



King County Fire District No. 2
15100 8th Avenue Southwest,
Burien Washington 98166
206.242.2040 Fax 206.433.6042

August 17, 2011

The Honorable Joan McGilton
Mayor, City of Burien
400 SW 152nd St., Suite 300
Burien, WA 98166

Dear Mayor McGilton,

King County Fire District # 2 wants to ensure the Burien City Council has an opportunity to review and consider all pertinent information as you carefully evaluate annexation of the North Highline area. We recognize there are numerous perspectives the Council must examine and this letter intends to focus specifically on issues related to Fire and Emergency Medical Services, of which I am confident you agree, necessitates utmost consideration. As you are aware, by application of State statutes, any area annexed by the City of Burien becomes the responsibility of the Fire District #2. Knowing the issues are complex, I will not attempt to exhaustively explain in detail, but rather frame the issues as a starting point for discussion.

The Board looks forward to working closely with the Council to discover positive solutions to the issues eliminating or at the very least minimizing impact to the current citizens of Fire District #2. In addition, it is imperative thoughtful attention is given to providing comparable levels of service in any future annexed areas.

CFTR: 09/12/11

Fire and EMS Issues: North Highline Fire District has accumulated LEOFF 1 Pension liabilities calculated in excess of \$1 million dollars. This figure may be significantly higher depending on healthcare costs and the health status of the individuals covered. There are no funding mechanisms for these liabilities, therefore current General Fund dollars are allocated to pay the LEOFF 1 Pension expenses. The reduction to the current General Fund reduces monies available for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services for Burien's citizens. Fire District #2 should not have to absorb those liabilities it did not create, but if North Highline Fire District is dissolved; there is no other logical entity to be responsible for those liabilities. Perhaps some mitigation funds from the city or county could be provided to offset these expenses.

Two fire stations currently serve the potential annexation area. They were built in 1955 and 1960. There are numerous concerns regarding the condition, effectiveness and cost to renovate or replace these two facilities. The citizens of Burien recently voted and approved \$25 million in general obligation bonds to construct two new fire stations to replace existing stations in Burien. There is no funding allocated to properly renovate the facilities in the potential annexation area. It would be onerous to ask the current citizens of Burien to pay additional monies over and above the current voter approved bonds.

The calls for service in this area are much higher than the current city. Coupled with lower assessed value and reduced staffing the result is an increase in mutual aid requests, longer response times, increased equipment wear/expenses and increased operational costs. Currently Fire District #2 deploys one engine and one aid-car from the headquarters station at 15100 8th Ave SW (Station 28). In contrast, the station located at 1243 SW 122th (Station 18) in the potential annexation area only deploys one engine despite the fact it is at least 25% busier than the Fire District #2 headquarters, Station 28. Station 18 in the potential annexation area would need to add a full time aid unit at an annual cost in excess of \$1 million dollars to provide the equivalent coverage that Burien residents currently receive. There is insufficient funding for Fire District #2 to provide a full time aid unit in the potential annexation area.

An additional area of concern includes assuming responsibility of a \$1.29 million non-voted bond indebtedness that North Highline Fire Department used to pay asset transfer monies to Fire District #2 as a result of the first North Highline annexation. Again, there is no funding allocated for this debt and current Burien citizens should not absorb such a liability.

Although the focus of this letter has been on Fire and Emergency Medical Services, consideration of an annexation is complex and entails numerous issues. The Burien City Council has a tremendous responsibility to thoroughly examine and evaluate all concerns in an effort to reach a decision in the best interest of Burien citizens. The Board of Commissioners of Fire District #2 looks forward to the opportunity to cooperatively discuss and resolve these issues prior to the city finalizing a decision and taking action on annexation. The Board respectfully requests notification regarding the city's plan to proceed and the opportunity to mutually resolve the issues at hand.

Sincerely,



Gary Hobbick, Commissioner
Chairman of the Board

Cc: Burien City Council Members
Mike Martin, City Manager

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