

**FINAL**  
MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

And

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE

Courtland Fire Protection District

September 3, 2014

LAFC #08-14

Prepared By:

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**CORTESE -KNOX -HERTZBERG  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION ACT OF 2000**

Introduction

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization (CKH) Act of 2000 requires that each Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) prepare a Municipal Service Review and Spheres of Influence Updates for all cities and independent special districts within its jurisdiction.

A *Sphere of Influence* is defined by Government Code 56425 as:

A plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency or municipality.

A *Municipal Service Review* is defined by Government Code Section 56430 as: A means of identifying and evaluating public services.

A Municipal Service Review may be conducted prior to, or in conjunction with, the update of a Sphere of Influence, as necessary.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW**

Purpose

The Municipal Service Review is intended to provide adequate information for the Commission to make decisions related to both current Spheres of Influence (SOI) and SOI Amendments to determine logical service providers and boundaries, to initiate additional studies in the event that the Commission determines that adequate services are not being provided.

In addition to MSR's, annexations, reorganizations, consolidations, and incorporations require detailed master service plans, fiscal analysis and environmental analysis and other special studies as may be required for these types of action.

Requirements

The Commission shall include a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

- Growth and population projections for the affected area.
- Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies.
- Financial ability of agencies to provide services.

- Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.
- Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.
- Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy.

## **SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

### **Purpose**

In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping logical and orderly development as well as the coordination of local governmental agencies so as to most advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the County and its communities, the Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission must develop and determine the Sphere of Influence of each local governmental agency within the County.

### **Requirements**

When adopting, amending or updating a Sphere of Influence, the Commission shall, according to Government Code, do all of the following:

- Require districts to file written statements specifying the functions or classes of services provided.
- Establish the nature, location and extent of any functions or classes of services provided by the districts.

In determining the Sphere of Influence of each local agency, the Commission shall consider and prepare determinations with respect to each of the following:

- The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.
- The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
- The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides, or is authorized to provide.
- The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines they are relevant.

## OVERVIEW

### Introduction

Sacramento County has an estimated population of approximately 1.4 million people. Public and municipal services are provided by the County, cities, and special districts. The local government structure in Sacramento County is somewhat unique because a significant amount of development has occurred in the unincorporated area from 1950 to the present. Consequently, municipal services to the unincorporated areas are primarily provided by the County, and/or dependent and independent Special Districts. During the past 15 years there have been three incorporations of urbanized areas: City of Citrus Heights, City of Elk Grove, and the City of Rancho Cordova. For the most part, the new cities continue to use the county and special districts for some municipal service providers. Only the Cities of Sacramento, Folsom and Galt (except fire and emergency services) provide the full array of municipal services.

Most of the fire districts in Sacramento County were formed during the 1940's. However, Galt, Elk Grove, Natomas, Rancho Cordova, and Rio Linda can trace establishment back to the 1920's. With the exception of the town of Freeport, fire and emergency services are provided either by cities or special districts for the entire county. Note: The Town of Freeport receives fire service primarily from the City of Sacramento, however, it does not lie within either a city or fire protection district boundary.

### **FIRE DISTRICTS**

Fire protection is an indispensable municipal service with which all areas in the County, regardless of their rural or urban nature, should be provided. Fire service is provided in the County of Sacramento by the Cities of Folsom and Sacramento, and eleven fire protection districts. The Board of Supervisors governs one district: Natomas Fire Protection District, ex officio. The other districts (which include the Cosumnes Community Services District) are independent special districts and are governed by elected Boards of Directors. There is one remaining area in the County that is not within any organized fire protection agency (see map). It contains the unincorporated community of Freeport. In addition to the eleven districts and two municipalities, Folsom State Prison provides fire protection services within Folsom State Prison and does not provide public protection. Finally, Sacramento International Airport provides rescue and fire support but does not provide emergency medical services.

Fire districts are formed and regulated pursuant to the Health and Safety Code, Section 13801 et seq. The enabling legislation authorizes fire districts to provide fire protection and ambulance and rescue services.

Seventy years ago, when the incorporated area was significantly less urbanized than it is today, fire protection was provided strictly on a volunteer basis. By 1940, increases in population and its attendant growth in fire and fire-related problems, created a need for more organized and widespread fire protection. Thus, the fire district system began to develop in the unincorporated area and professional fire fighting forces became full-time necessity. Districts developed from 1921 (Galt) through 1951 (North Highlands). However, in the more rural south County and Delta, the fire service remains largely staffed by volunteers. This is the case with Courtland FPD.

