

MENDOCINO

Local Agency Formation Commission

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NOTICE OF ADOPTION FOR MULTI-DISTRICT FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE

May 17, 2018

Dear District Board of Directors:

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Act requires Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo) to prepare a Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update for each city and special district within its jurisdiction. Mendocino LAFCo staff prepared an SOI Update for 13 fire protection services districts in Mendocino County, which the Commission adopted by LAFCo Resolution No. 2017-18-07 on May 7, 2018. The final document is posted on our website at <http://mendolafco.org/sphere-of-influence-updates-soi/> and can be downloaded in its entirety or alternatively for a specific district. Enclosed is a hard copy of your district's section, sans the introduction and appendices. Thank you for your assistance in providing information and feedback related to the SOI Update prepared for your district.

The Commission has discussed the requirement for financial audits at length, recognizing the difficulty to small districts in funding that requirement. Attached to this letter, for informational purposes only, is California Government Code Section 26909 which requires all special districts to provide the County Auditor-Controller an annual financial audit report prepared by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), and which includes exceptions to the annual financial audit requirement for special districts under certain circumstances. More specifically, a special district may replace the annual financial audit requirement with (A) a two-year or five-year audit consistent with Section 26909(b), or (B) a financial review consistent with Section 26909(c)(1), provided that the district's annual revenues do not exceed \$150,000 and other statutory requirements are met.

Determining the applicability of and/or granting an exception to financial reporting requirements is not within the purview of LAFCo. LAFCo staff has identified options for complying with the financial reporting requirements of state law, but ultimately resolution of this matter is under the authority of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. Please contact their office at (707) 463-4221 for more information related to the applicability of financial reporting exceptions for your agency.

Additionally, attached to this letter is a list of resources for local agencies interested in learning more about the broad scope of public interest laws geared towards government transparency and accountability.

It has been a pleasure working together in preparing this SOI Update. Thank you again for your time and assistance. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or feedback.

Sincerely,



Uma Hinman
Executive Officer
Mendocino LAFCo

OPEN GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

The purpose of this document is to provide a brief list of some of the educational resources available to local agencies interested in learning more about the broad scope of public interest laws geared towards government transparency and accountability. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive reference list or to substitute legal advice from a qualified attorney. Feel free to contact the Mendocino LAFCo office at (707) 463-4470 to make suggestions of additional resources that could be added to this document.

The websites listed below provide information regarding the following open government laws: (1) **Public Records Act** (Government Code §6250 et seq.), (2) **Political Reform Act** – Conflict-of-Interest regulations (Government Code §81000 et seq.), (3) **Ethics Principles and Training** (AB 1234 and Government Code §53235), (4) **Brown Act** – Open Meeting regulations (Government Code §54950 et seq.), and (5) **Online Compliance** regulations (Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act and Government Code §11135).

- Refer to the State of California Attorney General website for information regarding public access to governmental information and processes at the following link: <https://oag.ca.gov/government>.
- Refer to the State of California Attorney General website for information regarding Ethics Training Courses required pursuant to AB 1234 at the following link: <https://oag.ca.gov/ethics>.
- The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) is primarily responsible for administering and enforcing the Political Reform Act. The website for the Fair Political Practices Commission is available at the following link: <http://www.fppc.ca.gov/>.
- Refer to the California Department of Rehabilitation website for information regarding Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act and other laws that address digital accessibility at the following link: <http://www.dor.ca.gov/DisabilityAccessInfo/What-are-the-Laws-that-Cover-Digital-Accessibility.html>.
- Refer to the Institute for Local Government (ILG) website to download the Good Governance Checklist form at the following link: www.ca-ilg.org/post/good-governance-checklist-good-and-better-practices.
- Refer to the Institute for Local Government (ILG) website to download the Ethics Law Principles for Public Servants pamphlet at the following link: www.ca-ilg.org/node/3369.
- Refer to the Institute for Local Government (ILG) website for information regarding Ethics Training Courses required pursuant to AB 1234 at the following link: <http://www.ca-ilg.org/ethics-education-ab-1234-training>.
- Refer to the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) website for information regarding online and website compliance webinars at the following link: <http://www.csda.net/tag/webinars/>.

ADOPTED FINAL

**MULTI-DISTRICT
FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES**

Sphere of Influence Update

Prepared for:

MENDOCINO LAFCO

200 South School Street
Ukiah, California 95482

<http://www.mendolafco.org/>

Public Hearing: April 2, 2018
May 7, 2018

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo) are quasi-legislative, independent local agencies that were established by State legislation in 1963 to oversee the logical and orderly formation and development of local government agencies including cities and special districts. There is one LAFCo for each county in California.

LAFCo is responsible for implementing the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code Section 56000 et. seq.) in order to promote orderly growth, prevent urban sprawl, preserve agricultural and open space lands, and oversee efficient provision of municipal services.

LAFCo has the authority to establish and reorganize cities and special districts, change their boundaries and authorized services, allow the extension of public services, perform municipal service reviews, and establish spheres of influence. Some of LAFCo's duties include regulating boundary changes through annexations or detachments and forming, consolidating, or dissolving local agencies.

1.2 MENDOCINO LAFCO

The CKH Act provides for flexibility in addressing State regulations to allow for adaptation to local needs. Mendocino LAFCo has adopted policies, procedures and principles that guide its operations. These policies and procedures can be found on Mendocino LAFCo's website at the following location: <http://www.mendolafco.org/policies.html>.

Mendocino LAFCo has a public Commission with seven regular Commissioners and four alternate Commissioners. The Commission is composed of two members of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, two City Council members, two Special District Representatives, and one Public Member-At-Large. The Commission also includes one alternate member for each represented category.

1.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

The CKH Act (GC §56430) requires LAFCo to prepare a Municipal Service Review (MSR) for all local agencies within its jurisdiction. MSRs are required prior to and in conjunction with the update of a Sphere of Influence (SOI).

An MSR is a comprehensive analysis of the services provided by a local government agency to evaluate the capabilities of that agency to meet the public service needs of their current and future service area. An MSR must address the following seven factors:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area.
2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.
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.

4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.
5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.
6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.
7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

MSRs include written statements or determinations with respect to each of the seven mandated areas of evaluation outlined above. These determinations provide the basis for LAFCo to consider the appropriateness of a service provider's existing and future service area boundary.

