

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: February 4, 2025**

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Ad Hoc Committee Fire Services
Subject: Recommendation on City of Sebastopol Fire Service Reorganization to the Gold Ridge Fire District
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Adopt a resolution approving the revenue sharing and property transfer agreement with the Gold Ridge Fire Protect District. annexing City fire services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, the District’s attached reorganization application to LAFCO, and the Revenue Sharing Agreement with District.
2. Adopt a resolution approving the annexation of City fire and emergency medical services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District and the District’s reorganization application.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Fire Ad Hoc Committee recommends reorganizing the City’s Fire Department to merge with the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. This will lead to significantly improved services at a lower cost, compared to retaining an independent Fire Department.

The proposed reorganization (also known as annexation or consolidation) will provide consistent emergency response for Sebastopol, including robust fire prevention and weed abatement, accredited training for firefighters and volunteers, and a deep level of support services to include planned apparatus replacement, dedicated facilities maintenance or remodel, and enhanced fire district administration.

This improved level of service will cost the City \$1 million less per year than if we maintained our own Fire Department, which would be unlikely to provide the same level of service at the higher cost. Either a reorganized or stand-alone model requires an additional parcel tax to be financially viable. In reorganization, the Fire District’s existing parcel taxes would be applied to the parcels in the City. A standalone City department would have to ask the voters to approve similar supplemental taxes. Those taxes are \$265/year for the typical single family home.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

In April 2024, the City Council received a comprehensive report from its Fire Ad Hoc Committee and City staff. It recommended that the City proceed with reorganizing, or consolidating, fire services with Gold Ridge. The Council approved this direction and re-established the Fire Ad Hoc Committee to lead negotiations with Gold Ridge, and authorized the City Manager to enter into a short-term agreement with the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to provide Chief Officer services at the Sebastopol fire station during the merger transition while developing a longer-term agreement subject to the approval of the City Council and Gold Ridge Board of Directors. The Ad Hoc Committee began meeting with Gold Ridge last July.

On October 1, 2024, the City Council passed Resolution No. 24/25-05, a concurrent resolution with the District endorsing the proposed annexation of the City’s fire services into the District and establishing the general terms and conditions of such annexation. The Resolution concluded with: “Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that (1) the Sebastopol City Council and the Board of Directors of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District are satisfied with the

proposed terms and conditions of the reorganization of the City to the District and (2) the District Fire Chief is authorized to transmit this resolution to Sonoma LAFCO.” Another direction was for the City Manager to retain consultant assistance to develop final, long-term agreements with the District for City Council consideration. In turn, with the approval of the City’s Ad Hoc Fire Committee, the City brought on Citygate.

The Council Ad Hoc committee, City staff, and District staff provided extensive background information to Citygate. They then examined our independent, stand-alone fire protection and first responder needs, costs, and available funding and compared them to reorganizing, or merging, with the District for cost effectiveness. Citygate and the Committee found reorganization to be the best choice over the coming decades for the City.

The April report recommending that direction cited improvements in services and cost-effectiveness as reasons for reorganization. The analysis underpinning those recommendations was based on the best available information at the time and remains valid. Those recommendations are reinforced by the more thorough analysis completed by and under the direction of the Fire Ad Hoc Committee since then – again demonstrating, with stronger evidence, that reorganization will lead to improved and more cost-effective services for the residents of Sebastopol.

Note that the attached Citygate report was completed based on information available as of January 9. Since then the Ad Hoc Committee and Gold Ridge conducted additional discussions, leading to some changes (reducing \$90,000 in annual funding from the City to Gold Ridge by reducing administrative support funding from a full time employee equivalent allocation to quarter time employee equivalent allocation; and sharing equally on remaining lease payments for the fire truck the City has previously ordered that will be delivered in 2026). The numbers in this staff report reflect the agreement negotiated between the Fire Ad Hoc Committee and Gold Ridge.

Reorganization is also supported by a large majority of the City’s volunteer firefighters. On November 21, 2024, the City received a letter signed by 25 of its volunteer firefighters ”to encourage the City Council to move forward with a reorganization with Gold Ridge FPD, and to provide them the flexibility and resources necessary to allow for proper and appropriate level of service.”

As provided under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is required by the State Legislature to regulate the orderly formation and expansion of local government agencies. LAFCO has the authority to review and approve or disapprove proposals for changes in the boundaries and organization to include consolidations. LAFCO will consider this issue at its March 5, 2025 meeting. LAFCO approval is required for the proposed reorganization to occur.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Staff has reviewed Citygate’s operational and economic analysis of the City’s fire service needs. We and the community know that our historic and mostly volunteer fire service is under pressure to provide the level of service our community now and into the future really deserves.

Level of Staffing: Economics to provide regulatory compliant fire services 24/7 no longer support a small, one-crew fire department given the overhead, safety, training, and protective equipment standards. The analysis showed that it would be much more expensive immediately and across 20 years to fund an independent fire department. Even if the City had the resources to do so, it would be a challenge to hire and retain a small fire service career staff supported by volunteers.

The District’s economies of scale, depth of personnel, and resources provide a more resilient and robust level of fire services, yet still under the local control of an elected Fire District Board. We expect to see substantial

improvements in the speed of responses to emergencies, and the number of firefighters responding. Additionally, we will see improvements in fire inspections and prevention, and improved management compared to a stand-alone model.

The national standard for fire responses is four firefighters so that two can enter a burning building and two remain outside for support and to assist with rescue if needed.

As of today, the typical response to a call for service varies. While we have two paid fire engineers, we also have an exceptional core of volunteers. We recently expanded our stipend program for these volunteers to increase coverage, an important step. We will soon be adding two paid Fire Captain positions, which will further improve coverage and leadership. Still, we occasionally cannot respond to calls, or can respond only with an insufficient number of staff. The most important improvement with reorganization will be expanded staffing, with lower response times and a greater number of responders on most calls.

Under a stand-alone model, the typical response to a call for service would include three permanent staff with a fourth position subject to a stipend volunteer being available. However, as Citygate notes this model would be fragile as a stand-alone Department would lack sufficient depth in staffing to cover absences due to illness, vacations, or other factors.

Under the proposed reorganized model, the typical response to a call for service would also include three permanent staff and one stipend volunteer. Because of Gold Ridge's size and the resulting economies of scale, there would be sufficient depth in staffing to cover absences.

Staff Transition in a reorganization: In addition to a capable team of volunteers, the Sebastopol Fire Department has two full-time Fire Engineers, and one part-time administrative position. The full-time department firefighting personnel are unrepresented. The Administrative position is represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The department is in the process of recruitment for two additional Fire Captain positions.

State law (CCR [§53291](#) and [§53291](#)) governs the transition of firefighting personnel in a reorganization. In addition, LAFCO has the statutory authority to impose conditions regarding the transfer of employees, and the related terms and conditions.

The proposed application provides that the Fire Engineers and Fire Captains employed by the City at the time of transfer will become employees of the District upon the effective date of the reorganization. These individuals will retain their current rank and seniority based on the date they were hired as City full-time fire employees.

Administrative personnel will not be transferred to the District as part of reorganization. Transition of administrative personnel is not governed by state law, and it is too early to tell what options will be available. Staff will work with SEIU and the employee as more information is available and well in advance of the reorganization.

Fire Station and Apparatus (Fire Engines and other vehicles): The reorganization application includes the transfer of the City's fire station to Gold Ridge in its current condition. As part of the negotiations, the City and Gold Ridge hired COAR consultants to conduct an assessment of the City's fire station. That report was provided to Gold Ridge in full transparency of the condition of the building and both parties agreed to the transfer of the station in the "as is" condition as noted above. The application includes a clause so that if Gold Ridge stops using the building as a fire station it would revert back to the City. However, Gold Ridge has the right to sell the

building and property if the proceeds are used for a replacement station in Sebastopol. The replacement station would include the same requirement to revert to the City should it ever be used for other purposes. A deed will be recorded on the property to reflect this restriction. There is no plan to sell the current building and property.

There are several reasons for transferring ownership of the station to Gold Ridge:

- a. Having one entity own and manage a facility is considerably simpler than splitting the responsibilities, where we would need additional agreements spelling out responsibilities for maintenance, repair, etc.
- b. The station requires significant and costly improvements. As part of the reorganization, Gold Ridge will receive the City's share of Measure H funds (discussed below), of which \$5 million is intended for the Fire station.
- c. Improving the building will likely require issuing debt; this will be more feasible for the owner and operator to obtain than if the functions were separate. Also, Gold Ridge has a strong credit rating which is likely to lower the costs of any debt.

The reorganization application also calls for the transfer of all apparatus (nine fire engines and other vehicles, plus trailers) in "as-is" condition from the City to Gold Ridge. As noted above as part of the negotiations, both parties have agreed to share equal responsibility for approximately \$480,000 in remaining payments for the Type 3 fire engine that the City has ordered and which will be delivered in 2026. That fire engine will be required to be based at the fire station in Sebastopol.

Community Identity: A reorganized department will retain identification with the Sebastopol community. This will include the following:

- a. Gold Ridge will absorb Sebastopol's volunteers, a transition which has begun with joint training and other steps toward integration.
- b. The Sebastopol fire station will include both the Gold Ridge and Sebastopol names on its sign.
- c. The apparatus will include both the Gold Ridge and Sebastopol names (see Application for Reorganization for examples from other Gold Ridge mergers).
- d. While the uniforms and badges will be identical, current Sebastopol staff and volunteers will have the option to wear a pin identifying them as part of the Sebastopol Fire Department.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to scheduled meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

DIFFERENCE IN COSTS: The cost to provide an adequate level of City-operated fire services would be \$4.4 million annually with a stand-alone option versus \$3.3 million in a reorganized model.

The following table (adjusted from the Citygate report to reflect later negotiations) compares a standalone fire department versus reorganization. Even if the City were to impose the same supplemental property taxes as the Fire District, the City's General Fund still requires a greater contribution with a stand-alone option – nearly double the amount required with the reorganized option. Reorganization would bring substantial economies of scale.

Fire Services Options Fiscal Summary – FY 25/26 (Year 1) – Standalone vs. District Reorganization

| Fiscal Element | Standalone Fire Services Cost FY 25/26 | District Budget for City Fire Service Post Reorganization |
|--|--|---|
| Revenues | | |
| Fire Direct Fees/Charges for Services | \$40,000 | \$40,000 |
| Measure H | \$1,080,000 | \$1,080,000 |
| Parcel Taxes | \$1,111,058* | \$1,111,058 |
| City Net General Fund Contribution | \$2,188,267 | \$1,110,000 |
| | | - |
| Total Revenues | \$4,419,325 | \$3,341,058 |
| Expenditures | | |
| Total Salaries/Benefits | \$3,047,422 | \$2,340,798 |
| Total Other Operating Costs | \$476,050 | \$450,260 |
| Total Capital Outlay | \$59,210 | - |
| Total Debt Service | \$686,643 | \$550,000 |
| Total Contribution to Reserves | \$150,000 | - |
| 2025 | \$4,419,325 | \$3,341,058 |
| Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | \$0 | \$0 |

*Presumes approval of a parcel tax by City voters.

In either standalone or annexed fire services, the City’s General Fund can’t support an appropriate level of fire services. In reorganization, the Fire District’s existing parcel taxes would be applied to the parcels in the City. A standalone City department would have to ask the voters to approve similar supplemental taxes. Those taxes are \$265/year for the typical single family home.

Each year the Gold Ridge Board reviews the parcel tax, including all parcels in the District and the assessment for each parcel. This occurs at a public Board meeting, and members of the public can express any concerns they have with the amount of the assessment. The next meeting where this will be discussed will likely occur in July or August of 2025.

Additionally, in recent years Gold Ridge reorganized and added several fire districts in the unincorporated areas of the County. Gold Ridge receives a portion of the property taxes dedicated to fire services, which the City does not have. And similar to the arrangement proposed for Sebastopol, those reorganizations include an annual transfer of County General Funds to the District, with an annual cost of living increase. The amount of the transfer in FY 24-25 is \$4.3 million.

The reorganization with the County also resulted in Gold Ridge receiving the full allocation of Measure H funds for those areas. Thus, the Sebastopol proposal is much like the other reorganizations, with the City and County both allocating money from the General Fund, assigning Measure H funds, and adding supplemental property taxes.

ANNUAL COSTS: The cost to the City's General Fund with reorganization will be approximately \$1.1 million annually, with the cost increased annually based on the Bay Area Consumer Price Index. The annual increase will be a minimum of 2%, with a 5% maximum. This compares to a \$2.2 million General Fund cost with a stand-alone model. The current year City budget includes \$1.55 million in General Funds for the Fire Department.

PARCEL TAX: As part of the proposed reorganization, the District's existing parcels taxed would be applied to parcels within the City, generating approximately \$1.1 million. Stand-alone options presumes the adoption of a parcel tax worth \$1.1 million in revenue (and if such measure is not adopted, that funding would need to come out of the General Fund); without this revenue, both options result in an unacceptable level of service. Taxes would be \$265/year for the typical single family home.

MEASURE H FUNDS: These projections include the shift of Sebastopol's revenue from Measure H (voter-approved sales tax to support fire services) to Gold Ridge. We estimate this will be \$1.1 million initially. Measure H revenue collected through the fourth quarter of FY 24-25, with final distribution to the City in September 2025, will be the property of the City. The City will transfer any remaining fund balance from Measure H to Gold Ridge.

The City's amount of Measure H revenue does not fully reflect our needs. It assumes two professional firefighters on duty at all time, rather than three staff in most other parts of the County. It also includes \$5 million (over an extended period of time) intended for fire station improvements, which will be insufficient to meet all needs. These amounts were agreed to by a prior interim fire chief and are not reflective of what is required for the City to provide consistent emergency response.

BEST OPTION: The reorganization option is the most prudent option, from both fiscal and service perspectives. The City would receive fire services that would meet best practices for \$400,000 less than the City currently pays for inadequate fire services (\$1.1 million versus \$1.5 million) from the General Fund now, and \$1.1 million less annually in the future, with significantly better service.

Source of Funding: There are two basic options under the LAFCO rules regarding how the City could pay \$1.1 million to acquire the appropriate fire services under reorganization:

- Option 1: Permanently transfer a portion of the property tax rate to the District.
- Option 2: Directly pay from the General Fund annually, with an inflator tied to an index such as CPI.

The Fire Ad Hoc Committee and the Fire District's negotiating committee have agreed to use Option 2. This will include an initial payment of \$1,010,000 in September of 2025. The amount will increase each year to reflect the Bay Area Consumer Price Index, with a minimum increase of 2% and a maximum increase of 5%. The City's annual payment of funds is reflected in the proposed Revenue Sharing Agreement between the City and the District, which also incorporates the various operational terms described herein.

NEXT STEPS:

Should the Council approve the recommended action, Gold Ridge will submit the application for reorganization to LAFCO. Then:

- a. LAFCO will issue public notice of a hearing on the merits of the application for their March 5, 2025 meeting
- b. March 5: LAFCO hearing; if they adopt resolution supporting the reorganization, they will open a protest proceed. This will include issuing a notice to all Sebastopol landowners, and publishing a notice in the

Press Democrat, of the opportunity to protest the reorganization. The protest period will last approximately 50 days, until the May 7 LAFCO meeting.

- c. The City and Gold Ridge will conduct public education within the City.
- d. May 7: LAFCO to hold a protest hearing. If less than 25% of property owners or voters file a protest, the reorganization is approved. If more the 25% submit a protest there will be an election scheduled for November, 2025.
- e. June: Presuming that the reorganization is approved, LAFCO will record a Certificate of Completion.
- f. July: Reorganized District will hold a special meeting to adopt an Implementation Resolution and the reorganization takes effect no later than July 1.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. Adopt a resolution approving the revenue sharing and property transfer agreement with the Gold Ridge Fire Protect District. annexing City fire services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, the District’s attached reorganization application to LAFCO, and the Revenue Sharing Agreement with District.
- 2. Adopt a resolution approving the annexation of City fire and emergency medical services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District and the District’s reorganization application.

We are requesting the flexibility to make minor changes to the application as bringing this item back to the Council for further discussion would reduce the time for a public protest period, and potentially prevent reorganization from occurring on July 1.

OPTIONS:

- 1. Build up a stand-alone City fire department using career and volunteer members, which would require pursuing a supplemental tax levy from the City’s parcels and allocating a greater portion of the General Fund for fire services.
- 2. Use current funding (including Measure H funds) and expand the existing Department to the extent feasible (note that the Ad Hoc Committee did not consider this option in the analysis discussed in this report; it was part of the April, 2024 report).

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Resolution approving the revenue sharing and property transfer agreement with the Gold Ridge Fire Protect District
- 2. Resolution approving the annexation of City fire and emergency medical services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District and the District’s reorganization application.
- 3. Gold Ridge Fire District LAFCO Reorganization application
- 4. Revenue Sharing Agreement
- 5. Citygate Associates Study
- 6. COAR Report/Station Assessment

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: _____ Approval Date: 1-29-2025
 CEQA Determination (Planning): _____ Approval Date: 1-29-2025
The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
 Administrative Services (Financial) Approval Date: _____
Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes No N/A
 Account Code (f applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval:
City Manager Approval:

Approval Date: January 27, 2025
Approval Date: January 28, 2025

RESOLUTION NUMBER: XXXX-2025
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL APPROVING THE REVENUE SHARING AND PROPERTY TRANSFER AGREEMENT WITH THE GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the City previously created a Fire Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate the City potentially reorganizing its Fire and Emergency Medical Services (hereinafter, “fire services”) into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (the “District”); and

WHEREAS, in April 2024, the City Council received a comprehensive report from the Fire Ad Hoc Committee and City staff recommended that the City proceed with reorganizing fire services with the District, and authorized the Fire Ad Hoc Committee to lead negotiations with the District; and

WHEREAS, in May 2024, the City and District entered into a memorandum of understanding for shared services which results in greater fire and emergency medical services management and coordination between the two agencies; and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution 6619-2024, a Joint Resolution of the City and District Endorsing the Proposed Annexation of the City of Sebastopol’s Fire and Emergency Medical Services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District subject to certain terms and conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Ad-Hoc Committee and staff have been working diligently to complete due diligence and negotiate the detailed terms and conditions of the reorganization of Fire Services with the District; and

WHEREAS, reorganization of fire services into the District will enable the City to receive an increased level of service at less of a cost for the City’s General Fund due to the District’s economies of scale, depth of personnel, and resources; and

WHEREAS, it would cost the City at least a \$1 million more from the City’s General Fund to maintain a fire department that will provide the same level of service as the District, or at least \$2 million more from the City’s General Fund if City voters would not approve a new parcel tax for fire services; and

WHEREAS, maintaining the City fire department with the current level of service will result in fire services being provided at level that does not meet community expectations or current standards; and

WHEREAS, under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has the authority to review and approve or disapprove proposals for changes in the boundaries and organization to include consolidations, and must approve the proposed reorganization of the City’s fire services into the District; and

WHEREAS, as part of LAFCO’s consideration of the proposed reorganization, the City and District must reach an agreement for the transfer of revenue from the City to the District to pay for the District’s cost of providing the reorganized fire services; and

WHEREAS, the City and District have determined that the best way to pay for the reorganized services is for the City to make an annual payment to the District from the General Fund, without any reallocation of the City's AB 8 property tax allocation to the District; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Ad-Hoc Committee has completed extensive negotiations with the District regarding the revenue payment, and the parties have agreed that the City will make annual payment to the District of \$1.11 Million; and

WHEREAS, the annual payment will be increased annually by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for the San Francisco Bay Area, with a minimum annual increase of 2% and a maximum annual increase of 5%; and

WHEREAS, the proposed revenue sharing agreement incorporates the District's LAFCO application for reorganization; and

WHEREAS, the proposed revenue sharing agreement includes various terms and conditions, including regarding the transfer of City owned fire engines and the fire station, and incorporates as an exhibit the deed for the transfer of the fire station; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has carefully reviewed the proposed Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement with the District, a copy of which was included in the agenda packet for February 4, 2025 City Council meeting; and

WHEREAS, the City and District intend the revenue sharing agreement to satisfy the requirements of Revenue and Taxation Code section 99; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to authorize the City Manager to make minor changes to the Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement without further Council approval in order to prevent unnecessary delays in the LAFCO proceedings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Sebastopol hereby approves the Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement with the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, and authorizes the City Manager to execute the Agreement and related documents in a form approved by the City Attorney.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Council's approval of the Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement is contingent upon LAFCO adopting a resolution approving the reorganization proposal based upon the District's application for reorganization, in the form approved by the City Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Council authorizes the City Manager, in coordination with the Fire Ad-Hoc Committee, to approve minor modifications to the Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 4th day of February, 2025 by the following vote:

VOTE:

Ayes:

Noes:
Absent:
Abstain:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor Stephen Zollman

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
Alex Mog, City Attorney

RESOLUTION NUMBER: XXXX-2025
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL APPROVING THE ANNEXATION OF CITY FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES INTO THE GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT AND THE DISTRICT'S REORGANIZATION APPLICATION

WHEREAS, the City previously created a Fire Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate the City potentially reorganizing its Fire and Emergency Medical Services (hereinafter, "fire services") into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (the "District"); and

WHEREAS, in April 2024, the City Council received a comprehensive report from the Fire Ad Hoc Committee and City staff recommended that the City proceed with reorganizing fire services with the District, and authorized the Fire Ad Hoc Committee to lead negotiations with the District; and

WHEREAS, in May 2024, the City and District entered into a memorandum of understanding for shared services which results in greater fire and emergency medical services management and coordination between the two agencies; and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution 6619-2024, a Joint Resolution of the City and District Endorsing the Proposed Annexation of the City of Sebastopol's Fire and Emergency Medical Services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District subject to certain terms and conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Ad-Hoc Committee and staff have been working diligently to complete due diligence and negotiate the detailed terms and conditions of the reorganization of Fire Services with the District; and

WHEREAS, as part of this due diligence process, the City retained an experienced consultant, Citygate, to evaluate and compare the reorganization with maintaining an independent stand-alone fire district; and

WHEREAS, reorganization of fire services into the District will enable the City to receive an increased level of service at less of a cost for the City's General Fund due to the District's economies of scale, depth of personnel, and resources; and

WHEREAS, it would cost the City at least a \$1 million more from the City's General Fund to maintain a fire department that will provide the same level of service as the District, or at least \$2 million more from the City's General Fund if City voters would not approve a new parcel tax for fire services; and

WHEREAS, maintaining the City fire department with the current level of service will result in fire services being provided at level that does not meet community expectations or current standards; and

WHEREAS, the City also hired a consultant to evaluate the City's fire station, which revealed that the station needs substantial investment, which will cost millions of dollars; and

WHEREAS, under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has the authority to review and approve or

disapprove proposals for changes in the boundaries and organization to include consolidations, and must approve the proposed reorganization of the City's fire services into the District; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Ad-Hoc Committee has completed extensive negotiations with the District, and the outcomes of those negotiations are reflected in the District's proposed LAFCO application for reorganization; and

WHEREAS, as part of the reorganization, the City will enter into a revenue sharing agreement with the District whereby the City will make annual payment to the District of \$1.11 Million, which will be increased annually in accordance with the annual percent change in the consumer price index; and

WHEREAS, as part of the reorganization, all fire assets of the City, including fire apparatus and the fire station, will be transferred to the District in their as-is condition, which will be responsible for all ongoing maintenance and repair; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has carefully reviewed the District's proposed LAFCO application for reorganization, which is included in the agenda packet for the February 4, 2025 City Council meeting; and

WHEREAS, the reorganization of the City's fire services into the District will create a higher level of fire and emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that proceeding with the reorganization of the City's fire services into the District will serve the public interest and further the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City of Sebastopol.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Sebastopol hereby approves the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District's proposed application of reorganization for the City's Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Council authorizes the City Manager, in coordination with the Fire Ad-Hoc Committee, to approve minor modifications in the District' proposed application.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 4th day of February, 2025 by the following vote:

VOTE:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor Stephen Zollman

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____

Alex Mog, City Attorney

Application for Reorganization

Consisting of the Annexation of
the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency Services
into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Submitted February 2025
Shepley Schroth-Cary, Fire Chief
Gold Ridge Fire Protection District



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Application Information

Submittal Date: February 2025
Name of Applicant: Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
Mailing Address: 4500 Hessel Rd. Sebastopol, CA 95472
Contact Person: Fire Chief Shepley Schroth-Cary
Contact Email: shepleyschroth-cary@goldridgefire.org

Title of Application: Application for Reorganization Consisting of the Annexation of the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency Services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District.

Project Description: As provided in the Joint Resolution City of Sebastopol No. 6619-2024 and Gold Ridge Fire Protection District No. 24/25-05, effective October 1, 2024, reorganization consisting of the detachment of City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency Services and the consolidation of the detached City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency Services into a reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District.

Location/Area Involved: As set forth in the Municipal Service Review and amended Sphere of Influence approved by Sonoma County LAFCO on November 6, 2024, in LAFCO Resolution No. 2789 the boundary of the reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District will include the combined existing Sebastopol City limits and the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. A concurrent reorganization application by Gold Ridge Fire Protection District will also annex the Monte Rio Fire Protection District. The map showing the entirety of the reorganized District is provided with Joint Resolution included in this application.

Joint Resolution

City of Sebastopol Resolution Number 6619-2024

Resolution No. 24/25-05
September 11, 2024

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL AND GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ENDORSING THE PROPOSED ANNEXATION OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL'S FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES INTO THE GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

WHEREAS, in May 2024, the City of Sebastopol ("City") and Gold Ridge Fire Protection District ("District") (collectively the "Parties") entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for Shared Services which resulted in greater fire and emergency medical services ("EMS") management and coordination between the two agencies and responses to emergency incidents; and

WHEREAS, the Parties have initiated assessing the sharing of resources via an annexation of City fire and EMS into the District which will then be considered for approval by the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission ("Sonoma LAFCO") pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code section 56000 et seq.) (the "LAFCO Act") in order to best serve the residents of both jurisdictions, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Government Code section 56855, the Parties are preparing separate contracts regarding the terms and conditions of annexation of the City's fire and EMS services into the District for a minimum of 20 years, and which Sonoma LAFCO is requested to approve; and

WHEREAS, the Proposed Reorganization is subject to Sonoma LAFCO approval of the amended spheres of influence of the Parties to include the entirety of the reorganized District; and

WHEREAS, the boundaries of the territory included in the reorganized District will be the are shown in Exhibit "A", the map attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference; and

WHEREAS, the territory included in the Reorganized District is inhabited, as defined in the Cortese-Knox- Hertzberg Act; and

WHEREAS, the Parties desire that the Proposed Reorganization be subject to the following terms and conditions as set forth herein:

- a. The name of the reorganized District shall remain the "Gold Ridge Fire Protection District."
- b. The reorganized District is intended to achieve greater economy and efficiency in providing fire protection and emergency services. The Parties have determined that the Proposed Reorganization is in the best interest of the Parties in order to provide better services to the residents of the reorganized District.

- c. Pursuant to the provisions of California Health and Safety Code §13842 and Government Code section 56866(n), reorganized District shall continue to be governed by a seven (7) member Board of Directors, subject to District-wide election.
- d. With the exception of the City's fire station, which will be subject to a separate agreement; all fire and EMS assets, unrestricted, restricted or fiduciary, held by the Parties may be transferred to and become assets of the reorganized District. The reorganized District shall be the successor agency to the Parties for fire and EMS services.
- e. The Parties shall enter into a revenue transfer agreement to City payment for the costs of enhanced fire and EMS services by reorganized District, as well as transfer of the City's allocation of Measure H sales tax revenue pursuant to Sonoma County Code section 12-60 et seq.
- f. All fire and EMS services liabilities of the Parties shall be transferred to and become liabilities of the reorganized District.
- g. The effective date of the Proposed Reorganization shall be the date of recordation of the certificate of completion of reorganization pursuant to Government Code section 57200 et seq.
- h. Distribution of Services: The Board of Directors of the reorganized District will authorize an annual work plan for services throughout the reorganized District; and

WHEREAS, the Parties hereby consent to the annexation of City fire and EMS into the District without election by the registered voters within the City and District; and

WHEREAS, the Parties' find that the annexation of City fire and EMS into the District appears to be categorically exempt on the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") by virtue of section 15320 of the State CEQA Guidelines ("Class 20 Exemption") because this annexation is a reorganization of a local government agencies where the changes do not change the geographical area in which previously existing powers are exercised.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that (1) the Sebastopol City Council and the Board of Directors of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District are satisfied with the proposed terms and conditions of the annexation of the City to the District and (2) the District Fire Chief is authorized to transmit this resolution to Sonoma LAFCO.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sebastopol City Council and the Board of Directors of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District hereby find, determine, declare, and order as follows:

- 1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and are adopted as herein for set forth above.

2. Sonoma LAFCO is requested to undertake proceedings for the proposed annexation of City fire and EMS into the District according to the terms and conditions stated above, the Parties separate agreements, and in the manner provided in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act.
3. The Mayor of the City and President of the District Board of Directors are authorized and directed to execute this Concurrent Resolution and any other documents as Sonoma LAFCO may reasonably request to accomplish the proposed annexation of City fire and EMS into the District.
4. The Fire Chief of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, and/or his designee, shall be, and is hereby, authorized and directed to perform any and all acts required to complete the proposed annexation of City fire and EMS into the District, including, but not limited to, preparation and coordination of the application to Sonoma LAFCO, and preparation and filing of Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA guidelines.

