



# ***SOLANO FIRE DISTRICTS MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW FINAL***

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Prepared for the  
Solano Local Agency Formation Commission  
by Policy Consulting Associates, LLC.



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# ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

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ADWF:	Average dry weather flow
af:	Acre-feet
afa:	Acre-feet per annum
ADC:	Average Daily Calls
AFB:	Air Force Base
ALS:	Advanced Life Support
BLM:	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
BLS:	Basic Life Support
BOE	California Board of Equalization
CAD:	Computer Aided Dispatch
Cal Fire:	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CCICCS:	California Incident Command Certification System
CC&R:	Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions
CEQA:	California Environmental Quality Act
CFPD:	Cordelia Fire Protection District
CHP:	California Highway Patrol
CIP:	Capital improvement plan
CSDA:	California Special District Association
CY:	Calendar year
DFG:	California Department of Fish and Game
DFPD:	Dixon Fire Protection District
DIF:	Development Impact Fee
DME:	Durable Medical Equipment
DPA:	Cal Fire Direct Protection Area
DOF:	California Department of Finance
ECC:	Emergency Command Center
EMS:	Emergency Medical Services
EMT:	Emergency Medical Technician
EOA:	Exclusive Operating Area
EOC:	Emergency Operations Command
ERAF:	Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund
EVFPD:	East Vallejo Fire Protection District
FDAC-FASIS:	Fire District Association of California- Fire Agency Self-Insurance System
FEERAM:	Fire Engine Equipment Replacement and Maintenance
FEMA:	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FD:	Fire District
FF:	Firefighter
FPD:	Fire Protection District
FRA:	Federal Responsibility Area
FTE:	Full-Time Equivalent
FY:	Fiscal year
GIS:	Geographic Information Systems
GM:	General Manager
GP:	General Plan



ISO:	Insurance Services Organization
JHA:	Jurisdiction having authority
JPA:	Joint Powers Authority
LAFCO:	Local Agency Formation Commission
LEMSA:	Local Emergency Medical Services Agency
LNU:	Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit of Cal Fire
LRA:	Local Responsibility Area
MCL:	Maximum Contaminant Level
MFPD:	Montezuma Fire Protection District
mg:	Millions of gallons
MSA:	Municipal Service Area
MSR:	Municipal service review
MTZ:	Mutual Threat Zone
NA:	Not applicable
NFPA:	National Fire Protection Association
NP:	Not provided
OASA:	Out-of-Area Service Agreement
OES:	Office of Emergency Services
OIT:	Operator in training
OPR:	Governor’s Office of Planning and Research
PPP:	Public Private Partnership
PSAP:	Public Safety Answering Point
RMS:	Records Management Systems
SADC:	Sheriff’s Average Daily Calls
SEMSC:	Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative
SDMRA:	Special District Risk Management Authority
SFPD:	Suisun Fire Protection District
SOI:	Sphere of influence
SR:	State Route
SRA:	State Responsibility Area
USFS:	United States Forest Service
VFPD:	Vacaville Fire Protection District
Firefighting staff:	Staff that respond to service calls
Administrative staff:	Staff that do not respond to service calls, such as administrative assistants, bookkeepers, etc.
Call:	Service call or paid call
Call firefighter:	Firefighter that is on call at certain times and receives a minimal stipend for services.
Paid firefighter:	A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

# ***PREFACE***

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Prepared for the Solano Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), this report is a service specific municipal services review—a state-required comprehensive study of fire services within Solano County. This MSR focuses on fire protection districts and other municipal service providers in Solano County that provide fire suppression and emergency medical services. The intent of this document is to provide a detailed description of how fire services are offered in Solano County.

## **CONTEXT**

Solano LAFCO is required to prepare this MSR by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000, et seq.), which took effect on January 1, 2001. The MSR reviews services provided by public agencies whose boundaries and governance are subject to LAFCO. Special districts providing fire-related services are the focus of this review.

## **CREDITS**

The authors extend their appreciation to those individuals at many agencies that provided planning and financial information and documents used in this report. The contributors are listed individually at the end of this report.

Solano LAFCO Interim Executive Officer, Elliot Mulberg, provided project direction and review. Solano County prepared maps and provided GIS analysis. This report was prepared by Policy Consulting Associates, LLC, and co-authored by Jennifer Stephenson and Oxana Wolfson. Oxana Wolfson served as project manager. Jennifer Stephenson provided research analysis. Chief Steve Kovacs, of Professional Management Associates, provided technical expertise and input throughout the review process. Arianna Menon provided research assistance.

The local agencies have provided a substantial portion of the information included in this document. Each local agency provided budgets, financial statements, various plans, and responded to questionnaires. The service providers participated in interviews covering topics such as workload, staffing, facilities, regional collaboration, and service challenges.



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a Municipal Service Review (MSR) of fire services provided in Solano County by fire protection districts prepared for the Solano Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). An MSR is a State-required comprehensive study of services within a designated geographic area, in this case, Solano County. The MSR requirement is codified in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000 et seq.). After MSR findings are adopted, LAFCO will begin updating the spheres of influence (SOIs) of the agencies covered in this report.

## SERVICE PROVIDERS

**Figure 1-1: Fire Protection Districts in Solano County**

This report focuses on special districts under LAFCO jurisdiction in Solano County that provide fire and emergency medical services (EMS). These providers were last reviewed in an MSR in 2006. As shown in Figure 1-1, six fire protection districts were reviewed as part of this review. This MSR also includes information on other fire and EMS service providers, such as the seven city fire departments in Solano County, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) and Travis Air Force Base (AFB), to better depict the service configuration in Solano County and their relation to providers in the County.

<i>Fire and EMS</i>
Cordelia Fire Protection District (CFPD)
Dixon Fire Protection District (DFPD)
East Vallejo Fire Protection District (EVFPD)
Montezuma Fire Protection District (MFPD)
Suisun Fire Protection District (SFPD)
Vallejo Fire Protection District (VFPD)

## SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

**Figure 1-2: Existing Boundaries and Spheres of Influence**

For a majority of the districts reviewed the spheres of influence were not updated to reflect boundary changes or reorganizations. The SOIs are, therefore, currently out of date

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Boundary Area (square miles)</i>	<i>SOI Description</i>
Cordelia FPD	56	To be updated
Dixon FPD	312	Annexable SOI
East Vallejo FPD	1.5	To be updated
Montezuma FPD	200	Coterminous SOI
Suisun FPD	140	To be updated
Vacaville FPD	135	To be updated

and need to be updated during the upcoming SOI update process to account for the overlooked boundary changes. As shown in Figure 1-2, two of the six fire protection districts in Solano County have SOIs that are current and that were updated after each boundary change that had taken place. Dixon FPD’s SOI extends beyond its boundary area to include territory with no established local fire provider in the vicinity of Liberty Island Road, and is defined as an “annexable SOI,” meaning that LAFCO anticipates this area, which is within the SOI but presently outside the agency’s bounds, will eventually be

annexed into its bounds and will be served by Dixon FPD. At present, Dixon FPD provides services to the area outside its bounds but inside its SOI when requested through the countywide mutual aid agreement. Montezuma FPD's SOI is coterminous to the District's boundaries.

## **GROWTH AND SERVICE DEMAND**

Each fire agency considers its customer base to be the residents, businesses, visitors, structures, and open spaces in its service area, as well as the people traveling through the area. In 2013, the districts in Solano County responded to approximately 2,944 calls for fire, EMS and other emergency response services. Among all the districts, the largest volume of calls was responded to by Cordelia FPD. Montezuma FPD had the lowest volume of calls. A majority of the calls that the districts responded to were medical emergency calls.

There are approximately 424,233 residents in Solano County in 2014. Since 2000, the number of residents has grown by 7.5 percent. Projections for future growth differ depending on the source (California Department of Finance, California Department of Transportation, and the Association of the Bay Area Governments (ABAG)), and range between 0.7 and 0.9 percent average annual growth over the next two decades. According to ABAG, growth will be clustered in three major centers, including Fairfield, Vacaville and Vallejo. The City of Rio Vista, however, is anticipated to see the most dramatic population increase of all the cities in Solano County.

## **PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

Planning for future capital improvement needs is considered a best management practice, which is recommended for all public agencies regardless of size. With the exception of Dixon FPD, which is included as part of the city fire department's capital improvement plan (CIP), none of the reviewed districts have adopted a formal CIP. All of the districts, however, conduct at least some short-term capital improvement planning as part of the annual budgets or as separate informal capital needs lists. Three of the six districts, including Cordelia FPD, Suisun FPD and Vacaville FPD, are reportedly in the process of developing their respective CIPs.

CIPs can be tailored to the needs of the agency, but should include a list of anticipated replacement and improvement needs with an anticipated timeline for completion and a financial plan for achieving those goals. It is recommended that a CIP have a planning horizon of at least five years and be updated annually to reflect current conditions.

With regard to strategic planning, none of the fire protection districts in Solano County have a strategic plan or conduct formal future growth planning for their respective service areas. Although Cordelia FPD and Dixon FPD conducted some strategic planning in the past, their plans are now outdated.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Of the six districts reviewed, five maintain websites or web pages where documents and information are made available to the public. Although Vallejo FD maintains a web presence, there is no information regarding EVFPD. It is a recommended practice that districts maintain a website where all district information, including board meeting

materials, district and Board policies and up to date contact information, is readily available to constituents.

Residents of the fire protection districts in Solano County are generally interested in district activities as demonstrated by the low vacancy rate on their boards of directors. Only Dixon FPD reported that generally there is low public interest in the operations of the District, as there has been no public attendance at the Board's regular meetings in at least the last five years.

Overall, all districts reviewed demonstrated accountability by performing outreach activities beyond what is legally required, and maintaining a system in place to address customers' complaints. In addition, a majority of districts reviewed demonstrated accountability in their cooperation with LAFCO during the MSR process.

Dixon FPD, East Vallejo FPD, Suisun FPD, and Vacaville FPD have adopted and were able to provide the required conflict of interest codes. Cordelia FPD and Montezuma FPD were not able to provide their codes, but Cordelia FPD reportedly maintains one. All of the districts, with the exception of Vacaville FPD, have adopted a set of policies, such as bylaws, that guide the operations of their Boards of Directors. As reported by Vacaville FPD, its Board's efforts are guided by the insurance guidelines. All board members of five of the districts, including Cordelia FPD, Dixon FPD, East Vallejo FPD, Suisun FPD, and Vacaville FPD, have reportedly undergone ethics training in the last two years. MFPD board members do not receive ethics training and are not required to do so because they do not get compensated or receive expense reimbursements.

## **FINANCING**

Fire protection districts in Solano County rely on a variety of revenue sources to fund fire agency operating costs—primarily property taxes, special taxes, service charges, and intergovernmental funds and grants. The largest funding source for the districts is ad valorem property tax. Service charges in the form of reimbursement from the State for use of strike teams and other charges for services constitute about 10 percent of total revenue sources. The agencies periodically receive intergovernmental funds, grants and donations. Only Cordelia FPD supplements funding with special tax revenue. None of the districts in the County levy a benefit assessment. Opportunities for sustainable supplementary funding sources are limited.

The financial ability of each of the providers is constrained by available revenues and legal limitations on revenue increases. A majority of the agencies reviewed in this report have experienced declines in revenues, due to a decrease in property values, in the face of a growing demand for services. The financial condition of the fire districts has been exacerbated by a number of substantial expenditure increases, including fuel, apparatus maintenance, liability insurance, physicals, training, and personal protective equipment costs.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

Fire protection districts serving Solano County operate 21 fire stations. Of these, 14 were reported to be in good or excellent condition, seven in fair condition and none in poor condition. A majority of the stations belonging to the fire districts require replacements or

upgrades of varying degrees. Cordelia FPD requires an additional station. Vacaville FPD identified a need to replace its Station 67. Vacaville FPD is also in the process of constructing Station 68.

With the exception of East Vallejo FPD, all the fire protection districts in Solano County, contract with Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for dispatch services. East Vallejo FPD is dispatched through the City of Vallejo. The cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo each have their own dispatch centers. Communication equipment is sometimes not compatible making it difficult to communicate when coordinating a mutual aid call. Many of the districts have mutual aid agreements with the cities. Dispatch becomes a challenge if the nearest responder is a city agency or if a city requires assistance from a district. Often times it takes multiple calls to different departments to get assistance sent. The districts support a consolidated fire dispatch center of some form as was recommended in a feasibility study in 2010 to address these concerns; however, no movement toward dispatch consolidation has occurred since that time.

## SERVICE ADEQUACY

The fire and EMS adequacy measures reviewed here include firefighter certification rates, response times, Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings, and coverage adequacy.

Among the fire protection districts in Solano County, Cordelia FPD has the highest Firefighter I certification rate of 92 percent. Dixon FPD staff (City of Dixon FD staff) has a similarly high Firefighter I certification rate of 90 percent. The situation is similar for EMT 1 certification, for which Cordelia FPD and Dixon FPD are leading with 100 percent and 79 percent certified, respectively. On the other side of the spectrum, Montezuma FPD has the lowest certification rates for Firefighter I and EMT 1 with 13 and 19 percent, respectively.

Montezuma FPD is the only district in Solano County that does not track its response times for each incident and was not able to provide the requested data, and therefore was omitted from the data analysis. Response times are the primary indicator of an agency's ability to provide emergency services, and as such, each of the fire agencies should make efforts to track their response times and analyze the results to identify where improvements can be made. According to the data provided by the five districts—Cordelia FPD, Dixon FPD, East Vallejo FPD, Suisun FPD, and Vacaville FPD—the fastest responder is EVFPD with a median response time of five minutes and 30 seconds; Dixon FPD has the longest median response time of 11 minutes and 30 seconds.

The ISO classifies fire service in communities from 1 to 10, indicating the general adequacy of coverage.<sup>1</sup> The best ISO rating of thee belongs to East Vallejo FPD. Dixon FPD has an ISO rating of 10 in its rural areas. Most of the fire districts in Solano have a rating of eight in their rural and remote areas.

On average each fire station in Solano County covers approximately 39 square miles. Dixon FPD serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles served per station. Densely

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<sup>1</sup> Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1.



populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area per station for East Vallejo FPD<sup>2</sup> is 8.3 miles per fire station.

## ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several issues and challenges faced by the fire protection districts in Solano County, which were identified over the course of this service review. The summary of issues and the recommendations are outlined in Figure 1-3.

**Figure 1-3: Issues and Recommendations**

Issues	Recommendations
Negative impact of city annexations on district financing	Countywide fire provider
County policies limit development outside of city boundaries, thus negatively affecting district financing	Countywide fire provider
Volunteer firefighter availability is unpredictable	Collaborative volunteer recruitment program
Districts struggle with remote and hard to reach areas with extended response times	Response time tracking within district zones and/or closest available resource response system
Districts suffer from a severely disjointed communication and dispatch system	Develop milestone path and start implementing steps towards a consolidated dispatch center.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OPTIONS

During the course of this MSR process, it was identified that full consolidation of all fire providers in Solano County is the preferred governance structure alternative. Consolidation promotes efficiency, professionalism and public safety. The primary benefits of consolidation are economies of scale, which is achieved through pooling of resources, and regional fire service coordination and planning to the greatest degree. Additionally, Solano County fire protection districts would be able to mitigate existing financial constraints through consolidation. However, prior to any movement forward on this or the other options discussed in this report, it is essential that the fire agencies address the dispatch and communication issues through consolidation into a single dispatch center. Without significant improvements to the system, the agencies will continue to face inefficiencies in response to incidents, which poses a public safety concern, regardless of the governance and operational structure of the fire providers.

Other forms of consolidation could be used as interim steps towards the long-term goal of formation of a countywide fire agency. Functional consolidation options for fire protection districts in Solano County include contractual arrangements with city fire departments and a joint powers authority (countywide or between comparable agencies). A closest unit response system is a strongly preferred alternative that would breakdown boundaries between the agencies and promote movement toward countywide

<sup>2</sup> Territory serviced includes the City of Vallejo.



coordination and collaboration. In terms of full consolidation, the reorganization may occur 1) regionally to include only districts along the I 80 corridor or between districts and neighboring city fire department, 2) between all districts that serve unincorporated County, or 3) among all fire service agencies in Solano County, including districts and city fire departments.

Once again, the disjointed dispatch and communication system must be addressed prior to any of these options being considered or implemented. Complete consolidation of dispatch into a single facility offers the most practical and forward thinking solution to the numerous identified issues with the current system. It is recommended that the fire agencies become proactive in coordinating dispatch consolidation efforts, to ensure the highest level of public safety service possible. This report outlines several steps to generate discussion and momentum towards change. First and foremost, all fire providers are encouraged to form a dispatch JPA to actively discuss options, determine the ideal outcome, and address any issues necessary to initiate a solution.

The fire agencies in the County have demonstrated extensive collaboration with one another in the form of joint studies and grants, which may be indicative of the potential for consolidation of all providers countywide. The providers appear to be open to consolidation in some form and have initiated informal discussions among one another. It is recommended that further detailed study be conducted regarding countywide consolidation to quantify costs and benefits and stakeholder support.

## ***2. LAFCO AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES REVIEWS***

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This report is prepared pursuant to legislation enacted in 2000 that requires LAFCO to conduct a comprehensive review of municipal service delivery and update the spheres of influence (SOIs) of all agencies under LAFCO's jurisdiction. This chapter provides an overview of LAFCO's history, powers and responsibilities. It discusses the origins and legal requirements for preparation of the municipal services review (MSR). Finally, the chapter reviews the process for MSR review, MSR approval and SOI updates.

### **LAFCO OVERVIEW**

After World War II, California experienced dramatic growth in population and economic development. With this boom came a demand for housing, jobs and public services. To accommodate this demand, many new local government agencies were formed, often with little forethought as to the ultimate governance structures in a given region, and existing agencies often competed for expansion areas. The lack of coordination and adequate planning led to a multitude of overlapping, inefficient jurisdictional and service boundaries, and the premature conversion of California's agricultural and open-space lands.

Recognizing this problem, in 1959, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr. appointed the Commission on Metropolitan Area Problems. The Commission's charge was to study and make recommendations on the "misuse of land resources" and the growing complexity of local governmental jurisdictions. The Commission's recommendations on local governmental reorganization were introduced in the Legislature in 1963, resulting in the creation of a Local Agency Formation Commission, or "LAFCO," operating in every county.

LAFCO was formed as a countywide agency to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the orderly formation and development of local government agencies. LAFCO is responsible for coordinating logical and timely changes in local governmental boundaries, including annexations and detachments of territory, incorporations of cities, formations of special districts, and consolidations, mergers and dissolutions of districts, as well as reviewing ways to reorganize, simplify, and streamline governmental structure. The Commission's efforts are focused on ensuring that services are provided efficiently and economically while agricultural and open-space lands are protected. To better inform itself and the community as it seeks to exercise its charge, LAFCO conducts service reviews to evaluate the provision of municipal services within the County.

LAFCO regulates, through approval, denial, conditions and modification, boundary changes proposed by public agencies or individuals. It also regulates the extension of public services by cities and special districts outside their boundaries. LAFCO is empowered to initiate updates to the SOIs and proposals involving the dissolution or consolidation of special districts, mergers, establishment of subsidiary districts, and any reorganization including such actions. Otherwise, LAFCO actions must originate as petitions or resolutions from affected voters, landowners, cities or districts.

Solano LAFCO consists of five regular members: two members from the Solano County Board of Supervisors, two city council members, and one public member who is appointed by the other members of the Commission. There is an alternate in each category. All Commissioners are appointed to four-year terms. Special districts are not represented on the Commission.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES REVIEW ORIGINS**

The MSR requirement was enacted by the Legislature months after the release of two studies recommending that LAFCOs conduct reviews of local agencies. The “Little Hoover Commission” focused on the need for oversight and consolidation of special districts, whereas the “Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century” focused on the need for regional planning to ensure adequate and efficient local governmental services as the California population continues to grow.

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### **Little Hoover Commission**

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In May 2000, the Little Hoover Commission released a report entitled Special Districts: Relics of the Past or Resources for the Future? This report focused on governance and financial challenges among independent special districts, and the barriers to LAFCO’s pursuit of district consolidation and dissolution. The report raised the concern that “the underlying patchwork of special district governments has become unnecessarily redundant, inefficient and unaccountable.”

In particular, the report raised concern about a lack of visibility and accountability among some independent special districts. The report indicated that many special districts hold excessive reserve funds and some receive questionable property tax revenue. The report expressed concern about the lack of financial oversight of the districts. It asserted that financial reporting by special districts is inadequate, that districts are not required to submit financial information to local elected officials, and concluded that district financial information is “largely meaningless as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided by districts, or to make comparisons with neighboring districts or services provided through a city or county.”<sup>3</sup>

The report questioned the accountability and relevance of certain special districts with uncontested elections and without adequate notice of public meetings. In addition to concerns about the accountability and visibility of special districts, the report raised concerns about special districts with outdated boundaries and outdated missions. The report questioned the public benefit provided by health care districts that have sold, leased or closed their hospitals, and asserted that LAFCOs consistently fail to examine whether they should be eliminated. The report pointed to service improvements and cost reductions associated with special district consolidations, but asserted that LAFCOs have generally failed to pursue special district reorganizations.

The report called on the Legislature to increase the oversight of special districts by mandating that LAFCOs identify service duplications and study reorganization alternatives

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<sup>3</sup> Little Hoover Commission, 2000, page 24.

when service duplications are identified, when a district appears insolvent, when district reserves are excessive, when rate inequities surface, when a district's mission changes, when a new city incorporates and when service levels are unsatisfactory. To accomplish this, the report recommended that the State strengthen the independence and funding of LAFCOs, require districts to report to their respective LAFCO, and require LAFCOs to study service duplications.

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### Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century

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The Legislature formed the Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century ("21st Century Commission") in 1997 to review statutes on the policies, criteria, procedures and precedents for city, county and special district boundary changes. After conducting extensive research and holding 25 days of public hearings throughout the State at which it heard from over 160 organizations and individuals, the 21st Century Commission released its final report, *Growth Within Bounds: Planning California Governance for the 21st Century*, in January 2000.<sup>4</sup> The report examines the way that government is organized and operates and establishes a vision of how the State will grow by "making better use of the often invisible LAFCOs in each county."

The report points to the expectation that California's population will double over the first four decades of the 21st Century, and raises concern that our government institutions were designed when our population was much smaller and our society was less complex. The report warns that without a strategy open spaces will be swallowed up, expensive freeway extensions will be needed, job centers will become farther removed from housing, and this will lead to longer commutes, increased pollution and more stressful lives. *Growth Within Bounds* acknowledges that local governments face unprecedented challenges in their ability to finance service delivery since voters cut property tax revenues in 1978 and the Legislature shifted property tax revenues from local government to schools in 1993. The report asserts that these financial strains have created governmental entrepreneurship in which agencies compete for sales tax revenue and market share.

The 21st Century Commission recommended that effective, efficient and easily understandable government be encouraged. In accomplishing this, the 21st Century Commission recommended consolidation of small, inefficient or overlapping providers, transparency of municipal service delivery to the people, and accountability of municipal service providers. The sheer number of special districts, the report asserts, "has provoked controversy, including several legislative attempts to initiate district consolidations,"<sup>5</sup> but cautions LAFCOs that decisions to consolidate districts should focus on the adequacy of services, not on the number of districts.

*Growth Within Bounds* stated that LAFCOs cannot achieve their fundamental purposes without a comprehensive knowledge of the services available within its county, the current efficiency of providing service within various areas of the county, future needs for each service, and expansion capacity of each service provider. Comprehensive knowledge of

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<sup>4</sup> The Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century ceased to exist on July 1, 2000, pursuant to a statutory sunset provision.

<sup>5</sup> Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2000, page 70.

water and sanitary providers, the report argued, would promote consolidations of water and sanitary districts, reduce water costs and promote a more comprehensive approach to the use of water resources. Further, the report asserted that many LAFCOs lack such knowledge and should be required to conduct such a review to ensure that municipal services are logically extended to meet California's future growth and development.

MSRs would require LAFCO to look broadly at all agencies within a geographic region that provide a particular municipal service and to examine consolidation or reorganization of service providers. The 21st Century Commission recommended that the review include water, wastewater, and other municipal services that LAFCO judges to be important to future growth. The Commission recommended that the service review be followed by consolidation studies and be performed in conjunction with updates of SOIs. The recommendation was that service reviews be designed to make nine determinations, each of which was incorporated verbatim in the subsequently adopted legislation. The legislature since consolidated the determinations into seven required findings.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES REVIEW LEGISLATION**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires LAFCO review and update SOIs not less than every five years and to review municipal services before updating SOIs. The requirement for service reviews arises from the identified need for a more coordinated and efficient public service structure to support California's anticipated growth. The service review provides LAFCO with a tool to study existing and future public service conditions comprehensively and to evaluate organizational options for accommodating growth, preventing urban sprawl, and ensuring that critical services are provided efficiently.

Effective January 1, 2008, Government Code §56430 requires LAFCO to conduct a review of municipal services provided in the county by region, sub-region or other designated geographic area, as appropriate, for the service or services to be reviewed, and prepare a written statement of determination with respect to each of the following topics:

- ❖ Growth and population projections for the affected area;
- ❖ The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the SOI (effective July 1, 2012);
- ❖ Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies (including needs or deficiencies related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection in any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence);
- ❖ Financial ability of agencies to provide services;
- ❖ Status of, and opportunities for shared facilities;
- ❖ Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies; and
- ❖ Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES REVIEW PROCESS**

For local agencies, the MSR process involves the following steps:

- ❖ Outreach: LAFCO outreach and explanation of the project
- ❖ Data Discovery: provide documents and respond to LAFCO questions
- ❖ Profile Review: internal review and comment on LAFCO draft profile of the agency
- ❖ Public Review Draft MSR: review and comment on LAFCO draft MSR
- ❖ LAFCO Hearing: attend and provide public comments on MSR

MSRs are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §15262 (feasibility or planning studies) or §15306 (information collection) of the CEQA Guidelines. LAFCO's actions to adopt MSR determinations are not considered "projects" subject to CEQA.

The MSR process does not require LAFCO to initiate changes of organization based on service review findings, only that LAFCO identify potential government structure options. However, LAFCO, other local agencies, and the public may subsequently use the determinations to analyze prospective changes of organization or reorganization or to establish or amend SOIs. Within its legal authorization, LAFCO may act with respect to a recommended change of organization or reorganization on its own initiative (e.g., certain types of consolidations), or in response to a proposal (i.e., initiated by resolution or petition by landowners or registered voters).

## **SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATES**

The Commission is charged with developing and updating the Sphere of Influence (SOI) for each city and special district within the county.<sup>6</sup> SOIs must be updated every five years or as necessary.

An SOI is a LAFCO-approved plan that designates an agency's probable future boundary and service area. Spheres are planning tools used to provide guidance for individual boundary change proposals and are intended to encourage efficient provision of organized community services and prevent duplication of service delivery. Territory cannot be annexed by LAFCO to a city or a district unless it is within that agency's sphere.

The purposes of the SOI include the following: to ensure the efficient provision of services, discourage urban sprawl and premature conversion of agricultural and open space lands, and prevent overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of services.

LAFCO cannot regulate land use, dictate internal operations or administration of any local agency, or set rates. LAFCO is empowered to enact policies that indirectly affect land use decisions. On a regional level, LAFCO promotes logical and orderly development of communities as it considers and decides individual proposals. LAFCO has a role in reconciling differences between agency plans so that the most efficient urban service

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<sup>6</sup> The initial statutory mandate, in 1971, imposed no deadline for completing sphere designations. When most LAFCOs failed to act, 1984 legislation required all LAFCOs to establish spheres of influence by 1985.



arrangements are created for the benefit of current and future area residents and property owners.

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Act requires to develop and determine the SOI of each local governmental agency within the county and to review and update the SOI every five years. LAFCOs are empowered to adopt, update and amend the SOI. They may do so with or without an application and any interested person may submit an application proposing an SOI amendment.

LAFCO may recommend government reorganizations to particular agencies in the county, using the SOIs as the basis for those recommendations.

In determining the SOI, LAFCO is required to complete an MSR and adopt the seven determinations previously discussed.

In addition, in adopting or amending an SOI, LAFCO must make the following determinations:

- ❖ Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands;
- ❖ Present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area;
- ❖ Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public service that the agency provides or is authorized to provide;
- ❖ Existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines these are relevant to the agency; and
- ❖ Present and probable need for water, wastewater, and structural fire protection facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.

The CKH Act stipulates several procedural requirements in updating SOIs. It requires that special districts file written statements on the class of services provided and that LAFCO clearly establish the location, nature and extent of services provided by special districts.

By statute, LAFCO must notify affected agencies 21 days before holding the public hearing to consider the SOI and may not update the SOI until after that hearing. The LAFCO Executive Officer must issue a report including recommendations on the SOI amendments and updates under consideration at least five days before the public hearing.

## **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

On October 7, 2011, Governor Brown signed SB 244, which makes two principal changes to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. SB 244 requires LAFCOs to: (1) deny any application to annex to a city territory that is contiguous to a disadvantaged unincorporated community (DUC) unless a second application is submitted to annex the disadvantaged community as well; and (2) evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities in a municipal service review (MSR) upon the next update of a sphere of influence after June 30, 2012.

The intent of the statute is to encourage investment in disadvantaged unincorporated communities that often lack basic infrastructure by mandating cities and LAFCOs to include them in land use planning.

SB 244 defines disadvantaged unincorporated community as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.

SB 244 also requires LAFCOs to consider disadvantaged unincorporated communities when developing spheres of influence. Upon the next update of a sphere of influence on or after July 1, 2012, SB 244 requires LAFCO to include in an MSR (in preparation of a sphere of influence update): 1) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere; and 2) The present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services and infrastructure needs or deficiencies including needs or deficiencies related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection in any disadvantaged unincorporated community within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.

In determining spheres of influence, SB 244 authorizes LAFCO to assess the feasibility of a reorganization and consolidation of local agencies to further orderly development and improve the efficiency and affordability of infrastructure and service delivery. LAFCOs should revise their local policies to include the requirements imposed by SB 244 to ensure they fulfill their obligations under this legislation.



### **3. INTRODUCTION**

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Solano County is located about halfway between the cities San Francisco and Sacramento and is bordered by Napa, Yolo, Sacramento, Sonoma, and Contra Costa counties. It is officially one of the nine Bay Area counties and one of four North Bay counties. The County is the easternmost county of the North Bay, and a portion of it geographically extends into the Sacramento Valley. The county seat is the City of Fairfield and the largest city is Vallejo. Other cities in the County include Benicia, Dixon, Rio Vista, Suisun City, and Vacaville.

Solano County was one of the original counties of California, created in the 1850s at the time of statehood. The County derives its name directly from a Native American chief—Chief Solano of the Suisun people.

The County encompasses approximately 910 square miles, consisting of 830 square miles of land and 80 square miles of water. About 128 square miles of the County, or 14 percent of the total land area, lies within seven incorporated cities. Because of Solano County’s commitment to focusing development within urban areas, about 95 percent of the County’s population lives in the cities.

The County’s territory is divided into two topographic sections. The western quarter extends into the foothills of the coastal range. This area is characterized by steep slopes, which become more gently rolling in the eastern portion. The remainder of the County, which is part of the Sacramento Valley, is characterized by level topography, with some isolated areas of low rolling hills. Other significant features include the Suisun Marsh, which has an area of more than 30 square miles, and the Napa-Sonoma Marsh area, with an area of more than 60 square miles, some of which is in Solano County.

Solano County is threatened by both, urban and rural fires with the potential to cause property damage, injury, and loss of life. Wildfires pose the greatest danger in the unincorporated county area. Topography, weather, and native vegetation provide the ingredients for destructive fires that can spread rapidly. In California, development activities within hazard areas have worsened the problem by placing people into hazard areas, disrupting natural fire processes, and allowing buildup of flammable brush and vegetation. Such development has also moved the urban-wildland interface (the area where human development meets undeveloped wildlands) closer to higher-risk wildfire hazard areas, increasing the number of people and buildings at risk. The rugged rural terrain found in the western hills of the County makes firefighting more difficult.

Insufficient water pressure and supply also contribute to wildfire danger. Most of the higher-risk wildfire areas in the County are not served by public water. Fire districts serving these areas are typically equipped with tank trucks. Properties designated for residential use in areas without public water service are required to maintain sufficient on-site water storage and new development must show that it has sufficient water pressure for firefighting services.

Research conducted at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory indicates that climate change will increase the frequency and size of wildfires in California. Hotter, drier climates will promote increased accumulation of fire-prone

vegetation, aided by prolonged drought and stronger winds will continue to fan the flames, spreading fires faster and farther than previously experienced. This will expand the size of the urban-wildland interface because more residential communities will be within reach of wildfire activity. An expanded urban-wildland interface will require increased resources, planning and funding to maintain and defend.

## **GROWTH & POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

This section reviews historical and recent population and economic growth, projected growth, and growth areas.

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### **Land Use and Growth Policies**

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The County has historically required that development requiring water and sewer service be incorporated within one of the County's cities. Based on this policy, most residential, commercial and industrial development in the County has been in incorporated areas.

In 1980, the Solano County Board of Supervisors adopted a General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element that established a development policy of city-centered growth. Under the 1980 General Plan, urban development was to be confined to patterns that did not conflict with essential agricultural lands, while rural and suburban development was to be confined to non-essential marginal agricultural lands. The 1980 General Plan was intended to provide policy guidance for shaping growth and development within the unincorporated areas of Solano County, and for protecting its agricultural and natural resources, until the year 1995.

Proposition A, an initiative measure passed by the voters of Solano County in June 1984, reaffirmed the 1980 General Plan's cornerstone policies of city-centered growth and farmland protection, and imposed strict limitations on the County Board of Supervisor's ability to allow new residential, commercial, or industrial development in agricultural and open-space areas. Proposition A was a limited-term measure that was to expire in December 1995.

In 1994, the voters of Solano County proposed the Orderly Growth Initiative, in order to extend the protections of Proposition A until December 31, 2010. In response to broad public support for that proposal, the Solano County Board of Supervisors adopted the Orderly Growth Initiative as its Resolution No. 94-170 on July 26, 1994.

On November 4 2008, Solano voters passed Measure T, which was an amendment to Solano County's 1994 Orderly Growth Initiative that updated certain provisions of the Solano County General Plan related to agriculture and open space policies and land use designations, and extended the amended initiative until December 31, 2028.

By passing Measure T, the voters required that the County would:

- ❖ Maintain the current development strategy of city-centered growth;
- ❖ Retain the overall function of the Orderly Growth Initiative, while updating and refining the initiative's policies and land use designations;

- ❖ Protect and support agriculture as an important component of Solano County's economy and quality of life;
- ❖ Provide an opportunity for farm-based, businesses, such as wineries, to develop successfully within Solano County;
- ❖ Encourage the location of new industrial and agricultural processing facilities;
- ❖ Sustain and enhance Solano County's natural environment, including its diverse species, watersheds, natural communities, and wildlife corridors;
- ❖ Ensure sufficient opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial development within areas served by the cities, in order to provide all of Solano County's residents with a vibrant economy and affordable housing options;
- ❖ Protect the health, safety, and welfare of Solano County's residents by avoiding more air pollution, water pollution, water shortages, traffic congestion, noise and other adverse environmental impacts from urban sprawl;
- ❖ Prevent costly and inefficient extensions of urban services and infrastructure to rural areas of the County;
- ❖ Permit Solano County to continue to bear its fair share of regional growth and provide safe, decent affordable places for people to live in Solano cities;
- ❖ Prevent piecemeal amendments of the Solano County General Plan that would allow development on agricultural and open space lands;
- ❖ Help increase the County's supply of good jobs by encouraging job development in the growing agriculturally-based industries; and
- ❖ Allow the County to update and amend its General Plan periodically as necessary to comply with State law and changing conditions, while requiring that any such amendments be consistent with the cornerstone policies of city-centered growth and protection of farmlands and open space.

About 20 percent of the unincorporated land area in Solano County is some type of undeveloped natural resource land. This includes marsh and watershed lands in the southern and western portions of the County comprising 101,307 acres. Over 329,000 acres of land are in agricultural use, which is approximately 70 percent of the unincorporated land area. Agricultural land is concentrated in the eastern portion of the County and in smaller areas scattered throughout the County. Watershed lands are also in agricultural use.

Residential land uses occupy about 6,878 acres developed mostly at rural residential densities of one dwelling unit per 2.5 or more acres. Rural residential development has been concentrated in the area north of Vacaville in the English Hills, Allendale and Olive School areas, along Leisure Town Road east of Vacaville, in the Tolenas area of unincorporated Suisun City, and the Green Valley area north of Fairfield.

Residential estate use at densities of one unit per  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 acre exist in the Green Valley, Rockville Corners, Willotta Oaks, Old Town Cordelia, Elmira, Birds Landing, and Collinsville areas. A small amount of the unincorporated county's residential land is used for urban density residential single family and multifamily development including apartment

buildings, duplexes, triplexes and similar housing types located in unincorporated areas in the Vallejo area.

Industrial land uses account for about 2,125 acres of land area in the unincorporated county. Most of the existing industrial development in the county is within cities.

Approximately 641 acres are in commercial land use, which includes retail, commercial services, and service stations. Smaller commercial developments are located in the unincorporated county areas to serve the needs of local residents and visitors. Highway-oriented commercial development represents the predominant commercial land use in the unincorporated area with the majority of such land located along I-80.

Other uses of land in the County include public use (such as schools, cemeteries, and federal lands), which accounts for about 1,517 acres, park and recreation land (791 acres), and vacant land, which comprises about 1,011 acres.

The Solano County General Plan includes multiple development policies related to delivery of fire protection services in the County:

- ❖ The County requires that structures be built in fire defensible spaces and minimizes the construction of public facilities in areas of high or very high wildfire risk.
- ❖ Solano prohibits non-farm-related development and road construction for public use in areas of extreme wildfire risk.
- ❖ It requires new developments in areas of high and very high wildfire risk to incorporate fire-safe building methods and site planning techniques into the development.
- ❖ The County attempts to update the Zoning Ordinance to limit development in areas of extreme, very high, and high wildfire risk. Development within the extreme risk area is limited to farm-related development served by private roads. Land divisions within the very high and high risk areas are restricted, unless the availability of adequate water supply can be demonstrated and guaranteed, more than one access point for firefighting equipment can be provided, defensible space is permanently maintained around any buildings, and fire-resistant materials are used in construction.
- ❖ Solano County aims to collaborate with fire districts to establish funding mechanisms, including impact fees to offset fire protection costs for new developments in areas of high wildfire risk.
- ❖ The County has a goal of working with fire districts to ensure that new development is built to support effective firefighting. Solano also attempts to seek fire district input on new development projects and ensure that such projects incorporate fire-safe planning and building measures. Such measures may include clustering housing, buffering properties, creating defensible space around individual units, using fire-resistant building materials, installing sprinkler systems, and providing adequate on-site water supplies.

Some areas within Solano County are designated by the General Plan as Municipal Service Areas (MSAs). A municipal service area (MSA) defines the area of a city's current and/or future jurisdictional responsibility. Within the MSA, a city must provide the

necessary services to support urban land uses specified by the County General Plan policies and land use designations. MSAs reflect city planned urban growth areas and are based on County review of city general plans and spheres of influence established by Solano LAFCO. MSAs are not necessarily the same as the cities' respective SOIs and may include territory that is smaller or larger than their SOIs.

Within MSAs, future development of urban land uses is to be facilitated and served through city annexation. Current land uses within MSAs may continue under County jurisdiction until the land is annexed to the city for conversion to urban uses. A change in land use of unincorporated lands within MSAs is permitted only for agricultural uses, which do not conflict with planned land uses until annexed for urban development. Some unincorporated lands within the MSAs that are designated as agriculture will continue in agricultural use until annexed to a city for urban development.

In areas outside MSAs, planned land uses are to be maintained or developed under county jurisdiction. Services to support current and future development outside MSAs are provided by the County and special districts. Land uses within MSAs designated by the County are generally consistent with the planned land uses within each city's general plan. Individual city general plans are used to determine specific land use designations and development policies within MSAs. In establishing MSAs, the County takes into consideration that local jurisdictions periodically revise and update their general plans. Based on the revisions to a city general plan, the city and the County review and may recommend that Solano LAFCO approve revisions to the city's sphere of influence. As part of this joint review, the County also reviews the city land use changes and considers amending the County's land use designations to revise the MSA and incorporate the new urban land uses. An MSA is established for each city.

Another policy related to growth in Solano County was adopted by LAFCO. The policy requires that an agency applying to LAFCO for annexation of a specific territory describe the effect that the proposed annexation would have on adjacent areas and outside the agency. It must also describe any social and economic benefits or detriments, which might be experienced by other agencies. Examples of economic benefits include achieving a balanced housing supply, the provision of needed commercial areas, the creation of new employment opportunities, protecting resources, and improving levels of services without harming other providers.

These benefits could in some cases be argued to offset the negative consequences of a particular annexation, which may include negative affects of the annexation on special district budgets or service provision. This policy directly concerns fire districts in the County when territory is detached from the district and annexed to a city leaving it without adequate funding to continue providing sufficient levels of service. In these cases where a special district might be affected in such a negative manner, the annexation applicant "should work with the Executive Director to identify the affected agencies and work with those agencies to identify and mitigate the impacts. LAFCO will not normally approve detachments from special districts or annexations that fail to provide for adequate mitigation of the adverse impacts on the district. Where the adverse impact is fiscal, adequate mitigation will normally include a permanent, funding source for lost revenues or increased costs to the affected special district."

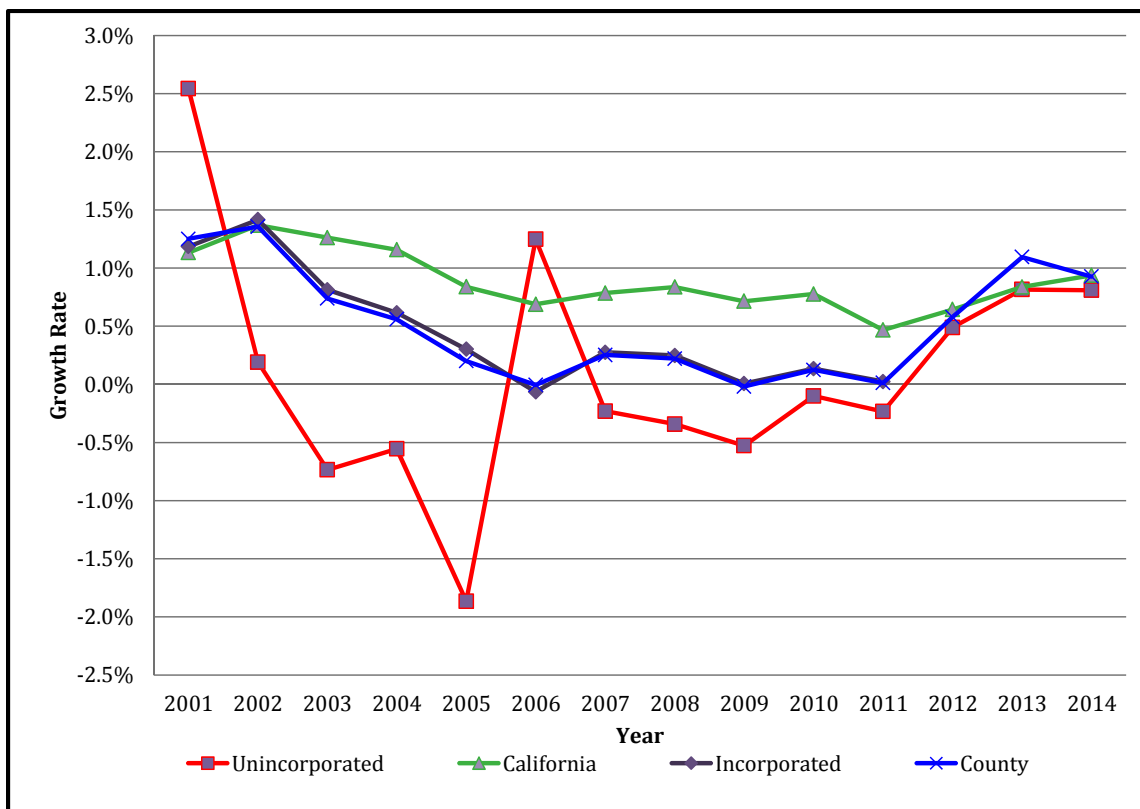
## Historical Growth

There were 394,542 residents in Solano County in 2000, according to the 2000 Census. The population in the unincorporated communities was 19,322, composing five percent of the County’s entire population. Since 2000, the rate of growth in the County has tapered off to small increments. Between 2000 and 2010, Solano grew by 18,802 or 4.8 percent, which is significantly less than the 15.9 percent population gain experienced in the previous decade. The population of the County in 2010 was 413,344. All of the growth during both decades occurred within the cities, due to the Orderly Growth Initiative discussed earlier. In fact, the population in the unincorporated portions of the County decreased by 11 percent between 1990 and 2000 and by three percent from 2000 to 2010.

The California Department of Finance’s (DOF) January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 estimate of the population of Solano County is 424,233. Between 2010 and 2014 the County grew by 10,889 residents or 2.6 percent. The population in the unincorporated communities grew by two percent during the same time period. From 2013 to 2014, DOF estimates that the total population of the County, as well as in unincorporated areas, rose by one percent. Solano County annually averaged 0.5 percent positive population growth from 2000 to 2014.

Among comparable counties, Solano County was in the middle tier of population growth. Placer and Solano counties experienced 0.6 percent population growth during 2012. Tulare and Stanislaus counties experienced the largest rate of growth—0.9 percent—among all counties. Marin and San Luis Obispo experienced the lowest rate of growth at 0.2 percent.

**Figure 3-1: Population Growth Rates in Solano County and California, DOF 2001-2014**





Population growth in the County (both incorporated and unincorporated) has been for the most part below the statewide growth rate over the last 14 years as shown in Figure 3-1. However, more recently, in 2012, countywide population growth evened out with that of the State, exceeded the State's in 2013, and became equal again with the State's in 2014. After the growth rate of the unincorporated communities skyrocketed above the statewide growth rate in 2006, it declined to negative growth where it remained through 2011. After 2011, the growth rate in unincorporated Solano began to rise and equalized with the statewide rate during the period from 2012 to 2014. Growth in the incorporated areas of the County mirrored that of the County as a whole.

The Department of Transportation Solano County Economic Forecast published in 2013 explains that the Solano County population increase from 2007 to 2012 was due entirely to the natural increase (new births), as the County lost an average of 1,900 residents per year through net migration.

Solano County's population density is 466 residents per square mile, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas.

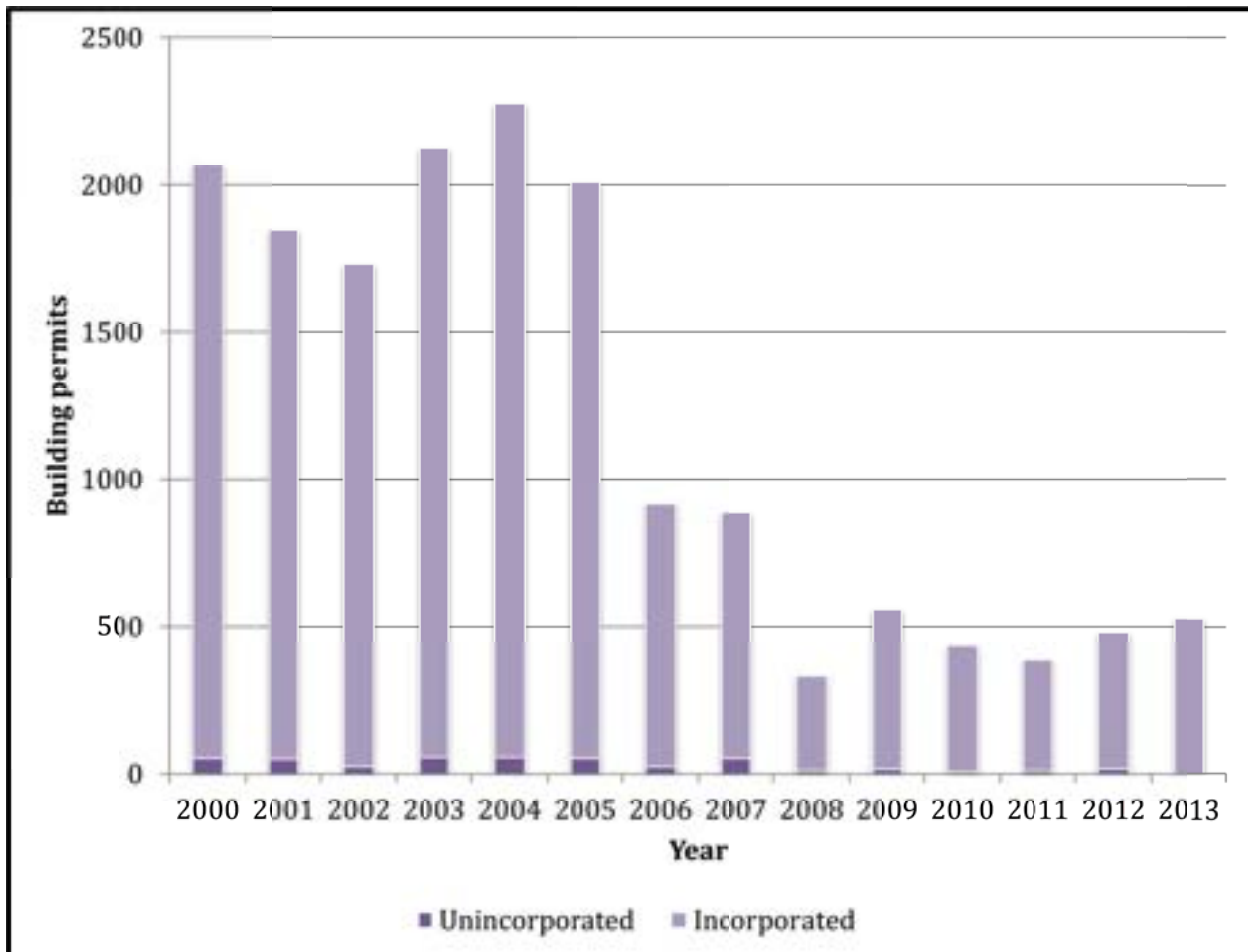
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## Development

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### Historical Development

**Figure 3-2: New Residential Building Permits, U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2013**



The number of new residential permits issued in unincorporated Solano County peaked in 2003 and 2004 at 57, as shown in Figure 3-2. Similarly, the number of permits issued in the incorporated cities of Solano County experienced a rise in 2004 to 2,278. Between 2000 and 2014, Solano County cities issued 97 percent of all the building permits approved in the County. The overall number of permits declined in 2006 and 2007, and went further down in 2008, after which it fluctuated minimally through 2013.

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## Population Projections

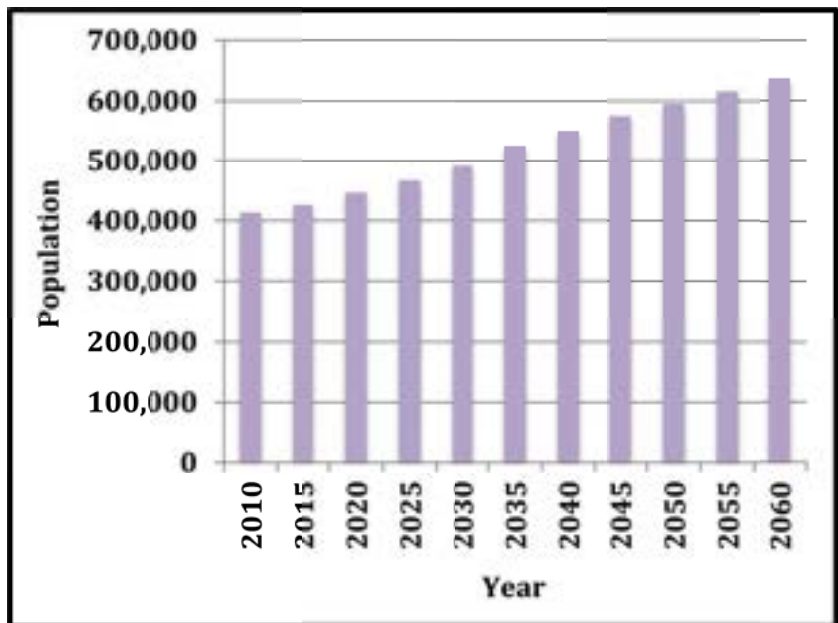
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Population projections for the County vary depending on the data source that is used. Solano County relies on the Department of Finance for its population projections.

The population of Solano County is projected to grow to 634,852 by 2060 according to the latest projections by the DOF. The DOF has not used the 2010 Census benchmark in its long-term projections, however. Using the 2010 Census count and the DOF projected growth rate of 54 percent, the population of Solano County in 2060 is anticipated to be 636,550. Using the same Census 2010 benchmark method, the estimated population in 2020 and 2030 will be 446,412 (eight percent increase since 2010) and 491,879 (19 percent increase since 2010) respectively. The DOF projections adjusted to the 2010 Census benchmark through 2060 are shown in Figure 3-3.

**Figure 3-3: Countywide Adjusted DOF Population Projections**

Another source of population projections is the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), which is the regional land use planning agency for the Bay Area, including the counties of Napa, Sonoma, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, and Solano. ABAG's projections include a set of policy assumptions that are based on the region's principles for growth. The projections assume that, over time, State, regional, and



local policies and programs will change in a way that shifts new growth toward areas near transit and existing downtowns. These policies and programs are assumed to have an increasing effect on population over the thirty-year forecast horizon.

According to ABAG's 2009 San Francisco Bay Area Vision Project, although other counties will experience higher absolute population increases, Solano County will have the highest percentage increase in population of any county in the Bay Area between 2000 and 2030. Solano's population will increase by 46 percent or nearly 182,000 residents, by 2030.



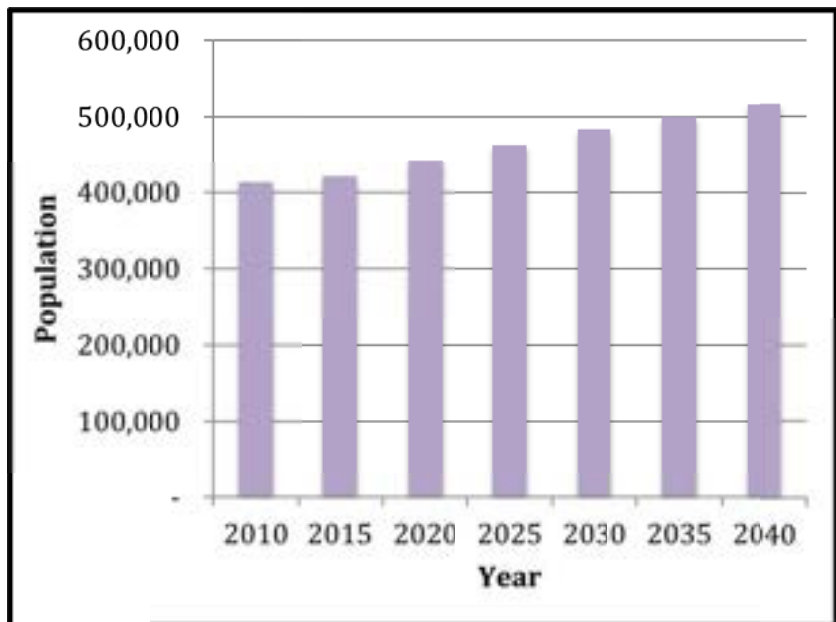
ABAG projects growth to be clustered in three major centers: Fairfield, Vacaville and Vallejo, which will account for nearly three-quarters of the County’s 62,970 new households. Fairfield will have the most growth, with 16,190 new households. Vacaville will add 15,250 households, and Vallejo 14,890. Rio Vista will see the most dramatic change of the cities in Solano County. In fact, Rio Vista is expected to have the largest percentage increase in its population of any city in the entire region between 2000 and 2015 of 229 percent.

Elsewhere in the County, Dixon is expected to continue to grow. The number of households in Dixon is projected to more than double between 2000 and 2030—one of the highest growth rates in the Bay Area. Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo will continue to experience significant growth, while Benicia’s population and households will grow at a relatively low rate. There is a potential to develop three- and four-story commercial buildings along portions of the I-80 corridor and mixed-use development around Capitol Corridor rail stations. Transportation improvements include the creation of two new Capitol Corridor stations, one adjacent to Travis Air Force Base and another in Dixon. The pattern of development preserves Solano County’s strong agricultural industry and character by focusing development within its incorporated cities. Significant household and employment growth is expected to occur in the downtowns of Vallejo (including adjacent Mare Island), Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Dixon.

ABAG’s Jobs Housing Connection Strategy 2012 projects that the population of Solano County will grow by 24 percent from 2010 to 2040, amounting to 512,368 in 2040.

**Figure 3-4: Countywide Adjusted DOT Population Projections**

The California Department of Transportation (DOT) also makes population projections for each county in the State. According to the DOT, the population in Solano County was expected to grow by 0.4 percent in 2013. Annual growth in the period from 2013 to 2018 is forecasted to average 0.7 percent. Similar to the DOF, the DOT has not used the 2010 Census benchmark in its projections; therefore, estimates presented in this



report are adjusted based on the benchmark. Based on adjusted estimates using the Census 2010 population count, the Solano population is projected to be 442,278 in 2020 and 483,612 in 2030. The DOT projections adjusted to the 2010 Census benchmark through 2040 are shown in Figure 3-4.

**Figure 3-5: Annualized Growth Projections by Method**

<i>Method</i>	<i>2010-2040</i>
Department of Finance Projections	0.9%
Department of Transportation Projections	0.7%
Association of Bay Area Governments Projections	0.7%

A comparison of the annualized growth rates through 2040 for each of the projection methods discussed is shown in Figure 3-5. As shown, the DOT and ABAG projections are similar and slightly more conservative than DOF projections. Over the period of 30 years, DOF projected that Solano County population will grow by 33 percent, DOT projections showed an increase of 25 percent, while ABAG estimated a rise of 24 percent.

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### Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

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LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.<sup>7</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.<sup>8</sup> According to DWR, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County.

DWR is not bound by the same law as LAFCO to define communities with a minimum threshold of 12 or more registered voters. Because income information is not available for this level of analysis, disadvantaged unincorporated communities with smaller populations that meet LAFCO's definition cannot be identified at this time.

## **FIRE AND EMS SERVICES**

This section provides an overview of fire protection and emergency medical services provided by local agencies in Solano County. The most recent municipal service review (MSR) for the Solano fire protection districts was completed in 2006. For a detailed description of each district, please refer to the agency-specific chapters of this report.

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<sup>7</sup> Government Code §56033.5.

<sup>8</sup> Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.

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## Service Providers

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This report focuses on fire and emergency medical service providers located in Solano County, which are under the jurisdiction of Solano LAFCO. As shown in Figure 3-6, six special districts were reviewed as part of this Municipal Service Review.

In addition, this review includes limited information on the City of Benicia Fire Department, City of Dixon Fire Department, City of Fairfield Fire Department, City of Rio Vista Fire Department, City of Suisun Fire Department, City of Vacaville Fire Department, City of Vallejo Fire Department, California Department of Forestry (Cal Fire), and Travis Air Force Base (AFB) to provide a comprehensive description of the structure of fire and emergency response services in Solano County.

The types of services provided by each agency vary depending on staff expertise, training and certification, as well as availability of specialized equipment or vehicles, and other resources. Figure 3-6 details the various services provided by each agency under LAFCO jurisdiction. The bounds of each of these agencies are shown in Figure 3-7.

**Figure 3-6: Fire Service Providers in Solano County**

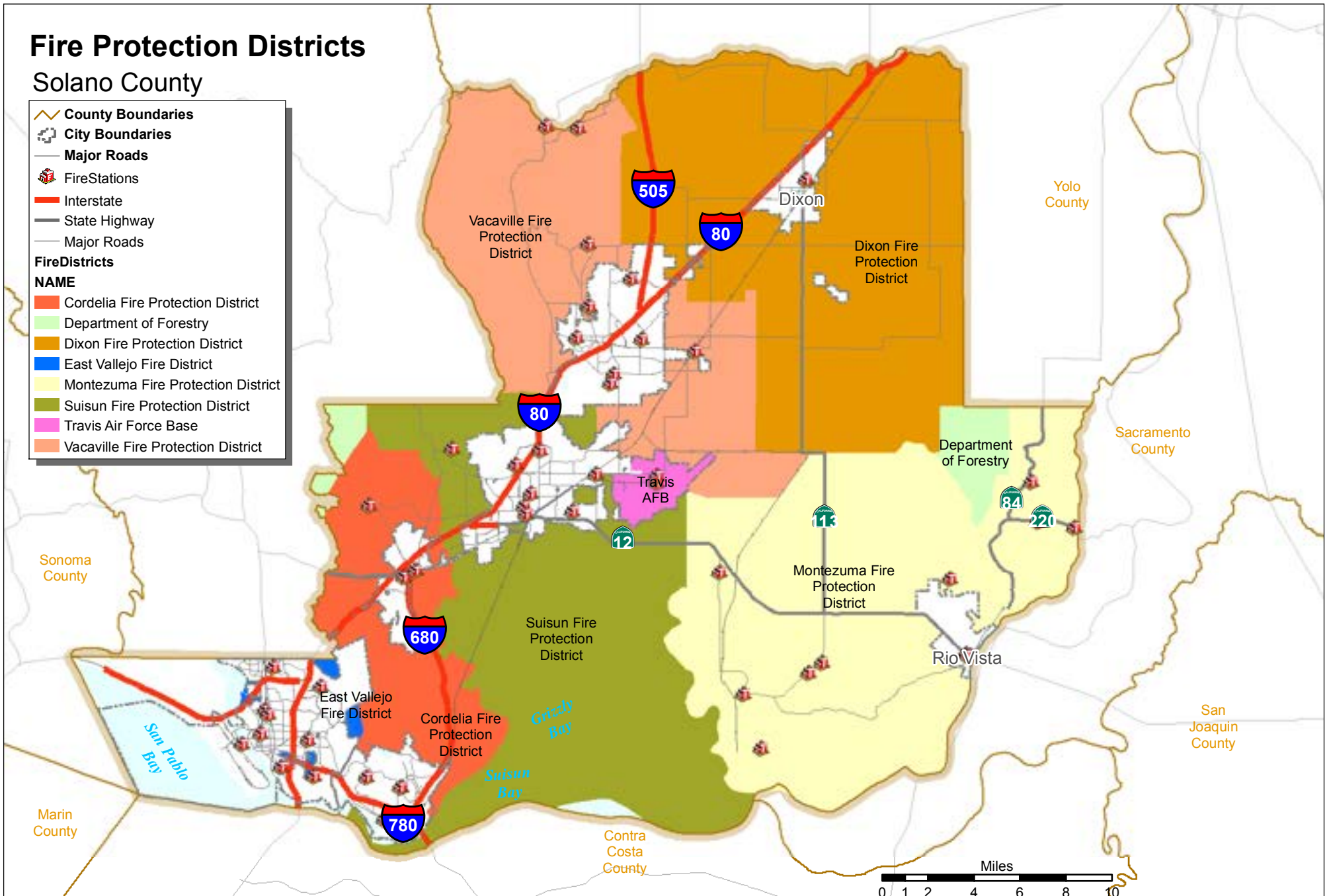
Service	CFPD	DFPD	EVFPD	MFPD	SEPD	VFPD
<b>Fire Suppression Services</b>						
Structural Fire Protection	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wildland Fire Protection	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vehicle Fire Protection	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ladder Truck Capabilities		✓	✓			
Fire Suppression Handcrew			✓	✓	✓	
Fire Suppression Dozer						
Helicopter Services – Fire Suppression						
Boat With Fire Suppression Capabilities					✓	
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>						
Basic Life Support Provider	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advanced Life Support - Non Transport Provider	✓	✓	✓			
Advanced Life Support Transport Provider						
Continuing Education Provider – Medical	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Air Ambulance Transport Helicopter Services						
Helicopter Landing Facilities On Site		✓			✓	✓
Vehicle Extrication Tools/Equipment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Fire Prevention</b>						
Fire Safety Education – Children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Safety Education – Adults/Seniors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fire and Life Safety Business Inspection Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Protection Planning		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Commercial Construction Plan Reviews	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Public Education Provider (CPR, First Aid, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Home Fire/Safety Inspections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Origin and Cause Investigations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fuel Reduction/Weed Abatement Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	▪	✓
Smoke Detector Giveaway/Installation Program	▪	✓	✓	▪	▪	✓
Address Sign Installation Program	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	✓
<b>Rescue Services</b>						
First Responder Swift Water Rescue Program	▪	▪	✓	✓	▪	✓
Water Rescue Program	▪	▪	▪	✓	✓	✓
Ice Rescue Program	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Dive Rescue Program	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	✓
Low angle Rope Rescue Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Helicopter Short/Long Haul Rescue Capabilities	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Response To Boating Accidents	✓	▪	▪	✓	✓	▪
Rescue Dog Services	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>						
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Basic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hazardous Materials Response Team	▪	▪	✓	▪	▪	▪
<b>Support Services</b>						
Firefighter Incident Support Unit	▪	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mobile Incident Command/Communications Unit	▪	▪	✓	✓	▪	✓
Fill Station for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mobile Breathing Support Unit	✓	▪	▪	▪	✓	✓
Community Emergency Response Team	✓	▪	✓	▪	▪	▪
Chaplain Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	▪	▪
Training Academy	▪	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency Operations Center Capabilities	▪	✓	✓	✓	▪	✓
<b>Miscellaneous</b>						
Public Service Assists	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Motor Vehicle Accident Response	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Welfare Checks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Safety Answering Point	▪	▪	✓	▪	▪	▪
Fire/EMS Dispatch	▪	▪	✓	▪	▪	▪
Fundraising Activities	✓	▪	▪	▪	✓	✓
Firefighters Association - Non Profit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Auxiliary Association	▪	▪	▪	▪	✓	✓
<b>Other</b>						
College Career Days	✓	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Collection Point for Toys for Tots	✓	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Confined Space Rescue	▪	✓	▪	▪	▪	▪
Training Tower (15-week academy)	▪	▪	✓	▪	▪	▪
Apprentice Program (3 weeks)	▪	▪	✓	▪	▪	▪

# Fire Protection Districts

## Solano County

County Boundaries  
 City Boundaries  
 Major Roads  
 Fire Stations  
 Interstate  
 State Highway  
 Major Roads  
**Fire Districts**  
**NAME**  
 Cordelia Fire Protection District  
 Department of Forestry  
 Dixon Fire Protection District  
 East Vallejo Fire District  
 Montezuma Fire Protection District  
 Suisun Fire Protection District  
 Travis Air Force Base  
 Vacaville Fire Protection District



Solano Local Agency  
Formation Commission

744 Empire St., Suite 216  
Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 439-3897  
[www.solanolafo.com](http://www.solanolafo.com)

This map is to be used for general information purposes only. Where precise accuracy is required reference should be made to certified maps, surveys, documents and/or by other official means.

