



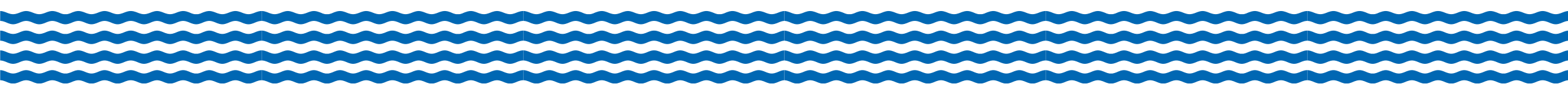
AB 6249: Seeking Proposals for Consideration of Adoption of a Regional Fire Services Model

April 4, 2023



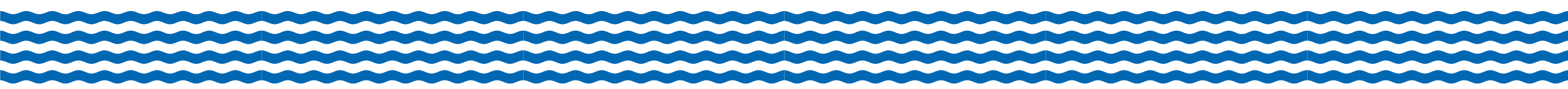
Overview

- Summary of City Manager's Proposal
- Fire Services on Mercer Island
- Overview of Regional Fire Service
- Adopting a Regional Fire Services Model
- Process for Selecting a Regional Fire Service Agency
- Frequently Asked Questions & Answers



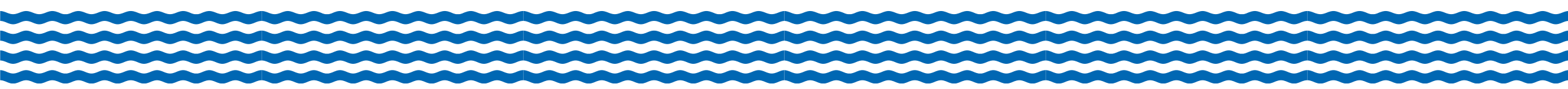
Summary of City Manager Proposal

- Recommending that the City of Mercer Island formally explore adoption of a regional fire services model.
- In this scenario, **Mercer Island would be served by a larger, regional fire agency** instead of the City operating its own, smaller department.
- City staff have developed a request for proposals (RFP) outlining the City's requirements for a regional fire service model (Exhibit 1).
- With Council approval, the City Manager will seek proposals from the **City of Bellevue** and **Eastside Fire & Rescue** to provide fire and emergency services on Mercer Island.
- Requesting proposals does not commit the City to an outcome.



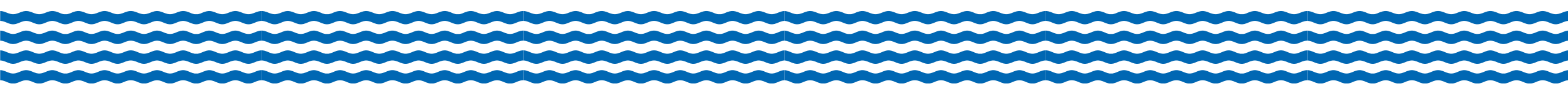
Safety is the Top Priority

- The safety of the Mercer Island community remains the City's number one priority, and no changes would be made that will adversely affect safety.
- The City of Mercer Island will continue to control service levels for fire services provided on Mercer Island.
- Our stations will remain open and staffed, meeting or exceeding current services levels.



Our Staff Team is a Priority

- Since its inception, the City's fire department has done a remarkable job keeping the Mercer Island community safe.
- The City has every intention to secure employment opportunities for all Fire Department personnel.
- Impacts of the transition to a regional fire services model will be bargained with Mercer Island IAFF Local 1762.



