



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1



PROPOSITION 1 VOTE APRIL 22, 2025



Fairwood Voters Decide Whether to Permanently Join Renton RFA in April



On April 22, 2025, voters in King County Fire District 40 (KCFD 40) will have the opportunity to vote on Proposition 1, a ballot measure that will determine whether KCFD 40 permanently joins Renton Regional Fire Authority (Renton RFA) for fire and emergency medical services.

For the past 17 years, Renton RFA has provided fire and emergency medical services to KCFD 40 under a contract agreement. Both agencies operate under a two-part funding model, which includes a property tax levy and a fire benefit charge. In 2023, voters in both jurisdictions approved a levy lid lift, setting a rate of \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed property value with an adjustment for inflation over the next five years, making these funding systems nearly identical. Proposition 1 asks voters to decide if KCFD 40 should be formally annexed into Renton RFA, which would merge the agencies permanently.

IF PROP 1 IS APPROVED

If Prop 1 is approved, the \$6.3 million contract between KCFD 40 and Renton RFA for fire and emergency medical services will be eliminated and KCFD 40 will become a permanent part of Renton RFA's jurisdiction, which is funded by the same type of two-part funding model

that KCFD 40 already uses. This merger would make implementing adjustments in service based on the needs of the Fairwood community more agile, as they would not have to be reviewed and approved as an addendum to the current contract.

KCFD 40 would also receive additional representation on the Renton RFA Governance Board. Currently, KCFD 40 is represented by a single, nonvoting member. While their input is invaluable to the Renton community, their ability to affect change is limited based on the non-voting status of their seat on the Board. If Prop 1 is passed, KCFD 40 will have two voting members on the Renton RFA Governance Board, giving them greater input on the financial decision-making of the organization.

Additionally, the costs for KCFD 40 capital projects, such as the construction of a fire station or the purchase of a new fire engine, would be spread across Renton RFA's entire jurisdiction, rather than being solely funded by KCFD 40 taxpayers. This will reduce the financial impact of KCFD 40 capital projects on Fairwood taxpayers through cost-sharing.

There will also be a reduction in overhead costs and workload for KCFD 40 Fire Commissioners. If

Prop 1 is approved, administrative responsibilities will be handled by Renton RFA administrative staff. Contracts for IT and Fire Marshal services currently in place will also be eliminated, as Renton RFA will provide those services to Fairwood as a part of its jurisdiction.

IF PROP 1 IS REJECTED

If the measure is rejected, KCFD 40 will continue to contract fire and emergency medical services from Renton RFA at an annual cost of \$6.3 million, based on the 2025 contract fee. Funding for future capital projects will remain the responsibility of KCFD 40 taxpayers alone, and governance will continue with KCFD 40 holding one non-voting seat on the Renton RFA Governance Board. The costs of maintaining the KCFD 40 Board of Fire Commissioners, as well

as contracts for IT and Fire Marshal services, will also remain in place.

The outcome of Proposition 1 will determine the future structure of fire and emergency medical services in Fairwood. Residents are encouraged to review the details of the measure and participate in the election by casting their vote on April 22, 2025.

More information can be found at rentonrfa.com/fd40prop1.



KCFD 40 Fire Commissioners (3 of 6, L-R): Joe Pratt, Charlotte Ryan, Andrew Schneider

IN THIS ISSUE

A Message from the Fire Chief	2
2024 Emergency Response Statistics	2
Safety Corner: Smoke Alarms Save Lives	2
Progress Update: Fire Station 16	3
A Renton Hero Retires	3
Renton RFA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan	4
The Impacts of Peer Support	4

A Message From the Fire Chief

As we settle into 2025, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible year we had at Renton Regional Fire Authority. Thanks to the dedication of our firefighters, staff, and community partners, we achieved milestones that will strengthen our ability to serve Renton for years to come.

One of the biggest highlights of 2024 was earning accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International—an achievement that recognizes our commitment to excellence in fire and emergency services. This distinction is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team and demonstrates that we are operating at the highest national standards.

Additionally, we successfully completed our latest strategic plan a full year ahead of schedule, reinforcing our dedication to planning for the future and continuously improving how we serve our community.

Beyond our operational achievements, we also made great strides in community engagement. We welcomed more than 1,000 community members to our annual open houses, giving residents the opportunity to meet their firefighters, learn about fire safety, and see firsthand the resources we use to protect our community.

