



AB 6307:

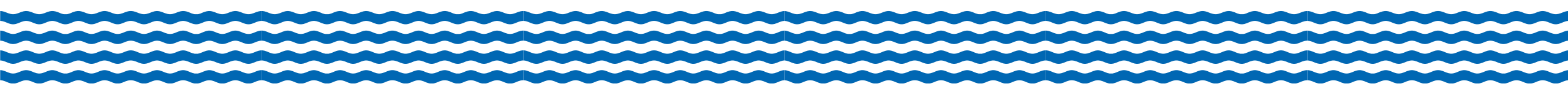
Interlocal Agreement with
Eastside Fire & Rescue for
Regional Fire and Emergency
Medical Services

July 5, 2023



Agenda

- Background
- Regionalization
- City Manager's Recommendation
- Draft Interlocal Agreement with Eastside Fire & Rescue

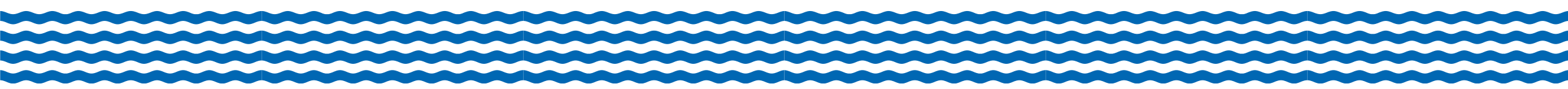


Background



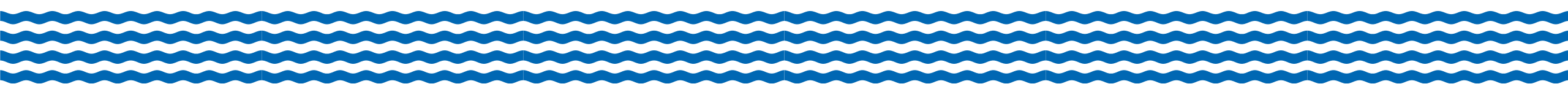
Authorization to Seek Proposals

- On April 4, 2023, the City Council authorized the City Manager to seek proposals from the **City of Bellevue** and **Eastside Fire & Rescue** to provide fire and emergency services on Mercer Island.
- Timely responses were received from both agencies.



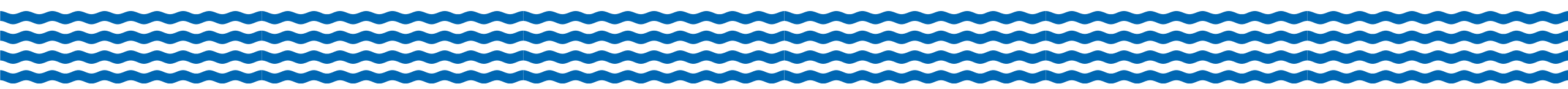
City Council Ad-Hoc Committee

- On May 2, 2023, the City Council created the Regional Fire Service Proposal Review Ad-Hoc Committee to assist the City Manager with review and evaluation of the regional fire service proposals.
- The City Manager, City Staff, and the Ad Hoc Committee met several times in May to review and evaluate the proposals in preparation for a presentation and update to the City Council.



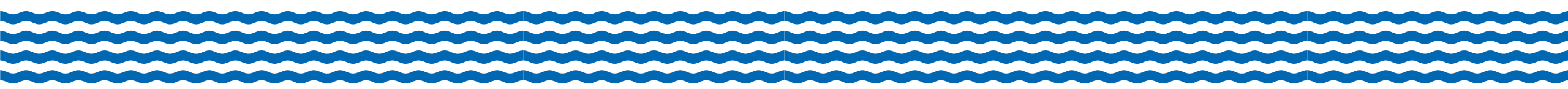
Initial Overview and Discussion

- On June 6, 2023, the staff presented an initial overview and analysis of the regional fire services proposals received from the City of Bellevue and Eastside Fire & Rescue, which included the initial financial analysis.



Direction to Begin Negotiations

- On June 20, 2023, the City Council held an Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining and potential litigation on matters related to the adoption of a regional fire model.
- After the Executive Session concluded the City Council returned to the open portion of the City Council meeting and passed a motion directing the City Manager to begin negotiating an agreement with Eastside Fire & Rescue.
- The City Council also directed the City Manager to return to the City Council with an agenda bill presenting the City Manager's recommendation.

