

EL DORADO LAFCO

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 24, 2021

REGULAR MEETING

TO: Tim Palmer, Chair, and
Members of the El Dorado County Local Agency Formation
Commission

FROM: José C. Henríquez, Executive Officer

PREPARED BY: Erica Sanchez, Assistant Executive Officer

AGENDA ITEM #8: El Dorado County Fire Protection District Island Annexation

LAFCO Project No. 2020-01

PROPONENTS: El Dorado County Fire Protection District

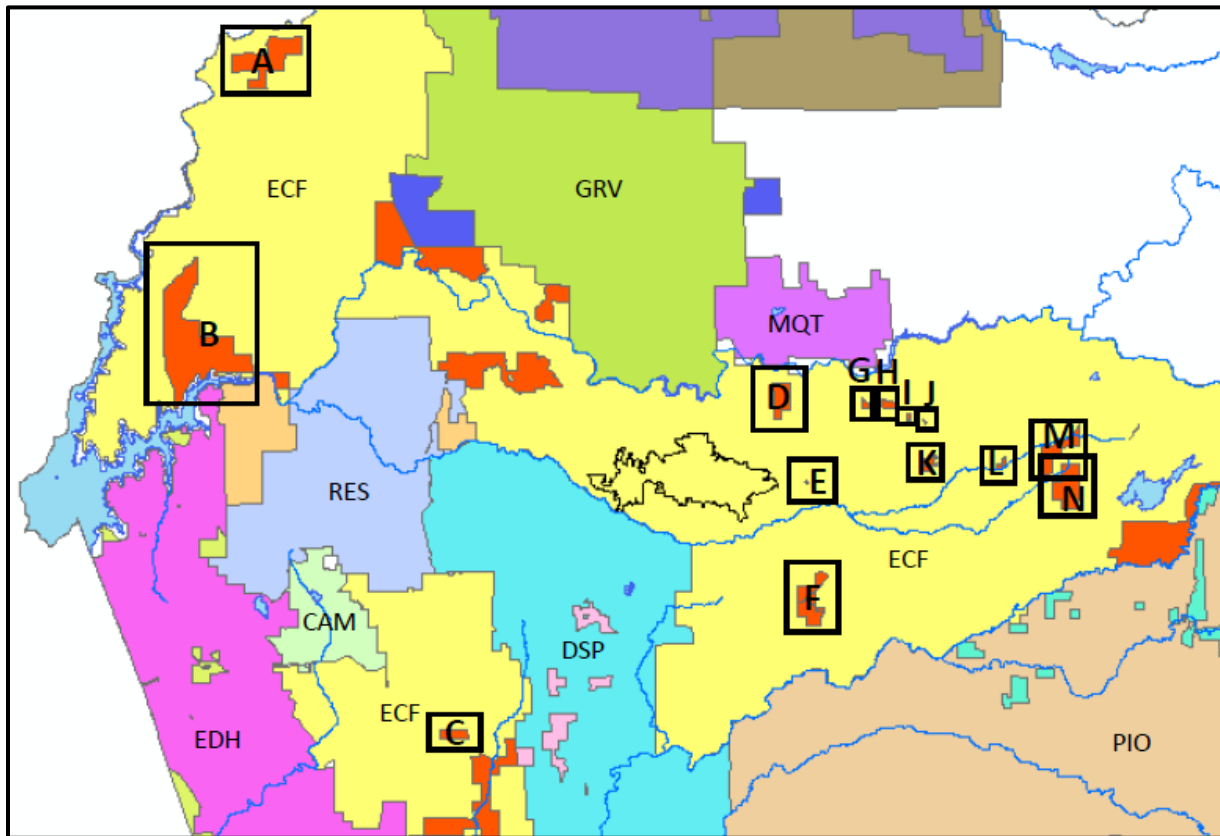
AGENT: Chief Tim Cordero, El Dorado County Fire Protection District

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The El Dorado County Fire Protection District (ECF) Board of Directors submitted a resolution of application (Attachment A) to LAFCO for the annexation of 14 separate “island” areas, including a total of 159 parcels (5,439 acres), in order to extend fire protection and emergency medical services to areas not currently within ECF boundaries. The proposed annexation would align ECF’s boundaries more closely with its service area and first response area.

LOCATION

The island areas are located throughout ECF’s service area, in the communities of Cool, Pilot Hill, Shingle Springs, Placerville, Camino, and Pollock Pines. Each of the islands are completely surrounded by ECF boundaries and are within the District’s sphere of influence. A map of the 14 proposed annexation areas A-N can be found on the following page, detailed maps of the individual islands are included as Attachment B.



PURPOSE

The islands are composed of parcels of land that are completely surrounded by ECF boundaries but outside its service area. Parcels outside the ECF service area do not have a portion of the property tax go towards fire service and are not subject to local fire special taxes. Functionally, ECF already extends its emergency services to the affected parcels, but the District does not receive revenue from the out-of-district parcels to offset the cost of services. ECF is requesting annexation of these islands in order to collect revenue to offset the costs of continuing to provide fire protection and emergency medical services. The annexation formalizes ECF's extension of fire protection and emergency medical services to the island areas, and will allow ECF to recoup the costs of services to these areas through a portion of the property taxes and special taxes in place in ECF's various service zones. The additional revenue collected from the island areas will go towards public safety services provided by the District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the Commission take the following actions:

1. Find that the project is exempt from provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act under Categorical Exemption §15320 and direct staff to file the Notice of Exemption in compliance with CEQA and local ordinances implementing the same.
2. Adopt LAFCO Resolution L-2021-06 (Attachment H), adding any additional conditions the Commission finds appropriate and approve the El Dorado County Fire Protection District Island Annexation.

