



CITY OF KIRKLAND
City Manager's Office
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3001
www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Joe Sanford, Fire Chief
Andreana Campbell, Management Analyst

Date: March 31, 2020

Subject: COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL REGARDING A POSSIBLE NOVEMBER 2020 FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BALLOT MEASURE.

RECOMMENDATION:

Kirkland City Council:

- Receives the attached report from the Community Safety Advisory Group (ComSAG) providing a summary of recent discussions to explore a potential Fire and Emergency Medical Services ballot measure for the November 3, 2020 general election.
- Reviews and provides feedback on attached Resolution R-5413 accepting the ComSAG report.
- Reviews and provides feedback on updated survey questions from EMC Research.

Unless the Council is prepared to take action at the April 7, 2020 Council meeting, staff will look to the Council for action on Resolution R-5413 at the April 21, 2020 Council meeting.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

COVID-19

The Community Safety Advisory Group process began last October, before the COVID-19 pandemic began. As the outbreak has escalated and the economic impact has increased, the City Manager, City Attorney, Fire Chief, Emergency Manager and Finance Director and other members of the city's leadership team have evaluated whether a fire ballot measure should continue to be pursued in 2020. The staff recommendation is to proceed for several key reasons. The leadership team evaluated whether the recommended elements of the ComSAG would have increased the city's ability to respond to a pandemic like COVID-19. The conclusion was that proposed elements would have significantly improved the city's response. The additional 24 firefighter/EMTs would have buttressed the department's ability to respond to 911 calls when over 30 Kirkland firefighters were in quarantine and isolation. With a new Fire Station 27, the old 27 could have been converted to a quarantine facility and allowed Station 21 to remain online during the pandemic. In addition, the proposed renovations to the existing Station 21, 22, and 26 would provide "hot zone" decontamination rooms separate from living quarters, reducing the chance of spreading the virus after 911 calls with COVID-19 patients. Finally, with the likely budget challenges created by the economic impacts of COVID-19, the city will have no financial ability to add any of these additional public safety investments without a voter approved funding source. For these reasons and more, staff is recommending that Council continues with the ballot measure as all proposed investments would be useful not only in response to this pandemic, but to the City of Kirkland in all emergency scenarios.

ComSAG

Fire and Emergency Medical Services are a critical public safety component of the quality of life for all residents, businesses, and visitors to the City. These services belong to the entire community and it is critical that the entire community understand and support the need for these new investments for any ballot measure to be successful. For that reason, staff recommended establishing a Community Safety Advisory Group (ComSAG) to identify the capital and operating elements to be included in fire/EMS ballot measure and the funding mechanisms to be placed on the ballot.

At the September 17, 2019 Council meeting, Council adopted Resolution R-5386, authorizing the City Manager to engage the following stakeholders, suggested by staff and revised by the Council. The check marks indicate stakeholder groups that appointed a representative to attend all meetings.

Community Safety Advisory Group	
✓ Kiwanis	✓ Chair/Convener - Mayor Penny Sweet
✓ Kirkland Downtown Association	Rotary
Kirkland Chamber of Commerce	✓ Kirkland Safe
✓ Northwest University	✓ Kirkland Indivisible
✓ Lake WA Institute of Tech	✓ Google
✓ Lake WA School District	✓ Realtor
Kirkland Interfaith Network	✓ Builder/Developer
Merrill Gardens	✓ Aegis Living Kirkland
✓ Two Community Members at Large	The Sophia Way
Eastside Business Association	✓ Kirkland Business Roundtable
Evergreen Hospital	Hopelink
✓ Houghton Community Council	Planning Commission
✓ Senior Council	✓ Youth Council
✓ Evergreen Hill	✓ Fill Hill
✓ Highlands	✓ Juanita
Central Houghton	✓ Everest
✓ Lakeview	✓ Market
✓ Moss Bay	✓ N. Rose Hill
✓ S. Rose Hill/Bridle Trails	Norkirk

Under Section 2 of Resolution R-5386 two additional members were appointed by the City Manager to be part of the ComSAG representing Kirkland Emergency Communications Team (KECT), and the Totem Lake neighborhood. With the addition of these two members, the ComSAG was comprised of 30 members overall.

