

## Chapter 8 – Service Review Determinations & Recommendations

### Background

This chapter addresses the requirements of the Cortese-Knox-Hetzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code Section 56430). This Act requires LAFCO to conduct Municipal Service Reviews prior to updating the Spheres of Influence (SOI) for local agencies within the county. As part of the review process, LAFCO is required to make *written* statements of determinations in each of the nine categories listed below.

1. Infrastructure needs and deficiencies
2. Growth and population projections
3. Financing constraints and opportunities
4. Cost avoidance opportunities
5. Opportunities for rate restructuring.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities and resources
7. Government structure options (including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service providers)
8. Evaluation of management efficiencies
9. Local accountability and governance

Determinations are based on an analysis of information concerning the adequacy of local service agency conditions. Determinations are not all findings of fact; they are “...declaratory statements that make a conclusion based on all the information and evidence presented.”<sup>30</sup>

In addition to being used in updating the SOI, the service review process provides a new set of tools that can be used by LAFCO, local agencies and the public to:

- Promote orderly growth and development with consideration of service feasibility and service costs
- Learn about service issues and needs
- Plan for the provision of infrastructure needed to support planned growth
- Address regional issues
- Develop a structure for dialogue among agencies that provide services
- Develop a support network and promote shared resource acquisition
- Provide an informational database
- Develop strategies to avoid unnecessary costs and to streamline and improve service delivery
- Provide ideas regarding different or modified government structures

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<sup>30</sup> *Final Local Agency Formation Municipal Service Review Guidelines*, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, August 2003, page 44.

Fire protection and basic life support for emergency medical services are handled in Stanislaus County by a combination of service providers that includes both cities and districts. The delivery system has undergone significant changes over the last two decades. Communities that were once separated geographically are now merging; growth and development occurs in a fashion that does not often consider the impact on local fire agencies. The previous chapters of this report provide information on how each specific entity is staffed, how its fire stations are situated, and how the organization is coping with change.

In these ways, the analytical processes utilized can be used to further investigate an appropriate change.

## **1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

**Purpose:** To evaluate the infrastructure needs and deficiencies of a jurisdiction in terms of available resources, capacity to deliver services, and the condition of facilities.

Infrastructure is what the public thinks when they think of the fire service. If they see a fire station or they observe a fire truck on the street, they have a perception that fire protection is being provided. However, the infrastructure of a fire department encompasses a great deal more. Infrastructure has to be evaluated in terms of its adequacy to do the job, the reliability of being available when needed, and the overall need to provide the right set of tools to do the job that are current and safe to operate.

The following points were derived from the information provided in the previous chapters:

- The communities are changing with the influx of new homeowners and new businesses. The service providers are strained to keep up with the response workload, replacement of equipment, and the development of programs. The potential for remodeling fire stations of most of the smaller agencies is negligible.
- Because of the changing nature of the automatic aid and mutual aid system, jurisdictional boundaries are often transparent to the delivery of services to the citizen. The closest fire company to provide a service is used in many cases to provide initial attack.
- Building new equipment to meet nationally recognized standards is financially more expensive than past practices of purchasing recycled apparatus from other entities. Purchasing retired apparatus is becoming more of a problem due to changing standards and increased liability of poorly maintained vehicles.
- The ISO ratings generally reflect the capacity of the departments to protect their level of risk. The lower the classification, the higher the level of service.
- The majority of the agencies are making a good faith effort to conform to nationally accepted standards for fire ground operations.
- Increased development does not mean increased revenue in all cases.

- Population drives demand and demand drive resources. The two factors are not equally matched in the current system. This is reflected in the per capita costs. Lower per capita costs results in lower levels of infrastructure capacity.
- Water supplies in the rural area forces the use of water tenders to be part of the infrastructure, and they are not easily maintained.
- Demand for emergency medical services exceeds demand for fire suppression. Revenue enhancements may be needed to keep pace with demand.
- The mission statement of the recently created Joint Powers Authority to “develop current and future fire service administrative and operational standards to provide the highest level of service possible to Stanislaus County Fire Services,” is an appropriate move to deal with emerging infrastructure issues.
- Design of modern apparatus is challenging the size of many of the older facilities. Fire apparatus is getting larger because of specification requirements; however, many of the stations were built for smaller vehicles.

### **Written Determinations – Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The following represent the Municipal Service Review determinations relating to infrastructure needs and deficiencies.

#### Determination 1.0

- There is no long-term comprehensive strategic or master plan within the region to improve or recommend changes to infrastructure capacity for fire protection. This prevents adequate consideration of options and alternatives.

#### Determination 1.1

- Fire protection and emergency medical services response patterns in the study area are characterized by overlapping polygons and areas with no coverage. In certain areas, there is redundancy and other areas response times are longer than normal. This prevents the effective and efficient use of limited resources.

#### Determination 1.2

- Fire stations in the districts are generally aged and while still serviceable, are in need of substantial upgrades. The fire stations in the cities vary in age but are in generally better condition, and in some cases are already scheduled for replacement. There are very few new stations in the overall inventory. However, new stations that are being built do comply with contemporary standards. Specifically, these include the recent stations constructed in Salida, Oakdale, and Ceres.

#### Determination 1.3

- The fire apparatus inventory is also, in general, aged, and many vehicles are likely to need replacement in the next 5 to 10 years.

#### Determination 1.4

- Small tools and equipment range from being nearly obsolete to being relatively current, with the preponderance being older and in need of replacement.

#### Determination 1.5

- The level of service being provided ranges from urban to rural, with no degree of consistency in fringe areas that are hard to serve or underserved. There are large areas that are underserved with current station distribution. The area that is underserved has a very low population density.

## **2. Growth and Population Projections**

Purpose: To evaluate service needs based upon existing and anticipated growth patterns and population projections.

Population and population density are the two driving forces that create demand for fire and emergency medical services. The manifestation of this is in the development of housing stock and the distribution of that housing stock upon the landscape. Incremental changes in population that result from infill of existing land within any jurisdiction, especially if the development is limited to the area that is already covered by the department's response pattern, is of limited impact. Major housing tract developments that bring in hundreds or thousands of people, especially when the location of the development is beyond existing response patterns, is the force behind the need for additional fire stations and additional expenditures. The risks, hazards, and values in fire protection districts are dispersed and not highly concentrated.

