



Northshore Fire Department

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  northshorefiredepartment



Woodinville Fire & Rescue

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cost Savings Projected for Taxpayers in Northshore and Woodinville Fire Merger

KENMORE, Wash. – Property taxpayers in Kenmore, Lake Forest Park and Woodinville are receiving some good news this holiday season. A proposed merger between the Northshore Fire Department and Woodinville Fire & Rescue would save taxpayers money on emergency service costs when the new effective tax rate takes effect in 2022.

The merger proposal is scheduled for the April 27, 2021 Special Election ballot. Because the Northshore Fire Department would merge into Woodinville Fire & Rescue, Northshore voters are the ones to vote. However, property taxpayers from both jurisdictions would see a savings if the merger is approved.

Northshore property owners would save a projected \$0.11 per \$1,000 of assessed property value or 8.5% of the effective tax rate. Woodinville Fire property owners would save \$0.07 per \$1,000 or 5.6%. There also would be economies of scale in purchasing goods and services, and less overall cost per property taxpayer to fund stations and apparatus.

“Northshore and Woodinville are both financially strong. Taxpayers will see a lower effective tax rate as a result of the merger,” said Fire Chief Greg Ahearn. “That’s great news to share as we move forward with the election.”

Both agencies are approximately the same size, and fund emergency services with a fire levy and fire benefit charge. They also share the same financial philosophy of maintaining a strong reserve fund to pay cash for capital items to save taxpayers money instead of financing these purchases.

In addition to saving taxpayers money, merging fire districts will improve emergency services for residents and businesses. A merger would maintain the same number of emergency personnel but allow better deployment to provide an improved emergency response for both communities. Each agency also owns specialized apparatus and equipment that the other benefits from when responding to emergency

calls. Merging also has the added benefits of providing better training opportunities for firefighters, stronger fire prevention programs in local schools and more community engagement.

Smaller fire agencies throughout King and Snohomish counties are partnering together to provide residents with better service and cost efficiencies. Northshore and Woodinville Fire have been operating under a temporary interlocal agreement since last February. The agencies share training programs for emergency personnel, administrative positions (fire chief, deputy chief, and a chief administrative officer) and joint departments, including finance, human resources, and IT. Merging would make these administrative efficiencies permanent.

The agencies would develop a new name that reflects all three communities if the merger is approved by voters. More information can be found on the fire districts' websites at www.northshorefire.com or www.wf-r.org. Chief Greg Ahearn is available to answer questions about the proposed merger at (425) 354-1780 or GAhearn@northshorefire.com.

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Northshore Fire Department provides fire and emergency medical services to approximately 37,000 people over 10 square miles, including the cities of Lake Forest Park and Kenmore. Its emergency call volumes average 3,600 a year.

Woodinville Fire & Rescue provides fire and emergency medical services to approximately 37,000 people over 30 square miles. Its emergency call volumes average 4,000 a year.