

## ***Final Report***

# **2nd Round EMS/Fire Services Municipal Service Review/Sphere of Influence Updates**



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Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This Second Round Municipal Service Review (MSR) update of emergency medical services (EMS) and fire services in Contra Costa County provides: (1) selected data updates for the 11 EMS/fire service providers (three cities: El Cerrito, Richmond and Pinole) and eight special districts (Contra Costa County FPD, County Service Area (CSA) EM-1, East Contra Costa FPD, Kensington FPD, Moraga-Orinda FPD, Crockett-Carquinez FPD, Rodeo-Hercules FPD and San Ramon Valley FPD), (2) review of automatic and mutual aid agreements, and (3) focus on East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) and Rodeo Hercules Fire Protection District (RHFPD), and the relationship of those focus agencies with Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (ConFire). The MSR update also provides a basis for consideration of agency Sphere of Influence (SOI) updates to be made by the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). **Figure 1**, below, depicts fire protection districts in Contra Costa County.

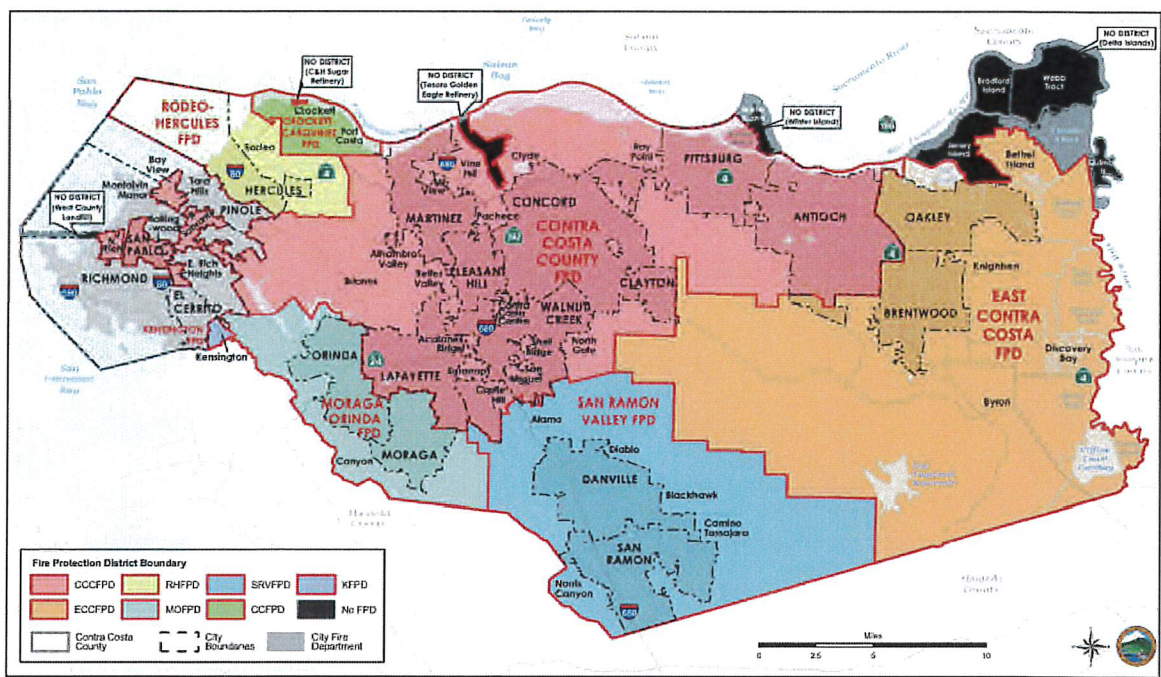
The 2009 MSR identified a number of significant issues affecting the provision of fire and EMS services. Although progress and action by public agencies has begun to address these issues, continued cost growth and constrained resources have worsened many of these problems, particularly for ECCFPD and RHFPD, which face significant financial and service deficiencies. The current status of MSR issues is summarized below.

### Financing

**For the most part, Contra Costa County fire service providers have the financial ability to deliver appropriate service levels, with the exception of ECCFPD and RHFPD.**

Since the 2009 MSR and the recession, financial conditions at ConFire have stabilized and begun to improve, and other agencies continue to have the financial ability to provide adequate service levels, with the exception of the ECCFPD and RHFPD. Of all Contra Costa fire agencies, these two agencies receive the smallest share of the 1% property tax rate. Except in the event of a district dissolution or other boundary reorganization involving a transfer of service responsibilities, shifting of property taxes to a fire service agency from another existing taxing entity will face significant hurdles.

**Figure 1**  
**Fire Protection Districts in Contra Costa County**



The lack of requirements for special taxes from new development increases the burden on fire agencies to obtain a two-thirds special tax voter approval once an area is populated. In addition to the difficulty of obtaining 2/3’s voter approval of special taxes, fire districts also face limited sources of revenue, including inability to charge for most services, low property tax shares as many agencies evolved from volunteer agencies, high insurance costs due to the risky nature of the profession, and significant pension liabilities from past underfunding.

Notwithstanding the continuing financial problems of the ECCFPD and RHFPD as summarized below, certain actions since the 2009 MSR have begun to address financial issues. For example, the new partnerships among the County, ConFire and AMR for ambulance services. Also, pension reform allows for a new, reduced tier of pension benefits for new hires. CalPERS and the Contra Costa County Employees’ Retirement Association (CCCERA) have taken steps to reduce unfunded liabilities by accelerating amortization periods for funding liabilities. However, in some cases these actions result in higher annual payments for agencies, worsening financial conditions for all agencies, including ECCFPD and RHFPD.<sup>1</sup> Significant pension and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liabilities, and related costs,

<sup>1</sup> In addition to its recent reduction in anticipated investment returns, CCCERA is considering additional changes that will further affect pension costs; these changes may become known by CCCERA’s August 10, 2016 meeting, although additional time may be required to fully assess the impacts on fire agencies.

burden all fire service agencies, and are particularly acute for agencies with insufficient resources, including RHFPD and ECCFPD as discussed below.

ECCFPD serves most of the far eastern portion of Contra Costa County, beyond Pittsburg and Antioch, with a service area of 249 square miles, the second largest service area in the County. The District continues to suffer from inadequate financial resources, and was forced to close five fire stations since 2009. ECCFPD is heavily dependent on property tax, which is significantly lower than most other fire districts in the County; has been unsuccessful in passing special taxes due to lack of voter support; and carries significant pension and OPEB liabilities. A recently formed Task Force comprised of County, Brentwood and Oakley representatives has provided ECCFPD interim financing to re-open one station, and is investigating longer-term solutions in partnership with affected agencies. ECCFPD continues to look for financial enhancements and governance options, through a Standards of Cover (SOC) Study, pursuit of independence through a directly elected board, and an ongoing quest for new funding sources.

RHFPD serves the City of Hercules and unincorporated Rodeo, a portion of which is a Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community (DUC). RHFPD relies on property tax for a majority of its revenue, and receives the lowest allocation of property tax of all fire districts in the County. Other fiscal constraints include reduced property tax in the City of Hercules due to extensive redevelopment (RHFPD lost 29 percent to redevelopment in Fiscal Year 2015-16); limited property tax from the Phillips refinery property;<sup>2</sup> significant pension and OPEB liabilities; and a recent court decision that terminated the District's 2014 benefit assessment at the end of FY 2016-17. At issue in the lawsuit was the constitutionality of a special assessment levied upon parcels to fund general fire department services. In an effort to maintain current service levels, RHFPD will continue to pursue new revenue sources including tax measures, grant and bond opportunities; additional Measure H funding (a Countywide assessment to improve EMS); and possible Proposition 172 funds through the County. Without additional revenues, the RHFPD faces the potential closure of one of its two stations following the elimination of its benefit assessment at the end of FY 2016-17, and expiration of its Federal SAFER<sup>3</sup> grant.

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<sup>2</sup> When Phillips was annexed to RHFPD in 1996, the tax sharing agreement only allocated a share of future incremental tax growth to the District at a rate lower than nearby areas; the District did not receive any of the base taxes paid by the refinery prior to annexation, therefore the District does not receive its typical share of full value, just the growth since 1996.

<sup>3</sup> "SAFER" is an acronym for "Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Response."

## **Growth and Service Demand**

**Continued population growth, job creation, and changes in health care services affect the volume and location of service calls, creating needs for new facilities and staff resources in order to sustain services.**

The recession, which began in December 2007 and extended for at least 18 months, created a pause in real estate development. However, with recovery in real estate markets, development planning and construction has resumed. The ability to restore services to pre-recession levels and fund increased services required by new development are especially challenging financially for the RHFPD and ECCFPD, which are the primary focus of this MSR. New development creates increased service responsibilities and costs to all fire service agencies, but does not provide sufficient revenues for adequate levels of increased service, particularly to RHFPD and ECCFPD. ConFire, as well as other agencies, was forced to make difficult choices – overall, the number of its fire apparatus was reduced by as much as 30%, although ConFire has begun to reestablish services with improved funding availability.

This update to the 2009 MSR proposes options for addressing the fiscal sustainability of the two focus districts.

## **Service Levels**

**Many Contra Costa fire agencies are unable to meet “Best Practices” for response times and staffing.**

The 2009 MSR indicated that fire agencies were unable to meet national and state guidelines for fire response times 90% of the time. This finding has not changed, and in fact, response times have worsened for the RHFPD and the ECCFPD due to financial problems, station closures, and staff reductions.

Typical fire service provider services are based on two fundamentally different activities: fire suppression and emergency medical response. Each of these activities requires distinct training and equipment in order to be performed adequately. Depending on the nature of the incident, emergency medical response can often be provided adequately by two fully trained personnel equipped with specialized support equipment.<sup>4</sup> Fire suppression service requires a much more complex and coordinated personnel- and equipment-intensive response. While additional or improved ambulance service can augment or supplant medical emergency services provided by fire service agencies, that is not the case for fire

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<sup>4</sup> A first responding fire company can generally be successful providing EMT or basic life support, with a paramedic staffed ambulance following, as is the case in Richmond and ECCFPD.

suppression activities. Those activities remain dependent on adequate personnel and equipment responding within reasonable timeframes to be effective.

This point is particularly applicable to the ECCFPD and the RHFPD due to their current and possible future lack of personnel and equipment resources. As outlined below, the impact of RHFPD returning to a one-station configuration will have significant impacts on its services, particularly fire suppression activities. Any working fire in the RHFPD will require cooperative service from adjacent districts to perform fundamental fire suppression activities to achieve minimum levels of effectiveness. Travel times from adjacent jurisdictions will compound the difficulties in conducting effective fire suppression activities, given the lack of in-district personnel and equipment. Inadequate service levels will result in increased fire damage, potential failure of fire rescue activities, and injuries to fire personnel.

The current three-station configuration of ECCFPD clearly demonstrates the impacts of inadequate staffing and personnel to provide adequate fire suppression services. Longer response times for fire service and reduced emergency medical response are all outcomes of the reductions in personnel that have occurred in recent years.

Adequate fire suppression response is an essential function of the County's fire service providers, and important to support the capability to respond to multi-casualty and disaster events. As outlined in subsequent sections and discussed in **Appendix A**, the National Fire Protection Association and other agencies have developed standards for performance, staffing and service adequacy. While those standards are not absolute, significant deviations from those standards have definite and significant impacts on the communities served.

Multi-jurisdictional efforts have been approved to provide interim funding to re-open an ECCFPD station in July 2016, while a plan is developed and implemented to provide for sustainable longer-term funding. If the re-opened station cannot be maintained and additional stations opened in the long-term, service levels will continue to be inadequate and threaten the safety of life and property.

RHFPD is working on improving revenues in order to avoid closing one of its two stations. Closure of its second station will have a significant adverse impact on services within the RHFPD as well as the West County service area.

Response times for ambulances dispatched by ConFire are anticipated to improve as a result of the new contract between ConFire and American Medical Response (AMR). This system may also help to reduce the number of medical calls that require fire engine response. ConFire could realize increased federal or state revenues from the arrangement, which could be reinvested in improved and reduced-cost ambulance services to the community.

## Disadvantaged Communities

A “Disadvantaged Community” is defined as “a territory that constitutes all or a portion of a ‘disadvantaged community’ including 12 or more registered voters”<sup>5</sup> ... with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income.<sup>6</sup> After preparation of the 2009 MSR, State legislation was enacted requiring that an MSR consider disadvantaged communities in its findings.<sup>7</sup>

Contra Costa County has documented disadvantaged communities, and identified the applicable fire service provider for each, as detailed in **Appendix B**. Disadvantaged communities within the two focus MSR agencies are described below. There are several disadvantaged communities in other areas of the County as well, as noted in the Appendix.

### ECCFPD

Several disadvantaged communities fall entirely within the current SOI of the ECCFPD. Areas include Bethel Island, and an area to the east of Brentwood that includes the community of Knightsen.<sup>8</sup> Those two areas experience among the worst response times in the ECCFPD of 13:37 minutes and 18:18 minutes respectively (90% of responses fall within those times), which fall significantly below overall District times, and well-below national standards for “Best Practices.”

### RHFPD

One community in Rodeo has been identified as a disadvantaged community. The area is within one mile of RHFPD Station 75, and therefore response times for the first-arriving engine company should meet or exceed Best Practice norms. However, if Station 75 closes as a result of revenue shortfalls, the next closest station would be Station 76, over two miles away. Times required for arrival of additional engine companies in the event of a structure fire would increase as well.

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<sup>5</sup> Senate Bill 244: Land Use, General Plans, and Disadvantaged Communities, Technical Advisory, State of California Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

<sup>6</sup> Cal. Water Code § 79505.5. Qualifying MHI is 80% or less of Statewide MHI. California MHI is \$61,400 and qualifying MHI is \$49,120.

<sup>7</sup> Cal. Gov. Code § 56430, as amended by SB 244.

<sup>8</sup> “Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Determination”, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009 - 2013), County of Contra Costa.

## Infrastructure Needs

### **Nearly half of the fire stations in the County are over 40 years old and a significant number are in poor condition, needing repair or replacement.**

In some cases, for example the ECCFPD, many of the stations in need of repair or replacement currently are not staffed; however, with increased operating revenues and re-opened stations, planning for capital repair and replacement will become essential. Standards of Cover (SOC) studies, in East County and in West County, are necessary to identify priorities for station locations, staffing, equipment and other infrastructure decisions. ECCFPD commissioned an SOC, to be prepared by Citygate Associates, that will be completed in July 2016.

## Accountability

### **In the 2009 MSR, agencies demonstrated accountability based on standard measures, which generally remains true. The ECCFPD, however, suffers from a number of accountability issues.**

Most of the agencies reviewed follow Best Practices in terms of contested elections, constituent outreach efforts, transparency, and disclosure practices. The ECCFPD Board members are not directly elected, and are appointed by the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the cities of Brentwood and Oakley. ECCFPD's limited financial resources constrain the District's ability to prepare and update financial plans and audits and reports for public review, and limit the agencies' ability to maintain and update their websites with comprehensive information in a timely manner. Efforts are underway to stabilize ECCFPD's funding and to create a more representative elected Board.

While agencies adhere to generally accepted accounting practices for public entities, recent changes in standards issued by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) allow for the reporting of "net liabilities" for pension and OPEB plans.<sup>9</sup> While the "net" reporting helps to simplify the reporting process, it also reduces the availability of important information available to the public regarding total pension and OPEB assets and liabilities, and actual vs. total required payments. Agencies should include both the total and the net liabilities to provide maximum transparency and public information.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Statement No. 68, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pension—an Amendment of GASB Statement No. 27 (issued 6/12), Government Accounting Standards Board.

<sup>10</sup> Additional OPEB clarity can also be provided by compliance with recent GASB draft guidelines proposing that governments report OPEB liabilities on the face of the financial statement; GASB also recommends reporting of actual annual payments made for the prior two years, and the net OPEB obligation at the end of each year.



Current Task Force planning efforts to stabilize ECCFPD funding include requirements by the County to initiate action to change the existing Board of Directors from an appointed Board to an elected Board.

## **Governance Options**

### **ConFire**

The 2009 MSR presented a wide-ranging set of potential governance changes for the East and West County cities and districts; some were boundary cleanups, others were governance/reorganizations, and many involved ConFire's active participation.

Due to ConFire's continuing recovery from recent adverse financial conditions, its ability to undertake additional service areas or service responsibilities depends on receiving additional revenues sufficient to offset its additional costs. This means that any significant governance changes related to the RHFPD or the ECCFPD, the primary focus of this MSR, are likely to require that those agencies adopt special taxes or other new revenues that will enable a "revenue neutral" service arrangement with ConFire so that ConFire's existing services are not diminished.

### **ECCFPD**

The 2009 MSR proposed a number of potential governance options; however, no agency action has occurred since 2009 related to changes in governance. As summarized below and described in **Chapter 4**, significant changes in governance are not likely in the near-term; however, one viable option is the creation of an independent district (Option "d," below), currently an objective of the Task Force pursuing sustainable solutions for ECCFPD.

**a. Detachment from ECCFPD of either the City of Brentwood or the City of Oakley, or both** – If either or both cities detach, the remaining unincorporated area would essentially be a remnant district and would be financially unsustainable. In the event of detachment, the detaching city would be responsible for providing fire service within city boundaries either directly by forming a fire department or indirectly through a contract.

A detailed analysis of the impact of detachments has not been prepared; however, because Brentwood accounts for over 50 percent of the property taxes of the ECCFPD, the loss of revenues from detachment of Brentwood would not be offset by cost savings from detaching one fire station, or one-third of the total stations. In addition, it is unlikely there would be a reduction in overhead, thus the average cost per remaining ECCFPD station would increase. Because Oakley represents about 20% of assessed value, its detachment would present less of an impact on the remaining ECCFPD; however, the latter scenario is unlikely since Oakley's gain



in tax revenue would be insufficient to fund its station, and likely additional mitigation payments to ECCFPD would worsen Oakley's funding problem.

It is likely that LAFCO would allocate existing liabilities between the detaching entity and the remaining district; thus the detaching entities would not only assume the burden of annual operations, but would also be responsible for a share of current and long-term ECCFPD liabilities. LAFCO would determine this allocation, as well as any required mitigation payments, at the time of detachment.

**b. Consolidation of ECCFPD with ConFire** – This change of governance would require the cooperation of the ConFire governing board, which is the Contra Costa County BOS; however, the consolidation could effectively degrade the service levels to the ConFire service area, which would likely be unacceptable to the BOS. Without significant additional new taxes from ECCFPD residents, a financial drain on ConFire is likely due to outstanding pension and OPEB liabilities, and due to differentials in pay and benefits that would need to be reconciled.

**c. ECCFPD contract for service with CAL FIRE** – Financial savings are unlikely to result from this option given that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) costs are similar to ECCFPD's.<sup>11</sup> ECCFPD would also need to resolve costs associated with its unfunded pension and OPEB liabilities. Some efficiencies in administration are likely, considering CAL FIRE's administrative operations. Actual costs and benefits would require a detailed analysis of contract services and charges.

**d. Establish ECCFPD as an independent district** – This option is consistent with the original ECCFPD formation goals, and recognizes the current de facto organization that functions independently of the County.<sup>12</sup> However, this option alone does not alter the District's ability to increase revenues. This option, in conjunction with other revenue-related actions, is discussed below under "ECCFPD MSR Recommendations."

## **RHFPD**

The 2009 MSR considered a number of governance options; however, no agency action has occurred since 2009 related to changes in governance. Following is a review and update of potential options.

**a. Annexation of area served by Crockett-Carquinez FPD** – While there would be benefits to a unified command structure and some shared internal support services, the cost reductions (net of revenues) to the RHFPD would not be significant enough to overcome RHFPD's financial shortfalls. Increased financial

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<sup>11</sup> MRG/BA Interview with Chief Henderson, ECCFPD, November 24, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> LAFCO law defines an independent district as having a board elected by voters within its boundaries.

and operational efficiencies, in conjunction with other actions, could improve the long-term financial sustainability of RHFPD; however, there has been no activity in this area and neither of the agencies has expressed interest in pursuing it.

**b. Consolidation among West County fire providers** – Historically, major impediments to implementing this recommendation have included political, financial, operational, employee compensation and training differences, as well as an expressed lack of interest. Although the City of Pinole allowed its contract with the RHFPD for Fire Chief services to expire in 2013, and has been recruiting for a replacement Chief, they recently placed the recruitment on hold. The ConFire District Chief has approached both the City of Pinole and the RHFPD (who will have a Chief vacancy on May 1, 2016) and proposed a “shared Chief” opportunity for the RHFPD, the City of Pinole and ConFire. The “shared Chief” position would be a ConFire employee who would provide fire and EMS leadership to the three agencies. The agencies would share the costs of the position equally and receive ongoing service from the Chief in the position. This is a practical, easily implementable and cost-effective method of providing Chief-level leadership for these three agencies. Although significant long-term issues, including pay and benefit differentials, varying pension costs and unfunded OPEB obligations exist between RHFPD, ConFire and the City of Pinole, the “shared Chief” position will, if implemented, make a significant step in integrating the agencies in a functional manner.

Although a “grand solution” that includes a consolidation or annexation is highly unlikely to occur in the near-term, increased “functional” consolidation, which does not require governance changes, will provide a more efficient application of resources available in the West County area. Functional consolidation does not offset the inherent deficiencies of service that are created in RHFPD as a result of unfunded service demands and closed fire stations, but in conjunction with other actions, could improve the long-term financial sustainability of RHFPD.

## **MSR Recommendations**

### **ConFire**

Opportunities may exist whereby ConFire, by virtue of economies of scale, can provide a variety of services to smaller agencies in a cost-effective manner, as described below. ConFire’s assistance can help to reduce costs and improve the operating and administrative effectiveness of RHFPD and ECCFPD in particular, as one element of achieving long-term sustainability of those agencies.

**1. Services to RHFPD** – In the West County area there are opportunities for ConFire to assist RHFPD with organizational management, chief services, training, and facilities and equipment resourcing.

**2. City of Pinole** – Opportunities should be explored for potential utilization of a vacant station, organizational management, chief services, training, and facilities and equipment resourcing.

**3. Battalion 7 service area** – ConFire’s presence in the unincorporated areas of San Pablo provides opportunities for fire response coordination in the area.

**4. ECCFPD** – In East County, the significant impacts of automatic aid on ConFire when responding to requests for service from ECCFPD have taxed the resources available to the ConFire service area. As ECCFPD develops fiscal and operational resources, ConFire will be able to play a more complete role. ConFire already provides a number of technical and support activities for ECCFPD at the present time.

### **ECCFPD**

Current ECCFPD service levels are inadequate, and risk loss of life and property, and injury to firefighters if the District does not increase resources to reopen and staff fire stations. The ECCFPD, in collaboration with a Task Force of participating agencies, are working to address these issues. This MSR recommends the following as minimum steps to restore adequate service levels.

**1. Educate the community on the need for professional fire and emergency medical services** – Informed community participation is essential to the creation of a service plan, and to the review and development of funding sources as part of a long-term service and cost plan (see #4, below), improving the likelihood of support for a tax measure.

**2. Establish an independent ECCFPD governing board** – While an independent board does not guarantee increased revenues, the community will have a greater opportunity and ability to engage in District governance and support needed financial measures if the Board is elected locally and accountable to the community.

**3. Develop a long-range service and cost plan that ensures adequate service levels** – The ECCFPD has engaged a consulting firm to conduct a Standards of Cover (SOC) Study that will establish the basis for projecting service costs associated with the District’s service area over the long term. The costs for capital and operational needs identified in the SOC Study can provide a basis for constructing a financially viable long-range service plan for the ECCFPD, as well as provide support to the District in its efforts to justify and efficiently utilize increased revenues.

**4. Develop a funding plan for services that integrates the three governmental agencies’ powers to generate development-related revenues for ECCFPD and, to the extent possible, justifies the use of**

**additional tax revenues** – The funding plan, involving the County and the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley, will be based on the outcome of the SOC Study. Community education and involvement, described above, are essential to ensure community support for needed revenues, including tax measures. The ECCFPD does not have the ability to impose development impact fees, but can create a special tax with two-thirds voter approval. In any case, active engagement and support of the County and the Cities is essential to implementation of any new tax.

## **RHFPD**

The RHFPD budget will lose over \$2 million of annual grant and assessment revenues over the next one to two years, which will require closing of one of its two stations, resulting in significant reductions in service levels, increased response times, and additional risk of loss of property and life, as well as risks to firefighters. The following steps represent the minimum actions needed to address this situation.

**1. Pursue new RHFPD funding sources** – The RHFPD should pursue voter approval of a special tax measure, which would require a two-thirds voter approval. The tax revenues, in addition to potential cost savings from operational efficiencies, could significantly improve the RHFPD’s ability to sustain adequate levels of service.

As part of the planning efforts for a tax measure, RHFPD should participate in a SOC Study for the West County area to identify operational improvements and other measures to ensure efficient and cost-effective use of existing and new financial resources.

**2. Create a Battalion 7/West County Fire and Emergency Services Task Force** – Establish a Battalion 7/West County Fire and Emergency Services Task Force with representatives from all of the involved jurisdictions. The Task Force would be requested to meet regularly to develop, review and implement a regional SOC Study, apply for grants, refine operational practices and develop cooperative agreements to improve services through collaborative efforts described further in the MSR Determinations in **Chapter 7**.

**3. Undertake a West County SOC Study** – The study would objectively review the current level of fire and rescue services in the studied communities. The SOC analysis will identify the service area’s strengths, deficiencies and areas of overlap. The results of the SOC Study could be used to improve the coordinated services in West County and form the basis for implementation of further service efficiencies, as well as to document service standards and improvements that support the RHFPD request for special tax revenue from voters.

## **SOI Recommendations**

### **ConFire**

ConFire should further investigate the feasibility of annexing several unserved areas in the County that currently are not within the bounds of a fire service agency, including refineries (e.g., Tesoro). These annexations will be contingent on ConFire receiving adequate revenues, through a combination of property tax and service agreements, to offset increased costs.

### **ECCFPD**

This MSR recommends that the current ECCFPD SOI be designated as “provisional,” requiring that the ECCFPD report back to LAFCO on at least an annual basis to inform LAFCO as to the ECCFPD’s progress in implementing the recommendations of this MSR, and in meeting the objectives of independent governance, adequacy of services, and long-term financial sustainability.

As described above in “ECCFPD MSR Recommendations,” this MSR recommends that the ECCFPD address its financial and service deficiencies by becoming an independent district with a directly elected board and a revenue stream adequate to support an acceptable level of fire and emergency medical services. The success of this strategy depends on increased support from the cities in the District, as well as public support for special tax increases. Reductions in its current service boundary, as discussed in the “Governance Options” section, above, would adversely affect the District’s financial position and ability to achieve independent status.

Current facility and service deficiencies indicate an inability of the District to provide adequate services, as stated in the determinations; affirmation of the current SOI would be inconsistent with these determinations.

### **RHFPD**

This MSR recommends that the current RHFPD SOI be designated as “provisional,” requiring that the RHFPD report back to LAFCO on at least an annual basis to inform LAFCO as to the RHFPD’s progress in implementing the recommendations of this MSR, and in meeting the objectives of adequacy of services and long-term financial sustainability.

As indicated in the “RHFPD Governance Options” discussion, significant annexations or consolidations among West County agencies are unlikely due to the perpetuation of current financial shortfalls, as well as a lack of interest among agencies. However, full consolidation is not required for the involved agencies to implement cooperative staff sharing, contracts for service, expanded automatic aid

and coordinated response agreements to improve the services provided to the communities they serve.

While the RHFPD currently is providing adequate services, increased demands as well as the impending loss of over \$2 million in grant and assessment revenues will force the closure of one of its two stations, significantly lengthening response times, reducing the ability to respond to multiple simultaneous incidents, and reducing the District's ability to provide needed aid to nearby agencies.

Affirmation of the current RHFPD SOI would be inconsistent with the near-term risk of significant service inadequacies if only one station is staffed.

Alternatively, LAFCO could consider a "zero SOI" designation, signaling that the District's services will ultimately be provided by another agency. However, there are no current prospects for service by another agency given RHFPD's service deficiencies, financial obligations and impending reductions in funding. Through a successful combination of actions as recommended in this MSR, including support for new taxes and increased collaboration among West County agencies, the District will be in a much better position of financial sustainability, and potential service area changes will be more viable at that point in time.

## 2. LAFCO AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEWS

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The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (“CKH Act” - Gov. Code § 56000, et seq.) requires that every five years, as necessary, LAFCO review and update the SOI of each local agency. An SOI is a planning boundary outside of an agency’s legal boundary (such as the city limit line or district boundary) that designates the agency’s probable future boundary and service area. Factors considered in an SOI review focus on the current and future land uses, the current and future need and capacity for service, and any relevant communities of interest.

