

# Report to the El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission

## Plan for Providing Services to Annexed Islands (LAFCO 2020-01)

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## PLAN FOR SERVICES

This is a plan for providing public services to 159 parcels in areas (“islands”) substantially surrounded by territory within El Dorado County Fire District (ECF) boundaries. The plan addresses the boundary-service area mismatch described in municipal service reviews prepared by El Dorado LAFCO. The District already extends its emergency services to the affected parcels in the extraterritorial islands even though the property owners do not presently contribute to District financing. The proposed new boundary will enhance public services in the annexation areas by tying financing to services provided, and promotes transparency and logical boundaries.

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### ANNEXATION AREAS

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The proposed project is the annexation of 159 parcels to ECF in order to align the District’s boundaries more closely with its service area and first response area, as described in the *Countywide Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Municipal Services Review* reports prepared by El Dorado LAFCO in August 2006 and August 2011. The proposal is consistent with the LAFCO-adopted sphere of influence (SOI) for the District. Each of the proposed annexation areas lies within the District’s adopted SOI, as most recently updated by LAFCO in 2011.

**Table 1: Proposed Annexation Areas**

The affected parcels are located in 14 distinct areas or “islands” that are substantially surrounded by territory already within ECF bounds. These areas vary from 3 to 2,681 acres in size, as shown in Table 1. The proposed annexation areas are located throughout the western and central portions of the District’s boundary areas, as shown in Figure 1. Each of the proposed annexation areas is served by the closest fire station with resources available at the time of the incident.

Affected properties are mostly rural residential, and include agricultural and industrial uses, as well as vacant lands.

There are several reasons why these parcels lie outside District boundaries even though they receive services from the District: 1) a historical misunderstanding that the prohibition on annexing Williamson Act lands to cities applied to fire districts as well, 2) the County Development Department had neglected to require landowners to annex to fire districts for a portion of its history, 3) the sale of lands into private ownership that had formerly been owned by the federal government, and 4) a lack of incentives or requirements for fire districts to process annexations to correct the boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

Area	Community	Parcels	Acres	Units	First-In FS
A	Cool	9	915	1	ECF 72
B	Pilot Hill	31	2,681	1	ECF 72
C	Shingle Springs	1	133	0	ECF 28
D	Fruitridge Road	2	279	1	ECF 21
E	Smith Flat	2	3	2	ECF 25
F	Pleasant Valley	9	437	3	ECF 19
G	Camino	1	33	1	ECF 21
H	Camino	2	54	1	ECF 21
I	Camino	1	18	1	ECF 21
J	Camino	1	3	0	ECF 21
K	Camino	3	72	2	ECF 21
L	Camino	3	31	1	ECF 21
M	Pollock Pines	37	309	17	ECF 17
N	Pollock Pines	<u>57</u>	<u>481</u>	<u>35</u>	ECF 17
Total		159	5,448	66	

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<sup>1</sup> El Dorado LAFCO, *Countywide Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Municipal Service Review*, adopted Aug. 23, 2006, pages 297-298.

