



MARIN COUNTY FIRE SERVICES STUDY



Public Draft
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Prepared by Marin LAFCo



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2.0 PREFACE

This Fire Study Special Review documents and analyzes services provided by local fire agencies that provide fire services throughout Marin County. Specifically, it evaluates the adequacy and efficiency of local government structure and boundaries within the county. It provides a basis for boundary planning decisions by the Marin Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).

2.1 CONTEXT

Marin LAFCo has prepared this special study under its authority granted by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000, et seq.). Unlike municipal service reviews, special studies are discretionary and allow LAFCo to examine specific governance, service delivery, or boundary issues. This special study evaluates fire protection and emergency response services provided by cities, the County, and special districts whose boundaries and governance are subject to LAFCo. The analysis and recommendations included are intended to provide data, context, and options to support efficient and effective service delivery while promoting the orderly development of communities and the preservation of open space and agricultural lands.

2.2 COMMISSIONERS, STAFF AND SPECIAL STUDY PREPARERS

Commissioners

Barbara Coler – Chair	City	Town of Fairfax
Dennis Rodoni – Vice Chair	County	District 4 Supervisor
Eric Lucan	County	District 5 Supervisor
Larry Chu	Public	Commission
Lew Kious	Special District	Almonte Sanitary District
Craig Murray	Special District	Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District
Steve Burdo	City	Town of San Anselmo
Roger Smith	Public Alternate	Commission
Cathryn Hilliard	Special District Alternate	Southern Marin Fire Protection District
Rachel Farac	City Alternate	City of Novato
Stephanie Moulton-Peters	County Alternate	District 3 Supervisor

Staff and Special Study Preparers

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MARIN LAFCO

Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) were established in 1963 and are political subdivisions of the State of California responsible for providing regional growth management oversight in all 58 counties. LAFCOs' authority is currently codified under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("CKH"), which specifies regulatory and planning powers delegated by the Legislature to coordinate and oversee the establishment, expansion, and organization of cities and special districts, as well as their municipal service areas.

Guiding LAFCOs' regulatory and planning powers is to fulfill specific purposes and objectives that collectively construct the Legislature's regional growth management priorities under the Government Code (G.C.) Section 56301. This statute reads:

“Among the purposes of the commission are discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing governmental services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances. One of the objects of the commission is to make studies and to obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies in each county and to shape the development of local agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities.”

LAFCo decisions are legislative in nature and not subject to an outside appeal process. LAFCOs also have broad powers with respect to conditioning regulatory and planning approvals, so long as they do not establish terms that directly control land uses, densities, or subdivision requirements.

Regulatory Responsibilities

LAFCOs' principal regulatory responsibility involves approving or disapproving of all jurisdictional changes involving the establishment, expansion, and reorganization of cities and most special districts.¹ More recently, LAFCOs have been tasked with overseeing the approval process for cities and districts to provide new or extended services beyond their jurisdictional boundaries through existing services. LAFCOs generally exercise their regulatory authority in response to applications submitted by the affected agencies, landowners, or registered voters.

Recent CKH amendments, however, now authorize and encourage LAFCOs to initiate on their own jurisdictional changes to form, consolidate, and dissolve special districts consistent with

¹ CKH defines "special district" to mean any agency of the State formed pursuant to general law or special act for the local performance of governmental or proprietary functions within limited boundaries. All special districts in California are subject to LAFCo with the following exceptions: school districts; community college districts; assessment districts; improvement districts; community facilities districts; transportation districts; and air pollution control districts.

current and future community needs. LAFCo regulatory powers are described in Table 3-1 below.

Table 3-1: LAFCo's Regulatory Powers

Regulatory Powers Granted by Government Code (G.C.) Section 56301	
• City Incorporations / Disincorporation	• City and District Annexations
• District Formations / Dissolutions	• City and District Detachments
• City and District Consolidations	• Merge/Establish Subsidiary Districts
• City and District Outside Service Extensions	• District Service Activations / Divestitures

Planning Responsibilities

LAFCos inform their regulatory actions through two central planning responsibilities: (a) making sphere of influence (“sphere”) determinations and (b) preparing municipal service reviews. Sphere determinations have been a core planning function of LAFCos since 1971 and effectively serve as the Legislature’s version of “urban growth boundaries” with regard to cumulatively delineating the appropriate interface between urban and non-urban uses within each county. Municipal service reviews, in contrast, are a relatively new planning responsibility enacted as part of CKH and are intended to inform, among other activities, sphere determinations.

3.2 SPECIAL STUDIES

Special studies are an important tool available to LAFCos to evaluate particular issues, trends, or circumstances affecting local governance within a defined geographic area. Unlike municipal service reviews, which are mandated by statute and tied to sphere of influence determinations, special studies are discretionary analyses undertaken by LAFCos to provide additional context, information, or recommendations on specific matters.

Special studies may address topics such as the fiscal sustainability of an agency, service delivery alternatives, boundary considerations, or other governance-related challenges. They can focus on a single agency, a type of service, or a broader regional concern. A special study aims to provide LAFCos, local agencies, and the public with valuable data and analysis to inform decision-making and foster the orderly and efficient development of communities.

While not governed by the same statutory requirements as municipal service reviews, special studies may draw on similar information sources and analytical approaches. They also have the potential to inform subsequent LAFCo actions, including but not limited to consolidations, dissolutions, annexations, or boundary adjustments. Each special study culminates in written findings that reflect LAFCo’s independent research and analysis of the issues at hand.

3.3 MARIN LAFCO COMPOSITION

Marin LAFCo is governed by a 7-member board comprised of two county supervisors, two city council members, two independent special district members, and one representative of the

general public. Each group also gets to appoint one “alternate” member. Each member must exercise their independent judgment, separate from their appointing group, on behalf of the interests of all residents, landowners, and the public. Marin LAFCo is independent of local government and employs its own staff. Marin LAFCo’s current commission membership is provided above in Table 3-2.

Marin LAFCo offices are located at 1401 Los Gamos Drive, Suite 220, in San Rafael. Information on Marin LAFCo’s functions and activities, including reorganization applications, are available by calling (415) 448-5877 by e-mail to staff@marinlafco.org or by visiting www.marinlafco.org.

Table 3-2: Marin LAFCo Commission Membership

Name	Position	Agency Affiliation
Barbara Coler, Chair	City	<i>Town of Fairfax</i>
Dennis Rodoni, Vice-Chair	County	<i>District 4 Supervisor</i>
Craig Murray	Special District	<i>Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District</i>
Eric Lucan	County	<i>District 5 Supervisor</i>
Larry Chu	Public	<i>Commission</i>
Lew Kious	Special District	<i>Almonte Sanitary District</i>
Steve Burdo	City	<i>Town of San Anselmo</i>
Cathryn Hilliard	Special District Alternate	<i>Southern Marin Fire Protection District</i>
Rachel Farac	City Alternate	<i>City of Novato</i>
Roger Smith	Public Alternate	<i>Commission</i>
Stephanie Moulton-Peters	County Alternate	<i>District 3 Supervisor</i>

4.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 SCOPE AND INTENT

The Marin County Fire Services Study is an updated compilation of past Marin LAFCo regional Municipal Service Reviews (MSR) of local fire agencies in Marin County. It synthesizes new findings and previous discoveries from the most recent round of MSRs conducted from 2018 to 2025, providing a comprehensive overview of fire services. It also provides a compilation of past recommendations and their current status. This study provides a countywide lens of fire services for the use of fire agencies, elected officials, policymakers, and the public. This countywide snapshot helps examine operational integration, governance structures, and systemwide trends across all providers. This study aims to identify structural patterns and long-term considerations that support informed decision-making. This report does not mandate consolidation, rank, or prioritize agencies, nor does it prejudge future LAFCo actions.

This study was undertaken to show the detailed response in Marin County as well as the segmented delivery structure that has continued to evolve over the years through the evaluation of service delivery models such as consolidations, districts, departments, and JPA's. At present, service provision in the county relies heavily on mutual aid agreements amongst the multiple agencies providing fire services to mitigate any gaps in coverage. Most recently, action was taken to consolidate the Southern Marin Fire and Mill Valley Fire departments to increase efficiency and sustainability in service response in the Southern Marin region. The study will serve as a guide to the Commission, informing it of boundary changes, organizational changes within agencies over the past five years, and the provision of fire services throughout the county. Furthermore, to continue conversations regarding ongoing questions about efficiency, sustainability, and coordination.

4.2 JURISDICTIONAL AGENCIES AND AUTHORITIES

This report focuses on eight independent special districts, two joint powers authorities (JPA), 1 city-run department, and 1 county-run fire department. Additionally, Marin County has three volunteer departments and one private department. These are listed below and shown in Figure 1. Throughout the county, there are approximately 553 full-time employees, not including part-time, seasonal, and volunteer, working across 12 fire agencies. These agencies operate from 36 strategically located fire stations throughout the county to reduce response times.

Fire Service provisions in the county comprise several different service models, including city departments, fire districts, Joint Power Agreements (JPA's), and shared services contracts. JPAs offer the opportunity for two or more governing bodies to come together for service delivery, enabling interagency and regional coordination. However, this service model involves a more complex governance structure and a reliance on member agency commitment to ensure the longevity and financial stability of the agreement. An Independent District is its own government entity with defined boundaries. Although at times this may lead to service fragmentation through defined district boundaries, especially when several service providers exist, Districts have their own direct revenue, governance, and public oversight. City departments operate within municipal governance structures and are typically funded through city revenues, aligning fire services with broader municipal service delivery. Shared services contracts allow agencies to consolidate

functions such as administration, command, or operations while retaining independent governance.

Figure 1: Marin County Fire Service Providers



4.3 KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

Throughout this study and the past MSR cycle, many key themes arose regarding fire services through the analysis of Marin County’s fire departments and districts. Marin’s fire system functions operationally as a coordinated network, but governance and administrative capacity vary significantly by agency size. Fire response in the county is supported through mutual aid to assist in response in a county with several service providers with defined jurisdictional boundaries. On an operational and administrative level, some key takeaways from this report are:

- Operational strength due to mutual aid
- Existing foundation for enhanced shared services or future structural efficiencies
- Smaller agencies face disproportionate administrative burdens
- Administrative demands are primarily shaped by structural factors and agency scale, rather than response capability.

Long-term financial and organizational sustainability is a key factor in the stability and adaptability of future service delivery in the County. At present service delivery in the county is financially stable through a combination of local revenues, regional funding mechanisms, and cooperative agreements. The system does not face extreme fiscal stress, but long-term sustainability pressures are real, contributing to the following takeaways:

- No widespread immediate fiscal distress

- Structural differences in governance and organizational design between districts and JPAs, that could shape collaborations or potential consolidation.
- Sustainability as a standing question, not a short-term alarm

Structural change in Marin has historically occurred incrementally and through relationship-building between LAFCo and agencies. One example being the Southern Marin Fire consolidation with Mill Valley. Shared services are a practical first step with JPA's and consolidations as long-term options. Marin LAFCo's involvement in the future evolution of fire systems will be built around collaboration with districts and departments. It is Marin LAFCo's goal to function as a facilitator, not a mandating body, with change being locally driven and with governance continuity maintained.

4.4 PLANS, POLICIES, STUDIES

Key references and information sources for this fire services special study were gathered for each of the twelve fire agencies considered. References utilized in this study include published reports; review of agency files and databases (agendas, budgets, contracts, audits, staffing and training records, service call data, etc.); Fire Master Plans; Capital Improvement Plans; incident response data; insurance and risk rating reports (e.g., ISO evaluations); and state and regional agency information (permits, regulations, funding, and compliance reviews). Additionally, the staff contacted each agency to request comments and reviews.

4.5 AGENCY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Within the approved scope of work, this study has been prepared with an emphasis on soliciting outside public review and comment as well as multiple opportunities for input from the affected agencies. This included information requests sent to individual agencies, draft agency profiles sent to agencies, meetings requested by an agency, and a review of the draft report before Commission action.

This Special Study is posted on the Commission's website (www.marinlafco.org). It may also be reviewed at the LAFCo office located at 1401 Los Gamos Drive, Suite 220, in San Rafael during open hours.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

From October 2019 to April 2026, Marin LAFCo completed a full round of MSR's that covered all fire departments in the various reports. This section is a reiteration of recommendations made in those MSR's, along with a status update. In addition, we have added 2 recommendations based on either updates to what has occurred since the last MSR was done for that agency or based on the full review of all agencies together in this report.

1. Angel Island:
 - a. Representatives from Marin LAFCo, Marin County Fire Department (on behalf of County Service Area #31), the Town of Tiburon, the Tiburon Fire Protection District, California State Parks, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) should convene to explore the current status and future possibilities of the organization and efficiencies of fire protection services for Angel Island State Park, as well as the consideration of the detachment of the area from Marin County Service Area #31 and/or the Town of Tiburon. (Recommended Multi-Regional MSR Aug. 2024)
 - b. Though currently outside of the Tiburon Fire Protection District's jurisdictional boundary, TFPD consistently finds itself handling initial response duties for both fire and medical calls on Angel Island. With no stationed equipment or facility on the island, the opportunity presents itself for both/either CSA 31 and/or the Town of Tiburon to erect a structure in order to store necessary emergency response equipment that can be accessed by the responding agency. (Recommended Tiburon Peninsula MSR June 2020)

Status of this item – While a few meetings have occurred to discuss this matter, more work is still needed.

2. Full consolidation of the Mill Valley Fire Department into the Southern Marin Fire Protection District. With the December 2022 approval by LAFCo of the consolidation of the SMFPD and Mill Valley Fire Departments, no other specific opportunities for shared facilities that would prove advantageous to both participating parties were identified in the course of this study. (Recommended Golden Gate MSR April 2023)

Status of item – This has been completed and fully resolved.

3. County Service Area 28, in collaboration with the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District, should explore future funding options as well as current operational constraints that would allow the seasonal emergency medical response unit that is staffed during the summer months to have permanent year-round staffing. (Recommended West Marin MSR June 2022)

Status of Item – The west Marin Chiefs have been working to create a year-round ambulance model by 2030. SBFPD is creating a dedicated ambulance bay and two dorm rooms to accommodate this activity.

4. Ross Valley Fire accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies:

In the time allotted prior to the sunseting of the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Ross Valley Fire Department and the County of Marin in 2023, a group should be formed between Marin LAFCo and each of the member agencies comprising the Ross Valley Fire Department to explore the possibility of creating a new independent or dependent single fire services district for the Upper Ross Valley region. In addition, representatives from Kentfield Fire Protection District, as well as the Central Marin Fire Department, should be included in this working group in an effort to also explore the creation of a single fire district for the entirety of the Ross Valley. This new district may also assume responsibility for paramedic services. From a high level, the immediately apparent advantages of this action are as follows:

- a. Service Level, Operations, or Efficiency: Increased organizational scale may allow reductions in management costs, greater efficiency in overtime control, unified training, and reduction in equipment and procedural redundancies. Additionally, a reduced reliance on mutual aid.
- b. Cost Savings: Reduced personnel costs (chief officers); elimination of redundant purchases for apparatus, reduced maintenance of reserve equipment, building space, training facilities, and other supplies. Also, an opportunity for unified information management services.
- c. Political Accountability: Direct representation, election of district members (independent district only). The district board may be expanded to include board members of predecessor agencies. Consolidations would require voter approval unless there is unanimous consent of the consolidating boards.

Some of the obstacles that present themselves from an initial analysis include:

- a. Cost Savings: Requires permanent transfer of property tax revenues from cities to the new district. Financial equity may be difficult for all agencies involved. It may require new special tax measures in some areas. Possible aggregate increases in the cost of employee benefits.
- b. Political Accountability: Complex implementation likely to require a step-by-step consolidation process. Loss of ability to weigh competing service priorities in multipurpose agencies (i.e., cities).

While a special study on this particular endeavor is warranted, if not necessitated, preliminary dialogue between the proposed agencies and Marin LAFCo to begin vetting some of the high-level issues is encouraged as soon as possible. (Recommended Upper Ross Valley Region MSR October 2020)

Status of Item – In November 2025, LAFCo staff made a presentation on the differences between a JPA and district model for fire services. At this time, no Ross Valley Fire JPA member agency has committed to changing the current model. Neither Kentfield nor Central Marin Fire has expressed interest in moving forward with the consolidation of fire departments. Should the member agencies wish to move forward with this in the future, LAFCo staff will be available to assist.

5. The Central Marin Fire Department, as well as the Kentfield Fire Protection District, should be included in a group formed by Marin LAFCo to explore the possibility of creating a new independent or dependent single fire services district for the area. If, in

the course of these exploratory discussions, it is deemed that CMFD and KFPD have identified too many significant hurdles to continue the possibility of inclusion in the consolidation, a separate group should be formed between Marin LAFCo and CMFD to explore the possibility of the creation of a single district for fire services in the Twin Cities region. From a high level, the immediately apparent advantages of this action are as follows:

- a. Service Level, Operations, or Efficiency: Increased organizational scale may allow reductions in management costs, greater efficiency in overtime control, unified training, and reduction in equipment and procedural redundancies. Additionally, a reduced reliance on mutual aid.
- b. Cost Savings: Reduced personnel costs (chief officers); elimination of redundant purchases for apparatus, reduced maintenance of reserve equipment, building space, training facilities, and other supplies. Also, the opportunity for unified information management services.
- c. Political Accountability: Direct representation, election of district members (independent district only). The district board may be expanded to include board members of predecessor agencies. Consolidations would require voter approval unless there is unanimous consent of the consolidating boards.

Some of the obstacles that present themselves from an initial analysis include:

- a. Cost Savings: Requires permanent transfer of property tax revenues from cities to the new district. Financial equity may be difficult to attain for all involved agencies. It may require new special tax measures in some areas. Possible aggregate increases in the cost of employee benefits.
- b. Political Accountability: Complex implementation likely to require a step-by-step consolidation process. Loss of ability to weigh competing service priorities in multipurpose agencies (i.e., cities).
- c. Agency Type: With a mix of joint powers authorities and independent special districts, in the event that negotiations were able to overcome the political obstacles standing in the way of a unified agency, the difference in financing mechanisms between the agency types will present significant challenges. While a special study on this particular endeavor is warranted, if not necessitated, preliminary dialogue between the proposed agencies and Marin LAFCo to begin vetting some of the high-level issues is encouraged as soon as possible.

(Recommended Twin Cities MSR June 2021)

Status of Item – As of 2021, neither city has shown a desire to change the current model. Should that change, LAFCo staff is willing to assist if they want to create a different model for this fire agency.

6. Tiburon Fire Protection District and the City of Belvedere may consider formal annexation of the City of Belvedere into the District. At this time, the City contracts with the District for both fire and emergency medical response services. With no foreseeable plans for the City to create those municipal services of its own, annexation would allow the residents of Belvedere to vote for representation on the District's Board of Directors.

A group should be formed by LAFCo to help determine what is in the best interest of both the City and District, along with the general public. (Recommended Tiburon Peninsula MSR June 2020)

Status of Item – In 2024, TFPD, City of Belvedere, and LAFCo started a process to study and determine the possibility of the City being annexed by TFPD. This process is currently ongoing.

7. San Rafael Area Fire Services

a. Regional Collaboration and Sustainable Fire Services

Marin County operates no fire stations in the San Rafael region and contracts with other local fire service providers to meet the service needs of the unincorporated neighborhoods within CSAs No. 13 and No. 19. They contract for CSA No. 13 service with Marinwood CSD and for CSA No. 19 service directly with the City of San Rafael. San Rafael's service partnerships with fire-service providing agencies in the unincorporated San Rafael region designate the city department to be the primary responder both within the city limits and in all areas of CSA No. 19. Additionally, Marinwood CSD (and therefore also CSA No. 13) shares San Rafael's Fire Chief and utilizes city administrative capacity, training, supplies, and response support.

With the San Rafael Fire Chief serving as the de facto chief for all four service jurisdictions, the City of San Rafael, in many ways, is functionally the fire service provider for the entire study area. Such an arrangement allows for continuous service throughout the study area in the near future; however, continued sustainability should be addressed through regional collaboration and consideration of long-term agency reorganization options. Substantial planning activity should occur at both the individual agency level and through regional collaboration of all fire-service providing agencies in the study area. A regional fire-services group could be established with representation from each agency, other local stakeholders, and local decision-makers to lead this process.

It would be beneficial to further study whether a structural reorganization of the fire service providers into a single agency would improve the sustainability and efficiency of fire services to the entire region. Such a reorganization could be achieved through the formation of a singular regional fire agency. A singular regional fire providing agency, through a merger or a new district formation, would provide a singular fire service organization providing ensured long-term cohesiveness of services to the entire region. Additionally, this would reduce the strain of providing a complex and increasingly more costly service to smaller agencies, such as Marinwood CSD.

b. Sustainability of Contractual Agreements

Historically, Marinwood CSD's fire service agreements with other local agencies have constituted a significant portion of their fire service revenue. Both the contract with CSA No. 13 and the contract with the City of San Rafael have relatively short-term termination periods. CSA No. 13 is subject to renewal annually, and San Rafael's may be terminated

with a 90-day notice. While both contracts could ostensibly be continued indefinitely, should either be terminated, Marinwood CSD would have very little lead time as a government agency to establish other service options. Staffing, budget, and service ability would potentially be challenging, as was historically the case and documented in the 2006 San Rafael Regional MSR. In addition to engaging in strategic and long-term planning activities, the District may consider extending the notice of termination time period for its contracts to provide it with more time to react and plan for significant changes to its budget and service ability.

c. Fire Contracts Outside Agency Boundaries

Effective January 1, 2016, G.C. Section 56134 requires that LAFCo approve fire protection contracts or agreements for the exercise of new or extended fire protection services outside a public agency's jurisdictional boundaries. Marin LAFCo has defined that such a contract is eligible for Commission review and approval if it:

- Transfers responsibility for providing services in more than 25 percent of the area within the jurisdictional boundaries of any public agency affected by the contract or agreement; or
- Changes the employment status of more than 25 percent of the employees of any public agency affected by the contract or agreement; or
- A contract or agreement for fire protection services outside a public agency's jurisdictional boundaries that, in combination with other contracts or agreements, would produce the results described in either threshold (a) or (b) above.

Contracts or agreements for fire protection services entered into before December 31, 2015, or recipients of LAFCo approval after December 31, 2015, do not require separate LAFCo approval due to renewals or renegotiated terms, so long as they do not constitute a new 25 percent change in service area or employment status per the above conditions. Except for the specific situations exempted by G.C. Section 56134, a public agency may provide new or extended services pursuant to a fire protection contract that meets the above-defined thresholds only if it first requests and receives written approval from the Commission.

Marinwood CSD, the City of San Rafael, Marin County, and any other fire-service provider in the region that enters into a contract to provide fire-services beyond its jurisdictional boundaries should consult with the Marin LAFCo Executive Officer to determine whether any current fire protection contracts or agreements are subject to Commission review and approval, if they have not done so already. (Recommended San Rafael Area MSR Oct. 2019)

Status of Item – After the release of the 2019 MSR, several meetings were held regarding the possible consolidation of services into a single fire department. Unfortunately, not all parties were interested in continuing this discussion, so work stopped. Earlier this year, San Rafael and Marinwood began discussing a new agreement that would further tie the two fire departments together to address staffing issues. In 2025, Marinwood CSD and the City of San Rafael had talks about new agreements for sharing staff. After discussions were had, San Rafael expressed that they are not interested in pursuing consolidation at

this time but are open to exploring alternate staffing models within the current agreement structure.

8. Marin LAFCo recommends that the Novato Fire Protection District and the Marinwood Community Services District engage in discussions to determine each agency's willingness to enter into a joint feasibility study to explore the possibility of consolidating Marinwood Community Services District's fire and emergency medical services provision into the Novato Fire Protection District (Recommended Novato Area MSR June 2026)

9. Shared Services Between Agencies

Outside of emergency response and field operations, fire departments face the same administrative issues as any other agency. However, some of those administrative services have unique aspects that differ from those of non-emergency services, making it challenging to recruit new hires and experienced staff. Additionally, smaller agencies may not have enough work for a full-time employee, leading to the hiring of employees who divide their time among multiple responsibilities/roles. LAFCo would recommend that fire agencies begin discussing what a shared administrative system may look like. This system may not be implemented right away, but could be slowly transitioned into as current staff retire or move on to other opportunities. (New Recommendation)

10. Stinson Beach Fire House

Since the last MSR for the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District was completed in June 2022, the agency has undergone a transition as it brings on more full-time fire personnel. This transition has created the need for a new firehouse that can facilitate a hybrid department with both volunteers and full-time staff. As remarked in the SBFPD section and discussed during meetings with the District, additional funding opportunities may need to be explored to support the development of a new facility. Given that they have a larger number of seasonal and tourist visitors compared to year-round residents, they may need to look to Federal, State, or private funding sources to ensure they can provide proper services year-round. (New Recommendation)

6.0 MARIN COUNTY FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

6.1 OVERVIEW

In Marin County, California, fire service providers include a network of twelve agencies that work collaboratively to ensure community safety and effective fire response. These agencies encompass municipal, special district, and volunteer firefighters, all dedicated to protecting lives, property, and natural resources from the threats of fire and other emergencies. The fire service providers operate from a total of 38 fire stations across the county. Their responsibilities extend beyond fire suppression to include fire prevention education, emergency medical services, and community outreach initiatives.

The following section provides a broad overview of the county's fire services. For a more in-depth analysis, please refer to the individual profiles, which are an updated compilation of Municipal Service Reviews completed in the past five years.

6.2 MARIN COUNTY FIRE HISTORY

1800s-1900

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, fire services in Marin County existed as needed, distinct from today's official jurisdictional boundaries and officialized special districts. Some departments were operated by railroad companies, some by army bases, some by cities, and some by citizens. Many departments had niche purposes geared towards fighting structure fires or wildfires, but not both. The majority of departments created before 1910 were volunteers and were operated by volunteer citizens who raised funds through dances, card games, cake sales, and other methods. The first paid firefighter in Marin County was not hired until 1907 by the Mill Valley Fire Department. Even then, for decades, the paid staff consisted primarily of chiefs, with maybe one or two paid firefighters. The remaining firefighters were volunteers staffed through their respective fire districts.

With so few people living in the County, large, incorporated fire departments were unnecessary and would have been frivolous given the circumstances. The demands of the fire department also did not necessitate highly trained individuals, and they failed to justify a paid staff. It was a time before the specialized demands of the modern fire apparatus, and extensive training for firefighters was not essential to their job performance. Chemical carts, tanks, and wagons that horses or men drew were the most common in Marin in the early days of many FDs.

1900s-1930

Throughout the 1900s, the most common impetus for creating fire departments in the County was other tragic events that highlighted the importance of having an emergency response agency

within a certain community. Many Fires occurred in this time period including the 1923 Ignacio fire burning around 50,000 acres, the 1929 Mill Valley Fire that destroyed over 100 homes, the 1919 Sausalito/Mill Valley Fires and later on the 1936 Bolinas Ridge Fire which burned 4,000 acres. Departments such as the Olema Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) and Forest Knolls VFD² were created in the wake of destructive structure fires in neighboring areas or wildfires like the 1923 Northern California fires. For other departments like Homestead Valley VFD and Sausalito Fire Department, it was more personal, a “not again situation,” where a house or community of houses was lost unnecessarily to a fire that got out of control and wasn’t responded to adequately or efficiently enough because of a lack of response capacity in the immediate area³⁴. One major event that significantly influenced the formation and growth of several fire departments was the Great San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. The earthquake devastated San Francisco, causing widespread destruction and displacement. As many residents fled the city, Marin County experienced a substantial population increase, which in turn drove the need for expanded fire protection and emergency services in the area.

1930s-1960s

The most significant change in Marin County occurred with the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937. The development of the bridge significantly improved access to the area and triggered a sharp rise in the county’s population⁵. This population increase brought greater responsibilities for fire departments, expanding their focus from just structural and wildfire incidents to the inclusion of emergency response and fire prevention. As the scope of fire department duties broadened, roles within these departments became more specialized.

In 1941, the Marin County Fire Department was founded to better coordinate fire protection across the growing region⁶. That same year, World War II caused a population surge in Marin County. The establishment of shipyards along the southeastern coast attracted large numbers of workers, fueling a population boom and increasing emergency service calls. These conditions also led to the creation of the Marinship Fire Department and the expansion of the Sausalito Fire Department⁷.

The wartime atmosphere heightened concerns about safety, as fears of air raids and other attacks prompted the formation or growth of several local fire departments, including the Alto Fire Department and, to some extent, the Marin City Volunteer Fire Department. During this period, fire departments developed response plans specifically for air raids and other wartime threats.

² “Forest Knolls VFD,” *Marin County Fire History*, <https://www.marinfirehistory.org/forest-knolls-vfd.html>.

³ “Homestead Valley VFD.” *Marin County Fire History*. <https://www.marinfirehistory.org/homestead-valley-vfd.html>.

⁴ “Fire in Sausalito.” *Sausalito Historical Society*. <https://www.sausalitohistoricalsociety.com/2019-events/2019/9/20/fire-in-sausalito>.

⁵ “Golden Gate Bridge forever changed Marin.” *Marin Independent Journal*, <https://www.marinij.com/2012/05/25/golden-gate-bridge-forever-changed-marin/>

⁶ “History of the Fire Department.” *Marin County Fire*, <https://www.marincounty.gov/departments/fire/administration/history-fire-department>

⁷ “History of Marinship Fire Department...” *Marin Fire History*, <https://www.marinfirehistory.org/marinship-fd.html>

In 1946, Sausalito became one of the first cities in the state to purchase a fire ambulance. By 1954, the Bolinas Volunteer Fire Department began providing emergency response services, and in 1962, a volunteer ambulance corps was formed under the leadership of the Stinson Beach Fire Chief. From this point on, emergency response became a central part of fire departments' missions.

1970 - Present

Throughout the 1970s and 1990s, wildfires in Marin were contained but still posed a threat due to the county's dense vegetation and Mediterranean climate. In 1995 devastation struck West Marin in form of the Mount Vision Fire that burnt nearly 13,000 acres starting in the Point Reyes National Seashore, due to illegal campfires, and spreading as far east as Inverness Park where 44 homes were destroyed⁸. Vision fire which was reported on October 3rd spread rapidly burning 1,600 acres by the morning of October 4th to 9,000 acres by the end of that same day. Smaller and larger fires, like the Vision Fire, drew attention to the need for faster response and mutual aid shifting the perspective from "what if" to the inevitable "when"⁹ and expanding the focus of fire services beyond suppression to prevention. These wildfires led to the strengthening of the Marin County Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the expansion of Marin County Fire's seasonal workforce to better respond to wildfire risks and enhance the wildland-urban interface. Some of these enhancements included the addition of larger and more frequent prescribed fires or controlled burns to increase wildland health, reducing flammable underbrush and ecosystem restoration to mimic natural fire cycle but in a controlled setting.

Through the 1980s, increased fire risk led to some park rangers with the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) becoming Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). By the end of the decade, all their rangers were certified as EMTs. At this time, agencies also collaborated with MMWD to increase access to fire roads and water storage for agencies within the Mt. Tamalpais watershed¹⁰. The uptick in wildfires in these years, along with smaller fires, led to stronger fire prevention efforts and helped shape the Marin County Fire Department's wildfire management programs.

In recent years, from 2010 to the present, California has experienced an increase in fire activity, and Marin County has not been immune to these threats. Large fires, such as those in 2017, occurred, including a fire that broke out at Dixie Elementary School in Marinwood. The same year, the nearby Pine Fire burned 15 acres near Kent Lake but was quickly contained without threatening any structures. Additionally, the 2020 Woodward Fire was fueled by factors such as extreme weather conditions, drought, and high winds. These fires affected homes and businesses, stressing the importance of fire-adaptive communities. In response, Marin County has increased its focus on community engagement, preparedness, and fire mitigation strategies through

⁸ "Vision Fire: Burning Issues in Fire Management" National Park Services, https://www.nps.gov/pore/learn/nature/wildlandfire_visionfire_burningissues.htm

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ "The Marin Municipal Water District Fire Department." Marin Fire History, <https://www.marinfirehistory.org/marin-municipal-water-district.html>

programs such as the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) 2020¹¹, Fire Safe Marin, founded in 1992¹², the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and other city- and neighborhood-based programs. The region has invested in more sophisticated early detection systems, fire breaks, and coordination between local, state, and federal agencies to protect both life and property from increasingly frequent and intense wildfires.

6.3 CURRENT FIRE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Marin County, with a population of 262,321, as of the 2020 Census, is served by 12¹³ direct fire service providers overseeing both incorporated municipalities and unincorporated areas, which total 456.89 square miles. The county includes 11 incorporated municipalities, with fire services provided by a mix of public, volunteer, and private agencies. Notably, the Muir Beach Fire Department operates as a volunteer fire agency, and the Nicasio Volunteer Department functions as a private fire brigade. Although mentioned in this report Marin LAFCo does not have oversight of private and volunteer fire service providers. Among these agencies, three Community Service Areas (CSAs) provide fire services at the county level by the Marin County Fire Department or a neighboring agency, while the remainder operate at local or district levels. Two agencies, the Central Marin Fire Department (covering Larkspur and Corte Madera) and Ross Valley Fire Department (covering Ross, San Anselmo, Fairfax, and Sleepy Hollow), function as Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs).

The County contracts with the state for certain fire-related services, particularly in West Marin, where the state also helps fund fire apparatus in exchange for fire-fighting services. This arrangement allows the county to manage fire risks effectively while receiving reimbursement from the state for services rendered, ensuring a more coordinated and well-funded fire response system.

6.4 PUBLIC PROTECTION CLASSIFICATIONS

Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO)¹⁴, which is an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire protection efforts throughout the United States. An ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible that can be given to any fire department using this metric. Insurance companies often use ISO information combined with other factors to establish local property insurance rates. While many communities receive a single number classification, many smaller and more rural communities receive a split classification to reflect the risk of loss more precisely. In the case of a split classification, the first number refers to the classification of properties within five road miles of a fire station and within 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply. The second number, with either the X or Y designation, applies to properties within 5 road miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply (i.e., fire hydrant). ISO assigns Class 10 to properties beyond five road miles. Most insurance agencies throughout the country use the PPC classification for underwriting and calculating

¹¹ <https://www.marinwildfire.org/>

¹² <https://firesafemarin.org/>

¹³ Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District is not a direct provider. Fire protection services are provided by RVFD through a JPA. Which is why although referenced through the report it is not listed as a “direct” provider.

¹⁴ [ISO, “PPC Program.”](#)

premiums on residential, commercial, and industrial properties. Table 6-1 shows the breakdown of the PPC rating of the agencies providing fire services.

Table 6-1: Marin County Service Providers

Service Provider	Public Protection Classification	Area Served
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Class 3/3x	Bolinas
Central Marin Fire Department (JPA)	Class 2	City of Larkspur and City of Corte Madera and some surrounding unincorporated areas
Marin County Fire Department (CSA 13 &31)	Class 3/3x	Marin County Fire Department provides most of its services to unincorporated areas
Inverness Public Utility District	Class 5/5x	Inverness
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Class 1	Kentfield, Greenbrae
Marinwood Community Service District	Class 2/2x	Marinwood
Novato Fire Protection District	Class 1	Novato and surrounding unincorporated areas
Ross Valley Fire Department (JPA) and Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District	Class 2	San Anselmo, Fairfax, Ross, and Sleepy Hollow
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Class 1/1x	Sausalito, Tamalpais Homestead Valley, Strawberry, Mill Valley (2023)
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Class 4/4x	Stinson Beach
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Class 1	Town of Tiburon and City of Belvedere
San Rafael Fire Department	Class 1	San Rafael, Marinwood CSD, CSA 19

Table 6-2: Marin County Volunteer and Privat Fire Service Providers

Volunteer and Private Fire Departments
Nicassio Volunteer Fire Department
Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department
Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade
Tomales Volunteer Fire Company

6.5 MUTUAL & AUTOMATIC AID

A mutual aid agreement is a type of agreement between two government agencies that outlines the terms and conditions for the exchange of services between them. This agreement allows the agencies to share services, information, and resources while minimizing duplication of effort and maximizing efficiency. The Mutual Aid Agreement typically specifies the type of services to be provided, the duration of the agreement, payment terms, and any other relevant details. By entering into a mutual service agreement, government agencies can improve their ability to deliver services to the public while reducing costs and increasing collaboration among agencies.

The following is a list of existing mutual aid agreements in Marin County that exist among some or all fire agencies.

- Countywide Mutual Threat Zone Plan

- Marin Sonoma County Mutual Threat Zone Plan
- [Marin County Mutual Aid Agreement](#)
- County of Marin Urban Search and Rescue
- County of Marin Office of Emergency Services
- State of California Master Mutual Aid
- North Bay Incident Management Team

6.6 STATIONS AND STAFFING

In Marin County, there are approximately 553 full-time employees, not including part-time, seasonal and volunteers, working across 12 fire agencies. These agencies operate from 36 strategically located fire stations throughout the county to reduce response times. The distribution of stations ensures efficient coverage for fire suppression, medical emergencies, and other incidents. The combination of professional and volunteer personnel provides a flexible and coordinated emergency response system for the county.

Table 6-3: Fire Service Providers Staffing and Apparatus

Personnel	Stations	Fire Apparatuses	Other Equipment
Bolinas Fire Protection District			
5 (FTE), 21 Volunteers	One	2 Type 1 Engine, 1 Type 3 Engine, Utility Vehicle, Command Vehicle, Flatbed Pickup	
Central Marin Fire Department (JPA)			
40 Personnel FTE	Four	3 Type 1 fire engines, 1 Advanced Life Support (ALS), 2 Type 3 wildland engines, and 1 Type 1 tactical water tender.	
Marin County Fire Department (CSA 13,19 &31)			
149 (FTE, seasonal and volunteer), 14 Tamalpais Wildland Fire Crew	Six	9 Type 1 Engines, 1 Type 2 Engine, 14 Type 3 Engines, 6 Type 6 Engines, 4 water Tenders, 5 ambulances, 5 boats, 11 Cars, 1 Class 7 Truck, 2 Class 8 Trucks, 6 Crew Carriers, 16 Crew Trucks, 11 Rescue Watercraft, 1 Skid Steer, 1 Skip Loader, 10 SUV's, 33 Trailers, 43 Trucks, and 9 Utility Terrain Vehicles	12 Cameras, 2 Lookout Towers, 5 chippers, 1 dozer, 2 Equipment Trailers, 4 Excavators, 1 Grader
Inverness Public Utility District (IPUD)			
2 FTE, 4 part-time and 20 volunteers	One	1 Type 1 engines, 1 Type 6 engine, 1 small rescue, 2 utility/command vehicles	
Kentfield Fire Protection District			
13 personnel FTE	One	Engine 17 is a 2018 Pierce Engine, 17-A is a 2006 Pierce Dash, 2002 Pierce Dash, 2005 Westates HME and 1 2915 Dodge Ram Engine 2500, 2615 Type 6 Wildland Fire Engine 2020.	
Marinwood Community Service District			
9 personnel	One	1 Type 1 Engine and 1 Type 3 Engine	
Novato Fire Protection District			
88 personnel, 12 Reserves and 15 explorers	5 stations, 1 Admin building	5 front-line type 1 engines include a rescue pumper, 2 type 1 reserve engines, 1 type 1 training engine, 1 Truck, 3 Type III, 3 first out ambulances, 2 reserve ambulances, 9 command vehicles, 1 reserve command vehicle, 1 water tender, 11	Thermal imaging cameras and a weather station, 1 training tower

		administrative pool vehicle, 3 utility pick-ups, 1 van, 2 UTV's, 1 training forklift	
Ross Valley Fire Department (JPA)			
39 personnel	Three	3 Type 1 engines, 1 reserve Type one engine, 1 OES engine, 1 Type 3 engine, Fire Chief Command Vehicle, Battalion Chief Command Vehicles, Utility Vehicles, and Inspector Vehicles	
Southern Marin Fire Protection District/ Mill Valley Fire Department			
93 personnel FTE	Five	4 Type 1 (+1 reserve), two Type 3, two ALS ambulances (+1 reserve), one medium rescue truck, one ladder truck, one command vehicle, one utility task vehicle (UTV), 4 utility vehicles, 1 Inflatable Rescue Boat, 1 Dive Team Tender, 1 40' Metalcraft Fire Boat, 2 Rescue Watercraft	
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District			
8 FTE and 15 volunteer	1 Station, 1 Annex	2 Type 1, 1 Type 3, 1 BLS ambulance, 2 utility vehicles, 1 water rescue craft, 1 Tactical Water Tender	
Tiburon Fire Protection District (Belvedere FD)			
34 personnel FTE	Two	2 Type 1 Engines, 1 Type 3 Engine, 1 Reserve Engine, 1 Ambulance, 1 Rescue Unit, 1 Fireboat, 1 Command Vehicle, 1 Chief Vehicle, 1 Day Battalion Chief Vehicle, 2 Prevention Vehicles, 2 Utility Pickups	
San Rafael Fire Department			
82 Personnel	Six	5 Type 1 Engines, 1 Ladder Truck, 1 Type 3 Engine, 1 Type 6 Engine, 3 Reserve Engines, 1 Reserve Truck, 4 Ambulances, 2 Reserve Ambulances, 1 Fire boat, 1 Jet Ski, 2 UTVs, 5 Command Vehicles, 3 Pickups, 1 Stake Side Truck, 1 Mobile Repair Truck.	Air Trailer Unit, Medical Supply Trailer

6.7 RESPONSE AND SERVICES

Across Marin County, the services offered by fire agencies vary widely. While all agencies provide fire suppression, some also offer specialized services such as water rescue, mountain rescue, and residential/commercial water provisions. Additionally, most agencies engage in both wildfire prevention and suppression efforts.

