

LAFCO

Meeting Date: 03/31/2022

Information

SUBJECT

Commission discussion and direction regarding Fire Protection District draft governance recommendations for LAFCo's Municipal Service Review (no action will be taken)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Following a staff overview, discuss and provide direction regarding Fire Protection District draft governance recommendations for LAFCo's Municipal Service Review (MSR). Staff will incorporate the Commission's direction into the draft MSR, tentatively scheduled for a public hearing on May 26, 2022.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION

LAFCo staff have been working on this MSR for the fifteen (15) fire protection districts (FPDs) since summer 2021. Two of the state-mandated determinations for MSRs is the "status of, and opportunities for, shared services and facilities" and "accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies" (Government Code Section 56430). Therefore, LAFCo is required to make a determination regarding FPD governance and making recommendations to that end.

As staff engaged with the districts regarding governance, it became readily apparent that any recommended changes could have potentially significant ramifications and would, understandably, be controversial. Staff recommends an iterative approach would be useful in this case, providing a two-step process with the Commission: (1) discussing and providing direction on governance issues at the March 31, 2022 meeting; and (2) holding the public hearing for consideration and potential adoption of the MSR at the May 26, 2022.

BACKGROUND

Please see attachment A. The report contains maps and tables that do not import into the agenda software well.

Attachments

ATT A Staff Report Background Section 03.31.22

Form Review

Inbox

Christine Crawford (Originator)
Form Started By: Christine Crawford
Final Approval Date: 03/23/2022

Reviewed By

Christine Crawford

Date

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BACKGROUND

Fire Reorganization Trends Across the State

Fire districts in California are faced with considerable challenges, including securing adequate sustainable revenue, public reluctance to tax themselves to fund services, increased calls for service, demand on automatic/mutual aid, and loss of community volunteer base. The fire season has extended into nearly a year-round event. Agencies that have traditionally relied primarily on volunteers are especially challenged, as many see declines in volunteer ranks and diminished availability of volunteer firefighters.

With most of the state in a declared drought emergency and record setting years for wildfires, many LAFCos statewide have either completed or are working on fire reorganizations in their counties. LAFCos around the state have seen a significant uptick in applications seeking approval of service contracts, and more crucially, agency reorganization proposals.

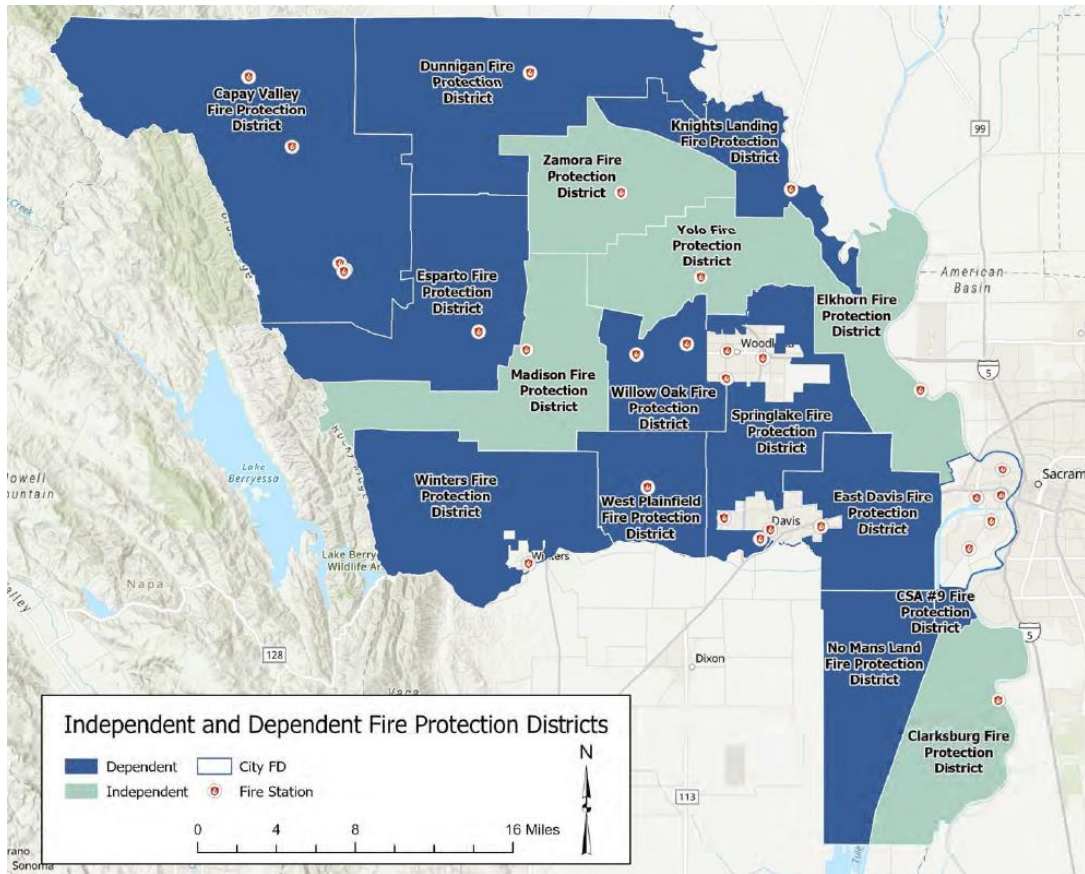
Agencies are passing special taxes to support a growing trend of moving to paid staffing, and they are also increasingly looking at “scaling up” by reorganizing with neighboring agencies or entering into service contracts with other providers.