*Figure 1: Proposed Island Annexation Areas “A” through “N”*

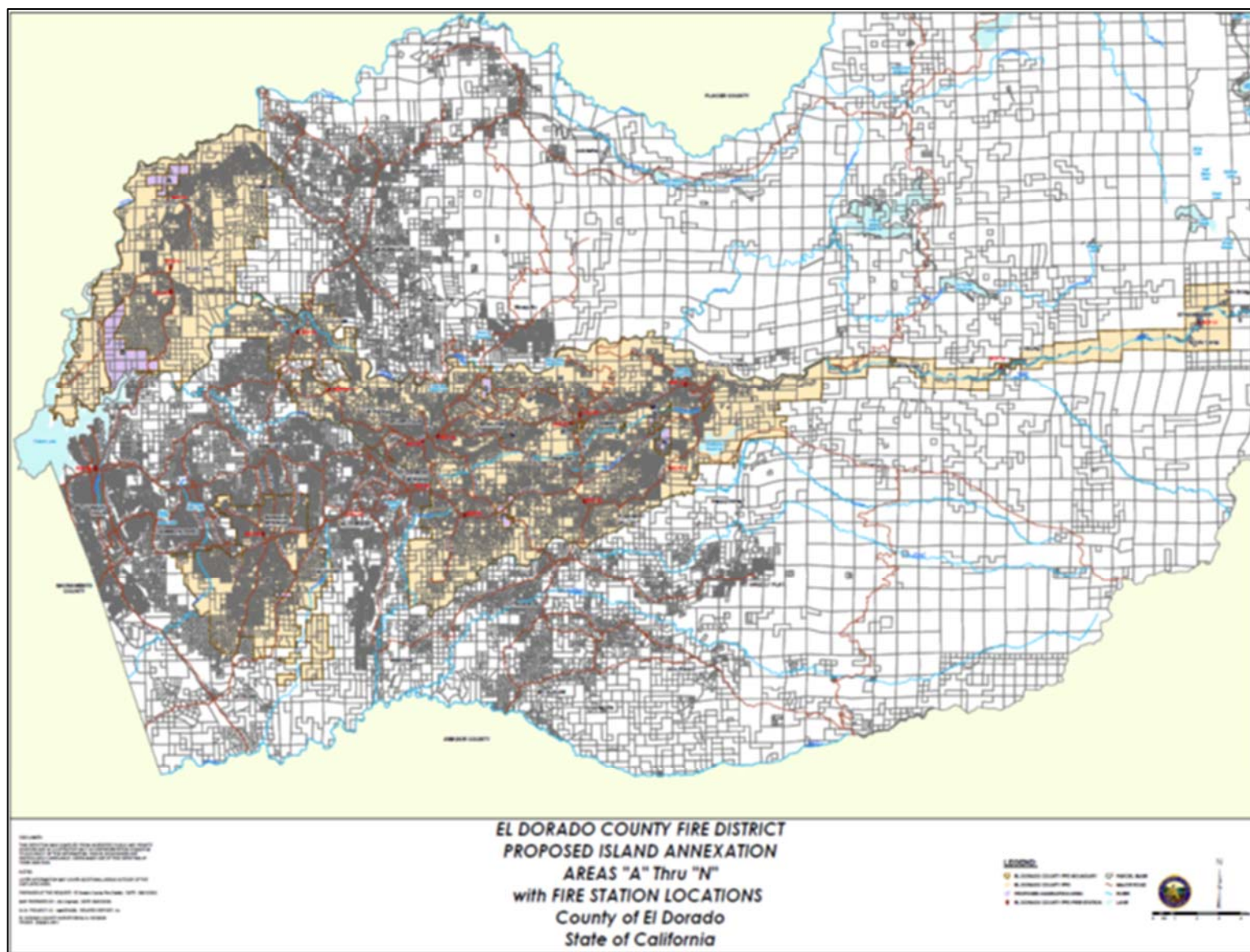


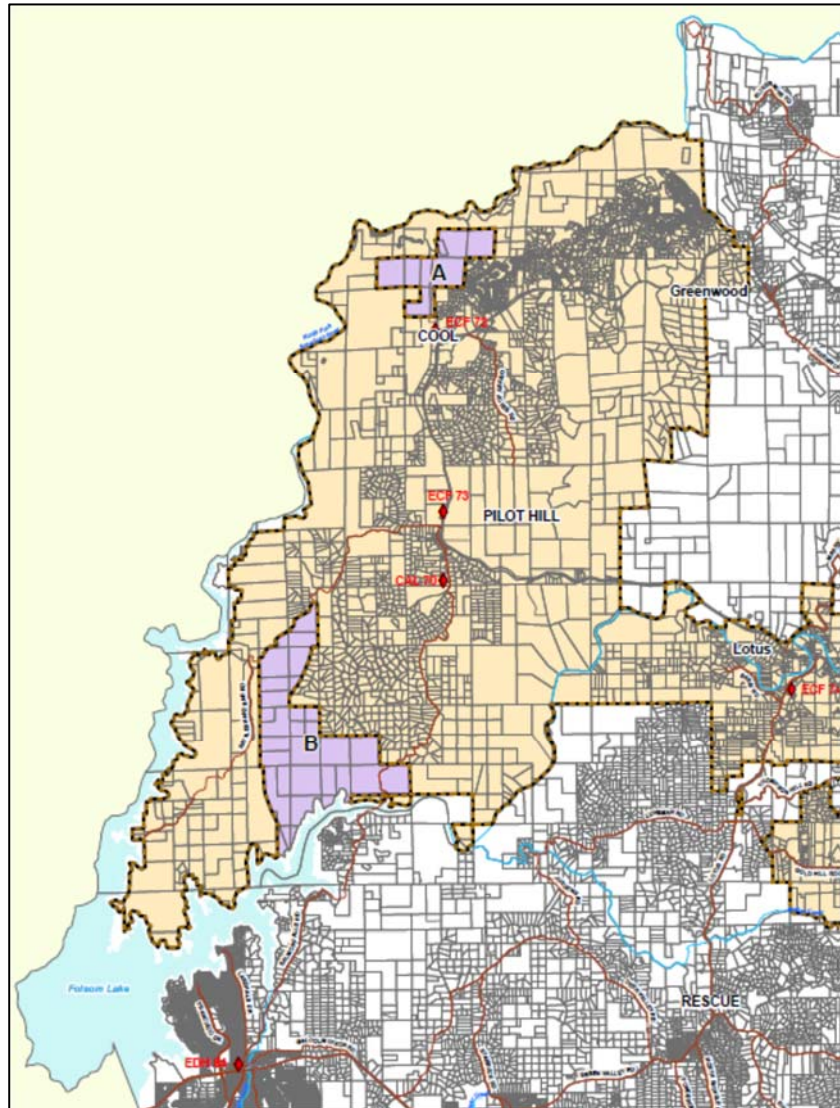


Figure 2: Annexation Areas A (Cool) & B (Pilot Hill)

Annexation areas A and B lie in the northwest portion of the District in the vicinity of Cool and Pilot Hill respectively.

Annexation Area A encompasses 916 acres on nine rural and industrial parcels. Cool Cave Quarry, a limestone mine, is located in this area, along with adjacent vacant industrial parcels and rural parcels. The quarry is mined for limestone for use in concrete products. Besides a mobile home at the quarry site, there are no housing units in the annexation area, as reflected in the parcel records.<sup>2</sup>

Annexation Area B spans 2,681 acres on 31 rural parcels by Folsom Lake on the outskirts of the Pilot Hill community. There is a housing unit on one of the parcels on Rattlesnake Bar Road. No other housing units are reflected in parcel records for this annexation area. The remaining parcels are rural restrictive and rural lands without residences.



