

East Davis County Fire Protection District

C/O DAVIS FIRE DEPARTMENT, STATION 33
425 MACE BOULEVARD
DAVIS, CA 95618

SERVING EL MACERO, WILLOWBANK, AND YOLO COUNTY

DATE: June 8, 2022
TO: Christine Crawford, Yolo LAFCo Director
FROM: Bill Weisgerber, Chair EDCFPD
SUBJECT: East Davis Fire Protection District Comments—Draft Yolo LAFCo MSR/SOI Study

The comments below are critically significant to the issues and outcomes of Commission action soon to be taken on the Yolo LAFCo MSR/SOI Study for East Davis County Fire Protection District. It is respectfully requested that the Commissioners receive them in an expedient manner, for their due consideration.

Please find herein a summary of comments that have been inserted into the companion Draft LAFCo MSR/SOI Study document for East Davis County Fire Protection District. For convenience, comments are referenced by page and paragraph (item or bullet) of the Study document and represent a compilation of feedback from the entire East Davis County Fire Protection District Board.

Page 4 - Capacity and Adequacy of Facilities and Services MSR Recommendation(s) (Last bullet, bottom of page):

MSR Report states the East Davis Chief should provide an annual written evaluation of service per NFPA 1720. However, East Davis contracts for services with the City of Davis FD, a paid City FD which falls under NFPA 1710 and not the referenced 1720. In either case, NFPA Standards are voluntary, not mandatory.

Page 5 - Financial Ability (Items 4c.& 4d.):

As the District's fiscal agent, the Yolo County DFS should be providing these reports automatically to the Board. And, as stated in the MSR, East Davis has no employees and typically only has 5 transactions annually. These include one major invoice for Davis Fire Service; and up to four minor invoices of no more than \$500/each: YCPARMIA Insurance; CPA SCO-prep/filing; CPA Budget prep; Public Notice reimbursement. As such, why would we need quarterly reports?

Page 6 - Discussion: Financial Background (Item a):

- This is an incorrect interpretation of Section 8 of the agreement with the City.
- The reserve fund is not what is at the “*sole discretion*” of the District. The repository of reserve funds in a separate account with the City is what is at the “*sole discretion*” of the District. Alternatively, the District has elected to maintain those funds with Yolo County DFS.
- The contract requires the District to maintain this reserve. Reducing it would potentially breach the contract while exposing the District to risk if there were to be an issue with collecting funds or providing service, for a given year.

Page 7 - Expenditures:

At the recommendation of the District's independent CPA, the District is pursuing an amendment to the formula for invoicing from the City; in which the District would budget and pay the actual amount from the year preceding the immediate prior year. In the current budget cycle case, the amount owed for fiscal year 2023 would be the “actuals” from fiscal year 2021. This would allow the District to budget a known amount and not have an unexpected higher invoice from the City.

Page 7 - (Item b):

This item affirms the District’s accounting records are under the County financial system, subject to the same accounting and financial policies as the County. “...Accounting and budget data including all cash receipts and disbursements are reviewed by the County finance staff before they are posted...”

- **It then should be incumbent upon County DFS to provide the financial reports to the District board automatically--just as they would any other County department.**

Page 7 - (Item c):

- Inaccurate. This was not undetected. State Fish and Wildlife has not paid their assessments in 17 years, and a years-long effort to remedy the situation has been in vain, as the situation remains unchanged. This past March, Davis FD administration *once again* invoiced the following delinquent State properties having compounded delinquent taxes as far back as FY 2004/2005: Sacto/Yolo Port; Reclamation District #9; and CA State Fish and Game. **County DFS does not make the District whole on delinquent State Agencies, as they do with private parcel owners.**
- There was not a net loss. The invoice overage due to lag-time in State reimbursement to the City was covered by the District Reserve fund. Moreover, this would have been budgeted for had City of Davis Financial Services made the proper calculations and invoiced with an accurate figure, in a timely manner.

Page 7 - (Item d):

- Again, it should be incumbent upon County DFS to provide the financial reports to the District Board automatically--just as they would any other County department.
- The District annually confirms with County DFS Property Tax Supervisor, proper posting of Direct Charge revenue.
- The Board confirms with County DFS accounting staff the posting of the five annual invoices paid.

