

## FINAL REPORT

# TOWN OF WINDSOR MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

Prepared for:

Sonoma Local Agency Formation Commission

Prepared by:

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EPS #13023



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. SUMMARY OF SERVICE ISSUES AND TRENDS .....	2
Town of Windsor Governance.....	2
Growth and Development .....	2
Services .....	3
III. WATER.....	7
IV. WASTEWATER.....	10
V. STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION.....	14
VI. PARKS.....	16
VII. POLICE.....	18
VIII. FIRE.....	21
Windsor Fire Protection District.....	21
Rincon Valley Fire Protection District.....	24
IX. DETERMINATIONS .....	27

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

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Table 1: Municipal Service Providers for the Town of Windsor.....	4
Figure 1: Sonoma County Administrative Area Boundaries .....	5
Figure 2: Town of Windsor Map .....	6

# I. INTRODUCTION

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In 1997, the State Legislature convened a special commission to study and make recommendations to address California's rapidly accelerating growth. The Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century focused energies on ways to empower the already existing Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) in California counties. The Commission's final report, *Growth within Bounds*, recommended various changes to local land use laws and LAFCO statutes. Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg encompassed the recommendations of the Commission in Assembly Bill 2838, which passed into the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. The new law endows LAFCO with more responsibilities and more influence to oversee growth in California.

One of the major new responsibilities of LAFCO is to conduct comprehensive, regional studies of municipal services (Municipal Service Reviews, or MSRs), in conjunction with reviews of city and district spheres of influence (SOIs). LAFCOs are directed to review and update agencies' SOIs, as necessary, every five years, according to Government Code Section 56425. Section 56430 requires MSRs to be conducted prior to or in conjunction with the sphere updates. MSRs must address at least the following nine factors:

1. Infrastructure needs or deficiencies
2. Growth and population projections for the affected area
3. Financing constraints and opportunities
4. Cost avoidance opportunities
5. Opportunities for rate restructuring
6. Opportunities for shared facilities
7. Government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages or consolidation or reorganization of service providers
8. Evaluation of management efficiencies
9. Local accountability and governance

Sonoma LAFCO retained Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. (EPS) to develop the MSRs for cities and special districts in Sonoma County. The process was split into phases: water and sewer service providers and fire protection providers were reviewed in the first two phases, and cities are studied in the third, and final, phase. An initial survey was mailed to each city with a request for documents such as general plans, budgets, and maps. EPS used the completed surveys and supporting documents to write provider profiles and the nine determinations required by law for each provider. The profiles and determinations were submitted to each city for its review. The cities' comments were then incorporated into the report.

## II. SUMMARY OF SERVICE ISSUES AND TRENDS

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### TOWN OF WINDSOR GOVERNANCE

The Town of Windsor is a General Law City incorporated in 1992. The Windsor Town Council consists of five elected Councilmembers, one of whom is chosen by the Council members to serve as Mayor for a one-year term. The Town Council also serves as the Board of Directors for the Town of Windsor Redevelopment Agency and the Windsor Water District. The Town Council holds regular meetings on the first and third Wednesday evenings of each month in the Council Chambers. The Town Manager is the overall manager of the Town, following the direction of the Town Council. The Town of Windsor hosts a web site, which features information on all Town departments and meeting agendas and minutes of the Town Council, Redevelopment Agency, and other Town commissions. The Town's General Plan, zoning ordinance, municipal code, and other public documents are available for download. Council and commission meetings are open to the public.

### GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

As of 2005, Windsor has a population of 25,475 people in 6.5 square miles, or about 4,000 acres. The community is experiencing a controlled growth in recent years of single-family homes and limited commercial and industrial development. According to projections cited by the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department in the Sonoma County Draft General Plan 2020, the population of the Windsor Urban Service Area is expected to reach 30,300 by 2020, an annual increase of approximately 1.7 percent between 2000 and 2020.<sup>1</sup>

Windsor's SOI was last updated in 2001. The Town's most current General Plan was developed in 1996, with a Housing Element Update in 2002. Another Housing Element revision is planned for 2007. Significant annexation proposals currently in the early planning stages include the Sanderson Ford car dealership site at the north end of the Town, the Shiloh Road Village Vision Plan area in the southeast, and the Taft Street winery to the northeast.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> California Department of Finance, City/ County Population Estimates, Jan. 1, 2005. Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Overview Draft. <<http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/gp2020/draft1/index.htm>>.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Town Manager J. Matthew Mullan, 4 Oct. 2005.

## SERVICES

Windsor employs 126 people in the following departments:

- Planning
- Building
- Public Works
- Administration
- Economic Development and Housing
- Engineering
- Parks and Recreation
- Police (contracted through Sonoma County Sheriff's Department)

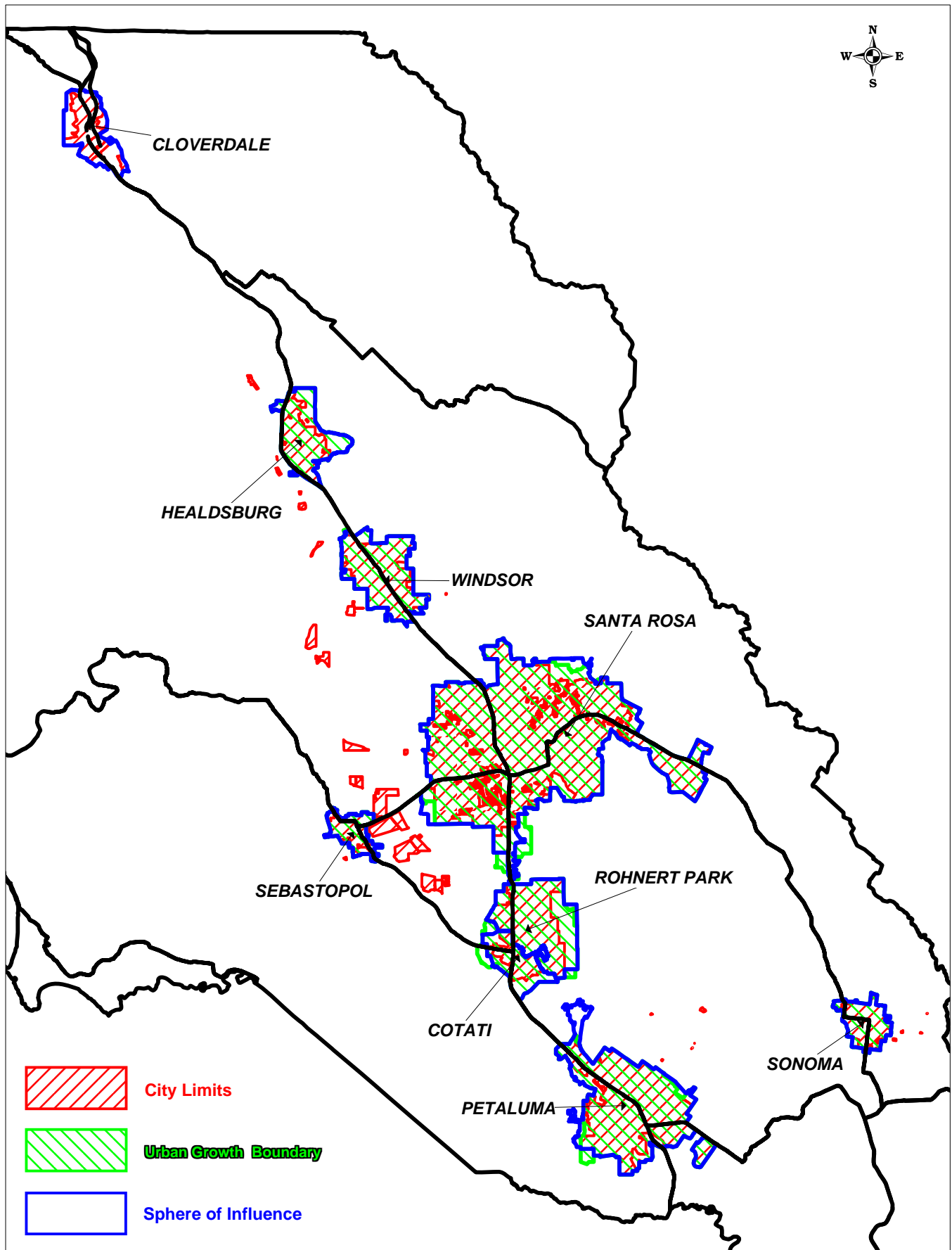
Public K-12 education for students living in the Town of Windsor is provided by the Windsor Unified School District, which includes one traditional high school (9-12) and one continuation high school (10-12), one middle school (6-8), and four elementary schools (K-1, K-3, and 4-5), including one Spanish immersion elementary school (K-8). Sonoma State University, part of the California State University system, and Santa Rosa Junior College are located in Sonoma County and offer higher education opportunities.

