



**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

701 Ocean Street, #318-D
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone Number: (831) 454-2055
Website: www.santacruzlafco.org
Email: info@santacruzlafco.org

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

(hybrid meeting may be attended remotely or in-person)

Attend Meeting by Internet: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85603836977>
(Password 208678)

Attend Meeting by Conference Call: **Dial 1-669-900-6833 or 1-253-215-8782**
(Webinar ID: 856 0383 6977)

Attend Meeting In-Person: **Board of Supervisors Chambers**
(701 Ocean Street, Room 525, Santa Cruz CA 95060)

HYBRID MEETING PROCESS

Santa Cruz LAFCO has established a hybrid meeting process in accordance with Assembly Bill 2449:

- a) Commission Quorum: State law indicates that a quorum must consist of Commissioners in person pursuant to AB 2449.
- b) Public Comments: For those wishing to make public comments remotely, identified individuals will be given up to three (3) minutes to speak. Staff will inform the individual when one minute is left and when their time is up. For those attending the meeting remotely, please click on the "Raise Hand" button under the "Reactions Tab" to raise your hand. For those joining via conference call, pressing *9 will raise your hand. The three (3) minute limit also applies to virtual public comments.
- c) Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: Santa Cruz LAFCO does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. If you are a person with a disability and wish to attend the meeting, but require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the staff at (831) 454-2055 at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to make the appropriate arrangements. Persons with disabilities may also request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.

1. ROLL CALL

2. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

The Executive Officer may make brief announcements in the form of a written report or verbal update, and may not require Commission action.

a. Hybrid Meeting Process

The Commission will receive an update on the hybrid meeting process.

Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

b. Big Basin Water Company – Status Update

The Commission will receive an update on the private water system.

Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The Commission will consider approving the minutes from the September 4, 2024 Regular LAFCO Meeting.

Recommended Action: Approve the minutes as presented with any desired changes.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items not on the agenda, provided that the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Commission and that no action may be taken on an off-agenda item(s) unless authorized by law.

5. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

This is an opportunity for the Commission to receive special presentations from local, regional, or state agencies / representatives regarding LAFCO-related matters. These presentations may or may not require Commission action.

a. County Parks – “Life After Dissolution”

The Commission will receive an update from the County regarding the dissolution of the Opal Cliffs Recreation District approved in April 2022.

Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearing items require expanded public notification per provisions in State law, directives of the Commission, or are those voluntarily placed by the Executive Officer to facilitate broader discussion.

a. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Service & Sphere Review

The Commission will consider the adoption of a service and sphere of influence review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Recommended Actions:

- 1) Find, pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, that LAFCO determined that the service and sphere of influence review is not subject to the environmental impact evaluation process because it can be seen

with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment and the activity is not subject to CEQA;

- 2) Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, that LAFCO is required to develop and determine a sphere of influence for the District, and review and update, as necessary;
- 3) Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56430, that LAFCO is required to conduct a service review before, or in conjunction with an action to establish or update a sphere of influence; and
- 4) Adopt LAFCO Resolution (No. 2024-16) approving the 2024 Service and Sphere of Influence Review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District with the following conditions:
 - a. Reaffirm the District's current sphere of influence within Santa Cruz County with the condition that a stakeholder group be formed with representatives from the District and the LAFCOs of Santa Clara and Santa Cruz to evaluate the proposed annexation of District-owned parcels within Santa Cruz County; and
 - b. Direct the Executive Officer to distribute a copy of the adopted service and sphere review to Santa Clara LAFCO as the principal LAFCO and other interested or affected parties, including but not limited to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and the Santa Clara/San Mateo LAFCOs.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Other business items involve administrative, budgetary, legislative, or personnel matters and may or may not be subject to public hearings.

a. CSA 48 Reorganization Effort

The Commission will receive an update on the proposed reorganization involving County Service Area 48 (County Fire).

Recommended Action: Direct staff to continue coordinating with the County of Santa Cruz and CalFire to develop a reorganization plan for CSA 48.

b. City of Watsonville Notice of Preparation – LAFCO Comment Letter

The Commission will consider submitting a letter to the City of Watsonville regarding their upcoming 2050 General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

Recommended Action: Direct staff to submit a comment letter to the City of Watsonville prior to their October 14, 2024 deadline.

8. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

LAFCO staff receive written correspondence and other materials on occasion that may or may not be related to a specific agenda item. Any correspondence presented to the Commission will also be made available to the general public. Any written correspondence distributed to the Commission less than 72 hours prior to the meeting will be made available for inspection at the hearing and posted on LAFCO's website.

9. PRESS ARTICLES

LAFCO staff monitors newspapers, publications, and other media outlets for any news affecting local cities, districts, and communities in Santa Cruz County. Articles are presented to the Commission on a periodic basis.

a. Press Articles during the Months of August and September

The Commission will receive an update on recent LAFCO-related news occurring around the county and throughout California.

Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

10. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

This is an opportunity for Commissioners to comment briefly on issues not listed on the agenda, provided that the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. No discussion or action may occur or be taken, except to place the item on a future agenda if approved by Commission majority. The public may address the Commission on these informational matters.

11. ADJOURNMENT

LAFCO's next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES:

Campaign Contributions

State law (Government Code Section 84308) requires that a LAFCO Commissioner disqualify themselves from voting on an application involving an "entitlement for use" (such as an annexation or sphere amendment) if, within the last twelve months, the Commissioner has received \$250 or more in campaign contributions from an applicant, any financially interested person who actively supports or opposes an application, or an agency (such as an attorney, engineer, or planning consultant) representing an applicant or interested participant. The law also requires any applicant or other participant in a LAFCO proceeding to disclose the amount and name of the recipient Commissioner on the official record of the proceeding. The Commission prefers that the disclosure be made on a standard form that is filed with LAFCO staff at least 24 hours before the LAFCO hearing begins. If this is not possible, a written or oral disclosure can be made at the beginning of the hearing. The law also prohibits an applicant or other participant from making a contribution of \$250 or more to a LAFCO Commissioner while a proceeding is pending or for 3 months afterward. Disclosure forms and further information can be obtained from the LAFCO office at Room #318-D, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (phone 831-454-2055).

Contributions and Expenditures Supporting and Opposing Proposals

Pursuant to Government Code Sections §56100.1, §56300(b), §56700.1, §59009, and §81000 et seq., and Santa Cruz LAFCO's Policies and Procedures for the Disclosures of Contributions and Expenditures in Support of and Opposition to proposals, any person or combination of persons who directly or indirectly contributes a total of \$1,000 or more or expends a total of \$1,000 or more in support of or opposition to a LAFCO Proposal must comply with the disclosure requirements of the Political Reform Act (Section 84250). These requirements contain provisions for making disclosures of contributions and expenditures at specified intervals. Additional information may be obtained at the Santa Cruz County Elections Department, 701 Ocean Street, Room 210, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (phone 831-454-2060). More information on the scope of the required disclosures is available at the web site of the Fair Political Practices Commission: www.fppc.ca.gov. Questions regarding FPPC material, including FPPC forms, should be directed to the FPPC's advice line at 1-866-ASK-FPPC (1-866-275-3772).

Accommodating People with Disabilities

The Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs or activities. The Commission meetings are held in an accessible facility. If you wish to attend this meeting and will require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the LAFCO office at 831-454-2055 at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. For TDD service, the California State Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 will provide a link between the caller and the LAFCO staff.

Late Agenda Materials

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.5 public records that relate to open session agenda items that are distributed to a majority of the Commission less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available to the public at Santa Cruz LAFCO offices at 701 Ocean Street, #318-D, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 during regular business hours. These records, when possible, will also be made available on the LAFCO website at www.santacruzlafco.org. To review written materials submitted after the agenda packet is published, contact staff at the LAFCO office or in the meeting room before or after the meeting.



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

DRAFT MINUTES

LAFCO REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, September 4, 2024

Start Time - 9:00 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Chair John Hunt called the meeting of the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (LAFCO) to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. He asked the staff to conduct a roll call.

The following Commissioners were present:

- Commissioner Jim Anderson
- Commissioner Roger Anderson
- Commissioner Justin Cummings
- Commissioner Manu Koenig (*Vice-Chair*)
- Commissioner Eduardo Montesino (*Arrived at 9:02 a.m.*)
- Commissioner Allan Timms
- Alternate Commissioner Ed Banks
- Alternate Commissioner John Hunt (*Chair*)

Alternate Commissioner Ed Banks will be a voting member on behalf of Commissioner Rachél Lather (District Member).

The following LAFCO staff members were present:

- LAFCO Analyst, Francisco Estrada
- Legal Counsel, Joshua Nelson
- Executive Officer, Joe Serrano

2. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

2a. Virtual Meeting Process

Executive Officer Joe Serrano indicated that the meeting was being conducted through a hybrid approach with Commissioners and staff attending in-person while members of the public have the option to attend virtually or in-person.

Chair John Hunt moved on to the next agenda item.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chair John Hunt requested public comments on the draft minutes. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no public comment on the item. **Chair John Hunt** closed public comments.

Chair John Hunt called for a motion. **Commissioner Allan Timms** motioned for approval of the August 7th Meeting Minutes and **Commissioner Jim Anderson** seconded the motion.

Chair John Hunt called for a voice vote on the approval of the draft minutes.

MOTION: Allan Timms

SECOND: Jim Anderson

FOR: Jim Anderson, Roger Anderson Ed Banks, Justin Cummings, Manu Koenig, Eduardo Montesino, and Allan Timms.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair John Hunt requested public comments on any non-agenda items. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was one request to address the Commission on the item.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, discussed recent actions taken by the board of directors for the Scotts Valley Fire Protection District regarding the Branciforte fire station and their efforts to move from at-large to district-based elections. Additionally, Ms. Steinbruner spoke about the importance of considering water district consolidations.

Chair John Hunt closed public comments and moved on to the next agenda item.

5. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

5a. Central Fire District – “Life After Consolidation”

Chair John Hunt requested staff to provide a post-consolidation update from the district.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano introduced Chief **Jason Nee** and explained that the purpose of the presentation was to provide the Commission with an update on the Central Fire District (CFD) since the 2021 consolidation between Aptos/La Selva and Central Fire Protection Districts.

Chief Jason Nee provided an overview of past consolidations in the county, detailed the district's current profile, and noted that throughout the State, more and more consolidations are being considered due to increasing financial burdens associated with providing these important municipal services. Chief Nee stated that since the consolidation in 2021, CFD has transitioned to district-based elections, developed a 20-year master plan, as well as establish a five-year strategic plan, and have placed a

general obligation bond for facilities and equipment improvements on the November ballot. Additionally, Chief Nee explained that benefits of consolidation included guiding two legacy agencies towards adopting a single policy and standard operating procedure, enhancing staffing and training capacity, elimination of redundancies, more coverage throughout the district, increased purchasing power and capital reserves, and the achievement of significant cost savings. Chief Nee also noted the importance of timing when planning for a consolidation in terms of aligning with the conclusion of board member terms.

Chair John Hunt requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted one request to address the Commission on the item.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, appreciated the presentation and noted the increased workloads created by the consolidation on the administrative and financial departments of the new district in 2021. Additionally, Ms. Steinbruner also reminded the Commission of the disparity in pay and benefits that required special legislation to resolve and spoke on how the agency was able to merge two different cultures.

Chair John Hunt closed public comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion. **Commissioner Eduardo Montesino** asked a question about the assimilation of work cultures since consolidation. **Chief Jason Nee** said that the process to bring two cultures together has not been easy, but staffs have blended well so far. Mr. Montesino inquired about response times. Chief Nee responded that response times have remained the same or have improved slightly due to having additional staffing and equipment capacity out in the field, even with an increase of emergency calls in the past few years.

Commissioner Allan Timms inquired about staffing levels. **Chief Jason Nee** responded that recruitment has been difficult for all fire departments since the early 2000s. Prior to consolidation, some members from both legacy organizations opted to retire while others waited until the consolidation process had been completed. Since consolidation, the agency has lost an average of four employees a year, while some employees have experienced upward mobility.

Commissioner Manu Koenig commended the District on its performance and service to the community. Mr. Koenig asked about the takeaways from their relationship with County Fire and what LAFCO should keep in mind as they consider future consolidations. **Chief Jason Nee** mentioned that in the last 4-5 years, the relationship with County Fire (CalFire) has improved significantly due to leadership from both agencies. Chief Nee emphasized the importance of the agency to ensure that the community receive the services that they need, at a level that is equal or better.

Commissioner Roger Anderson recommended developing an annotated version of the presentation for use by colleagues locally and around the state. **Chief Jason Nee** appreciated the comments and mentioned that after consolidation, the agency had to keep two sets of records until the end of the fiscal year, which added to staff workloads.

Chair John Hunt asked how CDF measured success and what sets of data they relied on. **Chief Jason Nee** explained that staff meet on a quarterly basis to assess and analyze incident data. Chief Nee also added that challenges during the COVID years did not yield reliable data and increased traffic time on highway has also affected response times.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano asked a question on articulating the benefits of consolidations for struggling fire agencies. **Chief Jason Nee** emphasized the importance of adding resources and capacity for agencies that will continue to struggle with limited revenues and growing expenses. Chief Nee also stressed the importance of finding solutions to problems before they become exasperated. Mr. Serrano followed-up with a question about the importance of LAFCO's action and how LAFCO can do more for future changes in organization. Chief Nee mentioned that LAFCO was a valued partner in establishing a transparent and informative process during the 2021 consolidation. Mr. Serrano inquired about future consolidation opportunities for the District. Chief Nee mentioned that the District has held transparent conversations with the City of Santa Cruz and have moved forward with a feasibility study. Mr. Serrano commended the Chief for constantly looking for ways to evolve and improve the services on behalf of their constituents.

Commissioner Justin Cummings asked about feasibility studies that analyze various fire agencies and/or larger consolidations. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** commented that based on his experience, consolidations and reorganizations are successful when the affected fire agencies are willing participants, and LAFCO should focus on those fire agencies at this time.

Commissioner Jim Anderson shared his experiences with community and outreach events during the initial phases of the consolidation in 2018. **Chief Jason Nee** stressed that the new agency is stronger as one than when it was two separate agencies.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Chair John Hunt noted that there were no public hearing items scheduled today.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7a. Educational Workshops

Chair John Hunt requested staff to provide a presentation on hosting future educational workshops to help promote more awareness regarding water and road maintenance services.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano reminded the Commission of the successful educational workshops led by LAFCO two years ago to provide special district staff and board members with updated information on the Brown Act, transparency laws, and how to be more efficient as a public agency. The workshops were also an opportunity to build trust or further develop relationships with the special districts. Today, LAFCO has heard from constituents wanting to get more information on water and road service in the county. Mr. Serrano stated that he believes that hosting these timely educational workshops will bring a number of benefits to both LAFCO and constituents countywide. Mr. Serrano also proposed hosting the educational workshops at different locations and audiences throughout the county. Mr. Serrano mentioned that additional information on the workshops will be provided to the Commission at an upcoming meeting and is requesting further direction as staff continues to develop the contents and details of each presentation.

Chair John Hunt requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted one request to address the Commission on the item.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, expressed appreciation for the proposed educational workshops and considers the last workshops successful. Ms. Steinbruner also commented that a panel discussion model was more beneficial to the residents as opposed to an open house forum. Finally, Ms. Steinbruner commented on the timeliness and appropriateness of these proposed workshops.

Chair John Hunt closed public comments and requested comments or clarifying questions from the Commission. **Commissioner Justin Cummings** agreed with Ms. Steinbruner on the structure of the workshops and inquired on the format of the presentations. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** mentioned that the educational workshops will all be the same, while also tailored for the respective audience. Commissioner Cummings then recommended adding a video component to the presentation. Mr. Serrano commented that he would identify locations with updated IT capabilities.

Chair John Hunt asked about potential partners for the event. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** stated that staff is currently considering local, regional, and state partners to see which agency(ies) best fits the needs of the local communities. **Commissioner Roger Anderson** requested consideration and thought on who the speakers will be for each workshop. Additionally, Mr. Anderson requested a study session on these topics at a LAFCO meeting and suggested hosting the workshop using a hybrid model.

Chair John Hunt called for a motion. **Commissioner Justin Cummings** motioned for approval of staff recommendation and **Commissioner Jim Anderson** seconded the motion.

Chair John Hunt called for a voice vote on the motion based on the staff recommendation: **Direct LAFCO staff to develop a detailed overview of each educational workshop, including but not limited to potential guest speakers, estimated costs, and possible dates and venues.**

MOTION: Justin Cummings

SECOND: Jim Anderson

FOR: Jim Anderson, Roger Anderson, Ed, Banks, Justin Cummings, Manu Koenig, Eduardo Montesino, and Allan Timms.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

7b. CSA 48 Reorganization Effort

Chair John Hunt requested staff to provide an update on the proposed reorganization involving County Service Area 48 (County Fire).

Executive Officer Joe Serrano informed the Commission that it will receive another update at the October meeting regarding CSA 48 once CalFire and the County have had

an opportunity to provide input on the reorganization plan outline. Since the last LAFCO meeting, the County has transitioned the Fire Department Advisory Committee (FDAC) into an advisory group and LAFCO has continued to coordinate with partner agencies on the proposed transition plan. The county fire master plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in late September, and they will also consider providing direction to their staff on working with LAFCO and CalFire to further consider the proposed reorganization of CSA 48.

Chair John Hunt requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted one request to address the Commission on the item.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, expressed her thoughts on the county's decision regarding FDAC and requested further clarification on the role and purpose of the new advisory group. Ms. Steinbruner also mentioned that she looks forward to the Board of Supervisors feedback to the proposed transition plan.

Chair John Hunt closed public comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion. **Commissioner Roger Anderson** inquired about information in the staff report and asked for further clarification on the financial data provided. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained that the information is from the feasibility study and the information demonstrates that potential annexation by small districts will have a destabilizing effect on CSA 48.

Commissioner Jim Anderson inquired about waiving LAFCO fees to encourage potential applications for consolidations. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** reminded the Commission they have full authority over the waiver of fees.

Commissioner Justin Cummings clarified that the decision to transition FDAC stemmed from a recommendation from the body itself and invited **Michael Beaton**, Director of General Services for the County of Santa Cruz, to provide additional information on the decision. Mr. Beaton informed the Commission that the purpose of the advisory body will be considered at an upcoming meeting and the county's master plan will also play a role in defining the role of the advisory group.

Commissioner Justin Cummings motioned for approval of staff recommendation and **Commissioner Jim Anderson** seconded the motion.

Chair John Hunt called for a voice vote on the motion based on the staff recommendation: **Direct staff to continue coordinating with the County of Santa Cruz and CalFire to develop a reorganization plan for CSA 48.**

MOTION: Justin Cummings

SECOND: Jim Anderson

FOR: Roger Anderson, Jim Anderson, Ed Banks, Justin Cummings, Manu Koenig, Eduardo Montesino, and Allan Timms.

AGAINST: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

7c. List of Extraterritorial Service Agreements – Status Update

Chair John Hunt requested staff to provide a status update on all the active extraterritorial service agreements within Santa Cruz County.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano explained that staff aims to provide the Commission with an update on the status of extraterritorial service agreements every two years. The report provides data on the number, size, and potential annexation dates of ESAs throughout the county. Staff believes that ESAs are precursors to future annexation.

Chair John Hunt requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there were no requests to address the Commission on the item.

Chair John Hunt closed public comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion. **Commissioner Jim Anderson** asked about the ESA to be annexed in Watsonville. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** confirmed that it was the Atkinson/Pippin Lane ESA.

Commissioner Roger Anderson inquired about approved ESA's that were never activated. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** confirmed that all approved ESA are receiving services.

Chair John Hunt moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

8. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Chair John Hunt inquired whether there was any written correspondence submitted to LAFCO. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** provided the Commission with an update and explanation on the importance of CALAFCO's adoption of a new legislative procedure and recent legislative bill activities. Santa Cruz LAFCO, along with other LAFCOs, sent a letter to CALAFCO requesting to reconsider its decision and hold additional discussions. Mr. Serrano also informed the Commission that staff sent a letter of support for SB 1209 regarding indemnification agreements.

Chair John Hunt requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there were no requests to address the Commission on the item.

Chair John Hunt closed public comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion. **Commissioner Roger Anderson** asked if the changes may lead to potential lobbying. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained that the CALAFCO staff is small, and they are not lobbyists, thus the item warrants more consideration. Mr. Anderson asked a follow-up about the status of the UC Santa Cruz lawsuit. Mr. Serrano mentioned that an article was provided in the agenda packet with an update and informed the Commission that staff had already reached out to the university to schedule a follow-up meeting.

Chair John Hunt moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

9. PRESS ARTICLES

Chair John Hunt requested staff to provide a presentation on the press articles. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that this item highlights LAFCO-related articles recently circulated in local newspapers.

Chair John Hunt moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

10. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

Chair John Hunt inquired whether any Commissioner would like to share any information. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there were no requests to share any information.

Chair John Hunt moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair John Hunt adjourned the Regular Commission Meeting at 10:41 a.m. to the next regular LAFCO meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

JOHN HUNT, CHAIRPERSON

Attest:

JOE A. SERRANO, EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Date: October 2, 2024
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Joe Serrano, Executive Officer
Subject: **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Service & Sphere Review**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

LAFCO periodically performs municipal service reviews and sphere of influence updates for each agency subject to LAFCO's boundary regulations. As part of the Commission's Multi-Year Work Program, LAFCO staff has drafted a service and sphere review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District ("District") and scheduled a public hearing.

It is recommended that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Find, pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, that LAFCO determined that the service and sphere of influence review is not subject to the environmental impact evaluation process because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment and the activity is not subject to CEQA;
2. Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, that LAFCO is required to develop and determine a sphere of influence for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and review and update, as necessary;
3. Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56430, that LAFCO is required to conduct a service review before, or in conjunction with an action to establish or update a sphere of influence; and
4. Adopt LAFCO Resolution (No. 2024-16) approving the 2024 Service and Sphere of Influence Review for the District with the following conditions:
 - a. Reaffirm the District's current sphere of influence within Santa Cruz County with the condition that a stakeholder group be formed with representatives from the District and the LAFCOs of Santa Clara and Santa Cruz to evaluate the proposed annexation of District-owned parcels within Santa Cruz County; and
 - b. Direct the Executive Officer to distribute a copy of the adopted service and sphere review to Santa Clara LAFCO as the principal LAFCO and other interested or affected parties, including but not limited to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Santa Clara/San Mateo LAFCO.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT:

State law requires LAFCO to periodically review and update the services and spheres of all cities and special districts. LAFCO staff has prepared a service and sphere review for the District (refer to **Attachment 1**). Key findings and recommendations are presented in the *Executive Summary* of the attached report. The review also includes an analysis of the District's ongoing operations, current financial performance, existing governance structure, ability to provide services, and its importance within its jurisdictional area. The attached report concludes with determinations required by State law. This staff report summarizes the service and sphere review's findings, as shown in the following page.

Purpose & Key Findings

The goal of this analysis is to accomplish the Commission's direction to complete a service and sphere review for the CSA under the Multi-Year Work Program and fulfill the service and sphere determinations under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. The following are the main conclusions of the report:

1. The District provides services to a population beyond its borders.

MROSD encompasses over 550 square miles in three separate counties and offers more than 256 miles of recreational trails. Open space services provided by MROSD is not restricted to residents within the District's jurisdiction. It is estimated that approximately 763,000 residents currently live within MROSD's service area but, on average, over 2.4 million people visit the 25 preserves open to the public owned and operated by the District each year. As a result, there is a constant demand for open space services.

2. Santa Clara LAFCO is the principal LAFCO for the District.

MROSD has a service area consisting of three different counties. When multiple counties are involved, state law assigns authority to the principal county's LAFCO. Santa Clara LAFCO has been identified as the principal LAFCO for MROSD. As the principal LAFCO, Santa Clara LAFCO is statutorily responsible for any changes of organization related to MROSD. In the event that a proposed boundary change involves Santa Cruz County, Santa Clara LAFCO will coordinate with our LAFCO.

3. The District has dealt with annual deficits.

MROSD has experienced an annual deficit during the last five fiscal years (FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23). The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's financial standing continues to be strong, General Fund Revenues continue to outpace General Fund Expenditures. When analyzing all funds, there is a structural deficit due to the significant investments the District made in a new administrative office partially covered by committed fund balance and several large land purchases covered by Measure AA bond funds. The District's net position has grown by 33% in the last five years to \$489 million, demonstrating that the deficits do not have a negative impact on the District's overall financial standing.

4. The District is transparent.

Senate Bill 929 was signed into law in September 2018 and requires all independent special districts to have and maintain a website by January 1, 2020. It outlines minimum website data requirements agencies must provide including contact information, financial reports, and meeting agendas/minutes. The District maintains a comprehensive website that exceeds the minimum requirements outlined in SB 929. LAFCO recommends that the District include a copy or link of the latest service and sphere review on their website for additional transparency.

5. Sphere boundary includes parcels owned by the District.

MROSD previously expressed interest in annexing District-owned parcels along Bear Creek Redwoods and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserves. Staff is recommending that the current sphere be reaffirmed with the condition that a stakeholder group be formed to include representatives from the District, Santa Clara LAFCO, and Santa Cruz LAFCO. This group would be tasked with evaluating the proposed annexation of the District-owned parcels and determine if and when an annexation application should be submitted to the Principal LAFCO.

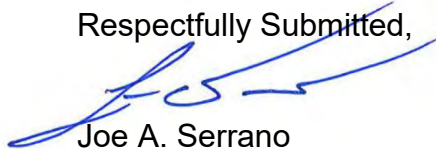
Environmental Review

LAFCO staff has conducted an environmental review for the draft service and sphere review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has determined that the service and sphere review is exempt because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, and the activity is not subject to CEQA (Section 15061[b][3]). A Notice of Exemption, as shown in **Attachment 2**, will be recorded after Commission action.

Agency Coordination and Public Notice

A hearing notice for this draft service review was published in the September 10th issue of the Santa Cruz Sentinel (**Attachment 3**). The draft service and sphere review is attached to this staff report. An administrative draft of the report was shared with the District's General Manager Ana Maria Ruiz as an opportunity to review LAFCO staff's findings and provide corrections and/or feedback before finalizing the report. The assistance from the District's staff in completing this service review was greatly appreciated. In conclusion, staff is recommending that the Commission adopt the attached resolution (refer to **Attachment 4**) approving the service and sphere review.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Attachments:

1. Service and Sphere Review – Administrative Draft
2. Environmental Determination – Categorical Exemption
3. Public Hearing Notice
4. Draft Resolution No. 2024-16

cc: Ana Maria Ruiz, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Service and Sphere of Influence Review

Draft Version (October 2, 2024)

Photo: Cloverdale Ranch (Megan Derhammer)

Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County

701 Ocean Street, Room 318-D Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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Phone: (831) 454-2055



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This Service and Sphere of Influence Review provides information about the services and boundaries involving Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (“MROSD” and “District”). The report is for use by the Local Agency Formation Commission in conducting a statutorily required review and update process. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act requires that the Commission conduct periodic reviews and updates of spheres of influence for all cities and districts in Santa Cruz County (Government Code Section 56425). It also requires LAFCO to conduct a review of municipal services before adopting sphere updates (Government Code Section 56430). The last service review conducted for MROSD was adopted on November 6, 2019.

The municipal service review process does not require LAFCO to initiate changes of organization based on service review conclusions or findings; it only requires that LAFCO make determinations regarding the delivery of public services in accordance to the provisions of Government Code Section 56430. However, LAFCO, local agencies, and the public may subsequently use the determinations and related analysis to consider whether to pursue changes in service delivery, government organization, or spheres of influence.

Service and sphere reviews are informational documents and are generally exempt from environmental review. LAFCO staff has conducted an environmental review of this report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and determined that the District’s service and sphere review is exempt from CEQA. Such exemption is due to the fact that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment (Section 15061[b][3]).

Multi-County Special District

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District was founded as an independent special district in 1972 to preserve the regional greenbelt in northwestern Santa Clara County. In accordance with its principal act, MROSD may be located within multiple counties as long as the lands are contiguous (Public Resource Code Section 5502[a]). In the last four decades, the District has expanded its services into three counties. In 1976, the District was extended to include southern San Mateo County, and again in 1992 to add a small portion of Santa Cruz County. In 2004, through the Coastsides Protection Program, the District’s boundary was extended to the Pacific Ocean in San Mateo County.

The District now encompasses over 550 square miles of territory located in the County of Santa Clara (approximately 200 square miles; \$287 billion in assessed value), the County of San Mateo (approximately 350 square miles; \$138 billion in assessed value), and the County of Santa Cruz (approximately 2.6 square miles; \$1,374,244 in assessed value)¹. The current population within MROSD’s entire service area is approximately 763,000. An overview map is shown as **Figure 1** on page 6.

¹ Assessed values are based on data from the Counties of San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz

Principal LAFCO

Since the District is located in multiple counties, the principal county's LAFCO has purview over MROSD. A "principal county" is the county that has "the greater portion of the entire assessed value, as shown on the last equalized assessment roll of the county or counties, of all taxable property within a district or districts for which a change or organization or reorganization is proposed" (Government Code Section 56066). Based on this criteria, Santa Clara LAFCO has been identified, and continues to be, the principal LAFCO. The principal LAFCO is statutorily responsible for MROSD's proposed boundary changes, sphere amendments, and service reviews. The last service review for MROSD was adopted by Santa Clara LAFCO in December 2013². **Appendix A** provides a copy of Santa Clara LAFCO's policy regarding its duties as a principal LAFCO.

Affected LAFCO

State law does not prohibit other "affected" LAFCOs, such as Santa Cruz LAFCO in this instance, from adopting additional or supplemental service reviews involving a multi-county special district. The last service review for MROSD was adopted by Santa Cruz LAFCO in November 2019. Not much has changed since the last evaluation. That being said, the goal of this service review is to complete four main objectives: (1) fulfill the Commission's direction to complete a service review for MROSD under the current work plan, (2) fulfill the service and sphere determinations for MROSD under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act, (3) complete an analysis that is supplemental to Santa Clara LAFCO's 2013 Service Review, and (4) update MROSD's sphere boundary to reflect its current and future presence in Santa Cruz County. For purposes of this report, and to ensure our analysis provides additional and distinctive information, this service review will primarily focus on areas involving the District and Santa Cruz County. These areas consist of 16 parcels (totaling 1,968 acres) and are located within the District's sphere and owned by the District. An overview of MROSD's entire operation and finances will also be provided in this report. Any staff recommendations identified in this review will be shared with Santa Clara and San Mateo LAFCOs.

Sphere of Influence

Santa Clara LAFCO has adopted a multi-county sphere of influence for the District. The District's multi-county sphere is generally coterminous with its jurisdictional boundary. In addition to this multi-county sphere, Santa Cruz LAFCO adopted a sphere of influence for lands within Santa Cruz County following the District's annexation of approximately 1,500 acres in March 1992. In January 2008 and again in November 2019, Santa Cruz LAFCO reaffirmed this sphere boundary. The sphere of influence involving this County is slightly larger than the District's existing service area. Both sphere boundaries adopted by Santa Clara and Santa Cruz LAFCOs coincide with the territory found in Santa Cruz County. There was previous interest by MROSD to annex District-owned territory in 2013 and again in 2019. However, no application has been submitted to the principal LAFCO. Staff is recommending that the sphere be reaffirmed with the recommendation that a stakeholder group be formed to include representatives from the District, Santa Clara LAFCO, and Santa Cruz LAFCO. This group would be tasked with evaluating the proposed annexation of the District-owned parcels and determine if and when an annexation application be submitted to the Principal LAFCO.

² Santa Clara LAFCO MSR: https://santaclaralafco.org/sites/default/files/service_reviews/6_MROSD.pdf

Key Findings

The following are key findings of the 2024 Service and Sphere of Influence Review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District:

1. The District provides services to a population beyond its borders.

MROSD encompasses over 550 square miles in three separate counties and offers more than 256 miles of recreational trails. Open space services provided by MROSD is not restricted to residents within the District's jurisdiction. It is estimated that approximately 763,000 residents currently live within MROSD's service area but, on average, over 2.4 million people visit the 25 preserves open to the public owned and operated by the District each year. As a result, there is a constant demand for open space services.

2. Santa Clara LAFCO is the principal LAFCO for the District.

MROSD has a service area consisting of three different counties. When multiple counties are involved, state law assigns authority to the principal county's LAFCO. Santa Clara LAFCO has been identified as the principal LAFCO for MROSD. As the principal LAFCO, Santa Clara LAFCO is statutorily responsible for any changes of organization related to MROSD. In the event that a proposed boundary change involves Santa Cruz County, Santa Clara LAFCO will coordinate with our LAFCO.

3. The District has dealt with annual deficits.

MROSD has experienced an annual deficit during the last five fiscal years (FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23). The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's financial standing continues to be strong, General Fund Revenues continue to outpace General Fund Expenditures. When analyzing all funds, there is a structural deficit due to the significant investments the District made in a new administrative office partially covered by committed fund balance and several large land purchases covered by Measure AA bond funds. The District's net position has grown by 33% in the last five years to \$489 million, demonstrating that the deficits do not have a negative impact on the District's overall financial standing.

4. The District is transparent.

Senate Bill 929 was signed into law in September 2018 and requires all independent special districts to have and maintain a website by January 1, 2020. It outlines minimum website data requirements agencies must provide including contact information, financial reports, and meeting agendas/minutes. The District maintains a comprehensive website that exceeds the minimum requirements outlined in SB 929. LAFCO recommends that the District include a copy or link of the latest service and sphere review on their website for additional transparency.

5. Sphere boundary includes parcels owned by the District.

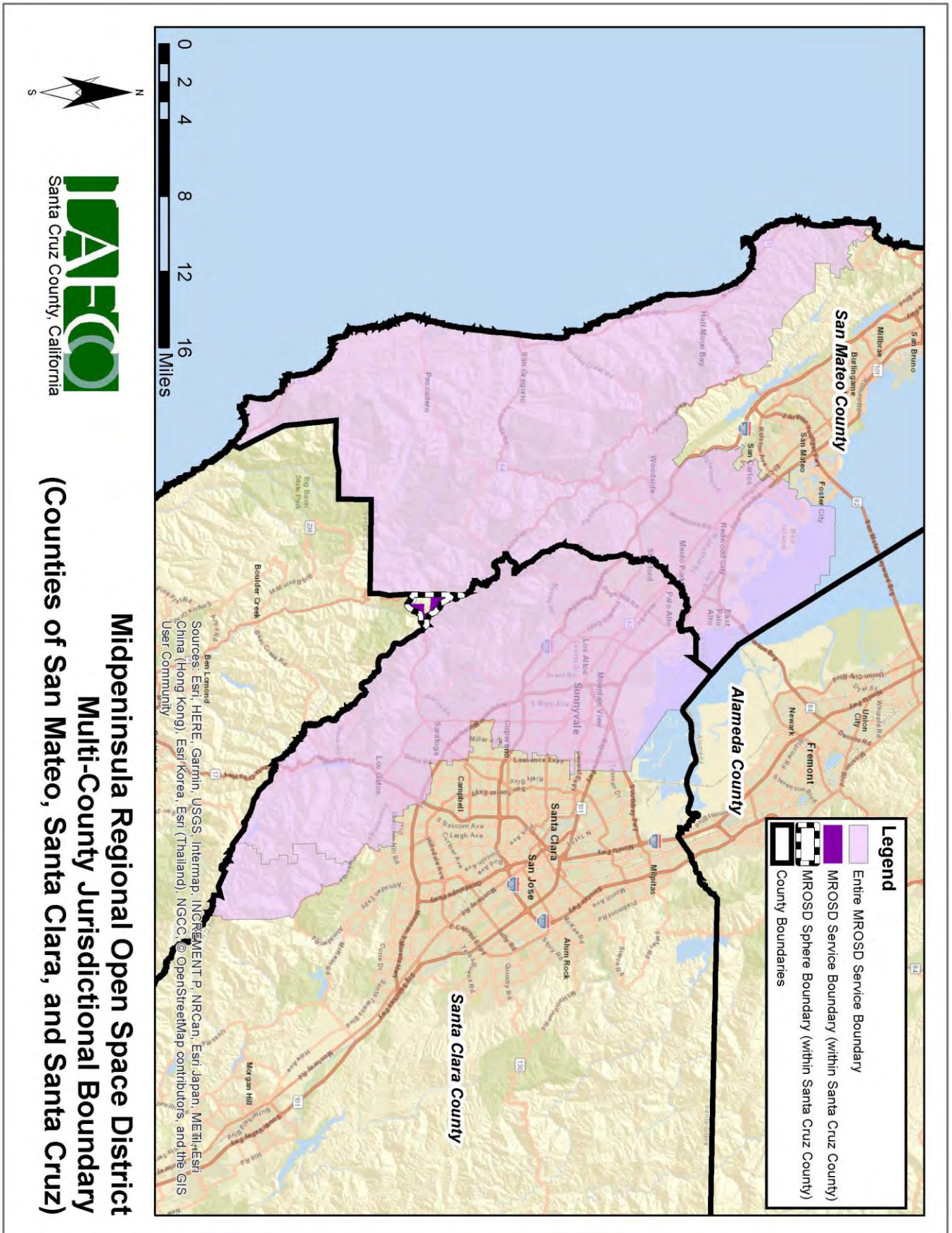
MROSD previously expressed interest in annexing District-owned parcels along Bear Creek Redwoods and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserves. Staff is recommending that the current sphere be reaffirmed with the condition that a stakeholder group be formed to include representatives from the District, Santa Clara LAFCO, and Santa Cruz LAFCO. This group would be tasked with evaluating the proposed annexation of the District-owned parcels and determine if and when an annexation application should be submitted to the Principal LAFCO.

Recommended Actions

Based on the analysis and findings in the 2024 Service and Sphere of Influence Review, the Executive Officer recommends that the Commission:

1. Find that pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, LAFCO determined that the service and sphere of influence review is not subject to the environmental impact evaluation process because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment and the activity is not subject to CEQA;
2. Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County is required to develop and determine a sphere of influence for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and review and update, as necessary;
3. Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56430, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County is required to conduct a service review before, or in conjunction with an action to establish or update a sphere of influence; and
4. Adopt a Resolution (LAFCO No. 2024-16) approving the 2024 Service and Sphere of Influence Review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District with the following conditions:
 - a. Reaffirm the District's current sphere of influence within Santa Cruz County with the condition that a stakeholder group be formed with representatives from the District and the LAFCOs of Santa Clara and Santa Cruz to evaluate the proposed annexation of District-owned parcels within Santa Cruz County; and
 - b. Direct the Executive Officer to distribute a copy of the adopted service and sphere review to Santa Clara LAFCO as the principal LAFCO and other interested or affected parties, including but not limited to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Santa Clara/San Mateo LAFCO.

Figure 1: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Overview Map



DISTRICT OVERVIEW

History

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District was formed in 1972 to acquire and preserve public open space land in northern and western portions of the County of Santa Clara. Initially, the District only provided services in Santa Clara County. In accordance to its principal act, MROSD may be located within multiple counties as long as the lands are contiguous (Public Resource Code Section 5502[a]). During the next 50 years, the District has expanded into three counties. In June 1976, the southern and eastern portions of the County of San Mateo were annexed to the District. MROSD annexed three parcels located in the northern tip of Santa Cruz County in 1992, but the 1% ad valorem property tax is not levied on this land for the benefit of the District. In September 2004, MROSD completed the Coastsides Protection Program, which extended the District boundaries to the Pacific Ocean in the County of San Mateo, from the southern borders of the City of Pacifica to the San Mateo/Santa Cruz County line. This last annexation increased the size of the District from 331 to 556 square miles. No further boundary adjustments have occurred in either of the three counties since 2004.

The District currently encompasses over 550 square miles of land located in the County of Santa Clara (approximately 200 square miles), the County of San Mateo (approximately 350 square miles), and the County of Santa Cruz (approximately 2.6 square miles). For purposes of this report, Santa Cruz LAFCO's analysis will focus on the lands within Santa Cruz County only (totaling 1,968 acres). Specifically, the 1,231 acres within the sphere of influence and the additional 737 acres of land that is owned by the District but sits outside its jurisdictional and sphere boundaries. A majority of the subject territory (76%) analyzed in this report is owned by MROSD (1,498 out of 1,968 acres).

Services & Operations

The District's purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment. The District has preserved nearly 73,000 acres of public land, owns 67,000 acres and manages 27 open space preserves – 25 of which are open to the public free of charge.

Open space preserves are generally kept in a natural condition in order to protect the environment and wildlife habitat, and are developed with only the amenities needed to provide low-intensity recreation. Ranging from 55 to over 19,000 acres, 25 out of 27 preserves are open to the public all year round. On average, over 2.4 million visitors enjoy over 256 miles of trails each year. In addition to open spaces and hiking trails, special amenities include a backpacking camp, nature center, historic farm, and winery. The District's open space preserves offer a great variety of environments, wildlife habitats, and plant life. Preserves include redwood, oak, and fir forests, chaparral-covered hillsides, riparian corridors, grasslands, and wetlands along the San Francisco Bay. These lands are a critical habitat for mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, deer, golden eagles, red-legged frogs, California newts, Coho salmon, and different varieties of wildflower.

A complete overview of each open space preserve is available on the District's website: <https://www.openspace.org/preserves>.

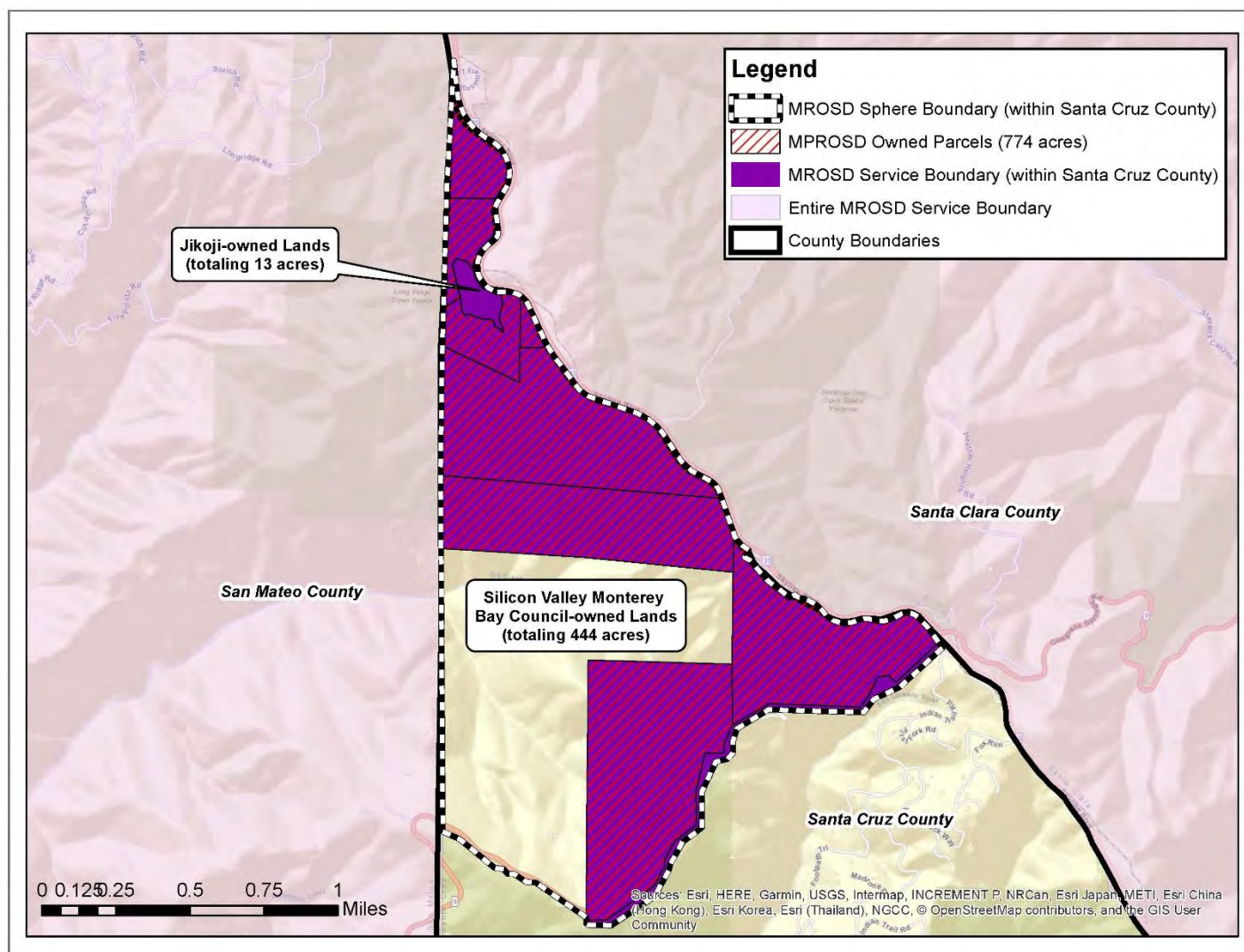
Service Area

The District's multi-county service area encompasses 556 square miles in northern Santa Clara and southern San Mateo Counties, a small portion of Santa Cruz County, and includes unincorporated territories and 17 cities: Atherton, Cupertino, East Palo Alto, Half Moon Bay, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Menlo Park, Monte Sereno, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Portola Valley, Redwood City, San Carlos, Saratoga, Sunnyvale, and Woodside. An overview map is shown as **Figure 1** on page 6.

Lands within Santa Cruz County

A total of 11 parcels, totaling approximately 1,200 acres, are located within the District's current sphere of influence. Seventy-three percent of those parcels (8 out of 11 parcels) are part of the Long Ridge Open Space Preserve and are owned by the District. Two parcels within the District's service and sphere boundaries are owned by a faith-based organization (Jikoji). The remaining parcel is owned by a branch of the Boy Scouts of America (Silicon Valley Monterey Bay Council) and is the only parcel within the sphere boundary that is outside MROSD's jurisdictional area. **Figure 2** provides a sphere map depicting the subject parcels.

Figure 2: Parcel Ownership Within District's Sphere (Santa Cruz County)



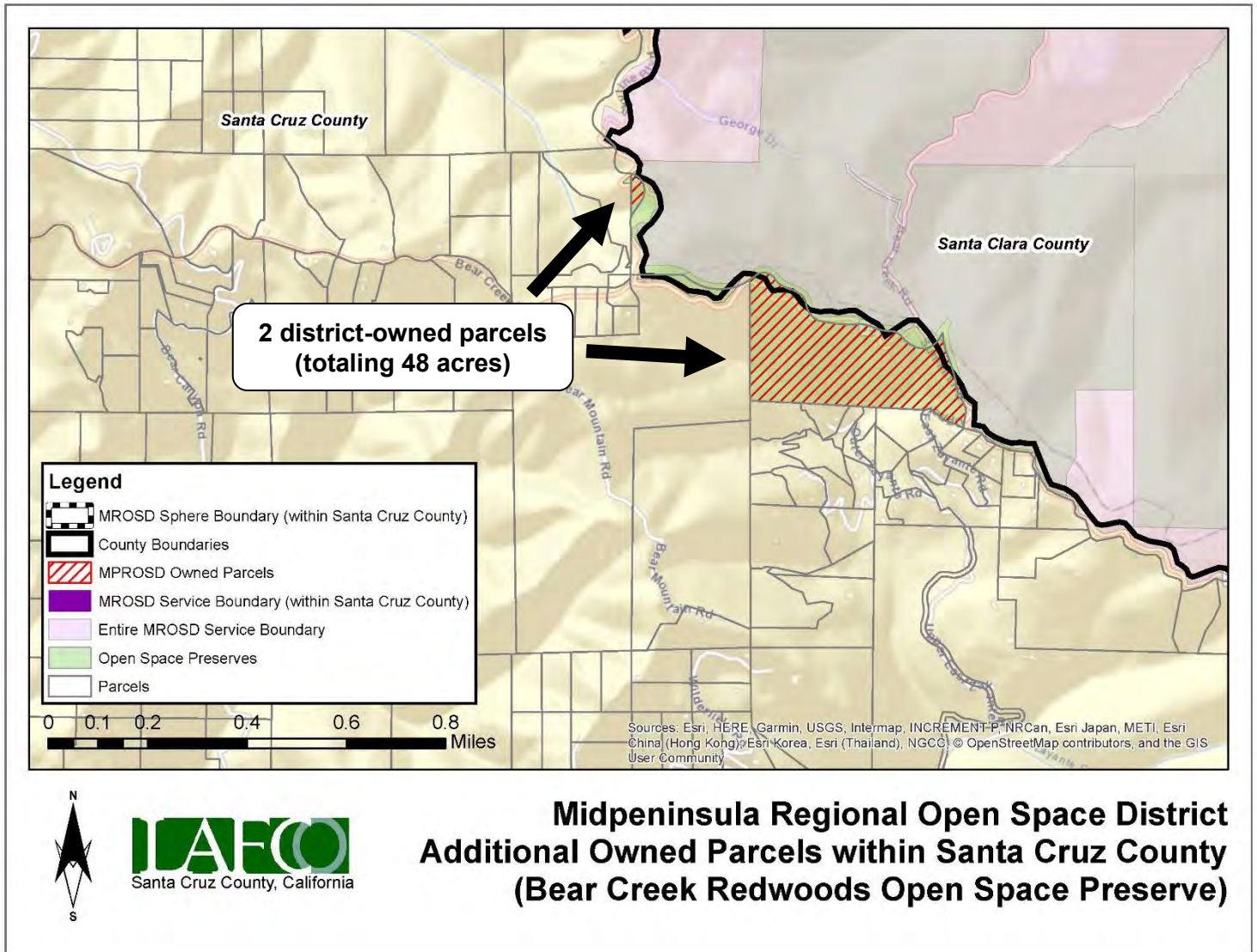
Based on staff's analysis, and in conjunction with MROSD's confirmation, the District also owns five additional parcels (totaling 737 acres) within Santa Cruz County that are outside their current jurisdictional and sphere boundaries. These additional parcels are located within two preserves already maintained by the District: Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve.

- **Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve:** This preserve is located three miles south of Los Gatos and covers over 1,400 acres. Visitors have access to six miles of hiking and equestrian trails. The majority of the preserve is located in Santa Clara County and is within the District's jurisdictional and sphere boundaries. However, a portion extends into Santa Cruz County and is outside the District's service and sphere limits. The area in question consists of two parcels, totaling 48 acres, and is owned and maintained by MROSD (as shown in **Figure 3** on page 10).

The District has expressed interest in annexing these parcels in the foreseeable future. If annexation is considered, a formal application needs to be submitted to Santa Clara LAFCO, as the principal LAFCO. It is our understanding that the District may submit an application for annexation following annexation of the portions of Santa Clara County that are currently in the sphere of influence but outside the jurisdictional boundary around the year 2027. In the interim, LAFCO staff will continue to coordinate with the District and Santa Clara LAFCO over the next 5 years. Further analysis will be conducted during the next service review cycle in 2029.



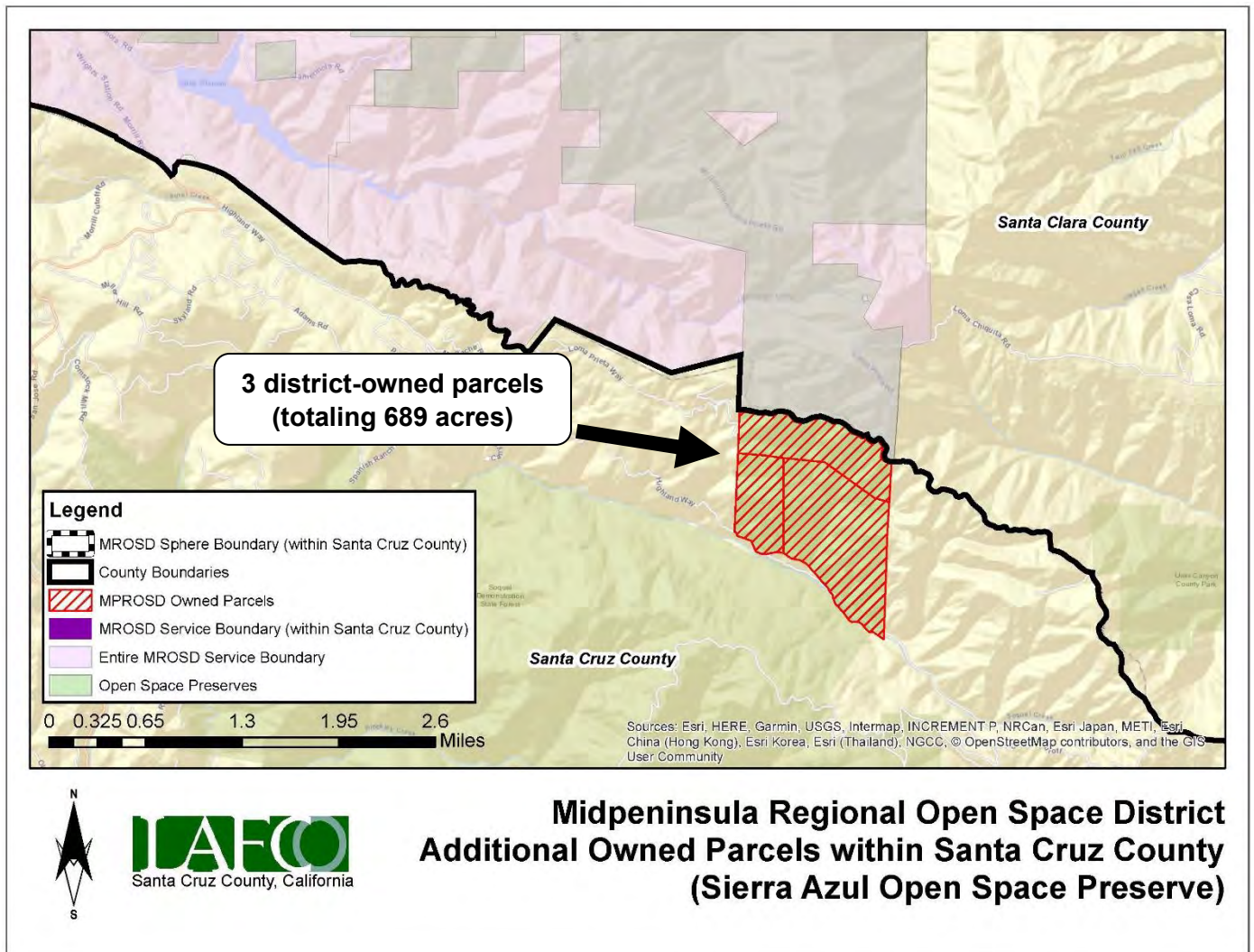
Figure 3: Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (within Santa Cruz County)



- **Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve:** This preserve is located south of Los Gatos and covers over 19,000 acres. Visitors have access to 24 miles of hiking and equestrian trails. The majority of the preserve is located in Santa Clara County and is within the District's jurisdictional and sphere boundaries. Similar to the Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, a portion of this preserve extends into Santa Cruz County and is outside the District's service and sphere limits. The area in question consists of 3 parcels, totaling 689 acres, and is owned and maintained by MROSD (as shown in **Figure 4** on page 11).

The District has previously expressed interest in annexing these parcels in the foreseeable future. However, the District should pursue annexation of lands in Santa Clara County prior to initiating annexation in Santa Cruz County to ensure that the District's service area remains continuous. Therefore, staff is recommending once the District annexes the contiguous land in Santa Clara County that a stakeholder group be formed with representatives from the District and the LAFCOs of Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. The goal of this group is to evaluate the proposed annexation of District-owned parcels within Santa Cruz County.

Figure 4: Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (within Santa Cruz County)



Population & Growth

The population of MROSD in 2020 was approximately 763,000. Based on staff's analysis, approximately 30 people reside in the Santa Cruz County portion of the District. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) provide population projections for cities and counties in the Coastal Region. **Table 1** on page 12 shows the anticipated population for each local agency within MROSD. The average rate of change in population for these municipalities is approximately 3%.

Population Projection

Based on the projections for the cities and counties within the District's service area, LAFCO staff was able to develop a population forecast for MROSD. LAFCO staff increased the District's 2020 population amount by 3% each year. Under this assumption, LAFCO staff projects that the entire population of MROSD will be approximately 859,000 by 2040, with the Santa Cruz County portion estimated to be around 32.

Table 1: Population Projections

Local Agencies within MROSD	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Average (%)
Cities						
Atherton	7,390	7,435	7,525	7,590	7,685	0.91%
Cupertino	63,515	64,730	65,690	66,565	68,305	1.70%
East Palo Alto	30,675	30,970	31,285	34,575	36,090	3.89%
Half Moon Bay	13,040	13,205	13,345	13,385	13,440	0.72%
Los Altos	31,530	31,895	3,225	32,655	32,960	0.91%
Los Altos Hills	8,340	8,390	8,475	8,540	8,650	0.82%
Los Gatos	31,635	32,120	32,560	32,780	33,050	1.14%
Menlo Park	44,530	48,490	52,865	53,455	54,920	7.83%
Monte Sereno	3,440	3,485	3,535	3,545	3,575	1.22%
Mountain View	111,725	112,875	119,445	128,085	138,980	11.57%
Palo Alto	81,170	81,595	82,835	84,465	86,510	4.25%
Portola Valley	4,590	4,610	4,640	4,675	4,730	0.56%
Redwood City	83,995	85,340	90,995	96,420	103,940	4.67%
San Carlos	33,205	33,580	33,915	34,670	35,250	1.39%
Saratoga	30,560	30,905	31,205	3,140	31,880	0.90%
Sunnyvale	149,935	157,705	162,975	203,780	222,210	8.27%
Woodside	5,680	5,700	5,745	5,795	5,855	0.82%
Counties (Unincorporated Areas Only)						
San Mateo	63,760	64,550	65,835	67,540	68,525	1.81%
Santa Clara	88,170	90,605	94,885	97,875	103,925	3.81%
Santa Cruz	136,891	137,896	139,105	140,356	141,645	0.96%
AVERAGE RATE OF CHANGE						3.00%
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District*						
Entire Service Area (multi-county)	763,000	785,890	809,467	833,751	858,763	3.00%
District Sphere (within Santa Cruz County only)	29	30	30	31	32	3.00%

**Assumption – District’s population projections are based on the average rate of change (3%) from the local agencies and counties within Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.*

FINANCES

This section will highlight the District's audited financial performance during the most recent fiscal years. Fiscal Year 2022-23 is the latest audited financial statement available. A comprehensive analysis of the District's fiscal health during the past five years is shown in **Tables 3 and 4**, on pages 17 and 18.

At the end of Fiscal Year 2022-23, total revenue collected was approximately \$87 million, representing a 25% increase from the previous year (\$70 million in FY 21-22). Total expenses for FY 2022-23 were approximately \$88 million, which increased from the previous year by 15% (\$76 million in FY 21-22). The District has ended with a deficit during the last five fiscal years, as shown in **Figure 5**. However, the District's financial standing continues to be strong, General Fund Revenues continue to outpace General Fund Expenditures. When analyzing all funds, there is a structural deficit due to the significant investments the District made in a new administrative office partially covered by committed fund balance and several large land purchases covered by Measure AA bond funds. The District's net position has grown by 33% in the last five years to \$489 million, demonstrating that the deficits do not have a negative impact on the District's overall financial standing. At present, the District is heavily reliant to property taxes to fund its internal and external operations.

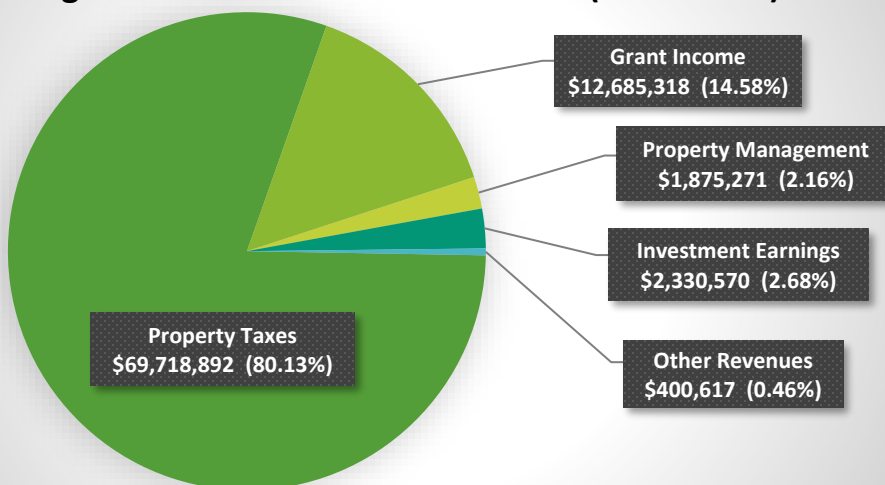
Figure 5: Statement of Revenues & Expenditures



Operating Revenue

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has a limited amount of revenue streams to operate its services and facilities. Operating revenue for FY 2022-23 was approximately \$87 million. Property taxes continue to be the primary source of revenue for the District. In FY 2022-23, property taxes represented 80% of total revenue. **Figure 6** shows the breakdown of the District's revenue sources. During FY 2022-23, the District received approximately \$70 million from property taxes, \$13 million from grant income, \$2 million from property management, \$2.3 million from Investment Earnings, and \$400,000 from Other Revenues (ex. miscellaneous funds such as donations or other variable income).

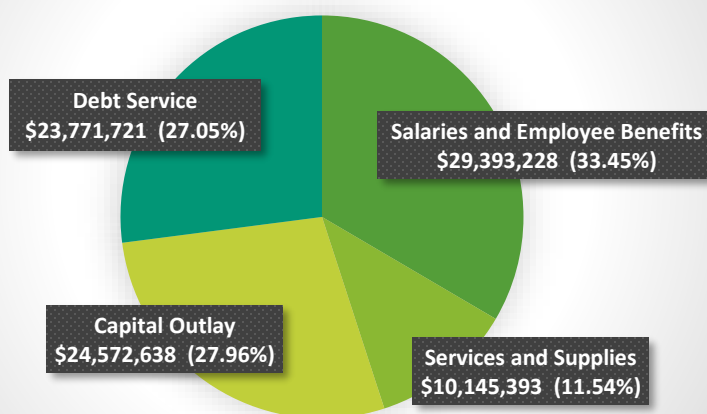
Figure 6: Total Revenue Breakdown (FY 2022-23)



Operating Expenditure

Operating costs for FY 2022-23 was approximately \$88 million. The District's expenses can be categorized into four groups: Salaries & Benefits, Services & Supplies, Capital Outlay, and Debt Service. In FY 2022-23, Salaries & Benefits represented approximately 33% of total expenditure. **Figure 7** shows the breakdown of the District's expenses. During FY 2022-23, the District incurred the following costs: approximately \$29 million in Salaries & Benefits, \$25 million in Capital Outlay, \$24 million in Debt Service, and \$10 million in Services & Supplies.

Figure 7: Total Expense Breakdown (FY 2022-23)

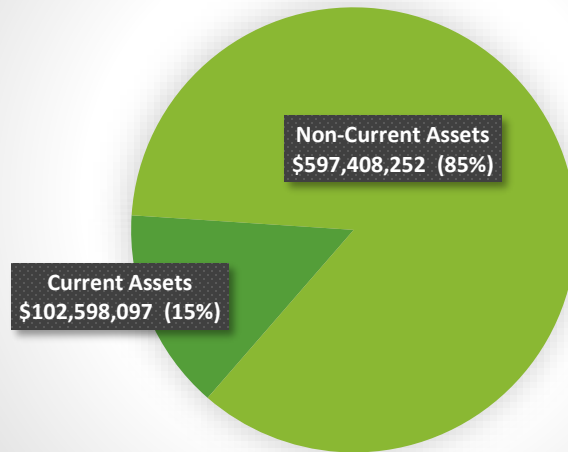


Assets & Liabilities

District Assets

As of June 30, 2023, the District had approximately \$700 million in total assets. This represents an increase of \$28 million or 4% from FY 2021-22's total assets of \$672 million. Total assets can be categorized into two groups: Current Assets and Non-Current Assets. In FY 2022-23, current assets were approximately \$103 million (15% of total assets) while non-current assets were approximately \$597 million (85% of total assets), as shown in **Figure 8**.

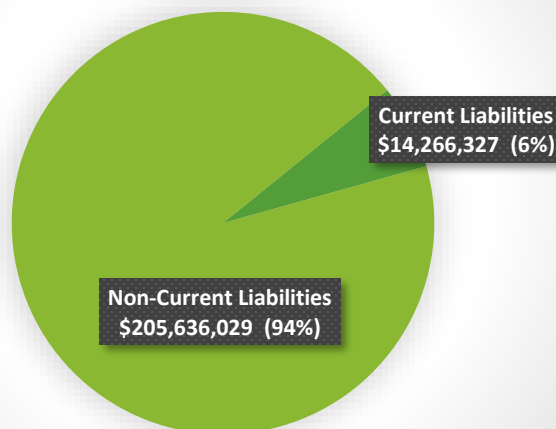
Figure 8: Total Assets Breakdown (FY 2022-23)



District Liabilities

As of June 30, 2023, the District had approximately \$220 million in total liabilities. This represents a decrease of approximately \$7 million or 3% from FY 2021-22's total liabilities of \$226 million. Total liabilities can be categorized into two groups: Current and Non-Current Liabilities. In FY 2022-23, current liabilities were approximately \$14 million (6% of total liabilities) and non-current liabilities were approximately \$206 million (94% of total liabilities), as shown in **Figure 9**.

Figure 9: Total Liabilities Breakdown (FY 2022-23)



A complete overview of the District's assets and liabilities is shown on page 19.

Net Position

As of June 30, 2023, the total fund balance ended with approximately \$100 million. The following table highlights the fund balance from 2019 to 2023. As shown in the table below, the District's fund balance has been declining each year, with the exception of FY 2022-23. It is important to note that the District would have ended in a deficit in FY 2022-23, however, it sold property that same year which earned the District \$10.4 million in revenue. District policy requires that the District maintains an unassigned fund balance of at least 30% of the Budgeted General Fund Total Revenue. The end of FY24 fund balance is approximately \$100 million (\$26.2 million of unassigned) and the Budgeted General Fund Revenue for FY25 is approximately \$78.7. A complete overview of the District's net position is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Net Position Balance

	FY 17-18 (Audit)	FY 18-19 (Audit)	FY 19-20 (Audit)	FY 20-21 (Audit)	FY 21-22 (Audit)	FY 22-23 (Audit)
Ending Balance	\$132,413,225	\$104,327,304	\$100,899,233	\$96,466,566	\$90,382,188	\$99,909,876
Change from Previous Year (\$)		-\$28,085,921	-\$3,428,071	-\$4,432,667	-\$6,084,378	\$9,527,688
Change from Previous Year (%)		-21%	-3%	-4%	-6%	11%



La Honda Creek (Randy Weber)

Table 3: Total Revenues & Expenditures (FY 13-14 to FY 17-18)

	FY 18-19 (Audit)	FY 19-20 (Audit)	FY 20-21 (Audit)	FY 21-22 (Audit)	FY 22-23 (Audit)
REVENUES					
Property Taxes	\$ 54,395,054	\$ 57,250,664	\$ 62,476,170	\$ 64,409,628	\$ 69,718,892
Grant Income	\$ 1,081,711	\$ 3,293,483	\$ 2,881,053	\$ 3,884,075	\$ 12,685,318
Property Management	\$ 2,360,364	\$ 2,655,179	\$ 2,297,444	\$ 1,490,268	\$ 1,875,271
Investment Earnings (Losses)	\$ 3,648,705	\$ 2,326,866	\$ 1,978,944	\$ (896,478)	\$ 2,330,570
Other Revenues	\$ 640,850	\$ 261,702	\$ 978,340	\$ 842,244	\$ 400,617
Total Revenues	\$ 62,126,684	\$ 65,787,894	\$ 70,611,951	\$ 69,729,737	\$ 87,010,668
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$ 21,095,865	\$ 23,615,953	\$ 25,490,539	\$ 25,963,012	\$ 29,393,228
Services and Supplies	\$ 8,090,095	\$ 7,828,976	\$ 8,743,629	\$ 9,323,616	\$ 10,145,393
Capital Outlay	\$ 45,355,657	\$ 20,101,473	\$ 24,139,794	\$ 25,115,629	\$ 24,572,638
Operational Expenditure, Sub-total	\$ 74,541,617	\$ 51,546,402	\$ 58,373,962	\$ 60,402,257	\$ 64,111,259
Total Revenue minus Operational Expenditure: Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (12,414,933)	\$ 14,241,492	\$ 12,237,989	\$ 9,327,480	\$ 22,899,409
Debt Service:					
Principal	\$ 6,480,000	\$ 9,115,000	\$ 8,395,000	\$ 8,120,000	\$ 16,390,000
Interest	\$ 9,190,988	\$ 8,554,563	\$ 8,245,925	\$ 7,924,888	\$ 7,381,721
Total Expenditures	\$ 90,212,605	\$ 69,215,965	\$ 75,014,887	\$ 76,447,145	\$ 87,882,980
Total Revenue minus Operational Expenditure & Debt Service: Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (28,085,921)	\$ (3,428,071)	\$ (4,402,936)	\$ (6,717,408)	\$ (872,312)
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES/(USES)					
Transfers In	\$ 49,928,981	\$ 21,110,274	\$ 16,227,318	\$ 38,927,003	\$ 19,774,853
Transfers Out	\$ (49,928,981)	\$ (21,110,274)	\$ (16,227,318)	\$ (38,927,003)	\$ (19,774,853)
Sale of Property	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,400,000
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,400,000
FUND BALANCE					
Net Change in Fund Balance: Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (28,085,921)	\$ (3,428,071)	\$ (4,402,936)	\$ (6,717,408)	\$ 9,527,688
Fund Balance - Beginning	\$ 132,413,225	\$ 104,327,304	\$ 100,869,502	\$ 97,099,596	\$ 90,382,188
Fund Balance - Ending	\$ 104,327,304	\$ 100,899,233	\$ 96,466,566	\$ 90,382,188	\$ 99,909,876

Table 4: Total Assets & Liabilities (FY 13-14 to FY 17-18)

	FY 18-19 (Audit)	FY 19-20 (Audit)	FY 20-21 (Audit)	FY 21-22 (Audit)	FY 22-23 (Audit)
ASSETS					
<u>Current Assets</u>					
Cash and Investments	\$ 108,106,556	\$ 104,639,305	\$ 103,028,263	\$ 96,071,885	\$ 101,934,965
Accounts Receivable:					
Deposits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Rent	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Interest	\$ 158,943	\$ 214,097	\$ 5,872	\$ 4,448	\$ 32,377
Other	\$ 182,269	\$ 362,854	\$ 101,667	\$ 60,151	\$ 197,302
Due from Other Governments:					
Taxable Receivable	\$ 221	\$ 221	\$ 345,073	\$ 346,220	\$ 221
Other Current Assets	\$ 195,315	\$ 221,226	\$ 320,095	\$ 286,387	\$ 433,232
Total Current Assets	\$108,643,304	\$105,437,703	\$103,800,970	\$ 96,769,091	\$102,598,097
<u>Non-Current Assets</u>					
Net OPEB Asset	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 615,298	\$ -
Lease Receivable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,776,909	\$ 5,956,769
Notes Receivable	\$ 94,182	\$ 74,509	\$ 71,728	\$ 68,015	\$ 64,200
Unamortized Issuance Costs	\$ 468,350	\$ 414,042	\$ 359,736	\$ 305,431	\$ 259,873
Non-Depreciable Capital Assets	\$ 453,957,019	\$ 467,412,266	\$ 480,431,581	\$ 503,418,146	\$ 525,690,221
Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation	\$ 50,602,390	\$ 58,689,051	\$ 66,875,210	\$ 66,303,933	\$ 65,437,189
Total Non-Current Assets	\$505,121,941	\$526,589,868	\$547,738,255	\$575,487,732	\$597,408,252
TOTAL ASSETS	\$613,765,245	\$632,027,571	\$651,539,225	\$672,256,823	\$700,006,349
DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES					
OPEB Adjustments	\$ 670,768	\$ 638,539	\$ 847,395	\$ 832,763	\$ 868,564
Pension Expense and Contributions	\$ 4,760,025	\$ 4,083,643	\$ 4,086,354	\$ 3,894,005	\$ 10,701,460
Deferred Loss on Early Retirement of Long-term Debt	\$ 9,395,700	\$ 8,550,577	\$ 7,705,452	\$ 6,860,335	\$ 6,264,908
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	\$ 14,826,493	\$ 13,272,759	\$ 12,639,201	\$ 11,587,103	\$ 17,834,932
ASSETS + DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES	\$628,591,738	\$645,300,330	\$664,178,426	\$683,843,926	\$717,841,281
DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES					
OPEB Adjustments	\$ 92,510	\$ 215,779	\$ 231,079	\$ 1,580,183	\$ 691,633
Leases Receivable Deferrals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,194,486	\$ 5,218,800
Pension Adjustments	\$ 1,379,355	\$ 1,570,668	\$ 1,811,064	\$ 5,132,227	\$ 2,859,573
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	\$ 1,471,865	\$ 1,786,447	\$ 2,042,143	\$ 10,906,896	\$ 8,770,006
LIABILITIES					
<u>Current Liabilities</u>					
Accounts Payable	\$ 2,516,839	\$ 2,616,408	\$ 5,821,678	\$ 6,100,357	\$ 1,917,150
Deposits Payable	\$ 218,240	\$ 177,135	\$ 60,584	\$ 99,843	\$ 329,094
Payroll and Other Liabilities	\$ 1,580,921	\$ 1,744,926	\$ 1,452,142	\$ 769,126	\$ 1,179,946
Accrued Interest	\$ 2,381,063	\$ 2,293,246	\$ 2,207,004	\$ 2,114,721	\$ 1,978,054
Current Portion of Long-Term Liabilities	\$ 9,998,885	\$ 9,278,885	\$ 8,584,627	\$ 10,494,627	\$ 8,862,083
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 16,695,948	\$ 16,110,600	\$ 18,126,035	\$ 19,578,674	\$ 14,266,327
<u>Non-Current Liabilities</u>					
Due Within One Year	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Due After One Year	\$ 243,049,767	\$ 235,321,577	\$ 228,565,745	\$ 206,843,174	\$ 205,636,029
Total Non-Current Liabilities	\$243,049,767	\$235,321,577	\$228,565,745	\$206,843,174	\$205,636,029
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$259,745,715	\$251,432,177	\$246,691,780	\$226,421,848	\$219,902,356
NET POSITION					
Net Investment in Capital Assets	\$ 351,151,768	\$ 371,186,303	\$ 382,787,610	\$ 409,656,415	\$ 435,082,792
Restricted for:					
Debt Service	\$ 6,775,924	\$ 4,813,811	\$ 4,229,931	\$ 4,148,795	\$ 2,712,945
Hawthorne Maintenance	\$ 1,431,717	\$ 1,464,150	\$ 1,500,736	\$ 1,428,333	\$ 1,632,036
OPEB	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 615,298	\$ -
Total Restricted	\$ 8,207,641	\$ 6,277,961	\$ 5,730,667	\$ 6,192,426	\$ 4,344,981
Unrestricted	\$ 8,014,749	\$ 14,617,442	\$ 26,926,226	\$ 30,666,341	\$ 49,741,146
TOTAL NET POSITION	\$367,374,158	\$392,081,706	\$415,444,503	\$446,515,182	\$489,168,919
DEFERRED INFLOWS + LIABILITIES + NET POSITION	\$628,591,738	\$645,300,330	\$664,178,426	\$683,843,926	\$717,841,281

GOVERNANCE

Legal Authority

The principal act that governs the District is Public Resources Code §§5500-5595. State law empowers the District to “plan, adopt, lay out, plant, develop, and otherwise improve, extend, control, operate, and maintain a system of public parks, ... trails, natural areas, ecological and open space preserves, parkways, scenic drives, boulevards, and other facilities for public recreation, for the use and enjoyment of all the inhabitants of the district, and it may select, designate, and acquire land, or rights in land, within or without the district, to be used and appropriated for such purposes” (Cal. Pub. Res. Code §5541). Pursuant to its enabling legislation, the District’s stated purpose is to purchase, permanently protect, and restore lands to form a regional open space greenbelt; preserve unspoiled wilderness, wildlife habitat, watershed, viewshed, and fragile ecosystems; and provide opportunities for low-intensity recreation and environmental education. The District primarily acquires or otherwise preserves land outside the urban service area (USA) boundaries of cities that has significant regional open space value.

Local Accountability & Structure

The District is governed by a seven-member elected board of directors. Each board member is elected to serve a four-year term and represents a geographic ward of approximately equal populations. Individual ward maps are included in **Appendix B**. The current Board is as follows:

Table 5: Board of Directors (as of September 2024)

Board Member	Title	Term of Office
Craig Gleason (Ward 1)	Board Treasurer	2023 - 2026
Yoriko Kishimoto (Ward 2)	Board Member	2023 - 2026
Jed Cyr (Ward 3)	Board Vice-President	2021 – 2024
Curt Riffle (Ward 4)	Board Secretary	2021 – 2024
Karen Holman (Ward 5)	Board Member	2023 - 2026
Margaret MacNiven (Ward 6)	Board President	2023 - 2026
Zoe Kersteen-Tucker (Ward 7)	Board Member	2021 - 2024

The Board holds its regular public meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m., at the District administrative office located at 5050 El Camino Real, Los Altos, CA.

District staffing currently includes over 200 employees in 10 departments: Budget and Finance , Engineering and Construction, Human Resources, Information Systems and Technology, Land and Facilities, Natural Resources, Planning, Public Affairs, Real Property, and Visitor Services. Over 600 volunteers also assist the District each year ranging from one-day projects to ongoing natural history education, trail patrol, maintenance, and restoration programs.

Website Requirements

Senate Bill 929 was signed into law in September 2018 and requires all independent special districts to have and maintain a website by January 1, 2020. SB 929 identifies several components that must be found within an agency's website. Additionally, the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF), an independent, non-profit organization formed to promote good governance and best practices among California's special districts, has also outlined recommended website elements as part of its District Transparency Certificate of Excellence. This program was created as an effort to promote transparency in the operations and governance of special districts to the public. LAFCO conducted a thorough review of the District's website based on SB 929's criteria and the recommendations set by the SDLF. **Table 6** summarizes staff's findings on whether their website is meeting the statutory requirements. At present, MROSD meets all benchmarks, except for one requesting links or copies of previous LAFCO service reviews. Staff recommends that the District considers uploading past service reviews on their website for additional transparency. Overall, the District has a transparent website filled with useful information and resources that are easily accessible.

Table 6: Website Transparency

Website Components	Status (Yes = ✓)
Required Items (SB 929 Criteria and SDLF Benchmarks)	
1. Names and Contact Information of Board Members*	✓
2. Board Member Term Limits	✓
3. Names of Key Staff, including General Manager	✓
4. Contact Information for Staff	✓
5. Election/Appointment Procedure & Deadlines	✓
6. Board Meeting Schedule*	✓
7. Mission Statement	✓
8. Description of District's Services/Functions and Service Area	✓
9. Authorizing Statute/Enabling Act	✓
10. Adopted District Budgets*	✓
11. Financial Audits*	✓
12. Archive of Board Meeting Agendas & Minutes*	✓
13. Link to State Controller's Webpages for District's reported Board Member and Staff Compensation	✓
14. Link to State Controller's Webpages for District's reported Financial Transaction Report	✓
15. Reimbursement & Compensation Policy / Annual Policies	✓
16. Home Page Link to Agendas/Board Packets	✓
17. SB 272 - Compliance-Enterprise Catalogs	✓
18. Machine Readable/Searchable Agendas	✓
19. Recipients of Grant Funding or Assistance	✓
20. Link or Copies of LAFCO's Service & Sphere Reviews	
Total Score (out of a possible 20)	19 (95%)

Long-term Management Plan

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District recently adopted a long-term strategic plan for the next 15 to 20 years. The District provides updates to this plan on an annual basis. The annual strategic plan provides a framework to guide the District in its planning process and in evaluating districtwide needs. The District understands that the future of a successful network of open space preserves depends on the success of both public and private partnerships at a regional level, as well as the enthusiastic support of the public who live and work there. Their goal is to work collaboratively with all of their partners to address regional land conservation, stewardship, and public access challenges.

At the same time, the District has placed energies on connecting and understanding our shared communities, which have experienced a major shift in demographics and interests in the last decade. The District's long-range plan for the future of open space is grounded in its original mission of preservation, restoration, public access and education, but it also focuses on a rapidly changing social and physical environment that requires foresight, flexibility, and the means to succeed. The District has four overarching goals they plan on completing in the next 15–20 years:

- **Goal 1** - Promote, establish, and implement a regional environmental protection vision with partners
- **Goal 2** - Protect the positive environmental and biodiversity values of open space and agricultural lands
- **Goal 3** - Connect people to open space and agricultural lands, and a regional environmental protection vision
- **Goal 4** - Strengthen organizational capacity and long-term financial sustainability to fulfill the mission

These goals, with its supporting objectives and assigned projects, are discussed in detail within each adopted strategic plan. Access to the annual strategic plans are available on the District's website: <https://www.openspace.org/about-us/district-reports>.



Rancho San Antonio (Neely Dunlap)

Board Redistricting Effort

Following the federal census every ten years, MROSD's board of directors was required by law to ensure that the geographic areas, or "wards", which our seven publicly elected board members represent, remain substantially equal in population. This effort required the District to evaluate and adjust the boundaries of their seven wards to ensure that representation mirrors population shifts. After a six-month public outreach process, the board of directors adopted a map that was used during the November 8, 2022 general election. **Appendix C** provides an overview map of the new ward map.

Opportunities & Challenges

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has been in existence for over 50 years now. During this time, the District has preserved over 73,000 acres of open space on 27 preserves in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, with a small portion located in Santa Cruz County. The result is an integrated regional open space system that offers recreational activities to all visitors, regardless of whether they are constituents of the District.

The small portion located in Santa Cruz County consists of approximately 1,500 acres and form the southern ends of Long Ridge, Bear Creek Redwoods, and Sierra Azul Preserves. These lands are all owned and managed by the District. There are also other District-owned parcels located in Santa Cruz County but outside MROSD's jurisdictional and sphere boundaries. While MROSD has previously expressed interest in annexing lands owned and operated by the District in the foreseeable future, no efforts have been made to this day. It may be beneficial for the District and the affected LAFCOs to explore the proposed annexation of the District-owned parcels.

LAFCO Staff Recommendation: Joint effort by the District, Santa Clara LAFCO, and Santa Cruz LAFCO to discuss the annexation, and concurrent sphere amendment, involving the District-owned parcels located within Santa Cruz County.



Fremont Older (Frank Mao)

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act

City and special district spheres of influence define the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Commission (Government Code Section 56076). The law requires that spheres be updated at least once every five years either concurrently or subsequently to the preparation of Municipal Service Reviews. Spheres are determined and amended solely at the discretion of the Commission. In determining the sphere of influence for each local agency, the Commission is required by Government Code Section 56425(e) to consider certain factors, including:

- The present and planned uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands;
- The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area;
- The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide;
- The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency; and
- For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, that occurs pursuant to subdivision (g) on or after July 1, 2012, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.

Current Sphere Boundary

Santa Clara LAFCO, as the principal LAFCO, has adopted a multi-county sphere of influence for the District. The District's multi-county sphere of influence is generally coterminous with its jurisdictional boundary, as shown in **Figure 10** on page 24. In addition to this multi-county sphere, and following the 1992 annexation of 1,500 acres, Santa Cruz LAFCO also adopted a sphere of influence for MROSD within Santa Cruz County only. In January 2008 and again in November 2019, Santa Cruz LAFCO reaffirmed this sphere boundary. The sphere boundary within Santa Cruz County is slightly larger than the District's existing service area and has remained unchanged. **Figure 11** on page 25 shows the sphere map created by Santa Cruz LAFCO.

In December 2013, Santa Clara LAFCO conducted a service review involving Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and noted the District's interest in expanding its sphere of influence to include additional parcels owned within Santa Cruz County. Specifically, the District expressed the desire to annex the Loma Prieta Ranch, which is a part of Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, and to annex the southern portion of the Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. Both territories are owned by MROSD and are part of preserves already maintained by the District. LAFCO is recommending that the Commission reaffirm the sphere boundary with the condition that the District and the affected LAFCOs discuss the possible annexation of the District-owned parcels.

Figure 10: Multi-County Sphere of Influence (adopted by Santa Clara LAFCO)

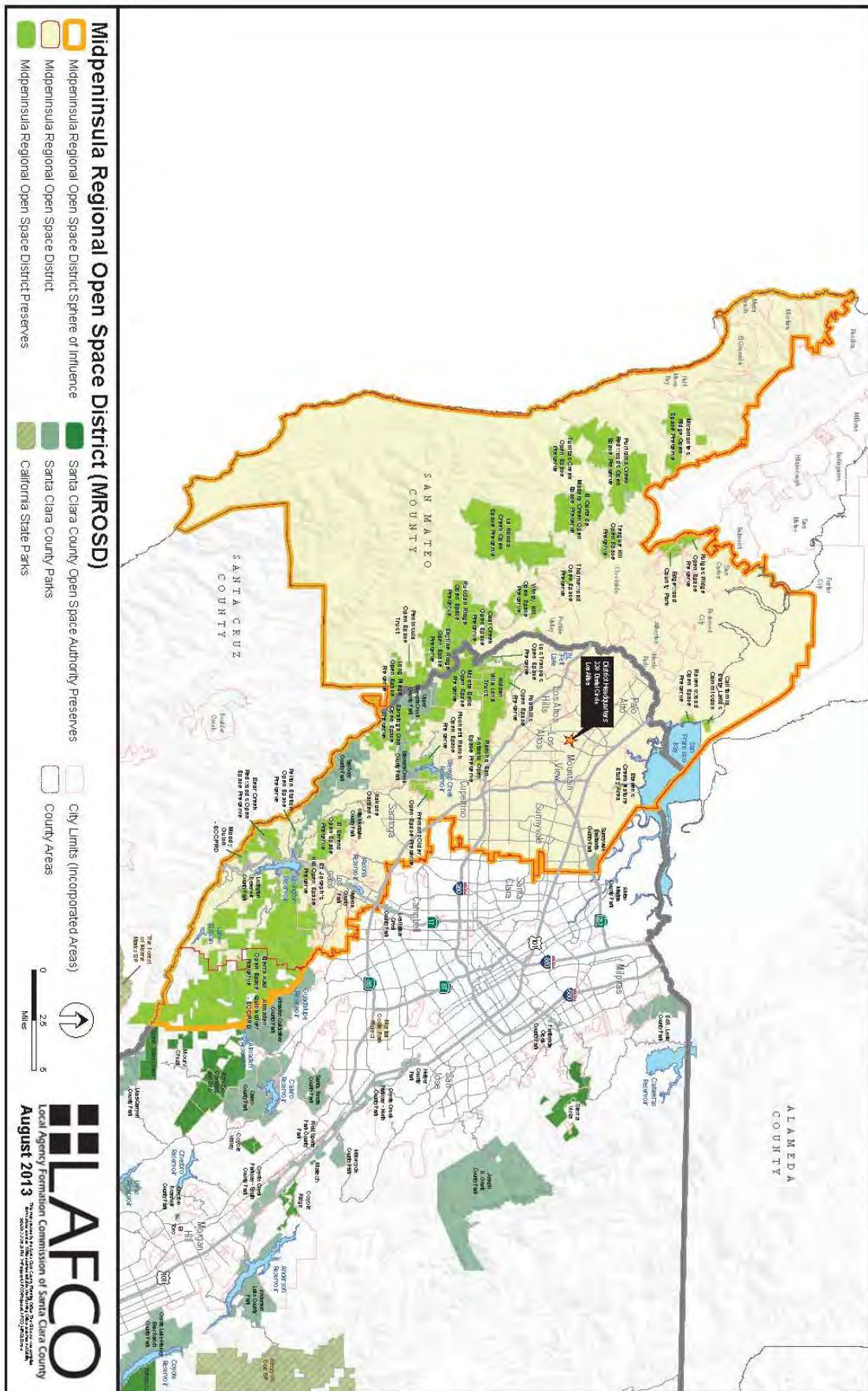
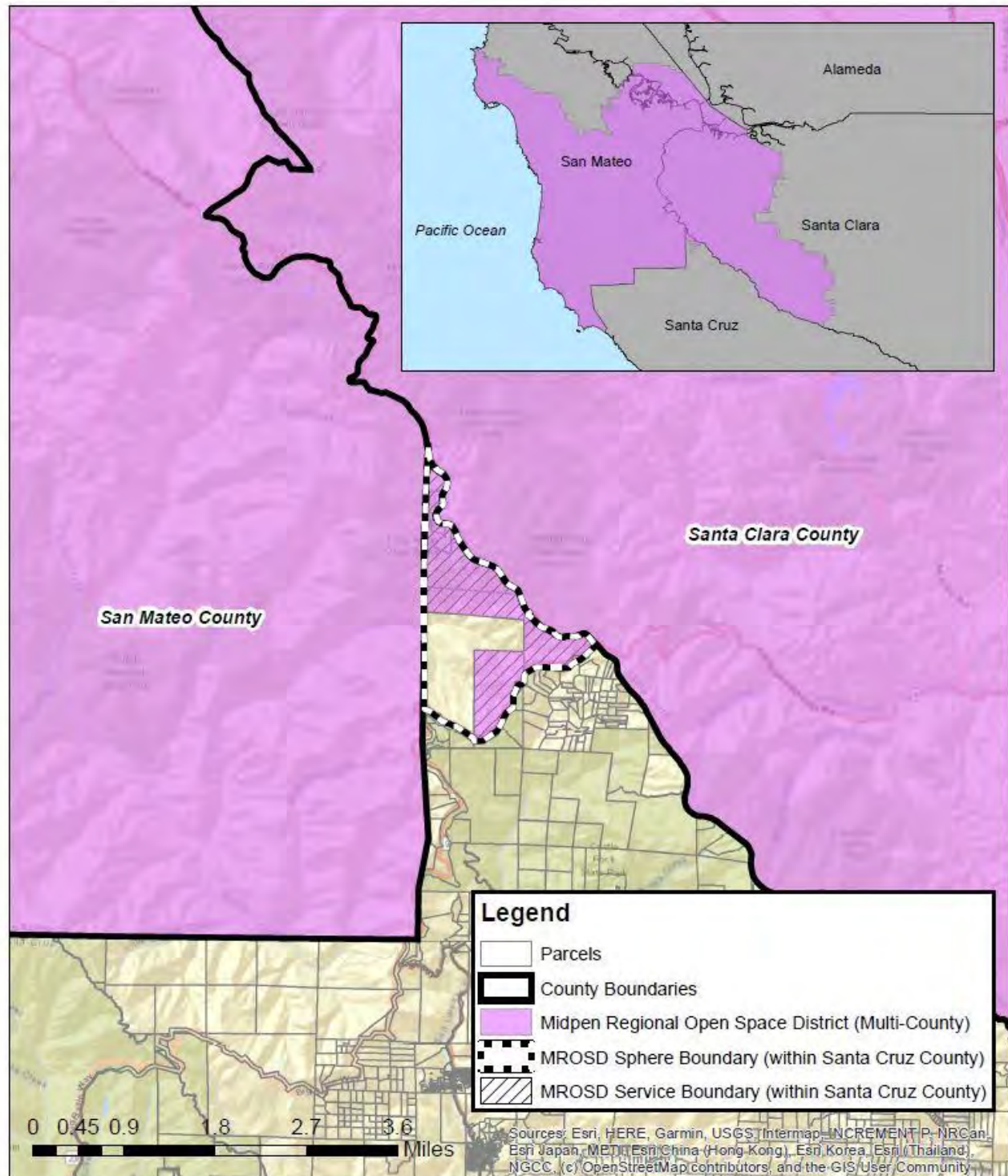


Figure 11: Sphere of Influence (considered by Santa Cruz LAFCO)



Map created on 9/3/24

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Service & Sphere Boundaries within Santa Cruz County

Original Sphere adopted on March 25, 1992

Sphere reaffirmed on January 9, 2008

Sphere reaffirmed on November 6, 2019

Sphere reaffirmed with condition on October 2, 2024

DISTRICT SUMMARY CHART

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	
Formation	Public Resources Code §§5500-5595
Board of Directors	Governed by a seven-member Board of Directors. The District is divided into seven geographic wards, each represented by an elected Board member for a four-year term.
Contact Person	Ana María Ruiz, General Manager
Employees	Approximately 200 employees in 10 departments; The District has four field offices, one located at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve one off of Skyline Blvd at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve, one located in the city of Campbell, and a small outpost office in La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.
Facilities	The District owns and manages 27 open space preserves.
District Area	The District's entire boundary consists of nearly 67,000 acres of preserved land and encompasses three counties – Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz. In Santa Cruz County, the District serves approximately 1,500 acres (2.3 square miles).
Sphere of Influence	Santa Clara LAFCO (Principal LAFCO): Multi-County Sphere Boundary. Santa Cruz LAFCO: Sphere boundary is slightly larger than the District's jurisdictional boundary within Santa Cruz County.
FY 2022-23 Audit	Total Revenue = \$87,010,668 Total Expenditure = \$87,882,980 Net Position (Ending Balance) = \$99,909,876
Contact Information	Mailing Address: 5050 El Camino Real, Los Altos, CA Phone Number: 650-691-1200 Email Address: aruiz@openspace.org Website: https://www.openspace.org/
Public Meetings	Regular meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month, at 7:00 pm. These Board meetings are typically held at the District's administrative office in Los Altos and are open to the public.
Mission Statement	"To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education."

SERVICE & SPHERE DETERMINATIONS

The following service and sphere review determinations fulfill the requirements outlined in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's staff and ad-hoc committee members were instrumental in addressing the statutory determinations by providing data and other requested information to LAFCO staff in a timely fashion.

Service Determinations

Government Code Section 56430 requires LAFCO to conduct a municipal service review before, or in conjunction with, an action to establish or update a sphere of influence. Written statements of determination must be prepared with respect to each of the following:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area.

The population for MROSD in 2020 was 763,000. Based on LAFCO's analysis, staff determined that 29 people reside in the Santa Cruz County portion of the District's jurisdictional and sphere boundaries during that same year. LAFCO staff projects that the entire population of MROSD will be approximately 842,000 by the year 2040. The estimated population in the Santa Cruz County portion will be around 32 by the year 2040.

2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.

In 2017, the California statewide median household income was \$67,169, and 80% of that was \$53,735. LAFCO staff utilized the ArcGIS mapping program to locate potential disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) within the District's service and sphere boundaries. Based on the criteria set forth by SB 244, staff's analysis indicates that there are no areas in MROSD designated as a DUC. In addition, MROSD does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

3. 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 communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.

The District's purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment. The District has preserved nearly 73,000 acres of public land and manages 27 open space preserves – 25 of which are open to the public free of charge. MROSD does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.

The District has a limited revenue stream to operate its services and facilities. Total operating revenue for FY 2022-23 was approximately \$87 million. Based on LAFCO's analysis, the District expressed an annual deficit during the last five fiscal years (FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23). At present, the District is heavily reliant to property taxes to fund its internal and external operations.

5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.

The District works to form a continuous greenbelt of permanently preserved open space by linking its lands with other public parklands. Such actions and goals are completed by collaborating with other local agencies including but not limited to counties, cities, and other local organizations.

6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.

The District is governed by a seven-member elected board of directors. Each board member is elected to serve a four-year term and represents a geographic ward of approximately equal populations. The Board holds its regular public meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m., at the District administrative office: 5050 El Camino Real, Los Altos, CA.

District staffing currently includes more than 200 employees in 10 departments: Budget and Finance, Engineering and Construction, Human Resources, Information Systems and Technology, Land and Facilities, Natural Resources, Planning, Public Affairs, Real Property, and Visitor Services. Over 600 volunteers also assist the District each year ranging from one-day projects to ongoing natural history education, trail patrol, maintenance, and restoration programs.

7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

No additional local LAFCO policies are specifically relevant to this service and sphere review.

Sphere Determinations

Government Code Section 56425 requires LAFCO to periodically review and update spheres of influence in concert with conducting municipal service reviews. Spheres are used as regional planning tools to discourage urban sprawl and encourage orderly growth. Written statements of determination must be prepared with respect to each of the following:

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.

The District's purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment. The District encompasses over 550 square miles of territory. Open space preserves are generally kept in a natural condition in order to best protect the environment and wildlife habitats, and are developed with only the amenities needed to provide low-intensity recreation. Ranging from 55 to over 19,400 acres, 25 of the 27 preserves are open to the public all year round.

