

**Municipal Service Review
And
Sphere of Influence Recommendation
Antelope Valley Fire Protection District
Mono County, California**

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SUMMARY

Municipal Service Review Determinations

1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

- The renovation or replacement of existing facilities will be needed to maintain or increase the quality of service provided by the district.
- Accelerated development will place more pressure on the AVFPD to augment its service capacities. Portions of the district will probably require new and increased infrastructure.
- The replacement of aging equipment and the purchase of additional equipment will be needed to maintain or increase the quality of service provided by the district.
- The district needs a longterm solution to the lack of sufficient volunteer personnel.
- Additional paved roadways could increase the quality of service provided by the district.
- The availability of a longterm reliable water supply directly impacts the district's ability to provide fire suppression services. The district's capacity to serve new development will be contingent on the development of a longterm dedicated water supply.

2. Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area

- The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element allows for significant additional growth in the Antelope Valley.
- Growth is anticipated to occur primarily in and adjacent to existing developed areas. Development on lands designated for agricultural uses would create new pockets of development away from currently developed areas.
- Seasonal visitors to and residents of the Antelope Valley will continue to increase demand for services such as emergency medical response, vehicular accident response, and search and rescue, while providing no commensurate increase in revenues available to provide those services. There is a need to have these users pay for their share of the services.
- The population in Antelope Valley is projected to increase to 1,936 by 2020 and 2,082 by 2030, creating an increased demand for fire and emergency medical services.
- The population will continue to age, creating an increased demand for emergency medical services.

3. Financing Constraints and Opportunities

- The AVFPD's future financing will continue to rely primarily on property tax revenues, fire mitigation fees and augmentation (in the form of aid from other governmental agencies and grants).
- The district's fire mitigation fee of 30 cents per square foot of new construction is the lowest in the county. An opportunity may exist to increase the fee.
- The adequacy of property tax revenues to fund local facilities and services has steadily declined over time. There is a need to ensure that property tax assessments are kept current.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain existing service levels as costs increase over time.

- There are opportunities to coordinate with other fire districts and agencies to increase efforts to secure grant funding.

4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities

- In Mono County, each community area is a discrete geographic area; there are no overlapping service boundaries.
- Administrative costs are low for the AVFPD since it is staffed predominantly by volunteers.
- The district strives to keep operations and maintenance costs low by sharing services and training with other districts.
- Participating in group purchasing programs could result in lower prices or discounts.
- Cooperation among fire districts is an important part of reducing costs.
- The cost of volunteer training is unavoidable and may be lost when trained volunteers leave the district. A possibility exists for the district to offer benefit contracts so that a volunteer agrees to be with the district for a specific amount of time or to reimburse the district for training costs.
- Integrated planning, especially long range planning, is an important part of cost avoidance.

5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

- All funding mechanisms have inherent limitations that may prevent their implementation, use or restructure.
- The district could benefit from increasing its fire mitigation fee from \$.30 per square foot to an amount comparable to the fee charged by most of the rest of the fire protection districts in the unincorporated area (\$.50 to \$.75 per square foot of new construction).
- The AVFPD should seek additional opportunities to reduce costs through cooperation and sharing with other agencies.
- The AVFPD should continue to pursue granting funding.

6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities and Resources

- The largest impediment to greater sharing of resources and facilities in Mono County is geographic separation between fire protection districts.
- Fire districts in Mono County can share resources through joint training sessions, shared purchasing, and the implementation of mutual aid agreements.
- The **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for Mono County** contains a number of mitigation measures to address fire hazard planning in the county's communities. While the focus of the plan is on mitigation planning for wildland fire hazards, the mitigation measures identified in the plan apply to all fire hazards in the area. Responsibility for implementing those fire-hazard planning measures rests with the County, the Regional Planning Advisory Committees, and local fire protection districts.

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7. Government Structure Options

- In regions of the county with separate, distinct communities that are geographically remote from each other, public services are most logically provided by single purpose special districts rather than by a larger entity such as the county.

8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies

- The Antelope Valley FPD is managed by an elected board of commissioners, and a part-time paid fire chief.
- The board of directors' individual skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications, motivation and the time they have available for the district determine the effectiveness of the district and its efficiency.
- In the past, the AVFPD has set goals and objectives on an incremental basis to meet identified needs.
- The AVFPD has a Five Year Plan, as well as an equipment replacement plan.
- The district needs to develop a budget and funding sources that will allow for the development of contingency funds.
- While the district provides adequate service to existing residents of the area, its ISO rating is six within areas that are within 1,000 feet of a water hydrant and nine in areas beyond that distance. It may not have the resources (particularly personnel) to serve the longterm needs of the area.

9. Local Accountability and Governance

- The AVFPD complies with the minimum requirements for open meetings and public records.
- The AVFPD is a visible presence in the community, participating in local events.
- Public accessibility to district information is limited and is often based on the availability of the board members.
- Public participation in the decision-making process is limited and usually occurs only when a controversial item is on the agenda.

Sphere of Influence Findings

1. Present and Planned Land Uses

Land use within the service area for the AVFPD is predominantly residential and agricultural, with smaller areas of commercial, mixed use, open space, and public uses. The planned land uses for the area are similar. Development will be concentrated primarily within and adjacent to existing development although land use designations for the area allow for the conversion of agricultural lands to residential uses with large lot sizes.

2. Present and Probable Need For Public Facilities and Services

The Antelope Valley has an existing and continuing need for public facilities and services to serve the increasing and planned residential development in the area.

3. Present Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services

The district currently provides an adequate level of service but has identified a need to improve both its facilities and services in order to lower its ISO rating and to serve additional development.

4. Social or Economic Communities of Interest

The Antelope Valley area exhibits substantial social and economic interdependence with development in Nevada. This interdependence has no relevance in determining the sphere of influence for the district.

Sphere of Influence Recommendation

The Sphere of Influence for the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District should remain as it is, coterminous with the boundaries of the district.

Reorganization Recommendation

Section 56001 of the California Government Code states that:

The Legislature finds and declares that a single multipurpose governmental agency is accountable for community service needs and financial resources and, therefore, may be the best mechanism for establishing community service priorities especially in urban areas. Nonetheless, the Legislature recognizes the critical role of many limited purpose agencies, especially in rural communities. The Legislature also finds that, whether governmental services are proposed to be provided by a single-purpose agency, several agencies, or a multipurpose agency, responsibility should be given to the agency or agencies that can best provide government services.

Currently, the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District best provides services to the Antelope Valley community. The Antelope Valley includes another small special district, the Antelope Valley Water District, which is currently inactive. As development occurs in the Antelope

Valley, additional community water services may become necessary or desirable. In the future, the FPD could consider reorganization with the Antelope Valley Water District into a multipurpose agency such as a Community Service District (CSD). At that time, a reorganization study should be conducted to determine what governmental structure would best provide services for the region. Such a reorganization could provide greater fiscal and service flexibility for the Antelope Valley but should occur only with the concurrence of the involved districts' Boards of Directors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Municipal Service Reviews

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) to conduct comprehensive reviews of all municipal services in each county in California and to periodically update that information. The purpose of the municipal service reviews is to gather detailed information on public service capacities and issues.

Relationship Between Municipal Service Reviews and Spheres of Influence

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act requires LAFCOs to develop and determine the Sphere of Influence (SOI) for each applicable local governmental agency that provides services or facilities related to development. Government Code Section 56076 defines a SOI as “a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency.” Service reviews must be completed prior to the establishment or update of SOIs (§56430(a)). Spheres of influence must be reviewed and updated as necessary, but not less than once every five years (§56425).

