



Monroe Parks & Public Safety Services

Levy Lid Lift - Proposition 1



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

*The Monroe community has consistently expressed that quality parks and recreation activities and community safety are high priorities. In response to these community priorities, the City of Monroe has placed Proposition 1, **Parks and Public Safety Services Levy Lid Lift**, in the November 2024 general election. Proposition 1 addresses longstanding parks maintenance staffing deficiencies and supports police community safety services. If approved by Monroe voters, the property tax levy rate would be set at \$1.08 per \$1,000 of assessed value (AV), which is a \$0.22/\$1,000 AV increase from the current levy rate. On average, a Monroe homeowner would pay about \$10.84 more a month in property taxes to the City if Proposition 1 passes. Qualifying low-income seniors, disabled veterans, and others with disabilities will be exempt from the levy lid lift.*

*These **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQs) are intended to provide in depth information about why the City of Monroe placed the levy lid lift on the ballot, and if approved, what city services would be funded and how the levy would impact Monroe property taxpayers.*

1. Why is the City of Monroe seeking a levy for parks and public safety services?

Several community engagement surveys in recent years reflect a high value for quality parks and recreation activities and a safe community. Residents have even expressed a willingness to support an increased investment in Monroe’s parks system via a tax measure ([2022 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan](#)). Residents and businesses also strongly value safety. In response to these community priorities, the Monroe City Council unanimously approved placing a “levy lid lift” on the November 2024 general election ballot that would, if approved by Monroe voters, provide permanent investment in parks maintenance and public safety services.



Monroe’s recent growth has created demand for more park amenities, recreation activities, crime prevention, nuisance abatement, and animal control. Property and sales taxes, the primary revenue sources that fund city services, including parks maintenance and public safety services, are in decline. As property values have risen in recent years, Monroe’s levy rates have fallen from \$1.46 per \$1,000 of Assessed Value (AV) in 2013 to \$0.86 per \$1,000 AV in 2023. Sales tax revenues are not keeping pace with inflation and are expected to be below 2022 levels in the coming years. City operating costs have increased more than 25 percent due to inflation. The gap is widening between available revenues to maintain services the community values and the costs of providing them.

Parks Services

Parks maintenance generally includes mowing, weeding, sweeping, trash collection, landscaping, equipment repair, restroom maintenance, special event support, and vandalism repair. Staff levels were reduced in 2008 due to the recession from eight (8) full-time positions to six (6), which is the current level of staffing. In recent years there has been a 29% increase in parkland to maintain, a 44% increase in park field reservations and a 400% increase in city-permitted events. In addition, many city parks were

built over 30 years ago and have aging play structures, restrooms, and irrigation systems that need more frequent repair. The national parks staffing benchmark for acres maintained per full-time equivalent (FTE) is 12:1. Monroe parks maintenance staff are performing at 26:1.

Parks Maintenance Staff Cares for:

- 17 park & open space sites (288 acres)
- 14 miles of trails
- 160,000+ square feet of median strips
- 12 playgrounds
- 12 athletic fields
- 9 grass open fields
- 14 sports courts

Public Safety Services

Monroe residents and business owners are requesting enhanced police services and community relations safety programs. Police Department services are supported by Community Services Officers (CSOs) who address nuisance violations, animal control complaints, and parking violations, and participate in community events.

On a monthly average, CSOs respond to more than 65 parking enforcement complaints, over 35 animal control issues, and about 10 abandoned vehicle complaints. CSOs present the Monroe Police Department in community events such as National Night Out, Monroe’s Community Egg Hunt, Walk & Roll to School and the city’s Community (Police) Academy.



The City has historically had one CSO in the Police Department. Since there were vacancies in patrol in 2023, the Mayor recommended and the City Council approved, adding a second one-year term limited CSO position for 2024. This allowed the Police Department to respond more quickly to quality-of-life issues and complaints. The second CSO position has allowed the City to provide 7-day a week CSO service, enhancing response times.

