

Municipal Service Review And Sphere of Influence Recommendation

Bridgeport 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 Bridgeport FPD to augment its service capacities. Portions of the district may require new and increased infrastructure.
- The replacement of aging equipment and/or the purchase of additional equipment will be needed to maintain or increase the quality of service provided by the district.

2. Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area

- The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element allows for significant additional growth in the area served by the Bridgeport FPD.
- 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.
- Visitors to the area will continue to increase demand for services such as emergency medical response and vehicular accident response 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 the area served by the Bridgeport FPD is projected to increase to 894 by 2020 and 961 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 Bridgeport FPD's future financing will continue to rely primarily on property tax revenues and augmentation (in the form of aid from other governmental agencies and grants).
- 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

- The Bridgeport Valley area is a discrete geographic area within Mono County; there is no duplication of service efforts or overlapping or inefficient service boundaries
- The Bridgeport FPD is a volunteer department with an elected board of commissioners—administrative costs are generally low.

- Although the district strives to keep operations and maintenance costs low by sharing services and training with other districts, small districts tend to suffer from a lack of economies of scale.
- 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. The district has no long-range plan to address the demands imposed by growth within the district.

5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

- All funding mechanisms have inherent limitations that may prevent their implementation, use or restructure.
- The district recently implemented fire mitigation fees that are above the county average.
- The Bridgeport FPD should seek additional opportunities to reduce costs through cooperation and sharing with other agencies.
- The district should continue to seek grant 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.

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.
- Consolidation with the Bridgeport PUD is not recommended.

8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies

- The Bridgeport FPD is managed by an elected board of commissioners and a volunteer 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 Bridgeport FPD has set goals and objectives on an incremental basis to meet identified needs.
- The Bridgeport FPD has no longterm planning documents.
- 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 6, and it may not have the resources (particularly personnel) to serve the longterm needs of the area.

9. Local Accountability and Governance

- The Bridgeport FPD complies with the minimum requirements for open meetings and public records.
- Public accessibility to district information is limited and is often based on the availability of the board officers.
- 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

Present land uses in the area served by the Bridgeport FPD includes residential, commercial, and public uses in the community of Bridgeport, residential and resort uses at Rancheria and Twin Lakes, and agricultural uses in the Bridgeport Valley. 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 Bridgeport 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 serve additional development.

4. Social or Economic Communities of Interest

The Bridgeport Valley area exhibits some social and economic interdependence with development in Nevada. This interdependence has no relevance in determining the sphere of influence for the district. Development in surrounding areas, such as Swauger Creek and Willow Springs, shares some social and economic communities of interest with the communities in the Bridgeport Valley, but is geographically removed from the rest of the district area.

Sphere of Influence Recommendation

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

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 Bridgeport 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. BRIDGEPORT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Service Area

The Bridgeport Fire Protection District (Bridgeport FPD) was formed in 1948 to provide fire protection to the community of Bridgeport. The district originally included approximately six square miles encompassing private lands in the townsite, south of town along Highway 395, and a small area at the Rancheria subdivision. In January, 1996, the district boundaries expanded to include additional land at Rancheria and the development at Twin Lakes. The district now covers approximately 17 square miles (see Figure 1).

The district includes private non-agricultural lands within the Bridgeport Valley. The valley is bordered to the west by the Sierra Nevada Mountains, to the south by Conway Summit and Mono Basin, to the east by the Bodie Hills, and to the north by the Sweetwater Mountains. Highway 395 provides the major access through the area; Twin Lakes Road provides access from the community of Bridgeport to Twin Lakes. Surface waters in the area include Twin Lakes, the Bridgeport Reservoir, and the East Walker River. Topography in the area is characterized by the relatively flat floor of the valley, gently sloping hills to the sides of the valley floor and steep slopes above the hills. Vegetation on the valley floor is predominantly irrigated pastureland and wetlands. Vegetation on the surrounding hills is sagebrush scrub, junipers, and pinon pines.

The community of Bridgeport is the county seat of Mono County. The town includes residential and commercial uses, an elementary school, health care facilities, a county park, community center and ball fields, county government offices, the county library, the county jail, a county road yard and maintenance facilities, a solid-waste transfer station, an airport, the USFS Bridgeport Ranger Station, and a materials pit.

The Bridgeport Valley is irrigated pastureland and is heavily used for grazing livestock. The Rancheria area includes single-family residential development. Twin Lakes includes an area of single-family residential development as well as an area of resort development.