The primary facility providing service to each area is the fire station with the shortest travel time to that area. ECF Fire Station 72 is the closest of ECF's full-time staffed stations to both annexation areas. This station is located in the Cool community 1.27 miles from the centroid of annexation area A, and staffed 24 hours a day by an engine company whose personnel are certified paramedics or emergency medical technicians (EMTs). ECF Station 72 is the closest resource to annexation area B (8 miles driving distance from its centroid), where it is typically the first-in provider to about 75-80 percent of the incidents in the area. Cal Fire Station 70 is sometimes first-in to serve annexation area B in Pilot Hill during the wildfire season (typically July through October or November) when its station is staffed with a 3-person engine company whose personnel are certified emergency medical technicians, and some are certified paramedics.

<sup>2</sup> El Dorado County Assessor, *Current Assessor Property Information System*, online system accessed October 2020.

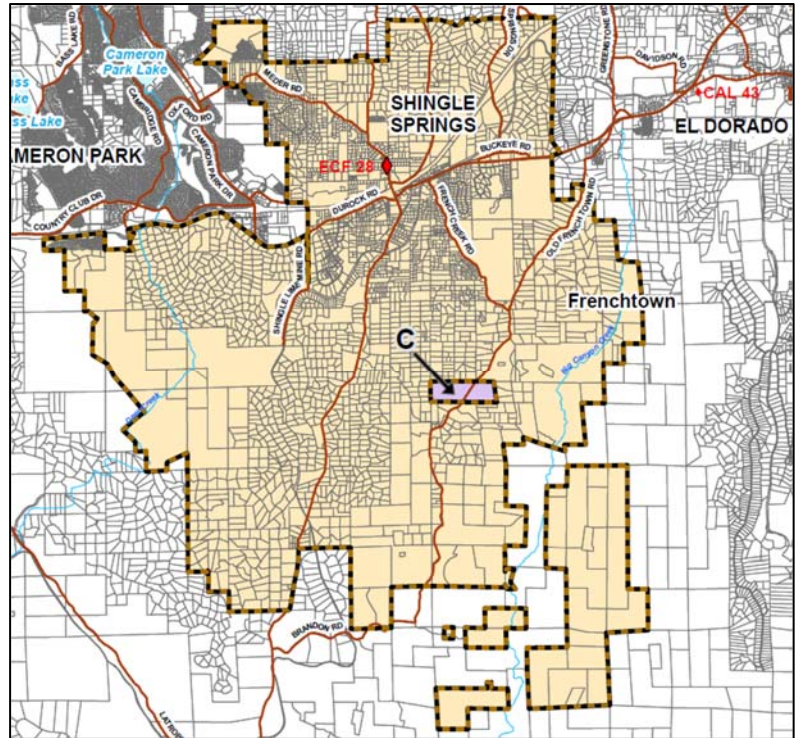


**Figure 3: Annexation Area C (Shingle Springs)**

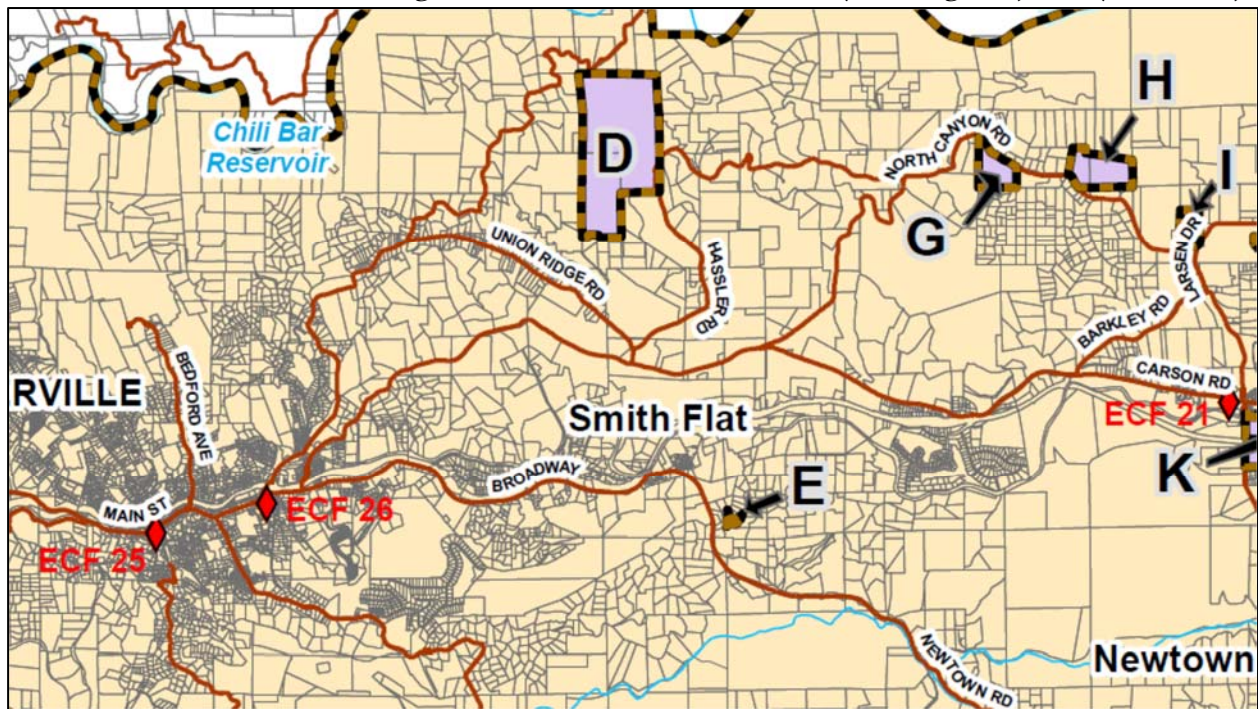
Annexation area C is composed of one 133-acre parcel located on French Creek Road. The affected property's primary land use is rural restrictive. There are no housing units in this proposed annexation area.