There is no “one size fits all” approach to fire service from county to county, but its important to look at the evolving nature of fire service and get in front of trends. LAFCos are also using the Municipal Service Review process to identify reorganization opportunities, in some cases taking a leadership role in helping agencies identify more effective service provision models. This is the approach for the 2022 Yolo LAFCo Municipal Service Review (MSR) for the Yolo Fire Protection Districts (FPDs).

Countywide FPDs

FPDs in the county were formed from 1927 to 1974, cover the entire unincorporated area, and are authorized to provide fire protection and emergency response services. FPDs under state law can be formed as either independent districts with its own board or as a dependent district under the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The BOS can elect to delegate its FPD authority to a local fire commission. In Yolo County, there are 5 independent FPDs and 10 dependent FPDs, and the BOS has delegated authority to a local fire commission for 9 of those 10 dependent districts (all except No Man’s Land FPD).

The map below provides an overview of the 15 FPDs countywide, their geographic territory, and whether they are formed as independent districts or dependent districts to Yolo County.



2016 LAFCo Municipal Service Review

LAFCo's last review of FPDs was prepared by Citygate Associates and adopted in 2016. The MSR identified the following key FPD challenges: rising costs and stagnant revenues, a shrinking volunteer labor pool, and increased demands for service.

The two complaints staff hears the most from FPD representatives about the 2016 MSR are: (1) The consultant's misunderstanding of the YECA data regarding missed calls; and (2) The FPDs financial projections penalized them for having reserve apparatus (i.e., maintenance costs were included for unused reserve apparatus). These issues undermined confidence in (and FPD acceptance of) the report and its recommendations. However, many of the 2016 MSR findings and recommendations for shared services and governance remain valid today:

- *Despite a continual recruitment effort, most Yolo County fire protection districts struggle to maintain an adequate roster of volunteer firefighters able to devote the time to maintain training requirements and also be available to regularly respond to emergency incidents. (Finding #4)*
- *Elkhorn FPD should consider a contract for service with the City of Woodland and/or the City of West Sacramento to achieve long-term fiscal sustainability and continuity of services. (Recommendation #8)*
- *Esparto and Madison FPDs should consider consolidating into a single district to enhance operational and fiscal efficiencies. (Recommendation #13)*

- *Services could be enhanced across all of the districts by creating a cooperative countywide regional fire service framework (Finding #14)*
 - *Training oversight*
 - *Common training and performance standards*
 - *Standardization of fire apparatus design specifications*
 - *Cooperative purchasing, including debt funding or lease purchasing of fire apparatus and other capital equipment*
 - *Shared reserve apparatus*
 - *Shared volunteer firefighters*
 - *Weekday staffing of selected districts with stipended firefighters to provide regional on-duty response coverage*
- *Creation of a cooperative countywide regional fire service framework could provide a structure that, in addition to potentially providing funding to support capital infrastructure replacement, could also provide other operational and support benefits to rural fire districts without loss of local control (Finding #40)*
- *The rural fire districts should consider exploring feasibility and support to expand the authority and powers of the West Valley Regional Fire Training Consortium, or the Yolo County Fire Chiefs Association, to provide a cooperative countywide regional fire service framework (Recommendation #14)*

Unfortunately, no action has been taken by the FPDs on any of these recommendations listed above since the 2016 MSR. Therefore, these issues remain and need to be addressed again with this 2022 MSR.

2018 FPD Request for a Portion of Proposition 172 Public Safety Funding Received by Yolo County

Proposition 172 History

In 1992, facing serious budget issues, the State instructed county auditors to take the allocation of local property tax revenues from local government and give it to schools (educational revenue augmentation funds or “ERAF”). To cushion the impact of these shifts, the State submitted a proposal for a new sales tax. Proposition 172 (aka “Prop 172”), the Local Public Safety Protection and Improvement Act of 1993, was approved by California voters. It replaced a half-cent sales tax, meaning taxpayers saw no net increase in their overall tax burden.

Mindful of the substantially larger proportion of impact to counties than to cities and special districts, the State initially considered allocating all Prop 172 funds to counties only but realized success with the voters would be enhanced with the support of city officials, so a portion was allocated to cities also¹. According to the Prop 172 analysis by the Legislative Analyst at the time, “the additional sales tax revenues resulting from this measure are intended to offset part of the \$2.3 billion in county and city revenue losses that resulted from adoption of the State’s 1993-94 budget” (that took property tax revenues).

Yolo County lost 65% of its property taxes to fund schools through ERAF, which is an ongoing shift occurring annually. This shift equaled \$40.5 million in fiscal year (FY) 20/21 and the County’s share of Prop 172 replaced \$24.5 million of that loss. FPDs are impacted differently by these property tax shifts. For FY 20/21 the ERAF tax shifts for 6 out of the 15 FPDs resulted in additional property tax revenue (ranging from +13.0% to +106.5% of property tax revenue), while the other 9 FPDs lost revenue (ranging from -3.8% to -20.0% of property tax revenue).

¹ Coleman Advisory Services Proposition 172 Facts, Updated October 2006

The purpose of Prop 172 was not increasing public safety funding, but to maintain public safety funding levels in spite of property tax shifts. The monies are collected and allocated to each county based on its proportionate share of statewide taxable sales. The FPDs are eligible to receive Prop 172 funding and counties determine the allocation to local public safety. Most counties do not allocate Prop 172 funds for fire protection if it was determined by the county it did not provide fire protection services at the time Prop 172 was implemented². However, over the years some additional counties have begun to distribute some Prop 172 funds to FPDs and currently it is estimated 43 of 58 counties do³.

