

# ZONE 6 FIRE MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

**DRAFT REPORT**

SEPTEMBER 2014

PREPARED FOR:

SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

PREPARED BY:

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# **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Recently, representatives of the Cloverdale Fire Protection District, the Geyserville Fire Protection District (“the Districts”), the City of Healdsburg (“the City”), and the County of Sonoma Fire and Emergency Services Department have been meeting to discuss issues associated with delivery of fire protection and emergency services in the northeastern section of the County.

Known as Zone 6, the area covers 505.2 square miles. Each agency provides fire and emergency medical services in certain portions of the Zone, with the County, operating as County Service Area No. 40 (“CSA 40”), providing oversight for the Knights Valley Volunteer Fire Company and Sotoyome Fire Service Area. In addition, the Dry Creek Rancheria Fire Department provides fire protection to its casino located in the Zone, and CAL FIRE provides wildfire protection for State Responsibility Areas (“SRAs”) within Zone 6.

Staff of the Sonoma Local Agency Formation Commission (“LAFCO” or “Commission”) attended some of the group’s meetings and encouraged the agencies to work together to develop a mutually beneficial plan to provide more efficient and effective delivery of services, to share resources as much as possible, and to establish more formal agreements if feasible. In March 2013, the Commission received a staff report on the scope of a possible Municipal Service Review (“MSR”) on fire services in the County and directed its Executive Officer to meet with fire chiefs to determine study parameters.

Subsequently and separately, in June 2013, authorized representatives of the two Districts, the City, and CSA 40 signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing that “...efficiency in delivering fire services would benefit all parties and better serve the community” and stating that “...the Municipal Service Review is an appropriate vehicle to accomplish this goal.”

The parties requested that LAFCO conduct a MSR and recommend actions for consolidation or reorganized fire services in Zone 6. At the same time, the Cloverdale Fire Protection District requested and received from the County Board of Supervisors \$180,000 to fund its operations for 2013-14, to allow the District to continue to provide services within its service area and to provide mutual aid to other providers in Zone 6 while the MSR was being conducted.

Subsequent to discussions with the parties’ fire chiefs, in November 2013 Sonoma LAFCO initiated a contract with Citygate Associates LLC to conduct a Municipal Service Review for Zone 6 Fire. Pursuant to state law, a Municipal Service Review is intended to serve as a vehicle for updating or determining spheres of influence of agencies under LAFCO jurisdiction by examining various factors that would contribute to that determination. Relative to Zone 6 fire agencies, the MSR is intended to study the agencies’ level(s) of service, determine whether the

current governance model – separate agencies with individual staffing, equipment and stations – best serves the community, and review finances to determine whether expenditures and revenues are in balance and, if not, what would be next steps for the agencies.

Given the stated interests of Cloverdale FPD and Geyserville FPD to consider a consolidation, this report analyses that opportunity in isolation. Cooperative agreements or consolidations between or involving other agencies in the Zone, while potentially beneficial, have not been considered.

Other MSRs for fire services, supported by analysis from the County of Sonoma Fire and Emergency Services Department and districts throughout the County, is likely to be undertaken beginning in 2015. The report is intended to provide a “road map” for provision of services in the future, including recommendations for consolidations where appropriate.

## **1.2 EXISTING LEVELS OF FIRE SERVICES IN ZONE 6**

According to our analysis, the fire agencies in Zone 6 have maintained a level of fire service that provides suburban and rural response times within recommended best practices and safety regulations.

### **1.2.1 Facilities and Equipment**

The headquarters stations for the City of Healdsburg and the Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Districts are built to fully meet the current needs of these departments and provide adequate room for local area expansion of service levels. The two Geyserville fire stations in the Alexander and Dry Creek Valleys, along with the Knights Valley fire station are all smaller, older stations, but adequate to house apparatus and some equipment. They do not provide living facilities.

The City of Healdsburg, Geyserville FPD, and Cloverdale FPD have apparatus of the type needed to meet the response needs in their areas for structure, wild land, and specialty rescue response. The larger agencies have capable reserve apparatus.

The City and Districts, to their credit, have good fiscal planning and have maintained adequate fleets.

The structure fire apparatus in the Cloverdale FPD are the oldest and, as such, will have to be replaced in approximately the next five years. Given the District’s financial picture, this will create a fiscal hardship.

### **1.2.2 Staffing**

Healdsburg, Geyserville, and Cloverdale are using fire service best practices to stretch low revenues to provide at least one staffed fire crew in every major population area. Each utilizes several classes of volunteers that include both uncompensated positions and stipends or part-time pay for apprentices. All of the agencies, except for Knights Valley, have a robust roster of volunteer firefighters.

An important parameter to measure the adequacy of staffing is an agency's ability to field multiple units to severe emergencies. In a suburban area, such as Santa Rosa, 15 firefighters plus a command chief typically respond to a house fire within 11 minutes of receipt of a 9-1-1 call. In Zone 6, with the separated population centers and with some agencies having one staffed fire engine, this level of response is not possible. The agencies studied depend on each other for the immediate response of all staffed units for severe events. At a minimum, this requires three units from the public agencies of Cloverdale, Healdsburg, and Geyserville, totaling eight firefighters. Dry Creek Rancheria Fire can contribute two firefighters, for a total of ten. To provide more resources, volunteers must be called from home and work, respond to the station and then be dispatched to the scene with more units. The Fire Chiefs state that the extra units can usually be staffed within 20-30 minutes, but it is not a guaranteed service 24/7/365.

With such a level of response, small fires can become larger and the resultant goal becomes to not let a fire spread beyond the building or parcel of origin. Given the positive response times listed in this report, the staffing plans of the agencies, and the adequate fire apparatus and fire station locations, most of the significantly populated areas of Zone 6 receive primary response staffing in suburban and rural areas consistent with national best practice recommendations. However, as stated above, for serious emergencies requiring multiple firefighters and units, the agencies are all co-dependent. These are weak links and even one agency failing to assemble its callback personnel can hurt the multi-agency response anywhere in the Zone. At the same time, it should be noted that, due to the dedication of the off-duty career and volunteer personnel, this rarely occurs. All of the firefighters are very committed and understand that primary responders depend on the backup staffing to arrive.

### **1.3 CONSOLIDATION OF THE CLOVERDALE AND GEYSERVILLE FIRE DISTRICTS**

The consolidation of the Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Protection Districts, from a geographical and operational perspective, is logical and could provide slightly improved fire service over time by combining administrative staffing, but only if additional revenues become available to offset current budget deficits. Combined, the two Fire Districts would still experience an annual operating deficit of approximately \$600,000 per year operating at their current staffing configuration and would not be able to initially improve fire service within the two District boundaries, other than for headquarters services.



An immediate consolidation of the two Districts is not feasible until both Districts have adequate fiscal resources to avoid structural deficits. This is consistent with Sonoma LAFCO policies that indicate that the following conditions must be met for application to LAFCO for a change in spheres of influence and/or a consolidation:

1. The Agencies identify cost savings measures and/or additional revenues sufficient to both eliminate the Districts' current operating deficits and provide adequate funding to maintain a level of service commensurate with that provided during Fiscal Year 2012-13.
2. The Agencies negotiate and execute an agreement with employees regarding any changes in salaries, benefits, promotional opportunities, and working conditions, should consolidation be approved.

#### **1.4 BROADER FIRE SERVICE FISCAL ISSUES WITHIN ZONE 6**

The only local government fire departments/agencies in Zone 6 are the two Fire Districts, the City of Healdsburg, and River Rock Casino. CAL FIRE protects the wildland State Responsibility Areas (the SRA). The last remaining volunteer fire company, Knights Valley, is in a very fragile state with only five volunteers. By design, the County Fire Department facilitates, but does not directly provide, fire services staffing at the community level.

To protect the unincorporated areas (excepting Knights Valley), the City of Healdsburg, the two Fire Districts, and the County Fire Department have identified Integrated Response Plan areas (IRPs) where the closest fire department is dispatched. There has been some fiscal support to the Zone 6 fire agencies by the County.

1. Knights Valley receives modest financial support although the amount is not enough for part-time firefighters or other higher levels of staffing.
2. Healdsburg receives payment, under contract, for providing coverage in two areas, Fitch Mountain and Sotoyome. Healdsburg can be called on for support in other areas as well.
3. Cloverdale received an emergency stipend in 2012-13 and 2013-14 to address a structural deficit due to the recession's impacts on its tax base; funds are being provided in the current year as well.

As noted, the Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Protection Districts struggle with structural financial deficits. Neither they nor the Healdsburg Fire Department is reimbursed for expenses incurred when responding to calls outside their own agency boundaries. All the agencies rely on each other for a coordinated response, given their small sizes.

The Districts' chiefs state that they share duty chief responses, coordinated mutual aid, and, to a growing extent, training programs but are concerned that the Districts may need to reduce service levels within their own boundaries, given their fiscal situation. If that occurs, the

agencies believe that service to all areas within the Zone – including County areas - would decline, impacting residents of their Districts as well as rural residents living in areas beyond the Districts' boundaries.

The Districts contend that they could provide better service, if consolidated, if additional revenues are made available to offset their projected deficits. They believe that funding could come from an expansion of their combined service area with concurrent additional revenue for the cost of providing fire service to much, if not all, of the remaining areas within Zone 6.

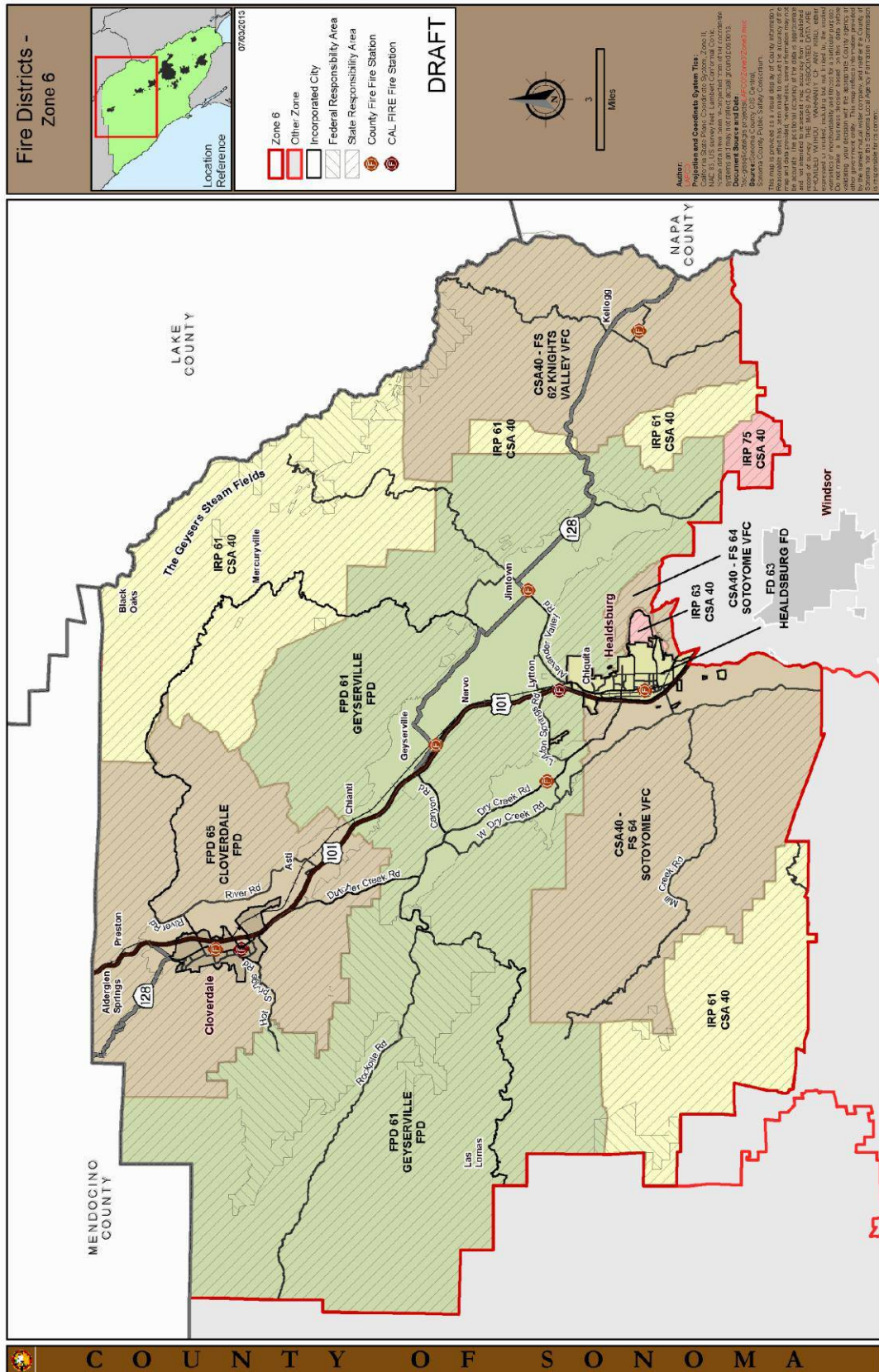
## **1.5 NEXT STEPS**

The Districts and County should continue a dialogue over how to re-balance available fire service revenues to enhance the Districts' ability to continue to provide, at a minimum, their current level of service to both their jurisdictions and outlying areas.

If the County, the Districts, and/or voters arrive at a revised revenue framework, then over time, the Districts could perhaps expand their level of service by increasing career and stipend (reserve) firefighters to better respond to most, if not all, areas of Zone 6 except for Healdsburg and its contracted service areas.

Revision of spheres of influence for fire agencies within Zone 6 should be predicated upon resolving the fiscal shortfalls. With stable and sustainable funding, the agencies and LAFCO can determine what the spheres of influence should be to reflect the role of each fire agency in providing fire service within Zone 6. Until the funding situation is resolved, no change in the spheres of influence of either the Cloverdale or Geyserville Fire Protection District is recommended.