While public safety is always our top priority, we also believe in building strong relationships with our community in fun and creative ways. That's why we were thrilled to win the "Festive Innovation" award at Renton PD's Battle of the Badges, proving that our team not only knows how to fight fires but also how to bring some holiday cheer!

As we look ahead at the remainder of 2025 and beyond, an important decision is on the horizon for our neighbors in Fairwood. On April 22, 2025, Fairwood voters will decide on Proposition 1, which

will determine whether King County Fire District 40 (KCFD 40) permanently joins Renton RFA. For 17 years, we have provided fire and emergency medical services to KCFD 40 under a contract agreement. If approved, this annexation would ensure long-term service stability and representation for Fairwood community members and businesses. We encourage all eligible KCFD 40 voters to review the details of the measure and make their voices heard in this important election.

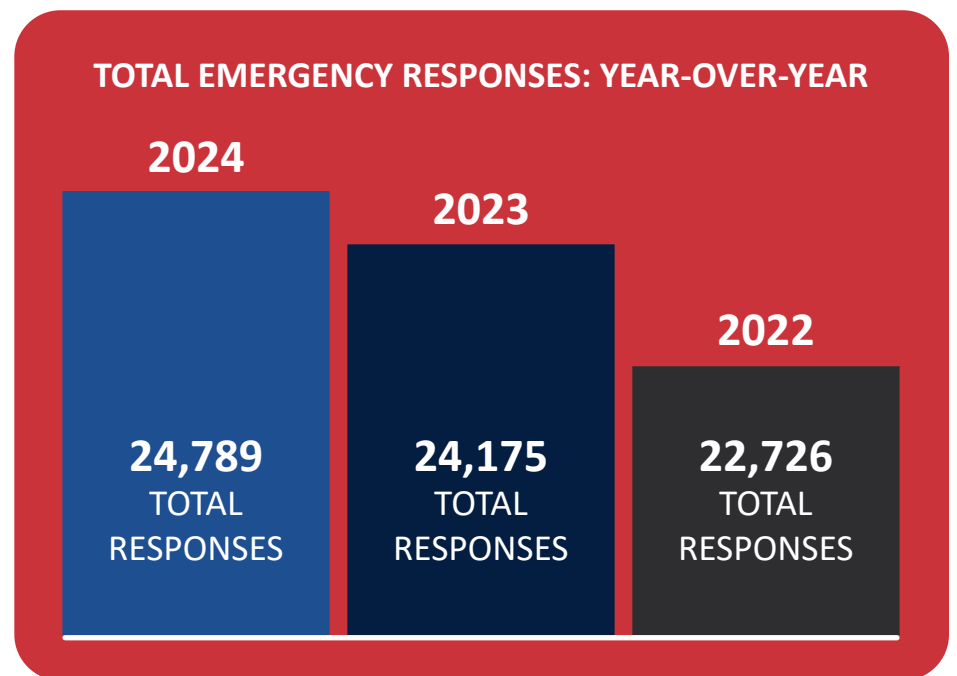
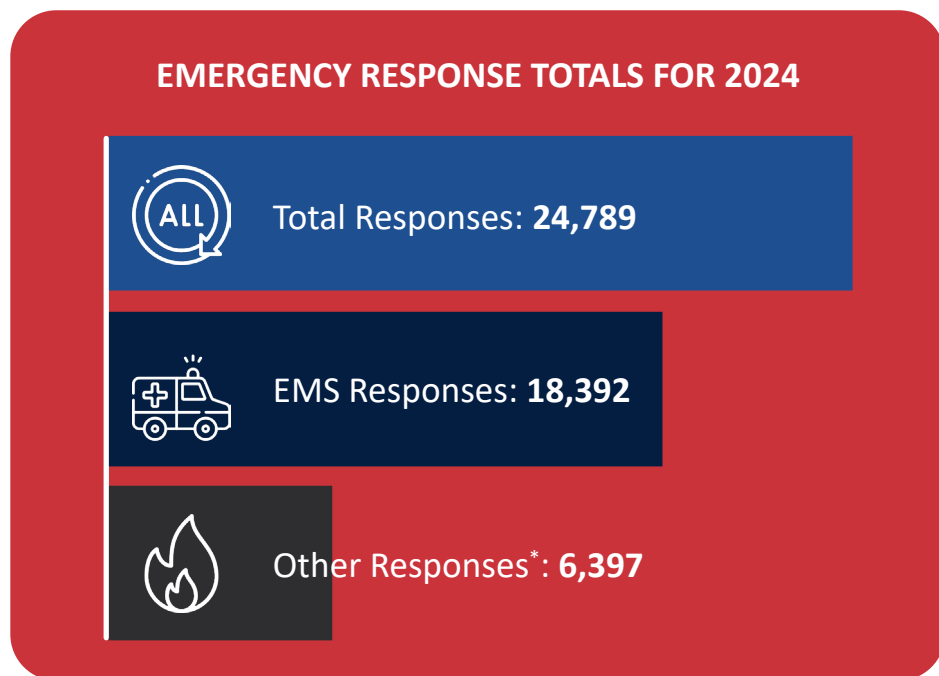
We remain focused on building a more resilient Renton community through collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to public safety. The momentum we built in 2024 sets the stage for an even stronger future, and we will continue working to provide the highest level of service to the people we are honored