**Table 1** details the provision of services in the Town of Windsor. **Figure 1** provides an overview of cities in Sonoma County. **Figure 2** provides a map of the Town of Windsor.

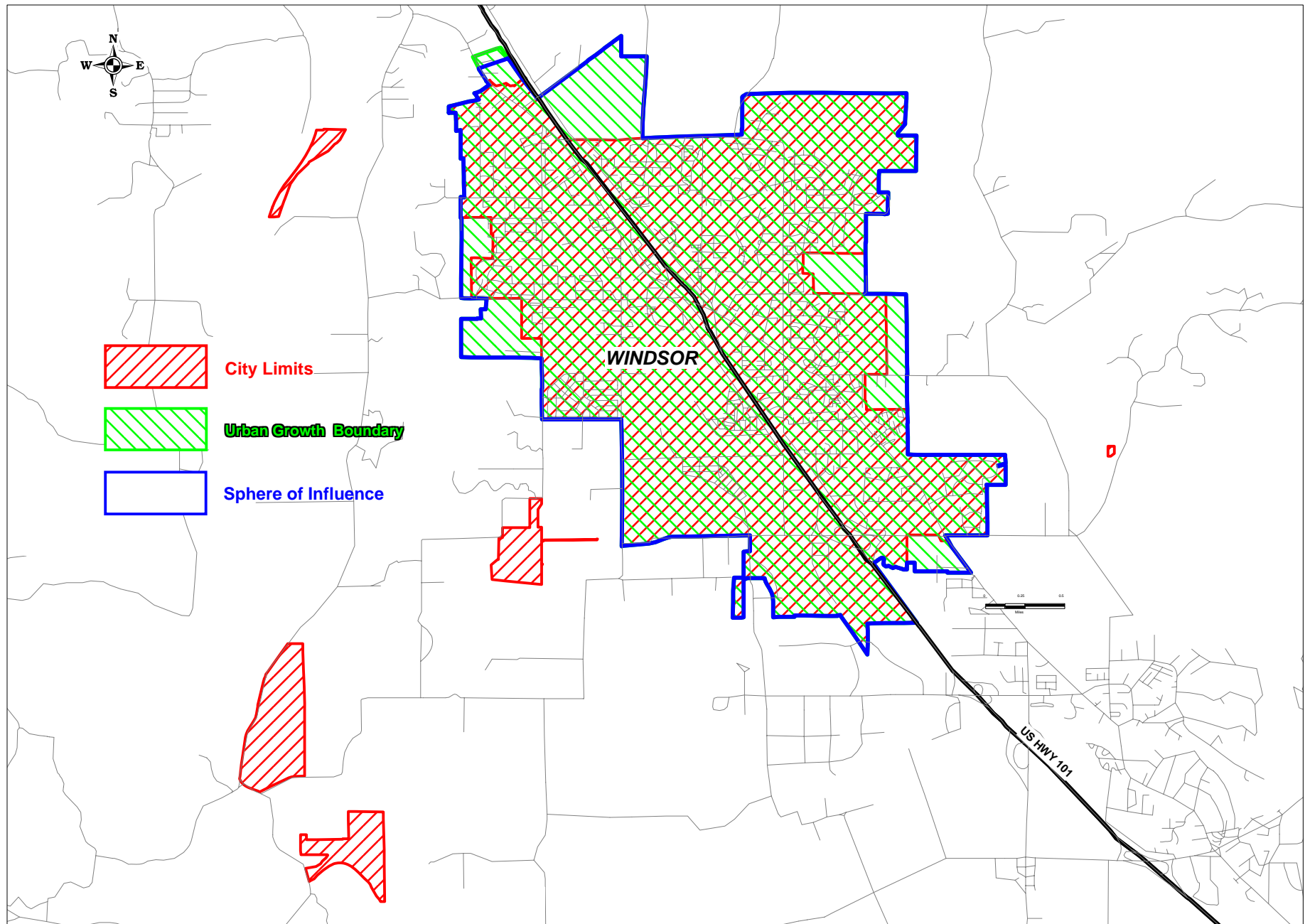
**Table 1**  
**Municipal Service Providers for the Town of Windsor**  
**County of Sonoma Municipal Service Reviews**

<b>Municipal Service</b>	<b>Service Provider</b>
<b>General Government</b>	
Governing Board	Town Council
Manager	Town of Windsor
Attorney	Contractor
Finance/Clerk/Administrative Services	Town of Windsor
<b>Public Protection</b>	
Traffic Control/Accident Investigation	Contract with Sonoma County Sheriff
Law Enforcement	Contract with Sonoma County Sheriff
Fire Protection	Windsor and Rincon Valley Fire Protection Districts
Animal Control	Contract with County of Sonoma
<b>Land Use and Planning</b>	
Regulation & Planning	Town of Windsor
Building Inspection	Contractor and Town of Windsor
City Engineering	Town of Windsor
<b>Community Services</b>	
Local Parks/Recreation Facilities	Town of Windsor
Library	Windsor Regional Library (Sonoma County)
<b>Public Works</b>	
Roads, Local Drainage, Bridges, Signals	Contractor and Town of Windsor
Domestic Water	Town of Windsor
Wastewater Treatment/Disposal	Town of Windsor
Solid Waste Management/Disposal	Contract with West Sonoma County Disposal Service, Inc.
Street Lighting	Contractor
Street Tree Maintenance	Town of Windsor
<b>Public Education</b>	
K-12 Grade Levels	Windsor Unified School District
College	Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University
<b>Other Services</b>	
Electricity	Pacific Gas & Electric
Gas	Pacific Gas & Electric
Cable Television	Comcast
Public Transit	Sonoma County Transit

**Figure 1**  
**Sonoma County Administrative Area Boundaries**



**Figure 2**  
**Town of Windsor Map**





### III. WATER

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#### GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

