
Esparto Fire Protection District Final MSR/SOI Municipal Service Review Sphere of Influence October 25, 2004



Esparto Fire Training Exercise

LAFCO

Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission
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Resolution No. 2004-08
(Resolution Adopting the Esparto Fire Protection District
Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update)
(LAFCO Proceeding S-009)

WHEREAS, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 set forth in Government Code Sections 56000 et seq. governs the organization and reorganization of cities and special districts by local agency formation commissions established in each county, as defined and specified in Government Code Sections 56000 et seq. (unless otherwise indicated all statutory references are to the Government Code); and,

WHEREAS, Section 56425 et seq. provides that the local agency formation commission in each county shall develop and determine the sphere of influence of each local governmental agency within the county, and enact policies designed to promote the logical and orderly development of areas within the spheres of influence, as more fully specified in Sections 56425 et seq.; and,

WHEREAS, Section 56430 requires that local agency formation commissions conduct a municipal service review (MSR) prior to, or in conjunction with, consideration of actions to establish or update a sphere of influence (SOI) in accordance with Sections 56076 and 56425; and,

WHEREAS, in 2004, the Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) undertook to review and update the existing Sphere of Influence for the Esparto Fire Protection District; and,

WHEREAS, in conjunction therewith, the LAFCO Executive Officer prepared a combined draft MSR and SOI (hereafter collectively referred to as the Sphere of Influence) for the Esparto Fire Protection District; and,

WHEREAS, in connection therewith, the Executive Officer reviewed the project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and determined that the project is exempt from CEQA because it has no growth-inducing impacts nor any potentially significant environmental impacts, and, based thereon, the Executive Officer prepared a Notice of Exemption; and,

WHEREAS, the Executive Officer set a public hearing for September 27, 2004 for consideration of the draft Sphere of Influence and Notice of Exemption, and caused notice thereof to be posted, published and mailed at the times and in the manner required by law at least twenty-one (21) days in advance of the date; and,

WHEREAS, on September 27, 2004 the draft Sphere of Influence came on regularly for hearing before LAFCO, at the time and place specified in the Notice; and,

WHEREAS, at said hearing, LAFCO reviewed and considered the Notice of Exemption, the draft Sphere of Influence, and the Executive Officer's Report and

Recommendations; each of the policies, priorities and factors set forth in Government Code Sections 56425 et seq. and LAFCO's Guidelines and Methodology for the Preparation and Determination of Spheres of Influence; and all other matters presented as prescribed by law; and,

WHEREAS, at that time, an opportunity was given to all interested persons, organizations, and agencies to present oral or written testimony and other information concerning the proposal and all related matters; and,

WHEREAS, LAFCO then continued the public hearing to October 25, 2004, for further hearing and proceedings, including consideration of any additional information presented by the Esparto Fire Protection District and other interested parties; and,

WHEREAS, thereafter, the LAFCO Executive Officer prepared a revised draft Sphere of Influence for the Esparto Fire Protection District based upon additional information provided by the District and other interested parties; and,

WHEREAS, on October 25, 2004, LAFCO further reviewed and considered the Notice of Exemption, the revised draft Sphere of Influence, the Executive Officer's Report and Recommendations, each of the policies, priorities and factors set forth in Government Code Sections 56425 et seq., and LAFCO's Guidelines and Methodology for the Preparation and Determination of Spheres of Influence Studies, and all other matters presented as prescribed by law; and,

WHEREAS, at that time, an opportunity was given to all interested persons, organizations, and agencies to present oral or written testimony and other information concerning the proposal and all related matters.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, ORDERED and FOUND by the Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission as follows:

1. Each of the foregoing recitals is true and correct.
2. The Notice of Exemption prepared by the Executive Officer is approved as the appropriate environmental document for this project, because there are no growth-inducing impacts or potentially significant environmental impacts as a result of the adoption and implementation of the Sphere of Influence.
3. The Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission adopts the combined Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence for the Esparto Fire Protection District as set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference, including all written determinations and the ten and twenty-year lines as set forth therein.
4. The Executive Officer is instructed to:
 - a. Mail a certified copy of this Resolution to the Esparto Fire Protection District and the County of Yolo.
 - b. Prepare and file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk in accordance

with the California Environmental Quality Act.


PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission, County of Yolo, State of California, this 25th day of October, 2004, by the following vote:

Ayes: Kristoff, Pimentel, Pollock, Woods and Thomson
Noes: None
Abstentions: None
Absent: None



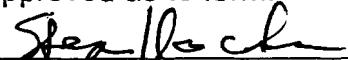
Helen Thomson, Chairwoman
Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission

Attest:

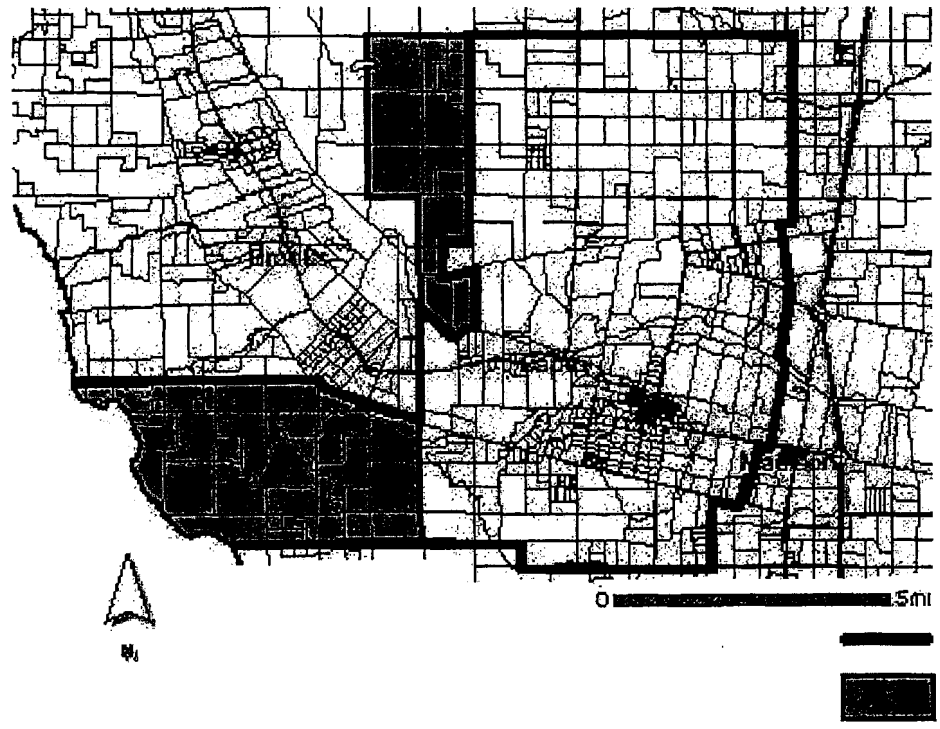


Elizabeth Castro Kemper, Executive Officer
Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission

Approved as to form:



Stephen Nocita, Commission Counsel



Esparto FPD Sphere of Influence Boundary
Study Area with Capay Valley Fire Protection District

Final 2004 Esparto Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence Boundary Line

Exhibit A

Final

Esparto Fire Protection District

Municipal Services Review and
Sphere of Influence

Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission

October 25, 2004

YOLO COUNTY
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS

Helen Thomson, Chairwoman, County Member
Artemio Pimentel, City Member
William Kristoff, City Member
Lynnel Pollock, County Member
Olin Woods, Public Member

ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Robert Chapman, City Member
Frank Sieferman, Jr., County Member
Vacant, Public Member

STAFF

Elizabeth Castro Kemper, Executive Officer
José C. Henríquez, LAFCO Analyst
Stephen Nocita, Commission Counsel
Cynthia Guerrero, Commission Clerk

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INTRODUCTION

This Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update is prepared for the Esparto Fire Protection District. The combination of the two documents analyzes the District's ability to serve existing and future residents. The SOI and Service Review were prepared to meet the requirements and standards of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (CKH). The Service Review was prepared using the Service Review Guidelines prepared by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

The fundamental role of the Local Agency Formation Commission, LAFCO, is to implement the CKH Act (found at Government Code Sections 56000 et seq.), consistent with local conditions and circumstances. LAFCO's decisions are guided by the CKH Act. The major goals of LAFCO as established by the CKH Act include:

- To encourage orderly growth and development, which are essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well being of the state;
- To promote orderly development by encouraging the logical formation and determination of boundaries and working to provide housing for families of all incomes;
- To discourage urban sprawl;
- To preserve open-space and prime agricultural lands by guiding development in a manner that minimizes resource loss;
- To exercise its authority to ensure that affected populations receive efficient governmental services;
- To promote logical formation and boundary modifications that direct the burdens and benefits of additional growth to those local agencies that are best suited to provide necessary services and housing;
- To make studies and obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies and to shape their development so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities;
- To establish priorities by assessing and balancing total community services needs with financial resources available to secure and provide community services and to encourage government structures that reflect local circumstances, conditions and financial resources;
- To determine whether new or existing agencies can feasibly provide

needed services in a more efficient or accountable manner and, where deemed necessary, consider reorganization with other single purpose agencies that provide related services;

- And effective January 2001, to update SOIs as necessary but not less than every five years; and
- Conduct a review of all municipal services by county, jurisdiction, region, sub-region or other geographic area prior to, or in conjunction with, SOI updates or the creation of new SOIs.

To carry out State policies, LAFCO has the power to conduct studies, approve or disapprove proposals, modify boundaries, and impose terms and conditions on approval of proposals. Existing law does not provide LAFCO with direct land use authority, although some of LAFCO's discretionary actions indirectly affect land use. LAFCO is expected to weigh, balance, deliberate and set forth the facts and determinations of a specific action when considering a proposal.

Sphere of Influence Update Process

An important tool utilized in implementing the CKH Act is the adoption of a Sphere of Influence for a jurisdiction. A SOI is defined by Government Code §56425 as "...a plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency or municipality..." An SOI represents an area adjacent to a jurisdiction where development might be reasonably expected to occur in the next 20 years. The Act further requires that a Municipal Service Review be conducted prior to or, in conjunction with, the update of a Sphere of Influence.

In addition, the Commission's methodology for sphere preparation is an essential part of updating the Sphere of Influence. In Yolo County, an SOI generally has two planning lines. One is considered a 20-year growth boundary, while the other is a 10-year, for immediate growth and projected service extension.

