

# EEL RIVER VALLEY-LOST COAST REGIONAL FIRE SERVICES

Municipal Service Review

Adopted January 18, 2016



## **HUMBOLDT LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

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### **Acknowledgements:**

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Bridgeville Fire Protection District  
Carlotta Community Services District  
Ferndale Fire Protection District  
Fortuna Fire Protection District  
Loleta Fire Protection District  
Petrolia Fire Protection District  
Rio Dell Fire Protection District  
Scotia Community Services District

Prepared by  
Humboldt LAFCo



**HUMBOLDT**  
*Local Agency Formation Commission*

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## INTRODUCTION

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The mandate for Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCos) to conduct service reviews is part of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (CKH Act), California Government Code Section 56000 et seq. LAFCos are required to conduct service reviews prior to or in conjunction with sphere of influence updates and are required to review and update the sphere of influence for each city and special district as necessary, but not less than once every five years. The service review must include an analysis of the service issues and written determinations in each of the following categories:

- Growth and population projections for the affected area;
- The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere;
- Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
- Financial ability of the agency to provide services;
- Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities;
- Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies; and
- Any other matter affecting or related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy.

The preparation of a municipal service review for fire protection service providers in the Eel River Valley/Lost Coast region serves to determine the best approaches for improving service levels and addressing the mismatch between fire-related district boundaries and response areas. The service review provides an overview of fire protection services along with profiles of each agency. The report also includes service review determinations and sphere of influence recommendations for each of the following fire- related agencies:

1. **Bridgeville Fire Protection District**
2. **Carlotta Community Services District**
3. **Ferndale Fire Protection District**
4. **Fortuna Fire Protection District**
5. **Loleta Fire Protection District**
6. **Petrolia Fire Protection District**
7. **Rio Dell Fire Protection District**
8. **Scotia Community Services District**

## 1.1 Uses of the Report

A regional approach for conducting this service review provides the opportunity identify shared trends relating to the adequacy, capacity, and cost of providing fire protection services to the Eel River Valley/Lost Coast region. Most local fire departments report having insufficient funding to adequately respond to the demands placed on their service. There are large populated areas of the county that do not fall within the boundaries of any fire-related district. These areas receive what is referred to as “goodwill service” from nearby district fire departments or non-district fire companies that do not have an official jurisdictional boundary. This goodwill service is not supported by any sustainable revenue source and requires district resources to respond outside of their jurisdictional boundary which puts additional strain on already overburdened resources.

This service review process serves to identify ways to expand fire district boundaries where appropriate to match their true response areas, to form new districts where non-governmental fire companies currently provide service, evaluate the feasibility of consolidations where appropriate, and identify and implement other measures to address the lack of complete community coverage and sustainable revenue. The potential uses of this report are described below.

### **To Update Spheres of Influence**

This service review serves as the basis for updating the spheres of influence for the 8 fire-related districts included in the report. Specifically, a sphere of influence designates the territory LAFCo believes represents a district’s appropriate future jurisdiction and service area. All boundary changes, such as annexations, must be consistent with an affected district’s sphere of influence with limited exceptions.

### **To Consider Jurisdictional Boundary Changes**

This service review contains a discussion of various alternative government structure options for efficient service provision. LAFCo is *not* required to initiate any boundary changes based on service reviews. However, LAFCo, other local agencies (including cities, special districts or the County) or the public may subsequently use this report together with additional research and analysis, where necessary, to pursue changes in jurisdictional boundaries.

### **Resource for Further Studies**

Other entities and the public may use this report for further study and analysis of issues relating to fire protection and emergency medical services in the Eel River Valley/Lost Coast region.

## 1.2 Review Methods

The following information was gathered from the fire-related districts to understand the current status of district operations and services:

1. Governance and Organization
2. Financial
3. Personnel
4. Training
5. Calls for Service
6. Response Standards and Performance
7. Mutual/Automatic Aid
8. Stations and Apparatus

In addition, LAFCo obtained call data from annual reports published by the Fire Chief's Association, response mapping from County Planning staff, and regional fire service information from the Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Other source documents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan
- Humboldt County General Plan Update
- Humboldt County Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report
- Humboldt County Fire Chief's Association Annual Reports
- Humboldt County General Plan 2014 Housing Element

Information gathered was analyzed and applied to make the required determinations for each agency and reach conclusion about the focus issues identified in the service review. All information gathered for this report is filed by LAFCo for future reference.

## FIRE PROTECTION OVERVIEW

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This chapter provides a summary of fire protection services in Humboldt County and, more specifically, a comparative overview of the fire protection capabilities of the local agencies covered by this service review.

### 2.1 Humboldt County Fire Services

Fire and emergency services delivery in Humboldt County is complex. There are 45 fire departments providing fire protection to cities and unincorporated communities throughout the county. The majority of local fire service providers are associated with a special district, including one (1) County Service Area (CSA); eight (8) Community Service Districts (CSDs); 19 Fire Protection Districts (FPDs), and one (1) Resort Improvement District (RID), with the remainder consisting of two (2) city fire departments, and 13 fire companies not associated with local government agencies. There are also four (4) state, federal, or tribal fire departments providing seasonal wildland fire protection that also work in cooperation with local fire departments.

The districts were formed to provide fire services within a specific jurisdictional boundary and are supported by revenue from a combination of taxes, fees, and fundraising. Many of these jurisdictional boundaries were created as far back as the 1930's. Since that time, neighborhoods, scattered subdivisions, and rural residential development have emerged outside of district boundaries. This newer development requires year-round fire protection and emergency services, which it receives in a variety of ways.

Some areas outside the boundaries of an established district receive fire protection from district resources responding outside of their jurisdictional areas. This type of out of district service is often referred to as "goodwill service." District fire departments provide service to these areas even though they are under no obligation to do so and receive no compensation for their service, other than donations. This practice can put a strain on already limited resources. Furthermore, property owners within the district may question why the services funded through their taxes are benefiting out of district residents, particularly if they pay a special tax or benefit assessment specifically for fire protection.

Many areas outside the boundaries of an established district receive fire protection from a fire company that is not affiliated with a district. These fire companies receive no tax revenue and depend solely on revenue generated from community donations, fundraisers, and grants. Some communities are more supportive of their local fire companies than others, and support can fluctuate dramatically depending on local economic conditions.

### 2.2 Measure Z Fire Services Planning

In November 2014, Humboldt County voters passed Measure Z, a half-cent sales tax to fund essential public safety services. The sales tax measure was approved for a period of five years and is set to expire on March 31, 2020. A Citizen's Advisory Committee was formed to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors as to the expenditure of funds raised by Measure Z.

The Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association was granted \$2.2 million in Measure Z funds for fiscal year 2015-16, and \$1.8 million in fiscal year 2016-17. These funds have been used to purchase basic essential safety equipment and communication services to ensure there will not be a reduction or degradation in current fire service responses. In addition, a portion of funds granted to the Chiefs Association have been used to support a formal planning effort led by County staff to address the mismatch between fire-related district boundaries and where goodwill services are provided but not supported by a sustainable revenue source. These funds may also be used to cover costs associated with the LAFCo process related to receiving, reviewing, and approving applications for fire-related district formation and expansion, as well as the election process. These costs, as well as the lack of administrative staff and expertise to start and complete the district formation and expansion process, have previously prohibited local fire-related districts from addressing the challenges identified in this report.

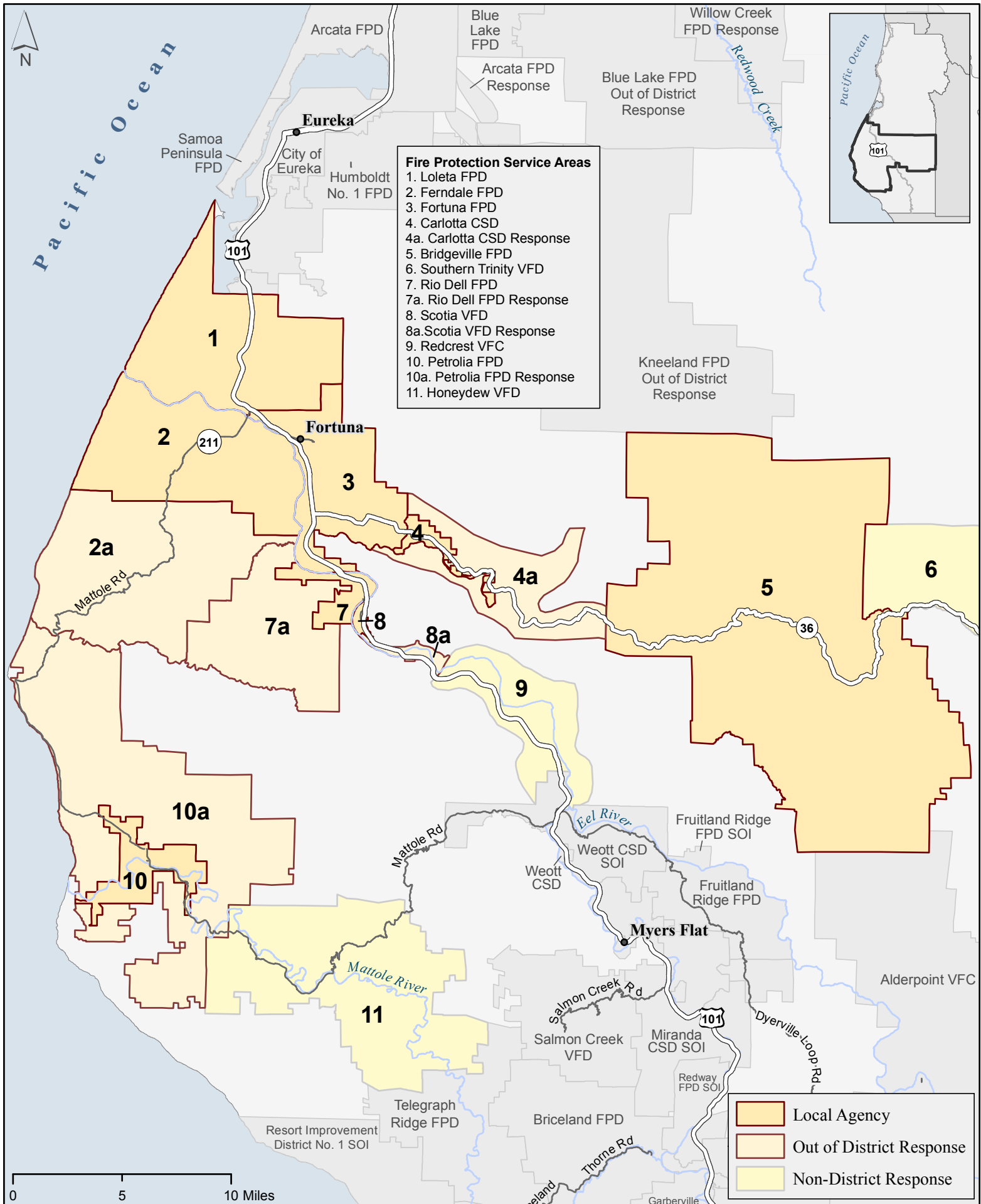
## 2.3 Service Providers and Service Areas

The study area for this service review is the Eel River Valley/Lost Coast region where a significant portion of the unincorporated area is located outside local fire-related district boundaries. Community fire protection services are provided in this area by 8 special districts and 5 volunteer fire companies, all of which are the subject of this report. The following table summarizes the district and out of district response areas, fire stations, equipment available, and number of firefighters for each district. As shown in Table 2-1, the combined out of district response areas for these districts cover approximately 231.9 square miles, which represents over half of the total district areas combined. While the district boundaries define the geographical extent of the authority and responsibility of a district, the district response areas have been established over time in areas where no fire-related district exists.

**Table. 2-1 Eel River Valley/Lost Coast Fire Service Provider Summary**

Service Provider	Total Calls for Service 2015	Area in Square Miles		Stations	Apparatus	Firefighters
		District	Non-District Response Area			
Bridgeville FPD	79	196	0	1	4	0 paid 8 volunteer 0 auxiliary
Carlotta CSD	114	4.4	46	2	8	0 paid 14 volunteer 0 auxiliary
Ferndale FPD	230	42	58.5	1	7	0 paid 34 volunteer 0 auxiliary
Fortuna FPD	525	29	0	3	12	2 paid 79 volunteer 22 auxiliary
Loleta FPD	267	48.8	0	1	5	0 paid 21 volunteer 0 auxiliary
Petrolia FPD	37	11	91.5	1	6	0 paid 24 volunteer 5 auxiliary
Rio Dell FPD	476	5.3	33.5	1	7	0 paid 26 volunteer 5 auxiliary
Scotia CSD*	141	0.8	2.4	1	6	1 paid 11 volunteer 2 auxiliary

\*While the formation of the Scotia CSD included fire protection as an authorized service, an ongoing sustainable funding source, such as a special tax or assessment, has not been approved. For the short term, the Scotia VFD continues to receive funding support from the Town of Scotia, LLC who is in the process of subdividing and selling residential and commercial properties.



## SERVICE AGENCY PROFILES

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This chapter provides an overview of the 8 fire-related districts and 3 volunteer fire companies providing fire protection services in the Eel River Valley/Lost Coast region of Humboldt County. Included is a description of each agency's organizational development, tables listing key service information, and maps of each agency's jurisdictional and response area boundaries.

### **3.1 BRIDGEVILLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **3.2 CARLOTTA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT**

### **3.3 FERNDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **3.4 FORTUNA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **3.5 LOLETA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **3.6 PETROLIA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **3.7 RIO DELL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **3.8 SCOTIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT**

### **3.9 VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES**

### **3.10 OTHER FIRE AGENCIES**



## 3.1 Bridgeville Fire Protection District



### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-1. Bridgeville FPD Contact Information**

Contact:	Ben Fleek, Chief
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 51, Bridgeville, CA 95526
Phone Number:	(707) 777-3424
Email	bcbf@netzero.net
Website	facebook.com/Bridgevillevolunteerfire
Population Served:	601 residents
Size of Service Area:	196 square miles (126,6530 acres) in District
Number of Staff	8 volunteers

### Background

The Bridgeville Fire Protection District (Bridgeville FPD or District) is located in the eastern-central portion of Humboldt County, approximately 25 miles east of Fortuna along the State Route 36. The Bridgeville Volunteer Fire Company (VFC), a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, has been serving the Bridgeville area since 2005 and continues to provide emergency fire and rescue services on behalf of the Bridgeville FPD since its formation in 2012. A municipal service review (MSR) for the District was previously conducted in 2011 as a part of the formation process. This document will update the previous MSR and build upon information provided therein.

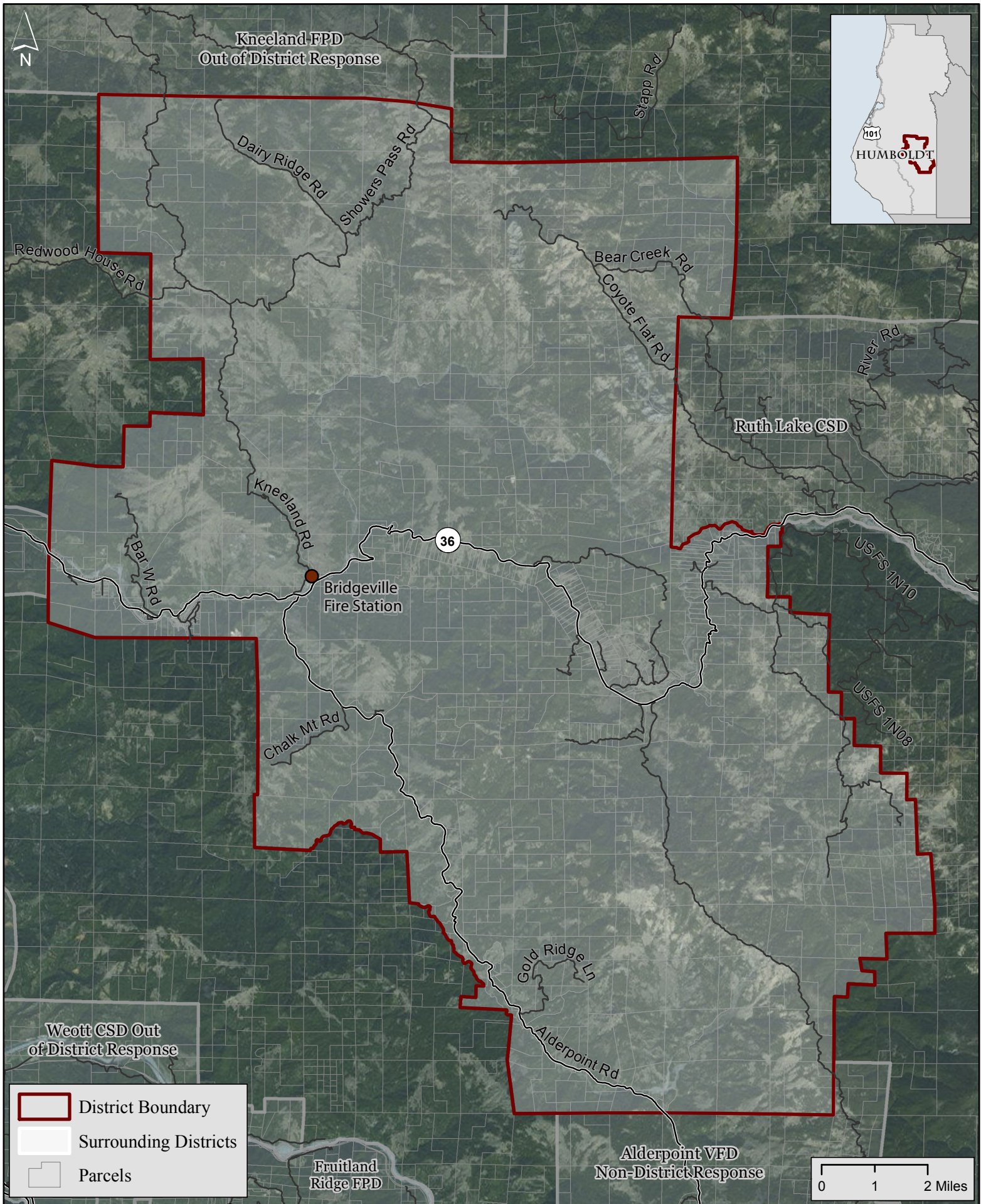
### Formation

The Bridgeville FPD was formed in September 2012 after a successful special election was held, which included the approval of a special tax on property. The formation was initiated by petition for which 31 percent of the registered voters within the formation area signed in support of establishing a fire protection district. The District was formed for the purpose of providing fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987, Division Part 2.7 of the California Health and Safety Code. The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors, elected by registered voters who live within the District.

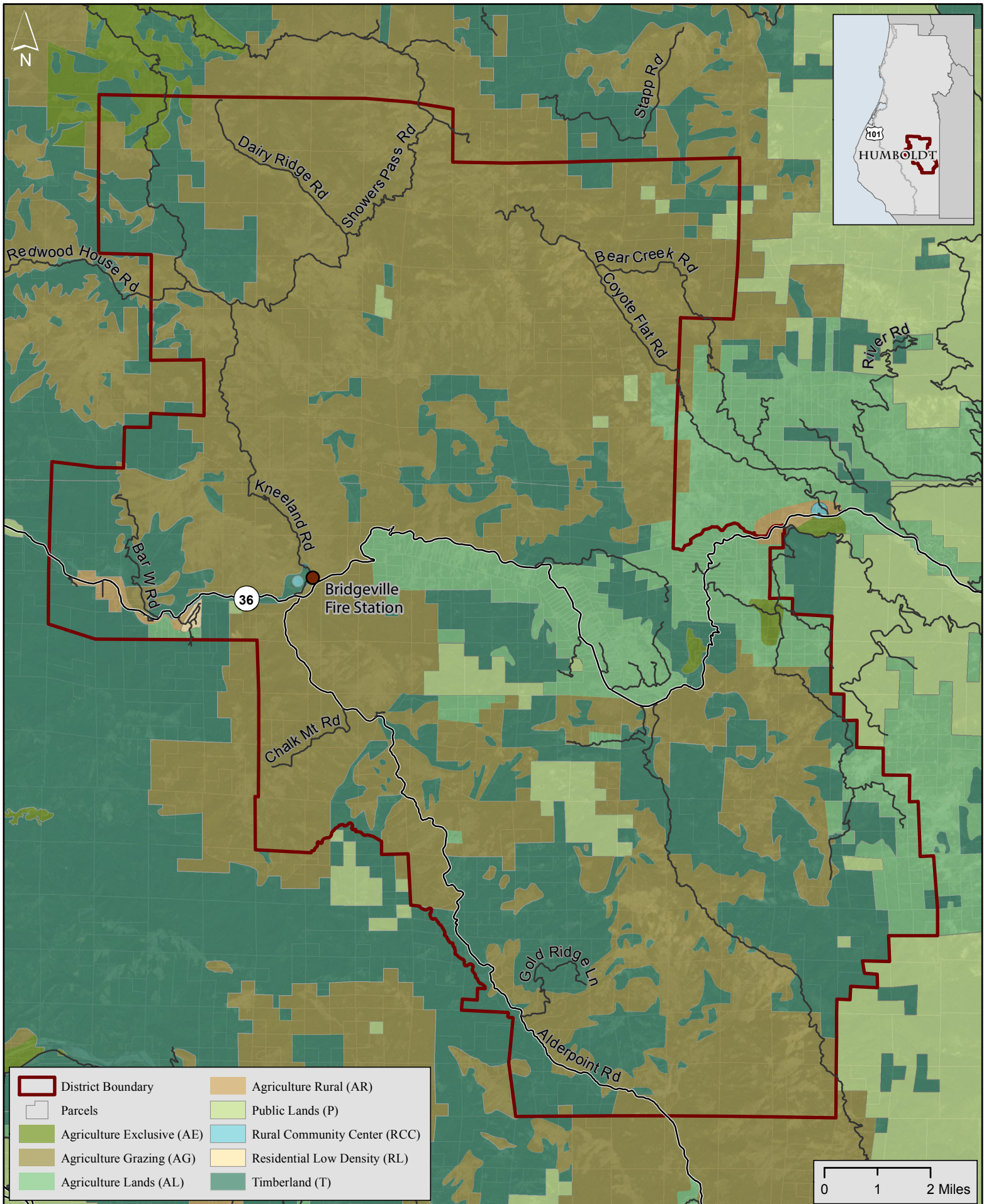
### District Boundary

The District's boundary coincides with what historically was the VFC's response area and covers approximately 196 square miles (126,653 acres). Responses out of district are mutual aid-related. The District contains a portion of State Route 36, the unincorporated town of Bridgeville, and the Swains Flat and Golden Gate residential areas. The District's boundary abuts the Southern Trinity Volunteer Fire Department response boundary to the northeast, the Alderpoint VFC to the south, Carlotta CSD's response area along Highway 36 to the east, and Kneeland FPD's Response Area to the north-west (See Figure 2).









## **Growth and Population**

Based on the 2010 Census, the Bridgeville FPD currently serves approximately 601 residents and 360 total housing units. The most populated district areas are Swains Flat, Little Golden Gate, Maple Lane, and the Bridgeville town site. The Bridgeville Community Center and Bridgeville VFC estimate the population within the District boundaries to be closer to 1,200 persons. This is based on the 2010 Census undercounting the number of residents per housing unit (LAFCo, 2011).

Future District population has been estimated using a 1.0 percent annual growth rate. Applying this growth rate to the Census 2010 population, the District population could reach approximately 700 by the year 2030, or an increase of five to ten new residents per year. Therefore, the demand for fire protection service within the District is not expected to change significantly over the next 20 years (LAFCo, 2011).

## **Existing and Planned Uses**

The District's most prominent feature is the privately-owned town of Bridgeville, located at the intersection of State Route 36 and Kneeland and Alderpoint Roads. The town of Bridgeville contains residential uses, the Bridgeville School, the Bridgeville Community Center, a County of Humboldt roads maintenance station which also contains the Bridgeville VFC fire station, and a seasonal CAL FIRE station.

Land uses within the Bridgeville FPD boundaries are subject to the Humboldt County Framework General Plan, Volume I, and Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1). The Humboldt County Framework General Plan and proposed General Plan Update designate most lands within the district boundaries for timber, grazing and rural residential development (See Figure 3), which limits future development potential. The availability of water and soil suitable for septic systems also limits the density of future development within the district boundaries (LAFCo, 2011).

## **Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities**

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this MSR, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewage, and fire protection. Bridgeville FPD provides one of these services, fire protection, and is therefore responsible for assuring that this service is adequately provided to the community. Except for residences within the Bridgeville Town-site and Swain's Flat Trailer Park that utilize small private water systems, all properties within the district boundaries use on-site water and septic systems.

The Bridgeville FPD is in Community Block 060230109021, which the California Department of Water Resources identifies as a Severely Disadvantaged Community Block. The block has a MHI of \$30,625, which is 50 percent of the state average MHI, thereby qualifying the area as disadvantaged (DWR, 2016). Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area should be considered further.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Service Demand and Service Levels

The Bridgeville VFC is an active member of the fire service in Humboldt County. The VFC participates in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the Humboldt County Dispatch Cooperative, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. Additionally, Bridgeville is a nationally designated Fire-Wise Community.

The Bridgeville VFC provides a full range of fire protection services, including emergency medical services, auto extrication, technical rescue (rope, swift water, and confined space rescue), hazardous materials, and general public assistance. They are a non-transport BLS service provider and are equipped with jaws-of-life equipment, an AED, and oxygen.

The Bridgeville VFD responded to approximately 79 calls for service in 2015, of which approximately 23 calls, or 29 percent, were fires of various types, and 20 calls, or 25 percent, were medical related. Other calls such as vehicle accidents, which comprise approximately 37 percent of total calls, may also involve the delivery of emergency medical services. Refer to Table 3-2 for an overview of Bridgeville VFC service calls.

**Table 3-2. Bridgeville VFD Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	0	2	2	5	4	6
Structure Fires	1	0	3	2	5	4
Other Fires	9	2	12	13	9	13
Vehicle Accidents	0	3	29	38	27	29
Medicals	48	7	24	37	30	20
Hazard/Menace	3	1	3	4	4	5
Public Assists	-	-	-	6	4	1
Others	1	1	9	1	5	1
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	100	No	340	1,700	1,100	470
Training	120	Report	1,800	800	860	692
Maintenance	100		128	150	100	96
Fundraising	100		1,506	600	200	120
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,774</b>	<b>3,250</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>1,378</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	8	8	10	12	10	10
Auxiliary	2	2	1	0	0	0
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

**Source:** CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Report

## Personnel

The District reports eight active volunteer personnel. All firefighters are CPR and First Responder certified. Of these personnel, 4 are trained as Fire Fighter 1 or above, 4 are trained in Wildland (CICCS), and 2 are trained in Hazardous Materials Operations. Training is conducted through the Eel River Valley Fire Academy (District Response to Questionnaire, 2014). The District is always looking for more recruits. Recruiting is conducted on an annual basis as well as through the Bridgeville Community Newsletter and events.