Emergency and Medical Services

While this study includes a high-level overview of emergency medical services (EMS), Marin LAFCo does not have regulatory authority over paramedic service delivery. EMS is governed at the county level through the local Marin County Emergency Medical Services Agency¹⁵ under California Health and Safety Code, which establishes standards for paramedic services, including

¹⁵ <https://ems.marinhhs.org/marin-ems>

system design, provider authorization, and medical protocols. Throughout the county, there are five paramedic zones¹⁶. Although fire departments provide emergency services in some of these zones, there are independent paramedic agencies in others that provide support to the fire departments that operate in that area without being directly integrated into those departments. Refer to individual agency profiles for details on emergency response apparatus inventory.

The below agencies provide ALS and BLS care in and beyond their service area, with Marin County Fire Department providing medical services to districts that do not provide medical services. Although not formally designated within the County's paramedic response zones, other agencies, including Marinwood CSD, continue to provide both advanced life support (ALS) and basic life support (BLS) services within their jurisdictions through locally supported response models. The five paramedic zones are Zone A – Novato, Zone B – San Rafael, Zone C – Central Marin, Zone D – Southern Marin, Zone E – West Marin

Zone A - Novato Area through Novato Fire Protection District

The Emergency Medical Services Division of the Novato Fire Protection District is overseen by a Battalion Chief-EMS and supported by a Medical Director, EMS educator, and quality improvement staff. The division focuses on maintaining and improving patient care through a structured Continuous Quality Improvement program that uses data analysis and peer review. The EMS Division also evaluates medical equipment, supports responder well-being through internal behavioral health programs, and coordinates with external agencies to address broader community needs, including services for vulnerable populations.

Zone B – San Rafael area through the San Rafael Fire Department

The San Rafael Fire Department provides EMS through a fire-based paramedic model, with personnel trained in ALS delivering medical care as part of frontline response. EMS delivery is integrated into daily operations, with fire companies serving as first responders and coordinating with ambulance transport. In 2025, the Department introduced a Basic Life Support (BLS) EMT pilot program, adding a dedicated ambulance staffed by EMTs to respond to lower-acuity calls. This approach allows ALS paramedic units to remain available for critical emergencies, improving system efficiency, resource availability, and response time.

Zone C – Central Marin through Ross Valley Paramedic Authority and Central Marin Fire

The Ross Valley Paramedic Authority (RVPA) provides EMS through an eight-member JPA model serving multiple jurisdictions. RVPA delivers ALS and BLS care through paramedic-staffed ambulances, working in coordination with local fire departments that provide first response. In Zone C, paramedic and ambulance services are supported through contractual and operational partnerships with agencies including Marin County Fire Department and Central Marin Fire Department, which provide staffing, response, and system coordination. Operationally, a tiered response system allows fire and ambulance personnel to respond concurrently, supporting rapid on-scene care and coordinated transport, while the Authority also provides regional oversight and support to participating agencies.

¹⁶ EMS System Information: <https://ems.marinhhs.org/ems-system-information>

Zone D – Southern Marin through Southern Marin Emergency Medical Paramedic System

The Southern Marin Emergency Medical Paramedic System (SMEMPS) provides EMS through a five-member JPA model serving multiple Southern Marin jurisdictions. SMEMPS delivers ALS and BLS care through paramedic-staffed ambulances, working in coordination with local fire departments that provide first response. Paramedic and ambulance services are administered through SMEMPS and supported by member agencies, including the Southern Marin Fire Protection District, which provides staffing and operational response. The tiered response system allows fire and ambulance personnel to respond concurrently, supporting rapid on-scene care and coordinated transport. At the same time, SMEMPS provides regional coordination, contracting, and system oversight across its member agencies.

Zone E – West Marin through Marin County Fire

West Marin is served by the Marin County Fire Department, which provides EMS delivery across a large, primarily rural area. The Department delivers both ALS and BLS care through paramedic-staffed units and works in coordination with local fire service providers. Ambulance transport and paramedic services are operated directly by the County, supporting a coordinated system that integrates career and volunteer resources. The tiered response model allows for simultaneous dispatch of fire and EMS personnel, helping to maintain timely response despite geographic challenges, while County administration provides system oversight, staffing, and operational coordination within the zone.

Technical Rescue

Technical Rescue refers to specialized rescue operations that require specific equipment, techniques, and training. These operations often involve coordination among multiple emergency response teams, such as firefighters, paramedics, and specialized rescue units.

Throughout the county, several agencies are equipped to manage technical rescues, including the Southern Marin Fire Protection District, Central Marin Fire Department, Stinson Beach Fire Protection District, Tiburon Fire Protection District and Novato Fire Protection District. Both the Novato Fire Protection District and Marin County Fire Department operate an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team with a Type 1 designation, indicating their high level of capability for urban search and rescue operations.

The Marin County Fire Department's Urban Search and Rescue team operates under a mutual aid agreement, meaning they can provide personnel and resources to assist with technical rescues in other districts when needed. This collaboration ensures that technical rescue operations are conducted efficiently across the county.

Hazardous Material

The Marin County Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) operates as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) under the coordination of the Marin County Fire Chiefs Association (MCFCA). This specialized team is trained and equipped to respond to hazardous materials incidents throughout the county, ensuring public safety and environmental protection. The HMRT

functions as part of the county’s broader special operations efforts, which include technical rescue and other emergency response capabilities.

Plan Review and Construction Inspection Services

Fire agencies throughout the county provide plan review and construction inspection services to ensure new buildings and renovations meet fire safety standards. These services involve reviewing architectural plans for fire safety compliance, inspecting construction progress, and verifying that fire protection systems (such as sprinklers, alarms, and fire exits) are properly installed. Agencies offering these services include the Marin County Fire Department, San Rafael Fire Department, Novato Fire Protection District, Southern Marin Fire Protection District, Central Marin Fire Department, and Ross Valley Fire Department. Other participating agencies include the Tiburon, Kentfield, Stinson Beach, and Bolinas Fire Protection Districts, as well as the Inverness, Muir Beach, Tomales, Nicasio, and Point Reyes Station Fire Departments.

Public Education and Prevention

All agencies provide many forms of fire prevention and education to the public. The programs are meant to educate the public on evacuation and fire safety. Additionally, many programs developed by these agencies offer affordable opportunities to reduce flammable vegetation throughout the district. The following are types of programs provided by agencies/districts throughout the county chipper days, vegetation management, commercial and residential inspections, First Aid/CPR training.

Emergency Communication (Dispatch)

The Marin County Emergency Command Center (ECC) is a dispatch hub operated by the Marin County Fire Department, launched in 2024 as a unified system for dispatching fire and emergency medical services (EMS) across the county. It was developed to improve interagency coordination and reduce delays by consolidating what were previously separate dispatch systems. Calls originating through the Marin County Sheriff’s 911 system are transferred to the ECC for coordination of fire or EMS responses.

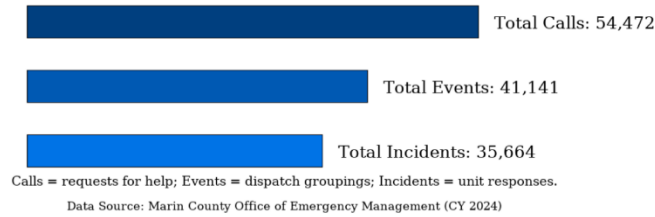
The Emergency Command Center (ECC) at 1600 Los Gamos Drive is managed by a new ECC Director who operates with twelve dispatchers, three fire captains, and support staff on a three-platoon schedule for continuous coverage¹⁷. The ECC required over \$7.7 million in start-up costs, shared between the County and participating fire agencies, with ongoing annual operating costs of about \$5 million—76% funded by local fire agencies and 24% by the County, partially offset by Sheriff’s budget savings.

Functionally, the ECC is organized into regional dispatch zones, North, Central, South, and West Marin, allowing for specific response strategies. It operates using advanced technology, including the HEXAGON computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, Motorola radio systems, and VESTA phone systems. It also relies on the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) network, which ensures interoperable communication with local and regional agencies through dedicated dispatch and tactical talk groups.

¹⁷ Correspondence with Marin County Fire; September 9, 2025

Figure 2: OEM Countywide Call Data

Marin County Office of Emergency Management
CY 2024 Countywide Call Snapshot



6.8 MARIN WILDFIRE PREVENTION AUTHORITY

The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) is a regional wildfire prevention coordination and implementation organization created in 2019 as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). The creation of MWPA stemmed from the Marin County Fire Department’s report Lessons Learned from 2017 North Bay Fire Siege¹⁸ (2018) and Wildfire Preparedness, a New Approach¹⁹, released by the Marin Civil Grand Jury (2019). Following these studies, the Marin Wildfire Prevention Initiative was presented to the Marin County Board of Supervisors, which was followed by the formal adoption of the JPA in 2019 and, later, the passage of the Measure C ballot measure in 2020.

MWPA focuses on vegetation management, community education, evacuation planning, warning systems, and more, with the support of its member agencies. The MWPA operates with a specific set of goals and objectives that include indicators and outcomes monitored by the authority. These goals were created based on the Marin Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)²⁰. These goals include Goal 1: Vegetation Management, Goal 2: Detection, Alert & Evacuation, Goal 3: Grants, Goal 4: Public Outreach & Education, and Goal 5: Defensible Space & Home Hardening.

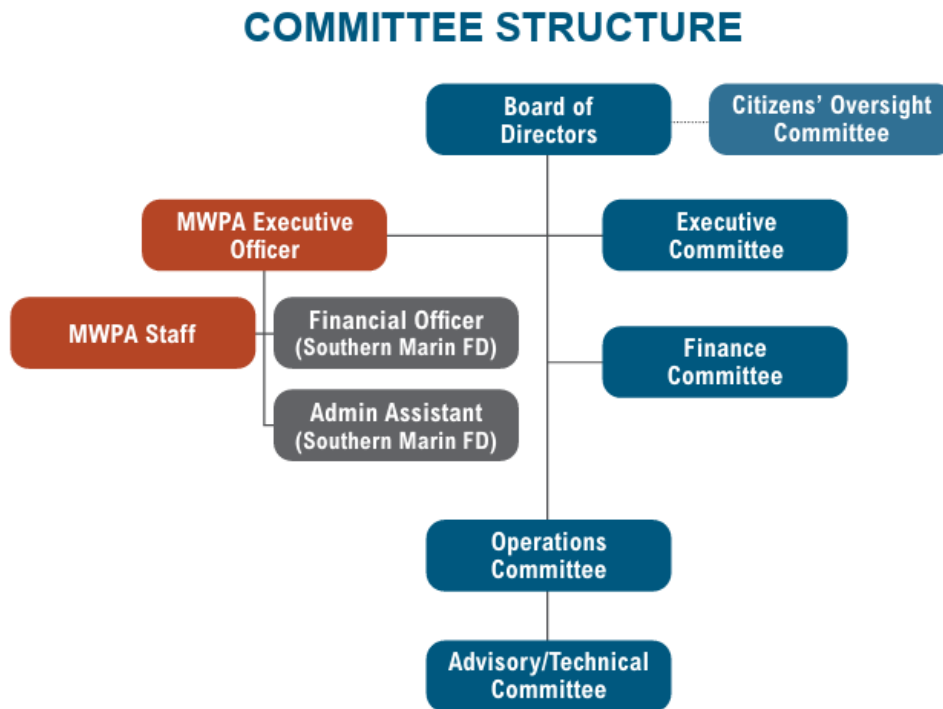
The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority comprises 17 member agencies, including the County and a mix of cities and districts. The membership includes Bolinas Fire Protection District (FPD), City of Larkspur, City of San Rafael, County of Marin Fire, Inverness PUD, Kentfield FPD, Marinwood CSD, Muir Beach CSD, Novato FPD, Sleepy Hollow FPD, Southern Marin FPD, Stinson Beach FPD, Town of Fairfax, Town of Ross, Town of San Anselmo, City of Mill Valley, and the Town of Corte Madera. Each of these member agencies selects an elected official to serve on the Board of Directors for MWPA. Member involvement on the governing level goes beyond the board of directors to include a series of committees as seen in Figure 3.

¹⁸ <https://mwpa.webflow.io/about-mwpa/measure-c>

¹⁹ [Ibid](#)

²⁰ <https://www.marinwildfire.org/about-mwpa/guiding-documents>

Figure 3: MWPA Committee Structure



Funding Framework

The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority is primarily funded by Measure C, passed by voters in 2020. Measure C is a parcel tax applied to all real property in Marin County within the defined boundaries of Member Taxing Entities. Starting in 2020, Measure C lasts for 10 years and collects up to 10 cents per building square foot and a flat annual rate on unimproved parcels, drawing in an estimated \$19 million annually, and is likely to raise more funds each year²¹.

Measure C funds are used solely for wildfire prevention, with 60% of funds allocated to Cross-Jurisdictional Projects (Core Programs), 20% to Defensible Space and Home Hardening, and 20% to Community-Level Wildfire Prevention Mitigation. The sixty percent Core Program funds are spent directly by MWPA on projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries; at least 80% of funds generated in a zone should be spent in that same zone. The 20% allocated to Defensible Space and Home Hardening can be administered by MWPA or by the member agency; the funds are allocated based on revenue generated in that tax rate area. The final 20% of Community-Level Wildfire Prevention Mitigation is given directly to the agency in proportion to the funds raised, which support local fire mitigation efforts determined by that agency's regional needs. See Figure 4 for a detailed summary of funding allocations.

²¹ <https://www.marinwildfire.org/about-mwpa/measure-c>

Figure 4: FY 22'-23' MWPA Budget Summary

Zone	Agency	Local (20%)	D-Space (20%)	Core (60% - Admin Costs)	Core Budget for JPA-wide Proposals	Core Budget per Zone
Central Marin	City of Larkspur	\$216,858.47	\$216,858.47			
Central Marin	Kentfield Fire	\$137,952.23	\$137,952.23			
Central Marin	Sleepy Hollow Fire District	\$47,314.59	\$47,314.59			
Central Marin	Town of Corte Madera	\$170,466.33	\$170,466.33			
Central Marin	Town of Fairfax	\$102,070.24	\$102,070.24			
Central Marin	Town of Ross	\$56,393.37	\$56,393.37			
Central Marin	Town of San Anselmo	\$190,691.19	\$190,691.19			\$1,485,333.69
West Marin	Bolinas Fire District	\$24,889.39	\$24,889.39			
West Marin	Inverness Volunteer Fire Department	\$21,171.88	\$21,171.88			
West Marin	Marin County Fire Department	\$339,913.80	\$339,913.80			
West Marin	Stinson Beach Fire District	\$27,844.78	\$27,844.78			\$394,336.38
Novato	Novato Fire District	\$1,006,437.26	\$1,006,437.26			\$1,597,062.33
San Rafael	City of San Rafael	\$969,009.79	\$969,009.79			
San Rafael	Marinwood Community Services District	\$68,346.54	\$68,346.54			\$1,886,242.35
Southern Marin	City of Mill Valley	\$247,319.23	\$247,319.23			
Southern Marin	Muir Beach Community Services District	\$6,319.95	\$6,319.95			
Southern Marin	Southern Marin Fire District	\$468,238.58	\$468,238.58			\$1,209,298.23
JPA-wide Core					\$4,501,068	
Totals		\$4,101,237.60	\$4,019,212.85*	\$11,073,341.52	\$4,501,068	\$6,572,272.98
Core (JPA-wide Core + Zone-specific Core)						\$11,073,341.52
Total Measure C (Local + D-Space + Core + Admin)						\$20,506,188.00

*minus 2% holdback for abatement.

Wildfire Prevention Services

MWPA funds a range of wildfire prevention programs across the County, including vegetation management, Detection & Evacuation, Grant Programs, Community Involvement and Home Hardening. To mitigate fires in the region, MWPA invests heavily in vegetation management by decreasing fuel buildup. MWPA works towards this goal through the removal of dead material, non-native and fire-hazardous vegetation, and thinning of hazardous native vegetation. MWPA is currently made up of five operational zones (see Figure 5) that have several ongoing vegetation management projects funded by MWPA. One of the most accomplished projects to date is the Greater Ross Valley Shaded Fuel Break²², a 38-mile-long shaded fuel break spanning multiple jurisdictions. A fire occurred near the project area in June 2023, though relatively low intensity, it burned in an area that had been previously prioritized for treatment through wildfire modeling and vegetation management efforts, and the fuel reduction work completed helped limit the fire's intensity and spread. This situation illustrates the role of data-informed planning in identifying higher-risk ignition areas. Had MWPA not been in place, this type of long-term planning and coordination would be difficult to achieve without a regional coordinating entity, helping to avoid

²² <https://www.marinwildfire.org/project/shaded-fuel-break-planning-project>

gaps in wildfire prevention. MWPA actively works on Education and Outreach throughout the region, including projects with FireSafe Marin. The majority of these programs aim to notify residents of ongoing programs as well as resources available to them to aid fire prevention within their home and community. These outreach programs significantly raise awareness of MWPA Fire Resistant Homes programs, including Chipper Days, Defensible Space & Home Hardening Evaluation, and Workforce Development & Staffing. These projects are provided as examples of the services MWPA supports regionally, but do not represent an exhaustive list of MWPA-funded activities.

Figure 5: MWPA Five Operational Areas



The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority functions as a necessary enhancement to local prevention operations, not a replacement. With increased fire risk throughout the region, the coordination provided by MWPA with each agency in prevention efforts, staffing, and fuel reduction priorities prevents jurisdictional boundaries from creating gaps in fire mitigation efforts. MWPA’s involvement in prevention has had a significant impact on wildfire prevention for its member agencies and on opportunities for residents in those areas. MWPA’s vegetation management dashboard tracks completed projects that have treated approximately 1,791 acres countywide, resulting in modeled reductions of 45 percent in overall fire behavior, 50 percent in flame length, and a 62 percent increase in areas suitable for direct attack²³. Fires do not start or stop based on jurisdictional boundaries; they ignite and spread according to environmental conditions. Given this, it should be considered for MWPA’s continued effectiveness that they and the region may be supported by maintaining sufficient flexibility within its prevention funding framework, allowing prevention resources to be directed toward the highest-priority wildfire risk areas as conditions and mitigation needs evolve.

²³ <https://marinwildfire.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/9e2ed6e8d3a54ff180b04896f2008b0f>

6.9 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Fiscal Year 2021-'22 Agency Comparison

Fire service providers throughout Marin County vary in size and populations served. Series one represented the providers' revenue, while series two reflects the expenditures. Most of the fire providers have expenditures that are less than that year's revenue. Please see the individual sections for more in-depth descriptions of the provider's finances.

Audits

All fire service providers had current audit reports posted and accessible on their websites. At the outset of this study, not all agencies had published their 2023 audits, so we focused on Fiscal Year 2021-22, as most of the revenue is derived from property taxes. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic during that period and the years leading up to it, we deemed it appropriate to use data from this fiscal year, given that property tax remains the primary source of funding for most providers and member agency dues for providers that are JPA's. Overall, fire agencies in Marin County are largely in compliance with the requirement to post their audit reports publicly, demonstrating transparency and accountability to the communities they serve. Although this report focuses on Fiscal Year 2021-22, all agencies are in compliance with completion and posting for subsequent years.

Meetings and Agendas

In accordance with the Brown Act (AB 2257), local districts are required to post agendas and minutes of public meetings on their websites. A 2019 amendment to Government Code Section 54954.2 mandates that current meeting agendas be accessible through a prominent, direct link on each district's primary webpage and be provided in a format that is downloadable, indexable, and electronically searchable by commonly used internet search tools. Most if not all, districts in Marin County comply with these requirements, ensuring that meeting materials are publicly accessible and easy to navigate online.

7.0 BOLINAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

7.1 OVERVIEW

The Bolinas Fire Protection District (BFPD) was established in February of 1958 as an independent special district. The BFPD boundary surrounds just over 9.3 square miles of the area, including and surrounding the census-designated place of Bolinas along Marin County’s Pacific Coast. The district serves a population of approximately 1,483 persons²⁴. The last Municipal Service Review that included the BFPD was conducted in June of 2022 as part of the West Marin Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

The primary function of BFPD is to provide fire protection, emergency medical response, disaster planning and response, fire prevention, and fire prevention education services to the unincorporated town of Bolinas and the surrounding area. The District also provides first responder services to the Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The jurisdictional boundary of the District reaches to the top of the Bolinas Ridge to the north, down to Duxbury Point at its southern tip. Part of the BFPD’s eastern border is contiguous with the border of the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District’s boundary. The BFPD participates in the Marin County and California Mutual Aid System with nearby fire districts and responds to wildland fires as needed. The District is also a member agency of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). MWPA aids local fire agencies throughout Marin County with funding for fuel removal projects, defensible space evaluations, and other helpful resources. BFPD is allocated .61% of MWPA’s total annual funding.

Table 7-1 - Bolinas Fire Protection District Overview

Bolinas Fire Protection District			
Primary Contact:	Chief George Krakauer	Phone:	(415)-868-1566
Headquarters:	100 Mesa Road, Bolinas, CA 94924		
Formation Date:	March 7, 1958		
Services Provided:	Fire Protection and Emergency Response		
Service Area:	6,009 acres	Population Served:	1,483

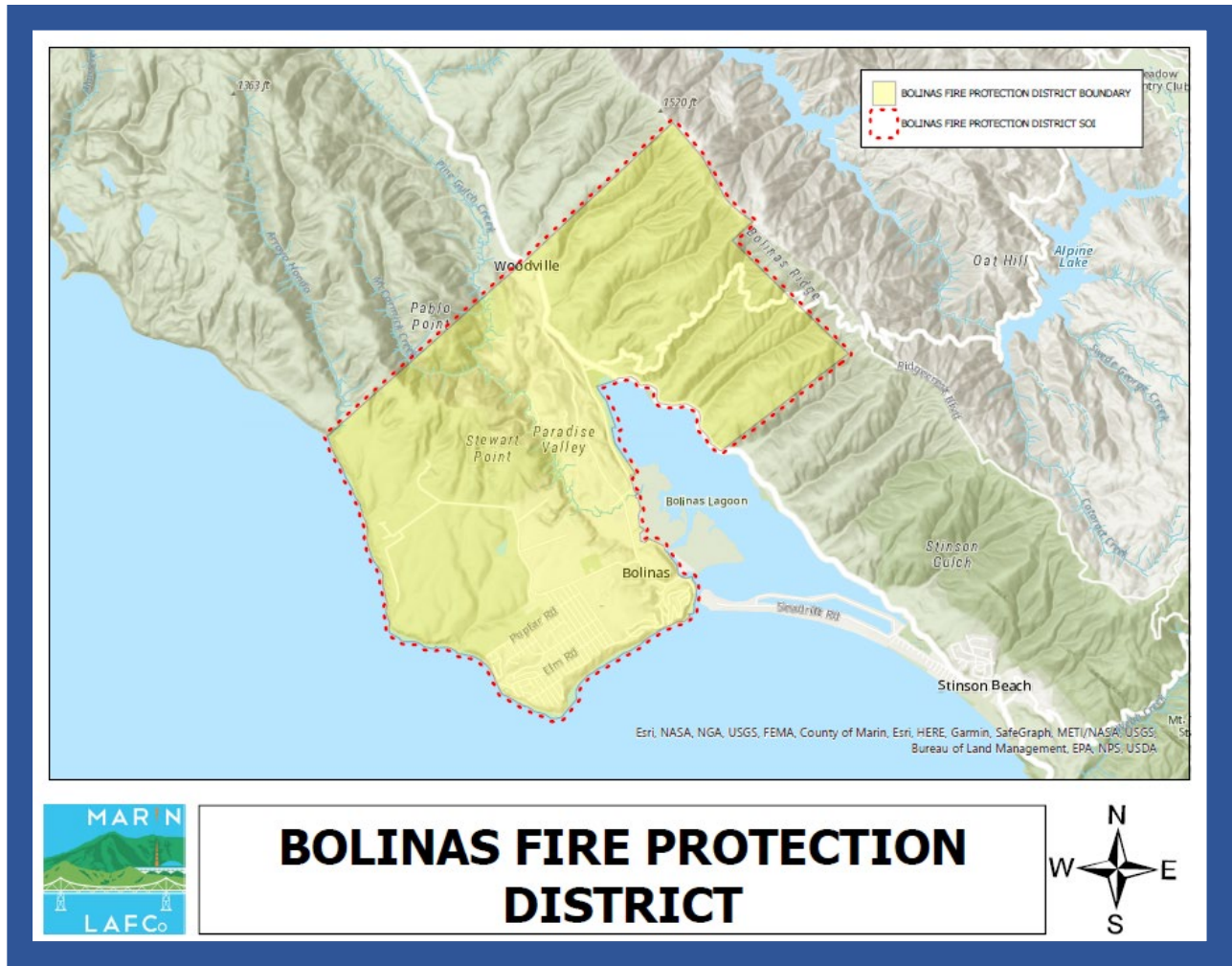
7.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Bolinas Fire Protection District was established as an independent Special District whose legal authority and responsibilities are contained in the State of California Health and Safety Code Sections 13800-13970. The Bolinas Volunteer Fire Department began providing fire protection services to the community years before the official formation of the District, but on February 14th, 1958, the Bolinas Fire Protection District was formally organized. The District’s firehouse was originally built on Mesa Road in 1970. In 1998, engineers determined that the

²⁴ [2020 US Census Redistricting Data](#)

building did not meet state building codes and would not withstand an earthquake larger than 6.5. In 2003, a tax measure (Measure F) was passed by the voters agreeing to a new parcel tax in order to fund the construction of a new firehouse. In February of 2006, the old firehouse was demolished and in July of 2007, the new firehouse was opened on the same site.

Figure 6: Bolinas Fire Protection District Jurisdictional Boundary and Sphere of Influence



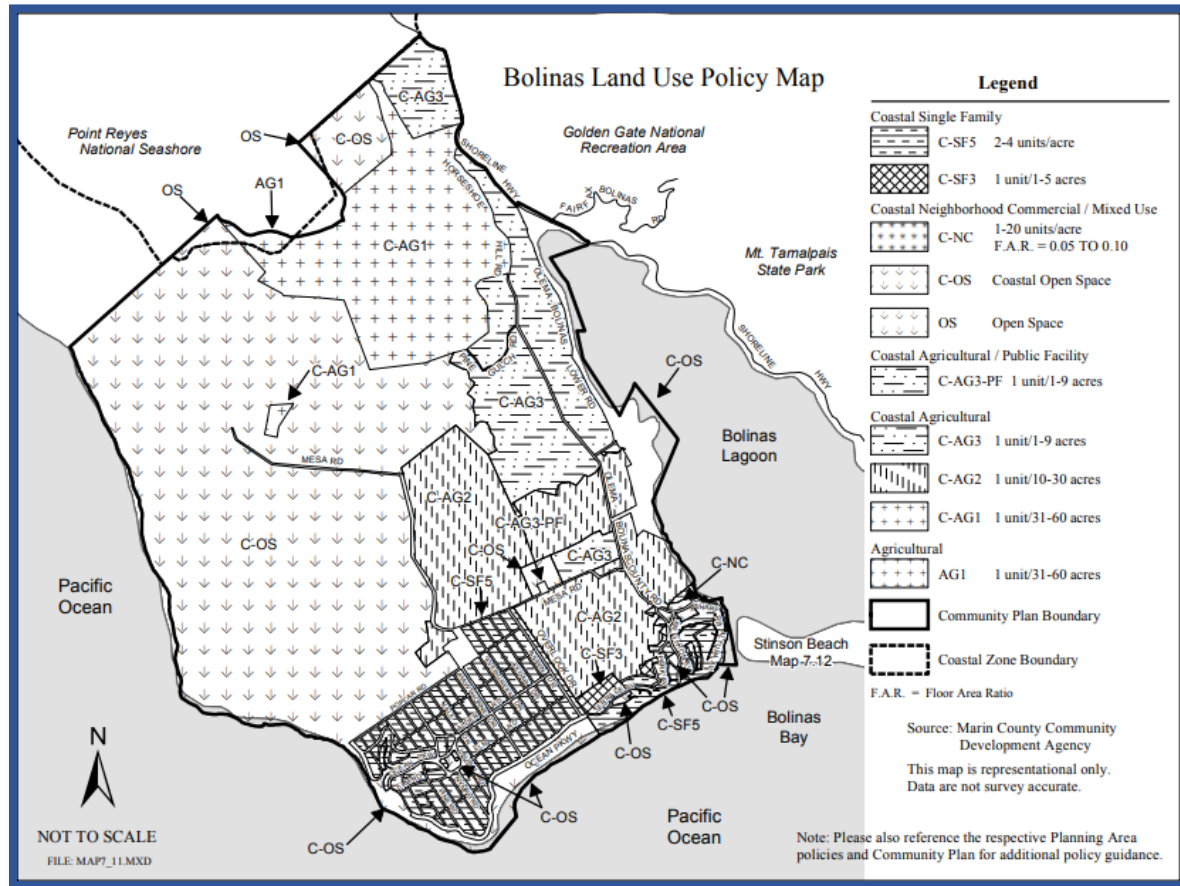
District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

Bolinas Fire Protection District’s service boundary, which currently encompasses just under 9.4 square miles, includes all of the residential areas of the census-designated place of Bolinas and stretches to the north up to the top of the Bolinas Ridge. The boundary encompasses agricultural lands, privately owned parklands like the Audubon Canyon Ranch, and publicly owned parklands like parts of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Point Reyes National Seashore. There are a total of 1,207 parcels within the District’s boundary and 887 total living units. The BFPD’s southeastern boundary is contiguous with the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District’s northern boundary. The District’s sphere of influence is coterminous with its jurisdictional boundary. The sphere of influence was last updated in August of 2022.

Growth and Population

The Bolinas Fire Protection District encompasses the census-designated place (CDP) of Bolinas. According to the 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the population of the CDP is 1,483, which is approximately an 8% decrease from the 2010 population of 1,620²⁵. The most recent census data shows the CDP to have 887 total housing units, with 660 of those units occupied. The theoretical buildout for the planning area is 975 units. The estimated maximum population projection (2030) based on the County-Wide Plan is 2,362, which would be over an 85% increase. This projection, however, does not account for the constraints on water and sewer capacity within the CDP that are currently in place. While the planning area has approximately 110 parcels remaining that are currently zoned to allow for new construction, the community's water district, Bolinas Community Public Utility District, has had a moratorium in place on new connections to the municipal water supply since 1971. This moratorium poses a significant hurdle for any new development. A land-use map for the planning area can be seen below in

Figure 7: Bolinas Land Use Map



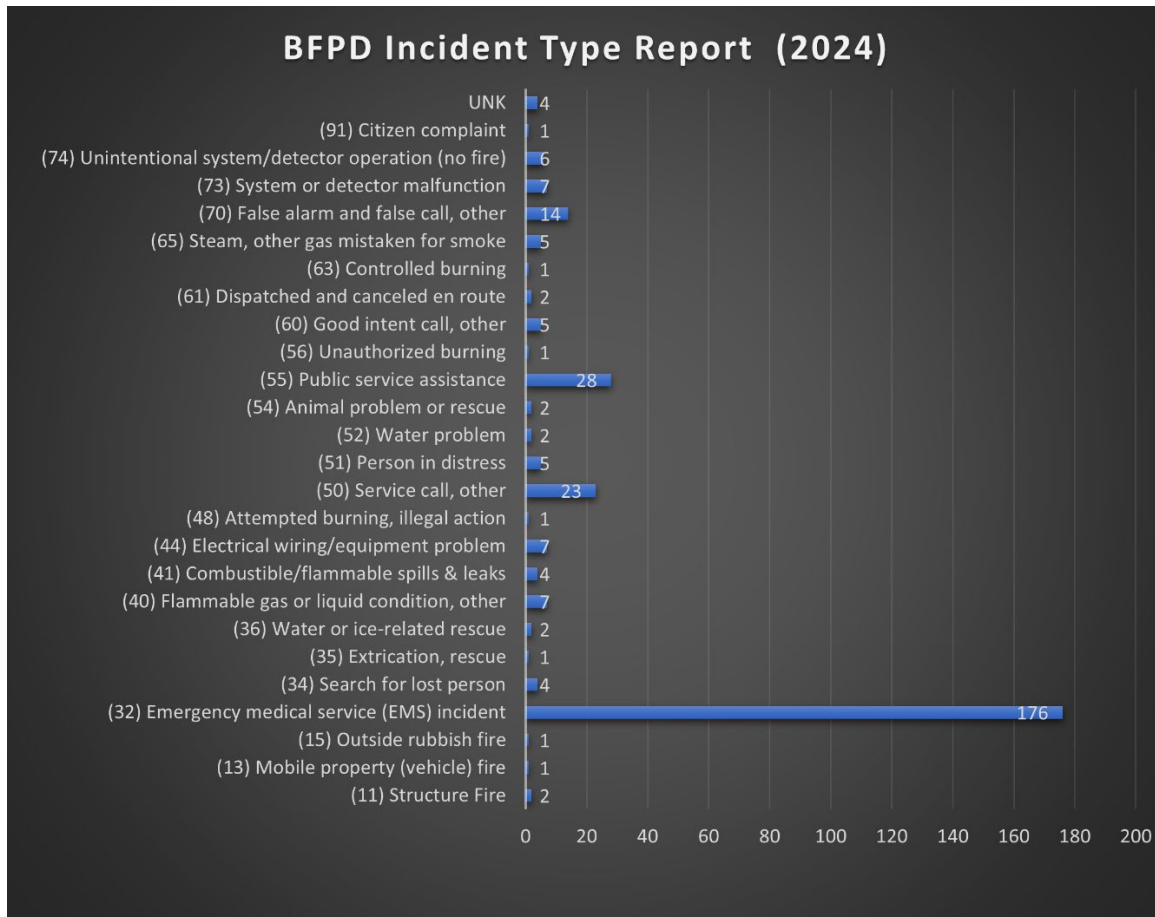
²⁵ [2020 US Census Redistricting Data](#)

7.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The Bolinas Fire Protection District provides fire protection, emergency medical aid, and disaster management/preparedness. Incident call types include fire, overpressure rupture/explosion/overheat, rescue and emergency medical service incident, hazardous conditions, service call, good intent call, and special incident type. BFPD receives an average of 310 calls per year (3-year average as of July 1, 2025), with the majority being for Rescue/Emergency Medical. During the calendar year of 2024, the BFPD responded to 312 incidents. Of these, 58.6 percent were for emergency medical services and 3.5 percent were for fires. Figure 7-3 below shows a complete breakdown of the calls for service received in 2024 for BFPD. The District has one station with 5.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) paid employees, as well as 21 volunteer firefighters. A majority of the firefighters are also Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certified. The Fire Chief oversees the general operations of the District in accordance with the policy direction of the Board of Directors. The Fire Chief is supported by an Assistant Chief, three Duty Officers, and an Administrative Manager.

Figure 8: Bolinas Fire Protection District Incident Type Report



Effective January 1, 2022, from a report that was created in September of 2021, the Bolinas Fire Protection District was given a Class 3/3x Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire-protection efforts throughout the United States. Ratings range on a scale of 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and class 10 indicates that the area’s fire suppression program does not meet ISO’s minimum criteria.²⁶ FPD’s rating of 3/3x puts the district in the top 14% of fire protection agencies in the country.

Facilities and Apparatus

The Bolinas Fire Protection District owns, operates, and maintains one fire station, which is concurrently used as its administrative building. The station is located at 100 Mesa Road in Bolinas. The BFPD also has a variety of apparatus that serve the community, ranging from support vehicles to fire engines. The District maintains a Vehicle Replacement Reserve Fund that receives annual allocations based on revenue and expenditure projections. The fund currently sits at approximately \$100,000 in the event that one of their current vehicles requires replacement. The District’s apparatus are as follows:

- 2010 Spartan Type 1 Engine
- 1997 Ford Type 1 Engine
- 1999 International Type 3 Engine
- 2012 Ford Utility Vehicle
- 2002 Chevrolet Command Vehicle
- 2002 Chevrolet Flatbed Pickup

7.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

The Bolinas Fire Protection District has a five-member board that is elected to four-year terms through an at-large election. All directors are required to live within the District’s jurisdictional boundary. Elections for board seats take place in November of each even-numbered year. The Board of Directors meets regularly on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Bolinas Fire Protection District Headquarters located at 100 Mesa Road in Bolinas.

Table 7-2: Bolinas Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Member	Position	Date of Next Seat Election
Claire Molesworth	President	November 2026
William Pierce	Director	November 2028
Nancy Torrey	Vice-President	November 2026
Chris Martinelli	Director	November 2028
Simon Dunne	Director	November 2028

²⁶ [How the PPC Program Works](#)

7.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The Bolinas Fire Protection District makes a concerted effort to maintain high accountability and transparency with all its activities and currently either meets or exceeds all California State mandates on agency transparency. The BFPD website (www.bolinasfire.org) provides information on defensible space, board meetings, financial reports, stations, history, response statistics, disaster preparedness, and more.

Meetings and Agendas

The BFPD Board of Directors meets regularly on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Bolinas Fire Protection District Headquarters at 100 Mesa Road in Bolinas. Special meetings are held as needed to go over specific topics. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the BFPD website (www.bolinasfire.org/board-meetings-1).

Annual Budget Review

The District's budget, adopted no later than the June board meeting each year, provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The Administrative Manager produces monthly reports on expense activity that assist the Chief in monitoring activities and programs. These reports are presented to the Board every month to ensure budgetary compliance.

7.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Most of the annual operating revenue brought in by the Bolinas Fire Protection District is collected in property taxes within the District's boundaries. Additional revenue includes a parcel tax, voter-approved special tax, grant funding, and rental revenue. In November of 2005, the BFPD Board of Directors officially adopted a balanced budget policy requiring the District's budgeted expenses not to exceed budgeted revenues in any fiscal year.²⁷

Revenue and Expenditure

Revenue sources for the BFPD come primarily from a portion of the 1% property tax on residents within its district boundaries. Of the 1% property tax, the BFPD receives \$662,459 for FY '22. The other major sources of revenue for the District include rental income (14%), Measure F parcel tax (9%), transient occupancy tax (7%), a voter-approved tax assessment for paramedic services (6%), as well as an annual disbursement from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority by way of the voter-approved Measure C parcel tax (4%). For FY '22, the District saw a revenue increase of \$259,444 (23.85%) primarily due to an increase in grant revenue.

²⁷ [BFPD Balanced Budget Policy](#)

Total revenue for the District for FY 2021-22 for FY'22 was 1,347,426. A breakdown of the most recent 5-year span of audited actuals for expenditures and revenues for the district is available below in Table 7-3.

In FY 2021–22, the Bolinas Fire Protection District incurred total expenditures of \$965,728, most of which were associated with salaries and employee benefits, totaling \$394,992. Other significant expenditure categories included materials and services, at 27.3%, and depreciation expense, at 25.8% of the total expenditures. There were no capital asset purchases during the fiscal year.

