

## Agency Profile

A loosely organized group of Georgetown community residents developed the Mountain Hook and Ladder Company in 1854. The Georgetown Fire Protection District (GEO) was formed eighty-three years later in August 12, 1937 (pre-dating LAFCO, refer to Map F). Located in the far northwestern portion of El Dorado County, south of the Middle Fork of the American River, GEO's largest community is Georgetown, but the district also encompasses Quintette and Volcanoville and portions of Greenwood. All of the communities in GEO are major risk areas for wildland/urban interface. GEO is approximately 96 square miles big.

### *Land Use Character*

Land in the district consists primarily of residential uses. Residential single-family homes are dispersed throughout the district but mostly on the western side. Commercial and industrial land use is located within a mile of each other in Georgetown. GEO's topography is characterized by dense forest and mountainous, steep terrain and the overwhelming land use designation in the district is "natural resources." The Eldorado National Forest borders the district on the south and west.

### *Level of Service*

GEO provides a moderate level of services to its residents district-wide. Its per capita district expenditure was \$143.89 in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. Its main funding mechanisms for these services are property taxes, assessments and development impact fees; however, GEO also receives revenues from the County Supplement Fund and out of district fees. Its five fire stations provide sufficient coverage for the district.

## Commission's Policies and Guidelines

LAFCO Policy 4.4 requires the Commission to review the following topics before making sphere of influence determinations. The Commission's recent review of fire suppression and emergency services addressed these requirements as noted below. All citations are from the Final Countywide Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Municipal Services Review, adopted by the Commission in August, 2006.

### **1. *Service capacity, level and types of services currently provided by the agency, and areas where these services are provided***

Refer to pages 125-127, "Services and Programs;" pages 128-129, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" pages 130-131, "Equipment and Vehicles;" pages 131-134, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" page 299, "Georgetown FPD (GEO);" and Map 8 – "North County Stations."

### **2. *Financial capabilities and costs of service***

Refer to pages 137-140 "Funding and Budget;" pages 319-321, "Agency Funding;" page 342, "Table 113 – Comparative Ratio of Fire Protection Expenditures to Population per Agency;" and page 343, "Table 114 – Comparative Personnel Cost Percentage of Total Budget per Agency."

### **3. *Topographic factors and areas of social and economic interdependencies***

Refer to pages 124-125, "Georgetown Fire Protection District;" and page 309, "Table 111 – El Dorado County Land Use Forecasts."

**4. Existing and planned land uses, land use plans and policies, consistency with county and city general plans, and projected growth in the affected area**

Refer to page 125, "Growth and Population;" and pages 307-312, "Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area."

**5. Potential effects on agricultural and open space lands**

The 2004 General Plan directs unincorporated growth to already existing population centers, or "community regions," such as Greenwood and Georgetown. The overwhelming land use designation in the district is "natural resources," which in this region of the county is forest lands. Because a significant percentage of these forest lands are in the Eldorado National Forest, it is unlikely that the land use within the district will change significantly.

The only possible changes in land use would be for formerly public lands that convert to private property. In those cases, it is conceivable that previously-vacant lands will have structures built on them or for previously-large parcels to be subdivided into smaller parcels with residences on them. While those changes should not significantly alter rural character of the district, they will lead to an increase in service demand to the district. Fire suppression and emergency medical services, in and of themselves, do not increase the likelihood of this type of activity and, therefore, induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural, open space or forest land to urban uses. On the contrary, the district's services protect forests and resources by responding to emergencies in undeveloped areas and minimizing the financial cost that a fire could cause.

**6. A description of the services that will be provided to any areas which may be added to the sphere and the timing and method for funding expansion of facilities or services**

Refer to pages 125-127, "Services and Programs;" pages 128-129, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" pages 130-131, "Equipment and Vehicles;" pages 131-134, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" page 299, "Georgetown FPD (GEO);" and Map 8 – "North County Stations."