Currently the fire districts cover larger areas with lower population density than cities. The rural road network is also a grid but on a much larger scale, with long distances involved to reach outlying areas of some of the districts. The cities are more compact, densely populated, and have grid street networks which are easier to serve than rural areas. Infill is not much of an issue.

The actual workload of emergency calls per fire district company is still fairly low, but it is rising. The workload in the areas with population densities over 1000 people per square mile is consistent with normal workloads of suburban fire companies.

### **Written Determinations – Growth and Population**

The following represent the MSR determinations relating to growth and population:

#### Determination 2.0

- The individual cities and districts do not have a standardized method of calculating population growth. Each fire agency uses its own source of data for planning purposes.

#### Determination 2.1

- StanCOG forecasts indicate that between 2000 and 2030, the County's population is expected to increase by 84 percent, adding another 375,000 residents that will need emergency services. Based on current emergency demand per 1000 people, that growth will increase the workload by another 25,000 calls.

#### Determination 2.2

- There are two distinctly different growth *corridors*. They are distributed along the I-5 and Highway 99 corridors. Growth in the area between the corridors is limited. Much of the land in between is agricultural, which will result in the focus of development sometimes occurring in a random fashion instead of a sequential pattern.

#### Determination 2.3

- Growth is unevenly distributed throughout the County, with each fire protection and emergency medical service provider experiencing distinctly different impacts on existing facilities, planning, capital needs, and staffing.

### 3. Financing Constraints and Opportunities

Purpose: To evaluate factors that effect the financing of needed improvements.

The level of effort in a community will determine the level of service. Low per capita incomes result in low levels of service. However, to acquire additional financial resources, fire agencies must utilize an array of funding mechanisms. Some of these are reasonably easy to utilize while others are very difficult; most require two-thirds voter approval for passage.

#### **Written Determinations – Financing Constraints & Opportunities**

The following represent MSR determinations relating to financing constraints and opportunities:

#### Determination 3.0

- Financial constraints are greater on the rural departments than on the others due to the lower density of population and the nature of the property values.

#### Determination 3.1

- Continued state actions regarding the budgeting aspects of local government make the prediction of the stability of all funding sources difficult.

#### Determination 3.2

- Capital equipment costs are increasing faster than the revenue sources, which make the purchases of high priced items more difficult.

#### Determination 3.3

- Local agencies' ability to generate revenue through alternative sources continues to be impacted by the need to acquire a two-thirds approval rate for most sources.

#### Determination 3.4

- The tax rate is very low in many of the more rural fire district areas. This keeps the per capita level of effort low.

#### Determination 3.5

- The per capita level of the county fire service agencies is lower overall than the benchmarks being set by the statewide and western region experience.

#### Determination 3.6

- The incremental costs for all elements of the budget will continue to increase which reduces the purchasing power of the agencies overtime.

#### Determination 3.7

- Many of the volunteer fire departments will face the need to acquire full-time staff to replace eroding volunteer forces, thus raising the costs of the department significantly when it occurs.

#### Determination 3.8

- Those fire departments already staffed with full-time personnel will face increased costs in both salary and benefits that may or may not be linked to the increase in revenue sources.

#### Determination 3.9

- Existing budgetary reserves will be eroded by increased costs of capital expenditures which will place pressure on the funding of new stations and equipment.

## **4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities**

Purpose: To identify practices or opportunities that may help eliminate unnecessary costs.

There is a difference between cost savings and cost avoidance. There is a tendency in government to call them by the same name. In the case of cost savings, the term should be applied to reducing the costs of an existing commodity, i.e. paying less for something than

before. Cost avoidance is based on the idea that you do not purchase something that you do not need (i.e. not buying what you do not have to). Therefore, anything that can be reduced in cost is based on eliminating duplication of effort. In the fire service, the avoidance of adding additional fire stations is a cost avoidance maneuver. The elimination of one of two stations covering the same area is a cost savings. Actions that can be taken to eliminate redundancy and eliminate overlap are, therefore, both valuable in improving a systems effectiveness and efficiency.

Another term for cost avoidance is *economy of scale*. This term is applied to the idea that if you purchase a commodity, you get a better break on it if you purchase an amount that allows for a discount of the commodity. To translate that into fire service terms, economy of scale relates to making sure that fire stations cover the most area they can without unnecessary overlap or engaging in purchase practices that reduce the unit cost of acquisition.

The following points were derived from the information provided in the previous chapters:

- The opportunity to participate in a leveraged situation when looking at those activities that can best be done on a regional basis. This could include purchasing, administrative record keeping, training, and other programmatic functions.
- Creating cost sharing agreements when reviewing the distribution of fire stations could be instrumental in preventing the construction of fire stations that are not cost effective.
- The perception that *cost savings* is the same as cost avoidance creates a false sense of confidence that by maintaining the status quo this is an appropriate action by some agencies. They cannot see any cost savings in reducing what they have but do not have a sense of how to avoid cost increases in the future.
- Countywide specialty teams are more cost effective than individual departments attempting to field specialty groups.

### **Written Determinations – Cost Avoidance Opportunities**

The following represent MSR determinations relating to cost avoidance opportunities:

#### Determination 4.0

- The existing Stanislaus County 9-1-1 center should be retained and improved.

#### Determination 4.1

- Provide additional support to retain and maintain volunteer fire forces.

#### Determination 4.2

- The existing system of operating the Stanislaus County/Community College partnership should be maintained and improved.

#### Determination 4.3

- The Joint Powers Authority provides an opportunity to engage in purchasing practices to reduce unit costs of acquisition if properly designed and maintained.

#### Determination 4.4

- The JPA could also serve as a vehicle to develop broader based specifications for purchase of other administrative services, such as liability insurance.

#### Determination 4.5

- Response time polygons should be considered in the analysis and development of future decisions to avoid duplication of effort.

## 5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

Purpose: To identify opportunities to positively impact rates without decreasing service levels.

