



Future Fire Alternatives



Surveying Washington
Fire Protection Districts
Fiscal, Political and Labor Impacts for a
Growing Municipality

Tackling the Topic

- Fire Services Authority vs Fire Protection District

DISTRICTS DEFINED

- What Legislation Addresses + Intends
- Why Interesting to City
- How They Are Formed
- Who May Benefit + Why
- What Are Potential Next Steps



FSA vs FPD

A Spokane-centric comparison

Fire Protection Service Authority

Formation	Council resolution – voter approval not required but must negotiate ILA
Governance	Governed by ILA; City retains most control
Taxing Authority	Levies up to \$0.50/ \$1k AV; city levy reduced \$ for \$; requires vote
Fire Benefit Charge	May adopt FBC for non-property tax revenue; requires vote
Labor	City employees transfer; existing CBA retained
Budget Isolation	Partially isolated; still subject to City budget pressures
Speed to Stand-Up	Faster: Legislative action only (no vote) but ILA time

Fire Protection District

Voters or Council resolution + voter approval
Council may serve as 7-member board or opt into elected independent Board of 5 Fire Commissioners
Levies up to \$1.50/ \$1k AV; city levy NOT reduced for districts formed after 1 Jul26 <small>*depending on votes,LL,compression</small>
May adopt FBC for non-property tax revenue; requires vote
City employees transfer; existing CBA retained w/ separate bargaining unit established
Fully isolated
Slower: Requires election



| Community Responsibility

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The fire district model provides transparent, voter-driven funding that ensures essential services remain strong and locally accountable.

-WA State Legislative Context on SB 6037

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Fire Protection District Fundamentals: Allowable FPD Services



Engage in
Fire Prevention +
Suppression



Provide
EMS



Protect
Life + Property



Train:
Internal + External

Q | We already perform these functions; Why explore an FPD?

| The Fiscal Drivers

\$ 163 MM

Biennial Fire Budget 2025-26

Why Transition Now?

The City's general fund is strained, and on-going Fire overtime costs compete directly with police, parks and libraries for limited dollars.

A dedicated FPD could reduce this competition while providing better stability to Fire.

| The Roadmap to Formation



Resolution

Pass Council resolution to explore single-city district.



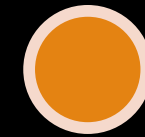
Fiscal Plan

Develop detailed financing and governance structures.



Voter Action

Establish a district: Either by simple majority or with 60% if want FBCs.









Operations

Transfer assets, labor/personnel, and taxing authority.
Enter ILA for I/F services, charges.

Fire District Fundamentals

Resolution Includes

-  Financing Plan
-  Dollar Amount FPD Will Levy
-  City's Highest Levy Reduced by FPD's Levy
-  Estimated Net Dollar Impact on Property Owners
-  Fire Benefit Charge (FBC) Information
-  Hearing Notice

Strategic Autonomy



Dedicated Focus

Moving from a City department to district model grants fire services independent governance, allowing for long-term capital planning without being subject to city-wide budget constraints.

New Revenue Architecture

Funding Tool	Rate/Limit	Fiscal Impact
Property Tax Levy	Up to \$1.50 per \$1k AV ~ \$1.00 w/ FBC	Stable, predictable base funding for operations
Fire Benefits Charge (FBC)	Up to 60% of Budget	Based on structure risk, not property value. May reduce levy.
EMS Levy	Up to \$0.50 per \$1k AV	Dedicated funding for EMS.
Impact Fees	Varies by Study	Requires new growth to pay for service expansion.

Benefit Charge Advantage



Equity in Funding

Unlike property taxes, the Fire Benefits Charge (FBC) correlates to the resources needed to protect a structure.

Large, high-risk commercial structures pay more than smaller residential units, even if their AVs are similar, resulting in a fairer distribution of costs than property taxes.

Benefit Charge Advantage



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Governance Shift



Elected Board

Oversight may move from City Council to dedicated 5- member Board of Fire Commissioners.



Focused Policy

Commissioners focus 100% on fire and safety, insulating Board from general municipal politics.



Direct Accountability

Funding requests made directly to voters as fire-specific measures rather than as part of City budget.

Labor and Operations

Preserving the Workforce

Transitions are designed to maintain operational continuity. In a single-city transition, existing firefighters typically transfer with seniority, rank and benefits intact. Collaboration with IAFF Local 29 is a legal and practical requirement during the planning phase.

- Collective Bargaining Continuity
- Standardized Training + Safety



Pension and Contract Security



LEOFF RETIREMENT

Personnel remain within the LEOFF retirement system, ensuring pension security.



CBA REALIGNMENT

Existing Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) are often adopted or renegotiated to reflect FPD as the new employer.



EMPLOYEE VOICE

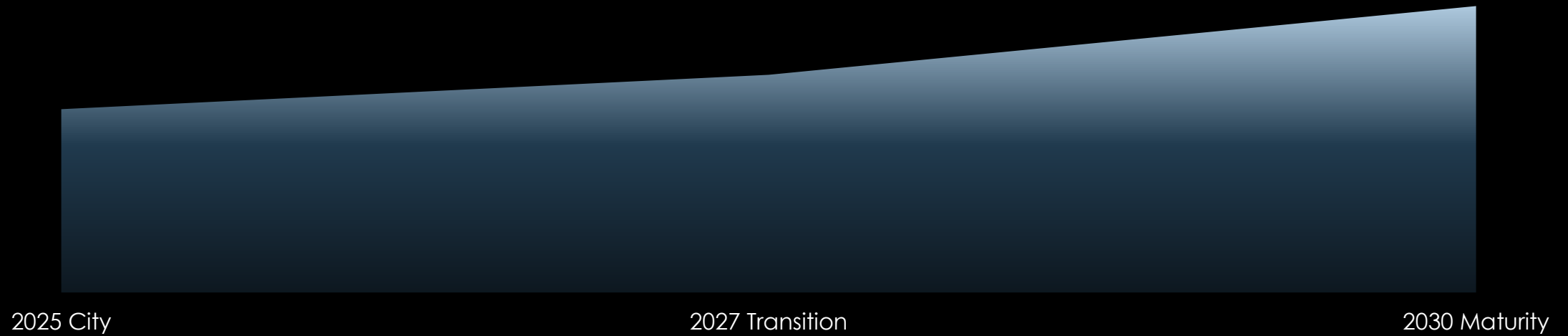
RCW 52.02 mandates consultation with labor unions on governance and financing plans before formation.



HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

Trusts and benefits are typically maintained or enhanced through the FPD's specialized HR focus.

Revenue Stability Forecast



PROJECTED FIRE SERVICE FUNDING STABILITY | Decoupling from the City allows for fire-specific revenue growth through FBCs and dedicated levies.

Questions and Discussion

NEXT STEPS

PHASE 1

- Data Gathering + Analysis
- Provide Information Toward Preparing Initial Resolution to Public Safety Committee
- Pass Resolution

PHASE 2

- Community Engagement + Outreach
- Asset + Fiscal Analysis
- Transition Planning

