

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW  
AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE STUDY  
FOR SONOMA VALLEY  
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICE AGENCIES**

**Subject Agencies:**

**City Of Sonoma (Fire)**

**Glen Ellen  
Fire Protection District**

**Kenwood  
Fire Protection District**

**Schell-Vista  
Fire Protection District**

**Valley of the Moon  
Fire Protection District**

**County Service Area 40 – Fire Services  
(Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department and IRP 31-75)**

**Public Review Draft**

**Sonoma Local Agency Formation Commission**

**October 2019**

**Project Name:** Municipal Service Review And Sphere Of Influence Study  
For Sonoma Valley Fire And Emergency Service Agencies

**Conducted By:** Sonoma Local Agency Formation Commission  
111 Santa Rosa Avenue, Ste. 240  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

**Date:** October 2019

**Subject Agencies:** City of Sonoma (Fire and EMS)  
1 The Plaza  
Sonoma, CA 95476

Glen Ellen Fire Protection District  
13455 Arnold Drive  
Glen Ellen, CA 95442

Kenwood Fire Protection District  
9045 Sonoma Highway  
Kenwood, CA 95452

Schell-Vista Fire Protection District  
22950 Broadway  
Sonoma, CA 95476

Sonoma County: Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department  
(County Service Area 40 – Fire Services)  
575 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District  
( Operating as Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority)  
630 2<sup>nd</sup> Street West  
Sonoma, CA 95476

**Agency Contacts:** Cathy Capriola, City Manager  
City of Sonoma

Peter Van Fleet, Board Chair  
Glen Ellen Fire Protection District

Darren Bellach, Chief  
Kenwood Fire Protection District  
Ray Mulas, Chief  
Schell-Vista Fire Protection District

Terri Wright, Administrative Analyst  
County Administrator's Office  
Sonoma County  
(County Service Area 40 – Fire Services)

Mike Jablonowski, Chief  
Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department

Steve Akre, Chief  
Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District  
(Operating as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue  
Authority)

**Date of Last MSR/SOI  
Adopted by LAFCO:**

Confirmation of Spheres of Influence in 2006  
Approval of Contract for Services, Valley of the Moon  
FPD to Glen Ellen FPD, 2018

**Table of Contents**

MSR/SOI Background .....	1
Municipal Service Review: Summary Determinations .....	6
Chart 1 Historical Call Volumes Generated Within Agency Territories .....	12
Table 1 Facility Inventory .....	16
Municipal Service Review: City of Sonoma (Fire & Emergency Medical Services) .....	20
Table 2: Historical Call for Service Volumes – City of Sonoma .....	24
Table 3: Response Time Statistics – City of Sonoma.....	25
Municipal Service Review: Glen Ellen Fire Protection District .....	30
Table 4: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth .....	33
Table 5: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Glen Ellen Fire Protection District .....	36
Table 6: Response Time Statistics – Glen Ellen Fire Protection District .....	36
Table 7: Glen Ellen FPD Financial Review.....	39
Table 8: Coordination Best Practices – Glen Ellen Fire Protection District .....	41
Municipal Service Review: Kenwood Fire Protection District .....	44
Table 9: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth .....	41
Table 10: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Kenwood Fire Protection District .....	50
Table 11: Response Time Statistics – Kenwood Fire Protection District .....	50
Table 12: Kenwood FPD Financial Review .....	52
Table 13: Coordination Best Practices – Kenwood Fire Protection District .....	55
Municipal Service Review: Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department (CSA 40) .....	58
Table 14: Response Time Statistics – Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department .....	61
Table 15: Financial Data for Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department Territory .....	62
Municipal Service Review: Schell-Vista Fire Protection District .....	65
Table 16: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth .....	68
Table 17: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Schell-Vista Fire Protection District ....	71
Table 18: Response Time Statistics – Schell-Vista Fire Protection District .....	71

Table 19: Schell-Vista FPD Budget Review .....	74
Table 20: Coordination Best Practices – Schell-Vista Fire Protection District .....	77
Municipal Service Review: Valley of the Moon fire Protection District .....	80
Table 21: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth .....	83
Table 22: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District .....	86
Table 23: Response Time Statistics – Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District .....	86
Table 24: Valley of the Moon FPD Financial Review.....	88
Table 25: Coordination Best Practices – Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District .	91
Spheres of Influence Amendments.....	94
Table 26: Sphere of Influence Amendment Evaluation .....	96

## **MSR/SOI BACKGROUND**

### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF LAFCO**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, as amended ("CKH Act") (California Government Code §§56000 et seq.), is LAFCO's governing law and outlines the requirements for preparing Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs) for periodic Sphere of Influence (SOI) updates.

MSRs and SOIs are tools created to empower LAFCO to satisfy its legislative charge of "discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open-space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing government services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances (§56301).

CKH Act Section 56301 further establishes that "one of the objects of the commission is to make studies and to obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies in each county and to shape the development of local agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities."

Based on that legislative charge, LAFCO serves as an arm of the State; preparing and reviewing studies and analyzing independent data to make informed, quasi-legislative decisions that guide the physical and economic development of the state (including agricultural uses) and the efficient, cost-effective, and reliable delivery of services to residents, landowners, and businesses.

While SOIs are required to be updated every five years, they are not time-bound as planning tools by the statute, but are plans meant to address the "probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency" (§56076). SOIs therefore guide both the near-term and long-term physical and economic development of local agencies and their broader county area, and MSRs provide the near-term and long-term time-relevant data to inform LAFCO's SOI determinations.

### **PURPOSE OF A MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW**

As described above, MSRs are designed to equip LAFCO with relevant information and data necessary for the Commission to make informed decisions on SOIs. The CKH Act, however, gives LAFCO broad discretion in deciding how to conduct MSRs, including geographic focus, scope of study, and the identification of alternatives for improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, accountability, and reliability of public services.

The purpose of an MSR in general is to provide a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the services provided by local municipalities, service areas, and special districts. An MSR evaluates the structure and operation of the local municipalities, service areas, and special districts and discusses possible areas for improvement and coordination.

The MSR is intended to provide information and analysis to support a sphere of influence update. A written statement of the study's determinations must be made in the following areas:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area;
2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence;
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 the sphere of influence;
4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services;
5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities;
6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies; and
7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

The MSR is organized according to these determinations listed above. Information regarding each of the above issue areas is provided in this document.

## **PURPOSE OF A SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

In 1972, LAFCOs were given the power to establish SOIs for all local agencies under their jurisdiction. As defined by the CKH Act, "'sphere of influence' means a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the commission" (§56076).

SOIs are designed to both proactively guide and respond to the need for the extension of infrastructure and delivery of municipal services to areas of emerging growth and development. Likewise, they are also designed to discourage urban sprawl and the premature conversion of agricultural and open space resources to urbanized uses.

The role of SOIs in guiding the State's growth and development was validated and strengthened in 2000 when the Legislature passed Assembly Bill ("AB") 2838 (Chapter 761, Statutes of 2000), which was the result of two years of labor by the Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which traveled up and down the State taking testimony from a variety of local government stakeholders and assembled an extensive set of recommendations to the Legislature to strengthen the powers and tools of LAFCOs to promote logical and orderly growth and development, and the efficient, cost-effective, and reliable delivery of public services to California's residents, businesses, landowners, and visitors.

The requirement for LAFCOs to conduct MSRs was established by AB 2838 as an acknowledgment of the importance of SOIs and recognition that regular periodic updates of SOIs should be conducted on a five-year basis (§56425(g)) with the benefit of better information and data through MSRs (§56430(a)).

Pursuant to Sonoma LAFCO policy, a SOI includes an area adjacent to a jurisdiction where development might be reasonably expected to occur in the next 20 years. A MSR is conducted prior to, or in conjunction with, the update of a SOI and provides the foundation for updating it. In Sonoma County, a SOI generally has two planning lines. One is the 10-year boundary which includes the area that may likely be annexed within 10 years, while the 20-year boundary is anticipated to accommodate boundary expansions over a 20-year horizon.

LAFCO is required to make five written determinations when establishing, amending, or updating a SOI for any local agency that address the following (§56425(c)):

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

## **SCOPE OF STUDY**

It is important to note that this study is being prepared with a deliberately limited scope, at the request of the applicant agencies and at the discretion of Sonoma LAFCO staff.

Fire and emergency service agencies throughout the county have been conducting discussions to determine if a regional consolidation program would best serve communities and underpin a sustainable service model for the future.

The subject agencies are seeking a Sphere of Influence amendment to potentially encompass the entirety of their territories, allowing consolidation through reorganizations. (The request to prepare the MSR and SOI Study came formally from the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District; the balance of the agencies have agreed to being included as subject agencies).



If the Commission adopts this Municipal Service Review and its determinations and agrees to amend spheres of influence as proposed, it would be expected that Valley of the Moon FPD, Glen Ellen FPD, Kenwood FPD, and the Mayacamas VPD portion of County Service Area 40 would consider a reorganization proposal shortly thereafter. The City of Sonoma and the Schell-Vista FPD may consider a reorganization at a later time.

#### *Note Regarding Terminology*

A “reorganization” of a special district encompasses any action that changes a district’s boundaries, including annexing or detaching territory, dissolution of the district and assignment of its functions to a successor agency, or a consolidation of one or more districts.

For this study, LAFCO is proposing that any eventual reorganization of the subject agencies would be accomplished by dissolution of a given district and annexation to another, or in the case of the County Service 40 – Fire Services territory, detachment from CSA 40 and annexation to one of the three independent special districts.

Technically, a “consolidation” (Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg §56030) is defined as uniting or joining two or more special districts into a single new successor district. In order to accommodate differing taxation structures (and, in particular, parcel tax rates), the preferred means to “consolidate” special districts is to conduct a reorganization that involves the aforementioned “dissolution/annexation” process.

In order to make this report clearer to the public, when the term “consolidation” is used it denotes the dissolution/annexation process rather than the formal definition denoted in state code.

### **ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

This report includes a discussion of issues common to all of the subject agencies, with an accompanying set of determinations. The balance of the report features what are effectively “stand alone” Municipal Service Reviews for each subject agency, describing agency conditions, and making accompanying determinations.

The format of the “stand-alone” MSRs are based on the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act, the LAFCO MSR Guidelines prepared by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, and adopted Sonoma LAFCO local policies and procedures.

This report includes four appendices:

Appendix 1: Individual Agency Profiles

Appendix 2: Current Boundary/Sphere of Influence Maps

Appendix 3: Guide to Response Time Standards

Appendix 4: Guide to Revenue Sources for Subject Agencies

Each agency MSR includes:

- A description of the subject agency;
- MSR draft determinations for public and Commission review; and
- Identification of any other issues that the Commission should consider.

## **AFFECTED AGENCIES**

Per Government Code Section 56427, a public hearing is required to adopt, amend, or revise a sphere of influence. Notice shall be provided at least twenty-one days in advance and mailed notice shall be provided to each affected local agency or affected County, and to any interested party who has filed a written request for notice with the executive officer.

Per Government Code Section 56014, an affected local agency means any local agency that overlaps with any portion of the subject agency boundary or SOI (including any proposed changes to the SOI).

The affected local agencies for this MSR/SOI are:

- County of Sonoma (various departments)
- Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Sonoma Valley Health Care District
- Sonoma Valley Sanitation District
- Valley of the Moon Water District
- North Bay Water District

Although there are no registered interested parties for this study, notices and draft copies of this report have been provided as a courtesy to:

- CALFIRE
- Coastal Valleys EMS Agency
- Napa County Fire
- Napa Local Agency Formation Commission
- Sonoma County Fire District
- City of Santa Rosa Fire Department
- Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW: SUMMARY DETERMINATIONS**

### **Growth and Population Projections**

#### **Determinations**

- **Although there continues to be modest population growth in the Sonoma Valley, subject agencies point to an array of other factors driving increased call volumes.**
- **These factors include an aging population and a dramatic increase in tourist visitors to the region.**
- **Similarly, agencies do not consider land use development a driver of call volume.**

#### **Discussion**

In previous Municipal Service Reviews for fire and emergency service agencies, Sonoma LAFCO has cited population growth estimates from the County and cities to analyze the potential impacts that a growing population will have on service provision.

Those analyses have indicated that call volume growth at fire and emergency service agencies is largely disconnected from population growth – for example, agencies typically report call volume growth rates of five percent per year or higher. The general population growth rate in the County is generally just over one percent annually.

Agency staff cite a variety of other factors that they believe drives call volume growth, including:

- An aging population, which drives an increase in medical service calls.
- An influx of residents from suburban and urban regions of the Bay Area and elsewhere, where expectations of service are higher. Agency staff indicate that these residents are more likely to avail themselves of emergency services than longtime residents who may be more independent.
- A steady increase in tourism, bringing visitors to the Valley, as well as traffic on the roadways throughout the region. This population drives rescue and medical service calls.

Other than citing tourism statistics (which notably affect several of the subject agencies), it is difficult to imagine sources of information that would accurately quantify the service impacts that these trends would engender.

Therefore, in the subsequent agency sections, high-impact trends will be noted alongside historical call volume growth statistics to indicate how agencies are being impacted.

## **Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities**

### **Determinations**

- **There are three LAFCO-designated disadvantaged unincorporated communities within two of the territories served by the subject agencies.**

### **Discussion**

SB 244 (Chapter 513, Statutes of 2011) made changes to the CKH Act related to disadvantaged unincorporated communities. Disadvantaged unincorporated communities, or "DUCs," are inhabited territories (containing twelve or more registered voters) where the annual median household income is less than eighty percent of the statewide annual median household income.

On October 12, 2012, LAFCO adopted a policy for the definition of 'Inhabited Territory' for the Implementation of SB 244 Regarding Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities, which identified twenty-one inhabited unincorporated communities for purposes of implementing SB 244. Of these, seven communities are designated as disadvantaged:

- |                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| • Boyes Hot Springs | • Monte Rio   |
| • Cazadero          | • Temelec     |
| • Glen Ellen        | • Valley Ford |
| • Guerneville       |               |

Because two of the subject agencies provide fire and emergency medical services to the three disadvantaged unincorporated communities in the region, a determination regarding the lack of appropriate services to these territories is not warranted.

## Capacity and Adequacy of Public Facilities and Services

### Determinations

- All subject agencies are experiencing staffing challenges of one form or another. These challenges range across a spectrum that includes:
  - A decline in active volunteer ranks
  - Declines in volunteer availability during particular shifts/times
  - A lack of promotional career paths for career professionals
  - Difficulty in retaining career professionals due to salary and benefit competition in Sonoma County and the Bay Area region
- Improvements to stipend programs for volunteers may enable agencies to address staffing challenges without transitioning fully to career-professional staffing, which most agencies cannot support financially.
- The Sonoma Valley volunteer agencies cannot provide “2/0” staffing at all times – the ability to respond to incident calls with two qualified personnel. The agencies with career professional staff are often unable to provide “3/0” staffing for responses, which is considered the optimum staffing level for providing appropriate service in suburban and urban areas. Additional revenue will be required to provide more career professional staff to address staffing levels.
- The Valley of the Moon FPD has secured a grant that will provide additional staffing for a three year period, improving coverage for the City of Sonoma and Glen Ellen FPDs, which are served under contract by Valley of the Moon. The grant only provides funding for three years, highlighting the need for the District (or a regionally reorganized agency) to develop an additional sustainable funding stream.
- Establishing more career-professional positions (particularly during weekday daytime shifts) within a regional agency would provide more opportunities for career progression.
- A regional agency would, over time, provide standardized training that would improve service delivery.
- While a cursory review of response time statistics indicate that most agencies are meeting National Fire Protection Association guidelines, the statistics are rudimentary and could obscure significant service level deficiencies.
- The provision of emergency medical services and ambulance coverage throughout the Sonoma Valley is vital. The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, operating as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority, provides advanced life support/ambulance coverage for all areas in the region, though the agency does not have sole service rights within the Kenwood Fire Protection District area.
- Although the facilities and equipment of the subject agencies are generally in reasonable condition, there are facilities that may require upgrades.

### Discussion

Although the four fire protection districts in the Valley have addressed funding needs with special tax measures (parcel taxes), only two (Schell-Vista and Glen Ellen FPDs)

have tax schedules that significantly address the need for revenue to provide and sustain service levels. Even if the other two districts are able to raise their special tax rates (through a regional consolidation, for example), a regional agency is likely to require additional support to maintain expected service levels.

The capacity and adequacy of facilities and services for each agency is reported in the subsequent subject agency sections. A general, area-wide assessment is presented here.

### *Staffing*

Staffing levels for four subject agencies are at appropriate levels ("3/0" staffing for engines, and two-person staffing for the two ambulance companies), but are increasingly difficult to maintain with regard to engine staffing due to declining volunteer participation, particularly during weekday daytimes.

The Kenwood FPD strives for "2/0" staffing (and considers staffing at "3/0" with ALS capability a necessity) but also sometimes falls short during the same periods. The District does not provide Advanced Life Support (ALS, or "paramedic") service, relying on Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority, the City of Santa Rosa, and a private ambulance service provider out of the central region of the County for ALS support.

The Mayacamas VFD can have difficulty mounting response capability during weekday day time hours, and although the Department generally provides a vital first-response role in its territory, it is generally reliant on support from neighboring agencies for many incident calls.

