



Elkhorn Fire Protection District (FPD) Proposed Reorganization Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ provides information about the proposed dissolution of the Elkhorn Fire Protection District (Elkhorn FPD) and County Service Area 9 (CSA 9) (Garcia Bend) and what it means for residents and landowners. It explains why the change is happening, how fire protection services would be provided in the future, and how the public can stay involved in the decision-making process.

1. Why is the Elkhorn FPD being dissolved?

The Elkhorn FPD is being dissolved because it cannot reliably sustain long term the resources or capacity to provide adequate fire protection and emergency response services. Increasing calls on I-5 and Old River Road have outpaced Elkhorn FPD's response capabilities, and its volunteer population base is declining. FPD Board Members recognize its ability to provide critical public safety services is not sustainable.

The Yolo Local Agency Formation Commission (Yolo LAFCo), which organizes districts in Yolo County, determined that contracting services from the adjacent Cities will improve reliability, efficiency, and public safety. On August 21, 2024, the Elkhorn FPD Board adopted a resolution initiating this Yolo LAFCo application process to dissolve the District.

Yolo LAFCo's reorganization plan being considered is to dissolve the Elkhorn FPD and CSA 9 (Garcia Bend) and annex both areas into the Springlake FPD to assume service contracts and finances. CSA 9 (Garcia Bend) has been added to the LAFCo Reorganization because its services are already provided by the City of West Sacramento and there are organizational efficiencies with consolidating into one district.

2. Where will our fire protection and emergency response services come from?

Per the reorganization plan currently under consideration, for Elkhorn the fire protection and emergency services would be provided by neighboring cities through contractual agreements with the City of West Sacramento (for the response area south of CR 124) and the City of Woodland (for the response area north of CR 124). These agencies have the personnel, equipment, and infrastructure to respond more effectively to emergencies in the area. For Garcia Bend, services would not change and will continue to be provided by the City of West Sacramento.

3. Will our service be better?

Service for Elkhorn FPD landowners and residents will improve. The transition is designed to improve service levels by ensuring consistent response times, state of the art equipment, and a larger pool of professionally trained firefighters. Residents would benefit from a more sustainable and professionally managed fire protection system.

During LAFCo's last review, a countywide committee of rural fire protection district chiefs advised that, for responder safety, fire calls should ideally be staffed with four personnel, and rescue or emergency medical calls with three. Elkhorn FPD's response data from 2019–2021 showed that most calls were handled by a single responder, with two responders available at times. Over the most recent four-year period (2021–2024), Elkhorn FPD averaged approximately one call per week (46 calls per year across all types). City service contracts will help ensure that responses consistently meet recommended staffing levels, ensuring safety for all first responders.

Currently, the West Sacramento and Woodland Fire Departments provide services through a mutual aid agreement and are dispatched if requested or if Elkhorn FPD does not respond within three minutes. Elkhorn FPD also lacks the resources to reciprocate effectively under the mutual aid agreement, creating an imbalance for the Cities.

As noted previously, services for Garcia Bend would not change and services will remain the same.

4. Will our insurance costs/ISO rating go down?

People want to know that their local fire department can protect them and their property. Insurers want that same assurance. The property insurance industry, therefore, often calls upon the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to determine just how well fire departments protect the communities they serve. These capabilities are represented by a metric known as an ISO score. An ISO score is a rating given to fire departments that evaluates their ability to offer adequate fire protection on a scale of one to 10. A Class 1 score indicates excellent service from a fire station and a Class 10 score suggests that the department doesn't meet minimum standards.

Elkhorn FPD and CSA 9 currently do not have an ISO rating and are therefore assigned a default Class 10. ISO ratings apply district-wide, and the Springlake FPD presently holds a Class 2Y rating, which is a significant improvement. If annexation moves forward, ISO will be contacted to conduct a new evaluation of the Elkhorn and Garcia Bend areas, but there is no known reason the same rating could not be achieved. A higher ISO rating often results in lower insurance premiums, and property owners may see reductions of roughly 20% to 50%, depending on their carrier. Residents should check directly with their insurance provider to confirm any potential savings.

4. How will the City contracts be paid for?

Funding for the service contracts would come from existing revenue sources, including property tax allocations and the existing special assessment of \$2.50 per acre that has supported Elkhorn FPD. These funds would help pay for contracted services. CSA 9 (Garcia Bend) does not currently have a special assessment, and one will be added as discussed below.

However, property tax and special assessment revenues alone are not sufficient to cover the Cities' estimated service costs per the table below (based on 2024 data). Therefore, Yolo County is anticipated to subsidize these costs for a five-year period.

