



NOTICE OF APPLICATION FILING

DATE: July 2, 2026

TO: Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association
 CAL FIRE – Humboldt Del Norte Unit
 City of Ferndale
 Del Oro Water Company
 Riverside Community Services District
 Ferndale Unified School District
 Redwoods Community College District
 Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District
 Humboldt County Flood Control District (Zone 05)
 Humboldt County Roads (District No. 01)
 Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
 Humboldt County Office of Education
 Humboldt County Administrative Office
 Humboldt County Assessor's Office
 Humboldt County Auditor-Controller's Office
 Humboldt County Sheriff's Office
 Humboldt County Elections Office
 Humboldt County Environmental Health
 Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services
 Humboldt County Planning and Building Department
 Humboldt County Public Works Department

Cc: Rick Nicholson, Fire Chief, Ferndale Fire Protection District
 Jack Smith, Chair, Ferndale Fire Protection District

FROM: Krystle Brogna, LAFCo Senior Analyst
 Colette Santsche, LAFCo Executive Officer

SUBJECT: APPLICATION RECEIVED – FERNDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT GOODWILL RESPONSE AREA ANNEXATION

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Project: Goodwill Response Area Annexation
Applicant: Ferndale Fire Protection District (FFPD)
Location: South, southeast and southwest of the existing FFPD boundary, including Capetown, Upper Bear River Road, and Bunker Hill Road areas (See Exhibit A)
APNs: 316 parcels – see Exhibit B
Notice: The above-referenced application has been submitted to LAFCo, and this Notice of Filing is being issued in accordance with Government Code Section 56658(b)(1). Agencies and interested parties wishing to receive a copy of the

application and supporting documents may contact LAFCo staff at colette@humboldtlafo.org.

The application is currently under review by LAFCo and is anticipated to be presented to the Commission for an informational preview at its July 15, 2026, meeting, with a public hearing tentatively scheduled for September 16, 2026. Meeting agendas and additional information are available on the LAFCo website.

LAFCo requests that agencies and interested organizations review the proposal and submit any comments, recommended conditions, or recommendations no later than **July 31, 2026**.

Proposal Overview

The Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) has received an application from the Ferndale Fire Protection District (FFPD or District) for annexation of 45,456 acres (71 square miles) of land located generally south, southeast and southwest of the existing FFPD boundary, including the Capetown, Upper Bear River Road, and Bunker Hill Road areas. FFPD has provided fire protection and emergency response services to this out-of-district goodwill response area for many years and now seeks to formally include the territory within its jurisdictional boundaries.

Reasons for Proposal

The reasons listed by FFPD for this 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.

Description of Annexation Area

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. The territory is located within the remote Wildcat area, where Mattole Road provides the primary transportation corridor connecting Ferndale to Capetown.

Provision of Services

Currently, there is no designated local fire protection service provider for the proposed annexation area. The area is considered a goodwill response area, where FFPD and neighboring agencies respond to emergencies as staffing, availability, and resources allow. Upon annexation, FFPD would be officially designated as the fire service provider for the area with the ability to manage services and collect fees to support the provision of services.

Water and wastewater services are generally provided by individual onsite systems. Law enforcement services are provided by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, road maintenance and drainage are provided by Humboldt County Public Works, and ambulance transport services are provided by City Ambulance of Eureka, with air ambulance services available through Cal Ore Life Flight.

Land Use Designations

The parcels in the annexation area are subject to the Humboldt County General Plan. Current land use designations include Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Agricultural Exclusive Grazing (AEG and AEG(2)), Agricultural Grazing (AG), Residential Agriculture (RA5-20), Timberland (T), and Coastal Commercial Timberland (TC). These designations reflect the rural and remote nature of the area.

Property Tax Exchange

Section 99 of the California Revenue and Taxation Code requires affected local agencies to negotiate an exchange of property tax revenues before a jurisdictional change becomes effective. On May 9, 2019 (File No. 19-501), the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors directed that different tax exchange agreements be offered in exchange for fire protection districts improving other sources of revenue, improving administrative capacity, and pursuing annexation/formation/consolidation. The FFPD proposes that they are eligible for Tax Exchange Agreement Offer No. 2 which requires the district to meet the following expectations.

The annexing district is willing to:

- Establish new and or update revenue sources;
- Annex realistic out-of-district response area;
- Commit to planning for the future;
- Unwilling to pursue reorganization/consolidation.

If the above expectations are met the county will:

- Transfer a portion of the county's share of the base property tax revenue to the fire district equal to 50% of the district's average tax allocation factor (TAF), multiplied by the 1% property tax revenue for the current year within the annexation area. The fire district's property tax base would increase by the amount transferred; the county's base would be reduced by the same amount.
- In addition, the fire district would receive 100% of its TAF applied to growth in property tax in the annexation area; the County's share of property tax growth would then be reduced by that amount.

The proposed annexation will be requesting use of the County's Tax Exchange Agreement Offer No. 2 set by the County Board of Supervisors on April 9, 2019.

Special Tax

LAFCo consideration of the annexation is expected to occur in close coordination with the District's efforts to secure voter approval of a new special tax at the November 3, 2026 election. Initial estimates indicate that, if approved, the special tax would generate approximately \$116,500 annually in revenue within the existing district and annexation area, including approximately \$106,000 from properties within the existing district and approximately \$10,500 from properties within the proposed annexation area. The measure would repeal and replace the District's existing assessment, which currently generates approximately \$33,000 annually within the existing district. The proposed special tax includes an annual inflationary adjustment provision and hardship exemption process for qualifying low-income property owners.

