

11 . KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) provides fire prevention, suppression, and emergency medical response services to the unincorporated community of Kensington by contract with the City of El Cerrito. The District owns its fire station and apparatus, and reimburses the City of El Cerrito for maintenance costs.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

FORMATION AND BOUNDARY

KFPD was formed on May 5, 1928 as an independent special district.¹⁹⁴ The District was formed to provide fire suppression services in the community of Kensington.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.¹⁹⁵ The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.¹⁹⁶ Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise latent powers or, in other words, those services authorized by the principal act but not provided by the District at the end of 2000.¹⁹⁷

The boundaries of KFPD extend north of the Contra Costa-Alameda county line along Arlington Avenue, to just north of the intersection of Arlington Avenue and Highland Boulevard, and west from Wildcat Canyon Regional Park to west of the Sunset View Cemetery, as shown on Map 11-1. The boundary area excludes the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) reservoir located west of Grizzly Peak Blvd. and south of Beloit Ave.¹⁹⁸ The District has a boundary area of approximately 612 acres.

The existing SOI for KFPD is coterminous with its boundaries; hence, it also excludes the EBMUD reservoir. The SOI for KFPD was adopted in 1984 to include an annexable area west of the District, consisting of the Sunset View Cemetery.¹⁹⁹ The SOI was amended by LAFCO in 2000

¹⁹⁴ The source for the official date of district formation is Board of Equalization.

¹⁹⁵ Health and Safety Code §13800-13970. In 1964 the District was reorganized under the Fire Protection District Law of 1961.

¹⁹⁶ Health and Safety Code §13862.

¹⁹⁷ Government Code §56824.10.

¹⁹⁸ The boundary area is the area shown within bounds, according to Board of Equalization (BOE) GIS files, and has not been verified by comparison to official BOE and LAFCO archives.

¹⁹⁹ LAFCO Resolution dated December 12, 1984, adopting spheres of influence (SOI) for fire protection districts within Contra Costa County.

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to “include affected territory” in the Sunset View/Newman Annexation.²⁰⁰ Kensington is within the City of El Cerrito SOI; the City’s SOI takes precedence over the District’s SOI under existing LAFCO policies.²⁰¹

Boundary History

There have been five boundary changes for KFPD since formation in 1928, according to State Board of Equalization (BOE) records, four of which occurred in the pre-LAFCO period, as shown in Table 11-1. The Contra Costa LAFCO record for KFPD contains a single annexation, the Sunset View/Newman Annexation of 2000. The annexation added 40-acres to the west of the District, consisting primarily of the Sunset View Cemetery, located at the intersection of Franciscan Way and Sunset Drive in the community of Kensington.

Table 11-1: KFPD Boundary History

LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

The District has a five-member governing body. Board members are elected at large to

staggered four-year terms. Board meetings are held monthly, but typically not in July. The last contested election for a board seat occurred in 2006, when one seat was filled. A two-member Finance Committee advises the Board on finance-related matters.

The District conducts outreach with constituents by giving station tours, open houses, fire education programs for school children and seniors, and a car seat program. Disaster preparedness training courses are also provided to community members. The District maintains a website that contains information on District programs, board meeting agendas and summary financial information. The District Board members and Chief participate in Town Hall meetings. The District also mails newsletters to residents and posts board meeting agendas online.

200 LAFCO Resolution No. 00-36.

201 Contra Costa LAFCO resolution, adopted Dec. 12, 1984, states "SOIs of the cities of El Cerrito, Pinole and Richmond shall take precedence over fire protection district SOIs. Proposals that include annexation to one of these cities consistent with that city's SOI, and concurrent detachment from a fire protection district, shall be construed as consistent with these fire protection district SOIs."

Project Name Acres

LAFCO

Resolution

Number

Formation NA 5/5/1928 (B)

Pre-LAFCO Annexation NA 5/5/1928 (B)

Kensington Highlands No. 1 Annexation NA 7/14/1953 (B)

Pre-LAFCO Annexation NA 4/5/1955 (B)

Detachment/Annexed to City of Richmond NA 1/28/1957 (B)

Sunset View/Newman Annexation 40.1 00-36 10/11/2000 (L)

Notes:

Date

(1) "NA" indicates LAFCO records are not available

(2) "L" indicates that the date is according to the LAFCO action date and "B" indicates that the official date is according to the Board of Equalization filing.