Population Characteristics

Mono County GIS estimates that there are approximately 925 parcels in the district, including 494 developed parcels (residential or commercial parcels valued at \$10,000 or more). The Bridgeport FPD estimates that there are approximately 680 residents within the district.

Population data from the 2000 US Census and California Department of Finance population estimates show the population of the Bridgeport Valley to be 704 in 2000 and 718 in 2003 (Table 3, Mono County Housing Element). In 2000, 5 percent of the population in the Bridgeport

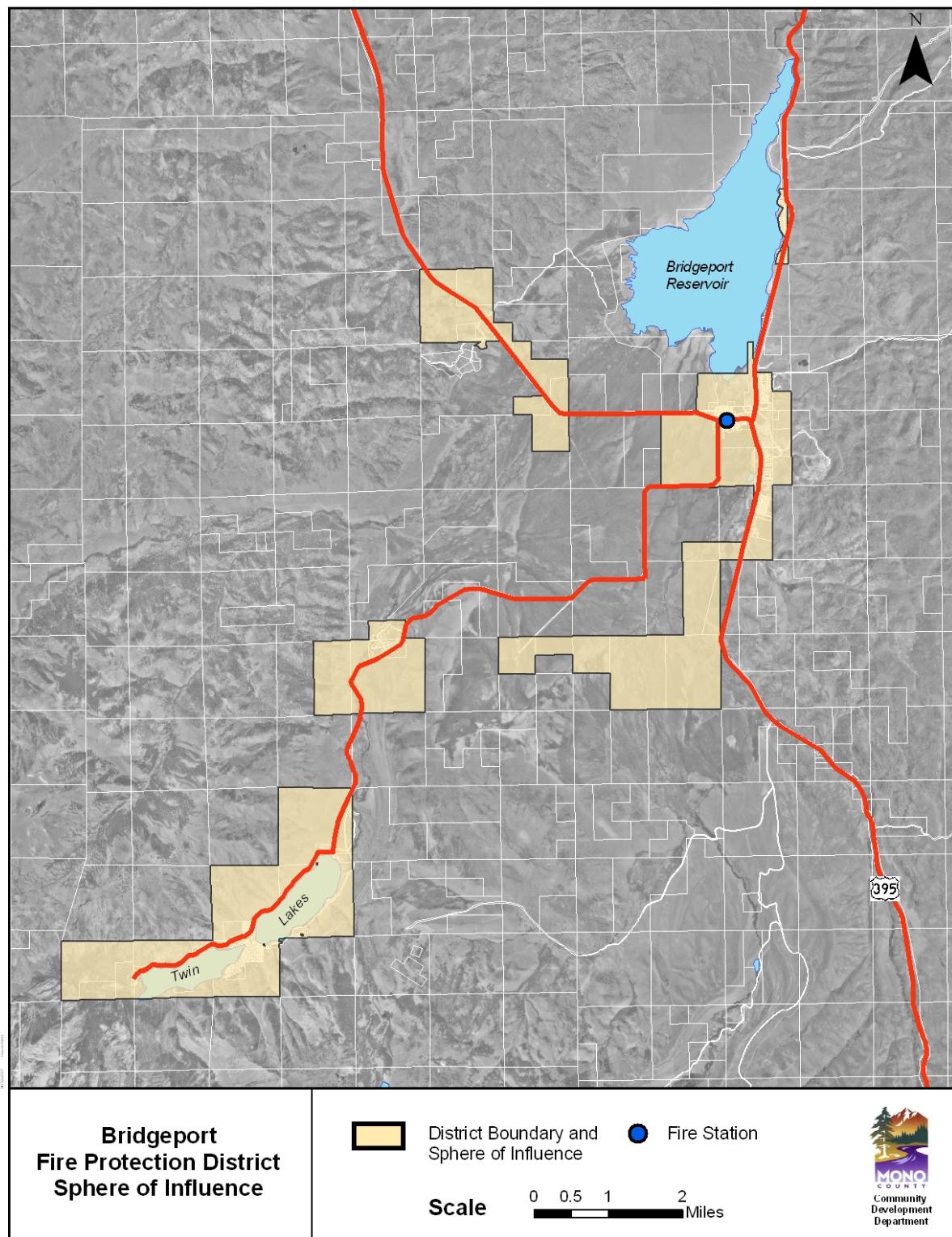


Figure 1
Bridgeport Fire Protection District Boundaries

Valley was under 5 years old, 16 percent was 5-17 years old, 65 percent was 18 to 64, and 14 percent was over 65 (Table 8A, Mono County Housing Element). In 2000, there were 311 households in the Bridgeport Valley, a 9 percent increase from 1990 (Table 12, Housing Element). Sixty-one percent of the households were owner-occupied and 39 percent were rented (Table 12, Housing Element). The only other area of the county with a higher percentage of renters was the Antelope Valley.