**Table 3-3. Bridgeville VFD Training Qualifications**

Training Qualification	# of Members Trained
Fire Fighter I or above	8
Wildland (CICCS)	6
First Responder (Medical)	6
EMT	1
Paramedic	0
HazMat First Responder Ops.	1
Rope Rescue	0
Swift Water Rescue	0
Fire Investigation	0

## Current Infrastructure and Facilities

The Bridgeville VFC operates from one fire station just off Kneeland Road in the town of Bridgeville. The station is located at the Humboldt County road maintenance facility and serves primarily as a garage for fire apparatuses. The following table describes the apparatuses utilized by the Bridgeville VFC. VFC equipment also includes a generator, water pump, smoke ejector, automatic external defibrillator (AED), jaws of life equipment and hand-held radios. Through Measure Z funds allocated to the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association, the Bridgeville VFD received 6 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBAs) in 2015.

**Table 3-4. Bridgeville FPD Facilities and Apparatus**

Station	Address	Apparatus	Common Name	Year	Type	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
1	38697 Kneeland Road Bridgeville, CA 95526	E7612	Engine	1968	II	250	800
		E7621	Engine	1971	II	250	1,000
		E7622	Engine	1984	II	250	800
		E7671	Rescue Wagon	1988	N/A	N/A	N/A

## Challenges and Needs

Like many small rural departments, Bridgeville VFD is challenged with aging equipment and facilities, and member recruitment and retention (Fire Chief's Association, 2015). The District specifically noted that it needs type III and type VI fire and rescue engines. Currently they only have 2-wheel drive capabilities, and 4-wheel drive is preferred to serve more isolated areas and off-road terrain.

## ISO Rating

There are several benchmarks by which the level of fire service provided by an agency may be measured, and the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification, or ISO PPC, is one such measure. The ISO is a rating commonly used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the best rating which indicates the highest level of fire protection and the lowest is 10. Based on an ISO audit, the Bridgeville VFD has a "10" rating (District Response to Questionnaire).

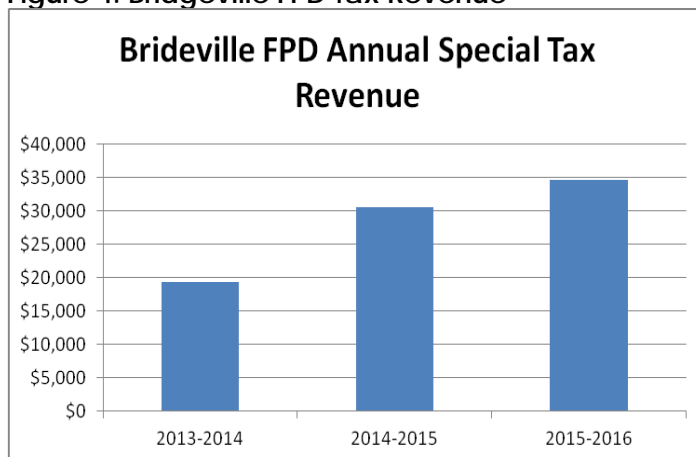
## FINANCING

### Current Revenues and Expenditures

The District's main revenue source is a special tax approved by voters during District formation. The special tax is apportioned to property within the District boundary on an annual basis in the following manner: \$10 for unimproved parcels; \$75 for improved parcels containing one-family residential dwellings; and \$100 for improved parcels containing commercial structures and manufactured home parks.

In the 2011 MSR, the special tax revenue was estimated to generate approximately \$40,000 annually (LAFCo, 2011). In Fiscal Year 2015-16, \$34,690 in special taxes were collected. The District was able to make up the difference in expenses with a 50/50 grant from CAL FIRE as well as income from CAL FIRE station coverage and assistance. The District has noted that a special tax rate increase may be needed as revenue from CAL FIRE is variable and annual expenses are around \$40,000 while special tax revenue has so far been closer to \$30,000 annually (see chart below).

**Figure 4. Bridgeville FPD Tax Revenue**



The amount of tax revenue currently collected cannot keep pace with rising costs of insurance, audits, reporting requirements, and equipment repairs. The District continues to fundraise and pursue grants to stabilize finances and to upgrade equipment and apparatus.

**Table 3-5. Bridgeville FPD Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16**

<b>Fiscal Year 2015-16 Budget</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$0
Services & Supplies	\$22,012
Fixed Assets	\$300
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>\$22,312</i>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Special Tax	\$34,690
Use of Money and Property	\$90
State	4,393
Other	\$752
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>\$39,925</i>
Total Revenues	\$39,925
Total Expenditures	\$22,312
Revenues/Sources Over (or under)	
Expenditures/Uses	\$17,613

**Source:** Financial records as reported to the California State Controller's Office, 2016.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

The Bridgeville FPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. Currently there are no vacancies on the board. Elections are set to be held for board members in 2017. They meet on the second Monday of each month at the Bridgeville Community Center at 5:00 pm. Meeting notices are posted at post office, at the school by the Bridgeville Community Center, and in the Bridgeville Community Newsletter. The Secretary to the Board is reimbursed for meetings at \$100 per month and the Treasurer to the Board is reimbursed \$40 a month for mileage (District Response to Questionnaire).



## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS**

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area**

- a) Based on the 2010 Census, the Bridgeville FPD currently serves approximately 601 residents and 360 total housing units.
- b) The population of the District could reach approximately 700 residents by the year 2030.

### **(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) The Bridgeville area qualifies as a disadvantaged unincorporated community.
- b) There are currently no local agency service providers in the Bridgeville area that provide water or sewer services.
- c) Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area should be considered further.

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

- a) The formation of the District included voter approval of a special tax which helps to stabilize the delivery of fire protection services to the Bridgeville area.
- b) The District's facilities, infrastructure, and services are sufficient to provide quality services to its residents.
- c) Like all volunteer departments, the Bridgeville VFD must continually recruit for additional volunteers and, as demand for services increases in the future, additional volunteers will be needed to maintain the service capacity of the District.

### **(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

- a) Annual operating expenses for the Bridgeville FPD are around \$40,000 while special tax revenue has so far been closer to \$30,000 annually.
- b) The District continues to supplement its income through fundraising, grants, and from CAL FIRE station coverage and assistance.
- c) A special tax increase, which would require 2/3 voter approval, may be necessary to address the District's operating shortfall.

**(5) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) The Bridgeville fire station is located at the Humboldt County road maintenance facility and serves primarily as a garage for fire apparatuses.
- b) Location of calls, historical call data, and natural boundaries of the Bridgeville area were considered in the development of the Bridgeville FPD boundaries during district formation. These factors determine the areas that are accessed, or served, by the Bridgeville VFD, or that are served by adjacent fire departments.
- c) The Bridgeville VFD is a participant in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the Humboldt County Dispatch Cooperative, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. Additionally, Bridgeville is a nationally designated Fire-Wise Community.

**(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies**

- a) The Bridgeville FPD is an independent district governed by a five-member Board of Directors. Board meetings are held regularly at the Bridgeville Community Center.
- b) The Bridgeville FPD, with support from the Bridgeville VFD, supports the mutual social and economic interests of the Bridgeville community by sustaining community-based fire protection services and establishing local governance for such services.
- c) The Bridgeville VFD maintains a Facebook page to communicate with members of the public.
- d) The District does not have a website. Establishing a website and posting agendas, minutes, budgets, and financial data would increase transparency to the community.
- e) The Bridgeville FPD demonstrated accountability in its cooperation with LAFCo's information requests.

**(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery**

- a) Bridgeville FPD boundary generally matches its response area. This corresponds with the District's sphere of influence that was established in 2012 as part of the district formation process. No change to the existing sphere of influence is recommended at this time.

## 3.2 Carlotta Community Services District



### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-6. Contact Information**

Contact:	John Church, Chief
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 33, Carlotta, CA 95528
Phone Number:	(707) 768-1714
Email:	Kaburke61@hughes.net
Website:	facebook.com/Carlotta-Volunteer-Fire-Department-156124474469271/
Types of Services:	Fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services
Population Served:	698 residents in District
Size of Service Area:	4.4 sq. mi. in District, 46 sq. mi. in goodwill response area
Number of Staff:	14 volunteers

### Background

The Carlotta Community Services District (Carlotta CSD or District) provides fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services to the community of Carlotta. These services are provided on behalf of the District by the Carlotta Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), which responds to an average of 70 calls per year. A municipal service review (MSR) for the District was previously conducted in 2008. This document will update the previous MSR and build upon information provided therein.

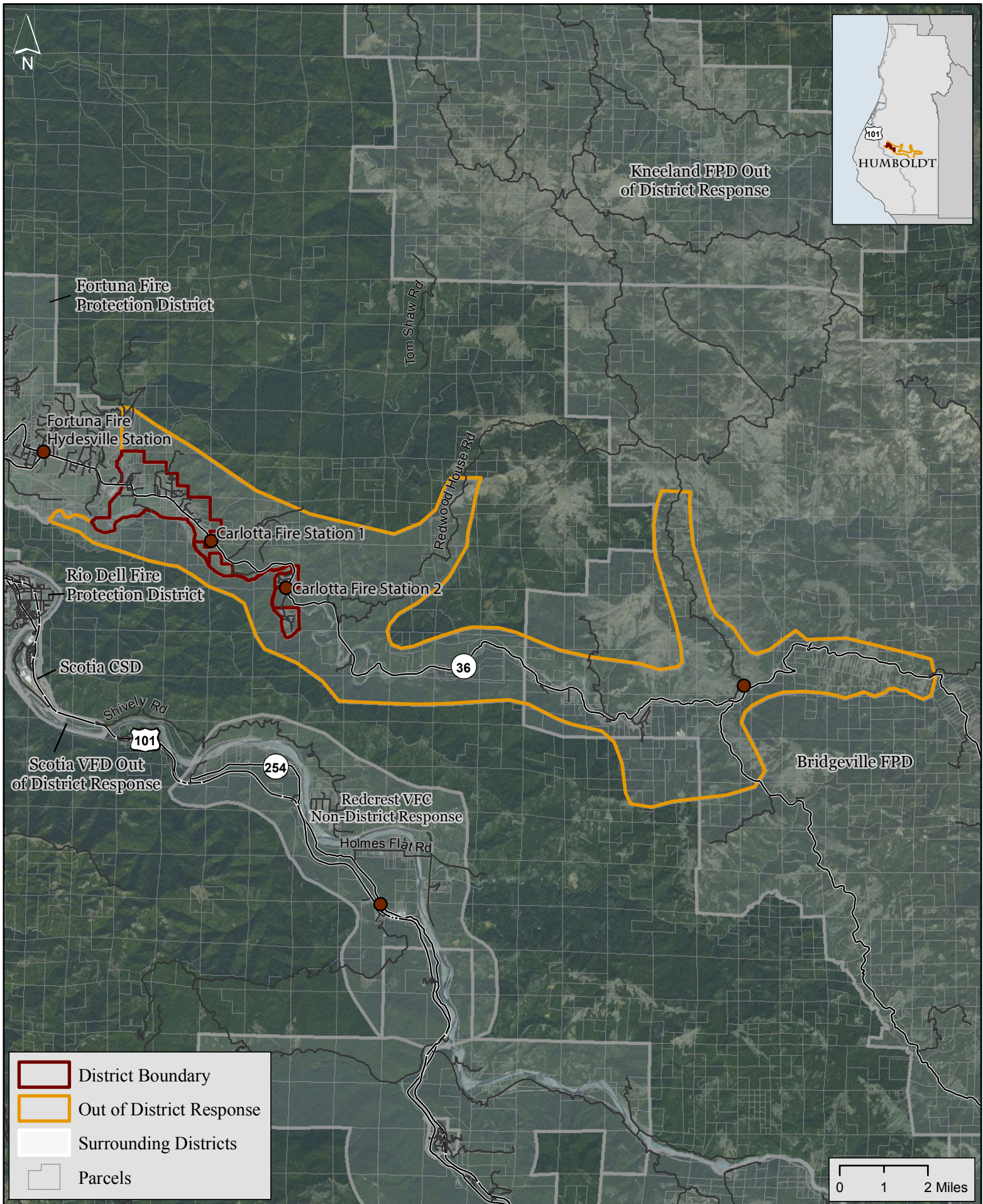
### Formation

The Carlotta VFD was established in 1964, and shortly after the Carlotta CSD was formed on April 6, 1965 by the Board of Supervisors (BOS Resolution No. 2089). The District was established in order to provide fire protection services pursuant to Community Services District Law (Government Code Sections 61000-61226.5) and does not provide any other services at this time. All other remaining services, facilities, functions or powers enumerated in the District's principal act are considered to be "latent," meaning that they are authorized by the principal act under which the District is formed but are not being exercised. Activation of latent powers and services would require LAFCo approval as provided in Government Code Section 61106. The Carlotta CSD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors who are elected by registered voters within the District.

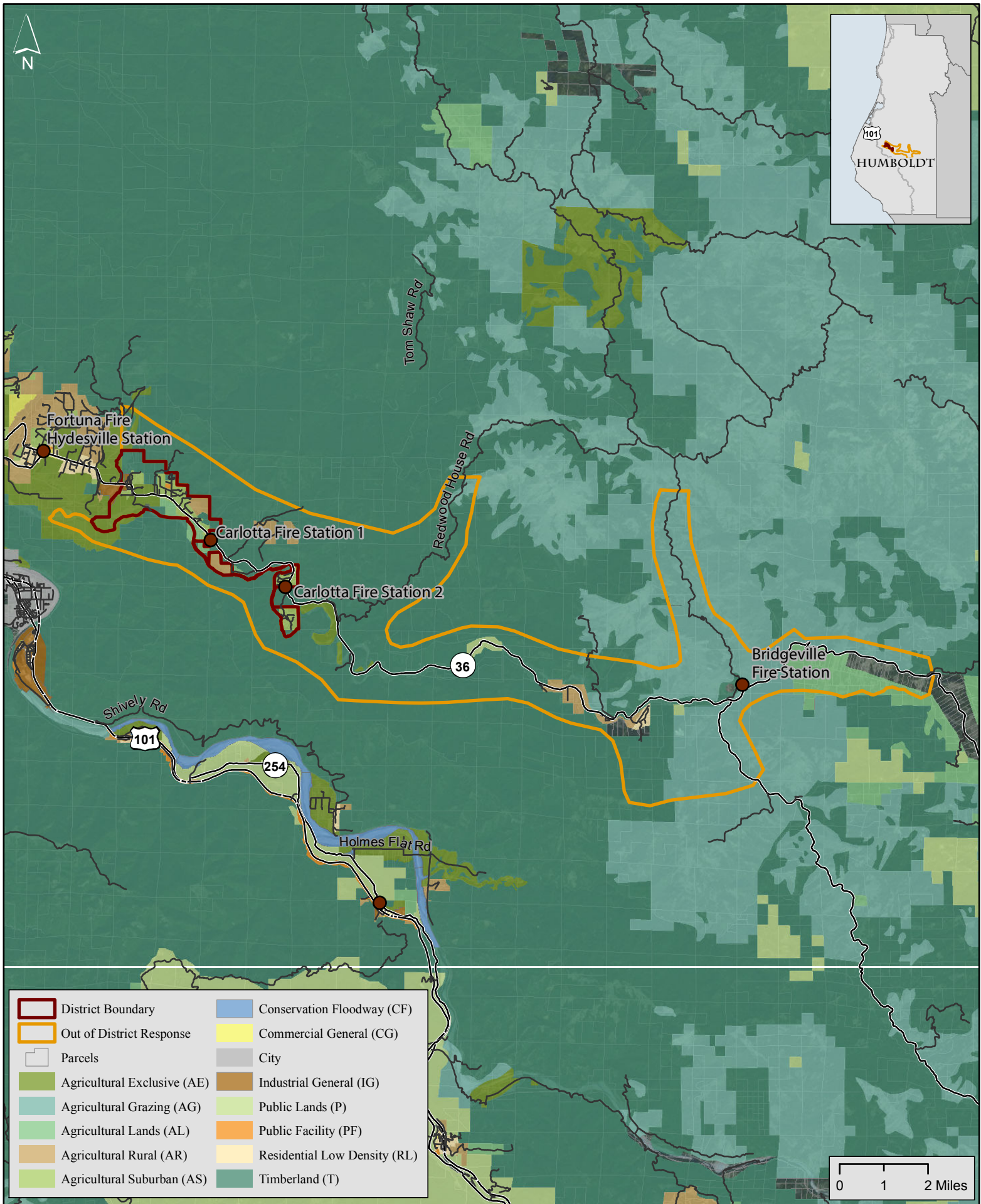
### District Boundary

The Carlotta CSD's boundary includes the community of Carlotta and is approximately 2,800 acres (4.4 square miles) in area. See Figure 4. The Carlotta CSD provides goodwill fire protection services to properties outside of the District's boundary. This non-district response area is approximately 29,500 acres (46 square miles), creating a total service area of 32,300 acres (50.4 square miles). This type of out of district service is often referred to as "goodwill service" because the fire department provides service to this area even though they are under no obligation to do so and receive no compensation for their service, other than donations. (Continued on pg. 22)









This practice can put a strain on already limited resources. Furthermore, properties within the existing District boundary largely subsidize the delivery of fire protection services to the out of district response area.

### **Growth and Population**

The 2014 Humboldt County Housing Element, estimated there are approximately 315 housing units and 698 people within the District boundary, based on the 2010 Census. The County further notes that the rate of population growth in Carlotta over the last 20-30 years has not been significant. New development within District boundaries is expected to occur at existing county-wide rates, which would likely range from 0.25 to 1.0 percent per year. Significant growth during the next ten years is not likely to occur (Humboldt County, 2014).

### **Existing and Planned Uses**

The District boundary includes all of the developed area of the Carlotta portion of the Hydesville-Carlotta Community Planning Area. There are no community water or wastewater systems in Carlotta. Residential, commercial, and agricultural land uses receive drinking and agricultural water from on-site water systems. The County Department of Health and Human Services Land Use Program does not indicate that there are any significant area-wide limitations restricting the development of on-site water systems in the Carlotta. However, parcels must be large enough to meet septic system and property line setback requirements and demonstrate to the satisfaction of County standards that adequate on site water is available (Humboldt County, 2014).

### **Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities**

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewage, and fire protection. Carlotta CSD provides one of these services – fire protection – and is responsible for assuring that those services are adequately provided to the community. There are no community water or wastewater systems in Carlotta; all existing uses rely on onsite systems.

Carlotta is identified as an unincorporated legacy community (ULC) within the Humboldt County Housing Element (Humboldt County, 2014). A legacy community is defined as a place that meets the following criteria:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- Is either within a city Sphere of Influence (SOI), is an island within a city boundary, or is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years; and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

The Carlotta community is in Census Community Block Group 060230109022 which has an estimated MHI of \$38,854 and qualifies as a DUC (DWR, 2016). Should the District seek to authorize its latent power to provide water or wastewater services to the community, or should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation, disadvantaged communities may be considered further.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Service Demand and Service Levels

The Carlotta VFD is an active member of the fire service in Humboldt County. The VFC participates in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the Humboldt County Dispatch Cooperative, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. They also have aid agreements with the Fortuna FPD, Loleta FPD, Ferndale FPD, and Rio Dell FPD.

In 2015, the Carlotta VFD responded to 114 calls for service, which is significantly more than the preceding five-year average of 55 call per year. In 2015, 20 calls, or 18 percent, were fires of various types, and 58 calls, or 51 percent were medical related. Other calls such as vehicle accidents, which comprise approximately 23 percent of total calls, may also involve the delivery of emergency medical services. Refer to Table 3-6 for an overview of Carlotta VFC's service calls.

**Table 3-7. Carlotta CSD Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	2	0	5	2	8	9
Structure Fires	1	0	2	4	6	5
Other Fires	6	4	3	6	9	6
Vehicle Accidents	0	7	30	31	17	26
Medicals	44	15	26	18	32	58
Hazard/Menace	1	0	3	2	1	-
Public Assists	-	-	-	1	1	9
Others	2	6	2	2	0	1
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	400	No Report	400	406	600	684
Training	1095		168	160	250	230
Maintenance	250		100	140	170	170
Fundraising	200		140	144	100	100
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>1,945</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,184</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	11	11	12	13	14	14
Auxiliary	1	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>

**Source:** CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Reports

## Personnel

The Carlotta VFD supports three EMTs and 11 First Responders, for a total of 14 volunteers.

**Table 3-8. Carlotta VFD Personnel and Training**

Training Qualification	Number*
Fire Fighter I or above	2
Wildland (CICCS)	2
First Responder (Medical)	8
EMT	2
Paramedic	0
HazMat First Responder Ops.	0
Rope Rescue	0
Swift Water Rescue	0
Fire Investigation & Prevention	0

## Current Infrastructure and Facilities

The Carlotta CSD operates from two fire stations. The northernmost fire station is located at 7950 State Route 36 and the second station is located approximately 2.5 miles southeast in the Riverside Acres area (LAFCo, 2008b). There are no fire hydrants in Carlotta and water must be transported via truck to extinguish fires. Through Measure Z funding, the District acquired 8 self-contained breathing apparatuses, 3 structural personal protective equipment, and 11 wildland personal protective equipment for their firefighters in 2015.

**Table 3-9. Carlotta CSD Facilities and Apparatus**

Station	Address	Apparatus	Common Name	Year	Type	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
Main Station (1)	7950 Highway 36	7226	Engine	2001	I	1500	1000
		7253	BMV-Harsco	1985	N/A	220	3,000
		7222	Ford Van Pelt Pumper	1977	I	1250	850
		7275	Rescue Vehicle GMC ¾ Ton	1986	N/A	N/A	N/A
		7221	Ford F700 Pumper	1980	II	1000	550
		7206	Wildland Rig	1983	N/A		150
		7274	Recue Vehicle F350 4x4 Super-Duty	2008	N/A	N/A	N/A
Carlotta East (2)	Hwy mi. marker 1.5	7265	Ford Van Pelt Pumper/Tender Combo	1977		1000	2,000



## **Challenges and Needs**

The District noted that one of its main challenges is recruitment and retention of volunteers. They also noted in 2015 that they would like to replace their 39-year-old "first-out" fire engine (Fire Chief's Association, 2015). With the help of Measure Z money, the District has recently purchased a new (used) vehicle- Engine 7226. The District has made great strides in the last five years to upgrade significant pieces of fire and rescue equipment.

## **ISO Rating**

There are several benchmarks by which the level of fire service provided by an agency may be measured, and the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification, or ISO PPC, is one such measure. The ISO is a rating commonly used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the best rating which indicates the highest level of fire protection and the lowest is 10. The Carlotta CSD's PPC in all areas of the District is currently a class 8X.

## **FINANCING**

### **Current Revenues and Expenditures**

Based on State Controller's Office reports, the Carlotta CSD received \$48,266 in revenue in the 2015-16 fiscal year, one-quarter of which comes from a special assessment and the remainder from property tax. The Carlotta CSD receives approximately 3.8% of the one-percent property tax paid within the District (based on the tax allocation factor within Carlotta CSD tax rate areas) (Humboldt County, 2014).

The assessment is apportioned based on a charge of \$15 per unit of benefit, whereby vacant parcels pay one unit of benefit or \$15, improved residential parcels pay two units of benefit or \$30, and commercial parcels pay six units of benefit or \$90 (Humboldt County, 2014).

**Table 3-10. Carlotta CSD Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16**

<b>Expense Category</b>	
Expense salaries & wages (perm emp)	\$1,800
Personal protection equipment	\$5,000
Communications	\$3,000
Insurance	\$8,000
Maintenance of equipment	\$8,750
Maintenance of building	\$9,150
Medical supplies	\$2,000
Membership training	\$1,000
Miscellaneous expenses	\$500
Office supplies	\$300
Professional and special services	\$1,000
Special district expenses	\$1,000
Utilities	\$2,500
Fuel	\$1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$45,500</b>

**Source:** As reported by District

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE**

The Carlotta CSD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors that oversees finances, policies and service needs of the district. Board members are elected and serve four year terms. The Board meets the second Monday of each month, at 7:00 p.m. at the Main station. There are no vacancies on the District Board. Minutes and notices are posted at the front of the Main Station and at Cuddeback School.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS-**

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

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

- a) Carlotta CSD serves an estimated population of 698 residents and 315 total housing units.
- b) Significant growth in the Carlotta community during the next ten years is not likely to occur.

### **2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) The Carlotta community qualifies as a disadvantaged unincorporated community.
- b) There are currently no local agency service providers in the Carlotta area that provide water or sewer services.
- c) Should the District seek to authorize its latent power to provide water or wastewater services to the community, or should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation, disadvantaged communities should be considered further.

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

- a) The District has made great strides in the last five years to upgrade significant pieces of fire and rescue equipment.
- b) In 2015, the Carlotta VFD responded to 114 calls for service, which is significantly more than the preceding five-year average of 55 call per year.
- c) Like all volunteer departments, the Carlotta VFD must to continually recruit for additional volunteers and, as demand for services increases in the future, additional volunteers will be needed to maintain the service capacity of the district.
- d) Fire protection services are provided by goodwill outside of the District boundary to an additional 26 square mile Out of District Response Area. This can put a strain on already limited resources, including increased maintenance costs for apparatus and equipment.

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

- a) The Carlotta CSD receives funding from property taxes that generates approximately \$26,000 per year and a special assessment that generates approximately \$9,000 per year.

- b) Properties within the existing District boundary largely subsidize the delivery of fire protection services to the Out of District Response Area. Annexation of the out of District response area could help facilitate a more equitable distribution of cost sharing among residents receiving District services.

**5) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) The Carlotta CSD is a regional partner in the overall fire suppression and prevention effort in Humboldt County. The Department is a participant in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the Humboldt County Dispatch Cooperative, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team.
- b) The Carlotta CSD provides enhanced fire protection services in the local community for structure fire, medical aid, vehicle accidents and extraction, and similar traditionally local fire department type services.

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

- a) The Carlotta CSD is an independent district governed by a five-member Board of Directors.
- b) The Carlotta CSD, with support from the Carlotta VFD, supports the mutual social and economic interests of the Carlotta community by sustaining community-based fire protection services and establishing local governance for such services.
- c) Carlotta VFD maintains a Facebook page to communicate with members of the public.
- d) The District does not have a website. Establishing a website and posting agendas, minutes, budgets, and financial data would increase transparency to the community.

**(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

- a) It is recommended that Carlotta CSD's sphere of influence be expanded to match its non-district goodwill response area. This would allow the District to pursue annexation in the future, if desired.

