



**CHANGE OF ORGANIZATION
OR REORGANIZATION APPLICATION FORM**
(Updated January 2023)

Proposal Description

1. Type of proposal:

	<i>Subject Agencies (Cities and/or Special Districts)</i>	<i>Related Jurisdictional Changes (Annexation, Detachment, Sphere Amendment, etc.)</i>
1.	Ferndale Fire Protection District	Annexation

2. Title of proposal:

Ferndale Fire Protection District Goodwill Response Area Annexation

3. Who initiated the proposal? *(LAFCo proposals may be initiated by resolution of application adopted by an affected city, county or special district, or by petition of landowners or registered voters of the affected area. In both cases, a notice of intent must be submitted to LAFCo.)*

The following is attached to this application form:

- ☒ Agency Resolution of Application
- ☐ Landowner Petition
- ☐ Registered Voter Petition

4. Does the proposal have 100 percent consent of all property owners? *(If so, please submit a letter of consent from each property owner to process the application without public notice or hearing.)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

5. Applicant:

<i>City/District/Chief Petitioner</i>	Ferndale Fire Protection District
<i>Street Address</i>	436 Brown Street
<i>City/State/Zip</i>	Ferndale, CA 95536

6. Designated Contact Person:

<i>Name</i>	Rick Nicholson
<i>Telephone</i>	707-786-9909
<i>E-mail</i>	chief@ferndalefire.org

General Information

1. Explain in detail the reasons for the proposal and why it is necessary.

The reasons for the proposed annexation are as follows:

- a. To formalize fire protection and emergency response services long provided to residents in the goodwill response area;
- b. To ensure equitable and sustainable funding for services provided; and
- c. To align jurisdictional boundaries with actual service responsibilities for the benefit of neighboring fire service providers, land use authorities, and other service providers.

Ferndale Fire Protection District (FPD) has provided fire protection and emergency response services to its out-of-district goodwill response area for many years and now proposes to formally annex this territory into its jurisdictional boundaries. The proposed annexation encompasses approximately 45,455 acres, and is located generally south, southeast and southwest of the existing Ferndale FPD boundaries, including the Capetown, Upper Bear River Road, and Bunker Hill Road areas.

The proposed annexation would establish clear and enforceable District boundaries, defining service responsibility for the benefit of land use authorities, residents, and other service providers within the area. Currently, the goodwill response area receives fire protection services from Ferndale FPD on an informal basis, without a defined service obligation or dedicated funding source, as no other fire protection provider serves the area. Annexation would formalize Ferndale FPD's responsibility for service delivery and establish a sustainable funding framework.

Existing revenue sources are insufficient to support the long-term, sustainable delivery of services across the District's full response area, including both the current District boundary and the goodwill response area. Ferndale FPD is therefore proactively pursuing voter approval of a new special tax, which would repeal and replace the District's existing benefit assessment. If approved, annexation would allow the District to receive a share of property tax revenues and, consistent with Government Code Sections 56886(t) and 57330, apply the voter-approved

special tax within the annexed territory upon the effective date of annexation, thereby supporting ongoing, reliable fire protection services.

2. Describe any terms and conditions that are requested as part of the proposed action by LAFCo.

Ferndale FPD requests that LAFCo condition annexation upon voter approval of the District's special tax as established in Ordinance No. 2026-1. If the special tax is not approved by qualified electors of the District at the November 3, 2026 general election, the annexation shall not become effective. Initial estimates indicate that, if approved by qualified registered voters and extended into the annexation area, the special tax will generate nearly \$116,000 per year in revenue. Approval of the new special tax will repeal and replace the existing assessment that generates \$32,000 per year in revenue.

3. Describe the general location and physical features of the subject territory.

The proposed annexation area is located generally south, southeast and southwest of the existing Ferndale FPD boundary, including Capetown, Upper Bear River Road, and Bunker Hill Road areas.

4. What is the current population of the subject territory?

The population of the proposed annexation area is approximately 149 residents and there are approximately 85 housing units, based on 2020 US Census (block level data).

5. If the proposal includes development, what is the estimated population of the subject territory?

The Ferndale FPD annexation does not include proposals for development of any sort. There would be no change in population resulting from the proposed annexation.

6. Number of registered voters within the subject territory.

The total number of registered voters within proposed annexation area, which is part of precinct 1FS, will be requested from the Elections Office.

7. Number of parcels within the subject territory.

There are 316 individual parcels within the subject territory proposed for annexation.

Proposal Boundaries

1. A map and geographic description of the proposal area meeting State Board of Equalization requirements must be submitted.