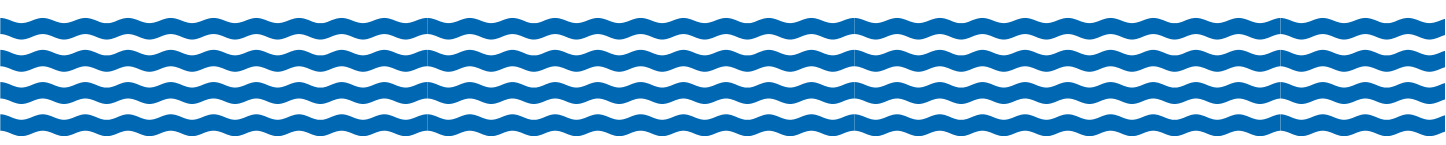
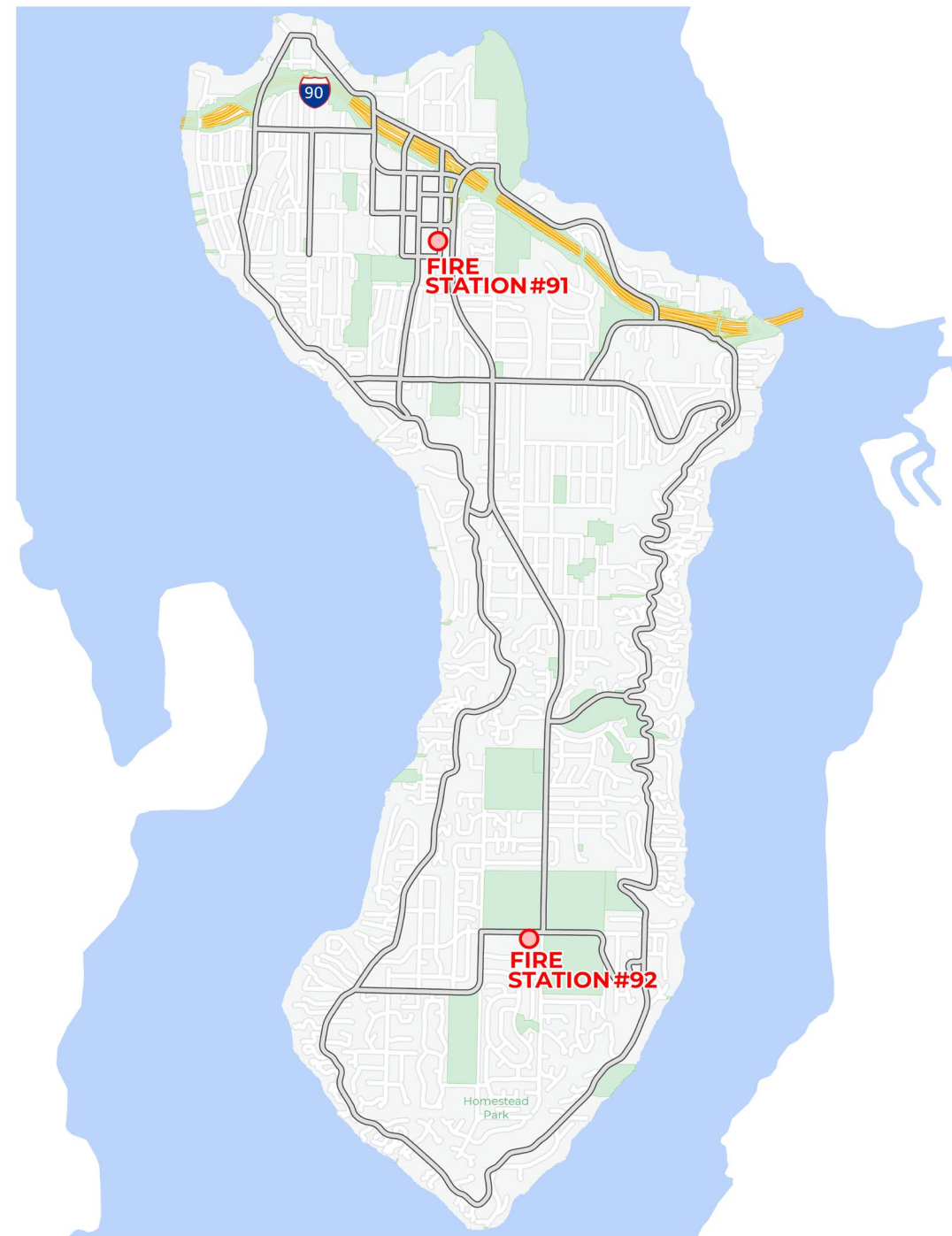


Regionalization



Fire and EMS Service Today

- Mercer Island Fire Department (MIFD) operates two fire stations (Station 91 and 92).
- **Under a regional fire services model, both fire stations would remain open and operational and provide services that meet or exceed today's service-level standards.**



