

Fire District 27 Town Hall Meeting

Hosted by FD 27 Commissioners
July 24, 2018

Town Hall Meeting

Purpose

- **Provide information** about:
 - **Issues** facing the Fire Department
 1. Financial Sustainability
 2. Service Delivery
 - **Future Options** being considered
 1. Stand-Alone Fire Department
 2. Merge with Fire District 10
 3. Partnership with City of Snoqualmie
- **Obtain public feedback** on these options
 - Sign-up Sheet
 - Limited to 3 minutes

Timeline

January 2018: Commissioners appoint committee to identify & analyze options

- Reported in newspaper & notice @ Post Office
- Committee had 15 meetings

May 24: Committee reported preliminary findings to Commissioners

June 18: Open House

Commissioner Meetings: **June 29, July 6, July 10**

July 16: Meeting with City of Snoqualmie

July 24: Town Hall Meeting

Future Commissioner Meetings: **2nd Tuesday** each month

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ISSUES

1. **Financial Sustainability**
2. **Service Delivery**

Also will discuss **Governance**

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Issue: Financial Sustainability

FD 27 Operating Revenues from Property Taxes

Regular Property Tax (ongoing)

- RCW 52.16.130, 140, 160, each allow up to \$0.50/\$1,000 Assessed Value (AV)
- Total rate up to \$1.50/\$1,000 AV
Currently \$1.27/\$1,000 AV

Excess Levy for Maintenance & Operations per RCW 84.52.130

Currently \$.39/\$1,000 AV

- Require at least **60% voter approval** every **4 years**
- In 2017 provided **21.4% of FD 27 revenue**

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Issue: Financial Sustainability

*Alternative to Excess Levy is **Fire Benefit Charge (FBC)** governed by RCW 52.18.*

- Applies only to structures, not vacant land
- Rate based on structure size, use & fire risk
- **Regular Property Tax** limited to \$1.00/\$1,000 AV
- Initial approval requires at least **60% voter approval**; Subsequent votes require greater than **50% approval** every **6 years**
- **FBC** can fund up to 60% of operating budget
- Commissioners can adjust FBC between elections for unexpected needs after public hearing

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Fall City Fire District 27 Services

Critical Emergency Services:

- fire suppression
- emergency medical service (EMS)
- technical and water rescue
- public safety education

(Advanced life services are provided by the regional [King County Medic One System](#).)

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Issue: Service Delivery

Standard practice is at least **3 firefighters** (FF) on duty to improve emergency outcomes and employee safety

- Structure Fires: if 2 FF, limited to defensive tactics only
- Medical Emergencies: 3 FF provides optimal patient care & handling
- Brush & Urban Interface Fires: 3rd FF makes initial attack on fire

FD 27 is a "**combination department**" providing 24/7 service
(12 career firefighters would meet 3-firefighter standard)

- 10 career firefighter/EMT's – Board authorized hiring 11th
- 11 volunteer firefighter/EMT's (+4 volunteer recruits in training)
- Fire Chief and Administrative Assistant

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OPTIONS Being Considered

1. **Stand-Alone Fire District:**
Continue as FD 27, essentially as we operate today
2. **Merge with Fire District 10**
FD 10 is member of Eastside Fire & Rescue
3. **Partnership with the City of Snoqualmie**

Eliminated option to Join Eastside Fire & Rescue as interlocal agreement partner

- Significantly more expensive (\$514k/year) without improving financial sustainability.
- Service levels comparable to Option 2

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Option 1: Stand-Alone District

Governed by 3 commissioners elected to staggered 6-year terms

Ensures local control and services adapted to community

Strong community support demonstrated by passage of ballot measures

2017-2020 Excess Levy: 66.67% Approval

2014-2016 Excess Levy: 75.31% Approval

2001-21 Bond for Station Remodel: 71.14% Approval

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Option 1: Stand-Alone District Financial Sustainability

Property owners pay **\$1.66314/\$1,000 AV** for **Operations**

- Regular Property Tax (ongoing): \$1.27009/\$1,000 AV
- Excess Levy for maintenance & operations (2017-2020): \$0.39305/\$1,000 AV

Property owners pay **\$.07087/\$1,000 AV** for **Station Remodel** (2002-2021 General Obligation Bond)

Example: \$500,000 AV pays \$831.57 for FD 27 operations + \$35.44 for fire station bond

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Option 1: Stand-Alone District Service Delivery

In 2017 the district responded to **874 calls**

- Emergency Medical (EMS): 609
- Fire/Other Emergency: 163
- Service/Non-Emergency: 102
- Mutual Aid & Assistance (out of district): 321

At least **3-Person Staffing** was provided: (2017 data)

- **63.75%** with **career staff** (will improve in 2019 with 11th FF)
 - 95.4% with career staff during day
 - 30.4% with career staffing at night
- **98.1%** with **combination career and volunteer staff**
 - 96.4% during day
 - 100% at night (sometimes 4 or 5 on-staff)

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Option 2: Merge with District 10

