

**STINSON BEACH AREA  
SERVICE REVIEW AND  
SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE**

**Marin Local Agency Formation Commission**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This report is presented as part of a process mandated by Section 56425 of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. As stated in that section, "In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping the logical and orderly development and coordination of local government agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities, the Local Agency Formation Commission shall develop and determine the sphere of influence of each local governmental agency within the county." As used in this section, "*sphere of influence*" means a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency.

In determining a sphere of influence, the Commission is required to consider and make written findings with respect to the following factors:

- ❑ The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.
- ❑ The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
- ❑ The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides or is authorized to provide.
- ❑ The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines they are relevant to the agency.

Changes to State law effective on January 1, 2001 require LAFCOs to study the service relationships between agencies providing municipal services within different sub-regions in each county prior to the periodic review of adopted spheres of influence. In this report, discussion of service review determinations precedes recommendations for the sphere of influence of the public agencies under study, the Stinson Beach County Water District, the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District, and County Service Area #33.

The actual effect of these or any other adopted spheres of influence will be to provide LAFCO and local communities with policy guidance on matters relating to the boundaries and organization of local government agencies. In short, the purpose of the Commission's sphere determinations is to answer the question, "What local agencies should provide which services to what geographical area as communities change?" More information on LAFCO and on all of Marin County's local governments, services and boundaries may be found on the Commission's website at <http://lafco.marin.org>.

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## II. MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

### Description of Community

The unincorporated residential community of Stinson Beach lies on Marin's Pacific Coast adjacent to Bolinas Lagoon and is surrounded by Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and park lands. Area residents receive services from the County of Marin (police, road maintenance, land use planning), Stinson Beach County Water District, Stinson Beach Fire Protection District and County Service Area #33 (park maintenance). The private, non-profit Stinson Beach Village Association is also active in local affairs.

### Stinson Beach County Water District

The Stinson Beach County Water District (SBCWD) is responsible for water service including treatment plant and system maintenance, garbage franchise and on-site wastewater system management. SBCWD was formed in 1962 under Sections 30000-33900 of the California Water Code. The District was formed initially to deal with wastewater issues and did not function as a water supplier until 1974 when the Stinson Beach Water Company was sold to the district by the owner George Leonard.

The SBCWD maintains a roster of seven employees. Staff includes a general manager, one water supervisor, one water plant operator, one wastewater technician, one utility operator and two administrative employees. A five-member Board of Directors, elected at-large, governs the SBCWD. The Board schedules two meetings a month. Board members receive a stipend of \$100 per meeting for their service.

SBCWD' jurisdiction includes approximately 12 square miles of which 9.5 square miles is watershed and 2.5 square miles is developed service area. This area lies on Marin's Pacific shore with Bolinas Lagoon roughly forming its western border, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area lands to the north as shown on page 5. The area includes residential, commercial, and open space land uses including the publicly owned lands of Bolinas Lagoon Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Mt. Tamalpais State Park. The area does not include the three privately owned Audubon Canyon Ranch parcels. The SBCWD's boundaries and sphere of influence are coterminous.

### Stinson Beach Fire Protection District

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District (SBFPD) provides fire protection, emergency medical aid, and disaster planning and response, to the residents and visitors of Stinson Beach. SBFPD also provides critical first responder services to the visitors of the adjacent Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

