

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW**  
**for the**  
**CITY OF SUSANVILLE**



**LASSEN LAFCO**

**ADOPTED JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2015**

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## **SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 LAFCO's Overview, Responsibilities, Municipal Service Reviews and Spheres of Influence**

This report is prepared pursuant to legislation enacted in 2000 that requires LAFCO to conduct a comprehensive review of municipal service delivery and update the spheres of influence (SOIs) of all agencies under LAFCO's jurisdiction by January 1, 2008 and that MSR's should be updated every 5 years thereafter. The City of Susanville's last MSR was prepared in 2006. An updated MSR is being prepared at this time. This chapter provides an overview of LAFCO's history, powers and responsibilities. It discusses the origins and legal requirements for preparation of the municipal service review (MSR). This chapter also explains SOIs and the legal and procedural requirements for updating the SOIs. Finally, the chapter reviews the process for MSR review, MSR approval and SOI updates.

After World War II, California experienced dramatic growth in population and economic development. With this boom came a demand for housing, jobs and public services. To accommodate this demand, many new local government agencies were formed, often with little forethought as to the ultimate governance structures in a given region, and existing agencies often competed for expansion areas. The lack of coordination and adequate planning led to a multitude of overlapping, inefficient jurisdictional and service boundaries, and the premature conversion of California's agricultural and open-space lands.

Recognizing this problem, in 1959, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr. appointed the Commission on Metropolitan Area Problems. The Commission's charge was to study and make recommendations on the "misuse of land resources" and the growing complexity of local governmental jurisdictions. The Commission's recommendations on local governmental reorganization were introduced in the Legislature in 1963, resulting in the creation of a Local Agency Formation Commission, or "LAFCO," operating in every county except San Francisco.

The Lassen LAFCO was formed as a countywide agency to discourage urban sprawl and encourage the orderly formation and development of local government agencies. LAFCO is responsible for coordinating logical and timely changes in local governmental boundaries, including annexations and detachments of territory, incorporations of cities, formations of special districts, and consolidations, mergers and dissolutions of districts, as well as reviewing ways to reorganize, simplify, and streamline governmental structure. The Commission's efforts are focused on ensuring that services are provided efficiently and economically while agricultural and open-space lands are protected. To better inform itself and the community as it seeks to exercise its charge, LAFCO conducts service reviews to evaluate the provision of municipal services within the County.

LAFCO regulates, through approval, denial, conditional approval or modification of boundary changes proposed by public agencies or individuals. It also regulates the extension of public services by cities and special districts outside their boundaries. LAFCO is empowered to initiate updates to the SOIs and proposals involving the dissolution or consolidation of special districts,

mergers, establishment of subsidiary districts, and any reorganization including such actions. Otherwise, LAFCO actions must originate as petitions or resolutions from affected registered voters, landowners, cities or districts.

Lassen LAFCO consists of five regular members: two members from the Lassen County Board of Supervisors, two members from the City of Susanville City Council, and one public member who is appointed by the other members of the Commission. One alternate member is appointed for each category. All Commissioners are appointed to four-year terms.

Appointing Agency	Members	Alternate Members
Two members from the Board of Supervisors appointed by the Board of Supervisors.	Jeff Hemphill Jim Chapman	Bob Pyle
Two from City of Susanville City Council Appointed by the City Council	Brian Wilson Rod De Boer	Kathie Garnier
One member from the general public appointed by the other four Commissioners.	Todd Eid	Andrew Wellborn

## 1.2 Municipal Service Review Origins

The MSR requirement was enacted by the State Legislature months after the release of two studies recommending that LAFCOs conduct reviews of local agencies. The “Little Hoover Commission” focused on the need for oversight and consolidation of special districts, whereas the “Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century” focused on the need for regional planning to ensure adequate and efficient local governmental services as the California population grows.

### Little Hoover Commission

In May 2000, the Little Hoover Commission released a report entitled *Special Districts: Relics of the Past or Resources for the Future?* This report focused on governance and financial challenges among independent special districts, and the barriers to LAFCO’s pursuit of district consolidation and dissolution. The report raised the concern that “the underlying patchwork of special district governments has become unnecessarily redundant, inefficient and unaccountable.” In particular, the report raised concern about a lack of visibility and accountability among some independent special districts. The report indicated that many special districts hold excessive reserve funds and some receive questionable property tax revenue. The report expressed concern about the lack of financial oversight of the districts. It asserted that financial reporting by special districts is inadequate, that districts are not required to submit financial information to local elected officials, and concluded that district financial information is “largely meaningless as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided by districts, or to make comparisons with neighboring districts or services provided through a city or county.”

The report questioned the accountability and relevance of certain special districts with uncontested elections and without adequate notice of public meetings. In addition to concerns about the accountability and visibility of special districts, the report raised concerns about special districts with outdated boundaries and outdated missions. The report questioned the public benefit provided by health care districts that have sold, leased or closed their hospitals, and asserted that LAFCOs consistently fail to examine whether they should be eliminated. The report pointed to service improvements and cost reductions associated with special district consolidations, but asserted that LAFCOs have generally failed to pursue special district reorganizations.

The report called on the Legislature to increase the oversight of special districts by mandating that LAFCOs identify service duplications and study reorganization alternatives when service duplications are identified, when a district appears insolvent, when district reserves are excessive, when rate inequities surface, when a district's mission changes, when a new city incorporates and when service levels are unsatisfactory. To accomplish this, the report recommended that the State strengthen the independence and funding of LAFCOs, require districts to report to their respective LAFCO, and require LAFCOs to study service duplications.

### **Commission on Local Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The Legislature formed the Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century ("21<sup>st</sup> Century Commission") in 1997 to review statutes on the policies, criteria, procedures and precedents for city, county and special district boundary changes. After conducting extensive research and holding 25 days of public hearings throughout the State at which it heard from over 160 organizations and individuals, the 21st Century Commission released its final report, *Growth Within Bounds: Planning California Governance for the 21st Century*, in January 2000. The report examines the way that government is organized and operates and establishes a vision of how the State will grow by "making better use of the often invisible LAFCOs in each county."

The report points to the expectation that California's population will double over the first four decades of the 21st Century, and raises concern that our government institutions were designed when population was much smaller and society was less complex. The report warns that without a strategy open spaces will be swallowed up, expensive freeway extensions will be needed, job centers will become farther removed from housing, and this will lead to longer commutes, increased pollution and more stressful lives. *Growth Within Bounds* acknowledges that local governments face unprecedented challenges in their ability to finance service delivery since voters cut property tax revenues in 1978 and the Legislature shifted property tax revenues from local government to schools in 1993. The report asserts that these financial strains have created governmental entrepreneurship with cities, counties and districts competing for sales tax revenue and market share.

The 21st Century Commission recommended that effective, efficient and easily understandable government be encouraged. In accomplishing this, the 21st Century Commission recommended consolidation of small, inefficient or overlapping providers, transparency of municipal service delivery to the people, and accountability of municipal service providers. The sheer number of special districts, the report asserts, "has provoked controversy, including several legislative

attempts to initiate district consolidations,” but cautions LAFCOs that decisions to consolidate districts should focus on the adequacy of services, not on the number of districts.

*Growth Within Bounds* stated that LAFCOs cannot achieve their fundamental purposes without a comprehensive knowledge of the services available within its county, the current efficiency of providing service within various areas of the county, future needs for each service, and expansion capacity of each service provider. The report argued that comprehensive knowledge of water and sanitary providers would promote consolidations of water and sanitary districts, reduce water costs and promote a more comprehensive approach to the use of water resources. Further, the report asserted that many LAFCOs lack such knowledge and should be required to conduct such a review to ensure that municipal services are logically extended to meet California’s future growth and development.

MSRs would require LAFCO to look broadly at all agencies within a geographic region that provide a particular municipal service and to examine consolidation or reorganization of service providers. The 21st Century Commission recommended that the review should include water, wastewater, garbage, and other municipal services that LAFCO judges to be important to future growth. The Commission recommended that the service review be followed by consolidation studies and be performed in conjunction with updates of SOIs. The recommendation indicated that service reviews be designed to make nine determinations, each of which was incorporated verbatim in the subsequently adopted legislation.

### **Municipal Service Review Legislation**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires LAFCO review and update SOIs not less than every five years and to review municipal services before updating SOIs. The requirement for service reviews arises from the identified need for a more coordinated and efficient public service structure to support California’s anticipated growth. The service review provides LAFCO with a tool to study existing and future public service conditions comprehensively and to evaluate organizational options for accommodating growth, preventing urban sprawl, and ensuring that critical services are provided efficiently.

Effective January 1, 2001, Government Code §56430 requires LAFCO to conduct a review of municipal services provided in the county by region, sub-region or other designated geographic area, as appropriate, for the service or services to be reviewed, and prepare a written statement of determination with respect to each of the following topics:

- 1) Infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
- 2) Growth and population projections for the affected area;
- 3) Financing constraints and opportunities;
- 4) Cost avoidance opportunities;
- 5) Opportunities for rate restructuring;
- 6) Opportunities for shared facilities;
- 7) Government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service providers;
- 8) Evaluation of management efficiencies; and

## 9) Local accountability and governance

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research issued Final Guidelines for the preparation of Municipal Service Reviews in 2003. See *State of California LAFCO Municipal Service Review Guidelines* (MSR Guidelines.) This MSR adheres to the procedures set forth in the MSR Guidelines as well as local policies adopted by Lassen LAFCO (LAFCO Resolution 2003-07). LAFCO of Lassen County adopted policies and standards related to LAFCO's operations on November 10, 2003 and has made amendments to the policies and standards in 2009, 2010 and 2014.

In 2008 required determinations for MSR's was amended by the legislature to include five required determinations and one optional determination as follows:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area.
2. Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies.
3. Financial ability of agencies to provide service.
4. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.
5. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.
6. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.

In 2011, with the passage of SB 244 (Wolk) one additional MSR determination applicable to domestic water, wastewater and fire service providers was added as follows:

“The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the Sphere of Influence”

The MSR process does not require LAFCO to initiate changes of organization based on service review findings; it only requires that LAFCO identify potential government structure options and determine their advantages and disadvantages per Government Code Section 56430. However, LAFCO, other local agencies, and the public may subsequently use the determinations to analyze prospective changes of organization or reorganization or to establish or amend SOIs. It is expected that MSR determinations may be closely followed by LAFCO actions to update various SOIs. The ultimate outcome of conducting a service review may result in LAFCO acting with respect to a recommended change of organization or reorganization on its own initiative, at the request of any agency, or in response to a petition.

### 1.3 Sphere of Influence

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires LAFCO periodically review and update of Spheres of Influence (SOI's). A SOI is a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the affected Local Agency Formation Commission (Government Code §56076.) Government Code §56425(f) requires that each Sphere of Influence be updated not less than every five years, as necessary,



and §56430 provides that a Municipal Service Review shall be conducted in advance of the Sphere of Influence update.

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 currently requires LAFCO to update spheres of influence for all applicable jurisdictions in the county every five to ten years. The City of Susanville last updated their sphere of influence December 10, 2007 and as such is within the desired time frame for an update.

Local governmental agencies, special districts and municipalities, which are subject to LAFCo's jurisdiction must have an adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary and territory that define the probable future boundary and service area of the agency. Inclusion of a particular land area within an agency's SOI does not necessarily mean that the area will eventually be annexed. The Sphere of Influence is only one of several factors LAFCO must consider in reviewing individual proposals for annexation or detachment (Government Section 56668.)

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

- 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; and
- The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.
- For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district which provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal or industrial water, or structural fire protection the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.

### **1.3.1 LAFCo Sphere of Influence Policies**

#### **3.1 General Policies (Excerpt from Lassen County LAFCO Policies, Standards, and Procedures)**

LAFCO must adopt a sphere of influence for each city and each district in its jurisdiction, and must review and, if necessary, update each Sphere of influence at least every five years. All LAFCO actions must be consistent with the relevant sphere plan. A Sphere of Influence is defined in Government Code Section 56425 as “a plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency or municipality as determined by the commission.”

The establishment of Sphere of Influence Plans is perhaps the most important planning function given to LAFCOs by the state legislature. Spheres of Influence are described by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act as an important tool for “planning and shaping the logical and orderly

development and coordination of local governmental agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities.” Spheres serve a similar function in LAFCO determinations as general plans do for cities and counties. Consistency with the adopted sphere plan is mandatory, and changes to the plan require careful review.

While LAFCO encourages the participation and cooperation of the subject agency, the sphere of influence plan is a LAFCO responsibility, and the Commission is the sole authority as to the sufficiency of the documentation and the plan’s consistency with law and LAFCO policy. Staff of LAFCO will work closely with agencies in developing sphere of influence plans. In determining the sphere of influence of each agency, LAFCO must consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to the following four factors as stated in Government Code Section 56425 (e):

- a) The present and planned land use in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.
- b) The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
- c) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by the agency.
- d) Any social or economic communities of interest in the area that the Commission determines is relevant to the agency.

*Note: in 2011 an additional Sphere Determination was added by the California Legislature, as follows”*

*“For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district which provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal or industrial water, or structural fire protection the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.”*

In order to prepare and update spheres of influence, LAFCO is required to conduct a review of the municipal services provided in the county, region, subregion, or other appropriate designated area. The policies and standards Lassen LAFCO applies to service reviews will be contained in a subsequent section of these policies and standards.

- a) Consistency Requirement. Every sphere of influence plan must be consistent with LAFCO’s Policies and Standards, the State legislature’s policy direction to LAFCO, the sphere plans of all other agencies in the area, the Commission’s statement of written determinations with respect to its review of municipal services in the applicable area, and with the long range planning goals for the area.
- b) Sphere Boundaries. In establishing the boundaries of a sphere of influence plan for an agency, LAFCO will consider the factors listed in Government Code Section 56425 (e) as noted above.

With respect to Factor 3.1(b) above, LAFCO will not include lands that are unlikely to require the services provided by the agency, for example, lands not designated for development by the applicable General Plan, areas where development is constrained by topographical factors, or areas where the projected and historical growth rates do not indicate a need for service within the timeframe of the sphere plan.

With respect to Factor 3.1(c) above, LAFCO will not include areas in an agency's sphere of influence, which cannot feasibly be served by the agency within a time frame consistent with the sphere plan.

- c) No Concurrent Amendment. LAFCO will generally not amend a Sphere of Influence concurrently with its action on a proposal.
- d) Time Factor. Sphere of Influence amendments will ordinarily take longer to process than applications for a change of organization or reorganization and will generally require more detailed information.
- e) Updated Plans Encouraged. Agencies are encouraged to keep the supporting documentation for their Sphere of Influence plans up to date so that individual applications for changes of organization or reorganization are not burdened with time delays.
- f) Internal Consistency Required. Sphere of Influence Plans shall be internally consistent.
- g) Agency Incapable of Providing Services. If the evidence demonstrates that an agency is unable to provide an adequate level of service within a portion of its service area boundaries within the time frame provided for that boundary, the Sphere of Influence Plan shall be amended pursuant to the procedures for periodic review such that the probable service boundaries are consistent with the determinations included in the applicable Municipal Service Review.
- h) Adoption and Revision. LAFCO will adopt, amend, or update Sphere of Influence Plans after a public hearing and pursuant to the procedures set forth in Government Code Section 56427. Sphere actions are subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. Sphere of Influence Plans shall be updated every five years, or more frequently if deemed necessary by the Commission. Wherever possible, the City of Susanville sphere update shall be scheduled to coincide with its general plan update.
- i. Zero and Minus Spheres. The Commission may adopt a "zero" sphere of influence (encompassing no territory) for an agency when the Commission has determined that the public service functions of the agency are either non-existent, no longer needed, or should be reallocated to some other agency of government. Adoption of a "zero" sphere indicates the agency should ultimately be dissolved. The

Commission may initiate dissolution of an agency when it deems such action appropriate. The Commission may adopt a “minus” sphere (excluding territory currently within that agency’s boundaries) when it has determined that territory within the agency’s boundaries is not in need of the agency’s services, or when the agency has no feasible plans to provide efficient and adequate service to the territory in question.

#### **1.4 LAFCO Policies and Procedures Related to Municipal Services**

In order to establish an appropriate sphere for an agency, LAFCO must have adequate information on present and future service needs in the area and the capabilities of the agency to meet those needs. To this purpose, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act requires LAFCO to conduct service reviews prior to establishing or updating spheres of influence. A service review is a comprehensive review of provision of specified services within a designated geographic area. Its purpose is to evaluate the provision of services on a regional basis and to recommend actions, when necessary, to promote the efficient provision of those services. The service reviews are intended to help LAFCO, the public and other agencies better understand the public service structure and evaluate options for the provision of efficient and effective public services. LAFCO uses the information and analysis provided by the Municipal Service Review (MSR) to ascertain whether an agency can provide adequate and efficient services to the areas in the agency’s sphere within the applicable time frame.

LAFCO will prepare or update the appropriate Municipal Service Reviews prior to or in conjunction with the adoption or update of an agency’s sphere of influence plan. In general, LAFCO will conduct such reviews on a service-by-service basis for designated geographic areas. The Commission will periodically develop and implement a multi-year coordinated schedule for preparing MSRs and updating spheres of influence, in accordance with LAFCO’s budget and the legislature’s direction to review each agency’s sphere of influence every five years and update as necessary.

- a) **General Standards.** LAFCO shall prepare Municipal Service Reviews in conformance with the provisions of Government Code §56430 and its policy regarding Municipal Service Review determinations. A Municipal Service Review must provide information specific to each agency to support the Commission’s written determinations with respect to the following:

Growth and population projections for the affected area.

Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies.

Financial ability of agencies to provide service.

Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.

Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.

Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.

*Note: In 2011 the legislature added an additional determination, as follows: “The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the Sphere of Influence”*

- b) Municipal Service Reviews Must Support Spheres of Influence. In addition to the requirements discussed above, Municipal Service Reviews shall normally contain information on which the Commission can base its determination of the appropriate sphere of influence for an agency, including:
  - i) Identification of existing land uses and a reasonable projection of land uses, which would occur if services were provided consistent with each agency’s sphere of influence plan. This analysis should include maps and explanatory text detailing the following:
  - ii) Present designated and actual land uses in the area, improved and unimproved properties, and agricultural and open space lands, as defined by Government Code Sections 56064 and 56059.
  - iii) Proposed future land uses in the area.
  - iv) Discussion of present and probable future needs for public facilities and services in the sphere area. The discussion should include consideration of the need for all types of major facilities, not just those provided by the agency.
  - v) A determination of the present and future capacity of facilities and adequacy of services the agency provides or has plans to provide. The review must include specific information and analysis of how the agency will meet anticipated growth in demand within its current boundaries and within the area included in its sphere. This information will guide the Commission’s designation of appropriate sphere horizons in the Sphere of Influence Plan. The required information should include the following:
- c) Maps and explanatory text that indicate the location and capacity of existing and proposed facilities, including a plan for timing and location of new or expanded facilities.
- d) An estimate of projected revenue and expense over the sphere horizons, specifically identifying the cost of planned new facilities or services and projected source(s) of revenue to fund those new facilities or services.
- e) Actual and projected costs of services to consumers in current dollars. A statement of actual and projected allocations of the cost of services between existing and new residents shall be included.
- f) Identification of any relevant social or economic communities of interest in the area. For example, an area which is completely within one subdivision governed by a single homeowner's association should be noted, in order to avoid unnecessary division of the territory between service agencies.
- g) Any other information as determined appropriate by the Commission.

