



# FIRE SERVICE LEVIES

## 2022 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT MEASURE

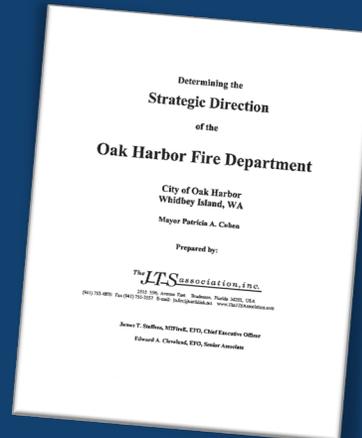
City Council Special  
Meeting 6/1/22

# INDEPENDENT STUDIES SHOW NEED

## NEED IDENTIFIED 16 YEARS AGO....

### 2006 STRATEGIC PLANNING

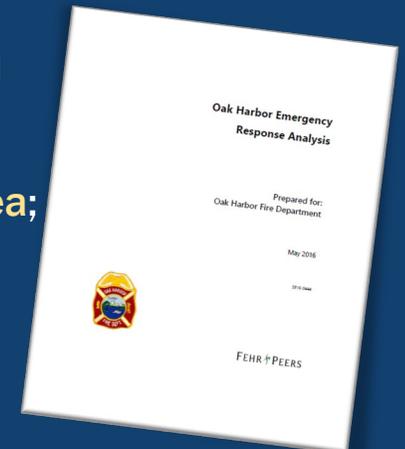
- JTS Association hired to determine the strategic direction of the Fire Department.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> fire station recommended** in the southwest area.
- City began collecting “fire fees” with new construction permits to help pay for new **fire station in the SW area.**
- Since 2006, the City has **annexed an additional 216.12 acres** of land.



## AND AGAIN 6 YEARS AGO

### 2016 RESPONSE ANALYSIS

- **24% of OH homes are NOT** within a 4-minute/  
1.5-miles radius
- City’s west side has the **largest coverage gap**
- Growth expected in **southwest area**
- Additional staffing at Station 81 will **improve response times**
- Recommend a **2<sup>nd</sup> station in SW area;** four potential station sites provided
- **SW station will meet future response standards**



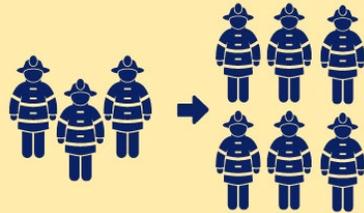
# COMMUNITY OUTREACH – KEY POINTS

A levy increase will improve emergency response times and capabilities.

The levy will provide funding for:



A smaller second fire station in the City's southwest area, staffed 24/7



Increase minimum staffing from three to six firefighters per day



Replace two 24-year-old pumper fire engines, one with a ladder truck



Necessary protective firefighter gear and tools

# STATION IN SOUTHWEST AREA



# REPLACE 2 ENGINES, 1 WITH QUINT



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



- Holland Happening Festival
- Open House Events: April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 12<sup>th</sup> Station 81
- Social Media Posts
- Electronic Sign at Beeksma/Gateway Park
- Whidbey News Times Article
- Printed material with QR code to online information and feedback form
- City Website redirect.
- Public Comments option after feedback form closed.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**BE HEARD OAK HARBOR**

**TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**



The City of Oak Harbor is considering a ballot measure requesting voters to approve an increase in its regular property tax levy to fund improved fire protection response times and capabilities, including building and staffing a second fire station in the City's southwest area.

Learn more and share your thoughts at:  
**WWW.OAKHARBOR.ORG/FIRELEVY**

SCAN SURVEY




**WHAT WILL THE LEVIES INCREASE PAY FOR?**

The levies will improve emergency response times and capabilities. For example, providing funding to hire additional firefighters, acquire vehicles/equipment, and build and operate a second station.

-  A smaller second fire station in the City's southwest area, staffed 24/7
-  Increase minimum staffing from three to six firefighters per day
-  Replace two 24-year-old pumper fire engines, one with a ladder truck
-  Necessary protective firefighter gear and tools

**CITY OF OAK HARBOR GUIDE TO FIRE SERVICE ON WHIDBEY ISLAND**

**Oak Harbor Fire Department (OHFD)** covers the City of Oak Harbor; 9.7 sq. mi. Operates from one station in the City's southeast area and is fully staffed 24/7 with four firefighters and one command officer.

**North Whidbey Fire & Rescue (NWFR)** (Island County Fire District No. 2) covers 55 sq. mi. from Description Pass Bridge to Libbey Rd; excluding NASWI and City of Oak Harbor properties. Operates from eight (8) stations, all but one are unstaffed.