3. Set the Conducting Authority proceedings for this proposal on April 28, 2021 and direct the Executive Officer to open the protest period and notify the appropriate parties, pursuant to Government Code §57000 and local policies.
4. Direct the Executive Officer to complete the necessary filings and transmittals as required by law.
5. Determine the effective date of the approval of this agreement to be five (5) working days after recordation by the County Recorder of the Executive Officer's Certificate of Completion once the imposed conditions are met.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

After careful consideration of the 29 factors listed in Government Code §56668 (see below) and LAFCO Policies, staff recommends approval of the proposed Island Annexations into ECF. The areas proposed for annexation are within ECF's sphere of influence and are fully surrounded by ECF's current boundaries. ECF has submitted a Plan for Providing Services to the Island Areas (Attachment C), which includes details on the continued provision of structural fire protection and emergency medical services to the island areas. The Service Plan includes a detailed description of the island areas, the specific resources dedicated to each area, and special tax zone information for each area that will provide additional revenue to the District for providing service. The ECF Board has also recently adopted a business model change for the District, which ensures fire and emergency medical services response in the Camino area through an agreement with Cal Fire, and reallocates existing personnel with the goal of enhancing staffing levels to a minimum of three firefighters per engine company (see Section I: Services for additional details). The new business model and plans for extending service to the proposed annexation areas will not affect ECF's current service levels.

Conducting Authority Proceedings

If the Commission approves the annexation, Conducting Authority (protest) proceedings will be required for this project because the petition was initiated by the ECF Board without the written consent of all involved landowners. A Conducting Authority hearing allows all landowners and registered voters of the subject territories a final opportunity to formally protest the annexation. The subject territories are considered inhabited per state law; therefore, written protests for this project may be filed by registered voters or any landowner within the subject territories.

At the Conducting Authority hearing, the Commission shall hear and receive any oral or written protests, objections, or evidence that is made, presented or filed. Written protests may be filed by any owner of land or registered voter, within the subject territory that will be counted towards determining whether the project continues.

Staff recommends the Commission set the Conducting Authority proceedings for this proposal on April 28, 2021, which is the next regularly scheduled LAFCO meeting occurring after the mandatory 30-day reconsideration period.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The affected parcels are located in 14 distinct areas or “islands” that are substantially surrounded by territory already within ECF bounds. These island areas vary in size from 1 to 57 parcels, and 2 to 2,681 acres in size. The proposed annexation areas are located throughout the western and central portions of the District’s boundary areas. 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. The following table was re-created from Table 1 within the Service Plan, prepared by Burr Consulting (November 2020):

Area	Community	Parcels	Acres ^a	Units ^b	First-In Fire Station ^c
A	Cool	9	909	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	Cal Fire 20
E	Smith Flat	2	2	2	ECF 25
F	Pleasant Valley	9	441	3	ECF 19
G	Camino	1	33	1	Cal Fire 20
H	Camino	2	54	1	Cal Fire 20
I	Camino	1	18	1	Cal Fire 20
J	Camino	1	3	0	Cal Fire 20
K	Camino	3	73	2	Cal Fire 20
L	Camino	3	30	1	Cal Fire 20
M	Pollock Pines	37	302	18	ECF 17
N	Pollock Pines	<u>57</u>	<u>481</u>	<u>35</u>	ECF 17
Total		159	5,439	67	

^a Some acreage estimates in the Service Plan differ slightly from totals in this table and otherwise reflected throughout this staff report. 14 parcels are split between tax rate areas (TRAs) and already partially within ECF boundaries; in those instances, only a portion of the parcel requires annexation. The totals above reflect the adjusted acreage, as determined by the El Dorado County Assessor’s Office.

^b Units includes residential, commercial, and industrial structures. Agricultural structures are not included.

^c The Service Plan (November 2020) references ECF Station 21 as the first-in station for the Camino response area. ECF’s recent Business Model Change (adopted December 2020, effective January 2021), includes the closure of ECF Engine 21 and a contract for services with Cal Fire from Station 20, also located in Camino.

Area A – Annexation area A is located in the in the Cool area, in the northwest corner of the County. The island encompasses a total of 909 acres on nine rural and industrial parcels. Cool Cave Quarry, a limestone mine, is located at 2601 State Highway 49. There is a mobile home at the quarry site, but no housing units in the annexation area. Four of the parcels are owned by Cool Cave Quarry, the other five are under public ownership (State/Federal). One of Federal parcels only requires a portion of the parcel to be annexed, as a majority of the parcel is already within ECF boundaries. ECF Station 72 in Cool is 1.27 miles driving distance from the area’s center.

Area B – Annexation area B is located in the Pilot Hill area, encompassing 2,681 acres on 31 rural parcels along Rattlesnake Bar Road and south towards Folsom Lake. There is one single-family residence at 6201 Rattlesnake Bar Road; no other residences are reflected in parcel records for this area. Six of the parcels are owned by the American River Conservancy (two of which are tax exempt) and 22 are under the same ownership. 30 of the 31 parcels are under Williamson Act contract. ECF Station 72 in Cool is 8 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area C – Annexation area C is composed of one 133-acre parcel in the Shingle Springs area, on both sides of French Creek Road, immediately south of Connie Lane. The property's primary land use is rural restrictive. There is one agricultural structure located on this parcel (a cattle corral), but no residences. The parcel is currently under Williamson Act contract. ECF Station 28 in Shingle Springs is 3.9 miles driving distance from the island.