There are five broad categorizations of staff:

1. Leadership – Chiefs, and in limited cases captains, who can be full-time paid, part-time paid, stipend paid, or not paid.
2. Administration – Generally part-time paid positions, with responsibility for records, purchasing, financial processing, and a myriad of other activities.
3. Firefighters/medical technicians – Generally classified as firefighters or engineers, with emergency medical technician or paramedic training, on a full-time or part-time career status.
4. Volunteer firefighters/medical technicians – With the same training and capability expectations as above (save paramedic training), but serving on a voluntary, non-employee status, often provided with stipends based on shifts, call response, or training session attendance.
5. Interns/Trainees – Generally volunteers who have not completed mandatory training but who are enrolled in a training program either provided by the agency or by an institution (notably the Santa Rosa Junior College program).

The challenge for fire and emergency service providers is to blend a mix of these types of staff into a cohesive team, meeting staff needs, and accomplishing that using available funding.

All agencies rely on volunteers to some degree; Mayacamas VPD relies solely on volunteers.

### *Training*

In order to serve the public, firefighters undergo rigorous training so that they can appropriately respond to a wide array of emergency calls.

Career firefighters often enroll in training programs offered by educational institutions; in Sonoma County, the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) offers a firefighter academy program.

Volunteer firefighters do not have to complete as rigorous a training program – the SRJC also offers an academy program targeted at volunteers.

The Federal government recommends that all active firefighters undertake training for 20 hours per month. Agencies in Sonoma Valley typically arrange training programs in house, but all admit that volunteer firefighters rarely if ever meet this standard.

The Mayacamas VFD used to receive training support from the County's Fire and Emergency Services department. A two-year contract between the County and North Bay Fire (an organization representing the remaining VFCs) is intended to provide funding to secure leadership and administrative support for the VFCs, and may also be used to secure training support.

The balance of the subject agencies have conducted regional training, led by the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority.

### *Call Volumes*

REDCOM, the joint powers agency that provides dispatch services to all Sonoma Valley agencies (and almost all of the fire and EMS service providers in the County), logs calls for service in a variety of ways.

A “first cut” of response statistics is simply a count of the number of calls received in each agency territory and an average of the response times for calls (see following section).

Further analysis can indicate which agency responded to calls within a given area – generally most calls are responded to by the local agency, but some calls are supported with mutual aid response. (Mutual aid response can be in support of a local agency that has responded to a call, or response when the subject agency is unable to staff a response.)

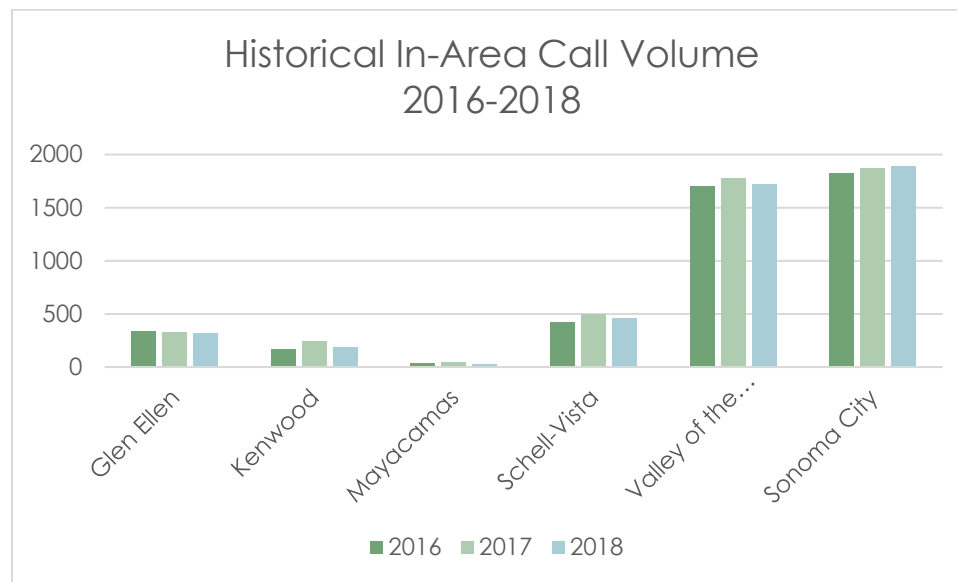
In some cases agencies respond with “automatic mutual aid” to neighboring jurisdictions, with the possibility of being “called off” if the neighboring jurisdiction determines it can handle the response alone.

REDCOM also records the type of call received, with common categories like vehicle accidents and medical responses, and uncommon ones like structure fires or hazardous material incidents.

(One of the most common calls within the "medical" category is "lift assist", where crews respond to residents who have fallen and need assistance.)

The following chart summarizes historical call volumes for 2014 through 2018 for the subject agencies. **It is important to note that these statistics indicate the number of calls generated within each agency territory, not the number of calls that each agency responded to.**



**Chart 1: Historical Call Volumes Generated Within Agency Territories**

Call volume characteristics for each agency are described in subsequent chapters of this study.

### *Response Times*

In each of the individual agency sections of the report, response time statistics are listed and compared to National Fire Protection Association standards, which are discussed in Appendix 3.

Although it is clearly crucially important to evaluate an emergency service agency on the basis of response times, the statistics gathered from REDCOM, the County-wide dispatch center, require clarification and understanding.

To determine response time statistics, one would look at all of the calls directed to an agency within a given timeframe, and then average the time it took for the agency to arrive on scene for each call.

The statistics listed in this report attempt to follow that methodology, but crucial factors are not reflected in the numbers.

For example, if an agency is unable to respond to a call for any reason, it is redirected to a neighboring agency that provides mutual aid backup, and the call is no longer part of the response time statistics for the “base” agency. (REDCOM can provide response time statistics for mutual aid calls.)

Clearly, mutual aid response is the ideal course of action, but the response time statistics make no distinction regarding why an agency was unable to respond – were resources responding to other calls, or were there no resources available due to unavailability of staffing?

Similarly, the statistics simply indicate how long it took to respond to a call and not whether appropriate resources were dispatched.

Therefore, although the response time statistics shown in this report are valid, they do not present a complete picture of an agency's ability to meet standards of service.

### *Emergency Medical Service*

All Sonoma Valley agencies report that three-quarters or more of service calls are related to medical needs, so provision of emergency medical services ("EMS") is really their primary mission.

In the vernacular of fire and EMS agencies, providing emergency medical service is "turning victims into patients", and is considered a crucial "front door" entry point for medical care.

Agencies provide emergency medical services in a variety of ways:

### *Basic Life Support*

All Sonoma Valley Agencies except for the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority (covering Sonoma, Valley of the Moon, and Glen Ellen) provide what is termed "basic life support" service, meaning that firefighters are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians ("EMTs"), providing a level of medical care for victims of illness or injury until they can be provided full medical care by an advanced life support provider or at a hospital. Basic life support ("BLS") comprises an initial assessment of a victim and airway maintenance and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

A key understanding of BLS responses to incidents is that the firefighter EMTs assess and stabilize a victim in preparation for transport by an agency or private provider that has Advanced Life Support capability.

### *Advanced Life Support*

Provision of Advanced Life Support service, or “ALS”, requires a higher degree of training, because staff can use needles, administer drugs, and make incisions in victims to stabilize them for transport to a hospital. Firefighters who are trained in ALS procedures are called paramedics.

Because of the more expansive set of medical interventions that paramedics can provide, ALS provision requires a more expansive array of equipment and supplies.

Paramedics can be based on ambulances or on engines. If an ambulance is staffed with cross-trained paramedics, the ambulances are often based on box vans rather than panel vans, to enable storage of rescue equipment and supplies. (ALS service can be provided using the typical panel van ambulance, if the paramedics are relying on firefighters to do rescue and extractions.)

Box van ambulances have an additional advantage in that they can accommodate two or even more patients.

The Valley of the Moon FPD, operating as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority, operates three engine-based ALS teams, and two ambulance-based teams, and provides coverage to the entire region. (The Agency does not have exclusive territory rights in Kenwood, but responds to half or more of the calls in that area.)

### *Ambulance (Transport) Service*

Other than for a subset of calls in Kenwood, Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue provides ALS/ambulance service to the region, transporting patients to Sonoma Valley Hospital or out-of-area facilities.

(Ambulances throughout the County are often repositioned, or “shifted”, to provide optimum coverage. However, by virtue of geography, Sonoma Valley’s ambulances are rarely repositioned.)

### *Is ALS Service Financially Sustainable?*

Providing advanced life support service is expensive:

- There are no volunteer paramedics; paramedics are paid staff.
- Supplies for paramedic services are more numerous and expensive than supplies for basic life support service.
- If ALS service is provided using ambulances, rather than engines, equipment costs are high. (Ambulances have far shorter lifetimes than engines, requiring replacement on a three- to five-year timeframe instead of the twenty years or more lifetime for engines.)

Despite the high costs of “standing up” ALS resources, a layperson could be excused for assuming that “ambulance service” can “make money” for an agency, given that patients are billed for service. (Sonoma Valley also offers a “subscription” ambulance

service program to Valley residents, where for an annual fee, residents are not charged for ambulance transport costs that are not covered by insurance providers.)

Indeed there is a revenue stream for agencies that provide ambulance-based service: an emergency response requiring transport to a hospital is generally billed at rates on the order of \$4000. However, given the vagaries of the health care system, agencies recoup just over thirty percent of their billing rate from insurers.

Simply put, ambulance-based life support coverage can only recoup costs (or make a return) if service utilization is high – with ambulance crews busy on calls most of the time, not just a few times per shift. Private providers also make significant returns on “transports” – moving patients from one health care facility to another.

#### *Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Ambulance Service*

Only the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, operating as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority, provides advanced life support services in the region.

Though covering territory outside of its District boundaries improves service utilization – the District has a higher call volume and therefore a greater revenue stream – Kenwood, Schell-Vista, and Mayacamas rely on the service but are not contributing to the “stand up” costs of having the service available.

Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue reports that it prioritizes ALS ambulance service over ALS engine capability, where staffing challenges are occurring. (It should be noted that the staffing challenges are generally for the “third” position on the engine, which is a firefighter rather than a paramedic, and almost always is filled by a volunteer.)

It would be equitable for all property owners in the Valley to pay special taxes under a consistent rate schedule to support and sustain existing ALS service capabilities.

Sonoma Valley has regularly analyzed ambulance service rates and current rates, though often not wholly recouped, are at appropriate levels.

#### *Facilities*

Sonoma Valley agencies own and maintain a variety of facilities that house vehicles and equipment and in some cases provide quarters for employees.

The stations in Sonoma and Schell-Vista were constructed relatively recently, and are suited for employee housing and administrative uses.

Stations in Kenwood, Glenn Ellen, El Verano, and Agua Caliente are older, and are not fully Americans with Disabilities Act compliant. However, the stations are in reasonably good condition and suited for their current use.

Schell-Vista and Valley of the Moon FPDs, and Mayacamas VFD, maintain four stations suited only for vehicle storage, not staffing. If their operational status is unchanged, these stations are adequate, but may require installation of ventilation equipment or other improvements if they are used more frequently in operations.

**Table 1 – Facility Inventory**

Agency - Facility	Suited for Staff	Upgrade Needed for Staff	Seismic Issues	Rebuild/Remodel Indicated	Notes
Kenwood	Yes	Yes (sleeping quarters)	Yes (half of station is deficient)	Likely (engine bays require expansion, seismic upgrade, quarters)	
Glen Ellen Headquarters	Yes	Yes (sleeping quarters)	Under evaluation	Addition of sleeping quarters, addition of accessibility features, potential seismic upgrade	Ideally situated for Glen Ellen community – all parcels within five miles
Glen Ellen Station 6	No	N/A	N/A	No	Vehicle storage only
Valley of the Moon – Agua Caliente	Yes	No	Unknown	Recent remodel	
Valley of the Moon – El Verano	Yes	No	Unknown	Recent remodel	
Valley of the Moon – Diamond A	No	No	Unknown	No	Vehicle storage only
Valley of the Moon/City of Sonoma	Yes	No	No	No	
Schell-Vista – Station 1	Yes	No	No	No	
Schell-Vista – Station 2	No	No	Unknown	No	Vehicle storage and staging only

Mayacamas – Stations 1 and 2	No	No	Unknown	No	Vehicle storage and VFD office only
------------------------------------	----	----	---------	----	--

## Equipment

Agencies in Sonoma Valley utilize a variety of equipment, including “typical” engines, “wildland” engines, rescue trucks, one ladder truck (at Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue), water tenders, and other specialized equipment.

“Typical” engines are suited for structure fire deployments and rescues and are designated as Type 1 or 2. “Wildland” engines are designated as Types 3 through 7, and among other features include four wheel drive and high ride clearance.

Most agencies expect to retain vehicles for a fifteen or twenty-year life cycle. Although vehicles can have quite low mileage at the end of that lifespan (sometimes under 20,000 miles), maintenance costs for hydraulic equipment becomes prohibitively expensive and parts availability becomes problematic. Although there are cases where vehicles are past their expected useful life, generally speaking the subject agency vehicle fleets are in reasonable condition.

Almost all agencies have at least a cursory vehicle replacement plan. Most plans have short time horizons (e.g. five years).

Agencies generally do not have a dedicated capital reserve fund for equipment purchases or facility upgrades and maintenance, instead funding these categories out of unrestricted reserves.

Without a rigorous capital program analysis, it is difficult to evaluate whether a given agency can sustainably fund vehicle and facility costs.

## Financial Ability to Provide Service

### Determinations

- **Three subject agencies do not prepare multi-year budget projections, which would nominally indicate impending financial sustainability challenges.**
- **The Fire Protection Districts and the City have taken steps to ensure financial stability, although the Valley of the Moon FPD needs additional revenue to maintain service levels as part of the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority.**
- **Under a short-term contractual agreement with the County, the Mayacamas VFD will have appropriate financial and administrative support through 2020. Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue is negotiating a longer-term contract for support services to Mayacamas, but recognizes that a reorganization into a regional agency is a preferable long-term solution.**
- **The facilities operated by the Sonoma Valley agencies are generally appropriate for their use, with the Kenwood station most in need of retrofits/expansion.**

## Discussion

The financial condition of each agency varies, but as a general statement, agencies are providing the level of fire and emergency services that they can afford.

There are four general categories of rising expenses:

- The need to implement stipends for volunteer firefighters, to increase stipend levels, to establish career firefighter positions, and to increase salaries and benefits for career firefighters to remain competitive in the labor market.
- Supplies, equipment maintenance, and equipment replacement costs.
- Facility maintenance and replacement costs.
- Vehicle replacement costs.

Valley of the Moon FPD (and by extension the City of Sonoma and Glenn Ellen FPD) prepares budgets with multi-year horizons, and all of the districts have at least five-year plans for vehicle replacements.

## Governance and Accountability

### Determinations

- **The Fire Protection Districts in Sonoma Valley appear to have well-functioning governing boards. The governance and accountability of the Mayacamas VFD 501 (c)(3) and district volunteer associations was not evaluated.**
- **No District reported any particular difficulty in recruiting candidates to run for board seats, though most have not seen contested seats either. Board members often have a fire and emergency services career background; it might better serve agency and community interests to have a wider variety of board member backgrounds and experience, and for there to be a somewhat higher turnover rate.**
- **There are no apparent instances of recent violations of open meeting regulations, campaign regulations, or other accountability requirements among the Fire Protection Districts in Sonoma Valley.**

### Discussion

Generally speaking, the agencies in Sonoma Valley have governing boards that are meeting standards of ethical and professional conduct, and have reasonably healthy elected board member turnover.

## Opportunity for Shared Services

### Determinations

- **Any proposed reorganizations of subject agencies, or contractual service arrangements, are unlikely to generate significant cost savings.**
- **A regionally consolidated agency or agencies would be better positioned to evaluate and project capital and expense needs, enabling agency leadership to develop sustainable funding strategies.**

## Discussion

The opportunities to achieve cost savings through a regional consolidation of agencies in Sonoma Valley is likely to be modest, resulting from more cost-effective equipment replacement and management. There is little opportunity for reductions in leadership positions (although some leadership positions may be reclassified), and there would not be any expected reductions in firefighter and paramedic ranks (if anything, there will be additions to paid staffing in the future).

There is some likelihood that the combined vehicle fleet in Sonoma Valley could be downsized. (Two Fire Protection Districts opine that they have too many vehicles in their fleets.)

There are perhaps modest opportunities to share services including establishing a common training program and delivery staff, and staffing battalion chief coverage across the region.

In summary, although a regionally consolidated agency in Sonoma Valley would achieve some cost savings through gains in efficiency, but savings will be outstripped by a likely increase, over time, in paid staffing positions.



**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW: CITY OF SONOMA  
(FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES)**

**AGENCY PROFILE**

The City of Sonoma has an area of two and three-quarters square miles, with just over 11,000 residents – a significant proportion of the Valley population of about 45,000. It is the only incorporated city within the region.

With regard to provision of fire and emergency services, the City is bordered to the east by the Valley of the Moon FPD, and to the south, west and north by Schell-Vista FPD.

For the past eighteen years the City has contracted with Valley of the Moon FPD for fire and emergency medical services. (Valley of the Moon operates as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority to recognize its expanded service area, which now also includes the Glen Ellen FPD territory.)

The contractual arrangement between the City and Valley of the Moon, while long-standing and sustainable, is somewhat complicated in structure. The City provides a “base” level of funding, with Valley of the Moon “refunding” some income from ambulance revenue streams. In addition, the City is responsible for replacement of a portion of combined vehicle fleet.

The result of this complexity is some variation in funding from the City to Valley of the Moon.

**POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT MSR DETERMINATIONS**

The MSR determinations reviewed below are potentially significant, as indicated by “yes” or “maybe” answers to the key policy questions in the checklist and corresponding discussion on the following pages.