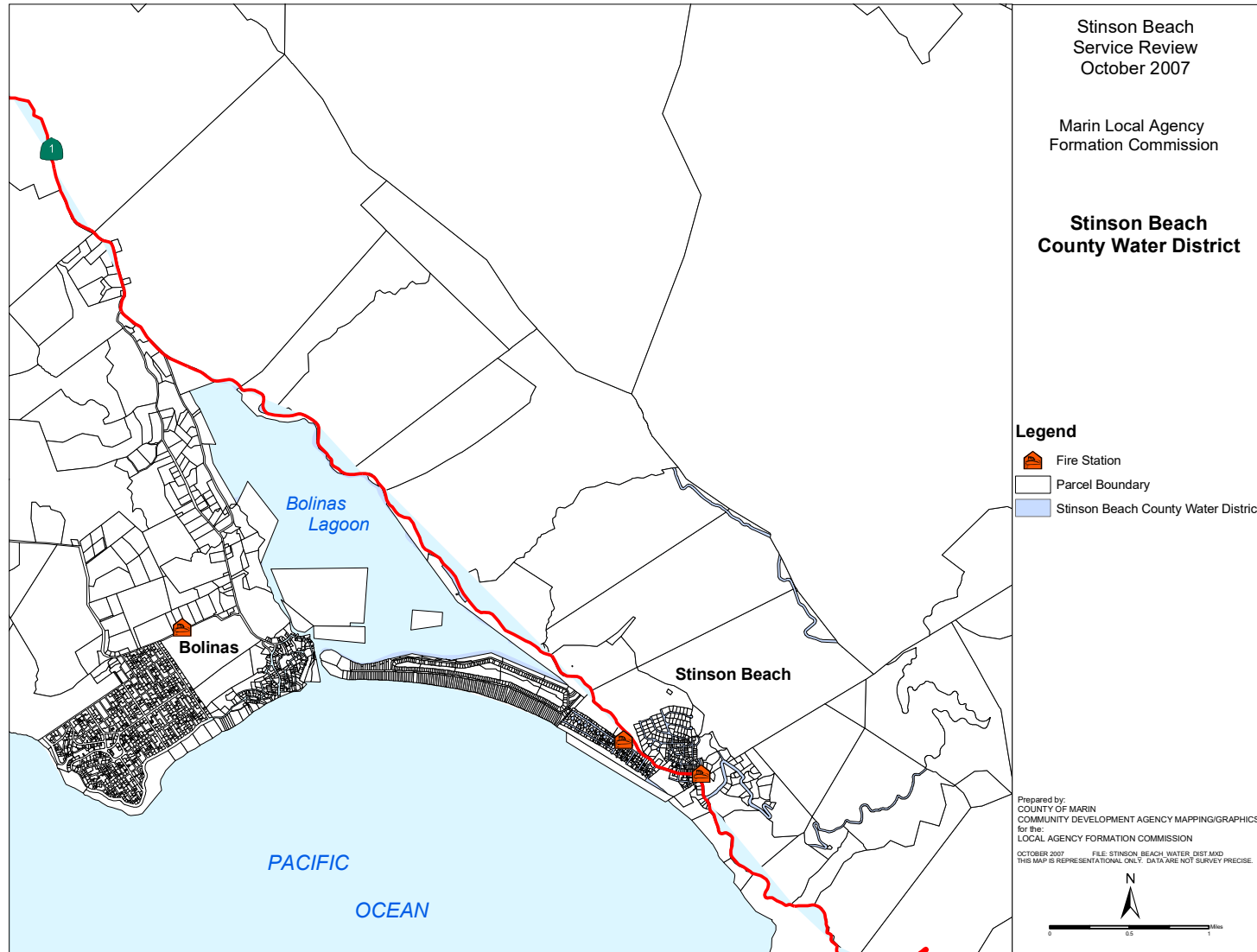
The district's jurisdiction includes the entire Stinson Beach residential area, including the Seadrift area and reaches Ridgecrest Boulevard (on top of Bolinas Ridge) to the north as shown on page 6. The SBFPD reaches northwest to the Bolinas Fire Protection District boundaries whereas the Stinson Beach Water District jurisdiction includes GGNRA lands northwest of Pike County Gulch Creek. The SBFPD area includes residential lands, privately owned parklands and publicly owned parklands (portions of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Mount Tamalpais State Park west of Steep Ravine Canyon). SBFPD's boundaries and sphere of influence are coterminous.