### 3.3 Ferndale Fire Protection District

#### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-11. Ferndale FPD Contact Information**

Contact:	Daniel DelBiaggio, Chief
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 485 Ferndale, CA 95536
Site Address	436 Brown Street, Ferndale, CA 95536
Phone Number:	(707) 786-9909
Email	chief@ferndalefire.org
Website	www.ferndalefire.org www.facebook.com/ferndalefire/
Types of Services:	Fire Protection and Suppression Services & Medical Response
Population Served:	2,600 residents
Size of Service Area:	44 sq. mi. District, 56 sq. mi. out of district
Number of Staff	32 volunteers

#### Background

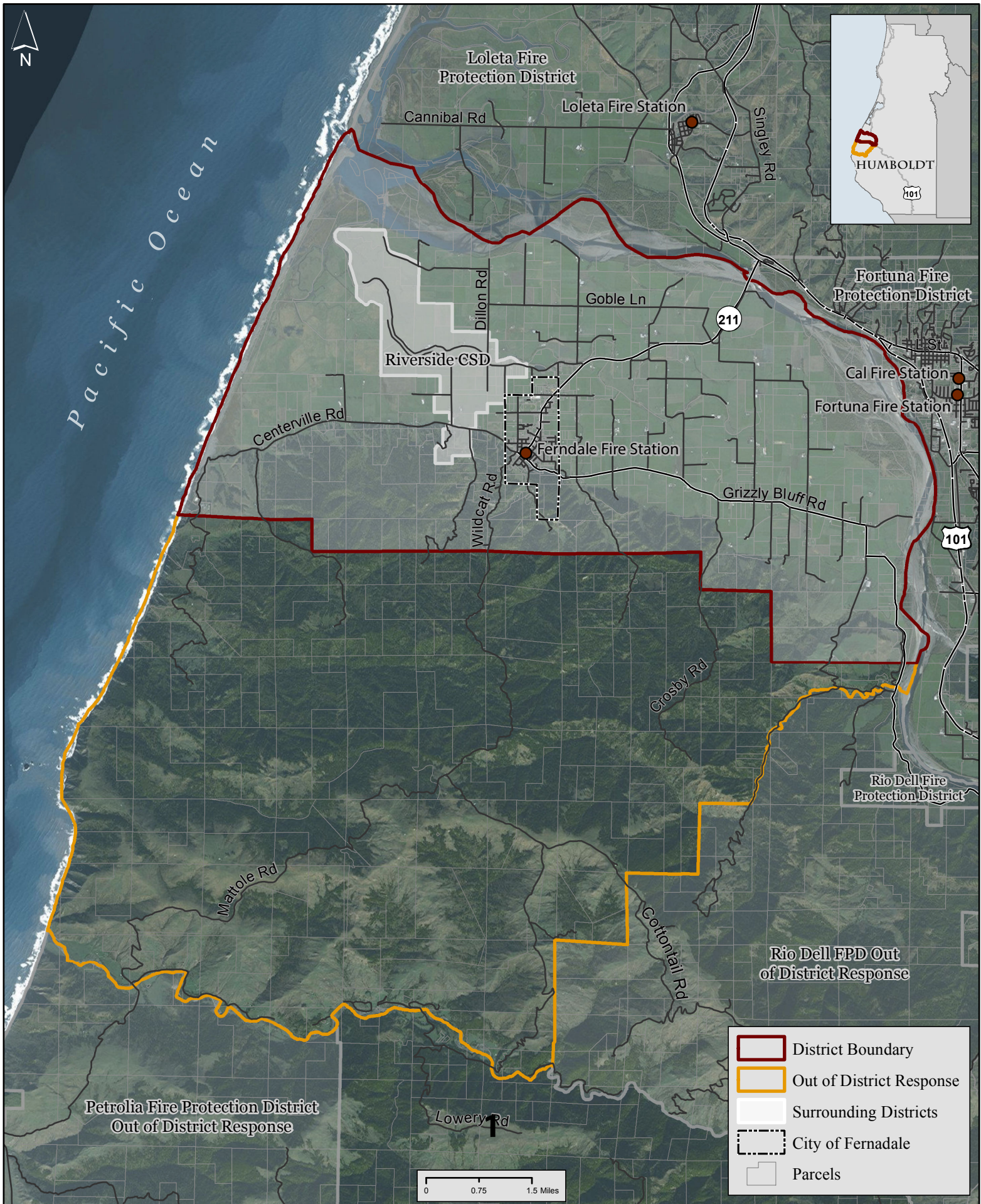
The Ferndale Fire Protection District (FPD) provides fire protection services to the City of Ferndale and to the unincorporated communities of Grizzly Bluff, Arlynda Corners, Centerville, Port Kenyon, Wildcat Ridge, and the remainder of the Eel River bottoms south of the Eel River. The largest facilities within the Ferndale FPD include the commercial downtown, the Humboldt County Fairgrounds, and Ferndale's Elementary and High Schools (LAFCo, 2008a). A municipal service review (MSR) for the District was previously conducted in 2008. This document will update the previous MSR and build upon information provided therein.

#### Formation

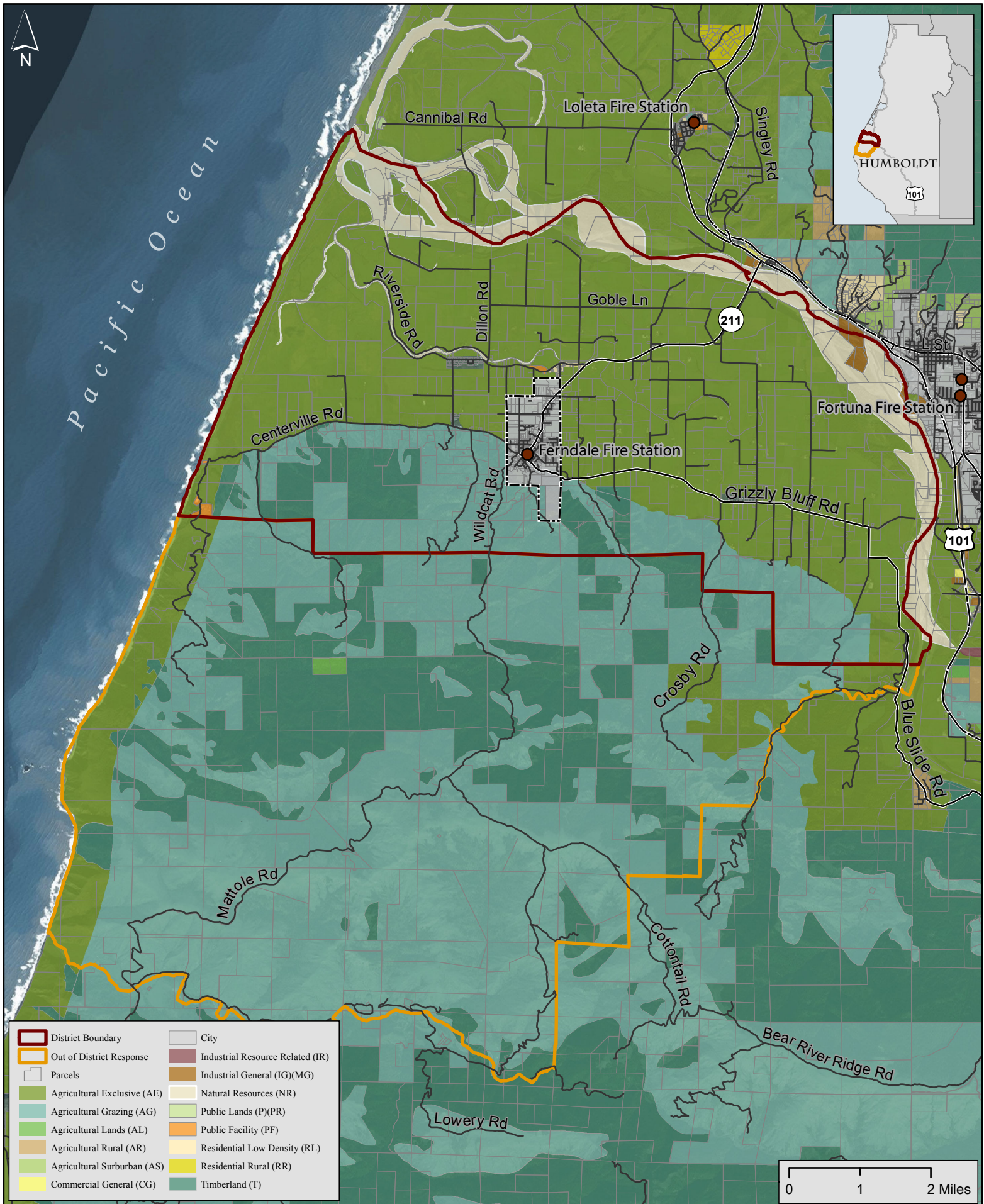
The Ferndale FPD was formed in 1934 and subsequently reorganized under the provisions of the California Health and Safety Code in 1964. The District assumed responsibility for fire protection from the Ferndale Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), and the VFD now delivers fire protection services on behalf of the Ferndale FPD. The Ferndale VFD was founded in 1897 and is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, which is comprised of all-volunteer members and governed by the Department's officers.

The Ferndale FPD is an independent single purpose special district authorized to provide fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (Division Part 2.7 of the California Health and Safety Code), which supersedes prior fire protection district laws. The District has a five-member Board of Directors that is elected by registered voters who live within the District.









# Ferndale Fire Protection District Land Use Designations

Figure  
7

## **District Boundary**

The Ferndale FPD's boundary is 29,036 acres (44.2 square miles) in area and the VFD provides good will services to properties outside of the District's boundary. Properties within the existing District boundary largely subsidize the delivery of fire protection services to the Out of District Response Area, which is approximately 37,432 acres (58.5 square miles), creating a total District Service Area of 66,468 acres (102.7 square miles). See Figure 6. The delivery of fire protection services outside of district boundaries is often referred to as "good will service" because there is no local agency responsible for providing the service and the District in question provides the service out of good will rather than obligation.

The District boundary abuts Loleta FPD at the Eel River to the north and Fortuna FPD to the at the Eel River to the east. There is an approximately 1.25 mile gap between the District boundary and the Rio Dell FPD boundary to the south-east near where Price Creek meets the Eel River. Typically both fire departments are dispatched to calls in this area. Ferndale FPD's Out of District Response Area also shares a border with Rio Dell FPD's Out of District Response Area along Monument Ridge, as well as Petrolia FPD's Out of District Response Area at Bear River.

## **Growth and Population**

The District boundary contains the City of Ferndale which is the most populated area within the District. Based on a review of Census Blocks, there are approximately 2,600 residents living in approximately 1,260 housing units within the District boundaries (including the City of Ferndale's population). The out of district "good will" response area contains approximately 130 people and 76 housing units.

Humboldt County has grown at an average annual growth rate of 0.6 percent per year over the last 10 to 12 years. During the same period City of Ferndale grew at an annual average rate of 0.15 percent. Data is not readily available for the portion of the existing District outside Ferndale. Given that the portion of the District outside Ferndale is dominated by land within the Coastal Zone or resource production land, past growth in this area would likely be less than that of the County as a whole. Therefore the population in Ferndale FPD is expected to grow at 0.15 percent per year or less over the coming years.

## **Existing and Planned Uses**

Land uses within the District and the Out of District Response Area are subject to the Humboldt County Framework General Plan (Volume I), the Eel River and South Coast Area Plans of the Humboldt County Local Coastal Program, and the Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1).

The Ferndale FPD is comprised predominantly of improved and unimproved rural residential, agriculture, and timber related uses, with more urban uses centered in downtown Ferndale. The predominant uses within the out of district response area are vacant and improved timber land, with a lesser proportion of improved and unimproved agriculture and rural residential land. See Figure 7.

## **Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities**

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such



communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewer, and fire protection. The Ferndale FPD provides one of these services – fire protection – and is responsible for assuring that those services are adequately provided to the community.

Other service providers within the Ferndale FPD include:

- The City of Ferndale, which provides wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, public roads, parks and recreation, schools, libraries, and other public facilities (LAFCo, 2008a).
- The Del Oro Water Company is a public utility that is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission and provides water to approximately 750 residential, commercial, and government connection in the City of Ferndale and surrounding area including Arlynda Corners.
- Riverside CSD, which operates a water system serving residents near the intersection of Centerville Road and Meridian Road, and throughout the Port Kenyon area. The Riverside CSD provides approximately 100 water service connections consisting of 75 residential and 25 agricultural operations (LAFCo, 2007).

The Port Kenyon/Arlynda Corners/Meridian Road areas, located north-west of the City of Ferndale and within the Ferndale FPD, are identified as an unincorporated legacy community (ULC) within the 2014 Humboldt County Housing Element. A legacy community is defined as a place that meets the following criteria:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- Is either within a city sphere of influence (SOI), is an island within a city boundary, or is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years; and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

Additionally, the City of Ferndale is a Census Designated Place with a MHI of \$45,949, which is 75 percent of California's reported \$61,094 MHI (DWR, 2016), thereby qualifying the area as disadvantaged. Ferndale is incorporated, and therefore does not qualify as a DUC. However, it stands to reason that sections of unincorporated territory surrounding the City may also qualify as disadvantaged. Furthermore, the City CDP and the remaining entirety of the District are in Census Community Tract 06023011200, which has a MHI of \$46,731, 76 percent of California's reported \$61,094 MHI (DWR, 2016), thereby also qualifying the tract as disadvantaged. Should the District pursue annexation, DUC communities within the District's vicinity may be examined further.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Service Demand and Service Levels

The Ferndale FPD has an automatic aid agreement with the Fortuna FPD, whereby Fortuna FPD will send a ladder truck to Ferndale in the event of a structure fire in the downtown area. In addition, the Ferndale FPD has an automatic aid agreement with the Fortuna FPD, Loleta FPD, and the Rio Dell FPD for the simultaneous dispatch of water tenders by each fire department to fires in areas that do not have access to the hydrant systems. This water shuttle could allow each district to reduce its fire insurance rating in areas away from a hydrant system.

Ferndale FPD is a member of the countywide mutual aid agreement. This allows districts to enter into agreements for services, including emergencies which have the potential to overwhelm the resource capabilities within a single district. For the Ferndale FPD, this enables the district to maintain preparedness for a disaster beyond its capacity, without the need to expand and create an additional facility.

In 2015, the Ferndale VFD responded to 227 calls for service, which is slightly higher than the five-year average of 206 calls (see Table 3-11). In 2015, 45 calls, or 20 percent, were fires of various types, and 156 calls, or 69 percent were medical related. Other calls such as vehicle accidents, which comprise approximately 4 percent of total calls, may also involve the delivery of emergency medical services. Refer to Table 3-11 for an overview of Ferndale VFD's service calls.

In addition to emergency calls, the Ferndale VFD conducts fire extinguisher clinics with business owners, puts up and takes down the Ferndale Christmas Tree lights, provides fire safety education to youth (Children's Center, Ferndale Elementary and the High School), and provides a grant to local youth interested in public service. They also host a blood drive and maintain a blood bank account for the community (FVFD, 2016). Recently, the Department partnered with the Boy Scouts of America to establish a youth Explorer Program. Students aged 14-18 years that have an interest in learning about the fire department are enrolled in this program and participate with the Department in all trainings and drills.

**Table 3-12. Ferndale VFD Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	7	5	10	10	4	9
Structure Fires	3	10	9	11	6	10
Other Fires	21	16	14	33	21	26
Vehicle Accidents	4	3	4	13	13	10
Medicals	130	125	117	164	139	156
Hazard/Menace	7	3	4	9	11	4
Public Assists	-	-	-	28	17	9
Others	6	13	14	2	3	3

<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	5,271	3,300	2,800	4,125	3,660	3,880
Training	1,854	1,060	1,150	1,400	1,750	1,920
Maintenance	N/A	420	550	600	640	635
Fundraising	500	160	220	275	290	275
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>7,625</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>4,720</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>6,340</b>	<b>6,780</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	41	40	34	30	30	32
Auxiliary	N/A	4	5	3	0	0
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>

Source: CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Reports

## Personnel

Ferndale VFD maintains 4 active companies, and a fifth company comprised of retired members. The Department is headed by a chief, two assistant chiefs, four captains, and four lieutenants. Ferndale firefighters have received wide-ranging training and are participants in the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. Monthly Department meetings and several monthly training drills are held to improve skills, maintain equipment and keep the department running smoothly (FVFD, 2016).

**Table 3-13. Ferndale VFD Training Qualifications**

<b>Training Qualification</b>	<b># of Volunteers Trained</b>
Fire Fighter I or above	3
Wildland (CICCS)	7
First Responder (Medical)	15
EMT	4
Paramedic	0
HazMat First Responder Ops.	5
Rope Rescue	5
Swift Water Rescue	3
Fire Investigation	1

## Current Infrastructure and Facilities

The Ferndale FPD has one fire station to serve the entire District, located at 436 Brown Street in Ferndale and an additional building across the street from the existing station which is used as an annex (LAFCo, 2008a).

Since 2008 (the last time Ferndale FPD services were reviewed by LAFCo), the Ferndale FPD has purchased new equipment and vehicles, expanded their facilities, and increased their volunteer numbers. In 2009 the District lowered the membership age to 18. Subsequent to lowering the age limit, the Department saw an increase in recruitment (FVFD, 2016).

In 2010 the FVFD completed their annex building across the street from the original fire hall, which now easily houses the newer larger engine style. In 2010 FVFD also adopted the state-wide numbering system, and acquired Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) for each engine. The numbering system makes it easier to identify apparatus at mutual aid incidents. The first two digits represent the agency, FVFD is 73. The next digit represents the type of apparatus, and the last digit is the unique number for that apparatus. For example, Engine 1 is a type 2 engine so it is referred to as 7321 (FVFD, 2016).

In 2012, a new roof and siren tower were installed on the fire hall. In 2014, to help the community and the department, the FVFD provided free reflective address signs for houses in rural areas. These highly visible blue address signs make it much easier to identify locations while responding to fire and medical emergencies (FVFD, 2016).

Also in 2014, FVFD implemented the *I Am Responding* system to help track personnel responding, the hours and details of calls, and the status of apparatuses. This system allows firefighters to call in as soon as they start responding. As firefighters start calling in, their status is listed on a large TV monitor in the hall, and in the radio room. Chiefs and others can also track responders through a phone app (FVFD, 2016).

In 2015 FVFD purchased a new Engine 3, designated 7313. The new engine replaced the old Engine 3, known as 7323. While the old Engine 3 could only seat 3, the new engine has seating for 5. In 2016, the 1980 Water Tender 7365 was replaced with a 2006 International that features a recycled tank from the old Tender 6 (FVFD, 2016).

Currently, the District currently has one fire station (with annex), three engines, two water tenders, a rescue vehicle, and a wildland quick attack engine. Other equipment includes about 20 self-contained breathing apparatuses, 38 structural and 10 wildland personal protective equipment for the firefighters, and one thermal imaging camera. Additionally, the district has 24 handheld radios, one GPS system, and five AEDs (LAFCo, 2008a).

The Ferndale FPD has a special assessment that is paid as part of property tax bills by owners of property within the District and is used to acquire new apparatus. Using these funds, one engine is replaced every five to ten years, maintaining an average age of apparatus between ten and 20 years.

**Table 3-14. Ferndale FPD Facilities and Apparatus**

Station	Address	Apparatus (seats)	Common Name	Year	Type	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
Ferndale Fire Hall & Annex	436 Brown Street Ferndale	7321	Engine 1	1998	II	1500	750
		7312	Engine 2	2005	I	1500	650
		7313	Engine 3	2015	I	1250	750
		7374	Rescue 4	2003	VII Rescue	N/A	N/A
		7365	Tender 5	1980	VI Tender		2000
		7356	Tender 6	2003	V Tender		3200
		7347	Attack 7	1991	IV	150	250

Information courtesy of Ferndale FPD website (FVFD, 2016)

### Water Supply

The Del Oro Water Company, a private water company regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission, operates the water system serving the City of Ferndale and limited unincorporated lands surrounding the City (including the Arlynda Corners area). The Del Oro Water system has springs fed by Francis Creek with a treatment and a large concrete reservoir above town with back up wells and hydrants throughout its service area. The Ferndale FPD is authorized to acquire water facilities for providing fire protection, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 13861, and the District owns and maintains the hydrants associated with the Del Oro Water system.

The Riverside Community Services District (CSD) operates a water system serving residents near the intersection of Centerville Road and Meridian Road, and throughout the Port Kenyon area. The Riverside CSD system does not support adequate fire flows, therefore the District does not have any hydrants on this system. Additionally, Waddington Water Works serving the Grizzly Bluff Road area also does not have hydrants. In these areas outside the City of Ferndale, the Ferndale FPD is required to shuttle water using its two water tenders and portable ponds to provide adequate water for fire suppression.

### ISO Rating

There are several benchmarks by which the level of fire service provided by an agency may be measured, and the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification, or ISO PPC, is one such measure. The ISO is a rating commonly used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the best rating which indicates the highest level of fire protection and the lowest is 10. Based on an ISO audit, the Ferndale FPD has an ISO PPC rating of 6/10 (2015). Such a rating provides the residents of the Ferndale area access to lower insurance rates, as opposed to a community with an agency who has a higher rating, such as a 9. The ISO "6" rating is applied to the area within 5 road miles of the responding fire station and 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply, such as a fire hydrant. The "10" is applied

to properties *within* 5 road miles of a fire station but *beyond* 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply, as well as to properties over 5 road miles of a recognized fire station.

## FINANCING

### Current Revenues and Expenditures

The District is primarily funded by a very small percentage of property taxes, a benefit assessment, and an annual door-to-door fundraising drive. The Ferndale FPD special assessment is \$5 per unit of benefit, where a single-family dwelling within the hydranted area is assessed four units of benefit; rural residences are assessed six units of benefit; and commercial uses are assessed between eight and twelve units of benefit.

**Table 3-15. Ferndale FPD Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2015-16**

<b>Expenditures</b>	
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$37,459
Services & Supplies	\$74,818
Contributions to Outside Agencies	\$4,000
Fixed Assets	\$347,066
Debt Service	\$27,770
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>\$487,117</i>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Property Taxes (1%)	\$163,945
Property Assessments	\$32,935
Use of Money and Property	\$1,914
State Revenues	\$2,320
Charges for Current Services	\$7,708
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>\$208,822</i>
Total Revenues	\$208,822
Total Expenditures	\$491,113
Revenues/Sources Over (or under) Expenditures/Uses	\$-282,291

Financial records as reported to the California State Controller's Office

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE**

The Governing Board of District has five representatives, and meets every other even month on the fourth Thursday at the Fire Hall. Meeting times and locations are posted on the Internet at [www.ferndalefire.org](http://www.ferndalefire.org) (LAFCo, 2008a).

Ferndale Volunteer Fire Department members meet on the first Thursday of the month. The department meets at the Fire Hall to go over business matters and review the previous month's fire and medical calls. The department holds drills on the second and third Thursdays of the month on various topics such as ladders, hoses and nozzles, fire attack, driving and pump operations and medical response skills. If there is a fifth Thursday in the month, there is a special drill that concentrates on medical skills. All meetings and drills are held at 7:00pm at the Fire Hall. This information is also available on the Ferndale Fire Department's website (LAFCo, 2008a).

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS**

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area**

- a) There are approximately 2,600 residents living in approximately 1,260 housing units within the District boundaries (including the City of Ferndale's Population).
- b) Population within Ferndale FPD is expected to grow at 0.15 percent per year or less over the coming years.

### **(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) Territory within the Ferndale FPD qualifies as disadvantaged. Those areas which are not incorporated qualify as disadvantaged unincorporated communities.
- b) Should the District pursue annexation, DUC communities within the District's vicinity may be examined further.

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

- a) The Ferndale FPD has the capacity to adequately serve current demand within the 44-square mile District boundary.
- b) Fire protection services are provided by good-will outside of the District boundary to an additional 56 square mile Out of District Response Area. Properties within the

existing District boundary largely subsidize the delivery of fire protection services to the Out of District Response Area.

- c) Like all volunteer departments Ferndale FPD needs to continually recruit additional volunteers and, as population increases in the future, additional volunteers will be needed to maintain the service capacity of the District.

**(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

- a) The Ferndale FPD generates approximately \$163,000 in property taxes and \$32,000 in special assessments per year, which is used exclusively for fire protection purposes. There is also an annual fundraising drive to supplement training, equipment, company gear, and department activities.
- b) The District Board of Directors adopts an annual budget and administers its funds consistent with Fire Protection District Law and budgeting, accounting, and reporting procedures for special districts in California.

**(5) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) The Ferndale FPD provides enhanced fire protection services in the local community for structure fire, medical aid, vehicle accidents and extraction, and similar traditionally local fire department type services.
- b) Ferndale FPD works closely and cooperatively with neighboring fire departments and has mutual and automatic aid agreements with them. In addition, the District is a member of the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association.

**(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies**

- a) The Ferndale FPD is an independent district governed by a five-member Board of Directors.
- b) The District maintains a visible presence in the community, and participates in community activities and events.
- c) The Ferndale VFD maintains a website ([ferndalefire.org](http://ferndalefire.org)) where it posts information about Department activities, documents and updates. At the present time, agenda, minutes and financial data are not posted for the Fortuna FPD.
- d) Ferndale FPD demonstrates accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Humboldt LAFCo. The District responded to the questionnaires, staff telephone calls, and cooperated with document requests.

**(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

- a) It is recommended that Ferndale FPD's sphere of influence be expanded to match its non-district good-will response area. This would allow the District to pursue annexation in the future.