2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

The District encompasses over 550 square miles in three separate counties and offers more than 256 miles of recreational trails. Open space services provided by MROSD are not restricted to residents within the District's jurisdiction. It is estimated that approximately 763,000 residents currently live within MROSD's service area but on average, over 2.4 million people visit the 25 preserves open to the public owned and operated by the District each year. As a result, there is a constant demand for open space services.

3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.

The District has adopted a long-term strategic plan and provides an update to this plan on an annual basis. The annual strategic plans provide a framework to guide the District in its planning process and in evaluating Districtwide needs. The District's goal is to work collaboratively with all of their partners to address regional land conservation, stewardship, and public access challenges. Various projects and accomplishments have been completed as a result of these adopted strategic plans.

4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

Santa Clara LAFCO is the "principal LAFCO" for the District under Government Code Section 56066.

5. For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, that occurs pursuant to subdivision (g) on or after July 1, 2012, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.

Neither the District nor LAFCO has identified any sub-area within or contiguous to the District's service or sphere boundaries that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community. In addition, MROSD does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

APPENDICES

A. Santa Clara LAFCO (Principal LAFCO) Adopted Policy

B. MROSD Board of Directors – Individual Ward Maps

C. MROSD Board of Directors – Multi-County Wide Ward Map



APPENDIX A:

Santa Clara LAFCO (Principal LAFCO) Adopted Policy

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING PROPOSALS AFFECTING MORE THAN ONE COUNTY

Legislative Authority

The Cortese Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 sets forth that the county having all or the greater portion of the assessed value, as shown on the last equalized assessment roll of the county or counties, of all taxable property within a district for which a change of organization or reorganization is proposed, is the principal county for changes in organization involving that district. It further states that the LAFCO of the principal county shall have jurisdiction over all boundary changes affecting that district including changes of organization involving territory in another county. Exclusive jurisdiction shall be vested in the LAFCO of the principal county, unless the principal county vests jurisdiction in the LAFCOs of the affected county and both LAFCOs agree to transfer of jurisdiction.

Santa Clara LAFCO recognizes the need to collaborate on a regional level when considering a change of organization of a district that affects another County. In order to further this collaboration and assure thorough and consistent consideration of applications affecting more than one county, this Commission adopts the following procedure for processing applications from multi-county districts.

A. Transfer of Jurisdiction to LAFCO of Affected County

When requested by a LAFCO of an affected county, Santa Clara LAFCO will consider and determine on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to transfer jurisdiction to the LAFCO of the affected County.

B. Procedure for Processing of Applications affecting more than one county when Santa Clara LAFCO is Principal LAFCO

1. Applications affecting the boundaries of a district for which Santa Clara LAFCO is principal LAFCO will be submitted to Santa Clara LAFCO including instances in which the subject territory is located in another county. Prior to application, applicants should meet with staff of principal LAFCO regarding process and application requirements. Applicant must comply with application requirements of both LAFCOs.
2. Upon receipt of the application involving territory in another county, staff will immediately forward a copy of the application to the LAFCO of the county containing the subject territory.

3. The commission of the principal county will also provide notice to the chair, each board member, and the executive office of all affected agencies of any proceedings, actions or reports on the proposed change of organization.
4. Santa Clara LAFCO staff will consult with the staff of the affected LAFCO and affected agencies in the county containing territory in order to gather data for the Executive Officer's report and recommendation.
5. The application will be scheduled for hearing by Santa Clara LAFCO so that the LAFCO of the affected county has had time to review the application and submit a written recommendation to be included in the Executive Officer's report for Santa Clara LAFCO consideration at a public hearing.
6. At the hearing, the Commission will consider the Executive Officer's report, the recommendation of the LAFCO containing the subject territory and the comments of affected individuals and agencies in making its determination.
7. Following the conclusion of the hearing, the Executive Officer will forward any resolutions and written report of Commission action to the chair, each board member, the executive office of all affected agencies and the LAFCOs of the affected county.

C. Applications affecting territory in Santa Clara County when Santa Clara LAFCO is not Principal LAFCO

Upon receipt by Santa Clara LAFCO of a notice and referral from a LAFCO of another county of an application for change of organization affecting territory in Santa Clara County, staff will place the application and report and recommendation on Santa Clara LAFCO's next possible agenda so that the Commission may consider the application and forward a recommendation to the LAFCO of the principal county. Said applications will be processed and a staff report will be prepared consistent with Santa Clara LAFCO's Policies and Procedures

Adopted December 11, 2002

APPENDIX B:

MROSD Board of Directors (Individual Ward Maps)

Ward 1

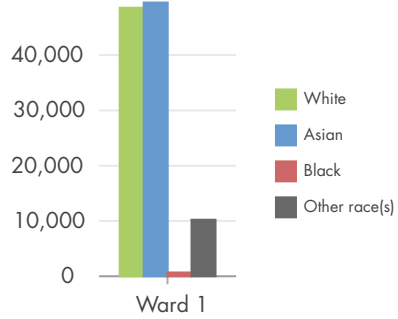
Detailed Map

Census 2020 Redistricting

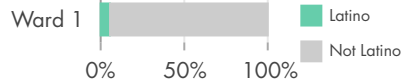


109,009 persons
0.00% from target population

Racial demographics



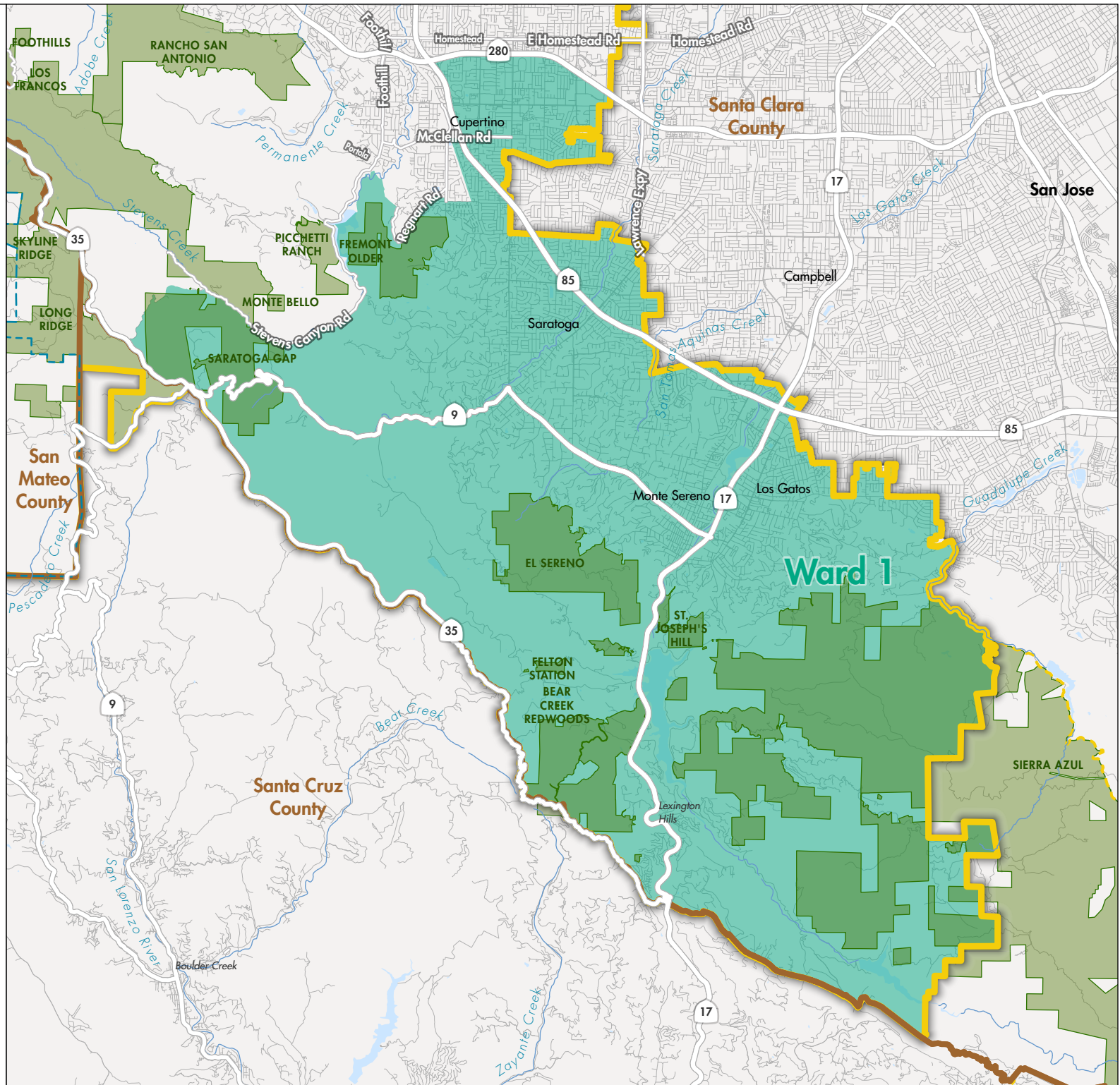
Hispanic/Latino origin



Map legend

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Incorporated city/town
- Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/1/2022



Ward 2

Detailed Map
Census 2020 Redistricting

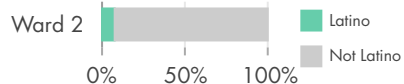


109,675 persons
+0.61% from target population

Racial demographics



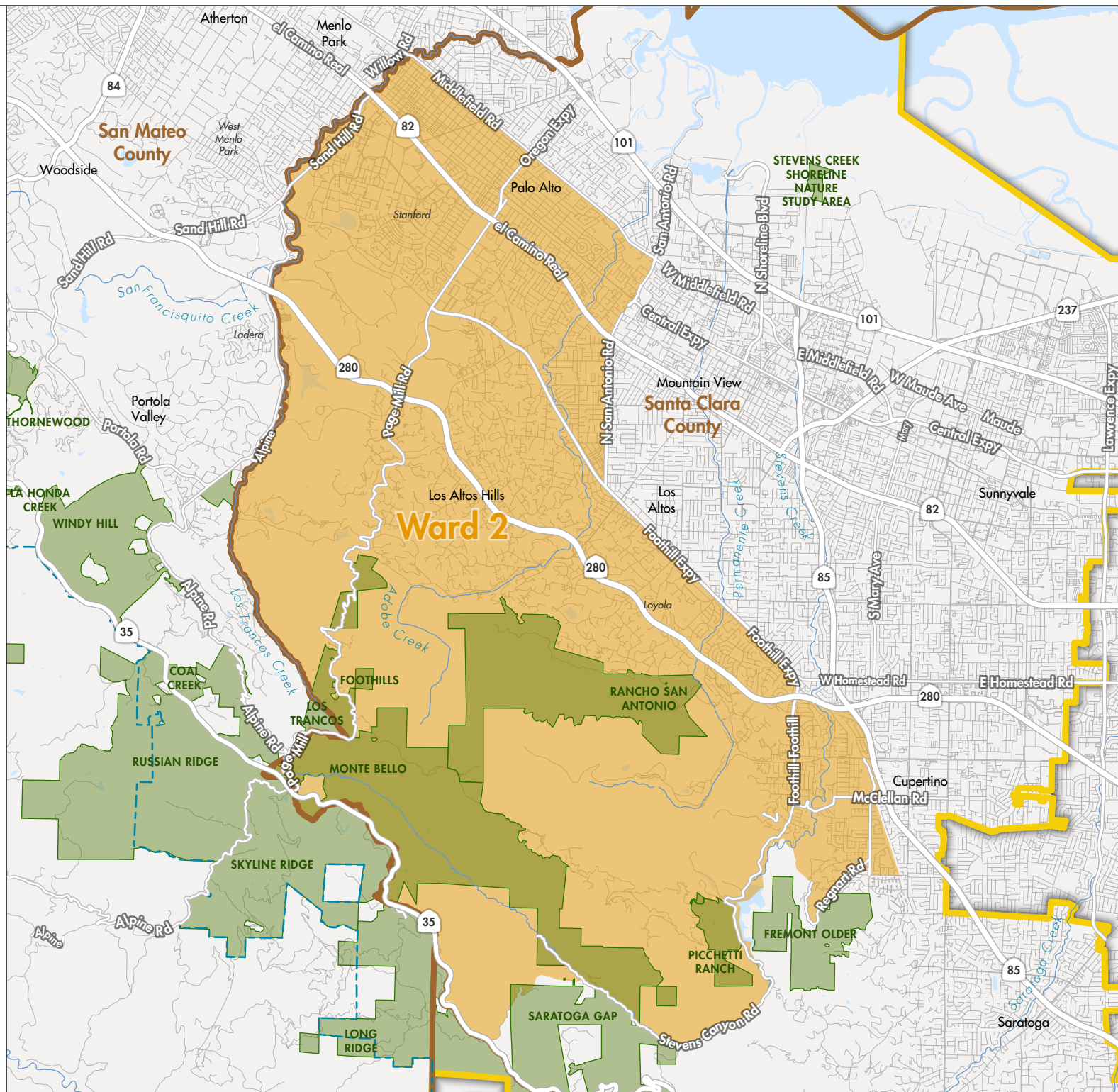
Hispanic/Latino origin



Map legend

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Incorporated city/town
- Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/1/2022



Ward 3

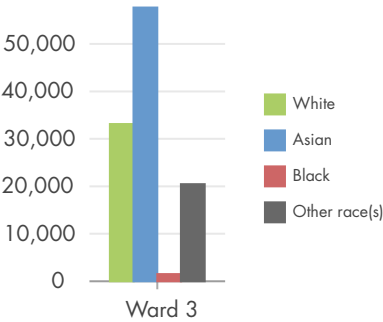
Detailed Map

Census 2020 Redistricting

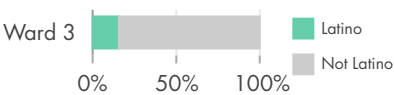


112,776 persons
+3.45% from target population

Racial demographics



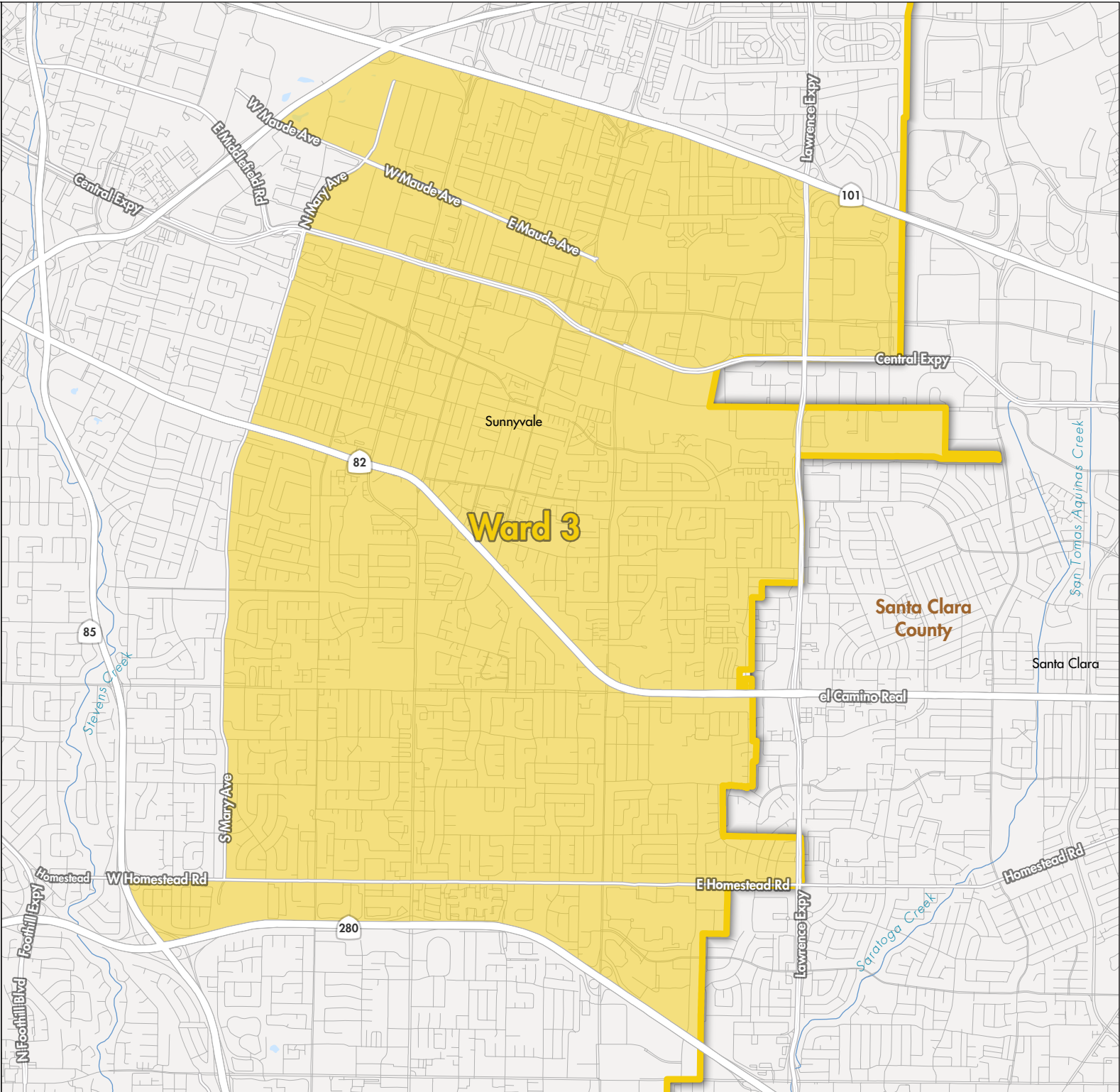
Hispanic/Latino origin



Map legend

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Incorporated city/town
- Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/1/2022



Ward 4

Detailed Map
Census 2020 Redistricting

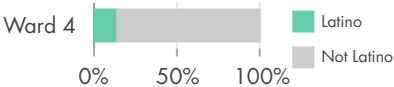


110,939 persons
+1.77% from target population

Racial demographics



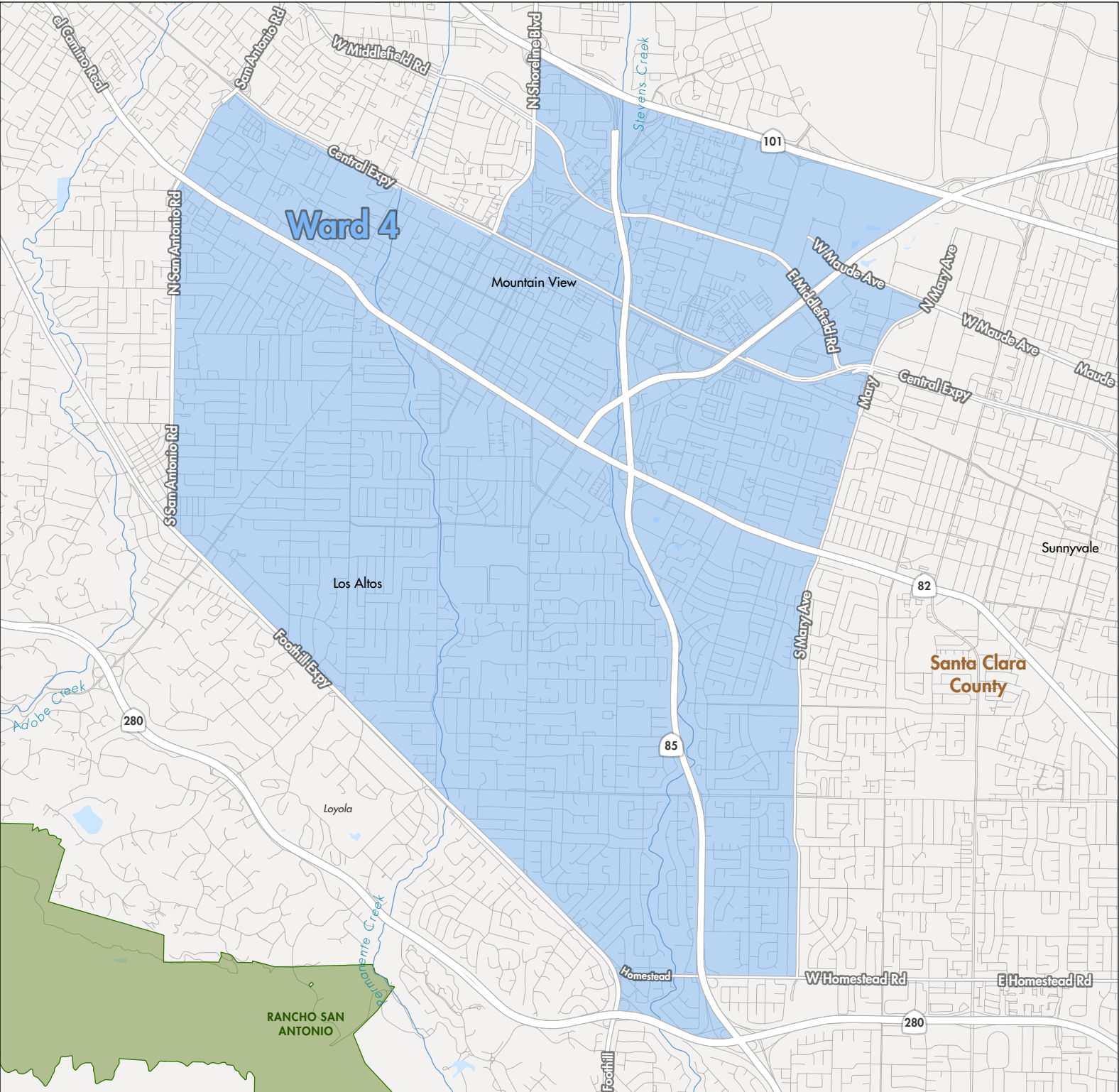
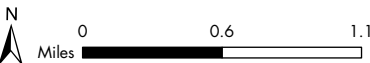
Hispanic/Latino origin



Map legend

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Aa Incorporated city/town
- Aa Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/1/2022



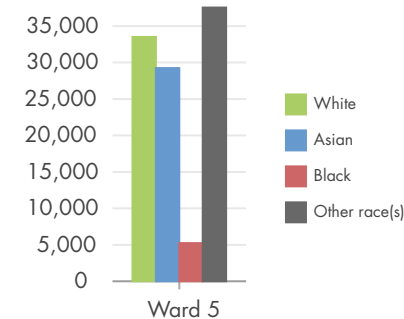
Ward 5

Detailed Map
Census 2020 Redistricting

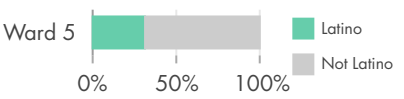


105,543 persons
-3.18% from target population

Racial demographics



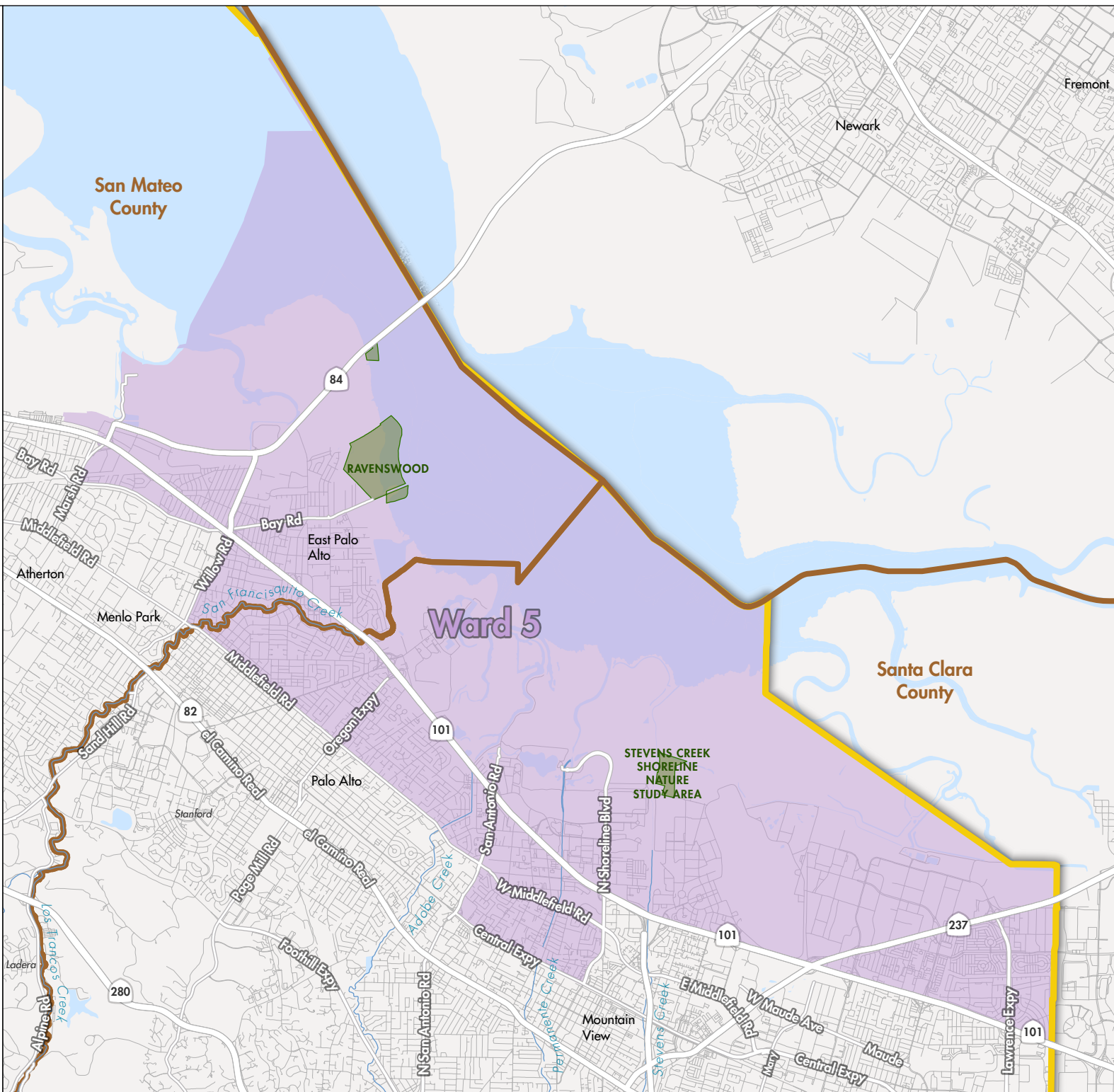
Hispanic/Latino origin



Map legend

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Aa Incorporated city/town
- Aa Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/1/2022



Ward 6

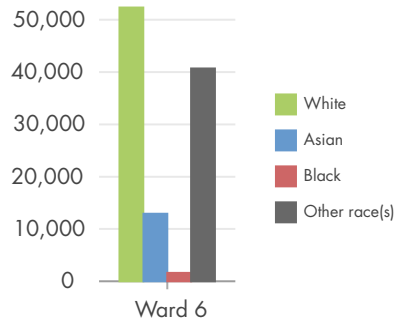
Detailed Map
Census 2020 Redistricting



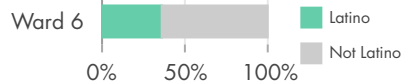
107,559 persons

-1.33% from target population

Racial demographics



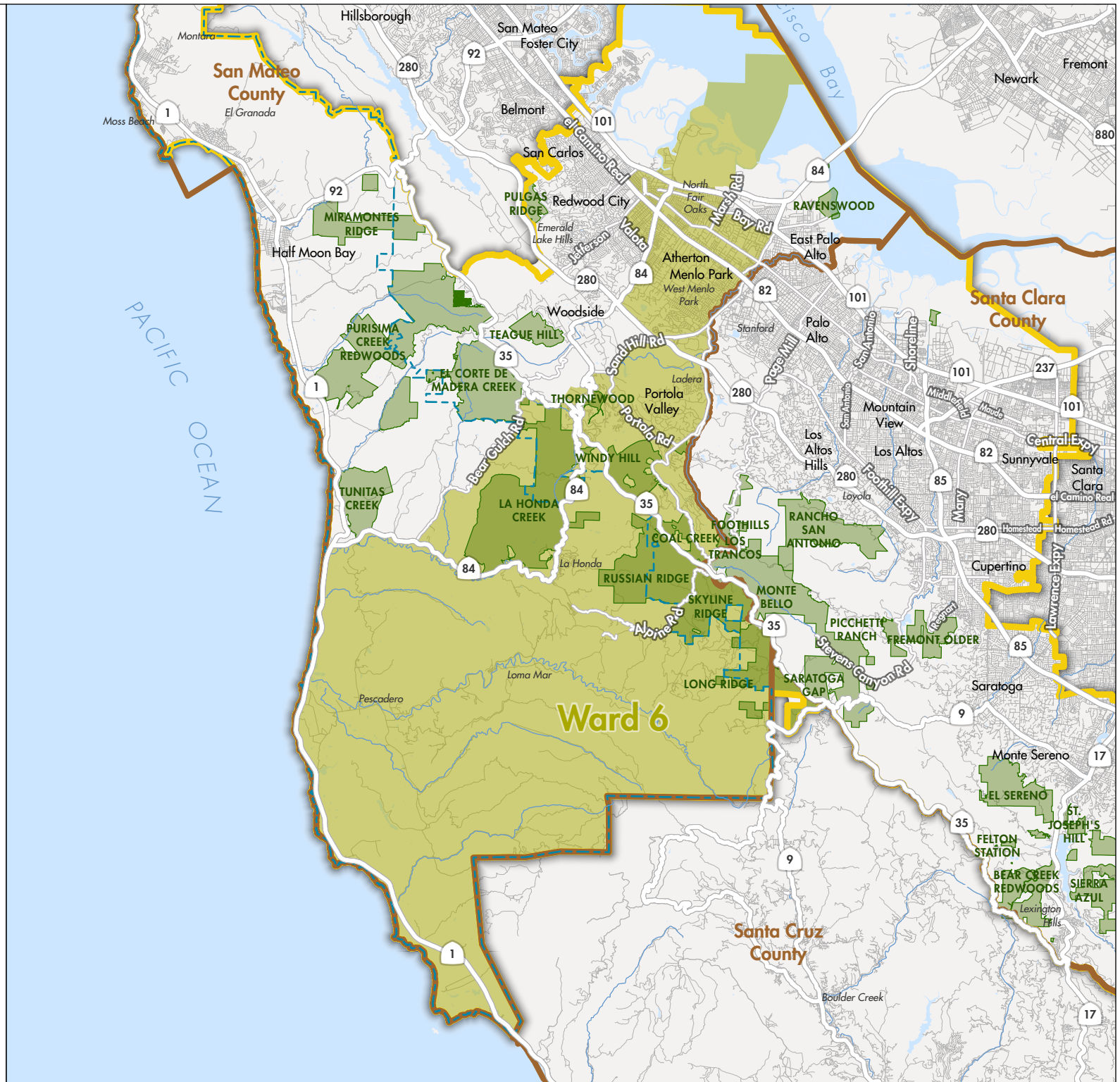
Hispanic/Latino origin



Map legend

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Incorporated city/town
- Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/1/2022



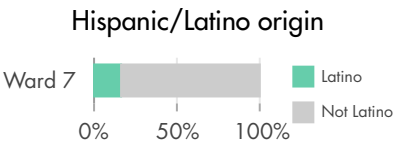
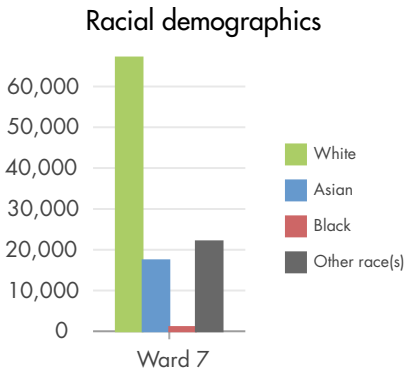
Ward 7

Detailed Map

Census 2020 Redistricting



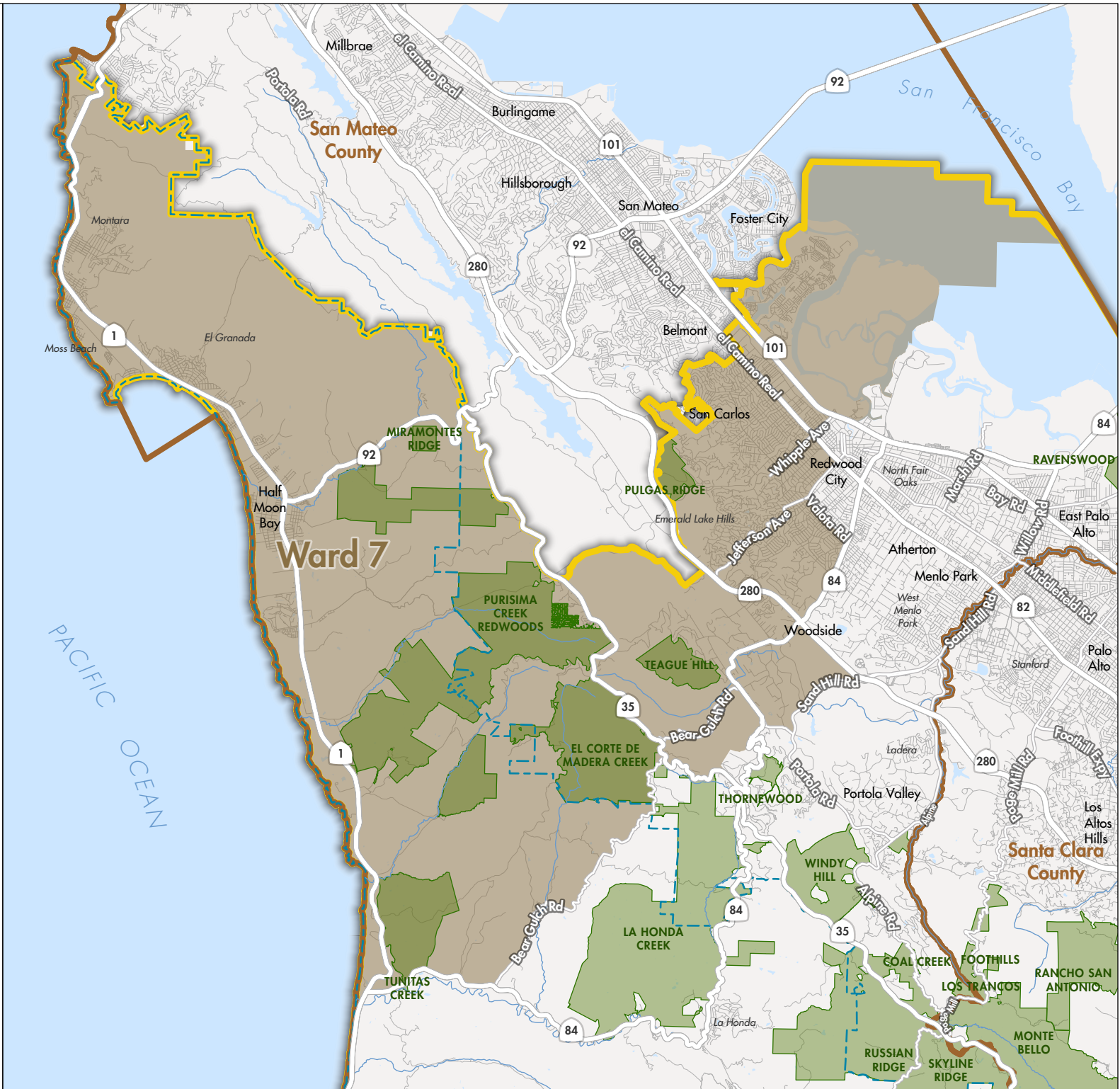
107,571 persons
-1.32% from target population



Map legend

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Incorporated city/town
- Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/1/2022



APPENDIX C:

MROSD Board of Directors (Multi-County Wide Ward Map)

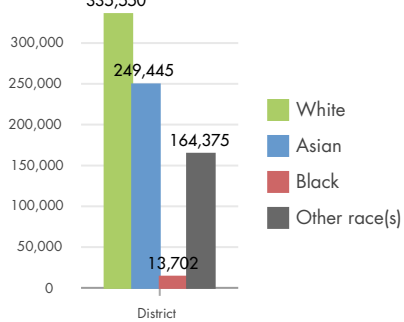
Overview Map

Census 2020 Redistricting

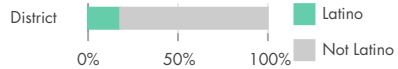


763,072 persons
Target population per ward: 109,010

Racial demographics



Hispanic/Latino origin



Map legend

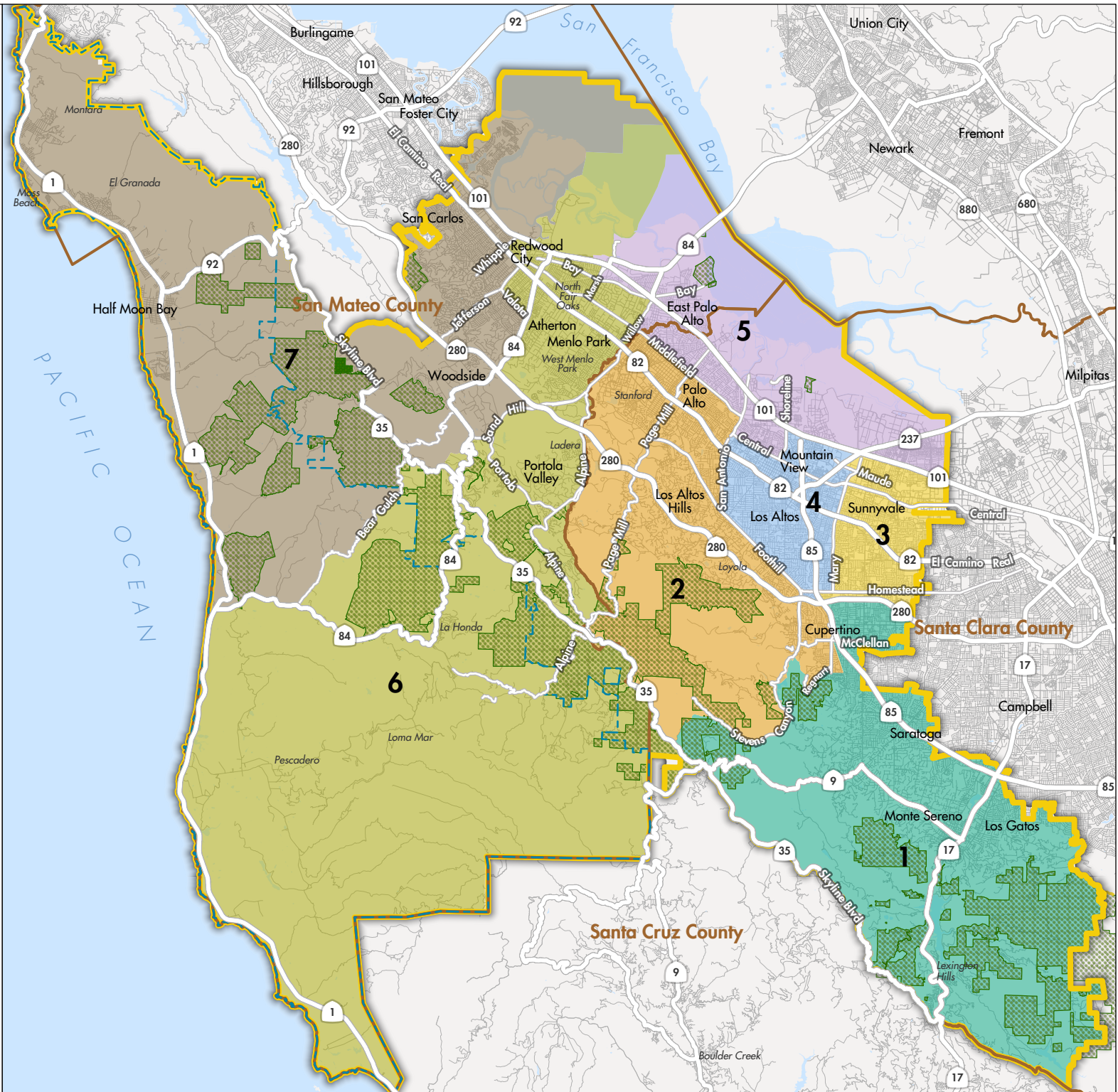
Ward boundaries



Wards constructed from 2020 Census block geography.

- County boundary
- District boundary
- Sphere of influence
- Coastside protection area
- Preserve boundary
- Incorporated city/town
- Census designated place

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
3/2/2022



Notice of Exemption

To: ☐ Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento CA 95814

From: (Public Agency)
Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission
701 Ocean Street, Room 318-D
Santa Cruz CA 95060

To: ☒ Clerk of the Board
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz CA 95060

Project Title: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Service and Sphere of Influence Review

Project Location: The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District was founded as an independent special district in 1972 to preserve the regional greenbelt in northwestern Santa Clara County. In accordance with its principal act, MROSD may be located within multiple counties as long as the lands are contiguous (Public Resource Code Section 5502[a]). The District encompasses over 550 square miles of territory located in the County of Santa Clara, the County of San Mateo, and the County of Santa Cruz. A vicinity map depicting the **District's** service and sphere boundaries is attached (Attachment A).

Project Location City: N/A

Project Location County: San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz Counties

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The report is for use by the Local Agency Formation Commission in conducting a statutorily required review and update process. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act requires that the Commission conduct periodic reviews and updates of spheres of influence of all cities and districts in Santa Cruz County (Government Code section 56425). It also requires LAFCO to conduct a review of municipal services before adopting sphere updates (Government Code section 56430). Santa Cruz LAFCO has prepared a municipal service review, and sphere of influence update for the District. The purpose of the report is to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of public services by the District, in accordance with the statutory requirements outlined in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County. The LAFCO public hearing on this proposal is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on October 2, 2024.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Exempt Status: (check one)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269 (b)(c));
☐ Categorical Exemption: State type and section number
☐ Statutory Exemptions: State code number
☒ Other: The activity is not a project subject to CEQA.

Reason Why Project is Exempt: The LAFCO action does not change the services or the planned service area of the City. There is no possibility that the activity may have a significant impact on the environment--State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

Lead Agency Contact Person: Joe A. Serrano

Area Code/Phone Extension: 831-454-2055

Signature: _____
Joe A. Serrano, Executive Officer

Date: October 3, 2024

☒ Signed by Lead Agency



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 2, 2024, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (LAFCO) will hold a public hearing on the following:

- **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Service and Sphere of Influence Review:**
Consideration of a service and sphere review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. The District encompasses over 550 square miles of territory located in three different counties: San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), LAFCO staff is scheduled to prepare a Categorical Exemption for the proposal listed above. Instructions for members of the public to participate in-person or remotely are available in the Agenda and Agenda Packet: <https://santacruzlafco.org/meetings/>. During the meeting, the Commission will consider oral or written comments from any interested person. Maps, written reports, environmental review documents and further information can be obtained by contacting LAFCO's staff at (831) 454-2055 or from LAFCO's website at www.santacruzlafco.org. LAFCO does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs or activities. If you wish to attend this meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the LAFCO office at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements.

Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Date: September 10, 2024

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
RESOLUTION NO. 2024-16

On the motion of Commissioner
duly seconded by Commissioner
the following resolution is adopted:

RESOLUTION OF THE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
APPROVING THE 2024 SERVICE AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE REVIEW
FOR THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

The Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (the "Commission") does hereby resolve, determine, and order as follows:

1. In accordance with Government Code Sections 56425, 56427, and 56430, the Commission has initiated and conducted the 2023 Service and Sphere of Influence Review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District ("District"). While Santa Cruz County is not the principal county for the District, the Commission wishes to undertake a review of the services provided by the District within Santa Cruz County.
2. The Commission's Executive Officer has given notice of a public hearing by this Commission of the service and sphere of influence review in the form and manner prescribed by law.
3. The Commission held a public hearing on October 2, 2024, and at the hearing, the Commission heard and received all oral and written protests, objections, and evidence that were presented.
4. This approval of the 2024 Service and Sphere of Influence Review for the District is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because this Commission action does not change the services or the planned service area of the subject agency. There is no possibility that the activity may have a significant impact on the environment. This action qualifies for a Notice of Exemption under CEQA and staff is directed to file the same.
5. The Commission hereby approves the 2024 Service and Sphere of Influence Review for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.
6. The Commission hereby approves the Service Review Determinations, as shown on Exhibit A.
7. The Commission hereby approves the Sphere of Influence Determinations, as shown on Exhibit B.

8. The Commission hereby reaffirms the Sphere of Influence Map for the District, as shown in Exhibit C.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County this 2nd day of October 2024.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

JOHN HUNT, CHAIRPERSON

Attest:

Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Approved as to form:

Joshua Nelson
LAFCO Counsel

EXHIBIT A
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
2024 SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area.

The population for MROSD in 2020 was 763,000. Based on LAFCO's analysis, staff determined that 29 people reside in the Santa Cruz County portion of the District's jurisdictional and sphere boundaries during that same year. LAFCO staff projects that the entire population of MROSD will be approximately 842,000 by the year 2040. The estimated population in the Santa Cruz County portion will be around 32 by the year 2040.

2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.

In 2017, the California statewide median household income was \$67,169, and 80% of that was \$53,735. LAFCO staff utilized the ArcGIS mapping program to locate potential disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) within the District's service and sphere boundaries. Based on the criteria set forth by SB 244, staff's analysis indicates that there are no areas in MROSD designated as a DUC. In addition, MROSD does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

3. 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 communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.

The District's purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment. The District has preserved nearly 73,000 acres of public land and manages 27 open space preserves – 25 of which are open to the public free of charge. MROSD does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.

The District has a limited revenue stream to operate its services and facilities. Total operating revenue for FY 2022-23 was approximately \$87 million. Based on LAFCO's analysis, the District expressed an annual deficit during the last five fiscal years (FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23). At present, the District is heavily reliant to property taxes to fund its internal and external operations.

5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.

The District works to form a continuous greenbelt of permanently preserved open space by linking its lands with other public parklands. Such actions and goals are completed by collaborating with other local agencies including but not limited to counties, cities, and other local organizations.

6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.

The District is governed by a seven-member elected board of directors. Each board member is elected to serve a four-year term and represents a geographic ward of approximately equal populations. The Board holds its regular public meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m., at the District administrative office: 5050 El Camino Real, Los Altos, CA.

District staffing currently includes 200 employees in 10 departments: Budget and Finance, Engineering and Construction, Human Resources, Information Systems and Technology, Land and Facilities, Natural Resources, Planning, Public Affairs, Real Property, and Visitor Services. Over 600 volunteers also assist the District each year ranging from one-day projects to ongoing natural history education, trail patrol, maintenance, and restoration programs.

7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

No additional local LAFCO policies are specifically relevant to this service and sphere review.

EXHIBIT B
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
2024 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE DETERMINATIONS

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.

The District's purpose is to create a regional greenbelt of unspoiled public open space lands in order to permanently protect the area's natural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment. The District encompasses over 550 square miles of territory. Open space preserves are generally kept in a natural condition in order to best protect the environment and wildlife habitats, and are developed with only the amenities needed to provide low-intensity recreation. Ranging from 55 to over 19,400 acres, the 24 preserves are open to the public all year round.

2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

The District encompasses over 550 square miles in three separate counties and offers more than 256 miles of recreational trails. Open space services provided by MROSD are not restricted to residents within the District's jurisdiction. It is estimated that approximately 763,000 residents currently live within MROSD's service area but on average, over 2.4 million people visit the 25 preserves open to the public owned and operated by the District each year. As a result, there is a constant demand for open space services.

3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.

The District has adopted a long-term strategic plan and provides an update to this plan on an annual basis. The annual strategic plans provide a framework to guide the District in its planning process and in evaluating Districtwide needs. The District's goal is to work collaboratively with all of their partners to address regional land conservation, stewardship, and public access challenges. Various projects and accomplishments have been completed as a result of these adopted strategic plans.

4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

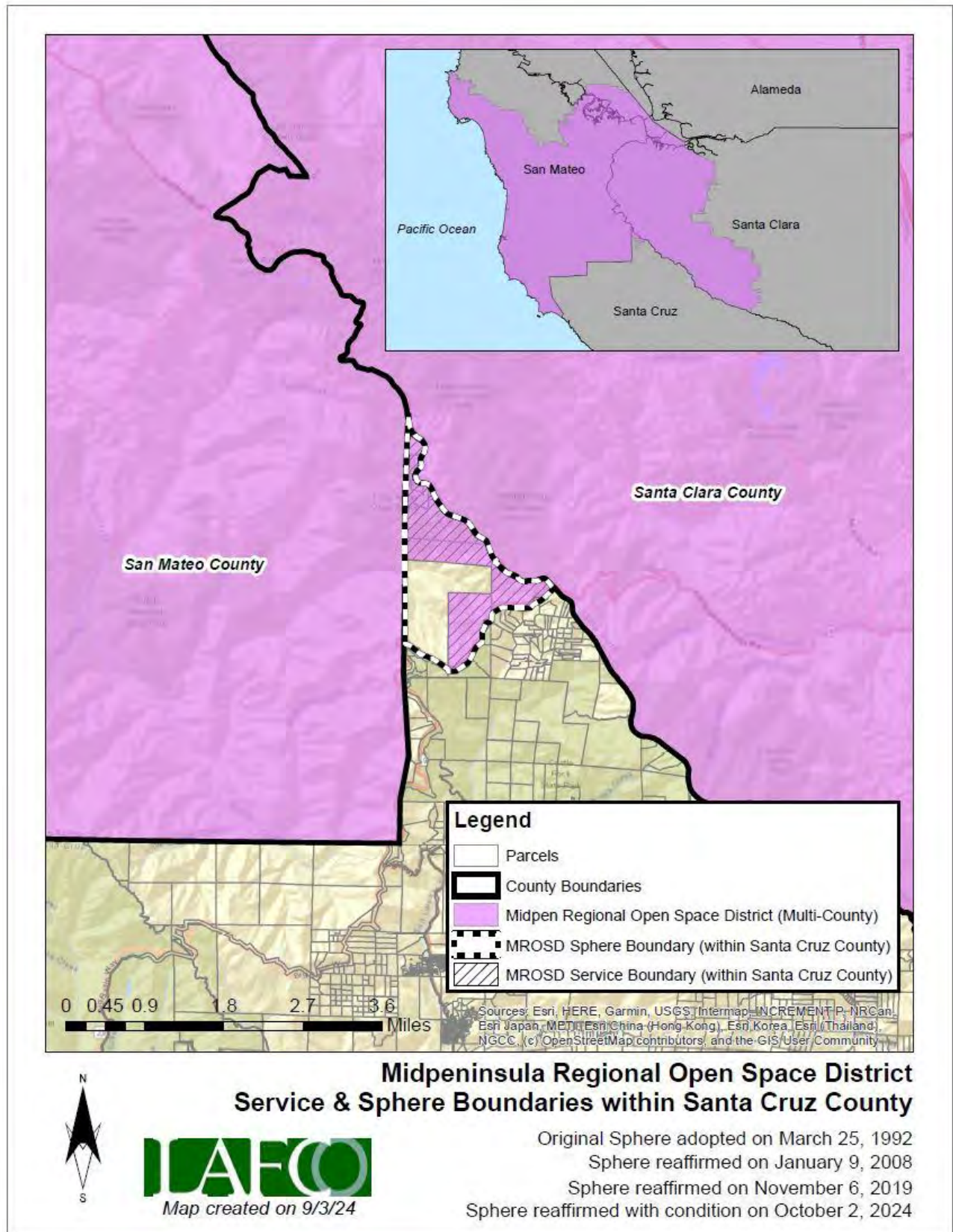
Santa Clara LAFCO is the "principal LAFCO" for the District under Government Code Section 56066.

5. For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, that occurs pursuant to subdivision (g) on or after July 1, 2012, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.

Neither the District nor LAFCO has identified any sub-area within or contiguous to the District's service or sphere boundaries that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community. In addition, MROSD does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

EXHIBIT C **MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT** **SPHERE OF INFLUENCE MAP**

LAFCO reaffirms the Sphere of Influence for the open space district.





Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Date: October 2, 2024
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Joe Serrano, Executive Officer
Subject: **CSA 48 Reorganization Effort**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

In August, the Commission received and filed the feasibility study developed by AP Triton and directed staff to coordinate with the County of Santa Cruz and CalFIRE to develop a transition plan that would evaluate the reorganization of County Service Area 48 (CSA 48) from a dependent special district to an independent fire protection district. The Commission also directed staff to bring this item back for further discussion during the next regularly scheduled LAFCO Meeting (September 4). This report provides an update on the latest efforts.

It is recommended that the Commission direct staff to continue coordinating with the County of Santa Cruz and CalFIRE to develop a reorganization plan for CSA 48.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Commission reviewed the findings from the AP Triton feasibility study¹ during the August 7th LAFCO Meeting. The study examined how future annexations within existing sphere boundaries would directly affect the annexing agencies, as well as the County as the agency responsible for the management of County Service Area 48 ("CSA 48"). During the August meeting, the Commission noted several typos and minor corrections throughout the AP Triton study. Staff provided those concerns to the consultant for consideration. As a result, AP Triton examined the entire study and provided the Commission with an updated document addressing all the errors identified by LAFCO.

Attachment 1 provides a copy of the final version of the fire study. The Commission discussed the financial impacts to CSA 48 in more detail during the September 4th LAFCO Meeting². In addition to the updated fire study, this staff report will provide a status update on other key projects involving CSA 48.

Fire Master Plan

The County hired an outside consultant to provide a master plan for CSA 48. A master plan provides an overview of the comprehensive analysis, planning, and vision that an agency uses to chart a course into the future of emergency services and fire prevention. The County Board of Supervisors (BOS) considered the master plan for CSA 48 on September 24³. During the September meeting, the BOS also directed County staff to coordinate with LAFCO on the CSA 48 reorganization effort.

¹ 8/7/24 LAFCO Staff Report: https://santacruzlafco.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/6b.0-Fire-Study-Staff-Report_Hyperlinked.pdf

² 9/4/24 LAFCO Staff Report: https://santacruzlafco.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/7b.0-CSA-48-Reorg-Staff-Report_Hyperlinked.pdf

³ 9/24/24 BOS Staff Report: <https://santacruzlafco.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/9-24-24-County-BOS-re-Master-Plan-Staff-Rpt.pdf>

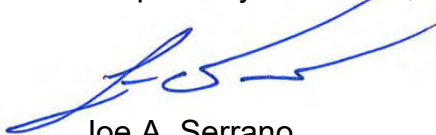
Reorganization Plan

In accordance to the direction from the BOS and this Commission, LAFCO and County staff are developing a plan that will define how CSA 48 will be converted into a new independent fire district. In other words, the plan will clearly explain why CSA 48's current model is not sustainable and how the proposed reorganization will provide residents with more transparency, accountability, and sustainability under a standalone fire district model. There are several questions that need to be addressed as part of the plan, including but not limited to the following:

- *Will the current level of service from CSA 48 continue under the new fire district in accordance with the contract between the County and CalFIRE? Will the existing contract be transferred over, or will a new contract be needed?*
- *Will the new fire district continue to operate under the Amador model?*
- *How many board members will the new district have? How many district-based election zones will be needed?*
- *What is the cost to provide the same level of service under CSA 48 to the new fire district? Are there potential cost-savings from the reorganization?*
- *What level of service can be adequately provided based on the current revenue structure?*
- *Can the new fire district operate sustainably for the next 10, 20, 30 years?*

While the plan is still in development, an outline of the plan is included in this report for reference (**Attachment 2**). Also included in this report is a tentative schedule of the entire reorganization process, if the County, CalFIRE and LAFCO determine that the new fire district would benefit the residents without any negative impacts to the level of service, representation, or established relationships with other existing fire agencies (**Attachment 3**). It is important to note that the timeline is meant for discussion purposes only and the dates are subject to change. That said, the proposed schedule identifies key milestones throughout the entire process.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

cc: Carlos Palacio, CAO Office
Jed Wilson, CalFIRE

Attachments:

1. AP Triton Fire Study (Final Version)
2. Reorganization Plan Outline
3. Reorganization Effort Timeline



July 2024

FIRE SERVICES Special Study



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Acronyms

ALS – Advanced Life Support

BCFPD – Boulder Creek Fire Protection District

BEN – Ben Lomond Fire Protection District

BLS – Basic Life Support

BRN – Branciforte Fire Protection District

CAD – Computer Aided Dispatch

CAL FIRE – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CFD – Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

CSA – County Service Area

CWPP – Community Wildfire Protection Plan

EMS – Emergency Medical Response

FEL – Felton Fire Protection District

GF – General Fund

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

LAFCO – Local Agency Formation Commission

LRA – Local Responsibility Area

NetCom – Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1

NFIRS – National Fire Incident Reporting System

NFPA – National Fire Protection Association

PAJ – Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District

PSAP – Public Safety Answering Point

SCCFCA – Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association

SCCFD – Santa Cruz County Fire Department

SCO – Scotts Valley Fire Protection District

SOI – Sphere of Influence

SRA – State Responsibility Area

UAL – Unfunded Actuarial Liability

UHU – Unit Hour Utilization

WUI – Wildland Urban Interface

ZAY – Zayante Fire Protection District

Section I: OVERVIEW & FINDINGS

Study Purpose

AP Triton, LLC (Triton) was retained by the Santa Cruz County LAFCO ("LAFCO") to prepare a focused study on the impacts of the potential detachments of territory from County Service Areas 4 and 48 and the concurrent annexation of the detached territory to the neighboring independent fire protection districts (7 in total). This study evaluated the impacts of the potential reorganizations, including an analysis of the fiscal effects.

A secondary purpose of this study was to evaluate the Plan for Service application submitted by the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District. The initial goal was to understand the validity of the application. However, after the application was removed from consideration by the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, the evaluation shifted to determining if this application was appropriate and if it could be used as a template for future requests to change service boundaries.

Triton's study intends to inform LAFCO's decision-making process on whether to initiate future reorganizations involving the affected fire agencies. Triton performed this study consistent with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000 et seq.) and LAFCO of Santa Cruz County policies and procedures.

Structure of Study

This study focuses on the fire property tax and assessments to standardize the financial revenue stream. The other revenue sources for County Service Area (CSA) 4 and CSA 48 are not considered as they are volatile and account for less than 7% of average revenue. All parcel data in the analysis, including assessments and property tax, is conducted using county-provided documentation.

During the final phases of this study, it was represented that CSA 4 residents were not interested in being incorporated into any other agency. However, to fully understand the implications and impact of reassignment, the financial implications of removing CSA 4 from the county fire protection funding must be evaluated.

This study is divided into six sections.

- Section I describes the study's purpose and lists its findings.
- Section II describes the Sphere of Influence (SOI) information and begins with an overview of the SOI inclusions.

- Section III summarizes the county-provided fire service, including a more detailed funding review and the effects of removing the spheres influencing **the county's** ability to continue providing service.
- Section IV evaluates the submitted application for the assumption of lands. This is a special study of an application within the PAJ sphere of influence (SOI) that was submitted before the start of this study. While this application is no longer active and has been removed for consideration by the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, it is still included here. The review was undertaken to determine its application and acceptability as a template for additional assumption of lands by other independent districts.
- Section V provides a summary overview of agencies that opted in at the beginning of the study.
- Section VI is the appendices. It includes a list of figures, a record of the onsite interviews, the SWOT analysis performed for each participating agency, a copy of the District Plan for Service, and a detailed review of each agency that opted into the study.

Findings

Key Concepts

- A dependent special district's requirements, responsibilities, and governance appear poorly understood.
- The dependent special districts are governed by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and serve primarily as a funding mechanism for fire protection. There is no inherent authority within these districts, and the expected level of service was only found in the CAL FIRE contract.
- Gathering limited information from many of the fire districts was challenging. This may indicate a limited administrative work capacity.
- The Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD) is not technically a department within the county.
- CAL FIRE is charged under a single contract to provide fire protection services to CSA 4 and CSA 48.
- CAL FIRE provides oversight and management to the volunteer and career companies in CSA 4 and CSA 48 under the umbrella of SCCFD.
- The CAL FIRE association with SCCFD and PAJ allows these agencies to access a deep well of support services and programs. These services are not typically identified in scheduled contracts and are delivered as part of the CAL FIRE business model. However, partnering agencies should be aware that these services could become part of the negotiated cost of scheduled contracts as fiscal pressures place demands on CAL FIRE.
- The county has 4 types of fire protection agencies: special fire protection districts, municipalities, fire-protection dependent districts, and state responsibility areas.
- There are 12 fire protection areas and 11 fire agencies. By contract with CAL FIRE, the two CSAs are SCCFD's responsibility.

Sphere of Influence Annexation Findings

Service Implications

- All agencies' SOI consists of 5,030 parcels. 3,133 parcels are in the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (PAJ) SOI, and the remaining parcels are split between the other fire protection districts.
- The expected increase in incident workload for districts other than PAJ is minimal.

- The total average annual workload across all districts is estimated to be 407 annual incidents, with a yearly increase to those receiving districts of 225 incidents. This includes incidents the districts historically did not already respond to.
- The PAJ SOI inclusion workload is expected to increase by an average of 720 incidents annually from the CSA 48 properties. However, the total number of increased incidents for a combined PAJ, Corralitos, and CSA 48 organization is not likely to change between the merged agencies.
- The population within the county is projected to experience low or no growth.
- Incident volume will increase throughout all systems over the next 10 years.

Financial Implications

- Four separate fire protection-specific assessments are designed to fund fire protection in the county service areas. These are the county fire property tax assessment, the fire flow unit special assessment for CSA 4, the fire flow unit special assessment for CSA 48, and the single-family residential assessment for CSA 48.
- County budget documents do not separate the two CSA 48 special assessments.
- Fire protection budgets are found in CSA 48, County Fire (Fund 26-105), and CSA 4.
- CSA 4 and CSA 48 are treated differently in the budget document, which may cause some confusion about the roles of the CSAs.
- FY 23/24 fire-specific revenue for CSA 4 and CSA 48 amounts to \$7,037,828.
- The total FY 23/24 expenses for CSA 4 and CSA 48 amounts to \$15,202,764.
- 72% of fire services expense is accounted for in the Services and Supplies expense type.
- 55.3% of CSA 48 and CSA 4 fire-related assessments are within a SOI.
- 100% of the CSA 4 dependent special district is within a SOI
- The total funds shifted due to the SOI are the County Fire Property Tax of \$2,082,356, Fire Flow Unit Assessments of \$1,178,482, and CSA 48 Single Family Assessment (CSA 48 2020), \$635,062, for a total firefighting fund shift of \$3,895,900.
- Neither CSA 48, as found in the County Fire Protection Fund (26-105), nor CSA 4 (Pajaro Dunes) is self-sufficiently funded. The adopted budget net cost for FY 22/23 was \$3,377,856, and the budgeted cost for FY 23/24 is \$7,722,035, which will apply against the reserves in those funds.
- Based on assessments and taxes, the financial impact to the County Fire Fund (26-105) is \$651,707 for those areas absorbed by all fire protection districts except PAJ.

- PAJ SOI absorption for fire-based assessments and taxes would be \$3,263,193, \$1,806,757 from the CSA 48 area, and \$1,456,436 from CSA 4.
- As reviewed in the submitted proposal, the total expense offset from the PAJ SOI inclusion is estimated to be \$4,934,237 in FY 23/24. This leaves FY 23/24 expenses of \$10,268,528 to be absorbed by the County Fire Fund (26-105) on fire assessments and tax revenue of \$3,793,635. The total net cost for this shift is approximately \$6.4 million.

Application Findings

- The application meets most of the statutory requirements.
- The application for the proposed annexation of the SOI by PAJ does not adequately identify funding, structure, or goals. These should be clarified in the application.
- Revenue sources should be listed separately to clarify expectations and as a talking point with the Santa Cruz County LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors.
- Expenses should be listed separately to ensure accountability and as a talking point with the Santa Cruz County LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors.
- The application's structure will need to be revised to be used as a template for future reorganizations.
- Because the application was pulled, the application review section is intended solely to illustrate the review process for an application. The efficacy of the actual proposal is not considered germane to the outcome of this study.

Agency General Findings

- No agencies in the study provided evidence of a current community risk assessment or standard of cover.
- Emergency response services for all agencies are similar, based on whether the system is primarily volunteer or career fire service employee-driven.
- CFD responds to more incidents annually than all other agencies in the study combined.
- Each fire protection district in the San Lorenzo Valley stated they provide fire prevention and public education services. However, with limited staff availability, the efficacy of these programs may be questionable and could not be ascertained.
- The SOI boundaries should be re-evaluated, utilizing parcel location and closest station availability.

- The total 24-hour staffing facilities capability of all agencies in the study is 80 personnel. The daily minimum 24-hour staffing is 25.
- The most significant incident density throughout the study area closely follows the populated areas of the county. The highest call density is within the CFD boundaries.
- There are 25 fire stations in the study ranked as fair or fair/poor. The average age of the stations is 51 years old. This may indicate the need for capital investments in the facilities.
- Two dispatch centers, CAL FIRE's ECC and NetCom, operate on different radio systems.

Conclusions

This study was conducted to determine the impacts of the potential detachments of territory from County Service Areas 4 and 48 and the concurrent annexation of the detached territory to the neighboring independent fire protection districts (7 in total).

Based on an evaluation of the financial information submitted by the county and the affected agencies and service call load, the detachment of these areas from the CSA 4 and CSA 48 service areas would have an overall detrimental impact on the county's ability to provide fire protection. While the movement of funds to most special districts is a positive for these agencies, it does not appear to have an excessively positive impact. In addition, the incident volume for most agencies would not increase significantly, and the SCCFD call load would not diminish perceptively.

The application submitted by the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District is a good starting point for developing a template for other agencies that may wish to submit similar applications. However, an improved document structure and increased financial details will help determine the overall effect of such an application.

Section II: KEY CONCEPTS & SOI SUMMARY

Introduction

Triton was engaged in this project in August 2022. Triton contacted the agencies affected by this study and described the project and its aims. Triton requested data from each of the participating agencies. Some agencies were unable to provide the requested computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data. Alternate means of gathering this information required negotiation with the Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (NetCom) communications center and the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Obtaining NetCom data required the intervention of additional persons retained by LAFCO.

During the data-gathering phase, the Santa Cruz County Fire Department contracted with Triton to perform a Fire Service Master Plan. This plan would provide a much more in-depth study of the county fire department, the current service provider, and the SOI being studied. It was determined that completing the Master Plan project would significantly enhance the overall value of the LAFCO study.

Participating agencies were able to provide most of the administrative information by November 2022. However, CAL FIRE, the Office of the **State Fire Marshal's Office**, and NetCom did not provide incident data until February 2023. By then, the SCCFD Master Plan was being conducted, and the LAFCO project was slowed until the **plan's details** could be fully explored. The SCCFD Master Plan project entered a technical review in August 2023, allowing this study to be complete.

The study contains a detailed assessment of 7 of the 13 agencies responsible for fire protection within the county. The Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville are covered by incorporated city fire departments and were omitted. Likewise, the state responsibility areas under the responsibility of CAL FIRE, the Scotts Valley Fire Protection District, the Branciforte Fire Protection District, and the Aromas Fire Protection District were also excluded. The study did not incorporate CAL FIRE's **state**-mandated mission for the state response area. The study omitted the Aromas Fire Protection District because it is primarily in Monterey County. Scotts Valley opted out because they were in the process of annexing Branciforte.

Key Concepts

During the research for this study, it became clear that the county-provided fire service is poorly understood. This is primarily due to the service's complex nature, funding mechanisms, governance, and organizational structure. The following subsection of this study will provide an overview of some key concepts that will drive any discussion of the SOI or reorganizations.

Special Districts—Dependent versus Independent Districts

A special district is separated from any city, county, or other government body, created to provide governmental or crucial services to a community regardless of local governance boundaries. California has two types of special districts: independent and dependent. An independent district receives its authority directly from the community through a governing body, usually a district board. These districts are directly accountable to the community they serve. A dependent district is closely tied to another governmental body and is typically subject to that other body's interests, influence, and authority.¹

Two special fire protection district types exist within Santa Cruz County. The fire protection districts are independent districts operating under the governance of a district board. County Service Areas (CSA) 4 and 48 are dependent districts that operate as a funding mechanism for the county to offset some expenses of providing fire protection in the CSAs. These CSA-dependent districts are governed directly by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. While the funds generated under these CSAs are required to be utilized for fire protection, there is no performance expectation or definition of service afforded within the CSAs; only fire protection is provided. The Board of Supervisors defines and adopts all the details of that service.

Funding

Revenue streams for the multiple fire agencies come from several sources. However, the primary funding sources and the focus of this study come from special assessments and property tax. Incorporated cities within the county can also assess sales tax to generate revenue for fire services, but this is outside the study's scope.

¹ www.csga.net/special-districts/learn-about.

Special Assessments

One form of funding persistent in this study is the funding sources utilized by the dependent districts, CSA 4 (created in 1966) and CSA 48 (created in 1985). Residents authorized a fire protection levy assessment for their respective CSAs. Both special assessments are based on fire flow units per year. These rates change annually based on the consumer price index or by resolution of the residents within the CSA. The 2022/2023 tax year lists this assessment as \$488.49 for each fire flow unit in CSA 4 and \$86.49 per fire flow unit in CSA 48. A fire flow unit is calculated for each property parcel. It is determined by the use, size, construction, and type of structure.

Residents within CSA 48 approved an additional assessment in 2020 for their service area. The additional assessment is based on the residential status and property size. This assessment was listed as \$156.08 per single-family unit in the 2022/2023 tax document.² The following figure shows the two dependent districts and their special assessment history.

Figure 1: Depended Special District Specific Assessment History

Special District	FY 19/20 (actual)	FY 20/21 (actual)	FY 21/22 (actual)	FY 22/23 (actual)	FY 23/24 (budget)
Santa Cruz CSA 4					
Assessment for Fire Protection	508,056	524,824	534,212	551,310	574,698
Santa Cruz CSA 48					
Assessment for Fire Protection (less CSA 48 Auditing Fees)	1,231,153	2,746,251 ⁺	2,669,902	2,649,654	2,813,746
Total CSA Special Assessments	1,739,209	3,271,074	3,204,114	3,200,964	3,388,444

⁺ The adopted 2020 single-family residential additional assessment for CSA 48 will start showing in FY 20/21.

A final potential special assessment comes from a statewide half-percent sales tax called Proposition 172 (Prop 172), the Local Public Safety Protection and Improvement Act of 1993. While a small portion of these funds are provided by the county for fire protection, they are distributed to the Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association to distribute at their discretion. This distribution has averaged \$97,693 over the last 5 budget years. Section III provides a more thorough explanation of Prop 172 and its potential funding effects.

² The County of Santa Cruz Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2022–23.

Property Tax

The County of Santa Cruz levies a one-percent property tax on all net taxable property values within the county. The net taxable value is the county **assessor's** real property valuation with improvements, less the allowable discounts. The 1% property tax funds multiple county services through specific levies or as a portion of the general fund.

A portion of this property tax is used to fund independent special districts, which include the county fire protection districts. While not a straightforward application of percentages, the concept is that each Fire Protection District's **community requests a portion of the** property tax to fund fire protection. The county collects the property tax and allocates the funds based on special services within a taxation area. The fire protection assessments range from 0.08% to 3.95% of the 1% property tax. Additionally, the county apportions approximately 0.5% of the 1% property tax for County Fire in CSA 4 and CSA 48 areas.

The county fire property tax is assessed per property parcel, and the amount is not levied separately by CSAs. However, the county tracks property taxes collected in the budget by the fire protection fund and CSA 4. The following figure shows the total property tax assessment in the county budgets; it includes current and prior years and secured and unsecured tax funds.

Figure 2: County Fire Property Tax Revenue History

County Fire Property Tax	FY 19/20 (actual)	FY 20/21 (actual)	FY 21/22 (actual)	FY 22/23 (actual)	FY 23/24 (budget)
Santa Cruz CSA 4					
Property Tax	764,988	781,728	827,622	907,052	862,738
County Fire as Tracked in Fund 26-105					
Property Tax (other than CSA 4 areas not covered by fire protection)	2,474,742	2,587,064	2,646,903	2,820,072	2,786,646
Total CSA Property Tax	3,239,730	3,368,792	3,474,525	3,727,124	3,649,384

Previous Period Funds

The County of Santa Cruz carries previously unused revenue funds to maintain funding for fire services. The funds collected for fire protection in either County Fire Fund 26-105 or CSA 4 carry forward. In cases where revenues exceed expenses, the fund balance increases and decreases when expenditures exceed revenues. Historically, the county has maintained a positive balance in both funds to cover periodic overages.

The funds are captured as of June 30 in the first budget year. For example, the funds available for the 2017/2018 fiscal year are listed as June 30, 2017. The County Fire Fund has grown steadily, while CSA 4 funds have remained steady at nearly \$1 million. During the 2022/2023 fiscal year, however, expenditures exceeded revenues for both budgets. CSA 48 available funds have remained at or below \$10,000, and the fund balance remains steady at approximately \$13,000 from June 30, 2019. Evaluating the potential fund balances is complex primarily due to the fluctuations in billing by CAL FIRE. Estimating the funds available for the 2024/2025 fiscal year requires reviewing the recommended and adopted budget figures. The following figure shows fund balances from the 2019/2020 fiscal year to the 2023/2024 budget.

Figure 3: Fund Balances (FY 20/21–FY 23/24)

Expenditures	FY 20/21 (actual)	FY 21/22 (actual)	FY 22/23 (actual)	FY 23/24 (actual)	2024 Ending (recommended)	2024 Ending (adopted)
County Fire, Fund (26-105)						
June 30 th Balance	6,176,772	8,931,701	10,029,661	9,305,835	7,501,473	2,2738,171
Obligated Funds	3,071,544	5,460,353	3,747,687	5,904,746		
Total Available	3,105,228	3,471,348	6,281,974	3,401,089		
CSA 4 Fund 22250						
June 30 th Balance	944,034	1,174,435	1,403,399	1,153,471	540,645	(112,771)
Obligated Funds	820,874	(400,748)	367,559	112,771		
Total Available	123,160	1,575,183	1,035,840	1,040,700		
CSA 48, Fund 22110						
June 30 th Balance	13,023	13,023	13,024	12,524		
Obligated Funds	4,661	13,023	13,023	13,023		
Total Available	8,362	-	1	(499)		
Total Avail., All Funds	3,236,750	5,046,531	7,317,815	4,441,290	8,042,118	2,625,400

The estimates for the ending balances on June 30th, 2024, have two calculatable options based on the current budget. One balance assesses existing balances against the Net Cost for the 2023/2024 Recommended Budget, and the other assesses the 2023/2024 Adopted Budget. Historically, the Recommended Budget appears more accurate than the Adopted Budget. Therefore, a 2024 funds balance for CSA 4 would be closer to \$500k and Fund 25-106 more nearly \$7.5 million. Therefore, the total funds available for both is likely closer to \$8 million. All funds for CSA 48 have been obligated, leaving little discretionary available. These funds are not included in the total available funds.

Santa Cruz County Fire Department

The Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD) is not technically a department of the county. It is not listed in the Santa Cruz County Department's directory.³ The organization was established in 1948 when the county contracted with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for fire protection. SCCFD incorporates local volunteer fire and CAL FIRE companies. The contracted services fall under one or two types: an Amador agreement and a Schedule-A agreement.

An Amador agreement is one in which the contracting communities pay for full-time coverage by funding the fire company outside of the wildfire season. This is an actual cost agreement and can vary by season.

A Schedule-A agreement is where the community funds the fire company throughout the year and absorbs all direct costs. These fire companies are managed by the CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz (CRZ) Unit Chief with support for CAL FIRE administrative and dispatch services.⁴ While not all county fire protection costs are directly associated with the CAL FIRE contract, they are consistently the most significant single line-item cost.

The county tracks the expenses for fire protection in two separate areas. The general budget's Fire Protection Fund (26-105) tracks revenue and expenses other than CSA 4. However, note that the two areas are treated the same operationally. In addition, the county signs one cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE for all areas of fire protection within the county. The following two figures summarize the fire protection budget expenditures for Fund 26-105 and CSA 4.⁵

³ www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Departments.aspx.

⁴ dpwtest.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/About/CountyFireHistory.aspx.

⁵ www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Government/BudgetandFinancialReports.aspx.

Figure 4: Santa Cruz Fire Protection (Fund 26-105 & CSA 4)

Expenditures	FY 19/20 (actual)	FY 20/21 (actual)	FY 21/22 (actual)	FY 22/23 (actual)	FY 23/24 (adopted budget)
Emergency Services/Fire Protection, Fund 26-105					
Services and Supplies ¹	3,038,824	3,136,077	2,596,509	5,996,101	8,484,311
Other Expenses	451,677	676,362	2,161,801	1,193,775	4,107,646
Total Fund 26-105	3,490,501	3,812,439	4,758,310	7,189,876	12,591,957
CSA 4 Expenditures					
Services and Supplies ¹	1,382,906	1,193,051	1,146,328	1,033,794	2,437,632
Other Expenses	39,751	6,447	16,349	689,612	173,175
Total CSA 4	1,422,657	1,199,498	1,162,677	1,723,406	2,610,807

¹ The CAL FIRE Contract is accounted for in this account and is most, not all, of the expense in this account.

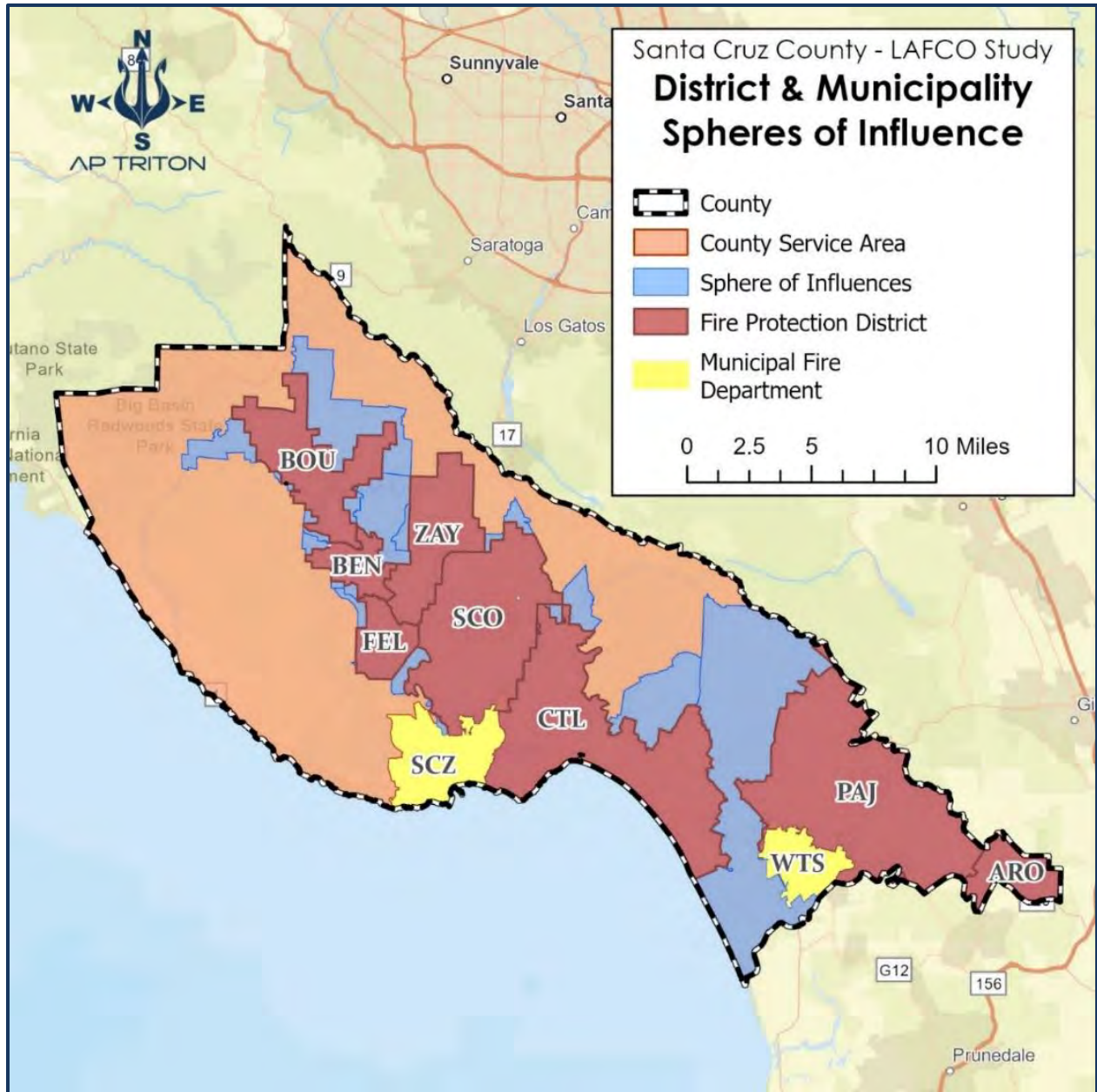
Separating the funds creates an illusion that there are two separate agencies. However, the two dependent CSA special districts are used to fund one agency. CAL FIRE is contractually responsible for providing fire protection for both CSAs.

Sphere of Influence

The primary goal of this study was to understand the effect of other agencies absorbing SCCFD land into their SOI. The SOI is the planning boundary outside a jurisdiction's legal boundary that may designate the agency's probable future service area and boundary.⁶ The following figure depicts the SOI lands and the other service providers discussed in this study.

⁶ calafco.org/About_LAFCOs.

Figure 5: Fire Service Sphere of Influence Overview



The county provided the summary financial data evaluated for this study and covers the 2022/2023 assessment data. Property taxes were gathered using tax rate area (TRA) information. Special assessment valuation for CSA 48 was collected using the parcel number information from the assessor's office. Triton also evaluated each parcel based on its geography to validate the information provided. Parcel detail information is found in each jurisdictional profile in Section VI, Appendix F.

There were some difficulties in obtaining exact figures. One of these difficulties arises when the SOI bisects a property. Depending on the data set used, between 5 and 30 properties were divided by an SOI border. Triton calculated 30, while the county identified 5. These split property discrepancies should be resolved if there are any jurisdictional boundary changes.

Triton used the county-provided assessment information for these calculations. However, the budgets are derived from received monies, not assessed value. Therefore, due to delinquent taxes, the numbers presented here will likely be slightly higher than the budgeted numbers. A more in-depth evaluation will be necessary if agencies intend to move forward with SOI absorption. However, Triton did not feel these differences were significant enough to change the outlook of the study. In addition, while specific parcels were evaluated for CSA 48, the study assumes that any changes to CSA 4 would include the entire CSA because it resides wholly in the Pajaro Valley SOI. Therefore, CSA 4 totals were used rather than specific property valuations. For the 2023/2024 proposed budget, CSA 4 revenue for current property taxes was \$862,738, and the fire assessment was \$574,698. The following figure shows the potential total number of parcels, special assessment dollars, additional assessments, and overall property tax revenue for all properties within another agency's SOI. A breakdown of the totals is found in Section II.

Figure 6: CSA 4 and CSA 48 Potential Tax Shift for All SOIs

Dependent Special District	Parcels	County Fire Property Tax	CSA Fire Assessment	CSA 48 2020 Assessment	Total*
CSA 4 (All)	625	\$862,738	\$574,698	N/A	\$1,437,436
CSA 48	4,405	\$1,219,618	\$603,784	\$635,062	\$2,458,464
TOTAL SOI	5,030	\$2,082,356	\$1,178,482	\$635,062	\$3,895,900

Overall, Triton estimates that revenue shifts of CSAs 4 and 8 assessments and county fire property tax is \$3,895,900. As defined above, these same revenue sources account for \$7,037,828 in the FY 23/24 budget. This shift represents a 55.3% revenue shift of these sources if the SOI areas are absorbed by each respective agency. A complete review of the SOI shifts is in Section III.

Population and Incident Growth

Estimating population growth is essential for two reasons: finances and the implied correlation between emergency incident demand and population.

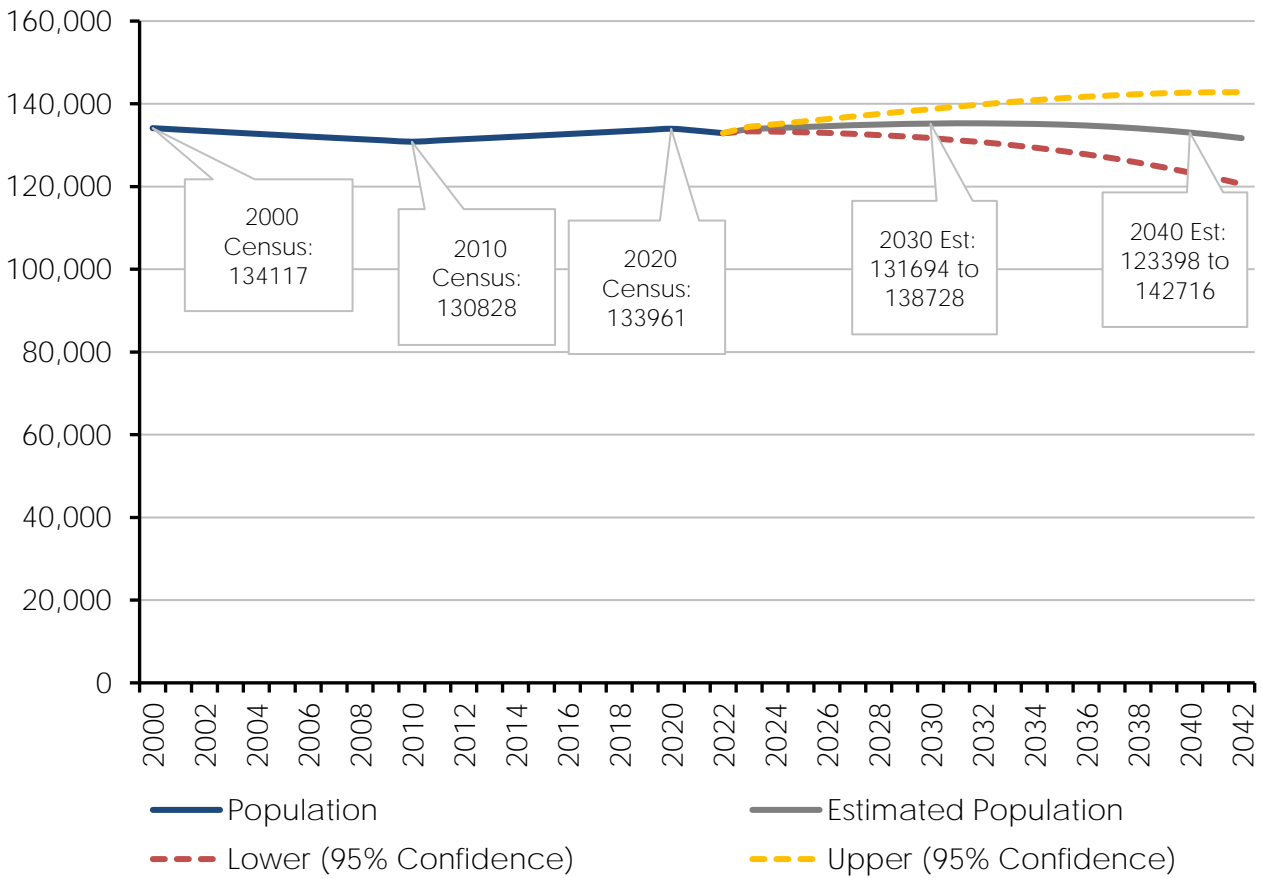
Financially, development typically improves properties to create an improved property tax base. In addition, an increase in population can improve sales tax revenue.

Another factor in understanding population growth is the implied correlation between emergency incident demand and population. Although this correlation is not quantifiably understood, it is commonly recognized that there is a greater demand for emergency services as the population increases. While population size is a good indicator of service need, the level of demand also depends on other factors such as population density, age, and other socio-economic factors.

Each agency included in this study is reviewed in Section VI Appendix F. Still, the growth for the study area is generally similar throughout. Population growth and levels for the entire county are not expected to grow dramatically.

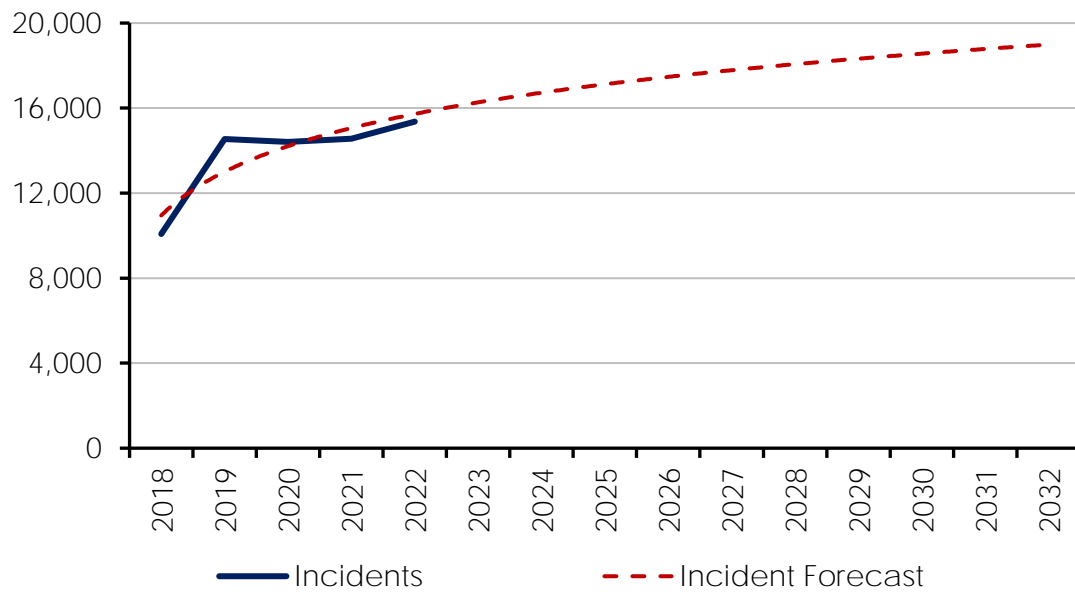
Two techniques were used to estimate population growth in the study area. The first relies on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or very moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the study area, the best-fit model was a two-factor polynomial regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.7738. This means the model fits the historical data moderately well. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast with a 95% confidence band shows a range in population projections of +/- 9,700 people. The polynomial model indicates a slight decrease from 133,961 in 2020 to a 2040 county-wide population of 133,057. The forecast ranged between 123,398 and 142,716 by 2040, with a 95% confidence level. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

Figure 7: Population Estimates (2000–2042)



Predicting incident growth for each agency was more challenging. An appropriate predictive model could not be attempted with limited information in a 5-year sample of incidents. Most of the agencies had a minimal data set to evaluate. In addition, the service disruption in the middle of the data set, namely the COVID-19 pandemic, made modeling difficult. However, the overall incident growth for the next 10 years can be estimated for the entire system. A linear regression analysis model utilizing a logarithmic approach indicates the incident growth should be moderate. The model returned an R^2 value of 0.7995, a statistically acceptable fit for the data. The following is the actual and estimated incident growth model for 2018–2032 for all agencies within the study.

Figure 8: Incident Volume Estimation (2018–2032)



Section III: SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION, FINANCE, & SOIs

Fire Service in Santa Cruz County

Understanding the types of fire protection services provided is essential to realize the effects of potentially shifting the fire protection SOI on land areas within Santa Cruz. This is not a detailed description of the different agencies but an overview of the services and the SOI shift. For detailed information about the agencies that opted in for this study, please see Section VI, Appendix F.

Fire Protection Service Providers

There are four types of fire protection organizations within the county:

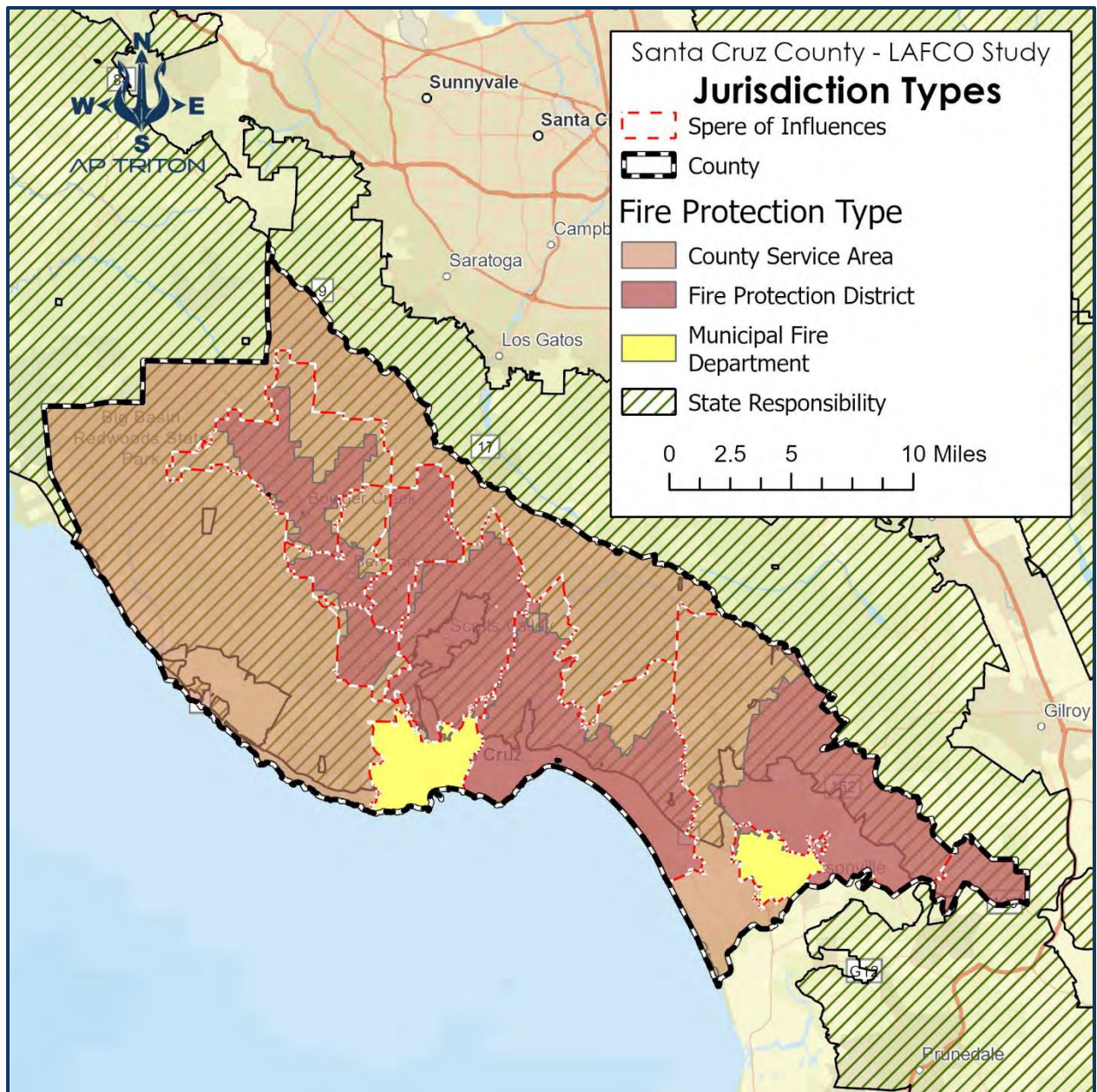
- Municipal fire departments work as a department within the city.
- Fire protection districts are independent special districts that work through an elected board of directors.
- The county also provides fire protection through a contract with CAL FIRE using county funds and funds from two dependent special districts, County Service Areas (CSA) 4 and 48.
- The final type of service is the areas that are part of the state responsibility areas (SRA). Since CAL FIRE is responsible for the SRA, the Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD) CAL FIRE units do double duty within all county areas.

Having CAL FIRE responsible for the SRA has advantages and disadvantages. The state is responsible for all vegetation in non-municipal areas. Special districts and county fire departments are also responsible for all structures. This is not an issue for coordination with the agencies that contract and use CAL FIRE for both. However, when a special district is responsible for the structures and the state (CAL FIRE) is accountable for any vegetation, the division of responsibilities can create questions for incidents that include both fuel sources. **This issue doesn't usually arise during the initial attack. However,** questions about jurisdiction, finances, and responsibilities may emerge as the incident expands, lasts longer, or ends.

All areas within the county are within a local fire jurisdiction and do not need to rely solely on a state response. A more thorough examination of each agency in this study is found in Section VI, Appendix F.

