

SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

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Staff Report

Meeting Date: May 3, 2017

Agenda No. 5.1

Agenda Item Title: Study Session on Fire and Emergency Services in Sonoma County

Proposal:

Environmental Determination: Not a project under CEQA

Staff Contact: Mark Bramfitt

ANALYSIS

Background

Over the past several years, the Fire and Emergency Services agencies in the County have been studying opportunities to address operational and financial challenges, identifying agency consolidations as a strategy for maintaining and potentially improving service levels.

As these agencies discuss moving to regional governance model, LAFCO has been approached by Fire Protection Districts seeking sphere of influence amendments, annexations, consolidations, and approval for fire service contracts between agencies.

Presentation

Staff has prepared a presentation to deliver to the Commission that attempts to provide a “Fire and Emergency Services 101”, covering the following topics:

- What services are provided by fire and emergency service agencies? (The Basics)
- What types of agencies do we have, and what defines each category?
- Overarching challenges: funding and staffing are critical factors driving change.
- How are challenges being addressed?
- Case Studies:
 - Districts with systemic funding shortfalls
 - Districts and VFCs facing staffing “collapse”
 - Successful reorganizations and contracts
 - What is coming to LAFCO for consideration?
 - A curveball: Coastal Valleys EMS

Staff is also seeking the Commission’s review of staff guidance to the Fire and Emergency Services community regarding seeking adjudication of proposals at LAFCO.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission entertain a presentation regarding the status of Fire and Emergency Service provision in Sonoma County. Staff further recommends that the Commission take public testimony on the topic, with the recognition that the Commission will not be issuing policy directives, or adjudicating filed or pending proposals. The Commission may direct staff to develop policies or otherwise provide further information as needed