Area D – Annexation area D is located on the outskirts of Placerville and accessed by Fruitridge Road. The island is composed of two rural residential parcels and covers 279-acres. There is one single-family residence in this area (1000 Fruitridge Road), as well as agricultural uses. Both parcels are under the same ownership and under a current Williamson Act contract. Cal Fire Station 20 in Camino is 4.8 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area E – Annexation area E is located in the Smith Flat area. This island encompasses two acres composed of two parcels, each with a with single-family residence (3331 Newtown Road and 1401 Ivy Knoll Court). Only a portion of 1401 Ivy Knoll Court is proposed to be annexed, the majority of the parcel is already within ECF boundaries. ECF Station 25 in Placerville is 4.8 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area F – Annexation area F is located in Pleasant Valley, along Pleasant Valley Road and Bucks Bar Road. The island is made up of nine parcels covering 441 acres; six whole parcels under the same ownership, a tax-exempt roadway, and two parcels which only require a small portion to be annexed, as a majority is already within ECF boundaries. The primary land use is rural residential, with two single-family residences (4650 Bucks Bar Road and 2781 Springer Road); one parcel is improved commercial with a small grocery store (Mill Creek Market, 2528 Pleasant Valley Road). ECF Station 19 in Pleasant Valley is 4.8 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area G – Annexation area G is a single parcel located in the Camino area on the south of North Canyon Road, at 3800 North Canyon Rd. The 33-acre parcel consists of a single-family residence and the Indian Rock Tree Farm, a choose and cut Christmas tree farm and historic gold mine, open to the public seasonally and by appointment. Cal Fire Station 20 in Camino is 2.7 miles driving distance from the parcel.

Area H – Annexation area H is located in the Camino area, on the north side of North Canyon Road, directly east of Sky Ranch Lane. The island is composed of two rural-residential parcels covering 54 acres. The parcel at 4211 North Canyon Road contains a single-family residence, the other parcel, accessed off Sky Ranch Lane, is vacant. Cal Fire Station 20 in Camino is 2.6 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area I – Annexation area I includes a single parcel located at 2420 Apple Vista Lane in Camino, approximately 100 feet north of the intersection of North Canyon Road and Larsen Drive. The 18-acre parcel contains a single-family residence. Cal Fire Station 20 in Camino is 1.3 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area J – Annexation area J is a single parcel located in the Camino area, west of Larsen Drive, between Harvest Drive and Bumblebee Lane. The undeveloped 3-acre parcel consists almost entirely of a small lake. Cal Fire Station 20 is 1.8 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area K – Annexation area K is located in the Camino area, east of Snows Road. The island includes three large parcels, totaling 72 acres, each bisected by U.S. Highway 50. One of the parcels contains two housing units at 3942 Roosevelt Avenue and Sloan Winters Mountain Orchard and Garden at 3121 Snows Road, a small farm open to the public seasonally for organic produce and hayrides. The other two parcels, under the same ownership, contain agricultural uses but are otherwise vacant. A small portion of one of the parcels is already within ECF boundaries. Cal Fire Station 20 in Camino is 0.3 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area L – Annexation area L is located in the Camino area, along the North Fork of Weber Creek, accessed at the end of Eight Mile Road. The island consists of three parcels, totaling 30 acres. The three rural residential parcels are under the same ownership, one parcel contains residence and the other two are vacant. A portion of one of the parcels is already within ECF boundaries. Cal Fire Station 20 is 3.5 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area M – Annexation area M consists of 37 parcels, totaling 302 acres, in the Pollock Pines area. The island includes parcels both north and south of North Fork Weber Creek. The five parcels to the north are accessed by Inagahee Road; the 35 parcels to the south are accessed by secondary roads off Starkes Grade Road. The primary land use in this area is rural residential. The area contains 18 residences (single-family and mobile home) and other non-residential improvements, located along Lynx Trail (5), Ski Run Road (6), Saint John Road (2), Slalom Lane (2), Manx Road (1), and Inagahee Road (2). One of the residential parcels on Inagahee Road also contains a small business for on-site outdoor photography, by appointment. Two parcels in this island are Federally owned and tax-exempt. Six of the parcels contain small portions which are already within ECF boundaries. ECF Station 17 in Pollock Pines is 5.4 miles driving distance from the area's center.

Area N – Annexation area N is located in the Pollock Pines area, in the Sly Park area. This island encompasses 481 acres on 57 parcels. The primary land use in this area is rural residential. A majority of the parcels are developed, with a total of 35 residences. Most of the developed parcels are in the northwest portion of the Sly Park community and accessed via Sly Park Road, from Dolly Varden Lane (17), Aurora Lane (3), Casselbarry Court (3), and North Pine Tree Lane (2). The other parcels are accessed from the north via Starkes Grade Road (1), from Pine Tree Drive (5) and South Pine Tree Lane (4). ECF Station 17 in Pollock Pines is 6.5 miles driving distance from the area's center.

BACKGROUND

History

According to LAFCO's 2006 Countywide Fire MSR, 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.

