

Agenda Item 2



Balancing Community and Commerce

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

DATE: March 12, 2026
TO: LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: J.D. Hightower, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: FARMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ADOPTING A SERVICE REVIEW AND AFFIRMING A COTERMINOUS SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

RECOMMENDATION

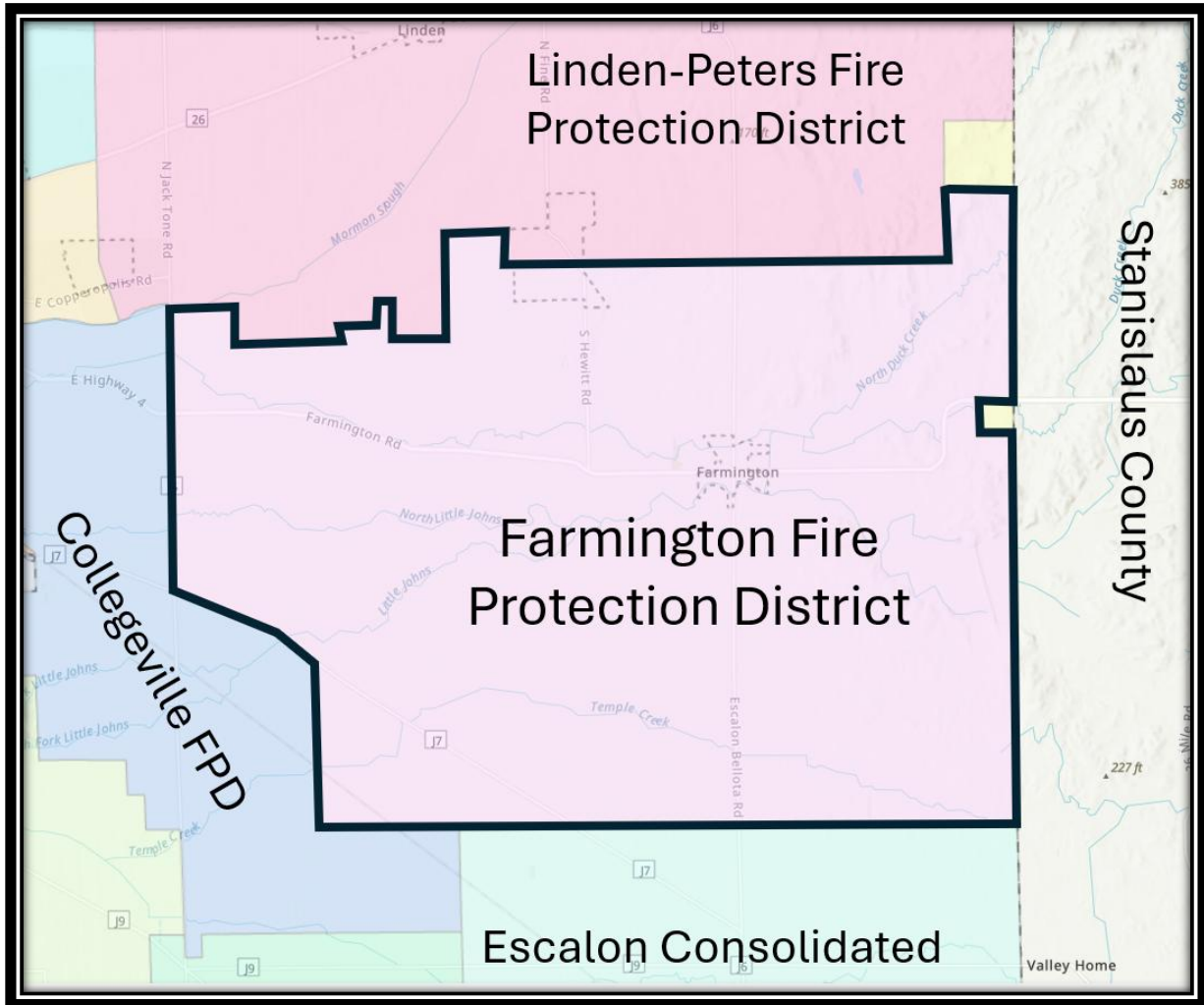
It is recommended that the Commission adopt a resolution adopting the service review of the Farmington Fire Protection District (District) and affirming the Districts coterminous Sphere of Influence (SOI).

BACKGROUND

The Farmington Fire Protection District (FPD) was formed in 1936. The District currently offers fire protection, suppression and prevention, fire inspection, hazardous material, and basic and emergency medical services. The District is governed by a five-member board of directors that are elected from within the District that serve four-year terms.

The District's service area is approximately 56,850 acres (89 square miles) and is located in the eastern portion of the County between Copperopolis Road to the north, Dodds Road to the South, Jack Tone Road to the west and the County border on the east. The District serves the communities of Farmington and the southern portion of the community of Peters. The Linden-Peters Rural FPD provides service to the northern portion of Peters.