**DETERMINATION 1. GROWTH AND POPULATION**

Growth and population projections for the affected area.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the city's territory or surrounding area expected to experience any significant population change or development over the next 5-10 years?			No (modest population growth)
b. Will population changes have an impact on the city's service needs and demands?			No
c. Will projected growth require a change to the city's service boundaries?		Maybe	

**Determinations**

- The City of Sonoma will continue to experience modest development and population growth, but this growth is not expected to be the primary driver for increases in calls for fire and emergency medical services.

**Discussion**

The required level of staffing and other resources for a fire and emergency services agency is linked to three primary categories:

- The population of residents and workers within the territory
- Transient populations, included travelers through the territory (on roads or other transit systems) and visitors (to event centers and recreational areas)
- The amount and type of development in the territory (i.e., commercial, industrial, residential, and the composition of each). This factor is also informed by the age, type of construction, and building standards of the development.

*Population*

The Association of Bay Area Governments adopted "Plan Bay Area 2040" in 2017. The plan includes projected population growth for urban areas of cities and counties between 2010 and 2040.

The report indicates that Sonoma's population will grow from 10,170 in 2010 to a projected 11,905 in 2040, for a total growth rate over that period of 17% and an annual compound growth rate of 0.39%. (That growth rate is comparable to the larger cities in the County).

### Development

The City is anticipating renewal of an Urban Growth Boundary (an ordinance approved by voters) within the next few years, and is also preparing to begin an update of its General Plan.

It is not expected that the City will significantly add to its area through annexations; rather, infill development will constitute the largest proportion of new development.

The level of new development is not expected to generate population growth beyond the modest historical growth rate.

While the City anticipates some tourist-serving development (lodging and modest event-supporting projects), the level of this development is not expected to significantly increase the need for fire and emergency service provision.

### DETERMINATION 2. DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the City provide public services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection?	Yes		
b. Are there any "inhabited unincorporated communities" (per adopted Commission policy) within or adjacent to the subject agency's sphere of influence that are considered "disadvantaged" (80% or less of the statewide median household income)?	Yes		
c. If "yes" to both a) and b), is it feasible for the agency to be reorganized such that it can extend service to the disadvantaged unincorporated community?			No

### Determination

- There are no LAFCO-designated disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the City of Sonoma. The unincorporated El Verano neighborhood is a designated disadvantaged community, and is adjacent to the City to the west.

### Discussion

SB 244 (Chapter 513, Statutes of 2011) made changes to the CKH Act related to disadvantaged unincorporated communities. Disadvantaged unincorporated communities, or "DUCs," are inhabited territories (containing twelve or more registered

voters) where the annual median household income is less than eighty percent of the statewide annual median household income.

On October 12, 2012, LAFCO adopted a policy for the definition of 'Inhabited Territory' for the Implementation of SB 244 Regarding Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities", which identified twenty-one inhabited unincorporated communities for purposes of implementing SB 244. Of these, seven communities are designated as disadvantaged.

CKH Act Section 56375(a)(8)(A) prohibits LAFCO from approving an annexation of more than ten acres if a DUC is contiguous to the annexation territory but not included in the proposal, unless an application to annex the DUC has been filed with LAFCO. The legislative intent is to prohibit "cherry picking" by cities and districts of tax-generating land uses while leaving out under-served, inhabited areas with infrastructure deficiencies and lack of access to reliable potable water and wastewater services. DUCs are recognized as social and economic communities of interest for purposes of recommending SOI determinations pursuant to Section 56425(c).

The unincorporated community of El Verano is adjacent to the City to the west, and is a recognized disadvantaged unincorporated community. However, Valley of The Moon FPD provides fire and emergency services to El Verano, so there are no deficiencies in the provision of those services to the area.

**DETERMINATION 3. CAPACITY AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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 the sphere of influence

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any deficiencies in the City's capacity to meet service needs of existing development within its existing territory?			No
b. Are there any issues regarding the City's capacity to meet the service demand of reasonably foreseeable future growth?			No
c. Are there any concerns regarding fire and emergency medical services provided by the City being considered adequate?			No
d. Are there any significant infrastructure needs or deficiencies to be addressed?			No

	YES	MAYBE	NO
e. Are there changes in state regulations on the horizon that will require significant facility and/or infrastructure upgrades?			No
f. Are there any service needs or deficiencies for disadvantaged unincorporated communities related to fire and emergency medical services within or contiguous to the City's sphere of influence?			No

### Determinations

- **The City, through its contract for services with the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, is providing a high standard of services to its residents and to visitors.**
- **The provision of service is exemplified by short response times, appropriately-staffed responses, and a superior ISO fire rating.**

### Discussion

#### Service Volumes

The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, operating as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority, provides fire and emergency medical services to the City of Sonoma under contract.

Table 2 indicates the historical frequency of service calls that are generated within the City.

**Table 2: Historical Call for Service Volumes – City of Sonoma**

	2016	2017	2018	Average
Calls Generated Within Area	1822	1873	1884	1860

### Response Standards

Information regarding staffing and response time standards promulgated by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Agency and the National Fire Protection Association are described in Appendix 3.

The City of Sonoma is a suburban community under the NFPA recommended guidelines, and all emergency calls are almost always staffed at “3/0” levels (three-member crews are dispatched to all calls), or at two-member crews for ALS/ambulance calls.

**Table 3: Response Time Statistics – City of Sonoma**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Response Times (Dispatched to “Arrived On Scene”)</b>
2016	5 minutes 42 seconds
2017	4 minutes 58 seconds
2018	4 minutes 50 seconds

These statistics indicate that the Valley of the Moon FPD (the contractor to the City) meets NFPA response time standards for suburban areas for calls that are generated within the City.

### ***ISO Rating***

The City has an International Standards Organization (ISO) Public Protection Class rating of 1, which is the highest attainable level, indicating superior property fire protection. The ISO rating is used by virtually all insurers to calculate premiums.

### ***Facilities***

The City of Sonoma has one fire station which was constructed in 2002 and is wholly compliant with codes and standards (including seismic safety and Americans with Disabilities Act codes) that were in place at that time. The station features living quarters and a vehicle maintenance and repair building. The station is not deficient in any way.

### ***Staffing***

The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District (providing contracted service to the City) is a “combined” department, with both paid and volunteer firefighters.

The District relies on paid career staff for Advanced Life Support/ambulance service, and both paid career and volunteer firefighters for fire services.

Valley of the Moon reports that volunteer firefighter availability during weekday daytime hours is deficient, and that to staff fire response crews at “3/0” levels is therefore challenging. (Engine crews are generally staffed with two paid career firefighters and one volunteer.)

**DETERMINATION 4. FINANCIAL ABILITY**

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the City routinely engage in budgeting practices that may indicate poor financial management, such as overspending its revenues, failing to commission independent audits, or adopting its budget late?			No
b. Is the City lacking adequate reserves to protect against unexpected events or upcoming significant costs?			No
c. Is the City's rate/fee schedule insufficient to fund an adequate level of service, and/or is the fee inconsistent with the schedules of similar service organizations?			No
d. Is the City unable to fund necessary infrastructure maintenance, replacement and/or any needed expansion?			No
e. Is the City lacking financial policies that ensure its continued financial accountability and stability?			No
f. Is the City's debt at an unmanageable level?			No

**Determinations**

- **The City of Sonoma has been able to fund its contract with Valley of the Moon FPD for the past eighteen years, and despite fiscal challenges, is expected to be able to continue to secure fire and emergency medical services under contract for the foreseeable future.**
- **The City and Valley of the Moon might consider renegotiating the current services contract to provide more consistent financial transfers in the near term (next two to three years). This would include removing ambulance service revenue from the transfer equation, and steady, consistent annual contributions for equipment, vehicle maintenance and replacement, and facility maintenance.**
- **The City should also consider exploring the cancellation of the contracted service model with Valley of the Moon, replaced by coverage by a regionally-reorganized Sonoma Valley fire and emergency medical service agency.**

## **Discussion**

The City of Sonoma has looked to both revenue enhancements and cost savings in recent years to ensure financial sustainability, which is crucial to the continued support of fire and emergency service provision.

For example, the City sought and received voter approval for a temporary sales tax increase beginning in 2009, with renewal five years later, and is now preparing to seek voter approval to make the sales tax permanent. The City has also adjusted its Transit Occupancy Tax upwards in recent years to generate additional revenue.

The City has also been diligent in seeking out more efficiency in operations, as evidenced by contractual arrangements with Valley of the Moon Fire and the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department for fire and police service respectively.

While this study did not conduct a thorough evaluation of City finances, it is expected that the City will continue to make the provision of fire and emergency medical services a priority, and will therefore sustainably finance those services.

### *Contract with Valley of the Moon FPD*

The contractual arrangement between the City and Valley of the Moon, while manageable and sustainable, is perhaps less than ideal from the viewpoint of both parties in terms of predictability of revenue transfers over multi-year timeframes.

The contract, in simplified terms, provides a "base" level of funding to Valley of the Moon from the City, determined as a percentage of the overall costs of operating the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Authority "refunds" a proportion of revenue from ambulance services to the City, which can vary from year to year based on call volumes, rates, and the amount recouped from billings.

Lastly, the City is responsible for replacement costs for a portion of the Authority's vehicle fleet – these costs can swing dramatically depending on vehicle replacement needs. (It is conceivable that in one year a pickup truck would need replacement, and in every twentieth year the ladder truck in the Authority's fleet would need replacement. A ladder truck costs in excess of one million dollars.)

It should be noted that the City can fund vehicle replacements out of a capital budget reserve account, moderating the impacts of varying needs from year to year.

Although renegotiating and re-approving the contract is not particularly difficult, it represents an administrative burden that could be obviated by pursuing inclusion of the City in a regionally-reorganized agency that establishes a permanent funding agreement.

## **Potential Cost Savings from Consolidation**

Because of the services contract (and now with Glen Ellen FPD as a contractual partner with Valley of the Moon) it is unlikely that any significant cost savings can be accomplished through a regional consolidation. Rather, there is significant potential to generate additional income from Kenwood, Mayacamas, and Valley of the Moon,



which would enable a regionally-reorganized agency to sustain and possibly improve service levels to the broad Sonoma Valley community.

#### DETERMINATION 5. SHARED SERVICES AND FACILITIES

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the City currently sharing services or facilities with other organizations? If so, describe the status of such efforts.	Yes (Contract for service with Valley of the Moon FPD)		
b. Are there any opportunities for the City to share services or facilities with neighboring or overlapping organizations that are not currently being utilized?			No
c. Are there any governance options that may produce economies of scale and/or improve buying power in order to reduce costs?			No
d. Are there governance options to allow appropriate facilities and/or resources to be shared, or making excess capacity available to others, and avoid construction of extra or unnecessary infrastructure or eliminate duplicative resources?		Maybe	

#### Determinations

- **The City is unlikely to capture any significant cost savings by joining a regional reorganization effort, but would benefit from additional revenues from other agencies that would help sustainably-fund an appropriate level of service throughout the Valley.**

#### Discussion

The City, through its contract for services, has essentially consolidated with Valley of the Moon Fire. Additional reorganizations in Sonoma Valley may result in modest cost reductions, but the City has essentially "captured" any potential savings through the existing contract (which has been in place for eighteen years).

The efforts by Valley of the Moon to attain efficiencies through cooperative arrangements with neighboring agencies and other support providers is described in the MSR section for VOMFPD.

#### Facilities

There may be a possibility of decommissioning or rebuilding/relocating Schell-Vista FPD's Station Two if both Schell-Vista and the City were part of a Sonoma Valley regional reorganization. This is discussed in the Schell-Vista FPD MSR section.

**DETERMINATION 6. ACCOUNTABILITY, STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCIES**

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any issues with meetings being accessible and well publicized? Any failures to comply with disclosure laws and the Brown Act?			No

**Determinations**

- For the purposes of this report, a comprehensive review of the governance and fiscal management of the City has not been undertaken. (It should be noted that there are no indications of any deficiencies in this area.)
- The City is encouraged to consider the possibility of formally "ceding" the provision of fire and emergency medical services to a regionally consolidated agency in place of the current contractual arrangement with Valley of the Moon FPD.

**Discussion**

Because this study focuses solely on the City of Sonoma's provision of fire and emergency services, a comprehensive review of governance of the City was not undertaken. It should be noted that there are no apparent deficiencies related to governance at the City.

The City is encouraged to consider joining a regionally-reorganized fire and emergency services agency, essentially "ceding" its provision of these services. Other cities in Sonoma County (Cloverdale, Windsor, and Cotati) are served by Fire Protection Districts, and there are potential benefits to mimicking that structure for the City.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW: GLEN ELLEN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**Agency Profile**

The Glen Ellen Fire Protection District (GEFPD, Glen Ellen Fire, or the District) provides fire and emergency services to the southernmost portion of the Sonoma Valley in a region once designated as "Zone 3", and now as "Region 3". The District was formed in 1955.

The District has primary responsibility for serving the unincorporated village of Glen Ellen, the Trinity Oaks area, and the Sonoma Developmental Center (Eldridge). The Sonoma Developmental Center has historically operated its own fire department, but is expected to end that service as the Center transitions to new uses.

GEFPD serves a portion of Highway 12, as well as several highly-travelled secondary roads. Much of the District territory includes rural residential development. The District also serves the Jack London Ranch State Park and a regional park, as well as the Sonoma Developmental Center. There is some modest commercial activity in the village of Glen Ellen, as well as several large wineries.

District staff report that about 350 calls are generated within the territory per year, with 65% solely medical-related. Less than 5% of calls are fire related.

GEFPD maintains a single headquarters station in Glen Ellen (the station serves in many ways as the "heart" of the village). The facility is currently being renovated to provide quarters, improved accessibility, and a structural evaluation.

The District board, reacting to a long decline in the availability of volunteer staff, sought out a contractual service agreement with Valley of the Moon Fire in 2018. That contract was reviewed and subsequently approved by LAFCO, with findings that the District has sufficient revenues to fund the agreement for at least the ensuing five years.

Primary funding for the District comes from property ad valorem taxes. Over 180 homes in the District were destroyed in the 2017 fire disaster, with a similar number damaged. These losses resulted in a decrease in tax revenues for the District in the near term on the order of \$75,000 annually.

The District secured voter approval for Measure T in 2018, establishing a parcel tax schedule for properties within the territory. A typical single-family residence pays up to \$200 per year, with additional charges for additional units.

The District also has an associated non-profit foundation that raises funds that are generally used to support equipment and vehicle purchases. The foundation has about six hundred thousand dollars on hand, with half allocated for a new Type 1 engine.

The District continues to maintain a volunteer firefighter roster to supplement the services of paid career staff from Valley of the Moon Fire.

**POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT MSR DETERMINATIONS**

The MSR determinations reviewed below are potentially significant, as indicated by “yes” or “maybe” answers to the key policy questions in the checklist and corresponding discussion.

**DETERMINATION 1. GROWTH AND POPULATION**

Growth and population projections for the affected area.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency's territory or surrounding area expected to experience any significant population change or development over the next 5-10 years?			No
b. Will population changes have an impact on the subject agency's service needs and demands?			No
c. Will projected growth require a change in the agency's service boundary?			No

**Determinations**

- The region served by GEFPD will continue to experience minimal development and population growth due to land use policies enacted by the County of Sonoma and managed by the County's Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma).

**Discussion**

The required level of staffing and other resources for a fire and emergency services agency is linked to three primary categories:

- The population of residents and workers within the territory.
- Transient populations, included travelers through the territory (on roads or other transit systems), and visitors (to event centers and recreational areas).
- The amount and type of development in the territory (i.e. commercial, industrial, residential, and the composition of each). This factor is also informed by the age, type of construction, and building standards of the development.

*Population*

Because there are no incorporated cities within Glen Ellen FPD's service area, land use planning is the responsibility of the County of Sonoma's Permit Sonoma department.

The County General Plan 2020 divides the County into nine planning areas. Planning Area Objectives and Policies recognize the circumstances of each of the nine planning

areas of the County and the fact that each area warrants its own unique policies. These policies also provide specific guidance regarding the use of individual properties. Most urbanized growth is expected to occur within Urban Service Areas.

The County has two goals that reinforce the philosophy of City centered growth. These goals, as stated in the County General Plan 2020 are as follows:

- 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.

The General Plan includes the "Sonoma Valley Planning Area" and enumerates a series of policies that strictly limit development of all types, and directs that development occur within existing urban and suburban areas that have municipal service provision (sanitation and water).

Glen Ellen FPD serves a portion of the Sonoma Valley Planning Area with very low development densities.

The County General Plan describes the features of each planning area and expected population growth as follows (emphasis added):

*Population is concentrated in Sonoma and in the adjacent unincorporated communities of Agua Caliente, Feters Hot Springs, El Verano and Boyes Hot Springs. Other communities include Kenwood and Glen Ellen. The balance of the area's population is scattered in rural agricultural and hillside areas at very low densities.*

*By 2020, population of the planning area is expected to reach 48,990 people. 34,400 of this population is expected in the unincorporated area, **particularly in the Urban Service Area along Highway 12**, with the remaining 14,590 people within the City of Sonoma.*

The County General Plan population projections for the Sonoma Valley Planning Area are shown in Table 4.

Although Glen Ellen FPD does not serve the entirety of the unincorporated region within the planning area, the projected growth rates for that portion of the planning area can serve as an appropriate proxy for population growth within the District's service area.

The total growth rate projected between 2000 and 2020 for the unincorporated area in the Sonoma Valley is 14.2 %, yielding an annual compound rate projection of 0.67 %.