Figure 1. Zone 6 Map



## II. MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

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### 2.1 OVERVIEW

#### 2.1.1 State Law

In 1997, the State Legislature convened a special commission to study and make recommendations to address California's rapidly accelerating growth. The Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century focused energies on ways to empower the already existing Local Agency Formation Commissions ("LAFCO") in California's counties. The Commission's final report, *Growth within Bounds*, recommended various changes to local land use laws and LAFCO statutes. The Report made a number of key observations, one of which stated:

*Among the most fundamental purposes of LAFCO iterated in GC §56001, §56300, and §56301 are to "encourage orderly growth", provide "... planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns..." and "...advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities. [p.98]*

These goals became the foundation of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("the CKH Act"), effective January 1, 2001.

An important responsibility of LAFCOs is to determine the sphere of influence of agencies under its jurisdiction. "Sphere of influence" is defined in state law as "a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the commission." The law states:

*In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping the logical and orderly development and coordination of local governmental agencies subject to the jurisdiction of the commission 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 city and each special district...within the county and enact policies designed to promote the logical and orderly development of areas within the sphere.*

LAFCOs are directed to, as necessary, review and update agencies' spheres of influence every five years. In order to prepare and to update spheres, the law directs LAFCO to conduct studies called Municipal Service Reviews. The goal of the Review, or MSR, is to analyze the community's needs, the adequacy of the service or services provided and those projected to be provided as well as the needs and deficiencies, determine financial ability to provide the service,

and explore possibilities for shared facilities and services. The Commission must prepare a statement of determinations for such factors.

One of the roles of LAFCO under these provisions is to examine the benefits or drawbacks of consolidation or reorganization of service providers.

### **2.2.2 Report Format**

The initial section of this MSR provides profiles and information about the agencies that provide fire service to Zone 6. The following section focuses on the factors established in state law for Municipal Service Reviews and required for response. Within each of the sub-sections, the narrative provides facts and analyses specific to the Zone 6 agencies, with a written statement of determinations following, again, as required. The final section evaluates the interest of the Geyserville and Cloverdale Fire Protection Districts in consolidation.

The source material for this MSR includes:

- Agency budgets and annual audits
- Wage and salary information provided by the Districts and the City
- Fire operational answers to a Citygate questionnaire, supporting agency files, in-person interviews, and follow-up phone calls.

### **2.2.3 Background**

Recently, representatives of agencies providing fire protection and emergency services in the northeastern section of Sonoma County have been meeting to discuss issues associated with delivery of services in that area. The agencies which provide those services include:

- Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services Department, as County Service Area 40, supporting:
  - Knights Valley Volunteer Fire Company (VFC)
  - Sotoyome Fire Service Area (FSA)
  - Fitch Mountain Fire Service Area (FSA)
- City of Healdsburg
- Cloverdale Fire Protection District
- Geyserville Fire Protection District
- CAL FIRE
- Dry Creek Rancheria Fire Department

Designated as Zone 6 years ago when all fire departments in the County agreed to manage mutual aid plans within sub-regional areas, the territory covers 505.2 square miles and contains the Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys, Knights Valley, the City of Cloverdale, the City of Healdsburg, and the Fitch Mountain area adjacent to Healdsburg. The area includes both

suburban and rural housing areas, farmland, mountains, and the Geysers geothermal energy production area. Major highways, including State Highway 101 and State Highway 128, traverse the area.

LAFCO staff attended some of the group’s meetings and encouraged the agencies to work together to develop a mutually-beneficial plan to provide more efficient and effective delivery of services, to share resources as much as possible, and to establish more formal agreements if feasible.

In March 2013, LAFCO received a staff report on the scope of a possible Municipal Service Review (“MSR”) on fire services in the County and directed its Executive Officer to meet with fire chiefs to determine study parameters.

Subsequently and separately, in June 2013, the two Districts, the City, and CSA 40 signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing that “...efficiency in delivering fire services would benefit all parties and better serve the community” and stating that “...the Municipal Service Review is an appropriate vehicle to accomplish this goal.”

The parties requested that LAFCO conduct a MSR and recommend actions for consolidation or reorganized fire services in Zone 6.

At the same time, the Cloverdale Fire Protection District requested and received from the County Board of Supervisors \$180,000 to fund its operations for 2013-14, to allow the District to continue to provide services within its service area and to provide mutual aid to other providers in Zone 6 while the MSR was being conducted.

Subsequent to discussions with the parties’ fire chiefs, in 2013 Sonoma LAFCO initiated a contract with CityGate to conduct a Municipal Service Review for Zone 6 Fire.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 provide profiles of the primary agencies providing fire service in Zone 6.

#### 2.1.4 Fire Protection Agency Profiles

**Table 1: Cloverdale Fire Protection District Profile**

Date of District Formation	The District was formed in 1994.
District Area	The District encompasses approximately 76 square miles in the northern portion of Fire Zone 6 of Sonoma County and includes the City of Cloverdale.
Enabling Legislation	Fire Protection District, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 13800 et seq.

Authorized Services	<p>The Health and Safety Code authorizes the following services, which the District provides:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire protection services</li> <li>2. Rescue services</li> <li>3. Emergency medical services</li> <li>4. Hazardous material emergency response services</li> </ol>
Aid Agreements (mutual or automatic)	Aid agreements exist with the Geyserville Fire Protection District, City of Healdsburg, CAL FIRE, and Town of Windsor in various locations in the District.
Properties and Facilities Managed	The District has one fire station located at 451 South Cloverdale Avenue, Cloverdale, CA.
Selection of Board Members	The registered voters residing within District boundaries elect the Board of Directors.
Number of Board Members	A five-member Board of Directors governs the District.
Members Terms of Office	The directors are elected to four-year staggered terms.
District Funding Source	The District's primary sources of revenue include a special parcel tax and the general property tax based on either a flat 1% rate applied to the adjusted 1975/1976 full value or on 1% of the sales price of the property on sales transactions and construction after the adjusted 1975/1976 valuation.
Property Tax Allocation	Funds are allocated to the District through the County tax collection process. The property tax amount is based on the property tax rate allocable to the District through the tax rate areas within the District. A Special Tax is collected from parcels within the District based on the rate applicable to each type of land use. The District also receives revenue from a per-unit special assessment and fees for service. The median tax rate is 0.0444 (10 TRAs).
Special Taxes or Assessments	The District has a Special Parcel Tax that returns annual revenue at a level nearly the same as the annual property tax revenue of the District.
District Staffing and Employees	The Cloverdale Fire Protection District has 1 part-time fire chief, 4 full-time career firefighters 2 apprentice firefighters without benefits, 1.75 administrative assistants, and volunteer and paid call firefighters.
Meeting Schedule	The regular meeting of the Board of Directors is held on the second Monday of each month.

Meeting Location	The Board of Directors meetings are held at 451 South Cloverdale Avenue, Cloverdale, CA
Office Location	The District offices are located at 451 South Cloverdale Avenue, Cloverdale, CA 95425
Contact Information	Mailing Address: 451 South Cloverdale Avenue, Cloverdale, CA 95425 Phone Number: (707) 894-3545
Web Site	<a href="http://www.cloverdalefiredistrict.com">www.cloverdalefiredistrict.com</a>

**Table 2: Geyserville Fire Protection District Profile**

Date of District Formation	The District was formed in 1996.
District Area	The District covers an area of 216 square miles in northern Sonoma County, bordering on the City of Healdsburg, the Cloverdale Fire Protection District, and unincorporated areas included within CSA 40
Enabling Legislation	Fire Protection District pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 13800 et seq.
Authorized Services	The Health and Safety Code authorizes the following services, which the District provides: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire protection services</li> <li>2. Rescue services</li> <li>3. Emergency medical services</li> <li>4. Hazardous material emergency response services</li> </ol>
Aid Agreements (mutual or automatic)	Aid agreements exist with the Cloverdale Fire Protection District, City of Healdsburg, CAL FIRE, and Town of Windsor in various locations in the District.
Properties and Facilities Managed	The District has three fire stations located at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Station 1 – 20975 Geyserville Avenue, Geyserville, CA – in downtown Geyserville.</li> <li>• Station 2 – 6571 Highway 128, Healdsburg, CA – in the Alexander Valley.</li> <li>• Station 3 – 3970 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, CA – in Dry Creek Valley.</li> </ul>



Selection of Board Members	Registered voters residing within District boundaries elect the Board of Directors.
Number of Board Members	The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors
Members Terms of Office	The directors are elected to four-year staggered terms.
District Funding Source	The District's primary source of revenue is the general property tax based on either a flat 1% rate applied to the adjusted 1975/1976 full value or on 1% of the sales price of the property on sales transactions and construction after the adjusted 1975/1976 valuation.
Property Tax Allocation	Funds are allocated to the District through the County tax collection process. The amount is based on the property tax rate allocable to the District through the tax rate areas within the District.
Special Taxes or Assessments	None
District Staffing and Employees	The Geyserville Fire Protection District has 1 part-time fire chief, 3 full-time firefighters, 1 part-time administrative assistant, and stipend and volunteer firefighters.
Meeting Schedule	The regular meeting of the Board of Directors is held on the second Wednesday of each month.
Meeting Location	The Board of Directors meetings are held at 20975 Geyserville Avenue, Geyserville, CA
Office Location	The District offices are located at 20975 Geyserville Avenue, Geyserville, CA 95441
Contact Information	Mailing Address: PO Box 217, Geyserville, CA 95441 Phone Number: (707) 857-4373
Web Site	<a href="http://www.geyservillefire.com">www.geyservillefire.com</a>

**Table 3: City of Healdsburg Fire Department Profile**

Date of City Incorporation	The City was incorporated in 1867.
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City Geographic size	The City encompasses approximately 4.1 square miles in the southern portion of Fire Zone 6 of Sonoma County. The County contracts with City Fire to provide coverage for Sotoyome and Fitch Mountain areas, which encompass 65 square miles.
Enabling Legislation	Various state legislative actions providing the service responsibilities of incorporated cities.
Authorized Services	The City can and does provide: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire protection services</li> <li>2. Rescue services</li> <li>3. Emergency medical services</li> <li>4. Hazardous material emergency response services</li> </ol>
Aid Agreements (mutual or auto)	Aid agreements exist with all of the fire agency partners in Zone 6.
Properties and Facilities Managed	The City has one fire station located at 601 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA.
Selection of Board Members	The City Council is elected by registered voters residing within the City.
Number of Board Members	The City is governed by a five-member City Council.
Members Terms of Office	The City Council members are elected to four-year staggered terms.
City Funding Source	The City's primary sources of revenue include the property tax, sales tax, and the Measure V sales tax increase. These three sources provide approximately 74% of the City's general fund revenue. The general property tax is based on either a flat 1% rate applied to the adjusted 1975/1976 full value or on 1% of the sales price of the property on sales transactions and construction after the adjusted 1975/1976 valuation. The City receives \$96,000 per year to provide fire service to Dry Creek-Sotoyome and \$33,000 per year to provide fire service to the Fitch Mountain area.
Property Tax Allocation	Funds are allocated to the City through the County tax collection process. The amount is based on the property tax rate allocable to the City through the tax rate areas within the City.

Special Taxes or Assessments	The City funds the Fire Department from the City General Fund. A portion of the General Fund revenue includes a ½ cent voter-approved sales tax increase that is estimated to generate approximately \$1,000,000 per year.
District Staffing and Employees	The Healdsburg Fire Department has 1 full-time fire chief, 7 full-time firefighters, 2 fire prevention personnel, 1 office assistant, and reserve firefighter personnel.
Meeting Schedule	The regular meeting of the City Council is held on the first and third Mondays of each month.
Meeting Location	The City Council meetings are held at 401 Grove Street, Healdsburg, CA
Office Location	The Fire Department Headquarters office is located at 601 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95444
Contact Information	Mailing Address: 601 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95448 Phone Number: (707) 431-3360
Web Site	<a href="http://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us">www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us</a>

### 2.1.5 CSA 40 – Fire Zone 6

Fire Zone 6 is located in the northeast quadrant of Sonoma County. The total area of the Zone, including the territory within the two independent Fire Districts, is approximately 505.2 square miles. The independent Districts and Healdsburg, under contract to the County, largely protect the areas of Zone 6, along with CAL FIRE for State Responsibility Areas (SRA), and with County Fire partially supporting the provision of fire service in Knights Valley, Sotoyome, and Fitch Mountain. First responder services for Sotoyome and Fitch Mountain are provided by the City of Healdsburg through a contract that currently expires on June 30, 2015. The City receives \$96,000 per year to provide fire service to Dry Creek-Sotoyome and \$33,000 per year to provide fire service to the Fitch Mountain area. The Zone 6 area has major highways including Highway 101 and Highway 128.

The areas outside of coverage from one dedicated fire agency are in Integrated Response Plan areas (IRPs); these cover large areas throughout Zone 6 not within the confines of a Fire District or under the umbrella of a volunteer fire company. These irregularly-shaped geographical boundaries are designated as first-in response districts to which contracted fire agencies provide first-due response. IRPs are not exclusive of County Fire management and response; however, there is not a County Fire company assigned as the first-due fire company to IRPs.

### Knights Valley VFC

Knights Valley VFC is the sole volunteer fire company in Zone 6. It serves an isolated valley of approximately 48.5 square miles of rural residential area in a wild land-urban interface area with heavy vegetation. The area also contains significant topography elevations and areas of heavy timber along with many agriculturally-based businesses. The area has good paved roadways and dirt roads within large acreage properties. The population is estimated at 342 people.

There are a very limited number of volunteers in the Knights Valley area and only the current fire chief is qualified as a driver/operator. The Geyserville Fire Protection District or the Dry Creek Rancheria Fire Department often provides first response into Knights Valley. Mutual aid to the valley comes from Calistoga to the south, although it is not often needed given a range of between three and thirty calls per year over the past three years.

#### **2.1.6 CAL FIRE**

CAL FIRE provides wild land fire protection within Zone 6 for State Responsibility Areas. As such, its staffing is much more significant during the declared wildfire season.

## **2.2 FACTOR 1—GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR THE AFFECTED AREA**

Three political jurisdictions have land use authority and planning responsibility in Zone 6: the County of Sonoma, City of Healdsburg, and City of Cloverdale. Each jurisdiction is required to prepare projections of housing, industry, populations, housing needs and development potential for the jurisdiction.

Although the entities can choose among several methodologies to prepare the projections, each parcel in the jurisdiction must have a land use designation which, in turn, must have an associated measure of intensity and density. The amount of land in each use designation multiplied by the intensity and density provides the basis for the projection.