As part of the SOI update, LAFCO must prepare a corresponding MSR. An MSR is a comprehensive study designed to better inform LAFCO, local agencies, and the community about the provision of municipal services. Service reviews attempt to capture and analyze information about the governance structures and efficiencies of service providers, and to identify opportunities for greater coordination and cooperation among providers. The service review is a prerequisite to an SOI determination and may also lead LAFCO to take other actions under its authority.<sup>13</sup>

In 2009, Contra Costa LAFCO completed a comprehensive, Countywide MSR covering EMS and fire services in Contra Costa County.<sup>14</sup> The current “2<sup>nd</sup> Round MSR” is focused on: (1) data updates for the 11 fire service providers (three cities and eight special districts), (2) review of automatic and mutual aid agreements, and (3) focus on ECCFPD and RHFPD, and the interface of those agencies with ConFire.

The authors of the current MSR established a base of data covering all municipal fire service/EMS providers in Contra Costa County, drawing upon responses and follow-up to a LAFCO Request for Information distributed in the Fall of 2015. Additional research was conducted for the two MSR focus agencies to obtain more detailed data. Interviews and meetings were held with the focus agencies, as well as ConFire and other fire/EMS agencies in the County, and officials of affected cities served by the focus agencies (including the Cities of Brentwood, Oakley, Hercules and Pinole). EMS and fire service providers also had the opportunity to review and comment on working drafts of the current MSR.

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<sup>13</sup> “What is LAFCo?,” CALAFCO website, <http://www.calafco.org/about.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> See “Fire and Emergency Service Providers,” [http://www.conracoalafco.org/municipal\\_service\\_reviews.htm](http://www.conracoalafco.org/municipal_service_reviews.htm).

## **SERVICE AREAS AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE**

The 2009 MSR proposed a number of governance and SOI changes to fire services and EMS in the County. A Fire Committee, formed following the presentation of the MSR to Contra Costa County LAFCO in April 2009, met five times in 2009 to review governance and SOI options, and other sub-regional and regional issues.<sup>15</sup> The Fire Committee provided a number of policy and SOI recommendations, including a recommendation that a West County Ad Hoc Committee be formed to develop a work plan to address issues identified in the MSR. A number of SOI changes, which were largely “clean up” to reflect actual areas of service delivery, were subsequently adopted by LAFCO (see **Appendix C**).

The Fire Committee’s recommendations and LAFCO’s SOI actions specifically excluded from ConFire’s SOI the western boundary areas (i.e., City of San Pablo, and unincorporated areas including Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Montalvin Manor, North Richmond, and Tara Hills) in anticipation of a future West County consolidation. LAFCO deferred SOI updates for the Crockett-Carquinez Fire Protection District (CCFPD), Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD), and RHFPD pending the formation of a West County Ad Hoc Committee to address issues raised in the 2009 MSR; no committee was formed. No consolidation study or other efforts occurred subsequent to the 2009 MSR due to lack of interest on the part of the service providers.

## **DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

Since the preparation of the 2009 MSR, State law has added a requirement that MSRs consider disadvantaged communities. The requirement resulted from Senate Bill 244 (Wolk, 2011) (SB 244), a law addressing disadvantaged communities. A “disadvantaged community” is defined as a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income (Water Code Section 79505.5). A disadvantaged community is also defined as “a territory that constitutes all or a portion of a “disadvantaged community” including 12 or more registered voters or some other standard as determined by the commission.<sup>16</sup>

California Government Code Section 56430, as amended by SB 244, now requires LAFCOs to include in the MSR a description of the “location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere

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<sup>15</sup> “Supplemental Report – Fire & Emergency Medical Services Sphere of Influence Updates,” letter from Lou Ann Texeira, Executive Officer to the LAFCO Commission, October 14, 2009 (agenda item).

<sup>16</sup> Senate Bill 244: Land Use, General Plans, and Disadvantaged Communities, Technical Advisory, State of California Office of Planning and Research (OPR).



of influence.”<sup>17</sup> The MSR must also contain specific written determinations on infrastructure needs or deficiencies related to public facilities and services, including but not limited to sewer, water, and fire protection services in any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides those services.

The County of Contra Costa has catalogued and mapped disadvantaged communities. Disadvantaged communities within the MSR areas of focus, namely the ECCFPD and the RHFPD, are discussed in the respective chapters for each of those agencies. **Appendix B** includes a list of disadvantaged communities in the County, and the fire service agency responsible for each one.

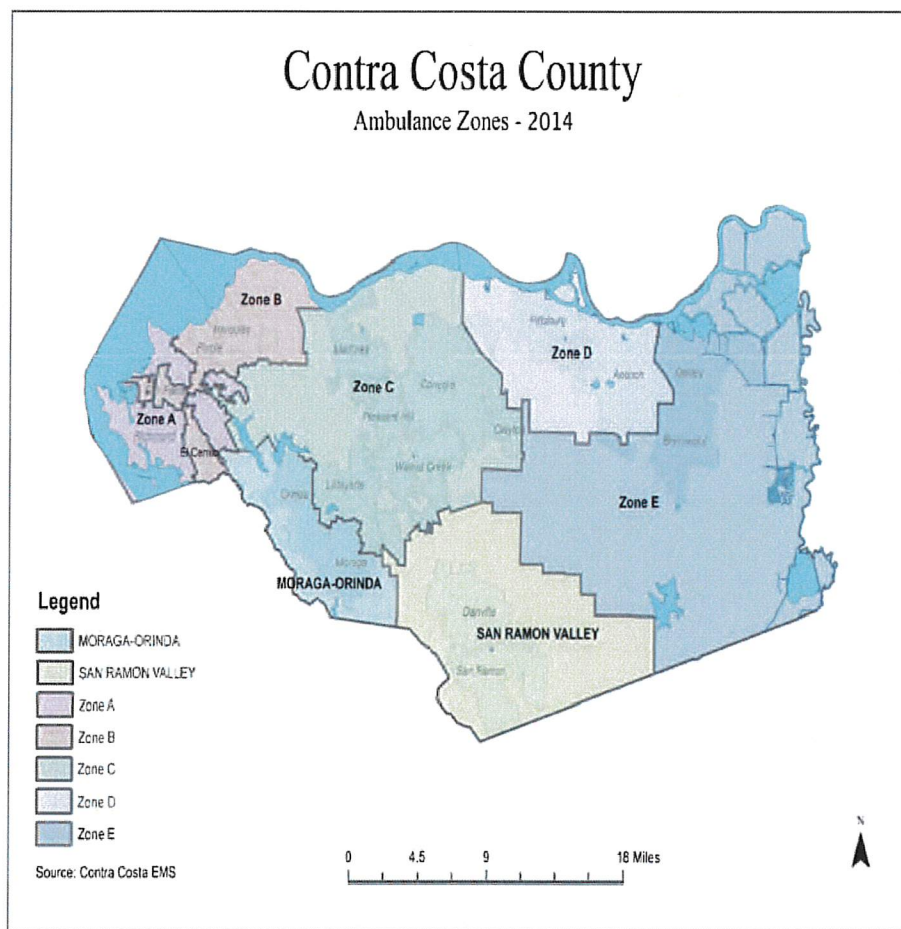
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<sup>17</sup> Cal. Gov. Code, § 56430(a)(2).

### 3. OVERVIEW OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

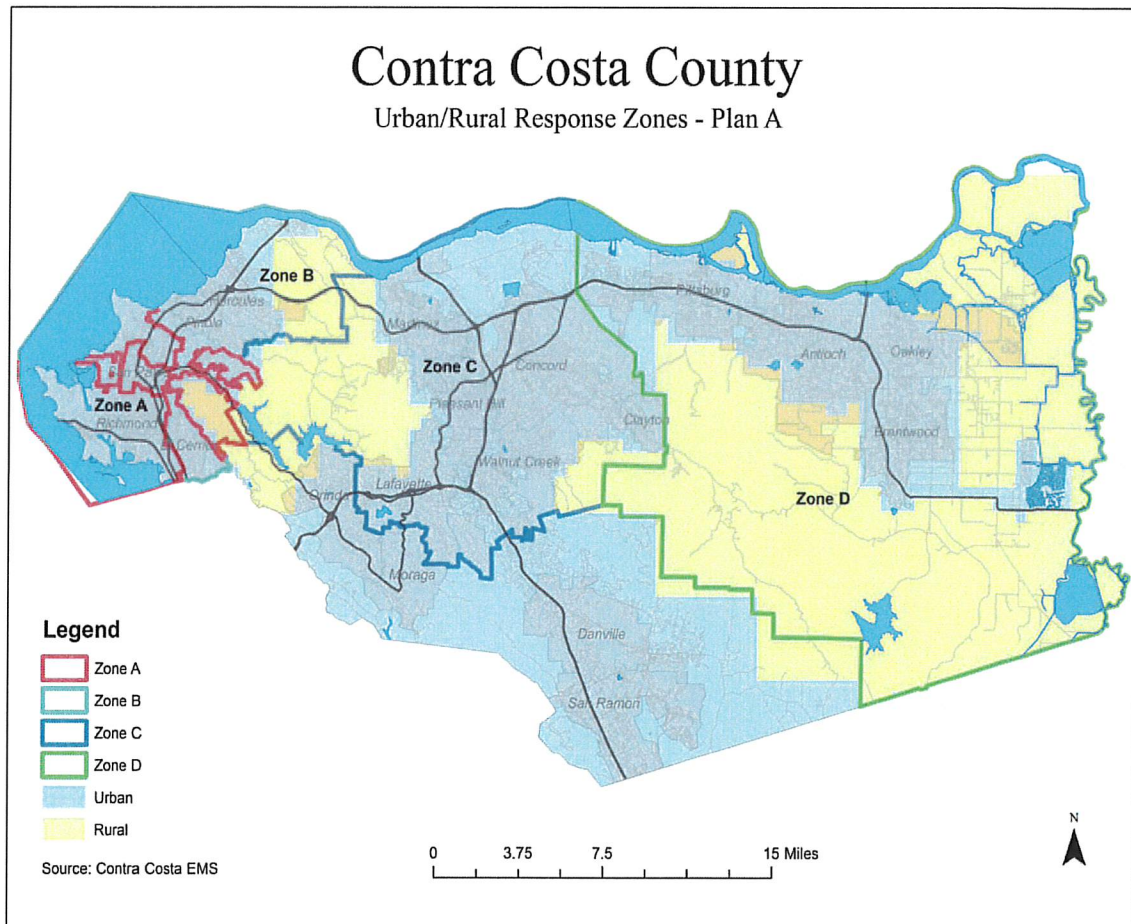
Designated by the County BOS, Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) serves as the local emergency medical services agency (the “EMS Agency,” or “LEMSA”). The County awards exclusive ambulance operating contracts through a competitive process for all Emergency Response Zones (ERZs). **Figure 2a**, below, shows 2014 zones that were the basis for the response time data contained in this report.

**Figure 2a**  
**Contra Costa County Ambulance Zones – 2014**



**Figure 2b** shows consolidated zones as currently configured. The ERZ served by the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD), a non-competitive ERZ, is not subject to the EMS Agency bidding process. The ERZs were re-configured to reflect population growth and current EMS ambulance utilization; the revised ERZs and applicable response time requirements provide expanded urban response to growing areas previously deemed rural. The ERZs and related response time requirements were also designed to provide cost savings to EMS ambulance providers to preserve an emergency ambulance service model that could sustain itself on insurance reimbursement alone.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 2b**  
**Contra Costa County Ambulance Zones – Current**



<sup>18</sup> Patricia Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa County Health Services Dept., email correspondence 2016-05-13 and 2016-06-24.

Emergency ambulance service delivery contracts require compliance with standards for response time, staffing, training and equipment. These competitively awarded ambulance contracts are performance based; that is, the ambulance service provider must put in whatever resources are necessary to comply with response time and contract requirements, including appropriate resources for training, clinical care, equipment, and vehicles.<sup>19</sup> The EMS Agency (CCHS) is the BOS's designated contract manager for ambulance services and reviews ConFire and all EMS System emergency performance and ambulance service performance. Performance monitoring for independent fire districts providing EMS ambulance services is a responsibility shared by those fire districts and the EMS Agency.

As described in the 2009 MSR,<sup>20</sup> all areas in the County continue to be served by ambulances staffed with two full-time personnel, including at least one paramedic qualified to deliver Advanced Life Support (ALS) services.<sup>21</sup> The ambulances provide transport, as needed, to local emergency hospitals. Effective January 2016, a new contract went into effect between ConFire and AMR which provides that ConFire can directly dispatch individual AMR ambulances.

Fire departments in nearly all areas of the County, with three exceptions, staff their engines with at least one firefighter licensed as a paramedic who can provide ALS services directly upon arrival of the first fire unit, in advance of arrival of an ambulance, if needed.

Three fire departments provide Basic Life Support (BLS) services only;<sup>22</sup> these departments include the City of Richmond, ECCFPD, and Crockett-Carquinez FPD. In Richmond, the County has set higher ambulance response standards to assure ALS response to immediately follow the initial BLS aid provided by the Richmond Fire Department, because the Richmond Fire Department does not provide ALS. However, the Richmond Fire Department is on a path to become Advanced EMT within the next 24 months. ECCFPD is also adding advanced skills to its EMT level staff to provide enhanced services.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Correspondence with Pat Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa Health Services, April 15, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> "Municipal Service Review: Fire and Emergency Medical Service Providers," Accepted by LAFCO August 12, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> ALS services are provided at the EMT-Paramedic level of care and involve the provision of advanced airway control, select pharmacologic interventions, and select invasive procedures, as well as cardiac monitoring and defibrillation (source: "EMS Modernization Report," Fitch & Associates, June 2014).

<sup>22</sup> BLS services are defined as the level of care that can be provided by an Emergency Medical Technician Basic (EMT-B). BLS services are limited to a basic level of patient intervention to include oxygen administration, splinting, bandaging, CPR, airway control, etc. Few (if any) pharmacological agents are allowed. Automated External Defibrillation (AED) may be provided at the EMT-B level; cardiac monitoring and advanced cardiac interventions are not.

<sup>23</sup> Correspondence with Pat Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa Health Services, April 15, 2016.

Two of the first responders—San Ramon Valley FPD (SRVFPD) and MOFD – staff their own ambulance companies directly with licensed paramedics, and all others rely on Alliance ambulances (CCFPD ambulance services provided by AMR).

In 2014, the County commissioned a study by Fitch & Associates<sup>24</sup> to understand the current EMS System functions and performance levels and to identify trends to guide recommendations for optimizing future EMS System operations.

Measures recommended in the Fitch Report to reduce EMS System costs included the following:

- consolidating the ERZs into three zones to create cost savings and efficiencies, by merging response zones A and B and response zones D and E;<sup>25</sup>
- establishing consistent response times and staffing requirements for the entire County;<sup>26</sup>
- lengthening response times requirements by 60 seconds;<sup>27</sup>
- eliminating Quick Response Vehicle (QRV) units;<sup>28</sup>
- allowing first response to be provided at the BLS level, which has been shown to be effective when followed by a paramedic ambulance;<sup>29</sup> and
- dispatching first responders only on calls where they are likely to be beneficial to the patients.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "EMS Modernization Report," Fitch & Associates, June 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Merging of response zones to D and E occurred effective January 2016 (P. Frost, April 15, 2016). Under the new agreement the County may elect to merge response zones A and B during the term of the contract if desired.

<sup>26</sup> A 1:1 ratio, or 1 EMT and 1 paramedic staffing, was made countywide with the new Alliance agreement (P. Frost, Director of EMS, April 15, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> This was elected NOT to be done at this time, but can be phased in over time if sustainability of ambulance services is at risk. The evidence and use of EMS in the County demonstrates this would be safe when paired with fire first medical response. It is also very important to note that ambulance response times were modified based on population growth; in East County the urban ambulance requirements added more ambulances (P. Frost, Director of EMS, April 15, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Quick response vehicles were eliminated and replaced with ambulance services along with expanded urban response zones, especially in East County (P. Frost, Director of EMS, April 15, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Correspondence with Patricia Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa Health Services, April 15, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Alliance model allows for that efficiency to occur. Co-location of fire and ambulance dispatch began in January 2016 to facilitate ambulance dispatch (P. Frost, Director of EMS, April 15, 2016).

## EMS DISPATCH

As described in a 2012 report by the County's Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMSA) to LAFCO:

*When a medically-related 9-1-1 call occurs in Contra Costa County, the call is routed to one of three designated fire/medical dispatch centers located at Contra Costa County Fire, San Ramon Valley Fire, and Richmond Police. There, specially-trained dispatchers systematically assess the medical needs based on information the caller provides, assigns a dispatch priority to the call, dispatches the appropriate EMS resources and may provide emergency first aid directions to the caller. A typical emergency call receives a fire engine first response and an ambulance, both dispatched immediately with lights and siren (Code 3). In some cases, where the dispatcher determines the call is less urgent and less complex, an ambulance alone may be dispatched without lights and siren.<sup>31</sup>*

The new contract between ConFire and its private ambulance provider AMR under the Alliance ambulance model provides that ConFire can directly dispatch individual AMR ambulances, depending on the incident's need and location. Previously, the County contracted with AMR, which dispatched the ambulance. Under the new system, ConFire anticipates improved response times, and reduced needs, and in some cases, expects to dispatch an engine company, since ConFire dispatch will have better information about ambulance locations and the ability to respond in a timely manner when making initial response decisions. This model also gives the opportunity for ConFire to deploy ambulance-only for low acuity calls. Currently the vast majority of 9-1-1 calls are Code 3 when many times they can be Code 2 ambulance only.<sup>32</sup> This improved fire/EMS dispatch arrangement only applies in areas where ConFire provides fire and ambulance dispatch; it does not apply in Richmond, where the City of Richmond dispatches fire and then ConFire dispatches the ambulance.<sup>33</sup>

LEMSA contract data on the effects of the new ConFire/AMR contract will be finalized for the first six months of the contract by August, so the impact on response times is not yet known. Because the new dispatch arrangement has only been in effect for less than one year, full realization of potential benefits may

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<sup>31</sup> "The Relationship of Fire First Response to Emergency Medical Services," Report to the Local Agency Formation Commission, Contra Costa Health Services, Emergency Medical Services Agency, August 8, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Correspondence with Patricia Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa Health Services, April 15, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Patricia Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa County Health Services Dept., email correspondence 2016-05-13 and 2016-06-24.

require more time. Regardless of changes in response times, the EMS Agency anticipates that the new ConFire/AMR arrangement will result in a level of service at least equal to the level of service prior to the changes as a result of expanded urban response, and co-location of ConFire/AMR dispatch.

Although AMR does not provide ambulance service within MOFD territory (MOFD provides its own ambulance service), the new ConFire/AMR arrangement offers the potential to improve mutual aid response to medical emergencies, between areas of ConFire and MOFD. A new ambulance mutual aid agreement between ConFire, MOFD and San Ramon Fire was a requirement of the County's RFP for ambulance service, to help assure improved coordination of ambulance services.

Release of emergency ambulance mutual aid is controlled through "resource requesting" using the Medical Health Operating Area Coordinator for out of County requests.

## **EMS STAFFING**

At least one paramedic-trained crewmember staffs all emergency ambulances and most fire first responder units. All responders, whether paramedic or EMT I, are trained and equipped to perform most immediately needed lifesaving first aid measures such as controlling bleeding, opening and maintaining an airway, providing cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and performing cardiac defibrillation. Only advanced EMT and paramedics can administer drugs and perform certain other Advanced Life Support procedures.<sup>34</sup> The Advanced EMT (AEMT) position has been identified by Contra Costa EMS as an option for fire first responder agencies who wish to provide a level of advanced life support (can give medications and do some paramedic functions but not all) as a more efficient staffing model.<sup>35</sup> Richmond Fire is exploring this option. About 5-10% of an urban EMS system's calls actually require interventions at an ALS level.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> "The Relationship of Fire First Response to Emergency Medical Services."

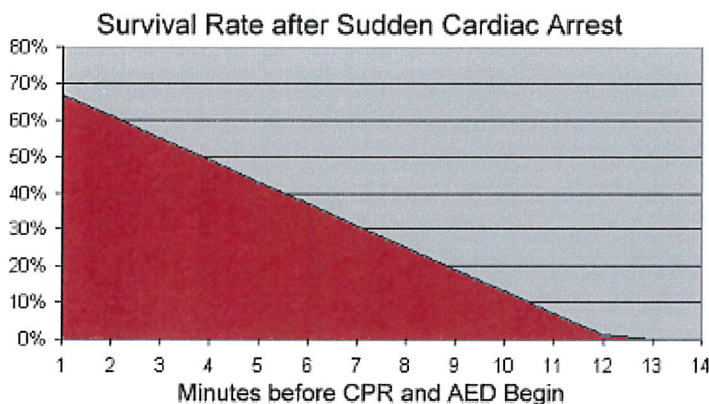
<sup>35</sup> Correspondence with Patricia Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa Health Services, April 15, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> 2014 Contra Costa EMS System Performance Report.



## EMS RESPONSE TIMES AND STANDARDS

Response times can have a critical impact on mortality rates. For example, the following graphic illustrates survival rates to a cardiac event.



**Table 1a**, below, displays ambulance response time standards applicable to each zone in 2014, the percentage of responses that should meet the standard, and the actual compliance with the standard. The urban standards exceed national standards of 12 minutes for urban areas. As noted previously, the standards that emergency ambulances are required to achieve are higher in the City of Richmond because the City does not provide paramedics on its first response fire engine.

**Table 1a**  
**Ambulance Response Time Standards (Priority 1) – 2014**

ERZ Provider	Geographic Area	Urban	Rural	Response %	2014 Actual Compliance %
ERZ A (AMR)	City of Richmond	10:00	20:00	95%	96%
ERZ B (AMR)	West County (non-Richmond)	11:45	20:00	90%	96%
ERZ C (AMR)	Central County	11:45	20:00	90%	94%
ERZ D (AMR)	Antioch, Bay Point, Pittsburg area	11:45	20:00	90%	93%
ERZ E (AMR)	East Contra Costa County	11:45	16:45 <sup>2</sup> Suburban 20:00 Rural	90%	92%
ERZ Moraga Orinda	Moraga Orinda <sup>3</sup>	11:59	20:00	90%	92%
ERZ San Ramon	San Ramon Valley <sup>3</sup>	10:00	20:00	95%	97%

Source: 2014 Contra Costa EMS System Performance Report

1) Current ambulance response performance requirements for the contracted ambulance provider

2) Includes Bethel Island and Discovery Bay

3) A fire protection district provides emergency ambulance service in this zone, rather than CSA-EM1.

The new ambulance contract with ConFire/AMR, effective January 2016, required new standards applicable to the current ambulance zones shown in **Figure 2b**. The standards and response zones reflect adjusted urban response zones based on population growth and community utilization of emergency ambulance services for



the communities served.<sup>37</sup> **Table 1b** shows the ambulance response times as required by the County in the new contract.

**Table 1b**  
**Ambulance Response Time Standards – 2016**

Priority Level	ERZ	Compliance	High Call Density Urban/Suburban	Low Call Density Rural
Priority 1	A	90%	≤ 10:00	N/A
Priority 1	B, C, D	90%	≤ 11:45	≤ 20:00
Priority 1	D (Bethel Island)	90%	≤ 16:45	N/A
Priority 2	A, B, C, D	90%	≤ 15:00	≤ 30:00
Priority 2	D (Bethel Island)	90%	≤ 20:00	N/A
Priority 3	A, B, C, D	90%	≤ 30:00	≤ 45:00
Priority 4	A, B, C, D	90%	+/- 15 minutes (scheduled) or ≤ 60:00 minutes	N/A

**Table 2**, below, shows average response times for ambulance service providers, as reported in the Contra Costa EMS Performance Report for 2014. The times shown represent averages. The Report did not indicate the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile and 95<sup>th</sup> percentile response times, which are the basis for the standards shown in the prior table; however, in all cases, the actual compliance met or exceeded the required standard. The County is in the process of evaluating response times under the new contract, but the results are not available at the time this report was prepared.

**Table 2**  
**Ambulance Response Performance by Zone and Service Provider**

ERZ Provider	Geographic Area	Avg. Code 3 Response Time
ERZ A (AMR)	City of Richmond	4:58
ERZ B (AMR)	West County (non-Richmond)	4:46
ERZ C (AMR)	Central County	5:23
ERZ D (AMR)	Antioch, Bay Point, Pittsburg area	5:06
ERZ E (AMR)	East Contra Costa County	6:24
ERZ Moraga Orinda	Moraga Orinda Fire Protection District <sup>3</sup>	5:33
ERZ San Ramon	San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District <sup>3</sup>	4:20

Source: 2014 Contra Costa EMS System Performance Report

<sup>37</sup> Patricia Frost, Director of EMS, Contra Costa County Health Services Dept., email correspondence 2016-05-13 and 2016-06-24.

## MEASURE H EMS FUNDING

Measure H, adopted by Countywide vote in 1988, established an annual parcel charge to provide for "...improvements in emergency medical and trauma care system including expanded countywide paramedic coverage; improved medical communications and medical dispatcher training; and medical equipment and supplies and training for firefighter first responders, including training and equipment for fire services electing to undertake a specialized program of advanced cardiac care (defibrillation)."

CSA EM-1 was formed with two zones, Zone A, which is all of San Ramon Valley Fire and Zone B, which is the remainder of the County. The basic assessment rate for Zone B is \$10.00 per single-family residence, and \$3.94 per single-family residence in Zone A. The lower rate in Zone A reflects that level of EMS enhancement funding approved by the San Ramon voters and governing boards in 1988. The primary purpose of Measure H was to provide funding for "paramedic ambulance services" countywide. The majority of Measure H funding between 1988 and 2004 funded paramedic ambulance services provided by the private contractor AMR.

In 2004, the Measure H funding that subsidized the private ambulance service provider was shifted to support fire first responder paramedic services as part of the new County ambulance contract. Until 2013, Measure H provided an annual subsidy of \$30,000 per paramedic-staffed fire engine for all Zone B fire agencies. In May 2013, the County Board of Supervisors approved a population-based formula that provides funding to all Zone B fire first responder agencies regardless of engine staffing.<sup>38</sup> The new formula was a response to engine reductions that many agencies suffered during the downturn, and helped to preserve funding levels.

As reported by the Contra Costa EMS, "In 2014, Measure H assessments generated approximately \$4.7 million. Currently, fire districts receive 60% of that revenue for first-responder EMS programs. The remaining funds support EMS system programs (17%), which include Trauma, Stroke, STEMI,<sup>39</sup> EMS for Children, Quality, Disaster Preparedness, Patient Safety programs; and multi-casualty and medical mutual aid dispatch from the Contra Costa Sheriff's Office (5%), with the remainder allocated for other services."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> "Guidelines for Fire First Medical Response Population Based Allocation County Service Area EM1 (Measure H) Funds," July 5, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> "STEMI" is an acronym for ST-elevation myocardial infarction, the most severe type of heart attack.

<sup>40</sup> 2014 Contra Costa EMS System Performance Report.

## COUNTY AMBULANCE CONTRACT

The County of Contra Costa recently entered into an exclusive agreement for ambulance services with ConFire, pursuant to a Request for Proposals process. The agreement is a "performance-based agreement (Agreement) for the provision of (1) a ground emergency medical transportation system at a "paramedic Advanced Life Support" (ALS) level of service; and (2) non-emergency inter-facility paramedic ALS ambulance transports originating in Contra Costa County ...."<sup>41</sup>

ConFire and its private subcontractor AMR provide ambulance service to County areas not served by the MOFD and the SRVFPD, which provide their own ambulance service. The five-year agreement assigns responsibility for billing and insurance reimbursements to ConFire, while AMR provides ambulance and paramedics for a fixed unit hour fee. The partnership includes a combined dispatch center that is "forecast to reduce response times by 30 seconds and lessen the need to dispatch firefighters to non-emergency medical calls." Additionally, with the County now running its ambulance program, it could qualify for a State program that offers partial reimbursements for the medical transport of certain Medi-Cal recipients".<sup>42</sup> These Federal matching funds are also available only to public entities.<sup>43</sup>

Under the new system, ConFire dispatches the ambulance, rather than the prior system that required 9-1-1 calls to be transferred to ConFire, followed by ConFire notification of AMR. It is expected that this system will enable ConFire to avoid dispatching firefighters to incidents where they are not required, thus freeing up the firefighters and equipment for fires and other emergencies.

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<sup>41</sup> "Request for Proposals, Exclusive Operator for Emergency Ambulance Service, Contra Costa County, California," February 27, 2015.

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.fireengineering.com/articles/2015/11/contra-costa-approves-ambulance-contract.html>, November 26, 2015. Note: this funding is limited to regular MediCal. Managed MediCal is not eligible to qualify for federal funds at this time (P. Frost, April 15, 2016).