- h) Uses of the Municipal Service Review. Upon approval of the Municipal Service Review, it will be utilized by LAFCO both in establishing the agency's sphere of influence and in the consideration of all proposals affecting that agency.
- i) Changes of Organization- revisions required. At the time LAFCO receives an application for a Change of Organization, information contained in the applicable Municipal Service Review (MSR) shall be reviewed and updated as required by adopted LAFCo policies.

## **1.5 Public Participation Process**

Lassen LAFCO is a legislative body authorized by the California Legislature and delegated powers as stated in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (the LAFCO Act) (Government Code §§56000 et seq.) and predecessor statutes. The LAFCO proceedings are subject to the provisions California's open meeting law, the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Sections 54950 et seq.) (Brown Act.) The Brown Act requires advance posting of meeting agendas and contains various other provisions designed to ensure that the public has adequate access to information regarding the proceedings of public boards and commissions. The Lassen LAFCO complies with the requirements of the Brown Act.

The State's MSR Guidelines provide that LAFCOs should encourage and provide multiple public participation opportunities in the municipal service review process. Lassen LAFCO has discussed and considered its MSR process in open session, and has adopted a schedule for completing the various Municipal Service Reviews and Sphere of Influence updates for Lassen County. Each municipal service review will be prepared as a draft, and will be subject to public and agency comment prior to final consideration by Lassen LAFCO.

## **1.6 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

The Municipal Service Review is a planning study that will be considered by LAFCO in connection with subsequent proceedings regarding the City of Susanville's Sphere of Influence. This MSR is funded in the Lassen LAFCO's operating budget. This MSR includes an analysis, to the extent required by Section 15262 of the CEQA Guidelines, of the environmental factors that may be affected by the Municipal Service Review process, but will not include the preparation of an EIR or negative declaration. The preparation of a Municipal Service Review is an activity that has been recognized as being exempt from CEQA review either as an activity that is not subject to CEQA, as a General Rule Exemption or as a Categorical Exemption under Section 15306 of the State CEQA Guidelines (Categorical Exemption, Information Collection, Class 6), which provides exemption for data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

## **1.7 Preparation of the MSR**

Research for this Municipal Service Review (MSR) was conducted over a six month period occurring during the Summer/Fall of 2014. This MSR is intended to support preparation and

update of Spheres of Influence, in accordance with the provisions of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. The objective of this Municipal Service Review (MSR) is to develop recommendations that will promote more efficient and higher quality service patterns; identify areas for service improvement; and assess the adequacy of service provision as it relates to determination of appropriate sphere boundaries. While the City of Susanville prepared the MSR document, the City did not engage the services of experts in engineering, law enforcement, fire protection, recreation and other specialists in related fields, but relied upon reports and city staff for information. Therefore, this MSR reflects the City's recommendations to LAFCO based on available information during the research period and provided by city staff to assist in its determinations related to promoting more efficient and higher quality service patterns; identifying areas for service improvement; and assessing the adequacy of service provision for the City.

This MSR consists of a review of various public services provided by the City of Susanville. The MSR may be considered by LAFCO in subsequent actions including the update of the Sphere of Influence or any annexation proposal within the City of Susanville or surrounding area.

## **SECTION 2.0 STUDY AREA**

This MSR reviews municipal services provided within the City of Susanville incorporated limits and its sphere of influence. This section provides an overview of the geographic area covered by the City limits, its sphere of influence, including other municipal service providers, and growth.

### **2.1 Susanville**

The City of Susanville is located in northeastern California in the south-central part of the Lassen County. The City is at the intersection of State highways 36 and 139 with U.S. Highway 395 skirting the City 4 miles to the east. Susanville is about 85 miles north-northwest of Reno, Nevada and approximately 103 miles north and east of Chico and Red Bluff. Elevations within the City range from 4,000 to 4,500 feet above sea level with City Hall at 4,240 feet. The City is surrounded by higher elevations on three side including Susanville Peak, 3 1/2 miles due north of the city at 6,576 feet high, Diamond Mountain, 8 miles south of Susanville is 7,738 feet and Thompson Peak (13 miles southeast) reaches 7,795 feet. Both Diamond Mountain and Thompson Peak straddle the Lassen County-Plumas County boundary. The city straddles the Susan River, which flows out of the mountains to the west and drains southeastward into the Honey Lake Valley. Honey Lake is periodically a dry lake, which has no known outlet.

West of Susanville, on both sides of the southeast-draining Susan River, foothills rise nearly 1,000 feet above the river valley to elevations of 5,000 to 5,200 feet.

State Highway 36 leads west from Susanville to the small communities of Westwood (Lassen County) and Chester (Plumas County) and to the northern Sacramento Valley and the City of Red Bluff (Tehama County). A short turn-off northward from Highway 36 leads to Mt. Lassen—a 10,437-foot volcano in Shasta County that last erupted in 1914. Highway 36 also leads eastward to Highway 395, then south to Reno, about 1 1/2 hour drive. Eagle Lake, an important sport fishing and tourist destination, is 23 miles north of Susanville on State Route 139.

The climate in Susanville is typical of Lassen County, and is generally described as semi-arid. Summers are typically dry, with moderate-high daytime temperatures and cool nights. Winters are typically wet, with an average annual precipitation of approximately 15 inches including an average of 35” of snow. Almost all precipitation falls between October and April. The mean annual high and low temperatures are 64 degrees and 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

Important open spaces within and near the city include areas along the Susan River and in places along Piute Creek, the Bizz Johnson Trail, Susan Ranch Park, Inspiration Point and the municipal golf course. In addition the City is surrounded by thousands of acres of public land under U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management ownership.



## **2.2 Growth**

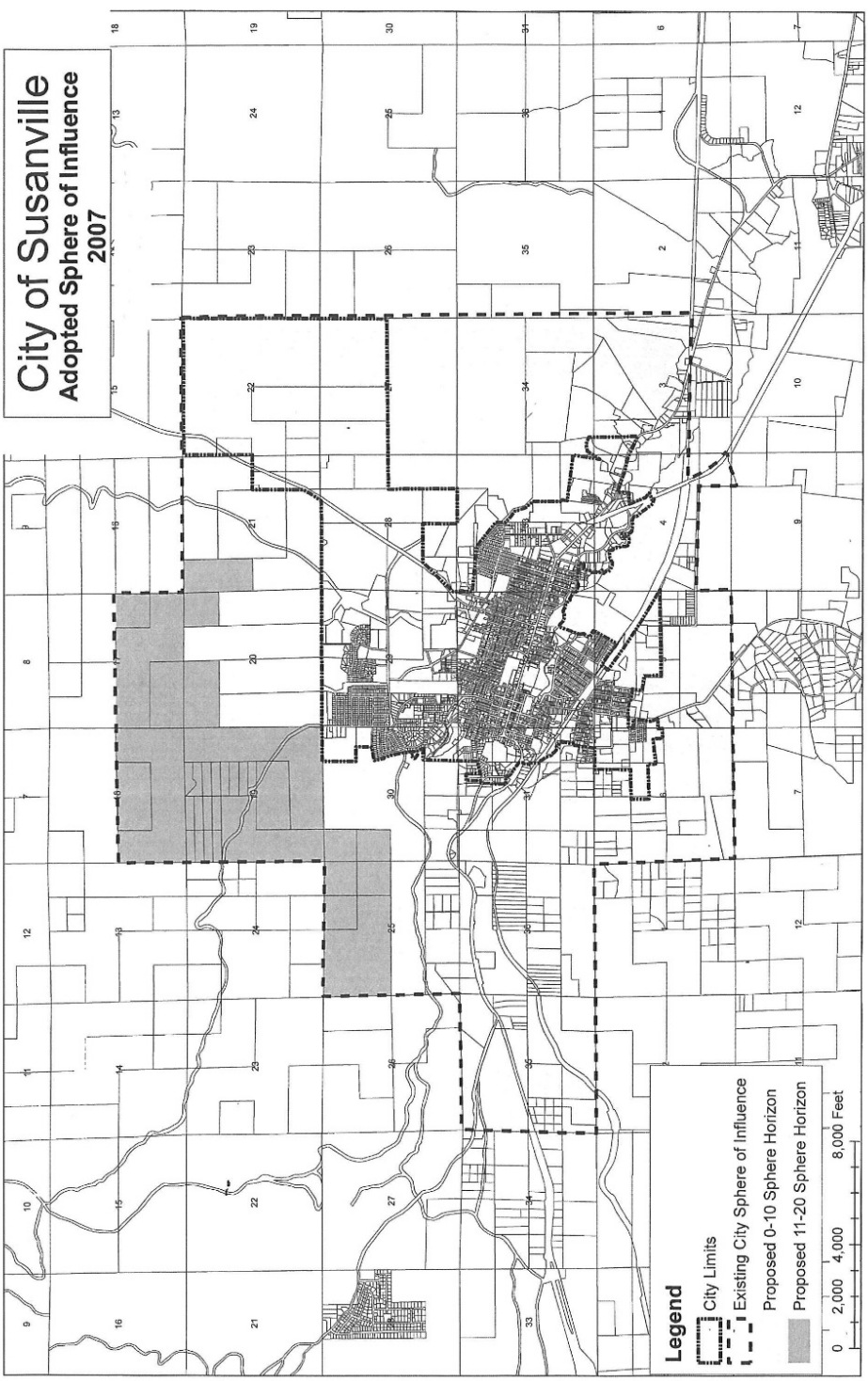
The City of Susanville has a population of 8,978 persons according to the State Department of Finance estimate for 1/1/2014. The prison population was not included in this figure as the State of California is the primary service provider for all services except natural gas which is provided by the City. The City is projected to have approximately 9,500 people in 2020 and 10,016 persons by the year 2025 based on a historical average annual growth rate of just under 1.0%. The City has a low organic growth rate with the population fluctuations being driven primarily by new employment. Population estimates for the MSR study area (including the Johnstonville Planning Area, the Richmond Gold Run Planning Area, the Susanville Planning Area and the City of Susanville) include a 2010 population estimate of approximately 14,143 persons (2010 census). At present, the City of Susanville has an average of 2.34 persons per household and Lassen County as a whole averages 2.50 persons per household (2014 DOF estimated data).

Based on data from the City's 2009- 2014 Housing Element there is an adequate amount of land within the City to accommodate the projected populations increased through 2025

The City of Susanville is the only incorporated city in Lassen County and serves as the County seat. The most recent annexations include the Lassen Community Hospital annexation in 2000/2001, which was the largest in the City's history and involved 1,340 acres including the Lassen Community College and vacant acreage that was utilized for the construction of the Banner Lassen Medical Center and adjacent Northeastern Rural Health Clinic. No residential subdivisions were included in the annexation area and the annexation was determined to be uninhabited.

## **2.3 Existing Sphere of Influence**

The City's current Sphere of influence is shown in figure 2.4-1 below:



## **2.4 Management Structure**

The City of Susanville was incorporated in 1900 and is a general law city. The five-member elected City Council is the legislative and policy-making body of the City. The City Council consists of five Council members who represent the City at large. The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem are to serve for a two-year term and are selected by the City Council from among its members. Regular Council meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

The City has a Council-Administrator form of government, with a full-time City Administrator appointed by the City Council. The City Administrator also serves as the Department Head of the Administrative Services Department and duties include ensuring the enforcement of all ordinances and ensuring that all franchises, contracts, permits, and privileges granted by the City Council are faithfully observed. The City Administrator leads an executive staff of 3 department heads and the City Attorney. All public buildings, parks and all other public property under the jurisdiction of the City Council and are under the general supervision of the City Administrator.

The City Attorney and City Administrator are appointed by the City Council. According to the Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and the City's approved position list, there are a total of 64 full-time employees working for the City of Susanville. In 2014 the City eliminated the City Treasurer position as all of the Treasurer functions were being dutifully performed by the Finance Division.

There are currently four departments in the City's organizational structure: Administrative Services; Police; Fire; and Public Works. The Police, Fire and Public Works Departments each have department heads who report to the City Administrator. The City Administrator is the department head for the Administrative Services Department.

The City Municipal Code provides for several appointed commissions and committees who serve as advisory groups for various City functions. The appointed commissions/committees in the code include the Planning Commission, Airport Commission, Recreation and Park Commission, Tree Commission, Design Review Committee, Lassen County/City of Susanville Historic Building Review Committee, Subdivision Committee, Architectural Review Committee, Appeals Hearing Board, and Abandoned Vehicle Hearing Board.

The City of Susanville Planning Commission is made up of five citizens that must be over the age of 18, live within the City of Susanville, and are registered to vote. The Commission members are appointed by a quorum of the members of the City Council. The Commission meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The Commission is responsible for the review and approval, denial, or recommendation thereof of development applications, including but not limited to Conditional Use Permits, Tentative Subdivision Maps, General Plan Amendments, Zone Changes, Architectural Design and Site Plan Reviews, Variances and the associated environmental documents that may be part of those applications. The Planning Commission also acts as the Architectural Review Committee to review new building for compliance with the City's Design Guidelines and to review architectural standards of the

Uptown Business District Zone and acts as the Appeals Hearing Board for nuisance abatement and administrative code enforcement hearings.

The Park and Recreation Commission is a seven-member body appointed by the Mayor with approval of the council. Five of the members must live within the city limits. The commission advises the city council and city staff on recreation policies, recreation programs, the development and use of city recreation facilities and opportunities; and on the promotion of arts and cultural activities and programs for all residents including the development and maintenance of facilities devoted to arts and culture. There is no sitting Recreation and Park Commission at this time.

The Design Review Committee is a seven member body appointed by the Mayor with approval of the council. The stated responsibilities of the committee are to evaluate, critique, consider and approve the design, painting and location of murals in the city and to be given the responsibility to review matters covered elsewhere in the code including but not limited to, architectural review, landscaping, community character, signs. The responsibilities of this committee appear to overlap the responsibilities of other committees or commissions. The Planning Commission currently functions as the Design Review Committee.

The Lassen County/City of Susanville Historic Building Review Committee consists of five members, two appointed by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors, two appointed by the City Council and the fifth appointed by the four appointees. The Committee reviews applications requesting buildings and/or sites to be placed on the Lassen County/City of Susanville historic building registry for the purpose of utilizing the State Historic Building Code. There is currently a full sitting committee.

The Abandoned Vehicle Hearing Board is a three member board consisting of the city administrator, the city planner and the building official. The Board hears protest filed against the removal of abandoned, wrecked, dismantled or inoperative vehicles from private property. Before the removal of such vehicles, the property owner may request a hearing before the board.

The Subdivision Committee is mentioned twice in the Code but is not defined anywhere.

As a result of recent changes to the City's organizational structure and consolidation of departments the City Code contains references to several departments and positions that no longer exist within the current structure of the City including a Housing Department, Planning Department, Building Department, Community Development Department, Community Services Department, Finance Director, and Community Development Director.

Pursuant to state law, the City provides an injury and illness prevention plan (under SB 198) with the objective of providing information and training to employees emphasizing the importance of safe practices in the workplace.

## **2.5 Public Access and Interest**

City Hall is located at 66 North Lassen Street in Susanville. City Hall contains the administrative offices of the City, and the City Council Chambers. City Hall is readily accessible to residents, with abundant free parking. Normal working hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The office is open during the lunch hour to serve the public.

The City adheres to the requirements of the Brown Act and other regulations mandating notice and public access, and makes reasonable efforts to provide for public participation in governmental decision-making.

The City of Susanville has developed a website for its residents with numerous links to the various departments of the city. For each department, an overview of their functions and programs is given, along with general information of respective department staff members. The website also offers links to other relevant sites, including Lassen County LAFCo, and to City Council agendas/minutes in printable PDF format. The City's website is easily navigated, and offers a good deal of useful information the average resident should be able to access without difficulty.

### **3.0 Existing Municipal Service Provided**

<b>Municipal Service</b>	<b>Existing City Limits</b>	<b>Existing SOI (unincorporated)</b>
<b>Public Safety</b>		
<i>Police</i>	City Police	County Sheriff
<i>Traffic Enforcement</i>	City Police, CHP	California Highway Patrol (CHP)
<i>Parking Enforcement</i>	City Police	County Sheriff
<i>Code Enforcement</i>	Various City Departments	Lassen County
<i>Animal Control</i>	City Police	Lassen County
<i>Fire Protection/EMS</i>	City Fire	CALFIRE/Fire Districts
<b>Utilities</b>		
<i>Water - Domestic</i>	City of Susanville (wells & springs)	Private wells
<i>Water - Irrigation</i>	City of Susanville	Various districts
<i>Natural Gas</i>	City of Susanville	None
<i>Wastewater</i>	Susanville Sanitation District (SSD)	SSD, private septic system
<i>Electricity</i>	Lassen Municipal Utility District	Lassen Municipal Utility District
<i>Solid Waste Planning and Disposal</i>	Lassen Regional Solid Waste Management Authority	Lassen Regional Solid Waste Management Authority
<i>Solid Waste Collection</i>	C & S Waste Management	C & S Waste Management
<b>Public Works</b>		
<i>Drainage</i>	City of Susanville	Lassen County
<i>Street Maintenance</i>	City of Susanville, Caltrans	Lassen County, Caltrans
<i>Street Lighting</i>	City of Susanville	Lassen County
<i>Snow Removal</i>	City of Susanville, Caltrans	Lassen County, Caltrans
<b>Community Services</b>		
<i>Parks</i>	City of Susanville	Lassen County
<i>Swimming Pool(future)</i>	Honey Lake Valley JPA	Honey Lake Valley JPA
<i>Library</i>	Lassen Library District	Lassen library District
<i>Vector Control</i>	Lassen County Public Health	Lassen County Public Health
<i>Cemetery</i>	Lassen County	Lassen County

### 3.1 Services

Susanville was incorporated as a general law city in 1900. The table above provides a list by department of services provided both within the City and within the sphere of influence:

## 4.0 Public Safety

The City Police Department (PD) is responsible for enforcing the laws and ordinances of the City and the State of California, for apprehending violators of the law, and for assisting in the prosecution of violators of the law. The City provides 24-hour police coverage of the City, including patrol, traffic and parking enforcement, investigations, school resource officer for Lassen High School District, part-time bicycle patrol unit and a narcotics task force officer. The department operates with 17 sworn officers, one full-time administrative assistant, 1 full-time and 1 part-time non-sworn Community Service Officers (total of 20 personnel).

The police department contracts with the Lassen County Sheriff's Office for dispatch services. The City relies on the Sheriff's Office for search and rescue, and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation staff for SWAT type services. Crime laboratory services are provided by the California Department of Justice's Redding office.

The police department provides part-time animal control services to City residents, and contracts with Lassen County for animal shelter services. Animal control services consists of patrolling for loose animals within the City limits, enforcing animal laws ordinances, picking up stray and dead animals, enforcing rabies control and licensing, as taking and following-up on state-mandated animal bite reports.

The Lassen County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement in the unincorporated areas in the City's sphere of influence (SOI). Their main headquarters is located within the City of Susanville. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is responsible for all traffic enforcement in unincorporated areas.

The PD, Sheriff, and CHP exchange general law enforcement assistance when needed. The agencies have a good working relationship to assist others as needed.