The closest staffed fire station is ECF Station 28 in Shingle Springs, which is 3.9 miles driving distance from the centroid of area C. This station is staffed 24 hours a day by an engine company and medic unit. This station is relatively new, having been rebuilt in 2008 to address seismic damage.

When Station 28 personnel are responding to another incident, other nearby stations may be dispatched for response to this area. The next closest staffed stations are Cal Fire Station 43 (during wildfire season) and Cameron Park FD Station 89.



**Figure 4: Annexation Areas D (Fruitridge Rd) & E (Smith Flat)**



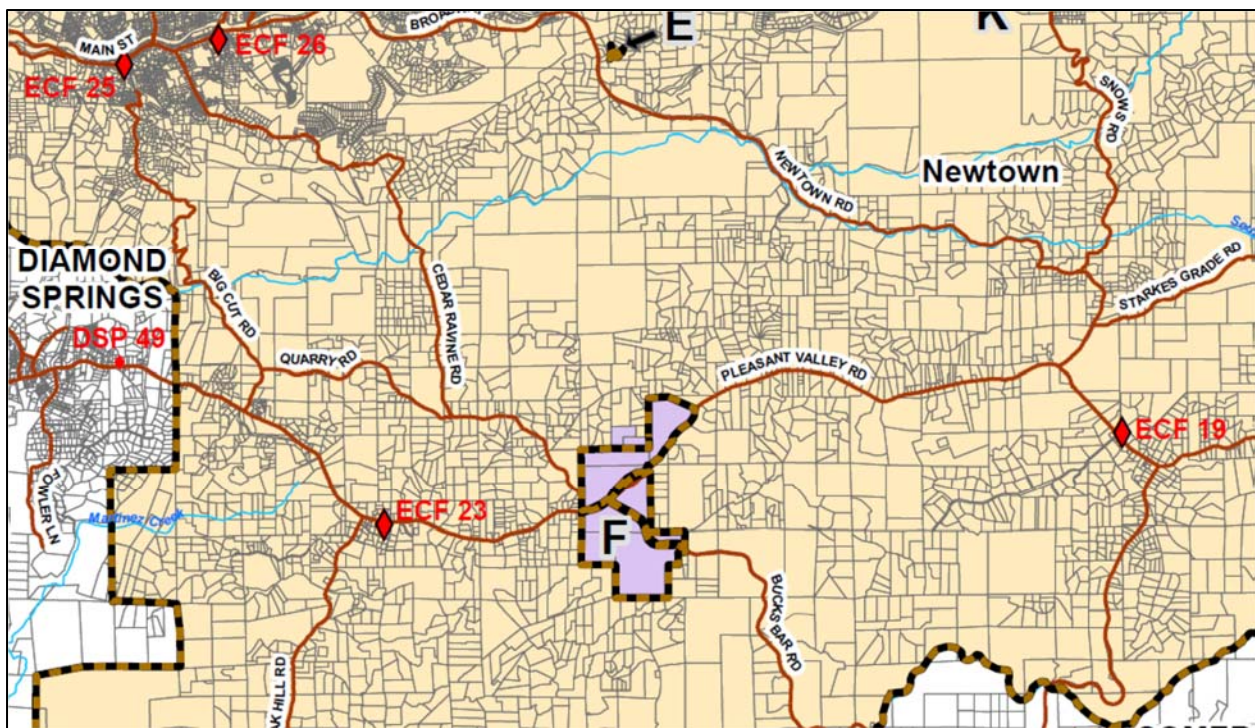
Annexation area D is composed of two rural residential parcels and covers 279-acres. Accessed by Fruitridge Road, this area is located on the outskirts of Placerville. There is one housing unit in



this area, as well as agricultural uses. The closest staffed fire station is ECF Station 21 which is staffed 24 hours a day by an engine company. This station also houses the District's administrative headquarters. Station 21 is 4.8 miles driving distance from this area's centroid. When Station 21 staff are occupied elsewhere, the next closest station is ECF Station 25 which would then provide first response services. In some cases, Cal Fire Station 20, which lies 6.4 miles from this area's centroid, is dispatched; this station is staffed with one engine company year-round and another during wildfire season.

Annexation area E (Smith Flat) is a 3-acre area composed of two parcels with single-family residences. Located in the Smith Flat vicinity, this annexation area is reached most quickly by ECF Fire Station 25 (4.8 miles away) which is staffed 24 hours a day by a 3-person engine company and 2-person medic unit. Although ECF Station 26 is closer to this annexation area, Station 26 is used for equipment storage, and is unstaffed. When Station 25 resources are otherwise engaged, the next closest staffed stations are ECF Station 21 (5.8 miles away) and ECF Station 19 (6.5 miles away).