Revenue generated through the proposed special tax, together with the Property Tax Exchange Agreement, would provide a reliable and sustainable funding source to support the District's long-term service objectives within both its existing territory and the proposed annexation area. The District has identified the special tax as its preferred funding strategy to support the

annexation. However, because approval of the special tax requires a two-thirds vote of the electorate, the outcome remains uncertain, and the District may need to rely on expanding its existing assessment to the annexation area as a fallback funding mechanism.

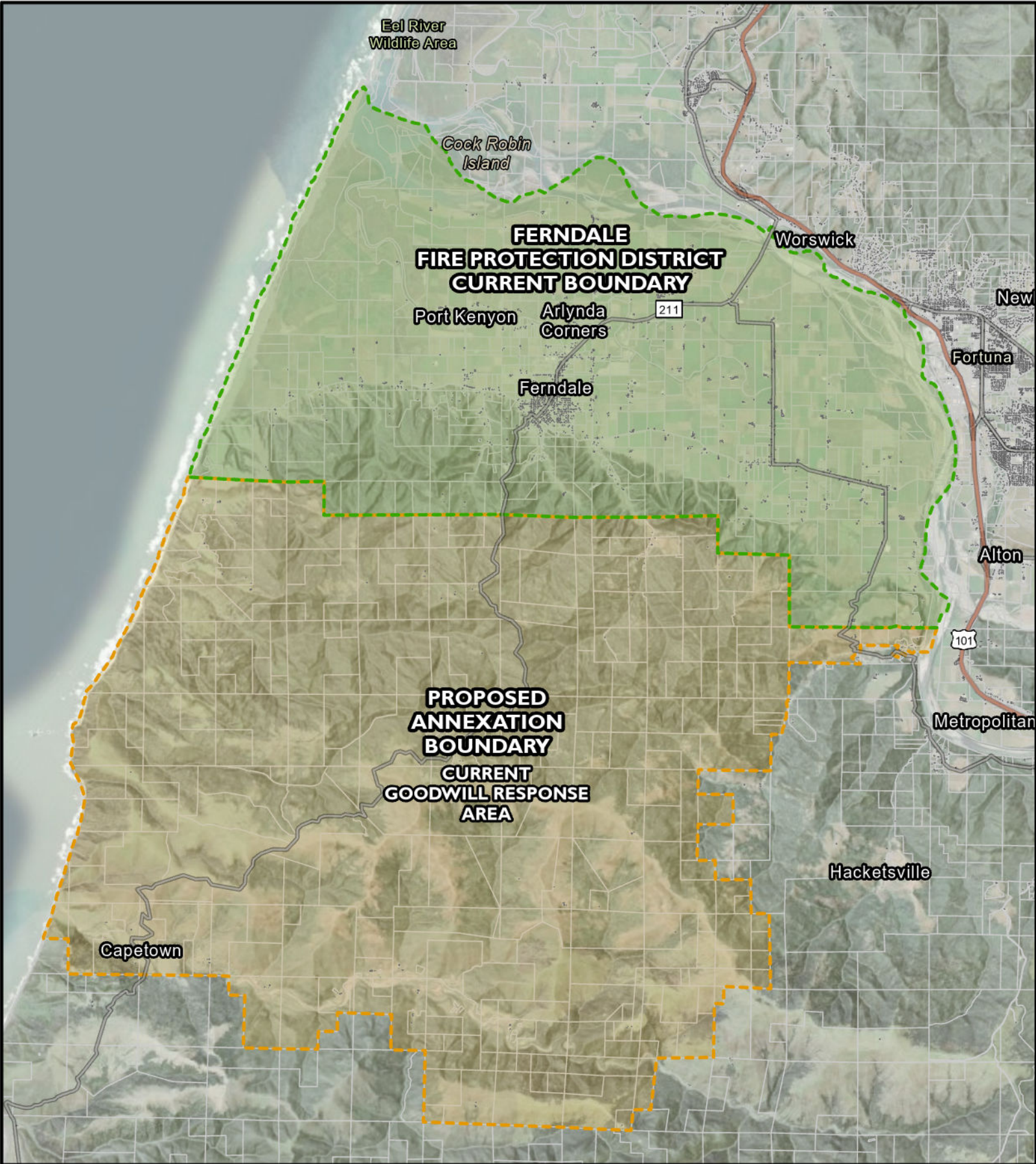
Environmental Review

All matters that involve discretionary action are subject to the applicable provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). FFPD has determined that the proposed annexation is exempt from CEQA per CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)3 as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question will have a significant effect on the environment – where the activity is establishment of a local district boundary to include areas that already receive “goodwill” service from the district, and that does not involve development or a change in the manner in which an existing service is provided.

The application described above is currently under review by LAFCo and is anticipated to be presented to the Commission for an informational preview at its July 15, 2026, meeting, with a public hearing tentatively scheduled for September 16, 2026. **Interested agencies are invited to review the proposal and provide any comments to LAFCo by July 31, 2026.**

If you have any questions, please contact LAFCo at (707) 445-7508 or via email at colette@humboldtlaftco.org.

Exhibit A: Map of Proposed Annexation Area



Legend

- Ferndale Current District Boundary
- Proposed Ferndale Annexation Area
- Humboldt Parcels

**FERNDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
PROPOSED ANNEXATION BOUNDARY**

 **HUMBOLDT COUNTY
FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION**

VER.250922

Scale: 1:110,000

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

One inch equals 1.74 miles

Center: 124°16'8"W 40°32'31"N

