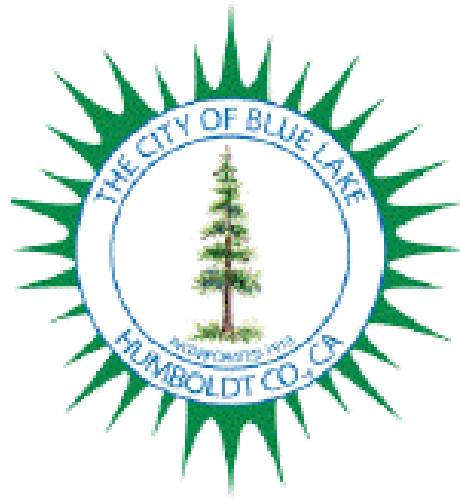


***City of Blue Lake***  
**Municipal Service Review**



January 2010

Prepared by:



For Updating the Sphere of Influence Report

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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This Municipal Service Review (MSR) was prepared as part of a mandated review of the spheres of influence (SOI) of all government entities in the County by the Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). This report focuses on the City of Blue Lake. The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate local governmental services in order to improve overall understanding of local service conditions and to enhance these conditions through comprehensive review and analysis. This MSR presents for the Commission's consideration a discussion, analysis, and recommendations regarding services provided by the City of Blue Lake. The current SOI for the City of Blue Lake was reviewed in 2002. This MSR serves to update the relevant data on services provided within the district's SOI.

### **Review Methods**

This MSR was prepared by LAFCo staff during February - April of 2009. The Blue Lake City staff completed an agency profile questionnaire, which provided LAFCo with the current status of district operations. The Infrastructure and Services Report that was compiled as part of the Humboldt County General Plan was also referenced for regional population and housing projections, as well as detailed descriptions of existing infrastructure. The draft report was sent to City staff for review and clarification. All information gathered for this report is filed by Humboldt LAFCo for future reference.

### **Statutory Authority**

The fundamental role of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is to implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act (Act) consistent with local conditions and circumstances. The Act guides LAFCo's decisions. The major goals of LAFCo as established by the Act are to:

- Encourage orderly growth and development;
- Promote orderly development;
- Discourage urban sprawl;
- Preserve open-space and prime agricultural lands by guiding minimizing resource loss;
- Exercise its authority to ensure that affected populations receive efficient services;
- Promote logical formation and boundary modifications that direct the burdens and benefits of additional growth to those local agencies that are best suited to provide services;
- Make studies and obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies to provide for present and future needs;
- Establish priorities by assessing and balancing community service needs with financial resources available to secure and provide community services and to encourage government structures that reflect local circumstances, conditions and financial resources;
- Determine whether new or existing agencies can feasibly provide needed services in a more efficient or accountable manner and, where deemed necessary,

As set forth in §56425(g) of the Act, on or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, Humboldt LAFCo shall review and update each Sphere of Influence (SOI). An MSR shall be conducted prior to, as a part of, or in conjunction with, the action to adopt, amend, or revise an SOI pursuant to the Act. Together, the SOI and MSR documents analyze the District's ability to serve existing and future residents.

In accordance with §56430 of the Act, in preparation for adopting, amending, or revising an SOI, Humboldt LAFCo shall comprehensively review all services and public service providers within the designated geographic area. The Commission shall prepare a written statement of determinations on six subject areas as pursuant to state law; these determinations may be utilized in future decision-making about the provision of services, appropriate boundaries, changes of organizations, and need to revise or update SOIs. LAFCo is required to make written determinations on the following:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area;
2. Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
3. Financing ability of agencies to provide services;
4. Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities;
5. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies;
6. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