The Windsor Water District, which existed prior to the incorporation of the Town, exists as a subsidiary to the Town Government. It provides the same water and water reclamation services that it did as an independent district, but operates functionally as a department of the Town. The Town Council serves as the District's Board of Directors.<sup>3</sup>

The Water Operations division is responsible for the daily operation of the Town's water system, including treatment, storage, distribution and maintenance, and employs 12 personnel. Windsor's FY 05-07 biennial budget includes \$7.0 million (approximately \$3.5 million annually) in Water Operations expenditures, including \$421,000 in capital outlay. In addition, \$2.9 million is budgeted for Water Administration, \$789,000 for Water Conservation, and \$990,000 for Water Repair and Replacement. The Water Capital Improvement Fund covers ongoing and new construction projects and includes \$982,000 for FY 05-07.<sup>4</sup>

Windsor's water system operates on a cost for services basis, where the expenses of providing for services are financed or recovered primarily through user charges. Windsor water charges consist of a flat fee plus a tiered water usage charge. Based on the rates set in July 2004, a single-family home is charged a \$6.03 monthly service charge plus \$1.44 per 1,000 gallons for the first 5,000 gallons and \$1.71 per 1,000 for the next 6,000 to 10,000 gallons. An additional fee is charged of residences in the Shiloh Meadows development, which is in a different pressure zone from the rest of the Town and therefore requires additional pumping. These rates are current as of October 2005. Windsor also charges a water connection fee for new construction to cover the costs associated with expanding the water system to serve new development.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Design and operation of the Town's water system provides for meeting federally established and State enforced Safe Drinking Water Standards as well as hydraulic demands generated by peak use periods and fire protection requirements. An average 112 million gallons per month is produced each month from five wells at the Russian River and Bluebird Well facilities. An additional 12 million gallons per month, on average, is produced by the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) and delivered to the Town through a 10-inch metered connection on Laughlin Road. A fifth well, Well #11, was drilled in 2004 at the Russian River Well field and came on-line in late spring 2005. Water is delivered to 8,382 service connections and 1,600 fire hydrants, traveling through over 95 miles of water mains in five separate pressure zones. Water operations

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Assistant Town Manager J. Matthew Mullan, 22 June 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G21 – G41.

staff also administers and coordinates the ongoing maintenance contract for testing and certification of more than 1,773 Town-owned backflow prevention devices in compliance with State requirements.<sup>5</sup>

The FY 2005-2007 Biennial Budget allocates \$110,000 for the rehabilitation of wells, and \$575,000 for the upgrade to the utility SCADA system. Other water capital projects for FY 05-07 include facility safety improvements, installation of stairways and catwalks at water storage tank sites, and miscellaneous vehicle and equipment purchases.<sup>6</sup>

## DEMAND AND CAPACITY

According to the FY 05-07 Biennial Budget, current water production required to meet demand from households and businesses in Windsor is 112 million gallons per month from the Russian River and Bluebird Well facilities, plus an additional 12 million gallons per month produced by the SCWA and delivered to the Town through a 10-inch metered connection on Laughlin Road.<sup>7</sup>

The total combined capacity of the Town's existing Russian River wells is 7.2 million gallons per day (mgd), or approximately 216 million gallons per month. In addition, the off-river groundwater Bluebird Well has a capacity of 0.5 mgd (approximately 15 million gallons per month). The total amount of water available from the SCWA Aqueduct during periods of impairment is 1.5 mgd (45 million gallons per month).<sup>8</sup> Future demand will require additional water sources beyond the Russian River wells.<sup>9</sup> The Town's 2000 Water System Master Plan identifies two potential future off-river groundwater well and treatment systems, each consisting of a groundwater treatment facility fed by several nearby wells. It is anticipated that the first increment of these new off-river well systems will be constructed within the period of the Town's current 5-Year Capital Improvement Program (2005-2010). Design of the first of these two systems is anticipated to commence in 2006.<sup>10</sup>

Windsor's tiered water usage charges encourage water conservation. The Town's water conservation program includes the use of reclaimed water for irrigation, requirements for water saving plumbing fixtures, demonstration gardening featuring low-water use plants, and water education in the local schools. All new development is required to install water-conserving plumbing fixtures, such as low-flow toilets and showerheads,

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<sup>5</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G21.

<sup>6</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G21.

<sup>7</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G21.

<sup>8</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Assistant Town Manager J. Matthew Mullan, 22 June 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 31 Oct. 2005.

and is encouraged to use drought-tolerant vegetation for landscaping.<sup>11</sup> These efforts all help to extend the available water supply and reduce the amount of wastewater produced.

The General Plan requires that there is a reserve equal to 100 percent of average daily demand, and that fire-flows meet minimum requirements of 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm) for residential and 3,000 gpm for commercial and industrial uses. The availability of a long-term, reliable water supply, as well as adequate wastewater treatment capacity, is a primary determinant of Windsor's growth rate.<sup>12</sup> Construction of new off-river well systems, as described above, will help the Town accommodate anticipated future growth.

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<sup>11</sup> Town of Windsor General Plan – Community Development p. 4-40.

<sup>12</sup> Town of Windsor General Plan – Community Development p. 4-40.

## IV. WASTEWATER

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### GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Windsor's Public Works Department houses its water reclamation division. Water reclamation's 14 employees are responsible for the daily operations of the Town's wastewater treatment plant, three gravity zones, two lift stations, approximately 95 miles of collection mains, 1,510 manholes, 650 cleanouts, and approximately 7,239 service connections.<sup>13</sup>

The Water Reclamation Operations budget for FY 05-07 is \$6.7 million (approximately \$3.35 million annually), including \$1.1 million in capital outlay. In addition, \$7.5 million is budgeted for Water Reclamation Administration, and \$1.5 million is budgeted for Water Reclamation Repair and Replacement. The Water Reclamation Capital Improvement Projects Fund, budgeted in FY 05-07 at \$10 million, covers ongoing and new construction projects.<sup>14</sup>

As with water, revenue for the Town's water reclamation system comes from user charges. A graduated rate for sewer service increases as the amount of wastewater discharge increases, thus encouraging customers to conserve water and reduce wastewater produced. Based on the rates set in July 2004, the water reclamation usage charge for a single-family home for 5,000 gallons or fewer is \$30.69. Above 5,000 gallons, the rate increases per 1,000 gallons, with a discount for low-income families. These rates are current as of October 2005. Windsor also charges a connection fee of new development to help fund the costs associated with expansion of the water reclamation system.

### INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Windsor's reclaimed water treatment facility is located on a 74-acre site just west of the railroad tracks, which run roughly parallel to Highway 101. In addition to the treatment plant, the Windsor Public Works department operates a gravity collection system, three trunk sewer lines, several private lift stations, and two pump stations.

Windsor's wastewater treatment plant provides tertiary treatment, with a daily wet weather flow capacity of up to 6 million gallons (average daily dry weather flow capacity is 2.25 mgd). According to the FY 05-07 biennial budget, the treatment plant treated over 720 million gallons of wastewater in 2004, with 976,000 lbs. of solid waste and 1,050,000 lbs. of biochemical oxygen demand.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G3.

<sup>14</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G1 – G18.

<sup>15</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G3.

