

Agency Profile

Located in the northwestern portion of El Dorado County, Rescue Fire Protection District (RES) was formed in December 1974 by LAFCO Resolution #74-26 (refer to Map L). Under the Health and Safety Code, it is empowered to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical response and hazardous material services. The community of Rescue has the highest concentration of people in the district; however, the rural community areas of Kanaka Valley, Luneman, Jergens, Arrowbee and the Starbuck Road are also served by RES. Terrain in the district is generally characterized by rolling hills; however, the district includes major geographic features and terrain that either impedes service or makes it particularly difficult for the district to serve. Kanaka Road and other smaller dead end roads throughout the district present a significant challenge to access for fire protection and emergency evacuation. All of the communities in the district are major risk areas for wildland/urban interface.

Land Use Character

Land uses are principally developed and undeveloped large lot residential estates on 5-10 acre parcels. Agriculture uses in the district include commercial operations of vineyard/winery, olive and olive oil, lavender and cattle/grazing. An area to the east of the district contains developed and vacant parcels zoned industrial, including the Mountain Firewood Company, a commercial firewood business that processes and stores large quantities of fire wood. A commercial storage facility is also proposed for this area.

Level of Service

RES provides a moderate level of services to its residents district-wide. Its per capita district expenditure was \$154.81 in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. Its main funding mechanisms for these services are property taxes and assessments; however, RES also receives County Supplement Funds. Its two 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 205-206, "Services and Programs;" pages 206-207, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" pages 207-208, "Equipment and Vehicles;" pages 208-209, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" pages 302-303, "Rescue FPD (RES); and Maps 7 ("West County Stations") and 8 ("North County Stations").

2. *Financial capabilities and costs of service*

Refer to pages 211-213 “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 202-203, “Rescue 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 204, “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 district is composed of either low density residential or rural residential with a few areas designated as open space or medium density residential. The 2004 General Plan directs unincorporated growth to already existing population centers, or “community regions,” such as Rescue or the area west of Cameron Park. While it is unlikely that the land use within the district will change significantly, several developers are advocating higher density growth west of RES, just outside of its district service area but inside its sphere. Should this project move forward, it is possible growth-inducing pressure will build around the Kanaka Valley region and lead to an increase in service demand to the district. Fire suppression and emergency medical services, by themselves, do not increase the likelihood of development. Consequently, the district’s activity should not induce any change in land use.

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 205-206, “Services and Programs; pages 206-207, “Infrastructure and Facilities;” pages 207-208, “Equipment and Vehicles;” pages 208-209, “Personnel and Staffing;” page 286, “Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;” pages 302-303, “Rescue FPD (RES);” and Maps 7 (“West County Stations”) and 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 RES:

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

The majority of present land use in the RES area includes rural and low density residential and agricultural uses, although, there are a few places with high density residential and commercial uses. The highest concentration of residents is in the town of Rescue; however, a substantial portion of the district's population is diffused throughout RES' service area. 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 within the community region of Rescue and the area west of Cameron Park. The area west of Cameron Park, especially south of Green Valley Road, is experiencing significant growth.

The current RES sphere includes lands to its west and east; neither of these areas are within the boundaries of a fire agency. As noted above, some landowners of the parcels to the west of the district are actively seeking to develop the Kanaka Valley area. This development has the potential to straddle two fire agencies: a portion of the project is within the RES sphere of influence. The remainder is in the El Dorado Hills County Water District (EDH) service area. The development of the Kanaka Valley region will introduce growth-inducing pressures, taxing the agency's ability to serve the area while maintaining current service levels. Further compounding the challenge of providing service to the area are the twin factors of limited road access in and out of Kanaka Valley and the location of the district's sole fire station in Rescue. There are no plans to develop the parcels to the east beyond the current General Plan designation. These areas are between RES and El Dorado County FPD (ECF). The RES, EDH and ECF chiefs recognize that these parcels are not within their respective fire protection agency. Since further discussions and analyses are necessary, they have requested that their spheres remain as they are currently drawn. All three chiefs have agreed to a collaborative effort to evaluate and reorganize the spheres and service areas, if necessary.

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

Parcels currently within the RES district receive sufficient fire suppression and emergency response services as needed. If annexed, the areas described above would increase demand for these services, potentially taxing existing personnel and equipment to maintain current levels of service to existing and new residents. Increased property taxes, development impact fees and assessments from any newly-annexed areas may offset this increase in costs.

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

The RES 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.*

RES serves the community of Rescue as well as the areas west of Cameron Park. The proposed project of Kanaka Valley, at full build-out, may be large enough to be considered a future “community of interest;” however, its inclusion would not require further Commission consideration of this issue at this time.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the Rescue FPD Sphere of Influence be updated to affirm its original sphere, as shown in Map L.