Table 7-3: Bolinas Fire Protection District 5-Year Financial Overview

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-18	\$809,458	\$592,710	\$216,748
FY 2018-19	\$883,457	\$656,542	\$226,915
FY 2019-20	\$1,052,268	\$707,792	\$344,476
FY 2020-21	\$1,087,982	\$997,348	\$90,634
FY 2021-22	\$1,347,426	\$965,728	\$381,698

Debt

As of June 30, 2022, the Bolinas Fire Protection District had approximately \$1,419,433 in long-term debt. In 2003, the District entered into a “lease, lease-back” agreement in order to procure bonds in the amount of \$2,260,000, which were issued in order to finance the acquisition and construction of a new District Headquarters. The bonds were (and continue to be) paid by the voter-approved parcel tax (Measure F). On December 15, 2016, the District refinanced the bonds in the principal amount of \$1,555,000. The refinancing reduced the principal and interest payments from the original rates of 4.0% - 5.1% to the updated rates of 3.5% - 4.5%. The bonds are scheduled to be repaid in August of 2045. In June of 2008, the District was issued Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (Solar Bonds) for \$189,000 to finance the purchase and installation of solar panels. These Solar Bonds were fully repaid in 2023.

The BFPD also provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS). CalPERS provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee’s years of service, age, and final compensation. As of June 30, 2022, the BFPD Net Pension Liability was \$109,620. The BFPD pension-funded ratio is 70%.

Financial Audit

The Bolinas Fire Protection District has its financial statements audited on an annual basis. The District contracts with an outside accounting firm, most recently Nigro & Nigro PC, to conduct the audit. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024

Figure 9: Bolinas Fire Protection District Financial Audit Summary

BOLINAS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Statement of Activities

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2022

(With Comparative Information for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2021)

	<u>Governmental Activities</u>	
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Expenses:		
Fire related services:		
Salaries and wages	\$ 361,950	\$ 343,468
Employee benefits	33,432	132,231
Materials and services	263,584	260,326
Depreciation expense	248,600	201,955
Interest expense	58,162	59,368
Total expenses	<u>965,728</u>	<u>997,348</u>
Program revenues:		
Voter-approved special tax – paramedic services	64,217	64,375
Parcel tax – CFD No. 2003-1	99,145	99,012
Solar recovery revenue	11,136	10,718
Other revenue and reimbursements	213	32,322
Operating and capital grant funding:		
Measure W – Transient-Occupancy-Tax – funding	139,804	60,728
Measure C – Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority – funding	207,797	47,393
West Marin Emergency Services	8,045	8,045
Other grant income	5,550	12,500
Total program revenues	<u>535,907</u>	<u>335,093</u>
Net program expense	<u>(429,821)</u>	<u>(662,255)</u>
General revenues:		
Property taxes	662,459	604,441
Rental revenue	161,866	145,128
Investment earnings	(12,806)	3,320
Total general revenues	<u>811,519</u>	<u>752,889</u>
Change in net position	381,698	90,634
Net position:		
Beginning of year	<u>3,866,975</u>	<u>3,776,341</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 4,248,673</u>	<u>\$ 3,866,975</u>

7.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local fire protection agencies like the Bolinas Fire Protection District play a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought, changing climate patterns, wind, and low humidity have the potential to increase the occurrence and severity of wildland fires, which could threaten structures and lives in the Wildland Urban Interface.

The BFPD participated in the Marin Community Wildfire Protection Plan that was released in 2020. This was a collaborative effort among fire agencies in the county, local fire organizations including FIRESafe Marin, land management agencies, and community stakeholders. Through this effort, areas of concern throughout the county were identified based on population, fire

behavior, vegetation, and other factors. The plan identified BFPD as having the 4th highest amount of total burnable acres, 5,947, of any fire agency in Marin County. Within the plan, several goals were stated, and associated action items were created to better prepare the participating fire agencies throughout the county for wildland fires. One such goal is to “Increase awareness, knowledge, and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and fuels reduction activities, and fire prevention through fire safe building standards”. The BFPD is working towards providing more education to the community about this topic. The District offers educational material on its website on defensible space for property owners, as well as guidelines for community members to create a personal preparedness plan to help residents stay informed and be ready to evacuate quickly if necessary. The District has also prioritized projects aimed towards defensible space, such as chipper days, roadside mowing, and other fuel reduction efforts to help reduce fire hazards throughout neighborhoods in Bolinas.

8.0 CENTRAL MARIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

8.1 OVERVIEW

The Central Marin Fire Department (CMFD) is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that is comprised of the fire departments from the Town of Corte Madera and the City of Larkspur. The primary function of CMFD is to provide structural fire and emergency medical response to the Town of Corte Madera, the City of Larkspur, and the surrounding unincorporated areas. The CMFD also participates in the Marin County and California Mutual Aid system with nearby fire districts and responds to wildland fires as needed. While the department in and of itself is not a member of the recently formed Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA), the member agencies that comprise the department are both members of MWPA. The MWPA was formed in an effort to develop and implement comprehensive wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness throughout Marin County. The last municipal service review that included both of the entities that make up CMFD was conducted in June of 2021 as part of the Twin Cities Region Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update. The data and information accumulated in that report have been updated for this particular study to reflect the fiscal year 2021-2022 data.

Table 8-1: CMFD Administrative Overview

Central Marin Fire Department Overview	
Primary Contact:	Chief Ruben Martin
Main Office:	342 Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera
Formation Date:	October 18, 2018
Services Provided:	Fire Protection and Emergency Response
Service Area:	4,905 acres
Population Served	≈22,000

8.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

While the Central Marin Fire Department, as it is currently composed, is still in its infancy as a singular operating entity, the two separate departments that make up CMFD each have history dating back over 100 years. The Town of Corte Madera's department was initially formed as a volunteer fire department in 1908. The volunteers provided fire protection through a chemical engine and two hoses carts. The first true fire truck was a Chevrolet Pope Hartford that was purchased in 1916. In 1928, the Town's voters approved a bond issue for the purchase of an American LaFrance Pumper. The volunteer department became an official municipal department when it was incorporated in 1930. Funds were raised to build a fire station to house the truck on what is now Tamalpais Drive.

The City of Larkspur's fire services began in 1906 with the formation of the Larkspur Association of Volunteer Firemen. At its inception, the only equipment available to the

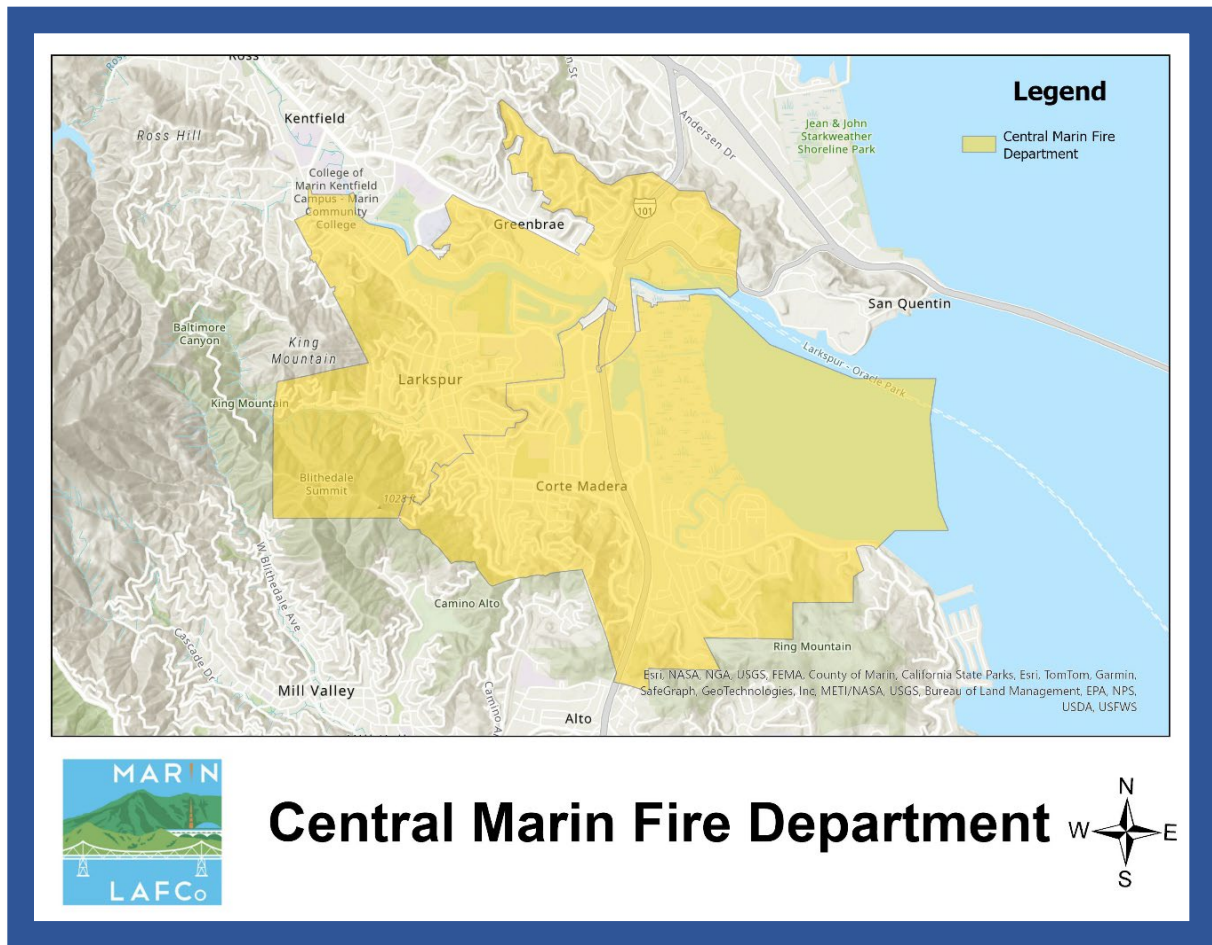
volunteers was a hose cart and a bucket brigade. Within 4 years, the volunteer operation had grown in numbers to 24 and the group had added 500 feet of hose to the original cart but were without a formal firehouse. Thanks in part to the profits the volunteers garnered from the annual outdoor dance they began, known as the Rose Bowl, the volunteers built a strong financial foundation for the department and by the 1930s had purchased a state-of-the-art fire engine, built a new fire station, and installed a Gamewell Fire Alarm System and a Diaphone. The Diaphone was one of the first to be installed in California. The diaphone was used as an alert system that could be heard for up to 7 miles away. The diaphone, while no longer in use, is still operational to this day.

The two separate departments began sharing services on a small scale in 2013. The opportunity to expand their collaborative efforts came in 2015 when the Larkspur and Corte Madera fire chiefs announced their retirements. With an interim chief in place, the two municipalities began negotiations in 2016 that would merge the two departments in a manner similar to the Central Marin Police Authority. In July 2017, a draft JPA agreement was presented at the Shared Fire Services Ad-Hoc Committee meeting, offering a prospective framework for the merger. Finally, in October 2018, the final (and current) version of the Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Larkspur and the Town of Corte Madera was approved. The City of Larkspur and the Town of Corte Madera jointly submitted a request to LAFCo in November 2018 to form the Central Marin Fire Authority, and the following month, LAFCo approved the request.

District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

CMFD boundary surrounds approximately 7.6 square miles of the southern Ross Valley area of Marin County. This area also includes service portions of County Service Area 31 (CSA 31) that include the unincorporated areas of the Greenbrae Boardwalk, Lucky Drive, and the San Quentin peninsula. The department serves a population of approximately 22,000 in the southern Ross Valley corridor. The agency does not have a sphere of influence.

Figure 10: Map of CMFD Boundaries



8.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The Central Marin Fire Department provides fire suppression (structure, vegetation, and vehicle), emergency medical services, fire prevention and inspections, vehicle accident response, disaster response, and community education to the Town of Corte Madera and the City of Larkspur as well as to small pockets of unincorporated land that are adjacent to the two municipalities. Incident call types the CMFD responds to include (but are not limited to) building fires, grass and brush fires, vehicle fires, other fires, medical, vehicle accidents, hazardous conditions, good intent, false alarms, and severe weather. The Department operates 4 fire stations located in Larkspur, Greenbrae, and two stations in Corte Madera.

CMFD employs 40 full-time personnel, including firefighters, engineers, captains, and battalion chiefs who provide 24/7 emergency response coverage. The department operates on a shift schedule that ensures continuous staffing of engines and other apparatus. The Fire Chief oversees the general operations of the Department in accordance with the policy direction of the

Management Committee and the Fire Council. The Fire Chief is supported in operational management by a Deputy Fire Chief. In addition, the Department has a shared services agreement with the Kentfield Fire Protection District that allows the agencies to share personnel to jointly provide fire and emergency services within their operational areas, thus improving the delivery of services in each agency’s jurisdiction while achieving greater efficiency and economic benefits.

The Department has been classified most recently as a Class 2 Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire protection efforts throughout the United States. An ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible that can be given to any fire department using this metric, with both Class 1 and Class 2 being considered “excellent”. Insurance companies often use ISO information combined with other factors to establish local property insurance rates – generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection. The Department remains determined to achieve a Class 1 ISO classification with continued improvements moving forward.

Figure 11: CMFD Organizational Chart



Facilities and Apparatus

The Central Marin Fire Department operates and maintains 4 fire stations, with 1 concurrently used as its administrative building (Station 14). The Stations are:

- Station 13 – 5600 Paradise Drive, Corte Madera, CA 94925
- Station 14 – 342 Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera, CA 94925
- Station 15 – 420 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939
- Station 16 – 15 Barry Way, Greenbrae, CA 94904

CMFD has a variety of apparatuses that serve the community, from utility vehicles to paramedic trucks. A full outline of the Department’s current apparatus can be seen below.

Three Type 1 fire engines, one Advanced Life Support (ALS), cross-staffs two Type 3 wildland engines, and one Type 1 tactical water tender.

8.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Governance

The Central Marin Fire Department is governed by a four-member council (Fire Council) comprising two council members from each participating agency. Each of the member agencies also appoints an alternate in the event that a member is unavailable for a scheduled meeting date. The members of the Fire Council appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair on an annual basis. Because the members of the Fire Council must be elected officials from the participating municipalities, there are no term limits levied on Fire Council seats.

The CMFD Fire Council oversees policy adoption, adopts an annual budget, sets fees for service, and enters into contracts, among other things. Any change in the member agency’s cost-sharing percentage, any revision of the adopted budget that results in an increase in annual contribution, any single expenditure in excess of 3% of the adopted operating budget, or the closing of any existing fire stations requires the unanimous vote of the full Fire Council.

The CMFD Fire Council regularly meets on the second Thursday in February, May, August, and November at 6:30 pm at the Central Marin Police Authority community room, located at 250 Doherty Drive in Larkspur. A list of the current CMFD Fire Council members and their agency affiliations can be seen below in Table 8-2.

Table 8-2: CMFD Board Member Overview

Member	Position
Rosa Thomas	Town of Corte Madera
Pat Ravasio	Town of Corte Madera
Fred Casissa	Town of Corte Madera Alternate
Catherine Way	City of Larkspur
Scot Candell	City of Larkspur
Stephanie Andre	City of Larkspur Alternate

Administration

CMFD receives administrative oversight from a two-person Management Committee. The Management Committee is comprised of the City Manager of Larkspur and the Town Manager of Corte Madera. The Management Committee is charged with administering the priorities and policies established by the Fire Council for fire services, appointing a Fire Chief, and approving the hiring or termination of all personnel proposed by the Fire Chief, among other duties. The current Fire Chief for CMFD is Ruben Martin.

8.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The Central Marin Fire Department maintains a high level of accountability and transparency surrounding all of its activities. The CMFD website (www.centralmarinfire.org) provides information on Fire Council meetings, financial reports, stations, history, prevention, and more. At this time, all legal requirements for public agency transparency are being met or exceeded by the department.

Meetings and Agenda

The CMFD Fire Council regularly meets on the second Thursday in February, May, August, and November at 6:30 pm at the Central Marin Police Authority community room, located at 250 Doherty Drive in Larkspur. Special meetings are held as necessary to go over specific topics such as the annual budget. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found by way of a link on the CMFD website (www.centralmarinfire.org/admin/fire-council) that routes the request to the document archive within the Town of Corte Madera's website (www.townofcortemadera.org/AgendaCenter/Fire-Council-Central-Marin-Fire-Authorit-11).

Annual Budget Review

The CMFD maintains extensive budgetary controls. The budget, adopted no later than June 15th of each year, provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The budget does not include the costs of replacement or reconstruction of any Fire Station that is owned by either of the member agencies. These costs remain the separate responsibility of the owning member. The Management Committee and the Fire Chief control and account for all expenditures under the adopted budget and make regular reports to the Fire Council on expense and revenue activities.

8.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Revenues and Expenditures

Approximately 85% of CMFD's annual operating revenues come from contributions from its two member agencies²⁸. The agency's agreement sets forth an equal cost-share percentage of 50%. For fiscal year (FY) 2021-22, each agency's General Fund contribution was \$4,868,860. Both agencies show an increase in their contributions to the CMFD General Fund of approximately 4.2% in comparison to their adopted contributions in FY 2020-21. Additional revenue for the Department comes by way of Measure C and miscellaneous other revenues. Measure C is a regionwide tax measure that was passed in March of 2020 that levies a tax on residential and commercial properties that is pooled into an MWPA fund and distributed among MWPA service area/member agencies. Projected Measure C revenues for FY 2021-22 for the Town of Corte Madera and the City of Larkspur combined is \$748,520.

There was an increase in expenditures from the previous fiscal year by \$1,477,270. The department projects to increase its total labor costs from the previous fiscal year by \$637,537

²⁸ [CMFD FY 2021-2022 Audit](#)

(6.8%). The general fund spent \$534,301 more than it earned in FY '21- '22, which includes \$567,919 for insurance claims and premiums. A summary of the last four fiscal years' revenues and expenditures can be seen below in Table 8-3.

Table 8-3: Four-Year Overview of CMFD Audited Revenues and Expenditures²⁹

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2018-2019	\$9,155,368	\$9,010,214	\$145,154
FY 2019-2020	\$9,864,493	\$9,740,769	\$123,724
FY 2020-2021	\$12,169,040	\$11,811,448	\$357,592
FY 2021-2022	\$12,770,192	\$13,288,718	\$(518,526)

Financial Audit

The Central Marin Fire Department prepares an annual report on the Department’s financial statements in accordance with established governmental accounting standards. The independent certified accounting firm, The Pun Group, prepared the most recent audited financial statement, which issued an unqualified or “clean” opinion of the Department’s financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. A breakdown of the revenues and expenditures and the change in fund balances for the year ending June 30, 2022, can be seen below in Figure 8-3.

²⁹ A four-year overview is shown instead of a five-year overview because FY 2017-18 was not publicly available on the CMFD website.

Figure 12: CMFD Breakdown of Revenues, Expenditures, and Change in Funds

Central Marin Fire Authority
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances
Governmental Funds
For the Year Ended June 30, 2022

	Major Funds		Non-Major Fund	Total Governmental Funds
	General Fund	Measure C Special Revenue Fund	Measure F Special Revenue Fund	
REVENUES:				
Intergovernmental:				
Contributions from Larkspur	\$ 4,868,860	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,868,860
Contributions from Corte Madera	4,868,860	89,651	-	4,958,511
State revenue	1,102,240	-	-	1,102,240
Local agencies revenue	37,613	-	-	37,613
Grant revenue	45,000	-	-	45,000
Special taxes	-	1,222,872	-	1,222,872
Charges for services	160,611	-	-	160,611
Miscellaneous revenue	354,485	20,000	-	374,485
Total revenues	11,437,669	1,332,523	-	12,770,192
EXPENDITURES:				
Current:				
Personnel	9,813,417	187,456	-	10,000,873
Outside services	677,684	1,055,800	-	1,733,484
Training and education	20,648	-	-	20,648
Dues and subscriptions	7,426	-	-	7,426
Equipment maintenance	31,256	-	-	31,256
Building maintenance	5,393	-	-	5,393
Vehicle maintenance	95,275	-	-	95,275
Utilities	95,236	-	-	95,236
Supplies	347,985	10,468	-	358,453
Minor equipment	98,473	-	-	98,473
Insurance claims	567,919	-	-	567,919
Capital outlay	57,944	63,024	-	120,968
Debt service:				
Principal	135,613	-	-	135,613
Interest and fiscal charges	17,701	-	-	17,701
Total expenditures	11,971,970	1,316,748	-	13,288,718
NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCES	(534,301)	15,775	-	(518,526)
FUND BALANCES:				
Beginning of year, as restated (Note 12)	936,718	68,560	588	1,005,866
End of year	\$ 402,417	\$ 84,335	\$ 588	\$ 487,340

Debt

The Department, as of June 30, 2022, is carrying \$576,985 in long-term debt. The following outlines the three sources that comprise this debt:

- **Notes Payable – Fire Engine Lease** - In 2021, the Authority finalized a lease-purchase agreement for \$712,598 for one Pierce Enforcer Custom Pumper. The lease requires annual payments of \$153,314 at 2.48 percent interest. As of June 30, 2022, the remaining principal balance was \$576,985.
- **Compensated Absences** – The department offers its employees the opportunity to accrue paid leave that can be cashed out upon the end of employment at the current rate of pay at the time of separation. The government-wide statement of net position reports the

liability, segregating the amount expected to be paid within one year as a current liability. As of June 30, 2022, the Department had a balance of \$304,350 due in over a year in accrued compensated absences, with \$35,424 due within one year.

- **Workers' Compensation Claims** – The accrued claims payable is based upon an actuarial review of the program's discounted and undiscounted liability for outstanding claims as of June 30, 2022. As of that date, the department had an ending balance liability of \$138,982 due in over a year, with \$318,819 due within one year.

While the Central Marin Fire Department does provide a pension plan for its employees and is part of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS), as of the most recent audit, the Department carried no pension liability of its own. CalPERS provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee's years of service, age, and final compensation. Within the language of the Joint Powers Agreement, both parties agreed to keep all of the unfunded pension liabilities tied to any employee of the Department prior to the enactment of the agreement tied strictly to the member agencies and for them not to be transferred to the Department. Any subsequent hire's pension liabilities would be the burden of the department. As of June 30, 2022, the CMFA total Net Pension Liability and OPEB Liability was \$8,719,927. The CMFD total funded ratio is 86.1%.

In addition to the pension plan, the CMFD provides retirees with post-retirement benefits (OPEB). As of June 30, 2022, the Department carried a net OPEB liability of \$(8,880,191). OPEB liability agreement between the two member agencies states that any liability tied to an employee who had retired prior to the Effective Date (October 18, 2018) would be the liability of the separate member agencies and not of the Department. Any OPEB liability for the Department's current or subsequent employees is the Department's responsibility to track. The member agencies mutually agree on the division of OPEB costs and are responsible for determining the funding source of their respective share of Department OPEB liability costs.

8.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies such as the Central Marin Fire Department play a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought, changing climate patterns, wind, and low humidity have the potential to increase the occurrence and severity of wildland fires, which could threaten structures and lives in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

The CMFD participated in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan that was released in 2016. This was a collaborative effort among fire agencies in the County, local fire organizations including FIRESafe Marin, land management agencies, and community stakeholders. This effort identified areas of concern throughout the county based on population, fire behavior, vegetation, and other factors. Additionally, several goals were stated, and associated action items were created to better prepare Marin County for wildland fires. One such goal is to “increase awareness, knowledge, and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and fuels reduction activities, and fire prevention through fire safe building standards.” Provided on the

Department's website is a thorough guide to defensible space inspections and the requirements of each inspected item in order to assist homeowners in having the necessary knowledge to create a buffer around their homes to help protect them from heat, flames, and embers during a wildfire. In addition, the Department mails a full four-page brochure to homeowners in the WUI prior to annual inspections by the Department in order to ensure the necessary time to prepare for upcoming inspections.

The Department's member agencies, the Town of Corte Madera and the City of Larkspur, are also members of the recently formed Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). The JPA was created in March of 2020 by way of a voter's tax measure (Measure C). The tax measure provides additional funding for local fire agencies within Marin County, designated specifically for wildfire prevention measures such as vegetation management, detection and evacuation program improvements, public education, and defensible space evaluations. The Central Marin Fire Department received \$748,520 in Measure C Wildfire Tax, a grant from Marin Wildfire Prevention JPA in the amount of \$474,353 for evacuation route expenses.

Some of the recent work the Department has performed in an effort to make the WUI area within its boundary safer is the reduction of hazardous vegetation located along the primary and secondary evacuation routes for properties located on and around Madrone Canyon and Kentfield's Blue Ridge. In April of 2024, Department employees spent a period of seven days cutting back and removing vegetation and tree limbs that encroached on the roadway and removing hazardous or combustible vegetation located along the roadway. The Department in collaboration with MWPA offers multiple "chipper days" each year for residents to be able to dispose of their property's brush, branches, and dead vegetation.

9.0 INVERNESS PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

9.1 OVERVIEW

The Inverness Public Utility District (IPUD) was established in 1948 as an independent special district under Section 15501 of the California Public Utilities Code. The Marin County Boundary Change Commission approved the jurisdictional boundary of the District, which was followed by a successful vote of the residents within the boundary. The District is located on the west shore of Tomales Bay, with the Point Reyes National Seashore to its west and south. The District’s jurisdictional boundary encompasses just under 2.2 square miles. IPUD serves a population of approximately 1,447³⁰ persons. The last municipal service review that included the IPUD was conducted in January of 2022.

IPUD’s currently activated service powers include potable water and fire protection. These services are primarily provided to the northern half of the census-designated place (CDP) of Inverness. The District’s primary potable water supply is collected locally from the three perennial creeks within the District by way of permits with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Table 9-1: Inverness Public Utility District Overview

Inverness Public Utility District			
Primary Contact:	Shelley Redding	Phone:	(415)-669-1414
Main Office:	50 Inverness Way North, Inverness 94937		
Formation Date:	1948		
Services Provided:	Potable Water and Fire Protection		
Service Area:	1,410 acres	Population Served:	1,447

9.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Inverness Public Utility District’s formation took place in 1948 with the intention for the District to be the conduit for the purchase of the private water company, Inverness Water Works, and proceed with potable water service duties following the acquisition. Between 1949 and 1951, three separate voter measures failed to pass to purchase the water company, leaving the District essentially dormant until activating its fire protection services in 1951. A vote of the District’s Board of Directors enabled IPUD to assume all service responsibilities of the Inverness Volunteer Fire Department. In 1954, a bond measure was passed to fund the construction of the first firehouse.

³⁰ Population served calculated through the means given in California Code of Regulations Section 64412 using number of current service connections multiplied by 2.8.

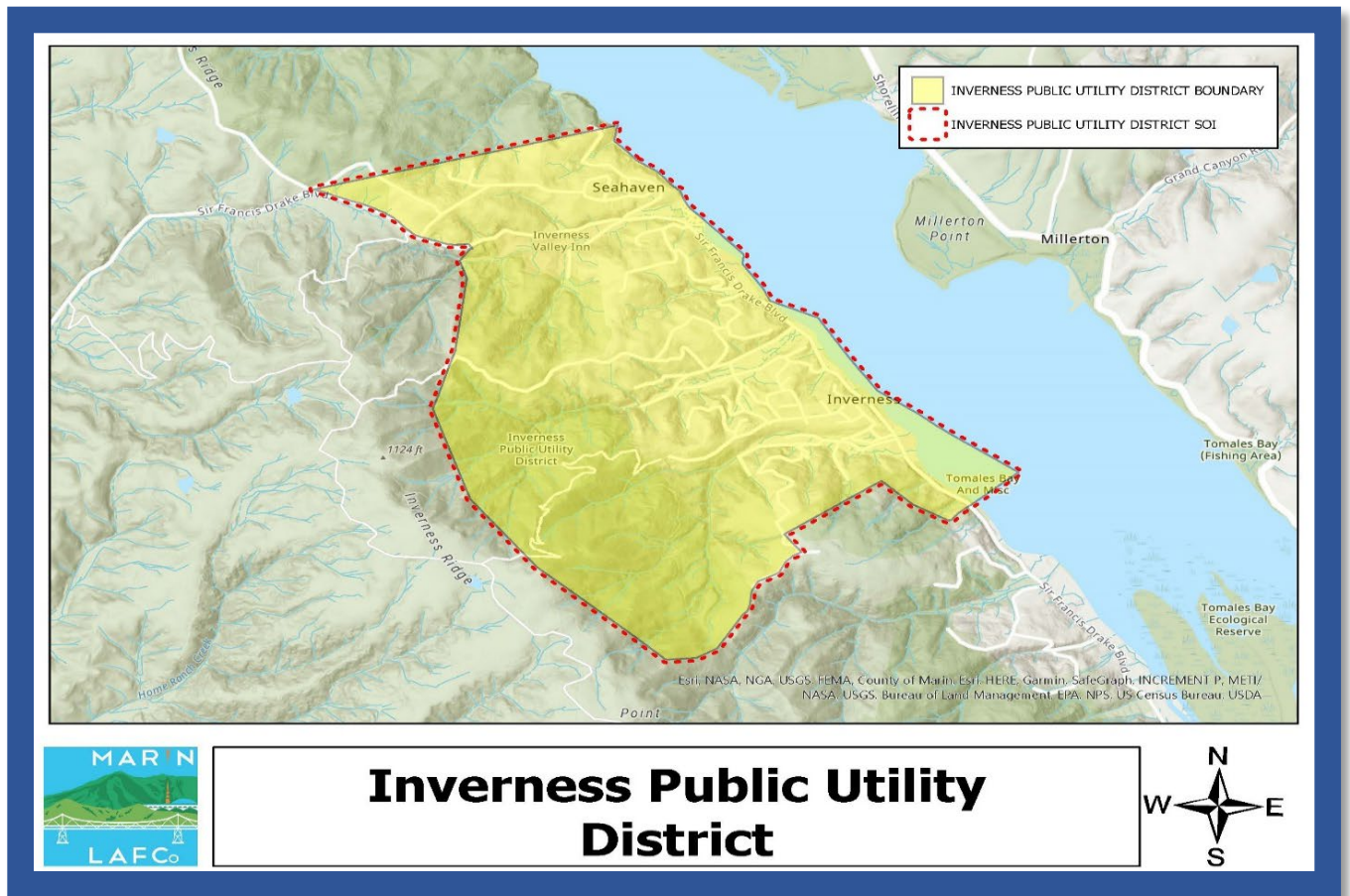
In June of 1980, the voters within the District approved a special tax to fund fire protection and prevention efforts within the District. The tax was levied at six cents per square foot of each structure within the boundary and \$5 per parcel acre for all unimproved properties. The tax contains no sunset date and continues funding the District's fire-related efforts to this day.

District boundary and Sphere of Influence

Inverness Public Utility District's jurisdictional boundary encompasses approximately 2.2 square miles and covers 1,410 acres of unincorporated Marin County. Approximately one-tenth of that acreage (196 acres) is part of the Tomales Bay State Park and is owned by the State of California. In total, there are 755 legal parcels encompassed within IPUD's boundary. The District's boundary has had no recorded changes since LAFcos were created in 1963. In a sphere of influence update conducted in 2017, the Commission concluded that IPUD's boundary continues to be excluded from NMWD's sphere of influence as "... these areas merit detachment from NMWD given the lack of social and economic communities of interests, and furthermore, the Commission encourages the District (NMWD) to submit one or more proposals to facilitate the referenced changes." Although there was previous overlap in water services provider between IPUD and North Marin Water District (NMWD), Marin LAFCo updated the boundaries, removing Inverness from NMWD at our April 2024 meeting, to reflect that all water services within IPUD are provided solely by IPUD.

The District's sphere of influence was established by Marin LAFCo in November of 1984. At that time, the sphere of influence was coterminous with the jurisdictional boundary. Marin LAFCo reaffirmed the sphere of influence in 2022.

Figure 13: Inverness Public Utility District Jurisdictional Boundary and Sphere of Influence

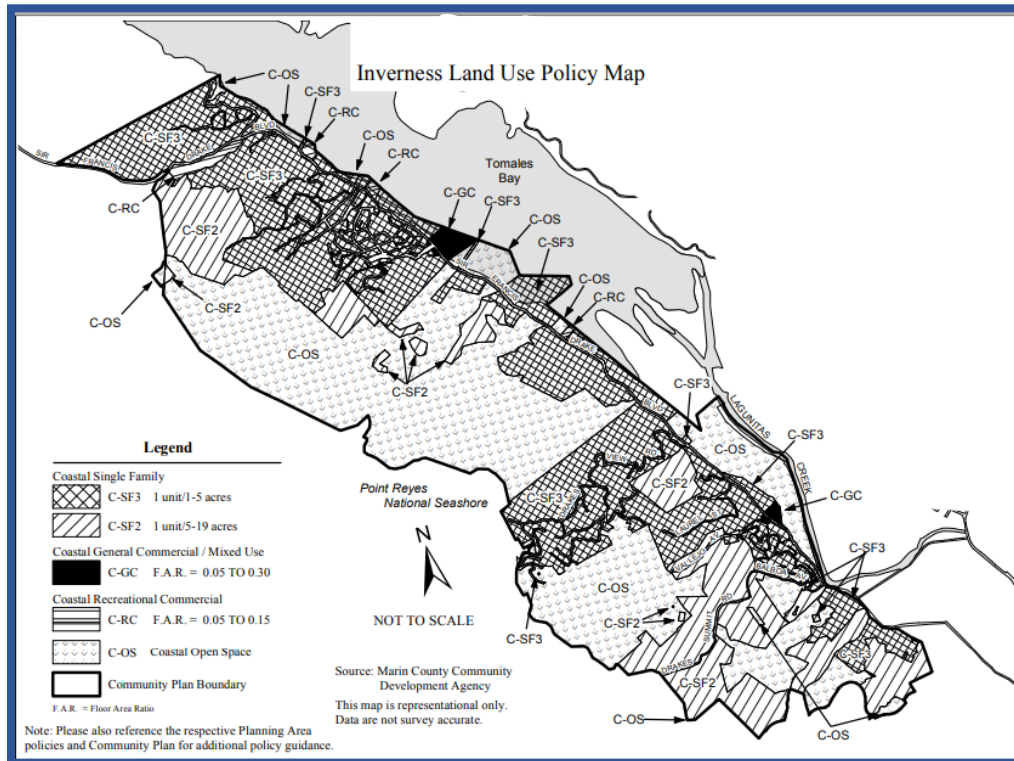


Growth and Population

The Inverness Public Utility District encompasses the northern half of the census-designated place (CDP) of Inverness. According to the 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the population of the entire CDP is 1,379, which is approximately a 6% increase from the 2010 population of 1,304³¹. The most recent census data shows the CDP to have 1,085 total housing units, with 702 of those units occupied. The remaining development potential within the IPUD boundary appears limited to the 55 privately owned undeveloped parcels that meet the minimum development size under existing County zoning standards and appear relatively unhindered by the area’s topographical constraints. A land-use map for the planning area can be seen below in Figure 9-2.

³¹ [2020 US Census Redistricting Data](#)

Figure 14: Inverness Land Use Policy Map



9.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection

The Inverness Public Utility District provides fire protection, emergency medical response, and disaster preparation by way of a vote to activate the District’s latent power in 1951 to assume the management of the Inverness Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD). The District maintains a roster of approximately 20 volunteer firefighters as well as one volunteer Fire Chief, one part-time assistant Fire Chief, two paid on-call Fire Duty Officers, a General Manager, a Water Superintendent, three Water Operators, a Customer Service Manager, a Bookkeeper, and a Grants and Program Manager. The response area for fire services matches the District boundary, with Tomales Bay State Park to the north, Point Reyes National Seashore to the west, Tomales Bay to the east, and Marin County Fire Department’s service area to the south. Training takes place twice a month on Mondays.

The Tomales Bay State Park and the Point Reyes National Seashore both receive fire protection services by way of a contract with the Marin County Fire Department, whose closest stations for response are in Point Reyes and Hicks Valley. The District contracts with MCFD for dispatch services, and an automatic mutual aid response protocol was established with MCFD in 1994. The Department is part of a Cooperative Fire Agreement with the Point Reyes National Seashore; other participants in this agreement include MCFD, Bolinas Fire Protection District, Stinson Beach Fire Protection District, Muir Beach Fire Department, South Marin Fire

Protection District, and Sausalito Fire Department. The District is also a part of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA), which helps to provide annual funding for its 17 member agencies’ fire-related projects and services. The District receives .52% of MWPA’s total annual funding allocations.

Effective September 1, 2021, Inverness Public Utility District was given a Class 5/5x Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire-protection efforts throughout the United States. Ratings range on a scale of 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and class 10 indicates that the area’s fire suppression program does not meet ISO’s minimum criteria.³²

Facilities and Apparatus

The District has a single station, at 50 Inverness Way, on the Village Green near the commercial center of town. The District owns the Firehouse/Village Green parcel. The Firehouse was built in 1956 and remodeled and expanded slightly in 1992. It houses the Fire Department and a community meeting room. District fire suppression equipment includes two Type 1 engines, one Type 6 engine, one small rescue vehicle, and two command/utility vehicle.

9.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

The Inverness Public Utilities District was originally formed with a three-member governing board. The board was expanded in the mid-1970s to a five-member board that is elected to staggered four-year terms. All directors are required to be registered voters within the District’s jurisdictional boundary. The Board of Directors meets regularly on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the IPUD Community Meeting Room at the Inverness Firehouse meeting room at 50 Inverness Way in Inverness.

Table 9-2: Inverness Public Utility District Board of Directors

Member	Position	Term Expiration
Ken Emanuels	Vice-President	December 2026
Dakota Whitney	Director	December 2028
Kathryn Donohue	President	December 2028
Brent Johnson	Director	December 2028
David Press	Treasurer	December 2026

Administration

The Board of Directors of IPUD appoints a General Manager who serves on an at-will basis to oversee all District activities and is exclusively responsible for the implementation of policies established by the Board of Directors. The General Manager oversees six employees, including

³² [How the PPC Program Works](#)

the Volunteer Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Water Superintendent, Customer Services Manager, Bookkeeper, and Grants and Projects Manager.

9.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The Inverness Public Utility District makes a concerted effort to maintain high accountability and transparency with all its activities. The IPUD website (www.invernesspud.org) provides extensive documentation and information on Board meetings, financial reports, services, history, water conservation, resolutions, and more. At this time, the District is meeting all of the set by the State of California for a public agency website.

Meeting and Agendas

The IPUD Board of Directors meets regularly on the third Tuesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the IPUD Community Meeting Room at the Inverness Firehouse meeting room at 50 Inverness Way in Inverness. Special meetings are held as needed to go over specific topics. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the IPUD website (www.invernesspud.org/board-meetings).

Annual Budget Review

The District’s budget, typically adopted no later than the July Board meeting each year, provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The District Manager presents financial reports to the Board every month to ensure budgetary compliance.

9.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

IPUD has maintained a positive budgeted revenue-to-expense differential in each of the five fiscal years, FY 2017-18 to 2021-22. The primary revenue sources for the District are water charges and property taxes, which combined account for approximately 90% of IPUD’s annual revenue. The primary annual expense for the IPUD, with approximately 70% of the District’s annual expenses, is personnel costs. The total revenue for the District for fiscal year 2021-22 is \$1,377,564. The total revenues for public safety for FY’22 was \$948,784 with expenditures of \$447,802. The District had an unrestricted net position of \$2,775,07 at the end of FY ’22. A breakdown of the past 5 years of projected revenues and expenses can be seen in Table 9-3.

Table 9-3: Inverness Public Utility District Board of Directors

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-18	\$596,292	\$534,401	\$61,891
FY 2018-19	\$645,192	\$ 691,331	\$ (46,139)
FY 2019-20	\$754,145	\$556,768	\$197,377
FY 2020-21	\$1,236,652	\$1,113,690	\$122,962
FY 2021-22	\$1,522,302	\$1,266,624	\$255,678

Revenue and Expenditures

The Public Safety revenues and expenditures are built into the overall Inverness Public Utility District’s Budget. The majority of funding for fire services comes from Property Taxes (76%) and Capital and Operating grant revenues (23%). Expenditures for Public Safety consist of fire services totaling \$424,354 and a Capital Outlay of \$23,448.