It should be pointed out that agencies may refer to differing information sources to project future growth. For example the projections of households, household population, and total population in the County General Plan 2020 were changed to match general plans or estimates for cities in the County, including Healdsburg. Because the City of Cloverdale was in the process of adopting its General Plan when the 2020 County General Plan was being developed, the projections for Cloverdale and environs differ somewhat from the County's General Plan projections.

### **2.2.1 County Jurisdictions: Cloverdale/Northeast County and Healdsburg and Environs**

The County General Plan 2020 divides the County into nine planning areas (or cities). Planning Area Objectives and Policies recognize the circumstances of each area and the fact that each area warrants its own unique policies. These policies also provide specific guidance regarding the use of individual properties.

Further, the County General Plan 2020 identifies "urban service areas" for the nine cities and all special districts providing sewer and water service. Most of the cities have an urban service area that matches their voter-approved Urban Growth Boundary and LAFCO-designated Sphere of Influence. Most urbanized growth is projected to occur within the cities' urban service areas.

As shown in Table 4, the County has two goals that reinforce the philosophy of city-centered growth.

In implementing the County General Plan 2020 goals and policies, the County identifies two planning areas in Fire Zone 6 where future development is projected: (1) Cloverdale/Northeast County, and (2) Healdsburg and Environs.

**Table 4: County General Plan 2020 Goals**

GOAL LU-2:	Accommodate the major share of future growth within the nine existing cities and their expansion areas and within selected unincorporated communities, which are planned to have adequate water and sewer capacities.
GOAL LU-3:	Locate future growth within the cities and unincorporated Urban Service Areas in a compact manner using vacant "infill" parcels and lands next to existing development at the edge of these areas.

*Cloverdale/Northeast County*

In the Cloverdale area, the County General Plan Land Use Element projects a population of 18,460 by 2020; this is an increase of 5,700 residents compared to the 2000 population.

Although the Planning Area is rich in scenery, agriculture, recreational opportunities and other resources, about sixty percent of the population is expected to live within the Cloverdale Urban Service Area. Major employment growth is anticipated in the retail and service industries, reflecting tourism due to winery promotions and events and recreation in and around Lake Sonoma and the Russian River.

The Sonoma County General Plan description of this Planning Area, anticipated population, and land use can be found in Appendix 1. The County General Plan population information, both historical and projected, for the Cloverdale Planning Area can be found in Table 5.

**Table 5: Cloverdale and Environs Historical and Projected Population**

<b>Planning Area/ City Urban Service Areas</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Projected 2020</b>	<b>Projected Change 2000-2020</b>	<b>Percentage Change 2000-2020</b>
Cloverdale Urban Service Area	5,509	5,500	7,052	11,200	4,148	58%
Unincorporated Area Outside City Urban Service Area	3,471	5,348	5,699	7,260	1,561	27%
Cloverdale Planning Area	8,980	10,848	12,751	18,460	5,709	44%
County Totals	299,684	388,222	458,614	546,030	87,416	19%

*Sources: U.S. Census, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD). Notes: (1) County totals for historical data are from U.S. Census. (2) All historical city data include unincorporated Urban Service Areas (USAs), as estimated by ABAG. (3) Projections for cities reflect General Plans or estimates, and include existing unincorporated USAs. (4) Projections for unincorporated areas are by PRMD, and reflect modifications to ABAG's "Projections 2002."*

More specifically to Cloverdale, the population of the City has increased steadily over the years, growing from 3,251 persons in 1970 to 8,618 in 2010. The decade from 2000 to 2010 experienced the greatest population increase with 26 percent annual growth.

Historical population changes in Cloverdale as compared to Sonoma County, as a whole, from 1970 through 2010 are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Historic Population Changes – Cloverdale and Sonoma County**

Agency	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1970-2010 Change	2000-2010 Change	Average Annual Change
<b>Cloverdale</b>	3,251	3,989	4,924	6,831	8,618	165%	26%	4.1%
<b>Sonoma County</b>	204,885	299,681	388,222	458,614	483,878	136%	6%	3.4%

*Source: CA Department of Finance, 2011*

Going forward, in 2007, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projected changes in the Cloverdale’s population from 2010 to 2035 (Table 7). The City was expected to experience a growth rate of twenty-six percent from 2005 to 2015, while the overall growth rate in Sonoma County was projected to be nine percent during the same time period.

Economic conditions between 2008 and 2013, however, slowed the growth rate appreciably, calling into question whether the 2015 ABAG projection will be met.

**Table 7: Projected Population Growth – Cloverdale and Sonoma County**

Agency	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
<b>Cloverdale</b>	8,618	10,600	11,400	12,000	12,600	13,000
<b>Sonoma County</b>	483,878	522,300	535,200	548,900	558,900	568,900

*Source: The Association of Bay Area Governments*

*City of Healdsburg and Environs*

In the Sonoma County General Plan, the Healdsburg and Environs area also includes the Town of Windsor. The population of the overall area is expected to grow to 51,460 by 2020, a 25 percent increase over the 2000 population; growth is expected mainly within the two cities, with rural growth minimal.

Employment growth is expected in the service and retail sectors and in the tourism industry. As in the Cloverdale Planning Area, increased reliance upon tourism has spurred growth in agricultural promotion activities.

The Sonoma County General Plan description of this Planning Area, anticipated population, and land use can be found in Appendix 1. The County General Plan population information, both historical and projected, for the Healdsburg Planning Area can be found in Table 8.

More specifically, the population of Healdsburg has increased steadily over the years, growing from 3,251 persons in 1970 to 8,618 in 2010. The decade from 2000 to 2010 experienced the greatest population increase with 26 percent annual growth.

**Table 8: Healdsburg and Environs Historical and Projected Population**

<b>Planning Area/City Urban Service Areas</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Projected 2020</b>	<b>Projected Change 2000-2020</b>	<b>Percentage Change 2000-2020</b>
Healdsburg Urban Service Area	8,422	10,299	11,253	13,160	1,907	16%
Windsor Urban Service Area	6,160	11,809	22,744	30,300	7,556	33%
Unincorporated Area Outside City Urban Service Areas	4,917	7,247	6,799	8,000	1,201	17%
Healdsburg and Windsor Planning Area	19,499	29,355	40,796	51,460	10,664	26%
Healdsburg Planning Area and Unincorporated Area	13,339	17,546	18,052	21,160	3,108	17%
County Totals	299,684	388,222	458,614	546,030	87,416	19%

*Sources: U.S. Census, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD). Notes: (1) County totals for historical data are from U.S. Census. (2) All historical city data include unincorporated Urban Service Areas (USAs), as estimated by ABAG. (3) Projections for cities reflect General Plans or estimates, and include existing unincorporated USAs. (4) Projections for unincorporated areas are by PRMD, and reflect modifications to ABAG's "Projections 2002."*

Historical population changes in Healdsburg as compared to Sonoma County, as a whole, from 1970 through 2010 are shown in Table 9.



In 2007, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projected changes in the Healdsburg’s population from 2010 to 2035. The City was expected to experience a growth rate of fourteen percent from 2005 to 2015, while growth rate in Sonoma County, overall, was projected as approximately nine percent during the same time period.

**Table 9. Historic Population Changes – Healdsburg and Sonoma County**

Agency	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1970-2010 Change	2000-2010 Change	Average Annual Change
Healdsburg	8,565	9,624	n/a	n/a	11,254	31%	n/a	
Sonoma County	204,885	299,681	388,222	458,614	483,878	136%	6%	3.4%

Source: CA Department of Finance, 2011 and City of Healdsburg

Economic conditions between 2008 and 2013, however, slowed the growth rate appreciably, calling into question whether the 2015 ABAG projection will be met.

As shown in Table 10, ABAG projects the total population within the City limits to increase by approximately 14 percent between 2005 and 2025, which is slightly less than the change projected for the SOI and County during the same time period. As used in Projections 2007, Healdsburg’s SOI includes both the area currently within the city limits and the unincorporated areas.

**Table 10: Projected Population Growth – Healdsburg and Sonoma County**

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Change 2005 – 25 (Percent)
Healdsburg City Limits	11,600	12,300	12,700	12,900	13,200	13.79
Sonoma County	478,800	509,100	522,300	535,200	548,900	14.64
Healdsburg Sphere of Influence	12,200	13,000	13,400	13,600	13,900	13.93

Source: The Association of Bay Area Governments

## 2.2.2 Factor 1: Determinations

Based on the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 and the General Plans of the City of Healdsburg and the City of Cloverdale, all of which consider territory outside the corporate city

limits, little rural growth is anticipated; most growth will occur in the cities. The projections do not take into account the possible long-term negative impacts on growth due to drought.

Therefore the determination is that population and development growth will not be a conclusive factor impacting the abilities of the Fire Districts and County Fire to provide service in their responsibility areas within Zone 6.

### **2.3 FACTOR 2 — LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES WITHIN OR CONTIGUOUS TO AGENCIES' SPHERES OF INFLUENCE**

As a result of the passage of Senate Bill 244 (Wolk) in 2012, state law requires LAFCOs to consider disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to an agency's sphere of influence in conducting Municipal Service Reviews, especially when structural fire protection is the subject. The location and characteristics of these communities, which are defined in state law as inhabited territory that constitutes all of a portion of a community with an annual median household income that is less than eighty percent of the statewide annual median household income, must be determined and analyzed. The State Department of Finance has determined that the statewide annual median household income in 2000 was \$60,882. Thus, an unincorporated community having less than \$48,706 as the median annual income would be considered a disadvantaged unincorporated community.

The only developed area within the sphere of influence of Healdsburg is the Fitch Mountain area, and the developed areas within the Cloverdale sphere, which was recently amended by LAFCO, are the McCray Road area, north of the City and the industrial area just south of the City. Between the Cities of Healdsburg and Cloverdale lies the unincorporated community of Geyserville. The 2010 Census identified Geyserville as a "census-designated place." Although a census-designated community is not a city or town, it is a named place with a concentration of residents, housing, and commercial activity located in a county's unincorporated territory.

For the purpose of this Municipal Service Review, the community of Geyserville, because of the relationship of the Geyserville Fire Protection District with the adjacent fire protection providers, was evaluated to determine if it was a disadvantaged unincorporated community.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) developed a methodology and a mapping system to determine disadvantaged unincorporated communities using, as the basis, census-designated places derived from the American Community Survey. The data was compiled for the five-year period from 2006-2010. The DWR study determined that in Sonoma County the disadvantaged unincorporated communities are Boyes Hot Springs, Cazadero, Glen Ellen, Guerneville, Monte Rio, Temelec, and Valley Ford.

Based on the determination of the Commission in reflection of the U.S. Census and DWR information, the Fitch Mountain area in Healdsburg, the McCray Road area in Cloverdale, and the community of Geyserville do not qualify as disadvantaged unincorporated communities.

### **2.3.1 Factor 2: Determinations**

There are no disadvantaged unincorporated communities within Fire Zone 6.

### **2.4 Factor 3—PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES, ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OR DEFICIENCIES INCLUDING NEEDS OR DEFICIENCIES RELATED TO SEWERS, MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL WATER, AND STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION IN ANY DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES WITHIN OR CONTIGUOUS TO AGENCIES' SPHERES OF INFLUENCE**

The standard of adequacy for fire and emergency medical services provided by the agencies which are the subject of this Review can be measured by: (1) adequacy of facilities and equipment; (2) response times; (3) incident staffing or force effectiveness; and (4) Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings.

This chapter includes a summary of the fire services provided by the City and the two Districts, the current facilities and their condition, and the available data to reflect response to calls for service.

#### **2.4.1 Background on Fire Service Deployment and Regulation**

No mandatory federal or state regulations exist which direct the level of fire service response times and outcomes for suppression or fire-engine-based emergency medical services (EMS).

The body of regulations on the fire suppression service provides that if fire services are provided at all, they must be done so with the safety of the firefighters and citizens in mind. For the most part in the United States, it is up to local governing bodies to determine the design of fire services.

Over the last 20 years, a number of state and federal laws, regulations, and court cases based on firefighter safety have affected the flexibility of fire agencies in determining their staffing levels, training, and methods of operation. An abbreviated overview of some of these is described below:

1. 1999 U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Staffing Policies – Federal OSHA applied confined space safety regulations for work inside tanks and underground spaces to America's firefighters. This requirement pertains to atmospheres that are "IDLH" (Immediately Dangerous to Life and

Health). Teams of two members inside and two members outside must be in constant communication. The outside team has to be equipped and ready to rescue the inside team. This situation occurs in building fires where fire and smoke conditions are serious enough to require the wearing of self-contained breathing apparatus. Commonly called the “2-in/2-out” policy, it requires that firefighters enter serious building fires in teams of two, while two more firefighters are outside and immediately ready to rescue them should trouble arise.

While under OSHA policy, one of the outside “two-out” personnel can also be the incident commander (typically a chief officer) or fire apparatus operator. This person must be fully suited in protective clothing, have a breathing apparatus donned (except for the face piece), and meet all physical requirements to enter IDLH atmospheres. Thus, this person must be ready to immediately help with the rescue of interior firefighters in trouble.

2. May 2001 National Staffing Guidelines – The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards on Career and Combination (volunteer) Fire Service Deployment was issued 13 years ago. While *advisory* to local governments, it has become locally adopted and has developed momentum.

For *substantially career departments*, NFPA 1710 calls for four-person fire crew staffing, arriving on one or two apparatus as a “company.” Under this recommended standard, the initial attack crew is required to arrive at the emergency within four minutes travel time, 90 percent of the time, and the total effective response force (First Alarm Assignment) shall arrive within eight minutes travel time, 90 percent of the time.

- NFPA 1720 (2010 Edition) for Substantially Volunteer Departments, would apply to all of the local government fire departments in Zone 6, since, in total, they have many more reserve, stipend, and volunteer firefighters than they do full-time career firefighters.
- NFPA 1720 Section 4.1 on Fire Suppression Organization states that for substantially volunteer departments, “fire suppression operations shall be organized to ensure that the fire department’s fire suppression capability includes sufficient personnel, equipment, and other resources to deploy fire suppression resources efficiently, effectively, and safely.”
- Response time advice contained in NFPA 1720 Table 4.3.2 (Table 11) shall be used by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to determine staffing and response time objectives for structural firefighting, based on a low-hazard occupancy such as a 2000 ft<sup>2</sup> (186 m<sup>2</sup>), two-story, single-family home without basement and exposures and the percentage accomplishment of those objectives for reporting purposes as required in 4.4.2.

