

10.0 WEOTT COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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10.1 DISTRICT BACKGROUND

Agency Overview

The Weott Community Services District (CSD or District) provides water and wastewater services to the community of Weott located along Highway 101 near Humboldt Redwoods State Park. The District, which lies on the eastern bank of the Eel River, is located on the ancestral tribal lands of the Sinkyone. The original townsite was located closer to the river but after the major destruction caused by the historic 1964 flood, much of the town moved to higher elevation.

Table 10-1: Contact Information

Primary Contact(s)	Daniel Arreguin, General Manager Jamie Little, Administrative Manager
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Address	P.O. Box 218 200 Lum Street, Weott, CA 95571
Phone	707-946-2367
Website	www.weottcsd.com

District Principal Act

The District's principal act is the Community Services District Law (Government Code §61000, et seq.) which authorizes CSDs to provide up to 31 types of governmental services within their boundaries. Weott CSD is currently authorized to provide water, wastewater, garbage, fire protection, and street lighting services. Other services, facilities, functions, or powers enumerated in the District's principal act but not identified in the formation resolution are "latent," meaning that they are authorized by the principal act under which the District is formed but are not being exercised. Latent powers and services activation require LAFCo authorization as indicated in Government Code §56824.10-14.

Formation and Development

The Weott CSD was formed on September 28, 1965, by the County Board of Supervisors for the purpose of providing water, wastewater, garbage collection, fire protection, and street lighting to area residents (Resolution No. 2159). The District formation followed a disastrous flood in 1964, which destroyed over 90 percent of the buildings in Weott that were located on the lower river terrace on either side of what is now the Avenue of the Giants (State Route 254), about 35 feet above the main South Fork Eel River channel. Today, most of the bench-lower river terrace lands are part of Humboldt Redwood State Park and the majority of the community is situated on the east up slope on either side of U.S. 101.

On December 2, 1987, the Commission approved the reactivation of Weott CSD's power to provide wastewater disposal services (Resolution No. 87-13). In addition, on December 2, 1992, the Commission activated the District's recreational powers to serve the District and region with television reception (Resolution No. 92-05); however, the television receptor is no longer in use. Additionally, fire protection services were discontinued in 2017 because the District was unable to maintain a sufficient number of volunteers and did not have a sufficient source of revenue to support fire protection services. At present, Weott CSD provides water and wastewater services to District residents. Any other services, including fire protection, would require LAFCo approval before the District could begin providing the service.

Table 10-2: Weott CSD Service Status

Service	Service Approval/Activation	Current Status
Water	Approved at Formation	Active
Wastewater	Approved at Formation Reactivated in 1987	Active
Fire Protection	Approved at Formation	Inactive as of 2017
Garbage Collection	Approved at Formation	Inactive
Street Lighting	Approved at Formation	Inactive
Recreation	Activated in 1992	Inactive

Boundary and Sphere of Influence

The District's boundary ~~and coterminous SOI~~ encompasses a total of 4,635 acres (7.24 square miles). Within the District boundary the majority of parcels are developed with small single-family homes with minimal commercial development. The District's boundary encompasses small neighborhoods, a charter school, and the Weott Community Center. The District's SOI generally follows their jurisdictional boundary with the exception of APN 095-191-016. This parcel was added into the SOI during the 2012 MSR/SOI Update (LAFCo Resolution 12-06). No changes are proposed to the District's SOI at this time.

The District previously provided financial support to the Weott Volunteer Fire Department (VFD). As such, Weott CSD has an established fire services only SOI, otherwise known as the goodwill response area, that encompasses 23,602 acres (39 square miles) and extends to the west and east of the District as shown in Figure 10-3. Since the VFD disbanded in 2017, it is recommended that the fire services only SOI be removed in its entirety.

Land Use and Zoning

The District's land uses are subject to the Humboldt County General Plan and the Avenue of the Giants Community Plan and Zoning Regulations (Humboldt County Code Title III, Division 1). Under Humboldt County General Plan, the District's land uses are Residential Agriculture (RA), Public Facility (PF), Residential Low Density (RL), Commercial General (CG), Public Lands (P), Residential Estates (RE), and Commercial Services (CS).