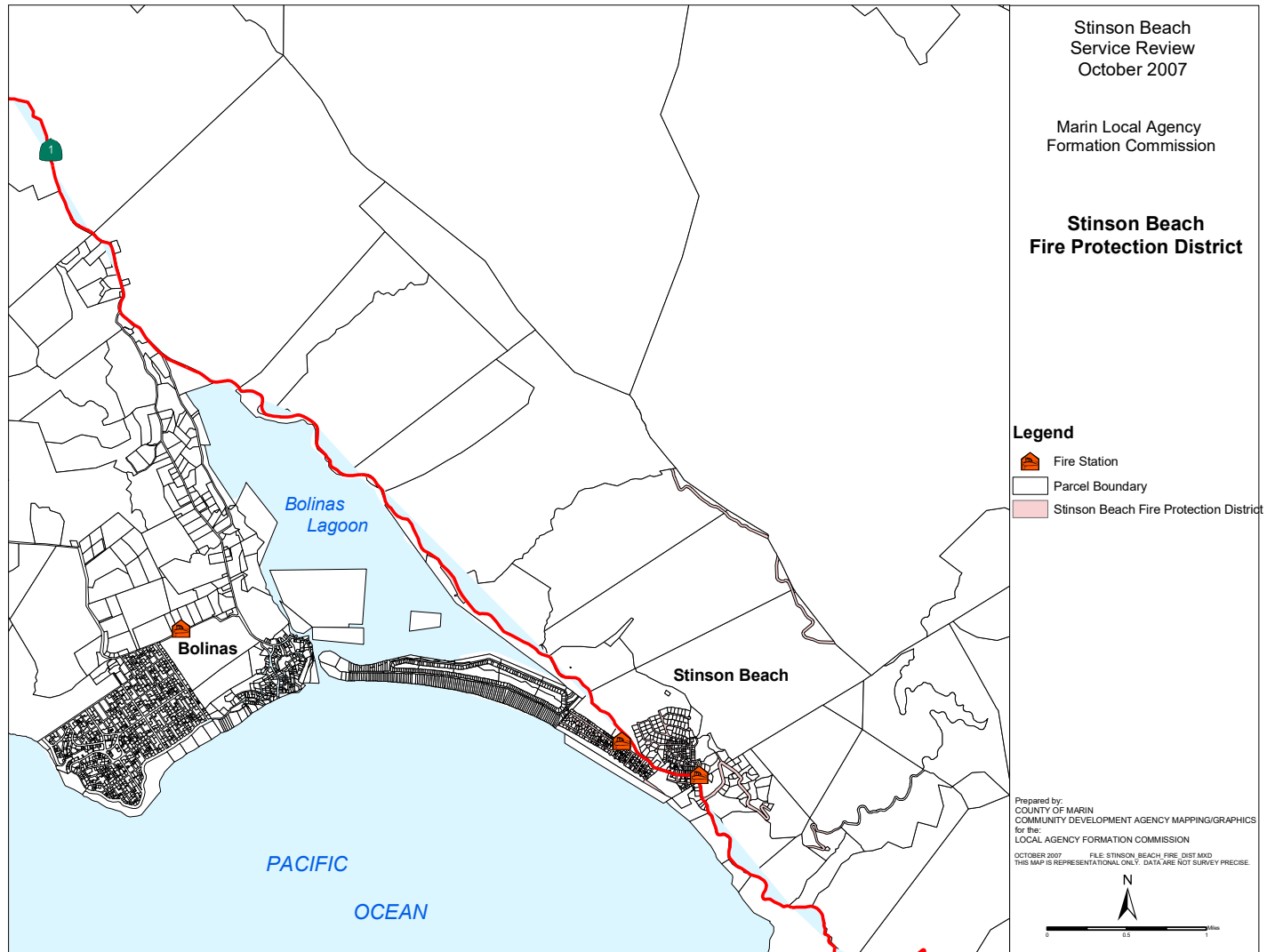
The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District staff consists of a chief, a medical director, a maintenance supervisor, and an office manager. The District has fifteen volunteer first responder firefighters and thirteen emergency medical technicians, providing basic emergency first aid. The County provides paramedic service from Pt. Reyes Station but in critical situations the Throckmorton and Southern Marin paramedics have also been dispatched.