The CKH Act requires LAFCO to update the Spheres of Influence for all applicable jurisdictions in the County within five years or by January 1, 2006. The MSR/SOI document provides the basis for updating the Esparto FPD Sphere of Influence and shall be updated every five years.

For rural special districts, such as the Esparto FPD, that do not have municipal level services to review, MSRs will be used to determine where the district is expected to provide fire protection and emergency medical aid and the extent to which it is actually able to do so.

For these special districts, the spheres will delineate the service capability and expansion capacity of the agency. The ten-year line will represent the ability of the district to

provide services within ten years. The twenty-year line will show the long-term expectations of influence, impact, and control. The sphere may have only one line depending on the projections for the district and the ability to provide services.

The process of preparing these documents has several steps, as shown below.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE PROCESS OUTLINE

1. Concurrent preparation of a Draft Municipal Services Review and a Draft Sphere of Influence Update.
2. Completion of the environmental review process consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
3. Public review of the Municipal Service Review, Sphere of Influence and environmental review documents.
4. Approval of the Municipal Service Review, Sphere of Influence Study, and acceptance of the Categorical Exemption #20 as the appropriate environmental document.

In order to update a Sphere of Influence, the CKH Act calls for LAFCO to prepare and consider written determinations for each of the following:

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

MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW FACTORS

This Municipal Service Review has been prepared in accordance with Section 56430 of the California Government Code as a means of identifying and evaluating public services provided by the Esparto FPD and possible changes to the District's Sphere of Influence. The Service Review Guidelines prepared by the State Office of Planning and Research were used to develop information, perform analysis and organize this study.

The legislative authority for conducting Service Reviews is provided in the CKH Act. The Act states, "That in order to prepare and update Sphere of Influences in accordance with Section 56425, LAFCOs are required to conduct a review of the municipal services provided in the County or other appropriate designated areas..." A Service

Review must have written determinations that address the following factors in order to update a Sphere of Influence:

Factors to be addressed

- Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies
- Growth and Population
- Financing Constraints and Opportunities
- Cost-Avoidance Opportunities
- Opportunities for Rate Restructuring
- Opportunities for Shared Facilities
- Government Structure Options
- Evaluation of Management Efficiencies
- Local Accountability and Governance

Information regarding each of the above issue areas is provided in this document. Written determinations for each factor have also been prepared for the Commission's consideration. The Service Review will analyze the District's services consistent with the State's Guidelines for preparing such a study.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE GUIDELINES

The Sphere of Influence guidelines adopted by Yolo County LAFCO provide direction in updating the District's Sphere of Influence. Each of the following guidelines has been addressed in either the Sphere of Influence Update or the Municipal Service Review.

1. LAFCO will designate a sphere of influence line for each local agency that represents the agency's probable physical boundary and includes territory eligible for annexation and the extension or withdrawal of that agency's services within a twenty-year period.
2. The sphere of influence is delineated by a twenty-year line that projects necessary service coverage by a particular agency. A ten-year line represents more immediate service area coverage needs. To preclude urban sprawl within an adopted sphere of influence, a request for a sphere amendment and approval of such a request, before changes in boundary, shall be considered.
3. LAFCO shall consider the following factors in determining an agency's sphere of influence.

- a. Present and future need for agency services and the service levels specified for the subject area in applicable general plans, growth management plans, annexation policies, resource management plans, and any other plans or policies related to an agency's ultimate boundary and service area.
 - b. Capability of the local agency to provide needed services, taking into account evidence of resource capacity sufficient to provide for internal needs and urban expansion.
 - c. The existence of agricultural preserves, agricultural lands and open space lands in the area and the effect that inclusion within a sphere of influence shall have on the physical and economic integrity of maintaining the land in non-urban use.
 - d. Present and future cost and adequacy of services anticipated to be extended within the sphere of influence.
 - e. Present and projected population growth, population densities, land uses, land area, ownership patterns, assessed valuations, and proximity to other populated areas.
 - f. The agency's capital improvement or other plans that delineate planned facility expansions and the timing of that expansion.
 - g. Social or economic communities of interest in the area.
4. Territory not in need of urban services, including open space, agriculture, recreational, rural lands or residential rural areas, shall not be assigned to an agency's sphere of influence, unless the area's exclusion would impede the planned, orderly and efficient development of the area.
 5. LAFCO may adopt a sphere of influence that excludes territory currently within that agency's boundaries. This occurs where LAFCO determines that the territory consists of agricultural lands, open space lands, or agricultural preserves whose preservation would be jeopardized by inclusion within an agency's sphere of influence. Exclusion of these areas from an agency's sphere of influence indicates that detachment is appropriate. These boundary changes may also occur when another agency can provide similar services better than an existing entity.
 6. Where an area could be assigned to the sphere of influence of more than one agency providing a particular needed service, the following hierarchy shall apply dependent upon ability to service.

- a. Inclusion within a city sphere of influence.
- b. Inclusion within a multi-purpose district sphere of influence.
- c. Inclusion within a single-purpose district sphere of influence.

In deciding which of two or more equally-ranked agencies shall include an area within its sphere of influence, LAFCO shall consider the agencies' service and financial capabilities, social and economic interdependencies, topographic factors, and the effect that eventual service extension will have on adjacent agencies.

7. Sphere of influence boundaries shall not create islands or corridors unless it can be demonstrated that the irregular boundaries represent the most logical and orderly service area of an agency.
8. Non-adjacent, publicly-owned properties and facilities used for urban purposes may be included within that public agency's sphere of influence if eventual annexation would provide an overall benefit to agency residents.
9. LAFCO shall review sphere of influence determinations every five years or when deemed necessary by the Commission. If a local agency or the county desires amendment or revision of an adopted sphere of influence, the local agency by resolution may file such a request with the Executive Officer. Any local agency or county making such a request shall reimburse the Commission based on the adopted fee schedule. The Commission may waive such reimbursement if it finds that the request may be considered as part of its periodic review of spheres of influence.
10. LAFCO shall adopt, amend or revise sphere of influence determinations following the procedural steps set forth in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act, Government Code Section 56000 et seq.

The Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update documents have been compiled using information from a variety of sources, including the Yolo County General Plan and EIR, District Service Survey and Questionnaire, County of Yolo, Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG), US Census Bureau and other governmental agencies.

AREAS OF INTEREST

District Background

DISTRICT TOPOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

One of fifteen fire suppression districts, the Esparto Fire Protection District is located generally in the midwestern section of Yolo County (refer to Map 1). The major roads in the area are Highway 16 running east-west and Highway E4 running north-south from Capay. The area is generally flat with the exception of the westernmost tip of the District, which contains hills south of the Capay Valley, an area also known as the Jackson Bluffs and encompassing the Blue and Rocky Ridges along the Yolo/Napa county line. The land use within the District is primarily agricultural and most of the land is under Williamson Act contract (refer to Map 2). Most of the soil types are Class I and Class II.

Capay and Esparto are the two biggest towns in the District and lie along Highway 16; this means that most of the population is concentrated along this narrow band. The District's population resides mainly on farms or in the small towns and is estimated by the 2000 US Census as approximately 2,800 people. The towns are composed mostly of single family residencies and a few businesses that provide goods and services to support either the residents or the farming communities. There is minimal commercial or industrial development.

DISTRICT HISTORY AND POWERS

Organized on April 21, 1931 under the provisions of General Law Statutes 123, Chapter 191, page 431, the Esparto Fire Protection District was created to serve a largely rural area covering roughly 75 square miles in northwest Yolo County. In 1966, the District was subsequently reorganized under Section 13822.5 et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code. The District extends one mile north of County Road 14, to the Napa County line to the west, to County Road 25 to the south, and to the eastern boundary located near Interstate 505.

The following powers were granted to the Esparto FPD at the time of the 1931 formation (the code sections immediately following the powers refer to state law at the time of the 1966 reorganization and the current code sections governing those same powers are listed in parentheses):

Eminent domain – California Health and Safety Code §13852(c) (California Health and Safety Code §13861(c))

Establish, equip and maintain a fire department – California Health and Safety Code §13852(d) (California Health and Safety Code §13861(b))

Provide any special service function necessary for fire prevention and protection— California Health and Safety Code §13852(h) (California Health and Safety Code §13861(i) and §13862(a))

Acquire and construct facilities for development, storage and distribution of water for the purpose of providing fire protection – California Health and Safety Code §13852(i) (California Health and Safety Code §13861(b))

Acquire and maintain ambulances and to operate an ambulance service – California Health and Safety Code §13853 (California Health and Safety Code §13861(i) and §13862(e))

Establish, maintain and operate first aid services – California Health and Safety Code §13854 (California Health and Safety Code §13861(i) and §13862(c))

Clear, or order the clearing of, flammable growths or materials from lands within the district – California Health and Safety Code §13867, 13868 (California Health and Safety Code §13879)

Adopt and enforce ordinances for the prevention and suppression of fires and for the protection of life and property against fire hazards – California Health and Safety Code §13869 (California Health and Safety Code §13861(h) and §13869.7)

Pursuant to current Fire Protection District Law, the District's powers also include those listed in California Health and Safety Code §§13861, 13862, 13869.7 and 13870 et seq.

NEIGHBORING FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS

The Esparto FPD is adjacent to the Capay Valley (on the northwest), Madison (on the east and south), Dunnigan (on the north) and Zamora (on the northeast) Fire Protection Districts and its western end lies within the State Responsibility Area shared with the California Department of Forestry (CDF – refer to Map 3). The District has a "First Alarm" agreement with the Madison FPD and "Mutual Aid" agreements with the rest of the public districts.

During fire season (May-October), the CDF has equipment and staff available to the Esparto FPD should the need arise. CDF has one engine, a minimum of three firefighters and a battalion chief in Brooks. A minimum of three firefighters and an engine are stationed in Gordon Valley. At Spanish Flats in Napa County the CDF has a minimum of six firefighters, two engines, a bulldozer and a battalion chief. The latter station is staffed year round, but with only one engine and a minimum staff of three firefighters during the non-fire season. For high dispatch, the following CDF resources are also

available in the area:

- 1 air attack aircraft
- 3 air tankers
- 1 helicopter
- 1 battalion
- 5 engines
- 2 bulldozers

The chart below outlines the resources available to the Esparto FPD from the neighboring fire districts:

Fire Protection District	Volunteers	Engines	Water Tenders	Grass Trucks
Capay Valley	17	2	2	2
Dunnigan	17	1	1	3
Madison	14	2	2	1
Willow Oak	27	2	2	3
Zamora	23	4*	1	4*

*According to the Zamora FPD fire chief, its engines and grass trucks are used interchangeably

In addition, the Esparto FPD signed an automatic aid with the Rumsey Rancheria Fire Department (RRFD), which has firefighters, a fire engine and paramedic staff to assist the Esparto FPD should the need arise.