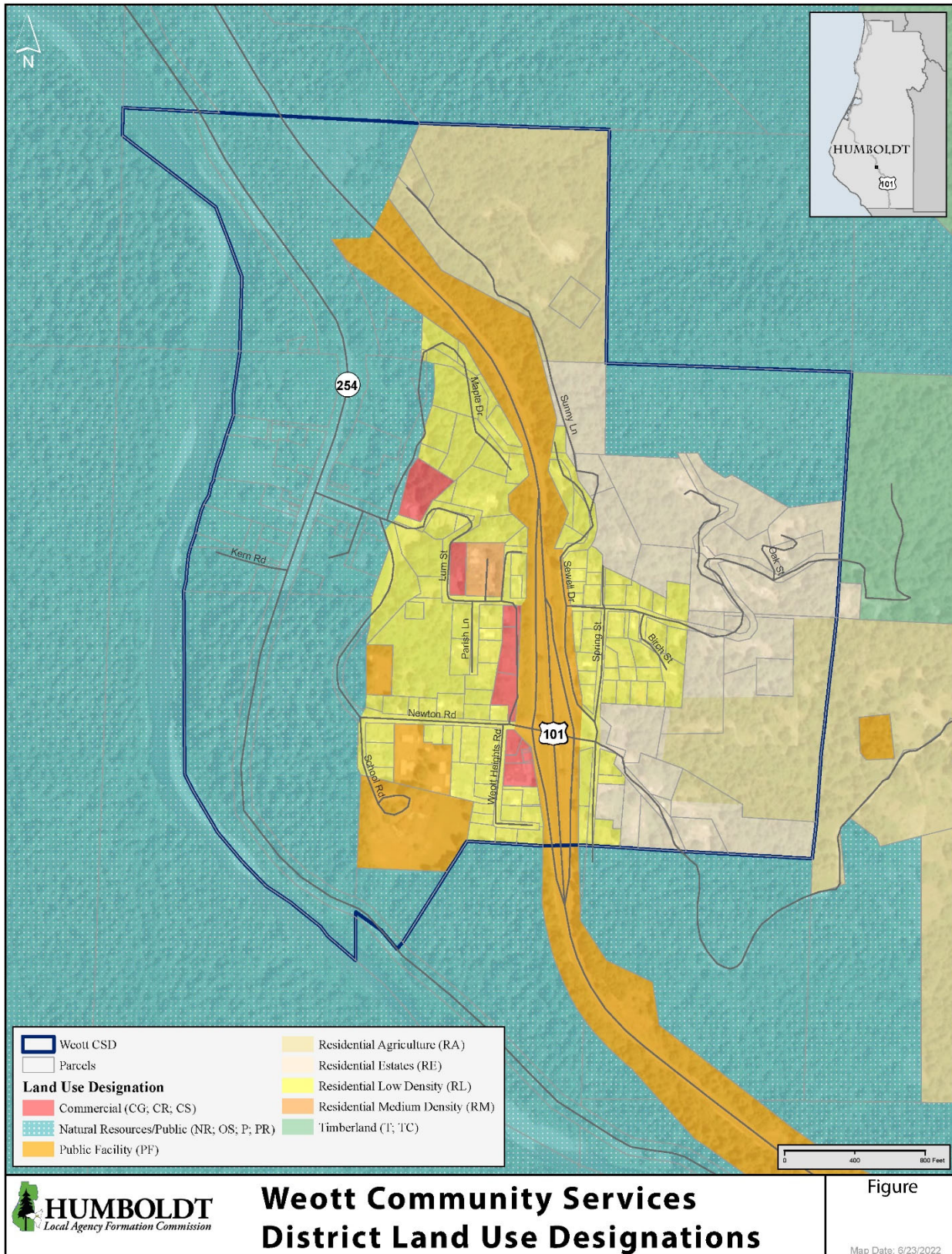
Under Humboldt County Zoning Regulations, the District's zoning is State Park, Agriculture General (AG) with combining zone Special Building site of five acres (B-5(5)), Timberland Production (TPZ), Flood Plain (FP), Community Commercial (C-2), Neighborhood Commercial (C-1), Highway Service commercial (CH) with the combining zones Design Control (D) and Qualified (Q), Residential Multiple Family (R-3), Rural Residential Agricultural with a minimum lot size of 1 acre (RA-1), and Residential One-Family (R-1). These designations generally allow for low density development and preservation of natural resources. As such, future large-scale development in the area is not anticipated.

Figure 10-1: District Boundary Map



Sources: Boundaries - Humboldt County GIS, Roads - US Census TIGER, Rivers - CAFRAP

Figure 10-2: Weott CSD Land Use



Sources: Boundaries - Humboldt County GIS, Roads - US Census TIGER, Rivers - CA FRAP