### County Service Area #33

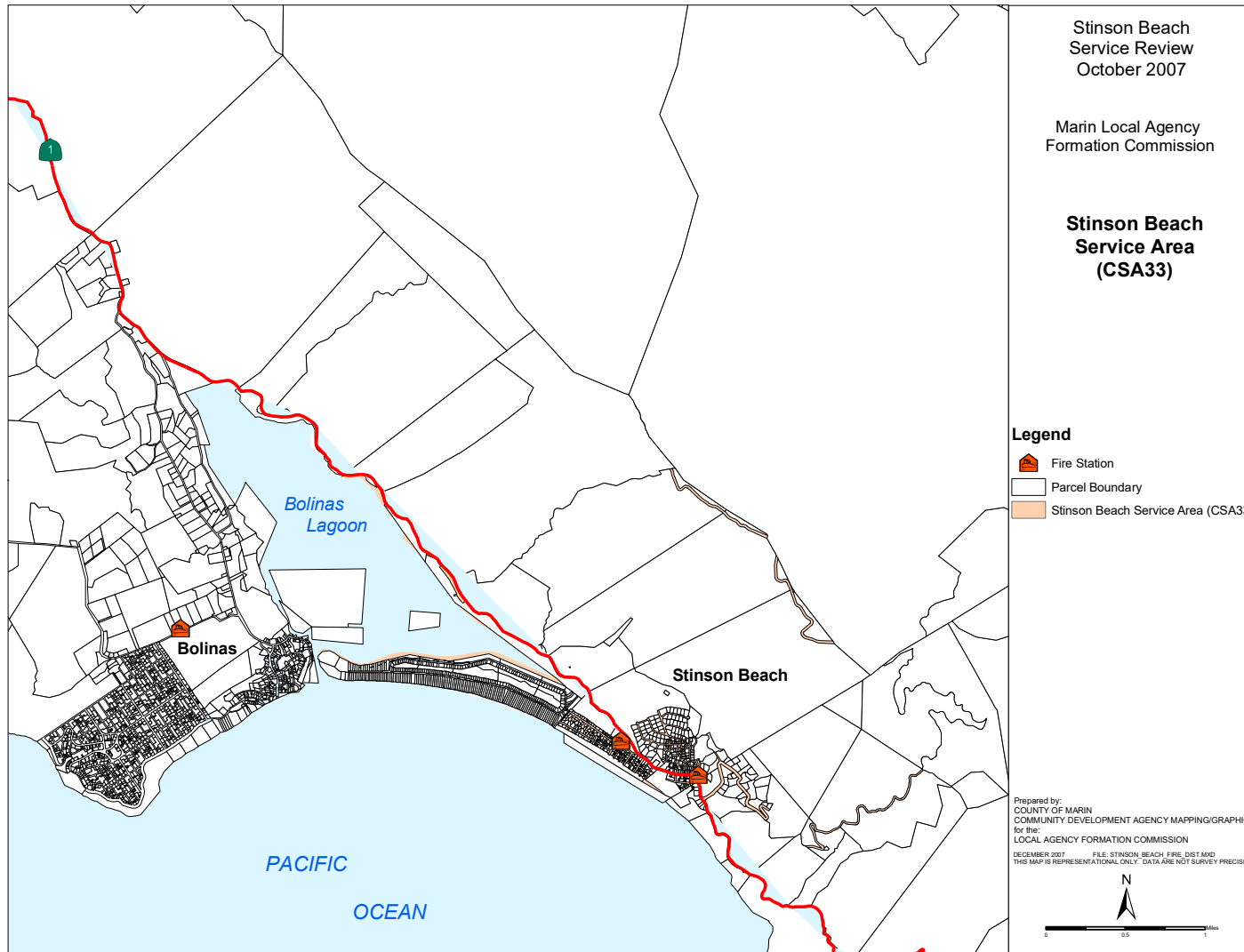
County Service Area #33 (CSA #33) was formed in 2003 to replace the Stinson Beach Landscape and Lighting District which acted as the mechanism to levy an assessment to the property owners. The dissolution of the landscape and lighting district and the formation of the new county service area provided a simpler method of levying the same charges. The County Department of Parks and Open Space provides maintenance of local park, recreation, and parkway facilities and services including maintenance of the Stinson Beach Village Green Park. CSA #33's boundaries and sphere of influence are coterminous as shown on page 7.

CSA #33 has an Advisory Board that meets on a regular basis whose purpose is to advise the County Board of Supervisors on all matters relating to programs, improvements and budgets of the CSA. There are five members that are required to live or own property within the Stinson Beach community.









**Municipal Service Review Determinations for Stinson Beach County Water District and Stinson Beach Fire Protection District**

The following sections address the Municipal Service Review factors specified in Government Code Section 56430.

**1. Government Structure Alternatives**

Under current State law, there are two alternatives for the reorganization of services in Stinson Beach that might yield advantage in the total costs of service. Each is discussed separately below. The following tables identify advantages and disadvantages of both options.

- a. Consolidation of all special districts serving Stinson Beach (SBCWD, SBFPD and CSA #33) to form a single community services district under Government Code Section 61000 et seq.*

	<b>Advantages/Incentives</b>	<b>Disadvantages/Obstacles</b>
<b>Service Level, Operations, or Efficiency</b>	Enhanced coordination of locally provided services and facilities (e.g. water/fireflow or cross-training of fire & utility personnel).  Needed office & meeting facilities available for fire protection functions.	Consolidated district would continue to require both a fire chief and water/sewer managers.
<b>Cost Savings</b>	Possible cost reductions in overlapping management, administrative/office functions	Cost savings probably insufficient to provide incentive for changing established organizational structure.  Change of organization would not result in new revenues.
<b>Political Accountability</b>	Unifies political accountability for local services under a single elected governing board to maximum extent for an unincorporated community.  Other, additional service functions possible under CSD enabling statute including park maintenance functions of CSA#33.	