Debt

IPUD provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS). CalPERS provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee’s years of service, age, and final compensation. The District maintains two distinct benefit packages – one for public safety (fire) and one for non-public safety (water). As of June 30, 2022, the District’s (both water and fire services) Net Pension Liability was reported at \$199,094 and is 73% funded. In addition to the pension plan, the District provides other post-employment benefits (OPEB) to its retirees. As of June 30, 2022, the District carried a net OPEB liability of \$557,502. The District currently has 10 employees, both active and inactive, in its OPEB plan.

Financial Audit

The Inverness Public Utilities District annually has its financial statements audited and contracts with an outside accounting firm, Nigro and Nigro PC. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024

Figure 15: Inverness PUD Audited Summary

	Governmental Activities		Business-Type Activities		Total	
	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2021
REVENUES:						
Program revenues	\$ -	\$ 87,202	\$ 569,915	\$ 582,436	\$ 569,915	\$ 669,638
General revenues	948,784	552,668	3,603	14,346	952,387	567,014
Total revenues	948,784	639,870	573,518	596,782	1,522,302	1,236,652
EXPENSES:						
Operations	463,180	450,453	700,951	506,802	1,164,131	957,255
Depreciation expense	5,223	52,133	95,587	104,302	100,810	156,435
Interest expense	-	-	1,683	-	1,683	-
Total expenses	468,403	502,586	798,221	611,104	1,266,624	1,113,690
Change in net position	480,381	137,284	(224,703)	(14,322)	255,678	122,962
NET POSITION:						
Beginning of year	1,941,214	1,803,930	578,181	592,503	2,519,395	2,396,433
End of year	\$ 2,421,595	\$ 1,941,214	\$ 353,478	\$ 578,181	\$ 2,775,073	\$ 2,519,395

9.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies such as the Inverness Public Utility District play a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought and increasingly unpredictable climate patterns have significantly increased the importance for local agencies to

step up their own conservation and long-term planning measures as well as making a concerted effort towards higher levels of public outreach.

As the District is located in the wildland-urban interface and has experienced a significant wildland fire (Vision Fire) that destroyed 48 homes in 1995 just outside of the District, IPUD is proactive within its financial capabilities in wildland fire fuel abatement. Through the District's participation in the JPA with the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority has expanded its fuel management efforts within the District. It now offers two annual opportunities for residents to have a chipper crew sent directly to their homes to dispose of organic materials, thereby promoting the improvement of defensible space around private properties. IPUD also has increased vegetation management on evacuation routes and around critical infrastructure locations. IPUD contracts with Marin County Fire to perform annual fire safety inspections of properties within the District. District staff consult with MWPA staff and Marin County Fire on proposed project work.

10.0 KENTFIELD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

10.1 OVERVIEW

The Kentfield Fire Protection District (KFPD) is an independent special district formed in 1922 and is responsible for fire protection, emergency medical services, hazardous materials first responder, fire inspection, code enforcement, and fire investigation and rescue in the Census Designated Place (CDP) of Kentfield. The District is approximately 2.7 square miles³³ and sits to the north of the City of Larkspur and borders the City of San Rafael to the District's east and the Town of Ross to the District's north. The District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. The last Municipal Service Review that included KFPD was conducted in 2020 as part of the Upper Ross Valley Region Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

Table 10-1: KFPD Administrative Overview

Kentfield Fire Protection District			
Primary Contact:	Chief Mark Pomi	Phone	(415)-453-7464
Main Office:	1004 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, Kentfield, CA 94904		
Formation Date:	1922		
Services Provided:	Fire Protection and Emergency Response		
Service Area:	1,751 acres		
Population Served:	≈6,500		

10.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Kentfield Fire Protection District's formation dates back to October of 1920, when fifty Kentfield citizens petitioned the Marin County Board of Supervisors to form a new fire district and appoint a Board of Fire Commissioners. In November of 1920, John Heckler, Chas Ackerman, and Jos Neal were appointed. In March of 1921, Kentfield residents passed a vote to levy a tax to support establishing and supplying the District with equipment. The total startup cost was approved at \$4,500. In 1922, the District started service and adopted its first ordinance. The Kentfield Association of Firefighters was formed, and A.W. Rampe was appointed as the first Fire Chief.

In 1934, the District, a founding member of the Marin County Association of Fire Departments, entered into an agreement with the fire departments of San Anselmo, Fairfax, Corte Madera, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Belvedere, and Tiburon to provide and accept mutual aid in the event of a fire. This agreement would eventually evolve into the resolution outlining a County-wide mutual aid agreement that was passed by the Board of Fire Commissioners in 1957. In 1951, a contract was approved to provide fire service to the Greenbrae School. At that same time, despite ongoing negotiations and an assurance from the State Board of Fire Underwriters

³³ [Marin Map Viewer; Fire Districts](#)

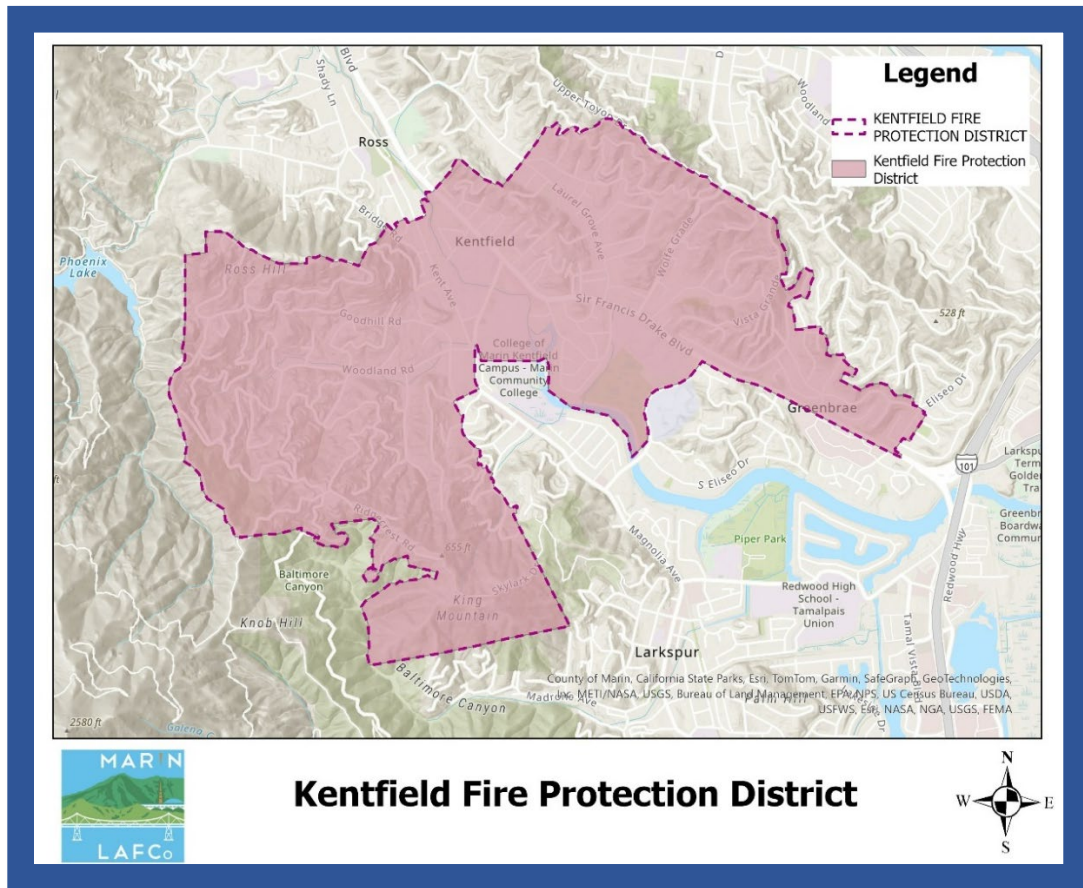
for no impact on fire insurance rate, the proposed annexation of the community of Greenbrae to the District was unsuccessful.

In the 1960s, as a product of the rapid growth of the Kentfield population and therefore the District's responsibilities, the District moved from a 3-member governing board to a 5-member governing board. In September of 1968, the construction of a new fire station was completed. The facility was featured in national fire service magazines as an example of efficiency and design.

District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

The Kentfield Fire Protection District covers an area of just over 2.7 square miles and includes the entire Census Designated Place of Kentfield. The population of Kentfield was 6,485 as of the 2010 census and increased to 6,808 as of the 2020 census³⁴. The Sphere of Influence (SOI) is the same as the jurisdictional boundary, which was reaffirmed in 2020.

Figure 16: Kentfield Fire Protection CSD Boundary and SOI



³⁴ [U.S. Census Bureau](https://www.census.gov)

Growth and Population

The Kentfield Fire Protection District encompasses Kentfield's census-designated place (CDP). According to the 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the population of the CDP is 6,808, which represents approximately a 5% increase from the 2010 population number of 6,485. The most recent census data shows the CDP to have 2,674 total housing units, with only 134 of those units being vacant. Kentfield is predominantly a single-family residential area with higher development zoning along central corridors. According to the 1987 Community Plan, the planning area is divided into nine subareas, each with existing and proposed zoning, land use policies, and development standards. Specific parcels have been identified for potential development or redevelopment, and the plan includes guidelines for landscaping, signs, and public improvements.

10.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The Kentfield Fire Protection District provides fire protection, emergency medical services, hazardous materials first responder, fire inspection, code enforcement, and fire investigation and rescue in the Census Designated Place (CDP) of Kentfield. In addition, the District has a contractual agreement to provide service outside of its district to Marin General Hospital, as well as a shared services agreement with the Central Marin Fire Authority. The shared services agreement allows KFPD and CMFA to share personnel to jointly provide fire and emergency services within their operational areas, thus improving the delivery of services in each agency's jurisdiction while achieving greater efficiency and economic benefits.

The District employs twelve full-time Firefighters, one full-time Deputy Fire Marshal, and three Apprentice Firefighters. The daily on-duty staffing level consists of three firefighters. All of the District's personnel are state-certified by their classification and rank. The District is a Ross Valley Paramedic Authority member; all emergency response personnel are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and are trained to provide primary life support medical care.

Approximately 51% of the District's calls for service are for medical emergencies. Other incident call types that KFPD responds to include building fires, grass and brush fires, vehicle fires, vehicle accidents, hazardous conditions, service calls, good intent, false alarms, and severe weather. The District responded to a total of 1,296 incidents in the 2024 calendar year³⁵.

KFPD has been classified as a Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), which independently evaluates municipal fire protection efforts throughout the United States. Using this metric, an ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible for any fire department, with Class 1 and 2 being considered "excellent." Insurance companies often use ISO information in combination with other factors to establish local property insurance rates – generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection.

³⁵ KFPD Staff Correspondence; July 22, 2025

Facilities and Apparatus

Kentfield Fire Protection District operates out of Fire Station 17, located at 1004 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Kentfield. Daily on-duty personnel at Station 17 consist of a Captain, an Engineer, a Firefighter, and one Volunteer/Seasonal Firefighter. The station houses 2 Type 1 Fire Engines, 1 75-foot ladder truck, and an additional Type six Fire Engine supplied by the State of California Emergency Management Agency (EMA). The EMA Fire Engine, as agreed upon with the State, can be dispatched to any area in the State. KFPD provides personnel for this engine and is reimbursed by EMA for personnel costs. The district's apparatus and some specifications on each are as follows:

Station 17: – Engine 17 is a 2018 Pierce Engine, 17-A is a 2006 Pierce Dash, 2002 Pierce Dash, and 1 2024 Dodge Ram 2500, Engine 2615 Type 6 Wildland Fire Engine 2020.

10.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

The Kentfield Fire Protection District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors who are publicly elected and serve four-year terms. The KFPD Board of Directors oversees policy adoption, oversight of district expenses, adopting an annual budget and hiring the Fire Chief, among other things. The Board is also charged with representing the interests of District residents, defining critical issues, monitoring progress toward reaching established goals, and ensuring that District business is conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, statutes, regulations, and codes.

The Board of Directors regularly meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. and holds other special meetings as necessary. Meetings are held at the Kentfield Fire District Station 17, 1004 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, in Kentfield. A list of the current KFPD Board members and their term expirations can be seen below in Table 10-3.

Table 10-2 - KFPD Board Members and Term Dates

Member	Current Term Expiration
Barry Evergettis	December 2026
Dennis Ryan	December 2026
Ron Naso	December 2026
Bruce Corbet	December 2028
Michael Murray	December 2028

10.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The KFPD maintains a high level of public accountability and transparency with all its activities. The KFPD website (www.kentfieldfire.org) provides information on Board meetings, financial reports, preparedness, public education, and more.

Meeting and Agendas

The KFPD Board of Directors meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. and holds other special meetings as necessary. Meeting agendas are posted on the District website (<https://www.kentfieldfire.org/board>) and at the District’s main office at Station 17, located at 1004 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Annual Budget Review

The KFPD adopts a preliminary budget no later than June of each year, and a final budget by no later than August. The annual budget provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The District’s administrative team produces reports on expense activity that assist the Board in monitoring activities and any necessary adjustments. The District publicly promotes the following standard for themselves within their own budget, “We will provide evidence to justify the community benefit of its adopted budgets, expenditures, and reserves.”

10.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2022, the District's net position is \$9,171,000, with a change from the previous year of \$2,832,812. This calculation considers adjustments such as capital expenditures, depreciation expense, property taxes, payments to reduce capital lease obligations, net pension liability, net OPEB liability, and accrued compensated absences.

The Kentfield Fire Protection District's primary source of revenue is property taxes. In addition to property taxes, the KFPD secures funding through various channels, including service charges, intergovernmental sources, and revenue from the use of money and property. These funding streams contribute to the district's financial sustainability.

Table 10-3: Kentfield Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2017-18 through FY 2021-22

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-2018	\$6,471,253	\$5,330,305	\$1,140,948
FY 2018-2019	\$6,533,888	\$5,380,861	\$1,173,027
FY 2019-2020	\$6,598,001	\$5,490,371	\$1,107,630
FY 2020-2021	\$7,755,267	\$5,985,279	\$1,769,988
FY 2021-2022	\$8,051,067	\$6,334,997	\$1,716,070

Revenue and Expenditures

Around 85% of the annual revenues for KFPD are generated through property taxes from the land within the jurisdictional boundary of the district. For the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22³⁶, the property tax revenue for the district was \$6,819,288, a 3.8% increase from the previous year. Apart from property taxes, the district receives revenue from various other sources, including Measure G Special Assessment, the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF), lease agreements with AT&T and T-Mobile, and a contractual agreement for services with Marin

³⁶ [KFPD Audit FY 2021-2022](#)

General Hospital. The majority of KFPD expenses are dedicated to employee salaries, with the next highest allocations going toward materials and services, followed by depreciation and interest on debt. For FY '22 KFPD expensed \$5,162,789 of the total expense of \$6,334,997 on salaries and benefits. An increase in net position for the year was in part due to the \$1,096,000 decrease from the previous year's expenditures in all categories except capital assets.

Debt

The District, as of June 30, 2022, is carrying \$1,069,988³⁷ in long-term debt. The following outlines the three sources of debt:

- **Compensated Absences Payable** – The District offers its employees the opportunity to accrue paid leave that can be cashed out upon the end of employment at the current rate of pay at the time of separation. The government-wide statement of net position reports the liability, segregating the amount expected to be paid within one year as a current liability. As of June 30, 2022, the District had a balance of \$606,782 in accrued compensated absences.
- **Solar Equipment Capital Lease** – In December 2008, the District entered a capital lease arrangement with Municipal Finance Corporation for the issuance of Clean Renewable Energy Bonds in the amount of \$153,845 for the purpose of obtaining zero-interest financing to purchase solar equipment. The final lease repayment was made in FY 2020-21
- **Fire Station Modernization Capital Lease** – In January 2009, the District entered into a similar lease financing arrangement with Municipal Finance Corporation for the purpose of obtaining financing for the modernization of its fire station. The capital lease was for \$4,030,000. In June 2014, the District amended the fire station lease agreement with a bank in the amount of \$2,494,425. The current remaining balance as of June 30, 2019, is \$1,281,225. The final payment was made on December 30, 2023.

The KFPD also provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS). CalPERS provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee's years of service, age, and final compensation. As of June 30, 2022, the KFPD Net Pension Liability was \$4,183,163. The KFPD pension funded ratio is 69.7%. In addition to the pension plan, the KFPD provides post-retirement benefits (OPEB) to its retirees. As of June 30, 2021, the District carried a Net OPEB liability total of \$146,251. The district currently has 35 total employees, both active and inactive, in their OPEB plan.

Financial Audit

The Kentfield Fire Protection District follows established governmental accounting standards to prepare an annual report on its financial statements. The most recently audited financial statement for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, was prepared by the independent certified

³⁷ IBID

accounting firm Maze and Associates Accountancy Corporation. The firm issued an unqualified or "clean" opinion of the district's financial statements. During 2022, the district's net position increased by \$2,833,000. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. A breakdown of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances for the District's General Fund for the year ended June 30, 2022, can be seen below in Table 10-5

Table 10-4: KFPD Revenues and Expenditures for FY '21- '22³⁸

Revenues	FY 2021-2022 Audit
Property Taxes	\$6,819,288
Intergovernmental	\$938,766
Use of Money and Property	\$186,656
Charges for Services	\$105,557
Other Revenue	\$800
Total Revenues	\$8,051,067

Expenditures	FY 2021-2022 Audit
Salaries and Benefits	\$5,162,789
Material and Services	\$644,729
Capital Outlay	\$218,018
Debt Services	
Principal	\$286,865
Interest	\$22,596
Total Expenditures	\$6,334,997
Excess Revenues Over Expenditures	\$1,716,070

10.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies such as the Kentfield Fire Protection District are critical in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought, changing climate patterns, wind, and low humidity have the potential to increase the occurrence and severity of wildland fires, which could threaten structures and lives in the wildland urban interface.

The KFPD participated in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan that was released in 2016. This was a collaborative effort among fire agencies in the county, local fire organizations including FIREsafe Marin, land management agencies, and community stakeholders. This effort identified areas of concern throughout the county based on population, fire behavior, vegetation, and other factors. Additionally, several goals were stated, and associated action items were created to better prepare Marin County for wildland fires. One such goal is to “Increase

³⁸ [Kentfield FD Finance and Budget](#)

awareness, knowledge, and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and fuels reduction activities, and fire prevention through fire safe building standards.” Provided on the District’s website is a thorough guide to defensible space inspections and the requirements of each inspected item in order to assist homeowners in having the necessary knowledge to create a buffer around their homes to help protect from heat, flames, and embers during a wildfire. In addition, the District mails a full four-page brochure to homeowners prior to annual inspections by the District in order to ensure the necessary time to prepare for any upcoming inspection.

11.0 MARIN COUNTY FIRE AND CSA NO. 31

11.1 OVERVIEW

Marin County Fire Department

The Marin County Fire Department serves several unincorporated communities throughout Marin County. In addition, the Marin County Fire Department provides services to most of West Marin outside of the communities that have their own fire department. Their responsibilities encompass fire prevention, suppression, investigation, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, and disaster preparedness and response. In addition, they also conduct community outreach and education programs to promote fire safety and emergency preparedness within their service areas.

Marin County Service Area No. 31

Marin County Service Area 31 (CSA 31) is a dependent special district that provides funding by way of a parcel tax for structural fire protection throughout the areas of unincorporated Marin County that are not provided fire services by an independent special district, city, joint powers authority, or another dependent special district providing fire service. The CSA has been funded by a special assessment approved by the voters within the District's boundary in 1994. The assessment aids in offsetting the costs incurred in providing year-round 24-hour structural fire protection. The service area includes the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center as well as Angel Island³⁹, except for the area of Quarry Point, which resides in San Francisco County.

Table 11-1: County Service Area 31 Overview

Marin County Fire Department and Marin County Service Area 31 Overview	
Primary Contact:	Chief Jason Weber
Formation Date:	June, 1994
Services Provided:	Structure Fire Protection
Service Area:	445 square miles

11.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Between 1889 and 1904, several forest fires occurred in the Marin County area. The fires burned thousands of acres, destroyed bridges and buildings, and posed significant threats to the surrounding regions. Efforts by residents and local authorities were made to control and extinguish the fires. The Tamalpais Forestry Association was formed to address the lack of legislative support for forest fire suppression. It received funding from business interests and organized efforts to prevent and fight fires on and around Mount Tamalpais. The association

³⁹ Angel Island is also within the jurisdictional boundary of the Town of Tiburon, as well as being designated as a California State Park. Additionally, despite being within CSA 31's boundaries TFPD provides services to the area.

purchased tools and equipment, strategically placing them in tool caches across the Tamalpais watershed for quick access by fire crews. Additionally, it coordinated volunteer fire departments to effectively respond to forest fires. This eventually led to the establishment of the Tamalpais Forest Fire District, funded by property taxes.

On May 21, 1917, the Tamalpais Forest Fire District holds the distinction of being the very first legally constituted forest fire district in California. Its authority included the ability to levy taxes and expand its boundaries over the years, encompassing an impressive 257 square miles of territory. The district faced significant challenges, such as the devastating 1929 Mill Valley fire that resulted in extensive damage to the surrounding area. The evolution of fire patrol from horseback to automobiles and the introduction of "backpack pump cans" for combating wildland fires all reflect the district's commitment to innovation and adaptation. The installation of the first fire lookout in 1921, which was maintained for a decade, stands as a testament to the district's dedication to fire prevention and safety. In 1935, the first fire truck for the District was acquired, equipped with the necessary firefighting tools and a water tank. Additionally, a new fire lookout was constructed in 1936, featuring advanced amenities. Another lookout was established on Mount Barnabe in 1939, later replaced with a modern tower in 1982.

The Marin County Fire Department was created on July 1, 1941, due to unresolved taxation disputes, replacing the Tamalpais Forest Fire District. It operates as a contract county fire department, providing local control over fire protection with some financial support from the state. Initially headquartered in Woodacre, the department gradually replaced one-man stations with geographically located ones, improving response capabilities. As of 1960, the department had forty firefighters and various support staff. Today, the department has over eighty members and utilizes modern firefighting vehicles and air tankers for fire suppression. They also provide first aid, rescue services, and maintain a fire prevention campaign. The future of wildfire management on Mt. Tamalpais remains uncertain, but changes will likely reflect an increased awareness of the mountain's value and beauty.

In 1982, the state legislature enacted the Benefit Assessment Act which allowed cities, counties, and special districts the ability to finance a variety of improvements. Following this, fire suppression-specific assessments were added to the State Government Code (§50078), stating "Any local agency which provides fire suppression services directly or by contract with the state or a local agency may, by ordinance or by resolution adopted after notice and hearing, determine and levy an assessment for fire suppression services pursuant to this article. The assessment may be made for the purpose of obtaining, furnishing, operating, and maintaining fire suppression equipment or apparatus or for the purpose of paying the salaries and benefits of firefighting personnel, or both, whether or not fire suppression services are actually used by or upon a parcel, improvement, or property." A fire suppression assessment is considered a benefit assessment because it is directly related to the benefit a property receives from fire suppression.

On October 12, 1993, the County of Marin Board of Supervisors approved resolution 92-268, approving the application to Marin LAFCo for the creation of a fire services county service area (CSA). The request came before the Board of Supervisors as then Fire Chief Harold Rowland imparted to the Supervisors that the Marin County Fire Department was operating at capacity

with minimum staff levels. He explained that the department had been particularly hard hit by the State's shift in property tax allocations and that without additional funding, it could result in the necessitation of closing one or more fire stations as well as staffing reduction due to the looming 9% budget shortfall. The application was received by Marin LAFCo on November 4, 1993, and, following a public hearing, Marin LAFCo resolution 93-15 was approved for the formation of County Service Area #31 on December 2, 1993.

On March 15, 1994, the Marin County Board of Supervisors approved Resolution 94-61 approving the proposal of CSA 31 as a ballot measure for the June 7th election. The proposed benefit assessment to go to the voters for CSA 31 was to be "... up to \$76 per living unit, \$38 per unimproved parcel, and \$114 per improved commercial and/or industrial parcel." The item was included on the June 7th election ballot as Measure R and was approved with 63% of the vote (only requiring a simple majority). There was no effort to amend the amount being assessed for 16 years. In November of 2010, Measure N was put on the ballot to increase the amounts to \$114 per living unit, \$57 per unimproved parcel, and \$171 per improved commercial/industrial parcel. Despite receiving 62% of the vote, Measure N failed to pass as it required a two-thirds vote (66.67%) for approval. There has not been another attempt since that time to increase the assessment.

Marin County launched a centralized Emergency Command Center (ECC) on July 1, 2024, at 1600 Los Gamos Drive, transferring all fire and EMS dispatch duties from the Sheriff's Office to the Marin County Fire Department. The center is managed by a new Director of the ECC and is staffed with twelve dispatchers, three fire captains, and support staff working in a three-platoon model to provide continuous coverage. This change followed years of planning and was chosen over outsourcing or forming a joint authority, with the goal of improving coordination, modernizing technology, and ensuring stronger countywide service.

The ECC required over \$7.7 million in one-time start-up costs for construction, technology, and staffing, with payments shared between the County and participating fire agencies either upfront or amortized over 15 years. Ongoing annual operating costs are about \$5 million, with roughly 76% covered by local fire agencies and 24% by the County, reflecting its broader wildland protection role. The County's share is offset partly by savings from the Sheriff's budget, with the remainder supported by the General Fund. This cost-sharing approach provides a sustainable structure for long-term operations.

District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

Marin County Service Area 31's service boundary, which currently encompasses just over 284,830 acres, includes coverage for the unincorporated communities of Marin City, Muir Beach, Woodacre, San Geronimo, Lagunitas, Nicasio, Olema, Point Reyes Station, Inverness Park, Marshall, Dillon Beach, Tomales, the Greenbrae Boardwalk Area, and Muir Woods Park. The District includes the small unincorporated neighborhoods of Oak Manor to the northeast of the Town of Fairfax, the Deer Creek Court/Baywood Canyon Road/Hunter Creek Road subdivisions to the northwest of the Town of Fairfax, and the San Francisco Boulevard/Sacramento Avenue subdivisions on the northeast side of the Town of San Anselmo. The area also encompasses privately and publicly owned parklands, including portions of the

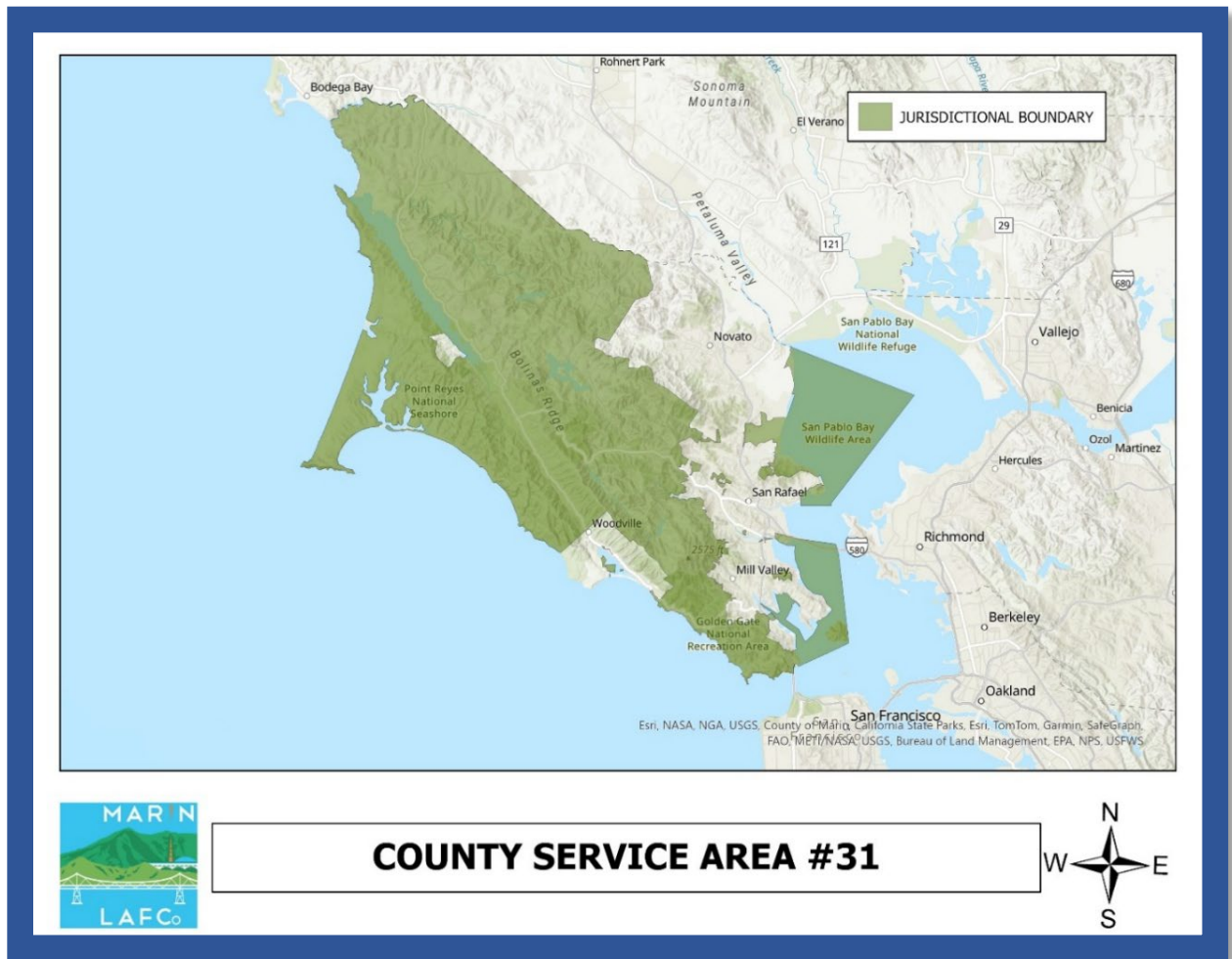
Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Mount Tamalpais State Park, China Camp State Park, Point Reyes National Seashore, and Angel Island State Park.

Marin LAFCo has no record of a sphere of influence ever being formally adopted for CSA 31. An Executive Officer's Report on the formation of CSA 31 from November 24, 1993, made the recommendation that the "... Sphere of Influence study be completed if the funding mechanism is approved by the voters." Marin LAFCo staff can find no record of the afore-mentioned sphere of influence study ever being performed, nor any resolution establishing a sphere of influence for the District. As the majority of county service areas have spheres of influence that are coterminous with their jurisdictional boundaries, there is a strong likelihood that in the seven months that passed between Marin LAFCo adopting the resolution approving the formation of CSA 31 in December of 1993 and the vote by the residents within the boundary in June of 1994, that the recommendation for a sphere of influence study was simply forgotten and there has always been the assumption that the sphere is coterminous with the boundary.⁴⁰ In August of 2024, a sphere of influence was established as a part of the Multi-Regional Services Municipal Service Review. When CSA 31's SOI was established Agel Island State Park was omitted "to show the Commission's intention to work proactively and collaboratively with the Town of Tiburon, Tiburon Fire Protection District, Marin County Fire Department, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure a more orderly and efficient delivery of fire protection and emergency medical services to Angel Island State Park."⁴¹

⁴⁰ This school of thought is reinforced by the language within the San Rafael Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update (January 2006) which states, "The existing spheres of influence of CSAs #13 and #31 are coterminous with their current boundaries as established by LAFCo in 1983." This would not be possible as CSA #31 was not formed until 1994.

⁴¹ Marin LAFCo Resolution No.24-09

Figure 17: Marin County Fire Department Service Area



Growth and Population

CSA 31 encompasses a majority of what the County of Marin has designated as the West Marin Planning Area with the exception of the areas of the Inverness Public Utility District, Stinson Beach Fire Protection District, and Bolinas Fire Protection District. The planning area comprises five census tracts: 1322⁴², 1321⁴³, 1130, 1311, and 1330. According to 2022 American Community Survey Data, the population of the planning area, less the aforementioned special district areas, is 9,331, which is less than a 4% increase from the 2010 population number 9,011. The District boundary also includes the Census-Designated Place of Marin City, which has a current population of 2,993. This amount is a 12% increase from 2010, when the population tally was 2,666.

⁴² Census tract 1322 is comprised of 3 Census Block Groups. Block Group 1 within Census Tract 1322 has a boundary that is coterminous with the Inverness Public Utility District. This area has a population of 683. This amount will be removed from the total population figures for CSA 31.

⁴³ Census Tract 1321's area is coterminous with the jurisdictional boundaries of the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District and the Bolinas Fire Protection District and therefore will not be factored into the population data.

11.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Municipal Services for Marin County Fire Department

Marin County Fire Department is divided into four divisions: Administrative, Operations, Fire Prevention and Investigations, and Emergency Medical Services.

Administrative: is responsible for administrative tasks, including (but not limited to) personnel processes, budget management, accounts payable and receivable, managing tax-based revenue, contract management, compliance, and administrative duties related to the department's Seasonal Firefighter program.

Operations: is responsible for fire suppression and emergency medical services. In addition to those core operations, this division also provides special operations and works with the Tamalpais Fire Crew.

Fire Prevention and Investigation: The prevention bureau, led by the Fire Marshal, works to decrease damage from fires by implementing fire safety standards and maintaining the fire code and Public Resources Code.

Emergency Medical Services: provides medical services to the surrounding community via ALS Transport Ambulances, Paramedic Units, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), and Fire Engines with up-to-date equipment to allow firefighters to provide medical services.

Office of Emergency Management: coordinates countywide disaster planning, response, recovery, and mitigation. It develops emergency plans, trains agencies and the public, manages alert systems like AlertMarin, and activates the Emergency Operations Center during crises.

Municipal Services for CSA 31

CSA 31 provides funding to the Marin County Fire Department to supplement the costs the Department incurs in providing year-round and round-the-clock structure fire protection services throughout unincorporated Marin County. The CSA's revenue, which is accrued by way of a voter-approved tax measure, is transferred to the Marin County Fire Department, which provides the service throughout the area. Marin County Fire is responsible for fire suppression and prevention, wildfire response, vegetation management and education, emergency medical services and paramedic services, urban search and rescue, and planning for emergency evacuations, as well as hazardous materials response. The Department collaborates with community and county partners to manage an emergency operations center that provides emergency response coordination and community outreach during emergencies, as well as planning and disaster preparations.

A significant amount of the land area⁴⁴ of CSA 31 is comprised of federally owned land, known as federal responsibility areas (FRA), and state-owned land, known as state responsibility areas

⁴⁴ Approximately 99%

(SRA). In many cases, federally owned land receives fire protection by way of local contracts and collaborations. In Marin County, the Marin County Fire Department has entered into a contract with the National Park Service to provide initial attack for fires within park boundaries. This includes approximately 100,000 acres of federally owned lands in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Muir Woods National Monument, and the Point Reyes National Seashore. In state responsibility areas, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) typically provides fire protection. In Marin County, however, CAL FIRE contracts with the Marin County Fire Department to provide wildland fire protection and associated fire prevention activities for lands designated as SRA. Marin is one of six counties in the state that contracts to protect SRA. The Marin County Fire Department is Responsible for the protection of approximately 200,000 acres of State land. There are 17,128 parcels and 14,697 living units located within Marin County's SRA.

Facilities and Apparatus

Marin County Fire Department operates and maintains 6 fire stations with a seasonal Tamalpais Fire Crew operating out of Novato's Station 65 and two paramedics with the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority. In the Marin County Fire Facilities Vision Plan, it was recommended that the MCFD headquarters and Fire Station at Woodacre, Hicks Valley, and Tomales Fire Stations be replaced. The estimated budget for the replacement and updating of facilities is between \$57 to \$68 million. Other recommended changes include seismic upgrade and expansion of Point Reyes Station, co-locating the Tam Fire Crew to Hicks Valley Fire Station, additional training towers as well as maintenance and repairs to lookout tires.



Figure 18: Marin County Fire Stations

Fleet Overview:

9 Type 1 Engines, 1 Type 2 Engine, 14 Type 3 Engines, 6 Type 6 Engines, 4 Water Tenders, 5 Ambulances, 5 Boats, 11 Cars, 5 Chippers, 1 Class 7 Truck, 2 Class 8 Trucks, 6 Crew Carriers, 16 Crew Trucks, 1 Dozer, 2 Equipment Trailers, 4 Excavators, 1 Grader, 1 Loader, 11 Rescue Watercraft (RWC), 1 Skid Steer, 1 Skip Loader, 10 SUVs, 33 Trailers, 43 Trucks, and 9 Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs)

Table 11-2 - Station Service Areas and Interagency Response Agreements

Station	Address	Primary Service Area	Aide
Tomales Fire Station	599 Dillon Beach Road, Tomales, CA 94971	Tomales, Dillon Beach, Marshall, Chileno Valley	Mutual Aid: Bodega Bay, Two Rock, Valley Ford
Hicks Valley Fire Station	330 Red Hill Road, Petaluma, CA 94952	Hicks Valley, Chileno Valley, Nicasio Valley	Mutual & Automatic Aid: Novato, Wilmar FPD, San Antonio Volunteer FD, portions of Sonoma County
Point Reyes Fire Station	4th and B Streets, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956	Point Reyes Station, Marshall, Olema, Inverness Park	Automatic Aid: Inverness Public Utility District
Woodacre Fire Station	33 Castle Rock Road, Woodacre, CA 94973	Woodacre, Nicasio, Lucas Valley, Forest Knolls, Lagunitas, San Geronimo Valley	Mutual Aid: City of Fairfax
Throckmorton Fire Station	16 Panoramic Highway, Mill Valley, CA 94941	Unincorporated Mill Valley, Muir Woods, Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Muir Beach	
Marin City Fire Station	50 Drake Ave, Marin City, CA 94965	Marin City	Mutual Aid: Town of Sausalito

Other Service Providers

Medic Station 18 – 33 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, Ross, CA 94957

The Marin County Fire Department provides two paramedics via contract with the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority to the Town of Ross. The paramedics operate an advanced life support ambulance, M18, and are supervised by the Woodacre Senior Captain.

Tamalpais Fire Crew, Station 65 - 5 Bolling Dr, Novato, CA 94949

Tamalpais Fire Crew is a program used for vegetation management and to build firefighting skills, work ethic, and leadership competency among the firefighters who will become the future of MCFD and other fire agencies throughout the state. The Crew shares Fire Station 65 with the Novato Fire District located in Hamilton. Staffing of the crew is fourteen firefighters, composed of a Fire Crew Superintendent, a Fire Crew Foreman, and 12 Seasonal Firefighters. They work

approximately 3-9 months during peak fire season, where the crew cuts and piles vegetation to create safer areas for fire suppression. The Tamalpais Fire Crew also responds to almost every wildland fire in the County to build containment lines, fell hazardous trees, and mop up fires.

11.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Board of Supervisors

As a dependent special district, the Marin County Board of Supervisors serves as the CSA’s and Marin County Fire’s governing body. The five-member Board of Supervisors meets on scheduled Tuesdays every month at 9:00 am in the County of Marin Civic Building located at 3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 330, in San Rafael. The Board of Supervisors determines policy, adopts annual budgets, fixes salaries, and is responsible for overseeing mandated district functions as carried out by various county departments.

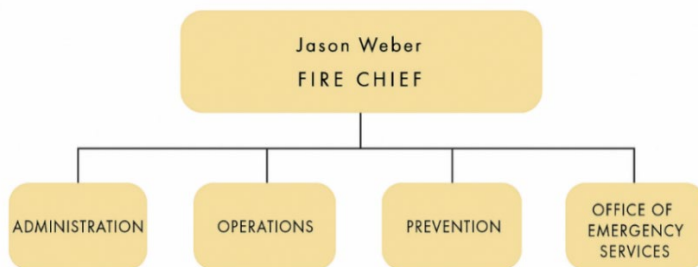
Table 11-3: Marin County Board of Supervisors

Member	Position	Term Expiration
Dennis Rodoni	Director	December 2028
Mary Sackett	President	December 2026
Eric Lucan	Director	December 2026
Brian Colbert	Vice President	December 2028
Stephanie Moulton-Peters	2 nd Vice President	December, 2028

Staffing and District Operations

As a dependent district of the County, all administrative services are provided by County departments, including legal counsel and compilation of financial transaction reports for the State Controller’s Office required under Government Code Section 53891. CSA 31 is primarily managed by the Marin County Fire Department, which oversees staffing and calls for services. Overall, Marin County Fire has approximately 149 staff members.⁴⁵

Figure 19: Marin County Fire Organization Chart



⁴⁵ Correspondence with MCF on 10/7/2025

11.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Meeting and Agendas

The Board of Supervisors meeting agendas, minutes, and recordings can be viewed on the Marin County website. Board documents such as resolutions and ordinances can also be found on the Board of Supervisors page of Marin County’s website.