Fire Chief Steve Heitman

to protect. Thank you for your trust and support. We look forward to another year of progress and excellence in public safety.

2024 Emergency Response Statistics



*Other Responses includes: false alarms, fires, good intent, hazmat, public service, rupture/explosion, and other hazards.

Smoke Alarms Save Lives



Having working smoke alarms is one of the most important ways that you can protect yourself and those living in your home from fire. They provide early detection of smoke and give you time to get outside safely. According to the National Fire Prevention Association, it is estimated that three out of five fire related deaths occur in homes without smoke alarms or with non-working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms save lives and should be present in every home.

Where do I install my smoke alarms?

Every home should have smoke alarms and they should be installed

on every level of the home, including the basement, in every bedroom and outside of every sleeping area. They should be placed on the ceiling or high up on the wall. For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms in your home. When smoke alarms are interconnected, when one sounds, they all sound. This can be especially important if you close your doors when sleeping.

How often should I test my smoke alarms?

All smoke alarms in the home should be tested monthly. You can test your smoke alarm by pressing and holding down the "test" button. If the alarm sounds, the detector is

working. If it does not, it may be time to replace the batteries or get a new smoke alarm. Ensure that everyone in your home knows what the smoke alarm sounds like and how to react if the alarm goes off.

When do I need to replace my smoke alarms?

It is recommended that you replace smoke alarms 10 years after the manufacture date or if they don't respond properly when tested. You can find the manufacture date on the back of your smoke alarm if you aren't sure how old it is. If your smoke alarm chirps, this is a sign that the batteries are low and need to be replaced.

Progress Update: Fire Station 16

The development of the new Fire Station 16 continues to move forward, bringing Renton Regional Fire Authority closer to a facility that will support both the firefighters who serve our community and the growing needs of the surrounding area. Recently, concept drawings for the new station were presented, offering an exciting look at the vision for this state-of-the-art facility. However, it's important to note that these renderings are conceptual and may not entirely reflect the final

design of the completed station.

Fire Station 16 is being designed with the future in mind. One of its key features is the inclusion of hot, warm, and cold zones, which will help prevent contamination from the apparatus bay or emergency calls from reaching the station's living quarters. This will enhance firefighter safety by limiting exposure to harmful contaminants and supporting overall health. Additionally, the station will feature a modern selective alert

system, which ensures that only the sleeping quarters for the dispatched apparatus receive alerts. This targeted notification system contributes to improved sleep hygiene and the long-term well-being of firefighters.

