

PLUMAS LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

HEARING DRAFT

EASTERN PLUMAS REGIONAL FIRE PROTECTION AGENCIES

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE UPDATE

December 12, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	BECKWOURTH FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT	13
3	EASTERN PLUMAS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT	15
4	GOLD MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT	21
5	SIERRA VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT	26

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 LAFCO's Responsibilities

This Sphere of Influence (SOI) Study has been prepared for the Plumas Local Agency Formation Commission (Plumas LAFCO). Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCO's) are quasi-legislative local agencies created in 1963 to assist the State in encouraging the orderly development and formation of local agencies. This SOI Study consists of a review of the fire protection districts in eastern Plumas County. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000 et seq.) is the statutory authority for the preparation of an MSR and periodic updates of the Sphere of Influence of each local agency.

A Sphere of Influence is a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the affected Local Agency Formation Commission (Government Code §56076). Government Code §56425(f) requires that each Sphere of Influence be updated not less than every five years as necessary, and §56430 provides that a Municipal Service Review shall be conducted in advance of the Sphere of Influence update.

1.2 Sphere of Influence Requirements

In determining the Sphere of Influence for each local agency, LAFCO must consider and prepare a written statement of determinations with respect to each of the following:

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands;
2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area;
3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides, or is authorized to provide;
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; and
5. Present and probable need for public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing Sphere of Influence

1.3 LAFCO Policies and Procedures Related to Spheres of Influence

Plumas LAFCO has adopted policies and procedures related to spheres of influence that are included as part of an overall Plumas LAFCO policy, standards and procedures document adopted on June 16, 2010.

With the exception of Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District (EPRFPD), the agencies included in this Sphere of Influence Update are in the midst of considering reorganization as members of the Local Emergency Services Study Group (LESSG). The proposed reorganization is to consist of formation of a new regional fire protection district to replace the fire protection and emergency medical services presently offered by the City of Portola, Beckwourth Fire Protection District, Gold Mountain Community Services District, and Sierra Valley Fire Protection District. The four agencies have all voted to support the completed feasibility study and to move forward with compiling an application to LAFCO. A Municipal Service Review was adopted on October

17, 2022 covering the member agencies, in addition to EPRFPD to present a complete picture of fire services provided in the region. The subsequent step is to update each agency's Sphere of Influence in anticipation of the application.

A final proposed Sphere map has been prepared for each of the agencies.

1.4 Description of Public Participation Process

Plumas LAFCO is authorized by the California Legislature and delegated powers as stated in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (the Act). LAFCO proceedings are subject to the provisions California's open meeting law, the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Sections 54950 et seq.)

The Brown Act requires advance posting of meeting agendas and contains various other provisions designed to ensure that the public has adequate access to information regarding the proceedings of public boards and commissions. Plumas LAFCO complies with the requirements of the Brown Act.

1.5 Possible Approaches to the Sphere of Influence

LAFCO may recommend government reorganizations to particular agencies in the county, using the SOIs as the basis for those recommendations. Based on review of the guidelines of Plumas LAFCO as well as other LAFCOs in the State, various conceptual approaches have been identified from which to choose in designating an SOI. These eight approaches are explained below:

1) **Coterminous Sphere:**

A Coterminous Sphere means that the Sphere of Influence for a city or special district that is the same as its existing boundaries of the city or district.

2) **Annexable Sphere:**

A sphere larger than the agency's boundaries identifies areas the agency is expected to annex. The annexable area is outside the district boundaries and inside the sphere of influence.

3) **Detachable Sphere:**

A sphere that is smaller than the agency's boundaries identifies areas the agency is expected to detach. The detachable area is the area within the agency bounds but not within its sphere of influence.

4) **Zero Sphere:**

A zero sphere indicates the affected agency's public service functions should be reassigned to another agency and the agency should be dissolved or combined with one or more other agencies.

5) **Consolidated Sphere:**

A consolidated sphere includes two or more local agencies and indicates the agencies should be consolidated into one agency.

6) Limited-Service Sphere:

A limited-service sphere is the territory included within the SOI of a multi-service provider agency that is also within the boundary of a limited purpose district which provides the same service (e.g., fire protection), but not all needed services. Territory designated as a limited service SOI may be considered for annexation to the limited purpose agency without detachment from the multi-service provider.

This type of SOI is generally adopted when the following conditions exist:

- a) The limited service provider is providing adequate, cost effective and efficient services
- b) The multi-service agency is the most logical provider of the other services
- c) There is no feasible or logical SOI alternative
- d) Inclusion of the territory is in the best interests of local government organization and structure in the area

Government Code §56001 specifically recognizes that in rural areas it may be appropriate to establish limited purpose agencies to serve an area rather than a single service provider, if multiple limited purpose agencies are better able to provide efficient services to an area rather than one service district.

Moreover, Government Code Section §56425(i), governing sphere determinations, also authorizes a sphere for less than all of the services provided by a district by requiring a district affected by a sphere action to “establish the nature, location, and extent of any functions of classes of services provided by existing districts” recognizing that more than one district may serve an area and that a given district may provide less than its full range of services in an area.

7) Provisional Sphere:

LAFCO may, at its discretion, adopt a provisional SOI that itemizes issues that must be addressed by the agency prior to the Commission’s review of the provisional SOI after a defined time frame from update—typically one year. This time frame allows the district an opportunity to address issues identified in the MSR determinations prior to LAFCO taking further steps to reorganize the agency if necessary.

8) Sphere Planning Area:

LAFCO may choose to designate a sphere planning area to signal that it anticipates expanding an agency’s SOI in the future to include territory not yet within its official SOI. There are no anticipated sphere planning areas within Plumas County at this time.

1.6 SOI Update Process

LAFCO is required to establish SOIs for all local agencies and enact policies to promote the logical and orderly development of areas within the SOIs. Furthermore, LAFCO must update those SOIs

every five years, as necessary. In updating the SOI, LAFCO is required to conduct a Municipal Service Review (MSR) and adopt related determinations, which was adopted on October 17, 2022.

This report identifies SOI determinations and recommends SOI updates for the fire protection districts within eastern Plumas County.

LAFCO must notify affected agencies 21 days before holding a public hearing to consider the SOI and may not update the SOI until that hearing is closed. The LAFCO Executive Officer must issue a report including recommendations on the SOI amendment and update under consideration at least five days before the public hearing.

1.7 SOI Amendments and CEQA

LAFCO has the discretion to limit SOI updates to those that it may process without unnecessarily delaying the SOI update process or without requiring its funding agencies to bear the costs of environmental studies associated with SOI expansions. Any local agency or individual may file a request for an SOI amendment. The request must state the nature of and reasons for the proposed amendment, and provide a map depicting the proposal.

LAFCO may require the requester to pay a fee to cover LAFCO costs, including the costs of appropriate environmental review under CEQA. LAFCO may elect to serve as lead agency for such a review, may designate the proposing agency as lead agency, or both the local agency and LAFCO may serve as co-lead agencies for purposes of an SOI amendment.

Local agencies are encouraged to consult with LAFCO staff early in the process regarding the most appropriate approach for the particular SOI amendment under consideration.

Certain types of SOI amendments are likely exempt from CEQA review. Examples are SOI expansions that include territory already within the bounds or service area of an agency, SOI reductions, zero SOIs and coterminous SOI's. SOI expansions for limited purpose agencies that provide services (e.g., fire protection, levee protection, cemetery, and resource conservation) needed by both rural and urban areas are typically not considered growth-inducing and are likely exempt from CEQA. Similarly, SOI expansions for districts serving rural areas (e.g., irrigation water) are typically not considered growth inducing.

Remy et al. write:

“In *City of Agoura Hills v. Local Agency Formation Commission* (2d Dist.1988) 198 Cal.App.3d480, 493-496 [243 Cal.Rptr.740] (*City of Agoura Hills*), the court held that a LAFCO's decision to approve a city's sphere of influence that in most respects was coterminous with the city's existing municipal boundaries was not a “project” because such action did not entail any potential effects on the physical environment.”¹

Since there will be no environmental impacts from the adoption of the updated Sphere no environmental document is required.