Farmington FPD's total current resident population within its jurisdictional boundary is estimated at 2,288 as of 2024.



Farmington Fire Protection District and Surrounding Fire Protection Districts

The District is bounded by three other rural fire districts including Linden-Peters to the north, Collegeville to the west and south, and Escalon Consolidated FPD to the south. The county line and the Oakdale FPD (Stanislaus County) border the District on the east.

In 1984 the Commission adopted a sphere of influence for the District that included the existing territory and a 161-acre parcel located to the east that did not receive fire services from any county rural fire district. The parcel is within the CalFire State Responsibility Area. The Commission also considered the realignment of the District's northern boundary to avoid the division of the Peters community; the realignment being based on an equitable exchange of territory and revenues with the Linden-Peters Rural FPD. The boundary splitting the community of Peters remains in-tact and the 160-acre parcel has not been annexed. The 160-acre parcel is within the State Responsibility Area. As such CAL Fire is the responsible service provider, hence the recommendation for a conterminous sphere for the District.



ANALYSIS:

A sphere of influence (“SOI”) may be adopted and modified as determined by the Commission. The procedures for making sphere amendments are outlined in CKH, and further refined by the Commission’s policies. Pursuant to Government Code Section 56430, the Commission must first conduct a services review prior to updating or amending a SOI.

Per Government Code Section 56430, a SOI shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations of the following factors:

- (1) Growth and population projections for the affected area.
- (2) The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.
- (3) Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services and structural fire protection in any disadvantaged, unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.
- (4) Financial ability of agencies to provide services.
- (5) Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.
- (6) Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.

	Farmington FPD	San Joaquin County
2010 Resident Population	2,253	685,327
2020 Resident Population	2,296	779,258
<i>Annual Change (2010-2020)</i>	0.2%	1.3%
2024 Resident Population	2,288	808,574
2029 Resident Population Projection	2,349	837,182
<i>Annual Change (2024-2029)</i>	0.5%	0.7%
2010 Median Age	37.1	32.7
2024 Median Age	39.7	36.4
<i>% Change (2010-2024)</i>	7.0%	11.3%
2024 Employment Levels (Ages 25-64)	96.3%	94.6%
2024 Unemployment Levels (Ages 25-64)	3.7%	5.4%

Farmington Fire Protection District and County wide Population Projection

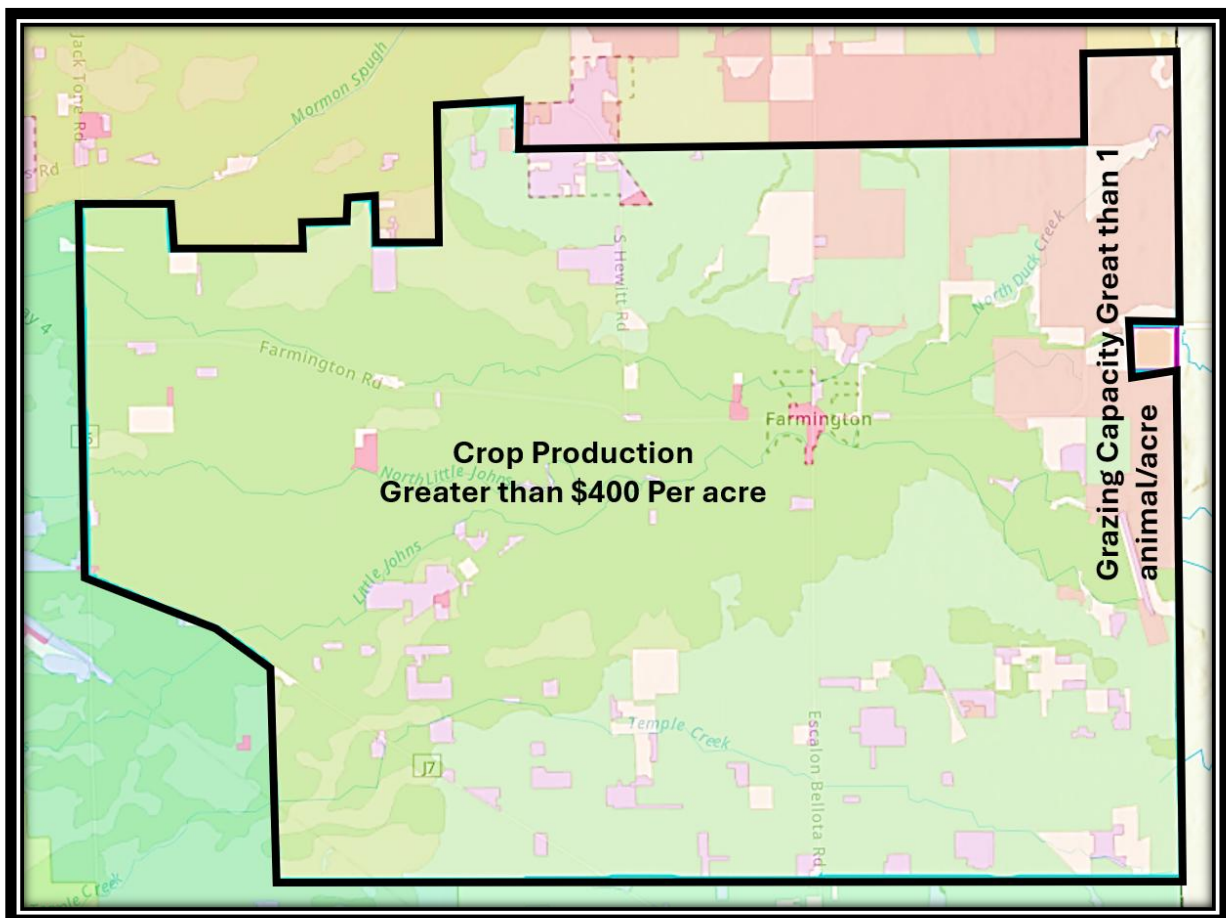
The Commission adopted a “Sphere of Influence Policy” in September 2007 with amendments made in December 2012. This policy provides a framework for SOI updates and provides definitions for different types of SOI that that Commission may adopt, For the Farmington Fire Protection District it is recommended that the Commission affirm a coterminous SOI for the District. A coterminous SOI is defined as the geographical area aligning with the District’s existing service area