FPD Request for Prop 172 Funding

The 2016 LAFCo MSR noted Prop 172 as a potential revenue source, stating “While a portion of these funds are allocated to fire agencies in some other counties, potential funding for the districts would need to be taken up with the Yolo County Board of Supervisors.” The MSR did not include a recommendation the FPDs should receive a portion of this funding.

Sometime in 2018, FPD representatives began talking to the County Administrative Officer (CAO) about receiving an ongoing portion of the existing Prop 172 revenue. In 2019 Yolo County staff researched and prepared a [report](#) regarding the challenges facing the Yolo County Fire Protection Districts. As a result, the Board directed staff to work with the FPDs to develop a long-term sustainability plan and formed the Yolo County [Fire Protection Sustainability Board Ad Hoc Committee](#) (“Ad Hoc Committee”) for this purpose, consisting of District 3 Supervisor Sandy and District 5 Supervisor Barajas. Representatives of the Yolo County Fire Chiefs Association (YCFCA) are also members of the committee. The goal of the Ad Hoc Committee is to work collaboratively with the YCFCA to develop options and implementation strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fire protection services in Yolo County.

The Ad Hoc Committee began meeting in August 2019, gathering and evaluating data, and assessing baseline operational standards. It also met with Amador and Sonoma County officials regarding similar fire service sustainability and reorganization efforts in those counties. The FPDs offered a proposal for the Ad Hoc Committee to distribute a percentage of the Prop 172 revenue growth (i.e., not taking current funding away from the County, only a portion of the sales tax revenue growth over time) and the County representatives on the Ad Hoc Committee indicated a desire to instead look for new revenue sources (i.e., FPD Proposition or “Prop” 218 assessments) first and then potentially to look at other County revenue sources, such as Cannabis Program funding.

In June 2021, LAFCo amended its work plan to expedite its countywide FPDs MSR process to help inform questions regarding FPD financial sustainability, operational efficiencies and FPD needs. On September 9, 2021, Yolo County set aside one-time funding of \$500,000 in Cannabis funding: \$200,000 for FPD’s fire season needs; and \$300,000 to pay for a consultant to prepare nexus studies to update and/or establish Prop 218 assessments for all the FPDs.

In September 2021, the County also set aside \$550,000 of general fund contingency revenues in the adopted FY 2021-22 budget for implementation of a long-term sustainability plan that is mutually agreed upon with the FPDs. The County and the FPDs are hopeful that after the LAFCo report is adopted, a mutually agreed upon fire service sustainability plan will be developed in a timely manner. County staff expect that any plan considered by the BOS will need to require the FPDs to support funding its own needs (subject to voter Prop 218 approval) before or concurrent with any commitment of County funds.

² CALAFCo University “Fire District Consolidation” Course Material June 5, 2009, page 17

³ Yolo County Fire Protection Districts Review of Challenges and Strategic Approaches, July 2019

The County's Ad Hoc Committee work is separate and distinct from LAFCo's MSR process, however, the two processes are relating to each other more and more. The County has tabled any conversations regarding additional stable ongoing funding for the FPDs until the completion of the LAFCo MSR.

2022 LAFCo Municipal Service Review

The countywide FPDs MSR process began in summer 2021. The LAFCo Commission was last updated regarding MSR work and data collected at its [December 9, 2021 meeting](#) (link) regarding data collected for the following MSR determinations required by Government Code Section 56430:

- *Growth and Population: "Growth and population projections for the affected area" (also call volume in the case of fire service)*
- *Capacity and Adequacy of Public Facilities and Services: "Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies"*
- *Financial Ability: "Financial ability of agencies to provide services"*

This data informs the need for shared services and governmental structure and operational efficiencies.

SHARED SERVICES AND GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Overall Recommendation/Approach

The scope of this discussion is framed by these required MSR determinations (collectively referred to as "governance" recommendations):