Modeled after the 2012 Park Funding Exploratory Committee (PFEC) that resulted in the successful 2012 voter-approved Park Levy, the ComSAG met for the duration of October 2019 to February 2020, with attendance averaging nearly 80%.

All meeting materials and recorded presentations can be found on the [City's website](#). Below are the meeting dates and curriculum topics.

Date	Curriculum/Timeline
2019	
September 3	Council provided direction on draft resolution and workplan
September 17	Council adopted resolution R-5386
Community Safety Advisory Group Begins	
October 29	Fire/EMS 101 – What do we do and how - facilities, staffing
November 7	Station Renovations for Seismic Resiliency and Firefighter Health and Safety
November 21	Station Tours
December 5	Potential capital and operating ballot measure elements and costs
December 19	Kirkland budget overview/How property tax works, funding options
2020	
January 15-	Evaluate Options 1 – Needed investments and how to pay for them (snowed out)
January 29	Evaluate Options 1 – Needed investments and how to pay for them
February 11	Evaluate Options 2 – Needed investments and how to pay for them
February 26	Final Recommendation – Investments and ballot measure options
City Council Involvement Begins	

COMSAG RECOMMENDATION:

The full recommendation from the ComSAG is included as Attachment A. The recommendation outline includes:

- ComSAG members
- Executive Summary
- Process
- Timing and Size of the Ballot Measure
- ComSAG Final Recommendation
- Next Steps
- Appendices A – G
 - A. Resolution R-5386
 - B. Ballot Measure Element Flashcards
 - C. Fire Department Strategic Plan
 - D. Washington Survey and Rating Bureau Report
 - E. Dec 19, 2020 Top of Mind Exercise
 - F. Survey Results from Ballot Measure Financing

- G. Key Messaging
- H. Additional Group Questions
- I. Survey Results from Ballot Measure Elements Ranking
- J. 2018 Fire Department Annual Report
- K. Staff Photos and Biographies

The Community Safety Advisory Group (ComSAG) is recommending two measures be placed on the November 3, 2020 ballot Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The first measure would be a permanent levy to staff 24 new firefighter/EMTs to improve response times. The second measure would be an excess levy bonded over 30 years to fund new fire station 27 in Totem Lake, and station seismic renovations and firefighter health and safety improvements to station 21 in Forbes Creek, 22 in Houghton, and 26 in N. Rose Hill to improve fire and emergency medical call response times and firefighter safety.

The following recommendation to the Council was made after eight, three-hour long meetings that spanned five months dedicated to educating and deliberating on what investments this potential ballot measure should fund. The ComSAG wanted to note that while there are three categories of what appear to be differing levels of importance, they felt that all elements introduced to them had significant value to the community. The difficult decisions came down to wanting to be aware of potential voter fatigue and overall cost. Below are definitions of the three categories the ComSAG used to place both capital and operating elements:

- **Definitely Include:** Elements ComSAG recommends the City Council should include in the ballot measure.
- **For Council Consideration:** Elements ComSAG feels have a strong value and recommends the City Council review pros and cons and decide whether to include.
- **Not This Ballot Measure:** Elements ComSAG feels are not ready for this measure and/or could be funded outside of this ballot measure.

For each category of recommendations, there is a chart listing capital investments first, followed by operating investments, with overall totals at the bottom. The "Definitely Include" chart shows which year each capital project is estimated to begin, while capital investments in categories outside "Definitely Include" are listed in 2026 dollars. All operating investments in the three charts show yearly costs beginning in 2021. All charts have the tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, and annual property tax impact to a median-valued home. Please note, the costs and calculations presented in the following charts were the cost of the investments at the time they were presented to the ComSAG. Those numbers are subject to change as the City Manager's interdepartmental recommendation review team continues to meet and refine each project. More information is provided in the paragraph below as well as in the section titled "Recommendation Review Team" later in the memorandum.

At the March 17, 2020 Council meeting staff highlighted that after the final ComSAG meeting, the City Manager convened an interdepartmental team consisting of staff from the City Manager's Office, the Finance Department, the Fire Department, the Public Works' Capital Improvement Plan team and TCA, the architectural firm in charge of renovating and constructing the City's fire stations. This team met twice in March to review operating overhead and internal service charges, and the elements and sequencing of all capital construction, and financing. The charts in the "Recommendation Review Team" section depict updated costs as of the team's last meeting on March 27, 2020 with capital projects being sequenced starting in 2021 and finishing in 2025. As this team continues to refine each project, cost, timelines, and tax rates for individual elements may change, ultimately impacting the total cost of the ballot measures.