This Joint Resolution may be executed in counterparts and is effective from the latest date of execution shown below.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Sebastopol City Council this 1st day of October, 2024 by the following

vote:

VOTE:

AYES: Councilmembers Hinton, Maurer, McLewis, Vice Mayor Zollman and Mayor Rich
NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST: Mary C. Gourley
City Clerk

Donna Conner Ricci
Mayor

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District this September 11, 2024 by the following vote:

VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST: Karen Johnson
Clerk of the Board

Robert E. Beckman
Board President

Map of Reorganized District

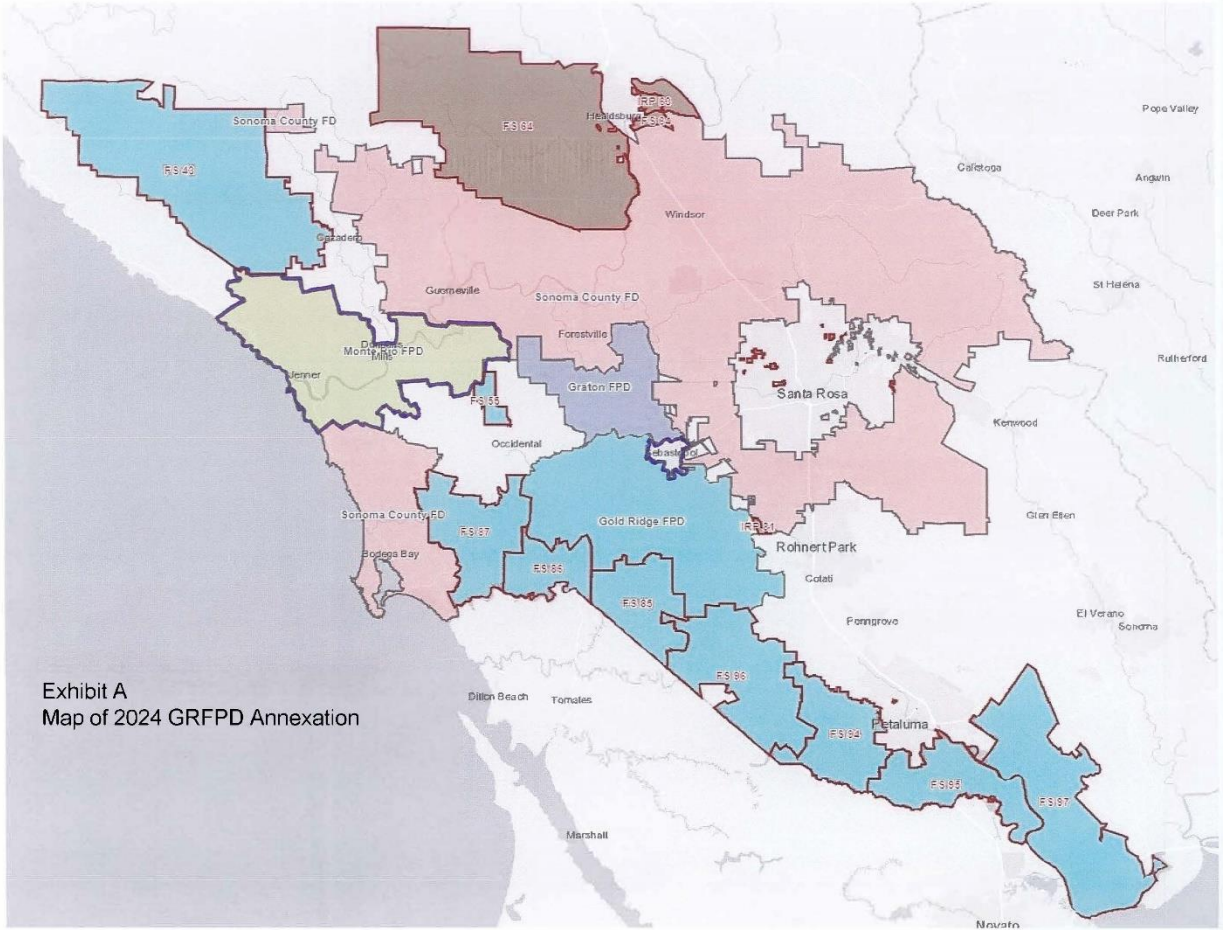


Exhibit A
Map of 2024 GRFPD Annexation

**REVENUE SHARING AND PROPERTY TRANSFER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT,
AND THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL FOR THE ANNEXATION
OF THE CITY FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES INTO THE DISTRICT**

This Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into and effective January 21, 2025, between the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District ("GRFPD" or "District"), which is an independent fire district organized and operated pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (California Health and Safety Code section 13800 et seq.), and the City of Sebastopol (the "City") (collectively referred to herein as "the Parties"), with respect to the following Recitals, which are incorporated as a substantive part of this Agreement.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of GRFPD and the City Council, all located in Sonoma County, California (collectively referred to as "the Parties"), desire to initiate proceedings pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Heitzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code section 56000 et seq.), with the Local Agency Formation Commission of the County of Sonoma ("Sonoma LAFCO") for the reorganization of the Parties as specified herein; and

WHEREAS, the Districts approved and adopted Joint Resolution No. 24/25-05, effective October 1, 2024, jointly requesting Sonoma LAFCO to approve the proposed reorganization and annexation of the City fire and emergency services for the Subject Territory, as shown in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein, and

WHEREAS, the Subject Territory is consistent with the amended spheres of influence of the Parties to be adopted by Sonoma LAFCO Resolution 2789 on November 6, 2024; and

WHEREAS, GRFPD will submit its "Application for Reorganization consisting of the Annexation of the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency Services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to Sonoma LAFCO in or about February 2025, and

WHEREAS, the Parties are desirous of facilitating successful fire protection services in the Subject Territory, should the reorganization and annexation be approved, by entering into this Agreement relating to the revenue sharing and property transfer in the Subject Territory now allocated for fire protection by the Parties, and

WHEREAS, this Agreement is intended to specifically implement the proposed annexation and reorganization for the Subject Territory only.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

AGREEMENT

1. Effect of Recitals. The foregoing Recitals are incorporated into and are a part of this Agreement.
2. Definitions. For purposes of this Agreement, except as otherwise provided or unless the context otherwise requires:
 - (a) "Reorganization" means the annexation of fire and emergency services within the territory of the City into the reorganized GRFPD.
 - (b) "ACTTC" means the Sonoma County Auditor-Controller Treasurer-Tax Collector.
 - (d) "Effective Date" means the date of recordation of the LAFCO Executive Officer's Certificate of Completion for the Reorganization.
 - (e) "Unincorporated Area" means the area of the GRFPD located outside the boundaries of the City of Sebastopol.
3. Extension of District-wide special taxes in City territory. GRFPD currently levies a 1997 tax established by District Ordinance 96-97-1, a 2008 tax established by District Ordinance 08-09-1-R, and a 2018 tax established by District Ordinance 2019/20-1 (collectively, the "Special Taxes"). Beginning in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and each Fiscal Year thereafter, GRFPD shall request the ACTTC levy the Special Taxes on all parcels of real property within the City.
4. Annual Revenue Sharing Payment. In exchange for GRFPD providing the fire and emergency services within the City of Sebastopol in the manner and subject to the conditions specified in the Application for Reorganization submitted by GRFPD to Sonoma LAFCO, the City shall make an annual payment to the GRFPD on or before September 15th of each year, starting in September 2025, in an amount equal to \$1,110,000.00, as annually adjusted, which payment shall continue in perpetuity subject to the provisions of this Agreement ("Revenue Sharing Payment"). This initial dollar figure is a baseline amount that shall be annually adjusted based on the percentage change in the annual Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward Area ("CPI"), issued in January of each year, over the prior year. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no event shall the annual adjustment be less than two percent (2%) or greater than five percent (5%). In the event that reorganization is effective after July 1, 2025, the Revenue Sharing Payment for Fiscal Year 25-26 shall be prorated based on the number of days remaining in the year.
5. Local Debt Limit. Should a court determine that the payments under Sections 3 or 4 constitute City-issued debt made in violation of California Constitution Article XVI, section 18, then the Parties agree that such payments are made in satisfaction of their obligations under Revenue and Taxation Code Section 99. The payments will remain as annual lump sum

payments made separately from the ACTTC's AB 8 allocation process. The Parties agree that the reorganization shall not result in any change or adjustment to the ad valorem property tax received by either the City or GRFPD pursuant to the ACTTC's AB 8 allocation process.

6. Transfer of existing City Fire Station real property and facility improvements located at 7425 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA. As part of the annexation and LAFCO approved reorganization, City agrees to transfer to the District full title, ownership, and responsibility for the existing City Fire Station real property and facility improvements located at 7425 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA (collectively the "Fire Station") upon the effective date of the reorganization. The Fire Station shall be transferred to GRFPD in an "as is" condition. GRFPD shall use the Fire Station solely for fire-related purposes and other ancillary uses. In the event the Fire Station is no longer used by the District as a fire station from which a fire engine is dispatched to respond to emergency calls, ownership of the Fire Station shall revert back to the City. However, this reversion clause will not be triggered if the District sells or otherwise transfers the Fire Station in order to help fund replacement of the Fire Station with another fire station facility located within the City limits, provided that the new fire station facility is subject to the same reversion restriction. On or before June 30, 2025, the parties shall prepare and record a separate Grant Deed transferring the fire station to the District, which includes this reversion clause, in substantially the form shown in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein. Upon transfer of the First Station to the District, the District shall be responsible for all repair and maintenance thereof, and the City will have no further duties, obligations, or liabilities related to the Fire Station.

7. Payment for remaining Type 1 Engine debt payments. The Parties agree that not later than July 1, 2025, the City and District shall each pay one of the two remaining apparatus payments of approximately \$240,000.00 each to Community Leasing Partners, so that this Type I Engine transfers with clean title to the District upon the effective date of reorganization. After that date, District shall be solely responsible for all repair and maintenance of all vehicles/apparatus transferred from City to GRFPD, and the City will have no further duties, obligations, or liabilities related to such vehicles after the effective date of reorganization.

8. City Measure H sales tax revenue. As required under Sonoma County Code section 12-66(E), the City allocated Measure H sales tax revenue collected after the date of reorganization shall transfer to District beginning upon the effective date of the reorganization. The Parties agree that Measure H sales tax revenue collected in the fourth quarter of FY 24-25, and anticipated to be distributed to the City in September 2025, shall be the property of the City. The City shall transfer any remaining fund balance of unspent City Measure H sales tax revenue for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 to the District on October 1, 2025.

9. City Fire Impact Fees. The City shall transfer to District any fire impact fee fund balance effective July 1, 2025. The City shall continue to collect the fire impact fees on behalf of the District, and timely transfer such funds to the District upon receipt, until a District-wide fire impact fee is approved. The District shall use such funds in accordance with all applicable legal restrictions. The District shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City, its officers,

officials, employees and agents against any and all claims relating to the fire impact fees, including but not limited to claims of misuse or misappropriation by the District.

10. Accounting. The designated representatives of City and GRFPD shall have the right to audit any records and supporting documentation pertaining to the performance of this Agreement. City and GRFPD shall maintain such records for a minimum of four (4) years from the Effective Date and to allow access to such records during normal business hours.

11. Termination.

(a) GRFPD Reorganization. This Agreement is contingent upon the final Reorganization. Should the Reorganization as contemplated above not occur, the parties agree that this Agreement shall be null and void and no transfers of revenues will occur without a new agreement to do so.

(b) Termination Due to Invalidity. Should any material portion of this Agreement be declared invalid or inoperative by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect, unless enforcement of this Agreement, as so invalidated, would be unreasonable or inequitable under all the circumstances or would frustrate the purposes of this Agreement and/or the rights and obligations of the Parties hereto.

(c) Termination Due to Change in Law. Subject to Section 5(d) and (e), should substantial changes occur in the statutory scheme or successor statutory schemes (whether by legislative or judicial action) governing this Agreement, including but not limited to the Government Code and Revenue and Taxation Code, which negate or frustrate the fundamental tenets of this Agreement, the parties may discuss a termination or amendment of this Agreement.

12. Remedies for Breach of Agreement. In the event of a breach of this Agreement, the non-breaching Party shall send written notice of the breach to the breaching Party. If the breaching Party fails to cure such default within thirty (30) days, or such other longer period of time as specified in the notice, the parties may exercise any remedy available to them at law or in equity for a material breach by the other party, including specific performance, injunctive relief, and writ of mandate.

13. Modification/Amendment. This Agreement may be modified or amended only by a writing duly authorized and executed by the parties to this Agreement.

14. Enforcement. The District and City each acknowledge that this Agreement cannot bind or limit themselves or each other or their future governing bodies in the exercise of their discretionary legislative power except as the Agreement provides. However, each binds itself that it will insofar as is legally possible, fully carry out the intent and purposes hereof, if necessary, by administrative and ministerial action independent of that legislative power and that this Agreement may be enforced by injunction or mandate or other writ to the full extent allowed by law.

15. Indemnification. Except as otherwise specifically provided for in this Agreement, each Party shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the other Party from and against any claims, losses, damages, liabilities, and expenses (including reasonable attorneys fee) based on or assert upon any act or omission of the indemnifying Party, except to the extent caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the indemnified Party.

16. Integration. With respect to the subject matter hereof, this Agreement is intended to be an integrated agreement and supersedes any and all previous negotiations, proposals, commitments, writings and understandings of any nature whatsoever between the Districts and the City as to the subject matter of this Agreement.

17. Notice. All notices, requests, determinations or other correspondence required or allowed by law or this Agreement to be provided by the parties shall be in writing and shall be deemed given and received when delivered to the recipient by first-class mail (or an equal or better form of delivery including electronic mail) at the following addresses, or such other address as either Party may identify in writing:

GRFPD

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
4500 Hessel Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472

CITY

City of Sebastopol
City Manager's Office
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

By giving notice, either party may change its address for these purposes.

18. Third Parties. This Agreement shall not be construed as or deemed an agreement for the benefit of any third party or parties. No other person shall have any right of action based upon any provision of this Agreement.

19. Attorney's Fees and Costs. In any action to enforce the provisions of this Agreement or for breach of the Agreement, the prevailing party shall recover from the other party, in addition to any damages, injunctive or other relief, all costs reasonably incurred at, before and after trial or on appeal, including without limitation attorneys' and witness (expert and otherwise) fees, deposition costs, copying charges and other expenses.

20. Approval. The parties represent that this Agreement was approved by their respective governing boards at a properly noticed meeting.

21. Choice of Law and Venue. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of California. Venue for actions and proceedings between the parties related to this Agreement shall

be in the Northern District of California for any federal action and, unless otherwise agreed by the parties, in Sonoma County Superior Court for state actions.

22. Agreement Mutually Drafted. Each party has participated jointly in the drafting of this Agreement, which each party acknowledges is the result of negotiations between the parties, and the language used in this Agreement shall be deemed to be the language chosen by the parties to express their mutual intent. If an ambiguity or question of intent or interpretation arises, then this Agreement will accordingly be construed as drafted jointly by the parties, and no presumption or burden of proof will arise favoring or disfavoring any party to this Agreement by virtue of the authorship of any of the provisions of this Agreement. The captions, headings and table of contents contained in this Agreement are for reference purposes only and shall not affect in any way the meaning or interpretation of this Agreement.

23. Joint Defense. In the event of a third party challenge of any type to this Agreement, the parties agree to meet and confer regarding jointly defending the validity and implementation of the Agreement.

24. Waiver. A waiver by any Party of any breach of any term, covenant, or condition herein contained or a waiver of any right or remedy of such Party available hereunder at law or in equity shall not be deemed to be a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same or any other term, covenant, or condition herein contained or of any continued or subsequent right to the same right or remedy. No Party shall be deemed to have made any such waiver unless it is in writing and signed by the Party so waiving.

25. No Joint Venture. Neither this Agreement, nor payment, shall constitute or create any form of association, joint venture, partnership, or cooperative activity, of any nature whatever, for any purpose between the City and the GRFPD. The City and GRFPD shall remain at all times independent parties.

26. Successors and Assigns. All representations, covenants and warranties specifically set forth in this Agreement, by or on behalf of or for the benefit of any or all of the Parties hereto, shall be binding upon an inure to the benefit of such Party, its successors, and assigns.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into this Agreement in Sonoma County, California.

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT:

President, Board of Directors, GRFPD Date

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Board, GRFPD Date

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL:

City Manager Date

ATTEST:

Clerk of the City Council Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

General Counsel for the District Date

City Attorney Date

Exhibit A

(Map of the Subject Territory to be added upon the Effective Date)

Exhibit B

Deed for Transfer of Fire Station

**RECORDING REQUESTED BY
AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:**

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
1690 Watertrough Rd.
Sebastopol, CA 95427
Attention: General Manager

With a copy to:

City of Sebastopol
7120 Bodega Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Exempt from recording fees per
Government Code §§6103, 27383

APN: _____

(SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE RESERVED FOR RECORDER'S USE)

Exempt from Documentary Transfer Tax Per Rev. & Tax. Code §11922, Governmental Agency acquiring title.

GRANT DEED

THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL, a California municipal corporation (the "**City**") hereby grants to GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (the "**District**"), certain real property (the "**Property**") known as County Assessor's Parcel Number _____ (the "**Property**"), as more particularly described in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference, subject to the following terms:

1. Effective July 1, 2025, the Property is conveyed in fee simple absolute subject to the continued use of the Property as an active fire station (the "**Fire Station**"). The Property is also conveyed subject to any easements and permitted exceptions of record.
2. The District hereby covenants and agrees that it will continue to actively use the Fire Station for the purpose of fire protection for the City and the area surrounding the City, which shall include, but not be limited to, using the Fire Station as the base for a fire engine that is dispatched to respond to emergency calls.
3. Right of Reverter.
 - (a) City reserves the right to enter or reenter, as the case may be, and take possession of, the Property and all improvements thereon and to vest or revest, as the case may be, in City the estate of District therein upon the failure by District to continue

(1) Sale of the Fire Station by the District shall not be considered a failure by the District to continue to use the Fire Station for active fire protection services if: i) the proceeds from the sale of the Fire Station are used to acquire or build a new fire station providing fire protection services elsewhere within the City of Sebastopol, and ii) a right of reverter for the benefit of the City in substantially the same form as this Deed is recorded on title for the property on which such new fire station is built or acquired.

(b) District shall, upon request of City, provide City with a recordable Quitclaim Deed, identical or substantially similar to that attached hereto as Exhibit B executed by District in favor of City, which quitclaim deed shall transfer District's entire right, title and interest in the Property to City for City's use for any lawful purpose.

(c) The term of the right of reverter shall commence upon the date of this Grant Deed and shall continue in perpetuity.

(d) City's right of reverter shall be subordinate and subject to and be limited by and shall not defeat, render invalid or limit:

(1) Any mortgage, deed of trust or other security instrument executed by District with respect to the purchase of the Property; or

(2) Any rights or interests for the protection of the holder of such mortgages, deeds of trust or other security instruments.

(e) Upon any resale by the City of the Property and any improvements constructed thereon, the proceeds of such sale shall be applied as follows:

(1) Reimburse the City for any costs it incurs in managing or selling the Property including but not limited to amounts to discharge or prevent liens, encumbrances or obligations arising from any acts or omissions of District;

(2) Any balance to the City.

(f) Notwithstanding anything in this Section 3(a) to the contrary, the District may sell the Property without the City being

4. No violation or breach of the covenants, conditions, restrictions, provisions or limitations contained in this Grant Deed shall defeat or render invalid or in any way impair the lien or charge of any mortgage, deed of trust or other financing or security instrument, provided however, that any successor of District to the Property shall be bound by such remaining covenants, conditions, restrictions, limitations and provisions, whether such successor's title was acquired by foreclosure, deed in lieu of foreclosure, trustee's sale or otherwise.

which such covenants relate. The City, in the event of any breach of any such covenants, shall have the right to exercise all of the rights and remedies and to maintain any actions at law or suits in equity or other proper proceedings to enforce the curing of such breach. The covenants contained in this Grant Deed shall be for the benefit of and shall be enforceable only by the City and its successors and assigns. The prevailing party in any action or proceeding to enforce the provisions of this Grant Deed shall recover their reasonable attorneys' and experts' fees and costs, in addition to all other recoverable costs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and District have caused this instrument to be executed on their behalf by their respective officers on this ____ day of _____, 2025.

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL,
a California municipal corporation

City Manager

The provisions of this Grant Deed are hereby approved and accepted.

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: General Manager

EXHIBIT A
LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

EXHIBIT B

FORM OF QUITCLAIM DEED

**RECORDING REQUESTED BY
AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:**

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
1690 Watertrough Rd.
Sebastopol, CA 95427
Attention: General Manager

With a copy to:

City of Sebastopol
7120 Bodega Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Exempt from Recording Fees
Government Code §§ 6103, 27383

APN: _____ (SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE RESERVED FOR RECORDER'S USE)

Exempt from Documentary Transfer Tax Per Rev. & Tax. Code §11922, Governmental Agency acquiring title.

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District ("**Grantor**") hereby quitclaims, releases and conveys to the City of Sebastopol ("**District**") any and all right, title and interest in certain property located at _____ known as Assessor's Parcel Number _____, as more particularly described in Exhibit A attached to this Quitclaim Deed and incorporated herein by this reference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Grantor has executed this Quitclaim Deed as of the _____ of _____, 20____.

GRANTOR:

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE

By: _____
Its: _____

[Signatures Must Be Notarized]

CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that the interest in real property conveyed by the Grant Deed dated the _____ of _____, 20__ from The City of Sebastopol to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District ("District"), is hereby accepted on behalf of the District by the undersigned officer or agent on behalf of the Board of Directors pursuant to authority conferred by resolution of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District Board of Directors adopted on the ____ of [Month, Year] and that Board of Directors consents to recordation of the Grant Deed by its duly authorized officer.

Dated _____, 20__

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: _____

History of Consolidating Agencies

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

The Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (“Gold Ridge” or “the District”) was initially formed in 1993 as a consolidation of the Hessel and Twin Hills Fire Protection Districts. In 2023, the District consolidated County Service Area-40 which included 7 volunteer fire companies who served the communities of Fort Ross, Camp Meeker, Bodega, Valley Ford, Two Rock, Wilmar, and Lakeville. The District provides fire protection and emergency services to a resident population of approximately 30,000 across 226 square miles. The District’s service area is mainly residential, but also includes a mix of commercial, light industrial and rural agricultural properties.

Gold Ridge is a combination Fire District consisting of 21 full-time fire suppression staff, 3 Battalion Chiefs, 2 Division Chiefs, a Fire Chief, 3 administrators and approximately 170 volunteers. The full-time fire suppression staff at Gold Ridge work a 48 hour on-duty, 96 hour off-duty schedule covering three rotating shifts.

Gold Ridge volunteers contribute to the organization in several important ways. They are available for response whenever needed, fill stipend daytime and sleeper shifts, staff engine companies during large wildland fire response, and provide station coverage. Gold Ridge volunteers are comprised of district residents and out of district members.

The District recruits interns from the Santa Rosa Junior College who make a year-long commitment to the organization. After their year-long internship, they have the option to become volunteers. Additionally, Gold Ridge has an Explorer Post which provides a pathway for new volunteers.

Gold Ridge operates 3 staffed stations: Hessel Station 81 (Headquarters), Twin Hills Station 82, and Wilmar Station 94. The District also has volunteer stations located in Lakeville, Two Rock, Valley Ford, Bodega, Freestone, Camp Meeker and Fort Ross.

City of Sebastopol and Sebastopol Fire Department

The City of Sebastopol (“the City”) is a small semi-urban community located in Sonoma County, California on the western edge of the Santa Rosa plain. It is 50 miles north of San Francisco, 8 miles west of Santa Rosa, 10 miles from Bodega Bay, and about 15 miles from the Russian River. The City, incorporated in 1902, currently has a population of about 7,800 and is comprised of approximately 2,900 parcels.

The Sebastopol Fire Department operates as a volunteer department within the confines of city government. The City has two full-time 40-hour fire engineers, currently contracts for shared services with the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District for Fire Chief services, and staffs the remaining positions with 27 volunteer firefighters and 3 Reserve Firefighters. There is a shared, full-time administrative assistant that is funded 50/ 50 with the City Building Department performing duties as assigned for both departments.

Historical Call for Service Volumes and Average Response Times

| Year | # of Calls | Average Response Times (Dispatched to "Arrived On Scene") |
|------|------------|--|
| 2019 | 1212 | 4 minutes 11 seconds |
| 2020 | 1121 | 4 minutes 39 seconds |
| 2021 | 1221 | 5 minutes 19 seconds |
| 2022 | 1351 | 5 minutes 9 seconds |
| 2023 | 1444 | 5 minutes 11 seconds |

Plan for Service

Description of Current Services

Sebastopol Fire Department is regarded as one of the best Volunteer Fire Departments in Sonoma County. This distinction is one to be proud of. However, the continued increase in call volume and the ever changing and increased requirements for training volunteers has made the service model fragile. The current service level in Sebastopol is inconsistent from one day to the next and depends on the time of day. The inconsistencies are both in the form of response time and weight of the response. On occasion, there are calls for service where there is no response from the Fire Department.

The City has made improvements recently, adding a second Full-Time Fire Engineer which provides a guarantee of one person on duty 6 out of the 7 days a week and two people on duty for 1 day a week during the hours of 7am-5pm. Many days there is a stipend volunteer firefighter who supplements the paid Fire Engineer during the daytime hours. Any additional response and nighttime response are provided by volunteers.

Chief Officer coverage is provided by Volunteer Captains who cover Battalion 83 Friday evening to Monday morning and holidays. The Captains who cover the weekends are reimbursed for their time with a stipend. In the absence of weekend coverage, the Fire Chief or the Volunteer Captains may respond to calls that require a Chief Officer, the Gold Ridge Battalion Chief B8 will also respond if needed. Ultimately the Chief officer's response to calls of significance has been intermittent, leaving a void in incident leadership.

Responsibilities outside of emergency response like fire prevention, public education, preventative maintenance, and training are shared between the paid staff and volunteers. These programs require a greater amount of support.

The leadership of the Sebastopol Fire Department has had a high turnover in recent years. The frequent change of Fire Chief has been challenging for the volunteer firefighters. Lack of consistency has also put strain on the abovementioned programs.

Description of Proposed Services

The Sebastopol Fire Station will be staffed 24/7 with a minimum of 3-person engine company consisting of a captain, engineer, and firefighter. This additional staffing will be the most significant enhancement to public safety and community services. The proposed staffing model will include participation from volunteers in the form of a daily stipend position. When a volunteer is available we will achieve a 4-person engine company. The inclusion of volunteers is important to ensure appropriate response depth when multiple resources are required i.e.: fires, traffic accidents, storm flood events, and multiple calls within the response area. As a result of the reorganization, a larger volunteer and paid labor force will enhance the ability to cover responses and station coverage. The combining of the two agencies will provide an enhanced recruitment and retention tool, allowing more choices and opportunities for participation. A combined work force will strengthen specialized programs like water rescue, large animal rescue, and technical rescue. As one agency, immediate efficiencies will be achieved on a day-to-day operational level. This includes 24-hour Battalion Chief coverage. The staffing, along with the efficiencies from reorganization will ensure that we are able to meet the needs of our community and visitors.

The reorganized District will hire a 40-hour a week Fire Prevention Captain, who will conduct new construction and tenant improvement inspections, coordinate annual fire inspections, and pre fire plans. The Fire Prevention Captain would handle community outreach programs as well as act as the Public Information Officer (PIO).

Gold Ridge has three Training Captains who coordinate the annual training calendar, administer Target Solutions (an online training program), develop training curriculum, monitor training compliance, and provide hands-on training. These Captains work two full days on, then four full days off (a 2x4 schedule), ensuring that they are available to administer drills at night when the bulk of the volunteers receive training. Providing adequate training for nearly 200 volunteers in the reorganized District is a recognized challenge and the District has made a significant investment to meet the challenge.

The Gold Ridge Fire District's Management Team consists of the Fire Chief, two Division Chiefs, and three Battalion Chiefs. The daily operation of the District is managed by the Battalion Chiefs who work on 2x4 providing 24/7 coverage. The Fire Chief and the two Division Chiefs work a 40-hour work week and remain on call on a rotating 2x4 schedule as the Duty Chief to provide redundancy to the battalion chiefs. The depth of the management team ensures that fire ground leadership is present when needed. The Division Chiefs have additional expertise in training and fire prevention which helps to bolster these important programs.

The Gold Ridge District Administrative Team consists of an Executive Assistant/Finance Officer, a part-time Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper, and a part-time Volunteer Coordinator. This team handles all the business needs of the District including but not limited to budgeting and finance, accounts payable and receivable, and human resources.

While the immediate and most dramatic improvement for City residents will be the staffed engine company, the addition of an administrative and management team will provide consistency and sustainability to the City of Sebastopol. Meeting the immediate challenges is important, but a continued focus on the future, the ability to grow, anticipate, and plan is critical. The Gold Ridge

Team has the expertise and ability to provide a sustainable improved level of service to the City, its residents, and visitors well into the future.

Schedule for Providing Services

Based on consultations with Sonoma County LAFCO staff, with a submittal date in February 2025, LAFCO could move through application review, consideration, and approval process, including any protest proceedings, to complete approval of this application by the regular LAFCO meeting on May 7, 2025. Based on this ongoing coordination and timeline, the annexation of the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency services into the reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District would be completed not later than June 30, 2025, for a “go live” date not later than July 1, 2025.

District Financial Position

The Gold Ridge Fire Protection District seven-member elected board passes a balanced budget each fiscal year. The District’s current operating budget for FY 2024-25 is \$12,794,185. Property tax accounts for 42% of total revenue, approximately 20% from Measure H Sales Tax, 36% is composed of intergovernmental revenue, i.e. county revenue sharing payment and contracts for services, and the remaining is made up of miscellaneous income and reimbursements. Salaries and employee benefits make up 63% of the expenditures, approximately 18% is dedicated to operating supplies and services, 9% is made up of building and equipment assets and loans, and 10% has been set aside for specific large purchases and contingencies.

The District has engaged Weist Law Firm and Cal Muni Advisors to assist the District in strategic planning, financial policy development, pension management, and municipal bond financing. This past year the Board has passed the following financial policies: Reserve Management Policy, Investment Policy, Debt Management Policy, and UAL Management Policy. Recently the District was awarded an AA+ credit rating by S&P which reflects the District’s financial health and long-term stability. This high rating allows the District to secure more favorable borrowing terms and access to lower interest rates, resulting in significant cost savings when funding capital improvement projects.

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District Tax Revenue Sources

Special Tax

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District’s special property tax revenue is generated from three voter-approved taxes. The 1997 tax approved in District Ordinance 96-97-1 is a unit of risk assessment at \$5.00 per unit of risk. A typical residential home is 4 units of risk equaling a total charge of \$20.00. The 2008 tax Measure O approved in District Ordinance 08-09-1-R is a simple tax applied to improved parcels at the rate of \$45.00/parcel. Finally, the 2018 tax Measure E approved in District Ordinance 2019/20-1 is a special tax which is levied at a rate not to exceed \$200.00 per assessor's parcel number plus \$100.00 per additional unit or site for residential and lodging properties; \$300.00 per assessor's parcel plus \$0.14 per square foot for commercial, industrial and warehouse property; \$50.00 for pastureland; and \$100.00 per assessor's parcel for other agricultural and vacant land. This special tax has an inflation adjustment which is applied each year and can be levied at a higher rate should the board vote to do so. Currently, the three special taxes combined, when applied to a typical single-family home, total \$265 annually.