- All aspects of fire service administered by FD 10; FD 27 ceases to exist
- Requires voter approval greater than 50%
- Irreversible decision
- FD 27 Commissioners on FD 10 Board during transition (per statute), then elected at large
- Decisions made to benefit larger (entire FD 10) area

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Option 2: Merge with District 10 Financial Sustainability

- Overall cost to FD 27 taxpayers would *decrease* ~\$250k/year in 2018 (11% decrease)
- Taxing structure changes
 - **Regular Property Tax** is reduced to: \$1.00/\$1,000 Assessed Value
 - **Excess Levy** for Maintenance & Operations *replaced* by Fire Benefit Charge
 - **Fire Benefit Charge** at current FD 10 rate *decreases* cost for most taxpayers (77%); *increases* for most businesses and a few homeowners
- General Obligation Bond for fire station *continues* through 2021: \$.07087/\$1000 Assessed Value

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Option 2: Merge with District 10 Financial Sustainability

Impact of Fire Benefit Charge (2493 parcels; 48 sample parcels)

Vacant Land: **Decrease**

RESIDENTIAL: **1908** parcels Decrease; Average Decrease = **\$134.10**

Sample parcels Decrease range: **\$2 - \$1,376**

RESIDENTIAL: **540** parcels Increase; Average Increase = **\$68.21**

Sample parcels Increase range: **\$10 - \$135**

COMMERCIAL: **4** parcels Decrease

Range of Decrease: **\$88 - \$466**

COMMERCIAL: **40** parcels Increase

Range of Increase: **<\$100 - \$2500+**

(50% in range \$100 - \$200)

Sample parcels Increase range: **\$118 - \$2,521**

Call FD27 Office (425) 222-5841 for impact to specific parcels.

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Option 2: Merge with District 10 Service Delivery

- 3-person career staffing at all times
- Charge for transporting patients
(\$755 + Mileage; Most insurance pays)
- Expanded community outreach, special operation and fire prevention
- Robust organization with levels of management, full scope of support services, and greater administrative expertise, capacity and efficiencies
- Increased career pathways & pay for firefighters
- Expanded firefighter training
- Current FD 27 volunteer firefighter program continues; could change as FD 10's program evolves
- All employees transfer with no loss of jobs

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Option 3: Partner with Snoqualmie

Discussions are in early stage so information is limited.

A range of options is being discussed.

All Sub-Options would require approval by FD 27 Board and Snoqualmie City Council.

Sub-Option 1: Functional Consolidation of Major Divisions
(Operations, Training, etc.)

Sub-Option 2: Shared Administration

(1 management team leading/overseeing 2 departments)

Sub-Option 3: Merged Organization

(Interlocal Agreement; function as 1 agency)

Sub-Option 4: Voter-Approved Merged Organization

(Regional Fire Authority or Annexation into District)

Note: This sub-option may be considered at a later date.

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Option 3: Partner with Snoqualmie

Sub-Options 1-3

- Continue governance by elected FD 27 Commissioners
- 2013 interlocal agreement to facilitate cooperative operation and/or consolidation of services (share staffing, reserve apparatus, training, special operations, administrative personnel)
- New interlocal agreement would establish governance, levels of service, administrative structure, financial structure, etc.
- Reduced control of operations
(sub-options 2 & 3)

Financial Sustainability

- Continued reliance on voted Excess Levy or could implement a Fire Benefit Charge
- Impact to expenses and taxes depends on extent of consolidation and negotiated cost-sharing

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Option 3: Partner with Snoqualmie

Sub-Options 1-3

Service Delivery

- Could achieve 3-person career staffing at station (Sub-Option 3)
- Firefighter salaries would increase (Sub-Option 3)
- Similar community programs and special operations
- Could achieve administrative efficiencies (Sub-Options 2 & 3)
- Improved overall firefighter training
- Strong community-oriented volunteer program

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Option 3: Partner with Snoqualmie

Sub-Option 4: Voter-Approved Merged Organization

(Regional Fire Authority or Annexation into District)

Note: This sub-option may be considered at a later date.

- Requires voter approval greater than 50%;
if Fire Benefit Charge, then greater than 60%
- Irreversible decision
- Governance structure to be negotiated

Financial Sustainability

- Taxes would likely decrease for FD 27 taxpayers

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Option 3: Partner with Snoqualmie

Sub-Option 4

Service Delivery

- Would be established with 3-person career staffing
- Could be established with locally-focused community programs
- New organization established with merged operations

(all benefits of Sub-Options 1-3, plus independent organization with fully merged administration and changed taxing structure)

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Next Steps

Commissioner Goals:

- Decide Future Option before 2017-2020 Excess Levy expires
- Preserve options during interim

Begin prescribed process for **Option 2: Merge with FD 10**

- Adopt Merger Petition
- Adopt SEPA Determination
- File Notice of Intent with KC Boundary Review Board

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- Commissioner Decision on February or April 2019 Election

Continue Meetings for **Option 3: Partnership with City of Snoqualmie**

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Commissioner Questions & Discussion

Public Comment

- Sign up on list
- Limited to 3 minutes

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