The information and determinations contained in a Municipal Service Review are intended to guide and inform SOI decisions. Service reviews enable LAFCO to determine SOI boundaries and to establish the most efficient service provider for areas needing new service. They also function as the basis for other government reorganizations. Section 56430, as noted above, states that LAFCO can conduct these reviews “before, in conjunction with, but no later than the time it is considering an action to establish a SOI.”

The Antelope Valley Fire Protection District Municipal Service Review is being conducted in response to, and in conjunction with, an update of the sphere of influence for the district.

II. ANTELOPE VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Service Area

The Antelope Valley Fire Protection District (AVFPD) was formed in August 1947, under Health and Safety Code §13801, et seq. to provide structural fire protection to approximately 33 square miles in the Antelope Valley in Mono County, California. The district expanded in 1966 with the annexation of approximately 0.5 square miles to its southern boundary (see Figure 1— District Boundaries). No further annexations or detachments have occurred.

The boundaries of the district extend north from Walker Canyon to the Nevada State Line and east-west across the Antelope Valley, an area 6 miles wide and 12 miles long. Elevations within the district average 5,400 feet, with surrounding mountains as high as 10,000 feet. Water bodies in the district include Topaz Lake, the West Walker River, and Mill Creek. The major access corridor through the area is Highway 395, which runs north to south.

Topography within the district is characterized by steep, narrow slopes in Walker Canyon, through which the West Walker River flows, the gently rolling agricultural lands of the Antelope Valley, and steep slopes surrounding the valley floor. Vegetation in the district is primarily sagebrush scrub and pine trees in Walker Canyon and on the slopes surrounding the valley floor. The valley floor is primarily irrigated agricultural land and grazing.

The AVFPD includes the three most northern communities in Mono County: Topaz, Coleville, and Walker, all of which are located along Highway 395. Topaz is located 13 miles south of the Nevada State Line, Coleville is approximately 4 miles south of Topaz, and Walker is approximately 3 miles south of Coleville. Walker Canyon makes up the southern boundary of the district, extending approximately 9 miles south from Walker.

Population Characteristics

Mono County GIS estimates that there are 888 parcels in the district, including 431 developed parcels (residential or commercial parcels valued at \$10,000 or more). The AVFPD estimates that there are approximately 752 housing units and 1,500 residents within the district.

Population data from the 2000 US Census and California Department of Finance population estimates show the population to be 1,525 in 2000 and 1,557 in 2003 (Table 3, Mono County Housing Element). In 2000, 7 percent of the population in the Antelope Valley was under 5 years old, 17 percent was 5-17 years old, 61 percent was 18 to 64, and 15 percent was over 65 (Table 8A, Mono County Housing Element).

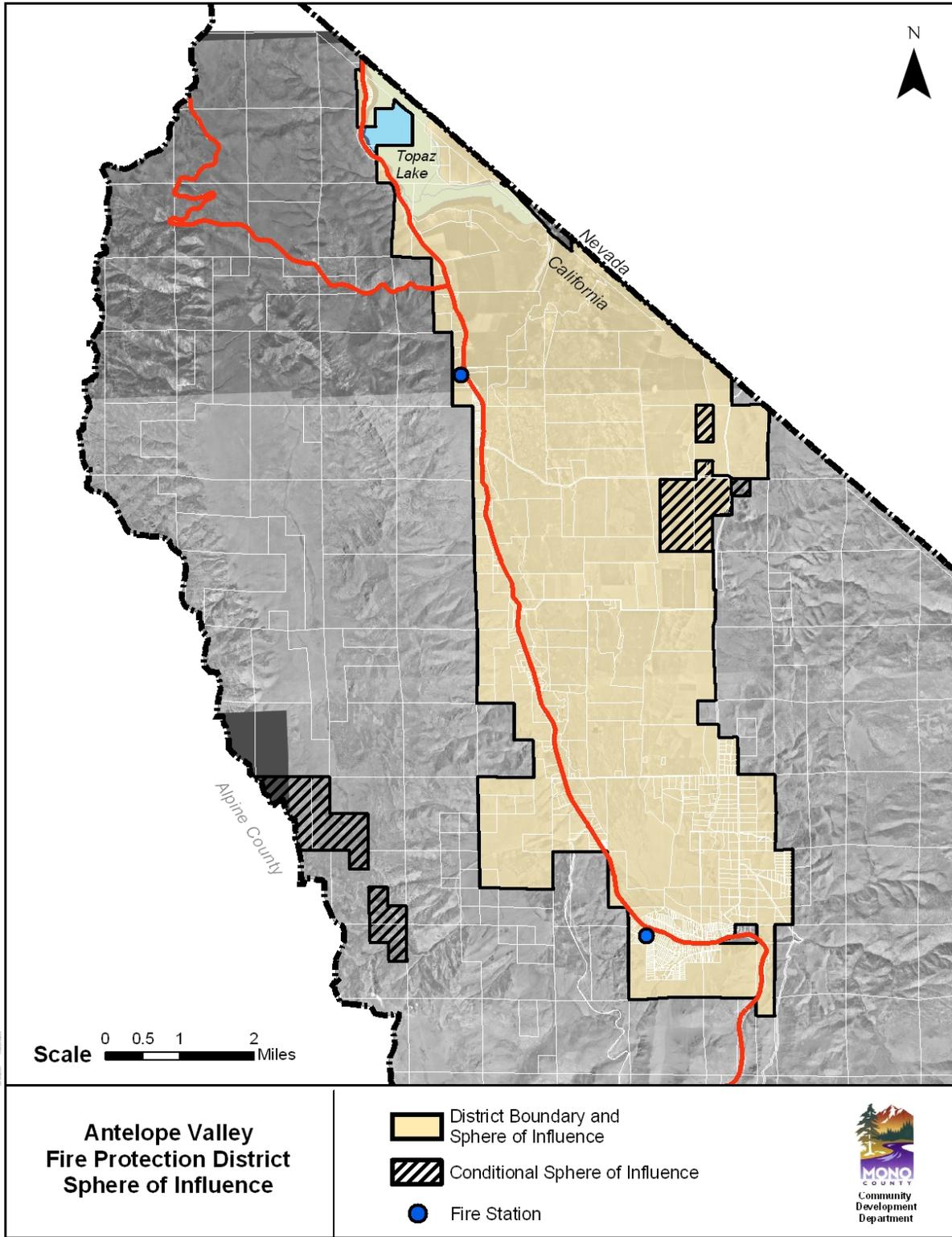


Figure 1
Antelope Valley Fire Protection District Boundaries

In 2000, there were 603 households in the Antelope Valley, a 20 percent increase from 1990 (Table 12, Housing Element). Approximately half of the households were owner-occupied and half were rented (Table 12, Housing Element).

A significant percentage of the residents of the Antelope Valley work outside of Mono County, either in another county in California or in Nevada. Of 768 workers 16 or older in 2000, 5 percent worked outside of Mono County but in California and 22 percent worked outside of California, presumably in Nevada (Table 28, Housing Element). As a result, travel times for 47 percent of the workers in the Antelope Valley were more than 30 minutes. Thirty-two percent of the workers spent 30-44 minutes commuting, 8 percent spent 45 to 59 minutes, and 6 percent spent 60 or more minutes commuting (Table 29, Housing Element).

Housing Characteristics

In 2000, the Census counted 726 housing units in the Antelope Valley; 58 percent of those units were single-family residences, 32 percent were multiple-family residences, and 10 percent were mobile homes (Table 35, Housing Element). Seventeen percent of the units were vacant in 2000; approximately half of the vacant units were seasonal uses residences, the remaining vacant units were for rent, for sale, or vacant for other uses (Table 14, Housing Element).