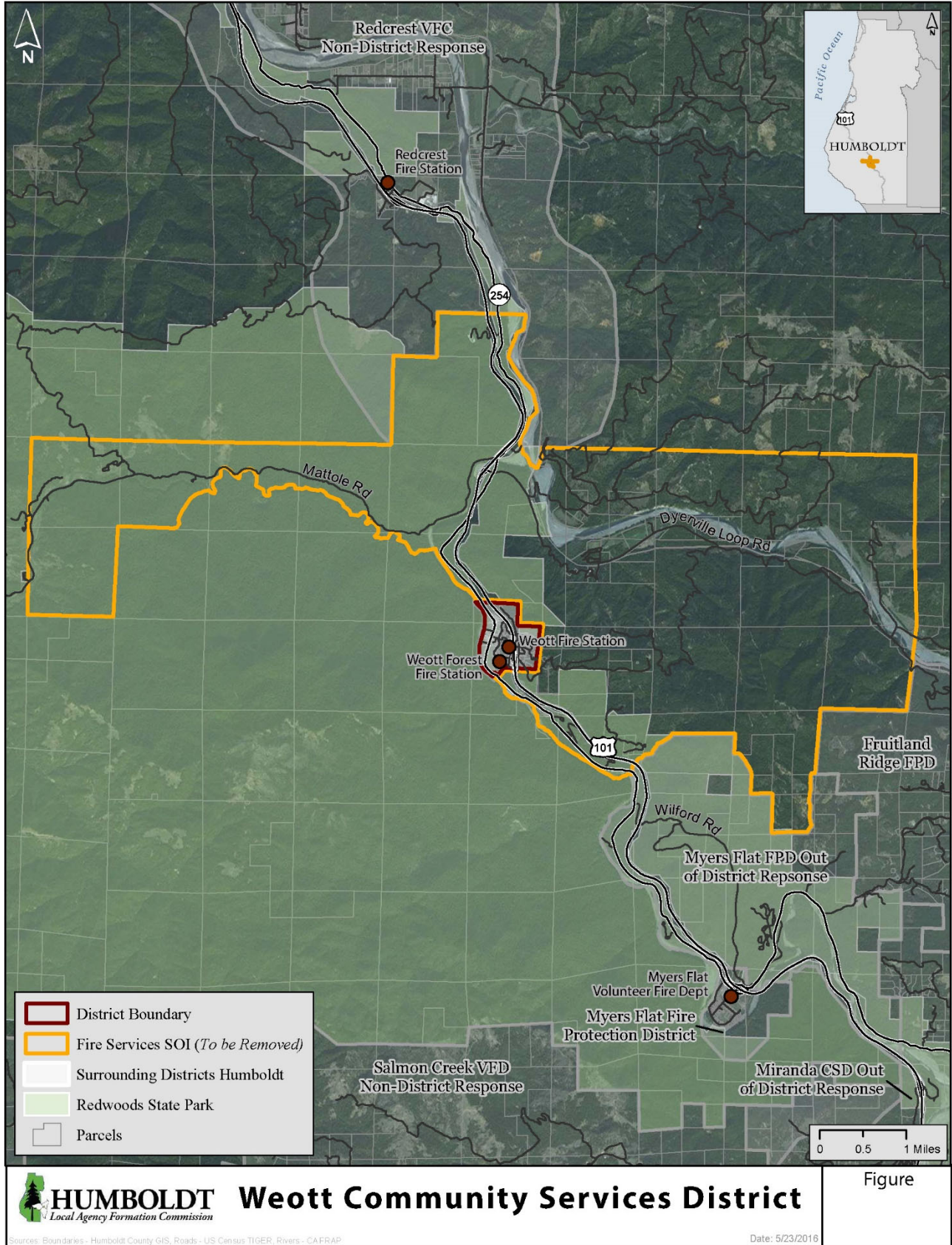


Weott Community Services District Land Use Designations

Figure

Map Date: 6/23/2022

Figure 10-3: Weott CSD 2016 Fire Services SOI



Growth and Population

According to a recent inspection report prepared by the California State Water Resources Control Board, the population of the District in 2018 was approximately 387¹. However, based on 2020 Census data and the District's boundary, GIS analysis estimates the current population to be approximately 210². Since accurate population data can be difficult to obtain in remote rural areas, this report will utilize an approximate population of 260. It is recommended that the District look into conducting a District specific population and income survey in order to provide more accurate estimates for the area. Based on the historical and estimated population growth for the area, it is unlikely the District will grow substantially over the next five to ten years.

Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

While the community of Weott is a census designated place (CDP), there is no MHI data available for the CDP or block group on the DWR DAC mapping tool. Therefore, the census tract that includes Weott will be used instead, which DWR does consider a severely disadvantaged community. The estimated MHI for the larger area is \$35,884³ which is 46 percent of the 2020 California MHI of \$78,672. As such, Weott can be considered a DUC.

As noted previously, DUCs are assessed for three primary services: water, wastewater, and fire/emergency response. Weott CSD provides water and wastewater services to the area. Fire and emergency response services in the area are not adequate after the discontinuation of fire protection services by the CSD in 2017.

The fire departments within the Avenue of the Giants area, including representatives of the Weott CSD, the Fruitland Ridge FPD, Miranda CSD, Myers Flat FPD, Phillipsville VFC, Redcrest VFC (now a Battalion of the Rio Dell PFD), and the Salmon Creek VFC, met between 2016 and 2018 to consider a broader fire reorganization to support service sustainability and redundancy. This working group considered numerous options for new revenue sources; improvements to training, recruitment, and operations; as well as options for successor agencies. Although the discussions regarding funding alternatives, operational consolidation, and merger options were very productive, there was no consensus to initiate a reorganization. As a result, the efforts were abandoned.

Currently, there are no community fire protection services in Weott. Good-will fire response to Weott is provided by the Miranda CSD, Rio Dell FPD – Redcrest Battalion, and CAL FIRE during fire season. The District is encouraged to work with its regional partners to reinstate collaborative efforts for the provision of this essential service.

Hazards

Weott is located within dense redwood forest along the banks of the Eel River. Due to its setting, the community may experience several different types of hazards including flooding, wildfire, landslides, and earthquakes.

The Eel River is a major collector for creeks and streams in the region. During heavy rainfall events the river can quickly rise to flood levels. The "Thousand Year Flood" that began on December

¹ State Water Resources Control Board: Division of Drinking Water, Weott Community Service Inspection. Print.

² U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019 5-year estimates.

³ U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2020 5-year estimates for Census Tract 011600. Accessed December 4, 2022 from <https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/dacs/>.

21, 1964 destroyed much of the Weott community that was originally located along the banks of the river⁴. After the flood, the town was rebuilt at a higher elevation and the lower portion was designated a flood zone in order to deter further development next to the river. Additionally, a FEMA 100-year flood zone is located along the river and on the western border of the District which helps to further deter development⁵. During a more recent flood event in February 2019, the South Fork of the Eel River reached a maximum of 30 feet at the Miranda stream gauge which was just three feet short of the minor flood stage. During this time, the Avenue of the Giants was closed near Redcrest due to flooding.

The community of Weott is also located in between two fault zones, the Russ fault zone to the east and the Garberville-Briceland fault zone to the west. The most recent earthquake recorded in the immediate area was a magnitude 2.9 approximately 3 miles northwest of Weott on January 16, 2020. Another magnitude 2.9 located approximately 1.8 miles southeast of Weott occurred on January 8, 2013⁶. Due to the low magnitude of these events, it is likely that the community only experienced weak shaking with no damage. On December 20, 2021, a 6.2 magnitude earthquake took place near Petrolia. According to response received from the Weott area, the community likely felt strong shaking with light damage⁷. Major earthquakes in the area, above what has been recorded in recent history, have the potential to damage District buildings and infrastructure.