### 3.4 Fortuna Fire Protection District



#### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-16. Fortuna FPD Contact Information**

Contact:	Lon Winburn
Department Headquarters:	320 South Fortuna Blvd. Fortuna, CA 95540
Phone Number:	(707)725-5021
Email	info@fortunafire.com
Website	www.fortunafire.com facebook.com/FortunaVolunteerFireDepartment
Types of Services:	Fire protection services including prevention, public education, preparedness and emergency response
Population Served:	15,000
Size of Service Area:	29 square miles in district
Number of Staff	1 Career, 69 Volunteer, 22 Auxiliary

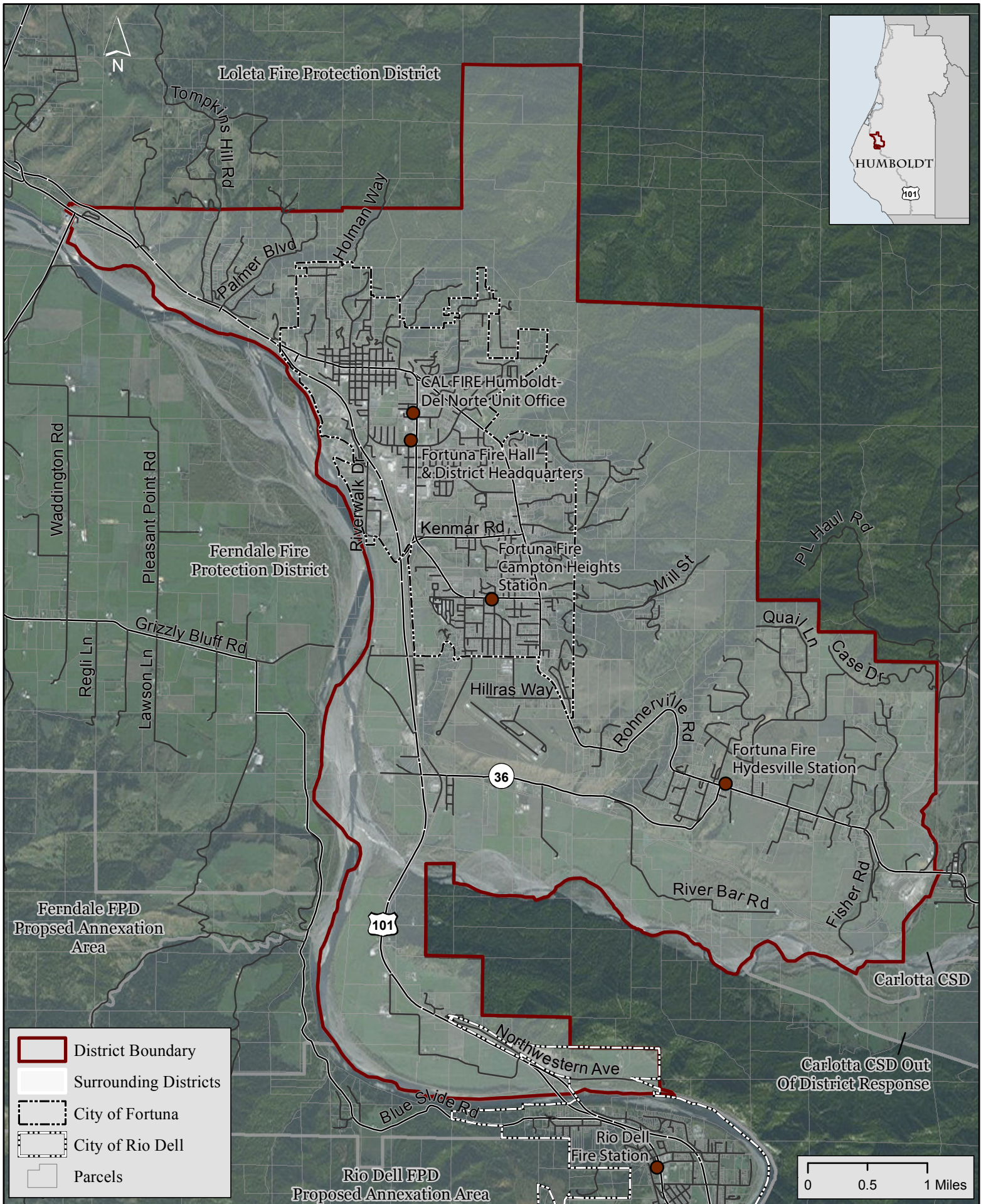
#### Background

The Fortuna Fire Protection District (FPD) provides fire protection services, including fire prevention, public education, preparedness and emergency response to the City of Fortuna and the outlying communities of Alton, Hydesville, Metropolitan, Fernbridge and Palmer Creek. The area encompasses 29 square miles with a population of approximately 15,000. Five fire companies work out of three fire stations within the District. A municipal service review for the District was previously conducted in 2008. This document will update the previous MSR and build upon information provided therein.

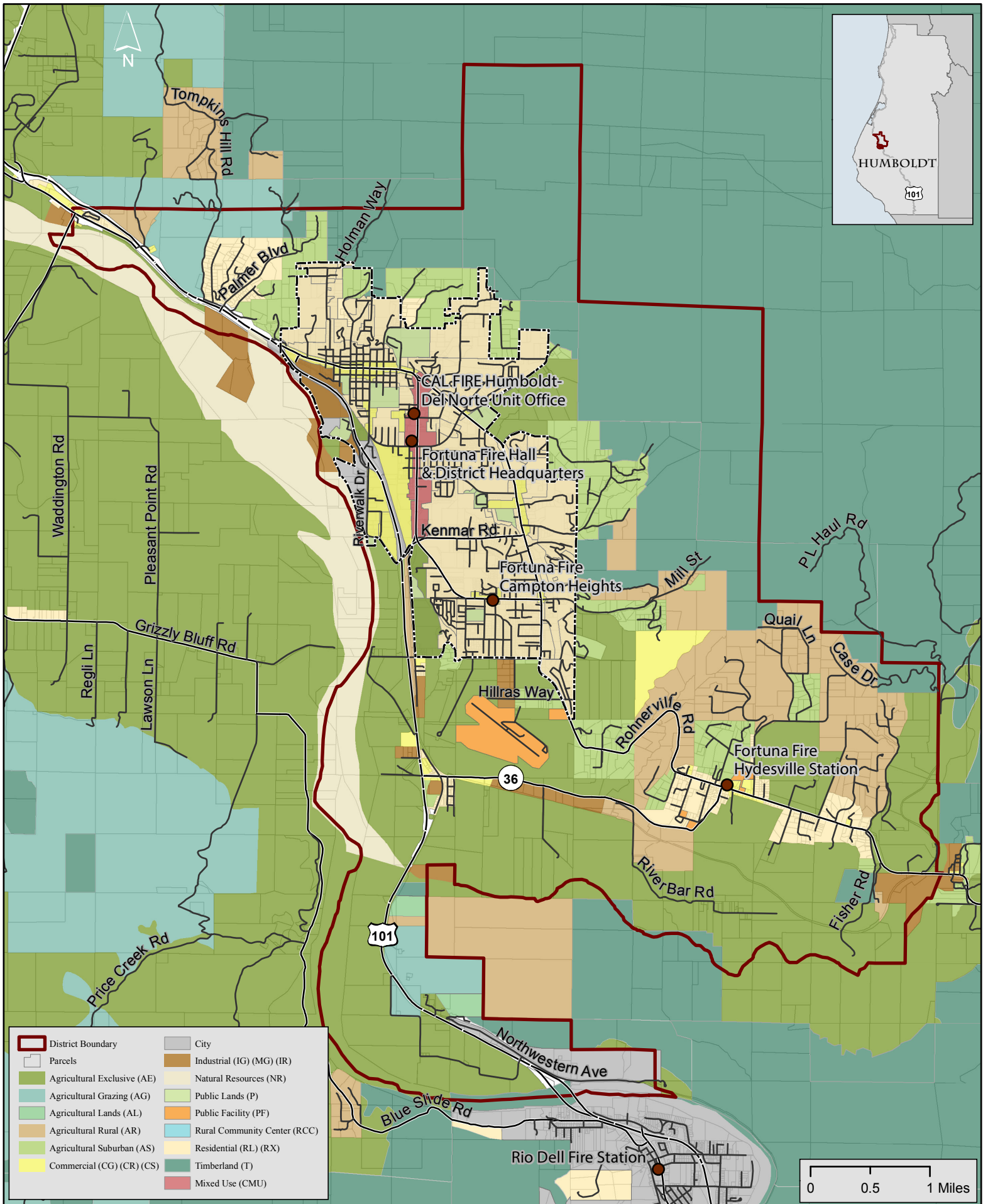
#### Formation

Fortuna Fire began in 1904 with the creation of the Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department (VFD). The Fortuna FPD was formed in 1936 after a successful special election was held. The Fortuna FPD is considered a “dependent” single purpose special district authorized to provide fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (Division Part 2.7 of the California Health and Safety Code), which supersedes prior fire protection district laws. Most other fire districts in Humboldt County are “independent,” whereby voters within the district directly elect the District Board of Directors. In 1985 the County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 85-40, delegating their governing board powers to the Board of Commissioners of the Fortuna FPD. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 13844, the Board of Supervisors “shall determine whether the commissioners shall serve at its pleasure or for staggered terms of four years subject to removal for cause”. In the case of Fortuna, the Board of Supervisors periodically appoints members to the five-member Board of Commissioners that serve as the governing board of the District.









## **District Boundary**

The Fortuna FPD boundary covers approximately 18,713 acres (29 square miles) and extends north to Graham Road (off of Tompkins Hill Road) and Fernbridge; west to the Eel River; south to the Metropolitan area near Rio Dell; and east almost to Carlotta. See Figure 8. The District boundary extends outside of the city limits and generally reflects the response area of the District (LAFCo, 2008c). The City accounts for approximately 17 percent of the District. Nearby similar service providers include Loleta FPD to the north, Carlotta CSD to the south-east, Rio Dell FPD to the south, and Ferndale FPD to the west. CAL FIRE also maintains a station in Fortuna which is home to their Dispatch Center and Humboldt Del Norte Unit office.

## **Growth and Population**

Within the District, the two major population centers are the City of Fortuna and the unincorporated community of Hydesville. The City of Fortuna has an estimated population of 12,000 (U.S. Census, 2015). The 2010 census estimated the community of Hydesville's population as 1,237 (US Census Bureau, 2010). The District estimates they serve a total population of 15,000 within District boundaries.

Humboldt County has grown at an average annual growth rate of 0.6 percent per year over the last 10 to 12 years. During the same period City of Fortuna grew at a similar rate. Using this growth rate and the total estimated District population, the District can expect to serve 16,310 residents in 2030, or an additional 1,300 new residents.

## **Existing and Planned Uses**

Land uses within the City of Fortuna are subject to the Fortuna General Plan 2030 and Zoning Regulations (Fortuna Municipal Code, Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 4). Land uses in the unincorporated area are subject to the Humboldt County Framework General Plan, Volume I, and Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1). The Humboldt County Framework General Plan designates most unincorporated lands within the District boundaries for timber and agriculture with some commercial and residential areas (see Figure 9). The Fortuna and Hydesville areas are subject to the Fortuna Area Community Plan and the Carlotta/Hydesville Community Plan, respectively (Humboldt County General Plan, Volume II).

## **Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities**

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewage, and fire protection. Fortuna FPD provides fire related services and is responsible for assuring that these services are adequately provided to the community.

No cohesive census boundary is available for the entirety of territory within the District. However, the City of Fortuna has an estimated MHI of \$42,450, which is 69 percent of the state average MHI (DWR, 2016), thereby qualifying the area as disadvantaged. Fortuna is incorporated, and therefore does not qualify as a DUC. However, it stands to reason that portions of unincorporated territory surrounding the City may also qualify as disadvantaged.

Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

### **Service Demand and Service Levels**

The Fortuna VFD participates in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the OES area operational meetings and planning, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. The Department is in the process of becoming a USAR Level 3 response resource. They also have auto aid agreements with the Rio Dell FPD, Loleta FPD, Ferndale FPD, and Carlotta CSD.

The Fortuna VFD is dispatched by the Fortuna Police Department. The Fortuna Police Department is the primary responder for medical calls within the incorporated area. City Ambulance located on South Fortuna Boulevard responds to all medical aid calls within the area and requests mutual aid from the Fortuna VFD when necessary (LAFCo, 2008c). The Department responds to medical calls in the Hydesville area and is dispatched automatically to traffic accidents within the District.

The Fortuna VFD responds to an average of 300 emergency calls per year and an additional 150-200 minor requests for service and/or investigations, normally handled by the command staff. The Department responded to approximately 266 calls for service in 2015, of which approximately 49 calls, or 18 percent, were fires of various types and 116 calls, or 44 percent, were medical related. Typically the Department's responses to medical calls have averaged between 15 and 20 percent of their total calls. Refer to Table 3-15 for an overview of Fortuna VFD service calls.

**Table 3-17. Fortuna VFD Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	17	16	20	31	37	21
Structure Fires	12	8	9	14	8	8
Other Fires	88	40	25	35	36	36
Vehicle Accidents	74	39	54	67	42	55
Medicals	74	96	83	105	90	182
Hazard/Menace	14	28	26	20	65	92
Public Assists	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	260	220	236	231	174	131
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>525</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	1,717	1,372	1,451	1,904	1,482	1,775
Training	2,718	2,880	3,000	2,545	3,215	3,250
Maintenance	N/A	624	200	200	200	200
Fundraising	N/A	300	200	200	200	200
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>4,435</b>	<b>5,176</b>	<b>4,851</b>	<b>4,849</b>	<b>5,097</b>	<b>5,425</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	68	69	68	68	68	68
Career	0	0	1	1	1	1
Auxiliary	27	-	22	22	22	22
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>

**Source:** CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Reports

## Personnel

The Fortuna VFD has five fire companies consisting of 15 members each that work out of three fire stations within the District. The command staff consists of one Fire Chief, two Assistant Fire Chiefs, and one Safety Officer for a total membership of 79. All members are volunteer with the exception of the full-time Fire Chief and Secretary positions. Of the five fire companies, three are located downtown, one in Campton Heights, and one in Hydesville. Each company has a captain, two lieutenants, and up to 12 firefighters.

The District has been working to develop cost-effective staffing programs, professional training, and response opportunities that will promote and sustain the volunteer fire department for the long-term. With the passage of a new special assessment in 2015, the District has developed a resident (internship) program and a volunteer shift program to help promote consistent staffing. They also hope to implement a paid call program and a LOSAP program (Length of Service Award Program) to help recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. The District's part-time secretary position has become full-time to oversee administrative and clerical duties, and that position is also cross-trained to be able to respond to calls. Ultimately, the District will have its prevention program administered by a full-time prevention officer, and

eventually (within 5 to 6 years) the addition of two Fire Captains to oversee shift programs including scheduling, response, and station duties.

All firefighters attend a 80 hour academy given by volunteer fire department instructors. Firefighters are trained to a minimum proficiency in firefighting based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Firefighters also receive training in specialized fire and rescue subjects, including hazardous materials, first responder medical, rope rescue, automobile extrication, wildland fire, and the use of Fortuna FPD equipment and apparatus (LAFCo, 2008c).

**Table 3-18. Fortuna VFD Training Qualifications**

<b>Training Qualification</b>	<b>Number*</b>
Fire Fighter I or above	60
Wildland (CICCS)	23
First Responder (Medical)	40
EMT	16
Paramedic	2
HazMat First Responder Ops.	14
Rope Rescue	3
Swift Water Rescue	8
Fire Investigation & Prevention	4

Training, public education, and fire prevention are all high priorities for the Fortuna FPD. The District's public education program includes a schools fire safety program, senior and civic group presentations, and fire and life safety information through the Department's website and social media. The District's fire prevention program includes inspection and code enforcement, plan review, and fire pre-planning and inspections of fire protection systems in new and remodeled construction as well as an established yearly cycle for inspections of schools, hospital, care homes, hotels/motels, and apartment complexes. The District's business inspection program currently consists of a self-inspection with a follow-up by request (in process of being established).

### **Current Infrastructure and Facilities**

The Fortuna VFD operates out of three fire stations. The headquarters station is located on South Fortuna Boulevard, with the two smaller stations located in Hydesville and Campton Heights. The main Fortuna Fire Hall houses the Department headquarters and Companies 1, 2, and 3. Company number 4 is located at Hydesville Station, and Company 5 is located at the Campton Heights Stations.

The District's apparatuses consists of one type-1 pumper, three type-2 pumpers, one type-3 wildland engine, two water tenders, one light rescue, one medium rescue, one 100-foot aerial platform, and three command vehicles. Also in reserve is a 50-foot quint aerial. The following table describes the apparatus utilized by the Fortuna VFD (Fire Chiefs Report 2014).



**Table 3-19. Fortuna FPD Facilities and Apparatus-**

Station	Address	Apparatus (seats)	Common Name	Year	Type	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
Fortuna Fire Hall (Headquarters)	320 South Fortuna Blvd	7482 - Reserve	50 ft. Quint Aerial	1976	N/A	1250	300
		7474	Rescue vehicle	2008	MD	250	250
		7481	100 ft. Aerial Platform	1989	N/A	1500	300
		7420	Fire Engine (pumper)	1995	II	1000	750
		7415	Fire Engine (pumper)	2009	I	1250	750
		7473	Rescue vehicle	2008	LD	N/A	N/A
Campton Heights	3080 School Street	7428	Fire Engine (pumper)	1992	II	1000	750
		7459	Water tender	2006	N/A	750	3000
		7472	Utility/Lt rescue	2003	LD	N/A	N/A
Hydesville	3495 Hwy 36	7471	Rescue vehicle	1999	LD	N/A	N/A
		7422	Fire Engine (pumper)	2000	II	1000	750
		7467	Water tender	2003	N/A	500	2000
		7433	Wildland Engine	2008	III	500	500
Command Vehicles- Not housed at station		7401	CMD Chevy Pick-up truck	2015	N/A	N/A	N/A
		7402	CMD Ford Pick-up truck	2001	N/A	N/A	N/A
		7400	CMD Ford Expedition	2013	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Infrastructure Needs

The District works to update and expand facilities as needed. The District has a 30-year apparatus replacement plan that allows the department to operate modern equipment that works to reduce maintenance costs and improve its ISO rating (discussed below). The District is seeking grants to replace turnout gear, air pacs, and other rescue equipment.

Recently, the District completed a remodel and constructed upstairs sleeping quarters in the Fortuna Main Station. They have identified two additional facility needs, including Campton Heights Station relocation and a new Training Facility. The current Campton Heights Station is undersized and lacks suitable parking. In addition, a Training Facility would allow the District to expand its fire academy and provide more coordinated and effective training for its volunteers and for other fire service organizations.

## **ISO Rating**

The Fortuna FPD's public protection classification (PPC) has seen constant improvement over the years. The classification is used as a means to evaluate a community's fire protection service and ties directly to insurance premiums. The classification rating scale is from 1 to 10, with 1 being the best rating which indicates the highest level of fire protection and the lowest is 10. The Fortuna FPD's PPC in all areas of the district that are within 1,000 feet of a hydrant is currently a class 4, which improved from a class 5 in 2010. The PPC for areas in which the District has to supply water (categorized as more than 1,000 feet from a hydrant) is currently a class 5, which improved from a class 8 to a 7 in 2010. This improvement is a direct reflection of the District's current state of equipment, extensive efforts on the part of the volunteers, and utilization of resources outside of the agency.

## **Other Service Providers**

The City of Fortuna provides a range of urban services within its boundaries, which are within the central portion of the District. The City installs and maintains fire hydrants in all areas where water service is available within its boundaries; and maintains a regular program for inspecting and testing fire hydrants. It specifies water main size, water flow, fire hydrant spacing, and water storage capacity to meet both the City's and the Fortuna FPD's fire protection standards (LAFCo, 2008c). Hydesville Community Water District provides fire hydrants in areas where water service is available (LAFCo, 2008c).

## **FINANCING**

### **Current Revenues and Expenditures**

The District is funded by a very small percentage (0.04%) of property taxes, a benefit assessment, Proposition 172 funds, income from leased property next to the Fortuna Main Station, and funding from a few other miscellaneous resources. The donations made to the Fortuna VFD, a separate entity, are used for various expenses including uniforms, functions such as open house events and the annual dinner, the Explorer and CERT programs, memorial services, and furniture and other fixtures within the facilities. These departmental expenses are not covered through the Fortuna FPD budget.

In 1997, the Fortuna FPD established a benefit assessment at a rate of \$3.00 per unit of benefit on a use-of-property basis. Typical single family houses are considered four units, while vacant lots are considered one unit. The 1997 assessment was approved to replace funding lost after the passage of Proposition 218. A new assessment increasing the rate to a total of \$18.00 per unit of benefit was approved by property owners in 2015 to reflect the increasing demand for fire protection services and the increasing costs to provide these services. The new assessment has no inflationary provision and will only grow based on new construction activity (i.e., changes to land use classifications). Revenue generated from the new assessment is estimated to be \$479,448 for taxable parcel in the 2016-17 fiscal year.

**Table 3-20. Fortuna FPD Estimated Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-17**

<b>Expenditures</b>	
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$269,525
Services & Supplies	\$188,950
Transportation and Travel	\$18,00
Fixed Assets	\$365,000
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>\$841,475</i>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Property Taxes (1%)	\$401,600
Assessments	\$485,00
Homeowner Exemption	\$200
Timber Yield Tax	\$25,690
Interest Income	\$18,000
Other	\$155,700
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>\$966,500</i>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$966,500</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$841,475</b>
<b>Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures</b>	<b>\$125,025</b>

Source: Fortuna Fire

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

### Organization

The Fortuna FPD is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners that are responsible for overseeing the fiscal responsibility of the fire district. The District Board meets once per month on the second Monday at 7pm at the Fortuna Main Station. Meetings are open to the public, and notifications are posted at the main station prior to the meeting.

### 20 Year Strategic Plan

The Fortuna FPD recently conducted a 20-year strategic plan and outreach program aimed at developing a cost-effective plan that will improve the level of service to the community and build a reliable and effective volunteer organization. Through this process, the District identified the following objectives:

- To implement and maintain a comprehensive fire prevention program to promote fire and life safety.
- To develop cost-effective staffing programs, professional training, and response opportunities that will promote and sustain the volunteer fire department for the long-term.

The Fortuna FPD is committed to providing a level of service that is in line with the needs of the community from all standpoints - emergency response, fire prevention, and financial

management. With passage of the 2015 assessment, the District is committed to implementing the services, programs, and improvements identified in the 20-year strategic plan.

### **Independent District Process**

While the District Board has been delegated all of the powers to conduct business of the District, its Commissioners are appointed and serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. Most other fire districts in Humboldt County are “independent” and have elected district board with staggered four year terms. The Fortuna FPD may elect to become an independent district by adopting a resolution and placing the question on the ballot for majority voter approval in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 13848. If a majority of voters voting upon the question approve of changing from an appointed district board to an elected district board, the members of the district board shall then be elected at the next general district election.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS**

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area**

- a) The District serve an estimated population of 15,000 within District boundaries.
- b) The District can expect to serve 16,310 residents in 2030, or an additional 1,300 new residents.

### **(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) The City of Fortuna qualifies as disadvantaged, however, Fortuna is incorporated, and therefore does not qualify as a DUC. However, it stands to reason that portions of unincorporated territory surrounding the City may also qualify as disadvantaged.
- b) Should territory in the area surrounding the District be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

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

- a) The District has been working to develop cost-effective staffing programs, professional training, and response opportunities that will promote and sustain the volunteer fire department for the long-term.
- b) The District works to update and expand facilities as needed.
- c) The Fortuna FPD has the capacity to adequately serve current demand within the 29 square mile District boundary.
- d) Like all volunteer departments Fortuna FPD needs to continually recruit additional volunteers and, as population increases in the future, additional volunteers will be needed to maintain the service capacity of the District.

### **(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

- a) The District is funded by property taxes, a benefit assessment, Proposition 172 funds, income from leased property next to the Fortuna Main Station, and funding from a few other miscellaneous resources.
- b) The new 2015 assessment increase supports the combined efforts of the Fortuna FPD and VFD and serves to improve the level of fire protection and emergency response services to the community.

- c) The District Board of Directors adopts an annual budget and administers its funds consistent with Fire Protection District Law and budgeting, accounting, and reporting procedures for special districts in California.

**(5) Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) The Fortuna FPD provides enhanced fire protection services in the local community for structure fire, medical aid, vehicle accidents and extraction, and similar traditionally local fire department type services.
- b) Fortuna FPD works closely and cooperatively with neighboring fire departments, has mutual and automatic aid agreements with them, and in addition, the District is a member of the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team.

**(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies**

- a) The Fortuna FPD is an “dependent” single purpose special district governed by a five-member Board of Directors who serve at the pleasure of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors.
- b) The District maintains a visible presence in the community, and participates in community activities and events.
- c) The Fortuna VFD maintains a website (fortunafire.com) where it posts information about Department activities, documents and updates. At the present time, agenda, minutes and financial data are not posted for the Fortuna FPD.
- d) Fortuna FPD demonstrates accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Humboldt LAFCo. The District responded to the questionnaires, staff telephone calls, and cooperated with document requests.

**(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

- a) Fortuna FPD’s boundary generally matches its primary response area. This corresponds with the District’s current sphere of influence. No change to the existing sphere of influence is recommended at this time.

## 3.5 Loleta Fire Protection District

### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-21. Loleta FPD Contact Information**

Contact:	Ken Nielsen, Fire Chief
Mailing Address:	PO Box 57 Loleta, CA 95551
Site Address	567 Park Street, Loleta
Phone Number:	707-845-3090
Email	loletafire@suddenlinkmail.com
Website	<a href="http://pages.suddenlink.net/loletafire/">http://pages.suddenlink.net/loletafire/</a>
Population Served:	783 residents in District
Size of Service Area:	48.9 square miles in District
Number of Staff	23 volunteers

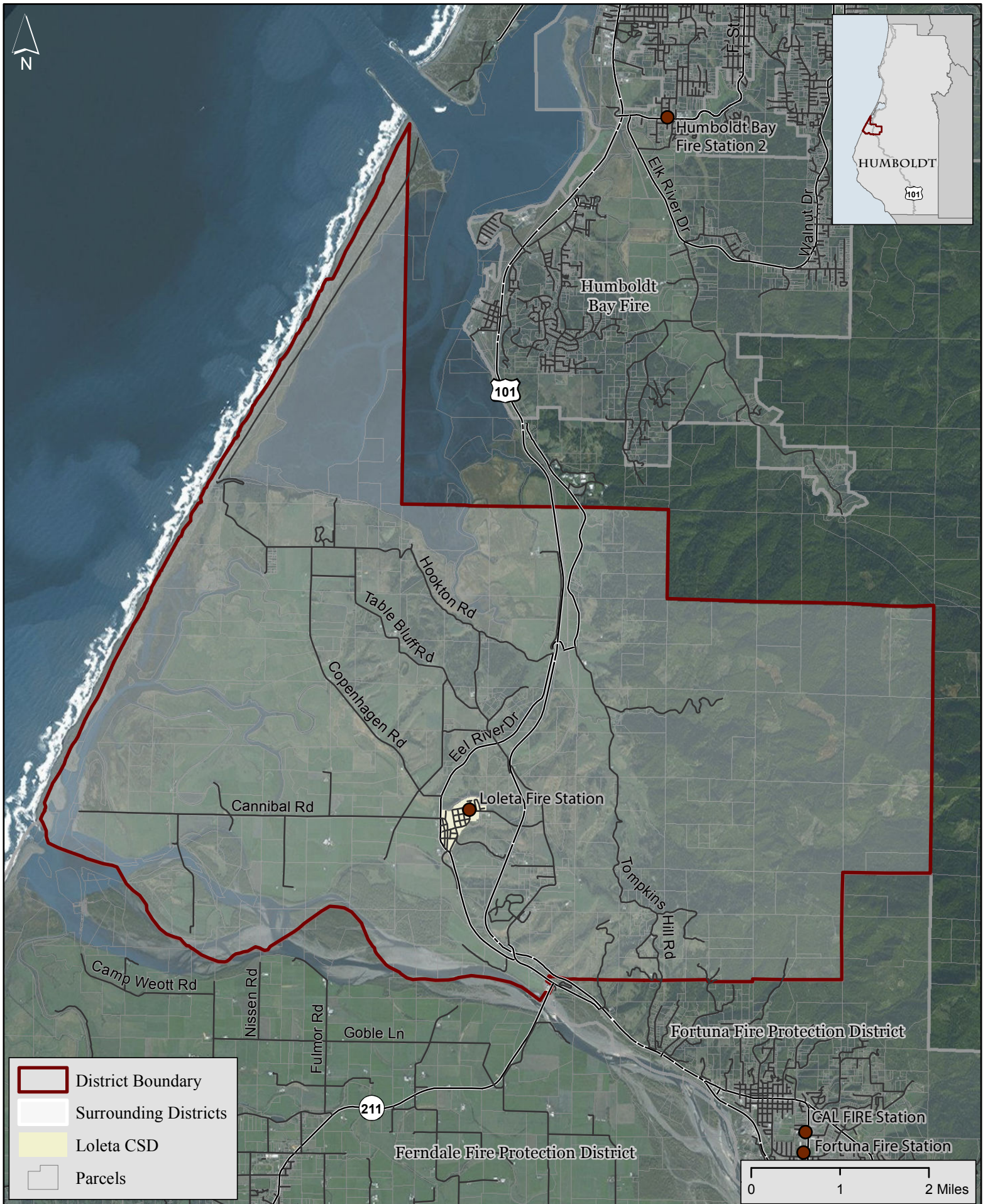
### Background

The Loleta Fire Protection District (Loleta FPD or District) is responsible for providing fire protection and emergency response services to the town of Loleta and surrounding area. The District boundary generally matches its response area and includes approximately 48.9 square miles (31,284 acres). The Loleta FPD operates one fire station, located on Park Street, which is centrally located in downtown Loleta. A municipal service review for the District was previously conducted in 2008. This document will update the previous MSR and build upon information provided therein.