Annual Budget Review

The County of Marin contracts with an independent financial auditor, Clifton Larson Allen, to conduct an annual financial report. CSA 31 is included in the report under the Budgetary Comparison Schedule for County Service Areas Fund.

Every year the Marin County Fire Department develops a proposed budget for CSA 31 and presents it to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval. It is based on the prior year’s expenses and projected parcel tax revenue for the upcoming fiscal year.

11.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Financial Overview Marin County Fire

The Marin County Fire Budget is a part of the greater county budget process. The budget was adopted by the Board of Supervisors for FY 2021-2022. The West Marin Fire Emergency Services Fund and Measure W Marin County Fire Fund have undergone comprehensive updates. The adjustments encompass a thorough revision of taxes, services, and supplies, with a particular focus on the allocation of additional transient occupancy taxes to support emergency services in West Marin.

The expenditures for Marin County Fire (CSA 31) are primarily dedicated to salaries and benefits, services and supplies, client support, capital assets, independent charges, and contingencies. The largest portion of the budget is allocated to salaries and benefits, followed by services and supplies. For the fiscal year 2022, out of a total expenditure of \$35,740,553, approximately \$29,651,078 was spent on salaries and benefits.

Table 11-4: Marin County Fire FY 2021-22 Five-Year Actuarial Budget/Expenditures

Fiscal Year	Expenditures
FY 2017-18	\$29,599,470
FY 2018-19	\$31,040,320
FY 2019-20	\$32,737,127
FY 2020-21	\$39,542,793
FY 2021-22	\$40,542,347

Post FY 2021-'22 Update: Office of Emergency Management Integration

Although the fiscal trend for this study ends in FY 2021-'22 to standardize analysis, Marin County Fire has since gone through major changes and incorporated the Office of Emergency

Management (OEM) starting in Fiscal Year 2023-24. This update is to provide insight into the current financial capacity and scope of the Marin County Fire. The OEM consolidated countywide disaster preparedness, emergency operations planning, public warning/alerting, and resilience coordination under Marin County Fire’s executive and administrative structure. The incorporation of the OEM into the Marin County Fire budget led to an increase of approximately 26% going from \$36.99 million in FY 2022-23 to \$46.71 million in FY 2023-24⁴⁶. Funding now reflects combined operational support for both fire suppression/EMS functions and all-hazards emergency management activities.

Financial Overview for CSA 31

CSA 31 provides funding to the Marin County Fire Department by way of a voter-approved tax measure, creating a benefit assessment district that was initially passed in 1994. The approved tax measure, Measure R, was adopted with no sunset date or escalators. The tax measure, as it currently stands, levies a charge in the amount of \$76 per living unit, \$38 per unimproved parcel, and \$114 for each commercial/industrial parcel. The tax is the CSA’s only form of revenue. For FY 2022-23, the CSA realized \$507,204 in revenue and \$514,747 in expenditures. The CSA’s average annual revenues only make up a very small portion of the Marin County Fire Department’s total annual revenues. While the CSA has shown recent occurrences of expenditures outpacing revenues for the fiscal year, in each instance, the balance of the added expenditures was covered by a fund balance that was carried over from the prior fiscal year. A breakdown of the district’s finances over the past 5 fiscal years can be seen below in Table 11-5.

Table 11-5: Marin County Service Area No. 31 Financial Overview

	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-18	\$524,511	\$548,000	(\$23,489)
FY 2018-19	\$523,593	\$514,535	\$9,058
FY 2019-20	\$523,460	\$531,746	(\$8,286)
FY 2020-21	\$522,358	\$513,878	\$8,480
FY 2021-22	\$507,204	\$514,747	(\$7,543)

Financial Audit

The County of Marin prepares an annual report on the County’s financial statements in accordance with established governmental accounting standards. The most recent audited financial statement was prepared by the Department of Finance, which issued an unqualified or “clean” opinion of the Department’s financial statements. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024

⁴⁶ Correspondence with MCF on 10/7/2025

11.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

The Marin County Fire Department is a member agency of both the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority as well as Fire Safe Marin. MCFD also has a Prevention Bureau, responsible for minimizing or preventing damage to life and property caused by fire. The Fire Prevention Bureau develops amendments to the model fire codes and fire prevention standards to achieve this. It enforces the fire safety and law enforcement sections of the Fire Code and Public Resources Code (PRC). Additionally, the Fire Prevention Bureau manages the Residential Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Business Inspection Programs. It also conducts fire investigations and implements fire and life safety programs in the MCFD protection areas. Moreover, the Bureau reviews land development and building plans as part of the issuance of fire permits. MCFD also operates the following programs: public education, pre-fire management, vegetation management, and defensible space. In the MCFD 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, they created 3 Focus Areas, with Focus 2 aiming to reduce the Marin County Fire Department (MCFD), which is an active member of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority and Fire Safe Marin. The MCFD's Prevention Bureau is crucial in minimizing and preventing damage to life and property caused by fire. This Bureau is responsible for developing amendments to the model fire codes and fire prevention standards and enforcing fire safety and law enforcement sections of the fire code and Public Resources Code (PRC). The Fire Prevention Bureau also manages the Residential Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Business Inspection Programs, conducts fire investigations, and implements fire and life safety programs in the MCFD protection areas. Furthermore, the Bureau reviews land development and building plans as part of the issuance of fire permits. MCFD also operates public education, pre-fire management, vegetation management, and defensible space programs. In the MCFD 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, three Focus Areas were created, with Focus 2 aiming to reduce the potential of wildfires and community disasters while enhancing fire prevention and community education. The specific actions outlined in this plan include:

1. Providing fire hazard reduction and defensible space through mailers, workshops, and public service announcements, promoting the Ready, Set, Go program in coordination with other agencies and Fire Safe Marin.
2. Implementing an annual defensible space inspection program to inspect 4,000 homes annually.
3. Working with county and local entities to support green waste in completing defensible space by providing four days of green waste disposal.

12.0 MARINWOOD COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

12.1 OVERVIEW

Marinwood Community Services District (CSD) is an independent, multi-purpose special district organized pursuant to California Government Code Section 61000 et seq. The Marinwood CSD provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the unincorporated community of Marinwood and the surrounding areas. In addition, the District contracts with the County of Marin to extend these services to County Service Area 13 (CSA 13) and the Juvenile Hall/County Farm site. The District serves as a critical provider of emergency response within the area, including fire suppression, rescue operations, and emergency medical assistance.

Table 12-1: Marinwood CSD Overview

Marinwood Community Services District			
Primary Contact	Eric Dreikosen, District Manager:	Email	edreikosen@marinwood.org
Office Location	775 Miller Creek Road, San Rafael, CA 94903		
Formation Date	1960	Enabling Legislation	G.C. §61000 et seq.
Services Provided	Fire Protection, Parks and Recreation, Open Space, Street Lighting,		
District Boundary	1,984 acres (based on GIS boundary shapefiles)	Population Estimate ⁴⁷	6,259

12.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The first homes in Marinwood were built near Highway 101 in 1955. At that time, the closest San Rafael city boundary was four miles to the south, at the top of Puerto Suello Hill, and the closest Novato boundary was six miles to the north. In order to provide municipal services to the growing community, particularly for fire protection, as well as to secure bond financing for Marinwood Park, the firehouse, community center and pool, the Marinwood CSD was formed in 1960.

In 1972, the community again voted to tax itself to purchase open space on the ridge bordering the community to preserve it from development. The original purchase of 321 acres has grown to more than 812 acres as additional parcels have been purchased, and developers are required to set aside land as open space.

Notably, the District formation excluded Upper Lucas Valley, which lies between two distinct jurisdictional areas of Marinwood CSD. Upper Lucas Valley was developed in 1961 as one of Joseph Eichler's last projects, keeping itself separate from Marinwood CSD and the San Rafael city limits. It has its own community center, pool, and stables. It has long-standing Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions (CC&Rs) that prevent second stories and teardowns. It has its own

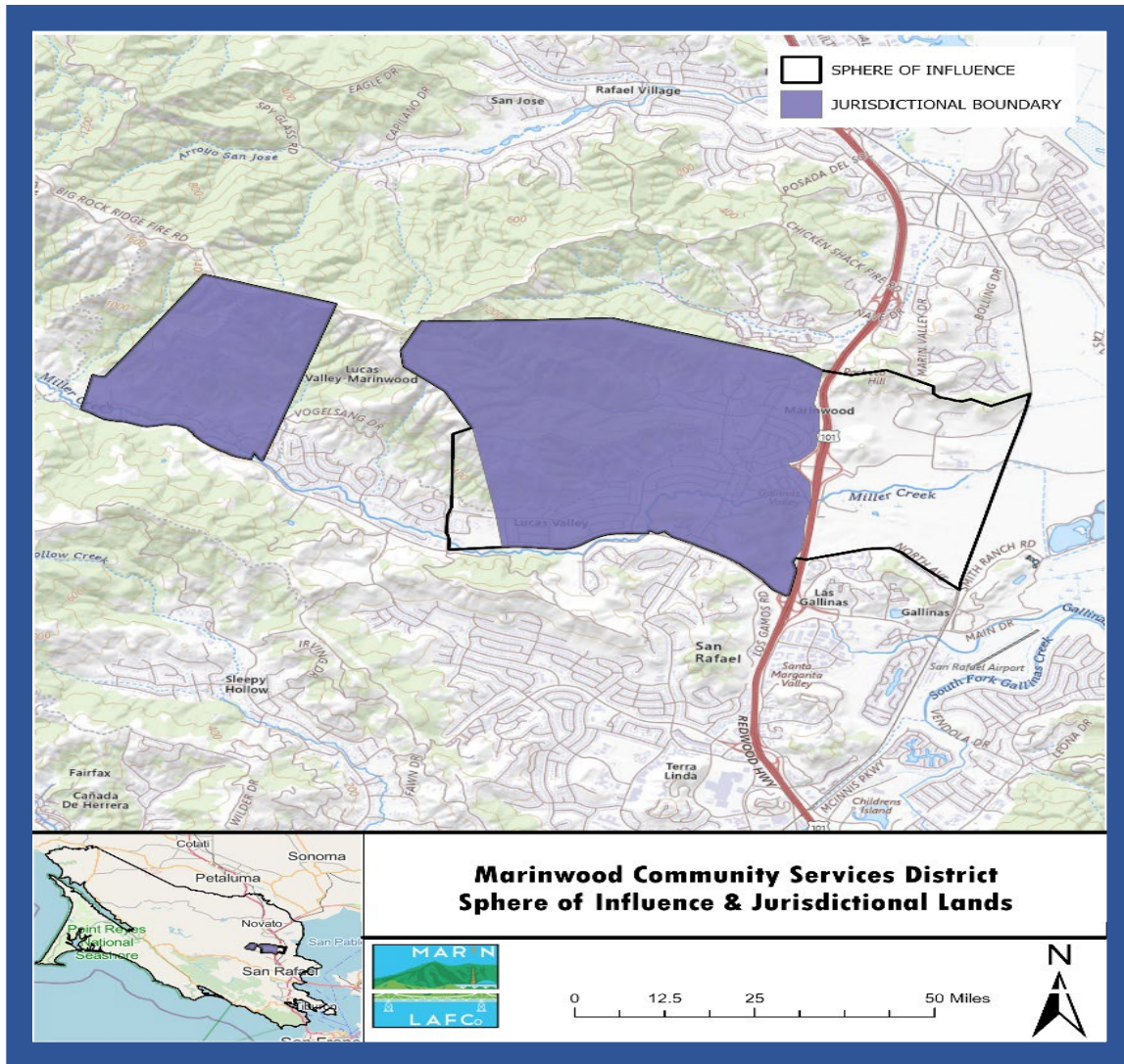
⁴⁷ Estimate based upon U.S. Census Block Group Data from U.S. Census Tract 1070, Block Groups 1,3,4,5

zoning district in the County Zoning Code with design guidelines to preserve the architectural character of the Eichler homes.

District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

Marinwood CSD is located west of U.S. 101 between the northern boundary of the City of San Rafael and the southern boundary of the City of Novato. Home to about 5,119 residents (9% of Marin’s unincorporated population), it is the county’s second-largest CSD by population. The district covers 1,984 acres (3.09 sq. mi.). The CSD boundaries include various urbanized areas, including Marinwood, Lucas Valley, Casa Marinwood, Roundtree, Miller Creek Gardens, Miller Creek Ranch, Lucas Valley Estates, and Las Gallinas Ranch. The Sphere of Influence for Marinwood CSD was established in 1983 and was most recently reaffirmed in October 2025 as a part of the San Rafael Area Service Review.

Figure 20: Marinwood CSD Boundary



12.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

Marinwood CSD provides a full range of fire protection services, including fire suppression, rescue, advanced life support (ALS) and emergency medical services, hazardous material control, and fire prevention services. The Marinwood Fire Department works closely and cooperatively with neighboring fire departments to provide service to its community and the surrounding areas. It maintains a shared services agreement with the City of San Rafael and contracts with Marin County to provide service to CSA No. 13. As a result of these agreements and in conjunction with other mutual aid agreements, the District's operational fire service area extends beyond District boundaries. They serve the nearby unincorporated areas of Upper Lucas Valley, St. Vincent's/Silveira, and the incorporated northern neighborhoods of San Rafael, as well as some southern neighborhoods of Novato via mutual aid.

Marinwood Fire has been awarded a Class 02/2X Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire-protection efforts throughout the United States. An ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible that can be given to any fire department using this metric. Insurance companies often use ISO information combined with other factors to establish local property insurance rates – generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection.

Facilities, Apparatuses, and Staffing

The Marinwood CSD operates a single fire station located at Miller Creek Drive near Lucas Valley Road. Marinwood CSD employs nine full-time paid personnel and a contract Fire Chief. The District Manager oversees the operations of the district and reports to the Board of Directors. Beyond service calls, Department activities include training, equipment maintenance, structure and vegetation management inspections, CERT support, and public outreach.

Station 58: one Type 1 Engine and one Type 3 Engine

Other Service Providers

Agreement Between Marinwood CSD and the City of San Rafael

The City of San Rafael Fire Department and the Marinwood CSD have entered into a number of contractual fire service agreements dating back as far as 1973. Through the most recent agreement, a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JPA) initiated in April 2014, San Rafael provides the District with administrative capacity, training, medic oversight, fuel, dispatch services, supplies, and response support. In return, the District provides primary response to service calls in the northern neighborhoods of the City (over 50% of the District's total annual service calls), giving faster response times for San Rafael residents in the area. The agreement is to remain in place until participation is terminated by one of the parties, with a 90-day notice.

In October 2018, longtime Marinwood CSD fire Chief Tom Roach retired. To fill the open position, the District amended its existing JPA with San Rafael to include Fire Chief Officer Services to be provided by the City at a cost to the District of \$113,895 for FY 2024-2025, including a 3% annual escalator for the first 5 years, then a re-evaluation by the City of San Rafael. Such an agreement codifies the shared services between the two agencies.

Agreement Between Marinwood CSD and CSA No. 13 – Upper Lucas Valley

The Marinwood CSD provides fire and emergency services to the residents of CSA No. 13 through an annual agreement between the District and the County. The contract specifies that the District agrees to provide fire protection and rescue services to the residents and property owners of CSA No. 13, on the same basis as it provides services to the residents and property owners of the District. CSA No. 13 currently pays the District approximately \$753,096 for FY 2025-2025 for contract services. The exact amount is adjusted every year using an agreed-upon formula, based on the percentage of building square feet within CSA No. 13 as compared to the combined square footage of both Marinwood CSD and CSA No. 13.

Other Outside Agency Services

The District also contracts with the County to provide fire protection services to the area referred to as “County Farm” on Jeanette Prandi Road. The area includes the juvenile hall, court, and community schools, Marin County Open Space District facilities, and Rotary Village senior housing.

12.4 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

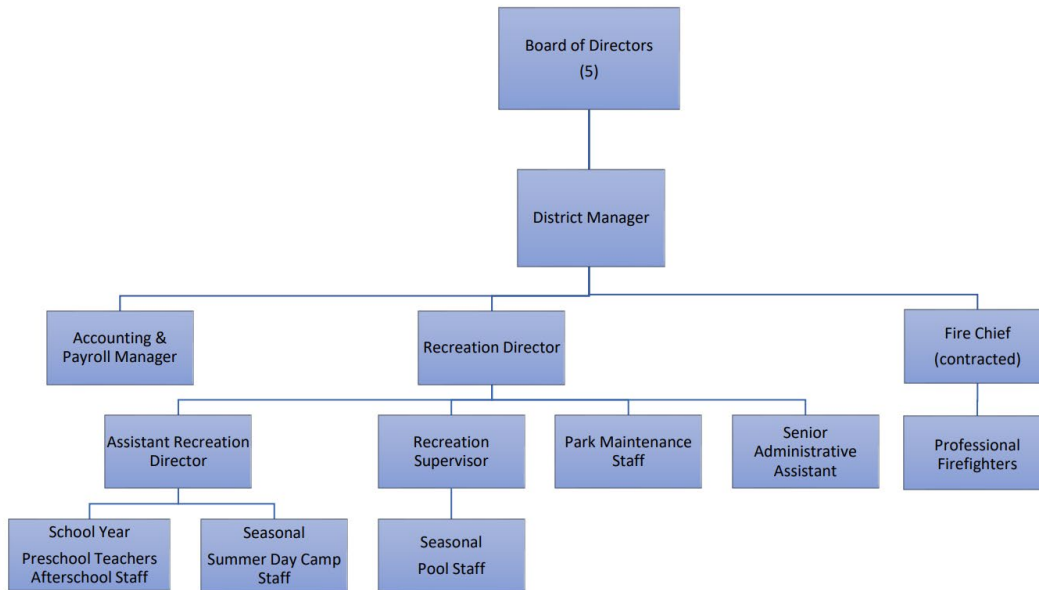
Marinwood CSD is governed by a five-member board of Directors. Members serve four-year terms and must be residents of Marinwood CSD. Board meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the second Tuesday of each month at the Marinwood Community Center at 775 Miller Creek Road, San Rafael, CA 94903.

The Marinwood CSD Board of Directors has two advisory commissions, including a Fire Commission and a Parks and Recreation Commission that oversee the routine operations of those District services. The five-member advisory commissions make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding policy and budgetary matters. All Board and Commission meetings are open to the public. Agendas and meeting information are published online at www.marinwood.org.

Table 12-2: Marinwood CSD Board Members

Member	Term Expiration
Sivan Oyserman	2022-2026
Christopher Case, President	2024-2028
Kathleen Kilkenny	2024-2028
Lisa Ruggeri	2024-2028
William Shea	2022-2026

Figure 21: Marinwood CSD Organization Chart



12.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Marinwood CSD has consistently made it a priority to maintain high accountability and transparency with all its activities. Marinwood CSD website (<https://www.marinwood.org/>) provides information on Board meetings, financial reports, stations, history, apparatus, and more.

Meetings and Agendas

The Marinwood Board of Directors regularly meets at 7:00 PM on the second Tuesday of each month at the Marinwood Community Center at 775 Miller Creek Road, San Rafael, CA 94903. Special meetings are held as necessary to go over specific topics such as the annual budget. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found by way of a link on the Marinwood CSD website (<https://www.marinwood.org/about-us/board-agendas>).

Annual Budget Review

The District posts its annual budgets and audits on its webpage through a link located on the finance page of the website. Currently, the public can access and download the District's budgets and audits going back at least five fiscal years online through the District's website. Budgets are prepared and presented to the board of directors by the District Manager for approval and adoption on an annual basis.

12.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Marinwood receives the majority of its revenue from property taxes, and three special taxes—fire, park maintenance, and street lighting. Other revenues are from fees generated from fire service contracts, recreational programs such as swimming pool and community building

use, and from recreation programs ranging from daycare and summer camp, to dance lessons. The majority of CSD expenditures are for staffing and other personnel-related services, including benefits and retirement. Table 12-3 shows an abbreviated budget for the district. Property taxes are allocated across departments.

Approximately 66% of the annual district revenue comes from taxes and the special tax assessment. Other revenues include charges for services, which make up about 34% of their revenues. Marinwood CSD offers many services to the district and maintains a goal of providing a high level of community service while maintaining sustainable fiscal practices.

Table 12-3: Marinwood CSD Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2017-18 through FY 2021-22⁴⁸

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017 - 2018	\$6,111,119	\$5,491,456	\$619,663
FY 2018-2019	\$6,331,031	\$5,371,569	\$959,462
FY 2019-2020	\$6,185,802	\$5,094,343	\$1,091,459
FY 2020-2021	\$5,917,999	\$4,566,373	\$1,351,626
FY 2021-2022	\$6,925,960	\$6,653,030	\$272,930

Revenues and Expenditures

Revenue sources for the Marinwood Fire come directly from the CSD, which includes revenue from Taxes, grants, charges for services, contracts, and special taxes. According to the FY 21-22 Audit, fire services revenue was \$2,711,505. Of Marinwood Fire’s total revenue budget, 24% comes from property taxes, 44% comes from special taxes, with the remaining coming from provided services, contracts, and interest.

The CSD maintains a General Fund and a Measure A Fund. In FY 2021-2022, Marinwood CSD saw an increase in the general fund by about \$1,007,961, with an increase in expenditures of \$1,128,401. This increase in expenditure was due to a capital outlay increase and other minor increases in other categories.

Debt

In the fiscal year end for 2021-2022, the Marinwood Community Services District (CSD) had a long-term debt of \$770,935⁴⁹ and a net pension and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability of \$8,797,326. The long-term debt includes:

- **Marin Emergency Radio Authority Loan** – MERA issued a revenue bond in 1999 to construct the emergency communications facility. Marinwood was responsible for 0.856% of the lease obligation of \$18,575,000, which totaled \$178,484. This lease was paid off in June of 2022.
- **Fire Truck Lease** – In 2014, Marinwood CSD entered a lease purchase for a fire truck with a lease of 10 years at a 3% interest rate. The districts make payments in September toward the \$364,692 total lease obligation. The lease balance as of June 2022 is \$120,935. This lease was paid off in September of 2024.

⁴⁸ [Marinwood CSD Finance page; Audits from Fiscal Years ending in 2018 through 2022](#)

⁴⁹ [Marinwood CSD Fiscal Year ending June 31, 2022; pg. 5](#)

- **CSDA Lease** – Marinwood entered into this lease to finance the construction costs of Marinwood’s new maintenance facility. The obligation totals \$650,000 at an annual interest rate of 2.34%.

Marinwood CSD offers a pension plan to its employees, which is administered by the California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CALPERS). The benefits provided by CALPERS are based on years of service, employee classification, and hire date, and include retirement, disability, and death benefits. In addition to the pension plan, the Marinwood CSD also offers post-retirement healthcare benefits to its retirees (OPEB). Currently, the district has a total of 34 employees, both active and inactive, who are enrolled in the OPEB plan. Furthermore, the district currently has a total of \$137,709 in compensated absences.

Financial Audit

Marinwood has its financial statements audited on an annual basis. The district contracts with an outside accounting firm, most recently O’Connor & Company, to conduct the audit. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The following table reflects Marinwood in its entirety and is not specific to its fire department.

Table 12-4: Marinwood CSD Audited Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2021-2022

Revenues	FY 2021-2022 Audit
Property Taxes	\$2,362,567
Special Assessments	\$1,629,480
Charges for Service	\$2,353,334
Investment Earnings	\$3,772
Other Revenue	\$576,807
Total Revenues	\$6,925,960

Expenditures	FY 2021-2022 Audit
Park	\$715,726
Recreation	\$1,816,829
Public Safety	\$2,728,727
Street Lighting	\$23,872
Measure A	\$319,323
Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority	\$140,641
Capital Outlay	847,611
Debt Services	
Principal	\$55,448
Interest	\$4,853
Total Expenditures	\$6,653,030
Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures	\$272,930

12.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies are critical in protecting natural resources and the environment through land conservation, water recycling, preserving open space, and renewable energy projects. Marinwood CSD utilizes recycled water for landscaping where available and has converted streetlights to LEDs to the extent feasible throughout the District.

Warmer temperatures and longer drought periods increase the potential for wildfires that may threaten structures in the District. Marinwood CSD is part of the countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan, maintained by FireSafe Marin. Marinwood CSD is one of several member agencies that form the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). The MWPA is a collective effort to prevent wildfires in the Marin area. The MWPA works to reduce the risk of wildfires by implementing various preventative measures, such as clearing brush and other flammable materials, conducting controlled burns, and educating the public on fire safety practices. Defensible space services are provided by SRSD Defensible Space Division. The District would benefit from continued community education, preparedness, and mitigation efforts, including encouraging communities to seek FireWise certification from the National Fire Protection Association.

Marinwood CSD is within the San Rafael operational/geographic zone of MWPA. The FY 2022-'23 anticipated funding for Defensible Space (D-Space) totaled \$66,959 and \$68,325 for Local Wildfire Prevention Mitigation. The San Rafael Zone uses herbivores (primarily goats) to remove light and flashy fuels to create a buffer between the built environment and wildlands. This will reduce the density of fuels adjacent to the built environment, reduce ignition potential, and slow the spread of fire. Additional projects in the San Rafael Zone can be found on the MWPA website (<https://www.marinwildfire.org/projects-by-location?tab=sanraf>).

13.0 ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

13.1 OVERVIEW

Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that is comprised of the fire departments from the towns of San Anselmo, Ross, and Fairfax, as well as the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District. The RVFD boundary surrounds approximately 9 square miles of the Upper Ross Valley area. This area, along with the towns, includes the entirety of the Census Designated Place (CDP) of Sleepy Hollow as well as the unincorporated area west of the San Rafael City Limits, Baywood Canyon, and east of Baywood Canyon in Fairfax, south of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District, and north of the Meadow Club. The department serves a population of approximately 25,000 in the Upper Ross Valley corridor. The last Municipal Service Review that included RVFD was conducted in April of 2020 as part of the Ross Valley Area Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

The primary function of RVFD is to provide emergency medical services, structural and wildland fire response to the Town of San Anselmo, the Town of Ross, the Town of Fairfax, and the unincorporated area of Sleepy Hollow. The RVFD also participates in the Marin County and California Mutual Aid System with nearby fire districts and responds to wildland fires as needed.

Table 13-1: RVFD Admin Overview

Ross Valley Fire Department			
Primary Contact:	Dan Mahoney	Phone	(415) 258-4686
Main Office:	777 San Anselmo Avenue, San Anselmo, CA 94960		
Formation Date:	1982		
Services Provided:	Fire Protection, Wildland Fire and Emergency Response		
Service Area:	5,735 acres		
Population Served:	≈25,000		

13.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

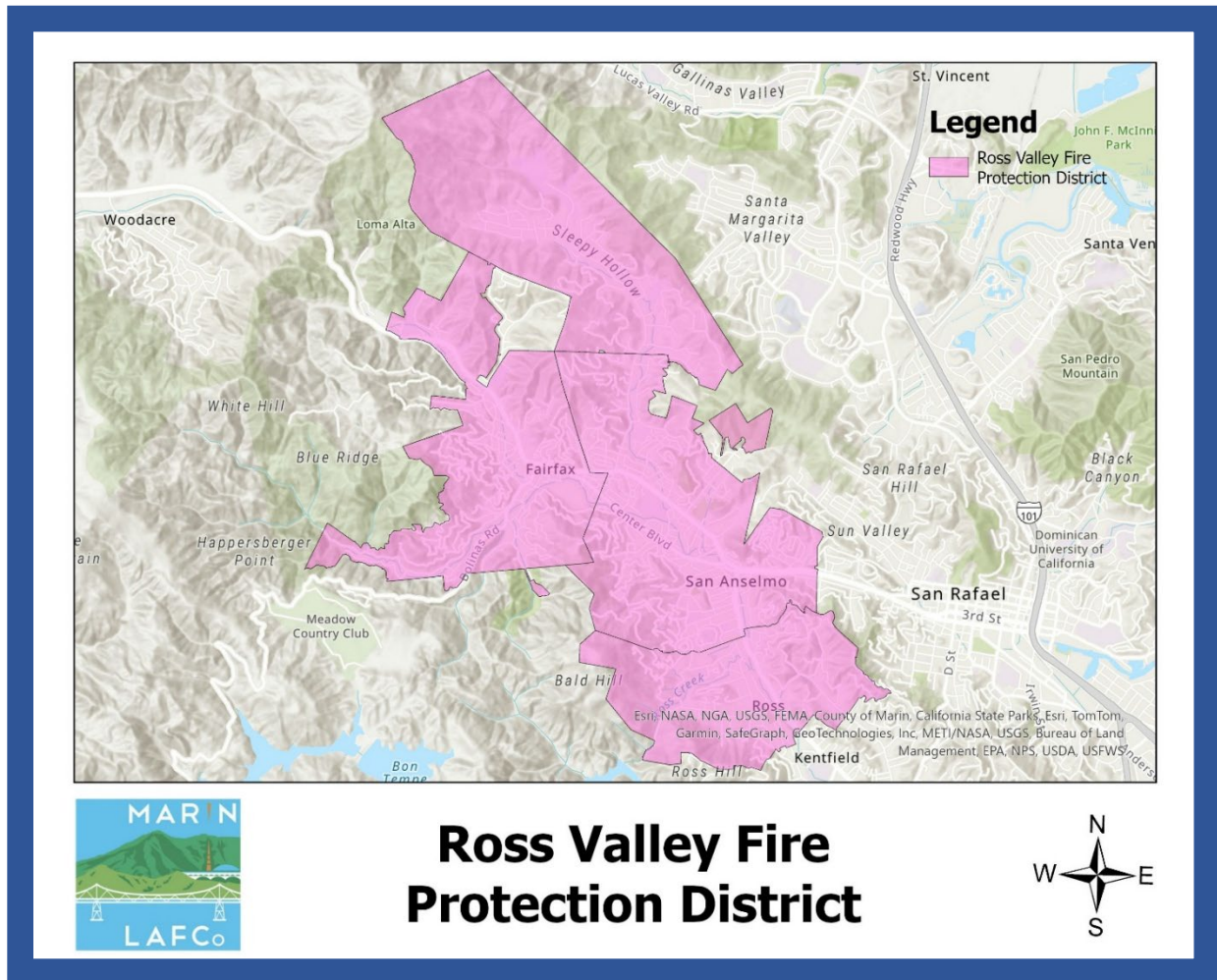
The history of the Ross Valley Fire Department can be traced back to the early 1900s, when volunteer fire departments were formed in the towns of Ross, San Anselmo, and Fairfax. The San Anselmo Volunteer Fire Department was established in 1907. Soon after, the Town of Ross built the Ross Fire House and established the Volunteer Fire Department in between 1908 -1910. Also in 1910, the Fairfax Improvement Club helped establish the Town of Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department. Meanwhile, in 1949, the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District (SHFPD) was officially formed to provide fire protection for the unincorporated Sleepy Hollow area, and Fire Station 20 was built in 1961.

In 1956, SHFPD signed a service agreement with the Town of San Anselmo for fire protection based on assessed values and shared expenses. This agreement lasted until 1976, when the voters

of Sleepy Hollow approved a special tax to re-establish independent fire protection services, ending the contract with San Anselmo. However, in 1979, SHFPD and San Anselmo entered a new 25-year agreement, with the costs based on a percentage of total labor expenses.

In 1982, the Towns of San Anselmo and Fairfax consolidated their fire departments, forming the Ross Valley Fire Service Joint Powers Authority (JPA). Although the contract with San Anselmo remained the same, fire services were now administered through the JPA. In 2002, SHFPD proposed to become a voting member of Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) and to increase its share of fire protection costs, but a revised joint powers agreement was not approved. In 2004, SHFPD signed a five-year "evergreen" contract with San Anselmo, based on the former labor cost agreement, and agreed to pay 25% of the costs for two years to assist with the Town's budget shortfall. In July 2010, SHFPD achieved full voting-member status within the RVFD, officially becoming part of the JPA alongside the towns of San Anselmo, Fairfax. The Town of Ross became a member of the JPA in 2012.

Figure 22: Ross Valley Fire Department Boundary



13.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The Ross Valley Fire Department provides fire suppression (structure, vegetation, and vehicle), emergency medical services, fire prevention and inspections, hazardous materials spills response, vehicle accident response, disaster response, and community education to the towns of San Anselmo, Ross, and Fairfax, as well as the CDP of Sleepy Hollow. RVFD responds to incident call types, including building fires, grass and brush fires, vehicle fires, other fires, medical and vehicle accidents, hazardous conditions, service calls, good intent, false alarms, and severe weather. The department had 4 stations located in Ross, San Anselmo and Fairfax. However, in 2021, the Ross Town Council voted to close Station 18 in Ross, effective July 2025.

The department currently has 39 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees made up of 1 Fire Chief, 4 Battalion Chiefs, 9 Captains, 9 Engineers, 12 Firefighters, 2 Fire Inspectors, 1 Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator, and 1 Administrative Assistant. Daily on-duty staff consists of ten personnel staffing three Type-1 fire engines as well as one Battalion Chief. The Department has developed a specific response plan by incident type, which dictates the exact resources to be dispatched to a given incident. The Fire Chief oversees the general operations of the department in accordance with the policy direction of the Board of Directors.

Ross Valley Fire Department has been classified as a Class 2 Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). This organization independently evaluates municipal fire protection efforts throughout the United States. An ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible that can be given to any fire department using this metric, with both Class 1 and Class 2 being considered “excellent”. Insurance companies often use ISO information combined with other factors to establish local property insurance rates – generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection. The department remains determined to achieve a Class 1 ISO classification with continued improvements and increased staffing levels.

In 2024, RVFD responded to approximately 2,900 incidents. Fifty-five percent were for emergency medical services. Station 21 had the highest number of responses (1,135), followed by Station 19 (912). Station 20 had 527 incidents, followed by Station 18 with 384⁵⁰.

The Department has also created a Defensible Space Inspection program, and in May 2019, they began sending inspectors to approximately 3,800 residences throughout the RVFD jurisdiction. The Department’s goal in this program is to take an educational approach to assist residents in understanding what they can do to protect homes and communities from wildfires. All visits from the inspectors are documented utilizing the Ross Valley Fire Department Notice of Defensible Space Inspection forms and include other fire preparedness information.

Facilities and Apparatus

RVFD operates and maintains 3 fire stations, with 1 concurrently used as its administrative building (Station 19). The stations are:

⁵⁰ RVFD Staff Correspondence; July 22, 2025

- Station 19 – 777 San Anselmo Avenue, San Anselmo, CA 94960
- Station 20 (Sleepy Hollow) – 150 Butterfield Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960
- Station 21 – 10 Park Road, Fairfax, CA 94930

RVFD also has a variety of apparatus that serve the community, ranging from support vehicles to paramedic trucks. The department also has a handful of support vehicles that include the Fire Chief Command Vehicle, Battalion Chief Command Vehicles, Utility Vehicles, and Inspector Vehicles. RVFD’s apparatus listed by station is provided below.

Station 19: 1 Type 1 Fire Engine, 1 Reserve Type 1 Fire Engine

Station 20: 1 Type 1 Fire Engine, 1 OES Engine

Station 21: 1 Type 1 Fire Engine, 1 Type 3 Fire Engine

13.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

The Ross Valley Fire Department is governed by an eight-member board that is comprised of two designees from each of the four participating agencies. The Town Councils of Fairfax, San Anselmo, and Ross, as well as the Board of Directors of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District, designate two voting members to sit on the RVFD Board. With these internal appointments being the status quo, there are no term limits levied upon any of the board members. Additionally, each JPA member agency appoints one alternate who may substitute for either of its two designated members when an individual member is unavailable.

The RVFD Board of Directors oversees policy adoption, adopting an annual budget, and setting fees for services, among other things. Any change in the member agency’s cost-sharing percentage, any revision of the adopted budget that results in an increase in the annual member’s contribution, any change to fire station service levels, or approval of any single expenditure in excess of three percent of the adopted operating budget requires a unanimous vote of the full board.

RVFD receives administrative oversight from an Executive Officer. The position of Executive Officer rotates between the Town managers of Fairfax, San Anselmo, and Ross for two-year terms. The Board of Directors appoints a Fire Chief for operational oversight. The Fire Chief reports to the Board through the Executive Officer.

Table 13-2: RVFD Board Members

Member	Representing
Bill Kircher	Town of Ross
Julie McMillan	Town of Ross
Steve Burdo	Town of San Anselmo
Chantel Walker	Town of San Anselmo
Thomas Finn	Sleepy Hollow FD
Richard Shortall	Sleepy Hollow FD
Stephanie Hellman	Town of Fairfax
Barbara Coler	Town of Fairfax
Dave Donery	Executive Officer

13.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The RVFD maintains a high level of public accountability and transparency with all its activities. The RVFD website (<https://rossvalleyfire.org/>) provides information on Board meetings, financial reports, preparedness, public education, and more.

Meeting and Agendas

The Board of Directors regularly meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm at San Anselmo Town Council Chambers, located at 525 San Anselmo Avenue in San Anselmo. Board meeting packets can be downloaded from the RVFD website (<https://rossvalleyfire.org/about/board/board-meetings>).

Annual Budget Review

The RVFD adopts a preliminary budget no later than June of each year and a final budget by no later than August. The annual budget provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The District’s administrative team produces reports on expense activity that assists the Board in monitoring activities and any necessary adjustments.

13.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2022, the District's net position is in a deficit of \$9,584,930, with a change from the previous year of \$11,978,321 (more information provided on the deficit in the financial audit section). This calculation considers adjustments such as capital expenditures, depreciation expense, property taxes, payments to reduce capital lease obligations, net pension liability, net OPEB liability, and accrued compensated absences. As of June 30, 2022, the Department reports a negative Net Position due to pension and OPEB liabilities.

Ross Valley Fire Department receives the majority of its funding through its contracts with the Town of San Anselmo, Town of Fairfax, Sleepy Hollow, and Town of Ross. In addition to the

JPA Contracts, RVFD secures funding through a variety of channels, including Fire Prevention Fees, Investment Earnings, and Other Sources. These funding streams contribute to the financial sustainability of the district.

Table 13-3: Ross Valley Fire Department Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2017-18 through FY 2021-22⁵¹

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-2018	\$10,457,190	\$9,780,016	\$677,174
FY 2018-2019	\$11,141,701	\$10,994,083	\$147,618
FY 2019-2020	\$11,489,713	\$12,766,602	(\$1,276,889)
FY 2020-2021	\$12,754,130	\$11,845,295	\$908,835
FY 2021-2022	\$12,907,646	\$12,450,002	\$457,644

Revenue and Expenditures

The majority of RVFD’s revenues are generated through its contracts with the Town of San Anselmo, the Town of Fairfax, Sleepy Hollow, the Town of Ross all of which are member agencies. Although not a member agency the County of Marin contracts with RVFD for fire services in surrounding unincorporated areas. Each contract saw an increase in FY ’22. The district receives revenue from various other sources, including Retiree Health and Contributions, Fire Prevention Fees, Investment Earnings, and other Miscellaneous Sources.

The majority of RVFA expenses are dedicated to employee salaries, with the next highest allocations going toward services and supplies, followed by Debt Services for Principal and Interest. For FY ’22, RVFA expenses \$10,626,283 of the total expense of \$12,450,002 on salaries and benefits. For FY ’22, there was a positive change in net position.

Debt

The District, as of June 30, 2022, is carrying \$296,037⁵² in long-term debt. In February of 2019, the RVFD entered a loan agreement with SHFPD in the amount of \$708,535, with an interest rate of 3.00% to finance a portion of the purchase of two fire engines. At the end of FY ’22, the balance of this loan is \$299,367

The RVFD also provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS). CalPERS provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee’s years of service, age, and final compensation. As of June 30, 2022, the RVFA Net Pension Liability was \$8,845,238. The RVFD total funded ratio is 69.7%. In addition to the pension plan, the RVFD provides post-retirement benefits (OPEB) to its retirees. As of June 30, 2021, the District’s contribution to the plan was \$786,295 with 33 active employees and 40 inactive employees.