This determination generally applies to enterprise districts such as water and sewer districts. The funding options that are applicable to fire districts are noted in the MSR Chapter 5 - Financing Constraints and Opportunities. There are opportunities to add revenues to the fire agencies that do not currently have a funding source for expanding their infrastructure, such as new stations and new apparatus. This requires the adoption of an appropriate development fee schedule. There are also opportunities for fire districts to take initiatives to the public for voter approval. Additionally, there is an opportunity for the development of tax sharing agreements to stabilize the funding levels process for the rural fire districts.

### **Written Determinations – Rate Restructuring**

The following represent MSR determinations relating to opportunities for rate restructuring:

#### Determination 5.0

- Some of the departments are obtaining funds for future development through the CEQA process. Others do not have a development fee in place. All agencies should have a plan for the acquisition of funds for capital acquisition for future fire stations in place.

#### Determination 5.1

- The detachment process that occurs upon annexation needs to be thoroughly evaluated with regards to cost sharing. The concept that annexation requires future fire stations could be avoided through cooperative agreements. This consideration should be exercised before adding new stations to the inventory.

## Determination 5.2

- Based on national benchmark data, every fire agency – regardless of population protected – should work to achieve a minimum of per capita level of effort equal to the baseline of \$100.00 per person. This would require initiatives to be taken by each district to establish additional funding sources.

## 6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities

Purpose: To evaluate the opportunities for a jurisdiction to share facilities and resources to develop more efficient service delivery.

### Sharing Facilities

The obvious aspect of this component is to identify opportunities to discuss the location of fire stations, training, communications centers, and maintenance facilities. Outcome of this objective is to identify opportunities to minimize duplication of services, to reduce costs, and to maintain and improve efficiency of services and programs with the intent of reducing current or potential capital improvement costs.

One of the first and most obvious resources for evaluations is fire stations and fire apparatus. They are located in a geographical distribution pattern that has been explained under the standards of cover concept. However, there are two aspects of this consideration that are not as obvious. The first is that automatic aid has been established in many areas and is already reducing redundancy of stations, minimizing the opportunity to do this. The other aspect is the idea of relocating fire stations so that they may become more effective often means separation instead of co-location.

The County fire service has already availed itself of a major opportunity to share facilities by having most of the districts dispatched by the Stanislaus Regional 9-1-1 JPA.

One aspect of this objective would be to share a training function among the districts. None of the districts have an adequate fire training program, and no single district has an adequate training facility. One future opportunity would be to enter into an agreement to have a training officer with mobile training facilities who would bring structural fire training to the districts, instead of expecting personnel to travel long distances to obtain basic training skills.

An additional suggestion is to consider the sharing of maintenance facilities. With the exception of the cities and a few of the districts, the ability to conduct major maintenance on fire apparatus is limited. This could be an excellent opportunity to utilize a JPA system. Creating a central maintenance capacity, under the umbrella of that group, would accrue benefits to all agencies. As observed by the fire chiefs, there would be geographical challenges to such a system, but the principle could work using a combination of centrally developed contacts to perform service, as well as the development of mobile equipment to service vehicles. Furthermore, there would be budgetary considerations for hiring and maintaining a workforce.

### **Written Determinations – Opportunities for Shared Facilities and Resources**

The following represent the MSR determinations relating to opportunities for shared facilities and resources:

#### Determination 6.0

- Two of the most obvious sharing of facilities are already in existence – the Stanislaus Regional 9-1-1 center and the Regional Fire Academy. Each fire district is a member of the Fire Science Advisory Committee. Each of the fire districts has made a financial contribution to the Training Center. This current communications system is an excellent example of shared facilities.

#### Determination 6.1

- The presence of the Accredited Fire Academy at the College should be continued and expanded to better serve the needs of the volunteer fire service.

#### Determination 6.2

- The existence of automatic aid and the high level of cooperation among some agencies are critical to maintaining the levels of service.

#### Determination 6.3

- The existence of policy preferences and individual decisions to not participate in cooperative agreements is an impediment to progress.

#### Determination 6.4

- The opportunity, at some level, to improve vehicle maintenance through a cooperative agreement is a viable option.

## **7. Government Structure Options**

Purpose: To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various governmental structures to provide public services.

Gertrude Stein was once quoted as saying, “A rose is a rose is a rose.” If Miss Stein had been talking about fire protection, she could not have made that simple statement. A fire department is not a fire department is not a fire department. While the public may perceive that fire protection is a monolithic infrastructure in a community, it is anything but that. In spite of the fact that we have buildings, fire apparatus, uniforms, similar equipment, wear badges, and even engage in similar types of training, there are many ways to organize and execute a fire protection agency.

Nowhere can that be any truer than in Stanislaus County. In accordance with California laws related to fires and firefighters, there are as many ways of organizing a fire protection agency as

there are colors in a Crayola box. More than 60 elected officials govern structural fire protection and emergency medical services in the unincorporated region. Eleven independent fire protection districts maintain three- to seven-member boards of directors. Most of these directors are appointed by the County Board of Supervisors.

As noted earlier in the report, special districts are often developed in a local community to address specific service needs. This chapter provides an overview of the decision-making process used by the different governance methods, the opportunity for public input, and each district's involvement with the community.

The following chart illustrates the various forms of selection and /or appointment of the Directors from the various agencies.

**Figure 36: Methods of Appointment/Election**

Department	Governance	Directors	Elected/Appointed
Burbank-Paradise FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Elected
CDF	State Agency	NA	NA
<b>Ceres</b>	<b>City</b>		<b>City Council</b>
Ceres FPD	Fire Protection District	3	Elected
Denair FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed
Hughson FPD	Fire Protection District	3	Elected
Industrial FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Elected
Keyes FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed
<b>Modesto</b>	<b>City</b>		<b>City Council</b>
Mountain View FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed
<b>Newman</b>	<b>City</b>		<b>City Council</b>
<b>Oakdale</b>	<b>City</b>		<b>City Council</b>
Oakdale Rural FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed
<b>Patterson</b>	<b>City</b>		<b>City Council</b>
Salida FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Elected
Stanislaus Consolidated FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed
<b>Turlock</b>	<b>City</b>		<b>City Council</b>
Turlock Rural FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed
West Stanislaus FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed
Westport FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Elected
Woodland FPD	Fire Protection District	5	Appointed

The significance of this is that these various forms are organized in a wide variety of ways of doing business. It is important, from a standpoint of a municipal service review, that all of these forms of governance be adequately evaluated before any consideration is made of any potential modifications.

