

Agency Profile

The Lake Valley Fire Protection District (LAV) was formed in 1947 (pre-dating LAFCO, refer to Map G). Under Health and Safety Code §13800, et seq., the district is empowered to provide fire protection and suppression, emergency medical and rescue services along the south shore of Lake Tahoe in an area characterized by dramatic mountains and topographic variety. Located in the far eastern portion of El Dorado County, the district includes approximately 80 square miles from Emerald Bay south to Alpine County. It wraps around the City of South Lake Tahoe and Fallen Leaf Lake CSD. The southwestern edge of its boundary borders the eastern edge of El Dorado County Fire FPD. The district serves multiple distinct communities including the Emerald Bay/Cascade Lake area, Echo Summit, Christmas Valley, Meyers, Phillips, Sawmill and Pioneer, North Upper Truckee, Heavenly Valley, Phillips, Twin Bridges, Spring Creek (near Cascade Lake) and has a total permanent population of approximately 11,000, with about 5,000 registered voters. The population increases seasonally to approximately 40,000 persons. The district is entirely within the state responsibility area for wildland fire protection.

Land Use Character

Based on TRPA databases, the district contains 53,120 acres. Of these, the United States Forest Service owns and administers 12,800 acres. The State of California owns a total of 1,280 acres and 39,040 acres are in private/local ownership. Major land uses include recreation and tourism activities associated with Lake Tahoe, such as skiing, snowboarding, camping, hiking, mountain biking, fishing and summer water sports. Residential areas within LAV cluster around Highway 50, Highway 89, Pioneer Trail and Upper Truckee Road.

Level of Service

LAV provides a moderate level of services to its residents district-wide. Its per capita district expenditure was \$444.73 in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. Its main funding mechanisms for these services are property taxes and development impact fees and, to a lesser extent, out of district fees. Its three 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 146-147, "Services and Programs;" page 148, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" pages 148-149, "Equipment and Vehicles;" page 149, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" page 300, "Lake Valley FPD (LAV);" and Map 10 – "Tahoe Basin Stations."

2. *Financial capabilities and costs of service*

Refer to pages 152-153 “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 144-145, “Lake Valley 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 145, “Growth/Population;” and pages 307-312, “Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area.”

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

The Tahoe Regional Planning Authority (TRPA), a federally created bi-state agency, regulates growth near Lake Tahoe. Building within the district is severely restricted and approximately 65 residential permits are issued within LAV each year. Subdivisions are prohibited according to the LAV Annual Report on Fire District Development Improvement Fees (March 2004). The district contains 1,700 buildable lots, which will gradually be developed over time. According to the chief, the Tahoe Conservancy and federal or state agencies have purchased approximately 3,700 parcels. These parcels no longer have development potential and will be permanent open space. Consequently, it is extremely unlikely that the land use within the district will change significantly.

However, the services provided by the District do not induce urban growth or the conversion of open space to urban uses. Given the topography and tourist activity in the area, the district’s services protect forests, lives and open space 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 146-147, “Services and Programs;” page 148, “Infrastructure and Facilities;” pages 148-149, “Equipment and Vehicles;” page 149, “Personnel and Staffing;” page 286, “Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;” page 300, “Lake Valley FPD (LAV);” and Map 10 – “Tahoe Basin 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 LAV:

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

The present land use in the LAV area includes residential, recreational and tourist-related uses. Primary residential areas within LAV tend to follow the major highways and roads that bisect the district. Growth and development potential is limited largely by TRPA regulations and there are not expected to be any substantial changes in the planned land use as a direct result of this review. There are no known development proposals expected to occur outside of a fire protection district boundary within the immediate vicinity of the LAV that may require a future amendment to the LAV sphere of influence.

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

At present, all developed and undeveloped areas within the LAV district receive sufficient fire suppression and emergency response services as needed. There are no areas outside of the current LAV service boundaries that are likely to require inclusion consideration within its sphere of influence in the foreseeable future.

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

The LAV 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 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.*

LAV serves multiple distinct communities including the Emerald Bay/Cascade Lake area, Echo Summit, Christmas Valley, Meyers, Phillips, Sawmill and Pioneer, North Upper Truckee, Heavenly Valley, Phillips, Twin Bridges, Spring Creek (near Cascade Lake); however, there are no large, concentrated, social or economic communities of interest that are relevant to the agency. Due to TRPA land use regulations, these communities' populations are expected to remain relatively stable.

In the past, there were discussions of consolidating LAV and Fallen Leaf Lake CSD; however, topographical factors make such a consolidation unfeasible.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that Lake Valley FPD Sphere of Influence be updated to affirm the original sphere, which is coterminous with its current boundaries.