Although the Glen Ellen area is experiencing a construction "boom", almost the entirety of these projects represent rebuilding of residences that were destroyed in the 2017 fire disaster. These rebuilt homes will likely represent less of a fire danger given current codes and standards (i.e. homes will be equipped with fire sprinkler systems).

**Table 4: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth**

<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>
Unincorporated Area Outside Sonoma Urban Service Area	20,483	28,617	30,125	34,400	4,275

Sources: U.S. Census, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and 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."

The District is currently able to meet its service goals with existing staffing and equipment resources, and rarely relies on mutual aid from neighboring agencies except in cases (like major structure or wildland fires) where operational needs demand support.

This operational effectiveness will not be affected by the very low resident population growth in the region served by the District.

#### *Transient Population*

Fire and emergency services agencies respond to "transient" populations as well as resident populations within their service areas. For some agencies, the service needs for transient populations can greatly exceed the needs for resident populations. Although there are tourist-serving developments in the territory (notably wineries and parks), the District does not consider transient populations a driver of call growth.

#### *Development*

The County of Sonoma has sole jurisdiction over land use and planning for the area served by the District. Permit Sonoma does not anticipate any significant residential, commercial development in the areas served by the District. Projects with the largest impact on the District would be new wineries or other event centers with associated event activity.

It is not anticipated that the very modest population growth in the area and limited development activity would in any way affect the District's ability to provide fire and emergency services at current levels and response times.

**DETERMINATION 2. DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the subject agency provide public services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection?	Yes		
b. Are there any "inhabited unincorporated communities" (per adopted Commission policy) within or adjacent to the subject agency's sphere of influence that are considered "disadvantaged" (80% or less of the statewide median household income)?	Yes		
c. If "yes" to both a) and b), it is feasible for the agency to be reorganized such that it can extend service to the disadvantaged unincorporated community (if "no" to either a) or b), this question may be skipped)?			No

**Determination**

- Glen Ellen is designated as a disadvantaged unincorporated area, and is served by the District.

**Discussion**

The Glen Ellen area is designated as a disadvantaged unincorporated area, and is within the District's territory. The remaining disadvantaged unincorporated communities in the Sonoma Valley are served by the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, which is the contracted service provider for Glen Ellen Fire.

**DETERMINATION 3. CAPACITY AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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 the sphere of influence.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any deficiencies in agency capacity to meet service needs of existing development within its existing territory?			No
b. Are there any issues regarding the agency's capacity to meet the service demand of reasonably foreseeable future growth?			No
c. Are there any concerns regarding public services provided by the agency being considered adequate?			No
d. Are there any significant infrastructure needs or deficiencies to be addressed?			No
e. Are there changes in state regulations on the horizon that will require significant facility and/or infrastructure upgrades?			No
f. Are there any service needs or deficiencies for disadvantaged unincorporated communities related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection within or contiguous to the agency's sphere of influence?			No

**Determinations**

- The Glen Ellen Fire Protection District effectively provides fire and emergency services within its existing service area and is expected to be able to serve potential population and development growth for the foreseeable future.
- The District is currently meeting recommended standards to operate a combination fire department under NFPA 1720. (A combination department is one that relies on both paid and volunteer staffing.)
- The District is addressing a decline in the number and availability of volunteers by contracting with the Valley of the Moon Fire District for paid career staff. With current District financing, this service model has been determined to be sustainable at least through 2021, through a review of the contract by LAFCO.



## Discussion

The District provides fire and emergency services within its boundaries, and provides mutual aid support to neighboring agencies.

Under the contract with Valley of the Moon FPD, call response is generally with a “2/0” or “3/0” staffed engine, with Advanced Life Support capabilities, a significant improvement over the “2/0” Basic Life Support service that the District provided prior to entering into the contract.

Table 5 indicates the types of incidents that the District responds to, and their historical frequency.

**Table 5: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Glen Ellen Fire Protection District**

	2016	2017	2018	Average
Calls Generated Within Area	329	328	314	324

This data indicates that the number of incident calls the District responds to has decreased; according to District staff, the destruction and damage to existing residences in the 2017 fire disaster has led to a short-term decline in resident population, leading to decreased call volume.

### *Response Standards*

**Table 6: Response Time Statistics – Glen Ellen Fire Protection District**

Year	Average Response Times (Dispatched to “Arrived On Scene”)
2016	7 minutes 32 seconds
2017	14 minutes 3 seconds
2018	6 minutes 8 seconds

These statistics indicate that the District meets NFPA response time standards for rural areas for calls that are generated from within the District territory.

### *ISO Rating*

The District has an International Standards Organization (ISO) Public Protection Class rating of 2 (on a scale of ten, with one the highest rating), indicating very high property fire protection. The rating recently was reassessed from the previous score of 4. The ISO rating is used by virtually all insurers to calculate premiums.

### *Facilities*

The District maintains a main fire station/headquarters that was erected in 1969. The facility is modest, and is undergoing a remodel that includes the addition of sleeping quarters, improved accessibility, and a structural evaluation, to ensure that it continues to serve District needs effectively.

Glen Ellen FPD also leases a small facility (Station 6) on Sonoma Mountain Road that is suitable solely for vehicle storage.

### *Staffing*

GEFPD is now classified as a “combined” department, with both paid and volunteer firefighter and EMT staffing.

The District provides training to volunteers under the auspices of the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, its service contractor. Prior to the contractual arrangement, Glen Ellen provided training two times per month; under the auspices of Valley of the Moon, training is now offered to both paid career and volunteers every week.

The District reports that their volunteer roster has steadily declined, necessitating the contractual arrangement with Valley of the Moon Fire for paid career staffing. Although the District maintains a volunteer program, volunteer availability (particular during normal weekday work hours) is becoming problematic. (The loss and damage to residences in the District due to the fire disaster in 2017 has further reduced volunteer ranks and availability.)

### *Vehicles*

The District maintains an equipment replacement schedule, and the District's Firefighter Association has designated \$500,000 for two engine replacements (and an additional \$100,000 for the fire station renovation).

**DETERMINATION 4. FINANCIAL ABILITY**

Financial ability of agencies to provide services.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the organization routinely engage in budgeting practices that may indicate poor financial management, such as overspending its revenues, failing to commission independent audits, or adopting its budget late?			No
b. Is the organization lacking adequate reserves to protect against unexpected events or upcoming significant costs?		Maybe	
c. Is the organization's rate/fee schedule insufficient to fund an adequate level of service, and/or is the fee inconsistent with the schedules of similar service organizations?			No
d. Is the organization unable to fund necessary infrastructure maintenance, replacement and/or any needed expansion?		Maybe	
e. Is the organization lacking financial policies that ensure its continued financial accountability and stability?			No
f. Is the organization's debt at an unmanageable level?			No

**Determinations**

- The Glen Ellen Fire Protection District has been meeting its expenses without difficulty and has been able to provide funding for infrastructure needs (primarily vehicle and equipment replacement).
- The District has secured sustained revenue to support their current staffing program (provided through a contractual arrangement with Valley of the Moon FPD).
- Financial management of the District is sound, and is independently audited on an annual basis.

## Discussion

### Budget

The Glen Ellen district board members fulfill administrative support activities on behalf of the District, including developing annual budgets and monitoring finances. The Board considers a proposed budget each year, and offers opportunities for the public to provide review and comments before formal adoption of the plan.

**Table 7: Glen Ellen FPD Financial Review**

#### Audited Financials

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Balance	Fund Balance EOY
FY 15-16	\$1,229,913	\$782,848	\$517,065	\$2,483,648
FY 16-17	\$1,100,730	\$600,201	\$500,529	\$2,984,177
FY 17-18	\$1,186,205	\$1,188,668	(\$2,463)	\$2,981,714

#### Budget/Actuals

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Capital and Operations Income/Expense	Net To Fund Balance
FY 18-19	\$1,053,003	\$877,953	\$4,904	\$142,177
FY 19-20*	\$1,335,628	\$959,311	\$115,000	\$183,785

\* Reflects budget, not audited results.

### Revenue

Glen Ellen receives a property tax allocation based on an AB8 rate of 10.97%, which is healthy compared to the average of 7.89% for all Fire Protection Districts in the County.

The District also received voter approval for Measure T, which allows the District to assess parcel taxes. The rate schedule allows the District to assess as much as \$200 per year for a typical single-family dwelling.

### Reserves

The District maintains cash reserves and manages them per a board-adopted Financial Reserve Policy.

Current reserves amount to approximately \$3 million, and are intended for capital expenditures and operational deficits, as needed. The District maintains a five-year "capital plan", which predicts major expenses such as vehicle and equipment replacements. The District does maintain capital plan reserve accounts, one for

vehicles and the other for buildings and grounds. The District also has a third “general reserve” account.

The District's volunteer association has a fund of over \$600,000 that is earmarked for vehicle and equipment purchases and the station renovation project that is underway.

*Financial Policies*

The District has adopted financial policies to help ensure the proper fiscal management, including:

- Purchasing
- Financial Reserve Policy
- Capital Assets

The District retains an independent contracted auditor to conduct financial reviews annually.

*Resources:*

- Budget projections and independently audited financial statements are on file with Sonoma LAFCO.

**DETERMINATION 5. SHARED SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency currently sharing services or facilities with other organizations? If so, describe the status of such efforts.			No
b. Are there any opportunities for the organization to share services or facilities with neighboring or overlapping organizations that are not currently being utilized?		Maybe	
c. Are there any governance options that may produce economies of scale and/or improve buying power in order to reduce costs?	Yes		
d. Are there governance options to allow appropriate facilities and/or resources to be shared, or making excess capacity available to others, and avoid construction of extra or unnecessary infrastructure or eliminate duplicative resources?		Maybe	

**Determination**

- The Glen Ellen Fire Protection District contracts for services with the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, and has indicated a willingness to participate in a regional agency consolidation effort.

## Discussion

The Glen Ellen FPD, under the auspices of the Valley of the Moon FPD, manages operations cooperatively with neighboring agencies, notably through mutual response agreements.

The District also participates in multi-agency management systems, such as the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM), which manages emergency services dispatch for the majority of emergency services agencies in the County.

The District is insured through the Fire Agencies Insurance Risk Authority (FAIRA), and is a member of the Fire District Association of California/Fire Agency Self-Insurance System (FDAC/FASIS) for workers' compensation coverage.

A summary of best practices for fire district coordination with other agencies is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Coordination Best Practices – Glen Ellen Fire Protection District**

Best Practice	Observation and findings
The District participates in the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM)	Yes.
The Districts has mutual aid Agreements with other Districts.	All of the Region 3 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.	No. The District secures independent financial auditing services.
The District participates with other districts or the County for equipment purchasing or leasing.	Yes
The District participates in joint insurance programs.	Yes
The District has an “Amador Contract” with CalFire.	No districts in Region 3 currently contract with CalFire for services.
The District participates in joint training with other districts or the County.	Yes, all Districts in Region 3 are coordinating training through the Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District's Training Officer.
The District participates with another district or the County for joint administration services.	No. Glen Ellen secures administration services through its contract with Valley of the Moon FPD.
The District shares facilities with other districts.	In the event of a region-wide reorganization, there may be opportunities to evaluate the status and staffing of fire stations.
The District shares a fire chief or other staff with another District.	Yes (contractually).
The District participates in joint recruitment with other districts.	Not at this time.

## REGIONAL AGENCY CONSOLIDATION

Glen Ellen has been an active participant in regional discussions that have taken place recently to consider appropriate fire and emergency service agency consolidation in Region 3.

LAFCO staff continue to monitor fire and emergency services agency consolidation discussions throughout the County, and opine that Region 3 remains at the forefront of possible action in the near term, in part due to the existing operational coordination between Region 3 agencies.

**DETERMINATION 6. ACCOUNTABILITY, STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any issues with meetings being accessible and well publicized? Any failures to comply with disclosure laws and the Brown Act?			No
b. Are there any issues with filling board vacancies and maintaining board members?			No
c. Are there any issues with staff turnover or operational efficiencies?			No
d. Is there a lack of regular audits, adopted budgets and public access to these documents?			No
e. Are there any recommended changes to the organization's governance structure that will increase accountability and efficiency?			No
f. Are there any governance restructure options to enhance services and/or eliminate deficiencies or redundancies?		Maybe	
g. Are there any opportunities to eliminate overlapping boundaries that confuse the public, cause service inefficiencies, unnecessarily increase the cost of infrastructure, exacerbate rate issues and/or undermine good planning practices?			No



### **Determinations**

- The Glen Ellen Fire Protection District is governed in a manner that not only complies with all statutes and laws, but is fully open to community input. Board directors have been elected and/or appointed appropriately.
- The District undertakes annual independent financial and business practice audits and is in compliance with financial regulations and recommended practices.
- The District is encouraged to continue discussions with all other fire and emergency services providers in Region 3 regarding opportunities for coordinating service provision to produce efficiencies and cost savings, up to and including potential consolidation of operations in the future.

### **Discussion**

The Glen Ellen Fire Protection District is in compliance with all public noticing requirements for board meetings. There have been no noted Brown Act violations by the Directors. The District makes files available to the general public when requested – most documents are posted to the District web site.

Board members file financial interest statements and comply with State training requirements for public officials.

The District undergoes an annual financial audit, and changes auditors regularly. All District documents are available to the public.

District board members have supported discussions regarding operational and governance options in Region 3, up to and including a region-wide reorganization and consolidation of fire and emergency service agencies.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW: KENWOOD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**Agency Profile**

The Kenwood Fire Protection District (KFPD, Kenwood Fire, or the District) provides fire and emergency services to the northernmost portion of the Sonoma Valley in a region once designated as "Zone 3", and now as "Region 3". The District was formed in 1946.

The District has primary responsibility for serving over 40 square miles of territory centered on and surrounding the unincorporated village of Kenwood, including all of Hood Mountain Regional Park and Sugarloaf State Park to the east, and about a third of Annadel State Park to the west.

The District shares a short border with Napa County to the East, extensive borders with the Sonoma County Fire District to the north and west, a border with the City of Santa Rosa's Oakmont area to the north, and a border with the Glen Ellen Fire Protection District to the south.

The Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Company serves a County Service Area 40 (CSA 40) territory that abuts the District at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. The District also abuts a CSA 40 Incident Response Plan area (31-75) at its southern border.

KFPD maintains one headquarters station on Highway 12 in Kenwood, effectively in the center of the District territory.

The District relies on paid staff for leadership and administrative roles, four full-time paid firefighters, eight part-time paid firefighters, and volunteers paid on a per-shift stipend basis.

Primary funding for the District comes from property ad valorem taxes, and a modest parcel tax (which assesses \$40 per year for a single-family residence).

The District also has an associated non-profit foundation that raises funds that are generally used to support equipment and vehicle purchases.

The District provides Basic Life Support service, with Advanced Life Support services provided by Sonoma Life Support (the contractor for the Exclusive Operating Area in the central portion of the County) and Valley of the Moon FPD operating as Sonoma Valley Fire.

**POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT MSR DETERMINATIONS**

The MSR determinations reviewed below are potentially significant, as indicated by "yes" or "maybe" answers to the key policy questions in the checklist and corresponding discussion.

**DETERMINATION 1. GROWTH AND POPULATION**

Growth and population projections for the affected area.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency's territory or surrounding area expected to experience any significant population change or development over the next 5-10 years?			No
b. Will population changes have an impact on the subject agency's service needs and demands?			No
c. Will projected growth require a change in the agency's service boundary?			No

**Determinations**

- The region served by KFPD will continue to experience minimal development and population growth due to land use policies enacted by the County of Sonoma and managed by the County's Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma).

**Discussion**

The required level of staffing and other resources for a fire and emergency services agency is linked to three primary categories:

- The population of residents and workers within the territory.
- Transient populations, included travelers through the territory (on roads or other transit systems), and visitors (to event centers and recreational areas).
- The amount and type of development in the territory (i.e. commercial, industrial, residential, and the composition of each). This factor is also informed by the age, type of construction, and building standards of the development.

*Population*

Because there are no incorporated cities within Kenwood FPD's service area, land use planning is the responsibility of the County of Sonoma's Permit Sonoma department.

The County General Plan 2020 divides the County into nine planning areas. Planning Area Objectives and Policies recognize the circumstances of each of the nine planning areas of the County and the fact that each area warrants its own unique policies. These policies also provide specific guidance regarding the use of individual properties. Most urbanized growth is expected to occur within Urban Service Areas.

The County has two goals that reinforce the philosophy of City centered growth. These goals, as stated in the County General Plan 2020 are as follows:

- 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.

The General Plan includes the "Sonoma Valley Planning Area" and enumerates a series of policies that strictly limit development of all types, and directs that development occur within existing urban and suburban areas that have municipal service provision (sanitation and water). Kenwood FPD serves a portion of the Sonoma Valley Planning Area.

The County General Plan describes the features of each planning area and expected population growth as follows (emphasis added):

*Population is concentrated in Sonoma and in the adjacent unincorporated communities of Agua Caliente, Feters Hot Springs, El Verano and Boyes Hot Springs. Other communities include Kenwood and Glen Ellen. The balance of the area's population is scattered in rural agricultural and hillside areas at very low densities.*

*By 2020, population of the planning area is expected to reach 48,990 people. 34,400 of this population is expected in the unincorporated area, particularly in the Urban Service Area along Highway 12, with the remaining 14,590 people within the City of Sonoma.*

The County General Plan population projections for the Sonoma Valley Planning Area are shown in Table 9.

Although Kenwood FPD does not serve the entirety of the unincorporated region within the planning area, the projected growth rates for that portion of the planning area can serve as an appropriate proxy for population growth within the District's service area.