**7. An analysis of the effects of a proposed sphere of influence on other agencies and their service capabilities:**

Refer to pages 336-339, "Government Structure and Cost Effectiveness."

**DETERMINATIONS**

In determining the sphere of influence for each local agency, Government Code §56425(e) requires the Commission to consider and prepare a written statement of determinations with respect to four factors. Staff recommends the following determinations for amending the sphere for GEO:

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

The majority of present land use in the GEO area includes agricultural and low density residential uses, although there are small pockets of medium density residential and commercial uses near the Georgetown Community Center. Primarily, residential areas within GEO are spread throughout the district; however, residential areas are concentrated along Wentworth Springs Road, Volcanoville Road and Spanish Dry Diggins / Sliger Mine Roads. Future land uses are expected to remain relatively unchanged, with population growth likely lower than the projections for other unincorporated portions of the Western Slope. The 2004 General Plan encourages future development to remain largely within the community regions of Georgetown and Greenwood.

There are approximately 14,075 acres currently within the GEO sphere that are not within the district boundaries. Of these, approximately 7,040 acres are United States Forest Service land, 6,033 acres are privately-owned lands utilized for timber production, 640 acres are owned by the University of California and utilized for forestry research and 326 acres are residential lands designated for agriculture, which are largely undeveloped. Of the total 14,075 acres included, only approximately 17.5 acres are designated by the 2004 General Plan specifically for rural residential uses. The remaining acreage is designated to remain in some sort of agricultural production.

Since approximately half of the above land is owned by the Federal Government, fire suppression services are expected to be largely provided by the United States Forest Service. However, GEO is likely to be the primary public fire agency to respond to a fire or medical emergency within the other portion of the areas outside of district boundaries. This creates an issue of fiscal inequity for the district, which does not currently receive any revenue to offset the cost of this service. The GEO chief has requested that these parcels remain within the GEO sphere for now.

The GEO Chief requested that LAFCO include an additional 27 parcels northeast of the current SOI within the updated SOI for future annexation consideration. This would extend the GEO sphere boundaries directly north of the easternmost edge of the sphere, up to the north fork of the American River, enclosing a portion of land that is currently outside of any fire providers' sphere. The area contains land that is currently utilized primarily as timber preserves, held by a variety of landowners including private landowners, the United States Forest Service, the University of California and the Bureau of Land Management. The Chief believes that the territory contains property that is significantly exposed to the risk of wildland fire and may warrant consideration for annexation into the district in the future. The potential annexation would increase service demand; however, the district's current staff and equipment appear sufficient to maintain service levels.

**2. *The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.***

Parcels currently within the GEO district receive sufficient fire suppression and emergency response services as needed. If annexed in the future, the areas described above would increase demand for these services and it is possible that

existing personnel and equipment would not be adequate to meet the level of service required for the inclusion. However, increased revenue, in the form of additional property taxes and assessments received, could offset increased costs and ensure the sufficient provision of services to serve the area.

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

GEO appears to provide adequate fire suppression and emergency response services within and, in cases of mutual aid responses, outside its boundaries. The district is compensated for these services primarily through property taxes, County Supplement Funds and district assessments.

**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.***

GEO serves the communities of Georgetown, Quintette, Volcanoville and portions of Greenwood. The areas proposed for inclusion are located largely in the southeast and northern portions of the district, outside of any established community boundaries. Other than Greenwood, there is no social or economic community of interest that would require further Commission consideration of this issue for the sphere update.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the Georgetown FPD Sphere of Influence be updated to affirm its original sphere, along with the inclusion of the areas describe above, as shown in Map F. The parcels proposed for inclusion are:

062-020-40	063-010-04	063-020-16	063-020-26
062-041-08	063-010-06	063-020-20	063-020-27
062-041-09	063-020-11	063-020-21	063-020-28
062-550-01	063-020-12	063-020-22	063-020-29
063-010-01	063-020-13	063-020-23	063-020-30
063-010-02	063-020-14	063-020-24	063-020-31
063-010-03	063-020-15	063-020-25	