

Lynnwood Fire Service Delivery Options

The City of Lynnwood's Fire Department (LFD) provides a wide variety of emergency and non-emergency services to the citizens and visitors of Lynnwood.

These services include:

- Fire Prevention
- Fire Suppression
- Public Education
- Emergency Medical Services
- Hazardous Materials
- Specialized Rescue Responses

The department consists of 50 full-time career Firefighters/EMTs, Paramedics and Fire Inspectors, staffing two full-time stations and responding to an average of over 7,000 alarms annually, approximately 75% of which are emergency medical calls. The department consistently provides exemplary emergency services and is among the top-rated city fire departments in Washington State. Currently, the Lynnwood Fire Department has a two-year operating budget of \$19.1 million.

The City of Lynnwood is developing a strategic plan in order to achieve our Community Vision for a City Center, accommodate projected growth in population and employment, and prepare for the impacts of Light Rail. As the City of Lynnwood continues to make progress towards these goals, the services required of the Fire Department will continue to increase. The annual cost of the current level of service is expected to increase approximately \$6.2 million by 2020.

In order to accommodate for the future growth of the city, the Lynnwood City Council, along with the City of Lynnwood, Lynnwood Fire Department and Fire District #1 are exploring a variety of different options to effectively and efficiently provide our community with fire and emergency services.





Several options have been identified and will be discussed with the community and deliberated by City Council over the next several months. The four options currently under consideration are:

1. Status Quo: City Provides Services

The city continues to provide fire services independently. With the increased cost of fire service delivery, a voter approved property tax levy lift, (an increase in property taxes levied) would be considered in order to cover the anticipated \$6.2 million funding gap.

2. City Contracts with Fire District #1

Through a City Council approved inter-local agreement, Fire District #1 would provide fire service to the City of Lynnwood. The contract amount would reflect the cost of service and would be funded through the city's general fund. A voter approved property tax levy lift would be considered to cover the increased cost of service. Lynnwood Fire Department staff would be employed by Fire District #1. Currently, the cities of Edmonds, Mountlake Terrace and Brier contract with Fire District #1.

3. Annexing into Fire District #1

The City would annex into Fire District #1 with voter approval. Fire service would be provided by Fire District #1, and city residents would pay a property tax assessment. The Lynnwood Fire Department staff would be employed by Fire District #1. There are several cities locally that have annexed into a Fire District. Examples include Shoreline, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Woodinville, Lake Stevens, and Monroe to name a few.

4. Create a Regional Fire Authority

A Regional Fire Authority (RFA) is a special purpose district created by a vote of the people to consolidate and regionalize fire and emergency services while retaining local control. Fire District #1 and the City of Lynnwood are reviewing this option.

Creation of an RFA would combine regional resources into a single regional fire department to enhance service delivery, remove duplication, provide economic efficiencies, and provide borderless fire and emergency medical response. The services would be paid for through a property tax assessment.

Consolidation of the fire service is not a new idea in Lynnwood. Regionalized fire service in Snohomish County has been discussed nine separate times since 1972.

The RFA option has been embraced by 9 other communities in Washington State and has created the following Fire Authorities: Kent Fire, Valley Regional, South East Thurston, Riverside, West Thurston, North County, West Benton, North Mason and South Whatcom Regional Fire Authorities.

The RFA would collect property tax assessment from property owners within the RFA boundary and the city's general fund would be reduced. City Council would determine the city's new tax rate.

For more information such as staff reports, financial reviews, and frequently asked questions, visit www.ci.lynnwood.wa.us/FireServiceOpportunities