2. How will the levy funds be used if Proposition 1 is approved?

If approved, Proposition 1 would provide permanent funding to:

- **Restore parks maintenance staffing to pre-recession levels** and address current service demands due to an expanded park system and increased users, visitors, and special events, and to address deferred maintenance issues.
- **Fund a second full-time Community Services Officer (CSO)** that would allow for 7 days/week coverage address nuisance, animal control, and parking violations and represent the Police Department at community events.
- **Fund a public safety position** in the Police Department that would best support community needs. The position description allows flexibility should the position be determined to be a commissioned (e.g., police officer) or non-commissioned position (e.g., CSO or embedded social worker).

If approved, Proposition 1 would generate a little more than \$1 million per year to support parks maintenance and public safety staff and equipment.



3. How much will my property taxes increase if the levy lid lift passes?

A Monroe homeowner with a median home value (estimated in 2023 by the Snohomish County Assessor to be \$591,000) would pay approximately \$10.84/month more in property taxes to the City if Proposition 1 is approved by Monroe voters. Proposition 1 proposes to set the property tax levy rate at \$1.08/\$1,000 per assessed value (AV) which is \$0.22 more than the current property tax levy rate of \$0.86 per \$1,000 AV. The levy does provide for certain exemptions (See Question 4)

4. Does Proposition 1 allow for tax exemptions?

Yes. As noted in the [City's Resolution](#) to place Proposition 1 on the November ballot, qualifying low-income seniors, disabled veterans, and other persons with disabilities may be exempt. For more information about the tax exemption program, contact the [Snohomish County Assessor's Office](#) at 425-388-3540 or assessor@co.snohomish.wa.us.

5. Why does the City need a voter approved levy lid lift to pay for parks maintenance and public safety if it has money to remodel City Hall?

Property and sales tax primarily fund the City’s operating budget and are allocated for daily operational costs, including staff salaries, maintenance, and essential services. In contrast, the money for rebuilding the Municipal Campus, including City Hall and Monroe Municipal Court, comes from funds such as the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET). The City receives REET funding through the sale of a residential or commercial building. This revenue source is legally restricted to capital projects like construction and infrastructure improvements. Therefore, capital funds like REET cannot be used for ongoing operational expenses. Funding for the Municipal Campus Improvement Project is not funded through an increase of property taxes paid to the City. By increasing the property tax levy rate, the City ensures it has sufficient operating revenue to maintain and enhance public safety and park services. For more information about the [Municipal Campus Improvement project](#), visit MonroeWA.gov and search the project title.



5. When will the vote on the Proposition 1 be held?

Monroe’s Proposition 1 will be on the November 5, 2024 General Election. For election and voter registration information, visit:

<p>Snohomish County Auditor’s (Elections) Office snohomishcountywa.gov/224/Elections-Voter-Registration 425-388-3444 (1-800-833-6388 or 7-1-1 for Washington Relay TTY/TDD) elections@snoco.org</p>	<p>Washington Secretary of State www.sos.wa.gov/elections 1-800-448-4881 elections@sos.wa.gov</p>
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6. What happens if Proposition 1 is not approved by Monroe voters?

Parks Services

If Proposition 1 does not pass by a simple majority (50% plus 1), park maintenance services would continue but at reduced levels or be deferred. Resources for programs, sports field uses, and events would be reduced. There would be fewer opportunities to add new events and reserve park facilities and sports fields. Future acquisitions and developments of new parks, trails and facilities such as the riverfront parks, Cadman site and Trombley Park would be delayed.