<sup>43</sup> Private ambulance companies are not eligible for the government Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) reimbursement program – a federal match, up to costs incurred, for providing approved services.

## 4. OVERVIEW OF FIRE SERVICES

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### **FIRE SERVICE PROVIDERS**

As shown in **Table 3**, below, the total number of special district and city fire stations serving Contra Costa County has remained relatively constant since the 2009 MSR, excluding ECCFPD and ConFire. **Appendix D** provides information about individual stations, and changes since 2009.

By the time the 2009 MSR was finalized in April 2009, station closures had begun. Recent growth in revenues and property taxes has provided for the re-opening of some stations; however, certain districts continue to face financial difficulties, including the ECCFPD and the RHFPD. ECCFPD plans to re-open one station for one year as a result of an inter-agency Task Force funding plan. RHFPD anticipates possible closure of one of its two stations when current grant funding terminates near the end of FY 2015-16 and SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant funds have been depleted.

In addition to special districts and city fire departments, there are a number of other service providers that contribute to related emergency services in the County, and cooperate with the special districts and cities.<sup>44</sup> These agencies include:

**CAL FIRE**, which has primary responsibility for wildland fires in State Responsibility Areas (SRAs). CAL FIRE's role and responsibility, and relationship to local agencies, is further described in this chapter below, under the heading "Wildland Fire Response."

**East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)**, which provides fire suppression, prevention, BLS for medical emergencies, rescue, and initial hazardous materials response to the regional parks within Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, and serves as the first-in responder to designated non-park SRA lands by contract with CAL FIRE. ConFire remains the "Authority Having Jurisdiction" (AHJ), and is responsible, along with other local agencies, for responding to the majority of fire, EMS, and rescue services to EBRPD lands, particularly given EBRPD's limited equipment and response capacity.<sup>45</sup>

**Federal Fire Department, Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO)**, which provides fire protection to the MOTCO facility with two engine companies operating

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<sup>44</sup> The 2009 MSR provides additional information about these emergency service providers.

<sup>45</sup> Correspondence with Lewis Broschard III, Deputy Fire Chief, ConFire, April 18, 2016.

out of two fire stations. The MOTCO facility consists of an approximately 7,600-acre area, formerly known as the “Naval Weapon Station Concord Tidal Area.”

**Private Fire Brigades** – Within Contra Costa County, there are four fuel refineries (Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Shell, and Tesoro), one large chemical plant complex (Dow Chemical), and one large sugar processing plant (C&H Sugar). C&H Sugar and Tesoro lie outside any fire district boundary in unincorporated areas of the County. One refinery, Chevron, has a full-time, paid fire department. The others operate fire brigades, with a manager functioning as the Fire Chief in addition to other duties. **Appendix E** provides additional information about refinery brigades and services.

Presently, local government fire service agencies are expected to respond to both routine and major emergencies at all these facilities to provide personnel, equipment, ALS first-responder medical care, ALS ambulance transport, and fire investigation. These responses are provided either through automatic-aid, mutual-aid, or as the AHJ.

Mutual Aid from the refineries is infrequent and only Chevron could provide services other than petro-chemical emergency response off-site. These facilities have the operational and overhead capacity to handle small incidents without mutual aid from local government agencies. Medium and large incidents require support and management from local agencies. Large incidents, particularly those involving off-site releases, require the use of an incident management team (IMT), the activation of emergency operations center(s) (EOCs), and public information functions. These are not presently well defined or exercised.<sup>46</sup>

**The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)**, which serves as a first responder for incidents involving injuries, loss of life or damage to vessels on the waterways and off of the coast of Contra Costa County.

**The Parks Reserve Forces Training Area** (Camp Parks), which is also a provider of fire services at the U.S. Army facility located within the service area of SRVFPD and near the City of Dublin.

**The Contra Costa County Sheriff Marine Unit**, which serves as law enforcement for abandoned vessels and crimes committed on Contra Costa waterways, but which is also the primary first responder for incidents involving injuries and boating accidents in the waterways.

**The Contra Costa County Health Services Department**, which provides specialized hazardous materials response.

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<sup>46</sup> Source: Fire Chief Stephen Healy, MOFD, Contra Costa County Operational Area Mutual Aid Coordinator; Lewis Broschard III, Deputy Chief, ConFire. See attached Appendix for additional information about initial attack responsibilities.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of Service Provider Stations, 2009 MSR vs. 2015**

AREA Agency	Staffed Stations		Total Stations
	2009	2015	
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>			
City of Richmond	7	7	7
City of El Cerrito	2	2	2
City of Pinole	2	1	2
Kensington FPD	1	1	1
Rodeo-Hercules FPD	2	2	2
Crockett-Carquinez FPD (2)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Subtotal	15	14	17
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>			
San Ramon Valley FPD (1)	9	9	11
Moraga-Orinda FD	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Subtotal	14	14	16
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>			
East Contra Costa FPD	8	3	8
<b>OTHER</b>			
Contra Costa County FPD (ConFire) (1)	28	24	29
<b>TOTAL (3)</b>	65	55	70

(1) Includes stations staffed with reserves (ConFire Stations 19, and SRVFPD Stations 37, 40).

ConFire Station #18 is being sold (as of 4/18/16), and is excluded.

(2) CCFPD 2015 total includes 1 staffed, 1 unstaffed, and one utilized by AMR (#79) pre-2016.

(3) The Sunshine Station, staffed by CAL FIRE, serves the Morgan Territory from May-Nov.

### **FIRE AGENCY SERVICE AREAS AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE**

The 2009 MSR recommended changes to SOIs; LAFCO adopted SOI updates for CSA EM-1, ConFire, ECCFPD, MOFD, and SRVFPD, as summarized in **Appendix C**. The changes sought to align boundaries with land use development and service responsibilities of the primary service provider; the changes were not associated with major organizational changes (consolidations, etc.). LAFCO deferred SOI updates for the West County agencies (i.e., CCFPD, KFPD, and RHFPD) in anticipation of the West County agencies forming an Ad Hoc Committee to pursue issues raised in the 2009 MSR. Also, LAFCO updated the SOIs for the Cities of El Cerrito, Pinole and Richmond in conjunction with the 2009 West County Sub-regional MSR covering city services.

## **FIRE AGENCY SERVICE AGREEMENTS**

Local fire agencies have entered into a number of agreements, both formal and informal, to augment existing services and help to jointly handle hazards that may be beyond the capability of any single agency. These agreements, in some cases, also provide for the sharing of various functions such as training, dispatch, and administrative services. These agreements are discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 8**.

## **WILDLAND FIRE RESPONSE**

The 10 fire station closures since the 2009 MSR had a significant impact on responses to all call types within the entire fire service emergency response network in Contra Costa County.

All wildland resources are cross-staffed by fire personnel who also staff structural firefighting apparatus, including engines and trucks. The closure of fire stations and lack of funding to reopen those stations increases the workload on the remaining companies, creating a very busy response network. Because the resources are cross-staffed, when a fire engine is on an EMS call it is unavailable as a wildland engine resource.

A high call volume caused by station closures affects the entire system. Increased resources are necessary to respond to wildland fires, as well as all other call types, because of the inter-related staffing.

In addition to a reduced number of stations, environmental factors have had a detrimental effect on wildland fire response. The increase in temperatures, longer wildland fire seasons, and the drought have all increased the number and complexity of wildland incidents. These increases, in turn, negatively affect responses to all other call types.

CAL FIRE's response varies based on the time of the year, level of response and the drawdown of CAL FIRE resources. During the regular fire season, CAL FIRE has one engine in the County; during peak seasons it has two. CAL FIRE dispatches at three different levels: "low" dispatches two engines, "medium" dispatches six engines, and "high" dispatches eight engines. CAL FIRE uses many factors to determine these levels. It should be noted that CAL FIRE could take as long as one hour for its resources to arrive in the County for a State Responsibility Area (SRA) fire. During this time, local agencies handle all mitigation operations.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Chief Lance Maples, President of the Contra Costa County Executive Fire Chiefs Association, (7/20/16).

**FINANCING**

As shown in **Table 4**, below, the primary revenue source for the fire districts is property taxes, which depend on the district's share of taxes generated by assessed value within district boundaries. A low share of property taxes, combined with relatively low assessed values, contributes to the significant financial problems of the ECCFPD and RHFPD, which receive on average 6% to 7% of each property tax dollar paid within their districts, compared to other districts that receive two to three times that tax share. Except in rare cases of district dissolutions or certain reorganizations, shifting property taxes from one entity to a fire service agency is highly unlikely to occur, either at the State or the local level.

**Table 4**  
**Financing of Fire and EMS Expenditures (FY 2014-15)**

AREA Agency	Expenditures		Revenues				TOTAL
	Fire & EMS	per Resident	Property Taxes (1)	% of 1% Tax	Assessments & Spec. Taxes	Other Sources	
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>							
City of Richmond	\$29,388,000	\$274	\$6,346,000	28%		\$23,042,000	\$29,388,000
City of El Cerrito	5,742,000	\$239	1,268,000	18%		4,474,000	5,742,000
City of Pinole (2)	3,469,000	\$184	530,000	12%	\$1,006,600	1,932,400	3,469,000
Kensington FPD	3,009,000	\$593	3,264,000	30%	\$200,000		3,464,000
Rodeo-Hercules FPD	6,637,000	\$201	2,743,000	6%	\$2,277,000	1,617,000	6,637,000
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	<u>436,000</u>	<u>\$132</u>	444,000	12%			444,000
Subtotal	\$48,681,000	\$254					
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>							
San Ramon Valley FPD	\$55,703,000	\$370	\$56,838,000	14%		\$4,479,270	\$61,317,270
Moraga-Orinda FD	<u>18,842,000</u>	<u>\$449</u>	16,150,000	17%		2,692,000	18,842,000
Subtotal	\$74,545,000	\$387					
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>							
East Contra Costa FPD	\$10,791,000	\$94	\$10,363,000	7%		\$428,000	\$10,791,000
<b>OTHER</b>							
ConFire	\$89,200,000	\$149	\$96,600,000	12%			\$96,600,000

(1) City property taxes allocated to fire/EMS estimated based on property taxes as % of GF revenues.

(2) City of Pinole Fund 105 FY14-15 Revised Measure "S-2006" for fire expenditures.

(3) El Cerrito excludes approx. \$2.4 million of reimbursement for KFPD contract.

In limited circumstances, new developments have been required to fund public safety operations through creation of a special tax by a city or the County, with concurrence of the developer. If the County or a city does not take advantage of the opportunity to require and create a special tax for fire services before residents move into a community, the tax will require two-thirds voter approval, which has proven difficult in areas already burdened by special taxes for infrastructure and by lack of voter support.



Redevelopment helped to support new development that will generate growth in property taxes in the future, particularly with an improving real estate market, but at the near-term cost of diverting a share of districts' property taxes otherwise needed to respond with increased fire protection services. Although redevelopment financing has been eliminated in California, property taxes will continue to be diverted to pay off remaining redevelopment obligations, affecting both RHFPD in Hercules, and ConFire in San Pablo and Pittsburg. According to the County Auditor, approximately 10 percent of fire district revenues were diverted to redevelopment in Fiscal Year 2015-16. RHFPD lost nearly 30 percent, and ECCFPD about 5 percent.<sup>48</sup>

Federal grants, such as SAFER grants, helped many agencies maintain service levels, however, these grants expire after a fixed period. Assessments are another source of funding, although the recent assessment increase adopted by the RHFPD was prematurely eliminated by settlement of a lawsuit against the District.

Cities have a range of revenue sources available to fund fire service, although they are typically responsible for funding a broad range of public services. Fire districts have funding limitations relating to the ability to charge fees for service and imposing special taxes and assessments. As with districts, a low share of property taxes and low assessed values generally translate into lower fire service expenditures per resident.

The average expenditure per resident for fire and EMS services provided by fire agencies was approximately \$200 per resident in 2014, which is slightly below typical expenditures listed in the 2009 MSR of \$209 per resident.<sup>49</sup> This result reflects the significant impact of the recession, station closures, and service reductions, combined with increased populations. Factors influencing expenditures, in addition to property taxes, include the availability of other revenues, geography and service demands, and policy decisions by residents and local leaders related to service and expenditure priorities.

### **Assessed Value and Property Taxes**

According to the County Assessor, assessed values and property taxes have recovered and now exceed pre-recession levels. The increase in the Countywide local tax base for FY 2015-16 represents a 7.53% increase in assessed value. Cities with the largest increases in assessed value from the prior year include Brentwood at 12.29% and El Cerrito at 9.96%. Moraga, Hercules, and Pittsburg

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<sup>48</sup> Correspondence from Bob Campbell to LAFCO, May 20, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> 2009 MSR, p. 4.

had the lowest assessed value increases. Moraga and Hercules each had a 5.87% assessed value increase and Pittsburg had an assessed value increase of 5.48%.<sup>50</sup>

Over the three-year period between FY 2009-10 and FY 2011-12, Countywide property taxes declined by 11.08%. Over the last three years, FY 2012-13 to FY 2014-15, the increase was 13.4%. This means that property taxes over the past six years only grew by a net of 2.32% over the entire period. This fact is a significant reason for the slow economic recovery in Contra Costa County, according to the County's FY 2015-16 budget.

### **OPERATING EXPENDITURES**

Recent State legislation has enabled local agencies to limit benefits received by new hires, helping to constrain cost growth. Although inflation has generally been low (around 2% annually), health costs continue to grow; some agencies conservatively forecast 10% annual growth in health related costs.

### **Salaries and Wages**

Salaries and wages represent 75% to 90% of operating budgets for Contra Costa fire agencies; the share of the total budget varies depending on costs of outside services and contracts, and revenues available for non-labor costs such as equipment repair and replacement, facility improvements, and debt service.

### **Pension Costs and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)**

In general, long-term liabilities for employee benefits are likely to decline as a result of State legislation and reduced benefits for new hires. The California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA), that covers all State and local public retirement systems, mandated retirement formulas for new safety hires. The formulas range from 1.836% at 55 to 2.5% at 55;<sup>51</sup> the new hires must be offered the option that is lower than, but closest to, the formula provided to members in the same safety retirement plan on December 12, 2012.<sup>52</sup> These new rates are generally lower than prior rates. PEPRA also defined "pensionable compensation" for new members to eliminate prior abuses stemming from "salary spiking."

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<sup>50</sup> Contra Costa County Office of Assessor, letter to the Board of Supervisors, July 1, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> In other words, "2.5% at 55" means a retiring employee can retire at 55, accruing an annual pension of 2.5% of pensionable salary for each year of service, up to a maximum percentage of pensionable salary (e.g., 90%).

<sup>52</sup> "Brief FAQs Regarding the Proposed California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013," by Janae H. Novotny, Esq., Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP.

In the near term, however, actions by CalPERS and CCCERA to reduce unfunded liabilities have resulted in increased annual payments to some agencies; this occurs as a result of shortened amortization periods for unfunded liabilities, which increases annual payments. For example, CCCERA reduced its assumed interest earnings on assets to 7.25%, which is slightly lower than CalPERS' assumptions of 7.5%; and CCCERA also reduced its amortization periods required for payment of unfunded liabilities; CCCERA's amortization periods are also generally faster than those of CalPERS, which effectively increases annual required payments.<sup>53</sup>

In April, 2016, CCCERA further reduced its assumed interest earnings rate, which will increase agency payments; ConFire estimates an annual impact of \$4.5 million to \$5 million.<sup>54</sup> In addition to its recent reduction in anticipated investment returns, CCCERA is considering additional changes that will further affect pension costs; these changes may become known by CCCERA's August 10, 2016 meeting.

Recent actions by CCCERA "de-pooled" certain liabilities, which effectively placed burdens for future obligations of an agency entirely on that agency, rather than spreading the burden among multiple, potentially larger agencies. The effect, for example, in the case of the RHFPD, was to increase the district's unfunded liabilities and annual costs. Spread among a reduced staff, the burden relative to payroll increased.

While unfunded liabilities have generally been declining, economic conditions and investment returns have a significant effect on changes in those liabilities. For example, if CalPERS and CCCERA investments do not achieve or exceed the returns assumed in the calculation of pension liabilities, the unfunded portion will grow and require increased payments (the annual changes are amortized over several years to smooth annual variations).

Payments by agencies against unfunded liabilities, e.g., through the use of Pension Obligation Bonds, can help reduce interest charges accrued by those liabilities. However, the agency is still obligated to provide additional resources if future investment earnings decline and assets are insufficient to fund obligations. This scenario constrains the ability to fully pre-pay future obligations, for example, in order for an agency to consolidate with another organization without the baggage of excessive unfunded liabilities.

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<sup>53</sup> MRG/BA interview with Wrally Dutkiewicz, Compliance Officer, CCCERA, February 26, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Lewis Broschard, Deputy Chief, ConFire, testimony at LAFCO Hearing May 11, 2016.

**GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

As shown in **Table 5**, below, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projects that Countywide population growth from 2015 through 2020 will average 0.7% annually. This is approximately the same rate of growth as the County realized from 2010 through 2015. East and West County growth is above the Countywide average, and Central County exhibits slightly below-average rates.

**Table 5**  
**Projected City and County Population Growth 2015-2020**

Jurisdiction	2015	2020	Annual Growth
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>			
Richmond	109,100	114,600	1.0%
El Cerrito	24,100	24,700	0.5%
Pinole	18,900	19,500	0.6%
Hercules	26,500	28,900	1.7%
San Pablo	<u>30,300</u>	<u>31,500</u>	<u>0.8%</u>
Subtotal	208,900	219,200	1.0%
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>			
San Ramon	74,400	76,800	0.6%
Moraga	16,400	16,900	0.6%
Clayton	10,900	11,100	0.4%
Concord	125,300	128,500	0.5%
Danville	42,700	43,500	0.4%
Lafayette	24,500	25,100	0.5%
Martinez	36,500	37,100	0.3%
Orinda	18,000	18,400	0.4%
Pittsburg	67,600	72,000	1.3%
Pleasant Hill	33,800	34,400	0.4%
Walnut Creek	<u>67,000</u>	<u>69,900</u>	<u>0.9%</u>
Subtotal	517,100	533,700	0.6%
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>			
Antioch	105,600	108,900	0.6%
Brentwood	52,700	54,000	0.5%
Oakley	38,500	<u>41,600</u>	<u>1.6%</u>
Subtotal	196,800	204,500	0.8%
<b>UNINCORPORATED</b>			
Subtotal	162,900	166,100	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,085,700</b>	<b>1,123,500</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

Source: ABAG Projections 2013

As noted by ConFire, many areas in the County will continue to see growth of residential communities, which will require additional funding mechanisms and development agreements for capital, equipment, and staffing of new fire stations needed to cover these areas.

Certain communities, such as the City of Walnut Creek, have experienced significant infill growth with the development of multiple mid-rise residential and mixed-use occupancies. Despite the economic recession, single-family dwelling development continues to occur and is increasing in the Cities of Pittsburg and Antioch. The transfer of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station land to the City of Concord will result in significant residential and commercial development in that area. The communities of Pittsburg and Antioch will continue to see above-average growth of residential communities.<sup>55</sup>

### **SERVICE DEMAND**

**Table 6**, below, compares total fire and EMS incidents to the population in each jurisdiction. Overall, the incidents per population of 1,000 equal 83/1,000 residents, which are slightly higher than indicated by the 79/1,000 residents in the 2009 MSR; however, the difference likely is not statistically significant. The incidents/1,000 residents is shown for general comparison purposes only; standards and national norms are not readily available, as the ratios can vary significantly based on numerous factors, such as daytime vs. nighttime populations, and incidents should be further stratified to provide more direct comparisons.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> ConFire Response to LAFCO Request for Information.

<sup>56</sup> "Fire Service Performance Measures," Jennifer D. Flynn, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Fire Analysis and Research Division, November 2009 (see p. 14).

**Table 6**  
**Summary of Fire Agency Incidents by Service Providers – 2014**

AREA, Agency	Population	Incidents	
		Total	Incidents per 1,000 pop.
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>			
City of Richmond	107,300	10,774	100
City of El Cerrito	24,000	3,018	126
City of Pinole	18,900	2,205	117
Kensington FPD (1)	5,100	608	119
Rodeo-Hercules FPD	33,000	2,159	65
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	<u>3,300</u>	<u>524</u>	159
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>191,600</b>	<b>19,288</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>			
San Ramon Valley FPD	150,480	8,618	57
Moraga-Orinda FD	<u>38,500</u>	<u>3,162</u>	82
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>188,980</b>	<b>11,780</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>			
East Contra Costa FPD	<b>119,125</b>	<b>5,423</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>OTHER</b>			
Contra Costa County FPD (ConFire)	<b>597,887</b>	<b>54,547</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,097,592</b>	<b>91,038</b>	<b>83</b>

(1) KFPD calls include 302 calls outside Kensington; 306 calls/5,100 population is equals about 60 calls per 1,000 population.

## INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OR DEFICIENCIES

As previously shown in **Table 3**, the number of open stations declined by nearly 15% since the 2009 MSR, a net reduction of about 10 stations. Meanwhile, the population of Contra Costa County increased by about 3.5% over the same period.<sup>57</sup>

The closure of five ECCFPD stations accounts for the majority of the station reductions. ECCFPD currently has plans to re-open its Knightsen station for the period July 2016 through June 2017, contingent on a funding plan developed in conjunction with Contra Costa County and the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley.

ConFire currently has six closed stations (two of those stations are unstaffed, but serve as reserve stations with 10 on-call firefighters). The District has plans to begin re-opening certain stations depending on improved revenues and future needs.

RHFPD is at risk of closing one of its two stations when its SAFER current grant funding expires in the Spring of 2016, and 2014 assessment revenue is significantly reduced the following year, due to insufficient revenues to fund two stations.

Pinole continues with a one-station configuration—a 50% decrease from prior levels, which adversely affects response times.

The structural condition of stations has declined since the 2009 MSR; the total number of stations Countywide rated by the agencies as in “poor” condition increased from six stations in 2009 to 17 stations, according to the 2015 survey of agencies, as summarized in **Table 7**.

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<sup>57</sup> “ABAG Projections 2013” estimated growth of 36,675 from 2010 through 2015, from a total population of 1,049,025 (2010) to 1,085,700.

**Table 7**  
**Facility Condition – 2015 MSR Survey**

AREA Agency	Total Stations	Poor Condition	
		2009	2015
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>			
City of Richmond	7	0	1
City of El Cerrito	2	0	0
City of Pinole	2	0	1
Kensington FPD	1	0	0
Rodeo-Hercules FPD	2	0	0
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	17	0	2
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>			
San Ramon Valley FPD (1)	11	0	0
Moraga-Orinda FD	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Subtotal	16	2	2
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>			
East Contra Costa FPD (3)	8	3	3
<b>OTHER</b>			
Contra Costa County FPD (ConFire) (1,2)	29	1	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	70	6	17

*Sources: Responses to 2015 LAFCO Request for Information; 2009 MSR.*

(1) Includes stations staffed with reserves (ConFire Stations 19, and SRVFPD Stations 37, 40  
ConFire Station #18 is being sold (as of 4/18/16), and is excluded.

(2) In 2015, 3 of 10 ConFire stations in "poor" condition were not open.

### **SERVICE ADEQUACY**

The ultimate goal of any emergency service delivery system is to provide sufficient resources (personnel, apparatus and equipment) to the scene of a reported emergency in time to take effective action to minimize and mitigate the impacts of the emergency situation. All fire agencies should strive to meet generally recognized response performance measures based upon their current capabilities and resources. Each agency should have established benchmark response goals



that can be analyzed annually to measure how well the organization is performing in relation to the response time goals.<sup>58</sup>

The components of benchmark response goals have been established and or recognized by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Center for Public Safety Excellence/Commission on Fire Accreditation, and the Insurance Service Office (ISO). The American Heart Association (AHA) has shown that bystander CPR and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are the most critical factors to cardiac arrest survival, not fire EMS response times.

This MSR describes response times as one common benchmark against which to measure fire agency performance. It is important to note that the typical response times measure the arrival time of the first engine to the scene of the incident. Other critical measures consider the time required for additional engines and firefighters to arrive, depending on the type of incident.

### **Response Times**

For effective outcomes on serious medical emergencies and to keep serious but still-emerging fires controllable, industry Best Practices recommend the establishment of response time goals to measure adequacy of a response. NFPA Standard 1710, applicable to fire companies staffed by career firefighters, recommends 80 seconds (1 minute and 20 seconds) for “turnout time,” or the time between receiving a dispatch call and leaving the station, for fire and special operations responses. The subsequent travel time standard requires no more than a 240-second travel time (4 minutes) to 90% of the incidents.<sup>59</sup> The combined time, from dispatch to arrival of the first responding engine company, equals 5 minutes and 20 seconds (not including time from receipt of 9-1-1 call to dispatch).

The Crockett-Carquinez FPD and the East Bay Regional Parks Fire Department are covered under NFPA Standard 1720 due to the manner in which those fire departments are organized.

Medical response standards, as described further in **Chapter 3**, depend on the nature of the medical emergency. The response time goal for BLS and defibrillation first response to potential cardiac arrest patients, as recommended by the County’s Fitch Study, should be less than 10 minutes, 90 percent of the time. The system response time goal for ALS response and transport should be established between 12 and 13 minutes, 90 percent of the time.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> **Appendix A** discusses response times and adequacy in greater detail.

<sup>59</sup> NFPA 1710.

<sup>60</sup> EMS Modernization Project Report, Fitch & Associates, June 2014 (p. 56).

As shown in **Table 8**, below, none of the fire service providers reported response times that achieve NFPA Standard 1710 standards of 5 minutes and 20 seconds 90% of the time. Crockett-Carquinez FPD does meet the NFPA Standard 1720, responding within 14 minutes to 80 percent of calls.<sup>61</sup> Knightsen and Bethel Island, within the ECCFPD, are also “rural” and subject to the longer response time per NFPA 1720.

**Table 8**  
**Response Times (Code 3) and ISO Ratings (2014)**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>90 Percent</b>	
<b>Agency</b>	<b>of Responses</b>	<b>ISO</b>
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>		
City of Richmond	8:20	2
City of El Cerrito	6:51	2
City of Pinole	8:38	3
Kensington FPD	7:37	2
Rodeo-Hercules FPD (1)	9:43	2/2X
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	9:40	3/10
Subtotal		
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>		
San Ramon Valley FPD	7:01	02/2Y
Moraga-Orinda FD	8:20	3/9
Subtotal		
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>		
East Contra Costa FPD (3)	11:58	4/10
<b>OTHER</b>		
Contra Costa County FPD (ConFire)	9:33	3/8
<b>TOTAL</b>		

*Source: Agency responses to LAFCO Request for Information, except as noted.*

(1) RHFPD response information from correspondence 2/24/16.

(2) SRVFPD 4/14/16

(3) ECCFPD response time shown is for 2015.

<sup>61</sup> CCFPD has a population of less than 500 people/square mile, which meets the “rural” definition and the longer response standard.

By comparison to the 2009 MSR, response times have generally been maintained or improved; one exception is the ECCFPD that significantly reduced its number of stations, and thereby increased travel times from the remaining, more distant stations. The likely closure of an RHFPD station will have a significant effect on response times in that area.

### **ISO Ratings**

**Table 8** also shows Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings for each service provider. The ISO's Public Protection Classification (PPC) system is intended to reflect a community's local fire protection capacity for property insurance rating purposes and provides a basis for the ISO rating. Although many insurance companies no longer utilize PPC ratings in determining insurance costs, it is a factor in many cases, and provides an indicator of levels of fire protection and fire risk.

ISO classifies communities from 1 (the best) to 10 (the worst) based on how well the community scores on the ISO Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, which grades such features as water distribution, fire department equipment, manpower and fire alarm facilities.<sup>62</sup> Any building more than five road miles from a fire station is rated 10, unless the area has an "automatic aid agreement" with another fire agency. Buildings within five miles of a station, but further than 1,000 feet from a hydrant, may receive a 9 (or a new, lower rating under a revised "split" rating system). Insurance rates typically may be higher for ISO ratings of 9 or 10;<sup>63</sup> however, insurance companies may use a number of other factors to determine rates. The areas with an ISO rating of 9 or 10 are generally the more remote and isolated areas of the County, which are difficult to access and serve.

ECCFPD, ConFire and MOFD report areas within their districts with ISO ratings of 9 or 10.

The new "split" rating system, which shows a "2/2X" for RHFPD, recognizes that there are areas within the District that are within 5 road miles of a fire station, but not within 1,000 feet of a hydrant (or "creditable water supply"); previously, the District would have been rated a "2/9" because of the lack of water supply in certain areas, but the new system recognizes benefits to being within 5 miles of a station. Similarly, SRVFPD received a "2/2Y", which previously would have been a "2/8B."