¹ Remy, Michael H., Tina A. Thomas, James G. Moose, Whitman F. Manley, *Guide to CEQA*, Solano Press Books, Point Arena, CA, February 2007, page 111.

1.8 Spheres of Influence for Fire Protection Agencies in Eastern Plumas County

Information contained in this Sphere of Influence is only current as of the date of adoption. LAFCO Policy 3-C calls for an updated Municipal Service Review at the time a proposal is made and essentially requires an updated Municipal Services Review anytime a change of organization is proposed provided significant changes in the Municipal Service Review baseline occur. There have been no changes in the MSR baseline since the adoption of the Municipal Service Review in October 2022.

The existing SOI for each agency covered in this SOI update is shown in the figure below. These SOIs were last comprehensively updated in October 2012.

Agency	Boundary Area (square miles)	SOI Area (square miles)	SOI Description
Beckwourth Fire Protection District (BFPD)	14	190	Annexable
Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District (EPRFPD)	8	22.5	Annexable
Gold Mountain Community Services District (GMCSD)	2	2	Coterminous
Sierra Valley Fire Protection District (SVVFPD)	220	191	Detachable

1.9 History of LAFCO Review of Fire Districts

LAFCO's were created in 1965 to discourage urban sprawl and to encourage orderly and efficient urban development patterns. To accomplish those objectives, LAFCOs were given two basic powers: 1) to establish spheres of influence of each local governmental agency within its county and 2) to approve or disapprove proposals for annexation of territory. In 1971 the Legislature modified certain statutory language to make the adoption of spheres of influence mandatory, but no deadline was set. In 1977 an opinion of the Attorney General concluded that, despite the absence of an explicit deadline, a LAFCO must adopt spheres within a reasonable time. The case *Resource Defense Fund v. Local Agency Formation commission of Santa Cruz County* (1983) 138 Cal.App.3d 987,989,994,188 Cal.Rptr.499.) Says before a Local Agency Formation Commission can approve an annexation, a sphere of Influence must first be determined. During the 1980's most LAFCO's completed Spheres of Influence for all agencies within their jurisdiction, including Plumas LAFCO.

In 2001, with the passage of AB 2838 LAFCO's were required to periodically update Spheres of Influence. However, in order to adopt a Sphere of Influence for an agency, LAFCO was required to do a comprehensive review of municipal services and prepare a Municipal Service Review (MSR).

The statute was later amended to clarify the content of a MSR and to clearly state a deadline to prepare Spheres of Influence. The current statute states: "On or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, the commission shall, as necessary, review and update each Sphere of Influence".

Plumas LAFCo approved Resolution 2022-0006 on October 17, 2022 adopting a Municipal Service review for the fire service providers in eastern Plumas County included in this Sphere of Influence Update.

Previous Municipal Service Reviews and Sphere of Influence Updates prepared by Plumas LAFCO regarding the subject agencies were conducted as follows:

- a. An individual Municipal Service Review for the Beckwourth Fire Protection District was adopted on November 8, 2010 (Resolution 2010-0012), a regional Municipal Service Review as adopted on October 3, 2011 (Resolution 2011-0008), and most recently a regional fire MSR was adopted on October 17, 2022 (Resolution 2022-0006). The Sphere of Influence for BFPD was adopted on November 8, 2010 (Resolution 2010-0013) and updated on October 15, 2012 (Resolution 2012-0005).
- b. A MSR was originally adopted for the Eastern Plumas Rural Protection District on October 3, 2011 (Resolution 2011-0008) by Plumas LAFCO and most recently a regional fire MSR was adopted on October 17, 2022 (Resolution 2022-0006). LAFCO adopted a Sphere of Influence for this district on February 12, 2007 (Resolution 2007-0001) and updated the SOI on October 15, 2012 (Resolution 2012-0005).
- c. Gold Mountain CSD's MSR was first adopted on October 3, 2011 (Resolution 2011-0008) and most recently a regional fire MSR was adopted on October 17, 2022 (Resolution 2022-0006). GMCSD's SOI was updated in 2006 (Resolution 2006-0007), expanding to include wildland territory south of the boundaries, small suburban pieces of land to the north and east, and industrial property to the west. Most recently, on April 9, 2018 (Resolution 2018-0001), the District's SOI was updated to be coterminous with its boundaries.
- d. The inaugural MSR was adopted for the Sierra Valley Fire Protection District on October 3, 2011 (Resolution 2011-0008) by Plumas LAFCO most recently a regional fire MSR was adopted on October 17, 2022 (Resolution 2022-0006). The Sphere of Influence for SVVFPD was adopted in 1982 and reduced to a significantly smaller area in 1994. The SOI was updated on October 15, 2012 (Resolution 2012-0005) when the Maddelena Road Area and an area to the north were excluded.

1.10 Eastern Plumas Regional Fire Reorganization

All fire protection and EMS providers in the region have identified significant challenges to providing adequate service levels, thus the impetus to analyzing alternate services structures at a regional level. Challenges to service include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Irregular boundaries,
- Serving outside of boundaries without revenue,
- Lack of sufficient funding with increased costs,
- Meeting expanding standards and requirements,
- Disjointed services with lack of consistency,
- Duplication of services (i.e., administration),
- Divided voices limiting influence,
- Lack of regional planning,

- Reliance almost entirely on volunteers with declining volunteerism, and
- Larger and more frequent wildfires.

Each of these challenges is described in further detail in the *Eastern Plumas Regional Fire Municipal Service Review*.

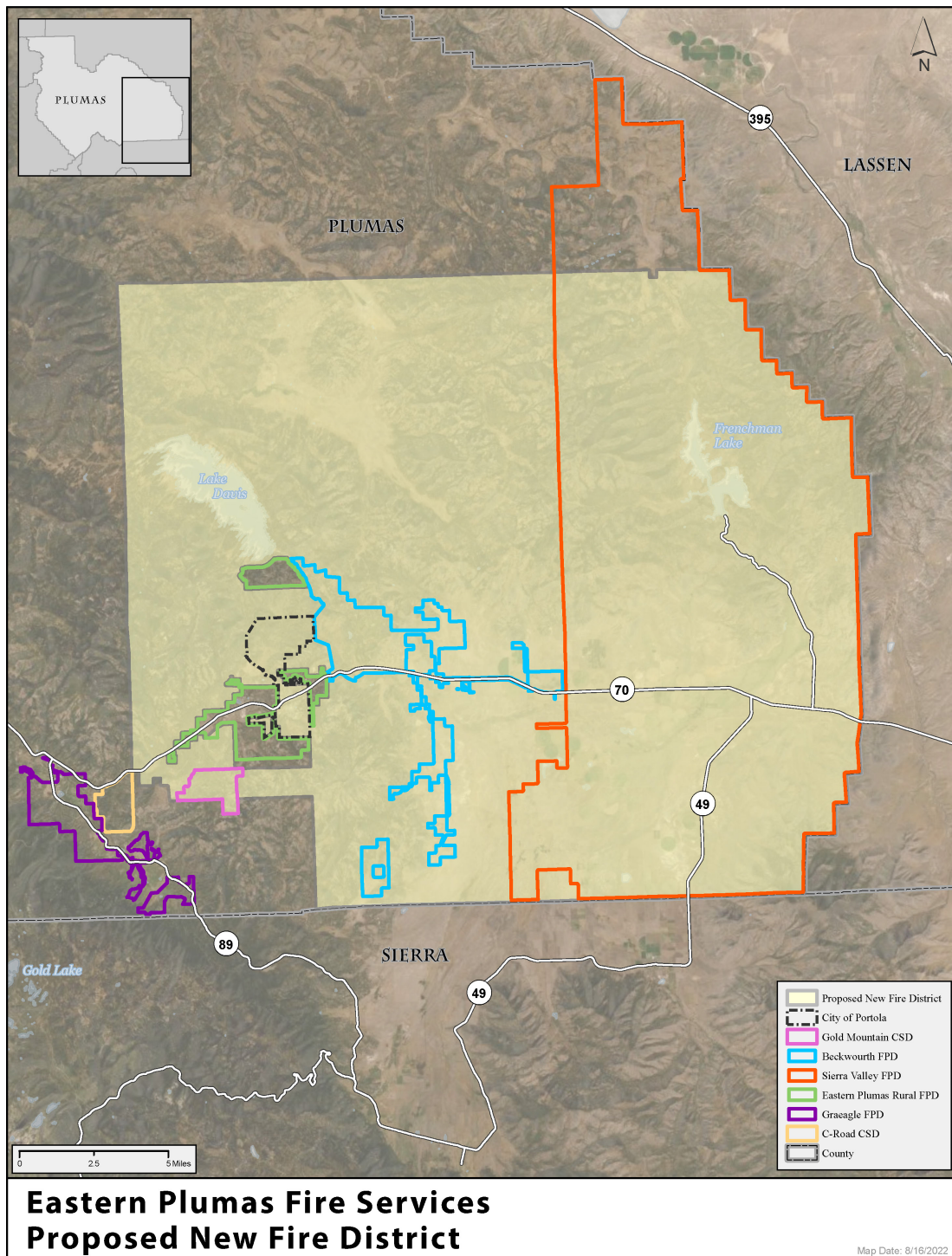
Over the course of many discussions with regional fire providers, the challenges above were discussed and provided an impetus to discussions of reorganization to best address these issues and better serve the residents of eastern Plumas.