Page 8 - (Item g) and Financial Ability MSR Determination; Financial Ability MSR

Recommendation(s):

- The District Reserves Fiscal Policy is set at the 110% of one year’s budget, as contingency against catastrophic hardship (financial or otherwise) that may cause City services to be significantly curtailed (e.g., brown-out or blackout of Fire Station 33); or cancelled, altogether, due to inability to provide services.
 - If this were to happen, the District’s 110% contingency would be able to fund a bridging effort to sustain fire services from Station 33 for at least one year’s time, providing opportunity for alternative solutions to be arranged.
- If reserves are reduced or eliminated (as is being recommended,) the District would be unable to pay for fire service if such a catastrophe were to occur.
- East Davis has been previously held up as an example of sustainability. Now the ability to maintain that sustainability is a point of critical contention as the suggested reorganization may threaten the stability of the District.
- While there is a government recommended standard for reserves, there does not appear to be a rule to follow, and the Board believes this is just a guideline rather than an actual rule against excess reserve funds that fails to account for the unique aspects of the District.

Page 9 - (First bullet at top of page):

Per comments from Page 8, the District has only 5 transactions per year. Moreover, as County DFS is the District’s fiscal agent and fiduciary, it should be incumbent upon County DFS to provide reports to the District on a regular basis.

Page 10 - Discussion re: Accountability, Structure and Efficiencies (Page 9 Items a and d):

- The District pays a pro rata fair-share for fire service based on ad valorem (AV) taxes, as demonstrated in the bona fide engineering report and associated ballot language for the Prop 218.

- Springlake and No Man’s Land ***do not*** pay a proportionate rate for the services that they enjoy and have no financial sustainability recourse (however, East Davis does).
- Both Springlake and No Man’s Land do not generate enough income to cover the cost of service provided. Therefore, this is not a case of East Davis paying too much—but rather a case of the other two districts not paying enough (or *their pro rata fair share*).

There are built-in cost containment measures in both the East Davis Prop 218 and Contract agreement.

- The formula is very specific and will be further refined as stated in the comments for Page 7.
- The contract inflation clause is also specifically set at 3%, or CPI, whichever ***IS LESSER***.
- This inflation clause has not been exercised in at least the past 7 years and is not likely to be exercised in the foreseeable future.

Moreover, the absence of a sustainable revenue mechanism *without* an inflation clause is a direct cause of the financial instability of some Yolo Rural FPDs as costs are outrunning the revenue to support them. The revenue mechanism the District has in place is why East Davis is successful.

Any further assumptions on this matter should be held in abeyance until after SCI Consultants have completed their comprehensive, countywide Rural FPD Prop 218 study.

MSR statements associated with residents being confused as to what fire district they live in, what fire department serves them, and which fire commission represents them are ***specious, contrived, and unfounded***.

Page 11 - (First three bullet points):

See previous comments re: contract costs, cost containment measures, and reserve fund balances (from Pages 6, 7, 8, and 10 above).

- The MSR/SOI Study statements regarding a partial solution of adding commissioners to the District Board, is completely out of touch with real world conditions in these Districts. Springlake struggles to maintain a quorum and No Man’s Land has never produced a single volunteer commissioner.
- Is the public to believe that volunteers will now inexplicably appear and be seamlessly galvanized into this board configuration? These are three different communities with different issues, interests, and intricacies.
- The reorganization being suggested is a dismantling of a successful district that has operated continuously since 1966 with no significant issues.
- The East Davis Board believes this reorganization will result in the ultimate failure of the District when undue financial and administrative burdens are imposed by adding two other Districts absent an in-kind benefit assessment from the additional Districts/parcels or any administrative support from the County.
- The residents in the District are sure to react negatively when they learn that they now must subsidize service in two other areas—which will be the case as both of those Districts are currently ***underfunded*** and have no Proposition 218 levies.
- Any perceived savings or efficiencies will be overshadowed by the cost and effort of responding to the outcry by residents and property owners that voted for the East Davis District in its current form.

Page 12 - (Item h) and Accountability, Structure and Efficiencies MSR Determination:

The District has no record of being informed of the website transparency score short-comings and can either remedy those issues or take the site down completely—since it is not required.

Page 13 - Accountability, Structure and Efficiencies MSR Recommendation(s):

The purpose of the Prop 218 for the District was (and remains) to ensure that the properties of the District were paying their pro rata fair-share of the cost of fire service delivery to the community—since pass-through AV taxes were not providing a sustainable amount.

The Prop 218 process, legitimately included:

- Completion of a bona fide engineering report,
- Conducting of multiple community outreach and informational meetings to educate the electorate, and

- A balloted election vote taken by the property owners to tax themselves for fire service.

The reserve fund balance was addressed in the comments for Page 8 of the MSR.