Summary of District Special Tax Rates

| Tax | Rate | Unit |
|------------|-------------|---|
| 1997 Tax | \$5 | per unit of risk - typical family home is 4 units |
| Measure O | \$45 | per improved parcel |
| Measure E | \$200 | per residential property + \$100/additional unit |
| | \$300 | per commercial property = \$0.14 per sq. ft. |
| | \$100 | per other parcel i.e. vacant |
| | \$50 | for pastureland |

The District special tax is estimated to generate \$2.4M in FY 2024/25. A component of application to annex the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency services into the reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District is for LAFCO to order to collection of these special taxes within Sebastopol pursuant to Government Code section 56886(f). When applied to the 2,977 parcels within Sebastopol City limits, the district special taxes are estimated to generate \$1.1M annually.

Ad Valorem Tax

The District ad valorem property tax is estimated to generate approximately \$3M in FY 2024/25. The characteristic of this revenue source provides steady growth, the housing market in the district is stable.

Measure H Sales Tax

In March 2024, Measure H or the “Improved and Enhanced Local Fire Protection, Paramedic Services and Disaster Response Initiative” was passed which imposes a ½ cent sales tax on retail transactions within Sonoma County starting October 1, 2024, and was estimated by the ordinance to generate \$60M in County-wide revenue. The District’s allocation of Measure H funding is 9.67% and is estimated to generate \$10 M in FY 2024/25. The City’s allocation of Measure H funding is 1.80% which is estimated to generate \$1.1M annually. Pursuant to the requirement of Measure H, upon the annexation of the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency services into the reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, Gold Ridge will automatically begin receiving the City’s Measure H allocation.

Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement

Measure H establishes a maintenance of effort requirement, to ensure Measure H funding does not supplant historic funding for fire services and related activities. The City’s maintenance of effort requirement under Measure H is approximately 10-11%. In February 2025, the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District entered a Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement with the City of Sebastopol for the annexation of the City’s Fire and Emergency Services into the reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. This revenue sharing agreement requires the City to pay Gold Ridge \$1,110,000.00 annually, with such amount increased annually based on the percentage change in the consumer price index for the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition, annexation would allow the District to collect its special taxes throughout the City, which would generate approximately \$1.1 million annually. The City of Sebastopol’s Measure H, which Gold Ridge will receive upon reorganization, allocation is estimated to generate \$1.1M. Combined, this would amount to approximately \$3.3 million of revenue. These collective revenue sources will support and sustain the proposed staffing and operating plan.

GRFPD/Sebastopol Fire Annexation Financial Projection

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Gold Ridge Special Tax Revenue | 1,136,908 |
| Measure H Sales Tax Revenue | 1,080,000 |
| Fire Impact Fees | |
| Total Revenue | 2,216,908 |
| Salaries and Benefits | 2,326,648 |
| Operating Costs | 450,260 |
| Debt Service | 550,000 |
| Total Expenditures | 3,326,908 |
| Revenue Sharing Payment | 1,110,000 |

Five-Year Projection

| Gold Ridge Fire Protection District 5 year Financial Projection of Consolidated Fire District | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 2024-25 Final | 2025-26 Year 1 | 2026-27 Year 2 | 2027-28 Year 3 | 2028-29 Year 4 | 2029-30 Year 5 |
| Total 10 · Property Tax | 3,059,826 | 3,121,023 | 3,183,443 | 3,247,112 | 3,312,054 | 3,378,295 |
| Total 10.1 · Special Tax | 2,400,000 | 3,536,908 | 3,536,908 | 3,536,908 | 3,536,908 | 3,536,908 |
| Total 17 · Use of Money/Property | 13,212 | 13,212 | 13,212 | 13,212 | 13,212 | 13,212 |
| Total 20 · Intergovernmental Revenues | 4,801,247 | 5,635,297 | 5,781,815 | 5,932,142 | 6,086,378 | 6,244,623 |
| Total 20.1 · Measure H | 2,500,000 | 7,400,000 | 7,474,000 | 7,548,740 | 7,624,227 | 7,700,470 |
| Total 30 · Charges for Services | 760 | 560 | 560 | 560 | 560 | 560 |
| Total 40 · Miscellaneous Revenues | 19,140 | 19,140 | 19,140 | 19,140 | 19,140 | 19,140 |
| Total Revenue | 12,794,185 | 19,726,140 | 20,009,078 | 20,297,814 | 20,592,479 | 20,893,208 |
| Total 50 · Salaries/Emp Benefits | 8,074,290 | 13,808,298 | 14,006,354 | 14,208,470 | 14,414,735 | 14,625,246 |
| Total 60 · Services/Supplies | 2,251,300 | 2,735,330 | 2,776,360 | 2,818,005 | 2,860,275 | 2,903,180 |
| Total 75 · LT Debt | 288,778 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Total 85 · Assets | 923,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Total 90 · Appropriations | 1,256,817 | 200,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 |
| Grand Total Expenditures | 12,794,185 | 18,543,628 | 18,782,714 | 19,026,475 | 19,275,011 | 19,528,425 |
| Operating Surplus/Deficit | - | 1,182,512 | 1,226,363 | 1,271,339 | 1,317,468 | 1,364,783 |

* Assuming 2% increase in Property Tax annually, 2.6% CPI increase in the County and City Revenue Sharing Agreements annually, 1% increase in Measure H Sales Tax annually, Salaries and benefits are 70% of the annual budget, and 1.5% increase in operating costs per year.

Financial Benefits & Opportunities of Reorganization

- Cost reductions from shared Management, Fire Prevention and Administrative positions.
- Combining fleet into one available pool will reduce the need to purchase certain vehicles.
- Better positioned as a larger agency when competing for grants
- Increased purchasing power through volume purchases, competitive bid processes, and standardization of vendors.
- Administrative, indirect, and operative cost savings.
- Service improvement will include enhanced community risk reduction services, community outreach services, dedicated training officer, enhanced disaster preparedness and response, depth of operational resources, enhanced command and control of major incidents.
- General fund contribution to fire services creates predictability of fire service costs
- Depth of labor force which reduces turnover and provides opportunity

Capital Improvements

Fleet Management

Gold Ridge will provide a comprehensive preventive maintenance (PM) program consisting of semi-annual service and safety inspections by equipment/safety specialists and a certified fire mechanic, brake and lamp inspections, and Basic Inspection of Terminal, if applicable. Repairs will be completed in-house, within our capability, and by outside vendors such as Twin Oaks Garage, Burton's Fire Apparatus in Modesto, Pete's Automotive in Sebastopol, as well as others, depending on the nature of repair. Reserve apparatus may also be available when equipment is out of service for an extended time. The District has a comprehensive Fleet Replacement plan:

- Command Vehicles: 10 years. Battalion Chief's unit runs 3-4 years front-line, then is moved into utility use for the balance.
- Type 1 Engine: 20 years. One reserve.
- Type 3 Engine: 20 years. Two reserves.
- Water Tender: 25 years. No reserves.
- Ladder Truck: 25 years.
- Rescue: 25 years.

The City has purchased and will receive a Type 3 engine in the spring of 2025 and a Type 1 engine in 2026. The Type 3 is paid for in full, the Type 1 has two remaining payments of roughly \$240K. The City and District will each make one of these payments by July 1, 2025, so that the Type 1 transfers to the District with clean title and no debt payments. The ladder truck needs to be replaced by 2028 and due to build-time it should be ordered soon. The estimated cost to replace the truck is estimated to be \$2.7M and has been accounted for in debt service projections.

Title to all vehicles and equipment owned by the City shall transfer upon reorganization. After that date, the City will have no further duties, obligations, or liabilities related to such vehicles. Both the Type 3 engine to be received in Spring 2025, as well as the Type 1 engine to be received in 2026, shall be based at the fire station location in the City of Sebastopol (although it may respond to calls outside the City of Sebastopol, or be temporary relocated to as part of emergency response).

Facilities

The City will transfer ownership of all assets including the fire station, located at 7425 Bodega Avenue, upon reorganization. Thereafter, the District shall be responsible for all repair and maintenance of the station, and the City will have no further duties, obligations, or liabilities related to the station. The District and the City have conducted a station needs assessment and have a remodel plan to address the facility, particularly developing sleeping quarters so this can become a staffed station. The District is poised to secure financing to immediately begin station improvements. The District and City have also agreed that if the fire station ceases to be used as a fire station, the District shall return the property to the City. The parties will record a deed restriction on the property to memorialize these obligations.

Appropriations Limit for Reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

As directed by the Gold Ridge FPD and City Joint Resolution effective October 1, 2024, LAFCO is requested to establish the initial appropriations limit for the reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District starting in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 as the total of the combined City funding of fire services and the combined appropriations limits of the Gold Ridge FPD and the Monte Rio FPD, as well as the anticipated increased tax collections projected from the extension of Gold Ridge FPD special tax throughout the entirety of reorganized District and the revenues for all agencies from the County-wide sales tax measure which was passed in March 2024. Accordingly, it is requested that the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 appropriations limit for the reorganized Gold Ridge FPD be established at \$35,000,000.00.

Identification of Existing Fire Service Providers Affected by Reorganization

As set forth in the Joint Resolution effective October 1, 2024, and included in this application, the reorganization includes the consolidation of the City of Sebastopol's fire and emergency services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. Additionally, a concurrent reorganization annexing the Monte Rio Fire Protection District into Gold Ridge is submitted to Sonoma County LAFCO.

Any existing automatic and mutual aid agreements with neighboring cities and fire districts will remain in place. An improved level of service will be achieved by consolidation and be realized by neighboring cities and fire districts.

Governance

As set forth in the Joint Resolution effective October 1, 2024, it has been determined that the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District Board of Directors will continue to be comprised of seven Directors elected in District-wide election to at-large positions serving four-year terms of office. The formation of the Board of Directors is pursuant to the provisions of the California Health and Safety Code section 13842 and Government Code section 56886(n).

Impacts of Reorganization on Current Employees and Volunteers

Gold Ridge is a combination Fire District consisting of 33 full-time fire suppression staff, 3 Battalion Chiefs, 2 Division Chiefs, a Fire Chief, 3 administrators and approximately 170 volunteers. The full-time fire suppression staff at Gold Ridge are represented by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 1401, Gold Ridge Paid Firefighters Association. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defines the salaries and benefits of these positions and is collaboratively negotiated on an annual basis. No change in staffing is anticipated.

The Sebastopol Station will be staffed 24/7 with a minimum of a 3-person engine company consisting of a captain, engineer, and firefighter. In addition to the minimum 3-person engine company the budget supports daily participation from volunteers often achieving a 4-person engine company. Current Sebastopol Fire suppression employees will become employees of the District upon the effective date of the reorganization. Current Sebastopol Fire suppression employees shall be blended into one District-wide workforce retaining their current rank and will be assigned a shift and station assignment based on operational need by the Fire Chief or his designee. The seniority for such employees shall be based on the date they were hired to be full time Sebastopol Fire suppression employees, consistent with Section 7.1 of the MOU.

To recognize the community and the City, the rebranding of the station and fire apparatus will include the Sebastopol name along with the Gold Ridge Fire District. This is consistent with our previous reorganizations. To recognize the many years of dedicated service the Sebastopol Volunteers are authorized to wear a pin on their right chest to commemorate their commitment to the community.

Liabilities

As directed by the Gold Ridge FPD and City Joint Resolution effective October 1, 2024, all fire and EMS services liabilities of the Parties shall be transferred to and become liabilities of the reorganized District.

**REVENUE SHARING AND PROPERTY TRANSFER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT,
AND THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL FOR THE ANNEXATION
OF THE CITY FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES INTO THE DISTRICT**

This Revenue Sharing and Property Transfer Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into and effective January 21, 2025, between the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District ("GRFPD" or "District"), which is an independent fire district organized and operated pursuant to the Fire Protection District Law of 1987 (California Health and Safety Code section 13800 et seq.), and the City of Sebastopol (the "City") (collectively referred to herein as "the Parties"), with respect to the following Recitals, which are incorporated as a substantive part of this Agreement.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of GRFPD and the City Council, all located in Sonoma County, California (collectively referred to as "the Parties"), desire to initiate proceedings pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Heitzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code section 56000 et seq.), with the Local Agency Formation Commission of the County of Sonoma ("Sonoma LAFCO") for the reorganization of the Parties as specified herein; and

WHEREAS, the Districts approved and adopted Joint Resolution No. 24/25-05, effective October 1, 2024, jointly requesting Sonoma LAFCO to approve the proposed reorganization and annexation of the City fire and emergency services for the Subject Territory, as shown in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein, and

WHEREAS, the Subject Territory is consistent with the amended spheres of influence of the Parties to be adopted by Sonoma LAFCO Resolution 2789 on November 6, 2024; and

WHEREAS, GRFPD will submit its "Application for Reorganization consisting of the Annexation of the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency Services into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to Sonoma LAFCO in or about February 2025, and

WHEREAS, the Parties are desirous of facilitating successful fire protection services in the Subject Territory, should the reorganization and annexation be approved, by entering into this Agreement relating to the revenue sharing and property transfer in the Subject Territory now allocated for fire protection by the Parties, and

WHEREAS, this Agreement is intended to specifically implement the proposed annexation and reorganization for the Subject Territory only.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

AGREEMENT

1. Effect of Recitals. The foregoing Recitals are incorporated into and are a part of this Agreement.
2. Definitions. For purposes of this Agreement, except as otherwise provided or unless the context otherwise requires:
 - (a) "Reorganization" means the annexation of fire and emergency services within the territory of the City into the reorganized GRFPD.
 - (b) "ACTTC" means the Sonoma County Auditor-Controller Treasurer-Tax Collector.
 - (d) "Effective Date" means the date of recordation of the LAFCO Executive Officer's Certificate of Completion for the Reorganization.
 - (e) "Unincorporated Area" means the area of the GRFPD located outside the boundaries of the City of Sebastopol.
3. Extension of District-wide special taxes in City territory. GRFPD currently levies a 1997 tax established by District Ordinance 96-97-1, a 2008 tax established by District Ordinance 08-09-1-R, and a 2018 tax established by District Ordinance 2019/20-1 (collectively, the "Special Taxes"). Beginning in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and each Fiscal Year thereafter, GRFPD shall request the ACTTC levy the Special Taxes on all parcels of real property within the City.
4. Annual Revenue Sharing Payment. In exchange for GRFPD providing the fire and emergency services within the City of Sebastopol in the manner and subject to the conditions specified in the Application for Reorganization submitted by GRFPD to Sonoma LAFCO, the City shall make an annual payment to the GRFPD on or before September 15th of each year, starting in September 2025, in an amount equal to \$1,110,000.00, as annually adjusted, which payment shall continue in perpetuity subject to the provisions of this Agreement ("Revenue Sharing Payment"). This initial dollar figure is a baseline amount that shall be annually adjusted based on the percentage change in the annual Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward Area ("CPI"), issued in January of each year, over the prior year. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no event shall the annual adjustment be less than two percent (2%) or greater than five percent (5%). In the event that reorganization is effective after July 1, 2025, the Revenue Sharing Payment for Fiscal Year 25-26 shall be prorated based on the number of days remaining in the year.
5. Local Debt Limit. Should a court determine that the payments under Sections 3 or 4 constitute City-issued debt made in violation of California Constitution Article XVI, section 18, then the Parties agree that such payments are made in satisfaction of their obligations under Revenue and Taxation Code Section 99. The payments will remain as annual lump sum payments made separately from the ACTTC's AB 8 allocation process. The Parties agree that the

reorganization shall not result in any change or adjustment to the ad valorem property tax received by either the City or GRFPD pursuant to the ACTTC's AB 8 allocation process.

6. Transfer of existing City Fire Station real property and facility improvements located at 7425 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA. As part of the annexation and LAFCO approved reorganization, City agrees to transfer to the District full title, ownership, and responsibility for the existing City Fire Station real property and facility improvements located at 7425 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA (collectively the “Fire Station”) upon the effective date of the reorganization. The Fire Station shall be transferred to GRFPD in an “as is” condition. GRFPD shall use the Fire Station solely for fire-related purposes and other ancillary uses. In the event the Fire Station is no longer used by the District as a fire station from which a fire engine is dispatched to respond to emergency calls, ownership of the Fire Station shall revert back to the City. However, this reversion clause will not be triggered if the District sells or otherwise transfers the Fire Station in order to help fund replacement of the Fire Station with another fire station facility located within the City limits, provided that the new fire station facility is subject to the same reversion restriction. On or before June 30, 2025, the parties shall prepare and record a separate Grant Deed transferring the fire station to the District, which includes this reversion clause, in substantially the form shown in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein. Upon transfer of the First Station to the District, the District shall be responsible for all repair and maintenance thereof, and the City will have no further duties, obligations, or liabilities related to the Fire Station.

7. Payment for remaining Type 1 Engine debt payments. The Parties agree that not later than July 1, 2025, the City and District shall each pay one of the two remaining apparatus payments of approximately \$240,000.00 each to Community Leasing Partners, so that this Type I Engine transfers with clean title to the District upon the effective date of reorganization. After that date, District shall be solely responsible for all repair and maintenance of all vehicles/apparatus transferred from City to GRFPD, and the City will have no further duties, obligations, or liabilities related to such vehicles after the effective date of reorganization.

8. City Measure H sales tax revenue. As required under Sonoma County Code section 12-66(E), the City allocated Measure H sales tax revenue collected after the date of reorganization shall transfer to District beginning upon the effective date of the reorganization. The Parties agree that Measure H sales tax revenue collected in the fourth quarter of FY 24-25, and anticipated to be distributed to the City in September 2025, shall be the property of the City. The City shall transfer any remaining fund balance of unspent City Measure H sales tax revenue for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 to the District on October 1, 2025.

9. City Fire Impact Fees. The City shall transfer to District any fire impact fee fund balance effective July 1, 2025. The City shall continue to collect the fire impact fees on behalf of the District, and timely transfer such funds to the District upon receipt, until a District-wide fire impact fee is approved. The District shall use such funds in accordance with all applicable legal restrictions. The District shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City, its officers, officials, employees and agents against any and all claims relating to the fire impact fees, including but not limited to claims of misuse or misappropriation by the District.

10. Accounting. The designated representatives of City and GRFPD shall have the right to audit any records and supporting documentation pertaining to the performance of this Agreement. City and GRFPD shall maintain such records for a minimum of four (4) years from the Effective Date and to allow access to such records during normal business hours.

11. Termination.

(a) GRFPD Reorganization. This Agreement is contingent upon the final Reorganization. Should the Reorganization as contemplated above not occur, the parties agree that this Agreement shall be null and void and no transfers of revenues will occur without a new agreement to do so.

(b) Termination Due to Invalidity. Should any material portion of this Agreement be declared invalid or inoperative by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect, unless enforcement of this Agreement, as so invalidated, would be unreasonable or inequitable under all the circumstances or would frustrate the purposes of this Agreement and/or the rights and obligations of the Parties hereto.

(c) Termination Due to Change in Law. Subject to Section 5(d) and (e), should substantial changes occur in the statutory scheme or successor statutory schemes (whether by legislative or judicial action) governing this Agreement, including but not limited to the Government Code and Revenue and Taxation Code, which negate or frustrate the fundamental tenets of this Agreement, the parties may discuss a termination or amendment of this Agreement.

12. Remedies for Breach of Agreement. In the event of a breach of this Agreement, the non-breaching Party shall send written notice of the breach to the breaching Party. If the breaching Party fails to cure such default within thirty (30) days, or such other longer period of time as specified in the notice, the parties may exercise any remedy available to them at law or in equity for a material breach by the other party, including specific performance, injunctive relief, and writ of mandate.

13. Modification/Amendment. This Agreement may be modified or amended only by a writing duly authorized and executed by the parties to this Agreement.

14. Enforcement. The District and City each acknowledge that this Agreement cannot bind or limit themselves or each other or their future governing bodies in the exercise of their discretionary legislative power except as the Agreement provides. However, each binds itself that it will insofar as is legally possible, fully carry out the intent and purposes hereof, if necessary, by administrative and ministerial action independent of that legislative power and that this Agreement may be enforced by injunction or mandate or other writ to the full extent allowed by law.

15. Indemnification. Except as otherwise specifically provided for in this Agreement, each Party shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the other Party from and against any claims,

losses, damages, liabilities, and expenses (including reasonable attorneys fee) based on or assert upon any act or omission of the indemnifying Party, except to the extent caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the indemnified Party.

16. Integration. With respect to the subject matter hereof, this Agreement is intended to be an integrated agreement and supersedes any and all previous negotiations, proposals, commitments, writings and understandings of any nature whatsoever between the Districts and the City as to the subject matter of this Agreement.

17. Notice. All notices, requests, determinations or other correspondence required or allowed by law or this Agreement to be provided by the parties shall be in writing and shall be deemed given and received when delivered to the recipient by first-class mail (or an equal or better form of delivery including electronic mail) at the following addresses, or such other address as either Party may identify in writing:

GRFPD

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
4500 Hessel Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472

CITY

City of Sebastopol
City Manager's Office
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

By giving notice, either party may change its address for these purposes.

18. Third Parties. This Agreement shall not be construed as or deemed an agreement for the benefit of any third party or parties. No other person shall have any right of action based upon any provision of this Agreement.

19. Attorney's Fees and Costs. In any action to enforce the provisions of this Agreement or for breach of the Agreement, the prevailing party shall recover from the other party, in addition to any damages, injunctive or other relief, all costs reasonably incurred at, before and after trial or on appeal, including without limitation attorneys' and witness (expert and otherwise) fees, deposition costs, copying charges and other expenses.

20. Approval. The parties represent that this Agreement was approved by their respective governing boards at a properly noticed meeting.

21. Choice of Law and Venue. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of California. Venue for actions and proceedings between the parties related to this Agreement shall be in the Northern District of California for any federal action and, unless otherwise agreed by the parties, in Sonoma County Superior Court for state actions.

22. Agreement Mutually Drafted. Each party has participated jointly in the drafting of this Agreement, which each party acknowledges is the result of negotiations between the parties, and the language used in this Agreement shall be deemed to be the language chosen by the parties to express their mutual intent. If an ambiguity or question of intent or interpretation arises, then this Agreement will accordingly be construed as drafted jointly by the parties, and no presumption or burden of proof will arise favoring or disfavoring any party to this Agreement by virtue of the authorship of any of the provisions of this Agreement. The captions, headings and table of contents contained in this Agreement are for reference purposes only and shall not affect in any way the meaning or interpretation of this Agreement.

23. Joint Defense. In the event of a third party challenge of any type to this Agreement, the parties agree to meet and confer regarding jointly defending the validity and implementation of the Agreement.

24. Waiver. A waiver by any Party of any breach of any term, covenant, or condition herein contained or a waiver of any right or remedy of such Party available hereunder at law or in equity shall not be deemed to be a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same or any other term, covenant, or condition herein contained or of any continued or subsequent right to the same right or remedy. No Party shall be deemed to have made any such waiver unless it is in writing and signed by the Party so waiving.

25. No Joint Venture. Neither this Agreement, nor payment, shall constitute or create any form of association, joint venture, partnership, or cooperative activity, of any nature whatever, for any purpose between the City and the GRFPD. The City and GRFPD shall remain at all times independent parties.

26. Successors and Assigns. All representations, covenants and warranties specifically set forth in this Agreement, by or on behalf of or for the benefit of any or all of the Parties hereto, shall be binding upon an inure to the benefit of such Party, its successors, and assigns.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have entered into this Agreement in Sonoma County, California.

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT:

President, Board of Directors, GRFPD Date

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Board, GRFPD Date

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL:

City Manager Date

ATTEST:

Clerk of the City Council Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

General Counsel for the District Date

City Attorney Date

Exhibit A

(Map of the Subject Territory to be added upon the Effective Date)

Exhibit B

Deed for Transfer of Fire Station

**RECORDING REQUESTED BY
AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:**

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
1690 Watertrough Rd.
Sebastopol, CA 95427
Attention: General Manager

With a copy to:

City of Sebastopol
7120 Bodega Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Exempt from recording fees per
Government Code §§6103, 27383

APN: _____

(SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE RESERVED FOR RECORDER'S USE)

Exempt from Documentary Transfer Tax Per Rev. & Tax. Code §11922, Governmental Agency acquiring title.

GRANT DEED

THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL, a California municipal corporation (the "**City**") hereby grants to GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (the "**District**"), certain real property (the "**Property**") known as County Assessor's Parcel Number _____ (the "**Property**"), as more particularly described in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference, subject to the following terms:

1. Effective July 1, 2025, the Property is conveyed in fee simple absolute subject to the continued use of the Property as an active fire station (the "**Fire Station**"). The Property is also conveyed subject to any easements and permitted exceptions of record.
2. The District hereby covenants and agrees that it will continue to actively use the Fire Station for the purpose of fire protection for the City and the area surrounding the City, which shall include, but not be limited to, using the Fire Station as the base for a fire engine that is dispatched to respond to emergency calls.

3. Right of Reverter.

- (a) City reserves the right to enter or reenter, as the case may be, and take possession of, the Property and all improvements thereon and to vest or re-vest, as the case may be, in City the estate of District therein upon the failure by District to continue to use the Fire Station for active fire protection services in the City and surrounding area.

(1) Sale of the Fire Station by the District shall not be considered a failure by the District to continue to use the Fire Station for active fire protection services if: i) the proceeds from the sale of the Fire Station are used to acquire or build a new fire station providing fire protection services elsewhere within the City of Sebastopol, and ii) a right of reverter for the benefit of the City in substantially the same form as this Deed is recorded on title for the property on which such new fire station is built or acquired.

(b) District shall, upon request of City, provide City with a recordable Quitclaim Deed, identical or substantially similar to that attached hereto as Exhibit B executed by District in favor of City, which quitclaim deed shall transfer District's entire right, title and interest in the Property to City for City's use for any lawful purpose.

(c) The term of the right of reverter shall commence upon the date of this Grant Deed and shall continue in perpetuity.

(d) City's right of reverter shall be subordinate and subject to and be limited by and shall not defeat, render invalid or limit:

(1) Any mortgage, deed of trust or other security instrument executed by District with respect to the purchase of the Property; or

(2) Any rights or interests for the protection of the holder of such mortgages, deeds of trust or other security instruments.

(e) Upon any resale by the City of the Property and any improvements constructed thereon, the proceeds of such sale shall be applied as follows:

(1) Reimburse the City for any costs it incurs in managing or selling the Property including but not limited to amounts to discharge or prevent liens, encumbrances or obligations arising from any acts or omissions of District;

(2) Any balance to the City.

(f) Notwithstanding anything in this Section 3(a) to the contrary, the District may sell the Property without the City being

4. No violation or breach of the covenants, conditions, restrictions, provisions or limitations contained in this Grant Deed shall defeat or render invalid or in any way impair the lien or charge of any mortgage, deed of trust or other financing or security instrument, provided however, that any successor of District to the Property shall be bound by such remaining covenants, conditions, restrictions, limitations and provisions, whether such successor's title was acquired by foreclosure, deed in lieu of foreclosure, trustee's sale or otherwise.

5. The covenants contained in this Grant Deed shall be binding for the benefit of the City and its successors and assigns, and such covenants shall run in favor of the City for the entire period during which such covenants shall be in force and effect, without regard to whether the City is or remains an owner of any land or interest therein to which such covenants relate. The City, in the event of any breach of any such covenants, shall have the right to exercise all of the rights and remedies and to maintain any actions at law or suits in equity or other proper proceedings to enforce the curing of such breach. The covenants contained in this Grant Deed shall be for the benefit of and shall be enforceable only by the City and its successors and assigns. The prevailing party in any action or proceeding to enforce the provisions of this Grant Deed shall recover their reasonable attorneys' and experts' fees and costs, in addition to all other recoverable costs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and District have caused this instrument to be executed on their behalf by their respective officers on this ____ day of _____, 2025.

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL,
a California municipal corporation

City Manager

The provisions of this Grant Deed are hereby approved and accepted.

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

By:

General Manager

EXHIBIT A
LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

EXHIBIT B

FORM OF QUITCLAIM DEED

**RECORDING REQUESTED BY
AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:**

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
1690 Watertrough Rd.
Sebastopol, CA 95427
Attention: General Manager

With a copy to:

City of Sebastopol
7120 Bodega Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Exempt from Recording Fees
Government Code §§ 6103, 27383

APN: _____ (SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE RESERVED FOR RECORDER'S USE)

Exempt from Documentary Transfer Tax Per Rev. & Tax. Code §11922, Governmental Agency acquiring title.

Gold Ridge Fire Protection District ("**Grantor**") hereby quitclaims, releases and conveys to the City of Sebastopol ("**District**") any and all right, title and interest in certain property located at _____ known as Assessor's Parcel Number _____, as more particularly described in Exhibit A attached to this Quitclaim Deed and incorporated herein by this reference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Grantor has executed this Quitclaim Deed as of the _____ of _____, 20____.

GRANTOR:

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE

By: _____
Its: _____

[Signatures Must Be Notarized]

CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that the interest in real property conveyed by the Grant Deed dated the _____ of _____, 20____ from The City of Sebastopol to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (“District”), is hereby accepted on behalf of the District by the undersigned officer or agent on behalf of the Board of Directors pursuant to authority conferred by resolution of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District Board of Directors adopted on the ____ of [Month, Year] and that Board of Directors consents to recordation of the Grant Deed by its duly authorized officer.

Dated _____, 20__

GOLD RIDGE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: _____



CITYGATE
FIRE & EMS

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF FIRE SERVICES

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL, CA

JANUARY 27, 2025



CITYGATE
FIRE & EMS

WWW.CITYGATEASSOCIATES.COM

600 COOLIDGE DRIVE, SUITE 150 FOLSOM, CA 95630
PHONE: (916) 458-5100
FAX: (916) 983-2090



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Sebastopol (City) retained Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) to conduct a Financial Analysis of Fire Services for the work conducted related to the potential annexation of the City by the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (District) and compare the option of annexation against the City operating its own fire services to meet long-term needs. This study updates the analysis work conducted by the City and others in 2023/2024, and provides a peer review of relevant issues performed by consultants with deep, practical experience related to fire services merger and consolidation analyses within California’s regulatory context.