**Central Whidbey Fire & Rescue** (Island County Fire District No. 3) covers 50 sq. mi., the central part of Whidbey Island from Libbey Rd to Muthy Bay Rd. Operates from three stations.

**South Whidbey Fire / EMS** (Island County Fire District No. 3) covers 66 sq. mi., the southern part of the island from Muthy Bay Rd southward. Operates from six stations.

**NASWI Federal Fire Department** serves Naval Air Station Whidbey Island and the Seaplane Base. Fully staffed 24/7.

**WhidbeyHealth** coordinates Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Island County. Maintains agreements with fire agencies to assist with medical incidents.

Learn more: this flyer and links to fire service agencies on Whidbey Island are available at [www.oakharbor.org/fire](http://www.oakharbor.org/fire).

**Station 21** UNSTAFFED  
395 W. Troxell Rd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**Station 22** UNSTAFFED  
3440 Taylor Rd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**Station 23** UNSTAFFED  
847 Silverlake Rd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**Station 24** UNSTAFFED  
1213 Old Polnell Rd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**Station 25** STAFFED with 2 Firefighters  
2720 Heller Rd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**Station 26** UNSTAFFED  
1817 Zylstra Rd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**Station 27** UNSTAFFED  
1160 Monroe Landing Rd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**Station 81** STAFFED 24/7  
855 E. Whidbey Ave  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277  
ONLY STATION FOR CITY

**Proposed Station 82** WILL BE STAFFED 24/7  
Southwest Area  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

**North Whidbey Fire & Rescue Administration**  
770 NE Midway Blvd  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277  
Headquarters / Business Offices Only

**CENTRAL WHIDBEY FIRE & RESCUE**  
Island County Fire District No. 3 (Libbey Rd to Muthy Bay Rd) 50 square miles, 3 stations.

**SOUTH WHIDBEY FIRE / EMS**  
Island County Fire District No. 3 (Muthy Bay Rd southward) 66 square miles, 6 stations.

**STATION STAFFING: UNSTAFFED VS. STAFFED 24/7**

**UNSTAFFED STATION** - strategically located buildings contain equipment and apparatus, but rely on volunteer firefighters to:

- Receive notice of a call on a pager,
- Leave their work or home and drive to the station and wait for additional firefighters,
- Wait for other firefighters to arrive,
- Put on gear, get in apparatus, and drive to the incident.

**STAFFED 24/7 STATION** - a strategically located building where full- or part-time firefighters work around the clock. A minimum of four firefighters (a full engine company) are ready to:

- Full crew receives notice of a call,
- Put on gear, get in apparatus and drive to the incident.