23

KENSINGTON

F P D

MORAGA-ORINDA

F P D

RICHMOND

Fire Department

EL CERRITO

Fire Department

Kensington

Ashbury Ave

Moeser Ln

Richmond St

Fairmount Ave

Arlington Ave

Colusa Ave

Navellier St

Key Route Blvd

Santa Fe Ave

Colusa Ave

Key Route Blvd

El Cerrito

Richmond

65

Map created 01/09/2009
by Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development
GIS Group
651 Pine Street, 4th Floor North Wing, Martinez, CA 94553-0095

Miles
This map or dataset was created by the Contra Costa County Conservation and Development Department with data from the Contra Costa County GIS Program. Some base data, primarily City Limits, is derived from the CA State Board of Equalization tax rate areas. While obligated to use this data the County assumes no responsibility for its accuracy. This map contains copyrighted information and may not be altered, it may be reproduced in its current state if this source is cited. Users of this map agree to read and accept the County of Contra Costa disclaimer of liability for geographic information.

Kensington Fire Protection District Boundary and Coterminous Sphere of Influence Fire Stations

23
Staffed

3
Unstaffed

Fire Protection Districts

KENSINGTON
NO DISTRICT
Kensington FPD SOI
Other Protection Districts
Urban Limit Line
City Limits
County Boundary

Map 11-1

Note: Maps will be updated in the Draft Final MSR to reflect the final recommended fire hazard severity zones, city urban limit lines, and planned fire stations.

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With regard to customer service, complaints may be submitted to the District administrator. The District reported that no complaints were filed in CY 2007 or FY 07-08.

Table 11-2: KFPD Governing Body

The District demonstrated full accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with LAFCO. The agency responded to LAFCO's written questionnaires and cooperated with LAFCO map inquiries and document requests.

MANAGEMENT

The District's staff consists of one part-time administrator. The District has contracted with the City of El Cerrito for services since 1996; previously, the District had operated its own fire department. The District contracts with private contractors for legal and financial services, and has contracted in the past with East Bay Municipal Utility District for installation and upgrade of water pipelines and fire hydrants. The City of El Cerrito's Fire Department (FD) staff consists of a total of 37 full-time staff and no paid on-call staff, of which approximately 10 sworn staff serve the Kensington fire station. The City FD is organized into four divisions—Fire Prevention, Training/EMS, Operations, and Support Services—over which the Fire Chief and battalion chiefs provide management oversight. Battalion chiefs that manage the four divisions are evaluated annually by the Chief and are compensated based on performance. Specifically, battalion chiefs may receive a performance incentive of up to 25 percent more or less than their surveyed rank depending on their performance.

The District conducts annual performance evaluations of its administrator. The City of El Cerrito evaluates its employees annually. New hires undergo an intensive 10-shift training and evaluation program and are then evaluated quarterly during their 18-month probationary period. This process includes written evaluations as well as job-related performance evaluations in which skills are demonstrated.

Governing Body

Name Position Began Serving Term Expires

Helmut Blaszczyk Director 2007 2010

Don Dommer Director 1996 2012

Janice Kosel Director 1994 2010

Leslie Michael Director 2002 2012

Nina Ramsey Director 2000 2010

Manner of Selection

Length of Term Four years

Meetings Date: 2nd Wednesday of each month (except July) at 7:30 p.m.

Agenda Distribution

Minutes Distribution

Contact

Contact Administrator

Mailing Address

Email/Website www.kensingtonfire.org

Members

Elections at large

217 Arlington Avenue, Kensington CA 94707

Location: 59 Arlington Avenue,

Kensington CA 94707

Distributed through website, library, public safety building kiosk, and public kiosk.

Distributed through board packets, meetings, and by request.

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District performance is evaluated periodically by the Insurance Services Office (ISO); an ISO evaluation was most recently completed in 2003.²⁰² The District monitors its performance by comparing costs per fire station with other East Bay fire service providers. The District did not identify other productivity monitoring, performance evaluation or benchmarking activities. The City FD evaluates its performance primarily by monitoring response times, fire loss, occupancy inspections, training, and community satisfaction as demonstrated through correspondence and commendations received in the field or communicated to council members. City management monitors FD workload indicators, including service calls, inspections, plan checks, and public education contacts, through its annual budget process.