Approximately 50 percent of the housing units in the Antelope Valley were constructed within the past 20 years; an additional 30 percent were built between 20 and 40 years ago and the remaining 17 percent are older than 40 years (Table 37, Housing Element). A housing conditions survey completed by Mono County in 2003 showed most of the housing in the area to be in good condition (Table 36, Housing Element).

Services Provided

The district serves a full time residential population in the communities of Walker, Coleville, and Topaz as well as travelers along Highway 395 and visitors to the area's recreational attractions. It provides fire prevention/suppression and emergency medical response services, as well as mitigation inspections. Additionally, the district provides extrication services, swift water rescue, rope rescue, and HAZMAT spill services. According to their mission statement, the goal of the AVFPD is to "protect and serve the citizens and visitors of the Antelope Valley by providing fire protection and suppression, safety education, emergency medical care and to respond to the community's emergency needs in a safe, professional, courteous, and efficient manner as resources allow."

ISO Rating

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) is a private organization that supplies information used by underwriters to evaluate and price particular risks, including fire protection. ISO staff gathers information on individual properties and communities and, in turn, insurers use that information in underwriting personal and commercial property insurance, commercial liability and workers compensation policies. The ratings range from a score of 10 (no fire protection at all) to 1 (best fire protection possible).

The ISO rating for the AVFPD is 6/9; six within areas that are within 1,000 feet of a water hydrant and nine in areas beyond that distance. According to the AVFPD's "Five Year Plan," one of the district's major objectives is to lower its ISO fire rating (the district's Five Year Plan has not yet been adopted by the commissioners).

Land Ownership

With the exception of several small public land parcels managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the southern portion of the district, land throughout the district is privately owned. Lands surrounding the district are generally in federal ownership and are provided wildland fire protection by the BLM fire station at Topaz through a mutual aid agreement with the Forest Service. Private lands outside the AVFPD have no formal structural fire protection service.

With the exception of developed areas to the north in Nevada, the area surrounding AVFPD is generally undeveloped and in open space use. Federally owned lands managed by BLM, the US Marine Corps, or the Forest Service border the district to the east, west, and south. Pockets of privately owned land are directly south of the district and approximately two miles west of the district.

Surrounding Fire Protection Facilities

The closest fire protection district to the Antelope Valley is the Bridgeport Fire Protection District, which is located 37 miles south of the district via Highway 395. The Marine Corps' Pickel Meadows facility near Sonora Junction 14 miles south of the district also provides structural fire protection. A volunteer firefighting group is situated over the Nevada State Line at Topaz Lake and serves nearby developed areas in Nevada.

Fire Hazard

Wildfire hazards are considered to be one of the most prevalent natural hazards in Mono County due to their repeated occurrence, the damage they have caused in the past, and the geographically widespread nature of the hazard (Mono County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan). Most of the developed parcels in the Antelope Valley are in areas identified by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) as Wildland Fire Hazard Areas (see Figure 2). The California Fire Alliance has also identified the Antelope Valley as an area with the highest risk from wildland fires on surrounding public lands.

Local Fire History

In recent history, a number of events have posed challenges to the district. In 1974 there was a fire in the foothills of Walker. The fire took out several homes and structures, and destroyed many watershed-protecting trees. In 1986, a bus accident in Walker Canyon claimed the lives of several people. Ten years later, a fire behind the Marine Corps housing destroyed many acres of forest in west of Highway 395 between Coleville and Topaz. The department's strength was further tested in 1997 when the Walker River flooded, wiping out major portions of Highway 395 through the canyon, taking out three bridges, destroying homes and campgrounds, and uprooting nearly 7,000 trees. In 2002, hot, dry conditions led to three major fires:

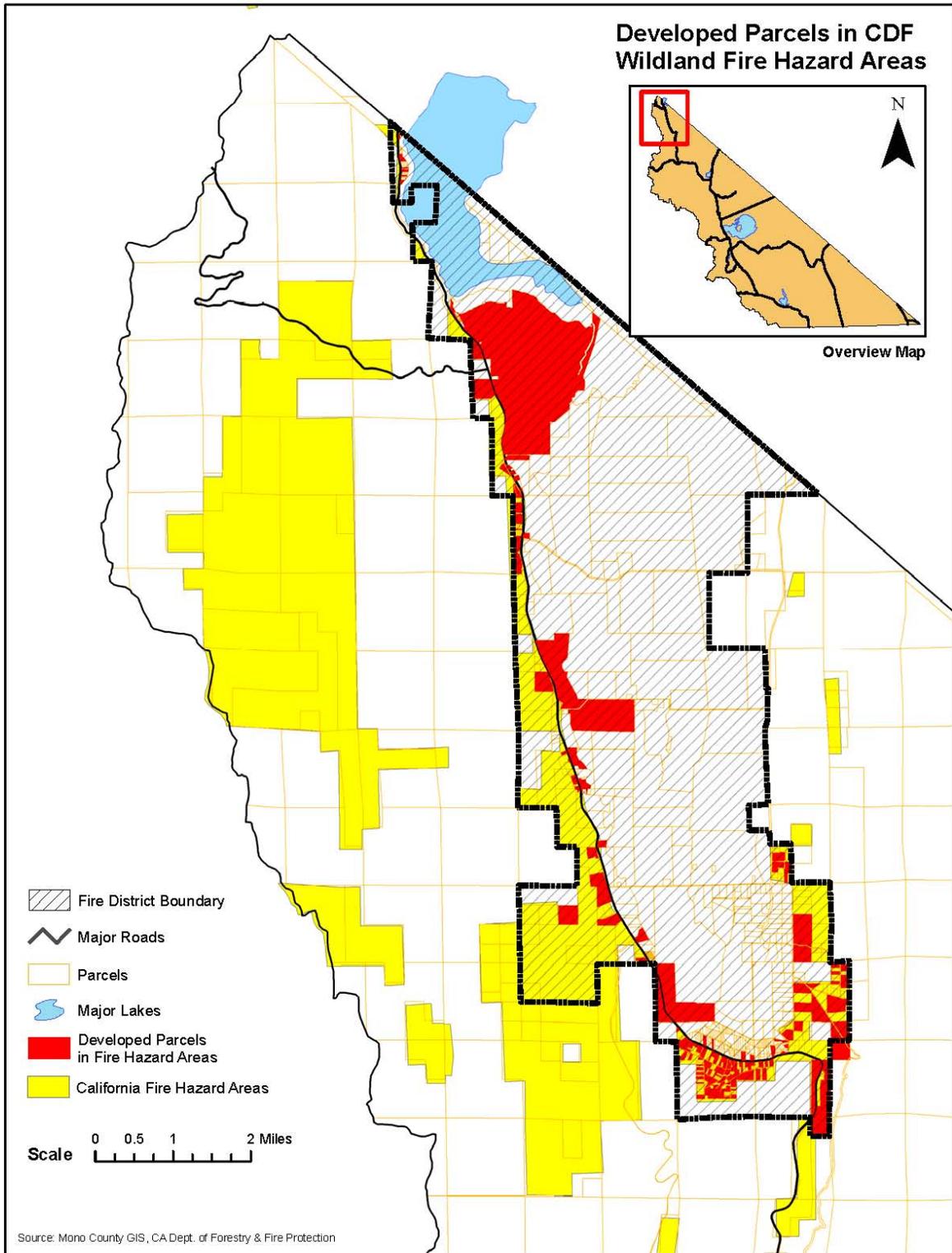


Figure 2
Antelope Valley Wildland Fire Hazard Areas

the Canon Fire, the Gate Fire, and the Slinkard Fire. These fires burned over 70,000 acres and resulted in the loss of electricity, water, and phone service for a period of time. In the summer of 2006, the Jackass Flats Fire, started from a lightning strike, burned 6,500 acres. Finally, on June 1, 2007, the Larson Fire threatened the town of Coleville, burning 1,100 acres and causing more than \$3 million in damage.

