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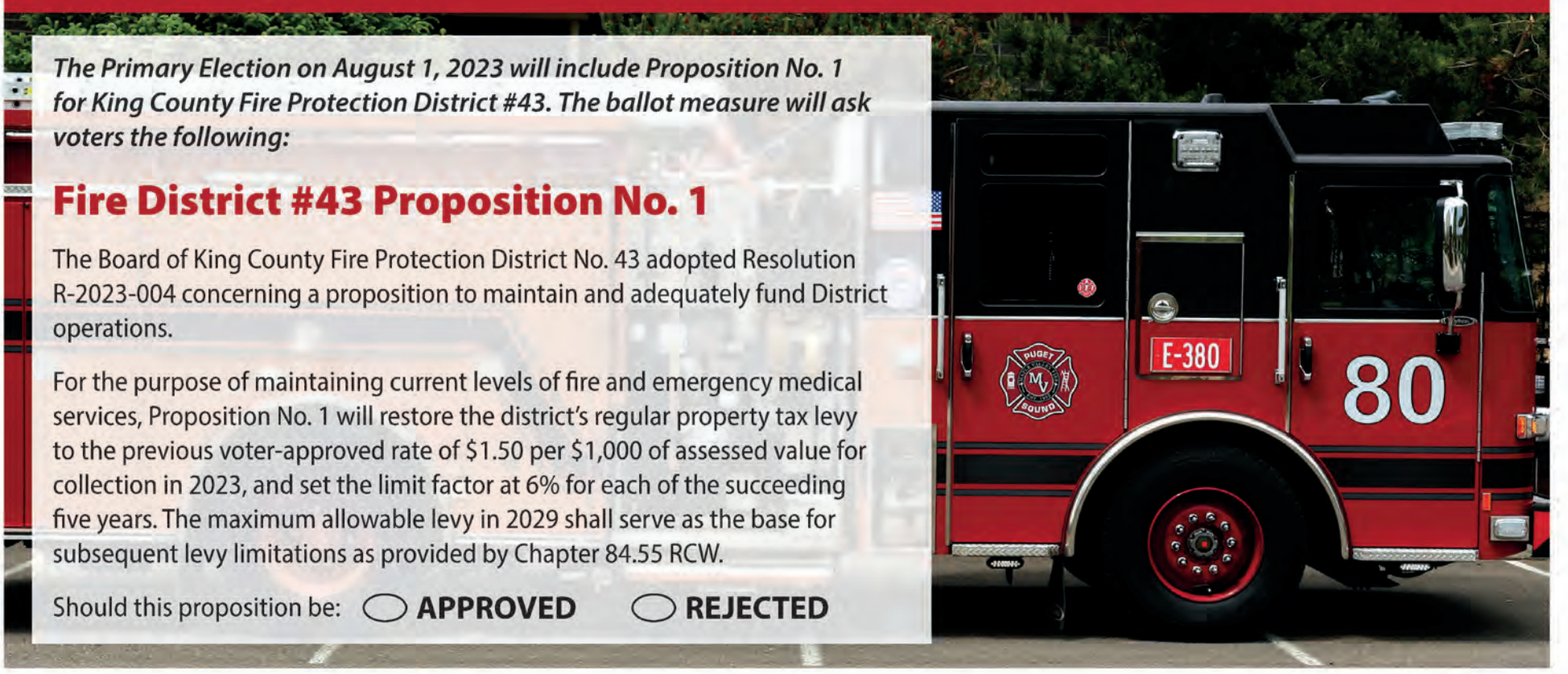
A PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PUBLICATION

SUMMER 2023 – SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION ISSUE – KING COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #43

PROPOSITION NO. 1 - PLEASE VOTE!



The Primary Election on August 1, 2023 will include Proposition No. 1 for King County Fire Protection District #43. The ballot measure will ask voters the following:

Fire District #43 Proposition No. 1

The Board of King County Fire Protection District No. 43 adopted Resolution R-2023-004 concerning a proposition to maintain and adequately fund District operations.

