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For Immediate Release

Mill Creek Residents: Learn More About South County Fire
Annexation Proposed for April 26 Ballot

Mill Creek, Wash. – The Mill Creek City Council unanimously passed a resolution asking residents to annex into South Snohomish County Fire & Rescue Regional Fire Authority (South County Fire). The request will be on the April 26, 2022 Special Election ballot, and would be the lowest cost option for property owners in Mill Creek based on 2022 figures. City officials want residents and businesses to know more about South County Fire should voters approve annexation.

South County Fire is headquartered south of Everett and serves unincorporated southwest Snohomish County north and west of Mill Creek, and the cities of Lynnwood, Brier, Edmonds, and Mountlake Terrace. It was created by voters in Snohomish County Fire District 1 and the City of Lynnwood in 2017. The agency serves approximately 270,000 residents with 14 fire stations, several of which are close to City borders. South County Fire often responds to fire and EMS calls in Mill Creek as the closest available unit.

A regional fire authority is a separate taxing district authorized to provide fire and EMS services. South County Fire is one of two regional fire authorities in Snohomish County. It is governed by a board of seven elected commissioners. Five commissioners are elected from districts of roughly equal population in its service territory. The remaining two commissioner positions are elected “at-large,” by all voters within the regional fire authority.

South County Fire responded to 30,320 calls in 2021, 85% of which were EMS-related. All firefighters are certified as either paramedics, or emergency medical technicians. The agency provides Advanced Life Support, which is the highest level of care from arrival on scene to a hospital. It also provides technical rescue, a hazardous materials response, a community paramedic program, and fire prevention and life safety programs for residents and businesses.

South County Fire funds emergency services with a fire levy, an EMS levy and a fire benefit charge. If annexation were in effect in 2022, the owner of a 2,000 square foot home with an assessed value of \$602,000 (considered the average for Mill Creek) would pay South County Fire a total of \$882.73 for the year. This is based on the 2022 combined tax rate for South County Fire of \$1.35/\$1,000 assessed value, plus a \$70.03 fire benefit charge.

A fire benefit charge has gained popularity with property owners in recent years because it reduces government’s reliance on property taxes. It replaces some property taxes in funding emergency services, and is not a tax. It is a fee based on the size and use of a structure and

the resources required to fight a fire. Single-family homes pay less than commercial developments because it costs less to defend a house in a fire compared to a large warehouse.

More information about the annexation request and a fire benefit charge is available on the City's website at www.cityofmillcreek.com/fire. Residents and businesses also are encouraged to learn more about South County Fire at www.southsnofire.org.

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Incorporated in 1983, the City of Mill Creek is located in Snohomish County, Wash., and is home to nearly 21,000 people. Mill Creek is a physically active community with ten attractive neighborhood and community parks, more than 23 miles of nature trails, and facilities that support diverse recreational opportunities. Mill Creek offers an exceptional community experience, where natural beauty is preserved, neighborhoods flourish, businesses thrive and recreational opportunities abound. For more information, visit www.cityofmillcreek.com or follow us on social media at [Facebook.com/MillCreekWA](https://www.facebook.com/MillCreekWA), [Twitter.com/MillCreekWA](https://twitter.com/MillCreekWA) and [Instagram.com/CityofMillCreek](https://www.instagram.com/CityofMillCreek).