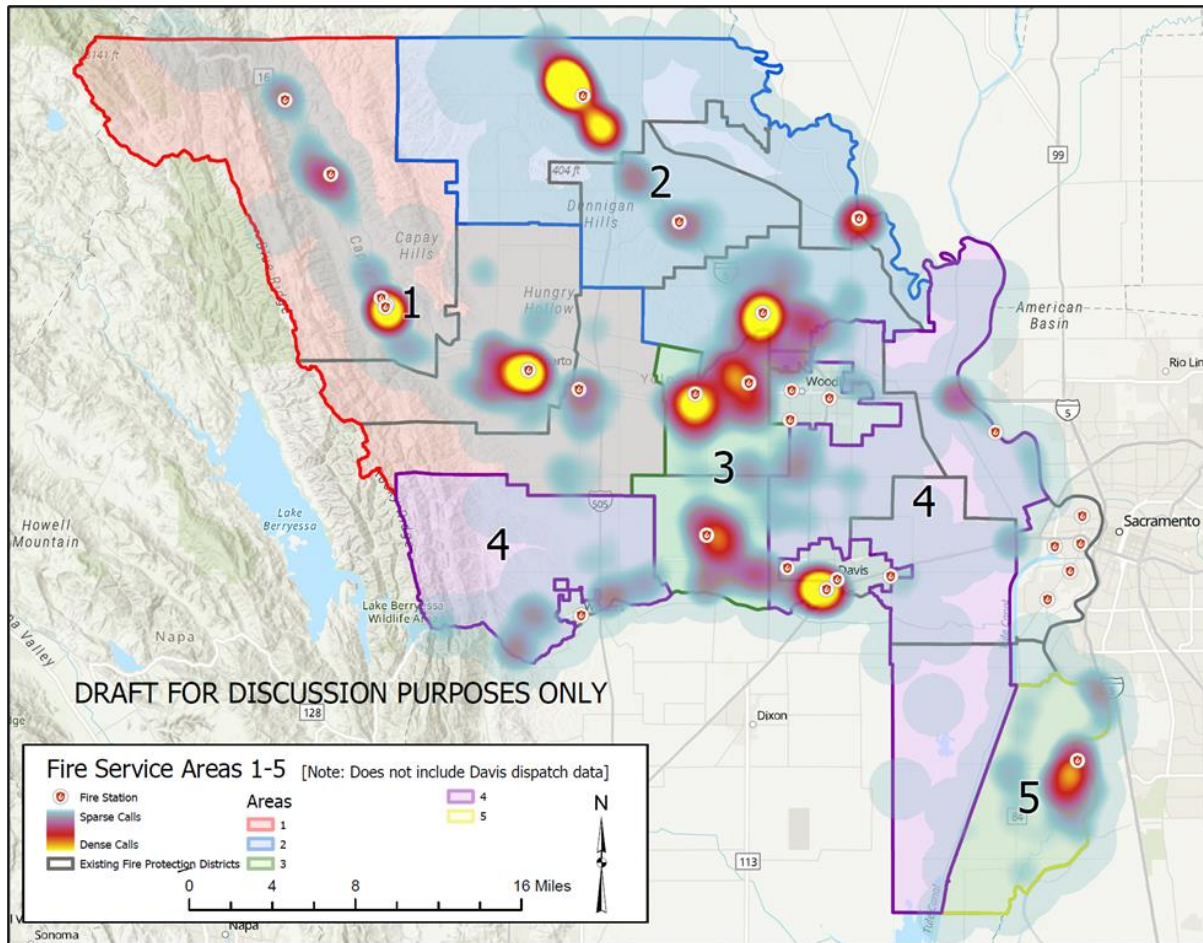
- *Shared Services and Facilities: "Status of, and opportunities for, shared services and facilities"*
- *Accountability, Structure and Efficiencies: "Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies"*

Given the adequacy, deficiencies, and needs of fire services provided by each FPD, the YCFCA MSR Subcommittee (YCFCA appointed chiefs who volunteered to support LAFCo in its MSR process) met five times in January 2022 to develop draft governance recommendations.

The MSR Subcommittee was guided by the following values and principles:

- What promotes the best service to the public?
- What is the most efficient and effective utilization of our resources?
- What is the "right" balance of economies of scale versus flexibility to address local conditions?

Below is the graphic used to explain the overall recommendation/approach. The 15 FPDs are separated into Areas 1-5 with recommendations for each Area. The base map shows a heat map representing calls for service, a data visualization technique that shows the magnitude and spatial distribution of calls for service. Below this map a narrative follows that explains what is recommended for each of Areas 1-5 shown.



Fire Service Areas 1-3

Fire Service Areas (“Areas”) 1-3 include FPDs that provide direct services (i.e., do not contract with cities for service). Staff recommends the FPDs in each Area develop governance solutions that will provide for a coordinated and more uniform level of service and operation. The governance solution for each Area could take a variety of forms including: Joint Operation Agreements (JOAs), contracts for services, Joint Powers Agreements/Agencies (JPAs), or agency merger/consolidation. The goal for coordinated/joint operations in each Area is to achieve a similar service standard, efficient use of resources, consistent training/testing/reporting, standardization, and improved coordination during incident response.

The selection for FPDs for each area were based on geography, FPDs that were already working together formally or informally, and the fire service principle of “span of control”. Span of control refers to the number of individuals or resources that one supervisor can manage effectively during an incident. The optimal span of control is one supervisor to five subordinates (1:5) but can range from 1:3 to 1:7. For the MSR, this principle is being used instead as the ideal number of stations in Areas 1-3 for coordination purposes.

Yolo FPD was originally included in Area 3 which created better balance across Areas 1-3 from a geographical and dispatch numbers perspective, however, the Chief indicated his district already works more closely with Knights Landing and Zamora FPDs and requested to be part of Area 2 instead. Staff recommends this adjustment because these governance recommendations will be more easily implemented by leveraging existing FPD relationships.

The draft recommendation is for the FPDs to sign JOAs for each area to share staff, apparatus, training, reporting, and standardization. These JOAs would create the framework for what’s called a “functional consolidation” in LAFCo terminology, meaning they are operating together for many practical purposes, but not a legal agency consolidation. A JOA could lay the groundwork for a later consolidation or it may suffice long-term.

The matrix below shows the efficiencies that could be achieved with either a JOA or consolidation. Most efficiencies can be achieved with a JOA, so legal consolidation may not be worth the cost and effort depending on the situation.

Joint Operations Agreement Versus Legal Consolidation

	Status Quo	Joint Operations Agreement	Consolidation (or Dissolution/Annexation)
Improved station coverage		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shared paid personnel, reserves and volunteers		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shared apparatus and equipment		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Standardization (equipment, UFC, training, testing, policies, and procedures)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cooperative Purchasing		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consolidated FPD board/commission (1 instead of 3)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced administration costs (1 insurance, incident reporting, SCO report, website, budget, AP, grants, etc. instead of 3)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Easier to Undo	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Fire Service Area 4

Its recommended Elkhorn FPD contract with the cities of West Sacramento and Woodland for services (consistent with the 2016 MSR), resulting in five contract FPDs that comprise Area 4. It is further recommended these five contract FPDs be consolidated into one and establish four “Service Zones” (under Fire Protection District Law Health and Safety Code Sections 13950 – 13956) that correlate to the city service areas. Each Service Zone can also have its own Prop 218 assessment and/or development impact fee and citizen advisory committee, if needed.