1.4 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

The CKH Act requires LAFCo to adopt a Sphere of Influence (SOI) for all local agencies within its jurisdiction. A SOI is "a plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency or municipality as determined by the Commission" (GC §56076).

When reviewing an SOI for a municipal service provider, LAFCo will consider the following five factors:

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.
2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.
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.
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.

SOI Updates include written statements or determinations with respect to each of the five mandated areas of evaluation outlined above. These determinations provide the basis for LAFCo to consider the appropriateness of establishing or modifying a service provider's sphere of influence or probable future boundary.

1.5 MENDOCINO LAFCO POLICIES

In addition to making the necessary determinations for establishing or modifying a Sphere of Influence consistent with the CKH Act, the appropriateness of an agency's SOI is also based on an evaluation of consistency with local LAFCo policies. The following Sphere of Influence policies are from the Mendocino LAFCo Policies and Procedures Manual, adopted January 4, 2016, under Chapter 9 (Spheres of Influence, MSRs, and Special Studies) and Sections 1.4 through 1.10 (LAFCo, 2016b).

Reduced Spheres

The Commission shall endeavor to maintain and expand, as needed, spheres of influence to accommodate planned and orderly urban development. The Commission shall, however, consider removal of land from an agency's sphere of influence if either of the following two conditions apply:

- a. The land is outside the affected agency's jurisdictional boundary but has been within the sphere of influence for 10 or more years; or
- b. The land is inside the affected agency's jurisdictional boundary but is not expected to be developed for urban uses or require urban-type services within the next 10 years.

Zero Spheres

LAFCo may adopt a "zero" sphere of influence encompassing no territory for an agency. This occurs if LAFCo determines that the public service functions of an agency are either nonexistent, no longer needed, or should be reallocated to some other agency (e.g., mergers, consolidations). A local agency that has been assigned a zero sphere should ultimately be dissolved.

Service Specific Spheres

If territory within the proposed sphere boundary of a local agency does not need all of the services of the agency, a "service specific" sphere of influence may be designated.

Agriculture and Open Space Lands

Territory not in need of urban services, including open space, agriculture, recreational, rural lands, or residential rural areas shall not be assigned to an agency's sphere of influence unless the area's exclusion would impede the planned, orderly and efficient development of the area. In addition, LAFCo may adopt a sphere of influence that excludes territory currently within that agency's boundaries. This may occur when LAFCo determines that the territory consists of agricultural lands, open space lands, or agricultural preserves whose preservation would be jeopardized by inclusion within an agency's sphere. Exclusion of these areas from an agency's sphere of influence indicates that detachment is appropriate.

Annexations are not Mandatory

Before territory can be annexed to a city or district, it must be within the agency's sphere of influence (G.G. §56375.5). However, territory within an agency's sphere will not necessarily be annexed. A sphere is only one of several factors that are considered by LAFCo when evaluating changes of organization or reorganization.

Islands or Corridors

Sphere of influence boundaries shall not create islands or corridors unless it can be demonstrated that the irregular boundaries represent the most logical and orderly service area of an agency.

Overlapping Spheres

LAFCo encourages the reduction of overlapping spheres of influence to avoid unnecessary and inefficient duplication of services or facilities. In deciding which of two or more equally capable agencies shall include an area within its sphere of influence, LAFCo shall consider the agencies' service and financial capabilities, social and economic interdependencies, topographic factors, and the effect that eventual service

extension will have on adjacent agencies. Where an area could be assigned to the sphere of influence of more than one agency, the following hierarchy typically applies:

- a. Inclusion within a city's sphere.
- b. Inclusion within a multi-purpose district's sphere.
- c. Inclusion within a single-purpose district's sphere.

Territory placed within a city's sphere indicates that the city is the most logical provider of urban services. LAFCo encourages annexation of developing territory (i.e., area not currently receiving services) that is currently within a city's sphere to that city rather than to one or more single-purpose special districts. LAFCo discourages the formation of special districts within a city's sphere. To promote efficient and coordinated planning among the county's various agencies, districts that provide the same type of service shall not have overlapping spheres.

1.6 FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The following general information is provided as background regarding municipal fire service operations and issues. Fire districts are formed and regulated pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 13801 et seq. This enabling legislation authorizes fire districts to provide services relating to the protection of lives and property.

The range of services provided by special districts providing fire protection services vary depending on the level of financial and staff resources available, but generally entails serving as first responders to incidents related to structure fires, rescue and extrication, medical emergencies, hazardous materials (HAZMAT), public assistance, and any other emergency condition for which the agency is dispatched. Some special districts providing fire protection services also provide advanced life support and ambulance or medical transport services. In general, special districts providing fire protection services play an integral role in addressing the emergency medical needs of the greater community.

Most fire districts are affiliated with a volunteer fire department or firefighters association. The relationship between the district and the volunteer organization is structured in various ways related to finances, equipment and facility ownership, and firefighting personnel. However, in general, the volunteer organization augments or supports the activities of the district and can accept charitable funds on behalf of the district if formed as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It is common for the volunteer organization to host fundraisers and capital campaigns that support donations to the district for purposes of purchasing equipment and making facility improvements.

1.6.1 NON-DISTRICT FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

There are a variety of public and private entities that provide some level of fire protection services in Mendocino County that are not under the purview of LAFCo and are not addressed by this SOI Update.

Public agencies providing fire protection services are organized by responsibility areas (Figure 1-1): Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA) for US Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Tribal lands, and other federally owned public lands; State Responsibility Areas (SRA) for public lands owned by the State; and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) for areas covered by a local fire agency. LRAs in Mendocino County are generally designated for the inland areas of the County with more urbanized development patterns and located within the core of a special district boundary. Special districts providing fire protection services are focused on structural fire protection and medical emergency response. Wildland

fire protection service is primarily provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) in SRAs during the wildfire season and secondarily by a fire district; although, districts are often the first to respond to such incidents, particularly during non-fire season months.

In addition to the public agencies providing fire protection services described above, there are numerous community-based volunteer fire companies throughout the County, such as the Westport Volunteer Fire Company, Whale Gulch Volunteer Fire Company, Bell Springs Volunteer Fire Department, Ridgewood Ranch Volunteer Fire Crew, and Turtle Creek Fire Brigade. These local organizations are not affiliated with a fire district, although they coordinate at various levels with nearby fire districts and help to address gaps in service between district boundaries. These fire companies receive no tax revenue and depend solely on revenue generated from community donations, fundraisers, and grants.