### Solano County GIS Services

Department of Information Technology  
675 Texas Street, Suite 3700  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707-784-6340  
Email: [GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com)  
PRJ\_1093, 08/01/2014

#### Disclaimer:

This map was made using Solano County GIS files with varying degrees of scale, accuracy, precision, currentness, and alignment and therefore cannot be used for situations requiring survey grade measurement or legal boundary determination. Solano County disclaims liability for any loss that may result from the use of this map. User acknowledges data limitations and accepts responsibility for map based judgments.





### Cordelia Fire Protection District

Cordelia Fire Protection District (CFPD) provides structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, fire prevention services, hazardous materials assistance, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic and advanced life support. In addition, the District provides specialized rescue services, such as response to boating accidents along the shoreline and low angle rope rescue services.

The District provides services to the unincorporated territory in the southwestern portion of Solano County.

CFPD operates out of two stations; services are provided by four full-time equivalent personnel and 46 volunteers.

### Dixon Fire Protection District

Dixon Fire Protection District (DFPD) provides structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, fire prevention services, hazardous materials assistance, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic and advanced life support. In addition, the District provides specialized rescue services, such as confined space rescue. All services are provided by the City of Dixon Fire Department through a contract.

The District operates out of one station. DFPD does not have any staff of its own; all services are provided by City of Dixon FD personnel. Dixon FD serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles (312 square miles of the District and eight square miles of city territory) from its single station.

### East Vallejo Fire Protection District

East Vallejo Fire Protection District (EVFPD) provides structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, fire prevention services, hazardous materials assistance, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic and advanced life support. In addition, the District provides specialized rescue services, such as swift water and low angle rope rescue services. All services are provided by the City of Vallejo Fire Department by contract.

The District serves seven non-contiguous unincorporated areas, which are either entirely surrounded by the City of Vallejo or immediately adjacent to the City's limits.

EVFPD does not have staff of its own. All staff are provided by Vallejo FD, which has 87 firefighting personnel.<sup>9</sup> The District receives services from seven stations; each station serves a very small area of about 8.3 square miles.

### Montezuma Fire Protection District

Montezuma Fire Protection District (MFPD) provides fire response, limited hazardous materials response, full vehicle extrication, and 24-hour basic life support services. The District performs fire code plan checks, inspection and enforcement, participates in

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<sup>9</sup> Firefighting personnel are personnel that respond to incidents. Administrative personnel is staff that do not respond to service calls, such as administrative assistants, bookkeepers, etc.

educational activities to increase community awareness of fire safety and prevention, and conducts fire investigations within its boundary area.

The District is served by 32 firefighting staff. MFPD serves an extensive territory of 200 square miles of mostly farmland and pasture lands in southeastern Solano County and operates out of four stations, each of which covers about 50 square miles.

#### Suisun Fire Protection District

Suisun Fire Protection District (SFPD) provides structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, some fire prevention services, hazardous materials awareness and operations, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic life support. In addition, the District provides specialized rescue programs, such as water and boating accident rescue, and low angle rope rescue services.

The District operates out of two fire stations. Services are provided by 39 firefighting personnel. SFPD is located in the southwestern portion of Solano County and surrounds the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City almost in their entirety.

#### Vacaville Fire Protection District

Vacaville Fire Protection District (VFPD) provides 24-hour response for emergencies. The District responds to all types of incidents, including, but not limited to wildland fires, structure fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, activated alarms, technical rescues, hazardous materials, and public service assists. In addition, VFPD provides fire prevention and public education programs, as well as on-going training for all district staff.

VFPD is located in the northwestern portion of Solano County and surrounds the City of Vacaville. The District is served by 77 firefighting staff. Although the overall number of firefighting personnel is the highest in the County among the other fire protection districts, the District serves a large population, making its firefighting personnel ratio per capita of seven firefighters per 1,000 residents, the lowest of the fire districts. VFPD operates out of five fire stations.

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## Other Service Providers

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#### City of Benicia Fire Department

The Benicia Fire Department functions within three divisions, which consist of Fire and Life Safety/Administration, Fire and EMS Operations and Fire Training and Emergency Preparedness. The Department operates out of two fire stations.

The Department is an “all-risk” fire department and provides a variety of emergency and non-emergency services to the community. For more information on the Benicia Fire Department, refer to the 2005 City of Benicia Municipal Service Review and the City of Benicia website.

#### City of Dixon Fire Department

The Dixon Fire Department is responsible for providing emergency fire, rescue, medical, and nuisance and graffiti abatement services for the City of Dixon. By contractual agreement, the City also provides fire protection services to the surrounding Dixon FPD,

and the city chief functions as the chief of DFPD. All services are provided out of a single fire station.

The City of Dixon provides basic life support, as well as advanced life support. The Dixon FD paramedic engine is staffed with a firefighter/paramedic at all times. For more information on Dixon FD, refer to the 2005 City of Dixon Municipal Service Review and the City of Dixon website.

#### *City of Fairfield Fire Department*

Fire suppression and paramedic services are provided by the City of Fairfield Fire Department from five fire stations located throughout the City.

The mission of the Fire Department is to efficiently and effectively maintain the highest levels of fire and life safety services for the community, and to minimize loss of life and property damage. The department is comprised of paid<sup>10</sup> and volunteer firefighters. The Department is organized into five service divisions.

The Fire Department participates in a mutual aid system that responds to requests for aid from throughout the County and State. In return, resources are provided to Fairfield when needed. The Fire Department also has automatic response agreements with neighboring fire agencies, and adjacent fire jurisdictions likewise respond simultaneously to Fairfield calls in close proximity to their fire stations. For more information on Fairfield FD, refer to the 2012 City of Fairfield Municipal Service Review and the City of Fairfield website.

#### *City of Rio Vista Fire Department*

The Fire Department serves the City of Rio Vista, including the airport, and contracts with the Delta Fire Protection District to extend fire service coverage to the Delta communities.

The Fire Department is a full-service organization providing fire response, limited hazardous materials response, full vehicle extrication, and 24-hour basic and advanced life support services. The Department performs fire code plan checks, inspection, and enforcement, participates in educational activities to increase community awareness of fire safety and prevention, and conducts fire investigations within its jurisdiction. In the event of a major disaster, the Fire Department is the acting Emergency Operations Command (EOC).

The Department is broken down into five divisions: Administration, Operations, Training, Prevention, and Community Outreach. For more information on the Rio Vista FD, refer to the 2006 City of Rio Vista Municipal Service Review and the City of Rio Vista website.

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<sup>10</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.



City of Suisun Fire Department

The Suisun Fire Department is a volunteer fire department protecting approximately four square miles of territory. The Department operates out of one fire station.

The Department provides fire suppression, emergency medical response, fire prevention, public assist calls, public education programs, and management of a public nuisance weed abatement program.

Although the Department is staffed mostly by volunteers, they staff a minimum of one engine 24 hours a day, seven days per week. About 70 percent of the time, two engines or an engine and a truck are staffed. In addition, volunteers are on-call to respond to incidents requiring additional equipment and personnel.

For more information on the Suisun FD, refer to the 2005 City of Suisun Municipal Service Review and the City of Suisun website.

City of Vacaville Fire Department

The City of Vacaville Fire Department provides four different types of services including fire suppression, emergency medical service, emergency response (including non-medical rescue, hazardous material spills and public assistance calls), and non-emergency services including public education, fire prevention programs, code compliance, and permit and inspection services. Also, unlike other fire agencies in the County, Vacaville FD provides transport ambulance services within a specific area in the City and surrounding the City.

The Department is currently operating out of four stations. Another station is under construction. Administrative offices are located at City Hall

The Vacaville Fire Department has a staff of 82 persons providing services 24 hours per day. A total of 69 emergency response personnel work on three operation shifts, with a minimum daily shift staffing of 19 emergency response personnel plus one battalion chief. The Fire Department is currently able to dispatch three engines, one truck, one medic unit and one battalion chief to reported structure fires.

For more information on the City of Vacaville Fire Department and its operations, refer to the 2014 City of Vacaville Municipal Service Review and the City of Vacaville website.

City of Vallejo Fire Department

The City of Vallejo Fire Department provides fire suppression, advanced life support emergency medical services, and responds to any and all calls for emergency service. All of the stations are staffed with paramedics. The Department responds to about 12,000 calls per year and is broken down into the Fire Suppression division, Emergency Medical Services division, Fire Training division, and Fire Prevention division.

The Vallejo Fire Department currently has six fire stations. The stations are located strategically throughout the city in positions to provide the best coverage for the City as possible. For more information about the City of Vallejo FD, refer to the 2005 City of Vallejo Municipal Service Review and to the City of Vallejo website.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)

Cal Fire is a state agency responsible for protecting and maintaining privately owned wildland, providing emergency services and responding to wildland fires throughout California.

Cal Fire also provides technical support throughout the County in the form of specialized services such as fire suppression handcrews, dozers, and helicopter services when necessary.

Solano County is served by the Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit (LNU) of Cal Fire. The Unit was created in 1996 when the Sonoma Ranger Unit and the Lake-Napa Ranger Unit were merged into one unit. LNU has primary responsibility for more than 2.3 million acres of Cal Fire direct protection area (DPA) lands,<sup>11</sup> more than any other unit. It has the third largest population living within a Cal Fire DPA, and ranks the third in average number of annual fires.

The Unit is divided into four divisions and ten field battalions. The boundaries of Sonoma County define the West Division, which is comprised of four field battalions. Napa County defines the South Division, and is comprised of three field battalions. Lake County defines the North Division, and is comprised of two field battalions. The remaining counties of Yolo, Solano, and Colusa define the East Division, which is comprised of a single battalion.

Sonoma-Lake Napa Unit's headquarters, including the Emergency Command Center (ECC) and the South Division offices are located just north of St. Helena in Napa County. Division specific offices are located in smaller facilities in Santa Rosa Station for the West Division, Konocti Camp for the North Division, and Delta Camp for the East Division.

Travis Air Force Base Fire Department

Travis Air Force Base (AFB) is located in the central part of Solano County and is bordered by the City of Fairfield in the west, SFPD in the west and south, VFPD in the north, and MFPD in the southeast. Travis AFB occupies approximately 7,100 acres of land, with two 11,000-foot runways oriented along the northeast-southwest diagonal, away from existing housing developments. In 1995, the function of the base was expanded by the addition of air refueling assets from March AFB. The U.S. Department of Defense has been using the site for military operations since the early 1940s.

Travis AFB Fire Department is a paid<sup>12</sup> fire department, which is a part of the federal government. The Department operates out of four stations and is staffed by 94 paid firefighters.

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<sup>11</sup> Cal Fire and federal wildland fire protection agencies, such as U.S.F.S. and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have entered into agreements to define direct protection areas (DPA). A DPA is a geographic area where one particular agency is responsible for providing wildland fire protection regardless of land ownership in the area. On a statewide basis, Cal Fire and the federal agencies attempt to balance the amount of responsible acreage. Solano County local fire agencies do not have statutory responsibility for wildland fire protection, but they do respond to wild fires and get reimbursed from the state or federal governments.

<sup>12</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

Travis' firefighters are responsible for fighting multiple types of fires because of the size and nature of the Travis community. The crew must be ready to respond to situations in airplanes, homes and other facilities. Aircraft firefighting, structure fires, wildland blazes, petroleum/oil/lubricant situations, hazmat, confined-space rescue and emergency medical situations are all part of the Travis fire crew's roster of responsibilities.

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## Context

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There are a wide range of fuels in the Solano County area ranging from agricultural farmland, annual grasses, oak woodlands intermixed with chemise and coastal chaparral's in the western areas of the Vaca mountains to marshland tules in the east along the Sacramento river delta. Large areas of Solano County fall within the mutual threat zone (MTZ) and offer the potential for structure protection issues, if a fire were to start in these areas. Due to aggressive fire suppression efforts and lack of local wildland fuels management, both vertical and horizontal continuity of fuels will and have promoted rapid fire growth. Numerous riparian zones are located throughout the County as well.

The weather is generally warm and dry with a great portion of the valley being marine influenced keeping areas to the southwest seasonally cooler. Average daytime temperatures range from 85 to 105 degrees in the summer. Nighttime lows average between 50 and 60 degrees; marine influence brings a lot of fog that impacts temperature dramatically. Daily winds, known locally as the Delta breeze, range from five to 15 miles per hour from the west and act as a cooling effect throughout the southwest increasing fuel moisture and recoveries. The area is also subject to Foehn North winds, which range in speed from 25 to 75 miles per hour. These winds cause high rates of spread and control problems.

There are two topographic features of note within the County—Mt. Vaca and the Montezuma Hills. There are numerous ridges located within these areas, which influence the landscape dramatically and can contribute to fire spread. Narrow canyons and valleys with heavy fuel loading and numerous narrow man-made roads present several control issues, but do offer points to consider as control lines.

Solano County has a history of large wildland fires. Two fires of note are the 1965 Kaiser Fire, when a fire started in the drought dried seasonal grasses and spread rapidly from Soscol Ridge off SR 29 to American Canyon, reaching a final acreage of 25,888, and the 1965 Mix Canyon Fire, which reached an approximate 35,000 acres. The fire period of note was in 1965, which was referred to as black Thursday when the County was under siege from the east to the west with several fires burning at the same time, with the largest becoming the above noted Kaiser Fire.

### Jurisdictional Responsibilities

Fire services within Solano County are provided by six fire protection districts, which are the focus of this review, seven city fire departments, Cal Fire, the United States Forest Service (USFS), and Travis AFB Fire Department. Each of the district's service areas is equal to its boundary area. Similarly, each of the cities provides services within its boundaries. However, all agencies participate in mutual and automatic aid agreements by which they may provide services outside of their bounds.

There are two areas within the County that are located outside of a local fire service providers' service area. One such area is situated in western Solano County and is bordered by CFPD and SFPD in the east and Napa County in the west; the second area is in eastern Solano County bordered by DFPD in the west (within DFPD's SOI), MFPD in the east, west and south, and Yolo County in the north.

Cal Fire provides services in wildland areas within Solano County defined as State Responsibility Areas (SRA). An SRA is an area of the State where the State of California is financially responsible for the prevention and suppression of wildfires. An SRA does not include lands within city boundaries or in federal ownership. Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit is responsible for 93,820 acres of SRA lands in Solano County. There are 10,751 people and 3,884 houses in the Solano SRA. SRAs in Solano are mostly stretched north-south in the western portion of Solano County with high fire hazard severity zones located mostly to the west and less severe zones to the east. SRA land is present within the boundary areas of VFPD, SFPD and CFPD. Also, as previously mentioned, Cal Fire provides technical support throughout the County in the form of specialized services including fire suppression handcrews, dozers and helicopter services as needed.

Similar to Cal Fire, the United States Forest Services (USFS) also provides services in California, primarily within forests and grasslands. Areas where USFS services are focused are defined as Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA). There are only a few small areas that are considered FRA in Solano County, all of which are located in the western portion of VFPD.

The rest of the territory in Solano County is designated as Local Responsibility Area (LRA), which consists of high (in the west) and moderate (central Solano) fire hazard severity zones, as well as unzoned lands (the rest of the LRA).

Travis AFB Fire Department serves territory within the air force base and responds to incidents related to AFB aircraft when they occur in other parts of Solano County.

### Boundaries and SOIs

All of the fire protection districts in Solano County have undergone multiple boundary changes since their respective formation dates, including annexations, detachments and consolidations. Refer to the individual district chapters in this report for details regarding each agency's annexations and detachments. Note that information regarding boundary changes was derived from available LAFCO records and may not be complete, excluding records that were not found or readily available.

There have been three consolidations among the fire protection districts of Solano County, including the consolidation of Cordelia FPD with Benicia FPD in 1978, Vacaville FPD with Elmira FPD in 1986, and Montezuma FPD with Ryer Island FPD in 2006.

While multiple district reorganizations modified the boundary areas of the respective districts, the spheres of influence of the majority of the districts were not adjusted after multiple reorganizations and boundary changes had occurred. With the exception of DFPD and MFPD, for which the SOIs are currently up to date, the rest of the districts' spheres of influence have to be updated to reflect boundary changes. MFPD's SOI is currently coterminous with its boundaries, while DFPD's SOI is larger than its boundary area and includes territory where there is no established local fire provider.

### Dispatch and Communications

There are six dispatch centers in Solano County, which include the Benicia Dispatch Center, Fairfield Dispatch Center, Suisun City Dispatch Center, Vacaville Dispatch Center, Vallejo Dispatch Center and the Solano County Dispatch Center. Each of the six dispatch centers dispatches for multiple agencies.

With the exception of East Vallejo FPD all the fire protection districts in Solano County contract with Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for dispatch services. East Vallejo FPD is dispatched through the City of Vallejo. The cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo dispatch through their own dispatch centers.

The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center also provides dispatch services to the Sheriff's Office, Isleton Police and Fire, Dixon Police and Fire, California Medical Facility, Rio Vista/Delta Fire Districts, and Solano Community College Police on a 24-hour basis. The Sheriff's Dispatch Center also handles coordination of air ambulance for scene calls to all areas of the County (city or county), coordination of all mutual aid for the County, and out of county requests.

The County dispatch center operates with at least two people on duty at all times. The center operators answer and transmit on three primary radio channels, seven secondary channels and a number of other law and fire radios for other agencies. The dispatch center also answers 12 business lines, four Nextels, six 911 lines, numerous alarm panels, fax requests, and mobile data computer messages.

The Benicia Communications Center is part of the Services Division of the City of Benicia Police Department. The Communication Center is the primary public safety answering point for wireline, wireless and VoIP 911 calls originating in the City of Benicia, and it handles business lines for the police department. The Center provides dispatch services for the Benicia Police Department and the Benicia Fire Department. It also answers dispatches for assistance from CHP on I-780 and I-680 and Contra Costa Fire Department regarding fire or medical incidents occurring on the Benicia Bridge. The dispatch center places individual calls to the on-call police administration and detectives and dispatches for "after hours" Public Works and Parks Department call-out personnel.

The Fairfield Dispatch Center is the primary public safety answering point for the City of Fairfield. The center dispatches for Fairfield Police Department and the Fairfield Fire Department. After hours and during lunch it dispatches for Fairfield Public Works. The center is the primary public safety answering point for wireline, wireless and VoIP 911 calls for the City. The dispatch center answers all incoming administrative telephone calls for the Fairfield Police Department. The dispatch center is equipped with seven positions, which can answer incoming telephone calls and dispatch the fire and police departments.

The Suisun City Dispatch Center handles all 911 calls, wireless 911 calls, and fire and police dispatch. In addition, there are several other duties performed by the dispatcher, which include all records duties, collecting fees, vehicle releases, and lobby windows. The Center also monitors all cameras upon request.

The Vacaville Dispatch Center dispatches for fire/EMS and police services, answers all 911 calls, wireless 911 calls, and administration calls for the Police Department, and answers after hours calls for Humane Animal Services, Public Works, Utilities, and Building



Maintenance. The Center monitors all city radio systems through emergency situations, schools, wastewater, and City Coach.

The Vallejo Dispatch Center is part of the support service staff of the Vallejo Police Department. The Dispatch Center handles all fire/ EMS and police dispatch for the City of Vallejo, EVFPD and all administrative calls for the Police Department. The Center calls Medic Ambulance for transport services. In addition, the Center calls public works and animal control after-hour services using pagers.

Currently, most of the six centers operate different computer aided dispatch (CAD) systems, which limit the ability to share information between each of the centers. In most cases the existing CAD was chosen based on the needs and available budget of each dispatch center. The City of Vacaville, Suisun City and Solano County Dispatch, all use VisionAir, Benicia uses Sungard, Fairfield uses MotoCAD, and Vallejo uses Motorola PrintTrack. In addition, the centers are using different records management systems (RMS). The City of Vacaville uses Northrop Grumman, Suisun City and Solano County Dispatch both use VisionAir, Benicia uses Sungard, Fairfield uses Tiburon, and Vallejo uses Motorola NetRMS.

In most cases the fire and EMS agencies are using different RMS systems than the police departments. In addition, most fire and EMS RMS systems are not compatible with the dispatch center CAD, which often requires manually entering information from one system into another. The fire departments are operating 15 different RMS systems, one for each of the fire agencies. While some are using the same vendor, they are not interconnected and a very small number are receiving any type of automatic updates from the CAD. Most agencies are manually entering times and other data from the CAD into the RMS system. Each individual fire department maintains its own local records. These systems are not interfaced with the CAD system.

Fire agencies are on multiple frequency bands (800 MHz, VHF, and UHF T-Band), which makes it difficult to coordinate response in large incidents. Agencies need the ability to hear 800 MHz callouts and be able to monitor the 800 MHz fire dispatch channels. Volunteers can only monitor VHF frequencies through their issued pager, which does not allow them to anticipate requests for mutual aid, causing some delays in the district's ability to reduce response times.

The different frequency bands (800 MHz, UHF and VHF) for fire and police also make interoperability a problem between these units. The city dispatch centers cannot communicate directly with the Sheriff and use a scanner to monitor those channels.

#### Advance Life Support and Ambulance Services

Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC), as the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) for Solano County, coordinates agencies providing EMS services through planning, policies and procedures, promulgation of standards, and the monitoring of operational and medical performance.

Medic Ambulance, Inc. holds the exclusive ambulance agreement for all advanced life support (ALS) transport in Solano County, except for the City of Vacaville and Zone "C" where the Vacaville Fire Department is charged with providing 911 response. Medic also provides ambulance service for portions of Sacramento County, including the City of

Isleton, River Delta Fire Protection Districts, as well as Gordon Valley Fire Protection District in Napa.

Medic Ambulance Service, Inc. was awarded the exclusive ambulance contract in Solano County in May 2010. Medic Ambulance has a response time requirement of 12 minutes in the four Public Private Partnership (PPP) Cities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, and Vallejo and a nine minute response time requirement in Rio Vista and Suisun. Rural calls are allowed a 15-minute response time and remote calls have a 90-minute response time.

Fire departments in the cities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, and Vallejo are part of the PPP and each provides ALS first responder support to area residents. The City of Rio Vista and CFPD provide first responder ALS service, but are not part of the Public Private Partnership and do not get reimbursed for support of Medic Ambulance’s services. Suisun City provides only basic life support (BLS) for its residents.

The PPP Agreement between Medic Ambulance and the Cities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, and Vallejo allow the fire departments in these cities to operate under a high performance contract with Medic Ambulance and the SEMSC, which is substantially similar to the contract SEMSC entered with Medic Ambulance. This agreement allows Medic Ambulance crews an additional three minutes to arrive on scene, as the fire departments provide “first response” service to their communities.

In the Medic service area, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority calls for all PPP cities. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses.<sup>13</sup> Compliance with these requirements is determined on a monthly basis. If a city providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards, it is fined by the Medic.

As specified in the State EMS Authority approved EMS Plan, Vacaville Fire Department provides 911 response to the City of Vacaville and “Zone C,” which includes the territory of VFPD and a portion of DFPD. The Vacaville Fire Department has been providing emergency ALS First Response and transport since the mid 1970’s. The City of Vacaville operates under the guidance of Solano County Department of Emergency Medical Services as a part of SEMSC. Response times in the City of Vacaville are measured at seven minutes for urban calls within the city limits and 15 minutes for rural calls. All calls outside the city limits regardless of distance are considered “rural” and measured at the 15-minute standard. This designation is based on historical precedent.

Solano County is served by three air ambulance providers, including CALSTAR (California Shock/Trauma Air Rescue) with a base station in Solano County at the Nut Tree Airport as well as Buchanan Field, and Sacramento, REACH Air Medical Services with bases in Concord, Lakeport, and Santa Rosa and the California Highway Patrol (CHP), which has a helicopter capable of transporting injured persons stationed at the Napa Airport.

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<sup>13</sup> Code 2: non-life-threatening emergency response. Code 3: Life-threat response.



## **4. CORDELIA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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Cordelia Fire Protection District (CFPD) provides structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, fire prevention services, hazardous materials assistance, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic and advanced life support. In addition, the District provides specialized rescue services, such as response to boating accidents along the shoreline and low angle rope rescue services. The District provides services to the unincorporated territory in the southwestern portion of Solano County.

### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

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#### **Background**

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CFPD was formed in 1918 as an independent special district for the purpose of providing fire protection to the unincorporated areas of Solano County located outside the city limits of the City of Fairfield and the City of Benicia.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>14</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>15</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.<sup>16</sup>

CFPD surrounds the City of Fairfield and the City of Benicia in the southwestern portion of Solano County. The District borders Suisun FPD in the east and is adjacent to the City of Vallejo and East Vallejo FPD in the southwest.

#### **Boundaries**

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CFPD is entirely within Solano County. The present bounds encompass approximately 56 square miles of unincorporated territory in Solano County. The District's boundaries include the communities of Green Valley, Rockville, Cordelia, and Lower Suisun Valley, as shown in Figure 4-2. While the District surrounds the City of Fairfield and the City of Benicia, it does not serve the incorporated city territory, as both cities have their own fire departments.

The District has undertaken two annexations, eight detachments, and one consolidation with Benicia FPD since its formation. The most recent change took place in 1994 when

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<sup>14</sup> Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

<sup>15</sup> Health and Safety Code §13862.

<sup>16</sup> Government Code §56824.10.

1,110 acres of land protected by CFPD were detached from the District and annexed to East Vallejo FPD. The District’s boundary changes are shown in Figure 4-1.

**Figure 4-1: CFPD List of LAFCO-Approved Boundary Changes**

Project Name	Type of Action	Year	Recording Agency
Cordelia Fire Protection District	Formation	1918	County
Lewis Mangels	Annexation	1975	LAFCO
UPS property	Detachment	1976	LAFCO
Moore and Strahan properties	Detachment	1976	LAFCO
Smith property	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Mangels property	Annexation	1977	LAFCO
Red Top	Detachment	1978	LAFCO
Frisk and Dittmer properties	Detachment	1978	LAFCO
Benicia FPD and Cordelia FPD	Consolidation	1978	LAFCO
Gateway Plaza	Detachment	1990	LAFCO
Stonedene	Detachment	1992	LAFCO
Trailer City Park, Lands of Bordonni, Lake Herman Quarry, Lands of Minahen, Lands of Brown, Lands of Azevedo	Detachment	1994	LAFCO

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## Sphere of Influence

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The sphere of influence (SOI) for the District was originally adopted in 1983 as coterminous with its boundaries as they existed at that time. In 1994, the SOI was amended to reflect past reorganizations. Since then, there have been no updates. The District’s SOI should be updated to Comply with LAFCO’s policy and CKH.

# Cordelia Fire Protection District

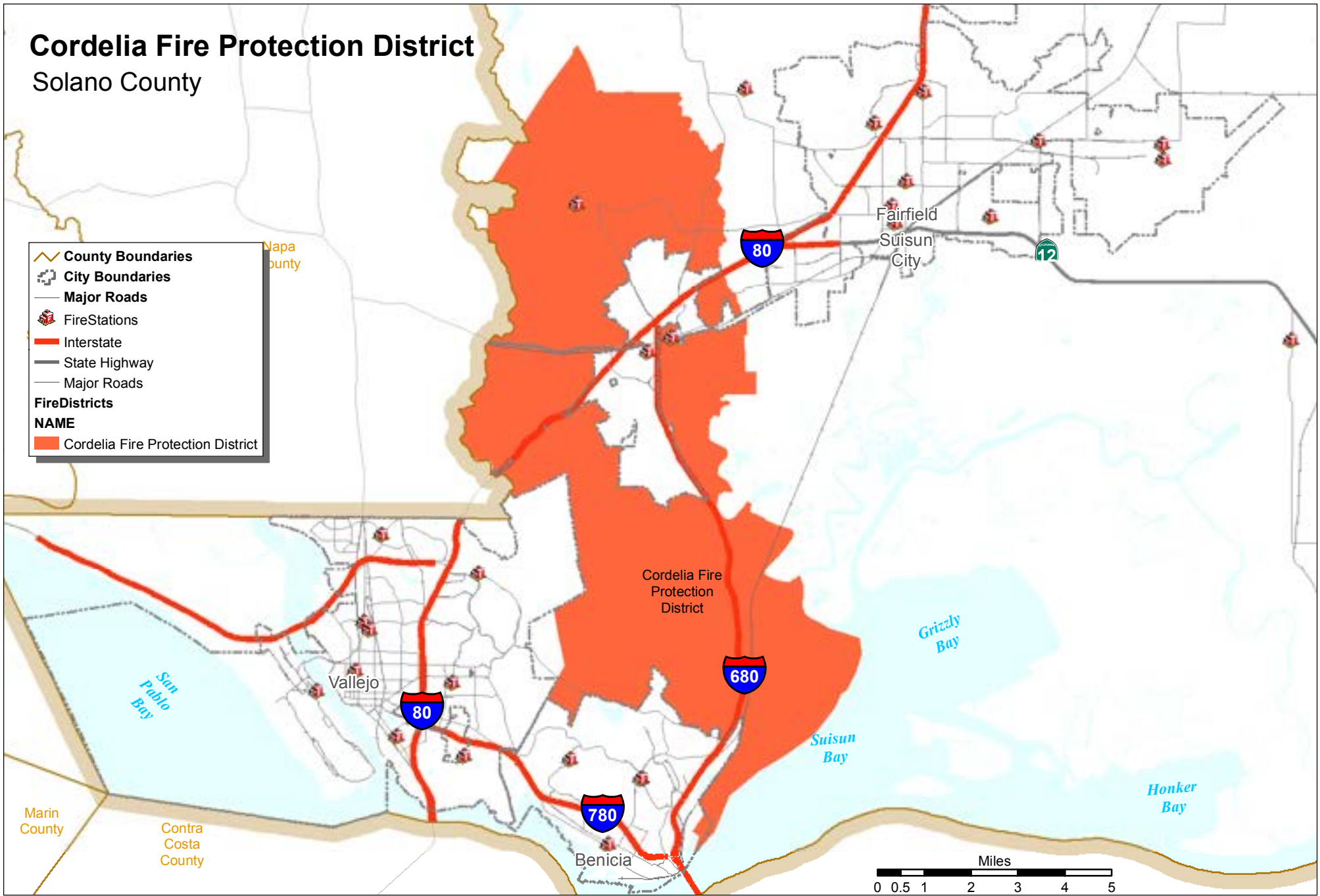
## Solano County

-  County Boundaries
-  City Boundaries
-  Major Roads
-  Fire Stations
-  Interstate
-  State Highway
-  Major Roads
- Fire Districts**
- NAME**
-  Cordelia Fire Protection District

Napa  
County

Marin  
County

Contra  
Costa  
County



**Solano Local Agency  
Formation Commission**

744 Empire St., Suite 216  
Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 439-3897  
[www.solanolafo.com](http://www.solanolafo.com)

This map is to be used for general information purposes only. Where precise accuracy is required reference should be made to certified maps, surveys, documents and/or by other official means.

### Solano County GIS Services

Department of Information Technology  
675 Texas Street, Suite 3700  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707-784-6340  
Email: [GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com)  
PRJ\_1093, 08/01/2014

### Disclaimer:

*This map was made using Solano County GIS files with varying degrees of scale, accuracy, precision, currentness, and alignment and therefore cannot be used for situations requiring survey grade measurement or legal boundary determination. Solano County disclaims liability for any loss that may result from the use of this map. User acknowledges data limitations and accepts responsibility for map based judgments.*



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## Type and Extent of Services

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### Services Provided

Figure 4-3 details the services provided by CFPD. If a service is not provided by CFPD, but is offered by another agency, it is indicated in the figure. Resources from Cal Fire provided outside the SRA are provided on a mutual aid basis. Availability is dependent upon fire activity, time of year, and other factors.

**Figure 4-3: CFPD Services**

Service	Agency
<b>Fire Suppression Services</b>	
Structural Fire Protection	Yes
Wildland Fire Protection	Yes
Vehicle Fire Protection	Yes
Ladder Truck Capabilities	Fairfield FD
Fire Suppression Handcrew	No
Fire Suppression Dozer	No
Helicopter Services – Fire Suppression	No
Boat With Fire Suppression Capabilities	No
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>	
Basic Life Support Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support - Non Transport Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support Transport Provider	Medic Ambulance
Continuing Education Provider – Medical	Yes
Air Ambulance Transport Helicopter Services	No
Helicopter Landing Facilities On Site	No
Vehicle Extrication Tools/Equipment	Yes
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	
Fire Safety Education – Children	Yes
Fire Safety Education – Adults/Seniors	Yes (open house and fire extinguisher training)
Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program	No
Fire and Life Safety Business Inspection Program	Yes
Fire Protection Planning	No
New Commercial Construction Plan Reviews	Yes
Public Education Provider (CPR, First Aid, etc.)	Yes
Home Fire/Safety Inspections	Yes
Fire Origin and Cause Investigations	Yes
Fuel Reduction/Weed Abatement Program	Yes
Smoke Detector Giveaway/Installation Program	Installation program only

Address Sign Installation Program	No
<b>Rescue Services</b>	
First Responder Swift Water Rescue Program	No
Water Rescue Program	No
Ice Rescue Program	No
Dive Rescue Program	No
Low angle Rope Rescue Program	Yes
Helicopter Short/Long Haul Rescue Capabilities	No
Response To Boating Accidents	Yes – Shoreside only
Rescue Dog Services	No
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Basic	Yes
Hazardous Materials Response Team	No
<b>Support Services</b>	
Firefighter Incident Support Unit	No
Mobile Incident Command/Communications Unit	No
Fill Station for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	Yes
Mobile Breathing Support Unit	Yes
Community Emergency Response Team	Yes
Chaplain Services	Yes
Training Academy	No
Emergency Operations Center Capabilities	No
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Public Service Assists	Yes
Motor Vehicle Accident Response	Yes
Welfare Checks	Yes
Public Safety Answering Point	Sheriff
Fire/EMS Dispatch	Sheriff
Fundraising Activities	Yes
Firefighters Association - Non Profit	Yes
Auxiliary Association	No
<b>Other</b>	
College Career Days	Yes
Collection Point for Toys for Tots	Yes

Service Area

CFPD provides services outside of its boundary area through an automatic aid agreement with the City of Fairfield FD. In addition, the District maintains a master mutual aid agreement with Solano County fire providers, and on occasion may respond to areas

within another agency's bounds.<sup>17</sup> CFPD participates in strike teams comprised of other county agencies, which may on occasion respond around the State.

The District was in the process of developing and negotiating an automatic aid agreement with Napa County Fire Department as of the drafting of this report, for the SR 12 (Jamison Canyon) corridor.

Additionally, to the northwest of CFPD is an area that does not have a designated local fire provider, which is designated as being within Cal Fire's jurisdiction, where the District provides fire services when necessary and provides permit services.

The District reported that there were no unserved areas within its bounds. There are reportedly no significant obstacles that challenge response to calls for service.

### Services to Other Agencies

The District does not provide contract services to other agencies.

### Contracts for Services

Similar to all other fire protection districts in the County (with the exception of East Vallejo FPD), CFPD contracts with the County Sheriff's Office for dispatch services. The structure of these services is discussed in more detail in the *Facilities* section of this chapter.

### Overlapping Service Providers

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) provides services throughout the State. Generally, Cal Fire services are focused in wildland areas defined as State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Similarly, the United States Forest Service (USFS) also provides services in California, primarily within forests and grasslands. Areas where USFS services are provided are defined as Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA). A majority of the territory within CFPD is considered high and moderate fire hazard SRA territory where Cal Fire has responsibility for wildland fires. Cal Fire also provides technical support throughout the County in the form of specialized services such as fire suppression handcrews, dozers, and helicopter services when necessary.

## **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to 1) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 2) a defined complaint process designed to handle all issues to resolution, and 3) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

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<sup>17</sup> Cordelia FPD is part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Dixon, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Montezuma FPD, Suisun FPD, Vacaville FPD, Cal Fire, and Travis Air Force Base.



The principal act requires that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>18</sup> CFPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected to four-year terms. The District reported that the Board Chair had resigned in 2013, and the position remained vacant as of the drafting of this report.

The Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Cordelia Fire Station located at 2155 Cordelia Road in Fairfield. Agendas are posted at the fire station and minutes are available upon request and are located on the Clerk’s desk in the office after approval. Information about Board meetings is shown in Figure 4-4.

**Figure 4-4: Cordelia Fire Protection District Governing Body**

<b>Cordelia Fire Protection District</b>		
<b>Governing Body and Board Meetings</b>		
<i>Manner of Selection</i>	Election	
<i>Length of Term</i>	4 years	
<i>Meetings</i>	Every second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.	Fire Station Hall 2155 Cordelia Road, Fairfield CA 94534
<i>Agenda Distribution</i>	Front of the fire station	
<i>Minutes Distribution</i>	Available upon request	
<b>Contact</b>		
<i>Contact</i>	Chief, Jay Huyssoon	
<i>Mailing Address</i>	2155 Cordelia Road, Fairfield CA 94534	
<i>Phone</i>	707.864.0468	
<i>Fax</i>	707.864.8607	
<i>Email/Website</i>	<a href="http://www.cordeliafire.com/">http://www.cordeliafire.com/</a>	

Board directors do not receive any monthly compensation. Government Code §53235 requires that if a district provides compensation or reimbursement of expenses to its board members, the board members must receive two hours of training in ethics at least once every two years and the district must establish a written policy on reimbursements. The District was not aware if there were adopted policies on expense reimbursements. The Board of Directors reportedly last received ethics training in 2013.

In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District tries to reach its constituents by participating in various community events, including the Christmas Tree Lot and College Career Days. Additionally, CFPD collaborates with various nonprofits, including Toys for Tots during Christmas, partners with community service clubs (i.e., Lions), and holds fundraising events on its own throughout the year. The District has a website and a Facebook page where information is made available to the public.

<sup>18</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.



If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted in person at the board meetings. District customers are also given the opportunity to rate satisfaction with the services received from CFPD on a simple survey. The District's chief is responsible for handling complaints to resolution. The District reported that it received one complaint in 2013. The complaint was received on the customer satisfaction survey, and was regarding confusion of the caller's address. This complaint has since been addressed. CFPD tracks complaints by including them in filed board packets.

The Board of Directors maintains policies and procedures to guide its efforts. The policies were not provided to LAFCO and it is unclear if the District maintains policies regarding code of ethics, public records requests, and/or Brown Act compliance.

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000, et seq.) requires State and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation (California Code of Regulations §18730), which contains the terms of a standard conflict of interest code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's code. The District reportedly maintains a conflict of interest code, which is signed each year by the Board of Directors.

Government Code §87203 requires persons who hold office to disclose their investments, interests in real property and incomes by filing appropriate forms with the determined filing agency (i.e., the County or Fair Political Practices Commission) each year. Pursuant to the District's conflict of interest code, all five board members file a copy of their individual Form 700 with the County's Registrar of Voters. All five members filed timely for the 2012 reporting period. The 2013 filing deadline had not yet occurred as of the drafting of this report.

During the course of this MSR process, CFPD demonstrated full accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Solano LAFCO. The District responded to questionnaires and cooperated with interview and document requests.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, maintaining a website, and filing of Form 700 Statements of Economic Interest
- ❖ Improvements could be made to the District's operations in order to enhance accountability and transparency. District policies and procedures should be made readily available to the public on its website. Additionally, the District should make improvements to its financial controls as recommended by its auditor.
- ❖ Governance structure options for CFPD are limited to reorganization with another agency—consolidation with a neighboring district or multiple agencies in the County.

## **GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

This section discusses the factors affecting service demand, such as land uses, historical and anticipated population growth, and relevant growth strategies.

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### **Land Use**

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Land uses within the District consist of resource conservation, rural residential, residential traditional communities, agricultural, and exclusive agricultural. The District's bounds encompass approximately 56 square miles.

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### **Population**

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There are approximately 2,597 residents within the District, based on GIS analysis of 2010 Census population information.<sup>19</sup> However, the District reported that as of the last tax roll there were approximately 1,550 residential structures within its boundaries. Based on Solano County's average household size of 2.87 persons, the District estimates that its population is closer to 4,449. The population density within the District is between 46 and 79 people per square mile.

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### **Projected Growth and Development**

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CFPD reported that there had been growth in population over the last five years and a slight decrease in service demand, reportedly due to fire prevention measures. While the District no longer conducts formal growth and service demand forecasts, it anticipates minimal growth in population and an increase in service demand within its territory in the next 10 years.

There are proposed developments in Green Valley and in Rockville Corners, within the District's boundaries. Build-out of these projects would yield approximately 433 new residential dwelling units and would slightly increase demand for the District's services. Conversely, the District anticipates that its boundaries will continue to shrink as the City of Fairfield conducts further annexations, which will reduce its service area as well as property tax revenues.

The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Solano County will grow by eight percent from 2010 to 2020. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.8 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from between 2,597 and 4,449 in 2010 to between approximately 2,805 and 4,805 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally, based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

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<sup>19</sup> This population figure may be slightly inflated based on comparison of known populations in other areas with those generated through the GIS analysis.

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## Growth Strategies

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The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County.

The lands within the District are designated in the County's General Plan as rural residential, traditional community residential, park and recreation, watershed, agriculture and marsh resource conservation. Because the majority of the land in CFPD is designated as watershed, agriculture and marsh resource preservation, it is anticipated that there will be minimal development or population growth within the District. The County has historically required that development requiring water and sewer service be incorporated within one of the County's cities. Based on this policy, most residential, commercial, and industrial development in the County has been in incorporated areas.

Portions of the District are within the sphere of influence of the City of Fairfield, the City of Vallejo, and the City of Benicia. It is anticipated that these areas will eventually be annexed by the cities. As such, the cities have planned for land uses within the areas, and the County coordinates with the cities on any proposed developments in the areas.<sup>20</sup> Future development of urban land uses is to be facilitated and served through city annexation. Current land uses in these areas may continue under County jurisdiction until the land is annexed to the city for conversion to urban uses. The City of Fairfield's General Plan land use map designates the lands within the District and in the City's SOI as mixed use, very low residential, and park and recreation. The City of Vallejo's General Plan land use map designates the lands within the District and in the City's SOI as agriculture, residential, and community parks. The City of Benicia's General Plan land use map designates the lands within the District and in the City's SOI as general open space.

The District is participating in a study with other fire protection districts to establish a development impact fee throughout the unincorporated territories of the County. In 2013, several fire protection districts (Cordelia, Dixon, Suisun, and Vacaville FPDs) in the County hired a consulting firm to conduct a nexus study to assess and make recommendations regarding a uniform development impact fee for each of the districts. Such a fee would be designed to ensure a certain level of continued service among the fire districts should development occur within their bounds.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Cordelia Fire Protection District (CFPD) currently has an estimated population of 2,597 based on GIS calculations; however, the District estimates its population is closer to 4,449.
- ❖ CFPD has experienced a slight decrease in service demand over the last five years, possibly due to fire prevention measures.

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<sup>20</sup> The areas are designated as being part of the City's municipal service area by the County. MSAs reflect city planned urban growth areas and are based on County review of city general plans and spheres of influence established by the Solano LAFCO.

- ❖ The District anticipates minimal growth in population and similarly a nominal increase in service demand within its territory in the next 10 years. While there are some proposed developments within the District's boundaries, annexation of district territory by neighboring cities is anticipated to offset any growth as a result of those developments.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from between 2,597 and 4,449 in 2010 to between approximately 2,805 and 4,805 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within CFPD will increase minimally, as any growth in demand generated by population growth will likely be balanced by city annexations of district territory.

## **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.<sup>21</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.<sup>22</sup> According to DWR, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to CFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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### **Determinations**

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to CFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

## **FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES**

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by the District and identifies the revenue sources currently available to the District.

The District reported that financial levels were generally inadequate to provide services. Primary challenges to financing levels include high employee benefit costs and the impending higher costs associated with the upcoming replacement of the retiring chief. Additionally, the District has faced historical challenges associated with areas mistakenly

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<sup>21</sup> Government Code §56033.5.

<sup>22</sup> Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.

included in CFPD's property tax rate area and later removed, which resulted in a distinct reduction in the District's property tax revenues in 2002.

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## Revenues and Expenses

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The District's revenue in FY 12-13 was \$915,728, of which 39 percent was from special tax revenue, 25 percent was from property taxes, 23 percent from intergovernmental sources (capital and operating grants), seven percent from charges for services, four percent from fire impact fees, one percent from interest, and one percent from contributions and donations.

In 2002, the District introduced Measure I to district voters to collect a special tax on properties within the District to supplement revenue sources. District voters approved the special tax. The amount of the tax is dependent upon land use—residential parcels are assessed \$300 and commercial parcels are assessed \$400 annually. Parcels with public uses are not assessed. The tax does not adjust according to inflation.

The District charges fees for services including fees for reports and permits, plan review, operating permits, field inspections, etc.<sup>23</sup>

The District's expenditures amounted to \$835,304 in FY 12-13—50 percent was spent on salaries and benefits, 49 percent was spent on services and supplies, and one percent on capital outlays.

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## Capital Improvements

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The District conducts capital planning through an informal wish list, which includes estimated costs. The District's current wish list dates from 2005, but is updated as items are purchased or replaced. In FY 12-13, the District spent \$8,995 on capital improvements. In FY 13-14, the District has allocated \$33,000 for capital improvements, a majority of which is designated for capital reserves.

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## Outstanding Debt

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The District had no long-term debt at the end of FY 12-13.

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## Reserves

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The District does not have a formal policy on the amount of reserves to be maintained for contingency purposes, but has an informal goal to maintain one year in expenditures in its reserve fund. At the end of FY 12-13, the District maintained a fund balance of \$426,672, of which \$308,048 is committed for capital uses.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District reported that financial levels were generally inadequate to provide services. Primary challenges to financing levels include high employee benefit costs

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<sup>23</sup> CFPD Ordinance 2008-01.

and the impending higher costs associated with the upcoming replacement of the retiring chief.

- ❖ The District has faced historical challenges associated with areas mistakenly included in CFPD's property tax rate area and later removed, which resulted in a distinct reduction in the District's property tax revenues in 2002.
- ❖ During the District's FY 12-13 audit, the auditor found three significant deficiencies which were deemed to be material weaknesses, two significant deficiencies that were not deemed material weaknesses. It is recommended that the District address these issues to ensure accountability and transparency in its financial control.
- ❖ In order to improve its operational efficiency and reduce costs, CFPD has updated various equipment, improved employee scheduling by making it available online, started using credit cards for all payments to streamline accounting, and regularly makes CalPERS payments at the beginning of the year to ensure that interest is not accumulated.
- ❖ While the District maintained a substantial fund balance of \$426,672 at the end of FY 13, approximately 72 percent of these funds are planned to be used for vehicle replacement.

## PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY

The District reported that it had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its present service area through mutual aid agreements. The District reported that any growth in demand would require additional funds, likely in the form of development impact fees, to ensure adequate capacity and resources to continue to provide the current level of services.

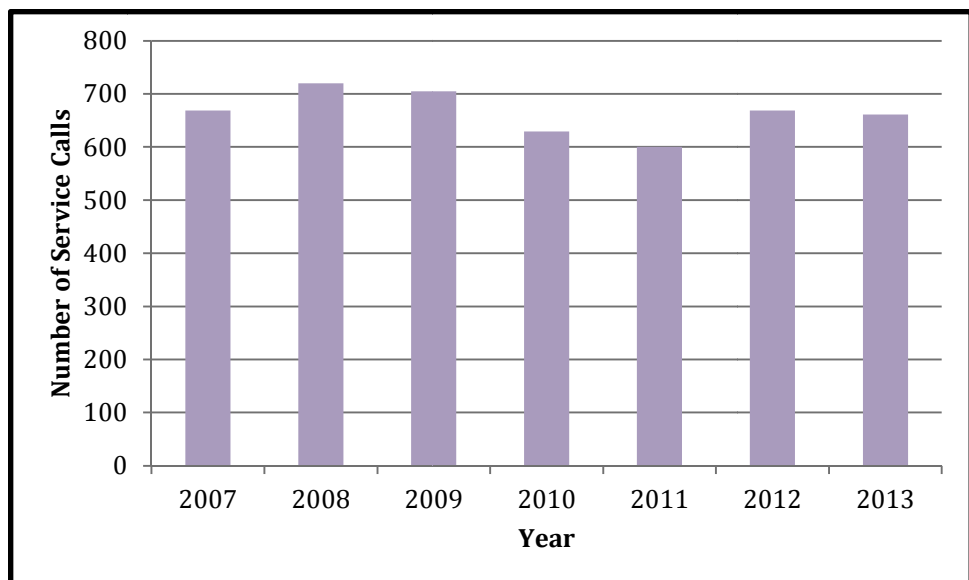
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### Existing Demand

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CFPD reported that structure fires did not occur with the same frequency as vegetation fires. The District's peak demand times for vegetation fires occurs in the afternoon from two to eleven. Service calls are higher in volume during the months of July through October.

**Figure 4-5: CFPD Number of Calls by Year, 2007-2013**





Vehicle accidents peak during commuting hours and on Friday and Saturday nights.

CFPD reported that it had observed a decrease in service demand in the last few years. As shown in Figure 4-5, service demand has experienced an overall decrease between 2008 and 2013, with the lowest call volume in 2010 and 2011. In 2013, CFPD received a total of 649 calls. The largest portion of calls were for emergency medical service (31 percent), while false alarms constituted 28 percent of calls. The remainder was for fires and hazardous materials (18 percent), motor vehicle accidents (14 percent), miscellaneous emergencies (five percent), and miscellaneous non-emergency calls (four percent).<sup>24</sup> Of the total calls reported, 10 percent were mutual aid calls. The District averaged 254 service calls per 1,000 residents.<sup>25</sup>

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## Staffing

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The District has 52 firefighting personnel—one paid<sup>26</sup> chief, one paid battalion chief, two volunteer battalion chiefs, two paid engineers, and 46 volunteer firefighters. While termed volunteer firefighters for the purposes of this report, these personnel are considered “residential firefighters” by the District and are asked to staff one of the District’s fire stations for a 24-hour period once a week and receive \$20 per 24-hour shift, paid on a quarterly basis. The median age of the District’s firefighters is 28.5, with a range from 19 to 66.

CFPD reported that its staffing level had not changed in the last few years. While the District has had annual staff turnover rates of between 40 and 62 percent over the last three years, all positions have been immediately filled. This high turnover rate is mostly attributable to CFPD’s program of hiring trained firefighters immediately after academy as residential firefighters who then move on to full-time paid positions with other agencies. The District identifies this as a challenge that is acceptable given the heightened level of service that the full-time station staffing allows at minimal cost.

The District recruits volunteers amongst graduates from the California State Fire Marshal Academy and the Contra-Costa County Academy. CFPD reported that recruitment was also conducted by employees through word of mouth. When employees transfer to different departments, they are encouraged to let people know about the District’s programs and vacant positions. As of the drafting of this report, the District had a waiting list of about 15 volunteers.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the firefighter to perform essential and advanced fire ground tasks, as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. The level of certification required for each firefighter is determined by the individual fire department. However, according to the

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<sup>24</sup> Non-Emergencies calls include emergency standby, public service assist, agency assist.

<sup>26</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of his earned income working in the fire service.



California State Fire Marshal, there are plans to phase out the Volunteer Firefighter certification level and the most basic level of certification will eventually be Firefighter I. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fire ground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>27</sup> In addition to the general firefighter certification, there are also several emergency medical and specialized certifications that firefighting personnel may attain. Refer to the Overview Chapter in this document for a description of each of these certifications. The number of CFPD personnel certified in each category is shown in Figure 4-6. Each firefighter, including volunteers, is able to hold multiple certifications, including strike team certifications.

**Figure 4-6: CFPD Certified Personnel**

Certification Level	Number of Firefighting Staff	% of Total Firefighting Staff
Volunteer Firefighter	46	87%
Firefighter I	49	92%
Firefighter II	15	28%
First Responder EMS	0	0%
Emergency Medical Technician 1	52	100%
Paramedic	15	28%
Apparatus Engineer	9	17%
Company Officer	3	6%
Chief Officer	3	6%
Haz Mat FRO	45	85%
CICCS FFT 2	14	26%
CICCS FFT 1	32	60%
CICCS Engine Boss	4	7%
CICCS Strike Team Leader	2	4%

CFPD conducts a majority of its training in house. Training hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. every day of the year. Those with Firefighter I certification and drivers/operators are required to train an additional three hours per day for 250 days a year. Live fire training lasts two weeks every year. Paid firefighters train between eight to 10 hours per month, but hours can be as high as 18 to 20 hours monthly, when unscheduled training is necessary.

New paid firefighters are required to have served four years as resident staff and passed the District’s Engineer testing procedure to hold the rank of Engineer. In order to be considered for an entry level paid position, the new applicant must possess a valid Class C driver’s license and clean driving record, a National Registry EMT license, a CPAT Physical Ability Certificate that is less than 365 day old, and a completion certificate from an approved California Firefighter I academy.

<sup>27</sup> State Fire Marshal, Course Information and Required Materials, 2007, p. 44

Volunteers are required to complete California State Fire Marshal Firefighter I training, Driver/Operator 1a and 1b, and Company Officer Curricula as the training minimum standards.

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## Facilities

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CFPD operates two fire stations. The District owns Station 31 and rents Station 29 from the Fairfield-Suisun School District. The lease agreement is for 15 years, with an option of renewal for another 20 years on a month-to-month basis. The function and condition of each fire facility is described in detail in Figure 4-7.

**Figure 4-7: Cordelia FPD Fire Stations**

	Station #31	Station #29
Property owner	Cordelia Fire Protection District	Fairfield Suisun School District
Address	2155 Cordelia Road, Fairfield, CA 94534	1624 Rockville Rd, Fairfield, CA 94534
Purpose	Fire Station	Fire Station
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	Hall Rental	Polling Facility
Hours station is staffed	24 hours/day, 7 days a week	24 hours/day, 7 days a week
Date acquired or built	1939	1974
Condition of facility <sup>28</sup>	Fair	Fair
Infrastructure needs	Roof repair, mold removal, aging support beams, and possibly near an earthquake fault line.	Possibly near an earthquake fault line.
Number and type of vehicles at facility	1-Type 1 Engine 1- Type 2 Engine 1 - Tactical Water Tender 1 - Type 3 Engine 5 -Staff Vehicles	1 - Type 1 Engine, 1 - Type 3 Engine, 1 - 1-ton utility vehicle 1 - mobile air unit
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	1 Paid Chief, 1 Paid Battalion Chief 2 Paid Engineers/Company Officers	0

<sup>28</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	0	0
Number of volunteers staffing facility	3 to 5 per day	3 to 4 per day
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	3 to 5 per day in the station, total is 28 to 30. Call back varies from 6 to 8 for large incidents.	3 to 4 per day in station, total 16 to 18

For water supplies, the District uses its own tactical water tender. The District did not indicate the presence of other water reserves available for firefighting purposes.

It appears that currently there is marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of the District's facilities and CFPD's response times. Both of the District's stations are in fair condition, which constitutes a capacity constraint. CFPD meets the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) response time guidelines for a volunteer or combination fire department, but it does not yet meet the guidelines for a fire department with paid staff as outlined in NFPA 1710. The District's response to medical emergencies meets the Solano Emergency Medical Service Cooperative standard for rural areas. The District's two stations cover 56 square miles of territory and response times to areas at the periphery of the District can be lengthy.

Dispatch and communications

With the exception of East Vallejo FPD, all fire protection districts in Solano County, including CFPD, contract with Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for dispatch services.<sup>29</sup> The District reimburses the Sheriff's Office based on CFPD's ratio of calls compared to total calls for fire services handled by the dispatch center. Generally, reimbursement for these services reportedly averages about \$25 per call.

The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center also provides dispatch services to the Sheriff's Office, Isleton Police and Fire, Dixon Police and Fire, California Medical Facility, Rio Vista/Delta Fire Districts, and Solano Community College Police on a 24 hour basis. The Sheriff's Dispatch Center also handles coordination of air ambulance for scene calls to all areas of the County (city or county), coordination of all mutual aid for the County and out-of-county requests.

The Dispatch Center operates with at least two people on duty at all times. The center operators answer and transmit on three primary radio channels, seven secondary channels, and a number of other law and fire radios for other agencies. The dispatch center also answers 12 business lines, four Nextels, six 911 lines, numerous alarm panels, fax requests, and mobile data computer messages.

Communication equipment is sometimes not compatible making it difficult to communicate when coordinating a mutual aid call. Many of the districts have mutual aid agreements with the cities. Dispatch becomes a challenge if the nearest responder is a city

<sup>29</sup> East Vallejo is dispatched through the City of Vallejo. The cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo each have their own dispatch centers.

agency or if a city requires assistance from a district. Often times it takes multiple calls to different departments to get assistance sent.

The District reported that the use of multiple frequency bands (800 MHz, VHF, and UHF T-Band) made it difficult to coordinate the fire agencies' response during large incidents. The District indicated that because there is an excess of data sent to multiple incident commanders, vital information sometimes goes unnoticed resulting in potentially dangerous situations. Additionally, CFPD reported that it was generally difficult to communicate with a subordinate or a superior, because radios often malfunctioned, or all radios were carried by engine captains.

In order to improve the current dispatch services, the District suggested the following strategies:

- ❖ Have all fire agencies on the same frequency;
- ❖ Centralize fire dispatch separately from law enforcement dispatch;
- ❖ Have dispatchers specialized in fire incidents;
- ❖ Use available technology for up-to-date dispatching capabilities;
- ❖ Make use of willing support from the various fire agencies;
- ❖ Make improvements to the current system as soon as possible to minimize liability related to potential serious miscommunications in the field; and
- ❖ Keep the solution simple and easy to understand—an example of which is Contra Costa Fire Dispatch. (Refer to the *Overview* chapter in this document for a detailed description of the Contra Costa Fire Dispatch configuration.)

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## Infrastructure Needs

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CFPD identified the need for a new facility in the southern part of the District, along Lake Herman Road near the City of Benicia or along Highway 680 on the corridor south of Marshview Road and north of Lake Herman Road. However, due to financial constraints, a schedule for construction has not yet been determined.

The District's current stations were identified as being in fair condition. Station 31 reportedly has the most significant needs, as it is in need of a roof repair and mold removal from the living and sleeping quarters. Additionally, the station has aging timber support beams. The roof repairs and mold removal would cost approximately \$220,000. Different long-term solutions are being considered, including the building of new living quarters on the north side of the property (\$200,000) or the replacement of the entire facility with a new steel frame building (\$2,500,000). The cost to purchase and replace Station 29 is approximately \$5,400,000, but the District does not anticipate this project to be developed in the near future.

CFPD reported that the upgrades could possibly be financed with a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan. The District's development impact fee proceeds may help to repay the loan.

With regard to vehicles and equipment, the District reported to have an adequate equipment/apparatus replacement schedule to ensure proper operating condition. An

Environmental Protection Agency regulation requires that all tier 0 diesel engines be replaced or upgraded by 2016. Based on this regulation, the District needs to replace three vehicles—a new Type 1 engine, a Type 1 tactical water tender, and a new Type 2 apparatus—which would cost an estimated \$1.7 million. However, CFPD does not presently have sufficient funds to replace these vehicles.

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## Challenges

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There are certain areas along the periphery of the District where there can be longer response times depending on traffic—the southern end of the District at the northern end of Sky Valley Road can take 25 minutes, it may also take 25 minutes or longer to respond to vehicle accidents on Lake Herman Road, north bound I-680 north of Lake Herman, or east bound I-80, east of American Canyon Overpass, and there are areas of marsh land to the east of I-680 that are time consuming to access for either medical or vegetation fires.

The primary challenges to CFPD offering adequate services include the following:

- ❖ Maintaining an adequate level of paramedics to cover both stations for all seven daily shifts had been a particular challenge;
- ❖ Maintaining apparatus in an optimum state of repair and the equipment up-to-date with current technology with a limited revenue stream; and
- ❖ Limited revenue resources, that are anticipated to become further constrained as neighboring cities annex additional territory.