In 2000, the Bridgeport Valley was the only area in Mono County that had no residents working outside of the county. Of 370 workers 16 or older in 2000, 84 percent had a commute time of 30 minutes or less (Table 28, Housing Element).

Housing Characteristics

In 2000, the Census counted 686 housing units in the Bridgeport Valley; 77 percent of those units were single-family residences, 12 percent were mobilehomes, and 12 percent were multi-family units with 2-4 units (Table 35, Housing Element). Fifty-five percent of the units were vacant in 2000; approximately 85 percent 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 13 percent of the housing units in the Bridgeport Valley were constructed within the past 20 years; an additional 55 percent were built between 20 and 40 years ago and the remaining 33 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 or fair condition (Table 36, Housing Element).

Services Provided

The district serves a full time residential population in the Bridgeport Valley as well as travelers along Highway 395 and State Route 182. It provides fire prevention/suppression and emergency medical response services, wildland firefighting, hydrant testing, school safety programs, community education, permit approvals and development proposal reviews.

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 Bridgeport FPD is 6.

Land Ownership

The district includes only private lands. The Bridgeport Valley includes large areas of private land, much of which is large ranches. The land surrounding the valley is public land managed either by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

Surrounding Fire Protection Facilities

The closest fire protection districts to the Bridgeport FPD are the Antelope Valley Fire Protection District, which is located 20 miles north of the district via Highway 395, and the Mono City Fire Protection District, which is located 20 miles south of the district via Highway 395.

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 Bridgeport FPD are in areas identified by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) as Wildland Fire Hazard Areas (see Figure 2).

Planned Land Uses

The Mono County Land Use Element provides for substantial additional development in Bridgeport. The additional development allowed by the plan would be a mix of residential uses and commercial uses within the town of Bridgeport. Residential development could also occur throughout the valley on agricultural lands. The Bridgeport Valley has a development credits program that allows a certain number of units to be developed per parcel, depending on the size of the parcel and the ownership.

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 a fire safe council in the Bridgeport Fire Protection District; however, the district has indicated that the fire safe council does not provide support for district activities.