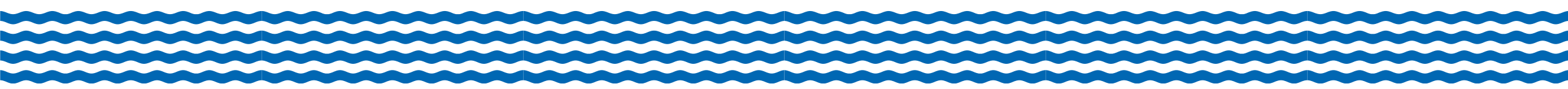
Fire and EMS Service Today

- MIFD staffs 29 firefighters. This includes firefighters, lieutenants, battalion chiefs, and a fire marshal.
- 7 staff members on duty at one time.
 - 1 Battalion Chief in charge of Station 91 and 92
 - 1 Lieutenant at each station
 - 2 Firefighters at each station
- One full-time Fire Marshal
- Interim Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief provided by Eastside Fire & Rescue.
- Part-time Fire Administrative Assistant



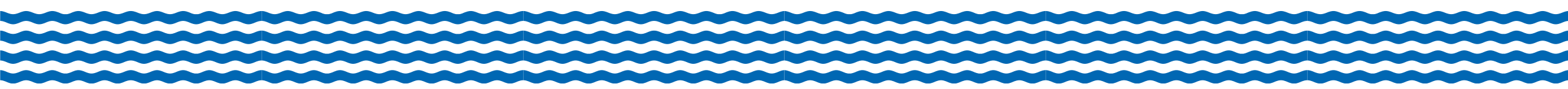
Why regionalize?

- Firefighting today is much different than even a few decades ago.
- Fire departments were originally created to specifically address fire emergencies, and now cover emergency medical services, hazmat services, special rescue, mobile integrated health, and more.
- A regional collaboration provides for **enhanced fire and emergency medical services, introducing specialty services not available through a smaller Department.**
- Adopting a regional fire services model ensures the response to all these needs **is cohesive, efficient, and cost effective.**



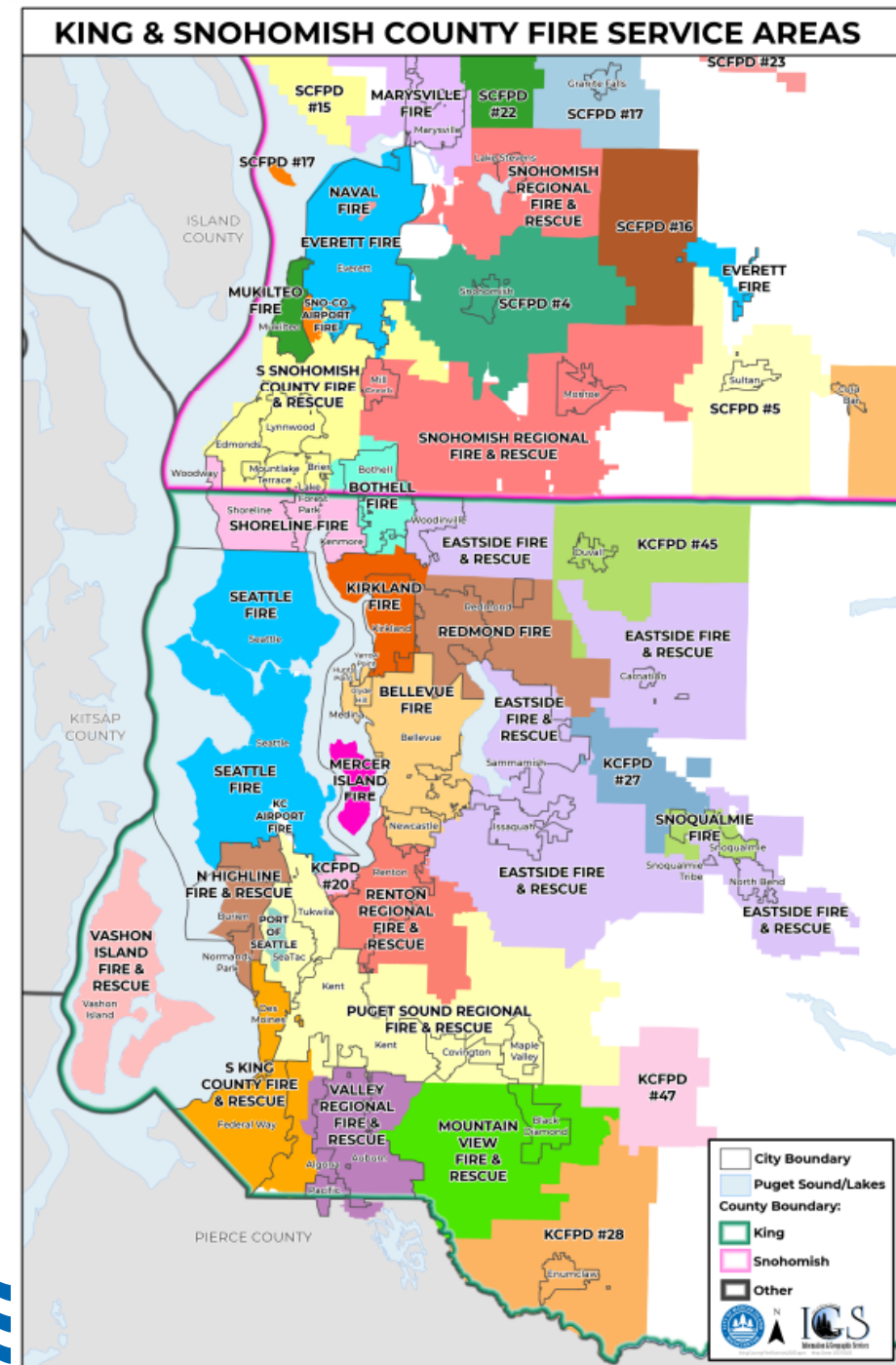
Trend of Regionalization in Fire Service