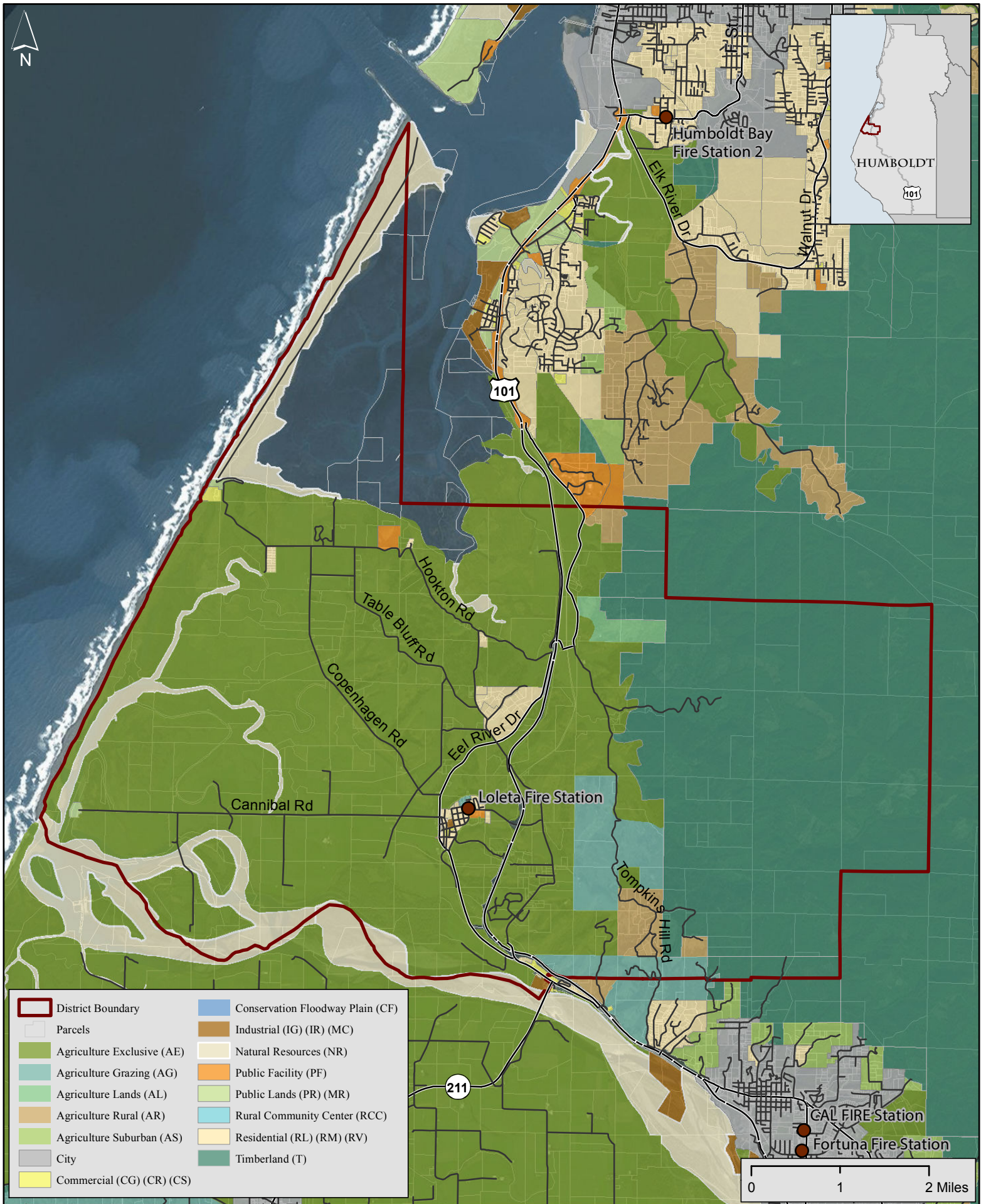
### Formation

The Loleta Fire Department originally established in 1900, and was later formed into the Loleta FPD in March of 1936. The Loleta FPD is considered a “dependent” single purpose special district authorized to provide fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (Division Part 2.7 of the California Health and Safety Code), which supersedes prior fire protection district laws. Most other fire districts in Humboldt County are “independent,” whereby voters within the district directly elect the District Board of Directors. In 1985 the County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 85-40, delegating their governing board powers to the Loleta FPD Board of Commissioners. Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 13844, the Board of Supervisors “shall determine whether the commissioners shall serve at its pleasure or for staggered terms of four years subject to removal for cause”. In the case of Loleta, the Board of Supervisors periodically appoints members to the five-member Board of Commissioners that serve as the governing board of the District.









## **District Boundary**

The District boundary generally matches its response area and includes approximately 48.9 square miles (31,284 acres), and contains the unincorporated town of Loleta and the surrounding rural residential areas.

## **Growth and Population**

The Loleta community is identified as a census-designated place whose boundaries roughly match that of the Loleta FPD. Based on the 2010 Census, the estimated population of Loleta is 783 residents and 341 total housing units. However, the District estimates that it serves around 1,500 residents (Fire Chief's Association, 2015).

New development within District boundaries is expected to occur at existing county-wide rates, which would likely range from 0.25 to 1.0 percent per year. Significant growth during the next ten years is not likely to occur.

## **Existing and Planned Uses**

Land uses within the Loleta FPD boundary are subject to the Humboldt County Framework General Plan (Framework Plan), Volume I, and Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1). The primary land uses within District boundaries are agriculture and timberland. Other uses include residential, commercial, industrial, and public facility occur in the urban area along Loleta and Eel River Drives.

## **Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities**

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as a part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewage, and fire protection. Loleta FPD provides one of these services – fire protection – and is responsible for assuring that those services are adequately provided to the community. Loleta receives water and wastewater services from the Loleta Community Services District.

The community of Loleta is a CDP with an estimated MHI of \$41,094 (DWR, 2016), which 67 percent of the state average, thereby qualifying the community as disadvantaged. Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

### **Service Demand and Service Levels**

Fire protection services for the District are provided by the Loleta VFD. The Department participates in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. The Department is a ALS certified provider. They also have aid agreements with the Rio Dell FPD, Fortuna FPD, Ferndale FPD, and Carlotta CSD.

The Loleta VFD responded to approximately 267 calls for service in 2015, of which 51 calls, or 19 percent, were fires of various types, and 153, or 57 percent were medical related. Other calls such as vehicle accidents, which comprise approximately ten percent of total calls, may also involve the delivery of emergency medical services. Typically the Department's response to fire calls averages 19 percent of their total responses. Refer to Table 3-19 for an overview of Loleta VFD service calls.

**Table 3-22. Loleta FPD Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	6	4	4	12	12	8
Structure Fires	6	5	4	4	2	9
Other Fires	17	19	9	39	26	34
Vehicle Accidents	43	19	29	35	33	29
Medicals	103	112	104	114	162	153
Hazard/Menace	7	2	3	6	7	8
Public Assists	-	-	-	5	5	8
Others	33	7	38	12	14	18
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	1,263	No Report	1,272	1,997	2,919	2,534
Training	1,200		2,340	1,331	1,430	1,545
Maintenance	556		117	500	300	384
Fundraising	960		1,800	800	800	794
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>3,979</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,529</b>	<b>4,628</b>	<b>5,449</b>	<b>5,257</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	30	30	30	26	26	23
Auxiliary	18	18	18	0	0	0
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>

**Source:** CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Reports

## Personnel

The Loleta VFD currently has 21 (2016) volunteer personnel, two of which are certified paramedics. All of the District's personnel must undergo continual training in all phases of fire protection, rescue techniques, and first aid. The firefighters take part in a regular nine (9) hour per month training schedule that includes training for any emergencies that may arise within the District such as medical, fire, hazmat, and tech-rescue.

**Table 3-23. Loleta FPD Training and Qualifications of Members**

Training Qualification	Number*
Fire Fighter I or above	21
Wildland (CICCS)	10
First Responder (Medical)	21
EMT	4
Paramedic	2
HazMat First Responder Ops.	0
Rope Rescue	3
Swift Water Rescue	0

### Current Infrastructure and Facilities

The Loleta VFD operates out of one fire station, located at 567 Park Street in Loleta. The District's apparatus consists of one Type 1 Engine, two Type 2 Engines, one Type 3 Engine, and a water tender (Fire Chief's Association, 2015). See Table 3-21 for apparatus details. Recently, the District has received grants to upgrade their SCBAs and Air Filling Station. They also received support from Measure Z funding to complete their SCBA project and received wildland and structure turnouts to replace some aging sets.

**Table 3-24. Loleta FPD Facilities and Apparatus**

Station	Address	Apparatus	Common Name	Year	Type	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
Loleta Fire Station	567 Park Street, Loleta	7512	Engine	2015	I	1500	750
		7523	Engine	1999	II	1500	750
		7539	Engine	2009	II	1500	750
		7539	Engine	1990	III	500	500
		7556	Water Tender		N/A		4000

### Challenges and Needs

Like many rural departments, Loleta VFD is challenged with member recruitment and retention and is always looking for volunteers. The District noted that their goal is to build their number of volunteers up to 30. They specifically noted a need for volunteers who don't work outside of the District and can be available for daytime calls (Fire Chief's Association, 2015).

### ISO Rating

There are several benchmarks by which the level of fire service provided by an agency may be measured, and the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification, or ISO PPC, is one such measure. The ISO is a rating commonly used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the best rating which indicates the highest level of fire protection and the lowest is 10.

Based on the ISO audit conducted in 2005, the Loleta FPD has an ISO PPC rating of 6/8B. The ISO "6" rating is applied to the area within 5 road miles of the responding fire station and 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply, such as a fire hydrant. The "8X" is applied to properties within 5 road miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply. Such a rating provides the residents of the Loleta area access to lower insurance rates.

## FINANCING

### Current Revenues and Expenditures

The District is funded primarily by a percentage of property taxes, and a benefit assessment. Other revenues include loaning out District vehicle and staff as a CALFIRE strike team (\$141,783 in 2016) and grant funding.

In 1998, the Loleta FPD established a benefit assessment at a rate of \$15.00 per unit of benefit on a use-of-property basis. Typical single family houses are considered four units. The 1997 assessment was approved to replace funding lost after the passage of Proposition 218.

**Table 3-25. Loleta FPD Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16**

<b>Expenditures</b>	
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$3,381
Services & Supplies	\$70,457
Other Charges	\$490
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>\$104,757</i>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Property Taxes (1%)	\$41,445
Property Assessments	\$40,062
Revenue From Use of Money and Property	\$2,376
State	\$31,496
Other	\$141,783
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>\$257,162</i>
Total Revenue	\$257,162
Total Expenditures	\$104,757
Revenues/Sources Over (Under)	
Expenditures/Uses	<b>\$152,405</b>

**Source:** Financial records as reported to the California State Controller's Office

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

### Organization

The Loleta FPD is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners that are responsible for overseeing the fiscal responsibility of the fire district. The District Board meets once per month on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Station. Meetings are open to the public, and notifications are posted at the main station prior to the meeting.



## **Independent District Process**

While the District Board has been delegated all of the powers to conduct business of the District, its Commissioners are periodically appointed and serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. Most other fire districts in Humboldt County are “independent” and have elected district boards with staggered four year terms. The Loleta FPD may elect to become an independent district by adopting a resolution and placing the question on the ballot for majority voter approval in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 13848. If a majority of voters voting upon the question approve of changing from an appointed district board to an elected district board, the members of the district board shall then be elected at the next general district election.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS**

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area**

- a) The District estimates it serves around 1,500 residents.
- b) New development within District boundaries is expected to occur at existing county-wide rates, which would likely range from 0.25 to 1.0 percent per year. Significant growth during the next ten years is not likely to occur.

### **(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) The community of Loleta qualifies as disadvantaged.
- b) Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

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

- a) The Loleta FPD has the capacity to adequately serve current demand within the 49-square mile District boundary.
- b) The District’s facilities, infrastructure, and services are sufficient to provide quality services to its residents.
- c) Like all volunteer departments Loleta FPD needs to continually recruit additional volunteers and, as population increases in the future, additional volunteers will be needed to maintain the service capacity of the District.

### **(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

- a) Based upon the State Controller's Report, current financing levels appear adequate to deliver services at the current level of service.
- b) The District Board of Directors adopts an annual budget and administers its funds consistent with Fire Protection District Law and budgeting, accounting, and reporting procedures for special districts in California.

**(5) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) The Loleta FPD provides enhanced fire protection services in the local community for structure fire, medical aid, vehicle accidents and extraction, and similar traditionally local fire department type services.
- b) Loleta FPD works closely and cooperatively with neighboring fire departments, has mutual and automatic aid agreements with them, and in addition, the District is a member of the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team.

**(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies**

- a) The Loleta FPD is an "dependent" single purpose special district governed by a five-member Board of Directors who serve at the pleasure of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors.
- b) The District maintains a visible presence in the community, and participates in community activities and events.
- c) The Loleta VFD maintains a website (<http://pages.suddenlink.net/loletafire>) where it posts information about Department activities, documents and updates. At the present time, agenda, minutes and financial data are not posted for the Loleta FPD.
- d) Loleta FPD demonstrates accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Humboldt LAFCo. The District responded to the questionnaires, staff telephone calls, and cooperated with document requests.

**(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

- a) Loleta FPD's boundary generally matches its response area. This corresponds with the District's current sphere of influence. No change to the existing sphere of influence is recommended at this time.

## 3.6 Petrolia Fire Protection District

### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-26. Petrolia FPD Contact Information**

Contact:	Travis Howe, Fire Chief
Mailing Address:	P.O Box 169 Petrolia, CA 95558
Physical Address:	98 Sherman Road Petrolia, CA 95558
Phone Number:	(707) 629-3558
Email	petroliafire@frontier.net
Website	None
Population Served:	472 residents in District
Size of Service Area:	11 sq. mi. in District, 91.5 sq. mi. goodwill response
Number of Staff	19 volunteer, 5 auxiliary

### Background

The Petrolia Fire Protection District (Petrolia FPD or District) provides fire protection services, including fire prevention, public education, preparedness and emergency response to the unincorporated community of Petrolia and surrounding territory. It is located in the Mattole Valley, part of the Lost Coast region, one of the largest wilderness areas and the longest stretch of undeveloped coastline in the continental United States. The area has no major freeways or highways. A draft municipal service review for the District was prepared in 2010, but never adopted. This document will update the previous MSR and build upon information provided therein.

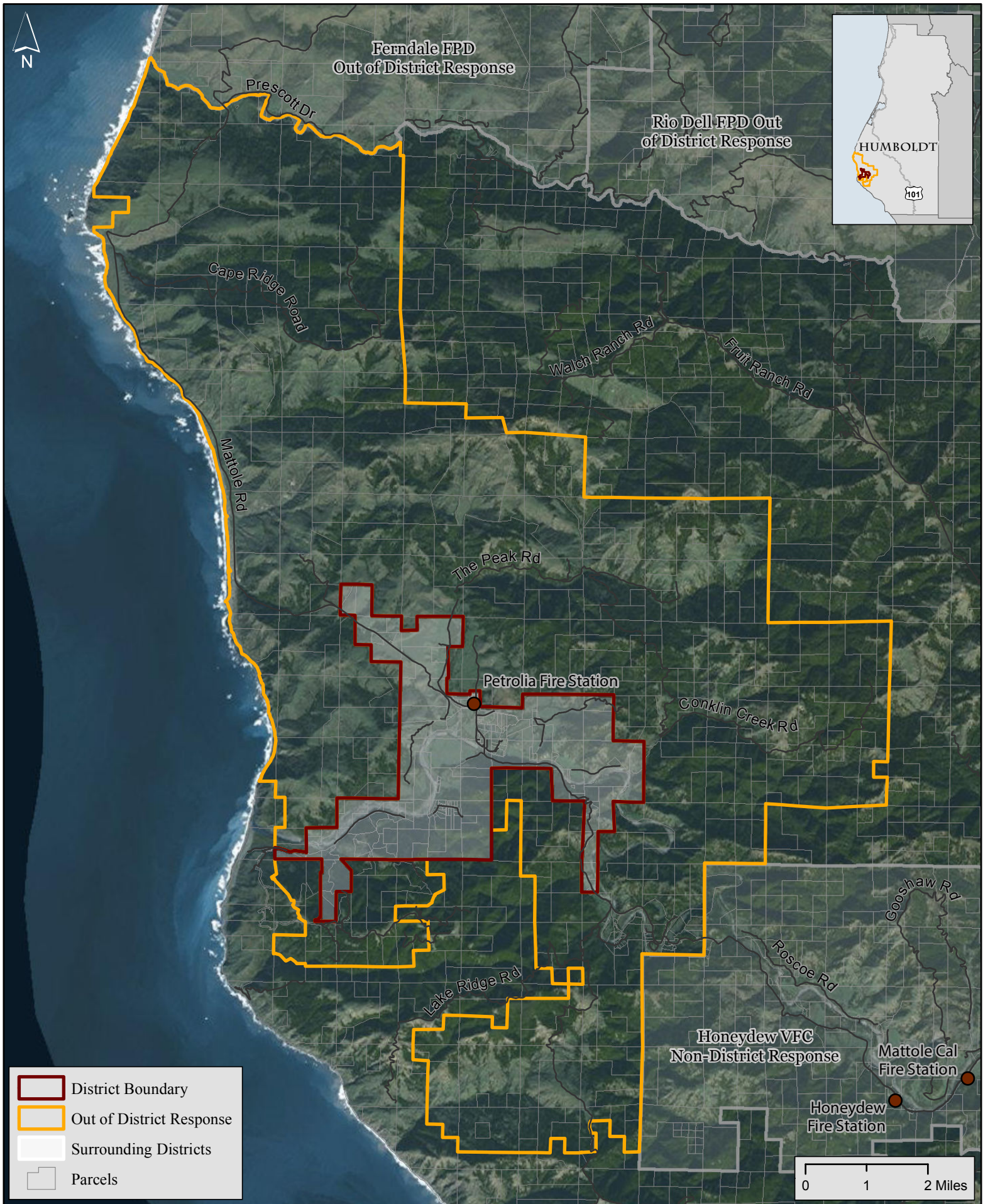
### Formation

The Petrolia FPD was formed in 1951 after a successful special election was held. The District is authorized to provide fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (Division Part 2.7 of the California Health and Safety Code), which supersedes prior fire protection district laws. Like most other fire districts in Humboldt County, Petrolia FPD is an “independent” special district, whereby voters within the District directly elect members to the three-member District Board of Commissioners.

### District Boundary

The Petrolia FPD boundary covers approximately 11 square miles (7290.8 acres). The out of district goodwill response area is approximately 91.5 square miles (58,572.5 acres), for a total response area of 103 square miles. The District and non-district goodwill response area includes a portion of the King Range National Conservation Area. The District shares a portion of its boundary with the Honeydew Fire Company and is located within the CALFIRE SRA.

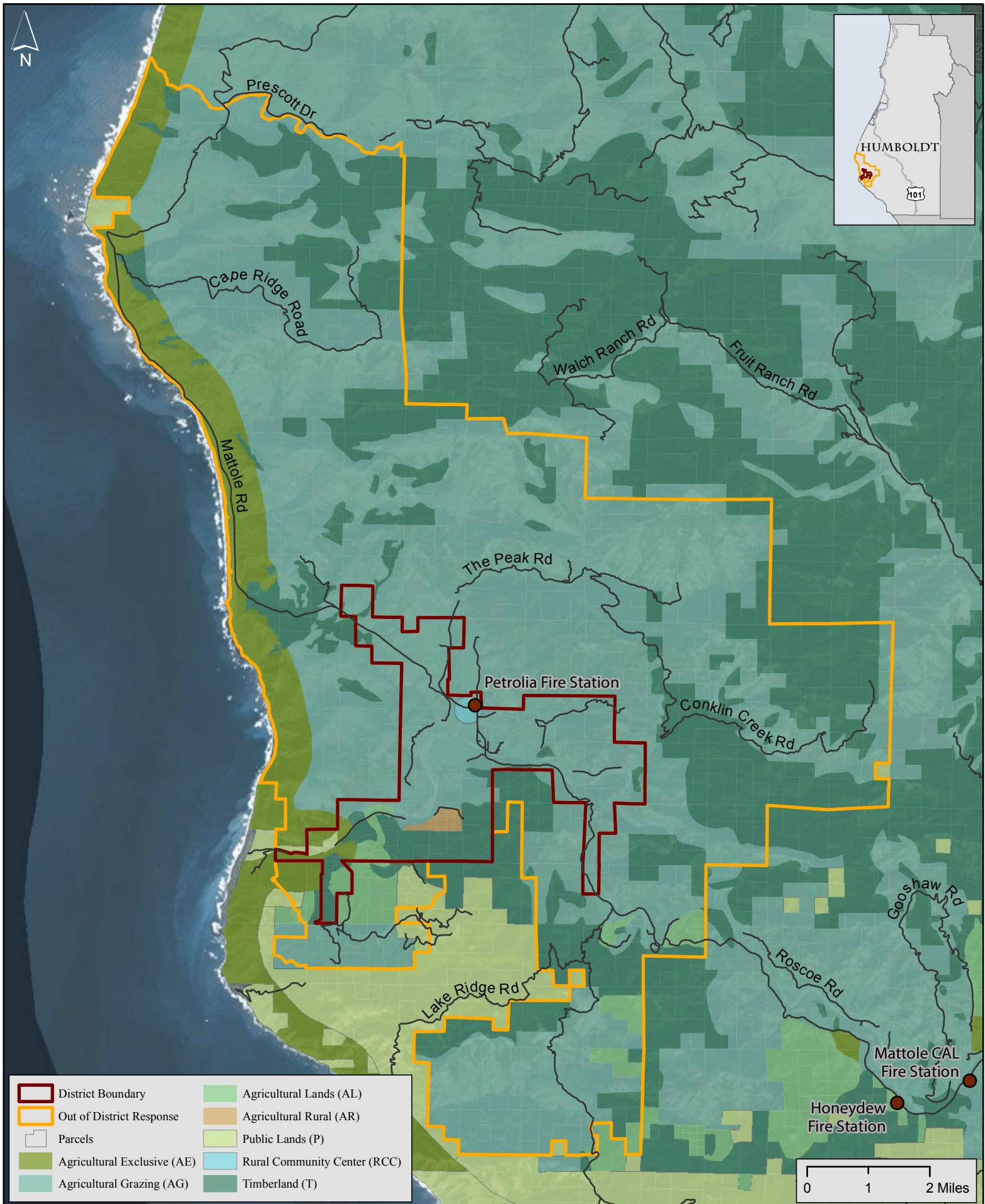




# **Petrolia Fire Protection District**

Figure  
**12**





## Growth and Population

Petrolia is not a census designated place and many of the area residents “live off the grid”. The District estimates its population to be around 600 residents. The estimated population growth rate for Petrolia is 0.3% (District response to Questionnaire)<sup>i</sup>. At this rate, the District’s population could reach approximately 620 by the year 2025.

## Existing and Planned Uses

Land uses in the District and out of district goodwill response area are subject to the Humboldt County Framework General Plan, Volume I, and Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1). The Humboldt County Framework General Plan designates lands within the District boundaries for timber and agriculture (see Figure 13). Petrolia is not located within a Community Planning area.

There are no community water or wastewater systems in Petrolia. Residential, commercial, and agricultural land uses produce drinking and agricultural water through on-site water systems. Parcels must be large enough to meet the setback requirements to septic systems and property lines and demonstrate to the satisfaction of County standards that adequate water is present on site (Humboldt County, 2014).

## Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewage, and fire protection. Petrolia FPD provides one of these services –fire protection- and is responsible for assuring that those services are adequately provided to the community. As discussed above, there are no community water or wastewater systems provided in the Petrolia area.

Petrolia is identified as an unincorporated legacy community (ULC) by the 2014 Humboldt County Housing Element (Humboldt County, 2014). A legacy community is defined as a place that meets the following criteria:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- Is either within a city sphere of influence (SOI), is an island within a city boundary, or is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years; and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

Although no specific census data is available for the Petrolia area, the community is in Census Tract 06023011200, which has a MHI of \$46,731, 76 percent of the statewide average, identifying the Tract as disadvantaged. Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation, disadvantaged communities in the area should be considered further.



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Service Demand and Service Levels

The Petrolia Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) provides firefighting and emergency medical response services to the Petrolia FPD. The Petrolia VFD responds to an average of 44 emergency calls per year. The Department responded to 37 calls for service in 2015, of which 14 calls, or 38 percent, were fires of various types and 15 calls, or 41 percent, were medical related. Other calls such as vehicle accidents, which comprise approximately 8 percent of total calls, may also involve the delivery of emergency medical services. Typically the Department's responses to medical calls have averaged between 40 and 50 percent of their total calls. Refer to Table 3-22 for an overview of Petrolia VFD service calls.

**Table 3-27. Petrolia FPD Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	8	0	10	10	3	7
Structure Fires	1	1	1	3	1	-
Other Fires	4	3	8	-	4	7
Vehicle Accidents	3	1	2	8	5	3
Medicals	18	9	31	38	12	15
Hazard/Menace	6	0	7	2	1	3
Public Assists	-	-	-	4	3	1
Others	5	5	2	6	1	1
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	1,260	No Report	701	1,952	915	1,000
Training	1,750		1,301	1,046	501	2,200
Maintenance	600		1,500	987	464	600
Fundraising	400		500	875	411	900
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,002</b>	<b>4,860</b>	<b>2,291</b>	<b>4,700</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	20	20	18	20	19	19
Auxiliary	8	8	8	7	7	5
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>

Source: CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Reports

### Personnel

In 2015, the Petrolia VFD totaled 4,700 volunteer hours, taken from incidents, training, maintenance, fundraising, prevention, community service, and other department related functions. They have 24 volunteers who serve as responders, maintainers, secretaries,

dispatchers, administrators, fundraisers, and all the other elements it takes to run a fire department. Four of their members are EMTs and eight are medical first responders.