	Woodland Service Area	West Sac Service Area
Revenues		
Property Tax	\$ 32,419	\$ 34,661
Special Tax	\$ 48,134	\$ 21,075
Total Revenues	\$ 80,553	\$ 55,736
Estimated Service Cost*	\$ 293,129	\$ 88,036
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (212,576)	\$ (32,300)

** call duration methodology is estimated and creates significant variability in cost*

5. Will my property taxes or special assessments go up?

For Elkhorn, not in the near term. Property taxes and special assessments would not increase because of this dissolution and annexation into Springlake FPD. The existing tax revenue and special assessment that funds Elkhorn FPD would continue to support fire protection services under the new arrangement. No new

special assessment formulas are anticipated for at least five years, and any proposed increase would require landowner approval.

Elkhorn FPD’s current assessment includes a Consumer Price Index (CPI) escalator, which allows the assessment to be adjusted as needed. The CPI measures changes in the cost of a broad range of goods and services over time. Over the past three years, CPI increases have ranged from 2.4% to 3.0%. For fiscal year 2024/25, the average assessment paid by property owners (excluding large LLC-type landowners) was \$281. Using that amount as a baseline, a 3.0% CPI increase for one year would result in an assessment of \$289. As a maximum-case example, if the assessment increased by 3.0% each year for five years, it would be \$326.

For Garcia Bend landowners, an annual special assessment would be a new cost. Currently, there is no special assessment for fire protection services in this area and property tax revenues have not kept pace with increased City costs. If CSA 9’s territory is annexed into the Springlake FPD, landowners would see a new special assessment added to property tax bills per the Springlake FPD formula below:

Springlake FPD Assessment Formula for Garcia Bend Only

Property Type	Proposed Rate	Unit
Single Family	\$149.98	each
Multi-Family	\$46.43	res unit
Commercial/Industrial	\$646.85	acre
Office	\$318.48	acre
Storage	\$497.75	acre
Parking Lot	\$33.72	each
Vacant	\$26.08	each
Agriculture	\$2.83	acre
Range Land & Open Space	\$1.86	acre

6. What will happen to the Elkhorn Fire Station?

The Elkhorn Fire Station is located on land leased from the State Lands Commission and the Cities do not plan to staff the station. If no changes occur to the lease and the reorganization plan goes through, the station and lease would transfer to the Springlake FPD. The Elkhorn FPD has indicated it will reach out to the State Lands Commission to explore a lease transfer to the Elkhorn Volunteer Association, a private non-profit organization. A review of the current lease terms and potential additional or alternative uses of the property is currently underway. Regardless of the lease holder, the plan is to maintain the station for public safety and community use.

7. How will my community needs and interests be represented?

Per the reorganization plan currently under consideration, the Springlake FPD would expand its 5-member Advisory Committee to 7-members to include representation from Elkhorn and Garcia Bend. The Committee would advise the Board of Supervisors (acting as the Springlake FPD Board) on the adequacy of services, review of budgets and financial reporting, or other matters as needed.

8. What opportunities are there for public input on the Reorganization?

The Elkhorn FPD has scheduled a community meeting on **Wednesday, April 8th at 5:30 p.m.** at the Elkhorn Fire Station. Residents and landowners are encouraged to attend to ask questions and can also reach out to LAFCo staff at (530) 666-8048 or at lafco@yolocounty.gov.

Additionally, Yolo LAFCo will hold a public hearing on the Elkhorn FPD Reorganization scheduled for **April 23rd at 9:00 a.m.** at the County Administration Building in Woodland. Public hearing notices will be mailed to landowners and registered voters 21-days prior to the hearing. Anyone may submit written comments or provide verbal comments at the hearing, which will be considered by the Commissioners.

If LAFCo approves the reorganization, a protest process will follow, and protest notices will be mailed allowing landowners and voters to protest the decision by mail-in ballot or in person. The Protest Hearing has not been scheduled yet but will likely be held on **May 26th in West Sacramento**.

Those interested in attending either of these meetings should check the LAFCo schedule and agendas, available at www.yololafco.org/meetings.

9. What happens at the Protest Hearing?

Any registered voter and/or landowner in Elkhorn FPD and CSA 9 (Garcia Bend) would be eligible to protest LAFCo's approval. Any protest votes that have either been mailed in advance or provided in person at the hearing are tallied, in separate categories for: (1) registered voters; and (2) landowners with a weighted vote per assessed value owned (and anyone can submit protests in both categories if eligible for both).

The next steps will depend on the percentage of protests received in either category (i.e. not both added together):

- 0% - <25% protest is received: the LAFCo action goes through
- 25% - <50% protest is received: the question goes to an election
- If 50% or more protest is received: LAFCo's action is terminated

If an election is needed, it typically occurs at the next general election (i.e. the question is added to Official Elections Ballots for voters registered within Elkhorn FPD and CSA 9 (Garcia Bend). The results of the election are a simple majority vote, and there is no landowner vote.