Sphere Of Influence History

The last comprehensive Sphere of Influence Study for the Esparto Fire Protection District was completed in 1986. Since then, no proposals directly involving this District have been considered by LAFCO.

At this time, LAFCO is being asked to consider the following actions as a part of this Sphere of Influence Update:

- Consider the Municipal Service Review for the Esparto Fire Protection District;
- Approve and adopt the Esparto Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence Update; and
- Accept the Categorical Exemption as the appropriate environmental determination pursuant to CEQA

LAFCO has generated the following analysis to evaluate issues and address the factors unique to LAFCO's role and decision-making authority pursuant to the CKH Act.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Present And Probable Capacity and Need

The following is key information completed for the Esparto Fire Protection District. Each of the nine factors that are required to be addressed by the CKH Act for a MSR is covered in this section as well as factors required for a Sphere of Influence.

Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

Like all agencies, the Esparto FPD has staff and primary and ancillary equipment in order to operate and serve its constituents. Before 2003, there was no systematic method to forecast District infrastructure needs (e.g. equipment or staffing). Since then, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors' approval of the Fire District Impact Mitigation Fee Ordinance, which provides that an FPD must develop a "capital improvement plan" before the adoption of development impact fees, provides the District with the opportunity to develop a systematic method. After its development, this capital improvement plan can be used as a blueprint to forecast the District's infrastructure needs.

Until the completion of the capital facility and equipment plans, the District will rely on its previous methodology for replacement of the major equipment, as described in the following. For the determination of the staffing levels at the station, the Fire Chief indicated he uses a "rule of thumb" used by most rural fire districts. This rule of thumb, which is based on call volume within an 8-hour time period, is: if a district receives 500 calls or more per year, then hourly/paid staff is needed. In 2003, the District incurred 229 calls. He supplements this rule of thumb by also using population density as a guide. For example, the Chief is aware that 92 new houses were built in 2003. In the next two years, 300 more houses are projected for construction. Knowing this, the Chief and the Board of Commissioners are discussing the personnel level for the District and will make a determination soon on whether additional staff is necessary. For the moment, the Chief indicates he has sufficient personnel and equipment to maintain service at current levels. But he is unsure whether that will be the case in the long term given the pace of growth in the Esparto area.

STAFF

The Esparto Fire District contains has 23 volunteer firefighters in addition to one paid fire chief and one part-time paid administrative assistant/office manager. According to Barry Burns, Fire Chief, this number of volunteers reflects the historic average number for the District; however, the 1986 SOI noted 30 volunteers for the Esparto FPD. Eight of the 23 volunteers are certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), while the rest are certified to administer CPR and First Aid.

New recruits are trained in-house; however, individuals can sign up for additional

courses at other institutions. The District, as a policy, reimburses a portion of the cost of these courses. Monthly refresher training practices for established firefighters and for the Chief are conducted concurrently with new recruits. Each training session can last as long as four hours per day. During emergencies, new staff can be part of the company that responds to the call; however, their role is strictly to observe and/or to provide support for the established volunteers.

Table 1 illustrates the challenge the District faces with the question of the town of Esparto's rapidly increasing population. A comparison was made of population served, based on the 2000 US Census, and the number of volunteers in the neighboring fire districts. For a long-term perspective in the analysis, the estimated population and volunteer numbers from the 1986 Esparto FPD SOI were also included. In order to control for the variance in population and number of volunteers per district, a ratio of population to volunteers was calculated. It can be seen that, of the FPDs shown below, the Esparto FPD is easily the biggest fire district in terms of population and it is also the district with the highest per capita volunteer ratio. In fact, its current ratio denotes that each volunteer now covers almost twice as many residents said volunteer would have covered in 1986. An Esparto FPD volunteer also covers 23 more residents than a volunteer at the Madison FPD, the district with the second-highest per capita volunteer ratio.

TABLE 1 – COMPARATIVE RATIO OF POPULATION TO FIREFIGHTERS PER DISTRICT

Fire Protection District	District Population	Number of Firefighters	Firefighters per Capita
Esparto (1986)	2,000 (est)	30	66:1
Esparto (2003)	2,802	23	122:1
Capay Valley (2003)	861	17	51:1
Dunnigan (2003)	1,234	17	73:1
Madison (2003)	1,389	12	99:1
Willow Oak (2003)	1,615	25	65:1
Zamora	359	23	16:1

Note: Willow Oak is the only district shown here to have paid firefighters. In the other districts, only the fire chief has a salary and he was not included among the volunteer numbers

On the other hand, the population growth is concentrated around the town of Esparto, minimizing the impact (response time, travel distance, access to infrastructure, etc.) of having to provide coverage to more people. Further, the Chief indicated that the Dis-

district's main concern is to protect structures, as the CDF would provide supplementary assistance in suppressing grass fires on hills in the western portion of the District.

EQUIPMENT

Through savings and fundraisers, the District has been able to purchase and replace some equipment despite the budgetary constraints that have plagued other local districts since the passage of Proposition 13. However, using fundraisers as the main mechanism to replace equipment can be a slow process, because the amount that can be raised at each fundraising event is limited. Therefore, it takes multiple events spread over time to raise sufficient funds for a costly item.

The following is a list of the District's major equipment:

- Two engines/fire trucks: 1973 International with a 500 gpm pump (due to be replaced in 2005) and 1995 Ford with a 1,000 gpm pump, 2004 HME 1,500 gpm
- Two water tenders: 1978 Freightlander (3,800 gallons) with a 500 gpm pump and 1995 GMC (2,000 gals) with a 300 gpm pump
- One grass truck: 1978 GMC (500 gals) with a 300 gpm pump

Half of the equipment at the District's disposal is over 20 years old and requires nearly constant maintenance. The District's strategy for replacing the equipment is three-fold (these replacement plans are not formally instituted or adopted by the District). First, the District plans to "stagger" replacing the engines so no engine is more than 15 years old at any time. This will allow each engine to be within its operational life and help maintain the District's ISO rating (more on this to follow). Second, for the grass truck the District will try to replace it within a reasonable timeframe, but it will not be as aggressive in replacing the grass truck as it proposes for the fire engines. Finally, for all other equipment the District plans to exchange them for newer ones as the opportunity arises.

The District's main impediment to replacing equipment is financing: the District's stable revenue streams are only large enough to cover ongoing costs and maintenance (further discussion on the District's finances will occur in the "Financing Constraints and Opportunities" section). However, with the potential adoption of a stable development impact fee schedule, it is now possible for the district to enhance its revenue stream and thereby using this additional revenue to upgrade or replace equipment to ensure the long-term maintenance of its service levels.

As part of a landmark agreement with Yolo County, the Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians agreed to pay more than \$100 million over 18 years to help mitigate off-reservation impacts of its casino expansion. The District applied for \$35,092 of mitigation funding, based upon its need to purchase additional equipment to help manage the rise in ve-

hicular collisions resulting from increased traffic flows along Highway 16. The District's application detailed some of the District's smaller equipment needs in addition to the replacement of aging vehicles. The District requested the following emergency/medical response equipment:

- Stabilization equipment to keep automobiles involved in collision from rolling over;
- Foam fire extinguishers specifically made for car fires;
- Traffic control radios;
- Equipment interfaces to allow the District's apparatuses to work with other districts' machinery during joint rescue operations.

According to Chief Burns, the goal was for the Esparto, Madison, Yolo and Willow Oak FPDs to have the interchangeable equipment so that each district could provide the same emergency medical services in a seamless and consistent fashion. On December 9, 2003, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors, which is the ultimate decision-maker on the appropriation of the mitigation funds, approved the District's request for \$35,092.

CALL VOLUME

Despite a significant increase in population and vehicular traffic, the District's call volume has only increased at a moderate rate for the past four years. Table A2 groups the various types of calls received by the District from 2000 through late-2003. The only significant surge in intra-district calls occurred in the "Other" category in 2002 (a surge in calls also occurred in the "Mutual Aid" category, however those were calls outside of the District boundaries). The Chief attributed the surge in the "Other" category calls to problems caused by flooding that year. Through November 30, 2003, the District continued to experience flooding problems and also had a rash of false alarms from pranks by high school-age children.

TABLE 2 – TYPES OF CALLS RECEIVED BY CATEGORY

Year	Structure Fires	Grass Fires	Vehicle Fires	Vehicle Accidents	Medical Aid	Hazardous Materials	Mutual Aid**	Other*	Total Calls
2000	8	22	4	31	82	2	18	15	182
2001	5	26	7	49	107	3	16	7	220
2002	8	38	8	44	90	1	15	31	235
2003 to now	6	35	2	41	80	4	30	31	229

- This category includes any other type of call not covered in the other categories, plus false alarms.
- ** Calls that require the District to leave its jurisdiction to fight fires or come to the aid of other fire protection districts

It can be seen that the highest volume of calls come from the categories of medical aid, vehicle accidents and grass fires, in descending order. In their application for casino mitigation funds, the District noted that in 2002 at least 50% of the District's vehicle accident calls involved cars that either coming from or going to the casino.

DISTRICT RATING

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) is a private organization that supplies information that underwriters use to evaluate and price particular risks, including fire protection. Its 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. Among other services, the ISO:

- Evaluates the fire-protection capabilities of individual cities and towns.
- Surveys of personal and commercial properties to determine:
 - the type and effectiveness of building construction
 - the hazards of various commercial uses of the properties
 - the type and quality of sprinkler systems and other internal and external fire protection
 - special conditions
 - potential dangers from adjacent properties

Using the information it gathers, the ISO rates each fire protection agency within the United States. This rating determines the fire insurance rates for the residents and businesses within the agency's jurisdiction. The ratings range from a score of 10 (no fire protection at all) to 1 (best fire protection possible). The Esparto FPD is divided into two zones. The town of Esparto forms Zone 1 and has an ISO rating of 6. Zone 2 is composed of the rest of the District and it has an ISO rating of 8. The difference in ratings results from different response times, availability of water and the number of structures in peril. Both ISO ratings are reasonable for the Esparto FPD given its financial and infrastructure circumstances and its size and population.