The District reported that its financial planning efforts include annual budgets, mid-year budget review, annual financial audits, and occasional capital improvement plans. The District's most recent audit was completed for FY 06-07; the District provided a draft audit for FY 07-08 at the time this report was drafted. The District adopted a water system improvements master plan in 1999, and has completed construction of the improvements in that study. There is no capital improvement plan at this time. The District annually designates funds toward fire station remodeling needs and apparatus replacement through its budget process. The District has an adopted mission statement. The City of El Cerrito prepared a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2005. Other City fire planning studies include an emergency operations plan (last updated in 2007), a fire hazard reduction plan (1993), and a fire task force report (1999).

The District reported completing its water system improvements and enhancing service levels in the wildland interface areas by equipping its station with a Type 3 engine as its most recent accomplishments, and did not identify any other honors, awards or other accomplishments between 2003 and 2008. The City FD's honors, awards and accomplishments achieved between 2003 and 2008 include implementation of an engine-based paramedic program that staffs two paramedics on

every engine company in Kensington and El Cerrito. The FD was recognized for this in 2006 by ICMA with the Award of Transformation for this program. Another City FD accomplishment is attainment of six grants which have funded a public education trailer, firefighter safety equipment, EMS equipment, wildland equipment, a firefighting training unit, and advanced firefighter training. Another FD achievement was enhancing service levels in the wildland interface areas by equipping its wildland interface station with a Type 3 engine.

SERVICE DEMAND AND GROWTH

Land uses within the District include residential, commercial, open space and institutional uses. Residential areas are located throughout the District and consist primarily of single-family residences, at five to seven units per net acre. Commercial areas are located in two distinct areas, in the southwestern portion of the District on Colusa Avenue, and in the south of the District along Arlington Avenue. Open space consists of the approximately 81-acre Sunset View Cemetery facility, located in the western portion of the District. Institutional uses primarily consist of school-related facilities, including the Blake House and Botanical Garden, owned by the University of California. A public facility located adjacent to the District, but not within the bounds, is the Summit Reservoir owned by EBMUD.

202 The ISO rating for the District was most recently three, an improvement from its prior rating of four.

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The District considers its customer base to be the residents and businesses in its service areas as well as those living or traveling through the area, the structures in its service area, and the parks and open spaces. Service demand tends to peak during peak commuter periods. The Kensington station responded to 308 service calls in 2007. By comparison, the median fire station in the County fielded 920 calls.

Local business activities are fairly minimal, and include local-serving retail and day care. The estimated number of jobs in 2005 was 857, based on analysis of GIS, Census and 2007 ABAG projections data. The projected job growth rate from 2005 to 2030 is 29 percent, which is lower than the countywide projected growth of 46 percent over that period.

The estimated residential population in the District bounds was 4,936 at the time of the 2000 Census. The District's population density was approximately 4,292 per square mile in 2000, compared with the countywide density of 1,317. The estimated number of residents in 2008 was 5,009, based on analysis of GIS, Census and 2007 ABAG projections data. The projected population growth rate from 2008 to 2030 is two percent, which is substantially lower than the countywide projected growth of 20 percent over that period. The District concurs that growth will be minimal as the area is built-out.

Future growth is expected to consist of limited infill opportunities. There are no planned or proposed developments in the community.

The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies.

The District did not identify any growth areas.

FINANCING

The District reported that the current financing level is adequate to deliver services, and indicated that the community is satisfied with the current service level. The District has not considered a fire assessment increase since the current assessment was approved in the early 1980s, although there is no cost escalator built into the existing assessment to adjust the assessment with annual inflation. The District's FY 08-09 anticipated revenues would increase slightly (one percent) over revenue levels in the prior year, and that expenditures would increase by eight percent. The District practices appropriate fund accounting by separating its funds into accounts for

general expenses, special revenue and capital projects.

