



DRAFT

Municipal Service Review
Russian River County Sanitation District

Sonoma LAFCO

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ACRONYMS

ABS – Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene

ADWF – Average Dry Weather Flow

CEQA – California Environmental Quality Act

CIP - Capital Improvement Project

CKH - Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000

DUC- Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community

ESD – Equivalent Single-family (Standard) Dwellings

FOG – Fats Oils Grease

FY - Fiscal Year

gpm - Gallons Per Minute

LAFCO – Local Agency Formation Commission

LHMP – RRCSD Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

mgd – Million Gallons Per Day

MHI - Median Household Income

MSR – Municipal Service Review

OPEB – Other Post Employment Benefits

PSH – Permanent Supportive Housing

PVC - polyvinylchloride

SOI - Sphere of Influence

SSO – Sanitary Sewer Overflow

SCWA – Sonoma County Water Agency

SWRCB - State Water Resources Control Board

VCP – Vitrified Clay Pipe

WAC – Water Advisory Council

WWTP - Wastewater Treatment Plant

1: INTRODUCTION

The fundamental role of a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is to implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code Section 56000, et seq.), providing for the logical, efficient, and most appropriate formation of local municipalities, service areas, and special districts. The CKH requires all LAFCOs, including Sonoma County LAFCO, to conduct a Municipal Service Review (MSR).

According to CKH the LAFCO Commission must make a determination for each of the following seven elements:

Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area. This section reviews projected growth within the existing service boundaries of the district and analyzes the district’s plans to accommodate future growth.

The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence. A disadvantaged community is defined as one with a median household income of 80 percent or less of the statewide median income.

Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services Including Infrastructure Needs or Deficiencies. This section discusses the services provided including the quality and the ability of the district to provide those services. It will include a discussion of capital improvement projects currently underway and projects planned for the future where applicable.

Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services. This section reviews the district’s fiscal data and rate structure to determine viability and ability to meet service demands. It also addresses funding for capital improvement projects.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities. This section examines efficiencies in service delivery that could include sharing facilities with other agencies to reduce costs by avoiding duplication.

Accountability for Community Service Needs, including Government Structure and Operational Efficiencies. This section examines the district’s current government structure, and considers the overall managerial practices. It also examines how well each district makes its processes transparent to the public and invites and encourages public participation.

Matters Related to Effective or Efficient Service Delivery, as Required by Commission Policy. This section includes a discussion of any Sonoma LAFCO policies that may affect the ability to provide efficient services.

1.1 – Purpose of the Municipal Service Review

This MSR will provide Sonoma LAFCO with an informational document that analyses current service provision by the RRCSD. Exhibit 1-1 shows the boundaries of the Russian River County Sanitation District (RRCSD).

The RRCSD was formed in 1983 and may desire to update or modify its SOI. CKH requires an MSR to precede changes to the SOI. Key sources for this study include agency-specific information gathered through a questionnaire, strategic plans, general plans, websites, financial reports, agency audits, research, personal communication, and the Municipal Service Review Guidelines published by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research.

1.2 – Sphere of Influence

This report will also include an analysis of the sphere of influence for the District. There are five determinations which must be made to update or amend the SOI. The Commission must consider:

Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands - This consists of a review of current and planned land uses based on planning documents to include agricultural and open-space lands.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services - This includes a review of the services available in the area and the need for additional services.

Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by the agency - This section includes an analysis of the capacity of public facilities and the adequacy of public services that the District provides or is authorized to provide.

Social or economic communities of interest - This section discusses the existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the District. These are areas that may be affected by services provided by the District or may be receiving services in the future.

Present and probable need for services to disadvantaged communities - Beginning July 1, 2012 the commission must also consider services to disadvantaged communities which are defined as inhabited areas within the SOI whose median household income is less than or equal to 80 percent of the statewide median income. CKH defines inhabited as 12 or more registered voters.

1.3 – California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Actions taken by LAFCO require review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Municipal service reviews are exempt under Class 6, since the MSR is a data collection study. CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 states that “Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental

management, and resource evaluation activities that do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.”

In contrast a sphere of influence is subject to CEQA. In many cases, LAFCO is the responsible agency, but when LAFCO initiates the project, it is the lead agency. For example, LAFCO is often the lead agency for the adoption of a sphere of influence or an update to a sphere of influence. However, in this case it is likely the RRCSD will be the lead agency if they initiate the SOI update and LAFCO will be the responsible agency. If the Commission finds that the update results in no changes in regulation, no changes in land use, or that no development will occur as a result of adopting the sphere, then the update would qualify for the commonsense exemption under CEQA.

1.4 – Uses of the Municipal Service Review

The MSR is used to shed light on the operations of a local agency, identify agencies unable to perform their mandated services, or identify ways to provide more effective, efficient services. Government Code Section 56375 allows LAFCO to take action on recommendations found in the MSR, such as initiating studies for changes of organization, updating the SOI, or originating a change of organization.

Studies in anticipation of a change of organization are useful to identify potential issues that may arise during the process. Issues can range from legal barriers to fiscal constraints to concerns of residents and landowners. A study would allow more focused analysis and the opportunity to resolve issues or options before beginning the process.

The MSR also provides the necessary information to help LAFCO make decisions on the proposed SOI update. In evaluating the proposed SOI, the MSR provides the information necessary to determine if the agency has the capability to serve a larger area. The MSR discusses the financial condition of each district, source of revenues, and projected expenses. It also includes a discussion of the projected infrastructure needs that would allow for expansion of those services.

Alternatively, the MSR can recommend changes of organization: consolidation, dissolution, merger, establishment of a subsidiary district, or the creation of a new agency that typically involves a consolidation of agencies. Those changes of organization may also require an environmental review, a property tax sharing agreement, and an election.

1.5 – District Profile

The RRCSD was formed in 1983 and provides wastewater treatment, reclamation, and disposal for approximately 3,300 parcels and 3,200 equivalent single-family dwellings. The RRCSD service area covers approximately 2,700 acres in and around the Guerneville community including the unincorporated areas of Rio Nido, Guerneville Park, and Vacation Beach. The District serves some 3,300 parcels and approximately 3,200 equivalent single-family dwellings. The RRCSD operates its own treatment plant under a permit from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The treatment plant has a design capacity of 710,000 gallons per day and treats wastewater to tertiary levels. Treated water from RRCSD can be used for irrigation.

In 1995 Sonoma County Water Agency assumed responsibility from the County of Sonoma for managing the county sanitation zones and districts. The RRCSD is one of eight regional sanitation districts that is managed by SCWA. The Sonoma County Water Agency was created in 1949 by a special act of the California Legislature. SCWA is a separate legal entity and has specific purposes and powers. SCWA also has taxation powers and sources of revenue that are separate from the County's. However, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors acts as the Board of Directors of SCWA and in turn the RRCSD.

Table 1-1 shows general information about the district including the agency contact.