Fire Service Area 5

Clarksburg FPD’s land-locked geography limits its ability to share services and operations with other FPDs. Therefore, it is recommended to remain as-is.

FIRE SERVICE AREAS DISCUSSION AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a high-level summary of FPD performance indicators that inform the governance discussion. Performance indicators are not included for contract FPDs because the data is not separated out between incident response for the city versus the FPD territory and presumed to be adequate.

FPD Performance Indicators

FPD	ISO	Personnel Issues				Financial Issues	
	Rating ⁴	Fire Response	Rescue/EMS Response	Response Time (9 min > 80%)	Missed Calls (<1%, 1-3% or >3%)	Apparatus >25 yrs. old	Fund Balance (+/- or flat trend)
Capay Valley	8	■	■	□	■	□	■
Clarksburg	5/8	■	■	□	■	□	■
Dunnigan	NP	□	□	■	☒	□	■
Elkhorn	NR	□	□	□	□	□	☒
Esparto	5/10	■	☒	■	■	■	■
Knights Landing	5/5Y	☒	■	□	□	□	☒
Madison	5/10	☒	☒	■	■	□	■
West Plainfield	3/3Y	■	■	■	■	■	☒
Willow Oak	3/3Y	☒	■	■	■	■	■
Yolo	4/4Y	□	□	□	■	□	□
Zamora	8b/10	□	■	□	☒	□	■

* Matrix Legend: ■ = fully meets criteria; ☒ = partially meets criteria; □ = does not meet criteria

Area 1

FPD Info (FY 20/21)

FPD	Area (ac)	Est.		Dispatches			Ending Fund Balance	ISO	Station Coverage	Paid Fire Personnel (FTE)	Reserves with stipend	Volunteers
		Residential Pop.	Total Dispatches	Inside Jurisdiction	Core Revenue							
Capay Valley	D	110,345	1,130	194	149	\$ 214,901	\$ 1,220,126	8	On Call	1.5	0	17
Esparto	D	48,161	3,122	589	469	\$ 298,188	\$ 810,273	5/10	Regular Hours	2.5	6	21
Madison	I	42,325	962	321	175	\$ 254,074	\$ 493,678	5/10	Regular Hours	2.0	12	12

Capay Valley FPDs performance deficiencies are response time (met for 50-60% of calls) and age of apparatus. Most of the volunteers live/work locally, so it can get enough personnel on scene, it just takes more time to arrive on scene with a station staffed by volunteers.

Esparto FPDs performance deficiencies are just less than adequate personnel on scene for rescue/EMS calls, but a drop off in service levels is visible in the NFIRS data beginning in December 2019. Response times are met 90-95% of calls.

Madison FPDs performance deficiencies are just less than adequate personnel on scene for both fire and EMS calls. Response times are achieved within 9 minutes for 85-90 % of calls. It also is using apparatus greater than 25 years old.

⁴ ISO Ratings range from 1-10 (10 is the lowest rating). FPDs are graded on fire flows, emergency communications, FPD staffing/training/operations, and water supply. Split ratings represent within/beyond 1,000 feet of water supply. For rural FPDs, it's not possible to be graded higher than 3 due to not having hydrants. NP/NR means the FPD either did not provide the information or is not rated.

Governance Background/Options

Capay Valley is responding with enough volunteers on scene, but response time is an issue. Capay Valley and Esparto FPDs are early adopters and have already entered into a JOA, which is a model shared services agreement/framework also recommended for Areas 2 and 3. Esparto FPD recently hired a shared driver/operator position who will staff Capay Valley's Guinda Station 3 days per week and the Esparto Station 2 days per week, which will bring both stations to 7-day coverage from 8 am to 5 pm.

The Esparto FPD Chief is concerned about the number of personnel that will be required to serve the additional 400 residential units for Esparto that have been approved by the County and are in the construction pipeline. The units will increase the FPD's assessed valuation, however, the Esparto FPD receives on average 3.9% of property taxes, which is relatively low as compared to the other FPDs.

Madison FPD was invited to participate in this JOA from the beginning stages. Madison FPD is an independent district and has indicated it is not interested in joining the JOA at this time. Concerns expressed include: (1) A consolidation with Esparto would improve service in Esparto but reducing service to Madison residents; and (2) The Madison FPD serves as a community center and joint operations with Esparto would negatively impact the community identity and alienate residents and volunteers.

Some community members at the Area 1 outreach meeting pushed back on staff's draft recommendation stating LAFCo could only recommend governance changes if a problem was identified, which is not the case. The 2004 and 2016 MSRs recommended that Esparto and Madison FPDs be consolidated for operational and financial efficiencies. The Esparto and Madison FPD stations are 3 miles apart and together have 4 paid staff providing redundant daytime coverage. A more effective allocation of resources could provide 24/7 coverage at the Esparto station and maintain Madison as a volunteer station (many of the Madison volunteers apparently live in Esparto). The dispatch response matrix can be adjusted for station coverage backup as needed.

