

County Service Area Number 4

Municipal Service Review



**California Department of
Forestry and Fire Protection**

May 2009

Prepared by:



HUMBOLDT
Local Agency Formation Commission

For Updating the Sphere of Influence Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Agency Profile	4
Governance Structure and Administration	4
Population and Land Use	5
Services Provided	6
Other Service Providers	6
Determinations	7
References	8

LIST of TABLES and FIGURES

Figure 1: County Service Area No. 4 Boundary	3
Table 1: Agency Profile	4

INTRODUCTION

This Municipal Service Review (MSR) was prepared as part of a mandated review of the Spheres of Influence (SOI) of all government entities in the County by the Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). This report focuses on County Service Area Number 4 (CSA No. 4). The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate local governmental services in order to improve overall understanding of local service conditions and to enhance these conditions through comprehensive review and analysis. This MSR presents for the Commission's consideration a discussion, analysis, and recommendations regarding services provided by CSA # 4. The current SOI for the CSA # 4 was updated in 1986; this MSR serves to update the relevant data on services provided within the district's SOI. At this time, the SOI will not be amended.

Review Methods

This MSR was prepared by LAFCo staff during February / March of 2009. The CSA # 4 staff completed an agency profile questionnaire, which provided LAFCo with the current status of district operations. The Infrastructure and Services Report that was compiled as part of the Humboldt County General Plan was also referenced for regional population and housing projections, as well as detailed descriptions of existing infrastructure. The draft report was sent to the district for review and clarification. All information gathered for this report is filed by Humboldt LAFCo for future reference.

Statutory Authority

The fundamental role of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is to implement the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act (Act) consistent with local conditions and circumstances. The Act guides LAFCo's decisions. The major goals of LAFCo as established by the Act are to:

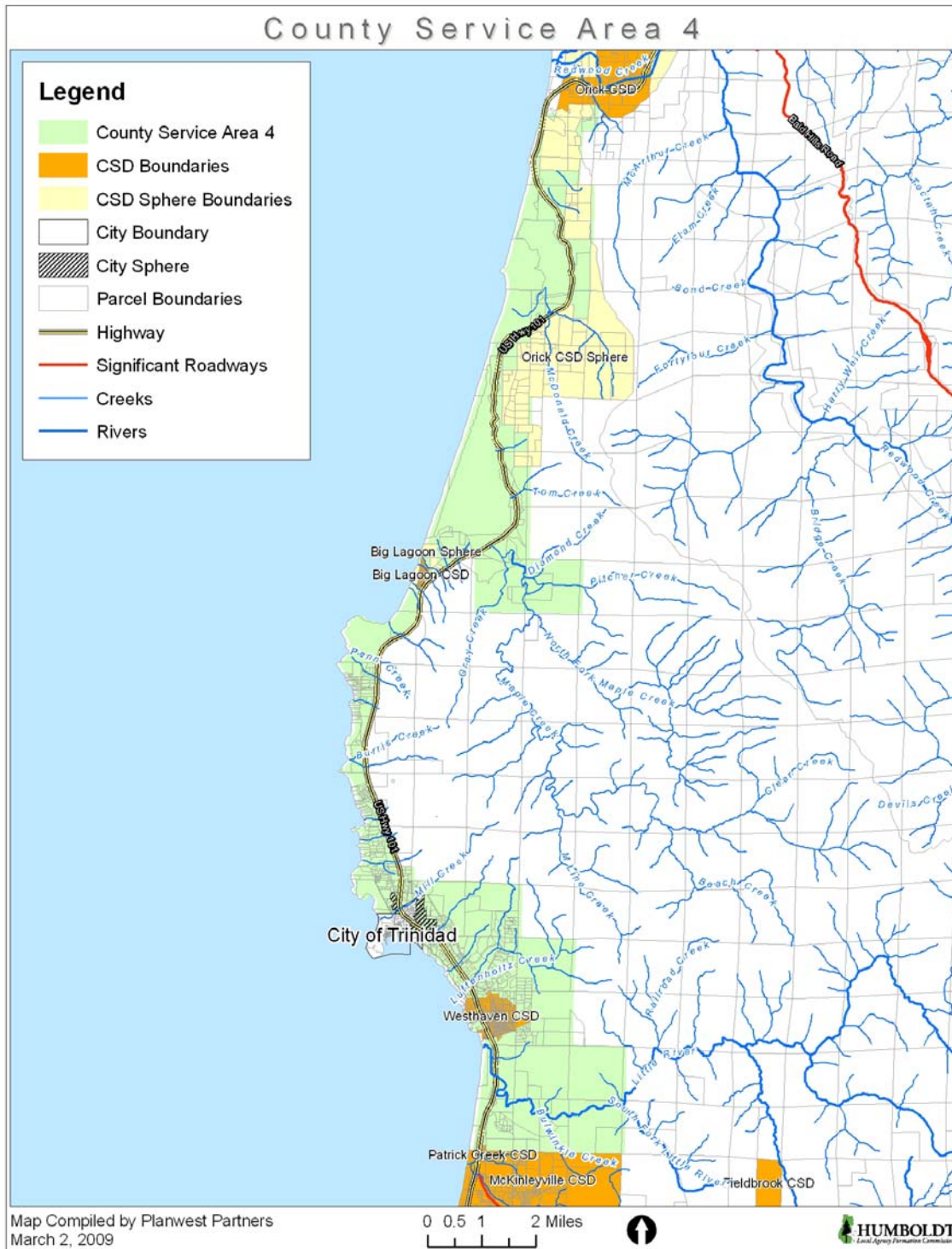
- Encourage orderly growth and development;
- Promote orderly development;
- Discourage urban sprawl;
- Preserve open-space and prime agricultural lands by guiding minimizing resource loss;
- Exercise its authority to ensure that affected populations receive efficient services;
- Promote logical formation and boundary modifications that direct the burdens and benefits of additional growth to those local agencies that are best suited to provide services;
- Make studies and obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies to provide for present and future needs;
- Establish priorities by assessing and balancing community service needs with financial resources available to secure and provide community services and to encourage government structures that reflect local circumstances, conditions and financial resources;
- Determine whether new or existing agencies can feasibly provide needed services in a more efficient or accountable manner and, where deemed necessary,