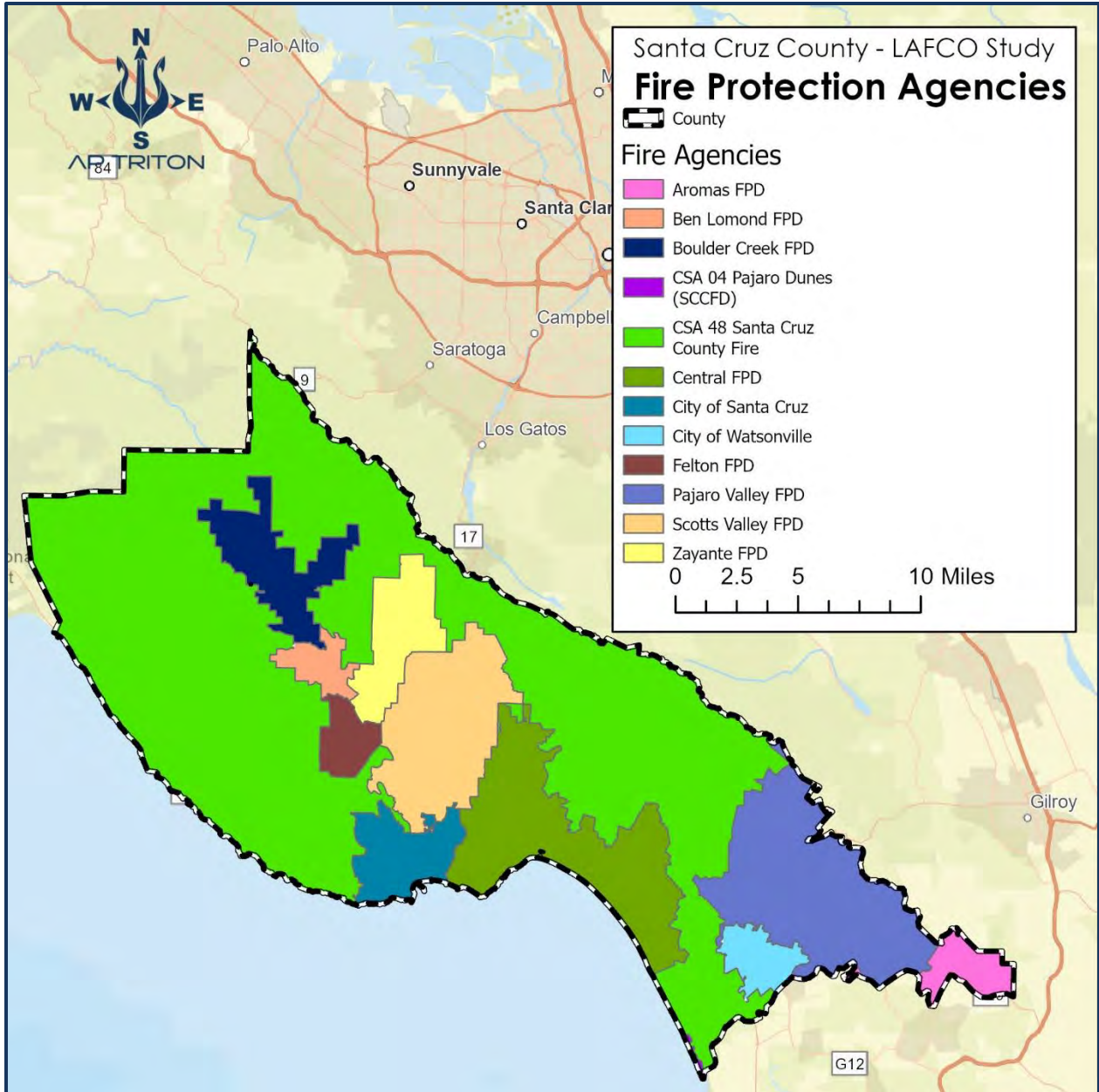
The following figure is a map of the types of fire protection areas within the county.

Figure 9: Fire Protection Organizations



There are 12 specific fire areas and 11 fire agencies. CSA 4 and CSA 48 are the county's responsibility; they rely on the SCCFD agency for coverage. The remaining coverage is by either a fire protection district or municipality. The following figure shows the fire protection agencies within Santa Cruz County.

Figure 10: Santa Cruz County Fire Service Areas



Santa Cruz County Fire Department, CSA 4 and CSA 48

As previously noted, the Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD) is not an official county organization. This agency is the caretaker for fire protection in county areas outside the city or special fire protection district coverage. The organization's management is contracted to CAL FIRE, whose fire chief is accountable to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors through the Administrative Offices. The deputy fire chief of operations reports to the Director of General Services for Santa Cruz County.⁷

The SCCFD operates eleven fire stations: 7 are owned by the county or CSAs, and 4 are owned by the state.

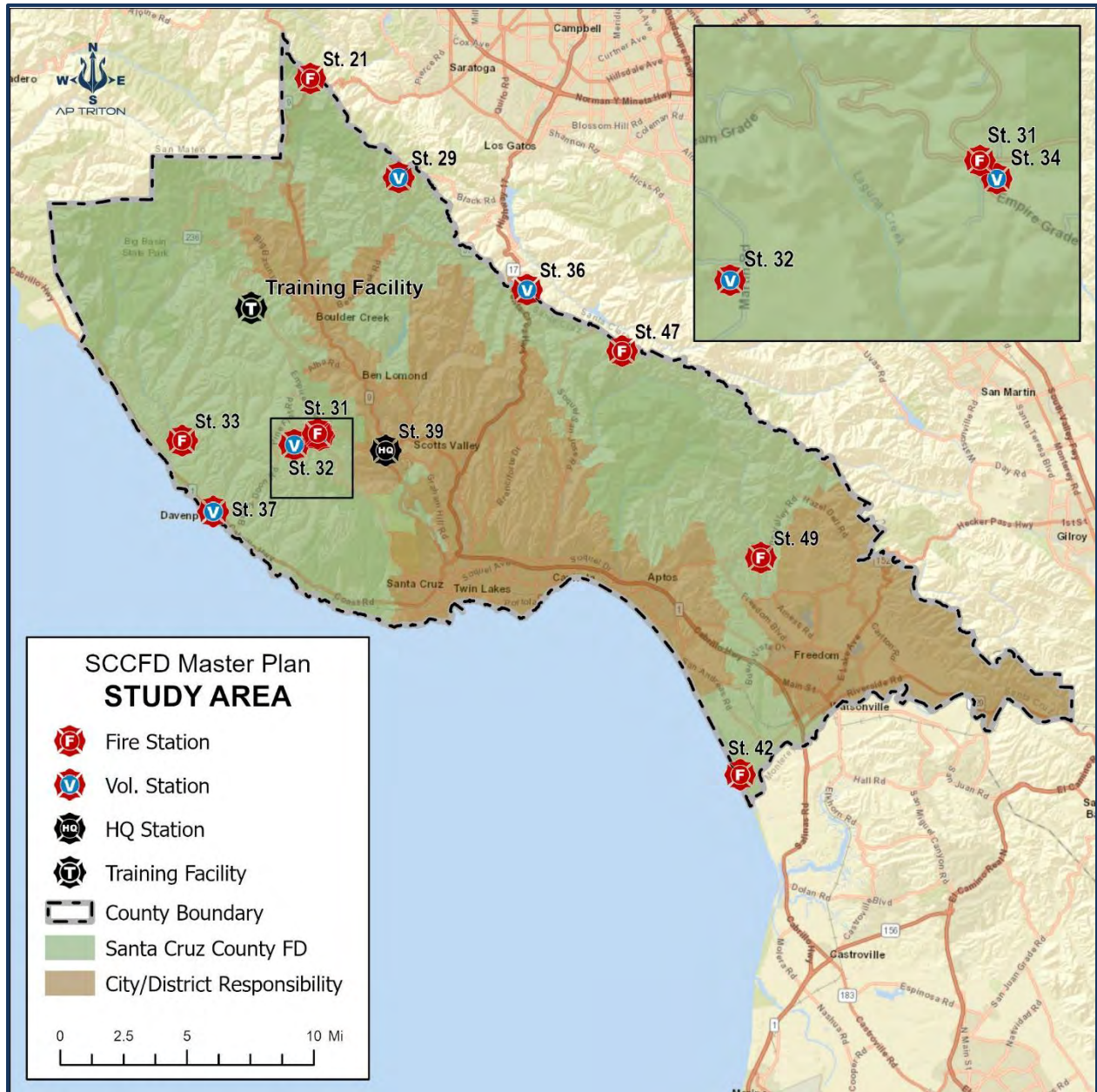
There are 6 volunteer fire companies; 5 by contract with CAL FIRE through an Amador agreement and 1 as a full-time career fire company. For a complete description of the SCCFD, see Section VI, Appendix F.

This study focused on SCCFD and the fire protection services provided by the county. The SOIs that may be absorbed by other agencies will reduce the area covered by SCCFD. The critical question is whether this reduction in area and funding offsets the need for county services. Only Station 49 (Corralitos) and Station 42 (Pajaro Dunes) lie within a SOI. This will be an important factor when evaluating the financial impact of the SOI absorption potential, especially within the PAJ SOI. The following figure maps SCCFD fire station locations and overall coverage area.⁸

⁷ countyfire.santacruzcountycalifornia.gov/About/CountyFireHistory.aspx.

⁸ Santa Cruz County Fire Department, Long-Range Master Plan, November 2023.

Figure 11: County Fire Service Map



Financial Analysis

Understanding the financial impact of SCCFD is a driving factor in this study. A more detailed financial analysis is presented in Section VI, but the salient points are presented here. This will form the background for the detailed SOI study in the following subsection. This will also be used as the background for the application evaluation in the next section.

As stated in the previous section, the SCCFD operating areas receive funds from four sources specifically earmarked for fire protection in the county:

- CSA 4 and CSA 48 each have individual assessments for fire protection based on fire flow unit calculations. In fiscal year 2022/2023 (FY 22/23), the cost per fire flow unit was \$488.49 in CSA 4 and \$86.49 in CSA 48. This increased to \$504.12 and \$91.33 in fiscal year 2023/2024 (FY 23/24).
- CSA 48 has an additional assessment based on single-family properties of \$156.08 in FY 22/23, which increased to \$162.33 in FY 23/24.⁹
- The county assesses a 1% property tax on the net taxable value of properties.
- For those properties not protected under a fire protection district or municipal fire department, a portion of that property tax is allocated to "County Fire." The budget documents reviewed stated the percentage of this property tax earmarked for County Fire was 0.5%. However, the detailed parcel review for each tax reporting area in the affected SOI area lists the allocation at 0.6125%.

In addition, the county fire services also receive some funds from inspection charges, permitting processes, cost recovery from incidents, and other sources. These different sources have averaged 10% of total revenue for the previous five years, approximately \$750,000.

⁹ www2.santacruzcountyca.gov/AuditorBudget/2023-2024/2023-2024_Adopted_Budget.pdf.

Expenses for county fire protection are grouped into four major categories. A fifth category, contingencies, is budgeted for every year but has no actual expense associated with any closed year. The primary categories are Salaries and Employee Benefits, accounting for an average of 2% of the budget expenses; Services and Supplies, for an average of 79%; Other Expenses, for an average of 4%; and fixed assets, for an average of 15%. The sub-category in Services and Supplies of Professional Services, which appears to contain the payment to CAL FIRE for its services, is the most substantial single account and makes up approximately 58% of the total budget.

These revenues and expenditures are in the county budget under three categories. CSA 4 and CSA 48 budget details are found in the "Special District Budget Detail/Public Protection" section of the budget. As identified, CSA 4 (Fund 22-250) shows as a complete budget, while CSA 48 (Fund 22-110) only appears as a pass-through of the other accounting fund assessment. The remaining fire protection budget is in the general budget under the Public Protection function and Fire Protection activity, Fund 26-105. However, any SOI revenue changes will affect each of these funds. The following two figures show summarized budgets for the special districts, CSA 4 and CSA 48, and the Fire Protection budget, Fund 26-105.

The county covers any overages in expenses from reserves found with Fund 26-105 and CSA 4. Firefighting-specific funds were adequate to cover firefighting expenses in FY 19/20 through 21/22. However, in FY 22/23 and FY 23/24, these funds were insufficient. These shortages are assessed against the reserves, totaled \$3.38 million in FY 22/23, and are budgeted to \$7.72 million in FY 23/24.

Figure 12: Revenue & Expense by Dependent Special District (FY 19/20–FY 23/24)

Fund/Type	FY 19/20 (actual)	FY 20/21 (actual)	FY 21/22 (actual)	FY 22/23 (actual)	FY 23/24 (budget)
Santa Cruz CSA 4					
REVENUE					
Property Taxes & Fines	765,191	781,963	827,730	907,270	862,738
Use of Property (Interest)	26,071	8,141	6,296	10,000	10,000
Intergovernmental	4,180	5,728	23,406	(4,786)	9,000
Other Charges & Transfers In	—	109,244	—	—	—
Assessment for Fire Protection	449,891	488,988	508,056	524,823	534,212
Total Revenue	1,303,498	1,429,899	1,391,644	1,463,794	1,456,436
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Benefits	27,150	—	—	—	—
Professional Services ¹	1,223,325	1,095,464	1,015,301	983,395	2,284,335
Other Services & Supplies	159,581	97,587	131,027	50,399	153,297
Other Charges	4,104	6,447	11,506	9,577	11,503
Fixed Assets	8,497	—	4,843	680,035	61,672
Contingencies ²	—	—	—	—	100,000
Total Expenditures	1,422,657	1,199,498	1,162,677	1,723,406	2,610,807
Net CSA 4 (Deficit)	(119,159)	230,401	228,967	(259,612)	(1,154,371)
Santa Cruz CSA 48					
REVENUE					
Assessment for Fire Protection & CSA 48 2020	1,228,726	2,745,022	2,668,297	2,640,121	2,840,855
Use of Property (Interest)	2,927	1,729	2,106	9,533	2,300
Total Revenue	1,231,653	2,746,751	2,670,403	2,649,654	2,843,155
EXPENDITURES					
Accounting & Auditing	500	500	500	500	29,409
Transfer to Fund 26-105	1,231,153	2,746,251	2,669,902	2,649,654	2,813,746
Total Expenditures	1,231,653	2,746,751	2,670,402	2,650,154	2,843,155
Net CSA 48	—	—	—	—	—

¹ Location of payment to CAL FIRE for contract coverage.

² The contingency category is a budget-only category. No actual expenditures were recorded.

Figure 13: County Fire Protection Combined Revenue & Expense (FY 19/20–FY 23/24)

Fund/Type	FY 19/20 (actual)	FY 20/21 (actual)	FY 21/22 (actual)	FY 22/23 (actual)	FY 23/24 (budget)
County Fire Protection (Fund 26-105)					
REVENUE					
Property Taxes & Fines	2,475,390	2,587,819	2,647,258	2,820,769	2,786,646
Use of Property (Interest)	129,551	48,811	42,323	77,670	80,300
Intergovernmental	107,085	156,628	102,938	127,530	128,601
Other Charges & Transfers In	241,494	1,027,859	393,846	691,058	215,000
Assessment from CSA 48	1,231,153	2,746,251	2,669,902	2,649,654	2,813,746
Total Revenue	4,184,673	6,567,368	5,856,267	6,366,681	6,024,293
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Benefits	99,889	137,551	99,252	150,052	164,536
Professional Services ¹	2,210,227	2,270,710	1,372,215	5,065,903	6,743,100
Other Services & Supplies	828,597	865,367	1,224,294	930,198	1,741,211
Other Charges	229,087	174,457	397,693	268,701	289,715
Fixed Assets	122,701	364,354	1,664,856	775,022	3,453,395
Contingencies ²	—	—	—	—	200,000
Total Expenditures	3,490,501	3,812,439	4,758,310	7,189,876	12,591,957
Net Fund 26-105 (Deficit)	694,172	2,754,929	1,097,957	(723,826)	(6,567,664)
Combined CSA 4, 48, and County Fire Protection (Fund 26-105)					
REVENUE					
Property Tax	3,239,730	3,368,792	3,474,525	3,727,124	3,649,384
Fire Service Assessments	1,736,782	3,269,845	3,202,509	3,191,431	3,415,553
Other Revenue Sources	1,743,609	4,057,921	3,241,282	3,670,627	3,258,947
Total Revenue	6,720,121	10,744,018	9,918,316	10,589,182	10,324,784
EXPENDITURES					
Professional Services ¹	3,433,552	3,366,174	2,387,516	6,049,298	6,331,884
All Other Expenses	2,711,239	4,392,514	6,203,873	5,514,138	11,714,035
Total Expenditures	6,144,791	7,758,688	8,591,389	11,563,436	18,045,919
Net Fire Protection in Santa Cruz County (Deficit)	575,330	2,985,330	1,326,927	(974,254)	(7,721,135)

¹ Location of payment to CAL FIRE for contract coverage.

² The contingency category is a budget-only category. No actual expenditures were recorded.

Proposition 172

This study does not recommend how the county collects or distributes funds to county fire protection agencies. However, the study will focus on funding challenges and questions related to service delivery. A vital aspect of this discussion includes the distribution of funds under Proposition 172.

In 1992, Governor Wilson and the California Legislature directed counties to shift local property tax revenues from local governments to the school system, creating Educational Revenue Augmentation Funds (ERAFs). To compensate for the loss of income for public safety, the governor introduced Proposition 172 (Prop 172), the Local Public Safety Protection and Improvement Act of 1993. This act established a ½ cent sales tax intended to mitigate the effects of ERAF. Proposition 172 funds were then distributed to cities, counties, and special districts.¹⁰

In 2004, the Office of the Attorney General for the State of California issued Opinion No. 03-804, stating that “an independent fire protection district is eligible to receive Proposition 172 monies under the Local Public Safety Protection and Improvement Act of 1993.”¹¹ This presents a potential opportunity to shift funding if fire protection districts assume control over specific SOIs.

The County of Santa Cruz releases a small portion of the Proposition 172 funds to area fire protection districts through the Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association (SCCFCA). The funds are accounted for in Fund 26-105 and, on average, approximately \$97,000 over five years. They are allocated by the SCCFCA for county projects. Under the current fire protection organization, the SCCFD may indirectly benefit from Proposition 172 if granted access to general funds to cover cost overages. Most county Proposition 172 funds are allocated to judicial, probation, police, and detention functions. The following figure shows Prop 172 receipts and fire distribution over the last five years.

Figure 14: Proposition 172 Funds History

Prop 172	FY 19/20 (actual)	FY 20/21 (actual)	FY 21/22 (actual)	FY 22/23 (actual)	FY 23/24 (budget)
Received from the state	17,868,974	20,699,019	22,975,336	24,208,212	21,747,383
Distributed to SCCFCA	92,788	97,255	89,421	104,501	104,501

¹⁰ www.californiacityfinance.com/Prop172facts.pdf.

¹¹ oag.ca.gov/system/files/opinions/pdfs/03-804.pdf.

Spheres of Influence

This study explores the potential outcomes if the agencies annexed the published SOI. Section II provides a summary of the SOI tax and assessment revenue shift. A more detailed discussion of the impact of reassigning jurisdictional revenue and responsibilities is warranted.

This study reviews three scenarios. The first scenario groups agencies that would not absorb enough land to warrant any change in service by SCCFD, including those fire protection districts in the San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley, and Central Fire Protection Districts. The second scenario examines the shift in funds and service level requirements if Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District were to annex its SOI. The final scenario combines the previous scenarios to demonstrate the potential impact if all agencies annex their SOI.

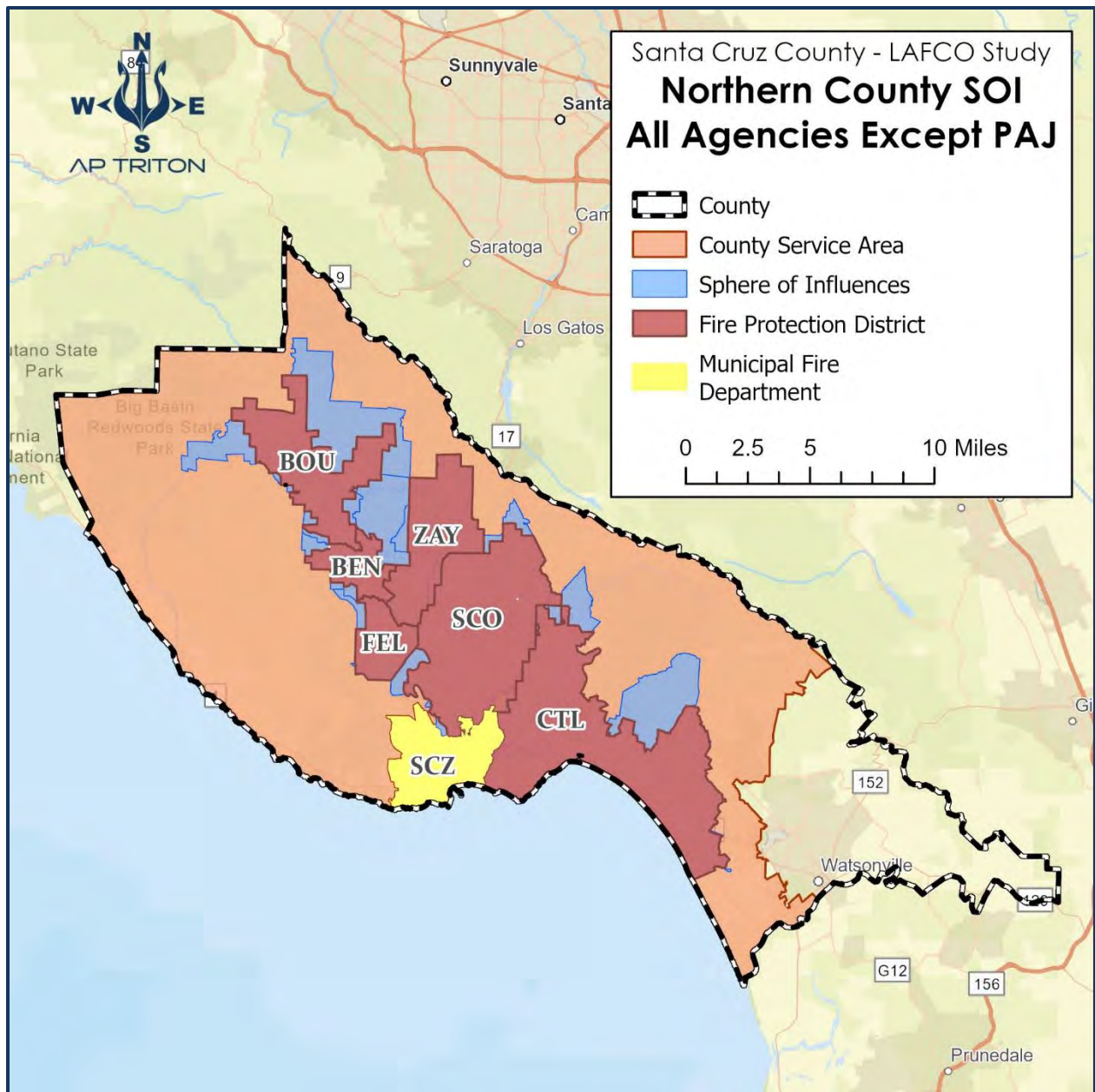
The study also examined the appropriateness of the SOI lines. The criteria used by LAFCO to determine SOI lines were not identified. However, it became apparent that the lines would not effectively determine the reclassification of service jurisdiction. Several properties were split between one or more SOIs, leading to potential confusion in tax collection. The SOI boundaries should be redrawn and normalized to ensure effective and fair taxation and assessments.

Fire Protection District Absorption

The first consideration is to evaluate the financial impact if the fire protection districts, except Pajaro Valley, absorb their SOIs. This is a stand-alone evaluation because the absorption of these agencies by their respective agencies would have minimal operational impact on either the receiving agency or the county fire protection services.

This evaluation examines the SOI absorption by the San Lorenzo Valley Fire Protection Districts of Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Felton, and Zayante. It also includes the Scotts Valley and Central Santa Cruz Fire Protection Districts. These agencies would take on land within the middle section of the current service area, which does not appear to alter the deployment needs of the current system. Additionally, no current county service fire station resides within these SOIs. The following chart shows the fire protection districts and the SOIs included in this evaluation.

Figure 15: Sphere of Influence Overview



These areas are carved out of the CSA 48 service area. This has a negative financial impact on CSA 48 but does not necessarily reduce the need for response or change deployment. Only those funds directly tied to fire protection are evaluated for this study. Between five and thirty properties are bisected by the SOI lines, which will be included in a separate row. The following figure shows the FY 23/24 financial impact on county fire protection funding sources.

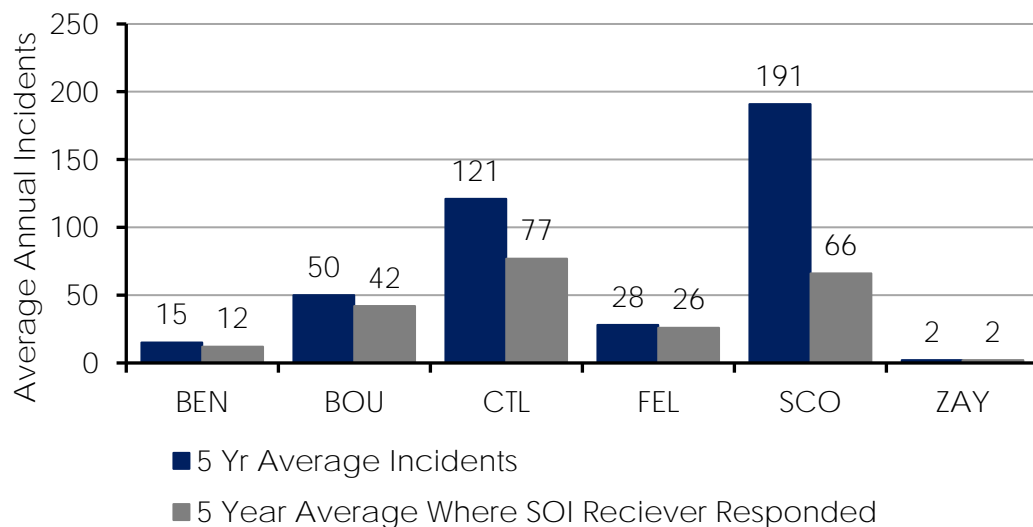
Figure 16: SOI Financial Impact for San Lorenzo Valley, SCO, and CTL (FY 23/24)

Agency	Parcels	Property Tax Allocation	Fire Flow Assessment	CSA 48 2020 Assessment	Total Fire Funds
BEN SOI	492	910	16,439	10,723	28,072
BOU SOI	486	48,293	46,670	35,634	130,597
CTL SOI	676	180,794	90,873	92,752	364,419
FEL SOI	13	665	731	452	1,848
SCO SOI	220	46,653	35,984	2,1243	103,880
ZAY SOI	5	2,561	639	848	4,048
Shared (BEN/BOU & BEN/ZAY)	5	16,972	731	1,140	18,843
Total	1,897	296,848	192,067	162,792	651,707

The county will face a total fire-specific assessment reduction of \$651,707. This reduction is unlikely to improve the financial position of any receiving agencies or the service delivery to residents.

The incident workload in these SOIs was judged on two criteria. The first criterion was the total number of responses to which the receiving SOI agency had already responded. Because most of the service within the county is aid delivered across all jurisdictions, it was noted that most of the responses in this area were already part of the receiving SOI responses. The following chart shows the annual responses to the SOI and the number of responses the receiving agency responded to.

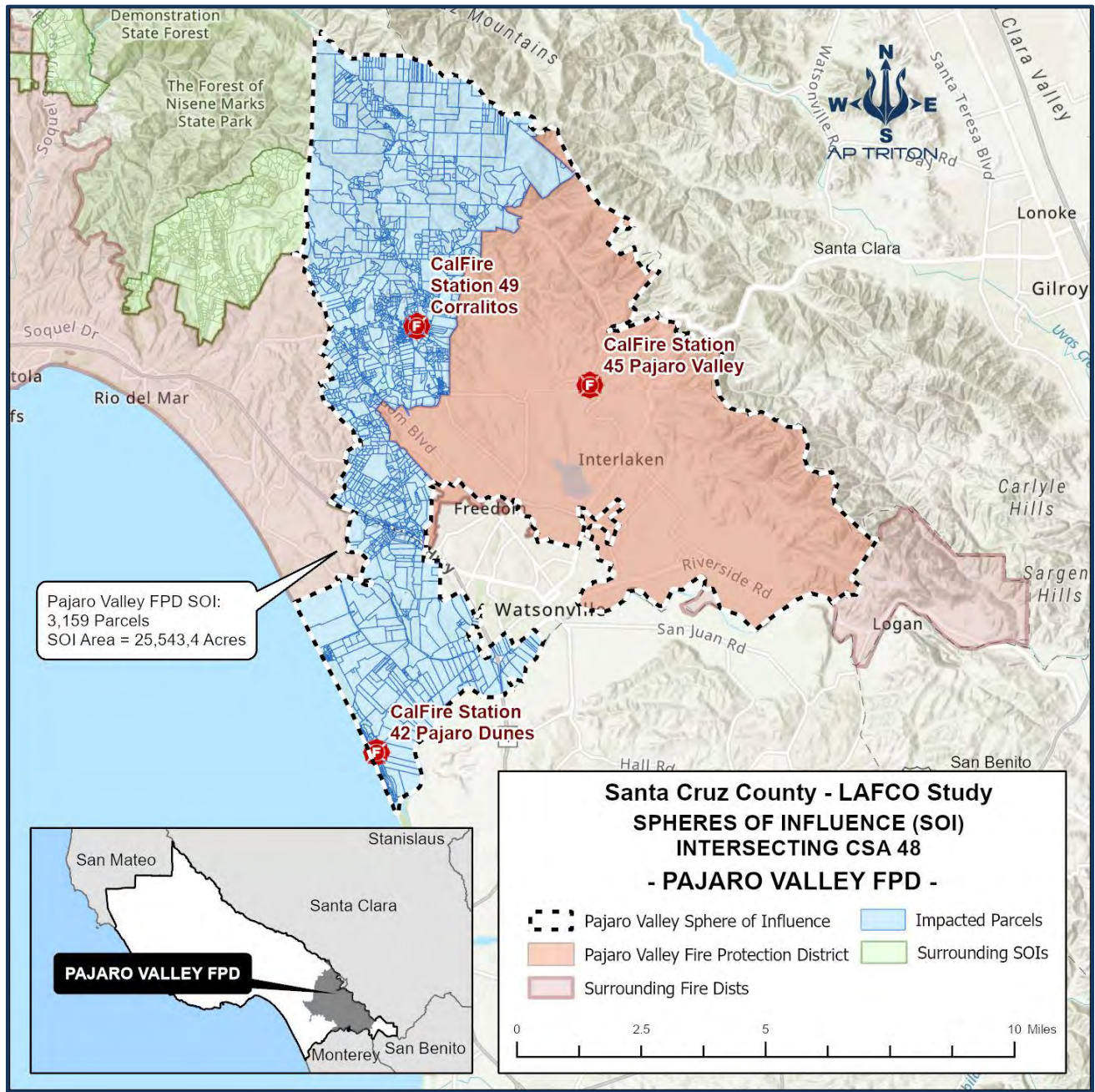
Figure 17: Average Emergency Incidents Within the SOI (2018–2022)



Pajaro Valley Inclusion

The second analysis focuses on the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District's absorption. Unlike the previous group of districts, this inclusion would significantly impact current CSA 48 and CSA 4 operations. The service submission plan proposes to transfer fixed assets and fire apparatus. The following figure shows the location of the SOI, including the two stations at Corralitos (Station 49) and Pajaro Dunes (Station 42).

Figure 18: Pajaro Valley SOI



The overview of the number of parcels and assessments shows that this is the single largest SOI area in the study. While the other SOIs only affect County Fire and CSA 48, this SOI transfer will affect all fire-related financial reporting agencies, including County Fire, CSA 4, and CSA 48. The following figure shows the FY 23/24 financial impact on these fire protection funding sources.

Figure 19: SOI Financial Impact for PAJ (FY 23/24)

Funding Budget	Parcels	Property Tax Allocation	Fire Flow Assessment	CSA 48 2020 Assessment	Total Fire Funds
Fund 26-105 & CSA 48	2,508	922,970	411,717	472,270	1,806,757
CSA 4	625	862,738	574,698	N/A	1,437,436
Total	3,133	1,785,508	986,418	472,270	3,244,193

Unlike the rest of the SOI impact, this study requires additional attention. The other SOIs in this study would not necessarily alter the deployment requirement or service level of the SCCFD. However, this SOI would include a station, apparatus, and staff service shift.

The reduced service locations should be offset by a similar reduction in SCCFD workload. The primary concern for this SOI inclusion is reducing SCCFD revenue and offsetting expenses based on the change in career service and station costs. The key question is whether the decrease in revenue is offset by the reduced expenses of Pajaro Dunes and Corralitos stations.

Based on the SOI properties, a determination must be made on how much revenue will shift. While other revenue sources are available, this study focuses on the county-assessed fire protection property tax, the CSA Fire Service Assessment, and the CSA 48 2020 assessment. The following figure shows the adjusted fire-specific revenue streams for the Pajaro Valley SOI using the FY 23/24 numbers.

Figure 20: PAJ SOI Revenue Shift (FY 23/24)

Fire Specific Revenue	FY 23/24 (Budget)	SOI Adjustment	Remaining Funds
CSA 48			
Taxes	2,786,646	922,770	1,863,876
Assessments	2,813,746	883,987	1,929,759
CSA 48 TOTAL	5,600,392	1,806,757	3,793,635
CSA 4			
Taxes	862,738	862,738	—
Assessments	574,698	574,698	—
Other	19,000	19,000	—
CSA 4 TOTAL	1,456,436	1,456,436	—
Total Fire-Specific Revenue	7,056,828	3,263,193	3,793,635

The second step is to evaluate the change in expenses based on cost normalization. Triton did not obtain enough data to conduct a thorough cost analysis specifically for Corralitos. However, the Pajaro Dunes costs are fully captured in the CSA 4 budgets. Estimating general costs for the Corralitos station, the reduction of staffing costs is accomplished as a percentage of total costs.

Amador staffing costs and the CAL FIRE contract reduction are calculated at one-fifth of the Professional Services cost relative to the current Amador-funded units. The remaining costs for County Fire (CSA 48) will be one-sixth based on the Corralitos station moving to the absorbing agency relative to the number of county-owned stations. This generalized cost estimation is used only to approximate the potential cost shift as a planning tool. The following figure shows the expense shift allocation based on the above calculations.

Figure 21: PAJ SOI Expense Shift (FY 23/24)

Expenses	FY 23/24 (Budget)	SOI Adjustment	Remaining Funds
CSA 48			
Other Expenses (SOI = 1/6th Total)	5,848,857	974,810	4,874,048
Professional Services (SOI = 1/5th Total)	6,743,100	1,348,620	5,394,480
CSA 48 Total	12,591,957	2,323,430	10,268,528
CSA 4			
All	2,610,807	2,610,807	-
CSA 4 TOTAL	2,610,807	2,610,807	-
Total Fire Specific Expenses	15,202,764	4,934,237	10,268,528

The preceding total figures will be helpful in planning, but the key question remains whether the expenses will offset the loss in area revenue if the SOI is absorbed. Ideally, a percentage shift in revenue should be offset by a corresponding percentage shift in expenses. In this case, the revenue shift would leave 54% of the FY 23/24 budget for CSA 48, while 68% of the expenses would remain. This indicates an uneven shift. The following figure shows the net cost and total offset as an expense percentage.

Figure 22: PAJ SOI Shift Comparison (FY 23/24)

Comparison	FY 23/24 (Budget)	SOI Adjustment	Remaining Funds
Net Cost to the County	8,145,936	N/A	6,474,893
Revenue as a Percent of FY 23/24	100%	46%	54%
Expense as a Percent of FY 23/24	100%	32%	68%
Net Cost as a Percent of FY 23/24	100%	N/A	79%

Combined Effect of SOI Absorption

After evaluating both the fire protection districts that would not likely change the response or staffing requirements of county-provided fire services and the absorption of the Pajaro Valley SOI, it is apparent the SOI adjustment does not provide any financial benefit. If all agencies absorbed their SOIs, only one Amador and one Schedule-A company would likely be removed. Additionally, only two fire stations and their associated costs would be transferred. Meanwhile, the remaining area would require the same deployment to maintain current service levels. The following figure combines the financial impact of all agencies absorbing their stated SOIs.

Figure 23: SOI Summary Chart FY 23/24

Service Area SOI	Parcels**	County Fire Tax Assessment*	Fire Flow Assessment	CSA 48 2020 Assessment	Total Fire Funds
BEN SOI	492	910	16,439	10,723	28,072
BOU SOI	486	48,293	46,670	35,634	130,597
CTL SOI	676	180,794	90,873	92,752	364,419
FEL SOI	13	665	731	452	1,848
SCO SOI	220	46,653	35,984	21,243	103,880
ZAY SOI	5	2,561	639	848	4,048
Shared (BEN/BOU & BEN/ZAY)	5	16,972	731	1,140	18,843
PAJ SOI (CSA 48)	2,508	922,970	411,717	472,270	1,806,957
PAJ SOI (CSA 4)	625	862,738	574,698	N/A	1,437,436
TOTAL SOI	5,030	\$2,082,556	\$1,178,482	\$635,062	\$3,896,100
CSA 48 SOI	4,405	1,219,618	603,784	635,062	2,458,464
CSA 4 SOI	625	862,738	574,698	N/A	1,437,436
TOTAL 4 & 48 SOI	5,030	\$2,082,556	\$1,178,482	\$635,062	\$3,896,100

** Only Full Parcels are Counted

* Property Tax Estimated from 2023-2024 Tax Assessment Does Not Include Uncollected Amounts

This fire fund shift represents 55% of the total like funds (assessments and taxes) for county fire services. Most of this would go to the PAJ SOI inclusion, which would only absorb 32% of the expenses.

Section IV: APPLICATION REVIEW

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Proposal Evaluation

On March 22, 2022, Santa Cruz LAFCO received an application from Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (PAJ) to annex the territory within County Service Area (CSA) 4 Pajaro Dunes, dissolve CSA 4, annex the Corralitos community within CSA 48, and detach the territory from CSA 48. The application was later removed for consideration by the agency.

A review of this application is provided here to illustrate to potential applicant agencies the steps the Santa Cruz LAFCO may take to determine the appropriateness of an application. This review aims to evaluate the application based on statutory requirements, Santa Cruz LAFCO policies, and the impacts the reorganization would have on other agencies and operational structures. In addition, the application is being evaluated as a potential template for future SOI inclusion applications.

Proposal Composition

PAJ initiated the application to LAFCO by Resolution 2022-02 on January 20, 2022. PAJ proposed to annex all territory within CSA 4, resulting in the dissolution of the CSA, and annex the Corralitos community within CSA 48, coinciding with the detachment of the territory from the CSA. The reorganization would have resulted in annexing all territories within PAJ's existing SOI. Thus, the proposal does not require any changes to PAJ's SOI. A copy and formatted version is included in the appendix for reference.

As a required component of the application, PAJ submitted a Plan for Services. The proposal covers all content required by Government Code Section 56653 and Santa Cruz LAFCO policies as part of a Plan for Services, including the following:

1. A description of the level and range of services to be provided to the affected territory.
2. An indication of when the services can feasibly be extended to the affected territory.
3. Identification of any improvement or upgrading of structures, roads, water or sewer facilities, other infrastructure, or other conditions the agency would impose upon the affected territory.
4. The estimated cost of extending the service, and a description of how services or required improvements will be financed. Additionally, details of the sufficiency of revenues for anticipated service extensions and operation as required.

5. An indication of whether the annexing territory is, or will be, proposed for inclusion within an existing or proposed improvement zone/district, redevelopment area, assessment district, or community facilities district.

Proposal Summary

A general observation regarding this document as a template is the misuse of headings and sections. For example, the index lists "PROPOSAL," "INTRODUCTION," and "EXHIBITS" as primary headings. However, the main points of the documents are found under the main heading of "INTRODUCTION." Additionally, within the document's body, "SERVICES" appears at the same level as "INTRODUCTION" but does not appear in the index and is placed between subsections 1.2 and 1.3. A more specific and structured approach should be adopted to use the document as a template. This will ensure ease of use and content delivery. The following is an application overview with observations to determine its adequacy.

Affected Territory

The affected territory consists of 84 square miles (PAJ 44.3 sq. miles, CSA 4 0.5 sq. miles, and CSA 48 39.2 sq. miles) of unincorporated territory in the southern portion of Santa Cruz County. There are an estimated 20,450 residents in the proposed structure. PAJ has an estimated population of 18,000, CSA 4 has an estimated population of 250, and the portion of CSA 48 proposed for annexation has approximately 2,200 residents. These estimates were retrieved from the application.

PAJ serves three communities in both urban and rural areas. The District has a large area in the state responsibility area (SRA) categorized as a wildland/urban interface (WUI). The District has two major highways and several lakes. The District also serves the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, which draws over 300,000 visitors annually.

CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes is a coastal community surrounded by agriculture. The area includes light industrial businesses, several multi-residential structures, and single-family dwellings, all accessed by boardwalk walkways. This infrastructure poses a unique fire risk.

The Corralitos community in CSA 48 consists primarily of single-family dwellings and several small businesses. The area is mostly SRA, with areas categorized as WUI.

Some agricultural lands within PAJ and the subject area in CSA 48 meet the definition of prime agricultural lands (Government Code Section 56064). Several of these properties have active Williamson Act contracts and meet the definition of prime agricultural lands.

While protected lands exist within the proposed district's boundaries, the reorganization does not anticipate an impact to protected lands, as services are already provided throughout the proposed boundaries through the two CSAs. There would be no change in areas that are receiving services.

Governance Structure

Following the reorganization, PAJ would continue to be represented by a five-member board. However, the District would transition from a Board elected at large to elections by district to ensure representation from all areas. CSA 4 would be dissolved, and the territory removed from CSA 48. As these CSAs are dependent districts of the County, the Board of Supervisors would cease making decisions regarding fire and emergency services on behalf of the residents. Instead, residents of the annexed territory in both CSA 4 and the removed portions of CSA 48 would be served by the PAJ Board of Directors. This change would provide a more local level of governance for the communities.

Adequacy

All current revenue sources are anticipated to be transferred to the reorganized District. However, it is unclear if the application was based on the specific fire protection assessments or the assumption that all additional Santa Cruz County fire-related fund balances were a part of this assumed transfer of funds. The applicant asserts the cost of delivering services to the communities will not increase, as the reorganization is intended to create more effective use of local tax dollars. The application indicates a higher level of service while reducing duplication of costs; however, two additional management and support positions (a Division Chief and a Staff Services Analyst) would need to be provisioned to manage a more complex organizational structure. The exact change in staffing and any resulting change in associated costs is unclear, and should be clarified in the Service Plan. The reorganized district anticipates making use of paid-call firefighters for increased operational staffing.

Financial

In addition to property taxes, the FY 23/24 adopted fee schedule includes a CSA 4 benefit assessment of \$504.12 per fire flow unit and a CSA 48 \$91.33 assessment per fire flow unit. A fire flow unit is defined based on the occupancy type, use, and density of living spaces. These funds account for approximately \$986,415 in the proposed annexation area. The Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services Assessment in CSA 48 is \$162.33 per ESFE unit. This assessment accounts for an additional \$472,270 for a total fire flow and ESFE transfer of \$1,558,685. The following figure shows a breakdown of the FY 23/24 assessments for the proposed PAJ annexation.

Figure 24: PAJ Revenue Summary Shift (FY 23/24)

Service Area SOI	Parcels**	Property Tax Allocation*	Fire Flow Assessment	CSA 48 2020 Assessment	Total Fire Funds
PAJ SOI (CSA 48)	2,508	922,970	411,717	472,270	1,806,757
PAJ SOI (CSA 4)	625	862,738	574,698	N/A	1,437,436
TOTAL SOI	3,133	\$1,785,708	\$986,415	\$635,062	\$3,244,193

** Only Full Parcels are Counted

* Property Tax Estimated from 2023-2024 Tax Assessment Does Not Include Uncollected Amounts

Triton estimates the proportional share of the general fire reserve funds with this transfer would be approximately \$1.67 million in FY 23/24 above the identified fire-specific funds. The application states, "it is anticipated that all fees, assessments, special taxes, or other charges that were approved by the voters or imposed conditions of prior annexations to either district will remain in effect post-reorganization." However, there are limited circumstances under which voter-approved assessments or taxes may remain in effect after a reorganization of this type. The Board of Supervisors must pass a resolution identifying the continuance of the benefit assessment and the transfer to the successor agency, PAJ. LAFCO can condition reorganization on transferring the benefit assessment or special tax to the annexing agency.

To track the revenue sources within each area and ensure funds are used for the area from which they were collected, Zones of Benefit would be established by the reorganized district. LAFCO does not have jurisdiction over the establishment of Zones within a district.

Suppose the District prefers to request a normalized property tax levy instead of the currently available fire funds. In that case, Triton estimates this would only add \$1,908,513 in special district funding based on the property valuation in the affected area. This calculation is based on the current property tax levy of 3.7% for the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, with a 1% net tax of \$5,157,210.

All financial assets would be transferred to PAJ, including cash balances and reserves currently possessed by PAJ, CSA 4, and CSA 48 (serving the area to be annexed). Additionally, PAJ would assume all remaining debt service associated with equipment purchased by PAJ, CSA 4, and CSA 48 (serving the area to be annexed).

PAJ had planned to use reserve funds to replace apparatus, capital equipment, and building improvements. These reserve funds are funded by an annual transfer from the district's reserve funds based on a 10-year replacement schedule for capital items. These schedules identify a committed minimum transfer each fiscal year to meet projected expenditures.

While PAJ experienced a revenue deficit in FYs 20/21 and 21/22, the funds were primarily used to pay down unfunded accrued liability. Projections show PAJ's expenses will exceed revenues over the next five fiscal years. In contrast, recent increases in CSA 48's benefit assessment assure sustainable financing through FY 28/29. Although CSA 4 funding has covered expenses between FY 18/19 and FY 22/23 (except for FYs 20/21 and 22/23 due to planned capital expenditures), projections show a growing spending deficit yearly for the next five years through FY 28/29. This indicates inadequate current and future funding of fire services in the area.

This deficiency would need to be addressed to ensure sustainable financing of the future reorganized district. Fiscal projections through FY 28/29 show that revenue growth will be outpaced by inflation of expenses, resulting in a deficit funded by reserves for FYs 26–28. The newly reorganized district would have to address this growing annual shortfall through enhanced revenues or reduced costs.

Overall, Triton estimates that CSAs 4 and 48 fire-specific revenue shifts to PAJ would total \$3.2 million in FY 23/24. This would represent approximately 43% of the funds currently available for the County to apply to fire protection. At the same time, only 32% of the current county's expenses will be reduced by this shift. This would affect the ability of the county to continue to provide services at the current level.

One aspect of the financial analysis completed in the application was a lack of detail. Because the funding sources are varied in the County of Santa Cruz and include special assessments at different levels, property tax, and other forms of revenue, it was necessary to identify each revenue and expense stream. It would have likely sped up the application process if these separate sources were clearly identified in the application. This would have helped formalize financing assumptions and assisted the county in validating the requested funds.

Impact on Service Structure

All three districts are considered all-hazard fire districts, which provide structural and wildland fire suppression, BLS, fire prevention, fire marshal services, extrication, and technical rescue services, to name a few.

PAJ has a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE to provide fire protection services. It operates one fire station serving approximately 44 square miles and receives an average of 1,200 calls for service annually.

CSA 4 is currently served by SCCFD, which also has a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE for year-round protection services, known as a Schedule A contract. CSA 4 encompasses half a square mile, but its response area is reported to extend into portions of CSA 48 in the south coastal area of the county. Services are provided by a single fire station that responds to an average of 200 calls annually.

Similarly, the CSA 48 area is a part of SCCFD and is served by CAL FIRE through a cooperative agreement. Staffing is supplemented by community volunteer firefighters. The station serving CSA 48 is a CAL FIRE station that responds to approximately 800 calls annually. During fire season, the station is served by two State-funded engines. During the off-season, it is served by one County-funded engine under the Amador plan.

Staffing

Through cooperative agreements with CAL FIRE, PAJ, and CSAs 4 and 48 share multiple staffing positions, including a Chief, a Division Chief, two Operational Battalion Chiefs, a Battalion Chief Fire Prevention, Battalion Chief Safety, Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal, two Human Resources staff, and a Field Logistics Officer. PAJ shares costs for the Fire Marshal position with CSA 48 and the Battalion Chief with CSA 4. The personnel are distributed between the three districts' suppression personnel, fire prevention, management team, and administrative staff. All agency personnel are CAL FIRE employees under the cooperative agreement, so no personnel transfer would be necessary under the proposed reorganization. The reorganized district anticipates making use of paid-call firefighters for increased operational staffing.

Agency questionnaires indicated concerns that annexation of territory within CSA 48 might result in a loss of volunteer responders for the County or, conversely, that the Pajaro Valley communities might lose access to the County Fire Volunteer companies, potentially reducing the level of service available. However, the only county volunteer company in the proposal area is Corralitos, and the District plans to keep that company intact. There are no other volunteer companies within the vicinity of the proposal area.

Fixed Assets and Assignments

Upon annexation of the two territories, the annexed areas would be served by PAJ. PAJ and its own stations would continue to use the two stations currently serving the CSAs. Each station would be overseen by a Fire Captain/Company Officer with a three-person crew assigned 24/7, although exact staffing may fluctuate. The areas of the reorganized District **closer to other agencies' stations** would continue to be served by automatic and mutual aid agreements. CAL FIRE would continue to provide district personnel training. Fleet maintenance and annual services would continue to be provided by the Central Fire Protection District by contract. Human Resources would continue to be provided by CAL FIRE as part of the cooperative agreement, and treasury services would be provided by the County of Santa Cruz.

All fixed assets in the form of vehicles and equipment currently owned by PAJ, CSA 4, and CSA 48 (serving the area to be annexed) would be transferred to PAJ but remain as currently assigned. The proposal states that the CSA 4 station would continue to be owned by the CSA; however, it is unclear how this will occur if CSA 4 were dissolved. It is more likely that the CSA 4 station would have become PAJ's property, a point that should be clarified by the proponents. The station serving CSA 48 (Corralitos) is State-owned, and PAJ planned to enter an agreement to house apparatus and personnel at the facility to serve the area.

Service Enhancements

The PAJ application identifies the following as purposes and benefits of the reorganization:

- Provides opportunities to improve fire service efficiencies and service,
- Offers service structure to move towards meeting long-term goals to provide ALS service in South County,
- Increases staffing to the Pajaro Dunes community to reduce fire risk and improve Insurance Service Organization (ISO) ratings and
- Enables 24/7 engine coverage for the Corralitos community.

Under the terms of the application, PAJ planned to upgrade its emergency medical response from BLS to ALS services throughout its existing boundaries and the territory proposed for annexation. The provision of ALS by the District would have streamlined access to more immediate advanced medical services, thus improving patient outcomes. PAJ would become part of Santa Cruz County's Emergency Medical Services Integration Authority (EMSIA), a joint powers agreement between the ALS fire agencies in Santa Cruz County. PAJ anticipated that existing mutual aid and automatic aid agreements with neighboring agencies would have been updated after the reorganization.

Impact on Service Levels

The proponents anticipate a higher level of fire protection services would have resulted from the proposed reorganization due to:

- Local control of revenues, using revenue generated in the project area to provide service in the project area,
- A reorganized management and organization structure that will free up personnel to provide enhanced services, including ALS, fire prevention, wildfire preparedness, and emergency response,
- Enhanced efficiencies will reduce duplicative costs, resulting in increased fund balances, enabling the replacement of equipment, and adding resources to enhance service levels.

Findings from the study assessments indicate that while service may be increased in the PAJ service area by adding a full-time paid engine at Corralitos and ALS service, the impact on the rest of CSA 48 would likely be negative. Based on the detailed evaluation in Section III of this study, the reduction in revenue is not offset by a similar decrease in expenses.

Service Demand

It is assumed that service demand trends would remain unchanged with this reorganization.

Response Times

Adding a career-staffed engine at the Corralitas station may improve response times to the surrounding coverage areas and likely the surrounding mutual/automatic aid areas. It should be noted that the coastal area is served by CFD, specifically the La Selva Beach station, through an auto-aid agreement.

LAFCO Considerations

A reorganization plan must include a plan for providing services within the affected territory. This includes the following, and any additional information required by the commission or the executive officer. The proposal should provide all required information to the degree necessary to appropriately evaluate the application.

Figure 25: Government Code §56653

Government Code §56653	
Required Content	Analysis
(1) An enumeration and description of the services currently provided or to be extended to the affected territory.	The Plan for Services clearly outlines the fire and emergency medical services currently provided within each of the three districts. It describes the services that PAJ will take on due to the reorganization of the CSAs, as well as the augmentation of services provided, including the initiation of ALS services and the staffing of an engine 24/7 for the Corralitos community.
(2) The level and range of those services.	The level and range of services to be provided were described to an extent in the Plan for Services concerning the reorganization and any resulting changes in services and service levels.
(3) An indication of when those services can feasibly be extended to the affected territory if new services are proposed.	The proposal estimates that 6 months after the effective date of the application, it will be able to operate and provide services as the reorganized district. The length of the process will greatly depend on the timing of the necessary renegotiation of contracts with CAL FIRE. The timing of initiating ALS services is unclear.
(4) An indication of any improvement or upgrading of structures, roads, sewer or water facilities, or other conditions the local agency would impose or require within the affected territory if the change of organization or reorganization is completed.	No facility improvements or upgrades are proposed as part of the reorganization.
(5) Information concerning how those services will be financed.	The Plan sufficiently outlines the anticipated financing sources and expenses and includes a 5-year fiscal projection through FY 28/29. However, there appears to be insufficient funding to cover projected expenses after FY 26/27.

Factors to be considered in the review of a proposal shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

Figure 26: Government Code §56668

Government Code §56668	
Factor	Analysis
(a) Population and population density; land area and land use; assessed valuation; topography, natural boundaries, and drainage basins; proximity to other populated areas; and the likelihood of significant growth in the area, and in adjacent incorporated and unincorporated areas, during the next 10 years.	The Plan includes a description of the population of the subject areas, general land uses, and other significant features. The Plan does not address the likelihood of significant growth in the area. Based on the projections of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments for the County, however, growth is anticipated to be low or very moderate over the next 20 years.
(b)(1) The need for organized community services; the present cost and adequacy of governmental services and controls in the area; probable future needs for those services and controls; and probable effect of the proposed incorporation, formation, annexation, or exclusion and of alternative courses of action on the cost and adequacy of services and controls in the area and adjacent areas.	The subject area is composed primarily of SRA with wildfire risk in areas categorized as WUI. Additionally, residents of the area require structural fire protection and emergency medical services. Visitors compound the need for these services when traveling to the County for vacation or special events. The proposal aims to consolidate these services under a single provider to enhance efficiency. Under the terms of the proposed reorganization, PAJ will be the successor agency, and the transfer of assets, property, and revenues from the two CSAs will occur as outlined in the Plan for Services.

Government Code §56668	
Factor	Analysis
(c) The effect of the proposed action and of alternative actions, on adjacent areas, on mutual social and economic interests, and on the local governmental structure of the county.	The proposed reorganization is anticipated to benefit neighboring agencies and their constituents through organized and streamlined services offered by mutual and automatic aid. The contract provider of services, CAL FIRE, will remain unchanged, although the contract will need to be renegotiated. SCCFD will experience the greatest negative impact with a loss of approximately \$3.2 million. This represents approximately 43% of similar funds currently available for SCCFD. This reduction would likely be detrimental to SCCFD's continued operations elsewhere in the County due to declining economies of scale and diminishing efficiencies.
(d) The conformity of both the proposal and its anticipated effects with both the adopted commission policies on providing planned, orderly, efficient patterns of urban development, and the policies and priorities in Section 56377.	An analysis of the project's consistency with adopted LAFCO policies will be addressed in a subsequent section of this study.
(e) The effect of the proposal on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of agricultural lands, as defined by Section 56016.	The proposed reorganization does not include expanding the current service areas. The existing levels of development in the area are not expected to be affected by this proposal. Consequently it is unlikely that current agricultural uses within the area will be affected.
(f) The definiteness and certainty of the boundaries of the territory, the nonconformance of proposed boundaries with lines of assessment or ownership, the creation of islands or corridors of unincorporated territory, and other similar matters affecting the proposed boundaries.	The boundaries of the subject territory include the entire territory within. The proposed district's boundaries are clearly defined in the map included in the application.
(g) A regional transportation plan adopted pursuant to Section 65080.	The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments compiled the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The proposed reorganization does not suggest any changes that conflict with the transportation plan.

Government Code §56668	
Factor	Analysis
(h) The proposal's consistency with city or county general and specific plans.	The proposal does not request changes to land use in the subject area, and the current land use does not conflict with the General Plan of Santa Cruz County.
(i) The sphere of influence of any local agency that may be applicable to the proposal being reviewed.	The application is consistent with the SOIs of PAJ, CSA 4, and CSA 48, all of which were affirmed/updated on October 13, 2021. The application proposes annexing all territory within PAJ's SOI that extends outside its current boundaries, including the entirety of CSA 4 and the southern portion of CSA 48. CSA 4 has a Zero SOI, indicating that LAFCO anticipates it will be dissolved . CSA 48's SOI excludes the territory proposed for annexation, indicating it is anticipated to be detached.
(j) The comments of any affected local agency or other public agency.	Comments have not yet been solicited from affected districts and the public.
(k) The ability of the newly formed or receiving entity to provide the services that are the subject of the application to the area, including the sufficiency of revenues for those services following the proposed boundary change.	PAJ currently provides similar services and service structure within its boundaries, demonstrating the ability of the District to provide services to the territory proposed for annexation. Multi-year revenue and expenditure projections demonstrate sufficient revenues to provide the proposed services for the first three years of operation. However, fiscal projections show that revenue growth will be outpaced by inflation of expenses, resulting in a deficit funded by reserves for FYs 26-28. To ensure viability, the newly reorganized district would have to address the growing annual shortfall through enhanced revenues or reduced costs.
(l) Timely availability of water supplies adequate for projected needs as specified in Section 65352.5.	Not applicable.

Government Code §56668	
Factor	Analysis
(m) The extent to which the proposal will affect a city or cities and the county in achieving their respective fair shares of the regional housing needs as determined by the appropriate council of governments consistent with Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580) of Chapter 3 of Division 1 of Title 7.	Not applicable.
(n) Any information or comments from the landowner or landowners, voters, or residents of the affected territory.	Unknown.
(o) Any information relating to existing land use designations.	The area proposed for annexation within CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes is a coastal community surrounded by agriculture. The area includes light industrial businesses, several multi-residential structures, and single-family dwellings. The Corralitos community in CSA 48 consists primarily of single-family dwellings and several small businesses.
(p) The extent to which the proposal will promote environmental justice. As used in this subdivision, "environmental justice" means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the location of public facilities and the provision of public services, to ensure a healthy environment for all people such that the effects of pollution are not disproportionately borne by any particular populations or communities.	Because no change in the present use of the property will result from the reorganization, this proposal will neither promote nor detract from environmental justice.
(q) Information contained in a local hazard mitigation plan, information contained in a safety element of a general plan, and any maps that identify land as a very high fire hazard zone pursuant to Section 51178 or maps that identify land determined to be in a state responsibility area pursuant to Section 4102 of the Public Resources Code, if it is determined that such information is relevant to the area that is the subject of the proposal.	The subject areas are a mixture of LRA and SRA. The area within CSA 48 is predominantly SRA categorized as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones in the WUI, which indicates a high demand/need for fire protection services.

Figure 27: Government Code §56668.3

Government Code §56668.3	
Factor	Analysis
(a)(1) In the case of district annexation, whether the proposed annexation will be for the interest of landowners or present or future inhabitants within the district and within the territory proposed to be annexed to the district.	<p>The proposal is intended to be in the interest of both landowners and residents that will benefit the constituents through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local control of revenues, • A reorganized management and organization structure will free up personnel to provide enhanced services, including ALS, fire prevention, wildfire preparedness, and emergency response, • Enhanced efficiencies will reduce duplicative costs, resulting in increased fund balances and enabling the replacement of equipment and the addition of resources to enhance service levels.
(5) Any other matters which the commission deems material.	Refer to Santa Cruz LAFCO Adopted Proposal Evaluation Policies below.

Figure 28: Government Code §56668.5

Government Code §56668.5	
Factor	Analysis
The commission may, but is not required to, consider the regional growth goals and policies established by a collaboration of elected officials only, formally representing their local jurisdictions in an official capacity on a regional or subregional basis. This section does not grant any new powers or authority to the commission or any other body to establish regional growth goals and policies independent of the powers granted by other laws.	The proposal does not affect regional growth, so does not conflict with regional growth goals and policies.

Figure 29: Santa Cruz LAFCO Adopted Proposal Evaluation Policies

Santa Cruz LAFCO Adopted Proposal Evaluation Policies	
Factor	Analysis
2. All changes of organization shall be consistent with adopted spheres of influence of affected agencies.	The proposal is consistent with the adopted SOIs of PAJ, CSA 4, and CSA 48.
3. Any proposal involving annexations, incorporations, and formations shall not be approved unless it demonstrates a need for the additional services to be provided to the area; while all proposals involving detachments, disincorporations, and dissolutions shall not be approved unless the proponent demonstrates that the subject services are not needed or can be provided as well by another agency or private organization.	The subject areas already receive fire and emergency medical services, indicating a continued need for those proposed services by PAJ. A primary purpose of the reorganization is to enhance efficiencies to benefit the public through improved service levels. Although the need is already met by SCCFD in the CSAs, the areas will still benefit from these enhancements, particularly through increased operational staffing and the provision of ALS.
3.2 Existing Land Use Designations For proposals concerning the extension of other services by annexation, incorporation, or district formation, need shall be established by the applicable general plan land use designations and the service levels specified for the subject area in the applicable general plan.	The area proposed for annexation within CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes is a coastal community surrounded by agriculture. The area is composed of light industrial businesses, several multi-residential structures, and single-family dwellings. The Corralitos community in CSA 48 consists primarily of single-family dwellings and several small businesses. The proposal does not request changes to land use in the subject area, and the current land use does not conflict with the General Plan of Santa Cruz County.
3.4 Population Analysis In reviewing proposals, LAFCO shall consider: (1) the "population" in the proposal area to be the population recorded in the last biennial or special census unless the proponent or affected agency can present updated or more detailed information which LAFCO determines to be more accurate, (2) the "population density" to be the population divided by the acreage, and (3) the "per capita assessed valuation" to be the full cash value of all the property in a proposal area (as set by the last secured property tax roll) divided by the population.	Based on GIS analysis, this review identifies an estimated population from which population density can be determined. The assessed value of the project territory was not provided as part of the application.

Santa Cruz LAFCO Adopted Proposal Evaluation Policies	
Factor	Analysis
3.7 Provision of Services In order for LAFCO to approve a change of organization, the proponent shall demonstrate that the subject services can be provided in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost.	The proposal estimates that 6 months after the effective date of the application, the reorganized district will be able to operate and provide services. The length of the process will likely greatly depend on the timing of the necessary renegotiation and cost of contracts with CAL FIRE. Timing of initiating ALS services is unclear. Based on available financial information for the last five fiscal years and the project application, it appears that the public service costs of the proposal are likely to be less than or substantially similar to the costs of alternative means of providing the service.
4. Proposals, where feasible, should minimize the number of local agencies and promote the use of multi-purpose agencies.	The proposal would eliminate CSA 4 and regionalize services in the area under a single provider, minimizing the number of local agencies.
4.1 Ranking Different Boundary Changes New or consolidated service shall be provided by one of the following agencies in the descending order of preference: a) Annexation to an existing city; b) Annexation to an existing district of which the Board of Supervisors is the governing body; c) Annexation to an existing multi-purpose district; d) Annexation to another existing district; e) Formation of a new county service area; f) Incorporation of a new city; g) Formation of a new multi-purpose district; or h) Formation of a new single-purpose district.	The proposal consists of annexation to another existing district, and none of the other preferred reorganization structures are feasible in this case.
4.2 Consolidation Proposals The Commission will promote and approve district consolidations where feasible.	While not a consolidation for processing purposes, the proposal's outcome is ultimately a consolidation, resulting in the elimination of a district and greater efficiencies.
4.3 Logical Boundaries LAFCO shall promote more logical agency boundaries.	The proposed boundaries of PAJ would create a logical service area without irregular boundaries that would hinder ease and timing of access to calls for service.

Santa Cruz LAFCO Adopted Proposal Evaluation Policies	
Factor	Analysis
4.4 Political Boundaries To the greatest possible extent, boundaries shall follow existing political boundaries, natural features (such as ridges and watercourses), and constructed features (such as railroad tracks).	The proposed boundaries are based on PAJ's adopted SOI which was determined by LAFCO. The applicant does not determine those boundaries.
4.5 Roads and Streets (Right-of-Way) Boundary lines shall be located so that entire rights-of-way are placed within the same jurisdiction as the properties fronting on the road.	The application meets this policy.
4.6 Community Boundaries Boundaries should avoid dividing an existing identifiable community, commercial district, or other area having social or economic homogeneity. Where such divisions are proposed, the proponents shall justify exceptions to this standard.	The proposed boundaries are based on PAJ's adopted SOI, which was determined by LAFCO. The applicant does not determine those boundaries.
4.7 Parcel Boundaries The creation of boundaries that divide assessment parcels shall be avoided whenever possible. If the proposed boundary divides assessment parcels, the proponents must justify to the Commission the necessity for such division. If the Commission approves the proposal, the Commission may condition the approval upon obtaining a boundary adjustment or lot split from a city or county.	The proposed boundaries are based on PAJ's adopted SOI, which was determined by LAFCO. The applicant does not determine those boundaries.
4.8 Prevention of "Islands" Boundaries should not be drawn so as to create an island or strip either within the proposed territory or immediately adjacent to it. Where such an island or strip is proposed, the proponent must justify reasons for nonconformance with this standard.	An island is not formed by this proposal.
4.9 Prevention of Irregular Boundaries Where feasible, city and related district boundary changes should occur concurrently to avoid an irregular pattern of boundaries.	The application proposes concurrent boundary changes for CSAs 4 and 48, simultaneous with the annexations of those territories.

Santa Cruz LAFCO Adopted Proposal Evaluation Policies	
Factor	Analysis
<p>4.10 Social & Economic Interests</p> <p>The Commission shall consider the effects of a proposed action on adjacent areas, mutual social and economic interests, and on local governmental structure.</p>	<p>The proposed reorganization is anticipated to benefit neighboring agencies and their constituents through more organized and streamlined services offered by mutual and automatic aid. The contracted provider of services, CAL FIRE, will remain unchanged, although the contract will need to be renegotiated. SCCFD will experience the greatest negative impact, losing approximately \$3.2 million. This represents approximately 43% of funds available for its operations. While there would be corresponding reduction in expenditures for currently provided services, this could negatively impact SCCFD's continued operations elsewhere in the County due to declining economies of scale and reduced efficiencies.</p>
<p>4.11 Metes & Bounds</p> <p>A map of any proposed boundary change shall show the present and proposed boundaries of all affected agencies in the vicinity of the proposal site. The Commission shall assure that any approved boundary changes are definite and certain. The Commission may approve a proposal conditioned on the proponent preparing a new boundary map and description.</p>	<p>The boundaries of the subject territory include the entire territory within. The proposed district's boundaries are clearly defined in the map included in the application.</p>
<p>4.13 Financially Desirable Areas</p> <p>The sole inclusion of financially desirable areas in a jurisdiction shall be avoided. The Commission shall amend or reject any proposal that, in its estimation, appears to select principally revenue-producing properties for inclusion in a jurisdiction.</p>	<p>The proposal is to annex the entirety of the area within PAJ's SOI, ensuring that there is no selection of any areas based on finances.</p>
<p>5. Agricultural Lands</p> <p>Urban growth shall be guided away from prime agricultural lands, unless such action would not promote planned, orderly, efficient development of an area.</p>	<p>The proposed reorganization does not include expansion of the current service areas. The current levels of development in the area are not expected to be directly affected by this proposal. It is unlikely that current agricultural uses within the area will be affected.</p>

Santa Cruz LAFCO Adopted Proposal Evaluation Policies

Factor	Analysis
<p>5.1 Smart Growth</p> <p>A change of organization is considered to promote the planned, orderly, and efficient development of an area when: a) It is consistent with the spheres of influence boundaries and policies adopted by LAFCO for the affected agencies; and b) It conforms to all other policies and standards contained herein.</p>	<p>The proposal is consistent with the SOI boundaries and policies adopted by LAFCO for the affected agencies. This analysis demonstrates that the proposal generally conforms to all other Santa Cruz LAFCO policies and standards.</p>

Application and Model Evaluation Findings

This evaluation finds that the proposal generally meets the intent of State legal requirements and Santa Cruz LAFCO policies. Certain information was deficient in the application and should be added or expanded upon, including the following:

- Likelihood of significant growth in the area.
- Population density.
- Assessed the value of the project territory
- Enhanced clarity and detail on the staffing/service structure and differences from existing staffing levels.
- Detailed sources of revenue.

Overall, the model appears favorable, promoting efficient services, a key aim of LAFCOs. The proposal enhances public access and accountability for community service needs and financial resources through a local governance structure and Zones of Benefit ensuring transparency in funding and spending in geographical areas.

However, concern remains regarding the impacts of the annexations and the resulting loss of revenues for SCCFD. Options for the future of SCCFD and CSA 48 should be considered and addressed quickly to prevent a prolonged decline in viability as areas are detached. The loss of revenue to the County (SCCFD) will be partially offset by a significant reduction in costs related to services provided by CAL FIRE as the area of responsibility will transfer to other agencies.

Additionally, the projected deficit three years after the reorganization is a primary concern and must be addressed before recommending the reorganization. The District should conduct further financial modeling to ensure long-term funding, either by identifying either additional revenues or cost reductions.

Finally, it is unclear whether the CAL FIRE contracts can be easily negotiated with beneficial terms. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the impacts of the CAL FIRE contracts for services with PAJ and SCCFPD and the extent of those impacts.

Section V: PARTICIPATING AGENCY OVERVIEW

Overview County Fire Service Providers

The original agencies included in the study were the Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD), Central Fire Protection District of Santa Cruz (CFD), Scotts Valley Fire Protection District (SCO), Branciforte Fire Protection District (BRN), Boulder Creek Fire Protection District (BCFPD), Ben Lomond Fire Protection District (BEN), Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (PAJ), and Zayante Fire Protection District (ZAY). After the initial video meeting on August 16, 2022, SCO and BRN opted out of the project as SCO was in the process of absorbing BRN. The acronyms used for the agencies were adopted as the agency identified its preferred designator, or as the state designator if the agency did not state a preference.

Level of Service

Each agency provides a similar mission and is accountable for all fire and rescue responses within its specific area of responsibility. While not responsible for vegetation fires, they will respond if notified. For ease of identification of the service, agencies are grouped according to the four distinct service types. The following figure shows an overview of the primary services provided, as identified by each agency.

Figure 30: Agency Emergency Services Offered

Service	San Lorenzo Valley				CAL FIRE		CFD
	BEN	BCFPD	FEL	ZAY	PAJ	SCCFD	
Fire Suppression	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EMS First Response	BLS	BLS	BLS	BLS	BLS	BLS	ALS
Ambulance Transport	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hazmat Response	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plan Review	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Each agency responds to fire, medical, and technical rescue. Only ZAY, BCFPD, and CFD provide medical transportation, and only PAJ, SCCFD, and CFD provide hazardous materials response. Note that typical medical transport is delivered by a private third-party provider contract. The three agencies that provide licensed transport vehicles use these in the event of a mutual aid request or disaster.¹² In addition, all agencies reported that they perform some level of fire safety/code enforcement, plan reviews, public education, and investigations.

¹² www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/PublicHealth/EmergencyMedicalServices.aspx.

Figure 31: Service Assets

Service	San Lorenzo Valley				CAL FIRE		CFD
	BEN	BCFPD	FEL	ZAY	PAJ	SCCFD	
Stations	1	2	1	3	1	11 ⁴	7
24-Hour Staffing Capacity	2	12	2	4	3	28	29
Engines	5	4	4	4	2	16	11
Trucks	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rescue or Ambulance	1	1	0	2	0	5	1
Water Tender	0	1	1	1	1	5	2
Other Vehicles	4	5	4	4	3	8	16
Daily Minimum Staffing	Vol ¹	Vol ¹	Vol ¹	(3) Vol ²	3 ⁵	(2) Vol ³	22

¹ Volunteer agency with a paid chief.

² Volunteer agency with 3 person paid crew, M–F 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

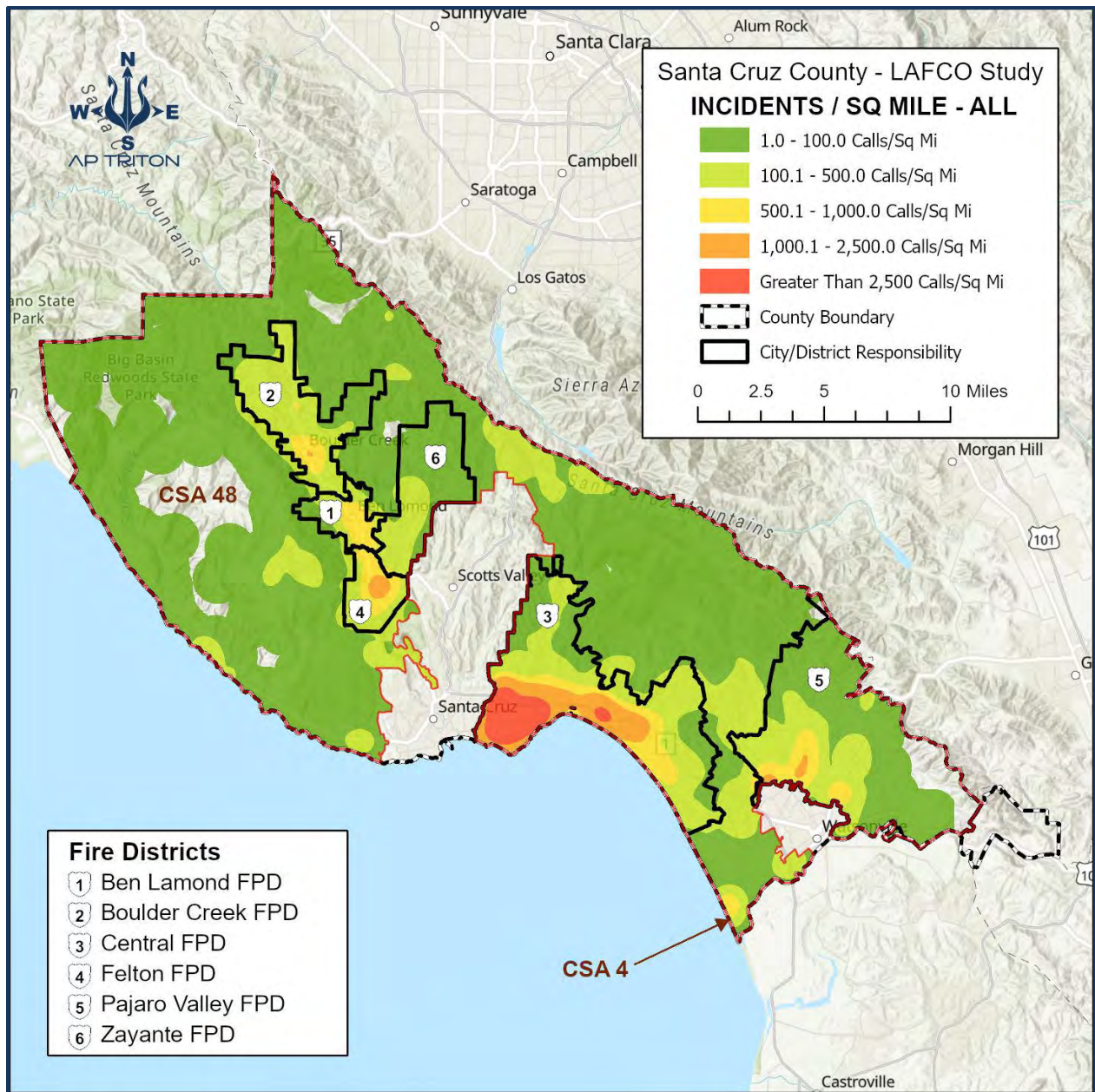
³ Volunteer agencies with support from CAL FIRE, including Amador-funded apparatus.

⁴ 7 locations owned locally; 4 locations owned by the state.

⁵ One Battalion Chief is also part of the staffing; the position is like a Fire Chief.

Incidents occur throughout the study area, with the greatest concentration in populated areas. CFD has the largest staff on duty, the highest number of staffed apparatuses, and the greatest incident density. While incident hotspots exist throughout the service area, significant incident clustering is prevalent in the San Lorenzo Valley agencies and the Pajaro Valley FPD service area. The following figure illustrates the incident density across the study area.

Figure 32: Study Area Incident Density



SWOT Analysis

Triton conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Santa Cruz County fire departments. Six fire protection districts and departments within Santa Cruz County responded to our request: Ben Lomond Fire, Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, Santa Cruz County Fire Department, Central Fire of Santa Cruz County, Zayante Fire Protection District, and Boulder Creek Fire Protection District. The analysis sought to evaluate the internal and external factors affecting each agency and to identify county-wide trends. By pinpointing these elements, the analysis provides a roadmap for strategic decision-making, uncovers opportunities for collaboration, and highlight areas requiring immediate attention to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of these vital public safety organizations. For the full SWOT analysis results and county-wide trends, please see Appendix C.

Fire Service Providers

Among the seven participating fire response agencies included in this analysis, four distinct service delivery types exist:

- The fire districts in the San Lorenzo Valley area: Ben Lomond (BEN), Boulder Creek (BCFPD), Felton (FEL), and Zayante (ZAY) fire protection districts. Each are very similar in structure and response capabilities.
- The Central Fire Protection District (CFD). CFD primarily protects an urban population and employs a locally sourced career staffing model.
- Pajaro Valley is also a career model; however, it is staffed and supported through contracts with CAL FIRE.
- The Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD) employs a combination of CAL FIRE contracts for support, Amador coverage, and volunteer responders. For this study, both county service areas, CSA 4 and 48, fall under the SCCFD area of responsibility due to the structure of the CAL FIRE contracts, leadership, and support.

Although each agency was analyzed individually in Section II, they were appraised using common criteria, allowing similarities to be highlighted and providing a basis for comparison. While there are differences in agency operations, moral, training, and supervision techniques, these factors could not be easily identified or quantified, and were omitted. However, any discussions of consolidations, reorganizations, or annexations should include topics.

Fire Agency Governance

Each fire protection district within this study falls under the purview of the Fire Protection District Law of 1987. This law outlines the processes, responsibilities, authorities, and requirements of forming and running a fire district.

The SCCFD will essentially be treated as a district for boundary and financial negotiations, although it is not established under the 1987 law. Instead, it is a general-fund-supported county department. Its additional funding sources, County Service Area 4 and County Service Area 48, were created under County Service Area Law (Government Code Section 25210 et seq.) and are governed by the County Board of Supervisors.

CFD, BEN, BCFPD, FEL, ZAY, and PAJ operate as a special district governed by a five-person board of directors. The boards of directors are primarily responsible for overseeing the management and funding of their respective agencies. SCCFD operates as a county service within the County of Santa Cruz, accountable to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors through the County's Department of General Services.

The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability as identified by each participating agency.

Figure 33: Agency Transparency and Accountability Methods

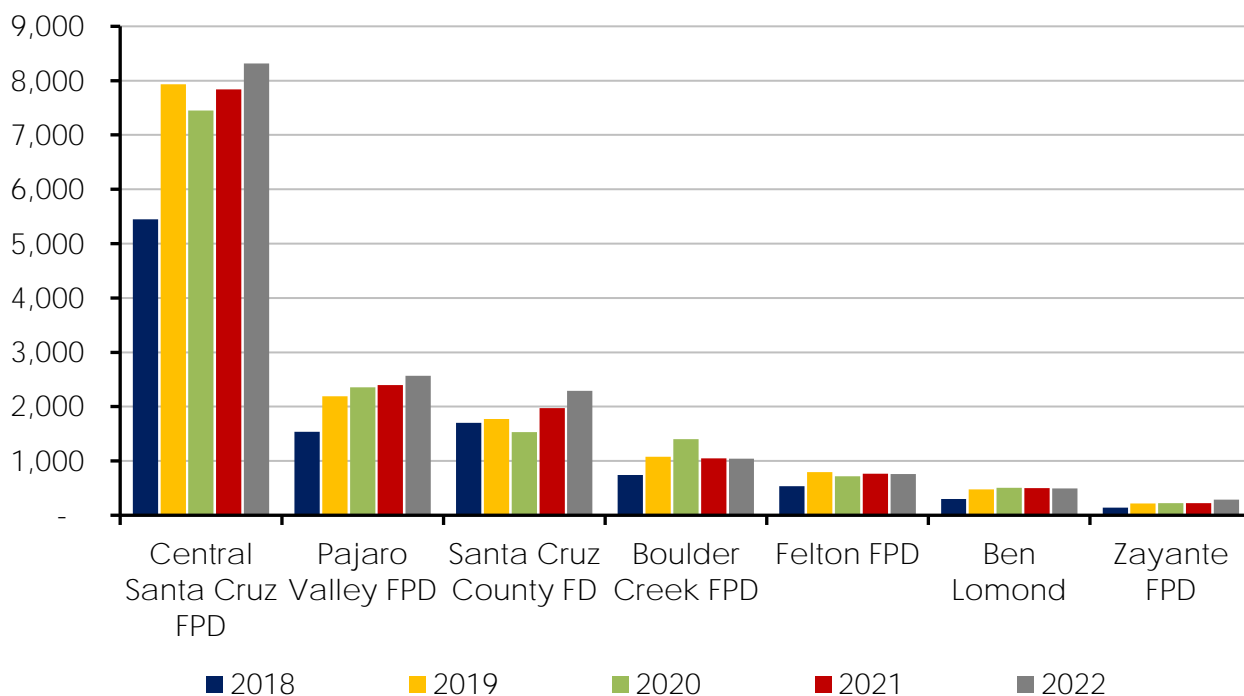
Method	San Lorenzo Valley				CAL FIRE		CFD
	BEN	BCFPD	FEL	ZAY	PAJ	SCCFD	
Agency website ¹³	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ¹⁴	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
SOC performance reports are available on the website	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

¹³ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information.

¹⁴ Government Code §54954.2.

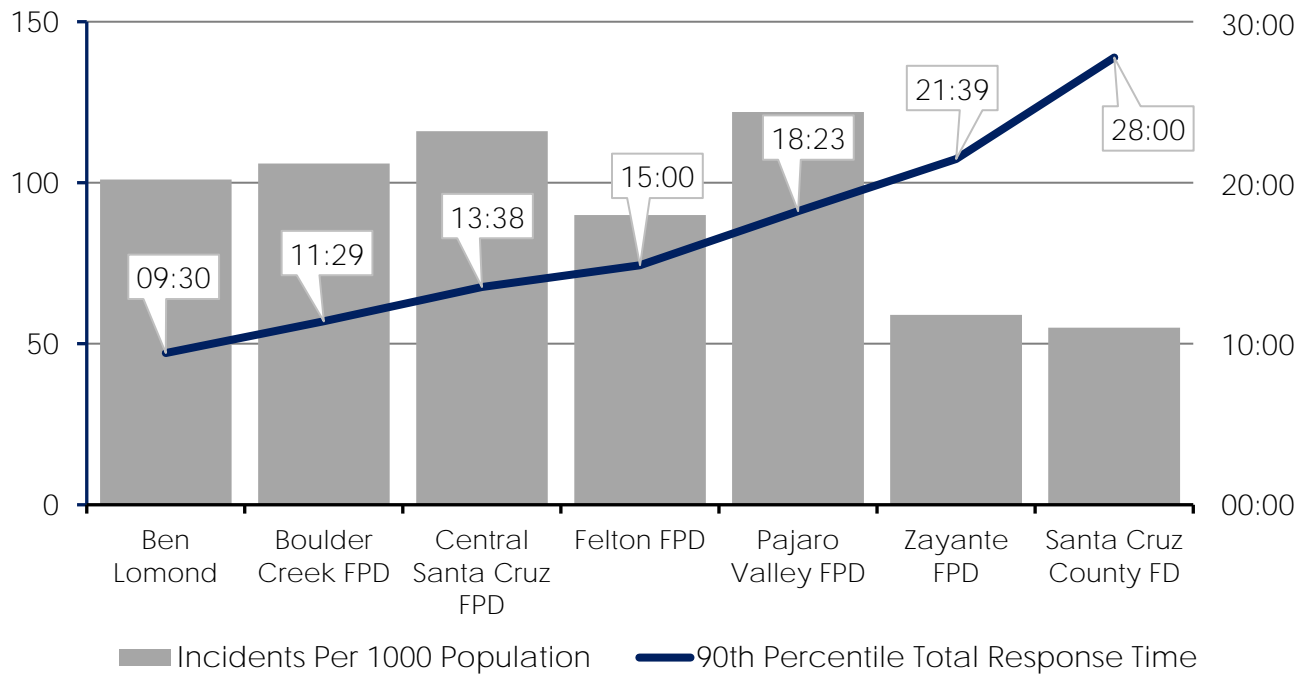
Workloads are not evenly distributed across agencies. CFD accounts for over 53% of the overall number of responses. The following figure illustrates the total annual responses for each agency.

Figure 34: Total Annual Responses Within Each Jurisdiction



The study area's midpoint 90th percentile Total Response Time is approximately 16 minutes, 48 seconds. Total Response Time is measured when the incident starts at the first dispatch center to when the first unit arrives. However, the midpoint does not account for the total number of responses. The actual midpoint for all arrivals is likely lower, as CFD accounts for a high percentage of responses, and is over 3 minutes faster than the 90th percentile midpoint. Additionally, this study does not differentiate between emergent and non-emergent incidents. Therefore, all emergent and non-emergent incidents were evaluated. The following figure illustrates the incidents per 1,000 population protected with the 90th percentile time as a reference.

Figure 35: 90th Percentile First Due Performance and Incidents Per 1,000 Population



The preceding figure highlights the sensitivity of response data to travel distance, as in SCCFD's case, and limited response data in ZAY's case. It does show, however, the significant differences between service demand and response performance of each agency.

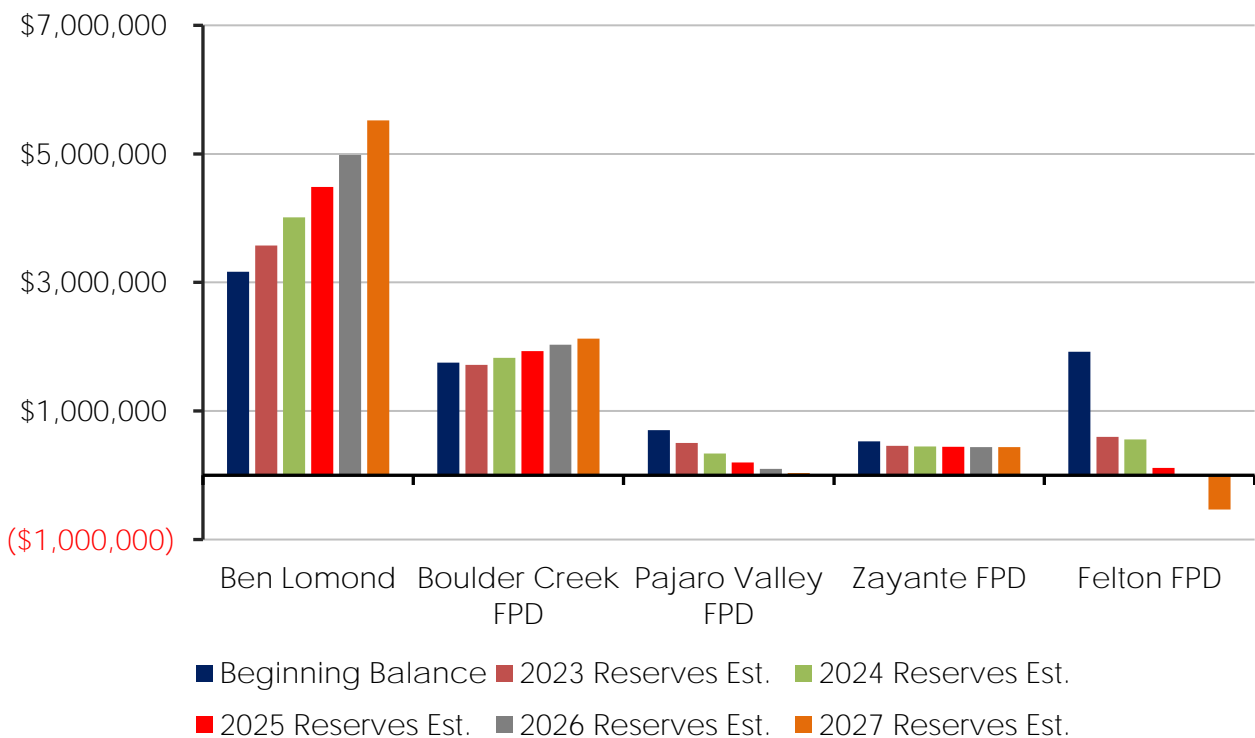
Financial Health

A complete financial analysis of each agency is found in Section VI. This overview is presented as a comparative evaluation and background to the SOI question posed in this study.

Reserve Funds Balances

The financial health of each agency varies significantly, as does the revenue collection between the fire districts and SCCFD. CFD is well-funded with several different fund balances to help offset expected capital expenditures. Additionally, CFD holds a healthy general reserve, but the fund would be depleted within 8 months if no revenues were forthcoming. SCCFD works under the county, a much larger funding agency with access to additional funds that are not necessarily earmarked for the service but are available nonetheless. The remaining districts have a wide range of reserve fund balances. The following figure illustrates each district's estimated reserve fund balance forecast based on the provided information and the estimated revenue/expenses predicted.

Figure 36: District Funds Balance Prediction (without CFD)

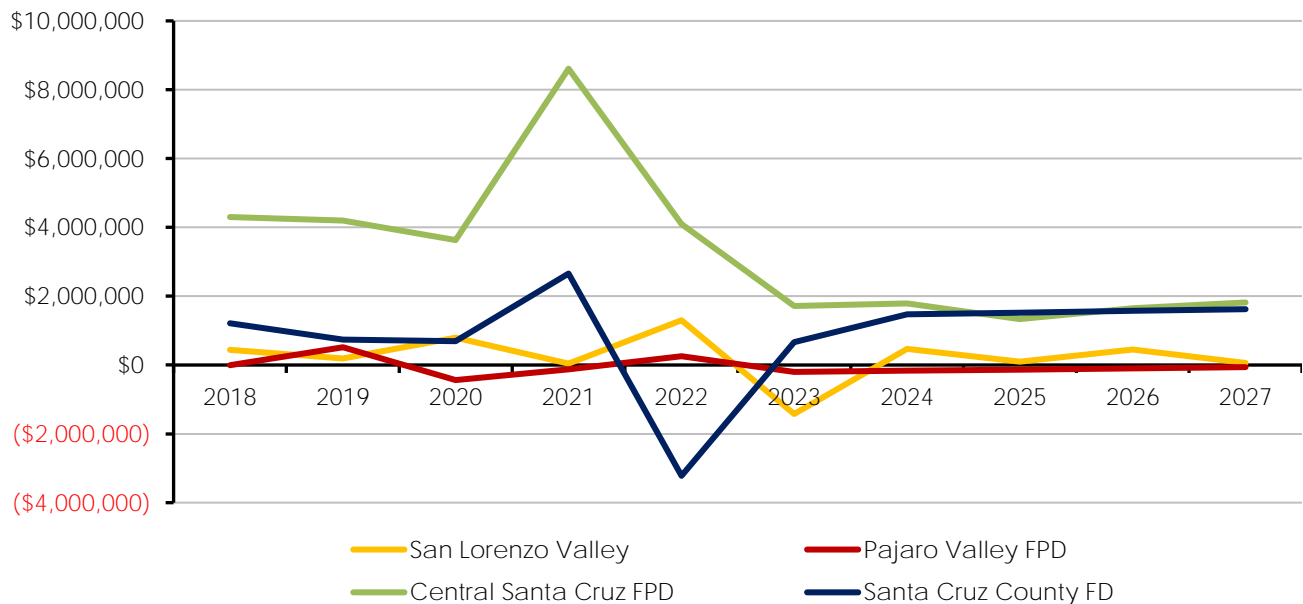


As the previous figure indicates, PAJ and FEL are poorly funded, with reserve funds projected to be depleted by 2026 or 2027. BEN and BCFPD have a strong financial foundation, with reserves increasing annually. ZAY remains a consistent reserve of about \$500,000, but the fund loses value when inflation is considered.

Revenue versus Expenses

Evaluating the revenue and expense streams out to 2027 reveals a similar picture. The agencies in the San Lorenzo Valley do not show significant growth in their reserve fund balances. PAJ expenses slightly exceed its revenue, requiring it to rely on reserve funds starting in 2023. Because of the nature of the income and payments in the CAL FIRE contract, understanding the agency's financial health in isolation is challenging. CFD remains steady, with the ability to increase reserves or fund capital expenses at a respectable rate. The following figure illustrates the agency's revenue/expense differences annually, forecasted to 2027. The San Lorenzo Valley fire districts are grouped together for ease of analysis.

Figure 37: Grouped Agency Revenue vs Expense (2018–2027)



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Appendix B: Stakeholder Feedback

Introduction to the Stakeholder Interviews

On November 7th, 8th, 9th, and 16th, 2022, Triton associates interviewed various internal and external stakeholders as part of the Santa Cruz County LAFCO Project. Approximately 18 stakeholders were interviewed during the four days of sessions. These interviews were designed to better understand issues, concerns, and options regarding the emergency service delivery system, opportunities for shared services, and expectations from community members.

It is important to note that the information solicited and provided during this process was in the form of "people inputs." Stakeholders individually responded to each question, some of which were perceptions reported by stakeholders. All information was accepted at face value without an in-depth investigation of its origination or reliability. The project team reviewed the answers to ensure consistency and frequency of comments to identify specific patterns and/or trends. Multiple sources confirmed the observations and the information provided was significant enough to be included in this report. Based on the information reviewed, the team identified a series of observations and recommendations and felt they were significant enough to be included in this report.

Stakeholders were identified and grouped based on their relationship with the participating agencies. Then, individual interviews were conducted based on one of three groups. Elected officials, county management, and department heads were one group. Another group consisted of fire chiefs from the potentially affected fire agencies. The final group comprised businesses, community, and volunteer leaders and members.

Elected Officials, County Management & Department Heads

Please describe your expectations of the fire agency.

- Reliable equipment, good stations, and 3-person staffing.
- Fiscally responsible and conservative, with effective management of fire services contracts.

Are your expectations being met?

- In general, yes.
- The equipment funding and plan are in good shape, but the employee costs exceed the taxes.
- There are staffing and volunteer coordination issues with the various agencies.

Does the current system provide an acceptable level of service?

- It is acceptable in most areas.
- Some enhancements need to be made to service delivery, and paramedic responses would be beneficial.

What are the advantages of the current fire service delivery system?

- Good equipment, top-notch personnel, sound mutual, and auto-aid systems are in place.
- Santa Cruz County gets a good financial deal with CAL FIRE, which can bring an extensive response capability in the event of significant incidents.

What are the disadvantages of the current fire service delivery system?

- Because of CAL FIRE's responsibilities during fire season, the area response suffers, and the local governments have very little control.
- Due to the disparity of service provision between the cities, fire protection districts, and county, the system does not support the closest unit dispatch approach, and apparatus move-ups are very far.

What opportunities do you believe exist that would enhance service to the region?

- Improved governance, local representation, and fire district elections.
- A fire district annexation in the south county areas would keep the funds in the south, allow for a more cohesive response approach, and potentially enable paramedic staffing.

Fire Chiefs from Potentially Affected Agencies

Please describe your expectations of CAL FIRE/County Fire as a regional partner.

- There should be a well-defined difference between the two agencies with an apparent chain of command.
- CAL FIRE has state response area (SRA) responsibilities for most rural regions. The expectation is they fight wilderness fires and assist with structural responses as a mutual aid partner.
- If necessary, CAL FIRE should bring its entire asset pool to an incident, and specialized resources such as fleet services and arson investigation are helpful.
- They both can bring additional resources to a response.
- The community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) is created by CAL FIRE which benefits all of the area communities.

Are your expectations being met?