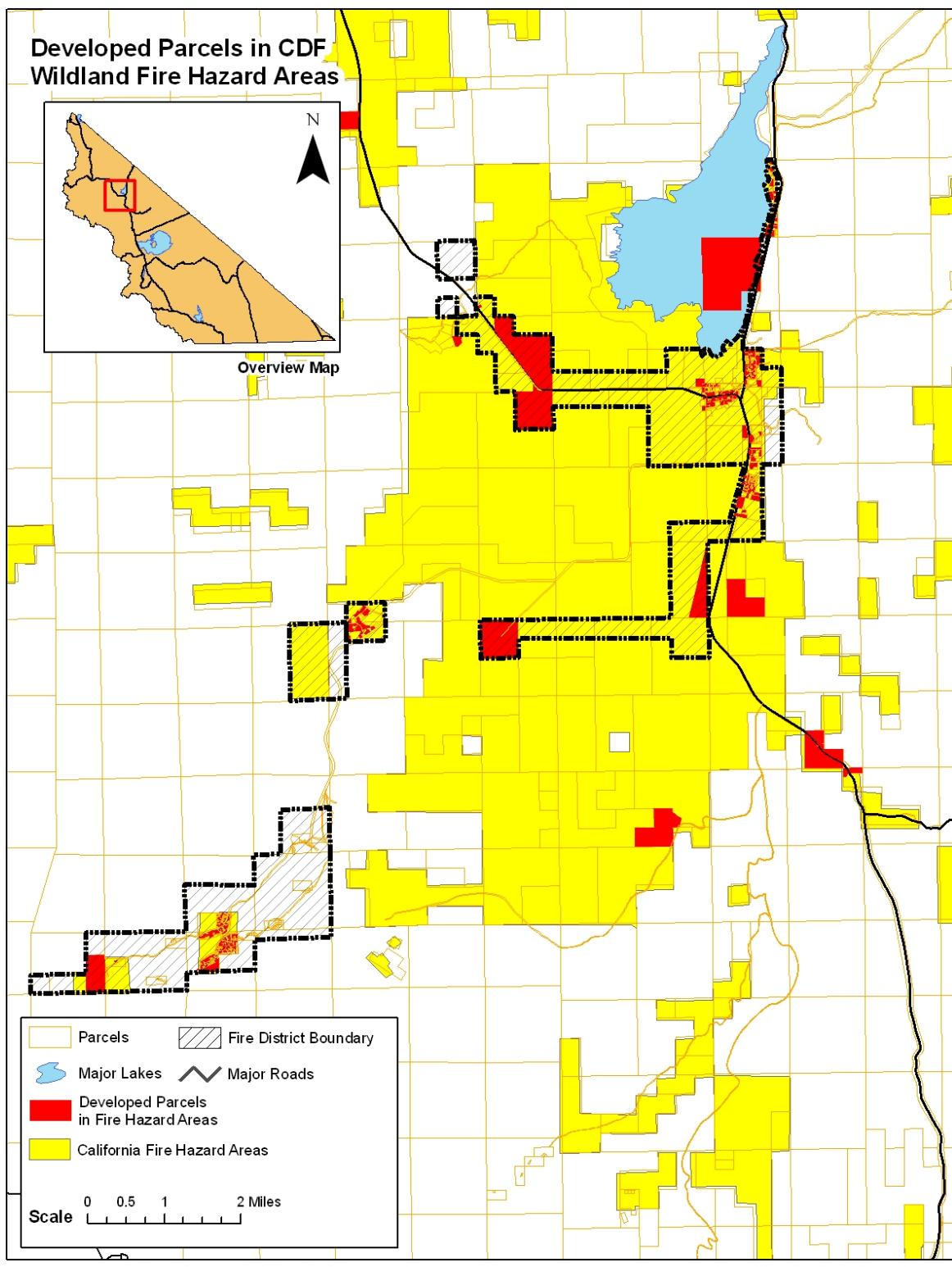


Figure 2
Bridgeport Wildland Fire Hazard Areas

District Issues of Concern

The district has indicated it has a need for a new main fire station. It is a challenge for the district to comply with ongoing regulatory requirements. Training for HazMat response is going to be a concern for the district. Funding for equipment and personnel is a constant concern. Mapping for the area needs to be improved.

District Planning

The FPD, as is typical with many rural districts, does not have a master fire protection plan, or a capital improvement program. Planning for the district is done by the firemen and discussed with the board of commissioners. As such, it occurs on an incremental basis as the need arises.

DISTRICT SERVICES

Fire Suppression and Emergency Medical Response

Structural fire protection is provided to valley residents from the district's main fire station in Bridgeport and a second station in Twin Lakes. The station is manned by 20 volunteer firefighters, with an average of 20 of them being able to respond midday. There are 85 fire hydrants within the district. The district estimates that 55 percent of the district is accessible within 5 minutes, 40 percent is accessible within 10 minutes, and the remaining 5 percent within 15 minutes. As a result, the average response time to an emergency within the district is approximately 5 minutes. The district also responds to calls along State Route 182 to the Nevada state line, Bodie, Conway Summit, Virginia Lakes, Swauger Creek, Devil's Gate, and Willow Springs.

The district provides emergency medical response with 7 of the volunteer firefighters qualified as EMT1s. The remaining thirteen volunteers are trained in CPR and first aid. The County Division of Emergency Medical Services operates Medic-7 in Bridgeport, providing Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) services in the Bridgeport Valley.

The district also reviews development proposals and building permits and provides school safety programs and community education.

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 maintains mutual aid agreements with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Forest Service (USFS), and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDFA). 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 Bridgeport Fire Protection District derives little, if any, revenue from serving non-district areas. The FPD is, 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: Bridgeport 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	Staff	
Commercial Inspection	Staff	
Burn Permits		
Fire Safe Inspections		
Hydrant Inspections	Staff	
Defensible Space/Brush Reduction		
HazMat		Not provided
<i>Rescue Services</i>		
Swift Water Rescue		Not provided
Rope Rescue		Not provided
Extrication/Vehicle Rescue		Not provided
<i>Medical Services</i>		
Basic Life Support	7 EMTs	
First Responder		
<i>Other Safety Services and Programs</i>		
Public Education Program	Staff	
School Programs	Staff	
Community Activities	Not provided	
<i>Development</i>		
Plans Review	Chief	
Permit Approval	Chief	
Will-Serve Letters	Chief	

Infrastructure and Facilities

District facilities include the main fire station in Bridgeport and a second station at Twin Lakes. District equipment includes the following: three engines/pumpers, two rescue vehicles, and a command vehicle. All of the equipment was purchased new. The district indicates that it needs 2 Type III Brush Trucks to replace older models.