This document represents a summary-level report of Citygate’s analysis, including costs and the feasibility of annexation for fire services based on information received by Citygate as of January 9, 2025—taking into account best practices and regulations that must be complied with to provide an appropriate and sustainable level of fire services in meeting the City’s needs.

POLICY CHOICES FRAMEWORK

There are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of staffing, response times, or outcomes related to fire services. If services are provided, local, state, and federal regulations must be followed for the safety of both the public and the personnel providing the services. Thus, the level of fire protection services provided is a *local policy decision*. Communities have the level of fire services they can afford and choose to purchase, which may not always be the level desired to protect community risks and provide positive emergency outcomes in a city or district.

ANNEXATION FOR FIRE SERVICES OVERVIEW

In California, fire services can be provided by cities, counties, or special districts. The form of shared fire services between entities can entail a contract with renewal clauses, the formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), or a reorganization of political and fiscal boundaries known as annexation. Significant reorganizations—and all annexations—must be submitted to a county’s Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO), which state law designates as the approving body rather than the individual partner agencies. The LAFCO application and approval process ensures that one or more parties to the annexation will *not* end up fiscally and/or operationally insolvent to continue their remaining general services.

This study, then, sets forth the services to be provided, as well as related costs and revenue impacts should the City choose annexation by the adjoining district. Annexations are typically perpetual, and include a transfer of permanent, sustainable revenues from a city to a fire district *at near their present value*. Thus, a city ceases to provide fire services, and the associated district cannot ask the city organization for added revenues in the future. If a district desired an increase in revenues and resultant services, it would have to ask all voters in the service area, including any cities.

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

There are multiple benefits to consider as they relate to an annexation for the provision of fire services—from economies of scale to increased redundancy of staff and technical services, while also avoiding employment and retention issues for some smaller agencies. The cost for a headquarters staff to train, equip, and supervise is expensive; a minimum team is needed even to deploy one fire unit per day. Conversely, within a combined services organization such as a special district, one small administrative team can manage at least three to five fire stations and crews.

STANDALONE FIRE SERVICE NEEDS OVERVIEW

Compliance regulations for fire services operations are ever increasing, so the proper hiring, training, and supervision of operational personnel requires a significant commitment of leadership and general management. The City, like other smaller communities throughout the country, has utilized various forms of volunteers for years. However, the increase in firefighter safety regulations related to the training and equipping of volunteers has collided with a two-income, commuter-based economy, reducing volunteer availability.

Firefighting is also very physically challenging. To find adults with both the spare time *and* the necessary physical ability to serve as firefighters is increasingly difficult for many agencies, and the City is no exception. Frequently, a smaller subset of an agency's volunteer force provides most of the needed staffing and responds to most emergency calls for service. This presents a significant challenge if the small number of very active volunteers cannot respond on a given day. The public being protected needs a reliable force, 24/7/365, to keep small emergencies from escalating into devastating outcomes.

SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS

1. The current structure of the City's fire services model is not sustainable to provide needed services in alignment with best practices in meeting the City's fire safety needs.
2. The cost to provide an adequate level of City-operated fire services would be at least \$4.4 million annually versus the approximately \$1.5 million currently spent from the City's General Fund on existing (inadequate) fire services.
3. The annexation option is the most fiscally prudent option available to the City. Under annexation, the City would receive fire services that would meet best practices for approximately \$300,000 less than what the City's General Fund currently pays for inadequate fire services (\$1.2 million versus \$1.5 million).
4. As proposed, annexation would improve the City's fiscal condition significantly over time. Based on the assumptions discussed in this report, the City's General Fund would improve by almost \$3.7 million by 2035.

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Two basic options under the LAFCO rules distinguish themselves in relation to how the City could pay \$1.2 million to acquire the appropriate fire services that would be gained under annexation:

1. Permanently transfer a portion of the property tax rate to the District.
2. Directly pay from the General Fund annually, with an inflator tied to an index such as CPI.

As a result of this study’s modeling, the City team has chosen Option 2. The City’s General Fund forecast assumes a property tax growth rate of 4 percent per year, whereas the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Bay Area averaged approximately 3.51 percent between fiscal years (FY) 2017 and 2023. This difference is not statistically significant when applied to a \$1.2 million base amount. This means the City can afford Option 2, the-direct-pay-with-CPI-inflator method, over a 20-year agreement.

CITYGATE’S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Finding #1:** The City’s current fire services are too reliant on a small volunteer staffing group. The volunteer program should be maintained while the City adds a small staff of career firefighters to provide service 24/7/365.
- Finding #2:** Fire services operating and safety standards require management, training, and 24/7 certified incident command. The City needs a fire service solution providing the requisite administrative and command team functions.
- Finding #3:** The City has significant upcoming apparatus and fire station enhancement costs. The present fire station cannot support 24/7 staff. These issues must be addressed, whether by annexation or City-based fire services.
- Finding #4:** A City-operated, sustainable, and standards-meeting fire department staffing plan would provide similar services to those provided through District annexation but would lack the District’s depth of resources given its quantity of employees. A City-operated department would also incur the ongoing cost impacts of city hall staff and other administrative needs.

The following table shows a comparison of current fire services staffing with the options under consideration by the City.

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Table 1—Fire Services Staffing Comparison

| Position | Current City Fire Services Staffing | District Annexation Option (Nov. 2024 Proposal) | Standalone City Option |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Fire Chief | .5 | 1 (Shared) | 1 |
| Division Chief 40-hr. | | 2 (Shared) | |
| Battalion Chiefs | 0 | 3 (24/7/365) | 2 (40 Hour) |
| Fire Captain 40-hr. Fire Prevention | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Administrative Assistant | .5 | 1 | 1 |
| Fire Captain | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Fire Engineer | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Firefighter | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Career Total | 3 | 17 (6 Shared Chiefs) | 13 |
| Volunteer | 30 | 178 +/- | 30 |

Finding #5: The City is facing fiscal constraints even with the passage of the Measure U sales tax measure. As a result, identifying areas that could be used to fund enhanced fire services at a level desired by the City will be difficult.

Finding #6: The City currently spends approximately \$1.55 million from the General Fund for its volunteer fire services—which do not meet the City’s current needs, and which will become increasingly ineffective as the City evolves. Although the City’s share of Measure H proceeds will help, Measure H proceeds alone will not fully address the City’s total fire services needs in the future.

The following table provides a comparison of a standalone fire department versus the latest District proposal. The key difference is the impact to the City’s General Fund. Even if the City were to impose the same supplemental taxes as the Fire District, the City’s General Fund still requires a greater contribution. With supplemental revenues being the same, the District’s expenses, due to economies of scale, are less than the City’s.

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Table 2—Fire Services Options Fiscal Summary – FY 25/26 (Year 1) – Standalone vs. District Annexation

| Fiscal Element | Standalone Fire Services Cost FY 25/26 | District Budget for City Fire Service Post Annexation |
|---|--|---|
| Revenues | | |
| Fire Direct Fees/Charges for Services | \$40,000 | \$40,000 |
| Measure H | \$1,080,000 | \$1,080,000 |
| City Parcel Tax | \$1,111,058 | \$1,111,058 |
| City Net General Fund Contribution | \$2,188,267 | \$1,205,191 |
| Total Revenues | \$4,419,325 | \$3,436,249 |
| Expenditures | | |
| Total Salaries/Benefits | \$3,047,422 | \$2,435,989 |
| Total Other Operating Costs | \$476,050 | \$450,260 |
| Total Capital Outlay | \$59,210 | - |
| Total Debt Service | \$686,643 | \$550,000 |
| Total Contribution to Reserves | \$150,000 | - |
| Total Expenditures | \$4,419,325 | \$3,436,249 |
| Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | \$0 | \$0 |

Finding #7: The option of annexation by the District provides the City with the minimum appropriate expanded fire services, meeting the City’s current and future needs, for a net General Fund impact of approximately \$983,000 less than a City-operated fire department.

Finding #8: Based on Citygate’s projection to FY 29/30, the City would be paying nearly twice as much with an independent, standalone fire department when compared to the cost of the annexation option assuming a 2.5 percent growth rate for the annexation option.

Annexation Payment Option – Property Tax Rate Transfer

Under this option, the City and the District would enter into an agreement that would require the County to reduce the property tax rate used to calculate the City’s allocation of property tax revenues by an agreed-upon amount and increase the rate used by the County to calculate the District’s allocation of property tax revenues. Any increase in property tax revenues associated with the transferred portion of the rate would accrue to the District and not the City. Determination of the actual rate that would generate the first-year contribution amount of \$1,205,191 would have to be developed with assistance from the County; however, based on the City’s FY 24/25 budget

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

estimate of property tax revenues of \$3,600,000, a rate transfer of approximately one third of the City's current rate would be necessary to generate \$1,205,191. This rate transfer would be effective in perpetuity and the District would have the responsibility of providing appropriate levels of fire services into the future with no additional contribution from the City.

Annexation Payment Option – Direct General Fund Annual Contribution

Under this option, the City would enter into an agreement with the District to make an annual payment to the District for fire services received. Typically, this type of agreement would include some inflator rate tied to an index, such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Finding #9: As Table 18 in Section 3.5.6 displays, all the General Fund direct pay options result in the City paying less to the District, depending on the growth assumption.

Recommendation #1: Finalize negotiations with the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to identify the City's fiscal contribution and payment method to move forward with the annexation into the District. Doing so will provide enhanced fire services consistent with industry best practices and improve the City's overall financial condition going forward.

Recommendation #2: The City should use the General Fund direct pay option for annexation and, in the agreement, settle on both a minimum and maximum CPI inflator percentage and specific index to ensure evolving costs over 20 years are balanced between the agencies.

In conclusion, the City's net General Fund contribution could be approximately \$1,205,191 in the first year, subject to final decisions by the two agencies. Based on our analysis for improved fire service operations and the viable economics for an annexation to the District, Citygate's opinion is that the best choice for appropriate and sustainable fire services is for the City to annex into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District.

NEXT STEPS

- ◆ Approve the method of the City's transfer of permanent and stable revenues to the District reflecting the City's near-term fire service costs.
- ◆ If annexation and ensuing costs result in an annexation application, the City should proceed with the immediate addition of the planned Fire Captain positions and discuss with its career employees the impacts of employment transfer to the District.

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

SECTION 1—BACKGROUND AND REVIEW METHODS

This section sets forth what has occurred prior to the commissioning of this report, as well as a summary description of the agencies and how this study was conducted.

1.1 AGENCIES BACKGROUND

The City of Sebastopol was incorporated in 1902 and began volunteer fire services in 1904. Fire prevention services were added in 1952. Some local families have served the City and Department for multiple generations. The Department provides services from one fire station which is unable to house a 24/7 crew. Current staffing includes a contract Fire Chief from Gold Ridge, two career (40-hour workweek) Fire Engineers, a half-time Administrative Assistant, and 28 stipend volunteers. The contracted Fire Chief provides supervision as there are no first-line supervisors beyond five volunteer Fire Captains. The Department strives to provide emergency response, fire inspections, fire prevention, fire investigation, and community support services.

Over the last several years, most of Sonoma County has reorganized and voted for additional funding to stabilize and, where possible, strengthen fire services. Not immune to these challenges, the City commissioned a study of fire service options in 2022, with a Final Report issued in January of 2023. That study concluded with a recommendation to annex fire services to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District and, while that transition was underway, make modest improvements to the City's fire services. After that study, the City Council and community discussed the options.

In April 2024, the City Council received a comprehensive report from its Fire Ad Hoc Committee and City staff. The report made eight recommendations—all centered around annexing fire services to the District and making small, short-term improvements to staffing the City's Department, including sharing a Fire Chief with Gold Ridge. Another direction was for the City Manager to retain consultant assistance to develop final, long-term agreements with the District for City Council consideration.

After further work by both agencies, on October 1, 2024, the City Council passed Resolution No. 24/25-05 concluding with: "Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that (1) the Sebastopol City Council and the Board of Directors of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District are satisfied with the proposed terms and conditions of the annexation of the City to the District and (2) the District Fire Chief is authorized to transmit this resolution to Sonoma LAFCO." Four action items were included to begin the process of annexation. Citygate Associates, LLC was retained by the City on October 7, 2024.

On November 21, 2024, the City received a letter signed by 25 of its volunteer firefighters "...to encourage the City Council to move forward with a reorganization with Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, and to provide them the flexibility and resources necessary to allow for proper and appropriate level of service."

City of SebastopolFinancial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

The Gold Ridge Fire Protection District was formed in 1993 with the merger of the Hessel and Twin Hills fire districts. This created an independent fire district governed by an elected, seven-member board. The initial District covers approximately 75 square miles to the south and west of the City. At present, District staffing consists of 20 full-time Firefighters, three Battalion Chiefs, two Division Chiefs, a Fire Chief, three administrative staff, and approximately 150 to 180 volunteers.

In July of 2023, the District completed the consolidation of the Volunteer Fire Companies County Service Area (CSA) 40 into the District. This was the conclusion of an extended shared service agreement between the County of Sonoma, North Bay Fire, and the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. The District is now comprised of three career-staffed fire stations and seven volunteer-staffed stations located in the communities of Fort Ross, Camp Meeker, Freestone, Twin Hills, Bodega, Valley Ford, Hessel, Two Rock, Wilmar, and Lakeville. The District offers all-risk fire protection and emergency medical response spanning 226 square miles of rural Sonoma County and serving a population of roughly 25,000 residents, as well as providing mutual aid to all surrounding fire agencies.

1.2 CITYGATE REVIEW METHODS

Citygate's public safety and general government principals conducted this review consistent with our experience in fire services and local government finance administration. Citygate is deeply experienced with all aspects of contracting for fire services—for cities, counties, districts, and joint powers authorities, as well as the contracting of fire services and costing methods of several of the largest fire departments in the state, including fire districts.

Citygate requested and received a large variety of City and District documentation related to budgets and operations, as well as City Council agenda documents. We reviewed the District's initial and revised annexation proposal. Citygate staff interviewed all City and District Staff and attended sessions with the City's Fire Ad Hoc Committee.

Citygate, through prior public safety consulting projects over nearly 20 years, is very familiar with Sonoma and adjoining Marin County Fire services. Our most recent annexation work was for the successful annexation of the City of Mill Valley into the Southern Marin Fire Protection District.

SECTION 2—ANNEXATION AND CITY-BASED FIRE SERVICES

This section summarizes how a fire services annexation is structured, the District’s proposed service levels, and the timeline for annexation. The section then describes City-based standalone fire services and compares the services to those that would be provided via annexation.

2.1 HOW AN ANNEXATION IS STRUCTURED

As the City is the agency being annexed, the District is thus expanding its boundaries. Given this boundary expansion, the District is the agency to submit a detailed proposal to Sonoma LAFCO, which will detail the operational and fiscal understanding the City and District have constructed.

The LAFCO application must address the following **11 elements** impacting both agencies:

1. History of Consolidating Agencies
2. Plan for Service
3. LAFCO Fire and EMS Agency Sphere of Influence Amendment Criteria
4. Schedule for Providing Services
5. District Financial Position and City Fiscal Contributions/Impacts
6. Five-Year Fiscal Projection
7. Capital Improvement Expenses
8. Appropriations Limits
9. Identification of Existing Fire Service Providers Affected by the Reorganization
10. Governance
11. Impacts of Reorganization on Current Employees and Volunteers

Given the City and consultant work on the record over the last two years, the next sections of this report will detail the City’s fire services operational and cost impacts for 2025 and beyond, as they will require final City Council approval to submit to LAFCO. The City’s ongoing fire services needs will be contrasted with the post-annexation services that would be provided by the District for comparison. This is an important distinction: what *should* the City’s comparable fire services entail apart from annexation to the District? Stated this way, at present, the City does not staff or expense a fully regulatory-compliant fire department given (1) the current sharing of chief officer staffing with the District and (2) having only two career Fire Engineers on City staff, plus a small number of volunteers.

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

2.2 DISTRICT ANNEXATION RESPONSE AND HEADQUARTERS SERVICES

Services and costs under District annexation break down into two core components, each detailed in this section. A third component—the City’s fire station—will be addressed in the following section focusing on City fire services.

2.2.1 Response Services

Under annexation, the City’s fire station will be staffed 24/7 with a daily minimum of a three-person, career-staffed engine company consisting of a Fire Captain, a Fire Engineer (driver/operator), and a Firefighter/EMT. The proposed staffing model will include participation from the 177 total City and District volunteers to fill a fourth daily position. Volunteer personnel will fill the fourth position on the engine under a daily stipend. This staffing represents a critical upgrade in comparison to the City’s current model, which is a minimum of just one or two 40-hour personnel during daytime hours, and volunteers from home or work after the staffed hours.

The ongoing inclusion of volunteers remains an important means to ensure appropriate response depth when multiple personnel are required at serious fires, traffic accidents, storm/flood events, and multiple simultaneous calls for service within the City’s response area.

The annexation option provides a much larger volunteer force to ensure all stipend shifts are 100 percent filled. Additionally, the unified District operation will act as a recruitment and retention tool, providing more choices and opportunities for both career staff and volunteer recruitment. A combined workforce will strengthen specialized responses to water rescue, large animal rescue, and technical rescue. In addition to the single-person engine crew in the City, the District will provide 24-hour certified command Battalion Chief coverage.

In brief, the expanded staffing afforded by annexation provides the following.

- ◆ First, an immediate four-firefighter response that meets California and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety requirements of two-in/two-out. Under this 1998 rule, firefighters can only enter a burning building where respiratory protection is required in teams of two, with two outside being capable of immediately rescuing them should the need arise. Thus, with four personnel, there can be one two-firefighter attack team inside a building while two other personnel—a pump operator and an Incident Command / Chief Officer—remain outside and capable of rescue should the inside firefighters encounter trouble.
- ◆ Second, with around-the-clock, dedicated staffing, response time is significantly reduced. The January 3, 2023, Fire Department Feasibility Study Final Report

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

identified a crew “turnout” time of 6:09 minutes to 90 percent of medical calls for service. Turnout time is the measure of a crew being alerted, donning the required protective clothing, and getting an apparatus moving toward the incident. In suburban communities, staffing in a station provides for a turnout time that is no longer than 2:00 minutes. Thus, 24/7/365 staffing provides a response that is 4:00 minutes faster, which brings the City-based unit’s 9-1-1 call-to-arrival response times into alignment with best practices for delivering positive outcomes in a suburban area.

- ◆ Third, the District’s Battalion Chief response for incident command frees up the fire unit’s Captain for immediate use and crew supervision on firefighting and EMS incidents.

2.2.2 Administration and Fire Prevention

The District’s management team consists of the Fire Chief, two Division Chiefs, and three Battalion Chiefs. Daily operation of the District is managed by the Battalion Chiefs, who work a schedule providing 24/7 coverage. The Fire Chief and the two Division Chiefs work a 40-hour workweek and remain on call on a rotating schedule as the supplemental Duty Chief to provide redundancy to the one Battalion Chief on duty for very serious and/or simultaneous incidents. The Division Chiefs have additional expertise in training and fire prevention program management, which helps to staff these (regulatory required) important programs.

The District administrative team consists of an Executive Assistant / Finance Officer, a part-time Administrative Assistant / Bookkeeper, and a part-time Volunteer Firefighter Program Coordinator. This team handles all business needs of the District, including but not limited to budgeting and finance, accounts payable and receivable, human resources, Board of Directors meetings, and regional agency coordination.

2.2.3 Annexation Process Timeline

Based on City and District staff consultations with the Sonoma County LAFCO Director, with an application submittal date in April 2025, LAFCO could move through the Sphere of Influence development, application review, consideration, and approval process—including any protest proceedings—to complete approval of this application by the time of the regular LAFCO meeting on June 1, 2025. Based on this coordination and timeline, the consolidation of the City of Sebastopol Fire and Emergency services into the reorganized Gold Ridge Fire Protection District would be completed no later than June 30, 2025, for a “go-live” date no later than July 1, 2025.

City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

2.3 STANDALONE LONG-TERM CITY FIRE SERVICE NEEDS

Should the City not pursue annexation, the question becomes: *What fire services can the City provide to meet even minimum capabilities within regulatory safety and operating standards?* This study breaks down these issues into three essential components detailed in this section.

2.3.1 Response Services

The City's fire crew response plan prior to Measure H and in the second half of 2024 consisted of two career Fire Engineers (driver/operators) on a 40-hour, overlapping workweek schedule as well as volunteer personnel in-station or responding from home or a place of business. The Department strived for at least two personnel in the station during the 40-hour workweek, supplemented by volunteers as available. At times, there was only a two-person response. Many times, but not always, there were at least a few volunteers available to respond quickly. This plan worked for decades, but as incident demand increases—with EMS and other incident responses becoming more technically complex within modern buildings—adequate staffing per incident becomes essential to deliver best practices outcomes.

The ever-increasing need for emergency services in the community adds to the limitations of the current staffing model. In 2024, the Department was projected to respond to approximately 1,500 incidents, **a substantial increase of 66.67 percent over the past twenty years**. For perspective, in 2003, the Department responded to approximately 900 incidents. Per the 2023 fire service study, the hours between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm are the busiest for emergency requests in the City.

For 24/7/365 certified incident command, if the interim Fire Chief is not in the community, then mutual aid command units must be waited for. While that response occurs, one of the two or three persons in the active fire company must act as incident command / safety and cannot be deployed for firefighting or patient care.

2.3.2 Critical Firefighting and EMS Incident Tasks

The staffing required at an emergency incident can be broken into discrete tasks per firefighter, most of which must be completed in parallel to deliver the desired outcome.

The following tables illustrate critical tasks typical of building fire and medical emergency incidents, including the minimum number of personnel required to complete each task. These tables are composites from Citygate clients in suburban departments with units staffed with three personnel per engine or ladder truck.

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It is important to understand the following relative to critical task performance:

- ◆ It can take a considerable amount of time after a task is ordered by command to complete the task and achieve the desired outcome.
- ◆ Task completion time is usually a function of the number of personnel that are *simultaneously* available. The fewer firefighters available, the more linear and longer tasks will take to complete. Conversely, with more firefighters available, many tasks are completed concurrently.
- ◆ Some tasks must be conducted by a minimum of two firefighters to comply with safety regulations. For example, two firefighters are required to search a smoke-filled room for a victim.

The following table illustrates the critical tasks required to control a typical single-family dwelling fire with eight response units, including three engines, one ladder truck and one chief officer, for a total Effective Response Force (ERF) of 13 personnel. These tasks are taken from typical fire departments' operational procedures, which are consistent with firefighting and safety standards. No conditions exist to override OSHA's two-in/two-out safety policy, which requires that firefighters enter atmospheres, such as building fires, that are immediately dangerous to life and health in teams of two while two more firefighters are outside and immediately ready to rescue them should trouble arise.

Scenario: *Simulated approximately 2,000-square-foot, two-story, single-family residential fire with unknown rescue situation. Responding companies receive dispatch information typical for a witnessed fire. Upon arrival, they find approximately 50 percent of the second floor involved in fire.*

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Table 3—First Alarm Residential Fire Critical Tasks (13 Personnel)

| Critical Task Description | | Personnel Required |
|---|--|--------------------|
| First-Due Engine (3 Personnel) | | |
| 1 | Conditions report | 1 |
| 2 | Establish supply line to hydrant | 2 |
| 3 | Deploy initial fire attack line to point of building access | 1–2 |
| 4 | Operate pump and charge attack line | 1 |
| 5 | Establish incident command | 1 |
| 6 | Set up to conduct primary search for victims | 2 |
| Second-Due Engine (3 Personnel) | | |
| 1 | Enter the building for the primary search | 2 |
| 2 | If necessary, establish supply line to hydrant | 1 |
| 3 | Secure utilities | 1 |
| 4 | Deploy a backup attack line | 2 |
| 5 | Establish first attack line or provide initial Rapid Intervention Team | 2 |
| First-Due Ladder Truck (3 Personnel) | | |
| 1 | Conduct secondary search and rescue, if not already completed | 2 |
| 2 | Deploy ladders to roof | 2–3 |
| 3 | Establish horizontal or vertical building ventilation | 1–2 |
| 4 | Open concealed spaces as required | 2–3 |
| First-Due Chief Officer | | |
| 1 | Transfer of incident command | 1 |
| 2 | Establish exterior command and incident safety | 1 |
| Third-Due Engine (3 Personnel) | | |
| 1 | Deploy the Rapid Intervention Team | 2 |
| 3 | Assist suppression effort as directed | 2–3 |

Grouped together, these duties form an ERF, or First Alarm Assignment. These distinct tasks must be performed to effectively achieve the desired outcome; arriving on-scene does not stop the emergency from escalating. While firefighters work to accomplish these tasks, the incident progression clock keeps running.

Studies have shown that a small fire can spread to engulf an entire room in fewer than 3:00 to 5:00 minutes after free burning (open flame) has started. Once the room is completely superheated and involved in fire (known as flashover), the fire will spread quickly both vertically and horizontally

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throughout the structure. For this reason, it is imperative that fire suppression and search/rescue operations commence before the flashover point occurs if the outcome goal is to keep the fire damage in or near the room of origin and to rescue persons unable to self-evacuate. In addition, flashover presents a life-threatening situation to both firefighters and any occupants of the building. Fire fatalities typically include persons under 5 and over 65 years of age and those unable to self-evacuate, and 32 percent of the population of the City falls within those age groups.

2.3.3 Critical Medical Emergency Tasks

For comparison, the following table summarizes the critical tasks required for a cardiac arrest patient.

Table 4—Cardiac Arrest Critical Tasks – 1 Engine and 1 Ambulance (5 Personnel)

| | Critical Task | Personnel Required | Critical Task Description |
|----|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Chest compressions | 1–2 | Compression of chest to circulate blood |
| 2 | Ventilate/oxygenate | 1–2 | Mouth-to-mouth, bag-valve-mask, apply O2 |
| 3 | Airway control | 1–2 | Manual techniques/intubation/cricothyroidotomy |
| 4 | Defibrillate | 1–2 | Electrical defibrillation of dysrhythmia |
| 5 | Establish I.V. | 1–2 | Peripheral or central intravenous access |
| 6 | Control hemorrhage | 1–2 | Direct pressure, pressure bandage, tourniquet |
| 7 | Splint fractures | 2–3 | Manual, board splint, HARE traction, spine |
| 8 | Interpret ECG | 2 | Identify type and treat dysrhythmia |
| 9 | Administer drugs | 2 | Administer appropriate pharmacological agents |
| 10 | Spinal immobilization | 2–5 | Prevent or limit paralysis to extremities |
| 11 | Extricate patient | 3–4 | Remove patient from vehicle, entrapment |
| 12 | Patient charting | 1–2 | Record vitals, treatments administered, etc. |
| 13 | Hospital communication | 1–2 | Receive treatment orders from physician |
| 14 | Treat en route to hospital | 2–3 | Continue to treat/monitor/transport patient |

2.3.4 Critical Task Analysis and Effective Response Force Size

The time required to complete the critical tasks necessary to stop the escalation of an emergency (as shown in Table 3 and Table 4) must be compared to outcomes. As stated, after approximately 3:00 to 5:00 minutes of free burning in an enclosed room, fire will escalate to the point of flashover. At this point, the entire room is engulfed in fire, the entire building becomes threatened, and human survival in or near the room of a fire’s origin becomes impossible. Additionally, in a critical medical emergency, brain death begins to occur within 4:00 to 6:00 minutes of the heart stopping. Thus, the ERF must arrive in time to prevent these emergency events from becoming worse.

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The Department's existing daily on-duty response staffing of two firefighters (with a hoped-for sizable volunteer response) is **insufficient** to deliver a response close to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard #1710 recommendation for a career-staffed department with a minimum ERF of 16–17 personnel¹ to a low- or medium-hazard building fire in a suburban setting. In areas served by a combination department of career and volunteer staffing, under NFPA Standard #1720 for career/volunteer departments, the City is challenged to field even the recommended 10 firefighters in 10:00 minutes from the time of the crew being alerted for areas with a modest 500–1,000 people per square mile. The City's population density is over 4,000 people per square mile. While the City has mutual aid available from the District and the City of Santa Rosa, those forces are farther away and, at a time of need, might be responding to another emergency incident in their own service area.

Mitigating an emergency event is a team effort once the units have arrived. This refers to the *weight* of response analogy; if enough personnel arrive too slowly, the emergency will escalate instead of improving. Conversely, if the arriving force arrives quickly but is too small, the emergency will escalate and yield less-desirable results.

The number of personnel and the arrival timeframe can be critical in a serious fire. Fires in older or multiple-story buildings could require the initial firefighters to rescue trapped or immobile occupants. If the ERF is too small, rescue and fire suppression tasks *cannot* be conducted simultaneously. Thus, achieving good performance requires *adequate staffing* (and training).

If fewer firefighters arrive, all tasks may not be completed. Most likely, the search team would be delayed, as would ventilation. The attack lines would only consist of two firefighters, which does not allow for rapid movement of the hose line above the first floor in a multiple-story building. Because rescue is conducted with at least two two-person teams, when rescue is essential, other tasks are not completed in a simultaneous, timely manner. Therefore, effective deployment is about the **speed** (*travel time*) and the **weight** (*number of firefighters*) of the response.

2.3.5 City Volunteer Force Review

As of October 2024, the City had 28 stipend volunteers on the roster able to respond to fire and EMS events. The demography of the volunteer force is:

- ◆ Average age: 38.8 years.
- ◆ Nine volunteers are over the age of 50.

¹ NFPA 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments (2020 Edition).

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- ◆ 10 volunteers are between 40 and 50 years old; in total, 67.8 percent of volunteer personnel are at/above age 50.
- ◆ Six volunteers are new and still on probationary training.
- ◆ There are four Captains and one Assistant Chief between the ages of 53 and 61.
- ◆ Only four volunteers are certified drivers/operators.
- ◆ Only 13 volunteers were with the Department prior to 2020.
- ◆ In FY 23/24, volunteers were deployed 1,427 times:
 - Eight volunteers, or 28.5 percent, handled more than 400 responses.
 - 16 volunteers, or 57 percent, handled more than 300 responses.
 - 37 percent of volunteers handled less than 200 responses.
- ◆ If volunteers were to staff one engine slot 365 days a year, with a force of 28, the burden per person would be 13 days—or just over once per month, per person. If one doubles the scheduling slots to cover or assume only half of the 28 volunteers have the time per month to work even one shift, the capacity becomes insufficient. Further, crew staffing time is *in addition to* mandatory training hours each month.
- ◆ The City’s 2023 fire service study calculated:
 - Three firefighters per 24-hour day would require 47 volunteers.
 - Three firefighters per 16-hour day would require 36 volunteers.
 - One 24-hour slot per day would require 30 volunteers.