3. OSHA Liability Changes – Many state Occupational Safety and Health Administrations (OSHAs) have added rules over the last decade making all of the OSHA regulations applicable to local government, including fines and a huge increase in criminal penalties. Individual managers and supervisors (Fire Chiefs, Incident Commanders) may now be fined and be imprisoned for failure to take appropriate safety precautions. This has been the response to improve safety in the fire service and general government operations. Further, the on-scene Incident Commanders (battalion chiefs) at hazardous materials incidents must have certification compliant with NFPA 472, Standard for Emergency Response to Hazardous Materials incidents. This is also now an OSHA requirement.

**Table 11: NFPA 1720 – Table 4.3.2 Staffing and Response Time**

Demand Zone	Demographics	Staffing and Response Time – FF/Minutes	Percentage of Completion
Urban	>1000 people/mi. <sup>2</sup>	15/9	90
Suburban	500–1000 people/mi. <sup>2</sup>	10/10	80
Rural	< 500 people/mi. <sup>2</sup>	6/14	80
Remote*	Travel distance ≥ 8 mi.	4	90
Special risks	Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)	AHJ	90

\* Upon assembling the necessary resources at the emergency scene, the fire department should have the capability to safely commence an initial attack within 2 minutes, 90 percent of the time.

For ambulance response in Zone 6, response time guidelines established by the Sonoma County EMS Agency for emergency calls is 5 minutes in urban areas, 15 minutes in suburban or rural areas and within 60 minutes in wilderness areas. The Zone is covered by County EMS agreements with a private ambulance and the Cloverdale Health Care District. The provision of ambulance service is not part of this Municipal Services Review for fire protection.

Many times, the primary focus of the public is on agencies’ response times. In reality, however, if too small a force arrives too quickly to a fire, the crew will not be able to stop the spread of the fire. If a large force arrives too slowly, the fire will outgrow the crew’s ability and become a conflagration. *Thus, the amount of staffing in the right time frame for each type of emergency is critical.*

Fire department deployment, simply stated, is about the **speed** and **weight** of the attack. Speed calls for first-due, all-risk intervention units (engines, ladder trucks, and/or rescue ambulances) strategically located across a service area. These units are tasked with controlling everyday,

average emergencies, preventing the incident from escalating to second alarm or greater. These larger incidents unnecessarily deplete the department resources as multiple requests for service occur. Weight is about the multiple-unit response to provide additional staffing for significant emergencies like a room and contents structure fire, a multiple-patient incident, a vehicle accident with extrication required, or a heavy rescue incident. In these situations, departments must assemble enough firefighters in a reasonable period of time in order to control the emergency safely or provide quality EMS pre-hospital treatment on-scene without the emergency escalating to greater alarms or undesirable EMS outcomes.

Thus, small fires and medical emergencies require a single or two-unit response (engine and specialty unit) with a quick response time. Larger incidents require more crews. In either case, if the crews arrive too late or the total personnel sent to the emergency are too few for the emergency type, they are drawn into a losing and more dangerous battle. The science of fire crew deployment is to spread crews out across a community for quick response to keep emergencies small with positive outcomes, without spreading the crews so far apart that they cannot amass together quickly enough to be effective in major emergencies. In cardiac, stroke, or serious illness and trauma EMS cases, response time is paramount to maintain life. In designing fire department response systems, positive outcomes are the goal, and crew size and response times can be calculated to provide the desired and economically possible outcome.

Emergency medical incidents have the most severe time constraint. In a heart attack that stops the heart, a trauma that causes severe blood loss, or in a respiratory emergency, the brain can only live 8 to 10 minutes maximum without oxygen. Other events can cause oxygen deprivation to the brain; heart attacks make up a small percentage. Drowning, choking, trauma constrictions, or other similar events have the same effect.

In a building fire, a small incipient fire can grow to involve the entire room in an 8- to 10-minute timeframe. If fire service response is to achieve positive outcomes in severe EMS situations and incipient fire situations, **all** responding crews must arrive, size-up the situation, and deploy effective measures before brain death occurs or the fire leaves the room of origin.

Given that the emergency likely started before it was noticed and continues to escalate through the steps of calling 9-1-1, dispatch notification of the crews, their response, and equipment set-up once on scene, there are three “clocks” that fire and emergency medical crews must work against to achieve successful outcomes:

1. The time it takes an incipient room fire to fully engulf a room, thus substantially damaging the building and most probably injuring or killing occupants.
2. When the heart stops in a heart attack, the brain starts to die from lack of oxygen in 4 to 6 minutes, and brain damage becomes irreversible at about the 10-minute point.
3. In a trauma patient, severe blood loss and organ damage becomes so great after the first hour that survival, is difficult if not impossible. The goal of trauma

medicine is to stabilize the patient in the field and get them to the trauma surgeon within one hour. This goal rests on the fire and ambulance responders quickly taking care of the patient and getting them quickly to the surgeons. Pre-hospital care, as well as more definitive hospital care, must both occur within the first hour.

Somewhat coincidentally, in all three of the above situations, the first responder emergency crew must arrive on-scene within five to seven minutes of the 9-1-1 call to have a chance at the most desirable outcome: save lives in immediate danger and control serious fires to inside the building or parcel of origin. Further, the follow-on (additional) crews for serious emergencies must arrive within the ten-minute point.

Thus, from the time of 9-1-1 receiving the call, an effective deployment system is **beginning** to manage the problem within seven to eight minutes total response time in areas *close to fire stations*. This is right at the point that brain death is becoming irreversible and the fire has grown to the point to leave the room of origin and become very serious.

Thus, fire departments need a first-due response goal that is within the range to give the situation hope for a positive outcome. Unfortunately, there are times that the emergency has become too severe even before the 9-1-1 notification and/or Fire Department response for the responding crew to reverse. However, when an appropriate response time policy is combined with a well-designed system, then only issues like bad weather, poor traffic conditions or multiple emergencies will slow the response system down. Consequently, a properly designed system will give citizens the hope of a positive outcome for their tax dollar expenditure.

#### **2.4.2 Fire Services in Zone 6**

The City of Healdsburg, the Fire Districts, the Casino and the Knights Valley Volunteer Company provide multiple services, including fire protection, rescue, emergency medical care, and hazardous material emergency response.

As stated earlier, the Districts were formed pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 13800 et seq. which authorizes the following services:

1. Fire protection services
2. Rescue services
3. Emergency medical services
4. Hazardous material emergency response services

The fire agencies provide mutual aid and/or contract services to the Local Responsibility Area (LRA) with Sonoma County Fire, CAL FIRE, and neighboring counties in designated areas.

#### Facilities

A critical factor in providing effective and efficient fire service is the location and quality of fire equipment. Determining the location for fire station facilities should take in a number of considerations and include an analysis of service area demographics, roadway data, occupancy types, population, emergency response data, workforce, and response trends. The use of computer software systems can guide the determination of future investments for fire station locations, fire apparatus types, and staffing configurations.

Fire departments typically have one main fire station located in the largest population cluster capable of supporting operations in accordance with the needs assessment. Larger departments in rural areas typically have additional outlying fire stations to provide lower response times or apparatus storage locations staffed by volunteers. The fire apparatus should be stored in adequate facilities to protect the vehicle and equipment from the weathering and damage.

One size does not fit all when it comes to fire station design for the urban and rural fire service, and Sonoma County has a mixture. In Zone 6 there is a mix of the smaller cities, including Cloverdale and Healdsburg, along with small population clusters such as Geyserville. The two large fire districts in Zone 6 serve very large rural and wild land fire-prone areas, yet these areas have very low population.

The headquarters stations for Healdsburg, the Cloverdale Fire District, and the main Geyserville station are built to fully meet the current needs of these departments and provide adequate room for expansion of service levels. The Geyserville fire stations in the Alexander Valley and Dry Creek Valley and the Knights Valley fire station are smaller, older stations, adequate to locate apparatus and some equipment. They do not provide living facilities.

### Apparatus

Besides having well-situated facilities, fire agencies need a sufficient number and type of well-maintained apparatus. As a rule of thumb, in an area the size of Zone 6, the minimum fire apparatus, in good working condition, would be:

- A front-line pumper for structure fire protection (called a Type 1)
- A reserve (older) back-up pumper for structure fire protection
- A wild land fire apparatus (called a Type 3)
- A water tanker (tender) for areas without fire hydrants on public water mains
- A command vehicle for the responding incident commander (chief officer)
- A smaller rescue unit to carry specialty tools
- A small boat water rescue craft.

Tables 12 through 15 identify the type of apparatus owned by the two Districts, the City, and the Knights Valley VFC.



### Apparatus Adequacy

Based on the minimum fire apparatus identified above, the Zone 6 agencies, individually and collectively, operate a diverse and capable fire apparatus inventory meeting the needs of the Zone and exceeding a baseline minimum.

**Table 12: Fire Apparatus: Cloverdale Fire Protection District**

Type of Apparatus	Year Purchased
2000 KME Fire Pumper, Type 1	1999
1997 Pierce Lance Pumper	2011
1997 International Fire Pumper, Interface Type 2/3	1997
2004 West Mark Wild Land Model 14, Type 3	2004
KME Custom Rescue	2005
Custom-Built Water Tender	2011
1997 Ford F450 Rescue/Utility	1997
2003 Chevrolet Silverado Command Vehicle	2003
2008 Chevrolet Silverado Command Vehicle	2008
2010 Chevrolet Silverado Utility Vehicle	2010

*Source: Cloverdale Fire District*

**Table 13: Fire Apparatus: Knights Valley**

Type of Apparatus	Year Purchased
1993 Intl Type 3	1993
2003 Ford F550 Type 3	2003
1973 Ford F600 Rescue Squad	1973
1978 Ford Water Tender	1978

**Table 14: Fire Apparatus: Geyserville Fire Protection District**

Type of Apparatus	Year Purchased
Type 1 Engine	2011
Type 1 Engine	2003
Type 3 Engine	1999
Type 3 Engine	1996
Type 3 Engine	1997
Water Tender	1991
Rescue Squad	2009
4x4 Utility Battalion 6	2005
Rehab Ops Special Trailer	2001
Chief's Command Truck	2013
Boat	N/A

**Table 15: Fire Apparatus: City of Healdsburg**

Type of Apparatus	Year Purchased
Type 1 Engine	2001
Type 1 Engine	2000
Type 1 Engine	2008
Ladder Truck	2000
Wild Land Fire Engine	1997
Administration and Utility Units	Varies

*Dispatch Service*

The Geyserville FPD and the City of Healdsburg participate in the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM) system. This Joint Powers Authority (JPA) was created to dispatch ambulances and fire department first responders in Sonoma County simultaneously on all incidents fielded through the 9-1-1 system. Automatic aid and mutual aid agreements among districts and departments are built into REDCOM's computer-assisted dispatch system, which generates deployment tables based on aid agreements and equipment availability.

The CAL FIRE dispatch center provides dispatch services to the Cloverdale FPD.

### 2.4.3 Calls for Service

Tables 16 through 21 summarize the types and count of emergency incidents and response times for the period 2010-2012.

**Table 16: Calls for Service by Type: Cloverdale FPD**

Type of Call for Service	2010	2011	2012	Total	2012 % by Call Type
Emergency Medical/ Rescue/ Auto Accidents	675	738	691	2,104	66%
Structure Fire	17	38	29	84	3%
Wildland Fire	18	20	48	86	5%
All Other Fires	5	15	7	27	1%
Other / Public Assistance	235	283	257	775	25%
Total	950	1,094	1,032	3,076	100%
Response time (min/sec) from crew notify to 1 <sup>st</sup> unit on-scene for 90% of the annual emergencies	2:34	3:22	4:54		

**Table 17: Calls for Service by Type: Geyserville FPD**

Type of Call for Service	2010	2011	2012	Total	2012 % by Call Type
Emergency Medical/Rescue/Auto	308	312	304	924	53%
Structure Fire	35	42	44	121	8%
Wildland Fire	35	33	62	130	11%
All Other Fires	17	35	22	74	4%
Other / Public Assistance	175	131	139	445	24%
Total	570	553	571	1,694	100%
Response time (min/sec) from crew notify to 1 <sup>st</sup> unit on-scene for 90% of the annual emergencies	13:20	10:52	10:39		

**Table 18: Calls for Service by Type: City of Healdsburg**

Type of Call for Service	2010	2011	2012	Total	2012 % by Call Type
Emergency Medical/Rescue/ Auto Accidents	600	622	653	1,275	56%
Structure Fire	14	24	22	60	2%
Wildland Fire	17	11	19	47	1.6%
All Other Fires	14	20	20	54	1.7%
Other / Public Assistance	442	447	448	1,337	38.7%
Total	1,087	1,124	1,162	3,373	100%
Response time (min/sec) from crew notify to 1 <sup>st</sup> unit on-scene for 90% of the annual emergencies	4:01 100%< 15min	4:02 100%< 15min	3:51 100%< 15min		

**Table 19: Calls for Service by Type: Knights Valley**

Type of Call for Service	2010	2011	2012	Total	2012 % by Call Type
Emergency Medical/Rescue/Auto Accidents	18	25	19	62	83%
Structure Fire	0	0	0	0	0
Wildland Fire	1	1	3	5	13%
All Other Fires	1	0	1	2	4%
Other / Public Assistance	9	4	0	13	0%
Total	29	30	23	82	100%
Response time (min/sec) from crew notify to 1 <sup>st</sup> unit on-scene for 90% of the annual emergencies	N/A	N/A	11:23		

**Table 20: Calls for Service by Type: Sotoyome**

Type of Call for Service	2010	2011	2012	Total	2012 % by Call Type
Emergency Medical/Rescue/Auto Accidents	81	92	70	243	41%
Structure Fire	7	4	3	14	1.5%
Wildland Fire	10	9	10	29	6%
All Other Fires	2	4	1	7	0.50%
Other / Public Assistance	62	67	87	216	51%
Total	162	176	171	509	100%
Response time (min/sec) from crew notify to 1 <sup>st</sup> unit on-scene for 90% of the annual emergencies	8:26 92.5%< 15min	9:02 93.7%< 15min	8:48 94.6%< 15min		

Source: City of Healdsburg Fire Department

**Table 21: Calls for Service by Type: Fitch Mountain**

Type of Call for Service	2010	2011	2012	Total	2012 % by Call Type
Emergency Medical/Rescue/Auto	13	12	15	40	28%
Structure Fire	1	1	1	3	2%
Wildland Fire	1	0	1	2	2%
All Other Fires	0	0	0	0	0
Other / Public Assist	23	15	37	75	68%
Total	38	28	54	120	100%
Response time (Min/sec) from crew notify to 1 <sup>st</sup> Unit On-Scene for 90% of the annual emergencies	8:44 100%<15m in	6:65 100%<15m in	8:57 98.2%<15 min		

Source: City of Healdsburg Fire Department

#### **2.4.4 Multiple-Unit and Specialty Response Needs**

For serious fires, multiple units are needed. As the fire departments in the main population clusters in Zone 6 staff one full-time station each, they are dependent on one another for multiple-unit response for fires, technical rescues, and hazardous materials incidents.