The total growth rate projected between 2000 and 2020 for the unincorporated area in the Sonoma Valley is 14.2 %, yielding an annual compound rate projection of 0.67 %.

**Table 9: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth**

Planning Area	1980	1990	2000	Projected 2020	Projected Change 2000-2020
Unincorporated Area Outside Sonoma Urban Service Area	20,483	28,617	30,125	34,400	4,275

Sources: U.S. Census, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and 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."

The District is currently able to meet its service goals with existing staffing and equipment resources, and rarely relies on mutual aid from neighboring agencies except in cases (like major structure or wildland fires) where operational needs demand support.

This operational effectiveness will not be affected by the very low resident population growth in the region served by the District.

#### *Transient Population*

Fire and emergency services agencies respond to "transient" populations as well as resident populations within their service areas. For some agencies, the service needs for transient populations can greatly exceed the needs for resident populations.

Because the District covers a portion of Highway 12 and three large parks, a portion of calls are certainly for service to transients, but likely not in a higher proportion than most agencies.

#### *Development*

The County of Sonoma has sole jurisdiction over land use and planning for the area served by the District. Permit Sonoma does not anticipate any significant residential, commercial development in the areas served by the District. Projects with the largest impact on the District would be new wineries or other event centers with associated event activity.

Approximately 150 homes were destroyed in the District's territory during the 2017 fire disaster. Although many homes are in the process of being rebuilt, only a modest portion have been completed.

It is not anticipated that the very modest population growth in the area and limited development activity would in any way affect the District's ability to provide fire and emergency services at current levels and response times.

**DETERMINATION 2. DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the subject agency provide public services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection?			No
b. Are there any "inhabited unincorporated communities" (per adopted Commission policy) within or adjacent to the subject agency's sphere of influence that are considered "disadvantaged" (80% or less of the statewide median household income)?			No
c. If "yes" to both a) and b), it is feasible for the agency to be reorganized such that it can extend service to the disadvantaged unincorporated community (if "no" to either a) or b), this question may be skipped)?			No

**Determination**

- There are no county-designated disadvantaged unincorporated areas within the territory served by the District, and fire and emergency service provision is exempted from provisions of SB 244.

**Discussion**

There are no areas within the District that are designated as disadvantaged unincorporated communities. The community of Temelec is a designated disadvantage unincorporated community, and is substantially surrounded by the District, but the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority (Valley of the Moon Fire) provides service to the area.

**DETERMINATION 3. CAPACITY AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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 the sphere of influence

	YES	MAYBE	NO
g. Are there any deficiencies in agency capacity to meet service needs of existing development within its existing territory?			No
h. Are there any issues regarding the agency's capacity to meet the service demand of reasonably foreseeable future growth?			No
i. Are there any concerns regarding public services provided by the agency being considered adequate?			No
j. Are there any significant infrastructure needs or deficiencies to be addressed?			No
k. Are there changes in state regulations on the horizon that will require significant facility and/or infrastructure upgrades?			No
l. Are there any service needs or deficiencies for disadvantaged unincorporated communities related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection within or contiguous to the agency's sphere of influence?			No

**Determinations**

- The Kenwood Fire Protection District effectively provides fire and emergency services within its existing service area and is expected to be able to serve potential population and development growth for the foreseeable future.
- The District is currently meeting recommended standards to operate a combination fire department under NFPA 1720 standards. (A combination department is one that relies on both paid and volunteer staffing.)
- District leadership believe that additional paid career staffing will be required in the future to maintain service levels given the decreasing availability of volunteers. Additionally, the District believes that pay rates will need to be increased to maintain paid career staff ranks.

## Discussion

### *Call Volume*

The District provides fire and emergency services within its boundaries, and provides mutual aid support to neighboring agencies. Table 10 indicates the historical frequency of calls generated within the District territory.

**Table 10: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Kenwood Fire Protection District**

	2016	2017	2018	Average
Calls Generated Within Area	165	239	183	196

### *Response Standards*

**Table 11: Response Time Statistics – Kenwood Fire Protection District**

Year	Average Response Times (Dispatched to “Arrived On Scene”)
2016	5 minutes 48 seconds
2017	9 minutes 32 seconds
2018	5 minutes 46 seconds

These statistics indicate that the District meets NFPA response time standards for rural areas for calls that are generated from within the District territory.

### *Facilities*

The District maintains one main fire station/headquarters essentially in the center of its territory. Half of the station requires seismic safety upgrades; the station does not have suitable crew quarters, and an engine bay expansion is needed.

### *Staffing*

KFPD is dissimilar to many fire protection districts in the County in that it is a “combined” department, with both paid and volunteer firefighter and EMT staffing. (Districts that have a paid chief and administration employees, with all other staff serving on a volunteer basis, are typically classified as a “volunteer” department.)

The District has five full-time and eight part-time paid career staff. Staff pay rates are purported to be among the lowest in the State, and therefore certainly low in comparison to other agencies in the County.



There are twenty-two volunteers on the District roster, with about half of them active. KFPD provides modest volunteer stipends on a per-response basis, or for commitments to staff 12-hour or 24-hour shifts. (Shift volunteers are offered very modest accommodation arrangements.)

The District provides training, equipment and other support for volunteers.

The District reports that they have not yet had any challenges recruiting and maintaining its paid career workforce, despite very low wage scales. Despite a solid volunteer roster with over ten active volunteers, the District notes that during weekday work hours volunteers simply aren't available.

#### *Equipment*

District staff note that there are opportunities to reduce its vehicle fleet.

### **DETERMINATION 4. FINANCIAL ABILITY**

Financial ability of agencies to provide services

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the organization routinely engage in budgeting practices that may indicate poor financial management, such as overspending its revenues, failing to commission independent audits, or adopting its budget late?			No
b. Is the organization lacking adequate reserve to protect against unexpected events or upcoming significant costs?			No
c. Is the organization's rate/fee schedule insufficient to fund an adequate level of service, and/or is the fee inconsistent with the schedules of similar service organizations?			No
d. Is the organization unable to fund necessary infrastructure maintenance, replacement and/or any needed expansion?			No
e. Is the organization lacking financial policies that ensure its continued financial accountability and stability?			No
f. Is the organization's debt at an unmanageable level?			No

## Determinations

- The Kenwood Fire Protection District has been meeting its expenses without difficulty and has been able to provide funding for infrastructure needs (primarily vehicle and equipment replacement).
- Financial management of the District is sound, and is independently audited on an annual basis.

## Discussion

### Budget

KFPD staff prepares annual budgets in the spring for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors prior to the upcoming fiscal year (July through June). The staff seeks guidance from the Board, and District customers are able to comment, in successive board meetings prior to budget approval.

Kenwood paid staff are enrolled in the CalPERS retirement system. The District is current with contributions and has reduced an unfunded balance.

**Table 12: Kenwood FPD Financial Review**

### Audited Financials

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Balance	Fund Balance EOY
FY 15-16	\$	\$	\$	\$
FY 16-17	\$	\$	\$	\$
FY 17-18	\$	\$	(\$)	\$

### Budget/Actuals

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Capital and Operations Income/Expense	Net To Fund Balance
FY 18-19	\$	\$	\$	\$
FY 19-20*	\$	\$	\$	

\* Reflects budget, not audited results.

### Revenues

Kenwood FPD has a property tax allocation rate of 9.01 %, which is about 1 percentage point higher than the average for fire districts in the County.

The District also relies on a voter-approved parcel tax or revenue, with the typical single-family residence owner assessed \$40 per year. Districts that have sought parcel taxes in

the past few years have successfully sought rate schedules that assess \$200 or so per year for a single-family residence.

Seeking voter approval for a parcel tax increase, or having a parcel tax extended on the Kenwood district territory from an agency with a higher rate schedule through a reorganization therefore represent the most likely options for raising additional revenue.

(Although decreases in property tax revenues due to lost homes in the 2017 fire disaster were nominally covered by the State for a two-year period, the District will likely see a decrease in property tax revenue in ensuing years, dependent on how many homes are rebuilt and how quickly.)

### *Reserves*

The District maintains cash reserves and manages them per a board-adopted Financial Reserve Policy.

Current reserves amount to approximately \$2.5 million, and are intended for capital expenditures and operational deficits, as needed. The District maintains a five-year "capital plan", which predicts major expenses such as vehicle and equipment replacements. The District does not maintain a capital plan reserve account – reserves are unallocated.

The District's volunteer association has a fund of about \$500,000 that is nominally earmarked for vehicle and equipment purchases.

### *Financial Policies*

The District has adopted financial policies to help ensure the proper fiscal management, including:

- Purchasing
- Financial Reserve Policy
- Capital Assets

The District retains an independent contracted auditor to conduct financial reviews annually.

### *Resources:*

- Budget projections and independently audited financial statements are on file with Sonoma LAFCO.

**DETERMINATION 5. SHARED SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency currently sharing services or facilities with other organizations? If so, describe the status of such efforts.			No
b. Are there any opportunities for the organization to share services or facilities with neighboring or overlapping organizations that are not currently being utilized?		Maybe	
c. Are there any governance options that may produce economies of scale and/or improve buying power in order to reduce costs?			No
d. Are there governance options to allow appropriate facilities and/or resources to be shared, or making excess capacity available to others, and avoid construction of extra or unnecessary infrastructure or eliminate duplicative resources?		Maybe	

**Determination**

- The Kenwood Fire Protection District is appropriately positioned to seek out and enter into agreements with other fire and emergency services providers in Region 3 to take advantage of opportunities to reduce costs, and to provide more efficient and effective services.

**Discussion**

Kenwood FPD manages operations cooperatively with neighboring agencies, notably through mutual response agreements. The District also participates in multi-agency management systems, such as the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM), which manages emergency services dispatch for the majority of emergency services agencies in the County.

The District invests reserve funds in the County of Sonoma Treasury investment pool.

The District is insured through the Fire Agencies Insurance Risk Authority (FAIRA), and is a member of the Fire District Association of California/Fire Agency Self-Insurance System (FDAC/FASIS) for workers' compensation coverage.

A summary of best practices for fire district coordination with other agencies is presented in Table 13.

**Table 13: Coordination Best Practices – Kenwood Fire Protection District**

<b>Best Practice</b>	<b>Observation and findings</b>
The District participates in the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM)	Yes.
The Districts has mutual aid Agreements with other Districts.	All of the Region 3 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.	No. The District secures independent financial auditing services and manages its own financial accounting.
The District participates with other districts or the County for equipment purchasing or leasing.	Yes
The District participates in joint insurance programs.	Yes
The District has an “Amador Contract” with CalFire.	No districts in Region 3 can afford contracts for service from CALFIRE.
The District participates in joint training with other districts or the County.	Yes
The District participates with another district or the County for joint administration services.	No. Kenwood secures administration services through a half-time District employee.
The District shares facilities with other districts.	In the event of a region-wide reorganization, there may be opportunities to evaluate the status and staffing of fire stations.
The District shares a fire chief or other staff with another District.	No.
The District participates in joint recruitment with other districts.	Not at this time.

#### REGIONAL AGENCY CONSOLIDATION

Kenwood has been an active participant in regional discussions that have taken place recently to consider appropriate fire and emergency service agency consolidation in Region 3.

LAFCO staff continue to monitor fire and emergency services agency consolidation discussions throughout the County, and opine that Region 3 remains at the forefront of possible action in the near term, in part due to the existing operational coordination between Region 3 agencies.

**DETERMINATION 6. ACCOUNTABILITY, STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any issues with meetings being accessible and well publicized? Any failures to comply with disclosure laws and the Brown Act?			No
b. Are there any issues with filling board vacancies and maintaining board members?			No
c. Are there any issues with staff turnover or operational efficiencies?			No
d. Is there a lack of regular audits, adopted budgets and public access to these documents?			No
e. Are there any recommended changes to the organization's governance structure that will increase accountability and efficiency?			No
f. Are there any governance restructure options to enhance services and/or eliminate deficiencies or redundancies?		Maybe	
g. Are there any opportunities to eliminate overlapping boundaries that confuse the public, cause service inefficiencies, unnecessarily increase the cost of infrastructure, exacerbate rate issues and/or undermine good planning practices?			No

**Determinations**

- The Kenwood Fire Protection District is governed in a manner that not only complies with all statutes and laws, but is fully open to community input. Board directors have been elected and/or appointed appropriately.
- The District undertakes annual independent financial and business practice audits and is in compliance with financial regulations and recommended practices.
- The District is encouraged to continue discussions with all other fire and emergency services providers in Region 3 regarding opportunities for coordinating service provision to produce efficiencies and cost savings, up to and including potential consolidation of operations in the future.

## **Discussion**

The Kenwood Fire Protection District is in compliance with all public noticing requirements for board meetings. There have been no noted Brown Act violations by the Directors. The District makes files available to the general public when requested – most documents are posted to the District web site.

Board members file financial interest statements and comply with State training requirements for public officials.

The District undergoes an annual financial audit, and changes auditors regularly. All District documents are available to the public.

District volunteers and board members have supported discussions regarding operational and governance options in Region 3, up to and including a region-wide reorganization and consolidation of fire and emergency service agencies.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW: MAYACAMAS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT (CSA 40)**

**SUMMARY DETERMINATIONS**

- **The Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department continues to provide a solid volunteer-based fire service.**
- **The County is preparing to enter into a services contract with Valley of the Moon Fire for services for Mayacamas VFD. However, it is critical that Mayacamas-area residents consider long-term, sustainable service options, which would best be achieved through inclusion of the area in a regional agency.**

**OVERVIEW**

The Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department ("Mayacamas" or "Mayacamas VFD") serves a portion of County Service Area 40 – Fire Services, which is a dependent District of the County of Sonoma.

The VFD provides service to almost thirteen square miles of unincorporated area. There are about 390 residents in the area according to the 2010 census; however, effects of the 2017 fires have resulted in a sharp decrease in residents in the short term.

The territory is bordered by the Kenwood FPD at Sugarloaf State Park to the north, Glen Ellen FPD to the west, Valley of the Moon FPD to the south, Schell-Vista FPD to the south, and by Napa County Fire to the east.

The Department averaged about thirty calls per year prior to the 2017 fire disaster.

The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District (acting as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority) provides emergency medical/ambulance coverage to the Mayacamas area. The District is also negotiating with the County to provide

**SIGNIFICANT MSR DETERMINATIONS**

The MSR determinations reviewed below are potentially significant, as indicated by "yes" or "maybe" answers to the key policy questions in the checklist and corresponding discussion.



**DETERMINATION 1. GROWTH AND POPULATION**

Growth and population projections for the affected area.	Evaluation
a. Is the agency's territory or surrounding area expected to experience any significant population change or development over the next 5-10 years?	No
b. Will population changes have an impact on the subject agency's service needs and demands?	No
c. Will projected growth require a change to agency service boundaries?	No

**Determinations**

- **The Mayacamas area has not experienced growth and is not expected to do so in the future.**

**Discussion**

The required level of staffing and other resources for a fire and emergency services agency is linked to three primary categories:

- The population of residents and workers within the territory
- Transient populations, included travelers through the territory (on roads or other transit systems) and visitors (to event centers and recreational areas)
- The amount and type of development in the territory (i.e., commercial, industrial, residential, and the composition of each). This factor is also informed by the age, type of construction, and building standards of the development.

*Resident Population*

Serving a mountainous region devoted predominantly to agriculture and very low density residential development, Mayacamas VFD has not experienced significant community growth and is not expected to in the future.

*Transient Population*

Fire and emergency services agencies respond to “transient” populations as well as resident populations within their service areas. For Mayacamas VFD, response to vehicle accidents on Trinity Road, which is a primary route from the Sonoma Valley to the central Napa Valley, represents the primary provision of service to transients.

*Development*

The County of Sonoma has jurisdiction over land use and planning for the areas served by the Department and does not anticipate significant development in the area other than rebuilds of damaged and destroyed properties.

**DETERMINATION 2. CAPACITY AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies.	Evaluation
a. Are there any deficiencies in agency capacity to meet service needs of existing development within its existing territory?	Yes (declining volunteer roster)
b. Are there any issues regarding the agency's capacity to meet the service demand of reasonably foreseeable future growth?	Yes (per above)
c. Are there any concerns regarding public services provided by the agency being considered adequate?	Maybe
d. Are there any significant infrastructure needs or deficiencies to be addressed?	No
e. Are there changes in state regulations on the horizon that will require significant facility and/or infrastructure upgrades?	No
f. Are there any service needs or deficiencies for disadvantaged unincorporated communities related structural fire protection within or contiguous to the agency's sphere of influence?	No

**Determinations**

- **The Mayacamas area generates about 30 service calls per year.**
- **The Department receives mutual aid support from the Valley of the Moon, Glen Ellen, and Kenwood FPDs, and emergency medical/ambulance support from Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District.**

**Discussion****Service Volumes****Response Standards**

A discussion of response time standards is included in Appendix 3 of this report.

Mayacamas serves a territory with **rural** demands and currently strives to operate crews with "2/0" staffing (two-member crews are dispatched to all calls).

**Table 14: Response Time Statistics – Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Response Times (Dispatched to "Arrived On Scene")</b>
2016	19 minutes 18 seconds
2017	15 minutes 26 seconds
2018	14 minutes 49 seconds

These statistics indicate that the Department and mutual aid agencies provide service that meets NFPA response time standards for rural areas for calls that are generated from within the service area.

### **Facilities**

The VFD has two modest facilities in the community. They are unsuited for staffing; the buildings, while not seismically evaluated, are of wood frame construction so likely have low levels of seismic risk.

