



Lou Ann Texeira
Executive Officer

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September 14, 2011 (Agenda)

September 14, 2011
 Agenda Item 8

Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)
 651 Pine Street, Sixth Floor
 Martinez, CA 94553

Fire Service Update – East Contra Costa County

Dear Commissioners:

This report is in response to the Commission’s request for a monthly update regarding fire service activities in East Contra Costa County. As previously reported, discussions are underway among East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD), the cities of Brentwood and Oakley, San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), Cal Fire and other interested parties, which could potentially lead to significant changes in the delivery of fire and emergency medical services in East County.

East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) - In June, the ECCFPD Board adopted a preliminary FY 2011-12 budget that will utilize \$2.8 of the \$3.4 million in the District’s reserve funds, leaving an estimated \$600,000 in reserve funding. The ECCFPD Board established an Ad Hoc Committee to review options to address the revenue shortfall. The Committee meets weekly and is focused on the following three areas: 1) *service models*; 2) *service providers*; and 3) *election dates and voter turnout*. The Board will meet on September 12 to discuss these issues as well as a proposed parcel tax. Additional information may be available following the September 14 ECCFPD Board meeting.

City of Brentwood – As previously reported, the Brentwood City Council is concerned with the future of fire service, and is working on a back-up plan for a Brentwood-only fire service option. In June, the Brentwood City Council approved moving forward with plans to apply to LAFCO to detach from ECCFPD and form a new fire district. The City Council directed its staff to prepare the necessary paperwork in conjunction with a LAFCO application. On August 23, the City Council received an update and accepted the City’s Fire Ad Hoc Subcommittee’s recommendation to put on hold pursuing a Brentwood-only fire service option pending the outcome of ECCFPD’s efforts on a proposed parcel tax.

City of Oakley – As previously reported, in May the Oakley City Council discussed a plan similar to the Brentwood-only fire service option, and instead voted to continue to look for ways to keep ECCFPD fiscally sound. We are aware of no other action by the City of Oakley since its discussion in May.

San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), Cal Fire and Marsh Creek/Morgan Territory (MCMT) Area – As previously reported, the MCMT residents are concerned with the future of fire service to their area given the fiscal challenges ECCFPD faces. Consequently, the residents have initiated discussions with SRVFPD regarding possible service through that district. The MCMT area is served by the Sunshine station located on Marsh Creek Road, east of Clayton. The Sunshine station is currently staffed year-round by Cal Fire. ECCFPD currently contracts with Cal Fire for operation of the Sunshine station during the wet season, and Cal Fire directly finances staffing the station during fire season. The SRVFPD Fire Chief previously met with MCMT residents and with Cal Fire officials to discuss fire service options. The SRVFPD Fire Chief has discussed the issue further with Cal Fire, with the ECCFPD Fire Chief, and with the SRVFPD Board. On August 24, the SRVFPD Board received a report and voted to discontinue consideration of the potential annexation of the Marsh Creek/Morgan Territory area. After careful consideration the District has determined that annexation of the Marsh Creek/Morgan Territory area is not practical due to the distance from the balance of the District boundaries.

In July, we learned that the Governor signed a bill (ABX 129) which imposes a fire protection and prevention fee on rural residents. Specifically, it establishes an annual fee, capped at \$150, to be paid by residents living in a State Responsibility Area (SRA) where Cal Fire is responsible for providing fire service. We understand that the MCMT residents will be assessed by the State the \$150 for Cal Fire prevention services; and that at this time, the money cannot be used for fire suppression.

Additional information regarding East County fire service issues may be available following the upcoming local agency meetings in September.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report and provide input and direction as desired.

Sincerely,

LOU ANN TEXEIRA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

c: Distribution