Throughout the interview process there were many comments that significant management efficiency could be gained by consolidating the functions of some of the region's fire protection agencies. This is not the only solution, but with eight of the Fire District Boards appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, it could be considered.

Management-to-staff ratios within individual agencies are currently reasonably low. However, 11 fire chiefs oversee the provision of safety services in the unincorporated region. Layers of positions below fire chief and multiple non-safety positions are also duplicated across the region. A regional fire protection organization could eliminate redundancies among functions and rededicate personnel to purposes that would enhance fire protection services. For example, economies of scale could allow a regional system to retain professional training officers or a geographic information systems professional; whereas most fire protection districts do not have the resources to maintain such positions.

In the context of the MSR, governance is a key issue. Without considering what authority and what organizational resources an agency has to perform for any type of service, it can become extremely difficult to evaluate when it comes to considering what possibilities might occur, and what options and alternatives could be more effective in the future. This is why each option has both advantages and disadvantages.

### **Written Determinations – Government Structure Options**

The following represent the Municipal Service Review determinations relating to government structure options:

#### Determination 7.0

- Sixty-six different board members govern structural fire protection and emergency medical services in areas outside of cities.

#### Determination 7.1

- The agency representing fire protection and emergency medical services within the unincorporated area of Stanislaus County are encouraged to establish a comprehensive fire protection system with a Master Planning effort. Cities should be encouraged to participate.

#### Determination 7.2

- Support of the Joint Powers Authority is essential to developing further options.

#### Determination 7.3

- The cities are almost all staffed by paid personnel. The districts are mostly staffed by volunteer and/or combination departments.

#### Determination 7.4

- The dissolution of the Burbank-Paradise Fire District would eliminate overlap of existing response coverage with the city of Modesto but would likely create political reaction.

#### Determination 7.5

- Dissolution of the Industrial Fire Protection District would result in more accountability to the respective agencies that now share the revenues.

#### Determination 7.6

- Dissolution of the Ceres Fire Protection District would reduce the levels of governance.

#### Determination 7.7

- Oakdale City and Oakdale Rural Fire Departments could improve operational and administrative efficiencies by entering into a joint effort selected from the various methods of contracting or joint operation such as has been demonstrated by West Stanislaus. This has been attempted several times in the past. In order for such a plan to succeed, many issues would need to be resolved. They include defining the different levels of service to the respective area. A careful consideration of how the revenue sources and the expenditures are allocated would be needed.

## 8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies

Purpose: To evaluate the management structure of the organization.

Management effectiveness deals specifically with the manner in which the organizations can document, review, and evaluate both their current conditions, as well as their ability to plan for changes and make improvements in the overall organization.

The standard template for management efficiency is based on a model that includes such things as standard operating procedures (SOPs), the development of internal planning devices, and evidence that the department has rules, regulations, and policy documents that are reviewed on a periodic basis.

During the data collection, attempts were made to locate evidence of these types of documents. In general, the fire departments were lacking in written policy and procedure, evidence of master or strategic planning efforts and/or procedures and processes to address those very items

### **Written Determinations – Evaluation of Management Efficiencies**

The following represent the Municipal Service Review determinations relating to evaluation of management efficiencies:

#### Determination 8.0

- There is limited master or strategic planning activity in the fire agencies. There is limited evidence of long-term budget activity to prepare to meet overall system needs in the future. There is evidence that specific agencies have developed amortization and replacement plans for apparatus and equipment, but the effort cannot be called master or strategic planning, with few exceptions.

#### Determination 8.1

- The creation of the current fire prevention program within the fire warden's office should assist in the standardization of the fire prevention function.

#### Determination 8.2

- Training is not readily available in the outlying areas and lacks standardization and ready access to all departments.

## **9. Local Accountability and Governance**

Purpose: To evaluate the public accessibility and participation associated with the agency's decision-making processes.

As noted earlier, special districts are often developed in a local community to address specific service needs. The service review process looks at the accountability and governance component as a reflection of the degree to which the organization provides oversight in the area of performance and effectiveness as an organization. This review provides an overview of the decision-making process, the opportunity for public input, and each district's involvement with the community. When accountability is high, the decision-making processes are timely and the results are easily determined. When accountability is low, decisions are deferred and results are often sporadic.

### **Public Education Efforts**

All the departments were queried with respect to how they saw their reputations among the public. The majority of them were satisfied that their customer base was pleased with them as an organization; but simultaneously admitted that there are considerable misunderstandings in the community, and that direct involvement with the problems of the fire department are practically non-existent.

When pressed to determine whether or not any of the departments had an active public education program, the response was minimal. In addition, the question was asked whether or not any public education material had been developed that could be widely distributed to the citizenry regarding the status of fire protection; the response here was minimal as well.

In general, since many of these fire departments have to operate by donations and through fundraisers, there is no question that there is a fairly high level of community support or none of these fundraisers would work. However, these fundraisers in and of themselves are certainly insufficient to provide adequate funds to meet all the needs of the fire department.

There is also reluctance by many of the departments to even admit that they are a volunteer fire department. This creates a built-in efficiency. If the community thinks that they have a full-time department and does not support donations and/or pass tax rates to support the organization, there is a funding deficiency. On the other hand, if the department declares that it is volunteer fire department, there may well be a perception that there are no costs involved and people may stop supporting them. This may appear to be a proverbial two-headed coin. However, contemporary literature tells us that in those areas where the community is clearly aware they have a volunteer fire department and are simultaneously aware that the department is not free, there is a tendency for the community to provide financial support.

The one issue that needs to be very clear is that volunteer fire departments are not free. The liability insurance, worker's compensation, vehicle amortization, fire station amortization, personal protective clothing, etc., are all costs of doing business.

