

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## Shoreline Fire and Northshore Fire Departments Regional Fire Authority Ballot Measure

The Shoreline Fire Department and the Northshore Fire Department Boards of Commissioners have approved a Regional Fire Authority measure to be placed on the February 11, 2025 special election ballot.

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# FAQ



## What is a Regional Fire Authority?

A Regional Fire Authority is a special-purpose district created to provide fire protection and emergency medical services. It operates very similar to a fire district and is formed by consolidating fire districts or departments, typically in neighboring regions, to improve service efficiency and reduce costs. Regional Fire Authorities are funded through mechanisms such as property tax levies and fire benefit charges. Since 2007, sixteen Regional Fire Authorities have been created in Washington State, including six in King and Snohomish Counties.

## Why form a Regional Fire Authority?

Regionalization is driven by the desire to improve services and achieve cost-efficiencies. A Regional Fire Authority allows for the highest levels of service while providing many efficiencies. Creating a Regional Fire Authority will ensure that the communities we serve have the best fire and emergency medical services while stretching tax dollars by eliminating redundancies.

## What is the Interlocal Agreement between the Shoreline and Northshore Fire Departments?

The Shoreline Fire Department and Northshore Fire Department have talked about regionalization for decades. As a planned first step toward regionalization, the Shoreline and Northshore Fire Departments signed an inter-local agreement (ILA) in 2022. Under the ILA, Shoreline Fire provides fire and emergency medical services to the cities of Kenmore and Lake Forest Park. The ILA has improved service-level performance for the residents of Shoreline, Kenmore, and Lake Forest Park while saving taxpayers about \$1.4 million dollars annually.

## Will a Regional Fire Authority provide additional service improvements beyond those provided under the current ILA?

Yes. The ILA between the Shoreline Fire Department and Northshore Fire Department has led to significantly improved fire and emergency medical services in our communities. A Regional Fire Authority will lead to additional service improvements, including:

- ✓ **ENHANCED COLLABORATION**- Firefighters will continue to train and work together, ensuring coordination, collaboration, and culture-building.
- ✓ **MORE EFFICIENT USE OF APPARATUS**- Resources can be assigned on an as-needed basis.
- ✓ **IMPROVED PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**- Assignments will no longer be limited by district boundaries, boosting efficiencies.
- ✓ **INCREASED TECHNICAL RESCUE CAPABILITIES**- Particularly in Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, and the surrounding areas.
- ✓ **BETTER RESOURCE POOLING**- A RFA strengthens grant applications, such as a potential future rescue/fire boat on Lake Washington.

## Will a Regional Fire Authority provide additional taxpayer savings beyond those savings achieved under the current ILA?

Yes. The ILA between the Shoreline Fire Department and Northshore Fire Department has led to significant taxpayer savings. A Regional Fire Authority will lead to additional taxpayer savings, including:

- ✓ We estimate that there will be **\$196,000 in annual expense savings** from forming a Regional Fire Authority.
- ✓ In 2026 there will also be over **\$3 million in savings** from removing redundant annual carryover funds.
- ✓ There will be a **significant reduction** in overall equivalent levy rate due to efficiencies.
- ✓ A RFA can **reduce liability and risk**, lowering the need for reserves and enabling reinvestment in services or reduced levy rates.
- ✓ A RFA brings **sustainability**, protects property values from fluctuation, and diversifies revenue sources.
- ✓ Shoreline's growth will benefit all communities in the RFA through **better resource sharing**.
- ✓ A RFA will help maintain our **Class 2 WSRB rating** and will continue to save on insurance costs for homeowners and businesses, placing us in the top 2% of all fire departments in the State.

## Will a Regional Fire Authority provide additional efficiencies beyond those achieved under the current ILA?

Yes. The ILA between the Shoreline Fire Department and Northshore Fire Department has led to greater efficiencies. A Regional Fire Authority will provide additional efficiencies, especially with administrative duties, including:

- ✓ The Fire Chief and other administrative staff will no longer need to manage multiple boards, budgets, and policies.
- ✓ Financial staff can handle revenues and programs like GEMT and BLS transports more efficiently.
- ✓ The Administrative Director can manage staff without concerns over location of personnel.
- ✓ Support services will improve by managing fewer separated budgets, allowing better use of equipment and resources without ownership constraints.

## How will a Regional Fire Authority ensure local control?

The Regional Fire Authority will improve citizen involvement and representation on the Regional Fire Authority Governance Board, including:

- ✓ The two existing fire districts, Shoreline and Northshore, will continue to elect Fire Commissioners to the governing board.
- ✓ A Regional Fire Authority will combine the Shoreline Board of Commissioners, with elected Commissioners from Lake Forest Park and Kenmore gaining direct oversight of the entire Regional Fire Authority.
- ✓ A Regional Fire Authority will ensure that there will be equal representation of elected Commissioners from Northshore Fire and Shoreline Fire with five members each serving on the Regional Fire Authority Board.

## Who will vote in the Special Election on February 11, 2025?

Voters from both existing fire districts (Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, and Shoreline) will vote on the formation of the Regional Fire Authority and its revenue sources (property tax levy and fire benefit charge). Even though both the Northshore Fire and Shoreline Fire Departments have existing fire benefit charges, establishing a Regional Fire Authority with a fire benefit charge requires a super-majority of 60% plus one vote.



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