Fire and Emergency Services Today



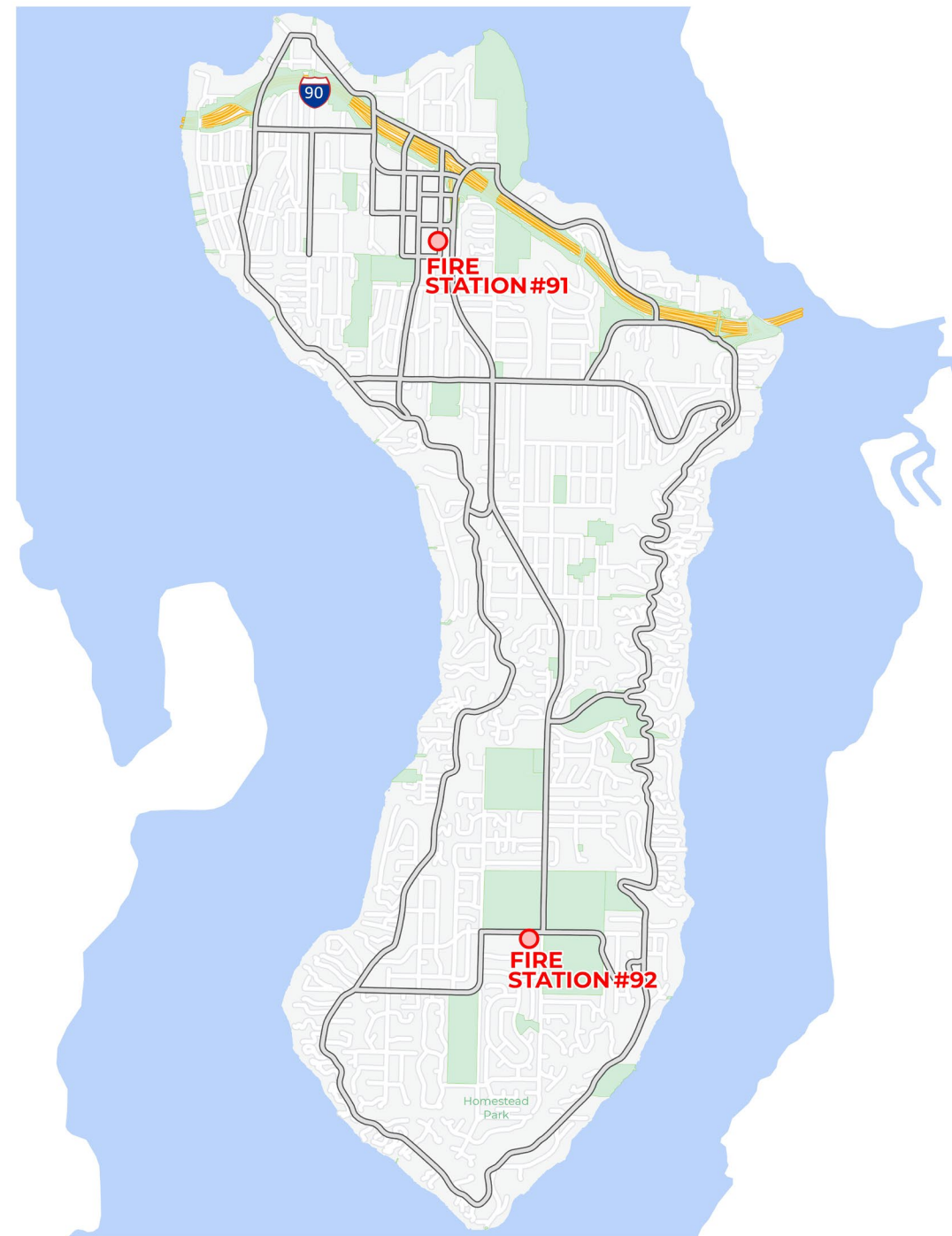
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

FIRE HEADQUARTERS-STATION 91



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.



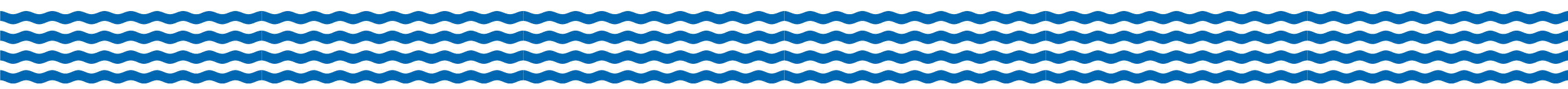
Fire and EMS Service Today

- 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

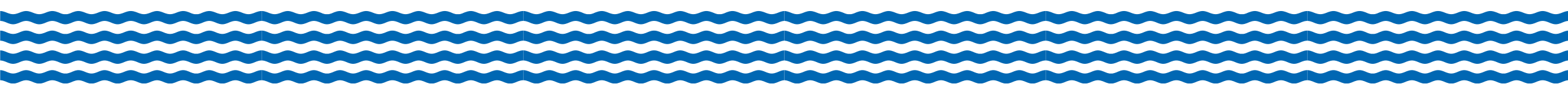
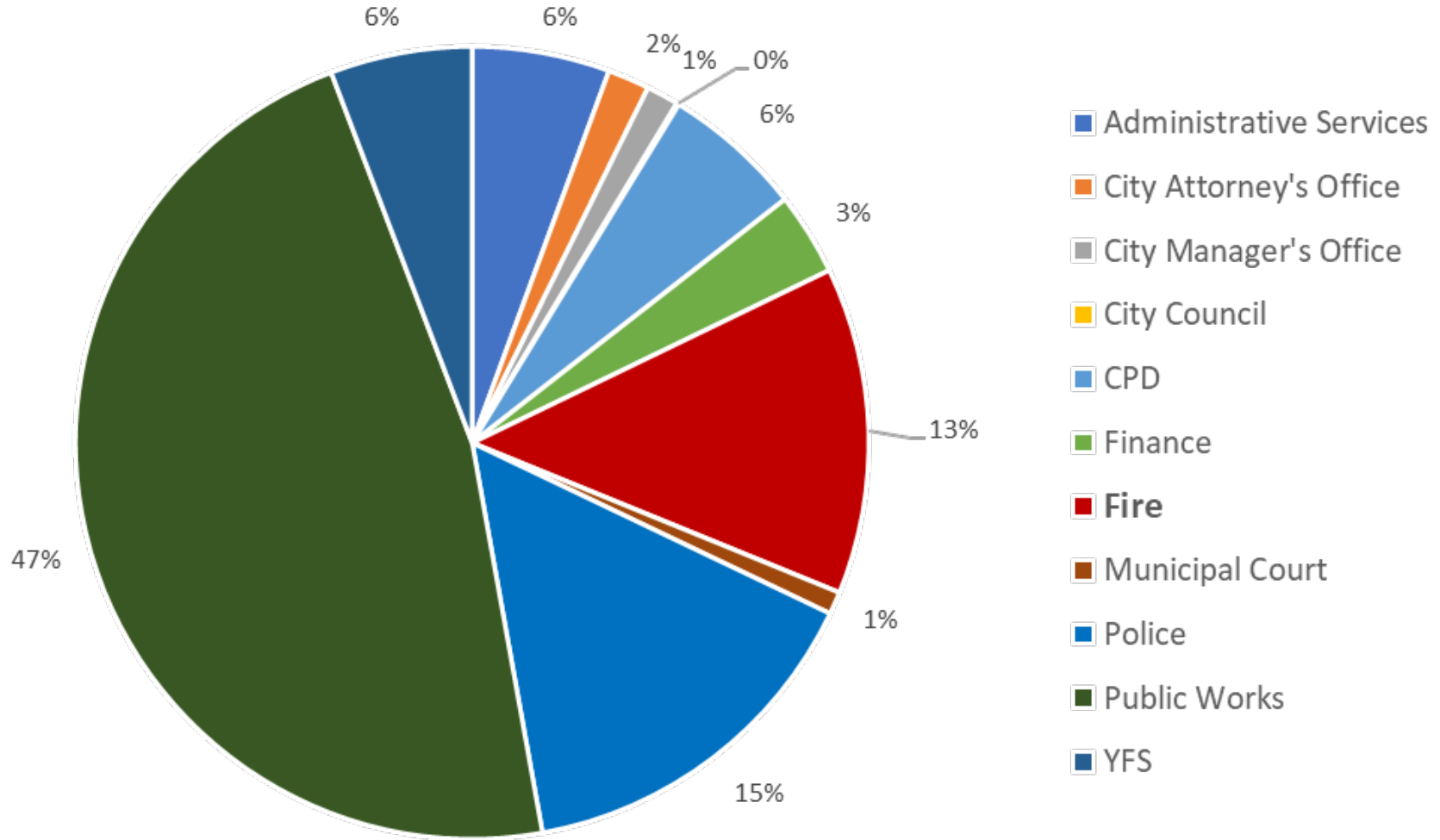