As set forth in §56425(g) of the Act, on or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, Humboldt LAFCo shall review and update each Sphere of Influence (SOI). An MSR shall be conducted prior to, as a part of, or in conjunction with, the action to adopt, amend, or revise an SOI pursuant to the Act. Together, the SOI and MSR documents analyze the District's ability to serve existing and future residents.

In accordance with §56430 of the Act, in preparation for adopting, amending, or revising an SOI, Humboldt LAFCo shall comprehensively review all services and public service providers within the designated geographic area. The Commission shall prepare a written statement of determinations on six subject areas as pursuant to state law; these determinations may be utilized in future decision-making about the provision of services, appropriate boundaries, changes of organizations, and need to revise or update SOIs. LAFCO is required to make written determinations on the following:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area;
2. Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
3. Financing ability of agencies to provide services;
4. Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities;
5. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies;
6. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

Figure 1: CSA # 4 - Boundary



AGENCY PROFILE

County Service Area No. 4 (CSA 4) is located along the north Pacific Coast approximately 300 miles north of San Francisco. The district covers 15,058 acres extending from Clam Beach in the south to Freshwater Lagoon in the north. The City of Trinidad and the Trinidad Rancheria are excluded from the CSA 4 boundary and Sphere of Influence (SOI) and are served by their own City Fire Department. The map on page 3 shows the district's boundary.

Table 1: Agency Profile

Agency Name	Date of Formation	Enabling Legislation
County Service Area # 4	April 8, 1986	State of California Government Code §50078
Contact Person	Contact Title	Email/Website
Steven Hartman	Battalion Chief	steve.hartman@fire.ca.gov v
Mailing Address	Physical Address	Phone/Fax
CAL FIRE Humboldt-Del Norte Unit 923 Patrick's Point Drive Trinidad, CA 95570	CAL FIRE Humboldt-Del Norte Unit 923 Patrick's Point Drive Trinidad, CA 95570	Phone: 677-3638

Formation

CSA 4 was formed on April 8, 1986 by Ordinance of the County Board of Supervisors, pursuant to §50078 of the California Government Code. The district was formed for the purpose of providing fire protection and prevention services.

Governance Structure and Administration

The CSA 4 is a dependent special district governed by the County Board of Supervisors who serves as its Board of Directors. CSAs can be authorized to provide a wide range of municipal services; however, CSA 4 provides only fire protection.

GROWTH AND POPULATION

County Population and Growth

According to the State of California Department of Finance, Humboldt County has an estimated 2008 population of 132,821. The County grew at an overall rate of 0.6 percent during 2007ⁱ. Assuming this growth continues, the population of Humboldt County will reach approximately 147,000 by the year 2025.

District Population and Housing Projections

The CSA 4 is located in a rural area of Humboldt County that does not have specific census data. Development within the district's boundary is sparse, as is the population density. The population growth rate for unincorporated areas of Humboldt County is 0.5%ⁱⁱ.