⁴ Department of Water Resources, Bulletin No. 161, FLOOD! December 1964 – January 1965. Written by Hugo Fisher, Edmund Grown

⁵ Humboldt County, Humboldt County Web GIS. Accessed April 25, 2022 from <https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.0/>

⁶ USGS, Earthquake Hazards Program. Accessed from earthquakes.usgs.gov on December 12, 2022.

⁷ USGS, M 6.2 – 7km N of Petrolia, CA. Accessed April 19, 2022 from <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eventpage/nc73666231/executive>

Figure 10-4: Weott - 1964 Flood Inundation and Present Day



The northern portion of the District is noted by steep slopes of 30% or more and is also the location of a historic landslide⁸. Due to the steep slopes in this area, landslides may occur during heavy rainfall events or large earthquake events. Landslides in and around the area may impact the District by silting in water intakes or disrupting transportation.

Another potential hazard for the District is wildfires. The entire area is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA – where the state of California is responsible for wildfire protection) and the District is split between moderate and high severity fire hazard zones. In 2003, the Canoe Fire came within one mile of the District's southern border and burned a total of 11,043 acres⁹. Wildfires have the potential to severely impact the District by damaging buildings, infrastructure, and the watershed. There is also the potential for a drop in the existing customer base if homes are lost or people move away from the area due to the rising cost of insurance.

10.2 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Water Services

The information provided in the following section was largely taken from the SWRCB Weott Community Service District Public Water System Inspection report dated March 27, 2019 (except where noted).

The District has two surface water sources including Mill Creek and Corner Creek (a combination of two other permitted sources) located across the Eel River from Weott in Redwoods State Park. The District's water right permit (SWRCB Permit #17694) allows for 0.39 cubic feet per second (cfs) (175 gpm) to be diverted from June 1 to October 31 and 0.26 cfs (116.7 gpm) to be diverted from November 1 to May 31 of each year with a maximum diversion of 186 acre feet per year (60.62 MG)¹⁰. Mill Creek currently has a pumping capacity of up to 60 gpm and Corner Creek has a capacity of up to 80 gpm. The District also has a well that was drilled in 2003 but never put on-line due to high levels of iron, manganese, arsenic, and magnesium which would require additional treatment before domestic use could be permitted. Due to the remoteness of the intakes within the State Park, they have not been inspected by the SWRCB for a long time.

Raw water is pumped from the creeks to settling tanks located next to the diversion point. It is then gravity fed to the treatment plant through two separate lines; Line A and Line B. These lines travel under the South Fork Eel River and Highway 101 before reaching the District's treatment plant on South Spring Street. The A Line portion of the system consists of approximately 8,100 linear feet of piping made up of 5-inch aluminum and 2.5 to 4 inch steel pipes. The B Line portion of the system consists of approximately 6,000 linear feet of 3-inch PVC. Currently, there is no way to shut off flow from the raw water lines, so water is continuously flowing through the treatment system even if the storage tanks are full. This results in excess water that overflows from the tanks and is wasted.

Each raw water transmission line has its own treatment path. Raw water is first injected with coagulant before moving on to direct pressure filtration that includes roughing and polishing filters. From there, the water continues to the disinfection step, with each filter path having their

⁸ Humboldt County, GIS – Hazards – Seismic Safety and Slope Stability. Accessed from <https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.0/> on December 12, 2022.

⁹ Humboldt County, GIS – Hazards – Fire. Accessed from <https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.0/> on December 12, 2022.

¹⁰ SWRCB, Division of Water Rights. Permit for Diversion and Use of Water – Permit #17694 (Application #25677). September 5, 1979.

own chlorine injection point. Treated water is then transferred to storage tanks before entering the distribution system.

The Line A tank is a 72,000 gallon concrete block tank that is old and deteriorated. It also overflows into the Line B tank which is a 97,000 gallon bolted steel coated tank that was installed in 2001. Together, the two tanks provide 169,000 gallons of storage. From the tanks, treated water flows into the A Line and B Line portions of the distribution system. The A Line is made up of mostly 4-inch PVC (some smaller) and 3-inch steel pipe. The B Line portion is made up of mostly 4-inch PVC (some smaller). Approximately 10% of the service lines are of unknown material but both lines are reported to be in good condition.

As of the 2019 inspection report, the District had 129 connections (including one out of district connection for APN 095-191-016) and diverted 20.8 MG of water in 2018. The maximum diversion month for that year was August at 2.24 MG. According to the District's 2021 water rights progress report, a total of 13.64 was diverted with the maximum month being June 2021 with a total diversion of 1.92 MG. Based on the maximum permitted diversion amount of 60.62 MG per year and the total amount diverted in 2021, the District is using approximately 23% of its permitted source capacity. However, there have been reported issues with source flow during the summer months due to the ephemeral and remote nature of creeks. It is recommended that the District continue to monitor flows to better assess the overall source capacity for the system.

State Water Resource Control Board

During the last routine inspection conducted by the SWRCB on February 21, 2019, there were a number of items listed as deficiencies which included the following:

1. Obtain daily chlorine residual readings at the outlet of each tank or at the first connection that is served by each tank.
2. Provide the Division of Drinking Water (DDW) with a proposal to increase chlorine contact time in the B Tank.
3. Begin reporting the chlorine contact time data with the monthly treatment records.
4. Complete Stage 2 Disinfection Byproducts Monitoring Plan and submit a copy to DDW.
5. Obtain a shift operator for the system.
6. Provide DDW with a complete distribution system schematic.
7. Obtain the next round of the lead and copper samples from the service lines of unknown materials.
8. Continue to work on funding for fixing the treatment system deficiencies, this is an ongoing task.