1.6.2 MENDOCINO COUNTY FIRE DISTRICTS

1.6.2.1 EMS SYSTEM

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system consists of first responder service providers including local fire agencies, advanced life support and medical transport services provided by qualified local public agencies and private ambulance companies, and area hospitals that provide medical intervention and emergency receiving facilities. By state law, the EMS system is a county government function. Coastal Valleys EMS Agency (CVEMSA) has been designated as the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) for Mendocino County and is responsible for managing the EMS system and regulating and monitoring out-of-hospital emergency medical services providers. This includes the licensing and/or permitting of ambulance provider companies and hospitals, coordination and monitoring of air and ground ambulances, certification and/or accreditation of pre-hospital care personnel (EMT and paramedics), policy development and implementation, medical control, quality improvement, and disaster medical response preparedness. Mendocino County is currently assessing a variety of options for its LEMSA, including a continuation with Coastal Valleys EMS Agency.

Mendocino County has also been developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to create an Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) for emergency medical services in the inland portion of the County to establish a contract with a single provider. It is anticipated that the RFP will be released shortly. It is unknown how fire districts with ambulance operations will be impacted by this potential change.

1.6.2.2 MUTUAL AND AUTOMATIC AID

While fire protection and emergency medical service providers primarily serve residents and property within their jurisdictional boundary, due to the critical need for rapid response in emergency situations, when a call for service is received, the nearest available response unit is dispatched regardless of jurisdictional boundary.

There are large areas in Mendocino County that are located outside the boundaries of any fire protection service provider. These areas are located within County Service Area (CSA) #3 by default, although this entity does not provide fire protection or emergency medical services. In order to meet the urgent needs of those located outside district boundaries, most fire protection agencies have mutual and automatic aid agreements with adjacent service providers to cover the areas in between jurisdictions.

Mutual aid refers to reciprocal service and support provided to another agency upon request under a mutual aid agreement between one or more agencies. Automatic aid differs in that no request for aid is necessary in order for reciprocal service and support between agencies within the automatic aid

agreement. These types of pre-arrangements allow for the dispatch and use of additional equipment and personnel that a single jurisdiction cannot provide on its own and also entails a reciprocal return of resources when needed.

1.6.2.3 DISPATCH

In Mendocino County, Fire and EMS dispatch services are provided by the CAL FIRE Emergency Communications Command Center (ECC) at the Howard Forest Station near Willits. In addition, the City of Willits provides dispatch services to the Little Lake Fire Protection District. The emergency medical system consists of the initial medical response and ambulance transport to the appropriate medical facility. Due to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of emergency medical services, more than one public agency could be dispatched to an emergency. In responding to emergencies, local fire and ambulance service providers are often dispatched to medical calls simultaneously. In most cases, fire service providers arrive on scene prior to the ambulance and provide first aid and basic life support such as gathering vital signs, stabilizing the patient, and preparing the patient for transport to the hospital.

1.6.2.4 RESPONSE TIMES

Response time relates to the time elapsed between the dispatch of personnel and the arrival of the first responder on the scene of an incident. There are different response time expectations and first responder capabilities in serving urban, suburban, and rural areas. For fire and paramedic service, there are national service standards relating to response times. In general, the faster the response time the higher the likelihood of a positive outcome related to managing and addressing the incident. A fast response time for medical care is especially important for incidents involving patients who are suffering from a life threatening condition. Further, a fast response time for fire suppression is important to prevent a structure fire from rapidly spreading to other structures and/or wildland interface areas.

1.6.2.5 ISO RATING

Fire services in communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), which is an advisory organization depended on by insurance companies for establishing the availability and costs for fire insurance. The ISO classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire protection facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms, communications, equipment, and personnel receive a rating of 1. Primary factors assessed in establishing ISO ratings are maintaining more than one fire station within a district boundary to meet the 5-mile radius requirements, ensuring appropriate facility maintenance and upgrades are made, and sufficient personnel and volunteers exist to respond to each station.

1.6.2.6 FUNDING

Fire districts generate revenue primarily from a share of Mendocino County's ad valorem property tax, special assessments, fees for services, and fundraising. With the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, property taxes were greatly reduced, thereby reducing tax share funding for fire protection districts. The reduction in the underlying revenue base for fire protection districts became more challenging as a result of the state-mandated Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) property tax re-alignment, which was enacted in 1992.

In response, some fire protection districts have increased their revenue base by gaining voter support through Proposition 218 for special assessments and taxes. Mendocino County also contributes funding when possible to support local fire districts. In 2017, the County of Mendocino disbursed a share of

Proposition 172 funds to eligible fire agencies within the County. The formula for funding allocations was developed by the Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts and incorporates a minimum distribution per district, plus a population-based proportional allocation. In 2018, an alternate funding formula was adopted that includes the population of the incorporated cities. These allocations are discretionary and reviewed annually based on availability of funding. Since Fiscal Year 2015-16, the County also provides \$66,000 in ALS Enhancement Funding annually to the Long Valley Fire Protection District and the Anderson Valley Community Services District to provide advanced life support ambulance services outside their District boundary. The County also provided this funding to the Covelo Fire Protection District; however they are no longer able to participate.

In general, fire protection districts operate with limited resources and are very resourceful in using volunteers, surplus and donated equipment, and by working cooperatively with other fire agencies to deliver services. Long-range financial planning is needed to sustain fire protection services in the future as these districts face higher costs for providing existing levels of service due to more complex regulations and increasing employee benefit contributions, in addition to meeting future demand for services from new development and growth.

