

Levy Facts:

- The Maintenance and Operations Levy currently in place will end in 2022
- A proposition to replace the current Levy ending in 2022 was placed on the August 2nd Primary Ballot and it did not pass due to the supermajority of 60% requirement. A majority of the citizens did support it, so we are running the Levy again on the November 8, 2022 General Ballot.
- The proposition will fund operational and firefighter/EMT staffing costs for four (4) years 2023-2026 and add 6 additional Firefighter/EMT's.
- The current Levy pays for operating four of the five staff able fire stations operated by West Thurston Regional Fire Service Authority.
- The levy rate is approximately \$13.33 per month per 100,000 property value
 - Year 1 = 1.71/1000
 - Year 2 = 1.63/1000
 - Year 3 = 1.55/1000
 - Year 4 = 1.48/1000
- Low income residents can file for exemption through the Thurston County Assessor's Office
- The fire department is funded primarily by the residents and business owners of the district.
- The fire department does not receive any regular federal, state or county funding.
- The Fire Department is currently rated amongst the best of any non-city fire department in the region.
- The fire departments Public Protection Classification (PPC rating) is a 4. A 1 rating is the best that a department can get.

Levy frequently asked questions:

Q: Is this a replacement Levy or an Excess Levy?

A: This is a Replacement Levy and replaces the Levy that is set to expire at the end of 2022. The Levy that expires has eroded to \$0.84. The replacement Levy provides funding to maintain and in some cases enhance services to meet current and future emergency response demands.

Q: Does this levy allow the fire department to collect as much as it wants without limitation?

A: No. State law sets statutory limits for each type of taxing district. Initiative 747 (originally passed in 2000, overturned by the courts, and reinstated by the Legislature in 2007) also provides limits on the increases in regular levy collections (those made without a public vote) to 1% a year over the prior year.

Q: What services will the Levy pay for?

A: The fire department delivers comprehensive emergency medical, rescue, wild land and structural fire suppression services to 30,000 residents in the largest geographical emergency response zone (158 sq. mi.) in the region.

Q: How will the fire department use the revenue from this Levy?

A: The fire department will use the revenue to maintain current staffing and fund 6 additional firefighter/EMT positions and pay for fire station operational costs to prevent closure, maintain response times and avoid system failure.

Q: Why do you need 6 more Firefighter/EMT's?

A: West Thurston has seen an increase of 40% in the amount of 911 calls in the past 9 years. Last year was a record number of 911 calls for service at 3,431. By comparison, in 2013 we responded to 2443 emergencies. We have no reason to believe our call volume and service demand will decrease and that is what we are planning for to maintain effective service response. In 2021, we were managing two (2) or more incidents at the same time 36% of the time in our fire district. We are struggling with current staffing to keep pace with the current call volume. Your Firefighter/EMT's are now tasked with mandatory overtime to fill staffing gaps in order to maintain service levels. Part of the money received from this levy will allow us to hire six additional Firefighter/EMT's. We believe these six will meet the demands not only for today but years down the road as well.

Q: What will happen if the levy fails again on November 8, 2022?

A: We will be forced to close fire stations. It is estimated that if the levy fails, up to 50% of staff will be laid off as funding erodes. We expect response times to double in most areas.

Q: If layoffs occur will fire stations close?

A: Yes, two of the four staffed fire stations operated by West Thurston will close December 31st, 2022

Q: Will fire station(s) closing have an impact on emergency response times?

A Yes, depending upon where you live the response times are projected to double.

Q: Will the fire department rating be impacted?

A: If the fire department closes fire stations, insurance companies may increase fire insurance premiums. When this occurs depends on when the rating bureau re-evaluates and changes the current fire department rating.

Q: Are there any other impacts if the levy does not pass?

A: The fire department provides ambulance transport at a significantly reduced cost compared to private ambulance service. Nearly 80% of our emergency service calls are for pre-hospital medical care and transport. We will be unable to maintain the ambulance transport service to our citizens and instead rely on private ambulance services for transports to the hospital in order to maintain fire protection in the district.

Furthermore, with less personnel to respond to an emergency we will rely more on other fire departments located throughout the county to help with emergency calls. Response times will increase as a result of travel distance. Below is graph of travel time between fire stations and what affect closures of stations will have.