The District's total revenues were \$3.0 million in FY 07-08. Revenue sources include property taxes (89 percent), assessments (seven percent) and interest income (four percent). The District's share of property tax revenues was 30 percent in FY 07-08; by comparison, the average fire district share countywide was 12 percent in cities (served by fire districts) and 13 percent in unincorporated areas. The assessment lacks an inflation escalator, and was most recently increased in 1980. The District does not anticipate needing to increase the assessment in the next five years. Should the District need to increase the assessment in the future, it should submit to local voters an increase the assessment to adjust for inflation and include an automatic inflation escalator to ensure that this funding source is not eroded over time. Neither the District nor the County levies a development impact fee to fund growth-related fire facility needs in Kensington.

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The District's expenditures were \$2.6 million in FY 07-08. Of this amount, 75 percent was spent on the City of El Cerrito contract, seven percent on compensation including benefits for former employees, 11 percent on water system improvements, three percent on services and supplies, three percent on depreciation expense, and the remainder on miscellaneous costs.²⁰³

The District reported no long-term debt at the end of FY 07-08. The District provides postretirement

health care benefits to its firefighters (last employed by KFPD in 1995), and had accumulated \$2.2 million in OPEB liability as of mid-2008. The District does not offer postretirement

health care benefits to its one remaining employee. The District established a trust account with CalPERS, and aims to pre-fund the liability and pay off unfunded liability within a 5-10 year period.

The District does not have a formal policy on maintaining financial reserves, although KFPD attempts to maintain at least one year of contract fees in unreserved funds. The District had \$3.3 million in unreserved, undesignated funds at the close of FY 07-08. The amount is equivalent to 129 percent of all expenditures in FY 07-08. In other words, the District maintained 15.5 months of working reserves. The District had \$550,000 in designated capital reserves for future fire station remodeling needs and apparatus replacement.

The District engages in joint financing arrangements related to liability and other insurance. The District is a member of the Contra Costa County Special District JPA for provision of insurance.

FIRE SERVICE

NATURE AND EXTENT

The City of El Cerrito provides fire suppression (structural, vehicle, and vegetation fires) and prevention, Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) for medical emergencies, rescue, initial hazardous materials response, fire inspection, fire investigation, public education, and fire-related permit services. The District owns its fire station and apparatus, and reimburses the City of El Cerrito for maintenance costs.

The City of El Cerrito provides ALS until American Medical Response, a privately-owned ambulance company, arrives to continue Advanced Life Support and provide ambulance transport services.

The buildup of unmanaged vegetation, whether native or non-native, steep hillsides with canyons and draws, and periods of extremely hot, dry weather all combine to create in Kensington the potential for catastrophic fire behavior such as occurred in the Oakland/ Berkeley Hills Fire of October 1991. For brush fires in hillside areas, typically the City of El Cerrito is deployed as well as

the City of Richmond, ConFire, EBRPD, and CAL FIRE. The City of El Cerrito's primary fire prevention strategies are fuel reduction, creation of fuel break along property lines and adjacent to structures, and fire-resistant ornamental landscaping. The Hills Forum and Diablo Fire Safe Council
203 Kensington FPD, *Draft Kensington Fire Protection District Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the Year Ended June 30,*

2008, January 15, 2009. Expenditures extracted from "Statement of Activities" column on page 8.

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are both active in the area. The City of El Cerrito's Fire Marshall is on the board of the Fire Safe Council, which is presently preparing a community wildfire protection plan. The Hills Forum monitors programs and conducts community outreach.

The City of El Cerrito responds to hazardous material incidents to provide initial identification and isolation. The City of Richmond and Contra Costa County Health Services Department provide specialized hazardous material response.

The City of El Cerrito checks fire plans for new development prior to construction. All parcels (2,211) in the District receive an annual vegetation inspection. In addition, 57 businesses are inspected annually.

The City of El Cerrito provides disaster preparedness training to the public through its Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. Community members are trained in disaster first aid disaster preparedness, basic firefighting, light search and rescue, damage assessment, and turning off utilities. It is important for community members to have such skills in the event of a major disaster.

Dispatch Services

All 911 calls made from land lines are automatically routed to the City of Richmond. Radio dispatch services are provided by the City of Richmond; hence, the City of Richmond is the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). Once the PSAP dispatcher determines a call requires fire department response, full-time staff are dispatched. For medical emergencies, the PSAP calls American Medical Response and the company dispatches the nearest ambulance.

Calls to 911 from cellular phones are initially routed to the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

CHP relays the call to the PSAP, and dispatching follows the protocol discussed above.