### **Staffing**

Mayacamas has a roster of five volunteers, with four active. One volunteer is a trained paramedic.

## **DETERMINATION 3. FINANCIAL CONDITION**

### **Determinations**

- **As part of County Service Area 40 – Fire Services, Mayacamas VFD was eligible for financial and administrative support from the County of Sonoma. However, the County is preparing to cede a direct administrative support role to North Bay Fire, a new non-profit organization representing the remaining Volunteer Fire Companies in Sonoma County. North Bay Fire has in turn entered into a contract with Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to provide leadership and administrative services. The contract will include provision of stipends for volunteers. The County is funding North Bay Fire for a two-year period, with an expectation that the Volunteer Fire Companies will participate in regional consolidations within that time frame.**
- **Notwithstanding this arrangement, the County is preparing to contract with Valley of the Moon FPD to provide support services to Mayacamas VFD.**

### **Discussion**

Mayacamas VFD exists as a 501(c)(3) organization, so does not receive tax revenue directly and has no taxation authority.

A portion of property tax revenue in the Mayacamas territory is directed to County Service Area 40 – Fire Services, as shown in Table 15:

**Table 15: Financial Data for Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department Territory**

Factor	Value
Parcel Count	237
Total Assessed Value	\$205,667,829 (pre 2017 fire disaster)
Average AB8 Rate	3.2%
Net Property Tax to CSA 40	\$70,934 (pre 2017 fire disaster)
Special Tax Revenue	\$23,212

## FINANCIAL OPTIONS

Appendix 4 describes options for subject agencies to increase revenues and decrease costs, either as stand-alone agencies or through a regional consolidation program.

### Revenue Source Options

The Mayacamas VFD does not have taxation authority, but County Service Area 40, which is a dependent district of the County of Sonoma, could seek approval from the voters within the entire district for special taxes.

Another possibility is that a neighboring fire protection district could seek a sphere of influence amendment from LAFCO encompassing the territory of Mayacamas, subsequently annexing the territory and extending an existing special tax over the area.

At a typical parcel tax rate of \$200 per year, a special tax might generate \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year in the Mayacamas area, depending on the number of residences and structures (which is contingent on rebuild activity).

It should be noted that this additional revenue, combined with property tax allocations, would not support anything other than a volunteer program, and would be unlikely to provide sustainable funding that would address vehicle, equipment, and facility needs.

**DETERMINATION 4. SHARED SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.	Evaluation
a. Are subject agencies currently sharing services or facilities with other organizations? If so, describe the status of such efforts.	Pending (contract with Valley of the Moon FPD)
b. Are there any opportunities for the organizations to share services or facilities with neighboring or overlapping organizations that are not currently being utilized?	Yes
c. Are there any governance options that may produce economies of scale and/or improve buying power in order to reduce costs?	Yes
d. Are there governance options to allow appropriate facilities and/or resources to be shared, or making excess capacity available to others, and avoid construction of extra or unnecessary infrastructure or eliminate duplicative resources?	No

**Determinations**

- **Due to low call volumes, the Mayacamas area is likely best-served with a volunteer Department that is part of a regional agency that provides leadership, administrative support, and mutual aid. The volunteer operation would provide “quick response”, with “3/0” staffed response coming from the regional agency out of another location.**

**Discussion**

As noted previously, the Volunteer Fire Companies providing service in CSA 40 territory will be receiving support from Gold Ridge Fire Protection District for the next two years under contract, until a contract for services with Valley of the Moon FPD is executed.

It is clear that Mayacamas (and the other VFCs providing service in CSA 40) will require support, both operationally and organizationally, and that this support will have to come from an agency other than the County, given the County's decision to reorganize its Fire and Emergency Services department.

Although support services can be provided under contract, as the Gold Ridge FPD contract (and subsequent contract with Valley of the Moon FPD) illustrates, the County has indicated that the VFCs must consider reorganization with neighboring agencies, within a two-year timeframe.

## **DETERMINATION 5. ACCOUNTABILITY, STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCIES**

### **Determinations**

- **The County of Sonoma, which runs County Service Area 40 as a dependent district, meets all requirements for proper governance.**
- **Volunteer Fire Companies are not government agencies, and are therefore not subject to review of governance strictures.**
- **The County has established a two-year timeframe for Mayacamas VFD (and the other VFCs in the County) to seek reorganization opportunities with other fire and emergency service agencies.**

### **Discussion**

The County of Sonoma, as part of its management of Board of Supervisors meetings, fully meets governance requirements, and therefore does so for governance of County Service Area 40, a dependent district.

Volunteer Fire Companies are not government agencies, but are organized as 501 (c)(3) entities, so are not subject to governance regulations.

As noted in the previous section, the County has indicated a two-year timeframe during which Volunteer Fire Companies must seek reorganizations with neighboring fire and emergency service agencies.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW: SCHELL-VISTA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**Agency Profile**

The Schell-Vista Fire Protection District (SVFPD, Schell-Vista Fire, or the District) provides fire and emergency services to the southernmost portion of the Sonoma Valley in a region once designated as "Zone 3", and now as "Region 3". The District was formed in 1955.

The District has primary responsibility for serving over 65 square miles of territory including the hills on the north and east sides of the City of Sonoma (including, through a Mutual Aid contract with Napa County Fire District, the upper reaches of Lovall Road in Napa County) down to Highway 37 and the southern hills up to Highway 116.

SVFPD maintains a central station (Station #1) at the intersection of Highway 12 and Highway 121 and a subsidiary station (#2) at the intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> Street East and East Napa Street, adjacent to the eastern side of the City of Sonoma.

The District has mutual aid agreement with the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority and CALFIRE, and has an automatic aid agreement with Napa County Fire Department in designated areas.

The District relies on paid staff for leadership and administrative roles, and fire and emergency service professionals paid on a stipend basis. SVFPD maintains living quarters as a means of attracting qualified staff as part of what is known as a "sleeper program". In addition, the District conducts in-house training academies for new recruits.

Primary funding for the District comes from property ad valorem taxes and from a Mello-Roos assessment. The Mello-Roos assessment was enjoined to repay a bond issued to provide funding for the headquarters building.

The District secured voter approval for a significantly higher parcel tax schedule in 2018, which will provide funding for paid career staffing positions as well as ongoing operational costs.

The District also has an associated non-profit foundation that raises funds that are generally used to support equipment and vehicle purchases.

**POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT MSR DETERMINATIONS**

The MSR determinations reviewed below are potentially significant, as indicated by "yes" or "maybe" answers to the key policy questions in the checklist and corresponding discussion.

**DETERMINATION 1. GROWTH AND POPULATION**

Growth and population projections for the affected area.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency's territory or surrounding area expected to experience any significant population change or development over the next 5-10 years?			No
b. Will population changes have an impact on the subject agency's service needs and demands?			No
c. Will projected growth require a change in the agency's service boundary?			No

**Determinations**

- The region served by SVFPD will continue to experience minimal development and population growth due to land use policies enacted by the County of Sonoma and managed by the County's Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma).

**Discussion**

The required level of staffing and other resources for a fire and emergency services agency is linked to three primary categories:

- The population of residents and workers within the territory.
- Transient populations, included travelers through the territory (on roads or other transit systems), and visitors (to event centers and recreational areas).
- The amount and type of development in the territory (i.e. commercial, industrial, residential, and the composition of each). This factor is also informed by the age, type of construction, and building standards of the development.

*Population*

Because there are no incorporated cities within Schell-Vista FPD's service area, land use planning is the responsibility of the County of Sonoma's Permit Sonoma department.

The County General Plan 2020 divides the County into nine planning areas. Planning Area Objectives and Policies recognize the circumstances of each of the nine planning areas of the County and the fact that each area warrants its own unique policies. These policies also provide specific guidance regarding the use of individual properties. Most urbanized growth is expected to occur within Urban Service Areas.



The County has two goals that reinforce the philosophy of City centered growth. These goals, as stated in the County General Plan 2020 are as follows:

- 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.

The General Plan includes the "Sonoma Valley Planning Area" and enumerates a series of policies that strictly limit development of all types, and directs that development occur within existing urban and suburban areas that have municipal service provision (sanitation and water).

Schell-Vista FPD serves a portion of the Sonoma Valley Planning Area, and other than the 8<sup>th</sup> Street East industrial/commercial corridor, serves areas with very low development densities.

The County General Plan describes the features of each planning area and expected population growth as follows (emphasis added):

***Population is concentrated in Sonoma and in the adjacent unincorporated communities of Agua Caliente, Fethers Hot Springs, El Verano and Boyes Hot Springs.*** Other communities include Kenwood and Glen Ellen. The balance of the area's population is scattered in rural agricultural and hillside areas at very low densities.

*By 2020, population of the planning area is expected to reach 48,990 people. 34,400 of this population is expected in the unincorporated area, **particularly in the Urban Service Area along Highway 12**, with the remaining 14,590 people within the City of Sonoma.*

The County General Plan population projections for the Sonoma Valley Planning Area are shown in Table 16.

Although Schell-Vista FPD does not serve the entirety of the unincorporated region within the planning area, the projected growth rates for that portion of the planning area can serve as an appropriate proxy for population growth within the District's service area.

The total growth rate projected between 2000 and 2020 for the unincorporated area in the Sonoma Valley is 14.2 %, yielding an annual compound rate projection of 0.67 %.

**Table 16: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth**

<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>
Unincorporated Area Outside Sonoma Urban Service Area	20,483	28,617	30,125	34,400	4,275

Sources: U.S. Census, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and 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."

The District is currently able to meet its service goals with existing staffing and equipment resources, and rarely relies on mutual aid from neighboring agencies except in cases (like major structure or wildland fires) where operational needs demand support.

This operational effectiveness will not be affected by the very low resident population growth in the region served by the District.

#### *Transient Population*

Fire and emergency services agencies respond to "transient" populations as well as resident populations within their service areas. For some agencies, the service needs for transient populations can greatly exceed the needs for resident populations.

Schell-Vista in fact notes that about half of service calls are for vehicle accidents on the highways (Highways 12, 37, and 12) that traverse its territory, and another set of calls coming from visitors at event centers such as wineries and the Sonoma Raceway. (Major events at Sonoma Raceway are staffed with fire and emergency service units on a contracted basis; Schell-Vista provides "regular" service to the facility.)

#### *Development*

The County of Sonoma has sole jurisdiction over land use and planning for the area served by the District. Permit Sonoma does not anticipate any significant residential, commercial development in the areas served by the District. Projects with the largest impact on the District would be new wineries or other event centers with associated event activity.

It is not anticipated that the very modest population growth in the area and limited development activity would in any way affect the District's ability to provide fire and emergency services at current levels and response times.

**DETERMINATION 2. DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the subject agency provide public services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection?			No
b. Are there any "inhabited unincorporated communities" (per adopted Commission policy) within or adjacent to the subject agency's sphere of influence that are considered "disadvantaged" (80% or less of the statewide median household income)?			No
c. If "yes" to both a) and b), it is feasible for the agency to be reorganized such that it can extend service to the disadvantaged unincorporated community (if "no" to either a) or b), this question may be skipped)?			No

**Determination**

- There are no county-designated disadvantaged unincorporated areas within the territory served by the District, and fire and emergency service provision is exempted from provisions of SB 244.

**Discussion**

There are no areas within the District that are designated as disadvantaged unincorporated communities. The community of Temelec is a designated disadvantage unincorporated community, and is substantially surrounded by the District, but the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority (Valley of the Moon Fire) provides service to the area.

**DETERMINATION 3. CAPACITY AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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 the sphere of influence

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any deficiencies in agency capacity to meet service needs of existing development within its existing territory?			No
b. Are there any issues regarding the agency's capacity to meet the service demand of reasonably foreseeable future growth?			No
c. Are there any concerns regarding public services provided by the agency being considered adequate?			No
d. Are there any significant infrastructure needs or deficiencies to be addressed?			No
e. Are there changes in state regulations on the horizon that will require significant facility and/or infrastructure upgrades?			No
f. Are there any service needs or deficiencies for disadvantaged unincorporated communities related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection within or contiguous to the agency's sphere of influence?			No

**Determinations**

- The Schell-Vista Fire Protection District effectively provides fire and emergency services within its existing service area and is expected to be able to serve potential population and development growth for the foreseeable future.
- The District is currently meeting recommended standards to operate a combination fire department under NFPA 1720 standards. (A combination department is one that relies on both paid and volunteer staffing.)
- The District may face the same challenge that most fire protection districts in Sonoma County face with regards to transitioning from a primarily volunteer-based staffing model to a paid staffing model, due to declines in the availability of volunteers, though it should be noted that the District currently has a robust roster of volunteers.

## Discussion

The District provides fire and emergency services within its boundaries, and provides mutual aid support to neighboring agencies. Table 17 indicates the historical frequency of calls generated within the District territory.

(Prior to 2018, the District provided contractual call coverage to County Service Area 40 territories, including to Sonoma Raceway and the southern portion of the Mayacamas VFD area. These amounted to about 100 calls per year, and are not reflected in the statistics below. The District successfully sought a reorganization to annex those territories, so future call statistics will reflect calls to those areas.)

**Table 17: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Schell-Vista Fire Protection District**

	2016	2017	2018	Average
Calls Generated Within Area	418	497	457	457

This data indicates that the number of incident calls the District responds to is relatively steady. According to District staff, responses to car accidents (including responses to false reports) is the predominant driver of any expected call growth.

### Response Standards

**Table 18: Response Time Statistics – Schell-Vista Fire Protection District**

Year	Average Response Times (Dispatched to “Arrived On Scene”)
2016	8 minutes 28 seconds
2017	9 minutes 4 seconds
2018	7 minutes 49 seconds

These statistics indicate that the District meets NFPA response time standards for rural areas for calls that are generated from within the District territory.

District staff have described several issues that increase response times:

- Drive times to incidents on Highway 37 are high and often impacted by heavy traffic conditions. In addition, incidents on the Highway are often misreported with regard to location, or are otherwise erroneous.
- Drive times to the far reaches of Norrbom and Gehricke roads in the north eastern portion of the District are long due to access issues and topography.

### *Facilities*

The District serves major highways, and large rural and wildland areas that are lightly populated. The District area also includes wineries and other visitor-serving facilities, including the Sonoma Raceway.

The District maintains one main fire station/headquarters, and has one supplemental station where equipment can be stored.

### *Staffing*

SVFPD is dissimilar to many fire protection districts in the County in that it is a “combined” department, with both paid and volunteer firefighter and EMT staffing. (Districts that have a paid chief and administration employees, with all other staff serving on a volunteer basis, are typically classified as a “volunteer” department.)

SVFPD is also dissimilar in that volunteer stipends are paid on the basis of shift duty, rather than response to incidents, as many other programs do.

The District provides training, including an academy program; equipment; and other support for volunteers; and maintains a “sleeper program” that provides lodging.

The District reports that they do not have any challenges recruiting and maintaining their workforce, but that volunteer availability (particular during normal weekday work hours) is difficult to manage despite a robust program.

**DETERMINATION 4. FINANCIAL ABILITY**

Financial ability of agencies to provide services

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the organization routinely engage in budgeting practices that may indicate poor financial management, such as overspending its revenues, failing to commission independent audits, or adopting its budget late?			No
b. Is the organization lacking adequate reserve to protect against unexpected events or upcoming significant costs?			No
c. Is the organization's rate/fee schedule insufficient to fund an adequate level of service, and/or is the fee inconsistent with the schedules of similar service organizations?			No
d. Is the organization unable to fund necessary infrastructure maintenance, replacement and/or any needed expansion?			No
e. Is the organization lacking financial policies that ensure its continued financial accountability and stability?			No
f. Is the organization's debt at an unmanageable level?			No

**Determinations**

- The Schell-Vista Fire Protection District has been meeting its expenses without difficulty and has been able to provide funding for infrastructure needs (primarily vehicle and equipment replacement).
- The District has secured sustained revenue to support their current staffing program that includes three paid chief positions that were formerly paid on a shift-stipend basis.
- Financial management of the District is sound, and is independently audited on an annual basis.

## Discussion

### Budget

SVFPD staff prepares annual budgets in the spring for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors prior to the upcoming fiscal year (July through June). The staff seeks guidance from the Board, and District customers are able to comment, in successive board meetings prior to budget approval.

Schell-Vista paid staff are enrolled in the CalPERS retirement system.

As shown in Table 19, the budget for Fiscal Year 2016/2017 reflects two significant increases in expenses:

- The District converted three chief positions from stipend-paid to salaried, at a total annual salary and benefit cost of approximately \$200,000.
- The District planned to purchase an engine at a budgeted cost of \$350,000.

However, the District received voter support in 2018 for a revised parcel tax rate schedule, which will generate sufficient revenue to bring budgets back into balance.

**Table 19: Schell-Vista FPD Budget Review**

Fiscal Year	Revenue	Salaries and Benefits	Operating and Capital Expenditures	Deficit
FY 13-14	\$809,091	\$278,148	\$539,670	\$8,727
FY 14-15	\$926,760	\$317,274	\$517,811	(\$91,675)
FY 15-16	\$984,138	\$374,568	\$518,789	(\$90,781)
FY 16-17	\$825,237	\$657,122	\$759,820	\$591,705
FY 17-18				
FY 18-19*				

\* Reflects budget, not audited results.

### Revenues

Schell-Vista FPD has a property tax allocation rate of 4.37 %, which is very low compared to the average for fire districts in the County (at 7.89%).