Fire Department Budget

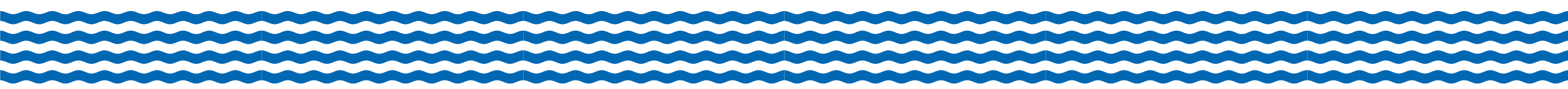
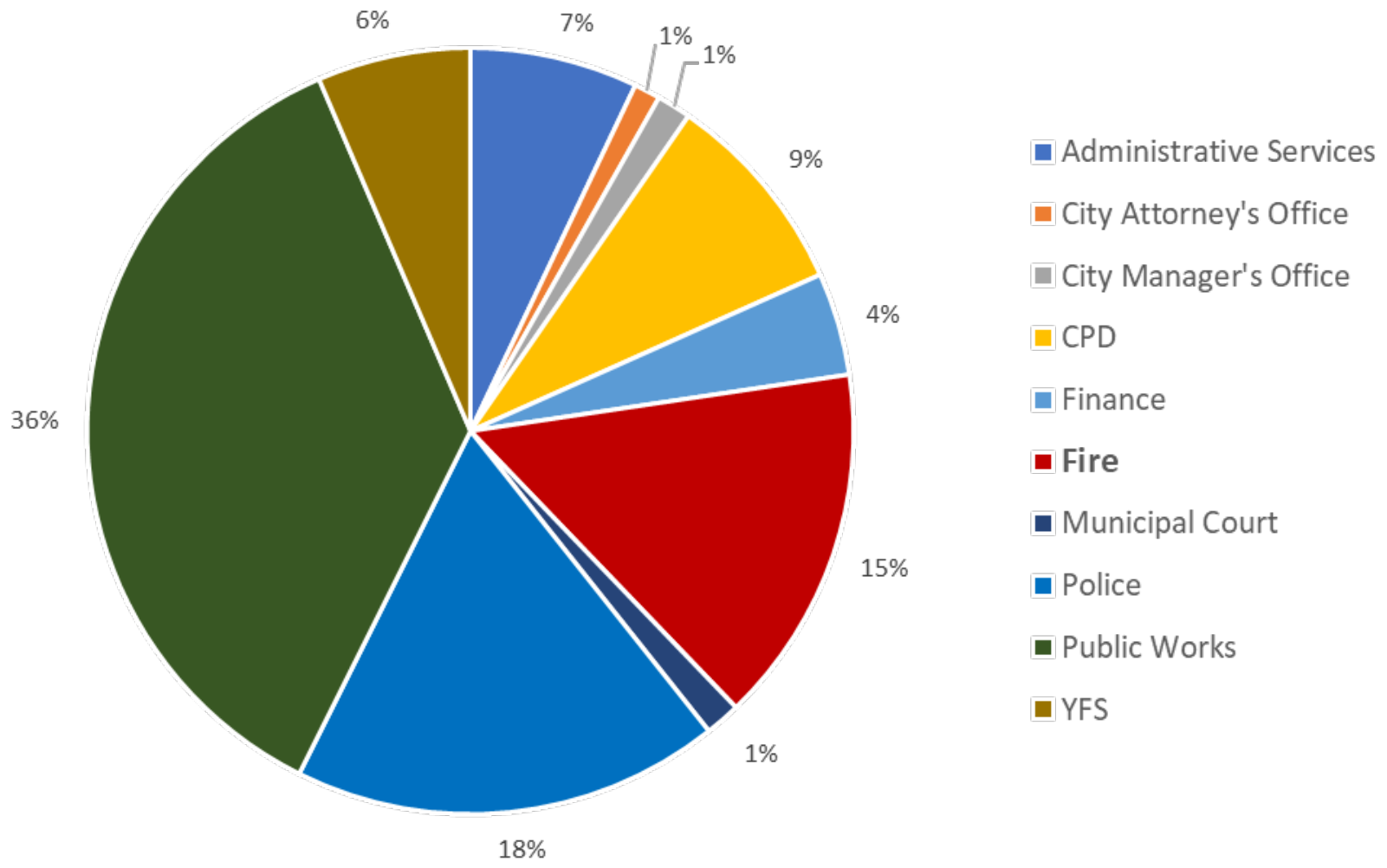
Mercer Island Fire Department Operating Budget		
Department Function	2023	2024
Administration	553,042	580,509
Operations	6,523,534	6,856,885
Community Risk Reduction	286,521	297,173
Training	163,750	163,750
Total	7,526,847	7,898,317