- They usually meet expectations well; participating in training and responses are very important and helpful.
- Since all agencies are not on the same communication system, there tend to be communication delays, especially from the emergency communications center.
- There can be a great deal of misunderstanding over whose jurisdiction a specific incident falls into, creating confusion and delayed responses.

Does the region's current system provide an acceptable level of service?

- The system does provide an acceptable level of service, but reliance on volunteer firefighters is less stable, creating a resiliency issue; fewer people volunteer, and the time commitment is burdensome.
- The rural areas do not enjoy a paramedic first response, and the ambulances can be delayed.
- It could provide satisfactory service if some volunteer agencies combined to find economies of scale.
- The current communications system is outdated, and dispatch processes are problematic, causing service delays.

What are the advantages of the current fire service delivery system?

- It is relatively inexpensive and gets the job done.
- The area access to response assets is robust, with response border drops and strong relationships.
- The expertise and large organization that CAL FIRE brings are invaluable.

What are the disadvantages of the current fire service delivery system?

- The multitude of volunteer companies and lack of participation sometimes create an inconsistent response and level of service.
- The duplication of effort in the multiple fire districts undermines the ability of agencies to benefit from economies of scale or exploit volume discounts during capital purchases.
- The two dispatch centers and radio frequencies are problematic.
- Funding is limited across all agencies.

- Being so heavily reliant on CAL FIRE's additional resources creates a service gap during an active fire season.

What opportunities do you believe exist that would enhance service to the region?

- Overwhelmingly the sentiment from interviewees was that service would be enhanced through cooperative efforts, consolidation, and annexation.
- Combined services include capital purchasing, prevention, community risk reduction, and response.
- Increased local funding or access to county funds that were earmarked for public safety.

Does the existing fire service system provide the community with an acceptable level of protection?

- The primary response from interviewees was that the protection was sufficient, with significant room for improvement.

Is there any advantage in changing the service area boundaries of the Districts and CSAs for Santa Cruz County fire agencies?

- Annexing the SOI areas is a positive step. It may lead to more consolidations and a reduction in fire districts.
- It does depend on which side of the financial situation the agency finds itself on; it is positive if it gains land and money and negative if it does not.
- Advantages would include power over decisions within the local jurisdiction, agencies dispatched to their own response areas, the closest unit would be sent, and fewer jurisdictions for water purveyors to work with.

If you were to annex your sphere of influence, what additional resources such as administration, volunteers, paid staff, facilities, and apparatus would need to be considered?

- The primary concern noted was that the addition of response areas without sufficient tax revenue to support them, as the areas are undeveloped.
- Some agencies with large SOIs to annex will need additional stations or staffing, including responders and defensible space inspectors.
- Some agencies will not need additional resources as the areas are small and can be covered with current staff and equipment levels.

Is there any disadvantages to changing the service areas of Santa Cruz County fire agencies?

- Predominantly, the feeling was there would be no disadvantage to changing the service areas.
- County Service Area (CSA) 48 and County Fire will potentially lose volunteer responders to other agencies if annexation occurs.
- The Pajaro Valley communities might lose access to the County Fire Volunteer companies, potentially reducing the level of service available.
- There will be a financial impact on CSA 48 and all impacted agencies, and it is unlikely that taxpayers would cover any additional burden.
- The public perception issue of losing control of their local organization and the different district boards' unwillingness to compromise will be difficult to overcome.

Businesses, Community Groups, Community Members, and Volunteers

Can you please describe your expectations of the Santa Cruz County fire agencies?

- The primary expectation is for timely and effective responses with the appropriate amount and types of equipment.
- Community involvement and collaboration with items such as mitigation, prevention, funding, and events.
- Appropriately trained and staffed responders and paramedic firefighters should be the norm.
- A trusting partnership with transparency, measurable results, and factual information shared at all levels.

Which of these expectations is not being met to your satisfaction?

- There is little cooperation between the agencies, the Firewise councils, and other community projects.
- No paramedic staffing.
- After the CZU Lightning Complex fire CAL FIRE, and by extension SCCFD, has lost community and volunteer agency trust; there is a perception of lack of transparency.
- Governance issues are of concern, including how the county supports communities, how the CSAs are funded and directed, and the effectiveness of the Fire Department Advisory Council (FDAC).

What do the Santa Cruz County fire agencies do particularly well?

- The agencies have great people and, for the most part, serve their community well during an emergency.
- The training program is effective and cooperative and available throughout the county.
- The various agencies work well with other response partners, such as the sheriff's department and security.

Are there services that you think the Santa Cruz County fire agencies should be providing that they are not providing now?

- Active fuel management might provide an avenue for improved public relations as long as the public knows who is doing the work; signs, for example.

Are there services the Santa Cruz County fire agencies provide that you think should be discontinued or done differently?

- There are too many apparatuses responding to any given situation.
- The size and availability of the response force are insufficient.

When you dial 9-1-1 to report an emergency, how long should it take for help to arrive?

- The most prevalent answer was 5 minutes.
- The remaining answers indicated that under 10 minutes was acceptable.

Does that expectation change depending on where in the community you are located?

- All those interviewed in this section understood that response times in hard-to-reach areas or during peak incident times may be extended.

Appendix C: SWOT Analysis

Triton is pleased to present this comprehensive SWOT analysis, developed in close partnership with fire protection agencies across Santa Cruz County. It is crucial to emphasize that the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats have been self-assessed by each participating agency. Our role at Triton has been to compile these individual results and analyze the common and diverging themes that have emerged. Additionally, we have examined the future landscape by identifying emerging trends informed by these self-assessments. This analysis aims to provide actionable insights and strategic recommendations that empower agencies to continually improve and adapt to the ever-changing public safety environment.

Figure 38: Ben Lomond Fire SWOT

Positives		Challenges		
Strengths		Weaknesses		
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Service: The agency excels in providing excellent service to the community.• Response Time: The agency has excellent response time during emergencies, ensuring fast and effective help.• Budget Management: The agency has a good grasp on managing its budget, likely making efficient use of available funds.• Certified Trainers: The training programs are led by state-certified trainers, ensuring quality and compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited Funds: Funding constraints can impact the agency's ability to expand and improve services.• Personnel Shortages: The agency faces issues with having adequate personnel for its operations.• Real Estate Constraints: Affordability and availability of real estate for personnel are challenges.• Training Availability: Those who have difficulty attending regularly scheduled training sessions need more flexible options.		
	Opportunities		Threats	
	External	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic Management: Addressing local traffic issues can improve response times and overall service.• Personnel Recruitment: There are opportunities to recruit more personnel, improving manpower and capabilities.• Grant Opportunities: Exploring more grant options can provide additional funding streams.• Partnerships: The agency already benefits from existing partnerships and could potentially benefit from more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure: Vulnerabilities in radio and 911 infrastructure could severely affect operations.• Volunteer Shortages: Lack of volunteer firefighters due to training mandates and cost of living can weaken the service.• Facility Limitations: The agency is at risk of outgrowing its current station, which would require significant investment to resolve.• State Mandates: Regulatory requirements, especially on volunteer departments, could place additional burdens on the agency.	

Figure 39: Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District SWOT

Positives		Challenges	
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Personnel: A motivated and committed staff is vital for effective emergency response and service delivery. • Fiscally Responsible: Financial stability and responsible budget management can contribute to long-term effectiveness. • Modern Facilities and Equipment: Keeping up-to-date with modern facilities and mobile equipment ensures optimal performance and public safety. • Effective Training Programs: Emphasizing multiagency cooperation and state-sponsored regional training ensures a high level of preparedness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity: The lack of awareness about the District can limit community engagement and support. • Community Support & Outreach: Limited community involvement can affect the agency's ability to effectively serve the public. • Operating Cost & Revenue: High operating costs and stagnant revenue streams could jeopardize the District's financial stability. • Specialized Training: There is a need for more comprehensive water rescue training programs, especially in a district prone to flooding. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Measures: A ballot measure could provide additional funding to address financial constraints. • Grants: Actively seeking grants can supplement the agency's revenue stream. • District Growth: As the district grows, so do opportunities for increased resources and capabilities. • Partnerships: Cooperation with organizations like CAL FIRE and Watsonville Fire Department could lead to better response times and services. • Emerging Technologies: Further adoption of technologies like Tablet Command and possibly drones could significantly improve emergency response and planning. efficiency and community engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Instability: The need for increased contract costs and potential staffing level decreases are significant financial threats. • Regulatory Changes: CAL FIRE's move towards a 56-hour work week will necessitate adjustments in salary and benefits. • Property Tax Revenue: Annexation of growing areas by the City of Watsonville could result in lost revenue for the district. 	
Opportunities		Threats	
External			

Figure 40: Santa Cruz County Fire Department SWOT

Positives		Challenges	
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of Resources: The department has resources available through its contract with CAL FIRE, ensuring a well-equipped and prepared team. • Availability of Automatic Aid: Contractual arrangements with CAL FIRE also allow for the availability of automatic aid resources, enhancing the department's response capabilities. • Beneficial Contracting: Collaborative contracting with other agencies for multiple services, including response, automotive maintenance, and fire marshal services, brings in extra expertise and cost-efficiency. • Comprehensive Training: The department's training program is not only comprehensive but also cost-effective due to cooperation with other resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Volunteer Response: There are times when volunteer response is limited, which can impact service quality. • Limited Revenue: Financial constraints could hinder operational efficiency and growth. • Reliance on CAL FIRE: While beneficial, dependency on free CAL FIRE resources could pose a risk if those resources were to become unavailable or reduced. • In-house Instructor Pool: There is a need for a deeper pool of in-house instructors to diversify and strengthen the training program. 	
	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-Time Staffing: Exploring options for full-time staffing through CAL FIRE could improve operational effectiveness. • Paid Call Firefighters: Having paid call firefighters work daytime shifts for immediate response could enhance service quality. • Partnerships: The department already has beneficial partnerships but sees room for more, which can bring additional expertise and resources. • Emerging Technologies: The department is working on new software for NFIRS and volunteer activity tracking, indicating a willingness to adapt and modernize. Watsonville Fire Department could lead to better response times and services. • Emerging Technologies: Further adoption of technologies like Tablet Command and possibly drones could significantly improve emergency response and planning, efficiency and community engagement. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Instability: The need for increased contract costs and potential staffing level decreases are significant financial threats. • Regulatory Changes: CAL FIRE's move towards a 56-hour work week will necessitate adjustments in salary and benefits. • Property Tax Revenue: Annexation of growing areas by the City of Watsonville could result in lost revenue for the district. 	
External			

Figure 41: Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County SWOT

Positives		Challenges	
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Adaptability: The agency has effectively adapted to changes, especially after the consolidation in 2021. • Strong Training Division: A supportive and engaging training division that fosters the deployment of ideas. • Strategic Planning: Comprehensive Master and Strategic plans have been developed to facilitate financial planning for facilities, apparatus, and equipment needs over the next 30 years. • Effective Training Programs: Emphasis on Command and Control, career development, and specialized academies ensures a well-prepared force. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Planning: Despite having a strategic plan, there is a stated lack of financial planning for the long term. • Real Estate Planning: Similar to financial planning, there is a lack of long-term planning for real estate. • Staff Participation: A reluctance among staff to participate in management promotional opportunities and development. • Outdated Equipment and Facilities: Existing schedules for replacing apparatus and equipment are becoming obsolete due to rising costs. 	
Opportunities		Threats	
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Collaboration: There's potential for a more integrated regional professional fire service organization involving multiple cities. • Public Ambulance Service: Exploring public agency-based ambulance transportation as an additional service. • Financial Innovations: Implementation of fire service impact fees and response fee studies for revenue generation. • Partnerships: Central Fire is open to partnerships and already has some in place, offering potential for future collaborations to enhance service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising Costs: Increasing land and construction costs pose significant challenges for long-term planning. • Regulatory Changes: The electric vehicle mandate for 2030 could be financially burdensome. • Revenue Imbalance: Revenue increases are not keeping up with the escalating costs, requiring a re-imagination of service delivery and resource allocation. • External Economic Factors: The general economic environment, especially related to construction and land costs, could affect performance. 	

Figure 42: Zayante Fire Protection District SWOT

Positives		Challenges	
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motivated Personnel: A dedicated and motivated staff is one of the agency's most significant assets.• Community Connection: A strong relationship with the community, highlighting trust and support.• Experiential Diversity: The agency has a diverse team in terms of skills, age, and gender, enriching its capabilities.• Effective Training: Building block approach, subject matter experts, and peer-to-peer support enrich training effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding Basis: The agency is hindered by a state base tax rate, limiting its financial capabilities.• Past Recruitment Practices: These have focused less on local residents, which poses challenges for response strategies.• Leadership Transition: The district has had three different leaders in as many years, affecting stability.• Equipment Costs: While not lacking, the agency faces challenges in updating equipment due to soaring costs and supply chain issues.	
Opportunities		Threats	
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional Funding: A clear need and opportunity to explore new avenues for funding to maximize existing strategies and personnel.• Emerging Technologies: Looking into LaRo and MURS radio strategies and emergency notification systems as a way to improve community engagement and safety.• Training Enhancement: There's room to refine the training schedule, either by adding hours or changing the day format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LAFCO: (Local Agency Formation Commissions) may impose regulations or changes that the agency deems as challenges.• Workers Compensation: The methodology of calculating rates could pose a financial threat.• Inflation: Rising costs, combined with Prop 13 limited funding, could further strain the agency's financial health.• Inter-agency Relations: Current tensions with neighboring agencies and trust issues could hamper any future partnerships or collaborative efforts.	

Figure 43: Boulder Creek Fire Protection District SWOT

Positives		Challenges	
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced Personnel: The certifications and experience of the agency's personnel stand out as a significant asset. Excellent Fleet: The agency boasts a fleet that is in excellent condition, contributing to its operational effectiveness. Community Connection: A high level of dedication and a strong connection to the community are also cited as strengths. Inclusive Training: The training program involves all ranks in its development and teaching, making it effective and inclusive. 		
Opportunities		Threats	
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different Response Model: Exploring new models for response, including a combination department, seasonal staff, and additional admin personnel, could improve timely responses. Partnerships: Shared services could reduce redundancy and offer advantages in purchasing power for equipment. Emerging Technologies: Adoption of drone technology could enhance both response times and safety measures. 		

SWOT Summary & Analysis

Common Strengths:

- **Community Engagement:** Most departments have a strong relationship with their communities, reflected in excellent or dedicated service, and community trust.
- **Financial Responsibility:** Budget management and fiscal responsibility are generally noted as strengths.
- **Training:** Several agencies mention effective training programs, some with state-certified or specialized trainers.

Common Weaknesses:

- **Financial Constraints:** Most agencies highlight limitations due to funding, whether for expansion, equipment, or training.
- **Staffing:** Shortages or inadequacies in personnel and volunteers are frequently cited.
- **Training Limitations:** A need for more flexible, diverse, or specialized training programs is mentioned.

Common Opportunities:

- **Partnerships:** Nearly all agencies see room for partnerships, whether with CAL FIRE, local agencies, or through regional collaboration.
- **Grants and Funding:** Additional streams of revenue through grants or ballot measures are suggested.
- **Technological Advances:** Emerging tech like drones, Tablet Command, and specialized radio systems are considered avenues for improvement.

Common Threats:

- **Financial Instability:** Rising costs and stagnating revenues pose threats to nearly all agencies.
- **Regulatory Changes:** State mandates or changes in work hours are frequently cited as external pressures.
- **Infrastructure and Equipment:** Several agencies note that outdated or vulnerable infrastructure could impact operations.

Trends:

- Financial Limitations: A recurring theme across all departments is the need for better financial planning and additional revenue streams.
- Human Resources: Staffing constraints, either due to budget or volunteer shortages, are a shared concern, pointing to a systemic issue that may require a coordinated, county-wide solution.
- Adaptability and Innovation: All agencies seem open to new technologies and partnerships, indicating a collective willingness to adapt and innovate.
- Regulatory and Policy Concerns: There's a trend of external regulatory changes imposing challenges, signaling a need for more proactive advocacy or adaptation strategies.
- Community Engagement and Service: Strong community ties appear as a common strength, but also highlight an area for continued effort, especially in agencies where community engagement is noted as a weakness.
- Training Gaps: While training programs are generally strong, gaps are identified in specialized areas like water rescue or EMS training, suggesting a need for cross-agency learning and resource sharing.

Appendix D: Copy of Pajaro Valley FPD Application

The following pages are a reproduction of the proposed fire service area reorganization. This application was withdrawn, but is used to assist Santa Cruz County LAFCO and applicant agencies determine if the application was appropriate and may be used as a template for future reorganization requests.

The application was copied verbatim, but the format was changed to fit this document. In addition, signatures, names, dates, and the district board resolution were removed to ensure this document is not confused with an official request.

**COPY OF SUBMITTED
DISTRICT PLAN FOR SERVICE**

Prepared for
LAFCO of SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
Proposed Fire Reorganization
Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District
CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes Community
CSA 48 Corralitos Community
(LAFCO Project No._____)

A proposed fire reorganization involving Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes, and CSA 48 Corralitos has been initiated by Pajaro Valley FPD.

Following the conclusion of the LAFCO process, the fire reorganization will be known as

“Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District.”



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PROPOSAL

The Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (FPD) is petitioning the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to annex its entire sphere of influence to include the communities of Pajaro Dunes (CSA 4) and the community of Corralitos (CSA 48). The consolidation of Pajaro

Valley FPD with CSA 4 and reorganization of CSA 48 will become part of the reorganized Pajaro Valley FPD. This reorganized independent fire district will provide service to the entire unincorporated area of South Santa Cruz County. Approval of the consolidation and reorganization is anticipated to create a more effective utilization of local tax dollars; and provide local governance and control. This proposal was initiated by resolution from the Pajaro Valley FPD Board of Directors.

The affected territory of the proposed consolidation and reorganization includes CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes and a portion of CSA 48 within the sphere of influence of Pajaro Valley FPD. No additional territory is proposed for annexation, and no change is anticipated in the Sphere of Influence as currently adopted by LAFCO. The consolidation will improve the current emergency response system and provide a higher level of service. The reorganized District will continue to receive automatic and mutual aid responses from CAL FIRE, Watsonville City FD, Aromas Tri-County FPD, Central FPD, South Santa Clara FPD and North Monterey County FPD. Ambulance services will not change; currently provided by American Medical Response.

INTRODUCTION

Government Code Section 56653 requires that a Plan for Service in narrative form must be submitted with the application for a reorganization, annexation, or detachment. This plan must respond to each of the following questions and be signed and certified by an official of the annexing agency or agencies.

1. A description of the level and range of service to be provided to the affected territory.
2. An indication of when the service can be feasibly extended to the affected territory.
3. An identification of any improvement or upgrading of structures, roads, water or sewer facilities, other infrastructure, or other conditions the affected agency would impose upon the affected territory.

4. The estimated cost of extending the service and description of how service or required improvements will be financed. A discussion of sufficiency of revenues for anticipated service extensions and operations as required.
5. An indication of whether the annexing territory is, or will be, proposed for inclusion within an existing or proposed improvement zone/district, redevelopment area, assessment district or community facilities district.

1. Description of Services

1.1 General Background Information

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District

In 1996, Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District was created after the consolidation of Freedom Fire Protection District and Salsipuedes Fire Protection District.

The Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District serves a rural community of approximately 18,000 people. The District covers approximately 52 square miles, a large part of which is an unincorporated area surrounding the City of Watsonville. The District encompasses both State Responsibility Area (SRA) and Local Responsibility Area (LRA) lands, and has the duty to respond to all fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, and hazardous materials incidents. Pajaro Valley FPD has a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE to provide fire protection services. On an average, the District runs 1200 calls per year.

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District has one fire station housing two type 1 engines, one type 1 water tender, one fire prevention vehicle, one utility vehicle, and one command vehicle.

County Service Area 4 Pajaro Dunes

County Service Area (CSA) 4 was initially formed in 1966 to establish a tax base to fund sewer and water service to the Pajaro Dunes Development. The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and LAFCO added fire protection to the functions of CSA 4 in 1970 when fire protection services were required as a condition of development to expand Pajaro Dunes. CSA 4 is part of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department. Santa Cruz County has a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE to provide fire protection services.

The District encompasses less than half of a square mile of territory. However, the response area also extends into portions of County Service Area 48 in the south coastal area of Santa Cruz County. The District has the duty to respond to all fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, and hazardous materials incidents. On an average, the District runs 200 calls per year and has a population of approximately 250 people. CSA 4 has one fire station housing two type 1 engines and one utility support vehicle.

County Service Area 48 Corralitos

County Service Area (CSA) 48 was formed in 1985 and operates as part of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department. Santa Cruz County has a cooperative agreement "Amador Plan" with CAL FIRE to provide fire protection services. The Amador Plan, allows local government to contract with CAL FIRE to provide year-round fire protection services, provided by CAL FIRE stations which would normally be closed during the "non-fire" season.

The Corralitos portion of CSA 48 encompasses approximately 9 square miles and has a population of 2,200 people. The station has responsibility for both LRA and SRA lands.

The station is staffed with two State funded type III fire engines during declared "peak fire-season" and is staffed with one County funded type 1 engine during "Amador." Corralitos station has the duty to respond to all fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, and hazardous materials incidents. Corralitos staffing is supplemented by Santa Cruz County volunteer firefighters. The station houses one type 1 engine, one type 2 engine, one type 1 water tender, and a type 3 rescue. The facility is owned by the State of California which houses two State owned type III fire engines. On average the station runs 800 calls per year.

Shared Services

Through the cooperative agreements with CAL FIRE, the Pajaro Valley FPD, CSA 4, and CSA 48 have multiple shared positions. Shared services include one Fire Chief, one Division Chief, two Operational Battalion Chiefs, one Battalion Chief Fire Prevention, one Battalion Chief Safety, one Fire Marshal, one Deputy Fire Marshal, two Staff Services Analysts (Human Resources) and one Field Logistics Officer.

The personnel are distributed between the three districts' suppression personnel, fire prevention, management team, and administrative staff.

SERVICES

The Pajaro Valley FPD, CSA 4, and CSA 48 are all-hazard fire districts. Some of the services provided to the community are fire suppression in structure and wildland fires, basic Advanced EMT Life Support, Fire Prevention services, defensible space inspections, business inspections, and wildland fuels reduction programs. Extrication and technical rescue services are also provided.



Workforce

1.2 *Management & Governance*

The current management structure for the District is a Fire Chief and an at large elected governing board. Pajaro Valley FPD has a publicly elected Board of Directors consisting of five members, who are elected to four-year staggered terms.

(NAMES AND TERMS REMOVED FROM THIS COPY)

Board Member	Current Term

CSA 4 and CSA 48's current management structure is a Fire Chief and an elected governing board. The Service Areas are governed by the publicly elected Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors consisting of five members, who are elected to four-year staggered terms.

(NAMES AND TERMS REMOVED FROM THIS COPY)

Supervisor	Current Term

Based on the results of the November 2022 election cycle, changes to the above structures may be made. Board members' terms will also update, thus ensuring a staggered rotation of Board members. To avoid conflict with the California Voting Rights Act, the consolidated District will transition to a system of elections by district when feasible after the reorganization is finalized.

The Fire Chief will answer to the five -member Board of Directors who are elected to four-year-staggered terms and represent more than 20,000 residents living within the reorganized Fire District. The reorganized District will operate under the authority of California Health and Safety Code Section 13800 (Fire Protection District Law of 1987) and be governed by the policies as approved and set forth by the Board of Directors.

The reorganized Fire District Management Team will consist of a Fire Chief, one Division Chief, one Battalion Chief, Fire Marshal, and Staff Services Analyst. For a complete Organization Chart for the combined District, see Exhibit E.

1.3 Operations

The fire reorganization will allow the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District to provide opportunities to improve fire service efficiencies and service, strive towards meeting long term goals to provide Advanced Life Support service in South Santa Cruz County, increased staffing to the Pajaro Dunes community, and provide 24/7 engine coverage to the Corralitos community.

Operations will be streamlined with improved management oversight through the Operations Division Chief. Each shift will be overseen by a Battalion Chief. Each of the District's three stations will be overseen by a Fire Captain/Company Officer with a 3-person crew assigned 24/7. The more remote areas of the district will continue to be served by automatic and mutual aid agreements.

1.4 *Training and Safety*

The Training Bureau is an important part of every fire service organization. Through the CAL FIRE cooperative agreement, all District personnel attend an all-risk fire academy. One Battalion Chief, two Fire Captains and an Administration Assistant are provided through the cooperative agreement. The Training Battalion Chief also works with other Santa Cruz County Training Officers and their respective fire agencies to help provide a cohesive cooperative training plan. The Training Bureau at the Unit level also provides ongoing training to comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. The cooperative agreement also provides a Safety Battalion Chief that ensures the District is meeting all requirements from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), International Organization of Standardization (ISO), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and California Code of Regulations (CCR).

As an Advanced Life Support (ALS) provider, the district's ALS program will have day to day oversight by company officers trained at the paramedic level and have overall program support and training as part of Santa Cruz County's Emergency Medical Services Integration Authority (EMSIA), a joint powers agreement between the ALS fire agencies in Santa Cruz County.

1.5 *Support Services*

All Districts that would be part of this consolidation currently contract with Central Fire Protection District for fleet maintenance and annual services. This contract ensures the operational readiness of the Districts' fire apparatus and support vehicles. The District is also supported by two Field Logistic Officers as part of the cooperative agreement.

1.6 *Human Resources*

Human Resources are managed by CAL FIRE as part of the cooperative agreement. All aspects of human resource related needs are maintained by a Staff Services Analyst at the Unit's headquarters with oversight by a CAL FIRE Division Chief Administration Officer.

1.7 Financial Services

The County of Santa Cruz shall serve as the treasury for the District. The Fire Chief, coordinating with the Division Chief and Staff Services Analyst, will be responsible to the reorganized District's Board of Directors for preparing and managing the budget. Investment and pooled cash shall be held with the treasury. The Board of Directors will contract annually with an auditing firm to comply with GASB regulations and required oversight of taxpayer funds.

1.8 Fire Prevention

The reorganized District will employ 1 Fire Captain/Fire Marshal who is responsible for handling construction plan reviews, life safety and business inspections, and updating the fire code. Through the cooperative agreement the District is provided 1 Battalion Chief/Fire Prevention who oversees fire, arson, and defensible space inspections.

Reorganized District personnel will continue to attend all community outreach events as well as conduct defensible space inspections and life safety business inspections.

1.9 Transfer of Assets

The Pajaro valley FPD has filed an application with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to reorganize the fire districts for the purpose of facilitating the efficient delivery of fire protection. The District is asking the Board of Supervisors to pass a resolution authorizing a 100% tax transfer and any fire department service delivery fees or assessments to the successor entity. This would be consistent with the County's long-standing guidelines for property tax exchanges and negotiations.

All assets currently held by Pajaro Valley FPD, CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes, and CSA 48 Corralitos shall be transferred to the reorganized Pajaro Valley FPD. This includes cash balances and reserve accounts. The District shall assume all remaining debt service associated with equipment purchased by either Pajaro Valley FPD, CSA 4, and the portion of CSA 48 annexed to the reorganized district. The County of Santa Cruz shall transfer all existing and future property tax revenue designated for fire protection services within the affected territory to the Pajaro Valley FPD.

The reorganized District will utilize various reserve funds for the replacement of apparatus, capital equipment, and building improvements. These reserve funds are funded by an annual transfer from the General Fund based on a 10-year replacement schedule for capital items. These schedules will identify a committed minimum transfer each fiscal year to meet projected expenditures.

A reorganization of these Districts will provide a higher level of service reducing duplication of costs. However, additional management and support positions will need to be in place to manage a more complex organization structure.

1.10 Transfer of Fixed Assets

All fixed assets including, but not limited to, mobile fire equipment and specialized emergency equipment, will remain as currently assigned and be transferred as the real and personal property of the Pajaro Valley FPD. The Pajaro Dunes fire station and facilities will remain under ownership of CSA 4. The Corralitos CSA 48 fire station is a State-owned facility, and an agreement will be entered to house apparatus and personnel. Further information can be found in Exhibit C (list of current Apparatus & Vehicles).

1.11 Transfer of Personnel

All personnel are CAL FIRE employees under the cooperative agreement. No transfer of personnel will be needed.

2. Service Units and Capacity

The application to be considered by LAFCO is the fire reorganization involving Pajaro Valley FPD, CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes, and CSA 48 Corralitos. This reorganization will provide Paramedic staffed fire engines to provide Advanced Life Support Services to the unincorporated areas of South Santa Cruz County. Additional fire engine staffing will be brought to the community of Pajaro Dunes reducing fire risk and improving Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings. The Corralitos community will be provided with a dedicated 24/7 staffed type 1 fire engine.

2.1 Geographical Risk Areas

The proposed reorganized Pajaro Valley FPD is made up of several geographical areas, all with their own unique risks:

The current Pajaro Valley FPD serves three communities, consisting of both urban and rural areas. The District has a large portion of State Responsibility Area posing high fire risk to the Wildland Urban Interface. The District has two major highways that run through it (Highway 152 and Highway 129). There are several lakes in the District: College, Kelly, Drew, Pinto, and Tynan.

Additionally, the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds is in the District. Annually over 300,000 visitors attend events at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds hosts over twenty-six events annually of 1,000 people or more. The Santa Cruz County Fair itself is the single largest event held in Santa Cruz County with approximately 80,000 people in attendance annually.

CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes is a coastal community surrounded by agriculture. Pajaro Dunes has several three-story multi-residential structures and single-family dwellings that are accessed by boardwalk walkways only, posing a unique fire risk. CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes also has some light industrial business.

CSA 48 Corralitos, serves an area of mostly single-family dwellings and several small businesses. CSA 48 Corralitos is mostly in the State Responsibility Area with risk for Wildland Urban Interface fires that extends all the way to Highway 1.

2.2 Deployment

All three communities will have a type 1 engine staffed with three personnel providing Advanced Life Support Services 24/7. Calls for service will come to the District by way of Felton Emergency Communications Center. Units are dispatched in accordance with the response matrix setup within the District's response areas. Existing mutual aid and auto aid agreements with neighboring Districts and Departments will be updated upon successful reorganization of the District.

2.3 Expectations

Expectations are that a higher level of fire protection and service will be provided with the reorganization. Local governance and local control of revenue will be established. Enhancing the management and administration structure will free up line personnel to provide a higher level of service. These enhanced services include, Advanced Life Support, fire prevention, wildfire preparedness, and emergency response. As expected, efficiencies begin to reduce duplicative costs, the fund balance will increase, replacement equipment can be purchased, and additional resources may be added to enhance existing service levels.

2.4 Staffing

The cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE will ensure that the District is staffed appropriately with management, support, and front-line personnel to respond and mitigate emergencies in a safe and efficient manner.

Attached as Exhibit E is the proposed staffing model for the district. The newly reorganized district will also utilize paid-call firefighters for increased staffing.

2.5 Timing for Extending Services

There will be no interruption to the current service levels to the affected territories. The fire reorganization can begin on January 1st, 2023. Advanced Life Support Services would begin at the soonest practical time after the reorganization is finalized. The County Assessor's office shall provide the transfer of reserves and balance of the FY 21/22 property tax revenue.

3. Proposed Service Infrastructure and Improvements

This proposal will provide the communities of South Santa Cruz County with enhanced fire protection, Advanced Life Support services, and a dedicated type 1 fire engine to the Corralitos community. There are currently no other proposed infrastructure improvements.

4. Time Frames, Financing and Conditions of Service

The cost of delivering services to the communities will not increase because of the reorganization. All current revenue sources including property tax and special assessments will be transferred to the reorganized District. There will be no increase in taxes and no increase to special assessments. In accordance with Proposition 218, taxes and/or other assessments cannot be added or increased without a vote of the people.

Existing tax revenue, current reserves, and grant funding opportunities will fund improvement and primary equipment upgrades. Additional fiscal projections are included in Exhibit D.

5. Inclusion of Existing Tax Revenue & Special Assessment Fees

Existing property tax revenue that the Pajaro Valley FPD, CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes, and CSA 48 Corralitos currently collect will be the primary source of revenue for the reorganized District.

Service Zones will be established to account for revenue within each zone. Citizen Advisory board or commission can be established if desired, for oversight of zone revenues.

It is anticipated that all fees, assessments, special taxes, or other charges that were approved by the voters or imposed conditions of prior annexations to either district will remain in effect post-reorganization.

Approval Signatures:

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Exhibit A – Proposed Sphere of Influence for Fire Reorganization

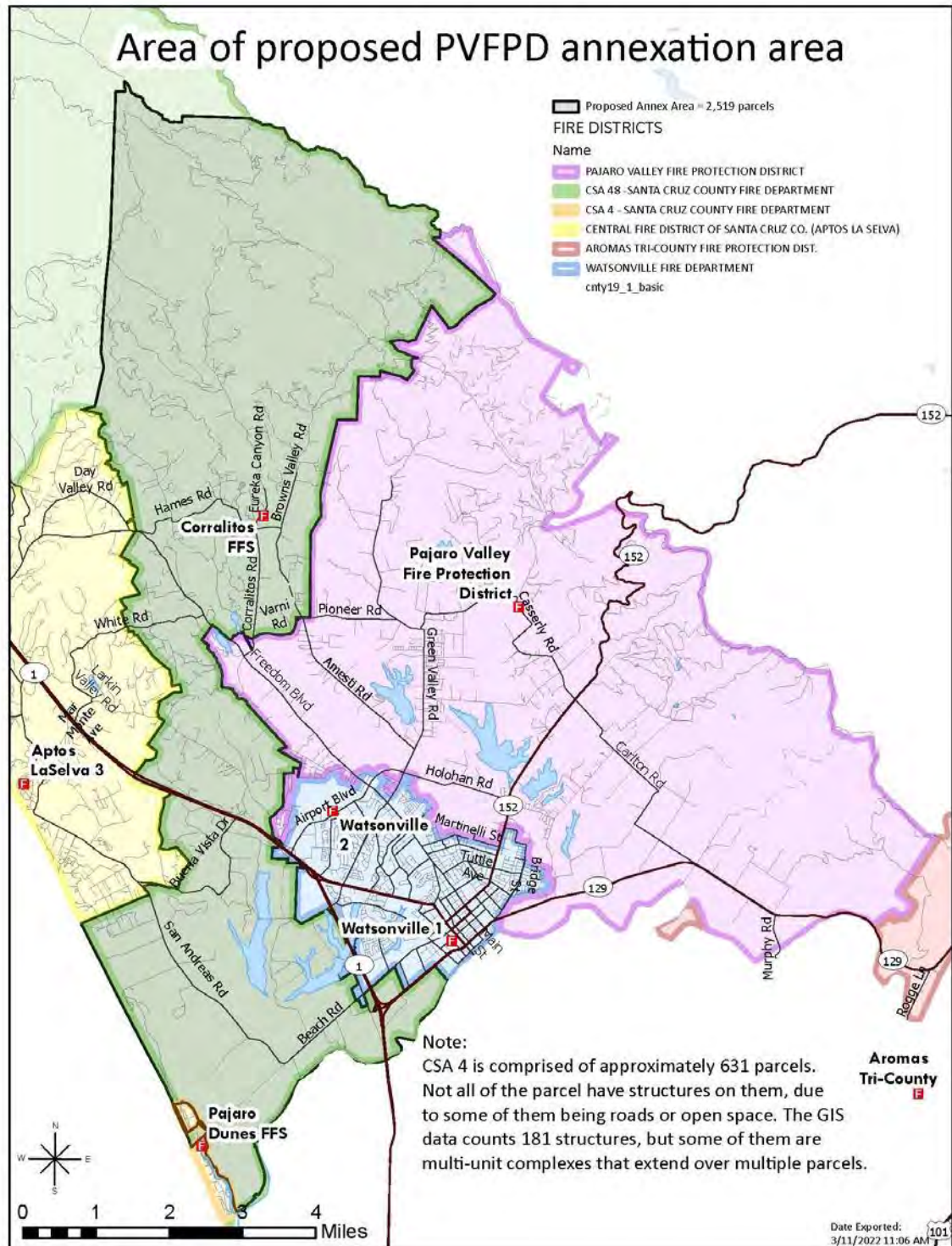


Exhibit B – Pajaro Valley FPD Board of Directors Resolution 2022-02

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Exhibit C – Apparatus and Equipment

Pajaro Valley	Category	Year
E-4511	Type-1 Engine	2010
E-4510	Type-1 Engine	2001
WT-4551	Type-1 Water Tender	2020
B-1716	P/U Command Vehicle	2014
P-4591	P/U Prevention Vehicle	2015
U-4591	P/U Utility Vehicle	2008

Corralitos	Category	Year
E-4111	Type-1 Engine	2001
E-4121	Type-2 Engine	1998
WT-4152	Type-1 Water Tender	2020
R-4161	P/U Rescue	1991

Pajaro Dunes	Category	Year
E-4211	Type-1 Engine	2010
E-4210	Type-1 Engine	1996
U-4291	P/U Utility Vehicle	2001

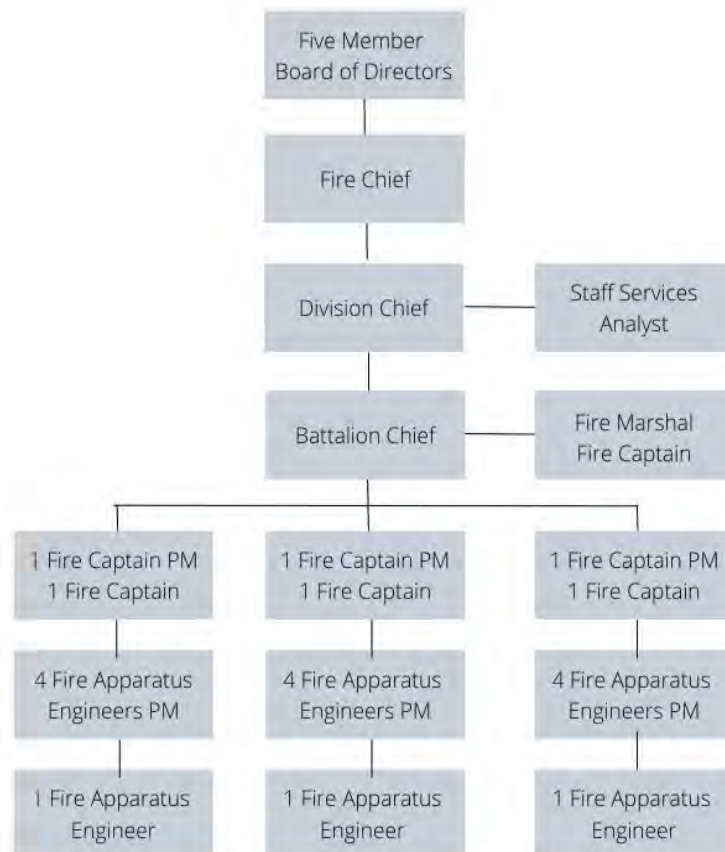
Exhibit D – Financial Projections

(Table Reproduced to Compensate for Formatting Errors)

2023-2028 Revenue and Expenditure Forecast

	Projection 2023	Projection 2024	Projection 2025	Projection 2026	Projection 2027	Projection 2028
<u>REVENUE</u>						
Property Tax	\$6,200,000	\$6,448,000	\$6,705,920	\$6,974,156	\$7,253,122	\$7,543,246
Percentage Change		+4%	+4%	+4%	+4%	+4%
Licensing & Permits	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,235,000	\$6,483,000	\$6,740,920	\$7,009,156	\$7,288,122	\$7,578,246
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>						
Salary & Benefits	\$5,400,000	\$5,670,000	\$5,954,000	\$6,252,000	\$6,565,000	\$6,893,000
Services & Supplies	\$700,000	\$735,000	\$772,000	\$812,000	\$853,000	\$896,000
(+5% per year)						
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,100,000	\$6,405,000	\$6,726,000	\$7,064,000	\$7,418,000	\$7,789,000
<u>FUND BALANCE</u>						
Total Revenue	\$6,235,000	\$6,483,000	\$6,740,920	\$7,009,156	\$7,288,122	\$7,578,246
Total Expense	\$6,100,000	\$6,405,000	\$6,726,000	\$7,064,000	\$7,418,000	\$7,789,000
Excess / (Deficit)	\$135,000	\$78,000	\$14,920	(\$54,844)	(\$129,878)	(\$210,754)
Historic Avg Saved	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
CHANGE IN FUND BAL	\$635,000	\$578,000	\$514,920	\$445,156	\$370,122	\$289,246

Exhibit E – Proposed Organization Chart



Appendix F: Individual Opt-In Study Fire Agency Details

Santa Cruz County Fire Department Profile

Agency Overview

The Santa Cruz County Fire Department (SCCFD) is a service funded from revenues generated from within CSAs 4 and 48 and an annually allocated share of the county general fund. The County contracts with CAL FIRE to provide services and management to these areas.

CSA 4 is primarily covered by a dedicated fire engine staffed with CAL FIRE employees.

CSA 48 coverage is provided by the county volunteer firefighters, some Amador-funded CAL FIRE equipment, and contracted coverage to a limited portion of the service area. The county contracts with the Central Santa Cruz Fire Protection District (CFD) and the City of Santa Cruz Fire Department (SCFD) to provide first-response services in select areas. Additional services, such as fire prevention, supervision, and management, are provided by county-funded CAL FIRE employees.

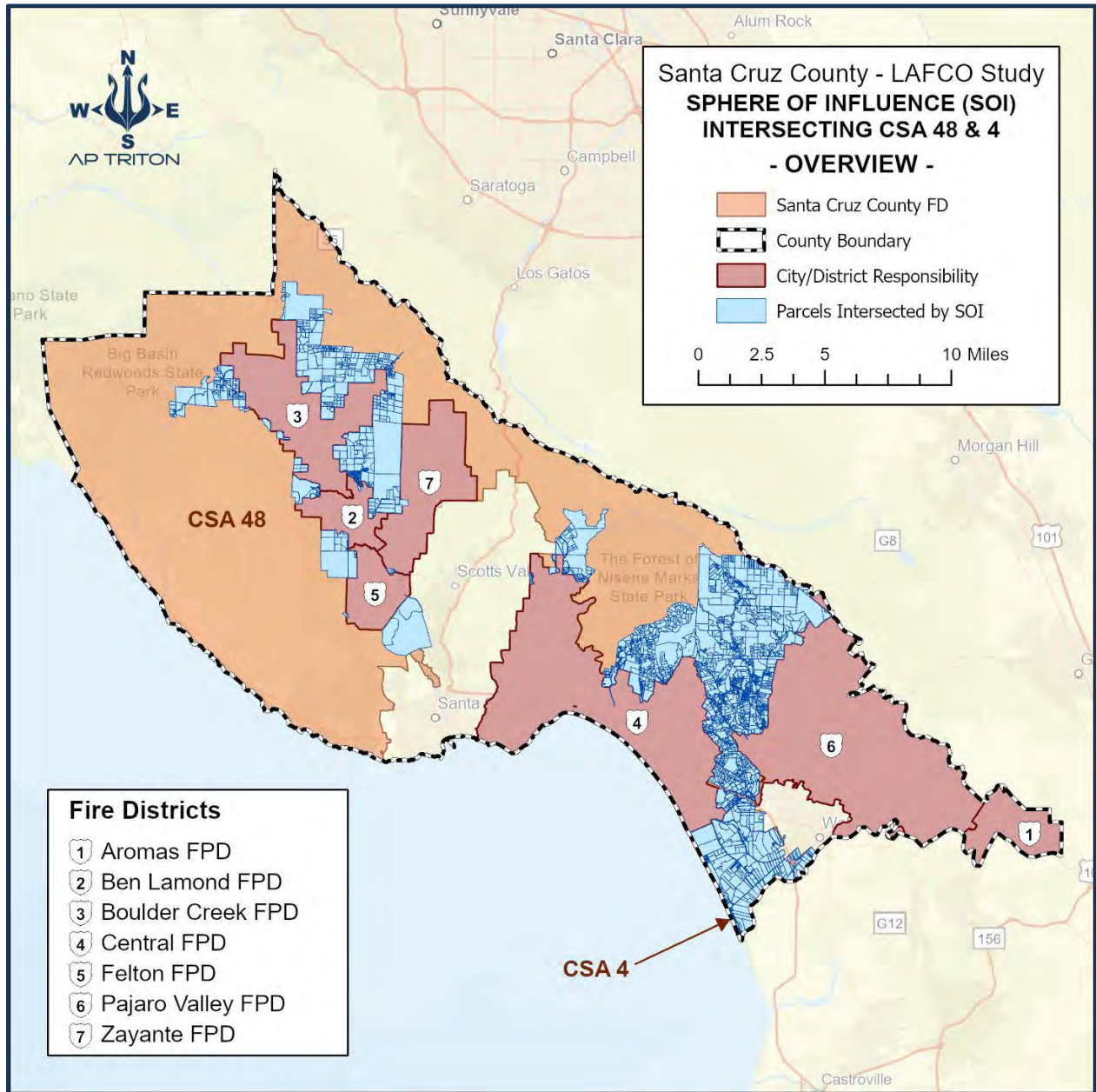
Amador staffing refers to CAL FIRE personnel provided under the Cooperative Fire Programs Agreement with Santa Cruz County for continuous staffing of five (5) CAL FIRE stations/apparatus 24/7 during non-peak fire season. When CAL FIRE determines it prudent to reduce staffing levels due to the reduced threat of wildfire, these CAL FIRE stations, and apparatus, are staffed to augment local agency staffing and serve as part of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department.

Boundaries

The SCCFD service area covers much of the unincorporated portion of the County not included within organized fire protection districts. The Cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz provide their own fire protection. In addition, the 8 other fire protection districts provide protection in various other locations. The northern service area is bisected along the San Lorenzo Valley by Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond, Felton, and Scotts Valley/Branciforte. In addition, the southern central portion of the County along the coast is served by Central Fire Protection Districts, and the southeastern portion is covered by Pajaro Valley and Aromas Fire Protection Districts. CSA 4 is a small portion of the county service area along the coast in the southern part of the County.

Because fire protection districts intersect with the county service area, much of the county service areas are included in other Fire Protection District's spheres of influence (SOI). Regardless of the relationship to the SOI, SCCFD retains the responsibility of providing Response coverage and other fire service-related services in the county service areas. The following figure shows the county service area and those areas included in other jurisdictions' SOI.

Figure 44: Santa Cruz County Fire Department Service Area



Type & Extent of Services

Services Provided

SCCFD provides a wide range of services for its community. These services are provided through a contract with CAL FIRE and include fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical care, and other emergency services. The contract is renewable and may be modified to include an increase in costs or modification in services provided. The following figure represents each of the services and the level performed as indicated by the agency.

Figure 45: Overview of Services Provided by SCCFD

Service	Y/N	Level
Fire Suppression	Yes	Structural, wildland (with CAL FIRE)
EMS First Response	Yes	BLS
Ambulance Transport	No	
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	High angle rescue
Hazmat Response	Yes	Awareness level response
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	
Plan Review	Yes	Contracted to a vendor
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Fire Wise
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	

Service Area

The Santa Cruz County Fire Department is an all-hazards public safety organization providing traditional fire protection, medical first response (MFR) at the Basic Life Support (BLS) level, technical rescue services, and hazardous materials response. In 2018, the Santa Cruz County Fire Department was assigned a Public Protection Classification (PPC®) grade of Class 4 by the Insurance Services Office (ISO).

In addition, SCCFD conducts fire inspections, plan reviews, fire-cause and arson investigations, and public education and prevention programs.

Collaboration

- SCCFD participants in the countywide mutual aid agreement.
- SCCFD responds for specialized high-angle rescue if requested.
- The cost of the Fire Marshal is shared 50% with Pajaro Valley FPD.
- 10% of one Battalion Chief for CSA 4 is shared with Pajaro Valley FPD.
- Several facilities are shared between SCCFD and CAL FIRE for state and local missions.

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs)

- None Identified

Contracts to provide services to other agencies

- None Identified

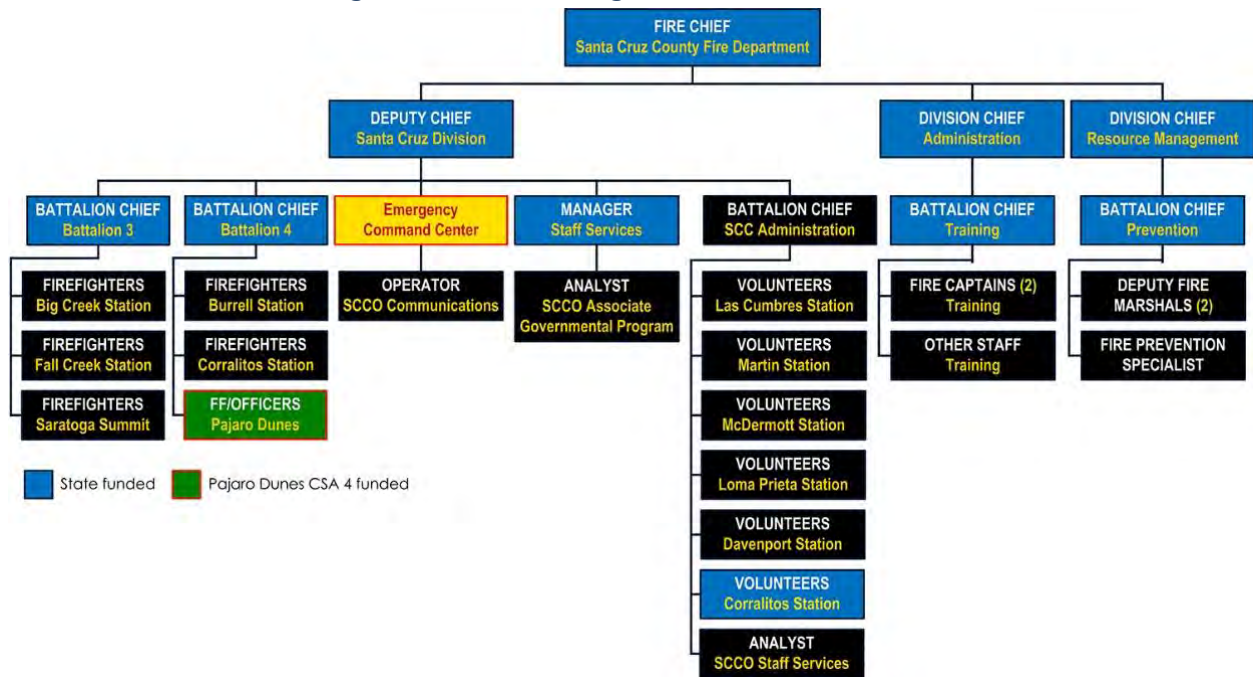
Contracts for service from other agencies

- SCCFD contracts for emergency response services for the area known as Aptos Hills with Central Santa Cruz Fire Protection District.
- SCCFD contracts for emergency response services for the area going toward the Lorenzo Valley with the City of Santa Cruz Fire Department.
- SCCFD utilizes Amador agreements with CAL FIRE to provide protection services during certain months outside California's wildfire season.
- SCCFD contracts with CAL FIRE for battalion supervision, the fire chief, prevention services, and training.
- CAL FIRE provides equipment and full-time staff for the Pajaro Dunes area, also known as CSA 4. This equipment is also available to respond to other regions within CSA 48.

Governance, Administration, & Accountability

SCCFD functions under the direction of the Santa Cruz County Fire Chief, who also serves as the CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Chief. In addition, this position serves as the Fire Chief for the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District. For SCCFD, the Chief is accountable to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors through the County's Department of General Services. As shown, some positions are state-funded, while others are funded by Santa Cruz County. Nearly all SCCFD's command staff and upper management are state-funded.

Figure 46: SCCFD Organization Chart (2023)



The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability.

Figure 47: Santa Cruz County Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability	Available
Agency website ¹⁵	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	Yes
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ¹⁶	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed	Yes
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	Yes
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	Yes
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	Yes
SOC performance reports are available on the website	No
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	Yes
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes

¹⁵ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information about the district. Government Code Section 53087.8 lists what must be included on the website.

¹⁶ Government Code §54954.2.

Growth & Population Projections

The county fire service areas, CSA 48 and CSA 4 are not considered census-designated place (CDP) and does not study separately from the County. However, tools and methods exist to capture and aggregate the specific census blocks into a geographical area. Therefore, the district boundaries will be used for the remainder of this section.

Current Population

The current population within SCCFD legal boundaries is 22,450, with an area of 264 square miles. There is a total of 10,143 housing units listed in the area.¹⁷ The number of residents and housing units meet the urban area classification threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁸ However, the vicinity is more extensive than most CDPs, and it is unlikely the U. S. Census would classify the service areas as urban.

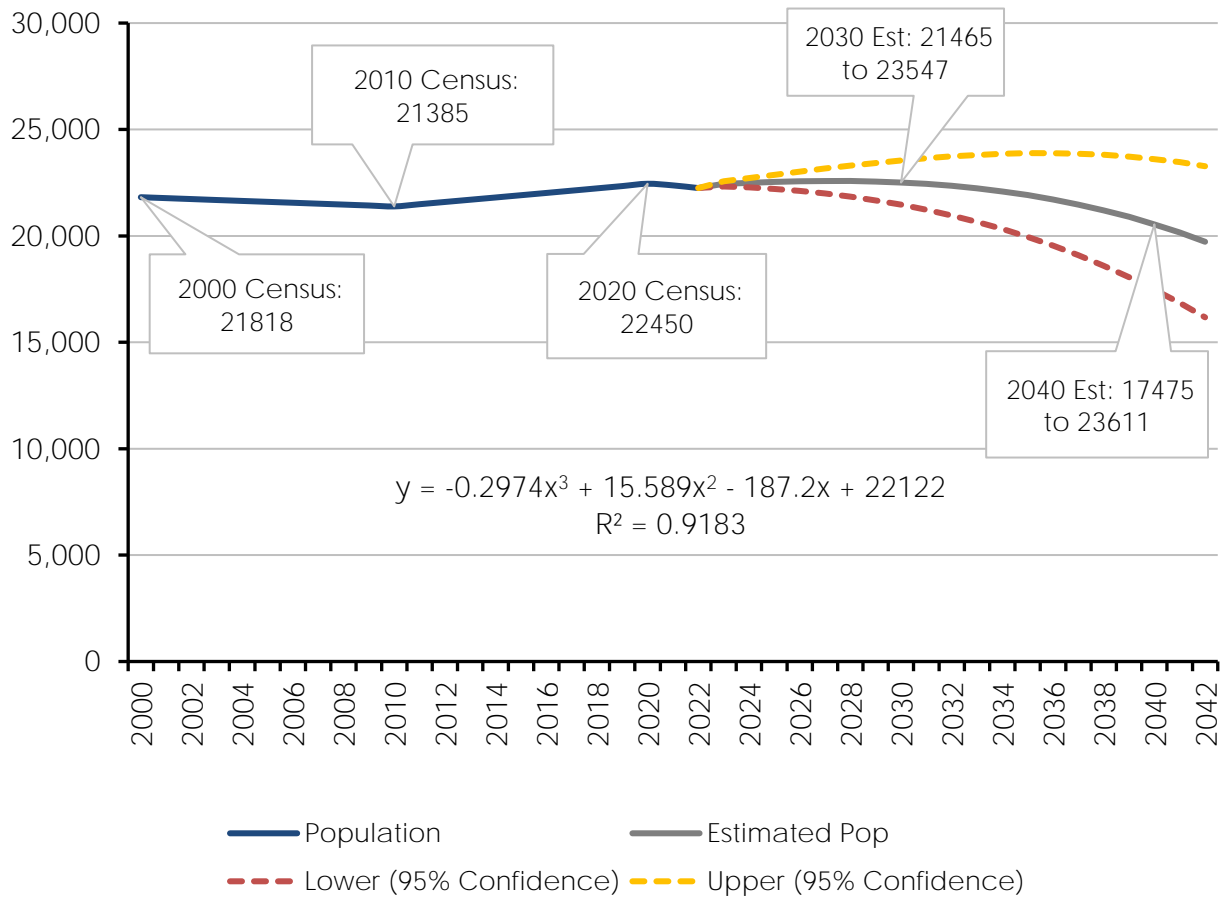
Projected Growth & Development

Estimating population growth is challenging due to many factors, such as new developments or local economies. For SCCFD, two techniques were utilized. The first was to rely on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or very moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the SCCFD area, the best-fit model was a three-factor polynomial regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.9183. This means the model fits the historical data very well. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast shows a wide range in population projections of +/- 3,000 people. The area's estimates range from 22,450 in 2020 to 17,475 and 23,611 by 2040, with a 95% confidence level. The direct model shows only a slight decrease to 20,5434 in 2040. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

¹⁷ ESRI Community Analyst, Source U. S. Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171).

¹⁸ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.

Figure 48: County Service Area 48 & 4 Historical Population and Forecast



Financial Overview

The County includes the revenue and costs related to the operation of its fire protection system in a group of funds labeled Other County Funds, which are included in the Total County-Wide Budget. County fire protection services include the area designated as CSA 48 and a separate service area CSA 4, Pajaro Dunes. Both areas are serviced by the Santa Cruz County Fire Department through a contract with CAL FIRE. Each area receives independent funding and under State law, each must maintain a different budget, and funds from one CSA budget may not be used to provide services within the others' boundaries.¹⁹

¹⁹ Santa Cruz County Fire Protection Services Proposed Budget, FY 2021–2022.

General Overview

SCCFD operates under the guidance and direction of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. It provides fire protection for the unincorporated areas of the County that are not included in an autonomous fire district. The County Service Area (CSA 4) Pajaro Dunes community is included as a separate component of the system. Another service area, CSA 48, was established to supplement financing of the costs of fire protection in the unincorporated areas of the County, which are not within the boundaries of autonomous fire districts. CSA 48 transfers its revenues to the County Fire Department annually.

In January 2020, CSA 48 obtained voter approval for an additional assessment to increase staffing in its boundaries from two persons to three persons per engine. The Santa Cruz County Fire Department provides services to its communities through a contract with CAL FIRE. The County prepares an annual operating budget based on a July through June fiscal year. It includes the budgeted amounts CAL FIRE has projected for its operations.

Consolidated Service Area Historical Financials

While the two service areas cannot be combined for accounting purposes, reviewing the entire county-funded fire service expense is helpful. This is typically presented as the fire protection services budget during the budget season and is reported under the summary Unit 34. This consolidation is the total fire services cost for the County. Surplus funds are returned to the County, whereas the deficits must be made up from other county funds.

The following figure combines the historical revenues and expenditures of the two budget areas, CSA 48 (referred to typically as County Fire) and CSA 4 (Pajaro Dunes). However, it should be reiterated that revenues from special assessments within CSA 4 and CSA 48 may only be spent on providing services within those respective areas. The following figure shows the consolidated historical budget data.

Figure 49: Consolidated SCCFD Agencies Revenues & Expenditures

Revenue/Expenses	FY 17/18 (Actual)	FY 18/19 (Actual)	FY 19/20 (Actual)	FY 20/21 (Actual)	FY 21/22 (Estimates)
Recurring Revenue	6,116,896	6,401,236	6,487,674	10,439,592	9,512,596
Other Revenues	42,854	67,095	51,049	118,983	38,177
Total Revenues:	6,159,750	6,468,331	6,538,723	10,558,575	9,550,773
Salaries & Benefits	150,251	148,687	127,018	235,138	98,386
CAL FIRE Contract	3,845,198	4,186,448	4,664,705	6,112,425	6,480,359
Services & Supplies	790,795	931,556	1,036,459	952,408	2,545,525
County Overhead	5,675	3,294	4,104	6,447	11,506
Total Recurring	4,791,919	5,269,985	5,832,286	7,306,418	9,135,776
Capital & Other	70,685	412,835	131,198	364,354	4,494,849
Total Non-Recurring	70,685	412,835	131,198	364,354	4,494,849
Total Expenditures:	4,862,604	5,682,820	5,963,484	7,670,772	13,630,625
Total Surplus (Deficit):	1,297,146	785,511	575,239	2,887,803	(4,079,852)

Consolidated Service Areas Financial Projection

These general revenue and expense sections are also found in the individual service areas. The following figure shows the consolidated revenues and expenses through fiscal year 2027/2028.

Figure 50: Consolidated SCCFD Projected Revenue & Expenditures

Description	FY 22/23 Budget ²⁰	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	FY 27/28
Revenue	9,893,676	10,348,521	10,700,089	11,069,274	11,451,993	11,848,763
Expenditures	9,521,354	9,160,191	9,467,402	9,785,796	10,115,795	10,457,841
Net Surplus (Deficit)	372,322	1,188,330	1,232,687	1,283,478	1,336,198	1,390,922

²⁰ FY 2023 Requested Budget.

Santa Cruz County Service Area 48—SCCFD

A significant amount of information was provided by County staff. It was reviewed to develop a financial trend analysis for the preceding five-year period, from fiscal year 2018 through the fiscal year 2022.²¹ Revenues from property taxes are included in the SCCFD revenues however, revenues from the two Special Assessments are accounted for separately as these funds must be spent on providing services only within the boundaries of CSA 48.

The Fire Protection Fund (FPF) is the bookkeeping vehicle the County of Santa Cruz utilizes to capture and account for the service fees collected for CSA 48. A historical review of the information developed from the FPF for County Fund 304400 revenues revealed recurring revenues increased from \$1,151,000 in FY 2018 to an estimated \$2,652,000 in FY 2022, a 130% overall increase or an annualized increase of approximately 32.6%. The significant increase occurred in FY 2021 with the passage of a CSA 48 2020 ballot measure that more than doubled the revenue stream annually. The special assessment funds are tracked here but appear as revenue for CSA 48, account 34100.

As the Santa Cruz County Fire Department provides services through a contract with CAL FIRE, cost recovery opportunities may be limited. The Department has no direct cost for which to seek cost recovery. The Fire Protection Fund expends funds for accounting and audit services and the service contract with CAL FIRE.

The most significant annual expenditure of County Service Area 48 (CSA 48) is the transfer of funds to the County for its service agreement with CAL FIRE. This expenditure typically requires almost 100% of the yearly recurring expenses. Due to the source of its funding streams, the COVID-19 pandemic had no significant negative impact on FY 2020 and FY 2021 revenues.

The following figure shows the receipts from the Special Assessment and the Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services Assessment against properties in CSA 48 and the related transfers of those funds to the County to be utilized to make payments on the CAL FIRE service contract.

²¹ Historical Financial Information provided by Santa Cruz County staff.

Figure 51: Santa Cruz CSA 48—SCC Fund 22-110 Revenues & Expenses (FY 2018–FY 2022)

Revenue/Expenses	FY 17/18 (Actual)	FY 18/19 (Actual)	FY 19/20 (Actual)	FY 20/21 (Actual)	FY 21/22 (Estimates)
Assessments	1,145,309	1,183,267	1,228,726	2,745,022	2,668,297
Other Revenues	5,448	4,288	2,927	1,729	2,106
Total Revenues:	1,150,757	1,187,555	1,231,653	2,746,751	2,670,403
Transfer to SCC for CAL FIRE Contract	1,150,256	1,195,678	1,231,153	2,746,251	2,669,902
Accounting & Auditing Fees	500	713	500	500	500
Total Expenditures:	1,150,756	1,196,391	1,231,653	2,746,751	2,670,402
Total Surplus (Deficit):	1	8,836	—	—	1

Financial Projections

The FY 2023 budget forecasts a total revenue growth rate of 2.95% from FY 2022. The revenue from the Special Assessment and the Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services Assessments are forecast to increase by 4.5% between the FY 2022 and FY 2023 budget year and this growth pattern is forecast to continue through FY 2028. Property tax revenue is included in the County's budget and not separately shown in the CSA 48 financial information.

As previously discussed, the service agreement between the County and CAL FIRE is the largest single item in the budget, consuming approximately 91% of the recurring expenditures in FY 2023. The CAL FIRE service contract is expected to increase by about 3% annually, using FY 2023 as the base year. The County anticipates savings, based on historical information, of approximately \$1,300,000 between the budgeted amount and the actual billings to be received from CAL FIRE.

It is anticipated the County will allocate Data Processing Service amounts to CSA 48, reducing available funds to be transferred to the County for the CAL FIRE service contract.

The following projections were developed from the historical trends identified in the financial analysis.

Figure 52: Santa Cruz CSA 48—SCC Fund 22-110 Projections

Description	FY 22/23 Budget ²²	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	FY 27/28
Revenue						
Special Assessment	1,330,271	1,390,133	1,452,689	1,518,060	1,586,372	1,657,759
Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services Assessment	1,462,276	1,526,429	1,595,118	1,666,899	1,741,909	1,820,295
Allowance		(3,202)	(3,391)	(3,589)	(3,795)	(4,011)
Total Revenue	2,792,547	2,913,360	3,044,416	3,181,370	3,324,486	3,474,043
Expenditures	2,792,547	2,913,360	3,044,416	3,181,370	3,324,486	3,474,043
Net Surplus (Deficit):	—	—	—	—	—	—

Capital Planning

Santa Cruz County has developed a Fire Department Capital Outlay Plan that only includes fleet vehicles. Still, no funding source for the purchases was identified in the materials provided.²³ CSA 48 does own several fire stations.

Santa Cruz County CSA-4—Pajaro Dunes

Financial Overview

Santa Cruz County provides fire protection for the Pajaro Dunes community under a contract with CAL FIRE. The County assesses and collects various property taxes, including a Fire Protection Tax, within the boundaries of County Service Area 4. The County accounts for the revenues and expenditures separately within its accounting system using the fund accounting concept of reporting. The County prepares an annual operating budget based on a July through June fiscal year. Services to the community are provided through a contract with the State of California (CAL FIRE).

The CAL FIRE Agreement requires the County to provide for the costs to maintain equipment and property that it owns but is utilized by CAL FIRE to perform its contractual obligations to the County.

²² FY 2023 Requested Budget.

²³ Draft SCCO Mobile Equipment Replacement Schedule.

Fire Protection Fund Recurring Revenues & Expenses

A significant amount of information was provided by County staff. It was reviewed to develop a financial trend analysis for the preceding five-year period, from fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2022.²⁴ This review of the historical information of Fire Protection Fund (FPF) for County Fund 304300 revenues revealed recurring revenues increased from \$1,192,000 in FY 2018 to a budgeted \$1,349,000 in FY 2022, a 13.1% overall increase, or an annualized increase of approximately 6.6%.

Property tax revenues are the most significant source of Fire Protection Fund Revenues, followed by a special assessment Fire Protection Tax, which is not restricted to specific uses. These two sources account for almost 98% of Fire Protection Fund Revenues from the Service District. Other sources of revenue include charges for services, interest, and other sources.

The Fire Protection Fund expends funds for extra help salaries and benefits, the service contract with CAL FIRE, services and supplies, allocation of county overhead, capital expenditures, and contingencies. In FY 2022, a new Type I engine was acquired. Per CAL FIRE, Type 1 apparatus has an expected useful life of 15 years.

The most significant annual expenditure of County Service Area 4 (CSA 4) is for its service agreement with CAL FIRE. This payment typically requires approximately 90% of the recurring yearly expenditures.

Due to the source of its funding streams, the COVID-19 pandemic had no significant negative impact on FY 2020 and FY 2021 revenues. The following figure represents the historical revenues and expenditures of the Department.

²⁴ Historical Financial Information provided by Santa Cruz County staff.

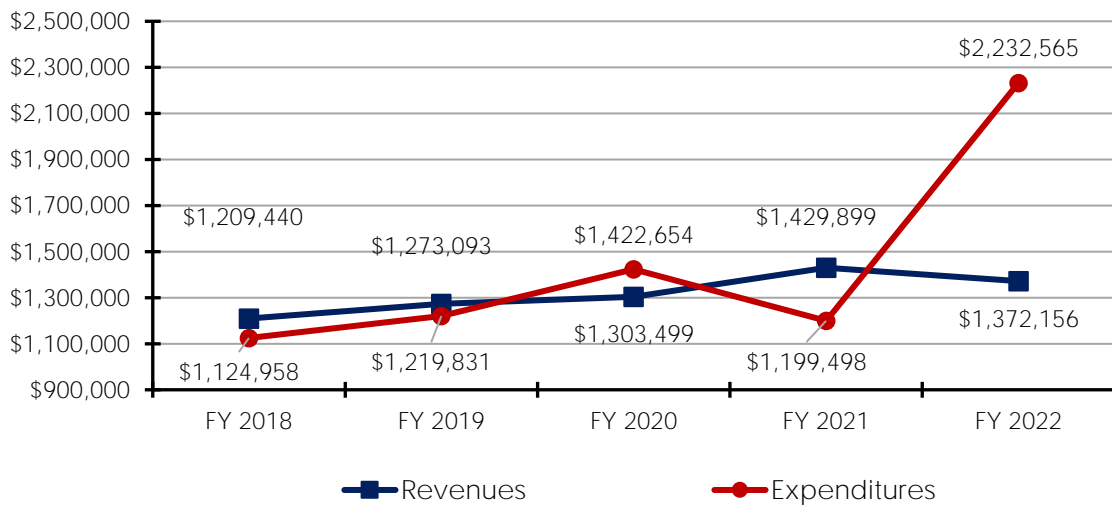
Figure 53: Santa Cruz CSA 4—Pajaro Dunes Summarize Revenues & Expenses*

Revenue/Expenses	FY 17/18 (Actual)	FY 18/19 (Actual)	FY 19/20 (Actual)	FY 20/21 (Actual)	FY 21/22 (Estimates)
Property taxes	718,552	750,341	769,372	786,033	803,325
Special Assessment	449,891	488,988	508,056	524,823	545,334
Charges for services	23,930	5,745	—	47,460	—
Recurring Revenue	1,192,373	1,245,074	1,277,428	1,358,316	1,348,659
Other revenues	17,067	28,019	26,071	71,583	23,497
Total Revenues:	1,209,440	1,273,093	1,303,499	1,429,899	1,372,156
Salaries and benefits	70,917	49,571	27,150	—	—
CAL FIRE contract	960,323	1,090,681	1,223,325	1,095,464	1,379,000
Services & supplies	72,069	76,285	159,579	97,587	163,265
Allocated county overhead	5,675	3,294	4,104	6,447	11,506
Total Recurring:	1,108,984	1,219,831	1,414,158	1,199,498	1,553,771
Capital & other	15,974	—	8,497	—	678,794
Total expenditures	1,124,958	1,219,831	1,422,655	1,199,498	2,232,565
Total Surplus (Deficit)	84,482	53,262	(119,154)	230,401	(860,409)
Beginning Reserves	925,446	1,009,928	1,063,190	944,036	1,174,437
Ending Reserves:	1,009,928	1,063,190	944,036	1,174,437	314,028

* Information provided by staff

The following figure displays this data and indicates CSA 4's historical revenues and expenditures.

Figure 54: Santa Cruz CSA 4—Pajaro Dunes Revenues & Expenses



Financial Projections

Property tax revenue growth has averaged approximately 3.3% between FY 2018 and FY 2022. The FY 2023 budget forecasts a growth rate of 3.1% from FY 2022, but to remain conservative and consistent with the more recent trend, recurring revenues are forecast to grow at 3% annually, using FY 2023 as the base period. Fire Protection Tax collections have shown an annual growth rate of 4.7% during the historical analysis study period. They are forecast to continue to grow at 4.2% annually. Other revenues are forecast to remain consistent.

As previously discussed, the service agreement between CSA 4 and CAL FIRE is the largest single item in the budget, consuming approximately 90% of the budgeted expenditures annually. CAL FIRE projects operating costs for each budget cycle but invoices only for those amounts expended in each category, typically less than the projected amounts. The County's staff have projected the cost savings of labor based on historical experience. The costs of this service increase and decrease depending on significant incidents in the Department and growth in wages and benefits. This study will forecast growth in this category at 3% annually, again using the FY 2023 budgeted amounts as a base year. Other services and supplies are also forecast at 3% annually. Non-recurring expenditures are forecast at \$50,000 annually for capital outlay and \$100,000 for contingencies.

The following projections were developed from the historical trends identified in the financial analysis. As indicated, the financial projections forecast a significant deficit between revenues and expenditures.

Figure 55: Santa Cruz CSA 4—Pajaro Dunes Summarized Projections

Description	FY 22/23 Budget ²⁵	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	FY 27/28
Revenue	1,411,610	1,460,191	1,505,794	1,557,773	1,611,617	1,667,393
Expenditures	1,701,983	1,748,542	1,796,499	1,845,894	1,896,771	1,949,174
Net Surplus (Deficit):	(290,373)	(288,352)	(290,705)	(288,120)	(285,154)	(281,780)

Capital Planning

An overall Capital Improvements/Replacement Plan was not observed in the documentation provided by the County. Still, an apparatus list supplied by the County indicated that many assets appear to be approaching their expected useful life.

Demand for Services

SCCFD is primarily a mix of suburban and rural systems that provide aid services to other communities when requested. Data was provided by the CAL FIRE ECC and the State Fire Marshal's Office, providing NFIRS data from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. In addition, any response to a wildland-type fire in the State Response Area was removed from the analysis. CAL FIRE units were considered aid units when not under Amador funding, on a state mission, or part of the Schedule A contract in CSA 4. The following figure is the overview of the response statistics for SCCFD.

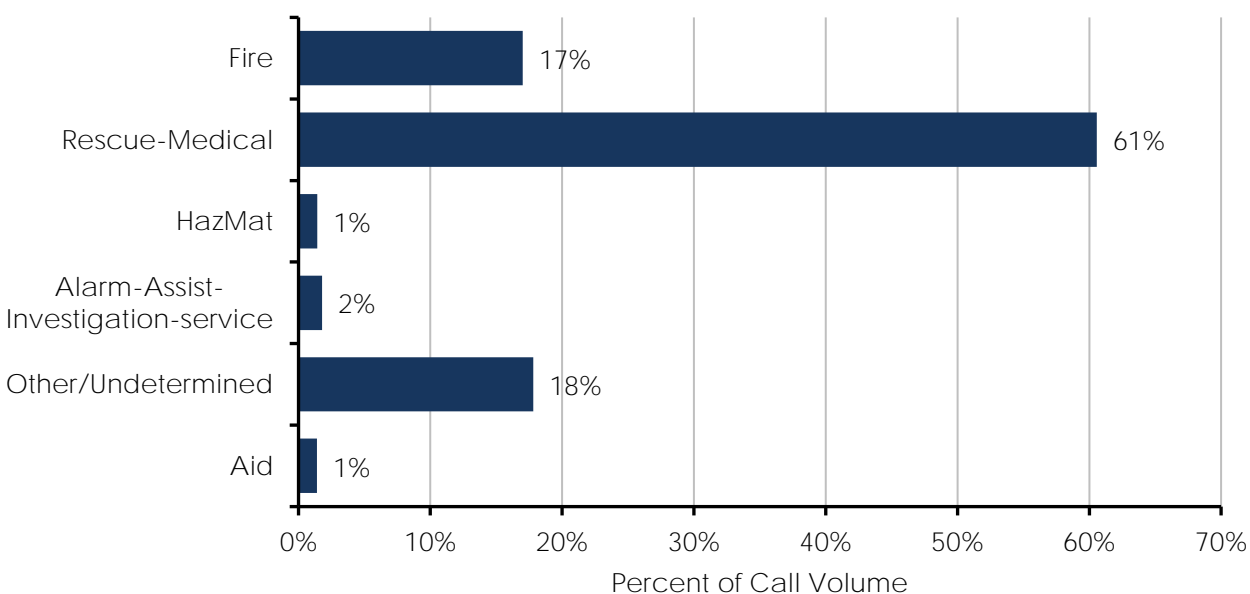
Figure 56: SCCFD Response Overview

Agency	Santa Cruz County Fire Department
Avg. Annual Incident Vol.	1,232
Incidents per 1,000 Population	55
90th Percentile Total Time	28:00

Each incident was grouped into the main categories based on the dispatch type. The incident types were related to the major categories in the National Fire Incident Reporting system. The following figure is the percentage of incidents within those categories for the entire data set, 2018–2022.

²⁵ FY 2023 Requested Budget.

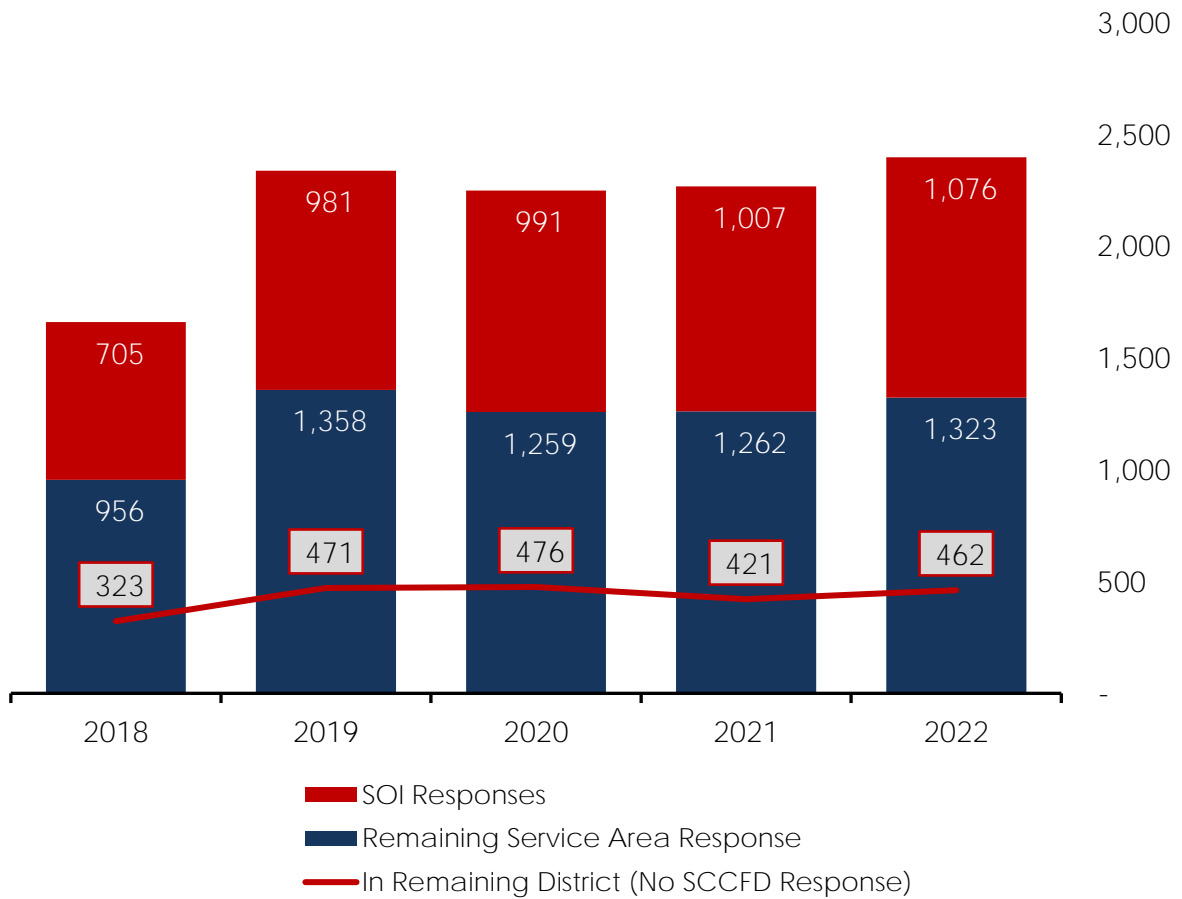
Figure 57: SCCFD Total Incident Responses by Type as a Percentage



Typically, an analysis of incidents by year can yield a trend or indicate what call volume might look like in the next few years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social and economic constraints, this is difficult with this data set. As a result, a trend was not easily spotted or extrapolated. It appears that SCCFD response numbers dropped in 2020 and have started to rebound but have not returned to the pre-pandemic rates.

The sphere of influence evaluation for SCCFD differs from the other agencies. The other agencies would look to increase their responses by the number of incidents within their SOI. However, SCCFD would potentially lose the number of responses within the associated SOIs, roughly half of the responses annually. Another noticeable difference for SCCFD is the number of times an agency unit was not captured in the CAD data. This could be due to the SOI effect, the relationship between CAL FIRE and SCCFD, or a lack of volunteer firefighter participation. Further study would be required to understand the dynamics behind this number. The following figure shows the annual incident volume by year with the responses into the sphere of influence and district-covered incidents.

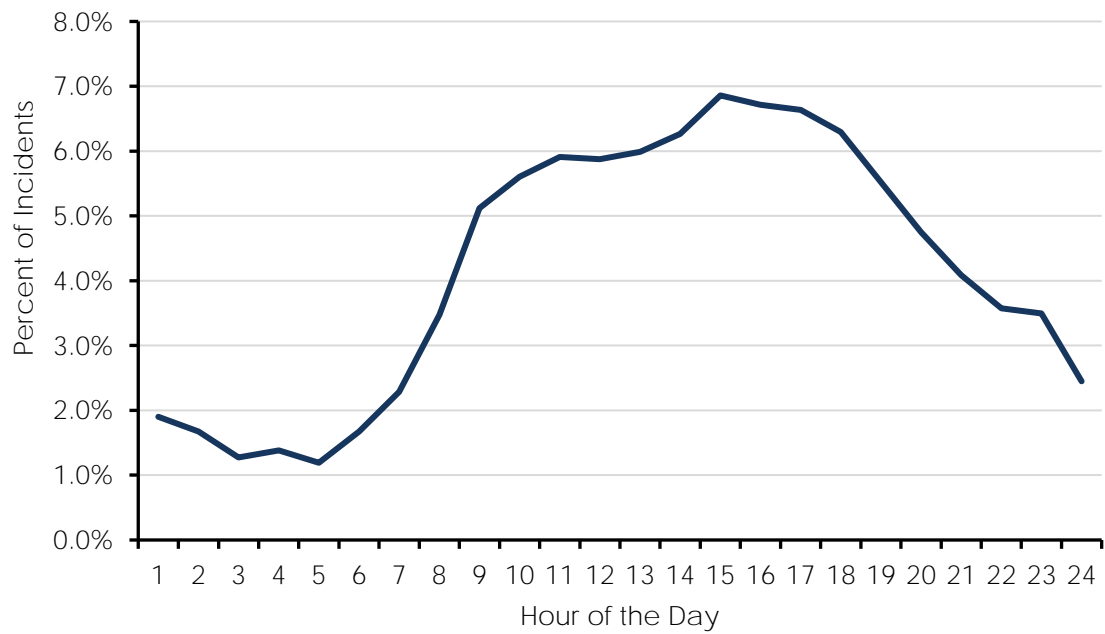
Figure 58: SCCFD Annual Incident Volume by Year



A temporal study indicated defined seasonality in the response data. The winter months, except December, indicated fewer than expected responses, while the summer months through October and December show increased incident responses. The variation was plus and minus 2%.

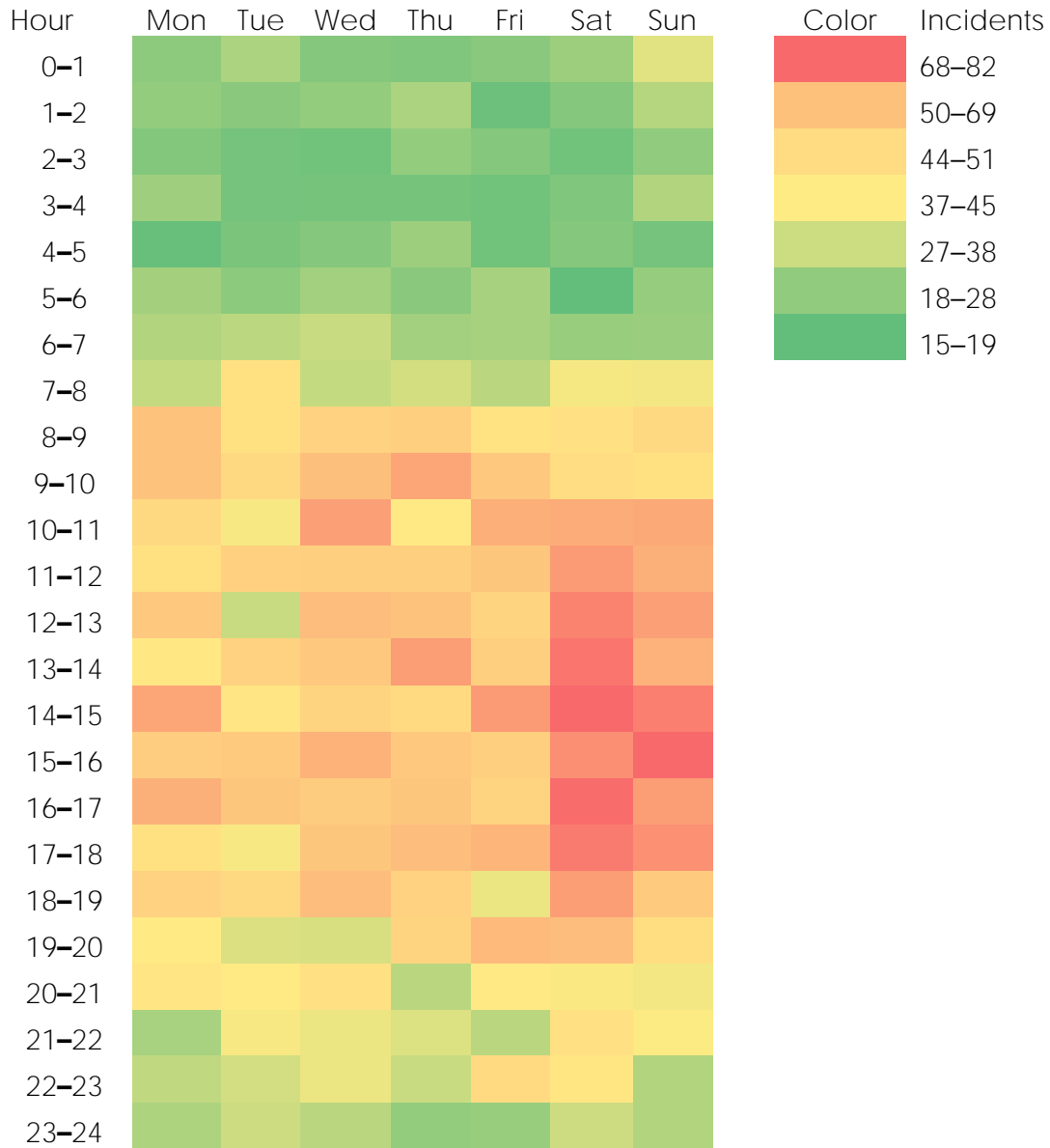
A study of demand by hour shows that SCCFD, like many fire agencies, sees a significant variation by the hour. In fact, about 75% of all incidents happen between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The following figure shows the general difference of the complete incident data set by hour.

Figure 59: SCCFD Incident Percentage by Hour



The average daily swing is typical and likely due to the number of awake and active people. However, the day-to-day variation in this information does play a part. The following figure is the incident heat map by the hour and day of the week.

Figure 60: SCCFD Incident Heat Map by Hour and Weekday



As indicated in the previous figure, the daytime hour incidents tend to be evenly distributed during the weekdays and more pronounced on the weekends. Saturday and Sunday are the heaviest days, while the remaining days are relatively consistent. There also seems to be a slight shift in incident density on Friday and Saturday nights, indicating a more active weekend scene.

The final volume analysis looked at the unit usage for all apparatus within the system. This analysis considered three dimensions. The first is the unit hour utilization (UHU). This number represents the time a unit was committed to an incident as a percentage of the total time they were on duty. The next is the average time a unit was committed to an incident. And finally, the average number of incidents a unit was deployed daily.

Only those units clearly identified by the agency or units with large volumes of responses within the data sets were evaluated. The units are grouped roughly into the stations. The following figure shows the general statistics for each frontline unit within the SCCFD system.

Figure 61: Santa Cruz County Fire Department Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
E2911	0.3%	50 Minutes	0.1
E2936	0.5%	52 Minutes	0.1
W2951	0.3%	148 Minutes	0.0
E4121	0.3%	46 Minutes	0.1
E3211	0.3%	63 Minutes	0.1
R3261	0.4%	56 Minutes	0.1
W3251	0.3%	100 Minutes	0.0
E3611	0.6%	48 Minutes	0.2
R3661	0.2%	53 Minutes	0.1
W3651	0.3%	76 Minutes	0.1
E3721	0.1%	59 Minutes	0.0
R3761	0.1%	61 Minutes	0.0
W3951	0.0%	61 Minutes	0.0
E4111	1.3%	42 Minutes	0.5
R4161	0.2%	49 Minutes	0.0
W4151	0.1%	59 Minutes	0.0
R3761	0.1%	61 Minutes	0.0

In addition to the units that are directly under the control of SCCFD, some of the CAL FIRE units are partially funded by the county fire department. These units operate under an Amador agreement and are committed to the County during the Amador periods. Periods outside of that, they will respond if available. Under these Amador agreements the county funds a portion of the off fire season CAL FIRE personnel and CAL FIRE agrees to keep these apparatus fully staffed year-round. The agreement obligates CAL FIRE to maintain equipment at specific stations during the off season and to respond to all SCCFD incidents as needed. However, it is essential to differentiate between the funded and mutual aid responses when evaluating the system. The following figure shows the different CAL FIRE units within the County participating in the Amador funding, their UHU, average, and whether they were State or Amador funded.

Figure 62: SCCFD Amador Funded Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
E1762			
Amador Funding	1.4%	109 Minutes	0.2
State Funding	5.6%	60 Minutes	0.1
E1766			
Amador Funding	1.2%	14 Minutes	1.2
State Funding	14.6%	99 Minutes	0.2
E1767			
Amador Funding	0.8%	65 Minutes	0.2
State Funding	15.5%	75 Minutes	0.3
E1769			
Amador Funding	0.4%	60 Minutes	0.1
State Funding	5.4%	71 Minutes	0.1
E1774			
Amador Funding	0.5%	45 Minutes	0.2
State Funding	13.3%	42 Minutes	0.5
E1776			
Amador Funding	1.6%	68 Minutes	0.3
State Funding	14.2%	54 Minutes	0.4

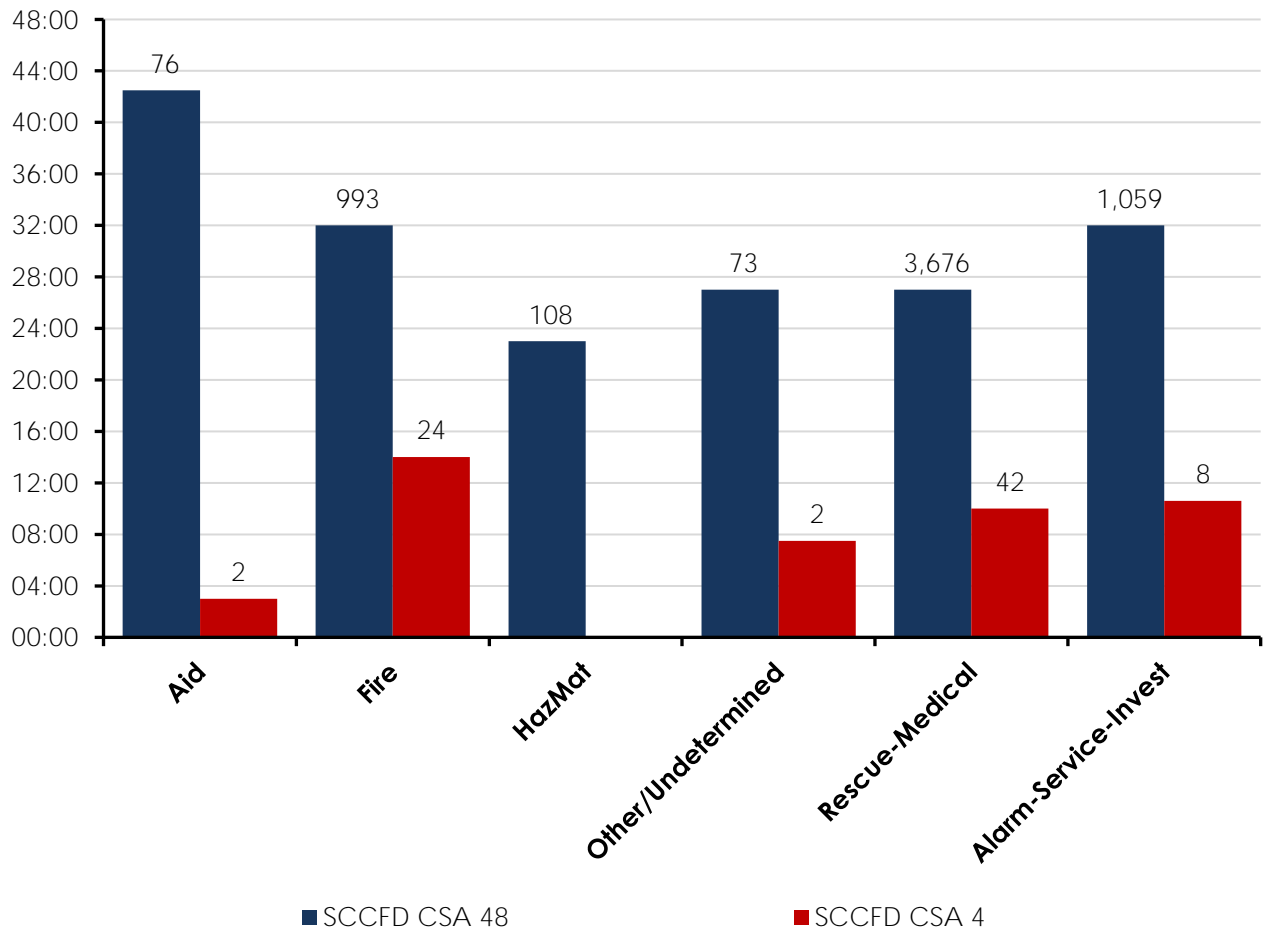
Service Delivery & Performance

The performance of the SCCFD response was also evaluated. The data did not differentiate between emergency responses and non-emergency responses. In addition, there was no evaluation of the arriving unit's type or agency. Therefore, all responses are evaluated. The 90th percentile is typically used in the fire service and is considered the standard for measuring incident response performance. Due to the nature of this report, SCCFD's performance in those areas identified as another agency's sphere of influence was also evaluated. Agency performance goals or standards are not taken into consideration for this report.

Three unique time segments are included when evaluating an agency's response performance. The first is the time it takes for the Dispatcher to answer the 911 call and notify the agency (call processing); the second is the time it takes for the agency to receive the call and go en route to the call (turnout time); and third is the time it takes for the unit to drive to the incident (travel time). All three segments combined make up the total response time. For this evaluation, the unit type was not discriminated against, and the first arriving unit was used to determine the total response time.

Each call type may contain variables. For example, questioning the caller for appropriate information may take more or less time. In addition, it may take longer for crews to respond depending on the personal protective equipment to be worn, which varies with the type of incident. The following figure shows the total response time performance for each of the major incident types for all incidents within the data set. The following figure shows the first due, 90th percentile total response time for two county service areas within the county fire department response area.

Figure 63: SCCFD Incidents 90th Percentile Total Response Times, Jan 2018–Dec 2022



Staffing

As mentioned, SCCFD is a combination fire department, deploying its personnel and apparatus from 10 fire stations distributed throughout a 247-square-mile service area. Of the 10 fire stations, four are County or locally-owned with the remaining six owned by the State of California. The following figure lists the various fire stations in Santa Cruz County, who owns them, and their staffing.

Figure 64: SCCFD Fire Stations & Staffing

Fire Station	Staffing (Daily/Total Volunteers)
County/Locally Owned	
Station 29 (Las Cumbres)	Volunteer (\cong 11)
Station 31 (Fall Creek)	Career/Amador (3)
Station 32 (Martin)	Volunteer (\cong 16)
Station 34 (McDermott)	
Station 36 (Loma Prieta)	Volunteer (\cong 16)
Station 37 (Davenport)	Volunteer (\cong 9)
Station 42 (Pajaro Dunes)	Career (2)
State-Owned (CAL FIRE)	
Station 21 (Saratoga Summit)	Career/Amador (3)
Station 33 (Big Creek)	Career/Amador (3)
Station 47 (Burrell)	Career/Amador (3)
Station 49 (Corralitos)	Volunteer (\cong 18) Career/Amador (3)

Career stations with "Amador" staffing typically maintain minimum staffing during the winter months, with additional career personnel during the busier summer months.

Facilities & Apparatus

Santa Cruz County Fire Department Facilities

Santa Cruz County Fire Department utilizes county-owned (Volunteer) and state-owned (CAL FIRE) stations to house fire apparatus and support emergency response personnel. The fire stations were evaluated using the National Fire Protection Association's Standard 1500: Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program as a guide. A walkthrough inspection of each facility was completed during site visits in December 2022.