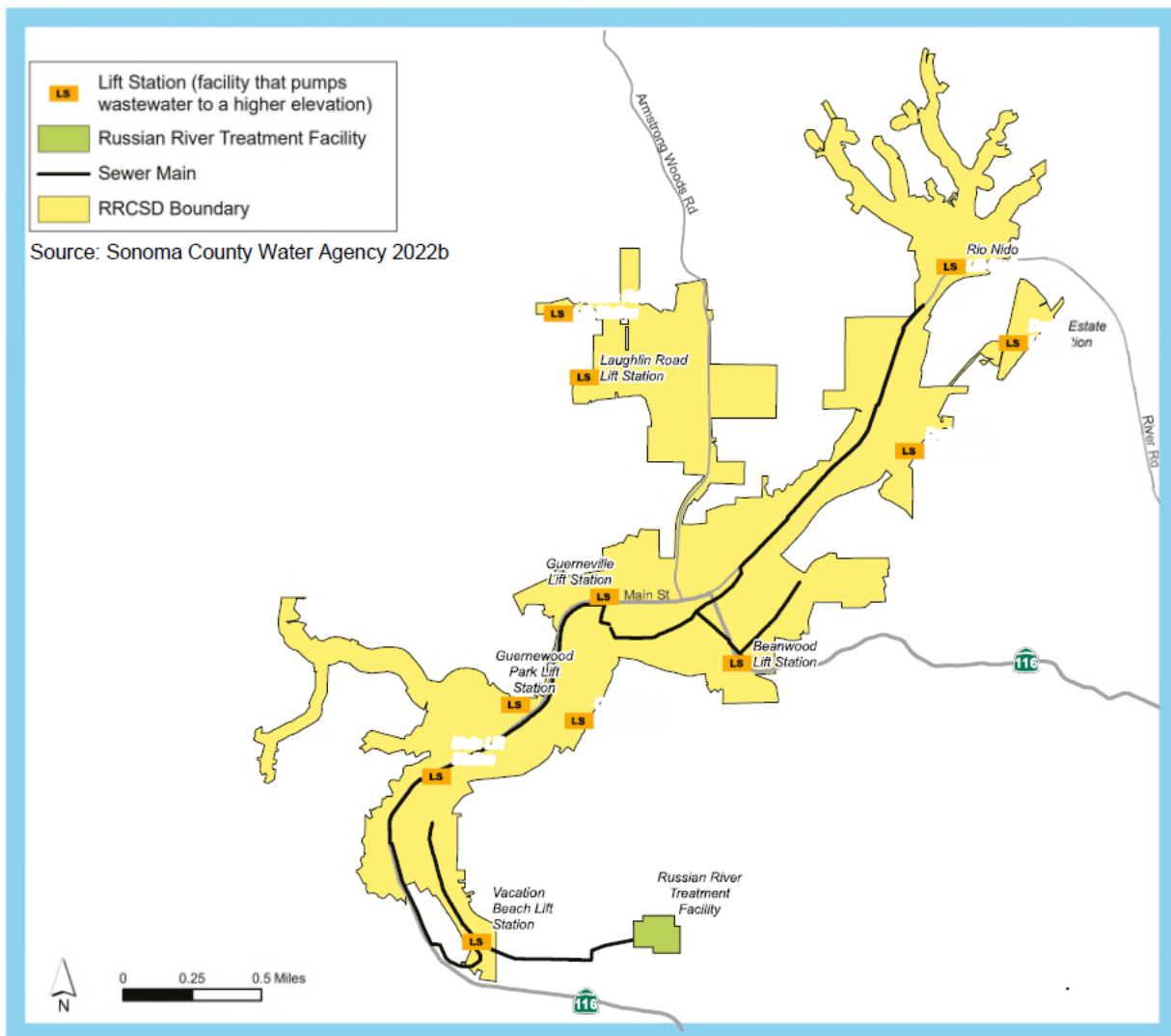
Table 1-1: About the District

General Information	
<i>Agency Type</i>	County Sanitation District
<i>Date Formed</i>	1983
<i>Services</i>	Wastewater collection and treatment, recycled water
<i>Location</i>	Residents of Rio Nido, Guerneville, Guerneville Park, Vacation Beach
<i>Sq. Miles/Acres</i>	2,700 acres
<i>Land Uses</i>	residential, agriculture, open space
<i>Sewer Connections</i>	3,200
<i>Population Served</i>	7,305
Sewer Infrastructure/Capacity	
<i>Treatment Plant Capacity</i>	710,000 gpd ADWF
<i>Primary Disposal Method</i>	Oct 1-May 14 – Discharged into Russian River
	May 15-Sept 30 – recycled water for irrigation
Financial	FY 22-23 Budget \$9.5 million
Governance	5 member SCWA Board (Sonoma County Board of Supervisors)
Agency Contact	Andrea Rodriguez 707-231-2040 andrea.rodriguez.swa.ca.gov

Source: Woodward & Curran 2021.

Although the RRCSD is a separate service district of the sanitation service system of SCWA, the SCWA develops a budget for RRCSD, provides staff, administration, and operation for the District. This MSR will focus solely on RRCSD and not SCWA.

Exhibit 1-1: Russian River County Sanitation District Boundary Map



2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 – Role and Responsibility of LAFCO

The fundamental role of a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is to implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code Section 56000, et seq.), providing for the logical, efficient, and most appropriate formation of local municipalities, service areas, and special districts. CKH requires all LAFCOs, including Sonoma County LAFCO, to conduct a Municipal Service Review (MSR) prior to updating the spheres of influence (SOIs) of the various cities and special districts in the County (Government Code Section 56430). CKH requires an MSR and SOI update to be updated periodically.

The focus of this MSR is to provide Sonoma County LAFCO with all necessary and relevant information related to the Russian River County Sanitation District (RRCSD). It will allow Sonoma County LAFCO to make determinations in each of the seven areas prescribed by CKH. This MSR evaluates the structure and operation of each of the agencies and discusses possible areas for improvement and coordination. The report contains one section for each of the following seven elements as prescribed by CKH:

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 and Adequacy of Public Services Including Infrastructure Needs or Deficiencies
4. Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services
5. Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities
6. Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Government Structure and Operational Efficiencies
7. Matters Related to Effective or Efficient Service Delivery Required by Commission Policy

The MSR is used to shed light on the operations of each local agency, identify agencies unable to perform their mandated services, or identify ways to provide more effective, efficient services. Government Code Section 56375 allows LAFCO to take action on recommendations found in the MSR, such as initiating studies for changes of organization, updating the SOI, or initiating a change of organization.

This report also includes sphere of influence recommendations. CKH requires LAFCO to adopt a sphere of influence and map for each city and special district in the County. For purposes of this MSR the RRCSD should be considered a special district. The sphere influence is defined by CKH in Government Code Section 56076 as “a plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency or municipality as determined by the Commission.”

The LAFCO Commission must make determinations with respect to the following factors when establishing or reviewing a sphere of influence:

1. Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands
2. Present and probable need for public facilities and services
3. Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by the agency
4. Social or economic communities of interest
5. Present and probable need for services to disadvantaged communities

A sphere of influence may be amended or updated. An amendment is a relatively limited change to the sphere or map to accommodate a specific project. An update is a comprehensive review of the sphere that includes the map and relevant portions of one or more MSRs. CKH requires updates at least every five years or as needed.

2.2 – District Profile

The RRCSD was formed in 1983 and provides wastewater treatment, reclamation, and disposal for approximately 3,300 parcels and 3,200 equivalent single-family dwellings. The RRCSD service area covers approximately 2,700 acres in and around the Guerneville community including the unincorporated areas of Rio Nido, Guerneville Park, and Vacation Beach. The District serves some 3,300 parcels and approximately 3,200 equivalent single-family dwellings. The RRCSD operates its own treatment plant under a permit from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The treatment plant has a design capacity of 710,000 gallons per day and treats wastewater to tertiary levels. Treated water from RRCSD can be used for irrigation

In 1995 Sonoma Water assumed responsibility from the County of Sonoma for managing the county sanitation zones and districts. The Russian River County Sanitation District (RRCSD) is one of eight regional sanitation districts that is managed by the Sonoma County Water Agency. SCWA was created in 1949 by a special act of the California Legislature. SCWA is a separate legal entity and has specific purposes and powers. Its taxation powers and sources of revenue are separate from the County's. However, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors acts as the Board of Directors of Sonoma Water and in turn the RRCSD.

Although the RRCSD is an integral part of the SCWA's wastewater services this MSR will focus solely on RRCSD. This report will not be a service review for SCWA.

2.3 – Population Projections

The RRCSD includes the unincorporated communities of Rio Nido, Guerneville, Guerneville Park, Vacation Beach. Estimated population of the District is approximately 7305 residents. Assuming the population will grow at the same rate as the County provides an upper bound to population growth. It is estimated the population may increase by 446 over the next twenty years resulting in a potential of 173 new connections.

2.4 – Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities are defined as inhabited unincorporated areas whose median household income is less than 80% of the statewide median household income. For 2020 that

figure is \$62,938. The DWR mapping tool identified two areas that fell below 80% of the statewide MHI. One is north of Rio Nido and one south and west of Guerneville to include Vacation Beach.

