

Miranda Community Services District

Municipal Service Review



August 2009

Prepared by:



HUMBOLDT
Local Agency Formation Commission

For Updating the Sphere of Influence Report

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INTRODUCTION

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 Miranda Community Services District. 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 District. The current SOI for the Miranda Community Services District was updated in 1999. This MSR serves to update the relevant data on services provided within the District's SOI. At this time, the SOI will not be amended.

Review Methods

This MSR was prepared by LAFCo staff during August of 2009. The District 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. In addition, the Waste Discharge Requirements for the Miranda Community Services District Wastewater Treatment Facility, as ordered by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, were reviewed to obtain current information on the status of the District's wastewater treatment system. The draft MSR report was sent to the District 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;

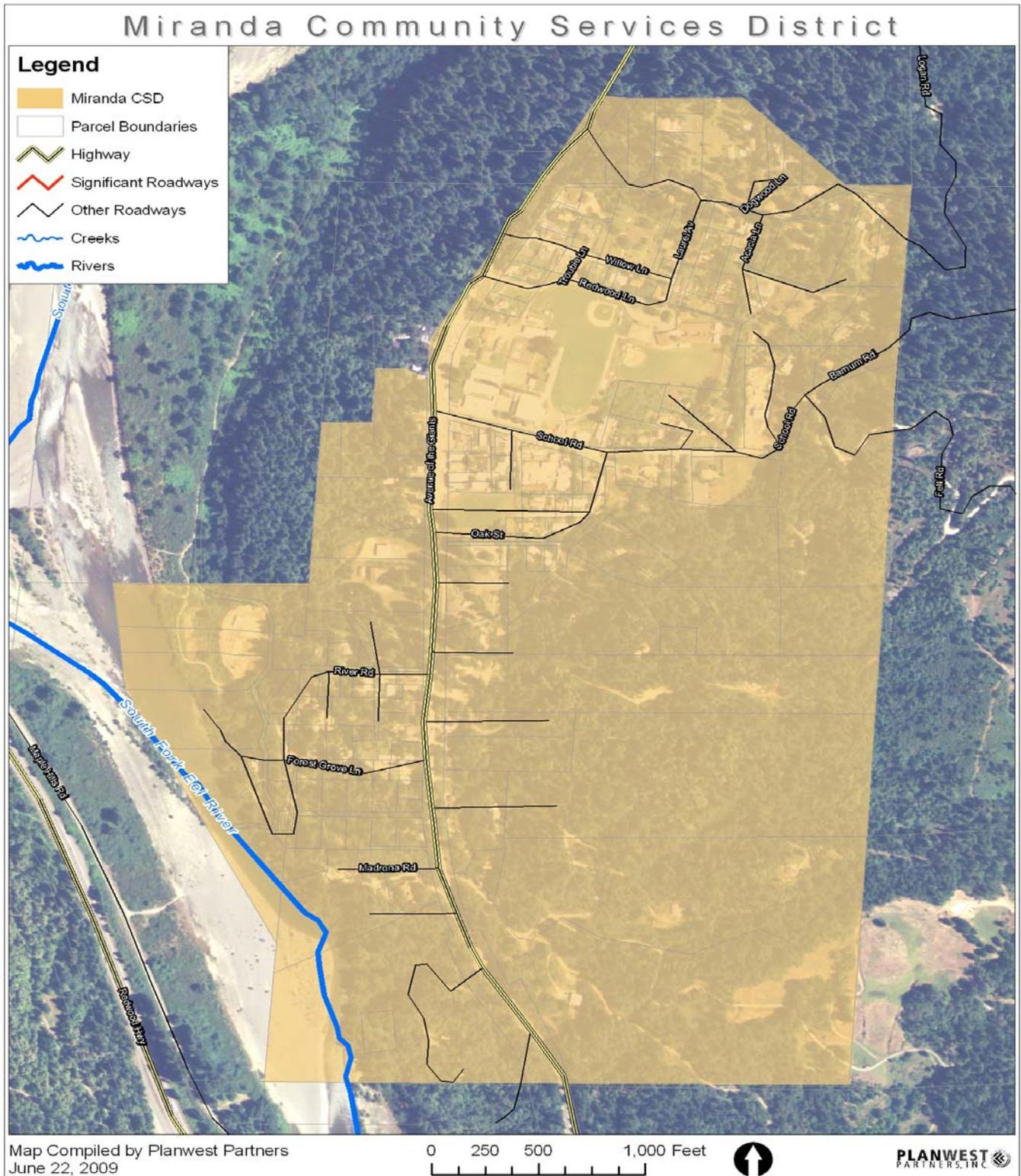
- Promote logical formation and boundary modifications that direct the burdens and benefits of additional growth to those local agencies that are best suited to provide services;
- Make studies and obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local 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.

