RODEO-HERCULES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
1680 REFUGIO VALLEY ROAD, HERCULES, CALIFORNIA 94547
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May 2021

Dear Rodeo and Hercules Residents:

As your Fire Chief, and together with the Fire District Board of Directors, we are sharing news of current long-term planning activity that has the potential to result in the provision of enhanced sustainable fire and emergency services to the communities of Rodeo and Hercules.

Our communities have enjoyed significant growth in recent years and are expected to continue to do so over the next several years. Most of the residential development has been in and around the Waterfront area of Hercules. Additionally, existing plans call for a new commercial shopping area, a hotel, an intermodal transportation center, and more, along with significant changes proposed to the Franklin Canyon area. This growth will increase demand for emergency services in our standalone fire district, and we are studying how to accommodate this in the long-term.

Providing fire and emergency services to our communities as we have done for more than eighty years is our top priority. But during our five-year strategic plan study, several challenges were presented by new development and the need to weather the impacts of any future economic downturn. One way to address these is the possibility of consolidation of our District with the neighboring Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (Con Fire), a semi-autonomous fire district serving parts of Contra Costa County, including communities east and south of us.

The District has hired a consulting firm to provide feedback on the feasibility of such a consolidation. The District decided to participate in the study because we believe the prospect of consolidation can offer many benefits to the communities we serve. At this point, we are simply sponsoring this study addressing a possible consolidation of the Rodeo-Hercules and Contra Costa County fire districts.

It is important to note, no decision has been made about consolidation, and none will be made without input from our communities. The study is ongoing, and we expect to begin receiving initial results in late spring.

Once the board receives the results, we will examine its findings and, if warranted, engage in a series of public communications, including surveys and public forums designed to assess opinions regarding them. We intend to facilitate open communications and transparency for all stakeholders. The views expressed by all will help to form the Fire District Board of Directors' thinking on any decisions regarding consolidation.

Fire District funding is one of many areas being looked at and one that has already raised some public concern. Currently, about one-third of RHFD's budget comes from a combination of two county assessments and Ballot Measure O, which was approved by voters in 2016 with a requirement for a citizens committee to oversee the expenditure of these funds.

Because of public concerns raised, we have undertaken a legal review of any impacts on revenue streams that a potential consolidation might pose. Early results of that review have assured us that any such consolidation would require revenue generated for our communities, by law, stay in Rodeo-Hercules and that the Measure O Committee would continue to exist and oversee the expenditure of these funds. Should results of the feasibility study warrant, we will make sure to determine how our communities' tax revenues will continue to benefit our residents.

As more long-term planning information becomes available, we look forward to reaching out to residents and stakeholders alike. Your participation and input will help our District best plan to continue providing fire and emergency services to the community for years to come.
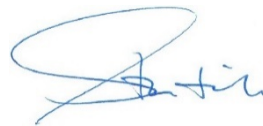
In the meantime, please feel free to leave your questions or comments regarding this initiative by voicemail at 510-799-8756 or by email to info@rhfd.org.

Thank you for your continued support of our Fire District.

Sincerely,

Bryan Craig
Fire Chief

Steve Hill
Board Chair