In response to the options presented, the affected agencies, consisting of the City of Portola, Beckwourth FPD, Eastern Plumas Rural FPD, Gold Mountain CSD, and Sierra Valley FPD designed a memorandum of understanding to form the Local Emergency Services Study Group (LESSG). The LESSG is a framework for cooperative and collaborative action to explore ways to strengthen and improve the provision of fire and emergency services throughout the Five Agencies' service areas. In October of 2020, following ten months of meetings with numerous stakeholders, the decision of the Five Agencies was unanimous to create a new single fire district that will provide fire and emergency medical response services, thus dissolving the existing Districts or relinquishing their fire and EMS authority, as the most effective, efficient, and economical choice available. As of October 2021, EPRFPD's Board chose to remove the District from participation in the feasibility study. The feasibility study was conducted by independent contractors and ultimately determined that formation of a new fire district is a practical and affordable solution to many of the challenges faced by fire providers in the region. Each of the four member agency's governing bodies accepted the feasibility study findings and voted to continue with reorganization efforts and proceed with an application to LAFCO.

The boundaries of the new fire protection district are proposed to encompass a majority of the territory of the City of Portola, Beckwourth Fire Protection District, Gold Mountain Community Services District, and Sierra Valley Fire Protection District and areas between the agencies in an effort to create logical boundaries. The northern tip of SVVFPD's existing boundaries is excluded from the proposed district boundaries due to challenges in accessing the remote territory. The territory within Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District's boundaries is excluded including territory to the immediate south of EPRFPD to maintain whole parcels for mapping and service clarity. The proposed boundaries of the new fire protection district are shown in Figure 1-1.

The proposed Sphere of Influence for each agency in this review is informed by the proposed formation of the new fire protection district. LAFCO is charged with ensuring efficient services, which precludes duplication of services by cities and districts. To that end, the SOI's proposed in this report are in anticipation of either dissolution or divestiture of services by the member agencies.

Figure 1-1: Proposed New Fire District Boundaries



1.11 Proposed Sphere of Influence Updates

Based on the anticipated application for reorganization the following Sphere of Influence updates are recommended for the subject agencies:

Beckwourth Fire Protection District

A Zero SOI is recommended for Beckwourth FPD in anticipation of formation of a new regional fire protection district and the naming of the new district as the successor agency of fire and emergency medical services in within BFPD's existing boundaries and in the region. A Zero SOI indicates that LAFCO anticipates reorganization will ultimately result in the dissolution of BFPD.

Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District

Given the challenges faced by EPRFPD as identified in the MSR, a Provisional Zero SOI is recommended for EPRFPD. It is recommended that the District address, or develop a plan to overcome within a year, the concerns itemized in the MSR and elaborated upon in EPRFPD's section of this report. EPRFPD will report on the status of its efforts at LAFCO's April 17, 2023 meeting. The District's SOI will be reviewed in December 2023 and an SOI adopted based on the status of the District's efforts in response to LAFCO's concerns.

Gold Mountain Community Services District

Because Gold Mountain CSD is a multi-service district, Limited Service SOIs will be adopted for the distinct services. Similar to the other member agencies in the fire reorganization efforts, a Zero SOI is recommended for Gold Mountain CSD for fire and emergency medical services in anticipation of formation of a new regional fire protection district and the naming of the new district as the successor agency of fire and emergency medical services in within GMCSO's existing boundaries and in the region. A Zero Limited Service SOI indicates that LAFCO anticipates reorganization will ultimately result in the divestiture of fire and emergency medical services on the part of GMCSO. A continued Coterminous Limited Service SOI is recommended for GMCSO for water and wastewater services, indicating anticipation of continuance of these services within the District's boundaries without change.

Sierra Valley Fire Protection District

A Zero SOI is recommended for Sierra Valley FPD in anticipation of formation of a new regional fire protection district and the naming of the new district as the successor agency of fire and emergency medical services in within SVVFPD's existing boundaries and in the region. A Zero SOI indicates that LAFCO anticipates reorganization will ultimately result in the dissolution of SVVFPD.

2 BECKWOURTH FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Beckwourth FD is located in the eastern part of Plumas County. The District is adjacent to the City of Portola and Eastern Plumas Fire Protection District (EPRFPD) in the west and the Sierra Valley Fire Protection District (SVVFD) in the east.

Beckwourth Fire District (BFD) provides structural fire suppression, wild land fire suppression, emergency response, basic life support, rescue services and some limited fire prevention programs for the community of Beckwourth. In addition, Beckwourth FD has been contracted to provide those same emergency services for the City of Portola and will begin providing those services to the community of Gold Mountain in January 2023. A municipal service review was last completed for the District in October 2022.

Beckwourth Fire Department was formed in 1948 and turned into a special district in 1949. The District started with one 1937 Fire Engine and a small Fire House. The original Fire House has been improved and a second Fire Station was added in 2007.

The District was formed to provide fire protection services to the residents of Beckwourth Township. Originally, its services were limited to structural fire and some brush fire. Now Beckwourth FD also has an EMS force, more equipment and provides services on a larger scale, including wildland fires, vehicle extrication, and ice rescue.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.² The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.³ Districts must apply and obtain LAFCo approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.

Existing Sphere of Influence

The SOI for Beckwourth FD was first adopted in 1976. In 1982 it was revised and again changed in 1983. It was then amended in 2003 after the completion of the abbreviated MSR. The second SOI update was initiated in 2008. The MSR and the SOI update were completed and adopted in 2010. The new SOI includes territory to the north in Red Clover Valley, residences in Dixie Valley, borders Sierra Valley FPD in the east, EPRFPD in the west and Sierra County in the south. The sphere contains about 190 square miles compared to 14 square miles of boundary area. The District's current boundaries and Sphere of Influence are shown in Figure 2-1.

² Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.

³ Health and Safety Code §13862.

Sphere of Influence Options and Recommendations

Options for Beckwourth FPD's SOI consist of the following:

- 1) Maintain existing Annexable SOI
- 2) Zero SOI in anticipation of formation of a new fire protection district

The four agencies working towards reorganization have recognized that the existing circumstances for fire providers are not sustainable and greatly hinder the level of public safety service that can be offered to residents. Consequently, retaining status quo by maintaining Beckwourth FPD's existing SOI will not address those challenges identified and is not a feasible long-term option. It is, therefore, recommended that LAFCO adopt a Zero SOI for Beckwourth FPD in anticipation of formation of a new regional fire protection district to serve the area and dissolution of Beckwourth FPD as is currently supported by the District and the other member agencies.