## **AGENCY PROFILE**

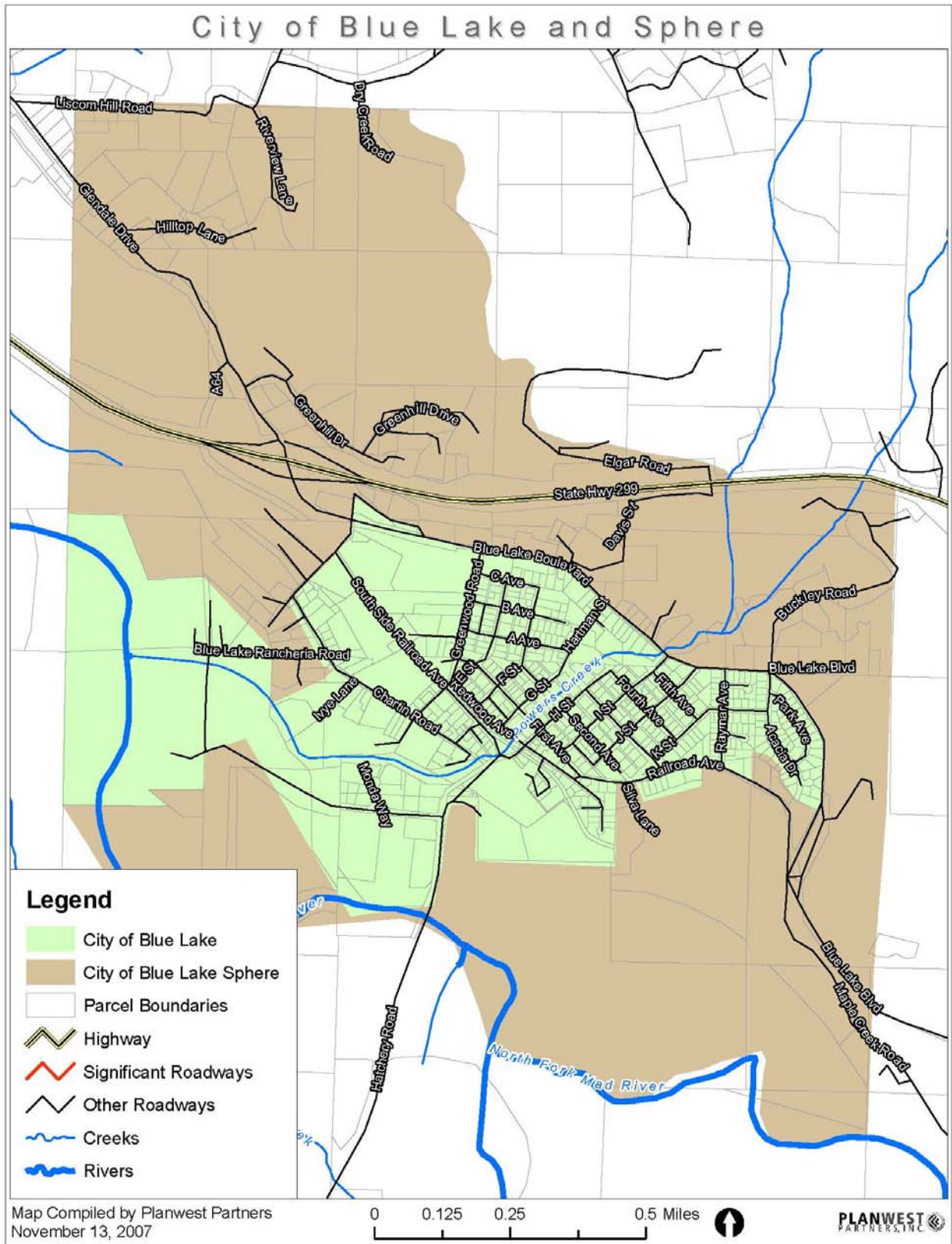
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The City of Blue Lake is located along U.S. Highway 299 and the Mad River approximately eight miles inland from Humboldt Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The City encompasses approximately 400 acres. Blue Lake is situated in the Mad River Valley and is bordered by the Mad River on the south and west. The lands surrounding Blue Lake are comprised of steep hillsides to the north and east, and more level, agricultural lands to the south and west. Figure 1, on page 3, shows Blue Lake's current boundary and Sphere of Influence.