### **Written Determinations – Local Accountability & Governance**

The following represent the Municipal Service Review determinations relating to local accountability and governance:

#### Determination 9.0

- Some districts have district boards appointed by the Board of Supervisors. This is consistent with State law. Smaller districts often use this method as a cost savings technique. It is common for election costs to run several thousand dollars for each election. This cost would be paid by the district.

#### Determination 9.1

- Changes to the organizational structure by itself will not address the problems of either insufficient revenues or ineffective management of programs.

#### Determination 9.2

- Detachment, which results in reduction in revenues is a serious issue with the districts.

#### Determination 9.3

- There are over 60 different members of boards of directors of the districts. Most are Board appointed.

#### Determination 9.4

- The Boards of Directors are in compliance with the Brown Act provisions. The information provided indicates that all districts comply with open meeting requirements, including regular meeting minutes providing the public an opportunity to observe and comment upon district actions. Posting of meeting times and dates is conducted in a variety of fashions including the use of the doors on the fire stations, faxing to local newspapers, and the use of other prominent civic buildings. In addition, minutes are available for public review including board actions.

#### Determination 9.5

- Cities are providing both fire and emergency medical services and fire prevention, but the levels of service are often not defined so as to project the performance that can be expected.

#### Determination 9.6

- Districts are primarily providing emergency response services only. Fire Prevention has been delegated to the JPA under contract.

#### Determination 9.7

- The County Fire Warden is now providing fire prevention services, which provides an economy of scale to the process.

### District-by-District Determinations

The second set of tables that have been produced are of the specific departments. The purpose of this set of determinations is to identify the specific factors that are being faced by the various organizations reviewed in this study.

<b>Burbank – Paradise Fire Protection District</b>	<b>District Specific Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	This district is <u>not</u> currently collecting CEQA fees. A station remodel may be required in the future. Funds may not be readily available.
2. Growth and Population Projections	The area is subject to annexation and detachment of property that generates funds to support the agency. It is in the city of Modesto Sphere of Influence. This district could shrink to the point where it is no longer viable. The period of time that this will take is based upon the annexation and detachment process.

<b>Burbank – Paradise Fire Protection District</b>	<b>District Specific Determination</b>
3. Financing Constraints	The district has obtained two special assessments to augment its tax base. The per capita costs are above the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	The current response polygon overlaps coverage provided by city of Modesto. The district is staffed with volunteers and part-time personnel that provide 24 hour a day coverage, 7 days a week. This approach to staffing is unique in this county.
5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring	None contemplated.
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	This district could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA.
7. Government Structure Options	This district could be faced with a need to be dissolved if it becomes under funded and cannot continue to operate through annexations and detachments.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	This district does not have any long-term planning document. This could lead to conditions that render it unprepared.
9. Local Accountability and Governance	The department does not have a standard of cover document, so level of service is not clearly defined. That makes its performance difficult to assess over time.

<b>Ceres (City)</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Headquarters station and its equipment are in very good condition. Training station is practically brand new. One station is in need of replacement because of age of facility.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Residential development near Central High school is anticipated. Area near Service Road between Crows Landing and Morgan Road has possible industrial growth. This will increase demand over time.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>below</u> the regional median. However, the financial resources appear very stable for this department.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Is currently involved in automatic aid which improves efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring	None contemplated.
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	Contracts to serve Industrial.
7. Government Structure Options	A participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a published master plan.

<b>Ceres (City)</b>	<b>Determination</b>
9. Local Accountability and Governance	Publishes an annual report of performance Does not have a published Standards of Cover.

<b>Ceres Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is <u>not</u> currently collecting CEQA fees. Contracts with City of Ceres.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Contracts with City of Ceres.
3. Financing Constraints	Per Capita expenditures are below the regional median. There are about 581 parcels in the District. Contracts with City of Ceres.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Contracts with City of Ceres.
5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring	Contracts with City of Ceres. Has assessment fees based upon use code – rate vary from \$60.00 (single family dwelling – \$90.00 (multi-family dwelling) to \$180.00 (hotels, motels and industrial property).
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	Contracts with City of Ceres.
7. Government Structure Options	Contracts with City of Ceres.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Contracts with City of Ceres.
9. Local Accountability and Governance	Contracts with City of Ceres.

<b>Denair Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. Does not have an equipment amortization plan in place. Is discussing a second station on the other side of the railroad tracks.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Growth is limited. Is in the city of Turlock SOI. There are approximately seven proposed developments in area which will increase demand.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>below</u> the regional median
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Is currently involved in automatic aid which improves efficiency and effectiveness Currently relies on volunteer labor force. Currently concerned over recruiting and retaining of volunteers
5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring	Considering asking for voter approved increase.
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	Participation in the JPA improves opportunity to leverage resource. This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA.

Denair Fire Protection District	Determination
7. Government Structure Options	Considering adding staff to cover 8 to 5 daylight hours. On Monday through Friday. This will improve performance.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan.
9. Local Accountability and Governance	Does not have a Standards of Cover.

Hughson Fire Protection District	Determination
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. Headquarters is an older building that does not meet current fire station design standards. The building is maintained and kept in good working order. Plans have been made to purchase a nearby building to serve as business offices and to provide crew housing. A replacement of the apparatus building in the near future would be advised.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Overlays the city of Hughson. Expected build out of Hughson, according to recent MSR, is 15,074 people by 2025. Expected growth rate of eight percent a year.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>below</u> regional median. Has passed a bond issue
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Currently relies on volunteer labor force. Is currently involved in automatic aid which improves efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring	Could seek voter approved increase.
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	Planning on rebuilding station in 2007. This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA.
7. Government Structure Options	Is participant in JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan.
9. Local Accountability and Governance	Does not have a Standards of Cover document.

Industrial Fire Protection District	Determination
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is <u>not</u> currently collecting CEQA fees. Contracts with both the city of Ceres and the city of Modesto to provide service.
2. Growth and Population Projections	
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>below</u> regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	
5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring	
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	
7. Government Structure Options	Could be dissolved without affecting services.