**Table 3-28. Petrolia VFD Training Qualifications**

<b>Training Qualification</b>	<b>Number*</b>
Fire Fighter I or above	5
Wildland (CICCS)	-
First Responder (Medical)	10
EMT	4
Paramedic	0
HazMat First Responder Ops.	2
Rope Rescue	5
Swift Water Rescue	4

### **Current Infrastructure and Facilities**

The Petrolia VFD operates out of one fire station located at 98 Sherman Road, Petrolia. The District maintains and operates three fire engines: one Type 1 Engine, and two Type 3 Engines, in addition to one rescue vehicle, one water tender, an ATV (all-terrain vehicle), a side by side, and a chief's vehicle. The District is in the process of replacing one of its type III engines. The replacement engine was purchased with Measure Z funds and is a previously-owned 4-wheel-drive type III engine. This engine will replace 1982 Type III engine. The District also owns hoses and pumps and monitors and maintains multiple large capacity water tanks throughout the area.

The District owns and operates other basic fire protection and rescue equipment including a winch, radios, self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA), jaws of life, portable pumps, generator, lighting, protective clothing, and numerous other tools and firefighting equipment. They recently received equipment through the Fire Chiefs' Association Measure Z grant, including SCBAs, and wildland and structure fire PPEs.

There are no public water providers within the District and no fire hydrants. The fire department must use water carried on fire engines and water tenders to extinguish fires, as well as water that may be available on site. The following table describes the apparatus utilized by the Petrolia FPD.

**Table 3-29. Petrolia VFD Facilities and Apparatuses**

Address	Apparatus	Common Name	Year	Type	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
Petrolia Fire Hall 98 Sherman Road, Petrolia	6666	Water Tender	2000	N/A	250	2,100
	6634	Type-3 Engine (4WD)	1988	III	490	500
	6632	Type-3 Engine	2000	III	1000	500
	6632	Type-3 Engine	1982	III		
	6612	Type-1 Engine	1982	I	1200	750
	6673	Ambulance-type Medical Rescue Engine	1996	N/A	N/A	N/A
	6677	Side-By-Side	2015	N/A	N/A	N/A
	6606	4x4 Quad	1994	N/A	N/A	N/A
	6600	Chief's Truck	2000	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Challenges and Needs

Petrolia FPD noted that it has been challenging to stretch their resources to cover a large response area, including areas located outside of the Petrolia FPD boundary (Fire Chief's Association, 2015). Areas outside the District's boundary receive what is referred to as "goodwill service" from Petrolia FPD. This goodwill service is not supported by any sustainable revenue source and requires district resources to respond outside of their jurisdictional boundary, putting additional strain on already overburdened resources.

### ISO Rating

There are several benchmarks by which the level of fire service provided by an agency may be measured, and the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification, or ISO PPC, is one such measure. The ISO is a rating commonly used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the best rating, which indicates the highest level of fire protection, and the lowest is 10. Based on an ISO audit, the Petrolia VFD has a "9" ISO rating within five miles of the station and a 10 in those response areas which are beyond the five mile radius beyond 10 (Humboldt County, 2014).

## FINANCING

### Current Revenues and Expenditures

The District is primarily funded by a small percentage (0.11%) of property taxes, which averages \$36,320 per year. Other sources of revenue include interest payments and grant funding. Expenditures for the District average \$36,500 per year. The District has no outstanding debt. Distinct funds pay for insurance, ground upkeep, fuel, utilities, etc. See Table 3-24 for the District's budget.

The donations made to the Petrolia VFD, a separate entity, are used for various expenses including uniforms, functions, furniture, and other equipment. These departmental expenses are not covered through the Petrolia FPD budget.

**Table 3-30. Petrolia FPD Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16**

<b>Expenditures</b>	
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$4,000
Services & Supplies	\$34,883
Other Charges	\$0
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>\$38,883</i>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Property Taxes (1%)	\$34,796
Property Assessments	\$0
Revenue From Use of Money and Property	\$385
State	\$597
Other	\$1,184
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>\$36,962</i>
Total Revenue	\$36,962
Total Expenditures	\$38,883
Revenues/Sources Over (Under)	
Expenditures/Uses	-\$1,921

**Source:** Financial records as reported to the California State Controller's Office

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

The District is governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners. Board Commissioners are elected by District residents every four years. Public meetings are held at the Fire Hall, as deemed necessary by the Board and noticed at Petrolia General store and Fire Hall. Meetings are held at least quarterly, generally on a weeknight in the evening. There are no Board vacancies. As with many small rural special districts, the District does not maintain a website. It should be noted that the District could improve accountability and public participation by holding regularly scheduled meeting and maintaining a website.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS**

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area**

- a) The Petrolia FPD's population is estimated to be approximately 450.
- b) The District's population growth rate is estimated as 0.3%. At this rate, the District's population will reach approximately 472 by the year 2025.

### **(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) Although no specific census data is available for the Petrolia area, the community is in Census Tract 06023011200, which qualifies as disadvantaged.
- b) Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation, disadvantaged communities in the area should be considered further.

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

- a) Like all volunteer departments the Petrolia FPD needs to continually recruit additional volunteers and, as population increases in the future, additional volunteers will be needed to maintain the service capacity of the district.
- b) The Petrolia FPD's engines, water tenders, and other utility vehicles are all in operable condition. Recently the Petrolia FPD was able to replace their self-contained breathing apparatuses and other personal protective equipment.
- c) Fire protection services are provided by good-will outside of the District boundary to an additional 91.5 square mile Out of District Response Area. Properties within the existing District boundary largely subsidize the delivery of fire protection services to the Out of District Response Area.

### **(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

- a) The Petrolia FPD is primarily funded by a small percentage (0.11%) of property taxes. Other sources of revenue include interest payments and grant funding.
- b) The Petrolia FPD relies on grants and donations to close the gap between expenditures and revenue.

**(5) Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) CAL FIRE provides seasonal wildland fire protection services throughout the State Responsibility Area (90 percent of the Petrolia FPD is State Responsibility Area). CAL FIRE may respond to other types of calls for service if they are available.
- b) While CAL FIRE is responsible for wildland fire protection, the Petrolia FPD provides enhanced fire protection services in the local community for structure fire, medical aid, vehicle accidents and extraction, and similar traditionally local fire department type services.

**(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies**

- a) The Petrolia FPD is an independent district governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners.
- b) The Petrolia FPD board should consider holding regularly scheduled and noticed board meetings, to provide better accessibility to the public.
- c) The District does not have a website. Establishing a website and posting agendas, minutes, budgets, and financial data would provide improved transparency.
- d) The Petrolia FPD supports the mutual social and economic interests of the Petrolia community by sustaining community-based fire protection services and establishing local governance for such services.

**(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

- a) It is recommended that Petrolia FPD's sphere of influence be expanded to match its non-district good-will response area. This would allow the District to pursue annexation in the future.



### 3.7 Rio Dell Fire Protection District



#### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-31. Rio Dell FPD Contact Information**

Contact:	Fire Chief - Shane Wilson
Address:	50 West Center Street, Rio Dell CA 95562
Phone Number:	707-764-3329
Email	info@riodellfire.com
Website	www.riodellfire.com
Population Served:	3,600 residents (District & good-will response)
Size of Service Area:	5.3 sq. mi. (District), 33.5 sq. mi. (non-district area)
Number of Staff	23 volunteer, 4 auxiliary

#### Background

The Rio Dell Fire Protection District (FPD) provides fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services to the City of Rio Dell and to the unincorporated areas of Monument Drive and Blue Slide Road. These services are provided on behalf of the District by the Rio Dell Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), which responds to an average of 350 calls per year. In 2014, the District obtained landowner approval of a benefit assessment increase to address the increasing demand for fire protection services and the increasing costs to provide these services. The increased revenue has allowed the District to replace aging apparatus and to make other necessary improvements. A municipal service review (MSR) for the District was previously conducted in 2008. This document will update the previous MSR and build upon information provided therein.

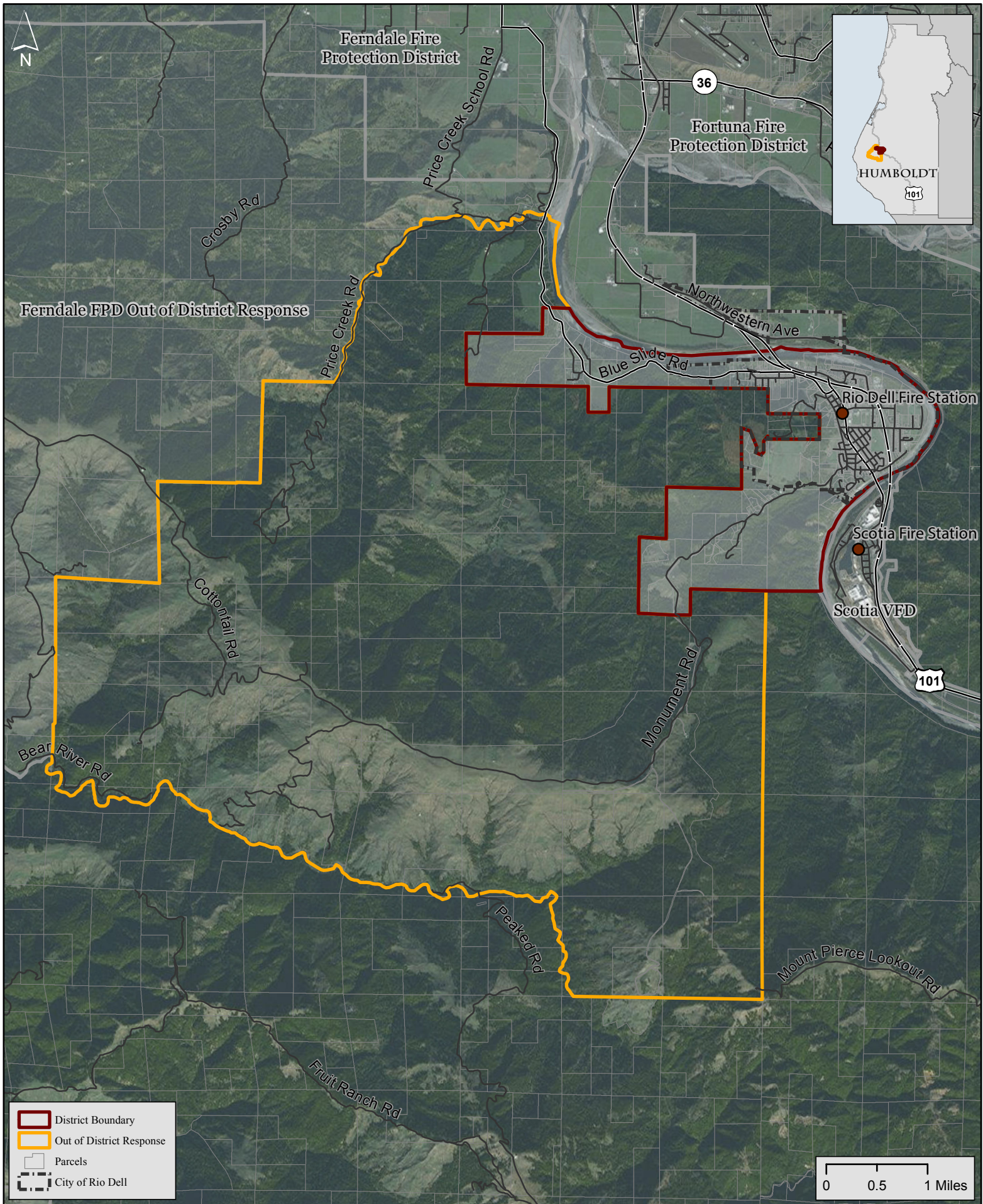
#### Formation

The Rio Dell FPD was originally formed on January 12, 1941 under the name "Wildwood Fire Protection District". The name was officially changed to the Rio Dell Fire Protection District on December 19, 1961. Rio Dell FPD is considered an independent, single purpose special district authorized to provide fire protection, rescue, and emergency medical services and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (Division Part 2.7 of the California Health and Safety Code), which supersedes prior fire protection district laws. The District has a five-member Board of Commissioners that is elected by registered voters who live within the District.

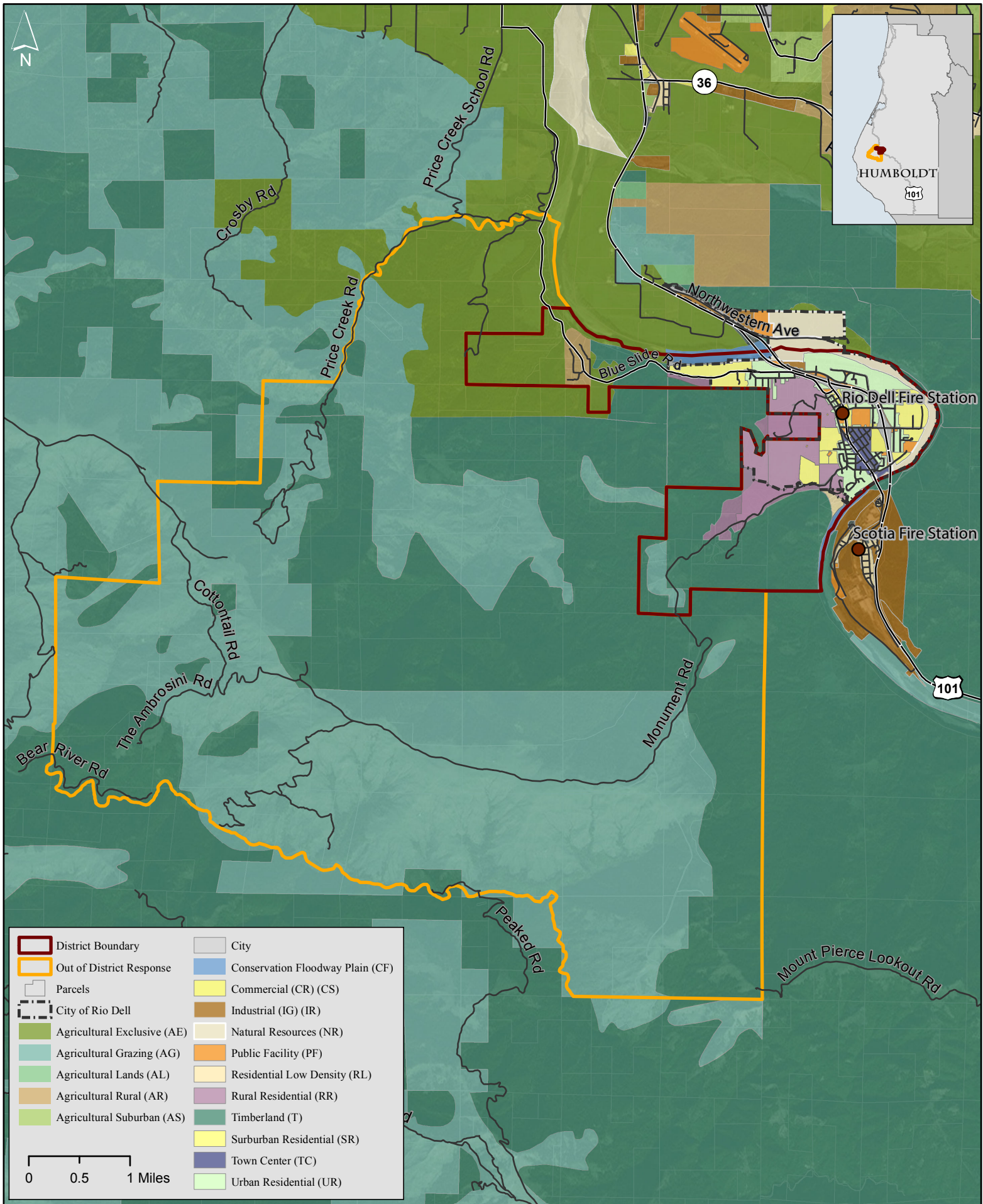
#### District Boundary

The Rio Dell FPD boundary encompasses approximately 5.3 square miles (3,385 acres). The out-of-district good-will response area is 33.5 square miles (21,407 acres), making the total response area approximately 38.8 square miles. The District also contains the majority of the City of Rio Dell. Nearby fire service providers include Fortuna FPD, Carlotta CSD, Ferndale FPD, Loleta FPD, and Scotia CSD.









## **Growth and Population**

The City of Rio Dell comprises the majority of the territory within District boundaries. The City has an estimated population of approximately 3,373 (DWR, 2016). It is estimated that an additional 100- 150 residents live outside of the City limits but within the District boundary, for a total of 3,523 residents within Rio Dell FPD's boundary. The District estimates it serves another 50-100 residents in their designated "good-will response area", totaling approximately 3,600 residents served by the District.

The City of Rio Dell Housing Element 2009-2014 Update reports that the City's population growth rates historically have mirrored that of the County, and further anticipate that the City population will reach 3,681 in 2030. Therefore the population of the District as a whole may be anticipated to experience similar growth rates to both the County and City. Humboldt County's estimated growth rate is 0.8 percent (US Census Bureau, 2015). Applying this estimate to the District population, there will be 4,024 residents in the District's current service area (District boundary and good-will service areas) in 2030.

## **Existing and Planned Uses**

Land uses within the City of Rio Dell are subject to the Rio Dell General Plan and Zoning regulations. Within City limits land uses are predominantly a mix of residential, commercial and public uses, with the exception of large sections of territory in the east of the City designated as Rural Residential (RR).

Land uses in the unincorporated area of the District are subject to the Humboldt County Framework General Plan, Volume I, and Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1). The Humboldt County Framework General Plan designates most unincorporated lands within the District boundaries for timber and agriculture with some commercial and residential areas (see Figure 15).

## **Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities**

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewage, and fire protection. Rio Dell FPD provides fire protection services and is therefore only responsible for assuring that these services are adequately provided to the community.

No cohesive census boundary is available for the entirety of territory within the District. However, the City of Rio Dell has an estimated MHI of \$39,692, which is 65 percent of the state average MHI (DWR, 2016), thereby qualifying the area as disadvantaged. Rio Dell is incorporated, and therefore does not qualify as a DUC. However, it stands to reason that portions of unincorporated territory surrounding the City may also qualify as disadvantaged. Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Service Demand and Service Levels

The Rio Dell VFD participates in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. They also have mutual and/or automatic aid agreements with the Fortuna FPD, Loleta FPD, Ferndale FPD, Scotia CSD, and Carlotta CSD.

The Rio Dell VFD responds to an average of 390 emergency calls per year. The Department responded to 476 calls for service in 2015, of which 83 calls, or 17 percent, were fires of various types and 310 calls, or 65 percent, were medical related. Other calls such as vehicle accidents, which comprise approximately 5 percent of total calls, may also involve the delivery of emergency medical services. Refer to Table 3-26 for an overview of Rio Dell VFD service calls.

**Table 3-32. Rio Dell FPD Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	2	4	12	14	11	20
Structure Fires	4	5	8	14	9	12
Other Fires	30	23	29	32	35	51
Vehicle Accidents	21	11	21	22	19	23
Medicals	274	243	242	275	300	310
Hazard/Menace	6	6	4	9	13	16
Public Assists	-	-	-	24	30	33
Others	19	52	36	8	3	11
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>476</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	395	395	395	965	1,250	1,325
Training	100	100	100	2,179	2,250	2,145
Maintenance	24	25	25	250	225	175
Fundraising	250	250	250	2,580	450	575
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>5,974</b>	<b>4,175</b>	<b>4,220</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	26	23	23	23	24	23
Auxiliary	8	5	7	5	6	4
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>

**Source:** CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Reports

## Personnel

The District currently has a regular volunteer force of 26 active members, and five auxiliary. All of the District's personnel must undergo continual training in all phases of fire protection, rescue techniques, and first aid. All members of the Rio Dell VFD have first responder medical training and three members are Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). District fire fighters participate in a regular drill on the third and fifth Thursdays of each month, with two eight hour basic skill drills per year for all personnel. Training schedules consist of general operations, safety and medical. The drills are planned and conducted by the department training officers.

The Fire Chief receives a small stipend and handles the majority of the administrative responsibilities for the District. Using funds from the 2014 increased benefit assessment, the District plans to provide funding for a Volunteer Firefighter Pay-Per-Call Program to help reimburse volunteer firefighters for expenses incurred while responding to emergency calls.

**Table 3-33. Rio Dell VFD Training Qualifications**

<b>Training Qualification</b>	<b>Number*</b>
Fire Fighter I or above	8
Wildland (CICCS)	15
First Responder (Medical)	25
EMT	4
Paramedic	0
HazMat First Responder Ops.	8
Rope Rescue	15
Swift Water Rescue	0

## Current Infrastructure and Facilities

The Rio Dell FPD operates out of a single fire station at 50 West Center Street in the City of Rio Dell. The Fire Station was built in 1963/64 and is currently used for equipment storage, volunteer training, and community functions. The Fire Station serves as an Emergency Operations Center and a training facility for the Rio Dell VFD.

The District has outgrown its current facility and has plans to construct two additional engine bays with an attached office and bathroom facility, and upgrade the existing facility to current building code standards. Facility improvements are also needed to address ADA and energy efficiency standards, HVAC system, plumbing, appliances, and onsite fuel storage for emergencies.

Utilizing the funds generated from the 2014 assessment, the District recently purchased a new Type 3 engine from Rosenbauer (E 7135). With the introduction of the new engine they recently retired their Type II engine from 1972 (E 7123). This engine will likely go to another small rural fire department in need of an engine. The District also received 16 new SCBA air packs as well as 5 sets of structure gear from Measure Z funds. Other apparatuses utilized by Rio Dell VFD include- a Type 1 Engine, a Type 3 engine, a Type 2 engine, a Type 4 engine, a Water Tender, 4000 gallon fold-a-tank, and a Ford Expedition Incident Command/Immediate Response/Duty Chief Vehicle. See Table 3-27 for a complete list of District apparatuses.



Fire hydrants are installed and maintained by the City of Rio Dell and are inspected bi-annually by the fire department. Fire equipment and apparatuses are maintained by the fire department regularly.

The District has developed an apparatus replacement schedule to ensure adequate funding is set aside annually to replace aging apparatus. The District replaces engines on a 30-year cycle. Other vehicles, including attack and utility pickups are replaced on a 20-year cycle.

**Table 3-34. Rio Dell FPD Facilities and Apparatus**

Station	Address	Apparatus	Common Name	Year	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
1	50 West Center Street	C 7100	Duty Chief Vehicle	2006	N/A	N/A
		E 7112	Type I	1996	1,250	1,000
		E 7134	Type III	1995	1,250	750
		E 7123	Type II	1972	1,000	1,000
		E 7135	Type III	2016	1,200	
		R 7171	Type IV Rescue Quick Attack	2006	300	250
		T 7151	Water Tender	1986		3800

### Challenges and Needs

As discussed above, the District noted that they need to add two bays to their existing station, improve facilities, and generally update to meet ADA requirements. They also noted a need for a new water tender that is smaller and has less maintenance issues (Fire Chief's Association, 2015). Adequate staffing during daytime hours can also be a challenge for the District because many of their volunteers work in other cities and are therefore unable to respond to Rio Dell during normal business hours.

### ISO Rating

There are several benchmarks by which the level of fire service provided by an agency may be measured, and the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification, or ISO PPC, is one such measure. The ISO is a rating commonly used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the best rating which indicates the highest level of fire protection and 10 being the lowest. Based on an ISO audit, the Rio Dell VFD is currently a class 7 in all areas of the District that are within 1,000 feet of a hydrant. The PPC for areas in which the District has to supply water (categorized as more than 1,000 feet from a hydrant) is currently a class 9.

## FINANCING

### Current Revenues and Expenditures

The District is funded by a very small percentage (.04%) of 1 percent (ad valorem) property taxes, a benefit assessment, and funding from a few other miscellaneous resources. As discussed above, the District received property owner approval to increase the rate of its benefit assessment from \$4 to \$25 per unit of benefit on a use-of-property basis. The new assessment has no inflationary provision and will only grow based on new construction activity

(i.e., changes to land use classifications). Revenue generated from the new assessment is estimated to be \$142,025 for taxable parcels in the 2016-17 fiscal year.

**Table 3-35. Rio Dell Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16**

<b>Fiscal Year 2015-16 Budget</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$20,000
Services & Supplies	\$84,500
New Fire Truck	\$60,000
Interest	\$10,276
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	<i>\$215,730</i>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Property Taxes (1%)	\$76,836
Property Assessments	\$144,000
Revenue from Use of Money and Property	\$4,000
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>\$374,216</i>
Total Revenue	\$374,216
Total Expenditures	\$215,730
Revenues/Sources Over (Under) Expenditures/Uses	<b>\$158,486</b>

Source: Rio Dell FPD

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

### Organization

The District board meets on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the fire station. The meetings are posted every month by the district secretary near the front door of the fire station. Voters within the District directly elect members to the five-member District Board of Commissioners.

### Fund Allocation Planning

As a part of the 2015 Benefit Assessment process, the District outlined the following specific areas to address with future funding:

1. Fire Station Operation, Maintenance and Expansion
  - a. Conduct facility upgrades to current building code standards.
  - b. Expand the facility to add an additional engine bay, office and bathroom facilities.
  - c. House all apparatus inside a temperature controlled area, accomplished with an expanded facility, and maintain ISO requirements
2. Increased Firefighter Staffing and Training

- a. Volunteer Firefighter Pay-Per-Call Program to help reimburse volunteer firefighters for expenses incurred while responding to emergency calls.
  - b. Maintain adequate training and certifications for personnel.
- 3. Improved Equipment and Apparatus Maintenance & Replacement
  - a. Implement an apparatus and equipment replacement schedule. Currently, the District does not have the available funds to replace apparatus or equipment on a regular basis.
- 4. Other Services and Supplies
  - a. Maintain adequate funding for District operations, services and supplies.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS**

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area**

- a) There are approximately 3,600 residents served by the Rio Dell FPD.
- b) Based on future growth estimates, the population could increase to approximately 4,024 residents by 2030.

### **(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) The City of Rio Dell qualifies as disadvantaged. Rio Dell is incorporated, and therefore does not qualify as a DUC. However, it stands to reason that portions of unincorporated territory surrounding the City may also qualify as disadvantaged.
- b) Should territory in the area surrounding the District be evaluated for annexation in the future, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

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

- a) The Rio Dell FPD is working to upgrade and expand facilities to meet the present and future needs of the department.
- b) The Rio Dell FPD has the capacity to adequately serve current demand within the 29-square mile District boundary.
- c) Like all volunteer departments, Rio Dell FPD needs to continually recruit additional volunteers and, as population increases in the future, additional volunteers will be needed to maintain the service capacity of the District.