- Mercer Island is **one of the few remaining stand-alone fire agencies** in the region.
- Most surrounding communities have moved to a regional services model along the lines of what is being evaluated for Mercer Island.
- Edmonds, Woodinville, Lynnwood, Tukwila, and Northshore have recently made this change, with other communities such as Duvall in a similar phase of decision-making on their future
- See regional fire service map next slide.



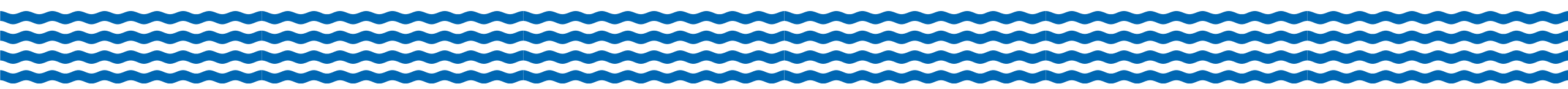
Regional Fire Service Map

- Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue:
Snohomish Fire District #7 and Monroe Fire merged in 2016, merged again with Lake Stevens Fire in 2020.
- Puget Sound Regional Fire & Rescue: Since 2014, SeaTac and Maple Valley joined Puget Sound Fire, which already provided fire services for Kent and Covington. Tukwila joined in 2023.
- South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue:
Established in 2017, South County Fire now includes Lynnwood, Edmonds, Mountlake Terrace, Brier, and surrounding unincorporated Snohomish county. Mill Creek joined in 2022.

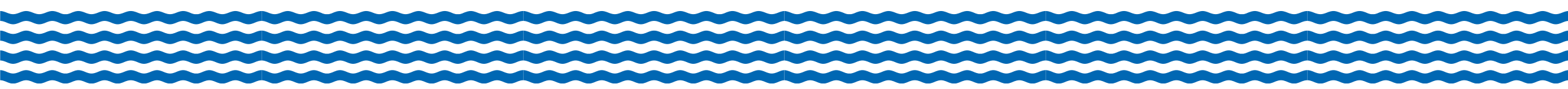


Regional Fire Services Model - Leadership

- **Leadership from the regional fire agency will oversee fire services** on Mercer Island with the respective Fire Chief reporting directly to the City Manager.
- Eastside Fire & Rescue currently provides Fire Department Leadership Services for Mercer Island.
 - This **includes an interim Fire Chief**, who currently serves the City about 10 to 15 hours a week and a **full-time interim Deputy Fire Chief**.
- Having interim fire leadership is not a sustainable solution long-term and was never intended to be permanent.
- Permanence of fire leadership provides stability for the workforce, encourages long-term planning, strategic leadership, and goal setting.

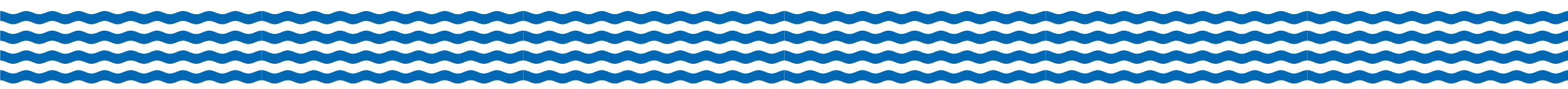


Regional Fire Services Model - Staffing

- Mercer Island fire personnel would transition to the regional fire agency.
 - The internal services needed to support the Fire Department – Human Resources, IT, Finance, for example - will also be largely provided by the regional fire agency.
 - **The City has every intention to secure employment opportunities for all Fire Department personnel.**
 - Impacts of the transition on City fire personnel are being bargained with Mercer Island IAFF Local 1762.
 - A few positions within the department will shift because of the transition to a regional fire services model, but these changes will not have an impact on fire department operations.
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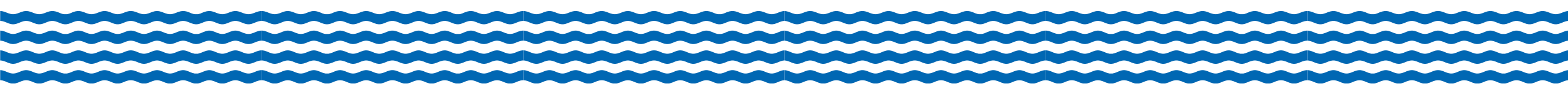
Regional Fire Service Model – Service Levels