As stated above, the District has no record of being informed of the website transparency score short-comings and can either remedy those issues or take the site down completely—since it is not required.

Conclusion:

The recommended reorganization will result in the *citizens, residents, and property owners* of the current District (s) to *not be well-served* and will saddle a sustainably successful district and board with assuming the responsibility and duties of two other districts (not even in the same community) that are currently failing to meet revenue targets.

- Davis Fire has not expressed any dissatisfaction with managing three contracts *and* the residents of the District have not expressed any dissatisfaction or confusion about their fire district, fire services provider, or their fire board.
- The MSR implies that the City of Davis has a problem because of multiple fire contracts for the three districts. However, the MSR reorganization will result in both Woodland and Elkhorn having multiple contracts to manage, which seems contrary to the goal of contract reduction.
- UCD-Fire is also affected by this potential change to their service and revenue from a portion of the Springlake District—yet this item has not been mentioned or addressed.
- The MSR/SOI Study fails to offer any conclusive proof that the East Davis Fire District needs to be reorganized and also fails to offer any sort of comprehensive plan for that reorganization.

Perhaps LAFCo can better serve the situation and the people of East County by seeking a way to help the Springlake and No Man’s Land Fire Districts without causing serious harm to East Davis.

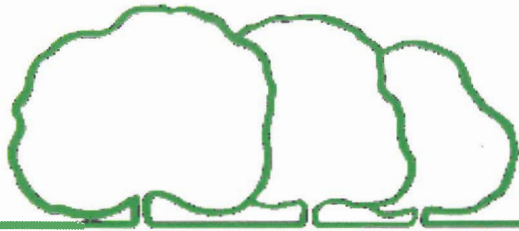
The East Davis Board implores the LAFCo Commissioners to carefully considering these comments and to *not approve* the MSR section written for East Davis as these extreme measures are potentially detrimental or even harmful to the residents of the East Davis County Fire Protection District.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the entire ECFPD Board,

Bill Weisgerber

Bill Weisgerber, Chair
EDCFPD

Cc: EDCFPD Board
Fire Chief Tenney
Supervisor Provenza
file



City of Woodland

COUNCIL MEMBER TOM STALLARD

300 FIRST STREET

WOODLAND, CALIFORNIA 95695

(530) 661-5800

June 23, 2022

Yolo Local Agency Formation Commission
625 Court Street Room 203
Woodland, CA 95695

LAFCo,

While I am no longer a sitting member of the Yolo Local Area Formation Commission, I was for the Fire Protection District Municipal Service Review items on December 9, 2021 and March 31, 2021. I would like to reiterate the importance of the municipal service review of all dependent and independent districts, and in particular those providing direct services to our residents. Our citizens and taxpayers deserve to know how our fire districts are performing, and how to better deliver services.

The Fire Service across our nation, state, and county are all struggling to meet the growing needs of our communities. An increase year over year in emergency response, increase in costs for goods and equipment, coupled with a decrease in volunteerism, has taken our fire services to the breaking point. As a LAFCo Board we must act upon the MRS recommendations to ensure the stability of fire protection, now and in the future. While I am happy to hear that most districts have already signed Joint Operations Agreements, more must be done. The fire protection districts in Areas one, two, and three must continue efforts to pool personnel, apparatus, personnel protective equipment, and training.

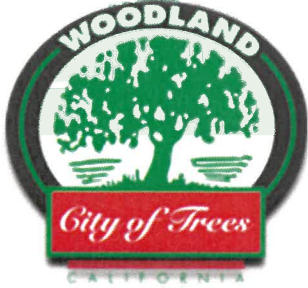
Those districts no longer sustainable must be dissolved and the responsibility given to the neighboring jurisdictions who are already providing the majority, if not all of the fire and emergency response. This is a statement I do not make lightly, but one out of grave concern out of the lack of timely response, equipment, and personnel to emergency incidents in their districts.

The cities of West Sacramento and Woodland have been providing automatic response aid to the Elkhorn FPD since 2015 with no financial compensation. This situation is serious and not sustainable as noted in a joint memo to the Executive Officer dated April 21, 2021 (attached) asking for resolution through this MSR process. Dissolving Elkhorn FPD would provide at least some funding to partially compensate for the service our cities have provided for years and it only makes sense that the contract districts be adjusted accordingly. Creating one district for each city in Area 4 streamlines contracts and creates a more efficient relationship with City Staff and its district.