For the purpose of maintaining current levels of fire and emergency medical services, Proposition No. 1 will restore the district's regular property tax levy to the previous voter-approved rate of $1.50 per $1,000 of assessed value for collection in 2023, and set the limit factor at 6% for each of the succeeding five years. The maximum allowable levy in 2029 shall serve as the base for subsequent levy limitations as provided by Chapter 84.55 RCW.

Should this proposition be: ◯ **APPROVED** ◯ **REJECTED**

BRIAN CARSON
Fire Chief

From Fire Chief Brian Carson

The Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (Puget Sound Fire/RFA) is proud to be a trusted partner in the communities we serve. Today, the cities of Kent and Covington are within the RFA borders, as is King County Fire District #37. The cities of SeaTac and Tukwila contract with the RFA for service, and the city of Maple Valley receives service through the RFA's contract with King County Fire District #43. Regardless of the structure, we share with each community the desire to enjoy a safe and sustainable place to live, work, and visit. Our vision is effective and sustainable fire and EMS services that maximize the resources entrusted to us. The RFA strives to earn your trust each day – the trust you, as a community, place in our fire department is greatly appreciated and never taken for granted.

> ***…Puget Sound Fire will always focus on taking care of people and being a trusted partner in the community.***

In Fire District #43, the contract for service with Puget Sound Fire has been ongoing since 2018. The district's fire personnel have been RFA members since that time, and although the district is still in place, I am incredibly honored to see Puget Sound Fire serve as Fire District #43's fire department. Regionalization has several benefits, and we continuously seek opportunities to gain efficiency through process improvement and cost reduction strategies. Your governance board provides strong leadership and guidance to ensure the practices and services of the RFA are sustainable.

In August, Fire District #43 will seek to restore their funding capacity through a levy lid lift. The additional tax revenue would be utilized to enhance fire and EMS services in Fire District #43. Regardless, Puget Sound Fire will continue to serve the City of Maple Valley, Fire District #43, and each of our regional partners with compassion and professionalism. It is my commitment to you that Puget Sound Fire will always focus on taking care of people and being a trusted partner in the community. We value your support and will remain focused on providing exceptional services. I encourage you to get out and vote on this important ballot measure and have your voice heard. Thank you. ■

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PLANNING EXPANDED FIRE/EMS SERVICE DELIVERY

By Deputy Chief Mark Jones

In 2018, King County Fire District #43 (KCFD#43/ district) was in a financial crisis. The cost to maintain fire and EMS services to the citizens of the Maple Valley area had exceeded the amount of money the district received in property taxes, and the prior year's ballot measure to pass a Fire Benefit Charge did not pass. This crisis had forced closure of fire stations and left firefighters and staff facing potential layoffs. Fire apparatus was in poor condition and in need of replacement, but there were no capital funds remaining.

To maintain basic services, KCFD#43 approached Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority to initiate a contract for fire and EMS services. This contract removed staffing redundancies such as the fire chief and administrative staff which reduced the cost to run the fire department. Fortunately, a levy lid lift ballot measure was approved by voters in time to save layoffs and additional station closures. The combination of lowering the operating costs and the passing of the levy lid lift saved fire and EMS service delivery to the Maple Valley area.

It has been five years since this happened, and the district is now ready to improve services to the community now that finances are stable. There are three components to improving service delivery to the community:

Maintaining a Reserve Fund

The first component to improving service delivery to the community is establishing and maintaining a reserve of 35% of the contract budget cost for expenditures while waiting for property tax revenue to come in. The fire commissioners have established this reserve by policy, and it supports fiscal stability. Property taxes are received in April and October. Without a reserve fund, the district would not be able to make expenditures for the first quarter of each year. This fund also acts as a small emergency fund in case of an unforeseen incident.

Addressing Threat of Wildland Fires

The second component is addressing the ever-increasing threat of wildland fires in urban areas. As housing development continues to push into forested areas, fast-moving wildland fires can threaten homes and lives. These fast-moving fire fronts require a quick response with specialized apparatus, protective equipment, and specially trained firefighters.

Your fire district is already taking steps to prepare for this increasing threat:

- Firefighters are receiving specialized training in wildland firefighting techniques and new protection equipment is being purchased.
- The district currently has large water tenders that bring water to remote locations lacking in hydrants.
- The district has replaced an aging and specialized truck used to fight brush fires and has partnered with Puget Sound Fire to split the cost of an additional brush truck.
- A Type 3 fire engine has been ordered which can handle both structure protection and wildland firefighting.