- The **City will establish service levels** under a regional services model and ensure the delivery of fire services continues to **meet or exceed current service levels**.
- The Fire Department will **continue responding to emergencies**, conducting fire inspections, and inviting your child to sit in a fire truck at events.
- **Fire Stations 91 and 92 will remain open and staffed**, meeting or exceeding current services levels.



Mutual Aid and Regional Coordination

- All fire departments assist other local departments with emergency response through mutual aid agreements.
- Mercer Island Fire Department operates under a **Regional Coordination Framework** through King County which brings together surrounding agencies to **share personnel, equipment, and information** during an emergency response.
- For example, Mercer Island does not have a ladder truck, so regional fire agencies provide this service to Mercer Island when needed.
- Mercer Island also provides support to nearby agencies.
- Mercer Island firefighters also train with surrounding agencies to ensure cohesion.

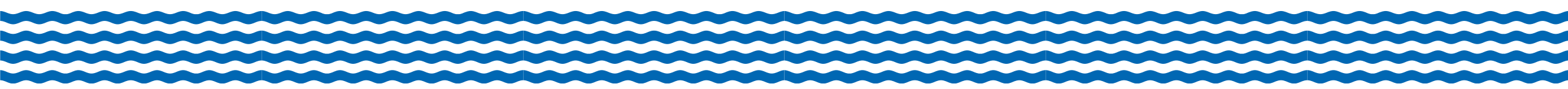


City Manager's Recommendation



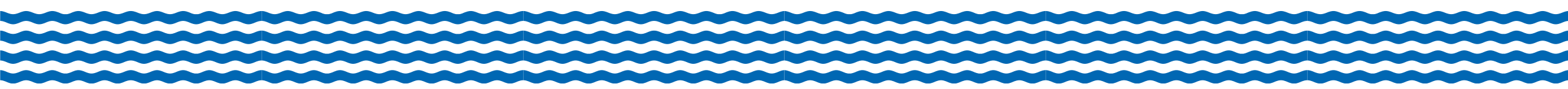
City Manager's Recommendation

- Eastside Fire & Rescue operates as a governmental non-profit that focuses only on providing fire and emergency response services.
- They are a consortium of many similar sized cities and towns with a shared governance model and commitment to equitable partnership
- The Eastside Fire & Rescue board includes representatives from member cities and regional fire districts, providing a diverse array of stakeholders who hold each other accountable and provide input from differing perspectives.



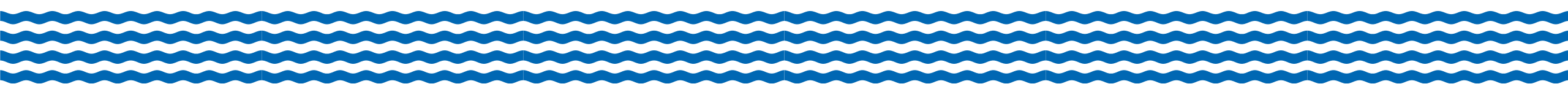
Dedicated and Experienced Fire Agency

- Eastside Fire & Rescue has proven the effectiveness of their model concerning public safety, resource sharing, and shared governance.
- Mercer Island has already successfully partnered with Eastside for interim fire leadership and apparatus repair and maintenance for nearly three years.



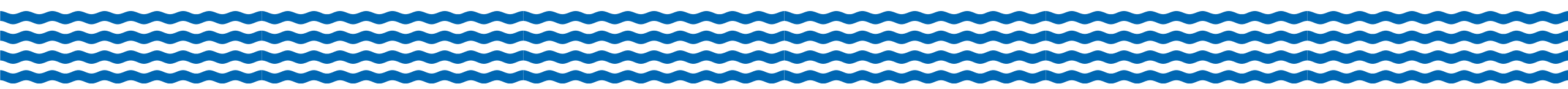
Increased Opportunity for Mercer Island Firefighters

- The Eastside staffing model provides 7 on-island fire service staff members, matching what is existing today.
- This includes the preservation of an on-island stationed Battalion Chief.
- The staffing model of Eastside also provides 11 promotional opportunities for Mercer Island firefighters.