After treatment, effluent must be stored or reused. Effluent pond storage capacity is approximately 165 million gallons.<sup>16</sup> Treated effluent is discharged both as irrigation and into Mark West Creek, a tributary of the Russian River. The seasonal discharge of highly treated reclaimed water to Mark West Creek was 319 million gallons in 2004, with an additional 319 million gallons discharged to land.<sup>17</sup> Treated effluent is used as irrigation on nearby pasture and vineyard lands, and also as irrigation for the Town's golf course, neighborhood parks, soccer fields, single-family home landscaping, and the Windsor High School grounds.

Major capital projects included in the 05-07 Biennial Budget include SCADA system upgrades, the ongoing reclaimed water disposal expansion project, and various equipment purchases and planning projects.<sup>18</sup>

Windsor has entered into a unique partnership with the new Vintage Greens residential development to provide dual piping for the provision of both drinking water and recycled water for landscaping. The Town is offsetting the cost of providing the piping and will provide the recycled water for front and backyard irrigation for free. This will increase the Town's recycled water disposal capacity, conserve drinking water, and reduce homeowners' water bills.<sup>19</sup>

## DEMAND AND CAPACITY

Windsor plans to increase the average daily dry weather flow capacity of the treatment plant to 3.0 mgd to accommodate demand at Town buildout.<sup>20</sup> The Town is also planning for increased effluent storage capacity by buildout, and is currently pursuing construction of Pond(s) S and/or T, as described in the 2001 Master Plan. The Town owns the property on which these ponds are planned. Design is anticipated to commence early in 2006. In addition, the Town is negotiating with Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) for the possible construction of an additional storage pond of approximately 50 million gallons at the SRJC's Shone Farm facility.<sup>21</sup>

Windsor supports three different methods of effluent disposal. The first and top priority disposal method is urban irrigation within Town limits and on agricultural lands, such as pasture and vineyards outside of the Town. Existing and planned reclamation lands as of October 2005 include 520 equivalent acres to which the Town provides reclaimed water, with an additional 30 equivalent acres anticipated in the near future. (An "equivalent acre" is the amount of land that uses 30 inches (2.5 acre-feet) of irrigation water per growing season. The Town uses the term to assist in comparison of irrigation

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<sup>16</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 31 Oct. 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G3.

<sup>18</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, G1 – G18.

<sup>19</sup> Town of Windsor web site, <<http://www.ci.windsor.ca.us/3089.html>>, Accessed 4 Oct. 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Town of Windsor Water Reclamation Master Plan: Treatment, Storage and Disposal. Dec 2001, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 31 Oct. 2005.

lands with varying water demand.)<sup>22</sup> The Town has plans for 820 equivalent acres for irrigation by Town buildout. This will account for about two-thirds of the Town's reclaimed water.<sup>23</sup> It is anticipated that agreements for additional reclamation lands will be entered into incrementally, as required, generally from among the potential reclamation lands identified in the 2001 Master Plan.<sup>24</sup>

The second priority disposal method, which is not currently being used, is reuse at the Geysers. The Town's adopted Master Plan allows for up to 0.75 mgd of reclaimed water to be transported to the City of Santa Rosa's Geyser Recharge project. This disposal method involves transporting disinfected tertiary effluent from the Windsor Wastewater Treatment Plant to the Geysers steamfield northeast of Healdsburg for injection to increase electrical power production. Transport of treated effluent through the Geysers Recharge pipeline would afford the opportunity to supply agricultural irrigation water to farmers en route.<sup>25</sup> The Town's reclaimed water is not currently being used for steam field recharge at the Geysers because negotiation of an agreement with the City of Santa Rosa to allow the transport of the Town's water to the Geysers via the City's Geysers pipeline has not yet been concluded. Reuse at the Geysers remains an objective of the Town's Water Reclamation Master Plan, subject to successful conclusion of such negotiations.<sup>26</sup>

The third and lowest priority disposal method is discharge to Mark West Creek in the winter months, from October 1 to May 14. Based on National Pollutant Discharge Elimination regulations, treated effluent cannot surpass 1 percent of the natural flow of the creek, measured at the point of discharge. Windsor's Reclaimed Water Master Plan proposes to construct approximately ten acres of wetlands along Mark West Creek to enhance the quality of discharged effluent as well as to create a wildlife habitat.<sup>27</sup> However, this element of the Master Plan has not yet been constructed and is not currently programmed within the timeframe of the current 5-Year Capital Improvement Program.<sup>28</sup>

In biennial FY 2005-2007, Windsor allocated \$2,733,000 for the Reclaimed Water Expansion Project to ensure the expansion of recycled water storage and disposal facilities needed to keep up with the pace of planned growth.<sup>29</sup> The estimated total capital cost of the entire project, including the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant, is \$22.7 million in 2001 dollars.<sup>30</sup> An update of the Water Reclamation Master

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<sup>22</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Town of Windsor Water Reclamation Master Plan: Treatment, Storage and Disposal. Dec 2001, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Town of Windsor Water Reclamation Master Plan: Treatment, Storage and Disposal. Dec 2001, 21.

Personal Communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 16 Dec. 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Town of Windsor Water Reclamation Master Plan: Treatment, Storage and Disposal. Dec 2001, 22.

<sup>28</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Personal communication from Assistant Town Manager J. Matthew Mullan, 7 June 2005.

<sup>30</sup> Town of Windsor Water Reclamation Master Plan: Treatment, Storage and Disposal. Dec 2001, 23.

Plan will include an overall reevaluation of estimated costs and is anticipated within the next year.<sup>31</sup> Treatment Plant elements of the Reclaimed Water Expansion Project should be completed by 2020, while storage and irrigation elements, to be increased incrementally, should be completed by 2030. Improvements completed thus far include construction and improvement of pump stations and construction of additional sludge stabilization ponds.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

## V. STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION

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Prior to 2003, a contractor provided street maintenance services in the Town of Windsor. In June 2003, the Town Council created the Town's own Street Maintenance Division to provide better services to the citizens of Windsor.

### GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

The Streets Division crew consists of one part-time and three full-time employees. Public Works staff are responsible for administration of the division.

Streets expenditures totaling \$12.0 million (\$6 million annually) are included in the FY 05-07 Biennial Budget. This amount is distributed among a number of specific funds and departments. \$3.0 million is budgeted from the Gas Tax Fund, which provides funding for street maintenance crews and street repair and maintenance, including all drainage systems, street lighting, sidewalks, traffic signals, and traffic controls such as signage and pavement striping.<sup>33</sup> Approximately \$1.9 million comes from Transportation Development Act funds, \$2.4 million comes from Traffic Mitigation Development Fees, and \$4.7 million comes from special assessments for street improvements to properties within the Mitchell/ Shiloh/ Conde Assessment District. In addition to the preceding, an additional amount of \$0.6 million is appropriated from the General Fund for street improvements.<sup>34</sup>

The Town's Transportation Development Act Fund contains the Town of Windsor's contribution to Sonoma County Transit, including local services, bus stop improvements, ADA paratransit implementation, and a reserve for Park-and-Ride lots. The FY 05-07 budget includes \$1.9 million for this fund.<sup>35</sup>

### INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

The Street Maintenance Division maintains 78 miles of streets and roads, a public drainage system covering the Town's 6.5 square miles, 14 signalized intersections, over 2,000 street lights, over 100 miles of sidewalk, and roadway signs and striping. It also responds to requests regarding pothole repair, malfunctioning traffic signals, downed trees, and emergency response to hazardous spills, traffic accidents, and other public hazards.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, D3.

<sup>34</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget, FY 05-07, D9.