In addition, the district has safety equipment for 20 volunteers, including 15 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and 20 sets of personal protective clothing (PPE), as required by Federal, State and local laws and standards, including those established by OSHA and NFPA. The district has no personal alert safety systems (PASS).

Table 2: Bridgeport Fire Protection District Facilities

Existing Facility: Type/Size	Year Built or Remodeled	Facilities	Characteristics
Bridgeport Station	1950	3 bays (room for 5 vehicles), bathroom, small meeting room, office, laundry room	.
Twin Lakes Station	2000	2 bays with room for 2 vehicles, bathroom	

Table 3: Bridgeport Fire Protection Equipment and Vehicles

Vehicle/Year/Model	Capacity & GPM¹	Location and Other Notes
Command Vehicle--2002 Ford F-150		
Rescue Vehicle--1985 GMC 3500		
Rescue Vehicle--2003 Ford F-550		
Brush Truck--1978 International	250 gallons 500 gpm	
Engine--1981 International	1000 gallons 1250 gpm	
Engine—1997 International	650 gallons 1250 gpm	

Communications

Fires and medical emergencies are dispatched to the Bridgeport FPD from the Mono County Sheriff's Office in Bridgeport via the county's 911 emergency system. The district currently contains cell phone towers on Conway Summit but coverage is poor which results in communications difficulties. The district has complete internet access. The district has indicated that it has a need for pagers, handheld radios, and mobile phones.

Administration and Staffing

The district is managed by an elected board of commissioners. Meetings are generally held once monthly. Twenty volunteer firefighters actively staff the district's facilities; all of those volunteers have received formal training.

¹ GPM=gallons per minute.

The volunteers receive training on a regular basis (approximately 12 hours a month), covering a wide variety of topics. Training is provided in-house or by Mono County Emergency Medical Services staff. The district also participates in multi-agency drills run by the Mono County Fire Chief's Association. Volunteers also attend seminars and training conferences.

Service Activity

The Bridgeport FPD responded to 145 calls in 2005. The Bridgeport FPD's service calls are 33 percent vehicle accidents, followed by emergency medical calls, and rescue calls.

Table 4: Bridgeport Fire Protection District Call Log--2005

<i>Incident Type Summary</i>	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
Structural	11	8%
Vehicle Accident	48	33%
Emergency Medical	40	28%
HazMat	3	2%
Rescue	30	21%
Wildland Fire	5	3%
False Alarm	8	6%
TOTAL	145	100%

Funding and Budget

The Bridgeport Fire Protection District relies heavily on property tax revenue for its funding. Supplies are the greatest expense of the Bridgeport FPD, at approximately 28 percent of the total budget. Services represent 25 percent of the budget, equipment represents 25 percent of the budget, liability insurance 11 percent, and training 11 percent. The district has two outstanding lease agreements, one for an engine that has one year remaining, and one for the squad car that has three years remaining. Currently, there is no adopted Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The district does not have a plan to replace apparatus but the budget will cover apparatus replacement.

Table 5: Bridgeport Fire Protection District Funding, FY 2006-2007

Revenues

Taxes and Assessments

Current Secured and Unsecured (1%)	\$129,363
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Revenue from Use of Money and Property

Interest Income	\$6,916
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Intergovernmental

State	\$338
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Local	<u>\$19,345</u>
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Total Revenues	\$155,962
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Expenditures

Services and Supplies	\$113,647
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Other Expenditures	<u>\$17,626</u>
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Total Expenditures	\$131,273
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Excess Expenditures	\$24,689
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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 Bridgeport 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.

Bridgeport FPD--Facilities

The Bridgeport FPD currently has two fire stations, the main station in Bridgeport and an auxiliary station in Twin Lakes. The district has indicated that it needs to replace the main station in Bridgeport.

The district estimates that 55 percent of the district is accessible within 5 minutes, 40 percent is accessible within 10 minutes, and the remaining 5 percent within 15 minutes. As a result, the average response time to an emergency within the district is approximately 5 minutes.