Beckwourth Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence Determinations

The following proposed Sphere of Influence determinations are based on information compiled and reported in the recently adopted *Eastern Plumas Regional Fire Municipal Service Review* (October 17, 2022). Refer to the MSR for greater detail.

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

- 2-1 There are approximately 618 permanent residents within the District, based on census block population in the 2020 census. It should be noted that there is a significant seasonal variation in population.
- 2-2 Despite economic difficulties and stalled developments, the population of the District is expected to grow minimally over the next few years.
- 2-3 The land uses within the District include residential, suburban, industrial, commercial, agricultural and wild land. The area within the District's boundaries is approximately 14 square miles.

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

- 2-4 The District reports that the peak demand period for every service, including emergency medical, occurs during the summer months, due to the influx of tourists. The most service calls occur between noon and three in the afternoon. There has been a significant increase in the number of calls in 2021 due to contracting with the City of Portola. The District has doubled the number of volunteers to handle the increase in calls. Demand is expected to continue increase when contract services begin to the Gold Mountain community.
- 2-5 Beckwourth FD operates two fire stations within its boundaries. In addition, the District now operates and staffs the two stations in the City of Portola by contract. Station 1 is located in Beckwourth and was built in 1948. The last addition to the station was done in 2003-04. Station 2, on Grizzly Road, was built in 2006. Station 1 is staffed from ten in the morning to four in the afternoon. There are always two to three people at a time staffing the station, including administrative personnel. Station 2, shared with USFS, is staffed from nine in the morning till seven in the afternoon in summer months and from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon during the rest of the year. Five people, all of whom are USFS personnel, usually staff the station. Station 2 is also operated by Beckwourth FD volunteers who typically respond from their work or residence. Station 3 and Station 4 are

in Portola and were both renovated in early 2021 and are staffed by part time duty officers and a volunteer Portola Division of fire fighters.

- 2-6 The District will need to institute some capital projects at its headquarters including new asphalt and replacement of a portion of the roof at Station 1 and other miscellaneous upgrades.

The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides, or is authorized to provide

- 2-7 Beckwourth FD responds to 90 percent of calls within 15 minutes, which is within the established California EMS Agency guidelines and the NFPA 1720 benchmark.
- 2-8 The District's current facilities have the capacity to adequately serve current demand, but not future growth. When new developments are constructed, the District will need to evaluate the need for additional stations.
- 2-9 Currently, capital improvement projects are identified in the annual budget. The District has adopted reserve policies and will need to do a replacement study of its assets and continue to fund the reserves funds annually.
- 2-10 The District reports that current financing levels are adequate to deliver services. The District does have a short fall in its Capital and repair and replacement programs.

The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency

- 2-11 Beckwourth FPD serves communities outside of its boundaries without revenue to offset costs for these services. Additionally, without an identified local fire provider, residents of these communities either pay exorbitant insurance rates or are refused insurance. These areas are considered communities of interest.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing Sphere of Influence

- 2-12 Based on American Community Survey 2016-2020 Census Tract information, the entirety of the study area and the boundaries within and immediately adjacent to each of the five reviewed fire providers is defined as disadvantaged. While the City of Portola is incorporated, the remainder of the territory meets the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community as defined in Water Code §79505.5. Census Tract 000300 encompasses the entirety of the service area and has a population of 4,484 comprising 2,051 households with a median income of \$48,238.
- 2-13 The territory throughout Beckwourth FPD's existing SOI is afforded the same access to fire and emergency medical services offered by the District, as it is all within the District's dispatch service area. While some areas may have longer response times, this is due to the remote nature of the areas in the wilderness.

3 EASTERN PLUMAS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District (EPRFPD) provides structural fire suppression, wildland fire suppression, emergency response, basic life support, rescue and occasional fire prevention programs. A municipal service review was last completed for the District in October 2011.

EPRFPD was formed in 1975 as an independent special district to provide structural fire, emergency medical and emergency rescue services.⁴ The reason for its formation was the need to provide fire protection to the growing urban areas around the City of Portola. For the first few years EPRFPD contracted with the City of Portola for the provision of fire and emergency services within the District's boundaries.⁵ Eventually, EPRFPD started providing fire suppression, emergency services, rescue and some fire prevention programs on its own.

Presently, EPRFPD provides contract services to C-Road Community Services District and Gold Mountain Community Services District. In 2014, C-Road CSD began contracting for fire protection and EMS services with EPRFPD.

Additionally, when the City of Portola disbanded its fire department in 2018, the City and GMCSD, which was receiving contract services from the City, began contracting with EPRFPD for fire and EMS services. The City of Portola transitioned to contracting with Beckwourth FPD for services in 2021, and GMCSD recently cancelled its contract with EPRFPD and will also be contracting with Beckwourth FPD for services beginning January 1, 2023.

EPRFPD is located in the eastern part of Plumas County. The District surrounds the City of Portola and borders Beckwourth Fire Protection District in the northeast. EPRFPD's boundaries consist of two non-contiguous parts. The larger part surrounds the City of Portola and stretches from Willow Creek in the west to Grizzly Ranch in the east. The smaller of the two areas is located by Lake Davis.

Existing Sphere of Influence

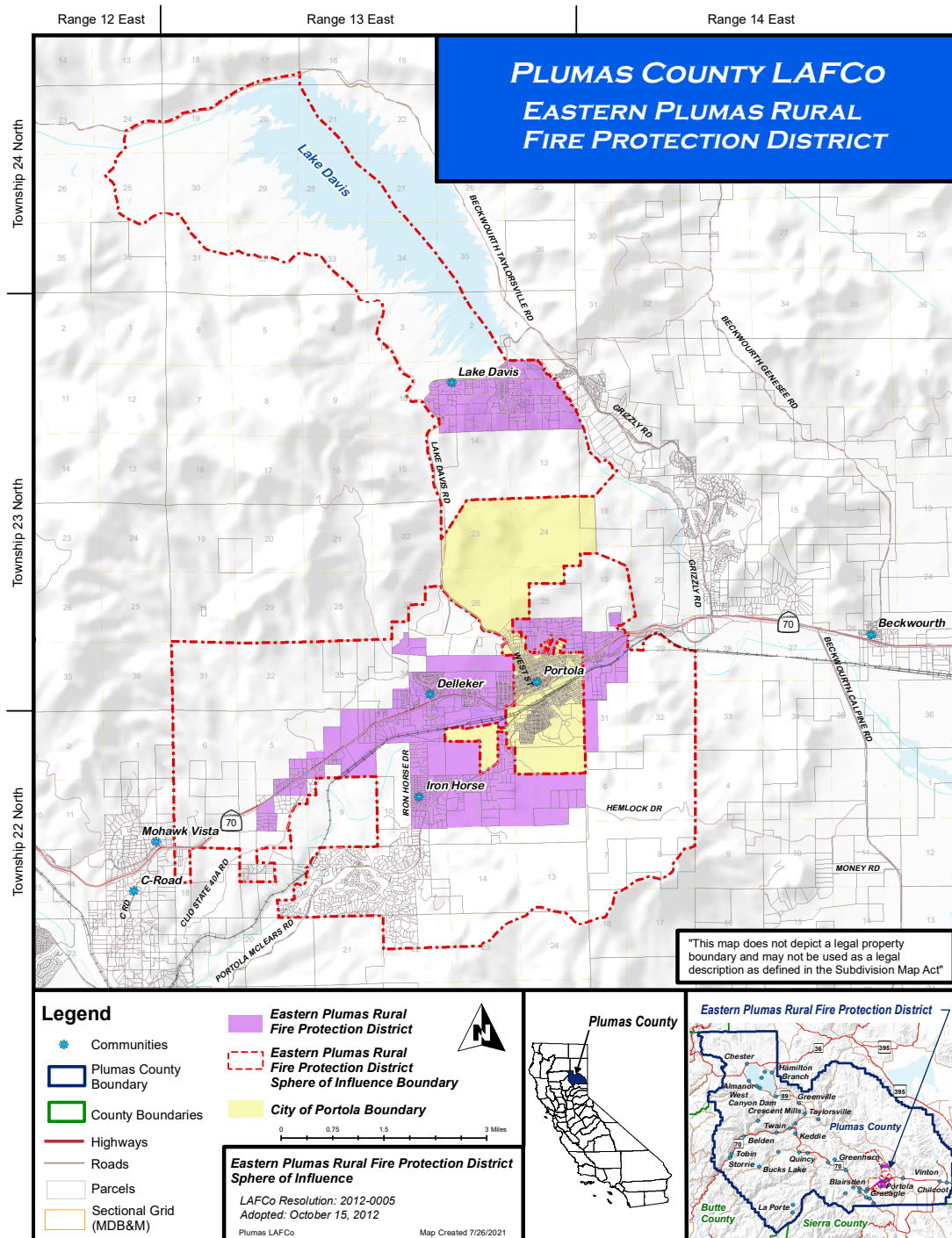
The SOI for EPRFPD was first adopted in 1975. The District's SOI was amended in 2007 and most recently updated in 2012. The current SOI includes areas southeast of its boundary along A-15, west along SR 70 to Mohawk Vista, and north of SR 70. In addition, the Gold Mountain Community Service District (GMCSD) territory is included in the District's SOI. EPRFPD's existing SOI excludes the City of Portola. In the 2012 SOI study and the subsequently adopted SOI, the Sphere line between the Beckwourth Fire Protection District and the Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District was adjusted from the middle of Lake Davis to the eastern shore of the Lake.