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<sup>62</sup> "Public Protection Classification (PPC) Frequently Asked Questions," <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/fire/fmppcfaq.html#>.

<sup>63</sup> "Understanding Fire Protection Class," Jack Bradley, Sept. 23, 2013, <http://www.jackbradley.com/news/2013/09/understanding-fire-protection-class>.

**Table 9**, below, provides an indication of area and population served by stations. Most notable is the ECCFPD, which serves 249 square miles with only three stations; each station must cover a much larger area than typical for other agencies, which in turn significantly increases response times. A high number of residents per station, as is the case for ECCFPD, also indicates a greater likelihood of high call volume and potentially fewer resources available to respond to those calls. Currently there are times that ECCFPD had zero resources available due to simultaneous multi-incidents or working fires with all resources committed.<sup>64</sup>

**Table 9**  
**Station Service Measures – Population and Area per Station**

<b>AREA Agency</b>	<b>Residents per Station</b>	<b>Area (sq.mi.) per Station</b>
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>		
City of Richmond	15,300	4.2
City of El Cerrito	12,000	1.3
City of Pinole	18,900	5.1
Kensington FPD	5,100	1.0
Rodeo-Hercules FPD	16,500	12.5
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	3,300	10.5
Subtotal		
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>		
San Ramon Valley FPD	16,700	15.5
Moraga-Orinda FD	7,700	8.4
Subtotal		
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>		
East Contra Costa FPD	38,300	83.0
<b>OTHER</b>		
Contra Costa County FPD (ConFire)	24,900	11.7
<b>Countywide Average</b>	<b>19,900</b>	<b>14.0</b>

<sup>64</sup> Correspondence from Chief Henderson, April 14, 2016.

## 5. CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

ConFire provides fire prevention, suppression and emergency medical response on its engines at the Advanced Life Support paramedic level to nine cities and much of the unincorporated territory in the Central and Western portions of the County. While ConFire is not a primary focus of this MSR, the District plays a key role in the provision of fire and EMS services in the County, and can offer services that could further improve fire services of other, smaller agencies.

Since 2009, the District has addressed a number of fiscal and operational issues due to the significant reduction in revenue resulting from the economic downturn that began in December 2007. As noted in the 2009 MSR, the District's reduced service levels, unmet capital needs and lack of reserves resulted in extended response times and inadequate service coverage. The District presented a Service Reduction and Fire Station Closure Plan to the BOS in November 2012 after severely depleting its reserves and offering a parcel tax measure (Measure Q) to the voters that would have raised roughly \$17 million;<sup>65</sup> the measure received insufficient support of only 53.01% "yes" votes rather than the required 66.6%.<sup>66</sup> The BOS approved the closure of four fire stations.

In 2013, ConFire commissioned a Fitch & Associates study of options to address its deteriorating financial condition.<sup>67</sup> The options were short-term solutions intended to help sustain ConFire for a period of three to four years, depending on the outcome of revenue estimates, cost increases, capital replacement, and natural disasters.

The District restructured its operations, and developed a "roadmap to sustainability" for the District that has utilized recent revenue growth to expand services and operational capacity. The District has made progress on retiring its Pension Obligation Bond debt and projects an annual budget surplus in FY 2017-18. The District's retirement expenses for the CCCERA increased by 84% between FY 2013-14 and FY 2015-16—significantly reducing its operational flexibility. Current projections for retirement expenses show a leveling of costs and stabilization of this portion of the District's operating expenses. The District is currently updating its fleet through lease-purchase agreements and is restoring a capital and equipment reserve fund.

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<sup>65</sup> "Measure Q a battle between Contra Costa fire services, pension reforms," Lisa Vorderbrueggen, *Contra Costa Times*, October 12, 2012, [http://www.conracoostatimes.com/portlet/article/html/fragments/print\\_article.jsp?articleId=21761455&siteId=571](http://www.conracoostatimes.com/portlet/article/html/fragments/print_article.jsp?articleId=21761455&siteId=571).

<sup>66</sup> "Measure Q, Parcel Tax, ConFire," <http://www.smartvoter.org/2012/11/06/ca/cc/meas/Q/>.

<sup>67</sup> "Evaluation and Options Appraisal, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District," prepared by Fitch & Associates, February 18, 2014.

In 2015, the District and AMR jointly responded to a Contra Costa Emergency Medical Services request for proposals to provide integrated emergency medical services response, as the sole bidder. The County approved this venture, and effective January 2016 the District and AMR implemented the expanded joint service program.<sup>68</sup> Through the elimination of separate dispatch and other duplicated services, the agencies will share responsibilities for emergency services resulting in improved service to users. ConFire will also be eligible to seek Federal grants and State reimbursements for services only available to public agencies. The revenues from these expanded services are projected to generate several million dollars of net revenue per year for the District.<sup>69</sup> In the first quarter of 2016 "...the ambulance program exceeded its revenue goal and expenses were lower than projected".<sup>70</sup>

Although ConFire has made significant financial progress and reduced expenditures, the total revenue available does not allow for expanded services without commensurate revenues to offset the additional services. Its current ability to provide aid to other districts, including ECCFPD, is constrained by limited resources; as a result, ConFire modified its aid agreement with ECCFPD, reducing its services to ECCFPD.

### **Challenges Faced by ConFire**

ConFire faces a number of challenges similar to other fire service agencies. The District relies heavily on property taxes – which provide over 80% of the District's total income. As exhibited in the December 2007 downturn, property taxes are largely determined by economic cycles, and it is uncertain when the current recovery will end. The District's total costs for retirement and post-retirement costs, including medical insurance for retirees, pose another major challenge. CCCERA determines the terms of ConFire's retirement cost obligations, and future OPEB costs also create uncertainty regarding future revenue and expenditure projections.

The BOS has discussed a potential sales tax measure to provide additional funding for County Law Enforcement and ConFire services, but currently no formal action has been taken.

Establishing an equipment replacement reserve adequate to address the future needs of ConFire is another challenge facing the District. ConFire currently spends

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<sup>68</sup> Fire Chief's Report to Board of Directors, August 18, 2015.

<sup>69</sup> Excess ambulance revenue was recommended by Citygate to be applied to reduce ambulance fees to reduce the cost to the public and enhance EMS services Countywide to the community as specified in the new ambulance contract (P. Frost, April 15, 2016).

<sup>70</sup> MOFD Directors Give Unexpected Kudos to ConFire Chief, [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com), April 20, 2016.

\$1.5 million from its operating budget for lease-purchase costs for a number of new pieces of equipment. Establishing a self-sustaining equipment reserve fund will require allocation of additional funds from the District's ongoing operating budget. The District recently updated its 2009 Capital Facilities Plan, which was approved by the District's Board in March of 2016.<sup>71</sup>

### **CONFIRE GOVERNANCE OPTIONS**

The 2009 MSR presented a wide-ranging set of potential governance changes for the East and West County cities and districts, some of which were boundary cleanups, others were governance/reorganizations, and many involved ConFire's active participation.

Due to ConFire's continuing recovery from recent adverse financial conditions, ConFire's ability to undertake additional service areas or service responsibilities depends on receiving additional revenues sufficient to offset its additional costs. This means that any significant governance changes related to RHFPD or ECCFPD, the primary focus of this MSR, are likely to require that those agencies adopt special taxes or other new revenue sources that will enable a "revenue neutral" service arrangement with ConFire so that ConFire's existing services are not diminished.

### **CONFIRE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Opportunities may exist whereby ConFire, by virtue of economies of scale, can provide a variety of services to smaller agencies in a cost-effective manner, as described below.

- 1. Services to RHFPD** – In the West County area there are opportunities for ConFire to assist RHFPD with organizational management, chief services, training, and facilities and equipment resourcing.
- 2. City of Pinole** – Opportunities should be explored for potential utilization of a vacant station, organizational management, chief services, training, and facilities and equipment resourcing.
- 3. Battalion 7 service area** – ConFire's presence in the unincorporated areas of San Pablo provides opportunities for fire response coordination in the area.
- 4. ECCFPD** – In East County, the significant impacts of automatic aid on ConFire when responding to requests for service from ECCFPD have taxed the resources available to the ConFire service area. As ECCFPD develops fiscal and operational

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<sup>71</sup> Correspondence with Lewis Broschard III, Deputy Fire Chief, ConFire, April 18, 2016.

resources, ConFire will be able to play a more complete role. ConFire already provides a number of technical and support activities for ECCFPD at the present time.

### **CONFIRE SOI UPDATE**

There are several unserved areas in the County that ConFire many wish to consider annexing, including refineries (e.g., Tesoro). As noted above, these annexations will be contingent on ConFire receiving adequate revenues, through a combination of property taxes and service agreements, to offset increased costs. **Figure 3**, below, illustrates potential areas for ConFire to consider for annexation. In some cases, ConFire may already be responding to incidents in these areas; therefore, annexation and a property tax exchange to ConFire would recognize and help fund these responsibilities.

For example, ConFire has indicated that the Tesoro Golden Eagle Refinery should be considered for annexation into ConFire given the need for fire code and fire-related building code enforcement of hazardous materials and processes, primary EMS and structural fire response, and provision of oversight and fire protection consistent with the other refineries within the County. Tesoro is the only refinery that is not covered by a fire authority. Since September 1, 2014, ConFire has responded into the refinery 10 times for EMS or fire related incidents, and has handled 29 Community Warning System (CWS) notifications from the facility. Appropriate allocation of the property tax distribution from the facility to ConFire would be required by ConFire.<sup>72</sup>

Although in 2009, LAFCO expanded ConFire's SOI to include the Roddy Ranch area, and removed the area from ECCFPD's SOI, no related annexation has been proposed; thus, the area is still in ECCFPD's service boundary. LAFCO should encourage the two districts to work together to pursue this boundary correction. Similarly, there exists a small area of overlap just outside the boundaries of the City of Clayton.

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<sup>72</sup> ConFire Response to LAFCO's Request for Information.





## **6. EAST CONTRA COSTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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The ECCFPD provides fire protection and BLS emergency medical response to the Cities of Oakley and Brentwood, a portion of the City of Antioch and the unincorporated communities of Bethel Island, Byron, Discovery Bay, and Knightsen. ECCFPD was formed on November 1, 2002 as a dependent district through the consolidation of three smaller, mostly volunteer fire districts, the Bethel Island, East Diablo and Oakley Fire Protection Districts.

Since 2009, the District has proposed several special tax measures that have been rejected by District voters. As a result, the District has closed the majority of its stations, and currently operates with only three open facilities. ECCFPD has relied on ConFire for mutual aid and assistance, which has been reduced pursuant to a revised automatic aid agreement. Continuing residential and commercial development in the ECCFPD service area has further exacerbated the gap between resources and service demands.

Response times have increased as a result of fewer stations and greater distances to respond to incidents. With only three engine companies, the District depends on aid from other agencies in the event of a structure fire, which requires a response from five companies. When all three engines are responding to an incident, no units remain available in the event of a simultaneous emergency, seriously jeopardizing life and property.

A multi-jurisdictional Task Force has been formed to provide interim funding to re-open a station, and to pursue longer-term options to improve the service capabilities of the District.

### **Challenges Faced by the District**

ECCFPD faces a number of significant and some severe challenges that will require extraordinary efforts to address, these include:

#### **1. Low property tax shares in the majority of the District's tax rate areas.**

Due to the volunteer and extraordinarily small service populations of the predecessor dependent districts prior to the formation of ECCFPD, low property tax rates were allocated to fire service. The average tax rate for the District is 7% compared to 12% for ConFire and 14% for SRVFPD. The low property tax rates were "locked in" when Proposition 13 was approved. The small low tax-rate districts were consolidated into the ECCFPD and fail to generate an adequate tax base to support their full-time operations. Reallocation of property taxes from other existing agencies to ECCFPD, notwithstanding dissolution of an agency, is a highly unlikely solution to this problem.

**2. The fiscal impact of CCCERA's reallocation of costs has produced impacts on the cost of funding employee retirement.** Until 1999,<sup>73</sup> the County "pooled" participants, significantly reducing liabilities to smaller entities because of the size of the pool. CCCERA de-pooled the agencies and districts and established rates for each entity that would fully fund its retirement costs. The impacts of the "depooling" on the District were significant. Because ECCFPD has significantly reduced its workforce over the past 10 years, it is bearing the full costs of funding current retirees and current retirees' retirement on a significantly reduced workforce and budget. This has driven the per-employee contribution by the agency to 126% of salary, which is significantly higher than ConFire's contribution of 74% of salary.<sup>74</sup>

**3. The impacts of benefit assessment and community facilities districts on residential properties.** A variety of "Mello-Roos" Community Facilities Districts and other special districts have routinely been applied to residential development in non-urban development areas for the past 20 years. The essential infrastructure costs of roadways, drainage facilities, landscape and facilities maintenance as well as city and County services are often applied to individual residential units to create funding for improvement bonds to install the needed facilities and maintain them.

As a result, homeowners are often required to pay additional fees on their property tax bills that significantly increase their ongoing homeownership costs. Assuming the basic 1% property tax applies to a \$350,000 home, the property tax will be about \$3,500. In most of the established subdivisions in Oakley, Brentwood and Discovery Bay, additional sets of fees for infrastructure, landscaping and lighting and other facilities are applied which, in some cases, double the applicable property taxes. Fees for school bonds and other voter-approved measures can further increase the total tax burden. This can lead to voter fatigue and resistance to additional ongoing charges. In 2012 and 2015, ECCFPD attempted to pass a special tax and a benefit assessment, respectively. The voters rejected both efforts.

**4. The lack of a unified community-based understanding of the value of fully operational fire and emergency services in serving the community.**

As a formerly rural area (Brentwood's population in 1990 was less than 7,500), ECCFPD and emergency services were largely provided by volunteer-based dependent districts until 2002. This history has led to a view that persists today

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<sup>73</sup> Starting with the December 31, 2009 Actuarial Valuation, the Board took action to depool CCCERA's assets, liabilities and normal cost by employer when determining employer contribution rates (CCCERA Actuarial valuation and Review as of December 31, 2014; p. 16).

<sup>74</sup> CCCERA Actuarial Valuation and Review as of December 31, 2014; rates are for FY 16-17, and include normal and unfunded liability.

that a volunteer force with select professionals can provide adequate service in an urbanized environment.

Today, the ECCFPD consists of more densely populated areas in Brentwood, Oakley and Discovery Bay, and the lightly populated unincorporated County areas stretching from Bethel Island to Byron to Knightsen. This creates a 249 square-mile service area with a population of 119,000 which is much more difficult to serve than neighboring Antioch with a population of 108,000 in 29 square miles. Unless the community accepts the need for fully staffed stations and equipment and a reasonable staffing level, service levels will continue to be substandard.

## **ECCFPD LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **Local Representation**

ECCFPD was formed in 2002 in conjunction with the consolidation of three rural fire districts. LAFCO called for resolution of the issues of local governance, inadequate service and insufficient funding by December of 2004 as a part of the consolidation approval. LAFCO did not believe that it had the authority or the ability to impose conditions requiring that the consolidated district become an independent district with a board elected by residents of the District. LAFCO also did not feel that it could impose a requirement that a revenue measure be adopted as a condition of the consolidation.<sup>75</sup>

Initially, the BOS governed the ECCFPD. Transition towards local governance did not occur until late 2009, at which time the District Board was restructured to include representatives from the cities of Brentwood and Oakley and the unincorporated County.<sup>76</sup> The appointed Fire Board took over the District in February of 2010,<sup>77</sup> with a new nine-member Board consisting of four City Council Members from the City of Brentwood, three City Council Members from the City of Oakley, and two representatives appointed by the County from the unincorporated area.

At its December 15, 2015 board meeting, the Brentwood City Council decided that with the recent approvals of the recommendations from the multi-jurisdictional task force and Brentwood's commitment to providing significant General Fund

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<sup>75</sup> "Consolidation of East County Fire Districts (LAFCO 02-24)," from Annamaria Perrella, Executive Officer, to LAFCO Commissioners, August 12, 2002.

<sup>76</sup> Fire Service Update – East Contra Costa County, Contra Costa LAFCO, June 8, 2011 (Agenda Item 9).

<sup>77</sup> Discussion of Fire Service in the City of Brentwood and Consideration of the Ad-Hoc Fire Subcommittee's Recommendation to Proceed with a Detachment/Formation Fire District Application to LAFCO Brentwood City Council, Agenda Item 26, June 28, 2011.

funds to the District, that the City's appointed representatives should be current elected members of the City Council.<sup>78</sup>

**Table 10**, below, lists current ECCFPD Board Members and the appointing authority. As noted above, three of the four Brentwood representatives are City Council Members, and one of the three Oakley representatives is a current City Council Member.

**Table 10**  
**East Contra Costa FPD (ECCFPD) Board of Directors**

Position	Name	Appointing Authority	Date Term Expires
President	Joel Bryant*	Brentwood	Dec-16
Vice President	Ronald Johansen	Oakley	Sep-16
Director	Steve Barr*	Brentwood	Dec-19
Director	Robert Kenny	County	Feb-18
Director	Jonathan Michaelson	Oakley	Apr-17
Director	Cheryl Morgan	County	Feb-18
Director	Randy Pope*	Oakley	Sep-16
Director	Erick Stonebarger*	Brentwood	Dec-19
Director	Joe Young	Brentwood	Dec-16

*Source: ECCFPD website (2/27/16)*

\* Denotes current city council members of the appointing authority.

### Service Agreements

The ECCFPD has relied on ConFire for auto aid and assistance, which was recently reduced pursuant to a revised automatic aid agreement. According to the agreement, ConFire will no longer respond automatically to non-critical medical emergencies unless ECCFPD resources are unavailable.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> City of Brentwood, discussion and possible consideration of the recommendation of the Fire Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to select two members of the City Council to serve as the City of Brentwood's appointments to the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District Board, December 15, 2015 (Agenda Item E. 1).

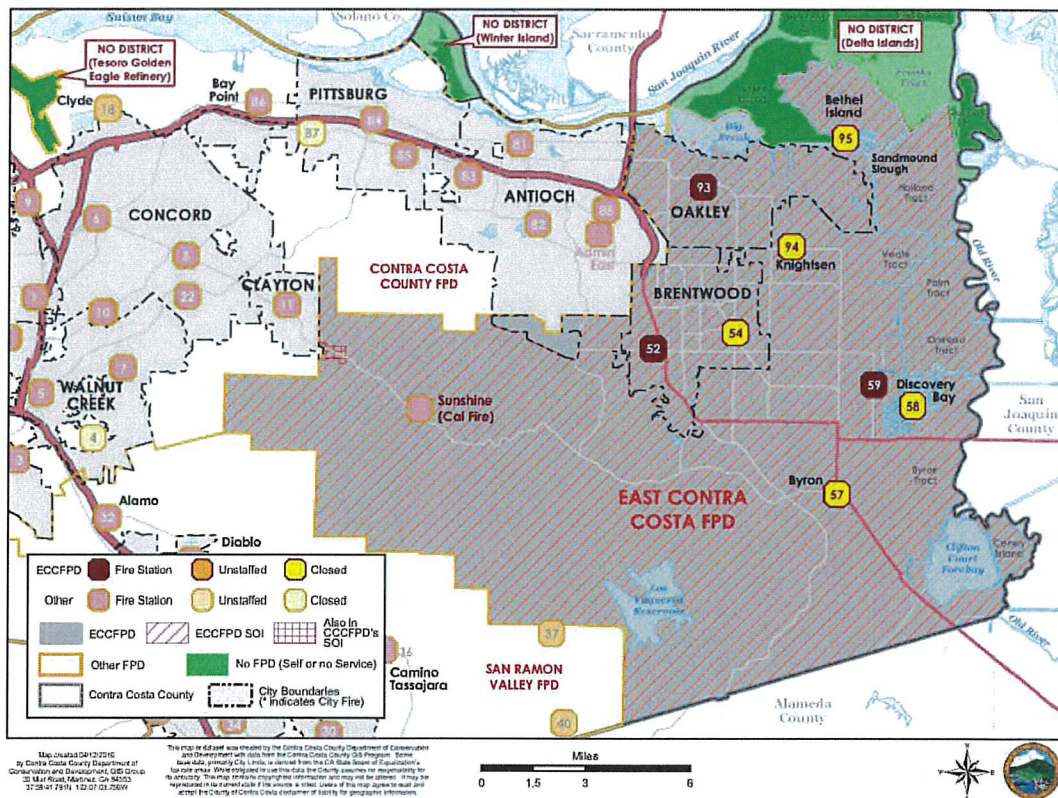
<sup>79</sup> "Automatic Aid Agreement for Exchange of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services between the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District," June 1, 2015 agreement revised 8-24-15.



**ECCFPD SERVICE AREA AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

**Figure 4**, below, from the 2009 MSR, shows the ECCFPD boundaries, which correspond to its SOI; the only change adopted by LAFCO following the 2009 MSR was to remove the Roddy Ranch area from the ECCFPD SOI and add it to ConFire’s SOI (see **Appendix C**). In 2013, the East Bay Regional Park District purchased Roddy Ranch’s 1,885 acres of East Contra Costa ranching land, of which 646 acres had been planned within Antioch’s SOI to be developed with low-density residential units around a golf course. There are areas north and east of ECCFPD (Jersey Island, Bradford Island, Webb Tract, Franks Tract, Quimby Island) that have no fire service provider. ECCFPD is sometimes called upon to respond to fires in these areas.

**Figure 4  
ECCFPD District Boundary and Sphere of Influence**



**ECCFPD DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

As described in **Chapter 2**, a disadvantaged community is a community with 12 or more registered voters and an annual median household income that is less than

80% of the statewide annual median income. Median household income in 2014 was \$61,489,<sup>80</sup> 80% of that amount equals \$49,190.

The County of Contra Costa identified several disadvantaged communities that fall entirely within the current SOI of the ECCFPD. These areas include Bethel Island, and an area to the east of Brentwood that includes the community of Knightsen.<sup>81</sup> Those two areas experience among the worst response times in the ECCFPD of 13:37 and 18:18, respectively (90% of responses fall within those times), which fall significantly below overall District times, and well below national standards for "Best Practices" of 5 minutes and 20 seconds, as described in the "Service Adequacy" section of **Chapter 4**.

The Task Force, currently working towards a plan for expanding fire services in ECCFPD, is reopening the ECCFPD's station in Knightsen for one year, as plans for increased funding have materialized. To the extent that funding could be more fully restored to ECCFPD, it is possible that its station on Bethel Island could be reopened as well; however, significant capital funding will be required because the Bethel Island fire station was condemned and uninhabitable due to mold, lead and asbestos.<sup>82</sup> These stations, in addition to other increases in District stations and staff, would significantly improve response times to these disadvantaged communities.

## **ECCFPD FINANCING**

The District is in the process of preparing an annual financial report.<sup>83</sup> This report will document assets and liabilities in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

As shown in **Table 11**, below, the ECCFPD budget projects FY 2015-16 property taxes to finally recover to FY 2008 levels shown in the 2009 MSR. Expenditures are comparable to (or slightly below) FY 2008 levels; station closures since 2009 have offset the anticipated cost increases described in the 2009 MSR. The 2009 MSR pointed to a 14% expenditure increase for the FY 2009 budget compared to FY 2008, in order to bring compensation in line with neighboring jurisdictions, and to fund pension and health benefit cost increases, and costs attributable to aging facilities.

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<sup>80</sup> <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06>.

<sup>81</sup> Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Determination, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009 - 2013), County of Contra Costa.

<sup>82</sup> Correspondence from Chief Henderson, April 14, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> According to ECCFPD Chief Henderson, the District is finalizing its audits for the last five years, which will be presented to the Finance Committee on May 19, 2016 (correspondence from Chief Henderson, February 24, 2016).

**Table 11  
Summary of ECCFPD Budget**

Item	Actual (1) FY14-15	Projected (2) FY15-16
<b><u>Revenues</u></b>		
Property Taxes	\$10,362,724	\$11,654,565
Grants, Intergovernmental	\$1,256,506	0
Other	<u>\$828</u>	<u>\$521,095</u>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$11,620,058</b>	<b>\$12,175,660</b>
<b><u>Expenditures</u></b>		
Personnel Services	\$8,290,191	\$9,178,855
Supplies and Services	\$2,500,862	\$1,721,091
County Charges	<i>inc. above</i>	\$711,065
Internal Services	<i>inc. above</i>	\$267,053
One-time Charges	<i>inc. above</i>	<u>\$187,600</u>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$10,791,053</b>	<b>\$12,065,664</b>
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>\$829,005</b>	<b>\$109,996</b>

(1) ECCFPD Revenue/Expense Report - Summary by Fund as of 6/30/2015  
(ECCFPD Response to LAFCO Request for Information, Item 6a).

(2) ECCFPD Fiscal Year 2015-16 Operating Budget Changes (ECCFPD  
Response to LAFCO Request for Information).  
Three station model, 34 operational and 2 admin personnel.

### **ECCFPD FUNDING SOURCES**

The ECCFPD is heavily dependent on property taxes to fund its operations, although it utilizes a range of other sources and continues to seek additional revenues such as special taxes.

**Property Taxes** – Property tax revenues represents about 96% of total revenues. The losses experienced during the recession created a significant hardship on the District, particularly as the District faced significant cost increases. The economic recovery and growth in real estate values boosted property tax revenues over 13% in FY 2014-15 compared to the prior budget year. The FY 2015-16 projected



budget includes a 12.5% increase in property tax revenues; this increase offsets the loss of the SAFER grant that ended in November 2014.

The ECCFPD may benefit from an additional property tax allocation, depending on the outcome of a LAFCO application initiated in November 2015 by the County. The action proposes to detach six overlapping areas from the Byron-Bethany Irrigation District, which are served by the Discovery Bay Community Services District. The detachment, if approved, would generate funds that could be reallocated to one or more of the affected taxing agencies. The potentially available funds total approximately \$685,000 annually. The BOS's action directed the County Administrator to develop a resolution of application for detachment to initiate the detachment process. The County Administrator was also directed to explore allocation of the property tax revenues from the overlap areas to the ECCFPD. Contra Costa LAFCO is currently processing the application for detachment.<sup>84</sup>

**Operating Grants** – The ECCFPD received a SAFER grant that provided over \$3.7 million of funding in FY 2013-14, but ended less than midway through FY 2014-15.

**Measure H** – As described in Chapter 3, Overview of EMS Services, Measure H established an annual parcel charge for increased ambulance availability. A new, population-based formula now provides funding to all agencies regardless of engine staffing.<sup>85</sup> This formula enables the ECCFPD to maintain its funding from this source despite significant reductions in stations and staffing.

**Community Facilities District (CFD)** – The County collects special taxes from a CFD it formed in 2004, acting as the Board of the ECCFPD, for the Cypress Lakes development in Oakley.<sup>86</sup> The maximum special tax initially was established at a rate of \$200 per parcel (developed and undeveloped), adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). For FY 2015-16, the amount is \$258.14 per parcel and is projected to generate \$162,370.<sup>87</sup>

**Special Taxes and Benefit Assessments** – The District placed a special tax measure (“Measure S”) on the June 5, 2012 ballot to impose a \$197 annual parcel tax on properties in the District. The tax would have increased by 3% per year, to

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<sup>84</sup> Memo from Mary Plepho to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, November 17, 2015.

<sup>85</sup> Guidelines for Fire First Medical Response Population Based Allocation County Service Area EM1 (Measure H) Funds, July 5, 2013.

<sup>86</sup> A Resolution of the Governing Board of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District of Formation of East Contra Costa Fire Protection District Community Facilities District No. 2004-1 (Fire Services), and Authorizing the Levy of a Special Tax Within the CFD, Resolution No. 2004/123.

<sup>87</sup> ECCFPD CFD No. 2004-1 (Fire Services) FY 2015-16 Special Tax Levy, Goodwin Consulting Group, December 31, 2015.

a maximum of \$257 in 2022. Measure S required a two-thirds voter approval. It failed with a 43.6% vote in favor of the tax. The measure would have raised \$8.6 million in the base year.<sup>88</sup> As a result of the failure of the tax measure, the District laid off 15 of its 43 full-time firefighters and closed three stations; Bethel Island, Knightsen and downtown Brentwood lost stations.

A May 2015 Benefit Assessment District election would have imposed a \$95 per household charge and raised \$4.2 million annually. The measure required a majority vote but only received 47%.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, the District closed two stations, one in Brentwood and the other in Knightsen—leaving the District with three stations to serve a 249 square-mile area with 115,000 residents.

**Fees and Charges** – The ECCFPD receives a small portion of its revenues from various fees and charges. The District recently adopted First Responder Fees, described below.