These new fire apparatus are crucial to early extinguishment of wildland urban interface fires prior to a fire moving from brush to structures.

Fire Station Location and Replacement

The third component in improving service delivery to the community is to addressing fire station location and replacement. In 2008, the district contracted with Emergency Services Consulting to conduct a station location analysis. The results of that study were incorporated into the 20-year Capital Plan.

KCFD #43 provides fire protection and EMS services over 50 square miles; however, all staffed fire stations are within the city limits of Maple Valley and within six square miles of each other. This results in long travel times to areas of the district that do not have staffed fire stations.

Adding new stations in the district are important to serve the area effectively. Station 84 is a previous volunteer station located at 16855 194th Ave SE in the Maple Valley Heights neighborhood. This station can be remodeled to support career firefighters 24/7. This would provide service delivery to 366 residential properties improving the fire and EMS services to the area. This area should then see an improvement in their Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau (WSRB) rating which effects fire insurance premiums.

Future Station 87 is located at 24416 SE 216th Street near Tahoma Elementary School. This land is in a great location for a fire station, and it would need to be built. This station would then have 24/7 staffing with career firefighters. This would provide service delivery to 156 residential properties and the area should then see an improvement in their WSRB rating which effects fire insurance premiums.

Station 80 located at 23775 SE 264th St. towards Four Corners is not in an ideal location, and neither is Station 83 which is located at 27250 216th Ave SE near the Pla Mor Bar and Grill. In addition, Station 83 is rapidly approaching its end of use and should be replaced. These two stations would be combined into one and moved closer to Tahoma High School.

The fire district receives revenue from property taxes and an EMS levy. In 2023, this amount was $14,607,625. The contract for fire and EMS services with Puget Sound Fire in 2023 was $11,074,309. When Station 84 opens, the contract becomes $13,700,000. This lowers the amount of money set aside each year for capital improvements.

There is approximately $13,000,000 currently set aside to build a new station 87. This would deplete the capital fund balance to $0. Staffing this station would be accomplished by moving Station 80 staff over to this station and closing Station 80.

After this has been accomplished there is no funding available to build new Station 83. In addition, Station 83 must be replaced due to age and condition. Without the levy lid lift, funds to build the new Station 87 would need to be directed to build the new Station 83.

Voters Will Decide in August Election

On August 1, voters will decide whether to restore the district's regular property tax levy to the previous voter-approved rate of $1.50 per $1,000 of assessed value for collection in 2023, and set the limit factor at 6% for each of the succeeding five years. Passing the levy lid lift ballot measure would bring in the additional funds needed to complete the required level of service improvements without having to seek a bond ballot measure. Without the levy lid lift, necessary service delivery cannot be delivered. We encourage you to vote in the August 1 Primary Election and weigh in on this important ballot measure. ■

SUSTAINABLE EMERGENCY SERVICES THROUGH RESPONSIBLE FUNDING

By Russell Calcote, King County Fire District #43 Board Chairperson

Your King County Fire District #43 fire commissioners would like to encourage you to vote in the Primary Election on August 1 concerning Proposition No. 1. As your board of commissioners, we are charged with being stewards of the monies that we receive from you, the taxpayers. We demand accountability and transparency in all financial transactions that occur in the fire department. We have policies and procedures in place that are followed so that you can rest assured that we are watching the dollars that are spent on your behalf.

We have department legal counsel to assure that we are following all state and federal laws. We have annual audits completed by the Washington State Auditor's office. The results of those audits have come back with a clean bill of health for King County Fire District #43. The department personnel, led by Chief Brian Carson, constantly look for opportunities to save money while providing the best equipment possible for our firefighters when they need it.

Since contracting for fire and EMS services from Puget Sound Fire in 2018, we have made many service improvements including the purchase of new fire engines that have proven to increase fleet reliability. In addition, community programs such as public education, fire prevention, FD CARES, and emergency management have given our communities the opportunity to meet with firefighters and other department members in non-emergency situations.