Planned Land Uses

The Mono County Land Use Element provides for substantial additional development in the Antelope Valley. The additional development allowed by the plan would be predominantly single-family residential development throughout the valley, and mixed-use development in Walker that could incorporate single-family residential development, multiple-family residential development and commercial development, and limited commercial development. The commercial development would occur in existing community areas along Highway 395. The single-family residential development would occur in and adjacent to existing residential development throughout the valley. Residential development could also occur throughout the valley on agricultural lands. A large amount of the agricultural land designated for residential development has large minimum lot sizes (5 acres or more), which means that the development would be spread out.

Mono County Fire Safe Standards

The Mono County Fire Safe Standards (Chapter 22 of the Mono County Land Development Regulations) apply to new development in State Responsibility Areas, generally areas outside fire district boundaries. They are intended to provide the same practical effect as the State's Fire Safe Regulations. The Fire Safe Standards establish basic wildland fire protection standards in the State Responsibility Areas of Mono County for emergency access; signing and building numbering; private water supply reserves for fire use; roof covering standards; and vegetation modification.

Fire Safe Council

Fire safe councils are non-profit organizations created to advise citizens how best to deal with the threat of wildfires to homes, communities and natural resources in the urban/wildland interface. Fire safe councils provide information on creating defensible space around structures, creating fire safe landscaping, and provide home inspections. The Eastern Sierra Regional Fire Safe Council provides fire safe information to homeowners and communities throughout Inyo and Mono Counties. Many communities in Mono County have local fire safe councils. There is currently no fire safe council within the boundaries of the AVFPD.

District Issues of Concern

Growth is a major area of concern for the district right now. The Five-Year plan notes that approximately 12 new homes are built each year in Antelope Valley. Potential deficiencies in personnel, equipment, and adequate facilities are the most challenging impediments to providing services. Water supply concerns also pose a threat to continued levels of service.

District Planning

The district has adopted a Five Year Plan, as well as an equipment replacement plan.

DISTRICT SERVICES

Fire Suppression and Emergency Medical Response

Structural fire protection is provided to valley residents from the district's main fire station in Walker and another station in Topaz. The two stations are manned by 18 volunteer firefighters, with an average of 6 of them being able to respond midday. There are 20 fire hydrants within the district. The fire chief estimates that 60 percent of the district is accessible within 5 minutes, 20 percent is accessible within 10 minutes, an additional 10 percent within 15 minutes and the last 10 percent within 20 or more minutes. As a result, the average response time to an emergency within the district is approximately 5 minutes. The district also responds to fires beyond its boundaries, generally to areas south to Sonora Junction, west along Highway 108 to Sonora Pass, west along Highway 89 to the county line, and northeast along Eastside Lane approximately five miles into Nevada. The district has formally established fire protection service for the Marine Corps housing facility in Topaz and the Indian housing facility east of Walker.

The district provides emergency medical response with all 18 volunteer firefighters receiving some level of formal EMS training. Six of the volunteers are trained EMTs. The volunteers assist and provide backup response to the county's paramedic unit, which is based at the district's fire station in Walker. Medic-1 provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) services to the Antelope Valley area.

The district also performs pre-development reviews and building permit approvals. All volunteer firefighters have completed Awareness Hazmat training (ten have completed Operational Hazmat training) and can provide service for Hazmat spills. Firefighters are also trained in extrication, swift water rescue, and rope rescue.

Mutual Aid and Service Agreements

Mono County contains eleven fire protection districts, all of which belong to a county fire service association and are party to a countywide mutual aid agreement. The agreement formalizes the procedure for each district to send personnel and equipment to fires and emergencies beyond district boundaries when needed. The districts have also established informal service areas for the unserved private lands that are outside of any local fire protection district. These informal service areas reflect a recognized moral – not legal – responsibility of the districts to assist in the protection of life and property in such areas.

The district also maintains mutual aid agreements with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Forest Service (USFS), Eastfork Fire Department in Douglas County, Nevada, the US Marine Corps, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). Although section 13007 of the Health and Safety Code authorizes fire protection districts to collect fees from the property owners to cover the cost of responding to a fire, the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District derives little, if any, revenue from serving non-district areas. The FPD is,

Antelope Valley Fire Protection District -- Municipal Service Review

however, reimbursed for the cost of responding to fires on federal lands through its memorandum of understanding with the BLM and the USFS.

Table 1: Antelope Valley Fire Protection District Services and Programs

Type of Service	Provider	Service Capacity and Other Notes
<i>Fire Services</i>		
Fire Suppression	All Staff	
Residential Inspection		Not provided
Commercial Inspection		Not provided
Burn Permits	All Staff	
Fire Safe Inspections		Not provided
Hydrant Inspections		Not provided
Defensible Space/Brush Reduction		Not provided
HazMat	18 volunteers with Awareness training; 10 volunteers with Operational training	
<i>Rescue Services</i>		
Swift Water Rescue	SAR ¹ , District will assist	
Rope Rescue	SAR, District will assist	
Extrication/Vehicle Rescue	Trained volunteers	
<i>Medical Services</i>		
Basic Life Support	All Staff	
First Responder	15 trained staff	
EMT	7 trained staff	
Medic	1 trained staff	
<i>Other Safety Services and Programs</i>		
Public Education Program	All staff	Provide training
School Programs	All staff	Participate in school fire drills
Community Activities	All staff	Participate in fall and spring festivals
<i>Development</i>		
Plans Review	Chief	
Permit Approval	Chief	
Will-Serve Letters	Chief	

¹ SAR = County Search and Rescue team operated by County Sheriff's office.

Infrastructure and Facilities

District facilities include the main firehouse with four bays and a bath in Walker, a 12 acre training facility in Coleville, and a satellite fire station with two bays, a kitchen, and a bath in Topaz. The district recently purchased a two-acre parcel on Highway 395 in Walker with the hope of replacing the existing 1947 fire station with a new one. Their plan is to fund the design and construction of the new station through grants and with monies from various sources within the budget.

Table 2: Antelope Valley Fire Protection District Facilities

Existing Facility: Type/Size	Year Built or Remodeled	Facilities	Characteristics
Walker Station	1947	4 bays, kitchen, 2 baths, office, training room	District has purchased land in Walker for the purpose of constructing a new station.
Coleville Sation	2008	7 bays, office, training	12 acre training facility
Topaz Station	unknown	2 bays, bath, kitchen, office	

District equipment includes the following: four engines/pumpers, two water tenders, two brush units, and two command vehicles. All of the equipment was purchased used. The district's fire chief indicates that the FPD needs one new structure engine and one type-three wildland engine.

Table 3: Antelope Valley Fire Protection Equipment and Vehicles

Vehicle/Year/Model	Capacity & GPM²	Location and Other Notes
Engine #1—Seagraves, 1989	1000 gal, 1250 gpm	Coleville
Engine #2—Van Pelt, 1976	750 gal, 1600 gpm	Coleville
Engine #3—International, 1988	1000 gal, 750 gpm	Topaz
Tender #1—Peterbilt	3500 gal, 1500 gpm	Coleville
Tender #2—GMC, 1987	3000 gal, 500 gpm	Topaz
Brush #1—International, 1979	1200 gal, 750 gpm	Walker
Brush #2—Ford, 1990	300 gal, 250 gpm	Coleville
Engine—Ford 1979	750 gal, 1500 gpm	Walker
Command #1—Ford, 2000		

² GPM = gallons per minute

Command #2— Ford, 2000		
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The district supplies all firefighters with personal protective clothing (PPE) as required by Federal, State and local laws and standards, including those established by OSHA and NFPA. All 18 volunteers are also equipped with self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) cylinders. The fire chief has indicated that the district needs to upgrade their communication system.