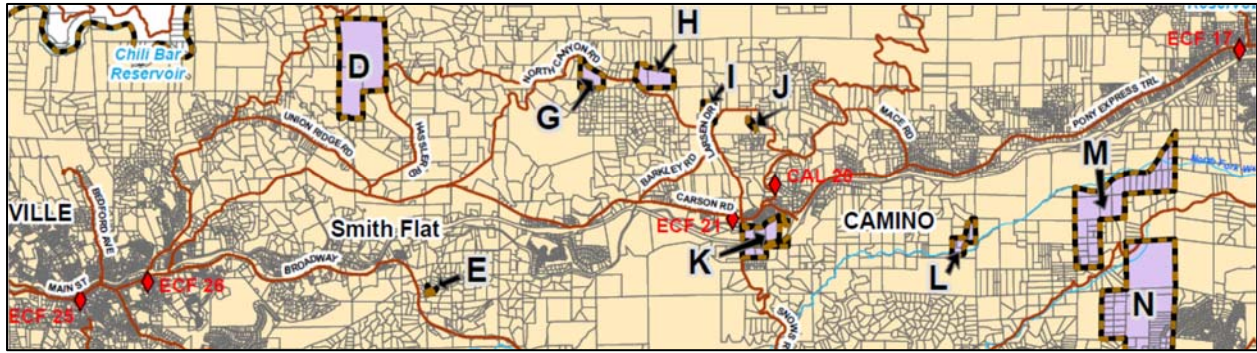
**Figure 5: Annexation Area F (Pleasant Valley)**



Annexation area F (Pleasant Valley) is made up of 9 parcels covering 437 acres. This area is located along Pleasant Valley Road and Bucks Bar Road. The primary land use is rural residential, with three housing units in this area. One affected parcel is improved commercial with a small grocery store (Mill Creek Market) and another is tax-exempt roadway.

The staffed fire station closest to this annexation area is ECF Station 19 (4.8 miles away). This station is staffed 24 hours a day with a 2-person engine company and a medic unit, and is in very good condition. (Although ECF Station 23 is located even closer, that station is used primarily as a warehouse and not staffed 24 hours a day). About 90 percent of the time, ECF Station 19 is the first-in provider. When ECF Station 19 resources are occupied elsewhere, the next closest resource is Diamond Springs Station 49. Under automatic aid agreements, the closest available resource is always dispatched to fire and medical emergencies.

Figure 6: Annexation Areas G-L (Camino vicinity)



Annexation areas G, H, I, J, K and L are located in the Camino vicinity, and within the shortest travel time of ECF Station 21. Station 21 is staffed 24 hours a day with an engine company, and houses administrative headquarters for the District. Station 21 is the first responder to incidents in the vicinity about 95 percent of the time. Cal Fire Station 20 is the closest staffed responder about 5 percent of the time in the vicinity.

Annexation area G is a 33-acre area south of North Canyon Road containing one parcel with timber preserve uses (a Christmas tree farm) and a housing unit. Station 21 is 2.7 miles driving distance from the area's centroid.

Annexation area H is a 54-acre area north of North Canyon Road. The area is composed of two rural-residential parcels, one of which contains a housing unit and the other is vacant. Station 21 is 2.6 miles driving distance from the area's centroid. Annexation area I is an 18-acre area near the intersection of North Canyon Road and Larsen Drive. One rural-residential parcel is located in this area, which contains one housing unit. Station 21 is 1.3 miles driving distance from the area's centroid.

Annexation area J is a 3-acre area near the intersection of Larsen Drive and Bumblebee Lane. One vacant rural-residential parcel is located in this area. Station 21 is 1.8 miles driving distance from the area's centroid. Annexation area K is a 72-acre area east of Snows Road. Of the three rural restrictive parcels in this area, one contains two housing units and two contain agricultural uses. Station 21 is 0.3 miles driving distance from the area's centroid.

Annexation area L is a 31-acre area along the North Fork of Weber Creek, accessed at the end of Eight Mile Road. There are three rural residential parcels in this area, of which one contains a housing unit and the other two are vacant. Cal Fire Station 20 is 3.5 miles from this annexation area, and ECF Station 21 is 3.6 miles distance. ECF Station 21 is dispatched to this area about 95 percent of the time due to highway travel time considerations, and also because Cal Fire station 20 staffing levels are seasonal.