The following is attached to this application form:

- ☒ Vicinity Map
- ☒ Boundary Map
- ☒ Boundary Description

2. Describe how the boundaries of the proposal were determined.

Ferndale FPD developed the proposed annexation area to include the parcels where their resources are most likely to be dispatched as the primary local emergency responder. Accessibility was also a consideration and areas where the District did not think their resources could reasonably get to were not included.

3. Would this proposal create an island of non-agency territory? If yes, please explain.

No. This proposal will not create an island of non-agency territory.

4. Total land area included in proposal:

45,455 Acres

Land Use Information

1. What is the total assessed value of properties (land and improvements) within the subject territory? (Note: you are encouraged to provide this information along with any existing assessments in a separate spreadsheet).

Subject Territory	Land	Improvement	Fixtures	Total
Assessed Value	\$26,708,475	\$14,788,900	\$977,024	\$42,474,399

2. Describe the existing uses within and surrounding the subject territory. Be specific regarding existing commercial corridors, residential communities, relevant structures, etc.

The following table displays the Assessor's Use Code for property within the proposed annexation area by count of parcel and total acres for each use. The proposed annexation area is comprised of rural residences and farm dwellings interspersed among timbered and grazing lands. There are no defined residential communities or commercial areas.

Description of Assessor's Use Code	Count of APNs	Sum of Acres
100% TPZ, Wwd, Improved	11	1,607
100% TPZ, Wwd, Vacant	60	6,161
Ag Preserve, Misc Imps	3	902
Ag Preserve, Res Imps	1	350
Ag Preserve, Vacant	17	2,414
Commercial, Recreational/Resort	1	102
Improved, Rural Residential, 1 to 5 ac	10	37
Improved, Rural Residential, 40+ac	8	766
Improved, Rural Residential, 5+ to 10 ac	2	20
Improved, Rural Residential, up to .99 ac	2	15
Licensed MH on fee parcel	1	158
Portion TPZ, Rdwd, Improved	1	312
Portion TPZ, Wwd, Improved	44	9,488
Portion TPZ, Wwd, Vacant	85	18,185
Public Land, Schools, Non Taxable Entities	8	665
Rural - Improved	13	271
Rural - Vacant	5	188
Rural w/ Timber Infl - Improve	6	430
Rural w/ Timber Infl - Vacant	15	1,445
Taxable MH on fee parcel	1	7
Vacant Rural Residential, 1-5 ac	2	8
Vacant, Rural Residential, 20+ to 40 ac	2	73
Vacant, Rural Residential, 40+ ac	11	1,193
Vacant, Rural Residential, 5+ to 10 ac	1	6
Vacant, Rural Residential, to .99ac	2	2
Vacant, Rural, Agricultural, Unrestricted	4	641
Total	316	45,446

3. What is the current land use and zoning designation(s) within the subject territory?

General Plan Land Use Designation	Acres
AE – Agricultural Exclusive	162.88
AEG – Agricultural Exclusive Grazing	1,796.47
AEG(2) – Agricultural Exclusive Grazing 2 acre minimum lots	577.69
AG – Agricultural Grazing	27,527.9
RA5-20 – Residential Agriculture one dwelling per 5-20 acres	31.07
T – Timberland	15,064.82
TC – Coastal Commercial Timberland	275.24
Total	45,436

Zone Classification	Acres
AE – Agriculture Exclusive	2,016.25
AE-600 – Agriculture Exclusive 600 acre minimum lots	78.14
AE-600/A,B,F,O,R - Agriculture Exclusive 600 acre minimum lots A,B,F,O,R combining zones	679.23
AE-600/B,O,R,F - Agriculture Exclusive 600 acre minimum lots B,O,F,R combining zones	1,591.23
AE-600/R - Agriculture Exclusive 600 acre minimum lots R combining zone	3.64
AE-B-5(160) - Agriculture Exclusive 160 acre minimum lots	15,064.20
AE-B-5(160)-R - Agriculture Exclusive 160 acre minimum lots streams and riparian corridors protection	427.37
TPZ – Timberland Production Zone	21,401.34
TPZ/R – Timberland Production Zone R combining zone	52.76
U - Unclassified	4,139.29
Total	45,453

4. Describe any proposed change in land use or zoning as a result of the proposal. (For city annexations, attach a copy of the adopted pre-zoning ordinance).

There are no proposed changes in land use or zoning as part of this reorganization or contemplated following approval.