At the time of formation, fire districts normally encompassed the general area associated with each suburban or rural community. With the post-World War II rise in population and attendant

development, the old central establishments in these communities frequently gave way to large shopping centers. The old, large, rural parcels in the unincorporated areas became new housing tracts, while county roads became freeways or other major thoroughfares. New developments did not follow district boundaries.

Numerous attempts toward reorganizing the historical fire district formation have been made in the past. Such endeavors include studies conducted by the Spink Corporation (1968-69), Fire Service Area Study Committee (1970-72), Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (1977), and the Local Government Reorganization Commission (1979-81).

As a result of these studies, several political consolidations occurred: Alta Mesa-Wilton (1980); Arden-Carmichael (1983); Arden and Carmichael as American River (1983); North Highlands- Citrus Heights (1984); American River-Arcade (1986); Rio Linda and Elverta (1987); Citrus Heights and Rancho Cordova as Sacramento County (1989); Rio Linda-Elverta with American River (1990); Sloughhouse with American River (1990); Fair Oaks with Sacramento County (1993); Florin with American River (1997); American River with Sacramento County to form Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (2000); Fruitridge with Pacific to form Fruitridge Pacific Fire Protection District (2006); Elk Grove Community Services District with Galt Fire Protection District to form Cosumnes Community Services District (2006).

### **General Background**

Fire Districts are formed and regulated pursuant to the California State Health and Safety Code, Section 13801, et. seq. The enabling legislation authorizes fire districts to provide fire protection, ambulance and rescue services. Fire districts in Sacramento County can be described as belonging to two broad categories: rural and urban. The definitions of rural and urban used here are developed in light of planning and zoning parameters, and in recognition of the development forces that have and are occurring in Sacramento County. The rural fire districts are generally found in the southern portion of the County and within the area known as the "Northwest Territories" located north of the City of Sacramento. Except for the unincorporated town of Freeport, fire districts serve the entire County.

### **Uniform Fire Code**

In July of 1972 the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors adopted a Uniform Fire Code. This ordinance provides that one fire code will be used for all fire agencies within the County. This code replaced and improved the various individual district codes that govern conditions hazardous to life and property from fire and explosion. The Uniform Fire Code does not standardize the operations of fire districts countywide, but it does speak to what the public can do with regard to inflammable/explosive material. State law requires that public buildings be inspected yearly for fire safety. Each district is responsible for inspection procedures, and these vary from district to district. Fire prevention in all districts is handled as an educational basis.

### **Communication**

The Sacramento Regional Fire/EMS Communications Center (SRFECC) provides fire and emergency medical dispatch services to the Sacramento region. The SRFECC is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that is managed by the following fire agencies: Cosumnes Community Services District, Folsom Fire

Department, Sacramento Fire Department, and Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District. For more information, please visit the following website: <http://www.srfecc.ca.gov/>

### Agency Cooperation-Mutual Aid and Automatic Response

All fire protection districts and city fire departments within Sacramento County have mutual aid and response agreements. When a call for service is received, the nearest available response unit is dispatched regardless of jurisdictional boundary.

### ISO Rating

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) is used to rate a fire district's ability to defend against major fires that might occur in the area it serves. The ISO rating procedure evaluates three principal features of fire protection as well as their weight of importance: water supply (40%), fire department staffing (50%), and communications (10%). The ISO devised a system that insurance companies use to compute fire insurance coverage and rates. The rating classes are numbered 1 through 10; the highest number represents the least protection with the highest fire insurance premium rates.

Some of the factors which are considered in the establishment of fire rating zones are: water supply, building codes and structural conditions of buildings, the distance of structures from the nearest fire station, the type of equipment and number of firefighters available at the station, and factors and distances between residences and local street access circulation.

When two numbers are included in an ISO rating, the first number refers to the rating for "watered" areas (areas with a water distribution system and hydrant system,) while the second number refers to "unwatered" areas. In rural areas of Sacramento County, ISO ratings are found to be higher e.g. 9, while urban districts are rated in a range running from 2 to 6 for watered areas.