**Table 1: Agency Profile**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Date of Formation</b>	<b>Enabling Legislation</b>
City of Blue Lake	April 11, 1910	General Government
<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Contact Title</b>	<b>Email/Website</b>
new hire: Dave Fonfara	City Manager	<a href="mailto:bluelakecm@aol.com">bluelakecm@aol.com</a>
<b>Mailing Address</b>	<b>Physical Address</b>	<b>Phone/Fax</b>
City of Blue Lake P.O. Box 458 Blue Lake, CA 95525	Blue Lake City Hall 111 Greenwood Road Blue Lake, CA 95525	Phone: (707) 668-5655 Fax: (707) 668-5916

**Figure 1: City of Blue Lake Boundary and Sphere of Influence**



## City Formation

The City of Blue Lake was incorporated in April 1910 as a general law city. The City was formed to consolidate the three communities of Scottsville, Powersville, and Blue Lake.

## Governance Structure and Administration

Blue Lake is a general law city with a Council-Manager form of government. The five-member City Council is elected by residents to serve four year terms. The City Council selects one of its own members to serve a two year term as Mayor following each election. The City Manager, City Clerk, City Treasurer, and City Attorney are appointed by the City Council to serve at the will and pleasure of the City Council. Table 2, below, shows the existing City Council composition.

The City Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The agenda is posted 72 hours prior to the meeting at City Hall. The City Hall is open and staffed from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday.

**Table 2: Blue Lake City Council**

Board Member	Title	Term Expiration
Marlene Smith	Mayor	November 2010
Karen Barnes	Mayor, Pro-tem	November 2012
Patricia Falor	Council Member	November 2012
Michele McCall-Wallace	Council Member	November 2012
Sherman Shapiro	Council Member	November 2010

## GROWTH AND POPULATION

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### County Population and Growth

According to the State of California Department of Finance, Humboldt County has an estimated 2008 population of 132,821. The County grew at an overall rate of 0.6 percent during 2007.<sup>i</sup> Assuming this growth continues, the population of Humboldt County will reach approximately 147,000 by the year 2025.

### District Population and Housing Projections

The City of Blue Lake's estimated 2008 population is 1,166. The City grew at a rate of 0.1% during 2007. The City's estimated 2025 population is 1,185.

A Community Infrastructure and Services (CIS) Report was prepared as part of the Humboldt County General Plan Update. The report identified Urban Study Areas (USA) and Water Study Areas (WSA) within special districts in order to develop land use planning scenarios and to focus the analysis for timing and location of new facilities.

The report identified both an USA and a WSA for Blue Lake; the two areas combined have essentially the same boundary as the City of Blue Lake. In 2005, the combined Blue Lake USA /

WSA had 186 dwelling units and 50 developable acres. The County's high build-out estimate within the Blue Lake USA and WSA is 161 additional dwelling units.

The City of Blue Lake has a General Plan that guides development within its boundary. Blue Lake's five-member Planning Commission is appointed by the City Council in June of even-numbered years to serve four-year terms. The Planning Commission acts as an advisory agency to the City Council making recommendations relating to the sound and orderly growth and development of Blue Lake. The Planning Commission has the authority to approve subdivisions, lot mergers, lot line adjustments, use permits, and variances.

## **SERVICES PROVIDED**

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The City of Blue Lake currently provides the following services to residents within its boundary:

- Water,
- Wastewater,
- Parks and Recreation,
- Public Facilities, and
- Road Maintenance & Street Lighting.

The City provides water, public facilities, police protection, and parks and recreation services to 100% of households within the City boundary and wastewater to 95% of households within the City boundary. The City employs eight full-time, twelve part-time, and 5 volunteer staff.

### **Water Service**

The water system in Blue Lake currently serves 669 connections; 558 of these connections are within the City limits and 111 are within the County's jurisdiction. Those residents receiving water service outside the City's boundary pay a higher rate for their water.