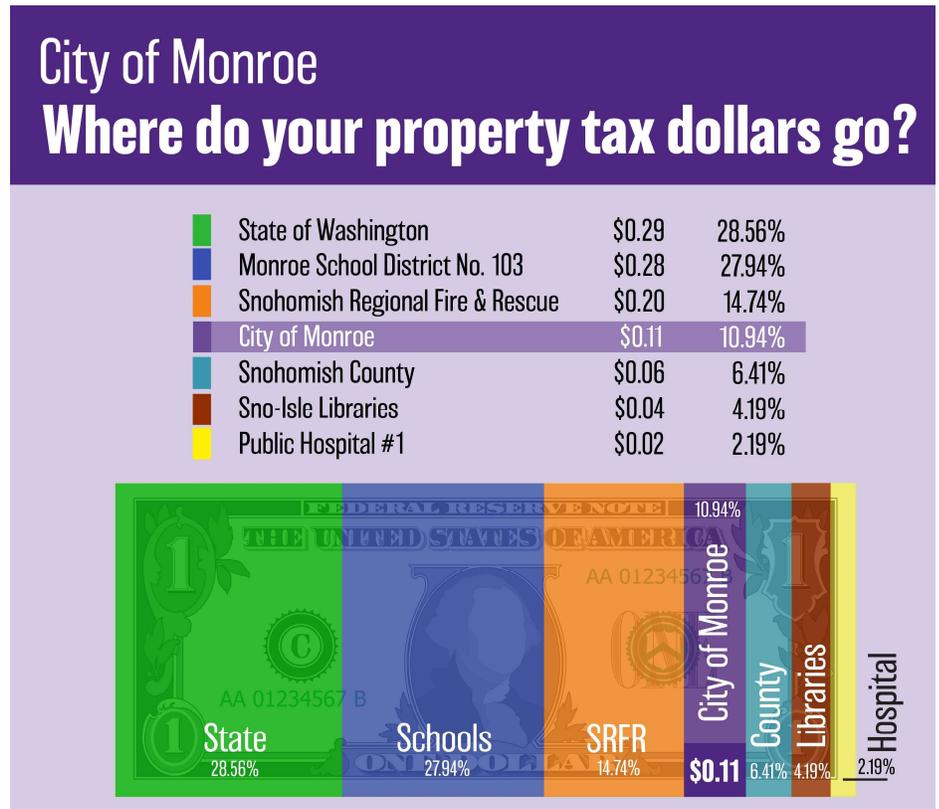
Police Services

If the ballot does not pass, Community Services Officer (CSO) staffing would revert to partial work-week coverage impacting response times for animal control issues and nuisance investigations and abatement. Additionally, parking and abandoned vehicles enforcement would be limited as would Police Department participation in community events.

7. How much of my property tax goes to the City of Monroe?

In 2023, a typical homeowner paid approximately 11 cents per \$1.00 in property taxes to the City of Monroe. This money supports essential city services, including parks maintenance and public safety. The graph to the right shows the percentage of taxes a person who owns property in Monroe generally pays. The City of Monroe receives 11%; other jurisdictions collectively receive 89%.

Property taxes in Snohomish County are calculated based on a property's assessed value (AV) determined by the County Assessor's Office. The County sets a levy rate, which is a dollar amount for every \$1,000 of AV. Property taxes are divided among local entities like cities, schools, hospitals, and fire districts.



8. How many votes are needed to pass Proposition 1?

Proposition 1 requires voter approval of a simple majority (50% plus 1).

9. What is a levy lid lift?

Washington’s levy-based property tax system allows a taxing jurisdiction, such as the City of Monroe, to collect a specified total dollar amount (the levy) per year. State law limits levy increases to 1% per year except for a voter-approved levy lid lift. A levy lid lift, if approved by a simple majority of voters within the taxing district, would raise the levy rate to an amount equal to or less than the statutory rate. For Monroe, the statutory rate is \$1.60/\$1,000 of assessed value.

More specifically, a levy lid lift ballot measure is a mechanism for voters to approve an increase in a taxing district’s total levy by more than the 101% limit. Although a levy lid lift allows the total levy dollar amount to increase more than 1% over the previous year, it does not allow the levy rate per \$1,000 AV to increase above the maximum statutory or constitutional rates.