***b. Consolidation of special districts serving Stinson Beach and Bolinas communities (SBCWD, SBFPD, BPUD and BFPD) to form a single community services district under Government Code 61000 et seq***

	<b>Advantages/Incentives</b>	<b>Disadvantages/Obstacles</b>
<b>Service Level, Operations, or Efficiency</b>	<p>Possible extension of on-site wastewater management service to un-sewered areas of Bolinas under established SBCWD policy &amp; practices.</p> <p>Enhanced coordination of locally provided services and facilities (e.g. water/fireflow or cross-training of fire &amp; utility personnel)</p>	<p>Supposedly consolidated district functions &amp; facilities would be divided between physically distinct &amp; divided communities.</p> <p>On-site wastewater management not necessarily required in Bolinas.</p> <p>Water supply insufficient in either community to provide advantage to the other.</p> <p>Different service areas for fire, water and sewer within new district jurisdiction.</p>
<b>Cost Savings</b>	<p>Possible cost reductions in overlapping management, administrative/office functions</p>	<p>Cost savings probably insufficient to provide incentive for changing established organizational structures.</p> <p>No revenue source for new service extensions identified. Change of organization would not result in new revenues.</p>
<b>Political Accountability</b>	<p>Broader responsibilities and higher profile for fewer elected board members.</p> <p>Other, additional service functions possible under CSD enabling statute.</p>	<p>Service needs in separate &amp; distinct communities of Stinson Beach &amp; Bolinas are dissimilar. Differing property tax contributions, utility rates would require rate zones &amp; may create endemic conflicts and competing priorities.</p>

Overall, consolidation of special districts serving Stinson Beach may offer

## 2. Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

### *Water System*

Older, inefficient waterlines are continually replaced to improve system integrity and provide improved fire flow and domestic water service. The District also allocates funds every year for water quality and water distribution improvements. Projects completed in 2006 include two distribution line upgrades, 300 linear feet of line on Lincoln and 300 linear feet on Puente Rizal with new fire hydrants. A new water treatment plant, currently in planning and design review, is planned to be built near the water tank on Laurel Drive. The current design review period will be over in January 2008.

Several other repair projects related to the storm damage of January 2006 will be undertaken using a combination of District staff and qualified contractors. Those projects include the replacement/repair of raw water transmission pipelines, drainage facilities, and stream culverts. The culverts will be modified to ensure an environmentally friendly habitat for local fish species.

The Stinson Beach water supply is provided by both surface water and ground water sources. Surface water is supplied by the Fitzhenry, Black Rock, Stinson Gulch and Webb creeks. Ground water is supplied by Alder Grove, Ranch, and Highlands wells, which operate intermittently. Raw water is piped to the Laurel Treatment Facility. The water is then processed by a Microfloc multi-media filtration system which consists of two parallel filters, each rated at 100 gallons per minute. To aid in coagulation, the chemicals aluminum sulfate and polymer are added prior to filtration and are filtered out prior to distribution. Sodium chlorite (chlorine) is added prior to and after filtration for disinfection purposes.<sup>1</sup>

The Board and management maintain a 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan that is updated on an annual basis. Like other water agencies in Marin, overall water supply is limited to local sources. Additional infrastructure investment will not significantly expand the District's water supply.

### *Fire District*

SBFPD has two stations, one located along Highway 1 and the other at Calle Del Arroyo. The District's equipment consists of the following:

- Unit 800 - 2002 Chevy Silverado 250 extended cab pick-up with four-wheel drive.

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<sup>1</sup> Stinson Beach County Water District website, <http://www.stinson-beach-cwd.dst.ca.us/quality.html>

- Engine 880 - 1985 Ford chase Vanpelt buildup.
- Engine 881 - 1995 High-tech built on a ford commercial chaise with a 1250-gpm two stage Hale pump and a 500-gallon poly tank.
- Engine 861 - 2004 International 480 with a High-tech buildup with four-wheel drive.
- Water Tender 890 - 2005 International 780 with a High-tech buildup. This eight-wheel water tender has a 2500-gallon stainless steel tank with a single stage Hale pump. Equipped with a 2000-gallon fold-a- tank on a powered lowering rack
- Ambulance 891 - 2001 Ford 350, Leader equipped with an Automatic External Defibulator and Basic Life Support capabilities.
- Squad 860 - 1974 Dodge Power Wagon with four-wheel drive capability. It has a front mounted winch. It carries some basic firefighting and extrication equipment.