Since Capay Valley and Esparto FPDs have already adopted and are working on implementing its JOA, options to address Madison FPD include:

- Leave Madison FPD alone as an independent FPD and reevaluate in the next MSR; or
- Initiate reorganization proceedings to consolidate Madison with Esparto FPD

Leaving Madison FPD alone would result in less coverage for its residents than if it were consolidated (either functionally through a JOA or legally through consolidation). Therefore, a functional or legal consolidation would promote the best service to the public and more efficient and effective utilization of resources.

Area 1 Recommendations

- Capay Valley, Esparto and Madison FPDs should provide for a coordinated and more uniform level of service and operation through either: (1) a Joint Operation Agreement (JOA); or (2) agency merger/consolidation. The goal for coordinated/joint operations in each Area is to achieve a similar service standard, efficient use of resources, consistent training/testing/reporting, standardization, and improved coordination during incident response.
- If Madison FPD does not enter into the JOA already established by Capay Valley and Esparto FPDs in good faith, a LAFCo reorganization to combine Esparto and Madison FPDs should be initiated if its determined consolidation would promote better service to the public and be a more efficient and effective utilization of resources.

Area 2

FPD Info (FY 20/21)

FPD		Area (ac)	Est.		Dispatches			Ending Fund Balance	ISO	Station Coverage	Paid Fire Personnel (FTE)	Reserves with stipend	Volunteers
			Residential Pop.	Total Dispatches	Inside Jurisdiction	Core Revenue							
Dunnigan	D	70,351	1,110	551	498	\$209,196	\$ 514,613	NP	Full Time 24/7	0	0	31	
Knights Landing	D	23,692	1,058	325	167	\$119,981	\$ 381,193	5/5Y	On Call	0	0	13	
Yolo	I	33,584	970	458	278	\$192,180	\$ 241,560	4/4Y	Regular Hours	1.0	0	21	
Zamora	I	33,709	335	152	110	\$157,907	\$ 648,080	8b/10	On Call	0	0	13	

Dunnigan FPD deficiencies are having sufficient personnel on scene for both fire and EMS calls, missed calls (0.4%), and is operating with apparatus greater than 25 years old. It is arriving on scene in a timely manner 80-85% of the time, but rarely with sufficient personnel. Its fund balance is trending in a positive direction over the last 5 FYs.

Knights Landing FPD's performance deficiencies are just under an average of 4 personnel on scene for fire incidents, response times met only 50-60% of the time, and 3.0% missed calls. Its fund balance is trending relatively flat over the last 5 FYs.

Yolo FPD deficiencies include fire/EMS personnel on scene, response times (70-80% within 9-minutes), apparatus greater than 25 years old, and a fund balance that is trending down over the last 5 FYs. The Chief indicates the incident data submitted was in error but has not yet provided LAFCo with updated information (after more than three months). Anecdotally, other FPD chiefs indicate Yolo is performing adequately.

Zamora FPD performance issues are sufficient personnel responding to fire incidents, response times met 70-80% of calls, and operating with apparatus greater than 25 years old. The ISO rating is also extremely low. The chief is relatively new and volunteer part-time. Surrounding chiefs report service has improved in the last year.

Governance Background/Options

The 2005 MSR for Dunnigan identified the need to increase revenues and fund at least one full-time paid firefighter/operator (back when there were only roughly 325 dispatches in 2004). Dunnigan FPD apparently hired a paid person without increasing revenues, and then in the 2016 MSR Dunnigan was identified as not being financially sustainable. Currently, Dunnigan is operating with no paid staff and no appointed Chief with 551 dispatches last FY. The most recent Dunnigan FPD Chief's management style alienated other FPD's and its own volunteers (according to other chiefs), and he recently left the position but is still volunteering at the station. The number of volunteers listed can be misleading because not all are active or located in the district.

Staff is concerned because the Dunnigan FPD appears to be significantly lacking in leadership at both the fire commission and personnel level. On February 7, 2022, Supervisor Barajas and staff met with two of its fire commissioners to offer any assistance possible with finding funding to hire a new fire chief or getting help on a temporary basis, but no help has been requested nor action taken to staff's knowledge. At the March 9, 2022 Dunnigan FPD commission meeting, the agenda did not include an item to address the vacant chief position and it became apparent that operations are currently being led by a part-time reserve/volunteer who stated he's planning to take a job with CalFire within 1-2 months and leave the FPD.

Considering the volume of Dunnigan FPD calls, full-time paid staff is needed plus a reserve program. The commission seemed open to this recommendation but skeptical its residents would pass a Prop 218 assessment to fund it. In staff's opinion, the current situation in Dunnigan is dire. Staff recommends Dunnigan FPD needs new leadership personnel hired as soon as possible and it will take some time to mend relationships with surrounding FPDs before a JOA is attempted.

Knights Landing FPD resources have been significantly drained in recent years by the failing Robbins FPD across the Sutter County border, but this situation has apparently improved recently. Anecdotally, morale and operations seem to have improved over the last six months. With its relatively high call volume served by a small volunteer base, Knights Landing FPD should also have full-time paid personnel. Knights Landing FPD representatives seemed open to a JOA and indicated it worked most closely with Yolo FPD.

Yolo FPD has numerous performance indicator issues and it's unknown if personnel response will be addressed with updated incident data. It is the only FPD with a negative fund balance trend over 5 FYs. When staff met with the board, it indicated it was not interested in a JOA because it would bring its service capacity/levels down. The Yolo FPD board has strong leadership and the FPD is respected by Knights Landing and Zamora FPDs. Staff hoped that including Yolo FPD in Area 2 would bring its leadership to leverage with the other struggling FPDs, but Yolo FPD is not interested at this time.