### **Water Source and Demand**

The City of Blue Lake purchases potable water from the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) via the booster pump station northwest of the City on Glendale Drive. The City's water is drawn from Ranney wells that are located in the bed of the Mad River, northeast of the City of Arcata. These Ranney wells draw water from the sands and gravel of the riverbed at depths of 60 to 90 feet, thereby providing a natural filtration process. The Department of Public Health classifies the HBMWD's source water as groundwater. The classification of water source type dictates the regulations a water system must follow to ensure water quality.

Blue Lake's water demand is approximately 150,000 gallons per day. The City anticipates a significant increase in demand when an industrial user, Blue Lake Power, comes on. The actual increase is unknown at this point, but the City anticipates 500,000 – 800,000 gallons per day use. According to 2005/2006 HBMWD records, the City of Blue Lake's average daily use was 0.223 million gallons per day (MGD) and peak daily use was 0.378 MGD. The City delivered over 84 million gallons of water in fiscal year 2005/2006. The Blue Lake water system currently has a

capacity of 0.46 MGD and a storage capacity of 0.9 million gallons. The pump station is capable of supplying more than 0.65 MGD.

### **Infrastructure**

The City owns and operates the booster pump station on Glendale Drive, which houses three pumps, electrical controls, and an emergency chlorination system. The booster station pumps water through a single pipe into the City's main distribution system to a pressure needed to fill two storage tanks. The distribution system consists of 51,050 feet of pipeline ranging from 1½ - 12 inches in diameter. Most of the piping is asbestos cement (AC), installed in 1973. The distribution system also consists of 125 gate valves, and 18,000 feet of ¾-1 inch diameter service lines. The booster station pumps water into town and the water that is not used flows through the grid and into the City's storage tanks.

The City has two redwood storage tanks with a total storage capacity of 900,000 gallons. The tanks each have a single inlet/outlet pipe. When the tanks are full the pump shuts down. When the level in the reservoir drops, the pumps come on again.

### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The Blue Lake water system is in good condition. The existing system has no major deficiencies for serving the current population. However, the Blue Lake USA is expected to receive an additional 161 units before reaching build-out conditions. The City of Blue Lake will need to plan for expansion of its water system infrastructure to serve this additional growth.

### **Maintenance Schedule**

The City performs regular water system maintenance to ensure efficient water delivery service.

### **Planned Upgrades**

Blue Lake has not yet developed a Capital Improvement Plan for their water system. The City hopes to loop two portions of the distribution system—one looping Acacia Ct. to Railroad Ave. and one looping the Greenhill area to the main line leading from the booster pump station.

The City of Blue Lake prepared an annexation plan that would expand the City boundaries to include all of the existing SOI. An initial fiscal analysis indicated that the proposed annexation would result in a net fiscal impact to the City. Until the City can ensure fiscal balance upon annexation, it is not interested in expanding services or City boundaries. However, the City feels it is capable of serving additional growth at the current rate of development.

### **Wastewater Service**

The City of Blue Lake provides wastewater service to approximately 591 total connections, one of which is the Blue Lake Rancheria Casino. The Blue Lake wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is located in the northwest corner of the City near the flood plain of the Mad River. The treatment plant is a domestic municipal treatment system that consists of headworks, four treatment ponds, a chlorine disinfection system, and three rapid infiltration basins. The infiltration basins are located near the bank of the Mad River. The City recently constructed a rock filter to try and improve their effluent quality.<sup>ii</sup>



## **Infrastructure**

Blue Lake's wastewater collection is a closed sanitary gravel system extending throughout the City and to several residents in the County. The collection system consists of 6, 8, and 12-inch mains that deliver wastewater to one main pumping lift station on Chartin Road. The pump station has two wet wells with two 10-horsepower pumps each that pump wastewater to the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTP). A small lift station, located in the City's Industrial Park, pumps wastewater under Davis Creek to the main Chartin Road sewer line.

From the Chartin Road lift Station, the raw wastewater is pumped directly to and through the grinder where gravity takes it from the headworks through the ponds and out to the percolation ponds. Aeration takes place in the facultative pond where the heavy solids are settled out. Further solids removal and treatment takes place as the wastewater flows through the remaining stabilization ponds. It then enters the outfall pipe at the end of pond 4 where chlorine gas is injected to kill coliform before it is discharged into the infiltration basins or percolation ponds.

