

January 5, 2016

Maple Valley Fire & Safety  
Fire District #43  
Board of Commissioners

The Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVUAC) represents ~18,000 citizens in the area outside the city of Maple Valley within the Tahoma School District. At our December 7, 2015, meeting we received a presentation from Chief Doerflinger on the three options before the Board to continue Fire District #43 funding.

We strongly oppose a merger with Fire District #37 (Kent), because of the loss of local control. Our bi-annual citizen surveys continually show support for local control for both Fire and School Districts. This system provides checks and balances in the form of voter approval, which could be outweighed in a larger district. Unfortunately, a merger with Kent (possibly combined with a merger with Tukwila and Des Moines) would remove local control, which we view as paramount.

We also are concerned the 216th Ave SE Station would be closed should a merger with Kent be completed. We believe this would clearly lessen response times in both City of Maple Valley and the rural areas. Further, volunteer staffing which is how our district began and the district currently endorses would be forbidden in the proposed Kent Fire merger. Finally, we would also lose our local Fire Chief who lives in our district and can relate to the people therein.

In closing, we request you reject the proposed merger. Further, we request you postpone for now any decision on a stand-alone approach or any potential future levy scenarios. We look forward to further discussions with you going forward on each of these options.

Thank you.

Steve Hiester  
Chair, GMVUAC