I strongly recommend that the LAFCo board accept and adopt all recommendations as outlined in the 2022 Fire Protection District Municipal Service Review.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Stallard



April 30, 2021

To: Christine Crawford, LAFCo

From: City Manager Ken Hiatt, City of Woodland

City Manager Aaron Laurel, City of West Sacramento

Handwritten signatures of Ken Hiatt and Aaron Laurel, with the word "for" written below the second signature.

Re: Fire Department Response to Elkhorn

Both the City of Woodland and City of West Sacramento have been reliable partners with the Elkhorn Fire Protection District, supporting those with emergencies within the boundaries of the District. However, due to the increasingly disproportionate calls for aid from our Departments to the Elkhorn District, we are requesting that LAFCo take a serious look at the health of the Elkhorn Fire Protection District and provide solutions that offset the impacts on the Woodland and West Sacramento Fire Departments. The current automatic aid agreement is not sustainable given the staffing capabilities of the Elkhorn Fire Protection District. The burden of response on our Departments is resulting in service impacts to the residents and businesses within our communities beyond justification. The residents of the City of Woodland and West Sacramento have unknowingly accepted these impacts.

Attached to this cover letter is a report that provides a synopsis of call data pulled from the Yolo Emergency Dispatch Agency's (YECA) Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. The data evaluated indicates that the burden of response to calls for service in the Elkhorn Fire Protection District fall on both the City of Woodland and the City of West Sacramento. This is because the Elkhorn Fire Protection District cannot routinely send adequate resources to effectively handle an incident in their own district. Unfortunately, it is the residents and thousands of travelers, including intra and interstate commerce who travel on the roadways within the Elkhorn District boundaries that would be negatively affected if either the WFD or WSFD are unable to respond to incidents within the Elkhorn Fire Protection District. Both the Woodland and West Sacramento Fire Chiefs have expressed a moral obligation that their fire departments not only respond, but that they set their personnel up for success and ensure their safety by sending the appropriate amount of resources to handle the incidents, evident by the automatic aid agreement.

The City of Woodland and the City of West Sacramento look forward to hearing the solutions LAFCo provides in order to rectify the issues within the Elkhorn Fire Protection District.

Assessment of Elkhorn Fire Protection District

2020 Service Year

The District

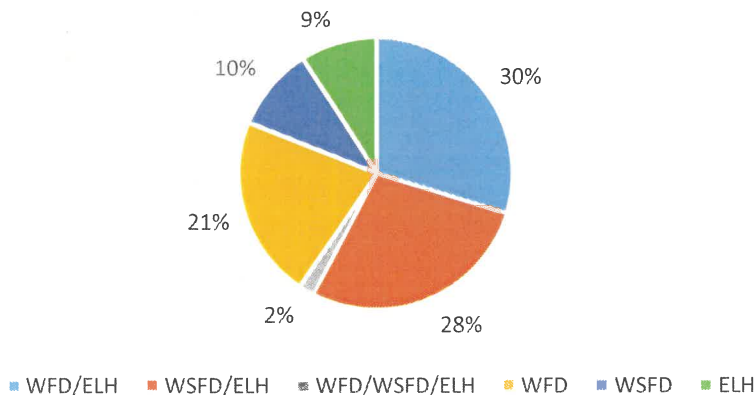
The Elkhorn Fire Protection District (ELH) is an independent fire protection district serving the unincorporated area east of the Yolo Bypass, between Woodland and West Sacramento. The Elkhorn District is 58 square miles, or 37,000 acres and has a little over 370 residents. Significant target hazards in the district include the Sacramento River, Interstate 5, and the River Road, which is classified as the most dangerous roadway in Yolo County.

Automatic aid

Leading up to 2010 the Woodland Fire Department (WFD), and West Sacramento Fire Department (WSFD) were being requested to provide mutual aid to the Elkhorn Fire Protection District on a regular basis. These mutual aid requests were being made several minutes after Elkhorn was initially dispatched and did not respond, or did not have enough resources to effectively respond. Both the Woodland Fire Department and the West Sacramento Fire Department were concerned over the significant delay to the emergencies and entered into an automatic aid agreement, which dispatches the respective department resources to incidents in the district. In 2015 the agreement was updated to include the amount of apparatus each automatic aid department would provide, essentially increasing our level of commitment to the district. A copy of the automatic aid agreement has been included for your review.