Industrial Fire Protection District	Determination
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	
9. Local Accountability and Governance	

Keyes Fire Protection District	Determination
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. Does not have vehicle amortization plan in place. New fire station likely to be needed to replace existing in the near future. Staffing increases to keep up with emergency demand likely to occur, but funds are not adequate to achieve.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Is in the city of Turlock Sphere of Influence. Development is occurring to the east and the south of the Keyes station.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita costs are <u>below</u> regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Currently relies on volunteer labor force. Is currently involved in automatic aid which improves efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring	Has not asked for voter approved increases.
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	Is a participant in the JPA which leverages opportunities. This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA.
7. Government Structure Options	Participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does not have a Standards of Cover.

Modesto (City)	Determination
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	The City of Modesto provides protection within it boundaries and is prepared to provide services into annexed areas. New stations and equipment are contemplated. Currently rebuilding Station 2. Consideration of replacing Headquarters. Contemplating the rehabilitation of many facilities in the near future. Population growth in northwest and northeast portions of the city may require two new stations in the future. There will be an increased demand for other infrastructure enhancements.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Anticipated population at build-out is 400,000 – that is an increase of 163,900 people. MSR on Modesto reports that it will have to expand 4 stations response polygons and add six new stations.

3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>at</u> the regional median. Is general funded by the City.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Is currently involved in automatic aid with neighboring fire districts, which improves efficiency and effectiveness of the agencies.
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	Currently has a capital Improvements fee in place. In 1989 Measure "S" failed by a small margin.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	Is a participant in the JPA. Modesto has concerns over inability of partner agencies to reciprocate with like services. Is currently a participant in both the 911 JPA and the Hazardous Materials JPA.
7. Government Structure Options	Participates in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does have a Current Master Plan (2003).
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does have a current Standard of Cover published of six minutes for first due equipment and 10 minutes for the arrival of an effective response force.

<b>Mountain View Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is <u>not</u> currently collecting CEQA fees. No dormitory facilities in stations. If permanent staff added will need to be accomplished. Anticipates addition of rescue vehicle.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Is in the City of Turlock Sphere of Influence.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>at</u> the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Currently relies on volunteer labor force.
5. Opportunities for Rate Re-structuring	Passed a special assessment in 1986. It passed with a 2/3 vote.
6. Opportunities for Shared Facilities	Is currently involved in automatic aid which improves efficiency and effectiveness. This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA.
7. Government Structure Options	Is a participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan.
9. Local Accountability and Governance	Does not have an adopted Standard of Cover.

<b>Newman (City)</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is part of the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District. Have concerns over having enough equipment and staff to deal with demand in the future. Is currently contemplating an additional fire station.
2. Growth and Population Projections	
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures were not calculated.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	City has not pursued any benefit assessments.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	
7. Government Structure Options	
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Has concerns over recruiting and retaining volunteers
9. Local Accountability and governance	

<b>Oakdale (City)</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Headquarters does not comply with either ADA or Seismic Standards. The department is considering two options. They are: to remodel the existing station or to replace it with a station that may preclude the construction of a third station that may be required as a result of the F Street annexation. <sup>31</sup> Has recently added a new fire station.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Oakdale General Plan has eight areas that lie within the sphere of influence that have specific plans.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>at</u> the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	None contemplated.
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	None contemplated
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	Is a participant in the Regional JPA for communications and the Arson JPA.
7. Government Structure Options	Is participant in JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	No indication of a Master Plan provided.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Has a declared response time of 4 minutes of travel time.

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<sup>31</sup> Based on letter from Oakdale Fire Chief Wilkinson, 11/4/2006.

<b>Oakdale Rural Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. Headquarters is inadequate to serve the needs of the District. Station two is not designed for 24 hour a day staffing. Currently need at least one new Type III engine company. Also needs two new Type I pumpers. Anticipate needing command vehicle. Anticipates upgrading Rescue to Heavy Rescue.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Is in the City of Oakdale Sphere of Influence.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>at</u> the regional median. Has a concern over annexations and subsequent detachment. Reserves are less than 10% of the budget.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Currently relies on volunteer labor force. Currently a member of Fire Agencies Self Insurance program (FASIS) and Fire Agencies Insurance Risk Association (FAIRA), both of which are JPAs. .
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	Has attempted to increase funding in the past. Measure M passed by 2/3rds in June of 2005. \$165.00 per dwelling, .14 cents per square foot per industrial building
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	Surrounds the City of Oakdale and provides a different service level. Has a cooperative agreement with Sheriffs Department to operate a rescue boat.
7. Government Structure Options	District successfully re-organized Valley Home District into Oakdale Rural. Could agree to a contract with City such as Industrial has
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan
9. Local Accountability and governance	District is too large to ever be annexed into the City, therefore reductions through annexations and detachments are a concern regarding future stability.

<b>Patterson (City)</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is independent, but operated as part of the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District
2. Growth and Population Projections	Anticipated to grow by about 6% a year till 2010, and then drop to 3.5%. Build out population should be about 30,000 in 2020
3. Financing Constraints	City of Patterson operates from the General Fund The Per Capita expenditures are <u>below</u> the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Is part of the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	Is part of the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	Currently shares a fire chief with the District
7. Government Structure Options	Is part of the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Is part of the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District
9. Local Accountability and governance	Is part of the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District

<b>Salida Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. The Salida fee schedule has been in place since at least 1989. The need for a new station and administrative building is tied to future growth, and the likelihood that the present location of Station 1 and the administration building will have to move due to the Kiernan Avenue interchange expansion is likely. Plans are underway to insure any future development pays for the expansion. Station 1 and the administrative building are, and will continue to be, serviceable for many years absent future growth or forced relocation.