Because the City of El Cerrito provides automatic aid to adjacent unincorporated areas, the City is a dual-dispatched agency and also receives dispatching services from ConFire.

LOCATION

The District contracts with the City of El Cerrito for services within its boundary area. Until 1996, the District has operated its own fire department and provided services directly. The only functions provided directly by the District are administrative; the District's administrative services do not extend beyond its boundary area.

Overlapping service providers include the various automatic and mutual aid providers discussed in the City of El Cerrito profile.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The District owns one fire station (FS 65) which is staffed 24 hours a day by the City of El Cerrito. The station was built in 1971, has been remodeled twice since then, and was reported to be in good condition. The District did not identify any infrastructure needs.

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Existing equipment includes two engines, one of which is Type 1 and the other Type 3. The District did not identify any apparatus needs.

The District's water resources for fire-fighting purposes include fire hydrants and water bodies.

There are fire hydrants throughout the District's service area. The District recently finished a fire flow improvement project, having spent \$1.8 million to add 4,680 feet of water main improvements and 32 new hydrants throughout the community, and reported no fire flow improvement needs at this time.

SERVICE ADEQUACY

There are two general indicators of service adequacy for municipal fire providers: ISO rating and response times. The Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization, classifies fire service in communities from 1 to 10, indicating the general adequacy of coverage. Communities with the best systems for water distribution, fire department facilities, equipment and personnel and fire alarms and communications receive a rating of 1. The District has an ISO rating of three.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response is required. NFPA guidelines call for career fire departments to respond within six minutes 90 percent of the time, with the response time including three components: dispatch time of no more than one minute,²⁰⁴ turn-out time of no more than one minute, and travel time of no more than four minutes.²⁰⁵ The response time guideline established by the California EMS Authority for emergency medical calls is five minutes in urban areas, 15 minutes in suburban or rural areas, and as quickly as possible in wilderness areas. According to the State guidelines, the entire district is classified as urban.²⁰⁶ The minimum State standard is that the Local EMS Agency establish response times that include dispatch time. For emergency (Code 3) medical calls, the City of El Cerrito is required by the Contra Costa County EMS Agency (LEMSA) to respond within six minutes 90 percent of the time throughout its service area.

The County has adopted a response time policy that an FPD strive to achieve a total response time, including dispatch time, of five minutes in urban and suburban areas for 90 percent of all emergency responses.²⁰⁷ The City of El Cerrito's adopted policy goal is to respond within six minutes 95 percent of the time. The City's 90th percentile response time was 6:46 minutes throughout its entire service area and 7:26 minutes in Kensington in 2007. The median response

²⁰⁴ National Fire Protection Association, *NFPA 1221: Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*, 2007. The dispatch time standard is one minute 95 percent of the time.

²⁰⁵ National Fire Protection Association, *NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2001, p. 6.

²⁰⁶ The recommended State guideline is classification of areas based on residential population density by census tract. A population density of 101 or more is urban, 51-100 is suburban, 7-50 is rural, and less than 7 is wilderness (California EMS Authority, *EMS System Standards and Guidelines*, 1993, pp. 26, 48-9). Response times in State guidelines include dispatch time. The only parts of the County meeting the suburban/rural standard are census tracts 3010 (Bethel Island, Jersey Island, Holland Tract and Bradford Island) and 3553.03 (Morgan Territory), calling into question the practical relevance of the State guidelines.

²⁰⁷ City of Brentwood, *City of Brentwood General Plan*, 2001, p. II. 4-12; Contra Costa County, *General Plan 2005-2020*, 2005, pp. 7-27.

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time in Kensington is 5:15 minutes. In other words, the City FD is able to respond timely much of the time, but falls short of meeting the LEMSAs standards. Response times exclude dispatch time.

The District reported that its service level is relatively uniform throughout the District bounds.

There are no perceptible differences within the District in service levels, except those relating to the distance of a particular property from the nearest fire station.

Service challenges include the very high fire hazard severity zone throughout Kensington, access challenges throughout Kensington related to the topography, and the wildland-urban interface along the District's eastern boundary.