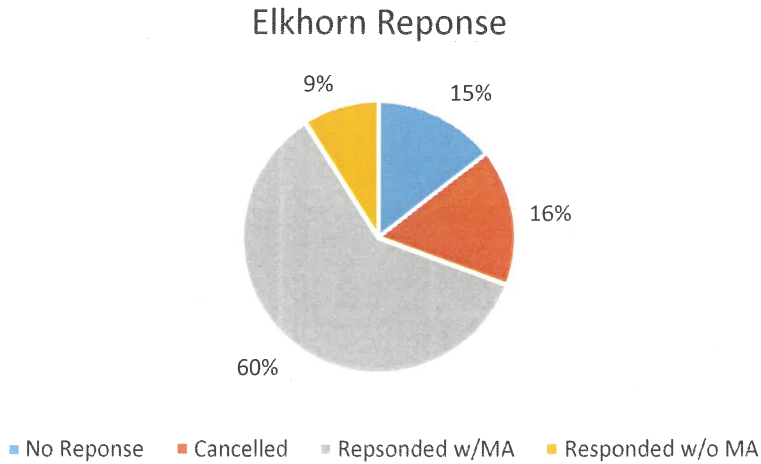
In 2020 the Elkhorn Fire Protection District had 111 calls for service within the district boundaries. Of those 111 calls, the WFD responded to 59, while the WSFD responded to 43 calls for service within the district boundaries.

Response by Agency



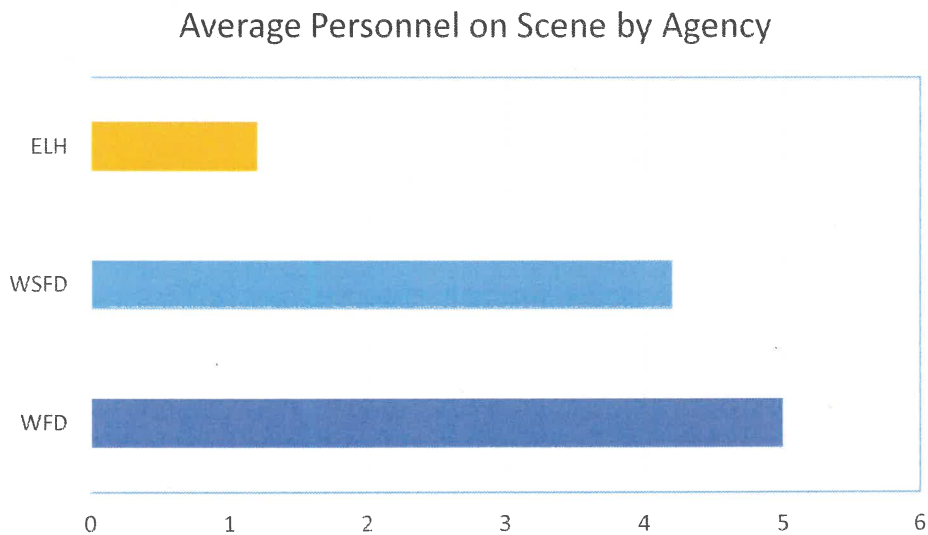
Reviewing just the Elkhorn Fire District responses, they were either cancelled enroute, or did not respond 31% of the time. The cancellation occurs when either WFD or WSFD arrive and can handle the

incident, or are ready to return to their respective jurisdiction and ELH has not yet arrived. ELH responded and handled calls for service on their own 9% of the time. Elkhorn never provided automatic aid to the City of Woodland or the City of West Sacramento in 2020.



Average Personnel per Incident

Analyzing the CAD call data, and based on the assigned units for each incident, it was determine how many personnel responded to calls for service in the Elkhorn District from ELH, the WFD, and WSFD.



On average ELH responded 1.2 personnel per incident while WFD responded 5 and WSFD responded 4.2. This covers all call types, including medical aids, vehicle accidents, grass fires, investigations, and water rescues. In some limited instances, 1.2 personnel can handle a minor medical aid or an investigation. Unfortunately, both I-5 and the River Road pose a significant risk to motorists, as well as first responders working on the scene of an incident, requiring more personnel. In a few instances last year, WFD and WSFD responded to significant incidents together in order to handle the events without further negatively affecting both the Cities of Woodland and West Sacramento. In some instances, staffing recalls have been needed to cover the City of Woodland due to incidents occurring in the

Elkhorn District. A staffing recall summons off duty personnel to provide station coverage while units are committed on a significant incident. A staffing recall places an additional financial burden on the City of Woodland. The West Sacramento Fire Department at times requests the City of Sacramento to assist with station coverage.

*Note: The data analyzed was done so manually, and is only as accurate as the data collected by YECA.