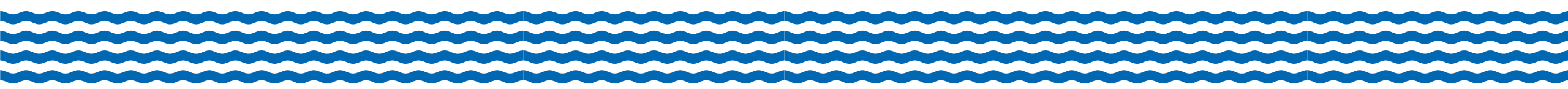
Increased Opportunity for Mercer Island Firefighters

- Mercer Island is in a competitive job market for employees, especially fire service employees.
- The City has experienced attrition in its fire service due to competing fire agencies who have higher pay, benefits, and career opportunities.
- This increase in pay and opportunities strengthens the ability to attract and retain talented employees, stabilizing fire services on Mercer Island.



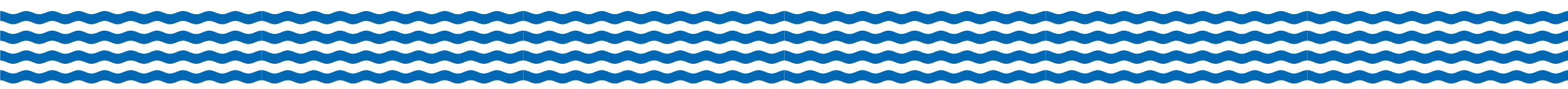
Increased Opportunity for Mercer Island Firefighters

- Eastside Fire & Rescue provides the highest level of total compensation of the three options considered, while continuing to provide cost efficiencies and savings to the City.
- They have demonstrated an ability to negotiate high quality and equitable collective bargaining agreements in a regular cadence, and typically in multi-year agreements.
- This provides more certainty for both employees and management.



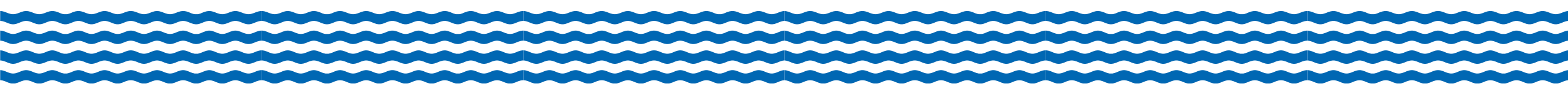
Cost Savings and Efficiencies

- Initial staff analysis suggests an estimated savings of \$260,000 in 2024 through a regional model with Eastside compared to estimated costs with an independent stand-alone Mercer Island fire department.
- Savings are realized through:
 - Shared leadership and administrative overhead
 - Economies of scale regarding management of fire apparatus and equipment
 - More efficient shift scheduling.



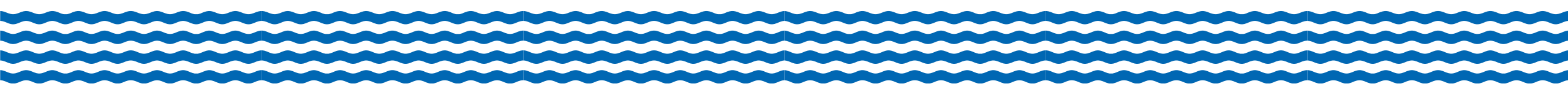
Cost Savings and Efficiencies

- Additional workload reductions will be realized for internal staff teams at Mercer Island that support various Fire Department operations as many of these duties will transfer to Eastside Fire & Rescue.
- We've identified potential cost savings in legal services and a reduction in some functions of payroll and benefits management. Other internal services that will see a workload reduction on fire-related issues include finance, human resources, customer service, legal, IT, GIS, fleet, and facilities.
- Potential for other savings, such as insurance premiums, as transition work continues.



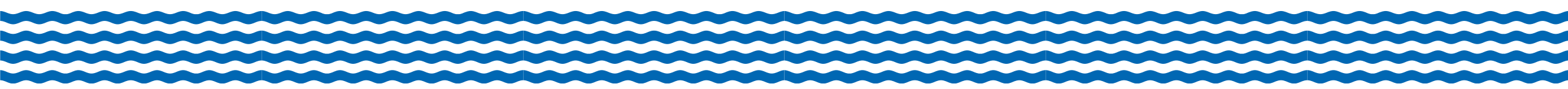
Training Consortium

- Eastside Fire is one of 15 King County Fire agencies (there are 21 including Seattle) that train under the South King County Training Consortium (SKCTC).
- Being part of this consortium provides for top tier consistent training, as all 15 agencies receive the exact same training by a robust professional full-time training staff.
- SKCTC provides an opportunity for Mercer Island firefighters to receive training on a larger array of equipment and across more specialties, including working alongside the many specialty technicians across the Eastside and SKCTC network.
- Mercer Island is currently a part of East Metro Training Group.