In a severe event, at a minimum, this is three units from the public agencies of Cloverdale, Healdsburg and Geyserville, totaling eight firefighters. The Dry Creek Rancheria Casino can contribute two more firefighters for a total of ten.

However, with its separated population centers, some of which are staffed with only one fire engine, a response that is typically found in a suburban area, such as Santa Rosa – where fifteen firefighters and a command chief arrive at a house fire within eleven minutes from the time of receipt of the call to dispatch – is not possible. The agencies' goal is to prevent a small fire from becoming larger and spreading beyond the building or parcel of origin.

The fire chiefs report that the response time for the Geyserville-staffed engine into the Cloverdale Fire District is approximately five minutes driving time, while the Geyserville first-due engine driving time into the city limits of Cloverdale is approximately eleven minutes.

The Healdsburg first-due engine into Geyserville is approximately twelve minutes, and fifteen minutes into the Cloverdale city limits. These times, of course, are dependent on the unit being available, traffic congestion, or bad weather delays.

The Zone 6 fire agencies have created a multi-department technical rescue team for the Zone. Technical/specialized rescue apparatus types include a Cloverdale rescue (medium type), a Geyserville light rescue, and a swift water rescue boat. Healdsburg fields a ladder truck and a rescue trailer with confined space and technical rescue equipment for medium severity deployments. The departments also store and deploy Mass Casualty Trailers to provide supplies for large patient care incidents.

Zone 6 does not have a hazardous materials incident response team. The County or City of Santa Rosa via Mutual Aid provides the hazardous materials team response.

#### **2.4.5 Ambulance Transport**

Ambulance transport is not covered in this Municipal Service Review. The Sonoma County Emergency Medical Services Agency oversees agreements with other entities for ambulance response.

Within the Cloverdale Fire District, the Cloverdale Health Care District is the primary ambulance provider; it has almost the same district boundary as the Fire District. Cloverdale firefighters typically work for the Health Care District as EMTs when off duty, and, when on duty for the fire

district, act in that capacity as well. When back-to-back ambulance calls in the Cloverdale district are made, off-duty Cloverdale firefighters often staff a back-up basic life support ambulance.

In Healdsburg and much of the rest of Zone 6, Bells Ambulance in Healdsburg provides the ambulance service. The EMS Agency has established guidelines for ambulance response: five minutes in urban areas, fifteen minutes in suburban or rural areas and within one hour in wilderness areas.

#### **2.4.6 Insurance Service Office (ISO) Ratings**

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) is an independent organization that serves insurance companies, fire departments, insurance regulators, and others by providing information about fire risk. ISO staff collects information about fire protection efforts in communities throughout the United States. ISO analyzes the relevant data and assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) number from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire-suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

Nearly all insurers of homes and business property use ISO's PPC to calculate premiums. In general, the cost of fire insurance in an area with a good PPC can be lower than in an area with a poorer rating, assuming all other factors are equal. The ratings are generally considered more important for commercial and industrial property than for residential development.

There are three primary factors considered in the development of the rating: the fire alarm and communications systems; the fire department; and the water supply system. Ten percent of the overall rating is based on the communication system; fifty percent for fire department; and forty percent on the community's water supply.

The communication systems evaluation includes consideration of staffing, telephone systems and dispatching systems.

The fire department considerations include equipment, staffing, training, and geographic distribution of fire companies.

Lastly, consideration is given to the water supply system including the condition and maintenance of hydrants and the amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires.

The importance of water supply is critical in determining the overall ISO rating. Fire districts without public water supply and fire hydrants will find it difficult to earn a PPC rating of less than 9. In much of the rural area of Sonoma County, an inadequate supply of water is available for fighting fires, resulting in higher ISO ratings.

In some districts, ISO develops a split classification in which the first rating applies to properties within five miles of a fire station and with access to public water. The second rating applies to properties within five road miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a hydrant. ISO generally assigns a Class 10 rating to properties beyond five road miles of a fire station.

A Class 8b was established to recognize “superior Class 9” communities that provide superior fire protection services, such as using water tender apparatus and fire alarm facilities, but lack the water main supply required for a PPC of Class 8 or better.

The ISO rating for the two Districts, the City, and County Fire in Zone 6 are:

- Cloverdale – Class 4 within the City, Class 5 within five miles of the Fire Station and Class 10 for areas beyond the five miles
- Healdsburg – Class 4/8B (as of June 2011)
- Geyserville – Class 6 in areas with hydrants and 8 for those areas without hydrants (as of September 2005)
- County Fire areas range from a Class 4 to 8B.

## 2.4.7 Incident Staffing

This section will list and describe the staffing plan for the Zone 6 agencies and then discuss their ability to individually and jointly deal with the fire risks present in the Zone.

**Table 22: Minimum Daily Staffing – Zone 6**

Agency	Minimum Career/ Apprentice/ Reserve	Minimum Stipend/ Reserve	Volunteer in Station	Total	Total Volunteers in Agency
Cloverdale FPD	2	1	Varies	3	25-30
Geyserville FPD	1	1	Varies	2	36
Healdsburg City	3	0	Varies	3	25 Reserves
Knights Valley	0	0	0	0	5
Dry Creek Rancheria Casino	1	1	Varies	2	27
Total	7	3	Varies	10	118-123

*Notes:*

*Cloverdale:*

*The volunteers and stipend firefighters are mostly younger, career driven. Many stipend firefighters live outside the District.*

*Geyserville:*

*Less than 50% of the volunteers live in the District.*

*Healdsburg:*

*Uses reserve firefighters, one of whom is scheduled on-duty evenings and weekends to ensure that a minimum of three personnel are on-duty.*



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*Knights Valley:* One of the five is the Fire Chief. As of December 2013 he was the only qualified fire apparatus driver/operator.

*Dry Creek Rancheria:* Supplements staffing to 3 or 4 a day with volunteers.

### Operational Analysis

All of the Zone 6 agencies are using fire service best practices to stretch very low revenues to provide at least one staffed fire crew in every major population area.

Healdsburg, Cloverdale, and Geyserville are using small career forces to provide a minimum, around-the-clock response. While the agencies might wish to provide a greater number of career personnel, given the modest funding available, which will be discussed below, paid employment at any reasonable level of compensation is difficult. This is compounded when pension considerations are included.

Healdsburg and Cloverdale have enrolled their career employees in the state CalPERS pension system at suburban to urban benefit levels. The increases for CalPERS pensions due to the recession continue to grow and will do so for the indefinite future.

Fire agencies in Zone 6 rely substantially on volunteers, with uncompensated positions, apprentices (at part-time pay), and volunteers who receive stipends.

All the agencies, except for Knights Valley, have a robust roster of volunteer firefighters. They not only have a larger population area to draw from, but they also have the fiscal ability to recruit, train, and equip volunteers from farther away areas. Knights Valley has too small of a population to recruit a large volunteer force. The area is somewhat isolated from the urban areas that produce young people trying to become firefighters by acquiring skills as volunteers.

Increased training standards, more double-income families, and workers who commute far distances to work make it difficult to maintain volunteers. In fact, within Zone 6, all of the agencies with a significant number of volunteers say that many of them are younger people seeking full-time employment in emergency services.

This is the pattern seen across the United States. California requires that volunteer firefighting training be equal to that of career firefighters. Volunteers must now donate considerable time both initially and annually to become and stay trained.

It is to the credit of the agencies in Zone 6 that the existing volunteer programs are as strong as they are.

As an example, at the Geysers fire in 2013, Cloverdale staffed four engines to send to the fire and to backfill the Cloverdale station for other local emergencies. As indicated above, many of Cloverdale's volunteer firefighters also are EMTs that staff units for the ambulance district. In

severe events, volunteers are called on to provide additional staffing. Because they must be recalled from home and work, travel to the station, and ultimately respond, extra units can usually be staffed within 20-30 minutes.

A major question facing the Zone 6 agencies becomes, "How long can the agencies maintain their volunteer forces at robust levels?" If volunteer forces fall to seriously low levels, such as at Knights Valley, a 24/7/365 response of a full *volunteer* crew is not a certainty.

CAL FIRE is not a reliable service for structural fire protection and EMS response because its mission is wildfire suppression, normally for about five months out of the year. Also, CAL FIRE has a response area much larger than Zone 6; thus, while they are a great ancillary resource for all types of incidents, they are not always available.

Given the revenue structure for all the fire agencies in Zone 6, they can remain sustainable only if costs do not grow and a strong volunteer force can be maintained. Any one of several changes could upend the existing balance and require increased revenues. This is especially true if it becomes critical to add more career employees.

#### **2.4.9 Factor 3: Determinations**

##### Response Time

Given the goals of the National Fire Protection Association, as indicated in this report, all of the agencies are responding within the ten to fourteen minute recommendations for suburban and rural response times, respectively. In Cloverdale and Healdsburg and the core population center in Geyserville, response times are much better than the recommendations.

This is a credit to the staffing plan of the larger agencies, as well as the appropriate location of fire stations in the population clusters. In Knights Valley, given the size of the area and the few volunteers, an eleven minute response time is certainly in the range of rural expectations.

As such, the Zone 6 fire stations are properly located and the fire agencies do not have a response time issue.

##### Fire Station Adequacy

The headquarters fire stations for the City of Healdsburg and Cloverdale Fire District are relatively new, built to fully meet the current needs of these agencies, and provide adequate room for some expansion of service levels. Each was funded through local capital borrowing strategies and neither imposes a fiscal hardship on either agency.

Geyserville's main fire station is eight years old and sufficient to meet the District's current needs. The District's other two fire stations in the Alexander and Dry Creek Valleys are smaller,

older stations and are marginally adequate to store apparatus and some equipment. They do not provide living facilities. The District has funding to provide building repairs as needed.

The Knights Valley fire station is a singular, large, garage-type building, partially separated into space for a small office and volunteer training/meeting room. The building dates to the 1970s and, while weather tight today, will eventually need a new roof, apparatus door, and/or wall repairs. Any of these will be beyond the fiscal capacity of the volunteers. In the past, for example, the local homeowners association's assistance was required to provide funds for roof repairs. The building is incapable of housing on-duty firefighters without modifications.

### Apparatus Adequacy Summary

All of the fire service providers in Zone 6 have apparatus of the type needed to meet the response needs in their areas for structure, wild land, and specialty rescue response. The larger agencies have capable reserve apparatus. Normal expectations are that depending on mileage and ability to be cost-effectively repaired, apparatus should provide 10-15 years of front-line service, and up to 10 more years of reserve service.

The City and Fire Districts, to their credit, have used good fiscal planning and maintained adequate fleets. The structure fire apparatus in Cloverdale are the oldest and, as such, will need to be replaced in the next five or so years. Given the current economy, this will create a fiscal hardship on the District.

In Knights Valley, the volunteers have typically purchased used apparatus and/or used some grant funds. The oldest apparatus are past replacement and safety standards age. Given the small fiscal capacity of the Volunteer Company, it does not currently have apparatus replacement funds.

### Staffing Adequacy Summary

The elected officials of the agencies are charged with providing fire services given available revenues, with the safety of the firefighters in mind. The relative rarity of fires leaving the building or parcel of origin show that, in Zone 6, the population centers can rely on a modest career firefighter staff and a level of fire service response lower than that of a more suburban or urban area.

Given the positive response times provided in this report, the staffing plans of Healdsburg, Cloverdale, and Geyserville, and the adequate fire apparatus and fire station locations, most of the significantly populated areas of Zone 6 receive primary response staffing in suburban and rural areas consistent with national best practice recommendations.

However, for serious emergencies requiring multiple firefighters and units, the agencies are dependent on each other and their volunteer staff to respond. These are weak links, and even

one agency's failing to get its callback personnel can hurt the multi-agency response anywhere in the Zone. Yet, due to the dedication of the off-duty career and volunteer personnel, this rarely occurs. All of the firefighters are very committed and understand that the primary responders depend on the backup staffing to arrive.

The staffing issues in Knights Valley are harder to solve given the constraints of distance, small population, and available revenues. Some form of assistance for part-time staffing would be the best "bridging" solution, especially during the 40-hour week when volunteer availability is the lowest. This might be a two-person unit stationed part time in the Valley that could perform station/apparatus checks, conduct training, and also remain available for a faster response than units from the western areas of Zone 6, or from across the County line in Calistoga.

### Staffing Options for Improved Service Levels

If the volunteer force cannot be maintained, or if one or more of the Zone 6 agencies would like an increased level of service for single-unit or multiple-unit response, what could the increase look like?

The history of fire service growth is the same in all communities: start with all volunteers, then use stipend positions, then a few career firefighters and, when necessary, mostly career forces.

Thus, when the Zone 6 agencies desire more guaranteed staffing on duty, they would first use more stipend, reserve, part-time, and/or apprentice positions that are less costly. Cloverdale is currently taking this approach. If and when more revenues become available, the agencies could add career positions.

Given the assets to be protected, travel time between the fire stations in the separated population centers, and response to an interior fire attack when needed under CalOSHA regulations, the departments with staffed stations could grow their on-duty force up to four firefighters per day. This would be an increase of one per crew in Cloverdale, Healdsburg, and Dry Creek Rancheria, with two per day more needed in Geyserville.