Financial Audit

The RVFD established governmental accounting standards to prepare an annual report on its financial statements. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special

⁵¹ [RVFD Financial Information page; Financial Statements from Fiscal Years ending in 2018 through 2022](#)

⁵² [RVFD Audit Year Ended June 20, 202; pg. 32](#)

Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently publicly available audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The firm issued an unqualified or "clean" opinion of the district's financial statements. A breakdown of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances for the District's General Fund for the year ended June 30, 2022, can be seen below in Figure 13-2.

Figure 23: Ross Valley Fire Department Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2021-2022

Ross Valley Fire Department
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances
General Fund
For the year ended June 30, 2022

	General Fund
REVENUES:	
Intergovernmental:	
Town of San Anselmo (Contract)	\$ 3,739,735
Town of Fairfax (Contract)	2,149,921
Sleepy Hollow (Contract)	1,181,073
County of Marin (Contract)	235,783
Town of Ross (Contract)	2,183,012
Prior Authority:	
Retiree health	97,552
Retirement contributions	1,125,991
OES reimbursement	785,270
Other sources	886,149
Fire prevention fees	474,371
Investment earnings	2,444
Miscellaneous	46,345
Total revenues	12,907,646
EXPENDITURES:	
Current:	
Salaries and benefits	10,626,283
Services and supplies	1,551,044
Capital outlay	126,963
Debt service:	
Principal	141,583
Interest and fiscal charges	13,129
Total expenditures	12,459,002
REVENUES OVER (UNDER)	
EXPENDITURES	448,644
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES):	
Proceeds from sale of capital assets	6,650
Total other financing sources (uses)	6,650
Net change in fund balances	455,294

13.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies, such as the Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD), play a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Each member agency of RVFD are members of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority. Additionally, RVFD participated in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan released in 2016, a collaborative effort among county fire agencies, local organizations such as FIRESafe Marin, land management agencies, and community stakeholders. This plan identified areas of concern across the county based on factors like population density, fire behavior, vegetation, and other key considerations. It also outlined several goals: to "increase awareness, knowledge, and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires." This includes promoting defensible space, fuel reduction activities, and fire prevention through fire-safe building standards.

Ross Valley lies within a high-risk Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) environment where residential neighborhoods have fire-prone vegetation which increases wildfire ignition potential. To assist in navigating this RVFD has created WUI maps and Fire Hazard Safety Zones for Incorporated Ross Valley, San Anselmo, Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District and Fairfax. The Town of Ross adopted a hillside ordinance code *18.39 Hillside Lot Regulations* instead of WUI code.

The RVFD is working towards providing more education to the community about this topic. Additionally, RVFD provides an illustration on their website of how to create the necessary defensible space around a resident's home to help protect homeowners in the event of a wildland fire incident. The site outlines different "zones" that range in size to help create the required 100 feet of defensible space. Both RVFD and SHFPD offer a downloadable guides to living in a wildfire-prone environment titled "Living With Fire in the Ross Valley" and "Living With Fire In Sleepy Hollow." The booklet provides specific wildfire preparedness information, including guidance on defensible space, landscaping, powerline safety, and other critical steps residents can take to protect their property from wildfires.

14.0 SAN RAFAEL FIRE DEPARTMENT

14.1 OVERVIEW

The San Rafael Fire Department is part of the City of San Rafael, in Marin County, along the Highway 101 and Interstate 580 corridors. San Rafael is approximately 22 square miles in size, with a population of 61,271 people (as of the 2020 Census). The Department has six fire stations, one training center, and one administrative office. Because of geographical proximity, San Rafael Fire works closely with the Marinwood Fire Department (part of the Marinwood Community Services District). The Department also provides 911 emergency response services to areas within County Service Area (CSA) 19 through a contractual agreement, including Santa Venetia, Merrydale-Los Ranchitos, Bayside Acres, Country Club, California Park, Sun Valley, and San Pablo-Tarrant Circle. San Rafael Fire represents the City of San Rafael in the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). The last municipal service review that included San Rafael and Marinwood was conducted in October of 2025 as a part of the San Rafael Area Study. The data and information accumulated in that report have been updated for this study to reflect the most recent fiscal year available.

San Rafael Fire provides advanced life support and paramedic-level emergency medical services (EMS) to the community, in addition to serving CSA 13, CSA 19, CSA 31, and Marinwood CSD. This includes a combination of paramedic engine companies and paramedic ALS ambulances. San Rafael's fire prevention division conducts fire safety inspections and issues fire permits for all activities regulated by the California Fire Code. Additionally, there is a division dedicated to wildfire mitigation that implements the City's 38-point Wildfire Prevention and Protection Action Plan and the Marin County CWPP goals. This includes a focus on defensible space, home hardening, vegetation management, resident education and support resources, evacuation route improvements and emergency alerting. The department has an Emergency Management Division that oversees the City's Emergency Operations Center, provides emergency management training to all employees, and collaborates with community groups and homeowners' associations to educate individuals on how to proactively prepare for a wide range of emergencies that could impact the area.

Table 14-1: SRFD Admin Overview

San Rafael Fire Department Overview	
Primary Contact:	Fire Chief Abraham Roman
Main Office:	1375 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael
Formation Date:	1874
Services Provided:	Fire Protection, Paramedic level EMS first responder and ambulance transport, Fire Prevention, and All Risk Emergency Response
Service Area:	San Rafael, Marinwood, and CSA 13 and 19
Population Served	≈61,271

14.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The San Rafael Fire Department was formed in 1874 by two residents who wanted to protect the newly incorporated City of San Rafael from fires. A 45-member volunteer fire department was created, led by James Tunstead, the elected sheriff. The company was initially named “San Rafael Hose Company Number One” but later changed to the “San Rafael Hose, Hook, and Ladder Company” to better describe its duties. Funding came from member dues, annual dances, and donations from grateful citizens whose property had been saved from fire. The first equipment used was a four-wheeled hose cart, which was pulled by hand. San Rafael had a well-maintained water system, and fire hydrants were strategically placed throughout the City. The firefighters would simply connect the hoses to the nearest hydrant and apply the hose stream against the structure or item on fire.

Over time, the San Rafael Hook and Ladder Company grew and improved. By the 1890s, the company had 90 volunteer members, two hand-pulled hose carts, two hose carriages, and one hook and ladder wagon. In 1913, the Department purchased its first motorized apparatus, a Pope chemical wagon, replacing hand-pulled or horse-pulled wagons.

Throughout the 20th century, SRFD continued to modernize, transitioning from an all-volunteer force to a fully paid professional department. By mid-century, the City had expanded its firefighting capabilities with the addition of new stations, advanced training programs, and more modern motorized equipment. Innovations in fire prevention and emergency medical services were incorporated over time, reflecting the evolving needs of the growing community.

By the early 2000s, with many of its facilities and infrastructure aging, the department launched a comprehensive review of its operations. This included assessing response times, evaluating the seismic safety of existing fire stations, and planning for the replacement or renovation of key facilities. These strategic initiatives set the stage for the development of modern fire stations and the consolidation of emergency services into more efficient, centralized facilities in the following decade.

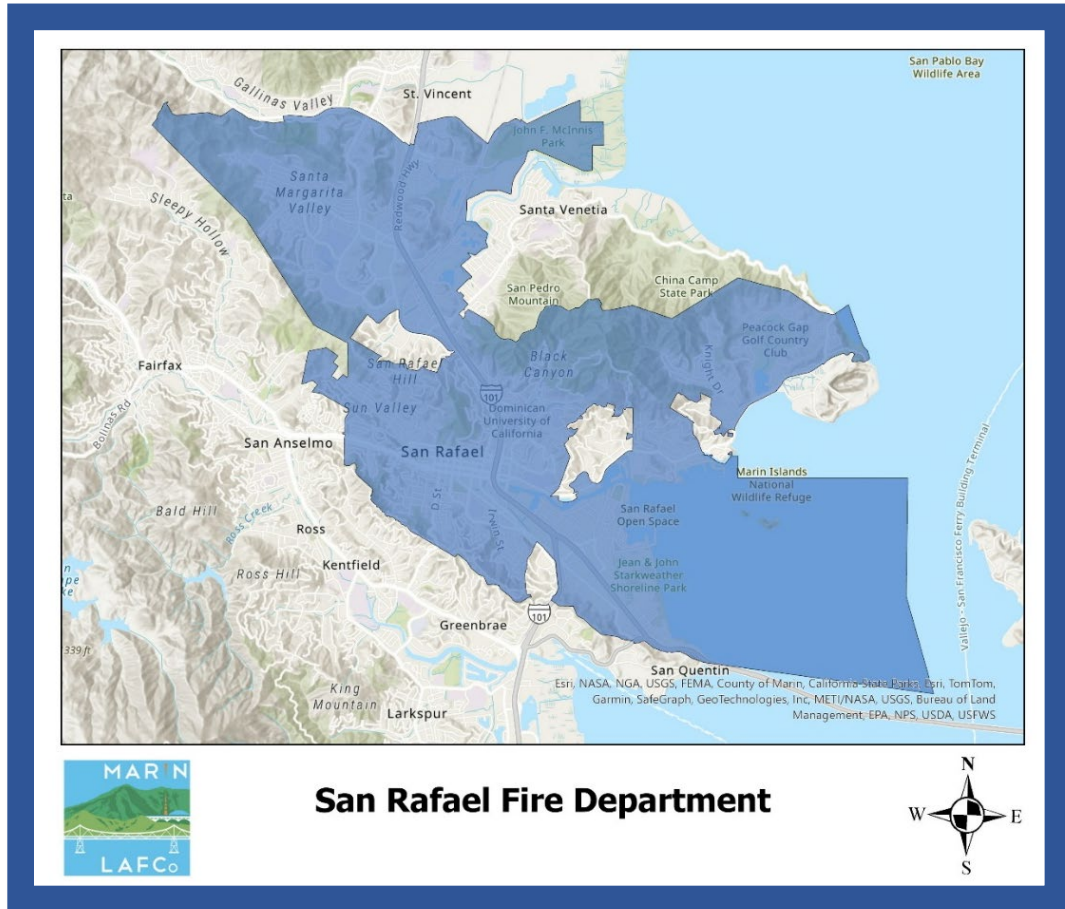
Upon the successful passage of Measure E in 2013, plans were approved for the demolition and rebuilding of Stations 51, 52, and 57, while Stations 54 and 55 were slated for significant renovations. In 2019, the new Fire Station 52 and Station 57 were opened. In July 2020, San Rafael Fire Station 51 was completed, and staff moved into the new Public Safety Center (PSC) at 1375 Fifth Avenue. The PSC houses Engine 51, the duty battalion chief, Fire Administration, but also the City's Police Department, Office of Emergency Services, and Fire Administration, which includes the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chiefs, Fire Prevention, Defensible Space, and the EMS Battalion Chief.

Today, it has a total workforce of 82 full-time personnel trained in specialties such as paramedic-level emergency medical care, firefighting, hazardous materials, fire prevention, and emergency & disaster preparedness. The department has a philosophy of “Community Fire Servicing,” which emphasizes a collaborative and proactive relationship with the community.

District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

The San Rafael Fire Department serves the city of San Rafael, and its boundaries are coterminous with the city limits. The department also covers neighboring unincorporated areas based on contract for services and mutual aid agreements for emergency services.

Figure 24: San Rafael Fire Department District Boundary



Growth and Population

The population of San Rafael, California, in the 2010 Census was approximately 57,713. By the 2020 Census, the population had increased to around 61,250. This is a 6.1% increase over that decade. Currently, the city has a total of 29,564 housing units, with 1,357 being vacant.

14.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire and Emergency Response

The San Rafael Fire Department provides emergency services for San Rafael. The department is considered an all-risk agency and provides a full range of 911 emergency response services, including fire suppression, rescue, advanced life support (ALS), ambulance transport, and hazardous material response. A full range of fire prevention and emergency management & disaster preparedness programs are also provided.

The San Rafael Fire Department works closely and cooperatively with neighboring fire departments to provide service to its community and the surrounding areas. It maintains contractual agreements with Marinwood CSD and CSA No. 19.

The Department operates an administrative office and six fire stations located throughout the City. Currently, they employ paid personnel, including a Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Battalion Chiefs, Fire Captains, Fire Engineers, Firefighters/Paramedics, Deputy Director of Emergency Management, Fire Prevention and Administrative Staff, and a Fire Mechanic. Most calls for Department service are medical in nature. In total, the department responded to 12,004 calls for services in 2024.

The San Rafael Fire Department has achieved a Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). This organization independently evaluates municipal fire-protection efforts throughout the United States. An ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible that can be given to any fire department using this metric. Insurance companies often use ISO information combined with other factors to establish local property insurance rates, generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection.

The San Rafael Fire Department receives additional support from the San Rafael Fire Foundation, a community nonprofit organization formed in 2014. The organization supports San Rafael firefighters and paramedics by funding technology, equipment, training, and public outreach through donations.

Facilities and Apparatus

The San Rafael Fire Department operates and maintains 6 fire stations. Station 51 and the Department's headquarters were incorporated into the new Public Safety Center that opened in 2020, housing not only fire administration and apparatus but also the police department and Office of Emergency Services. In 2015, the City Council approved a strategic plan for essential facilities that consisted of projects that were divided into phases. The first phase included the construction of a new public safety center in downtown San Rafael. The funding for this project was approved by Measure E, passed in November of 2013. The second phase of essential facility upgrades involved the replacement of Fire Stations 54 and 55.

- Public Safety Center (Station 51) - 1375 Fifth Ave, San Rafael, California 94901
- Station 52 - 52 Union St, San Rafael, CA 94901
- Station 54 - 46 Castro Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901
- Station 55 - 955 Point San Pedro Rd, San Rafael, CA 94901
- Station 56 - 650 Del Ganado Road, San Rafael, CA 94903
- Station 57 - 3530 Civic Center Dr, San Rafael, California 94903

SRFD has a variety of apparatus that serve the community, from utility vehicles, aerial ladder trucks, specialized wildland fire engines, to paramedic ambulances. A full outline of the Department's current apparatus can be seen below:

Station 51: One Type 1 Engine, one Type 6 Engine cross-staffed and the duty battalion chief utilizing a command staff vehicle.

Station 52: One Type 1 Engine, one Ambulance, 1 Reserve Engine, 1 pick-up truck

Station 54: One Aerial Ladder Truck, one cross-staffed Type 6 Engine, and one one-ton stake side truck.

Station 55: One Type 1 Engine, one cross-staffed Ambulance, one fire boat, one UTV.

Station 56: One Type 1 Engine, one cross-staffed Ambulance

Station 57: One Type 1 Engine, one Ambulance, and one reserve Aerial Ladder Truck, one pickup truck, one ATV, 1 Jet Ski.

SRFD Shop: 2 reserve engines, 2 reserve ambulances, Maintenance and repair.

Other Service Providers

Agreement Between the City of San Rafael and Marinwood CSD

The City of San Rafael Fire Department and Marinwood CSD have entered into a number of contractual fire service agreements dating back as far as 1973 to provide shared services in the northern extent of San Rafael and Marinwood CSD's service area. Through the most recent agreement, a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JPA) initiated in April 2014, San Rafael provides the district with administrative capacity, training, supplies, and response support. In return, the district provides primary service call response in the City's northern neighborhoods (over 50% of the District's total annual service calls), giving faster response times for area residents. The agreement remains in effect unless terminated by either agency with 90 days' written notice.

In October 2018, longtime Marinwood CSD Fire Chief Tom Roach retired. To fill the open position, the district amended its existing JPA with San Rafael to include Fire Chief Officer Services, to be provided by the City at an annual District cost of \$96,320.00 (includes a 3% annual escalator for the first 5 years, then a city re-evaluation). Such an agreement further codifies the shared services partnership between the two agencies.

Agreement Between San Rafael and CSA No. 19 – Unincorporated San Rafael Neighborhoods

Marin County and San Rafael have had an ongoing agreement since 1976 to provide fire protection services to the unincorporated neighborhoods within CSA No. 19, including: Santa Venetia, Los Ranchitos, Country Club, Bayside Acres, and California Park⁵³. San Rafael provides primary response to 911 calls within CSA No. 19's jurisdiction, and the County (CSA No. 19) leases land at 3530 Civic Center Drive (Station 57) to the City. The "Lease Agreement" and "Fire Protection Services Agreement" each have a 10-year term and were last renewed in 2016. Under these agreements, the City pays market value to lease the land where Fire Station 57 is located, and the County compensates the City for fire protection services from a negotiated \$1.3 million "base rate". This amount increases annually by the same percentage as the salary increase set by the firefighter collective bargaining agreement. Station facility maintenance and renovation costs are split between the two agencies.

⁵³ City of San Rafael. City Council Staff Report. Topic: County Service Area 19 Fire Protection and Lease Agreement. June 20, 2016.

http://cityofsanrafael.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=cityofsanrafael_ea23def85a6f192655493a2667a3492c.pdf

14.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

City Council and Fire Commission

The City of San Rafael operates under a council-manager system guided by its 1912 Charter, with a separately elected Mayor and four district-based council members overseeing policy direction. The City Council appoints a City Manager to serve as the administrative head of the City government, responsible for the day-to-day operations of the City. The Fire Chief reports directly to the City Manager. In addition, an advisory five-member Fire Commission with two alternates meets monthly to review and comment on department-related initiatives. Each commission member serves a four-year term and is appointed in staggered terms by the City Council, with a limit of two consecutive terms. The Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the San Rafael Public Safety Center, 1375 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, California 94901.

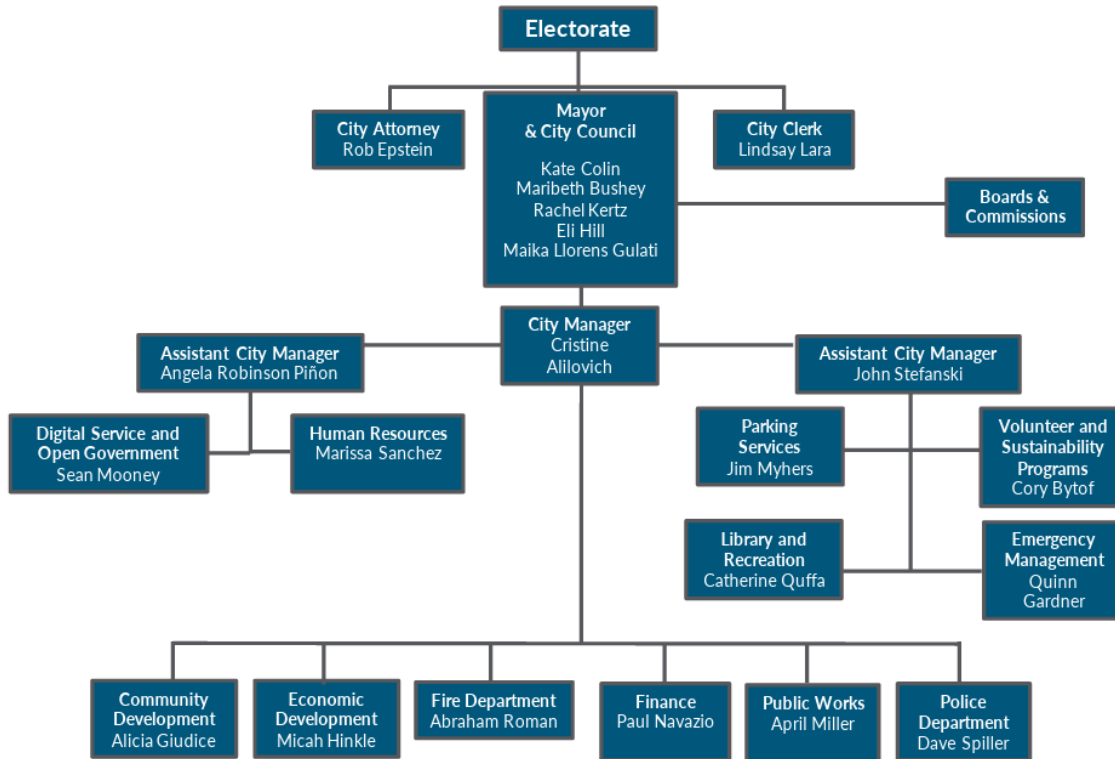
Table 14-2: SRFD Fire Commission

Name	Term
Stan Burford	2022-2026
Brian Waterbury	2024-2028
Ken Johnson	2021-2025
Donna McCusker	2023-2025
David Fonkalsrud	2023-2027
John Chung (alternate)	2023-2027
Vacant (alternate)	

Figure 25: San Rafael Organization Chart



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



14.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

SRFD has consistently made it a priority to maintain high levels of accountability and transparency in all its activities. The SRFD website (<https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/departments/fire/>) provides extensive information on the various divisions of the agency, fire commission meetings, stations, history, apparatus, and press releases. The department also publishes a biweekly newsletter titled Hot Shot that is available to the public with no subscription fee at <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/signup-for-hot-shot/>

Meetings and Agendas

The SRFD Fire Commission, an advisory group, meets regularly on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the San Rafael Public Safety Center. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the SRFD website (<https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/fire-commission/>).

Annual Budget Overview

The Department's budget, adopted no later than the June City Council meeting each year, provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them.

14.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The San Rafael Fire Department is part of the City; therefore, its budget and review are included in the City's annual audit. Therefore, individual revenue and expenditure are not made readily available like other districts. However, the main expenditures and debts are made available in the City of San Rafael's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. What follows is not a comprehensive report but a highlight of expenditures and debts.

Revenues and Expenses

Revenue sources for the SRFD come directly from the City, which include revenue from taxes, capital grants, charges for services, and operating grants and contributions. According to the FY 2021-2022 budget, fire services expenditure by department was \$21,385,526. Additional revenues come from agreements for services with Marinwood CSD and CSA No.19⁵⁴ as well as the Measure C Wildfire Prevention Parcel Tax and the Emergency Medical Services/Paramedic Fund.

The City maintains a fund called the Essential Facilities Capital Projects Fund that is used to account for significant capital improvements to public safety facilities. During the fiscal year 2021-2022, construction work began on Fire Stations 54 and 55. The total expenses incurred during this period amounted to \$4.9 million. Additionally, the General Fund received a total of \$715,000 from the Measure E Transaction and Use Tax, which was allocated to this fund. Furthermore, \$307,000 was also allocated from paramedic tax funds. Additional capital assets acquired during the fiscal year included the purchase of a Fireboat infrared camera for \$39,000.

Debts

MERA (Marin Emergency Radio Authority) was created on February 28, 1998, by the County of Marin and 25 local agencies to manage a public safety and emergency radio system county-wide. Members agreed to share maintenance, operation, and debt service costs on a pro rata basis. The City's obligation is 16.913%. The City paid \$388,993 for MERA's operations and debt service in FY 2022 and has established a reserve to pay future service payments.

The City leased property from the County of Marin in 2016 to construct Fire Station 57 for a 40-year term, ending in 2056. The City is required to make monthly payments of \$13,343 from July 1, 2021, onwards, which will increase by 3% every July 1. As of July 1, 2021, the City recorded an initial lease liability and intangible right-to-use asset of \$5,476,219. As of June 30, 2022, the balance of the lease liability was \$5,480,451, and the net value of the right-to-use asset was \$5,319,756, with an amortization of \$156,463.

⁵⁴ See page 100 "Other Service Providers" for more details on these agreements.

The SRFD also provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the Marin County Employees' Retirement Association (MCERA). MCERA provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee's years of service, age, and final compensation. The City and eight other employers share the plan. Retirement benefits are based on years of service, final average compensation, and age at retirement. The City of San Rafael's employer contribution rates for the year ended June 30, 2022, vary depending on the retirement tier. The City of San Rafael Fire Tier 1 plan has a 77.38% employer contribution rate, a 14.9% to 20.37% employee contribution rate, and a 3.0% benefit at age 55 on a highest-year basis. The City of San Rafael Fire Tier 2 plan has a 76.81% employer contribution rate, a 12.59% to 18.53% employee contribution rate, and a 3.0% benefit at 55 based on an average of the three highest years.

Financial Audit

The City of San Rafael annually prepares a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) to review the City's financial statements in accordance with established governmental accounting standards. The city contracts with an outside accounting firm, Maze & Associates, to audit the CAFR. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024⁵⁵.

14.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

The San Rafael Fire Department plays a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought, changing climate patterns, wind, and low humidity levels have the potential to increase the occurrence and severity of wildland fires, which could threaten structures and lives in the Wildland Urban Interface. Illustrating the City's commitment to wildfire safety, the City Council adopted the San Rafael Wildfire Prevention and Protection Action Plan developed by SRFD in 2020.

San Rafael is a member agency of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). SRFD manages over four million in tax revenue dedicated to wildfire prevention, mitigation, education, and preparedness each year. Projects supported by Measure C funding include vegetation clearance along roadways, defensible space evaluations, resident support resources such as grants and free chipping services, as well as open space and fuel management. Other initiatives, as outlined in the Action Plan, MWPA Mission, and Marin County CWPP, include:

- Ordinance changes to mitigate wildfire risk.
- Additional staffing, funds, and resources to address hazards.
- Expanded and new public outreach and education
- Expanded and new fuel reduction
- Expanded and new preparedness efforts
- Improving and increasing vegetation management plans (VMPs)

⁵⁵ City of San Rafael (2024). *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, Year Ended June 30, 2024*.

15.0 SOUTHERN MARIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

15.1 OVERVIEW

The Southern Marin Fire Protection District (SMFPD) was established on April 8, 1999,⁵⁶ as an independent special district by way of the consolidation of the Alto-Richardson Fire Protection District and the Tamalpais Fire Protection District. The SMFPD boundary surrounds just over 5.9 square miles of the southern portion of Marin County’s Highway 101 corridor. The District maintains contracts for service with the National Park Service (NPS) that expand the District’s full area of service to 25.3 square miles. The district serves a population of approximately 41,576⁵⁷ persons. The last Municipal Service Review that included the SMFPD was conducted in April of 2023 as part of the Golden Gate Corridor Region Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

The primary function of SMFPD is to provide structural fire protection, emergency medical response, water rescue, and disaster planning and response to the census-designated places (CDP) of Strawberry and Tamalpais-Homestead Valley, as well as the City of Sausalito and the northwestern area of the Town of Tiburon, with the City of Mill Valley recently approved for annexation to the District with the District taking operational control of the City’s Fire Department services in July of 2023. The District also provides services to the Marin Headlands and the Fort Baker areas of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area by way of a contract with the National Park Service. A map of the District can be seen below in Figure 15-1. The SMFPD participates in the Marin County and California Mutual Aid System with nearby fire districts and responds to wildland fires as needed. The District is also a member agency of the Southern Marin Emergency Medical Paramedic System (SMEMPS) as well as the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). SMEMPS has a board of directors that is comprised of representatives from the Tiburon Fire Protection District, the Southern Marin Fire Protection District, and the County of Marin. The City of Belvedere is also a non-voting member. Meanwhile, MWPA’s 17 member agencies throughout Marin County receive funding for fuel removal projects, defensible space evaluations, and other helpful resources by way of a voter-approved parcel tax that was passed in March of 2020.

Table 15-1: Southern Marin Fire Protection District Overview

Southern Marin Fire Protection District			
Primary Contact:	Chief Chris Tubbs	Phone:	(415)-388-8182
Headquarters:	28 Liberty Ship Way, Suite 2800, Sausalito, CA		
Formation Date:	April 8, 1999		
Services Provided:	Fire Protection and Emergency Medical/Rescue		
Service Area:	25.3 square miles	Population Served:	≈41,576

⁵⁶ [Marin LAFCo Resolution No. 99-5](#)

⁵⁷ Approximate number based on U.S Census Bureau data for the City of Sausalito, the northwestern area of the Town of Tiburon, and the census designated places of Strawberry, Tamalpais-Homestead Valley and Mill Valley

15.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Southern Marin Fire Protection District was established as an independent Special District whose legal authority and responsibilities are contained in the State of California Health and Safety Code Sections 13800-13970. While the official formation of the Southern Marin Fire Protection District took place on April 8, 1999, the two departments that were consolidated in order to form the District, the Alto-Richardson Bay Fire Protection District and the Tamalpais Fire Protection District (with the Tamalpais Fire Protection District also having been the product of a previous consolidation with the Homestead Fire Protection District), were spawned back in the early 1940s. In 1942, the Alto Fire Department was set up by three local residents, Mabel Berger, Joe Reis, and Clinton Thoney (the former Fire Chief to the City of Mill Valley), who had recently received civil defense service training. The training was a five-week course instructing members of the public on how to battle fires and administer first aid. The training was provided by Marin County Fire Chief Lloyd De La Montanya. With no formal firefighting equipment, the founders of the Alto Fire Department would carry fire hoses, hand tools, and any other piece of equipment that could be used to control a small fire in the trunks of their cars. In September of 1946, volunteers began construction on the first fire station for the department, located on Shell Road. The building was 700 square feet which was just large enough to house the old fire truck that had been purchased from the Muir Woods Improvement Club.

In 2004, the District formed a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the City of Sausalito in order to share personnel. This agreement, over time, ultimately evolved into the District annexing the City of Sausalito Fire Department in June of 2012. In October of 2010, the District entered into a service agreement with the National Park Service to provide service to the Marin Headlands and Fort Baker areas of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

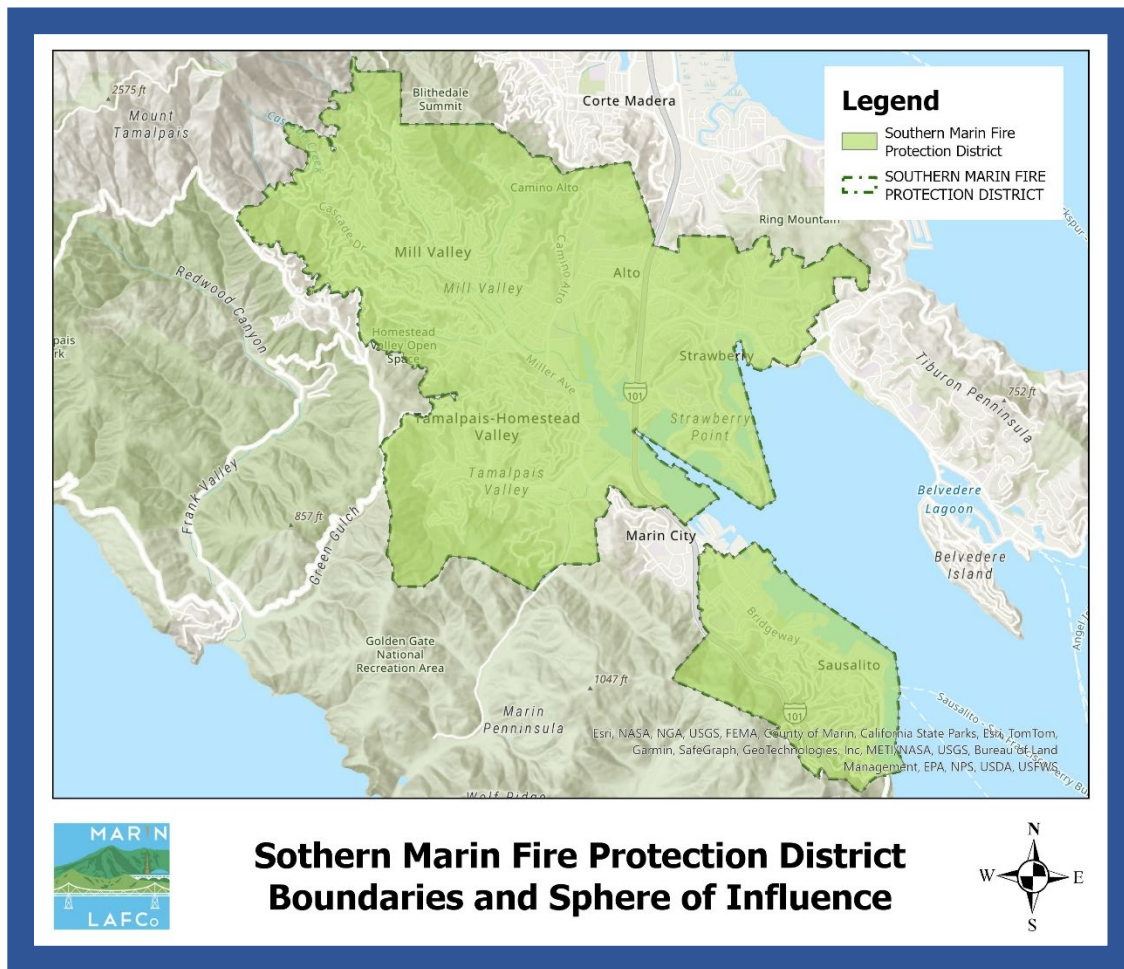
In the early part of 2015, the District entered into an operational cost-sharing agreement with the City of Mill Valley Fire Department in order to reduce administrative redundancies, reduce command redundancy, and create a single shared Training Division. In 2020, this agreement grew into a greater shared services agreement that combined the administrative and prevention components of both agencies to form a single management with the SMFPD Fire Chief serving as the Chief for both agencies. In October 2022, the District and the City of Mill Valley submitted a formal application to Marin LAFCo, requesting that the District annex the City and assume fire and emergency response services, effective July 2023. The application was approved at Marin LAFCo's regular meeting on December 8, 2022.

District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

Southern Marin Fire Protection District's service boundary, which currently encompasses all of the census-designated places (CDPs) of Strawberry and Tamalpais-Homestead Valley, as well as the City of Sausalito, the City of Mill Valley, and the northwestern area of the Town of Tiburon. The District's sphere of influence is coterminous with its jurisdictional boundary. The sphere of

influence, along with the annexation of the City of Mill Valley, was last updated in 2023⁵⁸. Since the last MSR occurred, Mill Valley FD has consolidated into SMFPD.

Figure 26: SMFPD Jurisdictional Boundary and Sphere of Influence



Growth and Population

The Southern Marin Fire Protection District’s jurisdictional boundary encompasses the entirety of the jurisdictional boundary of the City of Sausalito and the City of Mill Valley. The District encompasses unincorporated spaces as well, such as the census-designated places (CDP) of Tamalpais-Homestead Valley and Strawberry. The District also includes the area on the northwestern end of the Town of Tiburon. According to the 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the population of the Tamalpais-Homestead CDP is 11,492, which is approximately a 7% increase from the 2010 population number of 10,735⁵⁹. The most recent census data shows the CDP to have 4,678 total housing units, with 218 of those units vacant. The remaining development potential in the planning area is minimal, as current zoning regulations designated by the Community Plan make the area essentially built out. According to the 2020 U.S. Census

⁵⁸ Marin LAFCo Resolution No. 22-33

⁵⁹ [2020 US Census Redistricting Data](#)

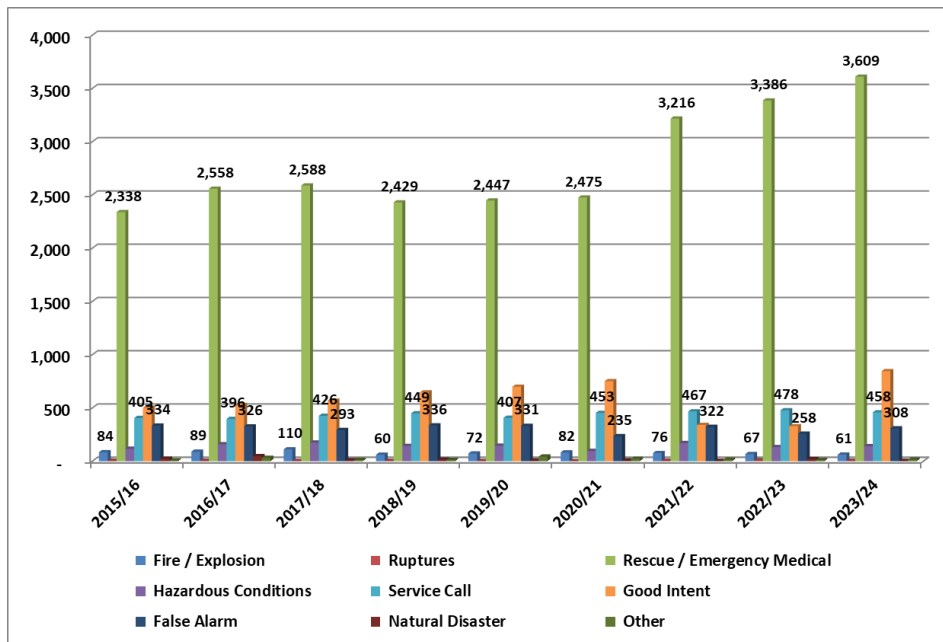
Redistricting Data, the population of the City of Sausalito is 7,269, which is approximately a 2.9% increase from the 2010 population number of 7,061. The City is shown to have 4,425 housing units, with 433 of those units being vacant. The maximum development allowed by the current General Plan policies would give the City 5,134 dwelling units. The City of Mill Valley’s official count from the 2020 Census put the City’s population at 14,231. The City is essentially built⁶⁰ out at this time, with few remaining vacant lots zoned for development that have not already been given a prospective project designation. The total population of the CDP of Strawberry as of the 2020 Census was 5,447, which was an increase from 5,393 in 2010. While there is still some room for development in the northern pocket of the CDP, the majority of the CDP is essentially built out and shows little growth potential.

15.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The SMFPD provides fire protection, technical rescue, emergency medical response, water rescue, and disaster planning and response services. Incident call types fielded by the agency include rescue/emergency medical response, fire/explosion, service calls, good intention calls, natural disasters, false alarms, and hazardous conditions (no fire). Over the past 10 years, the District has averaged 7,500 calls for service annually. The majority of those calls (approximately 60% annually) are for rescue/emergency medical response. On average, the District receives 4,500 rescue/emergency medical calls each year. A breakdown of the District’s calls for service between FY 2014/15 to 2023/24 can be seen below in Figure 15-2.

Figure 27: Southern Marin Fire Protection District Call Frequency by Type



⁶⁰ [City of Mill Valley Housing Element Update 6th Cycle 2023-2031; Pg. IV-11](#)

SMFPD was given a Class 1/1x Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO)⁶¹, an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire-protection efforts throughout the United States. Using this metric, an ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible for any fire department, with Class 1 and 2 being considered “excellent.” Insurance companies often use ISO information in combination with other factors to establish local property insurance rates – generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection

Facilities and Apparatus

The SMFPD owns or leases, operates, and maintains five fire stations. The stations are⁶²:

- Station 1 – 333 Johnson Street, Sausalito
- Station 4 – 309 Poplar Avenue, Mill Valley
- Station 6 – 26 Corte Madera Avenue, Mill Valley
- Station 7 – 1 Hamilton Drive, Mill Valley
- Station 9 – 308 Reed Boulevard, Mill Valley

The District leases space for its administrative, prevention, and preparedness operations in a building at 28 Liberty Ship Way in Sausalito. The SMFPD also has a variety of apparatus that serve the community, ranging from support vehicles to paramedic trucks. SMFPD’s apparatus listed by station is provided below.

Station 1: 1 Type 1 Engine, 1 Advanced Life Support Ambulance, 1 Inflatable Rescue Boat, 1 Dive Team Tender, 1 40’ Metalcraft Fire Boat, 2 Rescue Watercraft, 1 Utility Vehicle

Station 4: 1 Type 1 Engine, 1 Aerial Ladder Truck, 1 Type 3 Engine, 1 Advanced Life Support Ambulance, 1 Utility Vehicle

Station 6: 1 Type 1 Engine, 1 Reserve Advanced Life Support Ambulance

Station 7: 1 Type 1 Engine, 1 Type 3 Engine

Station 9: 2 Type 1 Engine (1 in reserve), 1 Medium Duty Rescue Truck, 1 Command Vehicle, 2 Utility Vehicles, 1 Utility Task Vehicle (UTV).

The District maintains a long-range (12-year) capital improvement plan (CIP) and allocates funding to the plan annually based on the estimated replacement cost of major assets in addition to any funds needed for forecasted facilities upgrades.