5. Is the proposal consistent with city or county general plans, specific plans, and or other adopted land use policies?

Humboldt County General Plan supports the annexation of lands outside of fire related district boundaries that are served by districts or non-district fire departments. Community Infrastructure and Services Element Policy IS-P 15, Expanded Fire Protection Services, specifically encourages the expansion of existing special district boundaries to provide fire protection services to areas outside of fire district boundaries. In addition, on April 9, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved a property tax sharing policy to support fire related district annexations and consolidations.

6. Will the proposal result in development of property now or in the near future? Describe the type of development proposed (type of business or industry, single-family or multi-family residential, etc., and the number of units or facilities).

There are no developments proposed as part of this reorganization or contemplated following approval.

7. If development is proposed, what discretionary approvals are needed? Be specific regarding subdivision maps, conditional use permits or other entitlements.

There are no developments proposed as part of this reorganization or contemplated following approval.

8. What is the effect of this proposal on agricultural or open-space lands within and adjacent to the subject territory? If the subject territory is subject to a Williamson Act contract, please provide a copy of the contract(s) along with any amendments.

The proposed Ferndale FPD annexation does not involve the conversion of agricultural, timberland, or open space land and does not propose to change land use patterns. The subject territory includes the following lands subject to the Williamson Act.

Ranch ID	Ranch Name	Acres
104	SCALES, REBECCA	843.12
106	BEAL, WINFRED	1,030.19
107	BRANSTETTER, WILLIAM	792.65
114	MAZEPPA LLC	2,831.63
170	LOWRY, SANFORD & DORIAN	639.08
174	McBRIDE, JO AN ETAL	725.59
176	McBRIDE, JO AN ETAL	177.04
177	McBRIDE, JO AN ETAL	394.98
178	MCBRIDE JACK	1,019.42
179	MCBRIDE JACK	966.39
181	McBRIDE, GADIE	1,313.97
187	FOX, MARGARET & KNIGHT, ANDREA	1,169.97
200	RAYL RANDY & SHARLENE	965.09
210	RUSS, JOSEPH & KAREN	2,154.77
219	WHATCHEER LLC	1,932.67
223	FAR WEST RANCH LLC	1,020.51
248	SCALVINI, FRANCIS	181.20
277	QUINN, KELLY	851.79
	Total	19,010.06

Agricultural, timberland, and open space resources within the proposed district boundaries will not be affected by the proposed district formation for the following reasons:

(1) It is common throughout Humboldt County that rural populations are dispersed within and around agriculture and timberland and logical boundaries for fire protection districts would include such resource lands.

(2) Approximately 25 percent of the land within existing fire protection district boundaries in Humboldt County is zoned TPZ or TC (coastal zone), 25 percent is zoned AE, and between five and ten percent is zoned AG, which totals to over 50 percent of all land within fire related districts (including cities). Fire related districts within the county routinely respond to calls for service at houses on resource land, barns, warehouses, roads, logging sites, and within farm fields.

(3) The two fire districts that have the most career/professional firefighters and that ostensibly provide the highest level of fire protection service in the county, Arcata FPD and the Humboldt Bay Fire (Humboldt No. 1 FPD), have approximately 62 percent and 59 percent agriculture and resource zoned lands, respectively, within their district boundaries.

(4) The provision of fire protection services to land planned for agriculture was not noted as a cause of agricultural land conversion in the Agricultural Resources Report (<https://humboldt.gov.org/DocumentCenter/View/1428/Agricultural-Resources-and-Policies-Full-Report-PDF>) prepared in August 2003 for the Humboldt County General Plan Update.

(5) The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Agency Reorganization Act requires that special districts first receive written approval from LAFCo prior to providing service outside their district boundaries. Therefore, service must be provided within district boundaries so for fire protection services within resource lands, developed or otherwise, such lands must be located within the boundaries of a fire related district.

(6) Land within the proposed district boundaries is within the State Responsibility Area and CAL FIRE is obligated to continue to provide wildland protection to State Responsibility Area at current levels of protection. CAL FIRE relies upon Ferndale FPD to support its response to wildland fires within the proposed annexation area.

(7) Ferndale FPD currently responds to calls for service throughout the proposed annexation area and have done so for many years. The weight of response and levels of service after the proposed Ferndale FPD annexation would be substantially similar to current levels and would therefore not significantly influence owners of resource land in their decisions to convert such land to other uses.

Public Services

1. List which agencies presently provide public services to the subject territory, and which are proposed to provide service. If not applicable or no change, please indicate accordingly.

