

## FACTUAL SUMMARY

### FAIRMOUNT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

4755 Isabell Street, Golden, CO | 303-279-2928

## Proposed Property Tax Increase and Subsequent Dissolution of Fairmount Fire Protection District in Connection with the Merger of Fairmount Fire Protection District into Arvada Fire Protection District

November 5, 2024 Coordinated Election

**THE DISTRICT:** The Fairmount Fire Protection District ("Fairmount Fire") is a local government of Colorado, which provides fire and emergency services to the citizens and property within its jurisdiction. The neighboring Arvada Fire Protection District ("Arvada Fire") is also a local government of Colorado authorized to provide fire and emergency services. Both Fire Districts are independent agencies and are not affiliated with any city government. Both Fire Districts are accredited, ISO Class I fire departments, and are dispatched by Jeffcom 911.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE:** Fairmount Fire is facing certain financial and operational challenges. Those challenges include lack of an adequate tax base to maintain robust response capabilities; reliance on mutual aid from other departments to respond to structure fires; only 12-hour per day contracted ambulance service; and inability to provide competitive firefighter wages or to retain a sufficient volunteer workforce. The Fairmount Fire Board of Directors evaluated the options for maintaining the availability of fire and emergency services within Fairmount Fire's jurisdiction, and determined that the health, safety, and welfare of Fairmount Fire's citizens and their property will be best served by merging Fairmount Fire into Arvada Fire as the sole regional fire and emergency services provider, and then dissolving Fairmount Fire.

At the November 5, 2024, coordinated election, Arvada Fire will put a ballot question on Fairmount Fire's ballot, to ask whether the Fairmount Fire area should be included into Arvada Fire's jurisdiction. Only Fairmount Fire voters will vote on this ballot question. At the same election, Fairmount Fire will also ask the Fairmount Fire voters for a 3.91 mill property tax increase to equalize Fairmount Fire and Arvada Fire's mill levies, and for the dissolution of Fairmount Fire by December 31, 2025. All three ballot measures must pass in order for any of them to be effective.

**ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PROPOSAL:** If successful, the proposal will merge Fairmount Fire into Arvada Fire, and Fairmount Fire will no longer provide fire and emergency services. For voters who prefer smaller governmental agencies, or who would prefer to see Fairmount Fire retained as a separate fire department, the merger of the fire departments may be contrary to their desires. Additionally, if successful, property taxes within the Fairmount Fire area will increase by 3.91 mills. The increased property taxes will go toward funding the fire and emergency services provided by Arvada Fire, many of which are not currently provided by Fairmount Fire, including an increased number of firefighters on shift, an all-career workforce, and 24-hour in-house advanced life support (ALS) ambulance service rather than 12-hour contracted services. Voters who do not support these additional services, or who support only some of them, may be opposed to an increase in property tax revenues to fund all of them. Some voters may prefer that Fairmount Fire decrease the level of fire and emergency services it provides rather than increase property taxes.

**ARGUMENTS FOR THE PROPOSAL:** If successful, the merger of Fairmount Fire into Arvada Fire is the most affordable option for continuing fire and emergency services throughout the Fairmount Fire area. Although the merger will increase property taxes by 3.91 mills, this amount is less than what Fairmount Fire will have to ask from its taxpayers if the merger is not successful. This is because, due to Fairmount Fire's limited tax base, Fairmount Fire would have to ask for a minimum 5.00 mill property tax increase in order to maintain its current level of fire and emergency services, or otherwise risk becoming insolvent. If successful, the Fairmount Fire area will also receive enhanced fire and emergency services as part of Arvada Fire, including:

- 50+ on-duty firefighters on all shifts
- 24-hours per day ALS ambulance response
- Paramedic staff on all ambulances and fire trucks
- Swift water and ice rescue response team
- Hazardous materials response team
- Increased access to emergency response equipment, apparatus, and training
- Dedicated mental health response team

**THE BALLOT MEASURES:** Please note that all of the ballot measures will appear only on the Fairmount Fire ballot and will be voted on only by Fairmount Fire voters. All three ballot measures must pass in order for any of them to be effective.

### **Arvada Fire Protection District Ballot Question**

If and only if the voters approve the Fairmount Fire Protection District's Ballot Question [TBD] and Ballot Issue [TBD] at the November 5, 2024 election, shall the following described area become a part of the Arvada Fire Protection District upon the following conditions?

Description of Area: All real property located within Fairmount Fire Protection District's boundaries.

Summary of Conditions:

1. Unless approved by the voters in advance, and subject to prior voter-approved mill levy adjustments, the maximum property tax that may be imposed by Arvada Fire Protection District is 14.813 mills, exclusive of refunds and abatement, beginning in assessment year 2025 (for collection in 2026);
2. The proposed inclusion is subject to the terms and conditions of the Pre-Inclusion Intergovernmental Agreement between Fairmount Fire Protection District and Arvada Fire Protection District effective March 26, 2024.

### **Fairmount Fire Protection District Ballot Issue**

SHALL FAIRMOUNT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT TAXES BE INCREASED \$1,668,780 (FIRST FULL FISCAL YEAR DOLLAR INCREASE) ANNUALLY, IN LEVY YEAR 2024 (FOR COLLECTION IN CALENDAR YEAR 2025) BY INCREASING THE DISTRICT'S EXISTING PROPERTY TAX BY 3.91 MILLS, AND SHALL ALL REVENUE AND ANY EARNINGS ON THE DISTRICT'S TOTAL AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX CONSTITUTE A VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE WITHIN THE MEANING OF ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION AND AN EXCEPTION TO THE LIMITATIONS SET FORTH IN SECTION 29-1-301 OF THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES, AND ANY OTHER LAW; PROVIDED, THAT SUCH PROPERTY TAX INCREASE SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE IF AND ONLY IF THE VOTERS APPROVE ARVADA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT'S BALLOT QUESTION [TBD] AND FAIRMOUNT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT'S BALLOT QUESTION [TBD] AT THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024 ELECTION?

### **Fairmount Fire Protection District Ballot Question**

If and only if the voters approve Arvada Fire Protection District's Ballot Question [TBD] and Fairmount Fire Protection District's Ballot Issue [TBD] at the November 5, 2024 election, shall the Fairmount Fire Protection District stop assessing a property tax beginning in assessment year 2025 and be dissolved for all purposes on or before the last day of calendar year 2025, with the current Board of Directors continuing in office thereafter for the limited purpose of winding up the District's affairs?