The former General Manager/Lead Operator for the system was working on improving system operations and monitoring until his sudden passing in August 2022. Since that time, the District has issued two boil water notices to the community with one in September 2022 due to a failed chlorine pump, and another in October 2022 attributed to higher than normal turbidity levels caused by a raw water line break under Highway 101¹¹. In November 2022, two of the District's existing four board members resigned. This series of events has severely impacted the District's ability to adequately provide services to the community.

¹¹ Redheaded Blackbelt. Broke, busted, and Beaten: Customers of the WCSD Demand Answers in Heated Meeting. October 25, 2022.

The District hired a temporary General Manager/Lead Operator from Garberville Sanitary District in November 2022 to help run the District and train a replacement General Manager. Additionally, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) has been working on a preliminary rate study for the District to assess what level of fees will adequately support District operations¹². This will be discussed further under Financial Overview below.

Water Rates

~~The District currently has a fixed charge by connection size (Table 10-3 Water Rates) for a set volume of water that changes seasonally. During the winter months from November to April, there is an allotment of 550 cubic feet per connection. During the summer months from May to October, there is an allotment of 1,350 cubic feet. If the monthly allotment is exceeded, there is an overage charge of \$11.00 per 130 cubic feet, or fraction thereof. According to the recent RCAC rate study, approximately 95% of customers use less than the monthly allotment on a regular basis and do not pay any overage charges. In 2023, WCSD completed a Proposition 218 process to adjust their water rates. The new water rates include scheduled increases over a five-year period to account for inflation. Each customer is charged a base rate based on the size of their meter (Table 10-3). They are then charged a usage rate of \$4.55 per 100 cubic feet (Year 2 - \$4.73; Year 3 - \$4.92; Year 4 - 5.12; Year 5 - \$5.32).~~

Table 10-3: Water Rates

Meter Size in Inches	Monthly Base Fee				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
¾"	\$64.90	\$68.15	\$71.55	\$75.13	\$82.64
2"	\$194.37	\$204.09	\$214.29	\$225.01	\$247.51
3"	\$402.17	\$422.28	\$443.39	\$465.56	\$512.12
4"	\$661.77	\$694.86	\$729.60	\$766.08	\$842.69

Wastewater Services

The Wastewater Treatment Facility has five major components: septic tank, recirculation tank, trickle filters, former chlorination/sulfonation contact basin, and leaching field. Wastewater first flows from the collection system into a three chamber, serpentine, 38,000-gallon septic tank where it undergoes anaerobic treatment¹³. While in the tank, the water passes through two screens that filter out debris before it is decanted into the 38,000-gallon recirculating/distribution tank. In the recirculation tank, new wastewater from the septic tank mixes with water that has already gone through the secondary filtration process. The mixing of the septic influent with the treated, aerated wastewater raises the oxygen concentration and helps to control possible odor problems.

From the recirculation tank, water is pumped into two gravel trickle filters. This aerates the wastewater and further filters it by percolation through the gravel media. Biological treatment is provided by microorganisms that affix themselves to the media and metabolize the wastewater components. From drains in the bottom of the filters, wastewater is pumped back into the recirculating basin and mixed with new wastewater from the septic tank before

¹² Redheaded Blackbelt. Board Members Jump Ship as Help Arrives. November 28, 2022.

¹³ Anaerobic wastewater treatment is a biological process where microorganisms break down organic contaminants in the absence of oxygen. (SAMCO, What is Anaerobic Wastewater Treatment and How Does It Work? July 9, 2019)

repeating the filtration process. Wastewater typically passes through the recirculation tank and trickle filters five times before flowing into the former chlorination basin. When the recirculation basin begins to fill up, a float valve shuts off the tank. Wastewater then bypasses the tank and flows into the former chlorination basin until water levels in the recirculating tank decreases.

The District no longer disinfects the filtered wastewater with chlorine gas and sulfur dioxide, so the former chlorination basin is used as a final collection and settling pond before filtered wastewater gravity flows to the leach field. In the event that ground water comes within five feet or less of the leach lines, calcium hypochlorite is distributed into the chlorination basin to further treat the wastewater before it is discharged to the leach field¹⁴.

The treatment plant is designed to accommodate an average daily dry weather flow of 45,000 to 65,000 gallons and a daily peak wet weather flow of 209,000 gallons. Based on the average daily dry weather capacity, the plant could treat approximately 23.7 million gallons of wastewater annually. The total wastewater treated in 2021, as reported by the District, was 3.97 million gallons. The 2021 peak wet weather flow was 43,680 gallons in one day with a dry weather average of 5,874 gallons per day (for July 2021)¹⁵. These levels are well below the design flows and indicate that the District has ample capacity to meet current and future demands.

Overflow Emergency Response

The District has an emergency response plan in place for any spill, accidental discharge, or Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) that may occur. Issues may be identified by a District employee during their daily responsibilities, or a member of the community may observe the problem and bring it to the District's attention. An emergency contact number for the District is provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As soon as operations is aware of a possible problem, they must immediately investigate and verify if an issue exists. The sewerage system spill investigation forms provide staff with key criteria to identify, quantify, and categorize any reported spills or overflows. Once the spill is verified, District staff assesses the situation and collects the required data regarding the spill. They then work to contain the spill, recover as much of the spill volume as possible, mitigate to the extent possible, and prevent it from reaching storm drains, water channels, or surface water bodies. Staff must finally communicate with the appropriate agencies and other emergency response departments/teams to help protect public and environmental health and safety¹⁶.

