

Exploring Fire Service Consolidation in San Mateo County

Building a Stronger, More Efficient, and Unified Emergency Service
Model



Will Fire Consolidation Improve Service?

YES

Fire Agency Consolidation would create a more efficient, less redundant model of service by:

- Building on existing automatic aid and shared Fire services.
- Aligning Fire service levels.
- Ensuring every resident receives the same quality of Fire, Rescue and EMS response.
- Prioritizing faster, more reliable emergency services at potentially lower cost.

Who Supports This Effort?

- Local 2400: Founded on the principle of County consolidation, this has been part of its mission for nearly 50 years.
- San Mateo Labor Council: Fire labor groups and General labor groups support consolidation.
- Fire Board & Council Members: Have shown interest but require education and economic analysis.
- Fire Chiefs Association & Management: Will be essential to shaping a realistic, fair plan.

What is the Right Structure for County Fire Services?

- We should consider whether a consolidation of current fire agencies would serve the citizens of San Mateo County better
- Considerations include:
 - Fiscal Impacts
 - Efficiency and effectiveness
 - Planning for the service demands for the fire service in the future.
 - Structures similar to San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department (SMCFD) — which is a scalable JPA model.

Lessons We Have Learned

Every Bay Area county has pursued some form of consolidation of Fire Departments realizing the benefits in service and cost savings

As an example: In San Mateo County, the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department (serving San Mateo, Belmont, and Foster City), is the most recent in the county to initiate a major consolidation. This consolidation has demonstrated:

- A Cost-effective delivery model
- High customer service standards
- Streamlined training & operations
- Stronger labor-management relationships

Broader Benefits of Consolidation

- Unified training programs
- Streamlined hiring and improved recruitment
- Efficient procurement and fleet maintenance
- Cost savings due to consolidation of redundant services
- Stability and Increased job security for our members
- Enhanced community engagement

Communication & Collaboration

Current Challenge: Departments working in silos limit overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Solution: A unified system enables clearer communication channels and consistent policies and procedures

Consolidation will result in shared resources and programs, enhanced training, and more efficient and effective emergency response.

Addressing Regional Training Center Needs

The development of a centralized, county-wide training center in collaboration with the College of San Mateo creates opportunities to address current and future training needs

- Consistent, high-quality firefighter operational and safety training
- Facility to host training to develop and enhance all hazard response skills
- Recruitment reflecting community diversity
- Pathways to fair-paying fire careers
- Local workforce development

The Next Steps

We are asking that the Board of Supervisors support and take the lead, in conducting a study of the potential benefits of a county wide fire services consolidation using the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department as a model. IAFF L2400 is willing to match up to \$30,000 to support this study.

The focused study of a regional consolidation should include the following:

- Consolidated Fire Services within San Mateo County
- Development of a Regional Training Facility
- Fire Dispatch Center and communication services