According to the District's Chief, SBFPD is outfitted with equipment adequate for a ten-year period. The main fire house was remodeled with a seismic upgrade in 2002. The second station was added in 200\_. SBFPD continues to lack adequate meeting and office space.

Because the staff is largely volunteer, a fire siren and an electronic paging system are used to call volunteers to emergencies.

There are concerns about the volunteer fire demographics and staffing adequacy for the long term. A prerequisite of being a member of the volunteer fire department is to live in the area and therefore affordable housing in Stinson Beach is also of concern to the District's ability to maintain a volunteer force. Because of housing costs, it is difficult to attract and retain younger firefighters. The District is currently organizing a committee for development of a 10-year strategic plan to anticipate infrastructure and staffing needs.

### **3. Growth and Population Projections**

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census information, the Stinson Beach CDP (Census Designated Place) planning area had a population of approximately 751. According to the Marin County Community Development Agency, there were 751 existing units in 2005. The second unit projection is 76 units and the 2030 buildout projection is 885 units. The estimated maximum population projection (2030) is 2,176, an increase of 190%.

Considering that the Stinson Beach area has many weekend residents, it is difficult to calculate the actual full time population, therefore, the registered

voters is another measurement of population. The Stinson Beach area currently has approximately 480 registered voters<sup>2</sup>.

According to the Community Plan, Stinson Beach has limited opportunity for future expansion since federal and state lands (GGNRA and Mt. Tamalpais State Park) and the Pacific Ocean surround the community. Accordingly, all future residential and commercial activities will occur within the existing developed area. Stinson Beach is already extensively developed and there remain few infill opportunities for growth. See Table 3, page \_\_\_.

#### **4. Financing Constraints and Opportunities**

##### *Stinson Beach CWD*

SBCWD receives revenues for both water and wastewater services. Annual total water system revenues for FY 2005/06 were \$582,755; income from property taxes was \$494,425; and income from investments was \$20,959. The reserve account balance at end of FY2006 was \$449,189.

The community's proximity to the Pacific Ocean and the coastal environment has caused rapid deterioration of some District facilities. In late 1997, several of the District's water storage tanks were in critical need of rehabilitation.

In 1998, the District Board elected to borrow \$1.1 million through the ABAG Water and Wastewater Revenue Bond Pool. The proceeds were used to fund tank improvements and to refinance three existing obligations. By using the ABAG Bond Pool, the District was able to share its financing costs with other agencies and at the same time qualify for bond insurance. The resulting AAA-rated pooled revenue bonds were very well received by investors and the District achieved a \$44,000 present value savings on its refinanced debt.<sup>3</sup>

##### *Stinson Beach FPD*

SBFPD receives revenues from property taxes as well as from grants. Annual total revenues for FY 2006/07 were \$742,461, with \$256,000 from grant income and \$396,000 from property tax income. The District's share of total property tax revenues for all services collected in the community is 8.7%. Other special districts providing fire protection service collect a greater proportion of total property tax revenues, ranging from 12% in the Bolinas FPD to 19.1% in the Marinwood CSD.

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<sup>2</sup> Per conversation with Water District General Manager, Ed Schmidt 12/11/07.

<sup>3</sup> Association of Bay Area Governments website, [www.abag.ca.gov/services/finance/water/about\\_water.htm](http://www.abag.ca.gov/services/finance/water/about_water.htm)

As is the case with other fire service agencies, the nature of emergency services does not lend itself to the use of service charges or other sources of revenue could otherwise be within the discretion of the District's governing board.

Staff has not identified any further financing opportunities that could be available to the two districts if they were reorganized as a community services district.

## **5. Cost-Avoidance Opportunities**

Staff has not identified significant cost avoidance opportunities in fire or water services in the Stinson Beach study area that could result from annexations anticipated by adopted spheres of influence or other changes in the relationships between local agencies. Consolidation of the special districts serving Stinson Beach would afford some opportunities for reducing administrative costs, however, consolidation would be unlikely to allow for reduction in management staff. The consolidated district would still require a fire chief and a manager for water and wastewater services.

## **6. Opportunities for Rate Restructuring**

### *Water District*

The SBCWD bills their customers on a bimonthly basis for the following charges:

- **Water Use-** The tiered charge is based on water used during the two month period indicated on the bill. The system reads water usage in 100 cubic feet; one cubic foot equals 7.48 gallons. The SBCWD utilizes a tiered system to promote water conservation:
- **Water Service Charge -** There is a standard charge billed bimonthly to all customers who are part of the SBCWD water system. The majority of consumers are charged \$55.44 for a 3/4" meter.
- **Wastewater Permit Charge -** There is a standard charge of \$61.38 billed bimonthly to all customers who are part of the SBCWD Wastewater Management Program, for periodic inspection of onsite wastewater systems.