Staff is also working alongside the City Attorney's Office, Bond Counsel, and outside legal counsel to present draft ordinances to the Council as soon as the Council meetings in June. More detail and next steps are presented at the end of the memorandum.

Below is the list of **capital and operating elements** in the **“Definitely Include”** category:

“Definitely Include” Capital Elements		Project Cost	Annual Cost	Tax Rate / \$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home*	
Juanita Station 27 design, build, and relocate east of I-405		\$23,340,000	\$1,285,079	\$0.04076	\$29.76	
Houghton Station 22 renovation and modernization		\$10,620,000	\$375,503	\$0.01855	\$13.54	
Forbes Creek Station 21 renovation and modernization		\$6,820,000	\$584,728	\$0.01191	\$8.70	
N. Rose Hill Station 26 renovation and modernization		\$9,410,000	\$518,106	\$0.01643	\$12.00	
Purchase of a 2 nd Ladder Truck		\$1,604,407	\$88,337	\$0.00280	\$2.05	
Design and build a Training Building at the new N. Juanita Station 24		\$6,222,853	\$342,625	\$0.01087	\$7.93	
Total Capital		\$58,017,260	\$3,194,378	\$0.10133	\$73.97	
“Definitely Include” Operating Elements		FTEs	Annual Cost**	Annual Cost	Tax Rate / \$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home
Dedicated Aid Car at Houghton Fire Station 22		10	\$1,626,102	\$1,626,102	\$0.05158	\$37.65
Cross staff new N. Juanita Station 24		5	\$813,051	\$813,051	\$0.02579	\$18.83
Additional Firefighter/EMT		5	\$813,051	\$813,051	\$0.02579	\$18.83
12 Hour EMS Transport		4	\$650,441	\$650,441	\$0.02063	\$15.06
Total Operating		24	\$3,902,645	\$3,902,645	\$0.12380	\$90.37
Total	Capital		\$58,017,260	\$3,194,378	\$0.10133	\$73.97
	Operating		\$3,902,645	\$3,902,645	\$0.12380	\$90.37
	Total			\$7,097,023	\$0.22513	\$164.34

*According to the King County Assessor’s Office, the median home value in Kirkland in 2020 is \$730,000.

**First Year Costs Shown

Below is the list of **capital and operating elements** in the **"For Council Consideration"** category:

"For Council Consideration" Capital Elements		Cost in 2026 \$	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home	
Training Props – Option B		\$7,786,076	\$428,694	\$0.01360	\$9.93	
Converting Current Station 27 into a Logistics Center		\$753,000	\$41,459	\$0.00132	\$0.96	
Total Capital		\$8,539,076	\$470,153	\$0.01492	\$10.89	
"For Council Consideration" Operating Elements		FTEs	Cost in 2021 \$	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home
Hire an Additional Fire Inspector		1	\$173,596	\$173,596	\$0.00551	\$4.02
Hire an Additional Battalion Chief Aide		5	\$813,051	\$813,051	\$0.02579	\$18.83
Total Operating		6	\$986,647	\$986,647	\$0.03130	\$22.85
Total	Capital		\$8,539,076	\$470,153	\$0.01360	\$10.89
	Operating		\$986,647	\$986,647	\$0.03130	\$22.85
	Total			\$1,456,800	\$0.04490	\$33.74

Below is the list of **operating elements** in the **"Not this Ballot Measure"** category:

"Not this Ballot Measure" Operating Elements		FTEs	Cost in 2021 \$	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home
Additional Training Officer		1	\$185,723	\$185,723	\$0.00589	\$4.30
Public Information Officer		1	\$125,419	\$125,419	\$0.00398	\$2.90
Total Operating		2	\$311,142	\$311,142	\$0.00987	\$7.20
Total	Capital		-	-	-	-
	Operating		\$311,142	\$311,142	\$0.00987	\$7.20
	Total		\$311,142	\$311,142	\$0.00987	\$7.20

If Council recommends including all elements in every category the proposed measure would be \$0.116 for capital and \$0.165 for staffing, a total of \$0.28, a difference of \$0.056 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The annual estimated property tax increase for a home with a median assessed valuation of \$730,000 would be \$205.28, a difference of \$40.94 when comparing to the elements recommended in the "Definitely Include" category. The ComSAG expressed a preference that any final ballot measure total come in below an annual cost of \$200 for the median assessed valued home.