10. How is the City going to balance its budget?

The Mayor and City Council are preparing for the 2025-2026 Biennial Budget adoption process to ensure a structurally balanced budget – one where revenue equals expenses. The Budget is to reflect the community’s vision and priorities and to achieve key strategic priorities established by the Mayor and City Council.

State law requires the City to balanced its budget. And like many Washington cities, revenue sources, such as property tax and sales tax, are on the decline and the cost of doing city business due to inflation is on the rise. This creates a gap between revenue and expenses. To address this gap, a reduction in services and an increase in revenue are considered.

City of Monroe Strategic Priorities

- Accessible parks and healthy waterways.
- Support local businesses and products.
- Build regional connections.
- Be friendly and responsive.
- Strengthen local connections.
- Ensure a safe place.

In August, the Mayor and City Council will begin the budget adoption process. To stay informed and involved, view meeting agendas, minutes and videos at MonroeWA.gov (Select the “[Meetings and Agendas](#)” icon)

11. What steps has the City taken to contain operating costs?

Parks Services

In 2018 and 2019, the City lobbied the State Legislature to create a voter-approved 0.1% parks sales tax option that would have the benefit of people who live outside of or pass-through Monroe to contribute toward maintenance of our city parks that they use whether visiting or living outside of the city limits in unincorporated Snohomish County. Unfortunately, it did not pass.

The City budgeted for more seasonal maintenance staffing to try to make up shortfalls, however, this has been unsuccessful in addressing the facilities maintenance deficit as seasonal staff are



limited-skill and temporary. Additionally, the use of volunteers has increased to support some maintenance efforts.

Cost savings have come from converting all park lighting to energy-efficient LED as well as equipment and technologies to gain efficiency in time and labor. The City has also encouraged donations of trees, flowers, park benches and event sponsorships to help offset some facilities and event costs.

Additionally, the City also aggressively pursues and secures numerous county and state grants annually that help to offset some facilities replacement costs. However, they are very competitive, not assured, cannot be used for ongoing maintenance and repairs, and require as much as 50% in local matching dollars to qualify for an award.

Police Services

Funding designated for police officer salaries has been used to support the second Community Services Officer (CSO) in the Police Department. Funding for this second CSO ends in 2024.



12. What is the difference between appraised value and assessed value?

State law requires that assessors appraise a property at 100% of its true and fair market value in money, according to the highest and best use of the property. Fair market value, or true value, is the amount of money that a willing and unobligated buyer is willing to pay a willing and unobligated seller. Assessed value is the value on which your property taxes are based. Assessed value is assigned to a property by a professional real estate appraiser from the [Snohomish County Assessor's Office](https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/5167/Assessor).

Snohomish County Assessor's Office



[snohomishcountywa.gov/5167/Assessor](https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/5167/Assessor)



425-388-3433



assessor@snoco.org

13. What is a levy?

As part of the budget process, the City of Monroe establishes the amount of property tax revenue needed to fund the City's budget. That amount needed to fund the budget is called the levy amount (or "levy.") It is the total amount to be collected from taxpayers by a taxing district. By law, this number is expressed in terms of a dollar rate per \$1,000 of valuation.

By November 30 of each year, the amount of taxes to be levied by taxing districts are certified to the county assessor. The county assessor then calculates the levy rate necessary to raise that amount of revenue by dividing the total levy amount by the assessed value of taxable property in the district.

With Washington State's levy-based property tax system, when the total value of property within a jurisdiction falls, the rates increase to raise the same amount of money. Conversely, when property values increase, then the rate would decrease to collect the same amount of money.

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MonroeWA.gov
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(9-1-1 for emergencies)

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- Monroe This Week newsletter published weekly
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 - Parks & Recreation Quarterly E-Newsletter
 - City news
 - Road closures
 - Parks and transportation project updates
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- MonroeWAPolice
- CityofMonroeWashington
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- Choose Monroe Magazine, Sno-Sky Adventure Magazine, Monroe Events Guide, City project mailers
- Attend City Council, Commission, and advisory board meetings
- Submit a request for service, complaint or compliment via Monroe Listens from website

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