Bridgeport FPD--Apparatus and Other Equipment

All of the district's equipment was purchased new. The district has indicated that it needs two Type II Brush Trucks to replace older models.

Bridgeport FPD--Personnel

The district has a current volunteer staff of 20. The Bridgeport Valley is the only area in Mono County in which most of the residents work in the community in which they live. Bridgeport also has a large population of residents aged 18-64. Currently, all of the 20 Bridgeport FPD volunteers are available to respond during the middle of the day.

Bridgeport FPD--Dispatch System

The emergency services dispatch system in Mono County is operated by the Mono County Sheriff's office from facilities in Bridgeport. Volunteers receive dispatches directly over

portable pagers. The district has indicated that improvements could be made in addressing and mapping for the district area.

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.

Bridgeport FPD--Roadways

The main access through the Bridgeport Valley is Highway 395, a paved, two-lane highway. Twin Lakes Road, which provides access to the Rancheria and Twin Lakes areas, is a paved two-lane county road. Most roads within the community of Bridgeport are paved.

Bridgeport FPD--Water Supply

Within the community of Bridgeport, water is provided by the Bridgeport Public Utility District for domestic water and fireflow purposes. The FPD owns and maintains 85 hydrants in Bridgeport.

The district considers water supply for fire suppression its area to be a critical problem. The district currently has no fire hydrants and must depend on the farms that have water available. Limited areas of development may also have water tanks for fire suppression. As the community grows, the availability of a secure water source for fire suppression will become a major issue.

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 Bridgeport FPD to augment its service capacities. Portions of the district may require new and increased infrastructure.
- The replacement of aging equipment and/or the purchase of additional equipment will be needed to maintain or increase the quality of service provided by the district.

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 Bridgeport

Development in the district is currently concentrated in the community of Bridgeport and in smaller areas of residential development at Rancheria and Twin Lakes. 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 Bridgeport Valley:

Table 6: Buildout Figures for Bridgeport Valley

Land Use Designation	Density	Acres	Maximum Potential Dwelling Units
ER Estate Residential	1 du/acre	296	296
RR Rural Residential	1 du/acre	30	30
SFR Single-Family Residential	5.8 du/acre	199	1,154
MFR-L Multiple-Family Residential – Low	11.6 du/acre	23	266
MFR-M Multiple-Family Residential – Moderate	15 du/acre	4	60
MU Mixed Use	15 du/acre	39	585
RU Rural Resort	1 du/5 acres	124	---
C Commercial	15 du/acre	26	390
SC Service Commercial	---	2	---
IP Industrial Park	---	21	---
PF Public/Quasi-Public Facilities	---	183	---
RM Resource Management	1 du/40 acres	854	21
AG Agriculture	1 du/2.5 ac.	24,823	691 ^a
SP Specific Plan	---	167	---b
Total Private Lands		26,791	3,493
RM Resource Management – Federal/State	---	17,936	---
OS Open Space – WRID	1 du/80 acres	3,066	38
Total		47,793	3,531

Notes:

- a. 66 acres designated AG 10 (10-acre min. parcel size). 115 acres designated AG 20 (20-acre min. parcel size). Dwelling unit potential for remaining 24,602 acres calculated using the development credits program established in the Hammil Valley which allows a certain number of units to be developed per parcel, depending on the size of the parcel and the ownership. In Bridgeport Valley it results in 678 potential du for the 24,602 acres.
- b. Development of the remaining 167 acres in the Bridgeport Community is constrained by identified wetlands; special considerations are necessary for development. No development plan has been submitted for either of these areas.

Seasonal Population

In addition to the projected residential growth, the Bridgeport Valley's population experiences significant seasonal increases due to tourism and second homeowners. The Bridgeport Valley and surrounding areas accommodate large numbers of recreational users and are 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 686 housing units in the Bridgeport Valley; 77 percent of those units were single-family residences, 12 percent were mobile homes, and 12 percent were multi-family units with 2-4 units (Table 35, Housing Element). Fifty-five percent of the units were vacant in 2000; approximately 85 percent 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 Bridgeport Valley to be 704 in 2000 and 718 in 2003. In 2000, there were 311 households in the Bridgeport Valley. The population in the Bridgeport FPD is projected to increase to 894 by 2020 and 961 by 2030 (State Department of Finance Report P-3, Population Projections²). 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, the Bridgeport Valley had an average size population of seniors 65 years and older. In 2000, 97 residents of the Bridgeport Valley were 65 or older; that number represents 14 percent of the total population in the Bridgeport Valley and 15 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 area served by the Bridgeport FPD.
- 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.
- Visitors to the area will continue to increase demand for services such as emergency medical response and vehicular accident response 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 the area served by the Bridgeport FPD is projected to increase to 894 by 2020 and 961 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.