The current SOI encompasses approximately 22.5 square miles, of which approximately one-third is within the District's boundaries. EPRFPD's existing boundaries and SOI are shown in Figure 3-1.

⁴ Plumas LAFCo, Resolution No. 75-2766.

⁵ Plumas LAFCo, *EPRFPD Municipal Service Review & Sphere of Influence Amendment*, 2007, p. 7.

Figure 3-1: Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District and Sphere of Influence



Sphere of Influence Options and Recommendations

Options for EPRFPD's SOI consist of the following:

- 1) Maintain existing Annexable SOI
- 2) Coterminous SOI in consideration of limited operational capacity and identified challenges
- 3) Provisional Zero SOI to address identified concerns within a defined time period

During the MSR process, concerns were identified regarding EPRFPD's accountability and transparency, operational reliability, and financial sustainability, consisting of the following:

- 1) The District struggles with ongoing accountability and transparency concerns. The District is in an ongoing law suit from former staff in 2020. Additionally, the District has received three formal Cease and Desist communications regarding concerns of violations of Brown Act requirements by the District to date in 2022. These communications indicated concerns of 1) preventing members of the public from commenting on agenda items, 2) delayed communication of a director's resignation, and 3) not properly posting an agenda on the District's website prior to a meeting. LAFCO has observed the District's meetings, which are often challenged with procedural disputes, which is exacerbated by high governing body turnover. While these disputes and debates are not prohibited, the conflictive environment does not promote public involvement nor support healthy debate to be able to address the District's challenges. There is a need for thorough training of board members and staff to ensure that not only are all Brown Act requirement adhered to, but that meetings are conducted in a smooth manner to invite public participation and volunteerism as board members and firefighters.
- 2) During its annual review of EPRFPD, Gold Mountain CSD identified a lack of leadership depth and availability leading to communication and coordination concerns. GMCSO stated that there has generally been a lack of communication and communication protocols on the part of EPRFPD. EPRFPD provided a response to the review negating all findings and recommendations in GMCSO's review. It is apparent that there was a breakdown in communication challenging the working relationship between the two agencies. Additionally, interaction between LAFCO and EPRFPD during the MSR process and after confirms that the District struggles with staffing and governing body capacity, which confuses the District's internal organizational structure and impedes external engagement with other agencies and reliable inter-agency communications. There needs to be clarity as to the District's communication structure and identified public liaisons to ensure that the District remains involved in local and regional discussions that affect the EPRFPD and its constituents.
- 3) Retention of volunteers was reported as a significant challenge for the District, similar to neighboring fire protection providers. The District reported that it has experienced a cumulative loss of three positions over the last decade. However, most recently the District's Fire Chief, Administrative Captain, district secretary, and a board member have also resigned, and additional resignations are anticipated. Staffing levels appear to be the primary capacity constraint for the District. Over the last year 2021 to 2022, response to incidents has on occasion been unpredictable and disorganized due to these staffing constraints, which have limited response capabilities as well as communication and coordination with neighboring agencies. Additionally, there has been an increase in requests for mutual aid calls within EPRFPD's boundaries, also as a result of lack of adequate personnel. This decline in volunteerism is affecting the District's current operations, but also calls into question EPRFPD's sustainability should this trend continue.

The District needs to design a plan aimed at focused efforts to promote additional volunteerism or another long-term plan for maintain adequate staffing levels.

- 4) The District struggles ensuring adequate funding sources to maintain adequate service levels. While financing levels have been improved over the last decade, primarily due to new contract revenues and grant funds, the District continues to struggle to fund capital needs and to meet any cost sharing mandatory commitments for grant funding. Additionally, due to the City of Portola and GMCSO both cancelling their contracts for services, the District's budget will no longer be augmented by those funds. It is essential for the District to find ways to increase its funding as its recently reduced budget is not sufficient to sustainably finance rising costs into the future. A long-term financing plan is necessary to educate district board members and the public regarding the viability of EPRFPD over the next 5-10 years and ideally identify additional funding sources.

Because of the concerns outlined here, it is not prudent to allow the District to continue with an Annexable SOI nor a Coterminous SOI until EPRFPD has demonstrated that it has 1) fully addressed the concerns listed and 2) has the continued and sustainable capacity and ability to provide services within its boundaries and any proposed SOI area outside of its bounds. Consequently, it is recommended that the Commission consider a Provisional Zero SOI for EPRFPD, which would allow the District the opportunity to address the concerns indicated and return to LAFCO in one year, at which time EPRFPD's SOI will be reviewed and updated based on the District's efforts. In order to ensure that the District is in regular communication with LAFCO, it is recommended that EPRFPD report at LAFCO's April 2023 meeting regarding any progress made.

Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence Determinations

The following proposed Sphere of Influence determinations are based on information compiled and reported in the recently adopted *Eastern Plumas Regional Fire Municipal Service Review* (October 17, 2022). Refer to the MSR for greater detail.

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

- 3-1 The estimated population of EPRFPD is 3,284 based on number of residential units and average household size in Plumas County. Over the past decade, the District has experienced a reduction in residential population; however, there has been an increase in tourists and related demand.
- 3-2 The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Plumas County will decline by 0.27 percent annually through 2040. Based on these projections, the District's population would decline from 3,284 in 2020 to approximately 3,111 in 2040. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will remain at least constant based on the DOF population growth projections through 2040 given the seasonal recreational and wildfire demand for services on the fire and EMS providers in the area.
- 3-3 Ninety-eight percent of the existing land uses within the District's boundary area are agricultural and undeveloped properties, with some forest zones. Residential, commercial and industrial uses are mostly concentrated around the City of Portola. There are some residential and recreational areas in the Lake Davis portion of the District.

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

- 3-4 The District faces challenges providing adequate services to the existing population and will face similar challenges providing adequate service levels to any increase in demand in the future without additional funding.
- 3-5 There will be a continued need for fire protection and emergency medical services in the area. Although population is projected to decline there has been enhanced demand associated with seasonal recreational tourists and more severe wildfire seasons. In the short-term demand for EPRFPD's services is anticipated to demand as GMCSD transitions to another contract service provider.