Table 11-3: KFPD Fire Service Profile

continued

Fire Suppression City of El Cerrito PSAP 1 City of Richmond
EMS - Basic Life Support City of El Cerrito Fire/EMS Dispatch
EMS - Paramedic City of El Cerrito Building Review City of El Cerrito
Ambulance Transport American Medical Response Public Education City of El Cerrito
Hazardous Materials Richmond & County Health Abatement City of El Cerrito
Fire Investigation City of El Cerrito Academy City of El Cerrito

Annual Calls 2007 308 NP NP

% EMS 57% NP NP

% Fire/Haz-Mat 6% NP NP

% Alarm 7% NP NP

% Other 31% NP NP

Service Calls per 1,000 67 NP NP

% Auto Aid Given NP % Auto Aid Received NP

Wildland

Fires

ISO Rating 3 2 Fire Stations in District 1

Median Response Time (min) 2 5:15 Sq. Miles Served per Station 4 1.0

90th Percentile Response Time (min) 7:26 Total Staff 5 11

Response Time Base Year 2007 Total Full-time Firefighters 10

Percent Certified as FF1 100% Total On-call Firefighters 0

Percent Certified as FF2 or more 91% Total Sworn Staff per Station 6 10.0

Percent Certified as EMT-1 100% Total Sworn Staff per 1,000 2.2

Percent Certified as Paramedic/ALS 47% Staffing Base Year 2008

City of Richmond & ConFire

There are 1-2 annually. In 1987, there was a brush fire near the Kensington School. Two major brush fires have occurred on Windsor Ave., south of Westminster Ave. There have been three fires in the riparian canyon through which Cerrito Creek flows.

All Calls Priority "Code 3" Non-Priority "Code 2"

Notes:

(1) Public Safety Answering Point is the agency first answering 911 calls placed from land lines.

(2) The City has an ISO Rating of 3 for all areas.

(3) Response time statistics were calculated for all (Code 3 and Code 2) calls in all areas (including automatic and mutual aid) in 2007.

(4) Primary service area (square miles) per station.

(5) Total staff includes sworn and civilian personnel.

(6) Based on ratio of sworn full-time and on-call staff to the number of stations. Actual staffing levels of each station vary.

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Bargaining Unit:

Schedule:

Full-time Firefighter (Top Step at Five Years Experience)

Base Salary: \$80,381 Overtime: \$2,981 Qualifications:

Full-time Paramedic (Top Step at Five Years Experience)

Base Salary: \$88,426 Overtime: \$3,280 Qualifications:

Paid On-Call Firefighter

Rate: Qualifications:

Station Location Condition Staff per Shift Apparatus

Station 65 Good

Automatic Aids

Mutual Aid 9

Opportunities:

None identified.

Notes:

(7) Base salary in FY 08-09 excludes compensation for overtime hours (more than 56 weekly hours). Overtime compensation is minimal planned overtime (72 hours per year), and excludes unplanned overtime hours.

(8) Automatic aid is automatically-dispatched aid to territory in another provider's boundary.

(9) Mutual aid is aid to territory in another provider's boundary that is provided upon request and subject to availability, and is not automatically dispatched.

Training: Training is conducted by the City of El Cerrito training director with basic training provided by fire captains. The sworn staff spent 533 hours per person training in 2007. Training is conducted at NFPA standards. Joint training in EMS, operations, safety and public education is conducted with surrounding jurisdictions.

Most of the District lies within a very high fire hazard severity zone. There are access challenges throughout Kensington. The wildland/urban interface threat along the eastern boundary presents challenges.

Current Practices:

Station 65 is shared with the local police and community services district. Through its contract with El Cerrito, the District relies on the City of Richmond dispatch and training facilities.

The District's fire station is first-in service provider to adjacent areas in the City of El Cerrito as far west as Village and Balra Drives. As the City of El Cerrito is a ConFire-dispatched agency, the District both provides and receives automatic aid from the closest available resource, regardless of boundaries. The City shares its battalion chief with Richmond, ConFire, Pinole and RHFPD when there are simultaneous incidents.

Through the California mutual aid plan, the City of El Cerrito may provide or receive aid throughout the western states. The Kensington station most often exchanges mutual aid response with the cities of Berkeley, Richmond, Albany, and Oakland, ConFire, East Bay Regional Parks District, and CAL FIRE.

217 Arlington Ave.

Kensington CA 94707

The District relies on both the City of Richmond and ConFire for dispatch; to improve interoperability of fire department communication systems, the EBRICS project is needed and is in the planning stages.