The Treatment Plant has been substantially modified three times since its original construction in 1955. The original plant consisted of an Imhoff Tank, earthen sludge drying beds, two 0.25 acre sedimentation ponds and 5.4 acres of stabilization ponds. The plant was upgraded in 1971 with the addition of a fourth stabilization pond, and again in 1985 when three infiltration basins were added to eliminate discharge to the Mad River. In 1992 the first part of the primary stabilization pond was converted to a facultative pond, and a solids grinder added to the headworks to take the old Imhoff Tank out of service.

## **Flows and System Capacity**

The sewer system is designed for a population of 1,920. The wastewater treatment capacity is 1 million gallons per day (MGD). The system is designed for average flows of 0.25 MGD and peak flows of 1.54 MGD. The City's average dry weather flows are currently 0.15 MGD. The City's utilizes some roads that are lacking full width (gutter to gutter) paving as a means of stormwater retention.

The full development of all available areas within the City does not exceed current sewage disposal capacities. The current City sewer system capacity and the lack of mainline extension infrastructure are the main factors limiting urban development surrounding the City of Blue Lake. Improvements could be made to the sewer system infrastructure to increase capacity<sup>iii</sup>.

## **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The City's inflow and infiltration (I & I) amounts to six times the average summer flow during major storm events. Significant portions of the City's collection system are in need of repair and/or replacement due to excessive I&I.

## **Maintenance Schedule**

The City performs regular manhole inspections.

## **Planned Upgrades**

The City plans to replace or re-line the high inflow lines and manholes. The city has completed camera inspections of the entire system, some smoke testing, and a recent storm event flow survey. The city is now applying for funding for the necessary improvements.

## **Parks and Recreation**

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for providing parks and recreation opportunities to the public. The department does this by both offering its own programs as well as by maintaining facilities for public use. The department is staffed by a Parks and Recreation Director, and utilizes additional employees as Recreation Specialists, After School and Summer Program Coordinators, and many part-time recreation leaders. The department works in conjunction with the advisory Blue Lake Parks and Recreation Commission to develop programs and policies. The commission meets the second Tuesday of every other month at 2:00pm in the Skinner Store building<sup>iv</sup>.

Among the programs regularly offered are after school activities, sports for all ages, play groups for younger children & their families, roller skating, leisure classes, summer youth activities, and facility rentals as well as seasonal events such as the Halloween Carnival and Nessler Car Show. The Parks and Recreation Department can be reached at (707) 668-5932 or by email at [bluelakerec@aol.com](mailto:bluelakerec@aol.com).

## **Infrastructure**

The City of Blue Lake has the following parks and recreational facilities (8.5 acres in total):

- **Perigot Park** located at 312 South Railroad has a little league field, a regulation softball/baseball field, bocce ball courts, new state of the art playground, and picnic area with cooking booth. All facilities are open to the public except when rented to private parties. Furthermore, an existing trail, the A & M trail, is present on the site.
- **Victor Prasch Community Hall** located on the Perigot Park grounds is utilized as a roller rink, basketball court, dance floor, and multipurpose room. The hall also has a kitchen and dining area. The hall is available for birthday party, event, and skate rentals.
- **Community Tot Lot** located at the corner of 4th and I streets is a neighborhood playground for small children as the name implies.
- **Horse Arena** located at 210 Chartin, although a park facility is maintained by community volunteers and has been utilized since the early 1970s. It remains free to the public with a minimal \$10 deposit for key check-out.
- **Outdoor Tennis and Basketball Courts** located at 210 Chartin Road after years of use have undergone total rehabilitation with complete resurfacing and equipment upgrades.

### **Public Libraries and Other Buildings include:**

- County Library at City Hall
- Blue Lake Museum
- Dell' Arte School of Mime and Comedy
- Mad River Grange

### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

Perigot Park needs a stage upgrade, as well as a serving booth. Prasch Hall, located within Perigot Park, has ongoing maintenance issues.