The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides, or is authorized to provide

- 3-6 The District's current facilities have minimally adequate capacity to serve current demand. EPRFPD does not have the capacity to serve future growth with existing fire stations and financial resources.
- 3-7 The District struggles with ongoing accountability and transparency concerns. There is a need for thorough training of board members and staff to ensure that not only are all Brown Act requirement adhered to, but that meetings are conducted in a smooth manner to invite public participation and volunteerism as board members and firefighters.
- 3-8 The District identified a need for station expansion and upgrades, a new Type 3 engine, and a water tank at the Iron Horse station. However, EPRFPD does not have plans to address these needs in the near future due to financing constraints.
- 3-9 Staffing limitations are the primary capacity constraint for EPRFPD, which has resulted in unpredictable response capabilities and occasional leadership and communication issues.
- 3-10 While financing levels have been improved over the last decade for EPRFPD, primarily due to new contract revenues and grant funds, the District continues to struggle to fund capital needs and to meet any cost sharing mandatory commitments for grant funding. Without these supplemental funding sources, the District will not be financially sustainable. A long-term financing plan is necessary to educate district board members and the public regarding the viability of EPRFPD over the next 5-10 years and ideally identify additional funding sources.

The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency

- 3-11 Beckwourth FPD serves communities outside of its boundaries without revenue to offset costs for these services. Additionally, without an identified local fire provider, residents of these communities either pay exorbitant insurance rates or are refused insurance. These areas are considered communities of interest.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing Sphere of Influence

- 3-12 Based on American Community Survey 2016-2020 Census Tract information, the entirety of the study area and the boundaries within and immediately adjacent to each of the five reviewed fire providers is defined as disadvantaged. While the City of Portola is incorporated, the remainder of the territory meets the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community as defined in Water Code §79505.5. Census Tract 000300 encompasses the entirety of the service area and has a population of 4,484 comprising 2,051 households with a median income of \$48,238.
- 3-13 The territory throughout EPRFPD's existing SOI is afforded the same access to fire and emergency medical services offered by the District, as it is all within the District's dispatch service area.

4 GOLD MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

The Gold Mountain Community Services District (GMCSO) is located in the eastern part of Plumas County. Located in the eastern part of Plumas County, three miles west of the City of Portola along County Road A-15 (Portola-McLears Road), the District borders the Feather River in the west, EPRFPD in the north, and the Plumas National Forest in the east and south.

GMCSO is a multi-service district and provides fire suppression, fire prevention, emergency medical, domestic water delivery, and wastewater collection and disposal. Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District (EPRFPD) provides contracted fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The Nakoma Community Association (NCA) (formerly known as the Gold Mountain Homeowners Association (HOA)) provides road maintenance and snow removal services. Plumas LAFCo conducted the last Municipal Service Review (MSR) for GMCSO in October 2022.

The Gold Mountain Community Services District is an enterprise, independent special district formed in 1996 under the provision of the Community Serviced District Law, commencing with Government Code §61000. Plumas LAFCo originally adopted Resolution No. 96-5 on April 25, 1996, approving the Formation of the GMCSO as a dependent special district and appointing the Plumas County Board of Supervisors (BOS) as its first Board of Directors. The Plumas BOS approved its Resolution No. 96-5893 ordering the formation of the GMCSO on May 14, 1996. There were no provisions for a property tax exchange for any service.

In 2004, GMCSO residents voted to take over control of the District in a general election and requested that the Plumas BOS appoint three interim directors until District residents could elect a permanent board. The Plumas BOS approved the request, and in 2005, residents voted to expand the Board of Directors from three to five members. Residents elected five Directors and GMCSO became an independent special district in 2005.

Under the State of California Community Services District Law, CSDs may potentially provide a wide array of services. State code requires CSDs to gain LAFCo approval to provide those services permitted by the principal act but not performed by the end of 2005 (i.e., latent powers). In January 2006, Plumas LAFCo determined that the District's active powers consisted of the provision of domestic water, sanitation sewer, fire protection, weed abatement and snow removal. The GMHOA had previously assumed responsibility for snow removal and weed abatement and retained those duties by mutual agreement with the GMCSO (District).

Water Services

The District provides retail water services, in the form of groundwater extraction and distribution via a pressurized water system. The District's three operational wells deliver a combined capacity of 90 gallons per minute (GPM), delivering water to nine pressure zones via seven booster stations. The District owns the water rights underlying all private residential lots and HOA common areas but does not hold the water rights underlying golf course property; therefore, the District competes for water in the deep granite aquifer. The District participates in groundwater monitoring as part of a groundwater management plan through monitoring devices on all District domestic water wells along with shallow purpose drilled monitoring wells in proximity to community leachfields. The District is working with the resort owner to improve monitoring of the six independently operated golf course wells. There are no other private wells within the district.

Wastewater Services

The District operates and maintains a wastewater utility which provides collection and disposal of domestic wastewater using a Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) system. Engineers designed the system to complete primary treatment in the individual septic tanks and dispose of septic tank effluent via subsurface infiltration in community leachfields.