**First Responder Fee** – The ECCFPD held a public hearing and adopted a First Responder Fee at its February 1, 2016 Board meeting. The fee will enable the District to recover the cost of providing emergency medical response services in case of injury or illness. Revenue from the fee will be used to help fund EMT differential pay, which is a 5% pay increase to firefighters that obtain EMT certification.<sup>90</sup> The initial fee is set at \$337.61 per call (resident and non-resident).

## **ECCFPD OPERATING EXPENDITURES**

Continued growth in labor costs and related health care and pension benefit costs exceeded ECCFPD's ability to generate required revenues, resulting in station closures. Expenditure categories are described in the following sections.

### **Personnel Services**

The FY 2015-16 ECCFPD budget allocated funding for 34 operational and two administrative staff equaling \$2.9 million, or about one-third of total salary and benefits costs.

At its December 28, 2015 meeting, the ECCFPD Board approved a labor contract with the International Association of Firefighters, Local 1230. The contract provided a 5% increase in salary rates, adjustments to steps and certain

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<sup>88</sup> "East Contra Costa County parcel tax for Fire Services, Measure S (June 2012)," Ballotpedia, [https://ballotpedia.org/East\\_Contra\\_Costa\\_County\\_parcel\\_tax\\_for\\_Fire\\_Services,\\_Measure\\_S\\_\(June\\_2012\)](https://ballotpedia.org/East_Contra_Costa_County_parcel_tax_for_Fire_Services,_Measure_S_(June_2012)).

<sup>89</sup> "East Contra Costa Fire Releases Breakdown of Benefit Assessment Vote," *East County Today*, July 6, 2015, <http://eastcountytoday.net/east-contra-costa-fire-releases-breakdown-of-benefit-assessment-vote/>.

<sup>90</sup> ECCFPD Staff Report for Meeting January 4, 2016.

classifications, and added a 5% pay differential to all employees who possess and maintain the criteria for enhanced Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The salary adjustments were reflected in the proposed FY 2015-16 budget; the funding for the new enhanced EMT differential would come from the proposed First Responder Fee, which was adopted at the January 21, 2016 Board meeting. **Table 12**, below, shows ECCFPD monthly salaries.

**Table 12**  
**ECCFPD Monthly Salaries (effective Jan. 1, 2016)**

	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
<b>Firefighter</b>	4,400	4,619	4,850	5,093	5,220
<b>Fire Engineer</b>	4,841	5,083	5,337	5,603	5,744
<b>Fire Captain</b>	5,325	5,591	5,870	6,164	6,328

*Source: ECCFPD Board of Directors Agenda Item No. D-1, Dec 28, 2015*

ECCFPD Step 5 firefighter salaries are approximately 30% less than top step firefighters at ConFire. This comparison does not account for other components of total pay that may include medic certification, longevity, and overtime.

### **ECCFPD Retirement Expenses**

Retirement benefits are provided through CCCERA. Employees hired before January 1, 2013 receive benefits based on a formula commonly referred to as 3.0% at 50, based on the single highest year of salary, and a 3% COLA. New employees hired on or after January 1, 2013 receive 2.7% at 57.<sup>91</sup>

Over half of the benefits cost, or \$3.6 million, represents retirement expenses paid to CCCERA. These rates are significantly higher than other fire protection agencies, largely due to ECCFPD's retirement obligations burdened on significantly reduced staff levels. The FY 2015-16 budget is based on 19 fewer firefighters than shown in the 2009 MSR, but the District continues to pay for retirement expenses for past firefighters that staffed eight stations instead of the current three.

Retirement expenses represent about 124% of salaries, overall, although specific rates applied to individual firefighter salaries vary. For example, ECCFPD pays an amount equal to nearly 100% of salaries to fund CCCERA obligations for past firefighters. Additional payments for retirement benefits of current firefighters

<sup>91</sup> CCCERA Actuarial Valuation and Review as of December 31, 2014.

range from 16.2% to 28.6% of salary, for new (“PEPRA”) and other “Legacy” firefighters, respectively.<sup>92</sup>

### **ECCFPD Health Insurance Benefits and OPEB**

The District’s FY 2015-16 budget allocates \$915,000 for employee group health insurance, and approximately \$260,000 for retiree health insurance. The budget pre-paid its OPEB obligations by about \$380,000 in FY 2015-16. The payments total \$1,555,000, which is about 55% of total permanent salaries of \$2.85 million.<sup>93</sup>

No current OPEB financial report is available showing unfunded liabilities; however, the ECCFPD is in the process of finalizing its audits for the last five years, which will be presented to its Finance Committee. The OPEB actuarial will be conducted over the next several months. The last OPEB actuarial is a part of Contra Costa County’s 2012 study.<sup>94</sup>

For FY 2011-12, ECCFPD’s Accrued Actuarial Liability was \$130 million; the value of net assets was not delineated in the County’s 2012 OPEB valuation. The “Normal Cost” at that time, given ECCFPD’s staffing levels, was \$3,066,000 annually, and the Annual Required Contribution was an additional \$3.8 million, or a total of \$7.4 million.<sup>95</sup>

The FY 2014-15 budget funded 53% of the District’s OPEB liabilities. The Board-approved goal is to fund 85% of the District’s OPEB liability by FY 2018-19.<sup>96</sup> The Finance Committee on September 18, 2014 recommended that the District fund the OPEB liability at the 85% goal starting in FY 2015-16.

### **ECCFPD CAPITAL ASSETS, CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES**

The ECCFPD’s primary source of capital funding, in addition to allocations of general revenues, consists of development impact fees. A balance of approximately \$1.3 million is anticipated at the end of FY 2015-16. Development fee rates include:

- Unincorporated areas - \$480 per single family unit;<sup>97</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Retirement rates are from p. 5 of “ECCFPD Fiscal Year 2015-16 Operating Budget Changes.”

<sup>93</sup> ECCFPD 2015-16 Budget 3 Station Model, 34 Operational Personnel, 2 Admin. (p. 3).

<sup>94</sup> Correspondence with ECCFPD Chief Hugh Henderson, February 24, 2016.

<sup>95</sup> “OPEB, Contra Costa County, GASB 43 and 45 Valuation Report as of January 1, 2012 and Annual Required Contribution for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2012,” Buck Consultants, March 5, 2012.

<sup>96</sup> ECCFPD Board of Directors Special Meeting, Monday September 22, 2014, Agenda Item No. PH.1.

<sup>97</sup> Chief Henderson, ECCFPD, correspondence with BA (March 22, 2016).

- Brentwood - \$819.25 per single family unit;<sup>98</sup> and
- Oakley - \$749 per single family unit.<sup>99</sup>

The ECCFPD does not have a current Capital Improvement Program. An SOC Study, currently underway and anticipated to be complete by June 2016, will document service needs and related facilities and equipment throughout the District. Although operating stations are in good or excellent condition as noted previously in the “Infrastructure Needs or Deficiencies” section of this report, re-opening of shuttered stations may trigger a need for facility improvements and equipment.

### **ECCFPD RESERVES AND OTHER FUNDS**

The ECCFPD’s projected FY 2015-16 operating budget indicates an ending fund balance of \$1.4 million.<sup>100</sup> According to the budget document, ECCFPD’s goal is an ending fund balance of 20% of operating expenditures, which would require a fund balance of about \$2.4 million.

In addition to the reserves for operations described above, the ECCFPD has established a number of special funds, as shown in **Table 13**, below. These funds enable the ECCFPD to segregate restricted revenues, and to allocate and accrue general and other revenues for particular purposes. For example, the projected developer fee balances, which are limited to capital expenditures, are projected to total \$1.3 million.

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<sup>98</sup> City of Brentwood Development Impact Fee Program 2015.

<sup>99</sup> City of Oakley Development Impact Fees, Impact Fees Valid October 1, 2015.

<sup>100</sup> ECCFPD 2015-16 Budget, 3 Station Model, 34 Operational Personnel, 2 Admin. (p. 1).

**Table 13**  
**ECCFPD Non-General Funds FY 2015-16**

Funds	Starting Balance	Revenues or Transfers In	Expenditures or Transfers Out	Ending Balance
<b><u>Developer Fees</u></b>				
Bethel Island	38,262	-	-	38,262
East Diablo (1)	1,378,587	-	132,600	1,245,987
Oakley	<u>32,060</u>	-	-	<u>32,060</u>
Total	1,448,909			1,316,309
<b><u>CFD</u></b>				
Summer Lakes (2)	681,721	162,370	163,370	680,721
<b><u>Capital</u></b>				
Capital Improvement	422,348	117,507	-	539,855
Equipment Replacement	<u>401,485</u>	<u>152,759</u>	-	<u>554,244</u>
Total	823,833	270,266		1,094,099
<b><u>OPEB</u></b>				
Total	633,557	385,835	-	1,019,392
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,588,020	818,471	163,370	4,243,121

*Source: ECCFPD Fiscal Year 2015-16 Budget, Other Funds*

(1) Brentwood, Discovery Bay, Byron

(2) Summer Lakes was originally Cypress Lakes.

### **ECCFPD MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL TASK FORCE**

Following the loss of the ECCFPD May 2015 special tax election, a Task Force was formed to make short- and long-term recommendations to the Board to address the current situation.

The Task Force and its members are charged with identifying long-term as well as short-term, temporary mitigation measures that will reduce public safety risks to the extent possible, by:

1. Identifying an "unconstrained" model for levels of service for 250 square miles of fire and medical response;
2. Examining long-term solutions;

3. Considering, discussing, and understanding data related to fire and medical services (i.e. response times, staffing, station location, etc.);
4. Identifying temporary mitigation measures to reduce public safety risks;
5. Developing a funding plan to fund and implement such mitigation measures; and
6. Accomplishing task force recommendations by August 2015.<sup>101</sup>

The Task Force recommended, and the Board approved, a plan for temporary funding to allow the District to reopen a fourth fire station located in Knightsen to improve District service. The temporary funding runs for a 16-month period during which the District will explore another ballot measure for a 2016 vote, and will work on long-term solutions for adequate fire and medical response services in the District. The ECCFPD has initiated an SOC study to develop impartial data on the current and future fire and medical emergency service needs of the District. The ECCFPD Chief indicates the study will be completed by June 2016.

The approximately \$2.2 million in interim/one-time funds will be provided through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District, the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley, and Contra Costa County. The BOS approved the expenditure of funds towards the interim plan with five conditions, requiring the District to:

1. Pursue achieving status as an "independent district";
2. Pursue achieving an independently elected Board;
3. Seek a name change;
4. Create a citizens oversight committee to oversee the expenditure of the one-time funds, and
5. Reopen the Knightsen station.

The ECCFPD Board approved the interim plan at its meeting on November 2, 2015. The Cities of Oakley and Brentwood have also approved the Plan.

ECCFPD currently has plans to re-open its Knightsen station for the period July 2016 through June 2017, a result of the funding plan developed in conjunction with Contra Costa County and the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley.

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<sup>101</sup> Fire and Medical Services Task Force Report to Elected Officials, October 21, 2015.

**ECCFPD GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

As shown in **Table 14**, below, the ECCFPD population is estimated to grow at about a 0.8% annual rate over the next 10 years. The City of Brentwood projects slightly higher rates than ABAG; the City's budget assumes about a 1.5% annual rate, which would marginally increase the numbers shown.

Major new growth in the District includes the Summer Lake development in Oakley. As development is completed in the 625-home Summer Lake South, the developer (Shea Homes) has approvals to proceed with Summer Lake North, which includes 824 homes in a 409-acre area on the east end of East Cypress Road.<sup>102</sup>

**Table 14**  
**Projected Population Growth, ECCFPD 2015-2025**

	2015	2020	2025
<b>Brentwood</b>	56,493	57,603	58,851
<b>Oakley</b>	38,789	39,746	40,776
<b>Unincorporated (1)</b>	<u>23,843</u>	<u>24,311</u>	<u>24,838</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	119,125	121,660	124,466
<b>Annual Avg. % Change</b>		0.4%	0.5%

*Source: Contra Costa County GIS from ABAG Projections 2013, DOF 2015, Census ACS.*

(1) ABAG growth rate forecasts are applied to County GIS estimates of current population.

(2) Unincorporated equals ECCFPD population less city populations.

Growth assumed at ABAG growth rates for unincorporated areas Countywide.

<sup>102</sup> Summer Lake North development activity may be affected by pending legal action by the City of Oakley and ECCFPD to assure timely construction of a new fire station required by the development.



**ECCFPD SERVICE DEMAND**

As shown in **Table 15**, below, over 80% of the ECCFPD Code 3 calls for service (life-threat responses requiring lights and sirens to expedite response) are for EMS. Total calls, including Code 2 calls (semi-life-threatening), increased from 6,550 in 2014 to 6,918 in 2015.

**Table 15**  
**Summary of ECCFPD Fire & EMS Calls and Response Times, by Subarea**

Service Area	Subarea Population	%	Code 3 Calls (2015)	%	Calls/ 1,000 pop.	
<b>Brentwood</b>						
West	52		1,627			
East	54		<u>1,148</u>			
Total, Brentwood	56,493	47%	2,775	47%	49	
<b>Discovery Bay</b>	58, 59	14,315	12%	541	9%	38
<b>Byron</b>	57	1,305	1%	187	3%	143
<b>Oakley</b>	93	38,789	33%	1,678	29%	43
<b>Knightsen</b>	94	1,644	1%	185	3%	113
<b>Bethel Island</b>	95	2,158	2%	339	6%	157
<b>Marsh Crk / Morgan Ter. (1)</b>	UN	<u>4,421</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>165</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>37</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,125</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,870</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>49</b>	

Source: Contra Costa County GIS (population) 2/24/16;  
ECCFPD, Contra Costa County Fire Reg'l Com. Center (calls, response times).

(1) Marsh Creek/Morgan Ter. Pop. estimate from County GIS "Other" total.

**ECCFPD INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OR DEFICIENCIES**

The three stations currently staffed by ECCFPD are all rated in "excellent" condition. The stations were built in 2002, 2003 and 2012. Other stations, which are currently closed but may be re-opened pending funding, were built in the '60s and '70s, and are rated in "fair" to "poor" condition.<sup>103</sup>

A new Fire Station #94, primarily serving the eastern area of the City of Oakley, was to be constructed in fiscal year 2015-16 and funded by developers; however, delays have prompted the City of Oakley and ECCFPD to pursue legal action to help

<sup>103</sup> Meeting with Chief Henderson, December 3, 2015.

assure timely construction. This station will replace the existing station, currently closed, located at 215 A Street in Knightsen.<sup>104</sup>

A Standards of Cover (SOC) Study, currently underway and anticipated to be complete by June 2016, will document service needs and related facilities and equipment for the entire ECCFPD.

## ECCFPD SERVICE ADEQUACY

### Response Times

The ECCFPD currently does not have an adopted response time standard. As shown in **Table 16**, below, 90% of responses were within 12 minutes in 2015, which significantly exceeds national standards of 5 to 6 minutes. Knightsen and Bethel Island qualify as "rural" areas and therefore are subject to the longer response time standard of NFPA 1720, that recommends a response within 14 minutes to 80 percent of calls.

**Table 16**  
**ECCFPD Response Times, 2015**

Service Area	Subarea	Population	%	Response 90th %
<b>Brentwood</b>				
West	52			9:18
East	54			9:54
Total, Brentwood		56,493	47%	
<b>Discovery Bay</b>	58, 59	14,315	12%	10:32-11:48
<b>Byron</b>	57	1,305	1%	17:10
<b>Oakley</b>	93	38,789	33%	9:30
<b>Knightsen</b>	94	1,644	1%	13:37
<b>Bethel Island</b>	95	2,158	2%	18:18
<b>Marsh Crk / Morgan Ter. (1)</b>	UN	4,421	4%	14:47-16:02
<b>Total</b>		<b>119,125</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11:58</b>

Source: Contra Costa County GIS (population) 2/24/16;  
ECCFPD, Contra Costa County Fire Reg'l Com. Center (calls, response times).

(1) Marsh Creek/Morgan Ter. Pop. estimate from County GIS "Other" total.

<sup>104</sup> Correspondence with Chief Henderson, April 15, 2016.

With its current three stations, ECCFPD relies on automatic aid from other agencies. In 2014, ECCFPD provided automatic aid to 227 incidents (almost entirely to ConFire) and received aid 588 times.

ConFire is the primary automatic aid responder, providing over 70% of aid responses to ECCFPD. In 2015, the automatic aid agreement between the two agencies was revised to limit aid for EMS incidents. For example, a ConFire engine company and ambulance will only be dispatched to an urgent medical call requiring rescue if no ECCFPD resources are available.<sup>105</sup>

### **ISO Ratings**

Communities within the ECCFPD and five miles from a fire station and within 1,000 feet from a fire hydrant qualify for an ISO rating of 4; all other areas are a 10.

### **ECCFPD MSR DETERMINATIONS**

#### **1. Growth and population projections for the area.**

Growth in the ECCFPD is expected to increase as the region recovers from the recession. Projections indicate growth of 0.8 to 1.5% annually, or about 240 new residents annually. This growth will increase calls for service and potentially reduce resources required for responses to other areas when multiple calls occur. ECCFPD's response times currently fall below national standards, and are likely to worsen as service calls increase.

#### **2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged communities within or contiguous to the SOI.**

Several disadvantaged communities fall entirely within the current SOI of the ECCFPD. Areas include Bethel Island, and an area to the east of Brentwood that includes the community of Knightsen.<sup>106</sup> Those two areas experience among the worst response times in the ECCFPD of 13:37 and 18:18, respectively (90% of responses fall within those times), which fall significantly below overall District times, and well-below national standards for "Best Practices." As described in the "Service Adequacy" section of **Chapter 4**, national standards recommend response times of 5 minutes and 20 seconds 90% of the time.

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<sup>105</sup> Automatic Aid Agreement between the ConFire and the ECCFPD, revised August 24, 2015.

<sup>106</sup> "Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Determination, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009 - 2013)," County of Contra Costa.

### **3. Capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services and infrastructure needs or deficiencies.**

The three stations currently staffed by ECCFPD are all rated in “excellent” condition. The three stations were built in 2002, 2003 and 2012. Other ECCFPD stations, which are currently closed and may be re-opened pending funding, were built in the '60s and '70s and are rated in “fair” to “poor” condition.<sup>107</sup>

Three stations are inadequate to cover the ECCFPD’s 249 square-mile service area. Response times fall below national standards. Limited firefighting resources also increase the probability that adequate response, e.g., to a structure fire which requires a minimum of 15 firefighters, will not arrive in time to contain a fire and minimize damage to property and risk of injury to residents. The District experiences multiple occasions each month when its firefighters are occupied and unable to respond to another call. While automatic aid from ConFire is available, it extends response times and potentially adversely affects ConFire’s ability to respond to incidents within its own service area.

### **4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.**

ECCFPD closed five stations since 2009 due to inadequate financial resources, significantly increasing response times from its remaining three stations to its 249 square-mile service area. A Task Force comprised of jurisdictions served by ECCFPD is developing plans for interim financing to re-open one of the closed stations, and preparing financial and operational strategies for longer-term financial sustainability and to increase the number of staffed stations.

Improved financial conditions will help to address infrastructure needs and service deficiencies. Other issues noted in these determinations, including lack of adequate financial documentation and elected representation, could also be better addressed as improved financial resources allow.

### **5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities/services.**

Currently, the City of Brentwood provides administrative support services to ECCFPD. ConFire provides fire prevention, fire investigation, and communications services.<sup>108</sup> Contingent on obtaining additional revenues, expansion of administrative support services could provide a cost-effective means of addressing needed staff services related to preparation, oversight and public distribution of financial documents.

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<sup>107</sup> Meeting with Chief Henderson, December 3, 2015.

<sup>108</sup> Correspondence with Lewis Broschard III, Deputy Fire Chief, ConFire, April 18, 2016.

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

The ECCFPD follows generally accepted practices and legal requirements for meeting noticing procedures. Website postings of minutes of Board meetings appear to be delayed by at least two months following a given meeting. The website includes a list of ECCFPD's Board of Directors, but no contact information. Operating budgets are posted to the website; however, explanation and descriptive information, which should be included with the budget, are found as a part of Board packets related to consideration of the budget.

No independent financial reports are posted on the website, nor were any recent reports available from the District, which is in the process of having reports prepared for the past five years. The most recent documentation of OPEB assets and liabilities is included in the valuation prepared for Contra Costa County in 2012. Pension assets and liabilities are included in Contra Costa County's most recent valuation, but were not posted to the ECCFPD website.

Upon formation of the ECCFPD, LAFCO did not address issues regarding creation of an independent district, but chose to defer that process to the newly created agency. At that time, LAFCO staff concluded that an independent district would not be feasible without a special tax, and that the law required creation of an independent district via a two-step voting process that was outside of LAFCO's conditioning power. While the District's Board of Directors is generally proportionate to the relative population distribution between the two cities and unincorporated areas, the current structure is not an independent district with its own elected board of directors representative of, and accountable to, its residents.

### **ECCFPD Governance Options**

The 2009 MSR considered a number of governance options; however, no action has occurred since 2009 related to changes in governance. Following is a review and update of potential options.

**a. Detachment from ECCFPD of either the City of Brentwood or the City of Oakley, or both** – If both cities detach, the remaining unincorporated area would essentially be a remnant district and would be financially unsustainable in its current form.

A detailed analysis of the impact of detachments has not been prepared; however, because Brentwood accounts for over 50 percent of the property taxes of the ECCFPD, the loss of revenues from detachment of Brentwood would not be offset by cost savings from detaching one fire station, or one-third of the total stations. In addition, it is unlikely there would be a reduction in overhead, thus the average cost per remaining ECCFPD station would increase. Because Oakley represents

about 20% of assessed value, its detachment would present less of an impact on the remaining ECCFPD; however, the latter scenario is unlikely since Oakley's gain in tax revenue would be insufficient to fund its station, and likely additional mitigation payments to ECCFPD would worsen Oakley's funding problem.

It is likely that LAFCO would allocate existing liabilities between the detaching entity and the remaining District; thus the detaching entities would not only assume the burden of annual operations, but would also be responsible for a share of current and long-term ECCFPD liabilities. LAFCO would determine this allocation, as well as any required mitigation payments, at the time of detachment.

If either Brentwood or Oakley detach from the ECCFPD, the remaining City and unincorporated area could potentially remain a dependent district, and would receive significantly less revenue with which to operate.

If the City of Oakley and/or the City of Brentwood detach and provide their own fire service, either directly or through a contract with another agency, there would be a transfer of property tax from ECCFPD to the new service provider (i.e., City). It is likely that additional funding above and beyond the property tax allocation would be needed to support an adequate fire/emergency medical service.

If the City of Brentwood (population 57,000) were to establish its own fire service and was allocated its proportionate share (about half) of the District's annual revenue (roughly \$11 million), the City would receive approximately \$5.2 million per year for fire service. By comparison, the City of Dublin (population 54,000) currently contracts with the Alameda County Fire Department for service, and the annual cost for service is approximately \$11 million. If Brentwood funded its service at the \$11 million level, an additional \$6 million per year would be required to bring Brentwood to a comparable service level. Assuming the City of Brentwood has about 19,000 households, the \$6 million would require a contribution of \$315 per unit per year if the residential units were to fully support the costs.<sup>109</sup>

As a note, the City of Brentwood officials have estimated the cost for the City to bring the fire activities in-house would be \$12 million.<sup>110</sup> Also, there could be substantial costs associated with additional equipment and facilities that would be associated with an independent City-based service. Similar cost requirements for start-up and operating costs would apply to the City of Oakley. Effectively, both the City of Oakley and the City of Brentwood would have to raise substantial additional revenue directly from their businesses and residents if fire services were provided in-house.

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<sup>109</sup> Assuming commercial properties would also be assessed, this amount would be lower.

<sup>110</sup> *East County Today*, September 12, 2015.

If one or both cities detached from the ECCFPD, the remaining District areas would lose most of their funding, effectively leaving the District without adequate resources to provide service to the remaining unincorporated areas. It is virtually certain that the District could not contract with either ConFire or CAL FIRE, or create an independent district with the current taxing capacity to provide even minimum levels of service to the remaining service area.

**b. Consolidation of ECCFPD with ConFire** – This change of governance would require the cooperation of the ConFire governing board, which is the Contra Costa County BOS; however, consolidation would effectively degrade service levels to ConFire, which would likely be unacceptable to the BOS. The County does not currently subsidize ConFire activities and has no plans to do so<sup>111</sup>. If ECCFPD requested consolidation, the expectation would be that ECCFPD would have adequate revenues to provide comparable salaries, benefits and service levels to those applied broadly across the ConFire service area. It may be possible, if the substantial funding issues were addressed, to create a service zone in the greater Eastern County region that would incorporate the additional resources available in the ConFire service areas in Antioch and Pittsburg.

Funding the consolidation with ConFire would require a substantial increase in the revenue generated by the ECCFPD, to meet ConFire's and County Supervisors' concerns, and a level of certainty that the increased level of funding is sustainable.

**c. ECCFPD contract for service with CAL FIRE** – Financial savings are unlikely to result from this option given that CAL FIRE firefighter costs are generally higher than ECCFPD's costs. ECCFPD would still need to resolve costs associated with its unfunded pension and OPEB liabilities. Some efficiencies in administration are likely considering CAL FIRE's more extensive administrative operations.

**d. Establish ECCFPD as an independent district** – This option is consistent with original ECCFPD formation goals, and recognizes the current de facto organization that functions independently of the County.<sup>112</sup> However, this option alone does not alter the District's ability to increase revenues. This option, in conjunction with other revenue-related actions, is discussed below under "ECCFPD MSR Recommendations."

## **7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

No additional matters have been identified at this time.

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<sup>111</sup> ConFire does receive approximately \$1.5 million of annual funding for EMS from Countywide Measure H funds.

<sup>112</sup> LAFCO law defines an independent district as having a board elected by voters within its boundaries.

## **ECCFPD MSR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommended strategy for the ECCFPD to address its financial and service deficiencies is for the ECCFPD to become an independent district with a directly elected board and a revenue stream adequate to support an acceptable level of fire and emergency medical services.

There are a number of opportunities the ECCFPD and its government partners — the cities of Oakley and Brentwood, and the County — should thoroughly explore and implement as part of a “*Go Forward Plan.*” Such a plan would allow the District to be self-funded, independent and able to manage its resources effectively.

This option, rather than consolidation or dissolution, is the best and most practical for several reasons:

- It allows the District to retain its lower salary costs;
- It does not materially affect other districts’ activities or dilute their service levels, e.g., ConFire;
- It fulfills ECCFPD’s original goals of becoming an independent district; and
- It establishes a locally elected governance structure accountable to residents within its boundaries.

The District’s current Fire Task Force is working toward these objectives. The following items/actions should be explored and implemented to the degree possible as part of the Task Force’s activities.

### **1. Educate the community on the need for professional fire and emergency medical services.**

It is critical for the community to have unbiased, objective and thorough explanations of the current service levels, the critical need for professional firefighters, and the SOC required to adequately serve the growing population.

Informed community participation is essential to the creation of a service plan, and to the review and development of the funding sources, improving the likelihood of support for a tax measure.

### **2. Establish an independent ECCFPD governing board.**

While an independent board does not guarantee increased revenues, the community will have a greater opportunity and ability to engage in District governance and support needed financial measures if the Board is elected locally and accountable to the community.



### **3. Develop a long-range service and cost plan that ensures adequate service levels.**

The ECCFPD has engaged a consulting firm to conduct an SOC Study that will establish the basis for projecting service costs associated with the District's service area over the long term. The costs for capital and operational needs identified in the SOC Study can provide a basis for constructing a financially viable long-range service plan for the ECCFPD, as well as provide support to the District in its efforts to justify and efficiently utilize increased revenues. As indicated previously, the District anticipates the study will be complete by this June.

### **4. Develop a funding plan for services that integrates the three governmental agencies' powers to generate development-related revenues and, to the extent possible, justifies the use of additional tax revenues.**

The funding plan, involving the County and the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley, will be based on the outcome of the SOC Study. Community education and involvement, described above, are essential to ensure community support for needed revenues, including tax measures. The ECCFPD does not have the ability to impose development impact fees, but can create a special tax with two-thirds voter approval. In any case, active engagement and support of the County and the Cities is essential to implementation of any new tax.

Revenue sources considered should include:

**Development impact fees** – All three agencies currently collect development impact fees for ECCFPD capital facilities on a coordinated basis. These fees are paid one time by new development, and can only be used to fund capital expenditures. These impact fees should be updated based on the District's SOC Study currently underway. There is no voter requirement for the imposition or increase of impact fees, however, a nexus study is required to justify the fees.