<sup>36</sup> Town of Windsor web site, <<http://www.ci.windsor.ca.us/3090.html>>, accessed 4 Oct. 2005.



A number of streets improvements are included in the FY 05-07 budget. Gas Tax funds are budgeted for a traffic signal battery backup system for 14 Town-operated signalized intersections, for the Traffic Safety Improvement Program, and for the Pavement Preservation Program, as well as for the Town's grant matching funds requirement for the Old Redwood Highway Pavement Rehabilitation Project. Additional funding for striping maintenance has also been included in the FY 05-07 budget.<sup>37</sup> General Fund monies are also budgeted for street capital improvements such as sidewalk improvements and pavement rehabilitation.<sup>38</sup>

## DEMAND AND CAPACITY

Existing streets facilities and maintenance levels are considered adequate to meet demand. Demand for related facilities and services is expected to increase in the near future due to new development, with the additional demand being met by street improvements to be constructed by developers and funded primarily from Traffic Mitigation Development Fees.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, D3.

<sup>38</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, C28.

<sup>39</sup> Personal communication from Associate Civil Engineer Bill Daida, 27 Oct. 2005.

## VI. PARKS

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### GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

The Recreation Program is part of the Economic Development and Community Services Department for the Town of Windsor. The Community Services Manager is responsible for the planning, promotion and implementation of recreation and other human services in accordance with the interests and needs of the community. In addition, the Community Services Manager coordinates the use of Town parks and facilities.<sup>40</sup>

The Parks Division's two-year General Fund budget for FY 05-07 is \$250,000, much of which is budgeted for capital outlay. An additional \$6.5 million is budgeted in the Park Development Fund, which funds acquisition, development, and enhancement of park and recreation facilities, primarily through development fees from new residential construction.<sup>41</sup> The maintenance of all community and neighborhood parks, as well as landscape maintenance of various community facilities, is covered by Zone 1 of the Windsor Lighting and Landscaping Assessment District, for which \$2.1 million is budgeted in FY 05-07.<sup>42</sup>

Windsor requires a contribution of land and/or fees in lieu of dedication for parks of all new residential subdivisions. The total contribution must be equal to the Town's requirement of 2 acres per 1,000 residents.<sup>43</sup>

### INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

According to definitions included in the Windsor General Plan, community parks are generally 5 to 50 acres and serve population within 2 miles, while neighborhood parks are approximately 1 to 5 acres and serve population within a quarter- to a half-mile radius. Regional parks are typically 50 to 200 acres, serve population within a one-hour driving time radius, and are generally oriented toward nature and outdoor recreation.<sup>44</sup>

Windsor has 6 community parks, 11 neighborhood parks, and 2 regional parks, along with a community center, the Huerta gymnasium, and a senior center. Windsor's General Plan requires 5 acres of neighborhood and community parks and special recreation facilities per 1,000 people. Specifically, the General Plan standards call for 3 acres of community parks, 2 acres of neighborhood parks, and 10 acres of regional parks per 1,000 population.<sup>45</sup> Total current park acreage includes approximately 63 acres of

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<sup>40</sup> Town of Windsor web site <<http://www.ci.windsor.ca.us/index.html>>, accessed 4 Oct. 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, B12, E7.

<sup>42</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, D19 – D20.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Economic Development and Community Services Director Anne Mullinax, 4 Oct. 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Town of Windsor General Plan – Community Development p. 4-38.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

community parks (2.6 acres per 1,000 population), 37 acres of neighborhood parks (1.5 acres per 1,000 population), and 1,056 acres of regional parks (43 acres per 1,000 population).<sup>46</sup>

Park facility projects planned for the 2005-2007 fiscal period include development of a trail through, and an aquatics facility in, Keiser Park.<sup>47</sup>

## DEMAND AND CAPACITY

To meet increasing demand from population growth and to implement General Plan standards, the Town will need to add parkland as development occurs. Based on General Plan standards and an estimated population of 35,200 at time of General Plan buildout, the Town should provide 105 acres of community parks and 70 acres of neighborhood parks. Currently, the Town enjoys approximately 74 acres of community parkland and 38 acres of neighborhood parkland, a substantial accumulation of an entity incorporated only since 1992. The current acreage figures do not include approximately six acres of neighborhood parks that are currently in the design review stage and will be partially constructed by the developers of the subdivisions in which they are located.<sup>48</sup> Ultimately, approximately 31 acres of additional community parks and 26 acres of neighborhood parks will be needed to serve a population of 35,200. On April 21, 1999, the Town Council adopted resolution No. 803-99 approving the *Town of Windsor Parks and Recreation Master Plan* ("Master Plan"). The need for this document was identified as an implementation program in the Town's General Plan. The Master Plan is a tool to guide the Town in parks and recreation planning on a long-term basis. The document provides baseline data, policies and recommendations for day-to-day tasks, as well as standards for planning future parks and recreation facilities. The Master Plan also includes a map that identifies potential sites for future parks.<sup>49</sup>

Park maintenance costs have increased in recent years with the addition of parks and recreation facilities, including Elsbree Skate Park and Wilson Ranch Soccer Park. To offset these cost increases, the Town's contract for park, landscape, building, and street maintenance was terminated in October 2003 and employees were hired to complete maintenance work in-house. The Department indicates that this change has resulted in greater staff flexibility, increased efficiency, and cost savings.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Town of Windsor Park Use Matrix, <<http://www.ci.windsor.ca.us/3041-ParkMatrix.html>>.

<sup>47</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, C33.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Economic Development and Community Services Director Anne Mullinax, 4 Oct. 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Personal communication from Assistant Town Manager J. Matthew Mullan, 7 June 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Economic Development and Community Services Director Anne Mullinax, 4 Oct. 2005.

## VII. POLICE

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### GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Since 1992 the Town Council has contracted with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services. A five-year contract that began in 1993 was renewed in 1998 for a period of ten years. Under this contract, the Windsor Police Department is staffed by the County Sheriff's Office and can call on many of its available resources, at no additional cost. The Town of Windsor selects a Chief of Police from the Sheriff's Office to manage the Department.<sup>51</sup>

Department staff, all County employees, include a chief, 2 sergeants, and 15 officers (a total of 18 sworn officers), as well as a secretary and a community services officer. The County Sheriff's office provides additional administrative support. Windsor contracts with the County on an hourly basis for special services such as investigative work, SWAT team response, and dog handling. Because the Department does not have to hire additional personnel to provide relief coverage or special services, officials state that the contract with the County allows for lower staffing levels than would otherwise be possible.<sup>52</sup> The FY 05-07 biennial budget includes funding for the addition of a half-time clerk and one police officer (to be hired in FY 2006-2007).<sup>53</sup>

The Department is also responsible for the Town's Youth and Family Services program, which, while under the Department's oversight, is managed by a full-time Town employee. Youth and Family Services contracts with Sonoma State University for the services of two counselors.<sup>54</sup>

The current contract with the County has a biennial FY 05-07 budget of approximately \$7.3 million, covered by the Town's General Fund. Additional costs associated with Maintenance and Operations, other financing uses, and capital outlay bring total two-year expenditures to around \$9.5 million (FY 05-07).<sup>55</sup> The Department has received some grant money in the past but does not view grants as a reliable future funding source.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Town of Windsor web site, <<http://www.ci.windsor.ca.us/3051.html>>.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Community Services Officer Lyndy Stevens, 4 Jan. 2005. Interview with Department Chief Paul Day, 11 Jan. 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, C19.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Department Chief Paul Day, 11 Jan. 2005.