**(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

- a) The District is funded by a very small percentage (.04%) of the 1 percent (ad valorem) property taxes, a benefit assessment, and other miscellaneous resources.
- b) The 2015 assessment increase supports the combined efforts of the Rio Dell FPD and VFD and serves to improve the level of fire protection and emergency response services to the community.

**(5) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) The Rio Dell FPD provides enhanced fire protection services in the local community for structure fire, medical aid, vehicle accidents and extraction, and similar traditionally local fire department type services.
- b) The Rio Dell FPD works closely and cooperatively with neighboring fire departments, has mutual and automatic aid agreements with them, and in addition, the District is a member of the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team.

**(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies**

- a) The Rio Dell FPD is an independent single purpose special district governed by a five-member Board of Directors.
- b) The Rio Dell VFD maintains a website (riodellfire.com) where it posts information about Department activities, documents and updates. At the present time, agenda, minutes and financial data are not posted.
- c) Rio Dell FPD demonstrates accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Humboldt LAFCo. The District responded to the questionnaires, staff telephone calls, and cooperated with document requests
- d) Rio Dell FPD supports the mutual social and economic interests of the Rio Dell community by sustaining community-based fire protection services and establishing local governance for such services.

**(7) Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.**

- a) It is recommended that Rio Dell FPD's sphere of influence be expanded to match its non-district good-will response area. This would allow the District to pursue annexation in the future.

## 3.8 Scotia Community Services District

### INTRODUCTION

**Table 3-36. Scotia CSD & Scotia VFC Contact Information**

	<b>Scotia CSD</b>	<b>Scotia Volunteer Fire Company</b>
Contact:	Steve Tyler, General Manager	John Broadstock, Chief
Address:	122 Main ST.	145 Main St Scotia, CA 95565
Phone Number:	(707) 506-3030	707-764-4322 (station), 707-845-2995 (chief)
Email	infoscotiacsd@gmail.com	jbroadstock@townofscotia.com
Website	scotiacsd.com	facebook.com/ScotiaFire
Population Served:	860 residents in District	860 residents in District
Size of Service Area:	0.8 square miles in District	2.4 square miles in Response Area
Number of Staff	No fire service related staff	12 volunteers, 1 career

### Background

The town of Scotia is located in the Eel River Valley in southern Humboldt County, and is bordered to the east by Highway 101, and to the north, south, and west by the Eel River. The City of Rio Dell is located just north, across the Eel River from Scotia.

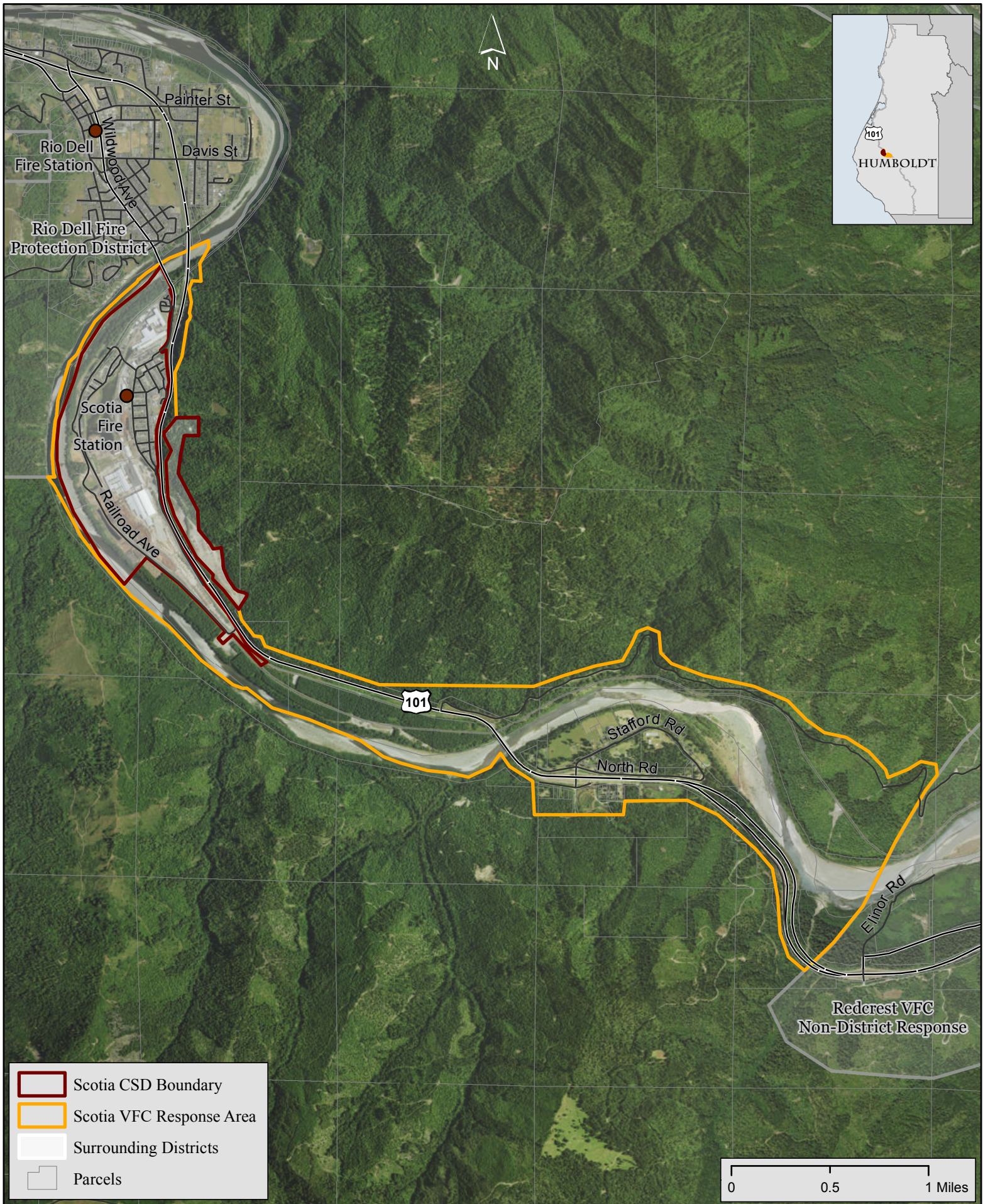
Scotia was developed by the Pacific Lumber Company starting in the 1880s and has been maintained since then as a true company town. In 2008, Pacific Lumber Company was reorganized, and today Scotia is owned and operated by the Town of Scotia Company, LLC. The Scotia Volunteer Fire Company (VFC) currently provides fire protection services to the town of Scotia and has served the community since 1908. Currently, all residences and businesses other than the Humboldt Redwood Company are occupied by rental tenants; however, the Town of Scotia is in the process of subdividing the properties and selling them into private ownership.

To facilitate this transition to private ownership, the Scotia Community Services District (CSD) was formed to provide the town with water, wastewater, streets and street lighting, storm drainage, parks and recreation, and fire protection services. As a part of the formation process, a municipal service review (MSR) for Scotia CSD was prepared in 2010. This document will update the previous MSR and will only discuss the District's power to provide fire protection services. Other services provided by Scotia CSD, notably water and wastewater services, will be addressed separately in a future regional water and wastewater services MSR.

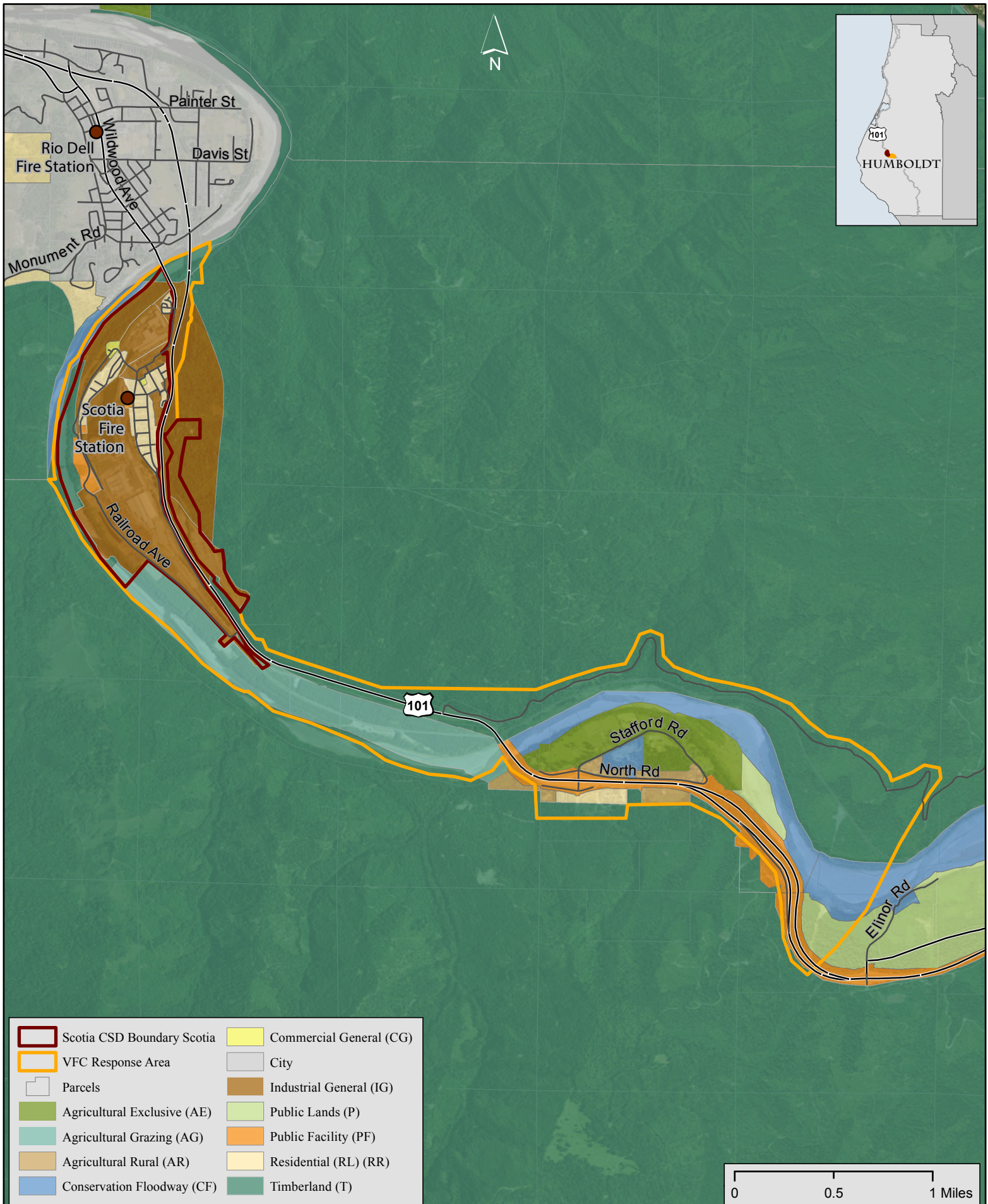
### Formation

In October 2010, Humboldt LAFCo adopted Resolution No. 10-09 granting approval for the formation of the Scotia CSD, subject to approval by the voters of Scotia. An election was held on August 30, 2011 (Ballot Measure "T"), which was passed with 93.96% voter approval. Following the election and the covenant/agreement to dedicate property and other assets of the Town of Scotia Company to the Scotia CSD, the District effectively started operating in 2014.









The provision of fire protection services was one of the powers authorized for the Scotia CSD at the time of formation. The intention at District formation was to transfer the Scotia VFC assets to the Scotia CSD and to establish an ongoing, community-supported revenue source, such as a benefit assessment or a special tax, to fund the continued operation of the VFC by the Scotia CSD. Essentially, this would transition the burden of funding fire protection services from the corporately-owned Town of Scotia Company to the community of Scotia as parcels are subdivided and sold into private ownership.

In 2016, Scotia CSD pursued a proposition 218 process which asked the community of Scotia to approve a benefit assessment to support the provision of fire protection services by the Scotia CSD. The assessment amount was proposed at \$147 per Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU), with a single-family home equal to one EBU. The proposed benefit assessment did not pass, and the Scotia VFC continues to receive funding by the Town of Scotia Company and operate separately from the Scotia CSD. It is expected that the Scotia VFC shall remain under Town of Scotia Company jurisdiction until either: (i) a funding mechanism is accepted by the District or another service provider is established to operate the Scotia VFC; or (ii) until such time as the last phase (phase 5) of the Subdivision is complete and the phase 5 Subdivision Map is recorded.

### **District Boundary**

The Scotia CSD's boundary and sphere of influence include the community of Scotia and covers approximately 0.8 square miles (493 acres) in area. The Scotia VFC responds to calls for service outside the Scotia CSD's boundary. The mapped response area for the Scotia VFC is approximately 2.4 square miles (1,547 acres). See Figure 16.

### **Growth and Population**

As of January 2010, the Town of Scotia Company estimates there are 270 residential dwelling units in Scotia, with an estimated residential population of approximately 860 persons (LAFCo 2010). The current and future population is anticipated to remain relatively stable, based upon the physical restraints of development outside of Scotia's current District boundaries. The town of Scotia is located adjacent to the City of Rio Dell, and the Eagle Prairie Bridge (State Route 283) links Rio Dell and Scotia. Scotia's topography ranges from flat areas in the west and central parts of the town, to sloped terrain in the eastern portion toward Highway 101. Steep, forested hillsides and mountains surround the town and river (LAFCo 2010).

### **Existing and Planned Uses**

Scotia is an unincorporated community and is located within the jurisdiction of Humboldt County with regard to land use regulations. Existing uses in Scotia include a mix of commercial, residential, industrial/timber production, public facilities, and recreational (See Figure 17). In 2005, the Town of Scotia Company applied for a General Plan Amendment, Zone Reclassification, Final Map Subdivision, Planned Development Permit and establishment of an urban boundary line for portions of Scotia. The General Plan and Zone Amendments have been adopted and are currently in effect. Present General Plan designations include Residential Low Density (RL), Commercial General (CG), Industrial General (IG), Public Facility (PF), and Timberland (T). Present Zoning includes Residential One-Family (R-1/D, N, P, Q), Community Commercial-Qualified (C-2-Q), Heavy Industrial-Qualified (MH-Q), Public Facility Urban (PFI), Timberland Production Zone (TPZ). A Tentative Map has been approved and a Final Map is anticipated to be considered by the Board of Supervisors in late 2016.

## Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this municipal service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. Per California Senate Bill 244, a DUC is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters where the median household income (MHI) is less than 80 percent of the statewide MHI. Within a DUC, three basic services are evaluated: water, sewage, and fire protection. Scotia CSD is authorized to provide water, wastewater, and fire protection services to the Scotia community, although the transfer of assets and funding structures necessary to operate and maintain these services have not been established.

Scotia is identified as an unincorporated legacy community (ULC) within the Humboldt County Housing Element (Humboldt County, 2014). A legacy community is defined as a place that meets the following criteria:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- Is either within a city Sphere of Influence (SOI), is an island within a city boundary, or is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years; and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

The Scotia CSD is in Community Tract 06023011100, which the California Department of Water Resources identifies as a Disadvantaged Community Tract. The Tract has a MHI of \$41,822 which is 68 percent of the state average MHI (DWR, 2016), thereby qualifying the area as disadvantaged. Should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

### Service Demand and Service Levels

The Scotia VFC is an active member of the fire service in Humboldt County. The department participates in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement and is a member of the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association and the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. The department has an automatic aid agreement with the Rio Dell FPD.

The Scotia VFC responds to an average of 104 emergency calls per year. The Company responded to approximately 141 calls for service in 2015, of which 38 calls, or 27 percent, were fires of various types and 71 calls, or 50 percent, were medical related. Other calls such as vehicle accidents, which comprise approximately 13 percent of total calls, may also involve the delivery of emergency medical services. Refer to Table 3-30 for an overview of Scotia VFC service calls.

**Table 3-37. Scotia VFC Department Numbers (2010-2015)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	1	0	2	6	5	2
Structure Fires	4	1	8	10	8	8
Other Fires	13	38	23	20	19	28
Vehicle Accidents	14	4	10	10	13	18
Medicals	35	24	43	59	66	71
Hazard/Menace	2	1	0	0	5	2
Public Assists	-	-	-	6	11	9
Others	5	7	8	0	2	3
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	585	630	630	322	605	458
Training	1,474	1,600	1,600	705	629	415
Maintenance	-	-	-	80	80	-
Fundraising	-	40	40	40	20	63
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>2,059</b>	<b>2,270</b>	<b>2,270</b>	<b>1,147</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>936</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	21	19	19	14	11	11
Auxiliary	4	3	3	0	0	2
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>

**Source:** CAL FIRE-Fortuna Interagency Command Center, Humboldt County Fire Services Annual Reports



## Personnel

The Scotia VFC currently has one paid staff member (chief) and 12 volunteers (1 less than in 2015). The Scotia VFC continually recruits new volunteers to join the department and become firefighters. The Chief position is funded by the TOS, and in addition to Chief duties, the position also includes overseeing TOS safety procedures and security staff. The majority of members are trained to the EMS First Responder level and all are trained in CPR/First Aid and Professional Rescuer Level, which incorporates Automated External Defibrillator with OX Administration certification.

**Table 3-38. Scotia VFC Personnel and Training**

Training Qualification	Number*
Fire Fighter I or above	5
Wildland (CICCS)	0
First Responder (Medical)	10
EMT	1
Paramedic	1
HazMat First Responder Ops.	4
Rope Rescue	3
Swift Water Rescue	0
Fire Investigation & Prevention	1

## Current Infrastructure and Facilities

The Scotia VFC has one fire station located at 145 Main Street, roughly in the center of town. Apparatuses used by the Company include a type I pumper engine, a type II pumper engine, a mini pumper engine, a medical response vehicle, a chief's pickup, and two rescue trailers which carry Jaws-of-Life and rope rescue equipment. In 2015, the SVFC was able to purchase a side by side vehicle (utility task vehicle) for off road responses from donations & fundraisers. In addition, the Company received 20 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in 2015 from Measure Z funds. The Scotia VFC is also in the process of decommissioning Engine 7017 and purchasing a replacement engine.

**Table 3-39. Scotia VFC Facilities and Apparatus**

Station	Address	Common Name	Apparatus (seats)	Year	Type	Pump (GPM)	Tank (Gal)
Scotia Fire Station	145 Main St. Scotia, CA 95565	Pumper Engine	7014	1985	I	1,500	1,000
		Pumper Engine	7017	1977	II	1,000	750
		Mini Pumper Engine	7047	1997	III	250	250
		Rescue Vehicle/Medical Response	7075	1990	N/A	N/A	N/A
		Chief's Pickup	7000	2004	N/A	N/A	N/A

## Challenges and Needs

The Scotia VFC noted that acquiring wildland turnouts is a top need for the Company. In addition, the recruitment and retention of volunteers available for both daytime and overnight/weekend response is needed. Currently the Fire Chief is available for daytime coverage in Scotia and Rio Dell, and receives reciprocal response from Rio Dell Fire for larger incidents at night and on weekends. This automatic aid agreement has been in place since 2012.

## ISO Rating

There are several benchmarks by which the level of fire service provided by an agency may be measured, and the Insurance Services Office Public Protection Classification, or ISO PPC, is one such measure. The ISO is a rating commonly used by insurance companies to determine fire insurance rates, with 1 being the best rating which indicates the highest level of fire protection and the lowest is 10. Based on an ISO audit, the Scotia VFC has an ISO PPC rating of 4/9. The Scotia VFC's PPC in all areas of the community that are within 1,000 feet of a hydrant is currently a class 4. Such a rating provides the residents of the Scotia area access to lower insurance rates, as opposed to a community with an agency who has a higher rating. The PPC for areas in which the District has to supply water (categorized as more than 1,000 feet from a hydrant) is currently a class 9.

## FINANCING

### Current Revenues and Expenditures

The Scotia CSD receives no funding for the provision of fire protection services. In 2016, Scotia CSD pursued a proposition 218 process which asked the community of Scotia to approve a benefit assessment to support the provision of fire protection services by the Scotia CSD. The proposed assessment amount was \$147 per Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU), with a single-family home equal to one EBU, which would generate approximately \$208,446 annually. The proposed benefit assessment did not pass, and the Scotia VFC continues to receive funding by the Town of Scotia Company and operate separately from the Scotia CSD.

It is expected that the Scotia VFC will remain under Town of Scotia Company jurisdiction until either: (i) a funding mechanism is accepted by the District or other service provider is established to operate the Scotia VFC; or (ii) until such time as the last phase (phase 5) of the Subdivision is complete and the phase 5 Subdivision Map is recorded. As of January 2017, the first phase of Subdivision has been recorded and the Scotia CSD is moving forward with establishing user fees and preparing for the transfer of assets to begin providing water and wastewater services.

There may be other opportunities to address the lack of funding for fire protection, including annexation by a neighboring fire protection district (any existing special tax or assessment could be extended to the annexation area), formation of a new fire protection district (would require approval of a new special tax or assessment), and/or the establishment of service contracts. Planning and coordination among neighboring fire-related districts is ongoing, and these efforts may facilitate a regional approach to addressing funding and service needs.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

The Scotia CSD has a five-member Board of Directors that is elected by registered who live within the District. Board members, which must reside within District boundaries, are elected for staggered four year terms of office. The initial election of board members occurred contemporaneously with the formation election. Elected board members were sworn in on April 17, 2014 and have been holding regular meetings once per month.

Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Scotia CSD's Office, unless otherwise noticed. All meetings are open to the public. Meeting information including agendas, board packets, and minutes are posted on the Scotia CSD website. Notices for upcoming meetings are also posted at the Scotia CSD offices at 122 Main Street next to the Post Office.

## MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS

As set forth in Section 56430(a) of the CKH Act- In order to prepare and to update the SOI in accordance with Section 56425, the commission shall conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the commission. The commission shall include in the area designated for a service review the county, the region, the sub-region, or any other geographic area as is appropriate for an analysis of the service or services to be reviewed, and shall prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

### **(1) Growth and population projections for the affected area**

- a) There are 270 residential dwellings and an estimated 860 persons in Scotia.
- b) There is limited population growth in Scotia due to available vacant land, substandard lot sizes that cannot support additions, and physical constraints.

### **(2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence**

- a) The Scotia CSD is in Community Tract 06023011100, which qualifies as disadvantaged.
- b) Should territory in the area surrounding the Scotia CSD be evaluated for annexation, disadvantaged communities in the area may be considered further.

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

- a) The Scotia VFC's facilities, infrastructure, and services are sufficient to provide an appropriate level of service to Scotia residents.
- b) The Scotia VFC is in the process of decommissioning Engine 7017 and purchasing a replacement engine. They also noted that acquiring wildland turnouts is a top need for the department.
- c) Like all volunteer departments the Scotia VFC needs to continually recruit additional volunteers. Currently the Fire Chief is available for daytime coverage in Scotia and Rio Dell, and receives reciprocal response from Rio Dell Fire for larger incidents at night and on weekends. This automatic aid agreement has been in place since 2012.

**(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services**

- a) While the Scotia CSD has the authority to provide fire protection services, the District does not have a funding source to support continued services by the Scotia VFC.
- b) It is expected that the Scotia VFC will remain under Town of Scotia Company jurisdiction until either: (i) a funding mechanism is accepted by the District or other service provider is established to operate the Scotia VFC; or (ii) until such time as the last phase (phase 5) of the Subdivision is complete and the phase 5 Subdivision Map is recorded.
- c) There may be other opportunities to address the lack of funding for fire protection in Scotia, including annexation by a neighboring fire protection district (any existing special tax or assessment could be extended to the annexation area), formation of a new fire protection district (would require approval of a new special tax or assessment), and/or the establishment of service contracts. Planning and coordination among neighboring fire-related districts is ongoing, and these efforts may facilitate a regional approach to addressing funding and service needs.

**(5) Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities**

- a) The Scotia VFC participates in the countywide fire protection mutual aid agreement, the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association, the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team, and has an automatic aid agreement with the Rio Dell FPD.

**(6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies**

- a) The Scotia CSD is an independent special district governed by a five-member Board of Directors.
- b) Scotia CSD demonstrates accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Humboldt LAFCo. The District responded to the questionnaires, staff telephone calls, and cooperated with document requests
- c) The Scotia CSD maintains a website (scotiacsds.com) where it posts information about Department activities, documents and updates.

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

- a) Given that the Scotia CSD is not currently providing any services outside of its District boundary, reaffirming a coterminous sphere is recommended.

### 3.9 Volunteer Fire Companies

Several volunteer fire companies (VFC) also exist within southern Humboldt County which have no tax-based support and rely largely on donations and various fundraising efforts from within their communities. Though these organizations are not strictly under the purview of LAFCo, they provide vital services to their communities and merit inclusion in fire-related discussions. These entities provide fire protection, as well as medical and rescue services. They include:

#### 3.9.1 Honeydew Volunteer Fire Company

**Table 3-40. Honeydew VFC Contact Information**

Contact:	Marcus Dube
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 74 Honeydew CA 95545
Phone Number:	(707) 373-4631
Email	honeydew@asis.com
Website	honeydewfire.com
Population Served:	400 residents in response area
Size of Service Area:	69 square miles
Number of Staff	20 volunteers

Established in 1987 as a 501c3 non-profit corporation, the Honeydew Volunteer Fire Company (Honeydew VFC) serves a response area of approximately 70 square miles (4,4019 acres). Their area of responsibility is rugged and isolated. To keep response times to a minimum, they maintain three separate, strategically located fire stations. One of the three is adjacent to the CAL FIRE Mattole Station. The VFC notes that they and have plans and support for a fourth station in the Panther Gap area (Fire Chiefs Association, 2015).

Response apparatuses include: a 6WD water tender, three Kaiser Type 6 engines, and a recently acquired 2003 Ford 550 crew cab. The Honeydew VFC response area covers approximately 400 residents who support the VFC financially through donations. The Honeydew VFC also annually produces the "Roll on the Mattole," an all-day music, crafts, and family-fun fundraiser that includes the Mattole Wildland Firefighters' Challenge (Fire Chiefs Association, 2015).

The Honeydew VFC has explored forming a new Fire Protection District to formalize the fire protection services provided by the Orleans VFD. Petition signature gathering and campaigning for district formation are often necessary to convince voters of the need to support establishing a new funding source (special tax or assessment) in order to ensure that fire protection services will be provided into the future. A district formation would allow the Honeydew VFC to establish formal boundaries, an ongoing revenue source, and a governing board that is elected by the registered voters within the community.