The District recently sought and was granted voter approval for a new parcel tax schedule (the District assesses parcel taxes based on "units of risk"). The District is now assessing about Districts that have sought parcel taxes in the past few years have successfully sought rate schedules that assesses \$200 per year for a single-family residence.



### *Reserves*

The District maintains cash reserves and manages them per a board-adopted Financial Reserve Policy.

Current reserves amount to approximately \$971,062, and are intended for capital expenditures and operational deficits, as needed. The District maintains a five-year "capital plan", which predicts major expenses such as vehicle and equipment replacements. The District does not maintain a capital plan reserve account – reserves are unallocated.

The District's volunteer association has a fund of about \$250,000 that is nominally earmarked for vehicle and equipment purchases.

### *Financial Policies*

The District has adopted financial policies to help ensure the proper fiscal management, including:

- Purchasing
- Financial Reserve Policy
- Capital Assets

The District retains an independent contracted auditor to conduct financial reviews annually.

### *Resources:*

- Budget projections and independently audited financial statements are on file with Sonoma LAFCO.

**DETERMINATION 5. SHARED SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency currently sharing services or facilities with other organizations? If so, describe the status of such efforts.			No
b. Are there any opportunities for the organization to share services or facilities with neighboring or overlapping organizations that are not currently being utilized?		Maybe	
c. Are there any governance options that may produce economies of scale and/or improve buying power in order to reduce costs?			No
d. Are there governance options to allow appropriate facilities and/or resources to be shared, or making excess capacity available to others, and avoid construction of extra or unnecessary infrastructure or eliminate duplicative resources?		Maybe	

**Determination**

- The Schell-Vista Fire Protection District is appropriately positioned to seek out and enter into agreements with other fire and emergency services providers in Region 3 to take advantage of opportunities to reduce costs, and to provide more efficient and effective services.

**Discussion**

Schell-Vista FPD manages operations cooperatively with neighboring agencies, notably through mutual response agreements. The District also participates in multi-agency management systems, such as the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM), which manages emergency services dispatch for the majority of emergency services agencies in the County.

The District no longer invests reserve funds in the County of Sonoma Treasury investment pool, relying instead on a local financial institution (Exchange Bank).

The District is insured through the Fire Agencies Insurance Risk Authority (FAIRA), and is a member of the Fire District Association of California/Fire Agency Self-Insurance System (FDAC/FASIS) for workers' compensation coverage.

A summary of best practices for fire district coordination with other agencies is presented in Table 20.

**Table 20: Coordination Best Practices – Schell-Vista Fire Protection District**

<b>Best Practice</b>	<b>Observation and findings</b>
The District participates in the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM)	Yes.
The Districts has mutual aid Agreements with other Districts.	All of the Region 3 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.	No. The District formerly contracted with the County, but now manages finances independently.
The District participates with other districts or the County for equipment purchasing or leasing.	Yes
The District participates in joint insurance programs.	Yes
The District has an “Amador Contract” with CalFire.	No districts in Region 3 can afford contracts for service from CALFIRE.
The District participates in joint training with other districts or the County.	Yes
The District participates with another district or the County for joint administration services.	No. Schell-Vista secures administration services through a half-time District employee.
The District shares facilities with other districts.	In the event of a region-wide reorganization, there may be opportunities to evaluate the status and staffing of fire stations.
The District shares a fire chief or other staff with another District.	No.
The District participates in joint recruitment with other districts.	Not at this time.

*REGIONAL AGENCY CONSOLIDATION*

Schell-Vista has been an active participant in regional discussions that have taken place recently to consider appropriate fire and emergency service agency consolidation in Region 3.

LAFCO staff continue to monitor fire and emergency services agency consolidation discussions throughout the County, and opine that Region 3 remains at the forefront of possible action in the near term, in part due to the existing operational coordination between Region 3 agencies.

**DETERMINATION 6. ACCOUNTABILITY, STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any issues with meetings being accessible and well publicized? Any failures to comply with disclosure laws and the Brown Act?			No
b. Are there any issues with filling board vacancies and maintaining board members?			No
c. Are there any issues with staff turnover or operational efficiencies?			No
d. Is there a lack of regular audits, adopted budgets and public access to these documents?			No
e. Are there any recommended changes to the organization's governance structure that will increase accountability and efficiency?			No
f. Are there any governance restructure options to enhance services and/or eliminate deficiencies or redundancies?		Maybe	
g. Are there any opportunities to eliminate overlapping boundaries that confuse the public, cause service inefficiencies, unnecessarily increase the cost of infrastructure, exacerbate rate issues and/or undermine good planning practices?			No

**Determinations**

- The Schell-Vista Fire Protection District is governed in a manner that not only complies with all statutes and laws, but is fully open to community input. Board directors have been elected and/or appointed appropriately.
- The District undertakes annual independent financial and business practice audits and is in compliance with financial regulations and recommended practices.
- The District is encouraged to continue discussions with all other fire and emergency services providers in Region 3 regarding opportunities for coordinating service provision to produce efficiencies and cost savings, up to and including potential consolidation of operations in the future.

## **Discussion**

The Schell-Vista Fire Protection District is in compliance with all public noticing requirements for board meetings. There have been no noted Brown Act violations by the Directors. The District makes files available to the general public when requested – most documents are posted to the District web site.

Board members file financial interest statements and comply with State training requirements for public officials.

The District undergoes an annual financial audit, and changes auditors regularly. All District documents are available to the public.

District staff and board members have supported discussions regarding operational and governance options in Region 3, up to and including a region-wide reorganization and consolidation of fire and emergency service agencies.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW: VALLEY OF THE MOON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**Agency Profile**

The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District (VOMFPD, Valley of the Moon Fire, or the District) provides fire and emergency services to the central portion of the Sonoma Valley in a region once designated as "Zone 3", and now as "Region 3". The District was formed in 1955.

The District has primary responsibility for serving over 31.5 square miles of territory including the communities of Temelec and Chanterelle, El Verano, Boyes Hot Springs, Feters Hot Springs, and Agua Caliente. The District territory also includes hillsides on both sides of the Valley, which includes rural residential and wild lands.

VOMFPD maintains three stations, not including the station in the City of Sonoma that it operates under contract, and that serves as the headquarters of the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority. The District also operates the Glen Ellen FPD station under contract.

The three District stations are located in El Verano, Agua Caliente, and at the Diamond A rural subdivision west of the Springs area. The first two stations are staffed; the Diamond A station is used for vehicle storage and crew staging when conditions warrant it.

The District has mutual aid agreements with neighboring agencies and CALFIRE. CALFIRE has a station on Highway 12 north of Trinity Oaks and south of Kenwood that is staffed during fire season.

The District relies on paid staff for leadership and administrative roles, paid firefighter/EMTs, paid paramedics, and a cadre of volunteers. The District has a training officer, and the District provides training services open to all agencies in the Valley conducts in-house training academies for new recruits.

Primary funding for the District comes from property ad valorem taxes, and from a voter-authorized parcel tax. The City of Sonoma and Glen Ellen FPD provide funding to the District for their respective contracted service arrangements.

The District sought voter approval for a significantly higher parcel tax schedule in 2018, but the measure very narrowly failed to gain sufficient support.

The District also has an associated non-profit foundation that raises funds that are generally used to support equipment and vehicle purchases.

**POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT MSR DETERMINATIONS**

The MSR determinations reviewed below are potentially significant, as indicated by "yes" or "maybe" answers to the key policy questions in the checklist and corresponding discussion.

**DETERMINATION 1. GROWTH AND POPULATION**

Growth and population projections for the affected area.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency's territory or surrounding area expected to experience any significant population change or development over the next 5-10 years?			No
b. Will population changes have an impact on the subject agency's service needs and demands?			No
c. Will projected growth require a change in the agency's service boundary?			No

**Determinations**

- The region served by VOMFPD will continue to experience development and population growth due to land use policies enacted by the County of Sonoma and managed by the County's Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma).

**Discussion**

The required level of staffing and other resources for a fire and emergency services agency is linked to three primary categories:

- The population of residents and workers within the territory.
- Transient populations, included travelers through the territory (on roads or other transit systems), and visitors (to event centers and recreational areas).
- The amount and type of development in the territory (i.e. commercial, industrial, residential, and the composition of each). This factor is also informed by the age, type of construction, and building standards of the development.

*Population*

Because there are no incorporated cities within Valley of the Moon FPD's service area, land use planning is the responsibility of the County of Sonoma's Permit Sonoma department.

The County General Plan 2020 divides the County into nine planning areas. Planning Area Objectives and Policies recognize the circumstances of each of the nine planning areas of the County and the fact that each area warrants its own unique policies. These policies also provide specific guidance regarding the use of individual properties. Most urbanized growth is expected to occur within Urban Service Areas.

The County has two goals that reinforce the philosophy of City-centered growth. These goals, as stated in the County General Plan 2020 are as follows:

- 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.

The General Plan includes the "Sonoma Valley Planning Area" and enumerates a series of policies that limit development of all types, and directs that development occur within existing urban and suburban areas that have municipal service provision (sanitation and water).

Valley of the Moon FPD serves a portion of the Sonoma Valley Planning Area, including areas that are within Urban Service Areas, where the County expects the majority of development to occur.

The County General Plan describes the features of each planning area and expected population growth as follows (emphasis added):

***Population is concentrated in Sonoma and in the adjacent unincorporated communities of Agua Caliente, Fethers Hot Springs, El Verano and Boyes Hot Springs.*** Other communities include Kenwood and Glen Ellen. The balance of the area's population is scattered in rural agricultural and hillside areas at very low densities.

*By 2020, population of the planning area is expected to reach 48,990 people. 34,400 of this population is expected in the unincorporated area, **particularly in the Urban Service Area along Highway 12**, with the remaining 14,590 people within the City of Sonoma.*

The County General Plan population projections for the Sonoma Valley Planning Area are shown in Table 21.

Although Valley of the Moon FPD does not serve the entirety of the unincorporated region within the planning area, the projected growth rates for that portion of the planning area can serve as an appropriate proxy for population growth within the District's service area.

The total growth rate projected between 2000 and 2020 for the unincorporated area in the Sonoma Valley is 14.2 %, yielding an annual compound rate projection of 0.67 %.



**Table 21: Sonoma Valley Planning Area Projected Growth**

<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>
Unincorporated Area Outside Sonoma Urban Service Area	20,483	28,617	30,125	34,400	4,275

Sources: U.S. Census, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and 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."

The District has had recent difficulty in ensuring appropriate engine company staffing at "3/0" levels, but has secured grant funding that will enable additional staffing for the three-year term of the grant. The District rarely relies on mutual aid from neighboring agencies except in cases (like major structure or wildland fires) where operational needs demand support.

Operational effectiveness of the District will not be impacted by the very low resident population growth in the region served by the District, but other factors are contributing to service level issues.

#### *Transient Population*

Fire and emergency services agencies respond to "transient" populations as well as resident populations within their service areas. For some agencies, the service needs for transient populations can greatly exceed the needs for resident populations.

Valley of the Moon notes that its service area is not generally impacted by transient populations compared to other agencies.

#### *Development*

The County of Sonoma has sole jurisdiction over land use and planning for the area served by the District. Permit Sonoma does anticipate development within the District's territory, almost exclusively within the Urban Service Area where municipal water and sanitation services are available.

It is not anticipated that the population growth in the area and development activity would negatively affect the District's ability to provide fire and emergency services at current levels and response times.

**DETERMINATION 2. DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the subject agency provide public services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection?			No
b. Are there any "inhabited unincorporated communities" (per adopted Commission policy) within or adjacent to the subject agency's sphere of influence that are considered "disadvantaged" (80% or less of the statewide median household income)?			No
c. If "yes" to both a) and b), it is feasible for the agency to be reorganized such that it can extend service to the disadvantaged unincorporated community (if "no" to either a) or b), this question may be skipped)?			No

**Determination**

- There are two county-designated disadvantaged unincorporated areas within the territory served by the District.

**Discussion**

There are two areas within the District that are designated as disadvantaged unincorporated communities: Temelec and Boyes Hot Springs. The District provides equitable service to those communities.

**DETERMINATION 3. CAPACITY AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

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 the sphere of influence

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any deficiencies in agency capacity to meet service needs of existing development within its existing territory?		Maybe	
b. Are there any issues regarding the agency's capacity to meet the service demand of reasonably foreseeable future growth?			No
c. Are there any concerns regarding public services provided by the agency being considered adequate?		Maybe	
d. Are there any significant infrastructure needs or deficiencies to be addressed?			No
e. Are there changes in state regulations on the horizon that will require significant facility and/or infrastructure upgrades?			No
f. Are there any service needs or deficiencies for disadvantaged unincorporated communities related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection within or contiguous to the agency's sphere of influence?			No

**Determinations**

- The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District effectively provides fire and emergency services within its existing service area and is expected to be able to serve potential population and development growth for the foreseeable future.
- The District is currently meeting recommended standards to operate a combination fire department under NFPA 1720 standards. (A combination department is one that relies on both paid and volunteer staffing.)
- The District has secured a three-year grant that will enable it to add career paid positions, ensuring "3/0" staffing for engine companies for that period. However, the District will need to secure sustainable funding to maintain that service level.

## Discussion

The District provides fire and emergency services within its boundaries, and provides mutual aid support to neighboring agencies. Table 22 indicates the historical frequency of incidents generated within the District's territory.

**Table 22: Historical Call for Service Volumes – Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District**

	2016	2017	2018	Average
Calls Generated Within Area	1699	1776	1722	1732

This data indicates that the number of incident calls generated within the District territory is fairly flat.

### *Response Standards*

**Table 23: Response Time Statistics – Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District**

Year	Average Response Times (Dispatched to "Arrived On Scene")
2016	5 minutes 23 seconds
2017	5 minutes 40 seconds
2018	5 minutes 34 seconds

These statistics indicate that the District meets NFPA response time standards for suburban areas for calls that are generated from within the District territory.

### *Facilities*

The District has completed a remodel of the El Verano station, and its station in Agua Caliente is sufficient. The storage/staging facility in Diamond A does not require any upgrades given its current use.

### *Staffing*

VOMFPD is dissimilar to many fire protection districts in the County in that it is a "combined" department, with both paid and volunteer firefighter and EMT staffing. (Districts that have a paid chief and administration employees, with all other staff serving on a volunteer basis, are typically classified as a "volunteer" department.)

The District provides training, equipment; and stipends for volunteers.

The District reports that they do not have any challenges recruiting and maintaining their workforce, but that volunteer availability (particular during normal weekday work hours) is difficult to manage despite a robust program.

#### DETERMINATION 4. FINANCIAL ABILITY

Financial ability of agencies to provide services

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Does the organization routinely engage in budgeting practices that may indicate poor financial management, such as overspending its revenues, failing to commission independent audits, or adopting its budget late?			No
b. Is the organization lacking adequate reserve to protect against unexpected events or upcoming significant costs?			No
c. Is the organization's rate/fee schedule insufficient to fund an adequate level of service, and/or is the fee inconsistent with the schedules of similar service organizations?			No
d. Is the organization unable to fund necessary infrastructure maintenance, replacement and/or any needed expansion?			No
e. Is the organization lacking financial policies that ensure its continued financial accountability and stability?			No
f. Is the organization's debt at an unmanageable level?			No

#### Determinations

- The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District has been meeting its expenses without difficulty and has been able to provide funding for infrastructure needs (primarily vehicle and equipment replacement).
- Financial management of the District is sound, and is independently audited on an annual basis.

## Discussion

### Budget

VOMFPD staff prepares annual budgets in the spring for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors prior to the upcoming fiscal year (July through June). The staff seeks guidance from the Board, and District customers are able to comment, in successive board meetings prior to budget approval.

Valley of the Moon paid staff are enrolled in the Sonoma County Employee Retirement Association retirement system.

Table 24 summarizes the financial condition of the District:

**Table 24: Valley of the Moon FPD Financial Review**

#### Audited Financials

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Balance	Fund Balance EOY
FY 15-16	\$	\$	\$	\$
FY 16-17	\$	\$	\$	\$
FY 17-18	\$	\$	)	\$

#### Budget/Actuals

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Capital and Operations Income/Expense	Net To Fund Balance
FY 18-19	\$	\$	\$	\$
FY 19-20*	\$	\$	\$	(\$)

\* Reflects budget, not audited results.

### Revenues

Valley of the Moon FPD has a property tax allocation rate of 13.3 %, which is healthy compared to the average for fire districts in the County (which is 7.89 %).

The District also relies on a voter-approved parcel tax or revenue, with the typical single-family residence owner assessed \$40 per year. Districts that have sought parcel taxes in the past few years have successfully sought rate schedules that assess \$200 or so per year for a single-family residence. Valley of the Moon sought voter approval for an increased parcel tax rate schedule in 2018 that was very narrowly defeated.

Seeking voter approval for a parcel tax increase, or having a parcel tax extended on the Valley of the Moon district territory from an agency with a higher rate schedule

through a reorganization therefore represent the most likely options for raising additional revenue.

#### *Reserves*

The District maintains cash reserves and manages them per a board-adopted Financial Reserve Policy.

Current reserves amount to approximately \$3.5 million, and are intended for capital expenditures and operational deficits, as needed. The District maintains a five-year "capital plan", which predicts major expenses such as vehicle and equipment replacements. The District does not maintain a capital plan reserve account – reserves are unallocated.

The District is supported by the Sonoma Volunteer Firefighters Association, which was formed through the combination of prior associations at the City of Sonoma and Valley of the Moon. The Association has reserves as of 2018 of \$460,000 that are nominally earmarked for vehicle and equipment purchases.