Islands and State Board of Equalization Fees

In September 2019, Former ECF Chief Lloyd Ogan contacted LAFCO staff about identifying and annexing the islands within ECF's boundaries. LAFCO identified a total of 22 island areas, including 14 true "islands" completely surrounded by ECF boundaries (or bounded by a substantial body of water such as a river), and 8 "fringe areas" partially surrounded by ECF boundaries and other fire districts or U.S. Forest Service Land. The distinction between islands and fringe areas is important when it comes to State Board of Equalization (BOE) fees for annexations, which vary considerably between the two. BOE annexation fees are based on acreage and each individual area is calculated separately. BOE fees for a "single area transaction" (contiguous parcels from a single area) are capped at \$3,500 no matter the acreage; fees for multiple areas are based on acreage per single area transaction, with no cumulative cap.

In an effort to encourage annexations of island areas, the BOE considers all non-contiguous islands as a single transaction area. Unfortunately, the BOE does not make the same exception for fringe areas, which are calculated separately by acreage for each non-contiguous area. The difference in this case is substantial: BOE fees for the 14 island areas are capped at \$3,500, while fees for the 8 fringe areas are calculated separately, adding up to \$21,000. Additionally, the BOE requires professionally prepared maps and legal descriptions for fringe areas, but island areas can be submitted with LAFCO-prepared maps without legal descriptions. Based largely on the BOE fees, ECF decided to proceed with an application to annex only the island areas A-N.

DISCUSSION OF STATUTORY AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Government Code §56668 and LAFCO Policies require that the Commission review 29 factors of consideration in the review of a reorganization proposal. Each of the 29 factors is individually summarized in Attachment D, and fully addressed in the following sections: I. Services, II. Cost and Revenues, III. Boundaries, IV. Potential Effect on Others and Comments, and V. Land Use Population and Planning.

I. SERVICES

Need for Services

The annexation will allow for the provision of, and equitable reimbursement for, extending essential services to the parcels within the island areas. Existing residential, industrial and commercial development in the island areas result in an

increased potential need for fire protection and emergency medical services to the area. ECF is an “all risk” fire department, responding to all emergencies such as medical aids, structure fires, wildland fires, vehicle traffic collisions, hazardous materials incidents, and public service assists. The proposed annexation will enhance public services in the annexation areas by tying financing to services provided, and promotes transparency and logical boundaries.

According to the Service Plan, ECF service calls are fairly consistent from year to year. Most service calls are medical, accounting for 71 percent of calls in 2019. Another 11 percent of calls were for fires, 4 percent were for hazardous materials and miscellaneous emergencies, and the remaining 15 percent of calls were for public assists and non-emergencies. ECF service calls will be unaffected by the proposed annexation, as the District already serves the affected areas.

Existing and Necessary Infrastructure to Deliver Service

Facilities and infrastructure for delivery of services include ECF fire stations, engines, personnel and equipment. No new infrastructure is necessary to deliver service to the proposed annexation areas. 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.

ECF 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, with adjustments made through the District’s annual budget process and operational management. The District’s 2018 Strategic Plan identified the following stations for replacement and/or significant remodel based on age, condition and operational functionality: Station 25 for replacement, Station 19 for significant remodel and expansion of crew living areas, and Station 17 for significant remodel.

Ability of Annexing District to Provide Service

A countywide automatic aid agreement ensures that service is provided to all, as needed. 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. When primary station personnel are responding to another incident, or the incident requires additional support, other nearby stations may be dispatched to respond as well. Under automatic aid agreements, the closest available resource is always dispatched to fire and medical emergencies. All response times are well within the County General Plan minimum standard for fire district response time of 15-45 minutes within Rural Centers and Rural Regions.

Island Area	First-In Fire Station	Distance (miles)	Nearby Fire Stations
A – Cool	ECF 72 Cool 7200 St. Florian Ct, staffed 24 hrs by 2-0 engine with certified paramedic or EMT personnel	1.27	Cal Fire 70 Pilot Hill 4731 Pedro Hill Rd. (wildfire season) ECF 74 Coloma/Lotus 5122 Firehouse Rd.
B – Pilot Hill		8	
C – Shingle Springs	ECF 28 Shingle Springs 3860 Ponderosa Rd., staffed 24 hrs by a 3-0 engine and 2-0 medic unit	3.9	Cal Fire 43 El Dorado 5660 Mother Lode Dr. (wildfire season) CAM 89 Cameron Park – 3200 Country Club Dr.
D – Fruitridge Road	Cal Fire 20 Camino (ECF-Cal Fire Contract) 2840 Mt. Danaher Rd., staffed 24 hrs, contract for 3-0 engine (average) to provide year-round, all risk coverage	4.8	ECF 25 Placerville 3034 Sacramento St. Cal Fire 20 Camino (Contract) 2840 Mt Danaher Rd.
E – Smith Flat	ECF 25 Placerville 3034 Sacramento St., staffed 24 hrs by 3-0 engine company and 2-0 medic unit	4.8	Cal Fire 20 Camino (Contract) 2840 Mt Danaher Rd. ECF 19 Pleasant Valley 4429 Pleasant Valley Rd.
F – Pleasant Valley	ECF 19 Pleasant Valley 4429 Pleasant Valley Rd., staffed 24 hrs by 3-0 engine and 2-0 medic unit	4.8	DSP 49 Diamond Springs 501 Main St.
G – Camino	Cal Fire 20 Camino (ECF-Cal Fire Contract) 2840 Mt. Danaher Rd., staffed 24 hrs, contract for 3-0 engine (average) to provide year-round, all risk coverage	2.7	ECF 17 Pollock Pines 6426 Pony Express Trl. ECF 25 Placerville 3034 Sacramento St.
H – Camino		2.6	
I – Camino		1.3	
J – Camino		1.8	
K – Camino		0.3	
L – Camino		3.5	
M – Pollock Pines	ECF 17 Pollock Pines – 6426 Pony Express Trl., staffed 24 hrs by 3-0 engine and 2-0 medic unit	5.4	ECF 19 Pleasant Valley 4429 Pleasant Valley Rd. Cal Fire 20 Camino (ECF Contract) 2840 Mt Danaher Rd. USF 18 Pollock Pines 5785 Sly Park Rd. (wildfire season)
N – Pollock Pines		6.5	

