

South Bay Fire District 8 Ballot Measure Frequently Asked Questions. (FAQs)

1. Why Does the District need more money?

There are several reasons that the District is asking for additional funding, including:

- a. Increasing call volume and decreasing ability to attract and retain volunteer responders requires the District to recruit, hire and retain more full-time career staff;
- b. Rising costs for labor (10% last year) and goods & services (average of 8% last year);
 - i. The average annual labor cost (salary & benefits) for a career firefighter is \$135k;
 - ii. The average annual labor cost (stipend & benefits) for a volunteer firefighter is \$5k.
- c. The statutory limitation for property tax revenue (at \$1.50 per thousand of assessed value) and the statutory cap on levy increases (at 1%) have greatly limited the ability of the District to maintain sufficient funding for its operations, both current and planned; and
- d. To consistently achieve the reasonable service levels we have defined as our “Target Levels of Service”, additional funding is necessary.
 - i. The “Target Level of Service” for fire protection is to have four firefighters respond and begin firefighting operations within 10 minutes of receiving the alarm;
 - ii. The “Target Level of Service” for emergency medical services is to have two EMTs respond and begin basic life support services with 8 minutes of receiving the call.

2. What do you plan to do with the extra money collected?

The District will use the additional funding to:

- a. Maintain the District’s growing demand for career staff;
- b. Provide sufficient funding for capital needs (replacement of vehicles and equipment); and
- c. Help pay for increasing costs for operations (e.g. training, incident response and support functions) and ongoing maintenance (e.g. vehicles, equipment, facilities).

3. How much will this cost a tax paying community member?

- a. The current (2023) basic property tax levy rate is \$1.20 per thousand of assessed value);
- b. If approved by voters in 2023, the basic tax levy would cost homeowners an additional 30 cents per thousand of their assessed value in 2024 (a total of \$1.50 per thousand of assessed value); and
- c. If approved by voters in the 2024, an excess tax levy would cost homeowners an additional 45 cents per thousand of their assessed value in 2025 (a total of \$1.95 per thousand of assessed value).

4. How will this improve your services?

- a. In 2022, the District had 16 career responders and 32 volunteer responders;
- b. As part of a five-year plan, the District would have 28 career responders and 25 volunteer responders by year 2028;
- c. The District’s current (2022) average response time is 7 minutes and 17 seconds;
- d. With voter approval of the proposed ballot measures, the District could implement the recommended staffing plan that provides an estimated *reduction of average response time* by about 1-1/2 minutes.

5. What will happen if this measure does not pass?

- a. If additional funding is not provided, the District estimates that *average response times would increase* an average of one to two minutes; and
- b. Over time, the staffing at the North Olympia Firestation would need to be reduced; without the proposed additional funding, it would eventually need to be closed.

6. Where can I get more information?

- a. You can contact Chief VanCamp at **360-491-5320** or by email at vancamp@southbayfire.com.
- b. You can access the District website at southbayfire.com where a special page has been established.