<sup>55</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, C19.

<sup>56</sup> Town of Windsor web site, <<http://www.ci.windsor.ca.us/3051.html>>. Interview with Department Chief Paul Day, 11 Jan. 2005.

## INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Town of Windsor owns the Department's facility and the majority of its equipment. The Windsor Police Department is located at 9291 Old Redwood Highway, Building 300, in the Windsor Civic Center. While this facility is in good condition and is adequate to meet current demand, the Department anticipates that it will need to expand the station or move to a larger building in the next five to ten years to accommodate increased staffing levels. Funding sources for such expansion have not been identified at this time.<sup>57</sup>

Department equipment includes three motorcycles, ten marked cars, and two unmarked cars, all of which the Town owns. According to the Department, this equipment is adequate to meet demand.<sup>58</sup>

In 2004, the department received 8,839 calls for service, not including officer-initiated activity.<sup>59</sup> For crimes in progress, the current response time averages five minutes from the time a call is received.<sup>60</sup>

## DEMAND AND CAPACITY

Windsor's population has expanded at a controlled rate in recent years. The Department added a new full-time position in July 2004 and anticipates that it may need to expand its staff further in the next five to ten years. (The FY 05-07 budget contains funding for the addition of one police officer in 2006-2007.<sup>61</sup>) To date, the Town has

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Department Chief Paul Day, 11 Jan. 2005.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> The total number of calls plus officer-initiated incidents (e.g., traffic stops) was 14,864 in 2004. Interview with Community Services Officer Lyndy Stevens, 12 Jan. 2005.

<sup>60</sup> This response time is somewhat higher than past calculations because of changes in methodology. Response time is now calculated from the time a call is received rather than the time a response is dispatched. Different jurisdictions use different models to calculate response time, making it difficult to directly compare one to another. Interview with Department Chief Paul Day, 11 Jan. 2005. Interview with Department Chief Steve Freitas, 4 Oct. 2004.

<sup>61</sup> Town of Windsor Biennial Budget FY 05-07, C19.

been able to fund increases in staffing to meet the growth of the Town. Future personnel additions would be made through the Town's contract with the County; this contract will continue to provide cost savings by decreasing the need for relief and special services staff.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Department Chief Paul Day, 11 Jan. 2005.

## VIII. FIRE

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The Town of Windsor is currently served by two fire protection districts. The Windsor Fire Protection District (WFPD) provides service to 30,000 people in an area of 30 square miles centered in the Town of Windsor. Approximately 24 square miles of the District lie outside the Town's boundaries.<sup>63</sup> In addition, the Rincon Valley Fire Protection District (RVFPD) serves the southern portion of the Town of Windsor, an area which includes Oak Creek Subdivision, Oak Park Subdivision, Shiloh Retail Center, Standard Structures, and Shiloh Business Park. Overall, the RVFPD covers an area of 125 square miles and provides services to a population of 30,000.

Either in its current Strategic Plan for the WFPD or in a future study, the Town should evaluate and consider mechanisms for encouraging cooperation between the two districts, maximizing efficiency, and ensuring consistent levels of service.

Profiles of the WFPD and the RVFPD were included in the Municipal Services Reviews of Fire Service Providers (summer 2005). Updated versions of these profiles (revised October 2005) are found below.

### WINDSOR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

#### GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

The WFPD was formed in 1986. It is empowered to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical services, hazardous material response, and other services relating to the protection of lives and property. Its staff includes three full-time captains and three full-time firefighters, with one captain and one firefighter on duty each day. In addition, the District has 30 volunteers and 3 resident sleepers (unpaid firefighters who stay at the station and have assigned shifts). It is governed by a five-member elected Board of Directors, which holds public meetings the third Wednesday of each month. Additional information is made available to the public on the WFPD web site and in the local press.<sup>64</sup>

The District is not currently carrying any debt. Its FY 05-06 operating budget is approximately \$1.5 million. Its reserves for the year will include approximately \$197,000 in the general fund, or about 15 percent of the District's operating budget, as well as \$330,000 in the new station fund, \$1.0 million in an equipment fund, and \$1.0 million in reserves funded by mitigation fees (based on anticipated development). Mitigation fees must be used to cover capital costs and require that 10 percent of project funds come from an alternative source; the new station fund is intended to ensure that these alternative funds are available. However, both the new station fund and the equipment fund are designated only for the purpose of tracking funding uses, and may be

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 28 Sept. 2004.

<sup>64</sup> LAFCO Request for Information, 2002. Interview with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004.

dedicated to uses other than facilities and equipment, as necessary.<sup>65</sup> Altogether, these reserves are equal to 161 percent of the District's operating budget. Mitigation fees are collected through the Town of Windsor and are charged to developers based on how much demand for services new building is expected to generate. This fee revenue can be used exclusively for fixed assets. The WFPD does not budget specifically for capital costs but instead relies on surplus funding carried over from year to year. As operations costs increase, the District may find it increasingly difficult to maintain adequate capital reserves.<sup>66</sup>

Around 50 percent of the WFPD's funding is generated by property taxes. The District's remaining revenues come primarily from a special tax of \$45 per unit of risk.<sup>67</sup> The District failed in its first attempt to increase this special tax, which was originally passed at the time of the District's formation. A measure on the November 2004 ballot attempted to raise the assessment to \$112 per unit of risk, or \$168 per single-family dwelling but failed to get the two-thirds approval necessary to pass.<sup>68</sup>

The District has automatic aid agreements with RVFPD, Geyserville, Healdsburg, and Forestville. It works very closely with Rincon Valley FPD, sharing training, battalion chief duties, and emergency staff coverage.<sup>69</sup>

## INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

The WFPD's ISO rating is 3 with access to water and 8 without. Areas with hydrants (i.e., Class 3 areas) are generally located in the Town of Windsor, which comprises approximately 20 percent of the District's total area. The WFPD's average response time is four minutes within the Town. It responds to around 1,800 calls for service each year.<sup>70</sup>

Its equipment includes four fire engines, one pumper/tender engine, one light rescue vehicle, and four other vehicles. The WFPD maintains two fire stations, only one of which is staffed. The unstaffed station was built in 1967, primarily for use as a garage. However, this station's location has grown increasingly important. The District is divided by a freeway and railroad tracks, with calls for service split evenly between its two sectors; to provide adequate response to both these sectors, the District needs to have equipment and staff distributed throughout its service area. The District had

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<sup>65</sup> Interviews with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 14 Jan. 2005 and 4 Oct. 2005.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 28 Sept. 2004. WFPD Final Budget FY 04-05.

<sup>67</sup> Windsor Fire Protection District web site. <<http://www.windsorfire.net/challenge.htm>> 13 July 2004.

Interviews with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004 and 28 Sept. 2004. One and a half units of risk are assigned to any single-family dwelling; one half unit is assigned to vacant land.