## SERVICE ADEQUACY

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. CFPD has an ISO rating of five in urban areas and 8b in rural areas throughout its service area. CFPD was last evaluated in 2011.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued response time performance standards depending on the service structure of the agency. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, these standards provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. For agencies with paid staff, NFPA 1710 identifies the response time guideline of six minutes at least 90 percent of the time. For volunteer and combination fire departments, NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14 minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are

directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>30</sup> The District reported that it aimed to meet the 1710 guidelines and arrive on scene within six minutes of dispatch calls 90 percent of the time.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) has designated an exclusive operating area (EOA) in Solano County for EMS and ambulance services provided by Medic Ambulance Services. The EOA includes all territory in Solano County with the exception of the City of Vacaville, Travis Air Force Base, and the territory designated as Zone C.<sup>31</sup> SEMSC has responsibility for assuring that all incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County have a safe, dependable and responsive pre hospital Emergency Medical Care system. In the EOA, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority call. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses. Compliance with these requirements are determined on a monthly basis. If a city providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards, it is fined. The amount payable by Medic to the participating member cities reflects the estimated cost savings to Medic under the SEMSC agreement due to the first response of the participating member cities. Medic on the other hand is required to respond within nine to 12 minutes in areas identified as urban areas, 15 minutes in areas designated as rural and 90 minutes in remote areas. The Medic response standard for rural areas indicates what is considered appropriate response times for medical emergencies for the District. CFPD responds to all calls with a median response time of five minutes and 53 seconds. CFPD responds to 80 percent of calls within nine minutes 17 seconds or less and 90 percent of calls within 10 minutes 49 seconds or less, which exceeds the NFPA 1710 response guidelines and meets the SEMSC EMS response time standards. As mentioned in the *Challenges* section of this chapter, there are certain areas along the periphery of the District where there can be longer response times depending on traffic.

The service area size for each fire station varies between the fire districts. The median fire station in Solano County serves approximately 39.8 square miles. Dixon FD serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles at its single station. Suisun FPD stations serve approximately 82.5 square miles per station on average. The service area for each of CFPD's fire stations is 28 square miles.

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers that rely on volunteer or call firefighters may have differing staff availability and reliability. An agency with more firefighters could have fewer resources, if availability is limited due to work and personal obligations. Staffing levels in Solano County vary from 0.68 firefighters per 1,000 residents in EVFPD to 29 in MFPD. By comparison, CFPD has on average approximately 20 firefighters per 1,000 residents.

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<sup>30</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

<sup>31</sup> Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative Ambulance Service Agreement, April 10, 2010.



Operating expenditures per capita is often reflective of the level of service offered by a fire provider as determined by financing constraints. The least amount of money per capita was spent by Dixon FPD (\$79). Montezuma FPD expended the most per capita (\$499), as it serves a relatively expansive area with very low population density. To compare, CFPD spent \$318 per capita in FY 12-13.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District reported that it had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its present service area through mutual aid agreements. Any growth in demand would require additional funds, likely in the form of development impact fees, to ensure adequate capacity and resources to continue to provide the current level of services.
- ❖ It appears there is marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of the District's facilities and CFPD's response times.
- ❖ Both of the District's stations are in fair condition, which constitutes a capacity constraint. Station 31 reportedly has the most significant needs, as it is in need of a roof repair and mold removal from the living and sleeping quarters. Different long-term solutions are being considered to address these needs; however, financing constraints limit the extent of any capital improvements or replacements.
- ❖ CFPD identified the need for a new facility in the southern part of the District; however, due to financial constraints, a schedule for construction has not yet been determined.
- ❖ With regard to vehicles and equipment, An Environmental Protection Agency regulation requires that all tier 0 diesel engines be replaced or upgraded by 2016. However, CFPD does not presently have sufficient funds to replace the affected vehicles.
- ❖ CFPD services appear to be adequate. The District has minimally adequate response times and an ISO rating which is comparable to other providers in the County. CFPD response times slightly exceed the NFPA 1710 response guidelines and meet the SEMSC EMS response time standards. There are certain areas along the periphery of the District where there can be longer response times depending on traffic.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts annual financial audits, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. CFPD could improve its management practices by conducting more formalized long-term capital planning and updating its 10-year goals and objectives.



## STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES

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### Shared Facilities and Regional Cooperation

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#### Shared Facilities

CFPD practices facility sharing by renting the hall at Station 31 to local nonprofit organizations and community service clubs. The District does not practice any vehicle sharing.

CFPD did not identify any opportunities for future facility and vehicle sharing.

#### Collaboration

As previously mentioned in the *Type and Extent of Services* section, CFPD has an automatic aid agreement with the City of Fairfield and a master mutual aid agreement with Solano County fire providers. Additionally, CFPD is a participant in the State of California's Master Mutual Aid Plan.

CFPD and other county fire districts are represented by one member on the Board of the Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC). SEMSC functions as a joint powers authority (JPA).

The District provides quarterly training for fire suppression jointly with Napa FD.

CFPD has participated in regional planning efforts, including the joint development impact fee study that is in progress with several other fire districts, the recent dispatch study, and the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan conducted by the County. Additionally, the District participated in the Future Public Land Planning Study regarding the Lower Green Valley Project.

CFPD is a member of several collaborative organizations, including the County Training Officers Association, the County Chiefs Association, the Operations Section Chiefs, the Terrorist Liaisons, and the California Special Districts Association.

Regarding future collaborations, the District reported that it had considered every opportunity to secure more revenues and improve service efficiency. CFPD indicated an interest in the possibility of forming a joint powers authority (JPA) among the fire districts to oversee the operations and administration of all of the districts in the County. Ideally, such a JPA would develop a consistent training program and increase the buying leverage of each agency by buying in bulk quantities. The JPA could also offer a means to consolidate prevention functions and promote consistency in operations among the agencies.

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### Management Efficiencies

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While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, track employee and agency productivity, periodically review agency performance, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic

financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, conduct advanced planning for future service needs, and plan and budget for capital needs.

CFPD employs four full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel, including one chief, one battalion chief, and two engineers. The remainder of the personnel consists of 48 volunteers, including two battalion chiefs, one fire marshal, and one personal protective equipment (PPE) coordinator. The Chief reports to the Board of Directors and oversees three assistant chiefs.

The battalion chief in charge of administration and prevention oversees the fire marshal and the Special Projects Division. The battalion chief in charge of operations and communications oversees the captains at Station 29 and Station 31, and the PPE program coordinator. The battalion chief in charge of support services and EMS is responsible for the Paramedic Program and training. Captains supervise engineers and firefighters. Employee evaluations are conducted annually. The chief evaluates the battalion chiefs, and the battalion chiefs evaluate the remainder of the personnel.

Overall agency performance evaluations are performed during the chief's annual report to the Board and during the budget process. In order to evaluate its performance specific to the operations and services provided, CFPD does not benchmark with other fire agencies, but measures its response times and its firefighters' completion of probation and medical evaluations according to standards and goals. The District compiled an annual report for 2013. Additionally, the District evaluates the engine company's completion of various tasks within a certain established time. The District tracks the workload of staff through sign-in sheets, training logs, and task logs, and monitors the productivity of the agency as a whole by tracking calls for service.

In order to improve its operational efficiency, CFPD reported that in the last three years various equipment had been updated, including the engine, the computers, the phone line, and the internet connection. The District has also improved employee scheduling by making it available online. CFPD makes CalPERS payments at the beginning of the year to ensure that interest is not accumulated. Additionally, CFPD reported that it had started using credit cards for every payment, resulting in streamlined accounting and bookkeeping.

To guide the efforts of the District, CFPD maintains a mission statement, which outlines a vision and general goals. In addition, CFPD's goals and objectives are discussed and written every two years at board meetings. In the past, the District compiled a 10-year plan, which outlined goals and objectives for the next 10-year period; however, the plan has now become outdated. Future planning strategies will be determined by the incoming chief.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget and annually audited financial statements. The District does not adopt a plan specific to capital improvement needs, but has an informal list. The District has also conducted a development impact fee study in the past, and is in the process of conducting another study in conjunction with other fire districts in the County.

During the District's FY 12-13 audit, the auditor found three significant deficiencies which were deemed to be material weaknesses, including the need to inform the auditor of required adjusting entries, the need to make periodic budget reviews and adjust the budget when conditions change, and the need to review strike team reimbursements to ensure

they are in compliance with requirements. Additionally, the auditor found two significant deficiencies that were not deemed material weaknesses—a lack of segregation of duties, which can increase the risk of potential errors or irregularities, and the need to consider training staff in preparing GAAP financial statements or hire an external qualified accountant to prepare the statements.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ CFPD practices facility sharing by renting the hall at Station 31 to local nonprofit organizations and community service clubs.
- ❖ An opportunity for further facility sharing and collaboration may be centralized dispatch center for all fire providers.

## **LAFCO POLICIES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY**

Solano LAFCO has adopted a policy that directly affects service delivery by fire protection districts in the County. Standard 11 in the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires that a city applying to LAFCO for annexation of a specific territory that belongs in this case to a fire protection district must offset the negative consequences of that annexation, which may include negative effects on the district's budget or service provision. The annexing city is required to work with the affected district to identify and mitigate the impacts. Adequate mitigation to adverse fiscal impact normally includes a funding source for lost revenues or increased costs to the affected special district. A common practice in Solano County is to negotiate a property tax neutrality agreement for a specific period of time between the annexing city and the negatively affected special district.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## **CORDELIA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS**

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### **Growth and Population Projections**

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- ❖ Cordelia Fire Protection District (CFPD) currently has an estimated population of 2,597 based on GIS calculations; however, the District estimates its population is closer to 4,449.
- ❖ CFPD has experienced a slight decrease in service demand over the last five years, possibly due to fire prevention measures.
- ❖ The District anticipates minimal growth in population and similarly a nominal increase in service demand within its territory in the next 10 years. While there are some proposed developments within the District's boundaries, annexation of district territory by neighboring cities is anticipated to offset any growth as a result of those developments.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from between 2,597 and 4,449 in 2010 to between approximately 2,805 and 4,805 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within CFPD will increase minimally, as any growth in demand generated by population growth will likely be balanced by city annexations of district territory.

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### **The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI**

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to CFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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### **Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

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- ❖ The District reported that it had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its present service area through mutual aid agreements. Any growth in demand would require additional funds, likely in the form of development impact fees, to ensure adequate capacity and resources to continue to provide the current level of services.
- ❖ It appears there is marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of the District's facilities and CFPD's response times.
- ❖ Both of the District's stations are in fair condition, which constitutes a capacity constraint. Station 31 reportedly has the most significant needs, as it is in need of a

roof repair and mold removal from the living and sleeping quarters. Different long-term solutions are being considered to address these needs; however, financing constraints limit the extent of any capital improvements or replacements.

- ❖ CFPD identified the need for a new facility in the southern part of the District; however, due to financial constraints, a schedule for construction has not yet been determined.
- ❖ With regard to vehicles and equipment, An Environmental Protection Agency regulation requires that all tier 0 diesel engines be replaced or upgraded by 2016. However, CFPD does not presently have sufficient funds to replace the affected vehicles.
- ❖ CFPD services appear to be adequate. The District has minimally adequate response times and an ISO rating which is comparable to other providers in the County. CFPD response times slightly exceed the NFPA 1710 response guidelines and meet the SEMSC EMS response time standards. There are certain areas along the periphery of the District where there can be longer response times depending on traffic.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts annual financial audits, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. CFPD could improve its management practices by conducting more formalized long-term capital planning and updating its 10-year goals and objectives.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The District reported that financial levels were generally inadequate to provide services. Primary challenges to financing levels include high employee benefit costs and the impending higher costs associated with the upcoming replacement of the retiring chief.
- ❖ The District has faced historical challenges associated with areas mistakenly included in CFPD's property tax rate area and later removed, which resulted in a distinct reduction in the District's property tax revenues in 2002.
- ❖ During the District's FY 12-13 audit, the auditor found three significant deficiencies which were deemed to be material weaknesses, two significant deficiencies that were not deemed material weaknesses. It is recommended that the District address these issues to ensure accountability and transparency in its financial control.
- ❖ In order to improve its operational efficiency and reduce costs, CFPD has updated various equipment, improved employee scheduling by making it available online, started using credit cards for all payments to streamline accounting, and regularly makes CalPERS payments at the beginning of the year to ensure that interest is not accumulated.
- ❖ While the District maintained a substantial fund balance of \$426,672 at the end of FY 13, approximately 72 percent of these funds are planned to be used for vehicle replacement.

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## Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ CFPD practices facility sharing by renting the hall at Station 31 to local nonprofit organizations and community service clubs.
- ❖ An opportunity for further facility sharing and collaboration may be centralized dispatch center for all fire providers.

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## Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, maintaining a website, and filing of Form 700 Statements of Economic Interest
- ❖ Improvements could be made to the District's operations in order to enhance accountability and transparency. District policies and procedures should be made readily available to the public on its website. Additionally, the District should make improvements to its financial controls as recommended by its auditor.
- ❖ Governance structure options for CFPD are limited to reorganization with another agency—consolidation with a neighboring district or multiple agencies in the County.

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## LAFCO Policies Affecting Service Delivery

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.



## **5. DIXON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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Dixon Fire Protection District (DFPD) contracts all services from the City of Dixon Fire Department and receives structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, fire prevention services, hazardous materials assistance, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic and advanced life support. In addition, the District receives specialized rescue services, such as confined space rescue. All services are provided by the City of Dixon Fire Department through a contract. The focus of this report is to review services provided within the District to the extent possible, rather than the performance of the City's Fire Department as a whole.

The District serves an expansive unincorporated area surrounding the City of Dixon.

### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

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#### **Background**

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DFPD was originally formed in 1926 to provide fire-related services to the unincorporated area surrounding the City of Dixon.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>32</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>33</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.<sup>34</sup>

The District is located in the northeast corner of Solano County. As shown in Figure 5-2, it abuts Vacaville FPD to the west and southwest, the City of Vacaville to the south, and Montezuma FPD to the south. There is a small area to the southeast of the District that is within the County but lacks a designated local fire provider. To the north of DFPD are West Plainfield FPD, Winters FPD, the City of Davis FD, the University of California at Davis FD and to the east are East Davis FPD and No Mans Land FPD (both contract with City of Davis FD), all of which are in Yolo County.

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#### **Boundaries**

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DFPD is entirely within Solano County. The present bounds encompass approximately 312 square miles and include territory extending from the Solano-Yolo county line in the

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<sup>32</sup> Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

<sup>33</sup> Health and Safety Code §13862.

<sup>34</sup> Government Code §56824.10.

north to Hastings Island Road in the south, and from the Solano-Yolo county line in the east to the Timm Road in the west.

Since formation there have been six detachments of territory from DFPD. The detached territories were subsequently annexed into the Cities of Dixon or Vacaville. The list of boundary changes in Figure 5-1 is derived from available LAFCO records and may not be complete, excluding records that were not found or readily available.

**Figure 5-1: DFPD List of LAFCO Approved Border Changes**

Project Name	Type of Action	Year	Recording Agency
City of Dixon Subdivision Lands	Detachment	1974	LAFCO
Dixon Sewer Plant	Detachment	1976	LAFCO
Delta Development Corp.	Detachment	1976	LAFCO
Hall Park	Detachment	1978	LAFCO
Quinn Road Property	Detachment	2002	LAFCO
Brookfield Property, School Property and Pond C Property	Detachment	2005	LAFCO
West Parkway Infill	Detachment	2010	LAFCO
Parkway West	Detachment	2013	LAFCO

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## Sphere of Influence

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The sphere of influence for DFPD was originally adopted in 1983.<sup>35</sup> Subsequent to the adoption of the District’s SOI, two detachments were processed, during which time the District’s SOI was appropriately amended to be the same as its boundaries pursuant to the detachments.









The existing SOI is generally coterminous with the District’s boundaries, except in the vicinity of Liberty Island Road where the SOI extends outside of the District’s bounds to include territory with no established local fire provider. The current bounds and SOI of the District are shown in Figure 5-2.

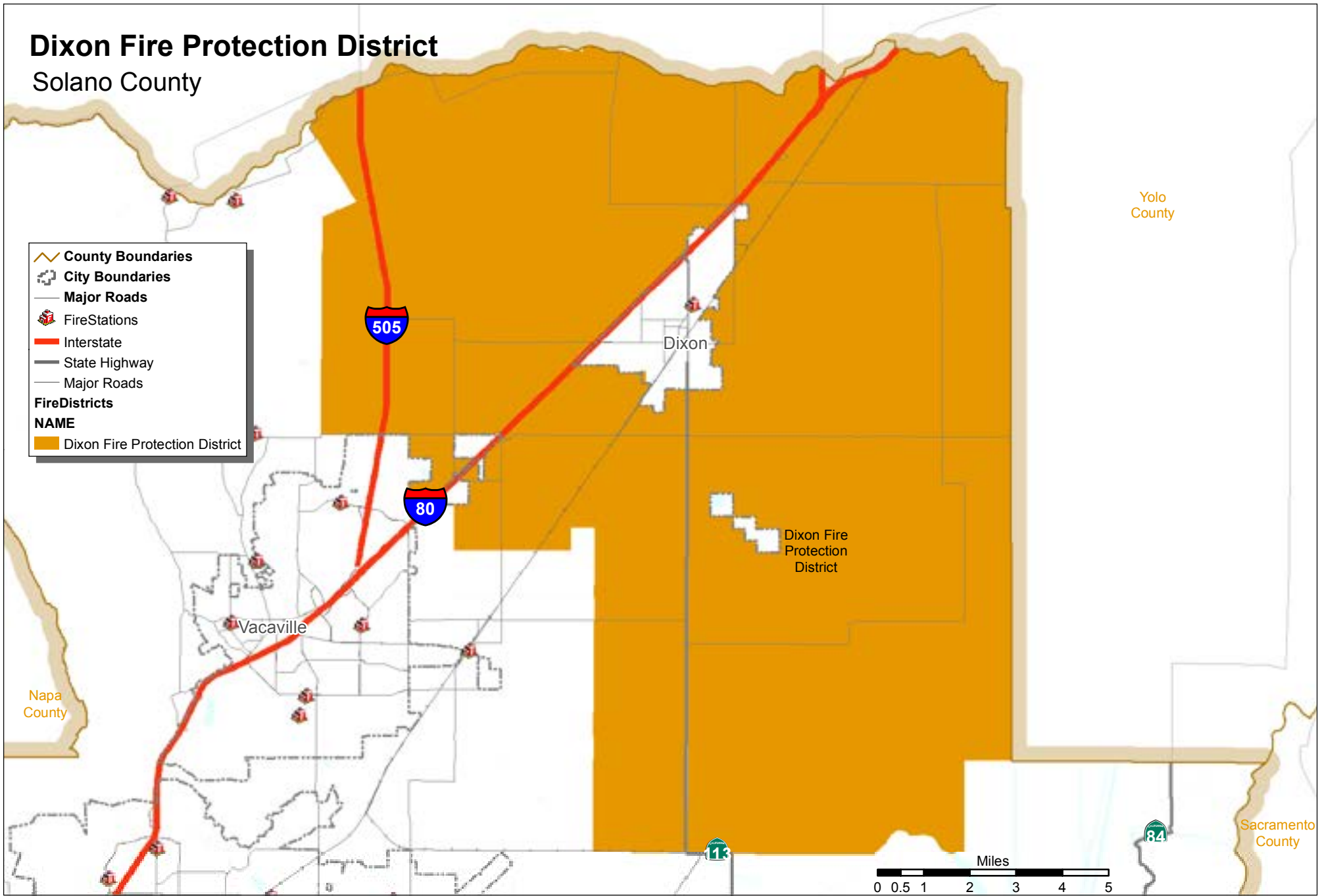
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<sup>35</sup> LAFCO Resolution 1983-07.

# Dixon Fire Protection District

## Solano County

-  County Boundaries
-  City Boundaries
-  Major Roads
-  Fire Stations
-  Interstate
-  State Highway
-  Major Roads
- Fire Districts**
- NAME**
-  Dixon Fire Protection District



Solano Local Agency  
Formation Commission

744 Empire St., Suite 216  
Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 439-3897  
[www.solanolafo.com](http://www.solanolafo.com)

This map is to be used for general information purposes only. Where precise accuracy is required reference should be made to certified maps, surveys, documents and/or by other official means.

### Solano County GIS Services

Department of Information Technology  
675 Texas Street, Suite 3700  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707-784-6340  
Email: [GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com)  
PRJ\_1093, 08/01/2014

#### Disclaimer:

This map was made using Solano County GIS files with varying degrees of scale, accuracy, precision, currentness, and alignment and therefore cannot be used for situations requiring survey grade measurement or legal boundary determination. Solano County disclaims liability for any loss that may result from the use of this map. User acknowledges data limitations and accepts responsibility for map based judgments.



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## Type and Extent of Services

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### Services Provided

Figure 5-3 itemizes the services provided by Dixon FD and made available to DFPD through its contract. If a service is not provided by Dixon FD, but is offered and available via another agency, it is indicated in the figure. Resources from Cal Fire provided outside the SRA are provided on a mutual aid basis. Availability is dependent upon fire activity, time of year, and other factors.

**Figure 5-3: DFPD Services**

Service	Agency
<b>Fire Suppression Services</b>	
Structural Fire Protection	Yes
Wildland Fire Protection	Yes
Vehicle Fire Protection	Yes
Ladder Truck Capabilities	Yes
Fire Suppression Handcrew	Cal Fire
Fire Suppression Dozer	Cal Fire
Helicopter Services – Fire Suppression	Cal Fire
Boat With Fire Suppression Capabilities	Vallejo FD, Suisun FPD, and West Sacramento
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>	
Basic Life Support Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support - Non Transport Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support Transport Provider	Medic Ambulance, Vacaville FD
Continuing Education Provider - Medical	Yes
Air Ambulance Transport Helicopter Services	Multiple providers
Helicopter Landing Facilities On Site	Yes
Vehicle Extrication Tools/Equipment	Yes
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	
Fire Safety Education – Children	Yes, but no schools in DFPD bounds
Fire Safety Education – Adults/Seniors	Yes
Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program	Yes
Fire and Life Safety Business Inspection Program	Yes
Fire Protection Planning	Yes
New Commercial Construction Plan Reviews	Yes
Public Education Provider (CPR, First Aid, etc.)	Yes
Home Fire/Safety Inspections	Yes, exterior only
Fire Origin and Cause Investigations	Yes
Fuel Reduction/Weed Abatement Program	Yes
Smoke Detector Giveaway/Installation Program	Yes
Address Sign Installation Program	No
<b>Rescue Services</b>	
First Responder Swift Water Rescue Program	City of Vacaville
Water Rescue Program	City of Vacaville
Ice Rescue Program	No
Dive Rescue Program	Vacaville FPD/Sheriff's Office

Low angle Rope Rescue Program	Yes
Helicopter Short/Long Haul Rescue Capabilities	CHP, Cal Fire, Sac Metro
Response To Boating Accidents	Sheriff's Office, Coast Guard
Rescue Dog Services	Solano OES/Sheriff
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Basic	Yes
Hazardous Materials Response Team	Solano County Hazmat Team
<b>Support Services</b>	
Firefighter Incident Support Unit	Yes
Mobile Incident Command/Communications Unit	County Office of Emergency Services
Fill Station for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	Yes
Mobile Breathing Support Unit	Cordelia FPD, Davis FD, Vacaville FD
Community Emergency Response Team	No
Chaplain Services	Yes
Training Academy	Yes – for new volunteers
Emergency Operations Center Capabilities	Yes
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Public Service Assists	Yes
Motor Vehicle Accident Response	Yes
Welfare Checks	Yes
Public Safety Answering Point	Sheriff's Office (by contract)
Fire/EMS Dispatch	Sheriff's Office (no EMD)
Fundraising Activities	Firefighters Association
Firefighters Association - Non Profit	Yes
Auxiliary Association	No
<b>Other</b>	
Confined Space Rescue	Yes

Service Area

In addition to services within its boundaries, DFPD maintains an agreement dating from 1977 with Winters FPD to provide mutual aid to one another when requested.

DFPD's contract provider (the City of Dixon Fire Department) provides services to the City of Dixon, as well as fire management and administration contract services to City of Winters. The City maintains several automatic and mutual aid agreements, through which it provides services outside of DFPD and the City of Dixon to Winters FPD, Vacaville FPD (auto aid), City of Vacaville (auto aid), the Cities of Davis, West Sacramento and Woodland (auto aid), the University of California at Davis (auto aid), and countywide to Solano County fire providers.<sup>36</sup> At present, Dixon FPD provides services to the area outside its bounds but inside its SOI when requested through the countywide mutual aid agreement.

<sup>36</sup> The City of Dixon FD is part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Vallejo, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Montezuma FPD, Suisun FPD, Vacaville FPD, Cal Fire, and Travis Air Force Base.

The District reported that there were no unserved areas within its bounds. There are reportedly no significant obstacles that challenge response to calls for service. While there are some remote areas with longer response times, there are few calls for service in those areas. There are also longer response times in the community of Allendale, which is more developed; however, the City of Vacaville Fire Department will provide support there when necessary.

### Services to Other Agencies

DFPD does not provide contract services to other agencies; however, as previously mentioned, the City of Dixon FD provides fire management and administration services via contract to the City of Winters FD. Winters FPD receives these services because of the nature of its contract with the City of Winters—Winters FD provides services to the area within Winters FPD. The administrative services contract is between the two cities. This contract will expire in November 2014.

The City of Dixon Fire Department also has a contract with the Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) to provide ALS non-transport services to the area within the City's boundaries. Dixon FD is not obligated to provide ALS services within DFPD's bounds; however, by coincidence the District does receive paramedic engine based service.<sup>37</sup> This agreement was initiated in 2011 and is set to expire in 2015. The agreement identifies a minimum level of services that must be maintained by the City, including service area, minimum staffing levels, training and license requirements of staff, and response time standards.

In addition to the agreement with SEMSC, the City of Dixon, in conjunction with the cities of Benicia, Fairfield and Vallejo, formed a public private partnership with the private ambulance provider (Medic Ambulance Services, Inc.) to continue to provide ALS first response emergency services within their respective bounds as support to Medic Ambulance. Participating member cities are reimbursed by Medic Ambulance for these support services.

### Contracts for Services

DFPD contracts with the City of Dixon for all fire-related services. A seven-year contract was most recently entered into in 2011. Services to be provided by the City Fire Department to the District include administration, fire protection, emergency medical service, rescue service, review of building plans, fire code enforcement inspections, investigation of causes of fire, and limited inspections of the rural water systems. At the time the contract was initiated, the City assumed full tactical control of the firefighting resources of the District. Reimbursement to the City for these services is defined in full in the contract.

Similar to all other fire protection districts in the County (with the exception of East Vallejo FPD<sup>38</sup>), DFPD—by way of the City of Dixon—contracts with the County Sheriff's

<sup>37</sup> On occasion, the Dixon FD engine that responds to the District is staffed only by BLS personnel. A significant portion of Dixon FPD receives ALS service from the City of Vacaville FD.

<sup>38</sup> While all calls in the unincorporated areas of the County are directed to the Sheriff's office first, the calls within East Vallejo FPD are then transferred to the City of Vallejo for fire dispatch.



Office for dispatch services. The structure of these services is discussed in more detail in the *Facilities* section of this chapter.

*Overlapping Service Providers*

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) provides services throughout the State. Generally, services are focused in wildland areas defined as State Responsibility Areas (SRA); within DFPD there is minimal territory along Timm Road that is identified as SRA territory. In spite of that, Cal Fire provides technical support/mutual aid throughout the County in the form of specialized services such as fire suppression handcrews, dozers, and helicopter services when necessary.

Additionally, the City of Vacaville Fire Department provides primary ALS non-transport services to certain areas within DFPD, as defined in its agreement with SEMSC.

## GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to 1) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 2) a defined complaint process designed to handle all issues to resolution, and 3) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

The principal act orders that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>39</sup> DFPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors appointed by the County Board of Supervisors to staggered four-year terms. Board members must be residents of the District.

Regular meetings of the District’s Board are held quarterly at the City’s fire station. The date and time of the meetings are determined based on the availability of the board members. Information about Board meetings is shown in Figure 5-4.

**Figure 5-4: Dixon Fire Protection District Governing Body**

<b>Dixon Fire Protection District</b>		
<b>Governing Body and Board Meetings</b>		
<i>Manner of Selection</i>	Appointed by County Board of Supervisors	
<i>Length of Term</i>	4 years	
<i>Meetings</i>	Quarterly – date and time based on director availability	City of Dixon Fire Station
<i>Agenda Distribution</i>	Posted at City fire station	
<i>Minutes Distribution</i>	Available upon request	
<b>Contact</b>		
<i>Contact</i>	Dixon FD Fire Chief, Aaron McAlister	
<i>Mailing Address</i>	205 Ford Way, Dixon CA 95620	
<i>Phone</i>	(707) 678 – 7060	
<i>Email/Website</i>	<a href="http://www.ci.dixon.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=328">http://www.ci.dixon.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=328</a> (DFPD site hosted by City)	

DFPD board members receive no compensation. Government Code §53235 requires that if a district provides compensation or reimbursement of expenses to its board members, the board members must receive two hours of training in ethics at least once every two years and the district must establish a written policy for reimbursements. While DFPD has not adopted a policy on expense reimbursements, the District reportedly has not issued any reimbursements to the Board members in at least the last six years. District board members are invited to attend regular city training. The City last conducted ethics

<sup>39</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.

training in January 2013; however, there are no records of which DFPD board members attended.

Agendas of the Board's meetings are posted at the City's fire station. Minutes of all meetings are made available by request. In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District does not conduct outreach to constituents. In the District's stead, the City conducts fire prevention planning, educational classes, participation in various community events, smoke detector installation, and sends out informational mailers as needed. There is a page dedicated to information on DFPD on the City of Dixon's website. Generally, there is low public interest in the operations of the District, as there has been no public attendance at the Board's regular meetings in at least the last five years. DFPD reported that it would evaluate means by which to encourage public participation at board meetings.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted to the Chief in any manner (written, email, or phone call) or submitted online on the feedback section of the City's website. There is a process to track personnel investigations, but not service complaints as they are infrequent. The Fire Chief is responsible for handling complaints to completion. In 2012, there were inquiries that were escalated to the Chief to be addressed; however, there were reportedly no service-related complaints during that year.

DFPD maintains policies and procedures to guide district activities and efforts. DFPD reportedly has by-laws related to public requests for information, code of ethics, and compliance with the Brown Act. In addition, the by-laws also state that the District will follow City of Dixon and Dixon Fire Department policies when there is not specific direction on a subject.

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000, et seq.) requires state and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation (California Code of Regulations §18730), which contains the terms of a standard conflict of interest code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's code. The District maintains a conflict of interest code as required.

Government Code §87203 requires persons who hold office to disclose their investments, interests in real property and incomes by filing appropriate forms with the identified filing agency (i.e., the County or the Fair Political Practices Commission) each year. All DFPD directors have reportedly submitted the required Forms 700 for 2013.<sup>40</sup> Pursuant to the District's conflict of interest code, the District's chief files a copy of his individual Form 700 with the County's Registrar of Voters. Board members are not required to submit copies of their Forms 700 to the County per the District's code.

During the course of this MSR process, DFPD demonstrated accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Solano LAFCO. The District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with interview and document requests.

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Aaron McAlister, City of Dixon Fire Chief, December 4, 2013.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, maintaining a website, and filing of Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest
- ❖ Several improvements could be made to the District's operations in order to enhance accountability and transparency. In order to enhance constituent interest and participation, the District could make use of advertisements in public newspapers and mail information to residents regarding the Board of Directors and district services. District policies and procedures should be made readily available to the public on its website. Additionally, the District should ensure and document that all board members have completed ethics training.
- ❖ Due to financial constraints, governance alternatives for DFPD are limited. The District does not have the financial resources to provide services directly. Options are limited to reorganization with another agency. Due to the size of the District, reorganization with the City of Dixon as a subsidiary district is not feasible. The remaining option is consolidation with a neighboring district or multiple districts in the County.

## **GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

This section discusses the factors affecting service demand, such as land uses, and historical and anticipated population growth.

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### Land Use

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Land uses within the District are primarily agricultural with parcels ranging in size from 40 to 80 acres. Minimal commercial and residential uses are concentrated along Interstate 80, just to the east of the City of Dixon. The District's bounds encompass approximately 312 square miles.

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### Population

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There are approximately 6,057 residents within the District, based on GIS analysis of 2010 Census population information.<sup>41</sup> The population density within the District is 19 people per square mile.

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### Projected Growth and Development

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Recent historical growth within the District has been minimal with approximately 12 new residences per year scattered throughout the District's territory. During that same time, there has been some loss of territory, due to annexations into the neighboring cities

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<sup>41</sup> This population figure may be slightly inflated based on comparison of known populations in other areas with those generated through the GIS analysis.

and detachment of the territory from DFPD. Minimal growth combined with this loss of territory has created relatively static demand for services. The District reportedly has capacity to provide services and continue to provide services in the future to the current and anticipated demand for service.

The District anticipates minimal growth in the near future, given the County's policy of minimal development outside of city boundaries. At present, there are reportedly no planned or proposed developments.

The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Solano County will grow by eight percent from 2010 to 2020. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.8 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from 6,057 in 2010 to approximately 6,542 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally, based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

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## Growth Strategies

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The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County.

However, there are areas surrounding the City of Dixon that are within the City of Dixon's sphere of influence, and land use within those areas are planned for by the City, as it is anticipated these areas will eventually be annexed into the City. The County coordinates with the City on any proposed developments in the area.<sup>42</sup> Future development of urban land uses is to be facilitated and served through city annexation. Current land uses in these areas may continue under County jurisdiction until the land is annexed to the City for conversion to urban uses. The City's General Plan land use map designates the lands within its SOI that are also within the District as highway commercial, agricultural, planned business/industrial, and future residential.

The lands within the District are designated in the County's General Plan as agriculture and agricultural reserve. The County has historically required that development requiring water and sewer service be incorporated within one of the County's cities. Based on this policy, most residential, commercial, and industrial development in the County has been in incorporated areas.

The District is participating in a study with other fire protection districts to establish a development impact fee throughout the unincorporated territories of the County. In 2013, several fire protection districts (Cordelia, Dixon, Suisun, and Vacaville FPDs) in the County hired a consulting firm to conduct a nexus study to assess and make recommendations regarding a uniform development impact fee for each of the districts. Such a fee would be designed to ensure a certain level of continued service among the fire districts should development occur within their bounds.

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<sup>42</sup> The areas are designated as being part of the City's municipal service area by the County. MSAs reflect city planned urban growth areas and are based on County review of city general plans and spheres of influence established by the Solano LAFCO.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Dixon Fire Protection District (DFPD) currently has an estimated population of 6,057.
- ❖ Recent historical growth within the District has been minimal with approximately 12 new scattered residences per year. During that same time, there has been some loss of territory, due to annexations into the neighboring cities.
- ❖ DFPD anticipates minimal growth in the near future, given the County's policy of minimal development outside of city boundaries.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 6,057 in 2010 to approximately 6,542 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the DFPD will increase minimally, as any growth in demand generated by population growth will likely be balanced by city annexations of District territory.

### **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.<sup>43</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.<sup>44</sup> According to DWR, there are no communities that meet the definition of disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to DFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to DFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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<sup>43</sup> Government Code §56033.5.

<sup>44</sup> Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.



## FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by the District and identifies the revenue sources currently available to the District.

The District reported that present financing levels were not adequate. As the District's contract with the City of Dixon is currently set up, DFPD pays a lump sum to the City, which is not earmarked for specific purposes. The District owns some specialized equipment that is used by the City. At existing financing levels, DFPD will likely face challenges in replacing the specialized equipment in a few years; consequently, the District is pursuing alternate financing sources, such as a development impact fee. The City is also searching for additional financing sources to supplement fire department services, such as EMS billing options in light of the Affordable Care Act.

As part of the Department's *Long-Range Strategic Plan* (2007) it was identified that the District's tax revenue was not adequate to support enough additional firefighters to make a "real and noticeable difference" in the services provided inside the District's bounds.<sup>45</sup> Since that time, the recent economic recession has resulted in lower property tax revenues for DFPD. Similarly, the City has experienced reduced revenues and was motivated to renegotiate labor contracts for city staff, including the Fire Department. While the District did not directly participate in the contract negotiations, it benefits from the improved efficiencies derived from the new contracts. The District has not conducted direct cost reducing efforts; all efforts are on the part of the City as the contract services provider.

The District has several challenges to raising more revenue to significantly increase service levels or to afford fire protection on its own. There are approximately 3,500 parcels in the District and the vast majority of these are permanently in agricultural or open space uses. Thus, even if the District were to obtain approval of a special parcel tax, the relatively few number of residential parcels would likely pay a majority of the new tax. The additional revenue source would likely not be able to finance a two-firefighter per day minimum staffing in a new district-area station.<sup>46</sup>

With regard to additional revenue sources, the City of Dixon FD has been particularly successful at pursuing and receiving grant funds. Grants funded in the last five years include: FEMA AFG-breathing apparatus, FEMA AFG cardiac monitors, FEMA SAFER three full-time positions funded for 24 months, FEMA SAFER Volunteer Retention and Recruitment Program, FEMA AFG radio hardware acquisition dual band radios, 2012 Cal Fire VFA 50/50 Wildland Firefighting PPE, and 2013 Cal Fire VFA 50/50 Wildland Fighting PPE. The District has indirectly benefitted from the City's pursuit of these funds.

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<sup>45</sup> City of Dixon Fire Department, Development of a Long-Range Strategic Plan, 2007, pg 1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, pg. 63.

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## Revenues and Expenses

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The District's revenue in FY 12-13 totaled \$508,594, which is almost entirely from property taxes. The District receives a minimal amount of income from interest earned on investments.

The District's expenditures amounted to \$497,735 in FY 12-13—96 percent of which is attributable to public safety services offered by the City<sup>47</sup> and four percent was attributable to capital outlays. Depreciation of capital assets in that year totaled \$46,686.

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## Capital Improvements

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The City outlines an anticipated schedule of vehicle replacement on behalf of DFPD in the Fire Department's annual report. The District owns only three vehicles and informally plans for replacement of these vehicles by putting aside any extra funds for when it becomes necessary to purchase new vehicles.

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## Outstanding Debt

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The District had no outstanding debt as of the end of FY 12-13.

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## Reserves

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The District does not have a policy or a goal regarding a target amount of reserves it would like to maintain for contingency purposes. At the end of FY 13 the District maintained an undesignated fund balance of \$606,710; however, approximately 70 percent of these funds are planned to be used for vehicle replacement.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The recent economic recession has resulted in lower property tax revenues for DFPD. It will likely face challenges in replacing specialized equipment in a few years; consequently, the District is pursuing alternate financing sources, such as a development impact fee.
- ❖ The District faces several challenges to raising more revenue to significantly increase service levels or to afford fire protection on its own. A vast majority of the parcels in the District are permanently in agricultural or open space uses, limiting revenue potential from a new special tax.
- ❖ All cost reduction strategies, such as employee contract negotiations, have been implemented by the City on behalf of the District.
- ❖ While the District maintained a substantial fund balance of \$606,710 at the end of FY 13, approximately 70 percent of these funds are planned to be used for vehicle replacement.

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<sup>47</sup> The District entered into a joint exercise of powers agreement with the City of Dixon under which the City will provide fire services to the entire territory of the District and will provide accounting services for a fee of 92.5 percent of the District's property tax revenues.

## PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY

DFPD reported that it presently had capacity to provide adequate services to the existing amount of demand within the District's bounds. Additionally, given the limited amount of anticipated future growth in the District, it is expected that there is sufficient capacity to continue the existing level of service in the future; however, an additional station may be necessary to address future growth in demand.

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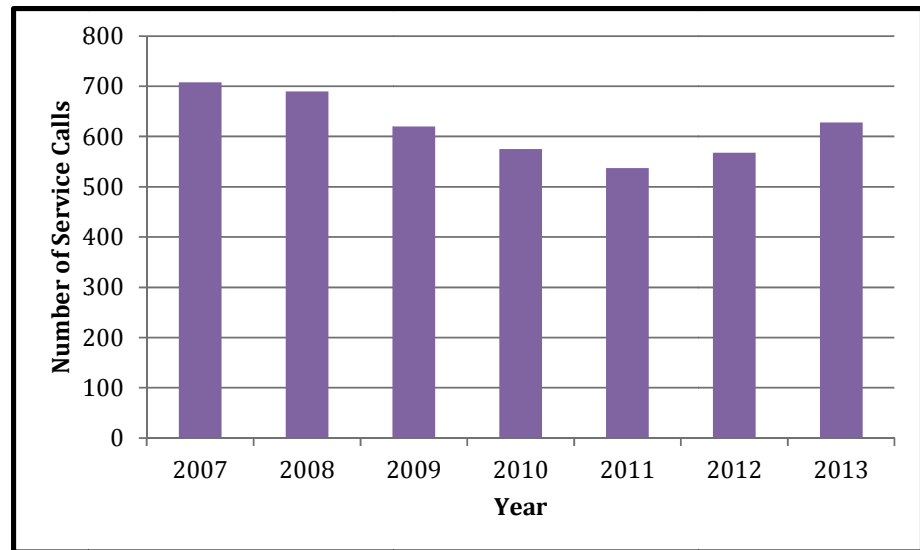
### Existing Demand

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The daily peak demand period for the Department is generally during daylight and early evening hours when people are most active. Calls for service tend to rise during the late spring and summer months, with incidents peaking in July.

**Figure 5-5: DFPD Number of Calls by Year, 2007-2013**

The District reported that it had observed little variation in service demand in the last few years. As shown in Figure 5-6, the number of calls declined through 2011, and began increasing again in 2012.



In 2013, Dixon FD responded to 2,053 calls, within DFPD and the City of Dixon, of which 628 were within the District's bounds. A large portion of calls were for emergency medical services (52 percent). Miscellaneous non-emergencies comprised 23 percent of all calls, while fires/hazardous materials and motor vehicle accidents comprised 10 percent and 12 percent of all calls, respectively. The Department averaged 84 service calls per 1,000 residents in that year.<sup>48</sup> Ratio of calls per 1,000 residents within the District's boundary area alone was 104.

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### Staffing

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DFPD does not have staff of its own. All staff are provided by the Dixon FD, which has 42 firefighting personnel—three chiefs, 20 frontline paid<sup>49</sup> personnel, and 19 volunteers. Volunteers are compensated \$50 for a 24-hour shift, which is funded by a federal grant for

<sup>48</sup> Ratio of calls per 1,000 residents includes all calls for service within the City and within DFPD as a ratio to the population in both areas based on 2010 Census data.

<sup>49</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

the next four years. DFD firefighting personnel range in age from 22 to 65, with a median age of 34. Dixon FD has experienced an overall increase of six firefighting staff positions since 2011, which was primarily attributable to a change in the number of volunteers. In 2011, the Department maintained 38 firefighting staff (including volunteers); the number of firefighting staff dipped to 35 in 2012, and finally rose to 42 in 2013.

Dixon FD recruits heavily from the regional fire academies, and this has reportedly been a successful strategy. DFD maintains recruitment brochures and is in the process of developing a recruitment video to support recruitment efforts.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the firefighter to perform essential and advanced fire ground tasks, as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. The level of certification required for each firefighter is determined by the individual fire department. However, according to the California State Fire Marshal, there are plans to phase out the Volunteer Firefighter certification level and the most basic level of certification will eventually be Firefighter I. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fireground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of volunteer or call experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>50</sup> The number of DFD personnel certified in each category is shown in Figure 5-6. Each firefighter, including volunteers, is able to hold multiple certifications, including strike team certifications. DFD reported that certification ratios among the daily paid staff are higher than shown in Figure 5-6.

**Figure 5-6: DFD Certified Personnel**

Certification Level	Number of Firefighting Staff	% of Total Firefighting Staff
Volunteer Firefighter	0	0%
Firefighter I	38	90%
Firefighter II	18	43%
First Responder EMS	0	0%
Emergency Medical Technician 1	33	79%
Paramedic	10	24%
Apparatus Engineer	10	24%
Company Officer	18	43%
Chief Officer	4	10%
Haz Mat FRO	23	55%
CICCS FFT 2	23	55%
CICCS FFT 1	23	55%
CICCS Engine Boss	18	43%
CICCS Strike Team Leader	4	10%

<sup>50</sup> State Fire Marshal, *Course Information and Required Materials*, 2007, p. 44

Newly hired paid staff, as well as volunteers, are required to be fire academy graduates and have Firefighter I certification prior to employment or being placed on the roster. Paid firefighters take part in between eight and 40 hours of training a month depending on what specialty training is offered in that month. Volunteers are required to attend a minimum of six hours of training each month. While on duty at the station, volunteers are offered between four and six hours per month in training. Regularly scheduled volunteer training is two nights per month. Additional specialty training is offered as determined by the training officers.

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## Facilities

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DFPD does not own or maintain fire facilities of its own, but owns three vehicles that are used by Dixon Fire Department. The City of Dixon owns and maintains a single fire station within the City, which is also used to serve DFPD's territory. Station 81 houses all of DFD's operations, as well as administration and training areas. The station was built in 1997 and is considered to be in excellent condition. The station is described in more detail in Figure 5-7.

**Figure 5-7: DFPD Fire Stations**

<b>Station 81</b>	
Property owner	City of Dixon
Address	205 Ford Way Dixon, CA 95620
Purpose	Houses emergency response vehicles & staff. Administrative personnel and serves as FD training Center. City of Dixon EOC.
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	Solano Community College Fire Academy, Solano County Registrar of Voters (elections), and misc. City uses (HR testing, etc.)
Hours station is staffed	24 hours a day/7 days a week
Date acquired or built	Built 1997, occupied 1998
Condition of facility <sup>51</sup>	Good/Excellent
Infrastructure Needs	Long range plans call for expanded administrative staff space as well as training center expansion at the existing station.
Number and type of vehicles at facility	City owned: 3 Engine/pumpers 1 Ladder Truck 1 Brush pumper 1 Rescue vehicle 1 Pickup Truck 3 SUV's 1 ATV 1 Utility Trailer 1 Utility Rescue Trailer District owned: 2 Water Tenders/Tankers 1 Brush Rig
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	All Fire Department employees: 1 Fire Chief 2 Fire Division Chiefs 3 Fire Captains 6 Fire Engineers 2 Firefighters 9 Firefighter/Medics 1 Admin Manager

<sup>51</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.



Station 81	
Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	None
Number of volunteers staffing facility	19
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	2 typically on duty. More available upon recall.

DFPD has no water reserves within the District's boundaries. All water needs for fire protection purposes are supplied via vehicle storage—type 1 engines carry 750 gallons each, type 3 (brush) pumpers carry 400 gallons, and water tenders carry 2,000 gallons of water each. There are miscellaneous agricultural wells and some limited storage throughout the District available for emergency use. The water reserves in DFPD's boundaries are not satisfactory, but are considered the norm in a rural setting.

Generally, the existing facilities, vehicles, and staffing levels appear to have sufficient capacity to provide adequate services within DFPD's bounds. Capacity constraints include declining volunteer availability and the limited fiscal capacity of a small city and special district. It is anticipated that future growth will be limited within the District and therefore not greatly impact demand for services; however, there are plans to build an additional station in the southwestern portion of the City of Dixon once demand warrants, which will ensure timely response to the southwestern section of the City as well as areas within DFPD.

### Dispatch and Communications

With the exception of East Vallejo FPD, all fire protection districts in Solano County, including DFPD, contract with Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for dispatch services.<sup>52</sup> DFPD contracts with the Sheriff's Office via Dixon FD. The current contract for dispatch services was signed in 2001 and amended in 2011. The contract will continue indefinitely until terminated as provided for in the terms of the agreement. For dispatch services rendered to Dixon FD, the City pays a proportionate amount of the Sheriff's dispatch budget based on the ratio of Dixon's average daily calls compared to the Sheriff's total average daily calls during the previous calendar year.

The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center also provides dispatch services to the Sheriff's Office, Isleton Police and Fire, Dixon Police and Fire, California Medical Facility, Rio Vista/Delta Fire Districts, and Solano Community College Police on a 24 hour basis. The Sheriff's Dispatch Center also handles coordination of air ambulance for scene calls to all areas of the County (city or county), coordination of all mutual aid for the County and out-of-county requests.

<sup>52</sup> East Vallejo is dispatched through the City of Vallejo. The cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo each have their own dispatch centers.

The Dispatch Center operates with at least two people on duty at all times. The center operators answer and transmit on three primary radio channels, seven secondary channels, and a number of other law and fire radios for other agencies. The dispatch center also answers 12 business lines, four Nextels, six 911 lines, numerous alarm panels, fax requests, and mobile data computer messages.

Communication equipment is sometimes not compatible making it difficult to communicate when coordinating a mutual aid call. Many of the districts have mutual aid agreements with the cities. Dispatch becomes a challenge if the nearest responder is a city agency or if a city requires assistance from a district. Often times it takes multiple calls to different departments to get assistance sent. The lack of a consolidated fire dispatch center increases the amount of time required to activate fire resources to emergencies.

In order to improve the current dispatch services, to ensure timely response and safety for firefighters and citizens, Dixon FD suggested the following options:

- 1) Consolidate the fire dispatch functions from the seven dispatch centers in the County into a single central dispatch center. There are several existing facilities within Solano County that have either been recently built or remodeled that can accommodate the fire dispatching functions of the entire County.
- 2) If getting to one center is not achievable, consolidate the fire dispatch functions of select centers into two of the existing centers.
- 3) If two is not achievable, consolidate the fire dispatch functions into three of the existing centers; North, South and Central.
- 4) Link the seven dispatch centers electronically, if consolidation is not feasible.
- 5) Increase interoperable communications to ensure each agency can communicate with another.

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## Infrastructure Needs

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There are no imminent infrastructure needs at DFD's existing fire station; however, long range plans call for expanded administrative staff space as well as expansion of the City of Dixon Fire Training Center.

Once demand warrants, a fire station will be needed to respond to the southwest section of the City of Dixon, as well as DFPD, in a timelier manner. Plans for the new station were being developed prior to the recent recession; however, budget constraints stalled the process. Once development resumes in the designated area, it is anticipated that the planning process will commence again. It is anticipated that development will occur sometime in the next five years. The new station will cost approximately \$3.5 million, which will be partially funded by City of Dixon development impact fees. The Dixon Fire District does not currently have the ability to participate financially in the construction of the fire station from which it will benefit.

With regard to vehicles and equipment, the Department reported that there were no pressing replacement needs. The Department will reportedly need a new engine in five

years and a new ladder truck in six years. One of the district-owned water tenders will need to be replaced in the next five years.

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## Challenges

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DFPD anticipates that it will continue to experience funding challenges until the economy rebounds.

Additionally, the Department anticipates that the volunteer/reserve pool from which it draws will become circumscribed as other agencies begin hiring for full-time paid positions again.

## SERVICE ADEQUACY

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. Dixon FD has an ISO rating of five in urban areas and 9/10 in rural areas throughout its service area. DFPD is considered rural and is therefore entirely designated as an ISO 9/10 rating. Dixon FD was last evaluated in 2012.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued response time performance standards depending on the service structure of the agency. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, these standards provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. For agencies with paid staff, NFPA 1710 identifies the response time guideline of six minutes at least 90 percent of the time. For volunteer and combination fire departments, NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14 minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>53</sup> Dixon FD is a combination fire department that relies on both, volunteer and paid firefighters. The District is subject to NFPA 1720 guideline, but strives to achieve response times set by NFPA 1710.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) has designated an exclusive operating area (EOA) in Solano County for EMS and ambulance services provided by Medic Ambulance Services. The EOA includes

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<sup>53</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

all territory in Solano County with the exception of the City of Vacaville, Travis Air Force Base, and the territory designated as Zone C.<sup>54</sup> In the EOA, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority call. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses. Compliance with these requirements is determined on a monthly basis. If an agency providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards then they are fined. The response times in DFPD are long, reflective of rural service provision. Within DFPD's boundaries DFD responded to all calls in 2013 (less those calls cancelled en route) with a median response time of 11 minutes 30 seconds. The Fire Department responded to 80 percent of all calls in DFPD within 14 minutes 13 seconds, and 90 percent of all calls for service within 15 minutes 33 seconds. These response times marginally exceed the NFPA 1720 guidelines for a rural area; however, some areas within the District could be considered remote. Of note is that Dixon FD was able to provide response time information in a timely manner and in a format that was easily used for analysis purposes. The agency also makes use of its response time info in its annual reports, which are made available on its website.

The service area size for each fire station varies between the fire districts. The median fire station in Solano County serves approximately 39.8 square miles. Dixon FD serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles (312 square miles of the District and eight square miles of the City territory) for its single station. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, each City of Vallejo fire station serving East Vallejo FPD serves approximately 8.3 square miles.

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers that rely on volunteer or call firefighters may have differing staff availability and reliability. An agency with more firefighters could have fewer resources, if availability is limited due to work and personal obligations. Staffing levels in Solano County vary from 0.68 firefighters per 1,000 residents in EVFPD to 29 in MFPD. By comparison, DFPD has on average approximately 1.72 firefighters per 1,000 residents.<sup>55</sup>

Operating expenditures per capita is often reflective of the level of service offered by a fire provider as determined by financing constraints. In FY 12-13, the least amount of money per capita was spent by Dixon FPD (\$79). During the same fiscal year, Montezuma FPD expended the most per capita (\$499), as it serves a relatively expansive area with very low population density.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District's existing facilities (made available through its contract with Dixon Fire Department) have the capacity to adequately serve current demand and short term future growth. The existing station is in good/excellent condition. Once demand

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<sup>54</sup> Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative Ambulance Service Agreement, April 10, 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Based on the total population served in DFPD and the City of Dixon by Dixon Fire Department.

warrants, a fire station will be needed to respond to the southwest section of the City of Dixon, as well as DFPD, in a timelier manner.

- ❖ DFPD did not identify any short-term infrastructure needs. Long range plans call for expanded administrative staff space as well as training center expansion at the existing station.
- ❖ DFPD services appear to be adequate for a rural service area. The District has adequate response times the expansive territory served. An additional station would serve to reduce response times in the remote areas of the District. The District's ISO rating is low compared to other fire districts in the County and could be improved upon.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts biennial financial audits, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints.

## **STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES**

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### Shared Facilities and Regional Cooperation

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#### Shared Facilities

DFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Dixon FD's services and station by contract.

Dixon FD also allows Solano Community College Firefighter Academy to make use of the Department's training site as the institution's sole training site. In return, students provide assistance in maintenance of facilities and equipment and the college reimburses the City for use with lease fees as outlined in a lease agreement. This arrangement allows the Department to maximize use of its modern training facility while exposing students to experiences at a working fire station.

No further opportunities for facility sharing were identified.

#### Collaboration

As previously mentioned in the *Type and Extent of Services* section, DFPD maintains an agreement with Winters FPD to provide mutual aid to one another when requested. All other collaborative efforts are conducted through Dixon FD on behalf of DFPD. Dixon FD provides contract services to Winters FPD and maintains automatic and mutual aid agreements with Vacaville FPD, City of Vacaville, the Cities of Davis, West Sacramento and Woodland, the University of California at Davis, and countywide with Solano County fire providers.

Dixon FD formed jointly with the cities of Benicia, Fairfield and Vallejo, a public private partnership with the private ambulance provider (Medic Ambulance Services, Inc.) to provide ALS first response emergency services within their respective bounds.

Dixon FD occasionally conducts training with Vacaville FD where the two agencies swap engines for a day for multi company drills, equipment and area familiarization. This same swapping of equipment for a half day has taken place with the City of Fairfield, UC Davis and the Davis FD. Dixon FD also participates in some countywide exercises, such as the countywide rescue team and countywide hazmat team. In addition, Dixon FD takes part in the training officers group as part of the Solano Fire Chiefs Association.

Dixon FD has also participated in regional planning efforts, including the County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Additionally, Dixon FD is a member of several collaborative organizations, including the Solano Fire Chiefs Association, the Incident Management Support Team, the Hazardous Materials Response Group, the Fire District Association (FDAC), and the California Fire Chiefs Association.

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## Management Efficiencies

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While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and the scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, track employee and agency productivity, periodically review agency performance, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, conduct advanced planning for future service needs, and plan and budget for capital needs.

DFPD does not have staff of its own. All staff are provided by the Dixon FD, which employs 43 personnel—one chief, two division chiefs, an administrative manager, 20 frontline paid personnel, and 19 volunteers. As part of the contractual agreement, the Department's chief also functions as the chief of the District, whose duties include preparing agendas, developing budgets, developing staff reports, and representing the District on official matters. The administrative manager also serves as clerk of the board for DFPD.

The division chiefs oversee the daily operations of the two divisions that comprise the Department. Both division chiefs report to the fire chief who also oversees the administrative manager. The chief reports to the DFPD Board at the regular meetings.

Dixon Fire Department is broken down into two divisions—Prevention/Fleet/Facilities and Operations/Training. The Prevention/Fleet/Facilities division manages fire inspections and plan review, conducts public education and emergency planning, manages fleet and facilities, and oversees city and district mapping. The Operations/Training division is responsible for daily operations, fire suppression, investigation, and emergency medical services, as well as managing policies and procedures, conducting training, and coordinating dispatch services.

Dixon FD conducts evaluations of employee performance annually. Probationary staff are evaluated every three months. Evaluations are conducted by the employee's immediate supervisor. The chief, as a City employee, is reviewed by the city manager and



the DFPD Board has the ability to provide input to the Chief directly or through the city manager. There is a subcommittee of two DFPD Board members and two City Council members who meet annually to review Fire Department performance and affairs. Volunteers are also required to complete probationary task books as a means of monitoring progress.

Overall agency performance evaluations are conducted in Dixon FD's annual report, which evaluates response times, value of property saved and loss during responses, extrication times, use of various EMS skills, and whether the Department remained within budget. Each of these indicators is evaluated based on standards as set forth in contracts, nationally recognized standards, or internally determined standards. The annual report also tracks agency-wide workload. The workload of staff is tracked via the previously mentioned volunteer task books, maintenance logs, calls for service reporting system, training records, and timesheets.

With regard to planning efforts, DFPD does not have any plans specific to services within its bounds. Dixon FD has developed a mission statement, long-term and short-term strategic plans, and standards of coverage to guide its efforts. Additionally, the Department annually outlines specific goals for the year. For FY 14, the Dixon FD aims to 1) fully equip a new fire engine and put it into service (completed as of drafting of report), 2) begin training of new volunteers on Dixon Fire Standard Operating Procedures, 3) continue to host State certified courses for fire departments, 4) continue to apply for grant funding when opportunities arise, and 5) begin project of developing pre-plans for specified facilities within the City and District boundaries.

DFPD does conduct financial planning efforts, which include an annual budget and biennial financial audits. Additionally, Dixon FD supplements these plans with a capital improvement plan. Also, the District itself is the owner of three pieces of apparatus which have been assigned a lifespan and replacement schedule identified in the annual report presented to the Board and City Council.

The District takes part in joint financing through its service structure—contracting for services from the City of Dixon Fire Department—which allows both agencies to share in the costs of providing services.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ DFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Dixon FD's services and station by contract. Dixon FD also allows Solano Community College Firefighter Academy to make use of the Department's training site as the institution's sole training site.
- ❖ An opportunity for further facility sharing and collaboration may be centralized dispatch center for all fire providers.

## **LAFCO POLICIES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY**

Solano LAFCO has adopted a policy that directly affects service delivery by fire protection districts in the County. Standard 11 in the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires that a city applying to LAFCO for annexation of a specific territory that belongs in this case to a fire protection district must offset the negative consequences of that annexation, which may include negative effects on the district's budget or service provision. The annexing city is required to work with the affected district to identify and mitigate the impacts. Adequate mitigation to adverse fiscal impact normally includes a funding source for lost revenues or increased costs to the affected special district. A common practice in Solano County is to negotiate a property tax neutrality agreement for a specific period of time between the annexing city and the negatively affected special district.

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### **Determinations**

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## **DIXON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS**

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### **Growth and Population Projections**

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- ❖ Dixon Fire Protection District (DFPD) currently has an estimated population of 6,057.
- ❖ Recent historical growth within the District has been minimal with approximately 12 new scattered residences per year. During that same time, there has been some loss of territory, due to annexations into the neighboring cities.
- ❖ DFPD anticipates minimal growth in the near future, given the County's policy of minimal development outside of city boundaries.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 6,057 in 2010 to approximately 6,542 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the DFPD will increase minimally, as any growth in demand generated by population growth will likely be balanced by city annexations of District territory.

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### **The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI**

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to DFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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### **Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

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- ❖ The District's existing facilities (made available through its contract with Dixon Fire Department) have the capacity to adequately serve current demand and short term future growth. The existing station is in good/excellent condition. Once demand warrants, a fire station will be needed to respond to the southwest section of the City of Dixon, as well as DFPD, in a timelier manner.
- ❖ DFPD did not identify any short-term infrastructure needs. Long range plans call for expanded administrative staff space as well as training center expansion at the existing station.
- ❖ DFPD services appear to be adequate for a rural service area. The District has adequate response times the expansive territory served. An additional station would serve to reduce response times in the remote areas of the District. The District's ISO rating is low compared to other fire districts in the County and could be improved upon.

- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts biennial financial audits, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The recent economic recession has resulted in lower property tax revenues for DFPD. It will likely face challenges in replacing specialized equipment in a few years; consequently, the District is pursuing alternate financing sources, such as a development impact fee.
- ❖ The District faces several challenges to raising more revenue to significantly increase service levels or to afford fire protection on its own. A vast majority of the parcels in the District are permanently in agricultural or open space uses, limiting revenue potential from a new special tax.
- ❖ All cost reduction strategies, such as employee contract negotiations, have been implemented by the City on behalf of the District.
- ❖ While the District maintained a substantial fund balance of \$606,710 at the end of FY 13, approximately 70 percent of these funds are planned to be used for vehicle replacement.

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### Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ DFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Dixon FD's services and station by contract. Dixon FD also allows Solano Community College Firefighter Academy to make use of the Department's training site as the institution's sole training site.
- ❖ An opportunity for further facility sharing and collaboration may be centralized dispatch center for all fire providers.

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### Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, maintaining a website, and filing of Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest
- ❖ Several improvements could be made to the District's operations in order to enhance accountability and transparency. In order to enhance constituent interest and participation, the District could make use of advertisements in public newspapers and mail information to residents regarding the Board of Directors and district services. District policies and procedures should be made readily available to the public on its website. Additionally, the District should ensure and document that all board members have completed ethics training.

- ❖ Due to financial constraints, governance alternatives for DFPD are limited. The District does not have the financial resources to provide services directly. Options are limited to reorganization with another agency. Due to the size of the District, reorganization with the City of Dixon as a subsidiary district is not feasible. The remaining option is consolidation with a neighboring district or multiple districts in the County.

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### LAFCO Policies Affecting Service Delivery

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## **6. EAST VALLEJO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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East Vallejo Fire Protection District (EVFPD) provides structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, fire prevention services, hazardous materials assistance, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic and advanced life support. In addition, the District provides specialized rescue services, such as swift water and low angle rope rescue services. All services are provided by the City of Vallejo Fire Department by contract. In this case, service in the District is the focus of this report to the extent possible, rather than the City's Fire Department. The District was last reviewed in 2006, along with all other fire districts in the County.