### Finances

Independent special districts that provide fire protection and emergency medical services are funded primarily from property taxes and they are considered a non-enterprise district. City fire departments are typically funded by the city's General Fund that includes both property taxes, sales taxes, and a variety of other revenue sources.

The passage of Proposition 13 put a lid on the amount of revenues that non-enterprise districts could raise to finance needed services. Proposition 13 limited property taxes to one (1) percent of the assessed value. This one (1) percent is allocated to the county, cities, special districts, and school districts based on the districts share of revenue it received just prior to the adoption of

Proposition 13. This change removed the discretionary authority of special districts to raise tax rates to generate additional revenues for both on-going and new programs to increase service levels, or for that matter to keep up with inflation.

## **District Summary Profile**

Agency: Courtland Fire Protection District

Address: 154 Magnolia Ave  
PO Box 163  
Courtland, CA 95615

Facility Locations: Station 91 - 154 Magnolia Ave, Courtland  
Station 92 - 1125 Hood Franklin Road, Hood

Website: [www.courtlandfire.com](http://www.courtlandfire.com)

Telephone: (916) 775-1210

Administrator Name: Chief David Welch

Name of Contact: David Welch

Contacts email address: [chiefdave9101@live.com](mailto:chiefdave9101@live.com)

Services Provided: Fire Suppression and emergency medical response

Number of Employees: 24 Volunteers

Agency Size: 33 Square Miles

Agency Population: Estimated at 2500 Residents



# Introduction

## **Background Info**

The Courtland Fire Protection District was founded in 1941 to provide fire protection to the town of Courtland and the surrounding community. It eventually took over emergency medical services in the district as well. After merging with the Hood Fire Department, its territory expanded north to protect the community of Hood and its surrounding farmland.

## **Setting**

The Courtland Fire Protection District is located on the western edge of Sacramento County, situated along and around the Sacramento River as well as the northern third of Grand Island and the entirety of Sutter Island and Randall Island. It consists almost entirely of rural farmland, as well as the unincorporated communities of Courtland and Hood.

The Courtland Fire Protection District covers territory bounded to the west by Yolo County and the Clarksburg Fire Department. Our northern border ends just south of the Freeport Bridge and the Sacramento City Fire Department service area southerly boundary. (Note: The Town of Freeport receives fire service primarily from the City of Sacramento, however, it does not lie within either a city or fire protection district boundary.) The Walnut Grove Fire Department marks our southern border, and the Cosumnes CSD Fire Department marks our eastern border just west of Interstate 5.

## **Management and Staffing Structure**

The District employs 24 Volunteer Firefighters and a single Volunteer Chief. The District pays its employees on a per call basis and has no salaried positions. Our organizational structure consists of a 3 member Board of Directors who appoints a Chief, who is entrusted with the appointment of Officers and employing of Firefighters. This structure and pay system is similar to the surrounding rural Fire Departments.

## **LAFCo DETERMINATION**

The Courtland Fire Protection District is an effective fire district as it relates to emergency responses related to fire, medical aid and other critical services. The Courtland Fire Protection District serves a rural population effectively and efficiently.

## **Growth and Population Projections**

The level of demand on the District for services is acceptable with current equipment and manpower. Our last financial year saw a call volume of 158 calls, or less than one call for every two days. Our District has previously been able to successfully manage multiple incidents in a single day, as well as up to two incidents at a time. Our projected demand for services anticipates minimal increases, due to stagnant population growth, but our capability could handle a 100% increase to up to 1 call a day. There have been occasions with multiple calls at each end of district with no issues on responding and taking care of the emergencies that have arisen. The CFPD has also responded on many occasions to mutual aid requests from other districts with more than adequate manpower and equipment and while maintaining an adequate resource reserve to cover the district.

The District population is expected to remain statistically stable for the foreseeable future. The only future growth we anticipate is based in industry, through the possible implementation of the BDCP Water Conveyance.

As currently proposed, the BGCP would bring construction to the district 24 hours a day with traffic quadrupling the amount of trucks and service vehicles. We have a plan with the finance director of this project to include financing our district to allow for a full/part time department in the event of project approval. Then the state would be allocating funding for payroll and equipment needed for the project. More immediate is the construction of a wine tasting venue and several breweries that could bring in tourism, but few permanent residents. At times our residential population grows with the seasonal farm jobs increasing the number from around 2500 to around 4000.