Written Determinations – Municipal Services

Currently, the Esparto Fire Protection District adequately provides fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services despite having aged equipment and a growing population to serve. Staff recommends the following findings:

1. The District is in compliance with all state laws and regulations.
2. The District may not have sufficient personnel and equipment to respond to an increasing level of calls over the long term. The District needs to explore ways to meet increasing services needs in the future.
3. The District is actively searching for new funding mechanisms to upgrade or replace equipment to better serve those in need of its services.
4. The District was astute in its request for tribal mitigation funds, coordinated with three of its neighboring FPDs, for the purchase of specific, important and strategic equipment
5. Additional infrastructure and resource needs to accommodate future development will include: expanded water supply, a larger volunteer force, and adequate equipment and facilities that the District can employ individually or in joint operations with other districts

MSR AND SOI ANALYSIS

Growth and Population

According to the 2000 US Census, the District currently serves a population of 2,802. The development and completion of the new subdivisions in the town of Esparto are as shown below:

TABLE 3 – RECENT DISTRICT GROWTH

PROJECT	UNITS	POPULATION INCREASE (est.)
Country West II	59	148
Parker Place	62	155
Esperanza Estates*	95	238
Total	216	541

* Planned and approved but not yet built

Table 4 lists proposed development, identified in the Esparto General Plan, and proposed new expansions not currently within the adopted general plan. Upon completion, the following projects could increase the population by approximately 899 people. These projects are:

TABLE 4 - POSSIBLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT	UNITS	POPULATION INCREASE (est. 2.5 per unit)
Blacksmith Homes/Orciuoli	165	413
Emerald/Lopez	73	183
Emerald/Parker	62	155
Emerald/Storey	59	148
TOTAL	359	899

MSR AND SOI FACTORS

Financing Constraints and Opportunities

DISTRICT ASSESSED VALUE

A district's assessed value is the combined secured, unsecured and utility assets as well as the total homeowner property tax exemptions within the district. The assessed value is a tool to measure the amount of development within a district as well as its property tax income. A lower assessed value means that the district will receive a lower amount of property tax revenues.

The total assessed value for the Esparto FPD in the 2002-2003 Fiscal year was \$173,177,992. To gain perspective, a comparison was made with its neighboring districts. This comparison is important because it highlights some of the District's challenges in raising property tax.

TABLE 5 – COMPARISON OF DISTRICT ASSESSED VALUE

Fire Protection District	District Population	Assessed Value	Per Capita Assessed Value
Esparto (2003)	2,802	\$173,177,992	\$61,805
Capay Valley (2003)	861	\$77,302,916	\$89,782
Dunnigan (2003)	1,234	\$161,121,086	\$130,568
Madison (2003)	1,389	\$100,417,010	\$72,294
Willow Oak (2003)	1,615	\$197,065,444	\$122,022

At first glance, it appears that the Esparto Fire District's assessed value, second highest among these five FPDs, would give it a relatively high property tax revenues. However, the District's assessed value per capita is actually the lowest among the five districts.

The good news for the District is that the brisk pace of development in Esparto results in higher property tax revenues for the District. This comes from the revaluation of their property tax base. Among other things, Proposition 13 freezes the value of a property and allows for its re-assessment only at the time said property changes ownership. The effect is two-fold. First, the property values on the new subdivisions would be reassessed when the developers sell new homes. Second, the reassessment on the land would be at market value and with improvements on each lot. This is in contrast to other districts with little or older development. This benefit for the Esparto Fire District would have to be weighed against the increase in service demand resulting from the new housing developments.

DISTRICT BUDGET

The District's operating budget is also an indicator of its fiscal health. The chart below contains the revenues, expenditures and net amounts for the District during the 2000-2001, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 fiscal years. The numbers reflect actual dollars, not budgeted amounts.

TABLE 6 – DISTRICT REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES (ACTUAL)

Budget Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Amounts
2000-2001	\$123,131.43	\$90,027.67	\$33,103.76
2001-2002	\$128,528.76	\$190,578.72	(\$62,049.96)
2002-2003	\$169,993.53	\$130,937.85	\$39,055.68

The District is not allowed to operate on a deficit. In fiscal 2001-2002, the District's expenditures exceeded revenues by \$62,049.96. According to Doug Olander from the Yolo County Office of the Auditor-Controller, the difference between expenditures and revenues was due to three things. First, the District budgeted for \$30,000 in development impact fees that did not materialize until fiscal 2002-2003. Second, the District made equipment purchases using their savings and other earmarked funds, with the effect that the District's expenses were inflated by some purchases that were paid for by capital and equipment reserves carried over from prior years. Finally, the District's expenditures were lower in prior years (including in fiscal 2001-2002) than what it had budgeted, so the District's positive carryover balance from prior years helped offset its lower-than-expected revenue situation in fiscal 2001-2002.

The District tries to keep a reserve that is approximately 10% of its budget. This percentage is based on historic levels. Current reserves are at \$11,000, which is 6% of revenue for 2002-2003. The use of the reserve varies, but according to the Chief it is most often used for emergency repair work and equipment purchases.

REVENUE SOURCES

The District's main revenue sources are property taxes, fire suppression assessments, and development impact fees (DIF). Of these three sources, property taxes and fire assessments are the most stable because they are collected every year; however, their relative value decreases slowly over time because they do not automatically increase with inflation.

- **Property Taxes** – In California, the maximum property tax assessed on any land can be 1% of said property's value. Of that 1%, the District receives approximately \$0.04 cents for every property tax dollar collected. As discussed earlier, most of the District's properties are under William-

son Act contract and their property values are suppressed.

- **Fire Assessments** – These fees are a fixed dollar amount per year and vary based upon land use. For example, the assessment on a commercial or residential property is higher than the assessment on agricultural land.
- **Development Impact Fees** – DIFs can be imposed in various ways, but mostly they are set at a certain charge per square foot of a new structure. The logic behind this assessment is that a new structure requires a public services district, in this case an FPD, to spend more resources to inspect and protect it than the FPD would spend to protect vacant or agricultural land. California Health and Safety Code §13916 prohibits fire protection districts from imposing DIFs; however, developers with projects in the town of Esparto have approached and negotiated with the Esparto FPD with DIFs as a way to mitigate the impact their project will have on local resources. DIF can be a beneficial source of revenue for the District, but it is volatile due to it being a one-time assessment and its amount subject to negotiation.

The State Development Mitigation Fee Act provides the authority and framework for local agencies to establish impact mitigation fee programs for new development. The law requires that agencies must study and provide information to support the imposition of fees within the district or agency boundaries. In 2004, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors approved the Fire District Development Impact Mitigation Fee Ordinance authorizing the imposition of fire development impact fees. However, before the Board of Supervisors can adopt such fees for an FPD, the FPD must first conduct capital facility and equipment plans detailing their current equipment inventory, growth projections for the area it serves and estimates for acquiring the necessary facilities to maintain its current levels service. Upon the completion of these plans, a development impact fee study is conducted to determine the appropriate DIF amount. The Esparto FPD is currently in the process of completing its capital facility and equipment plans.

ANALYSIS

The District is facing the challenge of serving a growing population with possibly inadequate capabilities. The District is interested in obtaining revenues both from internal and external sources, including development. However, the obstacle of raising additional revenue through limited options remains. For the last three years, all revenue sources remained stable and are satisfactory enough to pay for ongoing costs of existing equipment and personnel, but leave little room for acquisitions or improvements. Statutory requirements prevent increasing revenues through higher property taxes and, practically speaking, through raising fire assessments. Development impact fees may

be a source that has not been, up to now, tapped to its full potential. However, DIFs can be an unstable source.

The instability of DIFs was highlighted in 2002-2003, when the District experienced a \$30,000 increase in revenue from DIF. A \$0.50 per square foot assessment was negotiated with the developers of new residential housing at the Parker Place and Country West II subdivisions. These development fees, however, are one-time assessments and have the potential to be a volatile funding source. For example, part of the \$62,049.96 difference between revenues and expenditures in fiscal 2001-2002 was that the District expected \$36,000 in DIF revenue that did not materialize until 2002-2003. This instability introduces a certain amount of unpredictability into the District's budget process that makes it difficult for the District to plan for equipment improvements or purchases; however, once it materialized, the additional revenue, gave the District the ability to make some purchases. This infusion of cash highlights that DIFs, if budgeted conservatively, can provide a revenue boost.

It is necessary to caution, however, that new residential building would most likely occur in the town of Esparto, and its development is contingent upon the Esparto Community Services District's ability to provide municipal services to new housing. To date, the Esparto CSD is experiencing some difficulties with expansion, mainly due to insufficient revenues and aging infrastructure at the town's older core. As the Esparto CSD experiences challenges in extending services to new development, the construction timeline is impacted, which in turn delays payment of development fees to the Esparto FPD. Until the Esparto CSD is able to absorb new development, it is unlikely that DIF will become a predictable and stable funding source for the Esparto FPD.

Other revenue opportunities include the charging of out-of-district resident's insurance companies for emergency medical services and the recovery of costs associated with that response. Currently the District only bills insurance companies three times a year and does not have the resources to follow up on companies that do not respond. To remedy this situation, the District is looking to outsource billing to the County. In exchange for being the District's collections department, the County keeps a percentage of the money billed to the insurance companies. The Fire Chief indicated this was a good situation for the District since the County may have a higher success rate on collections.

In cases of rural fires, where it is determined that a person started said fire, the CDF bills that person for the costs incurred by its personnel to suppress it. If the District is involved, the District attaches its associated costs for assisting CDF with said fire.

Another constraint to the District is that because it is saving some money to purchase a new fire engine, the savings account skews appearance of the District's budget. According to the Chief, organizations are reluctant to award grants to the District because

the amount in the District's savings account makes it appear as if the District has more money available. As a result, for the past three years the District was unable to qualify for federal or state grants. The approval of the District's request for monies from the Cache Creek Casino Mitigation Fund provides a needed infusion for the purchase of equipment that would facilitate the District's ability to respond to emergencies with other FPDs.

Finally, the District has no outstanding debts or bonds, which ensures that no District revenues are used to retire debt.

Cost-Avoidance Opportunities

The Fire Chief develops and recommends a budget. It is submitted to, and approved by, the District Board of Commissioners. Most of the District's expenditures are delineated by the budget and the District does not stray too much from the allotted funds. Although there are no written procedures regarding discretionary spending, the Fire Chief and the office manager can make purchases without commissioner approval. However, the Fire Chief has a self-imposed \$5,000 cap on individual expenditures. Any request for moving monies from their allocated funds or for funding in excess of either the base budget or in excess of the \$5,000 cap must be fully justified by the Fire Chief and approved by the Board of Commissioners. This budget process is supposed to screen out unnecessary costs. It also minimizes unnecessary overhead costs associated with a more cumbersome procurement and budgetary procedures.