Operating Budget by Department FY 2023-2024 Biennium



Total Full-time Staff by Department Fiscal Year 2023



Overview of Regional Fire Services



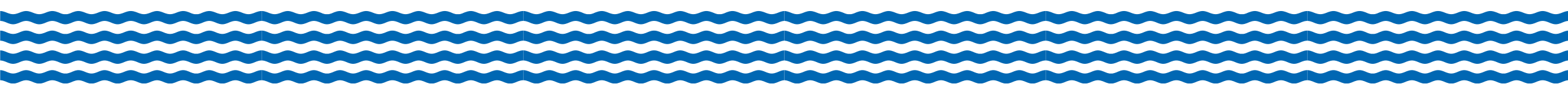
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

FIRE HEADQUARTERS-STATION 91



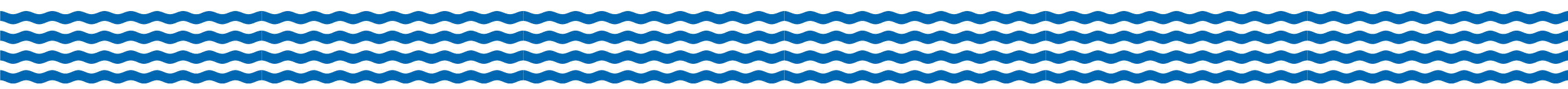
Trend of Regionalization in Fire Service

- 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.



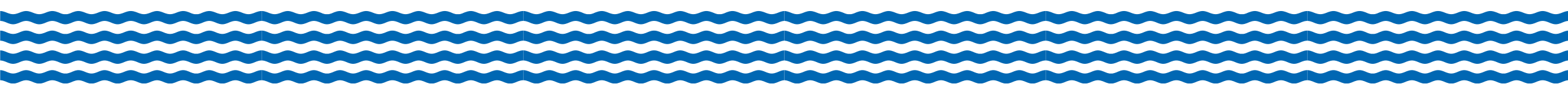
Why regionalize?

- 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 often 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.**



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 Bellevue Fire provides 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.



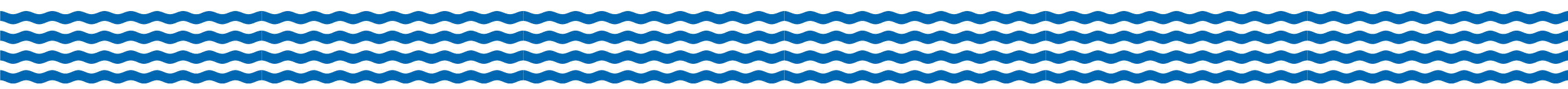


Adopting a Regional Fire Services Model



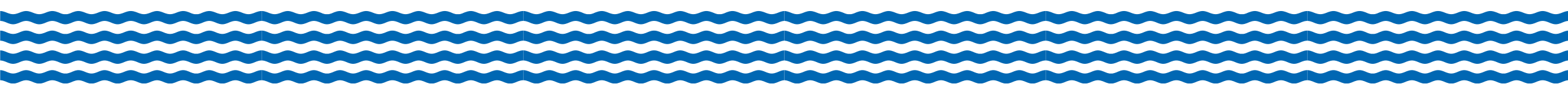
Regional Fire Service Model – Service Levels

- Mercer Islanders should expect **very little change under a regional fire services model.**
- 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.
- The **City will establish service levels** and ensure the delivery of fire services continues to meet or exceed current service levels.



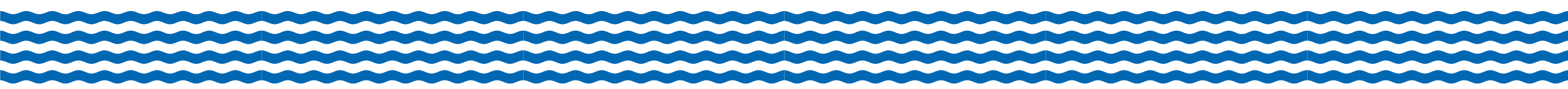
Regional Fire Services Model - Staffing

- Under a regional services model, **fire services will be managed and fulfilled by a regional fire agency** instead of being directly operated by the City of Mercer Island.
- Mercer Island fire personnel would transition to the regional fire agency.
- A few positions within the department might shift because of the transition to a regional fire services model, but these changes will not have an impact on fire department operations.
- 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.