Overall, the County's fire stations are older and do not meet the requirements of today's modern fire service. As the firefighting environment has changed, the technology, equipment, and safety systems have also changed to meet new demands. Older buildings do not typically have the space or engineered systems to meet that new environment in which fire personnel and equipment operate.

The following figure summarizes some of the primary features of the various County and state-owned fire stations located throughout the SCCFD service area.

Figure 65: SCCFD Station 21 (Saratoga Summit)


Address/Physical Location:		12900 Skyline Blvd, Los Gatos, CA 95030					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>This facility is one of the oldest CALFIRE stations in Santa Cruz County. It consists of several independent and adjacent structures. The living quarters appear well-maintained and conform to CAL FIRE operations and the housing of male and female firefighters.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1930s					
General Condition		Fair					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Generator					
ADA Compliant		Apparatus Bay-Yes; Barracks/Day Room-No					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-Throughs	0	Back-Ins	3	Total Bays:	3
Total Square Footage		5,500					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		Bedrooms	3	Beds	3	Dorm Beds	11
Maximum Staffing Capability		14	(Total number of staff that can be housed)				
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Gender Segregation (Y/N)		Bathrooms	Y	Showers	Y	Bedrooms	Y
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		No					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		No					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 66: SCCFD Station 29 (Las Cumbres)

Address/Physical Location:		18269 Las Cumbres Rd., Los Gatos, CA 95003					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>This fire station is over 35 years old and has two back-in apparatus bays and a small meeting and office space.</p> <p>An additional back-in garage building is located to the rear. It has a space to adequately house two utility vehicles.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1986					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Generator					
General Condition		Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		4
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		2,200					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		All Volunteer					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		No					
Kitchen Facilities		No					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Bathroom, no shower					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		No					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		No					
Smoke Detection		No					
Decon & Biological Disposal		No					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 67: SCCFD Station 31 (Fall Creek)


Address/Physical Location:	7272 Empire Grade Rd, Santa Cruz, CA 95060									
	General Description: This is a CAL FIRE wildland fire station with a single back-in apparatus bay. The firefighter living quarters and office space are in a separate adjacent one-story wood frame structure. The buildings appear well maintained and upgraded to accommodate all genders living and working on-site.									
	Structure									
Date of Original Construction	1990s									
General Condition	Fair									
Seismic Protection	Yes									
Auxiliary Power	Generator									
ADA Compliant	No									
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-Throughs	0	Back-Ins	1	Total Bays:	1				
Total Square Footage	1,900									
Facilities Available										
Sleeping Quarters	Bedrooms	3	Beds	6	Dorm Beds	0				
Maximum Staffing Capability	6	(Total number of staff that can be housed)								
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	Yes									
Gender Segregation (Y/N)	Bathrooms	3	Showers	3	Bedrooms	3				
Exercise/Workout Facilities	Yes									
Kitchen Facilities	Yes									
Individual Lockers Assigned	Yes									
Training/Meeting Rooms	No									
Washer/Dryer/Extractor	Yes									
Safety & Security										
Station Sprinklered	No									
Smoke Detection	Yes									
Decon & Biological Disposal	Extractor for decon; no disposal									
Security System	No									
Apparatus Exhaust System	No									

Figure 68: SCCFD Station 32 (Martin)


Address/Physical Location:	975 Martin Rd, Santa Cruz, CA 95060					
	General Description: This fire station is a 52-year-old wood-frame single-story facility. It has been adequately maintained and appears to provide appropriate facilities for the volunteer firefighters and equipment assigned to it.					
Structure						
Date of Original Construction	1972					
Seismic Protection	Yes					
Auxiliary Power	Generator					
General Condition	Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-through Bays	1	Back-in Bays		3	
ADA Compliant	Yes					
Total Square Footage	2,800					
Facilities Available						
Sleeping Quarters	1	Bedrooms	1	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability	All Volunteer					
Exercise/Workout Facilities	No					
Kitchen Facilities	Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned	No					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms	Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor	Washer and dryer. No Extractor					
Safety & Security						
Station Sprinklered	No					
Smoke Detection	Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal	No					
Security System	Camera in the apparatus bay					
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes					

Figure 69: SCCFD Station 33 (Big Creek)


Address/Physical Location:		240 Swanton Rd, Davenport, CA 95017								
	General Description: This facility is a CAL FIRE wildland fire station. It is an attached one-story wood-frame building with living quarters and a two-bay, back-in apparatus storage structure.									
Structure										
Date of Original Construction		1977								
General Condition		Fair								
Seismic Protection		Yes								
Auxiliary Power		Generator								
ADA Compliant		Yes								
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-Throughs		0	Back-Ins		2	Total Bays:	2	
Total Square Footage		2,785 square feet								
Facilities Available										
Sleeping Quarters		Bedrooms		1	Beds		8	Dorm Beds		8
Maximum Staffing Capability		8		(Total number of staff that can be housed)						
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes								
Gender Segregation (Y/N)		Bathrooms		2	Showers		8	Bedrooms		1
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes								
Kitchen Facilities		Yes								
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes								
Training/Meeting Rooms		In kitchen area								
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Washer/dryer; no extractor								
Safety & Security										
Station Sprinklered		No								
Smoke Detection		Yes								
Decon & Biological Disposal		No								
Security System		No								
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes								

Figure 70: SCCFD Station 34 (McDermott)


Address/Physical Location:		7276 Empire Grade Rd, Santa Cruz, CA 95060					
		<p>General Description: Station 34 is a 19-year-old two-story metal frame, fire sprinkler-protected structure. The ground floor is occupied by volunteer quarters (kitchen, day room, and office spaces) and two back-in apparatus bays. The second floor is primarily used for equipment storage.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		2004					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Generator					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		3
ADA Compliant		Yes					
Total Square Footage		3,300					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		All Volunteer					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		No					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Washer and dryer; no extractor					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		No					
Decon & Biological Disposal		No					
Security System		Camera in the apparatus bay					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 71: SCCFD Station 36 (Loma Prieta)


Address/Physical Location:		17445 Old Summit Road, Los Gatos, CA 95033					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>Station 36 is a 24-year-old one-story, metal-framed, fire sprinkler-protected structure. It has three back-in apparatus bays.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1999					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Generator					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		2
ADA Compliant		Yes					
Total Square Footage		2,500					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		All Volunteer					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		No					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		No					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		No					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		No					
Decon & Biological Disposal		No					
Security System		Cameras					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 72: SCCFD Station 37 (Davenport)


Address/Physical Location:		76 Marine View Ave, Davenport, CA 95017					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>Station 37 is more than 40 years old. It has three drive-through apparatus bays, an equipment storage loft, and a small meeting room and office for the volunteer firefighters assigned to this fire station.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1980s					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Generator					
General Condition		Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		3	Back-in Bays		0
ADA Compliant		Yes					
Total Square Footage		3,150					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	2	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		All Volunteer					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		No					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes/Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes/Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Washer and dryer; no extractor					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		No					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 73: SCCFD Station 42 (Pajaro Dunes)


Address/Physical Location:	50 Rio Boca Rd, Watsonville, CA 95076					
	General Description: Station 42 is a two-story wood frame, fire sprinkler-protected facility with a small office/public area and a kitchen/day room. The second floor is accessible by an interior staircase and exterior stairs leading down to the rear of the building's exterior. The sleeping area is located on this floor.					
Structure						
Date of Original Construction						
General Condition	Good					
Seismic Protection						
Auxiliary Power						
ADA Compliant	No					
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-Throughs	2	Back-Ins	0	Total Bays:	2
Total Square Footage						
Facilities Available						
Sleeping Quarters	Bedrooms		Beds		Dorm Beds	
Maximum Staffing Capability	3	(Total number of staff that can be housed)				
Bathroom/Shower Facilities						
Gender Segregation (Y/N)	Bathrooms	Y	Showers		Bedrooms	Y
Exercise/Workout Facilities						
Kitchen Facilities						
Individual Lockers Assigned						
Training/Meeting Rooms						
Washer/Dryer/Extractor						
Safety & Security						
Station Sprinklered						
Smoke Detection						
Decon & Biological Disposal						
Security System						
Apparatus Exhaust System						

Figure 74: SCCFD Station 47 (Burrell)



Address/Physical Location:		2050 Highland Way, Los Gatos, CA 95030					
	General Description: This is a CALFIRE wildland fire station. It comprises several independent and adjacent structures, including a dormitory/sleeping facility, kitchen, day room, and a remote two-bay back-in apparatus garage.						
Structure							
Date of Original Construction	1948						
General Condition	Fair						
Seismic Protection	Yes						
Auxiliary Power	Generator						
ADA Compliant	Yes						
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-Throughs	2	Back-Ins	1	Total Bays:	3	
Total Square Footage	4,530						
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters	Bedrooms	4	Beds	6	Dorm Beds	0	
Maximum Staffing Capability	6	(Total number of staff that can be housed)					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	Yes						
Gender Segregation (Y/N)	Bathrooms	Y	Showers	Y	Bedrooms	Y	
Exercise/Workout Facilities	Yes						
Kitchen Facilities	Yes						
Individual Lockers Assigned	Yes						
Training/Meeting Rooms	No						
Washer/Dryer/Extractor	Yes						
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered	No						
Smoke Detection	Yes						
Decon & Biological Disposal	Yes						
Security System	No						
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes						

Figure 75: SCCFD Station 49 (Corralitos)

Address/Physical Location:		120 Eureka Canyon Rd, Watsonville, CA 95076					
		General Description: This fire station is a 50-year-old one-story wood-framed facility. It includes five drive-through apparatus bays and firefighter living quarters adequate to accommodate at least two fire companies. Facilities are sufficient to support volunteer firefighters assigned to it. This facility is shared by both the Corralitos Station 41 volunteers and the Station 49 personnel.					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1970					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Generator					
General Condition		Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		5	Back-in Bays		1
ADA Compliant		Yes					
Total Square Footage		6,000					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		7	Bedrooms	13	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		13					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		No					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Fire Station Discussion

As shown in the preceding figure, fire stations owned by the State of California have a combined average age of 45 years as of 2023, while those owned by Santa Cruz County. The following figure summarizes the station's condition, age, and ownership.

Figure 76: Summary of the Fire Stations in the SCCFD Service Area (2023)

Station	Apparatus Bays	Minimum Staffing	General Condition	Station Age	County or State ^A
Station 21	6	6	Fair	88 years ^B	S
Station 29	4	Volunteers	Fair	37 years	C
Station 31	2	3	Fair	28 years	S
Station 32	4	Volunteers	Fair	51 years	C
Station 33	4	3	Fair	46 years	S
Station 34	3	Volunteers	Good	19 years	C
Station 36	2	Volunteers	Good	24 years	C
Station 37	3	Volunteers	Fair	38 years ^B	C
Station 42	2	3			
Station 47	5	3	Fair	75 years	S
Station 49	5	13 ^C	Fair	53 years	S
Totals:	38	28+	Average:	46 years	

Station 21—Saratoga Summit Station 21 is a CAL FIRE facility built in 1930 and modeled on a design utilized by the State to house personnel and fire apparatus remotely throughout the rural areas of California. Separate and remote buildings were built to house personnel (dormitory/living quarters/kitchen/dining) and fire apparatus. The facilities have been remodeled in the last decade to accommodate male/female firefighters and increased crew sizes. The station appeared clean, well-maintained, and adequate to support the currently assigned personnel.

Station 29—Las Cumbres Station 29 is staffed by Volunteer firefighting personnel serving the Las Cumbres Community. The station was built in 1986 and consists of two buildings. Both buildings appear well-maintained and adequate to serve this station's volunteer firefighters and equipment.

Station 31—Fall Creek is a CAL FIRE station co-located with Bonny Doon Volunteer Station 34 (McDermott). Station 31 is one of the five Amador-funded stations in the CAL FIRE cooperative agreement during the non-peak fire season.

The station's layout is consistent with other CAL FIRE wildland fire station facilities. The buildings appear well-maintained and upgraded to accommodate male and female firefighters living and working on-site.

Station 32—Martin, built in 1972, is a one-story 2,800 sq. ft. wood frame structure with four apparatus bays. It is one of two fire stations used by Bonny Doon Volunteers. Several apparatus are housed here to cover the western portions of the Bonny Doon community. The overall condition of the station was fair and generally well-maintained.

Station 33—Big Creek This State-owned wildland fire station supports the countywide response of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department. Station 33 is one of the five Amador-funded stations in the CAL FIRE cooperative agreement during the non-peak fire season. The station is a one-story wood-frame building built in 1977. It is a residential structure attached to a sizeable two-bay garage designed to house two fire apparatus.

Station 34—McDermott is co-located with Station 31 on a parcel at the intersection of Empire Grade, Ice Cream Grade, and Felton-Empire Road. The two-story metal structure station was built in 1984 and comprises three sizeable back-in apparatus bays, an attached office area, a commercial-style kitchen, a general-purpose training/meeting room, restrooms, and shower facilities on the ground floor.

Station 36—Loma Prieta is a single-story building constructed in 1999. The station is a single-story metal building that serves as a storage building for fire apparatus and a meeting location for volunteers.

Station 37—Davenport is a one-story wood frame structure. The building is fire sprinkler-protected and supported by a propane generator. The station is on a parcel providing quick access to Highway 1. The facility has three drive-through apparatus bays, a small meeting/office space, and limited fire equipment and supplies storage.

Station 42—Pajaro Dunes is located at the entrance to the Pajaro Dunes beachside residential community. This two-story wood-frame fire station is approximately 40 years old. The building appears to be well maintained and adequate to meet the needs of the two-person engine company assigned to protect the Pajaro Dunes community.

Station 47—Burrell is a CAL FIRE wildland fire station located on Highland Way in Los Gatos, CA. The station is one of the five Amador stations that serve Santa Cruz County FD as part of the CAL FIRE cooperative agreement during the non-peak fire season. The facility is typical of the State's older wildland fire station design style.

Station 49—Corralitos This fire station, built in 1970, is a large one-story wood-frame building shared by CAL FIRE and the Corralitos Volunteer Fire Company (Station 41). The facility has five drive-through apparatus bays. The station is ample in size and has a capacity for up to 13 personnel and volunteers assigned to the station.

Apparatus

SCCFD operates a wide range of vehicles and apparatus. The following figures show the type and conditions of SCCFD's fleet. Apparatus and vehicles starting with the number 17 are owned by CAL FIRE but used on SCCFD's behalf as stipulated in the contractual arrangement.

Figure 77: SCCFD Apparatus (2022)

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
E2911	Type 1	Good
E2936	Type 3	Good
E3211	Type 1	Good
E3222	Type 2	Poor
E3311	Type 1	Poor
E3611	Type 1	Good
E3638	Type 3	Good
E3641	Type 2	Fair
E3661	Type 2	Fair
E3711	Type 1	Excellent
E3721	Type 1	Poor
E3931	Type 3	Excellent
E3937	Type 3	Excellent
E4111	Type 1	Fair
E4111	Type 1	Excellent
E4121	Type 2	Fair
WT2951	Tender	Good
WT3251	Tender	Good
WT3651	Tender	Fair
WT3951	Tender	Poor
WT4151	Tender	Excellent
R3261	Rescue	Fair
R3761	Rescue	Fair
R3961	Rescue	Excellent
R3967	Rescue	Excellent
R4161	Rescue	Poor

Figure 78: SCCFD Command & Staff Vehicles (2022)

CAD Radio Name	Use	Condition
C1700	Command	Excellent
B3905	Command	Excellent
P1726	Prevention	Poor
P3981	Prevention	Excellent
P3982	Prevention	Excellent
T1752	Training	Good
T1753	Training	Poor
T3907	Training	Excellent

Facility Replacement & Infrastructure Needs

Overall, the County's fire stations are older and do not meet the requirements of today's modern fire service. As the firefighting environment has changed, the technology, equipment, and safety systems have also changed to meet new demands. Older buildings do not typically have the space or engineered systems to meet that new environment. Modern living also requires much more access to electrical outlets and technology than was designed in facilities constructed decades ago.

Older buildings typically do not meet the requirements due to the need to decontaminate personnel and equipment after many responses in the current firefighting context. Every crew member should have access to facilities to decontaminate immediately after a fire or hazardous event, and showers should allow for gender separation. In addition, there needs to be enough partitioned space to allow for gear and equipment to be thoroughly washed and decontaminated without causing exposure to the fire station's living and working spaces. Many of the facilities currently utilized by SCCFD do not meet this need.

While all structures require routine maintenance, staffed fire stations require even more maintenance due to their continuous occupancy by a minimum of three or more firefighters. Volunteer stations, although not occupied on a 24-hour basis, still require the same high degree of ongoing maintenance because they are essential public safety facilities. It appears the fire stations are being adequately maintained despite their age and frequency of use. County-owned volunteer facilities were often cluttered and disorganized, which could be attributed to a lack of available storage space or dedicated locations for equipment maintenance. Most stations were supplied with an apparatus exhaust removal system. During the inspection, it was noted that only a few apparatus in stations were attached and utilizing the exhaust removal equipment.

The following figure summarizes some of the primary features of the various County and state-owned fire stations located throughout the SCCFD service area.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

There is a wide range of potential shared facilities within these facilities. Due to the complex relationship between SCCFD and CAL FIRE, several facilities are already combined, as listed in the fire station discussion section.

Dispatch & Communications

Dispatch services for the Santa Cruz County Fire Department are provided by CAL FIRE under the terms of the Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. In addition to the Santa Cruz County Fire Department, the CAL FIRE Felton Emergency Command Center provides CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Administrative Unit (CZU) and the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District dispatch services.

When a 911 call is placed in Santa Cruz County, the call is immediately routed to the County's primary public safety answering point (PSAP) or the California Highway Patrol in Vallejo. Each center is staffed 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz Profile

Agency Overview

Technically, the Central Fire District (CFD) is a new organization. However, the name was initially used in 1987 with the consolidation of the Capitola, Soquel, and Live Oak Fire Districts. In February 2021, the Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and the Central Fire Protection District consolidated to become the Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County.

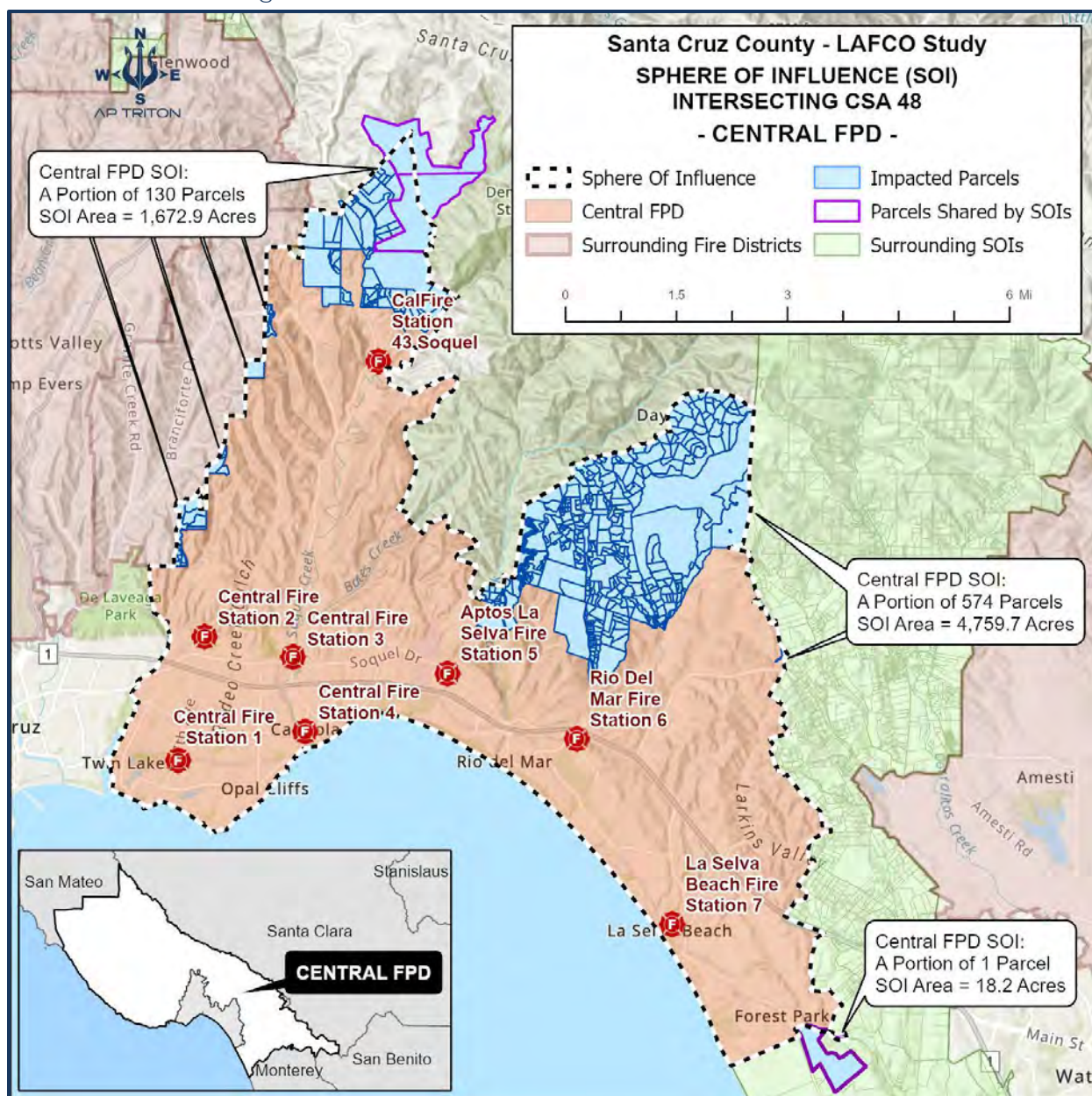
Boundary and Sphere of Influence

CFD is located along the coast and is surrounded on the north and east by CSA 48. The western border is shared with the City of Santa Cruz and Branciforte/Scotts Valley Fire Protection District.

Several areas are included in the SOI. Most of the sites are currently a part of CSA 48. However, along the western edge, there are some areas within the Branciforte/Scotts Valley Fire Protection District. The largest is north of the District. Within the SOI, there are 6,458.8 acres on 705 parcels. One, on the southeastern edge, is shared with neighboring jurisdictional SOIs.

The following figure shows the location and the SOI as currently reported.

Figure 79: Central Fire District Service Area with SOI



Type & Extent of Services

Services Provided

CFD provides a wide range of services for its community. These include fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical care, and other emergency services. The following figure represents each of the services and the level performed as indicated by the agency.

Figure 80: Overview of Services Provided

Service	Y/N	Level
Fire Suppression	Yes	Structural, wildland (with CAL FIRE)
EMS First Response	Yes	ALS
Ambulance Transport	Yes	ALS
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	Marine rescue, low and high-angle rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, vehicle extrication
Hazmat Response	Yes	Participates in the Santa Cruz Hazardous Materials Interagency Team (SCHMIT)
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	
Plan Review	Yes	By contract
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Fuels mitigation program, school education (junior fire marshal program)
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	Cause and origin only

Service Area

CFD is a multi-disciplined fire protection district. The District is statutorily responsible for fire protection of improved structures and other emergency services within the city limits. It also maintains contractual response obligations with the Santa Cruz County Fire Department. Vegetation fires are part of the state responsibility area and are statutorily the responsibility of CAL FIRE. However, CFD provides support and assistance when requested and will begin incident mitigation if notified directly.

Collaboration

- CFD participant in the countywide mutual aid agreement.
- CFD responds for specialized technical rescue and HazMat assistance if requested.

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs)

- Mobile cascade air system.
- Fire prevention trailer prop.
- Live fire training prop.

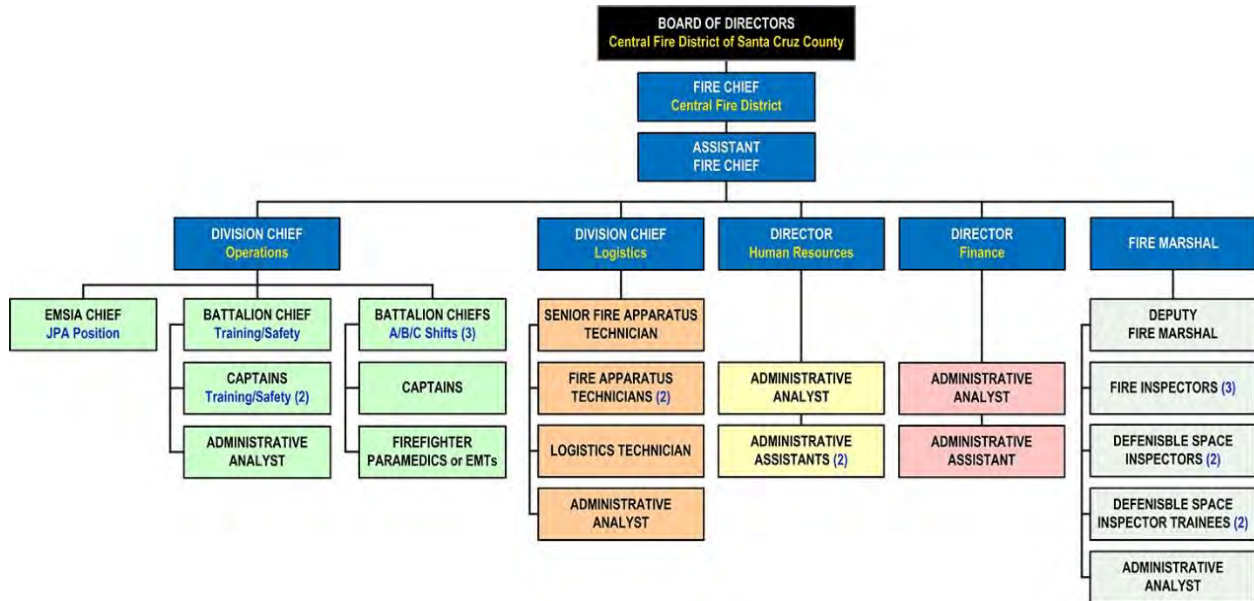
Contracts to provide services to other agencies

- Vehicle maintenance to several surrounding agencies.
- Response to the Aptos Hills area.

Governance, Administration, & Accountability

The CFD is governed by a five-member elected Board of Directors (BOD). However, the District underwent a California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) conversion process on the November 2022 general election ballot. The following figure shows the organizational structure in 2022.

Figure 81: CFD Organization Structure (2022)



The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability.

Figure 82: CFD Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability	Available
Agency website ²⁶	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	Yes
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ²⁷	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed.	No
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	Yes
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	Yes
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	No
SOC performance reports are available on the website	Yes
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	Yes
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes

Growth & Population Projections

The legal boundaries of CFD do not have a corresponding U.S. Census area to evaluate. Instead, CFD comprises at least 6 census-designated places and cities. It would be inconsistent to report these different census places in this report. Therefore, the district boundaries will be used for the remainder of this section.

²⁶ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information about the district. Government Code Section 53087.8 lists what must be included on the website.

²⁷ Government Code §54954.2.

Current Population

The current population within CFD legal boundaries is 73,170, with an area of 39.69 square miles. There is a total of 34,737 housing units listed in the area.²⁸ The number of residents and housing units meet the urban area classification threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁹

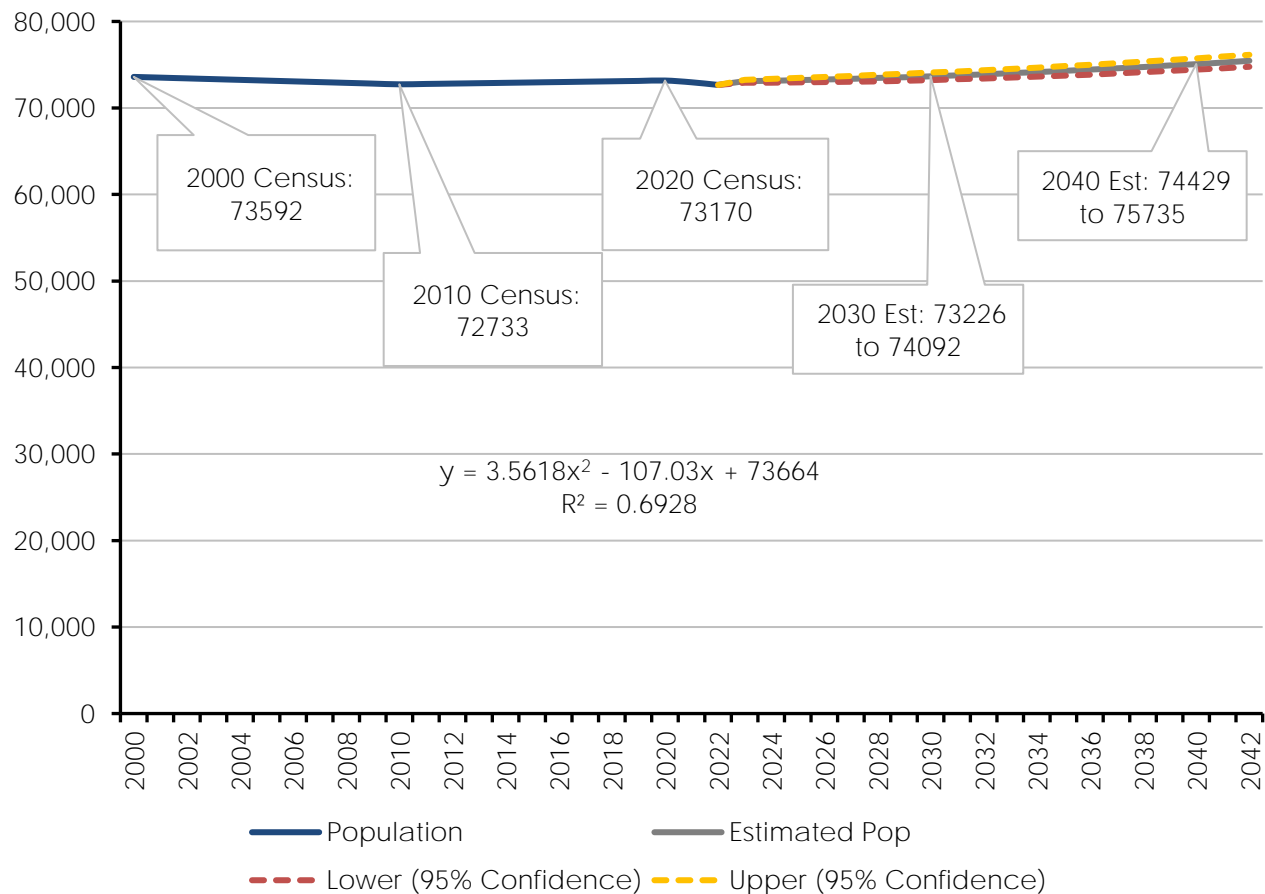
Projected Growth & Development

Estimating population growth is challenging due to many factors, such as new developments or local economies. For CFD, two techniques were utilized. The first was to rely on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the CFD area, the best-fit model was a two-factor binomial regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.6928. This means the model fits the historical data with average reliability. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast shows a slight increase in population for the area from 73,170 in 2020 to between 73,226 and 74,092 in 2040 with a 95% confidence level. This agrees generally with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments forecast. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

²⁸ ESRI Community Analyst, Source U. S. Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171).

²⁹ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.

Figure 83: CFD Historical Population and Forecast



Financial Overview

The consolidation of the Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and the Central Fire Protection District required Triton to combine the financial operations of these two independent districts before the merger. This analysis will offer an excellent historical perspective on the revenue trends of the District. However, it is important to note that the potential cost reduction resulting from this consolidation may not necessarily apply to the projected costs of operating the combined District.

For purposes of analysis and presentation of the finances of CFD, Triton classifies revenues and expenses as either recurring or non-recurring, with those identified as recurring being items that are expected on an annual basis and can be quantifiable. Conversely, non-recurring items are not expected annually or are not easily quantifiable. This allows the agency to identify those costs necessary to provide services versus those costs that may be, under the circumstances, deferred to future years.

Historical General Fund Revenues and Expenses

Property tax revenues provide the most significant portion of the District's recurring Operations Fund (General Fund) revenue stream. Growth in the Current Secured assessment has averaged approximately 4.5% annually since FY 2017. It is about 87.5% of the \$36,700,000 in FY 2022 property tax revenues. Other recurring revenues include interest on invested cash, intergovernmental revenues, and service charges. The following figure presents the combined general fund revenues from FY 2017 through the adopted FY 2022 budget.

Salaries and benefits have historically been almost 87% of CFD recurring expenses and approximately 80% of total general fund expenditures. Salaries have grown from \$12,719,000 in FY 2017 to \$17,904,000 in the adopted FY 2022 budget. A portion of these costs has been attributable to normal increases in wage rates and a 15% increase to cover the costs of new employees in FY 2021.

Pension costs have risen from 31% of salaries in FY 2017 to approximately 37% in the adopted FY 2022 budget. The most significant component of this increase in pension cost is the payment of the unfunded actuarial liability created by the financial issues experienced by CalPERS. Pension cost has increased from \$3,993,000 in FY 2017 to a budgeted \$6,634,000 in FY 2022, with approximately 50% of the costs attributable to the amortization of the unfunded liability. The amortization of the unfunded pension liability is anticipated to continue to escalate until 2031, when it peaks and begins to subside.

Services and supplies have increased from \$2,850,000 in FY 2017 to \$4,829,000 in the adopted budget for FY 2022. Service Center charges and Training costs have seen the most significant dollar growth. Dispatch service costs increased by over 100% between FY 2017 and FY 2022.

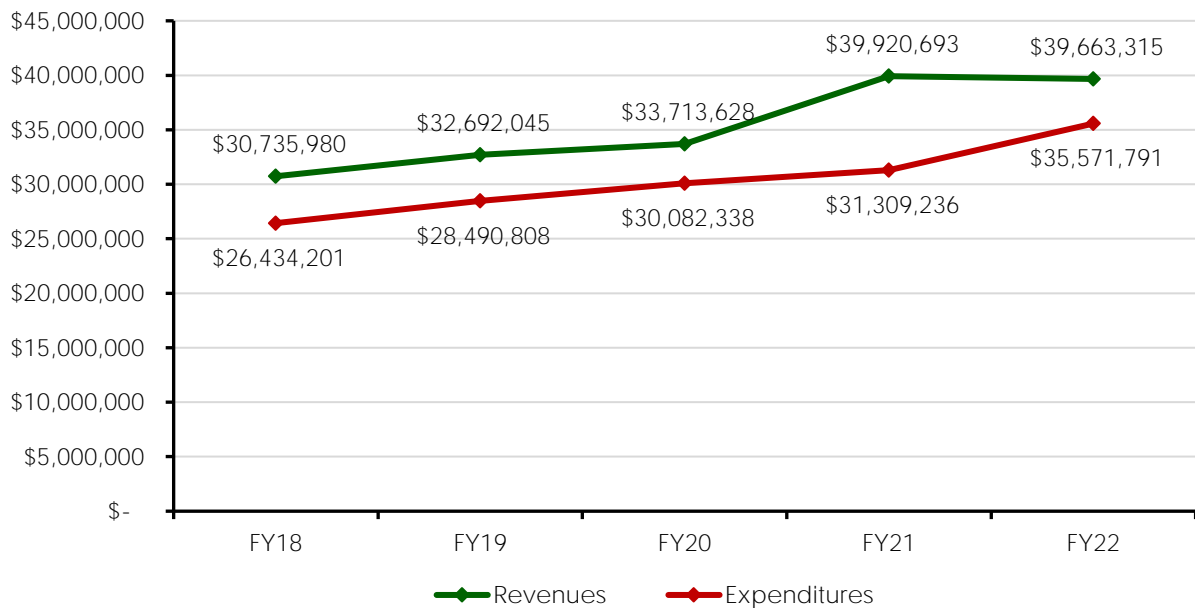
During the first two years of the financial review, it was noted that debt service payments and capital expenditures were included in the General Fund expenditures. Beginning in FY 2020, funds were transferred from the General Fund to the Capital Fund to provide capital improvements, equipment replacement, and remaining debt service payments.

Figure 84: CFD Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022³⁰

Revenue/Expenses	Actual FY 2018	Actual FY 2019	Actual FY 2020	Actual FY 2021	Budget FY 2022
Revenue	30,735,980	32,692,045	33,713,628	39,920,693	39,663,315
Expenditures	26,434,201	28,490,808	30,082,338	31,309,236	35,571,791
Surplus (Deficit)	4,301,779	4,201,237	3,631,290	8,611,457	4,091,524

The above information shows the revenues versus expenses have remained consistent throughout the study period. This can also be viewed graphically, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 85: Graphical Presentation of Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022



The following figure details the operating revenues, operating expenses, and capital expenditures of the District from FY 2018 through FY 2022.

³⁰ Information provided by CFD Staff.

Figure 86: CFD Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–2022

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2018 (Actual)	FY 2019 (Actual)	FY 2022 (Actual)	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 (Budget)
Revenue					
Current Property Taxes	28,361,759	29,923,341	31,014,293	35,514,292	38,899,614
Penalties	—	4,427	8,074	9,412	7,000
Intergov. Revenues	1,377,131	1,597,802	858,310	3,153,323	656,701
Charges for Services	701,735	730,593	1,412,361	1,031,120	—
Interest	132,330	256,727	284,873	107,867	100,000
Miscellaneous Revenues	161,024	179,156	135,718	104,679	—
Sales of Assets	2,000	—	—	—	—
Total revenues	28,433,131	30,735,980	32,692,045	33,713,628	39,920,693
Expenses by Category					
Salaries & Benefits	22,347,684	24,202,045	25,173,295	29,159,419	31,346,705
Services & Supplies	3,488,313	3,622,301	4,310,934	4,566,208	4,829,470
Debt Service	1,131,055	53,990	—	—	—
Payments to Agencies	68,846	112,410	40,201	37,670	38,692
Capital Expenditures	669,910	1,096,593	39,807	83,494	279,605
Transfers to Other Funds	785,000	995,000	1,745,000	1,725,000	2,100,000
Contingencies	—	—	—	—	100,000
Total Expenditures	26,434,201	28,490,808	30,082,338	31,309,236	35,571,791
Surplus (Deficit)	4,301,779	4,201,237	3,631,290	8,611,457	4,091,524

Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenses

The FY 2023 General Fund budget contains significant increases in property tax revenues. This is based on the historical trend line and conversations with the District's Finance Director. Property taxes comprise approximately 97% of the District's revenue stream. They are projected to grow by about 4% between FY 2023 and FY 2025, reducing to annual growth of 3% in the remaining two years of the projections. Non-recurring revenues are projected to increase by approximately 1% annually.

The FY 2022 budget forms the basis for projecting future operating costs of the General Fund. General Fund expenditures are projected to increase by approximately 4% between FY 2023 and FY 2024, about 5.3% between FY 2024 and FY 2025, and 2% and 3% in the following two years. Salaries and benefits are projected to remain approximately 85% of the total operating expenses of the District during the five-year projection period. Salaries are expected to escalate by 4.28%, 4.69%, 0.75%, and 0.75% from FY 2024 through FY 2027, respectively.

Workers' compensation insurance is projected to increase by 33% between FY 2023 and FY 2024, and 15% annually after that. Pension costs are expected to increase significantly as the amortization of the unfunded actuarial liability continues to grow throughout the projection period. Service and supply costs are projected to increase marginally during the next five years. The following figure provides the projected General Fund revenue and expenses through FY 2027.

Figure 87: CFD Forecast Revenues, Expenses, and Account Balances

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2023 (Budget)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund					
Revenues	40,278,186	41,889,314	43,564,886	44,871,833	46,217,988
Expenses	-38,562,036	-40,096,593	-42,230,635	-43,224,299	-44,399,070
Surplus (Deficit)	1,716,150	1,792,721	1,334,251	1,647,534	1,818,918
Transfers Out–Capital	-2,100,000	-2,100,000	-2,100,000	-2,100,000	-2,100,000
General Fund Bal.	27,864,250	27,556,971	26,791,222	26,338,756	26,057,674
Capital Fund					
Revenues	58,500	50,000	2,600,000	50,000	50,000
Transfers In/(Out)	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,100,000
Expenses/Purchases	-1,619,419	-2,293,360	-5,211,070	-1,935,022	-885,791
Capital Fund Bal.	7,146,187	7,002,827	6,491,757	6,706,735	7,970,944
Fleet Fund					
Revenues	670,530	704,056	915,273	961,037	1,009,089
Transfers In/(Out)	814,049	799,743	652,058	641,385	633,174
Expenses/Purchases	-1,484,579	-1,503,799	-1,567,331	-1,602,422	-1,642,263
Fleet Fund Bal.	328,093	328,093	328,093	328,092	328,092
Fund Balances	35,338,530	34,887,891	33,611,072	33,373,583	34,356,710

Capital Planning

As a result of the consolidation of the two agencies, an expanded Capital Fund was created into which an annual contribution is transferred from the General Fund. The proceeds and accrued earnings are used to construct/renovate District structures and acquire District apparatus and equipment. The Fund balance has been adjusted to match the results of the June 30, 2021, audit report and the projected June 30, 2022, balance.

The Capital Fund is projected to continue to be funded from the General Fund at \$2,100,000 annually. The projections contain a projected receipt of approximately \$2,600,000 in FY 2025, representing loan proceeds for acquiring replacement apparatus. The same year is expenditures above \$5,000,000, representing the purchase of fire trucks in a capital replacement project.

Demand for Services

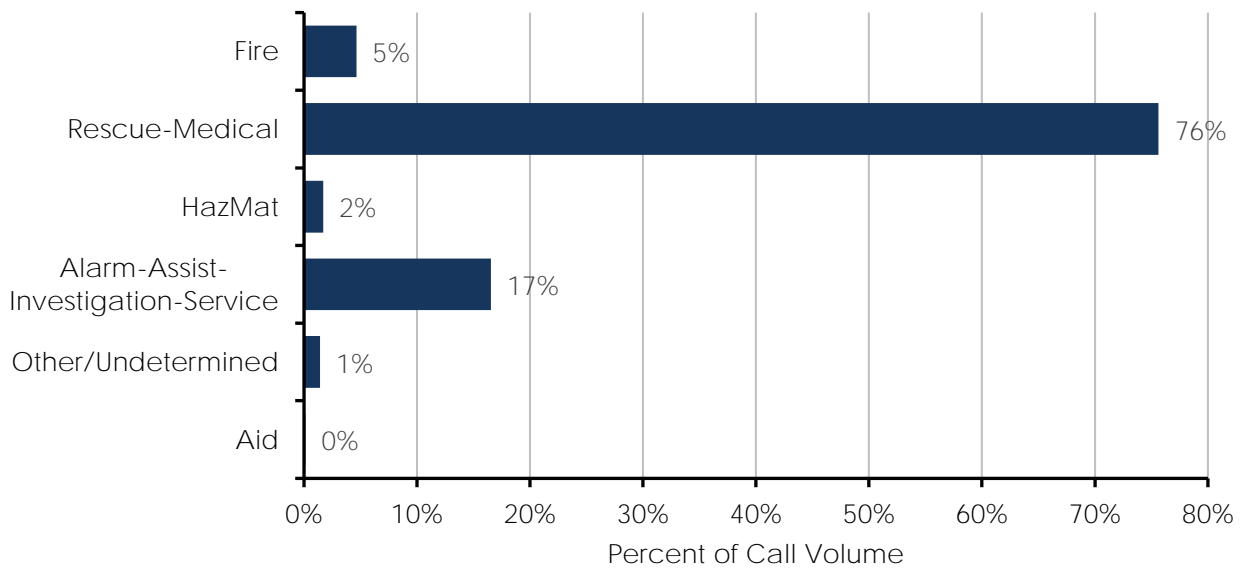
CFD is primarily an urban system that provides aid services to other communities when requested. Data was provided by the regional dispatch center and included incident information from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. In addition, any response to a wildland-type fire in the State Response Area was removed from the analysis. The following figure is the overview of the response statistics for CFD.

Figure 88: CFD Response Overview

Agency	Central Santa Cruz FPD
Avg. Annual Incident Vol.	7,397
Incidents per 1,000 Population	101
90th Percentile Total Time	9:30

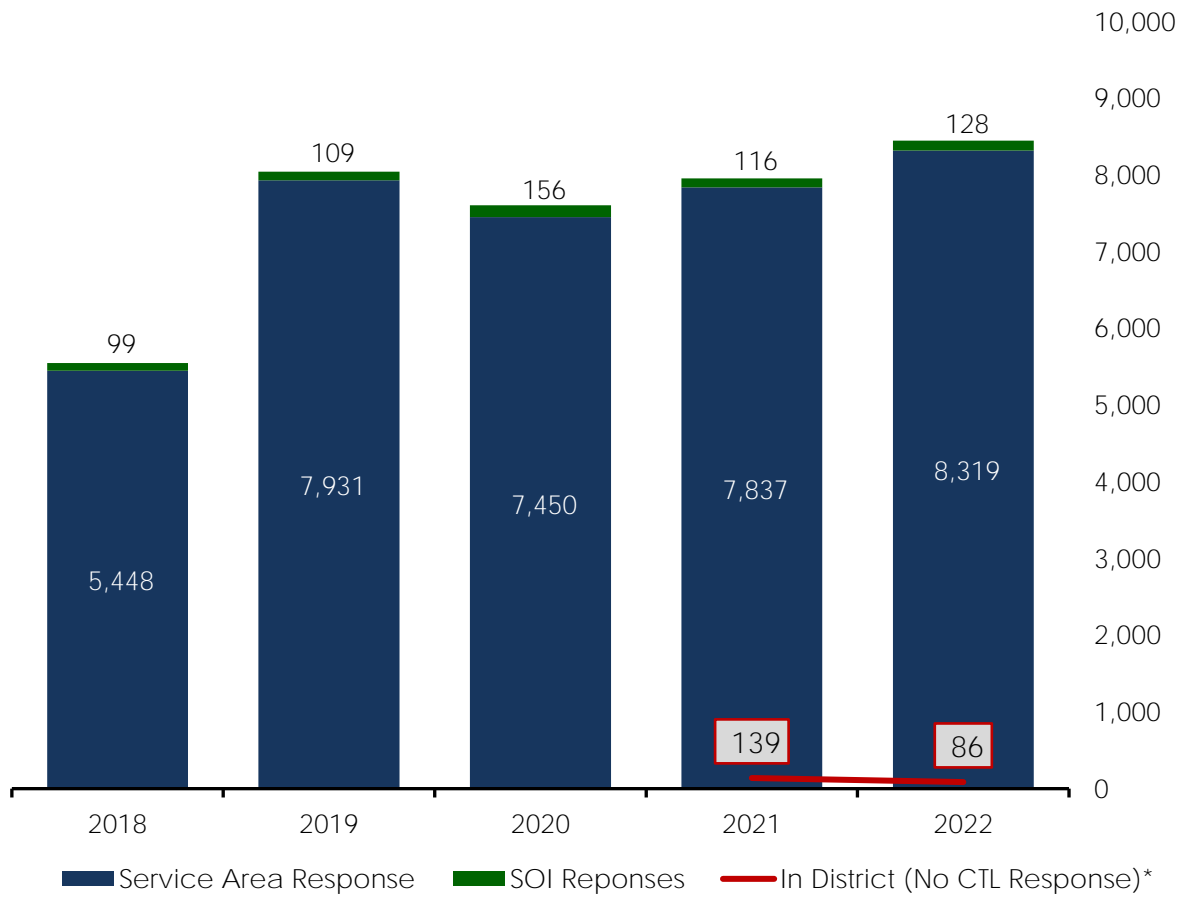
Each incident was grouped into the main categories based on the dispatch type. The incident types were related to the major categories in the National Fire Incident Reporting system. The following figure is the percentage of incidents within those categories for the entire data set, 2018–2022.

Figure 89: Total Incident Responses by Type as a Percentage



Typically, an analysis of incidents by year can yield a trend or indicate what call volume might look like in the next few years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social and economic constraints, this is difficult with this data set. As a result, a trend was not easily spotted or extrapolated. It appears that CFD response numbers dropped in 2020 and have started to rebound at a rate like 2019. In addition, responses into the sphere of influence are not a significant percentage of the incidents, and the consolidation of the two districts into the Central Fire Protection District created data issues throughout the dispatch data. CFD units respond to most incidents within their jurisdiction, although the pre-2021 data indicated several errors due to the unit numbering. The following figure shows the annual incident volume by year with the responses into the sphere of influence and district-covered incidents.

Figure 90: Annual Incident Volume by Year

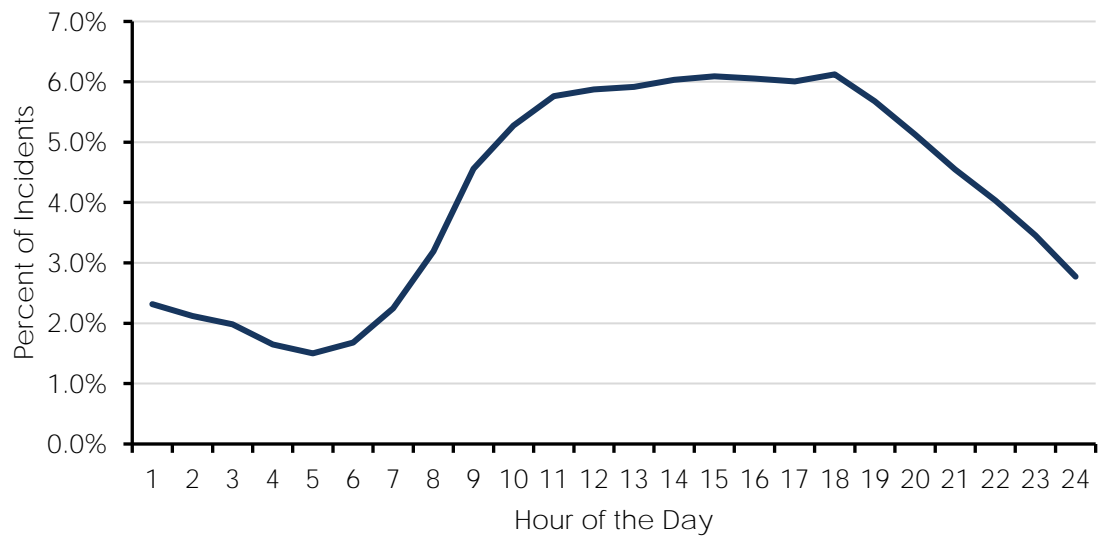


* No data before 2021 was included due to the consolidation.

A temporal study indicated some limited seasonality in the response data. Incident volume variation by month showed an incident volume decrease during the winter and early spring, with an increase in the warmer months. However, the seasonality was poorly defined, and the variation was plus and minus 1%.

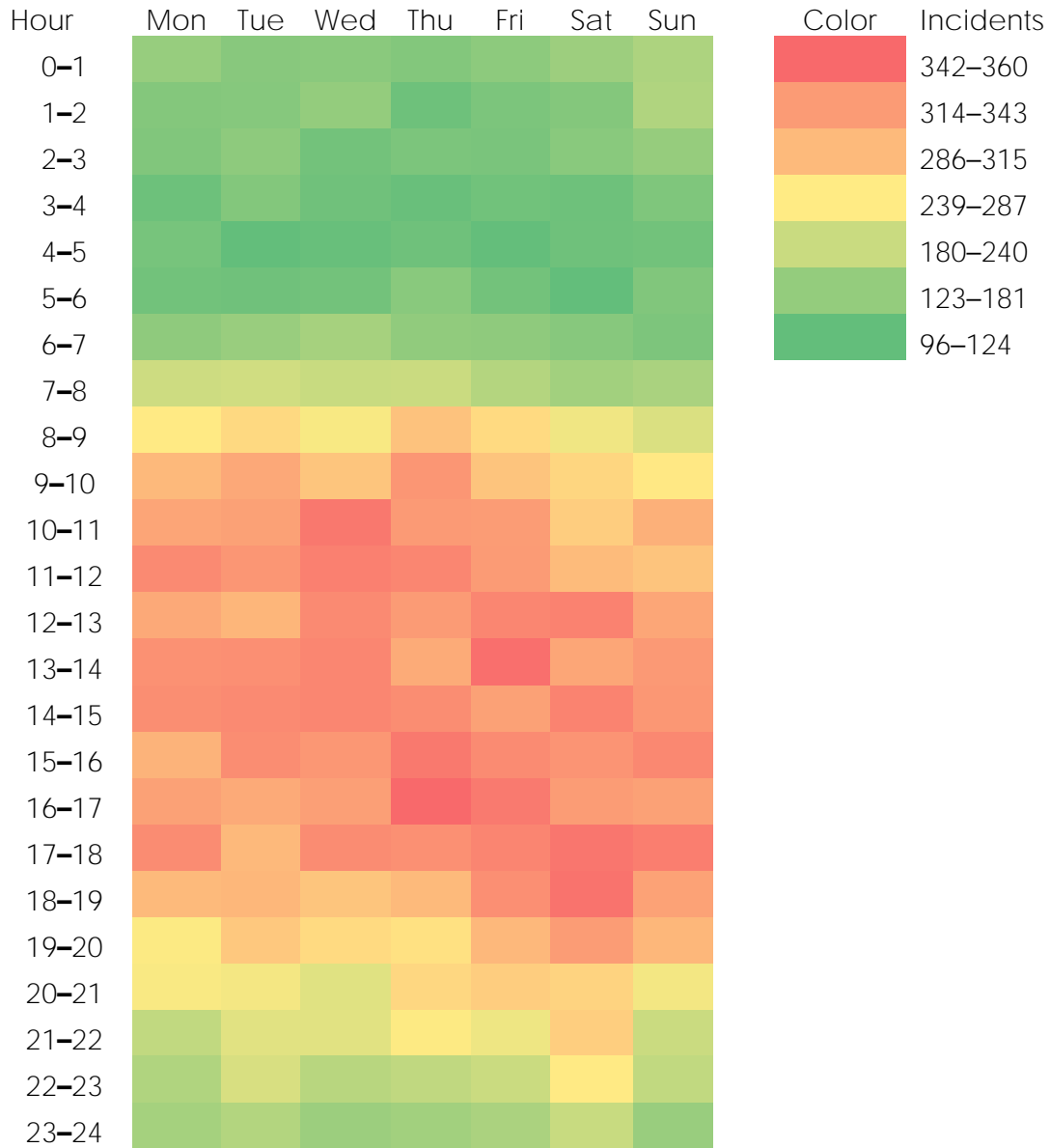
A study of demand by hour shows that CFD, like many fire agencies, sees a significant variation by the hour. In fact, about 73% of all incidents happen between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The following figure shows the general difference of the complete incident data set by hour.

Figure 91: Incident Percentage by Hour



The average daily swing is typical and likely due to the number of awake and active people. However, the day-to-day variation in this information does play a part. The following figure is the incident heat map by the hour and day of the week.

Figure 92: Incident Heat Map by Hour and Weekday



As indicated in the previous figure, the daytime hour incidents tend to be evenly distributed daily.

The final volume analysis looked at the unit usage for all apparatus within the system. This analysis considered three dimensions. The first is the unit hour utilization (UHU). This number represents the time a unit was committed to an incident as a percentage of the total time they were on duty. The next is the average time a unit was committed to an incident. And finally, the average number of incidents a unit was deployed daily.

Only those units clearly identified by the agency or units with large volumes of responses within the data sets were evaluated. The following figure shows the general statistics for each front-line unit within the CFD system.

Figure 93: CFD Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
E3511	6.3%	21 Minutes	4.2
S3561	0.0%	71 Minutes	0.0
E3523	1.9%	23 Minutes	1.1
T3572	4.0%	17 Minutes	3.3
E3512	0.7%	16 Minutes	0.6
W3552	0.2%	48 Minutes	0.1
E3513	5.8%	23 Minutes	3.6
E3537	0.3%	79 Minutes	0.1
E3543	0.1%	29 Minutes	0.0
E3524	1.7%	23 Minutes	1.1
E3514	6.3%	23 Minutes	4.0
E3536	0.2%	123 Minutes	0.0
E3515	5.3%	27 Minutes	2.8
B3505	2.8%	22 Minutes	1.8
E3538	0.4%	124 Minutes	0.0
E3516	5.0%	25 Minutes	2.9
W3556	0.2%	58 Minutes	0.0
E3517	3.1%	26 Minutes	1.7
E3522	1.1%	25 Minutes	0.6
C3500	0.1%	61 Minutes	0.0
C3501	0.1%	23 Minutes	0.0
C3502	0.1%	31 Minutes	0.1
B3504	0.2%	61 Minutes	0.0

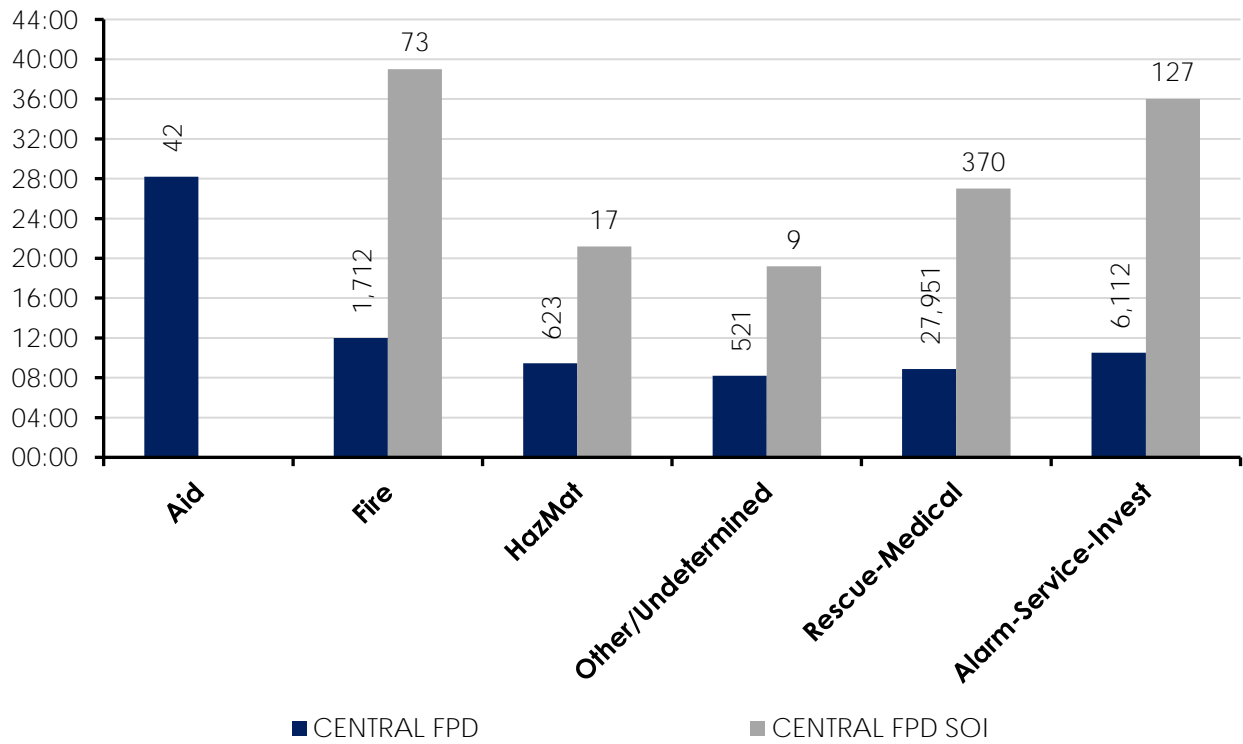
Service Delivery & Performance

The performance of the CFD response was also evaluated. The data did not differentiate between emergency responses and non-emergency responses. In addition, there was no evaluation of the arriving unit's type or agency. Therefore, all responses are evaluated. The 90th percentile is typically used in the fire service and is considered the standard for measuring incident response performance. Due to the nature of this report, CFD's performance in its identified sphere of influence was also evaluated. Agency performance goals or standards are not taken into consideration for this report.

Three unique time segments are included when evaluating an agency's response performance. The first is the time it takes for the Dispatcher to answer the 911 call and notify the agency (call processing); the second is the time it takes for the agency to receive the call and go en route to the call (turnout time); and third is the time it takes for the unit to drive to the incident (travel time). All three segments combined make up the total response time. For this evaluation, the unit type was not discriminated against, and the first arriving unit was used to determine the total response time.

Each call type may contain variables. For example, questioning the caller for appropriate information may take more or less time. In addition, it may take longer for crews to respond depending on the personal protective equipment to be worn, which varies with the type of incident. The following figure shows the total response time performance for each of the major incident types for all incidents within the data set. The following figure shows the first due, 90th percentile total response time for the District and the sphere of influence.

Figure 94: Incidents 90th Percentile Total Response Times, Jan 2018–Dec 2022



Staffing

CFD operates primarily with paid career staff with some reserve/volunteer staff to augment operations personnel. Emergency response consists of fire apparatus staffed daily at a minimum staffing level. Engines and trucks are minimally staffed with three personnel, including a captain and firefighters. In the case of the truck company, one of the firefighters is a qualified truck operator. The following figure shows the total number of personnel assigned to the CFD as of the 2022 Master Plan study.

Figure 95: CFD Staffing

Assignment	Staffing
Uniformed Administration	3
Non-Uniformed Administration	14
Fire Prevention	9
Operations Staff (Career-Paid)	80
Operations Staff (Volunteers, Reserve, and on-call) ³¹	≈4
Emergency Communications	0
Total Personnel/Volunteer	106 / ≈4

The following figure shows the daily operational staffing at each station and on each unit. All apparatus is staffed by career staff.

Figure 96: Daily Operational Staffing

Station	Daily Staffing	Unit Staffing
1	3	1 Engine. Cross-staffed Breathing Support Unit.
2	4	1 Truck. Cross-staffed Engine & Tender.
3	3	1 Engine. Cross-staffed Type 3 & 1 Type 6 Engines.
4	3	1 Engine.
5	4	1 Engine, 1 Battalion Chief. Cross-staffed type 3 and ambulance.
6	3	1 Engine. Cross-staffed USAR Rescue and Water Tender.
7	3	1 Engine.

³¹ As of 2022.

Facilities & Apparatus

Central Fire District Facilities

The following pages describe the details and features of CFD's fire stations and other facilities. The condition of the fire station is rated based on the criteria identified in the introduction to this section of the report.

Figure 97: CFD Live Oak Station (1)


Address/Physical Location:		930 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>The Live Oak fire station is on the same lot as the administration building and shares the same address. Rebuilt after significant earthquake damage to the old station. The two-story station is sufficient for modern firefighting operations. However, the parking area has no exterior security, and building security is easily defeated. This facility has a diesel fuel tank for the apparatus.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1997 (major remodel – ¼ of the original remains)					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Fair to Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		4
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		11,182					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		7	Bedrooms	15	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		7					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 98: CFD Thurber Station (2)


Address/Physical Location:		3445 Thurber Lane, Santa Cruz, CA 95065					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>The Thurber station is the newest purpose-built fire station in the District. The two-story station has adequate space, and its design is sufficient for modern firefighting operations. There is no exterior security for the building or parking area. This facility has a diesel fuel tank for the apparatus.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		2000					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		3	Back-in Bays		0
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		7,516					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		5	Bedrooms	10	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		5					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 99: CFD Soquel Station (3)


Address/Physical Location:		4747 Soquel Drive, Soquel, CA 95073					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>The single-story Soquel station sits on a flood plain with an older design and a remodeled volunteer fire station. The location has complicated access to a busy street with no traffic control. There is no parking security, and the entrance security is easily defeated.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1956					
Seismic Protection		Partial					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Poor					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		5
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		4,534					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		3	Bedrooms	6	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		3					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		No					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		No					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 100: CFD Capitola Station (4)


Address/Physical Location:		405 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010					
		General Description:					
		The Capitola station sits near the Capitola village area. It is the only location with easy access to the site during heavy traffic. The building is small and does not have sufficient space or facilities for modern firefighting operations. The building was recently refurbished after it flooded during heavy rains.					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1967 (2012 interior remodel after the flood)					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		No					
General Condition		Fair to Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		2
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		3,488					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		3	Bedrooms	6	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		3					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		No					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 101: CFD Aptos Station (5)


Address/Physical Location:		6934 Soquel Drive, Aptos, CA 95003					
		General Description: Before the merger, the Aptos station was the headquarters station for the Aptos fire district. It now houses a fire station, the community risk reduction division, and training. The fire station is adequate for modern fire operations. However, the CRR and training areas are insufficient in size and design for their functions. In addition, this facility has a gas and diesel fuel tank for apparatus and car fueling.					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1967					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		2	Back-in Bays		1
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		7,748					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		4	Bedrooms	6	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		3					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 102: CFD Rio Del Mar Station (6)


Address/Physical Location:		300 Bonita Drive, Aptos, CA 95003					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>The Rio Del Mar station was built as a residential structure with an oversized garage until a newer station could be constructed. However, it is a more modern two-story fire station with adequate design and space for a single fire company. Access to the bay from the living area is not efficient. It is currently undergoing light remodeling to move the workout area from the bay area. There is no parking security, and internal security is easily defeated.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1973					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		3
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		5,390					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		4	Bedrooms	6	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		4					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 103: CFD La Salva Beach Station (7)



Address/Physical Location:		312 Estrella Ave., La Selva, CA 95076					
	General Description: The La Selva Beach Station is a remodeled volunteer fire station sitting very close to the beach in the La Selva community. The station is older, with limited facilities, and does not meet the needs of modern fire operations. Firefighter parking is on the street, and internal security is easily defeated. The station has excellent beach access but is not situated for effective response.						
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1969					
Seismic Protection		Yes (Retrofit in 1985)					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		2
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		2,910					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		3	Bedrooms	3	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		3					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 104: CFD Administration Facility

Address/Physical Location:		930 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>The administration building is purpose-built and sits on the same lot with the same address as the Live Oak station. The office space is currently occupied with little room for growth by remodeling a large storage area. The station has external camera security and good overall security.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		2001					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		N	Back-in Bays		N
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		7,676					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		16 administrative staff only					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		No					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		No					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Two (small upstairs and large downstairs)					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		No					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		No					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		No					

Figure 105: CFD Fleet Services Facility

Address/Physical Location:		410 Kennedy Drive, Capitola, CA 95010					
	General Description: The fleet services facility is a commercial structure with three large bay areas and room for lifting fire engines and working on vehicles. In addition, the facility has two designated maintenance bays and one bay for long-term storage.						
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1974					
Seismic Protection		No					
Auxiliary Power		No					
General Condition		Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		0	Back-in Bays		0
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		15,972					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		5 staff in offices					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		No					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes (breakroom)					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		No					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		No					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Partial (shop floor)					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		No					
Security System		Yes					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Fire Station Discussion

CFD's fire stations were rated from fair to good. The average age of the stations was 46 years, the newest built 22 years ago. The firefighting environment has significantly changed over the past several decades. Technology, equipment, and safety systems have changed to meet new firefighting and emergency response demands. Older fire station buildings do not typically have the space or engineering systems to meet that new environment. Modern work and living spaces also require considerably more access to electrical outlets and built-in technology than is provided or expected in older buildings' design.

Figure 106: Station Configuration and Condition

Station	Apparatus Bays	Staffing Capacity	General Condition	Station Age
Station 1	4	7	Fair-Good	25 years
Station 2	3	5	Good	22 years
Station 3	5	6	Poor	66 years
Station 4	2	6	Fair-Good	55 years
Station 5	3	4	Good	55 years
Station 6	3	4	Fair	49 years
Station 7	2	3	Fair	53 years
Totals/Average:	22	35	Average:	46 years

Live Oak Station (Station 1)

The Live Oak station underwent a substantial remodel after the original station was damaged in an earthquake. Only one-quarter of the building is original. This station meets most modern firefighter needs. The station has space for turnout gear, three individual showers in the living area and one on the bay floor, seven sleeping quarters, office space, mechanical workspace, a decontamination area, a kitchen, and a day room that doubles as the training space. The four bays are large and adequately spaced for modern fire apparatus.

Thurber Station (Station 2)

The Thurber Station was purpose-built as a fire station in 2000. The two-story station is large with three drive-through bays and meets most modern firefighting requirements. The station has five bedrooms but only three showers, sufficient for the ordinary four staff members. However, the lack of a fourth shower is inadequate for personal decontamination if needed. In addition, the crew members will need to enter living spaces to shower, potentially spreading undesirable chemicals in these areas. Separate spaces exist for offices, kitchens, dayrooms, and workout facilities. The space for the workout area appears insufficient, and some exercise equipment was placed in the hallways for use.

The station living area is sinking, creating cracks in walls and floors. In addition, the bathroom drainage is insufficiently graded, and there are reports of frequent plumbing problems. During the site visit, it was noted that a wireless network extender was mounted on the ceiling upstairs with an extension cord permanently affixed to the wall as a power source. Building security is maintained with mechanical locks that can be easily defeated and left unlocked.

Soquel Station (Station 3)

The Soquel Station was initially built as a volunteer fire station in 1956. The five-bay station sits in a flood zone and does not meet modern firefighting requirements. It has no decontamination area or separate turnout gear storage. The three bedrooms and two bathrooms do not allow for staff size growth.

The height of the bay doors creates a very tight clearance for modern apparatus. The bays are emptied directly into a busy street with no traffic control devices. Crew lockers are in a room that is only accessible from the bay. The workout area is in the bay, although there is a plan and funding to partition the workout area and create a separate turnout gear room.

Capitola Station (Station 4)

The Capitola Station is a small 1967 building that underwent a light interior remodel after being flooded in 2012. The single bathroom lacks privacy and is not sufficient for mixed-gender crews. There is no decontamination area provided, and laundry facilities are insufficient. Turnout gear is stored separately from the bay, but the door has no closer and was open during the site visit. Building parking is inadequate, and vehicles must be shuffled during shift changes. Building security is with manual locks that are easily defeated and can be left unlocked.

The two bays are emptied onto a busy street with no traffic control, requiring a specialized backing policy. Even with this policy, there is abundant evidence of backing damage on the building due to the very tight turns necessary to enter. The bays are too small for modern apparatus with limited upper clearance, and side-to-side distance prohibits multiple apparatus doors from opening simultaneously. The gas generator in the bay was inoperative. The generator inspection documentation ended in November when it went out of service. The United States Geological Service has a seismometer in the building. However, the air compressor gives the seismometer false readings when it runs due to its proximity. In addition, a county repeater in the facility is not on emergency backup power. An emergency phone was still outside the building. Still, it was inoperative and should be removed to limit citizen confusion during an emergency.

While the building is inadequate, the location is critical for providing services to the Capitola Village area. Due to heavy traffic, the crew from this station can respond to the village, while other apparatus find it challenging to gain access.

Aptos Station (Station 5, CRR, & Training Facility)

The Aptos Station was built in 1967, with an addition in 1992 and earthquake mitigation in the late '90s. This station used to serve as the Aptos Fire District's offices and currently houses a response crew, the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division, and training. The station is partially adequate for the response crew's modern firefighting needs. It has sufficient bay space for engines, lower clearance trucks, and enough rooms to house the assigned staff. However, there is little room for staffing growth. The truck company in service will not fit in the bays due to height limits. The workout area is in the bay. Laundry facilities are available for both uniforms, and extractors are available for turnout gear. There is a county-approved wash rack in the rear. This station has diesel and gasoline fuel tanks for district apparatus and vehicles.

For its age, the building is in good condition. However, some concrete in the rear and on the apron needs repair. One significant concern is the size of the sewer main. When the addition was added in 1992, the decision was made to drain the entire building into the existing 2.5-inch sewer main. Because of the small pipe size, the number of facilities that can be used simultaneously is limited. In addition, only one extractor can be used at a time. The emergency generator appeared in good condition, but weekly inspection checks could not be located.

The CRR area is the lower floor of the administrative side. However, the size is insufficient for the current staff of 11 employees and allows for only 10 desks. Parking is also inadequate for the crews, CRR, and training. The building is secure, but there is no parking security.

The training area is likewise limited in space. The drill area is small. Because the facility is shared, it is strained if there is training during regular CRR operational hours.

Rio Del Mar Station (Station 6)

The Rio Del Mar station was built in 1973 with no significant improvements and evidence of needed maintenance. The two-story, three-bay station was constructed as a temporary single-family residence with an oversized garage. The facility has four bedrooms and three bathrooms with showers, which is adequate for the assigned three crew staff. However, the building does not meet modern firefighting standards. For example, there is no decontamination area, and the workout facility is in the bay. There was evidence during the visit of the intent to move the workout facility into the living space and out of the bay, but the work was not complete.

The bay was large enough for engines but not deep enough for a truck company. Access to the bays is problematic and not conducive to the rapid response from the living area. Building security is accomplished with mechanical locks that are easily defeated and can be left unlocked. There was an emergency phone on the exterior of the building, which was inoperative and should be removed to reduce citizen confusion in the event of an emergency. The emergency generator appeared in good working order, but weekly inspection checks could not be located.

La Salva Beach Station (Station 7)

The La Salva Beach Station was built in 1969 as a volunteer fire station. It is located near the ocean and does not provide centralized coverage for its response capabilities. The last improvements to the building were accomplished in 1985, and the building needs updating and repair. The building does not meet modern firefighting needs. It does not meet the requirements for a mixed-gender crew. In addition, it has no area for decontamination, and the bays are small, crowding modern firefighting apparatus. There is no staff parking. Instead, they are required to park on the street.

The generator requires occasional fueling, and because the surrounding public buildings were updated, refueling is challenging and requires special equipment. The workout area is in the bay, and it was questionable if the exhaust removal system was operational. Some emergency lighting was inoperative. There was an emergency phone on the exterior of the building, which was inoperative and should be removed to reduce citizen confusion in the event of an emergency.

Fleet Services

The fleet services facility is based on a 1974 warehouse structure. There are three overhead doors allowing access to a large maintenance floor. Currently, there are three bay stations, one for long-term apparatus storage based on need. An additional area is utilized by logistics to store and maintain district equipment and supplies. The facility has an external shed and a steel storage box for extra supplies and the historic fire engine. The size of the bays is adequate to operate apparatus lifts for ease of access, avoiding maintenance pits. There are plans to update the interior for improved office, storage, break space, and logistics areas. There are cracks on the exterior of the building from earlier earthquake activity. However, these are monitored to ensure they do not affect structural strength. Concrete failure is evident in the apparatus maintenance area, identified by staff, and plans are in place to repair it when funding becomes available. Building security is good with cameras, adequate locking mechanisms, and alarms. Other occupants of an adjacent building share access. This is of concern but is being managed by maintaining a good working relationship with the occupants of the other warehouse building on site.

Administration

The administration building is a 2001 purpose-built two-story office building on the same lot as the Live Oak Station. The building is modern, appropriately designed, in good repair, and has adequate space for current staffing levels. Security is good with security cameras and good locks. Most offices are assigned and used, leaving little room for additional staffing if needed. A large storage area on the second floor can be remodeled for extra workspace, requiring the records storage to move.

Apparatus

CFD operates daily with seven Type 1 engines and one truck. The District also cross-staffs three Type 3 and one Type 6 engine, one ambulance, and two water tenders. It also operates ten response command/training and six fire prevention vehicles.

Figure 107: CFD Frontline Apparatus Inventory (2022)

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
Engine 3511	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
Engine 3512	Type 1 Engine	Poor
Engine 3513	Type 1 Engine	Fair
Engine 3514	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
Engine 3515	Type 1 Engine	Fair
Engine 3516	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
Engine 3517	Type 1 Engine	Poor
Engine 3536	Type 3 Engine	Poor
Engine 3537	Type 3 Engine	Poor
Engine 3538	Type 3 Engine	Poor
Engine 3543	Type 3 Engine	Excellent
Truck 3572	Areal Truck	Excellent
Medic 3566	Ambulance	Good
W3552	Water Tender	Poor
W3556	Water Tender	Excellent

In addition to the staffed front-line apparatus, CFD maintains a cache of reserve vehicles to work as reserves when maintenance or operational issues take the front-line equipment out of action.

Figure 108: CFD Staff and Command Vehicle Inventory (2022)

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
C3500	Command/SUV	Good
C3501	Command/SUV	Good
C3502	Command/4x4 PU	Excellent
C3503	Command/4x4 PU	Excellent
B3504	Command/4x4 PU	Excellent
B3505	Command/4x4 PU	Fair
B3506	Command/4x4 PU	Excellent
B3507	Command/4x4 PU	Fair
B3508	Command/4x4 PU	Fair
B3509	Command/4x4 PU	Good
3580	Small SUV	Excellent
3581	Small SUV	Excellent
3582	Small SUV	Excellent
3583	Small SUV	Excellent
3584	Small SUV	Excellent
3596	Small SUV	Excellent

Facility Replacement & Infrastructure Needs

The Capitola and Soquel stations are in flood plains and experienced flooding during the 2023 rains. In addition, as discussed, several stations require some modernization or replacement. CFD is in the process of evaluating station locations and updating station deployment. Still, the stations under consideration will not affect this study.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

CFD currently has no shared response facilities with any other jurisdictions. While some of their stations have additional room for staff, these would not be positioned in a place that would improve service for the surrounding agencies. The La Salva station is located in an area that may provide additional benefits to the southeast portion of the District. However, the current station is too small for additional staff, apparatus, or services.

CFD does provide maintenance services from their Fleet Services to several surrounding jurisdictions, including the Santa Cruz County Fire Department. These services are provided under contract and are expected to continue.

Dispatch & Communications

Emergency communications and dispatch services are provided to CFD by Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (NetCom), which has operated for 25 years as of 2021. NetCom is a regional center operating as Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties' Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). It encompasses more than 330,000 residents and visitors. The center serves multiple fire, law enforcement, and EMS agencies.

NetCom processes nearly 600,000 calls annually.³² Although the center follows national standards for call answering, it focuses on achieving the State of California's standard (which is higher than national standards) of 95% of incoming 911 calls being answered within 15 seconds—equivalent to three rings at NetCom.³³

³² Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 website.

³³ Ibid.

Ben Lomond Fire Protection District Profile

Agency Overview

The Ben Lomond Fire Protection District (BEN) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the 5.17-square-mile area in and around the community known as Ben Lomond.³⁴

Boundary and Sphere of Influence

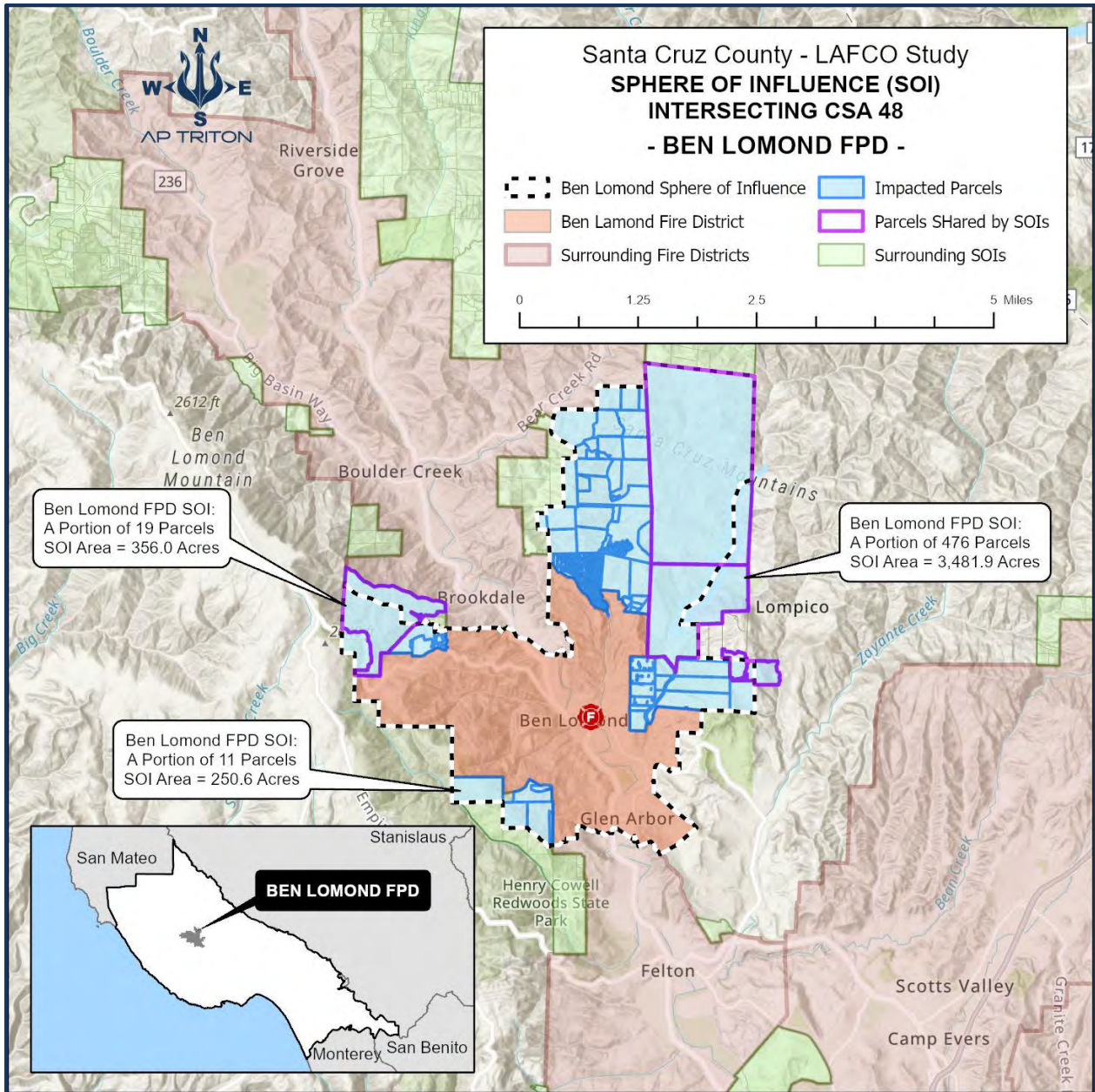
BEN is located in the San Lorenzo Valley. It is surrounded by the jurisdictions of Felton Fire Protection District, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District, and the Santa Cruz County Fire Department.

Three areas are included in the SOI, most of which are currently included in county service area (CSA) 48. Some of the parcels are shared with neighboring SOIs. The west central area has 19 properties and 356 acres, the southwest region has 11 lots and 250.6 acres, and the north and west area has 476 tracts and 3,481.9 acres for a total of 506 parcels and 4,088.5 acres in the SOI.

The following figure shows the District's location and the SOI as currently reported.

³⁴ ArcGIS Community Analyst.

Figure 109: BEN with Sphere of Influence



Type & Extent of Services

Services Provided

BEN provides a wide range of services for its community. These include fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical care, and other emergency services. The following figure represents information provided by the agency related to each of the services and the level performed as indicated by the agency.

Figure 110: Overview of Services Provided by BEN

Service	Y/N	Level
Fire Suppression	Yes	Structural, wildland (with CAL FIRE)
EMS First Response	Yes	BLS
Ambulance Transport	No	
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	Swift water rescue
Hazmat Response	No	First response only
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	
Plan Review	Yes	Contracted to a vendor
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Fire Wise
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	

Service Area

BEN is a multi-discipline fire protection district. The District is statutorily responsible for fire protection of improved structures and other emergency services within the District boundaries. Vegetation fires are part of the state responsibility area and are statutorily the responsibility of CAL FIRE. However, when requested, BEN provides support and assistance and will begin incident mitigation if notified directly.

Collaboration

- BEN participant in the countywide mutual aid agreement.
- BEN responds for specialized swift water assistance if requested.
- Shares a part-time administrative staff with Felton Fire Protection District.

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs)

- None Identified

Contracts to provide services to other agencies

- None Identified

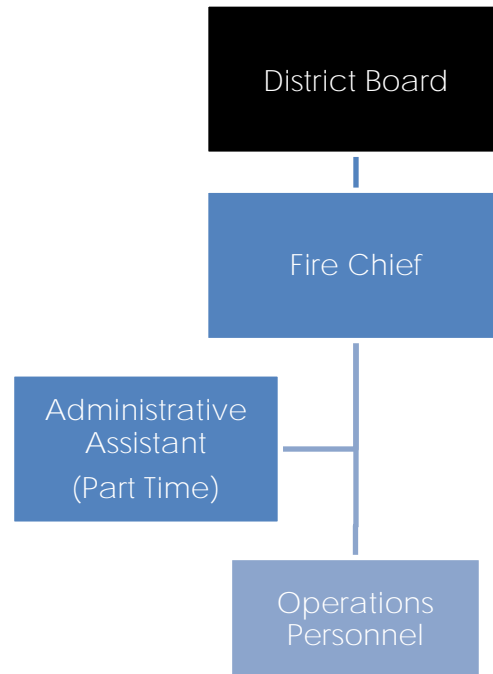
Contracts for service to other agencies

- None Identified

Governance, Administration, & Accountability

BEN is governed by a five-member board of directors whose head is the Board Chair. The Board hires a Fire Chief with a one-person administrative staff shared by Felton Fire Protection District. The following figure represents the BEN lines of authority.

Figure 111: BEN Lines of Authority



The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability.

Figure 112: BEN Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability	Available
Agency website ³⁵	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	Yes
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ³⁶	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed	No
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	No
SOC performance reports are available on the website	No
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	Yes
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes

Growth & Population Projections

Ben Lomond is a census-designated place (CDP) with census projections and population. The current population in the 8.37 square mile CDP area is 6,337.³⁷ However, this census geographic area differs from the legal boundaries of BEN, with the census zone encompassing a larger size than the legal boundaries of the District. The District boundaries will be used for the remainder of this section.

³⁵ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information about the district. Government Code Section 53087.8 lists what must be included on the website.

³⁶ Government Code §54954.2.

³⁷ www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/benlomondcdpcalifornia,US/PST045222.

Current Population

The population within BEN's legal boundaries is 4,152, with an area of 5.17 square miles. There is a total of 1,749 housing units listed in the area.³⁸ Neither the number of residents nor the housing units meet the urban area classification threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau.³⁹

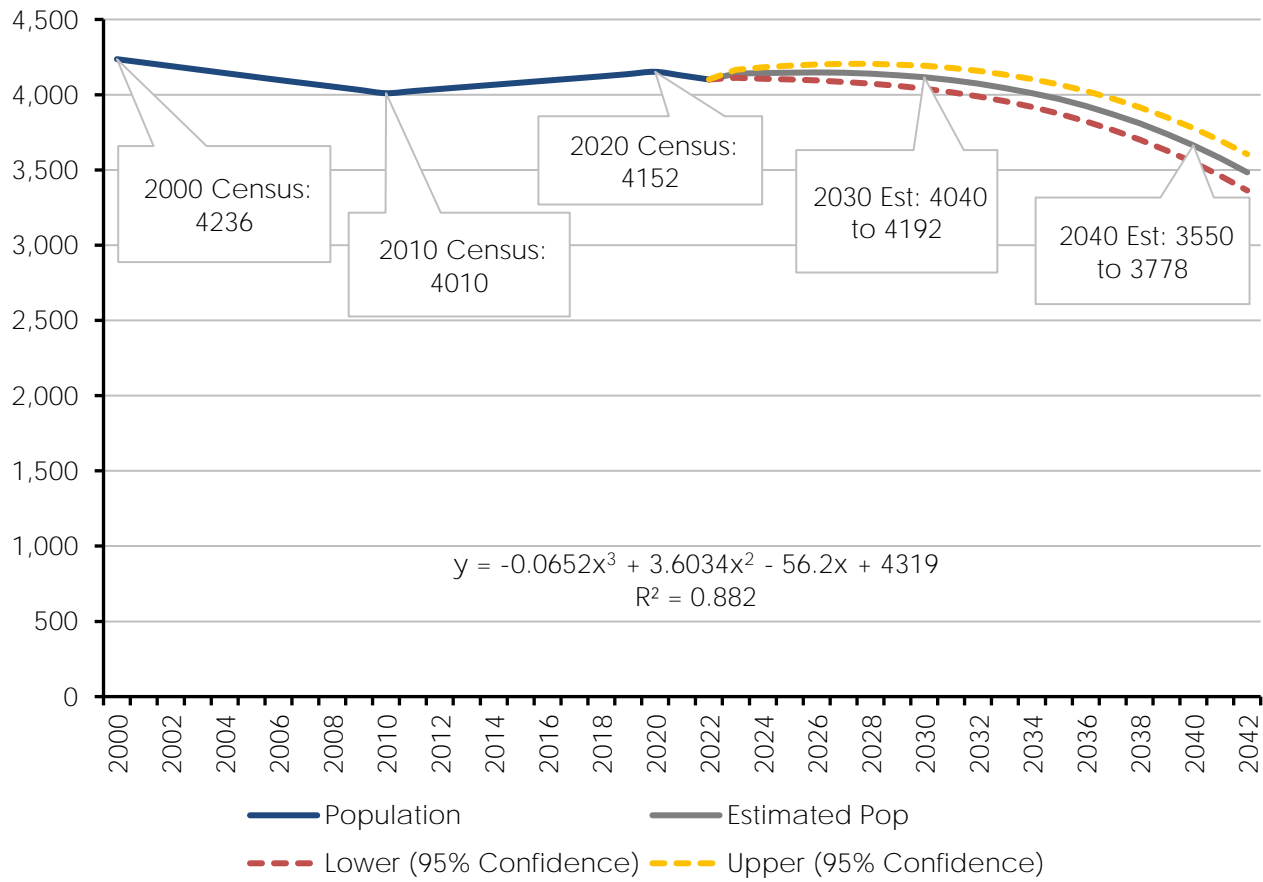
Projected Growth & Development

Estimating population growth is challenging due to many factors, such as new developments or local economies. For BEN, two techniques were utilized. The first was to rely on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the BEN area, the best-fit model was a three-factor polynomial regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.882. This means the model fits the historical data very well. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast shows a slight reduction in population for the area from 4,152 in 2020 to between 3,550 and 3,778 by 2040 with a 95% confidence level. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

³⁸ ESRI Community Analyst, Source U. S. Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171).

³⁹ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.

Figure 113: BEN Historical Population and Forecast



Financial Overview

This study will focus on the receipts and disbursements within the General Fund of the Ben Lomond Fire Protection District.

Historical General Fund Revenues and Expenses

Much information regarding the General Fund was reviewed to develop a financial trend analysis for the five years. This review of the historical data in General Fund (GF) revenues revealed total revenues increased from \$906,876 in FY 2018 to \$1,114,731 in FY 2022, an approximate 22.9% increase.

Property tax revenues are the most significant source of General Fund Revenues, providing approximately 93% of the total revenues annually. Historically, the District does not budget for revenues from delinquent tax collections and related penalties and interest or supplemental property tax revenues, contributing an average of \$18,000 annually to funding revenues. The increases and decreases observed in the historical analysis can be attributed to these sources of revenue. Other significant sources of revenue include Rents and Concessions, Interest, and other sources.

As previously indicated, the District's General Fund expends funds for the operation of the fire department, administrative costs, debt service, and capital expenditures.

Operating expenses of the District include salaries and benefits. These expenditures account for between 32% and 47% of overall annual expenses. Regular pay appears to be the only category within the salaries and benefits section of the financial reports that is consistent and able to identify a trend. The Districts' PERS contribution in FY 2018 was \$152,000. However, this expense dropped to an average of \$25,000 over the next four years. Extra Help expense is in response to the requirement to deploy resources for large-scale incidents, again, with no ability to reasonably anticipate the actual use annually.

Significant components of Services and Supplies include Clothing and Personal Supplies, Maintenance of equipment, grounds and apparatus, Professional and Special Services, and Special District Expenses. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) purchases are cyclical due to the expected life cycle, resulting in a reduction in annual procurements of \$106,000 in FY 2019 to \$25,000 in FY 2022. Maintenance costs may be planned, but unexpected things occur, and savings should be set aside for these eventualities.

The District extinguished a debt obligation in FY 2019, saving approximately \$70,000 annually. In addition, a long-term lease obligation ended in FY 2022. The District expends funds annually for capital improvements and replacements.

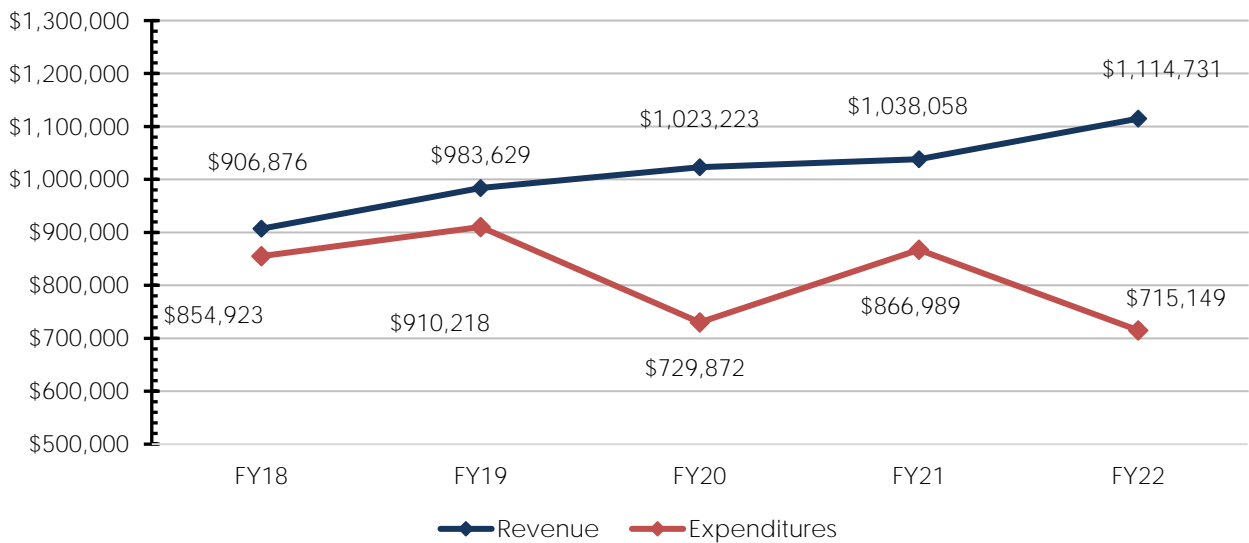
The District's fund balances continue to increase annually, providing a reserve against unforeseen significant issues. They can also provide capital for future acquisitions or replacements of long-lived assets.

Figure 114: BEN Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022⁴⁰

Revenue/Expenses	Actual FY 2018	Actual FY 2019	Actual FY 2020	Actual FY 2021	Actual FY 2022
Revenue	906,876	983,629	1,023,223	1,038,058	1,114,731
Expenditures	854,923	910,218	729,872	866,989	715,149
Surplus (Deficit)	51,953	73,411	293,351	171,069	399,582

The above information indicates the impact on the City's sales tax revenues of the pandemic and can be easier to see graphically.

Figure 115: BEN Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022



⁴⁰ Information provided by Ben Lemond Fire District Staff.

The following figure details the operating revenues, operating expenses, and capital expenditures of the District from FY 2018 through FY 2022.

Figure 116: BEN Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2018 (Actual)	FY 2019 (Actual)	FY 2022 (Actual)	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 (Actual)
Revenue					
Current Property Taxes	828,048	880,472	923,811	961,041	990,878
Delinquent Property Taxes	1,163	1,624	2,022	3,546	2,205
Supplemental Property Taxes	15,398	21,403	14,460	7,532	25,555
Interest	22,555	38,183	39,427	15,292	12,292
Rents & Concessions	34,634	36,864	38,405	45,612	50,376
Other	5,079	5,084	5,097	5,035	33,425
Total Revenues	906,876	983,629	1,023,223	1,038,058	1,114,731
Expenses by Category					
Salaries & Benefits	397,533	287,805	330,982	403,528	256,789
Services & Supplies	233,764	341,114	253,084	298,567	300,990
Debt Service	155,223	153,280	81,773	81,773	79,499
Capital Outlay	68,403	128,021	64,033	83,122	77,871
Total Expenditures	854,923	910,218	729,872	866,989	715,149
Surplus (Deficit)	51,953	73,411	293,351	171,069	399,582

Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenses

Property tax revenues have averaged an annual increase of approximately 5% between FY 2018 and FY 2022. Actual revenues have historically exceeded the budgeted amounts. Other incomes for rents and concessions have averaged double-digit growth between FY 2018 and FY 2022. The significant increase in total revenues in FY 2022 resulted from a considerable rise in Supplemental Property Tax receipts and an insurance recovery. Property tax revenues are projected to increase at 4% annually using the FY 2023 budget as the base year. As previously discussed, the District does not budget for specific property tax amounts received annually. These amounts are forecast to be \$15,000 annually. Interest income is a factor of available balances and interest rates. For a conservative forecast, interest income will be calculated using a 3% interest rate applied to the forecasted ending cash balances. Rents and Concession income has grown at an average annual rate of approximately 10%. Triton's forecast for this category is a 5% annual growth using the FY 2023 budgeted amount as the base year.