15.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

The Southern Marin Fire Protection District is governed by a seven-member board that is elected to four-year terms through an at-large election. All directors are required to live within the

⁶¹<https://www.sbfd.org/transparency/iso-public-protection-classification>
[ppc#:~:text=SMFD%20is%20an%20ISO%20PPC%20Class%201%20Agency](#)

⁶² Ibid

District’s jurisdictional boundary. The Board of Directors maintains current certificates for the AB 1234 Ethics Training Compliance as well as AB 1666 Sexual Harassment Prevention Training. Certificates for each of the board members can be viewed on the SMFPD website. The Board of Directors meets regularly on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the SMFPD Administration Headquarters located at 28 Liberty Ship Way, Suite 2800, in Sausalito.

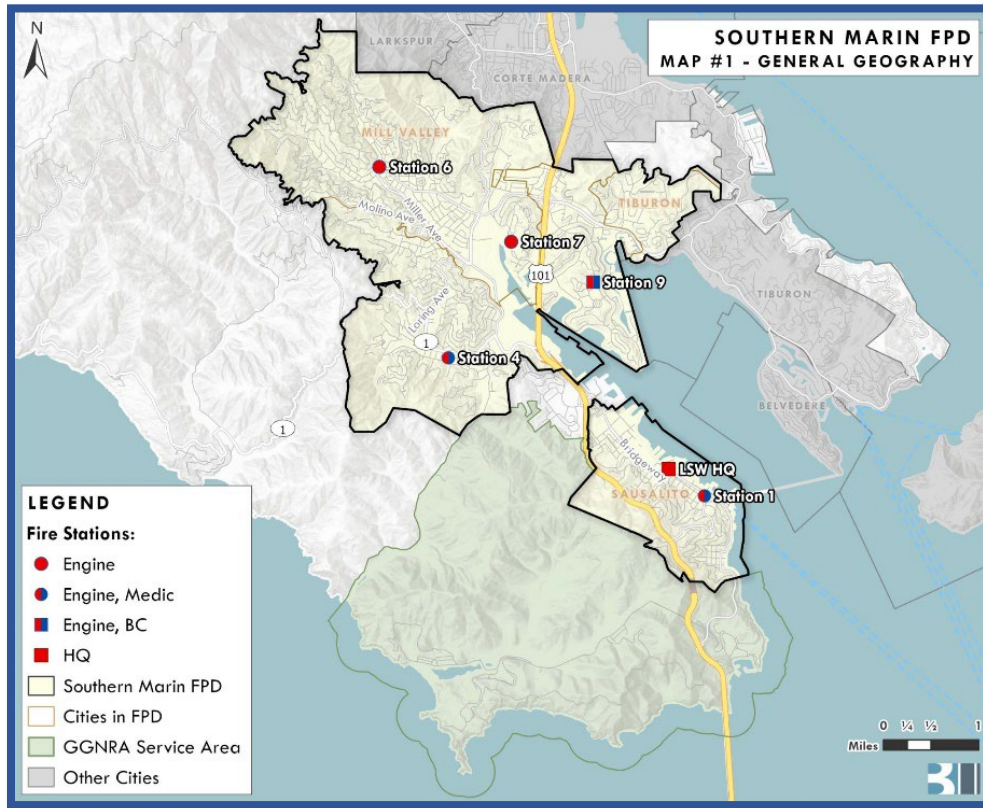
Table 15-2: Southern Marin Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Member	Position	Term Expiration
Pete Fleming	President	November 2026
Clifford Waldeck	Vice President	November 2029
Kurt Chun	Director	November 2026
Cristine Soto DeBerry	Director	November 2026
Tom Perazzo	Director	November 2026
Cathryn Hilliard	Director	November 2029
Ashley Raveche	Director	November 2029

Staffing and District Operations

Operations for the full-service area are divided into six distinct zones to streamline responses and shorten response times. Zone 1 includes the City of Sausalito and the Marin Headlands area of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Zone 4 covers Tamalpais Valley and Homestead Valley. Zone 9 encompasses the Alto and Strawberry areas. Additionally, Zones 6 and 7 both cover Mill Valley, ensuring comprehensive coverage for this region. Across all zones there are 93 full-time staff employees including a fire chief, 2 Deputy Fire Chiefs, 1 Fire Marshal, 1 Deputy Fire Marshal, 4 Battalion Chiefs, 15 Fire Captains, 17 Engineer Firefighters, 17 Engineer Paramedics, 7 Firefighter Paramedics, 12 Firefighters, 1 HR Manager, 1 HR Assistant, 1 Finance Manager, 1 Finance Assistant, 1 Communications Coordinator, 1 IT Coordinator, 1 Administrative Aide, 3 Fire Inspector/Plan Reviewers, 2 Wildfire Mitigation Specialists, and 2 Vegetation Management Specialists, and 1 NRG Coordinator. A map of the zone division is reflected below in Figure 15-3.

Figure 28: Southern Marin Fire Protection District Station Geography



15.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The Southern Marin Fire Protection District offers a very informative website. The website (smfd.org) gives members of the public access to the District’s financial, operational, historical, and preventative information. It offers a wealth of different offerings for disaster preparation instructions for homes, families, and businesses, as well as access to Pulse Point, which is a 911-connected app that offers real-time information on emergencies occurring locally. The District also contracts with a private firm to ensure that the website is ADA-compliant and that all links throughout the website are functional.

Meeting and Agendas

The SMFPD Board of Directors meets regularly on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the SMFPD Administration Headquarters located at 28 Liberty Ship Way, Suite 2800, in Sausalito. Special meetings are held as needed to go over specific topics. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the SMFPD website (<https://www.smfd.org/our-district/district-overview/board-of-directors/meeting-documents>).

Annual Budget Review

The District's budget, adopted no later than the June Board meeting each year, provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The CFO, Alyssa Schiffman, produces monthly reports on expense activity that assist the Chief in monitoring activities and programs. These reports are reported to the Board every month to ensure budgetary compliance.

15.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

There was a steady increase in net position over the course of four years leading up to 2020, reflecting the department's strong financial performance and growth. However, in July 2023, the financial landscape of the department underwent a significant shift due to the consolidation of the Southern Marin Fire Protection District (SMFPD) and Mill Valley Fire. This merger altered the department's financial structure, bringing together resources, liabilities, and assets from both entities, and resulting in a change in its overall financial makeup moving forward. As a result of this consolidation, the financial section of the SMFPD profile will be different than others in order to reflect more recent audits that account for the combined operations and fiscal health of the newly merged department.

Please note that this draft reflects Fiscal Year 2023–2024, rather than Fiscal Year 2021–2022, as it more accurately and fairly represents the agency's standing after recent changes resulting from the annexation of the City of Mill Valley.

Revenues and Expenditures

The primary revenue source for the SMFPD comes primarily from the portion of the 1% property tax on residents within its district boundaries. Of the 1% Current Secured property tax, the SMFPD receives between 10.8% and 17.9% depending upon the area of the District. Property tax revenue in FY 2024–25 is anticipated to grow by 6% compared to FY 2023–24, reflecting a significant 43% overall increase resulting from the annexation of the City of Mill Valley's Fire Department.

The District's total operational revenues for FY 2023-24 were \$37,119,204. Other fundamental sources of annual revenue for the District include the charges for service, special assessments, and interest income. The charges for service saw an increase of \$1.02 million from FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24. The special assessment line item also saw an increase between FY 2019-20 and 2020-21 of \$3,127,923, thanks to the passage of Measure U in November of 2018 that went into effect July of 2019. Measure U is a special tax that is levied annually at a rate of \$200 per residential parcel, \$150 per undeveloped parcel, and \$0.18 per improved square foot of business parcels. In FY 2021-22, the special assessment revenues totaled 4,025,021. Measure U was passed with an agreed upon automatic 5% annual elevator to account for inflation which can be adjusted by the Board of Directors to be less than that amount if deemed appropriate.

The primary expense for the District comes in the form of personnel costs (salaries, benefits, overtime), accounting for approximately 78% of the District's \$33.2 million in Operating & Equipment expenditures in FY 2023-24. The other primary expenditures annually for the

District are materials and services, equipment, capital outlay, and debt service. Expenses and revenues over the course of three previous fiscal years can be seen above in Table 15-3.

Table 15-3: SMFPD Revenues and Expenditures from 3 fiscal years

	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2021-2022	\$26,749,304	\$22,908,870	\$3,840,434
FY 2022-2023	\$26,560,006	\$24,597,843	\$2,755,684
FY 2023-2024	\$37,119,204	\$34,003,154	\$3,226,867

Debt

In FY 2022-2023, the SMFPD entered into a finance purchase agreement in the amount of \$793,137 for the purchase of a fire engine⁶³. Additionally, with the annexation of the City of Mill Valley’s Fire Department, the District acquired an additional two lease agreements for apparatus (not reflected below). GASB 75 also requires the disclosure of the District’s long-term lease with Harrison Holdings for the Administrative Headquarters building in Sausalito, listed below.

Figure 29: SFMPD Long-Term Debt Liability

	Balance at 6/30/2022	Additions	Deletions	Balance at 6/30/2023	Due within One year	Due in More Than One Year
Lease Liability	\$ 4,759,052	\$ -	\$ (239,994)	\$ 4,519,058	\$ 260,435	\$ 4,258,623
Equipment Finance Purchase	-	793,137	(160,876)	632,261	151,615	480,646

The SMFPD also provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the Marin County Employees’ Retirement Association (MCERA). MCERA provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee’s years of service, age, and final compensation. As of June 30, 2023, the SMFPD Net Pension Liability⁶⁴ was \$7,896,94.4. In addition to the pension plan, the SMFPD previously provided other post-retirement health care benefits (OPEB) to its retirees. In 2014, the District ceased providing OPEB benefits and switched to offering its employees the option of retiree health savings accounts (RHS) as a means of trying to address its OPEB liability. As of June 30, 2023, the District carried a Net OPEB liability⁶⁵ total of \$5,039,563. The District currently has 73 employees, both active and inactive, in their OPEB plan. The District also carries a total of \$1,620,216 in compensated absences as of 6/30/23.

Financial Audit

The Southern Marin Fire Protection District annually contracts with an outside accounting firm, most recently Badawi & Associates, to audit the District’s financial statements. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–

⁶³ SMFPD Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30th, 2023

⁶⁴ [Ibid](#)

⁶⁵ [Ibid](#)

22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recent audited financial statement made publicly available on the District's website was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The Southern Marin Fire Protection District has also received the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), a detailed, audited financial report that goes beyond basic annual statements to provide a full picture of a government's financial performance and condition. They have received this Achievement each year since 2021.

15.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies such as the Southern Marin Fire Protection District play a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought, changing climate patterns, wind, and low humidity have the potential to increase the occurrence and severity of wildland fires which could threaten structures and lives in the Wildland Urban Interface.

The SMFPD participated in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan that was published in 2016 by way of a \$123,200 grant from the State Resource Area Fire Prevention Fee Fund. The plan was most recently updated again in 2020. This was a collaborative effort among fire agencies in the county, local fire organizations including FIRESafe Marin, land management agencies, and community stakeholders. Through this effort, areas of concern throughout the county were identified based on population, fire behavior, vegetation, and other factors.

The SMFPD, with a significant area within its jurisdictional boundary being a part of the wildland-urban interface, is taking steps on multiple fronts to aid in the safeguarding of the communities it serves. Some of these efforts include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Targeted vegetation management program
- Conducting multiple public education events annually
- Providing inspection services
- Processing and permitting new construction and improvement projects
- Partnering with the Southern Marin Community Emergency Response and NRG teams
- Offering neighborhood chipper events
- Creating fuel breaks and buffer zones in high-risk areas

16.0 STINSON BEACH FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

16.1 OVERVIEW

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District (SBFPD) was established in March of 1958⁶⁶ as an independent special district. The SBFPD boundary surrounds just over 5.8 square miles of the Stinson Beach area of Marin County’s Pacific Coast. The district serves a population of approximately 541 persons. The last Municipal Service Review that included the SBFPD was conducted in 2022 as part of the West Marin Region Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

The primary function of SBFPD is to provide structural fire, emergency medical response, and disaster planning and response to the census-designated place (CDP) of Stinson Beach. In addition to serving the CDP, the District also responds to all-risk emergencies within Marin County, Mount Tamalpais State Park, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area through uncontracted mutual aid and good faith response, recognizing the remote nature of the area. The SBFPD also participates in the Marin County and California Mutual Aid System with nearby fire districts and responds to wildland fires as needed. The District is also a member agency of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). MWPA aids local fire agencies throughout Marin County with funding for fuel removal projects, defensible space evaluations, and other helpful resources. SBFPD is allocated .68% of MWPA’s total annual funding.

Table 16-1: Stinson Beach Fire Protection District Overview

Stinson Beach Fire Protection District			
Primary Contact:	Chief Jesse Peri	Phone:	(415)-868-0622 ext. 3
Headquarters:	3410 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA		
Formation Date:	March 7, 1958		
Services Provided:	Fire Protection, Emergency Response, Disaster Planning		
Service Area:	3,754 acres	Population Served:	541

16.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District (SBFPD) was established as an independent Special District whose legal authority and responsibilities are contained in the State of California Health and Safety Code Sections 13800-13970. While the official formation of the SBFPD took place on March 7, 1958, historical documents show that the Stinson Beach Fire Department was most likely formed in 1921 and was the first organization created in Stinson Beach. This action was taken at the time by property owners within Stinson Beach who had structures on their properties contributing to a fund for the purchase of a large chemical fire extinguisher apparatus. The contributions ranged from \$10 to \$250. As it was not conjoined to any specific vehicle, the

⁶⁶ Stinson Beach Fire Protection District, *Our Story*, <https://stinsonbeachfire.org/our-story>.

apparatus had to be towed to the necessary location for fire suppression efforts. The first firehouse was built by volunteers with materials that were purchased with funds raised in the community's 4th of July carnivals. The building was completed, and the fire truck moved inside in June of 1949. The building was remodeled and expanded to hold three vehicles in 1970. The second firehouse was built in 1980 by an additional volunteer effort. The first officially named Fire Chief of the district was William Airey in 1947. The Volunteer Ambulance Corps, overseen by the District, was established in 1962, as of 2021 the Volunteer Ambulance Corps has been formally appropriated into SBFPD

In 2022, SBFPD created and began to implement a 5-year strategic plan to transition the department from a volunteer-based agency to a combination department to enhance its current emergency response abilities⁶⁷. Following this 5-year plan, Measure R and Q were passed in 2024. Measure R is a \$.42 per square foot parcel tax that aims to generate approximately \$530,000 annually, with Measure Q modifying the appropriations limit to adjust for this increase in revenue. In addition to the Measure R revenue increase, the district is launching a three-year capital campaign to fund the development of a new fire station, which will replace the current one built in 1949⁶⁸. This new firehouse will allow for the accommodation of full-time staff, modernize outdated facilities, and increase seismic safety standards. The proposed new firehouse is estimated to cost approximately \$16.6 million. Given the district's relatively small year-round population, due in part to the high number of seasonal residents and tourists, its local funding base is limited. As such, the district may need to seek additional financial support through the three-year capital campaign fund they have launched.

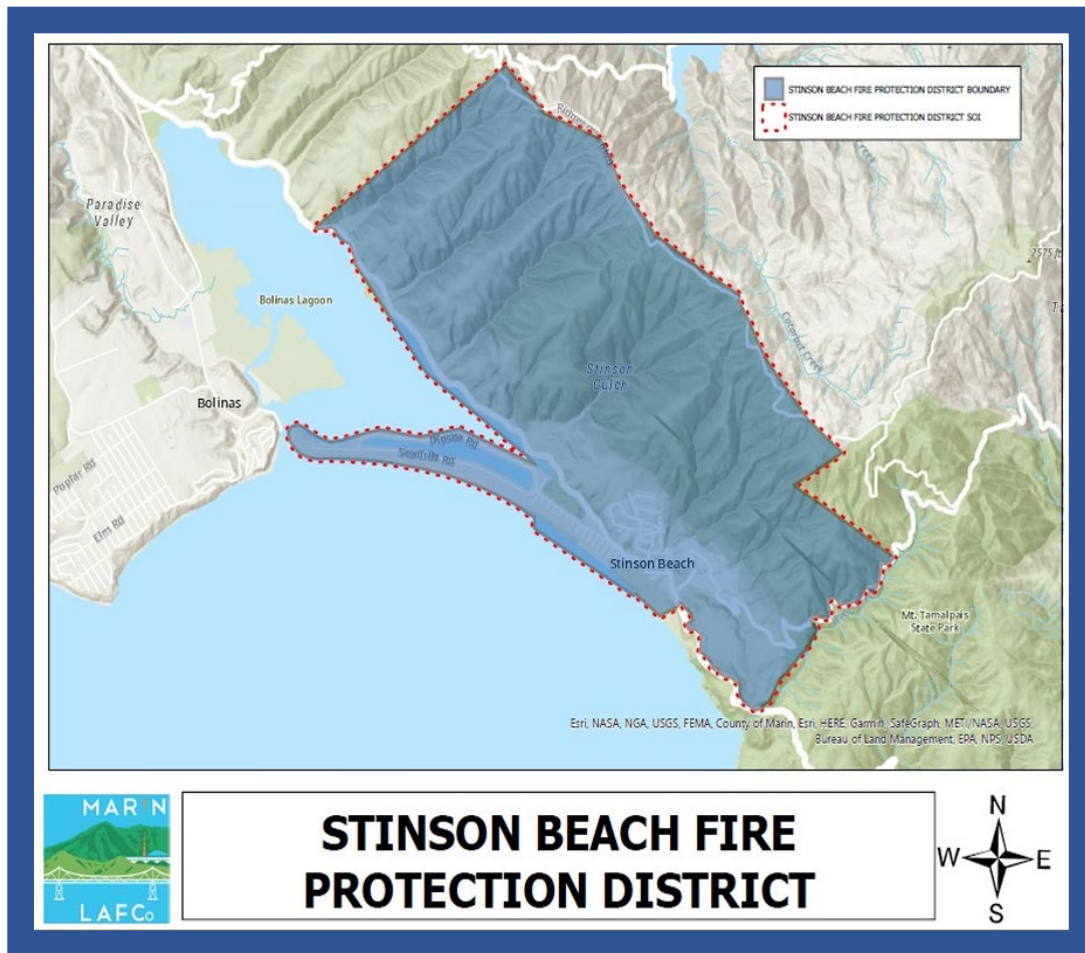
District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

Stinson Beach Fire Protection District's service boundary, which currently encompasses just under 6 square miles, includes all of the residential areas of the census-designated place of Stinson Beach, including the Seadrift area, and stretches to encompass a majority of Ridgecrest Boulevard to the north. The SBFPD's northwestern boundary is contiguous with the Bolinas Fire Protection District's southeastern boundary. The area also encompasses privately and publicly owned parklands, including portions of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Mount Tamalpais State Park. The District's sphere of influence is coterminous with its jurisdictional boundary. The sphere of influence was last updated in December of 2022.

⁶⁷ [Stinson Beach Fire Protection District Five-Year Strategic Plan](#)

⁶⁸ <https://stinsonbeachfire.org/firestation>

Figure 30: Stinson Beach Fire Protection District Boundary and Sphere of Influence



Growth and Population

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District encompasses the census-designated place (CDP) of Stinson Beach. According to the 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the population of the CDP is 541, which is approximately a 14% decrease from the 2010 population of 632⁶⁹. However, Stinson Beach receives around 600,000 visitors annually⁷⁰. The most recent census data shows the CDP has 751 total housing units, with only 290 of those units occupied. With the Stinson Beach area having numerous weekend residents, it is difficult to ascertain the actual full-time population. Due to this, the number of registered voters is another measurement of population that is used. According to the 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the number of registered voters in Stinson Beach is 505.

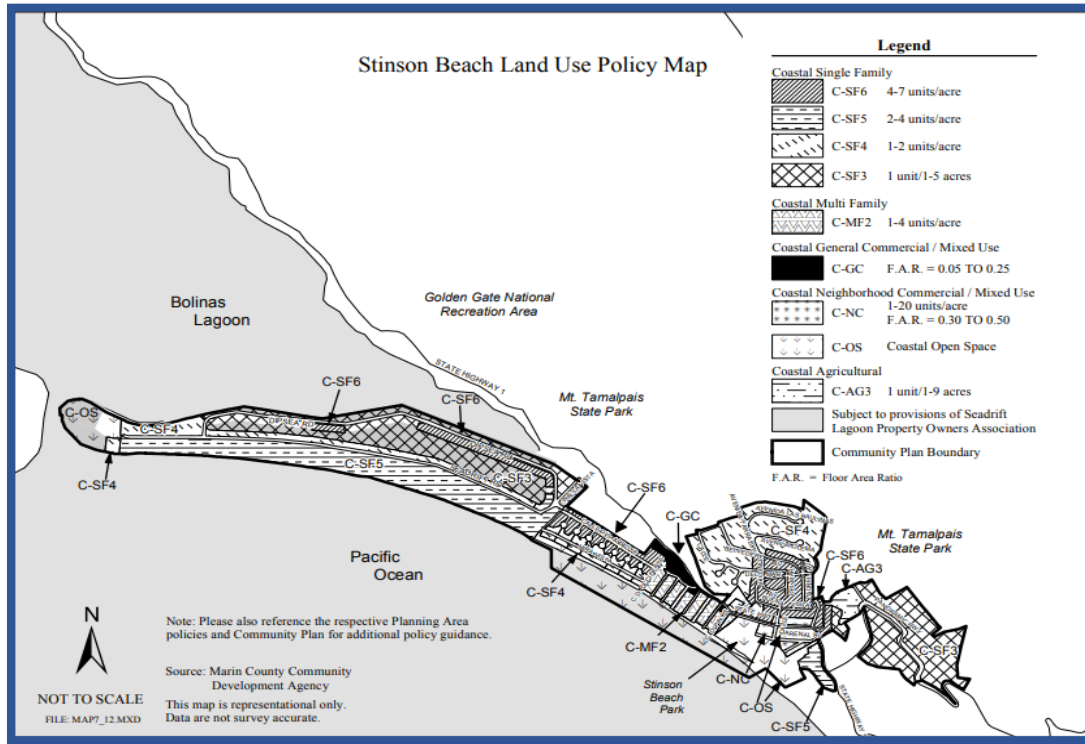
According to the Stinson Beach Community Plan, Stinson Beach has limited opportunity for future expansion since federal and state lands (Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Mount

⁶⁹ [2020 US Census Redistricting Data](#)

⁷⁰ *Marin County Community Development Agency. Stinson Beach Adaptation & Resilience Collaboration Study Report.* Marin County, June 2025. PDF file. Marin County public access portal

Tamalpais State Park), and the Pacific Ocean surround the community. As such, all future residential and commercial development will occur within the existing developed area. Stinson Beach is already extensively developed, and there remain few infill opportunities for growth. A map with the current zoning for the area is shown below in Figure 16-2.

Figure 31: Stinson Beach Land Use Policy Map



16.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The SBFPD provides fire protection, emergency medical response, and disaster planning and response services. Incident call types fielded by the agency include rescue/emergency medical response, fire, service calls, good intention calls, severe weather and natural disasters, false alarm, and hazardous conditions (no fire). The District has one station that is staffed by two paid personnel 24/7. The District has an additional annex facility that houses apparatus. In an effort to transition to a combination department, the district has increased its minimum staffing requirements to include 6 full-time operational employees (3 Fire Captains and 3 Engineers), 2 full-time administrative employees (1 Fire Chief and 1 Administrative Manager), and 15 volunteer firefighters. The Fire Chief oversees the general operations of the District in accordance with the policy direction of the Board of Directors.

On April 1, 2021, Stinson Beach Fire Protection District was given a Class 4/4x Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). This organization independently evaluates municipal fire-protection efforts throughout the United States. Ratings

range on a scale of 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and class 10 indicates that the area’s fire suppression program does not meet ISO’s minimum criteria.⁷¹ SBFPD’s rating of 4/4x puts the district in the top 30% of fire protection agencies in the country.

The SBFPD received an average of 317 calls between 2022 and 2024, with the majority being for Rescue and Emergency Medical Service. Table 16-2 presents call log data, organized by jurisdiction, showing that a significant portion of SBFPD’s calls occur outside the district’s boundaries. The District contracts with the Marin County Fire Department to provide both ALS and BLS assessment-level emergency medical services to the greater Stinson Beach area, as well as BLS transport services when staffing allows. Primary ALS transport services are provided by the Marin County Fire Department as outlined by CSA 28. The nearest full-time ALS transport unit responds from the Marin County Fire station in Point Reyes. During the high-visitation summer months in the area, a part-time ALS ambulance is staffed by the Marin County Fire Department to serve the areas of Stinson Beach, Bolinas, and Mount Tamalpais State Park.

With a large portion of the District’s boundary being beachfront and the area being a popular visitation destination, the District has developed a surf rescue program and provides the area with water rescue service. Water-based emergencies are responded to by way of tube and fin, paddleboard, or the District’s water rescue craft.

Table 16-2: Response Call Data Based on Jurisdiction

Agency Jurisdiction	2022	2023	2024
Bolinas - Private Property	13	10	11
Highways - Panoramic / Shoreline / Ridgecrest	46	63	62
Marin County Open Space - Beach, Village Green, Lagoon etc.	13	22	14
NA⁷²	10	9	5
National Park Service/Federal Responsibility Area	33	33	35
Other	24	14	16
State Responsibility Area	24	20	37
Stinson Beach – Private Property	134	158	145

Facilities and Apparatus

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District owns, operates, and maintains two fire stations, with one concurrently used as its administrative building, and the other operating as an unstaffed annex. The stations are:

- Station 1 – 3410 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970
- Station 2 (Annex) – 100 Calle Del Arroyo, Stinson Beach, CA 94970

⁷¹ [How the PPC Program Works](#)

⁷² NA and Other include ocean rescues and minor public assists and interventions. Correspondence with SBFPD, 2025

The SBFPD also has a variety of apparatus that serve the community, ranging from support vehicles to paramedic trucks. SBFPD’s apparatus listed by station is provided below.

Station 1: 1 Type 1 Engine, 2 4x4 Utility Pickup Trucks

Station 2 (Annex): 1 Type 1 Engine, 1 Type 3 Engine, 1 Water Tactical Water Tender, 1 Off-Road Utility Vehicle, 1 Rescue Watercraft, and 1 Ambulance

16.4 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Board of Directors

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District has a five-member board that is elected to four-year terms through an at-large election. All directors are required to live within the District’s jurisdictional boundary. The Board of Directors maintains current certificates for the AB 1234 Ethics Training Compliance as well as AB 1666 Sexual Harassment Prevention Training. Certificates for each of the board members can be requested by contacting the SBFPD office. The Board of Directors meets regularly on the 4th Monday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District Headquarters located at 3410 Shoreline Highway in Stinson Beach.

Figure 32: Stinson Beach Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Member	Position	Term Expiration
Ariel Poler	Director	November 2028
James Ritchie	President	November 2028
Michele Sileo	Director	November 2028
Mark White	Director	November 2026
Christophe Bertrand	Director	November 2026

16.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District makes a concerted effort to maintain high accountability and transparency with all its activities. The SBFPD website (www.stinsonbeachfire.org) provides information on Board meetings, financial reports, stations, history, apparatus, disaster preparedness, and more.

Meeting and Agendas

The SBFPD Board of Directors meets regularly on the 4th Monday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District Headquarters at 3410 Shoreline Highway in Stinson Beach. Special meetings are held as needed to go over specific topics such as the annual budget. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the SBFPD website (www.stinsonbeachfire.org/boardmeetings).

Annual Budget Review

The District’s budget, adopted no later than the June Board meeting each year, provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The Bookkeeper produces monthly reports on expense activity that assist the Chief in monitoring activities and programs. These reports are reported to the Board every month to ensure budgetary compliance.

16.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Approximately 81% of all annual district revenue⁷³ comes from property taxes. Additional revenue comes from operational and grant funding (14%), Cal OES, and rental revenue. Overall revenues increased by 3.46% in FY ‘21-’22. The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District maintains a goal of providing a high level of community service while maintaining sustainable fiscal practices. Over the past three years of available audited financial statements, the District has ended with budget surpluses that have helped to bolster the District’s net position. This year-over-year increase in net position is due primarily to a steady rise in home sales in the area over the past decade, which in turn has increased property tax revenue.

In 2024, voters approved Measure R, a parcel tax, and Measure Q to amend the district’s appropriations limit. To accommodate the impending changes in staffing and modernization, SBFPD also launched a three-year capital campaign to fund a new fire station.

Revenue

Revenue sources for the SBFPD come primarily from a portion of the 1% property tax on residents within its district boundaries. Of the 1% property tax, the SBFPD receives an average of 8.7% which amounts to approximately \$1.0 million for FY 2021-22. The other primary source of revenue for the District is the transient occupancy tax funding it receives, as well as an annual disbursement from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority by way of the voter-approved Measure C parcel tax. A breakdown of the most recent 5-year span currently available of audited actuals for expenditures and revenues for the district is available below in Table 16-3.

Table 16-3: Stinson Beach Fire Protection Revenues and Expenditures

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-18	\$876,659	\$520,930	\$355,729
FY 2018-19	\$955,069	\$590,905	\$364,164
FY 2019-20	\$1,811,137	\$1,838,271	(\$27,134)
FY 2020-21	\$1,370,198	\$1,006,084	\$364,114
FY 2021-22	\$1,417,635	\$931,858	\$485,777

⁷³ [SBFPD Fiscal Year Ending in June 2022 Audit Report](#)

Debt

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District carries a long-term debt in the form of lease liability amounting to \$103,102 at the end of FY '22. Any large-scale purchases, like the recent acquisition of a parcel of land in Stinson Beach, are paid for by way of the District's reserves and grant funding. Additionally, there are no current pension or other post-employment benefit (OPEB) obligations, as the agency offers retirement benefits to just its 4 full-time employees. These benefits are provided through the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and are paid for annually in full. While the District currently has no official reserve fund policy for maintaining a specific level of reserve funds, SBFDP has consistently maintained reserves of approximately 15% of annual operating costs over recent years. The District is currently contracted with a private firm to assist in building out its formal policies and bylaws.

Financial Audit

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District has its financial statements audited on a biennial basis. The District contracts with an outside accounting firm, most recently Maher Accountancy, to conduct the audit. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024

Table 16-4: Stinson Beach Fire Protection District Financial Audit Summary

Revenues	FY 2021-2022 Audit
Property Taxes	\$1,155,250
Fire Services – Cal OES	\$56,597
Operating and Capital Grant Funding	\$209,529
Rental Revenue	\$4,184
Other Revenues	\$11,103
Total Revenues	\$1,417,635
Expenditures	FY 2021-2022 Audit
Capital	\$22,410
Debt Services	\$13,200
Salaries	\$519,474
Employee Benefits	\$78,028
Materials and Services	\$298,746
Total Expenditures	\$931,858
Excess of revenues over expenditures	\$485,777

16.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies such as the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District play a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought, changing climate patterns, wind, and low humidity have the potential to increase the occurrence and severity of wildland fires which could threaten structures and lives in the Wildland Urban Interface.

The SBFPD participated in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan that was released in 2020. This was a collaborative effort among fire agencies in the county, local fire organizations including FIRESafe Marin, land management agencies, and community stakeholders. Through this effort, areas of concern throughout the county were identified based on population, fire behavior, vegetation, and other factors. Additionally, several goals were stated and associated action items were created to better prepare the county for wildland fires. One such goal is to “Increase awareness, knowledge, and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and fuels reduction activities, and fire prevention through fire safe building standards”. The SBFPD is working towards providing more education to the community about this topic. The District offers guidelines on its website for community members to create a personal preparedness plan to help residents stay informed and be ready to evacuate quickly if necessary. SBFPD is a member of MWPA, which aids in fire prevention work on the area. The District has also prioritized projects aimed towards defensible space, such as chipper days to help reduce fire hazards throughout neighborhoods in Stinson Beach, and the mowing of the Highlands to help create a greater fuel break.

17.0 TIBURON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

17.1 OVERVIEW

The Tiburon Fire Protection District (TFPD) was established in April of 1941 as an Independent Special District comprised of seventeen volunteer firefighters. The TFPD boundary surrounds just over 4 square miles of the Tiburon Peninsula in southeastern Marin County. This area includes a majority of the Town of Tiburon boundary and all of the unincorporated space along the peninsula's eastern shore. While not currently within the district's jurisdictional boundary, the District has a contractual agreement with the City of Belvedere to offer fire protection and emergency services. The district serves a population of approximately 10,500 persons. The last Municipal Service Review, including the TFPD, was conducted in June of 2020 as part of the Tiburon Peninsula Region Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update.

The primary function of TFPD is to provide structural fire and emergency medical response to the Town of Tiburon, City of Belvedere, and surrounding areas, as shown in Figure 17-1. The TFPD also participates in the Marin County and California Mutual Aid System with nearby fire districts and responds to wildland fires as needed.

Table 17-1: Tiburon Fire Protection District Overview

Tiburon Fire Protection District			
Primary Contact:	Chief Thomas Hellyer	Phone	(415)-435-7200
Office Location:	1679 Tiburon Blvd, Tiburon, CA 94920		
Formation Date:	1941		
Services Provided:	Fire Protection and Emergency Response		
Service Area:	2,579 acres	Population Served:	≈10,500

17.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Tiburon Fire Protection District's formation was the result of serious fires that damaged the Northwestern Pacific Railroad's railroad yard and several homes in the late 1930s. In 1941, community members petitioned the Marin County Board of Supervisors for organized fire protection, and in April 1941, a measure was approved for a new fire district, and three fire commissioners were elected. The original district was made up of seventeen volunteer firefighters. The fire district was established as an independent Special District whose legal authority and responsibilities are contained in the State of California Health and Safety Code Sections 13800-13970.

Growth and Population

The Tiburon Fire Protection District jurisdictional boundary encompasses the boundaries of the Town of Tiburon. The District encompasses some surrounding unincorporated spaces as well.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the population of the Town of Tiburon is 9,146, which is a 2% increase from the 2010 population number of 8,962. Under their contract with the City of Belvedere, they also oversee their population of 2,126 as of the 2020 census. Currently, the city has a total of 4,047 housing units, with 333 being vacant.

District Boundary and Sphere of Influence

Tiburon Fire Protection District's service boundary, which currently encompasses just over 4 square miles, includes all of the incorporated area of Tiburon that lies south of Turtle Rock Court as well as all of the space to the east, both incorporated and unincorporated, along Paradise Drive. The current Sphere of Influence encompasses 4.65 square miles. The Sphere of Influence includes all of the City of Belvedere, with which the District contracted services beginning in 1981. The Sphere of Influence was last amended and adopted in June 11, 2020.

Additionally, despite the area being outside of the District's service boundary, TFPD finds itself regularly being the agency tasked with the initial response for both fire protection and medical emergencies on Angel Island. While a majority of the island is within the jurisdictional boundary of the Town of Tiburon, it also has the designation of State Park Land. At the same time, the land technically falls under the jurisdiction of the Marin County Fire Department (CSA 31) for fire protection; however, the burden of response regularly falls to TFPD simply as a matter of its staff's physical proximity to the area. Currently, TFPD receives no funding from either the State of California, Marin County, or the Town of Tiburon for extending its services outside of its current boundary to Angel Island. Since 2007, the District has carried an average cost annually for Angel Island service call responses of \$173,370

There are County and city-designated land uses in and around the TFPD's service boundary. Within the Town of Tiburon boundary, land use authority falls under town jurisdiction. Unincorporated areas within the District are subject to the Marin County Land Use Authority. Land use within the town is predominantly residential but also includes commercial and mixed-use areas, business and industrial areas, and open space and natural resource lands. The predominant land uses in unincorporated district territory are generally comprised of open space and low-density residential lands.

Figure 33: Tiburon Fire Protection District Boundaries and Sphere of Influence



17.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The TFPD provides fire protection, emergency response, and paramedic services. Incident call types include rescue/emergency medical response, fire, service calls, good intention calls, natural disasters, false alarms, and hazardous materials/conditions. The District has two stations with personnel covering three shifts. The District has 34 full-time employees (20 career safety, 4 administrative personnel, 3 prevention personnel, and 7 firefighter trainees) staffing 2 companies, which include structure engines, wildland engines, and support units. The Fire Chief oversees the general operations of the District in accordance with the policy direction of the Board of Directors. The Fire Chief is supported by an Administrative Battalion Chief, a Finance Officer, an Administrative Officer, and two acting a Training Officer, Logistics Officer, and an Operations Officer.

Tiburon Fire Protection District has been awarded a Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). This organization independently evaluates municipal fire-protection efforts throughout the United States. An ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible that can be given to any fire department using this metric. Insurance companies often use ISO information combined with other factors to establish local property insurance rates – generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection.

The TFPD receives an average of 2,206 calls per year (2021-2025) with the majority being for Rescue/Emergency Medical. The call volume increased from 2,224 to calls in 2021/22 to 2,431 in 2023/25. Of the total 2,431 calls in FY '23-'25, 61% were for emergency medical services and 1.4% were for fires.

Facilities and Apparatus

The TFPD owns, operates, and maintains two fire stations, with one concurrently used as its administrative building. The stations are:

- Station 10 – 4301 Paradise Drive, Tiburon, CA 94920
 - Temporary Station - 445 Greenwood Beach Rd., Bldg A, Tiburon, CA 94920
- Station 11 – 1679 Tiburon Boulevard, Tiburon, CA 94920

Station 10 is currently undergoing an overhaul renovation to replace the original station built in the 1960's. This renovation project also includes the development of a 20-foot-tall training structure.

The TFPD also has a variety of apparatus that serve the community ranging from support vehicles to paramedic trucks. TFPD's apparatus listed by station is provided below.

Station 10: 1 Type 1 Engine, 1 Ambulance, 1 4x4 Utility Pickup Truck

Station 11: 1 Type 1 Engine, 1 Type 3 Engine, 1 Type 1 reserve Engine, 1 Medium-Duty Rescue Unit, 1 B/C Command Vehicle, 2 Prevention Vehicles, 1 Chief's Light Duty Truck, 1 Day BC Light Duty Truck, 1 Utility 4x4 Pickup

Waterfront: 1 Type 2 Fireboat

Angel Island: 1-Patient Transport Vehicle, 1 Type 3 Engine

The Fire Chief drives an SUV capable of responding "Code 3" when a life or property emergency exists. The Battalion Chiefs share a 4x4 pickup truck for daily response. There is a reserve Battalion SUV command vehicle at Station 11. Additionally, the Prevention Division utilizes a "Code 3" capable SUV for inspections, investigations, fire response, community service events, public education, and meetings.

The District has a preventative maintenance program, and for new equipment, a purchasing committee is formed to review or write specifications, seek public bids, and follow the vehicle through the build-up and delivery process. In addition to the maintenance program, a comprehensive vehicle replacement plan is in place to maintain a state-of-the-art fleet. Based on

frequency of use, apparatuses are replaced in a timely fashion to ensure the highest levels of in-service vehicle availability.

Other Service Providers

The TFPD is a member of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA), which is a countywide public safety and emergency radio system that allows emergency response agencies to communicate effectively with each other.

The TFPD serves as an alternate Emergency Operations Center (EOC) location for the Town of Tiburon and the City of Belvedere. During a major emergency or disaster, the EOC provides a central location of authority and information with face-to-face coordination among personnel.

Board of Directors

The Tiburon Fire Protection District has a five-member board that is elected to a four-year term through an at-large election. The Board of Directors maintains current certificates for the CA Local Agency Ethics. Certificates for each of the board members can be found on the TFPD website. The Board of Directors meets regularly on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Tiburon Fire Protection District Headquarters Station 11, 1679 Tiburon Boulevard.

Table 17-2: Tiburon Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Member	Position	Term Expiration
Joy Ho	President	2024-2026
Rick Jones	Director	2022-2026
Brett Tucker	Vice President	2024-2028
Cheryl Woodford	Secretary	2022-2026
Mark Capell	Director	2024-2028

17.4 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The TFPD has consistently made it a priority to maintain high accountability and transparency with all its activities. The TFPD website (www.tiburonfire.gov) provides information on Board meetings, financial reports, stations, history, apparatus, and more.

Meetings and Agendas

The TFPD Board of Directors generally meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Tiburon Fire Protection District Headquarters Station 11, 1679 Tiburon Boulevard in Tiburon. Special meetings are held as needed to go over specific topics such as the annual budget. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the TFPD website (www.tiburonfire.gov/board-of-directors).