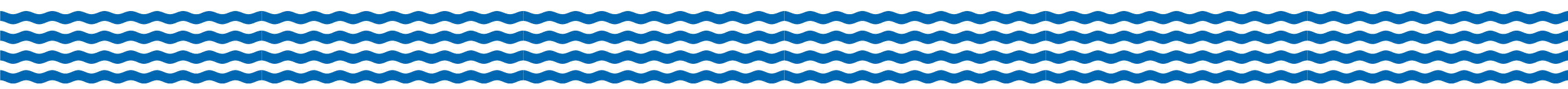
Regional Fire Services Model - Staffing

- **The City has every intention to secure employment opportunities for all Fire Department personnel.**
- Impacts of the transition on City fire personnel will be bargained with Mercer Island IAFF Local 1762.
- A few positions within the department might shift because of the transition to a regional fire services model, but these changes will not have an impact on fire department operations.



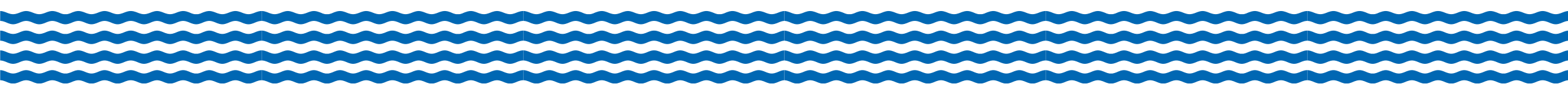
Regional Fire Services Model - Leadership

- **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.



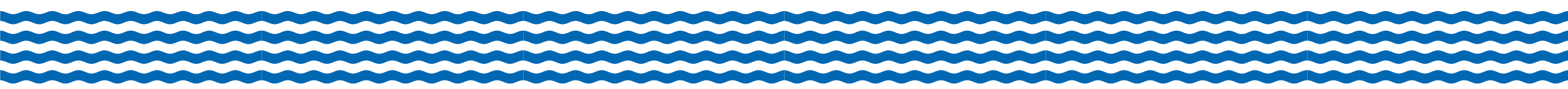
Regional Fire Services Model - Efficiency

- A regional collaboration will allow the City to offer **stronger fire and emergency medical services** for Mercer Island residents while also **saving costs**.
- The City anticipates ongoing cost savings through a **shared leadership model** (Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief). We also anticipate **indirect cost savings** in Human Resources, IT, Finance, and other internal service teams.
- Regional fire service models are particularly well suited to benefit greatly from **economies of scale**. The process of seeking proposals will highlight other efficiencies and opportunities.



Regional Fire Services Model – Enhanced Services

- **Firefighting today is much different than even a few decades ago;** whereas fire departments were originally created to specifically address fire emergencies, they have gone on to cover emergency medical services, hazmat services, special rescue, mobile integrated health and more.
- **Collaborating with a regional fire services provider helps make the response to all these needs more cohesive.**
- Regional providers are big enough to support entire teams of personnel trained to deal with special risks and circumstances like technical rescue, hazardous materials, and others.
- By joining a regional provider, the City would get the **advantage of this depth of expertise** if there are incidents on the Island where it is required.

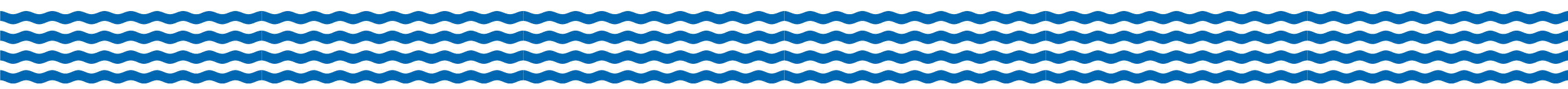


Process for Selecting a Regional Fire Service Agency



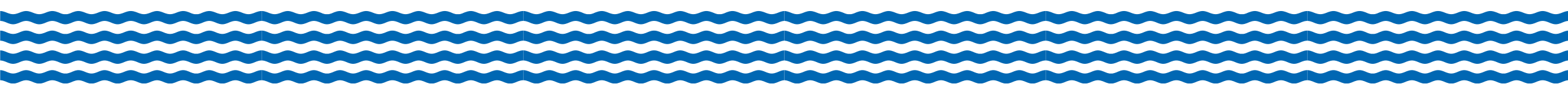
Request for Proposals from City of Bellevue and Eastside Fire & Rescue

- City staff have developed a **request for proposals** (RFP) outlining the **City's requirements** for a regional fire service model (Exhibit 1).
- The City has compiled a list of objectives and factors to guide the evaluation of regional fire services proposals.