### 4.1 Service Demands

The police department workload involves responding to emergency and non-emergency calls for service including but not limited to homicides, assaults, sexual assaults, burglaries, thefts, vandalisms, burglary alarms, suspicious circumstances, vehicle accidents, and citizen assists, in addition to patrol activities and well as parking and traffic citations. The Susanville Police Department responds to approximately 9,800 calls for service each year. Service calls have remained relatively stable over the past three years; however some property crimes have increased. Table 4.1 below shows the breakdown of service calls:

**Table 4.1 Service Calls Breakdown**

<b>INCIDENT TYPE</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Dispatched Incidents	8220	6750	7588
Officer Initiated	1697	3104	2239
Total Calls for Service	9917	9854	9827

City of Susanville  
Adopted Municipal Service Review  
Resolution 2015-0003



**Vehicle Collisions**

Non-Injury	111	97	72
Private Property	60	44	28
Injury	30	26	20
Traffic Citations	376	492	338
Parking Citations	131	101	112

**Arrests**

Misdemeanor	438	547	428
Felony	204	188	246

**Part 1 Crimes**

Homicide	0	1	2
Sexual Assault	5	5	3
Robbery	8	13	11
Aggravated Assault	15	24	27
Burglary	113	104	148
Theft	194	186	215
Auto Theft	11	13	22
Arson	1	4	6

**Miscellaneous**

Other Assault	241	189	177
Domestic Violence	148	126	81
Vandalism	163	157	145
Case Numbers Issued	2063	2085	2048

**4.2 Facilities**

The Police Department maintains one facility located at 1801 Main Street in Susanville. The facility was acquired by the City of Susanville in the mid 1980's, and remodeled for use as a police facility. Over the years, the facility has received minor updating and remodeling, however it is in need of additional work. The City of Susanville does not maintain a prisoner holding facility. The PD typically transports arrested individuals directly to the Lassen County Jail, which is located within the city limits on Sheriff Cady Lane.

The PD currently operates a fleet of fourteen vehicles. Eight vehicles are fully marked patrol vehicles, one marked Community Service/Crime Scene vehicle, four unmarked vehicles used for

the detectives and administrative staff, one pick-up truck used for animal control. Additionally, the PD operates one police motorcycle, two police bicycles, and one marked electric golf cart used for special events and community outreach.

Overall department equipment is adequate, but continues to need to be updated due to advancement of technology, records management needs, and the age of vehicles and equipment.

#### **4.3 Staffing Allocation**

Several years ago, the patrol officers transitioned to a twelve-hour shift, team configuration, with each team consisting of a Sergeant and two patrol officers. The goal of the shift change is to increase productivity and accountability. Currently the department only has three (3) approved Sergeant positions and one shift does not have an assigned Sergeant. The Lieutenant and Chief of Police pick up the daily supervision activities for this shift along with their other assignments.

The department has two detectives. One is assigned to investigate general crimes, while the other is primarily assigned to narcotics investigations. Both detectives work together as a team during major crime investigations.

The Community Service Officer are assigned duties including animal control, parking enforcement, evidence and property room management, managing fleet and building maintenance, crime scene investigation, and other administrative duties.

#### **4.4 Auxiliary Funding**

Most services of the Police Department are supported by the City's General Fund and Police Mitigation Fund. The department also receives \$100,000 Block Grant funding (COPS Grant) to supply a Sergeant, and approximately \$17,000 in matching funds from Safe Street Task Force funding from the FBI to pay for overtime investigate drug violations. There is auxiliary funding to provide a Lassen High School Resource Officer. Overall, the Police Department has sufficient funds to allow for ongoing programs and training.

#### **4.5 Management Structure**

The structure of the Susanville Police Department is as follows; The Chief of Police and one Police Lieutenant who oversees the administrative and operations divisions of the department. The administrative division has six (6) positions (including non-sworn), which includes two (2) Detectives, two (2) Community Service Officers, and one (1) Administrative Assistant. The operations division includes twelve (12) positions, which includes three (3) Sergeants and (9) Police Officers. Staffing is marginally adequate to meet the operational and management needs of the department given the current population of the City. There isn't currently a traffic officer and officers will frequently be paid for overtime to cover vacations and sick leave. The police department is often impacted by the attrition rate of the agency causing many patrol shifts being covered through overtime, and specialty assignments going unfilled for a period of time while new officers complete the lengthy field training program.

The Police Department has developed and maintained a Policy Manual that is up-to-date and helps with the officers' daily operations. The manual is provided by an outside vendor who develops policy manuals for several hundred police agencies. It is updated on a regular basis.

#### **4.6 Mission Statement**

The Department has adopted a motto to reflect its operational and protection service:

**“Pride in Service, Service with Pride”**

### **5.0 Public Works**

#### **5.1 Introduction to Public Works**

The Susanville Public works Department is located at 720 South Street in Susanville. The public works department is responsible for the following municipal services:

- 1.) street maintenance and circulation.
- 2.) drainage and flood control.
- 3.) geothermal water
- 4.) natural gas services.
- 5.) potable water.
- 6.) general engineering services

Beginning on January 1, 2012, through an Agreement with the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District, Public Works Staff also perform duties for the Air District. The City Engineer has been appointed by the Air District Governing Board as the Air Pollution Control Officer.

The Department is structured into four divisions: Public Works Administration, Natural Gas, Water / Geothermal, and Streets. Each division having a supervisor. The divisions exist primarily due to operational and budgetary differences. For example, each utility (natural gas, water and geothermal) operates as a separate enterprise receiving funding from their respective system users. The Streets Division is primarily funded with gas tax funding. The Public Works Administration Division comprises administrative personnel and positions that are structured to serve all divisions with fleet and engineering services.

For FY 2014-15 there are 21 budgeted full-time positions in the department, including a director, an engineer, a natural gas supervisor, a water and geothermal supervisor, and a street maintenance supervisor. Each division is staffed with a combination of journeyman and entry level workers.

Funding for the Department comes from a variety of sources including state and/or federal gasoline taxes, capital facility impact fees assessed to new development within the City and other sources (City of Susanville General Plan 1990-2010). The City's enterprises (water, natural gas and geothermal) under the Public Works Department are funded by fees for services. Additionally, 2 full time equivalent positions are funded by the Air District.

## **5.2 Street Maintenance and Circulation**

Street maintenance services provided by Public Works include patching, striping, and minor repairs and reconstruction of streets; installation and repair of curbs, gutters and sidewalks; installation and maintenance of street signage; street sweeping; snow removal; and street lighting. In addition, the Public Works Department oversees major street construction work such as installation of new streets and bridges. The Street Division crew is comprised of four full time employees. One of which is the Division Supervisor, one Street Operator III, and two Maintenance Workers.

Circulation and street improvements are required for all new developments in Susanville, including roadways, curb, gutter and sidewalks; however, this was not historically the case and there are numerous areas within the City, which do not have frontage improvements. To fill these gaps the City Code requires the installation of curb and gutter whenever more than \$25,000 of cumulative improvements are made to a lot or structure within a 3-year period. The installation of curb, gutter, and sidewalks is required when more than \$50,000 of improvements are made over a 3-year period.

Traffic circulation is not a big problem on the majority of city streets. Therefore, there is not a significant need to implement a number of capacity increasing or operational improvement projects. The street network's largest need is pavement rehabilitation, preservation, and maintenance.

When compared to old deteriorated streets, it is the newer or most recently rehabilitated streets that benefit the most from routine and consistent maintenance. The economic benefit of maintaining the "good roads" is exhibited in the city's pavement management system. Pavement defects can be assessed, qualified, and quantified by trained staff. Based on the pavement age, observed defects, and traffic loading, pavement condition index and deterioration curves are calculated. These values trigger various maintenance treatments that will extend the pavement life. The city uses Street Saver software developed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission as its pavement management system.

Some city streets have deteriorated to the point where maintenance is no longer an option to preserve the asphalt concrete. In these situations, the city relies largely on funding through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to rehabilitate streets. This funding source has proven to be unreliable for rehabilitation purposes, because rehabilitation projects do not rank high when state budgetary constraints limit STIP funding one circulation constraint is drivers often experience delays at Main St. intersections due to signal coordination and video recognition equipment. Caltrans is aware of these issues and is working to resolve the video recognition issues. Wired traffic loops are installed when there is new construction and Caltrans may be returning to the wired loops systems to detect side street vehicles to enhance the reliability of the signal network.

Since 2006, the City has had numerous street rehabilitation projects programmed in the STIP. Budget deficiencies at the state level have delayed the implementation of these projects. At its March 20, 2014, meeting, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted the 2014 STIP. The STIP was approved with over \$10,000,000 in funding programmed for City street projects over the next five years. A portion of this funding will be utilized for drainage improvements and upgrades to pedestrian facilities. Approximately \$5.7 million is programmed within the first two years of the five year STIP cycle.

Changes in the interpretation of what constitutes a street alteration, when completing rehabilitation work, has led to a requirement of upgrading curb ramps when overlaying a roadway. In addition, all local agency, STIP funded, rehabilitation projects are now required to be reviewed by the California Division of the State Architect. These changes will result in significant pedestrian curb ramp and sidewalk improvements in conjunction with the rehabilitation work. This will result in improved access for pedestrians but fewer funds for roadway improvements.

The Public Works Department is responsible for snow removal within the city limits. In 2011-2012 the City Council adopted a snow removal plan. The plan, which can be found on the City's website, describes priority routes and snow removal procedures. The small Street Division crew cannot complete all the snow plowing necessary for most storms. Therefore, the Department draws resources from all divisions (Natural Gas, Water/Geothermal, and Public Works Administration) during snow events.

Other modes of transportation in Susanville include public transit and a city owned and operated public airport facility.

### **5.3 Drainage and Flood Control**

Storm water runoff is collected from urbanized portions of Susanville with a network of detention ponds, catch basins and underground pipelines. In most cases, storm water runoff is eventually diverted to watercourses such as ditches and creeks that traverse the City, eventually leading to the Susan River (City of Susanville General Plan, 1990-2010).

The City's detention ponds detain storm water until the peak flow in the nearest watercourse subsides. When this occurs, water is allowed to drain into the system not including any water that has evaporated or percolated into the ground. The storm drainage system in Susanville is extended as growth necessitates expansion. The City does not have any adopted standards for sizing on-site detention facilities for individual development projects and each proposal is evaluated on an individual basis.

Storm water quality is becoming an increasing concern throughout the State and the City is now subject to complying with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System requirements adopted on February 5, 2013, by the State Water Resources Control Board in order No. 2013-0001DWQ. The order adopts waste discharge requirements from small municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) which is applicable to the City's stormwater system. The City has

registered under the Storm Water Multiple Application and Report Tracking System (SMARTS) as required. As a disadvantaged community, the City has requested a waiver of the requirement to implement the requirements of the MS4 system. The overall analysis and planning effort to properly implement the program is both costly and time consuming. Department staff will stay informed on this item and implement the MS4 requirements as required.

Some locations in Susanville have been and will be subject to flooding during a storm with a 1 percent chance of occurrence in a year referred to as a “100-year storm” which has been set as the “base flood” standard for acceptable risk. Past flooding has occurred during the winter and during the spring storm runoff, primarily along the Susan River and Piute Creek. Although flooding is not considered a big problem within Susanville or the surrounding area, the Susanville General Plan contains numerous policies dealing with flood control issues, including:

- 1.) *GP Policy ad. The City shall preclude new developments from compounding or impacting the potential for flooding,*
- 2.) *GP Policy ae. The City shall reduce the potential for flooding along the Susan River and along its tributaries,*
- 3.) *GP Policy af. The City shall maintain an updated flood control plan,*
- 4.) *GP Policy ag. The City shall regulate land uses in flood-plain areas and allow development in those areas only with appropriate mitigation*
- 5.) *GP Policy ai. The City shall cooperate with Lassen County to establish a flood management plan and program for the Susan River Watershed and Drainage Basin.*

In addition to these policies outlined in the General Plan, the City’s Floodplain Management Ordinance includes standards for subdivisions, manufactured homes, and utilities in relation to flood hazard reduction. These standards include anchoring, construction materials and methods, flood elevation and flood proofing. The City’s Floodplain Management Ordinance was updated to meet current FEMA recommendations in 2013.

As long as the City of Susanville complies with the above policies and those contained therein the Floodplain Management Ordinance, any flood related issues will be mitigated to the greatest extent possible given the fact that there is some development within the floodplain that was allowed before the City had a floodplain management ordinance.

Areas of localized flooding are watched carefully by the City Fire Department and City Public Works personnel. One area of concern is the Susan River in the vicinity of Carroll Street. This area has become such a prominent concern that over the years that the City leaves in place, year round, a concrete barrier that can be quickly sand bagged to protect the homes in the area. A permanent flood wall has been considered and may be installed as funding State or Federal becomes available.

## **5.4 Natural Gas Division**

### **5.4.1 Natural Gas System history**

On September 7, 1993, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 93-768, establishing a natural gas utility as an enterprise of the City. In 1999, the City Council commissioned a feasibility study on the construction of a gas project to serve the City's residents. The study was completed in 1999 and stated that a municipal natural gas utility was feasible based upon sufficient community interest in switching to natural gas and the City's ability to issue low cost debt. The November 7, 2000 election results revealed 56% of the residents of the City who voted, were in favor of the City constructing, owning and operating a natural gas utility. Construction of the natural gas distribution system began in May 2001 consisting of 10.81 miles of 6" steel transmission line from the Tuscarora/Susanville Lateral, 5.5 miles of 8" plastic feeder mainline, 43 miles of plastic distribution mainline and was complete and serving its first customer in November 2001. The City maintains all of the gas lines including the 10+ miles of distribution line. The City issued \$24,240,000 in debt (Certificates of Participation) to finance the construction and first two years of system operations. The City restructured the debt in 2010 and issued new thirty-five year subordinate bonds for the Natural Gas System.

### **5.4.2 Natural Gas System Operation**

The natural gas system is operated as an enterprise of the City. The City Council sets natural gas rates pursuant to Government Code Sections 66016, 66018 and 6062a after a public hearing. The finances and operation of the natural gas system are subject to certain market forces, such as competition, demand and supply. Whether the City generates sufficient revenue to pay all obligations payable out of the natural gas enterprise fund is, in large part, contingent upon consumers' willingness to purchase the service from the City. Because the City buys all of its natural gas from third parties, the successful operation of the natural gas system also depends on a steady supply of natural gas at affordable prices. The wholesale price of natural gas has experienced some volatility in recent years. Purchasing authority of natural gas is granted by City Council resolution for the City Administrator to purchase natural gas through an agreement with IGI Resources.

Current natural gas rates as of June 2014 are \$2.14 per therm for the first 450 therms and \$2.06 per therm thereafter in a reading cycle. The City also has a fixed price option for customers who use over 1,500 therms per year that is \$1.85 per therm. For large consumers of natural gas (over thirty thousand therms) the City has both variable and fixed rate options based on whether the customer has the ability to readily convert to propane or heating oil as alternative fuels. The variable rate option has two tiers of pricing based on whether the customer uses more than 30,000 or 75,000 therms per year and adjust the price monthly based on the relative prices of propane, heating oil and natural gas. The fixed rate option is based on a mutually agreed fixed price that is based on the New York Mercantile Exchange plus a geographical price base adjustment to the Susanville City gate plus \$1.30 per therm for customers using over 30,000 therms and \$1.24 per therm for customers using over 75,000 therms.

The operation of the natural gas system is subject to various constraints that are particular to the energy market. Availability of supply and demand by customers is heavily affected by certain natural elements such as weather changes which are unpredictable.

The City purchases natural gas by long-term contract and on the spot market from IGI Resources (a wholly owned subsidiary of British Petroleum), a wholesaler who sells gas on the open market. The Tuscarora Gas Transmission Company, Inc. owns and maintains the pipelines from which the City of Susanville has a contract for firm capacity and receives its gas supply. The Tuscarora Pipeline runs from Malin Oregon, (where it intersects with Gas Transmission Northwest Company pipeline coming from British Columbia) to Reno, Nevada, and is intercepted by the Susanville Lateral approximately 20 miles east of the city on the west side of Honey Lake. The connecting delivery point is at Chappuis Lane off of Center Road, approximately 10 miles east of the City, where the City maintained supply line begins. This line operates at about 350 psi and has a maximum allowable operating pressure (maop) of 1000 psi from Chappuis Lane to the Susanville City Gate on a 6 inch high pressure steel distribution mainline. The gas runs at about 40-50 psi within the City's PE distribution system, and the maximum allowed operating pressure is 60 psi. The gas is regulated again at every business and house (on location) in the system.

Prior to the completion of the natural gas system residents would use wood heating, heating oil, geothermal and propane. Wood heating is still a popular option for many residents who may use a combination of heating sources during the winter. The customer base for natural gas has grown significantly since gas was first offered as a service. Sales began at zero therms sold in fiscal year 2001-2002 to over 2 million therms sold in fiscal year 2013-2014. As of June 2014 there were 310 commercial gas meters/accounts and 2,765 residential meters/accounts. Approximately 5 other cities in California have developed a natural gas network as a function of their government.

As an incentive to connect to natural gas service the City only charges \$10 for a new service connection for most locations within the City. This includes trenching, pipe, installation of a meter, and gas plumbing within the house to appliance locations. The City also performs appliance installations at no cost and performs most repairs and service on gas appliances for the cost of parts only. While this policy has had the desired effect of attracting new customers, one effect has been that there are a large number of abandoned above ground propane and fuel oil tanks throughout the City which have the potential to be a fire hazard or contamination risk. Additionally, offering gas appliance repair with no labor costs potentially impacts the ability of local repair business to compete for certain repairs.

The Natural Gas enterprise has been successful in meeting its bond covenants, developing a rate stabilization fund 18 months ahead of schedule, and contributing to improving bond ratings. The utility continues to grow with a consistent influx of residential customers and commercial development.

In March 2014, the Department presented a 5 year plan for City Council's consideration. The plan included several goals and action items. System and customer growth was discussed in the plan as a goal; however, no market research or feasibility studies were conducted to substantiate



the plan objectives. Current staff will revisit the plan with an approach that includes a cost analysis and anticipated rate of return and additional revisions and refinements are needed to complete the plan.

### **5.4.3 Natural Gas System Regulatory Agencies**

The City's natural gas system falls under the regulatory authority of the United States Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration, also known as PHMSA. Under PHMSA regulations, the City as a gas operator is required to develop, several plans. These plans include an Operation and Maintenance Plan, an Operator Qualifications Plan, an Emergency Response Plan, a Distribution Integrity Management Plan, a Damage Prevention Plan, and a Public Awareness Plan. In addition, the gas system is subject to California regulations adopted under Assembly Bill 32 the California Global Warming Solutions Act, pertaining the greenhouse gas emissions.

The Natural Gas Division works diligently to comply with PHMSA regulations as a gas operator. Significant gas catastrophes over the past few years such as San Bruno, East Harlem apartments, and others have resulted in increased regulations and regulatory presence pertaining to pipeline safety. The City has embraced these new regulations and has responded by increasing training of staff, updating relevant plans, completing integrity surveys on the pipeline, and increasing communications with emergency response personnel.

California regulations require the City's Natural Gas Division to submit annual reports to the Air Resources Board with regard to emissions as a result of system leaks and natural gas combustion. At this time the City's emissions are below the threshold (25,000 metric tons) that requires participation in the state's Cap and Trade program.

### **Determination**

The City's natural gas system provide a reliable and relatively affordable source of energy to City residents. The system infrastructure is relatively new and operates with problems. The City has incentive for residents to get natural gas service by offering low hook-up costs and providing low cost gas appliance repairs for minor issues.