CKH requires identification of backbone services to DUC's. These include water, sewer and fire protection. Water services are provided by California Water Service Company – Armstrong Valley in the northern region and Sweetwater Springs Water District [in the south. Fire services are provided by the Sonoma County Fire District and CALFIRE.

2.5 – Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities

The RRCSD system serves approximately 3200 single family dwelling units. The collection system consists of over 39 miles of pipe and 11 lift stations that convey waste to the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). Wastewater receives a tertiary level of treatment before it is released. Between October and May effluent is released to the Russian River. The remainder of the year it is used to irrigate the golf course and adjacent forest land.

The WWTP has a capacity of 0.71 mgd. Average dry weather flow (ADWF) is 0.3 mgd. Since the capacity is more than twice the ADWF and with anticipated low levels of growth, the system has sufficient capacity.

2.6 – Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Service

The RRCSD has a current budget of \$9.5 million. As part of SCWA the RRCSD does not pay salaries and benefits as they would be included in the operations costs charged by SCWA. Consequently, the RRCSD has no direct OPEB obligations as they are included in operations costs. The budget allocates 26% for maintenance projects and 22% for capital improvements. The RRCSD anticipates spending \$19.7 million in the next five years on seven capital improvement projects.

A review of actual revenues and expenses showed that expenses exceeded revenues in four of the past five years, indicating the need for a rate increase. Consequently, the Board of Directors adopted a 8.9% rate increase effective July 1, 2022.

The RRCSD has two loans from SWRCB. The first loan was used to complete the Third Unit Process Project. The annual principal and interest payments of \$243,954. The loan is scheduled to be fully paid in 2024. The second loan also from SWRCB was used to fund the Disinfection Upgrade Project. Principal and Interest of \$124,111 are paid annually. The term is 20 years at an annual interest rate of 2.6% with the last payment scheduled for April 2032.

2.7 – Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities

The RRCSD is one of several sewer districts administers by the Sonoma Water Agency and works with the other agencies to provide services. Management efficiencies can be assessed through planning efforts. RRCSD engages in several types of planning activities. These include the Sewer System Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and the Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP). The Sonoma County Water Agency also prepares a capital improvement plan for each of its member districts and an annual budget, a financial plan.

2.8 – Accountability, Government Structure, and Operational Efficiencies.

RRCSD is a zone of service within the Sonoma County Water Agency. Its board of directors are the SCWA directors, which are the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. SCWA meets on Tuesdays, where issues relating to RRCSD are heard as needed. Meetings follow the Brown Act. RRCSD engages the public through its annual newsletter and its website.

2.9 – Matters Related to Effective or Efficient Service Delivery Required by Commission Policy.

There are three policies with the potential to result in effective or efficient service delivery. They include the SOI policy, the change of organization policy, and the out of area service policy.

2.10 – Sphere of Influence Considerations

After a careful review of services that the District delivers there is only one potential SOI update. The area known as George's Hideaway has been proposed for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). The location with respect to the District is shown in Exhibit 10-1. The project is located approximately 1.9 miles south of Guerneville and approximately a quarter mile south to the District's boundaries. The area consists of three parcels and a total of approximately two acres. The development is proposed by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, a successor to the redevelopment agency. The proposal will include 21 units and will be seeking a sphere amendment and annexation.

2.11 – Recommendations

There are several options for providing new services to the George's Hideaway Project. The District could apply to LAFCO for an out of area service agreement or apply to LAFCO for annexation. In recent times out of area services have been the subject of much scrutiny. The area is too small and has too many units to rely on a septic system for service. In this case an out of area service would rely on an exemption for health and safety concerns. An out of area service agreement could be a vehicle for providing District services if annexation was imminent. However, the District would have to request the District chose to request a Sphere of Influence amendment to do so. If the District applies for the SOI amendment an annexation is relatively easy. Therefore, we recommend that the District apply for the SOI amendment and to annex the territory to the District concurrently.

3: POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The RRCSD includes the unincorporated communities of Rio Nido, Guerneville, Guerneville Park, and Vacation Beach. Estimated population of the District is 7305 residents. Exact population growth projections are unknown. However, assuming population will grow in the same proportion as the county, estimates provided by the California Department of Finance provide an upper bound to the projected population. Between 2010 and 2020 the population of Sonoma County grew from 484,055 to 491,134 or an annual average of 0.15%.

Table 3-1 shows projected growth in the county and projected population in the RRCSD for 5, 10, 15 and 20 years in the future. Lacking better information, a growth rate comparable to the growth rate of the County represents an upper bound to population growth of the District. The table shows the population is estimated to increase by 6% over the 20-year period, resulting in a potential of 173 additional connections.

Table 3-1: Population Projections

Year	Estimated County Population	Percent Change	Estimated RRCSD Population	Estimated Additional Connections*
2022	502,886		7,305	
2027	514,886	2.39%	7479	68
2032	525,126	4.42%	7628	125
2042	533,614	6.11%	7751	173

*Assumes 2.58 persons per household

Source: California Department of Finance 2021.

Determinations:

3.1 The RRCSD includes the unincorporated communities of Rio Nido, Guerneville, Guerneville Park, and Vacation Beach. Estimated population of the District is 7305 residents.

3.2 Assuming the population will grow at the same rate as the County provides an upper bound to population growth. It is estimated the population may increase by 446 over the next twenty years resulting in a potential of 173 new connections.

4: DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

Senate Bill 244 was a significant piece of LAFCO-related legislation passed in 2011. This bill required LAFCO to make determinations regarding disadvantaged unincorporated communities or (DUCs). DUCs are defined as inhabited, unincorporated territory that constitutes all or a portion of a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide median household income (MHI). CKH defines inhabited as “territory within which reside 12 or more registered voters.” In 2020, 80% of the statewide median household income was \$62,938.

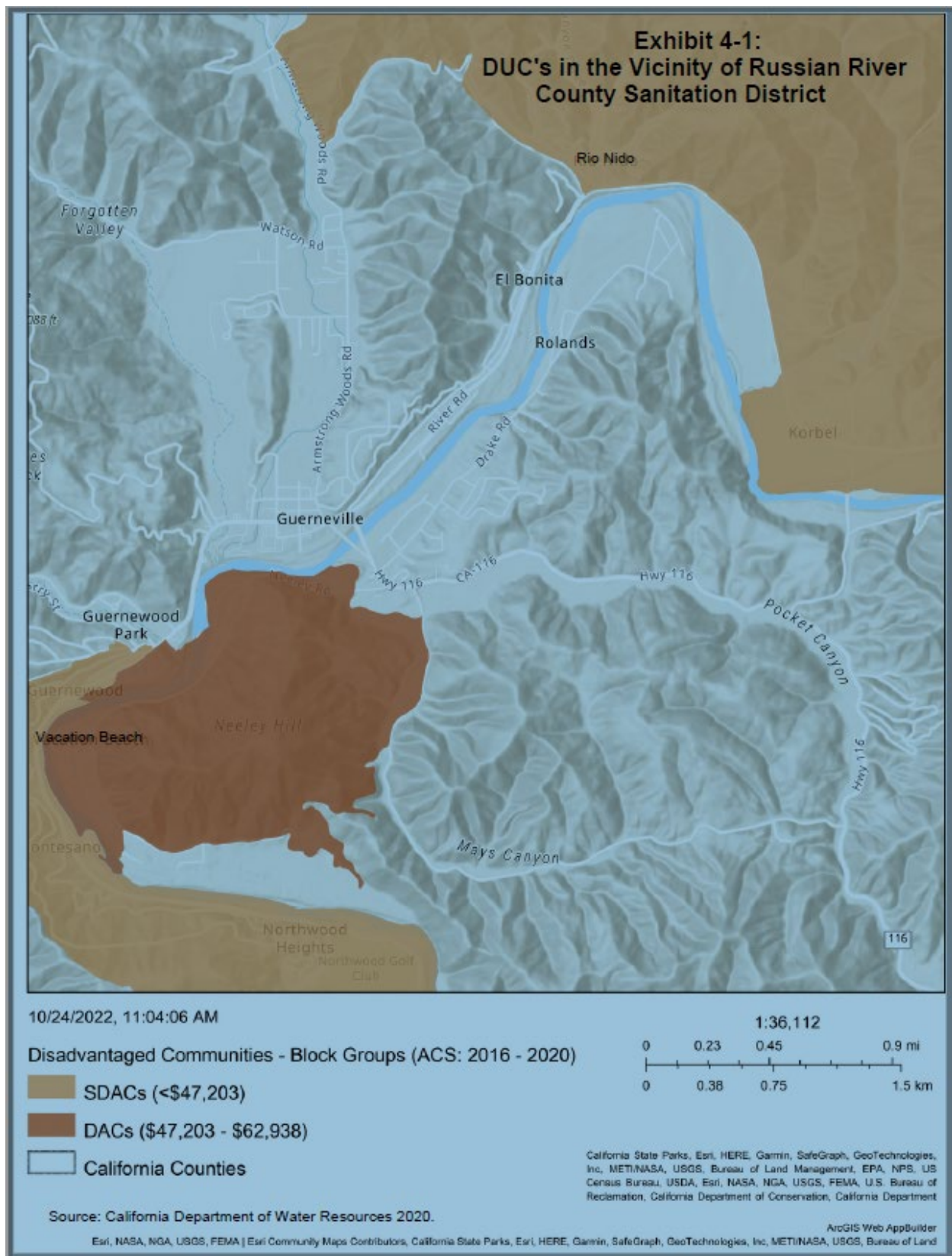
Exhibit 4-1 shows DUCs within and adjacent to the RRCSD. The exhibit shows disadvantaged communities north of Rio Nido and south and west of Guerneville including Vacation Beach.