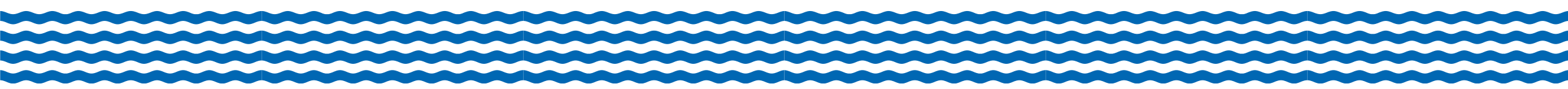
Training Consortium

- New hires to firefighting go through an academy training process prior to beginning their work in the field.
- Currently, the City of Mercer Island is paying about \$18,000 per recruit for training, which is in addition to the base fees for training. SKCTC has dedicated training officers, meaning this \$18,000 per recruit cost would no longer apply



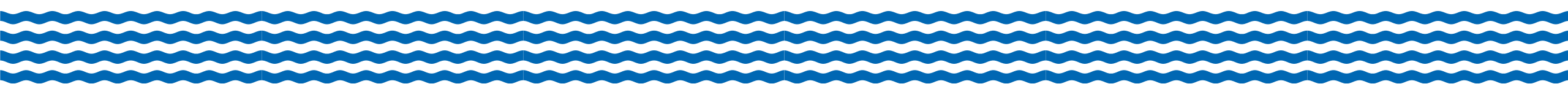
Technical and Specialized Rescue

- Eastside Fire & Rescue will increase access to training and resources for technical and specialized rescue response capabilities for firefighters serving on Mercer Island.
- Eastside's membership with the Eastside Hazardous Materials Consortium (HazMat) provides new training for Island firefighters and opportunity to train Eastside HazMat teams on specific contexts of emergency response on Mercer Island.
- Eastside is the leader of Wildland (forest fire fighting) response in Western Washington.



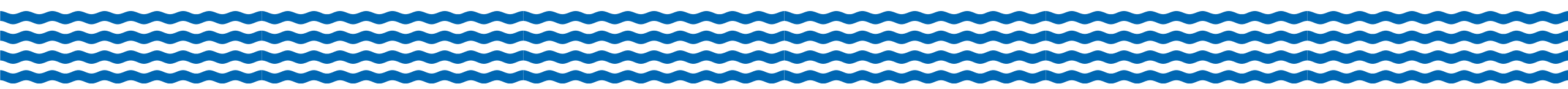
Other Programs and Services

- Continuity of community programs including school visits, special events such as Summer Celebration, and providing standby Aid Car for Mercer Island High School football games
- Mobile Integrated Health program (MIH) will also continue to be led by the City's Youth and Family Services Department with support from firefighters serving Mercer Island.



IAFF Local 1762

- The City of Mercer Island firefighters are organized under the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 1762.
- The City Administration has met with IAFF Local 1762 leadership members over the past two months to bargain the impacts of fire employees transitioning to another agency.
- The City and IAFF Local 1762 conversations have been productive and positive, but agreement on the terms of impact bargaining have not concluded. The City Administration will continue to work in good faith to resolve the outstanding issues.



Overview of Draft Interlocal Agreement with Eastside Fire & Rescue



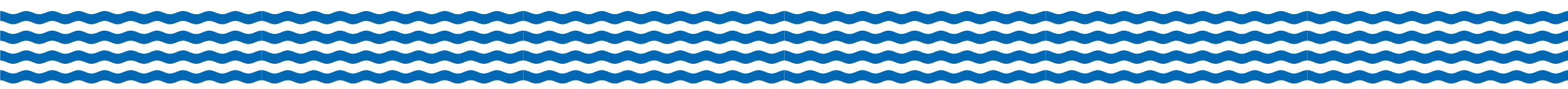
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

FIRE HEADQUARTERS-STATION 91



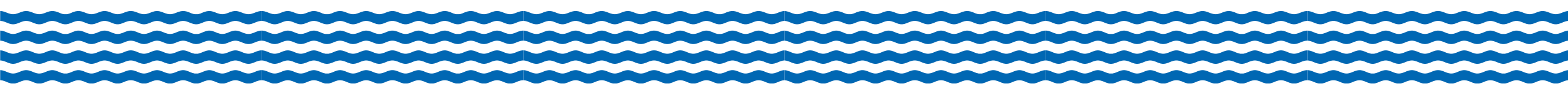
Overview of Eastside Agreement

- The relationship between the City of Mercer Island and Eastside Fire & Rescue for regional fire services will be governed by an interlocal agreement (ILA).
- The ILA will have a term of 10-years with an implementation date of January 1, 2024.



