

# 2017 LEVIES & PROPERTY TAX FACT SHEET

## Summary of 2016 Assessed Values and 2017 Levies

Property value increases this year were due to a mix of new construction and trends in the market which resulted in an increase in Thurston County's total taxable value from \$27.898 billion in 2015 to \$30.035 billion for the 2016 assessment year. This was an increase of \$2.137 billion or 7.7% compared to the previous year.

Actions by local voters and taxing district officials to increase their budgets had an impact on county taxes overall. For the 2017 tax year, however, the average levy rate countywide decreased to \$12.73 per thousand of assessed value compared to \$12.74 for the 2016 tax. The tax rate decrease is the result of a general increase in property values countywide.

## What is the overall increase in property taxes for 2017?

Voters continued to pass special levies to raise taxes in 2017. Total property tax to be billed in 2017 and then distributed to 44 taxing districts is \$381.5 million. This increase is \$26.5 million over 2016 property taxes and is due to voter approved levies and/or increases initiated by taxing districts.

[Click here](#) to see a breakdown of property taxes by taxing district.

## What caused 2017 property taxes to increase \$26.5 million more than property taxes levied for 2016?

There are multiple reasons for the countywide increase in property tax collections, including:

1. **Impact Due to Previous Years' Voter Approved Excess Levies** – Outstanding excess levies voted in by the voters for prior years will have an impact to each succeeding year's levy collection until the obligation is completed. Listed below are the excess levies that have passed since 2007 that will continue to have an impact on the 2017 taxes.

### **Maintenance & Operation and Technology & Capital Project Levies**

Fire District 1 – Rochester/Grand Mound passed a 3 year M & O levy on February 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$606,140, 2018 tax year - \$606,140, 2019 tax year - \$606,140.

Fire District 11 – Littlerock passed a 3 year M & O levy on February 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$606,235, 2018 tax year - \$606,235, 2019 tax year - \$606,235.

Fire District 5 - Black Lake passed a 4 year M & O levy on August 4, 2105. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2016 tax year - \$100,688, 2017 tax year -\$106,729, 2018 tax year - \$113,133 and 2019 tax year -\$119,921.

Fire District 9 - McLane passed a 4 year M & O levy on August 4, 2105. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2016 tax year - \$284,211, 2017 tax year -\$301,264, 2018 tax year - \$319,340 and 2019 tax year -\$338,500.

Centralia School District 401L passed a 4 year M&O levy on Feb 11, 2014. This proposition authorized the following taxes: \$5,625,000 for 2015 through 2018 collection. This amount is not an increase over the previous year.

Griffin School District 324 passed a 4 year M&O levy on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$2,350,000, 2018 tax year -\$2,233,500, 2019 tax year - \$2,267,000 and 2020 tax year -\$2,301,000. For the 2017 tax year this is an increase of \$75,000 from the previous year.

Griffin School District 324 passed a 2 year Capital Projects Levy on November 3, 2015. This proposition authorized the following taxes: \$550,000 for 2016 through 2017 collection.

North Thurston School District 3 passed a 4 year M&O levy on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$37,500,000, 2018 tax year - \$39,500,000, 2019 tax year - \$42,000,000 and 2020 tax year -\$44,500,000. For the 2017 tax year this is an increase of \$4,500,000 from the previous year.

Olympia School District 111 passed a 4 year M&O levy on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$25,500,000, 2018 tax year - \$26,300,000, 2019 tax year - \$27,100,000, and 2020 tax year - \$27,900,000. For the 2017 tax year this is an increase of \$2,040,000 from the previous year.

They also passed a 4 year Technology & Capital Projects levy on Feb 11, 2014. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2015 tax year - \$4,480,000, 2016 tax year - \$3,330,000, 2017 tax year - \$2,710,000, and 2018 tax year - \$2,720,000. For the 2017 tax year this is a decrease of \$620,000 over the previous year.

Rainier School District 307 passed a 4 year M&O on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$1,690,000, 2018 tax year - \$1,690,000, 2019 tax year - \$1,690,000, and 2020 tax year - \$1,690,000. This amount is not an increase over the previous year.

Rochester School District 401T passed a 4 year M&O on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$3,963,480, 2018 tax year - \$4,033,115, 2019 tax year - \$4,119,985, and 2020 tax year - \$4,198,856. This amount is not an increase over the previous year.

Tenino School District 402 passed a 4 year M&O on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$2,971,002, 2018 tax year - \$3,030,422, 2019 tax year - \$3,067,927, and 2020 tax year - \$3,067,927. For the 2017 tax year this is an increase of \$86,534 from the previous year.

They also passed a 6 year Capital Projects Levy on February 10, 2015. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2016 tax year - \$1,260,756, 2017 tax year - \$1,285,971, 2018 tax year - \$1,311,691, 2019 tax year - \$1,337,924, 2020 tax year - \$1,364,683, and 2021 tax year - \$1,391,975.

Tumwater School District 33 passed a 4 year M&O on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$15,298,000, 2018 tax year - \$15,910,000, 2019 tax year - \$16,547,000 and 2020 tax year - \$17,209,000. For the 2017 tax year this is an increase of \$588,000 from the previous year.

Yelm School District 2 passed a 4 year M&O on Feb 9, 2016. This proposition authorized the following taxes: 2017 tax year - \$10,700,000, 2018 tax year - \$11,200,000, 2019 tax year - \$11,700,000, and 2020 tax year - \$12,300,000. This amount is not an increase over the previous year.