CKH requires identification of backbone services to DUC’s. These include water, sewer, and fire protection. Water services are provided by California Water Service Company – Armstrong Valley in the northern region and Sweetwater Springs Water District in the south. Fire services are provided by the Sonoma County Fire District and CALFIRE.

Determinations:

4.1 Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities are defined as inhabited unincorporated areas whose median household income is less than 80% of the statewide median household income. For 2020 that figure is \$62,938. The DWR mapping tool identified two areas that fell below 80% of the statewide MHI. One is north of Rio Nido and one south and west of Guerneville that includes Vacation Beach.

4.2 CKH requires identification of backbone services to DUC’s, water, sewer and fire protection. Water services are provided by California Water Service Company – Armstrong Valley in the northern region and Sweetwater Springs Water District [in the south. Fire services are provided by the Sonoma County Fire District and CALFIRE.



5: PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

The RRCSD serves an area of approximately 2,700 acres and a population of 7,305 or 3,213 single family dwelling unit equivalents. The collection system was constructed in the early 1980's. It includes 39.06 miles of pipe. A total of 33.89 miles consists of Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene pipe (ABS) at various diameters ranging from 4 inches in diameter to 30 inches. Polyvinyl Chloride pipe (PVC) accounts for another 2.33 miles in sizes ranging from 2 to 12 inches. That represents 36.22 miles or 93 % of the system. The remaining system consists of small amounts of cast iron, ductile iron and vitrified Clay Pipe (VCP). There are also 11 lift stations. Each lift station includes two to three pumps. The District's collection system is shown in Exhibit 5-1.

5.1 – Wastewater Treatment

The collection system conveys wastewater to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) located on Neeley Road in Guerneville on approximately 12.5 acres. The RRCSD treatment plant was completed in September 1980 and began operating in 1982. The WWTP treats the wastewater in three stages.

Preliminary Treatment

Preliminary treatment includes screening, grit removal, and flow measurement.

Headworks: Raw sewage from domestic and commercial sources enters at the Headworks through a 16" force main. At this point, large inorganic solids in the waste stream are removed.

Secondary Treatment

Aeration basins: There are two rectangular reinforced concrete aeration basins, and one reinforced concrete equalization basin on the western side of the developed site. The wastewater undergoes biological treatment in the aeration basins. Air is injected into the wastewater to promote the growth of microorganisms that feed on organic materials in the sewage. The aeration basins are also configured to remove nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) from the waste stream.

Secondary clarifiers: There are three circular concrete tanks (two smaller and one larger) called the secondary clarifiers. The wastewater from the aeration basins is pumped into these clarifiers to separate the wastewater from the mixed liquor suspended solids. The suspended heavier materials settle to the bottom of the clarifiers as sludge, and the sludge is then returned to the aeration basins. The secondary-treated water flows over the weirs of the clarifiers and is then sent to the tertiary filters.

Tertiary Treatment

Tertiary filters: The secondary-treated water from the clarifiers flows by gravity into the tertiary filter complex to produce the effluent, recycled water. This filtering process removes the remaining suspended solids in the effluent. To prevent clogging, the solids that accumulate in the filters are occasionally flushed out during a backwash cycle and returned to the aeration basins.

Disinfection. The clear effluent from the tertiary filters is disinfected using ultraviolet light.

Between October and May the effluent is released into the Russian River. Between May 15 and September 30 the recycled water is used for irrigation on forested land adjacent to the

treatment plant and on the Northwood Golf Course.

5.2 – Capital Improvements

The treatment plant has historically experienced operational difficulties associated with major flooding on the Russian River. Soon after SCWA assumed operations of the facility in 1996, engineering and environmental documentation began to address operational problems associated with Russian River flood events, the irrigation system, and obsolete equipment at the Russian River County Sanitation District treatment plant.

In an effort to eliminate the discharge of treated wastewater containing chlorine-based disinfection by-products into the Russian River, the District, in 2012, upgraded its treatment facility to use ultraviolet disinfection technology. In 2014, the treatment facilities were further enhanced to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus based nutrient discharges to the Russian River.

The RRCSD has a capital improvement program (CIP) to replace aging infrastructure. In 2014, the main pipeline that feeds wastewater to the WWTP ruptured. The event along with a natural hazard assessment completed for the District in 2014 identified the need to upgrade significant portions of the collection system that are located in unstable soils and that could fail during a large earthquake. The District has a program to address this issue and will rely on rate increases, such as the one recently adopted, to complete the project. This project is expected to take up to 20 years to complete. The District received federal grants for the UV Retrofit project and Underground storage Tank Removal project. RRCSD also receives state grants for the Headworks Project.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted a series of enforcement orders for the Russian River County Sanitation District, in response to violations associated with flood events. The RRCSD responded by implementing a series of short and long-term projects aimed at bringing the facility into compliance. This was accomplished with the completion of the Third Unit Process Project in early 2005. This project, along with modifications to the lift station operations during flooding events in the Guerneville area, allows the treatment plant to pass all influent through the full treatment process.

5.3 – System Capacity

For the purposes of the Sewer System Master Plan the contractor developed a hydraulic model of the system to assess how the system could handle various flow scenarios. The model incorporated planning information, flow monitoring data, and design criteria for estimating wastewater flows. The model was calibrated to flow monitoring data to ensure that it represents a reasonably accurate picture of system conditions. A 24-hour duration 20 year storm event based on historical rainfall statistics was selected as the design event for evaluation capacity and for sizing required system improvements as needed. The model results for peak wet weather flow and peak dry weather flow showed the trunk system has adequate capacity. The wastewater system is vulnerable to earthquakes of magnitude 8 or greater, wildfires and to a limited extent flooding. The District completed a hazard mitigation plan to mitigate damage due to these events.

The WWTP was recently upgraded to increase the capacity to treat wastewater flows during flood conditions. The WWTP has a capacity of 0.71 million gallons per day (mgd). Average dry weather flow

(ADWF) is 0.3 mgd. Since the capacity is more than twice the ADWF and with anticipated low levels of growth, the system has sufficient capacity.

