

1. Why do we need a new station?

Station 101 serves as Fire District 10's headquarters, primary response station, training center, and administrative office. Originally built in 1961 for a department of 13 volunteer firefighters, the facility has been expanded several times over the years to accommodate the district's growth. Today, Fire District 10 has 70 members, including full-time firefighters providing 24-hour staffing, and operates much larger apparatus and with more equipment than the station was originally designed to support.

As the district has grown, the building's limitations have become increasingly apparent. Apparatus bays were designed for smaller fire engines, administrative offices lack adequate space and privacy, and living quarters have been retrofitted into a facility that was never intended for today's staffing levels. The upstairs training room is not ADA accessible, and the building lacks many of the features expected in a modern emergency services facility.

Replacing Station 101 will provide a safe, functional, and efficient facility capable of supporting emergency response, training, administration, and community needs for decades to come.

2. Can't you remodel the current station?

The district has explored the possibility of remodeling the existing building. Unfortunately, significant challenges make renovation impractical and costly. The facility contains asbestos, does not meet all current accessibility standards, and was not designed for a staff as large as we currently have.

Station 101's cinder-block construction sustained damage during the 2001 Nisqually earthquake. Because of the building's age and construction type, bringing the structure into compliance with current seismic and building codes would require extensive demolition and reconstruction. At the same time, renovation would do little to address many of the building's operational limitations, including inadequate space for apparatus, staffing, training, and administration.

The question is no longer whether significant investment is needed in Station 101, but whether taxpayers receive better long-term value by investing in a modern facility rather than continuing to repair and reconstruct an aging one.

3. How much will it cost me?

Based on an estimated bond rate of \$0.45 per \$1,000 of assessed value, the owner of a home assessed at \$650,000 would pay approximately \$292.50 per year, or about \$24.38 per month.

The proposed bond would be repaid over a period of up to 20 years. As with any long-term public infrastructure project, spreading the cost over time allows both current and future users of the facility to share in the investment.

Fire District 10 has a long history of being fiscally responsible and careful stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Many of the district's firefighters, EMTs, officers, commissioners, and staff members live within Fire District 10 and pay the same property taxes as other residents. As taxpayers themselves, they understand the importance of making sound financial decisions and ensuring that public funds are used responsibly.

4. What happens if the bond doesn't pass?

If the bond measure is not approved, Fire District 10 will continue operating out of the existing Station 101 facility. However, the challenges associated with the aging building including maintenance issues, limited space, accessibility concerns, and operational inefficiencies, will remain. The district will continue evaluating alternatives, but significant facility needs will still need to be addressed in the future.

5. How will this improve emergency services?

A modern station allows firefighters and EMS personnel to operate more efficiently and safely. Improved apparatus storage, training space, equipment storage, communications infrastructure, and living quarters help ensure responders are prepared when emergencies occur. The facility will be designed to support current operations while providing for future expansion to help maintain a high level of service for the community.

6. Why can't you use existing funds?

Fire District 10's annual budget funds day-to-day operations, including staffing, apparatus maintenance, fuel, training, emergency equipment, and facility upkeep. While the district maintains reserves for emergencies and smaller capital projects, the cost of replacing a

major public safety facility is far greater than can reasonably be funded through annual operating revenues without affecting emergency services.

Like most Washington fire districts, Fire District 10 relies primarily on property tax revenue. State law limits fire district levies to a maximum of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. During the district's most recent levy lid lift, voters approved a levy rate of \$1.35 per \$1,000 because district leadership believed that lower rate would allow Fire District 10 to meet its goals, including providing 24-hour staffing at Stations 101 and 103 with two-person crews.

Washington law also generally limits annual property tax revenue growth to 1% unless voters approve additional funding. As a result, fire districts often cannot accumulate enough funding through annual budgets alone to construct major facilities. Bond financing allows the cost of a long-term community asset to be spread over time, allowing the district to continue providing emergency services while ensuring that both current and future users contribute to the facility's cost.

7. Will this improve ambulance service in northern Clark County?

Yes. The district has been working with North Country EMS to explore co-locating ambulance services within Fire District 10. A new Station 101 would provide opportunities to better accommodate ambulance crews and equipment, improving coordination between fire and EMS providers. While ambulance service decisions ultimately involve North Country EMS and other stakeholders, a modern facility would help support future EMS partnerships and service improvements.

8. How old is the current station?

Station 101 was originally constructed in the 1960s and has undergone several additions and modifications over the years to meet the changing needs of the community. The second-floor training room was added in the early 1980s. We divided the living room to add a third bedroom just before 2010. These improvements helped extend the facility's useful life and allowed the district to continue serving the community as it grew.

However, despite these additions, the building remains fundamentally a structure designed for a much smaller volunteer fire department than exists today. While the improvements have extended the building's usefulness, the facility was not designed to support the size, complexity, staffing levels, apparatus, training requirements, and operational demands of today's Fire District 10.

9. What accountability measures are in place?

Fire District 10 is committed to transparency and responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds. The project budget, financing plan, and construction process will be reviewed by the Board of Fire Commissioners during public meetings. Project expenditures will be subject to public records requirements, independent auditing, and state procurement laws.

In addition, Fire District 10 has a strong history of accountability and financial stewardship. The district undergoes regular audits by the Washington State Auditor's Office and has consistently passed its accountability audits, demonstrating its commitment to complying with state laws, safeguarding public resources, and maintaining public trust.

The district will also provide regular updates to the community throughout the planning, design, and construction process so taxpayers can remain informed about project progress, expenditures, and key milestones.

10. How will the facility serve the community beyond emergency response?

Station 101 has long served as more than just a fire station. The facility provides space for public meetings, community events, educational programs, and emergency preparedness activities. A replacement facility would continue supporting these functions while improving accessibility and usability for all members of the community.

The new facility would also be designed to better support emergency management during large-scale incidents. In addition to serving as a fire station, it could function as a command post and coordination center during major emergencies such as wildland-urban interface (WUI) fires, severe weather events, and other disasters affecting the region. During the Big Hollow Fire in 2020, there was no readily available facility within the district capable of efficiently supporting large-scale incident management and interagency coordination. A modern Station 101 would help address that need and improve the district's ability to support emergency operations when the community needs it most.

The new building would be designed to serve as a community resource and gathering place while supporting the district's emergency response mission.