**Special Taxes (Gov. Code §§ 53970-53979)** - The City of Oakley collects special taxes to fund annual law enforcement operations pursuant to Government Code Section 53970. The law permits creation of special zones of service to tax the property owners for either law enforcement or fire and emergency medical services. The fee is based on the impact of the development on the existing services, and the enabling legislation permits special taxes for fire as well as police services. Oakley, Brentwood and the County could establish a uniform, coordinated fee to fund the operational impacts of development on the ECCFPD on an ongoing basis.. The special tax requires two-thirds approval by the electorate.

**Community Facility Districts (CFDs)** – Contra Costa County required that the Cypress Lakes development, which was subsequently annexed to the City of Oakley, pay annual special taxes for fire services. The City of Brentwood has

historically collected CFD revenues for public safety (police and fire) service impacts, including increased fire staffing, but in recent years the CFD proceeds have been used exclusively to fund law enforcement. CFD special taxes, or an equivalent annual payment (e.g., Gov. Code §§ 53970-53979) should be applied consistently by the County and cities to any and all new development within the District. The special tax requires voter or landowner approval, and is typically created during initial land development by a master developer.

## **ECCFPD SOI UPDATE**

The existing SOI for ECCFPD is non-coterminous with its bounds.

The 2009 MSR indicated that the ECCFPD requested an expansion of its SOI to include areas being served beyond its SOI, including to the Delta islands of Jersey, Bradford and Webb. The only change adopted by LAFCO following the 2009 MSR was to remove the Roddy Ranch area from the ECCFPD SOI and add it to ConFire's SOI (see **Appendix C**).<sup>113</sup> However, the ECCFPD's service boundary has not been changed to exclude that Roddy Ranch area, and the ECCFPD SOI remains non-coterminous with its service area boundaries.

Although in 2009, LAFCO expanded ConFire's SOI to include the Roddy Ranch area, and removed the area from ECCFPD's SOI, to date no related annexation has been proposed; thus, the area is still in ECCFPD's service boundary. LAFCO should encourage the two districts to work together to pursue this boundary issue.

A second area of overlap exists outside the boundary of the City of Clayton. This area was considered for removal from the ECCFPD service area during the 2009 MSR, but no change was made at that time.

## **ECCFPD Proposal**

The ECCFPD currently does not anticipate changes to its SOI in the next five years.<sup>114</sup>

## **SOI Determinations**

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

The District's existing SOI encompasses residential, commercial, mixed-use, agricultural, recreational, open space, and watershed uses. The predominant uses

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<sup>113</sup> LAFCO removed the Roddy Ranch area from ECCFPD's SOI; however, no corresponding detachment of the Roddy Ranch area has been submitted to LAFCO; thus this area is still in ECCFPD's service boundary.

<sup>114</sup> ECCFPD Response to LAFCO's Request for Information.

are agricultural and open space, which are located throughout the District. Residential areas are concentrated in the Cities of Oakley and Brentwood, and in the communities of Discovery Bay and Bethel Island. Continued growth, primarily within the cities, is anticipated. ABAG projects more than 5,000 new residents will move into the ECCFPD's service area over the next 10 years.

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

New development in the ECCFPD service area will exacerbate an existing shortfall of needed fire stations and staffing. In recent years, ECCFPD reduced its number of stations from eight to the present three stations, which are inadequate to serve ECCFPD's 249 square-mile service area.

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

Limited firefighting resources also increase the probability that adequate response, e.g., to a structure fire, which requires a minimum of 14 firefighters, will not arrive in time to contain a fire and minimize damage to property and risk of injury to residents. The District experiences multiple occasions each month when its firefighters are occupied and unable to respond to another call. While automatic aid from ConFire is available, it extends response times and potentially adversely affects ConFire's ability to respond to incidents within its own service area.

## **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.**

There has been no change to the communities of interest identified in the 2009 MSR. Those communities within the District's SOI include the incorporated cities of Oakley and Brentwood, and unincorporated areas including Bethel Island, Byron, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, the southern portion of the City of Antioch, and a portion of the City of Clayton SOI. Adjacent communities of interest include Jersey Island, Bradford Island and Webb Tract.

## **5. The present and probable need for the public facilities and services of any disadvantaged communities within the existing SOI.**

Several disadvantaged communities fall entirely within the current SOI of the ECCFPD. Areas include Bethel Island, and an area to the east of Brentwood that includes the community of Knightsen.<sup>115</sup> Those two areas experience among the worst response times in the ECCFPD of 13:37 and 18:18, respectively (90% of responses fall within those times), which fall significantly below overall District

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<sup>115</sup> "Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Determination, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009 - 2013)," County of Contra Costa.

times, and well-below national standards for “Best Practices.” As described in the “Service Adequacy” section of **Chapter 4**, national standards recommend response times of 5 minutes and 20 seconds 90% of the time.

**6. The nature, location, and extent of any functions or classes of services provided (special districts only).**

There has been no change to the services provided as described in the 2009 MSR, except the reduction in staffed stations as noted in Findings 2 and 3, above. ECCFPD provides fire and emergency medical services, including BLS. Ambulance transport and ALS is provided by AMR, a privately owned ambulance company. ECCFPD contracts with ConFire for dispatch, radio, information and fire prevention services.

**ECCFPD SOI Options and Recommendations.**

As described above in “ECCFPD MSR Recommendations,” this MSR recommends that the ECCFPD address its financial and service deficiencies by becoming an independent district with a directly elected board and a revenue stream adequate to support an acceptable level of fire and emergency medical services. Reductions in its current boundary, as discussed in the “Governance Options” section, above, would adversely affect the District’s financial position and ability to achieve independent status.

Current facility and service deficiencies indicate an inability of the District to provide adequate services, as stated in the determinations; affirmation of the current SOI would be inconsistent with these determinations.

However, the District currently is actively engaged with the County and the cities within the ECCFPD to reopen a fourth station, conduct an SOC Study, and seek new revenues to improve service. Therefore, it is recommended that the current ECCFPD SOI be designated as “provisional,” requiring that ECCFPD report back to LAFCO on at least an annual basis to inform LAFCO as to ECCFPD’s progress in implementing the recommendations of this MSR, and in meeting the objectives of independent governance, adequacy of services, and long-term financial sustainability.

Alternatively, LAFCO could consider a “zero SOI” designation, signaling that the District’s services will ultimately be provided by another agency. However, there are no current prospects for service by another agency given ECCFPD’s service deficiencies, financial obligations, and lack of funding; this designation would be contrary to the recommendations of this MSR that the ECCFPD pursue independent status and long-term financial sustainability.

**SOI/Service Boundary**

LAFCO should encourage ECCFPD and ConFire to work together to pursue the Roddy Ranch boundary correction described above, and correction to the overlap on the periphery of the City of Clayton.

## ***7. RODEO-HERCULES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT***

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The RHFPD provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the City of Hercules and the unincorporated community of Rodeo.

The 2009 LAFCO MSR stated that the RHFPD had the financial ability to provide adequate services and referred to its successful grant applications and well managed finances as major strengths. Due to external forces, including the impacts of the December 2007 downturn and other factors, the District closed one of its two stations in 2012. A number of additional setbacks, compounded by the District's very low share of property tax revenue, resulted in an extremely challenging financial future for the District.

Despite these challenges, the District has undertaken a number of initiatives to maintain services in the face of constrained revenues. The District obtained a Federal SAFER fire grant and initiated a voter approved benefit assessment district in 2014 to fund operational expenses. Counteracting these efforts, the District has experienced increased retirement costs, faces the future expiration of the Federal grant, and the extinguishment of its recently approved benefit assessment district, culminating in losses of over \$2 million of annual revenue. It appears likely that the District will return to a one-station service configuration during 2017, if not before. Even with the reduction in services, the District will need additional revenues to address its OPEB and unfunded pension obligations.

The one station configuration, if implemented, will significantly reduce the District's capacity to respond to emergencies—both fire and medical. It will reduce the available in-District services, and force the District to rely on outside resources to perform even basic firefighting services. Response times for emergency medical services will increase significantly, adding precious minutes to response times; first response by ambulance could help in those areas where fire resources are limited.

In February 2014, the RHFPD received a Federal grant of almost \$2.5 million spread over two years to allow the District to reopen its closed station, reestablish Engine 75 and rehire up to nine firefighters.

After working with the community for a number of years, on June 11, 2014, the District adopted a resolution for the purpose of levying a fire services assessment of up to \$82 per single-family parcel. The assessment, if successful, would have provided the District with approximately \$950,000 per year in additional revenue. The proposed assessment was approved by a majority of the voters, but not by the two-thirds vote required for a special tax. As the result of a legal challenge, it was agreed that this assessment would terminate and would no longer be levied after

FY 2016-17. The District used the grant and assessment district funds to implement the station reopening and add firefighter positions.

In October 2015, the District and the plaintiff reached a settlement that required the District to cease collection of the 2014 fee by July 2017. The District will be allowed to utilize the funds collected until the cessation in 2017. The District has indicated that it will be forced to reduce its workforce and close the reopened station as the Federal SAFER grant and Assessment District funding resources are depleted. The loss of the Assessment District revenue represents a \$950,000 annual loss to the District.

The District's operating costs have increased due to the CCCERA's reorganization of its actuarial practices that removed the District from its larger employee pool, and reduced amortization periods. The net effect of this action is discussed in detail below.

### **Challenges Faced by the RHFPD**

Even though the RHFPD has made strides towards managing its expenditures, including long-term reductions in pension obligations as a result of reduced benefits to new hires, the District continues to face significant financial challenges.

#### **1. Low property tax generation.**

The District relies on property taxes for the majority of its revenue now that its grant revenues have been expended and its recent benefit assessment terminated. The District's low share of property taxes is compounded by at least two issues noted below.

The RHFPD service area includes the City of Hercules that has extensively utilized redevelopment for reuse of a large portion of its developable properties. The creation of these Redevelopment Areas has reduced the property tax revenues that would otherwise have accrued to the District. The termination of redevelopment programs has not improved the District's revenue stream from the affected properties due to the high bonded debt and other financial obligations undertaken by the Redevelopment Agency that continue to divert property tax revenue. In Fiscal Year 2015-16, RHFPD shifted 29 percent to redevelopment. This condition will persist for the life of the bonded indebtedness that could extend several decades.

A second property tax constraint involves the ConocoPhillips oil refinery property annexed to the District in 1996. The District receives a share of the property taxes generated from the facility, but the County retained the base revenue at the time of the annexation and has only agreed to share a portion of the revenue generated above the 1996 levels. The refinery has also successfully sought to reduce its property tax assessed value, which reduces the District's revenues generated from

the site. At this time, the RHFPD receives some minor operational assistance from the refinery, but the costs of RHFPD service exceed the revenues it receives from the refinery.<sup>116</sup> There is little likelihood that the County will re-negotiate a tax sharing arrangement more favorable to the District.

## **2. Increased annual expenditures due to the CCCERA's changes in actuarial practices and cost allocations.**

Until 2009,<sup>117</sup> the County "pooled" participants in the agency that spread the liabilities of smaller entities to all members of a larger pool. In 2009, CCCERA de-pooled the agencies and districts and established rates for each entity that would fully fund their retirement costs within a reduced period of time. The "de-pooling" reduced amortization periods, and interest earning assumptions effectively increased RHFPD's annual expenditures for retirement obligations.<sup>118</sup>

The District's workforce has fluctuated over the past 10 years, which has had an impact on the District's retirement and post-retirement costs. The full costs of current retirees must still be funded, but by a significantly reduced budget. This has driven the per-employee contribution by the agency to about 90% of salary, which is significantly higher than ConFire's contribution of 74% of salary.<sup>119</sup> This high contribution rate reduces revenues available for non-retirement expenditures.

## **3. The RHFPD faces increased costs as a result of less than full contributions to the retirement and OPEB accounts.**

The RHFPD has not been making the required contributions needed to fully fund its required annual contributions to its CCCERA obligations.<sup>120</sup> While the District's payments have been sufficient to avoid significant growth in its liabilities, its liabilities limit opportunities for changes in governance.

For example, if the District were to consolidate with a neighboring district such as ConFire or a PERS retirement agency such as Pinole, there would be a substantial cost of refinancing RHFPD's unfunded liabilities with CCCERA. To address this issue, a pension obligation bond (POB) would need to be sold to satisfy these obligations, which would add to annual RHFPD (or consolidated agency) expenditures. At this point in time, it is not possible to speculate whether a POB would reduce the District's retirement costs adequately to offset the costs of the

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<sup>116</sup> MRG/BA interview with Chief Hanley, December 9, 2015.

<sup>117</sup> Starting with the December 31, 2009 Actuarial Valuation, the CCCERA Board took action to de-pool CCCERA's assets, liabilities and normal cost by employer when determining employer contribution rates (CCCERA Actuarial valuation and Review as of December 31, 2014, p. 16).

<sup>118</sup> MRG/BA interview with Wrally Dutkiewicz, Compliance Officer, CCCERA, February 26, 2016.

<sup>119</sup> CCCERA Actuarial Valuation and Review as of December 31, 2014; rates are for FY 16-17, and include normal and unfunded liabilities.

<sup>120</sup> MRG/BA interview with Wrally Dutkiewicz, Compliance Officer, CCCERA, February 26, 2016.



debt service on the debt if a lower-cost retirement system was accessed (in the case of consolidation with a city). It is likely that normal retirement costs would be lower under the PERS system; for example, Pinole’s and El Cerrito’s normal costs range from 12% to 20% of salaries; however, as noted above, the cost of pre-funding existing CCCERA pension obligations is likely a prohibitive prerequisite to leaving a CCCERA plan or to satisfying outstanding liabilities prior to consolidating with another CCCERA agency.

## **RHFPD LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **Local Representation**

**Table 17**, below, lists the current Board of Directors for the RHFPD. Chairperson Bartke resigned in March 2016, and the District is seeking a replacement.

**Table 17**  
**Rodeo Hercules FPD (RHFPD) Board of Directors**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term Expires</b>
Chairperson	Beth Bartke*	2016
Secretary	John S. Mills	2016
Director	Ernie Wheeler	2018
Director	Raemona Williams	2018
Director	Bill Prather	2018

*Source: RHFPD website (3/3/16)*

\* Resigned, March 2016

### **Service Agreements**

RHFPD and other local fire agencies have entered into a number of agreements to augment existing services and help to jointly handle hazards that may be beyond the capability of any single agency.<sup>121</sup> The agreements also help to ensure coordinated responses to wildland/interface incidents and to incidents on agency borders.

The RHFPD provides fire and rescue services to ConFire and CAL FIRE along the Highway 4 Corridor, including unincorporated Martinez, through a series of automatic aid and mutual threat zone agreements.

<sup>121</sup> RHFPD 2012 Strategic Plan.



## RHFPD DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

As described in **Chapter 2**, a disadvantaged community is a community with 12 or more registered voters and an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median income. Median household income in 2014 was \$61,489.<sup>122</sup> 80% of that amount equals \$49,190.

One community in Rodeo has been identified as a disadvantaged community. The area is within one mile of RHFPD Station 75, and therefore response times for the first-arriving engine company should meet or exceed Best Practice norms. However, if Station 75 closes as a result of revenue shortfalls, the next closest station would be Station 76, over two miles away. Times required for arrival of additional engine companies in the event of a structure fire would increase.

## RHFPD FINANCING

The RHFPD budget, shown in **Table 18**, below, suffered significant reductions compared to FY 2008-09, when the 2009 MSR was prepared. The General Fund budget declined from \$6.1 million and \$2.9 million in reserves, to \$5.3 million and \$1.3 million in reserves in FY 2014-15; reduced Phillips refinery assessments contributed to declining revenues.<sup>123</sup>

A SAFER grant helped to bridge budget shortfalls of \$1.4 million in FY 2014-15, and reserves were augmented by special benefit assessments, enabling the District to fund a total of 23 employees and continue to operate two stations.

The FY 2015-16 budget benefitted from growth in property tax-related revenues, as real estate values continued their recessionary recovery. The SAFER grant funding was similar to the prior year, however, benefit assessments were lower than the prior year.

As a result of the settlement of a lawsuit brought against the District's voter approved benefit assessment, the District will lose \$950,000 annually in FY 2017-18, which begins July 1, 2017. In addition, the SAFER grant will no longer provide funding. These two sources would account for a loss of over \$2.6 million annually. A structural deficit is likely to remain even if the District closes one station. The District has been setting aside the proceeds of its 2014-approved benefit assessment; over two years, this assessment reserve totals \$1.8 million, as shown below in **Table 20**.

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<sup>122</sup> <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06>.

<sup>123</sup> RHFPD Fiscal Year 2014-15 Operating Budget Presentation.

**Table 18**  
**Summary of RHFPD Budget**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Actual (1) FY14-15</b>	<b>Projected (2) FY15-16</b>
<b><u>Revenues</u></b>		
Property Taxes	\$2,774,330	\$3,010,983
Intergovernmental (3)	261,295	328,545
Charges for Services	118,972	89,500
Benefit Assessments (6)	1,331,556	1,338,993
Grants (SAFER)	1,165,187	1,287,202
Phillips (4)	0	0
Other	<u>233</u>	<u>15,000</u>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$5,651,573</b>	<b>\$6,070,223</b>
<b><u>Expenditures</u></b>		
Personnel Services	\$5,767,812	\$5,265,829
Supplies and Services	860,169	756,837
Other (5)	<u>8,643</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$6,636,624</b>	<b>\$6,022,666</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>-\$985,051</b>	<b>\$47,557</b>
<b>(less) Transfer to SAFER Reserves</b>	<b><u>-\$50,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$0</u></b>
<b>Net after Transfer</b>	<b>-\$1,035,051</b>	<b>\$47,557</b>

(1) Fiscal Year 2014-15 Financial Report for Year-end June 30, 2015  
Includes expenditure of a portion of SAFER Grant No. 2.

(2) RHFPD 2015/16 GF Budget, 6/1/15, SAFER Grant budget.  
RHFPD 2015/16 Revenue Projections, July 17, 2015

(3) Includes Home Owners Property Tax Relief (HOPTR)  
and RDA pass-through.

(4) Excludes Phillips 66 Capital #3 (\$50,000) in FY14-15  
and Capital #4 (\$65,000) and #5 (\$65,000) in FY15-16.

(5) Levy Code Fee.  
Capital expenditures not included.

(6) Excludes revenue from 2014 Benefit Assessment, which were  
set-aside in reserves.

## **RHFPD Funding Sources**

Relative to other fire service agencies, the RHFPD funds a smaller portion of its budget from property taxes. This is the consequence of the District receiving a very small share of property taxes as a consequence of the Prop. 13 process in 1978, which effectively penalized low-tax districts by memorializing low rates in perpetuity, and the District's offsetting efforts to fund acceptable service levels through the use of non-property tax revenues such as grants and benefit assessments.

**Property Tax** – Property tax represents about 50% of the FY 2015-16 budget. The District's property tax rate averages about 6% of each property tax dollar paid by property owners, the lowest rate of all fire districts in Contra Costa County; to compensate, the District sought grants and assessments to fill its funding gap. The District's total assessed value has not quite fully recovered to pre-recession levels due to real estate defaults, reduced refinery assessed value, and former redevelopment agency obligations. RHFPD lost 29 percent to redevelopment in Fiscal Year 2015-16. The District anticipates a nearly 10% increase in property tax revenues from FY 2014-15 to FY 2015-16 as a result of real estate market recovery.

**Fees and Charges** – Charges for services account for a relatively small, 1% to 2% share of the budget. The District is in the process of reviewing its policies fees charged regarding EMS services, and is considering expanding its charges to bill insurance companies of residents who receive transport and other medical emergency services.

**Special Taxes and Benefit Assessments** – On June 11, 2014, the District adopted a resolution levying a fire services assessment, generating about \$940,000, to supplement an existing assessment yielding about \$1.3 million annually. The new assessment was challenged by a resident's lawsuit, and the District entered into a settlement allowing collection of the new assessment through FY 2016-17 (ending June 30, 2017), after which the new assessment will expire.<sup>124</sup> The District has been accruing the revenue in a fund separate from the General Fund.

**Grants** – The District received a SAFER grant that extended over two years. The grant provides about \$1.3 million of funding for the FY 2015-16 year (and \$1.2 million the prior year), then terminates in future years. The District also received \$65,000 in FY 2014-15 from Phillips Refinery for District operations; no operating revenue from Phillips is included in FY 2015-16.

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<sup>124</sup> Settlement and Release Agreement, signed by RHFPD Chief Hanley November 2, 2015.

## RHFPD OPERATING EXPENDITURES

The RHFPD has experienced continued growth in expenditures, including labor and pension-related costs. The District has taken a number of steps to control these costs, as noted in the following sections.

### Personnel Services

The District's budget funds 12 firefighters, one Battalion Chief, and one Fire Chief. The budget also pays for a reserve firefighter program, and for one part-time administrative services staff person. **Table 19**, below, shows salaries as established by the most recent MOU extension.<sup>125</sup> The salaries do not show the required deduction for OPEB (3.75% for "Other Post-Employment Benefits"). In addition, according to the MOU extension, all employees are responsible for their entire employee retirement contribution.

**Table 19**  
**RHFPD Monthly Salaries**

	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>
<b>Firefighter</b>				
Firefighter I	3,500	4,000	4,500	5,000
Firefighter II	5,268	5,532	5,809	6,099
Firefighter III	6,692	7,027	7,379	7,748
<b>Fire Engineer</b>	7,375	7,743	8,130	8,537
<b>Fire Captain</b>	8,339	8,755	9,193	9,653

*Source: Agreement between RHFPD and I.A.F.F. Local 1230, Nov. 6, 2013*

RHFPD Firefighter III Step 4 salaries are approximately 5% higher than top step firefighter salaries for ConFire.<sup>126</sup> This comparison does not account for other components of total pay that may include medic certification, longevity, and overtime.

### RHFPD Retirement Expenses

Retirement benefits are provided through CCCERA. Employees hired before January 1, 2013 receive benefits based on a formula commonly referred to as

<sup>125</sup> Agreement Between RHFPD and I.A.F.F. Local 1230, November 6, 2013.

<sup>126</sup> ConFire employees also pay 100% of the CCCERA basic employee benefit contributions.

3.0% at 50, based on the single highest year of salary, and a 3% COLA. New employees hired on or after January 1, 2013 receive 2.7% at 57.<sup>127</sup>

RHFPD's average employer contribution for FY 2016-17 is 89.27% of estimated payroll (salaries), or a payment of \$1,977,156 annually. The estimated annual payment increased about \$200,000 over the prior year, an 11% increase.<sup>128</sup>

CCCERA's overall average employer contribution for FY 2015-16 is 40.06% of payroll, down from 43.58% from the prior year as a result of improved investment returns.<sup>129</sup>

The District asked CCCERA to lower its annual payments on unfunded retirement debt by extending the amortization schedule to 30 years; CCCERA met with the RHFPD and agreed to allow the District to make an annual payment sufficient to prevent additional interest accruals on unfunded balances, but not sufficient to amortize the unfunded balance.

### **RHFPD Health Insurance Benefits and OPEB**

The District provides health insurance to current and retired employees. No dental, vision, or life insurance benefits are provided. The District contracted in 2008 with the California Employers' Retirement Benefit Trust (CERBT). In FY 2011-12, the District implemented a 3.75% employee contribution to the OPEB Trust Fund. Since then, the employee contributions have continued, and the District has been funding its annual benefit costs on a "pay as you go" basis each year.

The last OPEB valuation was prepared in January 2014. The report indicated that the District's Unfunded Accrued Actuarial Liability (UAAL) would total \$11.3 million in FY 2013-14, resulting in an Annual Required Contribution (ARC) of \$903,000 for FY 2014-15.<sup>130</sup> The report projected the UAAL to grow to \$12.1 million by FY 2015-16, assuming no pre-funding payments were made in the interim, increasing the ARC to over \$1 million. The District's FY 2015-16 budget shows no payments, in addition to a required 3.75% employee contribution towards the ARC, allowing the UAAL to grow.

The District's "pay as you go" health insurance costs totaled \$316,000 for retirees in the FY 2015-16 budget, and \$348,000 for active employees; the total, \$664,000, is about 38% of salaries.

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<sup>127</sup> Side Letter of Agreement to Extend MOU Between RHFPD and I.A.F.F. Local 1230, November 14, 2012. Employee contributions are those established by AB 340 and AB 197.

<sup>128</sup> CCCERA Actuarial Valuation and Review as of December 31, 2014 (p. v).

<sup>129</sup> December 31, 2014 Actuarial Valuation, Adopted by the Board on July 8, 2015, CCCERA.

<sup>130</sup> RHFPD Retiree Healthcare Plan, June 30, 2013 Actuarial Valuation Final Results, Bartel Associates, LLC, December 13, 2013 (see Results, p. 18).

## **RHFPD CAPITAL ASSETS, CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES AND EXPENDITURES**

The RHFPD has a number of sources available for funding capital improvements; however, it is likely that most of the current fund balances shown in **Table 20**, below, will be needed as reserves for operations to buffer the impact of reduced assessment and grant revenues.

**Grants and Contributions** – The Phillips 66 Refinery in Rodeo provided capital funding to purchase and equip a new rescue pumper in FY 2013-14.<sup>131</sup> The subsequent two years' budgets show contributions of \$50,000 and \$65,000 towards purchases totaling \$296,000.<sup>132</sup>

**Developer Fees** – Developer fees are collected by the City of Hercules on behalf of the District. The fee for a single-family residence is \$1,029; fees are also collected from multi-family and commercial developments.<sup>133</sup> According to a 2009 RHFPD fee schedule, impact fees in Rodeo are \$1,012.<sup>134</sup> Projected impact fee fund balances will total \$117,000 by the end of FY 2015-16.

The RHFPD appeared before the County BOS Finance Committee on March 16, 2016 and requested Prop 172 funding; these are funds generated by a statewide sales tax that are distributed to counties for public safety purposes. As a matter of policy, Contra Costa County historically has allocated these funds to the Sheriff-Coroner and the District Attorney, and the County Administrator's response to the request was to recommend against the requested allocation.<sup>135</sup>

## **RHFPD RESERVES AND OTHER FUNDS**

As indicated in **Table 20**, the RHFPD projected FY 2015-16 budget shows a minimal ending General Fund balance of approximately \$50,000. However, the 2014 assessment fund is projected at \$1.9 million, or about 32% of expenditures. It is likely that a majority of this balance will be required to offset the SAFER grant funds that provided \$1.3 million of funding for operations in FY 2015-16, but which

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<sup>131</sup> RHFPD Basic Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2014, p. 12.

<sup>132</sup> A condition of approval (COA 84) for a project at the Phillips 66 Refinery was originally designated for the purchase of a Hazardous Materials Response Unit. The COA was changed by the BOS at the request of Phillips 66, and the amount was increased - the refinery agreed to pay half the cost of a rescue pumper with a larger capacity pump, foam and rescue capability to better serve the District.

<sup>133</sup> Approved by Resolution 10-088, effective July 1, 2010; downloaded from City of Hercules website January 30, 2016.

<sup>134</sup> Correspondence from RHFPD to MRG/BA (March 29, 2016).

<sup>135</sup> Memorandum from Timothy Ewell, Senior Deputy County Administrator, to the Finance Committee, March 16, 2016. According to the Finance Committee record of action, the BOS Finance Committee did not allocate funds to the RHFPD, noted that there must be a plan for going forward, suggested the RHFPD seek city funding, and requested that the County Administrator meet with the RHFPD Chief to discuss options for city funding similar to the ECCFPD Task Force.



have been fully utilized. The remaining fund balance will be insufficient in FY 2016-17 to fully offset the absence of SAFER grant funds and the pending termination of 2014 benefit assessment revenues, an additional loss of over \$900,000 annually beginning July 1, 2017.

**Table 20**  
**RHFPD Fund Balances FY 2015-16**

<b>Funds</b>	<b>Starting Balance</b>	<b>Revenues or Transfers In</b>	<b>Expenditures and/or Transfers Out</b>	<b>Ending Balance</b>
<b><u>General Fund</u></b>				
Total	\$66,293	\$4,783,021	\$4,800,464	\$48,850
<b><u>2014 Fire Assessment</u></b>				
Total	937,083	947,106	0	1,884,189
<b><u>SAFER Grant</u></b>				
Total	32,494	1,287,202	1,287,202	32,494
<b><u>Capital Projects</u></b>				
Total (1)	149,973	65,000	137,213	77,760
<b><u>Developer Fees</u></b>				
Hercules	1,358	100,000	0	101,358
Rodeo	<u>15,367</u>	0	0	<u>15,367</u>
Total	16,725	100,000	0	116,725
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,202,568</b>	<b>\$7,182,329</b>	<b>\$6,224,879</b>	<b>\$2,160,018</b>

Source: RHFPD FY2015/2016 Financial Report for Year-End June 30, 2016, (Sept. 3, 2015)

(1) Phillips 66 Capital #5

### **RHFPD GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

A number of significant new projects are anticipated to open in the City of Hercules over the next one to two years; however, because of the continued diversion of revenues to repay redevelopment obligations, the City's budget shows minimal

growth in property tax revenues. Projects expected to open within the next two years include:<sup>136</sup>

- Victoria Crescent – 43 residential units;
- “Parcel C” – 144 residential units;
- Sycamore Crossing – 130,000 sq. ft. of retail and a gas station; and
- Market Hall – 90-room hotel, gas station, drug store, and drive-thru restaurant.