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004 and 28 Sept. 2004. Election results updated 3 Nov. 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



hoped to use its November 2004 special tax increase to pay for additional employees to staff its second station; given the failure of the special tax measure, funding to do so may not be available. In 1999, the District initiated plans to replace its unstaffed station, including arrangements for a property trade with the Town of Windsor. However, the project stalled because of lack of funds.<sup>71</sup>

## FIRE PROTECTION DEMAND AND CAPACITY

Windsor's population has expanded at a controlled rate in recent years, growing from 13,500 in 1992 to 24,000 in 2003.<sup>72</sup> Calls for WFPD services went from 1.4 to 4.4 per day between 1990 and 2003.<sup>73</sup> The District states that it has not been able to meet this increase in demand for fire protection services, particularly in terms of staffing. Two new staff positions were added in 1996, but none has been added since that time. According to the District, current staff levels are not adequate to meet demand.<sup>74</sup>

Growth is expected to slow in the near future. Sonoma County PRMD projects an average annual growth rate of around 1.7 percent (in the Town of Windsor and its urban service area) between 2000 and 2020, as the population increases from 22,744 to 30,300.<sup>75</sup> Projections for the unincorporated area outside the Windsor and Healdsburg USAs anticipate an increase of 7,556 during the same period, or annual growth of 0.88 percent.<sup>76</sup> (The District also encompasses portions of "rural Santa Rosa," the unincorporated area outside the Santa Rosa USA, where PRMD projects annual growth of 0.64 percent.<sup>77</sup>)

While these projected increases are small relative to past growth, the District is still dealing with the effects of the rapid growth that occurred during the late 1980s and early 1990s, before Windsor incorporated. In addition, new challenges are presented by the specific type of growth currently occurring in Windsor. The town has a 486-acre redevelopment area, in which a common style of new building is a three-story structure with commercial space on the bottom floor and residential on top. The WFPD has limitations on the equipment or staff needed to respond to a fire in this type of structure; it has no aerial ladders, and it often lacks the four firefighters required to enter a burning structure under the "two in, two out" state policy.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> LAFCO Request for Information, 2002. Interviews with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004 and 28 Sept. 2004.

<sup>72</sup> Personal communication from Assistant Town Manager J. Matthew Mullan, 7 June 2005.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004. Windsor Fire Protection District web site. <<http://www.windsorfire.net/challenge.htm>> 13 July 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Interviews with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004 and 28 Sept. 2004.

<sup>75</sup> Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Overview Draft. <<http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/gp2020/draft1/index.htm>> Accessed 2 Nov. 2004.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with WFPD Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004.

In recent years, the District's budget has been unable to accommodate these new demands for expanded staff and equipment. The WFPD's special tax rate of \$68 per household has not changed since it was first passed in 1986 despite increases in operational expenses. The District reports that tax revenue from the Windsor Redevelopment Area, formed in 1984, is often extremely low, since all taxes on new assessed value (i.e., value acquired since the formation of the RDA) go to the redevelopment agency. According to the District, this results in a situation where the Fire District may receive almost no taxes on a property that requires full fire protection services.

In spring 2005, the WFPD requested \$900,000 in annual funding from the Town of Windsor. In response to this request, the Town is paying for the preparation of a Strategic Plan for financing and operations, which will analyze potential short- and long-term solutions to the District's funding shortfall. It is anticipated that this study will be completed in spring 2006, when it will be presented to a joint meeting of the Town Council and the District Board of Directors.<sup>79</sup>

## **RINCON VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**

The RVFPD was formed in 1948. It has since expanded its service area, in part through a 1993 merger with Bellevue Fire Protection District. It has also taken over numerous areas formerly served by CSA 40, allowing for improved fire protection services without the creation of new districts. The District provides fire protection services as well as emergency medical services and hazardous material response. It currently employs 22 full-time employees: 4 administrative staff and 18 firefighters. While the number of volunteer and part-time staff is variable, the District typically has around 30 volunteer/part-time firefighters. The RVFPD is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors, which meets the second Monday of each month. LAFCO has approved the reduction of the Board to five members, effective December 2005, based on the ongoing decrease in District territory because of annexations. Board meetings are open to the public.<sup>80</sup>

The RVFPD's revenue comes primarily from property taxes and a special tax of \$36 per single-unit residential parcel and \$12 per additional residential unit.<sup>81</sup> Other revenue sources include interest income, fees for service, state funding, and mitigation fee funds used to cover a portion of equipment purchases. The District currently has no debt.

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with Town Manager J. Matthew Mullan, 2 Nov. 2005.

<sup>80</sup> LAFCO Request for Information, 2002. Interview with RVFPD Administrative Assistant Charlene Virts, 22 July 2004. Communication from RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 7 Jan. 2005.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 27 Sep. 2004. Taxes for commercial buildings are calculated based on size.

Total reserve funds available to the District are in excess of \$1.5 million or over 34 percent of the FY 05-06 operating budget of approximately \$4.4 million.<sup>82</sup>

The District participates in automatic aid agreements with surrounding jurisdictions, including the City of Santa Rosa and the WFPD. It shares some training and battalion chief duties with the WFPD.<sup>83</sup>

## INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

The RVFPD has ISO ratings of 4 and 8b, depending on proximity to public water.<sup>84</sup> It responds to approximately 3,500 calls for service every year, of which around 10 to 15 percent are fire-related.<sup>85</sup>

The District maintains four fire stations, two of which are staffed full-time and two of which are all-volunteer. The staffed stations and the Middle Rincon Road volunteer station are each equipped with two engines, a water tender, and a utility vehicle. The volunteer-staffed station on Calistoga Road, the smallest of the four stations, contains only one engine and no other equipment.<sup>86</sup> The District does not anticipate that this station, built in the early 1990s, will require upgrading in the near future. Of the remaining three stations, the one on Lark Center Drive is less than 40 years old, while the station on Todd Road was constructed a little over 40 years ago.<sup>87</sup> The Middle Rincon Road station dates to the late 1940s or early 1950s.<sup>88</sup> Each of these stations was originally designed to accommodate a one-person staff. Despite periodic renovations, the District has had difficulty adapting these facilities to a state-recommended three-person staff minimum. The Larkfield station (on Lark Center Drive) is located on a very small lot, making it difficult to add the needed parking and training areas without purchasing additional land, for which the District lacks the necessary funds. There is a new squad at this station.<sup>89</sup> The main Middle Rincon Road station is surrounded by the

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with RVFPD Administrative Assistant Charlene Virts, 22 July 2004. RVFPD Final Budget FY 04-05. Communication from RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 7 Jan. 2005. Interview with RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 6 Oct. 2005.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with RVFPD Administrative Assistant Charlene Virts, 22 July 2004. Interview with Windsor Fire Protection District Chief Ron Collier, 22 July 2004.

<sup>84</sup> LAFCO Request for Information, 2002. Interview with RVFPD Administrative Assistant Charlene Virts, 22 July 2004.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 27 Sep. 2004.

<sup>86</sup> Communication from RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 7 Jan. 2005.

<sup>87</sup> Communication from RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 7 Jan. 2005.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 18 Jan. 2005.

<sup>89</sup> Communication from RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 23 May 2005.

City of Santa Rosa; the RVFPD has had informal discussions with the City of Santa Rosa regarding the possibility of making this a joint station.<sup>90</sup>

## FIRE PROTECTION DEMAND AND CAPACITY

According to the projections of the Sonoma County PRMD, the population of “rural Santa Rosa” (the unincorporated region outside the Santa Rosa Urban Service Area) will grow from 24,899 to 28,100 between 2000 and 2020, an annual increase of around 0.6 percent.<sup>91</sup> The City of Santa Rosa annexes individual District parcels on an ongoing basis, reducing the RVFPD’s service area and revenues.