The District serves seven non-contiguous unincorporated areas, which are either entirely surrounded by the City of Vallejo or immediately adjacent to the City's limits.

### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

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#### **Background**

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EVFPD was formed in 1939 for the purpose of providing fire protection to the unincorporated areas of Eastern Vallejo. EVFPD functioned as an independent special district with a separate Board of Directors, until the District was reorganized in 1994, when EVFPD became a dependent fire district of the County with the Board of Supervisors serving as the District's Board of Directors.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>56</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>57</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.<sup>58</sup>

EVFPD's seven non-contiguous areas are almost entirely surrounded by the City of Vallejo in the southwestern portion of Solano County. The District borders Cordelia FPD in the east and is adjacent to City of Benicia in the southeast.

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<sup>56</sup> Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

<sup>57</sup> Health and Safety Code §13862.

<sup>58</sup> Government Code §56824.10.



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## Boundaries

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EVFPD is entirely within Solano County. As shown in Figure 6-2, the present bounds encompass approximately 1.5 square miles and include the following seven non-contiguous areas:

- ❖ A small pocket area off Springs Road;
- ❖ The sandy beach area to the south of the City;
- ❖ An area northwest of the City and west of SR 37;
- ❖ An area northeast of the City of Vallejo, between Hiddenbrook Parkway and Highway 80;
- ❖ An area located at the east end of Vallejo, which borders Cordelia FPD and encompasses Lake Herman Road;
- ❖ Territory located southeast of Vallejo, which encompasses portions of both Interstate 780 and Interstate 80; and
- ❖ Land northwest of Vallejo, which includes a portion of SR 37 and borders Napa River.

The District has undertaken two detachments, an annexation, and a reorganization since its formation. The most recent changes took place in 1994 when EVFPD added about 1,109.83 acres of adjacent land previously protected by the Cordelia FPD. During the same year, the District detached areas consisting of approximately 63.5 acres, which were then annexed by the City of Vallejo. The District's boundary changes are shown in Figure 6-1.

**Figure 6-1: EVFPD List of LAFCO Approved Border Changes**

Project Name	Type of Action	Year	Recording Agency
East Vallejo Fire Protection District	Formation	1939	County
Glen Cove Area	Detachment	1979	LAFCO
EVFPD	Reorganization	1994	LAFCO
Trailer City Park, Lands of Bordoni, Lake Herman Quarry, Lands of Minahen, Lands of Brown, Lands of Azevedo	Annexation	1994	LAFCO
City of Vallejo Annexation District No. 157	Detachment	1994	LAFCO
Bordoni Ranch Annexation to City of Vallejo	Detachment	2006	LAFCO

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## Sphere of Influence

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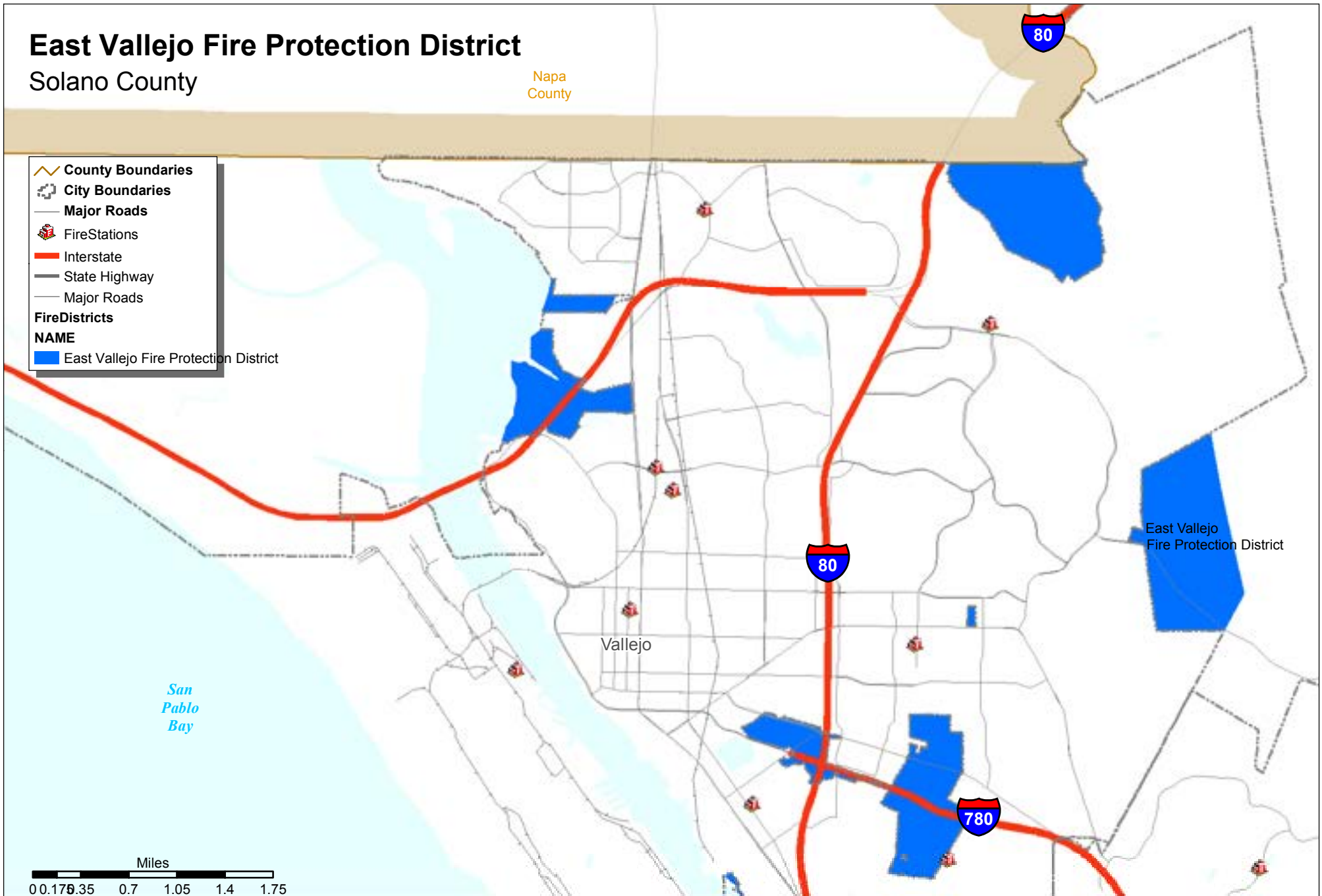
The sphere of influence (SOI) for the District was originally adopted in 1983 as coterminous with its boundaries as they existed at that time. In 1994, the SOI was amended to reflect past reorganizations. Since then, there have been no updates. The District's SOI should be updated to comply with LAFCO's policy and CKH.

# East Vallejo Fire Protection District

Solano County

Napa  
County

- County Boundaries
- City Boundaries
- Major Roads
- Fire Stations
- Interstate
- State Highway
- Major Roads
- Fire Districts
- NAME
- East Vallejo Fire Protection District



Solano Local Agency  
Formation Commission

744 Empire St., Suite 216  
Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 439-3897  
[www.solanolafo.com](http://www.solanolafo.com)

This map is to be used for general information purposes only. Where precise accuracy is required reference should be made to certified maps, surveys, documents and/or by other official means.

## Solano County GIS Services

Department of Information Technology  
675 Texas Street, Suite 3700  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707-784-6340  
Email: [GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com)  
PRJ\_1093, 08/01/2014

### Disclaimer:

This map was made using Solano County GIS files with varying degrees of scale, accuracy, precision, currentness, and alignment and therefore cannot be used for situations requiring survey grade measurement or legal boundary determination. Solano County disclaims liability for any loss that may result from the use of this map. User acknowledges data limitations and accepts responsibility for map based judgments.



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## Type and Extent of Services

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### Services Provided

Figure 6-3 details the services provided by EVFPD through its contract with the City of Vallejo FD. If a service is not provided by Vallejo FD, but is offered by another agency, it is indicated in the figure. Resources from Cal Fire provided outside the SRA are provided on a mutual aid basis. Availability is dependent upon fire activity, time of year, and other factors.

**Figure 6-3: EVFPD Services**

Service	Agency
<b>Fire Suppression Services</b>	
Structural Fire Protection	Yes
Wildland Fire Protection	Yes
Vehicle Fire Protection	Yes
Ladder Truck Capabilities	Yes
Fire Suppression Handcrew	Cal Fire
Fire Suppression Dozer	Cal Fire
Helicopter Services – Fire Suppression	Cal Fire
Boat With Fire Suppression Capabilities	No
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>	
Basic Life Support Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support - Non Transport Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support Transport Provider	Medic Ambulance
Continuing Education Provider - Medical	Yes
Air Ambulance Transport Helicopter Services	Cal Star
Helicopter Landing Facilities On Site	Sutter Solano Medical Center
Vehicle Extrication Tools/Equipment	Yes
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	
Fire Safety Education – Children	Yes
Fire Safety Education – Adults/Seniors	Yes
Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program	Yes, as needed
Fire and Life Safety Business Inspection Program	Yes
Fire Protection Planning	Yes
New Commercial Construction Plan Reviews	Yes
Public Education Provider (CPR, First Aid, etc.)	Yes
Home Fire/Safety Inspections	Upon request
Fire Origin and Cause Investigations	Yes
Fuel Reduction/Weed Abatement Program	Yes
Smoke Detector Giveaway/Installation Program	Occasional programs
Address Sign Installation Program	No
<b>Rescue Services</b>	
First Responder Swift Water Rescue Program	Yes
Water Rescue Program	No
Ice Rescue Program	No
Dive Rescue Program	Sheriff's Office
Low angle Rope Rescue Program	No, but have capability

Helicopter Short/Long Haul Rescue Capabilities	CHP
Response To Boating Accidents	Coast Guard
Rescue Dog Services	No
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Basic	Yes
Hazardous Materials Response Team	Yes, part of Regional Team
<b>Support Services</b>	
Firefighter Incident Support Unit	No
Mobile Incident Command/Communications Unit	Yes, Solano County MC1
Fill Station for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	Yes, stationary
Mobile Breathing Support Unit	American Canyon FPD
Community Emergency Response Team	Yes
Chaplain Services	Yes (Vallejo Police Department)
Training Academy	Yes
Emergency Operations Center Capabilities	Yes
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Public Service Assists	Yes
Motor Vehicle Accident Response	Yes
Welfare Checks	Yes
Public Safety Answering Point	Yes
Fire/EMS Dispatch	Yes
Fundraising Activities	Firefighters Union
Firefighters Association - Non Profit	Yes
Auxiliary Association	No
<b>Other</b>	
Training Tower (15-week academy)	Yes
Apprentice Program (3 years)	Yes

Service Area

While EVFPD does not provide services outside of its boundary area, its contract provider (the City of Vallejo Fire Department) provides services throughout Vallejo and to City of Benicia and certain areas in American Canyon FPD through automatic aid agreements. In addition, the City maintains a master mutual aid agreement with Solano County fire providers, and on occasion may respond to areas within another agency's bounds.<sup>59</sup>

The District reported that there are no unserved areas within its bounds. There are reportedly no significant obstacles that challenge response to calls for service.

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<sup>59</sup> The City of Vallejo FD is part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Dixon, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Montezuma FPD, Suisun FPD, Vacaville FPD, Cal Fire, and Travis Air Force Base.

### Services to Other Agencies

While the District itself does not provide services to other agencies, the City of Vallejo Fire Department has a contract with the Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) to provide ALS non-transport services to the City's entire service area. This agreement was initiated in 2011 and is set to expire in 2015. The agreement identifies a minimum level of services that must be maintained by the City, including service area, minimum staffing levels, training and license requirements of staff, and response time standards.

In addition to the agreement with SEMSC, the City of Vallejo, in conjunction with the cities of Benicia, Fairfield and Dixon, formed a public private partnership with the private ambulance provider (Medic Ambulance Services, Inc.) to continue to provide ALS first response emergency services within their respective bounds as support to Medic Ambulance. Participating member cities are reimbursed by Medic Ambulance for these support services.

### Contracts for Services

EVFPD contracts with the City of Vallejo for all fire-related services. The agreement was initiated in 1992 and remains in effect until terminated by either party. The City provides services in the form of plan review, fire investigation, disaster preparedness, fire inspection, weed abatement, pre-fire planning administration, complaint handling, fire prevention, fire training/public education, fire suppression, and emergency medical services. According to the agreement, services to the District should have the same priorities, level, and responsiveness of services provided within city limits.

The District pays the City all of its revenues and income, excluding property tax administration fees, any expenses incurred in connection with annexation of property to the District, and any administrative costs incurred by staff to the District of up to \$5,000, for these contract services.

### Overlapping Service Providers

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) provides services throughout the State. Generally, services are focused in wildland areas defined as State Responsibility Areas (SRA). EVFPD is almost entirely a high fire hazard Local Responsibility Area (LRA), with the exception of land bordering Cordelia FPD, which is considered SRA territory where Cal Fire would have responsibility for wildland fires. Cal Fire also provides technical support throughout the County in the form of specialized services such as fire suppression handcrews, dozers, and helicopter services when necessary.

## **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to 1) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 2) a defined complaint process designed to handle all



issues to resolution, and 3) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

The principal act requires that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>60</sup> EVFPD is governed by the five-member Board of Supervisors of Solano County. Supervisors are elected at large by district to staggered four-year terms.

The Board of Supervisors generally meets on the first, second, and fourth Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at the Solano County Administration Center 675 Texas Street in Fairfield. Meetings regarding EVFPD in particular take place quarterly. Agendas and minutes are posted on the County’s website. Information about Board meetings is shown in Figure 6-4.

**Figure 6-4: East Vallejo Fire Protection District Governing Body**

<b>East Vallejo Fire Protection District</b>		
<b>Governing Body and Board Meetings</b>		
<i>Manner of Selection</i>	Election	
<i>Length of Term</i>	4 years	
<i>Meetings</i>	Every first, second, and fourth Tuesday of the month at 8:30AM. Quarterly for EVFPD.	Board of Supervisors Solano County Administration Center 675 Texas Street, Fairfield CA 94533
<i>Agenda Distribution</i>	County’s website	
<i>Minutes Distribution</i>	County’s website	
<b>Administration Contact</b>		
<i>Contact</i>	Chris Rogers, County Administrators Office	
<i>Mailing Address</i>	675 Texas Street, Suite 6500 Fairfield, CA 94533	
<i>Phone</i>	707-784-6481	
<i>Email/Website</i>	<a href="http://www.solanocounty.com">www.solanocounty.com</a> (no district specific website)	
<b>Fire Provider Contact</b>		
<i>Contact</i>	Jack McArthur, City of Vallejo Fire Chief (contract provider)	
<i>Mailing Address</i>	970 Nimitz Avenue, Vallejo, CA 94592	
<i>Phone</i>	707-648-4526	
<i>Fax</i>	707-648-5289	
<i>Email/Website</i>	www.ci.vallejo.ca.us (no district specific website)	

<sup>60</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.

County Board of Supervisors receive \$8,000 in compensation per month, no additional compensation is received for operating as the governing body of EVFPD. Government Code §53235 requires that if a district provides compensation or reimbursement of expenses to its board members, the board members must receive two hours of training in ethics at least once every two years and the district must establish a written policy on reimbursements. The County has established policies on expense reimbursements.<sup>61</sup> The members of the Board of Supervisors take part in online ethics training created by the Institute of Local Government and found at the Fair Political Practices Committee's website. Each Supervisor maintains his or her completion certificate.

In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District does not conduct outreach activities on its own. The County does not maintain a separate website for the District where information is made available to the public. The City of Vallejo FD provides outreach activities on behalf of the District according to the contract for services; however, these outreach activities are educational and informational on fire and emergency services related topics and are not specific to EVFPD.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted to the Board of Supervisors. The District's contract chief is responsible for handling complaints. The District reported that there were no complaints in 2013.

The Board of Supervisors maintains policies and procedures to guide its efforts, including policies specifically related to code of ethics. While the County does not have formal policies related to responding to public records requests or Brown Act compliance, the Board has adopted formal rules and procedures, which incorporate both Brown Act principles.

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000, et seq.) requires state and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation (California Code of Regulations §18730) which contains the terms of a standard conflict of interest code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's code. The County's policies appropriately include a conflict of interest code.

Government Code §87203 requires persons who hold office to disclose their investments, interests in real property and incomes by filing appropriate forms with the appropriate filing agency (i.e., the County or the Fair Political Practices Commission) each year. All County Supervisors have submitted the required Forms 700 for 2012. As of the drafting of this report forms for 2013 were not yet due.

During the course of this MSR process, EVFPD (the Vallejo FD and County staff) demonstrated full accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Solano LAFCO. The District responded to questionnaires and cooperated with interview, information, and document requests.

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<sup>61</sup> County of Solano, Personnel and Salary Resolution, amendments through March 27, 2012, p. 59.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District (governed by the County Board of Supervisors) generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, conducting ethics training for all board members, and filing of Form 700 Statements of Economic Interest
- ❖ In order to enhance constituent interest and participation, the District could conduct outreach efforts such as making use of advertisements in public newspapers and mailing information to residents. It is also recommended that the County develop and maintain a separate website for the District where information is made available to the public.
- ❖ The areas served by EVFPD are anticipated to eventually be annexed into the City of Vallejo; consequently, governance structure options are limited to dissolution or formation of a subsidiary district to the City. Once the areas served by EVFPD are annexed into the City of Vallejo, the District can be dissolved, eliminating this extra level of governance and potentially improving efficiency and accountability.

## **GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

This section discusses the factors affecting service demand, such as land uses, historical and anticipated population growth, and relevant growth strategies.

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### Land Use

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Land uses within the District consist of rural residential, residential, commercial, agricultural, and marsh resource conservation. The District's bounds encompass approximately 1.5 square miles.

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### Population

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There are approximately 3,522 residents within the District, based on GIS analysis of 2010 Census population information.<sup>62</sup> The County reported that it estimates the population of the District to be closer to 3,329, based on a 2006 GIS report and review of building permits within EVFPD since that time. The population density within the District is 2,348 people per square mile.

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### Projected Growth and Development

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The City of Vallejo Planning Department did not respond to requests for information regarding the potential for development in the areas served by East Vallejo FPD or the potential for annexation of these unincorporated islands. However, it is assumed that

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<sup>62</sup> This population figure may be slightly inflated based on comparison of known populations in other areas with those generated through the GIS analysis.

growth trends within the areas served by EVFPD will be minimal given historical growth patterns and existing and planned land uses.

The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Solano County will grow by eight percent from 2010 to 2020. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.8 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from between 3,329 to 3,522 in 2010 to between approximately 3,595 and 3,804 in 2020. However, the County projects that the area within the District will likely experience a slower rate of growth than other areas in the County as developed areas are essentially built out and other areas are designated as agricultural preserve land where development is restricted. Based on both sources of population projections, it is anticipated that demand for service within the District would increase minimally through 2020.

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## Growth Strategies

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The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County.

The lands within the District are designated in the County's General Plan as low density residential, marsh and park uses. Because these areas are already extensively developed, it is anticipated that there will be minimal development or population growth within the District. Approximately one quarter of the land in EVFPD is designated as agricultural preserve. The County has historically required that development requiring water and sewer service be incorporated within one of the County's cities. Based on this policy, most residential, commercial and industrial development in the County has been in incorporated areas.

All territory within EVFPD is also within the City of Vallejo's SOI, meaning that it is anticipated the areas will eventually be annexed by the City. As such, the City has planned for land uses within this area, and the County coordinates with the City on any proposed developments in the area.<sup>63</sup> Future development of urban land uses is to be facilitated and served through city annexation. Current land uses in these areas may continue under County jurisdiction until the land is annexed to the city for conversion to urban uses. The City's General Plan land use map designates the lands within the District as agricultural, residential, and community parks.

There is presently no development impact fee specific to fire services for the area within EVFPD. In 2013, several fire protection districts (Cordelia, Dixon, Suisun, and Vacaville FPDs) in the County hired a consulting firm to conduct a nexus study to assess and make recommendations regarding a uniform development impact fee for each of the districts. As of the drafting of this report, EVFPD was not participating in the joint study. Vallejo FD reported that it was unaware that such a study was being conducted and would

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<sup>63</sup> The areas are designated as being part of the City's municipal service area by the County. MSAs reflect city planned urban growth areas and are based on County review of city general plans and spheres of influence established by the Solano LAFCO.

be interested in collaborating with the other fire districts should the opportunity arise. The County reported that a development impact fee was not necessary for the territory within EVFPD as there is little opportunity for development.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ East Vallejo Fire Protection District (EVFPD) currently has an estimated population of between 3,329 and 3,522.
- ❖ Given that the lands within EVFPD are already extensively developed, it is anticipated that there will be minimal development or population growth within the District.
- ❖ All territory within EVFPD is also within the City of Vallejo's Sphere of Influence, meaning that the City anticipates annexation.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from between 3,329 and 3,522 in 2010 to between 3,595 and 3,804 in 2020. The County anticipates slower growth within EVFPD territory than is projected countywide.

## **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.<sup>64</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.<sup>65</sup> According to DWR, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to EVFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to EVFPD's bounds and sphere of influence. However, data limitations preclude the ability to identify smaller disadvantaged communities, which will need to be surveyed and identified on a case by case basis.

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<sup>64</sup> Government Code §56033.5.

<sup>65</sup> Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.

## FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by the District and identifies the revenue sources currently available to the District.

The District has faced declining property tax revenues over the last few fiscal years. It appears that property tax revenues continued to decline in FY 12-13 by about nine percent from the previous year. While the District's decline in revenue did not directly impact service levels, the City of Vallejo also experienced financial challenges during the recession, which resulted in the City declaring bankruptcy in 2008. Following the bankruptcy, the City's Fire Department staffing level was greatly reduced and three of the City's eight fire stations were closed. One station has since reopened, and two continue to remain closed.

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### Revenues and Expenses

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The District's revenue in FY 12-13 was \$337,587, of which 99 percent was received from property taxes, one percent from intergovernmental revenues from the State, and a small fraction from use of money and property.

The District's expenditures amounted to \$336,161 in FY 12-13—99 percent was spent on salaries and supplies provided by the City of Vallejo Fire Department, while the other one percent was used for services provided by County staff. Although not shown as a separate expense in the District's budget, the County reports that expenditures also include property tax refunds from previous years.

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### Capital Improvements

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The District does not conduct any capital improvement planning as it does not own any facilities.

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### Outstanding Debt

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The District had no long-term debt at the end of FY 12-13.

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### Reserves

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The District does not have a formal policy on the amount of reserves to be maintained for contingency purposes. At the end of FY 12-13, the District maintained a roll-over cash balance of \$2,773, which is equivalent to about one percent of the District's annual expenditures.

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### Determinations

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- ❖ Financing levels for the District and the City are a challenge to providing adequate services. EVFPD has faced declining property tax revenues over the last few fiscal years. The City of Vallejo also experienced financial challenges during the recession,



resulting in bankruptcy, a reduction in Fire Department staffing and the closure of three fire stations.

- ❖ While the Fire Department has been able to reopen one of the closed stations and reopen an engine company, the City continues to struggle financially, and the ability of Vallejo FD to provide sustainable services at adequate levels to EVFPD is tentative.
- ❖ The District maintains a nominal roll over fund balance from year to year, which would not cover contingencies should the need arise.

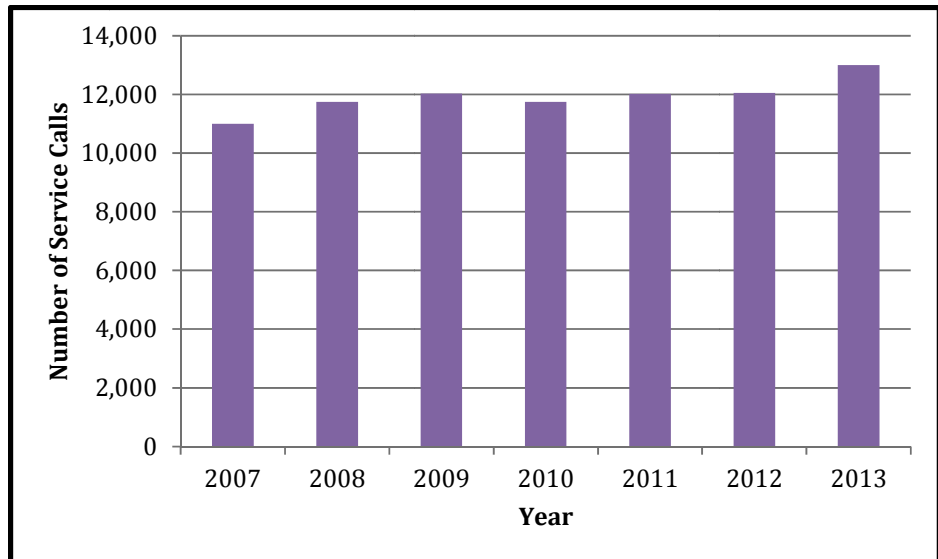
## PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY

### Existing Demand

EVFPD contracts with the City of Vallejo Fire Department for fire services. Vallejo FD reported that its peak demand periods occurred on Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday in the afternoon from two to four. Service calls are consistently high in volume throughout the year, but most often peak in December, January, and June.

**Figure 6-5: VFD Number of Calls by Year, 2007-2013**

Vallejo FD reported that it had observed an increase in service demand in the last few years. The provided demand data for 2007-2013 pertains to Vallejo FD at large, including its entire service area—the City of Vallejo and EVFPD. A small fraction of the reported calls



actually occur within EVFPD’s bounds. As shown in Figure 6-5, the number of calls has experienced an overall increase between 2007 and 2013 and consistently increased each year between 2010 and 2013. In 2013, VFD received a total of 12,995 calls. The majority of these calls were for emergency medical service (72 percent), the remainder was for miscellaneous emergencies (eight percent), fires and hazardous materials (six percent), motor vehicle accidents (four percent), miscellaneous non-emergency calls (four percent),<sup>66</sup> and false alarms (five percent). The Department averaged 109 service calls per 1,000 residents.<sup>67</sup>

Within the EVFPD boundary area, in 2013 Vallejo FD reported that it responded to 404 service calls within the District’s bounds; however, due to limited address information for each of these calls, the County reported that it was only able to confirm that 327 of these service calls occurred inside EVFPD’s bounds. The County reported that they were able to confirm 261 and 292 service calls within the District’s bounds in 2012 and 2011, respectively. Of the 404 calls reported by Vallejo FD, 67 percent were medical emergencies, seven percent were fire-related calls, six percent were motor vehicle accidents, 12 percent

<sup>66</sup> Non-Emergencies calls include emergency standby, public service assist, agency assist.

<sup>67</sup> Ratio of calls per 1,000 residents includes all calls for service within the City and within EVFPD as a ratio to the population in both areas based on 2010 Census data.

were false alarms, three percent were miscellaneous emergencies, and six percent were non-emergency calls. The District averaged 115 calls per 1,000 residents.<sup>68</sup>

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## Staffing

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EVFPD does not have staff of its own. All staff are provided by the Vallejo FD, which has 87 personnel, of which 82 are firefighting personnel consisting of six chiefs, 76 paid<sup>69</sup> firefighting officers, engineers and firefighters, and no volunteers. The median age of the firefighters is 39, with a range from 23 to 57. Vallejo FD has experienced an overall increase in staffing since 2011. In 2011, the Department maintained 68 firefighting staff, which increased to 79 in 2012.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the firefighter to perform essential and advanced fire ground tasks, as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. The level of certification required for each firefighter is determined by the individual fire department. However, according to the California State Fire Marshal, there are plans to phase out the Volunteer Firefighter certification level and the most basic level of certification will eventually be Firefighter I. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fire ground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>70</sup> In addition to the general firefighter certification, there are also several emergency medical and specialized certifications that firefighting personnel may attain. Refer to the Overview Chapter in this document for a description of each of these certifications. The number of VFPD personnel certified in each category is shown in Figure 6-6. Each firefighter, including volunteers, is able to hold multiple certifications, including strike team certifications.

**Figure 6-6: VFD Certified Personnel**

Certification Level	Number of Firefighting Staff	% of Total Firefighting Staff
Volunteer Firefighter	0	0%
Firefighter I	58	71%
Firefighter II	58	71%
First Responder EMS	4	5%
Emergency Medical Technician 1	20	23%
Paramedic	53	65%
Apparatus Engineer	12	14%

<sup>68</sup> Ratio of calls per 1,000 residents includes calls for service within EVFPD as a ratio to the population within the District.

<sup>69</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

<sup>70</sup> State Fire Marshal, Course Information and Required Materials, 2007, p. 44

Company Officer	18	21%
Chief Officer	4	5%
Haz Mat FRO	71	82%
CICCS FFT 2	4	5%
CICCS FFT 1	4	5%
CICCS Engine Boss	3	3%
CICCS Strike Team Leader	3	3%

Vallejo FD conducts a majority of its training in house. Firefighters are required to train at least 10 hours per month. Each new hire to Vallejo FD is required to complete a 15-week academy, and successful monthly evaluations over a 36-month period to complete their Joint Apprenticeship Program.

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## Facilities

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EVFPD does not own any infrastructure or facilities. All fire facilities that serve the District are owned and operated by the City of Vallejo and are located outside of EVFPD's bounds within the City's limits. The City of Vallejo owns and operates six fire stations, one fire training center, and one administration center. Before the recession the City operated eight fire stations; however, by 2011 three stations had to be closed, due to financial constraints. Since that time, one station has been reopened. While the administration center (Station 28) can be used for emergency service response, it is not presently functioning in that manner. Station 26 also continues to be shutdown. Stations 22 and 24 are the primary providers of emergency medical coverage to EVFPD; however, for any fire-related calls, other resources within the City also respond. Vallejo FD reported that on a second alarm structure fire response to EVFPD, all units within the City will respond to the scene. The function and condition of each fire facility is described in detail in Figure 6-7.

**Figure 6-7: Vallejo FD Fire Stations**

	Station #21	Station #22	Station #23
Property owner	City of Vallejo	City of Vallejo	City of Vallejo
Address	1220 Marin St.	700 Fifth St.	900 Redwood St.
Purpose	911 Emergency Services	911 Emergency Services	911 Emergency Services
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	Emergency Operations Center	N/A	N/A
Hours station is staffed	24 hours/7 days a week	24 hours/7 days a week	24 hours/7 days a week
Date acquired or built	Year Built: 1966	Year Built: 1985	Year Built: 1966
Condition of facility <sup>71</sup>	Good	Good	Good
Infrastructure Needs	Expansion and upgrades to EOC	Larger backup generator	No major upgrade needs.
Number and type of vehicles at facility	2 - Tiller Aerial Trucks 1 - Type 1 Engine 1 - Brush Unit 1 - Utility Pickup 1 - Command SUV	1 - Type 1 Engine 1 - Brush Unit 1 - Utility Truck 2 - Storage trailers	2 - Type 1 Engines 2 - Brush Units
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	6 Firefighting staff (2 Captains, 2 Engineers and 2 Firefighters)/day	3 Firefighting staff (Captain, Engineer and Firefighter)/day	3 Firefighting staff (Captain, Engineer and Firefighter)/day
Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	0	0	0
Number of volunteers staffing facility	0	0	0
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	0	0	0

<sup>71</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

	Station #24	Station #25	Station #27
Property owner	City of Vallejo	City of Vallejo	City of Vallejo
Address	1005 Oakwood Dr.	595 Mini Dr.	1585 Ascot Ct.
Purpose	911 Emergency Services	911 Emergency Services	911 Emergency Services
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	N/A	Polling Site	N/A
Hours station is staffed	24 hours/7 days a week	24 hours/7 days a week	24 hours/7 days a week
Date acquired or built	Year Built: 1955	Year Built: 1965	Year Built: 2001
Condition of facility <sup>72</sup>	Fair	Fair	Good
Infrastructure Needs	Remodeling - plumbing, electrical and energy efficiency improvements	Upgrades are being considered as part of the FY 14-15 budget	None
Number and type of vehicles at facility	1 – Type 1 Engine 1 – Brush Unit	1 – Type 1 Engine 1 – Brush Unit	2 - Type 1 Engines 1 - Brush Unit 1 - Reserve Truck
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	3 Firefighting staff (Captain, Engineer and Firefighter)/day	3 Firefighting staff (Captain, Engineer and Firefighter)/day	3 Firefighting staff (Captain, Engineer and Firefighter)/day
Number and classification of another agency’s paid staff staffing the facility	0	0	0
Number of volunteers staffing facility	0	0	0
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	0	0	0

<sup>72</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.



	Station #28	Fire Training Center
Property owner	City of Vallejo	City of Vallejo
Address	970 Nimitz Ave.	703 Curtola Pkwy
Purpose	Headquarters – fire administration, 911 Emergency Services (not presently active)	Firefighter Training
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	None	CERT and occasional city staff training
Hours station is staffed	Monday-Friday (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.)	As needed
Date acquired or built	Year Built: 2005	Year Built: 1938
Condition of facility <sup>73</sup>	Excellent	Good
Infrastructure Needs	The fire station portion is currently not in use.	Upgrades are being considered as part of the FY 14-15 budget
Number and type of vehicles at facility	2 - SUVs	1 - Van
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	5 Firefighting staff (Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Training Chief, EMS Coordinator and Executive Secretary)	Not staffed, only used during training
Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	0	0
Number of volunteers staffing facility	0	0
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	0	0

For water supplies, VFD uses large above ground reservoirs located throughout the city. The Department reported that these water reserves are satisfactory for fire emergencies.

<sup>73</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

The City reportedly has the general capacity to provide services for EVFPD to meet the existing demand for service. Based upon historical trends regarding emergency call volume within the District, the City's current facilities and staffing (as of the drafting of this report) appear to be adequate to meet service demands for future years. In the event that district growth surpasses previous trends, then the City's ability to meet those demands are uncertain. The ability to meet such demands would be based on the City's ability to reopen Station 26, as well as continuing to hire additional personnel.

#### Dispatch and communications

Responses by Vallejo FD to incidents in EVFPD are dispatched through the City of Vallejo Police Department's Communication and Dispatch Office. The office serves as the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) where all landline calls within the greater Vallejo area are originally directed.

In order to improve the current dispatch services, Vallejo FD suggested that all Solano County fire agencies use the same frequencies for incidents and be dispatched from a central PSAP. Vallejo FD recommended that Medic Ambulance (current provider of countywide ambulance transport) be dispatched from a joint center and be required to respond on a countywide radio system. The Department reported that gaining buy-in from the respective agencies, based on a cost-benefit analysis and an equitable funding formula, is necessary to achieve this goal.

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#### Infrastructure Needs

Vallejo FD did not identify a need for new or additional facilities. Necessary and desired improvements at the existing facilities are outlined in Figure 6-7. The stations were generally identified as being in fair to good condition. Station 24 reportedly has the most significant needs, as it is in need of remodeling due to its age. Plumbing, electrical and energy efficiency improvements at Station 24 are being considered as part of the budget process for FY 14-15.

With regard to vehicles and equipment, the Department reported to have an adequate equipment/apparatus replacement schedule to ensure proper operating condition. Vallejo FD is in the process of purchasing one Type-1 Engine (1500 GPM pumper) in FY 14-15 and plans to purchase another similar unit in FY 15-16.

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#### Challenges

There are several areas within the District that may provide a few challenges to the FD. Specifically, areas that have homes that are set back off the main roads and where fire hydrants are not in close proximity. In addition, some areas have large lots, narrow street access, and interface with wildland areas. These areas would present access challenges that would slow VFD's ability to get water onto the fire; however, it would not prevent the FD from providing proper response to the incident.

Additionally, the recent economic recession caused the Department to close three stations and eliminate four engine companies. However, since then VFD was able to reopen one of the closed stations (Station 25) and open another engine company (21) at Station 21 where a truck is located. The City continues to struggle financially, and the ability of Vallejo

FD to provide sustainable services at adequate levels to EVFPD is tentative. However, the FD has been able to increase staffing levels in recent years and reports a positive outlook for the future of the Department.

## **SERVICE ADEQUACY**

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. Vallejo FD has an ISO rating of three in urban areas and three in rural areas throughout its service area, including the territory within EVFPD. Vallejo FD was last evaluated in 2004.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued response time performance standards depending on the service structure of the agency. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, these standards provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. For agencies with paid staff, NFPA 1710 identifies the response time guideline of six minutes at least 90 percent of the time. For volunteer and combination fire departments, NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14 minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>74</sup> EVFPD falls within the definition of an urban demand zone with paid staff and would therefore be subject to the NFPA 1710 guidelines.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) has designated an exclusive operating area (EOA) in Solano County for EMS and ambulance services provided by Medic Ambulance Services. The EOA includes all territory in Solano County with the exception of the City of Vacaville, Travis Air Force Base, and the territory designated as Zone C.<sup>75</sup> In the EOA, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority call. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses. Compliance with these requirements are determined on a monthly basis. If an agency providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards then they are fined.

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<sup>74</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

<sup>75</sup> Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative Ambulance Service Agreement, April 10, 2010.

EVFPD's 80<sup>th</sup> percentile response time is seven minutes, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response time is 8.7 minutes, and the median response time is 5.5 minutes. The District does not meet the NFPA 1710 response time guidelines.

The service area size for each fire station varies between the fire districts. The median fire station in Solano County serves approximately 39.8 square miles. Dixon FD serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles for its single station. Suisun FPD stations serve approximately 82.5 square miles per station on average. The service area for Cordelia Fire Department's fire station is 28 square miles. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, each fire station in Vallejo FD serves approximately 8.3 square miles in EVFPD and within the city limits.

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers that rely on volunteer or call firefighters may have differing staff availability and reliability. An agency with more firefighters could have fewer resources, if availability is limited due to work and personal obligations. Staffing levels in Solano County vary from 0.68 firefighters per 1,000 residents in EVFPD to 29 in MFPD.

Operating expenditures per capita is often reflective of the level of service offered by a fire provider as determined by financing constraints. The least amount of money per capita was spent by Dixon FPD (\$79). Montezuma FPD expended the most per capita (\$499), as it serves a relatively expansive area with very low population density. To compare, EVFPD spent \$95 per capita in FY 12-13.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Based upon historical trends regarding emergency call volume within the District, the City's current facilities and staffing (as of the drafting of this report) appear to be adequate to meet existing and future service demands. In the event that district growth surpasses previous trends, then the City's ability to meet those demands are uncertain.
- ❖ Vallejo FD did not identify a need for new or additional facilities. Existing stations were generally identified as being in fair to good condition. Station 24 reportedly has the most significant needs, as it is in need of remodeling due to its age.
- ❖ With regard to vehicles and equipment, Vallejo FD reported that it has an adequate equipment/apparatus replacement schedule to ensure proper operating condition.
- ❖ EVFPD services appear to be minimally adequate. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response time within EVFPD does not meet the NFPA 1710 guidelines; however, the area served has the highest ISO rating among the fire districts reviewed and fire stations are within the closest proximity of all areas of the District compared to other districts in the County.
- ❖ An area that EVFPD (Vallejo FD) could improve upon is tracking and calculating median and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response times.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. As a component unit of the County, the District is included in the County's annual budget and audits; however, the District's finances are not isolated in the

County's audit. Vallejo FD, on behalf of EVFPD, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints.

- ❖ With regard to planning efforts, EVFPD does not have any plans specific to services within its bounds. While the City maintains a master plan and standards of coverage for fire services, both are obsolete and in need of updating.

## **STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES**

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### **Shared Facilities and Regional Cooperation**

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#### Shared Facilities

EVFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Vallejo FD's services and stations through contract.

As previously stated, EVFPD does not own any infrastructure of its own with which it can practice facility sharing; however,, EVFPD's contract provider (Vallejo FD) makes available the apparatus floor of Station 26 (currently closed) to the Vallejo Police Department to store their command van. Vallejo FD also shares its portable water supply unit with the Vallejo Water Department to assist with diverting water when needed.

In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the Department reported that Station 26 could also be used jointly with the Benicia Fire Department. Additionally, Vallejo FD has the potential to provide ladder truck service to the City of Benicia.

#### Collaboration

All other collaborative efforts are conducted through Vallejo FD on behalf of EVFPD. As previously mentioned in the *Type and Extent of Services* section, Vallejo FD has automatic aid agreements with City of Benicia and American Canyon FPD and a master mutual aid agreement with Solano County fire providers.

Vallejo FD formed, jointly with the cities of Benicia, Fairfield and Dixon, a public private partnership with the private ambulance provider (Medic Ambulance Services, Inc.) to provide ALS first response emergency services within their respective bounds. Vallejo FD reported that this partnership functions more as a cooperative than a joint powers authority (JPA).

Vallejo FD occasionally provides training for fire suppression jointly with other agencies, including the City of Benicia, American Canyon, and Fairfield at the VFD fire training center and Building #571 on Mare Island. VFD also collaborates with specialized response teams, including the county hazardous materials response team and the urban search and rescue county team on training efforts.

Vallejo FD has also participated in regional planning efforts, including the Mass Casualty Incident Plan conducted by the County EMS agencies, as well as several studies by the Chiefs Association. Additionally, Vallejo FD is a member of several collaborative organizations, including the County Training Officers Association, the County Chiefs Association, California Fire Chiefs Association, and the National Fire Protection Association.

In the future, the Vallejo FD may be able to take part in further collaborations among the fire protection districts in the County to further the interests of EVFPD, which consists of unincorporated territory and may have differing interests from that of the City, by participating in the County Fire Chiefs Association breakout meetings for district chiefs (in addition to those for city chiefs). The other fire protection districts in the County are currently initiating a joint study regarding development impact fees in the unincorporated territory, which may be an opportunity for a first step toward solidarity on the part of the districts, should EVFPD choose to participate. However, the County noted that the area within EVFPD, having limited potential for development, would have limited revenue potential from a development impact fee; and therefore, the District is unlikely to participate.

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## Management Efficiencies

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While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, track employee and agency productivity, periodically review agency performance, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, conduct advanced planning for future service needs, and plan and budget for capital needs.

EVFPD does not directly employ any staff, but instead relies entirely on Vallejo FD for staffing and services. Vallejo FD employs 87 full time equivalent (FTE) personnel, consisting of 82 firefighting, five administrative, and three part-time positions. The Department has a fire chief, one executive secretary, one deputy chief, four battalion chiefs, 21 captains, 20 engineers, and 35 firefighters. Captains are responsible for day-to-day operations of the Department. The Chief oversees the entire department; however, the executive secretary, the deputy chief, and fire prevention manager report directly to him. The Chief reports to the EVFPD Board on an annual basis.

The deputy chief oversees three divisions, including fire suppression, training, and EMS. The Fire Suppression Division consists of three shifts, each led by a battalion chief who oversees 21 captains, 21 engineers, and 42 firefighters. The Fire Training Division is comprised of one battalion chief, responsible for providing training that meet all State and federally mandated training standards. The EMS Division consists of one paramedic coordinator, three paramedic shift liaisons, and one EMS medical director. This division provides the necessary support for the Department's Paramedic Program.

Employees that are ranked battalion chief and above receive quarterly performance evaluations, and all employees with less than three years in the Department are evaluated monthly. Performance evaluations for other ranks are in the developmental stage.

Overall agency performance evaluations are performed during the Chief's annual report to the Board. No other evaluations are conducted specific to the operations and services provided within EVFPD's territory. The City has completed occasional annual reports in the past on its overall services; however, the most recent annual report was completed in 2008. Vallejo FD tracks the workload of staff through timesheets, training logs, and task logs, and monitors the productivity of the agency as a whole by tracking calls for service.



With regard to planning efforts, EVFPD does not have any plans specific to services within its bounds. The City has a master plan from 2006, which includes obsolete Standards of Coverage. The master plan is outdated, since the number of operational fire stations has decreased from eight to six.

As a dependent special district of the County, EVFPD is included as part of the County's budget, with pages specific to the District's revenues and expenditures. EVFPD is considered a component unit of the County for the purposes of the County's annual financial audit and is not separately identified as part of the report. There is no capital improvement plan specific to EVFPD; however, Vallejo FD maintains an informal annual apparatus replacement plan for aging equipment.

EVFPD takes part in joint financing by partially funding Vallejo FD's services and infrastructure with the fees it is paying to the City for its contract services. This arrangement allows both agencies to share in the costs of providing these services and allows for efficiency in service configuration by avoiding duplication of facilities, equipment, personnel, and management.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ EVFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Vallejo FD's services and stations by contract. In addition, EVFPD's contract provider (Vallejo FD) makes space available to the Vallejo Police Department and shares its portable water supply unit with Vallejo Water Department.
- ❖ Given that EVFPD does not own any facilities or infrastructure, the opportunities for future facility sharing are limited. However, Vallejo FD (the contract provider) reported that Station 26 could also be used jointly with the Benicia Fire Department and there is the potential to provide ladder truck service to the City of Benicia. EVFPD benefits from the efficiencies gained through the facility sharing practices of its contract service provider.
- ❖ Another opportunity for further facility sharing and collaboration may be centralized dispatch center for all fire providers.
- ❖ Vallejo FD may be able to take part in additional collaborations among the fire protection districts in the County to further the interests of EVFPD, which consists of unincorporated territory and may have differing interests from that of the City, by participating in the County Fire Chiefs Association breakout meetings for district chiefs (in addition to those for city chiefs).
- ❖ Other fire protection districts in the County are currently initiating a joint study regarding development impact fees in the unincorporated territory, which may be an opportunity for a first step toward solidarity on the part of the districts, should EVFPD choose to participate. However, the County reported little revenue potential for the District from such fees.

## **LAFCO POLICIES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY**

Solano LAFCO has adopted a policy that directly affects service delivery by fire protection districts in the County. Standard 11 in the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires that a city applying to LAFCO for annexation of a specific territory that belongs in this case to a fire protection district must offset the negative consequences of that annexation, which may include negative effects on the district's budget or service provision. The annexing city is required to work with the affected district to identify and mitigate the impacts. Adequate mitigation to adverse fiscal impact normally includes a funding source for lost revenues or increased costs to the affected special district. A common practice in Solano County is to negotiate a property tax neutrality agreement for a specific period of time between the annexing city and the negatively affected special district.

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### **Determinations**

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## **EAST VALLEJO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT DETERMINATIONS**

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### **Growth and Population Projections**

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- ❖ East Vallejo Fire Protection District (EVFPD) currently has an estimated population of between 3,329 and 3,522.
- ❖ Given that the lands within EVFPD are already extensively developed, it is anticipated that there will be minimal development or population growth within the District.
- ❖ All territory within EVFPD is also within the City of Vallejo's Sphere of Influence, meaning that the City anticipates annexation.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from between 3,329 and 3,522 in 2010 to between 3,595 and 3,804 in 2020. The County anticipates slower growth within EVFPD territory than is projected countywide by the DOF.

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### **The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI**

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to EVFPD's bounds and sphere of influence. However, data limitations preclude the ability to identify smaller disadvantaged communities, which will need to be surveyed and identified on a case by case basis.

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### **Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

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- ❖ Based upon historical trends regarding emergency call volume within the District, the City's current facilities and staffing (as of the drafting of this report) appear to be adequate to meet existing and future service demands. In the event that district growth surpasses previous trends, then the City's ability to meet those demands are uncertain.
- ❖ Vallejo FD did not identify a need for new or additional facilities. Existing stations were generally identified as being in fair to good condition. Station 24 reportedly has the most significant needs, as it is in need of remodeling due to its age.
- ❖ With regard to vehicles and equipment, Vallejo FD reported that it has an adequate equipment/apparatus replacement schedule to ensure proper operating condition.

- ❖ EVFPD services appear to be minimally adequate. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response time within EVFPD does not meet the NFPA 1710 guidelines; however, the area served has the highest ISO rating among the fire districts reviewed and fire stations are within the closest proximity of all areas of the District compared to other districts in the County.
- ❖ An area that EVFPD (Vallejo FD) could improve upon is tracking and calculating median and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response times.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. As a component unit of the County, the District is included in the County's annual budget and audits; however, the District's finances are not isolated in the County's audit. Vallejo FD, on behalf of EVFPD, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints.
- ❖ With regard to planning efforts, EVFPD does not have any plans specific to services within its bounds. While the City maintains a master plan and standards of coverage for fire services, both are obsolete and in need of updating.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ Financing levels for the District and the City are a challenge to providing adequate services. EVFPD has faced declining property tax revenues over the last few fiscal years. The City of Vallejo also experienced financial challenges during the recession, resulting in bankruptcy, a reduction in Fire Department staffing and the closure of three fire stations.
- ❖ While the Fire Department has been able to reopen one of the closed stations and reopen an engine company, the City continues to struggle financially, and the ability of Vallejo FD to provide sustainable services at adequate levels to EVFPD is tentative.
- ❖ The District maintains a nominal roll over fund balance from year to year, which would not cover contingencies should the need arise.

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### Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ EVFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Vallejo FD's services and stations by contract. In addition, EVFPD's contract provider (Vallejo FD) makes space available to the Vallejo Police Department and shares its portable water supply unit with Vallejo Water Department.
- ❖ Given that EVFPD does not own any facilities or infrastructure, the opportunities for future facility sharing are limited. However, Vallejo FD (the contract provider) reported that Station 26 could also be used jointly with the Benicia Fire Department and there is the potential to provide ladder truck service to the City of Benicia. EVFPD benefits from the efficiencies gained through the facility sharing practices of its contract service provider.
- ❖ Another opportunity for further facility sharing and collaboration may be centralized dispatch center for all fire providers.

- ❖ Vallejo FD may be able to take part in additional collaborations among the fire protection districts in the County to further the interests of EVFPD, which consists of unincorporated territory and may have differing interests from that of the City, by participating in the County Fire Chiefs Association breakout meetings for district chiefs (in addition to those for city chiefs).
- ❖ Other fire protection districts in the County are currently initiating a joint study regarding development impact fees in the unincorporated territory, which may be an opportunity for a first step toward solidarity on the part of the districts, should EVFPD choose to participate. However, the County reported little revenue potential for the District from such fees.

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### Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ The District (governed by the County Board of Supervisors) generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, conducting ethics training for all board members, and filing of Form 700 Statements of Economic Interest
- ❖ In order to enhance constituent interest and participation, the District could conduct outreach efforts such as making use of advertisements in public newspapers and mailing information to residents. It is also recommended that the County develop and maintain a separate website for the District where information is made available to the public.
- ❖ The areas served by EVFPD are anticipated to eventually be annexed into the City of Vallejo; consequently, governance structure options are limited to dissolution or formation of a subsidiary district to the City. Once the areas served by EVFPD are annexed into the City of Vallejo, the District can be dissolved, eliminating this extra level of governance and potentially improving efficiency and accountability.

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### LAFCO Policies Affecting Service Delivery

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## **7. MONTEZUMA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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Montezuma Fire Protection District (MFPD) provides fire response, limited hazardous materials response, full vehicle extrication, and 24-hour basic life support services. The District performs fire code plan checks, inspection and enforcement, participates in educational activities to increase community awareness of fire safety and prevention, and conducts fire investigations within its boundary area.

### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

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#### **Background**

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The election for the formation of the District took place in 1928 and resulted in the overwhelming majority of residents voting for the formation of MFPD. The first vehicle of the new fire department was actually purchased before the election was held, as confidence was high that the vote would pass.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>76</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>77</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.<sup>78</sup>

MFPD is located in the southeastern portion of Solano County. As shown in Figure 7-2, the District borders Suisun FPD in the west and Vacaville and Dixon FPDs in the north. MFPD is adjacent to Sacramento County (Delta FPD, Isleton FPD, Walnut Grove FPD, and Courtland FPD) in the east and south and Yolo County (No Mans Land FPD) in the northeast. Adjacent to the District is an area that lacks a determined local fire provider and is protected by Cal Fire. The City of Rio Vista is substantially surrounded by Montezuma FPD with a short stretch of the City's border adjacent to Sacramento County in the east.

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#### **Boundaries**

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MFPD is entirely within Solano County. The present bounds encompass approximately 200 square miles of mostly farmland and pasture lands and include the communities of Birds Landing, Collinsville, Hastings Island, Prospect Island, Ryer Island, and Holland Tract.

MFPD has had 10 boundary changes since its formation, eight of which were detachments, one annexation, and one consolidation. The detached territories were

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<sup>76</sup> Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

<sup>77</sup> Health and Safety Code §13862.

<sup>78</sup> Government Code §56824.10.



subsequently annexed into the City of Rio Vista. In 2006, the District consolidated with Ryer Island FPD (RIFPD), which contained about 30 square miles of boundary area at the time. The District’s boundary changes are shown in Figure 7-1.<sup>79</sup>

**Figure 7-1: MFPD List of LAFCO Approved Border Changes**

Project Name	Type of Action	Year	Recording Agency
Hastings Island	Annexation	1967	LAFCO
No. 13 area	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
No. 12 area	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
No. 11 area	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
The Marks Ranch Property	Detachment	1990	LAFCO
Del Rio Hills Property	Detachment	1990	LAFCO
Gibbs Ranch Property	Detachment	1990	LAFCO
New Rio Vista Airport Property	Detachment	1990	LAFCO
State lands/Waterfront	Detachment	1990	LAFCO
Ryer Island FPD	Consolidation	2006	LAFCO

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## Sphere of Influence

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The sphere of influence (SOI) for MFPD was established in 1983, as coterminous to the District’s boundaries.<sup>80</sup> The SOI was last updated in 2006 concurrently with the consolidation of the District with Ryer Island FPD, at which time it was made coterminous with the new District’s boundaries. MFPD boundaries and SOI are shown in Figure 7-2.

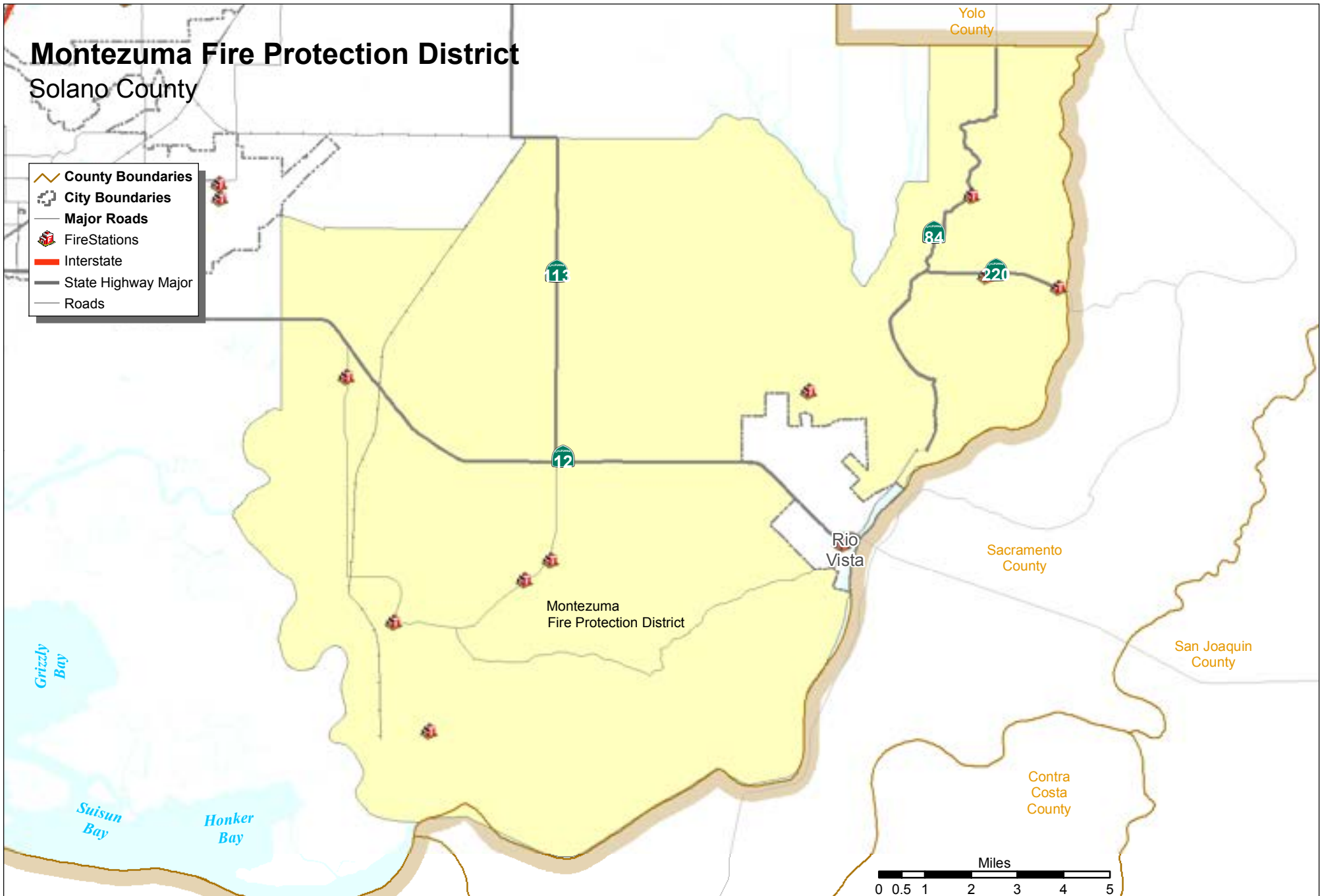
<sup>79</sup> The list of reorganizations in Figure 8-1 is derived from available LAFCO records and may not be complete excluding records that were not found or readily available.

<sup>80</sup> LAFCO Resolution 1983-07.

# Montezuma Fire Protection District

## Solano County

-  County Boundaries
-  City Boundaries
-  Major Roads
-  Fire Stations
-  Interstate
-  State Highway Major
-  Roads



**Solano Local Agency  
Formation Commission**

744 Empire St., Suite 216  
Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 439-3897  
[www.solanolafo.com](http://www.solanolafo.com)

This map is to be used for general information purposes only. Where precise accuracy is required reference should be made to certified maps, surveys, documents and/or by other official means.

### Solano County GIS Services

Department of Information Technology  
675 Texas Street, Suite 3700  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707-784-6340  
Email: [GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com)  
PRJ\_1093, 08/01/2014

#### Disclaimer:

*This map was made using Solano County GIS files with varying degrees of scale, accuracy, precision, currentness, and alignment and therefore cannot be used for situations requiring survey grade measurement or legal boundary determination. Solano County disclaims liability for any loss that may result from the use of this map. User acknowledges data limitations and accepts responsibility for map based judgments.*



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## Type and Extent of Services

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### Services Provided

Figure 7-3 details the services provided by MFPD. If a service is not provided by MFPD, but is offered by another agency, it is indicated in the figure. Resources from Cal Fire provided outside the SRA are provided on a mutual aid basis. Availability is dependent upon fire activity, time of year, and other factors.

**Figure 7-3: MFPD Services**

Service	Agency
<b>Fire Suppression Services</b>	
Structural Fire Protection	Yes
Wildland Fire Protection	Yes
Vehicle Fire Protection	Yes
Ladder Truck Capabilities	No
Fire Suppression Handcrew	Yes
Fire Suppression Dozer	Cal Fire
Helicopter Services – Fire Suppression	Cal Fire
Boat With Fire Suppression Capabilities	No
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>	
Basic Life Support Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support - Non Transport Provider	Medic Ambulance
Advanced Life Support Transport Provider	Medic Ambulance
Continuing Education Provider - Medical	No
Air Ambulance Transport Helicopter Services	Cal Star
Helicopter Landing Facilities On Site	Nearby
Vehicle Extrication Tools/Equipment	Yes
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	
Fire Safety Education – Children	Yes
Fire Safety Education – Adults/Seniors	Yes
Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program	Yes
Fire and Life Safety Business Inspection Program	Yes
Fire Protection Planning	Yes
New Commercial Construction Plan Reviews	Yes
Public Education Provider (CPR, First Aid, etc.)	Yes
Home Fire/Safety Inspections	Yes
Fire Origin and Cause Investigations	Yes
Fuel Reduction/Weed Abatement Program	Yes
Smoke Detector Giveaway/Installation Program	No
Address Sign Installation Program	No
<b>Rescue Services</b>	
First Responder Swift Water Rescue Program	Yes
Water Rescue Program	Yes
Ice Rescue Program	No
Dive Rescue Program	Sherriff’s Office
Low angle Rope Rescue Program	Yes
Helicopter Short/Long Haul Rescue Capabilities	CHP
Response To Boating Accidents	Yes

Rescue Dog Services	No
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Basic	Yes
Hazardous Materials Response Team	Solano County Hazmat Team
<b>Support Services</b>	
Firefighter Incident Support Unit	Yes
Mobile Incident Command/Communications Unit	Yes
Fill Station for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	Yes
Mobile Breathing Support Unit	No
Community Emergency Response Team	No
Chaplain Services	Yes
Training Academy	Yes
Emergency Operations Center Capabilities	Yes
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Public Service Assists	Yes
Motor Vehicle Accident Response	Yes
Welfare Checks	Yes
Public Safety Answering Point	Sheriff's Office
Fire/EMS Dispatch	Sheriff's Office
Fundraising Activities	Firefighter association
Firefighters Association - Non Profit	Yes
Auxiliary Association	No

Service Area

MFPD provides services outside of its boundary area through an automatic aid agreement with Suisun FPD. The two districts respond to eastbound SR 12 from Lawler Ranch Road to Shiloh Road and westbound SR 12 from Lambie Road to Walters Road. MFPD is a party to the countywide mutual aid agreement that includes multiple local agencies of Solano County, as well as agencies outside the County.<sup>81</sup>

The District serves outside of its boundaries through its strike team that responds to wild fires all over the State and gets reimbursed for its services.<sup>82</sup> MFPD also occasionally responds to medical emergencies within the unincorporated area to the north, which lacks a designated fire and EMS provider. The area is reportedly covered with swamp and mostly flooded.

According to MFPD, there are no unserved areas within the District's bounds.

Services to Other Agencies

The District does not provide services to other agencies, but rents a single room of the main fire station (Station 51) to Medic Ambulance Inc. The ambulance company's

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<sup>81</sup> Montezuma FPD is part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Dixon, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Vallejo, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Suisun FPD, Vacaville FPD, Cal Fire, and Travis Air Force Base.

<sup>82</sup> The District responds with its strike team as a part of the State of California Master Mutual Aid Agreement.

employees use the room to stand by and sleep between calls for service. The contract, initiated in 2000, is 'month to month' and is valid until terminated by either party. According to the contract, Medic Ambulance pays rent only for the months during, which it is providing service in Solano County.<sup>83</sup> MFPD is responsible for providing access to the shared kitchen and restrooms, supplies of general use, and all utilities except telephone services to any ambulance crew. The ambulance company is required to assist in the cost of keeping and maintaining the station, including the cost of utilities, building maintenance and insurance.

### Contracts for Services

The District contracts with Fire Recovery USA, LLC. that performs billing and collection services for fire departments in connection with motor vehicle accidents at which the fire departments provide emergency services. Fire Recovery bills insurance carriers on behalf of MFPD and reimburses the District for a portion of the total monies collected on the District's claims. The contract was initiated in 2008 and is valid until terminated by either party.

Similar to all other fire protection districts in the County (with the exception of East Vallejo FPD), MFPD contracts with the County Sheriff's Office for dispatch services. The structure of these services is discussed in more detail in the *Facilities* section of this chapter.

### Overlapping Service Providers

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) provides services throughout the State. Generally, Cal Fire services are focused in wildland areas defined as State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Similarly, the United States Forest Service (USFS) also provides services in California, primarily within forests and grasslands. Areas where USFS services are focused are defined as Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA). MFPD's territory consists of land that is considered moderate fire hazard and is designated entirely as Local Responsibility Area (LRA). Cal Fire nonetheless provides technical support throughout the County, including MFPD boundary area, in the form of specialized services such as fire suppression handcrews, dozers, and helicopter services when necessary.