Communications

Fires and medical emergencies are dispatched to the AVFPD from the Mono County Sheriff’s Office in Bridgeport via the county’s 911 emergency system. The district relies heavily on cell phones due to poor radio communication. The district has complete internet access.

Administration and Staffing

The district is managed and administered by an elected five-member board of commissioners and a part-time paid fire chief. The district also employs a part-time administrative secretary. Meetings are generally held once a month at the fire station in Walker. Eighteen volunteer firefighters actively staff the district’s facilities. The volunteers receive training on a regular basis (approximately 15 hours a month) in such topics as structural and wildland firefighting, emergency medical response, extrication, rope rescue, swift water rescue, and HazMat response. Training is provided in-house by the district department officers and by outside agencies as needed. In addition, the district participates in joint training with the Eastfork Fire Department (Nevada), the Marine Corps Training Center Fire Department, and the Bridgeport Fire District. The AVFPD chief attends the Mono County Fire Chief Association meetings six times a year.

Service Activity

The AVFPD responded to 88 calls in 2008. The AVFPD’s service calls are rescues, firefighting, EMT calls, mutual aid, inspections of local businesses and schools and community outreach and education.

Table 4: Antelope Valley Fire Protection District Call Log--2008

<i>Incident Type Summary</i>	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
Structural/Wildland	27	31%
Vehicle Accident	29	33%
Emergency Medical	21	24%
HazMat	3	3%
Rescue	0	0%
Other	8	9%
TOTAL	88	100%

Funding and Budget

The Antelope Fire Protection District relies heavily on property tax revenue for its funding. The district recently secured loans to purchase an engine and to construct its new fire station/training facility in Coleville.

**Table 5: Antelope Valley Fire Protection District Revenues and Expenditures,
FY 2007-2008**

Revenues	
Tax Allocation	\$ 156,636
Home Owners Exemption	357
Fire Mitigation Fee	5,146
Interest	15,712
Loan Proceeds:USDA	311,000
Other	65,379
Transfer between Funds	<u>20,000</u>
<i>Total Revenues</i>	\$574,230
Expenditures	
Structures and Improvements	311,000
Salaries	9,965
Benefits	852
Service and Supplies	129,137
Equipment	64,428
Insurance	17,196
Prior Period Adjustments	3
Transfer between Funds	<u>20,000</u>
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	552,581
<i>Net Revenue Over Expenditures</i>	\$ 21,649

III. SERVICE REVIEW ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATIONS

Government Code §56430 requires the analysis of nine factors when assessing the capabilities of public service agencies. Each of the required factors is discussed below as it pertains to fire protection districts in general and the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District specifically.

1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

Overview

Purpose: To evaluate the infrastructure needs and deficiencies of a district in terms of capacity, condition of facilities, service quality, and levels of service and its relationship to existing and planned service users

The infrastructure elements of fire protection and emergency services include facilities (stations), rolling stock (engines and ambulances), dispatch systems, water supplies and roadways. Service also depends on trained personnel.

In the context of fire and emergency services, infrastructure needs and deficiencies are indicated by facilities that do not provide adequate capacity to accommodate current or projected demand for service in the affected area. Adequacy of service can be measured by reviewing response times, coverage, mutual aid, staffing and the underlying water and roadway systems.

AVFPD--Facilities

The AVFPD currently has three fire stations, one in Walker, one in Coleville and the third in Topaz. The fire chief estimates that 60 percent of the district is accessible within 5 minutes, 20 percent is accessible within 10 minutes, an additional 10 percent within 15 minutes and the last 10 percent within 20 or more minutes. As a result, the average response time to an emergency within the district is approximately 5 minutes.

AVFPD--Apparatus and Other Equipment

The district relies heavily on aging fire equipment that will soon need to be replaced. The chief has indicated that the district currently needs or will need in the near future a new structure engine and a type-three wildland engine. In addition, new pagers, handhelds are needed. While no plan is currently in place to replace apparatus, the district has indicated that the AVFPD budget will cover the cost of replacement.

AVFPD--Personnel

The Antelope Valley fire chief has noted that a key item to improving the AVFPD's ISO rating is the training and retention of additional volunteer firefighters. The district has a current volunteer staff of 18. Volunteer staff are increasingly difficult to attract and retain. The population in the Antelope Valley contains a significant proportion of older residents (in 2000, 15 percent of the residents were over 65), as well as a significant proportion of the population who work outside of the valley (in 2000, 47 percent of the population commuted more than 30 minutes to work). As a result, many potential volunteers may be available only for very limited

time periods or may not have the time or energy to provide community service at the level of intensity required for volunteer firefighters. Currently, only 9 of the 18 AVFPD volunteers are available to respond during the middle of the day,

AVFPD--Dispatch System

The emergency services dispatch system in Mono County is operated by the Mono County Sheriff's office from facilities in Bridgeport. Dispatch services are currently adequate

Mono County, along with the Town of Mammoth Lakes and emergency service providers throughout the county, is in the process of a 911 Addressing Project for the entire county. Addresses are being input into the county's GIS system and being field checked for accuracy. Once the project is complete, 911 dispatchers in Bridgeport will see the location of a call displayed on an interactive map on their computer and will be able to describe the location more accurately and quickly to emergency services personnel.

AVFPD--Roadways

The main access through the Antelope Valley is Highway 395, a paved, two-lane highway. Eastside Lane provides paved access to the eastern portion of the valley. Paved access across the valley is provided by Topaz Lane, Larsen Lane, and Cunningham Lane. Many of the other roads in the valley are not paved. Access during winter months may be impeded by snow and ice on the roadways.

AVFPD--Water Supply

Water supply for fire suppression in Antelope Valley is a very important issue. The district currently has 20 fire hydrants with sufficient flow rates to meet current firefighting needs. However, the district covers a physically large area, with dispersed areas of development. Hydrants are only available in limited areas. As the community continues to grow, the access and availability of water may become a major issue. One of the main goals in the district's five-year plan is to identify water sources within in the valley for use by the fire district and to install strategic water tanks.

Determinations

- The renovation or replacement of existing facilities will be needed to maintain or increase the quality of service provided by the district.
- Accelerated development will place more pressure on the AVFPD to augment its service capacities. Portions of the district will probably require new and increased infrastructure.
- The replacement of aging equipment and the purchase of additional equipment will be needed to maintain or increase the quality of service provided by the district.
- The district needs a longterm solution to the lack of sufficient volunteer personnel.
- Additional paved roadways could increase the quality of service provided by the district.
- The availability of a longterm reliable water supply directly impacts the district's ability to provide fire suppression services. The district's capacity to serve new development will be contingent on the development of a longterm dedicated water supply.

2. Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area

Overview

Purpose: To evaluate service needs based on existing and anticipated growth patterns and population projections.