wherein there is no anticipated need for the agency's services outside of its jurisdictional boundary. In this case, the 160 acre parcel that the Commission included in the District's original SOI adopted in 1987 and not annexed is within the State's Responsibility Area.

Growth and population projections for affected area

The Farmington community is small, population of 94, agricultural community with a crossroads development pattern unincorporated town. The intersection of State Route 4 and Escalon Bellota Road acts as the center of the town. The three principle public facilities are Farmington Elementary School, Post Office and the District Station, all of which are in very close proximity to the intersection and one another. There is a limited amount of commercial establishments surrounding this main intersection. The surrounding area and remainder of the district is as the community is named, farming and agriculture.

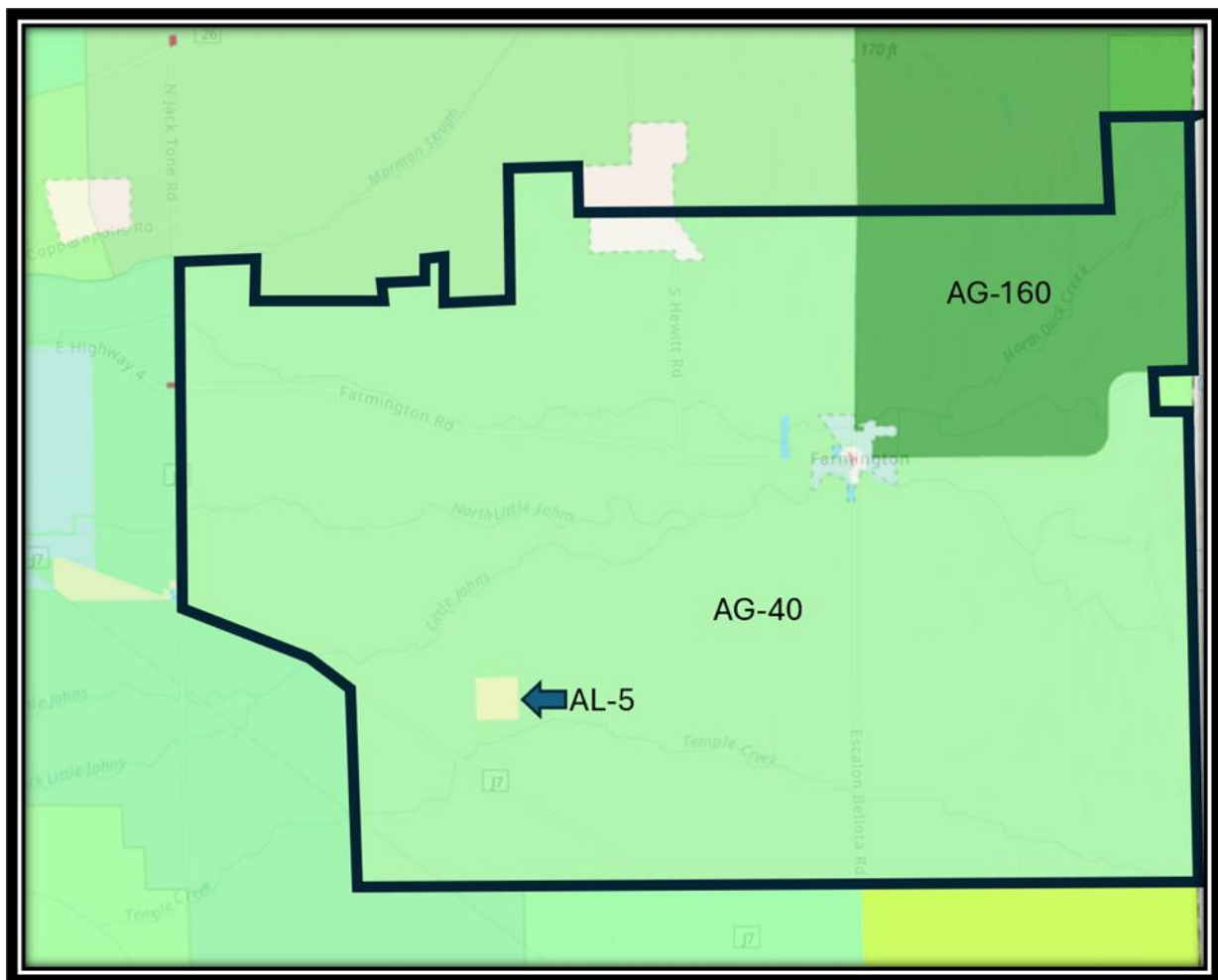


Farmington Fire Protection District Important Farmland Map