Business Model Change

On December 17, 2020, the ECF Board approved a business model change for the District to reallocate existing personnel with the goal of enhancing staffing levels to a minimum of three firefighters per engine company (3-0), effective January 16, 2021. One of the key components of the business model change involves the closure of Engine 21 in Camino and entering into an Amador Plan Contract with Cal Fire for coverage in the Camino area using an engine from Cal Fire Station 20. ECF moved forward with the plan in January and is currently under a local agreement with Cal Fire for coverage in the Camino response area. The Amador Plan is expected to be finalized in March or April.

Prior to this agreement, Cal Fire Station 20 was staffed with a year-round State mission engine and a seasonal State mission engine. The Amador Plan allows for ECF to contract for the seasonal engine to remain staffed during the off-season or non-fire season time frame (November-May typically). The year-round State mission engine will likely still remain at Station 20 all year; however, it is not available for ECF to contract. So, while it is likely that Station 20 will have two engines most of the time, only one will be under contract with ECF. The financial cost to the District through the Amador Plan contract is limited to “non-fire season” coverage.

Cal Fire is an “all risk” fire department, and their resources are already included in the drop-boundary, closest resource concept at the Camino Emergency Communications Center. Cal Fire coverage will include response to all emergencies such as medical aids, structure fires, wildland fires, vehicle traffic collisions, hazardous materials incidents, and public service assists. The engine at Station 20 will also participate in the move-up and cover matrix, as well as participate in multi-company trainings.

The Distance between the two fire stations is 1.4 miles, although the Cal Fire Station is actually visible from Station 21. Both stations essentially reside on the perimeter of Camino proper and the subsequent effect on response is expected to be negligible, per ECF Chief Cordero.

The six ECF firefighters previously assigned to Station 21 have been reallocated to Station 17 in Pollock Pines and Station 19 in Pleasant Valley, increasing the staffing levels at those stations to 3-0 per engine, from the previous 2-0. Under the business model change, ECF will also pursue a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant to enhance Station 72 staffing to three firefighters per engine as well, establishing 3-0 staffing as a District minimum staffing level.

Timely Availability of Water Supply

The proposed annexation will not have any effect on the water supply available in the general vicinity or the provision of water to the proposed annexation areas. Some of the affected parcels are within a public water provider such as the El Dorado Irrigation District or the Georgetown Divide Public Utility District, other parcels receive water from private wells.

Service Impacts to Existing District Customers

The level of service ECF currently provides within its service area is not expected to change as a result of the proposed annexation. The District and existing residents will benefit from the additional revenue from the annexed properties.

Alternatives for Service

Mutual aid agreements exist among the local fire districts in order to ensure service is provided in the most efficient manner possible, no matter the jurisdictional boundaries of where the emergency call is located. Regardless of annexation, ECF has the closest resources to the proposed annexation areas and is the most likely agency to be the first responder to a fire or medical emergency.

ECF does not have out of district fees to recover costs for services. Absent annexation, ECF has no mechanism in place to recoup its cost of service, which unfairly strains District resources provided by existing residents within ECF's service area.

Coordination of Applications

As previously noted, ECF has identified a total of 22 island areas surrounded by its boundaries. The District has indicated that it is interested in eventually annexing all of its island territories into the District, as feasible. However, State Board of Equalization (BOE) fees may make annexation of the remaining 8 "fringe areas" prohibitively expensive, so a District-initiated annexation of these areas is uncertain.

Conversely, any of the landowners in any of the remaining island areas could collectively or independently of one another choose to submit a landowner petition for annexation into ECF at any time. BOE fees are determined based on acreage and also on contiguous areas, so a petition to annex a single parcel, or smaller group of contiguous parcels within an island would have lesser BOE fees.

II. COST AND REVENUES

Cost to Provide Service

Costs to provide service to the affected parcels are not expected to increase upon annexation. ECF is the likely first responder to the island areas, regardless of any changes in the jurisdictional boundaries. Annexation will allow ECF to collect property tax and special tax revenue from the annexed properties to help offset the costs of providing fire protection and emergency medical services.

Assessed Value / Property Tax Exchange Agreements / Special Taxes

According to the Assessor's Report prepared for this project, the combined total net assessed value of the annexation areas is \$25,176,833.

On May 19, 2020, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors adopted property tax redistribution Resolution No. 086-2020 for the Island Annexation, approving a 10% future property tax increment for all 14 proposed annexation areas (Attachment E). On May 21, 2020, the ECF Board adopted Resolution No. 2020-04 agreeing to the proposed 10% increments. ECF received approximately 82% of its revenues from property taxes in FY 2021-21. 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 redistributed by the County to ECF.

The negotiated 10% property tax increment applies only to future increases in taxable assessed value, added after the effective date of the annexation. Future increases would include the maximum annual 2% increase to assessed value, and any increases to the assessed value as properties are reassessed due to a change in ownership or new development or improvements. It will take some time for ECF to realize a substantial property tax benefit from the parcels.