<b>Salida Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
2. Growth and Population Projections	<p>Portions of the District south of Kiernan Avenue, including the North McHenry Corridor, are within the City of Modesto Sphere of Influence. The rest of the District, including the <i>urban</i> area of Salida and Del Rio are not (though the urban area is still within the Modesto City General Plan). Annexations and land detachment by the City of Modesto poses a threat to the continued financial health of the District. Salida is taking an active role in trying to protect its interests, and are interested in examining alternatives that protect both the City and the District. These efforts will require the active support of the County and LAFCO.</p>
3. Financing Constraints	<p>Annexation and detachment of income – producing properties (most notably the North McHenry Corridor and Kaiser property) threatens the finances of the District.</p> <p>Service response times within the urban areas of Salida are comparable to those of the City of Modesto. Comparison of rural areas due to the very nature of urban vs. rural densities. Salida feels that its ability to provide these services for less than the regional median cost should be viewed positively as evidence of efficiency and responsible expenditure of public funds. However, Salida recognizes the need to increase staffing to maintain its current level of service in the face of increasing demands. The Salida Fire Protection District has begun the process to increase the current assessment to meet these need.</p>

<b>Salida Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	<p>In addition to FAIRA and FASIS, Salida is changing medical benefits to obtain better cost for the same level of benefit. Further, they have proposed to contract out services to the Fire Authority for communications support, and has plans to submit a proposal for a training contract. These contracts will allow the agency to provide needed services to other agencies in the County, and to leverage resources to avoid costs.</p> <p>Salida is also a member of the Regional Fire Training Center JPA, and is a charter member of the Stanislaus Regional Fire Authority JPA.</p>
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	<p>Salida is currently determining the most cost-effective and promising approach to increasing District income to ensure that service levels are maintained. The Board expects to have this issue before voters before the end of 2007.</p>
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	<p>Salida has actively initiated and supported the creation and on-going operation of the Fire Authority JPA. Salida has proposed contracting with the JPA for communications support, and plans to also make a proposal for training support. Salida has actively investigated partnership possibilities for its future capital needs. For example, they have discussed the possibility of co-locating a future station/administrative building with the Sheriff's Office and perhaps other County Services.</p> <p>Salida has been involved in developing local cooperative agreements also. This activity has included the Salida Sanitary District, The Salida School District, the Sheriff's office and various other county agencies.</p>

<b>Salida Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
7. Government Structure Options	Please refer to #6, above. Additionally, Salida has provided administrative services to Stanislaus Consolidated at a time when that District needed support to obtain interim financing. Salida states that they are open to doing the same in the future should the need arise for other agencies, and have proposed providing communication management services to the JPA under contract.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	The District is moving forward in implementing the Master Plan components. Salida has automatic aid and mutual aid agreements in place with all neighboring agencies, and provide aid to neighbors approximately 4.5 times to every time they request aid from others.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Several years ago, the Board recognized that local accountability would be enhanced if the Board members were elected. Therefore they asked the voters to change the Board from appointed to elected, and the measure passed. Salida is working to implement an adopted Standard of Cover, and has already adopted response time goals. The Board and management are proactive in leading efficiency reforms with the JPA. In addition to a published Operations Manual for all full-time and volunteer employees, the District has a published Board of Directors Manual. The Salida Board of Directors believes that the Special Districts must have representation on LAFCO.

<b>Stanislaus Consolidated Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. Currently has seven stations, six staffed and one which is a volunteer station. There are plans for an additional station at Oakdale and Morrill in the future. Plans set for additional resource additions.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Is in the City of Modesto Sphere of Influence. Riverbank is primary area of growth.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>at</u> the regional median.

4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	None contemplated.
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	Passed a benefit assessment in 2005 that created various rates for different occupancies and land uses.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA. Has an expressed interest in partnering with neighboring cities.
7. Government Structure Options	Is a participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does have performance standards for response but not in an SOC format.

<b>Turlock (City)</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	City considering new Headquarters to replace 1950's vintage station. There is new fire station projected for the Northeast area of Turlock.
2. Growth and Population Projections	2004 MSR discusses that there are 4,890 acres in the SOI. There is growth plan in effect for the City of Turlock. There is a Westside Industrial Specific Plan that indicates growth in that area.
3. Financing Constraints	Is general funded. Per capita expenditures are <u>slightly below</u> the regional median. City has a capital facilities fee in place. Rate set at 475.00 per unit for fire
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	None anticipated.
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	None anticipated.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	Is not currently a member of the joint communication Center.
7. Government Structure Options	Is a participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does have a Strategic Plan.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does not have a published Standards of Cover.

<b>Turlock Rural Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is <u>not</u> currently collecting CEQA fees. Headquarters remodeled in 1998. No additional stations or vehicles planned.
2. Growth and Population Projections	Is losing area through annexations. Limited growth in the area. Is in the City of Turlock Sphere of Influence.
3. Financing Constraints	Per Capita expenditures are <u>below</u> the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Currently relies on volunteer labor force. Has a waiting list of volunteer candidates. Has developed a sleep-in program to improve response capacity of department .

<b>Turlock Rural Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	None contemplated.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA. Conducts training with neighboring department to keep up schedules.
7. Government Structure Options	Is a participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Having difficulty with training to meet state mandates.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does not have an adopted Standard of Cover.

<b>Westport Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is <u>not</u> currently collecting CEQA fees. District is considering remodel of Headquarters in the future. Has need of replacing one of the Type I engine companies in the near future. Does not have a vehicle amortization plan in effect.
2. Growth and Population Projections	In the City of Modesto Sphere of Influence. No known growth in the District. Annexations are very likely in the near future.
3. Financing Constraints	Per Capita expenditures are <u>below</u> the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Currently relies on volunteer labor force. Trains with Ceres and Salida when they can.
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	District pursued a special tax assessment in 1982 that was approved.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA.
7. Government Structure Options	Is a participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Is experiencing difficulty in recruiting and training of volunteers.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does not have a response time standard.

<b>West Stanislaus Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. Will need additional stations in the future Over 1.3 of the District is out of response range from the fire stations. Department anticipates the need for a vehicle maintenance facility and a training area.

<b>West Stanislaus Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
2. Growth and Population Projections	Diablo Grande, at the west end of area is growing rapidly and will force workload demands on the department. Population by 2025 will be estimated at 36,900 using StanCog figures.
3. Financing Constraints	Per capita expenditures are <u>at</u> the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	As a result of being a cooperative effort of the cities of Patterson, Newman and the District many cost avoidance advantages have been enjoyed. Have needed to retain volunteer firefighters to avoid staffing cost increases. Has needed to work closely with CDF station in the area.
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	There is also a fire suppression assessment in place in Diablo Grande. Use of Mellos-Roos funds to capitalize growth anticipated.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	Is already sharing facilities.
7. Government Structure Options	Already consists of two cities and district area. Is a participant in the JPA.
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does not have published Standards of Cover.