When and if such an increase could be funded, the total on-duty force 24/7/365 in Zone 6 would grow from ten to fifteen firefighters. This would provide a force suitable to respond to serious fires commensurate with what is delivered in more suburban/urban areas.

As stated before, not all these positions must be full-time, career positions, enrolled in benefits with CalPERS. The agencies today are adept at blended staffing and they can continue this as long as they can maintain a part-time workforce.

The Fire Districts have developed a preliminary plan for staffing a consolidated agency, which is presented in Appendix 2.

## 2.5 FACTOR 4—FINANCIAL ABILITY OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES

This section focuses on the financial ability of the Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Protection Districts to fund needed services for current and future residents. It examines the current fiscal condition of these Districts, forecasts future costs, and estimates the current ability of the Districts to consolidate, based on their current staffing patterns.

This study does not make recommendations regarding potential sources of additional funding since that is a policy choice of those who may use this report as context for making those future decisions.

As background information, data on the revenue generated within Zone 6 by CSA 40 is provided along with the fiscal relationship between the County and the Knights Valley Volunteer Fire Company.

In order to provide an overview of the staffing and cost of operating the fire services in the City of Healdsburg, the two Fire Districts, and Knights Valley, Table 23 provides the current permanent staffing levels and the budgets for FY 2013-14.

**Table 23: Fire Organization Size and Budget Comparison**

	<b>Cloverdale</b>	<b>Healdsburg</b>	<b>Geyserville</b>	<b>Knights Valley</b>	<b>Dry Creek Rancheria</b>
Full-Time Line Firefighters	3	7	3	0	3
Staff	1 P/T Fire Chief 1 P/T Office	1 Fire Chief 1 Fire Marshal 1 Office	1 P/T Fire Chief 1 P/T Office	0	1
Number of Fire Stations	1	1	3	1	1
FY 13-14 Budget	\$1,165,354	\$2,451,678	\$852,900	\$22,035	\$650,000

The following two sections forecast the fiscal condition of the two Fire Districts. Table 24 and 25 show the Districts' estimated revenues and expenditures for Fiscal Years 2014-15 through 2018-19. The fire chiefs of the two Districts provided the baseline budget for FY 2014-15. Projected future revenue and expenditure trends are based on Citygate's long-term experience in multi-year budgeting both as practicing professionals and as consultants.

Knights Valley received minimal \$22,035 funding from the County for FY 2013-14, used largely for training, equipment, supplies and insurance. CSA 40 is the source of this funding.

Information for the City of Healdsburg is not provided below because the Healdsburg Fire Department is funded from the City General Fund. The City does provide fire response into neighboring unincorporated County areas and receives from the County \$96,000 per year to provide fire services for the Dry Creek-Sotoyome area, and \$33,000 per year for the Fitch Mountain area. This service contract expires at the end of FY 2014-15.

It is important to remember that the City has choices it can make regarding how to allocate its resources among its municipal services, including the level of fire service the City would like to provide. Additionally, the City has not asked LAFCO to include it in any consolidation review that involves the two Fire Districts.

### **2.5.1 Cloverdale Fire Protection District**

The budget for the Cloverdale FPD reflects the fire chief's acknowledgment that some of the maintenance and operations accounts have been underfunded as the District has tried to balance its budget each year.

The estimated additional operations need is approximately \$45,000 per year. The deficit column in Table 24 reflects the inclusion of this extra expenditure, while the last column in the table reflects the deficit the District is expected to incur if it continues to underfund maintenance and operation expenses for another year. Underfunding maintenance and operations needs will adversely affect the quality of service if this continues for more than a few years.

A large cost element, compared to Geyserville, is that full-time Cloverdale safety personnel are in the CalPERS retirement system; rates for Cloverdale are expected to rise from 29.581 percent of payroll for those positions, up to approximately 45 percent in five years.

Cloverdale receives approximately half of its revenue from property taxes, and the balance from a parcel tax. The parcel tax changes relatively little from year to year, which means that the District's revenue growth will not likely keep pace with the impact of inflation. The District does not have a reserve to use to fund the deficit when expenditures exceed revenue.

Projected Cloverdale deficits in future years are principally the product of the above factors.

### **2.5.2 Geyserville Fire Protection District**

The Geyserville FPD also will be experiencing a deficit in coming years, but its situation is not as difficult as that facing the Cloverdale FPD. Geyserville staff is not enrolled in a retirement system, which significantly reduces their annual expenses. The District's largest source of revenue is the property tax, which is expected to increase, in total dollars, more than the Cloverdale revenue sources.

**Table 24: Cloverdale FPD Budget Projections**

Fiscal Year	Revenue	Salaries and Benefits	Operating and Capital Expenditures	Deficit	Deficit Without Needed Equipment and Supplies
FY 14-15	\$989,966	\$789,353	\$423,023	(\$222,410)	(\$177,410)*
FY 15-16	\$1,011,673	\$821,205	\$424,660	(\$234,192)	
FY 16-17	\$1,034,148	\$846,720	\$430,253	(\$242,825)	
FY 17-18	\$1,057,418	\$874,728	\$435,958	(\$253,268)	
FY 18-19	\$1,081,510	\$903,623	\$441,777	(\$263,890)	

Source: Fire Chief for FY 2014-15 Budget and most recent available CalPERS rate increases, beginning at 29.581% in FY 2014-15 and increasing to 42.48% in FY 2018-19. The CalPERS rate increase is projected to be approximately 45% by FY 2019-20.

\*Underfunding maintenance and operations needs in future years will impact the quality of service provided by the District.

A particularly difficult situation for Geyserville, however, is that its annual \$336,000 contract with the Dry Creek Rancheria Casino was changed to provide, at this time, only \$100,000 over the next three years. There is also no guarantee that the payments will be made on time, if at all. The latest payment schedule is voluntary donation.

Geyserville has a fund balance that will be nearly \$800,000 to begin Fiscal Year 2014-15; this provides some ability for the District to continue operating at its current level. But using reserves to balance a budget over future years provides little ability for the District either to increase its service level or to handle unexpected expenditures. Should a consolidation with the Cloverdale Fire District be considered, this fund balance should not be used to stabilize Cloverdale's operating deficit. Table 25 shows the budget projections for five years beginning with FY 14-15.

**Table 25. Geyserville FPD Budget Projection**

Fiscal Year	Revenue	Salaries and Benefits	Operating and Capital Expenditures	Deficit
FY 14-15	\$862,313	\$498,546	\$437,483	(\$73,716)
FY 15-16	\$891,141	\$509,799	\$447,684	(\$66,342)
FY 16-17	\$920,985	\$521,399	\$451,724	(\$52,138)
FY 17-18	\$951,882	\$533,359	\$455,794	(\$37,271)
FY 18-19	\$983,867	\$547,519	\$459,894	(\$23,546)

Source: Fire Chief for FY 2014-15 Budget.

### 2.5.3 County Service Area 40 Revenue

The revenue generated for FY 2013-14 in the portion of CSA 40 that is within Zone 6 is estimated in Table 26. The information is provided only to illustrate the broader revenue context in which the Zone 6 area fire providers operate. This CSA 40 revenue is part of the revenue source used to fund County Fire. It is not intended to be a recommendation of any policy choice regarding how the Districts' future revenue needs might be met.

**Table 26: CSA 40 Zone 6 Revenue**

<b>Property Tax Revenue Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Geyserville Area	\$445,776
Remainder of Zone 6	\$424,206
Mello Roos District Revenue (Dry Creek Area)	\$108,000
Remaining Sources Less Admin. Costs	\$59,025
Estimated Total CSA 40 Zone 6 Revenue	\$1,037,007

### 2.5.4 Factor 4 – Determinations

1. Cloverdale Fire Protection District is currently running a deficit budget and operating adjustments will need to be made by the District if additional revenue is not available.
2. Geyserville Fire Protection District is currently running a deficit budget and operating adjustments will need to be made by the District as its current reserves are reduced if additional revenue is not available.



## **2.6 FACTOR 5—STATUS OF, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR, SHARED FACILITIES**

Public service costs may be reduced and service efficiencies increased if service providers develop strategies for sharing resources. For example, service providers in Sonoma County currently share communication centers. Sharing facilities and excess system capacity decrease duplicative efforts, may lower costs, and minimize unnecessary resource consumption.

On a regional or zone basis, many activities can and should be shared. The focus of this section is to identify the areas where joint coordination has helped the agencies carry out their individual responsibilities and identify any other potential opportunities.

### **2.6.1 Mutual and Automatic Aid**

The City and the Fire Districts have agreed to provide supplemental fire, rescue, and related services upon request by providing personnel, services, and equipment. This is a prearranged plan between agencies for reciprocal assistance upon request by the first-response agency.

Under this agreement the requesting party is not required to provide compensation to the assisting party for the services rendered. The cooperative agreement is especially important for districts since, for structure fires, most districts must rely upon assistance in order to assemble an adequate work force to fight the fire and to comply with specific safety regulations.

Many of the Districts have also entered into automatic aid agreements whereby there is a prearranged plan or contract between agencies for an automatic response for service. Many times the closest available engine responds without regard to District boundaries.

### **2.6.2 Joint Power Authorities**

Joint powers authorities (JPAs) are permitted under Government Code Section 6502, which authorizes two or more public agencies to operate collectively. At this time, joint power authorities do not require approval by LAFCO. A JPA is distinct from individual member agencies and has a separate operating board of directors.

Several JPAs exist as cooperative efforts of the participating fire Districts to develop and manage services and to combine efforts to achieve economies of scale.

### **2.6.3 Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM)**

On January 27, 2003, 9-1-1 emergency dispatch system for Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS was launched. It is fully integrated with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and links all but a few police and fire departments within the County, as well as all fire and medical first responders. This system ensures that the closest appropriate resource will respond in the minimal amount of time.

#### **2.6.4 Other Coordinated Programs**

In Zone 6 and across Sonoma County fire districts have worked cooperatively on other program and issues including:

- County Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR), Hazardous Material Response Team (Haz/Mat) and County Joint Fire Investigations Unit (FIU): Several rural fire districts provide assistance in emergency situations that require joint resources and specialized training. The specialized teams cooperate and work with the County Office of Emergency Services.
- Fire Agencies Self-Insurance System (FASIS): This is a workers' compensation program for fire districts. An 11-person board of directors governs the agency that offers the insurance. The agency offers legal assistance, workplace safety training and risk management.

#### **2.6.5 Training**

Firefighting is an essential public service. It takes quality-trained professionals and volunteers to keep communities safe and to maintain an adequate level of service. As new or improved technologies for firefighting are introduced, additional training becomes essential.

Training programs and facilities are limited for the rural fire districts. In order to meet training requirements, firefighters must often travel out of the County for the required classes, which takes away from the time a firefighter could be available for duty.

Districts that have the ability to provide training courses share with neighboring fire districts, even with an adjacent out-of-county fire district. Currently, a fire technology program is provided by Santa Rosa Junior College; however, classes offered do not prepare a student beyond the introductory training.

#### **2.6.6 Cooperative Practices of Zone 6 Fire Agencies**

In addition to training activities, the agencies share in other cooperative ways, as summarized in Table 27.

#### **2.6.7 Determinations**

The Districts and City are participating with other jurisdictions in sharing opportunities, including, but not limited to, dispatch, training, accounting, and mutual aid.

**Table 27: Review of Cooperative Practices**

Cooperative Practice	Observation and Findings
The district participates in the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM)	Healdsburg and Geyserville Fire are parties to the regional dispatch center. Cloverdale does not participate.
The district has mutual aid agreements with other districts.	All of the Zone 6 fire agencies participate in multiple mutual and or automatic aid agreements.
The district contracts for accounting and audit services with other districts or the County.	Yes.
The district participates with other districts or the County for equipment purchasing or leasing.	Yes.
The district participates with other districts or the County in joint insurance programs.	Not determined.
The district has an “Amador Contract” with CAL FIRE.	None can afford to do so at this time. Cloverdale did for several years until it was no longer affordable.
The district participates in joint training with other districts or the County.	Yes.
The district participates with another district or the County joint administration services.	Not determined.
The district shares facilities with other districts.	At this time the Districts do not directly share facilities, as they are geographically too far apart to make it feasible.
The district shares a fire chief or other staff with another district.	They do not for administration. However, Cloverdale, Healdsburg, and Geyserville all share duty chief incident command coverage responsibilities and share from a common list of stipend firefighters

## **2.7 FACTOR 6—ACCOUNTABILITY FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE NEEDS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES**

One of the factors in evaluating agencies' responsiveness to community needs is the number of avenues of opportunity for property owners, registered voters and residents to communicate with the civic leadership.

The responsiveness of an organization can include:

1. having an accessible and accountable elected or appointed decision-making body with agency staff;
2. encouraging and valuing public participation;
3. disclosing budgets, programs, and plans;
4. soliciting public input when considering rate changes and work and infrastructure plans; and
5. evaluating outcomes of plans, programs, and operations and disclosing results to the public.

No district is expected to have an outreach or community involvement program that encompasses all the best practices. However, it is important to review the various avenues of communications between the agency and the community to determine if improvements can be achieved.

The agencies that are the subject of this MSR offers their residents several opportunities for effective communication of their service needs.

Although there is no standard benchmark for determining an agency's performance, one thing is clear in this modern age of the Internet: a website is essential to good community communication. Both of the Fire Districts and the City of Healdsburg have websites that provide descriptive information about the fire service and information on participation in the governance process by residents.

Table 28 provides 17 "best practice" criteria for reviewing a fire agency's ability to meet the needs of the community. In the column opposite each best practice is an observation and finding related to the subject agencies.