Restoring the tax levy rate of $1.50 per $1,000 of assessed property value will allow us to increase response capabilities by adding an additional fire station staffed by firefighters 24/7. The additional firefighters will assist with increasing reliability and reducing the number of times that units from other stations are called in from further away.

Again, we encourage you to vote in the upcoming Primary Election on August 1. We are all in this together and we thank you for your continued support. ■

RUSSELL CALCOTE
King County Fire District #43 Chairperson

WASHINGTON SURVEYING AND RATING BUREAU

The Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau (WSRB), is an independent, not-for-profit organization licensed and regulated by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). They produce data that insurance companies covering property in Washington State can use to better understand, assess, and price fire risk. WSRB evaluates fire protection in a community based on four factors:

1) The Fire Department

The number of engine companies, ladder companies, distribution of fire stations, automatic aid received, equipment carried on apparatus, apparatus maintenance, pumping capacity, reserve apparatus, department personnel staffing levels and training.

2) Water Supply

The WSRB calculates required fire flows in gallons-per-minute (gpm) for community buildings and compare the results to the water system's supply capacity. They look at hydrant size, type and installation, as well as how often fire hydrants and other water system components are inspected.

3) Emergency Communications System

Facilities, emergency dispatching system, dispatch personnel staffing levels and training.

4) Fire Safety Control

Fire code enforcement, public education, fire investigations and building code enforcement.

After evaluating these four components, WSRB sets a Protection Class for the community on a scale from 1-10. One of the limiting factors in WSRB is the distance from a fire station for many homes. Any home that is more than five (5) drive miles from a fire station has a Protection Class of 9. This affects many homes in the Maple Valley Heights area and the Hobart area.

The goal of the levy lid lift is to open the fire station in Maple Valley Heights and to build a fire station in the Hobart area. This should improve the WSRB rating of homes in this area and if homeowners with an insurance company that uses WSRB may see a reduction in their insurance premiums.