### **Planned Improvements**

There are no planned improvements other than on-going maintenance.

### **Law Enforcement**

The City of Blue Lake's law enforcement services have been disbanded. The City is currently contracting with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office for police services. The County provides the City with 24 hour coverage.

### **Road Maintenance & Street Lighting**

Public Roads in the City include Chartin Road and Hatchery Road and a street system made up of additional arterial, collector and local streets. There are 6.73 miles of public-roads maintained by the City of Blue Lake. The City maintains street lighting within city limits.

### **Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The City's road system needs a center crown for proper drainage. Some of the City's roads are lacking full width (gutter to gutter) paving. There is a need to overlay some of the streets. The City has indicated that it needs to address subgrade of some streets.

### **Planned Improvements**

The City has bike paths, pedestrian safety islands at some intersections, and overlays planned.

### **Other Service Providers**

The County of Humboldt provides general governmental and law enforcement services. General governmental services include social services, health services, the courts and jail facility, regional planning, county roads and parks, office of emergency services, assessment, tax collection and auditing services. The Blue Lake Fire Protection District provides structural fire protection within and beyond the boundaries of the City. California Department of Forestry and Fire protection (CAL FIRE) also provides fire protection services in outlying areas.

## BUDGET

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The City's primary sources of funding are fees, property taxes and grants. According to the adopted City budget for FY 2008/2009, funding for general government, administration, police, public works, parks, and recreation come from the General Fund. Other funds include water, wastewater, and other special funds. See the FY 2008/2009 Budget Summary Table below.

According to City of Blue Lake records, the water system has an annual budget of approximately \$290,000. The City operates its wastewater system on an annual budget of approximately \$460,000. The majority of this income is from service charges, but funding also comes from property taxes, interest revenue, connection fees, and other smaller sources. Replacement or depreciation funds are not accumulated through revenues. The City has not developed a Capital Improvement Plan to date, and their reserves status is currently unknown.

**Table 3: City of Blue Lake Budget Summary (FY 2008/2009)**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Total General Fund</b>	\$ 1,540,558	\$ 1,526,750	\$ 13,808
<b>Other Funds</b>	\$ 684,375	\$ 651,375	\$ 33,000
<b>Water Operating &amp; Special Funds</b>	\$ 290,500	\$ 315,500	\$(25,000)
<b>Wastewater Operating &amp; Special Funds</b>	\$ 460,630	\$ 375,150	\$ 85,480
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,976,063</b>	<b>\$ 2,868,775</b>	<b>\$ 107,288</b>

## MSR DETERMINATIONS

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### **Growth and population projections for the affected area**

The City of Blue Lake's estimated 2008 population is 1,166. The City grew at a rate of 0.1% during 2007. The City's estimated 2025 population is 1,185.

### **Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies**

The Blue Lake water system is in good condition. The existing system has no major deficiencies for serving the current population. However, the Blue Lake USA is expected to receive an additional 161 units before reaching build-out conditions. The City of Blue Lake will need to plan for expansion of its water system infrastructure to serve this additional growth.

The City continues to address shortfalls within their wastewater collection and treatment systems. The City will need to invest significant effort and resources to reduce I&I within their collection system and to make improvements to the treatment and disposal system.

The City's road system needs a center crown for proper drainage. Some of the City's roads are lacking full width (gutter to gutter) paving. There is a need to overlay some of the streets. The City has indicated that it needs to address subgrade of some streets.

### **Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

According to the adopted FY 2008/2009 City budget, funding for general government, administration, police, public works, parks, and recreation come from the General Fund. Other funds include water, wastewater, and other special funds. The City's primary sources of funding are fees, property taxes and grants. The City's total outstanding debt is \$168,000; with the current repayment schedule the debt will be expired by December 2014.

### **Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities**

Under the direction of the CKH Act Section 56001, Humboldt LAFCo assists in coordinating the orderly development of communities in an effort to create the most efficient urban service arrangements for the benefit of area residents and property owners. In doing so, Humboldt LAFCo shall review opportunities for shared facilities and government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service providers.