## **5.5 Geothermal**

Geothermal heat distribution can be found in a small area in the southwest quadrant of Susanville. As of January 2015 there were 7 large commercial geothermal users within the City. The City's system consists of 2 production wells (1 active) and a re-injection well to return the water into the aquifer after a portion of the heat is extracted. There is approximately 3.2 miles of underground piping supply and return lines, which mainly serves areas in uptown Susanville.

The geothermal system operates differently from the municipal water system in that the supply line discharges into a return line. The return line can build pressure based on outlet settings and this can cause problems getting adequate flow to certain facilities within the system, some of

these problems were experienced in 2013-2014 affecting Diamond View School, County Mental Health, and the County Road Shop. These problems have been resolved (Fall 2014).

While there are only a few uses on the system the City does believe the commercial applications for geothermal heat can continue to be a viable alternative for space heating. The geothermal rate is based on square footage and is not metered. The City has established Rules and Regulations for its geothermal service requiring an agreement between the City and the end user.

The City currently evaluates expansion of the system on a case by case basis and expansion is primarily based on proximity to the existing infrastructure. The City is evaluating the feasibility of creating a separate small geothermal system utilizing two additional city wells located in the southern parts of the city along Sierra Road which may not be tied to the existing system.

### **Determination**

The Geothermal Service offered by the City is a small system that operates efficiently with little maintenance. There are ample resources to expand the system or add new customers if demand arises.

## **5.6 Engineering**

The Engineering Division provides survey, design, permitting and inspection services to the City's Capital Improvement Projects for transportation, water, geothermal, natural gas and storm water facilities. It maintains and updates the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The division also reviews site plans for private commercial and subdivision development projects and issues right-of-way use permits for construction activities within the city limits. The Engineering Division also assists other City Departments with survey, design and permitting support.

The Engineering Division provides staffing for the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District. The Engineering staff performs activities such as the permitting of stationary sources, enforcement of local, State, and Federal air pollution rules and regulations, and administration of grant programs.

## **5.7 Potable Water Service**

The City supplies potable water for municipal and industrial uses within the City limits and has two small systems in the unincorporated Lassen County. As of December 2014 the City had a total of 3,805 metered (active) connections, consisting of 3,332 residential meters/ accounts and 473 commercial meters/ accounts. While there are some city metered connections outside the City, the majority of users within the Sphere of Influence receive domestic water from private on-site wells or small water companies/providers.

In June 2008 water fees were increased to provide revenue specific funding to be placed in a special operational fund for the repair, improvement and replacement of the aging water system. These funds have been utilized to replace aging infrastructure as well as water meters. The rate

increase accounts for just over \$350,000 a year for infrastructure replacement. Water meters have been the primary focus of the infrastructure improvements. All small residential water meters have been replaced with new radio compatible meters. Evidence suggests that the new meters have been doing a better job of capturing low flow use within the system. Water infrastructure improvement funds will be utilized to replace aging mainlines and services laterals. The Department will complete several main line projects in 2015 ahead of street rehab work.

The City is a member of the Lahontan Basins Regional Water Management Group (RWMG). Other members include the Susanville Indian Rancheria, Lassen Irrigation District, and the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District. The purpose of the group, at this time, is to coordinate the preparation of the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. The purpose of the plan is to present the region's water resources management objectives and recommend water programs for addressing highest priority needs. Upon completion of the plan the RWMG's focus will shift to preparing projects for implementation grant funding. There is approximately 2.6 million dollars available for the Lahontan Basins Region in the next funding cycle. The RWMG will evaluate the grant solicitation process and tailor a competitive application for funding. The City has submitted projects for consideration including, the Carroll Street Floodwall, Cady Springs Pumping Station, Cady Springs Collection Site Rehabilitation, water main replacement, and others.

### **5.7.1 Regulatory Agencies**

Federal, state and local agencies play regulatory roles in California water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for enforcing drinking water quality standards, although much of this authority is delegated to the states.

Prior to July 1, 2014, the California Department of Health Services (DHS) was responsible for the enforcement of the Federal and California Safe Drinking Water Acts and the operational permitting and regulatory oversight of public water systems. DHS also conducted water source assessments, provided oversight of water recycling projects, permits water treatment devices, certifies water system employees, promotes water system security, and administers grants under the State Revolving Fund and Proposition 50 funding water system improvements. On July 1, 2014, the Drinking Water Program and the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program moved from DHS to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Under the SWRCB, the Drinking Water Division was created. The Drinking Water Division is responsible for the regulatory activities previously performed under the Department of Health Services.

Water providers are subject to federal and state requirements covering water quality, water planning, and ensuring that water employees are adequately trained, among others. This section provides an overview of the more significant and recent requirements. Since 2001, land use agencies in California have been required to obtain written verification of sufficient water supply before approving plans for new development projects over 50 dwelling units. Any project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) supplied with water from a public water system must be provided a water supply assessment, except as specified in the law. The plan must include information relating to the quality of existing sources of water available to an urban

water supplier over given periods and include the manner in which water quality affects water management strategies and supply reliability.

### **5.7.2 Water System History**

The City of Susanville acquired ownership of their water system on June 26, 1985 from California Pacific National (CP National). CP National operated the domestic water system under a domestic water system permit dated December 3, 1971. The City was granted a permit by the State of California to operate the domestic water system under Water Permit No. 86-043 on November 10, 1986. The City was granted the water permit subject to five provisions to improve operation and maintenance of the water system (for complete list of DHS provisions see City of Susanville Master Water Plan 1994, page 19). Since the water system was acquired in 1985, the City has implemented a water system capital improvement program to correct the water system deficiencies identified by the State Department of Health Services and addressed the five provisions under which the water permit was granted.

### **5.7.3 Supply Sources**

The City's sources of water supply are Bagwell Springs (located one mile north of the city), Cady Springs (located two miles west of the city), and four wells (Well #1, Well #3, Well #4 and Well #5). The four wells augment the supply from the springs for a maximum of 5 months of the year at varying levels during the summer and fall. Total storage capacity within the system is 3.4 million gallons, which represents 152% of average daily usage.

#### **Bagwell Springs**

Bagwell Springs is located on a wooded hillside about one and a half miles northwest of Susanville. The springs are approximately 4,485 feet in elevation. The springs include several streams flowing from fissures in volcanic rock. The springs are located on 80 acres of city-owned property (City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, 2010).

The City acquired the water system and water rights from CP National Corporation in 1985. CP National had the right to use and consume for furnishing water to consumers in its water service area 2.45 cfs (1,122 gpm) of the flow of water from the spring known as Bagwell Springs. In 2014 Bagwell Springs produced an average flow of 721 gpm, with annual averages of approximately 800 gpm (City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan 2010). At 720 gallons per minute this well produces approximately 378 million gallons per year.

Water from the spring is captured by a concrete collection box, which encloses the spring. A lockable metal lid cover on the top of the box provided access to the interior when required. In 1990, a 500,000-gallon water tank was constructed at an elevation of 4,458 feet, approximately 200 feet south of the Bagwell Springs headbox. There is a 12-inch-diameter water line, which transports water from the new 500,000-gallon tank to the City boundary. A 12-inch-diameter pipeline runs approximately 2,700 LF to Meadowview Drive where it connects to the City's existing water distribution system (City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, 2010).

Bagwell Springs meets all of the primary (health related) and secondary (aesthetic) drinking water standards currently adopted by the State of California and the EPA.

### **Cady Springs**

Cady Springs is located about two and a half miles west of Susanville on the north slope of the Susan River Canyon. Cady Springs is at approximately 4,600 feet in elevation, which is approximately 300 feet in elevation above the Susan River. The springs are located approximately 1,000 feet south of Highway 36 and are reached by an access road from the highway. The springs are located on 40 acres of city-owned property (City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, 2010).

The springs were originally developed as a municipal water supply in the late 1800's and the springs and water system were privately held until 1985 when the City acquired the water system and all water rights from California Pacific National Corporation. CP National had the right to use and consume the entire flow from Cady Springs for furnishing water to customers in its water service area.

In August 1992, improvements for the development and protection of Cady Springs were completed. General spring flow is collected in a series of pipes, basins and tunnels extending into the hillside. These collector pipes are connected to a 14-inch diameter transmission pipeline. The 14-inch diameter transmission line runs for most of the 13,400 LF from Cady Springs to the upper tank site, with a capacity of 1.04 million gallons, with short lengths of 12-inch-diameter pipeline at various locations. A chlorination system was also installed at the spring collection site.

Production records for 2014 indicate an average production of approximately 850 gpm, with seasonal variations between 850 gpm and 900 gpm. At 850 gpm the collected flow of this well produces approximately 447 million gallons per year.

Cady Springs meets all of the primary drinking water standards currently adopted by the California Department of Health Services (DHS) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and all secondary (aesthetic) drinking water standards adopted by the State of California

Approximately 75% to 80% of the City's annual water supply is from Bagwell and Cady Springs. Water from these two springs flows by gravity into water storage tanks, which supply the City's water system. Generally, from October to May the springs produce 100% or more of the water needed by City residents. During the months when landscaping irrigation isn't needed the excess water flows into Piute Creek and the Susan River.

### **City Wells**

The remaining 20% to 25% of the City's supply is from four ground water wells (Well #1, Well #3, Well #4 and Well #5). These wells are connected to the City's system and provide the source to fill the gap between the supply from Bagwell and Cady Springs and the demand during the summer/fall irrigation months. The pumping capacities in these wells are 298 million gallons/year for Well #1, 550 million gallons/ year for well #3, 298 million gallons/year for well

#4 and 298 million gallons/year for well #5 for a total of 1.44 billion gallons per year. In 2014 the City pumped 230 million gallons or 16% of the pumping capacity. In addition, the City also operates three ground water wells to supply irrigation and domestic water to the Diamond Mountain Golf Club. Water production from the golf course well system is not connected to the City's domestic water system, but is a stand-alone water system. Diamond Mountain Golf Club Irrigation Pumping Plant, constructed in 1971, is located approximately three miles south of the city limits by way of Richmond Road. The main irrigation well has a casing of 10 inches in diameter with 240 feet of perforation between the depths of 210 and 450 feet below the ground surface.

The pump in the primary well is capable of producing 300 gpm, which pumps water directly into two lakes. Water is pumped from the lakes into the irrigation system. The well pumping plant can be turned on and off automatically by sensing lake water levels. In late fall pumping is reduced to a maximum of 150 gpm due to fluctuating groundwater levels. (City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, 2010).

The Johnstonville Water System is located outside of the City limits south east of town approximately 3.5 miles. The well and property are not within the current City sphere of influence. This domestic water system currently provides water to only one customer, the Cal Trans maintenance facility located on Diane Drive south of Highway 395. The system consists of 400-foot well equipped with a production pump capable of pumping 200 gallons per minute, a 900 gallon pressure vessel and a fire pump, a 120,000 gallon storage tank and 10-inch main line running under highway 395 to the Cal Trans facility along with a 0.24 acre parcel. The well site is located less than ¼ mile from the entrance to the Susanville Municipal Airport and the City intends to expand the system to provide improved water service to the airport in the future.

The total annual water usage through the City water system was 1.0114 billion gallons in 2014 with 780.85 million gallons coming from Cady and Bagwell Springs and 230.51 million gallons coming from well sources. In the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan the projected water use for 2020 is 1,216.3 million gallons, however the current population is approximately 700 people less than the document's population for 2015 and the projected water usage is expected to be less.

The only chemicals used in the treatment process are chlorine gas and 12.5 percent hypochlorite liquid for disinfections that meets AMSI/NSF standards. The City's water system is operated by one grade III, two grade II and one grade I operators. With the current management structure in place, these operators possess the proper certifications and skill to run a water system of this type.

As a policy the City does not allow the drilling of individual wells within the City and requires all new development to connect to the City's water system.

#### **5.7.4 Piping**

There are approximately 43.5 miles of pipeline in the City's domestic water system. The water system has mainlines ranging in diameter from 2 inches to 14 inches. Approximately 65% of the

pipelines are six inches in diameter or smaller, approximately 30% are eight inches to 12 inches in diameter, and approximately 5% are larger than 12 inches in diameter. The City requires new residential pipelines to be a minimum of six inches in diameter. The water system pipes are composed of a variety of materials including steel, wrapped steel, galvanized steel, cast iron, asbestos cement pipe, and polyvinyl chloride. The steel, wrapped steel, galvanized steel, and cast iron pipe were primarily installed in the 1930's-1950's. The asbestos cement and polyvinyl chloride pipes were primarily installed in the 1960's-1980's. The City is replacing or retiring inadequate or substandard pipelines as economically feasible based on pipeline condition, age, size, composition, and location. The system will continue to improve operationally and hydraulically as those inadequate and substandard pipelines are replaced.

The City Council approved a CIP replacement fund in July 2008 to start replace the aging water infrastructure. The first phase of the improvements focused on replacing aging meters with radio-read meters which fixed accuracy problems as well as providing a significantly more efficient reading process. The next phase of the CIP which has started in 2014 will focus on replacing aging piping with those locations that have known reliability problems being replaced first.

### **5.7.5 Basin Ground Water Supply**

The Susan River Ground Water Sub-basin is the portion of the Honey Lake Valley Ground Water Basin that was drained by and affected by the Susan River. Most wells get their yield from sand layers in the Lahonton and Pliocene Lake deposits. The wells north of Conservation Center Road get most of their yield from the volcanic rocks and near shore deposits. Most of the irrigation wells are south of Center Road and obtain their yield from the lake deposits. Even though these wells have yields in excess of 1,000 gpm, the low permeability of the deposits causes large drawdowns. The specific capacities are less than 30 gpm/ft.

Ground water moves from the hills towards the Susan River and then southeast to Honey Lake. The ground water gradient is about 20 feet per mile (fpm) west of Lake Leavitt and about 10 fpm east of Lake Leavitt.

The Susan River Ground Water Sub-basin is a part of the Susan river watershed, which encompasses a 580-square-mile area. The Susan River is the primary stream in the watershed and is runs for 89 miles from the volcanic highlands east of Lassen National Park to Honey Lake (Susanville General Plan 1990-2010).

The Susan River flows all year. Reservoirs located west of Susanville at McCoy Flat and Hog Flat store water that is released during the summer months to supplement the natural flow and are eventually withdrawn for agricultural purposes. Within Susanville, the River is augmented by flows from Piute Creek from the north. Woodstock Dam is located in the southeastern part of Susanville and diverts water for agricultural purposes to the Jensen and Brockman Sloughs. The Johnstonville diversion also delivers agricultural water by canal. (Susanville General Plan, 1990-2010).

According to the State of California's Department of Water Resources report indicates changes in ground water levels suggest that this ground water subbasin (the Susan River Ground Water

Subbasin) is near equilibrium and might not be able to accommodate additional ground water development. The ground water levels were slow to recover from the 1976-77 droughts until ground water use was reduced in the mid-1980's. After a number of wet years, levels returned to pre-drought conditions. However, USGS Water Resources Investigation Report 90-4050 indicates that an additional 15,000 acre-feet could be withdrawn from the ground water basin. This same report goes on to say that ground water withdrawn annually for domestic, industrial, power generation, and stock use is small in comparison to the amount for irrigation use and is assumed to be a negligible part of the basin wide ground water budget (City of Susanville Master Water Plan, 1994).

As growth continues to occur in the Susanville area, it may be necessary to further define the limits of ground water extractions from the ground water basin. According to the California Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118, there is a limited amount of ground water, which can be extracted without adversely affecting the ground water table in the basin. For this reason, it is important for the City to begin to quantify this limit and secure future water sources for growth and demand and plan for future growth based on this limitation. City staff has implemented *best water practices* for the wasting of water through notices and mailings on conserving the City's precious natural resource.

The regulatory environment for the extraction and use of groundwater may be changing in the next 5-7 years based on new legislation adopted by the State of California requiring comprehensive sustainable groundwater management. The legislation require identification of all groundwater basins and/or sub-basins and provides for the creation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to develop management plans which are reviewed by the State Department of Water Resources. Sustainability Plans could allocate or limit ground water extraction within a basin or tie extraction volumes to certain recharge factors. For the purpose of this MSR these new rules should not have any significant impact to the current policies on ground water extraction.

Based on the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan the City has determined there is sufficient water supply to meet anticipated future demands.

#### **5.7.6 Water Quality**

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) is the main federal law that ensures the quality of Americans' drinking water. The law requires many actions to protect drinking water and its sources—rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs and groundwater wells—and applies to public water systems serving 25 or more people. It authorizes the EPA to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally occurring and man-made contaminants and to oversee the states, localities and water suppliers that implement the standards.

EPA drinking water standards are developed as a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for each chemical or microbe. The MCL is the concentration that is not anticipated to produce adverse health effects after a lifetime of exposure, based upon toxicity data and risk assessment principles.



The EPA's goal in setting MCLs is to assure that even small violations for a period of time do not pose significant risk to the public's health over the long run. National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (primary standards) are legally enforceable standards that limit the levels of contaminants in drinking water supplied by public water systems. Secondary standards are non-enforceable guidelines regulating contaminants that may cause cosmetic effects (such as skin or tooth discoloration) or aesthetic effects (such as taste, odor, or color) in drinking water. EPA recommends secondary standards to water systems but does not require systems to comply. However, states may choose to adopt them as enforceable standards.

The California Department of Health Services (DHS) implements the SDWA in California. State standards are in many cases more stringent than federal standards. DHS requires public water systems to perform routine monitoring for regulated contaminants that may be present in their drinking water supply. A water system with a contaminant exceeding an MCL must notify the public and remove the source from service or initiate a process and schedule to install treatment for removing the contaminant. Health violations occur when the contaminant amount exceeds the safety standard (MCL) or when water is not treated properly. In California, compliance is usually determined at the wellhead. Monitoring violations involve failure to conduct or to report in a timely fashion the results of required monitoring.

All water sources are sampled monthly for total coliform bacteria and specifically fecal coliform or E. coli. During the past 5 years there have been no instances of detected coliform from any of the City's water sources. The City's current bacteriological sample report is from February of 2015. The City's water consistently meets all State water quality standards.

**Cady Springs** – Combined flows from the springs are chlorinated to mitigate any coliform bacteria that have been occasionally present.

**Bagwell Springs** – Bagwell Springs has been monitored and chlorinated on a permanent basis as of July 2003 to mitigate any coliform bacteria that may occur.

**Ground Water Wells** – All wells, with the exception of well#1, are monitored and chlorinated on a permanent basis to mitigate any coliform bacteria that may occur.

### **5.7.7 Water Pressure**

Urban water systems must maintain adequate pressure in order to provide adequate fire flow. The City Fire Department uses State fire flow requirements included in Appendix III-A of the 2000 Uniform Fire Code, which identifies fire flow requirements based on building area, construction type and occupancy. There are no other requirements for water pressure, although customers expect adequate pressure for typical uses. The City's system provides adequate pressure with 45-55 pounds per square inch (psi) during normal operating conditions and 25 psi under maximum demand.