Reflecting the Prime Agricultural land capability of the land within the District service area, the County General Plan and zoning as designations are agricultural. The County General Plan designates a majority of the District as Agricultural



General and Open Space/Resource Conservation designation along the creeks and sloughs. The majority of the District is similarly zoned as General Agriculture 40 acre minimum lot size with the northeast corner of the intersection serving as the southwest corner of an area of the County zoning area as General Agriculture 160 acre minimum lot size. The Elementary school and a water storage tank owned by the Farmington Water Company are zoned Public Facility. Approximately 160 acres are zoned Agricultural Limited-5 acre minimum lot size around Gawne Road/Berkeley Road and Security Road. There is 5.6 acres of Commercial Rural Services on the northwest, southwest (District Station), and southeast corners of State Route 4 and Escalon-Bellota Road. In Peters on the southeast corner of Copperopolis Road and Fine Road there is 2.29 acres also zoned Commercial Rural Services.



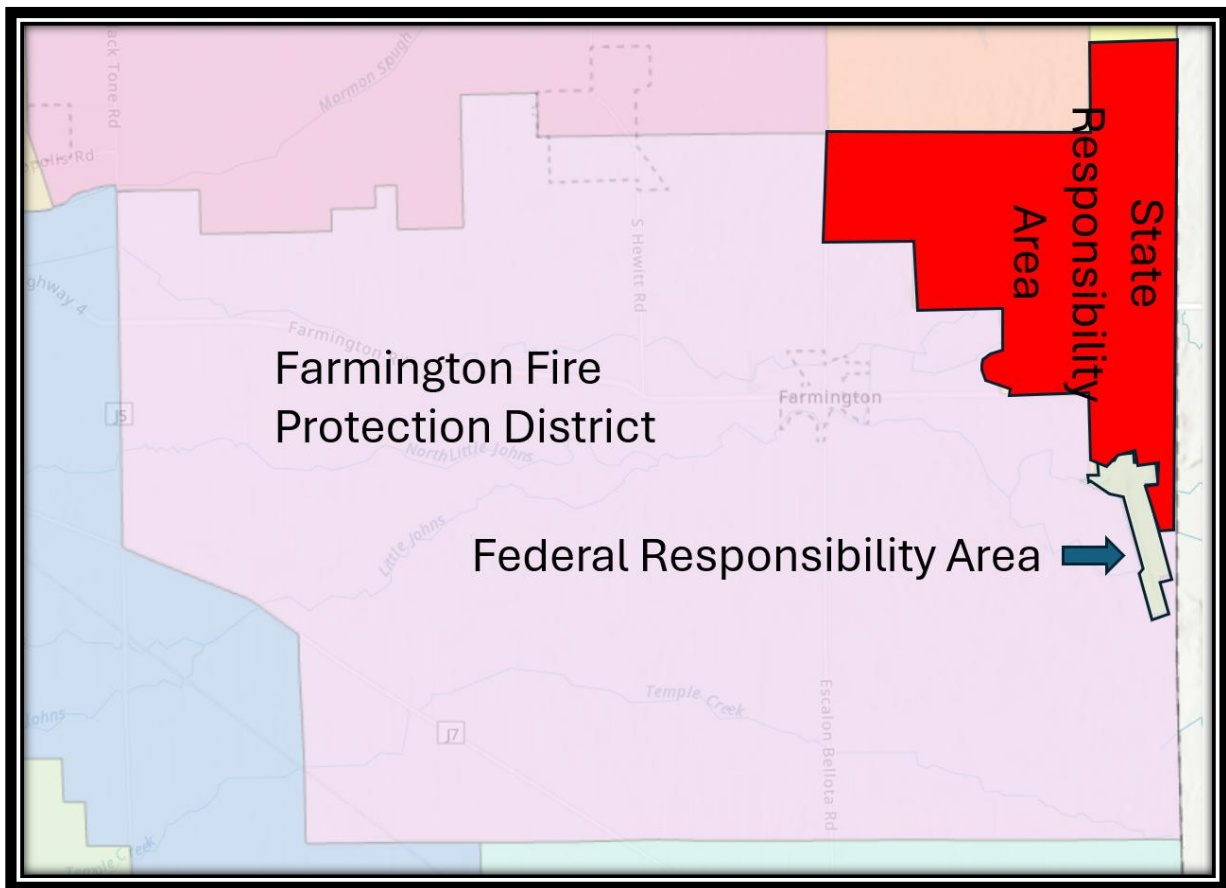
Farmington Fire Protection District County Zoning