Figure 1: Miranda CSD Boundary and Sphere of Influence



AGENCY PROFILE

Table 1: Agency Profile

Agency Name	Date of Formation	Enabling Legislation
Miranda Community Services District	January, 1964	California Government Code §6100-61936
Contact Person	Contact Title	Email/Website
Gary Miller	CSD Vice-Chairman	N/A
Mailing Address	Physical Address	Phone
P.O Box 160 Miranda, CA 95553	None Provided	(707) 943-3015

Formation

The Miranda Community Services District (CSD) was formed in 1964 pursuant to the provisions of Title 6, Division 2 of the Government Code. Figure 1 (on the previous page) illustrates the District's boundary. The District consists of approximately 280 acres. It is located in South-central Humboldt County, 50 miles southeast of the City of Eureka and 15 miles north of Garberville, along the South Fork of the Eel River. The District is bounded on its northern and western boundaries by Humboldt Redwoods State Park, on its southwestern boundary by the South Fork Eel River, and on the east by steep slopes and lands in Timber Production (TPZ) zones. State Highway 101 runs directly through the center of the District.

The District provides water, wastewater, and fire protection services to the Miranda CSD area. The District is governed by a five member Board of Directors that are elected by District residents for a term of four years. Board meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month and notice is posted at the local store, post office, and the community meeting hall.

The District employs three part-time staff. The District Office is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:00am - 2:00pm.

Governance Structure and Administration

Table 2: Board of Directors

Board Member	Title	Term Expiration
Bob Paine	Chairman	December 2009
Gary Miller	Vice-Chairman	December 2011
Martin Eldridge	Board Member	December 2009
Kathy Eldridge	Board Member	December 2011
Jason Solomon	Board Member	December 2011

GROWTH AND POPULATION

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.ⁱ Assuming this growth continues, the population of Humboldt County will reach approximately 147,000 by the year 2025.

District Population and Housing Projections

The District serves approximately 300 of the estimated 132,821 Humboldt County residents. At the District's current growth rate of 0.02 percent per year, the expected District population in the year 2025 is approximately 412.

According to the Building Communities Report, prepared in February of 2002 as part of the Humboldt County 2020 General Plan Update, the Miranda/Avenue of the Giants area has a target residential land demand of approximately 35 units.ⁱⁱ The targeted residential demand is calculated for the lifetime of the 2020 General Plan, or expected over the next twenty years.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The Miranda CSD currently provides water, wastewater, and fire protection services to District residents.

Fire Protection

Fire protection services within the District are provided by the Miranda Volunteer Fire Department, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). CAL FIRE has an automatic aid agreement with the Miranda Volunteer Fire Department and provides fire protection services in Miranda CSD's outlying areas.

The Miranda Volunteer Fire Department operates two fire engines with a 600-800 gallon capacity and one attack vehicle.ⁱⁱⁱ The District owns a fire station (located on

School Road), two fire engines, and communications equipment, which are used by the Miranda Volunteer Fire Department for fire suppression services. The Miranda Volunteer Fire Department is typically staffed by 10 volunteer firefighters and 2 or more certified First Responders.

Wastewater Service

Infrastructure

The Miranda CSD Wastewater Treatment Facility is located west of the Avenue of the Giants at the end of River Road. The District's wastewater collection facilities consist of small-diameter, gravity sewers to collect the effluent from individual septic tanks in the community. The wastewater collection system conveys wastewater to community septic tanks, where effluent is re-circulated and is treated by means of sand filters. The effluent is then chlorinated and stored in a settling pond located approximately 100 yard from the South Fork Eel River. The treated effluent leaches from the pond into gravel layers underlying the Eel River.^{iv}

In October of 2002, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) adopted Order No. R1-2003-008, which served to update the Miranda CSD's Waste Discharge Requirements and replaced the existing Order No. 86-93, issued in 1986.

The Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) contains a water quality objective of 6.5 to 8.5 for Hydrogen Ion (pH) in the South Fork Eel River. Discharger monitoring reports submitted to the RWQCB by the District have consistently shown pH data below 6.5, resulting in numerous technical violations of Order No. 86-93. The RWQCB believes the low pH values to be associated with the buffering ability of the high quality, pure water supply. It was determined by the RWQCB that since the effluent discharges to a percolation pond and not to surface water, the soils surrounding the pond should neutralize the effluent acidity.^v As such, Order No. R1-2003-0008 replaced Order No. 86-93 with the finding that a pH range of 5.6 to 8.5 is appropriate for the Miranda CSD Wastewater Treatment Facility's effluent.