1.6.3 COMMON CONCERNS

In the summer of 2015, the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council circulated a detailed questionnaire in which local fire chiefs expressed the needs of their agencies. The main issues facing local fire districts were identified as follows and amended by LAFCo for clarification:

- Diminishing numbers of younger, able-bodied volunteer firefighters available in rural areas due to two main causes: a) high housing costs which prohibit younger families from purchasing or even renting homes in rural areas, and b) lack of employment in the same areas. A case in point is the Leggett and Piercy area, many of whose younger adults commute north to Humboldt County to work and are not available to respond in northern Mendocino County during the daytime. Although most departments report being able to cover tuition for training, they cannot cover travel or lost time from the trainee's regular job.
- Laws and regulations imposed upon local fire departments by the state legislature and other governmental entities. The heightened requirements and liability resulting from such unfunded mandates are expensive and difficult for small rural volunteer departments.
- Lack of funds to replace aging and obsolete equipment necessary for both firefighter safety and effective fire suppression. Many departments are dependent on gifts of equipment from larger departments or on grants from the federal Assistance to Firefighters program for the purchase of fire engines, protective gear, and other costly equipment. Departments fortunate enough to receive grants for fire engines still face the requirement to raise 10% to 25% of the total amount as a "match."
- A large number of emergency calls for which costs are not recovered, including the following:

Traffic collisions involving non-residents. Highways 101, 20, 253, 128, and Highway 1 on the coast all see numerous traffic accidents per month. As these roads are major arteries for tourists, a good percentage of their accidents involve persons from out of county, and response costs of local fire agencies may not be recoverable.

Calls to fires and medical aids outside of taxing districts. Local fire personnel routinely respond to emergency calls outside of their districts – and outside of any district – from a sense of duty. Such services are essentially provided free of charge.

- o The State mandated requirement to complete municipal service reviews has imposed an administrative burden on rural fire districts.

(MCFCA, 2015)

1.7 DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

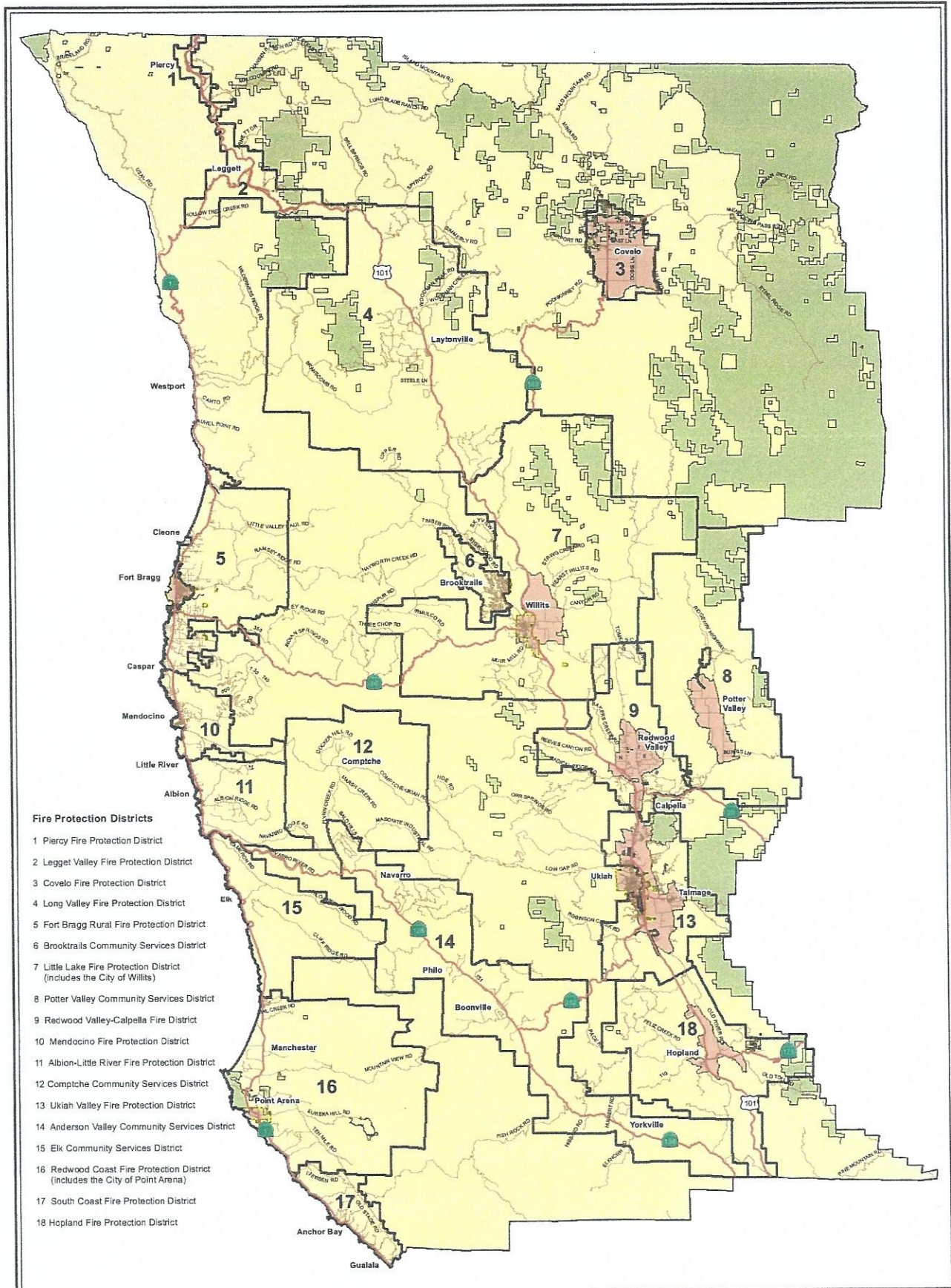
Senate Bill (SB) 244, which became effective in January 2012, requires LAFCo to evaluate any Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs), including the location and characteristics of any such communities, when preparing an MSR that addresses agencies that provide water, wastewater or structural fire protection services. A DUC is an unincorporated geographic area with 12 or more registered voters with a median household income (MHI) that is less than 80% of the statewide MHI. This State legislation is intended to ensure that the needs of these communities are met when considering service extensions and/or annexations in unincorporated areas. The evaluation of DUCs was addressed in the 2016 MSR prepared for these special districts providing fire protection services and is also addressed in the SOI Determinations section of this report.

1.8 SENATE BILL 215

Senate Bill 375 (Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act) requires each metropolitan planning organization (MPO) to address regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets for passenger vehicles in their Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) by integrating planning for transportation, land-use, and housing in a sustainable communities strategy. Senate Bill 215 (Wiggins) requires LAFCo to consider regional transportation plans and sustainable community strategies developed pursuant to SB 375 before making boundary decisions.