The District also uses other cost-saving measures, such as the use of competitive bidding, the sharing of facilities and by making joint purchases for equipment. The District shares the Esparto Community Hall and the adjacent office with the Esparto Community Services District. The Community Hall is used by both entities for their staff meetings and board meetings. The District also pursues equipment purchases with other fire districts, especially the Madison FPD.

As indicated earlier, the District is pursuing other cost-avoidance strategies. It will attempt to bill out-of-district residents' insurance companies for the cost of emergency medical services. It also received a grant from the Cache Creek Casino Mitigation Funds for the purchase of new equipment. Both of these measures avoid direct costs to the District, as these types of transactions have an affect on the District's budget. Finally, the District signed an automatic aid agreement with the Rumsey Rancheria Fire Department (RRFD). Part of the cooperation between the District, the Capay Valley FPD and the RRFD is to engage in joint training exercises. This results in lower training costs to the District because the joint operations ensure economies of scale.

Two additional options exist for the District to consider.

- **Land Exchange** – An exchange of lands between the Capay Valley FPD

and Esparto FPD. At the time he was the Capay Valley Fire Chief, Dan Garrison suggested that the boundaries between the two districts be adjusted (refer to Map 4).

- Esparto FPD contains the Jackson Bluffs on the western end of the District. Currently, the Esparto FPD must cross the district boundary line and use County Road 78A when responding to a grass fire in that area. It would be more efficient and accessible for Capay Valley FPD to have this territory within its boundary. With its fire station at Brooks, Capay Valley FPD can use Highway 16 and County Road 78A to respond to emergencies in Jackson Bluffs.
- Capay Valley FPD has areas east of the Capay Hills that are difficult for it to access. Only three bridges within the Capay Valley FPD, located in Rumsey, Guinda and Brooks, cross Cache Creek. The Capay Valley FPD must use the bridge in Brooks to respond to fires in the southern Capay Hills, a section of Capay Valley's FPD that is more accessible to Esparto FPD. From its station in the town of Esparto, the Esparto FPD can use Highway 16, County Highway E4 and County Roads 14, 15B and 16A for rapid deployment into the southern Capay Hills.

This adjustment would acknowledge that each district contains areas that are better served by the other. Esparto FPD stands to lose 5,762 acres and Capay Valley will lose 5,361 acres. As explained above, making such an adjustment will have positive repercussions on service delivery.

The adjustments will have financial repercussions, mostly as a loss of property tax revenue for Capay Valley FPD. Although comparable in size, the land exchange areas are not fiscally equal. The fire districts receive different property tax amounts for these areas. For its 5,762 acres, Esparto FPD receives \$203.77 in property tax revenues. Although smaller in size, Capay Valley FPD receives \$573.17 for its 5,361 acres in the southern Capay Hills. For Capay Valley FPD, this adjustment would result in a net loss of revenue. On the other hand, the Jackson Bluffs fall within the CDF "State Responsibility Area", meaning that the Capay Valley FPD would have shared jurisdiction over the Bluffs with CDF and would, therefore, invest fewer resources than if it had sole responsibility over those hills.

Support for this land exchange proposal is mixed. Chief Burns indicated that intermittent discussions on this boundary adjustment were held in the past, approximately during the 1960s. Chief Burns said that while Esparto FPD is willing

to discuss the exchange, it is not an option that his District will actively pursue. The new Capay Valley FPD chief, Reid Thompson, is open to the land swap but is cautious about the impact such an exchange will have on his district's budget.

- **Consolidation** – The District could consolidate with the Madison FPD (refer to Map 5). Geographically speaking, there is a benefit for consolidation. Excluding the mountainous region on the western ends of the districts, the remaining flat area will result in a combined district that is rough elliptical area with a maximum radius of eight miles. The combined district would share jurisdiction over the mountainous region with CDF during the peak fire season. Therefore, combining the districts would not result in additional expenditures to provide fire suppression services in the mountainous area. The flat elliptical area would help to ensure that service time would not be severely impacted by having a combined fire fighting corps.

To date both districts cooperate extensively; therefore merging the two would be a rational “next step” organizationally. Further, the benefits of such merger would be the expansion of both district's volunteer force and revenue base, the sharing of equipment and through other cost savings. Although Madison FPD's current volunteer corps is 12, a theoretically combined firefighter force of 35 could provide adequate service to the combined territory and population. In particular, Esparto residents would benefit from an expanded volunteer corps as there would be more firefighters available should the need arise.

Consolidation would entail a merger of the oversight boards and an expanded administration of either one chief with an assistant chief overseeing the combined volunteer force. The merger of the oversight boards could be a politically sensitive since the towns of Esparto and Madison have distinct identities and may wish to retain local oversight of their fire districts.

Although Tom Rominger, technician for Madison FPD, indicated that the two districts dismissed a possible merger as unfeasible two decades ago, the idea should be resurrected for discussion. For his part, Chief Burns from Esparto FPD has no opinion but said that he can see a merger as a possibility in the long term. According to Madison FPD Fire Chief Tom Lopez, there are no plans to combine the districts at this time, nor will Madison FPD actively pursue this option.

Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

Most of Esparto FPD's revenue comes from property taxes, supplemented by DIFs and fire assessments. The District historically negotiated a \$0.50 per square foot development impact fee on new residential development. For commercial development, there

is no set fee. Instead, a fee is negotiated between the District and the developer on a case-by-case basis. Unlike its neighboring fire districts (Capay Valley, Madison, Zamora and, before 2004, Dunnigan), Esparto FPD is the only district that regularly collects development fees. However, evidence up to now indicates that the rate negotiated by Esparto may be set too low. In June 2004, four FPDs that have completed the process outlined in the County's Fire District Development Impact Fee Ordinance (Clarksburg, Dunnigan, Knights Landing and Yolo). They have since requested that the Board of Supervisors adopt a DIF on their behalf. With an average DIF of \$1.17 per square foot for residential development and \$0.77 per square foot for commercial development, it stands to reason that a DIF for Esparto FPD may be approximately that amount.

State law limits other revenue opportunities. Madison, Zamora, Dunnigan and Esparto FPDs each have fire suppression assessments, meaning every property within each district is also charged an additional assessment for fire protection. However, Proposition 218 provides that any increase of an existing assessment is subject to specific calculation and election requirements: the increased assessment would have to be justified in terms of how much benefit each property owner receives from the District's fire suppression services, and then ratified by the landowners that would be subject to the increase. If a majority of landowners vote against the increase, it could not be imposed. Consequently, the Esparto FPD, like all districts with special assessments, is reluctant to pursue additional revenue through an increase of this assessment out of fear that it might be defeated at the ballot box.

In addition to pursuing stable and/or enhanced development impact fees or higher fire assessments, the District should also consider recovering the cost of emergency medical services from all recipients of that service. Currently, the District seeks reimbursement from out-of-district resident's insurance companies for emergency medical services and the recovery of costs associated with that response. The District could create a rate schedule to bill insurance companies for emergency medical services, either by adopting lower fees for District residents than non-residents or by charging a set amount regardless of the recipient's residence.

Opportunities for Shared Facilities

When considering annexation of new lands into a district, LAFCO can evaluate whether services or facilities can be provided in a more efficient manner if service providers develop strategies for sharing resources.

The Esparto Fire Protection District takes advantage of several opportunities to share facilities, equipment and personnel:

- It shares the Community Hall and the adjacent office with the Esparto Community Services District. The Community Hall is used by both enti-

ties for their staff meetings and board meetings.

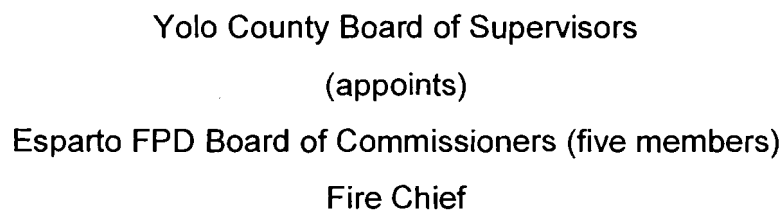
- It pursues equipment purchases with other fire districts, especially with the Madison FPD
- The District's firefighters conduct cross-training exercises with the Rumsey Rancheria Fire Department, operated by the Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians
- It has "first alarm" structural agreement with Madison FPD, an "automatic aid" agreement with the Rumsey Rancheria Fire Department and Capay Valley Fire Protection District and "mutual aid" agreements with other public FPDs
- It coordinates some equipment purchases with the Yolo, Madison and Willow Oak FPDs, so that each district's equipment can work with the other districts' equipment, thus preventing incompatible equipment from interfering during joint operations.

There are additional opportunities for sharing facilities, equipment and personnel.

- The Esparto FPD is adjacent to the Madison FPD, which provides similar services (fire suppression and emergency medical response) within its district boundaries. However, Madison FPD is a smaller FPD and has fewer opportunities for revenue enhancement. At this time, both districts should consider sharing administrative services. Some combination of administrative services, such as staffing, purchasing, equipment and contracting may be possible and mutually beneficial for both agencies
- In the future, consolidation of the Esparto and Madison FPDs should be considered as a way to achieve economies of scale and cost savings

Government Structure Options

The Esparto FPD is a dependent special district with the powers to govern and regulate itself in most matters. It has an appointed Board of Commissioners, selected by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. These commissioners are volunteers and their term of office is indefinite; however, the Board of Supervisors may remove a commissioner from office if appropriate. The existing board is comprised of Glen Jensen, Fulton Stephens, Steve Farnham, Burney Zentner and Jerry Matsumura. The flow chart for the District's organization is as follows:



Volunteers (23 trained members, including one of the five commissioners) and Administration Assistant/Office Manager

Public participation during hearings is encouraged and all public notices are posted pursuant to the Brown Act. The District has a medium level of public participation in conducting its business, as gauged by attendance during Board of Commissioners meetings.

The District has a written constitution and by-laws governing its structure and codes of conduct for its officers and volunteers. The Commissioners are rarely involved in personnel matters. Most of the disciplinary actions are taken either by the Chief or by the volunteers (the latter vote on the admission of new recruits and the dismissal of one of their peers). In serious cases, the Chief can override the decision of the volunteers. In all cases, the Chief informs the Commissioners of the disciplinary action or the pending action.