Salaries and benefits costs depend on circumstances that cannot be accurately forecasted. Extra help costs are forecast to remain at the FY 2023 budget amount. Services and supplies are forecast to increase at 5% annually based not on the FY 2023 budgeted amounts but on the FY 2022 actual amounts. Long-term debt appears to have been extinguished with the FY 2023 payment, but this could not be confirmed by the financial information provided. Capital outlay is forecast to be at an annual amount of \$100,000.

Figure 117: BEN Forecast Revenues and Expenditures

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2023 (Budget)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue						
Current Property Taxes	1,004,478	1,044,657	1,086,443	1,129,901	1,175,097	1,222,101
Delinquent Property Taxes	—	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Supp. Property Taxes	—	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000
Interest	—	94,948	107,242	120,414	134,506	149,556
Rents & Concessions	50,639	53,171	55,829	58,621	61,552	64,630
Other	5,097	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Total Revenues	1,060,214	1,212,776	1,269,514	1,328,936	1,391,155	1,456,287
Expenses by Category						
Salaries & Benefits	374,100	386,965	398,586	410,789	423,602	437,055
Services & Supplies	473,442	316,040	331,842	348,434	365,856	384,149
Debt Service	83,600	—	—	—	—	—
Capital Outlay	129,072	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Total Expenditures	1,060,214	803,005	830,428	859,223	889,458	921,204
Surplus (Deficit)	—	409,772	439,086	469,713	501,697	535,083
Beginning Reserves	3,164,946	3,164,946	3,574,718	4,013,804	4,483,517	4,985,214
Ending Reserves	3,574,718	4,013,804	4,483,517	4,985,214	5,520,297	3,574,718

Capital Planning

The District's Board and Staff have a Capital Improvement and Replacement Program to identify equipment, apparatus, and facilities projects. This plan identifies a committed reserve balance to provide the funding source for each. Increases to reserve funds are made each year as surplus funds permit.

Demand for Services

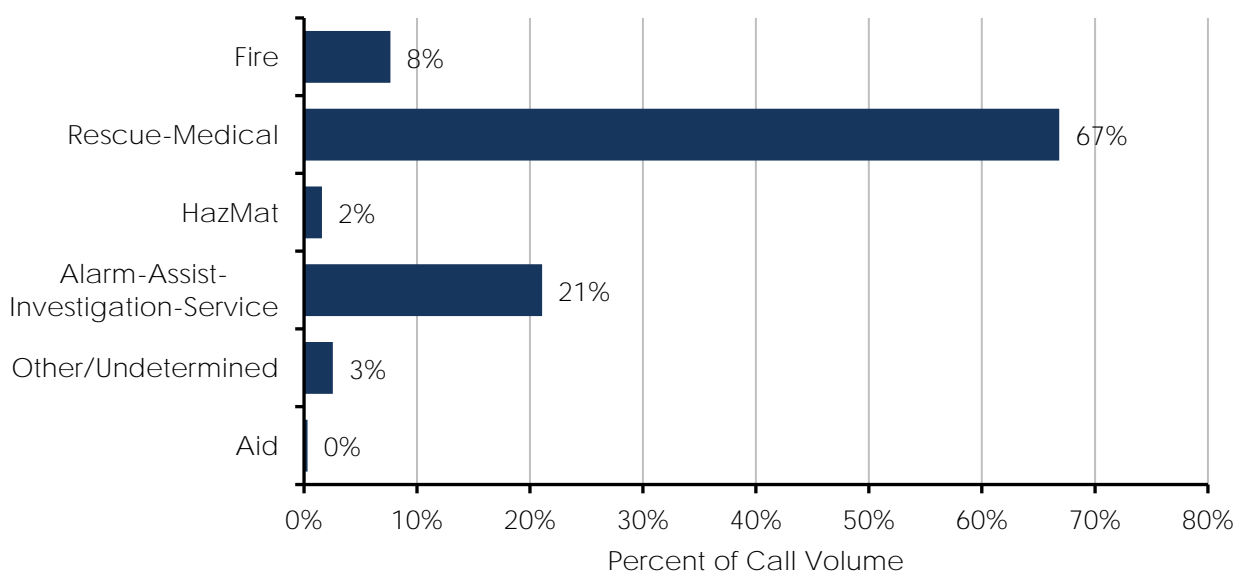
BEN is a rural system that provides aid services to other communities when requested. Data was provided by the regional dispatch center and included incident information from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. In addition, any response to a wildland-type fire in the State Response Area was removed from the analysis. The following figure is the overview of the response statistics for BEN.

Figure 118: BEN Response Overview

Agency	Ben Lomond FPD
Avg. Annual Incident Vol.	440
Incidents per 1,000 Population	106
90th Percentile Total Time	11:29

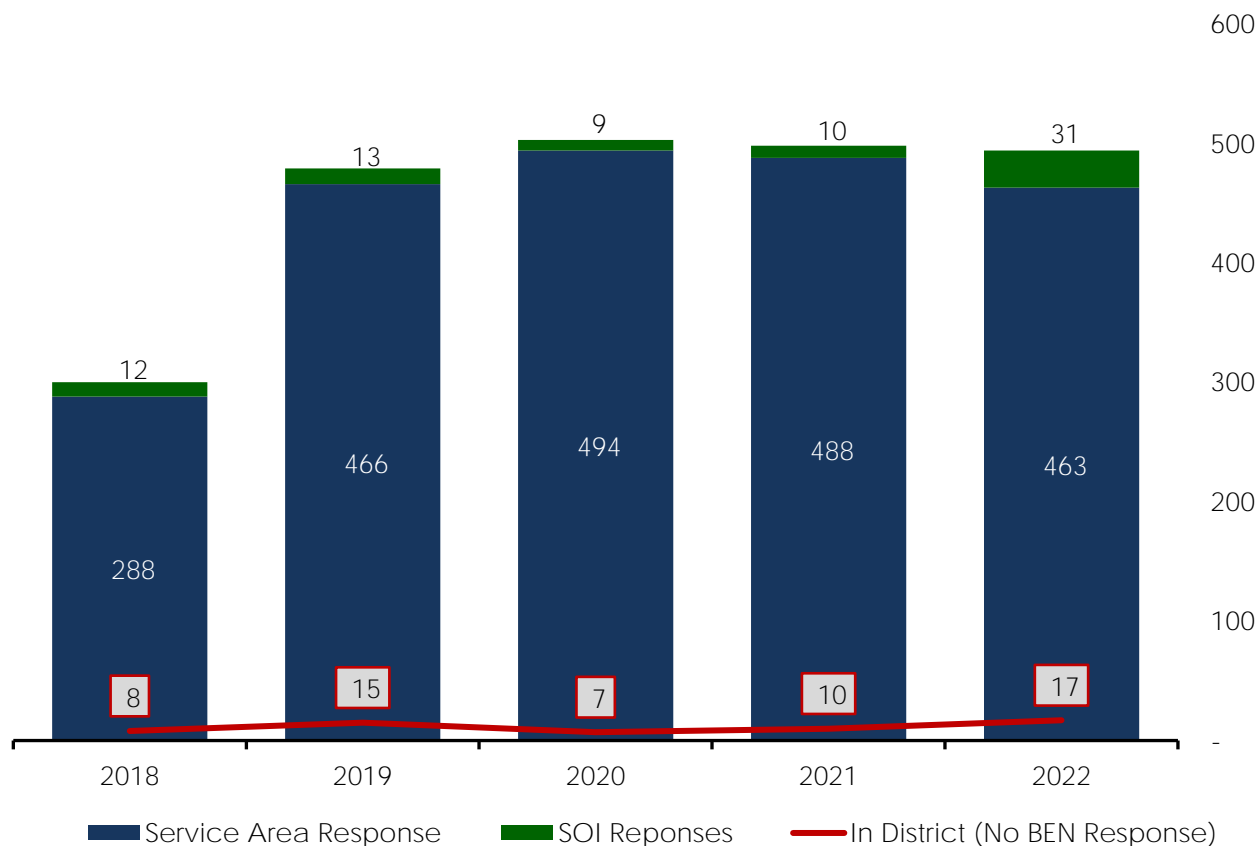
Each incident was grouped into the main categories based on the dispatch type. The incident types were related to the major categories in the National Fire Incident Reporting system.

Figure 119: BEN Total Incident Responses by Type as a Percentage



Typically, an analysis of incidents by year can yield a trend or indicate what call volume might look like in the next few years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social and economic constraints, this is difficult with this data set. As a result, a trend was not easily spotted or extrapolated. It appears that BEN response numbers are remaining steady after 2019. In addition, responses into the sphere of influence are not significant. One aspect of the service within the County of Santa Cruz is the prolific use of mutual aid. Occasionally, a unit from the primary jurisdiction is not identified in the CAD data, although non-radioed persons may have responded. BEN units respond to most of the incidents within their jurisdiction. The following figure shows the annual incident volume by year with the responses into the sphere of influence and district-covered incidents.

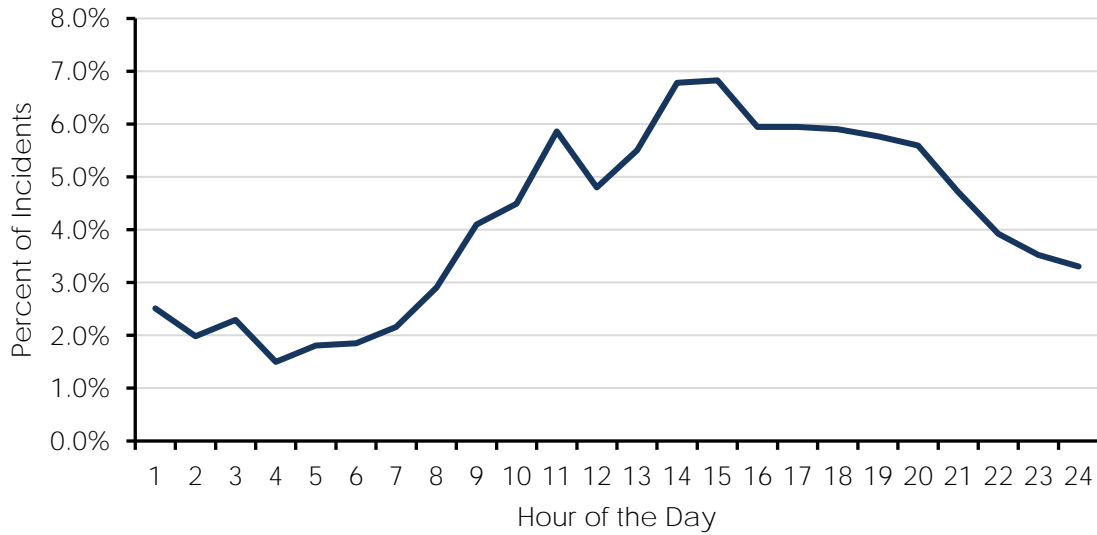
Figure 120: BEN Annual Incident Volume by Year



A temporal study indicated some seasonality in the response data. Incident volume variation by month showed a lower incident load from January through March, with peak incident volume in September, October, and December. The deviation was plus and minus 2%.

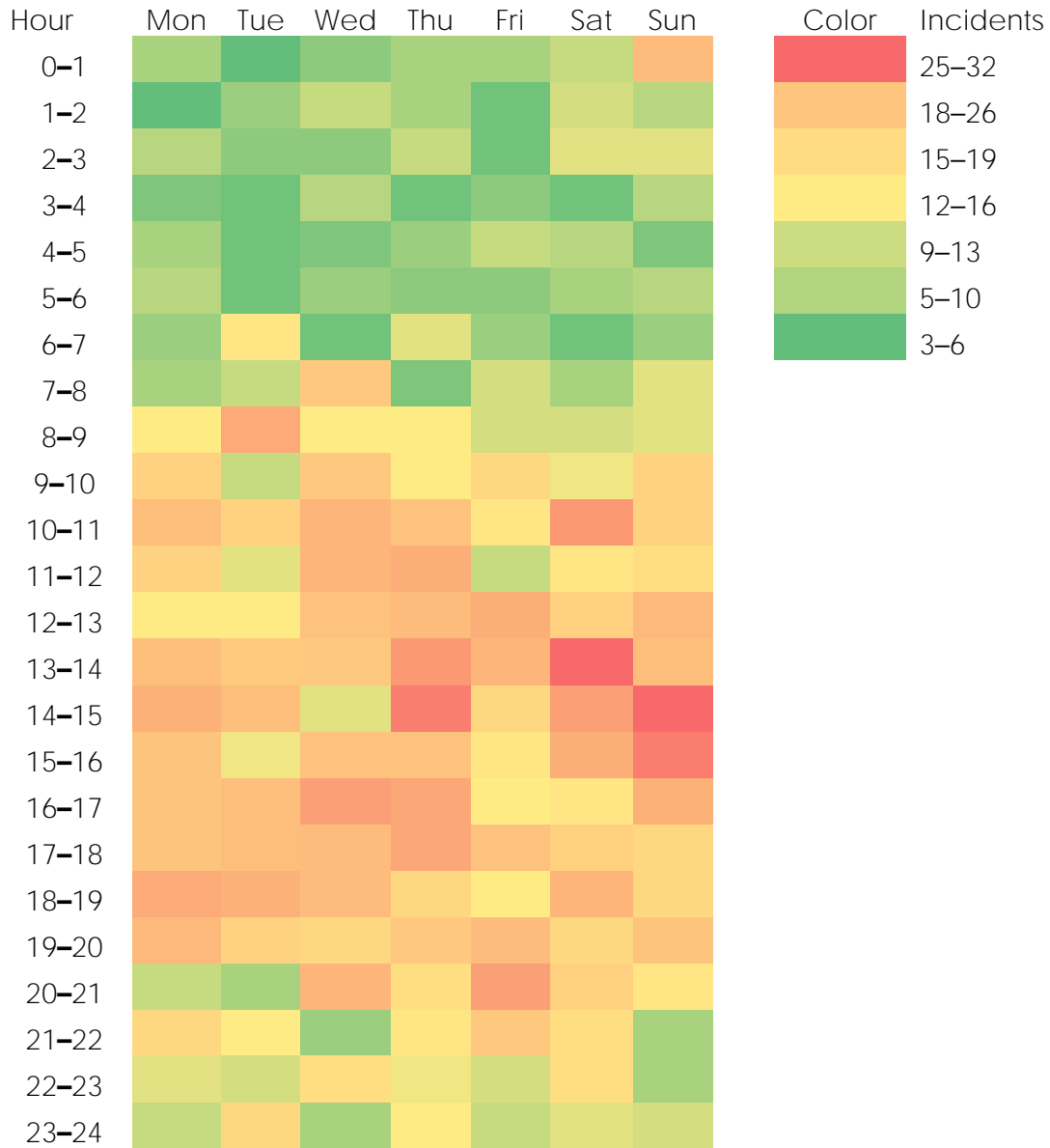
A study of demand by hour shows that BEN, like many fire agencies, sees a significant variation by the hour. In fact, over 72% of all incidents happen between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The following figure shows the general difference of the complete incident data set by hour.

Figure 121: BEN Incident Percentage by Hour



The average daily swing is typical and likely due to the number of awake and active people. However, the day-to-day variation in this information does play a part. The following figure is the incident heat map by the hour and day of the week.

Figure 122: BEN Incident Heat Map by Hour and Weekday



As indicated in the previous figure, the daytime hour incidents tend to be evenly distributed each day, with a slightly higher incident volume on the weekends.

The final volume analysis looked at the unit usage for all apparatus within the system. This analysis considered three dimensions. The first is the unit hour utilization (UHU). This number represents the time a unit was committed to an incident as a percentage of the total time they were on duty. The next is the average time a unit was committed to an incident. And finally, the average number of incidents a unit was deployed daily.

Only those units clearly identified by the agency or units with large volumes of responses within the data sets were evaluated. The following figure shows the general statistics for each frontline unit within the BEN system.

Figure 123: BEN Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
B2203	4.2%	28 Minutes	2.2
R2266	4.2%	27 Minutes	2.2
C2200	2.3%	23 Minutes	1.4
E2213	2.6%	27 Minutes	1.4
E2212	2.0%	39 Minutes	0.7
E2211	1.0%	31 Minutes	0.5
Utilities	0.4%	32 Minutes	0.2
E2231	0.6%	50 Minutes	0.2

Two additional apparatus, B2201, and E2249, did not have enough responses in the data set to be reported in the above analysis.

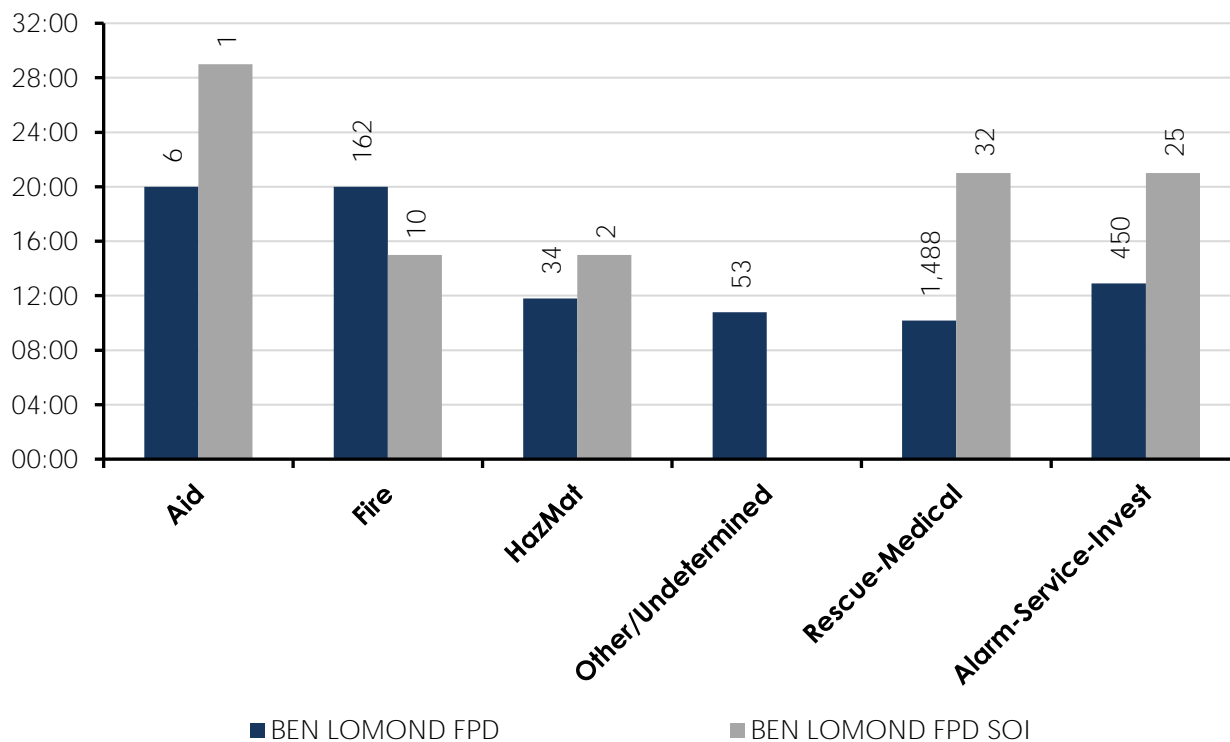
Service Delivery & Performance

The performance of the BEN response was also evaluated. The data did not differentiate between emergency responses and non-emergency responses. In addition, there was no evaluation of the arriving unit's type or agency. Therefore, all responses are evaluated. The 90th percentile is typically used in the fire service and is considered the standard for measuring incident response performance. Due to the nature of this report, BEN's performance in its identified sphere of influence was also evaluated. Agency performance goals or standards are not taken into consideration for this report.

Three unique time segments are included when evaluating an agency's response performance. The first is the time it takes for the Dispatcher to answer the 911 call and notify the agency (call processing); the second is the time it takes for the agency to receive the call and go en route to the call (turnout time); and third is the time it takes for the unit to drive to the incident (travel time). All three segments combined make up the total response time. For this evaluation, the unit type was not discriminated against, and the first arriving unit was used to determine the total response time.

Each call type may contain variables. For example, questioning the caller for appropriate information may take more or less time. In addition, it may take longer for crews to respond depending on the personal protective equipment to be worn, which varies with the type of incident. The following figure shows each incident type's total response time performance within the data set, grouped by the major NFIRS categories. The following figure shows the first due, 90th percentile total response time for the District and the sphere of influence.

Figure 124: BEN Incidents 90th Percentile Total Response Times, Jan 2018–Dec 2022



Staffing

BEN operates a volunteer response service with one paid Fire Chief and one part-time administrative assistant. Emergency response consists of fire apparatus staffed as needed by volunteer personnel. The following figure shows the total number of personnel assigned to the BEN.

Figure 125: BEN Staffing

Assignment	Staffing
Uniformed Administration	1
Non-Uniformed Administration	0.5
Fire Prevention	0
Operations Staff (Volunteers, Reserve, and on-call) ⁴¹	≈29
Emergency Communications	0
Total Personnel	1.5 / ≈29

The following figure shows the daily operational staffing at each station and on each unit. All apparatus is staffed by paid-on-call volunteers.

Figure 126: BEN Daily Operational Staffing

Station	Daily Staffing	Unit Staffing
1	Volunteer	4 Engines and 1 Rescue


⁴¹ benlomondfd.com/2018/12/meet-your-firefighters/.

Facilities & Apparatus

Ben Lomond Fire Station

The following figure outlines the basic features of the BEN fire station facilities. The condition of the fire station is rated based on the criteria identified in the introduction to this section of the report.

Figure 127: Ben Lomond Fire Station

Station Name/Number:	Ben Lomond Station 1									
Address/Physical Location:	9430 Hwy 9, Ben Lomond, CA 95005									
	General Description:									
	Centrally located in downtown Ben Lomond, the fire station consists of a one-story wood-framed building composed of 3 back-in apparatus bays, a classroom, a large kitchen, restrooms, and administrative offices.									
Structure										
Date of Original Construction	1948									
Seismic Protection	Front apparatus doors									
Condition (from rating sheet)	Fair									
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-through Bays			Back-in Bays		3				
Length of each Apparatus Bay										
Facilities Available										
Sleeping Quarters	2	Bedrooms			Beds		Dorm Beds			
Current daily staffing	0									
Maximum staffing capability	0									
Kitchen Facilities	1									
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	Yes (Bathroom) No (Shower Facilities)									
Training/Meeting Rooms	1									
Safety & Security										
Station Sprinklered	No									
Smoke Detection	Yes									
Decon & Biological Disposal	No									
Security System	No									
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes									
Washer/Dryer/Extractor	Yes									

Fire Station Discussion

BEN's fire station was considered in fair condition. The fire station appears to be well-maintained. However, because of its age, it does not meet modern firefighting requirements. The firefighting environment has significantly changed over the past several decades. Technology, equipment, and safety systems have changed to meet new firefighting and emergency response demands. Older fire station buildings do not typically have the space or engineering systems to meet that new environment. Modern work and living spaces also require considerably more access to electrical outlets and built-in technology than is provided or expected in older buildings' design. This station, although remodeled over the years to accommodate a growing department and community, still lacks adequate parking for responding volunteer firefighters, sufficient living space for the potential of future full-time staffing, and limited equipment storage space and facilities.

Although not currently designed or configured to accommodate the housing of full-time staff, the fire station has adequate space to allow for adding at least one 3-person engine company if existing facilities were to be re-configured and/or remodeled.*

Figure 128: BEN Station Configuration and Condition

Station	Apparatus Bays	Staffing Capacity	General Condition	Station Age
Station 1	3	3*	Fair	75
Totals/Average:	3	3*	Fair	75

Volunteer firefighters, as all working fire personnel, need to safely decontaminate personnel and equipment after many of the responses they face in the current firefighting context. Every crew member should have access to facilities to decontaminate immediately after a fire event, and showers should allow for gender separation. In addition, there needs to be enough partitioned space to allow for gear and equipment to be thoroughly washed and to control contamination in the living and working space of the station. The BEN fire station currently lacks adequate space and facilities to accommodate safe and effective decontamination of its personnel.

Apparatus

BEN operates with three Type 1, a Type 3, and a Type 6 engine. In addition, it has a rescue unit, three command vehicles, and one utility truck. The following figure shows the type and condition of BEN's fleet.

Figure 129: BEN Vehicles & Apparatus

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
B2203	Command/SUV	Excellent
R2266	Rescue	Excellent
C2200	Command/Jeep	Excellent
E2213	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
E2212	Type 1 Engine	Good
E2210	Type 1 Engine	Good
E2231	Type 3	Fair
B2201	Command/Truck	Excellent
E2249	Type 6	Excellent
U2290	Utility/Truck	Good

Facility Replacement & Infrastructure Needs

The BEN has occupied the current fire station location for over 75 years. Its central location in downtown Ben Lomond provides excellent access to the community's main commercial area for emergencies and responding volunteer firefighters. As mentioned, the fire station has been upgraded and appears to be adequately maintained. Its current location does have significant parking challenges for responding volunteers and minimal space for expansion. The Community and the Fire District should consider developing a plan to address the fire department's future space and facilities needs and the potential shift towards 24-hour on-duty paid or volunteer staffing as call volumes increase and the community's requirements grow.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

BEN has no shared facilities with neighboring San Lorenzo Valley fire agencies. The Department currently works closely with other area fire departments, providing mutual aid during routine calls for service and the significant emergencies that impact the area frequently. Continued enhanced collaboration and pooling of resources (facilities/staffing) between the San Lorenzo Valley volunteer agencies may be an effective short- to medium-term method to address community growth, service demand increases, and staffing challenges they may face in the future,

Dispatch & Communications

Emergency communications and dispatch services are provided to BEN by Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (NetCom), which has operated for 25 years as of 2021. NetCom is a regional center operating as Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties' Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). It encompasses more than 330,000 residents and visitors. The center serves multiple fire, law enforcement, and EMS agencies.

NetCom processes nearly 600,000 calls annually.⁴² Although the center follows national standards for call answering, it focuses on achieving the State of California's standard (which is higher than national standards) of 95% of incoming 911 calls being answered within 15 seconds—equivalent to three rings at NetCom.⁴³

⁴² Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 website.

⁴³ Ibid.

Boulder Creek Fire Protection District Profile

Agency Overview

The Boulder Creek Fire Protection District (BCFPD) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the 16.83 square mile area for the unincorporated communities of Boulder Creek, Mildwood, Redwood Grove, San Lorenzo Park, and Brookdale.⁴⁴

Boundaries

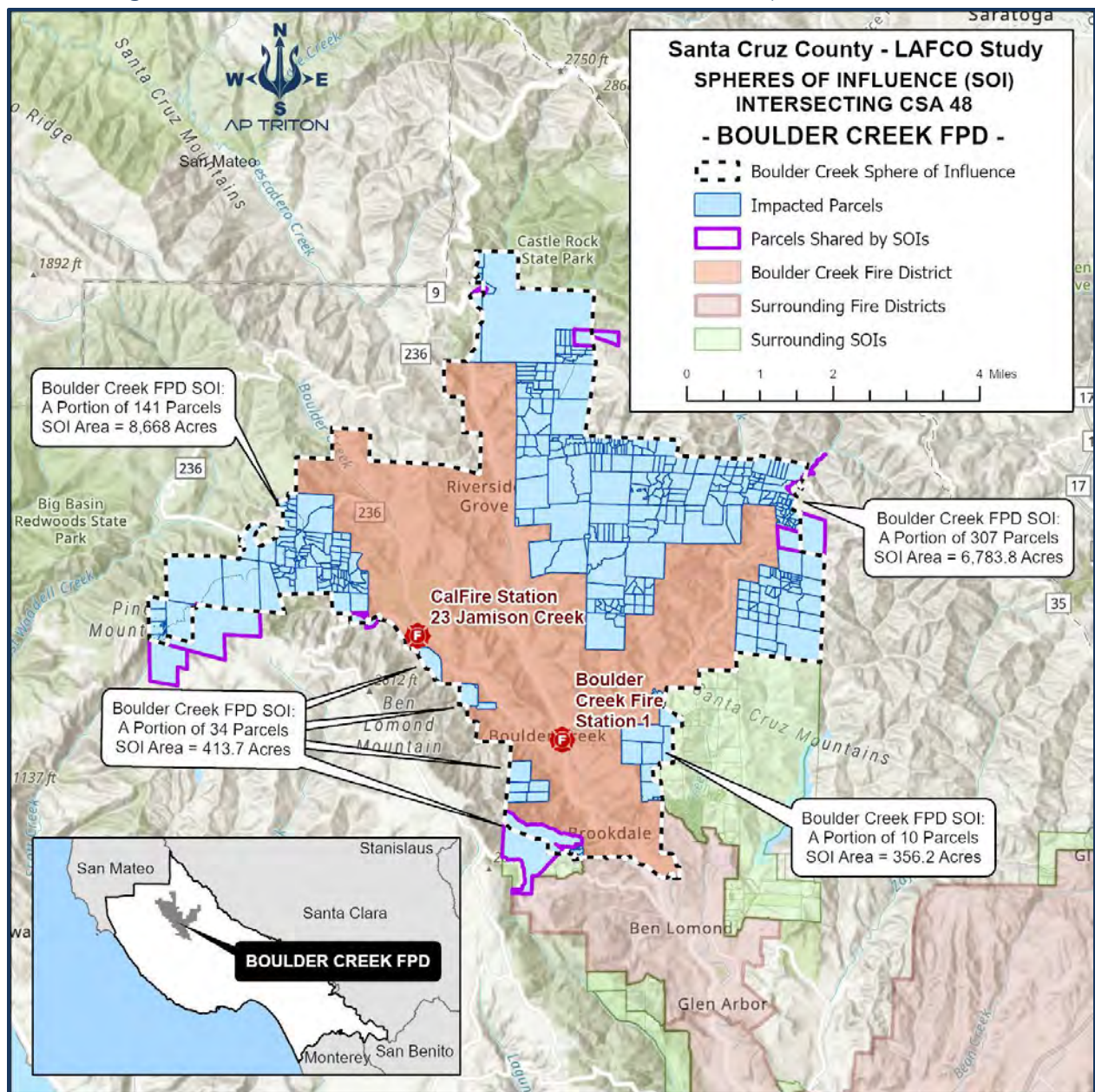
BCFPD is located in the San Lorenzo Valley and is almost entirely surrounded by the jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department. The southern border is shared with the Ben Lomond Fire Protection District.

Several areas are included in the SOI. The spheres are currently a part of CSA 48. The three most prominent are to the north and northwest and to the east of the District. Within the SOI are 16,221.7 acres on 492 parcels, some shared with neighboring jurisdiction SOIs.

The following figure shows the location and the SOI as currently reported.

⁴⁴ ArcGIS Community Analyst.

Figure 130: Boulder Creek Fire Protection District with Sphere of Influence



Type & Extent of Services

Services Provided

BCFPD provides a wide range of services for its community. These include fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical care, and other emergency services. The following figure represents each of the services and the level performed as indicated by the agency.

Figure 131: Overview of Services Provided by BCFPD

Service	Y/N	Level
Fire Suppression	Yes	Structural, wildland (with CAL FIRE)
EMS First Response	Yes	BLS
Ambulance Transport	Yes	BLS when requested
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	Technical rescue (high angle, confined space, trench, structure collapse, debris flow). UAV program (in development).
Hazmat Response	No	First response only
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	
Plan Review	Yes	In-house and vendor contracts when needed
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Cal Reality HIZ assessments, home hardening inspections, defensible space inspections, camp inspections, childcare facility safety inspections, fire extinguisher training, summer children's fire safety program, and high school ROP Fire tech/safety training. HOA road fire access/ordinance walkthrough.
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	

Service Area

BCFPD is a multi-disciplined fire protection district. The District is statutorily responsible for fire protection of improved structures and other emergency services within District Boundaries. Vegetation fires are part of the state responsibility area and are statutorily the responsibility of CAL FIRE. However, BCFPD provides support and assistance when requested and will begin incident mitigation if notified directly.

Collaboration

- BCFD participant in the countywide mutual aid agreement.
- BCFD responds for specialized technical rescue assistance if requested.
- Real estate is available for collaborative development.

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs)

- Mobile cascade air system.
- Fire prevention trailer prop.
- Live fire training prop.

Contracts to provide services to other agencies

- None Identified

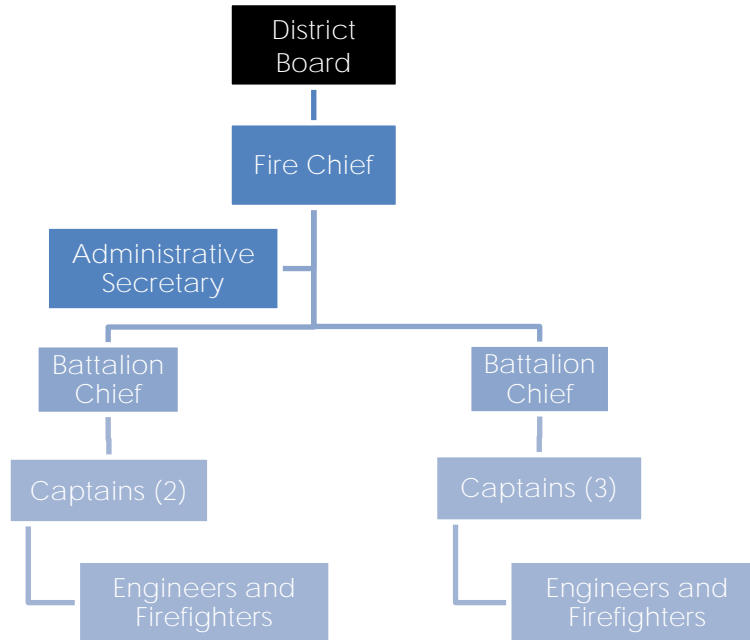
Contracts for service to other agencies

- None Identified

Governance, Administration, & Accountability

BCFPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors whose head is the Board Chair. The Board hires a Fire Chief. The following figure represents the BCFPD lines of authority.

Figure 132: Boulder Creek Lines of Authority⁴⁵



The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability.

⁴⁵ www.bcfpd.com/organizational-structure.

Figure 133: Boulder Creek Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability	Available
Agency website ⁴⁶	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	No
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ⁴⁷	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed.	No
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	No
SOC performance reports are available on the website	No
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	Yes
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes

⁴⁶ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information about the district. Government Code Section 53087.8 lists what must be included on the website.

⁴⁷ Government Code §54954.2.

Growth & Population Projections

Boulder Creek is a census-designated place (CDP) with census projections and population. The current population in the 7.51-square-mile CDP area is 5,429.⁴⁸ However, this census geographic area differs from the legal boundaries of BCFPD, with the census area encompassing a smaller size than the legal boundaries of the District. The District boundaries will be used for the remainder of this section.

Current Population

The current population within BCFPD's legal boundaries is 8,274, with an area of 16.83 square miles. There is a total of 3,806 housing units listed in the area.⁴⁹ Neither the number of residents nor the housing units meet the urban area classification threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau.⁵⁰

Projected Growth & Development

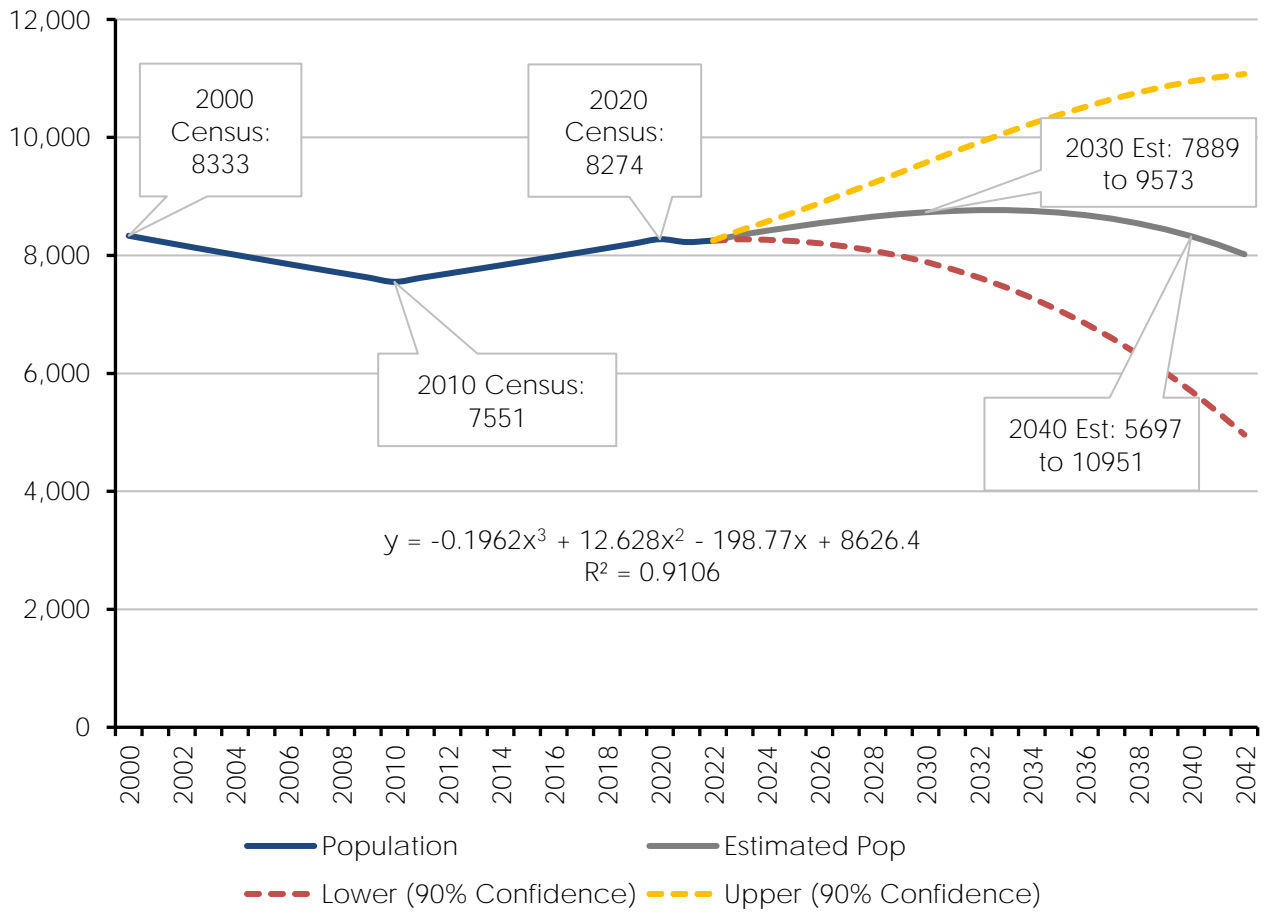
Estimating population growth is challenging due to many factors, such as new developments or local economies. For BCFPD, two techniques were utilized. The first was to rely on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or very moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the BCFPD area, the best-fit model was a three-factor polynomial regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.9106. This means the model fits the historical model very well. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast shows a wide range in population projections of +/- 2,600 people. The area estimates range from 8,274 in 2020 to 5,697 and 10,951 by 2040, with a 90% confidence level. The direct model shows only a slight increase to 8,324 in 2040. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

⁴⁸ www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/benlomondcdpcalifornia,US/PST045222.

⁴⁹ ESRI Community Analyst, Source U. S. Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171).

⁵⁰ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.

Figure 134: Boulder Creek FPD Historical Population and Forecast



Financial Overview

The Boulder Creek Fire Protection District operates only through the General Fund. The District prepares an annual operating budget based on a July through June fiscal year.

General Fund Recurring Revenues and Expenses

A significant amount of information was provided by the District staff. It was reviewed to develop a financial trend analysis for the five years, from fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2023. This review of the historical information of General Fund (GF) revenues revealed recurring revenues increased from \$1,156,000 in FY 2018 to a budgeted \$1,302,000 in FY 2023, a 12.5% overall increase or an annualized increase of approximately 2.5%.

Property tax revenues are the most significant source of General Fund Revenues, followed by Measure N Assessments restricted to specific uses. These two sources account for almost 94% of General Fund Revenues. Other sources of revenue include charges for services, grants, interest, training funds, and other sources.

The General Fund expends funds for salaries and benefits, services and supplies, capital expenditures, and debt service. The District has accumulated an Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL) in its CalPERS pension obligation. Of the approximately \$643,000 in salaries and benefits, over \$40,000, or 6%, is payment on the UAL.

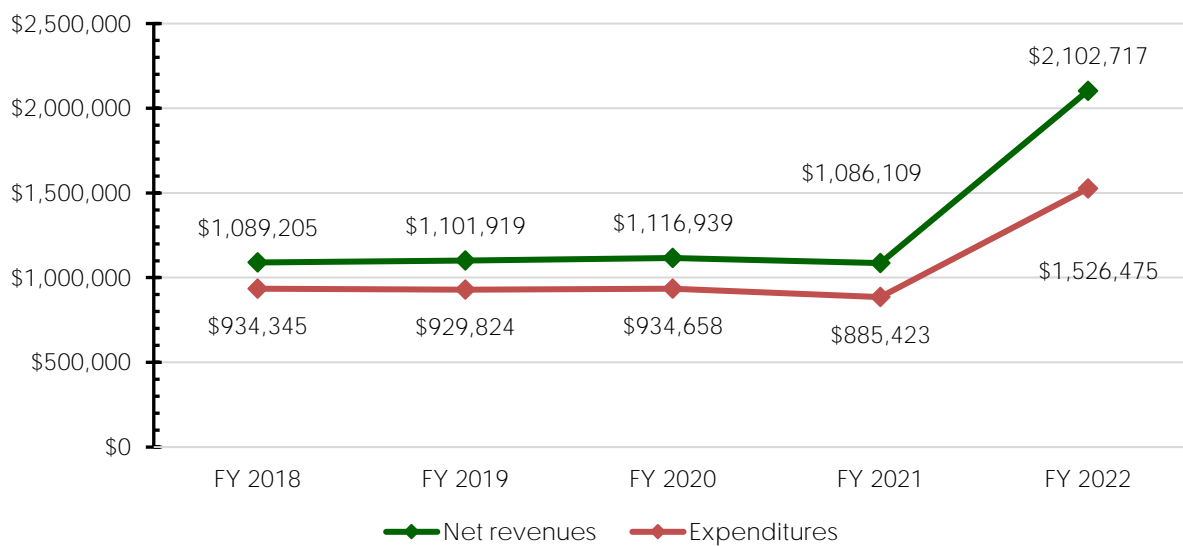
Due to the source of its funding streams, the COVID-19 pandemic had no significant negative impact on FY 2020 and FY 2021 revenues. The following figure is the historical revenues and expenditures of the District.

Figure 135: Boulder Creek Fire Protection District, Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022⁵¹

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2018 (Actual)	FY 2019 (Actual)	FY 2020 (Actual)	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 (Projected)
Recurring Revenue	1,156,287	1,057,809	1,077,617	1,112,297	1,276,526
Other Revenues	109,510	44,110	39,286	162,982	1,019,960
Total Revenues	1,265,797	1,101,919	1,116,903	1,275,279	2,296,486
Salaries & Benefits	464,261	416,409	514,338	517,862	895,606
Services & Supplies	350,837	367,542	318,369	367,561	580,869
Total Recurring Expenses	815,098	783,951	832,707	885,423	1,476,475
Capital Expenditures	119,247	145,872	101,952	—	50,000
Total Expenditures	934,345	929,823	934,659	885,423	1,526,475
Total Surplus (Deficit)	331,452	172,095	182,245	389,856	770,011
Restricted Measure N Rev.	176,592	—	(36)	189,170	193,769
Net Surplus (Deficit)	154,860	172,095	182,281	200,686	576,242

The following figure displays this data and indicates the District's historical revenues and expenditures.

Figure 136: Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses



⁵¹ Information Provided by Boulder Fire Protection Staff.

Financial Projections

The FY 2023 budget presentation spreadsheet does not calculate correctly, appearing to not include \$200,000 of capital expenditures. The FY 2023 budget will form the base year from which the forecasts will be developed.

Property tax revenue growth has slowed from approximately 5% in earlier years of the study to 2.25% in the FY 2023 budget. Remaining conservative and consistent with the more recent trend, recurring revenues are forecast to grow at 2.25% annually. Rent and other revenues are forecast to remain constant at \$80,000 annually.

Salaries and benefits have been distorted by overtime costs related to deployments to disaster-level incidents. Salaries & benefits are forecast to increase by 3% annually from the FY 2023 budgeted amounts. Services and supplies typically increase and decrease based on the organization's current needs, making a trend forecast difficult. This study will forecast growth in this category at 3% annually, again using the FY 2023 budgeted amounts as a base year. Capital expenditures are forecast at \$100,000 annually.

The following projections were developed from the historical trends identified in the financial analysis. Certain expenditures appear on an "as-needed" basis and are difficult to identify as a trend.

Figure 137: Boulder Creek General Fund Summarized Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenditures

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2023 ⁵² Budget	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue	1,383,175	1,406,219	1,431,418	1,457,184	1,483,530	1,510,468
Less Measure N	(193,769)	(193,769)	(193,769)	(193,769)	(193,769)	(193,769)
Net revenues	1,189,406	1,212,450	1,237,649	1,263,415	1,289,761	1,316,699
Expenditures	1,223,430	1,102,633	1,132,712	1,163,693	1,195,604	1,228,472
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(34,024)	109,817	104,937	99,722	94,157	88,227

⁵² Boulder Creek Fire Protection District FY 2023 Budget.

Capital Planning

A Capital Improvements/Replacement Plan was not observed in the documentation provided by the District. However, several reserve accounts were identified with funds being restricted in the Fund Balance Section of the balance sheet to provide for future expenditures for District apparatus, SCBA and PPE purchases (Measure N funds), mobile equipment reserves, Workers' Compensation reserves, buildings and improvements reserves, equipment reserve and clothing and personal reserve. These reserve and restricted amounts total over \$1,750,000.

Demand for Services

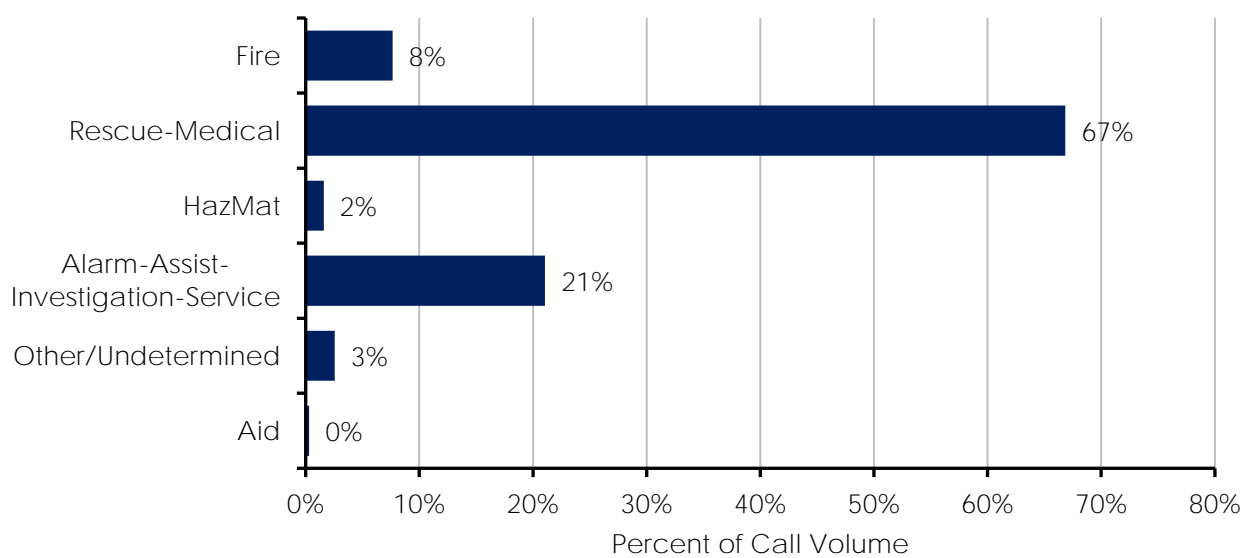
BCFPD is primarily a rural system that provides aid services to other communities when requested. Data was provided by the regional dispatch center and included incident information from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. In addition, any response to a wildland-type fire in the State Response Area was removed from the analysis. The following figure is the overview of the response statistics for BCFPD.

Figure 138: BCFPD Response Overview

Agency	Boulder Creek FPD
Avg. Annual Incident Vol.	1,013
Incidents per 1,000 Population	122
90th Percentile Total Time	18:23

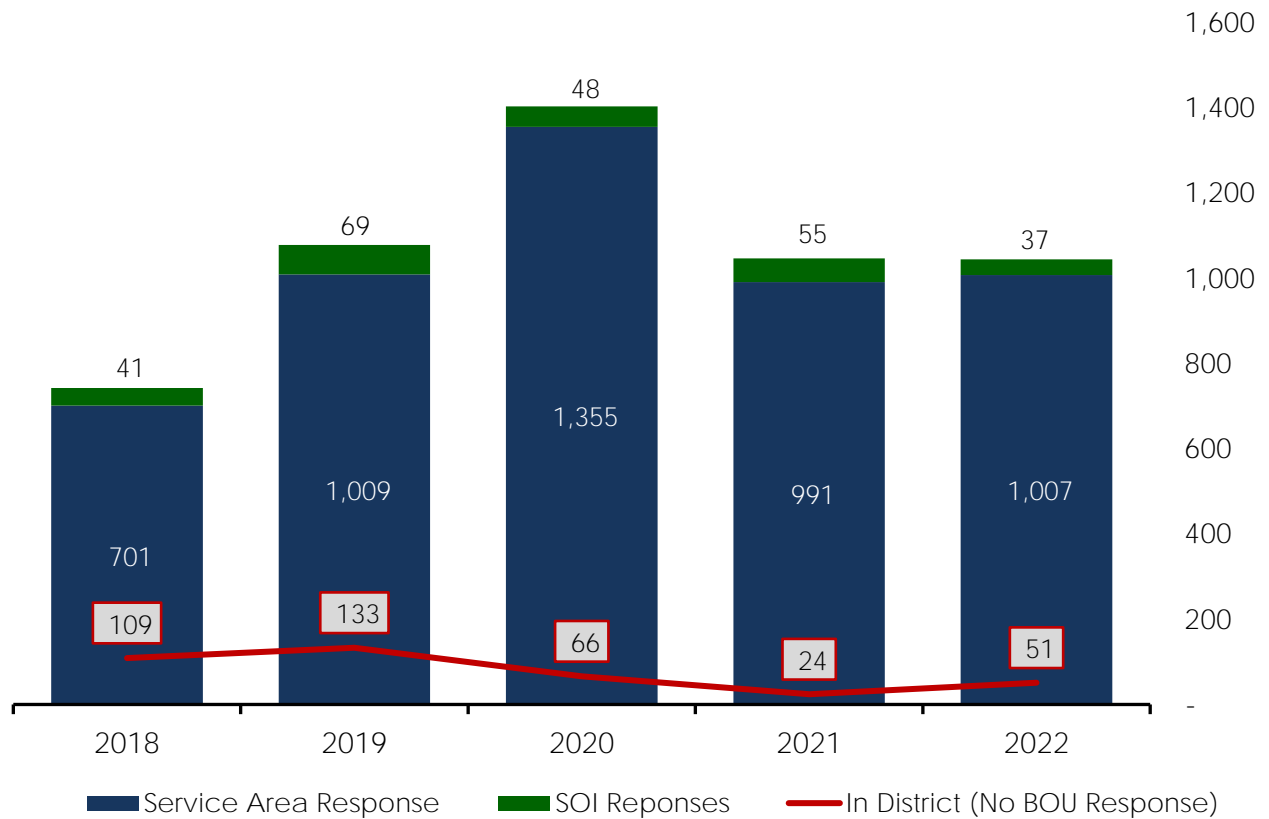
Each incident was grouped into the main categories based on the dispatch type. The incident types were related to the major categories in the National Fire Incident Reporting system. The following figure is the percentage of incidents within those categories for the entire data set, 2018–2022.

Figure 139: BCFPD Total Incident Responses by Type as a Percentage



Typically, an analysis of incidents by year can yield a trend or indicate what call volume might look like in the next few years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social and economic constraints, this is difficult with this data set. As a result, a trend was not easily spotted or extrapolated. BCFPD response numbers increased in 2020 and then dropped to pre-pandemic levels. The response volume has not returned to the 2020 volume but remains steady and similar to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, responses into the sphere of influence are not significant. One aspect of the service within the County of Santa Cruz is the prolific use of mutual aid. Occasionally, a unit from the primary jurisdiction is not identified in the CAD data, although non-radioed persons may have responded. BCFPD units respond to most incidents within their jurisdiction and have improved since 2019. The following figure shows the annual incident volume by year with the responses into the sphere of influence and district-covered incidents.

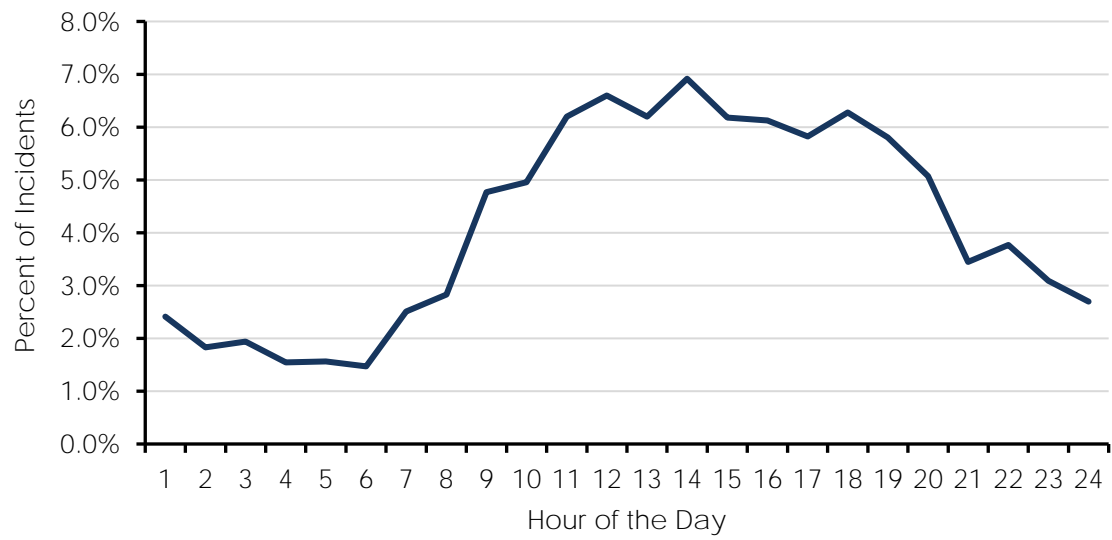
Figure 140: BCFPD Annual Incident Volume by Year



A temporal study indicated some evident seasonality in the response data. Incident volume variation by month showed an incident volume decrease through the winter and early spring, with an increase in the warmer months. The highest volume increase was in September. The variation was plus 4% and minus 3%.

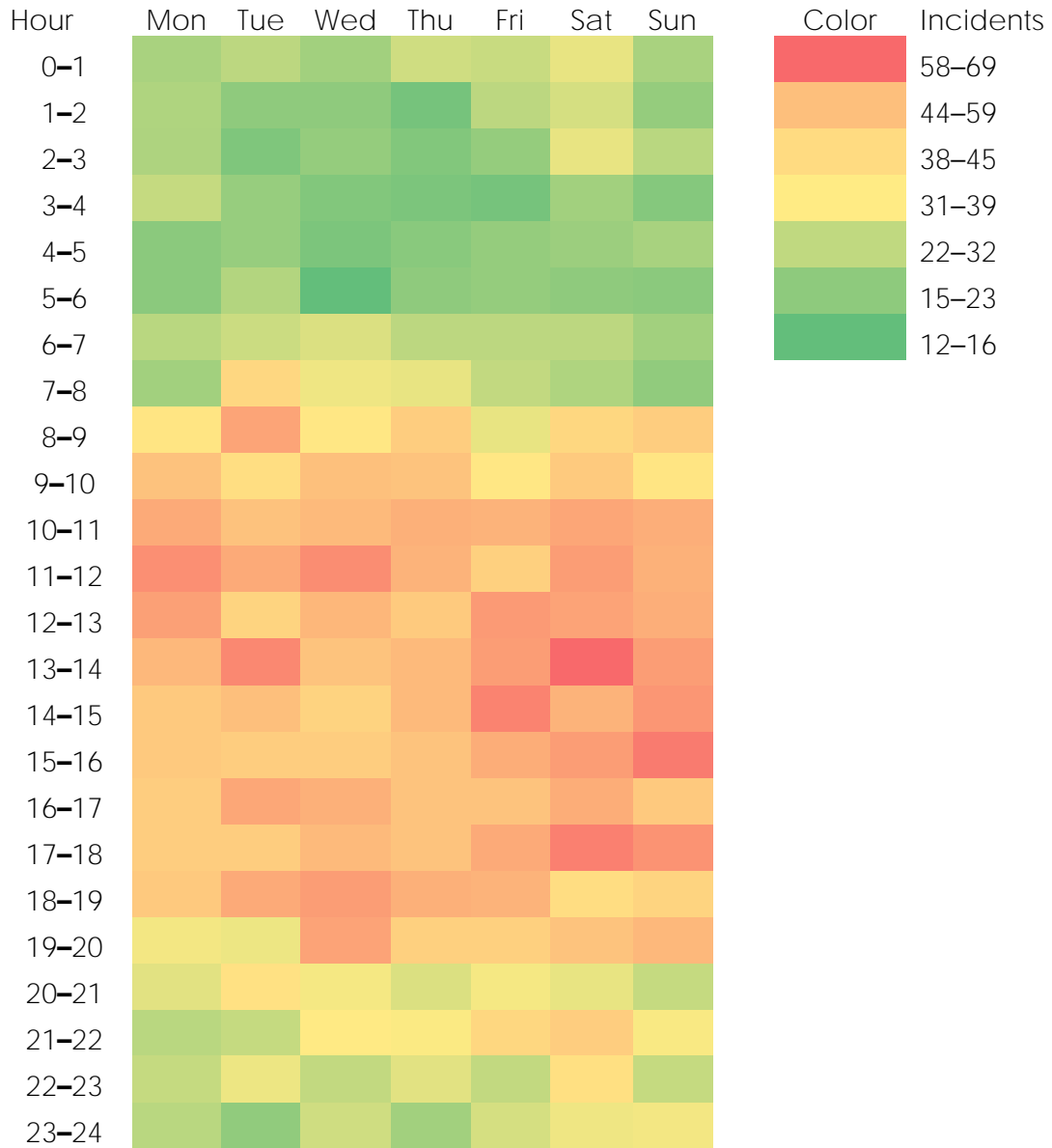
A study of demand by hour shows that BCFPD, like many fire agencies, sees a significant variation by the hour. In fact, over 74% of all incidents happen between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The following figure shows the general difference of the complete incident data set by hour.

Figure 141: BCFPD Incident Percentage by Hour



The average daily swing is typical and likely due to the number of awake and active people. However, the day-to-day variation in this information does play a part. The following figure is the incident heat map by the hour and day of the week.

Figure 142: BCFPD Incident Heat Map by Hour and Weekday



As indicated in the previous figure, the daytime hour incidents tend to be evenly distributed each day, with a slightly higher incident volume on the weekends.

The final volume analysis looked at the unit usage for all apparatus within the system. This analysis considered three dimensions. The first is the unit hour utilization (UHU). This number represents the time a unit was committed to an incident as a percentage of the total time they were on duty. The next is the average time a unit was committed to an incident. And finally, the average number of incidents a unit was deployed daily.

Only those units clearly identified by the agency or units with large volumes of responses within the data sets were evaluated. The following figure shows the general statistics for each frontline unit within the BCFPD system.

Figure 143: Boulder Creek Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
C2100	1.4%	39 Minutes	0.5
B2101	1.4%	26 Minutes	0.8
B2102	1.2%	24 Minutes	0.7
B2103	1.4%	22 Minutes	0.9
E2111	1.3%	26 Minutes	0.7
E2112	2.8%	26 Minutes	1.5
E2137	1.8%	40 Minutes	0.6
E2146	0.5%	34 Minutes	0.2
R2166	4.3%	26 Minutes	2.4
W2152	0.9%	65 Minutes	0.2
E2110	0.2%	19 Minutes	0.2

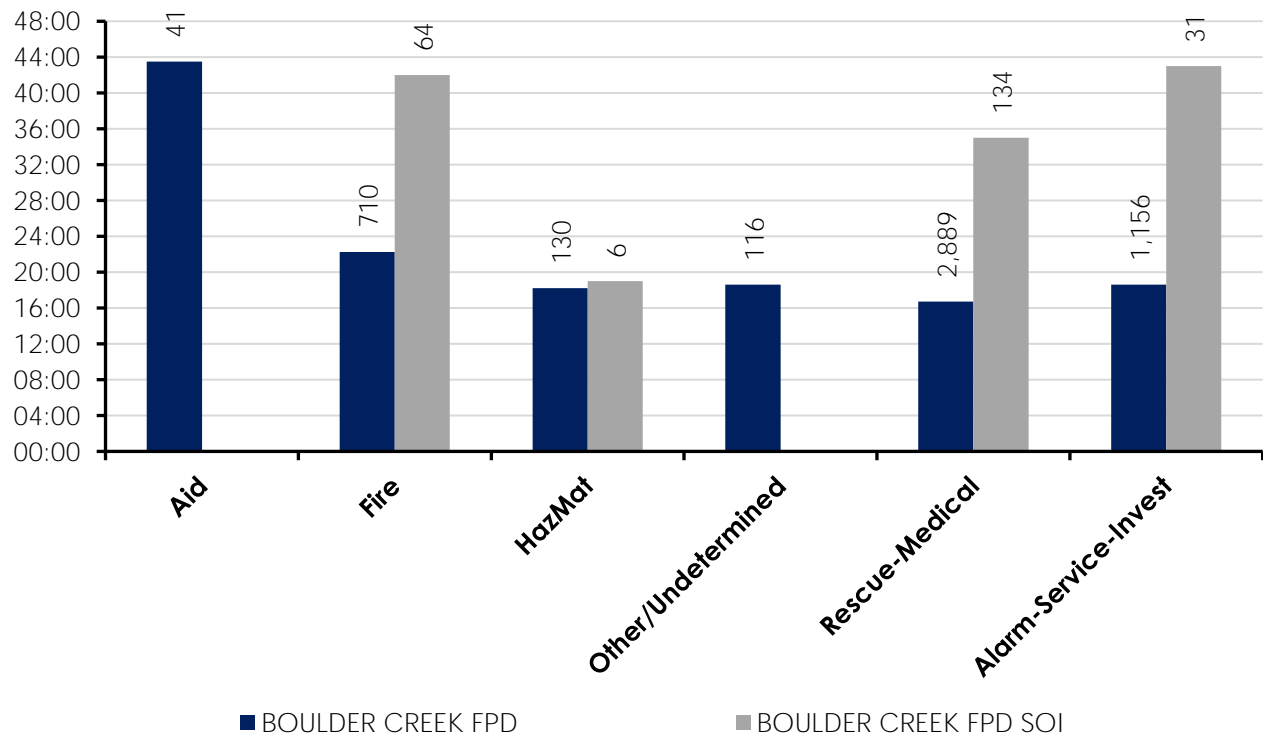
Service Delivery & Performance

The performance of the BCFPD response was also evaluated. The data did not differentiate between emergency responses and non-emergency responses. In addition, there was no evaluation of the arriving unit's type or agency. Therefore, all responses are evaluated. The 90th percentile is typically used in the fire service and is considered the standard for measuring incident response performance. Due to the nature of this report, BCFPD's performance in its identified sphere of influence was also evaluated. Agency performance goals or standards are not taken into consideration for this report.

Three unique time segments are included when evaluating an agency's response performance. The first is the time it takes for the Dispatcher to answer the 911 call and notify the agency (call processing); the second is the time it takes for the agency to receive the call and go en route to the call (turnout time); and third is the time it takes for the unit to drive to the incident (travel time). All three segments combined make up the total response time. For this evaluation, the unit type was not discriminated against, and the first arriving unit was used to determine the total response time.

Each call type may contain variables. For example, questioning the caller for appropriate information may take more or less time. In addition, it may take longer for crews to respond depending on the personal protective equipment to be worn, which varies with the type of incident. The following figure shows the total response time performance for each of the major incident types for all incidents within the data set. The following figure shows the first due, 90th percentile total response time for the District and the sphere of influence.

Figure 144: BCFPD Incidents 90th Percentile Total Response Times, Jan 2018–Dec 2022



Staffing

BCFPD operates a volunteer response service with one paid Fire Chief and one part-time administrative assistant. Emergency response consists of fire apparatus staffed as needed by volunteer personnel.

The following figure shows the total number of personnel assigned to the BCFPD.

Figure 145: Staffing

Assignment	Staffing
Uniformed Administration	1
Non-Uniformed Administration	0
Fire Prevention	0
Operations Staff	0
Emergency Communications	0
Volunteers, Reserve, On Call	≈35 ⁵³
Total Personnel	1.5 / ≈35

The following figure shows the daily operational staffing at each station and on each unit. All apparatus is staffed by paid-on-call volunteers.

Figure 146: Daily Operational Staffing

Station	Daily Staffing	Unit Staffing
1	Volunteer	4 Engines, 1 Tender, and 1 Ambulance
2	Volunteer	1 Engine

⁵³ wbcpsc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Brochure-Boulder-Creek-Fire-District-FINAL-II.pdf.

Facilities & Apparatus

Boulder Creek Fire Stations

The following figures outline the basic features of each BCFPD fire station. The condition of each station is rated based on the criteria identified in the introduction to this section of the report.

Figure 147: Boulder Creek FPD Fire Station #1



Station Name/Number:		Station 1					
Address/Physical Location:		13230 Hwy 9, Boulder Creek, CA					
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>This fire station was built over 80 years ago in 1940. Over the years, the original facilities were remodeled and added to accommodate the needs of the fire department and the community. The current fire station and ancillary support facilities are dated, undersized, and do not meet the needs of modern fire stations.</p>					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1940					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays			Back-in Bays		
ADA Compliant		Yes					
Total Square Footage		8,810					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		1	Bedrooms	-	Beds	6	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		6					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		Yes					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Figure 148: Boulder Creek FPD Fire Station #2

Station Name/Number:		Station 2					
Address/Physical Location:		16115 Jamison Creek Rd., Boulder Creek, CA					
		General Description:					
		Station #2 was built in 1989 and is a two-story wood frame fire-sprinkler-protected structure. It has 3 fire apparatus bays (2 drive-thru and one back-in) on the first floor. Living quarters designed to accommodate a 3-person engine company are on the second floor. A Type 1 engine is stored here and staffed by volunteer firefighters when needed. Additionally, this station is seasonally staffed by a CZU CalFire Type 3 engine crew through a lease agreement between the State of California and the Fire District.					
Structure							
Date of Original Construction		1989					
Seismic Protection		Yes					
Auxiliary Power		Yes					
General Condition		Good					
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		2	Back-in Bays		1
ADA Compliant		No					
Total Square Footage		6,000					
Facilities Available							
Sleeping Quarters		2	Bedrooms	3	Beds	6	Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability		12					
Exercise/Workout Facilities		Yes					
Kitchen Facilities		Yes					
Individual Lockers Assigned		Yes					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes					
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes					
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes					
Safety & Security							
Station Sprinklered		Yes					
Smoke Detection		Yes					
Decon & Biological Disposal		Yes					
Security System		No					
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes					

Fire Stations Discussion

The District deemed the Boulder Creek fire stations in good and fair condition. The main fire station in downtown Boulder Creek on Highway 9. The station appears to be well maintained but, because of its age, struggles to meet the requirements of modern firefighting. The firefighting environment has significantly evolved over the past several decades. Technology, equipment, and safety systems have changed to meet new firefighting and emergency response demands. Older fire station buildings do not typically have the physical space or engineering systems to meet that new environment. Modern work and living spaces also require considerably more access to electrical outlets and built-in technology than is provided or expected in older buildings' design.

Although remodeled in the past to accommodate a growing department and community, this station still has significant ADA non-compliance concerns and operational space issues. Boulder Creek Station 2 is located and provides coverage to the Jamison Creek area and houses a CalFire wildland fire engine company during fire season. This facility, built in 1989 and designed to accommodate full-time firefighter staffing, appears to be adequately meeting the needs of the CalFire and Boulder Creek personnel utilizing it. It is over 30 years old and is two stories. It does not sufficiently meet current ADA requirements for a public safety facility.

Figure 149: Station Configuration and Condition

Station	Apparatus Bays	Staffing Capacity	General Condition	Station Age
Station 1	1	5	Fair	83 years
Station 2	3	8	Fair	34 years
Totals/Average:	4	13	Average	59 years

The firefighters utilizing both fire stations have the need to safely decontaminate themselves and their equipment after many of the types of responses they face in the current firefighting context. Every crew member should have access to facilities to decontaminate immediately after a fire event, and showers should allow for gender separation. In addition, there needs to be enough partitioned space within the fire stations to allow for gear and equipment to be thoroughly decontaminated. Both Boulder Creek fire stations lack adequate partitioned space and facilities to adequately accommodate safe and effective decontamination of their personnel and equipment.

Apparatus

BCFPD operates three Type 1, one Type 6, and one Type 3 engine. In addition, it has a BLS Ambulance, a water tender, a utility truck, and four command vehicles. The following figure shows the type and condition of BCFPD's fleet.

Figure 150: BCFPD Vehicles & Apparatus

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
C2100	Command/4x4 PU	Excellent
B2101	Command/4x4 PU	Good
B2102	Command/4x4 PU	Excellent
B2103	Command/4x4 PU	Excellent
E2111	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
E2112	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
E2110	Type 1 Engine	Good
E2146	Type 6 Engine	Excellent
R2166	BLS Ambulance	Good (2023 Replace)
W2152	Water Tender	Good (2025 Replace)
E2137	Type 3 Engine	Excellent
U2192	Utility	Excellent

Facility Replacement & Infrastructure Needs

The District's headquarters station has occupied the current location in downtown Boulder Creek since 1939. Its central location provides excellent access to the community's main commercial area for emergencies and responding to volunteer firefighters. However, the heavy traffic that shares the main street through town can and often impacts it. The fire station has been upgraded and appears to be adequately maintained. Like neighboring Felton and Ben Lomond fire departments, its downtown location has created significant parking challenges for responding volunteers during emergencies and limited space for future expansion. The Community and the Fire District should consider developing a plan to address the fire department's future space and facilities needs, in addition to considering the impacts of the continued dependency and use of volunteer staffing as call volumes increase and the community's needs evolve.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

Boulder Creek Fire Department currently does not share facilities with the other neighboring San Lorenzo Valley fire agencies. It does have a seasonal relationship with CALFIRE, as the State staffs a Schedule-B Wildland engine company at Station 2. CAL FIRE designates the station as number 23 during fire season. The Department works closely with other area fire departments, providing mutual aid during routine calls for service and the significant emergencies that impact the area frequently. Continued and enhanced operational collaboration, in addition to sharing in the use of resources (equipment/facilities/staffing) between the San Lorenzo Valley volunteer agencies, may be an effective short to medium-term method to address community growth, service demand increases, the increasing cost of equipment purchases and replacement, and staffing challenges they may face in the future.

Dispatch & Communications

Emergency communications and dispatch services are provided to BCFPD by Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (NetCom), which has operated for 25 years as of 2021. NetCom is a regional center operating as Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties' Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). It encompasses more than 330,000 residents and visitors. The center serves multiple fire, law enforcement, and EMS agencies.

NetCom processes nearly 600,000 calls annually.⁵⁴ Although the center follows national standards for call answering, it focuses on achieving the State of California's standard (which is higher than national standards) of 95% of incoming 911 calls being answered within 15 seconds—equivalent to three rings at NetCom.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 website.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Felton Fire Protection District Profile

Agency Overview

The Felton Fire Protection District (FEL) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the 5.78 square mile area in and around the community known as Felton, with services provided to the Brackney and Mt. Hermon communities.⁵⁶

Boundaries

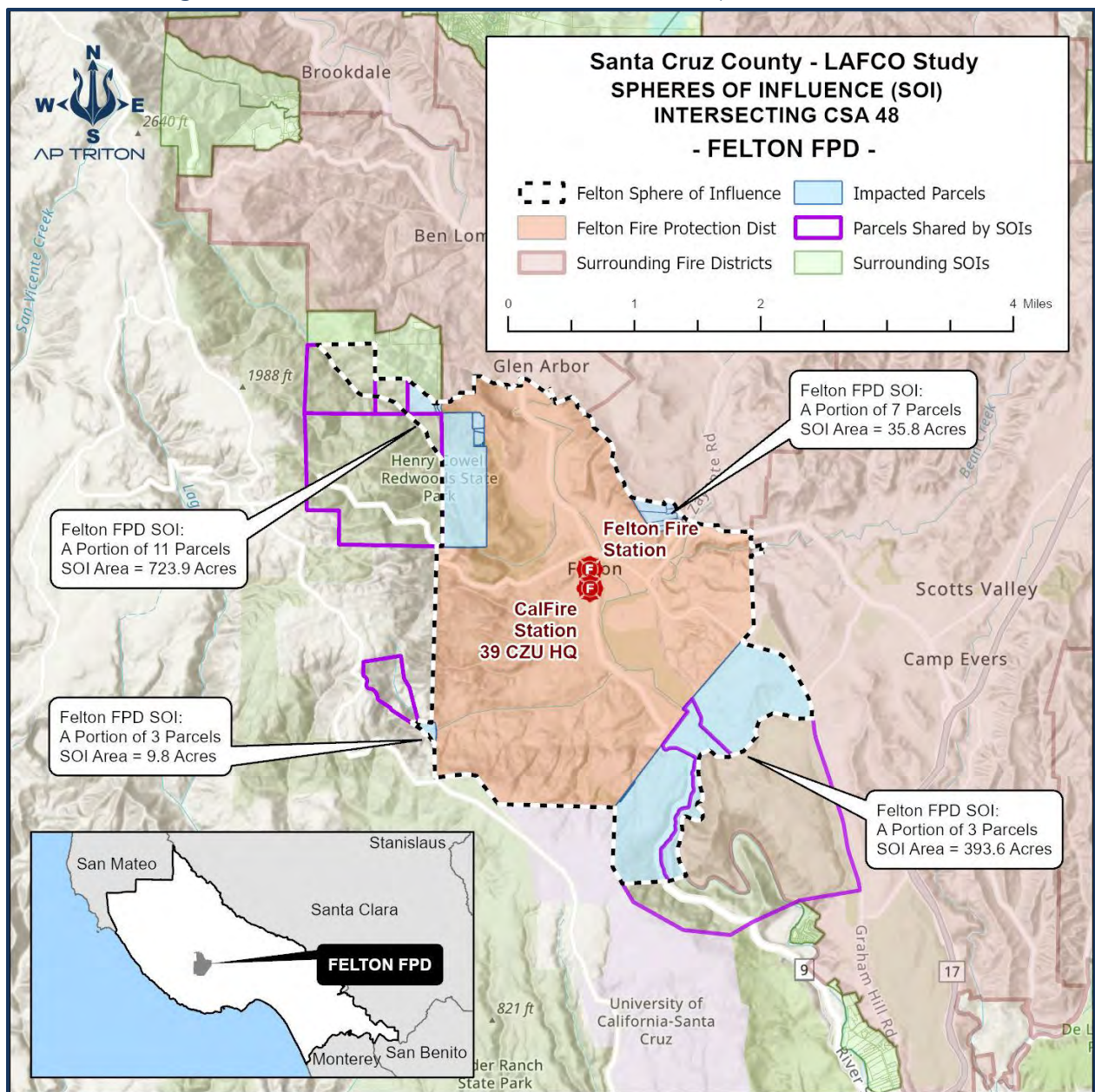
FEL is located in the San Lorenzo Valley and is surrounded by the jurisdictions of Ben Lomond Fire Protection District, Scotts Valley Fire Protection District, Zayante Fire Protection District, and the Santa Cruz County Fire Department.

Four areas are included in the SOI. None of the parcels within the SOI are complete, and the remaining part of those parcels are shared with other jurisdictions. Only the portion of the 14 lots to the west of the District are within CSA 48. The remaining are within Zayante or Scotts Valley Fire Protection Districts. A total of 24 parcels are affected by the SOI boundary and include 1,163.1 acres.

The following figure shows the District's location and the SOI as currently reported.

⁵⁶ ArcGIS Community Analyst.

Figure 151: Felton Fire Protection District with Sphere of Influence



Type & Extent of Services

Services Provided

FEL provides a wide range of services for its community. These include fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical care, and other emergency services. The following figure represents each of the services and the level performed as indicated by the agency.

Figure 152: Overview of Services Provided by FEL

Service	Y/N	Level
Fire Suppression	Yes	Structural, wildland (with CAL FIRE)
EMS First Response	Yes	BLS
Ambulance Transport	No	
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	Large animal rescue
Hazmat Response	No	First response only
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	
Plan Review	Yes	
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Firewise, fuels reduction program, CERT team, residential risk review program, elementary schools' education program, and others on request
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	Origin and cause only

Service Area

FEL is a multi-disciplined fire protection district. The District is statutorily responsible for fire protection of improved structures and other emergency services within the district.

Vegetation fires are part of the state responsibility area and are statutorily the responsibility of CAL FIRE. However, FEL provides support and assistance when requested and will begin incident mitigation if notified directly.

Collaboration

- FEL participant in the countywide mutual aid agreement.
- FEL responds for specialized large animal rescue assistance if requested.
- Participates in a cooperative purchasing grant pooling program with other valley fire districts.
- FEL shares a part-time administrative assistant with Ben Lomond Fire Protection District.

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs)

- None identified.

Contracts to provide services to other agencies

- None Identified

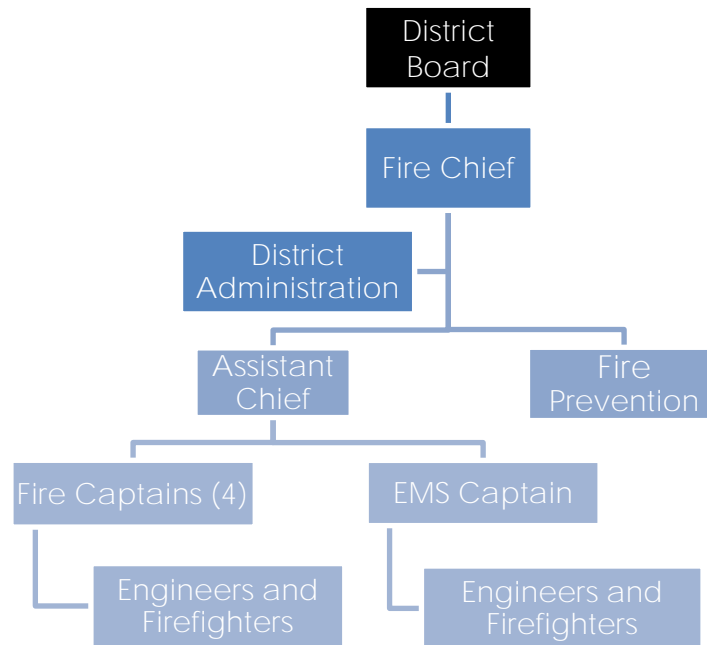
Contracts for service to other agencies

- None Identified

Governance, Administration, & Accountability

FEL is governed by a five-member Board of Directors whose head is the chairman. The Board hires a Fire Chief with a one-person administrative staff shared by Ben Lomond Fire Protection District. The following figure represents the BEN lines of authority.

Figure 153: Felton Lines of Authority



The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability.

Figure 154: Felton Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability	Available
Agency website ⁵⁷	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	Yes
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ⁵⁸	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed	No
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	No
SOC performance reports are available on the website	No
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	No
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes

⁵⁷ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information about the district. Government Code Section 53087.8 lists what must be included on the website.

⁵⁸ Government Code §54954.2.

Growth & Population Projections

Felton is not considered a census-designated place (CDP) and does not report separately from the county. However, tools and methods exist to capture and aggregate the specific census blocks into a geographical area. Therefore, the district boundaries will be used for the remainder of this section.

Current Population

The current population within FEL legal boundaries is 5,947, with an area of 5.78 square miles. There is a total of 2,574 housing units listed in the area.⁵⁹ The number of residents and housing units meet the urban area classification threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau.⁶⁰

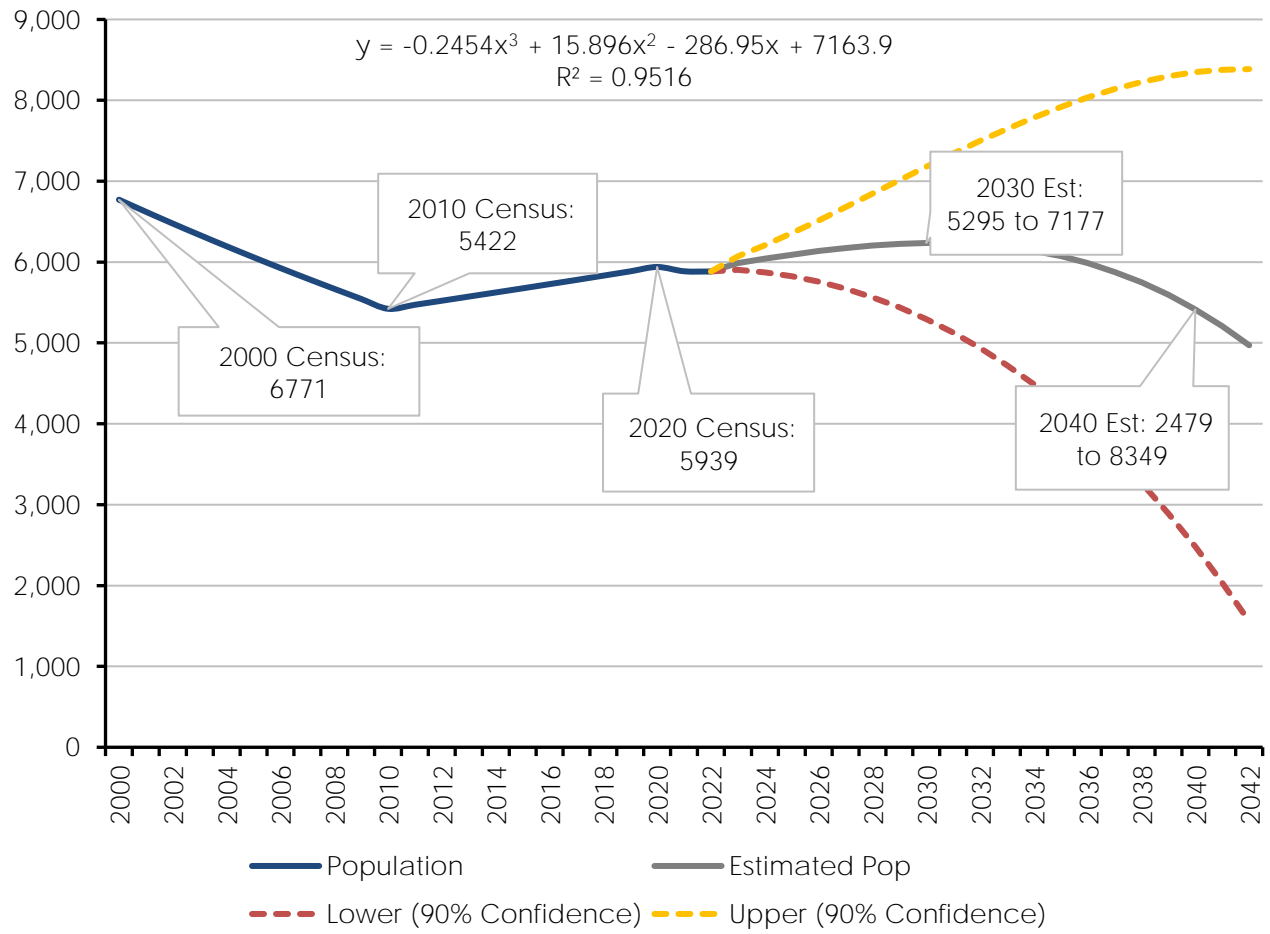
Projected Growth & Development

Estimating population growth is challenging due to many factors, such as new developments or local economies. For FEL, two techniques were utilized. The first was to rely on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or very moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the FEL area, the best-fit model was a three-factor polynomial regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.9516. This means the model fits the historical data very well. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast shows a wide range in population projections of +/- 3,000 people. The area estimates range from 8,274 in 2020 to 2,479 and 8,349 by 2040, with a 90% confidence level. The direct model returns a slight decrease to 5,207 in 2040. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

⁵⁹ ESRI Community Analyst, Source U. S. Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171).

⁶⁰ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.

Figure 155: FEL Historical Population and Forecast



Financial Overview

The Felton Fire Protection District operates through only the General Fund. The District prepares an annual operating budget based on a July through June fiscal year.

General Fund Recurring Revenues and Expenses

A significant amount of information was provided by the District staff. It was reviewed to develop a financial trend analysis for the five years, from fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2023. This review of the historical information of General Fund (GF) revenues revealed recurring revenues increased from \$757,000 in FY 2018 to a budgeted \$896,000 in FY 2023, an 18.4% overall increase or an annualized increase of approximately 3.6%.

Property tax revenues are the most significant source of General Fund Revenues, followed by Rents and Concessions Revenues. These two sources account for almost 96% of General Fund Revenues. Other sources of revenue include charges for services, grants, interest, training funds, and other sources.

The General Fund expends funds for salaries and benefits, services and supplies, capital expenditures, and debt service. The District has accumulated an Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL) in its CalPERS pension obligation. Of the approximately \$643,000 in salaries and benefits, over \$40,000, or 6%, is payment on the UAL.

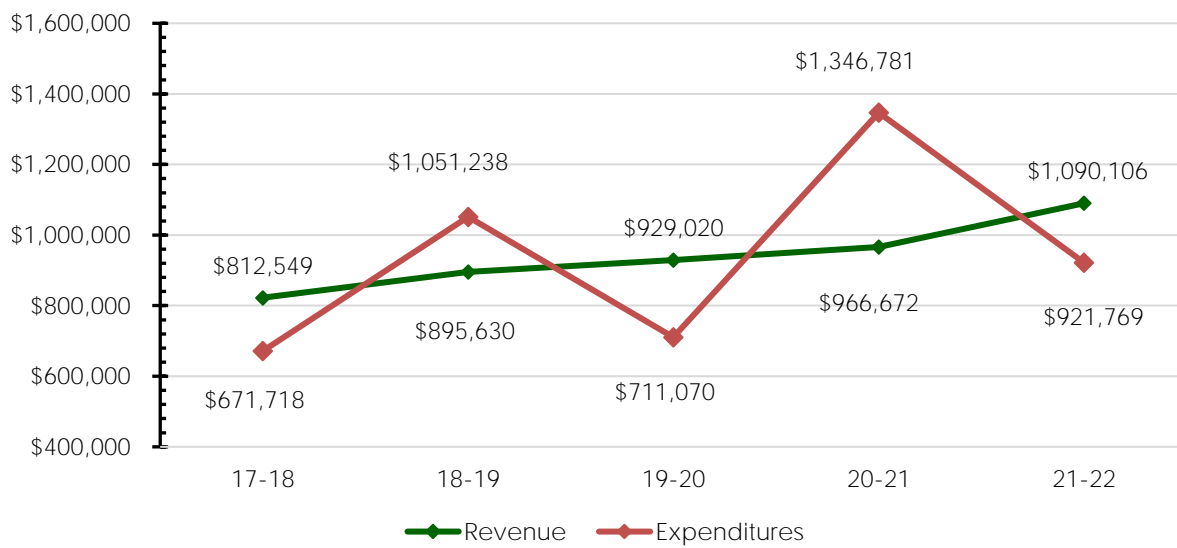
Due to the source of its funding streams, the COVID-19 pandemic had no significant negative impact on FY 2020 and FY 2021 revenues.

Figure 156: Felton Fire Protection District Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses,
FY 2018–FY 2022

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2018 (Actual)	FY 2019 (Actual)	FY 2020 (Actual)	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 Actual
Revenue	822,549	895,630	929,020	966,672	1,090,106
Expenditures	671,718	1,051,238	711,070	1,346,781	921,769
Surplus (Deficit)	150,831	(155,608)	217,950	(380,109)	168,337

The following figure displays this data and indicates the District's historical revenues and expenditures.

Figure 157: Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses

Figure 158: FEL Detailed Revenue and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022⁶¹

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2018 (Actual)	FY 2019 (Actual)	FY 2020 (Actual)	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 Actual
Revenue					
Property Tax Revenue	757,167	809,596	844,456	875,410	920,204
Rents & Concessions	36,391	37,019	38,055	39,567	40,122
Interest	20,908	32,589	33,941	9,720	5,930
Grants	—	5,081	4,125	—	107,351
Training Funds	386	2,463	1,398	35,058	9,103
Other	7,697	8,882	7,046	6,917	7,396
Total Revenue	822,549	895,630	929,020	966,672	1,090,106
Expenses by Category					
Wages & Benefits	406,972	438,350	404,413	491,604	642,840
Services & Supplies	245,468	211,188	276,466	217,001	248,055
Capital	19,278	401,700	30,191	638,176	30,874
Total Operating Expenses	671,718	1,051,238	711,070	1,346,781	921,769
Surplus (Deficit)	150,831	(155,608)	217,950	(380,109)	168,337

⁶¹ From Documentation Provided by the District.

Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenses

The FY 2023 budget appears to utilize approximately \$1,321,000 of reserve funds to balance the budget. Included in this budget are capital expenditures of roughly \$409,000. Salaries and benefits increased by about 9%, not including a one-time UAL payment of approximately \$100,000 to CalPERS. Services and supplies increased by \$134,000, with additional expenditures for clothing, radio charges, software upgrades, education and training, fuel, and special district expenses.

The following projections were developed from the historical trends identified in the financial analysis. Certain expenditures appear on an "as-needed" basis and are difficult to identify as a trend.

Figure 159: FEL Summarized Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenditures

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2023 ⁶² Budget	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Use of Reserve Funds	1,321,036	—	—	—	—
Revenue	970,256	1,006,611	1,044,347	1,083,578	1,124,365
Available funding	2,291,292	1,006,611	1,044,347	1,083,578	1,124,365
Expenditures	2,291,292	1,049,105	1,488,821	1,196,766	1,656,340
Net Surplus (Deficit)	—	(42,494)	(444,474)	(113,188)	(531,975)

Capital Planning

A Capital Improvements/Replacement Plan was not observed in the documentation provided by the District.

⁶² Felton Fire Protection District FY 2023 Budget.

Demand for Services

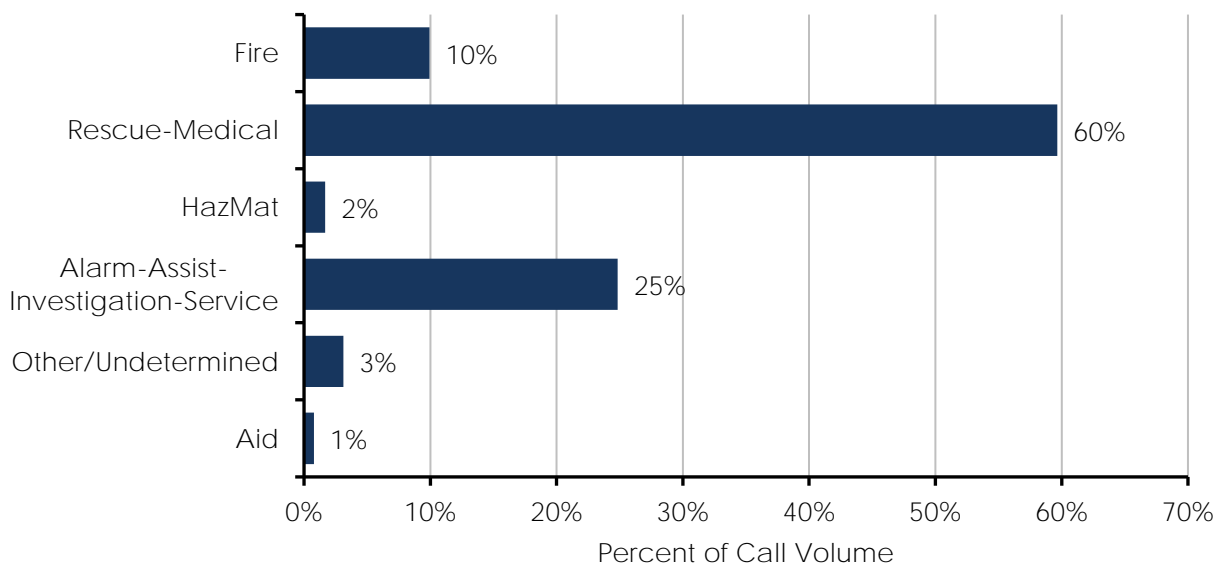
FEL is primarily a rural system that provides aid services to other communities when requested. Data was provided by the regional dispatch center and included incident information from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. In addition, any response to a wildland-type fire in the State Response Area was removed from the analysis. The following figure is the overview of the response statistics for FEL.

Figure 160: FEL Response Overview

Agency	Felton FPD
Avg. Annual Incident Vol.	686
Incidents per 1,000 Population	116
90th Percentile Total Time	13:38

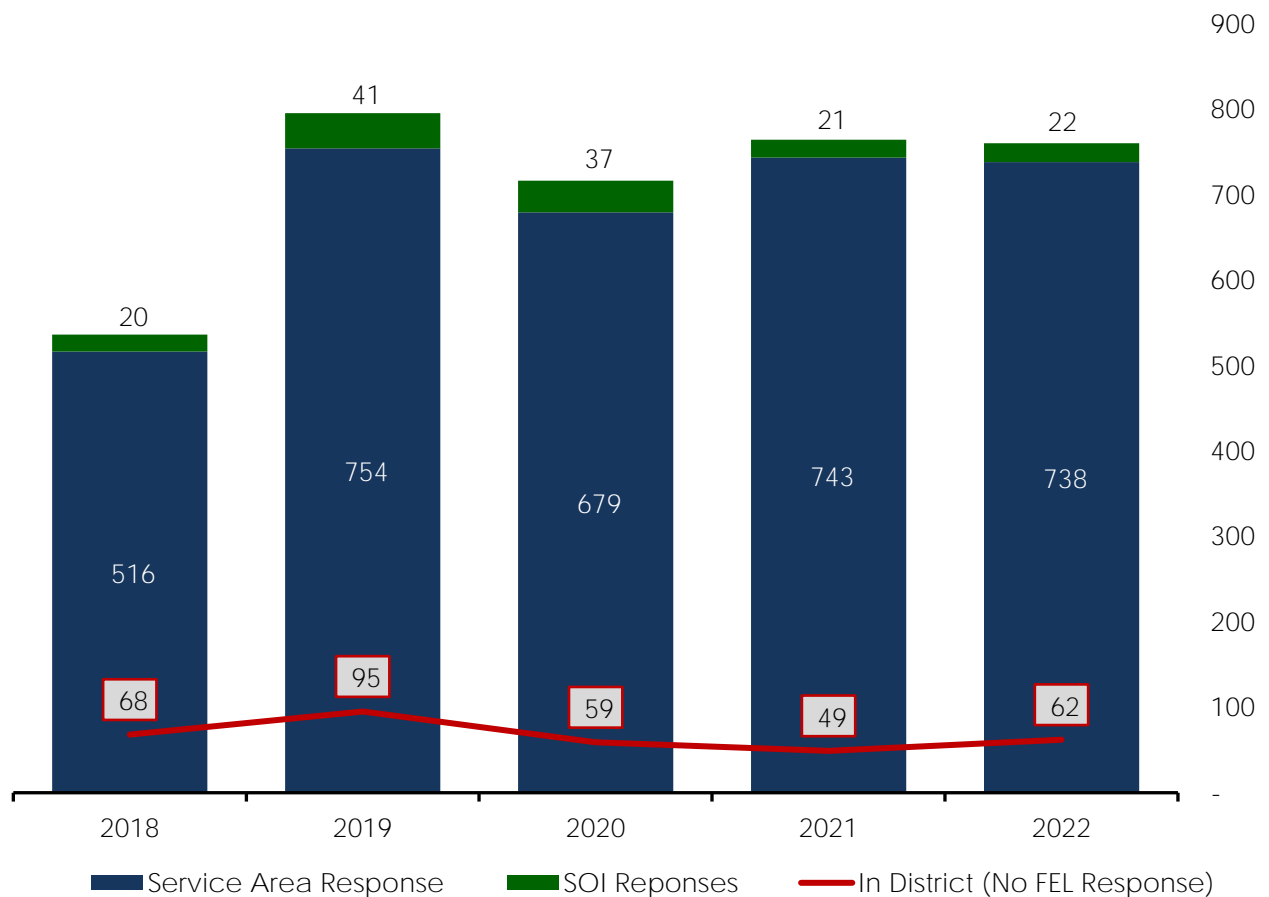
Each incident was grouped into the main categories based on the dispatch type. The incident types were related to the major categories in the National Fire Incident Reporting system. The following figure is the percentage of incidents within those categories for the entire data set, 2018–2022.