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with RVFPD Administrative Assistant Charlene Virts, 22 July 2004. Interview with RVFPD Chief Doug Williams, 27 Sep 2004. Interview with Santa Rosa Fire Dept. Deputy Chief Bart Lewis, 8 Nov. 2004.

<sup>91</sup> Sonoma County General Plan 2020, Overview Draft. <<http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/gp2020/draft1/index.htm>> Accessed 2 Nov. 2004.

## IX. DETERMINATIONS

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### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

- A new water well, which came on-line in late spring 2005, will help the Town meet future projected water demand. The 2000 Water System Master Plan also identifies two additional potential off-river groundwater well and treatment systems; it is anticipated that the first increment of these new systems will be constructed during the current 5-Year Capital Improvement Program period, with design of the first system commencing in 2006.
- The Town is pursuing construction of new effluent ponds, with design anticipated to begin in early 2006. Windsor is also negotiating with Santa Rosa Junior College regarding construction of an additional storage pond of approximately 50 million gallons at the SRJC's Shone Farm facility.
- Windsor's Reclaimed Water Expansion Project will ensure the expansion of recycled water storage and disposal facilities needed to keep up with the pace of planned growth. Treatment Plant elements of the Reclaimed Water Expansion Project should be completed by 2020, while storage and irrigation elements, to be increased incrementally, should be completed by 2030.
- Windsor's current neighborhood and community park acreage appears to be slightly below the population-based standard set forth in the General Plan.
- While the Police Department's current facility is in good condition and is adequate to meet current demand, the Department anticipates that it will need to expand the station or move to a larger building in the next five to ten years to allow for increased staffing levels. Funding sources for such expansion have not been identified at this time.
- The WFPD initiated plans to rebuild one of its two stations in 1999, but the project has stalled because of lack of funds. New multistory development in the Windsor Redevelopment Area has also created a need for specialized equipment, such as aerial ladders, for which the District currently lacks funding. In 2003, the Town increased the fire mitigation fee on new development to finance a new ladder truck. The Town of Windsor is in the early phases of an independent study to analyze short- and long-term solutions to the District's funding shortfall.
- Of the RVFPD's four fire stations, three are aging and too small to accommodate current staffing requirements. The District lacks the necessary funds to expand these stations.

## GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR THE AFFECTED AREA

- Windsor's population has expanded at a controlled rate in recent years. New construction in the Town of Windsor's 486-acre redevelopment area will contribute to continued growth. New development tends to be residential, rather than commercial or industrial, although new development in Windsor's old downtown has been primarily mixed-use.

## FINANCING CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- User fees and charges fund both water and wastewater services. The Town issues debt to fund large capital projects.
- Windsor's wastewater program allows the City to save money and water by irrigating public spaces and partnering residential projects with reclaimed water.
- Windsor Fire Protection District tax revenues from the Windsor Redevelopment Area do not fully reflect new development since the formation of the RDA; these revenues are frequently not sufficient to cover the cost of service to the area. In response to the District's request for funding from the Town of Windsor, the Town is conducting an independent study to analyze short- and long-term solutions to the District's funding shortfall. Completion of this study is anticipated in spring 2006.

## COST AVOIDANCE OPPORTUNITIES

- Windsor's partnership with the Vintage Greens residential development will save money for both homeowners and the City by including a dual piping system that will deliver both drinking water and recycled water to homes. This system will help to increase the disposal capacity of Windsor's wastewater treatment plant, conserve drinking water, and lower residents' water bills.
- Windsor's tiered water usage charges encourage water conservation. The Town's water conservation program includes the use of reclaimed water for irrigation, requirements for water saving plumbing fixtures, demonstration gardening featuring low water use plants, and water education in the local schools. All new development must install water-conserving plumbing fixtures. These efforts all help to extend the available water supply and reduce the amount of wastewater produced, resulting in long-term cost savings.
- The Town's recent shift from contracted to in-house park, landscaping, and street maintenance services has resulted in more efficient use of staff time.

- The Town of Windsor Police Department contracts with the County Sheriff's office for its staff, as well as for special services such as investigative work and SWAT team response. Because the Department does not have to hire additional personnel to provide relief coverage or special services, the contract with the County allows for lower staffing levels than would otherwise be possible, resulting in significant cost savings.
- Continued sharing of training and battalion chief duties between the WFPD and the RVFPD may allow both Districts to cut costs in those areas.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR RATE RESTRUCTURING

- Windsor updated water and wastewater usage fees in both July 2003 and July 2004. Charges have not been updated since then but will continue to be reviewed and adjusted to fund efficient operations.
- A measure on the November 2004 ballot attempted to triple the WFPD's special tax, increasing it for the first time since it was passed in 1986; however, this measure did not receive the necessary two-thirds voter approval. Additional funding opportunities may be identified in the Strategic Plan for financing and operations which is currently being prepared. The Town of Windsor is paying for this study, which is expected to be presented to the Town Council and Fire District Board in spring 2006.
- The RVFPD charges a special tax of \$36 per single-unit residential parcel.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES

- The Town's adopted Master Plan allows for up to 0.75 mgd of reclaimed water to be transported to the City of Santa Rosa's Geyser Recharge project. Transport of treated effluent through the Geysers Recharge pipeline would also afford the opportunity to supply agricultural irrigation water to farmers en route. The Town is not currently transporting reclaimed water to the Geysers Recharge project.
- The Police Department may gain increased access to regional facilities and resources through its contracts for service with the County Sheriff's Office and Sonoma State University.
- The WFPD and the RVFPD both have automatic aid agreements with surrounding jurisdictions. The two Districts work closely, sharing training, battalion chief duties, and emergency staff coverage.

## GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE OPTIONS

- Significant annexation proposals currently in the early planning stages include the Sanderson Ford car dealership site at the north end of the Town, the Shiloh Road Village Vision Plan area in the southeast, and the Taft Street winery to the northeast.

## EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCIES

- The Town's shift from contracted to in-house park, landscaping, and street maintenance services has allowed for increased staff flexibility and greater efficiency.
- Windsor's contract with the County Sheriff's Office allows the Town to draw on County resources and support staff, making it possible for the Police Department to operate more efficiently and with significant cost savings. The Department added a new full-time position last year and anticipates that it may need to expand its staff further in the next five to ten years to maintain a high level of service.
- The WFPD's dependence on volunteer staff could prevent it from operating at maximum efficiency.
- Either in its current Strategic Plan for the WFPD or in a future study, the Town should evaluate and consider mechanisms for encouraging cooperation between Windsor and Rincon Valley Fire Protection Districts, maximizing efficiency, and ensuring consistent levels of service.

## LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

- The Town of Windsor hosts a web site, which features information on all Town departments and the meeting agendas and minutes of the Town Council, Redevelopment Agency, and other Town commissions. The Town's General Plan, zoning ordinance, municipal code, and other public documents are available for download. Council and commission meetings are open to the public.
- The WFPD is governed by a five-member elected Board of Directors, which meets the third Wednesday of each month at Station 1. Additional public information is made available on the District's recently updated web site and in the local press.



- The RVFPD has a seven-member Board of Directors, which holds public meetings on the second Monday of each month at the Lark Center Drive fire station. LAFCO has approved the reduction of the Board to five members, effective December 2005, based on the ongoing decrease in District territory because of annexations.