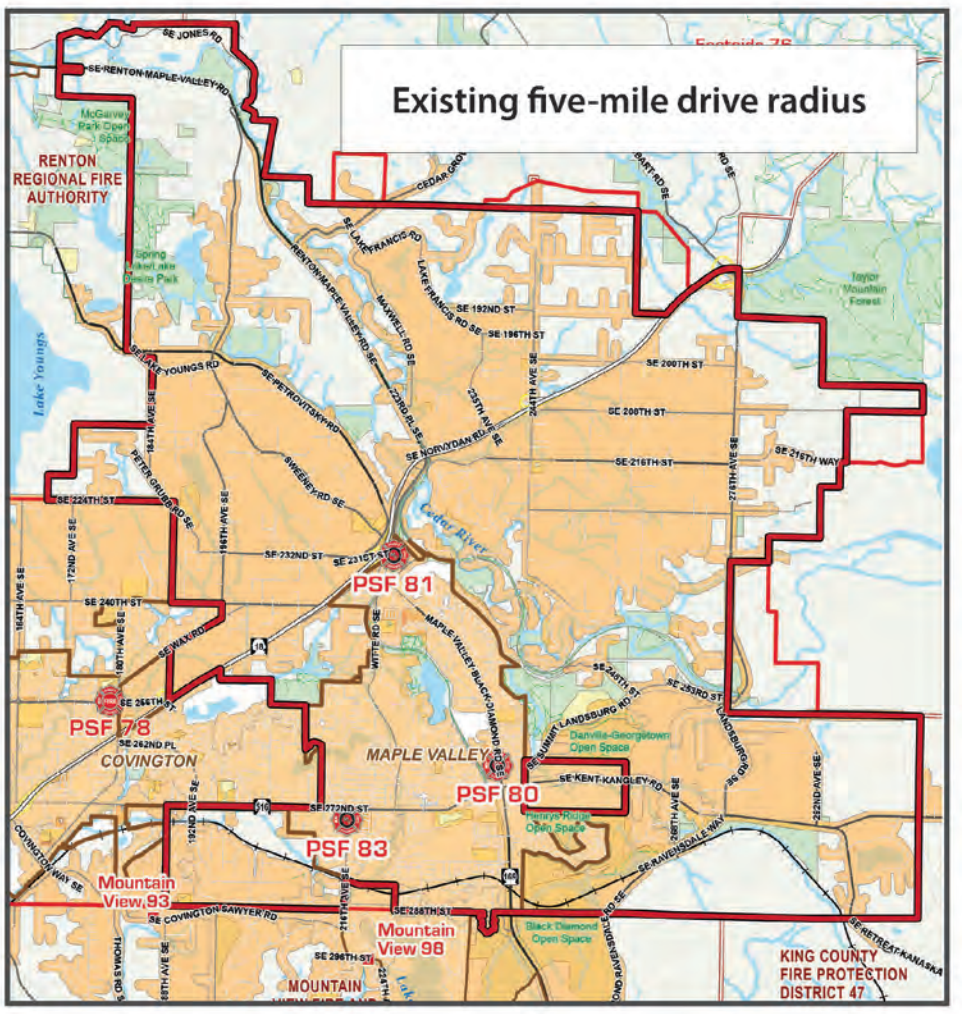
PROPOSED LEVY LID LIFT COST INCREASE

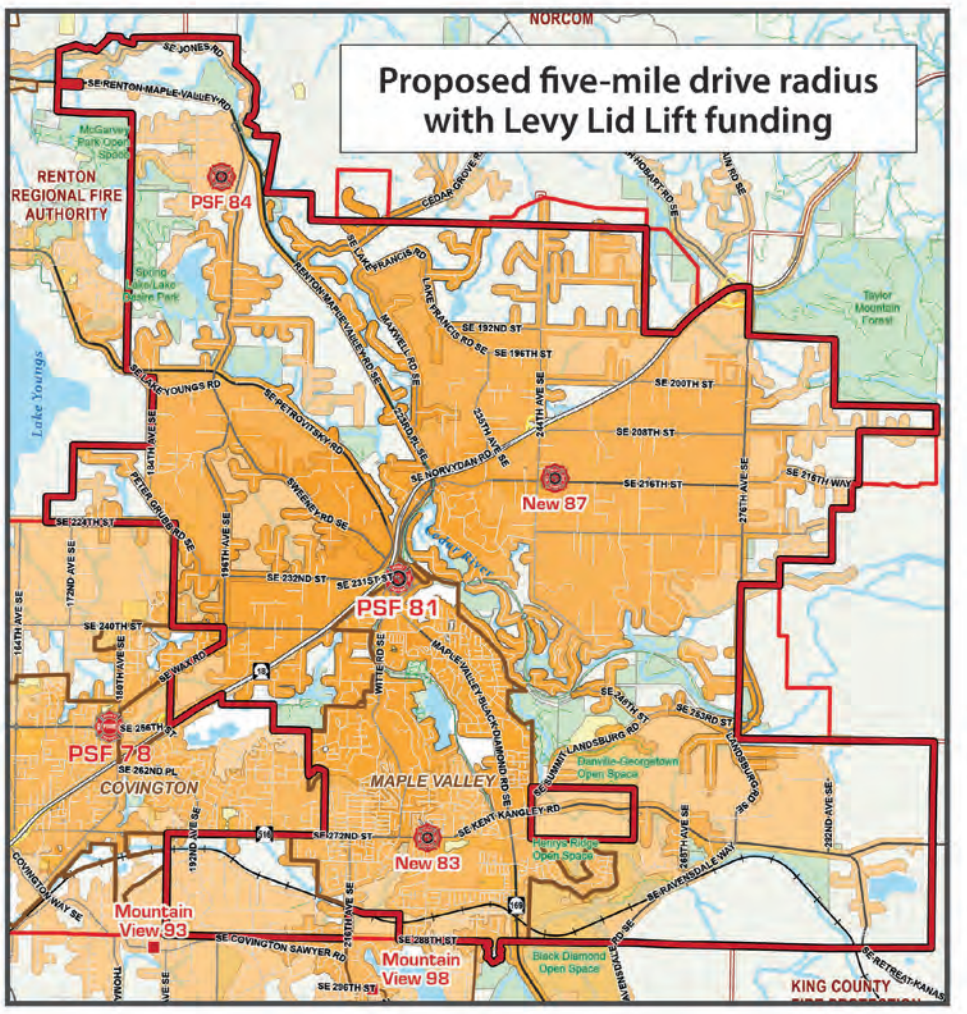
Appraised Value	2023 Levy	Proposed 2024 Levy	Annual Increase
$ 250,000	$ 287.25	$ 375.00	$ 87.75
$ 300,000	$ 344.70	$ 450.00	$ 105.30
$ 400,000	$ 459.60	$ 600.00	$ 140.40
$ 500,000	$ 574.50	$ 750.00	$ 175.50
$ 600,000	$ 689.40	$ 900.00	$ 210.60
$ 750,000	$ 861.75	$ 1,125.00	$ 263.25
$ 800,000	$ 919.20	$ 1,200.00	$ 280.80
$ 900,000	$ 1,034.10	$ 1,350.00	$ 315.90
$ 1,000,000	$ 1,149.00	$ 1,500.00	$ 351.00