The City does not have a large enough volunteer force to, on stipend, fill more than one slot in the fire station across a year. The District has staffing absences in filling three slots per day with *150 active volunteers*. Then there is the issue of physical fitness. Nine of the City’s volunteers (or 32 percent) are over age 50, which is the age/decade in which most career firefighters retire.

Actual firefighting is one of the most physically demanding activities, including high-level sports. Heart disease and cardio-pulmonary events kill volunteer and career firefighters every month in the United States.² It take tremendous commitment, decades of fitness training, and good genetics for older adults to combat fires without injury (or worse). At some point, volunteer firefighter families and a community should question why we are asking an aging society to do this work for

² <https://www.nfpa.org/about-nfpa/press-room/news-releases/2024/nfpa-report-fatal-firefighter-injuries-in-the-us-shows-89-on-duty-deaths-in-2023>

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free and why we assume volunteers have the time to give for training, planned staffing, and serious emergency responses.

Finding #1: The City’s current fire services are too reliant on a small volunteer staffing group. The volunteer program should be maintained while the City adds a small staff of career firefighters to provide service 24/7/365.

2.3.6 Administration and Fire Prevention Programs

Over the last two years, the City has staffed a Fire Chief three different ways—twice with retired chiefs under limited annual hours due to the state pension system rules, and via the contract with the District. There is one half-time Administrative Assistant (the position’s other “half” being shared with city hall duties) for office support, recordkeeping, and fire prevention work requests. All other support for personnel, finance transactions, workers’ compensation case management, and legal support comes from city hall.

Finding #2: Fire services operating and safety standards require management, training, and 24/7 certified incident command. The City needs a fire service solution providing the requisite administrative and command team functions.

2.3.7 Capital Facility and Apparatus

The City has one fire station that is 50 years old and was not built for overnight usage by daily crews. It essentially serves as a building for apparatus storage and support uses, and dates back to the era of the City being served solely by volunteers. There are significant, near-term changes that need to be made to the current building to safely and effectively accommodate around-the-clock staffing of three to four firefighters. At present, the City does not have the funds to rebuild the station to modern seismic, safety, and constant usage standards. The City has an experienced fire station architect working on options for full-time staffing. Measure H included an assumption that the City would need and receive \$5M for the fire station, based on estimates provided by the Interim Chief at the time.

Regarding fire apparatus, the Department operates three firefighting apparatus including a frontline and reserve pumper, an aerial ladder truck, and five other support vehicles. When apparatus need to be replaced, the City has not been able to save enough to fund replacement up front. Recently, the City chose to use the lease/purchase method to replace a frontline fire engine.

Delivery of the replacement structure fire engine is expected in 2026 when the engine has reached 15 years old, a best practices replacement point. Two lease payments are outstanding, each

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approximately \$238,000 or \$476,000 in total. The City also will obtain a new Type-3 wildland engine in October 2025 to replace one that is 28 years old. This new engine is paid for, but it will require an expense to outfit it with tools, equipment, and radios. The aerial ladder truck is 21 years old, exceeding frontline service criteria, and needs to be replaced. By replacement time it will be approaching 25 years old, the limit for reserve apparatus. Sebastopol has no dedicated funding source for this replacement, and the expected replacement cost is \$3.2 million.

Finding #3: The City has significant upcoming apparatus and fire station enhancement costs. The present fire station cannot support 24/7 staff. These issues must be addressed, whether by annexation or City-based fire services.

2.3.8 Minimum Necessary Standalone Fire Services

NFPA 1201³ states, in part, “the [Department] shall have a leader and organizational structure that facilitates efficient and effective management of its resources to carry out its mandate as required [in its mission statement].” Best practices call for a risk-based deployment plan of engines and personnel to meet the City’s day-to-day emergency needs. The Department’s management organization and headquarters programs must provide a properly trained, equipped, and supported response force to ensure prompt response and safe, competent service delivery. Compliance regulations for fire services operations are ever increasing, so the hiring, training, and supervision of operational personnel requires a significant commitment and proper management.

Taking into consideration all the factors to be protected in the City, a modest fiscal ability to fund fire services, and the current limited quantity of volunteers, Citygate recommends the following staffing plan:

- ◆ 1 Engine, staffed 24/7/365 with three career Firefighters and one stipend volunteer.
 - Requires nine career personnel—three Captains, three Engineers, and three Firefighters—for constant, three-platoon scheduled coverage.
- ◆ 1 ladder truck staffed by recalled volunteers.
- ◆ 1 Fire Chief, full-time, permanent, not interim.
- ◆ 1 Battalion Chief / Fire Marshal (full-time / 40-hour week).
- ◆ 1 Battalion Chief (full-time / 40-hour week) to oversee training, fleet, and logistics.

³ NFPA 1201 – Standard for Providing Emergency Services to the Public (2015 Edition).

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- ◆ One Administrative Assistant (full-time / 40-hour week) dedicated to the Department.
- ◆ 30 volunteer firefighters.
- ◆ 13 total career personnel.

For sick leave and vacation coverage of the fire crew staff, a combination of career staff on overtime and stipend volunteers can be utilized. For year-round incident command coverage, the three chief officers should rotate daily/hourly coverage, and will need to reside in or nearby the City for quick responses after hours.

The increase to 10 full-time Department personnel (over the present three) could well impact city hall support services in finance, personnel, workers’ compensation, and legal. At this time, City staff have not calculated how many part- or full-time personnel might have to be added. In Citygate’s experience, for a small city where the support staff is already overworked with limited or no backup when their earned leave is taken, at least a half-time position to serve both finance and personnel functions would be necessary.

In the next section of this report, the previously outlined staffing model will be expensed and compared to annexation.

2.4 STAFFING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CITY’S STANDALONE SERVICE NEEDS AND ANNEXATION

The following table compares the staffing plans between the current and needed standalone City fire services and annexation.

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Table 5—Fire Services Staffing Comparison

| Position | Current City Fire Services Staffing | District Annexation Option (Nov. 2024 Proposal) | Standalone City Option |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Fire Chief | .5 | 1 (Shared) | 1 |
| Division Chief 40-hr. | | 2 (Shared) | |
| Battalion Chiefs | 0 | 3 (24/7/365) | 2 (40 Hour) |
| Fire Captain 40-hr. Fire Prevention | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Administrative Assistant | .5 | 1 | 1 |
| Fire Captain | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Fire Engineer | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Firefighter | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Career Total | 3 | 17 (6 Shared Chiefs) | 13 |
| Volunteer | 30 | 178 +/- | 30 |

The numbers shown in the table do not quantify the depth of the District’s staffing model that requires career personnel to cover for absences, retirement attrition between hirings, and improved specialty response services such as technical rescue. A City-based department with one on-duty fire crew needing nine career personnel across three shifts, plus volunteers on stipend for the fourth position, is very fragile as it relates to staffing vacancies. Too many personnel absences or fewer volunteers can increase overtime replacement to painful levels to the remaining firefighters and their families.

Finding #4: A City-operated, sustainable, and standards-meeting fire department staffing plan would provide similar services to those provided through District annexation but would lack the District’s depth of resources given its quantity of employees. A City-operated department would also incur the ongoing cost impacts of city hall staff and other administrative needs.

SECTION 3—FISCAL REVIEW OF THE ANNEXATION PROPOSAL AND CITY BUDGET IMPACTS

Citygate modeled the following two options regarding the fiscal impacts of the City annexing or retaining fire services.

1. Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, based on prior work between the City and the District, structured to be sustainable for both parties.
2. City provides fire services structured to meet the needs of the City.

Recommendations in this report are based on the following detailed fiscal analysis of information provided to Citygate as of January 9, 2025, which includes a nine-year projection. The following table provides a summary financial comparison of the bottom-line results of the two options for FY 25/26.

Column Descriptions

- ◆ **Current Fire Services Cost FY 24/25** – Reflects FY 24/25 adopted budget amounts from the adopted budget posted online. This is the current cost of City fire services.
- ◆ **Post-Annexation Fire Services Cost FY 25/26** – Reflects the amounts for the City’s budget after annexation into the District per the latest information provided by the District on November 14, 2024, which was developed to provide sustainable and best practices fire service to meet the needs of the City. Assumes first year is FY 25/26.
- ◆ **Standalone Fire Services Cost FY 25/26** – Reflects amounts that the City would provide to support modest fire services, partially equivalent to the Fire District’s level of service, which would meet the City’s needs and comply with industry best practices. Assumes first year is FY 25/2026.

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Table 6—Fire Services Options Fiscal Summary – FY 25/26 (Year 1) – Options Comparison

| Fiscal Element | Current Fire Services Cost FY 24/25 | Post-Annexation Fire Services Cost FY 25/26 | Standalone Fire Services Cost FY 25/26 |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Revenues | | | |
| Fire Direct Fees/Charges for Services | \$40,000 | - | \$40,000 |
| Measure H | - | - | \$1,080,000 |
| City Parcel Tax | - | - | \$1,111,058 |
| City Net General Fund Contribution | \$1,495,910 | \$1,205,191 | \$2,188,267 |
| Total Revenues | \$1,535,910 | \$1,205,191 | \$4,419,325 |
| Expenditures | | | |
| Total Salaries/Benefits | \$601,616 | - | \$3,047,422 |
| Total Other Operating Costs | \$922,294 | \$1,205,191 | \$476,050 |
| Total Capital Outlay | \$12,000 | - | \$59,210 |
| Total Debt Service | - | - | \$686,643 |
| Total Contribution to Reserves | - | - | \$150,000 |
| Total All Expenditures | \$1,535,910 | \$1,205,191 | \$4,419,325 |
| Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

The annexation option is the more fiscally prudent option. The annexation option saves the City approximately \$983,100, in the first year over the standalone option. This amount would be impacted by any “leave-behind costs” discussed later in this report.

3.1 HIGH-LEVEL REVIEW OF THE CITY’S GENERAL FUND

Citygate completed a high-level review of the fiscal condition of the City’s General Fund, which funds fire services. Per the adopted FY 24/25 budget, estimated revenues totaled approximately \$14.3 million and anticipated expenditures totaled approximately \$15 million, resulting in an estimated FY 24/25 operating deficit of approximately \$700,000. However, two sales tax measures were not reflected in the FY 24/25 budget document published online that positively impacted the City. Those measures were Measure H, passed in March 2024, and Measure U, which passed in November 2024.

Measure H is a Sonoma-County-wide .5-cent sales tax to enhance fire-related services. Each applicable jurisdiction is allocated a portion of the revenues received for the service level it requested in the creation of the measure as set forth in the measure language. The City’s share is 1.80 percent, which is anticipated to generate approximately \$1,080,000 in the first full year based on initial estimates. To receive Measure H proceeds, each jurisdiction must meet a Maintenance

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of Effort (MOE) requirement based on the proportion of the amount spent for fire service operations to General Fund total (excluding capital outlay and other one-time items) in FY 21/22. Each jurisdiction must provide an annual report to the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association (SCFCA) showing that the MOE requirement has been met.

Measure U is a City-specific .5-cent sales tax for a period of twelve years to be used for General Fund purposes, including fire-related services. It is estimated that Measure U will generate approximately \$1.5 million in the first full year. However, due to a potential conflict with a second measure, the City may only receive half of the \$1.5 million estimate. Whereas Measure H funds cannot be used to supplant existing General Fund services, Measure U funds can be used to address the existing and future anticipated General Fund deficits.

After the adoption of the budget currently online, the City made several budgetary adjustments relating to fire services. The primary revision relates to the hiring of two Captain positions on a full-time basis funded by Measure H.

Finding #5: The City is facing fiscal constraints even with the passage of the Measure U sales tax measure. As a result, identifying areas that could be used to fund enhanced fire services at a level desired by the City will be difficult.

3.2 CURRENT CITY FIRE SERVICES COST VERSUS THE DISTRICT PROPOSAL

3.2.1 City Modified Estimate

After two years of research and analysis, the City’s Fire Services Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) and City staff narrowed down options that would provide the City with the desired level of fire services which, in Citygate’s opinion, meets the City’s needs and fire services regulations / best practices. After reviewing an annexation proposal from the District, the Committee recommended to the City Council further exploration of an annexation option with the District and the option of establishing a sustainable standalone department.

At the April 16, 2024, City Council meeting, the Committee identified what it believed to be the minimum costs for a standalone fire department that would meet the needs of the City. The Committee assumed that the funding for this option would come from Measure H if passed by residents. These financial items were not included as a Council-approved amendment to the FY 24/25 budget. However, for purposes of analysis, the City assumed that this would be the case and is the basis for the Modified FY 24/25 budget amounts included in the various tables of this report.

The personnel costs related to the Committee’s April analysis are shown in the following table.

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Table 7—Fire Services Ad-Hoc Committee April 2024 Analysis of Personnel Costs

| Position Title | Number of FTE | Extended Cost |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Fire Chief | 1 | \$283,065 |
| Prevention Captain | 1 | \$187,122 |
| Administrative Support/Services | 1 | \$174,000 |
| Captain | 3 | \$571,382 |
| Engineer | 3 | \$413,490 |
| Volunteer Firefighter Stipend Shift | N/A | \$125,000 |
| Volunteer Firefighter Reimbursements | N/A | \$150,000 |
| Calls/Drills | | |
| Volunteer Battalion Chief | N/A | \$28,800 |
| Total | 9 | \$1,932,859 |

The Committee estimated other operating expenses (non-personnel) at \$530,000.

These estimates resulted in a total estimated cost of \$2,462,859. This cost would be funded through a combination of the Fire Department’s FY 24/25 budgeted General Fund contribution of approximately \$1.55 million plus the anticipated City’s portion of Measure H funds of approximately \$1.08 million. These revenue sources would total approximately \$2.63 million, leaving a balance of \$167,141 that would need a funding source. However, even \$2.63 million in funding is insufficient to address other costs not included in the Committee’s early work above, such as fire apparatus and capital improvements, which are part of a truly sustainable, best practices fire department.

3.2.2 District Proposal

The District’s initial proposal included in the April 2024 City Council Committee report did address some of these missing costs that would be required under its annexation proposal.

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Table 8—Initial District Proposal Personnel Costs

| Position Title | Number of FTE | Extended Cost |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Fire Chief | .125 | \$35,625 |
| Battalion Chief | .125 | \$30,102 |
| Fire Marshal | .125 | \$21,373 |
| Prevention Captain | 1 | \$187,122 |
| Administrative Support/Services | .125 | \$22,930 |
| Captain | 3 | \$571,382 |
| Engineer | 3 | \$442,543 |
| Volunteer Firefighter Stipend Shift | N/A | \$129,609 |
| Volunteer Firefighter Reimbursements | N/A | \$150,000 |
| Calls/Drills | | |
| Volunteer Battalion Chief | N/A | N/A |
| Total | 7.5 | \$1,590,686 |

The initial District proposal was incomplete regarding some of the other non-personnel costs but did discuss the categories. Citygate was provided with subsequent District proposals that were more detailed. The subsequent proposals, however, did reflect cost increases from what was originally proposed. This is not unusual given the changing circumstances, such as the passage of Measure H.

Citygate was made aware of two revisions to the initial District proposal. The following table is a comparison of the initial and latest District personnel proposals.

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Table 9—Comparison of the Initial and Latest District Proposal Personnel Costs

| Position Title | Number of FTE (Initial) | Extended Cost (Initial) | Number of FTE (Latest) | Extended Cost (Latest) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Fire Chief | .125 | \$35,625 | 0 | \$0 |
| Battalion Chief | .125 | \$30,102 | 0 | \$0 |
| Fire Marshal | .125 | \$21,373 | 0 | \$0 |
| Prevention Captain | 1 | \$187,122 | 0 | \$0 |
| Admin Support/Services | .125 | \$22,930 | 1 | \$124,345 |
| Captain | 3 | \$571,382 | 4 | \$881,878 |
| Engineer | 3 | \$442,543 | 3 | \$571,199 |
| Firefighter | 0 | \$0 | 3 | \$506,066 |
| Volunteer Firefighter Stipend Shift | N/A | \$129,609 | N/A | \$103,972 |
| Volunteer Firefighter | | | | |
| Reimbursement Calls/Drills | N/A | \$150,000 | N/A | \$248,500 |
| Volunteer Battalion Chief | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Total | 7.5 | \$1,590,686 | 11 | \$2,435,990 |

The \$845,304 difference from initial District personnel proposal and the latest consists, primarily, of the addition of three Firefighter positions (approx. \$506k), miscellaneous workers’ compensation and Social Security (FICA) benefit increases (approx. \$70k), and additional negotiated benefits for Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) and 9 percent longevity pay (approx. \$280k). It should be noted that no estimate was presented in the District’s latest proposal for the fire management positions.

As will be shown in Table 11, the latest District proposal also assumed that the other operating costs would be \$450,260 derived from taking the District FY 24/25 budget for other non-personnel expenses of \$2,251,300 and dividing it by the five existing fire stations in the jurisdiction. Additionally, the latest proposal estimated that approximately \$8 million would be needed for equipment (primarily ladder truck) and capital improvements (approximately \$5 million to renovate the current City fire station). The proposal assumed that these would be financed at an estimated annual cost of approximately \$550,000. The District’s proposal also includes the provision of a preventative equipment maintenance program which the City does not currently have.

Based on the latest District proposal in the information provided to Citygate as of January 9, 2025, the total post-annexation cost to provide the fire services required would be approximately \$3,436,249 in the first year, assumed to be FY 25/26.

Per the District proposal, the revenue to fund these costs are reflected in the following table.

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Table 10—Revenue Sources per District Proposal

| Revenue Source | Amount |
|--|--------------------|
| Transfer of City share of Measure H | \$1,080,000 |
| Additional parcel tax levied on City residents | \$1,111,058 |
| City General Fund contribution | \$1,205,191 |
| Direct revenues for fire-related fees (inspection, plan check, etc.) | \$40,000 |
| Total | \$3,436,249 |

The additional parcel tax amount in the preceding table represents the application of the three parcel tax levies paid by all residents of the District which would apply to all City residents when annexed into the District. These three parcel taxes combined total approximately \$265 annually when applied to a typical single-family home.

The following table shows the fire budget in the City’s General Fund after annexation and the District’s post-annexation budget for only to the City’s fire services.

Table 11—Fire Services Cost Summary with District Proposal

| Fiscal Element | Post-Annexation Fire Services Cost FY 25/26 | District Budget for City Fire Service Post Annexation |
|--|---|---|
| Revenues | | |
| Fire Direct Fees/Charges for Services | - | \$40,000 |
| Measure H | - | \$1,080,000 |
| City Parcel Tax | - | \$1,111,058 |
| City Net General Fund Contribution | \$1,205,191 | \$1,205,191 |
| Contribution from Capital Replacement Reserves | - | - |
| Total Revenues | \$1,205,191 | \$3,436,249 |
| Expenditures | | |
| Total Salaries/Benefits | - | \$2,435,989 |
| Total Other Operating Costs | \$1,205,191 | \$450,260 |
| Total Capital Outlay | - | - |
| Total Debt Service | - | \$550,000 |
| Total Contribution to Reserves | - | - |
| Total All Expenditures | \$1,205,191 | \$3,436,249 |
| Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | \$0 | \$0 |

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The City estimated budget costs, after annexation, of approximately \$1.2 million listed in the preceding table does not include potential costs that the City would retain responsibility for even after annexation. Citygate refers to these costs as “leave-behind costs.” Examples of these leave-behind costs are city hall administrative support, incurred workers’ compensation claims, and incurred pension obligations. These leave-behind costs are discussed in more detail in section 3.4 of this report.

Finding #6: The City currently spends approximately \$1.55 million from the General Fund for its volunteer fire services—which do not meet the City’s current needs, and which will become increasingly ineffective as the City evolves. Although the City’s share of Measure H proceeds will help, Measure H proceeds alone will not fully address the City’s total fire services needs in the future.

3.3 STANDALONE CITY FIRE SERVICES VERSUS THE DISTRICT PROPOSAL

This section discusses and compares the latest District proposal and an independent, standalone fire department which would be operated by the City. Citygate relied on its extensive fire services experience to structure a standalone and sustainable fire services operation based on the specific characteristics and needs of the City, as well as industry regulations and best practices. To accomplish the costing for the developed structure, Citygate created a fiscal model consisting of multiple spreadsheets including the various cost categories, assumptions, and amounts, which are discussed in the following sections.

3.3.1 Personnel

As is the case with most municipal operations, personnel is the largest single annual operational cost. The following table lists the required personnel and costs associated with a sustainable and best practices fire service operation for the City.

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Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Table 12—Required Direct Personnel and Costs for Standalone Fire Department

| Position Title | Salary | Benefits | Total Salary/Benefits | Number of FTE | Extended Cost |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Fire Chief | \$185,400 | \$91,482 | \$276,882 | 1 | \$315,978 |
| Battalion Chief | \$173,040 | \$86,983 | \$260,023 | 2 | \$545,334 |
| Captain | \$146,025 | \$73,768 | \$219,793 | 3 | \$659,379 |
| Engineer | \$125,847 | \$65,752 | \$191,599 | 3 | \$574,797 |
| Firefighter | \$108,685 | \$60,058 | \$168,743 | 3 | \$506,229 |
| Administrative Support/Services | \$74,980 | \$43,225 | \$118,205 | 1 | \$118,205 |
| Volunteers | \$202,000 | \$0 | \$202,000 | N/A | \$202,000 |
| Total | \$1,015,977 | \$421,268 | \$1,437,245 | 13 | \$2,921,922 |

In addition to the direct personnel costs in the preceding table, Citygate recommends that one support position be added to the Administrative Services Department to handle extra payroll, workers’ compensation, accounts payable, accounts receivable, general ledger activity, grant administration, and other administrative duties that are not handled within the fire department. The model assumes an Accounting Assistant or Accounting Technician would cost approximately \$125,500 annually including salary, benefits, and miscellaneous expenses to support the position. This addition would bring the total personnel costs to \$3,047,422 for the first year, and this is the value used in Citygate’s comparison models throughout the report.

The assumptions used by Citygate in developing the fiscal model are discussed in the following subsections.

3.3.2 Salary Assumptions

The following are the assumptions used by Citygate regarding salaries.

1. Salary assumes top step currently paid to District employees, including a 9 percent longevity pay due to the expectation that the District would be the nearest recruitment pool and to provide cushion to address potential recruitment issues.
2. Overtime assumes 10 percent of base salary amount.
3. Incentive/Education pay assumes 3 percent of base salary.
4. The volunteer stipend is based on City staff report dated January 2025.

3.3.3 Benefits Assumptions

The following are the assumptions used by Citygate regarding benefits.

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1. Pension costs assume City PERS rates for classic and PEPRAs employees based on an 80-20 split due to uncertainty of status of employees that would be hired.
2. The workers' compensation rate is based on the current District rate.
3. All other benefits are based on current City rates.

3.3.4 Non-Personnel Operating Costs

Other typical, non-personnel operating costs for a standalone fire services operation, as estimated by Citygate, include other operating costs, capital outlay, debt service, and capital replacement reserve contribution.

1. To estimate the other operating costs, Citygate assumed a ten percent increase from the City's adopted line-item budget based on Citygate's professional opinion and experience for most of the line items. Any variation from this assumption was due to other factors specific to City operations. The total first-year amount based on these assumptions is \$476,050.
2. The capital outlay amounts were based on the capital replacement schedule provided by the City.
3. Startup costs associated with creating a standalone fire department are also included in the Citygate model. It has been assumed that most of these startup costs would be financed, as opposed to paid for by cash, considering the City's current financial situation.
4. Startup costs identified by Citygate totaled \$8,290,500. Of this amount, \$8,165,000 representing building improvements and major equipment, is assumed to be financed. The remaining \$125,500 represents a support staff position for the Administrative Services Department discussed in the personnel section previously.
5. The debt service estimate is based on the information provided by the City that approximately \$5 million for building improvements are needed for the City's fire station building, and approximately \$3 million are needed for equipment—primarily a ladder truck that needs to be acquired as soon as possible. Additionally, various equipment would be needed to equip the new safety line positions recommended by Citygate, which Citygate assumes would be financed at \$165,000. The Citygate model assumes a typical 30-year term at 4 percent for the building improvements; a 15-year, 7-percent financing term for the ladder truck; and a 7-percent, 5-year term for the personnel equipment. Based on these assumptions, annual debt service for the first year would be approximately \$687,000.

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It is best practices for an agency to establish and contribute to a capital replacement reserve, which would build up funds over time to address capital needs in the future. Based on the average of two nearby comparable agencies and the fire equipment replacement needs, Citygate believes that the amount of \$150,000 per year as reflected in the City’s FY 24/25 adopted budget is reasonable. This annual contribution will not eliminate the need to finance future equipment or building improvements, but it will lower the amount of financing required.

Based on the fiscal model developed by Citygate, the total cost for a standalone and sustainable best-practice-based fire department to meet the needs of the City would be \$4,419,325 in the first year, assumed to be FY 25/26.

The revenue identified to fund these costs are reflected in the following table.

Table 13—Revenue Sources for the Standalone Fire Department

| Revenue Source | Amount |
|--|--------------------|
| City share of Measure H proceeds | \$1,080,000 |
| Additional parcel tax levied on City residents | \$1,111,058 |
| City General Fund contribution | \$2,188,267 |
| Direct revenues for fire-related fees (inspection, plan check, etc.) | \$40,000 |
| Total | \$4,419,325 |

The additional parcel tax amount in the previous table represents an option that the City could ask of its residents that would be equal to what would occur if the City were annexed into the District, except the funds would be retained by the City. For a typical single-family home in the District, this currently represents approximately \$265 annually.

3.3.5 Concluding Cost Comparison

The following table provides a comparison of a standalone fire department versus the latest District proposal, which can inform the City team regarding possible cost and revenue implications in its discussions with the District. The key difference is the impact to the City’s General Fund. Even if the City were to impose the same supplemental taxes as the Fire District, the City’s General Fund still requires a greater contribution. With supplemental revenues being the same, the District’s expenses, due to economies of scale, are less than the City’s.

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Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Table 14—Fire Services Options Fiscal Summary – FY 25/26 (Year 1) – Standalone vs. District Annexation

| Fiscal Element | Standalone Fire Services Cost FY 25/26 | District Budget for City Fire Service Post Annexation |
|---|--|---|
| Revenues | | |
| Fire Direct Fees/Charges for Services | \$40,000 | \$40,000 |
| Measure H | \$1,080,000 | \$1,080,000 |
| City Parcel Tax | \$1,111,058 | \$1,111,058 |
| City Net General Fund Contribution | \$2,188,267 | \$1,205,191 |
| Total Revenues | \$4,419,325 | \$3,436,249 |
| Expenditures | | |
| Total Salaries/Benefits | \$3,047,422 | \$2,435,989 |
| Total Other Operating Costs | \$476,050 | \$450,260 |
| Total Capital Outlay | \$59,210 | - |
| Total Debt Service | \$686,643 | \$550,000 |
| Total Contribution to Reserves | \$150,000 | - |
| Total Expenditures | \$4,419,325 | \$3,436,249 |
| Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | \$0 | \$0 |

Finding #7: The option of annexation by the District provides the City with the minimum appropriate expanded fire services, meeting the City’s current and future needs, for a net General Fund impact of approximately \$983,000 less than a City-operated fire department.

Recommendation #1: Finalize negotiations with the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to identify the City’s fiscal contribution and payment method to move forward with the annexation into the District. Doing so will provide enhanced fire services consistent with industry best practices and improve the City’s overall financial condition going forward.

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Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

3.4 CITY LEAVE-BEHIND COSTS UNDER ANNEXATION

There are several potential costs that the City would have to retain even with an annexation into the District. Citygate refers to these costs as “leave-behind costs.” These leave-behind costs are discussed in the following subsections.

3.4.1 Pension

Under CalPERS policy, pension liability costs prior to the separation of an employee remains the liability of the agency where the employee was employed prior to separation. Under annexation, this would only effect two or possibly three individuals, so the annual impact would be minimal. Based on Citygate’s review, the City has not issued debt relating to its pension obligation, which is also a leave-behind cost, and as a result is not applicable in the City’s case.

3.4.2 Workers’ Compensation and General Liability Claims

As is the case with pension liabilities, risk pools typically require the agency where the employee was employed at the time the workers’ compensation claim was reported, or the agency where a general liability claim which involved an employee was filed, to maintain the liability until the conclusion of the claim, regardless of whether the employee separates from the agency. Citygate was informed by City staff that no outstanding claims currently exist, so this is not applicable to the City.

3.4.3 Facilities and Equipment Replacement

Depending on what is negotiated in the final contract, there is the potential that any proposed facilities and/or equipment to be transferred would need repair to meet operational standards, which would be a cost that the City must cover even if annexation is completed.

3.4.4 Administrative Overhead

It is best practice to allocate administrative overhead to applicable City operations to all funds, including the General Fund. There are several benefits of allocation of administrative overhead. Examples include:

- ◆ Identification of the actual cost of services being provided to the community.
- ◆ Equitable sharing of the costs of shared facilities and support services between departments, programs, and funds throughout the organization.
- ◆ Ensuring accuracy of cost-based user fees for public services such as utilities, development review, parks, or any other service where the user pays a fee for service.

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Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Since the administrative cost pool is typically allocated over all functions, if a function is eliminated, such as the annexation of the City's fire services, the other functions would have to absorb a larger piece of the total administrative overhead pool. The City, however, does not follow this administrative overhead best practice for General Fund departments. Although there would not be a leave-behind cost in this situation, it also results in an inaccurate accounting for functional costs within the General Fund of the City.⁴

3.4.5 Emergency Management Programs

This analysis did not consider how the City currently provides disaster preparedness programs. It is assumed the annexation of fire services does not remove any of the City's obligations and that the District would coordinate with the City as needed for preparedness and emergency activations of the City's Disaster Plan.