Approximately 6,950 acres of the northeastern corner of the District (0.1% of District) lies within the State responsibility Area (SRA) under CalFire. The SRA includes lands classified by the State Board of Forestry as areas in which the primary financial responsibility for preventing and suppressing wild land fires is that



of the State during fire season. These lands are covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, undergrowth or grass and lands used principally for range or forage purposes. Structural fires and other fire services are the responsibility of the local fire agency year round. There are very few residential units and some farm structures located in the SRA area. The State Bureau of Land Management provides fire protection to the Farmington Flood Control Basin also located within the District.

The 430.46 acres of Federal Responsibility Area is an area maintained by the Army Corp of Engineers for flood control purposes.



Farmington Fire Protection District Areas of Responsibility

Land use control is the exclusive power of San Joaquin County. Currently, the territory within the District is and forecasted to remain under agricultural production. The stability of the agricultural land use is reflected in the relatively stable demographic forecasts:

- There are approximately 2,288 residents in the Farmington FPD as of 2024. The District's population has increased by 35 residents since 2010.
- The Farmington FPD has lost approximately 2 housing units since 2010. This accounts for an annual decrease of 0.14 housing units.

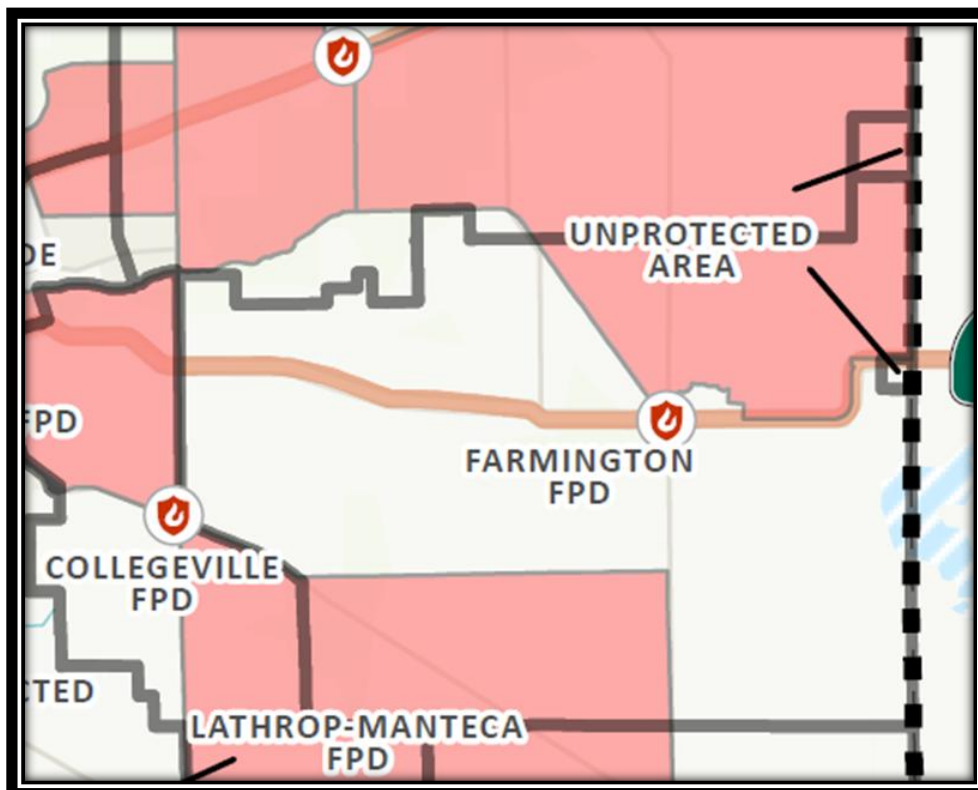


- The Farmington FPD resident population is expected to amount to 2,349 residents by 2029. This accounts for an annual growth rate of approximately 0.7%.
- The number of housing units in the Farmington FPD is expected increase by 25 to reach 827 units by 2029.

Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities within or Contiguous to SOI

The median household income of Farmington FPD is \$102,871, which is approximately 14.1% higher than the County's median household income of \$90,150.

Although the median household income within the district is higher than countywide median, there are two mapped areas of disadvantaged unincorporated communities in the District: 1) The north eastern portion of the District, that roughly corresponds to the area zoned by the County as Agricultural General 160; and 2) Census Tract 49.06 in southwestern portion of the District. That Census Tract runs south to the Stanislaus River. Farmington FPD has a poverty level rate of 15.5%, which is approximately 23.0% higher than the County's poverty level rate of 12.6% suggesting that residents within the District may face greater socioeconomic challenges that could potentially impact service needs and fiscal capacity to fund these services.



Present and Planned Capacity

As a result of the agricultural productivity taking place on the territory within the District, service calls are expected to remain increase at a sustainable rate as shown below:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average	Trend
Category							
Fire	44	74	69	81	79	69	14.5%
EMS	155	181	159	170	173	168	8.8%
Total Fire & EMS Calls	199	255	228	251	252	247	10.5%

Source: Valley Regional Emergency Communications Center (VRECC)

The Service Review analysis indicates the District is adequately staffed and equipped to serve its current population and projected growth. Call volume has shown a gradual, manageable increase over time, suggesting the District can sustain service delivery without a significant strain on resources. Should call activity continue to rise at the same pace, the District is expected to maintain operational efficiency and responsiveness within its current service boundaries for the foreseeable future.

Fiscal Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average	Trend
Type:							
Full-Time Positions	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.0%
Part-Time Positions	0	0	4	5	6	3	50.0%
Volunteer Firefighters	12	12	8	7	6	9	-50.0%
Total	13	13	13	13	13	13	0.0%
Per 100 residents	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.0%

Source: Farmington FPD

The following statements apply to the Farmington FPD with respect to the availability, adequacy, and performance of its fire protection and emergency medical services available under Health and Safety Code 13800 et. seq. The findings of the Service Review confirm that Farmington FPD has adequate capacity, infrastructure and availability to continue providing fire protection and emergency medical services to its residents now and into the foreseeable future. The MSR provides detailed analysis of the present and future service capacity of the District.

- The Farmington FPD provides fire protection and emergency medical services from its fire station – Farmington Station No. 4-1 located at 25474 East Highway 4 in Farmington - with a total public safety staffing of 10 as of FY 2024.
- Farmington Station No. 4-1 has undergone several improvements in the last 10 years and is in good condition. Recently the station was remodeled to provide bedding for personnel providing overnight service coverage. The District recently purchased approximately two (2) acres located west of the

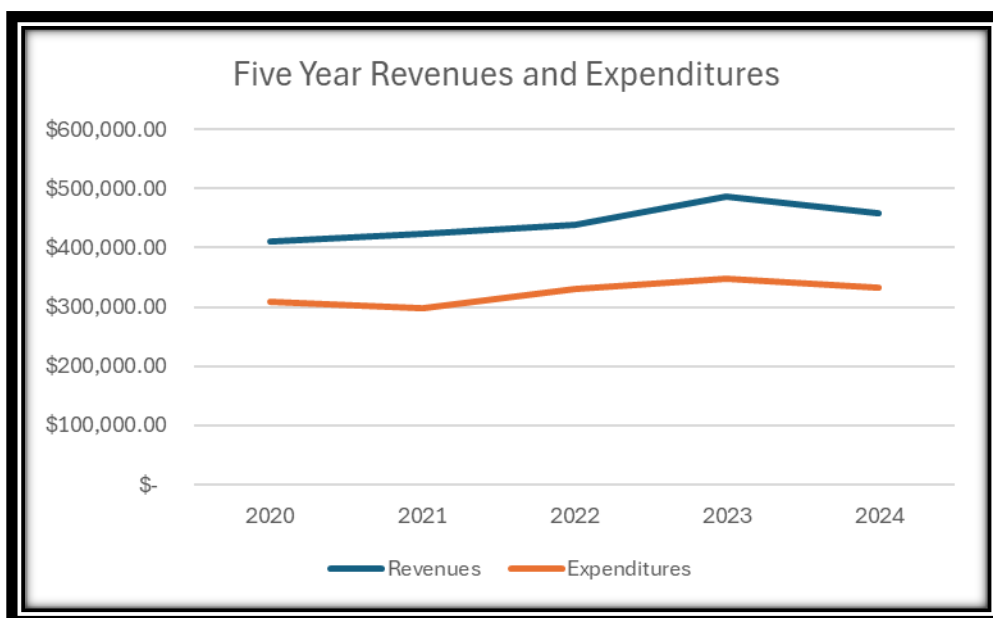


station to accommodate future expansion of the station, including sleeping quarters.