Given the most recent data provided to Humboldt LAFCo staff by the District, approximately 88 residents are serviced by the sewage collection system. The system has a design capacity of 46,000 gpd average dry weather flow and of this capacity; approximately 44% (26,400 gallons) is currently being utilized. The system could maintain an additional 112 sewer connections.

Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

There are no known infrastructure needs or deficiencies at this time.

Maintenance Schedule

All septic tanks are inspected annually and pumped as needed.

Planned Upgrades

The District currently has no planned upgrades. Replacements and upgrades are completed on an as needed basis.

Water Service

Infrastructure

The Miranda CSD supplies waters for domestic, irrigation, sanitation, commercial, fire protection and recreational uses. The District obtains its water from two wells located in the southwest portion of the CSD. The wells pump water from subsurface flow, flowing through sand and gravel layers beneath the South Fork of the Eel River. The wells are capable of providing 110 and 115 gpm.

The District has approximately 135 existing water connections, with a total capacity of 150 connections. The average daily use is 55,000-60,000 gallons per day (gpd) and the maximum daily demand is 200,000 gpd during the late summer months of August and September.^{vi}

The District maintains two wells southwest of town, distribution piping, and a 200,000 gallon water tank. Of this capacity, approximately 85% (112,000 gallons) is currently being utilized.^{vii}

Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

The Miranda CSD's water system is in fair condition. The existing system has no major deficiencies for serving the current population. However, given the District's current growth rate and the County's projections for future residential land demand, it is recommended that the District begin to consider options for increasing its current operating source capacity to accommodate future growth.

Maintenance Schedule

Aging and/or impaired water pipes are replaced on an as needed basis.

Planned Upgrades

The District currently has no planned upgrades. Replacements and upgrades are completed on an as needed basis.

Other Service Providers

The County of Humboldt provides general governmental 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 District's North and the West boundaries are shared with Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement is provided by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Operations Bureau is made up of seven units under the command of a Sheriff's Captain. The most visible of these units is Patrol. Patrol has one Main Station located on the ground floor of the Humboldt County Courthouse at 826 Fourth Street, Eureka. In addition, Patrol has outstations in Garberville, Hoopa, and McKinleyville, and five resident deputy posts. These deputies are responsible for responding to emergency calls for service, criminal investigations, and crime prevention through neighborhood and beat patrols. The Garberville deputies patrol from the Stafford area south to the Humboldt county line, which includes the Miranda CSD and its surrounding areas.

BUDGET

The Miranda CSD's budget for FY 2008-09 estimates that the District's primary source of revenue is from sewer service charges (37%), generating approximately \$60,000 annually. Water service charges account for an additional \$47,000 (29%). The District's remaining revenue is obtained from property taxes (23%), interest accrued on District funds (9%), and fees collected from renting out the District's community hall (less than 2%). The District's estimated annual revenue totals \$163,000.

The District's annual expenditures for FY 2008-09 total \$163,000. Of these expenditures, salaries and wages represent the highest expense at \$43,500 (27%). The second greatest expense is a result of equipment replacements and upgrades, at \$25,000 (15%). The remaining expenditures are comprised of various operating expenses such as insurance, utilities, supplies, etc.

The District has no reserve balance and no outstanding debt. All District revenue and expenditures for FY 2008-09 are included in Attachment "A".

MSR DETERMINATIONS

Growth and population projections for the affected area

The Miranda CSDs estimated 2009 population is 300. The District grew at a rate of 0.02% during 2008. The District's estimated 2025 population is approximately 412.

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

Under present conditions, Miranda CSD's Wastewater Facility and conveyance system can handle both average daily flows and peak flows. The system has a design capacity of 46,000 gpd average dry weather flow and of this capacity, approximately 44% (26,400 gallons) is currently being utilized. The system could maintain an additional 112 sewer connections.

Based on present and projected water use levels, Miranda CSD has the ability to meet the District's current water demands. The system is operating at approximately 90% of source capacity. The District's water distribution system serves approximately 135 connections. It was designed to serve 150 connections. Therefore, water service could be provided to 15 new customers without the need for new or expanded infrastructure.