3.5 STANDALONE LONG-TERM CITY FIRE SERVICES COSTS VERSUS ANNEXATION

Citygate developed long-term assumptions and a nine-year proforma based on a combination of independent research and information used by the City to develop its long-term General Fund forecast model.

3.5.1 Revenues Assumptions

- ◆ **Direct Revenues/Fees** – Actual growth has fluctuated widely over the last five years. Consequently, based on Citygate's experience with other jurisdictions, a conservative 2 percent growth rate is assumed through FY 33/34.
- ◆ **Parcel Tax** – Parcel tax collections will depend on the language approved by City residents. Typically, only a growth in the number of parcels, such as through development of vacant land, would potentially increase revenues. Given that parcel taxes are levied as a flat dollar amount as opposed to property taxes, which are levied on a percentage of assessed value, the growth rates for these property related revenues would not be equivalent. Consequently, to be conservative, Citygate is assuming a 1 percent growth rate through FY 33/34.
- ◆ **Measure H** – Revenues from Measure H are based on the City's allocation portion of Sonoma County sales tax collections. Per the County's budget message, consumer spending has significantly slowed and, given the continuing economic uncertainties, Citygate is assuming a 1 percent growth through FY 33/34.

⁴ <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/finance/accounting/cost-allocation#benefits>

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- ◆ **Capital Replacement Fund Contribution** – Transfer in from the Equipment, Technology, and Vehicle Replacement Fund to offset some of the financing requirements as determined by the fire equipment schedule developed by the City, so there is no annual growth rate assumed for this category or the financing proceeds category.

3.5.2 Expenditures Assumptions

- ◆ **Salaries and Benefits** – The City’s five-year General Fund financial forecast assumes an average growth rate of 3.2 percent for salaries and 3.5 percent average growth rate for benefits. Citygate believes these assumptions are reasonable and therefore used them in the proforma through FY 33/34.
- ◆ **All Other Operating (Except Capital, Debt Service, and Capital Replacement Contribution)** – For expenses in this category, Citygate assumed a 2.5 percent growth factor to approximate the current consumer price index (CPI) through FY 34/35.
- ◆ **Capital, Debt Service, and Capital Replacement Contribution** – Citygate did not assume a growth factor for these categories, just a flat amount for capital as determined by the City’s equipment replacement schedule, a flat amount for debt service based on the financing assumptions discussed in Section 3.3 of this report, and a flat amount of \$150,000 to be contributed into the City’s Equipment, Technology, and Vehicle Replacement Fund given the City’s financial situation. It is assumed that all these flat amounts will be allocated, annually, through FY 33/34.

The following table presents a nine-year proforma inclusive of the previously discussed assumptions for an independent (standalone) City fire department.

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Table 15—Standalone City Fire Department Nine-Year Proforma

| Fiscal Element | FY 25/26 | FY 26/27 | FY 27/28 | FY 28/29 | FY 29/30 | FY 30/31 | FY 31/32 | FY 32/33 | FY 33/34 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Revenues | | | | | | | | | |
| Fire Direct Fees/Charges for Services | \$40,000 | \$40,800 | \$41,616 | \$42,448 | \$43,297 | \$44,163 | \$45,046 | \$45,947 | \$46,866 |
| Measure H | \$1,080,000 | \$1,090,800 | \$1,101,708 | \$1,112,725 | \$1,123,852 | \$1,135,091 | \$1,146,442 | \$1,157,906 | \$1,169,485 |
| City Parcel Tax | \$1,111,058 | \$1,122,169 | \$1,133,390 | \$1,144,724 | \$1,156,171 | \$1,167,733 | \$1,179,410 | \$1,191,205 | \$1,203,117 |
| City Net General Fund Contribution | \$2,188,267 | \$2,218,539 | \$2,384,755 | \$2,407,723 | \$2,507,658 | \$2,611,315 | \$2,718,821 | \$2,830,305 | \$3,385,902 |
| Contribution from Capital Reserve Fund | | | | | | | | \$1,232,961 | |
| Financing Proceeds | | | | | | | | \$4,473,029 | |
| Total Revenues | \$4,419,325 | \$4,472,308 | \$4,661,469 | \$4,707,621 | \$4,830,979 | \$4,958,302 | \$5,089,720 | \$10,931,353 | \$5,805,37 |
| Expenditures | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Salaries/Benefits | \$3,047,422 | \$3,147,714 | \$3,251,311 | \$3,358,325 | \$3,468,866 | \$3,583,053 | \$3,701,005 | \$3,822,847 | \$3,948,707 |
| Total Other Operating Costs | \$476,050 | \$487,951 | \$500,150 | \$512,653 | \$525,470 | \$538,606 | \$552,071 | \$565,873 | \$580,020 |
| Total Capital Outlay | \$59,210 | | \$73,365 | | | | | \$5,705,990 | |
| Total Debt Service | \$686,643 | \$686,643 | \$686,643 | \$686,643 | \$686,643 | \$686,643 | \$686,643 | \$686,643 | \$1,126,643 |
| Total Contribution to Reserves | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 | \$150,000 |
| Total All Costs | \$4,419,325 | \$4,472,308 | \$4,661,469 | \$4,707,621 | \$4,830,979 | \$4,958,302 | \$5,089,720 | \$10,931,353 | \$5,805,370 |
| Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |



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Finding #8: Based on Citygate’s projection to FY 29/30, the City would be paying nearly twice as much with an independent, standalone fire department when compared to the cost of the annexation option assuming a 2.5 percent growth rate for the annexation option.

Assuming the annexation option previously discussed, the City’s net General Fund contribution could be approximately \$1,205,191 in the first year, subject to final decisions by the two agencies. The two most obvious options to fund this contribution are to transfer a portion of the City’s property tax rate in the amount that would generate the amount necessary to fund the City’s first-year contribution for expanded fire services or enter into an agreement with the District to pay directly from the General Fund the amount necessary to fund the City’s first-year contribution for expanded fire services.

3.5.3 Annexation Payment Option – Property Tax Rate Transfer

Under this option, the City and the District would enter into an agreement that would require the County to reduce the property tax rate used to calculate the City’s allocation of property tax revenues by an agreed-upon amount and increase the rate used by the County to calculate the District’s allocation of property tax revenues. Any increase in property tax revenues associated with the transferred portion of the rate would accrue to the District and not the City. Determination of the actual rate amount that would generate the first-year contribution amount of \$1,205,191 would have to be developed with assistance from the County; however, based on the City’s FY 24/25 budget estimate of property tax revenues of \$3,600,000, a rate transfer of approximately one third of the City’s current rate would be necessary to generate \$1,205,191. This rate transfer would be effective in perpetuity and the District would have the responsibility of providing appropriate levels of fire services into the future with no additional contribution from the City.

3.5.4 Annexation Payment Option – Direct General Fund Annual Contribution

Under this option, the City would enter into an agreement with the District to make an annual payment to the District for fire services received. Typically, this type of agreement would include some inflator rate tied to some index, such as Consumer Price Index (CPI).

3.5.5 Long-term District Costs

Based on the District’s draft LAFCO application, salary, benefits, and other operating costs excluding debt and capital contributions (remains flat), are estimated to grow at a rate of 1.5 percent annually through FY 29/30. Citygate did not analyze the assumptions made by the District to develop this 5-year financial forecast, which includes all operations of the District, including the annexed City fire services. However, if these assumptions are applied to the City’s contribution under the annexation option, the following is the result through FY 29/30.

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Table 16—5-Year General Fund Contribution Under Annexation

| Fiscal Year | General Fund Contribution |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| FY 25/26 | \$1,205,191 |
| FY 26/27 | \$1,223,269 |
| FY 27/28 | \$1,241,617 |
| FY 28/29 | \$1,260,242 |
| FY 29/30 | \$1,279,146 |
| Total | \$6,209,465 |

Per information received from City staff, Sebastopol property tax growth has averaged approximately 5.9 percent between FY 16/17 and FY 23/24; however, over the FY 22/23 and FY 23/24 period, average growth has been about 4.7 percent. The City’s General Fund financial forecast model assumes a 4 percent property tax growth rate, which Citygate believes is a more prudent and appropriate growth assumption.

Per the Association of Bay Area Governments, the average CPI for the San Francisco Bay area between FY 16/17 and FY 22/23 is about 3.51 percent.⁵ However, the City cost contribution factor per draft District documents is 1.5 percent and the City’s fiscal model created by another outside consultant assumes 2.5 percent.

The following table provides a comparison of four scenarios that could be used by the City to pay its fire service contribution assuming that annexation moves forward. The first year of the annexation would require the City to pay approximately \$1.2 million for the enhanced fire service. Using an estimated \$1.2 million contribution as a base for each scenario, various inflator growth factors were applied over the next twenty years in the following table. The following is a description of each column in this table.

- ◆ **Column A** – The fiscal year
- ◆ **Column B** – The amount if the City chose the property tax rate transfer scenario assuming an annual inflator of 4 percent, which is consistent with the property tax revenue growth rate assumed in City’s long-term General Fund forecast.
- ◆ **Column C** – The amount if the City chose an annual General Fund contribution scenario assuming an annual inflator of 2.5 percent, which is consistent with the City’s General Fund long-term fiscal forecast for expenditure growth.

⁵ <https://abag.ca.gov/tools-resources/data-tools/consumer-price-index/>

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- ◆ **Column D** – The amount if the City chose an annual General Fund contribution scenario assuming an annual inflator of 3.5 percent, which is consistent with the average Bay Area CPI growth between FY 16/17 and FY 22/23.
- ◆ **Column E** – The amount reflecting the difference between columns C and B
- ◆ **Column F**– The amount reflecting the difference between columns D and B

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Table 17—Fire Services Annexation Option Payment Comparison

| Fiscal Year | Property Tax Rate Transfer (Inflator 4%) | General Fund Contribution (Inflator 2.5%) | General Fund Contribution (Inflator 3.5%) | Difference Property Tax Transfer (4%) vs General Fund Contribution (2.5%) | Difference Property Tax Transfer (4%) vs General Fund Contribution (3.5%) |
|--------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| FY 25/26 | \$1,205,191 | \$ 1,205,191 | \$1,205,191 | \$0 | \$0 |
| FY 26/27 | \$1,253,399 | \$ 1,235,321 | \$1,247,373 | (\$18,078) | (\$6,026) |
| FY 27/28 | \$1,303,535 | \$ 1,266,204 | \$1,291,031 | (\$37,331) | (\$12,504) |
| FY 28/29 | \$1,355,676 | \$ 1,297,859 | \$1,336,217 | (\$57,817) | (\$19,459) |
| FY 29/30 | \$1,409,903 | \$ 1,330,305 | \$1,382,984 | (\$79,598) | (\$26,919) |
| FY 30/31 | \$1,466,299 | \$ 1,363,563 | \$1,431,389 | (\$102,736) | (\$34,910) |
| FY 31/32 | \$1,524,951 | \$ 1,397,652 | \$1,481,487 | (\$127,299) | (\$43,464) |
| FY 32/33 | \$1,585,949 | \$ 1,432,593 | \$1,533,340 | (\$153,356) | (\$52,610) |
| FY 33/34 | \$1,649,387 | \$ 1,468,408 | \$1,587,006 | (\$180,979) | (\$62,381) |
| FY 34/35 | \$1,715,363 | \$ 1,505,118 | \$1,642,552 | (\$210,244) | (\$72,811) |
| FY 35/36 | \$1,783,977 | \$ 1,542,746 | \$1,700,041 | (\$241,231) | (\$83,936) |
| FY 36/37 | \$1,855,336 | \$ 1,581,315 | \$1,759,542 | (\$274,021) | (\$95,794) |
| FY 37/38 | \$1,929,550 | \$ 1,620,848 | \$1,821,126 | (\$308,702) | (\$108,423) |
| FY 38/39 | \$2,006,732 | \$ 1,661,369 | \$1,884,866 | (\$345,363) | (\$121,866) |
| FY 39/40 | \$2,087,001 | \$ 1,702,903 | \$1,950,836 | (\$384,098) | (\$136,165) |
| FY 40/41 | \$2,170,481 | \$ 1,745,476 | \$2,019,115 | (\$425,005) | (\$151,366) |
| FY 41/42 | \$2,257,300 | \$ 1,789,113 | \$2,089,784 | (\$468,187) | (\$167,516) |
| FY 42/43 | \$2,347,592 | \$ 1,833,841 | \$2,162,927 | (\$513,752) | (\$184,665) |
| FY 43/44 | \$2,441,496 | \$ 1,879,687 | \$2,238,629 | (\$561,809) | (\$202,867) |
| FY 44/45 | \$2,539,156 | \$ 1,926,679 | \$2,316,981 | (\$612,477) | (\$222,174) |
| Total | \$ 35,888,272 | \$ 30,786,191 | \$ 34,082,418 | (\$5,102,081) | (\$1,805,854) |



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3.5.6 Summary Recap Table

The following table provides a summary of the cumulative amounts of **Table 17—Fire Services Annexation Option Payment Comparison** for 5 years, 10 years, and 20 years, as well as the respective present values for each column (B through F).

Table 18—Summary Recap

| Fiscal Element | Property Tax Rate Transfer (Inflator 4%) | General Fund Contribution (Inflator 2.5%) | General Fund Contribution (Inflator 3.5%) | Difference Property Tax Transfer (4%) vs General Fund Contribution (2.5%) | Difference Property Tax Transfer (4%) vs General Fund Contribution (3.5%) |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 5-Year Summary – Actual | \$6,527,703 | \$6,334,880 | \$6,462,796 | \$(192,823) | \$(64,908) |
| 5-Year Summary – Present Value | \$5,794,188 | \$5,878,980 | \$5,822,179 | \$84,793 | \$27,991 |
| 10-Year Summary – Actual | \$14,469,652 | \$13,502,215 | \$14,138,569 | \$(967,437) | \$(331,083) |
| 10-Year Summary – Present Value | \$11,588,375 | \$11,757,961 | \$11,644,357 | \$169,586 | \$55,982 |
| 20-Year Summary – Actual | \$35,888,272 | \$30,786,191 | \$34,082,418 | \$(5,102,081) | \$(1,805,854) |
| 20-Year Summary – Present Value | \$23,176,750 | \$23,515,922 | \$23,288,715 | \$339,172 | \$111,965 |



City of Sebastopol

Financial Analysis of Fire Services for Annexation to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

Finding #9: As Table 18 displays, all the General Fund direct pay options result in the City paying less to the District, depending on the growth assumption.

Recommendation #2: The City should use the General Fund direct pay option for annexation and, in the agreement, settle on both a minimum and maximum CPI inflator percentage and specific index to ensure evolving costs over 20 years are balanced between the agencies.

3.6 FISCAL ANALYSIS CONCLUSION

This analysis was performed based on the information provided to Citygate as of January 9, 2025. Based on our analysis for improved fire service operations and the viable economics for an annexation to the District, Citygate’s opinion is that the best choice for appropriate and sustainable fire services is for the City to annex into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District.



Sebastopol Fire Station No. 1

Site and Facility Assessment

January 15, 2025
COAR Design Group

200 E Street, Santa Rosa, 95404
619.504.0984
jeff@coargroup.com



I. PROJECT HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The City of Sebastopol is planning to develop plans and specifications for a renovation of the existing Fire Station 1 located at 7425 Bodega Ave, Sebastopol, CA. This report looks at the options for renovating the facility at the existing site.

The City and Gold Ridge Fire District are in discussion about the District taking over providing Fire service to the City. Doing so would entail placing full time staff at the station which is currently intended primarily for volunteer fire personnel. In order to make the best use of available Measure H funds, this assessment is intended to determine what upgrades must be made to the station to comply with current code, as well as best practices to support the health and welfare of fire personnel assigned to the station. The proposed remodel includes adding shop / turnout spaces along the west side of the apparatus bay and a four bunk rooms for full time staff. The existing building is approximately 7,500 square feet and the expected additions are assumed to 1,200 to 2,000 (Option 2) square feet.

The existing station was constructed in 1976, and is deficient or outdated in several areas including ADA compliance, floor plan that is inefficient and doesn't take into account current best practices for firefighter health and wellness, cumbersome public entrance as well as being in need of replacing the HVAC system, roof and updating the fire station with current technologies and meeting current building code requirements.

As part of our analysis the Fire District provided program requests that can not be accommodated in the proposed building footprint or budget. The program document contained in our report reflects those items which can be accommodated (Attachment B).

II. SCOPE AND PROGRAM

The intent of this report is to assess the potential for renovating the existing fire station to meet the long term needs of the City and Fire District, or to establish what can be done in the short term to make the building functional while funding for a replacement station is being considered. The report provides a detailed discussion of upgrades necessary at the existing building. The following are some basic outlines of recommended program, scope and functional upgrades:

- The existing site is not large enough to accommodate the future needs of the City or Fire District.
- The required improvements can not fully accommodate the equipment and training needs of the large volunteer contingent that has always served the City alongside paid Fire personnel.
- The site is strategically located to provide services to the community.
- The existing building is 50 years old and in general has reached the end of its expected life. Any renovation of the existing building will have to address all building systems, in addition to site and building utility upgrades.

III. EXISTING DEFICIENCIES

The existing facility was constructed at a time when firefighter accommodations were much different than expected today. There are no separate gender neutral sleeping quarters or no separate gender neutral restroom facilities. The station was originally constructed to accommodate a volunteer staff so the sleeping accommodations are shared with Training Room and not designed specifically for sleeping. There are significant ADA Accessibility compliance issues and the Turnout Lockers located on the Apparatus Bay floor do not comply with NFPA Requirements.

The Station does not meet Essential Service Building requirements. The existing building structural system does not comply with current seismic design criteria. There are improper separation of "dirty and clean" requirements within the station and the station cannot accommodate proper decon procedures which negatively impacts firefighter health and wellness. Many of these conditions are captured in the photos included in Attachment C.

IV. BUILDING PROGRAM

The existing staffing at the station accommodates multiple pieces of equipment including a Truck, and Engine, a Type VI vehicle and a boat. Future requests include an additional Type I Engine a Type III Engine

to support 3 firefighters and a Captain for a total of 4 personnel.

There are several additional considerations taken into account when developing the new building program. These include:

- New Program Requirements
- Location / Site Constraints
- Equipment / Apparatus Accommodations
- Need for temporary facilities
- Best practices for “Hot Zone” Design
- Gender neutral living quarters (Bunk Rooms and Restrooms)
- Cost
- Future Growth
- Structural requirements – Basic Code and Essential Service Facilities

V. RENOVATE OR REBUILD

There are several considerations taken into account when looking at the option to renovate or rebuild and older Fire Station. These include:

Benefits of Rebuilding

- Potentially lower cost than ground-up new construction
- Maintain the same location
- Potential for shorter construction duration
- Extend the service life of an existing building
- Preserve historic or nostalgic facilities – light bulb

Renovation Constraints

- Unforeseen circumstances in existing building
- Additional coordination required for operating during construction
- Meeting current building codes and best practices can be a challenge
- Can often cost nearly as much as tear down and rebuild

Benefits of Building New

- Start Fresh/clean slate
- More opportunity to incorporate sustainability features
- Easier to comply with building codes
- Easier to incorporate latest technology & best practices for fire station design

Constraints of Building New

- Potentially higher cost than renovating
- May require additional discretionary approvals

- Longer construction duration

VI. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING BUILDING

The existing building floor plan does not lend itself to a modern fire station. Based on our current awareness of firefighter exposure to harmful materials when responding to calls, we design stations today to focus on firefighter health and wellness. Aspects of this design strategy include site specific decontamination procedures and equipment, separation of spaces to reinforce the cleanliness of the living quarters, specific mechanical ventilation system design to prevent air from traveling from the “dirty” side of the station to the living quarters (“Clean side”). Current station design also focuses on gender neutral sleeping and restroom facilities to accommodate an ever changing demographic of staffing. None of these aspects exist in the current station design nor can easily be accommodated without significant improvements.

The focus of our redesign effort was on accommodating these recommended improvements noted above. The plans for the proposed improvements can be found in Attachment A. The west side of the existing station was originally constructed with a series of masonry wing walls that appear to have been designed to accommodate an expansion of the Apparatus Bay. While we are not proposing to make use of all of the wing walls we do propose to capture that area to construct a new addition to accommodate several of the needed “dirty” functions including a Workshop, EMS Storage, Laundry/Decon facilities, a restroom (for use by fire personnel returning from a call prior to decon), Turnout Storage (Firefighter personal protective equipment) and Storage. We have designed the Turnout area to accommodate not only paid fire personnel (4 x 3 shifts = 12) but volunteer personnel (23) as well. This addition provides many of the required and recommended improvements for operational spaces within the fire station.

On the living quarters side of the station we are proposing significant modifications within the existing building footprint to accommodate the proper layout of spaces for the fire personnel stationed here and to help reduce response time out to the Apparatus Bay floor. Most significantly we are adding four individual bunk rooms to accommodate a bed and 3 personal lockers in each bunk room to support the multiple shifts of personnel. We are providing two gender neutral restrooms and a separate laundry area to launder personal gear without mixing it with PPE or response materials. We are proposing to renovate and remodel the kitchen/dining and Day Room area, to more efficiently accommodate the station staff. The existing office areas will be generally maintained with upgrades as needed. An accessible restroom is provided to meet code and provide a restroom available for public coming to the station. Importantly an airlock vestibule is provided to control access to the Apparatus Bay area to prevent contaminants from entering the living quarters of the station.

The existing building plumbing and mechanical systems are dated and will not properly serve the needs of the revised floor plan. As part of the renovation new systems will be installed. Similarly, the building electrical power, lighting and communications systems will be upgraded as part of the renovation.

From a structural standpoint, the existing building has significant challenges to meet current standard seismic design criteria. The current Apparatus Bay walls on the north and south have significant challenges that are partially mitigated through the new walls of the addition. On the east and west walls of the Apparatus Bay improved shear wall nailing and adding new holddowns are required. For the living quarters of the station, to accommodate the code required egress windows from the bunk rooms will require adding additional structural support of the existing wall. On most of the remaining exterior walls additional holddowns will be required. Additional steel beams will be added to support the existing roof where existing framing needs to be modified to accommodate the new floor plan. Removal of the existing 2x6 ceiling structure will aid in providing flexibility for addition of new fire rated partitions.

In addressing the current code deficiencies we can accommodate the increase to meet Essential Service Requirements as well.

VII. BUILDING COST COMPARISON

Sebastopol Fire Station 1 Renovation Option 1

Sebastopol, CA

1/15/2025

Total Existing Renovation Building Area SF 7,065
 Total New Addition Building Area SF 1,235

Site/Building Costs

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----|-------------|--------------------|---|
| Offsite Improvements | 1 | LS | | \$0 | No improvement to existing driveways, sidewalks, etc. |
| Site improvements | 1 | LS | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | Minimal Site Improvements. Cost associated with excavation for addition |
| Renovation of Existing Station | 7,065 | SF | \$350 | \$2,472,750 | |
| New Building Addition | 1,235 | SF | \$800 | \$988,000 | |
| Subtotal Site/Building Costs | | | | \$3,510,750 | |
| Indirect Costs | | | | | |
| Testing & Inspections | 1 | LS | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | |
| Phase One Environmental Assessment | 1 | LS | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | |
| Geotechnical Update letter | 1 | LS | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | |
| Utility Company fees | 1 | LS | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | |
| Design Fees | 10 | % | | \$351,075 | |
| Permits, etc. | 1 | LS | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | |
| Furniture & Equipment (FFE) | 1 | LS | \$75,000 | \$75,000 | |
| Subtotal Indirect Costs | | | | \$576,075 | |
| Total Construction Cost | | | | | |
| Site/Building Cost | | | | \$3,510,750 | |
| Indirect Cost | | | | \$576,075 | |
| Subtotal | | | | \$4,086,825 | |
| | | | | | |
| Contractor General Conditions | 12 | % | \$3,510,750 | \$421,290 | |
| Contractor Overhead and Profit | 5 | % | | \$196,602 | |
| Design Contingency | 15 | % | | \$619,296 | |
| Construction Contingency | 10 | % | | \$474,794 | |
| Total Estimated Project Cost | | | | \$5,798,807 | |

VII. BUILDING COST COMPARISON

Sebastopol Fire Station 1 Renovation Option 2

Sebastopol, CA

1/15/2025

Total Existing Renovation Building Area SF 7,065
 Total New Addition Building Area SF 1,935

Site/Building Costs

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----|-------------|--------------------|---|
| Offsite Improvements | 1 | LS | | \$0 | No improvement to existing driveways, sidewalks, etc. |
| Site improvements | 1 | LS | \$75,000 | \$75,000 | Minimal Site Improvements. Cost associated with excavation for addition |
| Renovation of Existing Station | 7,065 | SF | \$370 | \$2,614,050 | |
| New Building Addition | 1,935 | SF | \$875 | \$1,693,125 | |
| Subtotal Site/Building Costs | | | | \$4,382,175 | |
| Indirect Costs | | | | | |
| Testing & Inspections | 1 | LS | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | |
| Phase One Environmental Assessment | 1 | LS | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | |
| Geotechnical Update letter | 1 | LS | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | |
| Utility Company fees | 1 | LS | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | |
| Design Fees | 10 | % | | \$438,218 | |
| Permits, etc. | 1 | LS | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | |
| Furniture & Equipment (FFE) | 1 | LS | \$75,000 | \$75,000 | |
| Subtotal Indirect Costs | | | | \$663,218 | |
| Total Construction Cost | | | | | |
| Site/Building Cost | | | | \$4,382,175 | |
| Indirect Cost | | | | \$663,218 | |
| Subtotal | | | | \$5,045,393 | |
| | | | | | |
| Contractor General Conditions | 12 | % | \$4,382,175 | \$525,861 | |
| Contractor Overhead and Profit | 5 | % | | \$245,402 | |
| Design Contingency | 15 | % | | \$773,016 | |
| Construction Contingency | 10 | % | | \$592,645 | |
| Total Estimated Project Cost | | | | \$7,182,316 | |

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the building and site, reviewing the proposed building program and assessing the cost implications we have reached the following conclusions for your consideration. With the understanding that the goal is to be able to quickly accommodate full time on duty staffing of a single company, there are significant changes that need to be made to the current building in order to safely and effectively accommodate this full time staff. The design concepts presented are based on the understanding that a remodel and not a replacement is the only viable immediate option. That said, it is my opinion, that these improvements are going to be a band aid to meet the immediate need, but based on the available budget of approximately \$5M from Measure H funds, will not be viable long term. Every new fire station we build today we design for a 50-75 year lifespan (the existing building is at 50 years old now). Based on my experience in designing new and remodeled fire stations I believe:

1. The building, once improved for the current need may suffice for the next 5-10 before it needs to be replaced.
2. The cost of a replacement building in today's dollars is approximately \$12-\$15 million for a similar single company station and up to \$20M for a multi-company station. As a point of reference, we have a single company station under construction for the City of Santa Rosa that is approximately \$18M construction cost. I would note that the site has significant site development cost included in that number which your current site would not have (retaining walls, major utility relocation costs, etc.).
3. The cost noted above is hard dollar construction cost, and not total project cost. Additional "soft costs" (design fees, utility company fees, permits, staff costs, etc.) would add 25-35% to the hard dollar construction cost.
4. The current building can be modified to accommodate the additional immediate needs. However, the site layout with these improvements is not ideal and not what I would propose if we were building new today.

The cost estimate provided is based on cost data from prior projects and is subject to change once detailed designs are developed. A design contingency has been included to cover cost of additional information which will become available as the design progresses. Note that the cost does not include temporary facility costs to house the fire equipment and personnel during the course of construction. A phased construction to allow the station to remain operational is not practical.

Based on the stated available funds, it is our recommendation that Option 1 be pursued to address shorter term needs, while funding for a full replacement of the station be initiated as a permanent solution to service the fire and emergency response needs of the City.