- Overall demands for fire protection and emergency medical services from Farmington FPD from FY 2020 to FY 2024 (“report period”) have averaged 247 dispatched calls annually or 0.68 calls per day.
- The Farmington FPD’s most recent evaluation of structural fire protection capabilities from the Insurance Services Office (ISO) was completed in 2020 and resulted in a Class 4/4Y rating. This rating is considered appropriate for a relatively rural service area where population density and land use require lesser demand for robust fire protection services and infrastructure.
- Farmington FPD currently lacks an adopted response time standard. The NFPA 1720 Response Time Standard for a rural fire protection service is 14 minutes.
- Farmington FPD’s average turnout time for fire protection and EMS calls, or the time between notification and the departure of an apparatus from the station, was 2 minutes and 22 seconds. The District’s overall response time, or the time from call receipt to arrival, averaged 8 minutes and 34 seconds.
- The District’s ability to respond to its calls for service appears to meet NFPA rural standards, District Board Members noted that only about four (4) fire personnel reside within the District boundary, which raises concerns about the District’s future ability to provide timely and adequate response to larger or simultaneous incidents.

Financial Ability

The Farmington FPD has the financial ability to provide fire and emergency medical services to its existing residents. For the past five years, District revenues have exceeded expenditures by an average of \$125,392.00.



The MSR notes that the District heavily relies on revenues generated from its share of the 1.0% general property tax levy and does not have a special assessment in place. Additional financial information is provided below and discussed in detail within the MSR.

- The District's total revenues amounted to \$530,305 and reflect an overall increase of \$118,606 – or 18.1% - since FY 2020.
- The District's total expenditures at the end of FY 2024 totaled \$381,130, accounting for an overall increase of \$72,850 - or 12.9% - since FY 2020.
- The District's net income has increased by 33.5% during the report period - from \$103,419 in FY 2020 to \$149,175 in FY 2024.
- Compared to the countywide average TIF of 11.9%, the District's property tax allocation (5.4%) is relatively low compared to the average of the other rural fire districts in the County.
- The District does not have a special tax in place, relying solely on property tax revenues and other limited sources, with no dedicated supplemental funding. Among the 19 rural fire protection service providers in the County, Farmington FPD is one of six districts that do not levy a special tax.
- The District's funding profile reflects the structural disadvantage faced by districts with historically low tax increment factors and below-average supplemental allocations, constraining long-term fiscal capacity despite increasing service demands.
- The District's overall net position has increased by \$523,731 – or 28.1% - during the report period.
- Based on the five-year forecast, it is projected that the District's revenues will increase overall by \$129,142 – or 23.7% by FY 2029. The District's total expenditures are expected to increase by \$152,616 – 38.0% - by FY 2029. This widening gap between the District's revenues and expenditures may constrain the District's financial flexibility and raises concerns about its ability to absorb future unanticipated costs.
- The District is currently exploring the expansion of its Station 4-1 to establish living quarters to improve overnight service coverage, which will also increase staffing costs for the District once implemented. The District should consider applying for grant opportunities to fund both its station expansion, in addition to its increased level of staffing.

Shared Facilities

The District shares and meets demand for dispatch and communication services by cooperating with other rural fire districts. The District services are dispatched by the Valley Regional Emergency Communication Center. The District can also communicate with other rural districts during emergency responses as a member of the San Joaquin County Joint Radio Users Group (JPA).



Recently the District has experienced the resignation of multiple resignations in a short-time period. This has led to an unprecedented level of cooperation amongst all of the rural fire districts as well as the City of Stockton FD in providing needed assistance to the District. This demonstrates the need and ability of the District to share facilities. In the past, the District has hosted trainings at its Station 4-1 every Tuesday, as well as hosting additional special trainings at the station throughout the calendar year in which fire personnel from neighboring districts could attend.

Recently, the City of Stockton offered training opportunities and shift coverage. . offered by the City of Stockton in the following areas:

1. Assist w/ teaching Operator 1A/1B
2. Volunteer signups (Captains or BC's) for a work a shift
3. Inspection of current staff turnouts and SCBAs
4. SCBA fit test if it hasn't been done in the last year
5. Fireground safety/watch out classroom presentation
6. Basic firefighting skills training
7. Refresher EMS skills

The above services complement the service assistance of the Linden-Peters Fire Protection District. Linden Peters FD has helping in manning the station during short-handed periods whenever possible. Additional information on shared facilities is within the MSR.

Accountability for Community Service Needs, including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

The Service Review noted several concerns regarding the District's governance structure and operational efficiencies, including an inability to establish consistent quorum, lack of regular Board meetings, and unprofessional behavior during regular Board meetings. Additional details can be found below:

- Farmington FPD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors that serve approximately four-year terms.
- Pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (Health and Safety Code Section 13855), a district board shall meet at least once every three months. While the District has held at least five (5) regular Board meetings throughout 2025 as of October 2025, the District had an insufficient number of Board members to establish a quorum at regular Board meetings between May and September 2025, raising concerns regarding the District's ability to adequately represent its constituents, exercise administrative and operational oversight, and undertake essential decision-making.
- While the District has intermittently achieved the minimum amount of Board Member seats to establish a quorum, dissensus amongst the Board Members and District staff has led to the continued inability for the District to successfully conduct regular meetings.
- The District maintains an active website wherein meeting agenda and related materials are posted. However, other pertinent files, such as audited annual



financial reports and annual budgets, were unavailable on the District's website.