**Fire Department Audience**  
Followers 2,755  
Reach 15,927 (April 1 - May 26, 2022)

**City of Oak Harbor Audience**  
Followers 5,020  
Reach 30,483 (April 1 - May 26, 2022)

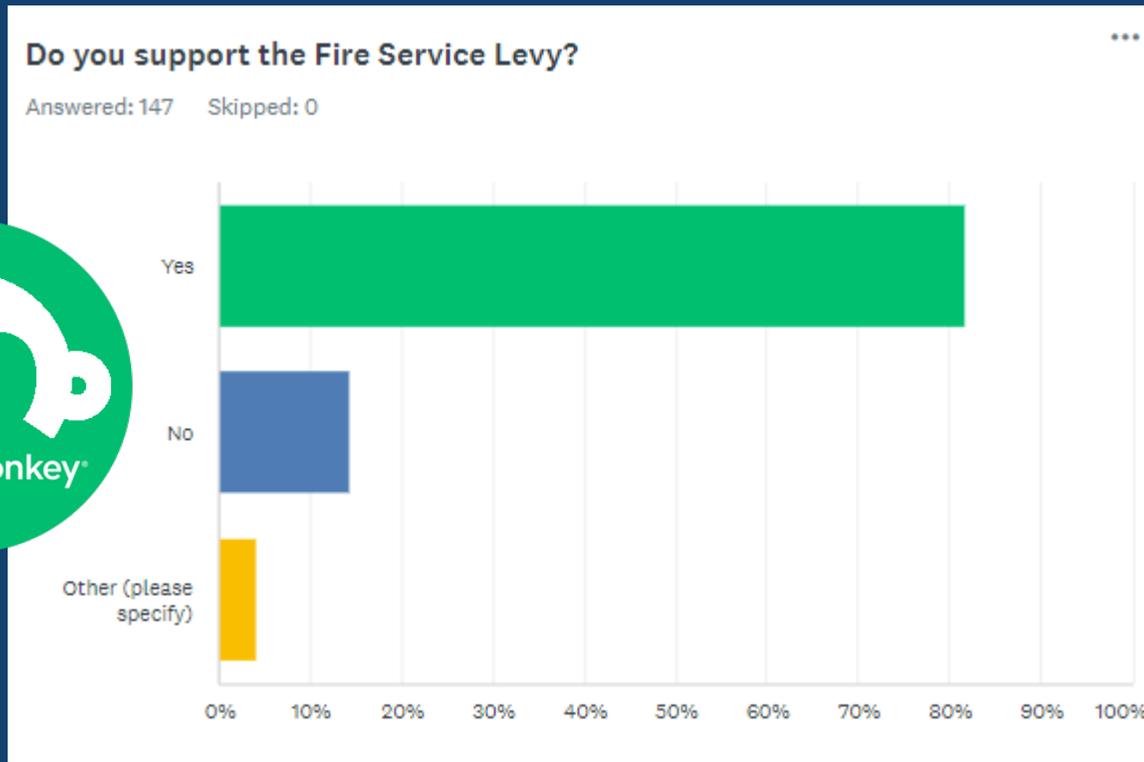
**BE HEARD OAK HARBOR**

**TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**

[WWW.OAKHARBOR.ORG/FIRE](http://WWW.OAKHARBOR.ORG/FIRE)



# FIRE LEVY FEEDBACK FORM



## Feedback Form

[surveymonkey.com/r/FireLevy](https://surveymonkey.com/r/FireLevy)

- **147 responses**
  - IP Addresses may be the same
    - Same organization/home server
    - Use same cell phone carrier
  - Feedback received corresponds to events and/or social media posts.
- **82% positive support**
- **Finances** is top non-support reason

*The feedback form is not statistically valid because it is for the purpose of receiving public feedback about a potential levy. Social Media tools like Facebook, Instagram, and E-sign are merely the tools to share the link that Survey Monkey creates with the public.*



# COMMENTS RECEIVED

Why not combine Oak Harbor Fire and North Whidbey Fire??? – Anonymous via feedback form

The city is surrounded on all sides by North Whidbey Fire, I assume there are mutual agreements, we need more info to justify this. – Robert Bade via FB

“I do support overall, but genuine question, wouldn't additional staff and truck/gear replacement/upgrades alone suffice versus also having another station? With the incoming school remodeling/rebuilds which are also raising property taxes it would be worth at least investigating if leveraging the facilities, you already have along with additional staff and gear would still accomplish the underlying goals. Granted the area of Fort Nugent Park doesn't have its own station but the area of coverage from Heller, Monroe, and Zylstra seem adequate distance-wise to serve that area.” – Anonymous via feedback form

With all of the residential housing scheduled to be built across the street from Safeway/Walmart and where Waldron Construction is scheduled to build, the station needs to be built ASAP. Congestion in that stretch of Hwy 20 is going to get bad. – Bob Peetz via FB



# COMMENTS RECEIVED

Oak Harbor has long needed another station and the increased staffing that will come with it. OHFD has always spent money wisely and frugally and may be expected to continue those practices Oak Harbor has needed this staffing increase for years! The Department has consistently provided wise fiduciary stewardship of the People's money, while delivering superior customer service in OH and to the surrounding area mutual aid partners. – Andy Davidson via FB

I would support both a second station and additional staffing but have concerns with how that staffing will be utilized. The city council presentation left the staffing models open ended, while I understand funding has an impact on how many staff members could be hired, and while I also understand that paid on call members provide a valuable service, it was also mentioned a number of the paid-on-call positions are used as a "stepping-stone" to full time jobs elsewhere. With the recent pay raise for paid on calls, would it not make more sense to hire additional full-time members and not only grow our dept, but also our community as economic development has also been a hot topic recently?? I do believe there is value in the paid-on-call program, but with it being a position to be used as a stepping-stone to full time employment elsewhere, how sustainable is it and will we be creating future staffing issues if we overly rely the program to fulfill service obligations. It seems the initial training, equipment outfitting, ongoing training are all associated costs in addition to regular pay that become tough to recoup if and when those members find full time employment elsewhere. – Anonymous via feedback form



# COMMENTS RECEIVED

Again, it is not that I do not support the levy, I do want to support it, but the staffing is a concern. I do realize the need for staffing, am just not sure I believe the heavy emphasis on paid on call is the best option, especially if it is something that will need to be addressed again in the future. Numerous city council presentations have stated volunteerism is down, and while I do see a benefit to the combination department, I think we may be better off with some additional fulltime staffing to provide more consistent coverage especially with the number of vacant shifts that have been shown at city council meetings.

