

# 2019 MILL LEVY PROPOSAL | FACT SHEET

## Why is Louisville Fire Protection District considering placing a mill levy measure on the November 5, 2019 ballot?

Louisville Fire Protection District (LFPD) seeks to improve response times and enhance emergency services by addressing its highest priority staffing, equipment and apparatus needs.

## What is LFPD's average response time and how does that compare to the National Fire Protection Association's benchmark?

The Fire District's average response time is six minutes, which is two minutes slower than the NFPA's benchmark of four minutes. Increasing LFPD's response rate by one to two minutes will save lives and property.

## How would the proceeds of the proposed mill levy be used?

The voter-approved mill levy would be used to address the following needs:

- A second, full-time engine crew
- One EMS Captain to oversee the EMS Division
- Personnel needed to provide community paramedicine services
- Improved recruitment and retention of firefighters and paramedics
- Scheduled replacement of emergency equipment and apparatus to maintain reliability and protect first responders

## How many full-time engine crews does LFPD currently have in place for each shift?

The Fire District currently has three fire stations, but only one full-time engine crew.

## Why is having only one full-time engine crew a problem?

When there are overlapping emergency calls, or when the LFPD's single crew is assisting with a call in a neighboring community, having only one crew is a significant challenge. In these situations, the Fire District must then rely on neighboring fire departments for assistance, which can result in a slower response time.

## Is the Fire District's call volume on the rise?

LFPD's emergency call volume has continued to increase. In just the past 10 years, the Fire District's call volume has increased 160 percent.

## Are emergency calls becoming more complex?

Yes, about 63 percent of the Fire District's 3,592 calls last year involved the need for emergency medical and/or rescue services.

## Why are emergency calls on the rise?

The increase in emergency calls is the result of Louisville's growing—and aging—population. LFPD currently serves more than 20,300 residents, 22 percent of whom are over 60 years old. The Fire District is also responsible for protecting more than 8,500 homes and apartments and 460 commercial buildings, including assisted living complexes.

## How many first responders are currently on duty each shift?

There are typically eight career first responders on duty each shift. They are located at Station 1 and Station 2.

## Are additional medic units needed?

No, LFPD currently has two medic units in place. Where the Fire District is most vulnerable is the lack of a second engine crew that can address structure fires, automobile accidents (extrications), other non-medical calls as well as emergency medical calls.

## In addition to response time and the complexity of emergency calls, what other major challenge does the LFPD face?

Other fire districts across the Front Range continue to aggressively recruit LFPD's seasoned first responders. Their success in doing so is driven, in part, by the Fire District's salary schedule that falls short of other career fire departments. While we are fortunate to have a strong volunteer program from which we can recruit full-time personnel, losing experienced firefighters and paramedics can have a direct impact on the quality of our service delivery.

## What is community paramedicine and why is this part of the Fire District's funding proposal?

LFPD seeks to better serve Louisville's growing senior population. This can be accomplished by providing community paramedicine services in partnership with our local hospital. This service offering involves specially trained LFPD paramedics working with senior patients to make sure they take their medications and/or that their wounds are properly taken care of after release from the hospital. This added service, which would be phased in over multiple years, would not only benefit our seniors but would also help to reduce the stress that is currently placed on our local hospital.



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## What are the types of emergency equipment and apparatus that need to be periodically replaced?

The proposed mill levy would help to fund the replacement of LFPD's 26-year-old ladder truck that was refurbished 9 years ago, 20-year-old fire engine that was refurbished 10 years ago and an aging medic unit. In the coming years, the District will also need to replace outdated, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), backup generator and heart monitors.

## When was the last time LFPD sought voter approval of a mill levy increase?

It's been 13 years since the LFPD placed a mill levy proposal on the ballot. Since then, the Fire District has worked hard to be frugal with your tax dollars and to live within our means.

## Does the Fire District have outstanding debt?

No.

## How were the recent station improvements funded?

These improvements were paid for with monies saved over multiple years.

## Does the Fire District receive funding from the City of Louisville?

The LFPD receives no funding from the City.

## Does growth pay for itself?

An increase in LFPD's total assessed valuation has not been a cure-all. Increasing fuel, utility, equipment replacement and other costs—coupled with a reduction in the residential assessment rate (RAR)—has restricted our ability to address our highest priority staffing needs. The reduction in the RAR by more than 9 percent in recent years has helped to temper property tax increases for many homeowners but has lowered the District's revenues by more than \$219,000 annually.

## How does LFPD's current mill levy compare to its peer districts across the Front Range?

LFPD has the lowest tax rate at 6.686 mills. In fact, many of LFPD's peer districts have two to three times the tax levy. This includes Rocky Mountain Fire (20.445), Mountain View FPD (16.247), Boulder Rural FPD (15.747), Berthoud FPD (13.816), among others.

## What is the estimated tax impact of the funding proposal?

The LFPD is proposing a mill levy increase of 3.9 mills, which would put LFPD more in line with its peer districts in Boulder County and across the Front Range. The new mill levy would result in an estimated tax impact of \$2.32 per month, or about \$27.89 per year, per \$100,000 of a home's actual value as determined by the County Assessor. For example, the tax impact for a \$500,000 home would be about \$139 per year.

## Is there tax relief for seniors?

The tax impact of the proposed mill levy would be lower for qualified residents who apply for the Senior Property Tax Exemption.

## How can district residents provide input on the funding proposal?

The LFPD will be gathering public input through a public opinion survey mailed to registered voter households districtwide. The Fire District will also be hosting multiple community information meetings, with dates, times and locations posted on our website: [www.louisvillefire.com](http://www.louisvillefire.com).

## What if residents have additional questions regarding the funding proposal?

If you have additional questions regarding LFPD's funding proposal, please contact John Willson at (303) 666-6595, Ext. 201 or [jwillson@louisvillefire.com](mailto:jwillson@louisvillefire.com).