Determinations:

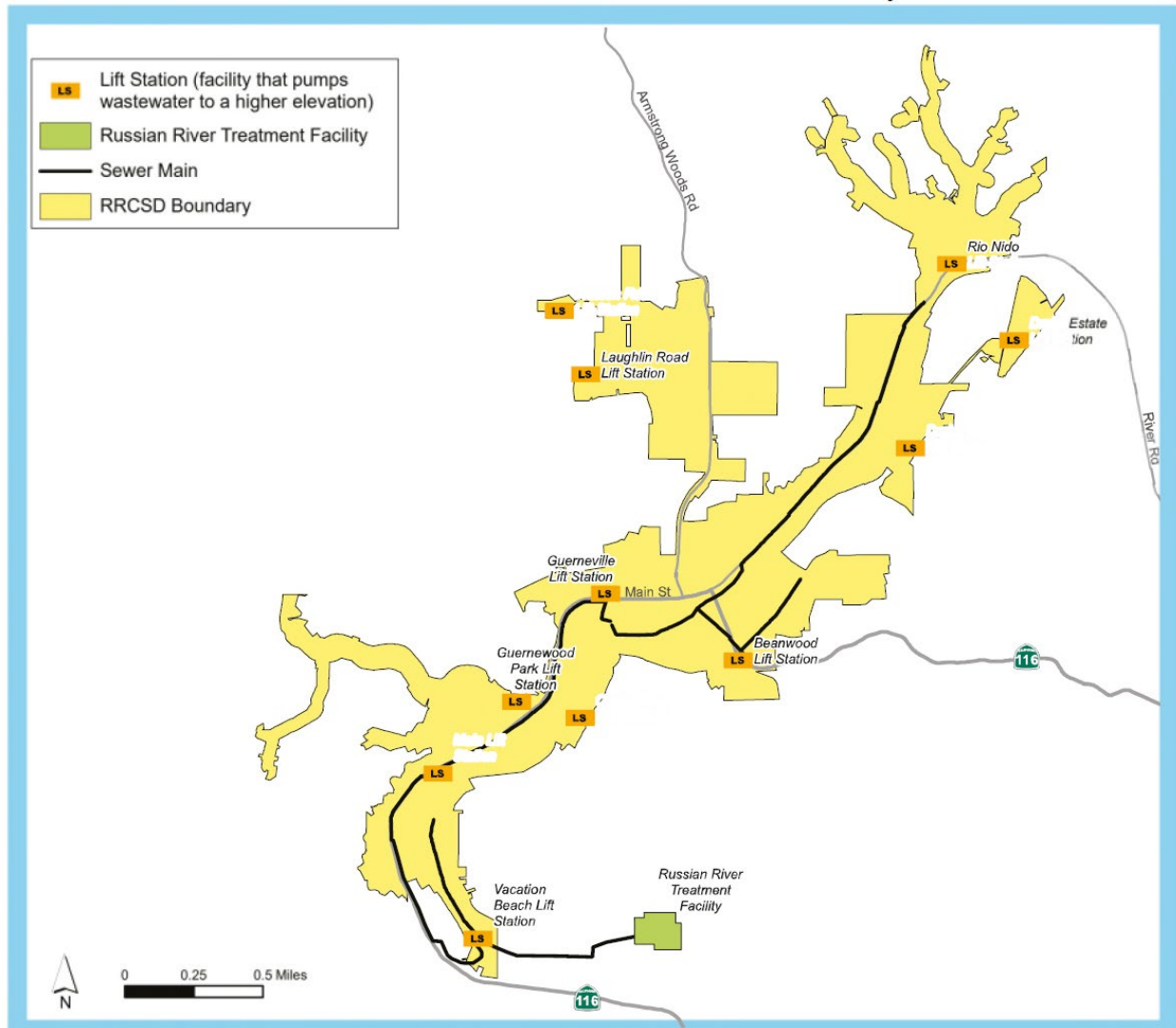
5.1 The RRCSD system serves approximately 3200 single family dwelling units. The collection system consists of over 39 miles of pipe and 11 lift stations that convey waste to the wastewater treatment facility.

5.2 Wastewater receives a tertiary level of treatment before it is released. Between October and May effluent is released to the Russian River. The remainder of the year it is used to irrigate the golf course and adjacent forest land.

5.3 RRCSD has a capital improvement program in place to address issues of ageing infrastructure and previous violations associated with flooding. Projects are funded by state and federal grants.

5.4 The WWTP has upgraded capacity to treat wastewater flows during flood conditions to 0.71 mgd. Average dry weather flow is 0.3 mgd. Since the capacity is more than twice average dry weather flow and with anticipated low levels of growth, the system has sufficient capacity.

Exhibit 5-1: RRCSD Collection System



6: FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICE

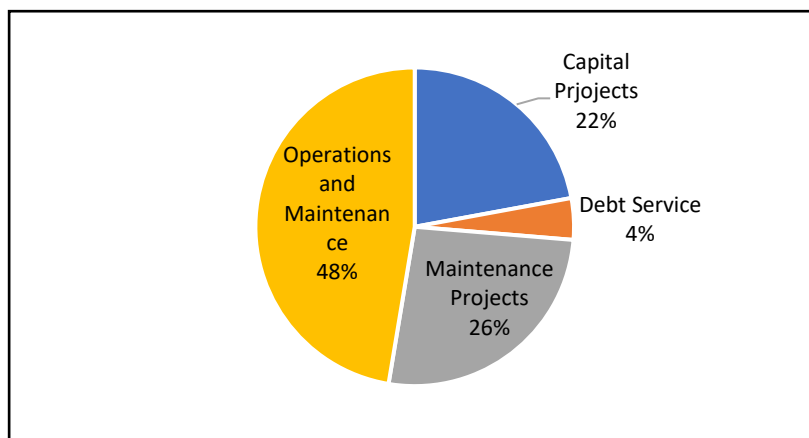
SCWA has managed eight wastewater districts and zones throughout Sonoma County since 1995. The districts and zones range in age from 70-plus years (Sonoma Valley, Occidental) to 40 years (Russian River, Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup) and they all face financial challenges. Given the facilities life span, the aging infrastructure of collection and treatment systems require ongoing replacement and maintenance projects.

Each of the districts and zones face more stringent water quality regulations, which increases operational and capital costs. Most of the districts and zones are relatively small and that means a smaller ratepayer base is responsible for these increasing costs.

6.1 – Revenues Expenses and Rates

SCWA adopts a budget for each district and zone that it administers. For FY 2022-23 SCWA adopted a \$9.5 million budget for the RRCSD. Revenues are derived from charges, 62%, and grants, 38%. Exhibit 6-1 shows the allocation of expenses for FY 2022-23. As shown 48% of expenses, \$4.5 million, are allocated for operations and maintenance and 26%, \$2.5 million, for maintenance projects and 22%, \$2.1 million, for capital improvement expenses.

Exhibit 6-1: Allocation of Expenses in Proposed FY 2022-23 \$9.5 Million Budget

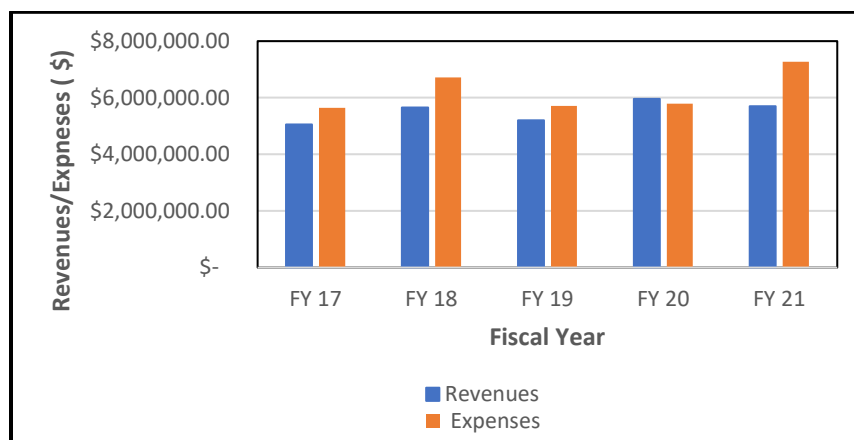


Source: Sonoma County Water Agency 2022a.