**Table 28: Community Service Best Practices**

Best Practice	Observation and Findings
The fire agency has a website that is informative and up to date.	Yes.
The fire agency has developed a mission or vision statement which is posted on the web site.	Yes.
The fire agency has developed a long range (3 to 5 years) strategic plan.	The Geyserville FPD is developing a long-range plan. The Healdsburg Fire Department and the Cloverdale FPD list their mission and values on their websites.
Joint work sessions of the Management Staff and the Board of Directors are conducted at least once a year.	The City reports an annual session on its website and the Geyserville FPD is engaged in a strategic planning process. The Cloverdale FPD does not report annual work sessions to establish goals and objectives.
The Board of Directors or City Council conducts an annual retreat to discuss and plan future activities open to the public.	The City reports an annual session on its website and the Geyserville FPD is engaged in a strategic planning process, including a workshop in early 2014. The Cloverdale FPD does not report annual work sessions to establish goals and objectives.
The District Board of Directors or City Council has adopted bylaws.	The Districts operate with by laws and the City operates under the guidance of State Legislation.
The District Board of Directors or members of the City Council are elected by registered voters and all positions are filled	Yes
New Board members and Council members are provided with an orientation and ongoing training.	Orientation and guidance are required under state law.
Meetings of the District Board of Directors or City Council are conducted pursuant to the Brown Act.	Yes, based on all available information.
Meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the website.	Yes.
Standards for non-emergency customer service response to telephone calls and e-mails are established and monitored.	Not determined.

Best Practice	Observation and Findings
The fire agency surveys customers following calls for service.	None noted on their websites.
The fire agency prepares press releases or articles for local newspapers.	Not on an ongoing regular basis.
The fire agency provides residents with a semiannual or annual report or newsletter.	Yes, in various forms by agency.
The fire agency surveys residents and property owners on the needs of the community.	Not determined.
The fire agency encourages volunteers and community participation.	Not determined.
The fire agency participates in the annual “fire prevention week” with special programs.	Yes, the agencies provide year round public education programs.
The fire agency has an ongoing school fire safety-training program.	Yes, to different extent by each agency.
The fire agency provides CPR and other medical assistance programs.	Yes, in various forms.
The annual budget has a work plan and objectives that are posted on the website.	Only the City of Healdsburg posts budget information on its website.
The fire agency performs an audit of its financial transactions and posts it to the website.	Only the City of Healdsburg posts its audit on its website.
A quarterly report is generated for the fire agency reporting actual vs. planned performance against these objectives and reported on the website.	No.
The fire agency conducts annual or semi-annual open houses.	Not determined.
The fire agency participates in the Sonoma Special Fire Agency Association.	Yes.
The fire agency supports a non-profit fire association.	All of the fire agencies use “paid call firefighters” to supplement their full-time staff. The two Districts and Knights Valley cooperate with volunteer associations that support the fire department.

### **2.7.1 Operational Efficiencies**

The fire agencies in Zone 6 and the Sonoma County Fire Services already cooperate at a high level. In particular, Cloverdale, Healdsburg, and Geyserville cooperate by:

- Sharing incident command chief coverage;
- Providing joint training and training schedules;
- Aligning their operational standard operating procedures;
- Coordinating multi-unit response to serious emergencies;
- Jointly planning for the Zone's operational benefit;
- Being willing to discuss more formal consolidation, contracts for service, or Joint Powers Authority.

### **2.7.2 Factor 6 - Determinations**

All fire agencies in Zone 6 should post their budgets and audits on their websites and provide annual goal-setting workshops with the board and residents, similar to the activity now being undertaken by the Geyserville Board of Directors. These activities, if conducted annually, will be of substantial value to the public.

### **2.8 Factor 7 - Any Other Matter Related to Effective or Efficient Service Delivery, as Required by Commission Policy**

The Commission has adopted, as required by law, policies pertaining to the urban development, spheres of influence, annexations, open space, and the physical form and functionality of cities and special districts. The adopted policies which relate to the subject MSR are:

- Consolidations and Mergers
- Duplication of Authority
- Premature Extension of Urban Services – Special Districts
- Spheres of Influence – Independent and Dependent Special Districts

Table 29 summarizes the applicable policies and provides commentary about the Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Protection Districts in relation to these policies. Full review of the policies and discussion is encouraged.

**Table 29: Summary of Applicable Commission Policies**

Policy	Review Comments
<b>Consolidations and Mergers</b>	
<p>The Commission encourages local government agencies to cooperate with each other in pursuit of providing services most efficiently and reducing costs. As a significant initial step, the Commission encourages agencies to enter into functional agreements, such as memoranda of understanding or joint powers agreements, in instances where the results of a special study initiated by agencies or a Municipal Service Review finds that such agreements would result in the better provision of services and reduction of costs. Experience under such agreements may determine the practical implications of potential future changes of organization, such as consolidations or mergers.</p> <p>In instances where the implementation of such a functional agreement has provided satisfactory results for all affected agencies, the Commission encourages agencies to pursue changes of organization, such as consolidations or mergers.</p> <p>By law, LAFCO has the power to initiate consolidations and mergers. Although the Commission generally defers operational considerations to local agencies, it reserves the right to initiate proposals for consolidation, or merger, when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is documentation through a Municipal Service Review or similar study that such a reorganization is physically and economically feasible, and</li> <li>• Reasonable efforts have been made by the Commission and affected agencies' staff to encourage the initiation of the action by resolution of one or more of the affected agencies.</li> </ul> <p>All Municipal Service Reviews shall include review and analysis of any potential consolidations and mergers of the affected agencies.</p>	<p>The Commission encourages cooperation between agencies and consolidation, when appropriate.</p>
<b>Duplication of Authority</b>	
<p>The Commission discourages inclusion of territory in the spheres of influence of two or more local agencies possessing common powers (also known as overlapping territory).</p> <p>Territories located within a special district's boundaries and within the sphere of influence of a city shall be excluded from the special district's sphere of influence.</p>	<p>There is no duplication of authority within Zone 6.</p>



Policy	Review Comments
<b>Premature Extension of Urban Services – Special Districts</b>	
<p>Prior to the Commission’s consideration of an expansion of a sphere of influence or a change of organization involving annexation of territory into a district, the applicant shall provide written evidence from the affected district that it has the physical and fiscal capability to adequately serve the subject territory.</p> <p>The Commission discourages the extension of urban services (i.e., water and sewer service) in the absence of either existing development or plans for imminent development.</p>	<p>Absent identification of additional funding sources, extension of services should be denied</p>
<b>Spheres of Influence and Municipal Service Reviews</b>	
<p>In updating spheres of influence, the Commission’s general policies are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The Commission will review all spheres of influences every five years for each governmental agency providing municipal services. Municipal services include cities and jurisdictions providing police, fire protection, waste disposal, and water services.</li> <li>B. Sphere of influence changes initiated by any agency providing a municipal service shall require either an updated or new service review.</li> <li>C. Spheres of influence of districts not providing municipal services including, but not limited to, ambulance, recreation, hospital, resource conservation, cemetery, and pest control shall be updated as necessary.</li> </ul> <p>This policy does not preclude the Commission from undertaking special studies or service reviews when requested by an agency or initiated by the Commission.</p>	<p>Absent identification of additional funding sources, consolidation of the Districts is not recommended..</p>
<b>Spheres of Influence – Independent and Dependent Special Districts</b>	
<p>In establishing spheres of influence for special districts, the Commission’s general policies are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Parcels within a special district should be within the district’s sphere of influence. Include frontage roads within the sphere of influence.</li> <li>B. Creation of islands, i.e., territory to be served by the district which is outside of and not contiguous to main district boundaries and which may or may not be owned by the district, is generally contrary to Commission policy and shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.</li> </ul>	<p>The spheres of influence of the Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Protection Districts are consistent with the policy.</p>

### **III. CONSOLIDATION**

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The Cloverdale and Geyserville FPDs have requested that LAFCO study the feasibility of the two agencies consolidating into a single fire district.

#### **3.1 FIRE CHIEF POSITION**

Consolidation of the two Districts would result in modest savings from consolidating administrative operations, although this is offset by the fact that both agencies now manage using a part-time Fire Chief.

Consolidation would require a full-time Fire Chief because of the expanded operation and geographical separation of the main fire stations in each District. While the amount of pay for a Fire Chief is a policy decision for a consolidated Board of Directors, the dollar amount does not significantly change the overall deficit that a consolidated District would encounter.

Additionally, during an initial consolidation period considerable work would be required to merge the Districts' operating, fiscal business, and Board of Director operations. The two Fire Chiefs state that, for a period of time, they believe two Chiefs would be needed to implement the consolidation.

The two District Fire Chiefs participate in the response system utilizing three fire departments in Zone 6 with shared duty chief responsibilities. Each District chief shares, along with Healdsburg, a portion of the responsibility to serve as incident commander at major events.

If a single Fire Chief position is provided in a consolidation, this change would reduce the ability of a consolidated district to provide incident command service. Another "fix" would be needed to supplement the single Fire Chief position to provide incident command service with the City of Healdsburg. The cost of this change for the Districts is not in the fiscal projections above as there are several ways the consolidated fire district could choose to provide this position.

#### **3.2 RETIREMENT SYSTEM COSTS**

Consolidation presents some other fiscal challenges. Since the Geyserville employees are not part of CalPERS, joining the two districts would leave two options.

In the first, these employees can join the new CalPERS retirement plan which costs significantly less for those newly entering the system.

Alternatively, the Cloverdale FPD could close out its CalPERS account, but at a significant cost, and have all new safety employees in a consolidated district without a retirement system, similar to the current Geyserville practice.

Cloverdale is expected to pay approximately 45 percent of its payroll costs for CalPERS by FY 2019-20, an increase from the present 29.581 percent. Although Cloverdale may negotiate a greater share of the retirement cost to be paid by employees, the CalPERS rate on total payroll can be expected to be near the projections that come from CalPERS. If former Geyserville employees are included in the CalPERS system, it would cost the consolidated District about 11.5 percent of salary if they receive CalPERS retirement benefits at the newest rates for employees just entering CalPERS.

If the Cloverdale FPD were to leave the CalPERS system, the one-time cost would be \$2,265,000, which is the estimated liability to CalPERS. This money would be necessary for CalPERS to pay off the Cloverdale unfunded CalPERS liability and to invest to ensure that CalPERS can pay the retirement benefit earned by Cloverdale employees up to the time the District terminates the CalPERS contract. CalPERS may provide a payment schedule over succeeding years, but this is an arrangement that the District would need to work out with CalPERS.

While Cloverdale may not decide to leave the CalPERS system, it is important that the public understands that leaving the CalPERS system would still result in an ongoing cost to the District for the prior years of liabilities incurred.

In searching for alternatives, a consolidated District would not have the option to lower the level of retirement benefits to current and former employees, in order to lower future retirement costs, since the retirement benefit is a vested right that a District cannot change. However, new employees would come under the substantially-reduced retirement system; their retirement cost to the District is currently estimated to be 11.5 percent of salary per year.

Overall, it is important to understand that, in a consolidation, at the current time, CalPERS does not intend for such action to be used as a means of reducing the retirement benefits of employees, such as those in Cloverdale FPD. The general CalPERS intent is that employees maintain the same or a very similar level of retirement benefits in a consolidation.

Table 30 shows the retirement rates and liabilities for the Cloverdale FPD.

### **3.3 WAGE DIFFERENCES**

Another issue in considering consolidation of the two Districts is the difference in wages for employees. As a condition of and prior to consolidation, the two Districts would need to first reach agreement with employees regarding future pay and benefits. The gap in wages that

needs to be resolved between the two agencies is illustrated in Table 31 along with the comparative wages from Healdsburg, which is not part of this study.

In consolidating, there would need to be a staffing transition plan that results in a “harmonization” of pay schedules after a multi-year period. Generally, this harmonization leads to higher salaries and benefit costs.

**Table 30: Retirement Rates and Liabilities**

District	FY 14-15 Retirement Rate – Most Recent Actuarial Report	FY 2019-20 Retirement Rate – Approx.	Prior Year Side Fund Debt Owed to CalPERS	Unfunded Liability	Est. Cost to Terminate the Retirement Plan
Cloverdale	29.581%	45.00%	\$49,543	\$574,377	\$2,265,000
Geyserville	Not in CalPERS				

*Source: FY14-15 retirement rate and liabilities have been provided by CalPERS documents. The 45% rate for FY 2019-20 is consistent with CalPERS projections.*

**Table 31: Wage Differences Among the Three Agencies**

District	Firefighter	Engineer or Lieutenant	Captain	Fire Chief
Cloverdale	\$59,865	\$73,457	\$85,431	\$50,751*
Geyserville	None	\$60,075	\$66,190	\$30,000*
Healdsburg	\$80,616	-	\$93,588	\$161,352

*\* Part-time position*

### 3.4 CONSOLIDATED BUDGET OF THE TWO DISTRICTS

Taking into account all of the fiscal information presented in this section, a combined budget for the consolidated districts can be developed. The budget is based upon:

- CalPERS rates already discussed
- adding a single full-time fire chief in place of two part-time fire chief positions
- increasing Geyserville employee wages to those comparable to the Cloverdale pay schedule
- adding the Geyserville employees to the CalPERS system under the new lower cost retirement plan,
- otherwise continuing the current staffing configurations, maintenance and operations and capital acquisition components in the two singular budgets.

Should a consolidated district determine that it does not need one or two pieces of apparatus, the overall deficit could be reduced by \$65,000 annually.

Table 32, nevertheless, illustrates that consolidating the two Districts substantially increases the deficit compared to the deficit projected for each separate District. For instance, the total projected deficit for the two Districts in FY 2014-15 is about \$296,126 absent consolidation (\$222,410 for Cloverdale and \$73,716 for Geyserville). A consolidated district would have an estimated deficit of \$586,153 for the same period, as shown below. The increase is primarily due to added retirement costs, wage increases and the cost of a full-time fire chief compared to two part-time fire chiefs.

**Table 32: Consolidated Budget for the Combined Two Districts**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Salaries and Benefits</b>	<b>Operating and Capital Expenditures</b>	<b>Deficit</b>
FY 14-15	\$1,852,279	\$1,592,926	\$845,506	(\$586,153)
FY 15-16	\$1,902,814	\$1,647,033	\$857,044	(\$601,263)
FY 16-17	\$1,955,133	\$1,696,498	\$866,371	(\$607,736)
FY 17-18	\$2,009,300	\$1,747,472	\$875,834	(\$614,006)
FY 18-19	\$2,065,377	\$1,799,994	\$885,434	(\$620,051)

Without consolidation, the two Districts will need to find additional revenue to cover current projected deficits to maintain the present level of service. Increasing that level of service will increase their deficits. Changing the current full-time staffing configuration to more part-time personnel may lower that deficit somewhat.