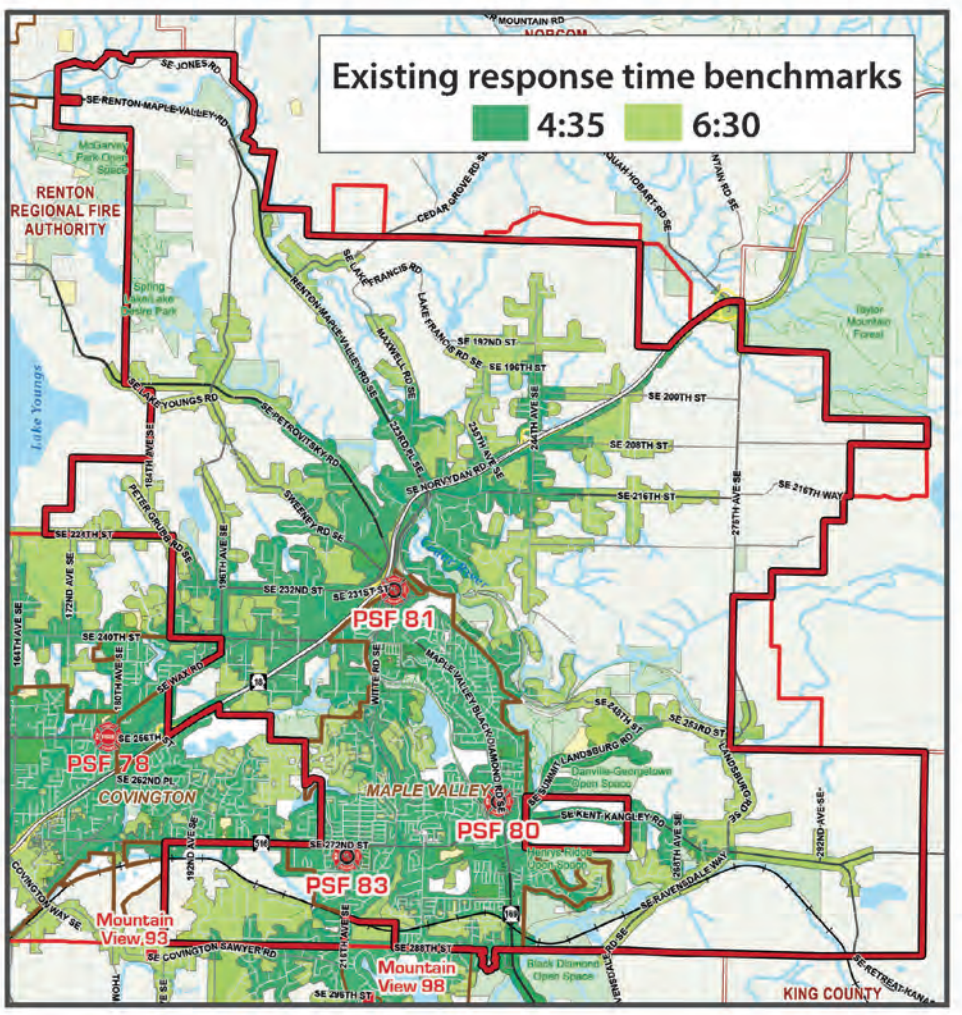
For more information, or answers to your questions, please email us at