Figure 161: FEL Total Incident Responses by Type as a Percentage



Typically, an analysis of incidents by year can yield a trend or indicate what call volume might look like in the next few years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social and economic constraints, this is difficult with this data set. As a result, a trend was not easily spotted or extrapolated. It appears that FEL response numbers decreased in 2020 and then rose. However, they have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, responses into the sphere of influence are not significant. One aspect of the service within the County of Santa Cruz is the prolific use of mutual aid. Occasionally, a unit from the primary jurisdiction is not identified in the CAD data, although non-radioed persons may have responded. FEL units respond to most incidents within their jurisdiction and have remained steady throughout the study period. The following figure shows the annual incident volume by year with the responses into the sphere of influence and district-covered incidents.

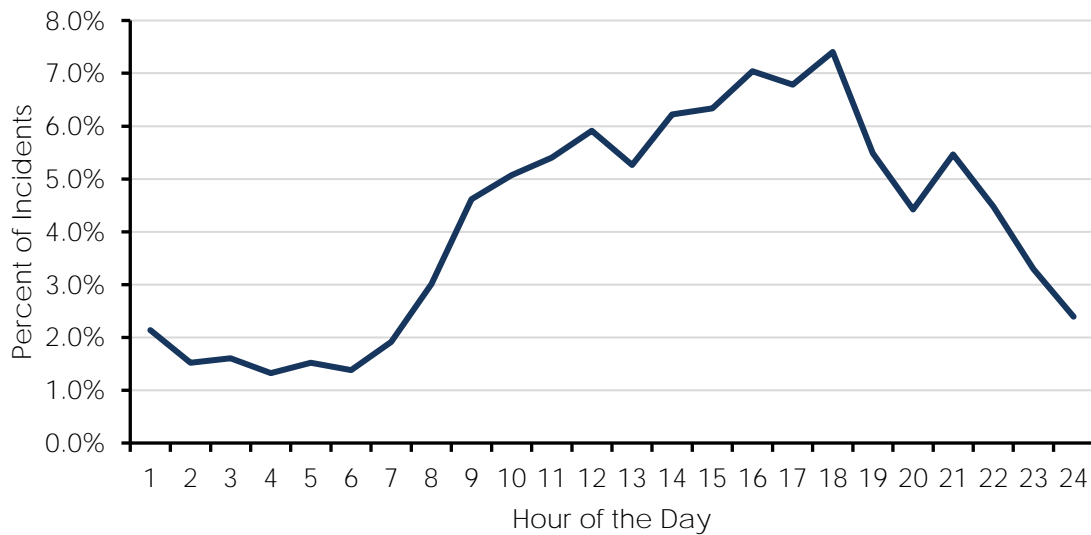
Figure 162: FEL Annual Incident Volume by Year



A temporal study indicated some evident seasonality in the response data. Incident volume variation by month showed an incident volume decrease through the winter and early spring, with an increase in the warmer months. The highest volume decrease was in March. The variation was plus 1% and minus 3%.

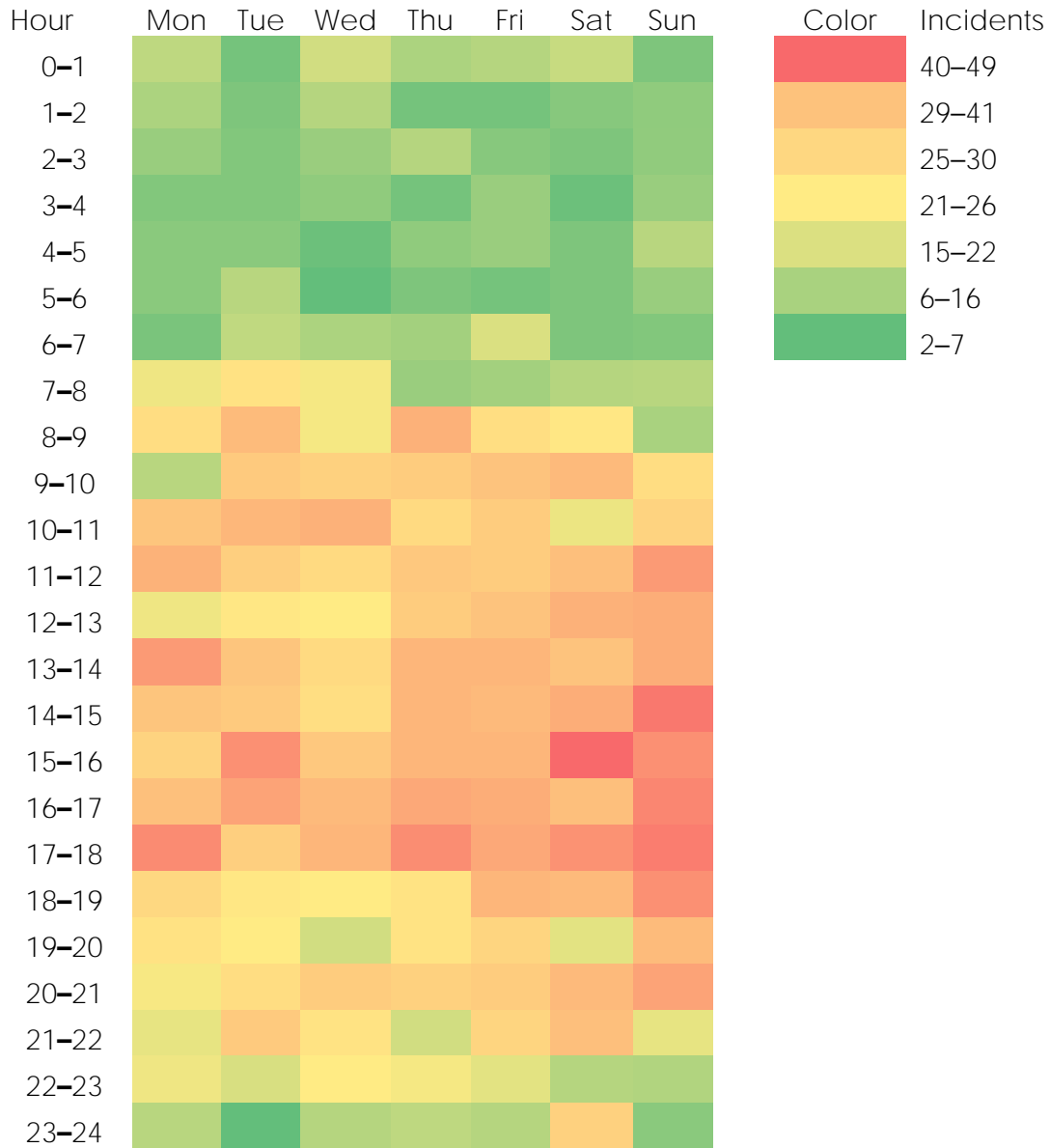
A study of demand by hour shows that FEL, like many fire agencies, sees a significant variation by the hour. In fact, over 75% of all incidents happen between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The following figure shows the general difference of the complete incident data set by hour.

Figure 163: FEL Incident Percentage by Hour



The average daily swing is typical and likely due to the number of awake and active people. However, the day-to-day variation in this information does play a part. The following figure is the incident heat map by the hour and day of the week.

Figure 164: FEL Incident Heat Map by Hour and Weekday



As indicated in the previous figure, the daytime hour incidents tend to be evenly distributed each day, with a slightly higher incident volume on the weekends.

The final volume analysis looked at the unit usage for all apparatus within the system. This analysis considered three dimensions. The first is the unit hour utilization (UHU). This number represents the time a unit was committed to an incident as a percentage of the total time they were on duty. The next is the average time a unit was committed to an incident. And finally, the average number of incidents a unit was deployed daily.

Only those units clearly identified by the agency or units with large volumes of responses within the data sets were evaluated. The following figure shows the general statistics for each frontline unit within the FEL system.

Figure 165: FEL Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
C2300	0.4%	28 Minutes	0.2
C2301	0.3%	30 Minutes	0.2
E2336	2.9%	28 Minutes	1.5
E2310	0.6%	20 Minutes	0.4
E2311	0.6%	19 Minutes	0.5
S2365	0.5%	49 Minutes	0.1
W2350	0.4%	59 Minutes	0.1
Utilities	0.7%	44 Minutes	0.2

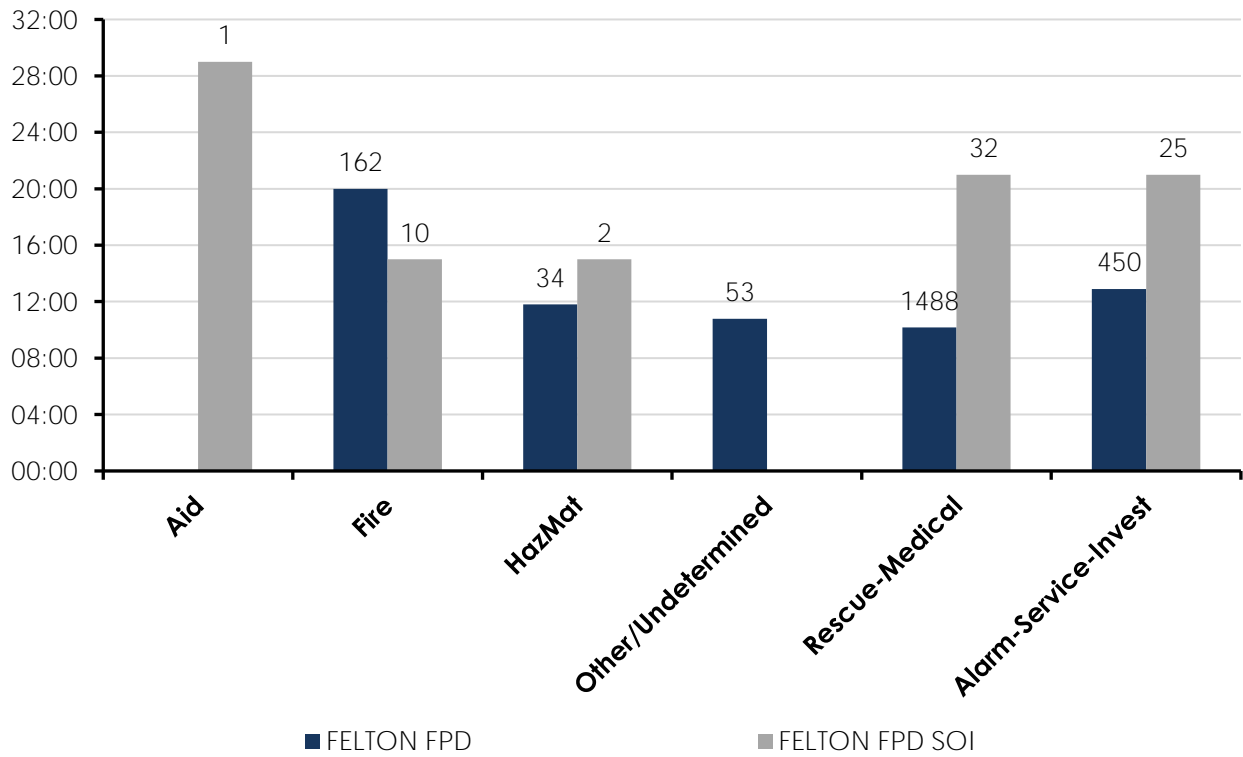
Service Delivery & Performance

The performance of the FEL response was also evaluated. The data did not differentiate between emergency responses and non-emergency responses. In addition, there was no evaluation of the arriving unit's type or agency. Therefore, all responses are evaluated. The 90th percentile is typically used in the fire service and is considered the standard for measuring incident response performance. Due to the nature of this report, FEL's performance in its identified sphere of influence was also evaluated. Agency performance goals or standards are not taken into consideration for this report.

Three unique time segments are included when evaluating an agency's response performance. The first is the time it takes for the Dispatcher to answer the 911 call and notify the agency (call processing); the second is the time it takes for the agency to receive the call and go en route to the call (turnout time); and third is the time it takes for the unit to drive to the incident (travel time). All three segments combined make up the total response time. For this evaluation, the unit type was not discriminated against, and the first arriving unit was used to determine the total response time.

Each call type may contain variables. For example, questioning the caller for appropriate information may take more or less time. In addition, it may take longer for crews to respond depending on the personal protective equipment to be worn, which varies with the type of incident. The following figure shows the total response time performance for each of the major incident types for all incidents within the data set. The following figure shows the first due, 90th percentile total response time for the District and the sphere of influence.

Figure 166: FEL Incidents 90th Percentile Total Response Times, Jan 2018–Dec 2022



Staffing

FEL operates a volunteer response service with one paid Fire Chief and one part-time administrative assistant. Emergency response consists of fire apparatus staffed as needed by volunteer personnel.

The following figure shows the total number of personnel assigned to the FEL.

Figure 167: FEL Staffing

Assignment	Staffing
Uniformed Administration	1
Non-Uniformed Administration	0.5
Fire Prevention	0
Operations Staff	0
Emergency Communications	0
Volunteers, Reserve, On Call	≈35 ⁶³
Total Personnel	1.5 / ≈35

The following figure shows the daily operational staffing at each station and on each unit. All apparatus is staffed by paid-on-call volunteers.

Figure 168: FEL Daily Operational Staffing

Station	Daily Staffing	Unit Staffing
1	Volunteer	4 Engines, 1 Tender, and 1 Breathing Support


⁶³ wbcipinc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Brochure-Boulder-Creek-Fire-District-FINAL-II.pdf.

Facilities & Apparatus

Felton Fire Station

The following figure outlines the basic features of the FEL fire station facilities. The condition of the fire station is rated based on the criteria identified in the introduction to this section of the report.

Figure 169: Felton Fire Station

Station Name/Number:	Felton Fire Station 1				
Address/Physical Location:	131 Kirby St Felton CA 95018				
	<p>General Description:</p> <p>A large 9,500 sq. ft two-story fire sprinkler-protected facility located in downtown Felton. The original fire station was built in 1954. Both this building and the newer attached annex do not meet the requirements or standards prescribed for a modern fire department facility.</p>				
Structure					
Date of Original Construction	1954				
Seismic Protection	Minimal following the 1989 earthquake				
Auxiliary Power	Yes, a 60KW generator was installed in 1993				
General Condition	Fair				
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-through Bays	0	Back-in Bays	8	
ADA Compliant	Mostly, but not all				
Total Square Footage	9,500				
Facilities Available					
Sleeping Quarters	2	Bedrooms	2	Beds	0 Dorm Beds
Maximum Staffing Capability	22 (Volunteer)				
Exercise/Workout Facilities	Yes, Full Gym				
Kitchen Facilities	Yes, original to the building				
Individual Lockers Assigned	Yes				
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	Yes, 2 restrooms/showers & one public-use bathroom				
Training/Meeting Rooms	Yes, One training room				
Washer/Dryer/Extractor	Commercial extractor & residential washer and dryer				
Safety & Security					
Station Sprinklered	yes				
Smoke Detection	Yes, in offices, the day room, and sleeping areas				
Decon & Biological Disposal	no				
Security System	Video Cameras with recording and remote access				
Apparatus Exhaust System	Yes, Plymovent				

Fire Station Discussion

FEL's fire station was considered to be in fair condition. The facilities comprise two large two-story structures on a corner commercial property in downtown Felton. The station facilities appear to be reasonably well maintained for their age. The station seems to have been constructed over the years, focusing on equipment and apparatus storage. The current administrative offices and publicly accessible spaces are cramped and limited.

Like most 69-year-old fire stations, this facility does not meet the requirements of modern firefighting. The firefighting environment has changed over the last six decades. The technology, equipment, and safety systems have also changed to meet new demands. However, older buildings do not typically have the space or engineering systems to meet that new environment.

Figure 170: FEL Station Configuration and Condition

Station	Apparatus Bays	Staffing Capacity	General Condition	Station Age
Station 1	8	2	Fair	69 years
Totals/Average:	8	2	Fair	69 years

Modern fire service working and living conditions also require much more access to electrical outlets than was expected in older buildings. Although remodeled over the years to accommodate a growing community and fire department, this station is still dated and challenged by its lack of parking, modern administrative office space, adequate living spaces for full-time staffing, and limited equipment storage facilities.

The Fire District has provided an adjoining small portable sleeping unit placed in a rear alley area directly behind the apparatus bays to accommodate volunteer firefighters staffing the station on a 24-hour basis. This type of sleeping arraignment will not adequately accommodate permanent on-duty staffing when and if the Fire District decides to move towards that type of staffing. The existing fire station facility has adequate space. It could accommodate the construction of living quarters to house firefighters and/or emergency medical response personnel.

Apparatus

FEL operates with two Type 1, a Type 3, and a Type 6 engine. In addition, it has a breathing support unit, two command vehicles, a water tender, and one utility truck. The following figure shows the type and condition of FEL's fleet.

Figure 171: FEL Vehicles & Apparatus

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
C2300	Fire Chief command pick up	Good
C2301	Asst fire chief command pickup	Fair
E2336	Type 3 Pumper 500 Gal	Excellent
E2310	Type 1 Pumper 500 Gal	Good
E2311	Reserve Type 1 Pumper 500 gal	Fair
S2365	Breathing Support (5,500 PSI)	Excellent
W2350	Water Tender 2500 Gal	Excellent
E2346	Type 6 pumper/rescue 300 Gal	Excellent
U2397	Utility/EMS response vehicle	Good

Facility Replacement & Infrastructure Needs

FEL has occupied the current fire station location for over 69 years. Its central location in downtown Felton provides excellent access to the town's main commercial and residential areas. This is essential for emergency responses and volunteer firefighters responding to the station to staff fire apparatus. As with other San Lorenzo Valley volunteer fire stations, the current Felton location does have significant parking challenges for responding volunteers and little space for expansion. The Community and the Fire District should consider developing a plan to address the fire department's future space and facilities needs. These must be addressed as call volumes increase and the community's needs change.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

FEL has no shared facilities with neighboring San Lorenzo Valley fire agencies. The District currently works closely with other Zayante and neighboring fire departments, providing mutual aid during routine calls for service and the significant emergencies that impact the area frequently. Continued enhanced collaboration and pooling of resources (facilities/staffing) between the San Lorenzo Valley volunteer agencies may be an effective short to medium-term method to address community growth, service demand increases, and staffing challenges they may face in the future.

Dispatch & Communications

Emergency communications and dispatch services are provided to FEL by Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (NetCom), which has operated for 25 years as of 2021. NetCom is a regional center operating as Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties' Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). It encompasses more than 330,000 residents and visitors. The center serves multiple fire, law enforcement, and EMS agencies.

NetCom processes nearly 600,000 calls annually.⁶⁴ Although the center follows national standards for call answering, it focuses on achieving the State of California's standard (which is higher than national standards) of 95% of incoming 911 calls being answered within 15 seconds—equivalent to three rings at NetCom.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 website.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Zayante Fire Protection District Profile

Agency Overview

The Zayante Fire Protection District (ZAY) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the 14.19 square mile area for areas around and the communities known as Zayante, Lompico, and Olympia.⁶⁶

Boundaries

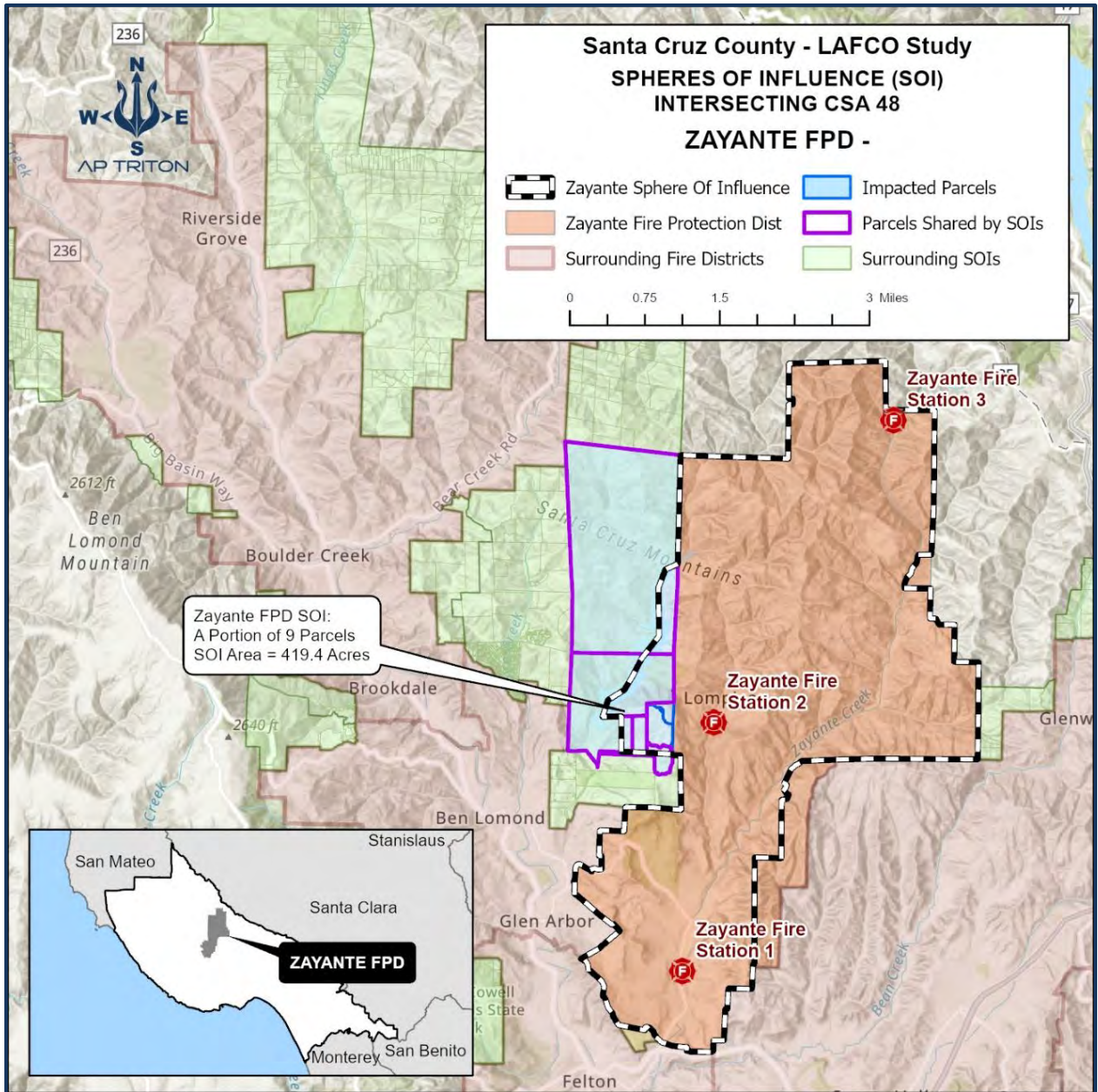
ZAY is located in the San Lorenzo Valley and is surrounded by the jurisdictions of Felton Fire Protection District, Ben Lomond Fire Protection District, Scotts Valley Fire Protection District, and the Santa Cruz County Fire Department.

ZAY's SOI is the smallest of the San Lorenzo Valley fire departments, and most of the nine parcels are shared by other agencies. However, the nine parcels do include 419.4 acres within the SOI.

The following figure shows the location of the District and the SOI as currently reported.

⁶⁶ ArcGIS Community Analyst.

Figure 172: Zayante Fire Protection District with Sphere of Influence



Type & Extent of Services

Services Provided

ZAY provides a wide range of services for its community. These include fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical care, and other emergency services. The following figure represents each of the services and the level performed as indicated by the agency.

Figure 173: Overview of Services Provided by ZAY

Service	Y/N	Level
Fire Suppression	Yes	Structural, wildland (with CAL FIRE)
EMS First Response	Yes	BLS
Ambulance Transport	Yes	BLS when requested
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	Low angle and vehicle rescue/extrication
Hazmat Response	No	First response only
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	
Plan Review	Yes	In-house and vendor contracts when needed
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Firewise community development, fuel reduction, school education, fire extinguisher, and CPR courses
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	Origin and cause only.

Service Area

ZAY is a multi-disciplined fire protection district. The District is statutorily responsible for fire protection of improved structures and other emergency services within the district.

Vegetation fires are part of the state responsibility area and are statutorily the responsibility of CAL FIRE. However, ZAY provides support and assistance when requested and will begin incident mitigation if notified directly.

Collaboration

- ZAY participant in the countywide mutual aid agreement.
- ZAY responds for specialized technical rescue assistance if requested.

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs)

- None identified.

Contracts to provide services to other agencies

- None Identified

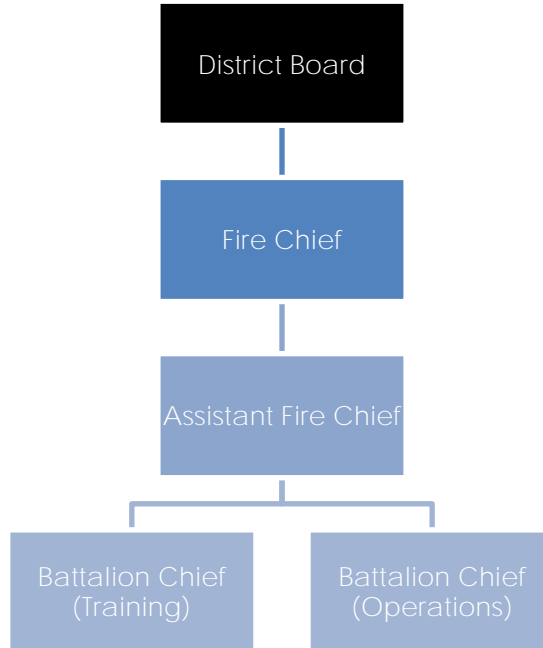
Contracts for service to other agencies

- None Identified

Governance, Administration, & Accountability

ZAY is governed by a five-member Board of Directors whose head is the chairman. The Board hires a Fire Chief, but no other administrative positions exist. The following figure represents the ZAY lines of authority.

Figure 174: ZAY Lines of Authority



The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability.

Figure 175: ZAY Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability	Available
Agency website ⁶⁷	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	Yes
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ⁶⁸	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed	No
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	No
SOC performance reports are available on the website	No
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	No
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes

⁶⁷ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information about the district. Government Code Section 53087.8 lists what must be included on the website.

⁶⁸ Government Code §54954.2.

Growth & Population Projections

Zayante is not considered a census-designated place (CDP) and does not report separately from the county. However, tools and methods exist to capture and aggregate the specific census blocks into a geographical area. Therefore, the district boundaries will be used for the remainder of this section.

Current Population

The current population within ZAY legal boundaries is 3,662, with an area of 14.19 square miles. There is a total of 1,570 housing units listed in the area.⁶⁹ Neither the number of residents nor the housing units meet the urban area classification threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau.⁷⁰

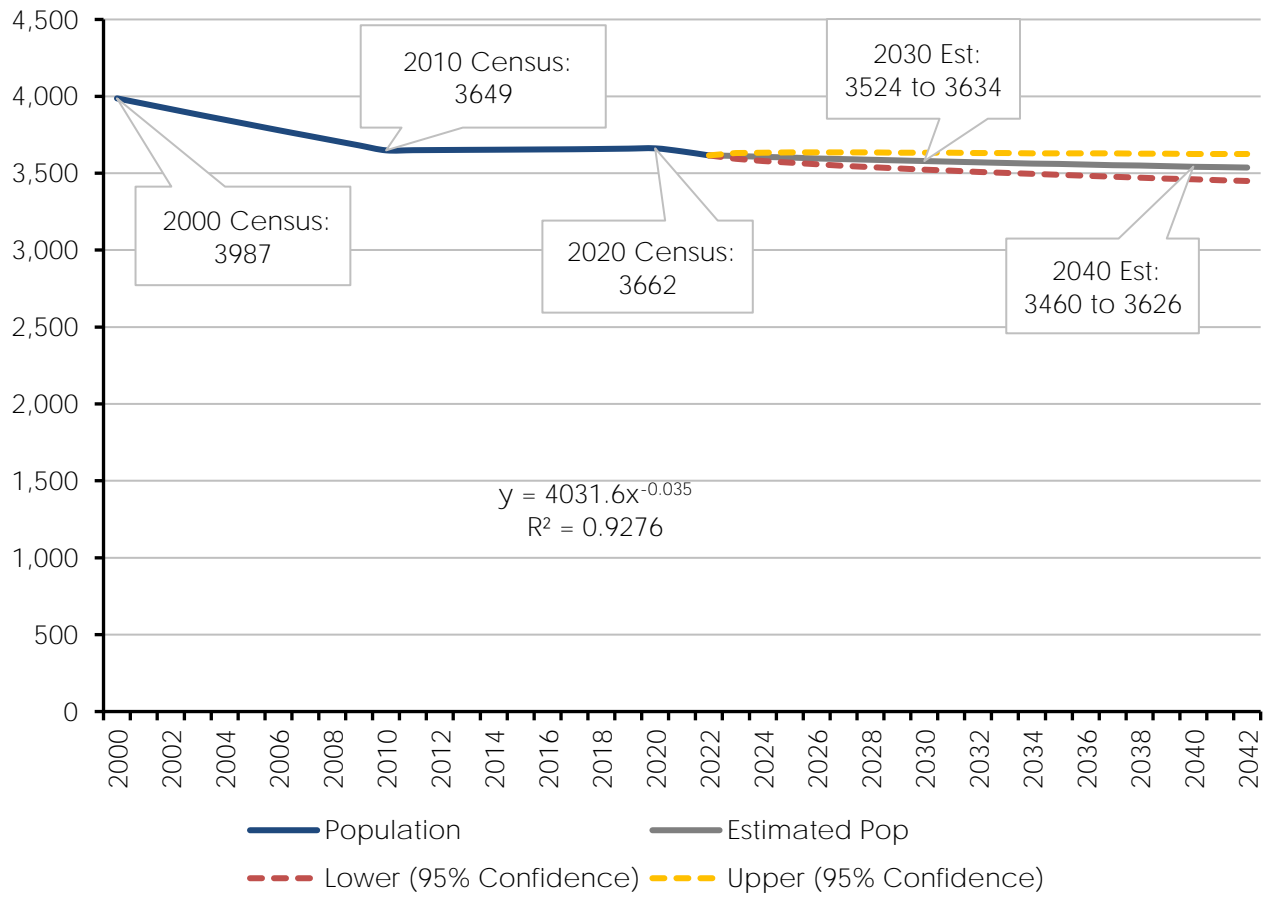
Projected Growth & Development

Estimating population growth is challenging due to many factors such as new developments or local economies. For ZAY, two techniques were utilized. The first was to rely on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the PAJ area, the best-fit model was a logarithmic regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.9276. This means the model fits the historical data very well. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast shows a slight population decrease for the area from 3,662 in 2020 to between 3,460 and 3,626 in 2040 with a 95% confidence level. This agrees generally with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments forecast. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

⁶⁹ ESRI Community Analyst, Source U. S. Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171).

⁷⁰ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.

Figure 176: ZAY Historical Population and Forecast



Financial Overview

ZAY operates through multiple funds, including the General Fund (GF) and the Capital Project Fund (CPF). The District transferred funds from its Debt Service Fund to the Capital Projects Fund in FY 2020, which reduced the Debt Service Fund balance by \$0. The study will focus on the activities of the GF. The District prepares an annual operating budget based on a July through June fiscal year.

General Fund Recurring Revenues and Expenses

A significant amount of information was provided by the District staff. It was reviewed to develop a financial trend analysis for the five years, from fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2022.⁷¹ This review of the historical information of General Fund (GF) revenues revealed recurring revenues increased from \$497,000 in FY 2018 to a budgeted \$534,000 in FY 2022, a 7.5% overall increase or an annualized increase of approximately 1.9%.

Property tax revenues are the most significant source of General Fund Revenues, followed by a special assessment Fire Protection Tax (Measure O) not restricted to specific uses. Both property tax and Measure O revenues are allowed to increase by California's annual consumer price index but with a 2% yearly cap on growth. These two sources account for almost 75% of General Fund Revenues. Other sources of revenue include State and Federal Reimbursement for response to natural disasters (22%), charges for services, interest, and other sources.

The General Fund expends funds for employees' salaries and benefits, services and supplies, capital expenditures, and debt service. District employee benefits are limited in scope, with the most expensive workers' compensation insurance. Compensation amounts vary with the demand for natural disaster deployments. Benefit expenditures have been reduced to negligible amounts in considering the overall budget.

Due to the source of its funding streams, the COVID-19 pandemic had no significant negative impact on FY 2020 and FY 2021 revenues. The following figure is the historical revenues and expenditures of the District.

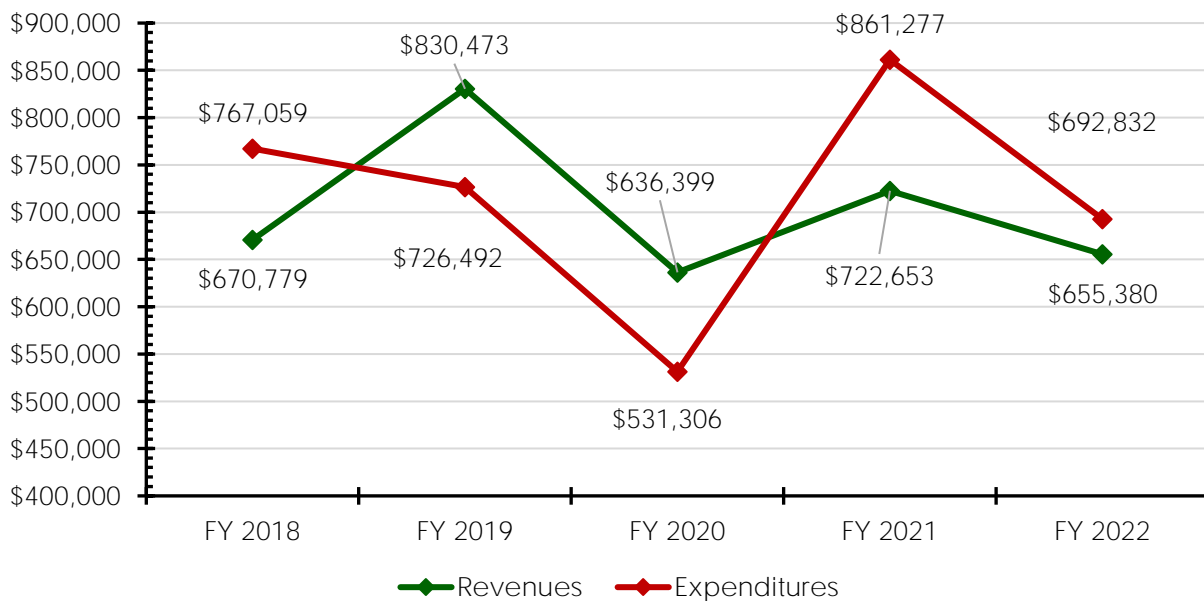
⁷¹ Historical Financial Information provided by ZAY staff.

Figure 177: ZAY Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2018 (Actual)	FY 2019 (Actual)	FY 2020 (Actual)	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 (Actual)
Recurring Revenue	497,298	527,447	547,069	550,326	534,698
Other Revenues	173,481	303,026	89,329	172,327	120,682
Total Revenues	670,779	830,473	636,398	722,653	655,380
Salaries & Benefits	477,257	480,531	381,087	537,255	431,353
Services & Supplies	217,776	195,557	149,243	223,404	259,402
Total Recurring Expenses	695,033	676,088	530,330	760,659	690,755
Capital Expenditures	72,026	50,403	976	11,061	2,077
Transfers to Capital Fund	—	—	—	89,556	—
Total Expenditures	767,059	726,491	531,306	861,276	692,832
Total Surplus (Deficit)	(96,280)	103,980	105,093	(138,624)	(37,452)
Beginning Reserves	588,977	492,697	596,677	701,770	563,146
Calculated Ending Reserves	492,697	596,677	701,770	563,146	525,694

The following figure displays this data and indicates the District's historical revenues and expenditures.

Figure 178: Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses



Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenses

Property tax revenue growth has averaged approximately 7.5% between FY 2018 and FY 2022. The FY 2023 budget forecasts a growth rate of 16.1% from FY 2022, but to remain conservative and consistent with the more recent trend, recurring revenues are forecast to grow at 2.0% annually using FY 2023 as the base period. Fire Protection Tax collections have shown minimal change during the historic analysis study period. They are forecast to grow at 2% annually. Other revenues are forecast to remain consistent. State disaster reimbursements are indicated at \$0 as most funds received are passed through for employee compensation.

Salary and benefit costs are forecast to increase at an annual 1% rate. Other services and supplies are forecast at 2% annually. Expenditures for clothing and personal supplies budgeted at \$25,000 in FY 2023 are reduced in the forecast to \$5,000 in FY 2024 as these resources typically have a 10-year life cycle. Similarly, the building maintenance budgeted at \$25,000 in FY 2023 is reduced to \$10,000 in FY 2024. Non-recurring expenditures are forecast at \$6,500 annually, as major capital expenditures are made from the Capital Projects Fund.

The following projections were developed from the historical trends identified in the financial analysis. Certain expenditures appear on an “as-needed” basis and are difficult to identify as a trend. The various “as-needed” payments distort the projections, and using the FY 2023 budget as a base period without additional information makes them unreliable.

Figure 179: ZAY General Fund Summarized Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenditures

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2023 Budget ⁷²	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue	609,405	621,345	633,524	645,947	658,618	671,543
Expenditures	677,675	631,140	640,038	649,079	658,264	667,596
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(68,270)	(9,794)	(6,514)	(3,132)	355	3,947

⁷² FY 2023 Adopted Budget.

Capital Planning

A Staff Report – Apparatus Plan, dated 2022, was observed in the documentation provided by the District.⁷³ The plan identifies apparatus needs and suggests solutions. ZAY maintains a Capital Projects Fund separate from the General Fund. This restricted amount totals approximately \$180,000 mentioned in the Staff Report, but Triton did not independently verify that amount.

Demand for Services

ZAY is primarily a rural system that provides aid services to other communities when requested. Data was provided by the regional dispatch center and included incident information from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. In addition, any response to a wildland-type fire in the State Response Area was removed from the analysis. The following figure is the overview of the response statistics for ZAY.

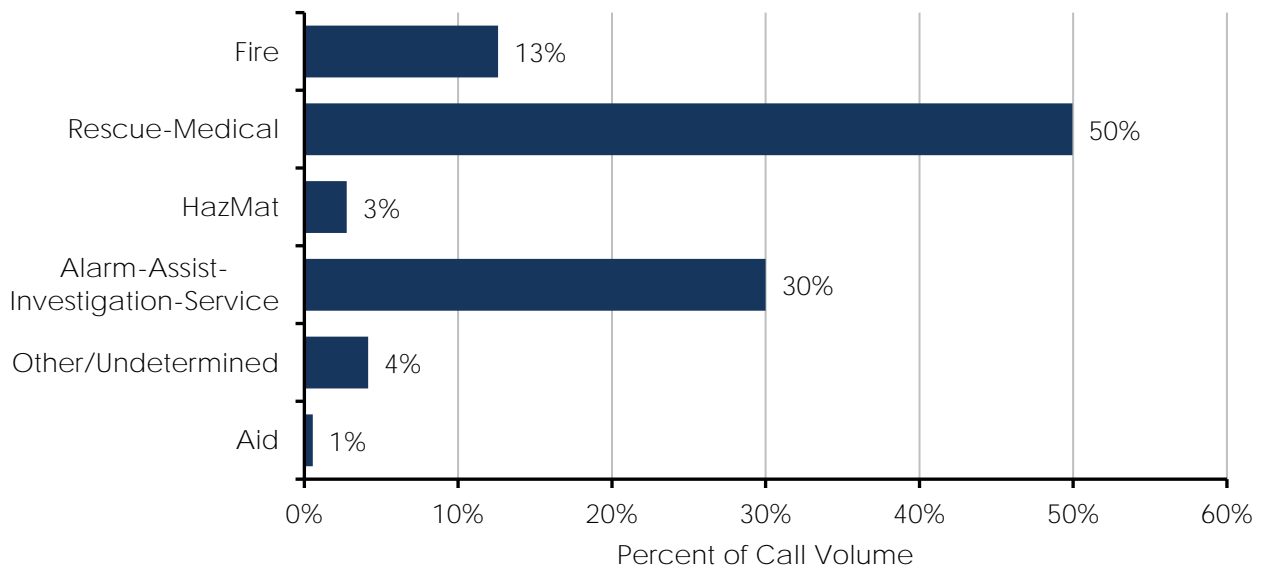
Figure 180: ZAY Response Overview

Agency	Zayante FPD
Avg. Annual Incident Vol.	216
Incidents per 1,000 Population	59
90th Percentile Total Time	21:39

Each incident was grouped into the main categories based on the dispatch type. The incident types were related to the major categories in the National Fire Incident Reporting system. The following figure is the percentage of incidents within those categories for the entire data set, 2018–2022.

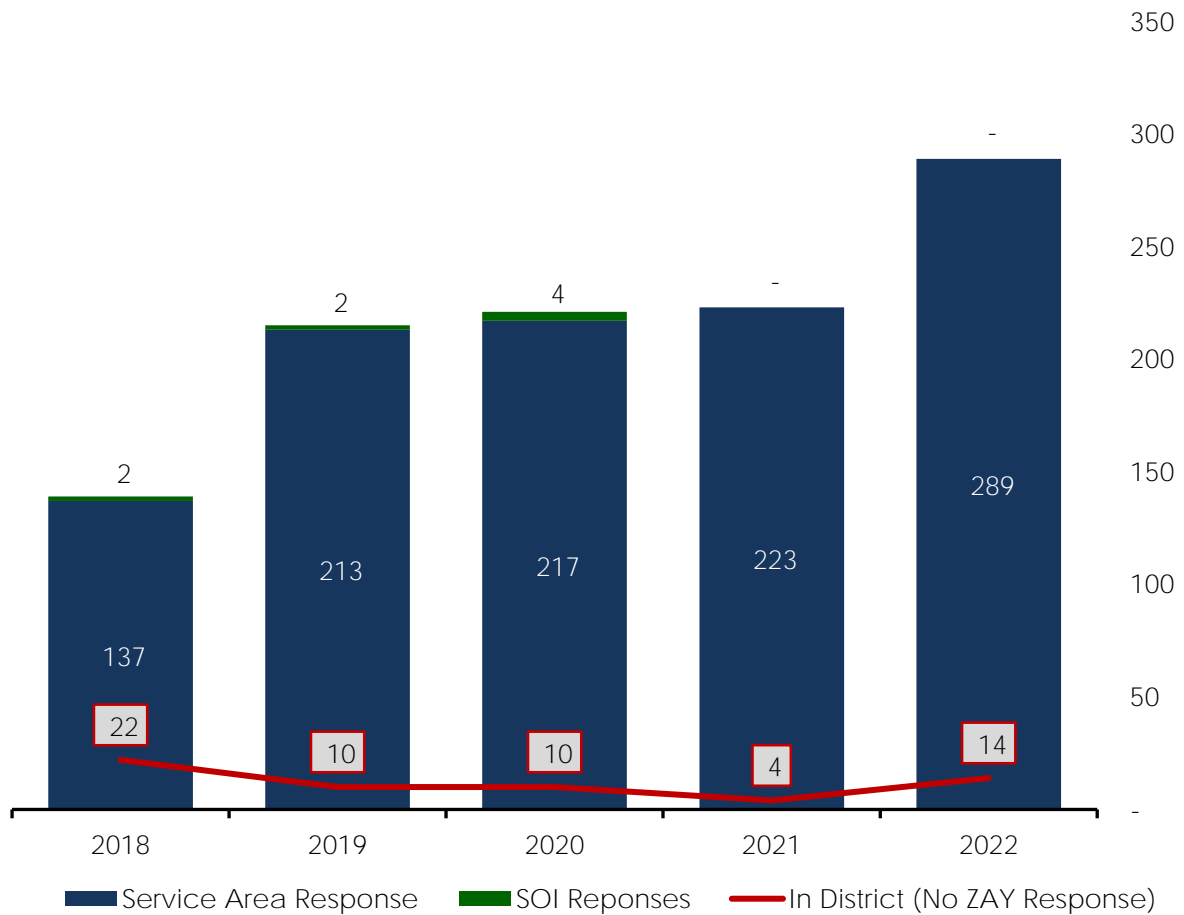
⁷³ ZAY Staff Report – Apparatus Plan.

Figure 181: ZAY Total Incident Responses by Type as a Percentage



Typically, an analysis of incidents by year can yield a trend or indicate what call volume might look like in the next few years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social and economic constraints, this is difficult with this data set. This data set is further complicated due to the limited number of responses recorded. As a result, a trend was not easily spotted or extrapolated. It appears that FEL response numbers stabilized in 2020 and 2021 but increased again in 2022. In addition, responses into the sphere of influence are insignificant, and there were no recorded responses in 2021 and 2022. One aspect of the service within the County of Santa Cruz is the prolific use of mutual aid. Occasionally, a unit from the primary jurisdiction is not identified in the CAD data, although non-radioed persons may have responded. ZAY units respond to most incidents within their jurisdiction and have remained steady throughout the study period. The following figure shows the annual incident volume by year with the responses into the sphere of influence and district-covered incidents.

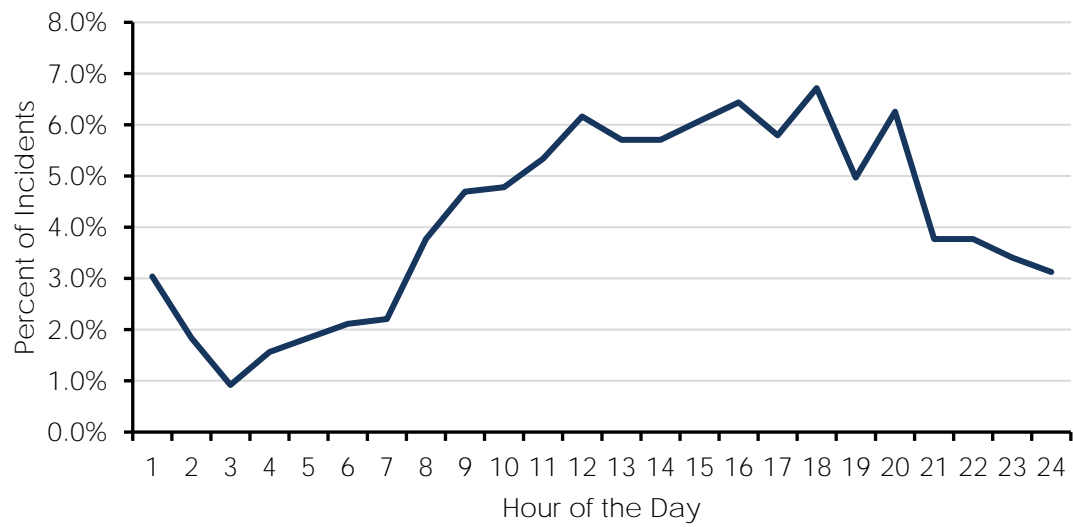
Figure 182: ZAY Annual Incident Volume by Year



A temporal study indicated some monthly variations from an even distribution, but no seasonality could be identified. February through June were lower than expected, but so were September and November. June and July were higher than expected, but so were December and January. Incident volume variation by month indicated a lower incident volume through the winter and early spring, with an increase in the warmer months. The highest volume decrease was in April. The variation was plus 1% and minus 2%.

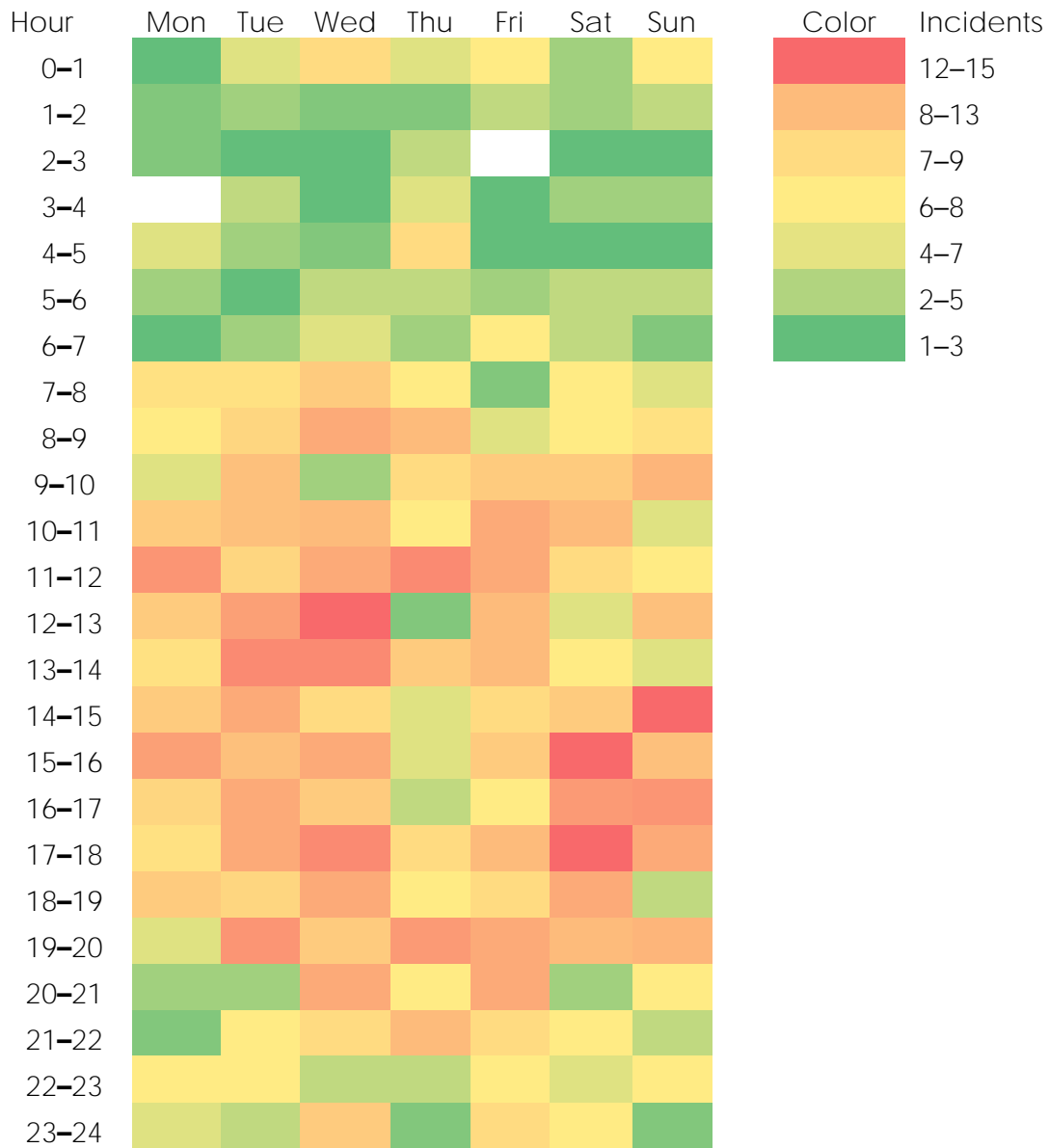
A study of demand by hour shows that ZAY, like many fire agencies, sees a significant variation by the hour. In fact, over 72% of all incidents happen between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The following figure shows the general difference of the complete incident data set by hour.

Figure 183: ZAY Incident Percentage by Hour



The average daily swing is typical and likely due to the number of awake and active people. However, the day-to-day variation in this information does play a part. The following figure is the incident heat map by the hour and day of the week.

Figure 184: ZAY Incident Heat Map by Hour and Weekday



The above evaluation does not prove definitively that the daytime hours are evenly distributed. Note the small spread of incidents within the color chart. However, it does follow that the daytime hours are busier, especially on the weekends.

The final volume analysis looked at the unit usage for all apparatus within the system. This analysis considered three dimensions. The first is the unit hour utilization (UHU). This number represents the time a unit was committed to an incident as a percentage of the total time they were on duty. The next is the average time a unit was committed to an incident. And finally, the average number of incidents a unit was deployed daily.

Only those units clearly identified by the agency or units with large volumes of responses within the data sets were evaluated. The following figure shows the general statistics for each frontline unit within the ZAY system.

Figure 185: ZAY Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
C2400	0.5%	45 Minutes	0.2
B2403	0.9%	38 Minutes	0.3
E2410	0.7%	32 Minutes	0.3
B2404	0.2%	43 Minutes	0.1
E2411	0.1%	56 Minutes	0.0
E2414	0.2%	38 Minutes	0.1
E2436	0.2%	63 Minutes	0.0
R2465	0.3%	36 Minutes	0.1
R2466	1.2%	35 Minutes	0.5
W2450	0.2%	73 Minutes	0.0
Utilities	0.1%	43 Minutes	0.0

Per staff direction, incidents included under the unit identified as C2401 were combined into the R2465 data. In addition, it should be noted that E2414 was removed from service in 2022. It is reported here as there was associated historical data, but it will not show in the apparatus table.

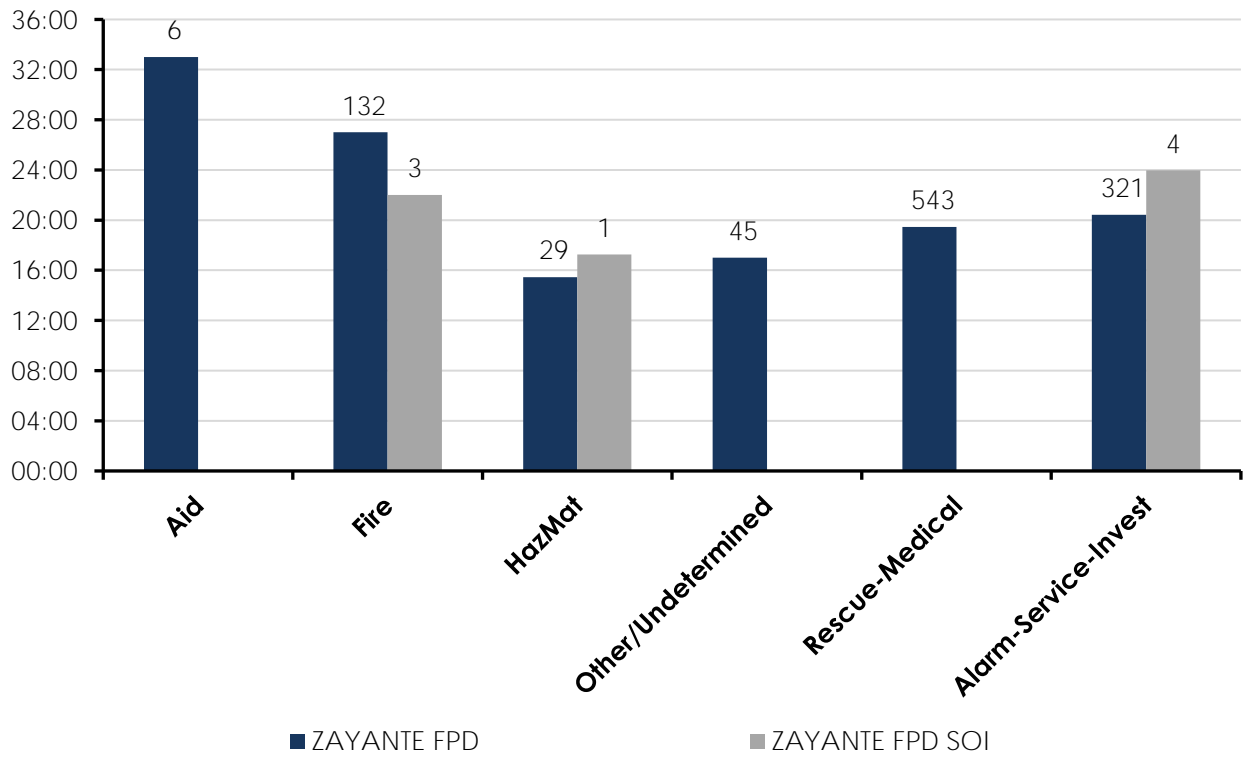
Service Delivery & Performance

The performance of the ZAY response was also evaluated. The data did not differentiate between emergency responses and non-emergency responses. In addition, there was no evaluation of the arriving unit's type or agency. Therefore, all responses are evaluated. The 90th percentile is typically used in the fire service and is considered the standard for measuring incident response performance. Due to the nature of this report, ZAY's operation in its identified sphere of influence was also evaluated. Agency performance goals or standards are not taken into consideration for this report.

Three unique time segments are included when evaluating an agency's response performance. The first is the time it takes for the Dispatcher to answer the 911 call and notify the agency (call processing); the second is the time it takes for the agency to receive the call and go en route to the call (turnout time). Third is the time it takes for the unit to drive to the incident (travel time). All three segments combined make up the total response time. For this evaluation, the unit type was not discriminated against, and the first arriving unit was used to determine the total response time.

Each call type may contain variables. For example, questioning the caller for appropriate information may take more or less time. In addition, it may take longer for crews to respond depending on the personal protective equipment to be worn, which varies with the type of incident. The following figure shows the total response time performance for each of the significant incident types for all incidents within the data set. The following figure shows the first due, 90th percentile total response time for the District and the sphere of influence.

Figure 186: ZAY Incidents 90th Percentile Total Response Times, Jan 2018–Dec 2022



Staffing

ZAY operates a volunteer response service with one paid Fire Chief. Emergency response consists of fire apparatus staffed as needed by volunteer personnel. The following figure shows the total number of personnel assigned to the ZAY.

Figure 187: ZAY Staffing⁷⁴

Assignment	Staffing
Uniformed Administration	1
Non-Uniformed Administration	0
Fire Prevention	0
Operations Staff (Paid-Career)	3
Operations Staff (Volunteers, Reserve, and on-call)	≈23
Emergency Communications	0
Total Personnel	4 / ≈23

The following figure shows the daily operational staffing at each station and on each unit. Station 1 is staffed with a full-time crew Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., the remaining apparatus and times are staffed by paid-on-call volunteers.

Figure 188: ZAY Daily Operational Staffing

Station	Daily Staffing	Unit Staffing
1	3 (daytime M-F) Volunteer	2 Engines, 1 Rescue, and 1 Water Tender
2	Volunteer	1 Engine and 1 Rescue
3	Volunteer	1 Engine

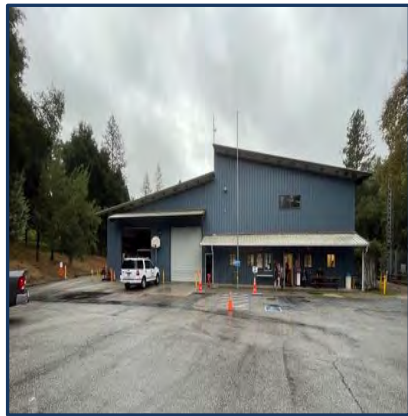
⁷⁴ zayantefire.com/overview/.


Facilities & Apparatus


Zayante Fire Stations

The following figures outline the basic features of each of ZAY's **three** fire stations. The condition of each station is rated based on the criteria identified in the introduction to this section of the report.

Figure 189: ZAY Fire Stations

Station Name/Number:	Zayante Station 1					
Address/Physical Location:	7700 East Zayante Road, Felton, CA					
	General Description:					
	25-year-old two-story large metal frame building. The first floor accommodates the Fire District Admin. Offices, community meeting room, kitchen, M/F restrooms, and apparatus storage area capable of housing 6 fire apparatus. The large upstairs area includes a training classroom, workout area, sleeper dorm rooms, M/F restroom facilities, and a significant storage area (community disaster equipment/supplies).					
Structure						
Date of Original Construction	1998					
Seismic Protection	No					
Condition (from rating sheet)	Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-through Bays	2	Back-in Bays			
Length of Each Apparatus Bay						
Facilities Available						
Sleeping Quarters	4	Bedrooms	4	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Current Daily Staffing	3 (Monday–Friday / 8 a.m.–5 p.m.)					
Maximum Staffing Capability	4					
Kitchen Facilities	1					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	Yes					

Station Name/Number:	Zayante Station 2					
Address/Physical Location:	10580 Lompico Road, Felton, CA					
	<p>General Description:</p> <p>Small masonry constructed garage structure housing one volunteer-staffed fire engine. No restroom(s) and minimal storage currently exist. Although currently in use, this facility does not meet current NFPA 1500 recommended standards. It is located on a rural road blind curve, in addition to its lack of adequate parking for responding volunteers. If abandoned, the adjoining Water District property could help mitigate the need for additional parking.</p>					
Structure						
Date of Original Construction	N/A					
Seismic Protection	No					
Condition (from rating sheet)	Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-through Bays		Back-in Bays		1	
Length of Each Apparatus Bay	N/A					
Facilities Available						
Sleeping Quarters	0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Current Daily Staffing	Volunteer					
Maximum Staffing Capability	0					
Kitchen Facilities	No					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	No					

Station Name/Number:	Zayante Station 3					
Address/Physical Location:	15585 East Zayante Road, Felton, CA					
	<p>General Description:</p> <p>One-story wood frame garage structure. Single Engine remotely located fire station staffed by neighborhood volunteers. Approximately 800–900 sq. feet of useable garage/storage space. The station currently does not have auxiliary power, restrooms, office space, or a meeting room. Water at the site is limited to a residential well and a moderately sized storage tank to the rear of the fire station.</p>					
Structure						
Date of Original Construction	N/A					
Seismic Protection	No					
Condition (from rating sheet)	Fair					
Number of Apparatus Bays	Drive-through Bays		Back-in Bays		2	
Length of Each Apparatus Bay	49 feet					
Facilities Available						
Sleeping Quarters	0	Bedrooms	0	Beds	0	Dorm Beds
Current Daily Staffing	Volunteer					
Maximum Staffing Capability	0					
Kitchen Facilities	0					
Bathroom/Shower Facilities	0					

Fire Stations Discussion

The District considered the three Zayante fire stations in “Fair” condition. Only Station 1 (Headquarters) functions as a staffed fire station and only during weekday business hours (Monday–Friday 0800–1700 hrs.). Fire Stations 2 and 3 are remote satellite stations operating essentially as garages for fire apparatus staffed by volunteers who live nearby. Station 1 is approaching 25 years old, with Stations 2 and 3 ages not identified or provided by the District staff. The following figure summarizes ZAY's fire stations and their features.

Figure 190: ZAY Station Configuration and Condition

Station	Apparatus Bays	Staffing Capacity	General Condition	Station Age
Station 1	2	4	Fair	25 years
Station 2	1	0	Fair/Poor	Unknown
Station 3	1	0	Fair	Unknown
Totals:	4	4	Average:	Unknown

Fire Station #1

This 25-year-old facility serves as the Fire District's headquarters fire station. It is a two-story metal framed structure protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system. The station's ground floor houses a two-bay apparatus/equipment storage area capable of accommodating multiple fire apparatus and related equipment. Administrative offices, a community meeting room, a commercially equipped kitchen, and gender-separated public restrooms are located adjacent to this area. A centrally located staircase leads to an upstairs training classroom, several equipment storage rooms, a designated "sleeper bedroom," additional restrooms, and a day room/workout area for volunteers. A secondary remotely located staircase leads from the N/W corner of the classroom area downstairs into the apparatus bay where the fire apparatus is located. The fire station site is surrounded by a large, paved parking area at the front and a similar-sized, unpaved gravel parking/storage area to the rear. This station is the only Zayante fire station capable of housing full-time, 24-hour on-duty firefighters. This station could be remodeled if the District transitioned to a fully staffed deployment model. The current building has the space and infrastructure to support the construction and addition of these facilities. The size of the station could be capable of housing at least two 3-person companies and a Battalion Chief if needed.

Fire Station #2

A remote, unstaffed single-bay building housing one fire engine and equipment supporting the volunteer firefighters living in the immediate area. The building is a one-story wood-framed structure of unknown age and size. It is on a blind curve with inadequate site distances for safe entry/exit. It has little to no parking for responding volunteer firefighters to safely park their vehicles before responding on the fire apparatus housed at the station. The station relies on propane for heat, and water is supplied by an adjacent community water system pump station. The facility did not appear to have restrooms, emergency standby power, or a static water storage supply tank. This station has neither the space nor infrastructure to accommodate on-duty full-time staffing by fire or emergency medical personnel.

Fire Station #3

This remote station is located at 15585 Upper Zayante Rd. in the Los Gatos Fire District area. The building is a one-story, two-bay wood-framed structure protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system. The sprinkler system is supported by a large water storage tank designed to supply the fire sprinkler system and an adjacent standpipe for filling fire apparatus water tanks. There is limited parking for responding volunteer firefighters located across a narrow rural driveway abutting the front ramp of the fire station.

Apparatus

ZAY operates with two Type 1, a Type 2, and a Type 3 engine. In addition, it has a rescue ambulance, a quick response rescue, two command vehicles, one water tender, and one utility truck. The following figure shows the type and condition of ZAY's fleet.

Figure 191: ZAY Vehicles & Apparatus

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
C2400	Command/SUV	Excellent
B2403	Command/SUV	Fair
E2410	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
B2404	Command/SUV	Good
E2411	Type 1 Engine	Good
E2436	Type 3 Engine	Good
R2465	Rescue QRV	Excellent
R2466	Rescue Ambulance	Excellent
W2450	Water Tender	Good
U2499	Utility	Fair
E2412	Type 2 Engine	Fair

Facility Replacement & Infrastructure Needs

District fire station size, location, and design are typically driven by community needs and property availability. Volunteer-staffed fire department facility needs differ significantly from those utilizing on-duty, in-station fire personnel. Zayante's main station, located on East Zanyante Rd., was designed and built 25 years ago to potentially accommodate firefighters living in the station. Future full-time staffing of this station because of its current location and size may be possible. Based on District needs, accommodating this type of change would likely require considerable upgrading of the interior spaces of the building. Neither Station 2 nor Station 3 have the physical size or infrastructure to accommodate staffed on-duty personnel.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

ZAY currently has no shared facilities with other fire agencies. The District works closely with the Felton FPD and routinely shares mutual aid resources to enhance emergency coverage in both fire district jurisdictions. Continued enhanced collaboration and pooling of resources (facilities/staffing) between these two volunteer agencies may be an effective short to medium-term method to address community growth or service demand increases they may face in the future,

Dispatch & Communications

Emergency communications and dispatch services are provided to ZAY by Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (NetCom), which has operated for 25 years as of 2021. NetCom is a regional center operating as Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties' Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). It encompasses more than 330,000 residents and visitors. The center serves multiple fire, law enforcement, and EMS agencies.

NetCom processes nearly 600,000 calls annually.⁷⁵ Although the center follows national standards for call answering, it focuses on achieving the **State of California's standard** (which is higher than national standards) of 95% of incoming 911 calls being answered within 15 seconds—equivalent to three rings at NetCom.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 website.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Profile

Agency Overview

The Pajaro Fire Protection District (PAJ) provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the 44.26 square mile area in the south-central portion of the county.⁷⁷ It serves the unincorporated communities of Amesti and Interlaken.

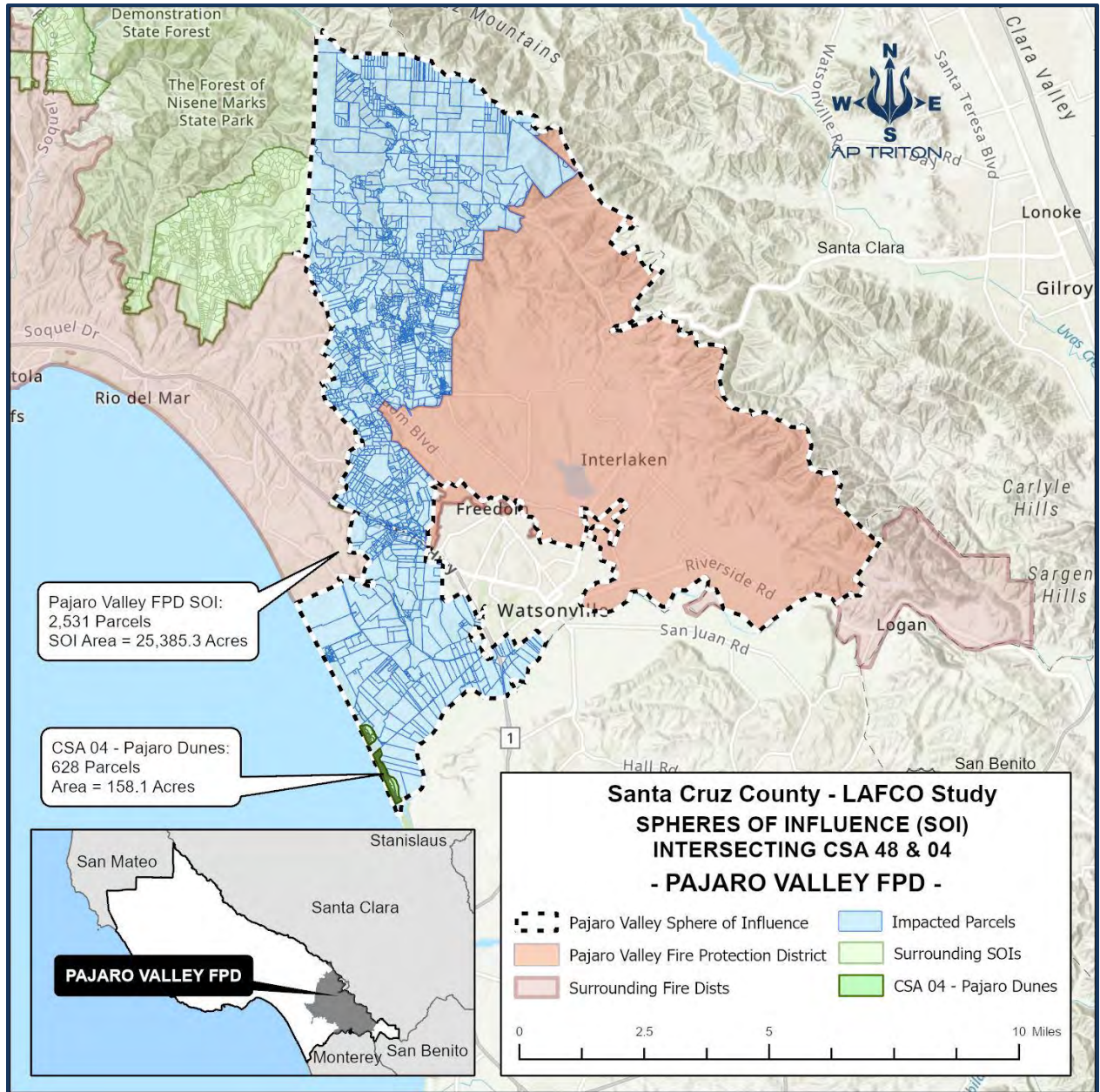
Boundaries

PAJ is located in the south-central area of the County of Santa Cruz. It shares a border to the west with CSA 48. The southern boundary is shared with the City of Watsonville, and the southeast is shared with the Aromas Fire Protection District.

The SOI area encompasses CSA 48 and CSA 4 service areas. The 3,159 parcels in the SOI account for 25,543.4 acres and only one property is shared. The following figure shows the location and the SOI as currently reported.

⁷⁷ ArcGIS Community Analyst.

Figure 192: Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District with Sphere of Influence



Type & Extent of Services

Services Provided

PAJ provides a wide range of services for its community. These include fire suppression, basic life support, emergency medical care, and other emergency services. The following figure represents each of the services and the level performed as indicated by the agency.

Figure 193: Overview of Services Provided by PAJ

Service	Y/N	Level
Fire Suppression	Yes	Structural
EMS First Response	Yes	BLS
Ambulance Transport	No	
Specialized/Technical Rescue	Yes	Low-angle rescue & auto extrication
Hazmat Response	Yes	First Responder-Operations Level
Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement	Yes	Defensible space & business inspection
Plan Review	Yes	
Public Education/Prevention	Yes	Includes fire extinguisher training
Fire and Arson Investigation	Yes	
Other	Yes	Chipping Program

Service Area

PAJ is a multi-discipline fire protection district that contracts for service with CAL FIRE. The District is statutorily responsible for fire protection of improved structures and other emergency services within the city limits. Vegetation fires are part of the state responsibility area and are statutorily the responsibility of CAL FIRE. However, PAJ provides support and assistance when requested and will begin incident mitigation if notified directly.

Collaboration

- PAJ participant in the countywide mutual aid agreement.
- PAJ shares the cost of the Fire Marshal, 50%, with county service area 48.
- PAJ shares the cost of the Battalion Chief with CSA 4. PAJ pays 90% of the pay and CSA 4 10%.

Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs)

- None Identified

Contracts to provide services to other agencies

- None Identified

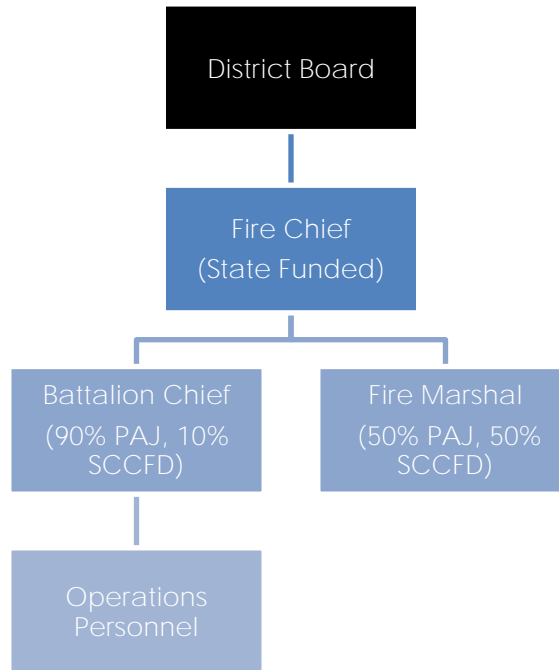
Contracts for service to other agencies

- None were identified, just the cost-sharing approach with CSA 4 and CSA 48.

Governance, Administration, & Accountability

PAJ is governed by a five-member Board of Directors whose head is the Board Chair. The fire chief is contracted with CAL FIRE, who serves as the CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Chief and the Santa Cruz County Fire Department Chief. The Chief is accountable to the district board. As shown, some positions are state-funded, while others are funded by PAJ. Nearly all PAJ's command staff and upper management are state-funded.

Figure 194: Pajaro Valley Lines of Authority



The following figure identifies the efforts to meet state laws to ensure transparency and accountability.

Figure 195: Pajaro Valley Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability	Available
Agency website ⁷⁸	Yes
The adopted budget is available on the website	Yes
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on the website ⁷⁹	Yes
Public meetings are live-streamed	Yes
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings are available on the website	Yes
Master Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	No
Strategic Plan (fire service specific) available on the website	Yes
Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover documents are available on the website	No
SOC performance reports are available on the website	Yes
Efforts to engage and educate the public on the services to the community	Yes
Staff and governing board member ethics training and economic interest reporting completed	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open-meeting requirements	Yes

⁷⁸ As of January 1, 2020, independent special districts are required to maintain websites according to Government Code Sections 6270.6 and 53087.8 to provide the public easily accessible and accurate information about the district. Government Code Section 53087.8 lists what must be included on the website.

⁷⁹ Government Code §54954.2.

Growth & Population Projections

The legal boundaries of PAJ do not have a corresponding U. S. Census area to evaluate. Instead, PAJ comprises at least two census-designated places but only one that reports data. It would be inconsistent to document these different census places in this report. Therefore, the district boundaries will be used for the remainder of this section.

Current Population

The current population within PAJ's legal boundaries is 16,336, with an area of 44.26 square miles. There is a total of 4,545 housing units listed in the area.⁸⁰ The number of residents and housing units meet the urban area classification threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau.⁸¹

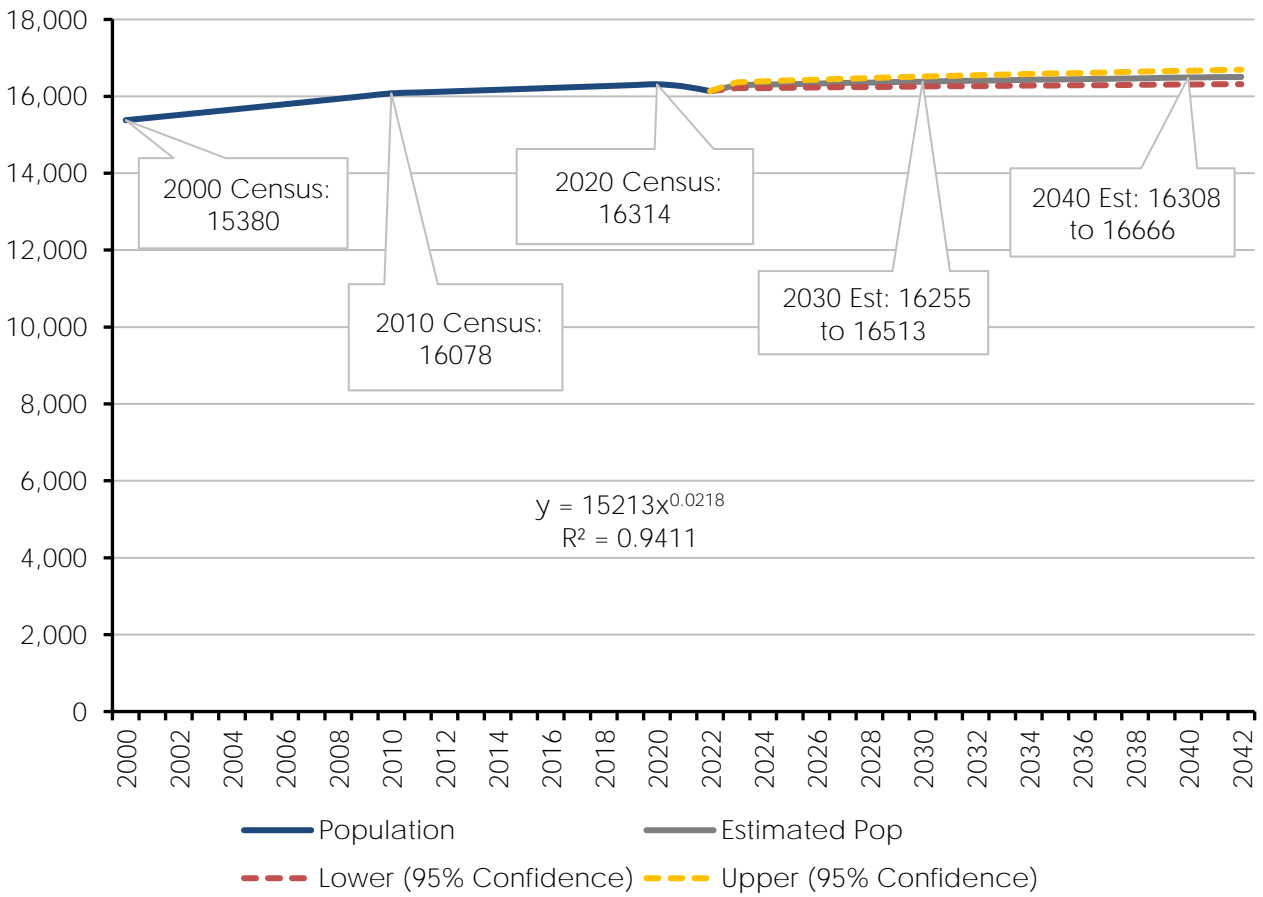
Projected Growth & Development

Estimating population growth is challenging due to many factors such as new developments or local economies. For PAJ, two techniques were utilized. The first was to rely on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, which calls for low or very moderate growth for the region. The second method evaluated the preceding 20 years of population growth, creating a statistical model that returned the best fit and then projecting that model out 20 years. For the PAJ area, the best-fit model was a logarithmic regression analysis, which produced an R^2 value of 0.9411. This means the model fits the historical data very well. An absolute perfect model fit returns an R^2 value of 1. Using the regression as a forecast shows no significant population change for the area from 16,336 in 2020 to 16,308 to 16,666 in 2040 with a 95% confidence level. This agrees generally with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments forecast. The following figure shows the 20-year actual and 20-year population forecast with confidence levels.

⁸⁰ ESRI Community Analyst, Source U. S. Census Bureau, 2020 Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171).

⁸¹ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.

Figure 196: PAJ Historical Population and Forecast



Financial Overview

PAJ operates through two funds: the General Fund (GF) and the Capital Projects Fund (CPF). The District transfers funds from the GF to the CPF to provide the money necessary for capital purchases. The study will focus on the activities of the GF. The District prepares an annual operating budget based on a July through June fiscal year. PAJ provides services to the community through a contract with the State of California (CAL FIRE).

The CAL FIRE Agreement requires the District to provide for the costs to maintain equipment and property that it owns, but that is utilized by CAL FIRE to perform its contractual obligations to the District. The District must also maintain a general liability insurance policy with limits of \$1,000,000.⁸²

General Fund Recurring Revenues and Expenses

A significant amount of information was provided by the District staff. It was reviewed to develop a financial trend analysis for the five years, from fiscal year 2018 through fiscal year 2022.⁸³ This review of the historical information of General Fund (GF) revenues revealed recurring revenues increased from \$1,879,000 in FY 2018 to a budgeted \$2,376,000 in FY 2022, a 26.5% overall increase or an annualized increase of approximately 6.6%.

Property tax revenues are the most significant source of General Fund Revenues, followed by a special assessment Fire Protection Tax, which is not restricted to specific uses. These two sources account for almost 94% of General Fund Revenues. Other sources of revenue include charges for services, interest, and other sources.

The General Fund expends funds for prior employees' benefits, including CalPERS Unfunded Actuarial Liability, services, contractual obligation with CAL FIRE, supplies, capital expenditures, and debt service. The District has accumulated an Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL) in its CalPERS pension obligation; however, a significant portion of the UAL was paid in FY 2021, leaving a minimal amount due in future years. Benefit expenditures have been reduced to negligible amounts in considering the overall budget.

The most significant annual expenditure of PAJ is for its service agreement with CAL FIRE. This expenditure typically requires approximately 90% of the yearly recurring expenses of PAJ.

⁸² Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Basic Financial Statements, June 30, 2020 and 2019.

⁸³ Historic Financial Information provided by PAJ staff.

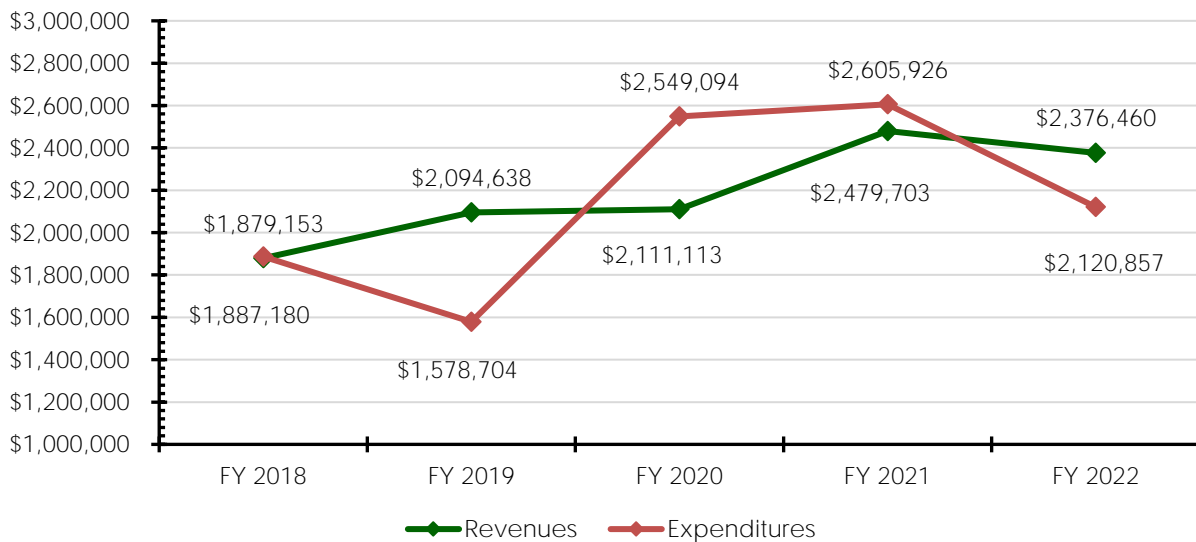
Due to the source of its funding streams, the COVID-19 pandemic had no significant negative impact on FY 2020 and FY 2021 revenues. The following figure is the historical revenues and expenditures of the District.

Figure 197: PAJ Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses, FY 2018–FY 2022

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2018 (Actual)	FY 2019 (Actual)	FY 2020 (Actual)	FY 2021 (Actual)	FY 2022 (Actual)
Recurring Revenue	1,826,000	1,949,318	2,010,494	2,085,607	2,200,113
Other Revenues	53,153	145,320	100,619	394,096	176,346
Total Revenues	1,879,153	2,094,638	2,111,113	2,479,703	2,376,460
Salaries & Benefits	1,073	26,328	57,916	695,050	79,705
Services & Supplies	1,863,631	1,405,215	2,428,021	1,907,541	1,926,882
Total Recurring Expenses	1,864,704	1,431,543	2,485,937	2,602,591	2,006,587
Capital Expenditures	22,476	147,161	63,156	3,334	114,270
Total Expenditures	1,887,180	1,578,704	2,549,093	2,605,925	2,120,857
Total Surplus (Deficit)	(8,027)	515,933	(437,981)	(126,222)	255,602
Beginning Reserves	503,766	495,739	1,011,672	573,691	447,469
Ending Reserves	495,739	1,011,672	573,691	447,469	703,072

The following figure displays this data and indicates the District's historical revenues and expenditures.

Figure 198: Summarized General Fund Revenues and Expenses



Financial Projections

Property tax revenue growth has averaged approximately 5% between FY 2018 and FY 2022. The FY 2023 budget forecasts a growth rate of 6.2% from FY 2022, but to remain conservative and consistent with the more recent trend, recurring revenues are forecast to grow at 5.0% annually using FY 2023 as the base period. Fire Protection Tax collections have shown minimal change during the historic analysis study period. They are forecast to remain consistent at \$141,400 annually. Other revenues are forecast to remain constant.

Benefits for former employees have stabilized with the prepayment of the UAL costs to CalPERS. As previously discussed, the service agreement between the District and CAL FIRE is the most significant single item in the budget, consuming approximately 90% of the budgeted expenditures annually. The costs of this Service increase and decrease depending on significant incidents in the District and growth in wages and benefits. This study will forecast growth in this category at 3% annually, again using the FY 2023 budgeted amounts as a base year. Other services and supplies are also predicted at 3% annually. Non-recurring expenditures are forecast at \$25,000 annually as significant capital expenditures are made from the Capital Projects Fund.

The following projections were developed from the historical trends identified in the financial analysis. Certain expenditures appear on an "as-needed" basis and are difficult to identify as a trend. The various "as-needed" expenditures distort the projections and, using the FY 2023 budget as a base period, in the absence of additional information, makes them unreliable.

Figure 199: PAJ General Fund Summarized Projected General Fund Revenues & Expenditures

Revenue/Expenses	FY 2023 Budget ⁸⁴	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue	2,405,340	2,509,837	2,619,559	2,734,767	2,855,735	2,982,752
Expenditures	2,604,090	2,676,760	2,755,750	2,837,110	2,920,911	3,007,226
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(198,750)	(166,923)	(136,191)	(102,343)	(65,176)	(24,474)

⁸⁴ FY 2023 Adopted Budget.

Capital Planning

An overall Capital Improvements/Replacement Plan was not observed in the documentation provided by the District. An asset list provided by the District indicated that many assets appear to be beyond their expected useful life. A Facility Replacement Plan, dated in 2022, was provided. PAJ maintains a Capital Projects Fund separate from the General Fund. This restricted amount totals over \$900,000 on June 30, 2021.⁸⁵

Demand for Services

PAJ is primarily a rural system that provides aid services to other communities when requested. Data was provided by the CAL FIRE ECC and the State Fire Marshal's Office, providing NFIRS data from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2022. In addition, any response to a wildland-type fire in the State Response Area was removed from the analysis. CAL FIRE units not part of PAJ are considered aid units for this evaluation. The following figure is the overview of the response statistics for PAJ.

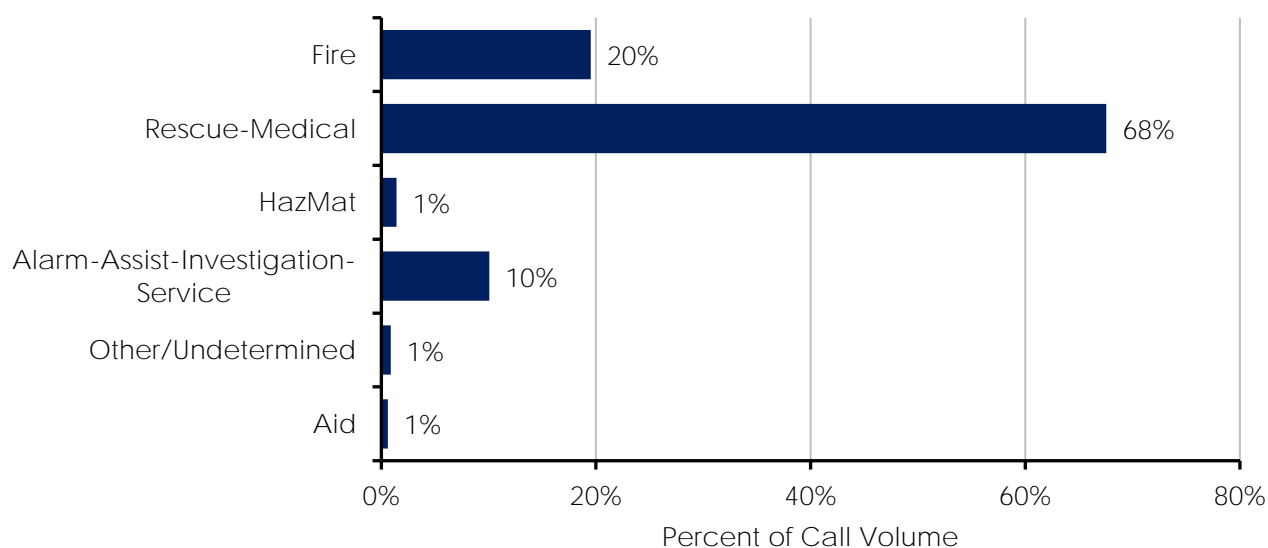
Figure 200: PAJ Response Overview

Agency	Pajaro Valley FPD
Avg. Annual Incident Vol.	1,472
Incidents per 1,000 Population	90
90th Percentile Total Time	15:00

Each incident was grouped into the main categories based on the dispatch type. The incident types were related to the major categories in the National Fire Incident Reporting system. The following figure is the percentage of incidents within those categories for the entire data set, 2018–2022.

⁸⁵ Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Basic Financial Statements, June 30, 2021 and 2020.

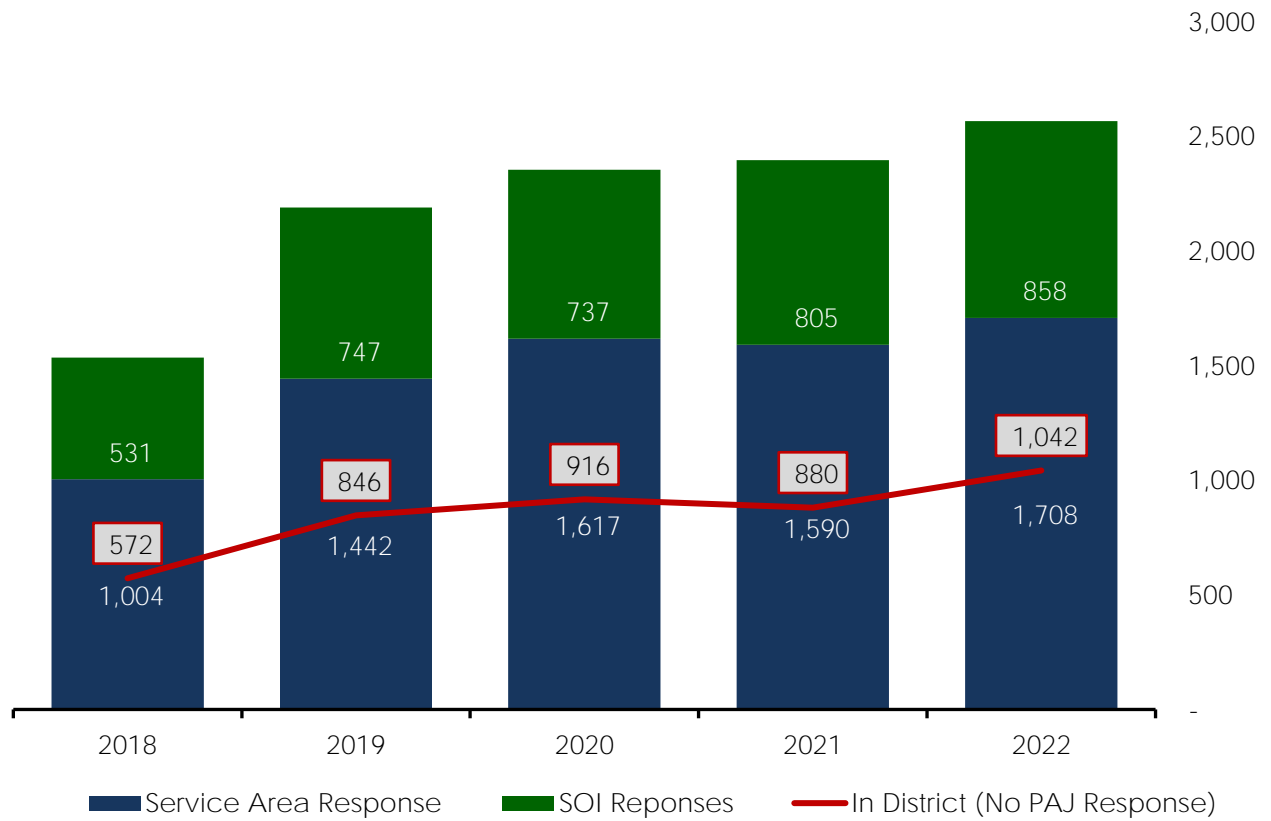
Figure 201: PAJ Total Incident Responses by Type as a Percentage



Typically, an analysis of incidents by year can yield a trend or indicate what call volume might look like in the next few years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social and economic constraints, this is difficult with this data set. As a result, a trend was not easily spotted or extrapolated. It appears that PAJ response numbers remained steady in 2020 and 2021 and have started to rebound but have not returned to the pre-pandemic levels.

Responses to the sphere of influence are significant, encompassing a large area. One aspect of the service within the cooperative agreement agencies with CAL FIRE is the sharing of state assets on a routine basis. PAJ units did not respond to most of the incidents within their jurisdiction. This is likely due to the CAL FIRE relationship between station 49 and the Pajaro Dunes station. The following figure shows the annual incident volume by year with the responses into the sphere of influence and district-covered incidents.

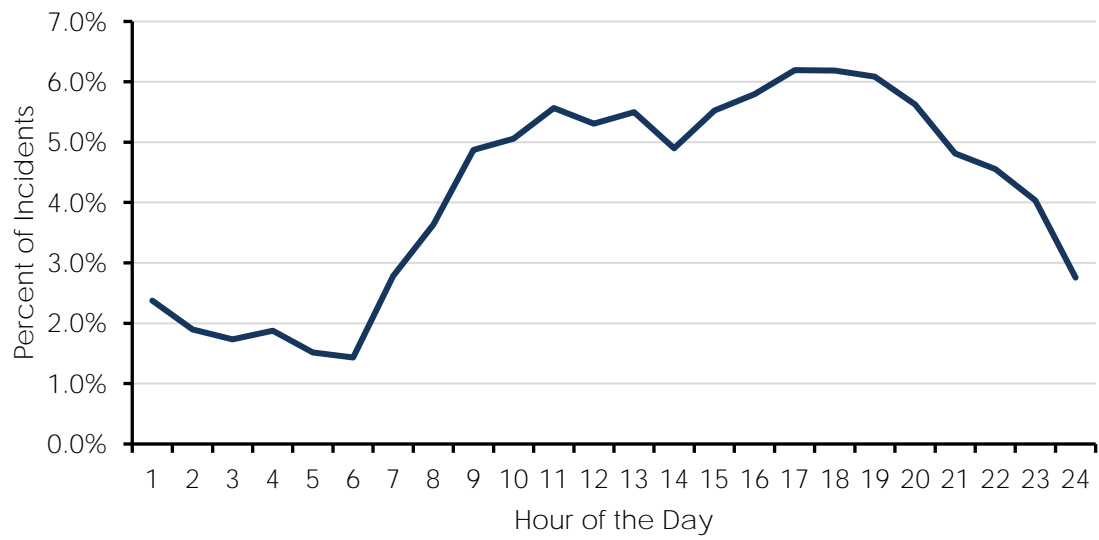
Figure 202: PAJ Annual Incident Volume by Year



A temporal study indicated defined seasonality in the response data. The winter months, except December, indicated fewer than expected responses, while the summer months through October and December show increased incident responses. The variation was plus and minus 2%.