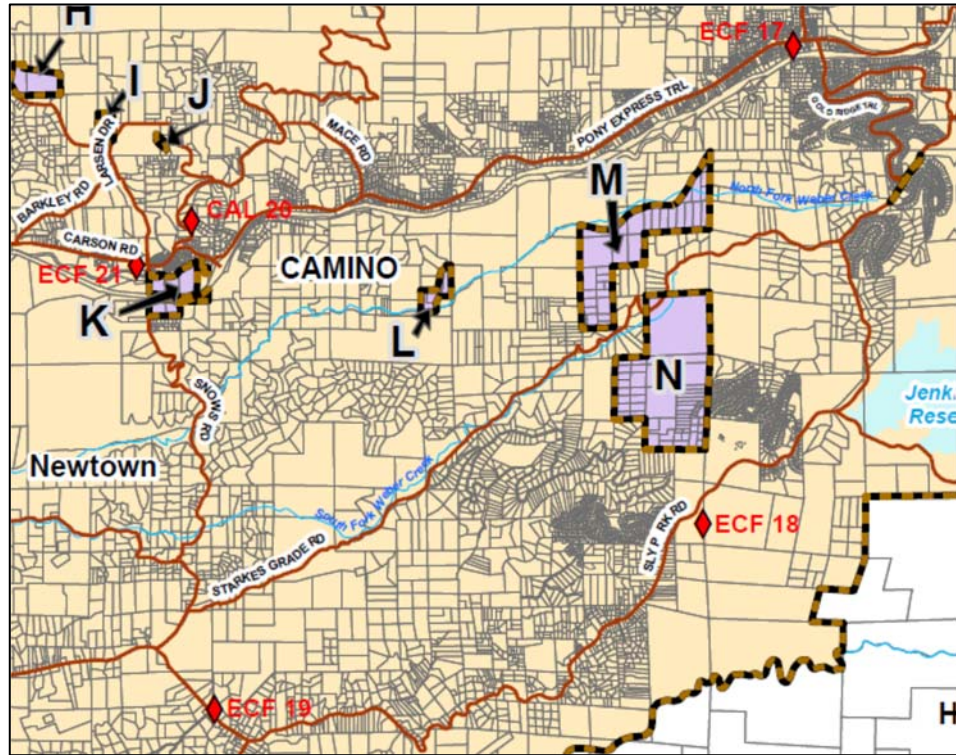
Figure 7: Annexation Areas M & N (Pollock Pines vicinity)

Annexation areas M and N are located in the Pollock Pines vicinity, and within the shortest travel time of ECF Station 17. Station 17 is located 5.4 and 6.5 miles driving distance from the centroids of areas M and N, respectively.

Station 17 is staffed 24 hours a day by an engine unit and a medic unit. When its staff are already deployed elsewhere, ECF Station 19 offers the quickest response time, followed by ECF Station 21. ECF Station 18 is located nearby as the crow flies, although it is rarely a first responder as it is unstaffed. The US Forest Service' seasonal fire station, which is located about a mile from ECF Station 18, is another nearby resource during wildfire season.

Annexation area M is a 309-acre area containing 37 parcels. The primary land use in this area is rural residential. A majority of parcels are vacant. Some of the parcels are developed, with 17 housing units located in this area, mostly along Lynx Trail and Ski Run Road. One parcel contains non-residential improvements. A 40-acre parcel in this annexation area is tax-exempt. This annexation area is accessed via Starkes Grade Road.

Annexation area N encompasses 481 acres on 57 parcels. The primary land use in this area is rural residential. A majority of the parcels are developed with 35 containing housing units. Some of the developed parcels are accessed via Starkes Grade Road. Most of the developed parcels are in the northwest portion of the Sly Park community and accessed via Sly Park Road.



## ENUMERATION OF SERVICES

The principal services provided by ECF are structural fire protection, wildland fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS), vehicle rescue, hazardous materials first response, search and rescue, arson investigation, burn permits, plan checks, and defensible space services. A detailed inventory of services can be found in the MSR report prepared by LAFCO in 2006.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the emergency nature of the District's services, the services are already being provided to the proposed annexation areas. Facilities and infrastructure for delivery of these services include ECF fire stations, engines, personnel and equipment, as shown in Table 2. Fire stations and apparatus were inventoried in detail in LAFCO's 2006 MSR.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: ECF Facilities & Infrastructure, 2020**

FS Location	Staffing		Apparatus						Square Feet	Year Built	Infrastructure Needs
	Engine Co	Medic Unit	HQ	Engine 1	Engine 3	Engine 6	Tender	Utility			
Stations Staffed 24-7											
17 Pollock Pines	•	•		•	•			•	4,950	1953	Replace electrical system, plumbing, asphalt in front, fence in back. Install 2nd shower.
19 Pleasant Valley	•	•		•			•	•	5,460	1974	Replace flooring, asphalt, paint.
21 Camino	•		◦	•		•	•	•	6,131	1973	Asphalt for crew parking, new flooring, interior paint, shower replacement. New admin bldg.
25 Placerville	•	•		•				•	5,358	1947	Repair foundation, replace bay doors & flooring. FS needs replacement (~\$5.5M).
28 Shingle Springs	•	•		•	•		•	•	10,049	2008	Repair foundation, stucco, windows.
72 Cool	•			•	•		•	•	5,501	1981	Update internet connection.
Stations Staffed As-Needed via On-Call Personnel or Volunteers											
15 Strawberry							•		2,065	1983	Replace siding, new asphalt, finish upstairs.
16 Kyburz		◦		•					2,600	1957	Replace roof, new asphalt.
18 Sierra Springs									3,009	1964	Replace bay doors.
23 Pleasant Valley								•	5,460	1944	New asphalt
26 Placerville				•			•		1,975	1976	NA
27 Gold Hill		◦							4,500	1986	NA
73 Pilot Hill									1,680	1976	Replace roof, paint exterior.
74 Coloma			◦	•				•	8,648	1983	Repair sheet rock, update bathroom.
Note: ◦ indicates function staffed part-time or seasonally (in addition to operating as-needed via on-call paid personnel or volunteers).											