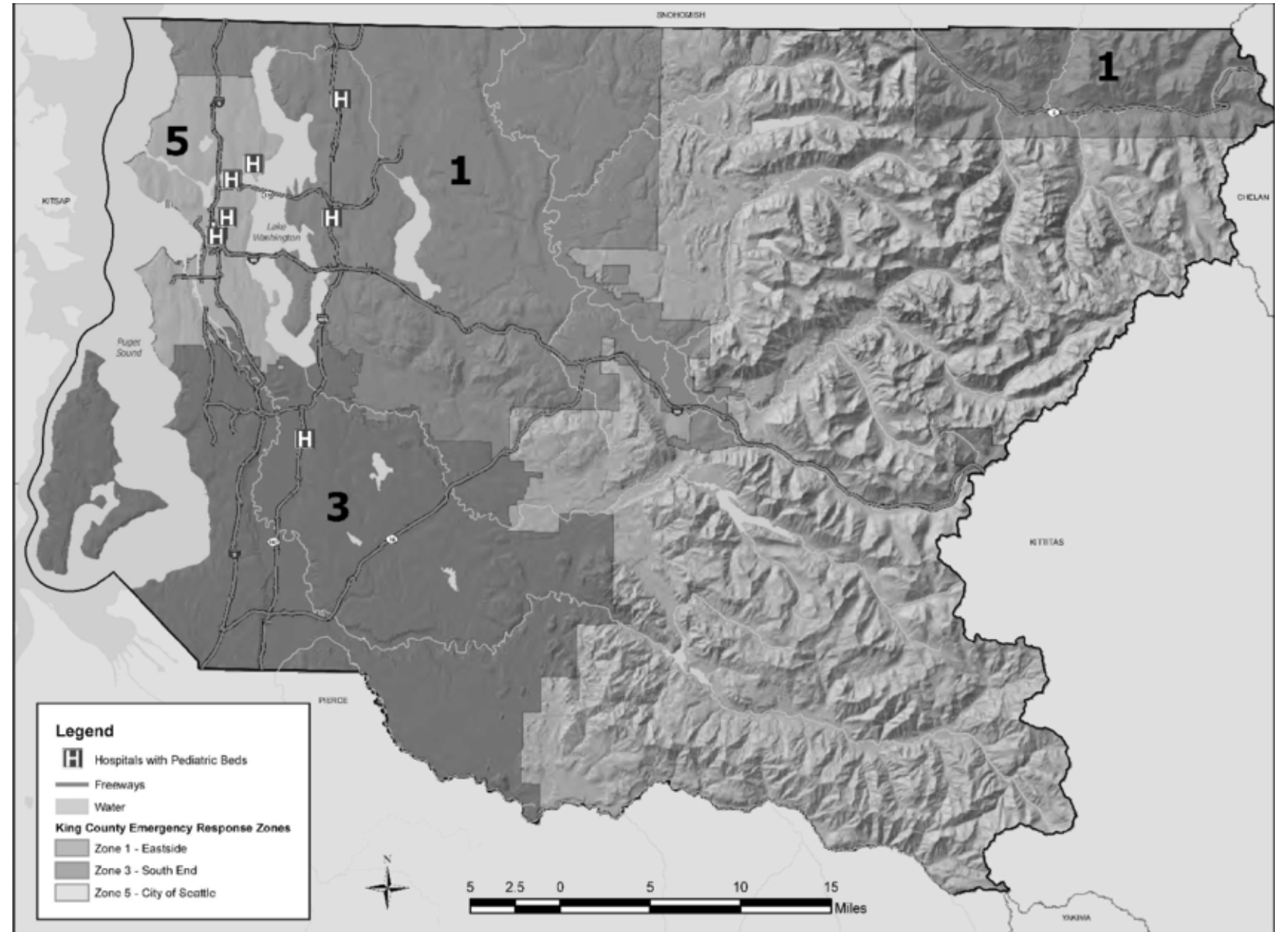


Why just Bellevue and Eastside Fire?

- King County is split into different emergency response zones. Mercer Island is in the same zone as the City of Bellevue and Eastside Fire & Rescue.
- Agencies in the same zone organize automatic aid, coordinate training and emergency management, and share dispatch centers.
- It is critical that the Mercer Island Police Department remains in the same dispatch center as Mercer Island Fire.
- There is also existing operational and leadership familiarity with Bellevue and Eastside Fire & Rescue.
- Both agencies have experience with a regional fire service model.

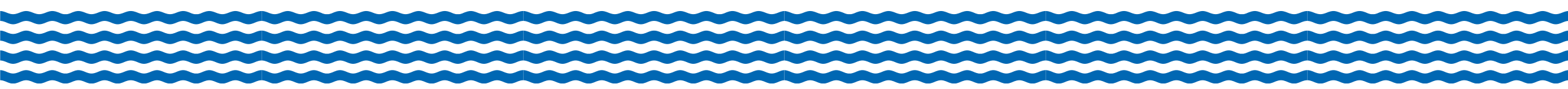


Emergency Response Zones Map



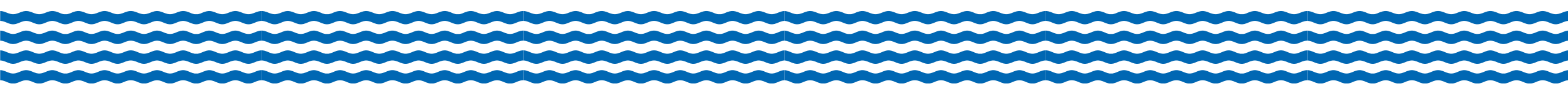
Evaluation Criteria for Proposals

- Services provided under a regional services model will maintain or improve current fire and emergency medical service levels while balancing the shared responsibility for long-term, cost-effective fire and emergency medical service delivery.
- The City of Mercer Island will continue to control service levels for fire and emergency medical services provided on Mercer Island.
- Both Mercer Island Fire Stations (Station 91 and Station 92) will remain open and operational, with provider services that meet or exceed today's standards.



Evaluation Criteria for Proposals

- Mercer Island fire employees will be hired by the regional agency in their current or comparable positions and will have opportunities for career growth, enhanced training, and other professional development opportunities.
- Other considerations include agency experience in delivering regional fire and emergency medical services, governance model, communications strategies, leadership approach, annual reporting, and more.