	<i>Present Provider</i>	<i>Proposed Provider</i>
<i>Sewer</i>	None	No change
<i>Water</i>	None	No change
<i>Fire</i>	No Fire District (Ferndale FPD Goodwill Response Area). CAL FIRE provides wildland fire protection within the State Responsibility Area.	Ferndale Fire Protection District
<i>Police</i>	Humboldt County Sheriff's Office	No change
<i>Roads</i>	Humboldt County Public Works	No change
<i>Recreation</i>	None	No change
<i>Drainage</i>	Humboldt County Public Works	No change
<i>Street Lighting</i>	None	No change
<i>Other</i>	North Coast EMSA Ambulance services provided by City Ambulance (Eureka)	No change

2. How would the proposal affect the type or level of services within the subject territory?

The proposed annexation area extends south, southeast and southwest of the existing Ferndale FPD Boundary and because the District is the nearest fire resource, “goodwill” response services are provided to this area when requested. From time to time, incidents in this area exceed “goodwill” response capabilities and additional fire and mutual aid resources are required and each agency may seek reimbursement for costs from the property owners. Upon annexation, Ferndale FPD would be obligated and funded to respond to incidents in these areas and will appropriately plan for the deployment of emergency response.

3. If, as a result of this proposal, increased service demand exceeds the existing capacity, describe what will be done by the service provider to increase capacity of services.

The proposed annexation would not result in increased service demand. See #2 above for a description of how the proposed annexation is intended to support and improve the level of fire protection services within the communities included.

4. Will the future delivery of services by any other public agency or service provider be affected by this proposal? If yes, list the agencies and indicate any comments received from these agencies. (Note: applicants must contact affected agencies prior to filing an application with LAFCo)

No, the proposed annexation will not affect other public agencies or service providers.

5. For proposals submitted by resolution of application by a local agency, a plan for providing services within the affected territory must be prepared pursuant to Government Code Section 56653.

A Plan for Services is attached to this application form:

☒ Yes

☐ Not applicable

Financial Information

1. How will public services be financed? List any assessments, taxes, fees or other charges to be levied as part of this proposal, or levied in the near future. (Note: a fiscal analysis and/or budget may be required).

Ferndale FPD is currently supported by revenue received through a portion of property taxes, and an assessment collected from parcels within the current district boundary. The District is requesting a new special tax be approved by voters of the District that would repeal and replace the existing assessment (see Ordinance No. 26-1). An updated annual special tax will be proposed for all Assessor's Parcels located entirely or partially within the existing Ferndale FPD boundary and extended to the annexation area, based on their land use type.

2. Does any affected agency have existing bonded indebtedness for which the subject territory will become/remains liable? If so, please indicate taxpayer cost.

There is no bonded indebtedness within the subject territory.

3. Does the resolution of application by a local agency include documentation that the agency is in agreement with a standing Master Tax Exchange Agreement, has negotiated a tax exchange agreement pursuant to [Section 99](#) of the Revenue and Taxation Code, or has made a determination that the proposal is revenue neutral?

On April 9, 2019, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors approved a policy providing for the transfer of property tax revenue to fire-related districts who annex their out of district response area, as well as meet other requirements. The Ferndale FPD requests that the proposed annexation be subject to the approval of an agreement with the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors regarding the exchange of ad valorem property tax pursuant to tax exchange agreement Offer Number 2.

Sphere of Influence

1. Is the subject territory within the existing sphere of influence of the affected agency?
☒ Yes
☐ No
2. If the proposal includes a request for a city or district sphere of influence amendment/update, justify the proposed changes with respect to the five sphere criteria listed in Government Code Section 56425(e):

- a. "The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands."

The annexation proposal does not include land use changes or proposed developments. Development within the annexation area would not be influenced by the annexation and would be expected to continue to occur at historic rates because Planning and Building permit approvals are based on the ability of the proposed project to meet General Plan, Zoning, and Fire Safe Regulations standards, which do not include standards relating to fire protection districts or local fire department capabilities.

Based on the Subdivision Map Act requirements, the Humboldt County General Plan Open Space Action Program, General Plan Land Use Designations, and Zoning Classifications, land that is zoned TPZ or AE may be subdivided now, without annexation, but other land may not be subdivided unless within a fire-related district. However, the General Plan requires that any subdivision of zoned TPZ or AE land improve the production of timber, food or fiber and this criterion has limited most if not all Open Space subdivisions. Therefore, the proposed annexation would not enable Open Space land subdivisions within the Ferndale FPD annexation area. Non-Open Space land may be able to subdivide after the Ferndale FPD annexation, subject to State Fire Safe Regulations for access, General Plan, Zoning, and Subdivision requirements. In order for the subdivision of these parcels to be approved, access roads must meet minimum State Fire Safe Regulations and on-site water and wastewater must meet County Environmental Health Regulations.