These projects will contribute to the residential growth shown in **Table 21**, below, as well as contribute to employment and visitor growth in the RHFPD.

**Table 21**  
**Projected Population Growth, RHFPD 2015-2025**

	2015	2020	2025
<b>Hercules (1)</b>	26,500	28,900	31,300
<b>Rodeo (2)</b>	<u>6,500</u>	<u>6,628</u>	<u>6,771</u>
<b>TOTAL (3)</b>	33,000	35,528	38,071
Annual Avg. % Change		1.5%	1.4%

*Source: ABAG Projections 2013*

- (1) ABAG forecast is shown for 2015; Cal. Dept. of Finance, E-1 Population Report, 2015 estimates a slightly lower 2015 population for Hercules.
- (2) Rodeo 2015 assumed to equal District population estimate less Hercules population. Rodeo projections assume average rates for unincorporated areas Countywide.
- (3) RHFPD 2015 estimate is from RHFPD response to LAFCO Request for Information.

According to the RHFPD, the Phillips refinery is planning new projects that would increase the RHFPD’s service responsibilities.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Long Range Forecast, Staff Report to the Finance Commission meeting, November 23, 2015.

<sup>137</sup> RHFPD Response to LAFCO Request for Information.

**RHFPD SERVICE DEMAND**

**Table 22**, below, summarizes calls for service for the RHFPD. Call volume is below Countywide averages; however, if one of its two stations closes, the calls per station will effectively double.

**Table 22**  
**RHFPD Calls For Service, 2014**

Station	2014			Total
	Fire (1)	EMS (2)	Other (3)	
Station 75	14	164	85	263
Station 76	114	1,081	701	1,896
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1,245</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>2,159</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: RHFPD Response to LAFCO Request for Information.

(1) Codes 100-151.

(2) EMS include vehicle accident with injuries.

(3) Includes "611: dispatched and cancelled en route".

**RHFPD INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OR DEFICIENCIES**

The 2009 MSR rated the two RHFPD stations as being in "good" condition. Fire Station 75 was originally designed in 1927 and has had one significant renovation in 1995. Fire Station 76 (owned by the City of Hercules) was dedicated in 1991.

Though functional, the two stations do not meet current "essential services" and "best practices and design" standards, according to the District.<sup>138</sup> The District's Business Plan includes a strategy to construct a new fire station to replace Station 75. The facility would consolidate all Fire District operations on one centralized campus and improve response times.<sup>139</sup>

Attached to Fire Station 76 is a modular training classroom, fitness and storage area. The grounds of Station 76 are utilized to house a mobile training tower, a firefighting live burn trailer, and a fire prevention safety house. Most recently,

<sup>138</sup> RHFPD Strategic Plan 2012.

<sup>139</sup> RHFPD Business Plan 2012-16.

each Fire Station is being upgraded with solar panels and other energy efficient features to reduce power costs.

The District's Business Plan includes implementation of the elements and recommendations of the Fleet Management Study, including Best Practices for apparatus replacement, repair, troubleshooting and preventative maintenance.<sup>140</sup>

## **RHFPD SERVICE ADEQUACY**

### **Response Times**

The RHFPD currently does not have an adopted response time standard. According to the District, 90% of responses<sup>141</sup> were within 9 minutes and 43 seconds in 2014, which significantly exceeds national standards of five to six minutes. This response time is nearly the longest of all Contra Costa fire service agencies, second only to ECCFPD.

While the total land area served by the two stations is not excessive, the geography of the District imposes additional travel times. Many of the areas served by the District require access via Interstate 80, which can impose additional delays during commute times, as well as less direct routes due to the multiple valleys that cross the District.

### **ISO Ratings**

Prior to 2014, RHFPD's ISO was reported to be 3/9; in 2014, the classification was changed to 2/2X.<sup>142</sup> The second factor of the split classification, a new system adopted by ISO in 2014, applies to properties within five road miles of a fire station, but beyond 1,000 feet from a creditable water supply.

## **RHFPD MSR DETERMINATIONS**

### **1. Growth and population projections for the area.**

Growth in the RHFPD is expected to increase as the region recovers from the recession. Projections indicate growth of 1.4 to 1.5% annually over the next 10 years, or about 480 new residents annually. This growth will increase calls for service and potentially reduce resources required for responses to other areas when multiple calls occur. Response times, which currently fall below national standards, will worsen, particularly if one of the RHFPD's two stations is closed.

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<sup>140</sup> RHFPD Business Plan 2012-16, Strategy 2013.4.

<sup>141</sup> Response times measured from time of dispatch to "on scene."

<sup>142</sup> RHFPD response to LAFCO Request for Information.

**2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged communities within or contiguous to the SOI.**

One community in Rodeo has been identified as a disadvantaged community. The area is within one mile of RHFPD Station 75, and therefore response times for the first-arriving engine company should meet or exceed Best Practice norms. However, if Station 75 closes as a result of revenue shortfalls, the next closest station would be Station 76, over two miles away. Times required for arrival of additional engine companies in the event of a structure fire would increase as well.

**3. Capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services and infrastructure needs or deficiencies.**

Though functional, the two RHFPD stations do not meet current “essential services” and “best practices and design” standards, according to the District.<sup>143</sup> The District’s Business Plan includes a strategy to construct a new fire station to replace Station 75; however, current revenues, particularly given pending reductions in assessment and grant revenues, will not be sufficient to construct the new station.

RHFPD response times are among the longest in the County, second to those of ECCFPD. Closure of Station 75, which could occur due to financial constraints, will worsen response times. First responder times will increase, and the RHFPD will become increasingly reliant upon aid from other agencies, increasing the probability that adequate response, e.g., to a structure fire, which requires a minimum of 15 firefighters, will not arrive in time to contain a fire and minimize damage to property and risk of injury to residents.

**4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.**

Within the next one to two years, RHFPD revenues will decline by over \$2.6 million, or 40% of its revenues, due to its SAFER Grant ending and the elimination of its recently adopted 2014 benefit assessment. These reductions will force the closure of Station 75, resulting in a significant adverse impact on service levels. The District can apply for another SAFER grant, however, the likelihood and timing of receiving another grant is unknown. A subsequent SAFER grant application cannot be submitted for the same activities and the same personnel who were hired under the current grant.

Growth within the District’s boundary is occurring in Hercules, particularly its former redevelopment area, as the economy improves. However, because of ongoing debts that survive the elimination of the redevelopment agency, property tax revenues that would otherwise accrue to the RHFPD from assessed value growth will be diverted to continue to pay off redevelopment debts.

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<sup>143</sup> RHFPD Strategic Plan 2012.

## **5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities/services.**

The fire providers in the West County have established informal and effective cooperative agreements to address the fire and emergency medical services needs of their constituent communities. The RHFPD, City of Pinole and ConFire all participate in the Battalion 7 configuration sharing Battalion chiefs who manage and coordinate fire and medical emergency activities.

If all West Contra Costa fire agencies acknowledge and implement improved cooperation, all participating agencies will benefit financially, and their communities will benefit by receiving an improved level of fire and rescue services. For this approach to work, it is essential that all agencies recognize the value of: implementing meaningful shared service agreements; cooperative sharing of scarce resources; and elimination of unnecessary duplication of special services. Agencies should agree to: share training management and delivery; improve dispatch and emergency communication functions; and share senior management and leadership positions, as practical.

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

The RHFPD follows generally accepted practices and legal requirements for meeting noticing procedures. Meeting agenda and packets are posted on its website for 2016, including minutes from meetings two months prior. Archival access to meeting minutes from 2011 is available on another section of the website.

The Board requested preparation of summary financial information, a draft of which is included in the January 16, 2016 meeting packet. Financial reports, including a 2014 financial report, are posted on the website, along with prior years' budgets and budget presentation materials, and employee information.

The District prepared a Business Plan and a Strategic Plan in 2012 that provide clear direction and strategies; however, implementation has been stymied by the District's lack of financial resources.

### **RHFPD Governance Options**

The 2009 MSR considered a number of governance options, however, no action has occurred since 2009 related to changes in governance. Following is a review and update of potential options.

**a. Annexation of area served by Crockett-Carquinez FPD** – While there would be benefit to a unified command structure and some shared internal support services, the cost reductions (net of revenues) to the RHFPD would not be significant enough to overcome RHFPD's financial shortfalls. Increased financial and operational efficiencies, in conjunction with other actions, could improve the long-term financial sustainability of RHFPD; however, this option does not appear

to be an area of interest to either district at this time. Crockett-Carquinez FPD, as an agency relying on volunteers, does not provide a significant increase in access to funding, and a revenue measure would bring limited revenues; the RHFPD and Crockett-Carquinez FPD have held multiple discussions regarding this issue; however, RHFPD does not have the staff to support fire prevention, training or fleet management for Crockett-Carquinez FPD.<sup>144</sup>

**b. Consolidation among West County fire providers** – Historically, major impediments to implementing this recommendation have included political, financial, operational, employee compensation and training differences as well as an expressed lack of interest. The recent proposal by ConFire for a “shared Chief” position for the City of Pinole, RHFPD and ConFire is a significant indicator that the agencies are currently considering a cost-effective, inter-agency solution to the overhead costs for the three agencies. If implemented, this initial step, followed by the recommendations earlier in this report could decrease operational costs for the agencies significantly and materially improve service. Significant issues remain to be addressed, including pay and benefit differentials, pension costs and unfunded OPEB obligations between RHFPD, ConFire and the City of Pinole are a few of the issues that would need to be addressed before a complete West County consolidation were enacted.

As is the case with ECCFPD, a consolidation of the RHFPD with ConFire, or dissolution of the RHFPD and expansion of ConFire’s SOI to include the RHFPD territory, would require the cooperation of the ConFire governing board, which is the Contra Costa County BOS; however, the change potentially could degrade the service levels to the existing ConFire service area, and would not contribute a significant increase in revenues, which would likely be unacceptable to the BOS. The County does not currently subsidize the ConFire activities and does not currently have plans to do so. If the RHFPD requested consolidation, or dissolution occurred, it is likely that new special taxes in the RHFPD area would be needed to fully fund the current two RHFPD stations, as well as fully fund all RHFPD financial obligations, including pension and OPEB obligations.

Although a “grand solution” that includes a consolidation or annexation is unlikely to occur in the near-term, more extensive “functional” consolidation, which does not require governance or boundary changes, could provide a more efficient and expedient application of resources in the West County area. Functional consolidation does not offset the inherent deficiencies of service that exist in the RHFPD as a result of unfunded service demands and closed fire stations. In conjunction with other actions, functional consolidation could improve the long-term financial sustainability of the RHFPD.

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<sup>144</sup> Correspondence from Chief Hanley to MRG, March 23, 2016.

**7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

No additional matters have been identified at this time.

**RHFPD MSR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Addressing RHFPD's service and financial challenges, and assuring that its two station service configuration remains intact, requires at least two strategies: (1) RHFPD should secure a new funding source to replace its grant revenues and benefit assessments; and (2) new levels of cooperation among West Contra Costa fire agencies can help address individual agency deficiencies and improve services to the region, thereby contributing to RHFPD operational efficiencies, improved service levels, and financial sustainability.

**1. Pursue New RHFPD Funding Sources.**

The RHFPD should pursue a voter approval of a special tax measure, which would require a two-thirds voter approval. The tax revenues, in addition to potential cost savings from operational efficiencies, could significantly improve the RHFPD's ability to sustain adequate levels of service.

As part of the planning efforts for a tax measure, the RHFPD should participate in an SOC Study for the West County area to identify operational improvements and other measures to ensure efficient and cost-effective use of existing and new financial resources.

**2. Create a Battalion 7/West County Fire and Emergency Services Task Force.**

It is recommended that a Battalion 7/West County Fire and Emergency Services Task Force be established with representatives from all of the involved jurisdictions. The Task Force would be required to meet regularly to develop, review and implement a regional SOC Study, apply for grants, refine operational practices, and develop cooperative agreements to improve services through collaborative efforts described above in "No. 5. – Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities/services."

**3. Undertake a West County Standards of Cover Study**

The study would objectively review the current level of fire and rescue services in the studied communities. The SOC analysis will identify the service area's strengths, deficiencies and areas of overlap. The results of the SOC study could be used to improve the coordinated services in West County and form the basis for implementation of further service efficiencies, as well as to document service standards and improvements that support the RHFPD request for special tax revenue from voters.



## **RHFPD SOI UPDATE**

The existing SOI for the RHFPD extends into the San Francisco Bay; this area in the Bay was considered for detachment as part of the options noted in the 2009 MSR. The 2009 MSR also considered detachment of the refinery area.

LAFCO deferred SOI updates for the RHFPD pending the formation of a West County Ad Hoc Committee to address issues raised in the 2009 MSR; however, no committee was formed. No consolidation study or other efforts occurred subsequent to the 2009 MSR due to lack of interest on the part of the service providers.

### **Agency Proposal**

The RHFPD does not anticipate changes to its SOI in the next five years.<sup>145</sup>

No agencies expressed interest in consolidation with RHFPD, nor in serving as a successor agency to the responsibilities of the RHFPD in the event of its dissolution.

### **SOI Determinations**

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

Following preparation of the 2009 MSR, many of the planned land uses, including those planned as part of the redevelopment of the Hercules Town Center, the waterfront in Hercules and Rodeo, and other infill development, were stalled by the recession. Renewed development activity is occurring with the improved economy, despite the elimination of redevelopment agencies in California.

Other existing uses within RHFPD, noted in the 2009 MSR, are primarily residential, commercial, industrial, and open space. Residential areas are concentrated in the western portion of the District's land area, with higher densities generally located west of I-80. Commercial areas are located along highways and major roads, but also concentrated in the town centers. Industrial activity is located along the coastline and consists of a large industrial park and the headquarters of a biological research company in Hercules, and the ConocoPhillips San Francisco Oil Refinery in Rodeo. Open space is located in the eastern half of the District's land area.

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

Renewed growth and development within the RHFPD service area will increase the need for adequate RHFPD facilities and services. Closure of one of its two fire

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<sup>145</sup> RHFPD Response to LAFCO Request for Information.

stations, which is imminent in the absence of new funding sources, will have a significant adverse impact on service levels.

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

With two staffed stations, the RHFPD is generally able to provide adequate services to its service area. However, increased growth and development in Hercules, including potential projects at the ConocoPhillips Refinery, will add to the service demands currently experienced by the District. As noted above, closure of one of its two stations due to inadequate financial resources will have a significant adverse impact on response times and ability to respond to multiple calls simultaneously. The need for aid from adjacent agencies will increase, and the ability to provide aid to other agencies will be diminished.

**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.**

No significant change in communities of interest has occurred since the 2009 MSR; those communities of interest include the City of Hercules and the unincorporated Rodeo area, along with the surrounding Cities of Pinole and San Pablo, the unincorporated communities of Bayview, Tara Hills, El Sobrante, North Richmond, Crockett, and Port Costa.

**5. The present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged communities within the existing SOI.**

One community in Rodeo has been identified as a disadvantaged community. The area is within one mile of RHFPD Station 75, and therefore response times for the first-arriving engine company should meet or exceed Best Practice norms. However, if Station 75 closes as a result of revenue shortfalls, the next closest station would be Station 76, over two miles away. Times required for arrival of additional engine companies in the event of a structure fire would increase as well.

**6. The nature, location, and extent of any functions or classes of services provided (special districts only).**

RHFPD provides fire and emergency medical services including paramedic services. RHFPD contracts with ConFire for dispatch and radio services. AMR, a privately owned ambulance company, provides ambulance transport services.

**RHFPD SOI Options and Recommendations**

As indicated in the "RHFPD Governance Options" discussion, significant annexations or consolidations among West County agencies are unlikely due to perpetuation of current financial shortfalls, as well as a lack of interest among agencies.

While the RHFPD currently is providing adequate services, increased demands as well as the impending loss of over \$2 million in grant and assessment revenues will force the closure of one of its two stations, significantly lengthening response times, reducing the ability to respond to multiple simultaneous incidents, and reducing the District's ability to provide needed aid to nearby agencies. Affirmation of the current RHFPD SOI would be inconsistent with the near-term risk of significant service inadequacies if only one station is staffed.

However, the District is actively engaged in seeking new sources of revenue in order to staff its second station and retain adequate service levels. Therefore, it is recommended that the current RHFPD SOI be designated as "provisional," requiring that the RHFPD report back to LAFCO on at least an annual basis to inform LAFCO as to RHFPD's progress in implementing the recommendations of this MSR, and in meeting the objectives of adequacy of services and long-term financial sustainability.

Alternatively, LAFCO could consider a "zero SOI" designation, signaling that the District's services will ultimately be provided by another agency. However, there are no current prospects for service by another agency given RHFPD's service deficiencies, financial obligations and impending reductions in funding. Through a successful combination of actions as recommended in this MSR, including support for new taxes and increased collaboration among West County agencies, the District will be in a much better position of financial sustainability, and potential SOI changes will be more viable at that point in time.

## 8. REVIEW OF AID AGREEMENTS

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### **MUTUAL AID PLAN**

All fire agencies in the County have signed the California State Master Mutual Aid Agreement that is administered by the State Office of Emergency Services. All agencies have also signed the Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs' Mutual Aid Plan, which was last updated in 1997. The County Fire Chiefs are assigned the responsibility to establish and manage the County Mutual Aid Plan that governs day-to-day interagency cooperation when an emergency exceeds the operational capability of any fire agency, by the State Office of Emergency Services, under the State Master Mutual Aid Agreement.

To activate the Mutual Aid Plan, the incident commander will contact the communication center and request additional fire personnel and equipment. The Contra Costa Fire emergency communication center would then be notified of the request, and using the County Mutual Aid Plan, identify which agency has the resources to fulfill the specific request, and contact the agency in accordance with the County Mutual Aid Plan. The agency that is being requested to respond is not required to respond, but voluntarily determines if its resources can be sent to the emergency without compromising that agency's ability to protect the people and communities in its primary service area.

### **AUTOMATIC AID**

Automatic aid agreements are different and distinctive in every case. Each agency enters the discussions with potential automatic aid partners with its interests and needs. Seldom are automatic aid agreements a one-for-one exchange of like services. In some cases an agency has a difficult service area in terms of response times, and its neighboring agency is in a better position to serve that area, and the agency may need additional fire engines or a truck company that its neighbor can provide. These agencies can both be satisfied with the agreement even if it does not appear to be a one-for-one exchange.

**Table 23**, below, indicates differences in automatic aid received compared to aid provided. In some instances, the disparity may stretch an agency's resources to the point where it must reduce available services in order to maintain its own service area standards, as exemplified by recent changes in the agreement between ConFire and ECCFPD. Similarly, there are concerns that closure of one of RHFPD's two stations will adversely affect aid responses within West County, as noted below.

**Table 23**  
**Summary of Incidents where Aid was**  
**Provided vs. Aid Received, 2014**

Agency	Aid Provided	Aid Received	NET Aid Provided or (Aid Received)
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>			
City of Richmond	1,862	1,321	541
City of El Cerrito (1)	687	424	263
City of Pinole	322	418	(96)
Kensington FPD (1)	na	na	na
Rodeo-Hercules FPD	230	415	(185)
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	107	39	68
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>			
San Ramon Valley FPD (2)	199	17	182
Moraga-Orinda FD	206	215	(9)
<b>EAST COUNTY</b>			
East Contra Costa FPD	227	588	(361)
<b>COUNTYWIDE/OTHER</b>			
ConFire	1,673	2,175	(502)
CDF	228	na	228
Other (TNT)	12	na	12

Source: ConFire ([inside.cccfpd.org/suppression/reports/MutualAidProvided.asp](http://inside.cccfpd.org/suppression/reports/MutualAidProvided.asp))

1) El Cerrito Fire Dept., 4/11/16. Includes Kensington (not separately reported).

2) SRVFPD, 12/8/16.

In response to an information request for the purpose of this MSR, the City of El Cerrito's fire department provided information for aid to and from Kensington.

Call data is reported monthly to the KFPD Board; however, the individual call data for calls to/from Kensington are not separately totaled for Kensington. The information indicated that the Kensington Engine 65 responded to 306 incidents in Kensington, and to 302 incidents outside of Kensington. A total of 139 units from the Cities of El Cerrito and Richmond responded to 57 incidents in Kensington.<sup>146</sup>

In addition to the County Mutual Aid Agreement, which is a reactive process that occurs while an emergency is in progress, automatic aid agreements have been developed and agreed upon between specific fire agencies that are generally in close proximity to each other. Automatic aid agreements differ from Mutual Aid Agreements in that agencies agree in advance of an emergency occurring to provide assistance upon the report of an incident requiring an appropriate response by a Fire agency.

In Contra Costa County, every fire agency is party to at least one, and often, multiple automatic aid agreements, as illustrated in **Table 24**, below. In some instances, a neighboring agency's fire personnel and apparatus are located closer to the emergency than the agency having jurisdiction for the area in which the emergency is occurring. In other cases, the neighboring fire agency might send one or more resources to supplement the agency having jurisdiction as part of a multi-apparatus response, such as would occur for a report of a working structure fire, vegetation fires, or a multi-vehicle accident, or a hazardous material incident.

In October of 2006, the agencies that contract with the Contra Costa Regional Fire Communications Center (CCRFCC) entered into a "Boundary Drop" agreement. This agreement was approved by the County-wide Fire Operations Committee, a subordinate committee of the Contra Costa County Fire Chief's Association. The agreement was put into effect quickly to align with a CCRFCC CAD upgrade. Presently, there is no written agreement.

The review of the automatic aid agreements signed by the various Fire agencies in the County appear to be monitored and changed on a regular basis as needed.

## **REFINERY FIRE BRIGADES**

In 1980, several refineries signed a cooperative mutual aid agreement, known as the Petro-Chemical Mutual Aid Organization (PMAO). This emergency response cooperative was formed with the purpose of providing materials and equipment during an emergency. Presently, all four refineries, Dow Chemical, the Valero refinery (in Benicia), ConFire, and West Sacramento Fire are participating members. PMAO meets monthly. Emergency services include specially trained personnel, high capacity fire pumps, and large quantities of firefighting foam.

<sup>146</sup> Correspondence from Chief Maples, City of El Cerrito Fire Department, April 19, 2016.

These resources are also available to municipal fire agencies for large petro-chemical incidents through mutual-aid requests. The PMAO agreement is not integrated into the County Mutual Aid Plan.<sup>147</sup>

**Table 24**  
**Overview of Aid Agreements**

Boundary	Automatic Aid Provided to	Automatic Aid Received from	Mutual Aid Partners
<b>City of El Cerrito FD (ECR)</b> Participates in the CCRFCC Boundary Drop Agreement	Cities of <b>Albany, Berkeley*</b> , Pinole and <b>Richmond; ConFire*</b> , MOFD, RHFPD	Cities of <b>Albany, Berkeley*</b> and <b>Richmond</b>	Cities of Berkeley and Oakland, ConFire, EBRPD, and CAL FIRE
<b>City of Pinole FD (POE)</b> Participates in the CCRFCC Boundary Drop Agreement	<b>City of El Cerrito, ConFire**, CCFPD RHFPD**</b>	<b>ConFire**, CCFPD RHFPD**</b>	EBRPD and CAL FIRE
<b>City of Richmond FD</b>	Cities of <b>El Cerrito</b> and Pinole, <b>ConFire*</b> , RHFPD	Cities of <b>El Cerrito</b> and Pinole, <b>ConFire*</b> , RHFPD	ECCFPD, CAL FIRE, CCFPD, EBRPD, MOFD, SRVFPD
<b>Contra Costa County FPD (ConFire, or CON)</b> Participates in the CCRFCC Boundary Drop Agreement	Cities of <b>Benicia, Pinole**</b> and <b>Richmond*</b> ; ECCFPD, MOFD, RHFPD**, SRVFPD	Cities of <b>Richmond*</b> and <b>Pinole**</b> , ECCFPD, MOFD, RHFPD**, SRVFPD	EBRPD, CAL FIRE
<b>Crockett-Carquinez FPD (CCFPD, or CRK)</b> Participates in the CCRFCC Boundary Drop Agreement	City of <b>Vallejo</b> , RHFPD	RHFPD	City of <b>Vallejo</b> , EBRPD, CAL FIRE
<b>East Contra Costa FPD (ECCFPD, or CCE)</b> Participates in the CCRFCC Boundary Drop Agreement	<b>ConFire</b>	<b>ConFire, CAL FIRE**</b>	Alameda County FD, CAL FIRE**, EBRPD, Stockton (STO), Tracy (TRY)
<b>Moraga-Orinda FD (MOFD, or MOR)</b> Participates in the CCRFCC Boundary Drop Agreement	City of <b>Oakland, Confire</b>	Cities of <b>Oakland</b> and <b>El Cerrito, Confire</b>	Cities of Berkeley* and <b>Oakland</b> , CAL FIRE, EBRPD*, Alameda County
<b>Rodeo-Hercules FPD (RHFPD, or RDO)</b> Participates in the CCRFCC Boundary Drop Agreement	City of <b>Pinole**</b> , <b>ConFire**</b> , CCFPD*	City of <b>Pinole**</b> , <b>ConFire**</b> , CCFPD*	EBRPD, and CAL FIRE
<b>San Ramon Valley FPD (SRVFPD)</b>	<b>Alameda County, ConFire</b>	<b>Alameda County, ConFire</b>	Cities of El Cerrito, Richmond, and Pinole, <b>Alameda County</b> , ECCFPD, CAL FIRE, CCFPD, MOFD, RHFPD, LAP (Camp Parks Army Training near Dublin)

\* Written agreement in place      \*\* Battalion-7 Cooperative Agreement  
Agencies in **BOLD** denote frequent responses. "CCRFCC" refers to Contra Costa Regional Fire Communications Center  
Source: Fire Chief Stephen Healy, MOFD, Contra Costa County Operational Area mutual aid coordinator.

<sup>147</sup> Source: Fire Chief Stephen Healy, MOFD, Contra Costa County Operational Area mutual aid Coordinator; Lewis Broschard III, Deputy Chief, ConFire. See attached Appendix for additional information about fire brigades.

## **WEST COUNTY AGREEMENTS**

### **Battalion 7**

The Battalion 7 “shared resources agreement” is an operational agreement, which includes the following fire departments: City of Pinole, ConFire (San Pablo and other unincorporated pockets) and RHFPD. Each of the three partner agencies provides an operational Battalion Chief to cover one of the rotating three 24-hour shifts. Each 24-hour Battalion Chief is responsible for the operational activities of the on-duty personnel from all three separate fire agencies.

Although the other West County fire agencies, specifically Crockett-Carquinez FPD, El Cerrito, Kensington FPD and Richmond participate in mutual and automatic aid agreements, they each operate completely independently of each other, and of the Battalion 7 agencies, with the exception of some operational training and the actual emergency response as dictated by separate automatic aid agreements.

The agencies in West Contra Costa County, although they all actively participate in mutual and automatic aid agreements, do not have a single set of unified operational guidelines to govern interagency operations. However, all of the West County fire agencies are aware of each other's basic operating principles and they follow the County Operations agreements and policies including: two in/two out; fire ground communications; rapid intervention crew (RIC); personnel accountability; high-rise structure response; and freeway response.

**The City of Pinole** – Administered by the Pinole Fire Chief, the City provides fire and rescue services for the Tara Hills, Bayview, Montara Bay Park<sup>148</sup> and the Alhambra Valley corridor (formerly the Pinole Fire District). This is a cooperative agreement with ConFire.

**Emergency Dispatch and Communications** – Fire agencies are dispatched by two different emergency communications centers, one operated by the City of Richmond Police Department – used by the El Cerrito and Richmond Fire Department – and the other, operated by ConFire, which provides dispatch services for all of the other West County Fire agencies.

A single dedicated fire communication center, responsible for primary dispatch and incident coordination, also referred to as “single point ordering,” would provide a needed operational improvement in the West County operations area. The current impediment to creating a desired single point of ordering communications rests with the City of Richmond. If the Richmond Fire Department were to leave the current City public safety dispatch center, which is operated by the Richmond Police Department, the Fire Department would still be required by the City of Richmond to contribute funding towards 18% of the operating costs of the City’s

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<sup>148</sup> Montara Bay Park is northeast of Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, southwest of Pinole.



dispatch center. The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District's communication center acts as the back-up communication center to ConFire Communications.