48 hours on, 96 hours off rotation

1 Captain, 1 Engineer, 1

Firefighter

Type 1 engine

Type 3 engine

Academy, certified as FF1 and EMT.

Academy, certified as FF1 and paramedic.

NA - no positions.

United Professional Firefighters Local 1230

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GOVERNANCE ALTERNATIVES

Three government structure options were identified for Kensington FPD.

Annexation of territory served by KFPD at the EBMUD reservoir is a government structure option.

Consolidation of KFPD with the Kensington Community Services District (KCSD) is an option. KCSD provides law enforcement, solid waste collection and park services to a boundary area that includes both the KFPD boundary area and the EBMUD reservoir. Consolidation of KFPD with KCSD would streamline local government, and offer cost-saving opportunities to the community. Currently, KCSD is reported to face financing challenges in delivering adequate law enforcement services to the community. The District presently staffs its own police department. Consolidation would offer opportunities to the community in exercising greater control over the share of local property tax dollars spent on fire, EMS, law enforcement and other services.

Consolidation among west county fire providers is an option to improve the efficiency of service areas, promote facility-sharing and improve service levels. This option has been entertained in the

past, but encountered opposition from the cities of Richmond and El Cerrito. A feasible option is consolidation of RHFPD, Pinole, and adjacent ConFire service areas. Crockett-Carquinez FPD could potentially be included at its existing service levels.

AGENCY MSR DETERMINATIONS

GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS

- 1) Residential population growth in the KFPD boundary is projected to be minimal. Future growth is expected to consist of limited infill opportunities. There are no planned or proposed developments in the community. In the long-term, growth is expected to increase the population from 5,009 in 2008 to 5,123 in 2030.
- 2) Commercial growth is projected to be sluggish in KFPD with the job creation rate projected to be less than the countywide average. In the long-term, growth is expected to increase the job base from 866 in 2008 to 1,105 in 2030.
- 3) There are no development projects or growth plans in the portion of the KFPD service area that is outside its bounds at the EBMUD reservoir location.
- 4) Service demand levels are average in the District, with 67 incidents annually per 1,000 people compared with the countywide average of 79 incidents per 1,000.
- 5) KFPD does not conduct growth planning due to the built-out nature of the community.

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PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC SERVICES, INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

- 6) KFPD owns one fire station, which is staffed by the City of El Cerrito. The station was built in 1971, has twice been remodeled and is in good condition. KFPD did not identify any apparatus needs. The District sets aside funds annually toward future fire station remodeling needs and apparatus replacement.
- 7) KFPD plans for long-term capital needs by occasionally preparing a capital improvement plan. The District does not anticipate needing additional facilities due to the limited growth potential.
- 8) KFPD provides adequate service levels. KFPD meets response time guidelines much of the time, but falls short of meeting guidelines 90 percent of the time. Due to its small size, KFPD's service provider relies on neighboring providers to marshal adequate resources for fire-fighting. However, KFPD's service provider also contributes similar aid to neighboring providers. KFPD's staffing level of 2.2 sworn staff per 1,000 people is higher than the countywide average of 0.8 and the Bay Area average of 0.9 for urban fire providers. Based on staff certification levels, sworn staff credentials and skills appear to be solid. Training hours per sworn staff member are higher than the countywide average.
- 9) The KFPD service areas contains areas in the extremely high fire hazard and high fire hazard severity zones along its eastern boundary. To protect these vulnerable areas, the District conducts comprehensive vegetation inspections, hydrant testing, and public education campaigns. The District implemented a vegetation management program, and partners with EBRPD to diminish the wildfire threat.
- 10) There are no differences in service levels within the District, other than differences between properties in distance from the fire station.

FINANCIAL ABILITY OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES

- 11) KFPD has the financial ability to provide adequate services. The District's expenditures per population served (\$546) are higher than other providers in the County (median of \$212).

The District has no debt other than the OPEB liability it is pre-funding, and has adequate financial reserves.

12) KFPD relies on property taxes for 88 percent of its revenue. The District receives an aboveaverage share of property taxes (30 percent), which is higher than any other fire district in the County.

13) KFPD relies on assessments for seven percent of its revenues. The assessment lacks an inflation escalator, and was most recently increased in 1980. The District does not anticipate needing to increase the assessment within the next five years.