Timeline for Proposal Evaluation

- Upon City Council approval the following is a tentative schedule for review and consideration of the proposals:

Issue RFP

April 5, 2023

Deadline for Submittal of Proposals

May 3, 2023, 4:00 PM PST

Internal Review of Proposals

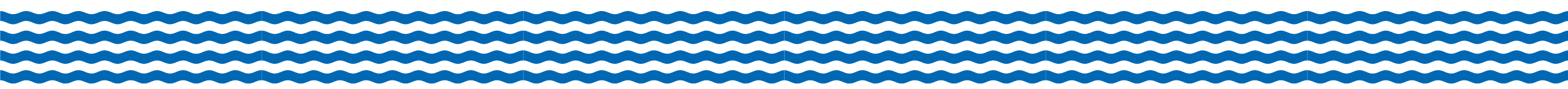
May 2023

City Council Review of Proposals

May/June 2023

Next Steps

Timeline TBD

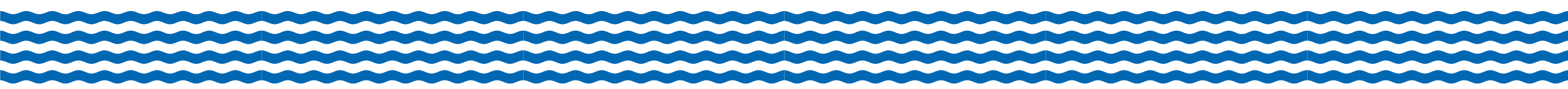


Frequently Asked Questions



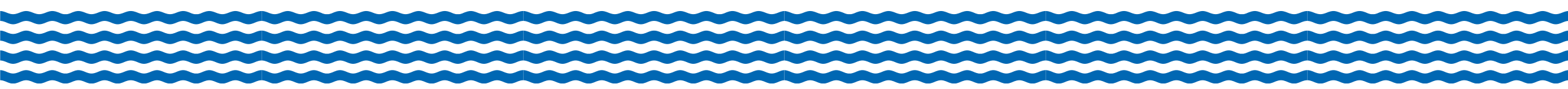
Will I have to call a different number to get fire department services?

- **No**, please continue to call 911 in case of any emergency. You can still reach the fire department's headquarters by calling (206) 275-7607.



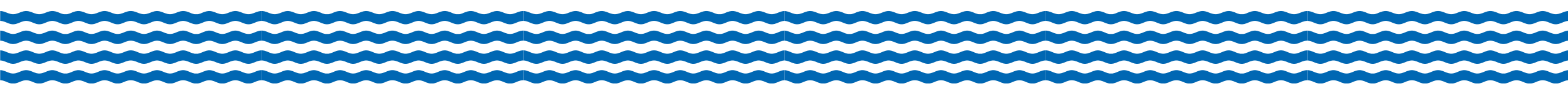
Will the fire department's response time be any slower because of this change?

- No. **Mercer Island will retain service level authority** with the expectation that no matter the nature of the emergency call, **response times will not be impacted** by a transition to a regional fire services model.



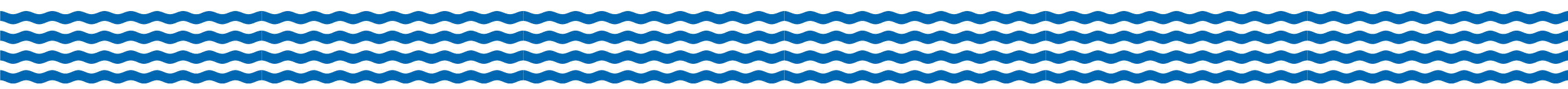
Will either of the fire stations close?

- **No**, both Mercer Island Fire Stations (Station 91 and Station 92) will remain open and operational and provide services that meet or exceed today's service-level standards.



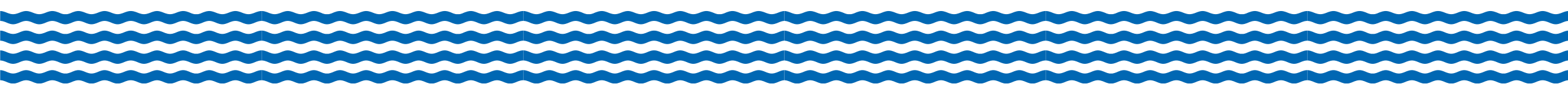
The City mentioned that this shift may result in some positions/jobs being changed. Can you elaborate on that?

- Through the adoption of a regional fire services model, some titles or ranks may be adjusted, to include promotional opportunities, to align with the staffing framework of the regional service provider.
- **These changes will not impact delivery of fire and emergency medical services to the Mercer Island community.**
- Impacts of the transition on City fire personnel will be bargained with Mercer Island IAFF Local 1762.



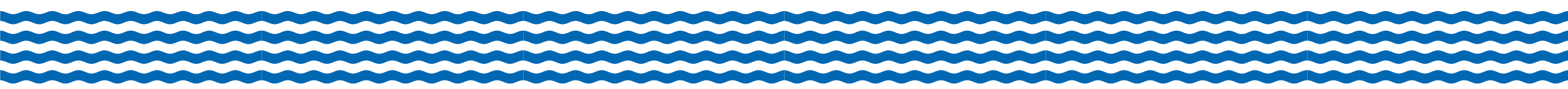
What impact will this have on my taxes?