² This assumes that the population in the unincorporated area remains at approximately 45 percent of the total county population and that the population in the Bridgeport Valley remains at approximately 12 percent of the total unincorporated population, as they were in 2000.

3. Financing Constraints and Opportunities

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.

Bridgeport FPD

The Bridgeport FPD is dependent on property taxes as its single most important source of revenue. 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. The Bridgeport FPD recently adopted fire mitigation fees to offset the impacts of new development: \$1,830 per unit for residential development, \$2,465 per unit for commercial lodging, and \$8.98 per square foot for commercial uses.

With an 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 Bridgeport FPD may be hard pressed to maintain service levels in the long run.

Determinations

- The Bridgeport FPD's future financing will continue to rely primarily on property tax revenues and augmentation (in the form of aid from other governmental agencies and grants).
- 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.

Bridgeport FPD

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 Bridgeport Valley is its own discrete geographic area; the nearest communities are the Antelope Valley, approximately 20 miles to the north, and the Mono Basin, approximately 20 miles to the south.

The Bridgeport 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 district has indicated that they need to replace the main fire station in Bridgeport.

The FPD, as is typical with many rural districts, does not have a master fire protection plan, or a capital improvement program. Planning for the district is done by the firemen and discussed with the board of commissioners. As such, it occurs on an incremental basis as the need arises.

Determinations

- The Bridgeport Valley area is a discrete geographic area within Mono County; there is no duplication of service efforts or overlapping or inefficient service boundaries
- The Bridgeport FPD is a volunteer department with an elected board of commissioners—administrative costs are generally low.
- Although the district strives to keep operations and maintenance costs low by sharing services and training with other districts and by purchasing through associations in order to take advantage of lower prices or discounts, small districts tend to suffer from a lack of economies of scale.
- 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. The district has no long-range plan to address the demands imposed by growth within the district.

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.

Bridgeport FPD

Property taxes – In California, the maximum property tax assessed on any land is generally 1% of the property's value.

Fire Mitigation Fees – The district recently adopted fire mitigation fees: \$1,830 per unit for residential development, \$2,465 per unit for commercial lodging, and \$8.98 per square foot for commercial uses.

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. The district 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 recently implemented fire mitigation fees that are above the county average.
- The Bridgeport FPD should seek additional opportunities to reduce costs through cooperation and sharing with other agencies.
- The district should continue to seek grant 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.

Bridgeport FPD

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 Bridgeport FPD shares resources in several other ways:

- They attend shared training sessions with other fire departments.
- They maintain mutual aid agreements with BLM, CDF, USFS (for wildland fires), and all fire districts in the county through the fire chiefs association.
- 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.

Bridgeport FPD

The Bridgeport Valley is isolated from the nearest fire district by 20 miles and terrain that is often hazardous in winter. The geographic constraints make it infeasible for the Bridgeport FPD

to consolidate with another FPD. The service area of the Bridgeport FPD overlaps the boundaries of the Bridgeport Public Utility District (PUD). The Public Utility District provides domestic water and sewer services to the community of Bridgeport. LAFCO policy generally promotes the consolidation of districts where they overlap, however, the two districts only overlap in the community of Bridgeport. The FPD serves areas outside of the community. Consolidation between the two districts is therefore not recommended.

Determinations

- 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.
- Consolidation with the Bridgeport PUD is not recommended.

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.

Bridgeport FPD

The Bridgeport FPD is managed by an elected board of directors and a volunteer fire chief. Management input is also provided during monthly Mono County fire chief meetings. As a small district, the Bridgeport FPD 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 no longterm planning documents. The district’s current ISO rating is 6. The district has no contingency reserves.

Determinations

- The Bridgeport FPD is managed by an elected board of commissioners and a volunteer 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 Bridgeport FPD has set goals and objectives on an incremental basis to meet identified needs.
- The Bridgeport FPD has no longterm planning documents.
- 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 6, and 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.

