

Case Study: Engine 12 Fire Station

Winning a Competitive District of Columbia RFP for Public Safety-Anchored Mixed-Income Housing
2225 5th St NE and 513 Rhode Island Ave NE, Washington, DC

SELECTED

#1 development team

136

TOTAL UNITS

16.9K SF

NEW FIRE STATION

40

AFFORDABLE UNITS (≤30-50% MFI)

57

TOTAL PARKING SPACES

\$74.7M

PROJECT COST

THE OPPORTUNITY

The District of Columbia issued a competitive RFP to redevelop the site of Engine Company 12, an active, in-service fire station on a 30,574 SF District-owned parcel.

The District needed a partner who could rebuild a modern firehouse while adding housing on a constrained infill site, without ever taking Engine 12 out of service. Two development teams competed for the award, presenting at DMPED's public disposition hearing: Rift Valley Partners and Rosewood Montage Eastbanc.

RIFT VALLEY'S WINNING APPROACH

- Assembled a specialized team: Rift Valley Partners as sponsor, Akaris Global (a New York-based institutional investment firm) as capital partner, Cunningham Quill as lead architect, Manns Woodward Studios, a firm that specializes specifically in public safety buildings, as public safety designer, and GCS Sigal as general contractor.
- Invested early in multiple fully-designed, fully-costed massing options so DMPED and FEMS could quickly weigh cost and schedule tradeoffs before committing.
- Identified underutilized backup sites in Eckington for temporary or permanent relocation of the firehouse, addressing the District's central concern head-on: keeping a critical life-safety facility operating throughout construction.
- Minimized residential parking given the site's proximity to Metro and the Metropolitan Branch Trail, while preserving dedicated parking for Engine 12 personnel.

THE RESULT

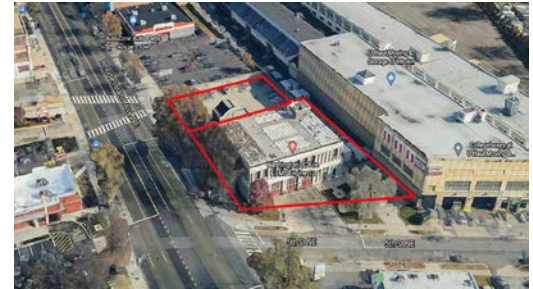
DMPED and the Deputy Mayor's office selected Rift Valley Partners as developer for Engine 12, announcing the award at the District's March Madness 2023 RFP event. The winning proposal delivers a 6-story, podium-typology building: a new Engine 12 on the ground floor with mixed-income residential above.

The approved project delivers:

- 136 total units on 135,630 GSF: 96 market-rate and 40 affordable (70%/30% split), plus a 16,900 SF ground-floor fire station
- Affordable unit income mix: 25% of affordable units at ≤30% MFI, 75% at ≤50% MFI
- Unit mix from studios to 2-bedrooms across both market and affordable tiers
- 57 total parking spaces
- Two fully-rendered design options, a base massing scheme and an alternate podium configuration with an added residential floor, gave the District a clear look at the tradeoffs before signing the land disposition agreement

Why It Matters For Partners

Engine 12 shows Rift Valley's ability to solve for a life-safety constraint most developers would treat as disqualifying, keeping an active fire station in continuous operation while delivering mixed-income housing above it, backed by a specialized public-safety design team.



THE DELIVERY TEAM

Rift Valley Partners
Sponsor Developer

Manns Woodward Studios
Public Safety Design

Akaris Global
Capital Partner

GCS Sigal
General Contractor

Cunningham Quill
Project Architect

MAC Realty / Urban Pace / Gates Hudson
Brokerage, Financial Advisory & Lease-Up

HOW THE PROPOSAL ADDRESSED DMPED'S PRIORITIES

Continuous Fire Ops	MET	Identified backup relocation sites in Eckington so Engine 12 could stay operational throughout construction
Affordable Housing	MET	40 units (30% of program) set aside at ≤30% and ≤50% MFI, meeting the District's on-site affordability goals
Decision-Ready Design	STRONG	Fully-costed massing options, backed by Manns Woodward Studios' public-safety expertise, let DMPED and FEMS decide quickly
Transit-Oriented Parking	STRONG	Only 57 spaces, minimized given proximity to Metro and the Metropolitan Branch Trail