Other governing structure options are available to the District are:

- **Independent Elected Fire District Board** – The District's residents would elect a five-member Board of Directors. This governmental structure would ensure that the District's Board members and appointed officials are more directly accountable to the District's citizens. However, having an elected Board of Directors may not be a prudent option at this time. Although the District does enjoy a higher level of public participation than some of its neighboring fire districts, public participation levels may not have reached the threshold necessary to support the direct election of the District's Board.
- **City Fire Department** – In the event the town of Esparto incorporates, the Fire Department could be restructured into the city and contract its services out to the remainder of the District. This structure would be similar to the structure that currently exists between the Winters Fire Department and the Winters FPD or between the Woodland Fire Department and the Woodland/Springlake FPD. State law requires that a minimum of 500 registered voters is needed for any incorporation effort to even be considered. The town of Esparto meets this requirement since it presently has approximately 830 registered voters.

However, to become a city, a more balanced economy will probably be necessary. Esparto does not have the financial resources to proceed with an incorporation attempt at this time. There is little industry diversity within Esparto (agriculture, mining and social services are the top three categories), little in sales taxes and the median household income is \$41,389 as of 2000. It is doubtful that the community would have the neces-

sary funds to finance the incorporation process, which entails environmental reviews, fiscal and legal analyses and LAFCO costs (the cost estimates of recent incorporations in the Greater Sacramento Area ranges from \$150,000 to \$360,000). The town lacks sufficient revenue generators to provide for service provision, administration and revenue neutrality with the County. In short, the cost of city administration would overwhelm the current revenue streams. Until the town of Esparto reaches a sufficient independent, economic viability, any consideration of it absorbing fire protection services would be academic.

Management Efficiencies and Local Accountability

The District has a management and accountability structure in place that adequately provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the District. It encourages public participation during its monthly hearings by posting notices in accordance with the Brown Act. Its finances are held in the County Treasury and are audited every two years by the County Auditor-Controller. The most current audit was performed by the firm Bartig, Basler & Ray in 2001 for fiscal years 1999 and 2000 (the most recent years available) and it found that the District's finances are in healthy shape and its reporting practices are in compliance with accepted standards.

Agricultural Lands

The final mandatory factor to address is the District's impact on agricultural land. The land within the Esparto Fire Protection District boundaries is primarily agricultural. However, the services provided by the District do not induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural land to urban uses. In some measure, the District's services protect farmland and the agriculture economy by responding to emergencies in undeveloped areas and minimizing the financial cost that a fire could cause to farmers.

In addition, it has been the long-standing policy of the County of Yolo to protect agricultural land. The County policies protect agricultural land from premature conversion to urban uses.

For the developed areas, the County's current General Plan projects managed growth for the town of Esparto and restricts its expansion to small parcels and parcels less suitable for optimum farming use. This is advantageous to the Fire District because all of the new structures and residents are concentrated in a small area. With the firehouse located in the town of Esparto, the Fire District can quickly respond to emergencies in the developed part of the District.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1) LAFCO intends that its municipal service review and sphere of influence determinations will serve as a guide for the future organization of local governments within Yolo County.
- 2) Spheres of influence shall be used to discourage urban sprawl and the unnecessary proliferation of local governmental agencies, to encourage efficiency, economy and orderly changes in local government, and to prevent the premature conversion of agricultural land.
- 3) The adopted sphere of influence shall reflect the appropriate general plans, growth management policies, annexation policies, resource management policies, and any other policies related to ultimate boundary and service area of an affected agency unless those plans or policies conflict with the legislative intent of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (Government Code Section 56000 et seq.).
- 4) Where inconsistencies between plans or policies (or both) exist, LAFCO shall rely upon that plan or policy which most closely follows the Legislature's directive to discourage urban sprawl, direct development away from prime agricultural land and open-space lands, and encourage the orderly formation and development of local governmental agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances.
- 5) The sphere of influence lines are a declaration of policy to guide LAFCO in considering any proposal within its jurisdiction.
- 6) LAFCO decisions shall be consistent with the spheres of influence of the affected agencies.
- 7) No proposal which is inconsistent with an agency's sphere of influence shall be approved unless LAFCO, at a noticed public hearing, has considered and approved a corresponding amendment or revision to that agency's sphere of influence.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Government Code §56425 of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act states:

- (a) In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping the logical and orderly development and coordination of local governmental agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities, the commission shall develop and determine the sphere of influence of each local governmental agency within the county and enact policies designed to promote the logical and orderly development of areas within the sphere.

It further indicates:

- (e) In determining the sphere of influence of each local agency, the commission shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:
 - (1) The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.
 - (2) The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
 - (3) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.
 - (4) The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

WRITTEN DETERMINATIONS

The Commission, in establishing the sphere of influence for the Esparto FPD, has considered the following.

- 1) The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands

There is no change in the planned land uses in the District as a result of this review. The majority of its residents in the District live in the towns of Esparto and Capay. All other areas outside of these two towns are sparsely populated, rural and agricultural. Currently most of the development and population growth is in Esparto.

- 2) The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area

The ability of the District to continue to provide fire suppression and emergency medical services should not be hampered by this growth around Esparto in the short term. However if the District's cash flow difficulties are not resolved, in the long term its ability to provide services may be impaired. Replacing aged equipment will become critical in the next 10 years as the growth in Esparto continues and traffic to and from the Cache Creek Casino increases.

- 3) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide

The District provides adequate fire suppression and emergency response services within and, in cases of mutual aid responses, outside its boundaries.

- 4) The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

The towns of Esparto and (to a lesser, although no less relevant, degree) Capay would constitute social or economic communities of interest relevant to this District. In the near future Esparto's growth, and the increased property valuation and DIFs that are generated because of it, will probably be the biggest generator of revenue for the District. However, this growth will also generate an increase in demand for services.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that 10 and 20 year lines for the Esparto FPD Sphere of Influence remain co-terminus with the current District boundaries (refer to Map 6). However, the Commission and its staff will work with the affected agencies regarding the following possibilities:

- The adjustment of boundaries between the Capay Valley FPD and Esparto FPD, possibly as described in Map 4
- The consolidation of the Esparto and Madison FPDs

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The California Environmental Quality Act requires that an environmental review be undertaken and completed for the Commission's Municipal Services Review and Sphere of Influence Study. This MSR/SOI qualifies for a Categorical Exemption from further CEQA review based upon CEQA Regulation §15061(b)(3), which states:

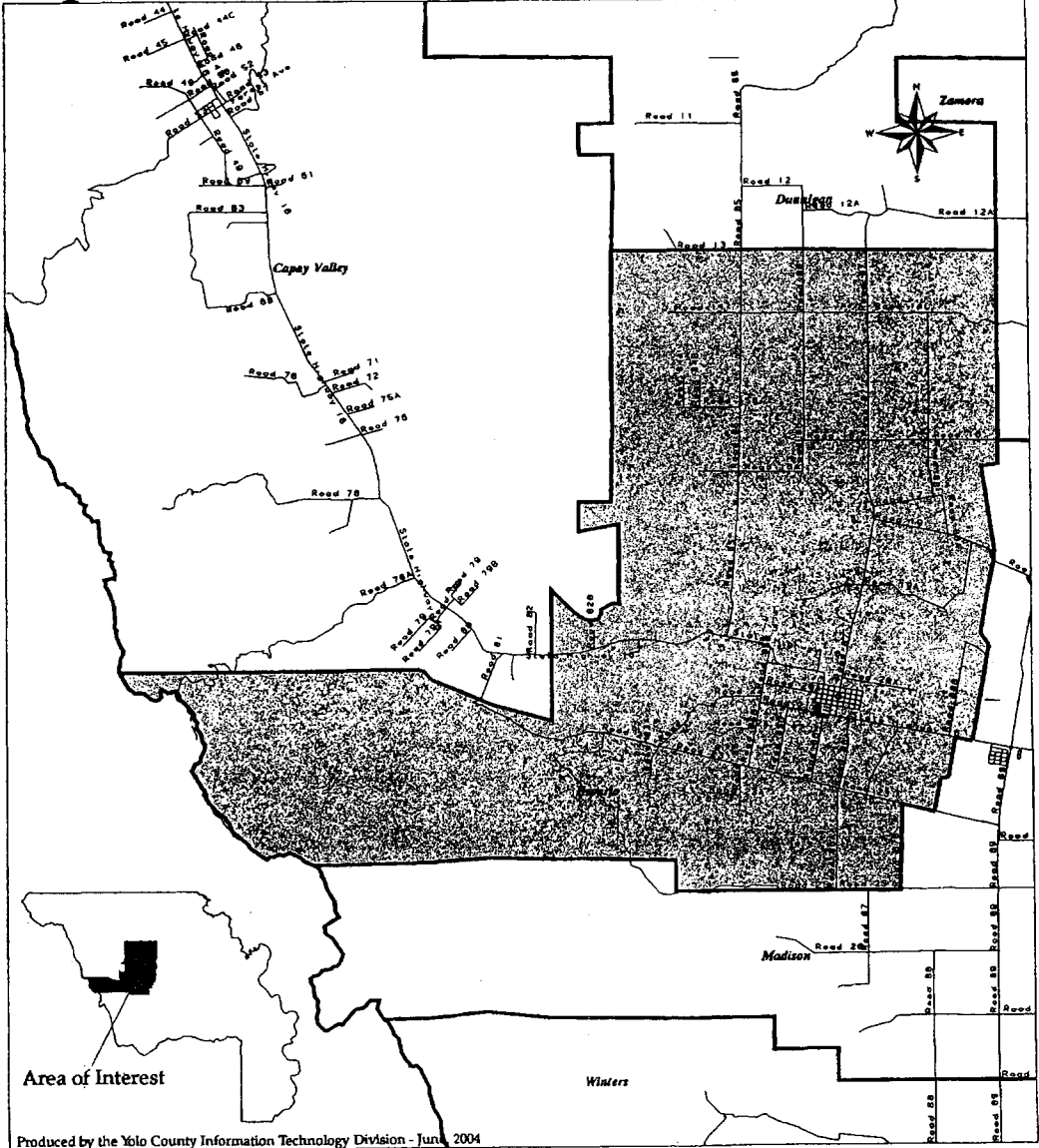
"The activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA."