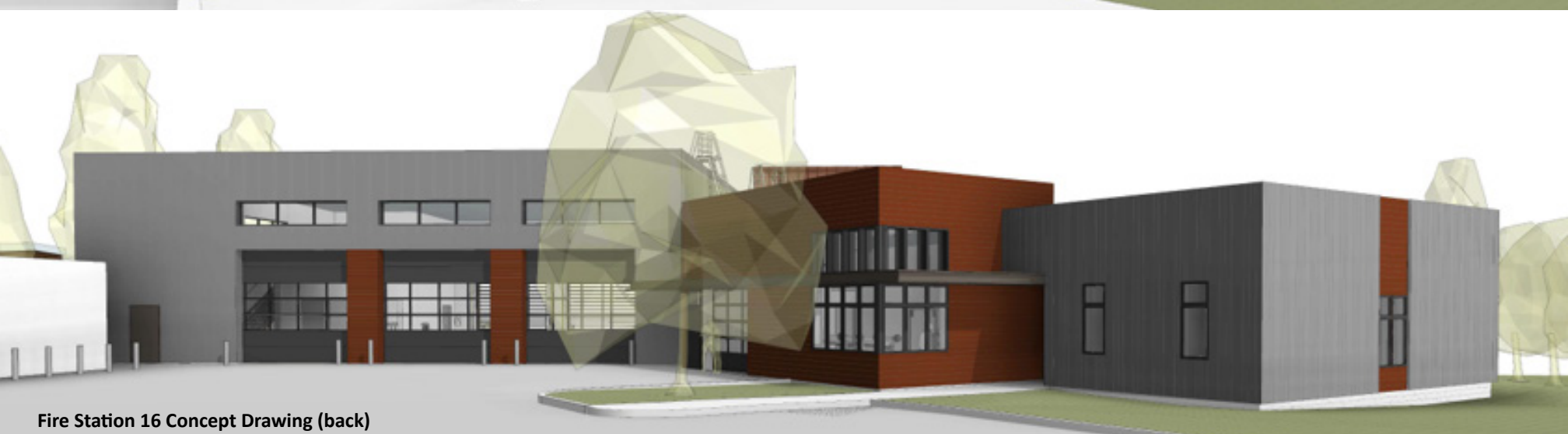
With a focus on sustainability and adaptability, Fire Station 16 is being built to last for 50 years and designed to accommodate future growth. The station will be capable of housing multiple apparatus, ensuring it can meet the evolving needs of the

community and support the potential addition of new emergency response vehicles in the years to come.

As planning and development continue, we remain committed to creating a fire station that enhances public safety, prioritizes firefighter wellness, and serves the community for decades. We look forward to sharing more updates as this important project progresses.



Fire Station 16 Concept Drawing (front)



Fire Station 16 Concept Drawing (back)

A Renton Hero Retires

He began his fire service career as a legacy firefighter with King County Fire District 25 (KCFD 25), serving the Highlands area. He continued that service into the greater Renton area when KCFD 25 merged with the City of Renton.

Empassioned by his work in emergency medical services, Chuck steadily ascended our ranks, growing right alongside the organization. Along the way, he was intimately involved in bringing a number of positive programs geared toward both our community and our staff, including the FD CARES program, which serves the most vulnerable, low-acuity patients throughout the community, and our internal Peer Support program, which seeks to innovate in our approach to support firefighter health and well-being.

As Deputy Chief of EMS/Health & Safety, Chuck was instrumental

in guiding our members and our community through the COVID-19 pandemic, not just here in Renton but throughout the region. He continues to be a vocal leader in the mission to improve firefighter mental health as well.

The only way to do great work is to love what you do.

- Steve Jobs

By this measurement, it is clear to our organization and our community that Chuck possessed a deep love of people and thrived in his ability to be of service to the public.

While we celebrate Chuck and his honored career in public service, giving back to the community he grew up in and raised his own family in, our hearts remain heavy as we

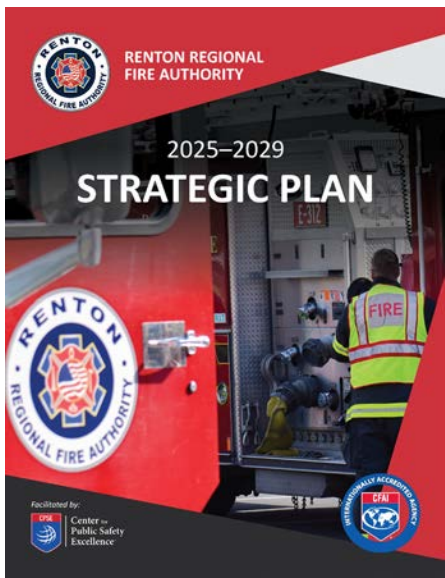
bid farewell to a valued member of the Renton RFA family. We extend our deepest gratitude to Chuck and his family for everything they've sacrificed and given to see our organization, our members, and our community succeed for the past 35 years.