SURVEY UPDATE:

First, in response to Council inquiries, staff asked whether EMC Research still feels it is valuable to conduct the survey this Spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic. EMC Research does believe a good survey can be conducted and that it will have value as COVID-19 will likely be present in some way throughout the year. How these investments impact the City's COVID-19 responses will likely be an issue that Kirkland voters weigh as they consider voting for or against the ballot measure. EMC recommends proceeding. However, EMC does recommend waiting until late April to conduct the survey.

Since the March 17, 2020 Council meeting, staff worked with EMC Research to incorporate Council's feedback on the survey questions. The latest version of the survey can be seen in Attachment B. Council suggested the survey might be too long in length and potentially redundant. EMC Research noted that they are open to feedback on which portions to remove, but urged staff to consider keeping the progression of questions the same because the survey gauges interest best by asking slightly different variations of the same question at three points: when survey takers have no information, some information, and more information. This can be seen in questions 20-31 in the survey.

Lastly, EMC Research suggested not mentioning that this potential Fire and EMS ballot measure is part of a larger, two-phased public safety process beginning in 2018. EMC felt that most voters will not be aware of this information when they cast their ballot, so making the survey takers aware of it might not provide the City with the most accurate gauge of interest. After Council review on April 7, EMC will prepare the survey for Public Disclosure Commission review and for the field. Staff will also create a web version of the survey that will be posted after the EMC survey is concluded.

RECOMMENDATION REVIEW TEAM:

As mentioned early in the memorandum, this interdepartmental team met twice this month and updated the preliminary ballot measure numbers. Land acquisition costs were added to the Station 27 project and all capital projects were given an estimated construction timeline to allow more accurate costing. The operating costs had internal service charges and overhead incorporated. Please note the team is continuing to meet and refine costs, and staff will keep the Council informed as the overall totals change. Below are the charts with updated numbers as of March 27, 2020.

Below is the updated list of **capital and operating elements** in the **"Definitely Include"** category:

"Definitely Include" Sequenced Updated Capital Elements		Project Cost	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home*	
Juanita Station 27 design, build, and relocate east of I-405 in 2022		\$25,900,000	\$1,426,000	\$0.04576	\$33.40	
Houghton Station 22 renovation and modernization in 2022		\$9,100,000	\$500,000	\$0.01604	\$11.71	
Forbes Creek Station 21 renovation and modernization in 2024		\$6,300,000	\$350,000	\$0.01113	\$8.13	
N. Rose Hill Station 26 renovation and modernization in 2023		\$8,360,000	\$460,000	\$0.01477	\$10.78	
Purchase of a 2 nd Ladder Truck in 2021		\$1,600,000	\$88,000	\$0.00280	\$2.07	
Design and build a Training Building at the new N. Juanita Station 24 in 2025		\$8,725,000	\$480,000	\$0.01541	\$11.25	
Total Capital		\$59,985,000	\$3,300,000	\$0.10595	\$77.34	
"Definitely Include" Updated Operating Elements		FTEs	Annual Cost**	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home
Dedicated Aid Car at Houghton Fire Station 22		10	\$1,690,000	\$1,690,000	\$0.05430	\$39.19
Cross staff new N. Juanita Station 24		5	\$846,000	\$846,000	\$0.02715	\$19.60
Additional Firefighter/EMT		5	\$846,000	\$846,000	\$0.02715	\$19.60
12 Hour EMS Transport		4	\$677,000	\$677,000	\$0.02172	\$15.68
Ongoing Costs			\$352,000	\$352,000	\$0.01128	\$8.15
Total Operating		24	\$4,411,000	\$4,411,000	\$0.14162	\$102.22
Total	Capital		\$59,985,000	\$3,300,000	\$0.10595	\$77.34
	Operating		\$4,411,000	\$4,411,000	\$0.14162	\$102.22
	Total			\$7,711,000	\$0.24757	\$179.56

*According to the King County Assessor's Office, the median home value in Kirkland in 2020 is \$730,000.