Since there are no changes in land use or general plan designations associated with this MSR/SOI, a Notice of Exemption is the appropriate environmental document.

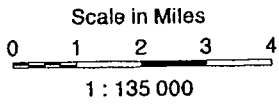
REFERENCES

1. Esparto General Plan, 1996, Crawford, Multari and Star
2. Town of Esparto General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, 1996, Yolo County Community Development Department
3. Esparto FPD Sphere of Influence, 1986, Yolo County LAFCO staff
4. Esparto FPD District Service Plan and interviews, 2003, Barry Burns, Chief
5. Yolo County Office of the Auditor-Controller
6. Yolo County Department of Planning and Public Works
7. Yolo County Administrative Office, Inter-Governmental Tribal Liaison
8. Sacramento Area Council of Governments, 2000 Regional Profile
9. U. S Census Bureau, 2000 Census information
10. Yolo County Woodland Area General Plan and Draft Housing Element
11. Interview, Tom Rominger, Technician, Madison FPD
12. Patricia Valenzuela, "Building Together in Capay Valley", Woodland Daily Democrat, March 14, 2004 page A1
13. Patricia Valenzuela, "Three Valley Fire Departments Sign Automatic Aid Agreement", Woodland Daily Democrat, March 28, 2004 page A1
14. Interview, Roseanne Chamberlain, El Dorado LAFCO
15. Interview, Peter Brundage, Sacramento LAFCO