Zamora FPD declined staff's presentation altogether. Anecdotally, staff has heard the FPD representatives are not interested in County funding if it comes with JOA/consolidation strings attached.

LAFCo's 2005 MSRs for Knights Landing, Yolo and Zamora FPDs recommended these three districts consolidate to achieve operation and financial efficiencies, but it never happened. A similar recommendation was not included in the 2016 MSR.

Options include:

- Leave Yolo and Zamora FPDs alone as independent FPDs and reevaluate in the next MSR;
- Initiate reorganization proceedings to consolidate Yolo and Zamora FPDs with surrounding FPDs;
- Utilize some other combination of JOAs and consolidations; or
- Consolidate all four FPDs.

Area 2 Recommendations

- Yolo County needs to focus immediate efforts with the Dunnigan and Knights Landing FPDs as dependent districts and disadvantaged communities. For Dunnigan FPD in particular, it is currently operating without a fire chief and commissioner board training is needed. A specific goal for Dunnigan and Knights Landing FPDs is to each hire a 0.5 FTE fire chief as soon as possible (that could be shared if a full-time position attracted a stronger candidate) to improve operations and service levels. It is recommended that a minimum of 3.5 FTE (potentially more for Dunnigan FPD) and a reserve program is ultimately needed for each station.
- Knights Landing, Yolo and Zamora FPDs should provide for a coordinated and more uniform level of service and operation through either: (1) a Joint Operation Agreement; or (2) agency merger/consolidation. Dunnigan FPD should join the coordination efforts (i.e., the JOA or merger/consolidation) in a later phase after its leadership is reestablished and earns trust back among the other Area 3 FPDs. The goal for coordinated/joint operations in each Area is to achieve a similar service standard, efficient use of resources, consistent training/testing/reporting, standardization, and improved coordination during incident response.

- If either of the dependent FPDs (Dunnigan and Knights Landing FPDs) do not enter into Area 2 JOAs in good faith, the BOS should consider rescinding delegation of its authority and enter into said agreement.
- If either of the independent FPDs (Yolo and Zamora FPDs) do not enter into Area 2 JOAs in good faith, a LAFCo reorganization to combine Yolo and/or Zamora FPDs with some combination of other Area 2 FPDs should be initiated if its determined consolidation would promote better service to the public and be a more efficient and effective utilization of resources.

Area 3

FPD Info (FY 20/21)

FPD	Area (ac)	Est.		Dispatches			Ending Fund Balance	ISO	Station Coverage	Paid Fire Personnel (FTE)	Reserves	
		Residential Pop.	Total Dispatches	Inside Jurisdiction	Core Revenue	Balance					with stipend	Volunteers
West Plainfield	D	21,221	752	233	180	\$370,093	\$ 385,631	3/3Y	Full Time 24/7	3.75	3	19
Willow Oak	D	21,546	2,502	554	382	\$453,387	\$ 865,485	3/3Y	Full Time 24/7	4.0	15	16

West Plainfield does not have any performance indicator deficiencies, other than a flat trend on its fund balance trend over 5 years.

Willow Oak does not have any performance indicator issues other than responding to fire calls on average with just under the recommended standard of 4 personnel.

Governance Background/Options

The West Plainfield and Willow Oak FPD commissions seem amendable to entering into a JOA. Staff from both FPDs are excited about the opportunities created by working more closely together and have already exchanged draft JOAs for review. Therefore, things are moving forward to implement this recommendation already.

Area 3 Recommendation

- West Plainfield and Willow Oak FPDs should provide for a coordinated and more uniform level of service and operation through a Joint Operation Agreement or agency merger/consolidation. The goal for coordinated/joint operations in each Area is to achieve a similar service standard, efficient use of resources, consistent training/testing/reporting, standardization, and improved coordination during incident response.
- Once the Area 3 JOA is established and operating successfully, combining the JOAs for Areas 1 and 3 into one larger JOA should be considered (in the 3 to 5-year timeframe).

Area 4

FPD Info (FY 20/21)

FPD	Area (ac)	Est.		Dispatches			Ending Fund Balance	ISO	Station Coverage	Paid Fire Personnel (FTE)	Reserves	
		Residential Pop.	Total Dispatches	Inside Jurisdiction	Core Revenue	Balance					with stipend	Volunteers
East Davis	D	29,143	2,075	297	297	\$824,863	\$1,432,155	NA (City)	City Contract	NA	NA	NA
Elkhorn	I	30,703	128	168	150	\$111,853	\$ 365,374	NR	On Call	0	0	8
No Mans Land	D	35,639	82	15	15	\$ 26,896	\$ 2,879	NA (City)	City Contract	NA	NA	NA
Springlake	D	32,545	6,587	240	240	\$556,024	\$ -	NA (City)	City Contract	NA	NA	NA
Winters	D	50,528	1,015	301	301	\$375,948	\$ 500,005	NA (City)	City Contract	NA	NA	NA

Elkhorn FPD has performance deficiencies across all the indicators: response personnel, response time, missed calls (6.7%), apparatus over 25 years old, and a flat fund balance trend over the last 5 FYs.

