

**Washington State
Boundary Review Board
for Spokane County**

1026 West Broadway Avenue
Spokane, WA 99260

(509) 477-4237

brb@spokanecounty.org

www.spokanecounty.org/boundary

PARTIAL MERGER PROCESS FOR FIRE DISTRICTS IN SPOKANE COUNTY

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The transferring of property from one fire protection district to another for purposes of better fire protection is considered a “partial merger” (RCW 52.06.090). The fire district gaining the territory is the merger district; the fire district losing the territory is the merging district as defined in RCW 52.06.010.

RCW 52.06 is the Washington State Law which describes the process for the partial mergers for fire districts. This process is outlined below for fire districts in Spokane County including the SEPA (RCW 43.21C) and Boundary Review Board (RCW 36.93) steps.

1) There are two ways to initiate the partial merger process according to RCW 52.06.090:

- A petition, signed by the majority of the commissioners of the merging district, is filed with the commissioners of the merger district; **OR**
- A petition signed by not less than fifteen percent of the registered voters residing in the area to be merged is filed with the commissioners of the merging district. According to the Spokane County Elections Department, if there are no registered voters in an area, an election can not be held and therefore, property owners can sign the petition.

2) The commissioners of the merging district approve or deny the registered voters/property owners petition if the second method of petition is used,

3) With either method, the petition is presented to the commissioners of the merger district.

4) At this time, the SEPA requirements for an Environmental Checklist and a Threshold Determination can be completed and sent to the Department of Ecology and affected agencies by the merger district. There is a fourteen-day comment period.

5) After review of the SEPA comments, the commissioners of the merger district can approve or deny the petition.

6) In the event, that either board of fire commissioners does not approve the petition, the proposal may still be approved by the Boundary Review Board.

7) A Notice of Intention is filed with the Boundary Review Board. An agency with a concern about the proposal has 45 days to request a public hearing before the Boundary Review Board. If there is a hearing, the Boundary Review Board may approve, modify, divide assets/functions or deny the petition. If there is no hearing before the Boundary Review Board, the Notice of Intention is approved after the 45-day period elapses.

8) The Boundary Review Board then sends to the merger Fire District, either its written Hearing Decision or a Certification of the Expiration of the 45-Day Period.

- 9) The matter is then set for an election unless sixty percent of the registered voters/property owners have signed the petition.
- 10) If approved in an election or if over sixty percent of the registered voters/property owners sign the petition, the Board of Fire Commissioners for the merger district adopts a final resolution officially including the area (including any modifications that the Boundary Review Board has made).
- 11) This Final Resolution and the recording fee are sent to the Boundary Review Board Office.
- 12) The Boundary Review Board Director will verify that the legal description is the same as approved by the Boundary Review Board and will record one copy with the Spokane County Auditor and file two copies with the Spokane County Assessor and one with the Spokane County Board of Commissioners.
- 13) The Boundary Review Board then changes official maps and notifies the various county departments and affected agencies of the changed boundaries.