SERVICES PROVIDED

CSA 4 provides fire protection services, through the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) Trinidad station, to the coastal communities of Big Lagoon, Trinidad, Westhaven, and Cranell. Cal Fire performs this service through a reimbursement contract with Humboldt County. Larger facilities within CSA 4 include Patricks Point State Park and other coastal recreation areas, U.S. 101, and the communities of Cranell, Big Lagoon, and portions of Westhaven.

The District has 6 paid personnel, and no volunteers. In Westhaven, the Volunteer Fire Department provides service and has requested back-up support from CSA 4. In 2006, CSA 4 recorded a total of 252 callsⁱⁱⁱ. The district's average call response time is 3-5 minutes. Based on an Insurance Services Office (ISO) audit, the CSA 4 has a Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating of 8. The following two paragraphs explain the relevance of this rating.

ISO Rating. The ISO establishes fire insurance ratings for communities throughout the United States. One of ISO's more well known services is to evaluate the fire suppression delivery systems of fire departments and districts. The result of those reviews is an individual PPC rating number assigned to the community that the respective fire department protects. The ratings are presented in a rating class structure that ranges from 1 to 10. Class 1 is the highest rating, representing excellent fire protection and Class 10 is the lowest, meaning the community's fire department did not meet the minimum requirements of the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule and is not recognized by ISO. The PPC is commonly used by insurance providers to establish home and business fire insurance rates.

The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule is used by ISO to rate the response capabilities within a community. Fifty percent of the grade is based on the fire department (equipment, staffing, training, and geographic distribution of fire companies), 40 percent is based on the water supply (condition and maintenance of hydrants, and a careful evaluation of the amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires), and ten percent is based on fire alarm and communications systems (telephone systems, telephone lines, staffing, and dispatching system).

Infrastructure

The CSA 4 utilizes one Cal Fire Station in Trinidad, which is staffed with a minimum of one company officer and one firefighter 24 hours per day for serving CSA 4. Cal Fire also provides the CSA 4 with a 24 hour Emergency Command Center dispatcher.

The district utilizes one type 3, Model 14 Cal Fire Engine that is staffed year-round to provide service to CSA 4. If this engine is detailed to a fire out of the area another engine is moved to serve the district, if available. The district also utilizes one half ton utility pickup truck.

Cal Fire owns and operates other basic fire protection and rescue equipment including radios, Self Contained Breathing Apparatuses (SCBA), High Pressure Air Bags, protective clothing, and numerous other tools and firefighting equipment. All riding positions on Fire Apparatus are equipped with radios and SBCAs and all firefighters are equipped with protective clothing.

Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

The CSA 4 reports that there are no infrastructure needs or deficiencies at this time.

Planned Upgrades

The CSA 4 reports that there are no planned upgrades at this time.

Other Service Providers

Fire protection services within the CSA 4 are also provided by the Westhaven Volunteer Fire Department, the Trinidad Volunteer Fire Department, and the Arcata Fire Protection District. Water service is provided from water supplies on fire fighting vehicles, water supplies at individual residences, some open water sources, and the community water system at Big Lagoon. Law enforcement and general governmental services are provided by the County.

BUDGET

Cal Fire provides fire protection services to the CSA 4 under a reimbursement contract with Humboldt County. The current two year contract allows for a maximum of \$367,250 in reimbursement costs for services rendered. The district's primary sources of revenue include property assessments and county general funds. The district currently has no outstanding debt.

MSR DETERMINATIONS

Growth and population projections for the affected area

The CSA 4 is located in a rural area of Humboldt County that is not projected to receive much growth. Adjacent service districts and the City of Trinidad are not projected to expand.

Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies

There are minimal public facilities and services in this area and no significant service expansion is planned.

Financing ability of agencies to provide services

This fire service will continue to be financed by assessments and the county contracting with Cal Fire.

Status of and, opportunities for, shared facilities

This is an example of a shared facility, where the Cal Fire Station also serves as the station for CSA 4.

Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies

The CSA 4 is governed by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors holds regular public meetings in accordance with the Brown Act.

Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy

There are no further matters to report regarding the CSA 4.

SOI STATUS

It is concluded that the current CSA 4 SOI is sufficient. Based on the results of this MSR, no amendments to the CSA 4 SOI are necessary at this time.

REFERENCES

ⁱ State of California, Department of Finance, E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percent Change — January 1, 2007 and 2008. Sacramento, California, May 2008.

ⁱⁱ *ibid*

ⁱⁱⁱ Humboldt County General Plan Update: Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report. July 2008. http://co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/gp/PrelimHearingDraft/Group7c/Technical%20Report/Comm_Inf_Serv_Tech_Report.pdf.