10. If the Reorganization is successful, when will it take effect?

The goal is for the reorganization changes and new services to take effect July 1, 2026, coinciding with the new fiscal year. If the Reorganization is successful via an election, the election process will delay the effective date. It's anticipated the FPD would change its name to better reflect its broader territory.

11. If the Reorganization fails, what happens then?

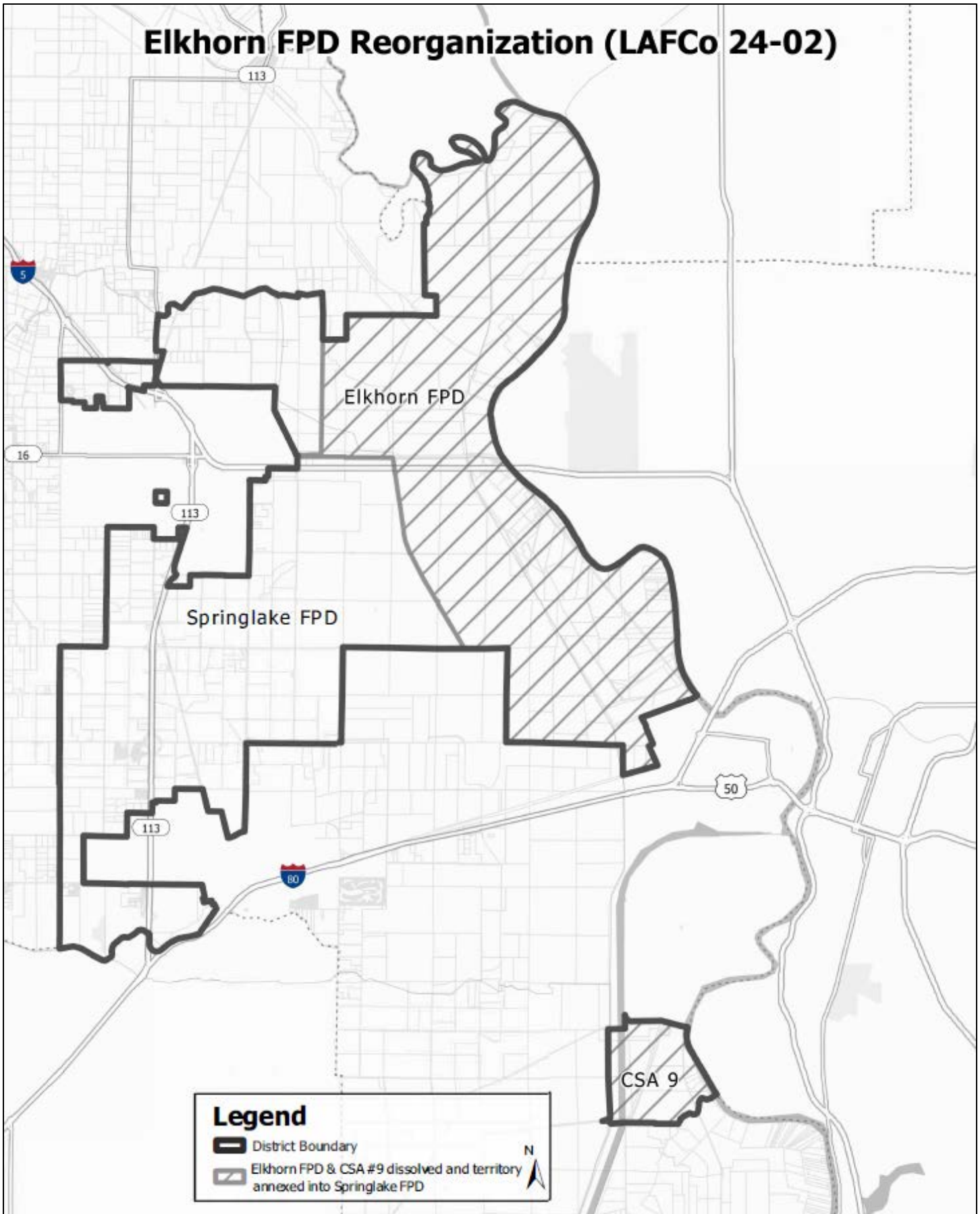
For Elkhorn, its FPD would remain and would be expected to continue to experience challenges with service levels, consistent response times, and an adequate pool of trained firefighters. Under the current mutual aid agreement, if there's no Elkhorn FPD response within three minutes of a dispatch call, the West Sacramento or Woodland Fire Department would then be called to respond. However, the Cities could decide not to provide mutual aid going forward.

For Garcia Bend, the services from the City of West Sacramento would remain status quo.

12. Attachments:

1. Proposed Elkhorn FPD Reorganization Map
2. Proposed Springlake FPD Map Showing Service Providers and Contracts (assuming Reorganization goes through)

Elkhorn FPD Reorganization (LAFCo 24-02)



Proposed FPD Contracts and Service Providers