### **Impact of Closure of RHFPD Station**

Based on the RHFPD's prior experience, there will be delayed responses within RHFPD, the Battalion 7 response area, and in the Crockett-Carquinez FPD. In the event of a fire or other significant emergency incident, another West County Fire agency will be called upon to fill the vacancy in the response dispatch call out order. These vacancies result in faster drawdown of the available Fire resources in the Battalion 7 area of West County. Historically there has existed a "quid pro quo" reciprocal service arrangement where the participating agencies in Battalion 7 automatically provide two fire companies and a Battalion Chief to certain types of emergencies, like structure fires. The City of Pinole Fire Department no longer has that response capacity, since the closure of one of its fire stations in 2010. The RHFPD will face the same limitation when its Station 76 is closed.<sup>149</sup> and it returns to a one station configuration.

The Crockett-Carquinez FPD is anticipating an increase in emergency response requests by the RHFPD if one of the two RHFPD fire stations is closed. The increased service level requested by the RHFPD service area could significantly impact the response times to other emergency calls within the Crockett-Carquinez FPD.

One mitigation to the closure of the fire station in RHFPD would be for the Crockett-Carquinez FPD to cease its practice of sending a fire engine to cover the remaining RHFPD fire station when the station is uncovered during an RHFPD emergency response.<sup>150</sup> This was an adjustment to the West County automatic response plan that ConFire and Crockett-Carquinez FPD employed the previous time RHFPD closed one of its two fire stations. The reciprocity basis for the automatic aid services between the Districts would be nullified due to the RHFPD's inability to respond to a neighboring jurisdiction's need for coverage for a vacant station.

This potential lack of staffing at RHFPD's one station during a response will adversely affect response times to other parts of RHFPD, and eliminate the ability for an engine company to provide aid to other agencies from the vacant RHFPD station. In addition to response times increasing, when more than one fire engine is assigned to an emergency response, the strategy and tactics employed at the emergency scene will need to be altered to reflect the reduced number of fire personnel on scene to mitigate the emergency.

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<sup>149</sup> Chief Hanley, RHFPD, correspondence with MRG, March 21, 2016.

<sup>150</sup> Chief Littleton, Crockett-Carquinez FPD correspondence with MRG, March 24, 2016.

The ability of the RHFPD to conduct the multiple firefighting evolutions,<sup>151</sup> including water supply; fire attack, search and rescue, ventilation and other necessary tasks, will be severely compromised, largely due to the lack of on-site Fire personnel due to increased response times when services are provided from distant stations.

## **CENTRAL COUNTY AGREEMENTS**

ConFire and SRVFPD have added portions of ConFire's response area in Walnut Creek as the result of the closure of a ConFire station in 2013.<sup>152</sup>

The Fire Chiefs from the ConFire and SRVFPD support the current automatic aid response plan for the Central Contra Costa area. Should the situation change, both Chiefs and agencies agree to meet and discuss the benefits and challenges related to the current automatic aid plan and to revise their agreement as needed to ensure that the emergency response needs of that area are met to the satisfaction of each of these separate Fire Departments.

Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD), in addition to its previous automatic aid agreements with ConFire, CAL FIRE and East Bay Regional Parks, has recently entered into an automatic aid agreement with the City of Berkeley to provide improved emergency response to portions of Tilden Park. Berkeley Fire responds as the closest resource into portions of Tilden park when their (ALS) Engine is available from their fire station on Shasta Road (Berkeley Station-7). MOFD reciprocates with an agreement to cover Berkeley Station-7 in the event of a 2nd-Alarm (or greater) fire in Berkeley if MOFD has sufficient resources available.

## **EAST COUNTY AGREEMENTS**

The ECCFPD has relied on ConFire for mutual aid and assistance, which has been reduced pursuant to a revised automatic aid agreement. According to the agreement revised in 2015, ConFire will no longer respond automatically to non-critical medical emergencies unless ECCFPD resources are unavailable.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Evolutions are defined as: "Uniform sequence of practiced steps by squad carrying out common tasks such as selection and placement of ladders, stowing hoses, putting hoses and tools into service in particular patterns; Intended to result in predictability during emergencies" (Glossary of Firefighting, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_firefighting#E](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_firefighting#E)).

<sup>152</sup> ConFire Station #4 was closed in January 2013 (Broschard, April 18, 2016).

<sup>153</sup> Automatic Aid Agreement for Exchange of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services between the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the East Contra Costs Fire Protection District, June 1, 2015 Agreement, revised August 24, 2015.

## **Appendix A**

# **FIRE SERVICE RESPONSE ADEQUACY**

## Fire Service Response Adequacy

In well-planned and properly funded fire agencies, fire stations are located strategically throughout the community in order to place fire apparatus within acceptable response distances to the areas that the fire resources are expected to serve. If a fire department does not have sufficient fire apparatus and personnel available to respond to a moderate structure fire in time to suppress the fire and keep it from reaching the flashover stage, the fire will spread throughout the structure and could threaten neighboring homes and other structures.

**Response time** is one of the most important measurements of the fire department performance.

Two commonly referred to criteria used to assess the adequacy of the fire department's response times are:

**1. Fire:** Fire response focuses on the time that elapses between the moment the fire originates to "flashover" in a structure fire. Flashover is defined as the point where a fire grows beyond the control capability of the first alarm fire department response.

The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), an international non-profit organization established to increase fire and electrical safety, administers over 300 applicable codes. NFPA developed NFPA 1710 as an industry standard for the deployment of fire suppression operations to ensure safe and effective fire service operations. That Standard stipulates that the first fire engine should arrive to 90% of emergency calls within a range of 6:15 and 6:45 minutes. It is recognized that the NFPA 1710 Standard is the optimal nationally and is clearly not regularly achieved in Contra Costa County fire agencies.

**2. Emergency Medical Service (EMS):** EMS focuses on the time from the onset of a life threatening medical emergency to the point of irreversible brain damage from which point successful resuscitation is greatly reduced – especially for patients that are pulseless and not breathing. Nationally, high performing EMS systems have a generally accepted response time goal of 8:59 minutes from onset to arrival at the scene. Other measures of response consider time from dispatch to arrival at the scene. The "Gold Standard" for cardiac arrest survival, validated by experience in Contra Costa County, is bystander CPR and AED, which relies on community CPR, law enforcement AED and Public Access Defibrillation to improve chances of survival.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Correspondence with Pat Frost, Contra Costa Health Services, April 15, 2016.

## **Adequacy**

Firefighting adequacy is determined by several factors, including the time elapsed between the origin of a fire and the initiation of firefighting activities. To illustrate this concept, the following materials describe the staffing and equipment resources required to successfully suppress and extinguish a fire. The situation describes the response times and equipment for a moderate-risk fire in a two-story 2,000 sq. ft. +/- home to contain the fire to the room or compartment/area of origin.

Well-trained and effective firefighting personnel perform their duties in a manner designed for maximum efficiency, effectiveness and safety. They train on a regular basis on performance of firefighting "evolutions." Evolutions involve the performance of different activities that provide for firefighting activities to be completed in a minimum amount of time. The materials below contain references to a number of these activities.

The tasks and evolutions that are commonly required of firefighting personnel to effectively contain a fire to the room or area of origin may require between 11 and 14 personnel performing a variety of tasks in a coordinated manner. These include:

Within 6 minutes and 45 seconds of notification of an emergency to the dispatch center, the first due fire engine arrives and should be capable of advancing an attack hose line with a fire flow of at least 150 gallons per minute of water from the onboard 500-gallon water tank.

The balance of the required fire apparatus and fire personnel, referred to as the effective response force (ERF), should arrive at the scene within a total of 11 minutes from the incident notification to the dispatch center.

A list of common tasks and required evolutions at a moderate risk structure fire includes:

- Establish command;
- Conduct scene assessment;
- Communicate the plan of action to involved personnel;
- Request additional resources as needed;
- Prepare for rescue operations of occupants as needed;
- Establish an uninterrupted water supply to provide water;
- Establish a scene safety officer;
- Establish the two in two out and rapid intervention crews;
- Provide additional fire attack lines;

- Establish back up and exposure protection hose lines;
- Assign personnel to ventilate the fire, heat and smoke from the structure;
- Conduct primary and secondary search of the structure;
- Secure and control utilities; and
- Perform salvage operations of personal property and overhaul fire damaged areas to extinguish all fire within the structure.

The order of task assignment and deployment of fire personnel is determined by the incident commander, and is dictated by the dynamics related to that particular fire.

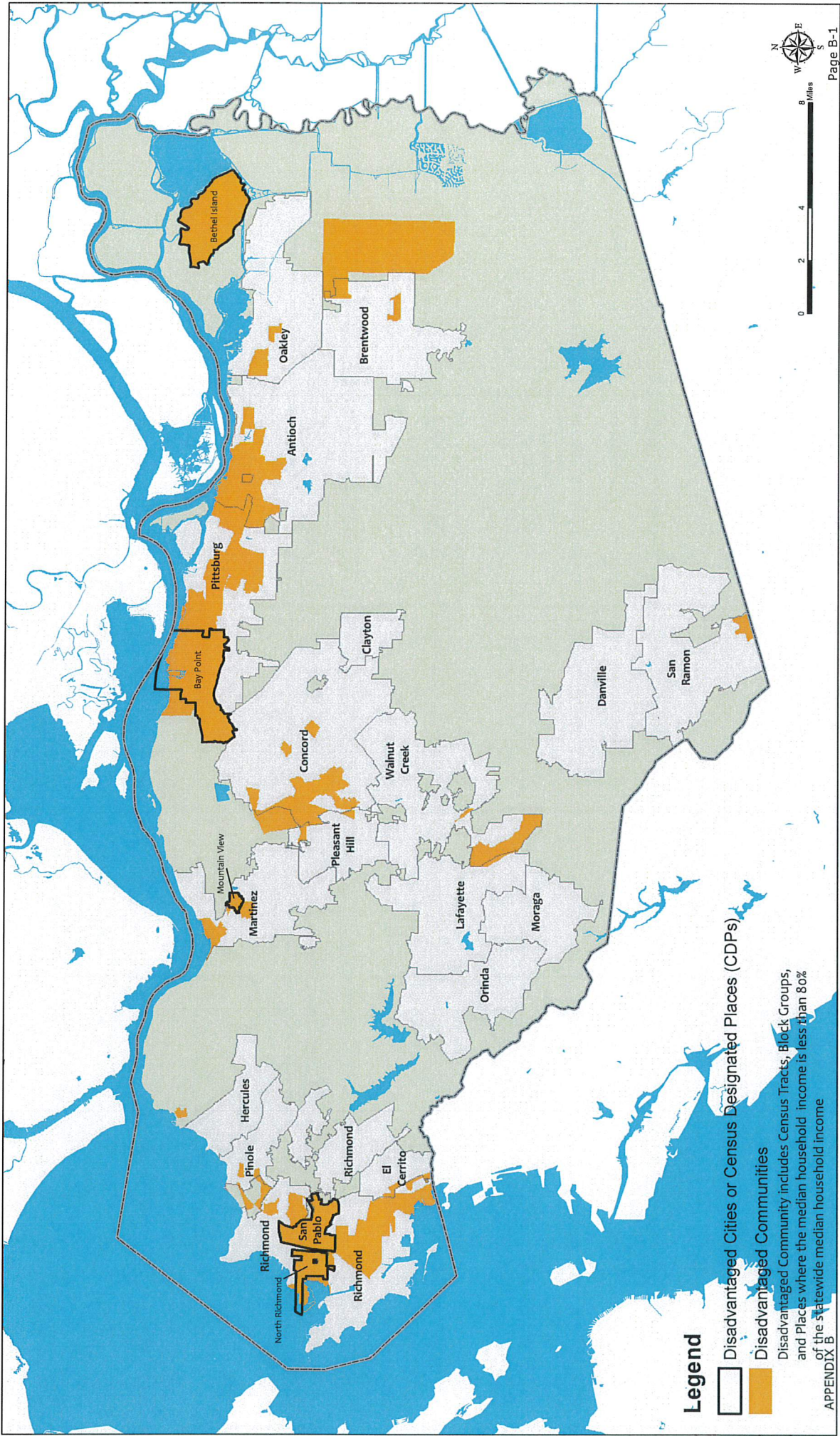
<b>Task</b>	<b>Fire Personnel</b>	<b>Company</b>
Command/Size Up	1	Battalion Chief
Fire Attack Lines	2	1st Engine
Pump Operator	1	1st Engine
Primary Search/Rescue	2	2nd Engine
Water Supply	1	2nd Engine
Two Out/Utilities and Safety	3	3rd Engine
Ventilation/Ladders	2	1st Truck company
Forcible Entry/Search/Rescue Support	2	1st truck company
Total Initial Fire Attack Personnel	14	5 fire apparatus

## **Appendix B**

# **DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**



# Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Determination American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2009 - 2013)





## **Appendix C**

### **2009 EMS/FIRE MSR – STATUS OF SOI UPDATES**

**2009 EMS/Fire MSR – Status of SOI Updates**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>SOI UPDATE</b>
County Service Area (CSA) EM-1	Retained existing coterminous SOI
Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (ConFire)	Expanded SOI to include area southeast of Clayton, Roddy Ranch area, eastern boundary areas in the cities of Antioch and Pittsburg already served by ConFire; removed from SOI Bogue Ranch area previously annexed to SRVFPD, and 101 acres in Orinda previously annexed to MOFD; and continued to exclude from SOI the western boundary areas (i.e., City of San Pablo, and unincorporated areas including Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Montalvin Manor, North Richmond, Tara Hills) in anticipation of a future West County fire consolidation
Crockett-Carquinez Fire Protection District (CCFPD)	Deferred SOI update pending the formation of a West County Ad Hoc Committee to address issues raised in the 2009 MSR report
East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD)	Removed from SOI Roddy Ranch property
Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD)	Deferred SOI update pending the formation of a West County Ad Hoc Committee to address issues raised in the 2009 MSR report and to complete MSR for Kensington CSD
Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD)	Expanded SOI to include 101 acres previously annexed to MOFD
Rodeo Hercules Fire Protection District (RHFPD)	Deferred SOI update pending the formation of a West County Ad Hoc Committee to address issues raised in the 2009 MSR report
San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD)	Expanded SOI to include previously annexed areas (Tassajara Valley/Morgan Territory, Bogue Ranch)
City of El Cerrito	Retained existing SOI following West County Sub-regional MSR covering city services
City of Pinole	Retained existing SOI following West County Sub-regional MSR covering city services
City of Richmond	Removed from the SOI areas east of Bonita Road and at North Arlington

## **Appendix D**

# **FIRE STATIONS AND STAFFING CHANGES RELATIVE TO THE 2009 MSR**

Table 3-8 from 2009 MSR, Updated 2015: Fire Station Condition, Staffing and Apparatus

FS	Address	Condition	Staff	Needs	Year
Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (ConFire)					
1	1330 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek CA 94596	Fair	2 Captains, 2 Engineers, 2- Firefighters <u>Staffing reduced to 5</u>		1965
2	2012 Geary Rd., Pleasant Hill CA 94523	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1966
3	1520 Rossmoor Pkwy., Walnut Creek CA 94595	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1997
4	700 Hawthorne Dr., Walnut Creek CA 94596	Fair <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1- Firefighter <u>Station currently closed</u>		1956
5	205 Boyd Rd., Pleasant Hill CA 94523	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1963
6	2210 Willow Pass Rd., Concord CA 94520	Fair <u>Poor</u>	2 Captains, 2 Engineers, 2- Firefighters <u>Staffing reduced to 5</u> Firefighters		1939
7	1050 Walnut Ave., Walnut Creek CA 94598	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1991
8	4647 Clayton Rd., Concord CA 94521	Fair <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1953
9	209 Center Ave., Pacheco CA 94553	Fair <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1956
10	2955 Treat Blvd., Concord CA 94518	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1967
11	6500 Center Ave., Clayton CA 94517	Excellent- Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		2002
12	1240 Shell Ave., Martinez CA 94553	Fair <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter <u>Station currently</u> <u>closed</u>		1956
13	251 Church St., Martinez CA 94553	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1964
14	521 Jones St., Martinez CA 94553	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1951
15	3338 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette CA 94549	Good <u>Fair</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1968
16	4007 Los Arabis Dr., Lafayette CA 94549	Poor	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter <u>Currently closed</u>	Replace, relocate (planned)	1958
17	620 St. Mary's Rd., Lafayette CA 94549	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1957
18	145 Sussex St., Clyde CA 94520	Fair	Unstaffed with 10 on-call No longer in use, being sold	Per ConFire, 4/18/16	1946

Table 3-8 from 2009 MSR, Updated 2015: Fire Station Condition, Staffing and Apparatus

FS	Address	Condition	Staff	Needs	Year
Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (ConFire) <i>Cont'd</i>					
19	1019 Garcia Ranch Rd., Martinez CA 94553	<del>Fair</del> <u>Poor</u>	Unstaffed with 10 on-call Reserve Station		1973
22	Crystal Ranch Pkwy., Concord CA 94521	<del>Excellent</del> <u>Good</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1998
69	4640 Appian Way, El Sobrante CA 94803	<del>Fair</del> <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1959
70	13928 San Pablo Ave., San Pablo CA 94806	<del>Fair</del> <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 2 Firefighters <u>Staffing increased</u>	Replace or expand	1993
81	315 W. 10th St., Antioch CA 94509	<del>Good</del> <u>Fair</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1957
82	196 Bluerock Dr., Antioch CA 94509	<del>Excellent</del> <u>Good</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		2003
83	2717 Gentrytown Dr., Antioch CA 94509	<del>Good</del> <u>Fair</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1973
84	<del>200 E. 6th St., 1903 Railroad Ave</del> <u>Pittsburg CA 94565</u>	<del>Fair</del> <u>Excellent</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Replace, relocate (planned)	1969
85	<del>2555 Harbor St., 2331 Loveridge Rd.</del> <u>Pittsburg CA 94565</u>	<del>Poor</del> <u>Excellent</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Replace, relocate (planned)	1969
86	3000 Willow Pass Rd., Bay Point CA 94565	<del>Fair</del> <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Replace, relocate (planned)	1946
87	800 W. Leland Dr., Pittsburg CA 94565	<del>Excellent</del> <u>Good</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter <u>Currently Closed</u>		1999
88	4288 Folsom Dr., Antioch CA 94531	<u>Good</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1996



Table 3-8 from 2009 MSR, Updated 2015: Fire Station Condition, Staffing and Apparatus

FS	Address	Condition	Staff	Needs	Year
<b>San Ramon Valley FPD</b>					
30	11445 Windemere Pkwy. San Ramon CA 94583	Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/ <u>Paramedic</u> , <u>Training Captain/Safety Officer</u>		2002
31	800 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville CA 94526	Good	1 Battalion Chief, 2 Captains, 2 Engineers, 2 Firefighters/ <u>Paramedics</u>		1970
32	1101 Stone Valley Rd. Alamo CA 94507	Fair - to be replaced	<del>2</del> <u>1</u> Captains, <del>2</del> <u>1</u> Engineers, <del>2</del> Firefighters/ <u>Paramedics</u>	Replace, relocate (planned)	1957
33	1051 Diablo Rd. Danville CA 94526	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/ <u>Paramedic</u>		1965
34	12599 Alcosta Blvd. San Ramon CA 94583	Good	2 Captains, 2 Engineers, 2 Firefighters/ <u>Paramedic</u>		1980
35	505 Silver Oak Ln. Danville CA 94506	Good	2 Captains, 2 Engineers, 2 Firefighters/ <u>Paramedics</u>		1985
36	2001 Lusitano St. Blackhawk, CA 94506	Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/ <u>Paramedic</u>		2009
37	10207-A Morgan Territory Rd., Livermore CA 94551	Good	Unstaffed ( <del>15 on-call firefighters</del> <u>11 on-call volunteers</u> )		1992
38	1600 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon CA 94583	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/ <u>Paramedic</u>		1989
39	9399 Fircrest Ln. San Ramon CA 94583	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, <del>3</del> <u>2</u> Firefighters, <del>2</del> <u>3</u> Paramedics, <u>1</u> Firefighter/ <u>Paramedics</u>	Relocate farther north	1998
40	9017 Double Tree Lane Livermore, CA 94550	Good	Unstaffed (3 on-call <del>firefighters</del> <u>volunteers</u> )		NP
<b>Moraga-Orinda FD</b>					
41	1280 Moraga Way Moraga CA 94556	Fair/Poor	1 Captain, 2 Engineer, 2 Firefighters	Replace or rehabilitate- <u>Rehabilitation planned 2019</u>	1967
42	555 Moraga Rd. Moraga CA 94556	Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		2001
43	20 Via Las Cruces Orinda, CA 94563	Fair/Poor	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Replace or rehabilitate- <u>Rebuild in-progress; expected completion 2017</u>	1952
44	295 Orchard Rd. Orinda CA 94563	Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		2006
45	33 Orinda Way Orinda CA 94563	Good	1 Captain, <del>2</del> <u>1</u> Engineers, <del>2</del> <u>1</u> Firefighters, 1 Battalion Chief; <u>add'l risk-based staff as needed</u>	Remove fuel tanks (planned) ( <u>completed</u> )	1969

Table 3-8 from 2009 MSR, Updated 2015: Fire Station Condition, Staffing and Apparatus

FS	Address	Condition	Staff	Needs	Year
<b>East Contra Costa FPD</b>					
52	201 John Muir Parkway, Brentwood CA 94513	Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		2002
54	739 1st St., Brentwood CA 94513	Poor	1 Captain, 1 Engineer <u>CLOSED</u>	Replace, relocate (planned) <u>CLOSED</u>	Early 1940s
57	3024 1st St., Byron CA 94513	Fair	1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter <u>CLOSED</u>		1970s
58	1535 Discovery Bay Blvd., Discovery Bay CA 94514	Poor	1 Captain, 1 Firefighter <u>CLOSED</u>	Repair or close- <u>CLOSED</u> (Sept. 21, 2014)	1970s
59	1801 Bixler Rd., Discovery Bay CA 94513	Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Relocate farther south	2003
93	<del>215 2nd Street,</del> 530 O'Hara Avenue, Oakley CA 94561	Fair- Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Replace, relocate farther south (planned). New station constructed	1960s- 2012
94	215 A St., Knightsen CA 94548	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Firefighter <u>CLOSED</u>	<u>CLOSED</u> (May, 2015)	1960s
95	3045 Ranch Ln., Bethel Island CA 94511	Poor	1 Captain, 1 Firefighter <u>CLOSED</u>	Repair	1961
<b>City of Richmond</b>					
61	140 W. Richmond Ave. Richmond CA 94801	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	New roof n/a	1960
62	1065 7th St. Richmond CA 94801	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Seismic upgrade	<del>Late</del> 70s
63	5201 Valley View Rd. El Sobrante CA 94803	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Replace	<del>Late</del> 80s
64	4801 Bayview Ave. Richmond CA 94804	Fair	2 Captains, 2 Engineers, 2 Firefighters	Seismic upgrade	<del>Late</del> 70s
66	4100 Clinton Ave. Richmond CA 94805	Fair <u>Poor</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Replace	Early 1940s
67	1131 Cutting Blvd. Richmond CA 94804	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Seismic upgrade	1942- 1943
68	2904 Hilltop Dr. Richmond CA 94806	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter	Seismic upgrade, renovate	1984- 1982
<b>City of El Cerrito</b>					
71	10900 San Pablo Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530	Fair	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter, Battalion Chief	Expand or replace	1960
72	1520 Arlington Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530	Excellent	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		2001- 1997
65	217 Arlington Ave. Kensington CA 94707	Good <u>Fair</u>	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter		1971



Table 3-8 from 2009 MSR, Updated 2015: Fire Station Condition, Staffing and Apparatus

FS	Address	Condition	Staff	Needs	Year
<b>City of Pinole</b>					
73	880 Tennent Ave Pinole, CA 94564	Good- Poor	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/Paramedic	Replace or relocate south	1984
74	3700 Pinole Valley Rd. Pinole, CA 94564	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter Unstaffed		2003
<b>Rodeo-Hercules FPD</b>					
75	326 Third St. Rodeo, CA 94572	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/Paramedic 24		1995
76	1680 Refugio Valley Rd. Hercules, CA 94547	Good	1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1 Firefighter/Paramedic		1991
<b>Crockett-Carquinez FPD</b>					
77	49 Canyon Lake Dr. Port Costa, CA 94569	Good	Unstaffed		1990
78	746 Loring Ave. Crockett, CA 94525	Fair	Three (7 p.m. - 7 a.m.) None (7 a.m. - 7 p.m.)	Repair	1957
79	1425 Lillian St. Crockett, CA 94525	Excellent	Unstaffed by CCFPD AMR paramedic housed		2002
Source: 2009 MSR; 2015 LAFCO Request for Information					
Notes:					
(1) Fire station condition definitions: Excellent—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. Good—reliable and requires only routine maintenance. Fair—non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. Poor—replacement or major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.					



# **Appendix E**

## **FIRE BRIGADES**

## **FIRE BRIGADES**

**Private Fire Brigades** – Within Contra Costa County, there are four fuel refineries (Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Shell, and Tesoro), one large chemical plant complex (Dow Chemical), and one large sugar processing plant (C&H Sugar).

One refinery, Chevron, has a full-time, paid fire department. The others operate fire brigades, with a manager functioning as the Fire Chief in addition to other duties. Initial attack response capabilities for these six facilities are summarized as follows:

- Chevron (Richmond) – Chevron operates its own, private fire department, which is comprised of 31 full-time personnel, including a full-time Fire Chief, six subordinate Chief Officers, Captains, Lieutenants, and Firefighters. Chevron Fire has an on-duty daily minimum staffing level of four (4) personnel, who are supplemented by 10-15 Operators.
- Chevron Fire employs an Emergency Response Preparedness Coordinator (ERPC), who is a direct report to the Fire Chief.
- Chevron Fire has an operating agreement with the City of Richmond Fire Department.
- ConocoPhillips (Hercules) – Conoco operates a private fire brigade, comprised of Operators who work at the refinery.
- ConocoPhillips has an operating agreement with the Rodeo-Hercules Fire District.
- Shell (Martinez) – Shell operates a private fire brigade, comprised of Operators who work at the refinery.
- Tesoro (Unincorporated Contra Costa County) – Tesoro operates a private fire brigade, comprised of Operators who work at the refinery.
- Dow Chemical (Pittsburgh) – Dow Chemical operates a private fire brigade, comprised of Operators who work at the site.
- C&H Sugar (Crockett) – C&H Sugar operates a private fire brigade, comprised of Operators who work at the site.

All refineries have members that attend biannual or annual refinery training at the Texas A & M Engineering Extension (TEEX) facility in Texas.

Chevron Fire is presently aligned with the California State Fire Training standards for Firefighter-I and II; Hazardous Materials Technician and Specialist; and TEEX. Chevron Fire offers training opportunities for local government firefighters through its training center and free TEEX courses in Texas.

C&H Sugar and Tesoro lie outside any fire district boundary in unincorporated areas of the County.

Presently, local government fire service agencies are expected to respond to both routine and major emergencies at all these facilities to provide personnel, equipment, ALS first-responder medical care, ALS ambulance transport, and fire investigation. These responses are provided either through automatic-aid, mutual-aid, or as the AHJ.

Mutual Aid from the refineries is infrequent and only Chevron could provide services other than petro-chemical emergency response off-site.

These facilities have the operational and overhead capacity to handle small incidents without mutual aid from local government agencies. Medium and large incidents require support and management from local agencies. Large incidents, particularly those involving off-site releases, require the use of an incident management team (IMT), the activation of emergency operations center(s) (EOCs), and public information functions. These are not presently well defined or exercised.

In 1980, several refineries signed a cooperative mutual aid agreement, known as the Petro-Chemical Mutual Aid Organization (PMAO). This emergency response cooperative was formed with the purpose of providing materials and equipment during an emergency. Presently, all four refineries, Dow Chemical, the Valero refinery (in Benicia), ConFire, and West Sacramento Fire are participating members. PMAO meets monthly. Emergency services include specially trained personnel, high capacity fire pumps, and large quantities of firefighting foam. These resources are also available to municipal fire agencies for large petro-chemical incidents through mutual-aid requests. PMAO mutual-aid response capabilities are organized into four (4) taskforces, which are categorized as follows:

1. Firefighting tactics
2. Foam and water supply tactics
3. Tank fire suppression (tanks <200-ft in diameter)
4. Tank fire suppression (tanks >200-ft in diameter)

The PMAO agreement is not integrated into the County Mutual Aid Plan.

*Source: Fire Chief Stephen Healy, MOFD, Contra Costa County Operational Area mutual aid Coordinator; Lewis Broschard III, Deputy Chief, ConFire.*