In addition to property tax revenue, ECF also levies various voter-approved special taxes within its different special tax zones for fire and emergency medical services (see the table below). Special tax assessments generate approximately 4% of the

District’s revenues. While annexation will not affect the amount of property taxes paid by the annexed parcels, it may add a special tax of \$30-\$60, depending on the ECF tax zone and the use of the parcel. Upon annexation, the special taxes will be extended to the annexing parcels, based upon which zone parcels are annexed into.

Island Area	Net Assessed Value*	Future Property Tax Increment	Special Tax Zone	Annual Special Tax
A – Cool	\$5,731,349	10.0%	Northside	\$35 All Parcels
B – Pilot Hill	\$1,123,913	10.0%	Northside	\$35 All Parcels
C – Shingle Springs	\$29,170	10.0%	Shingle Springs	\$0 No Special Tax
D – Fruitridge Road	\$423,497	10.0%	Pollock Pines-Camino	\$30 Single-Family & Undeveloped \$60 Developed – Other
E – Smith Flat	\$233,840	10.0%		
G – Camino	\$116,619	10.0%		
H – Camino	\$308,573	10.0%		
I – Camino	\$369,069	10.0%		
J – Camino	\$5,142	10.0%		
K – Camino	\$250,612	10.0%		
L – Camino	\$209,971	10.0%		
M – Pollock Pines	\$4,660,299	10.0%		
N – Pollock Pines	\$10,538,618	10.0%		
F – Pleasant Valley	\$1,176,161	10.0%	Pleasant Valley	\$42 All Parcels

* Per Assessor. Includes land, improvements, and other property, minus exemptions.

Special taxes are applied and collected on each parcel, whether developed or undeveloped (with an exception for cabins/houses on U.S. Forest Service leased land, not applicable for this project). Unbuildable, vacant parcels may be exempted from paying the special tax by application to and approval by the District’s Board.

Sufficiency of Revenues

The annexation is expected to provide sufficient revenue to cover the short- and long-term costs of providing fire protection services to the island areas. ECF will collect revenue from the subject areas through special tax revenue and an increment of the property taxes collected. Collected revenue will offset the cost of providing service to the island areas, but is not expected to exceed those costs.

III. BOUNDARIES

Proximity to District Boundaries / Sphere of Influence

Government Code §56375.5 requires LAFCO actions regarding changes of district boundaries be consistent with the affected district’s sphere of influence. 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.

Creation of Irregular Boundaries

Approval of the petition as recommended will eliminate 14 service islands within ECF's boundaries, resulting in a more logical ECF boundary overall. The boundaries of the proposed annexation areas conform to the existing lines of assessment and ownership of the subject parcels, except as otherwise noted for parcels that are split between tax rate areas and partially within ECF.

Topographical Information

The proposed island areas are located throughout ECF's boundaries. There are no apparent topographical features that will hinder service to the proposed annexation areas.

Fire Hazard Mitigation Plan

Effective January 1, 2019, LAFCOs are required to consider information contained in a local hazard mitigation plan, information contained in a safety element of a general plan, and any maps that identify land as a very high fire hazard zone, if it is determined that such information is relevant to the area that is the subject of the proposal.

El Dorado County's Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) serves as the implementation program for the coordination of hazard planning and disaster response efforts within the County. The LHMP can be found within the Public Health, Safety and Noise Element of the General Plan. The LHMP requires consultation of Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps in the review of all discretionary projects so that standards and mitigation measures appropriate to each hazard classification can be applied. Land use densities and intensities are determined by mitigation measures in areas designated as high or very high fire hazard.

Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps are produced on a county-wide basis by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), outlining the areas most vulnerable to wildfire and ranking them as medium, high or very high fire hazards. Within El Dorado County, the area starting in the foothills just east of El Dorado Hills and extending east, as well as north and south to the County lines is most vulnerable and prone to wildfire due to the climate, topography, and vegetation. Cal Fire's FHSZ Map for El Dorado County is included as Attachment F, along with a higher resolution map of very high fire hazard zones and current fire service provider boundaries (individual island areas can be seen on this map).

Cal Fire maps fuel hazards based on vegetation, fire history, and slope, not on a parcel basis, therefore most of the island areas contain more than one fire hazard designation. As can be seen in the following table, the majority of the island areas are designated as either high or very high fire hazard zones, at least in part. Ten of the islands are predominantly located in a high or very high hazard zone. Annexation will provide additional revenue to ECF to be used for essential structural fire protection services to the areas.

Island Area:	Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ)		
	Moderate	High	Very High
Area A - Cool	X	X*	X
Area B – Pilot Hill	X	X	X*
Area C – Shingle Springs		X*	
Area D – Fruitridge Road	X		X*
Area E – Smith Flat			X*
Area F – Pleasant Valley	X*		
Area G - Camino			X*
Area H - Camino	X*		X
Area I - Camino	X*		X
Area J - Camino	X*		
Area K - Camino		X	X*
Area L - Camino			X*
Area M – Pollock Pines			X*
Area N – Pollock Pines			X*

* predominant FHSZ designation

IV. POTENTIAL EFFECT ON OTHERS AND COMMENTS

Effect on Adjacent Areas

The proposed annexation will not have an adverse effect on ECF’s ability to provide fire protection and emergency medical services to adjacent areas already within the District. The proposed annexation will actually benefit both the existing customers and the District, by providing a fair share of additional revenue to ECF to be used for essential fire and emergency medical services.

Effect on Environmental Justice

LAFCOs are required to consider the extent to which a proposal will promote environmental justice, defined as with respect to the location of public facilities and the provision of public services, to ensure that the effects of pollution are not disproportionately borne by any particular population or communities.