The City has seven different pressure zones in operation. The west area of the City, pressure zone 1, was served through an existing booster pump plant located at the upper tank site prior to 1994. A new booster pump plant was constructed in 1994 replacing the existing pump plant to

serve this pressure zone. The current booster pump pumps water from the 1.04 million gallon upper tank directly into pressure zone 1 - west area. The booster pumps operate automatically by sensing system pressures in a pressure tank and turning pumps on as required to meet system demand in pressure zone 2 - west area. A low-level alarm shuts off the pumps if water levels in the 1.0 million gallon reservoir are too low to operate the pumps. A hydro pneumatic system pressure tank with a 1,600-gallon capacity was also constructed with the booster pump plant. All controls and pumps are housed inside a concrete block building located next to the upper tank 1.0 million gallon water storage reservoir (City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, 2010).

The booster pumping plant is operated as required to meet system demands in pressure zone 1. The pumping plant is operated on demand by sensing pressures in the hydro pneumatic pressure tank for pressure zone 1.

Within these zones the City operates nine automatic flow regulating and pressure-reducing valves to separate pressure zone 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 from the main pressure zone 4. The pressure-reducing valves are set so as to maintain a constant system pressure within the system.

Although not a regulatory agency, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) considers fire flow availability in determining ISO ratings for jurisdictions. The ISO uses a uniform set of criteria called the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) in the creation of its Public Protection Classification (PPC). The PPC is used to rate a community's ability to suppress fires and is based on a survey of water pumps, storage facilities and filtration systems. Forty percent of the PPC is based on water supply factors including the amount of supply maintained and the water flow available. Water flow requirements include water flow rate (gallons per minute) and duration, and vary throughout a community by building area and construction type. Water flows are assessed through a survey of representative locations within the community. Fire flow is adequate in most of the City, as indicated by the City fire Chief and the City's ISO rating of 4/9.

### **5.7.8 Future Water Service Areas**

The City's General Plan 1990-2010 outlines some potential future water service areas. These future water service areas include property within the City's current water service boundaries, property within the City's Sphere of Influence, and properties in the vicinity of Johnstonville and the Diamond Mountain Golf Club. The City is not proposing any changes in the golf course area at this time. The City acquired the Johnstonville water system from the County in November of 2014. This system was previously described in this Section and has acquired an existing water system in the Johnstonville area which has the capabilities of serving more than its current single customer.

The Johnstonville Water System is located outside of the City limits south east of town approximately 3.5 miles. The well and property are not within the current City sphere of influence. The domestic water system currently provides water to only one customer, the Cal Trans maintenance facility located on Diane Drive south of Highway 395. The system consists of 400-foot well equipped with a production pump capable of pumping 200 gallons per minute, a 900 gallon pressure vessel and a fire pump, a 120,000 gallon storage tank and 10-inch main line

running under highway 395 to the Cal Trans facility along with a 0.24 acre parcel. The well site is located less than ¼ mile from the entrance to the Susanville Municipal Airport and the City intends to expand the system to provide improved water service to the airport in the future.

### **5.7.9 Water Storage Reservoirs**

The City's domestic water system includes four water storage tanks (Bagwell Springs, Harris Drive, South Street Reservoir and Spring Ridge Reservoir) and one non-operational storage tank (Cady Springs). They have a combined storage capacity of approximately 3.4 million gallons.

### **Water Rights**

In addition to water rights from Bagwell Springs, the City has secured exclusive water rights to Cady Springs for municipal water use. The entire flow from Cady Springs, belongs to the City of Susanville, the City uses between 850 to 900 gpm, well below total source capacity (communication with Public Works Director Dan Newton, June 2014)

### **5.7.10 Determinations**

1. The City has an aged water system infrastructure, which requires a systematic program for repairing and replacing the oldest sections of lines. The City put a capital improvement plan in place in 2008 and has been making improvements the system.
2. The City receives water from two major springs, which supply 100 percent of the water demand from October to May. Additional flows from these springs are available to be developed to meet increased demand.
2. The City operates four groundwater wells that supply summer peak demands, and also acts as a backup water system. The system of wells has a total pumping capacity of 1.44 billion gallons per year.
4. The City has an operational storage capacity of approximately 3.4 million gallons.
5. There is a high degree of water supply reliability.
6. The City uses less than 20% of its groundwater pumping capacity.
7. The City has adequate water supplies to meet growth demand beyond 2025. In planning for the future growth of Susanville as allowed for in the adopted General Plan, the City has identified several ways to meet the expected future water demands. Increased conservation methods make up a large proportion of the methods to maintain existing water usage while accommodating an increasing population. The City's Urban Water Management plan contains 14 Demand Management Measures to implement the plan.

## **6.0 Fire Protection**

The Susanville Fire Department provides 24-hour fire protection and suppression services and emergency medical services to the citizens of Susanville. New development in the City must meet adopted standards for access, safe negotiation and turnarounds and proximity to water supply, current standards are generally adequate with some deficiencies during winter conditions. The fire department participates in the City's code enforcement program by enforcing weed abatement and trash/rubbish accumulations on properties throughout the City.

The City of Susanville Fire Department consists of eight sworn career personnel including a Fire Chief, one Battalion Chief, three captains, three firefighters/engineers and an administrative position. The Susanville Fire Department is complemented by a group of volunteers, whose authorized membership numbers up to 30. Currently, all operating personnel are EMS certified. The Battalion Chief serves as Fire Marshall/Code Enforcement Officer.

The City Fire Department provides fire suppression, fire prevention, and first responder emergency medical services. The Department is also responsible for the enforcement of local fire ordinances and State laws. The Department's activities and objectives include:

- 1.) safety programs for the schools
- 2.) continuous in-service training to maintain and increase the capabilities of the fire fighting paid and volunteer personnel
- 3.) administration of the City's weed abatement program
- 4.) public education
- 5.) technical rescue
- 6.) structure and wildland fire suppression
- 7.) mitigation of fire safety hazards

The Fire Department also attempts to inspect all businesses annually for fire and life safety compliance of the CFC Title 24, CCR Title 19 and to develop or maintain pre-suppression/pre-attack plans for their facilities, which may be accessed at any time by response personnel.

Sierra Emergency Medical Service Alliance SEMSA provides ambulance service within the city limits and surrounding unincorporated sphere surrounding Susanville.

### **6.1 Personnel**

The Fire Department operates one fire station at 1505 Main Street in the City of Susanville. The Fire Department operates 24-hours a day with at least 2 EMS personnel (EMT or First Responder) at all times. The Fire Chief, Battalion Chief, and Administrative Assistant typically work 5 days a week, 8am to 5pm, however the "Duty Chief" is required to respond to after hour emergencies that require a higher level of coordination. The remaining department staff works 56-hour workweek with 24-hour shifts.

Fire Department staff is considered to be "very well trained" and capable of providing excellent fire suppression and life support services. EMS training is overseen by NORCAL EMS and fire

protection training follows OSFM (State Fire Marshall) certification guidelines. The City has been accessed by ISO and is currently rated 4/9, which is appropriate for the size of community and size and type of department.

New career firefighters are required to possess upon employment a California State FF I certificate which is obtained from a formal academy or 348 hours of certified instruction, as well as a California Class B commercial driver’s license, Haz-Mat FRO, and EMT B license. All employees attend refresher training in areas such as technical rescue, hazardous materials, confined space rescue, and Emergency Medical Technician. Fire suppression employees participate in three drills per month as well as daily engine company training. Additionally, all fire suppression employees are encouraged to attend OSFM training courses. All employees must maintain training qualifications according to OSFM, Firescope, and CICC. On average, a Susanville Fire Department employee participates in over 400 hours of training each year. Some employees also attend additional formal training to maintain their certifications such as EMT B, Hazardous Materials Spec/Tech, Class B License, Swift Water Rescue, Low/High Angle Rope Rescue, and Rescue Systems I and II.

## 6.2 Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements

The department has automatic aid agreements with Cal Fire and Susan River Fire Protection District. The City has mutual aid agreements with all Lassen County fire departments and districts including the Susan River, Janesville, and Standish/Litchfield Fire Protection Districts, as well as various state agencies including the California Department of Forestry (Cal Fire), the California Correctional Center, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USFS, Sierra Army Depot and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES). The Fire Department shares equipment and personnel as part of this mutual aid agreement, and is obligated to respond to fires outside the City and, under certain circumstances, the County when resources are available. These agreements are formal and can be terminated only through a written request.

## 6.3 Service Calls

The City’s fire Department responds to a variety of calls including fire, emergency medical, vehicle accidents, hazardous materials/hazardous conditions, and other emergency calls. The large majority of calls are for EMS services as shown in Table 6.3.1 below.

**Table 6.3.1, Fire Department Service Calls 2008-2012**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Fires</i>	<i>Vehicle Accidents</i>	<i>EMS Service</i>	<i>Hazardous Conditions</i>	<i>Other</i>
2009	64	3	976	15	473
2010	40	7	1,156	17	389
2011	45	14	610	14	329
2012	54	5	441	21	266
2013	66	24	526	22	237

Source: City of Susanville Fire Department.

## 6.4 Response Times

For fire and paramedic service, there are service standards relating to response times, dispatch times, staffing, and water flow. Particularly in cases involving patients who have stopped breathing or are suffering from heart attacks, the chances of survival improve when the patient receives medical care quickly. Similarly, a quick fire suppression response can potentially prevent a structure fire from reaching the “flashover” point at which very rapid fire spreading occurs generally in less than 10 minutes.

The guideline established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 for fire response times is six minutes at least 90 percent of the time, with response time measured from the 911-call time to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. The fire response time guideline established by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (formerly the Commission on Fire Accreditation International) is 5 minutes 50 seconds at least 90 percent of the time. The Susanville Fire Department has a standard operating procedure SOP 6.19 which provides for a 60-90 second turnout time 90% of the time, and a 240-480 second travel time 90% of the time.

The City of Susanville Fire Department provides first response to emergency medical calls and basic life support prior to Sierra Medical Services Alliance (SEMSA) Ambulance arriving on the scene to provide Advance Life Support (ALS) as needed. The BLS medical response time guidelines established by the California EMS Agency is five minutes in urban areas, 15 minutes.

**Table 6.4.1, Recommended Regional and Local Response Times (Minutes)**

<i>Agency Providing Guideline</i>	<i>Dispatch</i>	<i>Fire</i>	<i>Full Structure Fire</i>	<i>Basic Life Support</i>	<i>Advanced Life Support</i>	<i>Ambulance Transport</i>
<i>National Fire Protection Association</i>	<i>1:00</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>	
<i>Center for Public Safety Excellence</i>	<i>0:50</i>	<i>5:50</i>		<i>5:50</i>		
<i>CA EMS Agency Urban Metro</i>				<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Suburban/Rural</i>				<i>15</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>NorCal EMS Urban/Metro</i>					<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>

Average response time for the City of Susanville Fire Department (within Susanville) is approximately 5 minutes, with a maximum of 6 minutes to remote parts of the City; response times for the other departments vary from 2 to 45 minutes respectively. Access problems may include tree limbs in the roadways, access during inclement weather, localized flooding and blocked alleyways. Overall the Susanville Fire Department’s ability to provide service can be characterized as good. Growth within the current City limits is reviewed on a case by case basis to consider the ability of the department to meet the standards due to increased call for service volume which may require to an increase to staffing levels. Future growth outside the current City limits would impact the department’s ability to meet desired response times/distance,

including the desired 1.5 mile radius per station, which could require additional stations, equipment, and staffing to be required for the new development.

## 6.5 Facilities and Equipment

Department equipment can be characterized as aging, but adequate at present. NFPA considers approximately 15 years to be of average useable age and all equipment meets acceptable standards, passing annual certification, at present (NFPA, ISO). Table 6.5.1 on the following page lists all Fire Department equipment.

**Table 6.5.1 Fire Department Equipment**

ID	Type	Tank Capacity	Make	Year	Pumping Capacity
Engine 621	1	750	Westates	1991	1500 gpm
Engine 622	1	750	International	2001	1250 gpm
Engine 623	2	500	Seagrave	1997	1500 gpm
Engine 626	2	800	International	1975	1000 gpm
Engine 628	2	500	International	1991	300 gpm
Truck 1	2		Osh Kosh	1976	
Utility 654	3		International	2001	
Utility 652	1		Ford F-250	2001	
Utility 653	2		Dodge 3500	1996	
Command 600	2		Ford Expedition	2007	
Command 602	2		Ford Explorer	2005	

Source: City of Susanville Fire Department, 2014.

The Susanville Fire Department follows standards set by the following entities:

- 1.) Northern California EMS (NORCAL EMS),
- 2.) State of California,
- 3.) International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA),
- 4.) State Fire Marshall (OSFM)
- 5.) National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

The Susanville Fire Department has an excellent safety track-record, the Department follows Federal, State, and local Emergency Response plans.

The Susanville Fire Department is financially supported by the City's General Fund. Mitigation Impact fees for new development include \$.87 per square foot for Residential buildings and \$1.08 per square foot for Commercial buildings (City Resolution # 08-4371 adopted 06/04/08). All finances are handled exclusively by the City Finance Division.

## **6.6 Water Supply**

The Fire Department maintains and operates approximately 423 hydrants total following local and national standards for spacing.

Required fire flow of 3,500 gpm for commercial building, and 1,000 gpm for residential is necessary per California Fire Code at all times. Currently, the City can attain these fire flow requirements. The department is able to utilize 3.4 million gallons total combined storage for fire suppression needs.

Water supply for fires outside of the area are served by water tenders which typically fill at hydrants within the City and static sources or fire hydrants outside the City if available. The City recently acquired the Johnstonville water system located outside of the city limits near the Susanville Municipal Airport. The system includes a 120,000 gallon storage tank. With some minor improvements to the facility a drafting connection can be installed which will allow fire agencies an alternative source to fill water tenders without having to come into the city. The well is located southeast of Susanville.

## **6.7 Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies**

The Fire Station located at 1505 Main St. was built in the 1960s, although there is a good maintenance program in place that has helped the building age well, the six original sectional garage doors are showing their age with increased maintenance needs, stress damage, wear point failures, and should be planned for replacement as catastrophic failures occur.

The original boiler or heating system is in need of an upgrade in the near future as well as starting to plan for a new roof in the next five years.

The City currently has approx. 50 Fire Hydrants that are pre-1960s that need replaced due to availability of parts and frequent maintenance due to failure, the Fire Department is working with the Water Division of the Public Works Department to schedule and budget a replacement program for these hydrants.

### **Determination**

The City Fire Department has adequate personnel and equipment to meet recommended response times for fire and EMS calls, however any significant future growth will have to be evaluated for potential impacts to response times. There is adequate water supply and storage to meet fire fighting needs.



## **7.0 Administrative Services Department**

Since the last MSR was prepared, the City has worked to implement efficiency measures including the reorganization of operational functions. These changes resulted in the Administrative Services Department absorbing smaller departments including Finance, Community Development (Planning & Building), Community Services (Parks & Recreation), the Airport and the Golf Course and managing additional functions. All billings now going through the Finance Department is an example of an additional function. The City Administrative Services Department now consists of four divisions, Administration, Finance, Community Development and Community Services. There are 28 full-time and 14 part-time positions within the Department. The City Administrator serves as the Department head and operations are coordinated through the Administrative Division.

### **7.1 Administration Division**

The Administration Division consists of five positions including the City Administrator, City Clerk, the Assistant to the City Administrator, Project Manager and the Administrative Staff Assistant. Administration division is directly or indirectly involved in every aspect of the City's operation.

The Administration Division staff have also been providing operational support to the Community Services Division including the managing of the Diamond Mountain Golf Course. In addition to the golf course, Administrative staff have been the primary contact for airport projects and leases for those who own or rent hangars from the City while the airport manager, a contract employee, oversees daily airport operations. Lease agreements and fee schedules for the Airport are also completed through the department. Administrative staff are also responsible for facilitating the rental of parks and/or buildings.

The Administration Division is also responsible for the accuracy and filing of public records including but not limited to City Council minutes, resolutions and ordinances. All personnel matters are coordinated through the Administration Division to ensure proper compliance for new employees is performed and the correct paperwork is completed.

This Administration Division has created a program activity team to secure both federal and state funding for projects benefitting low/mod income groups, such as the First-Time Homebuyer Program, as well as the public in general. They are currently working as part of a JPA to construct a community swimming pool and have applied for grant funding to assist in this project.

The Administration Division has worked closely with the Finance Division and has been successful in securing financing to pay off the City's PERS side fund liability, creating a long-term savings in interest costs, as well as reducing current and future employer payroll costs. The two divisions have worked cohesively to streamline the budgeting process. The Finance Manager and City Administrator work together to retrieve information from all departments regarding their projected projects and costs for budgeting purposes. They review the information then meet

with department heads to balance each departments' budget based on the information retrieved. This is a collaborative effort between the City Administrator, Finance Manager and each department head to ensure the best interest of the City.

## **7.2 Finance Division**

The Finance Division provides billing and revenue collection for the water, natural gas and geothermal utilities, business licenses, transient occupancy tax, housing loans and various other city services as well as accounts payable and payroll. The division is comprised of a Finance Manager, an Accounting Technician II, an Accounting Technician I and two Accounting Technicians that provide customer service to the public. The Finance Division staff is employed to keep the city's financial software accurate, provide timely information to all city departments, manage the city's loan and bond portfolios, monitor the city's cash flows, prepare and submit annual state and federal reports, prepare the annual budget and present the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) to the City Council upon completion of the annual audit. The city's CAFR has received the Outstanding Financial Reporting Award presented by the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers (CSMFO) consistently since fiscal year 2005-2006.

## **7.3 Community Development Division**

The City of Susanville Community Development Division provides land use planning and building permit and inspection services. Planning services include review of development projects, ordinance writing, environmental review for development projects and long range planning. This Division also provides project coordination services with other City departments and divisions, local and state agencies and members of the public. The Division is comprised of a City Planner, a Building Official and Permit Technician who provides administrative support services to the planner and building official and is also the primary point of contact with the public. The Community Development Division staff is employed to ensure that local residents make informed decisions, know what construction standards to expect, and fulfill city, state and federal code requirements, which will ultimately ensure resident safety.

### **Planning Services**

Planning services include administration of land use in the City, which includes the City's General Plan, zoning, The General Plan was originally adopted in 1991 with subsequent amendments in 1996, 2000, 2006 and 2013. The General Plan contains the state required elements: land use (2006), housing (2013), circulation (2006), open space, conservation, noise and safety and six optional elements including community character, economic development, parks and recreation, child care, health and air quality. While amendments have occurred to a number of the elements, the General Plan has not been comprehensively updated since its adoption and much of the general information should be updated. For example population projections in the General Plan have not been updated and new circulation improvements have been completed which are not reflected in the current plan. Implementing Ordinances include the

City’s Zoning Ordinance, which was significantly revised in 2000 and also updated in 2014 to address updates to the Housing Element. This ordinance includes administrative procedures, standards and requirements for development within the City and contains requirements within Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Special Zone Districts and Resource Zone Districts.

### 7.3.1 Mitigation Fees

Mitigation fees (or Development impact fees) are collected by the City of Susanville and the local school districts from all new residential and commercial development. The Community Development Division collects the following mitigation fees (Table 7.4.1) for the various services offered by the City. The table below represents current mitigation and impact fees that are likely to change on an annual basis:

**Table 7.3.1, City of Susanville Mitigation Fees**

<i>Service</i>	<i>Fee Amount</i>
Streets	\$0.92 per square foot
Police Protection	\$1.19 per square foot
Fire-Residential	\$0.87 per square foot
Fire-Commercial	\$1.08 per square foot

**Source: City of Susanville, Resolution 08-4371, 2008.**

The City of Susanville Community Development Division is supported by the City’s General Fund and also charges fees for services.