Mendocino County is not located within an MPO boundary and therefore is not subject to the provisions of SB 375. However, the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) supports and coordinates the local planning efforts of Mendocino County and the Cities of Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Ukiah, and Willits to address regional housing and transportation needs and helps provide a framework for sustainable regional growth patterns through the Vision Mendocino 2030 Blueprint Plan. MCOG is also responsible for allocating regional transportation funding to transportation improvement projects consistent with the 2010 RTP for Mendocino County.

Mendocino County and the Cities of Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Ukiah, and Willits are the local agencies primarily responsible for planning regional growth patterns through adoption and implementation of general plan and zoning regulations. The fire districts in Mendocino County were established to provide fire protection services and do not have the legal authority to make land use policy decisions that would impact growth in Mendocino County. Therefore, there will be no further discussion of the requirements of SB 375 or SB 215 in this SOI Update.



Fire Protection Districts

- 1 Piercy Fire Protection District
- 2 Leggett Valley Fire Protection District
- 3 Covelo Fire Protection District
- 4 Long Valley Fire Protection District
- 5 Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District
- 6 Brooktrails Community Services District
- 7 Little Lake Fire Protection District (includes the City of Willits)
- 8 Potter Valley Community Services District
- 9 Redwood Valley-Calpella Fire District
- 10 Mendocino Fire Protection District
- 11 Albion-Little River Fire Protection District
- 12 Comptche Community Services District
- 13 Ukiah Valley Fire Protection District
- 14 Anderson Valley Community Services District
- 15 Elk Community Services District
- 16 Redwood Coast Fire Protection District (includes the City of Point Arena)
- 17 South Coast Fire Protection District
- 18 Hopland Fire Protection District

**Mendocino County
Fire Protection Districts**

- Fire Protection Districts
- Federal Responsibility Areas
- State Responsibility Areas
- Local Responsibility Areas
- Incorporated Cities
- Highways
- Roads

Source: This map was prepared by the Mendocino County Division of Information Services GIS Program, April 2015.
Note: This map is not a survey product.



2 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE

2.1 OVERVIEW

LAFCo prepares a Municipal Service Review (MSR) prior to or in conjunction with the Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update process. The SOI Update considers whether a change to a district sphere, or probable future boundary, is warranted to plan the logical and orderly development of a district in a manner that supports Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Law and the Policies of the Commission. This SOI Update and associated determinations is prepared pursuant to California Government Code (GC) §56425(e).

The Commission approved the Multi-District Fire Protection Services Municipal Service Review on April 4, 2016 (LAFCo Resolution No. 15-16-18), which provides the analysis for the thirteen special districts providing fire protection services addressed by this SOI Update. The 2016 MSR and associated determinations form the basis of information for this SOI Update. To ensure the Commission has the most updated information for consideration, the MSR determinations were reviewed and updates provided in the relevant sections, as appropriate.

The following districts providing fire protection services are addressed in this SOI Update:

Albion-Little River Fire Protection District	Long Valley Fire Protection District
Comptche Community Services District	Mendocino Fire Protection District
Covelo Fire Protection District	Piercy Fire Protection District
Elk Community Services District	Potter Valley Community Services District
Hopland Fire Protection District	Redwood Valley-Calpella Fire District
Leggett Valley Fire Protection District	South Coast Fire Protection District
Little Lake Fire Protection District	

The Redwood Coast Fire Protection District, the Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District, and the Ukiah Valley Fire Protection District are addressed in separate MSR/SOI Update documents.

2.2 ALBION-LITTLE RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

2.2.1 BACKGROUND

2.2.1.1 District Services

The Albion-Little River Fire Protection District (ALRFPD or District) was formed by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors on April 24, 1962, and is the governing agency for the Albion-Little River Fire Department. The Albion-Little River FPD provides structural fire protection, first responder for emergency medical services and hazardous materials incidents, vehicle rescue and extrication, cliff and ocean rescue, and fire prevention. Wildland fire protection service is primarily provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) in State Responsibility Areas (SRA) during the wildfire season and secondarily by the District; although, the District is often the first to respond to such incidents, particularly during non-fire season months. More information regarding the District is available at the following website: <https://www.alrfpd.com/>.

2.2.1.2 District Boundary

The Albion-Little River FPD boundary comprises 37 square miles and encompasses the unincorporated coastal communities of Albion and Little River (Figure 2-1). The District is located along the Pacific Ocean, approximately 11 miles south of Fort Bragg, and is bisected in a north-south direction by 7 miles of State Highway 1, the primary transportation route in the area. The District extends from Little River Airport Road on the north to State Highway 128 on the south. The District extends inland for approximately six miles. Fire protection providers in proximity to the District include the Mendocino Fire Protection District to the north, the Elk Community Services District to the south, and the Comptche and Anderson Valley Community Services Districts to the east. The District is entirely within the SRA.

2.2.1.3 Out-of-Area Services

The District does not maintain contracts with individual property owners to provide services outside its boundary. Although the Albion-Little River FPD boundary area is approximately 37 square miles, the District response area, based on mutual aid services and dispatched service calls, is approximately 50 square miles. The District relies on and participates in mutual aid services with adjacent fire districts but no formal agreements are in place. CAL FIRE provides seasonal fire response in the District when resources are available for wildland fire incidents because the District is entirely within the SRA; however, no formal agreement is in place. Similar to all fire protection agencies and EMS providers within Mendocino County, the Albion-Little River FPD responds to service calls outside the District boundary as needed and as dispatched. According to the 2015 Mendocino County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Albion-Little River FPD is within Mutual Aid/Planning Zone 4, which includes Comptche Community Services District, Fort Bragg Rural Fire Protection District, Mendocino Fire Protection District, and Westport Volunteer Fire Department (MCFCA, 2015).

2.2.2 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

2.2.2.1 Existing Sphere of Influence

The Sphere of Influence (SOI) for Albion-Little River FPD is coterminous with the District boundary and was established by LAFCo on October 4, 1993, along with other special districts providing fire service in Mendocino County (LAFCo Resolution No. 93-4).

2.2.2.2 Areas of Interest

The majority of land in proximity to the District boundary is not within a fire district jurisdiction and is therefore considered to be unserved from a local provider perspective. These adjacent areas are within the SRA and are primarily in public ownership with some areas owned by a timber production company. These areas are difficult to serve due to the distance from existing District fire stations, remote location, and access.

There is a large unserved area, approximately 9-miles in length, along the State Highway 128 corridor located south of the District.