– Anonymous via feedback form

Oak Harbor Assessed Valuation \$2,526,249,219		Levy %	COST TO AVG PROPERTY OWNERS	
			Annual	Monthly
Statutory Limit	\$8,105,468.58	3.20850	\$1,062.24	\$88.60
<b>2022 Estimated Levy</b>	4,605,452.65	1.82303	<b>604.12</b>	<b>50.34</b>
Levy Balance	3,500,015.93	1.38545	436.66	36.39

**CURRENT TAX**

Projected Levy Lid Lift (50% + 1 vote to pass)		Levy %	Annual	Monthly
Staffing/Equip/Ops	1,097,129	0.43429	143.92	11.99
2 add'l Firefighters	192,235	0.07610	25.22	2.10
3 add'l Firefighters	318,710	0.12616	41.81	3.48
Replace Engine	73,372	0.02904	9.62	0.80
<b>Total Levy Lid Lift</b>	1,681,446	0.66559	<b>220.57</b>	<b>18.38</b>

**INCREASE WITH LEVY**

Excess Levy (60% + 1 vote to pass)		Levy %	Annual	Monthly
Bond for Station (20 years)	584,892	0.23153	76.72	6.39
Loan for Quint (12 years)	126,890	0.05023	16.64	1.39
<b>Total Excess Levy</b>	711,782.63	0.28175	<b>93.37</b>	<b>7.78</b>

**INCREASE WITH BOND**

**+**

Oak Harbor Assessed Valuation \$2,526,249,219		Levy %	COST TO AVG PROPERTY OWNERS	
			Annual	Monthly
Levy (Levy Lid Lift INCLUDED)	\$6,286,898	2.48863	\$824.00	\$68.72
20 Year Excess Levy	711,782	0.28175	93.37	7.78
Total Amount	6,998,681	2.77038	918.06	76.50

**TOTAL WITH BOND AND LEVY**

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?		Levy %	COST TO AVG PROPERTY OWNERS	
			Annual	Monthly
New Levy Amount	\$6,998,681	2.77038	\$918.06	\$76.50
Unchanged Levy Amount	4,605,453	1.82303	604.12	50.34
DIFFERENCE	2,393,228	0.94735	313.94	26.16

**AMOUNT TAX WILL INCREASE**

**STATION BOND**  
**\$585,000**

**STATION OPERATIONS**  
**\$140,200**

**APPARATUS**  
**\$200,263**

**STAFFING**  
**\$1,249,270**

**TOTAL**  
**\$2,174,773**

*\$2,327,156 by 3<sup>rd</sup> year*



# PROPOSED BALLOT LANGUAGE

## LEVY LID LIFT

### FIRE PROTECTION RESPONSE TIME IMPROVEMENTS

The City Council of the City of Oak Harbor adopted Ordinance \_\_\_\_\_ concerning funding for fire protection response time improvements. This proposition would provide funding to improve emergency response times by hiring additional firefighters, acquiring vehicles and equipment, improving firefighter health and safety, and funding the operating costs for a second fire station by increasing the City's regular property tax by \$0.6656/\$1,000 to a maximum rate of \$2.4886/\$1,000 of assessed valuation for collection in 2023. The 2023 levy amount will be used as the basis to calculate subsequent levies, consistent with RCW 84.55. Should this proposition be approved?

Yes  No **50% required to pass**

## GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

### FIRE PROTECTION RESPONSE TIME IMPROVEMENTS

The City Council of the City of Oak Harbor adopted Ordinance \_\_\_\_\_ concerning a proposition for fire protection response time improvements. This proposition authorizes the City to construct and equip a second fire station including the acquisition of a new ladder truck to improve response times throughout the City, and issue up to \$9,200,000 of general obligation bonds maturing within a maximum of 20 years to finance such projects; and levy annual excess property taxes to repay the bonds, as provided in Ordinance \_\_\_\_\_. Should this proposition be approved?

Yes  No **60% required to pass**



# RECOMMENDED ACTION

Move to authorize City staff to proceed with creating a ballot measure for the November 8, 2022, General Election

for a Fire Service Levy to increase the level of service the City of Oak Harbor Fire Department provides to its residents,

including building a second fire station in the southwest area of the City

increasing minimum staffing from three to six firefighters per day,

replacing two 24-year-old pumper engines with a new pumper engine and ladder truck (quint),

and the purchase of necessary protective gear and tools for staffing.