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<sup>83</sup> Medic Ambulance pays MFPD \$400 the first six months of the year and \$600 monthly for the remainder of the year.

## GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to 1) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 2) a defined complaint process designed to handle all issues to resolution, and 3) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

The principal act requires that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>84</sup> MFPD is governed by a five-member board of directors appointed to four-year terms. Appointments are made by the Solano County Board of Supervisors—Supervisorial District 5. If a position opens up mid-term, the District notifies the Board of Supervisors, advertises the position, and makes a recommendation to the Supervisor in charge of the MFPD appointments.

**Figure 7-4: Montezuma Fire Protection District Governing Body**

<b>Montezuma Fire Protection District</b>	
<b>Governing Body and Board Meetings</b>	
<i>Manner of Selection</i>	Appointed by Board of Supervisors- District 5
<i>Length of Term</i>	Four years
<i>Meetings</i>	Every Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the main station or Station 52
<i>Agenda Distribution</i>	Agendas are posted at the main station and Station 52
<i>Minutes Distribution</i>	Minutes are available upon request.
<b>Contact</b>	
<i>Contact</i>	Fire Chief, Joseph Rosewall
<i>Mailing Address</i>	21 N 4th Street, Rio Vista, CA 94571
<i>Phone</i>	707-374-5962
<i>Fax</i>	707-3745962
<i>Email/Website</i>	montezumafiredistrict.com, mfpd@frontier.com

The Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the District’s main station (Station 51) or station 52. Information about Board meetings is shown in Figure 7-4.

Agendas for the meetings are posted at the main station and Station 52. Minutes are available upon request. In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District tries to reach its constituents through participating in community events, including dinners sponsored by the District. MFPD maintains a website where it posts information related to its services, staff, Board of Directors, apparatus, service calls, contact information, and history. The District’s board meeting agendas and minutes are not available online.

<sup>84</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.



MFPD board members receive no compensation. Government Code §53235 requires that if a district provides compensation or reimbursement of expenses to its board members, the board members must receive two hours of training in ethics at least once every two years and the district must establish a written policy on reimbursements. It was reported that the District's board members do not receive ethics training as they have never received any compensation or reimbursements. For the same reason, the District has not established a policy on expense reimbursements.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted by contacting the fire chief or the Board of Directors directly. The District's chief is responsible for handling complaints to resolution. The Board of Directors is notified of all of the complaints and their resolution, after which the complaint records are filed. The District reported that there were no complaints in 2012.

MFPD has adopted a set of bylaws that guides and directs the District's governance and administration. The District has not indicated whether the bylaws included policies related to public requests for information, code of ethics or Brown Act, however reported that all operations of the Board are governed by the Brown Act.

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000, et seq.) requires state and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation (California Code of Regulations §18730), which contains the terms of a standard conflict of interest code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's code. The District was unable to provide the conflict of interest code.

Government Code §87203 requires persons who hold office to disclose their investments, interests in real property and incomes by filing appropriate forms with the appropriate filing agency (i.e., the County or the Fair Political Practices Commission) each year. In addition, the conflict of interest code of each district determines who among the officers and directors files the Form 700s with the County's Registrar of Voters. In Solano County select fire protection districts require both the fire chief and Board members to submit copies to the County, and in some cases only the chief files with the County's Registrar of Voters. All MFPD directors filed their Forms 700 for 2013 with the District. The chief filed with the County's Registrar of Voters. All MFPD directors also filed their Form 700s for 2013.

During the course of this MSR process MFPD demonstrated full accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Solano LAFCO. The District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with interview and document requests.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to its governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, maintaining a website, and filing Forms 700 Statement of Economic Interest.

- ❖ The District could improve its accountability and transparency by posting Board meeting agendas and minutes, district policies and procedures, and financial information, such as budgets and financial statements on its website. The District could also make use of advertisements in public newspapers and mail information to residents regarding the Board of Directors and district services.
- ❖ It was reported that the District's board members do not receive ethics training as they have never received any compensation or reimbursements. For the same reason, the District has not established a policy on expense reimbursements.
- ❖ Governance structure options for MFPD include functional or full consolidation with other fire protection agencies in Solano County. Consolidation may include consolidation with other fire districts, union with the City of Rio Vista or countywide consolidation that also includes city fire departments.

## **GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

This section discusses the factors affecting service demand, such as land uses, and historical and anticipated population growth.

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### **Land Use**

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Land uses within the District consist of agriculture, manufacturing-industrial, marsh agriculture, and some residential. The District's bounds encompass approximately 200 square miles.

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### **Population**

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There are about 1,113 residents within the District, based on GIS analysis of 2010 Census population information.<sup>85</sup> The population density within the District is about six people per square mile.

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### **Projected Growth and Development**

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MFPD reported that no growth has occurred within the District in the last five years. Similarly, the District anticipates minimal growth in the next decade. However, no formal population projections have been made by the District. Although no population growth is expected, it was reported that as more windmills are built in the area, MFPD expects a rise in rescue calls and fire responses, since windmills frequently catch fire. Also, additional people coming to the area to work on wind generators are creating additional vehicle flow, which adds demand on the back roads. The District is not aware of any planned or proposed developments within MFPD.

The California Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Solano County will grow by eight percent from 2010 to 2020. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.8 percent. Based on these

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<sup>85</sup> This population figure may be slightly inflated based on comparison of known populations in other areas with those generated through the GIS analysis.

projections, the District's population would increase from 1,113 in 2010 to approximately 1,202 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally, based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

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## Growth Strategies

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The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County. Reportedly, the District oversees all proposed developments in its boundaries and gives input on county general plan updates.

A majority of the lands within the District are designated in the County's General Plan as agricultural and resource conservation overlay. Because the territory within MFPD is mostly farmland and agricultural open space, it is anticipated that there will be minimal development or population growth within the District. A majority of growth in MFPD is commercial, including windmill generators. The County has historically required that development requiring water and sewer service be incorporated within one of the County's cities. Based on this policy, most residential, commercial and industrial development in the County has been in incorporated areas.

Portions of the District's territory to the northeast and southwest are also within the City of Rio Vista SOI, meaning that it is anticipated that the areas will eventually be annexed by the City. Similarly, the very eastern portion of the City of Fairfield's SOI is also located within the District's boundary area in the northwest. A small portion of the Rio Vista SOI lands in the southwest is designated as Municipal Service Area (MSA) by the County General Plan. In the case of Fairfield, its SOI area which is located within MFPD is designated as MSA in its entirety.

Within MSAs, future development of urban land uses is to be facilitated and served through city annexation. Current land uses within MSAs may continue under County jurisdiction until the land is annexed to the city for conversion to urban uses. A change in land use of unincorporated lands within MSAs should be permitted only for agricultural uses, which do not conflict with planned land uses until annexed for urban development. Unincorporated lands within the MSAs that are designated as agriculture will continue as agricultural use until annexed to a city for urban development.

In areas outside MSAs, planned land uses are maintained or developed under County jurisdiction. Services to support current and future development outside MSAs are provided by the County and special districts consistent with General Plan policies.

The City of Fairfield's General Plan land use map designates its MSA lands within the District as Travis reserve.<sup>86</sup>

There is presently no development impact fee specific to fire services for the area within MFPD. In 2013, several fire protection districts (Cordelia, Dixon, Suisun, and

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<sup>86</sup> Land in the Travis Reserve is set aside for future expansion of Travis Air Force Base only. If the status of the base changes, the construction of a non-military airport and support uses may be permitted in the Travis Reserve. No residential uses will be permitted in the Travis Reserve. Until a military or airport use is proposed for land with the Travis Reserve designation, the City supports its continued use for agriculture and grazing.

Vacaville FPDs) in the County hired a consulting firm to conduct a nexus study to assess and make recommendations regarding a uniform development impact fee for each of the Districts. MFPD declined to participate in the study with other districts at this time.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Montezuma Fire Protection District (MFPD) currently has an estimated population of 1,113.
- ❖ MFPD reported that no growth has occurred within the District in the last five years. Similarly, the District anticipates minimal growth in the next decade given the County's policy of minimal development outside of the city boundaries. The District is not aware of any planned or proposed developments within MFPD.
- ❖ Based on the Department of Finance (DOF) population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 1,113 in 2010 to approximately 1,202 in 2020.
- ❖ Because the territory within MFPD is mostly farmland and agricultural open space, it is anticipated that there will be minimal development or population growth within the District. A majority of growth in MFPD is commercial, including windmill generators.

## **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.<sup>87</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.<sup>88</sup> According to DWR, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to MFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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## Determination

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to MFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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<sup>87</sup> Government Code §56033.5.

<sup>88</sup> Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.

## FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by the District and identifies the revenue sources currently available to the District.

The District reported that its financing levels were adequate to deliver services. MFPD suffered no impact from the economic recession as reportedly properties have not changed ownership, thus property tax revenues have not decreased. Although no financing challenges were reported by the District, MFPD implements cost containment strategies nonetheless. The District compares pricing of supplies and equipment from multiple sources and buys equipment out right instead of leasing. At present, MFPD is not considering any new revenue streams.

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### Revenues and Expenses

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The District's revenue in FY 12-13 totaled \$960,978, of which 76 percent was received from property taxes, one percent from interest income and rents, concessions and royalties, one percent from homeowners property tax relief, and 21 percent from a State grant.

MFPD collects charges for some of its services. The District bills through Fire Recovery USA, LLC. for emergency services provided in connection with motor vehicle accidents. The District also charges a fee of \$35 per hour per unit with a minimum of \$100 per unit for use of equipment in response to emergency calls for non-residents of the District, a fee of \$35 per hour per unit with a minimum of \$100 per unit for use of equipment for non-emergency stand-by services for both residents and non-residents of the District, and \$40 for a plan check, site inspection, fire inspection, fire safety inspection and any other inspection requiring a fire officer. In addition, MFPD collects fees of \$15 for any fire, inspection and/or any other type of report generated by the District and the actual cost of disposable or expendable equipment or material used on a call, including but not limited to foam, extinguishing agents and medical supplies. MFPD does not receive any special taxes or benefit assessments.

The District's expenditures amounted to \$880,903 in FY 12-13—27 percent was spent on salaries and wages, 11 percent on employee benefits, 25 percent on services and supplies, 37 percent on fixed assets, and one percent on other expenditures.

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### Capital Improvements

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The District plans its capital improvements through annual budgets and finances them with equipment reserve funds and grant money.

The District spent \$327,306 in FY 12-13 on capital improvements, which included a new type 2 timberwolf structure and of a wildland unit.

In FY 13-14, MFPD plans to spend \$101,491 on buildings and improvements, \$20,000 on vehicles, \$20,000 on equipment, \$2,500 on computer equipment, and \$3,000 on communication equipment.

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## Outstanding Debt

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The District had no long-term debt at the end of FY 12-13.

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## Reserves

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The District has a management practice to keep three financial reserves. At the end of FY 13, there was \$42,500 in the equipment reserve, \$15,065 in general reserve and \$664,000 in the unrestricted fund balance for emergency purposes.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District reported that its financing levels were adequate to deliver services, but not sufficient for capital improvements. MFPD suffered no impact from the economic recession as reportedly properties have not changed ownership, thus property tax revenues have not decreased. MFPD implements cost containment strategies by buying supplies and equipment at best available prices.
- ❖ A majority of the District's revenue comes from property taxes. A fairly significant portion of MFPD's income also comes from grants, although this unpredictable source is not entirely reliable. The District established a service fee schedule; however, the fees constitute only a small percentage of MFPD's income.
- ❖ MFPD does not receive any revenue from special taxes or benefit assessments. The District is also not participating in collaboration with other fire protection districts in the County to develop a development impact fee. A vast majority of the parcels in the District are permanently in agricultural or open space uses, limiting revenue potential from a new special tax. In addition, the District's Board of Directors believes that land owners in the District already pay a sufficient amount through property taxes.
- ❖ The District plans its capital improvements through annual budgets and finances them with equipment reserve funds and grant money.
- ❖ The District has a management practice to keep three financial reserves. At the end of FY 13, there was \$42,500 in the equipment reserve, \$15,065 in general reserve and \$664,000 in the unrestricted fund balance for emergency purposes.



## PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY

The District reported that it presently has sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its existing service area and future growth area. It was also reported that despite current services being adequately provided, MFPD's service delivery could further be improved with additional stations and paid personnel available seven days a week on a 24-hour basis.

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### Existing Demand

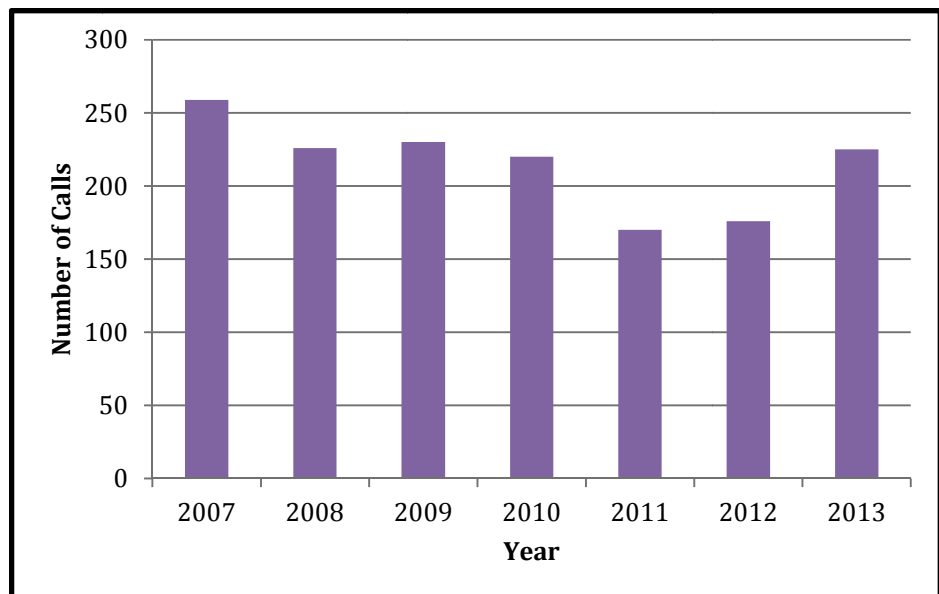
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MFPD reported that its peak demand periods occurred in the afternoons from three to seven. Service calls are higher in volume during the months of July through October.

The District reported that it had observed almost no change in service demand in the last several years. Reportedly, the motor vehicle accident rate dropped slightly, due to repairs performed on the local highway.

Figure 7-5: MFPD Number of Calls by Year, 2007-2013

As shown in Figure 7-5, the number of calls has experienced an overall decrease between 2007 and 2013. The number of calls reached the lowest level in 2011, after which it increased in 2012 and 2013. In 2013, MFPD received a total of 219 calls. The majority of these calls were for fires and



hazardous materials (38.2 percent) and the remainder constituted emergency medical service (33.3 percent), motor vehicle accidents (31.7 percent), miscellaneous non-emergency calls (5.7 percent),<sup>89</sup> and false alarms (6.2 percent). Of the total calls reported, 14 percent were mutual aid calls. The District averaged 197 service calls per 1,000 residents.

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<sup>89</sup> Non-Emergencies calls include emergency standby, public service assist, agency assist.



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## Staffing

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Montezuma FPD is a combination fire district with 32 firefighting staff<sup>90</sup> that includes three full-time personnel, one part-time employee and 28 volunteers. The District has a paid<sup>91</sup> fire chief, one paid assistant chief, one volunteer assistant chief, four volunteer captains, one paid lieutenant, one volunteer lieutenant, one part-time paid engineer, six volunteer engineers, and 16 volunteer firefighters.

Engineers and volunteer firefighters receive a stipend at the end of the year based on points earned from participating in training, emergency responses, and other district activities. MFPD reported that the pay rates for all ranks within the District were about half the pay scale of the city departments in Solano County. Similarly, the retirement benefits of MFPD are not as high as what city firefighters may receive.

The District's staffing levels have been fairly constant over the last three years, ranging from 28 to 32 firefighting staff. MFPD experienced slight turnover in 2013, when two firefighting personnel left, but were replaced by five new staff members. The District's firefighter ages range from 18 to 67. There are four firefighters in their 60s, 11 in their 50s, two in their 40s, in their 30s, eight in their 20s, and five 19-year olds. Median age of MFPD firefighters was not calculated because the District was unable to provide complete information. The District continuously attempts to recruit additional volunteers through word of mouth and advertising on the district website, reporting that it is not easy to find appropriate personnel.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the firefighter to perform essential and advanced fire ground tasks, as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. The level of certification required for each firefighter is determined by the individual fire department. However, according to the California State Fire Marshal, there are plans to phase out the Volunteer Firefighter certification level and the most basic level of certification will eventually be Firefighter I. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fireground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of volunteer or call experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>92</sup> The number of MFPD personnel certified in each category is shown in Figure 7-6. Each firefighter, including volunteers, is able to hold multiple certifications, including strike team certifications.

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<sup>90</sup> Firefighting personnel are personnel that respond to incidents. Administrative personnel is staff that do not respond to service calls, such as administrative assistants, bookkeepers, etc.

<sup>91</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

<sup>92</sup> State Fire Marshal, *Course Information and Required Materials*, 2007, p. 44

**Figure 7-6: MFPD Certified Personnel**

Certification Level	Number of Firefighting Staff	% of Total Firefighting Staff
Volunteer Firefighter	28	88%
Firefighter I	4	13%
Firefighter II	0	0%
First Responder EMS	28	88%
Emergency Medical Technician 1	6	19%
Paramedic	0	0%
Apparatus Engineer	6	19%
Company Officer	7	22%
Chief Officer	3	9%
Haz Mat FRO	3	9%
CICCS FFT 2	0	0%
CICCS FFT 1	0	9%
CICCS Engine Boss	4	13%
CICCS Strike Team Leader	1	3%

MFPD conducts a majority of its training in house. Firefighter applicants are required to pass an agility test and attend an in-house fire academy before they are allowed to respond to emergencies. Firefighters are required to participate in monthly three- or four-hour drills and monthly eight-hour training in the field generally held on Saturday or Sunday. All engineers, captains and drivers are required to attend engineer training twice a month. The MFPD’s four paid personnel are also the training officers of the District and attend formal courses to enhance their ability to supervise, lead and train district volunteers.

The District reported that because of the volunteers’ personal busy schedules it is challenging for them to comply with all the federal, State and local mandated training requirements.

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## Facilities

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MFPD operates four fire stations, two of which are used exclusively for storage. Station 51 is located in the City of Rio Vista and is considered to be in good condition. The station is staffed from 8:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Station 52, which was reported to be in excellent condition, is unstaffed and is located in Birdslanding. Station 53 located in Suisun is considered to be in excellent condition, while Station 64 in Ryer in fair condition. Stations 53 and 64 that are used for storage purposes, are owned by private parties. Each station is described in more detail in Figure 7-7.

**Figure 7-7: Montezuma FPD Fire Stations**

	Station #51	Station #52	Station #53
Property owner	Montezuma FPD	Montezuma FPD	Mark Dana
Address	21 N. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street, Rio Vista CA 94571	2151 Collinsville Rd, Birds Landing CA	3545 Shiloh Rd., Suisun CA
Purpose	Fire Station	Fire Station	Storage
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	One room rented to Medic Ambulance	None	None
Hours station is staffed	8:00a.m.- 5:00p.m. Mon-Fri	N/A	N/A
Date acquired or built	N/P <sup>93</sup>	N/P	N/P
Condition of facility <sup>94</sup>	Good	Excellent	Excellent
Infrastructure Needs	Currently being rebuilt	None	None
Number and type of vehicles at facility	1 - type 1 engine 1 - type 2 engine 2 - type 5 brush unit 1 - type 5 grass unit 1 - type 1 water tender 2 - type 6 command	1- type 5 brush unit 1- type 5 grass unit 1 - type 2 engine 1 - type 1 engine	1 - type 5 brush unit
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	1 - chief 1 - asst chief 1 - lieutenant 1 - p/t engineer	None	None
Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	0	0	0
Number of volunteers staffing facility	Varies up to 21	Varies up to 5	Varies up to 3
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	21	5	3

<sup>93</sup> N/P- Not Provided

<sup>94</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

	Station #63
Property owner	Hamilton/ Hectman
Address	9697 SR 220, Ryer, CA
Purpose	Storage
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	None
Hours station is staffed	N/A
Date acquired or built	2003
Condition of facility <sup>95</sup>	Fair
Infrastructure Needs	None
Number and type of vehicles at facility	1 - type 6 grass unit 1- type 6 command
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	None
Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	None
Number of volunteers staffing facility	1
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	1

For water supply, the District uses storage tanks located throughout the District (4,067,000 gallons), three water well systems, and fire hydrants in the City of Ro Vista. The District reported that the City was discussing the possibility of charging MFPD for the water use for firefighting purposes.

It appears that currently there is a sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of the District's facilities. Although Station 63 was reported to be in fair condition, its use is limited to storage and its condition may not significantly affect capacity. It was not possible to assess the District's facility capacity through its ability to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for

<sup>95</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

response to structural fire calls and the Solano Emergency Medical Service Cooperative standards for response to medical emergencies, as MFPD response time data was not provided.

The District's capacity constraints include limited and unpredictable volunteer availability and the challenge of serving wind generators, as they are difficult to ascent when they catch fire. In addition, wind generators are constructed of extremely flammable materials, on which fire is difficult to extinguish.

### Dispatch and communications

With the exception of East Vallejo FPD all the fire protection districts in Solano County, including MFPD, contract with Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for dispatch services. East Vallejo FPD is dispatched through the City of Vallejo. The cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo each have their own dispatch center.

MFPD entered into a contract with the Sheriff's Department on July 1st, 2014 for a term of three years ending on June 30, 2017. Compensation by the District to the Sheriff is determined by a CAD printout of incidents according to the following formula:

- 1)  $ADC \text{ (Average Daily Calls)}/SADC \text{ (Sheriff's Average Dail Calls)} = \%$
- 2)  $\% \text{ of ADC of Sheriff's Dispatch Budget} * \% \text{ of ADC} = \text{Cost to the District}$

The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center also provides dispatch services to Sheriff's Office, Isleton Police and Fire, Dixon Police and Fire, California Medical Facility, Rio Vista/Delta Fire Districts, and Solano Community College Police on a 24-hour basis. The Sheriff's Dispatch Center also handles coordination of air ambulance for scene calls to all areas of the County (city or county), coordination of all mutual aid for the County, and out of county requests.

The dispatch center operates with at least two people on duty at all times. The center operators answer and transmit on three primary radio channels, seven secondary channels and a number of other law and fire radios for other agencies. The dispatch center also answers 12 business lines, four Nextels, six 911 lines, numerous alarm panels, fax requests, and mobile data computer messages.

Communication equipment is sometimes not compatible making it difficult to communicate when coordinating a mutual aid call. Many of the districts have mutual aid agreements with the cities. Dispatch becomes a challenge if the nearest responder is a city agency or if a city requires assistance from a district. Often times it takes multiple calls to different departments to get assistance sent.

The District's suggestion for dispatch improvement was creation of a central consolidated dispatch center, which would allow for all the fire departments and districts in the County to know which units are in service.

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### Infrastructure Needs

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The District reported that a majority of the stations are in good to excellent condition. Desired improvements at the existing facilities include a larger training center and meeting room, a larger area to store the equipment and supplies, and a hose drying tower. The District is also in the process of expanding its station in Rio Vista, which includes adding

another apparatus by and converting the old apparatus bay into a training and meeting room.

MFPD is not planning for any new or additional facilities due to limited funding. Reportedly, the District receives sufficient funds from property taxes for its regular operations and necessary capital improvements, but not enough for the construction of new facilities.

With regard to vehicles and equipment, the District reported to have an adequate equipment/apparatus replacement schedule to ensure proper operating condition. MFPD's equipment was reported to be in good condition.

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## Challenges

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MFPD identified areas within the District, which are difficult to serve. The District particularly lamented the condition of the highways and county roads, as they are sometimes impassable and slow response times. The additional traffic on these back county roads, created by an influx of people working on wind generators, slows response. In addition, ascending the highly flammable windmills can be challenging.

Following the consolidation of MFPD with Ryer FPD in 2006, the only way to access Ryer Island and provide medical service and fire protection to its 500 residents, is through the Real McCoy Ferry. The District reported that this ferry is often out of service.

Another challenge is the availability of volunteers, which varies significantly depending on the time of the service call. Sometimes volunteer turnout is minimal, while other times all volunteer firefighters may respond to the same call.

## SERVICE ADEQUACY

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. MFPD has an ISO of 8B within five miles of the City of Rio Vista and 9 outside of five miles from the city limits and Ryer Island. The District was last evaluated in 2004.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued response time performance standards depending on the service structure of the agency. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, these standards provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. For agencies with paid staff, NFPA 1710 identifies the response time guideline of six minutes at least 90 percent of the time. For volunteer and combination fire departments, NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14



minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>96</sup> MFPD falls within the definition of a rural demand zone and would therefore be subject to the NFPA 1720 guidelines.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) has designated an exclusive operating area (EOA) in Solano County for EMS and ambulance services provided by Medic Ambulance Services. The EOA includes all territory in Solano County with the exception of the City of Vacaville, Travis Air Force Base, and the territory designated as Zone C.<sup>97</sup> SEMSA has the responsibility for assuring that all the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county have a safe, dependable and responsive pre hospital Emergency Medical Care system. In the EOA, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority calls for all participating member cities. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses. Compliance with these requirements is determined on a monthly basis. If a city providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards, it is fined. The amount payable by Medic to the participating member cities reflects the estimated cost savings to Medic under the SEMSC agreement due to the first response of the participating member cities. Medic on the other hand is required to respond within nine to 12 minutes in areas identified as urban areas, 15 minutes in areas designated as rural and 90 minutes in remote areas. Although these standards are intended for ALS providers, which MFPD is not, the Medic response standard for rural areas indicates what is considered appropriate response times for medical emergencies for the District.

The District's goal is to meet the county response standard of responding within three minutes. MFPD was unable to provide response times for each incident that occurred in 2013 and reported that response times vary because the District covers over 200 square miles with frequent traffic delays.

The service area size for each fire station varies between the fire districts. The median fire station in Solano County serves approximately 39.8 square miles. The Dixon FPD (Dixon FD) station serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area by EVFPD's (Vallejo FD) fire stations is 8.3 square miles. By comparison, each fire station in MFPD serves approximately 100 square miles.<sup>98</sup>

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers that rely on volunteer or call firefighters may have differing staff availability and reliability. An agency with more firefighters could have fewer resources, if availability is limited due to work and personal

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<sup>96</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

<sup>97</sup> Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative Ambulance Service Agreement, April 10, 2010.

<sup>98</sup> Estimate was made based on MFPD's two active fire stations. Two other stations, exclusively used for storage, were omitted from calculations.

obligations. Staffing levels in Solano County vary from 0.68 firefighters per 1,000 residents in EVFPD to 29 in MFPD.

Operating expenditures per capita is often reflective of the level of service offered by a fire provider as determined by financing constraints. In FY 12-13, the least amount of money per capita was spent by Dixon FPD (\$79). During the same fiscal year, Montezuma FPD expended the most per capita (\$499), as it serves a relatively expansive area with very low population density.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Although no population growth is expected, MFPD anticipates growth in service demand due to the presence of highly flammable wind power generators, more of which are being built throughout the District, and additional vehicle flow associated with the wind power generators.
- ❖ The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its existing service area and future growth area; however, service delivery could further be improved with additional stations and paid personnel available seven days a week on a 24-hour basis.
- ❖ Data analysis showed that currently there is sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of the District's facilities. It was not possible to assess the District's facility capacity through its ability to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for response to structural fire calls and the Solano Emergency Medical Service Cooperative standards for response to medical emergencies, as MFPD response time data was not provided.
- ❖ Desired capital improvements at the existing facilities include a larger training center and meeting room, a larger area to store the equipment and supplies, and a hose drying tower. There is currently no funding available for these improvements.
- ❖ The District's capacity constraints include limited and unpredictable volunteer availability and the challenge of serving wind power generators, as they are difficult to ascend and extinguish.
- ❖ MFPD services appear to be adequate. The District has an ISO rating which is comparable to other providers in the County. The District has the largest number of firefighters per 1,000 residents. Each station covers approximately 50 square miles. Adequacy of services could not be assessed through the District's response times because MFPD was not able to provide the data.
- ❖ An area that MFPD could improve upon is tracking its response times for each incident and being able to calculate its median and 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response times to be able to assess its capacity and service adequacy.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts financial audits for each fiscal year, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. MFPD could improve its management practices by

conducting long-term capital and strategic planning, as well as service demand projections.

## **STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES**

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### **Shared Facilities and Regional Cooperation**

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#### *Shared Facilities*

As previously mentioned in the *Type and Extent of Services* section, MFPD shares its facilities by renting a room in its main fire station to Medic Ambulance.

In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the District reported that additional practices be possible when MFPD adds another room at the main station with certain necessary accommodations for other agencies to use.

#### *Collaboration*

As previously mentioned in the *Type and Extent of Services* section, MFPD has automatic aid agreements with Suisun FPD. Additionally, the District is a part of a master mutual aid agreement with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Dixon, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Vallejo, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Vacaville FPD, Suisun FPD, Travis AFB, and Cal Fire.

The District participates in the Fire Agencies Insurances Risk Authority—a joint powers authority (JPA) for liability and property insurance. Additionally, MFPD is a member of the JPA called the Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC), which is comprised of all the cities in Solano County, except for the City of Vacaville, and all the fire districts in the unincorporated areas of the County.<sup>99</sup> Fire districts are represented by one member on the SEMSC seven-member Board of Directors. The SEMSC was designated by the Solano County Board of Supervisors as the Local EMS Agency (LEMSA) for Solano County. The SEMSC has all of the responsibilities and authority vested in a local EMS Agency, including the ability to select, via a competitive process, a provider for emergency ambulance service.

MFPD meets regularly with the City of Rio Vista Fire Department. MFPD does not participate in any regional planning efforts, but is a member of several collaborative organizations, including the County Training Officers Association, the County Fire Chiefs Association, and the County Firemen’s Association.

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<sup>99</sup> Services cover the Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) except 1) the territories of the City of Vacaville and Travis Air Force Base, and the territory of Solano County known as “Zone C”, 2) the territory of Sacramento County that incorporates the territories of the Delta FPD and the City of Isleton, and 3) the territory of Napa County designated as the Gordon Valley.

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## Management Efficiencies

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While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, track employee and agency productivity, periodically review agency performance, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, conduct advanced planning for future service needs, and plan and budget for capital needs.

MFPD employs 32 personnel, all of whom are firefighting staff and includes three full-time personnel, one part-time employee and 28 volunteers, all together constituting 3.6 full time equivalent staff (FTEs). The District has a paid fire chief, one paid assistant chief, one volunteer assistant chief, four volunteer captains, one paid lieutenant, one volunteer lieutenant, one part-time paid engineer, six volunteer engineers, and 16 volunteer firefighters. Engineers and volunteer firefighters receive a stipend at the end of the year.

The District's fire chief is responsible for the day-to-day operations of MFPD. Payroll is outsourced to an independent auditor; Solano County performs the district audits. The chief performs annual evaluations of both, paid personnel and volunteers. The chief is evaluated by the Board of Directors, also on an annual basis.

Overall agency performance evaluations are performed during the chief's monthly reports to the Board. No other evaluations are conducted specific to the operations and services provided by MFPD. The District reported that the measure it used to determine its service adequacy was the number and the type of complaints from its constituents.

MFPD tracks the workload of paid staff through timesheets. The District also keeps log and run sheets on responses and maintenance logs. The District reported that to improve its operational efficiency it tries to keep its affairs organized, updates its training routine and regularly upgrades its equipment.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget and audited financial statements, which are audited by Solano County every two years for every fiscal year. MFPD does not presently have any other planning documents. Short-term goals are established in the budgets, while establishment of long-term objectives is not one of the District's management practices. Capital improvements are planned for in annual budgets.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District shares its facilities by renting a single room of the main fire station (Station 51) to Medic Ambulance Inc. The ambulance company's employees use the room to stand by and sleep between calls for service.
- ❖ Additional opportunities for facilities may be possible when MFPD adds another room at the main station with certain necessary accommodations for other agencies to use.

## **LAFCO POLICIES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY**

Solano LAFCO has adopted a policy that directly affects service delivery by fire protection districts in the County. Standard 11 in the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires that a city applying to LAFCO for annexation of a specific territory that belongs in this case to a fire protection district must offset the negative consequences of that annexation, which may include negative effects on the district's budget or service provision. The annexing city is required to work with the affected district to identify and mitigate the impacts. Adequate mitigation to adverse fiscal impact normally includes a funding source for lost revenues or increased costs to the affected special district. A common practice in Solano County is to negotiate a property tax neutrality agreement for a specific period of time between the annexing city and the negatively affected special district.

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### **Determinations**

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## MONTEZUMA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT DETERMINATIONS

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### Growth and Population Projections

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- ❖ Montezuma Fire Protection District (MFPD) currently has an estimated population of 1,113.
- ❖ MFPD reported that no growth has occurred within the District in the last five years. Similarly, the District anticipates minimal growth in the next decade given the County's policy of minimal development outside of the city boundaries. The District is not aware of any planned or proposed developments within MFPD.
- ❖ Based on the Department of Finance (DOF) population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 1,113 in 2010 to approximately 1,202 in 2020.
- ❖ Because the territory within MFPD is mostly farmland and agricultural open space, it is anticipated that there will be minimal development or population growth within the District. A majority of growth in MFPD is commercial, including windmill generators.

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### The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to MFPD's bounds and sphere of influence. However, data limitations preclude the ability to identify smaller disadvantaged communities, which will need to be surveyed and identified on a case-by-case basis.

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### Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

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- ❖ Although no population growth is expected, MFPD anticipates growth in service demand due to the presence of highly flammable wind power generators, more of which are being built throughout the District, and additional vehicle flow associated with the wind power generators.
- ❖ The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its existing service area and future growth area; however, service delivery could further be improved with additional stations and paid personnel available seven days a week on a 24-hour basis.
- ❖ Data analysis showed that currently there is sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of the District's facilities.



It was not possible to assess the District's facility capacity through its ability to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for response to structural fire calls and the Solano Emergency Medical Service Cooperative standards for response to medical emergencies, as MFPD response time data was not provided.

- ❖ Desired capital improvements at the existing facilities include a larger training center and meeting room, a larger area to store the equipment and supplies, and a hose drying tower. There is currently no funding available for these improvements.
- ❖ The District's capacity constraints include limited and unpredictable volunteer availability and the challenge of serving wind power generators, as they are difficult to ascend and extinguish.
- ❖ MFPD services appear to be adequate. The District has an ISO rating of 8B/9, which is comparable to other providers in the County. The District has the largest number of firefighters per 1,000 residents. Each station covers approximately 50 square miles. Adequacy of services could not be assessed through the District's response times because MFPD was not able to provide the data.
- ❖ An area that MFPD could improve upon is tracking its response times for each incident and being able to calculate its median and 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response times to be able to assess its capacity and service adequacy.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts financial audits for each fiscal year, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. MFPD could improve its management practices by conducting long-term capital and strategic planning, as well as service demand projections.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The District reported that its financing levels were adequate to deliver services, but not sufficient for capital improvements. MFPD suffered no impact from the economic recession as reportedly properties have not changed ownership, thus property tax revenues have not decreased. MFPD implements cost containment strategies by buying supplies and equipment at best available prices.
- ❖ A majority of the District's revenue comes from property taxes. A fairly significant portion of MFPD's income also comes from grants, although this unpredictable source is not entirely reliable. The District established a service fee schedule; however, the fees constitute only a small percentage of MFPD's income.
- ❖ MFPD does not receive any revenue from special taxes or benefit assessments. The District is also not participating in collaboration with other fire protection districts in the County to develop a development impact fee. A vast majority of the parcels in the District are permanently in agricultural or open space uses, limiting revenue potential from a new special tax. In addition, the District's Board of Directors

believes that land owners in the District already pay a sufficient amount through property taxes.

- ❖ The District plans its capital improvements through annual budgets and finances them with equipment reserve funds and grant money.
- ❖ The District has a management practice to keep three financial reserves. At the end of FY 13, there was \$42,500 in the equipment reserve, \$15,065 in general reserve and \$664,000 in the unrestricted fund balance for emergency purposes.

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### Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ The District shares its facilities by renting a single room of the main fire station (Station 51) to Medic Ambulance Inc. The ambulance company's employees use the room to stand by and sleep between calls for service.
- ❖ Additional opportunities for facilities may be possible when MFPD adds another room at the main station with certain necessary accommodations for other agencies to use.

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### Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to its governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, maintaining a website, and filing Forms 700 Statement of Economic Interest.
- ❖ The District could improve its accountability and transparency by posting Board meeting agendas and minutes, district policies and procedures, and financial information, such as budgets and financial statements on its website. The District could also make use of advertisements in public newspapers and mail information to residents regarding the Board of Directors and district services.
- ❖ It was reported that the District's board members do not receive ethics training as they have never received any compensation or reimbursements. For the same reason, the District has not established a policy on expense reimbursements.
- ❖ Governance structure options for MFPD include functional or full consolidation with other fire protection agencies in Solano County. Consolidation may include merger with other fire districts, union with the City of Rio Vista or countywide consolidation that also includes city fire departments.

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### LAFCO Policies Affecting Service Delivery

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## **8. SUISUN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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Suisun Fire Protection District (SFPD) provides structural, wildland and vehicle fire suppression, some fire prevention services, hazardous materials awareness and operations, public service assistance, and emergency medical services in the form of basic life support. In addition, the District provides specialized rescue programs, such as water and boating accident rescue, and low angle rope rescue services.

### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

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#### **Background**

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SFPD was formed in 1935 as an independent special district for the purpose of providing fire protection to the unincorporated areas of Solano County located outside the city limits of Fairfield and Suisun City.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>100</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>101</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.<sup>102</sup>

SFPD is located in the southwestern portion of Solano County and surrounds the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City almost in their entirety, as shown in Figure 8-2. The District borders Cordelia FPD in the west, Montezuma FPD in the east, and Travis Airforce Base (AFB), Vacaville FPD and the City of Vacaville in the northeast. Suisun FPD abuts Napa County in the northwest and Contra Costa County across the San Francisco Bay to the south.

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#### **Boundaries**

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SFPD is entirely within Solano County. The present bounds encompass approximately 140 square miles. Since its formation, the District has undertaken 18 boundary changes, including one reorganization, one annexation, and 16 detachments. The District's boundary changes are shown in Figure 8-1.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

<sup>101</sup> Health and Safety Code §13862.

<sup>102</sup> Government Code §56824.10.

<sup>103</sup> The list of reorganizations in Figure 8-1 is derived from available LAFCO records and may not be complete excluding records that were not found or readily available.

**Figure 8-1: SFPD List of LAFCO Approved Border Changes**

Project Name	Type of Action	Year	Recording Agency
Suisun Fire Protection District	Formation	1935	County
SFPD	Reorganization	1975	LAFCO
Moore and Strahan properties	Detachment	1976	LAFCO
Pentecostal Church	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Fairfield USD	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Klein and Mahoney properties	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Dover Valley	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Bezzerrides	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Lotz property	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Gordon Wagner property	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Ledgewood Investors	Detachment	1978	LAFCO
Johnson and Bottoms	Detachment	1978	LAFCO
Underground Construction	Detachment	1978	LAFCO
Bren	Detachment	1979	LAFCO
Lawler Ranch (Richardson property)	Detachment	1980	LAFCO
Suisun Marsh	Annexation	1982	LAFCO
Peterson Property	Detachment	1986	LAFCO
Pierce Ranch	Detachment	Unknown	SFPD
Paradise Valley	Detachment	Unknown	SFPD

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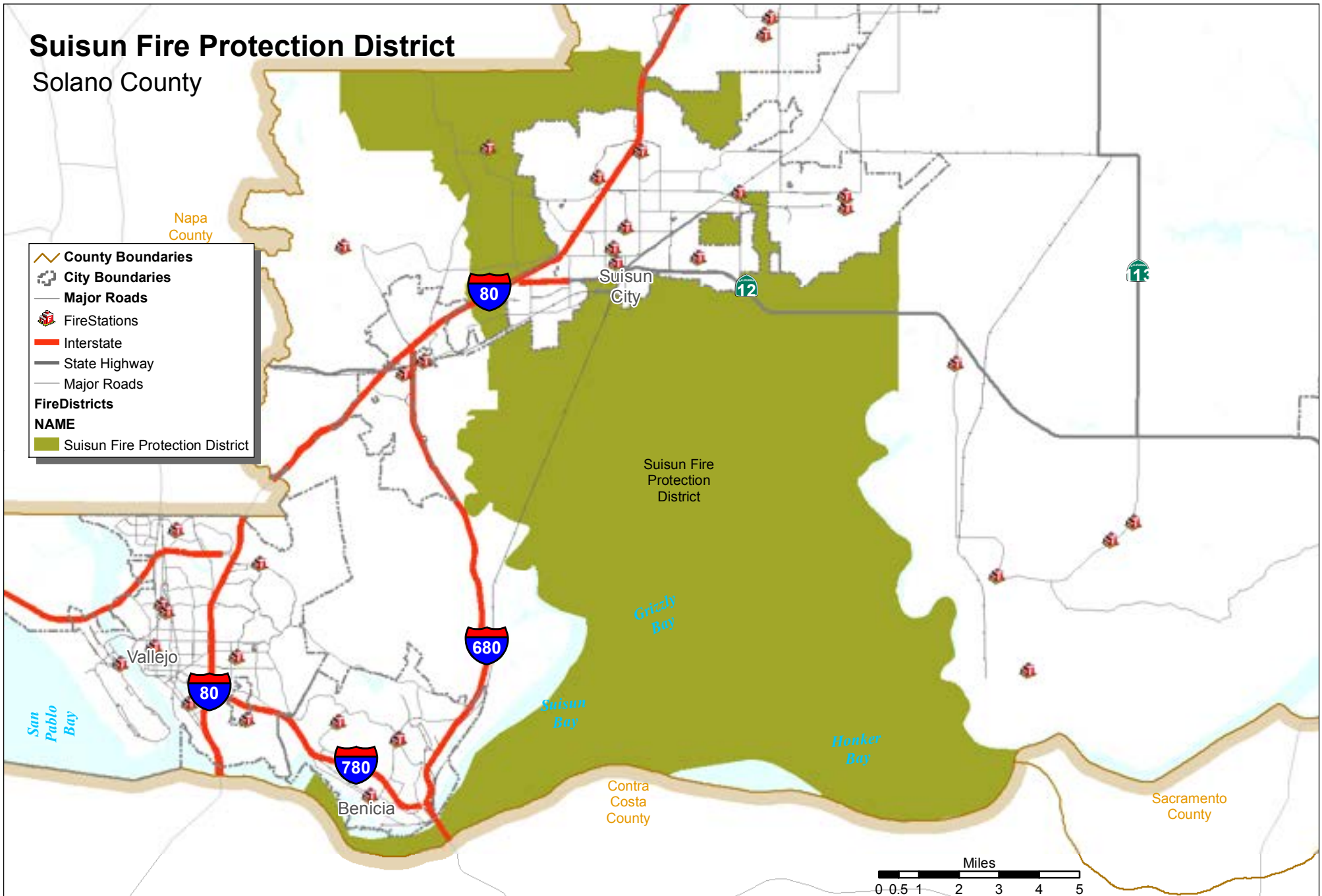
## Sphere of Influence

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The sphere of influence (SOI) for the District was originally adopted in 1983 as coterminous with its boundaries as they existed at that time. Since then, the District conducted one annexation in 1986. The SOI was not subsequently amended to include the annexed land of the Peterson property. It is also unknown if the District's SOI was updated after the detachments of Pierce Ranch and Paradise Valley. The District's SOI should be updated to reflect these boundary changes. SFPD's current boundaries and SOI are shown in Figure 8-2.

# Suisun Fire Protection District

## Solano County



Solano Local Agency  
Formation Commission

744 Empire St., Suite 216  
Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 439-3897  
[www.solanolafo.com](http://www.solanolafo.com)

This map is to be used for general information purposes only. Where precise accuracy is required reference should be made to certified maps, surveys, documents and/or by other official means.

### Solano County GIS Services

Department of Information Technology  
675 Texas Street, Suite 3700  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707-784-6340  
Email: [GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com)  
PRJ\_1093, 08/01/2014

#### Disclaimer:

This map was made using Solano County GIS files with varying degrees of scale, accuracy, precision, currentness, and alignment and therefore cannot be used for situations requiring survey grade measurement or legal boundary determination. Solano County disclaims liability for any loss that may result from the use of this map. User acknowledges data limitations and accepts responsibility for map based judgments.





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## Type and Extent of Services

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### Services Provided

Figure 8-3 details the services provided by SFPD. If a service is not provided by SFPD, but is offered by another agency, it is indicated in the figure. Resources from Cal Fire provided outside the SRA are provided on a mutual aid basis. Availability is dependent upon fire activity, time of year, and other factors.

**Figure 8-3: SFPD Services**

Service	Agency
<b>Fire Suppression Services</b>	
Structural Fire Protection	Yes
Wildland Fire Protection	Yes
Vehicle Fire Protection	Yes
Ladder Truck Capabilities	No
Fire Suppression Handcrew	Yes
Fire Suppression Dozer	Cal Fire
Helicopter Services – Fire Suppression	Cal Fire
Boat With Fire Suppression Capabilities	Yes
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>	
Basic Life Support Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support - Non Transport Provider	Medic Ambulance
Advanced Life Support Transport Provider	Medic Ambulance
Continuing Education Provider - Medical	Yes
Air Ambulance Transport Helicopter Services	Cal Star
Helicopter Landing Facilities On Site	Yes
Vehicle Extrication Tools/Equipment	Yes
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	
Fire Safety Education – Children	Yes
Fire Safety Education – Adults/Seniors	On request
Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program	Yes
Fire and Life Safety Business Inspection Program	Yes
Fire Protection Planning	Yes- joint with county builder
New Commercial Construction Plan Reviews	Yes, if available- mostly for agricultural buildings
Public Education Provider (CPR, First Aid, etc.)	On request
Home Fire/Safety Inspections	On request
Fire Origin and Cause Investigations	Yes
Fuel Reduction/Weed Abatement Program	Cal Fire handles it in SRA
Smoke Detector Giveaway/Installation Program	No
Address Sign Installation Program	No
<b>Rescue Services</b>	
First Responder Swift Water Rescue Program	No
Water Rescue Program	Yes
Ice Rescue Program	No
Dive Rescue Program	County Sheriff
Low angle Rope Rescue Program	Yes
Helicopter Short/Long Haul Rescue Capabilities	CHP



Response To Boating Accidents	Yes
Rescue Dog Services	No
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Basic	Awareness and operations
Hazardous Materials Response Team	Solano County Hazmat Team
<b>Support Services</b>	
Firefighter Incident Support Unit	Yes
Mobile Incident Command/Communications Unit	Solano County
Fill Station for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	Yes
Mobile Breathing Support Unit	Yes
Community Emergency Response Team	No
Chaplain Services	No
Training Academy	Yes
Emergency Operations Center Capabilities	No
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Public Service Assists	Yes
Motor Vehicle Accident Response	Yes
Welfare Checks	Yes
Public Safety Answering Point	County Sheriff
Fire/EMS Dispatch	County Sheriff
Fundraising Activities	Minimal
Firefighters Association - Non Profit	Yes
Auxiliary Association	Yes

Service Area

SFPD provides services outside of its boundary area through automatic aid agreements with Fairfield FD and Montezuma FPD. Fairfield FD and Suisun FPD respond to westbound I-80 from West Texas Street to the Green Valley Road overcrossing, eastbound and westbound SR 12 from Suisun city limits to I-80, Pennsylvania Avenue from SR 12 to Cordelia Road, and Cordelia Road from Pennsylvania Avenue to Suisun Creek. Fairfield FD also responds to eastbound I-80 from North Texas Street to Lagoon Valley Road.

According to the agreement with Montezuma FPD, both districts respond to eastbound SR 12 from Lawler Ranch Road to Shiloh Road and westbound SR 12 from Lambie Road to Walters Road. For both structure and vegetation fires, SFPD responds to the territory west of the area bounded by Creed Road to the intersection of SR 12, following SR 12 to the intersection of Birdslanding Road, and following Birdslanding Road to the point that it intersects with Montezuma slough. MFPD responds to SFPD zones one, two and six.

Additionally, the District has an agreement with Napa County Fire and Cal Fire (Gordon Valley Stations), according to which SFPD responds north on Wooden Valley Road to the area of Wooden Valley Creek and the address of 1705 Wooden Valley Road, all the roads included in that area, and any area of Napa County accessed off Twin Sisters Road. Gordon Valley stations would in turn respond to the area that includes Gordon Valley Road, Clayton Road, Mankas Corner Road, Twin Sisters Road, Sleepy Hollow Lane, Twin Sisters Court, Joyce Lane, Julian Lane, Williams Road, Lambert Road, Suisun Valley Road, and Sales Lane.

SFPD is a party to the countywide mutual aid agreement that includes multiple local agencies of Solano County, as well as agencies outside the County.<sup>104</sup> The District is a participant in the State of California's Master Mutual Aid Plan. SFPD occasionally responds to emergencies all over the State and gets reimbursed by the State or federal government.

The District reported that there were no areas within its boundaries where services were not provided by SFPD.

### Services to Other Agencies

The District does not provide contractual services to other agencies. However, district firefighters will likely arrive on-scene for an off-base aircraft-down incident before the Travis AFB emergency resources would reach the scene.

### Contracts for Services

Similar to all other fire protection districts in the County (with the exception of East Vallejo FPD), SFPD contracts with the County Sheriff's Office for dispatch services. The structure of these services is discussed in more detail in the *Facilities* section of this chapter.

### Overlapping Service Providers

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) provides services throughout the State. Generally, Cal Fire services are focused in wildland areas defined as State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Similarly, the United States Forest Service (USFS) also provides services in California, primarily within forests and grasslands. Areas where USFS services are provided are defined as Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA). SFPD's territory consists of land that is considered moderate to unzoned fire hazard and is designated almost entirely as Local Responsibility Area (LRA), with the exception of land bordering Napa County, which is considered SRA territory where Cal Fire would have responsibility for wildland fires. Cal Fire also provides technical support throughout the County in the form of specialized services such as fire suppression handcrews, dozers, and helicopter services when necessary.

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<sup>104</sup> Suisun FPD is part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Dixon, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Vallejo, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Montezuma FPD, Vacaville FPD, Cal Fire, and Travis Air Force Base.

## GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to 1) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 2) a defined complaint process designed to handle all issues to resolution, and 3) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

The principal act requires that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>105</sup> SFPD is governed by a five-member board of directors appointed by the Solano County Board of Supervisors (Supervisory Districts 2 and 3) to four-year terms. Due to concerns that the current board members' terms had expired several years ago and the Directors had not been officially reappointed to their positions by the Board of Supervisors,<sup>106</sup> the Supervisors appointed a new director on February 15, 2014 and renewed the terms of each director on March 11, 2014 by formal action. There continues to be one vacant position.

**Figure 8-4: Suisun Fire Protection District Governing Body**

<b>Suisun Fire Protection District</b>	
<b>Governing Body and Board Meetings</b>	
<i>Manner of Selection</i>	Appointment by Supervisorial Districts 2 and 3.
<i>Length of Term</i>	4 years
<i>Meetings</i>	Every second Wednesday of the month at 9:00 a.m. at SFPD fire station located at 445 Jackson Street, Fairfield CA 94533
<i>Agenda Distribution</i>	Posted at the front of the fire station
<i>Minutes Distribution</i>	Available upon request
<b>Contact</b>	
<i>Contact</i>	Ronald Glantz, Fire Chief
<i>Mailing Address</i>	445 Jackson Street, Fairfield CA 94533
<i>Phone</i>	707.425.3605
<i>Fax</i>	707.425.3615
<i>Email/Website</i>	<a href="http://www.suisunfiredistrict.org">http://www.suisunfiredistrict.org</a>

The Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the SFPD fire station in Fairfield. Agendas are posted at the fire station, and minutes are available upon request. In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District attempts to reach its constituents through participating in community events such as the Fourth of July parade and townhall meetings, held by SFPD, where it distributes informational brochures. In addition, the District has a website, where it makes available information regarding its services, training, fire prevention, and firefighters association; however, most of the pages

<sup>105</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.

<sup>106</sup> Solano County Grand Jury, 2012-2013 Grand Jury Report.

are currently under construction. SFPD also provides its contact information on the website, but the email address provided was discovered to be invalid. Information about Board meetings is shown in Figure 8-4.

SFPD board members receive no compensation. Government Code §53235 requires that if a district provides compensation or reimbursement of expenses to its board members, the board members must receive two hours of training in ethics at least once every two years and the district must establish a written policy on reimbursements. It was reported that the District's board members last received ethics training in 2012. The District reported that it did not have an established policy on expense reimbursements because SFPD Board members did not get reimbursed.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted by contacting the fire chief. If the chief, who is responsible for handling the complaints for the District, is unable to resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Directors or the County Board of Supervisors. The District reported that it received no complaints in 2012. In fact, there has been only one complaint in the last eight years.

SFPD has adopted District Policy Manual that provides a framework and direction for district governance and administration. Included in the Manual are policies on code of ethics and conduct and Brown Act requirements as related to board members being familiar with laws governing open meetings. The Policy Manual does not include a policy related to public requests for information.

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000, et seq.) requires state and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation (California Code of Regulations §18730), which contains the terms of a standard conflict of interest code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's code. The District has adopted a conflict of interest code.

Government Code §87203 requires persons who hold office to disclose their investments, interests in real property and incomes by filing appropriate forms with the appropriate filing agency (i.e., the County or the Fair Political Practices Commission) each year. In addition, the conflict of interest code of each district determines who among the officers and directors files the Form 700s with the County's Registrar of Voters. In Solano County select fire protection districts require both the fire chief and Board members to submit copies to the County, and in some cases only the chief files with the County's Registrar of Voters. Both, SFPD directors and the chief, filed their Form 700s for 2013 with the County's Registrar of voters. All SFPD directors also reportedly filed their Form 700s for 2013.

During the course of this MSR process SFPD demonstrated full accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Solano LAFCO. The District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with interview and document requests.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally

required, maintaining a website (however, most pages are currently under construction), and filing of Forms 700 Statement of Economic Interest.

- ❖ SFPD could make some improvements to its accountability and transparency, including posting up-to-date contact information, district and Board policies and procedures, as well as financial information on its website. The District could also increase public interest in SFPD's affairs by implementing additional outreach measures, such as newspaper advertisements and news releases and sending information about Board meetings and district services to SFPD residents.
- ❖ The District needs to continue its practice of ensuring and documenting that all board members have completed ethics training if the District's board members receive compensation or expense reimbursements. It was reported that the District's board members last received ethics training in 2012.
- ❖ Due to concerns that the current board members' terms had expired several years ago and the Directors had not been officially reappointed to their positions by the Board of Supervisors, the Supervisors filled a vacancy with a new director in February 2014 and renewed the terms of each director in March 2014 by formal action.

## **GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

This section discusses the factors affecting service demand, such as land uses, and historical and anticipated population growth.

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### **Land Use**

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Land uses within the District consist of agricultural, marsh resource conservation, industrial, rural residential, and some residential land uses. The District's bounds encompass approximately 140 square miles.

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### **Population**

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There are about 2,671 residents within the District, based on GIS analysis of 2010 Census population information.<sup>107</sup> The population density within the District is about 19 people per square mile.

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### **Projected Growth and Development**

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SFPD reported that no growth had occurred within the District in the last five years. Similarly, the District anticipates minimal growth in the next decade. However, no formal population projections have been made by the District. Although no population growth is expected, it was reported that growth of the wine industry in the County is attracting more tourism and therefor increasing demand for services. The District reported that there were no planned or proposed developments within SFPD.

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<sup>107</sup> This population figure may be slightly inflated based on comparison of known populations in other areas with those generated through the GIS analysis.

The California Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Solano County will grow by eight percent from 2010 to 2020. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.8 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from 2,671 in 2010 to approximately 2,885 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally, based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

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## Growth Strategies

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The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County.

The District reported that it occasionally (whenever available) conducts new commercial construction plan reviews, primarily for agricultural-purpose buildings.

The lands within the District are designated in the County's General Plan as agricultural, industrial, watershed, marsh, resource conservation, and some residential and rural residential. Because a majority of the land in SFPD is designated as marsh resource preservation, it is anticipated that there will be minimal residential development or population growth within the District. SFPD, however, expects agriculture-related construction, due to growth in the wine industry. The County has historically required that development requiring water and sewer service be incorporated within one of the County's cities. Based on this policy, most residential, commercial and industrial development in the County has been in incorporated areas.

Limited territory within SFPD to the south of the City of Fairfield is also within that City's SOI, meaning that it is anticipated that the areas will eventually be annexed by the City. Similarly, some lands to the east and west of the City of Suisun City are also located within the City's SOI and are anticipated to be annexed by Suisun City. Additionally, the territories located outside of the cities' boundaries but inside Suisun City's western SOI, part of its eastern SOI, and Fairfield's eastern SOI, are designated as Municipal Service Areas (MSAs) by the County General Plan. Within MSAs, future development of urban land uses is to be facilitated and served through city annexation. Current land uses within MSAs may continue under County jurisdiction until the land is annexed to the city for conversion to urban uses. A change in land use of unincorporated lands within MSAs should be permitted only for agricultural uses, which do not conflict with planned land uses until annexed for urban development. Unincorporated lands within the MSAs that are designated agriculture will continue in agricultural use until annexed to a city for urban development. In areas outside MSAs, planned land uses are maintained or developed under County jurisdiction. Services to support current and future development outside MSAs are provided by the County and special districts consistent with General Plan policies.



The City of Fairfield's General Plan land use map designates its MSA lands within the District as Travis Reserve.<sup>108</sup> The City of Suisun City's General Plan land use map designates the city MSA lands within the District as rural residential, agricultural, general commercial, business park, and marsh protection.

SFPD presently has a development impact fee (DIF) specific to fire services for the area within the District, which was last updated in 2008. The fee was established under the principle that new development in the District would increase the demand for fire protection services, and the DIF would fund fire facilities, apparatus and equipment necessary to accommodate residential and non-residential development in the District. The District's DIF is \$3,057 for a single family dwelling, \$2,209 for a multi-family dwelling, \$1.62 per square foot of commercial building, \$1.40 per square foot of an office building and \$0.84 per square foot of industrial building. The District is participating in a study with other fire protection districts to establish a development impact fee throughout the unincorporated territories of the County. In 2013, SFPD along with several other fire protection districts in Solano County, including Cordelia FPD, Dixon FPD and Suisun FPD, hired a consulting firm to conduct a nexus study to assess and make recommendations regarding a uniform development impact fee for each of the Districts.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Suisun Fire Protection District (SFPD) currently has an estimated population of 2,671.
- ❖ SFPD reported that no growth had occurred within the District in the last five years. Similarly, the District anticipates minimal growth in the next decade given the County's policy of minimal development outside of city boundaries. The District was not aware of any planned or proposed developments within SFPD.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 2,671 in 2010 to approximately 2,885 in 2020.
- ❖ Because a majority of the land in SFPD is designated as marsh resource preservation, it is anticipated that there will be minimal residential development or population growth within the District. SFPD, however, expects agriculture-related construction, due to growth in the wine industry.

## **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more

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<sup>108</sup> Land in the Travis Reserve is set aside for future expansion of Travis Air Force Base only. If the status of the base changes, the construction of a non-military airport and support uses may be permitted in the Travis Reserve. No residential uses will be permitted in the Travis Reserve. Until a military or airport use is proposed for land with the Travis Reserve designation, the City supports its continued use for agriculture and grazing.

registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.<sup>109</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.<sup>110</sup> According to DWR, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to SFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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## Determination

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to SFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

## FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by the District and identifies the revenue sources currently available to the District.

The District reported that its financing levels were adequate to deliver services. SFPD has not experienced any negative effects of the recent economic recession and reportedly did not have a need to implement any cost containment strategies; however, frugality is a part of the District's normal operations. For SFPD, the primary financing constraint identified is the loss of property tax revenue when lands are detached from the District and annexed into the neighboring cities. To enhance its level of financing, the District applies for grants and is currently implementing a development impact fee update.

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## Revenues and Expenses

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The District's revenue in FY 12-13 totaled \$396,542, a majority of which was received from property taxes (59 percent) and charges for services (37 percent). The remainder of the revenue came from licenses, permit and franchise fees, use of money, intergovernmental revenue, and miscellaneous revenue.

The District collects annual permit fees from businesses with hazardous operations. In addition, SFPD conducts special inspections and consultations and charges \$35 per hour with a one-hour minimum. The District also collects fees for automatic fire sprinkler systems plan reviews, inspection of community care facilities, code violations, salvage and overhaul, and special responses. The fee schedule includes personnel costs and vehicle fees. As was previously mentioned in the *Growth and Population Projections* section of this

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<sup>109</sup> Government Code §56033.5.

<sup>110</sup> Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.

report, SFPD also charges development impact fees. SFPD does not receive any revenues from special taxes or benefit assessments.

The District's expenditures amounted to \$329,409 in FY 12-13—47 percent was spent on salaries and employment benefits, 28 percent on services and supplies, one percent on other charges, and 24 percent on fixed assets.

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## Capital Improvements

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The District plans its capital improvements through the annual budgets and finances improvements with development impact fees and grant money. It was reported that the District was in the process of developing a capital improvement plan (CIP), which would be used to identify SFPD infrastructure needs, financing sources for improvements, and construction timeline. Two other fire protection districts in the County, including Cordelia and Vacaville, are in the middle of the same process of CIP development, all three using the same consultant.

The District spent \$77,965 in FY 12-13 on capital improvements, including \$60,000 on type 3 engine and the rest on fire station improvements.

In FY 13-14, SFPD plans to spend \$12,290 on buildings and improvements, \$40,000 on vehicles, \$5,000 on equipment, and \$2,200 on computer equipment.

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## Outstanding Debt

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The District had no long-term debt at the end of FY 12-13.

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## Reserves

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The District has a management practice to keep two financial reserves—an equipment reserve, which had a balance of \$60,000 at the end of FY 13, and an operating reserve also with a balance of \$60,000.

Additionally, SFPD has a DIF reserve, which had a negative balance of -\$7,368.65 at the end of FY 13.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District reported that its financing levels were adequate to deliver services. SFPD has not experienced any negative effects of the recent economic recession and reportedly did not have a need to implement any cost containment strategies; however, frugality is a part of the District's normal operations.
- ❖ For SFPD, the primary financing constraint identified is the loss of property tax revenue when lands are detached from the District and annexed into the neighboring cities. To enhance its level of financing, the District applies for grants and is currently implementing a development impact fee update.
- ❖ A majority of the District's revenues are received from property taxes and charges for services, including development impact fees. SFPD does not receive any revenues from special taxes or benefit assessments.

- ❖ The District finances its capital improvements with development impact fees and grant money.
- ❖ The District has a management practice to keep two financial reserves—an equipment reserve, which had a balance of \$60,000 at the end of FY 13, and an operating reserve also with a balance of \$60,000. Additionally, SFPD has a development impact fee reserve, which had a negative balance of -\$7,368.65 at the end of FY 13.

## PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY

The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its existing service area. As SFPD experiences mainly commercial growth within its boundaries and every commercial building must be equipped with sprinklers, the District would supposedly have sufficient capacity even if the number of calls doubled. The District, however, also reported that it planned to expand its station in the Valley to better accommodate wine industry-related tourism growth.

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### Existing Demand

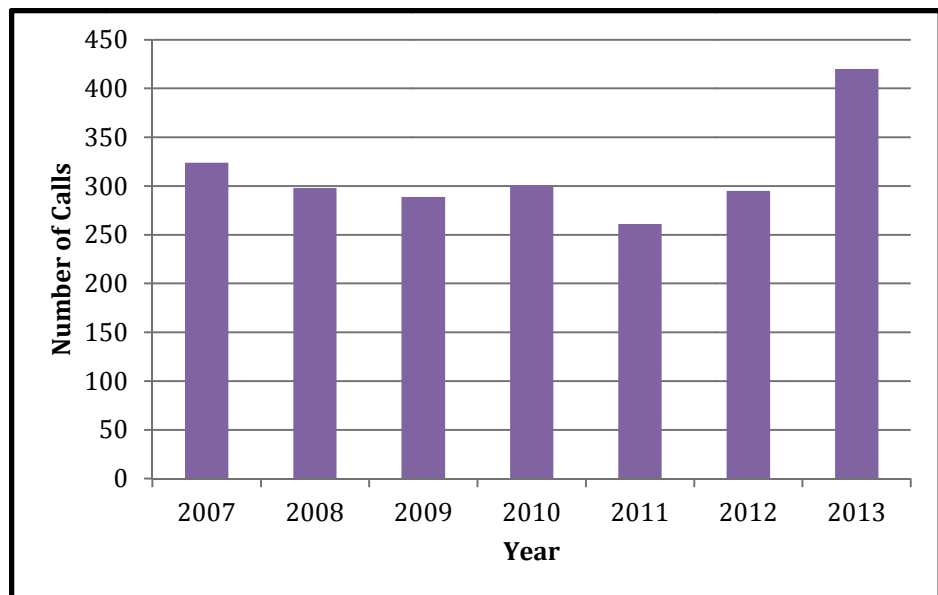
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SFPD reported that its peak demand periods occurred daily around five in the afternoon. The number of calls does not greatly depend on the day of the week. Fire service calls, especially those caused by vegetation fires, are higher in volume during the months of July through September.

The District reported that it had observed almost no change in service demand in the last several years. However, as shown in Figure 8-5, the number of calls dramatically increased in 2013, after being fairly stable for six years. The increase is attributed not to the actual increase in service demand, but to the District's improved tracking system. In 2013 the District started a program to assure that every response, regardless of the nature, is tracked and a National Fire Incident Reporting System (NIFRS) report generated.

**Figure 8-5: SFPD Number of Calls by Year, 2007-2013**

In 2013, SFPD received a total of 420 calls, which included emergency medical calls (36 percent), fires and hazardous materials calls (33 percent), motor vehicle accidents (11 percent), false alarms (11 percent), miscellaneous emergencies (six percent), and miscellaneous non-



emergency calls (three percent)<sup>111</sup>. Of the total calls reported, 11 percent were mutual aid calls. The Department averaged 157 service calls per 1,000 residents.

<sup>111</sup> Non-Emergencies calls include emergency standby, public service assist, agency assist.

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## Staffing

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The District has 39 firefighting personnel—one fire chief, one fire marshal, a training chief, two battalion chiefs, six captains, and 28 firefighters. With the exception of the training chief, all of the District’s firefighting personnel are volunteers. The training chief is a full-time paid employee and is required to train and instruct volunteer firefighters. In addition, this individual attends formal courses that enhance his/her ability to lead, supervise, and command others. Volunteers do not get compensated; however, in order to assure an immediate response during the wildland fire season, the District hires one firefighter per day for extra help on a part-time basis for \$12.00 per hour. The District also compensates volunteers who choose to respond as part of a mutual aid request to an incident that is a part of the California Fire Assistance Agreement. Any compensation received is dependent upon their rank and time spent on the incident.

The District reported that its employee and volunteer pay was comparable to other fire protection districts in the County. Reportedly, only one district in Solano County provides year-end compensation for a volunteer’s response during that year. The remainder of the districts, similar to Suisun FPD, do not offer any compensation to volunteer personnel. Two of the volunteer fire protection agencies surrounding Suisun FPD do provide reimbursement for expenses, which is not considered compensation.

The District’s staffing level has slightly increased in the last three years. SFPD experienced some turnover, however. The District lost a couple of volunteers in 2011 and 2013, but gained more firefighters in each of the last three years. The median age of the District’s firefighters is 29.5, with a range from 19 to 66.

Each year during the months of November, December and the first half of January, the District recruits new volunteer firefighters. Advertising is done locally through news media, and through a California State Firefighter’s Association grant that provides a website ([volunteerfirefighter.org](http://volunteerfirefighter.org)) referring applicants to the district website. That grant also provides local advertising in the form of banners and signs that can be displayed locally. The District is also a participant in a regional grant that will provide a monetary incentive for becoming and remaining an active volunteer firefighter. This grant has been submitted, but there had been no outcome on the application as of the drafting of this report.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the firefighter to perform essential and advanced fire ground tasks, as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. The level of certification required for each firefighter is determined by the individual fire department. However, according to the California State Fire Marshal, there are plans to phase out the Volunteer Firefighter certification level and the most basic level of certification will eventually be Firefighter I. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fireground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of volunteer or call experience in a California fire department as a firefighter



performing suppression duties.<sup>112</sup> The number of SFPD personnel certified in each category is shown in Figure 8-6. Each firefighter, including volunteers, is able to hold multiple certifications, including strike team certifications.

**Figure 8-6: SFPD Certified Personnel**

Certification Level	Number of Firefighting Staff	% of Total Firefighting Staff
Volunteer Firefighter	0	0%
Firefighter I	8	21%
Firefighter II	Not tracked	0%
First Responder EMS	12	31%
Emergency Medical Technician 1	15	38%
Paramedic <sup>113</sup>	3 <sup>114</sup>	8%
Apparatus Engineer	4 <sup>115</sup>	10%
Driver Operator	12	31%
Company Officer	7	18%
Chief Officer	5	13%
Haz Mat FRO	7 <sup>116</sup>	18%
CICCS FFT 2	0	0%
CICCS FFT 1	0	0%
CICCS Engine Boss	7	18%
CICCS Strike Team Leader	1	2%

The District provides training in two different formats for record keeping purposes. The first, termed “drill”, refers to any training received at the District’s regular Tuesday evening drill. These drills are conducted on the second, third, fourth, and fifth Tuesday (when five Tuesdays fall in one month) of every month. District volunteers are required to attend a minimum of 75 percent of these drills. The second format is termed “training”, with training sessions held throughout the year on an as-scheduled basis. These classes include any formal training offered through the local Training Officers Association, California State Fire Marshal classes, unscheduled classes that are determined necessary by the District, or training offered jointly with neighboring agencies.

All new volunteer firefighters must attend the District’s in-house fire academy prior to being placed in a position of responding to emergencies. The academy is scheduled from 18:00 to 22:00 on Monday and Thursday evenings for ten weeks. Three eight-hour classes are scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays to meet the hours needed. New recruits are also required to drill with regular volunteers on four Tuesdays during this same period of time. At the completion of the recruit academy the new volunteer will have completed

<sup>112</sup> State Fire Marshal, *Course Information and Required Materials*, 2007, p. 44

<sup>113</sup> Paramedics that work through other agencies

<sup>114</sup> Work as paramedics through other agencies.

<sup>115</sup> Have the rank of Engineer 12 and are qualified as driver operator.

<sup>116</sup> Six are hazmat IC qualified.

approximately 90 percent of the Volunteer Firefighter Training Syllabus as published by the California State Firefighter's Association.

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## Facilities

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SFPD owns and operates two fire stations. Station 33 is located in the City of Fairfield and was reported to be fair condition. Station 32, reported to be in good condition, is located in Suisun Valley. Neither of the stations is staffed. Each station is described in more detail in Figure 8-7.

**Figure 8-7: SFPD Fire Stations**

	Station #33	Station #32
Property owner	Suisun FPD	Suisun FPD
Address	445 Jackson Str., Fairfield CA	4165 Clayton Rd., Fairfield, CA
Purpose	Fire Station	Fire Station
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	None	None
Hours station is staffed	Varies	Varies
Date acquired or built	1954	1984
Condition of facility <sup>117</sup>	Fair	Good
Infrastructure Needs	None	Larger assembly area, indoor storage.
Number and type of vehicles at facility	1 – Type I Engine 1 – Type I Water Tender 1 – Type III Engine 2 – Type V Engines 1 – Rescue/squad 1 – Type 1 Breathing Air Support 1 – Boat 1 – Command /Brush Unit 1 – Utility SUV	1 – Type II Engine 1 – Type V Engine 1 – Type VI Engine 1 – Type 1 Water Tender 1 – Command /Brush Unit 1 – Reserve Type I Engine 1 – Utility 15 person Van
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	1 Battalion Chief	0
Number and classification of another agency’s paid staff staffing the facility	0	0
Number of volunteers staffing facility	Varies	Varies
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	39	39

<sup>117</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

Reportedly, the District currently has hydrants with sufficient water supply in the two areas of the District that have concentrations of residential housing. The water supply in the remainder of the District is provided through the use of water tenders (2,000 gallons and 3,000 gallons)—both district-owned and available through automatic and mutual aid. The building code requires fire sprinklers for any future construction.

It appears that currently there is marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of the District's facilities. One of the District's stations is in fair condition, which constitutes a capacity constraint. In addition, SFPD meets the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for response to structural fire calls, but its response to medical emergencies is slightly longer than the Solano Emergency Medical Service Cooperative (SEMSC) standard for rural areas. The measure of the response to medical emergencies is approximate as it was not possible to separate response times for medical emergencies from other types of calls. Additionally, some of the District's areas may be considered remote instead of rural, which lengthens the response times. Although the District is not an ALS provider and is not required to meet the SEMSC response standards, the measure approximates what may be considered appropriate response times to medical emergencies in rural areas of Solano County.

The District's capacity is further constrained by the unpredictability of the availability of a purely volunteer force.

#### Dispatch and communications

With the exception of East Vallejo FPD, all the fire protection districts in Solano County, including SFPD, contract with Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for dispatch services. East Vallejo FPD is dispatched through the City of Vallejo. The cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo each have their own dispatch center.

SFPD entered into a contract with the Sheriff's Department on July 1st, 2014 for a term of three years ending on June 30, 2017. Compensation by the District to the Sheriff is determined by a CAD printout of incidents according to the following formula:

- 1) ADC (Average Daily Calls)/SADC (Sheriff's Average Daily Calls) = %
- 2) % of ADC of Sheriff's Dispatch Budget \* % of ADC = Cost to the District

The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center also provides dispatch services to Sheriff's Office, Isleton Police and Fire, Dixon Police and Fire, California Medical Facility, Rio Vista/Delta Fire Districts, and Solano Community College Police on a 24-hour basis. The Sheriff's Dispatch Center also handles coordination of air ambulance for scene calls to all areas of the County (city or county), coordination of all mutual aid for the County, and out of county requests.

The dispatch center operates with at least two people on duty at all times. The center operators answer and transmit on three primary radio channels, seven secondary channels and a number of other law and fire radios for other agencies.

Communication equipment is sometimes not compatible making it difficult to communicate when coordinating a mutual aid call. Many of the districts have mutual aid agreements with the cities. Dispatch becomes a challenge if the nearest responder is a city

agency or if a city requires assistance from a district. Often times it takes multiple calls to different departments to get assistance sent.

SFPD reported that it supported the solution proposed by the *Solano Consolidated Dispatch Feasibility Study* conducted in 2010. The analysis in the Study determined that the full consolidation alternative presented a viable financial solution. “Bringing the existing dispatch center operations into the same room will result in significant enhancements to the interagency coordination that is required when more than one agency is responding to an emergency.”

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## Infrastructure Needs

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The District reported that it needed a larger assembly area for meetings and training of personnel and inside storage for apparatus at Station 32. Although SFPD has not reported any infrastructure needs for Station 33, the facility is in fair condition and is in need of upgrades to improve its condition. Reportedly, the District currently has no immediate need to replace any vehicles, but projects that one Type V engine is due to be replaced within the next five years. In addition, SFPD is planning to add three new pieces of fire suppression equipment to its fleet. All of the improvements and new purchases are planned to be financed with DIF revenue.

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## Challenges

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One of the primary challenges reported by the District is attracting, training, and retaining volunteers, especially volunteers in supervisory roles. SFPD believes that a key component to this process is assuring that these volunteers are participants in the decision making process, feel appreciated for their service, and receive deserved promotions to supervisory and management positions. The District reported that one of the main obstacles to retaining volunteers and sustaining motivation and commitment was the perceived threat among volunteers that the District would be disbanded, consolidated or its governance structure modified in some way without their input.

The second challenge reported is financial. As reported by SFPD, fire districts continue to lose property tax revenue as areas are detached from their boundaries by neighboring cities, which reduces the districts’ resources and capacity to offer a certain level of service.<sup>118</sup> SFPD would like to stabilize its funding sources in order to allow the District to maintain its current level of service.

The southern portion of the District was reported to be a challenging area to serve. There is no station close to that region and it takes the District 45 minutes to respond to incidents that occur during duck hunting season. It, however, may not be financially justifiable to construct a station in the area with only seasonal demand.

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<sup>118</sup> The districts affected by the detachments should take advantage of the Standard 11 in the LAFCO Policies and Procedures manual that requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## SERVICE ADEQUACY

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. Suisun FPD has an ISO rating of 5/8B throughout its service area. SFPD was last evaluated in 2012.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued response time performance standards depending on the service structure of the agency. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, these standards provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. For agencies with paid staff, NFPA 1710 identifies the response time guideline of six minutes at least 90 percent of the time. For volunteer and combination fire departments, NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14 minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>119</sup> SFPD falls within the definition of a rural demand zone and would therefore be subject to the NFPA 1720 guidelines. Reportedly, there are a few small areas of the District that meet the criteria of a “remote” area due to the travel distances required to access the properties.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) has designated an exclusive operating area (EOA) in Solano County for EMS and ambulance services provided by Medic Ambulance Services. The EOA includes all territory in Solano County with the exception of the City of Vacaville, Travis Air Force Base, and the territory designated as Zone C.<sup>120</sup> SEMSA has the responsibility for assuring that all the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county have a safe, dependable and responsive pre hospital Emergency Medical Care system. In the EOA, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority calls for all participating member cities. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses. Compliance with these requirements is determined on a monthly basis. If a city providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards, it is fined. The amount payable by Medic to the participating member cities reflects the estimated cost savings to Medic under the SEMSC agreement due to the first response of the participating member cities. Medic on the other hand is required to respond within nine to 12 minutes in

<sup>119</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

<sup>120</sup> Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative Ambulance Service Agreement, April 10, 2010.



areas identified as urban areas, 15 minutes in areas designated as rural and 90 minutes in remote areas. Although these standards are intended for ALS providers, which SFPD is not, the Medic response standard for rural areas indicates what is considered appropriate response times for medical emergencies for the District.

The District's goal is to meet the NFPA 1720 guidelines for rural demand zone. SFPD's 80<sup>th</sup> percentile response time is 13.13 minutes, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response time is 16.7 minutes, the median response time is 7.75 minutes, and average response time is 8.76 minutes.

The service area size for each fire station varies between the fire districts. The median fire station in Solano County serves approximately 39.8 square miles. The Dixon FPD (Dixon FD) station serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area by EVFPD's (Vallejo FD) fire stations is 8.3 square miles. By comparison, each fire station in SFPD serves approximately 70 square miles.

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers that rely on volunteer or call firefighters may have differing staff availability and reliability. An agency with more firefighters could have fewer resources, if availability is limited due to work and personal obligations. Staffing levels in Solano County vary from 0.68 firefighters per 1,000 residents in EVFPD to 29 in MFPD. By comparison, SFPD has on average approximately 15 firefighters per 1,000 residents.

Operating expenditures per capita is often reflective of the level of service offered by a fire provider as determined by financing constraints. The least amount of money per capita was spent by Dixon FPD (\$79). Montezuma FPD expended the most per capita (\$499), as it serves a relatively expansive area with very low population density. To compare, SFPD spent \$94 per capita in FY 12-13.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Although no population growth is expected, it was reported that growth of the wine industry in the County is attracting more tourism and therefore increasing demand for services.
- ❖ The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its existing service area. As SFPD experiences mainly commercial growth within its boundaries and every commercial building must be equipped with sprinklers, the District anticipates to have sufficient capacity, even if the number of calls doubled. The District, however, plans to expand its station in the valley to better accommodate wine industry-related tourism growth.
- ❖ Other needed capital improvements include a larger assembly area for meetings and training of personnel, inside storage for apparatus at Station 32 and purchase of additional fire suppression equipment. In addition, the District needs to make necessary improvements to Station 33 to improve its condition. All of the improvements and new purchases are planned to be financed with development impact fee revenue.

- ❖ Data analysis revealed marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the fair condition of the District's facilities. The District has sufficient capacity to provide services to its service area as it is able to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for response to structural fire calls. The District's capacity is constrained by the unpredictability of availability of a purely volunteer force.
- ❖ SFPD services appear to be adequate. The District has adequate response times and an ISO rating which is comparable to other providers in the County. The District has about 15 firefighters per 1,000 residents, which is about average in Solano County; each station covers approximately 70 square miles which also nears a countywide average.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts financial audits for every fiscal year, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. SFPD management practices will be improved when the District completes its capital improvement plan (CIP) that would outline long-term infrastructure needs, financing sources, and a completion schedule. The District could further make improvements by conducting strategic planning and service demand projections.
- ❖ The District was recently investigated by the Grand Jury, and the 2012-2013 report outlines a number of findings, including expired Board member terms, absence of certain Board and district policies, the need to automate training records, and loss of revenue due to territory detachments. The SFPD Board of Directors and the County Board of Supervisors have responded to Grand Jury findings; the SFPD chief's response is pending.

## **STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES**

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### **Shared Facilities and Regional Cooperation**

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#### *Shared Facilities*

SFPD practices facility sharing by allowing the Sheriff's Department to utilize Station 32 as a meeting and briefing location for on duty officers. The District also allows the County Public Works Department to store its equipment at Station 32 while working on projects in the area.

In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the District reported that there was not sufficient room at their current stations for SFPD equipment and the District did not anticipate sharing its stations unless they are further expanded.

The District does not share its vehicles and equipment with other agencies and does not see future opportunities to do so.

### Collaboration

As previously mentioned in the *Type and Extent of Services* section, SFPD has automatic aid agreements with the City of Fairfield Fire Department, Montezuma FPD, and Napa County Fire and Cal Fire. Additionally, the District is a part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Dixon, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Vallejo, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Vacaville FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Montezuma FPD, Travis AFB, and Cal Fire. SFPD is also a part of the statewide mutual aid agreement through the Office of Emergency Services (OES).

SFPD provides fire protection planning services jointly with the County Building Department.

SFPD is a member of the JPA called the Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC), which is comprised of all the cities in Solano County, except for the City of Vacaville, and all the fire districts in the unincorporated areas of the County.<sup>121</sup> Fire districts are represented by one member on the SEMSC seven-member Board of Directors. The SEMSC was designated by the Solano County Board of Supervisors as the Local EMS Agency (LEMSA) for Solano County. The SEMSC has all of the responsibilities and authority vested in a local EMS Agency, including the ability to select, via a competitive process, a provider for emergency ambulance service.

SFPD has participated in two regional planning efforts—the City of Suisun City Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan conducted by the County. Also, as previously mentioned in the *Growth Strategies* section, SFPD is taking part in a development impact fee study with three other fire protection districts in the County.

Additionally, Suisun FPD is a member of several collaborative organizations, including the Solano County Fire Chiefs Association, the California Fire Chiefs Association, and the California State Firefighters' Association.

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### Determinations

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- ❖ SFPD practices facility sharing by allowing the Sheriff's Department to utilize Station 32 as a meeting and briefing location for on duty officers. The District also allows the County Public Works Department to store its equipment at Station 32 while working on projects in the area.
- ❖ In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the District reported that there was not sufficient room at its current stations for SFPD equipment and the District did not anticipate sharing its stations unless they are further expanded.

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<sup>121</sup> Services cover the Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) except 1) the territories of the City of Vacaville and Travis Air Force Base, and the territory of Solano County known as "Zone C", 2) the territory of Sacramento County that incorporates the territories of the Delta FPD and the City of Isleton, and 3) the territory of Napa County designated as the Gordon Valley.

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## Management Efficiencies

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While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, track employee and agency productivity, periodically review agency performance, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, conduct advanced planning for future service needs, and plan and budget for capital needs.

The District's fire chief is responsible for the day-to-day operations of SFPD. SFPD has one full-time equivalent (FTE) paid<sup>122</sup> employee—a training battalion chief who is responsible for the firefighters' training. The remainder of the personnel consists of volunteers including one fire chief, one fire marshal, two battalion chiefs, six captains, 28 firefighters, five miscellaneous help staff, and 15 explorers. The fire chief reports to the Board of Directors and supervises the fire marshal, the training chief and the battalion chiefs. Both battalion chiefs supervise three captains each. Firefighters report to captains. Employee evaluations are conducted by the fire chief annually. The chief formally evaluates only the paid employee every year.

Overall agency performance evaluations are performed informally during the chief's annual reports to the Board. The chief reports on the strategic goals at the beginning of the year and on the results at the end of the year. The District records its goals and objectives, as well as the District's strengths and weaknesses as separate lists to be presented to the Board. In addition, the District conducts action reviews on each major incident. One of the main performance measures used by SFPD to determine its service adequacy is the response time standards set by NFPA 20, as described in the *Service Adequacy* section.

The District tracks the workload performed by the paid employee through time sheets. The workload of all other staff is tracked through logs, including response, training and other activities.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget and audited financial statements, which are audited by Solano County every two years for every fiscal year. SFPD does not presently have any other planning documents. Short-term goals are established in the budgets, while long-term objectives will be planned for in the capital improvement plan (CIP), which is currently being developed.

The District reported that in order to improve operational efficiencies for fire service provision in the County dispatch services need to be consolidated into one centralized fire dispatch that has responsibility over fire and EMS resources throughout Solano. SFPD also believes that SEMSA response time standards should be adjusted to allow for better coverage in rural areas that do not have paramedics on the initial response apparatus; for example, positioning ambulances deeper into rural areas rather than urban areas would constitute an improvement to operational efficiency and increase in service level.

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<sup>122</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

The District was recently investigated by the Grand Jury, and the 2012-2013 report outlines a number of findings. Besides the expired terms of the Board members, which was discussed in the *Government Structure and Accountability* section, the Grand Jury found that the Board of Directors had no written policies on Board member job descriptions and responsibilities, Board actions and procedures, and setting of policies. In addition, SFPD did not establish written operational policies and procedures regarding promotional standards and requirements, an injury and illness prevention program, physical ability assessment, job description program, a seat belt use policy, and discipline policy. The Grand Jury also found that SFPD was not taking full advantage of available automation for training records and that the District would continue to lose taxpayer funding in the event of continued detachments from the District, for which the Grand Jury's solution was consolidation of the western portion of SFPD with the eastern portion of Montezuma FPD.

In the response to the Grand Jury's investigation, SFPD's Board of Directors disagreed with most of the findings, including expired terms of directors and absence of policies. The Board asserts in its response that all the policies mentioned by the Grand Jury are in existence and available at the captain's office. The District implemented the Grand Jury's recommendation to automate training records and approved a part-time data entry position. SFPD also believes that revenues lost due to detachment of territory could be substituted by other revenue sources. The District fire chief has not yet submitted his response to the Grand Jury.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ SFPD practices facility sharing by allowing the Sheriff's Department to utilize Station 32 as a meeting and briefing location for on duty officers. The District also allows the County Public Works Department to store its equipment at Station 32 while working on projects in the area.

## **LAFCO POLICIES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY**

Solano LAFCO has adopted a policy that directly affects service delivery by fire protection districts in the County. Standard 11 in the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires that a city applying to LAFCO for annexation of a specific territory that belongs in this case to a fire protection district must offset the negative consequences of that annexation, which may include negative effects on the district's budget or service provision. The annexing city is required to work with the affected district to identify and mitigate the impacts. Adequate mitigation to adverse fiscal impact normally includes a funding source for lost revenues or increased costs to the affected special district. A common practice in Solano County is to negotiate a property tax neutrality agreement for a specific period of time between the annexing city and the negatively affected special district.

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### **Determinations**

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.



## SUISUN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT DETERMINATIONS

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### Growth and Population Projections

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- ❖ Suisun Fire Protection District (SFPD) currently has an estimated population of 2,671.
- ❖ SFPD reported that no growth had occurred within the District in the last five years. Similarly, the District anticipates minimal growth in the next decade given the County's policy of minimal development outside of city boundaries. The District was not aware of any planned or proposed developments within SFPD.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 2,671 in 2010 to approximately 2,885 in 2020.
- ❖ Because a majority of the land in SFPD is designated as marsh resource preservation, it is anticipated that there will be minimal residential development or population growth within the District. SFPD, however, expects agriculture-related construction, due to growth in the wine industry.

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### The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to SFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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### Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

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- ❖ Although no population growth is expected, it was reported that growth of the wine industry in the County is attracting more tourism and therefore increasing demand for services.
- ❖ The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its existing service area. As SFPD experiences mainly commercial growth within its boundaries and every commercial building must be equipped with sprinklers, the District anticipates to have sufficient capacity, even if the number of calls doubled. The District, however, plans to expand its station in the valley to better accommodate wine industry-related tourism growth.
- ❖ Other needed capital improvements include a larger assembly area for meetings and training of personnel, inside storage for apparatus at Station 32 and purchase of additional fire suppression equipment. In addition, the District needs to make necessary improvements to Station 33 to improve its condition. All of the

improvements and new purchases are planned to be financed with development impact fee revenue.

- ❖ Data analysis revealed marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the fair condition of the District's facilities. The District has sufficient capacity to provide services to its service area as it is able to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for response to structural fire calls. The District's capacity is constrained by the unpredictability of the availability of a purely volunteer force.
- ❖ SFPD services appear to be adequate. The District has adequate response times and an ISO rating which is comparable to other providers in the County. The District has about 15 firefighters per 1,000 residents, which is about average in Solano County; each station covers approximately 70 square miles which also nears a countywide average.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts financial audits for every fiscal year, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. SFPD management practices will be improved when the District completes its capital improvement plan (CIP) that would outline long-term infrastructure needs, financing sources, and a completion schedule. The District could further make improvements by conducting strategic planning and service demand projections.
- ❖ The District was recently investigated by the Grand Jury, and the 2012-2013 report outlines a number of findings, including expired Board member terms, absence of certain Board and district policies, the need to automate training records, and loss of revenue due to territory detachments. The SFPD Board of Directors and the County Board of Supervisors have responded to Grand Jury findings; the SFPD chief's response is pending.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The District reported that its financing levels were adequate to deliver services. SFPD has not experienced any negative effects of the recent economic recession and reportedly did not have a need to implement any cost containment strategies; however, frugality is a part of the District's normal operations.
- ❖ For SFPD, the primary financing constraint identified is the loss of property tax revenue when lands are detached from the District and annexed into the neighboring cities. To enhance its level of financing, the District applies for grants and is currently implementing a development impact fee update.
- ❖ A majority of the District's revenues are received from property taxes and charges for services, including development impact fees. SFPD does not receive any revenues from special taxes or benefit assessments.
- ❖ The District finances its capital improvements with development impact fees and grant money.

- ❖ The District has a management practice to keep two financial reserves—an equipment reserve, which had a balance of \$60,000 at the end of FY 13, and an operating reserve also with a balance of \$60,000. Additionally, SFPD has a development impact fee reserve, which had a negative balance of -\$7,368.65 at the end of FY 13.

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### Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ SFPD practices facility sharing by allowing the Sheriff's Department to utilize Station 32 as a meeting and briefing location for on duty officers. The District also allows the County Public Works Department to store its equipment at Station 32 while working on projects in the area.
- ❖ In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the District reported that there was not sufficient room at its current stations for SFPD equipment and the District did not anticipate sharing its stations unless they are further expanded.

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### Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by cooperating with the MSR process, adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, maintaining a website (however, most pages are currently under construction), and filing of Forms 700 Statement of Economic Interest.
- ❖ SFPD could make some improvements to its accountability and transparency, including posting up-to-date contact information, district and Board policies and procedures, as well as financial information on its website. The District could also increase public interest in SFPD's affairs by implementing additional outreach measures, such as newspaper advertisements and news releases and sending information about Board meetings and district services to SFPD residents.
- ❖ The District needs to continue its practice of ensuring and documenting that all board members have completed ethics training if the District's board members receive compensation or expense reimbursements. It was reported that the District's board members last received ethics training in 2012.
- ❖ Due to concerns that the current board members' terms had expired several years ago and the Directors had not been officially reappointed to their positions by the Board of Supervisors, the Supervisors filled a vacancy with a new director in February 2014 and renewed the terms of each director in March 2014 by formal action.

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### LAFCO Policies Affecting Service Delivery

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.

## 9. VACAVILLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Vacaville Fire Protection District (VFPD) provides 24-hour response for emergencies. The District responds to all types of incidents including, but not limited to wildland fires, structure fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, activated alarms, technical rescues, hazardous materials, and public service assists. In addition, VFPD provides fire prevention and public education programs, as well as on-going training for all district staff.

### AGENCY OVERVIEW

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#### Background

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After a few devastating fires during the prohibition era, the residents of the area from Silvey Ranch to Bolen Road decided to form a fire district, which was put on the ballot in 1928. The formation of Elmira Fire Protection District (EFPD) was carried by a large majority vote on August 30, 1928.

On March 29, 1946, residents of the proposed Vacaville Fire Protection District were given an opportunity to express their opinions by casting their vote for or against the formation of the proposed district. On April 5, 1946, the formation of the fire district was passed by a vote of 89 to 0. With the formation of the fire district, the district Board and the City of Vacaville mutually agreed to jointly use manpower and equipment. In 1981, because of the growth of the two entities, the departments split. At that time the District hired its first full-time employee, an assistant chief, who was promoted to the position of fire chief upon separation from the City of Vacaville.

On August 9, 1984, the Elmira FPD Board approached the Vacaville FPD Board with a proposal to consolidate the districts to better serve the residents of both districts. After many months of discussion, the two districts agreed on the terms of the consolidation and it became a reality on May 26, 1986.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>123</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>124</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.<sup>125</sup>

VFPD is located in the northwestern portion of Solano County. The District surrounds the City of Vacaville and borders Napa County in the west, Yolo County in the north, Dixon

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<sup>123</sup> Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

<sup>124</sup> Health and Safety Code §13862.

<sup>125</sup> Government Code §56824.10.

Fire Protection District in the east, Suisun Fire Protection District, City of Fairfield and Travis Air Force Base in the south, and Montezuma Fire Protection District in the southeast.

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## Boundaries

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VFPD is entirely within Solano County. As is evident from Figure 9-2, the present bounds encompass approximately 135 square miles and include two noncontiguous areas. The larger area is located to the northwest of the City of Vacaville and is surrounded by Napa County in the west, Yolo County in the north, Suisun FPD in the south, and the City and Dixon FPD in the east. The smaller, but more populated, of the two areas is situated to the southwest of the City of Vacaville and borders Dixon FPD in the south and east, Montezuma FPD in the southeast, Travis AFB and the City of Fairfield in the south, and Suisun FPD and the City of Vacaville in the west.

Since its formation, VFPD has undertaken 14 boundary changes, including 13 detachments and one consolidation. Consolidation with Elmira FPD took place in 1986. The latest detachments occurred in 2004 and included five different properties. All the territories detached from VFPD were subsequently annexed into the City of Vacaville. The District’s boundary changes are shown in Figure 9-1.<sup>126</sup>

**Figure 9-1: VFPD List of LAFCO Approved Border Changes**

Project Name	Type of Action	Year	Recording Agency
Lagoon Valley Park	Detachment	1977	LAFCO
Abe Tortosa property	Detachment	1978	LAFCO
VFPD/EFPD	Consolidation	1986	LAFCO
California Drive Extension	Detachment	1990	LAFCO
Cultural Center	Detachment	1991	LAFCO
Lower Lagoon Valley	Detachment	1991	LAFCO
Swanson/Farmer Property	Detachment	1991	LAFCO
Cooper Station	Detachment	1992	LAFCO
Alamo Place Subdivision and Vacaville Military Housing Project	Detachment	2002	LAFCO
Southtown-Moody	Detachment	2004	LAFCO
Rice-McMurtry Property	Detachment	2004	LAFCO
Browns Valley Annexation No.5	Detachment	2004	LAFCO
Moody Property	Detachment	2004	LAFCO
Meadowoods Subdivisions	Detachment	2004	LAFCO

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## Sphere of Influence

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The sphere of influence (SOI) for VFPD was originally adopted in 1983 as coterminous with its boundaries as they existed at that time.<sup>127</sup> Since then, the District conducted 11

<sup>126</sup> The list of reorganizations in Figure 8-1 is derived from available LAFCO records and may not be complete excluding records that were not found or readily available.

<sup>127</sup> LAFCO Resolution 1983-07.









detachments and one consolidation. The SOI was appropriately amended in 2002 to exclude the detached Alamo Place Subdivision and Vacaville Military Housing Project and in 2004 to exclude the detached lands of Southtown-Moody, Rice-McMurtry property, Browns Valley, Moody property, and Meadowoods Subdivisions; however, it does not appear that the SOI was amended to exclude the rest of the detached lands and include Elmira FPD with which VFPD consolidated in 1986. The District's SOI should be updated to reflect the aforementioned boundary changes. VFPD current boundaries and SOI are shown in Figure 9-2.

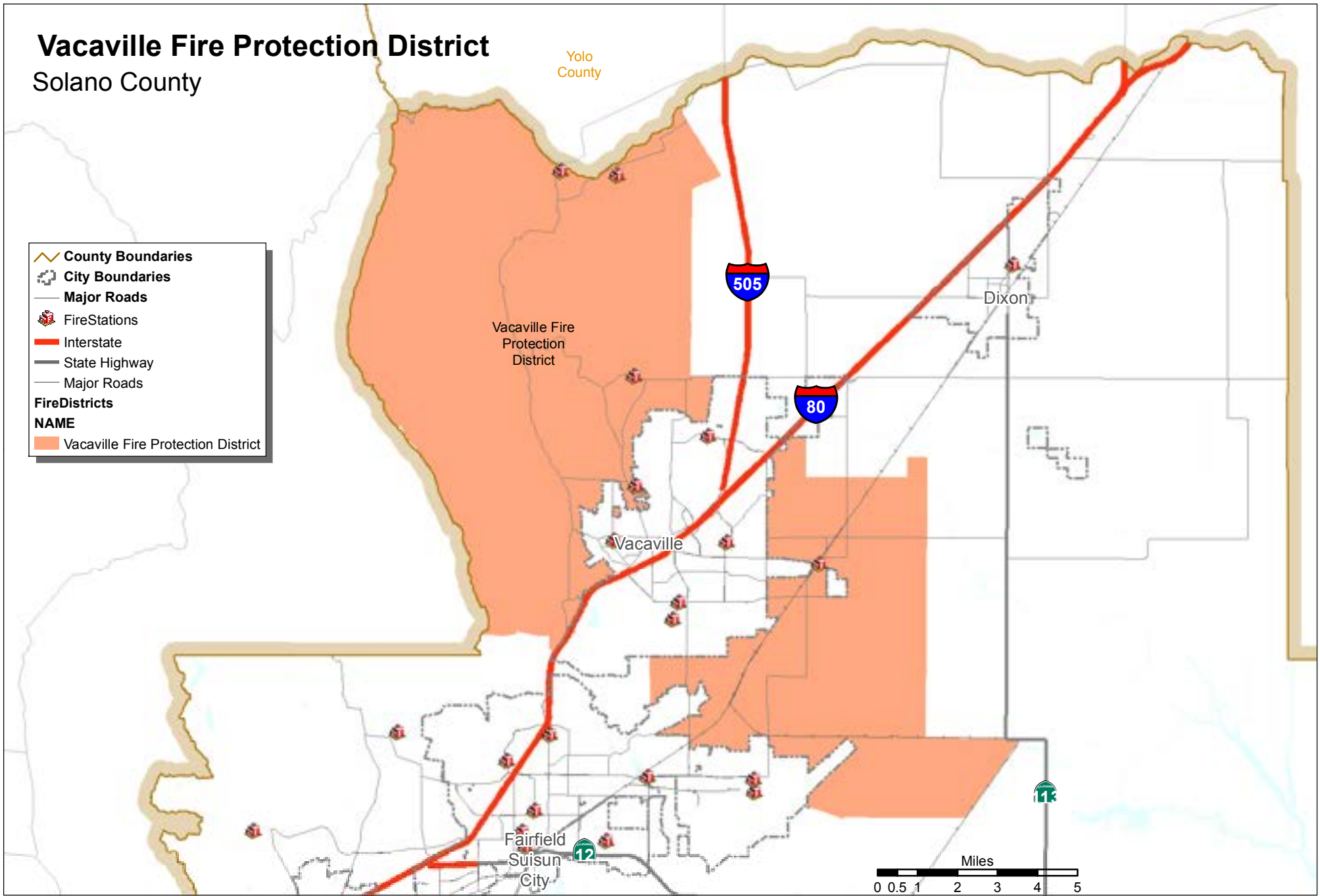


# Vacaville Fire Protection District

## Solano County

Yolo County

 County Boundaries  
 City Boundaries  
 Major Roads  
 Fire Stations  
 Interstate  
 State Highway  
 Major Roads  
**Fire Districts**  
**NAME**  
 Vacaville Fire Protection District



Solano Local Agency  
Formation Commission

744 Empire St., Suite 216  
Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 439-3897  
[www.solanolafo.com](http://www.solanolafo.com)

This map is to be used for general information purposes only. Where precise accuracy is required reference should be made to certified maps, surveys, documents and/or by other official means.

### Solano County GIS Services

Department of Information Technology  
675 Texas Street, Suite 3700  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
Phone: 707-784-6340  
Email: [GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com](mailto:GISStaff@SolanoCounty.com)  
PRJ\_1093, 08/01/2014

### Disclaimer:

This map was made using Solano County GIS files with varying degrees of scale, accuracy, precision, currentness, and alignment and therefore cannot be used for situations requiring survey grade measurement or legal boundary determination. Solano County disclaims liability for any loss that may result from the use of this map. User acknowledges data limitations and accepts responsibility for map based judgments.



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## Type and Extent of Services

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### Services Provided

Figure 9-3 details the services provided by VFPD. If a service is not provided by VFPD, but is offered by another agency, it is indicated in the figure. Resources from Cal Fire provided outside the SRA are provided on a mutual aid basis. Availability is dependent upon fire activity, time of year, and other factors.

**Figure 9-3: VFPD Services**

Service	Agency
<b>Fire Suppression Services</b>	
Structural Fire Protection	Yes
Wildland Fire Protection	Yes in LRA
Vehicle Fire Protection	Yes
Ladder Truck Capabilities	No
Fire Suppression Handcrew	No
Fire Suppression Dozer	Cal Fire
Helicopter Services – Fire Suppression	Cal Fire
Boat With Fire Suppression Capabilities	No
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>	
Basic Life Support Provider	Yes
Advanced Life Support - Non Transport Provider	City of Vacaville
Advanced Life Support - Transport Provider	City of Vacaville
Continuing Education Provider - Medical	Yes
Air Ambulance Transport Helicopter Services	CalStar
Helicopter Landing Facilities On Site	On open space near 3 stations
Vehicle Extrication Tools/Equipment	Yes
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	
Fire Safety Education – Children	Yes
Fire Safety Education – Adults/Seniors	Yes
Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program	No
Fire and Life Safety Business Inspection Program	Yes
Fire Protection Planning	Yes
New Commercial Construction Plan Reviews	Joint with Solano County, not primary
Public Education Provider (CPR, First Aid, etc.)	Available during training times
Home Fire/Safety Inspections	Yes
Fire Origin and Cause Investigations	Yes
Fuel Reduction/Weed Abatement Program	Yes
Smoke Detector Giveaway/Installation Program	Yes
Address Sign Installation Program	Yes
<b>Rescue Services</b>	
First Responder Swift Water Rescue Program	Yes
Water Rescue Program	Yes
Ice Rescue Program	No
Dive Rescue Program	Joint with County Sherriff
Low angle Rope Rescue Program	Yes
Helicopter Short/Long Haul Rescue Capabilities	CHP

Response To Boating Accidents	Coast Guard
Rescue Dog Services	No
<b>Hazardous Materials</b>	
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Basic	Yes
Hazardous Materials Response Team	Solano County Hazmat Team
<b>Support Services</b>	
Firefighter Incident Support Unit	Yes
Mobile Incident Command/Communications Unit	Yes and Solano County
Fill Station for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	Yes
Mobile Breathing Support Unit	Yes
Community Emergency Response Team	No
Chaplain Services	No
Training Academy	Yes
Emergency Operations Center Capabilities	Upstairs is designed to be local emergency center
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Public Service Assists	Yes
Motor Vehicle Accident Response	Yes
Welfare Checks	Yes
Public Safety Answering Point	County Sheriff
Fire/EMS Dispatch	County Sheriff
Fundraising Activities	Firebells
Firefighters Association - Non Profit	Yes
Auxiliary Association	FireBells and Explorer

VFPD is the sponsor of Fire Explorer Post 977 and chartered with the Boy Scouts of America.

The Vacaville Junior Fire Department was established back in 1959 for young adults to be given the training and guidance needed to learn the required skills for a firefighting career. Junior firefighters assist with all routine tasks in the community and around the fire station, including community relations, fire prevention, equipment and station maintenance, and training. Junior firefighters are issued wildland grass gear, which consist of pants, shirt, helmet, goggles, and gloves.

The District has a firefighter association, which was established in 1895. The association is involved in local parades and events, such as the Vacaville Fiesta Days Parade, Dixon May Fair Parade, Winters Youth Day Parade, Vacaville Harvest Days by sponsoring the chili cook-off, 31-cent scoop night at Baskin Robbins to help honor America’s firefighters through the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, and Fill the Boot Drive to help the Firefighters Burn Institute.

In addition, VFPD organized a muster team that travels throughout California to participate in the firemen’s musters.<sup>128</sup> The team consists of the District, members of the Firefighter Association, and FireBells members.

<sup>128</sup> A muster is a gathering of antique equipment for the purpose of competition, display and camaraderie.

FireBells is a support group for VFPD, which is involved in the fundraising activities for the District.

VFPD is extensively involved in fire prevention activities, including educating the public about electrical cords, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, spark arrestors, and weed abatement and conducting premises inspections.

### Service Area

The District reported that there were no areas within its boundary area where services were not provided by VFPD.

Vacaville FPD provides services outside of its boundaries, including dive team services countywide jointly with the County Sheriff and swift water rescue to other jurisdictions within Solano County on an as-needed basis. VFPD does not get compensated for providing these services out of bounds.

VFPD is currently in the process of establishing an automatic aid agreement with the City of Vacaville, according to which the City will be dispatched along with the District to calls within two areas located to the east and northwest of the City. In addition, VFPD also has automatic aid agreements with the City of Winters Fire Department in Yolo County and California Medical Facility Fire Department<sup>129</sup> in the City of Vacaville. According to the agreement with the City of Winters FD, VFPD is dispatched to the entire territory of the City of Winters and SR 128.

The District is involved with mutual aid within the local area through the countywide mutual aid agreement that includes multiple local agencies of Solano County and agencies outside the County,<sup>130</sup> as well as the statewide mutual aid agreement through the Office of Emergency Services (OES). VFPD also has a mutual aid agreement with the California State prison in the City of Vacaville.

An area of particular interest is represented by a small area within the eastern part of the District, for which Travis AFB is the responsible party in case of incidents associated with AFB, but where VFPD responds to civilian emergencies. VFPD is the first responder to the Golf Park; if it is a civilian emergency call, the District handles the incident.

### Services to Other Agencies

The District does not provide services through contracts to other agencies.

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<sup>129</sup> The California Medical Facility (CMF) was established in 1955 by the Legislature to provide a centrally located medical/psychiatric institution for the health care needs of the male felon population in California's prisons. CMF houses a General Acute Care Hospital, Correctional Treatment Center (CTC), Licensed Elderly Care Unit, in-patient and out-patient psychiatric facilities, a Hospice Unit for terminally ill inmates, general population, and other special inmate housing. Additionally, the Department of State Hospitals operates a licensed, Acute Care Psychiatric Hospital and an Intermediate Care Facility within CMF.

<sup>130</sup> Vacaville FPD is part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Dixon, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Vallejo, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Suisun FPD, Montezuma FPD, Cal Fire, and Travis Air Force Base.

### Contracts for Services

Similar to all other fire protection districts in the County (with the exception of East Vallejo FPD), VFPD contracts with the County Sheriff's Office for dispatch services. The structure of these services is discussed in more detail in the *Facilities* section of this chapter.

### Overlapping Service Providers

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) provides services throughout the State. Generally, Cal Fire services are focused in wildland areas defined as State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Similarly, the United States Forest Service (USFS) also provides services in California, primarily within forests and grasslands. Areas where USFS services are focused are defined as Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA). The VFPD boundary area consists of SRA that covers a majority of the western noncontiguous part of the District, with small island areas within the same portion of the District being FRA. The eastern portion of the District consists entirely of LRA. Cal Fire also provides technical support throughout the County in the form of specialized services such as fire suppression handcrews, dozers, and helicopter services when necessary.

Additionally, Travis AFB would provide fire protection and EMS services in the District should AFB planes crash land within its bounds. The City of Vacaville Fire Department is dispatched on medical emergencies as an advanced life support (ALS) and ambulance provider within a majority of the District's boundary area. A small portion of VFPD in the east is served by Medic Ambulance LLC.

## **GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to 1) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 2) a defined complaint process designed to handle all issues to resolution, and 3) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

The principal act mandates that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>131</sup> VFPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors appointed to four-year terms. Appointments are made by the Solano County Board of Supervisors—Supervisorial District 4 and Supervisorial District 5. If a position opens up mid-term, the District notifies the Board of Supervisors and tries to advertise for the position. The interested person submits the application to the Board of Supervisors and is appointed. As of the drafting of this report there was one vacancy on the District's Board of Directors.

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<sup>131</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.



The Board of Directors meets on the second Thursday of the following months: January, March, May, June, September, and November at 7:00 p.m. at the District’s headquarters at 420 Vine Street in Vacaville. Information about Board meetings is shown in Figure 9-4.

Board meeting agendas are posted at two of the District’s stations. Minutes are available at the following meeting and upon request. In addition to the required agendas and minutes, the District tries to reach its constituents through having open house events and the fire association participating in community events and parades. VFPD maintains a website where it posts information related to its services, staff, call statistics, contact information, and updates on community news, weather and events. The District’s board meeting agendas and minutes are not available online.

**Figure 9-4: Vacaville Fire Protection District Governing Body**

<b>Vacaville Fire Protection District</b>	
<b>Governing Body and Board Meetings</b>	
<i>Manner of Selection</i>	Appointed by Supervisors from Districts 4 and 5.
<i>Length of Term</i>	Four years.
<i>Meetings</i>	Meetings take place on the second Thursday of January, March, May, June, September, and November at 7:00 p.m. at the District’s Headquarters.
<i>Agenda Distribution</i>	Posted at the two fire stations.
<i>Minutes Distribution</i>	Available upon request.
<b>Contact</b>	
<i>Contact</i>	Howard Wood, Fire Chief
<i>Mailing Address</i>	420 Vine Street, Vacaville, CA 95688.
<i>Phone</i>	707-447-2252
<i>Fax</i>	707-447-2769
<i>Email/Website</i>	<a href="mailto:vfpd@vfpd.net">vfpd@vfpd.net</a> , <a href="http://www.vfpd.net">www.vfpd.net</a>

VFPD board members receive no compensation. Government Code §53235 requires that if a district provides compensation or reimbursement of expenses to its board members, the board members must receive two hours of training in ethics at least once every two years and the district must establish a written policy on reimbursements. It was reported that the District’s board members last received ethics training in 2012. The District was unable to provide a policy on expense reimbursements.

VFPD reported that complaints may be submitted over the phone or in person. Alternatively, a person may fill out a complaint form and have it heard at a board meeting. The chief is responsible for handling complaints to resolution. Complaints are tracked to full resolution. The District reported that it received one complaint in 2012.

The efforts of the Board, according to the District are guided by the VFPD’s insurance guidelines. The District has not established its own set of rules that would guide the efforts of the Board, including policies related to public requests for information, code of ethics or Brown Act.

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000, et seq.) requires state and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation (California Code of Regulations §18730),



which contains the terms of a standard conflict of interest code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's code. The District has established and was able to provide its conflict of interest code.

Government Code §87203 requires persons who hold office to disclose their investments, interests in real property and incomes by filing appropriate forms with the identified filing agency (i.e., the County or the Fair Political Practices Commission) each year. In addition, the conflict of interest code of each district determines who among the officers and directors files the Form 700s with the County's Registrar of Voters. In Solano County select fire protection districts require both the fire chief and Board members to submit copies to the County, and in some cases only the chief files with the County's Registrar of Voters. All VFPD directors filed their Form 700s for 2013 with the District. The chief filed with the County's Registrar of Voters.

During the course of this MSR process, VFPD demonstrated partial accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Solano LAFCO. The District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with interview and document requests; however, some requests required multiple follow up attempts.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, and maintaining a website. Although the District cooperated with LAFCO during the MSR process and provided all the information, requests required multiple follow up attempts.
- ❖ Several improvements could be made to the District's operations in order to enhance accountability and transparency. District policies and procedures and financial information as well as Board of Directors meeting materials, including agendas and minutes, should be made readily available to the public on its website.
- ❖ The District needs to continue its practice of ensuring and documenting that all board members have completed ethics training if the District's board members receive compensation or expense reimbursements. It was reported that the District's board members last received ethics training in 2012.
- ❖ Governance structure options for VFPD include functional or full consolidation with other fire protection agencies in Solano County. Consolidation may include regional merger with CFPD and SFPD along I 80, consolidation of all the districts serving unincorporated territory, functional consolidation with the cities of Vacaville and/or Fairfield, or countywide consolidation that includes all city fire departments and fire districts.

## **GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

This section discusses the factors affecting service demand, such as land uses, and historical and anticipated population growth.

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### **Land Use**

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Land uses within the District consist of agriculture, marsh agriculture, rural residential, residential, and resource conservation. The District's bounds encompass approximately 135 square miles.

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### **Population**

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There are approximately 10,995 residents within the District, based on GIS analysis of 2010 Census population information.<sup>132</sup> The population density within the District is 81 people per square mile.

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### **Projected Growth and Development**

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VFPD anticipates moderate growth in population within the District in the next decade. However, no formal population projections have been made by the District. The area was reported to be the largest residential area in the County. It is required that parcels within the District be 2.5 acres in size or larger, if there is a water source; parcels must be five acres or larger without a water source. The District identified two planned developments within its boundaries. Dove Creek development, located in English Hills, consists of 32 planned units, while Gridley development, in Putah Creek, has 22 planned units. Both developments are currently on hold. The District anticipates providing services to both planned developments when they are constructed.

The California Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Solano County will grow by eight percent from 2010 to 2020. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.8 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from 10,995 in 2010 to approximately 11,875 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally, based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

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### **Growth Strategies**

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The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County.

In cooperation with Solano County, the District conducts new commercial construction plan reviews. The County also seeks input from the District on proposed residential developments and general plan updates.

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<sup>132</sup> This population figure may be slightly inflated based on comparison of known populations in other areas with those generated through the GIS analysis.

The County has historically required that development requiring water and sewer service be incorporated within one of the County's cities. Based on this policy, most residential, commercial and industrial development in the County has been in incorporated areas.

The lands within the District are designated in the County's General Plan mostly as residential, park, marsh and agriculture, with residential developments located closer to the City of Vacaville. As the area is growing, VFPD is anticipating construction of large estates and high-value properties.

Limited territory within VFPD surrounding the City of Vacaville is also within the City's SOI, meaning that it is anticipated that the areas will eventually be annexed by the City. Similarly, SOI lands of the City of Fairfield to the northeast of the City are also within the District and are anticipated to be annexed by Fairfield. With the exception of SOI lands in the south and southwest, the rest of the territory within the Vacaville's SOI, but outside of its boundaries, is designated as Municipal Service Area (MSA) by the County General Plan. Comparably, except for the very northern portion of the Fairfield's SOI, the rest of its SOI land in VFPD is also designated MSA.

Within MSAs, future development of urban land uses is to be facilitated and served through city annexation. Current land uses within MSAs may continue under County jurisdiction until the land is annexed to the city for conversion to urban uses. A change in land use of unincorporated lands within MSAs should be permitted only for agricultural uses, which do not conflict with planned land uses until annexed for urban development. Unincorporated lands within the MSAs that are designated agriculture will continue in agricultural use until annexed to a city for urban development.

In areas outside MSAs, planned land uses are maintained or developed under County jurisdiction. Services to support current and future development outside MSAs are provided by the County and special districts consistent with General Plan policies.

The City of Fairfield's General Plan land use map designates its MSA lands within the District as Travis reserve.<sup>133</sup>

VFPD presently has a development impact fee (DIF) specific to fire services for the area within the District, which was last updated in FY 11-12. The fee was established under the principle that new development in the District would increase the demand for fire protection services. The DIF would fund fire facilities, apparatus and equipment necessary to accommodate residential and non-residential development in the District. The DIF in effect at the end of FY 11-12 was \$1.62 per square foot of new construction. The balance of the capital facilities fund at the beginning of FY 11-12 was \$57,048, while at the end of the same fiscal year the balance was in the red with a deficit of \$116,037. In 2013, VFPD along with several other fire protection districts in Solano County, including Cordelia FPD, Dixon FPD and Suisun FPD, hired a consulting firm to conduct a nexus study to assess and make recommendations regarding a uniform development impact fee for each of the Districts.

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<sup>133</sup> Land in the Travis Reserve is set aside for future expansion of Travis Air Force Base only. If the status of the base changes, the construction of a non-military airport and support uses may be permitted in the Travis Reserve. No residential uses will be permitted in the Travis Reserve. Until a military or airport use is proposed for land with the Travis Reserve designation, the City supports its continued use for agriculture and grazing.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Vacaville Fire Protection District (VFPD) currently has an estimated population of 10,995.
- ❖ VFPD anticipates moderate growth in population within the District in the next decade due to development of large estates and high-value properties. The District is aware of two planned developments within its boundaries that could potentially add about 54 units. Both developments are currently on hold.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 10,995 in 2010 to approximately 11,875 in 2020.

### **DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.<sup>134</sup>

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed a mapping tool to assist in determining which communities meet the disadvantaged communities median household income definition.<sup>135</sup> According to DWR, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to VFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

DWR is not bound by the same law as LAFCO to define communities with a minimum threshold of 12 or more registered voters. Because income information is not available for this level of analysis, disadvantaged unincorporated communities that meet LAFCO's definition cannot be identified at this time.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to VFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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<sup>134</sup> Government Code §56033.5.

<sup>135</sup> Based on census data, the median household income in the State of California in 2010 was \$57,708, 80 percent of which is \$46,166.

## FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by the District and identifies the revenue sources currently available to the District.

The District reported that its financing levels were inadequate to deliver services. Due to the recent economic recession, VFPD lost three paid<sup>136</sup> personnel and have deferred necessary equipment repairs and replacements. Additionally, the District has had to slow the construction of a new station. The District lost some property tax revenue. In order to balance the budget and contain some costs, VFPD cut personnel and scaled back on vehicle maintenance and station upgrades. The District is in the process of renewing its development impact fee to increase its revenues and mitigate the impact of economic challenges.

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### Revenues and Expenses

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The District's revenue in FY 12-13 was \$1.2 million, of which 77 percent was received from property taxes, 20 percent from charges for services (capital facilities fees, photo/microfiche copies, and other professional services), one percent from use of money, one percent from intergovernmental revenue, and one percent from other miscellaneous sources.

The District does not collect any service charges for fire protection services. VFPD has the option of charging for arson fires; the District receives money from the district attorney, if it can prove an incident was the result of arson. VFPD does not receive any special taxes or benefit assessments.

The District's expenditures amounted to nearly \$1.4 million in FY 12-13—63 percent was spent on salaries and benefits, 28 percent on services and supplies, eight percent on other charges, and one percent on fixed assets.

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### Capital Improvements

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The District is in the process of developing a capital improvement plan (CIP), which will be used to identify VFPD infrastructure needs, financing sources for improvements, and construction timeline. The CIP will be reviewed annually and updated every five years.

The District generally uses funding from the development impact fees to finance capital improvements; however, currently the development impact fee fund has a negative balance. VFPD uses its financial reserves to cover some of the CIP upgrades.

The most significant capital expenditure during FY 12-13 was the construction costs associated with the new Station 68. In the next year and the next five years the District plans to spend \$102,795.92 and \$616,774.52 respectively on the construction of Station 68.

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<sup>136</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

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## Outstanding Debt

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At the end of FY 12-13, the District had \$695,624 of long-term debt composed of compensated absences (21 percent) and a promissory note with Solano County Water Agency for construction of Station 68 at Putah Diversion Compound (79 percent).

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## Reserves

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The District has a management practice of keeping two financial reserve funds—one of which is a development impact fee fund that, as was previously mentioned, currently has a negative balance. The second fund is a financial reserve for emergencies, which at the end of FY 2-13 contained about \$200,000.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District reported that its financing levels were inadequate to deliver services. Due to the recent economic recession, VFPD lost three paid personnel and have deferred necessary equipment repairs and replacements. The District also lost some property tax revenue.
- ❖ In order to balance the budget and contain some costs, VFPD cut personnel and scaled back on vehicle maintenance and station upgrades. The District is in the process of renewing its development impact fee (DIF) to increase its revenues and mitigate the impact of economic challenges.
- ❖ A majority of the District's revenue comes from property taxes. Another significant source is charges for services. VFPD does not receive any revenue from special taxes or benefit assessments.
- ❖ The District generally uses funding from the development impact fees to finance capital improvements; however, currently the development impact fee fund has a negative balance. VFPD uses its financial reserves to cover some of the capital improvement upgrades.
- ❖ At the end of FY 12-13, the District had \$695,624 of long-term debt composed of compensated absences and a promissory note with Solano County Water Agency for construction of Station 68 at Putah Diversion Compound.
- ❖ The District has a management practice of keeping two financial reserve funds—one of which is a development impact fee fund that currently has a negative balance. The second fund is a financial reserve for emergencies, which at the end of FY 12-13 contained about \$200,000.

## **PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY**

The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its present service area. However, in case of future growth farmlands near Travis AFB and Pleasant Valley between the stations would require additional capacity. An additional station would have to be constructed to serve Pleasant Valley, which would be challenging due to hilly terrain.



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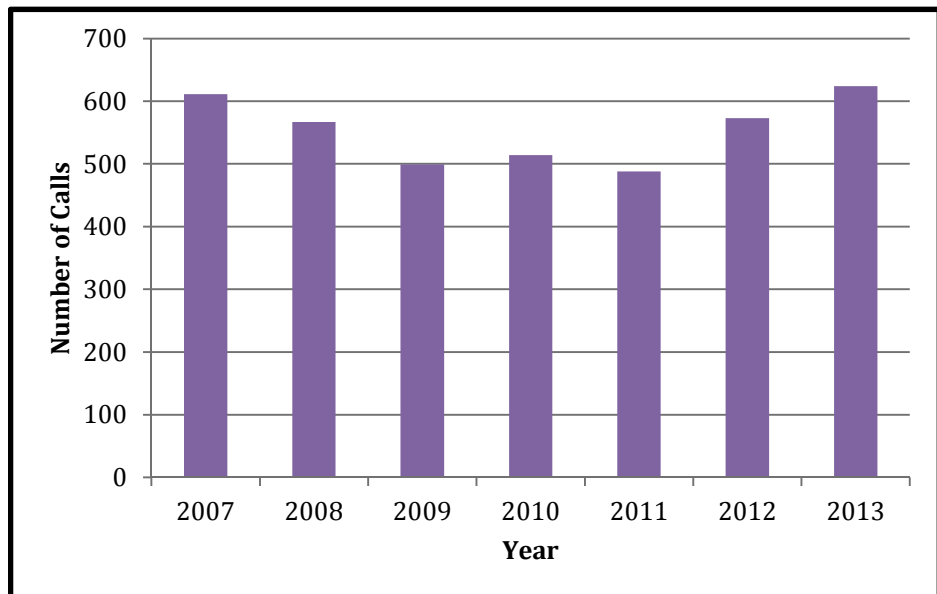
## Existing Demand

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The District reported that its peak demand times were from 11 in the morning until about six in the evening. Most of the incidents occur on Thursdays.

**Figure 9-5: VFPD Number of Calls by Year, 2007-2013**

The District reported that it had observed a slight decrease in service demand in the last few years, but it recently started climbing back up. Minimal population growth has occurred in the last five years (two houses have been constructed). VFPD attributes recent increase to the rise in mutual aid requests from other agencies.



As shown in Figure 9-5, the number of calls has decreased from 2007 to 2011 and rose again in 2012 and 2013. In 2013, the District was dispatched to 624 service calls, out of which 132 (21 percent) were fire related, 269 (43 percent) were medical emergency calls, nine (one percent) were related to hazardous condition, 65 (10 percent) were service calls, 133 (21 percent) were good intent calls, 12 (two percent) were false alarms, and four (one percent) were special incident calls. There were 57 calls per 1,000 residents in 2013.

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## Staffing

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VFPD has 77 firefighting personnel, including one fire chief, one deputy chief, one assistant chief, five battalion chiefs, 16 captains, 16 engineers, and 36 firefighters. The fire chief, one battallion chief and one firefighter are the only paid firefighting personnel. Volunteers receive no compensation. VFPD reported that its compensation for all ranks was equal to or higher than other surrounding fire protection service agencies at the same rank. The District's staffing levels have been fairly constant over the last three years; only in 2013, VFPD lost three firefighting staff. Currently, the median age of the District's firefighters is 33, with a range from 20 to 72. The District attempts to recruit additional volunteers through word of mouth and advertising on the district website.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the firefighter to perform essential and advanced fire ground tasks, as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. The level of certification required for each

firefighter is determined by the individual fire department. However, according to the California State Fire Marshal, there are plans to phase out the Volunteer Firefighter certification level and the most basic level of certification will eventually be Firefighter I. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fireground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of volunteer or call experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>137</sup> The number of VFPD personnel certified in each category is shown in Figure 9-6. Each firefighter, including volunteers, is able to hold multiple certifications, including strike team certifications.

**Figure 9-6: VFPD Certified Personnel**

Certification Level	Number of Firefighting Staff	% of Total Firefighting Staff
Volunteer Firefighter	77	100%
Firefighter I	50	65%
Firefighter II	4	5%
First Responder EMS	51	66%
Emergency Medical Technician 1	26	34%
Paramedic	0	0%
Apparatus Engineer	16	21%
Company Officer	15	19%
Chief Officer	8	10%
Haz Mat FRO	77	100%
CICCS FFT 2	0	0%
CICCS FFT 1	0	0%
CICCS Engine Boss	0	0%
CICCS Strike Team Leader	4	5%

As a volunteer agency, VFPD reported that achieving certification could be a challenge because of the availability of volunteers and cost of training. The District conducts in-house training and requires new volunteers to undergo 40 hours of basic firefighting. Newly hired paid firefighters are required to have experience being a volunteer firefighter with VFPD. VFPD offers 14 hours of training per month to paid firefighters and volunteers.