The annexation proposal will not have any effect on the promotion of environmental justice within the annexation areas or surrounding areas. The annexation will not alter the land use in or around the island areas, nor will it increase or decrease the level of pollution in the immediate area. The annexation proposal will also not have an adverse effect on the ability of neighboring land owners to receive service from ECF or to petition LAFCO to annex into the District for services.

Effect on Other Community Services

There are no negative impacts expected for other public service providers to the annexation areas. The following agencies were notified of, and provided an opportunity to comment on this proposal:

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)
- Camino Union School District
- City of Placerville

- Black Oak Mine Unified School District
- Buckeye Union School District
- El Dorado County Assessor's Office
- El Dorado County Auditor-Controller's Office
- El Dorado County Chief Administrative Office
- El Dorado County Agriculture Department
- El Dorado County Elections Department
- El Dorado County Emergency Services Authority
- El Dorado County Farm Bureau
- El Dorado County Office of Education
- El Dorado County Office of Emergency Services
- El Dorado County Planning Services
- El Dorado County Representing County Service Areas 7, 9 (including Zones 17, 18, 19, 26, 30, and Mother Lode Recreation Tax), 10 (including Zone H)
- El Dorado County Resource Conservation District
- El Dorado County Sheriff's Department
- El Dorado County Surveyor's Office
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- El Dorado Irrigation District
- El Dorado Union High School District
- Georgetown Divide Public Utility District
- Georgetown Divide Recreation District
- Gold Oak Union School District
- Los Rios Community College District
- Placerville Union School District
- Pollock Pines Elementary School District
- Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG)
- Sierra Community College District

As part of the standard notification process, LAFCO sent a project notice to all affected agencies requesting comments on the proposal on January 7, 2020. LAFCO sent a second notice to the affected agencies on December 17, 2020, with the Certificate of Filing and LAFCO hearing date. LAFCO did not receive any comments from the above affected agencies in response to the proposed annexation.

Public and Landowner/Registered Voter Notice

Per State Law and El Dorado LAFCO policies, LAFCO staff mailed notification of the proposal and hearing date to all registered voters and landowners both within, and within 500 feet of, the affected territory. Notices were mailed out the week of January 25, one week prior to the mandated 21-day notice deadline. This included separate notices for the 192 affected landowners and registered voters, and the 1,340 adjacent landowners and registered voters. In order to eliminate confusion for parcels within the adjacent 500 ft areas (which are already within ECF's boundaries), those notices clearly stated that the recipient was, "receiving this notice because your property is within 500 feet of one of the proposed annexation areas, your property will not be specifically affected by this proposal."

All of the mailed notices contained information about the proposal, including a map of the proposed annexation areas, and a brief summary of the property tax and special tax implications of the annexation. The notice also directed the recipients to the

LAFCO website for additional information, including a complete listing of affected parcels and tax zones, a high-resolution map of the proposed annexation areas, and the Service Plan adopted by ECF for providing fire and emergency medical services to the island areas.

Per State Law, a notice of public hearing was published in the Mountain Democrat 21 days in advance of this hearing, on February 3, 2021. The notice was also posted on the LAFCO website, at the LAFCO office in two locations (on the bulletin outside of the office building and on the window of the LAFCO office), and on the bulletin inside County Building A).

Comments and/or Objections from Landowners/Registered Voters

LAFCO staff has received multiple phone calls about the proposed annexation, ranging from general inquiries, to objections to being included in the proposal. Specifically, staff spoke with landowners from Area C (Shingle Springs) and Area F (Pleasant Valley) who objected to their inclusion in the proposed annexation. Staff provided information on how to access the public hearing via Zoom or phone and recommended they submit written comments in advance of the meeting for Commission consideration and/or provide verbal comments during the hearing. As of the date of this report, LAFCO has not received any written comments from the public in response to the proposed annexation.

V. LAND USE, POPULATION AND PLANNING

Zoning and Land Use Designations, Consistency with General / Specific Plans

Current land use in the affected island areas is mostly rural residential, agricultural, and residential, including some industrial and commercial uses, as well as vacant lands. Primary land use designations per the El Dorado County General Plan include Rural Residential (RR), Agricultural Lands (AL), and Low and Medium Density Residential (LDR / MDR). Other designations include Natural Resources (NR) and Commercial (C). All existing development and uses appear consistent with the land use designations. As described in ECF's Service Plan, there are a total of 67 "units" within the proposed island areas, consisting mostly of single-family residences, along with a few industrial, agricultural and commercial structures.

Surrounding Land Uses

Surrounding land uses and land use designations are similar to the uses and designations within the island areas. Areas D, E, G, H, I, J, and K are within the Camino/Fruitridge Agricultural District and Area F is within the Pleasant Valley Agricultural District; land uses surrounding these islands tends to be primarily rural residential and agricultural. Areas M and N are part of the larger Pollock Pines Rural Center; surrounding land uses tend to be low and medium density residential uses. All of the island areas are surrounded by properties already within the ECF boundaries.