### **LAFCo DETERMINATION**

Regarding growth and population projections for the affected area, the Commission determines that the Courtland Fire Protection District is capable of providing service that includes the growth and population projections for the affected territory for the next five years.

### **Facilities and Programs**

#### **Facilities**

Station 91 - 154 Magnolia Ave, Courtland  
2 Type II Engines  
1 Patrol /Grass Engine  
Diesel and Gasoline Fuel Pumps

Station 92 - 1125 Hood Franklin Road, Hood  
1 Type II Engine  
1 Water Tender  
1 Squad Truck

#### **Capacity of Present and Planned Public Facilities**

The District's present service capacity is adequate for the region it covers, as response times fit within National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1720 compliance. This widely recognized industry standard specifies requirements for effective and efficient organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations and special operations to the public by both volunteer and combination fire departments to protect citizens, property and the occupational safety and health of the fire service personnel. Provisions cover functions and objectives of fire department emergency service delivery, response capabilities and resources, including staffing levels, response times, and levels of service. General criteria for managing resources and systems, such as health and safety, incident management, training, communications and pre-incident planning are also included.]

The District is capable of responding to up one to two calls a day without any difficulty. The majority of the District is rural farmland and is expected to remain so in the foreseeable future. Minor commercial growth is expected within the next five years which should not stress the District's current capabilities.

Based on the projected population growth in the District, our facilities and services should remain adequate for the future.

#### **Infrastructure Needs or Deficiencies**

The District conducts weekly inspections of all equipment and facilities in its jurisdiction to maintain quality and identify equipment in need of replacement or repair. The District currently has no areas of deferred maintenance as equipment is either repaired immediately or as soon as necessary parts are available. Most of these repairs are handled in house or are donated by local mechanics.

Infrastructure and equipment is maintained to extend useful service-life for as long as possible. Any replacement equipment or infrastructure is financed through Grant funding or donations, supplemented by District tax revenue only when necessary.

Currently there are no deficiencies that have resulted in any violations. One engine is partially open cab, and can therefore not field a full complement of firefighters and will need to be replaced. However, these seats are not used for safety reasons. Similarly, one of our stations requires new bathrooms to become ADA compliant, the labor of which will be handled in house.

### **Programs**

Fire Safety programs are carried out at the local elementary school at the beginning of every school year aimed at teaching children about fire safety. The District also takes part in an activity day at the school to enforce fire safety and to talk about the fire service. These two programs cover the entire school, up to several hundred kids.

### **LAFCo DETERMINATION**

Regarding infrastructure needs or deficiencies, the Commission determines that the Courtland Fire Protection District currently has no immediate unmet infrastructure needs or existing deficiencies at the current levels of coverage and service response.

### **Financial Information**

#### **Revenue**

The vast majority of our revenue comes from property taxes. Donations are occasionally garnered from the population. We average between \$100,000 and \$120,000 in yearly income, and the property tax rate is on average 8.16%. We do not charge associated fees for our services or inspections, so our budget relies heavily on property taxes. State Proposition 13 severely impacts our main source of income in that it limits property taxes on our main tax base; family farms that have remained with the same families for generations. As such, we rely heavily on grants for major purchases. Another option at our disposal is a Special Assessment, which should add several tens of thousands of dollars to our budgets every year.

#### **Expenditures**

Our service levels compared to other local fire departments are similar relative to our call volumes. Our assets and equipment consist of 3 type II Fire Engines, a Water Tender, a Rescue Squad and a Patrol/Grass Engine. Each truck has the required amount of hose and firefighting equipment, as well as two sets of extrication gear, two ditch pumps, and two exhaust fans; one set per each main truck at each station. The District also maintains two river pumps as well as a fuel pump and tank at Station 91 for the trucks. We have a 1988 FMC Engine type II needing replacement now, 2004 Freightliner type 111 expected life 15 yrs, 2008 Freightliner type 111 expected life 15 yrs, 2006 Freightliner Water Tender expected life 15 yrs, 1991 International Grass Rig needs replacement soon, the 2006 F450 Rescue Squad has a 15 year life expectancy.

The District has neither proposed nor incurs standing debt, as well as no existing liabilities. All previous debt has been paid and all future expenditures are within budget or are through grants. Our budget is planned to spend the entirety of our earnings, so we leave little as a contingency or in emergency reserves. The CFPD last conducted an audit in 2012.