Existing and Anticipated Growth Patterns in the Antelope Valley

Development in the Antelope Valley is currently concentrated along Highway 395 in the communities of Walker, Coleville, and Topaz, and along Eastside Lane. Future growth is anticipated to occur primarily in and adjacent to existing developed areas. Development on lands designated for agricultural uses would create new pockets of development away from currently developed areas. The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element provides for the following buildout in the Antelope Valley:

Table 6: Buildout Figures for the Antelope Valley

Land Use Designation	Density	Acres	Maximum Potential Dwelling Units
ER Estate Residential	1 du/acre	585	454 ^a
RR Rural Residential	1 du/acre	1,511	398 ^b
RMH Rural Mobile Home	1 du/acre	65	65
MU Mixed Use	15 du/acre	180	2,700
RU Rural Resort	1 du/5 acres	11	---
C Commercial	15 du/acre	4	60
IP Industrial Park	---	20	---
PF Public/Quasi-Public Facilities	---	37	---
RM Resource Management	1 du/40 acres	540	13
OS Open Space	1 du/80 acres		
NHP Natural Habitat Protection	1 du/5 acres		
AG Agriculture	1 du/2.5 ac.	14,894	1,489 ^c
SP Specific Plan	---	260	--- ^d
Total Private Lands		18,107	5,179
RM Resource Management – Federal/State	---	6,685	---
OS Open Space – WRID	1 du/80 acres	1,236	15
Total		26,028	5,194

Notes: du = dwelling unit

- a. 146 acres designated ER 10 (10-acre minimum lot size).
- b. 1,344 acres designated RR 5 (5-acre minimum lot size); 39 acres designated RR 40 (40-acre minimum lot size).
- c. AG 10 (10-acre minimum lot size) designated in Antelope Valley.
- d. This represents the future expansion area for Coleville. No development plan has been proposed.

Seasonal Population

In addition to the projected residential growth, Antelope Valley’s population experiences significant seasonal increases due to tourism and second homeowners. Antelope Valley accommodates large numbers of recreational users and is a vacation destination for outdoor and wilderness activities such as fishing and hiking. While these visitors cause an increased demand

for services such as emergency medical response, vehicular accident response, and search and rescue, there is no commensurate increase in revenues available to provide those services.

In 2000, the Census counted 726 housing units in the Antelope Valley; 58 percent of those units were single-family residences, 32 percent were multiple-family residences, and 10 percent were mobilehomes (Table 35, Housing Element). Seventeen percent of the units were vacant in 2000; approximately half of the vacant units were seasonal uses residences, the remaining vacant units were for rent, for sale, or vacant for other uses (Table 14, Housing Element).

Population Projections

Population data from the 2000 US Census and California Department of Finance population estimates show the population in the Antelope Valley to be 1,525 in 2000 and 1,557 in 2003. In 2000, there were 603 households in the Antelope Valley.

The population in the Antelope Valley is projected to increase to 1,936 by 2020 and 2,082 by 2030 (State Department of Finance Report P-3, Population Projections³). Overall, the population in Mono County is aging. The median age in the unincorporated area increased from 33 in 1990 to 40.1 in 2000 (Mono County Housing Element). The number of seniors 65 years and older increased from 10 percent of the unincorporated population in 1990 to 12 percent in 2000. Of the communities in the county, Antelope Valley had the highest percentage of seniors 65 years and older. In 2000, 234 residents of the Antelope Valley were 65 or older; that number represents 15 percent of the total population in the Antelope Valley and 35 percent of the total senior population in the county.

Determinations

- The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element allows for significant additional growth in the Antelope Valley.
- Growth is anticipated to occur primarily in and adjacent to existing developed areas. Development on lands designated for agricultural uses would create new pockets of development away from currently developed areas.
- Seasonal visitors to and residents of the Antelope Valley will continue to increase demand for services such as emergency medical response, vehicular accident response, and search and rescue, while providing no commensurate increase in revenues available to provide those services. There is a need to have these users pay for their share of the services.
- The population in Antelope Valley is projected to increase to 1,936 by 2020 and 2,082 by 2030, creating an increased demand for fire and emergency medical services.
- The population will continue to age, creating an increased demand for emergency medical services.

3. Financing Constraints and Opportunities

³ This assumes that the population in the unincorporated area remains at approximately 45 percent of the total county population and the population in the Antelope Valley remains at approximately 27 percent of the total unincorporated population as they were in 2000.

Overview

Purpose: To evaluate factors that affect the financing of needed improvements.

Expenses for special districts generally fall into one of three categories: (1) acquisition of facilities and major capital equipment, (2) employee expenses, and (3) ongoing operations and maintenance costs. The primary criteria that should be considered when evaluating adequacy of potential funding sources is availability, adequacy to meet the need, equity between existing and future residents, stability, and ability to cover on-going operating and maintenance costs.

AVFPD

The AVFPD is dependent on property taxes as its single most important source of revenue, followed by fire mitigation fees. The district charges 30 cents per square foot for fire mitigation fees for all new development; their fee is one of the lowest in the county. The district also receives funding from the County through the Special District Augmentation Fund. This is a discretionary program intended to assist fire districts achieve longterm financial stability. Augmentation funds can only be used to provide equipment for enhanced fire protection and emergency medical services within the fire districts.

In FY 2007-2008, the district received \$129,500 in property taxes (64 percent of total revenues), \$7,000 in first response assessments (3 percent of total revenues), \$10,900 in interest income (5 percent of total revenues), \$32,000 in intergovernmental transfers from the State (16 percent of total revenues), and \$24,000 in intergovernmental transfers from the Marine Corps Base housing (12 percent of total revenues).

The AVFPD's Five Year Plan notes the district's intent to establish a grant committee to work on getting grant money for tanks, station equipment, fire engines, and generators. The district has not applied for or received grant funding in the past. In addition, the district plans to work with the school to set up local fundraisers.

With the increase in growth, previously adequate funding arrangements may no longer be adequate. To fund the infrastructure needed to support new residents, the district may need to rely more heavily on mechanisms such as impact fees, grants, and partnerships. Absent such changes, the AVFPD may be hard pressed to maintain service levels in the long run.

Determinations

- The AVFPD's future financing will continue to rely primarily on property tax revenues, fire mitigation fees and augmentation (in the form of aid from other governmental agencies and grants).
- The district's fire mitigation fee of 30 cents per square foot of new construction is the lowest in the county. An opportunity may exist to increase the fee.
- The adequacy of property tax revenues to fund local facilities and services has steadily declined over time. There is a need to ensure that property tax assessments are kept current.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain existing service levels as costs increase over time.

- There are opportunities to coordinate with other fire districts and agencies to increase efforts to secure grant funding.

4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities

Overview

Purpose: To identify practices or opportunities that may aid in eliminating unnecessary costs.

Cost avoidance opportunities are defined as actions to eliminate unnecessary costs derived from, but not limited to, duplication of service efforts, higher than necessary administration/operation cost ratios, use of outdated or deteriorating infrastructure and equipment, underutilized equipment or buildings or facilities, overlapping/inefficient service boundaries, inefficient purchasing or budgeting practices, and lack of economies of scale.

AVFPD

Generally, in Mono County each community area is a discrete geographic area and, as a result, there is no duplication of service efforts or overlapping or inefficient service boundaries. The Antelope Valley is its own discrete geographic area; the nearest communities are the Bridgeport Valley, approximately 20 miles to the south, and communities in Nevada, approximately 10 miles to the north.

The Antelope FPD is managed and administered by volunteer fire fighters and an elected board of commissioners. The department conducts joint training with other fire departments. As the level of cooperation among fire districts in the county has increased in recent years, the districts routinely share information and best practices in order to reduce or avoid unnecessary costs. One cost that is difficult to avoid is volunteer training. Small districts may spend limited resources to train volunteer personnel only to have those qualified volunteers leave the district. Since some of the district's infrastructure and equipment is old, there may be unnecessary costs associated with maintenance of its facilities and equipment.

The FPD has a Five Year Plan, as well as an equipment replacement plan.

Determinations

- In Mono County, each community area is a discrete geographic area; there are no overlapping service boundaries.
- Administrative costs are low for the AVFPD since it is staffed predominantly by volunteers.
- The district strives to keep operations and maintenance costs low by sharing services and training with other districts.
- Participating in group purchasing programs could result in lower prices or discounts.
- Cooperation among fire districts is an important part of reducing costs.
- The cost of volunteer training is unavoidable and may be lost when trained volunteers leave the district. A possibility exists for the district to offer benefit contracts so that a volunteer agrees to be with the district for a specific amount of time or to reimburse the district for training costs.