- b. "The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area."

Although outside fire protection district boundaries, the entire annexation area currently receives "goodwill" fire protection services by the Ferndale FPD, when requested. The proposed annexation area contains rural areas. A level of service is currently provided based on the needs of the community and the resources available to the fire department. There has not been significant growth in the proposed annexation area and significant growth is not anticipated in the future.

- c. "The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide."

Ferndale FPD responds to this area on a "goodwill" basis. Ferndale FPD is currently supported by a portion of the property tax revenue paid by property owners located within the boundaries of the District. Any services currently provided outside of the District boundary are based on availability and supported by the taxes paid by property owners within the District. Upon annexation, the District would have funding support and authority to provide services to its entire response area.

- d. "The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area."

There are no known social or economic communities of interest within the proposed annexation area based on a review of Humboldt County planning documents. Based on school district boundaries, Upper Bear River area is within the Ferndale Unified School District, which demonstrates the social and economic relationship between the annexation area and existing district.

- e. "For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection...the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence."

The proposed annexation would address the critical need for sustained fire protection service within the Ferndale FPD goodwill response area.

3. If the proposal includes a city sphere of influence amendment/update, provide a written statement that describes whether an agreement on the sphere change between the city and county was achieved pursuant to Government Code Section 56425(b-d). Describe the elements of the agreement (such as, development standards, boundaries, and zoning requirements) and provide a copy of the written agreement.

Not applicable.

4. If the proposal includes a special district sphere of influence amendment/update, provide a written statement, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425(i-j), that specifies the following: (a) the functions or classes of services provided by those districts; and (b) the nature, location, and extent of any functions or classes of services provided by existing districts.

Ferndale FPD provides fire protection services, as enumerated in California Health and Safety Code Section 13862 “a” through “f”, excluding “e” (ambulance services), which includes the following: fire protection services; rescue services; emergency medical services; hazardous material emergency response services; and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property. Fire protection services would continue to be provided throughout the entire annexation area in generally the same manner that they are currently provided.

Environmental Determination

1. Copies of environmental documentation, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prepared by the lead agency (including an initial study, technical reports, and written comments or recorded public testimony relative to the environmental documents) should be submitted with the application. Please include a copy of the Notice of Determination/Notice of Exemption showing the date filed with the County Clerk, and the environmental filing fee receipt from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The following environmental document has been prepared:

- ☒ Statutory or Categorical Exemption
- ☐ Negative Declaration
- ☐ Mitigated Negative Declaration
- ☐ Environmental Impact Report
- ☐ Other:

As part of Resolution No. 2026-02, Ferndale FPD found that the proposed annexation is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)3. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the proposed actions will have a significant effect on the environment because the annexation would serve to align the District’s jurisdictional boundary with the area it already serves on a longstanding goodwill basis. The proposal does not authorize or propose any new development, nor does it change the type, frequency, or manner in which existing fire protection and emergency response services are provided.

2. Was the environmental documentation (Notice of Preparation/Notice of Intent) circulated to LAFCo prior to adoption by the Lead Agency?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☒ No

Notification

Provide the names and contact information of the primary persons or agents who are to receive information requests, staff reports and notices:

Name	Telephone	E-mail Address
Rick Nicholson	707-786-9909	chief@ferndalefire.org
Jack Smith	707-499-0543	

Indemnification Agreement

LAFCo policy requires that all applicants sign a volunteer indemnification agreement specifying whether they agree to indemnify LAFCo in the event of litigation concerning the approval of an application.

The following is included with this application form:

☒ Signed Voluntary Indemnification Agreement

Filing Fees

Applicants are required to pay fees in accordance with LAFCo's adopted fee schedule to cover the administrative and staff costs required to evaluate proposals. Checks must be made payable to: "Humboldt LAFCo".

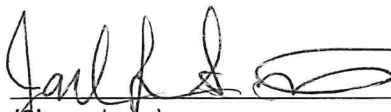
The following is included with this application form:

- ☒ Check for Filing Fees
☒ Signed Fee Agreement
☐ Other (please explain):

Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association Measure Z funding will be supporting the LAFCo deposit and BOE filing fees for this annexation.

Certification

The undersigned hereby certifies that all LAFCo filing requirements will be met and that the statements made in this application are complete and accurate to the best of their knowledge.


 (Signature)
Jack L. Smith
 (Printed Name)

Boards
Chair FERNDALE Fire District
 (Title)
12 FEBRUARY 2026
 (Date)