**Table 3-41. Honeydew VFC Service Calls (2010-2015)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	1	3	4	3	4	2
Structure Fires	1	2	1	2	2	1
Other Fires	2	3	0	4	2	3
Vehicle Accidents	3	1	5	1	9	2
Medicals	10	12	16	14	13	11
Hazard/Menace	0	0	2	0	2	1
Public Assists	-	-	-	1	3	-
Others	2	1	2	0	1	1
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	1600	No Report	53	304	350	300
Training	1000		120	402	450	800
Maintenance	400		86	500	350	500
Fundraising	750		72	300	500	600
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>3,750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>1,506</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>2,200</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	16	16	14	15	15	16
Auxiliary	1	1	3	3	3	4
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>

### 3.9.2 Redcrest Volunteer Fire Company

**Table 3-42. Redcrest VFCContact Information**

Contact:	Justin Olander
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 27 Redcrest CA 95569
Phone Number:	(707) 672-5840
Email	j.olander@kazandassoc.com
Population Served:	~350 residents
Size of Service Area:	21.6 square mile response area
Number of Staff	4 volunteers

#### Department Operations

Established in 1980, the Redcrest Volunteer Fire Company (VFC) serves communities in the Redcrest, Holmes, Larabee, Shively, and Stafford areas, as well as the Highway 101 corridor and Highway 254 from Dyerville Loop to Shively Road. This is a territory of 22 square miles (13,867 acres). See Figure 1.

#### Community Demographics

Based upon population estimates of the below discussed communities, the Redcrest VFC serves an estimated 350 residents.

#### *Redcrest*

The community of Redcrest is located in southern Humboldt County along the Avenue of the Giants, approximately 21 miles south of Fortuna and approximately 31 miles north of Garberville. Based on the 2010 Census, there were approximately 30 housing units and 52 people in the 385 acre Redcrest CDP. There are also no fire hydrants within Redcrest. As a result, the Redcrest VFC must rely on tank water carried on their fire engines and any on-site water tanks which may be available near the fire.

Redcrest is identified as an unincorporated legacy community (ULC) within the Humboldt County Housing Element. A legacy community is defined as a place that meets the following criteria:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- Is either within a city Sphere of Influence (SOI), is an island within a city boundary, or is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years; and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

There is a private water system in the community operated by the *Redcrest Water Works*. Residential, commercial, and agricultural land uses produce drinking and agricultural water through onsite water systems (Humboldt County, 2014). Community wastewater treatment and disposal is not available in the area.

The Redcrest CDP has an estimated MHI of \$28,750 and qualifies as a DUC. Given the area's status as an identified legacy community and DUC, should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation or district formation, this disadvantaged community may be considered further.

### *Holmes Flat*

Holmes Flat is located approximately two miles from Redcrest. Based on an estimate of improved residential parcels, there were approximately 48 housing units and 120 people in the Holmes Flat area, identified and defined using the proposed General Plan Update land use designations (Humboldt County, 2014). There are no fire hydrants within Holmes Flat. As a result, the Redcrest VFC relies on tank water carried on their fire engines and any on-site water which may be available near the fire. There has been little development in this community (Humboldt County, 2014).

Holmes Flat is identified as a ULC within the Humboldt County Housing Element. See above in the Redcrest section for further definition of a ULC. There are no community water systems in Holmes Flat. Residential, commercial, and agricultural land uses produce drinking and agricultural water through on-site water system. Community wastewater treatment and disposal are also not available in the Holmes Flat region.

There is a private water system in the Holmes Flat community operated by the *Redcrest Water Works*. Residential, commercial, and agricultural land uses produce drinking and agricultural water through onsite water systems (Humboldt County, 2014). Community wastewater treatment and disposal is not available in the area.

There are no median household income estimates available for the Holmes Flat area, but given the area's status as an identified legacy community, this area may be considered disadvantaged, and should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation or district formation, this community may be considered further.

### *Shively*

Historically, the Redcrest VFC has responded to the Shively region. However, recently the Shively community has expressed an interest in forming an independent local company to provide service to their area. Such a formation would serve to benefit the entire region, including the Redcrest VFC, providing more engine support and more volunteers to the larger region who are able to respond to calls. See the below discussion in the next section under *Shively VFC*.

### *Stafford*

The community of Stafford is located several miles south of Scotia along Highway 101 and is in the northern portion of Redcrest VFC's response territory. Scotia VFC also responds to this area.

Based upon 2010 Census Block data, there were approximately 61 housing units and 106 people in the Stafford community. The community boundary in this instance is defined using Humboldt County proposed General Plan land use designations (Humboldt County, 2014). There are no fire hydrants within Stafford. As a result, the responding fire department must rely on the tank water carried on their fire engines and onsite water tanks that may be available near the fire.

Stafford is identified as a ULC within the Humboldt County Housing Element. See above Redcrest section for further definition of a ULC. There are no community water systems in Stafford. Residential, commercial, and agricultural land uses produce drinking and agricultural water through on-site water system. Community wastewater treatment and disposal are also not available in the Stafford region.

There is no median household income estimate available for the Stafford area, but given the area's status as an identified legacy community, this area may be considered disadvantaged, and should territory in the surrounding area be evaluated for annexation or district formation, this community may be considered further.

### Infrastructure and Services

See Table 3-41 below for complete details of the Redcrest VFC's response to calls.

The Redcrest VFC does not currently have a station. Vehicles are housed at the Old Eel River Sawmill (Address: 26011, HWY 254). In 2015, through the Fire Chiefs' Association Measure Z grant, the Redcrest VFC received five sets each of wildland and structure PPEs as well as six SCBAs.

The Company's response apparatuses include:

- Rescue 6770, a 1995 Ford F-350 4-wheel drive Utility Truck, also equipped with medical equipment. It is utilized for traffic accidents and minor incidents. This vehicle is reportedly aging and will need replacing soon.
- Chief's Truck 6700, a 1998 GMC 220 gal water vehicle with a tank in the back.

The Company also owns Engine 6710, a Type 1 1989 International E-1 Pumper which carried 500 gallons of water and 20 gallons foam. This apparatus used to be the main responder, but is no longer operational.

### Challenges and Needs

Currently, the RVFC does not have a firehouse to secure apparatus from the elements. A firehouse acts as an important focal point for training and for bringing together volunteers. The company fundraises and reaches out to foundations for assistance, and hope to build a station for their Company. In addition, as mentioned above, the Company is without a responding engine. They are in great need of a replacement and are actively pursuing all avenues to try and find a solution. Recently, Redcrest VFC has learned they will receive Measure Z funds to replace their engine and build a structure to house the engines.

Finally, like many volunteer fire providers in the region, the Redcrest VFC has noted difficulty attracting and retaining volunteer firefighters.

### Organization Opportunities

The 2014 Humboldt County Housing Element, Appendix G, suggests that the "communities served by the Redcrest VFC should be encouraged to follow the example of Briceland and Bridgeville to seek voter approval to form a district and establish an ongoing funding source through a special assessment or tax" (Humboldt County, 2014). Formalizing fire protection services, whether it be through district formation or through annexation of a nearby district, would require an application to LAFCo. This approval would likely require a new tax or assessment approved by the property owners or registered voters to provide a reliable funding source for continued fire protection services.

**Table 3-43. Redcrest VFC Service Calls (2010-2015)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Incident Responses</b>						
Vegetation Fires	1	0	2	0	-	-
Structure Fires	3	0	1	2	2	2
Other Fires	5	3	2	3	8	6
Vehicle Accidents	9	3	9	8	11	13
Medicals	17	20	15	11	15	14
Hazard/Menace	1	0	0	2	2	3
Public Assists	-	-	-	1	4	1
Others	1	6	5	1	1	1
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>% Medical</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>% Fire Response</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>						
Incident	60	No Report	140	180	276	80
Training	224		144	160	56	325
Maintenance	30		80	85	54	20
Fundraising	50		440	709	106	50
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>475</b>
<b>Personnel</b>						
Volunteer	4	4	6	5	5	4
Auxiliary	0	0	14	16	10	7
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>



### 3.9.3 Shively Volunteer Fire Company

**Table 3-44. Shively VFC Contact Information**

Contact:	Marc Barsanti
Phone Number:	(707) 499-8475
Email	Marcgagelhunter1@sbcglobal.net

Shively is located in southern Humboldt County along the Avenue of the Giants. The community is 7 miles northwest of Redcrest along Shively Creek Road and approximately 13 miles southeast of Scotia along Shively Road. Access from Redcrest is limited during periods of high water in winter months when the low level bridge over the Eel River on Holmes Flat Road is flooded. In addition, access from Scotia can be difficult during winter months due to floods and slides along Shively Road. These access challenges have created the need to address emergency fire and rescue services at a local level.

According to the Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Shively is within the response area of the Redcrest VFC and the Scotia VFD. Shively is located approximately six miles from Redcrest using the summer bridge at Holmes Flat and 13 miles from Scotia using Shively road.

The Shively Volunteer Fire Company is currently (early 2017) being established by residents within the community. They are receiving an used engine from Rio Dell Fire and have turnouts on the way. They want to become a functioning fire department and feel that they have eight people who are motivated to be volunteers. This includes working on getting the fire department underway (equipment and apparatus, training, gas and insurance money) and obtaining 501(c)3 non-profit corporation status.

Based upon census blocks in the community, there were approximately 38 housing units and 69 people in Shively 2010. Public water service and community wastewater treatment and disposal are not available in the Shively. There are no fire hydrants within Shively. As a result, the responding fire department must rely on the tank water carried on their fire engines and on-site water tanks that may be available near the fire.

### 3.11.4 Ruth Lake CSD/ Southern Trinity Volunteer Fire Department

**Table 3-45. Southern Trinity VFD Contact Information**

Contact:	Bill German
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 16 Mad River, CA 95552
Physical Address:	221 Hastings Tie Rd. Mad River 95552
Phone Number:	(707) 574-6462
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Website	facebook.com/stfiredepartment

Historically this department has been a part of Ruth Lake Community Services District. The majority of the Ruth Lake CSD is in Trinity County, And Trinity County LAFCo is the primary LAFCo who oversees that district. When contacted for information regarding fire-related service activities, the District communicated that it was not actively providing fire-related services and that the fire department was operating independently of the District as a non-profit under the name "Southern Trinity Volunteer Fire Department. The VFD also reportedly purchased the station's property (APN 0186400300) from the CSD.

## SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fire protection service providers operate with limited resources and demonstrate a strong need for additional funding. Although local fire departments have demonstrated that they are very resourceful—using volunteers, surplus and donated equipment, and by working cooperatively to deliver services—the lack of sustainable funding levels results in disparities in levels of fire protection available. Some of the challenges associated with sustaining emergency fire and rescue services delivered by local fire departments include the following:

- Recruitment and retention of volunteers
- Community education, awareness, and support
- Changing community demographics
- Increased demand for service (including on state and federal lands/jurisdiction)
- Lack of funding
- Increased and demanding training standards/requirements
- Not having high enough levels of training
- Insurance burden (training, medical exams, etc.)
- Lack of administrative support

This chapter provides a summary of critical fire service considerations and recent planning efforts intended to improve fire protection services in Humboldt County. This chapter largely references information included in the Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2013) and other fire planning efforts conducted by Humboldt County Planning staff.

### 4.1 Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers

Local fire departments cite recruitment and retention of volunteers as a significant obstacle to sustaining and improving emergency fire and rescue services. These departments face the same recruitment and retention limitations identified in national fire service studies: a more mobile society, more demands on time, both parents working, other involvements, demanding training standards, and an increasing number of alarms.

While the burdens on firefighters continue to grow, some departments are trying different tactics to entice new recruits. The following recruitment and retention strategies were identified as part of meetings held during April/May 2016 with fire service representatives of the Avenues Study Area, which are relevant for departments countywide:

- Offer incentives to new members
  - Voucher program
  - Sleeper program
- Provide hands-on training rather than PowerPoint fire-rescue training
- Hold local training
- Encourage membership on a technical rescue team to develop unique skills
- Develop programs and partnerships to engage young adults (e.g., prior fire academy at South Fork High or possibly teaching Wilderness First Responder Medical as an elective class)
- Develop an Fire Explorer Program for youth

- Conduct advertising and hold community events
  - Recruitment banners
  - Social media
  - Letters to the editor
  - Events to bring out the community (e.g., Barbeques, Bike Safety Fair, Musters, Blood Drive, Heartsaver CPR classes, etc.)
- Build a strong brand identity (e.g., “Avenues Fire Cooperative”)
- Encourage involvement from the business community
  - Arrangements to allow volunteers to respond from work
  - Give plaques to businesses who provide support to fire-rescue departments or employ volunteers
  - Engage with the Chamber of Commerce
- Develop programs to prepare people for what/who they will see at medical calls/traffic collisions

Additional considerations for recruitment and retention efforts include the following:

#### **Plan Ahead for Response – Think Positive**

- Assume that there will be a number of new recruits
- Time recruitment efforts to match training and orientation opportunities
- Consider the need for coordinated recruit training
- Have “on-boarding” materials to set the new recruits up for success (schedules, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), by laws, rules and regulations, expectations, benefits of membership, etc.)

#### **Demonstrate Benefits of Being a Volunteer (Retention)**

- Discounts or freebies at local stores
- Leave from local employers to respond to calls
- Pay per call
- Events to honor volunteers including awards
- Career development opportunity (steppingstone to paid work)
- Standing in the community/respect and admiration
- Become a part of the fire service family

#### **Succession Planning (Retention)**

- Officer development training
- Train members to be effective leaders/instructors
- Specialized training opportunities
  - Driver/Operator 1A/1B
  - Rope/Trench/Water rescue
  - EMT
  - HazMat FRO & Decon

## **4.2 Training**

The lack of essential training and equipment are issues throughout the county. The development of fire and emergency services training facilities is critical to the delivery of emergency services. Humboldt County firefighters have varying and sometimes inadequate

levels of training. Recognizing that approximately 92% of Humboldt County firefighters are volunteers—many of whom live in outlying areas—multiple and/or mobile training facilities may be required to support countywide training programs. Providing all firefighters with necessary training will result in a more confident, capable, and reliable fire-fighting force prepared to deliver improved service to the citizens of the county. Addressing these fire protection resource-training issues is essential to local firefighters in meeting an established LOS standard. (Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Part III. Countywide Action Plan)

### 4.3 Response Times

Response times are largely dependent on two factors, the ability of appropriate fire personnel to reach the equipment at the fire station and the time it takes appropriate fire personnel and equipment to reach the scene of the incident. Fire station locations are a critical factor, but given response requirements (number of staff per apparatus, and number of staff to enter a building) the ability to get the appropriate number of personnel to the scene can be just as important. One trend that has been occurring is that more volunteers are working in areas other than the ones they serve. This means they are not available to respond to calls during working hours (Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Part III. Countywide Action Plan). Providing sleeper programs has been identified as an opportunity to attract youth and other members of the community to live for free at the fire station in exchange for dedicated volunteer hours.

### 4.4 Level of Service

There is a significant difference between the Level of Service (LOS) available to residents in urban areas of the county and residents living in more remote rural areas. Local fire departments use formal and informal mutual-aid and automatic-aid agreements to augment provided levels of protection, yet LOS differences between communities persist.

LOS standards are important for the following reasons: 1) an established standard will improve the ability of real estate professionals, public safety personnel, and government officials to inform landowners and residents of the available level of fire protection; 2) it will support fire department grant requests to local, state, and federal funding sources for purchase of apparatus, equipment, and training to help meet standards; and 3) it will allow local governments to effectively plan for municipal service delivery and population growth.

The Humboldt County Fire Chief's Association has been working to develop level of service standards or criteria based on National Fire Protection Association 1720, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Departments. The standards will need to be tiered, acknowledging that there are different expectations and capacities in rural, suburban, and urban environments. It has been determined that training level standards are the most critical focus area to begin this effort. (Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Part III. Countywide Action Plan)

## ADDRESSING BOUNDARIES AND SERVICE AREAS

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The issue of development occurring outside district boundaries has impacted local fire districts that continue to provide services without being reimbursed. This has further been complicated by changes to the State Subdivision Map Act, which now requires that all subdivision of parcels located in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) receive structural fire protection from a public agency or from another entity organized solely to provide fire protection services that is monitored and funded by a county or other public entity (Government Code Section 66474.02).

There are approximately 340,000 acres of privately owned property in Humboldt County within the SRA that are not located within the boundaries of a local fire district or other agency responsible for providing structural fire protection services that meet the standards of this law. Consequently, parcels in these areas cannot be subdivided without the provision of structural fire protection services that meet these requirements. Although fire-related districts, and volunteer fire companies not associated with districts, are commonly dispatched and respond to calls for service within most of these areas, they are not responsible for or obligated to provide such service and do not receive tax funding to do so, and therefore do not meet the definition of the law.

Fire planning efforts to date have generally identified and mapped logical future expansion/annexation areas for each existing district and where it makes sense to establish new districts or service areas for the provision of fire protection. Participants will need to refine and confirm the expansion and formation areas, work to make boundary changes were needed, and identify the most appropriate approach to providing structural fire protection services to areas that will inevitably still remain outside of any service boundary.

In addition, the amount of funding that will be required to ensure sustainable ongoing structural fire protection to the community will need to be determined. Traditional funding sources are limited to existing or increased special assessments and special taxes, new special assessments and special taxes, and property tax revenue exchange from the County to districts. Funding agreements may also be used, such as the agreements between fire districts and lumber companies to protect mill sites located outside district boundaries. Funding is likely the most challenging hurdle to achieving the goal. Funding solutions will vary based on geographic area or service area and could involve more than one funding source.

The following sections provide a range of boundary change options that can be used to address the mismatch between fire-related district boundaries and where the fire service provider delivers emergency response on a regular basis.

### 5.1 Annexation

Annexation, or the expansion of an agency's jurisdictional boundary, is an effective way to address the problem of districts providing services outside their jurisdictional boundaries without a sustainable revenue source. Annexation enables districts to extend its current funding sources (property taxes and special assessments) into the annexation area from which the fire district can rely upon into the future and improve service delivery. In addition,



the new district boundaries would clearly define service responsibilities for the benefit of neighboring fire service providers, land use authorities, the public and other service providers.

Many of the potential fire service annexation areas are very large; in some instances larger than the existing district. This may not be an issue for Fire Protection Districts, which are single-purpose special districts that provide only fire protection services. However, annexation of large areas by a district that provides water or sewer (and that does not currently provide those services to the annexation area) may be considered growth inducing, which will create additional complexity and potentially require additional environmental review. The district may propose, and LAFCo may accept, that the annexation area would be a new service zone where only fire protection services are authorized to be provided.

Annexations can be initiated by a district or a landowner proposing development. LAFCo annexation processing and costs would be made the responsibility of the applicant. The environmental effects of annexation must be analyzed and the analysis should include document compliance with all of the applicable state and local LAFCo statutes and policies. It should be noted that LAFCOs in California have approved fire district annexations of areas that currently receive out of district fire protection service provided by a fire district with the use of CEQA exemptions.

Annexations to fire protection districts that have the consent of all landowners could occur without a LAFCo hearing (Government Code Section 56663). This reduces the cost and time involved in an annexation process. Regardless of hearing, a LAFCo change in organization application must be prepared, including a plan for service and possibly a modified Municipal Service Review. The LAFCo Executive Officer evaluates the application based on the required state statutes and local policy criteria to make the required findings. There are also State Board of Equalization costs associated with changes in tax rate areas that are mapped for districts receiving property taxes.

## 5.2 District Formation

The formation of a new fire protection district is appropriate for formalizing the services of a volunteer fire company (VFC), but must provide for a sustainable revenue source. VFCs are funded through a range of sources including: donations, revenue for covering CAL FIRE stations, grants, and fundraising. Fundraising can require a significant amount of time and energy and revenue can vary significantly from year to year. The formation of fire districts combined with the establishment of a new tax or assessment ensures that small VFCs that previously relied solely on fundraising can become self-sufficient and stable agencies, thereby providing a higher level of fire protection for their communities.

Additionally, fire-related districts are official government agencies which are eligible for grants such as the annual Federal Assistance to Firefighters grant program and pre and post disaster grant programs funded through FEMA. Currently, many VFCs in the County are not official government organizations and therefore are ineligible to receive some grants and other types of funding and assistance. Formalizing the services of a VFC to a Fire Protection District would solve this problem.

District formation would involve approval by LAFCo, and if the area is inhabited, an election would need to be held. Like annexations, district formations that have the consent of all land owners can occur without a hearing and can result in cost savings. The process would be similar to the process described above for an annexation. A new district would not receive property tax revenue and would therefore not trigger the need and cost for BOE mapping.

As described in the annexation discussion above, a new tax or assessment approved by the registered voters or property owners of the subdivision would be required to provide sustainable fire protection services through the new district, which would involve time and expense. In addition, a Mello Roos Community Facilities District could be formed by the County and would simplify the process of establishing a special tax.

Many other California counties use County Service Areas (CSA), dependent special districts governed by the County Board of Supervisors, to provide fire protection services in the unincorporated area. Shasta County, for example, established CSA #1/Shasta County Fire Department (SCFD), which provides fire protection to all areas of the county outside existing fire protections districts and cities providing fire protection. The SCFD contracts with CAL FIRE to provide all department administration and operations functions. In addition, the SCFD supports 17 volunteer fire companies by providing oversight, administrative support, training, maintenance, funding, and dispatching. (Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan, Appendix A, Financing).

### 5.3 Contracts for Service

It is very common for counties to contract with CAL FIRE or city or district fire departments for fire protection services for the unincorporated area. For example, CSA 4 in Trinidad utilizes a property owner-funded Amador agreement to contract with CAL FIRE for year-round structural fire protection services to the unincorporated area. However, increases in costs from CAL FIRE make it difficult to fund and support new and existing Amador agreements.

In addition to counties, existing districts can contract with other fire-related districts as part of a functional consolidation or for an assistance-by hire arrangement to improve response times or service levels. However, starting on January 1, 2016, certain fire protection contracts will require LAFCo approval. SB 239 (Hertzberg) adds Government Code section 56134 to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, (Government Code section 56000 et seq.) establishing new procedures for the approval of these contracts entered into by both local and state agencies.

SB 239 applies to contracts for the exercise of new or extended fire protection services outside a public agency's jurisdictional boundaries that meet either of these threshold conditions: (1) transfers responsibility for providing services in more than 25 percent of a receiving agency's jurisdictional area; or (2) changes the employment status of more than 25 percent of the employees of any public agency affected by the contract. LAFCo's oversight also applies to instances where a combination of contracts results in the above threshold conditions. SB 239, however, expressly excludes from its requirements mutual aid agreements, including those entered into under the California Emergency Services Act (Government Code section 8550 et seq.), or Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (Health & Safety Code section 13800 et seq.). By its terms, SB 239 does not appear to apply to an extension of a fire protection contract unless one of the above threshold conditions is triggered. Arguably, modifications to existing contracts merely extending the term of the contract would not likely trigger the SB 239 requirements.

To initiate the process, an agency must adopt a resolution of application after a noticed public hearing, and either obtain the consent of all applicable recognized employee organizations representing firefighters, or provide the recognized employee organizations, and each affected public agency, at least 30 days advanced notice of the public hearing together with a copy of the fire protection contract. For contracts between a state and local agency, the application must also be approved by the Director of the Department of

Finance. The application must be submitted with a plan for services, which must include information delineated in Government Code section 56134, and an independent comprehensive fiscal analysis. This analysis must review the plan for services, include a cost analysis with cost comparisons with other like providers with similar service areas, populations and geographic size, a determination of the costs to the agency providing the new or extended fire protection services, and a determination that the affected territory will receive revenues sufficient to provide the services and provide for a reasonable reserve during the first three fiscal years of the contract.

Once an application is complete, LAFCo must consider the contract at a public hearing. LAFCo may not approve the contract unless it either determines, among other things, that the agency providing the services will have sufficient revenue to provide the services and provide for a reasonable reserve for three years following the effective date of the contract, or it conditions approval on the concurrent approval of sufficient revenue sources. (New Contract Procedures, BB&K, Paula C.P. de Sousa Mills, December 2015).

## 5.4 Activation of Latent Powers

There are instances where an existing multi-purpose special district, such as a community services district, can expand its services to include fire protection and rescue delivered by a non-district VFC. Government Code sections 56824.10 through 56824.14 govern LAFCo's proceedings and the application process for the activation of latent powers, including the requirement to submit a specialized, comprehensive Plan for Service. Government Code Section 56824.12 requires that the Plan for Service contains the district's financing plan to establish and provide the new service, the estimated cost to provide the service, the estimated cost to the customers, the potential fiscal impacts to customers of existing service providers, and alternatives to activating the latent power, including alternative service providers. LAFCo is statutorily prohibited from approving the activation of a latent power unless the Commission determines that the special district will have sufficient revenues to carry out the new service. Therefore, the activation of latent powers would likely require a new tax or assessment approved by the registered voters or property owners to provide sustainable fire protection services through the CSD on behalf of the VFC. These funding sources are described in more detail below.

## 5.5 Funding Sources for Boundary Changes

Traditional funding sources are limited to special assessments and special taxes, and property tax revenue exchange from the County to districts. A description of these funding sources are described below.

Special tax: A special tax requires that a resolution or ordinance be adopted that finds a reasonable relationship between the tax and the service to be provided and specifying the type of tax, the tax rate to be levied, and the method of collection. Special taxes must be approved by a two-thirds majority of voters casting ballots.

Special Assessment: A special assessment requires the preparation of an engineer's report that identifies the area subject to the assessment, the special benefit that would be received by property, a cost estimate, and a demonstration that the cost of the special benefit is spread to property in proportion to the benefit received. A 45-day notice is given to property owners that includes a protest ballot and information about the hearing scheduled to allow protest ballots to be counted. A special assessment is approved if weighted protest ballots equaling 50 percent or less of total benefit/value of the assessment are received.

Property Tax: Property tax revenue exchange negotiations for annexation areas are limited to those existing districts that currently receive property taxes within their existing district boundaries. Negotiations for the sharing of real property ad valorem taxes is authorized by Section 99(d) and 99.01 of the California Revenue and Taxation Code. Considering the base value of property taxes collected are currently committed, it is likely that annexing districts may only receive a share of property tax revenue attributable to the change in base value (i.e., property tax growth).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Defining spheres of influence for special districts is an important planning responsibility of LAFCo. Municipal service reviews must be prepared prior to, or in conjunction with, the establishment or update of spheres of influence. It is therefore recommended that the spheres of influence for the fire-related districts included in this service review be expanded to correspond with the fire response areas that have been mapped for each district. The only exception is for the Scotia CSD which is recommended to remain coterminous to the District's boundary. These response area boundaries have been defined as to reduce overlap and to designate the primary responder to the designated areas. These boundaries do not reflect the important mutual aid responses and reciprocal agreements that departments have established over time.

These sphere changes will help define where out of district services are currently being provided and will support future boundary change or reorganization options. Clearly defining district boundaries and establishing reliable sources of revenue will ensure a higher level of fire protection to the community. LAFCo is eager to work with the County, the districts, and the communities they serve to find the best service options and to develop sustainable, ongoing funding sources to support fire protection into the future.

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