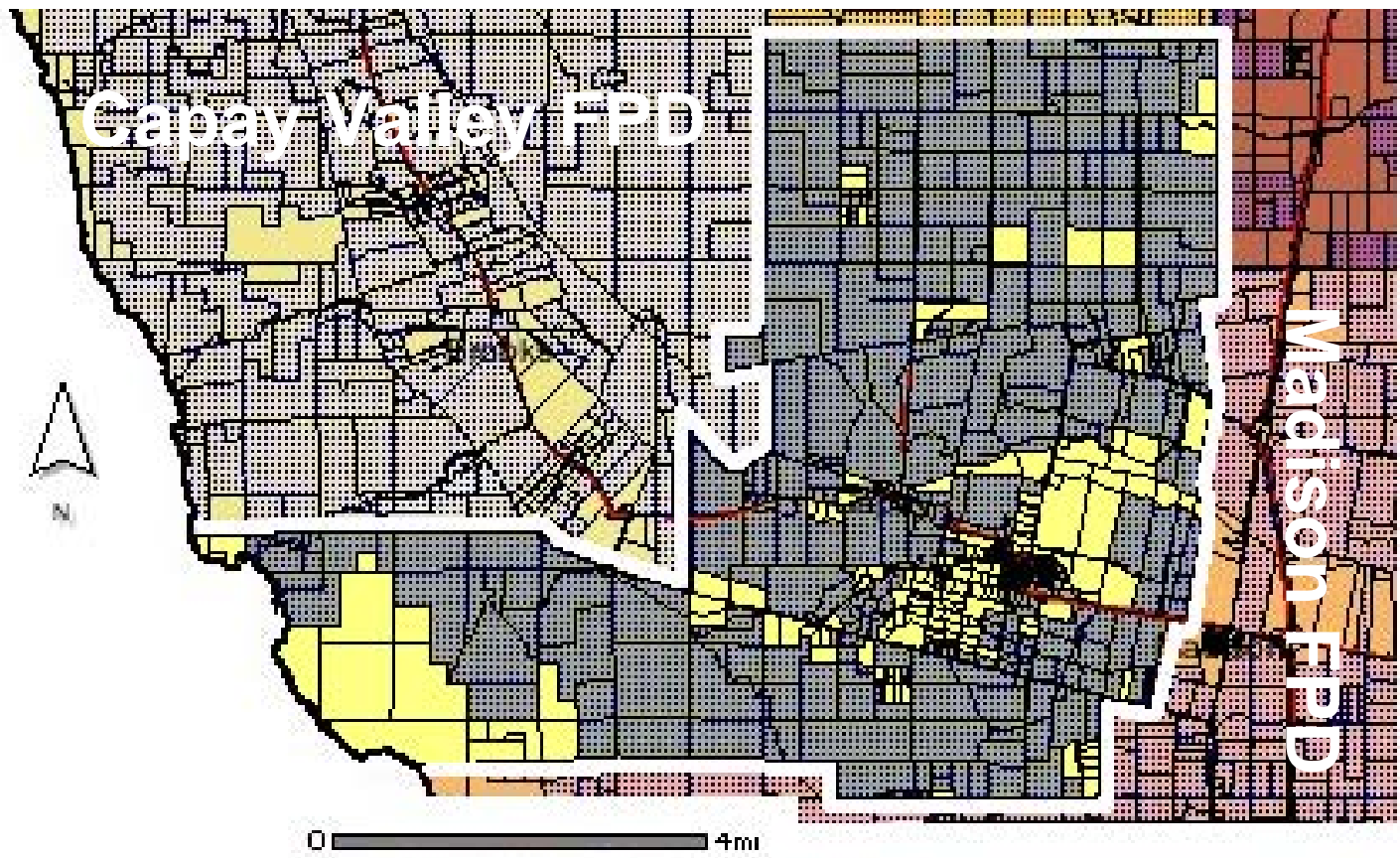
Esparto Fire District



- Esparto Fire District
- Fire District Boundaries
- Roads & Highways



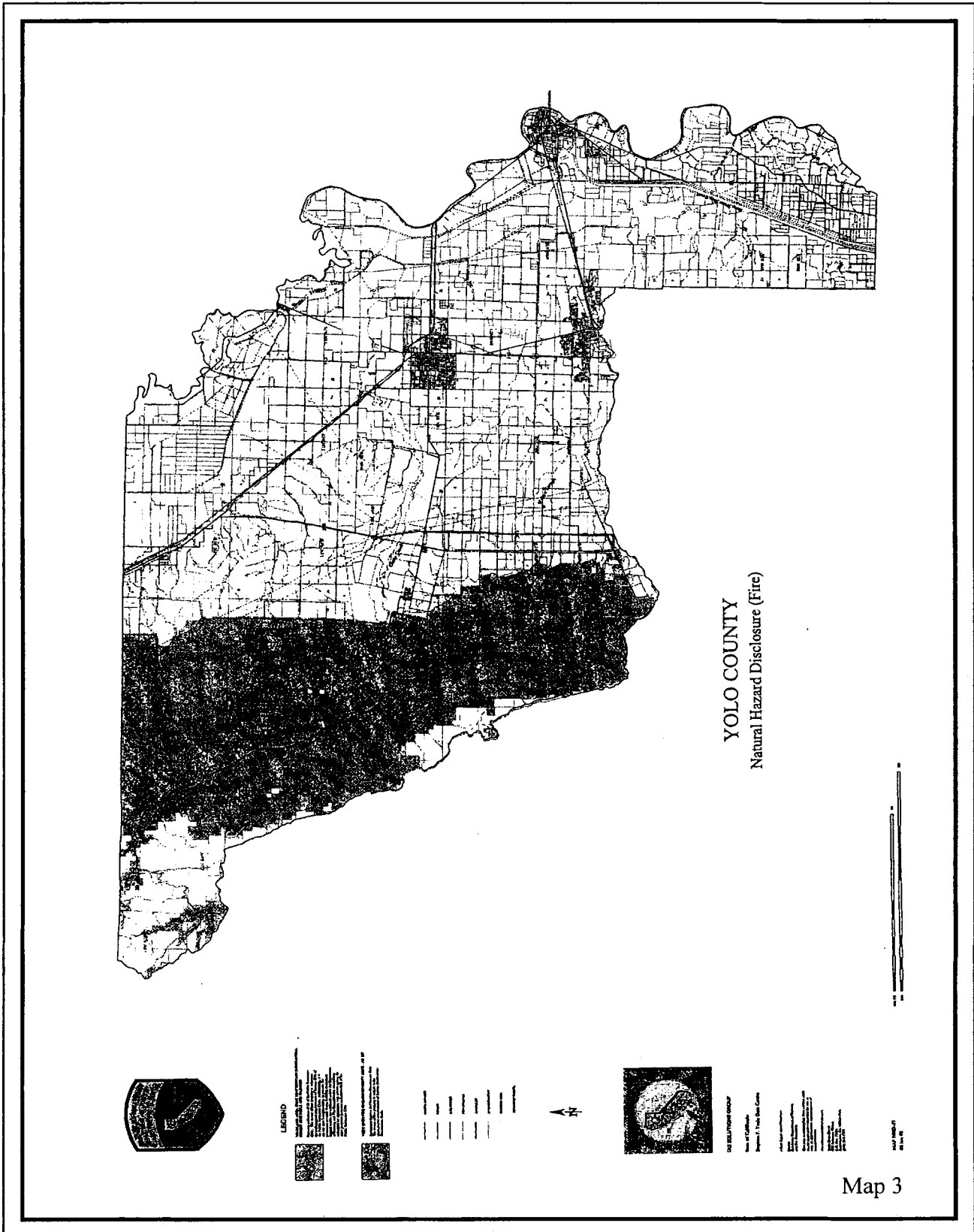
Map 1

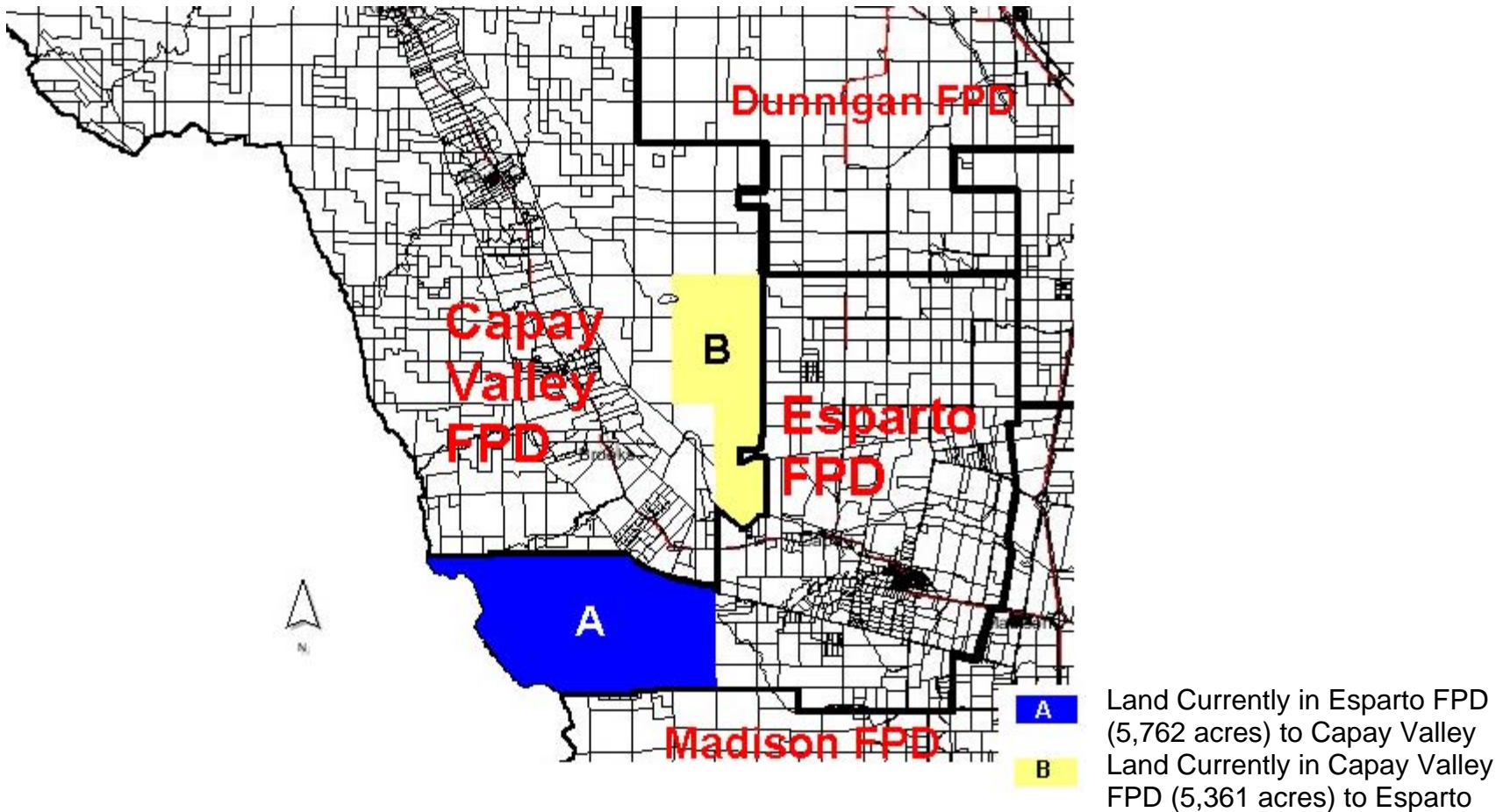


Williamson Act Lands in Esparto Fire Protection District

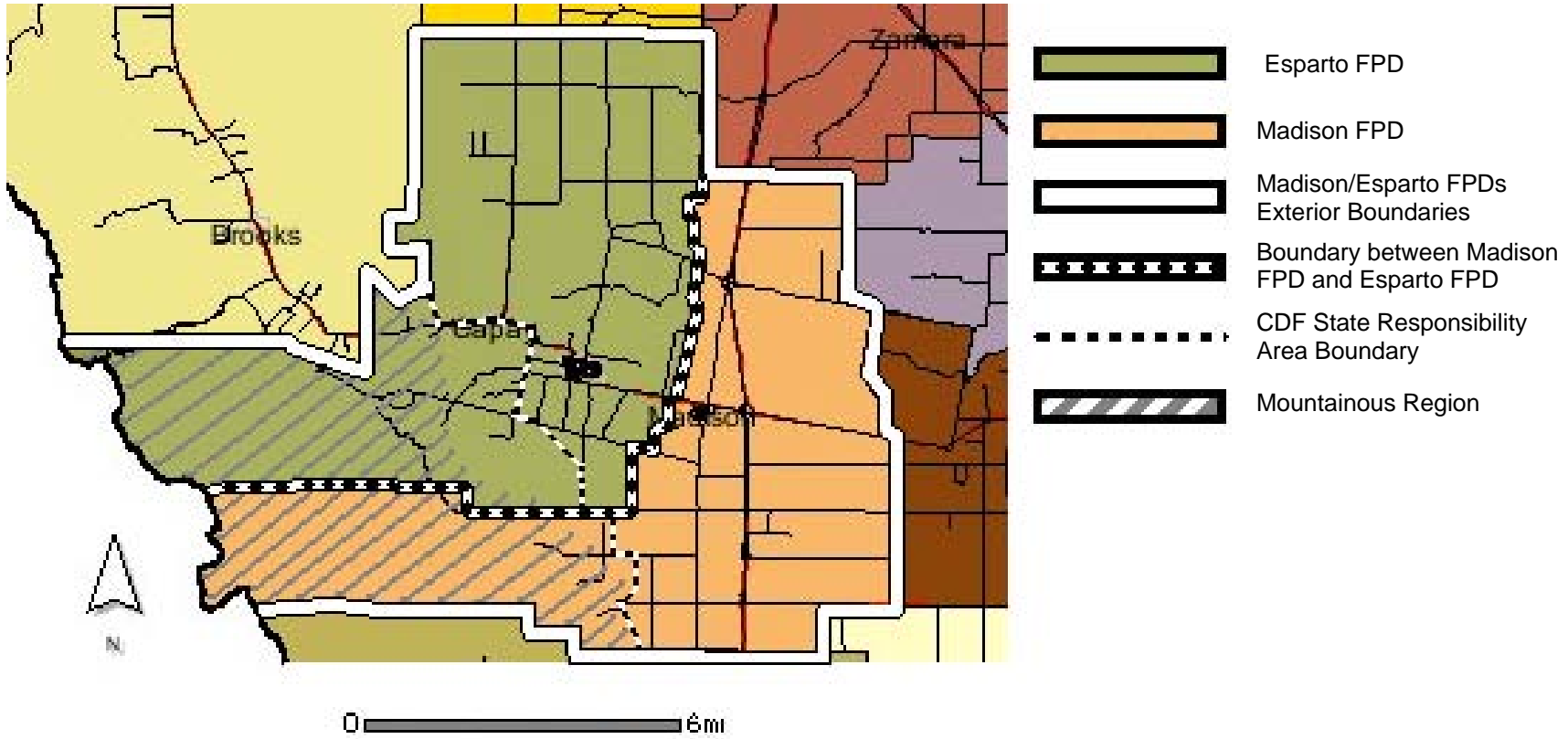
 Parcels Under Williamson Act Contract

 Parcels Not Under Williamson Act Contract

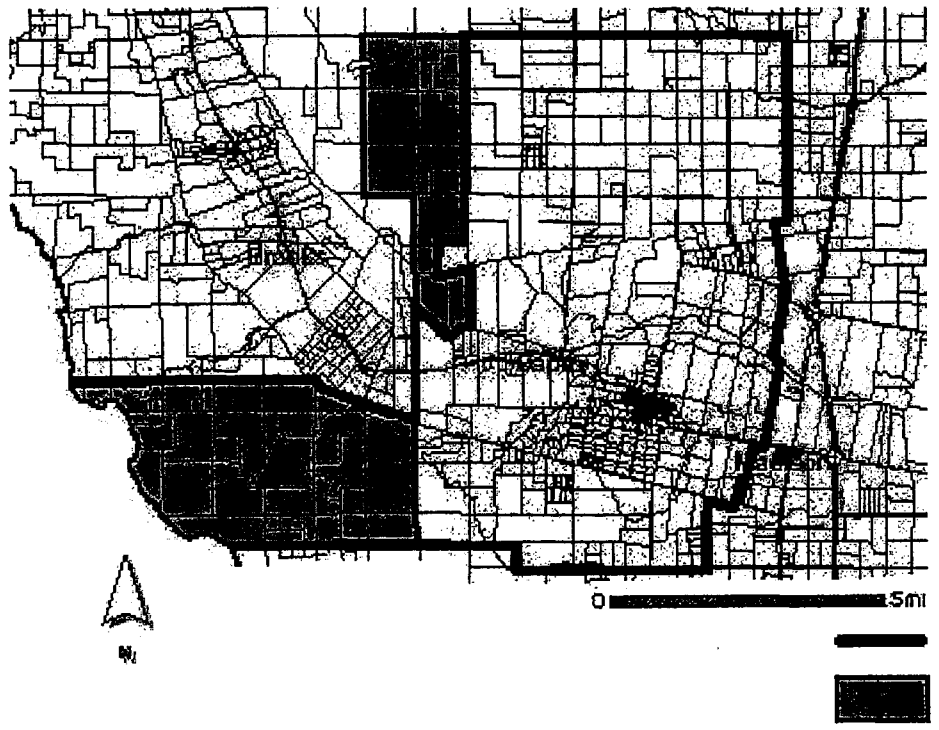




Possible Adjustment of District Boundaries Between Capay Valley FPD and Esparto FPD



Consolidated Madison and Esparto Fire Protection District



Recommended 2004 Esparto Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence Boundary Line

Map 6

COUNTY RECORDER
Filing Requested by:

Yolo County Board of Supervisors
Name
625 Court Street, Room 204
Address
Woodland, CA 95695
City, State, Zip

FILED
YOLO COUNTY CLERK/RECORDER
JAN 26 2005
FREDDIE OAKLEY, CLERK
BY KRISTINA A. HUNTER
DEPUTY

Notice of Exemption

To: County Clerk of Yolo County
625 Court Street, Room 105
Woodland, CA 95695

CONFORMED COPY
NOT COMPARED
WITH ORIGINAL

PROJECT TITLE: Esparto Fire Protection District Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

PROJECT LOCATION: The District extends one mile north of County Road 14, to the Napa County line to the west, to County Road 25 to the south and the eastern boundary is located near Interstate 505.

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT: To determine the general direction and area of growth for the Esparto Fire Protection District. In this instance, the District boundaries remain static.

NAME OF AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission

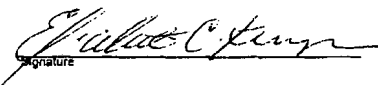
EXEMPT STATUS: General Exemption under CEQA Section 15061(b)3.

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: Adoption of the Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence boundary does not result in changes in land use, does not introduce or induce significant environmental impacts or development nor does it result in the loss of agricultural or habitat land.

CONTACT PERSON: Elizabeth C. Kemper, Executive Officer Yolo County LAFCO.

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (530) 666-8048

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING:


Signature Jan 19, 2005
Date

POSTED JAN 26 2005 TO

N05-04