



# WESTERN LAKES FIRE DISTRICT

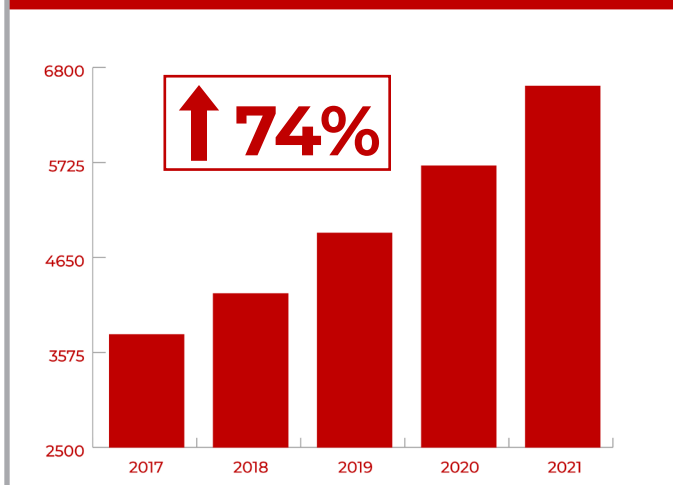
Options Assessment | March 2022

The communities served by the Western Lakes Fire District (WLFD) have identified a need to increase staffing levels throughout the district and recruit and retain staff by increasing wages to bring fire and EMS capabilities to appropriate levels and in line with industry standards.

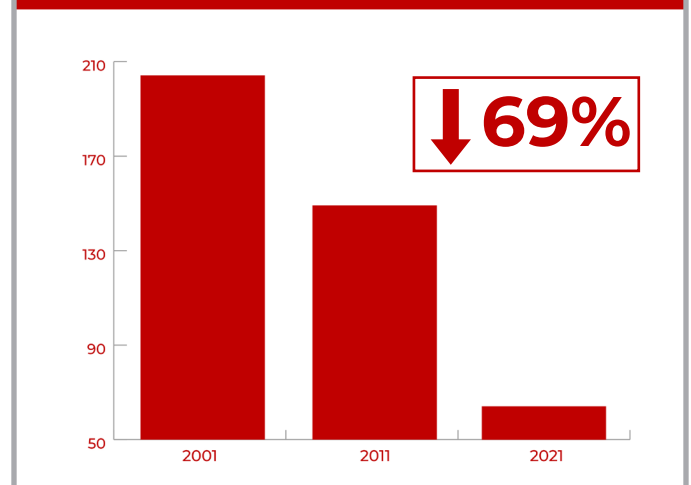
Increased population, development and calls for service coupled with a reduction in available staff - particularly local paid-on-call firefighters - have resulted in a critical need for additional funding.

## THE CHALLENGE

### INCREASED CALLS FOR SERVICE

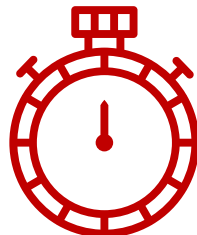


### DECLINE IN RESIDENT PAID-ON-CALL STAFF



### INCREASED RESPONSE TIME

Fire response times have increased and **DO NOT** meet national standards.



Five staff members are needed to respond to the vast majority of calls that require a fire apparatus. Current staffing requires in-station staff to wait for paid-on-call staff to arrive before they can respond to a call.

In recent years, WLFD has seen a decline in local paid-on-call-staff, significantly increasing response times.

## To meet the growing need for services, WLFD requires \$6.3M in additional funding for:

### Additional staff, including:

- **33** additional full-time firefighter / paramedics (11 per shift spread across the WLFD footprint)
- **15** internship positions (positions are not new, but new Department of Labor regulations require that intern positions be paid positions)
- **3** additional Battalion Chiefs (one per shift)
- **1** additional fire inspector
- **1** full-time administrative assistant

**Increased wages to avoid staff departures, be competitive in the market and enhance staff recruitment and retention.**

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO WLFD STAFFING CHALLENGES:

### Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo

Maintaining the status quo would likely compound the current stressors on WLFD services in the years to come as population and development trends continue and is **likely to further increase response times.**

### Option 2: Budget Cuts & Service Reductions

As of 2019, WLFD had the lowest per capita costs when compared to peer communities, further cuts cannot be sustained. **Cuts at the municipal level would be required to fund the necessary WLFD additions.** Examples of the type of services that would need to be cut could include road maintenance, and parks and other quality of life community services.

### Option 3: Identify Additional Sources of Revenue

There are two primary ways for communities to raise additional resources to support WLFD **without** impacting other critical services:

**Wheel Tax:** To fully fund the necessary WLFD staffing through a wheel tax, each municipality would need to levy an annual per vehicle tax as follows:

**Referendum:** WLFD communities can ask voters to consider a referendum to increase the property tax levy to raise \$6.3M. If passed, property owners would see the following annual property tax increases:

Municipality	Added Wheel Tax Per Vehicle
City of Oconomowoc	\$123
Town of Merton	\$283
Town of Oconomowoc	\$184
Town of Ottawa	\$219
Village of Dousman	\$114
Village of Lac LaBelle	\$518
Village of Summit	\$306

Municipality	Annual Property Tax Increase per 100K
City of Oconomowoc	\$80.10
Town of Merton	\$66.24
Town of Oconomowoc	\$62.65
Town of Ottawa	\$77.23
Village of Dousman	\$160.14
Village of Lac LaBelle	\$74.30
Village of Summit	\$82.47