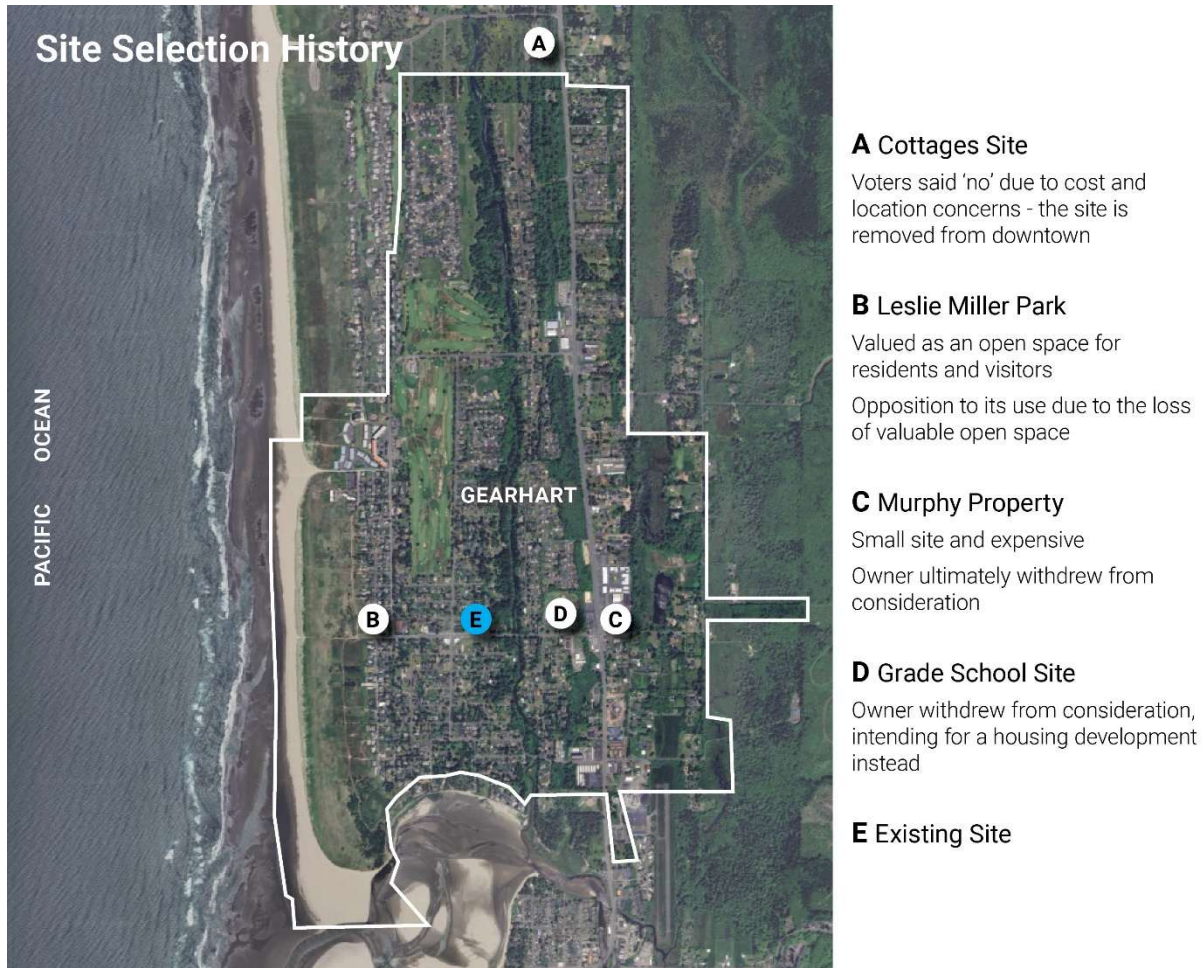
We are committed to working with the community at each stage and will provide regular updates through the website and public meetings.

6. Why was the current site chosen over other options?

Selecting the site for this project involved thorough evaluation. Here's why the current site was chosen:

- **Accessibility:** The site's central location ensures quick response times for emergency services.
- **Community Feedback:** Alternative sites like Leslie Miller Park were ruled out due to resident concerns about preserving open spaces.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** The selected site uses city-owned property, avoiding additional land acquisition costs.

This decision reflects the need to balance safety, cost, and community values.



Supporting Gearhart’s Volunteers and Departments

7. How does this project support our volunteer firefighters?

Our firefighters are the backbone of Gearhart's emergency response. The new facility will:

- Provide updated sleeping quarters, improved training spaces, and better operational facilities to help recruit and retain volunteers.
- Address the current facility's limitations, ensuring our professional volunteers have the resources to serve effectively.

8. Why does Public Works need to be included in the project?

Public Works shares infrastructure with the current fire station, which is outdated and does not meet safety standards. Replacing the Public Works facility will:

- Improve operational efficiency and ensure both departments can function more efficiently and cost-effectively.
- Allow the fire station to remain operational during construction by providing temporary accommodation.

Local Involvement

9. How will local businesses and contractors be involved in the project?

Supporting local businesses is a priority for this project. Here's how:

- **Local Bidding Opportunities:** We encourage local contractors to participate in the bidding process and will provide information sessions to facilitate their involvement.

Addressing Challenges

10. What happens if this bond measure doesn't pass?

If the bond measure fails, the city will still need to address our current facilities' critical safety and structural issues. Without the bond:

- Costs will continue to rise due to inflation and further degradation of the building.
- The safety of our first responders and community members could be compromised.
- Gearhart may face challenges in attracting and retaining volunteer firefighters, further straining our emergency response capacity.

Delaying this project will make it harder and more expensive to meet Gearhart's growing needs in the future.

11. What happened with past project attempts?

We acknowledge the community's frustration with past projects that haven't moved forward. Here's what's different this time:

- We've listened to your concerns about cost, location, design, and communication and are using that input to guide every step of this process.
- This project includes multiple opportunities for community input and collaboration.
- We consider your input invaluable. Attend the community meetings and share your thoughts, contribute to our online surveys, and stay informed by revisiting this site.

12. What if I have more questions?

We're here to listen. If you have additional questions or concerns, please attend one of the community meetings and respond to the public surveys.