<b>Woodland Avenue Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies	Is currently collecting CEQA fees. Has no plans for new stations. Has one station that is not currently up to contemporary standards for a fire facility and needs to be replaced.
2. Growth and Population Projections	In the City of Modesto Sphere of Influence. What growth does occur goes into City of Modesto.
3. Financing Constraints	Per Capita expenditures are <u>below</u> the regional median.
4. Cost Avoidance Opportunities	Currently relies on volunteer labor force.
5. Opportunities for rate re-structuring	None contemplated.
6. Opportunities for shared facilities	This District could benefit from shared support service provided by the JPA. District has stated interest in working closer together with Modesto in areas that are surrounded by the city already (islands).
7. Government Structure Options	Is a participant in the JPA.

<b>Woodland Avenue Fire Protection District</b>	<b>Determination</b>
8. Evaluation of Management Efficiencies	Does not have a Master Plan.
9. Local Accountability and governance	Does not have a Standards of Cover.

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Figure 37: Chart of Recommendations

<b>Recommendations Short Term</b>	<b>Priority A/B/C/D</b>	<b>Time Frame for Implementation</b>	<b>Anticipated Benefits</b>	<b>Responsible Position</b>
<u>Recommendation</u> Have each agency officially adopt levels of service for— rural, suburban, and urban areas	A	As quickly as possible	Clarification of service level	Each fire agency
<u>Recommendation</u> Improve the ability to communicate over time and distance	B	Within 12 months	Improve upon level of awareness	Fire Chiefs Association
<u>Recommendation</u> Improve upon volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition	B	Within 12 months	Improve upon conditions	County government & Fire Chiefs Association
<u>Recommendation</u> Provide more guidance for managing volunteer fire departments, to the leadership of these organizations	A	Within 12 months	Improve upon conditions	County government
<u>Recommendation</u> Support the development of a universal countywide development fee to create a future infrastructure for fire stations and equipment	A	In accordance with the procedures	Improved service level	All parties
<u>Recommendation</u> Harden stations to allow them to better function in disaster scenarios by installing emergency generators where none now exist	C	Within 24 months	Improved ability to perform in disasters	County Government
<u>Recommendation</u> Improve public awareness of the capabilities of the fire services	C	Over the next two years	Improved public support	Fire Chiefs Association

<b>Recommendations Long-Term</b>	<b>Priority A/B/C/D</b>	<b>Time Frame for Implementation</b>	<b>Anticipated Benefits</b>	<b>Responsible Position</b>
<u>Recommendation</u> Update Spheres of Influence based on existing policy and procedure, with consideration of the response polygon provided by agencies	A	Over next two years	Improved efficiency	LAFCO
<u>Recommendation</u> Re-align borders and consider district consolidations of some entities based upon level of service and response time criterion	A	Over next two years	Improved efficiency	Individual agencies
<u>Recommendation</u> Create a sub-committee of the JPA to create a viable cost sharing agreement for consideration during annexation processes	A	Over the next year	Improved relationships and increased cooperation	JPA Board of Directors
<u>Recommendation</u> Continue to support the roles of the Joint Powers Agreement among all fire agencies; county, cities, and districts to examine common issues and implement planning efforts for future options to be exercised.	A	Immediately	Economies of Scale and better utilization of resources	JPA Board of Directors
<u>Recommendation</u> Plan for major modifications to dispatching system. Consider allowing the JPA to operate a fire based system	A	Over next 2 years	Retention of county-wide communications system	JPA Board of Directors
<u>Recommendation</u> Develop a countywide fire and emergency services master plan	A	Over the next five years	Improved clarity of purpose	County Fire Chiefs Association

## Summary

Areas that are currently not heavily urbanized are experiencing a phenomenon that is somewhat counterproductive. When conducting meetings regarding this particular study, an individual used a quote that exemplifies the phenomenon. It was in reference to the fact that someone had told him that they were moving into the county because, "This area has now been discovered." In a sense, that means that in an area of very low density of population usually there is a low cost to housing, and it is somewhat attractive to individuals who are now attempting to transfer their lifelong equity into their final residence. This translates into a problem for the fire service, because those individuals who transfer their equity also bring with them a totally unrealistic expectation of the infrastructure that they have grown accustomed to. Equity immigrants are interested in moving into an area that has the lowest potential cost to them for a capital investment; and, simultaneously, has the lowest ongoing cost with regard to taxation and/or infrastructure support.

For example, an individual who had brought property back in the 60s or 70s, and perhaps as late as the 1980s in a more urbanized part of California, saw significant increases in the value of their real estate. Their primary residence appreciated in value so high that once they were able to reach retirement age and dispose of that property to avoid their capital gains tax, most chose to do so when the tax could be deferred and sought out lower priced housing in other areas. However, they also became very accustomed to having police, fire, water, roads, garbage, and utility coverage that was consistent with urbanized communities. Once they had purchased a new home in an area that has *lower housing costs*, they probably have a residence that is significantly less in price, and in some cases larger than what they left. But, are they willing to pay for their services to protect it from fire?

### **What will Stanislaus Fire Services look like in Five Years – Ten Years in the Future?**

In this report, ESCi identified how things have evolved up to this point. This section outlined steps that could or should be taken to improve current conditions. The next steps are the purview of leaders of the various organizations. LAFCO cannot require compliance with this report. Opposition to its various recommendations can and will delay any efforts to change the system.

Some recommendations require total cooperation of all entities. Others can be implemented with or without overall cooperation. As stated earlier, there are only choices and consequences. Cities, for example may not have any interest in a joining a consolidation effort but may have interest in how to improve upon recruiting and retention of volunteers. The County may be interested in the formation of a JPA but not be very interested in forming a county agency.

In the final analysis, the more things that the fire service can agree upon from this study, the more they can accomplish to achieve a positive outcome in the future. No one can predict what the end result will be but most assuredly the higher the level of cooperation, coordination, and consensus among the stakeholders, the stronger the solution will become.