Deputy Chief Charles DeSmith

It's a bittersweet year for Renton RFA, and the Renton community alike, as we bid farewell to Deputy Chief of EMS/Health & Safety Charles "Chuck" DeSmith. Chuck was born and raised in Renton and dedicated his entire 35-year career to providing exemplary service to his local community. He

Renton RFA Unveils New 2025-2029 Strategic Plan



Renton Regional Fire Authority is proud to announce the launch of its 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, a roadmap that will guide the organization's efforts to enhance public safety, strengthen community engagement, and maintain operational excellence over the next five years. Developed in collaboration with the Center for Public Safety Excellence, this community-driven plan reflects the input of local stakeholders and ensures Renton RFA continues to meet the highest standards in fire and emergency services.

At the core of this plan is Renton RFA's commitment to "Building a more resilient Renton community through collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to public safety." To achieve this vision, the strategic plan focuses on five key goals. It

Renton RFA 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Goals



Develop and implement a comprehensive external communication plan based on community feedback to enhance public awareness, foster community engagement, and ensure timely and transparent dissemination of information.



Enhance internal engagement by developing inclusive standards and practices that foster a sense of belonging among the membership using member feedback data, identified organizational opportunities for growth, internal evaluations, and a commitment to continuous improvement by all members.



Attract, develop, and retain a highly-skilled, diverse, and dedicated team of professionals committed to excellence in service, safety, and community engagement.



Work to reduce medical emergencies and fires to improve outcomes within our community through comprehensive and effective public education programs that are data-driven and specific to our community needs.



Maintain fiscal sustainability through effective financial planning, strategic resource management, and diversified revenue streams while ensuring transparency.

builds on the achievements of the past and sets the stage for continued innovation and service improvements. Renton RFA remains committed to transparency and accountability, with clear performance metrics in place to track progress and adapt as community needs evolve.

As Renton RFA embarks on this next chapter, community support and engagement remain vital. Residents are encouraged to stay informed, provide feedback, and work alongside Renton RFA to create a safer and more resilient future. For more details, visit: rentonrfa.com/strategic-plan

RENTON RFA GOVERNANCE BOARD

James Alberson Jr.
Board Chair

Sean Cook
Vice Chair

Kerry Abercrombie
Board Member

Marcus Morrell
Board Member

Ed Prince
Board Member

Ryan McIrvine
Board Member

Andrew Schneider
Board Member (nonvoting)

RENTON RFA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Steve Heitman
Fire Chief

Mark Seaver
Deputy Chief of Response Operations

Dan Alexander
Deputy Chief of EMS/Health & Safety and Support Services

Anjela Barton
Fire Marshal

Samantha Babich
Chief Administration Officer

The Impacts of Peer Support

Our team has made significant strides in expanding and enhancing its Peer Support Program, ensuring that firefighters and staff have access to vital mental health resources and a strong support network. By prioritizing resilience, well-being, and open communication, the program continues to make a lasting impact on our organization's culture.

In the past couple of years, Renton RFA conducted over 100 Kitchen Table Talks among its crews, creating a safe space for discussions on mental health and workplace challenges. Additionally, the Peer Support Team has played a role in an ongoing series of Q & A sessions

titled, "Ask the Chief," led by Fire Chief Steve Heitman, which aim to foster open dialogue and trust. The organization also hosted its first Peer Support Retreat, bringing members together for operational and personal resilience exercises.

Access to mental health resources expanded with the addition of two new therapists and over 26 professional referrals, while station visits by mental health professionals helped build familiarity and trust.

On the innovation front, Renton RFA secured a \$100K grant to develop PeerCommand, a digital platform designed to integrate resilience tools

and resource navigation specifically for public service members.

Through education, training, and peer-led initiatives, Renton RFA continues to break down barriers to mental health support, ensuring that every member has the resources they need to thrive in high-stress situations, because healthy firefighters contribute to healthy communities.



Renton RFA Peer Support Team



FREE CPR CLASS!

Renton RFA is hosting a **FREE** friends and family CPR class on March 22, 2025!

Join us to learn how to save a life. Registration is required to attend. Friends and family classes are for general knowledge and do not result in a CPR card. **For more information, visit:**

skccpr.eventbrite.com