SEBASTOPOL FIRE STATION
 Preliminary Fire Station Program
 Date Completed:

9-Jan-24

| ADMINISTRATIVE AREA | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| Type of Space: | | Fire Admin | Space Standards | | | |
| No. | Requirement | Space Attributes | Requested SF | Comments | Budget SF | Comments |
| 1 | Lobby | | 200 | | 65 | Existing to Remain |
| 2 | Reception | | 100 | | 80 | |
| 3 | Public Restroom | ADA Accessible | 140 | (2) Adjacent to Lobby | 65 | Previous Women's Restroom |
| 4 | Chief Office | | 150 | | 175 | Existing to Remain |
| 5 | Private Office | | 350 | 2 offices, 1 with meeting space | 155 | 1 Office, Previous Bldg. Dept. |
| 6 | Fire Safety Inspector | | 75 | Workstation | 0 | |
| 7 | Fire Marshal | | 75 | Workstation | 0 | |
| 8 | Workstations | | 225 | Admin. & 2 Open Stations | 175 | Open Office |
| 9 | Training Room | | 1200 | 25 - 100 People | 0 | 700 SF in Option 2 |
| 10 | Copy Room | | 80 | | 0 | |
| 11 | Custodial | | 80 | | 0 | |
| 12 | Records Storage | | 150 | | 0 | |
| 13 | General Storage | | 100 | | 55 | |
| Fire Admin SUBTOTAL: | | | 2,925 | | 770 | |

| APPARATUS | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Type of Space: | | Space Attributes | Space Standards | | | |
| No. | Requirement | Space Attributes | SF | Comments | Budget SF | Comments |
| 1 | Apparatus Bay | | 4,800 | 3 Bays | 3550 | Existing to Remain |
| 2 | Workshop | Workbench / Tool Storage | 200 | | 140 | |
| 3 | SCBA Maintenance & Compressor | | 250 | | 0 | |
| 4 | Turnouts | | 500 | Storage for 35 Turnouts | 400 | Storage for 35 Turnouts |
| 5 | Decontamination | Decon / Clean Room / Custodial / Storage | 350 | | 170 | |
| 6 | EMS Storage | Locking Storage Casework | 120 | | 90 | |
| 7 | Single Occupancy Restroom | Accessible from App Bay | 70 | | 65 | |
| 8 | Supply Storage | | 120 | | 120 | |
| 9 | Radio Storage | | 80 | | 50 | Located in Vestibule Storage |
| 10 | Hose Storage | | 100 | | 0 | |
| SUBTOTAL: | | | 6,590 | | 4,585 | |

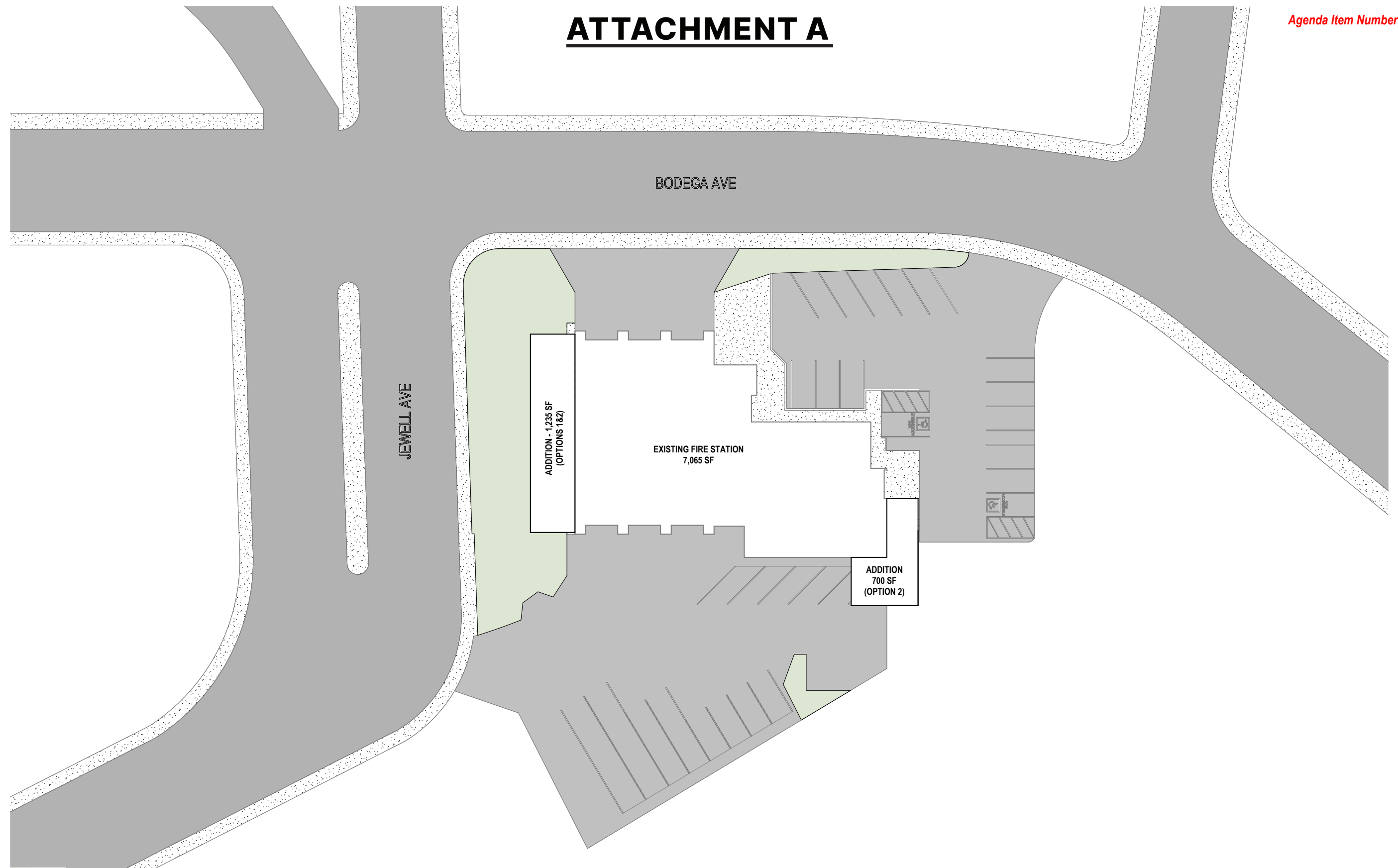
| LIVING QUARTERS | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|--|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Type of Space: | | Space Attributes | Space Standards | | | |
| No. | Requirement | Space Attributes | SF | Comments | Budget SF | Comments |
| 1 | Dorm Sleeping Rooms | Single Occupancy Dorms | 960 | 8 Bunks w/ Bed, Desk, 3 Lockers | 480 | 4 Bunks w/ Bed, Desk, 3 Lockers |
| 2 | Dorm Restrooms | Individual Restrooms with Showers | 400 | 4 Restrooms | 150 | 2 Restrooms |
| 3 | Captain's Quarters | Single Occupancy Dorm & Restroom | 225 | 1 Bunk, Bed, Desk, 3 Lockers | 0 | |
| 4 | Day Room | Space for recliners, built-in casework | 500 | | 350 | |
| 5 | Kitchen | | 500 | | 350 | |
| 6 | Dining | | 200 | | 200 | |
| 7 | Vestibule | | 100 | | 80 | |
| 8 | Laundry/Utility Room | | 100 | | 200 | Includes Storage, Mech., Jan. |
| 9 | Fitness | | 750 | | 0 | |
| SUBTOTAL: | | | 3,735 | | 1,810 | |

| SYSTEMS & UTILITIES | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Type of Space: | | Space Attributes | Space Standards | | | |
| No. | Requirement | Space Attributes | SF | Comments | Budget SF | Comments |
| 1 | Emergency Generator | Exterior | | | | Existing to Remain |
| 2 | Electrical Room | | 150 | | 70 | Existing to Remain |
| 3 | Telecom Room | | 100 | | | |
| 5 | Fire Sprinkler System | | 0 | Dedicated Fire Riser Room | 0 | |
| 7 | Mechanical / Utilities | Hot Water Heater | 100 | | 0 | Included in Laundry Room SF |
| SUBTOTAL: | | | 350 | | 70 | |

| SPACE NEEDS SUMMARY | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--|--------------|--|
| | SF | | Budget SF | |
| ADMINISTRATIVE AREA | 2,925 | | 770 | |
| LIVING QUARTERS | 3,735 | | 1,810 | |
| APPARATUS | 6,590 | | 4,585 | |
| SYSTEMS & UTILITIES | 350 | | 70 | |
| BUILDING SUBTOTAL (SF) | 13,600 | | 7,235 | |
| Circulation/Structurel | 2,720 | | 1,065 | |
| FIRE STATION GRAND TOTAL (SF)" | 16,320 | | 8,300 | |

ATTACHMENT A

Agenda Item Number: 7



SEBASTOPOL FIRE STATION ASSESSMENT

SITE PLAN

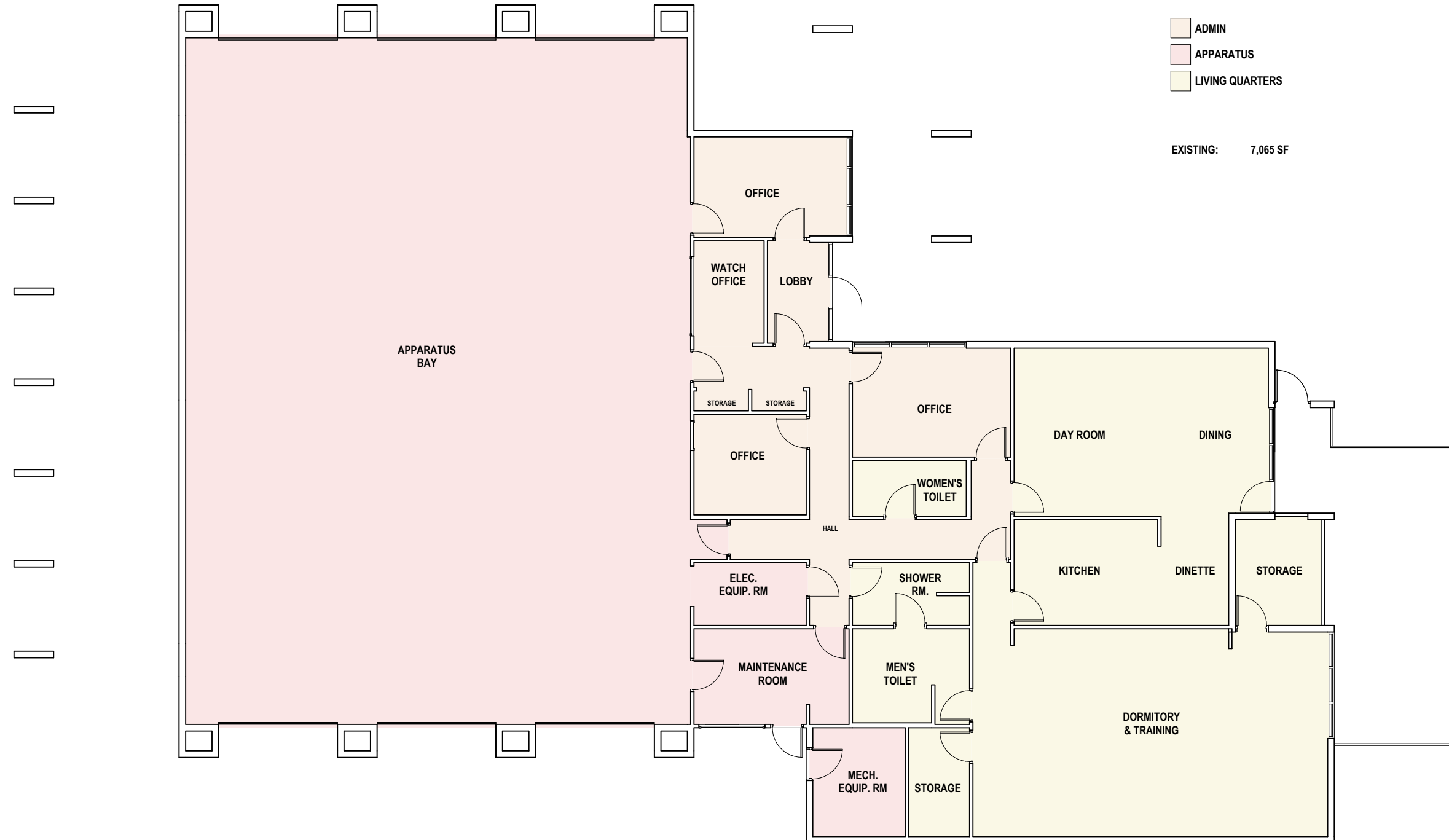


SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



CONCEPT DESIGN STUDY 01/09/25

ATTACHMENT A



SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

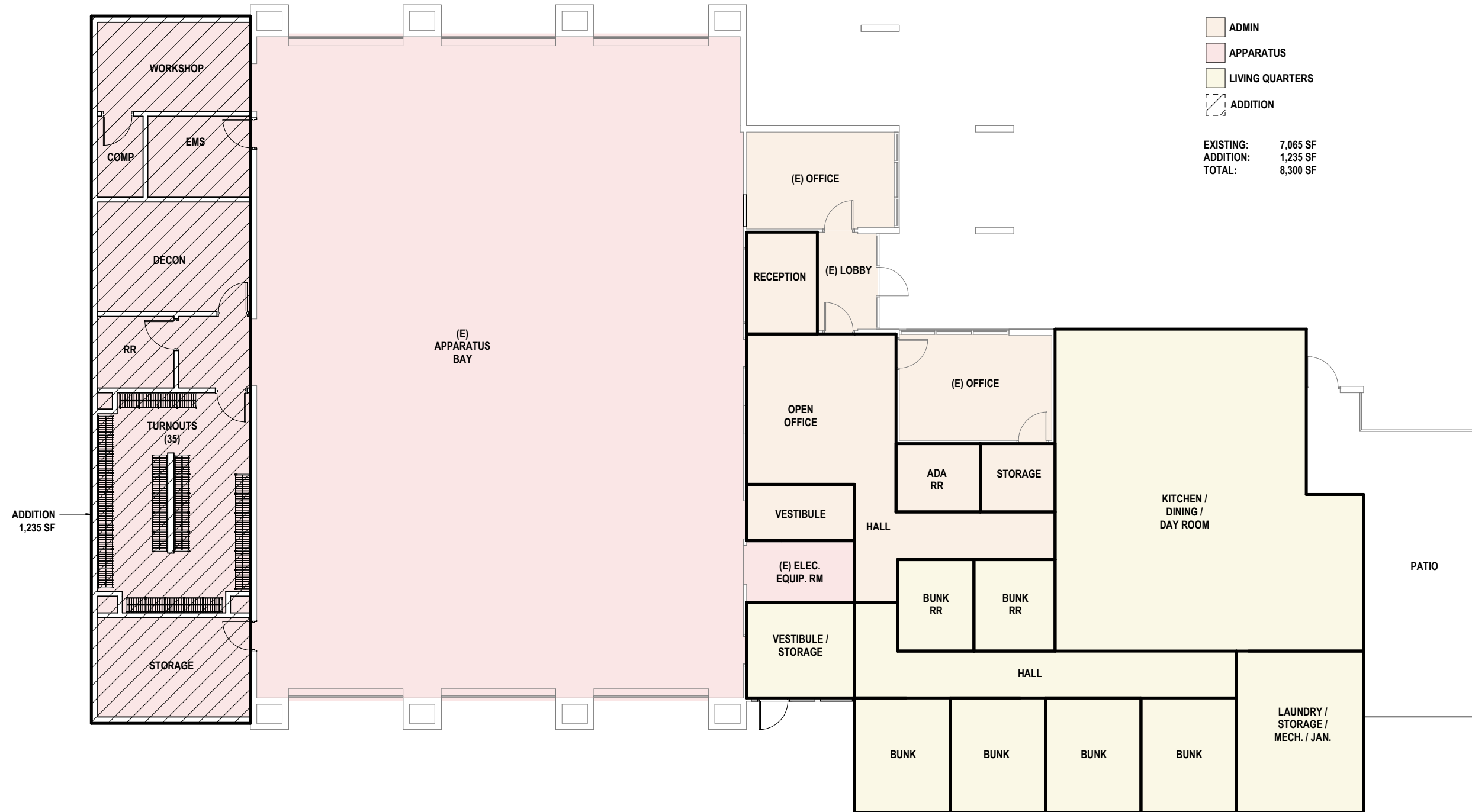
SEBASTOPOL FIRE STATION ASSESSMENT

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN



CONCEPT DESIGN STUDY 01/09/25

ATTACHMENT A



SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

SEBASTOPOL FIRE STATION ASSESSMENT

FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 1



CONCEPT DESIGN STUDY, 01/09/25

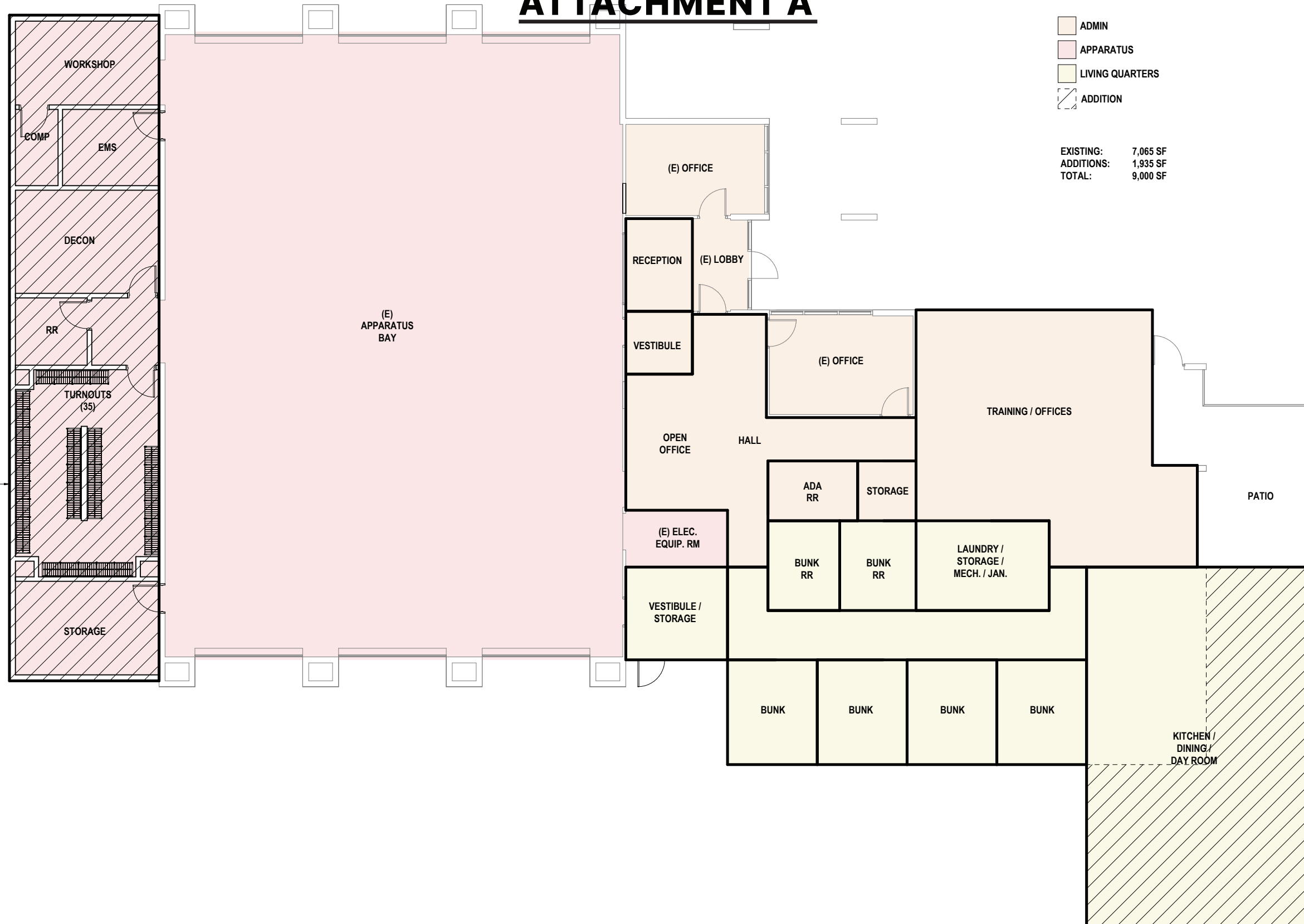
ATTACHMENT A

- ADMIN
- APPARATUS
- LIVING QUARTERS
- ADDITION

EXISTING: 7,065 SF
 ADDITIONS: 1,935 SF
 TOTAL: 9,000 SF

ADDITION
1,235 SF

ADDITION
700 SF



SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

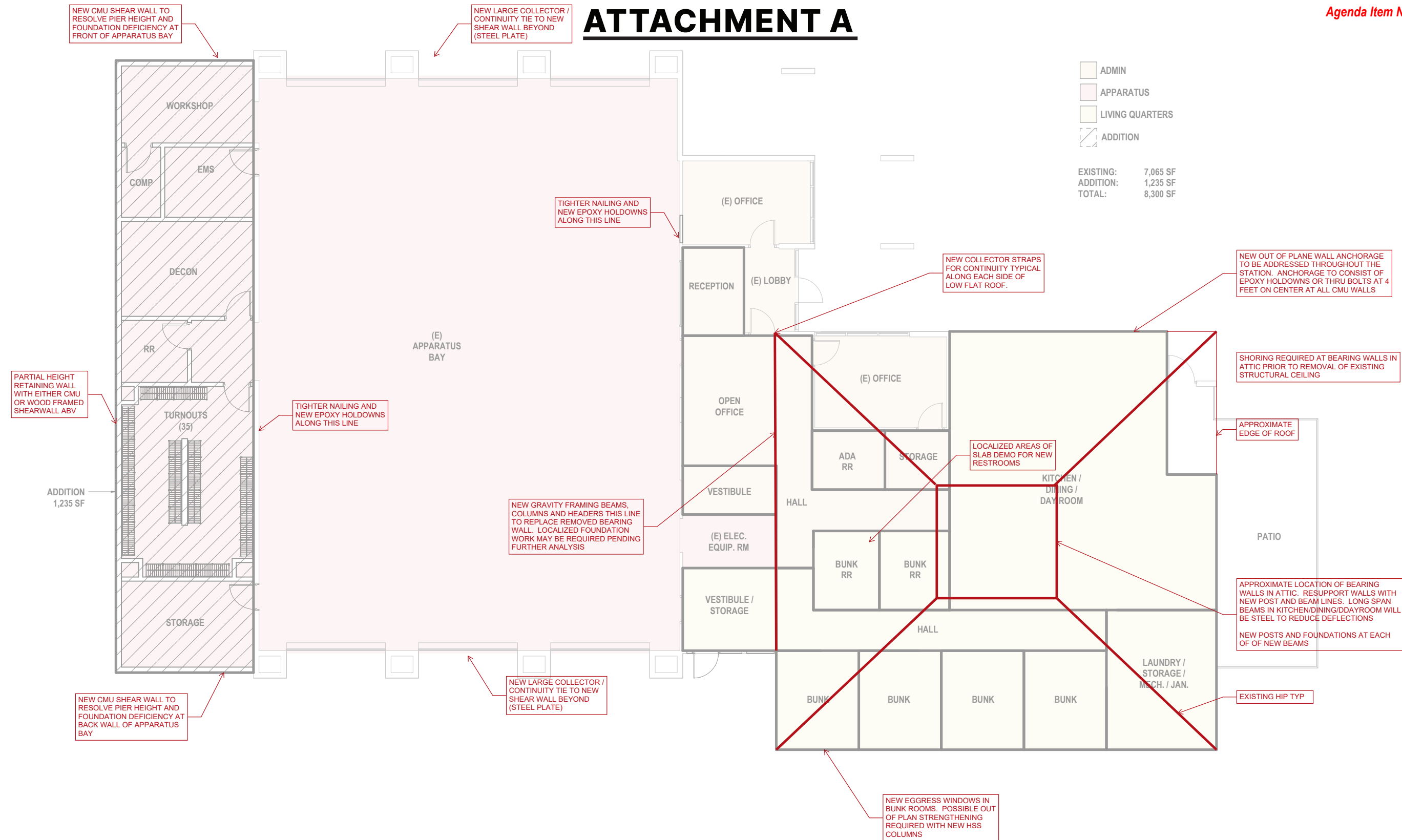
SEBASTOPOL FIRE STATION ASSESSMENT

FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 2



CONCEPT DESIGN STUDY 01/09/25

ATTACHMENT A



SEBASTOPOL FIRE STATION ASSESSMENT

FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 1



SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

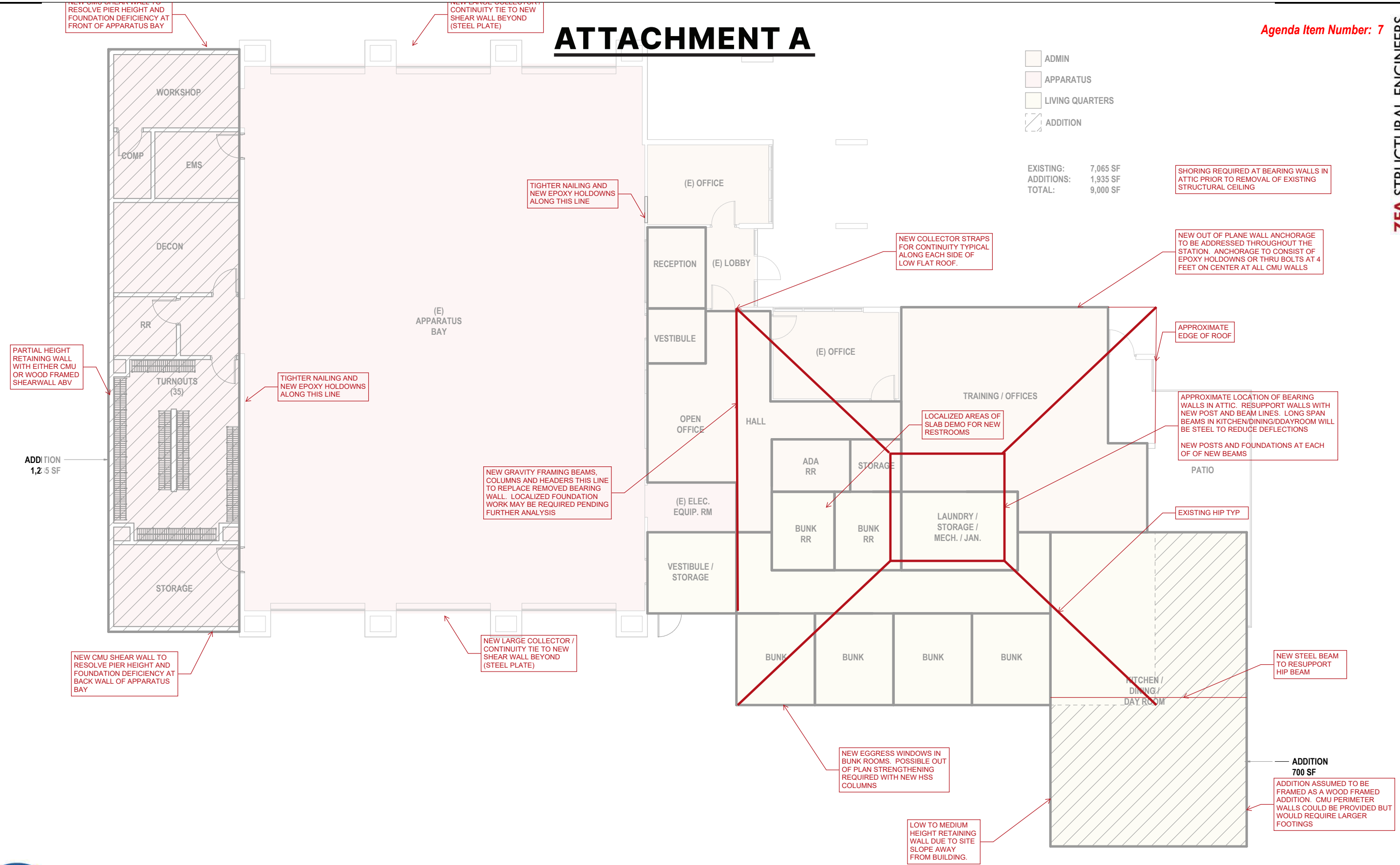


CONCEPT DESIGN STUDY 01/09/25

ATTACHMENT A

Agenda Item Number: 7

ZFA STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
250 D Street | Suite 200 | Santa Rosa, CA 95404 | 707.526.0992 | zfa.com



SEBASTOPOL FIRE STATION ASSESSMENT

FLOOR PLAN - OPTION 2



SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"



CONCEPT DESIGN STUDY 01/09/25

City Council Meeting Packet for Meeting of: February 4, 2025

Page 117 of 166

Space Needs Assessment

As Provided by Gold Ridge Fire District

November 2024



©2022

Please fill out this questionnaire to describe your expectations and desires for your new facility. Feel free to add any additional information that you think is not addressed. If we have not provided enough space, please add pages as necessary from the back of the questionnaire.

General Questions

1. What do you feel is important about your community relative to this project?

The design should be consistent with Sebastopol's "look" and not stand out as an eye sore.

2. What image should this facility portray to the community and (location)?

The station should look staffed and portray a level of professionalism.

3. Describe the "feeling" and character of the facility you wish to design. Address the "public" community areas, firefighter "living" areas, apparatus/support areas and maintenance area.

The station should have a flow complementing rapid access to the apparatus bay. Additionally, the station should be welcoming and warm with an emphasis on a fire "house". A training room is necessary for volunteer trainings and community meeting areas. We need dormitories for at minimum 4 firefighters, preferably 6-8. This will accommodate on duty crews with the ability to expand and provide dorms for upstaffing events.

4. What are the five most important features that will make it a good facility? (List from most important to least important).

- (a) Dormitories
- (b) Bathrooms and shower facilities
- (c) Training Room
- (d) Storage
- (e) Kitchen / Cooking Areas

5. What are the five worst design problems you have in your current facilities?

- (a) No dorms
- (b) Inadequate bathrooms and showers
- (c) Station internal movements / "flow"
- (d) Lack of storage, including PPE lockers
- (e) Need to move PPE Extractor out of interior shower area to apparatus bay, and move ice maker interior.

6. Are there any particular fire stations you feel would be a good model for your facility?

Name N/A
Why?

7. Identification of activities and functions (mark all boxes which apply):

- Aid calls
- Fire calls
- Hazmat response
- Fire prevention activities
- Onsite public interface
- Onsite interface with other agencies
- Voting
- Vehicle maintenance
- E.O.C.
- Cooking/eating/sleeping
- Private study
- Meetings (department and/or public)

| Department Meetings | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Department | # of People |
| Volunteer Drill Trainings | 35 |
| Admin. Business | 12 |
| Volunteer Assoc. Meetings | 35 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

- Public meetings**
of people @ chairs and tables
- 1-5 people
 - 5-12 people
 - 12-25 people
 - 25-50 people
 - 50-100 people
 - 100-125 people
 - 125-150 people
 - people

Inside training
Type

Training room muster and classroom presentation

Outside drilling/training
Type

Apparatus Bay trainings and exterior training (i.e. ladder throws)

Physical Training
Type

Facility needs a physical fitness training area.