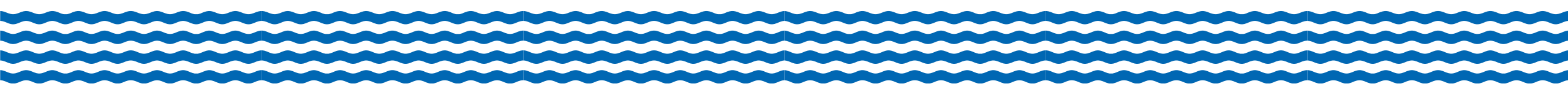
Overview of Eastside Agreement

- This ILA establishes the services levels and types of services to be provided by Eastside Fire and Rescue, which meets or exceed the service currently provided by the Mercer Island Fire Department.
- The ILA outlines the:
 - Annual fees
 - Timing of payment of one-time transition costs and annual ongoing costs,
 - Methodology for annual adjustment to charges.
 - Ownership, maintenance, and replacement of apparatus, vehicles, equipment, and facilities.



Overview of Eastside Agreement

- As a reminder, on June 6, 2023, staff presented an initial overview and financial analysis of the regional fire services proposals to the City Council (see AB 6283).
- The ILA includes an estimated 2024 cost of \$8,018,746 and an estimated one-time transition cost of \$1,241,406.

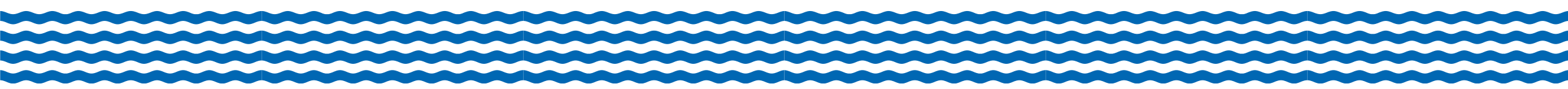


Next Steps



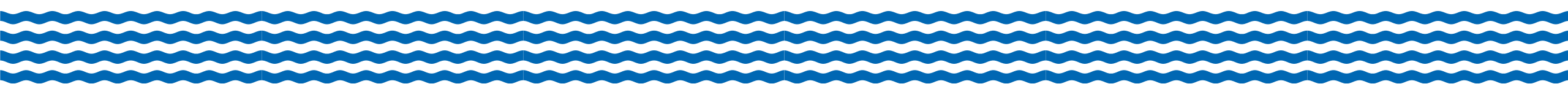
Next Steps

- Upon approval of Resolution No. 1645 by the Mercer Island City Council, the Eastside Fire & Rescue Board will review and consider the Interlocal Agreement at their next board meeting.
- Upon approval by both parties, Mercer Island and Eastside will form a staff transition team to work collaboratively prior to the commencement date to ensure a successful transition.



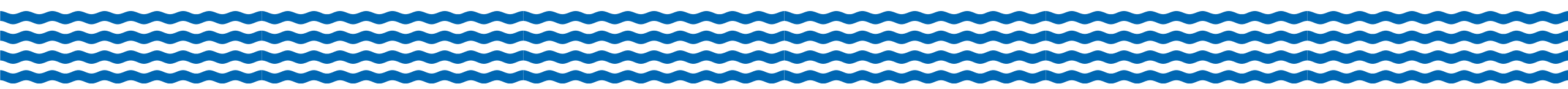
Next Steps

- The exact final costs of the one-time transition payments will not be known until the end of the year, as they are primarily based on vacation and sick leave balances.
- A final reconciliation will occur at the end of the year and inform the payment plan for accrued liability.



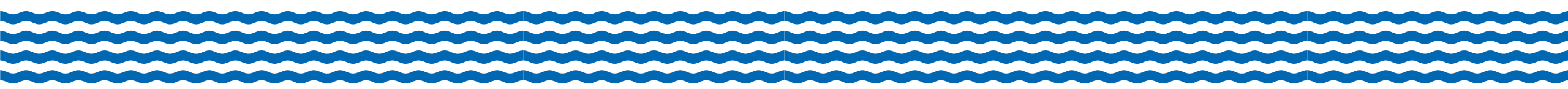
Next Steps

- Both the City and Eastside also acknowledge that as details emerge during this transition period, there may be a need for additional agreements to address matters not sufficiently covered in the ILA.
- The City Council will be regularly updated on this process.



Acknowledgement

- The City of Mercer Island would like to thank both the City of Bellevue and Eastside Fire & Rescue for submitting excellent and thorough proposals and for continually being available for clarification and follow-up from City Staff during the review process.
- The City thanks both entities for the strong working relationships and is committed to maintaining those relationships into the future.



Recommended Action

- Adopt Resolution No. 1645 approving the Interlocal Agreement with Eastside Fire & Rescue.