### **Bond Levies**

Fire District 6 – East Olympia passed a 6 year Bond levy in the amount of \$2,000,000 on August 8, 2016.

North Thurston School District 3 passed a 20 year bond for \$175,000,000 on February 11, 2014.

Olympia School District 111 passed a 20 year bond for \$160,700,000 on February 9, 2016.

Tumwater School District 33 passed a 20 year bond for \$136,000,000 on February 11, 2014. This was not levied for in the 2015 tax year and only the interest amount was levied for in 2016.

City of Olympia passed a 20-year Fire Department Acquisition and Improvement Bond Levy on August 19, 2008. The first year of collection for this levy is 2010 tax year.

Rainier School District #307 passed a new bond levy on May 15, 2007.

- 2. Voter Approved Lid Lifts** – This occurs when voters of a taxing district vote to remove the levy limit on the regular levies by allowing an increase greater than 1%. Lid lifts may be either permanent or temporary and may be for just one year or span over six consecutive

years. Listed below are the lid lifts that have passed since 2007 that have an impact on the 2017 taxes.

### Lid Lifts

SE Thurston Fire Authority had a 6-year permanent lid lift pass on August 2, 2016. For the 2017 tax year there is a two cent increase to the levy rate.

Lacey Fire District 3 had a 6-year permanent lid lift pass on August 5, 2014. For the 2017 tax year there is no increase to the levy rate because the district was already at the statutory maximum rate.

City of Tumwater had a 6-year permanent lid lift pass on August 16, 2011. For the 2017 tax year there is a two cent decrease to the levy rate.

Fire District 17 – Bald Hills had a 6-year permanent lid lift pass on August 6, 2013. There was no change to the levy rate because the district was already at the statutory maximum rate.

### Fire District Merge

Fire District 7 merged with Fire District 8 – This merge was voted on November 4, 2014 and took effect for the 2016 tax year.

3. ***Taxing Districts Increase Their Budgets as Permitted by Law*** – Each year taxing districts can legally increase their regular levy (budget from property taxes) by the lesser of 1% or inflation, plus an adjustment for new construction. For the 2017 tax year, several taxing districts increased their regular levy by 1% plus an adjustment for new construction.
4. ***New Construction*** – There was a little more new construction for the 2016 assessment year, totaling \$441 million, up from \$327 million in 2015. New construction includes remodeling activity and new homes, subdivisions, & commercial buildings. Regular taxing districts are allowed to increase above the 1% limit by the assessed value of new construction times last year's levy rate.
5. ***Taxing Districts Use Banked Capacity*** – Banked capacity is when taxing districts do not levy (or ask) for the full amount of tax allowed by law and may use it for a subsequent year. For 2017 property taxes, City of Yelm, Fire Districts 5 & 8, Cemetery Districts 1 & 2, and Thurston County PUD used a small amount of banked capacity to set their levy. This action allows districts to request additional funds in the current year and resulted in a minimal tax increase for property tax collection in 2017.
6. ***Creation of Regional Fire Authorities*** – To create a regional authority for fire protection and emergency medical services funded by a regular property tax, not to exceed \$1.50 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

## **Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities**

Yelm Fire District 2, Fire District 4 (which includes the City of Rainier), & City of Yelm received approval from voters to combine the three districts into the S.E. Thurston Fire Protection Service Authority on February 9, 2010. This authority can levy up to \$1.50 per thousand for tax year 2011.

Fire District 1 & Fire District 11 received approval from voters to combine the two districts into the West Thurston Regional Fire Protection Service Authority on August 18, 2009. This authority can levy up to \$1.50 per thousand for tax year 2011.

### **7. *Impact Due to Previous Years' Voter Approved Regular Levies***

Tanglewilde Park and Recreation District had a 6-year voted regular levy pass on August 6, 2013. For the 2013 tax year, this levy was defeated. For the 2017 tax year this was a decrease to the levy rate of 2.6 cents per thousand of assessed value.

Olympia Metropolitan Park District was formed by election on November 3, 2015. For the 2017 tax year, the levy rate is \$0.526.

## **In general, what causes property taxes to go up or down?**

**Property tax increases** are generally caused by a combination of factors. For instance, when taxing districts ask for more money (that is, increase their budgets), property owners will pay more tax. Most districts set their budgets by a vote of their legislative body that may authorize increases up to their statutory or levy rate limits. This often results in increased taxes.

Taxes can also go up when voters approve excess levies for community services. Voters can approve a taxing district's request for excess levies for continuing operations or capital projects, such as school district maintenance and operation levies, building bonds, bonds for school buses, or bonds for fire trucks.

Taxes for an individual property owner may go up when the value of the property rises at a faster rate or declines at a slower rate than other properties in that particular area of the county. Taxes may also increase for an individual property owner when a new house is constructed on a previously vacant lot or when a property previously receiving an exemption (such as a senior/disabled person exemption program) is sold and becomes fully taxable.

**Property tax decreases** may occur when taxing districts ask for less money or voters defeat excess levies, when the levy rate for a regular taxing district is at its statutory maximum and the assessed value is declining, when a property qualifies for an exemption (senior or disabled citizens exemption, remodeling exemption), when value increases in some areas are less rapid than increases in other areas, or when the value decrease for a property is greater than other properties.