Other
Type

8. Apparatus Inventory (Include Reserve Vehicles, Boats etc.)

| Type and Age | Length | Width | Weight | Turning Radius | |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|----------------|--------|
| | | | | Outside | Inside |
| Type 6 (8355) 5 yrs | 24' 10" | 9' 2" | 18,000 | | |
| Ladder truck (8350) 22 yrs | 40' 2" | 9' 9" | 70,800 | | |
| Type 3 (8361) 28 yrs | 24' 2" | 9' 9" | Unknown | | |
| Type 1 (8380) 13 yrs | 31' | 10' 1" | 43,500 | | |
| Type 1 (8381) 34 yrs | 27' 10" | 9' 8" | 40,500 | | |
| | | | | | |
| FYI: new Type 3 & 1 are on order | | | | | |
| Expect dimensions to be similar | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

9. Preferred Apparatus Configuration

| | Length | Drive Through | Preferred Hierarchy and type of vehicle (if more than one pre bay) |
|---------|--------|---------------|---|
| Bay # 1 | FT. | Y / N | Type 1's (8380 & 8381) |
| Bay # 2 | FT. | Y / N | Ladder truck (8350) |
| Bay # 3 | FT. | Y / N | Type 3 & Type 6 (8361 & 8355) |
| Bay # 4 | FT. | Y / N | |
| Bay # 5 | FT. | Y / N | |
| Bay # 6 | FT. | Y / N | |
| Bay # 7 | FT. | Y / N | |

10. Other:

The apparatus bays are designed as pull throughs, but two bays are double stacked with apparatus. One bay (8350) has the dept.'s PPE lockers blocking back half of bay.

| General Information | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Number of paid personnel in City: | 2 |
| Number of volunteers in City: | 30 |
| Number of fire Stations in City: | 1 |
| Anticipated Move-In Date: | Currently occupied |
| Has a site been selected? | Yes |
| Size of the Site: | Acres: 0.72 (TWO PARCELS) |
| Physical Description of the Site: | Existing station approx. 50 years old |
| Is a survey available? | No |
| Has a facilities and response planning study been done? | Unknown |
| Other: | |

| Administrative Area | Existing | Needed |
|--|----------|--------|
| Lobby, Reception: | X | |
| Public Toilet Room: | X | |
| Chief's Office: | X | |
| Deputy/Assistant Chief's Office: | | |
| Battalion Chief's Office: | | |
| Fire Safety Inspector: | | X |
| Fire Marshal: | | X |
| Plans Review Room: | | |
| Administrative Work Stations: | X | |
| Open Office/Work Stations: | X | |
| Private Office (w/ meeting space): | | X |
| Private Office (w/o meeting space): | X | |
| Private Office (w/sleeping): | | |
| Staff Toilet Room: | X | |
| Staff Locker Rooms: | | X |
| Library: | | |
| Break Room: | X | |
| Work Room, Copier, Mailing, Office Supplies, etc.: | X | |
| File Storage- Active: | X | |
| File Storage- Archive: | X | |
| Conference Room: | | |
| Training Room: | X | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Multi-Purpose Room/Community Room: | X | |
| Coffee Bar: | | |
| Media Production: | | |
| Aid Room: | | |
| General Storage: | | X |
| Custodial Room: | | X |
| Other: | | |

| Apparatus Area | Existing | Needed |
|---|----------|--------|
| Apparatus Bay's: | 3 | |
| Drive-Through Bays? #: | 3 | |
| Reserve Apparatus: | 1 | |
| Trailer Storage: | | X |
| Rescue Boat: | | X |
| Maintenance Bay: | | X |
| Turnout Storage/Lockers: #: Size: <i>Need storage for 35 turnouts</i> | | X |
| Extractor/Drying/Laundry: | | X |
| Decon/Clean Room: | | X |
| Toilet Room: | X | |
| Report Desk/Dispatch Counter: | X | |
| Battery Charge Alcove: | | X |
| Workshop: | X | |
| Compressor Room: | X | |
| SCBA Maintenance/Air Room: | | X |
| Custodial Room: | | X |
| Supply Storage: | | X |
| EMS Storage: | | X |
| Hazmat Storage: | | |
| Radio Storage: | | X |
| General Storage: | | X |
| Disaster Relief Supply Room: | | |
| Hose Storage: | X | |
| Apparatus Washing/Supply Alcove: | | X |
| Shift Training Room: | X | |
| Other: | | |

| Crew Area | | Existing | Needed |
|------------------|--|----------|--------|
| | Battalion Chief Living Quarters: | | |
| | Battalion Chief Bathroom: | | |
| | Captain's Living Quarters: | | X |
| | Captain's Bathroom: | | |
| | Kitchen: | X | |
| | Dining: | X | |
| | Day Room: # of Personnel: Sufficient seating for 6 | X | |
| | Study, Library: | X | |
| | Exercise/Fitness Room: | | X |
| | Dorm/Sleeping Room(s): # of Personnel to Accommodate: (6-8) | | X |
| | Amenities: 6 Bed 4 Desk & Chair 6-8 Lockers | | X |
| | Restroom/Showers: | | X |
| | Laundry/Utility Room: | X | |
| | Custodial Room: | | X |
| | Crew Area Storage: | | X |
| | Other: | | |

| Systems | | Existing | Needed |
|----------------|--------------------------------|----------|--------|
| | Telecomm Room: | X | |
| | Electrical Room: | X | |
| | Elevator/Elevator Equipment: | | |
| | Solid Waste/Recycling Storage: | | |
| | Fire Sprinkler Riser Room | | |
| | Emergency Generator: | X | |
| | Building Storage: | | |
| | Other: | | |

| Maintenance Facilities | | Existing | Needed |
|-------------------------------|--|----------|--------|
| | Maintenance Bays (Number, Type Apparatus, Vehicles): | | |
| | Drive-Through Bays? Number: | X | |
| | Mechanic's Office: | | |
| | Toilet Room: | | |
| | Maintenance Work Area: | X | |
| | Tool Room: | | X |

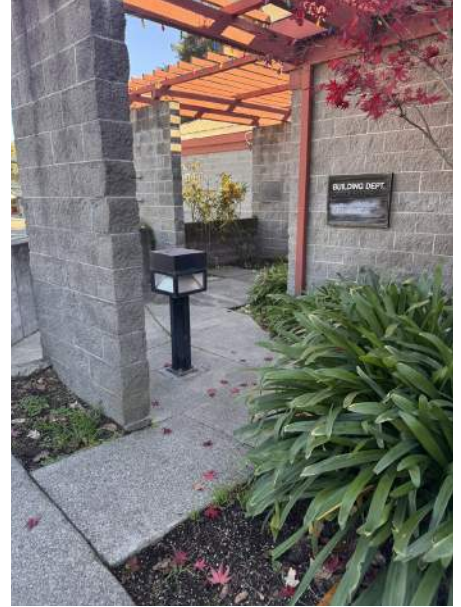
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|----------------------------|---|---|
| Waste/Bulk Oil: | | |
| Welding Area: | | |
| Hardware Storage: | X | |
| Work Shop: | X | |
| Grounds Equipment Storage: | | X |
| Cascade System: | X | |
| Electrical room: | X | |
| Mechanical Room: | | |
| Other | | |

| Site Development | | Existing | Needed |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|--------|
| | Drill Area (Approx. Size): | | |
| | Hose Drying Rack/Area: | X | |
| | Training Building/Tower: | | |
| | Pump Test Pit: | X | |
| | Antenna Tower: | | |
| | Helicopter Pad: | | |
| | Vehicle Wash Area: | | X |
| | Fuel Island: | X | |
| | Trash Enclosure: | | X |
| | Parking: (# of spaces) | X | |
| | Special Vehicle Requirements: | | |
| | Other: | | |



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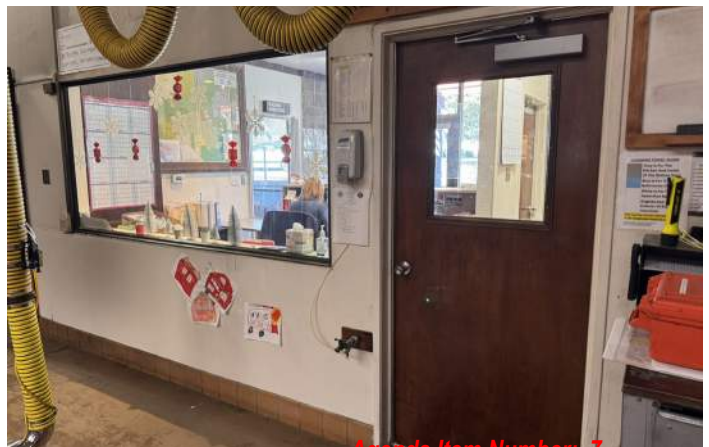
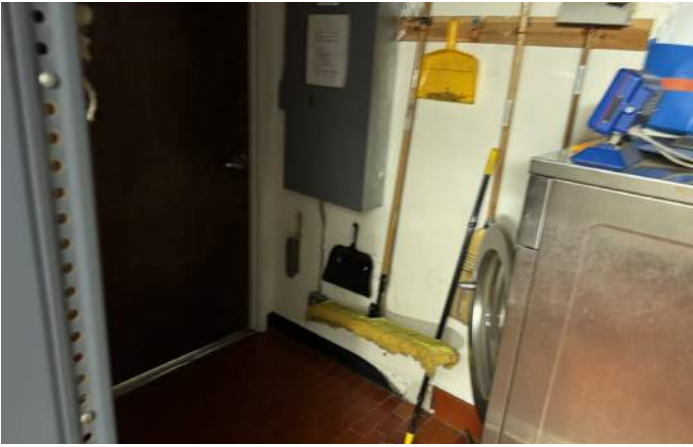
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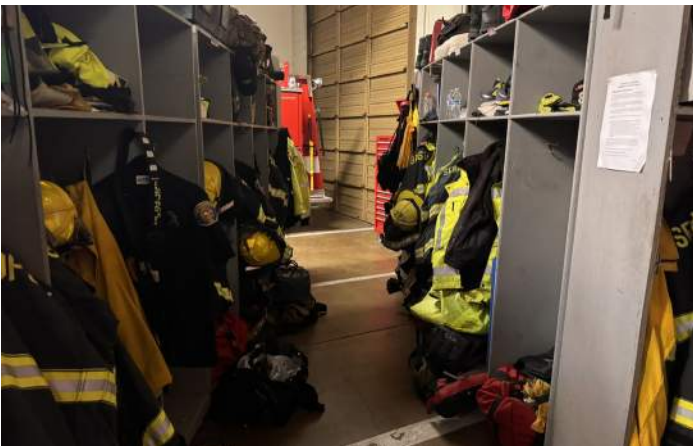
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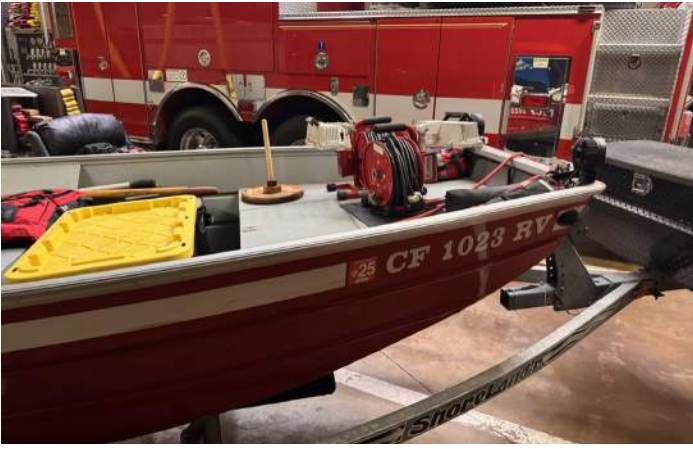
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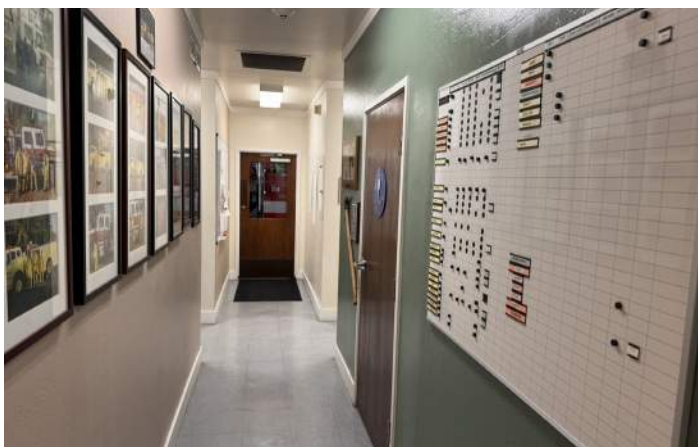
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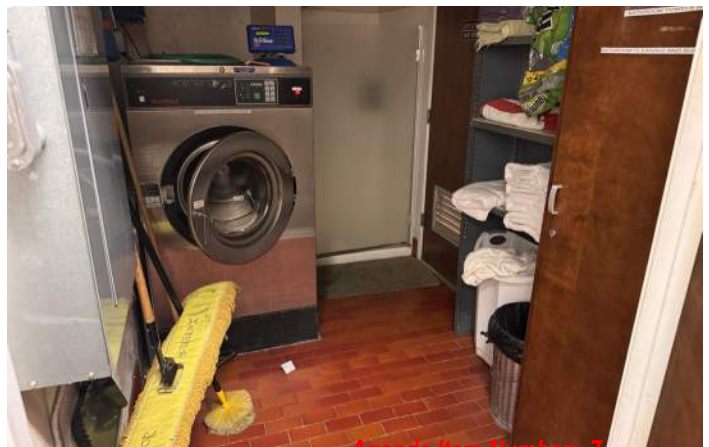
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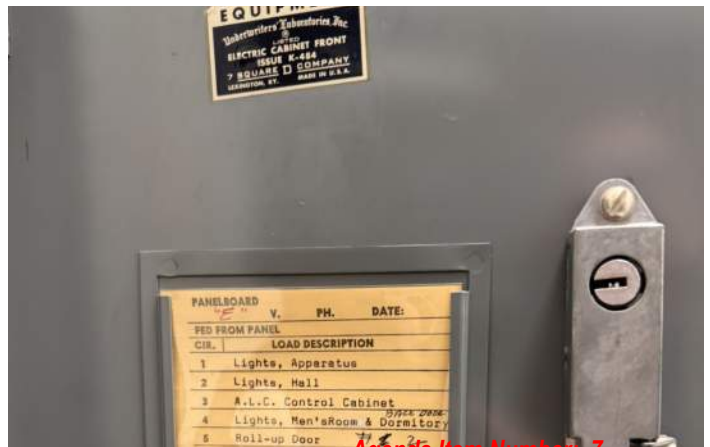
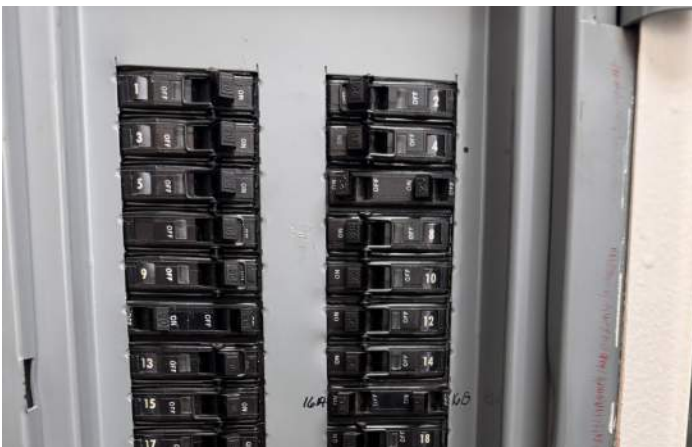
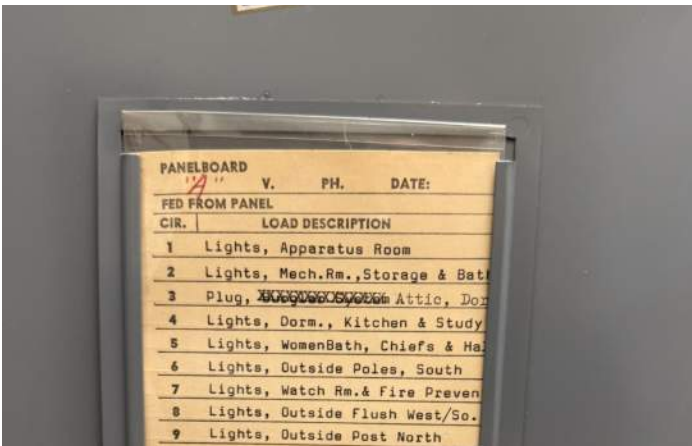
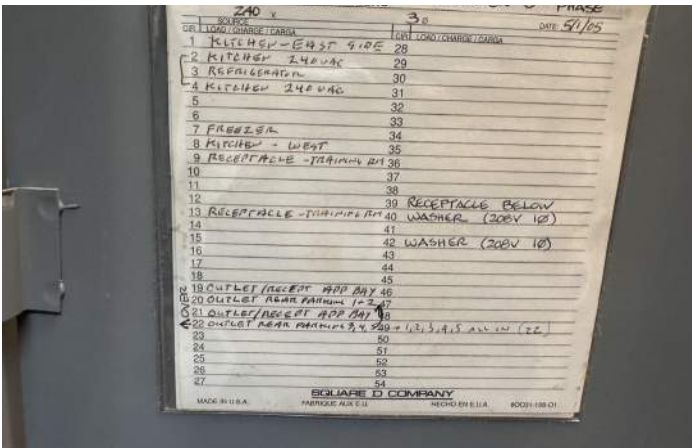
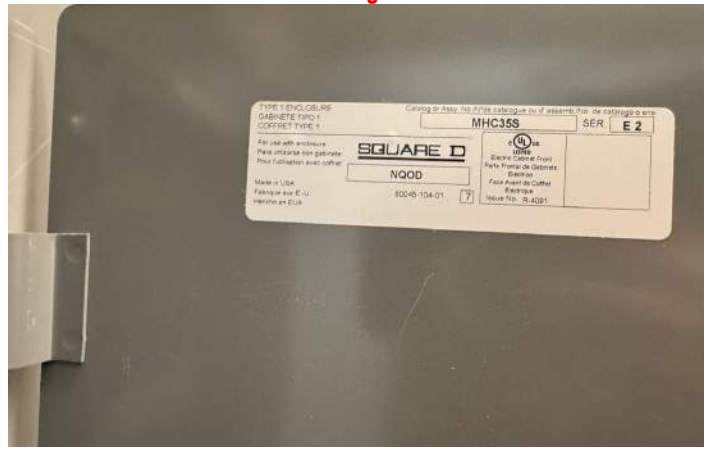
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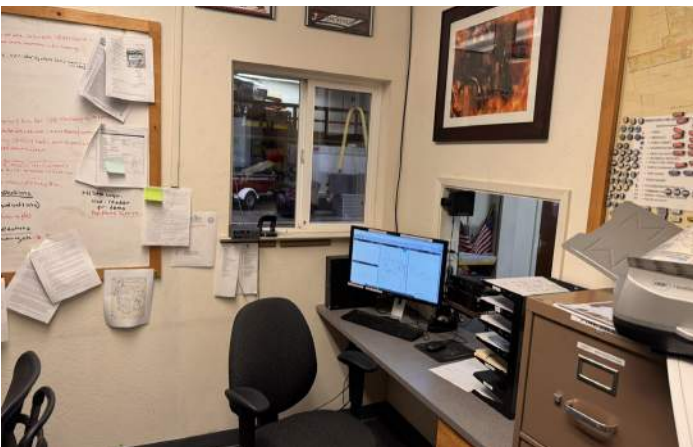
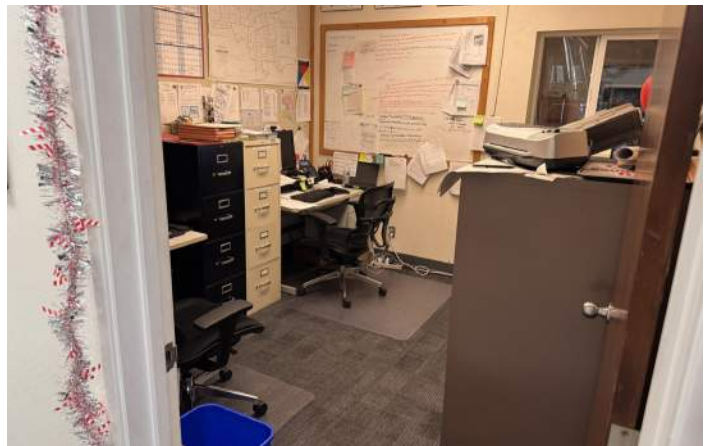
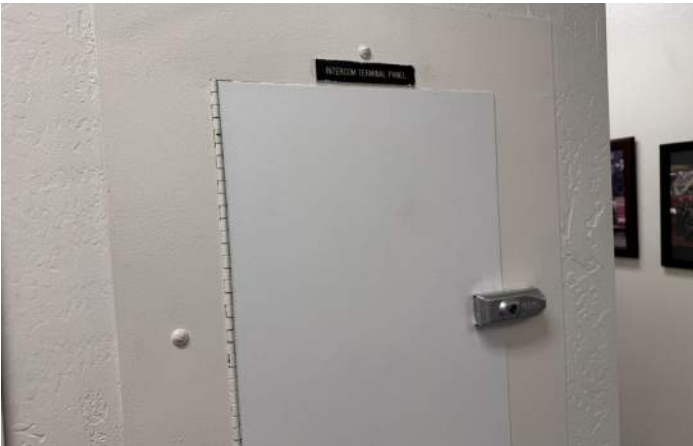
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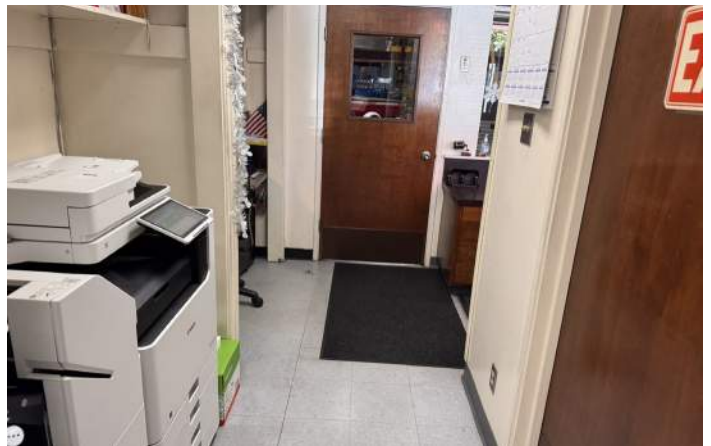
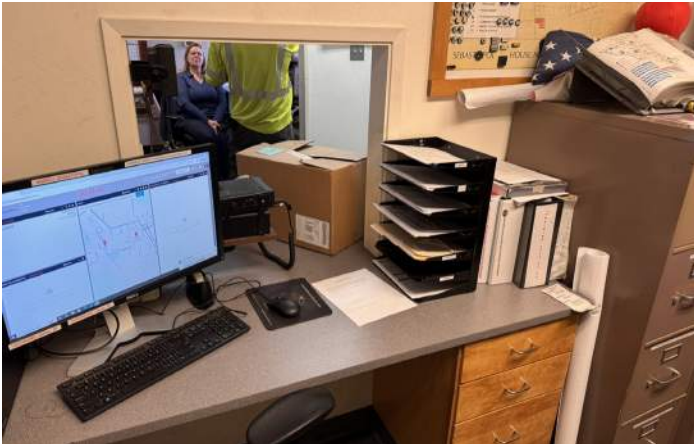
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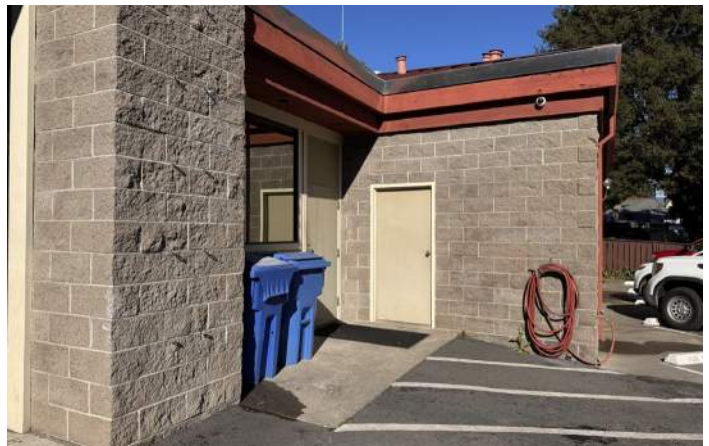
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City Council Meeting Packet for Meeting of: February 4, 2025

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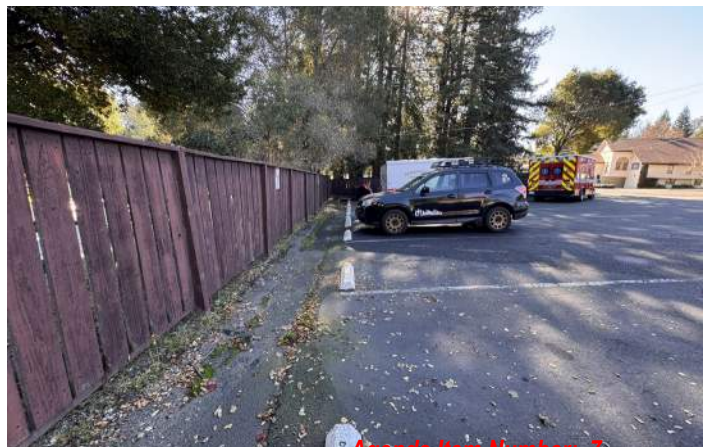
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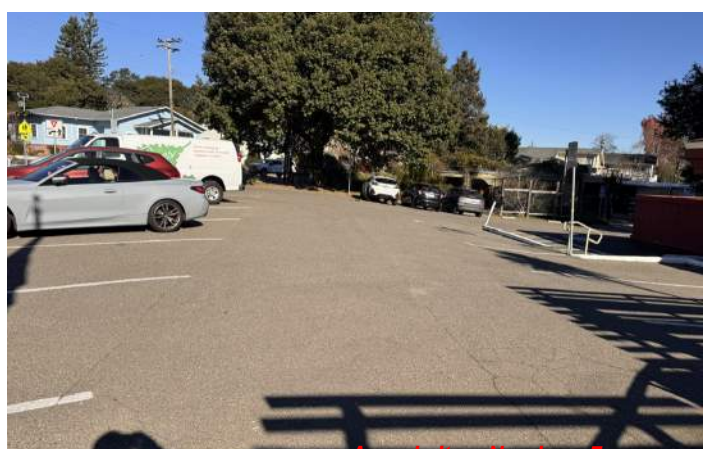
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Fire Reorganization: Sebastopol and Gold Ridge

February 4, 2025

Bottom Line Up Front

Substantially better services for \$1 million/year less in General Fund than remaining independent.

Requires a parcel tax – whether combined or independent – for high-quality service

Gold Ridge requires parcel tax to be uniform across District

Typical: \$265/year for single family home

BACKGROUND

- 8 years of discussion and analysis
- April, 2024: Decision to proceed w/Gold Ridge
- July, 2024: Initiated Negotiations
- October, 2024: Adopted resolution affirming decision
- Tonight: Approve application to Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)

Other Developments Since April

- Combined Gold Ridge and Sebastopol Ad Hoc Committees conducted extensive negotiations
- Citygate compared reorganization and stand-alone options in depth
- COAR Design assessed fire station
- City expanding staffing

Staffing Comparison: Future Recommended Reorg & Future Stand-alone

Future Reorganized

- ▶ Shared Fire Chief
- ▶ 3 Shared Battalion Chiefs
- ▶ 1 Fire Prevention Captain
- ▶ 0.25 Admin
- ▶ 3 Fire Captains
- ▶ 3 Fire Engineers
- ▶ 3 Firefighters
- ▶ Pool of 178 volunteers

Future Stand Alone

- ▶ Fire Chief
- ▶ 2 Battalion Chiefs (40 hours)
 - ▶ Fire Marshall
 - ▶ Training, Fleet, Logistics
- ▶ 1 Admin (in Fire)
- ▶ 0.5-1 Admin (in City Hall)
- ▶ 3 Fire Captains
- ▶ 3 Fire Engineers
- ▶ 3 Firefighters
- ▶ Pool of 30 Volunteers

Better Response Times at Lower Cost through Economies of Scale

- Shared Fire Chief
- 3 Shared Battalion Chiefs – Provide 24/7/365 Coverage
- Lower admin staff costs
- Greater depth in Captains, Engineers, and Firefighters improves coverage and reduces overtime

Apparatus (engines and trucks)

- All Sebastopol Fire Trucks/Engines will transfer as-is to Gold Ridge
- Gold Ridge and Sebastopol to split remaining payments on new Fire Engine
 - \$240,000 each
- In long run, will likely need to purchase fewer engines and trucks because of economies of scale

Fire Station: Assessed by COAR

- Need additional space
- 50 years
- Needs substantial investment

Fire Station Ownership

- Gold Ridge to assume ownership and full responsibility
- Can sell station and property if used for a replacement station in Sebastopol City Limits
- Ownership reverts to City if not used as Fire Station
- No plans to sell the property

Current Fire Finances: Two Major Revenue Sources

- City General Fund: \$1.55M
 - Meets Measure H Maintenance of Effort Requirement of 10-11% of GF

- Measure H: \$1.1M annually

- No Parcel Tax for Fire

With Reorganization: Three Major Revenue Sources

- City General Fund: \$1.1 M (instead of \$1.5M)
 - No Maintenance of Effort Requirement
 - Annual escalator tied to CPI
 - Minimum: 2%
 - Maximum: 5%

- Measure H: \$1.1M annually to Gold Ridge

- Fire Parcel Tax: \$1.1M annually to Gold Ridge
 - \$265 for typical single family home

Cost and Revenue Comparison

| Fiscal Element | Gold Ridge Budget for Sebastopol Fire Service Post Annexation | Sebastopol Standalone Fire Services Cost FY 25/26 |
|--|---|---|
| Revenues | | |
| Fire Direct Fees/Charges for Services | \$40,000 | \$40,000 |
| Measure H | \$1,080,000 | \$1,080,000 |
| City Parcel Tax | \$1,111,058 | \$1,111,058 |
| City Net General Fund Contribution | \$1,205,191 | \$2,188,267 |
| Total Revenues | \$3,436,249 | \$4,419,325 |
| Expenditures | | |
| Total Salaries/Benefits | \$2,435,989 | \$3,047,422 |
| Total Other Operating Costs | \$450,260 | \$476,050 |
| Total Capital Outlay | - | \$59,210 |
| Total Debt Service | \$550,000 | \$686,643 |
| Total Contribution to Reserves | - | \$150,000 |
| Total Expenditures | \$3,436,249 | \$4,419,325 |
| Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | \$0 | \$0 |

Local Identity: Stations, Engines, Pins



NEXT STEPS

- Submit application to LAFCO
- LAFCO Hearing: March 5
- If approved: LAFCO issues notice re: protest period
- City/Gold Ridge to conduct public education
- LAFCO protest hearing: May 7
 - If < 25% of voters or property owners file protest, reorganization is approved
 - If > 25% file protest, special election occurs in November
- No later than July 1: Reorganization takes effect (if no protest election)



Comments from Ad Hoc Committee

Similar to County – Gold Ridge Reorg

County

- ▶ Regular Property Tax: \$537K
- ▶ County General Fund: \$4.3M
- ▶ Measure H: \$4.1M
- ▶ Supplemental Parcel Tax: \$600K

City

- ▶ Regular Property Tax: \$0
- ▶ General Fund: \$1.1M
- ▶ Measure H: \$1.1M
- ▶ Supplemental Parcel Tax: \$1.1M