### 7.3.2 Annexations and Land Availability

The City of Susanville has had only one annexation in the past thirteen years. The “Lassen Community Hospital” annexation occurred in 2000/2001 and involved 1,340 acres – the largest annexation area in city history. This annexation was completed on June 13, 2001. No residential subdivisions were included in the annexation area and it was uninhabited. The main focus of the annexation was to include the community college and area for a new hospital to be included within the incorporated limits of the City. The Lassen Community College campus was the only developed area located within the annexation area.

The City limits envisioned in the City of Susanville General Plan (adopted in 1991 and subsequently revised) and presently unincorporated land within the Sphere of Influence would provide a significant amount of land upon which all types of housing and other uses can be developed. The current General Plan boundaries are not meant to depict future boundaries of the city. The potential future boundaries of the City are included within the City’s Sphere of Influence. The city boundaries will not change at this time. The Sphere of Influence will most likely be modified to remove areas with little to no development potential and include other areas that would be better served by municipal services and areas that could accommodate new and infill development to accommodate the growth that is anticipated for the area.

A survey of land availability was included in the City’s Housing Element (2009-2014) to determine compliance with the City’s portion of the Final Allocation Plan for Lassen County’s Regional Housing Needs for January 1, 2009 through June 30, 2014. The Regional Housing Needs Plan requires that the City provide land for 705 dwelling units for various income groups for the period between 2009 and 2014. The 2009-2014 Housing element analyzed all of the vacant residential parcels within the City limits for potential development and developed a list of 57 parcels. The result of the analysis for vacant developable parcels within the City is a list of 57 parcels. Of the 57 identified parcels, 10 do not currently have sewer or water available which puts their development potential at 0. The table identifies constraints, the size of the parcel, the maximum development allowed by zoning, an estimate of the realistic development potential and the limiting factors of each site, if any.

In addition to the parcels and potential for housing development in the list, there are currently 185 vacant infill lots with City services suitably zoned for single family development. It is estimated that 136 dwelling units can be built on these infill lots. Table 3-3 of the Housing Element is an inventory of vacant parcels within the City which shows that there is sufficient vacant residential land within the City limits to meet its Regional Housing Needs as well actual growth needs for the next 5-10 years at the historic rate of growth. Table 7.5.1 below is a condensed version of Housing Element table 3-3, based on zoning classification.,

**Table 7.3.2 Vacant Residential Land With Zoning Maximum and Realistic Capacity Given Constraints**

<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Total Vacant Acreage</b>	<b>Zoning Maximum Units <i>without</i> Constraints</b>	<b>Realistic Unit Capacity including constraints</b>
<b>R-1</b>	222.7	1,076	272
<b>R-2</b>	7.08	83	70
<b>R-3</b>	52.49	644	306
<b>R-3A</b>	3.58	38	38
<b>R-4</b>	53.84	1,074	512
<b>MHP</b>	32.77	455	150
<b>PD/DR</b>	192.22	1,465	665
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>564.7</b>	<b>4,536</b>	<b>2,013</b>

*Source: City of Susanville 2009-2014 Housing Element June 2013*

The City currently has 264 approved subdivision lots capable of being developed with 319 dwelling units.

**Determination**

There is adequate land planned and zone to meet future growth demands for more than 10 years. While the General Plan can still serve the needs of the community, comprehensive updates to each element should be made a priority for the City.

**Building Services**

Building Services provides building inspection and building code enforcement services for the City. The requirement for having building code adoption and enforcement is mandated under state law to ensure a high degree of building construction throughout the State. Every two years the State adopts and issues an updated Building Standards Code. The most recent update was the 2013 California Building Standards Code (based on the 2012 International Building Code, the 2012 International Fire Code, the 2012 Uniform Plumbing Code, the 2012 Uniform Mechanical Code, and the 2011 National Electric Code) which the City adopted as its building code (Ordinance # 13-0994) in 2013. The Division also inspects substandard structures for rehabilitation or demolition and administers the Floodplain Management regulations promulgated by FEMA and adopted by the City (Ordinance 13-0988).

The Building Services stated Objectives are to:

- 1.) Protect the public by assuring that all structures are safe.
- 2.) Encourage the use of better construction practices under the guidelines of the Uniform Building Code and other adopted codes.
- 3.) Establish clear rules and procedures that equally serve all citizens and apply them in a fair and impartial manner.
- 4.) Work with the public to achieve common goals in a helpful, timely and cooperative way.

The City of Susanville Building Services requires a building permit if a resident wishes to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, improve, convert, or demolish a building or structure. The Building Permit requirement includes building construction, remodeling, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical modifications. The City of Susanville Planning Division requires all proposed construction to be in compliance with the current zoning and construction codes, as these regulations and codes were established to assure well planned development and to safeguard health and safety ([www.cityofsusanville.org](http://www.cityofsusanville.org)).

The primary measures for efficient delivery of building services is timely review and issuance of building permits and responsiveness to periodic requests for inspections during the construction phase. Routine building permit requests for minor remodels, roofing jobs, plumbing or electrical work are typically reviewed and issued in 48 hours or less. Plans for new residential building construction go through plan check in 2-3 weeks. New commercial construction may take up to 4 weeks depending on the complexity. For commercial construction some aspects of plan check and building inspection require specialized plan check and inspection services. In these instance the developer will be responsible for a special inspector whose inspection reports are reviewed by the City Building Official.

As the City only has one person qualified to perform building plan checks and inspections and Lassen County has only 2 people, the City and County have entered into an agreement to provide reciprocal building service when personnel may be absent for vacation or illness. This ensures a continuation of services for public served by both jurisdictions.

## Determination

The City provides efficient and timely issuance of building permits for the public and provides for back-up services through an agreement with Lassen County for reciprocal services to cover vacations or illnesses.

## 7.4 Community Services Division

This division provides parks and recreation services to the residents of the City of Susanville and Lassen County. The Division is responsible for operation and maintenance at the City's 6 parks: Memorial Park, Riverside Park, Inspiration Point, Skyline Park, Little League Park/Pat Murphy Ball Field, and Susan River Parkway. In addition, the City operates and maintains the Diamond Mountain Golf Course and Lassen Historical Museum, Roop's Fort and Community Center. The City also sponsors and co-sponsors numerous programs and special events.

Parks and open space land owned and maintained by the City of Susanville totals 147 acres without including the Diamond Mountain Golf Club acreage (180 acres), and 327 acres including the Diamond Mountain Golf Club (City Administration).

### 7.4.1 Parks

In regards to parkland, the City of Susanville has a few unmet needs. Since Susanville is the County seat and only incorporated City in Lassen County, Susanville and Lassen County must fulfill a regional role in the provision of park and recreational services. Parks and open space are important in rural communities such as Susanville. According to the 2010 census there were 2,142 youths between the ages of 4 and 18 living in Susanville as of April 2010, not including the youth living in the surrounding unincorporated communities.

In order to assess park and recreation needs of the City of Susanville, it is helpful to consider standards adopted by similar agencies. The most comprehensive standards are those developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). NRPA recognizes a standard of 3 acres per 1,000 population for neighborhood parks and 2 acres per 1,000 for community parks, resulting in an overall standard of 5 acres per 1,000. Another standard for providing adequate recreation and parks land in a community has been established by the Land Development Ordinance (Title 22), as authorized in the Government Code by the Quimby Act. This standard determines the amount of parkland dedication or in-lieu fees that are required to be paid on new residential development in a community. The objective of this Code is to establish a minimum standard of three acres of neighborhood and community parkland per 1,000 residents.

The City has the following park facilities of which 146.92 acres are within the City Limits:

Facility	Type	Acreage
Memorial Park	Community	12.2
Little League Park	Community	8
Riverside Park	Community	6.3
Skyline Park	Trail/Open Space	61.92

Inspiration Point	Open Space	19.25
Roop's Fort/Community Center	Community	0.45
Susan River Parkway	Trail/Open Space	38.8
Susan Ranch Park*	Regional Trail/Open Space	1,100
Bizz Johnson Trail*	Regional Recreation Trail	25.4 miles

\* not in the City Limits or not entirely within the City Limits

According to the 2010 Census data there is an area-wide population around Susanville of approximately 18,200 people who use or potentially use recreation facilities in and around the City. Along with the current population in the City (8,978), the City serves park and recreation needs of an additional 9,200 (+ or -) regional residents in the Honey Lake Valley, including Standish, Janesville, Westwood, and Milford (City of Susanville, Susanville General Plan).

Taking NRPA standards and the Quimby Ordinance into consideration, the City of Susanville fulfills its local and regional duties as a major provider within the City of park and recreation facilities both for the City population and the area population. Based on the 147 acres of park and open space land operated and maintained by the City there is just over 8 acres of land per 1,000 population for the area population of 18,800. Adding Susan Ranch Park and the Biz Johnson Trail facilities the ratio increases to over 65 acres per 1,000 population.

For just the City population the 147 acres of City parks and open space results in a ratio of 16.33 acres of park land per 1,000 population. These ratios exceed both the NRPA and the Quimby Act standards.

It is important to note that the 147 acre figure does not include the Diamond Mountain Golf Club and Susanville Ranch Park as part of the acreage. Susan Ranch Park adds an additional 1,100 acres of open space park land with hiking, biking, equestrian trails, wildlife viewing, and winter activities such as cross country skiing and snowshoeing. This is a regional facility serving all of southern Lassen County and is located immediately adjacent to the city limits on the west side of the City.

Another regional facility is the Bizz Johnson Trail, which runs from the City of Susanville to the Town of Westwood. Following the old Fernley and Lassen Branch Line of the Southern Pacific railroad, the trail winds 25.4 miles from Susanville to Mason Station. For the first 16 miles, the trail follows the Susan River. As it winds through the rugged Susan River Canyon, the trail crosses the river 12 times on bridges and trestles and passes through two tunnels. The landscape is a combination of semi-arid canyon and upland forests of pine and fir. The trail then follows existing roads an additional 4.5 miles into Westwood, where a railroad station type kiosk and a 25-foot carved redwood statue of Paul Bunyan mark the Westwood trailhead. Recreation opportunities include, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, fishing, cross country skiing, and wildlife viewing.

While the City meets the desired ratios for parkland to population there are some specific amenities that are needed in the community. There is a general shortage of ball fields for all activities, primarily for soccer activities. At present, football practice and associated activities have priority over the open fields at the high school, leaving limited space for soccer expansion. There are also limited basketball courts that are available to the community as a whole. Many

open space and recreational needs of both the City and County are provided by the Susanville Ranch Park located outside the City.

The closure of Roosevelt Pool in December 2004 created a void in the recreation services available to the community. The pool facility was determined to be structurally unsound and was closed. Roosevelt Pool served approximately 10,000 people annually. The pool facility and grounds had previously belonged to the Susanville School District and was leased by the City of Susanville. There continues to be a need for a community pool. In 2013 the City and County formed the Honey Lake Valley Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to fund the site acquisition, design and construction of a new swimming pool facility. Both parties to the JPA have each committed to annual funding of \$200,000 to meet the goal of constructing the pool. To date, the JPA has acquired the old pool site and has demolished the old facility to make way for a new pool. The JPA has also acquired additional land from Lassen County to accommodate a new facility and allow additional room for expansion.

Additional park facility needs were determined using the NRPA standards as guidelines as illustrated in Table 7.6.1. These standards should always be used with due considerations for the community's unique characteristics, needs, interests and traditions. In addition, it is important to note that these standards represent the average and any community can elect to exceed or have lower standards.

**Table 7.4.1, Suggested Park Facility Standards For City of Susanville Based on NRPA Standards**

<i>Facility Type</i>	<i>Standard (# per pop.)</i>	<i>Existing Facilities in Susanville</i>	<i>Current Needs</i>	<i>Facility</i>
Basketball	1/5,000	0	2	
Handball	1/20,000	0	0	
Tennis	1/2,000	2	2	
Volleyball	1/5,000	2	2	
Baseball	1/5,000	4 (1 adult, 3 youth)	0	
Softball	1/5,000	3 (2 adult, 1 youth)	0	
Football	1/20,000	1	0	
Soccer (youth)	1/5,000	2	0	
Soccer (regulation)	1/10,000	1	0	
Running Track	1/20,000	0	0	
Community Center	1/10,000	1	0	
Multi-Use Hard Court	1/10,000	0	2	
Trail System	1 system/region	1	0	
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	0	0	
Skate Park	1/30,000	1	0	
Group Picnic Areas	1/10,000	2	0	

As can be drawn from the above table, Susanville has a need to develop various additional park and recreation facilities. In addition to these standards, there is a section in the Susanville General Plan (1990-2010) addressing additional park and recreational needs for the City of Susanville and surrounding unincorporated areas:



“In 1988, the Parks and Recreation Commission developed standards for meeting the recreation needs of Susanville residents through the development of new facilities and upgrading existing facilities. The needs identified are: two baseball fields; two softball/soccer fields; the addition of two more tennis courts with lighting; two multi-purpose playfields; and two neighborhood recreation centers.”

## **Determination**

1. Although, the City is in need of a few facilities, it provides its share of local and regional recreational needs at present and there is a wide variety of recreational opportunities for residents in and around the city. The City strives to fulfill residents’ needs by sharing facilities with schools throughout the community.

## **7.5 Airport**

The Susanville Municipal Airport is located on the southeast side of the community of Johnstonville, approximately four miles southeast of Susanville. It occupies approximately 122 acres of land. The airport, which is owned and operated by the City of Susanville, is located on and surrounded by unincorporated land (Airport Land Use Plan Susanville Municipal Airport, March 1987).

Current airport facilities consist of a paved and lighted runway, a graded dirt runway, a series of hangars (privately owned) and an administration building. A general aviation tie down apron and taxiways leading from the apron to the runway also exist. In addition, there is a helipad on the airport for helicopter operations (Airport Land Use Plan Susanville Municipal Airport, March 1987).

## **8.0 Other Municipal Service Providers**

### **8.1 Wastewater Collection and Treatment**

The City of Susanville and surrounding areas are provided wastewater services from the Susanville Sanitary District for both collection and treatment of wastewater. The Susanville Sanitary District (SSD) was formed on December 14, 1948 under the Sanitary District Act of 1923 and operates under the California Health and Safety Code Section 6400 et. seq. Prior to its formation under the Sanitary District Act of 1923, the Milwood Sanitary District and Susanville Sanitary district made a joint application to the State Board of Health to operate a sewage treatment plant and outfall in 1922, which was completed in 1924 and is at the current location of today's wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) has gone through a series of expansions since it was first constructed in 1951, the latest being in 2007. The 2007 expansion as undertaken to meet projected demand being proposed the City of Susanville, the County of Lassen's Susanville Vicinity Area Plan, and portions of the Johnstonville and Richmond Gold Run Area Plans. The SSD expanded its treatment capacity to 2.0 mgd with a hydraulic capacity of 4.0 mgd along with outfall improvements. This represents a 45% increase over the previous capacity based on an average of 265 gallons per day (gpd) per service connection and on maintaining the current ratio of commercial connections to residential connections. Current demand averages 1.0 mgd average dry weather flow with a peak day of approximately 1.2 mgd.

As a result of several effluent violations the District received a \$2.5 million loan from the Clean Water State revolving Fund to step up from secondary treatment to tertiary treatment. The improvements to the plant which included replacing the chlorination system with ultraviolet disinfection and installing an automatic backwashing filter were completed in 2013

The collection/treatment system primarily served residential customers, small businesses and restaurants (Commercial #1 and #2). In 2012 the district had 3,595 service connections (3,199 residential, 387 commercial, and 9 industrial) serving approximately 9,500 people. The SSD treatment system has the capacity to transport, treat and dispose of a maximum month average daily flow of 2.0 MGD. This expansion was sized to treat wastewater for 7,547 residential connections. Since the District expanded to 2.0 mgd, an additional 4,152 connections could be accommodated before the Wastewater Treatment Facility reaches capacity. Notwithstanding demand for commercial connections, assuming the current population to housing ratio in the Susanville area is 2.34 persons per household, a maximum additional population of 9,700 could be able to be served in the territory served by the District. The District does not reserve capacity for incorporated vs. unincorporated area and provides service on a first come first served basis.

It should be noted that various land uses including rural land use densities within the Susanville region are not envisioned to need wastewater services (LAFCO of Lassen County, SSD MSR).

## **Wastewater Reclamation**

The Wastewater Master Plan Final Report for Susanville Sanitary District completed in June 1992 describes the wastewater treatment alternatives for the Susanville area. Currently, most if not all of the effluent discharged from the treatment plant during the summer months is used as agricultural irrigation. Virtually all of the alternative treatment options incorporate reuse (irrigation water) of the effluent.

The potential for reuse of treated wastewater effluent is very good and is already being implemented and planned for in the future by the SSD. As new water supplies are harder to obtain, the reuse of treated wastewater will increase in importance. Both the County and the City need to encourage and support the reuse of wastewater effluent to supplement future water supply demands.

### **8.2 Solid Waste Disposal**

Solid waste collection and disposal in Susanville and the City's Sphere of Influence is overseen by the Lassen Regional Solid Waste Management Authority, a joint powers agency formed in 1998 by and between the City of Susanville and the County of Lassen. The Authority is responsible for all aspects of municipal solid waste management within Lassen County and is empowered to grant a franchise for municipal solid waste collection services.

The Authority objectives for the solid waste collection and recycling services are to:

- Preserve the environment and protect the health, safety and quality of life for the residents of Susanville and Lassen County.
- Provide for an efficient solid waste management system, which includes collection of solid waste and recyclable materials.
- Comply with state of California Assembly Bill 939, known as the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, which requires jurisdictions to divert solid waste generated within the County of Lassen from disposal in landfills.
- Assure that as many generators as possible of solid waste and recyclable materials within the County of Lassen are included in the solid waste collection and recycling system.

LRSWMA operates one municipal solid waste landfills and seven transfer stations within the Lassen County boundaries. Solid Waste from the City of Susanville and surrounding SOI area is collected by C&S Waste Solutions (a private company) under franchise from LRSWMA. C&S Waste Solutions provides customers with various receptacles for waste materials, including a bin for green-waste, a bin for recycling, and a bin for regular house refuse. Residents within the City of Susanville are not currently required to have refuse service, however it is a policy in the City's General Plan to require trash pick-up.

Refuse generated in the city is taken to the Bass Hill Landfill located approximately 7 miles southeast of the City. As of July 2013 the projected life expectancy of the Bass Hill facility is an additional 18 years based on a 20,000 ton per year waste stream. The facility has been experiencing an approximate 30% reduction in the waste stream since 2006 and which may alter that time frame. Alternatively, the waste stream could increase if economic conditions in the area, particularly in the construction sector improve.

Bass Hill Landfill is currently in violation of the applicable gas monitoring control regulations specifically for the release of methane. Gas probes on the site show methane concentrations above the 5% threshold in the air at locations up to 95 feet beyond the property line to the east. The LRSWMA is currently in negotiations with the adjacent property owner, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to acquire the necessary land to come into compliance. The transfer of the property is expected to occur in 2015.

#### Landfill Closure Fund

Due to increased operating costs and reduced revenues resulting from the reduced waste stream, the landfill closure fund balance is currently less than the amount required by operation regulations. The LRSWMA recognizes the shortfall and has scheduled increased closure fund deposits to insure sufficient closure funds in 2031. In July of 2013 the LRSWMA implemented an 11.2% self-hauler waste disposal fee increase and similar increases are anticipated for 2014 and beyond to meet the closure fund shortfall.