Wastewater Rates

Customers within the District are charged a ~~monthly flat~~ rate of ~~\$47~~\$48 per 10 units of average water use (1 unit = 100 cubic feet)~~month~~ for wastewater services¹⁷.

Other Service Providers

Fire Protection and Emergency Services

Due to lack of volunteers, financial constraints, and the loss of the District's fire station, the Weott Volunteer Fire Department disbanded in 2017. As such, community fire and emergency

¹⁴ WCSD, Sewer System Management Plan. 2018.

¹⁵ WCSD, General Manager. Personal Communication – Email. July 18, 2022.

¹⁶ WCSD, SSMP. 2018.

¹⁷ Average water use is calculated by taking the customer's average monthly usage from January through March. This sets the wastewater rate until April of the following year.

response services are no longer provided and goodwill services are delivered as available to Weott by the Miranda CSD, Rio Dell FPD – Redcrest Battalion, subject to long response times, and CAL FIRE. The CAL FIRE station, located in Weott on Newtown Road, responds to wildland fire related incidents and non-wildfire incidents throughout the Humboldt Del Norte Unit Battalion 2 when staffed and available during the wildfire season. This Battalion area generally encompasses the region of southern Humboldt from Scotia to Phillipsville along Highway 101 and from Petrolia along the coast to Fruitland Ridge in the east. However, their primary purpose is to respond to wildfires within the Battalion area. When they are called away for a wildfire or conducting other prevention activities, they are not able to respond to incidents in the immediate community.

Fire and emergency response services are vital to the community. The District or a community group should review the feasibility of several different options for providing fire services to the area including revitalization of the Weott VFD, annexation to a neighboring district, year-round contract services through CAL FIRE, or other viable options.

Solid Waste Disposal

Solid waste disposal and recycling services are provided by Recology Eel River. They serve residential, commercial, and industrial customers along the Eel River Valley including Ferndale, Fortuna, Loleta, Myers Flat, Rio Dell, Scotia, Stafford, Weott, and other parts of southern Humboldt County including Weott. There is also a transfer station located in Redway approximately 20 miles south of Weott on Highway 101.

10.3 GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

Governance

The District is an independent small district typically served by a five-member Board of Directors that is elected to staggered four year terms. Board meetings are held every fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm at the Weott Community Center located at 175 Lum Street.

Due to the small size of the District and remoteness of the community, the District has ~~had difficulty not been able to~~ recruiting individuals to ~~regularly~~ serve on the Board of Directors. As of ~~December 2022~~ October 2023, there are ~~only two~~ four board members which constitutes a quorum and allows the District to conduct business ~~which does not constitute a quorum. During this type of situation, a County Supervisor will typically step in to provide a quorum until an additional board member can be elected or appointed.~~ The District ~~should work on~~ is encouraged to continue outreach and recruitment of new board members in order to fill ~~the~~ Board vacancies and ensure proper governance of the District.

Table 10-4: Board of Directors

Board Member	Title	Term
Callie Buck	Director	12/02/2022-12/09/2026
David Sundberg	Director	12/04/2020-12/06/2024
Alan Aitken	Director	12/02/2022-12/09/2026
Marjorie French	Director	12/04/2020-12/06/2024
VACANT	Director	12/02/2022-12/09/2026

Governance Options

The District may want to explore different governance options due to the continued struggle with finding board members and retaining staff. These options could include reorganization into a County Service Area that is a dependent district where the County Board of Supervisors acts as the governing board or reorganization with another nearby district that would assume control over the WCSD infrastructure.

Staffing

The District currently employs a temporary general manager/chief plant operator, a general manager/lead operator in training, a monthly meter reading/maintenance and repairs employee, and an administrative manager/board secretary. According to SWRCB regulations, the District must have a certified lead operator and shift operator. The District is encouraged to ~~continuing~~ continue working on staffing efforts in order to bring a shift operator on board. This could include sharing administrative staff with other nearby Districts.

Accountability and Transparency

WCSD maintains a website (www.weottcsd.com) that provides information on the District including a list of Board Members, meeting agendas and minutes, audits, and a consumer confidence report. However, the District's budgets are not available and the consumer confidence report is for 2020 which is out of date. In order to increase transparency, it would be beneficial to post the District's adopted budgets and the most current consumer confidence report. Board agendas and notices are posted at the District office, the Weott Community Center, and online at least 72 hours in advance of scheduled Board meetings. Meeting minutes are posted to the website and available at the District office.

Financial Overview

The District is primarily funded by fees for water and sewer services as discussed above under Municipal Services. Additional funding comes from donations, grants, loans, and property taxes. The District typically adopts an annual budget but as of December 2022 has not adopted a FY 22-23 budget. Audits are also typically conducted on an annual basis. However, due to staffing shortages and limited funding for professional services, the last available audit for the District is from FY 19-20. There is no information available on the State Controller's website which indicates that the District has not been filing annual reports with the state.

As can be seen in Table 10-5 below, the District has been budgeting at a loss for the last two fiscal years reviewed. This can be attributed to the increase in the cost of maintaining and operating the aging water system along with increased fees for liability insurance. The budget is based on the expected income from water and sewer services. However, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, revenues have been substantially less than budgeted due to accounts that have not been paid. During the pandemic, many people were not able to attend work and lost their main source of income. In order to help protect those who had lost their income, there was a moratorium on service disconnections and evictions. This has inadvertently led to a severe decrease in revenues for small service districts including Weott CSD. In addition to this loss of revenue, the District has not been budgeting for depreciation of their assets. According to the Special District Uniform Accounting and Reporting Procedures, the "costs of providing services, including capital costs (such as depreciation or debt service), be recovered with fees

and charges, rather than with taxes or similar revenues" and as such should be accounted for in the annual budget¹⁸.