Rates and fees are determined by operational costs and capital improvement needs.

### *Fire District*

SBFPD's revenues are derived from property and parcel taxes. Emergency service agencies generally do not derive significant revenues from fees or service charges.

## **7. Opportunities for Shared Facilities**

SBFPD dispatching is handled by Marin County Fire Department from their headquarters in Woodacre. A paramedic ambulance is provided by Marin County Fire Department and comes from Point Reyes Station, approximately twenty minutes away. During the summer months, Marin County Fire Department staffs a second paramedic ambulance which is quartered in Stinson Beach and serves the Bolinas and Stinson Beach communities by agreement with the SBFPD, the Bolinas Fire Protection District, and the County of Marin, reducing the response time for Advanced Life Support services to about ten minutes. This ambulance supplements emergency service to meet the demand of the visitors to Marin County's coast. It is housed in a State Park building, which is also used by the lifeguards and sheriff.

SBFPD has a good working relationship with the Stinson Beach County Water District. One of the responsibilities of the SBCWD is to maintain and replace the fire hydrants. SBCWD periodically replaces hydrants based on recommendations of the fire chief.

Stinson Beach Fire also has a cooperative relationship with Bolinas Fire which includes joint EMT training at the new Bolinas station and joint wildland firefighting drills.

The Stinson Beach Fire Protection District and the Stinson Beach County Water District joined with the Bolinas Fire Protection District and the Bolinas Community Public Utility District to create the Bolinas-Stinson Resource Recovery Project. Residents of Bolinas and Stinson Beach can drop off their yard trimmings and other clean green waste to be chipped and composted at the Resource Recovery Site in Bolinas. There is a charge for green waste drop off and finished compost is sold as well as firewood, when available. The Resource Recovery Project has also been supported by grants from Fire Safe Marin, the County of Marin, and the National Park Service. <sup>4</sup>

The fire district is a member of the joint powers agreement with the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA). MERA is a countywide public agency consisting of the County, all cities and towns, fire districts, and other special

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<sup>4</sup> Bolinas Fire Protection District website, <http://www.bolinasfire.org/prevention.htm>.



districts that joined together to replace the aging and obsolete public safety communications system. This system unifies public safety response, making it possible for members to communicate more effectively and efficiently with each other and within individual departments.

Consolidation of SBCWD and SBFPD might provide office and meeting facilities that are not now sufficiently available to SBFPD. Relative to the existing actions of the two districts, consolidation would not significantly add to the pursuit of shared facility economies already undertaken as described above.

### **8. Management Efficiencies**

The budget processes and budget documents adopted by SBCWD and SBFPD are generally informative on the nature of services, allocation of resources to those services, performance measures, and projections. The documents are written in plain language for a general audience.

Since the inception of the Onsite Wastewater Management Program (OSWMP), the SBCWD has introduced innovative on-site wastewater technology systems to the Bay Area that help solve depth to groundwater and poor percolation rate problems. These systems, first used in Stinson Beach are now being used throughout the County. Stinson Beach is considered to be a model for other communities in California for onsite system management.

Both SBCWD and the SBFPD have the resources and management capability to provide water, wastewater and fire protection services to the study area given continuation of the present service demand and regulatory requirements. SBFPD's upcoming strategic planning efforts will assist the District in responding to demographic changes the Stinson Beach community.

### **9. Local Accountability and Governance**

Both SBCWD and SBFPD have elected governing boards conducting public business in general compliance with applicable State laws. SBCWD board members meet twice a month and receive a \$100 per meeting stipend; SBFPD has a five member board that meets monthly and are not paid to attend meetings and receive no benefits or travel expenses. The districts also maintain websites with updated information, and distribute periodic written reports or newsletters to their customers.

Although SBFPD and SBCWD effectively work together in the interests of the community, accountability for local services would be enhanced through consolidation of special districts. Consolidation would allow at least partial ability of the local governing board to weigh service priorities and allocate resources in ways that cannot be accomplished by separate organizations with more narrowly focused service roles.

### III. SPHERE OF INFLUENCE REVIEW AND UPDATE

Description of Current Spheres of Influence

Maps 1 through 3 show the current boundaries of the Stinson Beach County Water District, Stinson Beach Fire Protection District and County Service Area #33. In each case, each district’s sphere of influence is coterminous with its current boundaries.