Governance Background/Options

Elkhorn FPD is resistant to the recommendation to contract out all its services to the cities of Woodland and West Sacramento. When staff met with the Elkhorn FPD board, it indicated it would instead seek to negotiate with the cities for a fee per call for I-5 and River Road calls (55 rescue/EMS calls in FY 20/21). The board was going to regroup and look at what it can afford. However, staff's recommendation is Elkhorn does not have sufficient funding to pay the cities and maintain itself to respond to the other minimal calls (8 fire calls in FY 20/21). It would not make sense to increase Pop 218 fees more on such a small population to cover the costs to respond to accidents mostly generated by the surrounding area. The 2016 LAFCo MSR recommended Elkhorn FPD consider a contract for service with the cities of West Sacramento and Woodland. In staff's opinion, Elkhorn is fighting a losing battle that it does not make sense to overcome. Elkhorn FPD has done the best it can with such low core revenues and population, but it cannot keep up with increasing traffic and calls for service on I-5 and River Road caused by development in surrounding areas.

For the four other FPDs in Area 4 that already contract with cities for fire service, three out of the four FPDs have BOS powers delegated to a local Fire Commission (the BOS serves as the board for the No Man's Land FPD). However, Springlake FPD has struggled for years maintaining its commissioners and eventually it will lose its quorum and the BOS will assume those responsibilities. The two active FPD commissions are East Davis and Winters FPDs. A review of agendas indicates non-substantive items (weed abatement, Prop 172, and Fire Safe Council updates) and in Winters' case items that may be redundant to City fire department activities (Capital Improvement Plan and Development Impact Fee Study to present to the BOS). Staff recommends this additional layer of fire commissions are inefficient and unnecessary and governance could be more effectively handled by the city fire departments and the BOS.

There are also inefficiencies created with some of the existing contract FPD boundaries. Specifically, the City of Davis provides fire services to three FPDs with inconsistent contract costs. The three boards/commissions that handle these contracts operate unaware of the provisions of the other FPDs and are unable to maintain consistency because they operate in separate silos.

The East Davis FPD commissioners expressed vehement objection to be consolidated. Commissioners are concerned that its fund balance (which has been funded at least in part by a Prop 218 assessment) would be taken from the district and used elsewhere, which is not being suggested nor is legal to do. The fund balance would be held in a restricted or assigned account that could be used only as was approved by the voters. Regarding the inconsistency in City of Davis contract costs across the three FPDs served, the Chair stated the FPD would increase its assessments on property owners and the other FPDs served by the City of Davis should pay more also.

The Winters FPD commission expressed concerns regarding staff's recommendation to consolidate and the City is concerned about how its existing relationship with the FPD might be affected if governance were consolidated with the BOS. Staff will be meeting with the City of Winters on March 25th for a more in-depth discussion (after this report is published) and hopefully the City will find that a more streamlined relationship might benefit the City.

Staff also recommends County Service Area (CSA) #9 should be consolidated along with these FPDs. This district is a remnant of the old East Yolo FPD that was mostly subsumed by the City of West Sacramento when it incorporated. The CSA's only function is to collect and pass-through property taxes for City fire service.

Area 4 Recommendation

- Yolo County should initiate consolidation of the East Davis, Elkhorn, No Man’s Land, Springlake and Winters FPDs and County Service Area #9. This consolidated FPD would be a successor agency to all existing contracts with cities for fire services. “Service Zones” under Health and Safety Code 13950-13956 should be considered that would align to each city service territory. If needed, each Service Zone could have its own Prop 218 assessment and an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors.

Area 5

FPD Info (FY 20/21)

FPD	Area (ac)	Est. Residential Pop.	Dispatches			Ending Fund Balance	ISO	Station Coverage	Paid Fire Personnel (FTE)	Reserves with stipend	Volunteers	
			Total Dispatches	Inside Jurisdiction	Core Revenue							
Clarksburg	D	34,665	1,260	268	250	\$178,969	\$ 853,612	5/8	On Call	0	0	20

Clarksburg FPDs performance indicator issues are response time (met 70-80% of calls) and apparatus exceeding 25 years of age. The FPD is very successful with local volunteers. Its need is funding for apparatus.

Governance Background/Options

Staff met with the Clarksburg FPD board and it agrees with the draft recommendation. It would like to participate in any shared services that makes sense, such as pooled purchasing. The FPD sees its primary need as increased funding for apparatus, not paid staff.

Area 5 Recommendation

- Clarksburg FPD should take advantage of any shared services, such as standardized/pooled purchasing, developed by the FPDs in Areas 1-3.

FPD/PUBLIC OUTREACH

Once the draft recommendation was arrived at with the FPD MSR Subcommittee in January, staff organized and presented at many outreach meetings to share the information as quickly as possible and obtain FPD feedback. Presentations were provided to all FPDs (sometimes twice) except for Zamora FPD which declined the presentation.

Date	Meeting
February 8	Yolo County Fire Chiefs Association
February 17	Winters FPD
February 17	East Davis FPD
February 21	Area 1 (Capay, Esparto & Madison FPDs)
February 28	Area 3 (West Plainfield & Willow Oak FPDs)
March 2	East Davis FPD
March 3	Clarksburg FPD
March 7	Yolo FPD
March 9	Elkhorn FPD
March 9	Dunnigan FPD
March 11	Yolo Managers (city managers + CAO)
March 14	Madison FPD

Date	Meeting
March 14	Knights Landing FPD
March 25	City of Winters

NEXT STEPS

Following LAFCo direction and feedback on governance structure recommendations, staff will complete the individual administrative draft MSR for each FPD and send each report to each district for review and comment (during the month of April). Staff anticipates the final MSR will be noticed for a public hearing at the May 26th meeting.