All areas within the Blue Lake USA are within the Urban Services Boundary set forth in the Blue Lake General Plan. Therefore, it is likely that these areas will be annexed and services extended to these areas. Studies have been conducted to assess the feasibility of accepting wastewater flows from the Glendale USA. Currently wastewater from Glendale is piped to the City of Arcata for treatment. Glendale is projected to grow in County plans, and the City of Arcata has stated that it cannot accommodate increased wastewater flows. It is recommended that the City consider the viability of increasing wastewater capacity to accommodate planned growth in Glendale. The City of Blue Lake has considered such recommendation and does not wish to increase wastewater capacity at this time.

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

Blue Lake is a general law city with a Council-Manager form of government. The five-member City Council is elected by residents to serve four year terms. The City Council selects one of its own members to serve a two year term as Mayor following each election. The City Manager, City Clerk, City Treasurer, and City Attorney are appointed by the City Council to serve at the will and pleasure of the City Council.

The City Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The agenda is posted 72 hours prior to the meeting at City Hall. The City Hall is open and staffed from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday.

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

In conducting a service review, the commission shall comprehensively review all of the agencies that provide the identified service or services within the designated geographic area. The City currently shares some services with the Blue Lake Rancheria.

### **SOI Status**

Humboldt LAFCo is mandated by the CKH Act Section 56001 to promote orderly growth by discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, and efficiently

extending government services. The City of Blue Lake's current SOI covers a large area, including a rural and agricultural area north of State Highway 299. In consideration of the above factors and given the historical and projected growth rate of the City, it is determined that the SOI may be larger than necessary.

The SOI area north of State Highway 299, east of Glendale Drive, contains agricultural land, and rural residential and woodlands on hilly terrain. The area north of State Highway 299, west of Glendale Drive, contains prime agricultural land. Given the resource uses, rural character, and terrain in this area, it was determined in the MSR that this may not be a suitable area for City expansion.

The SOI area south of the City limits contains pasture land adjacent to the Mad River that is in agricultural use. The SOI area northeast of the City, between State Highway 299 and Blue Lake Boulevard, has residential development on wooded hilly terrain.

The SOI area is more than twice the area contained within city limits. During the draft preparation of this MSR it was recommended that the SOI be re-evaluated taking into consideration the discouragement of urban sprawl, preservation of open space and prime agricultural lands, efficient extensions of services, and present development constraints to determine if providing services to this large of a sphere remains feasible. If not, it was suggested that a SOI reduction be considered.

At the January 20, 2010 LAFCo meeting the Commission considered the proposed City of Blue Lake SOI reduction. The City of Blue Lake commented that the City SOI has been pre-zoned to preserve agricultural lands and to prevent sprawl and development and the City may wish to annex these lands in the future for preservation purposes. The City added that they are currently in the process of analyzing their projected future growth and requested that the SOI amendment and reduction be postponed until the next mandated MSR and SOI update (2015), giving the County adequate time to complete their general plan update process. At the January 20, 2010 LAFCo meeting the Commission adopted resolution 10-02, approving this City of Blue Lake MSR, without the proposed SOI amendment and with the recommendation that SOI reduction be re-evaluated during the next MSR and SOI update, pending the outcome of the County general plan update.

## REFERENCES

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<sup>i</sup> State of California, Department of Finance, E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percent Change — January 1, 2007 and 2008. Sacramento, California, May 2008.

<sup>ii</sup> Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report, Humboldt County General Plan Update. July 2008. [Hhttp://co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/gp/gpdemo/GPU-TOC-Demo3.htm#ch7](http://co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/gp/gpdemo/GPU-TOC-Demo3.htm#ch7)

<sup>iii</sup> Master Service Element, City of Blue Lake, Draft 2002.

<sup>iv</sup> City of Blue Lake. Parks and Recreation Department website [Hhttp://bluelake.ca.gov/index.php?module=pagesetter&func=viewpub&tid=2&pid=21&topic=5H](http://bluelake.ca.gov/index.php?module=pagesetter&func=viewpub&tid=2&pid=21&topic=5H)