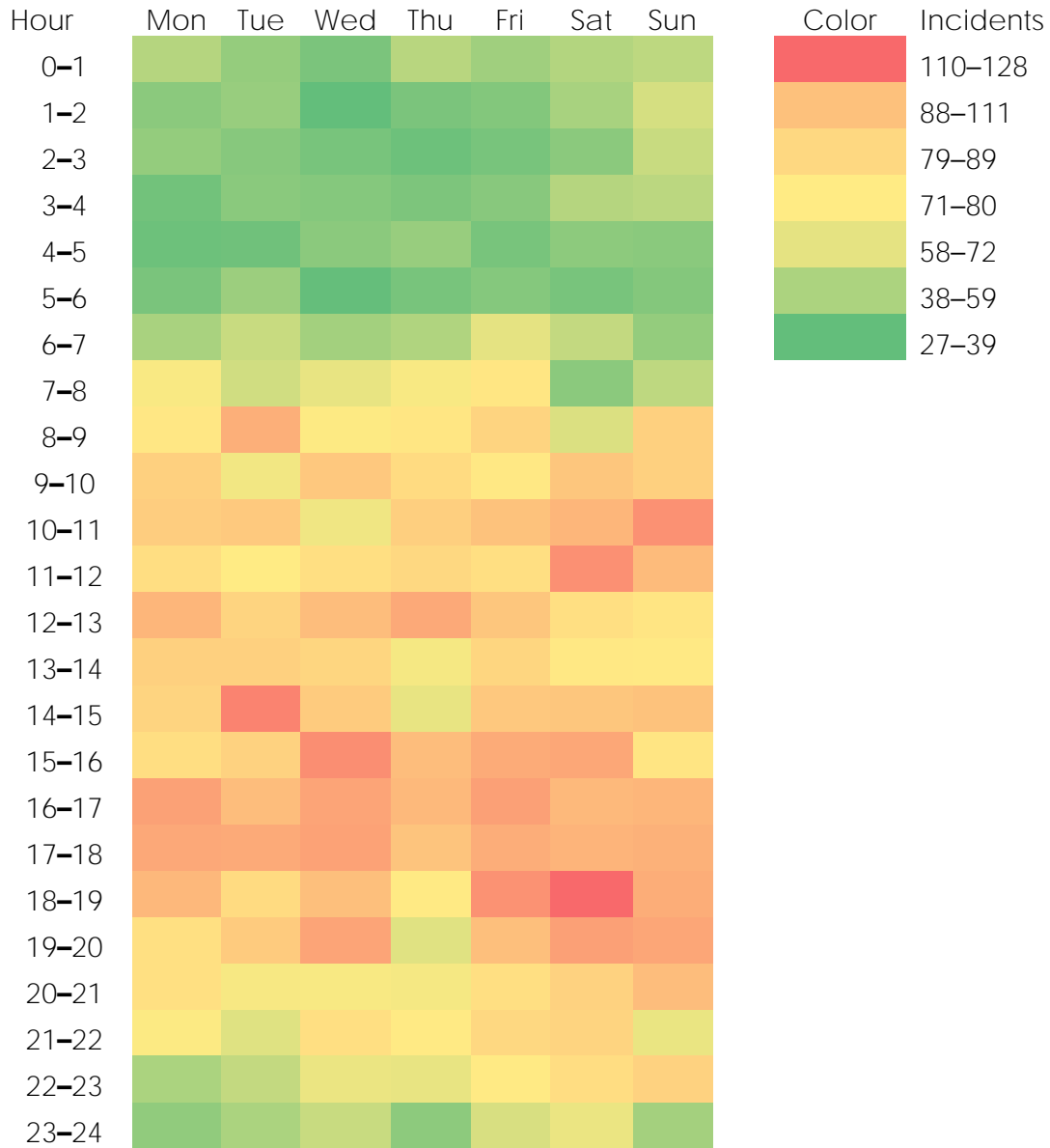
A study of demand by hour shows that PAJ, like many fire agencies, sees a significant variation by the hour. In fact, over 71% of all incidents happen between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The following figure shows the general difference of the complete incident data set by hour.

Figure 203: PAJ Incident Percentage by Hour



The average daily swing is typical and likely due to the number of awake and active people. However, the day-to-day variation in this information does play a part. The following figure is the incident heat map by the hour and day of the week.

Figure 204: PAJ Incident Heat Map by Hour and Weekday



As indicated in the previous figure, the daytime hour incidents tend to be evenly distributed during every day of the week.

The final volume analysis looked at the unit usage for all apparatus within the system. This analysis considered three dimensions. The first is the unit hour utilization (UHU). This number represents the time a unit was committed to an incident as a percentage of the total time they were on duty. The next is the average time a unit was committed to an incident. And finally, the average number of incidents a unit was deployed daily.

Only those units clearly identified by the agency or units with large volumes of responses within the data sets were evaluated. The units are grouped roughly into the stations. The following figure shows the general statistics for each frontline unit within the PAJ system.

Figure 205: PAJ Unit Usage (2021–2022)

Unit	Unit Hour Utilization (UHU)	Avg. Time per Incident	Avg. Incidents Per Day
E4511	3.9%	36 Minutes	1.5
E4510	0.8%	38 Minutes	0.3
U4591	0.0%	58 Minutes	0.0
W4551	0.5%	82 Minutes	0.1
B1716	1.0%	208 Minutes	0.1

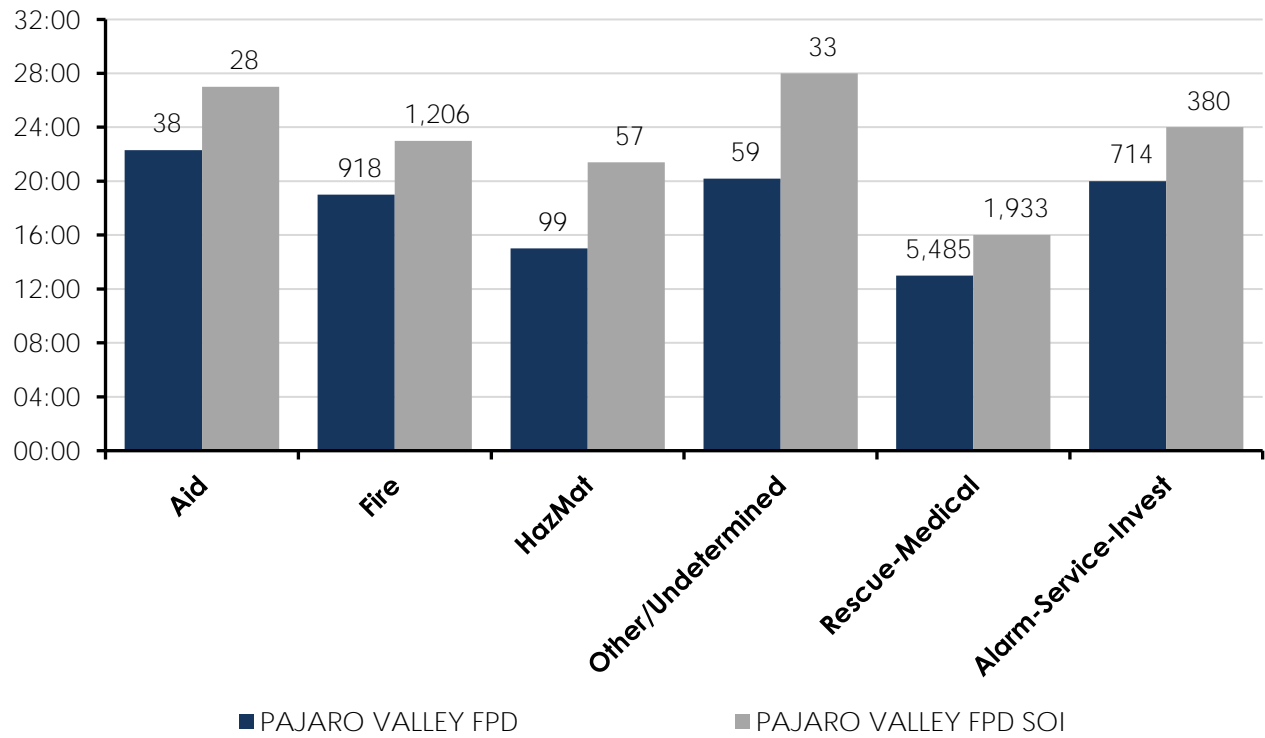
Service Delivery & Performance

The performance of the PAJ response was also evaluated. The data did not differentiate between emergency responses and non-emergency responses. In addition, there was no evaluation of the arriving unit's type or agency. Therefore, all responses are evaluated. The 90th percentile is typically used in the fire service and is considered the standard for measuring incident response performance. Due to the nature of this report, PAJ's performance in those areas identified as another agency's sphere of influence was also evaluated. Agency performance goals or standards are not taken into consideration for this report.

Three unique time segments are included when evaluating an agency's response performance. The first is the time it takes for the Dispatcher to answer the 911 call and notify the agency (call processing); the second is the time it takes for the agency to receive the call and go en route to the call (turnout time); and third is the time it takes for the unit to drive to the incident (travel time). All three segments combined make up the total response time. For this evaluation, the unit type was not discriminated against, and the first arriving unit was used to determine the total response time.

Each call type may contain variables. For example, questioning the caller for appropriate information may take more or less time. In addition, it may take longer for crews to respond depending on the personal protective equipment to be worn, which varies with the type of incident. The following figure shows the total response time performance for each of the major incident types for all incidents within the data set. The following figure shows the first due, 90th percentile total response time for two county service areas within the county fire department response area.

Figure 206: PAJ Incidents 90th Percentile Total Response Times, Jan 2018–Dec 2022



Staffing

PAJ operates a fully paid staff supplied by CAL FIRE. The team consists of a Battalion Chief serving as the PAJ lead manager, a Fire Marshal, and a daily minimum operations staff of 3. The Fire Chief on record is also the CAL FIRE CZU unit chief. Emergency response consists of one frontline apparatus and one cross-staffed unit. The following figure shows the total number of personnel assigned to the PAJ.

Figure 207: PAJ Staffing

Assignment	Staffing
Uniformed Administration*	1
Non-Uniformed Administration	0
Fire Prevention*	1
Operations Staff (Career-Paid)	7
Operations Staff (Volunteers, Reserve, and on-call)	0
Emergency Communications	0
Total Personnel	9

* Cost Shared Positions

The following figure shows the daily operational staffing at each station and on each unit. All apparatus is staffed by CAL FIRE personnel under a Schedule A contract.

Figure 208: PAJ Daily Operational Staffing


Station	Daily Staffing	Unit Staffing
1	4	1 Command Vehicle, an Engine, and a cross-staffed Water Tender. Also housed at the station is the Fire Marshal.

Facilities & Apparatus

Pajaro Valley Fire Station

The following figure outlines the basic features of the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District fire station. The condition of the fire station is rated based on the criteria identified in the introduction to this section of the report.

Figure 209: Pajaro Valley Fire Stations

Station Name/Number:		Pajaro Valley FPD Station 1				
Address/Physical Location:		562 Casserly Road, Watsonville, CA 95076				
		<p>General Description:</p> <p>A 6,000 sq. ft. facility built in 2005, featuring 4 apparatus bays, a Board/ Training room, 3 bedrooms, a kitchen, and an office for the Battalion Chief and Fire Marshal.</p>				
Structure						
Date of Original Construction		2005				
Seismic Protection		No				
Condition (from rating sheet)		Fair				
Number of Apparatus Bays		Drive-through Bays		3	Back-in Bays	
Length of each Apparatus Bay						
Facilities Available						
Sleeping Quarters		3	Bedrooms			Beds
Current daily staffing		3				
Maximum staffing capability		3				
Kitchen Facilities		1				
Bathroom/Shower Facilities		Yes				
Training/Meeting Rooms		Yes				
Washer/Dryer/Extractor		Yes				
Safety & Security						
Station Sprinklered		Yes				
Smoke Detection		Yes				
Decon & Biological Disposal		No				
Security System		No				
Apparatus Exhaust System		Yes				

Fire Stations Discussion

Built in 2005, the station appears to adequately meet most of the current requirements of modern firefighting. Contemporary firefighting methods, equipment, and professional standards are constantly changing, and fire station facilities, once constructed, can quickly become dated. Public Safety facilities are typically designed and built to have at least a 50-year useful life expectancy. The Pajaro Valley fire station is near the mid-point of its expected life. Evolving fire apparatus styles and sizes, adjusting personnel staffing configurations and deployments in addition to workforce and community expectations will always create challenges for aging fire station facilities.

Figure 210: PAJ Station Configuration and Condition

Station	Apparatus Bays	Staffing Capacity	General Condition	Station Age
Station 1	3	3	Fair	18 years
Totals/Average:			Average:	18 years

Current fire service standards recognize the need to safely decontaminate personnel and equipment after many of the responses experienced in the current firefighting context. Every crew member should have access to facilities to decontaminate immediately after a fire event, and showers should allow for gender separation. In addition, there needs to be enough partitioned space to allow for gear and equipment to be thoroughly washed and to control contamination in the living and working space of the station.

The Pajaro Valley fire station and its fire personnel especially need this type of decontamination, as they are surrounded by a significant number of agricultural facilities that use and store large amounts of hazardous materials required for commercial agriculture production operations in the community.

Apparatus

PAJ operates with one Type 1 and one command vehicles. In addition, it has a cross-staffed water tender, a utility vehicle, and a reserve engine. The following figure shows the type and condition of PAJ's fleet.

Figure 211: PAJ Vehicles & Apparatus

CAD Radio Name	Apparatus Type	Condition
B1716	Command/SUV	Excellent
E4511	Type 1 Engine	Excellent
E4510	Type 1 Engine (reserve)	Good
U4591	Utility	Good
W4551	Water Tender	Excellent

Facility Replacement & Infrastructure Needs

While all structures require routine maintenance, fire stations require even more due to the continuous occupancy by on-duty firefighting personnel. Additionally, multiple departures and returns of large and heavy fire apparatus also affect these structures. The Pajaro Valley Fire Station faces many of these same maintenance challenges currently. It will in the future as the station ages.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

The Pajaro Valley FPD currently contracts with CAL FIRE to provide fighting personnel and administrative resources to support the District's services to the surrounding community. There appears to be an active and supportive relationship between the Fire District and the other Santa Cruz County Fire Department components operated by CAL FIRE in the County. The neighboring Corralitos and Pajaro Dunes fire stations are staffed and managed by CAL FIRE CZU personnel and administrative resources.

Dispatch & Communications

Dispatch services for PAJ are provided by CAL FIRE under the terms of the Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. In addition to the Santa Cruz County Fire Department, the CAL FIRE Felton Emergency Command Center provides dispatch services for the CAL FIRE San Mateo-Santa Cruz Administrative Unit (CZU) and the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District.

When a 911 call is placed in Santa Cruz County, the call is immediately routed to the county's primary public safety answering point (PSAP) or the California Highway Patrol in Vallejo. Each center is staffed 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

CSA 48 REORGANIZATION PLAN / FEASIBILITY STUDY

DRAFT OUTLINE OF A STUDY FOR THE POTENTIAL REORGANIZATION
OF COUNTY SERVICE AREA 48 FROM A DEPENDENT SPECIAL
DISTRICT TO AN INDEPENDENT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

OUTLINE DEVELOPED BY CALFIRE, THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ AND
THE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCO)

COUNTY SERVICE AREA 48 (COUNTY FIRE) REORGANIZATION PLAN / FEASIBILITY STUDY

Draft outline for the assessment of the potential reorganization of County Service Area 48 from a dependent special district to an independent fire protection district.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the potential benefits, challenges, and overall viability of reorganizing County Service Area (CSA) 48 from its current structure as a dependent special district to an independent fire protection district. This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis to inform stakeholders and decision-makers about whether such a reorganization would improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of fire services in the region.

This section will also cover CSA 48's history, operations (current level of service), governance, contract with CalFIRE, and financial structure.

This section will also discuss the findings and recommendations found in LAFCO's fire study, the County's master plan, and recommendations made by the Fire Department Advisory Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section will summarize the key findings and proposed recommendations based on the report's analysis and conclusions. This section will include an overview of the benefits and constraints under the current model and the proposed new fire district.

CSA 48 OVERVIEW

This section will cover CSA 48's history, operations (current level of service), governance, contract with CalFIRE, and financial structure. The report will also compare CSA 48 with other fire districts to contextualize the reasons behind the proposed reorganization. This section will also discuss the findings and recommendations found in LAFCO's fire study, the County's master plan, and recommendations made by the Fire Department Advisory Commission (FDAC).

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION STUDY

The reorganization plan will analyze the following areas and must answer various questions / inquiries / concerns including but not limited to the following:

Stakeholder engagement

1. What opportunities will the stakeholders have to provide input in the process? Who are the target audiences?
 - Communities of Interest
 - North Coast /Davenport
 - Bonny Doon
 - South Skyline /Las Cumbres
 - Loma Prieta
 - Corralitos/South County
 - Others?

- Agencies/Organizations
 - Fire Agencies (Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Mateo counties)
 - Elected and appointed officials
2. What type of outreach will be conducted? What will be the follow-up mechanisms after community meetings to ensure concerns are addressed? How will feedback be incorporated into the study?
- Community meetings (what locations/who moderates/how many?)
 - Teleconferences
 - Flyer/questionnaire
 - Press releases / Newsletters

Service Impacts

1. Will the current level of service from CSA 48 continue under the new fire district in accordance with the contract between the County and CalFIRE? Will the existing contract be transferred over, or will a new contract be needed?
 - Will the new fire district continue to operate under the Amador model?
 - Will the new fire district require changes be made to existing fire stations and equipment? Is the current deployment model appropriate to meet the demand in each area?
 - If new staff or equipment are needed, what will the timeline for procurement and training look like? Can Cal FIRE continue operations without major service disruptions during the transition?
 - Will there be changes to the existing dispatch services? Radio System? IT?
 - What should be done regarding the five new year-round-staffed CalFIRE engines?
2. What scope of services will the new district provide?
3. What outside vendors or additional district employees might be needed for other services (ex. Equipment maintenance) not provided by CalFIRE?
4. What is the impact, if any, to the existing auto-aid and mutual-aid agreements continue under the new district?
5. Will other existing contracts for service continue (ex. Santa Cruz/Paradise Park, Central/Aptos Hills)?
6. How can additional areas be considered for contract service (adjacent to Watsonville, Pajaro Dunes, San Lorenzo Valley)?

Governance and Administration

1. What is the current population? What are the key communities?
2. Will CalFIRE act as the new district's fire chief and staff?
3. How many board members will the new district have? How many district-based election zones will be needed?
4. Will the district-based election zones be determined by a demographer before or after the new fire district is created?
5. Which policies and by-laws are needed to effectively guide the new fire district?
6. Should there be a contract administrator who is not a CalFIRE employee (such as a District Manager) What about other administrative support positions, such as a district clerk?
7. Will the district have employees, or strictly contractors? What about volunteers?

Finance and Operations

1. What is the cost to provide the same level of service under CSA 48 to the new fire district? Are there potential cost-savings from the reorganization?
2. Which stations will the new district own, lease, and/or rent? What about station maintenance?
3. What will happen to the current inventory of apparatus and equipment owned; replacement schedule?
4. What funding is available to the reorganized district?
 - Property tax revenue currently allocated to CSA 48?
 - Benefit assessment #1?
 - Benefit assessment #2 (2020)?
 - Other funding?
5. Will a contingency plan or other mechanism be needed in case revenue projections fall short or unexpected costs arise?
6. What costs will continue to be charged by the County? (i.e. tax administration)
7. What level of service can be adequately provided based on the current revenue structure?
 - Does the current revenue stream cover the cost for the same level of service?
 - Does the current revenue stream cover a higher level of service?

8. Can the new fire district operate sustainably for the next 10, 20, 30 years? (fiscal forecast needs to be included in this report)
9. How much money is currently in reserve for capital replacement, contingency, etc.?
10. What will be the cost for district-based elections?
11. What about funding for Saratoga Summit station? (currently serves three counties)
12. What about funding for all the parks/rec lands? (State Beaches/Nisene Marks/Wilder/Big Basin/Castle Rock/ North Coast BLM lands)
13. How much will the district lose to ERAF?

Miscellaneous

1. What will be the name of the new district?
2. Who will be appointed as the initial board of directors until the first members are voted by the constituents?
3. Who will be the assigned staff members (CalFIRE vs district)?
4. When and where will board meetings be held?
5. What area will be within the district boundary? Exclusions?
6. What will be the sphere designation? Coterminous? Larger than service area (ex. include the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District)? Smaller?
7. How does this reorganization affect CSA 4?
 - What about the area in CSA 48 that is directly served by CSA 4
8. What are the identified concerns from the residents and affected agencies (ex. other fire districts, the County, CalFIRE)?
9. Should service zones be considered? If so, should it be based on calls for service?
10. Will the County have any continuing role in fire protection under the following areas:
 - Preparedness/Planning?
 - Mitigation?
 - Fire Code adoption?
 - What about the County Fire Marshal duties?
 - Funding (countywide tax measures sold on “fire protection”; Prop 172)?
11. Should other agencies be invited into the discussion early?

- Which other fire agencies might be interested or a good fit?

- Pajaro Valley?
- Felton?
- Pajaro Dunes?
- Others?

12. When will the Mission/Vision/Values statements be determined? By whom?

13. Include a Risk Analysis of the reorganization plan/feasibility study. What are the major risks (financial, operational, political), and how can they be mitigated?

CONCLUSION

This section will explain how the proposed reorganization will result in an increase in accountability, transparency, and sustainability for the residents. This section will also reiterate how the proposed reorganization may benefit the County and the other fire agencies. It is important to note that both LAFCO and the County acknowledge that many important questions remain unanswered before such a decision can be made and whether an application to initiate a reorganization will be considered.

APPENDICES

This section will include any and all supporting documents used to prepare and complete the proposed analysis, including but not limited to a financial forecast (estimated revenues and expenditures under both the current and reorganized structures).

"CSA 48 Reorganization" (Tentative Timeline)			
Milestones	Responsible Agency(ies)	Target Date	Description
Before LAFCO Process			
1) Adopt LAFCO Study	LAFCO (Commission)	August 7, 2024	Commission will review and consider adopting the findings and recommendations resulting from AP Triton's evaluation.
2) Develop Transition Plan Outline	County, CalFire & LAFCO	Mid-August 2024	Develop a transition plan that outlines the "before" and "after" as part of the proposed reorg (i.e. operations, finances, governance, etc.).
3) Adopt County Master Plan	County (BOS)	September 24, 2024	Board of Supervisors will review and consider adopting the findings and recommendations resulting from AP Triton's evaluation.
4) Review Transition Plan Outline & Timeline	LAFCO (Commission)	October 2, 2024	Commission will review and consider the draft outline and timeline for the proposed transition plan.
5) Adopt Transition Plan	LAFCO	April 2, 2025	Commission will review and consider adopting the transition plan and any recommendations identified by LAFCO staff.
6) Adopt Transition Plan & Initiating Resolution	County	April - May 2025	Board of Supervisors will review and consider adopting the transition plan and recommendations identified by County staff, including but not limited to adopting an initiating resolution to begin the reorg process.
7) Submit Reorganization Application	County	May - June 2025	County staff will submit an application to LAFCO.
During LAFCO Process			
8) Review Application	LAFCO	June 2025	Pursuant to state law, LAFCO will identify any missing items to the applicant within 30 days. Concurrently, LAFCO will solicit comments from affected and interested agencies/parties.
9) Host Community Workshop	County, CalFire & LAFCO	June - July 2025	Affected parties will host an educational workshop to inform the community about the reorganization effort, articulate the benefits, and answer any questions from the residents.
10) Adopt Property Tax Exchange	County (BOS)	August 2025	The County will need to determine the transfer of ad valorem property tax revenues to fulfill the requirements of Section 99 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.
11) Host Community Workshop	County, CalFire & LAFCO	August - September 2025	Affected parties will host an educational workshop to inform the community about the reorganization effort, articulate the benefits, and answer any questions from the residents.
12) Complete Certificate of Filing	LAFCO	September 2025	Pursuant to state law, LAFCO's Executive Officer will deem the project complete when a Certificate of Filing is signed. All required documents and actions need to be accomplished before this step is taken.
13) Advertise LAFCO Hearing	LAFCO	September 2025	Pursuant to state law, LAFCO will advertise the consideration of the proposed reorganization in a newspaper(s) at least 21-days prior to the hearing date (GCS 56157[h] - 1/8 page in newspaper).
14) Conduct LAFCO Hearing (Approve Reorganization)	LAFCO	October 1, 2025	The Commission will consider the proposed change of organization in a public forum. Affected/interested agencies and members of the public will have an opportunity to address the Commission on this matter.
15) Record CEQA Document	LAFCO	October 2, 2025	The affected parties and LAFCO must determine which environmental document will be needed to fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. LAFCO may act as the Lead Agency.
16) Conduct Request for Reconsideration Period	LAFCO	October 2 - October 31, 2025 (30 Days)	<u>Reconsideration:</u> If the reorganization is approved, any person or affected agency may file a written request with the executive officer requesting amendments to or reconsideration of the adopted resolution. The request shall state the specific modification to the resolution being requested and shall state what new or different facts that could not have been presented previously are claimed to warrant the reconsideration.
17) Mail Out Protest Notice	LAFCO	October 27, 2025	State law requires LAFCO to conduct a protest proceeding and notify the affected residents. A protest notice will be mailed to the landowners/registered voters.
18) Advertise LAFCO Protest Hearing	LAFCO	October 31, 2025	Pursuant to state law, LAFCO will mail out notices to all affected residents (Landowners and Registered Voters) and advertise the protest proceedings for the reorganization in a newspaper(s) prior to the hearing date.
19) Conduct Protest Period	LAFCO	November 3 - December 5, 2025 (31 Days)	Pursuant to state law, the date of the protest hearing shall be no less than 21 days or more than 60 days after the date the notice is given. This is an opportunity for affected residents to submit protest petitions against the Commission's action (approval of the reorg). <u>Protest Threshold:</u> If less than 25% oppose, then Commission action holds If 25%-50% oppose, then election is required If more than 50% oppose, then Commission action is terminated.
20) Conduct Protest Hearing	LAFCO	December 5, 2025	A protest hearing will be held to receive any final protest petitions from affected residents/landowners.
21) Conduct LAFCO Hearing (Adopt Protest Results)	LAFCO	January 14, 2026	Pursuant to state law, LAFCO will adopt a resolution acknowledging the results of the protest proceedings.
22) Complete Terms & Conditions	County, CalFire & LAFCO	January - February 2026	The adopted resolution from the October 2025 LAFCO Meeting will list a number of terms and conditions. The affected parties will be responsible to fulfill such conditions prior to recordation.
23) Record Proposal (Officially Dissolve CSA 48 and Concurrently Create New Fire District)	LAFCO	February 2026	<u>LAFCO:</u> Recordation of the approved proposal with the County and the State Board of Equalization. <u>CSA 48-New District:</u> The effective date of the reorg may be the day of recordation or a specified date. The affected parties may specify the effective date as a potential condition in the LAFCO resolution.
After LAFCO Process			
24) Distribute Certificate of Completion	LAFCO	February 2026	LAFCO will send a copy of the Certificate of Completion, which includes the adopted resolution, to all affected/interested parties.
25) State Board of Equalization (Update Tax Roll)	SBE	February 2026	Reorganization will be reflected in the tax roll.
26) Coordinate with PVFPD	New Fire District, CalFire, PVFPD & LAFCO	February - March 2026	Determine if PVFPD is in need of a reorganization.
27) Develop Transition Plan	New Fire District, CalFire, PVFPD & LAFCO	March - April 2026	Develop a transition plan that outlines the "before" and "after" as part of the proposed reorg (i.e. operations, finances, governance, etc.).
28) Submit Reorganization Application	PVFPD	April - May 2026	After the PVFPD Board of Directors adopts an initiating resolution, the District may submit an application to LAFCO.

*Footnote: Dates subject to change; timeline is meant for discussion purposes only



Date: October 2, 2024
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Joe Serrano, Executive Officer
Subject: **City of Watsonville Notice of Preparation – LAFCO Comment Letter**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

LAFCO staff monitors the circulation of environmental documents, general plan updates, and other public comment requests made by local agencies. In some cases, LAFCO may determine that a comment letter is warranted. This agenda item explains why LAFCO staff submitted a comment letter to the City of Watsonville regarding their general plan update.

It is recommended that the Commission consider submitting a letter to the City of Watsonville regarding their upcoming 2050 General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

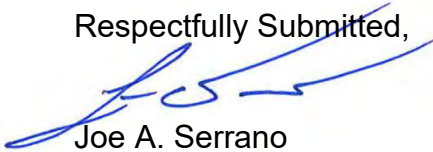
EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A general plan is a broad, long-range policy document that guides cities in its future development and conservation, as well as provide a comprehensive collection of goals and policies related to a multitude of aspects of community life. In California, cities and counties are required by State law to have and periodically update a general plan. The City of Watsonville is in the process of updating its current general plan. This plan will establish or update goals, policies, and actions that will guide future land use and environmental protection decisions in Watsonville over the next 25 years. The deadline to submit comments to the City is October 14, 2024.

Extraterritorial Service Agreements

In accordance with state law, a city's general plan must address areas outside its city limits that bear some relationship to its planning and development. As a result, the City of Watsonville has identified some planning areas, which encompasses all land within the City and unincorporated lands that may be affected by City Planning decisions. While the general plan update makes reference to the proposed planning areas, the adopted sphere boundary, and LAFCO as a state agency, it does not acknowledge the existing extraterritorial service agreements (ESA) the City currently has in place. An ESA is a LAFCO action which allows public agencies the ability to deliver public services (ex. water and sewer) to an area outside its jurisdictional boundary due to a health and safety issue or inability to process an annexation. At present, the City of Watsonville has 17 active ESAs. **Attachment 1** provides a copy of the letter sent by LAFCO staff requesting that the City acknowledge the active ESAs in their general plan before the October 14th deadline. The letter also includes a map depicting the location of each ESA.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Attachments:

1. Watsonville Notice of Preparation (dated 9/13/24)
2. LAFCO Comment Letter (dated 10/3/24)



CITY OF WATSONVILLE
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
 250 MAIN STREET • WATSONVILLE, CA 95076
 TELEPHONE: (831) 768-3050 • www.watsonville.gov

RECEIVED
SEP 13 2024
Santa Cruz I.A. #00

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Distribution (refer to attached list) **Date:** September 13, 2024

Subject: Notice of Preparation - Watsonville 2050 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Lead Agency:

Agency Name: City of Watsonville, Community Development Department
Street Address: 250 Main Street
City/State/Zip: Watsonville, California 95076
Contact: Justin Meek
 Assistant Community Development Director
Telephone: 831-768-3050

Consulting Firm:

Name: Circlepoint
Street Address: 42 S First Street, Suite D
City/State/Zip: San Jose, California 95113
Contact: Marco Mendoza
 Project Manager
Telephone: 657-208-6882

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is hereby given that the City of Watsonville (City) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Watsonville 2050 General Plan (project) (see **Attachment 1: Project Description**) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 15060(d)). City staff is requesting comments from your agency on the scope and content of the project's environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), the City of Watsonville determined that an EIR would be required for this project and did not prepare an initial study. The EIR will address the potential physical environmental effects of the project for each of the environmental topics outlined in the CEQA Guidelines. As of the date of this NOP and based on currently available information, it is anticipated that the project may have potentially significant impacts in connection with aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services and utilities, population and housing, recreation, transportation/circulation, and wildfire. Cumulative impacts will consider impacts of relevant foreseeable projects in and around the plan area in combination with those of the project. An evaluation of project alternatives that could reduce significant impacts will be included in the EIR.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date and **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice. The review period for public comments pertaining to this NOP extends from September 13, 2024, to October 14, 2024. Please send your response to Justin Meek, AICP, Assistant Community Development Director at the address shown above. We will need the name of a contact person in your agency.

An EIR Scoping Meeting for this project will be held at the following date, time, and location:

When: Wednesday, October 9, 2024, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Where: One-Stop Conference Room
 250 Main Street
 Watsonville, CA

Signature:

Title: Assistant Community Development Director
 City of Watsonville

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Project Description
 Attachment 2: Project Location Map
 Attachment 3: Planning Area Boundaries Map
 Attachment 4: Measure U/Q Development Planning Areas and Urban Limit Line Map
 Attachment 5: Areas of Projected Growth within the City's Sphere of Influence

Reference: California Administrative Code, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

ATTACHMENT 1 - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Title: Watsonville 2050 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Project Location:

The City of Watsonville (City) is in the southern portion of Santa Cruz County, approximately 14 miles southeast of the city of Santa Cruz and 16 miles north of the city of Salinas (see **Attachment 2: Project Location Map**). Watsonville is bordered to the west, north, and east by unincorporated Santa Cruz County and to the south by the Town of Pajaro in unincorporated Monterey County. Major transportation routes that provide access to the City include Highway 1, which runs north-south along the western edge of the City; State Route (SR) 152, which begins at Highway 1 and passes through the City along Main Street and East Lake Avenue; and SR 129, which also begins at Highway 1 and heads eastward through the southern portion of the City along Riverside Drive to U.S. 101. The City is approximately 4,200 contiguous acres or 6.5 square miles in area, including 5 areas on noncontiguous land at the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant (0.03 acres), Buena Vista Landfill (0.08 acres), Pinto Lake (0.12 acres), Corralitos Water Filter Plant (0.02 acres), and Browns Valley Intake (0.05 acres).

Planning Area Boundaries:

Several boundary lines define the framework for this general plan update (see **Attachment 3: Planning Area Boundaries**) including:

- The existing City limits;
- The City's Sphere of Influence (SOI), which represents the Watsonville Planning Area Boundary and encompasses parcels served by existing City public services (e.g., water services) both within and outside City limits. The land use jurisdiction remains within Santa Cruz County outside City limits; and
- The Urban Limit Line (ULL), which was established in 2002 by a vote of residents through Measure U, to limit where new growth can occur and under certain conditions through 2027, and extended to 2040 via a 2022 vote of residents through Measure Q. Potential annexation areas projected to accommodate new growth within the ULL include Area A (Buena Vista) and Area B (Atkinson Lane). Annexation areas within the ULL that are already developed or largely developed include the Freedom Area (Phases I and II), Area E (Villages), Area F (Manabe/Burgstrom), Area G (West of Highway 1), and the South Manfre Road Area (see **Attachment 4: Measure U/Q Development Planning Areas and Existing Urban Limit Line**). Anticipated growth involves amending the ULL to include Area C and the Highway 1 Gateway and expanding Buena Vista to Freedom Boulevard (see **Attachment 5: Areas of Projected Growth within the City's Sphere of Influence**).

The proposed General Plan planning area (the planning area) is defined as those areas within the ULL and the existing City limits.

Project Description:

The City is preparing a comprehensive update of the *Watsonville 2005 General Plan* in response to changes in conditions in the City and new state laws enacted since the preparation of the existing General Plan, including AB 1358 (Complete Streets), SB 99 (Evacuation Analysis), SB 379 (Climate Adaptation), SB 932 (Safe Systems), SB 1241 (Wildfire Hazards) and SB 1000 (Environmental Justice).

The proposed *2050 General Plan* will include updates of the following elements required by State Planning and Zoning Law: (1) Land Use and Community Character, including the Land Use Map; (2) Open Space; (3) Public Facilities and Services; (4) Mobility and Access; (5) Resource Conservation and Management; (6) Safety; and (7) Noise. In addition, the General Plan will include an Airport Land Use element. The updates to these elements will address environmental justice in accordance with California Government Code Section 65302. The City's 2023-2031 Housing Element is scheduled to be certified in Fall 2024. The City's Zoning Ordinance will be updated, as needed, to maintain consistency with the 2050 General Plan.

The *2050 General Plan* will include goals, policies, and implementation actions - developed with extensive community input - to advance the City's vision and community priorities, including: revitalizing Downtown Watsonville; introducing a range of new housing choices, both single-family and multi-family; attracting new employment and revenue-generating uses; maintaining the existing character of the City's residential neighborhoods, preserving the City's natural open spaces, especially the sloughs; improving the City's existing parks and community facilities, and introducing new ones; accommodating planned passenger rail service, including a station in Downtown Watsonville; implementing complete streets improvements; and rerouting truck routes around town.

Infill growth within the City Limits - primarily multi-family and mixed-use development - will be focused along the East Lake Avenue and Freedom Boulevard corridors and within Downtown Watsonville, which is governed by the recently adopted Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan per Ordinance no. 1457-23 (see **Attachment 5: Areas of Projected Growth within the City's Sphere of Influence**). New growth beyond existing City limits would be accommodated in the Buena Vista, Atkinson Lane, Area C, and the Highway 1 Gateway area. Growth within Buena Vista and Area C would consist of single-family and multi-family housing and small mixed-use neighborhood centers and may offer a significant number of new home ownership opportunities. Growth within the Highway 1 Gateway would consist of regional retail, community recreation, and visitor-serving uses. New development

within Buena Vista and Atkinson Lane, which are already within the ULL, would require annexation into the City of Watsonville. New development within the planning area beyond the ULL – the parcels adjacent to Buena Vista, within Area C, and within the majority of the Highway 1 Gateway – would require approval via a Citywide referendum and subsequent annexation. If a Citywide referendum does not result in approval, these parcels will not be eligible for development until 2040. To further enable infill development along North Freedom Boulevard and within the Buena Vista new growth area, the Watsonville Municipal Airport crosswind runway (9-27) is anticipated to be closed. To further enable aviation activities at the Airport, including jet aircraft, the main runway (2-20) would be lengthened from 4,501 to 5,181 feet.

Project Growth:

The projected growth in the *2050 General Plan* envisions the addition of up to 5,980 new residential units and 1.725 million square feet of non-residential development, as follows:

- 4,320 new residential units are projected to be developed within the existing City limits, primarily in Downtown Watsonville;
- 1,660 new residential units within the Buena Vista and/or Area C growth areas;
- 225,000 square feet of new non-residential development is anticipated to be developed within the existing City limits (Downtown Watsonville and along East Lake Avenue and Freedom Boulevard); and
- up to 1.5 million square feet of non-residential development within the Highway 1 Gateway new growth area including regional retail, community recreation, and visitor-serving uses.

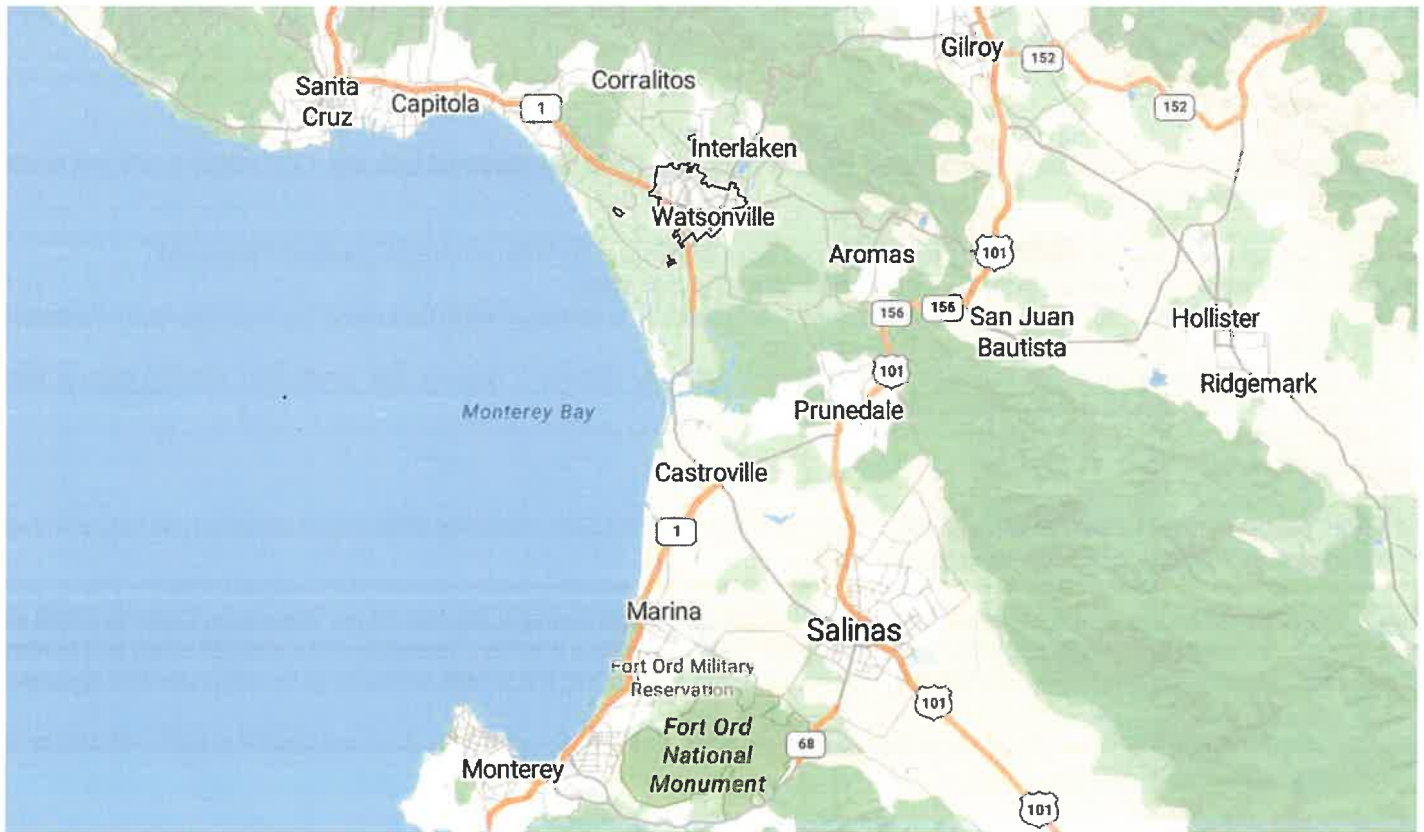
Project Alternatives:

The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of project alternatives that, consistent with CEQA, meet most of the project objectives and reduce or avoid potential environmental effects, including a No Project Alternative.

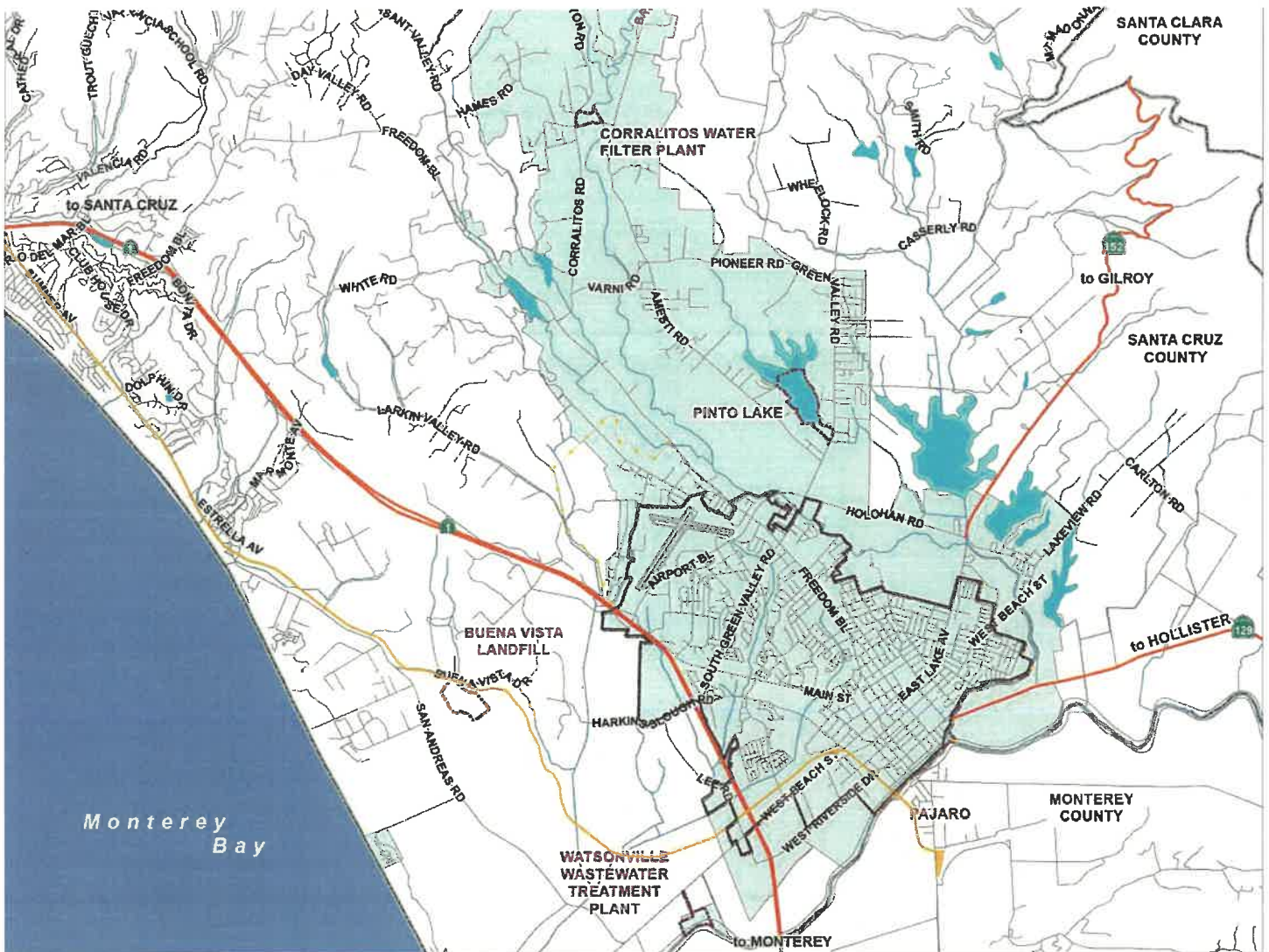
When a draft of the EIR is completed, it will be available for review at the City's offices located at 250 Main Street, Watsonville, California 95076 and online at: <https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/2440/General-Plan-Update>. The City will issue a Notice of Availability of the draft EIR at that time to inform the public and interested agencies, groups, and individuals on how to access the draft EIR and provide comments on the adequacy of the document.

If you have questions regarding this NOP, please contact Justin Meek, AICP, Assistant Community Development Director at (831) 768-3050 or via email at general.plan@watsonville.gov.

ATTACHMENT 2 – PROJECT LOCATION



ATTACHMENT 3 – PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES



Legend



City Limit



County Boundary



Sphere of Influence



ULL Segment 1



ULL Segment 2



ULL Segment 3



Street



Highway



Railroad

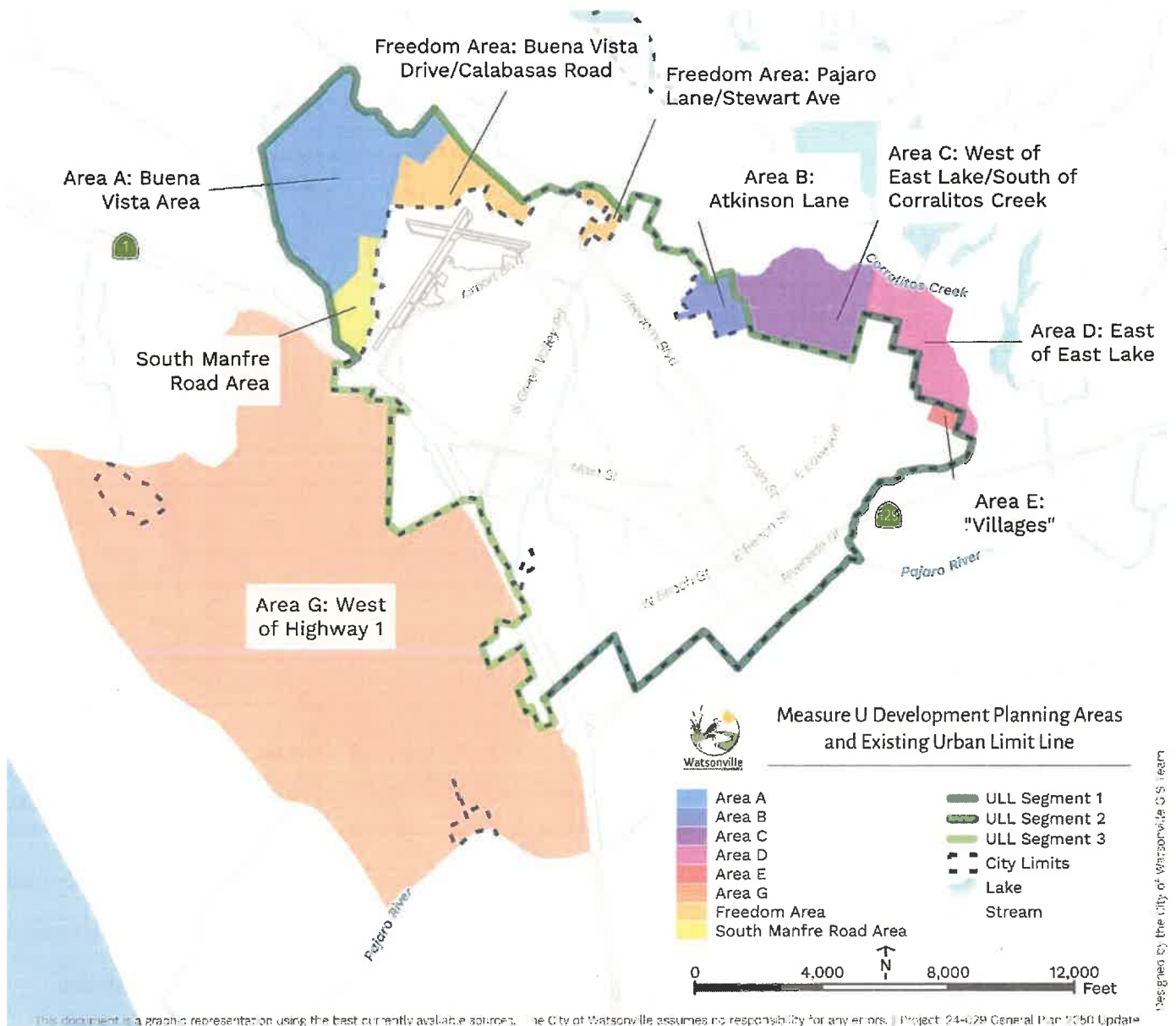


Stream



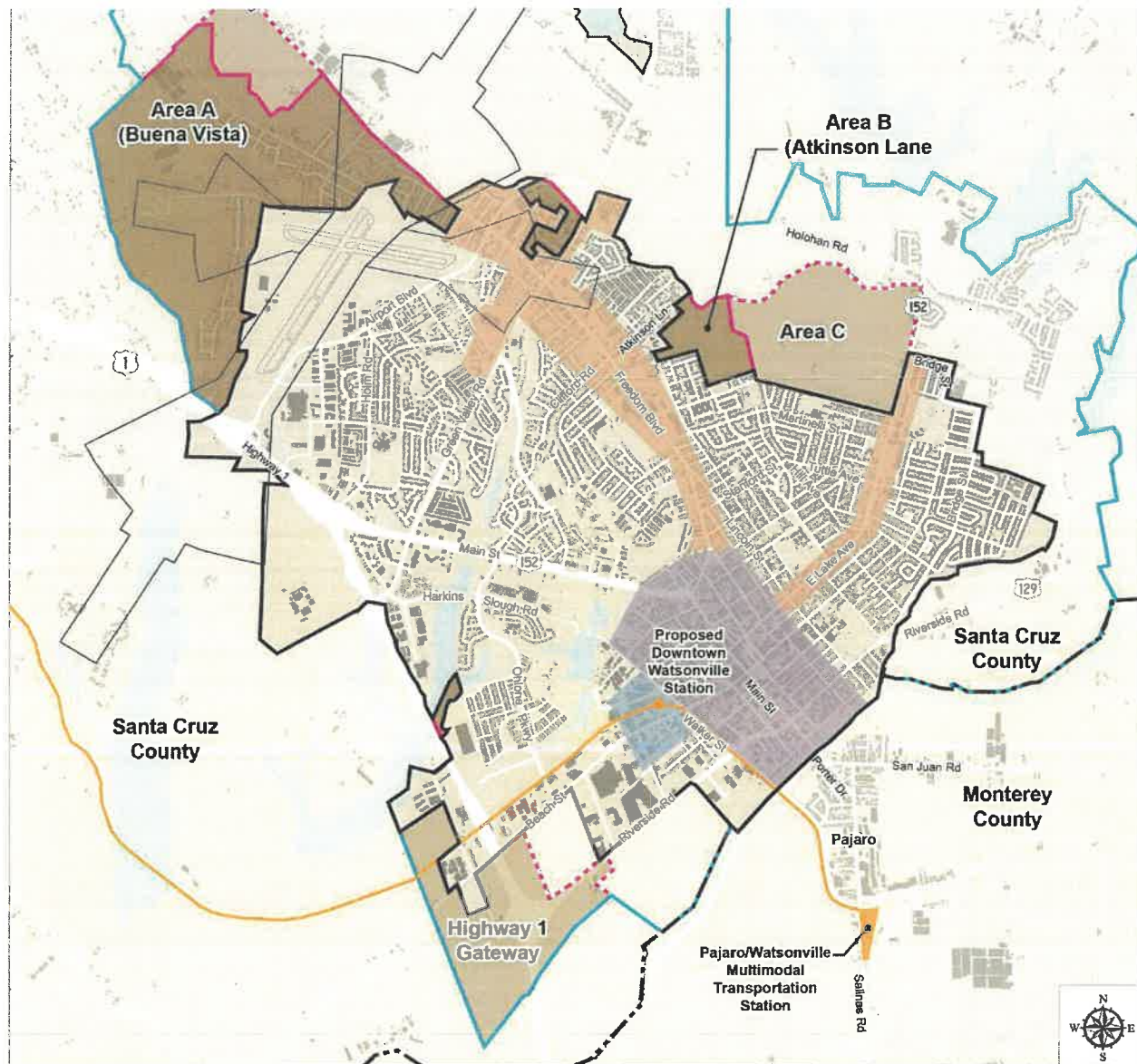
Lakes

ATTACHMENT 4 – MEASURE U/Q DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AREAS AND EXISTING URBAN LIMIT LINE



Designed by the City of Watsonville GIS Team

ATTACHMENT 5 – AREAS OF PROJECTED GROWTH WITHIN THE CITY'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| — City Limit | ■ Downtown Infill | — Main Runway Airport Safety Zones 1-5 |
| - - - County Boundary | ■ Station Area Infill | - - - Crosswind Runway Airport Safety Zones 1-5 |
| — Sphere of Influence (SOI) | ■ Corridor Infill | — Proposed Passenger Rail Line and Station |
| — Existing Urban Limit Line (ULL) | ■ New Growth Area within ULL | |
| - - - Proposed Urban Limit Line (ULL) | ■ New Growth Area outside ULL | |



October 3, 2024

Justin Meek, Assistant Community Development Director
 City of Watsonville
 250 Main Street
 Watsonville, CA 95076

Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed City of Watsonville 2050 General Plan

Dear Mr. Meek:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation of a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City's 2050 General Plan Update. The notice of preparation envisions future development for up to 5,980 new residential units and 1.725 million square feet of non-residential development. About 72% of the proposed development (4,320 residential units) is within city limits. However, it appears that the remaining 1,660 proposed units (28%), specifically Area A (Buena Vista Area) and Area G (West of Highway 1) are located outside the City's existing sphere of influence, as designated by the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (LAFCO). Development of currently unincorporated areas would be subject to LAFCO's approval of future sphere amendments and annexation proposals at a later date.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), LAFCO is a Responsible Agency for this proposal, and will have regulatory authority for future applications for the proposed annexation application. It is in this role that LAFCO is commenting on the EIR.

Comments on Scope of the Draft EIR:

1. Conformance to State LAFCO Law and Locally Adopted LAFCO Policies

(Please provide an analysis in the draft EIR).

LAFCO's statutory authority is derived from the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code section 56000, et seq.). Among LAFCO's purposes are: Discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing government services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances (section 56301). The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act identifies factors that must be considered, and determinations that must be made, as part of LAFCO's review of annexation proposals. These provisions of law are the legislative basis for LAFCO's locally adopted Policies and Procedures Relating to Spheres of Influence and Changes of Organization and Reorganization ("LAFCO Policies"), most recently updated March 6, 2024, which guide LAFCO's review and consideration of requests for annexation and other boundary changes. The full text of LAFCO's adopted Policies is available on LAFCO's web site: <https://santacruzlafco.org/about/policies-procedures/>.

If the EIR is approved, LAFCO will likely be requested, at a future date, to consider approval of one or more sphere amendments and/or annexation proposals for currently unincorporated sites in the proposed development areas, in accordance with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act and local LAFCO policies. As a CEQA Responsible Agency, LAFCO plans to use the City's environmental document to fulfill CEQA clearance for the annexation, and to support the evaluation of the proposal's consistency with the applicable LAFCO laws and policies, including adopted "Preservation of Open-Space and Agricultural Lands" and "City Jobs & Housing" policies, among others.

The City's Notice of Preparation makes no reference nor recognizes that the proposed development areas outside the city limits must also be evaluated for their consistency with LAFCO's sphere and annexation policies, including policies related to the logical expansion of urban boundaries and logical expansion of urban services and utilities.

LAFCO requests that the draft EIR being prepared include an analysis of the EIR's conformance to the full range of LAFCO's adopted policies and related State laws, to the extent such analysis is possible based on information currently available about potential long-term future development of currently unincorporated sites. LAFCO staff can provide examples of similar analyses from other recent proposals. A more detailed, site-specific, and updated analysis to LAFCO laws and policies should also be anticipated as a required part of subsequent, project-level CEQA documents when future proposals are brought forward to LAFCO. Provision of this information in current and future CEQA documents will help ensure that the Commission will have adequate information to act in its role as a CEQA Responsible Agency, when future Sphere amendments or annexation proposals for areas within the EIR are submitted to LAFCO.

2. Inclusion of Existing Extraterritorial Service Agreements (ESAs)

(Please address the general plan's consistency with the City's existing ESAs).

Our records indicate that the City of Watsonville has 17 active extraterritorial service agreements (ESAs) in place in accordance with Government Code Section 56133. The first ESA was approved in 1995 for the provision of water services, and the most recent ESA was approved in 2021 for water and sewer services. These agreements were approved to address health and safety issues and are meant to be precursors to annexation in the future. Attachment A shows the location of the ESAs. As the map shows, all 17 ESAs are located within the City's sphere, planning area, and immediately adjacent to the City's jurisdictional boundary.

At present, the general plan update does not reference the provision of sewer or water service to areas outside the city limits under these ESAs. Therefore, LAFCO is requesting that the City identify, catalog, and reference the ESAs within their general plan to reflect the current service delivery to the affected parcels outside the city but within its existing sphere boundary and planning area. Including these ESAs into the general plan would allow the City to plan for future annexations, if and when appropriate.

3. Conformance to the Adopted County Urban Services Line

(Please address the general plan's consistency with the County's USL).

Please include in the draft EIR an analysis of the general plan's consistency with the adopted 1979 County Urban Services Line, which does not appear to be discussed in the Notice of Preparation. Implementation of the general plan update may require revisions to the adopted USL and support from the County. Because such revisions would likely involve the potential for future sphere and annexation proposals, and would directly pertain to LAFCO's legislative purposes, LAFCO would like to have a role in any future modifications to the adopted USL.

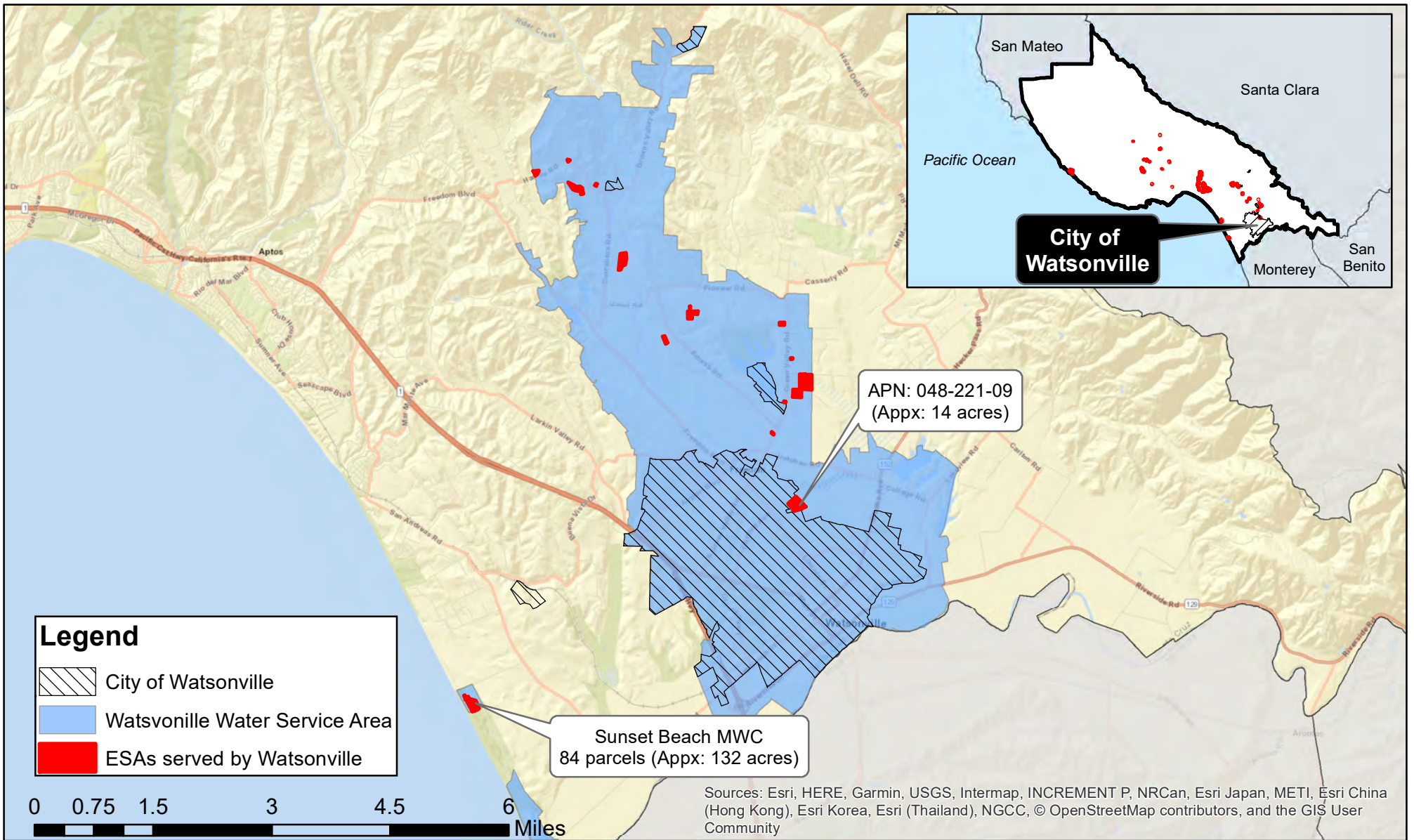
Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this proposal. Please continue to keep us informed throughout the process. I would be happy to meet with you and your consultants for more detailed discussions.

Sincerely,

Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Attachment:

A) ESA Map



City of Watsonville List of Extraterritorial Service Agreements (17 in total)

The City of Watsonville has 17 ESAs on file. These ESAs provide services to 152 parcels totalling approximately 209 acres.



Date: October 2, 2024
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Francisco Estrada, LAFCO Analyst
Subject: **Press Articles during the Months of August and September**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

LAFCO staff monitors local newspapers, publications, and other media outlets for any news affecting local agencies or LAFCOs around the State. Articles are presented to the Commission on a periodic basis. This agenda item is for informational purposes only and does not require any action. Therefore, it is recommended that the Commission receive and file the Executive Officer's report.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The following is a summary of recent press articles. Full articles are attached.

Article #1: "UC Santa Cruz 'disappointed' in judge's ruling on enrollment growth plan, weighs next steps". The article, dated August 30, provides an update on the aftermath of a recent court decision made by a Santa Cruz County Superior Court judge against UC Santa Cruz regarding the university's plan for student enrollment growth over the next two decades. Although disappointed in the ruling, UCSC officials are now weighing their options after the judge outlined the next steps in the case involving the City and County of Santa Cruz, and a local activist group. A final judgement is expected in October, after which the Board of Regents and UCSC will have 60 days to appeal.

Article #2: "Judge rules against EPA Sanitary District, city takeover looms". The article, dated August 30, details a recent appeals court decision in support of San Mateo LAFCO's decision to allow the city of East Palo Alto to take over the independent East Palo Alto Sanitary District. The agency has been accused of mismanagement and incompetence in policy decisions for years and the appeals judge ruled that there was "substantial evidence" to support LAFCO's decision. The decision will also allow the San Mateo Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder and Chief Elections Officer to cancel this November's election for the sanitary district's board.

Article #3: "San Lorenzo Valley Water District interim GM resigns". The article, dated September 1, informs the public that Brian Frus has made the decision to resign as interim General Manager of the San Lorenzo Valley Water District. Mr. Frus is a registered civil engineer and was appointed interim general manager in November 2023 to replace the former general manager Rick Rogers following his retirement. The SLVWD board says that Mr. Frus provided services that included efforts related to the repair of infrastructure impacted by flooding and the CZU wildfires during his time with the district and they thank him for his efforts.

Article #4: “Final steps completed on annexing Meeks Bay Fire into North Tahoe Fire Protection District”. The article, dated September 3, details the final steps in the annexation of Meeks Bay Fire Protection District and the North Tahoe Fire Protection District after providing fire protection and advanced life support services through a shared services agreement since 2014. This multi-agency effort has been a years’ long process in the making and will be effective starting on January 1, 2025. The article also outlines what constituents can expect in terms of level of service, tax rate and cost saving opportunities from the new agency.

Article #5: “Directors Ask For Scrutiny”. The article, dated September 5, informs the public that the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) will ask the Alameda County LAFCO for a special review and scrutinize the agency’s funding relationship with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). The special-review request comes as LAFCO prepares to finalize its municipal service review and amidst growing questions on the use of property tax dollars earmarked for recreation and park services. The LARPD board felt that their worries needed to be called out in more detail in the LAFCO review, adding that before it is written in law, it is important not to allow a draft MSR to go forward with mistakes.

Article #6: “Watsonville City Council will consider composting pilot program at Wastewater Treatment Plant”. The article, dated September 9, notes that at their next meeting, the Watsonville City Council will consider implementing a six-month pilot program that would develop and test an alternative sanitation service. This multi-sector partnership aims at developing a new sanitation services model that can be incorporated into emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans. The concept was developed after the vulnerability of the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant became apparent during last year’s atmospheric rivers and flooding. Potential flooding of this critical infrastructure would result in catastrophic failure, causing an immediate public health crisis and long lasting negative environmental consequences to Watsonville and communities in the Pajaro Valley.

Article #7: “Five failing water systems in Santa Cruz County: What it means for local residents”. The article, dated September 12, details the findings made by the California’s Water Resources Board indicating that hundreds of water systems across the state are in trouble. The report found 5 areas with a failing grade located in the county, including the Big Basin Water Company (BBWC). The court-appointed receiver for BBWC has indicated that capacity is a major reason for the failing status, as the infrastructure was damaged by the CZU fire. When asked if BBWC water is safe, the court-appointed receiver indicated that “Big Basin water is safe.” Although the article mentions five failing areas, it does not list them. Based on the State Water Board’s website¹, the five areas are: Aptos Hills Mutual Water Company, Big Basin Water Company, Laura Community League, River Grove Mutual Water Company, and The Willows Resort.

¹ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/saferdashboard.html

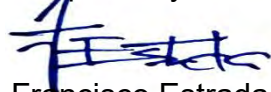
Article #8: “Letter to the Editor - Special districts should change views of LAFCOs”.

The letter, dated September 16, is written by a resident of Santa Cruz and affirms that a healthier working dynamic can exist between LAFCOs and the districts they oversee. The resident believes that special districts should approach LAFCOs like services providers, with considered and consistent engagement with local agencies preceding any action being the key to a better working relationship. Concurrently, the resident also believes that LAFCOs should be held accountable with their effectiveness by measuring the value they add directly to the respective constituents of each special district.

Article #9: “Zayante Fire proposes more staff, new equipment with Measure T”.

The article, dated September 25, informs the public of Zayante Fire Protection District’s effort to pass a parcel tax to fund full-time staff and replace aging fire engines for the upcoming November elections. The District has 25 volunteer firefighters, but it greatly depends on paid, daytime firefighters and engine drivers to respond to incidents and emergencies. Opponents of the measure argue that rural fire departments with small populations aren’t financially sustainable and recommend these agencies consider reorganization or consolidation.

Respectfully Submitted,



Francisco Estrada
LAFCO Analyst

Attachments:

1. “UC Santa Cruz ‘disappointed’ in judge’s ruling on enrollment growth plan...”
2. “Judge rules against EPA Sanitary District, city takeover looms”
3. “San Lorenzo Valley Water District interim GM resigns”
4. “Final steps completed on annexing Meeks Bay Fire into North Tahoe...”
5. “Directors Ask For Scrutiny”
6. “Watsonville City Council will consider composting pilot program...”
7. “Five failing water systems in Santa Cruz County; What it means for...”
8. “Letter to the Editor - Special districts should change views of LAFCOs”
9. “Zayante Fire proposes more staff, new equipment with Measure T”

lookout.co

UC Santa Cruz 'disappointed' in judge's ruling on enrollment growth plan, weighs next steps

Hillary Ojeda

5–7 minutes



Students walk on the UC Santa Cruz campus between classes. Credit: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz

Quick Take

UC Santa Cruz officials say they're considering their next steps after a Santa Cruz County Superior Court judge sided Monday with the city and county of Santa Cruz in a lawsuit arguing that the university's plan for student enrollment growth didn't adequately evaluate the potential impacts.

UC Santa Cruz officials say they're considering their next steps after a

Santa Cruz judge issued a final ruling Monday striking down the school's Long Range Development Plan, which calls for student enrollment growth over the next two decades. It's a decision the city's attorney says could reverberate across the University of California system.

Earlier this week, a Santa Cruz County Superior Court judge said UCSC [prepared a "deficient" plan](#) that didn't adequately consider the impact student enrollment growth would have on housing affordability and other community issues in Santa Cruz County.

In a follow-up hearing Thursday at the Santa Cruz County courthouse, Judge Timothy Schmal outlined the next steps in the case involving the university and the parties that filed the lawsuit: the city and county of Santa Cruz and a local activist group, Habitat and Watershed Caretakers. The parties need to file and agree on a draft final judgment.

The local governments and the caretakers group filed separate lawsuits against UCSC in 2022 alleging that the university's Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) and the environmental analysis for it didn't sufficiently consider the impact on the surrounding community if the university failed to create housing for all of its projected additional students. The lawsuits were partially consolidated.

The LRDP, [approved by the UC board of regents in 2021](#), includes the university's plan to increase enrollment by an additional 8,500 students by 2040, and provide housing to 100% of those students.

While Schmal has issued his final decision agreeing with the city, county and the activist group, there's still potential for UCSC and the UC board of regents to appeal. Representatives from the city and county told Lookout after the hearing Thursday that it's likely the judge will formally enter and sign a final judgment in October. After the final judgment is entered, the board of regents and UCSC have 60 days to appeal.

UCSC spokesperson Scott Hernandez-Jason told Lookout the school is dissatisfied with the court's decision and the university believes the 2021 Long Range Development Plan is "a win for our campus and a win for our

community.”

“We are disappointed with the court’s ruling and are determining our next steps,” he said.

Hernandez-Jason didn’t answer questions regarding whether UCSC plans to appeal or if the board of regents plans to rescind its approval of the LRDP and its environmental report.

City Attorney Anthony Condotti told Lookout that the judgment, once finalized and signed, will include a writ of mandate directing the board of regents to overturn the approvals.

However, if the regents appeal the decision, Condotti said that legal process would likely pause, and therefore delay, the timeframe for overturning the LRDP: “It could take a couple of years.”

Still, Condotti thinks this case is significant for other cities where there are University of California system campuses. For years, the City of Santa Cruz has fought to have the university tie the number of students it enrolls to the number of housing units it provides on its campus. He said the university has been “unwilling” to do that.



“The fact that [this decision] holds the university to account for the impacts of increased enrollment on the housing supply is a very significant aspect of the decision,” he said. “That would certainly be of interest to other communities when other campuses are going to increase their enrollment, and they’re all increasing their enrollment. So it’s an issue that other cities are also confronting.”

In his statement to Lookout, Hernandez-Jason said that UCSC has been striving to reach a balance between providing students access to an

education and addressing community concerns about housing, traffic and water use.

“We believe that our 2021 Long Range Development Plan, informed by four years of collaborative discussion with campus and community members before unanimous approval by the UC Board of Regents in September 2021, represents that balance,” he wrote. “The future imagined by the LRDP is an inclusive one that supports the university’s mission and is respectful of our environment and the greater Santa Cruz County community.”

Have something to say? Lookout welcomes letters to the editor, within our policies, from readers. Guidelines [here](#).



After three years of reporting on public safety in Iowa, Hillary joins Lookout Santa Cruz with a curious eye toward the county’s education beat. At the Iowa City Press-Citizen, she focused on how local... [More by Hillary Ojeda](#)


9A: ATTACHMENT 2

padailypost.com

Judge rules against EPA Sanitary District, city takeover looms – Palo Alto Daily Post

~3 minutes

East Palo Alto Sanitary District

District's territory shown in gray 

A judge on Friday cleared the way for the city of East Palo Alto to take over the independent East Palo Alto Sanitary District, which had been accused of mismanagement and incompetence for years.

[\(Read the ruling.\)](#)

The sanitary district went to court to appeal a decision by a county agency — the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission or LAFCo to allow the city to take over the district.

Judge Roger T. Picquet ruled that there was “substantial evidence” to support LAFCo.’s decision.

As a result, the city will take over the operation of the district. The city will

hire the West Bay Sanitary District in Menlo Park to run the East Palo Alto Sanitary District.

It's expected that San Mateo County Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder and Chief Elections Officer will cancel this November's election for the sanitary district's board.

Three of the five seats on the sanitary district's board were up for grabs this November, and only those who hold those seats had signed up to run. The three are former Menlo Park Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson, who was appointed to the sanitary district board, and incumbents Betsy Yanez and Glenda Savage.

Board members Dennis Scherzer and Ofelia Bello are in the middle of their four-year terms. They will lose their jobs as a result of the takeover that was approved Friday. Both Scherzer and Bello have signed up to run for City Council.

The city argued it should take over the district because of "years of mismanagement and incompetence in policy decisions."

The city claimed the district's connection fees were "unpredictable and unreasonable" and that the district "refused to cooperate in a meaningful way regarding options for financing that would allow for expansion/extension of necessary infrastructure," the judge wrote in his ruling.

The judge said the city denies the district's allegation that it will impose substantial rate increases on residents to pay for artificially low connection fees.

Critics of the district had claimed that it was jacking up connection fees on developers to stop growth in East Palo Alto.

The district claimed that the city's proposal to take over the district was underwritten and driven by developers seeking to make additional profit by paying less than the law requires, according to the judge's ruling.

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Coast Line | San Lorenzo Valley Water District interim GM resigns

Santa Cruz Sentinel

~2 minutes

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Coast Line | San Lorenzo Valley Water District interim GM resigns



The San Lorenzo Valley Water District has launched a two-year, \$6 million effort to replace 12 aging water tanks within its territory. (Santa Cruz Sentinel – Hannah Hagemann file)

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District board announced recently it has accepted the resignation of interim General Manager Brian Frus.

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District board says that Frus provided services that included efforts related to the repair of infrastructure impacted by flooding and the CZU wildfires during his time with the district. Frus also assisted in securing grants and FEMA funding to support the district's Capital Improvement Program.

"We thank Brian for his efforts during his tenure and wish him the best in his future endeavors," said Jeff Hill, president of the San Lorenzo Valley Water District Board of Directors, in a statement.

Frus, a registered civil engineer who lives in Felton, was appointed as interim general manager in November 2023. His resignation was effective Aug. 21. The district is actively recruiting for the general manager position.

southtahoenow.com

Final steps completed on annexing Meeks Bay Fire into North Tahoe Fire Protection District

By Paula Peterson

4–5 minutes

- [View the full image](#)



By 2025 the truck and equipment will carry the name of North Tahoe Fire Protection District. Photo by STN.

NORTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. - North Tahoe Fire Protection District (NTFPD) has provided fire protection and advanced life support services to the Lake Tahoe West Shore area of El Dorado County through a shared services agreement with the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District since 2014.

To officially make the agreement permanent, the final steps were completed this year - approval by both the [El Dorado County](#) and Placer County Board of Supervisors, and then the Placer County Local Agency

Formation Commission (LAFCO) gave their final blessing in August.

"This has been a very lengthy (years) process and is truly a benefit to our community," Edward Miller, longtime Meeks Bay Fire Protection District board president, said after the El Dorado County approval.



The annexation does mean he is out of a job though, but after 42 years on the board and all but two of them as president, he is ready for a break. Two other board members from Meeks Bay are seeking positions on the NTFPD board in the November election.

"The patch on the arm changes but the service remains the same," said Miller of the completed annexation.

The ten-year timeline of making Meeks Bay Fire a part of NTFPD:

2014 - The contract begins with NTFPD offering fire protection and advanced life support services to Meeks Bay Fire.

2016 - Employees of Meeks Bay Fire become employees of NTFPD.

There was one last front office person at Meeks Bay and they waited until she retired.

2018 - Standards of Cover completed with the alternative model study leading to the decision to be one organization.

2021 - Both supervisor boards discussed the process and the last step was to get them to agree that it was a good idea to go forward with an annexation.

2024 - El Dorado County, Placer County, and Placer LAFCO agree to the annexation.

The annexation is effective January 1, 2025.

NTFPD Chief Steve Leighton said the two organizations have been operating with two budgets and two audits, and it wasn't as efficient as it should have been for taxpayers. Leighton has been the fire chief of Meeks Bay since 2020 and NTFPD since 2021.

Leighton says the following things are happening with the annexation:

El Dorado County wanted a fire station still in the area, so the Meeks Bay Fire Station will remain.

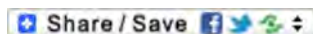
The tax rates will even out for North Lake Tahoe and Meeks Bay residents. North Lake Tahoe residents were paying \$235 per parcel for fire protection and Meeks Bay residents were paying \$270 per parcel. Meeks Bay property owners will now pay the smaller amount as well.

Since NTFPD faces a trim in revenue with the merger, El Dorado County will pay them a lump sum payment of \$992,000 to provide financial assistance through the reorganization transition until full efficiencies can be achieved. El Dorado County will also pay up to \$42,000 to NTFPD to assist with the payment of LAFCO's fees and costs for processing the reorganization.

"We can right the ship," said Leighton. "See where we can cut the budget. Cost savings are coming."

There will remain two staff members on duty at the Meeks Bay Fire Station (now being renamed to a North Tahoe Fire Station).

"It's a great thing for the community, it's a great thing for our employees," said Leighton of the annexation. "We will continue providing excellent service."



[independentnews.com](https://www.independentnews.com)

Directors Ask For Scrutiny

David Jen

5–6 minutes

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) will ask the county next month to look into where tens of millions of property tax dollars earmarked for recreation and park services have gone.

In 1992, LARPD and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) entered an agreement that placed the responsibility for the maintenance and operation of regional parks, open space and trails in eastern Alameda County (formerly known as Murray Township) upon EBRPD. While the area falls within LARPD's boundaries, the districts agreed that the area's recreation needs aligned better with EBRPD's regional mission. In exchange, EBRPD has since received a portion of LARPD property tax revenues.

But LARPD now questions how those funds have been used. At its Aug. 28 meeting, the LARPD Board of Directors agreed to send a letter to the Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) asking for a special review of the LARPD-EBRPD relationship. The conversation was a continuation of an issue raised in the board's Aug. 14 meeting.

According to LARPD staff, EBRPD has received more than \$110 million over the last 30 years through the agreement but has spent only \$35 million of it.

LARPD Director James Boswell said that \$35 million was even too generous a figure. After multiple reviews of EBRPD budgets, Boswell estimated EBRPD's use of the tax-sharing money as closer to \$6 million.

Regardless of whether EBRPD's investments amounted to \$6 million or \$35 million, said LARPD Director Philip Pierpont, "it's still a ton of money going the wrong direction."

LARPD Board Chair David Furst said, "They're getting a lot of money, and they can't really justify where that money's gone."

Deborah Spaulding, EBRPD assistant general manager of finance and management services, told The Independent that the tax-sharing funds were also intended for existing facilities.

"In 1992, when EBRPD annexed the Murray Township area, EBRPD and LARPD agreed to share a portion of property tax revenues, with LARPD receiving funds for existing LARPD park facilities and EBRPD receiving funds for ongoing park operations and maintenance of existing regional parks and acquisition and development of future regional parks," said Spaulding.

"EBRPD manages key regional parks serving Murray Township, including Del Valle, the Arroyo Staging Area, Ohlone Wilderness, Camp Arroyo, Shadow Cliffs and Brushy Peak," she continued. "The Park District looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with LARPD to determine how best to plan and provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities and services that serve the people of Murray Township."

The special-review request comes as LAFCo prepares to finalize its municipal service review, a report released every five years reviewing special districts and services within the county.

"LARPD takes the position that the share of property tax revenue transferred to EBRPD is not sufficiently reinvested in the Livermore community," read the report. "Beginning in FY 2003-04, EBRPD has transferred approximately \$200,000 per year back to LARPD for the purpose of supporting ongoing park maintenance projects. The transfer amount has not increased over the past 20 years."

That amount stemmed from a joint debt the two districts were paying for the Brushy Peak Regional Preserve in Livermore.

The LARPD board felt that their worries needed to be called out in more detail in the LAFCo review.

“If we allow the draft MSR (municipal service review) to go forward with mistakes, it becomes written in law,” said Furst.

But the special review includes risks to LARPD, according to the district’s counsel, Gary Bell, an attorney with Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley PC.

“There could be a recommendation that you all don’t want or don’t agree with,” said Bell.

One side effect, said Furst, could involve LARPD’s dissolution. He referred to a previous municipal service review that suggested that EBRPD was better equipped than LARPD to provide regional services in the Livermore area.

Although Bell conceded that an unfavorable special study could serve as the first step toward terminating LARPD, he qualified that likelihood as “very low.”

Pierpont and Boswell also discounted that possibility.

“I don’t see that happening at all,” said Boswell.

LAFCo will hold its next meeting on Sept. 12, although that meeting’s agenda — and whether the LARPD-EBRPD agreement will be discussed — has not yet been shared.

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Watsonville City Council will consider composting pilot program at Wastewater Treatment Plant

Nick Sestanovich

4–5 minutes

WATSONVILLE — An agreement to implement a six-month pilot program that would develop and test an alternative sanitation service will go before the Watsonville City Council at its Tuesday meeting.

According to a staff report by Public Works Director Courtney Lindberg and Assistant Public Works Director Danielle Green, Santa Cruz County has partnered with the nonprofit GiveLove and Ryan Smith Consulting to create a proof of concept for a container-based composting research program aimed at developing a new sanitation services model that can be incorporated into emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans. The report emphasized that the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex fires and the 2023 Pajaro River levee breach highlighted a need to go beyond on-site wastewater treatment plants.

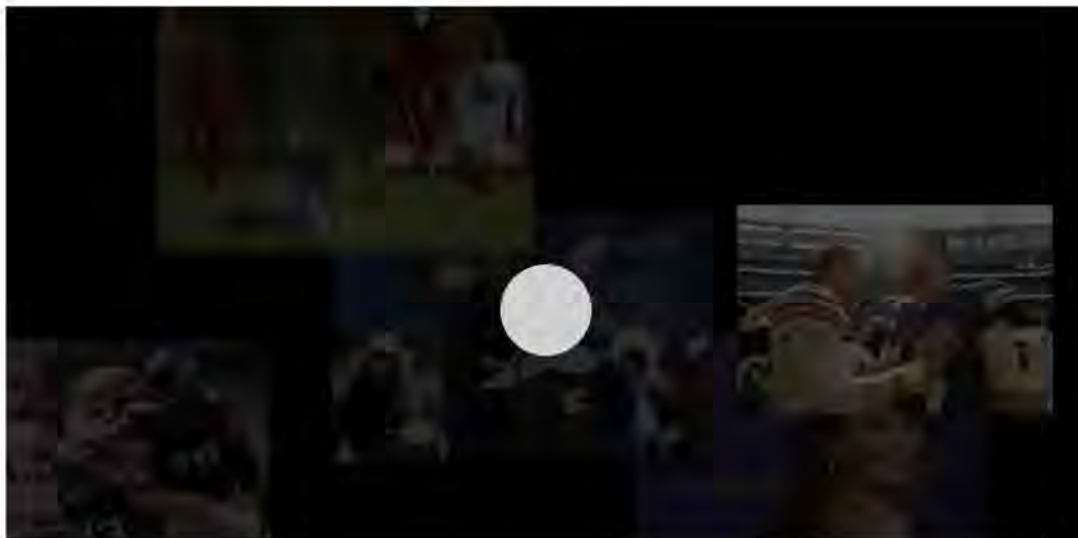
The method being spotlighted is container-based sanitation, which does not require water to convey bodily waste and instead consist of toilets with removable containers that are then collected and transported to wastewater treatment plants.

“It follows the same steps of what the World Health Organization calls the sanitation service chain: containment, collection, transportation, treatment, and final reuse or disposal of end products,” Lindberg and Green wrote. “These are the same steps wastewater systems use, with

the difference being that CBS systems do not use water and underground pipes as a means of conveyance, and a simple composting site is required for treatment instead of a wastewater treatment facility.”

Lindberg and Green wrote that the vulnerability of the Watsonville Wastewater Treatment Plant became apparent after last year’s atmospheric rivers and flooding.

“Attention at the local, regional, and State level was paid to the Pajaro River flooding and the potential for the levee along the treatment facility’s perimeter to breach, over-top, or otherwise experience some other mode of failure,” they wrote. “Flooding of this critical infrastructure would result in a catastrophic failure of equipment and several months of work to restore adequate wastewater pumping and treatment operations. During this time, Watsonville and communities in the Pajaro Valley would experience an immediate public health crisis and long lasting negative environmental consequences.”



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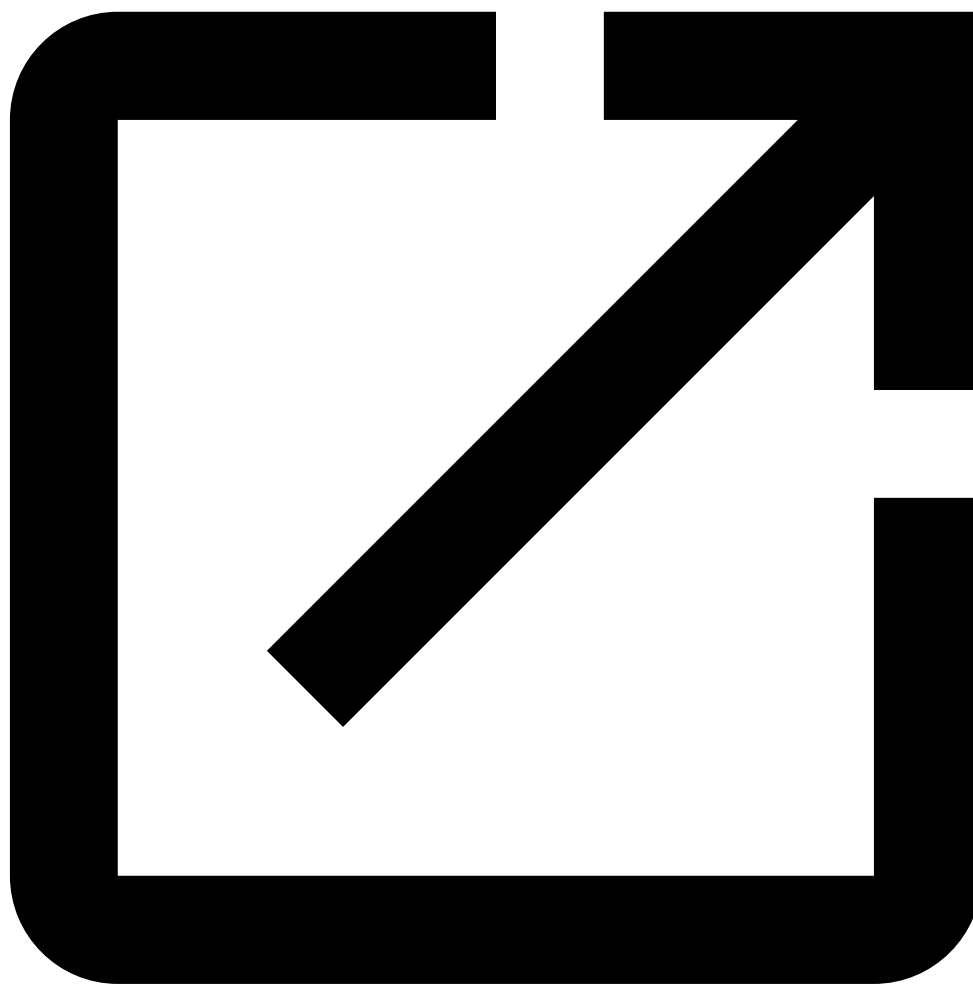


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Lindberg and Green wrote that the Wastewater Treatment Plant was an ideal location for the pilot project because composting at the site was categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act due to the facility having a coastal conditional land use permit for the land use and project type. The project would also be considered an existing use on a publicly owned property. Because the composting would take place at the plant's biosolids drying area, a Regional Water Quality Control Board waste discharge requirement would not be required.

Moreover, Lindberg and Green wrote that the Monterey Air Resources District confirmed that an air permit project is not required for the pilot project due to its small size. The footprint of the project is 1,000 square feet, will require minimum access and maintenance from Ryan Smith

Consulting and would not utilize any city staff time. Ryan Smith Consulting will provide a technical report upon the six-month conclusion of the program, which will be used to inform an emergency preparedness, response and recovery sanitation implementation plan.

This item is on the consent agenda, which means it will be approved in one motion alongside other items considered routine unless pulled for further discussion by a council member or member of the public.

In other business, Environmental Education Coordinator Tami Stolzenhaller will provide a report on the city's waste reduction efforts.

The council will meet publicly at 5 p.m. Tuesday on the top floor of the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main St. A closed session to discuss legal matters will precede the regular meeting at 4:30.

Originally Published: September 9, 2024 at 9:57 a.m.

kion546.com

Five failing water systems in Santa Cruz County: What it means for local residents – KION546

By Briana Mathaw

2–3 minutes

BOULDER CREEK, Calif. (KION-TV) — California's water resources board finding hundreds of water systems across the state are in trouble.

Referring to the systems tonight as "failing", including some in Santa Cruz County.

The report found that 5 areas of failed water systems are right here in Santa Cruz County.

Some of which received the "F" grade within the past two years.

"Big Basin has been status failing for at least 4 years now, they been trying to work with the owners of the company to achieve regulatory appliance and to turn things around," Nicolas Jaber court-appointed receiver for Big Basin Water Company said.

Big Basin Water company is a water supply utility for over eleven hundred residents and has indicated failure, risk assessment is at risk.

The court-appointed receiver for the company says, a part of it has to do with capacity.

"Capacity that's a big one," Jaber said. "We have over thirteen or fourteen hundred people that rely on the water."

Immediately after the CZU fire, many residents were given a boil water notice due to the fire damaged infrastructure including water supply systems and posed risk of contaminate such as ash and debris.

"Water was being shut off and there were boil water notices being issued on a regular basis," Jaber said.

Residents in the Boulder Creek area drew concerns on the failure water system saying many Big Basin residents had to boil water in the past.

We asked the Court Appointed receiver for Big Basin Water Company if the water safe to drink in Big Basin?

"Big Basin water is safe," Jaber said.

According to AP, "98% of Californians are served by water systems that meet state standards, and over \$1 billion in state grants have helped disadvantaged communities tackle drinking water problems."

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Letter | Special districts should change views of LAFCOs

Letters to the Editor

2–3 minutes

Santa Cruz LAFCO, the commission overseeing the county's special districts, has a reputation – and it's not entirely positive. Sometimes viewed as the Death Eaters of special districts, LAFCOs across the state play an important role in local governance. Still, despite prevailing sentiment, many common misconceptions about LAFCOs are undeserved. While some clear opportunities to improve LAFCOs exist, local agencies themselves are in part responsible for the dissonance between LAFCOs and the districts they oversee.

A healthier dynamic can be fostered if special districts use LAFCOs like service providers. In business, those who work with expert consultants understand that the quality of support correlates directly to the sincerity of client engagement. That logic extends well to local district administration.

LAFCO actions will appear less capricious if considered and consistent engagement with local agencies precede any action. Concurrently, LAFCOs must be held accountable, their effectiveness measured in the value they add directly to their local districts' constituents. If local districts treated LAFCO more like McKinsey (Ed. note: a multinational strategy and management consulting firm) and less like the local butcher, a more effective relationship would result.

— Philip Hover-Smoot, Santa Cruz

The Sentinel welcomes your letters to the editor. Letters should be short, no more than 175 words. We do not accept anonymous letters. Letter-writers should include their full name as well as a street address and telephone number. We don't publish those details in the newspaper, but need the information for verification purposes. Occasionally, we reject letters simply because we've had so many on the same subject. Submit your letters online at www.santacruzsentinel.com/submit-letters.

santacruzlocal.org

Zayante Fire proposes more staff, new equipment with Measure T - Santa Cruz Local

Jesse Kathan

3–4 minutes

Measure T will appear on ballots in Zayante Fire Protection District, which serves about 5,500 people in areas of the Santa Cruz Mountains including Zayante, Lompico and parts of unincorporated Santa Clara County.

The proposed annual tax would be:

- \$290 for homes, businesses or land with other structures. An existing parcel tax approved in 2016 is \$75 and would expire if Measure T is approved.
- \$100 for vacant lots 5 acres or larger.
- \$50 for vacant lots smaller than 5 acres.

The district has 25 volunteer firefighters, but it has long depended on paid, daytime firefighters and fire engine drivers to respond when volunteers are at their day jobs.

In 2021, Zayante Fire had three paid staff at the station daily. Now, it has a fire engine driver and a firefighter on “Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, just a driver on Wednesday, nobody on Saturdays and Sundays,” said Zayante Fire Chief Jeff Maxwell. “Schedule your emergency carefully.”

“We have to get back on track, or we’re going to have a fire department with no people and no fire trucks,” he said.

Some opposition has formed against Measure T. Lompico resident Jennifer Gómez said the tax proposal avoids the larger problem in the San Lorenzo Valley — that fire departments in rural areas with small populations aren’t financially sustainable. Fire protection districts in Zayante, Ben Lomond, Felton and Boulder Creek should consider reorganizing or combining their districts, she said.

“We’re going to either need to consolidate or we’re all going to end up paying more, and there’s going to be more and more [tax] measures, it’s going to become more costly, and we’re going to be getting less services,” Gómez said.

In 2023, money problems led Branciforte Fire Protection District to be annexed by Scotts Valley Protection District.

Maxwell said a consolidated San Lorenzo Valley fire district would not necessarily be more financially sustainable, and it could deprioritize service to Zayante and Lompico in favor of more populated areas such as Felton and Ben Lomond.

The Zayante district is “nine miles from end to end, and time matters,” Maxwell said. “Our three stations provide great service. We’re the only ones in the valley that actually put substations into communities where the population concentrations are and reduce response times.”

[Read more about Measure T in Santa Cruz Local’s Election Guide.](#)

More information about Measure T

- [Measure T official text, ballot arguments and impartial analysis](#)
- [Measure T resolution](#)
- [Zayante Fire Protection District website](#)

Read about other races and measures in the Santa Cruz Mountains

- [Measure U – San Lorenzo Water rate initiative](#)
- [Measure Q – Santa Cruz County Water and Wildfire parcel tax](#)