Given the District's current growth rate of two percent, it is foreseeable that the District's water system may soon be operating at full source capacity. In addition, according to the Building Communities Report, prepared in February of 2002 as part of the Humboldt County 2020 General Plan Update, the Miranda/Avenue of the Giants area has a target residential land demand of approximately 35 units.^{viii} The targeted residential demand is calculated for the lifetime of the 2020 General Plan, or is expected over the next approximately twenty years.

Therefore, given the foreseeable demand for water service in the future, it is recommended that the District begin to consider options for increasing its current operating source capacity to accommodate future growth.

Financing ability of agencies to provide services

The Miranda CSD provides adequate water, wastewater, and fire protection services to its customers under the existing rate structures. The water and wastewater systems are in good working condition and are insured to cover any unexpected damages. The District does not have any financial constraints to report.

Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities

The Humboldt County Community Development Department has been exploring opportunities for generating sustainable revenue to support fire protection through fire district reorganization and formation. Staff and Fire Safe Council members attended Humboldt County Fire Chief's Association and Southern Humboldt Fire

Chief's Association meetings, in addition to a meeting held in the Mattole. The purpose of the meetings were to introduce the concept of fire district reorganization and formation, such as forming districts where they do not currently exist, merging districts, and expanding the boundaries of existing districts to better reflect their response areas. In addition, County staff are exploring the possibility of forming a countywide (or smaller subset of the County) County Service Area (CSA) to provide some support to fire departments.

County staff has been meeting with the local Fire Departments/Districts interested in the formation to determine the next steps in the process. Such steps include: 1) updating basic department information such as facilities, equipment, etc.; 2) gaining a commitment from the fire departments to be actively involved in community outreach efforts; 3) financial forecasting to determine what fire departments require to increase their current level of service, or to serve areas that are currently unserved; and 4) engaging in the LAFCo application process.

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

The Miranda CSD Board holds public meetings the third Tuesday of each month and meetings are noticed in accordance with the Brown Act. The Board members are elected by District residents and hold four year terms of office. The current government structure is operating efficiently, and appears to have sufficient governance structure and operational capacity, no change is needed.

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

There are no further matters to report related to the water, wastewater, and fire protection services provided by the Miranda CSD.

SOI STATUS

According to projections used for this report, the current Miranda SOI is sufficient for accommodating future growth. Based on the results of this MSR, no amendments to the Miranda SOI are necessary at this time.

However, the County and local Fire Departments and Districts are in the process of coordinating efforts to increase the efficiency of local fire protection services. Many of the departments and districts located within Southern Humboldt and the Avenue of the Giants area have chosen to participate in the County's planning process.

It is recommended that the Miranda CSD consider participating in such efforts. Doing so will ensure that the District and neighboring jurisdictions are utilizing their resources wisely, operating in the most efficient means possible, and providing the best level of service to residents as can be provided.

In addition, based on the District's present and projected water use levels, Miranda CSD has the ability to meet the District's current water demands. However, the system is operating at approximately 90% of source capacity. The District's water distribution system serves approximately 135 connections. It was designed to serve 150 connections. Therefore, water service could be provided to 15 new customers without the need for new or expanded infrastructure.

Given the District's current growth rate of two percent, it is foreseeable that the District's water system may soon be operating at full source capacity. In addition, according to the Building Communities Report, prepared in February of 2002 as part of the Humboldt County 2020 General Plan Update, the Miranda/Avenue of the Giants area has a target residential land demand of approximately 35 units.^{ix} The targeted residential land demand is calculated for the lifetime of the 2020 General Plan, or expected over the next twenty years.

Therefore, given the foreseeable demand for water service in the future, it is recommended that the District begin to consider options for increasing its current operating source capacity to accommodate future growth.

REFERENCES

ⁱ 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, August 2009.

ⁱⁱ Dyett and Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners, Humboldt 2020 General Plan- Building Communities, February 2002.

ⁱⁱⁱ Humboldt County General Plan, Volume II-Communities, Avenue of the Giants Community Plan, April 11, 2000, Eureka, California.

^{iv} *ibid.*

^v State of California, Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region, Order No. R1-2003-0008 Waste Discharge Requirements for Miranda Community Services District Wastewater Treatment Facility, October 2002.

^{vi} Humboldt County General Plan, Volume II-Communities, Avenue of the Giants Community Plan, April 11, 2000, Eureka, California.

^{vii} *ibid.*

^{viii} Dyett and Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners, Humboldt 2020 General Plan- Building Communities, February 2002.

^{ix} Dyett and Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners, Humboldt 2020 General Plan- Building Communities, February 2002.