**First year costs shown

Below is the updated list of **capital and operating elements** in the **"For Council Consideration"** category:

"For Council Consideration" Updated Capital Elements		Cost in 2026 \$	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home	
Training Props – Option B in 2026		\$7,860,000	\$429,000	\$0.01367	\$10.04	
Converting Current Station 27 into a Logistics Center in 2026		\$753,000	\$41,500	\$0.00133	\$0.97	
Total Capital		\$8,615,000	\$470,500	\$0.01500	\$11.01	
"For Council Consideration" Updated Operating Elements		FTEs	Annual Cost	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home
Hire an Additional Fire Inspector		1	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$0.00578	\$4.17
Hire an Additional Battalion Chief Aide		5	\$846,000	\$846,000	\$0.02751	\$19.60
Ongoing Costs			\$88,000	\$88,000	\$0.00282	\$2.03
Total Operating		6	\$1,114,000	\$1,026,000	\$0.03611	\$25.80
Total	Capital		\$8,615,000	\$470,500	\$0.01500	\$11.01
	Operating		\$1,114,000	\$1,114,000	\$0.03611	\$25.80
	Total			\$1,584,500	\$0.05111	\$36.81

Below is the updated list of **operating elements** in the “**Not this Ballot Measure**” category:

“Not this Ballot Measure” Updated Operating Elements		FTEs	Annual Cost	Annual Cost	Tax Rate /\$1,000AV	Annual Impact to Median-Valued Home
Additional Training Officer		1	\$194,000	\$194,000	\$0.00617	\$4.45
Public Information Officer		1	\$132,000	\$132,000	\$0.00424	\$3.06
Ongoing Costs			\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0.00096	\$0.69
Total Operating		2	\$356,000	\$356,000	\$0.01137	\$8.20
Total	Capital		-	-	-	-
	Operating		\$356,000	\$356,000	\$0.01137	\$8.20
	Total		\$356,000	\$356,000	\$0.01137	\$8.20

RESOLUTION R-5413 ELEMENTS

Attached to this memorandum is Resolution R-5413. If Council adopts resolution R-5413, Council is accepting the Community Safety Advisory Committee report, and directing the City Manager to return to the Council with two ballot measure ordinances. One ordinance authorizing a permanent levy be placed on the ballot to fund operating investments, and a second ordinance authorizing a 30-year bond be placed on the ballot to fund capital investments. These two ballot measure ordinances would be brought back to the Council for review after the survey results are compiled, and no later than the second Council meeting in July.

NEXT STEPS:

At the March 17, 2020 meeting, Council received a preliminary update on the ComSAG’s recommendation, and is receiving the full report at the April 7, 2020 meeting along with updated survey questions incorporating Council’s feedback. At the April 21, 2020 Council meeting, staff will be seeking action from the Council to accept the ComSAG report by adopting Resolution R-5413.

Before EMC Research conducts the survey in late April or early May, the survey will be evaluated by the Public Disclosure Commission. Staff will bring results back to the Council in June after the results are compiled. The July 21st meeting marks the last day for Council to take final action to place these measures on the ballot. A timeline is outlined below with deadlines and an accelerated timeline if Council would like to act faster.

Election Calendar	Accelerated Calendar	Item
March 17		Staff Presented Preliminary Update on ComSAG Recommendation to Council
April 7		Staff to present Full ComSAG Recommendation to Council
April 21		Council to Adopt Resolution R-5413 Accepting Full ComSAG Report
April/May		EMC Research to Conduct Community Survey
May/June		Staff to Bring Survey Responses to Council
July 7 or 21	June 2 or 16	Ballot Measure Public Hearing
July 7	June 6	Pro/Con Committee Appointments Authorized
July 21	June 16	Pro/Con Committee Appointments Confirmed
July 21	June 16	Last Council Meeting to Approve Ballot Measure Ordinance
August 4		Ballot Measure Resolution due to King County
August 7		Explanatory Statement Due
August 11		Pro/Con Statements Due
November 3		General Election