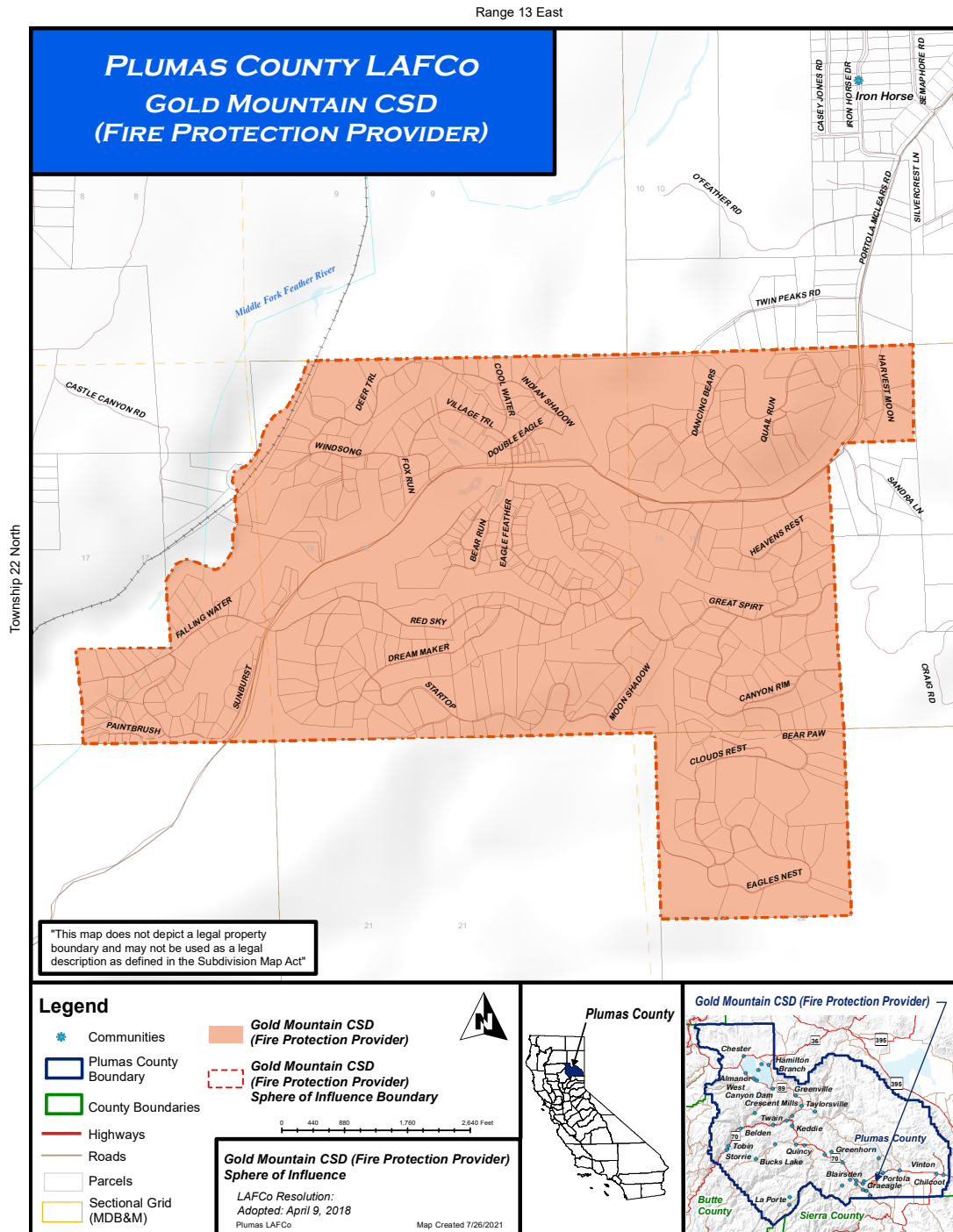
Fire Protection Services

The District contracted with the City of Portola fire and EMS services from formation in 1996 through 2018. With the City disbanding its fire department in 2018, the GMCSO began contracting with EPRFD for fire and EMS. As EPRFD also assumed contract services for the City of Portola, and with limited options, the District agreed to contract directly with EPRFD for services equivalent to those previously provided by the City. Initially on a one-year contract for \$35,000, the District agreed to renew in 2019 on a three year contract starting at \$36,050 with an annual 3 percent escalation option. With the impending expiration of the contract, GMCSO has chosen to transition its contract to Beckwourth FPD, to which the City of Portola has also transitioned. The new contract for services will take effect January 2023. Because BFPD is operating the City's fire stations, the nearest full fire station will once again be the City's south side Fire Hall, three miles from the District.

Existing Sphere of Influence

As GMCSO was formed to serve the Gold Mountain Planned Development, its original Sphere of Influence was coterminous with its boundary, which was consistent with the land within the development. The District's SOI was updated in 2006, expanding to include wildland territory south of the boundaries, small suburban pieces of land to the north and east, and industrial property to the west. According to the 2006 MSR, the Sphere of Influence was expanded "to accommodate those property owners outside the present District boundary who may seek services from the District in future annexations." Most recently, in 2018, the District's SOI was updated to be coterminous with its boundaries. The District's current boundaries and Sphere of Influence are shown in Figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1: Gold Mountain Community Services District and Sphere of Influence



Sphere of Influence Options and Recommendations

Options for GMCSO's SOI consist of the following:

- 1) Maintain existing Coterminous SOI for all services
- 2) Limited Service Zero SOI for fire protection services in anticipation of formation of a new fire protection district and retention of Coterminous SOI for water and wastewater services.

The four agencies working towards reorganization have recognized that the existing circumstances for fire providers are not sustainable and greatly hinder the level of public safety service that can be offered to residents. Consequently, retaining status quo by maintaining GMCSO's existing SOI for fire protection services will not address those challenges identified and is not a feasible long-term option. It is, therefore, recommended that LAFCO adopt a Limited Service Zero SOI for fire protection and related services for GMCSO in anticipation of formation of a new regional fire protection district to serve the area and divestiture of those services by GMCSO as is currently supported by the District and the other member agencies. It is further recommended that the District's Coterminous SOI be retained for water and wastewater services, as the District intends to continue providing these services within its boundaries and has capacity and means to do so.

Gold Mountain Community Services District Sphere of Influence Determinations

The following proposed Sphere of Influence determinations are based on information compiled and reported in the recently adopted *Eastern Plumas Regional Fire Municipal Service Review* (October 17, 2022). Refer to the MSR for greater detail.

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

- 4-1 The District currently has 88 residential structures with an estimated total population of 181 and year round population of 76.
- 4-2 Between 2011 and 2021, only 10 newly constructed residential structures have connected to the Districts' utility systems, equating an annualized growth of less than two percent.
- 4-3 The boundary area of GMCSO is two square miles, including 380 acres of open space recreation and common area. The community is primarily residential with a commercial golf resort and small commercial district. There are 395 lots designated for private single-family homes. There are an additional 43 resort parcels, including 14 commercial, 19 commercial multi-unit residential, and five lots since sold into private ownership.

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

- 4-4 The District anticipates continued slow growth in population and similarly in service demand over the next five years. Current infrastructure trigger points combined with infrastructure improvements remain adequate for the slow growth model. Based on existing demand and anticipated growth, there is a present and probable need for all services provided by GMCSO.
- 4-5 GMCSO projects its service needs related to growth through build-out of the subdivision in its regularly updated Master Plan. The next update is scheduled for 2022 although there are no current indications of a dramatic increase in new building starts.
- 4-6 The District has contracted for fire and EMS services with EPRFPD for the last three years and is in the midst of transitioning to contracting with BFPD. GMCSO is actively supporting the ongoing effort to join a new regional fire district. If successful, the District

will relinquish its current power for fire protection, yet retain a degree of fire responsibility for its QAV, HFT, and fire break programs.

The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides, or is authorized to provide

- 4-7 Presently, with the District's new well online, average daily demand for water is 18 percent of the 90 GPM wells' combined pumping capacity, while peak day demand constitutes 36 percent of the wells' combined pumping capacity.
- 4-8 The primary infrastructure needs identified by the District for the water system are increased water storage capacity. The priority project is the high elevation water tank, leading to improved fire suppression flows and improved backup water supplies. The second priority is a third larger tank adjacent to the current main storage tanks on District owned property. The District is pursuing each of these capital improvements, having completed preliminary engineering and property procurement in preparation for completion in the 2022-2024 timeframe. The two new wells have eliminated short to mid-term concerns for water production.
- 4-9 The existing sewer system appears to be at 95 percent capacity at peak flows and represents the District's primary infrastructure concern. The District is undertaking a two prong solution by expanding the Windsong leachfield with capital reserve dollars, while moving forward with a water reclamation plant funded by grant or utility loan financing. The District plans to have Phase I of the leachfield expansion operational in 2022, with both projects complete by 2023.
- 4-10 While the District has faced financial difficulties in the past, and anticipates significant underfunded infrastructure needs in the future, the District has solid financial planning and has initiated a cost of service rate study to provide long term financial stability. The District anticipated that it can meet mid-term (5-10 years) capital improvements with a combination of capital reserves, grants, and generational financing.
- 4-11 The District has made effective use of healthy restricted and unrestricted reserves over the last two years to meet priority infrastructure needs. Unrestricted Operational Reserves are sufficient to finance approximately four months of operations for water and wastewater services, and over a year of operations for fire services.

The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency

- 4-12 There are no communities of interest in the area of GMCSD, as it provides services only within its bounds and offers uniform access to these services throughout the community.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing Sphere of Influence

- 4-13 Based on ACS 2016-2020 Census Tract information, the entirety of the study area and the boundaries within and immediately adjacent to each of the five fire providers is defined as disadvantaged. However, based on smaller community size, there are no disadvantaged communities within or adjacent to GMCSD.

5 SIERRA VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Sierra Valley Fire Protection District, also known as the Sierra Valley Volunteer Fire Department (SVVFD), provides fire protection, basic life support response and some fire prevention programs. Municipal Service Reviews have been conducted on SVVFPD in 2011 and 2022.

