

## **City of Soledad Fire Department Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the role of the Soledad Fire Department in the community?**

The Soledad Fire Department (SFD) serves the City of Soledad's approximately 23,000 residents. SFD is the first responder for all 911 emergency response, including emergency medical calls and fires. SFD answers over 2,000 calls for service annually – averaging 5-6 calls every day.

### **How critical is emergency response time in Soledad?**

In the event of a medical emergency like a heart attack, stroke or car accident, minutes and seconds really matter. We are fortunate to have professional firefighters/EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) protecting our community and responding to local 911 calls – especially considering our closest hospital room is a half-hour away in Salinas.

### **Does SFD currently have any specific needs?**

Our local fire department faces growing challenges that threaten SFD's ability to reliably serve our community. Ensuring safe, modern equipment is critical for effective 911 response. SFD has worn and outdated medical gear, breathing apparatus, protective clothing and tools used by firefighter/EMTs.

### **What other challenges does City of Soledad Fire Department face?**

Unfortunately, right now our local fire station and fire engine relies on bare minimum staffing. SFD can only afford a single engine staffed with 2 firefighter/EMTs on call around the clock.

This creates real concerns if two significant emergencies happen at the same time in our small community and is worsened by the growing threats of wildfires, floods and other disasters in our region that could further pull resources away from local 911 calls.

### **Why is a reliable source of local funding necessary for emergency response?**

In order to continue providing emergency response, our community needs a reliable source of local funding to maintain the availability of rapid 911 response when an emergency strikes and seconds really matter.

### **Do neighboring communities have successful solutions for funding emergency response?**

Our neighbors in the City of Greenfield confronted these issues by approving a local funding measure to support firefighter/EMT staffing and maintain rapid response in their community.

### **What happens if SFD does not receive additional funding?**

Without additional funding, Soledad Fire Department won't be able to improve service—and may struggle to maintain its current level of response as costs continue to rise.

### **Is Soledad considering a similar solution to Greenfield's measure?**

The Soledad community is studying the Greenfield local funding measure to decide whether a similar model could be a solution to protect emergency response and keep low homeowner rates here in Soledad.

The potential measure would impose a parcel tax similar to what Greenfield voters approved: levying \$220 annually for single-family residential parcels; \$163 per apartment unit; and additional rates for commercial, industrial and agricultural parcels, adjusted for inflation.

### **What projects could a potential measure fund?**

All funds raised by the local parcel tax could only be used for Soledad firefighter/EMT staffing, vehicles and equipment including:

- Help ensure round-the-clock staffing for rapid emergency medical and fire 911 response
- Improve response times to medical emergencies, car accidents, wildfires, floods and other natural disasters
- Ensure our local fire department has up-to-date working equipment and resources to assist in emergency medical situations and to fight wildfires
- Replace old or outdated medical equipment, breathing apparatuses, protective clothing and other equipment used by firefighters/EMTs
- Ensure our local fire engine has important medical incident response equipment and supplies

### **How can we be sure all funds will be spent responsibly?**

- All funds would be spent on our local fire department to provide fire protection and emergency medical response
- Independent audits and oversight would ensure funds are spent as noted
- No funds can be taken by the State or used for any other purpose

### **Didn't we just pass a measure to increasing funding for our City?**

In 2020, local voters approved Measure S, a general tax, to provide additional funding to maintain a variety of City services. However, the potential new measure would provide a dedicated source of funding specifically for our fire department. To maintain and improve the level of service SFD provides in the event of an emergency, additional funding is required.

### **How can I learn more or share my thoughts?**

Your opinion matters, please visit [CityofSoledad.com/LocalFunding](https://CityofSoledad.com/LocalFunding) to learn more and take our survey. You can also email [soledadfirestn@cityofsoledad.gov](mailto:soledadfirestn@cityofsoledad.gov) with specific comments or questions.