There is a small unserved area at Van Damme State Park, which is between the District and the Mendocino Fire Protection District boundary.

2.2.2.3 Proposed SOI Changes

The areas of interest are not proposed to be added to or removed from the District SOI at this time. While these areas are not located within the boundary of a local fire protection agency, they do receive fire protection services from the District and adjacent providers when dispatched. These areas will be re-evaluated for suitability of inclusion in the District SOI in the next MSR/SOI Update.

The District has confirmed the adequacy of their existing District boundary and SOI. The coterminous SOI is appropriate given the District's current operating level. In addition, there is a legal challenge by a timber production company related to the District's new benefit assessment, Measure M, which has not been resolved to date. There are no proposed SOI changes for the Albion-Little River FPD.

2.2.2.4 Consistency with LAFCo Policies

While there are agricultural lands, open space lands, and agricultural preserves located within and adjacent to the District boundary, the provision of fire protection services alone does not jeopardize the preservation of these areas. Maintaining the existing District SOI is consistent with Mendocino LAFCo Policies. Refer to Section 1.5 for the specific SOI policies.

2.2.3 MSR UPDATES

The MSR information and associated determinations prepared for the District in 2016 serve as a substantially reliable basis for this study. The following updated information has been provided by the District for the preparation of this SOI Update.

2.2.3.1 Financial Information

The 2016 MSR for the District included financial information for Fiscal Years (FY) 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13. This section includes updated financial information for FY 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 and highlights specific revenue sources such as Proposition 172 funds, Strike Team reimbursement, and fundraising/donations.

The following table (Table 2.1) provides year-end (not budget) financial information for the District. This table summarizes the Statement of Activities prepared by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and represents the long-term financial standing of the District based on reporting capital asset activity using the full accrual basis of accounting. This involves depreciation, which is a method of spreading the cost of a capital asset over its estimated useful life, as opposed to recognizing the cost of a capital asset as an expenditure at the date of acquisition. Capitalization policies commonly define a capital asset as a fixed asset (land, buildings and improvements, equipment and vehicles) with an initial cost of \$5,000 or greater

with an estimated useful life in excess of one year. Also, refer to Figure 2-2 for the most recent Statement of Net Position, which represents the difference between the District’s assets and liabilities.

Table 2.1 Financial Summary			
	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16
Prior Period Adjustments	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ending Fund Balance	\$329,779	\$395,964	\$525,400
Committed Fund Balance	\$10,633	\$10,638	\$10,643
Revenues			
Special Tax	\$81,880	\$82,880	\$191,133
Taxes & Intergovernmental	\$76,673	\$77,871	\$81,304
Other Revenue	\$78,044	\$43,731	\$47,442
Interest Income	\$928	\$703	\$1,035
Total Revenue	\$237,525	\$205,185	\$320,914
Expenses			
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$6,046	\$9,342	\$10,323
Professional Services	\$9,904	\$7,409	\$14,842
Transportation & Travel	\$20,463	\$17,244	\$12,363
Depreciation	\$40,626	\$55,555	\$55,555
Maintenance & Capital Outlay	\$55,555	\$57,719	\$98,757
Services, Supplies, & Refunds	\$64,792	\$47,287	\$55,193
Total Expenses	\$197,386	\$194,556	\$247,033
Net Income/Loss	\$40,139	\$10,629	\$73,881
Fixed Assets Expenditures	\$112,802	\$26,597	\$54,198

Source: Pehling: 2015, 2016.

According to the financial information in the table above, the District generally operates at a net income and maintains a sufficient fund balance or reserve.

Measure M is a new benefit assessment fee structure for the District that was approved by the voters on the November 2014 ballot. This measure increased the per unit special tax from \$40 to \$75 and added timber and forest land to the assessment at 30-acres per unit. A timber production company has legally challenged the parcel tax established by Measure M as unlawful because commercial timber properties fall under the jurisdiction of CAL FIRE, not local fire authorities; although, the District is the first responder to service calls for fire and medical emergencies for injured timber workers on commercial timberland properties. This legal challenge has not been resolved to date. Revenues from Measure M began to accrue in Fiscal Year 2015-16. The District collected an additional \$108,000 in Fiscal Years 2015-16 and 2016-17 as a result of Measure M. (LAFCo, 2016a; ALRFPD, November 2017)

Mendocino County disbursed a share of Proposition 172 funds to Albion-Little River FPD as follows: \$13,154 in FY 2016-17 and \$14,482 in FY 2017-18 (BOS, 2018). These allocations are discretionary and reviewed annually based on availability of funding. The District does not participate in Strike Team assignments and therefore does not receive reimbursement for responding to wildland fire incidents

throughout the State. The Albion-Little River Fire Auxiliary raises approximately \$13,000 annually from fundraising activities and holds charitable funds for the benefit of the District. (ALRFPD, November 2017)

2.2.3.2 MSR Determinations

The following table (Table 2.2) summarizes the MSR Determinations contained in the 2016 MSR and includes updated information shown as underlined text for additions and strikethrough text for deletions.

Table 2.2 MSR Determination Updates	
Growth and population projections for the affected area	
1.	There are approximately 2,000-2,250 (Department of Finance, 2016) residents within, <u>and 3,600 visitors to,</u> the Albion-Little River Fire Protection District boundary, based on District estimates. There are 168 people residing in Albion, and 117 in Little River.
2.	The population of the District has not increased over the past few years, and is not expected to increase in the foreseeable future.
The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence	
3.	Both Albion and Little River are Disadvantaged s Unincorporated Communities (DUCs) within the District Sphere of Influence. However, the Fire District provides satisfactory service to these two areas and fire protection is not an issue.
Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies	
4.	The District's current facilities are not adequate, and new facilities need to be constructed. There is the possibility of upgrading stations as funding becomes available under Measure M; however, this will deplete the District's reserve funds and will not allow for replacement of apparatus and equipment.
5.	The Fire Department does not have the capacity to adequately serve current demand within the 37 square mile District boundary. The existing structure engine is over 40 years old, and along with other aging apparatus needs to be replaced. Since the 2016 MSR, and with the implementation of Measure M that increased the District's per unit special tax, the District's current financing levels are adequate to deliver services, but not to fund needed facility improvements. Over time, Measure M funds will help improve the District's capacity to adequately serve current demand within the District boundary. The District has been able to achieve enough financial stability to acquire lease-purchase agreements for three new built-to-order apparatus. The new apparatus includes a Water Tender, Type I Engine, and rescue vehicle.
6.	Water supply for fire-fighting is available from fill tanks, but the outlying areas rely on tanker trucks. Additional water tanks at strategic locations would be beneficial. Additional water storage tanks have been added by private property owners in various strategic locations since the 2016 MSR. Further, fire-fighting water supply needs are being addressed by the addition of compressed air foam system (CAFS) capacity to an existing pumper and specifying CAFS capacity in the new Type I Engine being built for the District.
Financial ability of agencies to provide services	
7.	ALRFPD reported that current financing levels are barely adequate to deliver services. With the implementation of Measure M, current financing levels are adequate to deliver services.
8.	The District utilizes its reserves to balance expenditures with revenues from year to year. Current annual operating revenues are sufficient to cover annual operating expenditures without the use of reserve funds.