The District engages in ongoing and regular planning for updating its facilities and infrastructure within the constraints of available financing. Strategic planning for facilities, training and staffing and financing is conducted in five-year cycles, as shown in the District's 2018 Strategic Plan,<sup>5</sup> with finetuning through the District's annual budget process and operational management.

<sup>3</sup> El Dorado LAFCO, *Countywide Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Municipal Services Review*, adopted Aug. 23, 2006, Table 21 on pages 76-77.

<sup>4</sup> El Dorado LAFCO, *Countywide Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Municipal Services Review*, adopted Aug. 23, 2006, Table 22 on pages 78-80.

<sup>5</sup> El Dorado County Fire District, *Five-Year Strategic Plan*, 2018.

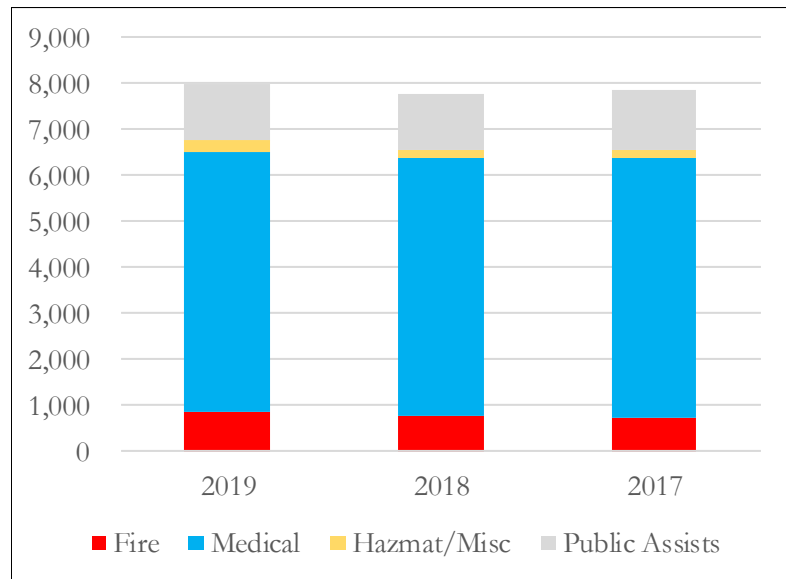
## SERVICE UNITS & CAPACITY

### Service Units

The District provides services to residents, businesses, other property owners and visitors not only to areas within District boundaries but also to nearby areas when and where District facilities, equipment and personnel can most expeditiously provide first response services. The District cooperates with other fire and EMS service providers in its approach to providing services, both offering response outside its bounds and receiving services from nearby service providers, as the case may be, depending on availability and anticipated response time.

**Figure 8: Calls for Service, 2017-2019**

The District considers its service units to be those needing services, as indicated primarily by calls for service. ECF service calls are fairly consistent from year to year, as shown in Figure 8. In 2019, ECF received 7,965 calls for service. Most service calls are medical, accounting for 71 percent of calls. About 11 percent of calls were for fires, 4 percent for hazardous materials and miscellaneous emergencies, and the remaining 15 percent of calls were for public assists and non-emergencies.



### Capacity Analysis

ECF service calls will be unaffected by the proposed annexation, as the District already serves the affected areas.

A countywide automatic aid agreement ensures that service is provided to all. Fire/EMS providers are dispatched to respond to 911 calls based on available resources located within the shortest travel time from the emergency. This system is known as “boundary drop” among the service providers. As a result, there are no entitled units of service that are unserved presently.

### Service Impacts

The proposed annexation would increase the property, acreage and resident population within District bounds. There are approximately 24,000 parcels within the existing boundaries, and proposed annexation would add 159 additional parcels. The proposed annexation would add 5,448 acres to the District boundary area, with approximately 66 housing units.<sup>6</sup>

Annexation is not anticipated to affect the District’s ongoing workload. Any impacts are expected to be modest efforts during the one-time transition of the affected parcels upon annexation.

<sup>6</sup> Calculations are based on the listing of affected parcels provided by El Dorado County Assessor, with acreage and housing units derived from parcel records on the Assessor’s online Parcel Data Information System.



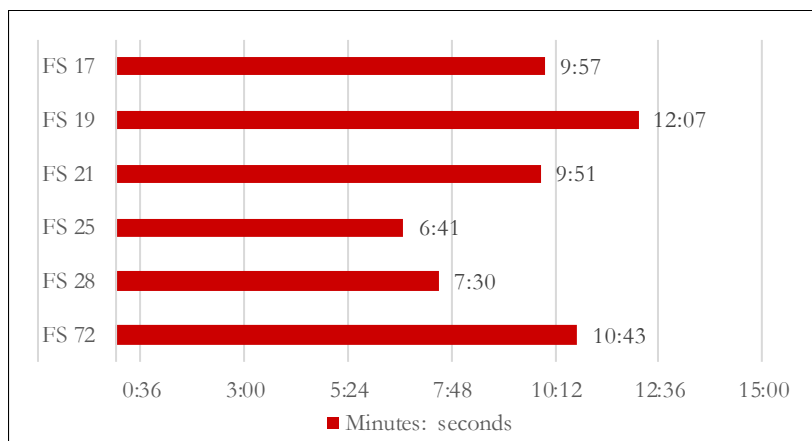
## PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposed annexation of the 14 areas may be accomplished with existing infrastructure, because the District is already providing service to the affected areas under the countywide automatic aid agreement whereby the closest staffed fire station is dispatched to fire and medical emergencies.