Service Relationships

Table 1 summarizes the sources of municipal services for the Stinson Beach area.

**Table 1. Sources of Municipal Service: Stinson Beach Area**

Police	Fire/Emergency. Medical	Water	Wastewater Disposal	Solid Waste	Comm. Development	Street Maintenance	Parks & Recreation	Library
County Sheriff	SBFPD	SBCWD	On-site/SBCWD	Waste Management	County	County	County, CSA #33	County - local branch

The Stinson Beach area receives fire services from SBFPD. Ambulance and paramedic services are provided by the County through CSA #28. SBCWD provides water and wastewater disposal for its service area. Library services are available through the County, with the nearest branch library located in Stinson Beach on Shoreline Highway. Stinson Beach has a wide range of recreational opportunities available to residents from Federal, State, County, and local park facilities, as well as school facilities that are also used for recreational purposes. CSA #33 was formed in 2003 to provide maintenance of local park, recreation, and parkway facilities and services (see page 4 for details). The County Department of Parks and Open Space provides maintenance of the Stinson Beach Village Green Park that is funded by CSA #33.

Need/Demand for Services

Existing and potential housing units and population for the Stinson Beach area are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Estimated Population and Development Potential  
Stinson Beach Planning Area**

	Land Area (acres)	2000 Population	2005 Existing Housing Units	2030 Buildout Housing Units	Estimated Maximum Population	% Potential Area Population Increase
Stinson Beach Planning Area	384	751	751	961	2,176	190%

Note: Stinson Beach Area 2030 Buildout based on Countywide Plan scenario most likely to be adopted. Second unit projection is based on State and local policy.

The 2000 population of the greater Stinson Beach community planning area was approximately 751 (per the 2000 census) within a land area of 384 acres. According to the Marin County Community Development Agency, there are currently 751 housing units with a future development potential of 210 additional units (which includes 76 second units), with maximum population of 2,176 under current zoning designations. The proposed population is determined by taking the total buildout housing units and multiplying by the proposed persons per household of 2.26. However, in the case of Stinson Beach, not all units are occupied on a full-time basis and the maximum population and the potential population increase may be inaccurate projections.

Summertime and weekend visitors greatly increase the District’s normal water demands. The population of the small community can easily reach 10,000 visitors on any given weekend from July through October. The District produced 185 acre-feet of water in 2000, which equates to approximately 230 gallons per day per dwelling unit. There is a maximum daily treatment plant capacity of 288,000 gallons per day for 691 residential and 28 non-residential connections. <sup>5</sup>

Ability to Extend Services

Water supply sources for the Stinson Beach County Water District include three active wells and several catchment basins located within the watershed. The

<sup>5</sup> Marin Countywide Plan, Community Facilities Element Technical Report, February 2003

watershed is located on publicly owned State and Federal government lands. The watershed area produces a water supply estimated at 323 acre-feet, assuming normal rainfall conditions. Based on the SBCWD's water demands, these projections seem adequate, although the water supply can be constrained by drought and peak summertime water demand. <sup>6</sup>

The possibility of extending fire services is improbable due to the location of the Stinson Beach area. There is sufficient water for fireflow purposes for current and future use. Cooperation with other agencies and reliance on mutual aid is what allows the fire district to work at the current levels. The future of maintaining volunteer program at current levels is questionable and will be studied further during a 10-year plan currently in the development stages.

#### City and County General Plans

The Stinson Beach Community Plan was prepared cooperatively by members of the Stinson Beach Village Association and the staff of the Marin County Planning Department in 1985. It was adopted by the Marin County Board of Supervisors in June, 1985.

The policies of the Local Coastal Program and the Marin Countywide Plan are aimed at preserving the physical integrity of the coastal villages, keeping them from expanding into the agricultural lands and other open spaces designated for preservation. These plans also emphasize "in-filling" of existing village areas as a basis for development. In the case of Stinson Beach, these goals and policies can be met by limiting village expansion to the boundaries of the Stinson Beach Planning Area.

#### Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission affirm the current Spheres of Influence for the Stinson Beach County Water District, the Stinson Beach Fire Protection District, and CSA #33 based on a lack of advantage of organizational alternatives and on the public ownership of all surrounding territory. Staff recommends that the Commission affirm the existing spheres of influence that are coterminous with the Districts' boundaries.

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<sup>6</sup> Marin Countywide Plan, Community Facilities Element Technical Report, February 2003