

LAFCO

Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission

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January 7, 2010 (Agenda)

Local Agency Formation Commission
105 East Anapamu Street, Room 403
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Program and Schedule to Update Spheres of Influence

Dear Members of the Commission:

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Commission receive this report and direct staff to review and update Spheres of Influence as proposed herein.

DISCUSSION

The Commission has complied with the statutory requirement to adopt and periodically update Spheres of Influence. It is time, however, to begin the next round of required Sphere of Influence updates.

Spheres of Influence and Municipal Service Reviews

In fulfilling its basic purpose to plan the future organization of local agencies the Commission is required to adopt a “sphere of influence” for each city and special district. A Sphere of Influence (hereafter SOI) is defined in Government Code §56076 as a LAFCO adopted “...a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area. . .” of each local agency.

Government Code §56425 is attached as Exhibit A. It describes spheres of influence, the written statements LAFCO must prepare in adopting SOIs and the need for SOIs to list the types of services currently being provided by special districts.

Attached as Exhibit B is Government Code §56430 that directs LAFCOs to prepare a Municipal Service Review (hereafter MSR) to help inform Commission’s decisions regarding SOIs.

Santa Barbara LAFCO Approach to Updating Spheres of Influence

The law requires LAFCOs to periodically update SOIs. It states that “On or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, the commission shall, as necessary, review and update each sphere of influence.” (Emphasis added)

When this law was enacted the Santa Barbara LAFCO undertook a comprehensive program to review and update all SOIs in the County in conjunction with preparing MSRs. The Commission studied many local agencies by geographical areas. Others were studied based the type of agency, i.e. cemetery districts. Still others were reviewed on a “stand alone” basis.

A very large amount of data was gathered and analyzed. The cooperation of all local agencies was necessary for the success of this project and was very much appreciated.

Public hearings to consider and approve MSRs and Update SOIs occurred over a number of months. The updated SOIs provide an excellent “snapshot” of local governmental agencies in Santa Barbara County including expectations for future growth or development and adequacy of public services presently being provided or planned for the future.

Agencies in the County and dates their current SOIs were updated is attached as Exhibit C.

Proposed Program and Schedule to Update Spheres of Influence

The statute directs LAFCOs to review and update SOIs “as necessary.” A number of LAFCO staffs throughout the State feel that if circumstances regarding a city or district have not changed appreciably, it should be sufficient to ratify the existing SOI.

To comply with the statute requiring LAFCOs to update SOIs every five years, staff is proposing the following Sphere of Influence Update Work Plan.

- Confer with Local Agencies

We will confer with each city and district with an adopted SOI to determine whether there have been changes that necessitate an in-depth MSR prior to updating the agency’s SOI.

Should this initial review indicate circumstances have require more detailed evaluation, we would prepare a new MSR and SOI Update, with appropriate environmental documentation in compliance with CEQA.

- Prepare Study and Hearing Schedule

Based on consultations with local agencies and independent review by LAFCO staff, we will recommend a hearing schedule to the Commission to comply with the requirement to update SOIs within the statutory five-year time limit.

- Notice LAFCO Hearings and Prepare Staff Reports

We will provide public notice of LAFCO hearing as appropriate and present staff reports for consideration by the Commission.

While the matter is not fully determined it is our intention to present updated SOIs to the Commission as in the past, either grouped by geographical area or by type of agency.

A copy of this report is being provided to each city and special district for their review prior to the January 7 LAFCO meeting.

Very truly yours,

BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer

cc: Each City and Special District