Bridgeport FPD

The Bridgeport FPD complies with the minimum open meetings and public information requirements. The Bridgeport Fire Commission meets twice a year or more often if required. Meeting notices and agendas are posted at the main fire station and at the post office. Minutes are posted at the fire station.

The district provides fire education at Bridgeport Elementary School and the Bridgeport Pre-School. The district also addresses fire concerns at the Twin Lakes Homeowner's Association and the Swauger Creek Homeowners Association.

Determinations

- The Bridgeport FPD complies with the minimum requirements for open meetings and public records.

Bridgeport Fire Protection District -- Municipal Service Review

- Public accessibility to district information is limited and is often based on the availability of the board officers.
- 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 Bridgeport Fire Protection District.

1. Present and Planned Land Uses

Discussion:

Present land uses in the area served by the Bridgeport FPD includes residential, commercial, and public uses in the community of Bridgeport, residential and resort uses at Rancheria and Twin Lakes, and agricultural uses in the Bridgeport Valley. The Mono County GIS estimates that there are approximately 925 parcels in the district, including 495 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 in the Bridgeport Valley was approximately 704 in 2000 and 718 in 2003. In 2000, there were 311 households in the Bridgeport Valley. The Mono County General Plan Land Use Element provides for the following buildout in the Bridgeport Valley:

Table 6: Buildout Figures for Bridgeport Valley

Land Use Designation	Density	Acres	Maximum Potential Dwelling Units
ER Estate Residential	1 du/acre	296	296
RR Rural Residential	1 du/acre	30	30
SFR Single-Family Residential	5.8 du/acre	199	1,154
MFR-L Multiple-Family Residential – Low	11.6 du/acre	23	266
MFR-M Multiple-Family Residential – Moderate	15 du/acre	4	60
MU Mixed Use	15 du/acre	39	585
RU Rural Resort	1 du/5 acres	124	---
C Commercial	15 du/acre	26	390
SC Service Commercial	---	2	---
IP Industrial Park	---	21	---
PF Public/Quasi-Public Facilities	---	183	---
RM Resource Management	1 du/40 acres	854	21
AG Agriculture	1 du/2.5 ac.	24,823	691 ^a
SP Specific Plan	---	167	---b
Total Private Lands		26,791	3,493
RM Resource Management – Federal/State	---	17,936	---
OS Open Space – WRID	1 du/80 acres	3,066	38
Total		47,793	3,531

Notes:

- a. 66 acres designated AG 10 (10-acre min. parcel size). 115 acres designated AG 20 (20-acre min. parcel size). Dwelling unit potential for remaining 24,602 acres calculated using the development credits program established in the Hammil Valley which allows a certain number of units to be developed per parcel, depending on the size of the parcel and the ownership. In Bridgeport Valley it results in 678 potential du for the 24,602 acres.
- b. Development of the remaining 167 acres in the Bridgeport Community is constrained by identified wetlands; special considerations are necessary for development. No development plan has been submitted for either of these areas.

Finding:

Present land uses in the area served by the Bridgeport FPD includes residential, commercial, and public uses in the community of Bridgeport, residential and resort uses at Rancheria and Twin Lakes, and agricultural uses in the Bridgeport Valley. 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 district's service area will create an increased need for fire protection services now. The buildup allowed by the General Plan will create a greater demand for those services in the future.

Finding:

The Bridgeport 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

Discussion:

The district has no latent powers; fire protection is the only service it is authorized to provide. The district provides adequate services with its existing facilities, infrastructure, and personnel; its ISO rating is 6. The district has identified a number of needs to continue to provide adequate service as well as to serve additional development, i.e.: a new main fire station, additional communications devices, newer apparatus to replace some existing trucks, and funding to provide all of the above.

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 serve additional development.

4. Social or Economic Communities of Interest

Discussion:

Due to the physical geography of the Bridgeport Valley and northern Mono County, communities in the Bridgeport Valley tend to interact socially and economically with communities to the north in Nevada, rather than with communities in Mono County. Development in surrounding areas, such as Swauger Creek and Willow Springs, shares some social and economic communities of interest with the communities in the Bridgeport Valley.

Finding:

The Bridgeport Valley area exhibits some social and economic interdependence with development in Nevada. This interdependence has no relevance in determining the sphere of influence for the district. Development in surrounding areas, such as Swauger Creek and Willow Springs, shares some social and economic communities of interest with the communities in the Bridgeport Valley.

Sphere of Influence Recommendation

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

V. REFERENCES

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Persons Consulted

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