- Integrated planning, especially long range planning, is an important part of cost avoidance.

5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

Overview

Purpose: To identify opportunities to positively impact rates without decreasing service levels.

As noted in the Financing Constraints and Opportunities Section, funding for fire protection districts in Mono County relies heavily on property tax revenues combined with mitigation fees, augmentation funds, and other smaller revenue sources (grants, fundraisers, etc.). Each of these categories has inherent constraints that prevent an agency from restructuring them.

AVFPD

Property taxes – In California, the maximum property tax assessed on any land is generally 1% of the property's value. Agencies with a substantial portion of land under Williamson Act contracts have a lower assessed value, do not collect as much in property taxes in those parcels as comparable land and rely on other funds to partially offset the lower collection of revenues. There are three parcels under Williamson Act contracts in the Antelope Valley, for a total of 502.02 acres.

Fire Mitigation Fees – The district has a resolution adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on the agency's behalf that sets the fire fees for all new construction. The district's fee of \$.30 per square foot of new construction is the lowest fee in the county except for the Bridgeport Fire Protection District, which has no mitigation fee. Other fire districts in the unincorporated area of the county charge \$.50 or \$.75 per square foot of new construction, or a set fee. Set fees range from \$832 in June Lake, with an additional fee for construction above 2000 square feet, to \$3,119 in Wheeler Crest).

Grants – Grant money is a one-time source that is useful in funding certain special projects but may be too unreliable or variable for ongoing expenses or recurring needs. Grants may help get funding for items that would otherwise have to be purchased out of the budget. The AVFPD has applied for and received grant funding in the past.

Determinations

- All funding mechanisms have inherent limitations that may prevent their implementation, use or restructure.
- The district could benefit from increasing its fire mitigation fee from \$.30 per square foot to an amount comparable to the fee charged by most of the rest of the fire protection districts in the unincorporated area (\$.50 to \$.75 per square foot of new construction).
- The AVFPD should seek additional opportunities to reduce costs through cooperation and sharing with other agencies.
- The AVFPD should continue to pursue granting funding.

6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities

Overview

Purpose: To evaluate the opportunities for a jurisdiction to share facilities and resources to develop more efficient service delivery systems.

Sharing facilities and resources can result in a more efficient and cost-effective delivery of resources.

AVFPD

Due to the geographic distance between most communities in the county, sharing facilities is not possible. Fire districts do share resource through mutual aid agreements. The most beneficial sharing of resources to residents in the County is the practice of deploying the nearest resource to an emergency. While there are costs associated with mutual aid and/or automatic aid, there is a direct benefit when an agency can rely on its neighbors for support. This ensures that residents of the County can be assured that there will be someone who will respond to an emergency without regard to jurisdictional issues. The fire districts in Mono County tend to do this very well.

The AVFPD shares resources in several other ways:

- They attend shared training sessions with the other departments.
- They maintain mutual aid agreements with BLM, CDF, USFS (for wildland fires), Douglas County, NV, Bridgeport FPD, and the Marine Corps.
- They attend monthly county fire chiefs meetings.

The **Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan** prepared for Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes identified a number of mitigation measures to address fire hazard planning in the county's communities. While the focus of the **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan** is on mitigation planning for wildland fire hazards, the mitigation measures identified in the plan apply to all fire hazards in the area, i.e.:

Mitigation W-3: Review and, if necessary update, the County's General Plan land use policies and regulations and building regulations to ensure that they address fire hazard planning as a component of the development process.

Mitigation W-5: Develop community-level fire plans for communities throughout the county, utilizing resources and assistance from the California Fire Alliance. These fire plans should address the following:

- Developing an informed, educated public that takes responsibility for its own decisions relating to wildfire protection.
- Developing an effective wildfire suppression program for local communities.
- Developing an aggressive hazardous fuel management program.
- Revising land use policies and standards to ensure that they protect life, property and local resource values.
- Implementing construction and property standards that provide defensible space.

Mitigation W-6: Develop and implement an ongoing countywide program to increase public awareness of wildland fire hazards.

Mitigation W-7: All communities and fire protection districts should participate in the Eastern Sierra Regional Firesafe Council.

Mitigation W-8: The county and the town should appoint a fire hazard coordinator with the responsibility for developing fire plans for the county, participating in the Eastern Sierra Regional Firesafe Council and the California Fire Alliance, coordinating with local, state, and federal fire protection and suppression entities, developing and implementing public education and awareness programs concerning fire safety including safe building materials and landscaping, and applying for funding for fire hazard mitigation such as fuel reduction programs.

Mitigation W-10: Help local landowners participate in the state's Vegetation Management Program (VMP), when applicable. The Vegetation Management Program (VMP) is a cost-sharing program that focuses on the use of prescribed fire and mechanical means to address wildland fire fuel hazards and other resource management issues on State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands.

Mitigation W-11: Help local landowners participate in CDF's hazardous fuel reduction program.

Mitigation W-12: Help local landowners participate in the BLM's Wildland Urban Interface Grant Awards program for hazardous fuel reduction.

Responsibility for implementation of these mitigation measures lies with the County, the Regional Planning Advisory Committees, local fire protection districts, and the County Office of Emergency Services.

Determinations

- The largest impediment to greater sharing of resources and facilities in Mono County is geographic separation between fire protection districts.
- Fire districts in Mono County can share resources through joint training sessions, shared purchasing, and the implementation of mutual aid agreements.
- The **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for Mono County** contains a number of mitigation measures to address fire hazard planning in the county's communities. While the focus of the plan is on mitigation planning for wildland fire hazards, the mitigation measures identified in the plan apply to all fire hazards in the area. Responsibility for implementing those fire-hazard planning measures rests with the County, the Regional Planning Advisory Committees, and local fire protection districts.

7. Government Structure Options

Overview

Purpose: To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various government structures to provide service.

Government Code §56001 declares that it is the policy of the State to encourage orderly growth and development essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well being of the State. The Code further states that "this policy should be effected by the logical formation and modification of the boundaries of local agencies, with a preference granted to accommodating additional growth within, or through the expansion of, the boundaries of those local agencies which can best accommodate and provide necessary governmental services."

For local agency consolidations to occur there has to be significant (and popularly desired) cost savings or an increase in service. For fire protection districts, consolidations might be recommended if any of the following would occur as a result of consolidation:

1. A reduction in the number of stations where service coverage might create unnecessary overlap.
2. An increase in the staffing of stations where currently staffing is limited.
3. An increase in staffing that reduces response times can be achieved.
4. A reduction in the number of senior administrative staff can be achieved.
5. Economies of scale for costly services can be attained.

AVFPD

Antelope Valley is isolated from the nearest fire district by 20 miles and a narrow winding canyon. The geographic constraints make it infeasible to consolidate with another FPD. The service area of the AVFPD is generally overlapped by the boundaries of the Antelope Valley Water District. The water district is authorized to provide water and sewer service and storm drainage facilities. LAFCO policy generally promotes the consolidation of districts where they overlap. The district should ultimately consider reorganization with the Antelope Valley Water District into a community service district (CSD). Such a reorganization could provide greater fiscal and service flexibility for the Antelope Valley. It is recommended that such a consolidation occur only with the concurrence of the involved districts' Board of Directors.

Determinations

- In regions of the county with separate, distinct communities that are geographically remote from each other, public services are most logically provided by a combination of several single purpose special districts.

8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies

Overview

Purpose: To evaluate the quality of public services in comparison to cost.