- The **regional fire services agency will not have taxing authority** on Mercer Island. Consequently, adopting a regional fire services model **will not have an impact on your taxes.**



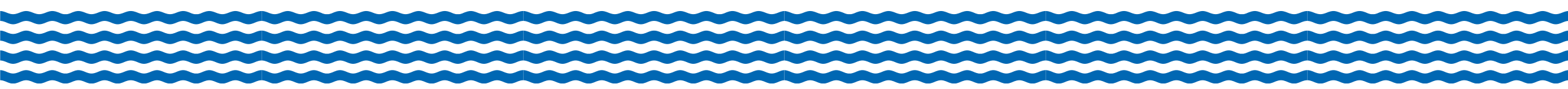
What other essential services is the City planning to combine into a regional service?

- **None.** The City of Mercer Island is only considering a regional approach to fire services.



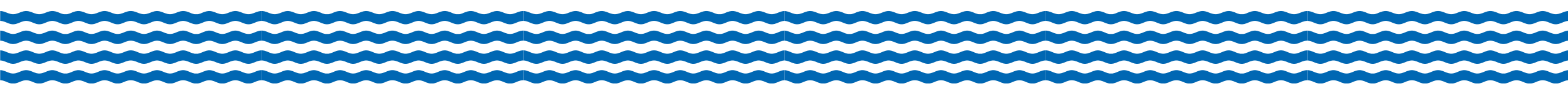
What impacts will this have on building inspection/fire code enforcement?

- If the City adopts a regional fire services model, **there will be no impact to building inspections or fire code enforcement.** Fire Marshal services will continue to include the enforcement of fire codes and regulations and promoting safe practices in the community.



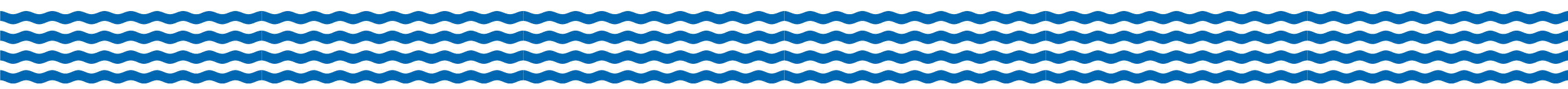
How much money will the City save outsourcing the fire department?

- The **proposals** from both agencies **will include a cost estimate** to provide fire and emergency medical services on Mercer Island.
- This **process of seeking proposals will allow the City to perform a side-by-side comparison** of current costs, versus the costs of services under a regional services model.



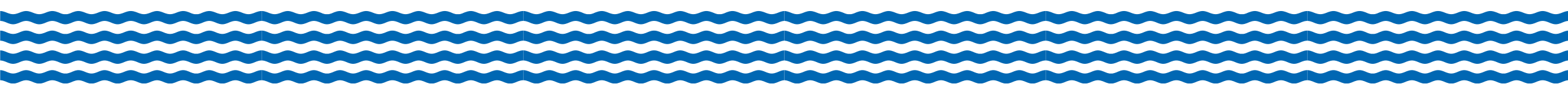
What if none of the proposals are adequate for Mercer Island?

- While we are confident that the proposals to transition to a regional fire services model will benefit the Mercer Island community, **there is always the possibility that we won't receive a proposal that meets our needs.**
- If this is the case, the City Manager, in consultation with the City Council, will **pause the request for regional proposals.**



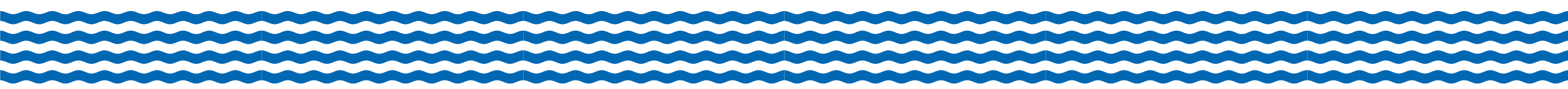
Will the regional fire service agency have to follow Mercer Island laws, codes, and standards?

- **Yes**, the agency will be bound by all Mercer Island laws, codes and standards as set by the City of Mercer Island.
- The Mercer Island **Fire Marshal will continue to enforce our fire codes and regulations** and promote safe practices in the community.



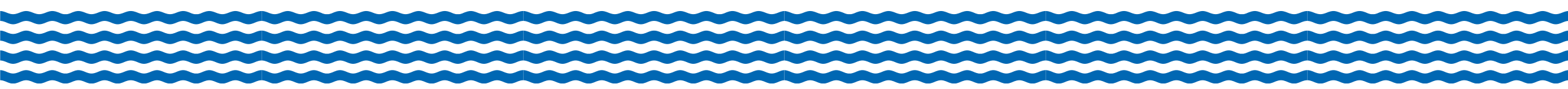
Will anything change about the Mercer Island fire trucks and uniforms?

- There will be no changes to our current fleet of trucks. They will **continue to have the city logo and “Mercer Island” on them.** Any new equipment procured will also include Mercer Island branding.
- It is anticipated that **fire personnel will wear the patches and uniforms associated with the respective regional agency.**
- There will certainly be an opportunity to discuss branding, use of logos, etc. as part of the proposal consideration process.



How will large scale emergency response change by adopting a regional fire services model

- The City of Mercer Island operates under an Emergency Management Regional Coordination Framework through King County.
- This framework brings together surrounding agencies to share personnel, equipment, and information during an emergency response. Our firefighters also train with surrounding to ensure cohesion.
- **Mercer Island will continue to operate under this regional mutual aid framework.**
- Under a regional services model, the Mercer Island community will have **increased access to personnel, resources, and equipment during times of emergency.**



Recommended Motion



Recommended Motion

Authorize and direct the City Manager to seek proposals from the City of Bellevue and Eastside Fire & Rescue for a regional fire service model.