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities

9. ~~The District collaborates with other fire service providers through state and county mutual aid agreements. The District relies on and participates in mutual aid services with adjacent districts but no formal agreements are in place. CALFIRE provides seasonal fire response in the District when resources are available for wildland fire incidents because the District is entirely within the SRA; however, no formal agreement is in place.~~

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

10. ALRFPD is governed by an elected five-person Board of Directors. However, all recent Board positions have been filled by appointment of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors or the Fire District Board of Directors. The District should renew its efforts to identify more than one candidate for each Board position during an election year cycle so that voters within the District will be afforded a choice and an opportunity to vote. Candidates were found to fill current Board vacancies and were appointed by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors in lieu of election.

11. ~~The Volunteer Fire Department maintains a website at <http://albionfire.com/>, and District information such as Board agendas, audio recordings of meetings, and a calendar is posted. No district financial information is posted.~~ The following information is posted on the District website: Board meeting notices, agendas, packets, and meeting minutes, contact information, bylaws, district map, calendar of events, current fiscal year revenue and expenses, and adopted ordinances, resolutions, and policies.

12. The District maintains a visible presence in the community, and participates in community activities and events.

13. The agency demonstrated accountability in its cooperation with Mendocino LAFCo information requests.

Source: LAFCo 2016; ALRFPD: August 2017, November 2017.

2.2.4 SOI DETERMINATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission affirm an SOI for the Albion-Little River FPD that is coterminous with the District boundary. The following statements have been prepared in support of this recommendation.

2.2.4.1 Land Uses

GC §56425(e)(1): The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.

The Albion-Little River FPD boundary contains a variety of land uses including residential and commercial development in the communities of Albion and Little River, transitioning to rural residential, public recreation areas, large tracts of forest and range lands, and cliffs and rocky shores of the Pacific Ocean. Mendocino County has land use authority over privately-owned lands within the District boundary and makes land-use decisions based on the County General Plan and Zoning Regulations.

2.2.4.2 Need for Facilities and Services

GC §56425(e)(2): The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

The Albion-Little River Fire Protection District provides the following services with the assistance of the all-volunteer Albion-Little River Fire Department: structural fire protection, first responder for emergency

medical services and hazardous materials incidents, vehicle rescue and extrication, cliff and ocean rescue, fire prevention, and wildland fire protection as a secondary provider.

As determined in the 2016 MSR prepared for Albion-Little River FPD, the District serves approximately 2,250 residents, including 168 people in Albion and 117 in Little River, and 3,600 visitors during the summer tourism and fishing season. Population growth within the County of Mendocino is expected to increase at an annual rate of approximately 0.2% (DOT, 2016). The population of the District is not expected to increase significantly and no substantial new development is anticipated in the foreseeable future. The District provides a critical service to the public. The residents and visitors currently receiving fire protection services from the District will continue to need this public service.

2.2.4.3 Capacity of Facilities and Adequacy of Services

GC §56425(e)(3): The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.

As described in the 2016 MSR prepared for the Albion-Little River FPD, the District's ISO rating was re-evaluated in 2014 and received a rating of 6, an improvement over the previous rating of 8, which is attributed to the District maintaining a fire station within five miles of all affected areas. The District operates five fire stations. The main station, located at 32600 Albion Ridge Road, is in good condition and has a two-bay structure with an upstairs training and storage room, and on-site water storage but no on-site septic system to support a bathroom or to wash turnouts after an incident. One of the other four fire stations has bathroom, shower, and laundry facilities. All of these are too small to house new apparatus and are in critical need of basic improvements or replacement. The District has three Rescue vehicles, one Type I Engine, one Type II Engine, three Type III Engines, two 2,000-gallon Water Tenders, one ocean/river boat, and two jet skis. Water for fire protection is adequate and provided from engines with on-board water tanks, re-supply water tanks at three fire stations, and other available water supplies such as ponds, swimming pools, and cisterns.

At the time of the 2016 MSR prepared for Albion-Little River FPD, it was determined that the District did not have the capacity to adequately serve current demand within the District boundary and the District's current financing levels were barely adequate to deliver services. In addition, the 2016 MSR determined that the District needed funding in the near future for construction of a modern main fire station, increased water supplies, and replacement of aged apparatus and equipment.

Since the 2016 MSR, and with the implementation of Measure M that increased the District's per unit special tax, the District's current financing levels are adequate to deliver services, but not to fund needed facility improvements. Over time, Measure M funds will help improve the District's capacity to adequately serve current demand within the District boundary. The District has been able to achieve enough financial stability to acquire lease-purchase agreements for three new built-to-order apparatus. The new apparatus includes a Water Tender, Type I Engine, and rescue vehicle. Additional water storage tanks have been added by private property owners in various strategic locations since the 2016 MSR. Further, fire-fighting water supply needs are being addressed by the addition of compressed air foam system (CAFS) capacity to an existing pumper and specifying CAFS capacity in the new Type I Engine being built for the District.

It is suggested that the District prepare a capital plan that identifies current and long-term District facility and equipment needs, including upgrades, renovations, and major maintenance, capital improvements and purchases, and facility expansions, and identifies potential revenue sources for addressing those

capital needs. It is also suggested that the District consider the feasibility of increased collaboration, such as formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), with adjacent fire agencies to provide services more cost effectively and to enhance volunteer resources.

2.2.4.4 Communities of Interest

GC §56425(e)(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.