Since RRCSD is managed by Sonoma Water the District does not incur any payroll expenses. Consequently, the RRCSD has no direct OPEB obligations as they are included in operations costs. SCWA charges the District for services based on direct labor plus overhead for SCWA labor applied to District activities. The overhead rate is periodically reviewed by management to determine its effectiveness. During the fiscal year ended June 30 2021, the District paid \$3,786,929 to SCWA for operational services and \$245,416 for acquisition and construction of capital assets.

Exhibit 6-2 shows actual revenues and expenses for five of the most recent fiscal years. The data show that expenses have exceeded revenues in four of those years. Shortfalls were absorbed by transfers from reserves. The consistent loss indicates the need for a rate increase.

Exhibit 6-2: Actual Revenues and Expenses FY 17 – FY21



Source: Pisenti & Brinker 2017,2018,2019,2020,2021

In 2022 the District held public hearings on a proposed rate increase. As a result of those hearings the Board passed a rate increase of \$158 or 8.9% to become effective July 1, 2022. The increased Sewer Charge was calculated by dividing the annual costs of providing wastewater treatment and collection service by the estimated number of equivalent single family dwelling units (ESD). Table 6-1 shows a comparison of rates before and after the increase. The increase should help to equalize revenues and expenses.

Table 6-1: Sewer Rates Before and After Rate Increase

Rate Factors	FY21-22	FY22-23 Adopted
ESDs	3,214	3,214
Annual Rate Per ESD	\$1,774	\$1,932
Annual Increase	\$68	\$158
Monthly Rate per ESD	\$147.83	\$161.00
Monthly Increase	\$5.67	\$13.17
Rate Increase	4.00%	8.90%
Increased Revenue	\$218,600	\$507,800

Source: Sonoma County Water Agency 2022b.

6.2 – Capital Improvements

The Districts has an adopted five-year Capital Improvement Plan for the Period 2022-2027. The Plan identifies seven major projects for a total of \$19.7 million. The projects are listed in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2: Capital Improvements for 2022-2027

Project	Cost (\$)
Electrical Service Replacement (3 Lift Stations)	587,000
Lift Station Electrical resiliency Project (Vacation Beach)	5,088,000
Northern and Western Collection System Raising	1,598,000
Recycle Water Truck fill Station	700,000
Force Main, Headworks, and Lift Station	9,350,000
Main Lift Diesel Tank Replacement	1,063,000
UV System Retrofit	1,309,000
Total	19,695,000

Source: Sonoma County Water Agency 2022.

6.3 – Long Term Debt

The District is repaying two loans to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The first loan of \$3,352,796 was for funding the Third Unit Process Project. This project was designed to address enforcement orders associated with flood events. The facility was brought into compliance with the completion of the project in early 2005. This project, along with modifications to the lift station operations during flooding events in the Guerneville area, allows the treatment plant to pass all influent through the full treatment process. The loan is a State Revolving Loan with annual principal and interest payments of \$243,954. The loan is scheduled to be fully paid in 2024.

A second loan of \$3,884,450 was secured from the SWRCB in FY 2014 to fund the Disinfection Upgrade Project. The disinfection method would be upgraded to using ultraviolet light as opposed to chemicals. In August of 2014 the SWRCB forgave \$1,942,225. As of June 30, 2021, the outstanding balance on the loan is \$1,174,215. The loan is a State Revolving Loan with payments of principal and interest of \$124,111, payable annually in April. The term is 20 years at an annual interest rate of 2.6% with the last payment scheduled for April 2032.

6.4 – Reserves

SCWA has established several reserve funds for its wastewater districts. Through SCWA's water advisory council (WAC), SCWA established minimum fund balance reserve guidelines. Typically reserves are used for capital improvement projects and to protect against temporary revenue shortfalls. For RRCSD revenue shortfalls shown in Exhibit 6-1 were remedied by transfers from reserves. The newly adopted rate increase should reduce shortfalls and the need to use reserves for that purpose in the future.

Determinations:

6.1 The RRCSD has a current budget of \$9.5 million. As part of SCWA the RRCSD does not pay salaries and benefits as they would be included in the operations costs charged by SCWA. Consequently, the RRCSD has no direct OPEB obligations as they are included in operations costs. The budget allocates 26% for maintenance projects and 22% for capital improvements.

6.2 In four of the last five years the District expenses exceeded revenues. Shortfalls were addressed by transferring funds from reserves. A comparison of revenues to expenses over the last five years indicated the need for a rate increase. Consequently, the Board of Directors adopted a 8.9% rate increase effective July 1, 2022.

6.3 The RRCSD anticipates spending \$19.7 million in the next five years on seven capital improvement projects.

6.4 The RRCSD has two loans from SWRCB. The first loan was used to complete the Third Unit Process Project. The annual principal and interest payments of \$243,954. The loan is scheduled to be fully paid in 2024. The second loan also from SWRCB was used to fund the Disinfection Upgrade Project. Principal and Interest of \$124,111 are paid annually. The term is 20 years at an annual interest rate of 2.6% with the last payment scheduled for April 2032.

7: STATUS OF AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES

This section discusses shared facilities with other agencies as well as management efficiencies. The District as part of Sonoma County Water Agency works with the other water and wastewater agencies under the SCWA umbrella. RRCSD is staffed by the SCWA and relies on SCWA for salaries and benefits. In addition, the SCWA prepares the budget for RRCSD and all the sanitation districts within its purview.

The District also works cooperatively with other state and local agencies. For example, the District has worked with the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to remedy violations associated with flood events.

The RRCSD also receives grants and loans from federal and state agencies. These funds are used to complete its major capital improvement projects such as the Third Unit Processes Project and the Disinfection Basin Project.

7.1 – Management Efficiencies

Management efficiencies contribute to cost reduction and more efficient service delivery. Management efficiencies can be measured through planning activities. The District participates in a number of planning activities. These include the Sewer System Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and the Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP). The SCWA also prepares a capital improvement plan for each of its member districts and an annual budget, which is a financial plan.

The LHMP reviews potential hazards to the system. These include earthquakes, wildfire, and flooding. The plan assesses vulnerability of the collection system, the WWTP, and the lift stations. The plan quantifies the impact to District facilities and recommends potential mitigation measures.

The RRCSD is located between the San Andreas Fault and the Rogers Creek Fault Zone. Seismic hazards that would affect RRCSD infrastructure include ground shaking, liquefaction, creek hazards and landslides. The LHMP quantifies how each of these hazards would affect District facilities.

The goal of SSMP is to properly manage, operate and maintain the sanitary sewer system to prevent sewer system overflows and mitigate any that occur. The SSMP also includes an overflow emergency response plan and an audit. The RRCSD is within the Russian River watershed, where the Russian River flows through the area served by RRCSD. Floodwaters from the Russian River pose a potential hazard to RRCSD facilities. Between 1940 and 2006 the Russian River has reached flood stage 38 times. The Plan reviews mitigation measures available to protect RRCSD facilities.

Wildfire represents the third major threat to the system. Wildfire is defined as any uncontrolled fire occurring on undeveloped land that requires fire suppression. Short-term loss and long term effects caused by wildfire can cause damage to and destruction of community infrastructure and increased vulnerability to flooding due to destruction of watersheds.

The SSMP includes an operations and maintenance program as well as the Overflow Emergency Response Plan, outlines the fats, oils and grease (FOG) control program and includes the system

evaluation and capacity assurance plan. It also includes program audits. The Overflow Emergency Response Plan was last updated in 2016.

Each year SCWA provides a financial plan or budgets for each of the districts under its purview. In addition, it provides a capital improvement plan. These two plans guide the operations of the District in the coming fiscal year.

Determinations:

7.1 The RRCSD is one of several sewer districts administered by the SCWA and works with the other agencies to provide services.

7.2 Management efficiencies can be assessed through planning efforts. RRCSD engages in several types of planning activities, such as the Sewer System Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and the Sewer System Management Plan. The SCWA also prepares a capital improvement plan for each of its member districts and an annual budget, the financial plan.

8: ACCOUNTABILITY FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE NEEDS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

The Russian River County Sanitation District is a specific zone of service provided by Sonoma County Water Agency. The governing body is the board of directors of SCWA which is the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. In 1995 SCWA assumed responsibility from the County for management and operation of eight different sanitation districts or zones in Sonoma County. The eight include the RRCSD.