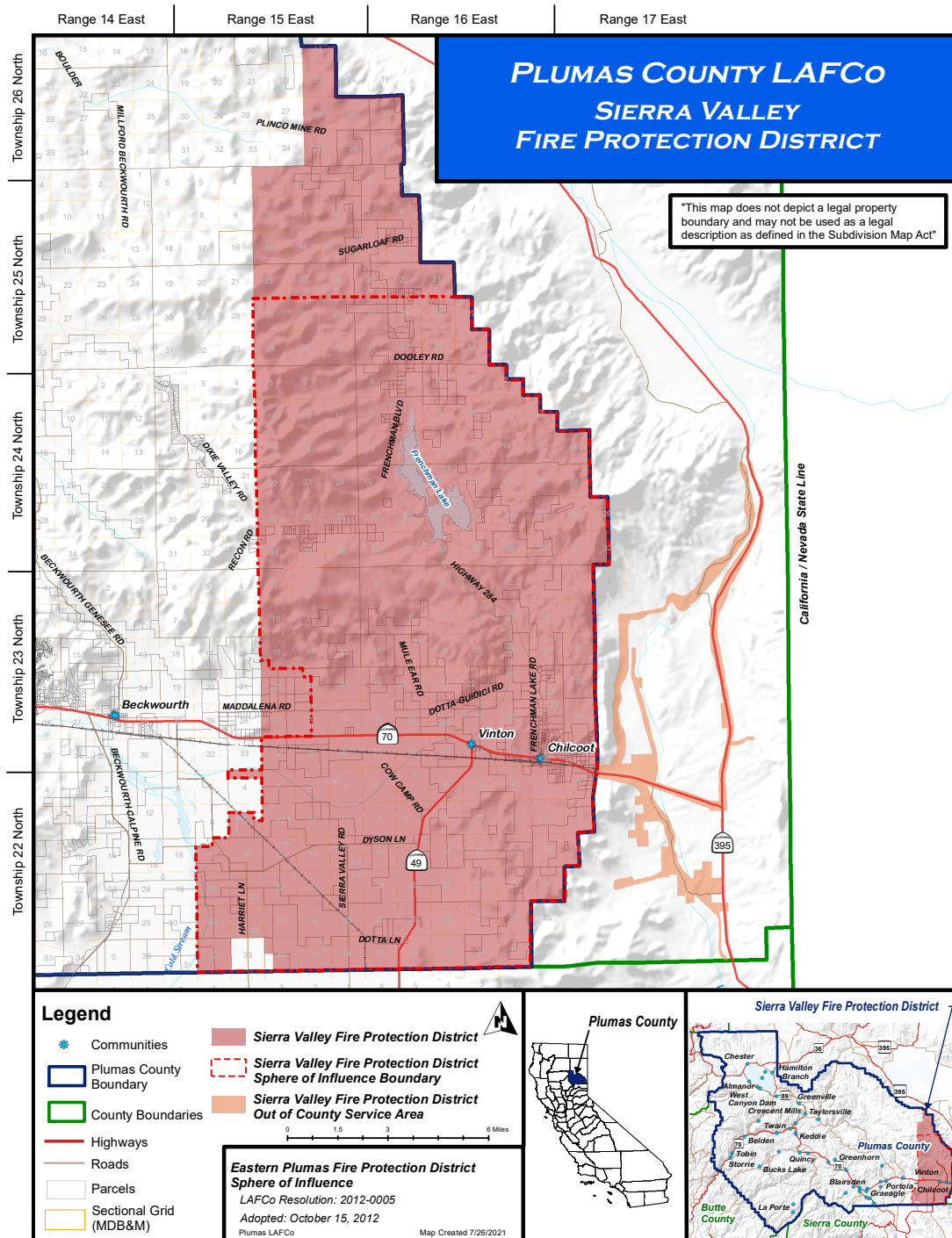
SVVFD was formed in 1948 as an independent special district. The District was formed to provide structural fire and basic life support services. SVVFD is one of the largest fire protection districts in Plumas County based on the total area within its boundaries. It is located in the eastern part of the County and is surrounded by territory served by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. The District borders Beckwourth FPD in the west, Hallelujah Junction FPD of Lassen County in the east, Lassen County in the north, and Sierra County in the south.

SVVFD's boundary is entirely within Plumas County. The District's boundaries encompass approximately 220 square miles, which include ranches, remote homes, residential sections, a mobile park, businesses and a lake/campground recreation area. The District provides extra-territorial fire and emergency services to Hallelujah Junction Fire Protection District (HJFPD) in Lassen County.

Existing Sphere of Influence

The SOI for SVVFD was originally adopted in 1982 and made coterminous with the District's boundaries. In 1994, it was reduced to a significantly smaller area to include the communities of Chilcote and Vinton along SR 70 and encompass eight square miles compared to 220 square miles of boundary area. Most recently, the District's SOI was updated in 2012 to include substantially more territory within the District's boundaries. The SOI continues to exclude the northern most boundary area due to lengthy response times and accessibility challenges and an area to the west along SR 70 consisting of the Maddalena Tree Farm that may be best served by BFPD due to proximity and access. At present, the District's SOI is 191 square miles. The District's existing boundaries and Sphere of Influence are shown in Figure 5-1.

Figure 5-1: Sierra Valley Fire Protection District and Sphere of Influence



Sphere of Influence Options and Recommendations

Options for Sierra Valley FPD's SOI consist of the following:

- 1) Maintain existing Detachable SOI
- 2) Zero SOI in anticipation of formation of a new fire protection district

The four agencies working towards reorganization have recognized that the existing circumstances for fire providers are not sustainable and greatly hinder the level of public safety service that can be offered to residents. Consequently, retaining status quo by maintaining Sierra Valley FPD's existing SOI will not address those challenges identified and is not a feasible long-term option. It is, therefore, recommended that LAFCO adopt a Zero SOI for Sierra Valley FPD in anticipation of formation of a new regional fire protection district to serve the area and dissolution of Sierra Valley FPD as is currently supported by the District and the other member agencies.

Sierra Valley Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence Determinations

The following proposed Sphere of Influence determinations are based on information compiled and reported in the recently adopted *Eastern Plumas Regional Fire Municipal Service Review* (October 17, 2022). Refer to the MSR for greater detail.

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

- 5-1 There are approximately 600 residents within the District. Over the past decade the District experienced a 34 percent increase in population.
- 5-2 The District anticipates little or no growth in population and similarly in service demand within the District in the next few years.
- 5-3 Most of the land uses within the District are wildland and agricultural. The densest residential and suburban areas are located in the community of Chilcoot and along SR 49. The territory north of Frenchman Lake is what the District referred to as a no-man's zone, which is part of SVVFD, but is extremely hard to reach. There are almost no residences approximately north of Dotta-Guidici Road and Rutting Deer Road.

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

- 5-4 A decline in population is expected within the District over the next 20 years based on the California Department of Finance projections for Plumas County; however, the District anticipates that the population will continue to increase in the future.
- 5-5 The District Fire Chief has observed a significant increase in traffic volume on routes US-395 and also CA-70, which pass through the District. The frequency and severity of calls has increased accordingly. This trend is anticipated to continue and result in an increase in demand for fire protection and emergency medical services in the area accordingly.

The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides, or is authorized to provide

- 5-6 The District's current facilities appear to have the capacity to adequately serve current demand and short-term growth; however, the District's stations serve an expansive 111 square miles, which results in lengthy response times.
- 5-7 The District identified a need for a new training facility and office space, as well as a new water tender. SVVFD regularly applies for grants to attempt to address these needs.
- 5-8 Currently, capital improvement projects are identified in the annual budget. The District should consider adopting a capital improvement plan to identify financing needs, as well as potential revenue sources and timing to address these needs.
- 5-9 As the District presently has two volunteers with Firefighter I certification, SVVFD could improve its level of service by promoting certification.
- 5-10 Generally, the fire districts have been challenged in maintaining full and legally-seated governing bodies. Over the last decade, the districts have failed to appropriately renew terms for already seated members, have appointed board members that do not meet the legal requirements to sit on the board, and have failed to inform the County Clerk regarding any changes to their board members.
- 5-11 The District hopes to improve its operational efficiency through applying for grants and purchasing newer equipment.

The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency

- 5-12 The District provides extra-territorial fire and emergency services to Hallelujah Junction Fire Protection District (HJFPD) in Lassen County. This area is considered an area of interest, and there is a need to ensure continued services to the community following reorganization.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing Sphere of Influence

- 5-13 Based on American Community Survey 2016-2020 Census Tract information, the entirety of the study area and the boundaries within and immediately adjacent to each of the five reviewed fire providers is defined as disadvantaged. While the City of Portola is incorporated, the remainder of the territory meets the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community as defined in Water Code §79505.5. Census Tract 000300 encompasses the entirety of the region and has a population of 4,484 comprising 2,051 households with a median income of \$48,238.
- 5-14 The territory throughout SVVFPD's existing SOI is afforded the same access to fire and emergency medical services offered by the District, as it is all within the District's dispatch service area. While there are areas with extensive response times, it is due to the remote nature of these wilderness areas.