Table 10-5: Weott CSD Annual Budget Summary

Category	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22
Revenues					
Water	\$100,000	\$115,000	\$120,000	\$116,000	\$116,000
Sewer	\$78,000	\$78,000	\$78,000	\$78,000	\$78,000
Interest	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
Late Charges	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Property Taxes	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenues	\$183,000	\$198,000	\$203,000	\$199,000	\$199,000
Expenditures					
Salaries & Benefits	\$86,800	\$87,000	\$88,400	\$88,400	\$88,400
Water System	\$23,864	\$35,464	\$36,564	\$34,314	\$34,314
Sewer System	\$18,000	\$19,500	\$23,000	\$19,750	\$19,750
Professional Fees	\$7,100	\$7,300	\$7,300	\$7,300	\$7,300
Insurance	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$11,000	\$11,000
Utilities	\$9,700	\$10,200	\$9,200	\$9,200	\$9,200
Loans	\$23,136	\$23,136	\$23,136	\$23,136	\$23,136
Other	\$8,900	\$9,900	\$9,900	\$16,450	\$16,450
Total Expenditures	\$183,000	\$198,000	\$203,000	\$209,550	\$209,550
Gain/ (Loss)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$10,550)	(\$10,550)

Table 10-6: Weott CSD Audit Summary

Category	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Revenues			
Water Sales	\$116,261	\$124,348	\$114,760
Sewer Services	\$80,191	\$80,842	\$81,149
Community Revenue	\$640	\$570	\$20
Total Revenue	\$197,092	\$205,760	\$195,929
Operating Expenses			
Payroll and Taxes	\$85,783	\$101,892	\$85,324
Materials and Supplies	\$8,715	\$11,185	\$7,781
Travel	\$1,833	\$3,064	\$2,318
Labs, Research, Monitoring	\$5,175	\$7,529	\$20,766
Office Expense	\$5,542	\$7,068	\$10,758
Insurance	\$6,960	\$7,825	\$6,864
Professional Services	\$7,225	\$7,275	\$8,417
Repairs and Maintenance	\$31,576	\$22,796	\$16,551
Utilities	\$12,245	\$11,307	\$10,401
Other	\$275	\$1,232	\$54
Depreciation	\$127,006	\$129,237	\$129,237
Total Operating Expense	\$292,335	\$310,410	\$298,471
Non-Op Revenue/ (Expense)	\$4,130	\$3,475	\$1,891
Net Gain/(Loss)	(\$91,113)	(\$101,175)	(\$100,651)

¹⁸ California State Controller's Office, Special District Uniform Accounting and Reporting Procedures (2022 Edition) - Section 5.04 Proprietary Funds. June 13, 2022.

The last available audits for the District show an overall decrease in the net position. This is largely due to depreciation of the District's assets including the aging water mains and wastewater treatment infrastructure. When looking at the revenues and expenses for each of the Districts enterprise services, water, and wastewater, it can be seen that the majority of the District's losses are from the wastewater system (Table 10-8).

Table 10-7: Total Net Position Summary

Category	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total Assets	\$1,804,303	\$1,680,914	\$1,567,160
Total Liabilities	\$255,751	\$240,307	\$227,204
Total Net Position	\$1,541,782	\$1,440,607	\$1,339,956

Table 10-8: Weoff CSD Audit Summary (Water vs. Wastewater)

Category	Water			Sewer		
	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Operating Revenue	\$116,261	\$124,348	\$114,760	\$80,191	\$80,842	\$81,149
Operating Expense	\$121,334	\$145,672	\$121,488	\$170,717	\$164,224	\$176,792
Non-Op Rev/ (Exp)	\$4,796	\$9,643	\$9,218	(\$6,423)	(\$6,168)	(\$7,327)
Net Gain/(Loss)	(\$277)	(\$11,681)	\$2,490	(\$96,949)	(\$89,550)	(\$102,970)

Fees for Services

The District's prior rate structure was set in 2009. Based on the total number of active accounts (137) and the current rate structure, the District could expect a minimum of \$170,000 annually if all accounts are paid in full on a regular basis. This amount varied based on the actual size of water meters and water usage. However, annual expenses for the District are typically over \$200,000 which resulted in an annual deficit as shown in the recent budgets and audits. For this reason, the District initiated a rate study in mid-2022.

RCRA prepared initial rate options for water and wastewater based on the most recent financial information available for the District. Each option for water included 4% to 10% inflation adjustments over a five-year period and were based primarily on usage as opposed to a flat rate per account. Wastewater rate options included a flat rate per connection and annual inflation rate adjustments ranging from 4% to 12.5%. Each option presented would provide the District ~~will~~with additional funding to support their capital improvement program.

As discussed under Municipal Services, WCSD completed a Proposition 218 process and implemented a new rate structure in 2023. Based on the approved rates, the District could expect approximately \$169,000 annually in water fees and \$84,000 in wastewater fees. This will help improve the District's overall financial standing, which should be reflected in future audits.

10.4 WEOTT CSD MSR 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 current District population is estimated to be 210 based on the 2020 decennial Census data. Based on the historical and estimated population growth for the area, it is unlikely the District will grow substantially over the next five to ten years.

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

a) There is no community specific income data available for Weott. As such, income data for the census tract was used to determine DUC status. The census tract had a 2020 MHI of \$35,884 which is 46 percent of the California and qualifies the area as a DUC. The DWR considers the area to be a severely disadvantaged community.