The District has recently undergone a brief but intense level of organizational change. A majority of the Board resigned at one meeting, making achieving a quorum not possible. In response, the Board of Supervisors appointed a District Board of Director to allow a quorum. Since the appointment of one of the former Directors, who reconsidered resignation only upon assurance that civil public meetings would take place (sergeant-at-arms usually Sheriff Officer and attorney), the District Board has met at its regularly scheduled time 7:00 pm on the 4th Monday of each month.

Simultaneously with the turnover in the Board of Directors, the District experienced key personnel turnover. The Assistant Chief, Interim Chief, and full-time engineer resigned. The Chief is out of office due to a reported work sustained injury. Neighboring fire districts are providing assistance during this time of change. The Chief of Colleeville Fire Protection District is has been appointed as Interim Chief on a short-term basis, 4-6 weeks, to allow the District to recruit a longer-term interim chief. Linder-Peters Fire District, when possible, has assigned fire fighters to the District while the District is recruiting for these positions. The City of Stockton has offered to continue training for the remaining District fire fighters and potentially backfill key personnel positions, if needed. This assistance by other Districts is in addition to the Board President presence at the station to provide necessary coverage as a former fire engineer and qualified to drive the District response vehicles.

The response by the District and all other rural fire districts has allowed the District to take necessary corrective action steps. The District appointment of a longer-term Interim Chief will enable the Board of Directors to focus on oversight and guidance of the District's assets, both human and capital. The District has taken steps to increase the level of transparency to the public during public hearings. Vehicle inspection and maintenance by certified mechanics is now taking place. It was also observed that the level of community interest in the District is high. These trends are expected to continue as the District's governmental structure is stabilized and operational efficiencies are achieved. Progress will be measured via the recommended 6 month reports over the next year. Additional discussion on accountability is documented within the MSR.

Service Review Recommendations:

Staff's recommendation is that the Commission adopt a coterminous sphere of influence for the Farmington FPD with the condition that LAFCO reassess the District's governance and financial health every 6-months over the next calendar year. Although the District has made progress to ensure public agency success, the progress made is expected to continue. Please note that demonstration of progress includes, but is not limited to, the following factors:



- The District should take all necessary steps to hold the minimum number of board meetings required by the Fire Protection District Law of 1987, codified under Health and Safety Code 13800-13970. Government Code Section 56375.1(a)(1)(D) specifies that a district that has failed to meet the minimum number of times required in its principal act may be eligible for a LAFCO-initiated dissolution.
- To ensure that Board meetings are legally compliant and conducted in a civil manner, it is recommended that the District continue to coordinate with San Joaquin County to ensure the presence of personnel necessary (sergeant of arms and attorney) to ensure orderly board meetings are conducted free of patterns of arguing, intimidation and behaviors that otherwise inhibit civic discourse, discussion and deliberation of matters.
- To enhance accountability and transparency, the Farmington FPD should make accessible information regarding the District's governance structure (including an organizational chart), compensation details, annual budgets, reserve fund policy, and the current and historical annual financial reports provided to the State Controller's Office. It is recommended that the District publish its most recent audited financial reports between FY 2022 through FY 2024 on its website when available.
- Should LAFCO determine the deficiencies noted above continue to persist following the 6-month and 12-month review period, San Joaquin LAFCO, at its discretion, may adopt a resolution of intent to initiate dissolution which must include a remediation period of not less than 12 months, and specify a date upon which the District shall provide a mid-point report on remediation efforts at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting in accordance with Government Code Section 56375.1(a)(2)(A). If the District fails to remedy the deficiencies outlined in this Service Review prior to the conclusion of the 12-month remediation period, the Commission may adopt a resolution ordering dissolution at a public hearing consistent with Government Code Section 56375.1(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 56881(b).
- It is recommended the District continue exploring the expansion of Station 4-1 to improve the District's capacity to respond reliably to simultaneous or larger emergency incidents. The District should consider applying for grant opportunities to fund both its station expansion, in addition to the increased staffing costs that will result from implementing overnight service coverage.
- The District does not have a special tax in place, relying solely on property tax revenues and other limited sources, with no dedicated supplemental funding. The District should consider establishing a special assessment or parcel tax to ensure the long-term operational sustainability of fire protection services within the District boundary.

Attachments:

1. 2026 Farmington Fire Protection District Service Review
2. Resolution of conditional approval

