



City of Taylorsville

2600 West Taylorsville Blvd. Taylorsville, UT 84129

Dear Taylorsville taxpayer:

Recently you received a letter from the Salt Lake Valley Fire Service Area District talking about a potential annexation of Taylorsville into their district. As your city council, we realize that more information is warranted on this very important issue, so please review the important information included in this mailer.

Sincerely,

The Taylorsville City Council

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What is the Fire District?

The Salt Lake Valley Fire Service Area District (Fire District) does not provide the actual fire services, but is a special service district that funds fire needs. The Fire District levies property taxes which are then forwarded to the Unified Fire Authority (UFA) for our fire and emergency services. Currently Herriman, unincorporated Salt Lake County, Riverton, and Midvale are part of this Fire District.

The Fire District has six board members made up of elected officials from the three participating cities, and three from Salt Lake County. If Taylorsville joins the Fire District, one of our elected officials would be added to the board. The board assesses needs of the Fire District and decides on the tax levy.



Taylorsville Station 117

We Have Not Been Paying Our Own Way

Currently Taylorsville is a member of UFA through a contract for our fire, emergency medical services and other related emergency responses, and pays approximately \$3.9 million annually for these services.

Taylorsville is the most densely populated city in Utah, and because of it warrants a higher need for public safety response. Elected officials take this matter seriously, and have stated that the safety of residents is their number one priority.

At present, Taylorsville is a net importer of fire and emergency services. That means that other cities and other fire stations outside the city come in regularly to cover for us because we don't have enough coverage. Each year there are over 4,000 responses within the city, equaling 15 percent of total UFA responses. Taylorsville only contributes 8.8 percent to the overall UFA budget.

Additionally, one national standard recommends a staffing level of one firefighter per thousand residents, but current levels within the city are just over 0.6 per thousand. This trend cannot continue.

**Taxpayers
in other
cities are
subsidizing
us**



Is the Fire District more or less expensive than funding fire services ourselves?

	Joining Fire District	Not Joining Fire District
Yield from Fire District Tax	\$4,580,167	N/A
Cost of UFA Contract	N/A	\$3,886,524
Additional Personnel	Included	\$1,186,794 <i>(3 firefighters per shift / 10.5 FTE - includes salaries, training, equipment, etc.)</i>
Additional Vehicles	Included	\$80,000 <i>(avg including replacement costs for fire engine and ambulance)</i>
New Fire Station	Included	\$446,500 <i>(10-year bond on \$3.9 million)</i>
Rebuild of Station 117	Included	\$400,716 <i>(10-year bond on \$3.5 million)</i>
TOTAL ANNUAL COST:	\$4,580,167	\$6,000,534 (Difference of \$1,420,367)

What happens if we don't join the Fire District?

If Taylorsville decides not to join the Fire District, then the Taylorsville City Council will continue to be the decision maker and funding arm for fire services. A significant city tax increase in 2013 would be necessary.

In the budget approved June 2012, the city council only budgeted for a half-year contract with UFA, since joining the Fire District in January 2013 would cover the rest. If we do not join the Fire District, the council would need to re-open the budget and find a way to pay the \$1.95 million contract for the rest of the year. This could happen by reducing our fund balance (savings account) down to the minimum, by cutting services out of the budget, or by bonding for the remaining amount.

Because Taylorsville's fire and emergency needs are currently understaffed, the service costs will go up next year and the city will need to raise taxes to fund fire and emergency services. The council would need to bond for a new fire station, add additional trucks, and increase the contract amount with UFA for more firefighters in next year's budget. The estimated cost of doing this would be \$6 million. (See cost comparison chart below.) After 10 years the two bonds for the third fire station and Station 117 rebuild would be paid off, which then brings the costs down to \$5.2 million, however, funds will still need to be set aside for capital improvements on the three stations as they age. Joining the Fire District costs taxpayers \$4.5 million. The reason the Fire District is less is because several large businesses, such as Kennecott, are part of the Fire District. When funds are pooled, it saves money.

Pros of Joining the District:

1. The city receives additional coverage - one additional firefighter at Station 117, and two additional at Station 118, with consideration given for more emergency personnel once the new station is complete.
2. Immediate plans for construction of a third fire station built within the city.
3. Necessary capital improvements can be made to an aging Station 117, which the city does not have funds for at present. The city would not need to worry about future capital improvements to Station 118 or other stations.
4. Joining the Fire District fits with the city's historical "pay as you go" philosophy. The District covers all the costs of major infrastructure expenditures eliminating the need for the city to bond for a new fire station, which would cost \$3.9 million.
5. By joining the Fire District, funding for public safety remains constant and does not get cut because of city financial issues that could jeopardize public safety funding.

Cons of Joining the District:

1. The city council defers service-level decisions on fire and emergency service to a broader board of elected officials. One of Taylorsville's elected officials will serve on the UFA and Fire District board with representatives from other cities and county elected officials.
2. It is a long-term commitment. Removing the city from the District would require a majority vote of the people.

Where do I go if I have further questions?

For questions specific to the Fire District, contact Ryan Perry at 801-743-7204.

For questions on city issues, contact John Inch Morgan at 801-963-5400.

For city financial questions, contact Scott Harrington at 801-963-5400.

How does joining the Fire District impact my taxes in 2013?

Joining the Fire District means residents would see a separate line item on their November 2013 property tax notice for fire services. The city council approved a resolution to lower the city tax by 50 percent in 2013. So even though you will have an additional tax for fire, your city tax will be cut in half.

\$197,000 home value:

2012 city tax: **\$238.59** or **\$19.88** per month

2013 city tax: **\$119.29** + fire district tax **\$225.26** = **\$344.55** or **\$28.71** per month

That means the average monthly increase would be around **\$8.83**.

This still means your total tax for city services and fire needs increases, but if we don't join the Fire District, our fire and emergency contract next year will go up and will need to be funded through a significant tax increase.

Historically we have been proud of our low tax rate in Taylorsville. For the past several years, our city's revenue has declined \$1.7 million and some items have not been adequately funded. As such, we've had to defer maintenance on city projects and have not adequately funded public safety.

CITIES IN SL COUNTY	2013 TAX RATE
Riverton	0.005007
West Valley City	0.004857
Midvale	0.004765
Salt Lake City	0.004743
Herriman	0.004504
Taylorsville	0.003180
West Jordan	0.002674
Cottonwood Heights	0.002654
South Jordan	0.002376
Draper	0.002009
Murray	0.001817
Holladay	0.001791
Bluffdale	0.001630
Sandy	0.001520

If Taylorsville joins the Fire District next year, and none of the cities in Salt Lake County increase their taxes, here is where our city would rank in order of the highest to lowest taxed cities. These estimates include all police and fire combined.

*This includes both the city tax and fire district tax.

What do I do if I can't afford my property taxes?

There are programs that can help if you have a hardship with paying your property tax. Contact the Salt Lake County Treasurer's office at **385-468-8300** or treasurer.slco.org to see if you qualify for property tax relief.