#### *Financial Policies*

The District has adopted financial policies to help ensure the proper fiscal management, including:

- Purchasing
- Financial Reserve Policy
- Capital Assets

The District retains an independent contracted auditor to conduct financial reviews annually.

#### *Resources:*

- Budget projections and independently audited financial statements are on file with Sonoma LAFCO.

**DETERMINATION 5. SHARED SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Is the agency currently sharing services or facilities with other organizations? If so, describe the status of such efforts.			No
b. Are there any opportunities for the organization to share services or facilities with neighboring or overlapping organizations that are not currently being utilized?		Maybe	
c. Are there any governance options that may produce economies of scale and/or improve buying power in order to reduce costs?			No
d. Are there governance options to allow appropriate facilities and/or resources to be shared, or making excess capacity available to others, and avoid construction of extra or unnecessary infrastructure or eliminate duplicative resources?		Maybe	

**Determination**

- The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District is appropriately positioned to seek out and enter into agreements with other fire and emergency services providers in Region 3 to take advantage of opportunities to reduce costs, and to provide more efficient and effective services.

**Discussion**

Valley of the Moon FPD manages operations cooperatively with neighboring agencies, notably through mutual response agreements. The District also participates in multi-agency management systems, such as the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM), which manages emergency services dispatch for the majority of emergency services agencies in the County.

The District is insured through the Fire Agencies Insurance Risk Authority (FAIRA), and is a member of the Fire District Association of California/Fire Agency Self-Insurance System (FDAC/FASIS) for workers' compensation coverage.

A summary of best practices for fire district coordination with other agencies is presented in Table 25.



**Table 25: Coordination Best Practices – Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District**

<b>Best Practice</b>	<b>Observation and findings</b>
The District participates in the Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority (REDCOM)	Yes
The Districts has mutual aid Agreements with other Districts.	All of the Region 3 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.	No. The District formerly contracted with the County, but now manages finances independently.
The District participates with other districts or the County for equipment purchasing or leasing.	No
The District participates in joint insurance programs.	Yes
The District has an “Amador Contract” with CalFire.	No districts in Region 3 can afford contracts for service from CALFIRE.
The District participates in joint training with other districts or the County.	Yes. The District provides training support to neighboring Sonoma Valley agencies.
The District participates with another district or the County for joint administration services.	No. Valley of the Moon has an in-house administrative staff, and provides administrative services to two other agencies under contract.
The District shares facilities with other districts.	In the event of a region-wide reorganization, there may be opportunities to evaluate the status and staffing of fire stations.
The District shares a fire chief or other staff with another District.	Yes. Valley of the Moon provides leadership services to two other Sonoma Valley agencies under contract.
The District participates in joint recruitment with other districts.	Not at this time.

#### REGIONAL AGENCY CONSOLIDATION

Valley of the Moon has been an active participant in regional discussions that have taken place recently to consider appropriate fire and emergency service agency consolidation in Region 3.

LAFCO staff continue to monitor fire and emergency services agency consolidation discussions throughout the County, and opine that Region 3 remains at the forefront of possible action in the near term, in part due to the existing operational coordination between Region 3 agencies.

**DETERMINATION 6. ACCOUNTABILITY, STRUCTURE AND EFFICIENCIES**

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any issues with meetings being accessible and well publicized? Any failures to comply with disclosure laws and the Brown Act?			No
b. Are there any issues with filling board vacancies and maintaining board members?			No
c. Are there any issues with staff turnover or operational efficiencies?			No
d. Is there a lack of regular audits, adopted budgets and public access to these documents?			No
e. Are there any recommended changes to the organization's governance structure that will increase accountability and efficiency?			No
f. Are there any governance restructure options to enhance services and/or eliminate deficiencies or redundancies?		Maybe	
g. Are there any opportunities to eliminate overlapping boundaries that confuse the public, cause service inefficiencies, unnecessarily increase the cost of infrastructure, exacerbate rate issues and/or undermine good planning practices?			No

**Determinations**

- The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District is governed in a manner that not only complies with all statutes and laws, but is fully open to community input. Board directors have been elected and/or appointed appropriately.
- The District undertakes annual independent financial and business practice audits and is in compliance with financial regulations and recommended practices.
- The District is encouraged to continue discussions with all other fire and emergency services providers in Region 3 regarding opportunities for coordinating service provision to produce efficiencies and cost savings, up to and including potential consolidation of operations in the future.

## **Discussion**

The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District is in compliance with all public noticing requirements for board meetings. There have been no noted Brown Act violations by the Directors. The District makes files available to the general public when requested – most documents are posted to the District web site.

Board members file financial interest statements and comply with State training requirements for public officials.

The District undergoes an annual financial audit, and changes auditors regularly. All District documents are available to the public.

District staff and board members have supported discussions regarding operational and governance options in Region 3, up to and including a region-wide reorganization and consolidation of fire and emergency service agencies.

### **SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AMENDMENTS**

The Municipal Service Review identifies and supports the need to change the subject agency Spheres of Influence. Therefore, SOI determinations are presented in this section of the report to support the recommended amendments.

The existing Spheres of Influence for the four fire protection districts are contiguous with their boundaries. The Sphere of Influence for the City of Sonoma is only marginally greater than existing City limits, and is contiguous with the existing Urban Growth Boundary ordinance.

County Service Area 40 – Fire Services, which includes the territory served by the Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department and Incident Response Area 31-75, has no authorized sphere of influence, with territory determined by what areas in the County are not covered by cities or fire districts.

Staff is recommending that the Commission consider amending Glen Ellen FPD's sphere to include the territory served by the other three Districts, the portion of County Service Area 40 served by the Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department and IRP 31-75, and for the City of Sonoma (for fire and emergency medical service provision only).

The spheres for Kenwood, Valley of the Moon, and Schell-Vista FPDs would be set to "zero", indicating that the Commission expects them to be dissolved and annexed into a regional agency within a five- to ten-year time frame.

(County Service Area 40 – Fire Services, has boundaries coterminous with any areas of the County not served by another fire and emergency services agency or city fire department, and has essentially a de facto "zero" sphere.)

Please note that the Commission does not have an adopted policy regarding a "zero" sphere designation, but that the term can be defined as:

"a transitional sphere of influence designation assigned to a local agency indicating that the public service responsibility and functions of the agency should ultimately be abandoned or re-allocated to another government agency"

The choice of Glen Ellen FPD as the "lead" agency deserves explanation and transparency.

Glen Ellen has an existing voter-approved parcel tax schedule that is almost exactly the same as Schell-Vista FPD's, with only a slightly lower charge for commercial buildings. The tax rate schedule is based on "units of risk", and the District is authorized to apply inflation escalation factors to the schedule.

Glen Ellen FPD's parcel tax schedule would be extended to other agencies if reorganizations are approved by LAFCO and not nullified through protest proceedings.

It is expected that the plan for services for a regional fire and emergency medical services agency in Sonoma Valley will largely rely on extension of an appropriate parcel tax structure to ensure service levels and long term financial sustainability.

It should be reiterated that registered voters and landowners would have the opportunity to protest proposed reorganizations, at lower “hurdle rates” than those for approving special taxes.

A cohort of either 50% of registered voters or 50% of landowners can nullify a reorganization proposal through protest proceedings; approval of special tax measures requires a two-thirds-plus one approval by registered voters.

If a cohort of 25% or more of registered voters or 25% or more of landowners protest the reorganization, a balloted election will be conducted, with registered voters eligible to participate. A voter threshold of fifty percent-plus-one is required to confirm the reorganization.

Clearly, because Glen Ellen is providing services through a contractual arrangement with Valley of the Moon Fire, the District is not expected to manage a regional consolidation effort, and is therefore the “lead agency” in name only.

The Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District is expected to manage any proposed reorganizations, in part because of the agency's leadership and management capabilities, in part due to its provision of Advanced Life Support/ambulance coverage to the entirety of the region except Kenwood, and in part due to its contractual service agreements with two of the other five agencies.

This assertion is in no way intended to diminish the capabilities of the staffs at Kenwood and Schell-Vista FPDs, or the capabilities of the City of Sonoma to manage a regionalization effort.

Formation of a Sonoma Valley fire and emergency medical service agency, based on the proposed sphere of influence amendments, would not preclude the formation of a County-wide agency at a later date.

Staff has proposed a set of criteria to the Commission regarding consideration of fire agency sphere of influence amendments, and has summarized evaluations of those criteria in Table 26:

**Table 26: Sphere of Influence Amendment Evaluation**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<p>Operational Fit</p> <p>Does the proposed SOI make sense from an operational perspective?</p>	Two, and soon three of the agencies in the Valley are receiving contracted service provision from Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District, and all agencies provide mutual aid coverage to each other.	Kenwood FPD could objectively join Sonoma County Fire District, though it currently receives more mutual aid response coverage from the Valley rather than from Sonoma County FD.
Financial Sustainability	Three agencies will generate more revenue under a regional reorganization: Kenwood FPD (additional parcel tax revenue), Mayacamas VFD (parcel tax revenue and potentially additional County contribution under a tax exchange agreement) and Valley of the Moon FPD (additional parcel tax revenue). In total, this incremental revenue will preserve existing staffing and service levels.	
Will a future reorganization offer opportunities to increase revenues or decrease costs?	A reorganization would raise incremental revenue (per above). There may be modest cost savings opportunities through fleet evaluation and reduction, and a modified staffing plan for facilities.	

<p>Advanced Life Support/Ambulance Service Territory</p> <p>Is the SOI amendment consistent with existing ambulance service territories, if applicable?</p>	<p>The proposed SOI amendment is fully consistent with the existing ALS territory of Valley of the Moon FPD, operating as the Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue Authority, with the exception of the Kenwood FPD territory, which is part of the Exclusive Operating Area of Sonoma Life Support (AMR), a contractor.</p>	<p>Kenwood FPD reports that about half of calls requiring ALS support are covered by Valley of the Moon. A regionally consolidated agency will need to consult with Coastal Valleys EMS regarding ALS coverage rights in the Kenwood area.</p>
<p>Agency Request/Preference</p> <p>Do the subject agencies support the sphere amendment, with the understanding that it predicts eventual reorganizations?</p>	<p>With the exception of Schell-Vista FPD (which may consider opposing the proposed SOI amendment, or may opt out of an initial consolidation), all subject agencies have indicated support for the proposed SOI amendment.</p>	

## BENEFITS OF REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION

### *Financial*

If the Commission concurs with the recommended sphere of influence amendments, Glen Ellen FPD, under the management of the Valley of the Moon FPD, would be eligible to seek dissolution and subsequent annexation of the territories now served by the other three fire protection districts, the CSA 40 territory served by the Mayacamas VFD, the CSA 40 IRP 31-75 territory, and the City of Sonoma (for fire and emergency medical service provision only).

If those annexations were approved by the Commission and survive the voter and landowner protest proceedings, the parcel tax rates of Glen Ellen would be applied to the annexed territories.

This would raise significant revenue from the Valley of the Moon and Kenwood FPD territories, modest revenue from the Mayacamas VFD territory (due to the modest number of parcels in the territory), and negligible revenue from the Schell-Vista FPD territory (because Schell-Vista has a parcel tax rate essentially comparable to Glen Ellen's). (It is unclear how an annexation of City of Sonoma territory into a regional district would be handled from the perspective of applying parcel taxes.)

The Mayacamas VFD territory (CSA 40) may generate modest additional revenue if Glen Ellen FPD (under the auspices of Valley of the Moon Fire) can negotiate a suitable tax exchange agreement with the County, based on a demonstrated need for funding beyond what the territory generates from property taxes, and what it would generate in parcel taxes.

Staff notes that the area served by the Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department generates just under \$71,000 in annual property tax revenue (per 2017 fire disaster) devoted to fire and emergency services (the revenue goes to CSA 40 – Fire Services).

An additional special tax in Mayacamas generates \$23,000 in revenue. Application of Glen Ellen FPD's parcel tax to the territory would likely generate a similar amount of annual revenue.

(Valley of the Moon FPD has negotiated a contract-for-services agreement with the County to provide administrative and leadership support. The contracted payments from the County are on the order of \$XX,XXX per year, but this amount is perhaps not indicative of an appropriate funding stream for taking on full responsibility for the area. For example, the County is paying insurance costs for Mayacamas, and there is no provision of funding for operational, equipment, maintenance, or facility needs.)

### ***Operational***

The Valley of the Moon, City of Sonoma, and Glen Ellen partnership has resulted in a capable, professional leadership and administrative operation, and the Mayacamas VFD, Kenwood FPD and Schell-Vista FPD would benefit from being functionally within that organization.

A larger regional operation will likely offer more opportunities for career advancement for volunteers, apprentices, and paid professionals. A consolidated agency would be in a better position to add paid staff in the future (subject to funding), and would provide a broader leadership and administrative organization offering better opportunities for career movement.

A regional organization would very likely be capable of providing Advanced Life Support services throughout the Valley through the deployment of ambulance- and engine-based ALS crews. Although the Sonoma Valley Fire Authority provides ALS services throughout the region (except in Kenwood, where it responds to about half of the calls generated), provision of this service could be optimized through appropriate deployment and stationing of resources.

### ***Funding Equity***

Barring the variation of property tax revenues generated within the region, and the City of Sonoma's unique position as the only incorporated area, residents of Sonoma Valley are paying widely divergent special taxes to support fire and emergency medical services.



It could be considered more equitable to align special tax rates that appropriately represent the cost to provide services throughout the region.

For example, landowners in the Valley of the Moon FPD and Kenwood FPD territories are paying special taxes that are nominally 20 % of those paid by landowners in the Schell-Vista FPD and Glen Ellen FPD territories.

With the ability to provide equitable service levels across the region, particularly for Advanced Life Support emergency medical services, a regional agency would be in the position to make the case for equitable taxation throughout the Sonoma Valley.

## POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT SOI DETERMINATIONS

### SOI DETERMINATION 1. NEED FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Would the SOI conflict with the Commission's goal to increase efficiency and conservation of resources by providing essential services within a framework of controlled growth?			No
b. Would the SOI expand services that could be better provided by a city or another agency?		Maybe	
c. Does the SOI represent premature inducement of growth or facilitate conversion of agriculture or open space lands?			No
d. Are there any areas that should be removed from the SOI because existing circumstances make development unlikely, there is not sufficient demand to support it or important open space/prime agricultural land should be removed from urbanization?			No
e. Have any agency commitments been predicated on expanding the agency's SOI such as roadway projects, shopping centers, educational facilities, economic development or acquisition of parks and open space?			No

### Determinations

- The recommended sphere of influence amendments, if followed by a regional consolidation through annexations, would provide modest operational and cost efficiencies, though these efficiencies would not ensure the continued viability of the new agency.
- A regional consolidation would, **if appropriately financed** through a variety of methods, ensure continued service levels for four of the subject agencies, and potentially superior services for Kenwood FPD and Mayacamas VFD.

## Discussion

The financial and operational advantages of a consolidated, regional fire and emergency services agency comprised of the territories of the six subject agencies have been outlined in the opening portion of this section of the report.

### SOI DETERMINATION 2. CAPACITY AND ADEQUACY OF PROVIDED SERVICES

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

	YES	MAYBE	NO
a. Are there any issues regarding water availability for the proposed SOI territory?			No
b. Are there any issues regarding the agency's willingness and ability to extend services?			No
c. Are there any issues with the agency's ability to maintain an adequate level of service currently and/or with future extension of services per the proposed SOI?	Yes		

## Determinations

- The Kenwood, Valley of the Moon, and Glen Ellen FPDs and the Mayacamas VFD are supportive of seeking an immediate consolidation pending approval of the recommended sphere of influence amendments by the Commission.
- While there is no apparent predisposition for Schell-Vista FPD to join or not join a regional agency encompassing these four agencies, there are operational benefits and potentially modest cost savings that could be achieved. Furthermore, Schell-Vista FPD is less suited for inclusion in any other potential regional agency that could be proposed in the County.
- The City of Sonoma indicates it would be open to discussions of inclusion in a regional agency after 2020, when it has attended to other funding matters. It is also expected that navigating a consolidation process will be more difficult for the City than for the other five agencies.

## Discussion

The fire and emergency medical service agencies in Sonoma Valley have had ongoing discussions regarding reorganization into a regional body. Valley of the Moon FPD, Glen Ellen FPD, and Kenwood FPD are fully supportive of consolidation. The Mayacamas VFD

area is expected to be served under contract by Valley of the Moon before the close of 2019, so is also considered ready for regional consolidation.

The Schell-Vista FPD is fully viable as a stand-alone agency, although it should be understood that Schell-Vista does not provide Advanced Life Support services – Valley of the Moon provides ALS coverage to Schell-Vista. Schell-Vista should be encouraged to consider joining a regional agency so that citizens in its service area receive sustainable ALS coverage, in part through equitable sharing of tax revenues.

Schell-Vista might also consider the “soft” benefits of joining a regional agency, which include improved leadership and administrative service support, superior options for career advancement for employees, and consistent training and operational support.

The City of Sonoma has been contracting with Valley of the Moon FPD for services for eighteen years, and could reasonably be expected to join a Valley-wide regional agency, if only to obviate the need for contract renegotiations and ongoing financial management of the contract.

The City is nominally open to discussions about ceding its fire and emergency services to a regional agency, but the transition may prove challenging. The City and the regional agency could negotiate a tax exchange agreement, or could seek approval from City residents for a consolidation that included application of parcel taxes on properties within the City, or both.

City staff have indicated that they could not begin discussions until 2020 or later, because they are addressing other fiscal and planning matters, including seeking an extension of a sales tax measure, re-enacting an Urban Growth Boundary measure, and conducting a General Plan update.