## **LAFCo DETERMINATION**

Regarding financing constraints and opportunities, the Commission determines that the Courtland Fire Protection District has no serious financing constraints at this time. Regarding cost avoidance opportunities, the Commission determines that the District uses its best efforts to take advantage of all reasonable cost avoidance and grant funding opportunities.

## **Status and Opportunities for Innovation and Shared Facilities**

The District is currently has Mutual Aid agreements with all of our surroundings departments and districts, specifically with Walnut Grove Fire, Clarksburg Fire in Yolo County, Consumes Fire Department and Sacramento City Fire. The District also has an agreement with Consumes CSD Fire for the use of their Ambulance units in medical situations. Through these agreements, we also are able to provide the use of our Water Tender and engines should they be needed in the surrounding districts. The District is not aware of any overlapping territory on our borders, though the town of Freeport and parts of Interstate 5 have been variously claimed by different departments to both belong and not belong to the District.

The District also does not feel any of its territory can be better administered by another. Of the only two areas of note, Sutter Island is only accessible from one road within the district and is therefore impractical for another to handle. The extreme northern end of the district, meanwhile, can take some time to reach but still falls within NFPA 1720 guidelines, and can often be reached before units from Sacramento City Fire. The District does feel that it might be beneficial if coverage from Station 92 be extended along Hood Franklin Road, as vehicle accidents on the road and grass fires in the neighboring fields can often receive a response from that station faster than it can from its current CCSD coverage in Elk Grove.

Current cost avoidance practices within the District consist mostly of in house repairs and maintenance, handled either by firefighters or donated by mechanics. We also take part in regional grants for increased purchasing power, gaining needed supplies such as modern radios to fall into line with neighboring departments. The District also takes part in shared training opportunities with neighboring districts as available.

## **LAFCo DETERMINATION**

Regarding opportunities for shared facilities, the Commission determines that the District shares facilities with other agencies and continually reviews new opportunities to do so. The District participates with the Sacramento Fire/ EMS Communication Center.

## **Accountability for Community Service Needs**

The District is governed by a three member Board of Directors, elected to office for four year terms, by Registered Voters living in district. The Board meets publically at Station 91 during the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 PM unless otherwise posted. The meeting times are posted at the Post Offices within the District and at the stations, and are open to the public. The Agenda is posted in advance on the website and Facebook page. The Board members are not compensated for their services.

Public participation is welcomed at the meetings but few members of the public attend. The meeting place is accessible to the public as it is in the middle of the main town of the District and is in the evening after people can get home from work. Currently the District has a public website where they can contact the Chief for assistance or information about the District or the Board meetings, and can request any public information about the Board of the District. The District also holds public education events at the local elementary school.

## **LAFCo DETERMINATION**

Regarding evaluation of management efficiencies, the Commission determines the District operates with a high degree of efficiency and professional cooperation with the community and other private/ public agencies. This cooperation is exemplified by the active participation in the quarterly South County Chiefs meetings.

## **Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities**

The district is a non-discriminatory entity and does not discriminate in its hiring processes based on race, age, or sex.

We follow State and Federal Employment Laws. We are a part of the Northern California Special District Insurance Authority (NCS DIA) which covers all Equipment, Land, Buildings and Workers Compensation.

### Additional

The Town of Freeport receives fire service primarily from the City of Sacramento, however, it does not lie within either a city or fire protection district boundary. The service responsibility for the unincorporated Town of Freeport should be clarified. The Courtland FPD is capable of providing service. However, to do so without adequate compensation may present a fiscal burden.

### Other Funding

We have to rely on Grants as they become available to assist in purchasing equipment and safety gear. With our minimal budget that relies totally on property tax we are not able to purchase say New Engines, and other vital Equipment.

Cal-Fire Grants have been very helpful with the purchase of Structure Gear, Wildland Gear, and compatible Paging Equipment. This Grant is a 50/50 match so we do have to spend from our reserve account each year.

### Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Grant

CFPD was able to purchase new Hurst Extrication Equipment with this Grant. The Chief was the Lead on this Regional Grant that included 5 Districts.

### Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program (AFG)

The CFPD applies annually, and has not yet been successful. This would be for new Engines that need to be updated and also SCBA equipment.

## **LAFCo DETERMINATION**

Regarding government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service providers, the Commission determines that the District currently provides services primarily to a clearly defined geographic area which is primarily rural and agricultural in nature.