<sup>137</sup> State Fire Marshal, *Course Information and Required Materials*, 2007, p. 44

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## Facilities

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VFPD currently operates five fire stations. Station 64 is located at 420 Vine Street in Vacaville. The station was built by the District in 1985 and is considered to be in good condition. The station is staffed with four staff, including an administrative assistant, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday through Friday. Station 64 houses two engines, two brush, one squad, one rescue, one water tender, one grass, five utility vehicles, and two trailers.

Station 65 is located in Elmira and was built in 1965. The station was reported to be in good condition and is unstaffed. The station contains two engines, one brush, one squad, one utility vehicle, and one boat.

Station 67, located in Vacaville, was built in 1975 and reported to be in good condition. The station is unstaffed and houses multiple vehicles, including one engine, one brush, one water tender, one grass, one pump, one air unit, one all wheel, and one rescue unit vehicle.

Station 68 was constructed in 2011 and is in excellent condition. It is located in Winters and houses one engine, one brush, one water tender, and one reserve tender. The station is unstaffed.

Station 69, also in Winters, is used for water rescue and contains one boat and one antique engine. It was built in 1970 and is considered to be in fair condition. The station is unstaffed.

All of the stations are owned by the District with the exception of stations 68 and 69 where the land is owned by USFS, but the buildings and improvements by VFPD. Stations 68 and 69 are located outside of the District's boundaries. Each station is described in more detail in Figure 9-7.

**Figure 9-7: VFPD Fire Stations**

	Station 64	Station 65	Station 67
Property owner	VFPD	VFPD	VFPD
Address	420 Vine Street Vacaville, CA 95688	6080 A Street Elmira, CA 95625	4315 Cantelow Road, Vacaville, CA 95688
Purpose	Fire station	Fire station	Fire station
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	Training room Board meetings	Hall rental	None
Hours station is staffed	8am-5pm Sunday-Friday	Unstaffed	Unstaffed
Date acquired or built	1985	1965	1975
Condition of facility <sup>138</sup>	Good	Good	Good
Infrastructure Needs	None	None	Needs to be replaced
Number and type of vehicles at facility	2 Engines, 2 Brush,1 Squad, 1 Rescue,1 Water Tender, 1 Grass, 5 Utilities,2 Trailers	2 Engines, 1 Brush 1 Squad, 1 Utility 1 Boat	1 Engine, 1 Brush 1 Water Tender 1 Grass, 1 Pump, 1 Air Unit, 1 All- wheel, Rescue unit
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	1 Fire Chief 1 Admin Asst. 1 Battalion Chief 1 Firefighter	None	1 Mechanic
Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	None	None	None
Number of volunteers staffing facility	34	21	16
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	77	77	77

<sup>138</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

	Station 68	Station 69
Property owner	VFPD, USFS	VFPD, USFS
Address	4012 Canal Lane Winters, CA 95694	8684 Pleasants Valley Rd, Winters, CA 95694
Purpose	Fire station	Water rescue
Additional uses or other entities using the facility	None	None
Hours station is staffed	Unstaffed	Unstaffed
Date acquired or built	2011	1970
Condition of facility <sup>139</sup>	Excellent	Fair
Infrastructure Needs	Currently under construction	Repairs are needed to improve condition
Number and type of vehicles at facility	1 Engine, 1 Bush 1 Water Tender 1 Reserve Tender	1 Boat 1 Antique Engine
Number and classification of paid staff staffing facility	None	None
Number and classification of another agency's paid staff staffing the facility	None	None
Number of volunteers staffing facility	6	26
Number of volunteers/on call staff available to respond to an incident utilizing a vehicle from this station	77	103

For water supply, the District uses the existing hydrant systems, in addition to each of the stations having a water tender available for each incident as needed.

It appears that currently there is marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of its facilities. The District has delayed

<sup>139</sup> Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

construction and repairs, due to financial constraints. Station 67 needs to be replaced and Station 69 requires significant repairs to improve its condition. Station 68 is currently under construction. The assessment of the District's capacity based on its response times revealed that VFPD also has marginal capacity as it exceeds the response time set as a standard by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The District's 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response time is also longer than the City of Vacaville standard for response to medical emergencies in rural areas.

Adequate response to future growth areas may present a challenge as the District would require an additional fire station in the Pleasant Valley area. Currently, the main capacity constraint is the District's financing challenges.

### Dispatch and communications

With the exception of East Vallejo FPD all the fire protection districts in Solano County, including VFPD, contract with Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for dispatch services. East Vallejo FPD is dispatched through the City of Vallejo. The cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo each have their own dispatch center.

VFPD entered into a contract with the Sheriff's Department on July 1st, 2014 for a term of three years ending on June 30, 2017. Compensation by the District to the Sheriff is determined by a CAD printout of incidents according to the following formula:

- 1) ADC (Average Daily Calls)/SADC (Sheriff's Average Daily Calls) = %
- 2) % of ADC of Sheriff's Dispatch Budget \* % of ADC = Cost to the District

The Solano County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center also provides dispatch services to the Sheriff's Office, Isleton Police and Fire, Dixon Police and Fire, California Medical Facility, Rio Vista/Delta Fire Districts, and Solano Community College Police on a 24-hour basis. The Sheriff's Dispatch Center also handles coordination of air ambulance for scene calls to all areas of the County (city or county), coordination of all mutual aid for the County, and out of county requests.

The dispatch center operates with at least two people on duty at all times. The center operators answer and transmit on three primary radio channels, seven secondary channels and a number of other law and fire radios for other agencies. The dispatch center also answers 12 business lines, four Nextels, six 911 lines, numerous alarm panels, fax requests, and mobile data computer messages.

Communication equipment is sometimes not compatible making it difficult to communicate when coordinating a mutual aid call. Many of the districts have mutual aid agreements with the cities. Dispatch becomes a challenge if the nearest responder is a city agency or if a city requires assistance from a district. Often times it takes multiple calls to different departments to get assistance sent.

The District's suggestion for dispatch improvement was creation of a central consolidated dispatch center, which would allow all the fire departments and districts in the County to know which units are in service. VFPD is interested in working with other fire protection agencies on cost sharing to finance a central dispatch system.



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## Infrastructure Needs

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As was previously mentioned, Station 67 needs to be replaced and Station 69's condition improved through multiple repairs. The District estimates that the replacement of Station 67 will cost about \$2 million. The replacement project is currently on hold due to financial constraints. VFPD is also in the process of constructing Station 68. The project is scheduled to be finished in two to three years with a total cost of \$1.5 million. Station repairs and upgrades are financed through DIF funds and the general fund. In addition, the District is in need of another station in the area of Pleasant Valley Road and Cantelow Road; however, VFPD has not started planning for the project. The District reported that it needed multiple vehicles replaced, as they had come to the end of their useful life. The details of replacement schedule and costs will be included in the new CIP, which is currently being developed.

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## Challenges

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VFPD did not identify any areas within the District, which were difficult to serve. The only area with difficult terrain reported is the Pleasant Valley area where a new station needs to be constructed.

The primary challenge experienced by the District is limited financial resources. Due to the recent economic recession, VFPD had to lay off multiple staff and delay necessary facility and vehicle upgrades. The District hopes to mitigate the effects of the economic crisis with the increased development impact fee.

## **SERVICE ADEQUACY**

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. VFPD has an ISO rating of 5/8B throughout its service area. The District was last evaluated in 2013.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued response time performance standards depending on the service structure of the agency. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, these standards provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. For agencies with paid staff, NFPA 1710 identifies the response time guideline of six minutes at least 90 percent of the time. For volunteer and combination fire departments, NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14 minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are

directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>140</sup> VFPD falls within the definition of a rural demand zone and would therefore be subject to the NFPA 1720 guidelines.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) has designated an exclusive operating area (EOA) in Solano County for EMS and ambulance services provided by Medic Ambulance Services and the City of Vacaville. The EOA for Medic includes all territory in Solano County with the exception of the City of Vacaville, Travis Air Force Base, and the territory designated as Zone C.<sup>141</sup> SEMSA has the responsibility for assuring that all the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county have a safe, dependable and responsive pre hospital Emergency Medical Care system. In the EOA for the Medic, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority calls for all participating member cities. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses. Compliance with these requirements is determined on a monthly basis. If a city providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards, it is fined. The amount payable by Medic to the participating member cities reflects the estimated cost savings to Medic under the SEMSC agreement due to the first response of the participating member cities. Medic on the other hand is required to respond within nine to 12 minutes in areas identified as urban areas, 15 minutes in areas designated as rural and 90 minutes in remote areas. The entire territory of VFPD falls within Zone C, which means that ALS first responder and ALS transport services within the District are provided by the City of Vacaville, which operates under the guidance of Solano County Department of Emergency Medical Services as a part of SEMSC. Response times in the City of Vacaville are measured at seven minutes for urban calls within the city limits and 15 minutes for rural calls. All calls outside the city limits regardless of distance are considered “rural” and measured at the 15-minute standard. This designation is based on historical precedent.<sup>142</sup>

Although these standards are intended for ALS providers, which VFPD is not, the City of Vacaville response standard for rural areas indicates what is considered appropriate response times for medical emergencies for the District.

VFPD’s 80<sup>th</sup> percentile response time is 15.62 minutes, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile response time is 18.46 minutes, the median response time is 10.73 minutes, and average response time is 11.56 minutes.

The service area size for each fire station varies between fire districts. The median fire station in Solano County serves approximately 39.8 square miles. Dixon FPD station serves the most expansive area (320 square miles). Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area for East Vallejo FPD (Vallejo FD) fire stations is 8.3 square miles. By comparison, each fire station in VFPD serves approximately 27 square miles.

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<sup>140</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

<sup>141</sup> Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative Ambulance Service Agreement, April 10, 2010.

<sup>142</sup> County of Solano Emergency Medical Services Agency, Annual Report, FY 2012-13, p. 18

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another indicator of level of service; however, it is approximate. The providers that rely on volunteer or call firefighters may have differing staff availability and reliability. An agency with more firefighters could have fewer resources, if availability is limited due to work and personal obligations. Staffing levels in Solano County vary from 0.68 firefighters per 1,000 residents in EVFPD to 29 in MFPD. To compare, VFPD has about seven firefighting personnel per 1,000 residents.

Operating expenditures per capita is often reflective of the level of service offered by a fire provider as determined by financing constraints. The least amount of money per capita was spent by Dixon FPD (\$79). Montezuma FPD expended the most per capita (\$499), as it serves a relatively expansive area with very low population density. To compare, VFPD spent \$114 per capita in FY 12-13.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its present service area. However, in case of future growth farmlands near Travis AFB and Pleasant Valley between the stations would require additional capacity. An additional station would have to be constructed to serve Pleasant Valley, which would be challenging due to hilly terrain.
- ❖ Data analysis showed the District's marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of its facilities. The District has delayed construction and repairs, due to financial constraints. Station repairs and upgrades are typically financed through DIF funds and the general fund.
- ❖ The District additionally has a need to replace multiple vehicles as they have come to the end of their useful life.
- ❖ Assessment of the District's capacity based on its response times revealed that VFPD lacks sufficient capacity to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for response to structural fire calls and the City of Vacaville standards for response to medical emergencies in rural areas.
- ❖ VFPD services appear to be marginally adequate. The District has longer than adequate response times but its ISO rating is comparable to other providers in the County. The District has seven firefighters serving every 1,000 residents, which is more than districts with higher population densities like DFPD and EVFPD (due to combined city and district estimates), but less than other more sparsely populated districts; every station in VFPD serves a fairly small area of 27 square miles.
- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts financial audits for every fiscal year, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. A significant improvement to the District's management practices would be short- and long-term capital improvement planning, which is currently being developed by the District. The agency would also benefit from conducting strategic planning and service demand projections.

## STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES

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### Shared Facilities and Regional Cooperation

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#### Shared Facilities

VFPD presently does not practice facility or vehicle sharing with any other agency.

In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the District reported that Station 68 could also be used jointly with Cal Fire. VFPD did not identify any opportunities for future vehicle sharing.

#### Collaboration

As previously mentioned in the *Type and Extent of Services* section, VFPD has automatic aid agreements with City of Vacaville Fire Department, City of Winters Fire Department and California Medical Facility Fire Department. Additionally, the District is a part of a master mutual aid agreement, which dates from 1996, with several Solano and Yolo County fire agencies, including the City of Benicia, the City of Dixon, the City of Fairfield, the City of Rio Vista, the City of Suisun, the City of Vacaville, the City of Vallejo, the County of Solano, the American Canyon FPD, the California Medical Facility FD, Delta FPD, Cordelia FPD, Exxon Benicia Refinery FD, Gordon Valley FD, Montezuma FPD, Suisun FPD, Travis AFB, and Cal Fire.

VFPD is a part of the statewide mutual aid agreement through the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and has a mutual aid agreement with the California State Prison in the City of Vacaville.

VFPD provides select services jointly with other agencies, including dive rescue program with the County Sherriff's Office and new commercial construction plan reviews in cooperation with Solano County.

The District participates in two joint powers authorities (JPAs)—the Fire Agencies Self Insurance System for workers' compensation (FASIS) and the Fire Agencies Insurances Risk Authority (FAIRA) for liability and property insurance. Additionally, VFPD is a member of the JPA called the Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC), which is comprised of all the cities in Solano County, except for the City of Vacaville, and all the fire districts in the unincorporated areas of the County.<sup>143</sup> Fire districts are represented by one member on the SEMSC seven-member Board of Directors. The SEMSC was designated by the Solano County Board of Supervisors as the Local EMS Agency (LEMSA) for Solano County. The SEMSC has all of the responsibilities and authority vested in a local EMS Agency, including the ability to select, via a competitive process, a provider for emergency ambulance service.

VFPD meets regularly with several city fire departments including Vacaville FD, Dixon FD, Rio Vista FD, Suisun FD, and Fairfield FD.

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<sup>143</sup> Services cover the Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) except 1) the territories of the City of Vacaville and Travis Air Force Base, and the territory of Solano County known as "Zone C", 2) the territory of Sacramento County that incorporates the territories of the Delta FPD and the City of Isleton, and 3) the territory of Napa County designated as the Gordon Valley.

The District participates in regional planning efforts with Solano County Water Agency on the issues that arise from the management of the dam and occasionally with Amtrak. Also, as previously mentioned in the *Growth Strategies* section, VFPD is taking part in a development impact fee study with three other fire protection districts in the County.

Additionally, VFPD is a member of several collaborative organizations, including the Fire District Association of California, the California Fire Chiefs Association, the Solano County Fire Chiefs Association, the Solano County Firefighters' Association, and the National Fire Protection Association.

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## Management Efficiencies

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While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, track employee and agency productivity, periodically review agency performance, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, conduct advanced planning for future service needs, and plan and budget for capital needs.

VFPD employs five full time personnel including one fire chief, one administrative assistant, one maintenance officer, one battalion chief, and one firefighter. All other staff, including 74 firefighting and one administrative, are volunteers. The fire chief, who reports to the Board of Directors, oversees an investigator, maintenance officer, deputy chief, and administrative assistant. Assistant chief, who is accountable to the deputy chief, is in charge of five battalion chiefs. Battalion chiefs manage captains, engineers and firefighters.

The District's fire chief and the administrative assistant are responsible for the day-to-day operations of VFPD. Paid personnel are biannually evaluated by the chief, who is also regularly evaluated by the Board of Directors. Chief presents regular district performance updates at board meetings. Volunteers are informally evaluated by their superiors. If any issues arise regarding the performance of a volunteer, these issues are discussed at officers' meetings.

Overall agency performance is evaluated informally at regular officers' meetings, where the participants look at the District's performance indicators and compare them to these of other similar districts in the area. Some of the indicators reviewed electronically are response times, types of calls received and personnel and training standards. These measures help the District determine resource allocation needs and areas that require improvement.

VFPD tracks the workload of paid staff through basic timesheets. Volunteers fill out timesheets for particular projects. In addition, personnel workload is tracked through maintenance logs and response logs. The District reported, that it continuously had been undertaking efforts to improve its operational efficiency. One of the latest successes was the use of computer programs by the training officer that make charts and tables that show the overall picture which helps determine shortfalls and needs.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget and audited financial statements, which are audited by Solano County every two years for every fiscal year. VFPD does not presently have any other planning documents. Short-term goals are

established in the budgets, while long-term objective are planned for in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which is currently being developed.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ VFPD presently does not practice facility or vehicle sharing with any other agency.
- ❖ In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the District reported that Station 68 could be used jointly with Cal Fire.

## **LAFCO POLICIES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY**

Solano LAFCO has adopted a policy that directly affects service delivery by fire protection districts in the County. Standard 11 in the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires that a city applying to LAFCO for annexation of a specific territory that belongs in this case to a fire protection district must offset the negative consequences of that annexation, which may include negative effects on the district's budget or service provision. The annexing city is required to work with the affected district to identify and mitigate the impacts. Adequate mitigation to adverse fiscal impact normally includes a funding source for lost revenues or increased costs to the affected special district. A common practice in Solano County is to negotiate a property tax neutrality agreement for a specific period of time between the annexing city and the negatively affected special district.

In case of VFPD, the district recently negotiated a property tax neutrality agreement with the City of Vacaville for a particular annexation, which sunsets after 25 years. The negative side of it, however, is that once mitigation payments have ceased, the District will still face a loss of regular income.

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## Determinations

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.
- ❖ VFPD negotiated a property tax neutrality agreement with the City of Vacaville for a particular annexation for 25 years, after which the mitigation payments will cease.



## VACAVILLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT DETERMINATIONS

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### Growth and Population Projections

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- ❖ Vacaville Fire Protection District (VFPD) currently has an estimated population of 10,995.
- ❖ VFPD anticipates moderate growth in population within the District in the next decade due to development of large estates and high-value properties. The District is aware of two planned developments within its boundaries that could potentially add about 54 units. Both developments are currently on hold.
- ❖ Based on Department of Finance population forecasts, the District's population is projected to increase from 10,995 in 2010 to approximately 11,875 in 2020.

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### The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI

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- ❖ According to the Department of Water Resources, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community in Solano County. As such, there are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or adjacent to VFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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### Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

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- ❖ The District reported that it presently had sufficient capacity to provide adequate services to its present service area. However, in case of future growth farmlands near Travis AFB and Pleasant Valley between the stations would require additional capacity. An additional station would have to be constructed to serve Pleasant Valley, which would be challenging due to hilly terrain.
- ❖ Data analysis showed the District's marginal capacity to provide adequate services to the existing service area based on the condition of its facilities. The District has delayed construction and repairs, due to financial constraints. Station repairs and upgrades are typically financed through DIF funds and the general fund.
- ❖ The District additionally has a need to replace multiple vehicles as they have come to the end of their useful life.
- ❖ Assessment of the District's capacity based on its response times revealed that VFPD lacks sufficient capacity to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for response to structural fire calls and the City of Vacaville standards for response to medical emergencies in rural areas.
- ❖ VFPD services appear to be marginally adequate. The District has longer than adequate response times but its ISO rating is comparable to other providers in the

County. The District has seven firefighters serving every 1,000 residents, which is more than districts with higher population densities like DFPD and EVFPD (due to combined city and district estimates), but less than other more sparsely populated districts; every station in VFPD serves a fairly small area of 27 square miles.

- ❖ District management methods appear to generally meet accepted best management practices. The District prepares a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conducts financial audits for every fiscal year, maintains current transparent financial records, tracks employee and district workload, and has an established process to address complaints. A significant improvement to the District's management practices would be short- and long-term capital improvement planning, which is currently being developed by the District. The agency would also benefit from conducting strategic planning and service demand projections.

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### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The District reported that its financing levels were inadequate to deliver services. Due to the recent economic recession, VFPD lost three paid personnel and have deferred necessary equipment repairs and replacements. The District also lost some property tax revenue.
- ❖ In order to balance the budget and contain some costs, VFPD cut personnel and scaled back on vehicle maintenance and station upgrades. The District is in the process of renewing its development impact fee (DIF) to increase its revenues and mitigate the impact of economic challenges.
- ❖ A majority of the District's revenue comes from property taxes. Another significant source is charges for services. VFPD does not receive any revenue from special taxes or benefit assessments.
- ❖ The District generally uses funding from the development impact fees to finance capital improvements; however, currently the development impact fee fund has a negative balance. VFPD uses its financial reserves to cover some of the capital improvement upgrades.
- ❖ At the end of FY 12-13, the District had \$695,624 of long-term debt composed of compensated absences and a promissory note with Solano County Water Agency for construction of Station 68 at Putah Diversion Compound.
- ❖ The District has a management practice of keeping two financial reserve funds—one of which is a development impact fee fund that currently has a negative balance. The second fund is a financial reserve for emergencies, which at the end of FY 12-13 contained about \$200,000.

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### Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ VFPD presently does not practice facility or vehicle sharing with any other agency.
- ❖ In terms of opportunities for future facility sharing, the District reported that Station 68 could be used jointly with Cal Fire.

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## Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ The District generally demonstrated accountability and transparency with regard to governance by adopting an annual budget prior to the start of the fiscal year, publishing agendas for public meetings as legally required, and maintaining a website. Although the District cooperated with LAFCO during the MSR process and provided all the information, requests required multiple follow up attempts.
- ❖ Several improvements could be made to the District's operations in order to enhance accountability and transparency. District policies and procedures and financial information as well as Board of Directors meeting materials, including agendas and minutes, should be made readily available to the public on its website.
- ❖ The District needs to continue its practice of ensuring and documenting that all board members have completed ethics training if the District's board members receive compensation or expense reimbursements. It was reported that the District's board members last received ethics training in 2012.
- ❖ Governance structure options for VFPD include functional or full consolidation with other fire protection agencies in Solano County. Consolidation may include regional merger with CFPD and SFPD along I 80, consolidation of all the districts serving unincorporated territory, functional consolidation with the cities of Vacaville and/or Fairfield, or countywide consolidation that includes all city fire departments and fire districts.

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## LAFCO Policies Affecting Service Delivery

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- ❖ Standard 11 of the LAFCO Standards and Procedures manual requires the city annexing territory from a special district to mitigate the negative impact on that district. Common mitigation practice of adverse fiscal impact includes a negotiated property tax neutrality agreement.
- ❖ VFPD negotiated a property tax neutrality agreement with the City of Vacaville for a particular annexation for 25 years, after which the mitigation payments will cease.

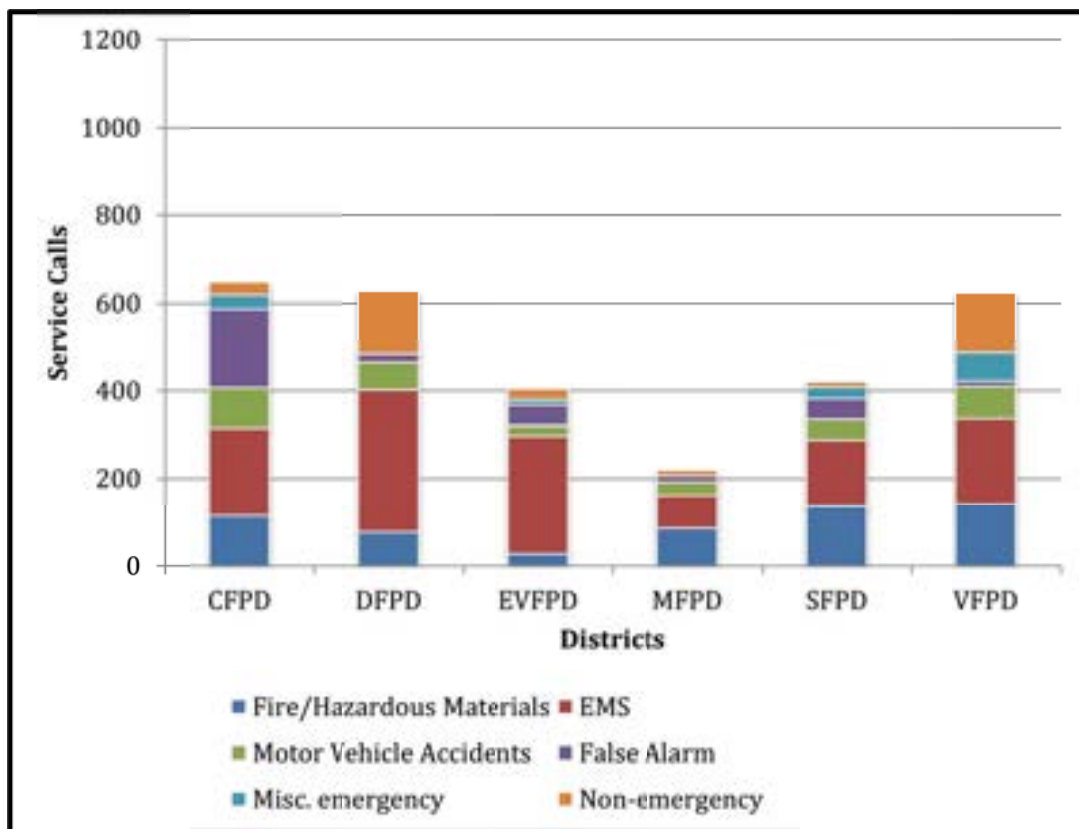
# 10. FIRE SERVICES COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an overview and comparison of fire districts in Solano County, based on the information reported in each of the district's individual chapters.

## SERVICE DEMAND

In 2013, the districts in Solano County responded to approximately 2,944 calls for fire, EMS, and other emergency response services. In other words, there were about eight calls for service per day to which Solano fire districts were dispatched. A call for service does not indicate the number of responses by each jurisdiction, as multiple jurisdictions may respond to a single call. The number of calls in Figure 10-1 is as reported by each agency and includes false alarms.

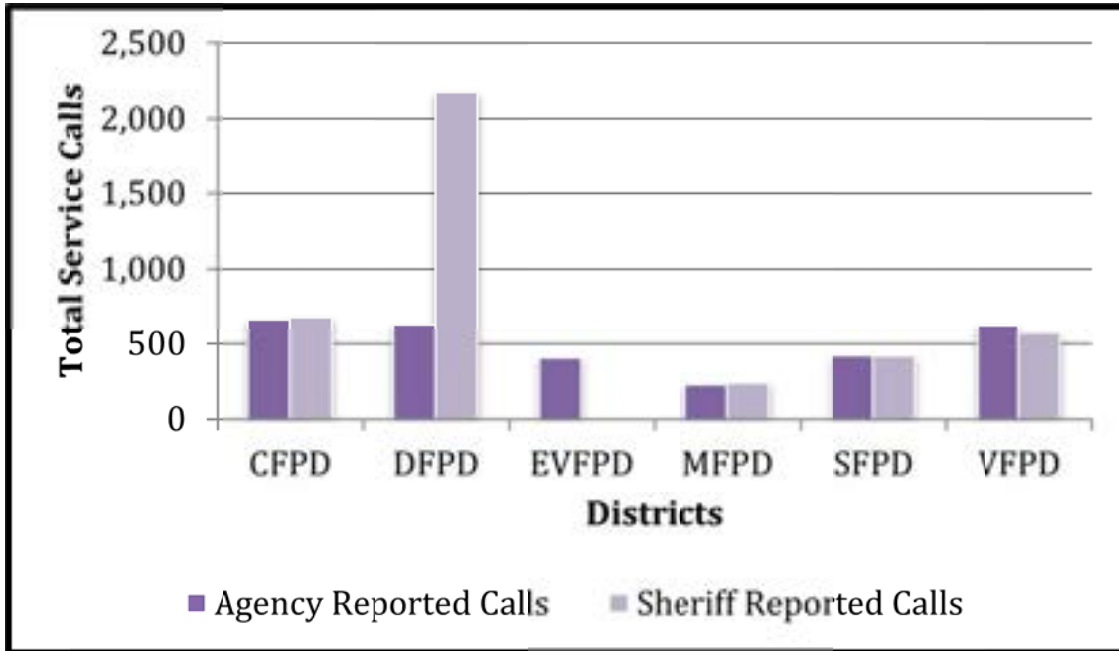
**Figure 10-1: Fire Agency Service Calls by Type, 2013**



The number of calls reported by the Solano County Sheriff's Office for each district (excluding EVFPD, which is dispatched by the City of Vallejo), differs from that reported by the districts. For CFPD and MFPD, the number of calls reported by the Sheriff's Office is slightly higher than what was reported by these districts, while the Sheriff reported number of calls for SFPD and VFPD is slightly lower. The number of calls reported by the Sheriff for DFPD is significantly higher than the actual number of calls as it includes all areas of DFD service area. The discrepancy between the two reporting entities fluctuated

between eight and two percent for all five districts. Since the discrepancy appears to be small, as is also evident from Figure 10-2, the inconsistency may be attributed to different recording methods that may include the agency’s practice of counting or excluding calls canceled at various points in time.

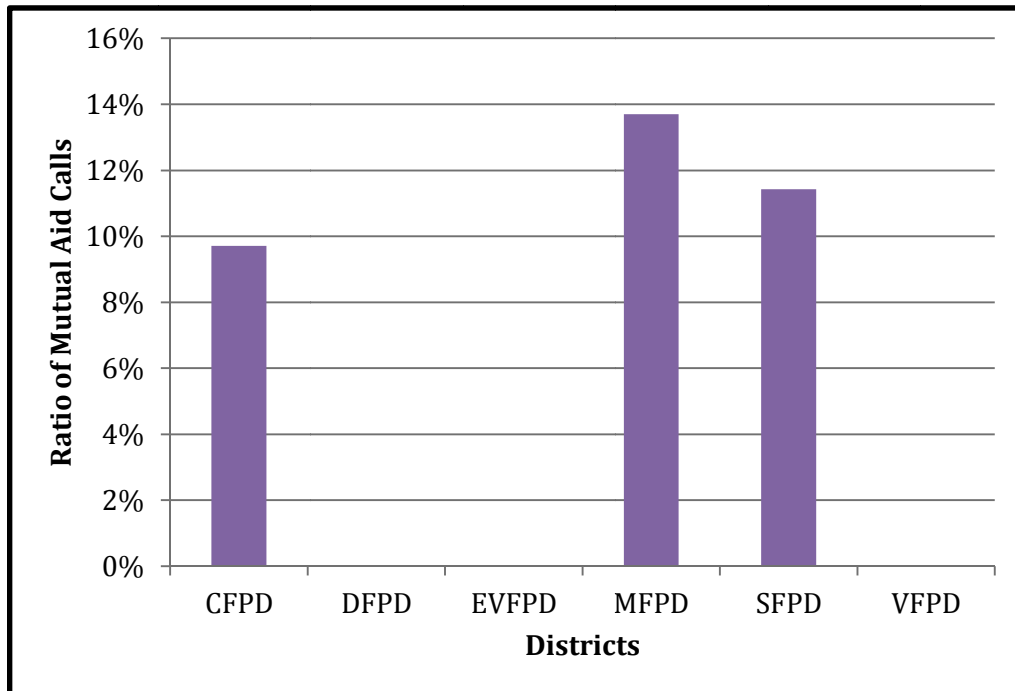
**Figure 10-2: Total Service Calls by Reporting Agency, 2013**



A majority of the calls (32 percent) experienced by all of the districts were medical emergencies, which is similar to call patterns experienced in rural areas of the State. The count for DFPD, however, was approximate and may be slightly inflated (52 percent) since the District only provided the total number of calls within its boundary area without breaking it down by call type. To estimate the number of EMS calls within DFPD bounds, the author used the share of medical emergency calls that the Dixon FD staff responded to within the City’s and the District’s combined service area. Similarly, the incident breakdown for DFPD in Figure 10-1 includes calls responded to within the City and the District. EVFPD responded to 67 percent of medical emergency calls within the District’s boundaries. Among the districts that do not contract with cities for their services, medical emergency calls constituted between 31 and 36 percent of all calls.

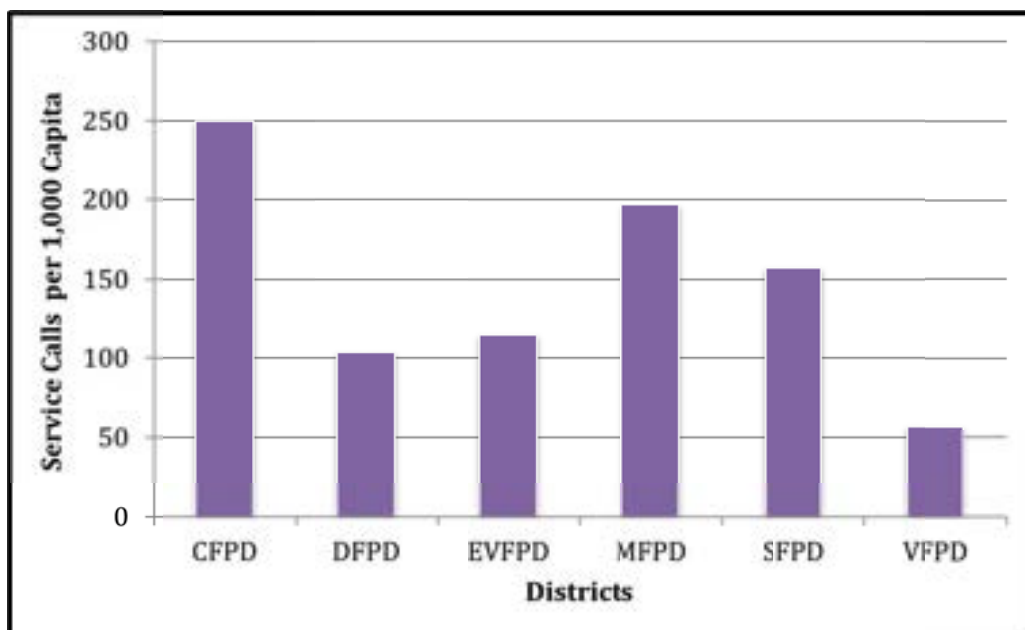
Calls for fire-related events (structure, vehicle and wildland) and hazardous materials among all the districts accounted for 19 percent of the incident volume on average, as shown in Figure 10-1. Rural districts with extensive wildland areas and a greater wildfire hazard tend to have a higher share of calls related to fire. MFPD had the highest percentage (39 percent) of fire-related calls among the five districts, while EVFPD had the lowest share (seven percent).

**Figure 10-3: Fire Agency Ratio of Mutual Aid Calls, 2013**



During 2013, three fire agencies—CFPD, MFPD and SFPD—provided support to neighboring providers in the form of 140 mutual aid responses, which was approximately 11 percent of all responses provided by these three districts. The ratio of mutual aid responses varied by agency, as shown in Figure 10-3. Given that Dixon FPD and East Vallejo FPD contract for services from the city fire departments, it is impracticable to attribute certain mutual aid calls to these districts or the city fire departments. Vacaville FPD failed to provide the number of mutual aid calls for 2013.

**Figure 10-4: Service Calls per 1,000 Residents, 2013**





Districts countywide averaged 109 service calls per 1,000 residents in 2013.<sup>144</sup> The volume of service demand may vary between jurisdictions based on the population's age and access to primary healthcare, visitor counts, highway miles and risk of wildland fires within the agency's boundaries. The number of service calls per 1,000 residents varied from 57 in Vacaville FPD to 250 within CFPD's service area, as shown in Figure 10-4.

Each of the jurisdictions experiences different peak periods of demand. Urban areas tend to experience the most service calls during daytime hours on weekdays, while rural and wilderness areas have the highest calls for service in the evenings and on weekends when residents have returned home from work. For example, DFPD receives most of its calls during daylight and early evening hours when people are most active. While for CFPD service calls are higher in volume during commuting hours and on Friday and Saturday nights.

The areas that are currently at the highest risk for fires are found in western Solano County, in the foothills and mountainous watershed areas, and also in grasslands located throughout the County. The Benicia Hills, Potrero Hills, Cement Hills, and western English Hills are all designated as high-risk fire areas. Before nearby lowlands were urbanized, vegetation in these west foothill and mountainous communities was naturally maintained by periodic fire. As nearby lands were developed, natural wildfires were suppressed, resulting in the further buildup of fire-prone brush and woodland. These efforts to suppress natural processes have resulted in larger, more damaging fires.

## SERVICE ADEQUACY

This section contains a discussion on service adequacy indicators, which is intended to identify outliers—providers with relatively high service levels and those providers that could take steps to improve certain aspects of service provision. The fire and emergency medical service adequacy measures discussed here include firefighter certification rates, response times, ISO ratings, coverage adequacy, staffing, best management practices, and accountability indicators.

### Response Times

Response times reflect the time elapsed between the dispatch of personnel and the arrival of the first responder on the scene. As such, response times do not include the time required to transport a victim to the hospital. The response times include the dispatching time of fire personnel. Response times are generally faster for more compact service areas and longer in large districts. Response times also vary depending on the number and location of stations and firefighters available.

Particularly in cases involving patients who have stopped breathing or are suffering from heart attacks, the chances of survival improve when the patient receives medical care quickly. Similarly, a quick fire suppression response can potentially prevent a structure fire from reaching the “flashover” point at which very rapid fire spreading occurs—generally in less than 10 minutes.

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<sup>144</sup> Service calls as reported by each agency. Population is the estimated residential population in the providers' service area based on GIS analysis of 2010 Census data.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued response time performance standards depending on the service structure of the agency. The response time is measured from the completion of the dispatch notification to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. Though not a legal mandate, these standards provide a useful benchmark against which to measure fire department performance. For agencies with paid staff, NFPA 1710 identifies the response time guideline of six minutes at least 90 percent of the time. For volunteer and combination fire departments, NFPA 1720 recommends that the response times for structure fire be nine minutes in urban demand zones at least 90 percent of the time, 10 minutes in suburban zones at least 80 percent of the time and 14 minutes in rural zones at least 80 percent of the time. Response times in remote zones are directly dependent on travel distances.<sup>145</sup> MFPD, SFPD and VFPD fall within the definition of rural demand zones and are therefore subject to the NFPA 1720 guidelines. CFPD also falls under the definition of a rural demand zone and would be subject to the NFPA 1720 guidelines; however, the District aims to meet the NFPA 1710 guidelines. DFPD served by Dixon FD a combination fire department that relies on both, volunteer and paid firefighters. DFPD is subject to NFPA 1720 guideline, but strives to achieve response times set by NFPA 1710. EVFPD is the only fire protection district in Solano County that falls within the definition of an urban demand zone with paid staff and is therefore subject to the NFPA 1710 guidelines.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative (SEMSC) has designated an exclusive operating area (EOA) in Solano County for EMS and ambulance services provided by Medic Ambulance Services and the City of Vacaville. The EOA for Medic includes all territory in Solano County with the exception of the City of Vacaville, Travis Air Force Base, and the territory designated as Zone C.<sup>146</sup> SEMSC has the responsibility for assuring that all the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County have a safe, dependable and responsive pre-hospital emergency medical care system. In the EOA for Medic, the response time guideline is seven minutes 90 percent of the time for a Code 3 response to a 911 priority calls for all participating member cities. There is no response time standard for Code 2 responses. Compliance with these requirements is determined on a monthly basis. If a city providing ALS services fails to comply with these response time standards, it is fined by the Medic. The amount payable by Medic to the participating member cities reflects the estimated cost savings to Medic under the SEMSC agreement due to the first response of the participating member cities. Medic on the other hand is required to respond within nine to 12 minutes in areas identified as urban areas, 15 minutes in areas designated as rural and 90 minutes in remote areas. The City of Vacaville operates under the guidance of Solano County Department of Emergency Medical Services as a part of SEMSC. Response times in the City of Vacaville are measured at seven minutes for urban calls within the city limits and 15 minutes for rural

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<sup>145</sup> Urban demand zone has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile; suburban zone—between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile, rural zone—less than 500 people per square mile, and remote zone is identified by eight or more miles of travel distance to an incident.

<sup>146</sup> Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative Ambulance Service Agreement, April 10, 2010.

calls. All calls outside the city limits, regardless of distance, are considered “rural” and measured at the 15-minute standard. This designation is based on historical precedent.<sup>147</sup>

Although three out of six fire protection districts in Solano County are not ALS providers and are not required to meet the SEMSC response standards, the measure approximates what may be considered appropriate response times to medical emergencies in rural areas of Solano County. DFPD and EVFPD provide non-transport ALS through their contractor cities, Dixon and Vallejo, respectively. Cordelia FPD is also an ALS provider. The Medic response standard for rural areas indicates what is considered appropriate response times for medical emergencies for CFPD, DFPD, EVFPD, MFPD, and SFPD. The City of Vacaville response standard for rural areas indicates what is considered appropriate response times for medical emergencies for VFPD.<sup>148</sup>

MFPD is the only district in Solano County that does not track its response times for each incident and was not able to provide the requested data, and therefore was omitted from the data analysis. The Sheriff’s Office, being the agency that provides dispatch services for five out of six fire protection districts in Solano County, also reported that it did not track each incident’s response time for any of the districts.

As shown in Figure 10-5, CFPD and SFPD meet the NFPA 1720 response time standard and DFPD nearly meets the NFPA 1720 standard. VFPD’s 80<sup>th</sup> percentile response time exceeds the response time set as a standard by NFPA 1720 by about a minute and a half. EVFPD does not meet the NFPA 1710 response time guideline. CFPD and DFPD meet the Medic response standard for rural areas. SFPD’s response time is slightly longer than the Medic standard. Similarly, VFPD’s response time exceeds the emergency medical response time set as a standard by the City of Vacaville. As was previously mentioned, however, the districts that do not provide ALS are not required to meet the SEMSC response time standards. This measure is an approximation of appropriate response times to medical emergencies.

**Figure 10-5: Response Times (minutes)**

Agency	Standard	District's Goal	Median	80th Percentile	90th Percentile	Meet guideline?
CFPD	NFPA 1720 (14 min 80%)	NFPA 1710 (6 min 90%)	5.88	9.28	10.82	Yes
DFPD	NFPA 1720 (14 min 80%)	NFPA 1710 (6 min 90%)	11.5	14.22	15.55	Nearly
EVFPD	NFPA 1710 (6 min 90%)	None	5.5	7	8.7	No
MFPD	NFPA 1720 (14 min 80%)	County standard of 3 minutes	NP	NP	NP	Unknown
SFPD	NFPA 1720 (14 min 80%)	NFPA 1720 (14 min 80%)	7.75	13.13	16.7	Yes
VFPD	NFPA 1720 (14 min 80%)	None	10.73	15.62	18.46	No

<sup>147</sup> County of Solano Emergency Medical Services Agency, Annual Report, FY 2012-13, p. 18

<sup>148</sup> The measure of the response to medical emergencies is approximate as it was not possible to separate response times for medical emergencies from other types of calls.

ISO Ratings

The Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization, classifies fire service in communities from 1 to 10, indicating the general adequacy of coverage. Communities with the best systems for water distribution, fire department facilities, equipment and personnel and fire alarms and communications receive a rating of 1. A Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating has a direct bearing on the cost of property insurance for every home and building in a community. In the case of split classifications, the first class generally applies to properties within five miles of a station and 1,000 feet of a hydrant. The second class applies to areas within five miles of a station but beyond 1,000 feet of a hydrant. Unlike the aforementioned NFPA performance standards that set different response time goals for volunteer and paid<sup>149</sup> fire departments, ISO standards are the same regardless of staffing type and whether an area is rural or urban.

**Figure 10-6: ISO Ratings**

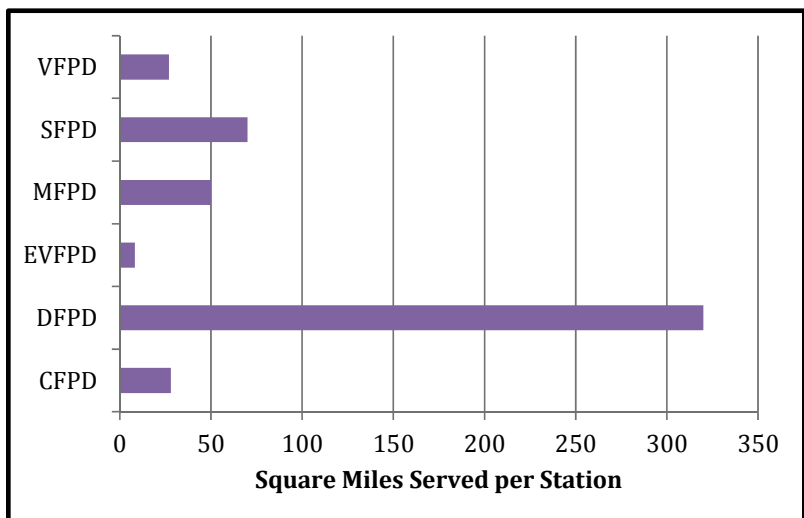
ISO ratings differ for every fire provider. Fire providers in Solano County have ISO ratings ranging from three to 10. Many providers have multiple ratings depending on the location of hydrants and stations in the area. As is evident from the Figure 10-6, the best ISO rating of three was received by East Vallejo FPD. Dixon FPD has an ISO rating of 10 in its most rural areas. Most of the districts in Solano County have a rating of eight in their rural and remote areas.

Agency	ISO Rating	Date Received
CFPD	5/8B	2011
DFPD	9/10	2012
EVFPD	3	2004
MFPD	8B/9	2004
SFPD	5/8B	2012
VFPD	5/8B	2013

Coverage Adequacy

**Figure 10-7: Service Area per Fire Station**

In urban areas, fire stations are typically located strategically within five minutes driving distance from potential victims. In rural areas, fire stations tend to be located strategically within 15 minutes driving distance. The driving distance is affected not only by the size of the service area, but also by congestion, topography and street layouts.

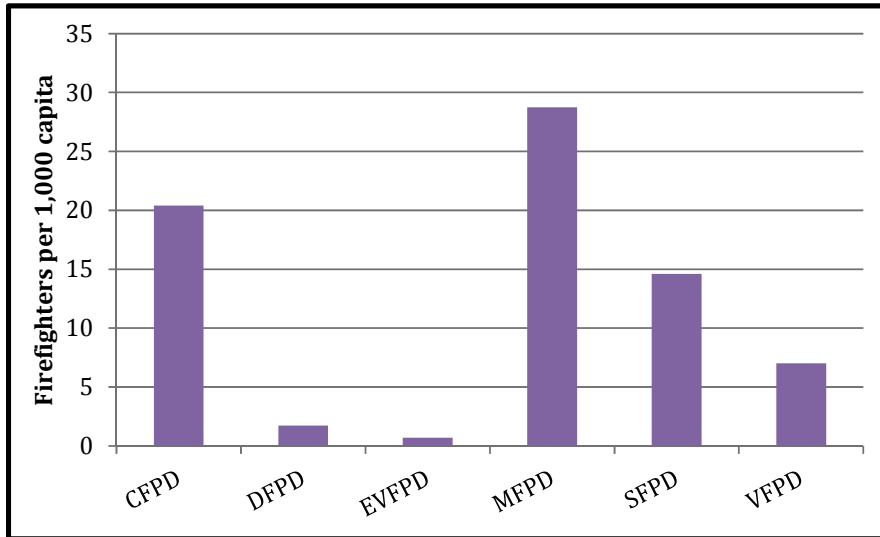


The service area sizes for each fire station differ for each fire provider, as shown in Figure 10-7. The median fire station among fire protection

<sup>149</sup> A person whose primary employment is as a firefighter for a municipality or other agency or company and who derives the majority of their earned income working in the fire service.

districts in Solano County serves approximately 39 square miles. Dixon FPD serves the most expansive area of 320 square miles served per station. Densely populated areas tend to have smaller service areas. For example, the average service area per station for EVFPD<sup>150</sup> is 8.3 miles per fire station.

**Figure 10-8: Firefighters per 1,000 residents, 2014**



Solano fire protection districts rely primarily on volunteer firefighters. By comparison, in a mature urban area, the staffing configuration is typically four paid firefighters per station at all times.

The number of firefighters serving within a particular jurisdiction is another

indicator of service adequacy; however, it is approximate. The providers' firefighters may have differing availability and reliability. A district with more firefighters could have fewer resources if scheduling availability (i.e., full-time work schedule) is restricted. Figure 10-8 illustrates the number of firefighters each provider has as a rate per 1,000 residents served. Staffing levels in Solano vary from 0.68 firefighters per 1,000 residents in EVFPD (including the City of Vallejo) to almost 29 in MFPD.

Firefighters in Solano County vary in age from 18 to 72, with an extensive range of experience. The median age of a firefighter in the County is 33. Rural providers tend to have a higher median age of firefighters.

### Staffing

The fire protection districts in Solano County are staffed mostly with a volunteer force, as is evident from Figure 10-9. Only DFPD and EVFPD have high ratio of paid personnel due to the fact that both districts are served by the respective cities through contracts and do not have staff of their own. For the rest of the districts the share of volunteer firefighting<sup>151</sup> staff amounted to between 88 percent in MFPD to 97 percent in SFPD.

**Figure 10-9: Staffing Levels**

District	Total firefighting staff	Paid	Share of paid staff	Volunteers	Share of volunteers
Cordelia FPD	52	4	8%	48	92%
Dixon FPD	42	23	55%	19	45%
East Vallejo FPD	82	82	100%	0	0%
Montezuma FPD	32	4	13%	28	88%
Suisun FPD	39	1	3%	38	97%
Vacaville FPD	77	3	4%	74	96%

respond to service calls (i.e. administrative assistant, bookkeeper).

Overall it was reported that the number of firefighting staff has increased overtime. Staff turnover rates were low in the last three years, except for within Cordelia FPD. The high turnover rate is mostly attributable to CFPD's program of hiring trained firefighters immediately after academy as residential firefighters who then move on to full-time paid positions with other agencies.

A majority of the districts reported some challenges with recruitment and retaining of volunteers. Other reported staffing challenges included decreasing and unpredictable availability of volunteer firefighters and stringent State and local mandated training requirements that impose a heavy burden on volunteer time.

Volunteers for the most part do not get compensated, except for limited stipends. It was reported that the pay rates for all ranks within the fire protection districts were about half the pay scale of the city fire departments in Solano County. Similarly, the retirement benefits are not as high as what city firefighters may receive. To compare among the four fire districts that rely on their own staff instead of city staff, the compensation levels were reportedly comparable to each other with slight fluctuations.

Currently, there are three certifications in the California firefighter series; Volunteer Firefighter, Firefighter I, and Firefighter II. While the Volunteer Firefighter focuses on skills and tasks necessary to assure safety on the fire ground, Firefighter I & II prepares the firefighter to perform essential and advanced fire ground tasks, as well as allowing entry into all tracks of the certification system. The level of certification required for each firefighter is determined by the individual fire department. However, according to the California State Fire Marshal, there are plans to phase out the Volunteer Firefighter certification level and the most basic level of certification will eventually be Firefighter I. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course, which includes training on various fire ground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>152</sup> In addition to the general firefighter certifications, there are also several emergency medical and specialized certifications that firefighting personnel may attain, including:

- ❖ First Responder EMS is a person who has completed a course and received certification in providing pre-hospital care for medical emergencies. First Responder EMS has more skill than someone who is trained in basic first aid but they are not a substitute for advanced medical care rendered by emergency medical technicians, emergency physicians, nurses, or paramedics.
- ❖ Emergency Medical Technician 1 is an intermediate level clinician, trained to respond quickly to emergency situations regarding medical issues, traumatic injuries and accident scenes.
- ❖ Paramedic is a medical professional who provides medical care to sustain life in the pre-hospital environment, usually in an emergency, at the point of illness or injury.

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<sup>152</sup> State Fire Marshal, Course Information and Required Materials, 2007, p. 44



This includes an initial assessment of the patient after a particular health crisis. Paramedics provide advanced levels of care for medical emergencies and trauma.

- ❖ Apparatus Engineer drives and operates heavy fire apparatus (fire engines and trucks). This individual is also responsible for protecting people and property from fire. A fire apparatus engineer is responsible for the general maintenance and operations of fire department equipment, tools and facilities. In addition, he or she is responsible for administering rescue and emergency-medical assistance to victims, cleaning the fire apparatus and training crews to fight fires.
- ❖ Company Officer is the individual in charge of a crew of firefighters and their responding apparatus.
- ❖ Chief Officer ranks above the company officer level and is involved in supervisory duties and fireground tactical operations.
- ❖ Haz Mat FRO (First Responder Operations) is the most popular level of chemical response certification.
- ❖ In addition, there are several wildland fire certifications, including California Incident Command Certification System (CCICCS) FF 1, CICCFS FFT2, CICCFS Engine Boss, and CICCFS Strike Team Leader.

Each firefighter, including volunteers, is able to hold multiple certifications, including strike team certifications.

**Figure 10-10: Firefighter Certification**

Certification	CFPD	DFPD	EVFPD	MFPD	SFPD	VFPD
Volunteer Firefighter	87%	0%	0%	88%	0%	100%
Firefighter I	92%	90%	71%	13%	21%	65%
Firefighter II	28%	43%	71%	0%	0%	5%
First Responder EMS	0%	0%	5%	88%	31%	66%
Emergency Medical Technician 1	100%	79%	23%	19%	38%	34%
Paramedic	28%	24%	65%	0%	8%	0%
Apparatus Engineer	17%	24%	14%	19%	10%	21%
Company Officer	6%	43%	21%	22%	18%	19%
Chief Officer	6%	10%	5%	9%	13%	10%
Haz Mat FRO	85%	55%	82%	9%	18%	100%
CICCFS FFT 2	26%	55%	5%	0%	0%	0%
CICCFS FFT 1	60%	55%	5%	9%	0%	0%
CICCFS Engine Boss	7%	43%	3%	13%	18%	0%
CICCFS Strike Team Leader	4%	10%	3%	3%	2%	5%
<b>Total number of firefighting staff</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>77</b>

As shown in Figure 10-10, among fire protection districts in Solano County, CFPD has the highest Firefighter I certification rate of 92 percent. DFPD staff (City of Dixon FD staff) has a similarly high Firefighter I certification rate of 90 percent. The situation is the same for EMT 1 certification, for which CFPD and DFPD are leading with 100 percent and 79 percent, respectively. On the other side of the spectrum, MFPD has the lowest certification rates for Firefighter I and EMT 1 with 13 and 19 percent, respectively.

Management

While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, plan and budget for capital needs, and conduct planning for future growth.

**Figure 10-11: Fire Agency Management Practices**

Management Practice	CFPD	DFPD	EVFPD	MFPD	SFPD	VFPD
Evaluate Employees Annually	A	A	A	A	A	A
Prepare Timely Budget	A	A	A	A	A	A
Periodic Financial Records	A	A	A	A	A	A
Current Financial Records	A	A	A	A	A	A
Capital Planning	I	A	I	I	I	I
Formal Strategic Planning	I	I	N	N	N	N
Note: A= Practiced adequately, I= Practiced, but improvement needed, N= Not practiced						

An evaluation of the adequacy of management practices is shown in Figure 10-11. The first four indicators are self-explanatory. Adequate capital planning involves a multi-year capital improvement plan (or comparable planning effort) for capital replacement and, if relevant, expansion. Strategic planning is adequate when an agency sets formal short- and long-term goals, as well as discloses its existing capacity and anticipates future needs, and updates the plan periodically.

All of the reviewed providers evaluate staff at least annually. SFPD and VFPD reported completing formal evaluations of only paid personnel; volunteers are evaluated informally.

All of the providers prepare timely budgets, complete financial audits on a regular basis and were able to provide up-to-date financial records.

Of the reviewed providers, only Dixon Fire Department has an adopted a formal capital improvement plan (CIP) that also includes needs associated with DFPD. CFPD and EVFPD plan their capital needs through informal lists. For example, the City of Vallejo maintains an apparatus replacement list specific to EVFPD. MFPD, SFPD and VFPD record their short-term capital improvement needs in annual budgets; long-term needs are not currently planned for. CFPD, SFPD and VFPD have retained the same consultant to develop a CIP for each of these three districts; the plans are presently under development. It is recommended that all agencies adopt capital improvement plans to identify long-term financing needs and funding sources for these needs. CIPs can be tailored to the needs of the agency, but should include a list of anticipated replacement and improvement needs with an anticipated timeline for completion and a financial plan for achieving those goals. It is recommended that a CIP have a planning horizon of at least five years and be updated annually to reflect current conditions.

None of the fire protection districts in Solano County have a strategic plan or conduct formal future growth planning for their respective service areas. CFPD reported to have an outdated plan of goals and objectives. It is anticipated that the new incoming chief would be conducting more formal strategic planning. City of Dixon FD maintains short- and long-term strategic plans, but nothing specific to DFPD. The City of Vallejo possesses a master plan that has some planning specific to fire services within EVFPD, but the information in it is not current. MFPD, SFPD and VFPD have not developed strategic plans.

### Accountability and Governance

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to: 1) constituent interest in the agency's activities as indicated by vacancy rates and Board meeting attendance, 2) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 3) presence of personnel, operating and Board policies, 4) filing of Form 700s, and 5) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

For a majority of the fire protection districts in Solano County, the established manner of board selection is appointment by the County Board of Supervisors. CFPD is the only district that has an elected Board of Directors. County Supervisors comprise the governing body of EVFPD. All Board positions within most of the districts reviewed are filled. The exceptions are Cordelia FPD where the position of the Board chair has been vacant for a year, and SFPD where the Board of Supervisors has not yet filled the last vacancy. Only DFPD reported that generally, there is low public interest in the operations of the District, as there has been no public attendance at the Board's regular meetings in at least the last five years.

All the reviewed agencies prepare and post meeting agendas and make minutes available as required. Additional outreach efforts include websites and educational and awareness programs. All the agencies conduct community outreach activities where they participate in community events and organize educational activities. A majority of the providers have websites to offer information by way of constituent outreach. Every district should ensure that Board meeting information, as well as correct contact information and district policies are readily available online. Although Vallejo FD maintains a web presence, there is no information regarding EVFPD. The County should maintain a separate website for the District where information may be made available to the public; alternatively, the City can build a webpage for the District similar to DFPD, which has web presence on the City of Dixon website.

None of the board members of the Solano fire protection districts receive compensation, except for EVFPD, which is governed by the County Supervisors who receive \$8,000 per month. Government Code §53235 requires that if a district provides compensation or reimbursement of expenses to its board members, the board members must receive two hours of training in ethics at least once every two years and the district must establish a written policy on reimbursements. Three out of six districts, including DFPD, MFPD and SFPD have not established a policy on expense reimbursements because their Board members do not receive reimbursements. CFPD was not aware whether the District had adopted a policy, and VFPD was unable to provide one. EVFPD is the only

district that has a policy on expense reimbursement, since Supervisors do receive expense reimbursements. All board members of five of the districts, including CFPD, DFPD, EVFPD, SFPD, and VFPD, have undergone ethics training in the last two years. MFPD board members do not receive ethics training reportedly because they do not get compensated or receive expense reimbursements.

Generally, all reviewed districts maintain adopted policies that guide operations of their governing bodies, including policies on code of ethics, public records requests and Brown Act compliance. CFPD reported that it had all the aforementioned policies, but was not able to provide them. SFPD's Policy Manual does not include a policy related to public requests for information. VFPD is the only district that has not established its own set of rules to guide the Board's operations. Efforts of its Board are guided by the insurance guidelines.

The Political Reform Act (Government Code §81000, et seq.) requires state and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation (California Code of Regulations §18730), which contains the terms of a standard conflict of interest code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's code. DFPD, EVFPD, SFPD, and VFPD have adopted and were able to provide their conflict of interest codes. CFPD reportedly has adopted the code as well, but was not able to provide it. It is unclear if MFPD has an adopted conflict of interest code because this information was not provided by the District.

Government Code §87203 requires persons who hold office to disclose their investments, interests in real property and incomes by filing appropriate forms with a designated filing agency each year. In addition, the conflict of interest code of each district determines who among the officers and directors files the Form 700s with the County's Registrar of Voters. In Solano County select fire protection districts require both the fire chief and Board members to submit copies to the County, and in some cases only the chief files with the County's Registrar of Voters. All of the districts filed appropriate forms with the County as required for the 2012 reporting period. Several of the districts had submitted forms for the 2013 reporting period, although the deadline for submittal had not yet occurred when the information was requested.

Of the agencies reviewed in this report, the majority demonstrated accountability in their disclosure of information and cooperation with LAFCO during the MSR process. A majority of the districts provided most of the requested information in a timely manner. Although VFPD and EVFPD also provided a majority of the requested information, it required several follow-up attempts.

## **SERVICE FINANCING**

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints, as well as management practices. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by fire service providers, identifies the revenue sources currently available to the service providers, and assesses the financial ability of agencies to provide services.

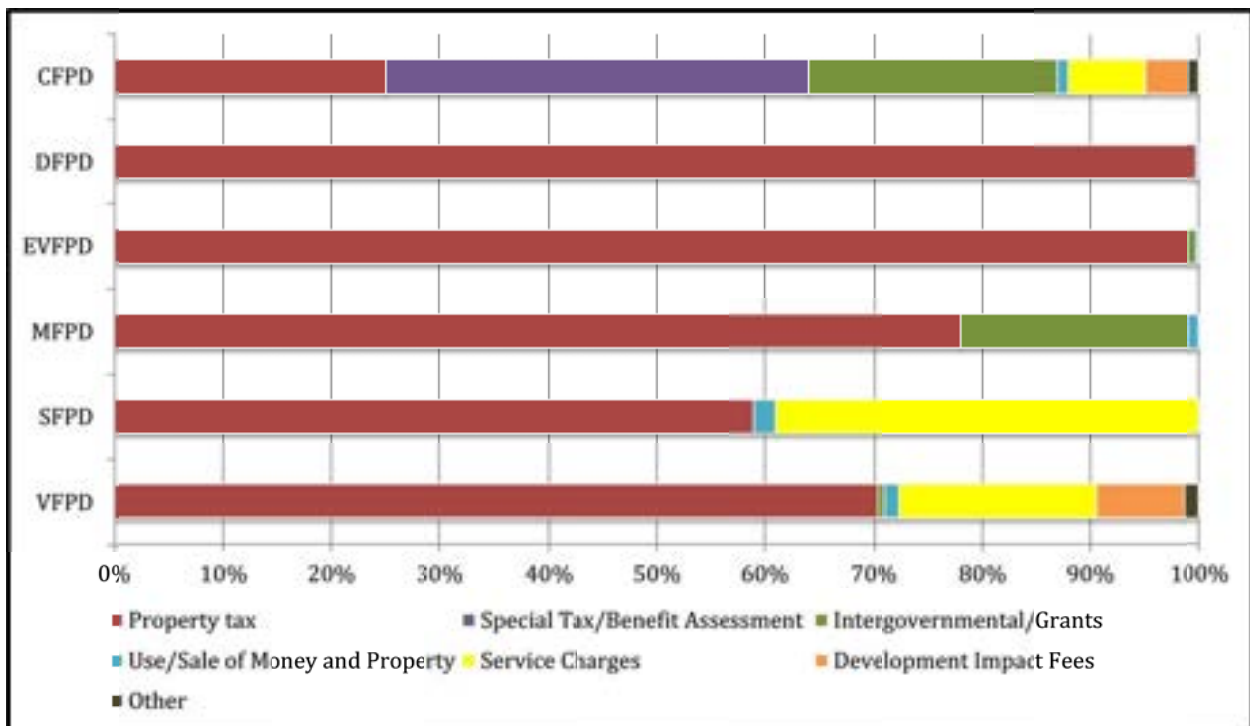
## Revenue Sources

Fire service providers rely on a variety of revenue sources to fund fire agency operating costs—primarily property taxes, special taxes, service charges, and intergovernmental funds and grants. The various funding sources for each fire agency are shown in Figure 10-12.