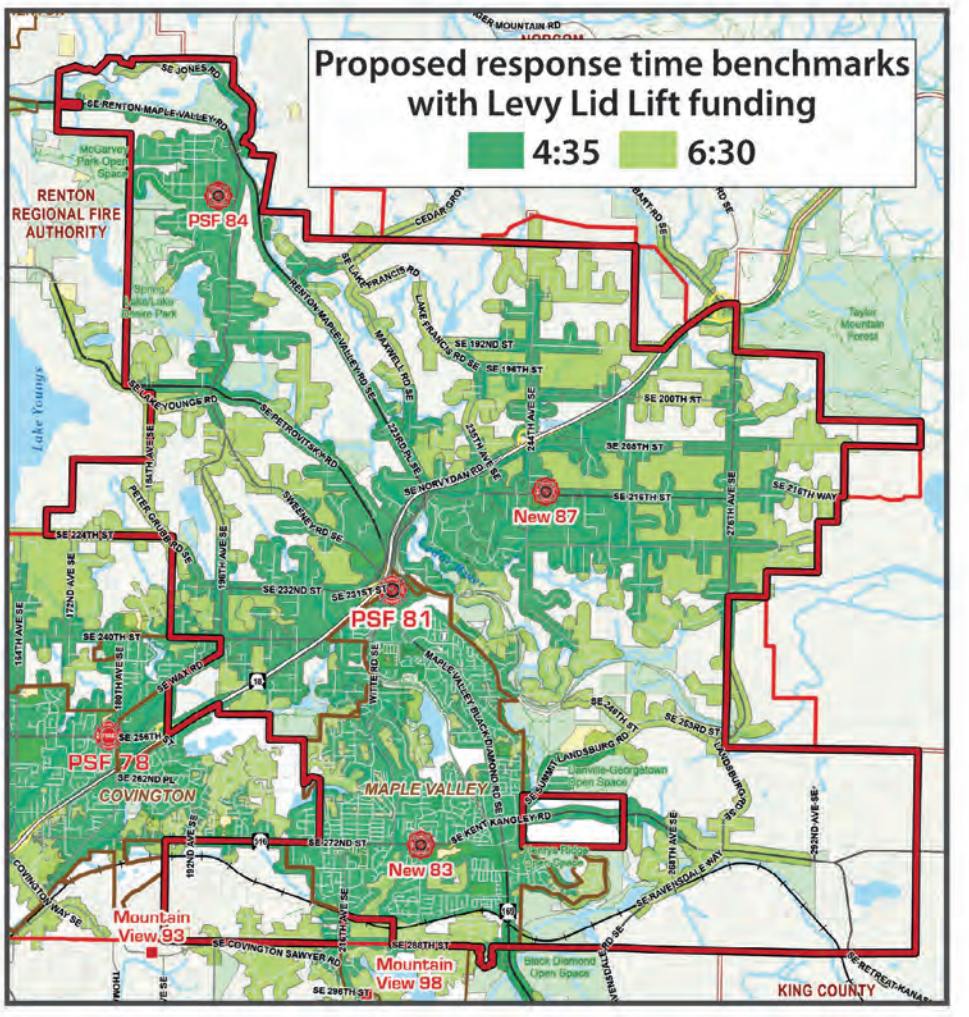
KCFD43Vote@PugetSoundFire.org

OUR PURPOSE — *Professionally and compassionately helping people .*









PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED FIRE AGENCY

FIRE HEADQUARTERS / ADMINISTRATION
24611 116th Ave. SE
Kent, WA 98030
(253) 856-4300

Emergency	9-1-1
Emergency Management	(253) 856-4440
Public Information Officer	(253) 856-4300
Community Risk Reduction	(253) 856-4440
FD CARES	(253) 856-4398
Public Education	(253) 856-4480
CPR and First Aid Classes	(253) 856-4300
Disaster Preparedness	(253) 856-4440
RFA Governance Board	(253) 856-4300
Fire Chief: Brian Carson	(253) 856-4300
Newsletter Editor: Janet Upegui	(253) 856-4300
Email	fire@pugetsoundfire.org
Website	pugetsoundfire.org