#### Post-Closure Fund

In September 2008 post-closure maintenance costs were estimated to be \$3,042,000 for a 30-year time period. Based on inflation of 6.2% for the period between August 2008 and August 2013 a new post-closure amount of \$3,230,640 has been established.

## **Section 9.0**

### **Municipal Service Review**

Lassen LAFCO is responsible for determining that an agency is reasonably capable of providing needed resources and basic infrastructure to serve areas within its boundaries and later in the Sphere of Influence. LAFCO will evaluate the present and long-term infrastructure demands and resources available to each district, analyze whether resources and services are, or will be, available at needed levels, and determine whether orderly maintenance and expansion of such resources and services are planned to occur in line with increasing demands.

The Final Municipal Service Review Guidelines prepared by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research in 2003 recommend that issues relevant to the jurisdiction be addressed through written determinations called for in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. Written determinations are provided for each of the six required factors, based on the information provided in this Municipal Service Review (MSR).

#### **9.1 Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area**

**Purpose:** To evaluate service needs based on existing and anticipated growth patterns and population projections.

##### **9.1.1 Growth and Population Analysis for the City of Susanville**

According to the Lassen County General Plan, Census figures indicate that, between the years of 1940 and 1970, Lassen County’s population fluctuated up and down with a sizable loss of population between 1950 and 1960. Since 1960, the County’s population has grown at a relatively rapid rate for a rural county, however, since 2010, population projections prepared by the State Department of Finance show a population decline in County population of almost 1,200 people exclusive of the prison population.

Susanville’s population grew at an average annual rate of 1.16 % (11.6 % total) between 1980 and 1990, according to U.S. Census figures (1990 and 2000) and State Department of Finance estimates. Between 1990 and 2000 the population increased to 17,611 representing a 142 % increase for the decade. This large population increase largely occurred in 1992 due to the City’s annexation of the California Correctional Center, which added approximately 4,250 state prison inmates to the City’s population. In 1993 the annexation of the Northside area which included some existing residential development and the construction that was needed to supply additional housing for future employees of the new High Desert State prison also added to the significant population increase. Based on Census and State Department of Finance estimates the City of Susanville has experienced a long term average annual growth rate of just under 1% for the period between 1980 and January 1, 2014.

Table 9.1.1: Susanville Population Growth and Projections, 2010 through 2025 (based on current population estimates projected forward using historical growth rates not including inmate population).

<i>Year</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2030</i>
<i>Population</i>	8,952	9,067	9,506	9,966	10,448

Source: 2010 Census, 2014 DOF Estimate and Population, projection based on historic growth

Because two of the most important provisions for new development are water distribution and wastewater collection and treatment, it is necessary to examine population projections in relation to their impact on providing these necessary services.

## Water

Service connection projections were created for the Urban Water Management Plan in 2010. Table 9.1.2 outlines the information therein.

**Table 9.1.2 Historical and Projected Water Connections**

Water Accounts	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Single family	2,789	2,875	2,867	2,947	3,030	3115
Multi family	824	824	847	871	895	920
Commercial/Other	656	671	674	693	713	733
Total	4,269	4,370	4,389	4,511	4,638	4,768

Source: City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, 2010.

According to the City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, based on current source capacity, the City of Susanville will be able to meet water demands through the year 2025 with the current infrastructure. However, current population projections based on the latest in the City's Housing Element project a population 10,851 through the year 2025 compared to the Urban Water Management Plan projection of 11,224. With the population decreases the City has experienced between 2010 and 2014 the future demand for water based on population appears to be significantly less than projected in 2010 when the Urban Water Management Plan was adopted. Projected water use for 2015 is 1207 million gallons but actual water use for 2014 was 1,011 million gallons. It is not possible to clearly project a year when existing capacity will be exceeded. However, capacity can be measured in the number of connections remaining regardless of what year that occurs. Based on the Urban Water Management Plan projections in the table below year as seen

**Table 9.1.3 Projected Demands**

Year	2015	2020	2025
Supply Totals	1329.6	1329.6	1329.6
Demand Totals	1207.7	1216.3	1225.3
Differences	+121.9	+113.3	+104.3

\* Unit of measure = million gallons/year

According to Table 9.1.2 above, water demand will be continue to be below supply beyond 2025. The City's remaining source capacity for 2015 is 121.9 million gallons per year enough to service 471 additional connections without the need for additional water supplies or water sources not in production at this time are developed (this figure does not take into account the difference in water usage between single-family, multiple family and commercial connections). Based on more recent figures, the actual water usage for 2014 was 1,011 million gallons resulting in current production surplus of 328 million gallons, enough for 1,236 additional connections.

## **Wastewater**

According to the SSD Plant Expansion Report, the current wastewater treatment plant capacity is 2.0 mgd with a hydraulic capacity of 4.0 mgd. Since the District expanded to 2.0 mgd, there are approximately 4,152 connections remaining before the Wastewater Treatment Facility reaches capacity.

### **9.1.2 Written Determinations for Growth and Population Projections for the affected area.**

1. The City of Susanville has a 2014 population of 8,978 without the inmate population (15,324 with inmates included) and has held a long-term average growth rate of just under 1% (1980 to 2014). There is a high likelihood of growth at a similar modest rate for at least the next 5 years with slightly higher rates after that time.
2. The City of Susanville has projected its anticipated growth through the year 2025 in the City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan (2010). Based on the population in 2014 it appears that the growth will not occur as quickly as projected. The Urban Water Management Plan should be revisited based on current data so that long-range projected demand for water services may be revised to more accurately identify necessary expansions to support population growth, if any. The service demand projections are consistent with land use designations in the area, and with planned land uses and community growth within the City of Susanville. According to the Urban Water Management Plan, there was a 2.8% growth rate in active service connections between 2000 and 2010 which equates to an average annual growth rate of 0.28%.
3. The City currently has adequate land within the city limits to accommodate projected growth for the next 10-15 years. The City updated its Urban Master Water Plan (2010) and Housing Element (2013), and based on the population projections in both documents there is adequate water supply to meet demand beyond the year 2025.
4. Based on the Urban Water Management Plan the average connection uses approximately 260,258 gallons of water per year. Assuming water use per connection remains constant as more connections are served and source capacity is not increased, there is currently enough remaining source capacity to service an additional 471 connections. Based on the most current usage figures that number increases to 1,236 additional connections.

5. Based on the Municipal Service Review prepared by LAFCO for the Susanville Sanitary District, the Wastewater treatment facility has excess capacity for an additional 4,152 residential wastewater connections before the Wastewater Treatment Facility reaches capacity.

## **9.2 MSR Determinations regarding Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs)**

**Purpose: To evaluate the presence of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities within the City and its Sphere of Influence.**

### **9.2.1 City of Susanville Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community Status**

In addition to a consideration of population growth, the State Law requires LAFCO to consider whether or not an area is a Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community (DUC). A DUC is an area where the Median Household Income is less than 80% of the State of California Median Household Income, which is \$60,883.

Using 2010 Census Data, the Median Household Income for the City of Susanville is \$45,198 which is less than 80% of the State Median Household Income (\$49,306). The whole of Lassen County Median Household Income of \$48,706 is also less than 80% of the State Median Household Income.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the DUC determination is to learn if there are any small areas, which could benefit from being annexed to the City. In the case of the City of Susanville this is not an important consideration because fire, water services and wastewater (from the Susanville Sanitary District) services are supplied outside the City (And the SSD) to contiguous unincorporated areas.

### **9.2.2 MSR Determinations on Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities near City of Susanville**

1. The City of Susanville is a disadvantaged community.
2. Prior to future inhabited annexations the City should provide LAFCo with an analysis of any contiguous Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities, as defined in the LAFCo Act.

## **9.3 Capacity and Infrastructure for the City of Susanville**

**Purpose: To evaluate the capacity and infrastructure of the City of Susanville including infrastructure needs and deficiencies in terms of supply, capacity, condition of facilities and service quality.**

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<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0613945.html>, May 31, 2013



### **9.3.1 City of Susanville Infrastructure Capacity**

LAFCO is responsible for determining that an agency is reasonably capable of providing needed resources and basic infrastructure to serve areas within its boundaries and later in the Sphere of Influence. It is important that such determinations of infrastructure availability occur when revisions to a Sphere of Influence and annexations occur. In the case of this Municipal Service Review, it is prudent for LAFCO to evaluate present and long-term infrastructure demands and resources available at needed levels, and determine whether orderly maintenance and expansion of such resources and services are planned to occur in line with increasing demands.

The most important infrastructure needs are the provision of water and wastewater services. Beyond these basic services, police and fire protection and circulation/road services are considered high-priority needs for future growth of the City. These services normally are expanded as growth occurs.

#### **Law Enforcement**

The City of Susanville provides 24-hour police coverage of the City, including patrol, traffic and parking reinforcement, investigations, school resource officer, bicycle patrol unit, animal control, and a narcotics task force. The department operates with 17 sworn officers and one administrative assistant and one full-time and one part-time (non-sworn) community service officers (total of 20 personnel). Experience level of the Department is approximately 7 years.

The City of Susanville maintains an excellent officer to resident ratio, and currently has one officer per 528 residents, a total of 17 sworn officers.

The Police Department is seeking to increase security and is looking into possible grants from the State Office of Emergency Services (OES). The department's fleet of patrol vehicles is starting to become a bit dilapidated, and the Police Department will be replacing four patrol cars in the near future, in addition to some miscellaneous computer equipment. Overall department equipment is adequate, and computer upgrading is scheduled for the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

For the most part, officer staffing is adequate for the City, however is impacted by daily population to provide law enforcement services to the City of Susanville. However, on rare occasions the school resource officer has to be pulled for added manpower, and there is a current need for an additional traffic officer specifically on Main St, due to the high VTD rate (vehicle trips per day; approximately 20,000 per day resulting in 30 accidents per month) and increased input from the community.

The staff structure appears to meet the operational and management needs of the system. The daily population who utilize Susanville as the business hub for the County of Lassen impacts the Susanville Police Department.

## **Fire Protection**

The Susanville Fire Department provides 24-hour fire protection and suppression services to the citizens of Susanville. The City of Susanville Fire Department consists of eight sworn career personnel. The paid staff has an accumulated total of more than 100 years of public safety experience. The Susanville Fire Department is complemented by a group of volunteers, whose authorized membership numbers 30. In addition, the department also offers 19 EMT personnel and a Fire Marshall/Code Enforcement Official.

The Fire Department operates a fire station at 1505 Main Street in the City of Susanville. The Fire Department operates 24-hours a day with at least 2 EMS personnel (3-4 during the day) with at least one technician with EMT or First Responder status at all times.

Fire Department staff is well trained and capable of providing excellent fire suppression and life support services and all Fire Department equipment appears to be adequate. Despite a solid ISO rating of 4, the department is striving to lower their ISO rating even more.

The City has formal mutual aid agreements with all the Lassen County fire departments and districts including the Susan River Fire Protection District, the Janesville Fire Protection District, the Standish/Litchfield Fire Protection District, as well as various state agencies including the California Department of Forestry (CDF), the California Correctional Center, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES). The Fire Department shares equipment and personnel as part of this mutual aid agreement, and is obligated to respond to fires outside the County, as staffing allows.

Average response time for the City of Susanville Fire Department (within Susanville) is approximately 3 minutes, with a maximum of 6 minutes to remote parts of the City; response times for the other departments vary from 2 to 45 minutes respectively. Access problems include tree limbs in the roadways and blocked alleyways due to inadequate parking. Access during winter months is adequate, with no added limitations to provide service.

The City of Susanville desires fire flows of 3,500 gpm for bigger buildings, but 1,500 gpm is generally what is needed. Currently, the City can attain these fire flow requirements. The department is able to utilize 3.4 million gallons total combined storage for fire suppression needs.

Overall the Susanville Fire Department's ability to provide service to the residents of Susanville and the surrounding area can be characterized as good. The Fire Department is working to improve their access time to 3 minutes for fire protection service and 2 minutes for EMS service. As the City of Susanville population continues to grow, so will the department

## **Water**

The City supplies potable water for municipal and industrial uses within the City limits. The sources of Susanville's water supply are Bagwell Springs (located one mile north of the city), Cady Springs (located two miles west of the city), and four wells (Well #1, Well# 2, Well #3 and

Well #5), located around the City. The four wells are only used for approximately five months during the summer to supplement the increased demand. Approximately 75% to 80% of the City's water supply is from Bagwell and Cady Springs. Water from these two springs flows by gravity into water storage reservoirs, which supply the City's water system. The remaining 20% to 25% of the City's supply is from the four ground water well sources. In addition, the City also operates three ground water wells to supply irrigation and domestic water to the Diamond Mountain Golf Club. Currently, the City has a total of 3,805 metered (active) connections.

According to Public Works Director Dan Newton the City of Susanville currently has plans to redevelop Bagwell Springs for additional water supply (Urban Water Management Plan, 20104).

There are approximately 43.5 miles of pipeline in the City's domestic water system. The water system has pipelines ranging in diameter from 2 inches to 14 inches. Approximately 65% of the pipelines are six inches in diameter or smaller, approximately 30% are eight inches to 12 inches in diameter, and approximately 5% are larger than 12 inches in diameter. The City requires new pipelines serving residential development to be a minimum of six inches in diameter. The City is replacing or retiring inadequate or substandard pipelines as economically feasible based on pipeline condition, age, size, composition, and location. The system will continue to improve operationally and hydraulically as those inadequate and substandard pipelines are replaced.

The City's General Plan outlines some potential future water service areas. These future water service areas include property within the City's current water service boundaries, property within the City's Sphere of Influence, and properties in the vicinity of Johnstonville and the Diamond Mountain Golf Club. These areas have not been included for analysis in this MSR. If potable water service is to be provided to these areas, the City of Susanville will be required to determine that adequate water supply and facilities are in place to serve these areas.

According to the City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan, the City of Susanville potable water distribution system has the capacity to provide water for new growth beyond 2025. At present, the City of Susanville provides adequate water service to the residents of Susanville and has excess capacity for 471 to 1,236 new connections depending on growth projections. The City has developed or has plans to enhance the current water supply to meet the current and foreseen demands to the year 2025 as outlined in the City of Susanville Master Water Plan. The development of land and infrastructure improvements within the City's boundaries is guided by the City's General Plan and Economic Development Strategy.

## **Natural Gas**

The City originally issued \$24,240,000 in debt (Certificates of Participation) to finance the construction and first two years of system operations. The City issued refunding revenue bonds in 2010 for \$25,160,000 to refund the original Certificates of Participation. These refunding revenue bonds were combined with the water bonds to allow the natural gas bonds to receive a rating from Fitch of BBB-, giving the city a better interest rate. Construction costs were approximately \$17 million dollars and the life expectancy of the pipeline is 60 years. The City currently budgets approximately \$388,000 per year in depreciation expense to fund future replacement costs of the system. The Susanville Municipal Energy Commission performs annual

reviews of natural gas rates pursuant to Government Code Section 66018 following a public hearing.

The natural gas system is operated as an enterprise of the City. The finances and operation of the natural gas system are subject to certain market forces, such as competition, demand and supply and are reviewed by the Susanville Municipal Energy Commission. Whether the city generates sufficient revenue to pay all obligations payable out of the natural gas enterprise fund is, in large part, contingent upon consumers' willingness to purchase the service from the City. Because the City buys all of its natural gas from third parties, the successful operation of the natural gas system also depends on a steady supply of natural gas at affordable prices. The wholesale price of natural gas has experienced some volatility in recent years.

Purchasing authority of natural gas is granted by City Council resolution for the City Administrator to negotiate and the Mayor to enter into the purchase agreement with Wasatch Energy, LLC within parameters established by the City Council.

The Tuscarora Gas Transmission Company, Inc. owns and maintains the pipelines from which the City of Susanville has a contract for firm capacity of 1000 MMBtu per day and receives its gas supply. The Tuscarora Pipeline runs from Kingsgate, British Columbia to Reno, Nevada, and is intersected by the City of Susanville approximately 10 miles east of the city on the west side of Honey Lake. The connecting delivery point is at Chappuis Lane near Center Road where the City runs between at about 350 psi from steel pipeline to plastic and on into Susanville. The gas runs at 40-50 psi within the city, and the maximum allowed operating pressure is 60 psi. The gas is regulated again at every business and house (on location) in the system. Prior to the completion of the natural gas system residents would use wood heating, heating oil, geothermal and propane.

The customer base for natural gas continues to grow approximately 5% annually. Sales began at zero therms sold in fiscal year 2001-2002 to 2 million therms sold in fiscal year 2013-2014. The City Council sets natural gas rates semi-annually pursuant to Government Code Sections 66016, 66018 and 6062a after a public hearing.

## **Parks and Recreation**

The City of Susanville Community Services Division provides parks and recreation related services to the citizens of the City of Susanville and surrounding unincorporated communities. Though the City is in need of a few facilities, it provides its share of local and regional recreational needs at present and there is a wide variety of recreational opportunities for residents in and around the city. The City strives to fulfill residents' needs by sharing facilities with schools throughout the community. The City and County are jointly in the process of constructing a new community pool facility in Susanville which will add another significant recreational amenity to the area. Each agency is committed to a \$200,000 annual contribution for the next 10 years to fund the facility.

### **9.3.2 MSR Determinations regarding Infrastructure and Capacity for the City of Susanville**

## **Law Enforcement**

1. The Susanville Police Department has adequate equipment, facilities, and personnel to achieve the level of law enforcement envisioned by the department, City Council and residents. As the population of Susanville grows, so should the Department to ensure a desired officer-to-citizen standard is in place and upheld.

## **Street Maintenance**

1. Street maintenance throughout the City of Susanville is adequate in most areas with some sections of curb, gutter or pavement falling into moderate disrepair. Maintenance and repair is provided as needed and the City is beginning a \$10 million pavement improvement and pedestrian access plan to be completed over by FY 2017-2018.

## **Drainage and Flood Control**

1. There does not appear to be any problem with flood control or drainage in the City of Susanville. Adequate flood control measures have been enacted, and drainage within the City is good.

## **Geothermal and Natural Gas**

1. The City is the natural gas provider in the Susanville area including the Johnstonville and Prattville Road areas. The natural gas system is in good shape and is generally free from any maintenance issues. The number of connections to the system has increased steadily since the system was installed and the enterprise provides a positive cash flow for the City.
2. The geothermal system continues to provide a few customers with a lower cost heating alternative and there is capacity to serve more customers. Until there is additional demand for services the system can be maintained without significant costs.

## **Potable Water Service**

1. As growth continues to occur in the Susanville area, it may be necessary to further define the limits of ground water extractions from the ground water basin. Susanville is located within the Honey Lake Basin. According to Department of Water Resources (DWR), Bulletin 118 (page 186), “the Honey Lake Valley Basin is very close to exceeding prudent perennial yield, and future development could come at the expense of water for agriculture.” A groundwater study for the eastern portion of the Honey Lake Valley prepared through an agreement between DWR, the State of Nevada and the U.S. Geologic Survey resulted in a conclusion

there is a limited amount of ground water, which can be safely transferred from the basin (DWR Bulletin 118, page 186, 2003 update). For this reason, it is important for the City to begin to quantify this limit, plan for future growth based on this limitation and coordinate with other basin water users in protecting water supplies. The City is well aware of its limited ground water supply as conservation measures are being prepared, and an updated Ordinance on Excessive Water use and the 2010 updated Water Master Plan.