Approximately 75 percent of the Solano fire agencies’ operating budgets were funded through ad valorem property tax and parcel tax revenue in FY 12-13. Service charges in the form of reimbursement from the State for use of strike teams, plan review and permit issuance, and other charges for services constituted 10 percent of total revenue sources. The agencies periodically receive intergovernmental funds, grants and donations—averaged out these funds account for about nine percent of the districts’ budgets.

The districts also make use of facility and development impact fees to pay for capital improvements. These revenue sources are discussed in more detail in the *Capital Financing* section of this chapter.

**Figure 10-12: Revenue Sources (FY 12-13)**



### Ad Valorem Property Taxes

Property taxes made up 67 percent of revenues among the Solano fire providers. Dixon FPD and East Vallejo FPD rely almost entirely on property tax revenue to provide services, with negligible revenues coming from other sources. As a funding source, property taxes are constrained by statewide initiatives that have been passed by voters over the years.

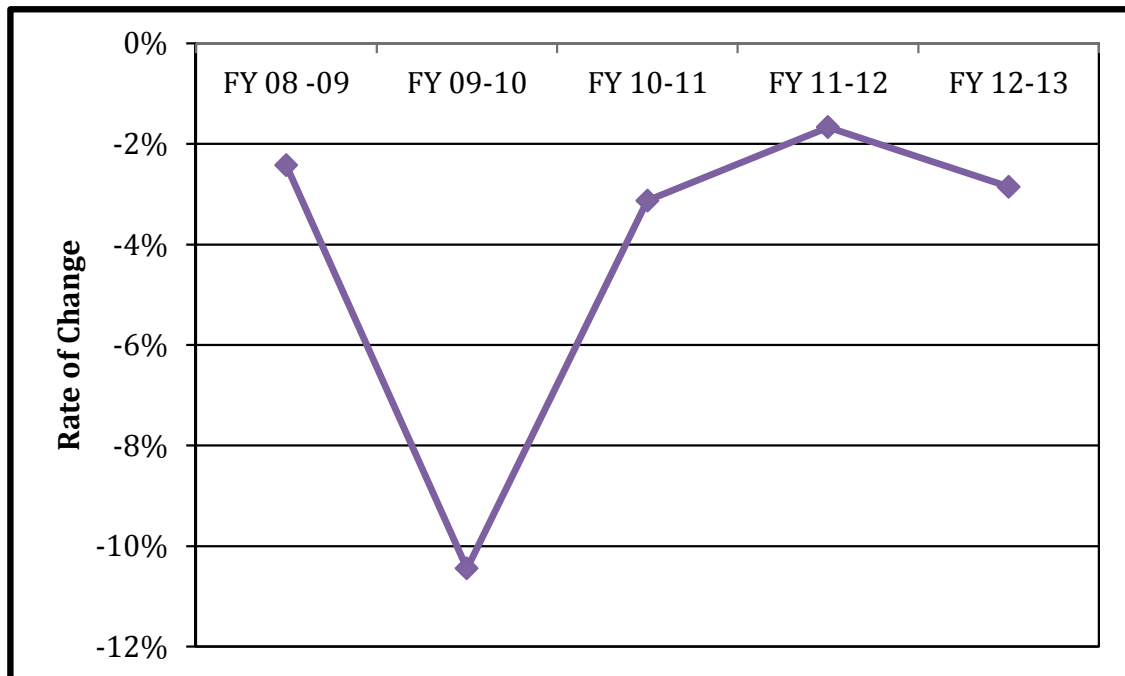
Proposition 13, which California voters approved in 1978, limits the ad valorem property tax rate, limits growth of the assessed value of property, and requires voter approval of certain local taxes. Generally, this measure fixes the ad valorem tax at one

percent of value, except for taxes to repay certain voter approved bonded indebtedness. In response to the adoption of Proposition 13, the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 8 (AB 8) in 1979 to establish property tax allocation formulas. Generally, AB 8 allocates property tax revenue to the local agencies within each tax rate area based on the proportion each agency received during the three fiscal years preceding adoption of Proposition 13. This allocation formula benefits local agencies which had relatively high tax rates at the time Proposition 13 was enacted.

Proposition 98, which California voters approved in 1988, requires the State to maintain a minimum level of school funding. In 1992 and 1993, the Legislature began shifting billions of local property taxes to schools in response to State budget deficits. Local property taxes were diverted from local governments into the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) and transferred to school districts and community college districts to reduce the amount paid by the State general fund. Local agencies throughout the State lost significant property tax revenue due to this shift.

In addition to these constraints, the districts have faced declining property values over the last five years, which has resulted in reduced property tax revenues for the agencies. As shown in Figure 10-13, the amount of property taxes levied countywide experienced a combined 17 percent decrease over the five-year period from FY 08-09 to FY 12-13, going from \$495 million in FY 09 to \$410 million in FY 13. The most significant drop in property tax revenue was experienced between FY 09 and FY 10, when total property taxes collected decreased by over 10 percent.

**Figure 10-13: Percent Change in Property Taxes Levied in Solano County (FYs 09 - 13)**



Special Taxes and Benefit Assessments

The most significant financing constraints for fire and EMS services are legal requirements that limit property taxes and require voter approval of new taxes and tax increases. A special tax requires approval by two thirds of voters. Several fire districts in



the State have also made use of benefit assessment revenue, which requires a simple majority for voter approval. For a benefit assessment it is required that the agency attribute distinct benefit to each parcel, while a special tax may be used to fund services with a general benefit to all parcels. Only one of the six special districts supplements funding with special tax revenue—Cordelia FPD. None of the districts in the County levy a benefit assessment.

In 2002, Cordelia FPD introduced Measure I to district voters to collect a special tax on properties within the District to supplement revenue sources. District voters narrowly approved the special tax. The amount of the tax is dependent upon land use—residential parcels are assessed \$300 and commercial parcels are assessed \$400 annually. Parcels with public uses are not assessed. The tax does not adjust according to inflation. These special tax revenues are not tracked separately in an independent fund from other revenue sources.

Several of the geographically larger districts that are comprised of primarily agricultural, open space and minimal low-density residential properties face a particular challenge in that a special tax or benefit assessment would not collect the necessary revenue to substantially augment services. Due to the County’s development policies, considerable growth is not anticipated outside of the cities. Consequently, the districts have not pursued either means of parcel taxation, due to a lack of perceived benefit.

Service Charges

Service charges comprised 10 percent of revenues among the fire providers in FY 12-13. Service charges include billing for providing emergency medical and ambulance services, fees charged for contract services, reimbursement from the State for use of strike teams, fees for services such as fire inspections and building approvals, charges for specialty emergency services, and charges to non-residents for services rendered. Four of the six districts reviewed receive revenue from some form of charges for services. Dixon FPD and East Vallejo FPD, which contract for fire services through city fire departments, do not directly charge and collect revenue for services offered.

**Figure 10-14: Charges for Services**

Of the fire protection districts reviewed, only Cordelia FPD provides non-transport emergency medical services in the form of advanced life support directly through district staff. However, the District does not receive reimbursement for support of Medic Ambulance’s services like those fire departments that have contracts with Medic and SEMSC for these services.

None of the fire protection districts in the County provide ambulance transport services, and therefore, do not receive revenue from charges for those services. Similarly, none of the districts provide contract services to other entities, such as administration or operations, and as such do not receive income from these services.

	Non-transport EMS	Transport Ambulance	Contract Services	Strike Team	Plan Review/Permits	Emergency Services	Non-residents
CFPD				✓	✓		
DFPD							
EVFPD							
MFPD				✓	✓	✓	✓
SFPD				✓	✓	✓	
VFPD				✓	✓		

The four districts that provide services directly with district staff occasionally respond to state fires with their strike teams or as members of a strike team and get reimbursed for it from the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire. District duty on a strike team or task force is compensated at predetermined rates depending on the rank of the firefighter and the type of the equipment used for the fire.

Billing for services may include fees for reports and permits, plan review, operating permits, and field inspections, to name a few. Four of the agencies charge fees for these services; the two districts that do not receive revenue from these charges are the two fire protection districts that contract for services—Dixon FPD and East Vallejo FPD. Instead, the contractor city fire departments charge the fees and collect the revenue directly.

Both, Montezuma FPD and Suisun FPD charge residents and non-residents alike for certain specialty emergency services, such as vehicle accidents. These agencies do not charge for general emergency fire and emergency medical responses.

Of the six districts, only Montezuma FPD charges non-residents for certain services provided. MFPD charges a fee of \$35 per hour per unit with a minimum of \$100 per unit for use of equipment in response to emergency calls for non-residents of the District.

### Grants

Among the fire protection districts, grant funds comprised \$425,583 or nine percent of revenues in FY 12-13. Of the six districts, Cordelia FPD and Montezuma FPDs were able to receive the most revenue from grant sources. Cordelia FPD received \$210,617 from grants in that year. While Montezuma FPD received \$201,805 from a USFA grant in conjunction with FEMA for operations and safety purposes. MFPD has received this grant two times in the last 10 years. Additionally, MFPD received donations and contributions towards its fire station in that same year.

While not a direct recipient of grant funds, DFPD indirectly benefits from Dixon FD's grant pursuit efforts. Grants funds received by Dixon FD in the last five years include: FEMA AFG-breathing apparatus, FEMA AFG cardiac monitors, FEMA SAFER three full-time positions funded for 24 months, FEMA SAFER Volunteer Retention and Recruitment Program, FEMA AFG radio hardware acquisition dual band radios, 2012 Cal Fire VFA 50/50 Wildland Firefighting PPE, and 2013 Cal Fire VFA 50/50 Wildland Fighting PPE.

### Proposition 172

Proposition 172 was enacted to help offset property tax revenue losses of cities and counties that were shifted to the ERAF for schools in 1992. Proposition 172, enacted in 1993, provides the revenue of a half-cent sales tax to counties and cities for public safety purposes, including police, fire, district attorneys, corrections, and lifeguards. Proposition 172 also requires cities and counties to continue providing public safety funding at or above the amount provided in FY 92-93.<sup>153</sup> The law provides nine counties with unique

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<sup>153</sup> The maintenance of effort provision for local public safety spending requires cities and counties to fund public safety at the 1992-93 levels, adjusted annually by a cost-of-living factor commencing with the 1994-95 fiscal year.

allocation formulas. These formulas are the result of special circumstances and negotiated compromises. Solano County is one such county with a unique allocation formula.<sup>154</sup>

While counties are not required to, many share Proposition 172 funds with local fire protection districts, particularly those formed prior to 1978 (the enactment of Proposition 13), which rely heavily on property tax revenues to provide services and were greatly impacted by the ERAF shifts. Solano County does not share Proposition 172 with the six fire protection districts in the County.

Auxiliary Associations

**Figure 10-15: Fundraising Efforts**

The fire districts conduct fundraising in several forms—directly through district staff, via a nonprofit firefighters association related to the district, and via nonprofit auxiliary groups dedicated to fundraising and supporting a particular district. Fundraising efforts and donations provide a nominal supplement to fire district revenues in Solano County.

As shown in Figure 10-15, each of the fire districts has a firefighters association linked to it. In the case of Dixon FPD and East Vallejo FPD, the firefighters associations are connected to the contract city fire departments, and while accumulated funds may benefit services within those districts, the city fire department is the recipient of all donated funds or capital assets. The district firefighter associations often conduct fundraising efforts on behalf of other nonprofit foundations and organizations, such as the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Firefighters Burn Institute.

Cordelia FPD and Suisun FPD are the only districts that conduct fundraising activities via district staff and volunteers. These efforts are reportedly minimal in nature.

Suisun and Vacaville FPDs are the only two districts with auxiliary fundraising associations in addition to the firefighters associations. The FireBells is a group dedicated to fundraising activities for Vacaville FPD.

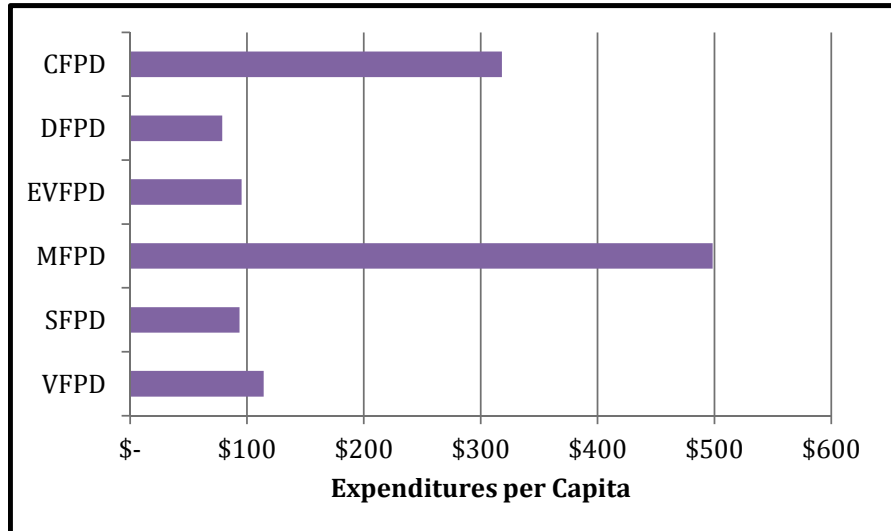
	Fundraising Activities	Firefighters Association	Auxiliary Association
CFPD	✓	✓	
DFPD		✓	
EVFPD		✓	
MFPD		✓	
SFPD	✓	✓	✓
VFPD		✓	✓

<sup>154</sup> Government Code §30055(b).

## Operating Expenditures

**Figure 10-16: Operating Expenditures per Capita (FY 12-13)**

The fire districts in Solano County spent approximately \$3.7 million in FY 12-13 on fire operations, which is the equivalent of approximately \$137 per capita. The median provider spent \$105 per capita. Operating expenditures per capita, shown in Figure 10-16, is often reflective of the level of service offered by a fire provider as



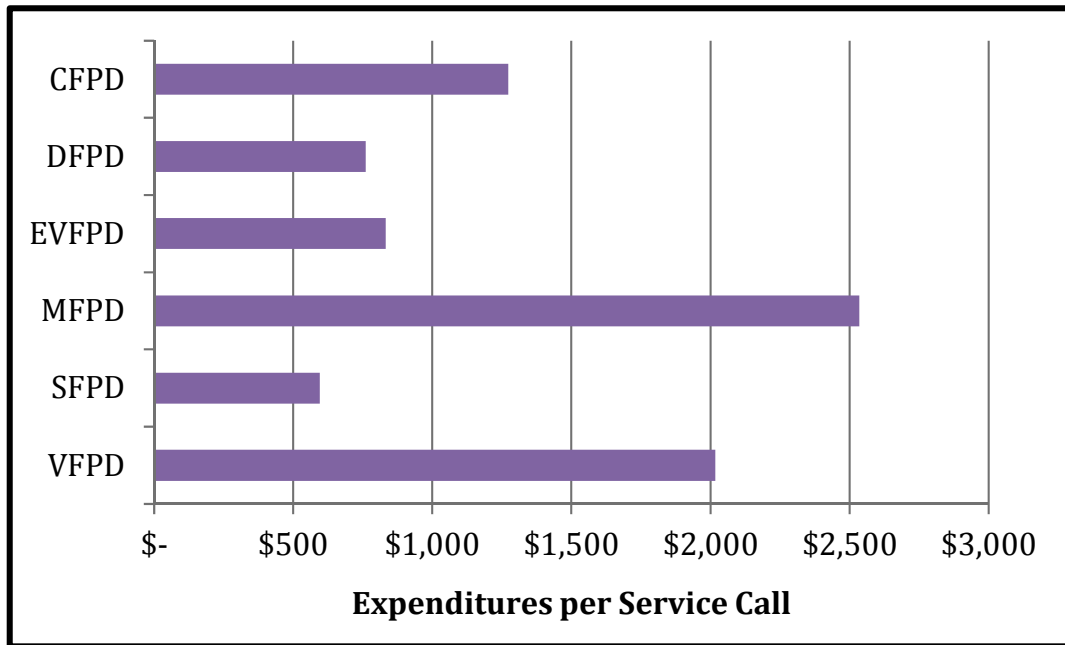
determined by financing constraints. The least amount of money per capita was spent by Dixon FPD. Montezuma FPD expended the most per capita, as it serves a relatively expansive area with very low population density. Further details about operating expenditures per capita for each district are included in Figure 10-17.

**Figure 10-17: Operating Expenditures per Capita (FY 12-13)**

District	Operating Expenditures	District Population	Operating Expenditures/Capita
CFPD	\$826,309	2,597	\$318.18
DFPD	\$477,826	6,057	\$78.89
EVFPD	\$336,161	3,522	\$95.45
MFPD	\$554,969	1,113	\$498.62
SFPD	\$250,351	2,671	\$93.73
VFPD	\$1,258,497	10,995	\$114.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,704,112</b>	<b>26,955</b>	<b>\$137.42</b>

A similar situation exists with operating expenditures per service call, as is clear from Figure 10-18. Those agencies with the lowest expenditures per call tend to rely more heavily on volunteer firefighters, which can greatly reduce costs, or rely on a contract agency for services. Suisun FPD has the lowest cost per call, most likely due to the low paid staffing level compared to the volume of calls received by the District. Similar to operating expenditures per capita, Montezuma FPD has the highest expenditures per service call.

**Figure 10-18: Operating Expenditures per Service Call (FY 12-13)**




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## Capital Financing

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Fire service providers in Solano County make use of development impact fees, reserve funds, grants, donations, and loans for capital purchases.

None of the fire districts have adopted goals or policies regarding levels of reserves to be maintained; although, many have informal management practices to maintain certain reserve funds and levels. As mentioned in the *Management* section of this chapter, only Dixon FPD (via the City of Dixon FD) has a formal capital improvement plan in place. Other districts maintain informal lists or address short-term capital needs in the annual budget, and Cordelia FPD, Suisun FPD and Vacaville FPD are developing formal CIPs. Pre-planning for future capital improvement needs is considered a best management practice, which is recommended for all public agencies regardless of size.

A common means to finance growth induced capital needs is through development impact fees or capital facility fees, which ensure that new construction and development covers the cost of the related capital improvements necessary to maintain a certain level of service. Only two of the fire protection districts presently have adopted development impact fees—Cordelia FPD and Vacaville FPD.

Four of the fire protection districts are participating in a joint study to establish a development impact fee throughout (Cordelia, Dixon, Suisun, and Vacaville FPDs) the unincorporated territories of the County. Montezuma FPD has chosen not to participate in the study, and East Vallejo FPD was not represented at the County district chiefs meetings where the joint study has been discussed. In 2013, these districts hired a consulting firm to conduct a nexus study to assess and make recommendations regarding a uniform development impact fee for each of the districts. It is intended that the fee be designed to ensure a certain level of continued service among the fire districts should development occur within their bounds.

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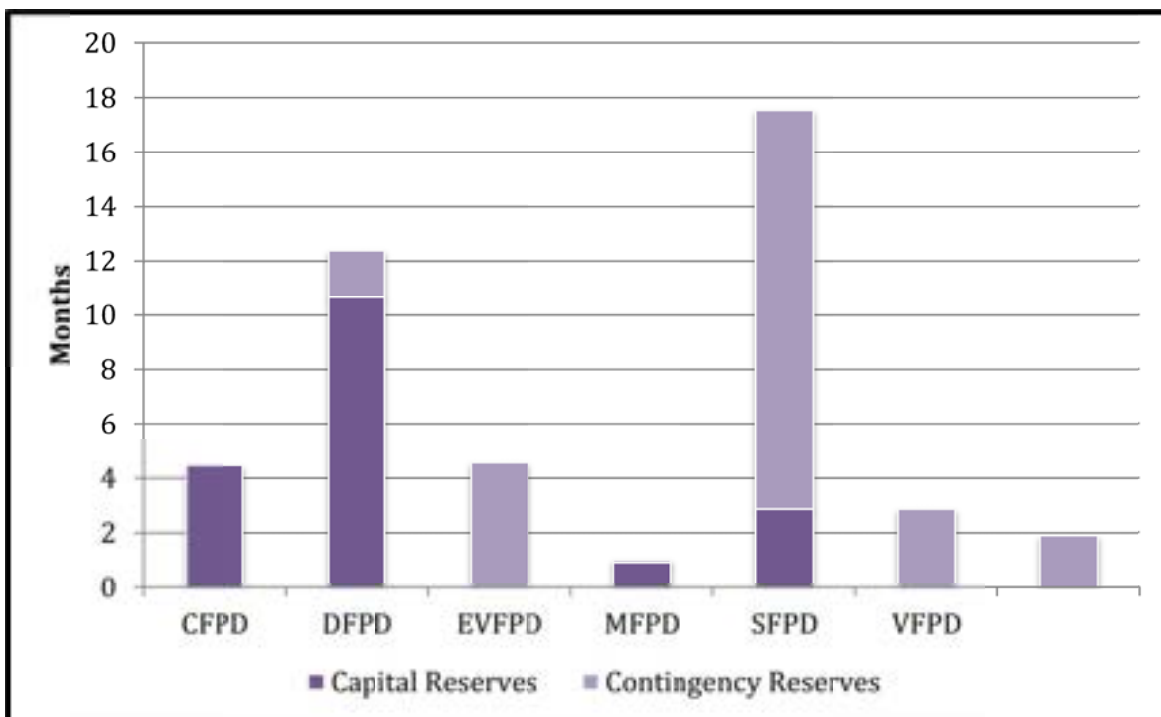
## Financial Reserves

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Fire providers rely on their financial reserves to weather recessions, to cover unexpected capital projects and as a form of savings to accumulate what is needed to make required capital improvements or replacements. Unrestricted financial reserves reflect savings that can be used for any fire-related purpose, and are the most flexible funds and most useful for sustaining service levels during tough economic times or for unanticipated capital projects. Restricted reserves are dedicated to a Board-designated use, such as future capital improvements.

Combined restricted and unrestricted reserves in terms of months of operating expenditures for each agency are shown in Figure 10-19.

**Figure 10-19: Reserve Levels in Months of Operating Expenditures, FY 12-13**



Montezuma FPD has the highest reserve levels among the six providers with funds to cover over 15 months of operating expenditures; a majority of these reserves are for contingency purposes. Dixon FPD also maintains comparatively high reserves; the District has earmarked over 70 percent of those reserves for vehicle replacement. East Vallejo FPD retains a very minimal fund balance at the end of each year and does not maintain any reserve funds.

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## Financial Ability

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The financial ability of each of the providers is constrained by available revenues and legal limitations on revenue increases. A majority of the agencies reviewed in this report have experienced declines in revenues, due to declines in property values, in the face of a growing demand for services. The financial condition of the fire districts has been exacerbated by a number of substantial expenditure increases, including fuel, apparatus



maintenance, liability insurance, physicals, training, and personal protective equipment costs.

Cordelia, Dixon, East Vallejo, and Vacaville FPD's each reported that current financing levels were not adequate to provide the fire protection service levels desired, and indicated that additional funding was needed to provide adequate service levels to meet both existing and future demand. Montezuma and Suisun FPDs reported that while there were certain financial constraints, funding levels were generally adequate to fund satisfactory services.

The two contract districts—Dixon and East Vallejo FPDs—face the most significant funding constraints given that they are entirely dependent on property tax income for funding of services and opportunities for substantial additional funding (i.e., special tax) are nonexistent. While the unincorporated area served by East Vallejo FPD should eventually be annexed into the City of Vallejo, at which point EVFPD will cease to exist, a majority of the area served by Dixon FPD is likely to remain unincorporated and will continue to require a fire service provider. Unfortunately, Dixon FPD faces several challenges to raising more revenue to significantly increase service levels or to afford fire protection on its own. A vast majority of the parcels in the District are permanently in agricultural or open space uses, limiting revenue potential from a new special tax.

Opportunities for supplementary revenue sources for each of the fire districts include 1) charging non-residents for services rendered in order to recoup costs for which these customers are not paying through property taxes, 2) special tax or benefit assessment, 3) the cooperative development impact fee that is in the process of being developed, 4) multi-agency grant applications (i.e., for staffing or consolidation of dispatch services), and 5) negotiating with the County to share a portion of the Proposition 172 funds. A potential funding source that is specific to Cordelia FPD is the opportunity to get reimbursed by Medic Ambulance for providing ALS services, similar to the set up that most of the city fire departments have with SEMSC and the transport ambulance provider. When the Public Private Partnership was first developed, Cordelia FPD was new to providing ALS and could not guarantee “around the clock” ALS response. Cordelia FPD's ALS services have become more reliable, and the District could reap financial benefits by taking part in the partnership.

# 11. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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There are several issues and challenges faced by the fire protection districts in Solano County, which were identified over the course of this service review. The challenges discussed here include 1) impact of city annexations on district financing, 2) county policies limiting development outside of city boundaries, 3) unpredictability in volunteer firefighter force, 4) remote and hard to reach areas with extended response times, and 5) disjointed dispatch systems.

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## City Annexations

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Several districts cited city annexations of territory within their bounds as a particular financial constraint to providing services. As cities annex territory and the areas are subsequently detached from a district, the district in question can anticipate a loss in property tax revenues. While LAFCO has a policy to ensure mitigation should an annexation negatively impact another agency,<sup>155</sup> as previously discussed in *Growth and Population Projections* and *LAFCO Policies Affecting Service Demand* sections, these agreements may sunset after a period of time. For example, Vacaville FPD recently negotiated a property tax neutrality agreement with the City of Vacaville for a particular annexation, which sunsets after 25 years. Consequently, once mitigation payments have ceased, the District will still face a loss of regular income, and these mitigation efforts may only have postponed the inevitable hardship on the District.

As will be discussed further under *Governance Structure Options*, the concern of cities annexing the districts' territory, which in many cases negatively affects the districts' financial condition, provides a rationale for the option of consolidating city fire departments with the neighboring fire protection districts in some form or a countywide fire provider to balance resources between the urban and rural service areas and ensure all providers can preserve economies of scale.

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## County Development Policies

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Another source of financial burden for Solano County fire protection districts is the county policies limiting most development to areas within city boundaries, as described in the *Growth and Population Projections* section of this document. Because of the minimal growth and development within the districts creating low density residential and agricultural service areas, the agencies will never realize a significant growth in property tax revenue, forcing the districts to search for other reliable and sustainable sources of

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<sup>155</sup> Solano LAFCO *Standards and Procedures, Glossary of Terms, Fees and Forms, Meeting Schedule, and Map and Description Requirements*. Standard 11 "The application shall describe the effect which the annexation could have on adjacent areas and outside the agency. It shall also describe any social and economic benefits, or detriments, which will accrue to the agency and other affected agencies. The proposal should not be motivated by intercity rivalry, land speculation, or other motivates not in the public interest, and should create no significant negative social or economic effects on the County or neighboring agencies."

income. As previously outlined in the *Service Financing* section, opportunities for sustainable supplementary revenue sources for each of the fire districts include 1) charging non-resident fees, 2) special tax or benefit assessment, 3) the cooperative development impact fee, and 4) negotiating a share of Proposition 172 funds.<sup>156</sup> While these are all opportunities for additional funding sources, there are substantial constraints to the benefit and feasibility of each option.

While non-resident fees could provide some income, it is not anticipated to be substantial enough to impact service levels. Additionally, these fees are difficult to collect. Because the revenue generating potential of a special tax/benefit assessment or development impact fees is greatly dependent on land use and new development, the agencies will likely reap only marginal additional revenues from these sources given the limits placed on development in the unincorporated areas and the low density residential and limited commercial uses that would be paying a special tax. Finally, Solano County has not historically shared Proposition 172 funds, and has not indicated any intentions of sharing this resource with the fire protection districts.

As property tax revenues start to become further constrained, the districts will need to find funding sources to maintain current service levels. Alternatively, another option may be creation of a countywide fire protection district. While a consolidated district serving only the unincorporated areas of the County is also an option and may act as a stepping stone towards countywide consolidation, it would not address the identified financing constraints of the rural areas. As previously discussed, a countywide fire agency could help in balancing resources between the urban and rural service areas and ensure economies of scale are preserved. This option will be discussed further under *Governance Structure Options*.

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## Volunteer Unpredictability

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A challenge common to every reviewed district, which is a significant capacity constraint, is the unpredictability of each agency's volunteer force. This challenge is common to most rural fire protection districts that rely heavily on volunteers to provide services. With the exception of the two districts that contract with the city fire departments for services, the districts almost entirely rely on volunteers, call, or resident firefighters that receive no or minimal stipends for their services. Availability of volunteer and call firefighters is often a problem, leading to times when too many or too few personnel respond to incidents. Cordelia FPD has a program of hiring trained firefighters immediately after academy as residential firefighters, meaning that these firefighters conduct shifts at the station, thus creating a reliable level of response for each incident. However, as a tradeoff, Cordelia FPD suffers from a high turnover rate in its staff as these firefighters move on to full-time paid positions elsewhere.

The districts also indicated that it was challenging to attract and retain volunteers, and time consuming training requirements pose a particular challenge given the volunteers' busy schedules.

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<sup>156</sup> Grant funds are not included here as they are not considered a sustainable and long term funding source.

A collaborative volunteer recruitment program among all of the fire districts could allow them to pool resources and efforts, and create a uniform volunteer recruitment and support system. For example, all fire districts in Calaveras County (via the Calaveras County Fire Chiefs Association) applied and received grant funding from SAFER to implement a volunteer recruitment and retention program. Funding was able to cover a regional volunteer benefit program, which includes insurance packages, childcare expenses, tuition assistance for higher education, and a Length of Service Award program or other retirement benefits, such as 401K contributions. Additionally, the program includes a marketing program to recruit new volunteers through television advertising, an informational website, and an online application process. Solano County fire districts could greatly benefit from a similar collaborative program. Some of the Solano fire districts are currently involved in a similar effort in conjunction with other providers as part of a regional grant that will provide a monetary incentive for becoming and remaining an active volunteer firefighter. This grant has been submitted, but there had been no outcome on the application as of the drafting of this report.

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### Longer Response Times

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Each district reported areas that were particularly challenging to serve, whether it be due to rural roads with limited access, landscaping and hydrology (i.e., marshes), or remoteness of an area. This challenge is typical of rural fire departments that serve remote less developed areas. Often these areas are located where it is not practical to construct a station to enhance response times, because service calls are infrequent and sometimes seasonal. There are two means to addressing and improving response times in these areas—being aware of response times in these areas to promote efficiencies and track improvement and/or transitioning to a “closest available resource” system. By being aware of what response times are to each area within a district’s boundaries, the agency is able to identify where there is room for improvement. During the drafting of this report, most of the districts struggled in providing accurate response time data for the district at-large, especially in a form that is suitable for data analysis. It is recommended that each district be able to not only identify and analyze districtwide response times, but also perform data analysis within specific zones that comprise the district to identify with greater specificity where problem areas are located. The other option is to transition to a closest available resource system where the closest resource is dispatched regardless of which agency’s boundaries the incident is within. At present, the districts make substantial use of mutual and automatic aid agreements to ensure the speediest response in particular areas. A closest unit response system would ensure that all areas, not just those defined in the agreements, receive the fastest response possible throughout the County. A closest unit response system would require a more centralized dispatch system compared to the existing communication system that is in place to ensure proper coordination among all providers in the County.

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### Dispatch

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As previously discussed in the *Context* section of this report, fire providers in Solano County suffer from a severely disjointed communication and dispatch system. Incompatibility of equipment and inability to coordinate multi-agency incidents between

several dispatch centers leads to longer response times and poses a public safety risk, particularly should there be a large multi-agency emergency incident. These issues were addressed in a countywide feasibility study report in 2010. At that time, full consolidation of dispatch center operations into the same room was recommended as the viable financial alternative. The consultants stated that full consolidation would “result in significant enhancements to the interagency coordination that is required when more than one agency is responding to an emergency.” All of the districts as well as several cities indicated support of this recommendation in some form during the course of this review. The recommendation included a financing plan whereby the cities and County would provide annual funding based on the ratio of the agency’s service calls to total countywide calls. Since that time, although all districts agree with the need to implement the dispatch consolidation, there has been no movement toward this recommendation, due to a lack of funding and the lack of an apparent agency to spearhead organizational efforts. Although the districts support consolidation, as the primary funders of the consolidated system, the cities and the County may need to create momentum towards implementation of a consolidation plan.

Each of the districts made recommendations as to how to properly address dispatch concerns, as outlined in Figure 11-1.

**Figure 11-1: Dispatch Recommendations by District**

District	Recommendation
Cordelia FPD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have all fire agencies on the same frequency;</li> <li>2. Centralize fire dispatch separately from law enforcement dispatch;</li> <li>3. Have dispatchers specialized in fire incidents;</li> <li>4. Use available technology for up-to-date dispatching capabilities;</li> <li>5. Make use of willing support from the various fire agencies;</li> <li>6. Make improvements to the current system as soon as possible to minimize liability related to potential serious miscommunications in the field; and</li> <li>7. Keep the solution simple and easy to understand—an example of which is Contra Costa Fire Dispatch.</li> </ol>
Dixon FPD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consolidate the fire dispatch functions from the seven dispatch centers in the County into a single central dispatch center. There are several existing facilities within Solano County that have either been recently built or remodeled that can accommodate the fire dispatching functions of the entire County.</li> <li>2. If getting to one center is not achievable, consolidate the fire dispatch functions of select centers into two of the existing centers.</li> <li>3. If two is not achievable, consolidate the fire dispatch functions into three of the existing centers; North, South and Central.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Link the seven dispatch centers electronically, if consolidation is not feasible.</li> <li>5. Increase interoperable communications to ensure each agency can communicate with another.</li> </ol>
East Vallejo FPD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All Solano County fire agencies should use the same frequencies for incidents and be dispatched from a central PSAP.</li> <li>2. Medic Ambulance (current provider of countywide ambulance transport) should be dispatched from a joint center and be required to respond on a countywide radio system.</li> <li>3. Gaining buy-in from the respective agencies, based on a cost-benefit analysis and an equitable funding formula, is necessary to achieve this goal.</li> </ol>
Montezuma FPD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of a central consolidated dispatch center, which would allow for all the fire departments and districts in the County to know which units are in service.</li> </ol>
Suisun FPD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supports the solution proposed by the <i>Solano Consolidated Dispatch Feasibility Study</i>.</li> </ol>
Vacaville FPD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of a central consolidated dispatch center, which would allow all the fire departments and districts in the County to know which units are in service.</li> <li>2. Interested in working with other fire protection agencies on cost sharing to finance a central dispatch system.</li> </ol>

It is apparent that there are several issues regarding the existing dispatch system, and all agencies are in agreement that there is a need for improvements. The immediate stage, however, is to develop a path towards a solution and start implementing specific steps. The following is a list of possible milestones that will assist in taking steps toward the agreed upon solution.

- 1) Form a joint powers authority consisting of representatives of each of the cities, the County and the fire protection districts, which would act as a decision making body that can actively discuss options, determine the ideal outcome, and hammer out any issues necessary to initiate a solution.
- 2) Deciding on the desired plan and implementation strategy is the next step. While full consolidation was recommended in the feasibility study and all the districts currently support this option, there may be concerns about the specifics of how to accomplish that end. The JPA member agencies will need to identify concerns, find the solutions and develop detailed steps to achieving the desired outcome by a certain date.
- 3) Determine operational cost sharing among member agencies.
- 4) Develop a multi-year budget/CIP with potential financing sources and project schedule.



- 5) Apply for grants to finance initial capital needs.
- 6) Follow next steps identified by the created JPA.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OPTIONS

This section discusses issues with and alternatives to the current organization of fire service in Solano County in light of current financial constraints and anticipated demand. It identifies options to the current government structure of fire provision, including consolidation of service providers.

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### Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements

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There are extensive mutual and automatic aid arrangements for fire and emergency medical services that cross jurisdictional boundaries throughout Solano County. Mutual aid refers to reciprocal service provided under a mutual aid agreement, a pre-arranged plan and contract between agencies for reciprocal assistance upon request by the first-response agency. In addition, the fire service providers rely on automatic aid primarily for coverage of areas with street access limitations and freeways. Automatic aid is based on the concept that the nearest available unit responds first. It refers to reciprocal service provided under an automatic aid agreement, a prearranged plan or contract between agencies for an automatic response for service with no need for a request to be made (i.e., the assisting provider is dispatched directly). All public safety agencies are required to provide mutual aid in times of extreme disaster as part of the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services Master Mutual Aid Agreement.

Solano County providers operate with an intricate set of mutual and automatic aid agreements with neighboring providers in the County and nearby counties. Figure 11-2 shows the mutual and automatic aid agreements with individual agencies in which each district participates.

**Figure 11-2: Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements**

Agency	Mutual Aid	Automatic Aid
Cordelia FPD	Countywide Agreement	City of Fairfield FD Napa County FD (in progress)
Dixon FPD	Countywide Agreement Winters FPD	Winters FPD Vacaville FPD City of Vacaville Cities of Davis, West Sacramento, and Woodland University of California at Davis
East Vallejo FPD	Countywide Agreement	City of Benicia American Canyon FPD
Montezuma FPD	Countywide Agreement	Suisun FPD
Suisun FPD	Countywide Agreement	Fairfield FD Montezuma FPD Napa County FD/Cal Fire
Vacaville FPD	Countywide Agreement California State Prison - Vacaville	City of Vacaville (in progress) City of Winters FD California Medical Facility FD

California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement calls for all the parties to the agreement to voluntarily aid and assist each other in the event that a disaster

should occur, by the interchange of services and facilities, including, but not limited to fire, police, medical and health, communication and transportation services and facilities, to cope with the problems of rescue, relief, evacuation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

The six fire districts, seven city fire departments, Cal Fire, State Office of Emergency Services, and USFS work together to provide mutual aid for structure fires, wildland fires, vehicle accident extrication, and mass casualty incidents (MCI). Solano County fire chiefs further work together through the Fire Chief's Association by discussing common issues and applying for grants; however, discussions and meetings are generally held separately for the chiefs of the city fire departments and the special districts as interests and factors affecting services are different for the two provider types.

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## Facility and Resource Sharing

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As previously mentioned, fire and EMS providers in the County rely on each other for mutual and automatic aid assistance to optimize response times and engage in sharing of fire station space with other organizations. Five of the fire districts rely on the County for dispatch services. A few providers share their stations with other agencies for occasional use. Additionally, two districts capitalize on receiving contract services from city fire departments with full-time paid staff that would otherwise not be affordable. In addition to sharing of facilities the agencies practice extensive collaboration and participate in local and regional organizations.

- ❖ CFPD practices facility sharing by renting the hall at Station 31 to local nonprofit organizations and community service clubs.
- ❖ DFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Dixon FD's services and station by contract. Dixon FD also allows Solano Community College Firefighter Academy to make use of the Department's training site as the institution's sole training site.
- ❖ EVFPD practices facility sharing by making use of Vallejo FD's services and stations by contract. In addition, Vallejo FD makes space available to the Vallejo Police Department and shares its portable water supply unit with Vallejo Water Department.
- ❖ MFPD shares its facilities by renting a single room of the main fire station (Station 51) to Medic Ambulance Inc. The ambulance company's employees use the room to stand by and sleep between calls for service.
- ❖ SFPD practices facility sharing by allowing the Sheriff's Department to utilize Station 32 as a meeting and briefing location for on duty officers. The District also allows the County Public Works Department to store its equipment at Station 32 while working on projects in the area.
- ❖ VFPD allows the Rural North Vacaville Water District to use one of its stations for their board meetings.
- ❖ The districts occasionally participate in joint training exercises with neighboring fire departments.

All county fire districts are represented by one member on the Board of SEMSC. A majority of the districts also participate in regional planning efforts, including the joint

development impact fee study that is in progress among several fire districts, the recent dispatch study, and the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan conducted by the County. The districts also take part in several collaborative organizations, including the County Training Officers Association, the County Chiefs Association, the Operations Section Chiefs, the Terrorist Liaisons, the California Special Districts Association, and the California Fire Districts Association.

Opportunities for future facility sharing and collaborations include further access to station space for outside organizations and other fire providers, joint training opportunities, and additional ways of collaboration, which would increase efficiency and safety.

- ❖ An opportunity for further facility sharing and collaboration may be centralized dispatch center for all fire providers in the County, as previously discussed.
- ❖ EVFPD reported that Station 26 could also be used jointly with the Benicia Fire Department and there is the potential to provide ladder truck service to the City of Benicia.
- ❖ Vallejo FD may be able to take part in additional collaborations among the fire protection districts in the County to further the interests of EVFPD, which consists of unincorporated territory and may have differing interests from that of the City, by participating in the County Fire Chiefs Association breakout meetings for district chiefs (in addition to those for city chiefs).
- ❖ Additional opportunities for facility sharing may be possible when MFPD adds another room at the main station with certain necessary accommodations for other agencies to use.
- ❖ VFPD reported that Station 68 could be used jointly with Cal Fire.

The districts have been open to collaboration with various partners, most recently conducting the joint development impact fee study. Future opportunities for collaboration include a joint grant to fund a program to recruit and retain volunteers and the proposed centralized dispatch center. With few exceptions, such as the contract service arrangement in DFPD and EVFPD, there appears to be a separation between the city and special district fire departments with regard to collaborative efforts, and these future opportunities may provide a chance for the various agencies to partner and further their relationships with one another.

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## Consolidation Options

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As part of this MSR, LAFCO is required to identify potential governmental structure and operational efficiencies upon which the agencies may be able to capitalize. Additionally, the County maintains a policy to promote and encourage consolidation of fire districts through the LAFCO process.

Generally, consolidation of fire providers promotes efficiency, professionalism and public safety. The primary benefit of consolidation is economies of scale, which may be achieved in several areas. Larger fire providers can more efficiently coordinate deployment of fire personnel when multiple incidents occur simultaneously or large incidents occur, as they control staffing at a greater number of adjacent fire stations.

Consolidation may offer opportunities to share and/or reconfigure fire station locations and apparatus, particularly in the more urbanized portions of the County. This may apply to training and communication facilities, as well as fire stations. Restructuring of staff could result in a more efficient fire service organization. Surplus administrative staff could be reassigned to operational assignments delivering improved services to the public. Newly consolidated districts reported observing cost savings from reduced management personnel and insurance costs.<sup>157</sup> Other cost savings opportunities may be the closing of redundant stations and the elimination of surplus administrative staff. Combining resources may allow districts to sell surplus vehicles, reducing the overall age of fleet.

Over the course of this review several forms of collaboration and reorganization were recognized that may benefit the fire districts. Options include functional consolidation alternatives where fire providers consolidate a portion of the fire functions or full consolidation of two or more agencies. Examples of functional consolidation include 1) a joint powers authority between two or more agencies to conduct specific types of services (i.e., administration) or all functions and operations related to fire services, 2) contracting for services from another provider, 3) consolidation of dispatch services, or 4) a closest resource response system where agency boundaries become irrelevant during dispatch. These options are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

### Compatibility Factors

Compatibility among the providers plays a large role in determining appropriate consolidation options. There are several manners in which agencies may or may not be compatible, including staffing levels, type and level of services provided, funding levels and sources, resources available such as stations and equipment, and geographical proximity, topography and hydrology.

As was previously shown in the *Service Adequacy* section of this *Overview* chapter, the staffing levels of the districts that do not rely on city staff for service provision fluctuate slightly with VFPD being the only outlier. Vacaville FPD, however, serves a larger population and its firefighting staff per 1,000 capita ratio is the lowest among the four districts that rely on their own staff. CFPD, MFPD and SFPD have comparable staffing ratios. In regard to paid staff, there are further similarities among these districts. Within the same four districts, the number of paid staff varies between one and four personnel, some of whom are part-time staff.

As was also discussed in the *Service Adequacy* section of the report, but is relevant in this section to illustrate compatibility, volunteers of all four aforementioned districts generally do not receive compensation, except for limited stipends. Among the same districts the compensation levels were reportedly comparable to one another with slight variations. These districts also reported that their pay rates for all ranks were about half the pay rates of the city fire departments in the County. Similarly, the retirement benefits are not as high as what city firefighters may receive.

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<sup>157</sup> Marin LAFCO.

It appears that the districts that rely on their own staff are similar in their staffing and compensation structures, while DFPD and EVFPD, which rely on city staff are comparable with other city departments.

The type and level of services provided by each agency appears to generally be consistent among the four fire districts that rely on their own staff. The districts largely provide the same basic services. Some of the providers offer additional services; for example, SFPD has a boat with fire suppression capabilities, and VFPD provides dive rescue services. Cordelia FPD is atypical in that it provides non-transport ALS. Among the city fire departments in Solano County, the City of Vacaville FD is distinctive as it provides transport ambulance services in addition to the non-transport ALS services that all the city fire departments provide (with the exception of Suisun City).

For the most part, no district in the County relies heavily on a source of revenue that is dissimilar to the other districts' or could not be adopted by a newly consolidated agency. The services of all the fire protection districts in Solano County, with the exception of CFPD, are primarily financed through property taxes. Cordelia FPD is the only district that supplements its income with special tax income; in fact, it is the largest source of income for the District. CFPD and MFPD rely heavily on grants, and CFPD, SFPD and VFPD collect service charges. These funding differences do not create a barrier to reorganization as these funding sources could be made consistent prior to or during the reorganization process. For instance, as was already discussed in multiple sections of this report, the districts could either collaborate in grant sharing or in the case of full consolidation apply for grants as a single large agency, which would increase their chances of success. CFPD's special tax does pose a particular challenge to consolidation, as voter approval makes it not so easily duplicated by agencies. In the case of full consolidation, the formed agency would have to either relinquish this source of income, pass a new special tax or create a zone of service.

In terms of territorial proximity, geographical terrain and station locations, the Solano County districts would experience certain challenges dependent upon the regional consolidation scenario, as will be discussed in detail further in this section.

### Functional Consolidation

Functional consolidation and other cooperative service agreements have the potential to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of emergency services, which can be achieved by a more efficient use of scarce resources, a reduction in equipment needs and duplicate efforts, and promote greater flexibility. Operational and political issues can be overcome as a result of functional consolidation. Boundary disputes can be minimized with the closest and most appropriate resources being dispatched. This will foster rational service response zones and the likelihood of faster response. A functional consolidation would allow each agency to retain its identity while at the same time combining resources or specialty assets.

A consolidation will likely require one or both organizations to relinquish their names. Consolidations can create animosity by and between firefighters, fire officers and elected officials. Although a long-term goal may well be a full consolidation, a functional consolidation may be better suited within the volunteer fire agencies or as an initial step in the process. This arrangement may also allow each party the opportunity to enjoy the



benefits of the relationship, while at the same time considering any loss of autonomy and local control.

There are two basic types of agreements that fire providers can enter—contracts and joint powers agreements. Contracts are used when jurisdictions agree to provide a service to another for a set fee. Joint agreements include the fire service standard of mutual aid (which was already discussed above) as well as joint power agreements. A joint power agreement is a partial consolidation of functions among two or more jurisdictions. It can be further expanded to create a joint power authority agreement where a completely separate organization is established to provide a service on behalf of the participating jurisdictions.

### Joint Powers Authority

Joint powers are exercised when the public officials of two or more agencies agree to create another legal entity or establish a joint approach to work on a common problem, fund a project, or act as a representative body for a specific activity.

A joint powers agreement is a formal legal agreement between two or more public agencies that share a common power and want to jointly implement programs, build facilities or deliver services. Officials from those public agencies formally approve a cooperative arrangement. A joint powers agreement is like a confederation of governments that works together and shares resources for mutual support or common actions. The government agencies that participate in joint powers agreements are called member agencies. With a joint powers agreement, a member agency agrees to be responsible for delivering a service on behalf of the other member agencies. Each joint powers agreement is unique as there is no set formula for how governments should use their joint powers. One agency will administer the terms of the agreement, which may be a short-term, long-term or perpetual service agreement.

A joint powers authority (JPA) is a new separate government organization created by the member agencies, but is legally independent from them. Like a joint powers agreement (in which an agency administers the terms of the agreement) a JPA shares powers common to the member agencies and those powers are outlined in the JPA agreement. Agencies create JPAs to deliver more cost-effective services, eliminate duplicative efforts and consolidate services into a single agency.

A joint powers authority offers the advantages of a more ephemeral and potentially more limited consolidation (e.g., training), continued accountability and local control, and a potential structure to overcome inherent financial incompatibilities among the providers towards future consolidation.

Collaboration by the means of JPAs does not currently exist among the Solano County fire districts and fire departments. As mentioned earlier, creation of a JPA would be a significant step towards full consolidation (if this is a goal) for both districts and fire departments.

One example of where creation of a JPA between city fire departments delivered lower costs and better services is the functional consolidation of the City of Livermore FD and City of Pleasanton FD. The consolidated department is operated by a JPA board. While a formal joint powers structure was put in place, the powers assigned to the JPA board were limited: all major fiscal and labor relations decisions are made by the two cities' City

Councils, with the JPA board serving in an advisory capacity to each body. The Board is comprised of the Mayor and a City Council member from each city. The City Managers of the two cities serve as joint Executive Directors and appoint the Fire Chief.

By forming the consolidated department, the partner cities avoided creating another agency with its own overhead costs for fiscal and personnel management. The new department uses existing city support services. The City of Pleasanton provides payroll, personnel and budget services, and the City of Livermore provides risk management and workers compensation services. Legal services for code enforcement are provided by both cities' legal departments.

To properly allocate the joint department's management expenses, the two cities use a four-part cost-sharing formula that takes into account factors such as the number of emergencies or fire prevention inspections occurring in each city. Currently, Livermore is covering 54 percent of these expenses, Pleasanton 46 percent. Each city maintains the right to determine the number of fire stations and firefighters it needs, so growth in one city does not affect the other city's fire service costs.

One of the management improvements resulting from the consolidation was the movement of top officers in both departments into full-time specialty roles. Before consolidation, division chiefs in both departments managed responsibilities such as emergency operations, training and emergency medical services on a part-time basis. Effectiveness is improved in the consolidated agency with full-time managers for each function. The separate Fire Prevention Bureaus also were consolidated; the single bureau jointly serves both cities, including their one-stop building permit centers.

Initially, all fire station personnel remained in their parent cities but were cross-trained in the other city's stations and on its fire equipment; currently, firefighters regularly work in the other city's stations, providing coverage for those on vacation or sick leave. The two fire union locals also merged, and the five-year labor agreement negotiated by the cities with the newly combined International Association of Fire Fighters local contributes to the consolidated fire department's long-term cost stability. The JPA immediately agreed to joint promotional testing, and the several promotions, which since being made have contributed to the blending of the two cities' fire services.

A single training system serves both cities' firefighters. Managed by a division chief, it uses a modern training tower and classroom located in Pleasanton. Emergency operations also have been completely merged, with a single "duty officer" responding to emergencies wherever they occur and both cities' fire equipment responding wherever needed. Dispatch services were consolidated in Livermore's public safety communications center, as it was larger and better suited to handle the workload created by the consolidation of the departments. The consolidated department has focused on the creation of one "culture" and one set of operating procedures which combines the "best practices" that were in use in both cities.

In Solano County, both city fire departments and fire districts could be member agencies in one single joint powers authority. Alternatively, at first only compatible agencies could enter in two different JPAs. For example, the four districts with compatible operational structures (CFPD, MFPD, SFPD, and VFPD) could form a JPA. City departments (which would include DFPD and EVFPD) would form a separate JPA. The two JPAs then

would work on consolidating into a single JPA while working out differences and building bridges.

### Contracting for Services

Contracting for certain services from other agencies offers an opportunity to test a service structure prior to committing to full reorganization and may also offer cost efficiencies depending on the structure and participating agencies.

At present, DFPD and EVFPD are benefitting from urban level services at minimal cost. DFPD enjoys the lowest cost per capita and second lowest cost per call and simultaneously receives services from a fire department with a high ratio of paid staff and high certification levels.

There may be opportunities for the districts to mirror a similar contractual service setup with a neighboring city or contract for specific services, such as administration, to reap similar benefits. Such a service configuration would also offer a means to address concerns regarding city annexations of district territory resulting in reduced revenues for the district. By the contracting city agreeing to provide continued services within the district for a fee, with consideration given to loss of income due to annexations, would provide for continued services within the district's budget regardless of loss revenue.

### Closest Unit Response

One option that is in essence a form of consolidated effort to improve efficiency to the extent practicable is a dispatch and response system where both the nearest provider and the provider having jurisdiction are dispatched simultaneously to allow for faster response times and enhanced efficiency. Implementation of this system would be a significant step towards countywide consolidation, given that in essence bounds would no longer determine the first responder to an incident.

While in general there are relatively few challenges to implementing a closest unit response system, a study on implementation of a closest unit response system conducted by FEMA cites tradition and unwillingness to change as the primary impediments to transitioning to this kind of response system.<sup>158</sup> Additionally, Solano County providers face the particular challenge of addressing needed improvements to the dispatch system. As the dispatch system presently exists, there is no reliable way to coordinate responses across jurisdictional boundaries, which would be necessary in the case of a closest unit response configuration.

The first and the most essential step towards the closest response system is resolving the existing problems with dispatch discussed previously in this report. Districts reported that they strive for closest unit response; however, the existing dispatch system is a barrier to fully realizing the benefits of such a system. The *Consolidated Dispatch Feasibility Study* conducted in 2010 proposed full dispatch consolidation and outlined proposed steps in this process, along with challenges. For more information regarding the full dispatch consolidation proposed by the discussed study, please refer to the 2010 Consolidated Dispatch Feasibility Study.

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<sup>158</sup> FEMA, Exploring Closest Unit Response to Fire and Medical Emergencies in Spokane County, 2009.

While full consolidation often has the largest start up costs (initial investment) it typically provides the greatest long-term cost savings. A consolidated center offers many advantages:<sup>159</sup>

- ❖ Employs common electrical, HVAC, and emergency power subsystems;
- ❖ Employees may be cross-trained;
- ❖ Employee schedules may be combined for added personnel efficiency;
- ❖ Flexible arrangements may amplify the commonalities in fire and medical dispatch;
- ❖ Better interagency information sharing;
- ❖ Elimination of duplicate services;
- ❖ Opportunities to pool financial resources to fund system upgrades;
- ❖ Increased ability to communicate between agencies;
- ❖ More efficient dispatch collaboration for fire and EMS; and
- ❖ Potentially, a more cost effective overall solution.

#### Further steps

Solano County providers must overcome several challenges in order to realize full consolidation, including lack of initial start up funding, lack of political will, and reluctance to give up control. In order to begin the functional consolidation process, the Solano County fire agencies may consider the following initial steps:

- 1) Establish an exploratory committee (possibly through the Fire Chief's Association) to cultivate the concept of functional consolidation. The committee should determine what level of interest exists between the agencies.
- 2) If sufficient interest exists, establish a task force to formally study the feasibility of entering into a functional consolidation arrangement.
- 3) Identify key individuals or positions to serve on a task force. Members should include fire chiefs, government officials and citizens.
- 4) There is also a possibility of retaining the services of an outside neutral facilitator to assist with charting the future roadmap toward functional consolidation.
- 5) Determine which services can be consolidated and the potential benefits that may be realized.
- 6) Ensure that all key stake holders are kept abreast of the status and progress.

#### Full Consolidation

Solano County fire agencies have a history of consolidation. There have been three consolidations among the fire protection districts of Solano County, including the

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<sup>159</sup> Currier, Walter and James Dye, *Consolidated Dispatch: Embraced or Feared?*, 9-1-1 Magazine.com, 2011

consolidation of Cordelia FPD with Benicia FPD in 1978, Vacaville FPD with Elmira FPD in 1986, and Montezuma FPD with Ryer Island FPD in 2006.

Consolidation could take many forms legally and geographically. There are two basic legal approaches: consolidate providers into a newly formed fire district with an independently elected board or consolidate providers into existing fire agencies. Consolidation into a newly formed fire district has the advantages of offering local control and accountability to participating areas and the opportunity to develop funding and service configuration approaches that benefit all participants. Consolidation into an existing agency has the advantages of fewer transition costs; disadvantages include pre-existing financing structures that limit compatible consolidation partners, as well as reduced local control and accountability for consolidating agencies.

A majority of the districts in the County rely on part-time administrative staff, including chiefs and other officers. This staffing constraint limits public access to staff and minimizes the time these personnel can direct towards professional management efforts, such as strategic planning. Through sharing of full-time administrative staff, consolidation could allow for a higher degree of management and improved accountability to the public. Additionally, larger more professionally run agencies have greater public visibility and invite greater public interest in their operations, as well as potentially greater funding sources. As these providers consolidate and grow, enhanced accountability will be required.

There are three basic geographic approaches to consolidation: a more regional approach among neighboring providers, all unincorporated areas, and countywide. The advantage of focusing on neighboring agencies is that these providers are more likely to have compatible needs with respect to service level enhancements and available financing; whereas, agencies with different land use composition, demand, and service levels may lack the compatibility necessary to reap any benefits from consolidation. Consolidation of similar providers that already conduct mutual and automatic aid response for one another, and participate in other joint activities, such as training, could potentially reduce administrative, training and facility costs, capitalize on pooled resources, and promote more comprehensive planning efforts for fire service facilities and needs in each sub-area/region of the County. Options for regional consolidations in the County include 1) districts along the I 80 corridor and 2) districts and neighboring city fire departments.

Cordelia, Suisun and Vacaville FPDs show the most compatibility and potential for future regional consolidation. These agencies appear to have similar challenges, services levels and structures, and level of demand. Consolidation of these agencies could provide continuity of services along the I 80 corridor. As it presently exists, the interstate changes fire jurisdiction 17 times through Solano County, traveling in and out of the same cities and districts several times. There have been informal discussions among some of the districts regarding the possibility of reorganization in some form. While Montezuma FPD could be included here as well, it serves a more rural area, which is separated from the I 80 corridor. Although DFPD is also located along I 80, its service configuration (contracting for services from a city) and lack of its own fire station would pose a substantial obstacle to consolidation with other districts. Consolidation of CFPD, SFPD and VFPD would serve the purpose of creating logical boundaries along the corridor and around the cities, where all three of the districts largely divided by city territory. While VFPD is somewhat separated



from the other districts by hills, this would not impact level of service upon consolidation as stations would continue to exist where required to provide services. Certainly, CFPD is dissimilar in its financing sources, staffing setup, and services offered from the other two districts; however, these differences can be overcome during the consolidation process. Additionally, Suisun FPD is more expansive than the other two agencies, which was cited by the District as a concern about consolidation; however, inclusion of SFPD would allow for more logical boundaries (preventing a district made of non-contiguous areas) and would be a logical step towards further consolidation in the County.

Full consolidation between a city and a district is a possibility. At present, the districts are struggling to maintain a certain financing level in the face of declining property values and city annexations of district territory. This lack of funding creates a barrier to transitioning to more paid staff and fully covering capital needs. Full consolidation of a city function with a district would require that either the district become a subsidiary of the city whereby the City Council would act as the governing body of the district or as an independent special district that serves within the city limits in addition to the surrounding unincorporated area. Formation of a subsidiary district requires that 70 percent of the territory and 70 percent of the population be within the City. Given the size of the districts, it is not likely that 70 percent of the territory would be located within the city limits; however, given that a majority of the population in the County is within the incorporated cities, a district may be able to meet the 70 percent of population requirement. It is unlikely that a city would support consolidation with service from an independent special district inside city limits. Formation of a subsidiary district managed by a city may have the benefits of addressing financing constraints on the districts as a result of city annexations, enhancing paid staffing levels within the district served areas, and allow for more logical service areas.

Another option is consolidation of all districts serving the unincorporated areas. This option would provide consistent service levels across the unincorporated areas of the County and allow a single entity to greater leverage limited resources. However, while consolidation of the districts would create efficiencies allowing for cost reductions, particularly with regard to administration, this option will not address the declining property tax revenue and other financial challenges presently faced by the districts.

Finally, formation of a countywide fire provider to serve unincorporated and incorporated areas alike is an option. This option will reap benefits similar to the other consolidation options, with the added benefit of balancing rural and urban resources and solving a lot of the financing problems, including property tax revenue loss by the fire districts. A large countywide fire protection agency would attract larger and more diverse financing sources. Countywide fire service would provide a larger tax base to allow larger expenditures with less tax payer burden.

According to multiple FEMA studies, countywide fire protection agency increases coordination and unified leadership by eliminating the fragmentation of government. In areas of the United States with more fragmented government, economic decline and stagnation has been more prevalent. Fragmentation takes place when there is an absence of a single government with the ability to look out for what is best for the whole region.



Opportunities are created simply by the larger size of an organization. Consolidation would allow staff to respond in a larger geographical area such as the jurisdiction in which they work, in addition to where they live (for example, if they live in unincorporated County and work in one of the cities). This may be particularly beneficial in light of the trend of many volunteer fire districts struggling to maintain daytime staffing because of local residents commuting for their jobs.

Consolidation of government entities makes them more socially and fiscally balanced by improved citizen participation, a more equitable distribution of taxes and services, and the potential for better economic development opportunities.

The fire agencies have demonstrated extensive collaboration with one another in the form of joint studies and grants, which may be indicative of the potential for consolidation of all providers countywide. The providers appear to be open to consolidation in some form and have initiated informal discussions among one another. For example, Cordelia and Vacaville FPDs, as well as Vacaville and Dixon FPDs, have reportedly entered into some casual discussions. It is recommended that consolidation be encouraged while the timing appears to be ripe in terms of both, fire agency enthusiasm and declining financial stability of fire protection districts in Solano County.

Considering the limited scope of this study, which exclusively covers the fire protection districts and excludes the cities in Solano County that provide fire and emergency services, as well as dispatch services, further stakeholder input is required to account for the interests of the cities in regard to the various consolidation options. The final conclusion of this report recommending countywide consolidation is supported mainly by quantitative data and to a lesser degree by the opinions expressed by the districts. To further investigate the feasibility of a countywide fire protection agency and steps needed for its implementation, a more in-depth study is recommended that would concentrate specifically on consolidation possibilities and include quantitative and qualitative data of all fire service agencies in the County, as well as include a detailed analysis of how service delivery would be improved by conducting a thorough comparative cost/benefit analysis of response times, coverage, rate of expenditures, to name just a few indicators. In the meantime, as was already mentioned above, Solano County fire agencies, by means of a newly formed JPA or the existing committee on dispatch consolidation, may choose to collect public and stakeholder input and determine the level of support of the various consolidation options. However, the foremost priority should be given to dispatch consolidation.

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# ***INTERVIEWS***

<i><b>Agency</b></i>	<i><b>Name and Title</b></i>
Solano County	Birgitta Corsello, Clerk of the Board
Solano County Counsel	Dennis Bunting, County Counsel
Solano County EMS Agency	Rachelle Canones
Solano County Sheriff's Office	Ramona Margherio, Deputy County Counsel
Cordelia FPD	Jay Huyssoon, Fire Chief
Dixon FPD	Aaron McAlister, Fire Chief
East Vallejo FPD	Ron Prince, Fire Chief
Montezuma FPD	Joe Rosewall, Fire Chief
Suisun FPD	Ron Glantz, Fire Chief
Vacaville FPD	Howard Wood, Fire Chief