Island Area	Land Use Designation	Current Land Use
A – Cool 9 parcels / 909 acres	Rural Residential (RR) Natural Resources (NR)	Rural and industrial. 4 parcels owned by Cool Cave Quarry (limestone mine), 5 parcels under public ownership (State/Federal). One unit (mobile home at quarry site), no residences.
B – Pilot Hill 31 parcels / 2,681 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL)	Rural restrictive and residential. One residence. Two parcels are owned by the American River Conservancy, 30 parcels are under Williamson Act contract.
C – Shingle Springs 1 parcel / 133 acres	Rural Residential (RR)	Rural restrictive. One ag structure (cattle coral), no residences. Under Williamson Act contract.
D – Fruitridge Road 2 parcels / 279 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL) *Camino/Fruitridge Ag District	Rural residential and agricultural. One residence and ag uses. Both parcels under Williamson Act contract.
E – Smith Flat 2 parcels / 2 acres	Low Density Residential (LDR) Medium Density Residential (MDR) *Camino/Fruitridge Ag District	Residential. Two residences.
F – Pleasant Valley 9 parcels / 441 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL) Commercial (C) *Pleasant Valley Ag District	Rural residential and commercial. Mill Creek Market (small grocery store), three residences.
G – Camino 1 parcel / 33 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL) *Camino/Fruitridge Ag District	Residential and timber preserves. Christmas tree farm, one residence.
H – Camino 2 parcels / 54 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL) *Camino/Fruitridge Ag District	Rural residential. One residence.
I – Camino 1 parcel / 18 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL) *Camino/Fruitridge Ag District	Rural residential. One residence.
J – Camino 1 parcel / 3 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL) *Camino/Fruitridge Ag District	Rural residential. Vacant.
K – Camino 3 parcels / 73 acres	Agricultural Lands (AL) *Camino/Fruitridge Ag District	Rural restrictive. Agricultural uses, two residences. All three parcels are under Williamson Act contract.
L – Camino 3 parcels / 30 acres	Rural Residential (RR)	Rural residential. One residence.
M – Pollock Pines 37 parcels / 302 acres	Rural Residential (RR) Low Density Residential (LDR) *Pollock Pines Rural Center	Rural residential. Two parcels under Federal ownership. Majority vacant, 17 residences, non-residential improvements.
N – Pollock Pines 57 parcels / 481 acres	Low Density Residential (LDR) Medium Density Residential (MDR) *Pollock Pines Rural Center	Rural residential. Majority developed, 35 residences.

Impact to Agriculture / Open Space

The proposed annexations will not have an adverse effect on agriculture or open space lands. As stated above, Areas D, E, G, H, I, J, and K are within the Camino/Fruitridge Agricultural District overlay and Area F is within the Pleasant Valley Agricultural District overlay. Additionally, 36 of the 159 parcels proposed for

annexation are currently under Williamson Act contract. Adjacent zoning designations allow residential uses and varying intensities of agricultural uses by right, none of which will be impacted by the proposed annexations.

The proposed annexations would not involve changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could individually or cumulatively result in loss of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The El Dorado County Agriculture Department, and El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts also had an opportunity to review the annexation proposal and did not identify any impacts to surrounding agricultural uses or natural resources.

Population and Growth in the Area

Per the Elections Report for this project, there are currently 91 registered voters residing in the proposal areas, therefore the subject territory is considered inhabited per Government Code §56046, which states, *"Inhabited territory" means territory within which there reside 12 or more registered voters...All other territory shall be deemed "uninhabited"*.

According to the Service Plan, approximately 67 of the 159 parcels proposed for annexation are already developed, at least to some extent, in accordance with their respective zoning, which leaves approximately 93 vacant parcels that could potentially be further developed in the future. However, 36 of the subject parcels are currently in active Williamson Act contracts, and approximately another half dozen are under public ownership (Federal or State), or owned by the American River Conservancy.

Regional Housing Needs Considerations

The annexation proposal does not include any type of new housing or residential development; therefore, it will neither assist or detract from the County's ability to achieve its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) targets.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

El Dorado LAFCO is the Lead Agency for the annexation. The Executive Officer reviewed the project for conformance under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and determined that the annexation was categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA under Section 15320 of the Public Resources Act. Categorical exemption 15320 provides for changes in the organization or reorganization of local government agencies where the changes do not change the geographical area in which previously existing powers are exercised. Due to the emergency nature of the District's services, the services are already being provided to the proposed annexation areas. LAFCO staff has prepared a Notice of Exemption for the project (Attachment G), which will be filed with the El Dorado County Recorder-Clerk's office upon approval of the annexation.

DETERMINATIONS

After reviewing the factors discussed above and summarized in Attachment D, the Commission should make its own determinations regarding the project. Staff recommends the following determinations based on project research, state law and local policies:

1. The subject territory is “inhabited” per Government Code §54046. Application for this annexation is made subject to Government Code §56650 et. seq. by District resolution.
2. The territory proposed for annexation is within the sphere of influence of the El Dorado County Fire Protection District and is contiguous to the existing boundary. The annexation will provide a more logical and orderly boundary.
3. The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15320 of the Public Resources Act.
4. The annexation will not result in negative impacts to the cost and adequacy of service otherwise provided in the area, and is in the best interests of the affected area and the total organization of local government agencies.
5. The annexation will not have an adverse effect on agriculture and open space lands.
6. The annexation will have no effect on water supply available for the buildout of regional housing needs determined by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: ECF Resolution of Application and Exhibits A and B
- Attachment B: Island Areas A-N Detail Maps
- Attachment C: Summary of Statutory and Local Policy Factors to be Considered
- Attachment D: ECF Plan for Service
- Attachment E: BOS AB-8 Resolution (Property Tax Agreement)
- Attachment F: Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps of El Dorado County
- Attachment G: LAFCO Notice of Exemption
- Attachment H: LAFCO Draft Resolution L-2021-06 and Exhibit A