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

a) Weott CSD is a retail water service provider that provides potable water to 129 connections including one that is outside the District boundary. Water is obtained from two surface water locations across the Eel River in Redwood State Park. Based on the District's permitted water right of 60.62 MG per year and the total amount diverted in 2021 of 1.92 MG, the District is utilizing approximately 23 percent of its source supply. However, actual surface water flows fluctuate greatly and the total source capacity may be much lower than permitted.

b) During 2022, two boil water notices were issued by the District due to a failed chlorine pump and higher than normal turbidity levels caused by a raw water line break under Highway 101. These items have since been fixed and no further boil water notices have been issued.

c) Weott CSD provides wastewater collection and treatment within its boundary. The District's treatment plant has a design capacity of 45,000 to 65,000 gallons per day during dry weather and a peak wet weather capacity of 209,000 gallons per day. The 2021 reported peak wet weather flow was 43,680 gpd which is 21 percent of the design capacity. This indicates that the District has ample capacity to meet current and future wastewater demands.

(4) Financing ability of agencies to provide services

- a) Weott CSD budgeted for a \$10,000 loss for fiscal years 2021 and 2022. This can be attributed to the increase in the cost of maintaining and operating the aging water system along with increased fees for liability insurance.
- b) Based on the financial audit information available, WCSD has been operating at a loss for all years reviewed as part of this report. This is largely due to the depreciation of aging assets.
- c) In an effort to increase revenues, the District undertook a Proposition 218 process in 2022 to 2023 to raise water and wastewater rates. The increased rates will increase revenue and allow the District to better plan for regular maintenance and capital improvement projects.

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

- a) In 2022, Weott CSD hired one of the GSD licensed operators to act as a part-time interim General Manager. As part of this agreement, the GSD operator was tasked with training a new long-term General Manager for Weott CSD.

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

- a) Weott CSD is governed by a five member board of directors that are elected to staggered four year terms. The District has difficulty retaining board members due to the small population base within the District boundary. During part of 2022, there were three vacant seats. As of October 2023, there was one vacant seat.
- b) Weott CSD maintains a website with general information about the District that is in compliance with SB929. Board meeting agendas and minutes are posted when available along with meeting attachments as applicable. Two years of District audits are available along with a link to the State Controller's website for additional information.

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

- a) The District's SOI generally follows their jurisdictional boundary with the exception of APN 095-191-016. This parcel was added into the SOI during the 2012 MSR/SOI Update (LAFCo Resolution 12-06). No changes are proposed to the District's SOI at this time.
- b) The District previously provided financial support to the Weott Volunteer Fire Department (VFD). As such, Weott CSD has an established fire services only SOI, otherwise known as the goodwill response area, that encompasses 23,602 acres (39 square miles). Since the VFD disbanded in 2017, it is recommended that the fire services only SOI be removed in its entirety. The District or a community group should review the feasibility of several different options for providing fire services to the area including revitalization of the Weott VFD, annexation to a neighboring district, year-round contract services through CAL FIRE, or other viable options.

10.5 WEOTT CSD SOI DETERMINATIONS

In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping the logical and orderly development of local governmental agencies to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities, the commission shall develop and determine the sphere of influence of each local agency, as defined by G.C. Section 56036, and enact policies designed to promote the logical and orderly development of areas within the sphere. In determining the sphere of influence of each local agency, the commission shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to the following:

(1) Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.

a) Land uses within the District are a mix of Residential (Low Density, Estates, and Agriculture), Public Facility, and Commercial. Surrounding the District, land use is predominantly Natural Resources with minimal Residential Agriculture and Timberland. This pattern of land use indicates that further development outside of the District is unlikely.

(2) Present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

a) The community of Weott continues to be inhabited by year-round residents. There are also several public/community facilities including a CAL FIRE station, school, community center, and church. This indicates there is a continued need for regular and reliable water and wastewater services.

(3) Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.

a) WCSD's permitted water supply is adequate to meet current and future needs. However, due to the remote location of the water sources and ephemeral nature of the creeks, actual water supply may be much lower, especially during the summer months. The District may want to consider a monitoring program to determine actual average creek flows throughout the year.

b) Some of the District's infrastructure is aging and in need of repair, including the concrete block Line A tank. The system could also be upgraded to include automatic shutoffs for the raw water lines, remote monitoring systems, and other efficiency improvements. However, there is limited funding to support capital improvement projects.

c) The District is using approximately 21 percent of its total wastewater capacity and the system is in good condition. As such, there is adequate capacity to meet current and future demands.

(4) Existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

a) The City of Rio Dell is located 19 miles northwest of the District along Highway 101. The City offers some community services including fuel stations, grocery stores, a library, and non-emergency medical services.

b) The community of Garberville is located 22 miles north of the District along Highway 101. This is one of the major population areas in southern Humboldt County. It provides a wider range of services including emergency medical facilities, grocery stores, fueling stations, parks, and other community amenities.

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

a) No update is proposed to the SOI at this time. The current SOI is reaffirmed which generally follows their jurisdictional boundary but also includes APN 095-191-016 to reflect the out of District water services provided to this parcel.

b) Water and wastewater services are provided to the Weott community by the WCSD. There is limited to no need for these services outside of the current District boundary.

c) The Weott community and surrounding area currently lacks year-round fire and emergency medical services since the Weott VFD disbanded in 2017. As such the fire only SOI is proposed to be removed in its entirety. The District is highly encouraged to participate in community and regional planning efforts regarding the provision of this vital service.