Although the District does not need to expand its infrastructure or staffing to serve the proposed annexation areas, the District does have infrastructure needs and is actively planning to address those needs as financing becomes available to do so. Facility needs at each of the District's fire stations are listed in Table 2 above. Major infrastructure needs in the District include rebuilding or replacement of Station 25 in Placerville, construction of a training center and training tower, and a new administration building.

**Figure 9: Average Response Time by Station, 2019**

ECF response time goals are no more than 11 minutes for urban incidents, with longer response times of 16 minutes for semi-rural areas, 24 minutes for rural areas, and 90 minutes for wilderness. The District manages to meet urban response time goals most of the time in spite of its sprawling geographical layout. Response times averaged 6:41 minutes at ECF Station 25 in



Placerville, and 7:30 minutes at ECF Station 28 in Shingle Springs, as shown in Figure 9. Response times run longer in the less urban settings, averaging 9:51 minutes at Station 21 in Camino, 9:57 minutes at Station 17 in Pollock Pines, 10:43 minutes at Station 72 in Cool, and 12:07 minutes at Station 19 in Pleasant Valley.

Expansion of District staffing to additional stations would depend on associated financing. The District had proposed a special tax of \$96 per parcel district-wide to fund additional firefighting positions. That proposal was rejected by voters in 2019, apparently out of concern that associated revenues be specifically designated for the anticipated purposes. If a similar proposal with greater assurances to the concerned electorate were to be proposed in the future following annexation, voters in the affected areas would have the opportunity to vote on such measures. If approved by voters, the District would expand its coverage of paid personnel beyond current service levels.

## CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

### Financing

The proposed annexation of the 14 island areas would better align the District's boundaries with its service area, and would also promote greater fairness and equity among properties in the District's service area.

Presently, the properties within District bounds contribute to District revenue streams to finance public services. The primary financing vehicle is allocation of property taxes, which are budgeted to generate 82 percent of the District's FY 20-21 revenues. Annexation will not affect the amount of property taxes paid by the annexed parcels. Upon annexation, a portion of the property taxes generated by affected parcels will be distributed by the County to ECF.

**Table 3: Special Tax by Annexation Area, FY 20-21**

Special tax assessments presently generate approximately four percent of the District's revenues. Single-family residential parcels pay up to \$60 annually. When the District was formed, special parcel taxes that had been imposed by four predecessor fire districts were transferred to the District. Specifically, parcel taxes had been imposed in territory that had previously been in the Pleasant Valley, Coloma/Lotus, Pollock Pines-Camino and Northside Fire Protection Districts (FPDs). When the Strawberry area was annexed to the District in 1992, a fire suppression assessment was imposed as a condition of annexation.<sup>7</sup> Neither the Shingle Springs FPD nor the City of Placerville levied a special fire tax, so there is no special tax presently in those portions of the District bounds.

Area	Community	Parcels	Special Tax Zone	Single-Family	Other Parcels
A	Cool	9	Northside	\$35	\$35
B	Pilot Hill	31	Northside	35	35
C	Shingle Springs	1	NA - Shingle Springs	0	0
D	Fruitridge Road	2	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
E	Smith Flat	2	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
F	Pleasant Valley	9	Pleasant Valley	42	42
G	Camino	1	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
H	Camino	2	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
I	Camino	1	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
J	Camino	1	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
K	Camino	3	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
L	Camino	3	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
M	Pollock Pines	37	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
N	Pollock Pines	<u>57</u>	Pollock Pines-Camino	30	60
Total		159			

Upon annexation, the affected parcels will be levied the assessment just like parcels already within District bounds, as shown in Table 3. A single-family residential parcel pays \$42 annually in Pleasant Valley, \$30 annually in Pollock Pines and \$35 annually in the Cool and Pilot Hill areas. Parcels in the Shingle Springs area do not presently pay a special tax. All parcels, including commercial and industrial parcels, pay the tax. Unbuildable, vacant parcels may be exempted from paying the special tax by application to and approval by the District's Board.

<sup>7</sup> SCI Consulting Group, *El Dorado County Fire District Combined Tax Report, FY 2020-21*, October 2020.

### Building and Development

Annexation would have no foreseeably significant impacts on building and development on the affected parcels.

The affected parcels are located in the unincorporated portion of the County and are not presently located within the bounds of a fire district. For new construction on such parcels, the County collects the fire development impact fee levied by the fire district closest to the affected parcel<sup>8</sup>. In processing the building permit for such parcels, the County send the building permit to the nearest fire district for its review. The fire district may check the permit and plans itself or refer it to Cal Fire for review.

Fire flow requirements for new construction are unaffected by annexation. The County imposes fire flow requirements on any development within such pockets outside fire district bounds in consultation with the nearest fire provider. In these instances, the District has imposed requirements on adjacent extraterritorial properties that are consistent with those imposed on properties within District bounds.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Correspondence with Associate Planner Evan Mattes, El Dorado County Community Development Services, Planning and Building Department, Oct. 28 and 29, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Fire Marshal Brandon McKay, El Dorado County Fire District, Oct. 29, 2020.