The Van Damme State Park and the Navarro River Redwoods State Park and surrounding areas along the State Highway 128 corridor will be re-evaluated for suitability of inclusion in the District SOI in the next MSR/SOI Update.

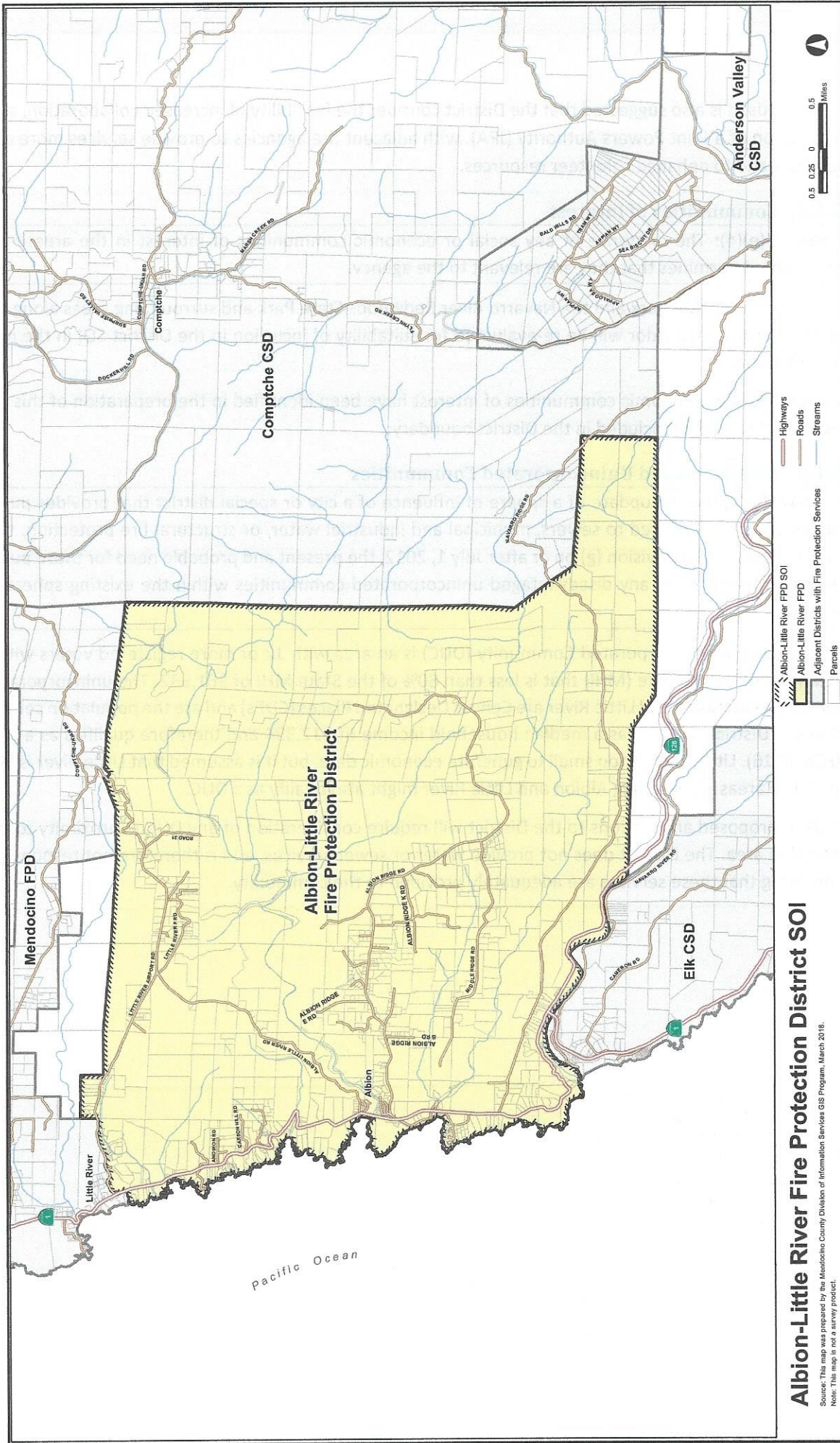
No other social or economic communities of interest have been identified in the preparation of this SOI Update that should be included in the District boundary.

2.2.4.5 Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

GC §56425(e)(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.

A Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community (DUC) is an area with 12 or more registered voters with a median household income (MHI) that is less than 80% of the State MHI of \$61,632. The unincorporated communities of Albion and Little River are Census Designated Places (CDPs) and are the population centers within the District. Albion has a median household income of \$12,394 and therefore qualifies as a DUC (LAFCo, 2016). Little River is too small to generate economic data, but it is assumed that Little River is also a DUC. The areas surrounding Albion and Little River might also qualify as a DUC.

All future proposed annexations to the District will require consideration of any DUC in proximity to the annexation area. The District does not provide water or sewer services, and is therefore not responsible for ensuring that these services are adequately provided to the community.



- Highways
- Roads
- Streams
- Albion-Little River FPD SOI
- Albion-Little River FPD
- Adjacent Districts with Fire Protection Services
- Parcels

Albion-Little River Fire Protection District SOI

Source: This map was prepared by the Mendocino County Division of Information Services GIS Program, March 2016.
 Note: This map is not a survey product.

Albion-Little River Fire Protection Dist

Statement of Net Position

	<u>June 30, 2016</u>	<u>June 30, 2015</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>		
<u>Current Assets:</u>		
Cash	514,756	391,131
Reserved Cash	10,643	10,638
Accounts Receivable	-	-
Total Current Assets	<u>525,400</u>	<u>401,769</u>
<u>Fixed Assets:</u>		
Land	125,683	125,683
Buildings & Improvements	322,400	322,400
Firefighting Equipment	503,254	503,254
Construction-in-Progress	81,152	81,152
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(723,000)</u>	<u>(667,445)</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>309,489</u>	<u>365,044</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>834,889</u>	<u>766,813</u>
<u>LIABILITIES</u>		
<u>Current Liabilities:</u>		
Accounts Payable	-	-
Other Current Liabilities	-	5,806
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>-</u>	<u>5,806</u>
<u>NET POSITION</u>		
Net Investment in Capital Assets	309,489	365,044
Restricted	-	-
Unrestricted	<u>525,400</u>	<u>395,964</u>
TOTAL NET POSITION	<u>\$ 834,889</u>	<u>\$ 761,008</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