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STATUS OF, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR, SHARED FACILITIES

14) KFPD practices facility-sharing and regional collaboration to economize on costs and improve service levels.

15) KFPD operations are functionally consolidated with the City of El Cerrito. El Cerrito provides contract service to the District. As a result, KFPD relies on El Cerrito's dispatch providers at the City of Richmond and ConFire, and indirectly participates in closestresource dispatching with ConFire-dispatched agencies.

16) The City of El Cerrito exchanges mutual aid response with the cities of Berkeley, Richmond, Albany, and Oakland, ConFire, East Bay Regional Parks District, and CAL FIRE. The District's Station 65 is shared with the local police and community services district. Through its contract with El Cerrito, the District relies on the City of Richmond dispatch and training facilities.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE NEEDS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

17) KFPD demonstrated accountability based on the measures of contested elections, constituent outreach efforts, transparency, and disclosure practices.

18) The District demonstrated accountability and transparency by disclosing financial and service related information in response to LAFCO requests.

19) Annexation of territory served by KFPD at the EBMUD reservoir is a government structure option.

20) Consolidation of KFPD with the Kensington Community Services District (KCSO) is an option. KCSO provides law enforcement, solid waste collection and park services to a boundary area that includes both the KFPD boundary area and the EBMUD reservoir. Consolidation of KFPD with KCSO would streamline local government, and offer cost-saving opportunities to the community.

21) Consolidation among west county fire providers is an option to improve the efficiency of service areas, promote facility-sharing and improve service levels. This option has been entertained in the past, but encountered opposition from the cities of Richmond and El Cerrito. A feasible option is consolidation of RHFDP, Pinole, and adjacent ConFire service areas. Crockett-Carquinez FPD could potentially be included at its existing service levels.

AGENCY SOI UPDATE

There are two government structure options to be considered in updating the KFPD SOI. Annexation of territory served at the EBMUD Reservoir is a government structure option. The reservoir, which is located west of Grizzly Peak Blvd. and south of Beloit Ave., is a tax-exempt property that does not appear to have been officially annexed to the District according to Board of Equalization maps. The affected area is in a very high fire hazard severity zone.

Consolidation of west county providers would promote more logical fire service areas and efficiency of response. The illogical boundaries of the City of Richmond contribute to illogical and inefficient service areas for ConFire, as ConFire must service non-contiguous areas surrounded by territory in the City of Richmond. However, such a consolidation may not be politically feasible at this time, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Consolidation of KFPD with Kensington Community Services District (KCSD) is an option. KCSD provides law enforcement, solid waste collection and park services to a boundary area that includes both the KFPD boundary area and the EBMUD reservoir. KCSD is organized under a principal act that would enable LAFCO to authorize the CSD to provide fire protection services. Consolidation of KFPD with KCSD would streamline local government, and offer cost-saving opportunities to the community.

SOI OPTIONS

Given the considerations addressed in the MSR, two options were identified for the KFPD SOI:

SOI Option #1 – Expand SOI to Include EBMUD Reservoir

If LAFCO determines that annexation of the EBMUD reservoir service area is appropriate and that it is logical for KFPD to remain responsible for fire protection services, then the SOI should be expanded to encompass the affected territory.

SOI Option #2 – Zero SOI

If LAFCO determines that KFPD should be consolidated with another agency, such as Kensington CSD or a consolidated west county fire provider, then the SOI should be reduced to a zero SOI to indicate the District will eventually be dissolved.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the SOI be reduced to a zero SOI. Consolidation of KFPD with the Kensington CSD appears to be the most efficient approach to providing municipal services to the community and to continue to provide the community with the local control that it desires. The intent of an SOI is to identify the most appropriate areas for an agency's services in the foreseeable future. Pursuant to the Contra Costa LAFCO policies relating to an SOI, LAFCO discourages inclusion of land in an agency's SOI if a need for services provided by that agency within a 5-10 year period cannot be demonstrated.²⁰⁸ Territory included in an agency's SOI indicates the probable need for service has been established, and that the subject agency is determined by LAFCO to be the most logical service provider. SOIs generally will not be amended concurrently with an action on the related change of organization or reorganization. A change of organization or reorganization will not be approved solely because an area falls within the SOI of any agency.