Consolidation presents the two Districts with the even greater problem of finding almost \$600,000 per year in added revenue, or reduced costs, just to maintain the current level of service.

Without finding additional revenue at the current staffing level of service, consolidation of the two Districts is not fiscally feasible.

### **3.5 DETERMINATIONS**

The Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Protection Districts cannot consolidate without finding additional revenue, or reducing costs, to, at a minimum, close the deficit, to provide service at their present level. Any intention to improve the service level with additional staffing would require even larger revenues to be provided.

## IV. SPHERE OF INFLUENCE REVIEW

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The sphere of influence (“SOI”) is a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Commission. The Geyserville and Cloverdale Fire Protection Districts are open to consolidation; if a consolidation is proposed the SOIs of the Districts would warrant amendment.

The Commission has adopted a policy guide for the process of consolidating districts. The policy is as follows:

*The Commission encourages local government agencies to cooperate with each other in pursuit of providing services most efficiently and reducing costs. As a significant initial step, the Commission encourages agencies to enter into functional agreements, such as memoranda of understanding or joint powers agreements, in instances where the results of a special study initiated by agencies or a Municipal Service Review finds that such agreements would result in the better provision of services and reduction of costs. Experience under such agreements may determine the practical implications of potential future changes of organization, such as consolidations or mergers.*

*In instances where the implementation of such a functional agreement has provided satisfactory results for all affected agencies, the Commission encourages agencies to pursue changes of organization, such as consolidations or mergers.*

*By law, LAFCO has the power to initiate consolidations and mergers. Although the Commission generally defers operational considerations to local agencies, it reserves the right to initiate proposals for consolidation, or merger, when:*

- There is documentation through a Municipal Service Review or similar study that such a reorganization is physically and economically feasible, and*
- Reasonable efforts have been made by the Commission and affected agencies’ staff to encourage the initiation of the action by resolution of one or more of the affected agencies.*

*All Municipal Service Reviews shall include review and analysis of any potential consolidations and mergers of the affected agencies.*

This Municipal Service Review concludes that the consolidation of the two districts should proceed if the two Fire Districts have:

1. A revenue source approved by the Board of Directors and the electorate eliminates any current operating deficit and provides an adequate revenue source to continue a level of service no less than what was provided during the Fiscal Year 2012-13.
2. An agreement with employees regarding any changes in salaries, benefits, promotional opportunities, and working conditions.

To update a SOI the Commission must make several determinations, pursuant to the requirements of MSR Government Code Section §56425, which states:

- (e) *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 each of the following:*
- (1) *The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.*
  - (2) *The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.*
  - (3) *The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.*
  - (4) *The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.*

The consolidation of the two Districts from geographical and operational perspectives is logical. However, since neither District has adequate fiscal resources to maintain the current level of services, additional funding, or a reduction in costs, is necessary.

Prior to any consideration of consolidation by LAFCO, the Districts should provide proof that a consolidated District is fiscally viable. Because that is not evident at this time, **no changes are recommended to the sphere of influence of either agency.**

A service and fiscal issue that needs to be reconciled is the provision of service in the Knights Valley and Geysers Steam Field area.

In most of the areas within Zone 6 beyond the boundaries of Healdsburg and the two Fire Districts, the Cloverdale Fire District and the City of Healdsburg are not reimbursed for the expenses they incur for providing fire service outside their jurisdictions; the exception is the two current contracts that Healdsburg has with the County to provide service to Sotoyome and Fitch Mountain areas. Yet, both Healdsburg and Cloverdale are part of the first response force, along with Geyserville, into the unincorporated areas such as the Geysers field area.

The Zone 6 Fire Districts believe that they could do a better job over time if they consolidated at least the two Fire Districts, providing that additional revenues were made available from the County areas not within a fire district or existing contract area. The Districts would then be



compensated for their response to these “unassigned” areas. If such revenues were transferred, the Districts could offset part or all of their projected deficits.

# **APPENDIX 1**

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## **DESCRIPTIONS OF FIRE SERVICE AREAS**

### **CLOVERDALE /NORTHEAST COUNTY**

The Cloverdale/Northeast County Planning Area includes the city of Cloverdale and the community of Geyserville. The rugged Mendocino Highlands on the west and the Mayacamas Mountains on the east surround the fertile Russian River Valley, including Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys. The area is also rich in other resources, including streams, riparian zones, fish and wildlife habitat, geothermal steam, construction aggregates, and water for domestic and agricultural use. Lake Sonoma and the Russian River also provide many recreational opportunities. Lands outside of the valley floors are severely constrained and relatively inaccessible.

The Land Use Element provides for a population of 18,460, a gain of 5,709 residents from year 2000. 11,200 of these residents are anticipated to live within the Cloverdale Urban Service Area. While agriculture, geothermal development, and manufacturing are the primary sources of employment, major growth is primarily in the retail and service sectors.

Lake Sonoma and increased tourism related to the wine industry, particularly in Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys, will create pressure for additional recreation and visitor serving uses. In recent years, increases in tourism have been primarily associated with winery promotions and events.

Demand for rural residential uses may increase in the agricultural valleys due to their scenic value and proximity to urban areas. Resource production must be regulated to avoid conflicts with other land uses, damage to the river, and loss of agricultural land. Many of the hillside areas are subject to severe constraints, poor access and shortage of services.

Lands within Cloverdale's Sphere of Influence include large vacant commercial and industrial parcels that currently lack urban services. Also, some commercial and industrial uses have developed outside of Cloverdale's urban boundary. Lands within the City's sphere also need to be retained for urban residential development to meet housing needs. Clear policy is needed to guide the type and location of urban development around Cloverdale to assure that public services are provided.

### **HEALDSBURG AND ENVIRONS**

The Healdsburg and Environs Planning Area is located in north central Sonoma County. High quality wines are produced from the vineyards in Dry Creek Valley and the Russian River Basin.

The Basin is also used for gravel mining and recreation. Adjacent valley floors are subject to flooding. The steep and geologically unstable hillsides of the Mendocino Highlands on the west have limited access and are primarily used as grazing lands. The Mill Creek area has extensive timber stands.

Healdsburg and Windsor are the two urban centers and are located along the Highway 101 corridor. Areas outside of the valley floors and lower foothills are relatively inaccessible and sparsely populated. Employment is provided by agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries.

The land use plan anticipates a total population of 51,460, an increase of 10,664 residents over the 2000 level. Most future growth is expected in Healdsburg and Windsor. The rural area is projected to have little growth. Employment growth is expected in the service and retail sectors and growth in the tourism industry. As in the Cloverdale Planning Area, increased reliance upon tourism has spurred tremendous growth in agricultural promotion activities.

The unique agricultural, resource, scenic, and recreational values of this planning area create development pressures and land use conflicts. At issue is the protection of agricultural and resource lands, the extent of urban development in physically constrained areas with few services, the location and extent of visitor serving uses, and the extent of Urban Service Areas for Windsor and Healdsburg.”

# APPENDIX II

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## PRELIMINARY STAFFING PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATED DISTRICTS



### *CLOVERDALE AND GEYSERVILLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS*

August 18, 2014

Sonoma County LAFCO

RE: Addendum to Cloverdale/Geyserville MSR

LAFCO Chair Jean Kapolchok,

On behalf of the Cloverdale and Geyserville Fire Districts we would like the attached staffing model addendums added to the Zone Six Municipal Services Review. Both districts support the majority of the MSR findings but believe the estimated costs for upgrading staffing were overstated by the consultants. Changes in the California Public Employees Retirement program and a phased approach to having parity within the two districts would minimize the retirement and employee cost liability of the reorganized districts. Also, the Geyserville Fire Protection District is not in financial crisis or about to run a deficit budget as described in the MSR.

There is one other alternative that we, the Cloverdale and Geyserville Board Ad Hoc Committee would like the Commission to consider. The Citygate MSR suggested that reorganizing Cloverdale and Geyserville might not be prudent at this time due to the need for additional revenue to create sustainability. If the commission agrees with that analysis, we strongly encourage the Commission to consider allowing Geyserville Fire Protection District to annex subject territory in Zone Six (area they currently protect) and expand their SOI now. Existing fire service property tax revenue in the subject territory would greatly enhance the entire zones ability to deliver fire protection to the region. This could be accomplished by district reorganization after the revised SOI is complete (which would merge current Prop 4 limits) or via JPA similar to Sonoma Valley Fire Rescue Authority. Once the district expands their SOI many options become available to establish sustainability in providing fire protection to the northeastern zone of Sonoma County.

Sincerely,

Directors  
Carol Giovanatto  
Melanee Southard  
Paul Bernier  
Rob Stewart

Fire Chiefs  
Jason Jenkins  
Marshall Turbeville

District Consultant  
Brian Elliott -- FESC

## RESPONSE TO CITYGATE

Zone Six Agency	Current Min. Daily	Reorg./expand SOI
Healdsburg City Fire	3	3
Geyserville FPD	2	3
Cloverdale FPD	2	3
CalFire Amador (Cloverdale or Healdsburg station)	-0-	3
Dry Creek Rancheria Fire	3	3
One shared forty-hour Firefighter	0	1
Total	10	16

Total cost estimate for increasing staffing after reorganization and annexation \$692,000

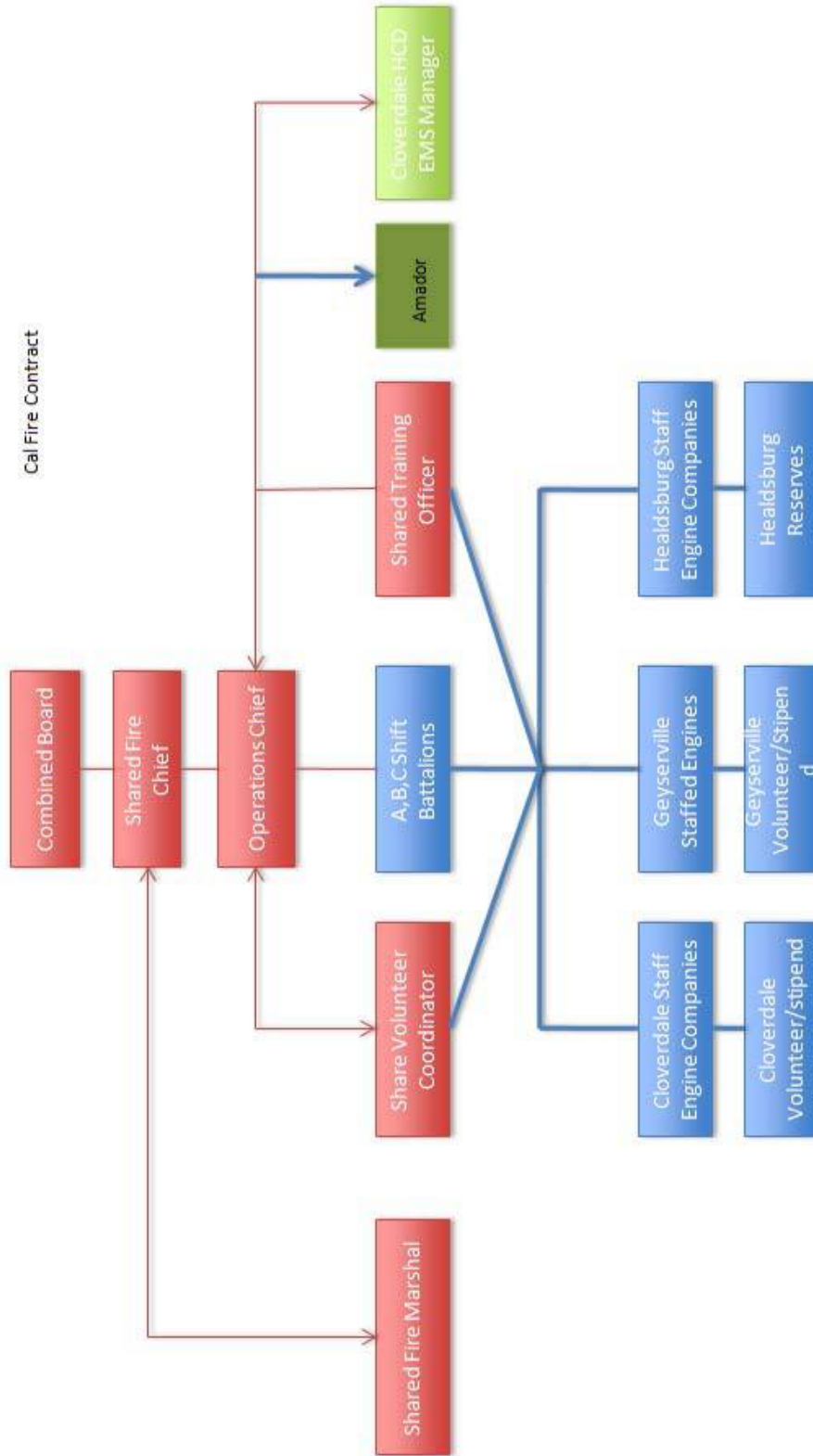
This is the additional amount of funds needed to create a daily staffing model of sixteen, as recommended in the Citygate MSR using existing zone personnel and creating new positions and cooperative agreements with the Cal Fire.

- Amador contracts allow you to increase minimum staffing levels. Rather than opening both CalFire stations with Amador, which the state would probably not want to do, we would pay for one Amador station and additional firefighters to maintain one 3-0 engine company on the CalFire engine.

The reorganized fire district would have adequate funds from existing tax revenue to achieve this staffing model in the first year. Additional benefit would come to the Knights Valley area by sharing personnel, staffing the Jamestown Geyserville station and having the Knights Valley volunteers train with Healdsburg, Geyserville and Cloverdale. Tax funds in excess of personnel costs would go to the equipment purchase and replacement fund. The combined Prop 4 limits would meet the needs of this model and not violate the Gann limits.

# HYPOTHETICAL/CONCEPTUAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR NEW ZONE SIX FIRE DISTRICT

## Hypothetical/Conceptual Organizational Chart for New Zone Six Fire District



Red indicates shared total cost of the position in the JPA between the two agencies (Geyserville and Cloverdale). Blue indicates individual agency cost by agency and green indicates coordination and possible future JPA with the Health Care District for expanded coverage into Healdsburg and Amador agreements with the State.