As defined by OPR, the term “management efficiency,” refers to the organized provision of the highest quality public services with the lowest necessary expenditure of public funds. An efficiently managed entity (1) promotes and demonstrates implementation of continuous improvement plans and strategies for budgeting, managing costs, training and utilizing personnel and customer service and involvement, (2) has the ability to provide service over the short and long term, (3) has the resources (fiscal, manpower, equipment, adopted service or work plans) to provide adequate service, (4) meets or exceeds environmental and industry service standards, as feasible considering local conditions or circumstances, (5) and maintains adequate contingency reserves. “Management Efficiency” is generally seen as organizational efficiency including the potential for consolidation.

The purpose of management is to effectively carry out the principal function and purpose of an agency. Good management will ensure that the agency’s mission is accomplished and that the agency’s efforts are sustainable into the future. Unfortunately, “good management” is a relatively subjective issue, and one that is hard to quantify.

AVFPD

The Antelope Valley FPD is managed by an elected board of commissioners, and a part-time paid firechief. Management input is also provided during monthly Mono County fire chief meetings. As a small district, the AVFPD has limited physical and financial resources. The district is able to provide adequate service in the short-term to the existing residents of the area but may not have the resources (particularly personnel) to provide longterm services to the planned development in the area.

The district currently has a Five Year Plan. The district’s current ISO rating is 6/9; six within areas that are within 1,000 feet of a water hydrant and nine in areas beyond that distance. The district has no contingency reserves.

Determinations

- The Antelope Valley FPD is managed by an elected board of commissioners, and a part-time paid firechief.
- The board of directors’ individual skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications, motivation and the time they have available for the district determine the effectiveness of the district and its efficiency.

- In the past, the AVFPD has set goals and objectives on an incremental basis to meet identified needs.
- The AVFPD has a Five Year Plan.
- The district needs to develop a budget and funding sources that will allow for the development of contingency funds.
- While the district provides adequate service to existing residents of the area, its ISO rating is six within areas that are within 1,000 feet of a water hydrant and nine in areas beyond that distance. It may not have the resources (particularly personnel) to serve the longterm needs of the area.

9. Local Accountability and Governance

Overview

Purpose: To evaluate the accessibility and levels of public participation associated with an agency's decision-making and management processes.

Special districts such as fire protection districts are required to adopt budgets at open public meetings and to file their budgets with the county auditor. They are required to have annual or biennial independent audits. Districts are subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act for meetings, agendas and minutes. They are also subject to the Public Records Act.

Complying with the minimum open meeting and information requirements is not sufficient to allow an adequate amount of visibility and accountability. Outreach efforts, including convenient meeting times, additional notice of meetings and dissemination of district information, are desirable.

AVFPD

The AVFPD complies with the minimum open meetings and public information requirements. The board of commissioners meets monthly at the fire station in Walker. Meeting notices are posted at the fire stations and at the Post Office. They do not post the meeting minutes anywhere and do not have a newsletter for residents. The district has indicated that few members of the public attend board meetings unless a controversial item is on the agenda.

The district has a Community Outreach/Resource Officer. The district participates in Fall and Spring Festivals organized by the local Chamber of Commerce, in school fire drills and Fire Prevention Week in October, in the Caltrans road trash pick-up program, and attends football games and pep rallies at Coleville High School.

Determinations

- The AVFPD complies with the minimum requirements for open meetings and public records.
- The AVFPD is a visible presence in the community, participating in local events.
- Public accessibility to district information is limited and is often based on the availability of the board members.

- Public participation in the decision-making process is limited and usually occurs only when a controversial item is on the agenda.

IV. SPHERE OF INFLUENCE RECOMMENDATION

In determining the sphere of influence for each local agency, Government Code §56425 requires the Local Agency Formation Commission to consider and prepare a written statement of its determination with respect to four required findings. Each of the required findings is discussed below as it pertains to the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District.

1. Present and Planned Land Uses

Discussion:

Present land uses in the Antelope Valley are primarily residential and agricultural with limited commercial facilities. The Mono County GIS estimates that there are 888 parcels in the district, including 431 developed parcels (residential or commercial parcels valued at \$10,000 or more). Population data from the 2000 US Census and California Department of Finance population estimates show the population to be 1,525 in 2000 and 1,557 in 2003. In 2000, there were 603 households in the Antelope Valley.

The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element provides for the following buildout in the Antelope Valley:

Table 6: Buildout Figures for the Antelope Valley

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Notes: du = dwelling unit

- a. 146 acres designated ER 10 (10-acre minimum lot size).
- b. 1,344 acres designated RR 5 (5-acre minimum lot size); 39 acres designated RR 40 (40-acre minimum lot size).
- c. AG 10 (10-acre minimum lot size) designated in Antelope Valley.
- d. This represents the future expansion area for Coleville. No development plan has been proposed.

Finding:

Land use within the service area for the AVFPD is predominantly residential and agricultural, with smaller areas of commercial, mixed use, open space, and public uses. The planned land uses for the area are similar. Development will be concentrated primarily within and adjacent to existing development although land use designations for the area allow for the conversion of agricultural lands to residential uses with large lot sizes.

2. Present and Probable Need For Public Facilities and Services

Discussion:

Increased development throughout the Antelope Valley has created an increased need for fire protection services now. The buildout allowed by the General Plan will create a greater demand for those services in the future. The Antelope Valley is

Finding:

The Antelope Valley has an existing and continuing need for public facilities and services to serve the increasing residential development in the area.

3. Present Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services

Discussion:

The district has no latent powers; fire protection is the only service it is authorized to provide. While the district provides adequate services with its existing facilities, infrastructure, and personnel, its ISO rating is 6/9; six within areas that are within 1,000 feet of a water hydrant and nine in areas beyond that distance. One of the district's major objectives is improve its facilities and services in order to lower its ISO rating and to serve additional development.

Finding:

The district currently provides an adequate level of service but has identified a need to improve both its facilities and services in order to lower its ISO rating and to serve additional development.

4. Social or Economic Communities of Interest

Discussion:

Due to the physical geography of the Antelope Valley and northern Mono County, communities in the Antelope Valley tend to interact socially and economically with communities to the north in Nevada, rather than with communities in Mono County. While the AVFPD has mutual aid

agreements with neighboring communities in Nevada, a special district in California cannot include areas in other states. Although the interdependence of the AVFPD with development in Nevada is relevant to district services, it has no relevance in the determination of a sphere of influence for the district.

Finding:

The Antelope Valley area exhibits substantial social and economic interdependence with development in Nevada. This interdependence has no relevance in determining the sphere of influence for the district.

Sphere of Influence Recommendation

The Sphere of Influence for the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District should remain as it is, coterminous with the boundaries of the district.

Reorganization Recommendation

Section 56001 of the California Government Code states that:

The Legislature finds and declares that a single multipurpose governmental agency is accountable for community service needs and financial resources and, therefore, may be the best mechanism for establishing community service priorities especially in urban areas. Nonetheless, the Legislature recognizes the critical role of many limited purpose agencies, especially in rural communities. The Legislature also finds that, whether governmental services are proposed to be provided by a single-purpose agency, several agencies, or a multipurpose agency, responsibility should be given to the agency or agencies that can best provide government services.

Currently, the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District best provides services to the Antelope Valley community. The Antelope Valley includes another small special district, the Antelope Valley Water District, which is currently inactive. As development occurs in the Antelope Valley, additional community water services may become necessary or desirable. In the future, the FPD could consider reorganization with the Antelope Valley Water District into a multipurpose agency such as a Community Service District (CSD). At that time, a reorganization study should be conducted to determine what governmental structure would best provide services for the region. Such a reorganization could provide greater fiscal and service flexibility for the Antelope Valley but should occur only with the concurrence of the involved districts' Boards of Directors.

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Persons Consulted

Antelope Valley Fire Protection District

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