Annual Budget Review

The district maintains extensive budgetary controls. The budget, adopted no later than the September Board meeting each year, provides overall control of revenue and expenditures, including appropriations on a line-item basis and the means of financing them. The Finance

Officer produces monthly reports on expense activity that assist Officers in monitoring activities and programs. These reports are also reviewed by the Fire Chief and the Finance Committee to ensure budgetary compliance.

17.5 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

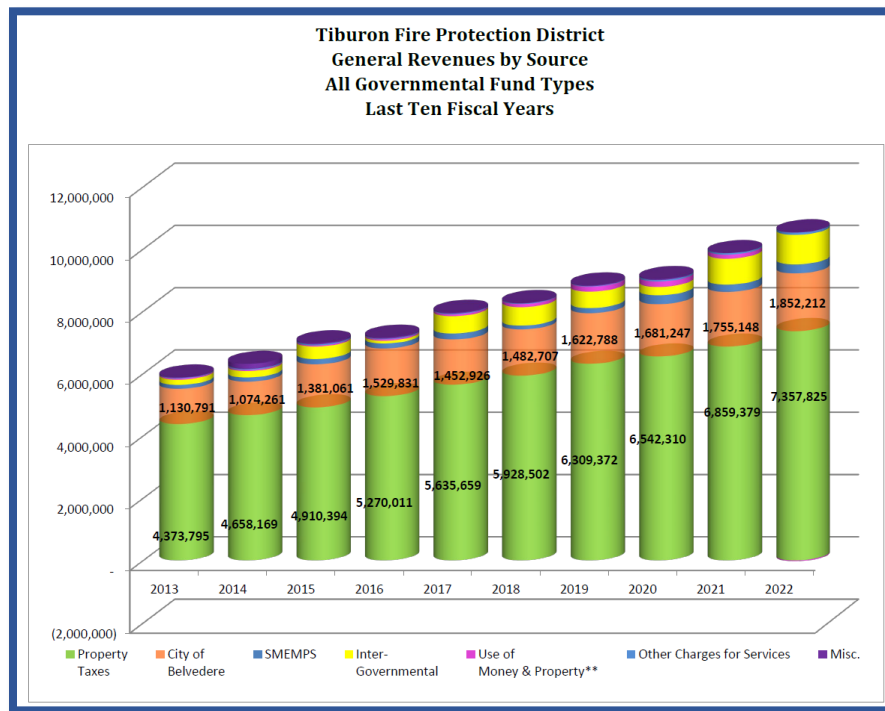
Approximately 70% of all annual district revenue comes from property taxes. Additional revenue comes from the district's contract with the City of Belvedere (18%), Intergovernmental and other reimbursements and fees (9%), and Southern Marin Emergency Paramedic Service (3%). The Tiburon Fire Protection District maintains a goal of providing a high level of community service while maintaining sustainable fiscal practices. Over the past three years, the District has ended with budget surpluses that have helped to bolster the general fund reserves.

Revenue and Expenditures

Revenue sources for the TFPD come primarily from a portion of the 1% property tax on residents within its district boundaries. Of the 1% property tax, the TFPD receives an average of 12% which amounts to approximately \$7.4 million for FY 2021-22. The other major source of revenue for the District is the funding it receives through its contracted services to the City of Belvedere. The contracted funds from the City totaled approximately \$1.85 million for FY 2021-22. Other sources of revenue for the district include, but are not limited to, charges for services, operating grants and contributions, and payments from the Southern Marin Emergency Medical Paramedic System (SMEMPS). An illustration of the District's revenue sources over the last ten fiscal years can be viewed in Figure 17-2 below.

The majority of TFPD expenses are dedicated to employee salaries, which increased by 8.2% from \$88,698,012 to \$9,414,504. The next highest allocations go towards CEPPT Funding and services and supplies. For FY '22, TFPD utilized \$10,350,179 in operating expenses. An increase of \$5,824,000 in net position for the year was due to the net effect of the District's pension liability, which decreased due to market gains. The total net position for FY '22 was \$8,769,135.

Figure 34: Tiburon Fire Protection District General Revenues by Source



Debt

The TFPD didn't expend any funds on debt for principal or interest in FY '22. Previous debt obligations include the lease of a Type 1 engine as well as payments to the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA). In 2018, the Tiburon Fire Protection District had approximately \$237,824 in outstanding debt for Equipment Capital Leases, but as of 2021, that debt is at 0.

The TFPD also provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS). CalPERS provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee's years of service, age, and final compensation. As of June 30, 2019, the TFPD Net Pension Liability was \$1,582,814. The TFPD pension funded ratio is 75.9%. In addition to the pension plan, the TFPD provides post-retirement health care benefits to its retirees. As of June 30, 2022, the District carried a Net OPEB liability total of \$651,035. The District currently has 29 employees, both active and inactive, in their OPEB plan.

Financial Audit

The Tiburon Fire Protection District annually prepares a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) in-house to review the District's financial statements in accordance with established governmental accounting standards. The District contracts with an outside accounting firm, Maher Accountancy, to audit the CAFR. While this financial review and evaluation in the Fire Services Special Study concludes with fiscal year 2021–22, it should be noted that the District is current with its audits. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Table 17-3: Tiburon Fire Protection District Revenues and Expenditures from the Past 5 years

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-2018	\$8,258,024	\$8,220,351	\$37,673
FY 2018-2019	\$8,826,383	\$8,490,001	\$336,382
FY 2019-2020	\$9,030,550	\$9,023,524	\$7,026
FY 2020-2021	\$9,863,785	\$9,640,912	\$222,873
FY 2021-2022	\$10,505,915	\$10,350,179	\$ 155,736

17.6 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Local agencies such as the Tiburon Fire Protection District play a critical role in protecting natural resources and the environment. Extended periods of drought, changing climate patterns, wind, and low humidity have the potential to increase the occurrence and severity of wildland fires, which could threaten structures and lives in the Wildland Urban Interface.

The TFPD participated in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which was released in 2016 and updated in 2020. This was a collaborative effort among fire agencies in the county, local fire organizations including FIRESafe Marin, land management agencies, and community stakeholders. Through this effort, areas of concern throughout the county were identified based on population, fire behavior, vegetation, and other factors. Additionally, several goals were stated and associated action items were created to better prepare the county for wildland fires. One such goal is to “Increase awareness, knowledge, and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and fuels reduction activities, and fire prevention through fire safe building standards”. The TFPD is working towards providing more education to the community about this topic.

Additionally, TFPD provides an illustration on their website of how to create the necessary defensible space around residents’ homes. In partnership with the Town of Tiburon Public Works Department TFPD provides “Chipper Events” to residents in the District. This allows residents the opportunity to drop off their vegetation cuttings and slash for chipper removal free of charge. The efforts have removed upwards of 700 tons of vegetation from the Peninsula.

18.0 NOVATO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

18.1 OVERVIEW:

The Novato Fire Protection District (NFPD) was established in 1926 as an independent special district from what was originally a volunteer fire department. The NFPD boundary encompasses approximately 71 square miles in northern Marin County, California. This includes all of the City of Novato and the surrounding unincorporated areas to the east, north, and west. The District has a population of approximately 66,000 persons. The last Municipal Service Review for the NFPD was conducted in 2020 as part of the Novato Regional Municipal Service Review.

Currently, the primary NFPD function is to provide structural fire and emergency medical response to the City of Novato and surrounding areas, as shown in Figure 18-1. The NFPD also participates in many automatic and mutual aid agreements with nearby fire districts and responds to wildland fires as needed. Some of these mutual aid agreements are with Lakeville Volunteer Fire Co., Marinwood CSD, Petaluma FD, San Antonio VFD, and CSA 31. Novato Fire is a member of MWPA. The main administration building is also the site of the City of Novato and NFPD Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during major disasters.

The NFPD has close community ties, and many of its members voluntarily support several Novato Fire Foundation programs, including youth programs, toy drives, and education activities. As part of its community outreach program, the NFPD hosts an annual open house and participates in and provides medical services at the Novato Chamber of Commerce Art & Wine Festival, where the community can visit any station to view equipment and interact with personnel.

Table 18-1: Novato Fire Protection District Overview

Novato Fire Protection District			
Primary Contact	Chief Dan Peters	Phone	(415) 878-2690
Office Location:	95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945		
Formation Date	1926		
Services Provided	Fire Protection and Emergency Response		
Service Area	~71 square miles	Population Served	~66,000

18.2 FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

NFPD formation resulted from community interest in providing basic services even before the town of Novato was created. Before the NFPD, a small volunteer fire department formed in 1894 and served the area with hose carts and a chemical engine. After Novato was granted township status, the NFPD was established, and its first commissioners were appointed on July 7, 1926. It was established as an independent Special District whose legal authority and responsibilities are contained in the State of California Health and Safety Code Sections 13800 – 13970.

District Boundary And Sphere of Influence:

NFPD’s service boundary, which currently encompasses 71 square miles, includes all of the City of Novato and outlying areas east to San Pablo Bay and up to the Sonoma County line. In 1977 the Hamilton Air Force Base was detached from the NFPD boundary, however, in 1999 the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals determined that the detachment was not valid. In 2009, Marin LAFCo rescinded the action on the “Hamilton Field and Rafael Village Detachment” with LAFCo Board Resolution No. 09-03. This action rescinded the NFPD boundary change but did not account for the SOI which was determined after the 1977 decision making the NFPD boundary larger than the SOI. In December of 2023, a resolution was passed to amend the Novato SOI to make the boundaries conterminous.

There are County and city-designated land uses in and around the NFPD’s service boundary. Within the City of Novato boundary, land use authority falls under city jurisdiction. Unincorporated areas within the District are subject to the Marin County Land Use Authority. Land use within the city is predominantly residential but also includes commercial and mixed-use areas, business and industrial areas, and community and natural resource lands. The predominant land use in unincorporated district territory are generally comprised of agricultural, public facilities, open space, rural residential, and low-density residential lands Figure 18-1.

Figure 35: NFPD District Boundary and Sphere of Influence



Growth and Population:

The Novato Fire Protection District jurisdictional boundary encompasses the boundaries of the City of Novato. The District encompasses unincorporated spaces as well, such as the census-designated places of Indian Valley, Bel Marin Keys, Burdell and other surrounding unincorporated areas. According to 2020 U.S. Census Redistricting Data, the population of the City of Novato CCD is 60,314, which is a 16% increase from the 2010 population number of 51,904. Currently, the city has a total of 24,184 housing units, with 822 vacant.

18.3 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Fire Protection and Emergency Response

The NFPD provides fire protection, emergency response, and paramedic services. Incident call types include emergency medical response, fire, service calls, good intention calls, natural disasters, and hazardous materials/conditions. The District has five stations with personnel covering three shifts. Each shift has one Battalion Chief, five Captains, and five engine companies, including a cross-staffed truck and Type 3 engines. Staffing includes two front-line paramedic ambulances, each staffed with two firefighters/paramedics. The District also has a Prevention division, as well as Training and EMS divisions.

NFPD has been awarded a Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), an organization that independently evaluates municipal fire protection efforts throughout the United States. An ISO rating of 1 is the highest possible classification that can be given to any fire department using this metric. Insurance companies often use ISO information combined with other factors to establish local property insurance rates – generally offering lower fire policy premiums in communities with better protection.

The NFPD receives an average of 5,921.5 calls per year (2013 – 2023) with the majority being for Rescue/ Emergency Medical. The call volume has increased steadily over the last five years from 5,996 calls in 2018/19 to 7,680 in 2023/24⁷⁴. A summary of call numbers over the last 10 years is shown below in Figure 18-2 and calls by type in Figure 18-3. The average reported response time was 5 minutes 47 seconds for emergency medical services and 6 minutes 39 seconds for fires.

⁷⁴ Correspondence with NFPD; July 24, 2025

Figure 36: NFPD Total Incidents by Station: YTD Comparison

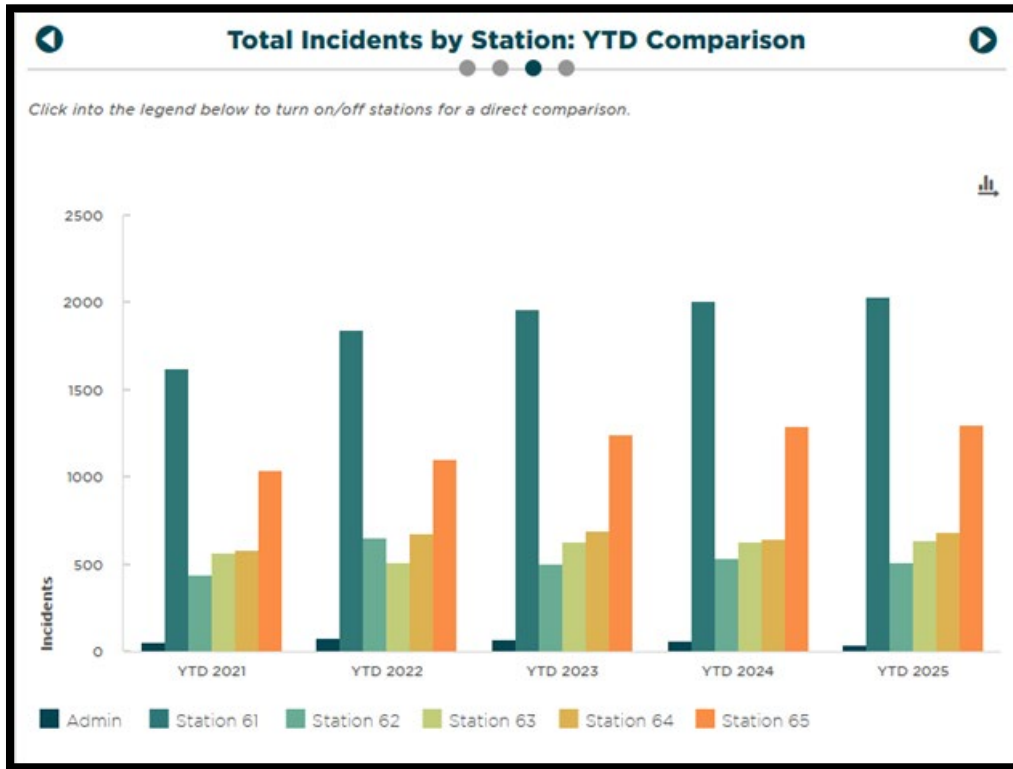
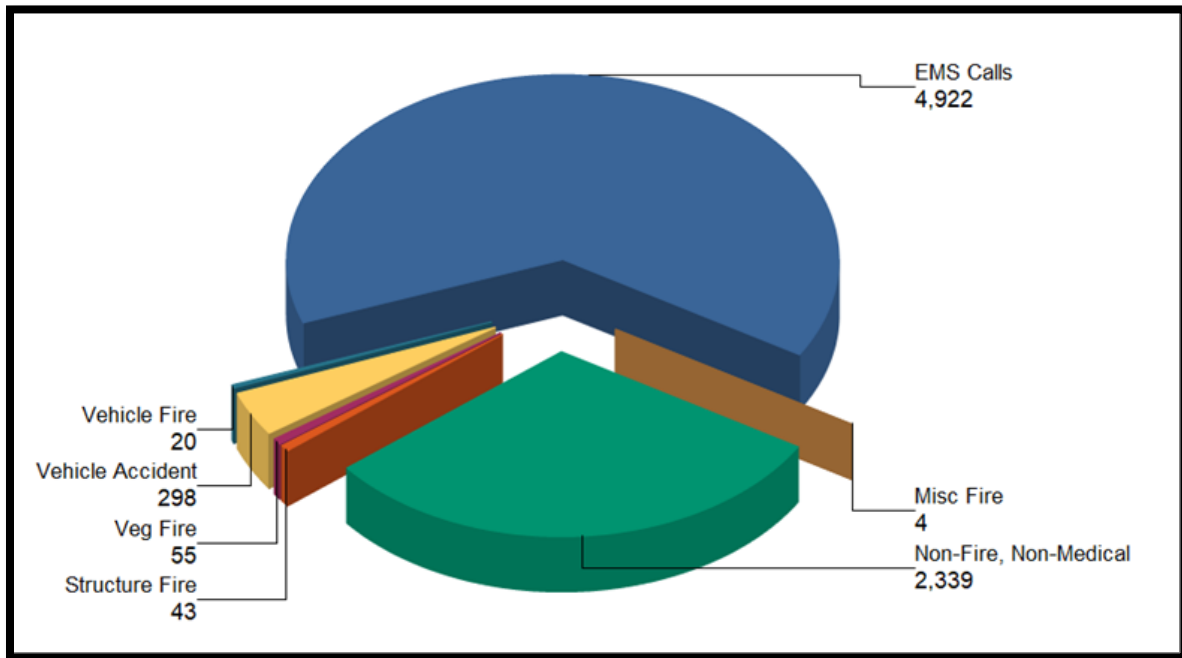


Figure 37: NFPD 2024 Incidents by Type⁷⁵



⁷⁵ Correspondence with NFPD; July 24, 2025

Facilities and Apparatus:

The NFPD owns, operates, and maintains one administrative building and five stations as listed below:

- Administration Building - 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945
- Station 61 - 7025 Redwood Boulevard, Novato, CA 94945
- Station 62 - 450 Atherton Avenue, Novato, CA 94945
- Station 63 - 65 San Ramon Way, Novato, CA 94945
- Station 64 - 319 Enfrente Road, Novato, CA 94949
- Station 65 - 5 Bolling Drive, Novato, CA

A facilities assessment was conducted in 2014 for all NFPD-owned buildings. The evaluation identified the current building status and upcoming repair and/or replacement needs. Station 64 was not included in this assessment as it was being rebuilt at the time of the evaluation.

During the assessment, many of the buildings were found to be in fair to good condition, with lifecycle replacements of building systems needed within the next 10 years. Having these assessments allows the NFPD to plan for major facility upgrades. Currently, the NFPD has completed the renovation of Fire Station 62's kitchen and full replacement and upgrade of the station's septic system. In addition to Fire Station 62's training tower, which was completed in 2021, two new training classrooms were completed in 2022 and 2023.

The NFPD has a variety of apparatus that serve the community, ranging from support vehicles to paramedic trucks. The NFPD's apparatus listed by station is provided below as of June 2023.

5 front-line type 1 engines include a rescue pumper, 2 type 1 reserve engines, 1 type 1 training engine, 1 Truck, 3 Type III, 3 first out ambulances, 2 reserve ambulances, 9 command vehicles, 1 reserve command vehicle, 1 water tender, 11 administrative pool vehicles, 3 utility pick-ups, 1 van, 2 UTV's, 1 training forklift

The NFPD utilizes a Vehicle Replacement Plan to ensure that all vehicles remain in sound working order and are replaced when needed. Operations vehicles are replaced based on years of front-line service and are then placed in reserve. Having a Vehicle Replacement Plan allows the NFPD to plan for upcoming replacement costs adequately and ensures that service needs can be fulfilled.

Other Service Providers

The NFPD is a member of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) which is a countywide public safety and emergency radio system that allows emergency response agencies to communicate effectively with each other.

The NFPD jointly operates an emergency operations center with the City of Novato at the NFPD administrative office. During a major emergency or disaster, the EOC provides a central location of authority and information with face-to-face coordination among personnel.

To the north of Novato is the City of Petaluma which provides emergency response services in Sonoma County and participates in an automatic aid agreement with the NFPD for the response to wildland fires in the Mutual Threat Zone. To the south of Novato is the San Rafael region which

has multiple emergency response agencies including Marinwood CSD, adjacent to the NFPD boundary, and the City of San Rafael.

Several automatic and mutual aid agreements are in place to ensure a high level of service to area residents. The NFPD currently has agreements with Lakeville Volunteer Fire Company; Marinwood Community Services District; Petaluma Fire Department; San Antonio Volunteer Fire Company; Marin County Fire Department. The NFPD also is a party in a Mutual Threat Zone agreement with CalFire, Marin County Fire Department, and Sonoma County Fire – San Antonio that outlines a joint response to vegetation fires in the area of Highway 101 near the Sonoma and Marin County line. In the event of extraordinary events, the NFPD is also a party to the Marin County Fire Chiefs Mutual Aid Agreement, which provides county-wide mutual assistance and mobilization during emergencies.

Additional public services in the area include water service provided by the North Marin Water District and sewer service provided by Novato Sanitary District. The City of Novato provides a range of municipal services, including parks and recreation and police services.

18.4 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Board of Directors

The NFPD has a five-member board that is elected to a four-year term. Elections for Board members are now by district elections so that each Board member represents a specifically defined area within the NFPD. The Board of Directors maintains current certificates for the CA Local Agency Ethics and California Sexual Harassment Prevention for Supervisors programs. Certificates for each of the board members can be found on the NFPD website.

According to the Board of Directors’ policy (Policy 225), members are paid a sum of \$200 per meeting (effective November 2019), workshop, study session, special meeting, and committee meeting up to a maximum of 4 meetings per month. Information on meeting dates and payments is provided on the NFPD website.

Table 18-2 - Novato Fire Protection District Board Members

Member	Position	Term Expiration
Lj Silverman	President	2024-2028
Michael Handfield	Vice-President	2024-2028
Shane Francisco	Director	2024-2028
William “Bill” Davis	Director	2022-2026
Bruce Goines	Secretary	2022-2026

Staffing and District Operations

The NFPD currently employs 88 staff members, excluding reserves, who work at five fire stations and one administrative building. Stations are regularly staffed with a combination of battalion chiefs, captains, engineers, and firefighters/paramedics.

The Wildfire Mitigation Specialists are responsible for conducting hazard assessments, providing vegetation management assessments and prescriptions, and drafting fuel reduction plans for the wildland-urban interface areas of the NFPD. The Training Captain would be responsible for creating and implementing a fire training program. The NFPD is currently looking into long-term strategies to fund these additional positions.

18.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Over the past several years, the NFPD has made it a priority to maintain high accountability and transparency with all its activities. The NFPD website (www.novatofire.org) provides information on Board meetings, financial reports, stations, history, employment, and more.

Meetings and Agendas

The NFPD Board meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 10:00 am at the Novato Fire District, Admin Building at 95 Rowland Way in the Heritage Conference Room. Special meetings are held as needed to go over specific topics such as the annual budget. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the NFPD website (www.novatofire.org).

Annual Budget Review

The NFPD prepares and adopts annual budgets covering revenues, operating, and capital expenses and fund balances. The NFPD takes into consideration five distinct divisions when preparing the annual budget: Emergency Medical Services, Risk Reduction Prevention & Mitigation, Operations, Organization Resources & Support, and Training. The NFPD vision statement is “To position the Fire District operationally and financially to create a sustainable future”.

18.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Approximately 80% of the district’s annual revenue comes from property taxes. Other revenue sources include charges for services, intergovernmental and interest on income. The NFPD aims to provide a high level of community service while maintaining sustainable fiscal practices. As is shown in Table 18-3, the past five years of audits show budget surpluses that help build the general fund.

Table 18-3 - Novato Fire Protection District Five-Year Fiscal Overview

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Net Difference
FY 2017-2018	\$30,785,044	\$30,363,720	\$421,324
FY 2018-2019	\$31,711,122	\$28,315,248	\$3,395,874
FY 2019-2020	\$35,555,545	\$28,924,918	\$4,630,627
FY 2020-2021	\$37,724,528	\$31,114,726	\$6,609,802
FY 2021-2022	\$39,314,379	\$35,393,952	\$3,920,418

Revenue and Expenditure

Revenue sources for the NFPD come primarily from a portion of the 1% property tax and a parcel tax originally approved by voters in 1991 and later amended in 2002. Of the 1% property tax, the NFPD receives approximately \$31 million for FY 2021-22. Other revenues include the voter-approved parcel tax Measure C, charges for services, and more. Other sources of revenue for the district include but are not limited to ambulance service charges, plan check and fire inspection fees, capital grants and contributions, investment earnings, and state and federal reimbursements for mutual aid.

The majority of NFPD expenses are dedicated to employee salaries, which comprise 73% of their total expenditures, with the next highest allocations going toward materials and services at 22% of the total expenditures, followed by debt services. For FY '22 NFPD expensed \$35,393,952. An increase of \$12,953,282 in net position for the year was in part due to an increase in revenues of expenses.

Financial Audit

The NFPD prepares an annual report on the Department's financial statements in accordance with established governmental accounting standards. The most recent audited financial statement was prepared by the independent certified accounting firm, Maze & Associates, which issued an unqualified or "clean" opinion of the Department's financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ [NFPD Fiscal Year Audit ending on June 31, 2022.](#)

Figure 38: NFPD Fiscal Year '22 Statement of Revenues and Expenditures⁷⁷

NOVATO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE GOVERNMENTAL (GENERAL) FUND FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2022	
REVENUES:	
Property taxes	\$31,273,366
Measure C revenue - MWPA	1,932,731
MWPA - Core fund reimbursement	624,047
Charges for services	3,209,478
Interest income	19,705
Intergovernmental	1,792,315
Miscellaneous	462,728
Total Revenues	39,314,370
EXPENDITURES:	
Current:	
Public Safety	
Salaries and benefits	26,133,581
Services and supplies	7,000,471
Capital outlay	1,681,954
Debt service	
Principal	548,374
Interest and fiscal charges	29,572
Total Expenditures	35,393,952
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	3,920,418

Debt

The NFPD expended approximately \$577,946⁷⁸ in the year-end of June 2022 on debt service, including principal and interest payments. In 2013, the District borrowed \$2,135,000 to refinance the debt on the administration building, and in 2015, it borrowed \$3,000,000 to finance the construction of Station 64. The District is committed to paying off the notes on the administration building and Station 64 by 2023 and 2024, respectively. As of June 30, 2022, the FPD had approximately \$1,030,000 in outstanding debt.

The NFPD also provides a pension plan for employees and is part of the Marin County Employees' Retirement Association (MCERA). MCERA provides retirement, disability, and death benefits based on the employee's years of service, age, and final compensation. As of June 30th, 2022, the Net Pension Liability (Asset) increased from approximately \$11 million Net Pension Asset to approximately \$22 million Net Pension Liability as of June 30, 2023. The NFPD pension funded ratio is 70.4%. For the fiscal year end of June 2022, NFPD contributed \$1,232,285 to the plan, which has 77 active members and 98 inactive employees or beneficiaries that are currently receiving benefit payments.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid

The NFPD maintains a District credit card with a credit limit of \$80,000. As of July 11, 2022, the available credit was approximately \$36,800. The card balance is typically paid in full every month so that no interest is accrued.

The NFPD contracts with an outside accounting firm, currently Maze & Associates, to prepare an annual report for each fiscal year to review the District's financial statements in accordance with established governmental accounting standards. The most recently audited financial statement was prepared for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

Financial Planning/Capital Improvement

The NFPD maintains several designated reserve accounts, additionally maintaining a committed fund that provides contingency funding in situations where actual revenue is 15% or more below expected revenue, or when a state of emergency is declared by the District Board or County of Marin for an area that falls within District boundaries. As of June 30, 2022, the balance for that fund was \$11,192,974 or 32% of the expenditures.

18.7 WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS

The Novato Fire Protection District (NFPD) plays a vital role in safeguarding natural resources and the community from the growing threat of wildland fires. With prolonged drought, shifting climate patterns, high winds, and low humidity, the risk of severe wildfires, especially in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), continues to rise.

In 2020, NFPD participated in the development of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), a collaborative effort involving county fire agencies, FIRESafe Marin, land management organizations, and local stakeholders. This plan identified high-risk areas based on population density, vegetation, and fire behavior, and outlined strategic goals and action items to enhance wildfire preparedness.

One key goal is to increase public awareness and encourage proactive measures—such as creating defensible space, reducing fuels, and adopting fire-safe building standards—to minimize loss of life and property. To support this, NFPD is expanding community education efforts and strengthening its Prevention Division which includes the following strategies:

- **Vegetation Management** – Identifying and reducing hazards, maintaining shaded fuel breaks, fire roads, and evacuation routes. Key projects include the Greater Novato Shaded Fuel Break, Ignacio Valley, Bahia, and city open space projects.
- **Evacuation Route Maintenance** – Clearing overgrown vegetation to keep evacuation corridors accessible and safe.
- **Home Assessments and Grants** – Offering free wildfire risk assessments and providing grants for vegetation management and home hardening (e.g., ember-resistant vents, fire-resistant materials).

- **Defensible Space and Home Hardening** – Promoting fire-resistant landscaping and structural improvements, with an emphasis on “Zone Zero”—the first five feet around a home.
- **Public Outreach and Education** – Engaging residents through workshops, demonstration gardens, and neighborhood wildfire preparedness initiatives.

NFPD’s vegetation management program is supported by a dedicated team that oversees these projects throughout the Novato area, often in partnership with FIRESafe Marin, other fire agencies, and community groups. Since 2020, the program has expanded evacuation routes, reduced fuel loads in open spaces, and established demonstration gardens to showcase fire-smart landscaping.

These efforts reflect both **strategy and action consistent with MWPA** funding and coordination, while NFPD delivers direct, on-the-ground programs tailored to Novato’s specific needs. The district remains committed to working with partner agencies to ensure the highest level of safety, resilience, and service for all Marin County residents.

19.0 VOLUNTEER AND PRIVATE FIRE DEPARTMENTS

19.1 OVERVIEW

Volunteer fire departments are vital to Marin County, but are specifically prevalent in West Marin, where they provide emergency services to rural and semi-rural communities. Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department, Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department, Tomales Volunteer Fire Company, and the Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade (private) are primarily staffed by volunteer firefighters trained to respond to wildland fires, structure fires, medical emergencies, and rescue situations. These departments are primarily funded by donations, fundraisers, and grants to provide emergency services as well as fire prevention and emergency preparedness programs. These volunteer fire departments are key to Marin County's emergency response system, ensuring safety and readiness across diverse landscapes and specifically rural areas of West Marin.

19.2 SKYWALKER RANCH FIRE BRIGADE

Overview

The Skywalker Ranch Volunteer Fire Department, established in 1985 by George Lucas, was created to protect the Skywalker Ranch property in Nicasio, California. This private fire brigade was formed to address the unique needs of the Ranch, which houses Lucasfilm's headquarters and a range of residential and recreational facilities. Over time, the department became an integral part of the local firefighting network, offering mutual aid to nearby communities such as Marinwood. In addition to providing emergency services, the brigade has made significant contributions to local firefighting efforts. For example, in 2012, Lucas donated a Type 3 wildland fire engine from the Ranch to the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department, bolstering their firefighting capabilities.

Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade is stationed at 5858 Lucas Valley Road, Nicasio, and focuses on emergency medical services, fire suppression, and prevention. The Battalion Chief leads the department, overseeing operations, training, and coordination with local emergency services. The department also engages in community outreach, promoting fire safety through events like Fire Prevention Week.

Service Area

The Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade operates in Nicasio, California, within Marin County, serving the expansive Skywalker Ranch property. This includes Lucasfilm's headquarters, production facilities, and surrounding residential and recreational structures.

Operations Overview

The Skywalker Ranch Fire Department is comprised of both career and volunteer firefighters. The department is led by a Battalion Chief, who oversees daily operations, including training, fire prevention activities, and coordination with other local emergency services. This

combination of professional and volunteer staff allows the department to maintain an elevated level of readiness while engaging with the local community.

The Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade is a private fire services provider run by Lucasfilm management and operates under the oversight of the company's leadership. As a private fire department, it is not directly governed by local or county fire authorities. However, it is integrated into the Marin County mutual aid system, which means it collaborates with and provides support to neighboring fire departments in emergencies. While it is independently managed, its operations are aligned with local firefighting standards and protocols for coordination and mutual assistance.

19.3 MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Overview

The Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department began in the early 1940s when residents formed a volunteer fire brigade due to the lack of fire protection. It officially became a recognized department in the 1950s and built a new fire station in 1965 to meet the community's growing needs. The department currently operates at 1760 Shoreline Hwy, Muir Beach.

In 2012, the Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade donated a Type 3 wildland fire engine to enhance Muir Beach's firefighting capabilities. Today, the department is a volunteer-based organization, providing fire suppression, emergency medical services, and community education. It operates under the Muir Beach Community Services District and works closely with other Marin County fire agencies through the mutual aid system.

Currently, Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, and community education. The Muir Beach Community Services District oversees the department and continues to work closely with neighboring departments, including the Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade and others in the Marin County mutual aid system.

Service Area

The Muir Beach Fire Department serves Muir Beach in West Marin County. The department's service area is primarily the community of Muir Beach, but also includes residential and recreational properties, and extends to the surrounding coastal and wildland regions. The department also provides mutual aid to nearby communities, particularly in the event of larger incidents, such as wildfires, as part of the county's mutual aid system.

Operations Overview

Muir Beach firefighters train alongside Marin County Firefighters at the Throckmorton station and are required to maintain certification as Emergency Medical Responders (E.M.R.) and State Volunteer Firefighters. The crew includes Emergency Medical Technicians (E.M.T.s) and a Physician.

Chief: *Chris Grove*

The Crew: *David Taylor (MD, EMR) – Assistant Chief, Maurice Conti (EMR), Brad Eigsti (EMR), Sefton Murray (EMR), Jonathan Rauh (EMR), Jeff Rediger (MD, EMR), Chris Vallee (EMR)*

Interns: *Jackson Sward, Stella Eigsti, Anna Rauh*

Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association

The Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association supports the department through fundraising for its operations and the purchase of emergency response equipment. The Association's primary fundraising activities include the annual Muir Beach Firemen's BBQ and engaging in grant writing to secure further financial support. Additionally, the Association helps coordinate the community's emergency preparedness efforts, ensuring residents have access to disaster preparedness.

Association Board of Directors:

- *Lisa Eigsti*
- *Michael Kaufman (Vice President)*
- *Debra Ketchum (Secretary)*
- *Brenda Kohn*
- *Denise Lamott (President)*
- *Ellen Litwiller*
- *Frank Schoenfeld (Treasurer)*
- *Nina Vincent*

19.4 NICASIO VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Overview

The Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department (NVFD) was established in 1946 to provide fire protection, emergency medical response, and fire prevention to the rural community of Nicasio. It operates primarily with volunteers out of its station at 1 Old Rancheria Rd, Nicasio, CA 94946. Today, NVFD is a part of the Marin County mutual aid system, enhancing its ability to respond to large-scale emergencies. The department continues to serve Nicasio, funded through local donations, grants, and fundraising events. It remains a vital community resource, with volunteers dedicated to protecting the area and maintaining its legacy of community service.

Service Area

The NVFD, in cooperation with Marin County Fire, responds to a 40-square-mile area, from Big Rock to the Nicasio Dam and Moon Hill to Rocky Hill.

Operations Overview

The Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department is structured with a combination of volunteer firefighters and paid personnel. The department is led by Fire Chief Kent Grady, who is responsible for overseeing operations, training, and coordination with other local agencies.

19.5 TOMALES VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Overview

Tomales Volunteer Fire Company (TVFC) is a volunteer fire organization in West Marin. TVFC provides support to the Marin County Fire Department (MCFD) in the form of trained volunteers who respond along with MCFD staff to medical emergencies, fires, vehicle accidents, rescues, and disasters that occur within their primary service area or by MCFD request in areas across Marin or in adjacent counties as mutual aid. TVFC also provides staffing for Water Tender WT1590, based at MCFD's Tomales Fire Station. TVFC is also involved with community safety education and disaster preparedness in our primary service area.

Service Area

The TVFC primary service area is the same as the primary service area of MCFD's Tomales Fire Station, which extends north from the town of Tomales to the Marin / Sonoma county line, west to the Pacific Ocean (including the town of Dillon Beach), south to just below the community of Marshall, and portion of the area east to the Marin / Sonoma county line including significant areas of the Chileno Valley. TVFC also provides support to other areas of Marin County upon request from MCFD. TVFC coordinates with other nearby fire agencies or districts by providing mutual aid when it has been requested by MCFD.

Operations Overview

TVFC is a fully volunteer-based company that works in cooperation with Marin County Fire. The Company is overseen by Chief Eric Cutler. Current TVFC staffing consists of seven volunteers. These volunteers have all successfully completed training to be either an Emergency Medical Responder or an Emergency Medical Technician. These volunteers have also successfully completed an extensive series of emergency medical, firefighting, rescue, and disaster training exercises conducted by either TVFC or MCFD. All of our current volunteers have multiple years of experience as TVFC volunteers, and some have decades of experience. TVFC is currently actively recruiting additional volunteers to expand its staffing.

All TVFC apparatus and equipment are provided by MCFD. This includes Water Tender WT1590, which has a 2000-gallon water capacity, and contains structural and wildland firefighting equipment, and Basic Life Support (BLS) medical equipment. All TVFC volunteers are issued structural and wildland firefighting and foul-weather protective clothing, along with associated personal equipment.

20.0 CONCLUSION

This study identified several countywide themes regarding how fire protection services in Marin are organized, governed, and delivered. Throughout the county, governance structures remain varied and fragmented. In the county, there are 12 fire service providers that directly respond to incidents. These providers comprise several different service models, including city departments, fire districts, Joint Power Agreements (JPA's), and shared services contracts. While these governance models vary, they collectively support a countywide system characterized by strong mutual aid coordination, operational collaboration, and shared commitment to regional service delivery. Strong mutual aid in the county allows for an almost seamless delivery of services across jurisdictions, which can mask structural differences between agencies that are less visible to the public.

Providers across the county, through collaborative efforts, have helped maintain reliable emergency response despite varied organizational models. Although mutual aid and service agreements are at times relied upon by agencies to operate within a landscape of varied governance structures and to cover for numerous unincorporated pockets within incorporated spaces, these cooperative frameworks have thus far led to an effective response system. Agencies also demonstrate a strong commitment to countywide initiatives for wildfire preparedness, public safety, fiscal and operational transparency, and emergency response. Collectively, these efforts show dedication and commitment to protecting and preserving the integrity of urban and rural landscapes that make up Marin County.

Marin LAFCo's aim with this study is to shed light on the efforts and hard work of agencies to provide a reliable, coordinated response throughout the county and to support successful change. This change will require early and sustained engagement from LAFCo and fire service providers. Shared services and mutual aid are proven first steps in enhancing governance and service delivery, but they do not always address long-term structural or fiscal challenges. Marin LAFCo's intention is to support agencies by fostering collaboration, sharing information, and helping identify opportunities for thoughtful, locally driven change.

The work presented in this report highlights the dynamic of Marin's fire system being operationally cohesive, yet structurally diverse. This has supported effective delivery thus far, but also presents questions regarding long-term alignment between governance structures and evolving service demands. The following questions were considered by Marin LAFCo throughout the curation of the report and the recommendations section. They are now presented for consideration, not directives, for fire agencies, policymakers, and the public:

- Are current governance structures sustainable over the long term?
- How might existing shared services, Joint Powers Authorities, or regional partnerships evolve over time to further enhance service delivery and operational efficiency?
- How might agencies evaluate the effectiveness of current governance structures as service demands and regional partnerships evolve?
- Where could shared administrative or operational services reduce strain?

- Are there opportunities to build on existing regional or joint models?
- How can prevention and suppression efforts be better supported countywide?

The above questions are reflected in our recommendations section (pg. 11), which identified opportunities to strengthen fire service provisions across the county. These recommendations emphasize the importance of regional coordination, evaluation of governance structure, enhancement of opportunities in delivery through shared services, facility planning, and potential structural changes where appropriate.

History reflects that within Marin County and other jurisdictions, changes in governance and delivery models can be gradual. An example of this is the consolidation of the City of Mill Valley into the Southern Marin Fire Protection District, which spanned many years, beginning with a 2015 cost-sharing agreement. From then on, SMFPD and the City of Mill Valley progressively expanded shared services, creating a unified management structure in 2020 and ultimately full annexation into the District, approved by Marin LAFCo in December 2022 and implemented in July 2023. Over time, through sustained collaboration with Marin LAFCo, the SMFPD, and the City of Mill Valley evolved, demonstrating that effective change can occur incrementally rather than through immediate consolidation. It is Marin LAFCo's intention to support sustainable changes, like this consolidation, through the facilitation of informed, locally driven actions to increase efficiency and sustainable service delivery.

Moving forward, this study acts as a path forward and a foundation for continued collaboration and progress. Through this study, Marin LAFCo hopes to provide data, analysis, and process support to inform discussions. It is recognized that progress will occur incrementally, and Marin LAFCo aims to act as a partner in open conversations with agencies to maintain trust and partnership, serving as a facilitator of change rather than the driver.