

# FAQs: City of Bothell and Snohomish County Fire District 10 Potentially Joining the Regional Fire Authority (RFA)

This FAQ provides factual information about the proposed annexation and its potential operational, financial, and governance impacts. It is intended for public education and does not advocate for or against the ballot measures. Preliminary financial estimates may change as additional analysis is completed.

## Why is the Shoreline Fire Department RFA considering further regionalization?

The Shoreline Fire Department became a Regional Fire Authority (RFA) in 2025 by combining the Shoreline and Northshore fire departments and serving Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, and the Town of Woodway (under contract).

From the outset, regional discussions included the potential addition of the City of Bothell and Snohomish County Fire District No. 10 (Sno10). The goal is to build a strong, sustainable fire and emergency medical services (EMS) system with the staffing, training, resources, and financial stability needed to serve a growing region and increasingly complex emergency needs.

Regional fire and EMS service is the predominant model in King and Snohomish counties. The organizations are evaluating whether expanding the RFA would strengthen service and provide long-term benefits for participating communities and Firefighters.

## What are the next steps?

The evaluation and development process is complete, and the RFA governing documents have been amended to allow Bothell and Sno10 to join the Shoreline RFA, subject to voter approval.

Bothell and Sno10 have each placed a measure on the November 3, 2026, ballot. Each measure requires a simple majority in its respective jurisdiction. Current Shoreline RFA voters do not participate in these annexation votes because the decision is whether Bothell and Sno10 will join the existing RFA.

If approved, annexation would take effect March 1, 2027. If not approved, then further consideration of future operations and management would have to be evaluated.

## Have Firefighters been involved in the process?

Yes. Firefighters have participated in discussions about regionalization for decades, with particularly active involvement over the past 10 years. Department leadership and the Firefighters' union have evaluated service models and potential impacts, with a focus on Firefighter safety, professional development, and sustainable service delivery.

## Why are Bothell and Sno10 considering joining the RFA?

The Shoreline RFA is a potential fit for several reasons:

**Proximity:** The RFA borders Bothell and Sno10 and already serves surrounding communities.

**Existing partnerships:** The Shoreline RFA already provides executive fire administration, Operations and Support Services management, and fleet maintenance for Bothell and Sno10. The Shoreline RFA Fire Chief also serves as Fire Chief for Bothell and Sno10.

**Regional alignment:** All three organizations operate within the same mutual-aid network and share similar service expectations and regional emergency-response responsibilities.

## How would firefighting or EMS response be affected if Bothell and Sno10 join the RFA?

Residents would continue to receive fire and EMS services through their existing stations and Firefighters. The annexation plan maintains current stations, Firefighter positions, and the existing emergency-response model.

The primary change would be organizational: Bothell and Sno10 would become part of a larger regional system with greater staffing depth, expanded training opportunities, and additional operational support. Future service decisions would be made by the RFA based on community needs and regional service demands.

### **Will additional fire stations be needed?**

Yes. Current planning identifies a need for one additional station in Bothell and one in Shoreline, **regardless** of whether Bothell and Sno10 join the RFA.

The proposed Bothell station would be located in the southern portion of the city and serve residents in Bothell and south Kenmore. The proposed Shoreline station would be located at the former volunteer fire station site in Richmond Beach and serve northwest Shoreline and Woodway.

These stations are intended to address population growth and improve emergency-response performance. Current planning anticipates that these two stations would meet all regional needs for many decades.

### **How would the new fire stations be funded?**

The RFA Board will consider the station projects and determine final funding. The current plan combines two funding sources:

- Fire impact fees from new development would fund a portion of the projects.
- A voter-approved capital bond would fund the remaining costs.

Project costs are still being developed. If Bothell and Sno10 join the RFA, bond costs could be spread across a larger service area, and the plan would include the additional Bothell station.

The current estimated levy rate for the bond is \$0.03 to \$0.058 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For an \$800,000 home, that equals approximately \$24 to \$46.40 **annually**. The RFA is considering a bond measure in 2027 if the station plan moves forward.

### **What would regionalization mean for Firefighters' jobs, pay, and benefits?**

Firefighters would transition into the regional fire authority with equivalent positions, pay, and benefits. The regional model is also expected to expand opportunities for advanced training, promotion, and specialization.

### **How would Bothell and Sno10 be represented in the RFA?**

If Bothell joins, three Bothell City Councilmembers would serve on the RFA Board. The nine-member Board would include:

- Three Fire Commissioners representing Shoreline;
- Three Fire Commissioners representing Lake Forest Park and Kenmore; and
- Three Bothell City Councilmembers.

Under the proposed plan, Sno10 is scheduled to dissolve at the end of 2027. Its service area would become part of the RFA rather than continue as a separate fire district with its own governing board.

### **What could joining the RFA mean for fire service taxes?**

Financial impacts would begin in 2028 and will be finalized through development of the RFA's 2028 budget. Preliminary analysis identifies approximately \$3 million in potential annual or ongoing efficiencies from combining the organizations. These efficiencies could benefit taxpayers throughout the region over time.

Using 2026 dollars, preliminary analysis estimates a potential reduction of approximately \$0.30 per \$1,000 of assessed value for taxpayers in Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, and Kenmore—about \$240 per year of savings for an \$800,000 home.

For Sno10 taxpayers, preliminary estimates indicate potential savings of approximately \$0.20 per \$1,000 of assessed value—about \$160 per year for an \$800,000 home.

Bothell currently funds fire services through its general fund. The City has indicated that it intends to reduce its general-fund property tax rate to reflect the change in fire service delivery. The City of Bothell will provide details about the potential impact on Bothell taxpayers.

It needs to be stressed that these estimates are **preliminary** and expressed in 2026 dollars. Actual 2028 rates will reflect the adopted budget, assessed valuation, revenues, staffing, and other costs. More detailed financial information will be available in late 2027 as the 2028 budget is developed.

### **Why was the Shoreline RFA created?**

In 2025, voters in Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, and Shoreline approved creation of the Shoreline Fire Department RFA, combining the Northshore and Shoreline fire departments.

The RFA created a regional organization serving neighboring communities and strengthened existing connections with Bothell and Sno10. Regionalization has been studied for decades because a larger system can create efficiencies, increase service capacity, and provide resources and capabilities that are harder for individual departments to achieve on their own.

The purpose is to sustain strong fire and EMS services as the region grows while managing long-term costs responsibly. Existing partnerships and increasing service demands make this an appropriate time to consider whether expanding the RFA would provide additional regional benefits.