2. Large portions of the City's water distribution system are over 40 years old. Deteriorating of the piping materials is a constant cause of pipeline leaks. In areas experiencing an inordinate amount of pipeline breakage and leaks, replacement of the pipeline can result in saving water that is being lost at each leak. The City has an on-going program to replace old waterlines with the worst sections being targeted first. .
3. The City can encourage water conservation through the establishment of various water rate structures. By instituting water rate structures that are related to water consumption, water system costs are recovered based on the level of water consumption. As a result, conservation is encouraged as high water users (higher than average use) pay excessive use quantity charges.
4. It appears that the City is able to meet fire flow requirements in excess of 1,500 gpm. The City is able to attain flows up to 3,500 gpm, more than enough to adequately provide fire protection.
5. Well and pumping plant Nos. 1, 2 and 5 are currently without auxiliary power. This could pose a serious problem in the event that one water supply sources is out of service during peak demand periods. It is recommended that either auxiliary power is developed for these stations (if not already there), or an additional water well be developed for emergency standby capacity.
6. Current water demand and supply projections estimate that demand will not outweigh supply for the City's water system. The City of Susanville Urban Water Management Plan recommends that new water conservation practices, spring redevelopment to catch escaping water and/or a new well should be drilled to meet the demand.
7. Any new unforeseen developments will need to be evaluated in the next Urban Water Management Plan Update.
8. The City is in need of updating its Urban Water Management Plan and is required to update this plan every 5 years.

## **Parks and Recreation**

1. The City of Susanville should take a regional approach for parkland and recreational needs of the surrounding unincorporated areas. The City of Susanville, local school districts, and Lassen County need interagency cooperation to fulfill the provision of these recreation and park services. It would be especially prudent of the City to make a special effort to involve Lassen County as much as possible in the provision of park and recreation facilities in Susanville and the surrounding areas as Susanville is fulfilling the regional provision of such services. The County through 2000-2002 parkland bonds is also taking a regional approach to park and recreational needs for park and recreational facilities. Lassen County and the City of Susanville have entered into a JPA for park services, which may evolve to the formation of a Park and Recreation District.
2. The City should review its existing general plan parks policies and acreage thresholds to meet current priorities of the community.

## **Fire Protection**

1. The Susanville Fire Department has the necessary equipment, facilities and knowledgeable and skilled personnel to provide more than adequate fire protection within the City of Susanville. The Insurance Services Organization (ISO) has rated the department at 4/9, which is appropriate for the size of community and size and type of department.
2. The Susanville fire Department has adequate personnel and equipment to serve the existing City area and can accommodate some infill population increase but will need additional personnel and equipment to serve any significant population added to the City through annexation.

## **General Government and Planning**

1. The City strives to recover all costs associated with new development. The City requires residential developers to provide a variety of on-site and off-site improvements including streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street trees, storm drainage, water, sewer, power and communications utilities.
2. To fulfill the City's requirements for housing types, the Community Development Department is charged with conducting an annual survey of land and holding capacity to determine that sufficient land exists to meet the needs of the City. The last vacant land survey was completed in 2004 in conjunction with the updated housing element. The City should continue to update this survey on an annual basis to comply with Government Code Section 65583 (a).

3. The City is experiencing a lack of land for residential development. Due to development constraints and factors that were not considered in preparation of the City's Housing Element, the city believes its City limits envisioned in the City of Susanville General Plan are not sufficient to provide a variety of land for all types of new housing. Unless a number of the constraints previously mentioned in this report are not somehow removed or mitigated, the City anticipates there will be a need to annex additional lands to accommodate this need.

## **Wastewater**

1. The City of Susanville is coterminous with and served by the Susanville Sanitary District for collection and treatment of wastewater. It is anticipated recent improvements will meet projected demand within the Susanville area well into the future.
2. The Lassen LAFCO recently adopted a Municipal Service Review (MSR) and a Sphere of Influence for the Susanville Sanitary District (SSD) documented an additional 4,152 connections could be accommodated in the Susanville area before the Wastewater Treatment Facility reaches capacity.

## **Solid Waste Disposal**

1. The City of Susanville does not provide solid waste collection and disposal to residents the Lassen Regional Solid Waste Authority manages this service to Lassen Waste Service (a private company). Lassen Waste Service runs solid waste collection and disposal services for the City of Susanville. The Lassen Waste Service provides customers with various receptacles for waste materials, including a bin for green-waste, a bin for recycling, and a bin for regular house refuse. Residents within the City are not required to have trash service. This incrementally contributes to illegal dumping within and around the City as well as build-up of trash in some residents' yards.

## **9.4 Financial Ability**

**Purpose:** To evaluate factors that affect the financing ability of the City.

### **9.4.1 Financial Considerations for the City of Susanville**

Financing of City services are supported by a variety of funds, which are affected by economic conditions and strategies at the county, state and federal level. In the City of Susanville, these funds are: The General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds, Capital Projects Funds, Enterprise Funds, Internal Service Funds and Agency Funds. LAFCO should consider the ability of the community to pay for improvements or services associated with annexed sites. This planning can begin at the Municipal Service Review stage by identifying available opportunities to address infrastructure and maintenance needs associated with future annexation



and development, and identifying limitations on financing such improvements, as well as the opportunities that exist to construct and maintain those improvements.

City revenues include tax revenue such as property and sales taxes, Vehicle License Fees, transfers, Charges for services and Enterprise Funds (user charges) for water, natural gas, geothermal, airport, and golf course. New connection fees for water, natural gas, and geothermal connections are also charged to pay for additional infrastructure necessitated by new development. Major General Fund Expenditures include Police, Fire, General Government, Community Development, Planning and Building.

According to the budget for fiscal year 2014-2015, the City of Susanville has numerous projects such as State Transportation Improvement Projects (STIP), phase one of the water line replacement project and gas meter radio upgrade project. General Fund revenues budgeted were \$5,168,442 and expenditures totaled \$5,243,442 resulting in a net deficit of \$75,000. This deficit relates to a one-time expense to meet the city's portion of an FAA grant funded project at the airport. The City's overall 2014-2015 expense budget is \$15,602,780 and anticipated revenue is \$14,965,163

With prudent fiscal management by the City Council, department heads taking an active role in managing their perspective budgets, and the budgetary controls that have been established, allowed the city to survive the cash flow problems from previous years and the downturn in revenues due to the recession. Total pooled cash for the city in 2006 was \$4.4 million and in 2014 it was \$14.2 million. General Fund cash in 2006 was \$589,000 and in 2014 it was \$2.5 million which includes \$802,000 in a restricted reserve fund.

The City's rate schedule is included in Section 9.4.1 below.

#### **9.4.2 Written Determinations on Financing for the City of Susanville**

1. The City of Susanville City Administrator's department applies for CDBG, HOME, Prop 46 and other funds on an annual basis as available.
2. The City prepares an annual budget with a mid-year update, and strives to use the best practices in managing their financial resources. Fiscal Year 2014-2015 budget was adopted on time and reflects the priorities set by City Council, departmental needs and maintains the current level of service to customers.
3. The City needs to ensure that the cost of providing municipal services is always fully covered by consumers, including debt service payments. If user fees are not fully covering the cost of providing the service, the City has the option to change its rate schedule. The City Council may also wish to consider additional revenue generating opportunities such as a public safety parcel tax, utility user tax, or increase in sales tax.
4. The City last raised its mitigation fees (i.e. impact fees) in 2008. The City should complete an in-house cost of services determination to find if the current

mitigation fees are adequate (see Section 8.3 above). The City could use the Consumer Price Index to ensure mitigation fees remain current.

5. The City should consider the use of a Fiscal Impact Analysis requirement as a condition for new land development within the City and especially prior to annexing new territory into the City to determine if development will result in a fiscal gain or burden for the City.

## **9.5 Cost Avoidance Opportunities including opportunities for Shared Facilities and Rate Restructuring**

**Purpose:** To identify practices or opportunities that may help eliminate unnecessary costs and to identify opportunities to positively impact rates without decreasing service levels.

### **9.5.1 Cost Avoidance Opportunities including opportunities for Shared Facilities and Rate Restructuring Considerations for the City of Susanville**

Identifying cost avoidance opportunities requires financial reporting and planning, creativity, cooperation and the will to propose and support changes that may be difficult for city officials and residents to accept. Local observers might consider proposals for cost avoidance through cooperation as an abandonment of local control.

Rate restructuring may be forced by shortfalls in funding, but the process may also reflect changing goals and views of economic justice and fairness within the community.

The City imposes mitigation fees to ensure services can be provided to new development. These rates can fluctuate from time to time, depending on a variety of factors. The current fees for the City's Mitigation Rates are as follows (Resolution No. 14-5041 adopted 05/07/14):

Streets:	\$0.92 per square foot
Police:	\$1.19
Fire (res):	\$0.87
Fire (comm.):	\$1.08

Provision of water and wastewater service are the two most crucial components of a City's infrastructure. These services will either allow growth or curb it before it is even proposed. The City's rates for water are set by resolution, and are based on the cost to provide that service

The City has adopted the following rates for New Connection Fees:

#### Water Fees

Where there is not a service or when it is necessary to install a new service the following fee applies (New Connection Fee):

Residential Water Connection: \$997.00

Commercial Connection: Determined from water consumption on basis of equivalent single-family residential connection fees.

In addition, the City charges a \$75 deposit fee for water service and a \$10.00 Service Establishment Fee.

The following table lists the City’s New Installation Fee schedule:

**Table 10.2.1 New Installation Fee Schedule**

Fee Schedule	3/4 inch	1 inch	1 1/2 inch	2 inch	Over 2 inches
New Service	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,790	\$2,070	Actual Cost
New Meter	\$134	\$173	\$295	\$380	Actual Cost
New Meter Location	\$850	\$1,100	\$1,700	\$1,950	Actual Cost
Remove Service	\$400	\$400	\$450	\$450	Actual Cost
Water Main Taps	\$140	\$155	\$180	\$255	\$475

Source: City of Susanville, Resolution No. 10-4703.

Monthly Charge and Consumptive Rates

Resolution 10-4703 set the most recent water system rate structure for the City’s Water Division. The monthly water service base charge for all metered connections is fixed by meter size as indicated:

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Minimum Monthly Base Charge</u>
5/8 x 3/4 inch	\$23.65
1 inch	\$31.93
1 1/2inch	\$41.60
2 inch	\$54.11
3 inch	\$81.37
4 inch	\$124.84
6 inch	\$217.27
8 inch	\$289.69
10 inch	\$362.10
Hydrant Meter	\$25.00

Resolution 10-4703 also instituted a Quantity Rate or “consumptive rate”. This kind of rate structure helps to keep consumption low through a progressive rate structure. The rate schedule is as follows:

- \$0.00 the first three hundred cubic feet is included in the monthly base charge.
- \$1.245 per one hundred cubic feet for any use after the first 300 cubic feet to 1,500 cubic feet.
- \$1.365 per one hundred cubic feet for any use in excess of the first 1,500 cubic feet through 4,000 cubic feet
- \$1.485 per one hundred cubic feet for any use in excess of the first 4,000 cubic feet through 6,500 cubic feet.
- \$1.565 per one hundred cubic feet for any use in excess of the 6,500 cubic feet through 10,000 cubic feet.
- \$1.645 per one hundred cubic feet for any use in excess of 10,000 cubic feet.

The City has established a list of Water Source and Storage Capacity In-Lieu Fees. These are:

Source Fee:	
Single-Family Res:	\$697.00
Multi-Family Res:	\$513.00
Comm./Industrial (per acre):	\$917.00
 Storage Fee:	
Single-Family Res.:	\$1,042.00
Multi-Family Res.:	\$689.00
Comm/Industrial (per acre):	\$3,641.00

Natural Gas Fees

The City charges the actual cost of time and materials less credit for average usage load. In addition, the City charges a \$200 deposit fee for natural gas service and a \$10.00 Service Establishment Fee.

In addition, in Resolution No. 10-4703, the City set the following fees:

A monthly Meter Charge of \$7.00; any site with meters in excess of 6 the charge is \$3.00 per meter.

There is a fuel charge of \$2.14 per therm of natural gas for the first 450 therms each month (metered) and a fuel charge of \$2.06 per therm for each therm above 450 therms. Customers using over 1,500 therms per year are charged the fixed rate of \$1.85 per therm. Customers using 30,000 to 75,000 therms and those using over 75,000 therms annually are placed on a two tier variable rate system with prices adjusted monthly based on the relative prices of propane, heating oil and natural gas.

## Geothermal Fees

The City charges the actual cost of connection into the system and a set monthly rate based on square footage. In addition, the City charges a \$50 deposit fee for geothermal gas and a \$10.00 Service Establishment Fee.

Planning for shared facilities usually begins at the staff level, and documentation of costs and benefits early in the decision-making process will make it more likely that staff proposals will gain a fair and reasoned hearing with the public.

### **9.5.2 Written Determinations on Cost Avoidance Opportunities, Rate Restructuring and Shared Facilities**

1. The City requires residential developers to provide a variety of on-site and off-site improvements including streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street trees, storm drainage, water, sewer, power and communications utilities. However, smaller projects may not be required to provide all improvements. In addition, costs of other off-site improvements, such as traffic signals or street construction, may be required whenever it is determined that the impacts of a new development justify such improvements. It is estimated that the typical on-site and off-site improvements for a single-family home would cost about \$5,000, which is substantially lower than many areas in California.
2. The city's natural gas system relied heavily on the city's general fund for operating cash during its initial start-up years. In 2010, the system began to break even, including coverage of its debt obligations and positive year end cash reserves. The city has continued to build its reserves through continued customer growth and lower than budgeted natural gas prices. The natural gas system has built its reserves from \$84,000 in 2010 to \$3.5 million at the 2014. In May 2014, Fitch Ratings upgraded the natural gas bonds from BBB to BBB+ with a ratings outlook from positive to stable. The natural gas system has approximately 3,075 customers as of 2014.
3. The City has established impact fees with the goal of ensuring that new development pays for infrastructure improvements bearing a reasonable nexus to the development. The City has done a Cost of Services Study to ensure that the rates charged are in line with the cost of providing the respective municipal service. However it has been 7 years since the last inflation update and the City should review inflation index to see if a revision to the impact fees is needed
4. The City recently established a policy calling for a timed and comprehensive review of its rate structure on an annual basis at the time the annual budget is presented. The General Fund is supported by these City fees and other revenue sources, and given the City's resources; the need for predictability in the development community, and the low rate of inflation, this policy should prove to

be extremely valuable. At present, the City has a recent Fee Study by City Department (see Fee Study By City Department attached to Resolution 14-5041).

5. Susanville is the only incorporated City in Lassen County. There are no other municipal service providers in the vicinity of Susanville that could provide the same level of service for provision of water, general planning, public works, and police and fire protection.
6. There are no other service providers in the Susanville Area. It is reasonable to conclude that municipal services provided in the Susanville area will be provided by the City of Susanville in the foreseeable future.
7. The City of Susanville does not provide municipal wastewater collection and treatment; Residents in the Susanville area receive this service from the Susanville Sanitary District (SSD). The SSD provides adequate sewer services and has planned accordingly in the development of their plant expansion project. Sharing facilities is not a practicable option for the City or SSD.
8. Joint financing opportunities for new facilities are sought by the City and most other governmental agencies due to the ongoing relative scarcity of resources at the local governmental level.
9. The City of Susanville Fire Department, Police Department and the Parks and Recreation Department are all sharing resources where applicable. The Fire Department holds Mutual Aid agreements with every fire protection entity in Lassen County. The Susanville Police Department shares resources and dispatch and responds to emergencies outside its boundaries through a verbal agreement with the Sheriff's Office and the California Highway Patrol. The Susanville Parks and Recreation Department have an agreement to share facilities with Lassen Community College and area schools to allow for additional gym time.

## **9.6 Government Structure and Accountability**

**Purpose: To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various government structures and to consider local accountability, governance and management**

### **9.6.1 City of Susanville Government Structure**

The City of Susanville has a City Council and a City Administrator to oversee the various City functions and departments.

Restructuring governmental services with other agencies is not a feasible option for the City of Susanville. Continued examination of service delivery and cost, may, from time to time, reveal opportunities for such change.

In evaluating Susanville’s capability to serve the City and Sphere of Influence areas, LAFCO can evaluate the City’s ability to maintain management and budget efficiencies.

The City Council has been diligent in working out past issues in the City’s annual budget with the adoption of Resolution 09-4543 that established formal policies and procedures for the annual budget. These policies outline the responsibilities of each department in managing their respective budgets, the encumbrance process for all projects and expenditures over a set dollar amount and the funding of the General Fund reserve

The formal budget process and budgetary controls that were implemented, continue to be a useful tool to aid in the fiscal management of the city’s resources. The Council has approved great autonomy of the Finance Manager in reporting financial information directly to the City Council.

LAFCO may also consider the agency’s record of local accountability in its management of community affairs as a measure of the ability to provide adequate services to the City, Sphere of Influence, and potential annexation areas.

#### **9.6.2 Written Determinations for Local Accountability, Governance and Management for the City of Susanville**

- 1 Susanville is a General Law City and the only incorporated City in Lassen County. There are no other municipal service providers in the vicinity of Susanville that could provide the same level of service for provision of water, community development, public works (utilities and roads) and police and fire protection.
- 2 There are no other service providers in the Susanville Area who provide municipal services. It is reasonable to conclude that municipal services provided in the Susanville area will be provided by the City of Susanville in the foreseeable future.
3. The City has demonstrated its commitment to public accountability and participation in past efforts to revise and update its General Plan and implementation ordinances. The City also offers various customer-oriented programs including a mission statement for the Police Department and Fire Department, Customer Confidence Report (water), regular in-house training and management, and similar programs designed to enhance the experience for the City customer.
4. The City should consider establishing a Capital Improvements Plan to aid in timed capital repairs, improvements and expansions. A Capital Improvements Plan will help set out a strategy for funding such projects and realistic timeframes for doing so.

5. The City has in place a variety of Mitigation Fees in the form of infrastructure improvements required from new projects and similar programs to monitor public service needs of new development. It is reasonable to conclude that the City endeavors to avoid long-term City obligations for the capital improvement or maintenance of new development projects, such as those that would occur in Sphere of Influence areas.
6. Long-term effects of individual annexations and development will be analyzed when site-specific annexations are present. Again, the cost-benefit analysis could be considered as a tool used by the City of Susanville to evaluate effects upon both the City and County when annexations or development are proposed and submitted to either LAFCO or the City for review.
7. The City has demonstrated its commitment to public accountability and participation by following open meeting laws (i.e., the Brown Act) and working in close cooperation with local residents on various projects and issues. The City Council meets the first and third Wednesday of every month in the Susanville City Council Chambers at 7:00 pm. The City Planning Commission meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council chambers
8. The City actively updates and maintains a City website. The website posts a plethora of information the average citizen should be able to easily access and navigate, including various departmental contacts, mission statements, meetings and agendas, Municipal Codes, organizational charts, financial information, and State of the City Reports. This is an excellent way to spark citizen interest in municipal affairs, as greater dissemination of information can lead to greater interest in attending City Council and Planning Commission meetings.



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## **PERSONS CONSULTED**

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City of Susanville, Water Supervisor

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