SCWA was created in 1949 as the Sonoma County Flood Control and Water Conservation District by a special act of the California Legislature. The district was established to provide water, wastewater, and flood control services to Sonoma County. Although SCWA is governed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors it is not a department of the County. It has broad powers to impose assessments, charges, and fees, but, like most agencies, it can only spend revenues for the purpose for which they were collected.

The organization of the RRCSD is shown in Exhibit 8-1, the organizational chart. The exhibit shows the relationship of the departments to the general manager and board of directors. As a service area of SCWA, the District is managed by SCWA which provides administration, engineering, operational services, and staffing. Since SCWA acts as the employer it is also responsible for providing its employees retirement. Consequently, SCWA is responsible for any OPEB expenses. In FY 2021-22 SCWA's OPEB liability was \$12 million.

Board meetings are held on Tuesdays in compliance with the Brown Act. RRCSD issues appear on the agenda as needed. The Agency encourages public participation at its meetings.

SCWA engages its residence through a water advisory committee or WAC. Typically, the WAC will review the current budget including capital improvement projects slated for the upcoming fiscal year. The WAC also participated in establishing the new rate structure. In addition, the RRCSD communicates to residents through its website. The District also produces an annual newsletter in English and Spanish in the spring of each year. The Newsletter was established to respond to Prop 218 reporting requirements.

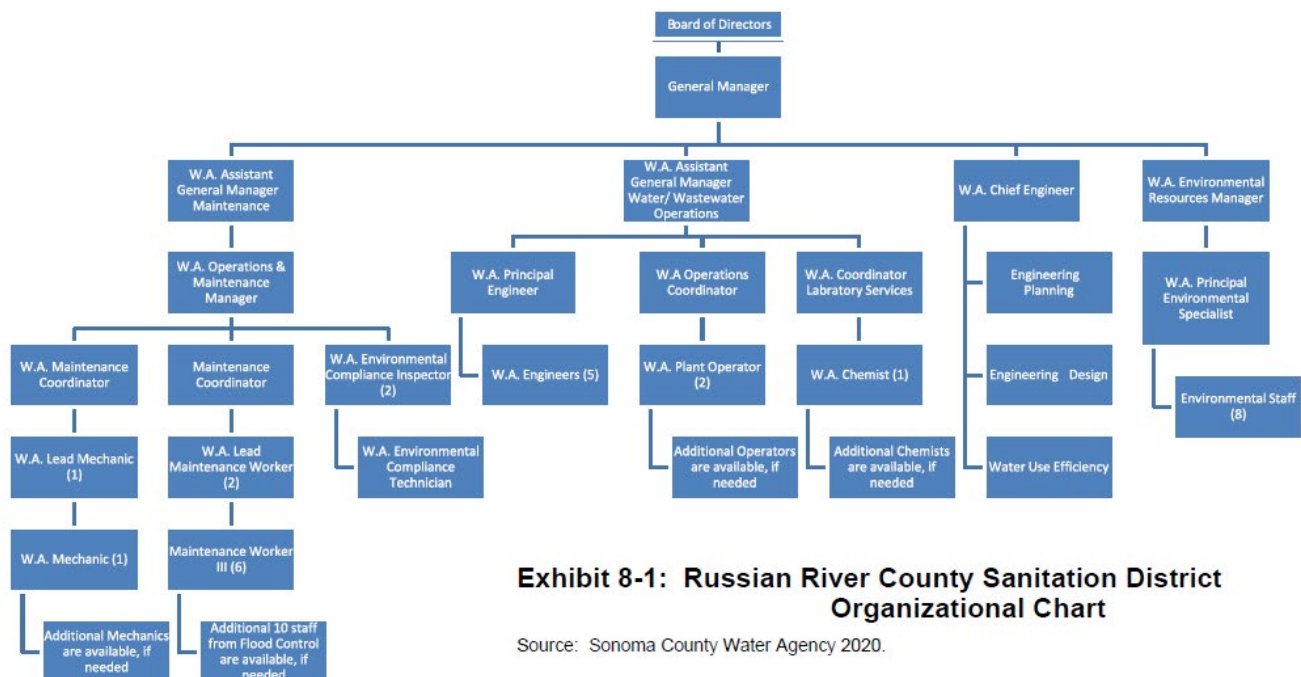
Determinations:

8.1 RRCSD is a zone of service within the Sonoma County Water Agency. Its board of directors are the Sonoma County Water directors, which are the Board of supervisors.

8.2 SCWA meets on Tuesdays, where issues relating to RRCSD are heard as needed. Meetings follow the Brown Act.

8.3 RRCSD engages the public through its annual newsletter and its website.

Exhibit 8-1: Russian River County Sanitation District Organizational Chart



9: MATTERS RELATED TO EFFECTIVE/EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY, AS REQUIRED BY COMMISSION POLICY

There are three policies with the potential to result in effective or efficient service delivery. They include the SOI policy, the change of organization policy, and the out of area service policy.

There is one potential annexation to the RRCSD. It known as 'George's Hideaway' and located about a quarter mile southwest of Vacation Beach. The proposal would add a 21 unit Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to the district. The PSH would be located on 2 acres and three parcels just south of the RRCSD boundaries. Serving the PSH would require a sphere of influence amendment and an annexation. In that case the SOI policy and change of organization policies would apply.

Alternatively, the RRCSD could apply for an out of area service approval from LAFCO. In that case the out of area service policies would apply. The out of area service agreement would have to assume a health and safety exemption. Or the District would have to amend its sphere to included the project and argue that annexation is imminent. The prospect of imminent annexation is more likely if the proposed project has the entitlements to allow for construction.

Determinations:

9.1 There are three policies with the potential to result in effective or efficient service delivery. They include the SOI policy, the change of organization policy, and the out of area service policy.

10: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE CONSIDERATIONS

The Sphere of Influence (SOI) is defined as the plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency. CKH provides for a review of the sphere of influence every five years or as necessary. The Commission is required to make determinations in five specific areas.

Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space

lands: This consists of a review of current and planned land uses based on planning documents to include agricultural and open-space lands.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services: This includes a review of the services available in the area and the need for additional services.

Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by the agency: This section includes an analysis of the capacity of public facilities and the adequacy of public services that the City provides or is authorized to provide.

Social or economic communities of interest: This section discusses the existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the District. These are areas that may be affected by services provided by the District or may be receiving services in the future.

Present and probable need for services to disadvantaged communities: Beginning July 1, 2012, the commission must also consider services to disadvantaged communities which are defined as inhabited areas within the SOI whose median household income is less than or equal to 80 percent of the statewide median income.

The SOI is currently coterminous with District boundaries. After a careful review of services that the District delivers there is only one potential SOI amendment. The area known as George's Hideaway has been proposed for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). The location with respect to the District is shown in Exhibit 10-1, approximately 1.9 miles south of Guerneville and approximately a quarter mile south to the District's boundaries. The area consists of three parcels and a total of approximately two acres, listed in Table 10-1 and shown in Exhibit 10-2. The development is proposed by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, a successor to the redevelopment agency. The proposal will include 21 units and will be seeking a sphere amendment and annexation of the parcels identified in the table.

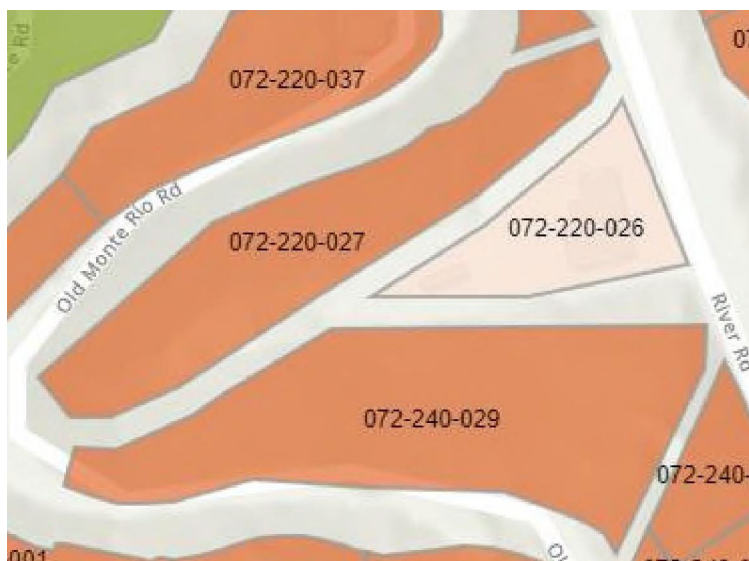
10.1 – Discussion of factors

There are five factors to be considered for the SOI amendment.

Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands. At present the area consists of woodlands, vacant land, a closed 2 story lodge, and a vacant 2-story duplex. According to the Sonoma County General Plan the area is zoned as neighborhood commercial and rural residential. The neighborhood commercial parcel borders on the River Road. The Rural Residential zone preserves

Exhibit 10-1: Location of Proposed SOI Amendment

Exhibit 10-2: Detail Map of George’s Hideaway Development



Source: Osmundsen 2022.

Table 10-1: George’s Hideaway Parcels and Acreage

APN	Acreage	Zoning	Allowed Uses
072-220-026	0.35	C-1 Neighborhood Commercial	PSH
072-220-027	0.82	RR-1 Rural Residential	
072-220-029	0.92	RR-1 Rural Residential	
Total	2.09		

Source: Osmundsen 2022.

the rural character and amenities in areas best used for low-density residential development. The area already receives transit and water service from the Sweetwater Springs Water District and contains a septic system.

The proposal for the site includes a 21 unit Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) development. The proposal before LAFCO would be to annex the territory to RRCSD so as to hook up to the sewer system.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services. The present land use needs no additional services as the lodge is closed and the duplex is vacant. They currently use a relatively new septic system. The current septic system was not designed to serve a 21 unit complex and most likely would be unable to adequately serve that many units. It is best served by connecting to a municipal sewer system. In addition, the area is already served by the Sweetwater Springs Water District.

Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by the agency. The capacity section of this report has indicated that the District has available capacity to serve the area.

The WWTP has a capacity of 0.71 mgd. Average dry weather flow is 0.3 mgd. Since the capacity is more than twice average dry weather flow, the system has sufficient capacity. With annexation there would be an extension of the sewer main to the project

Social or economic communities of interest. The community of interest in this case would be the Guerneville community. Guerneville is approximately 2 miles from the project site.

Present and probable need for services to disadvantaged communities. As shown in the previous section the RRCSD already serves disadvantaged communities within its boundaries. The proposed project and the fact that it is low income housing would require the District to serve an additional low income area.

Determination:

The Sphere of Influence of the RRCSD should be amended to include the George's Hideaway area.

11: RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several options for providing new services to the George’s Hideaway Project. The District could apply to LAFCO for an out of area service agreement or apply to LAFCO for annexation. In recent times out of area services have been the subject of much scrutiny. In this case an out of area service would rely on an exemption for health and safety concerns. Sanitary sewer services are essential for good health. The area is too small and has too many units to rely on a single septic system for service. Therefore, connection to the local sewer system would be appropriate. An out of area service agreement could request LAFCO to approve the agreement based on the health and safety exemption or if there was an SOI amendment that put George’s Hideaway territory in the SOI. The out area service would then qualify since “annexation was imminent”.

If the District chooses the SOI amendment it could request a concurrent annexation. The thought that adding the territory to the SOI would imply the desire to annex the territory. In that case the District should go forward with the annexation and forgo the out of area service request. If the District applies for the SOI amendment an annexation is relatively straight forward. Therefore, it is recommended that the District apply for the SOI amendment and concurrent annexation to the District.

Determination:

The recommendation is that the District or the developer apply for a Sphere of Influence amendment with subsequent annexation to the District.

12: SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS

Municipal Service Review Factors

The following is a summary of determinations for each of the seven areas.

Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area.

3.1 The RRCSD includes the unincorporated communities of Rio Nido, Guerneville, Guernewood Park, and Vacation Beach. Estimated population of the District is 7305 residents.

3.2 Assuming the population will grow at the same rate as the County provides an upper bound to population growth. It is estimated the population may increase by 446 over the next twenty years resulting in a potential of 173 new connections.

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

4.1 Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities are defined as inhabited unincorporated areas whose median household income is less than 80% of the statewide median household income. For 2020 that figure is \$62,938. The DWR mapping tool identified two areas that fell below 80% of the statewide MHI. One is north of Rio Nido and one south and west of Guerneville that includes Vacation Beach.

4.2 CKH requires identification of backbone services to DUC's, water, sewer and fire protection. Water services are provided by California Water Service Company – Armstrong Valley in the northern region and Sweetwater Springs Water District [in the south. Fire services are provided by the Sonoma County Fire District and CALFIRE.

Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services Including Infrastructure Needs or Deficiencies.

5.1 The RRCSD system serves approximately 3200 single family dwelling units. The collection system consists of over 39 miles of pipe and 11 lift stations that convey waste to the wastewater treatment facility.

5.2 Wastewater receives a tertiary level of treatment before it is released. Between October and May effluent is released to the Russian River. The remainder of the year it is used to irrigate the golf course and adjacent forest land.

5.3 RRCSD has a capital improvement program in place to address issues of ageing infrastructure and previous violations associated with flooding. Projects are funded by state and federal grants.

5.4 The WWTP has upgraded capacity to treat wastewater flows during flood conditions to 0.71 mgd. Average dry weather flow is 0.3 mgd. Since the capacity is more than twice average dry weather flow and with anticipated low levels of growth, the system has sufficient capacity.

Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services.

6.1 The RRCSD has a current budget of \$9.5 million. As part of SCWA the RRCSD does not pay salaries and benefits as they would be included in the operations costs charged by SCWA. Consequently, the RRCSD has no direct OPEB obligations as they are included in operations costs. The budget allocates 26% for maintenance projects and 22% for capital improvements.

6.2 In four of the last five years the District expenses exceeded revenues. Shortfalls were addressed by transferring funds from reserves. A comparison of revenues to expenses over the last five years indicated the need for a rate increase. Consequently, the Board of Directors adopted a 8.9% rate increase effective July 1, 2022.

6.3 The RRCSD anticipates spending \$19.7 million in the next five years on seven capital improvement projects.

6.4 The RRCSD has two loans from SWRCB. The first loan was used to complete the Third Unit Process Project. The annual principal and interest payments of \$243,954. The loan is scheduled to be fully paid in 2024. The second loan also from SWRCB was used to fund the Disinfection Upgrade Project. Principal and Interest of \$124,111 are paid annually. The term is 20 years at an annual interest rate of 2.6% with the last payment scheduled for April 2032.

Status of and Opportunities for Shared Facilities.

7.1 The RRCSD is one of several sewer districts administered by the SCWA and works with the other agencies to provide services.

7.2 Management efficiencies can be assessed through planning efforts. RRCSD engages in several types of planning activities, such as the Sewer System Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and the Sewer System Management Plan. The SCWA also prepares a capital improvement plan for each of its member districts and an annual budget, the financial plan.

Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Government Structure and Operational Efficiencies.

8.1 RRCSD is a zone of service within the Sonoma County Water Agency. Its board of directors are the Sonoma County Water directors, which are the Board of supervisors.

8.2 SCWA meets on Tuesdays, where issues relating to RRCSD are heard as needed. Meetings follow the Brown Act.

8.3 RRCSD engages the public through its annual newsletter and its website.

Matters Related to Effective or Efficient Service Delivery, as Required by Commission Policy.

9.1 There are three policies with the potential to result in effective or efficient service delivery. They include the SOI policy, the change of organization policy, and the out of area service policy.

Sphere of Influence Considerations

The Sphere of Influence of the RRCSD should be amended to include the George's Hideaway area.

Recommendations

The recommendation is that the District or the developer apply for a Sphere of Influence amendment with subsequent annexation to the District.

13: REFERENCES

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