

LOS ALAMOS COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE

Report to the
**Santa Barbara Local Agency
Formation Commission**

August 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

This report regarding the Los Alamos Community Services District was prepared by the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (“LAFCO”) in accordance with Section 56430 of the California Government Code. It responds to the requirement that LAFCO conduct a Municipal Service Review (MSR) to study the delivery of municipal services and update spheres of influence.

The MSR evaluates services provided by the District and issues regarding its sphere of influence. MSR Guidelines prepared by the State Office of Planning and Research were referred to in developing information, performing analysis and organizing this study.

This report describes service delivery and related issues for LAFCO to consider and presents determinations as required by law. The decision to approve or disapprove any determinations or policies rests entirely with the Commission.

Written determinations regarding the MSR and sphere of influence update are provided for the Commission’s consideration. This report is an informational document and does not substitute for discretionary decisions that can only be made by the Commission.

This Report is subject to reconsideration and revision as directed by the LAFCO staff or by the Commission during the course of its deliberations.

2. MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

Description of District

The Los Alamos Community Services District was formed on October 29, 1956 and operates pursuant to the Community Services District Act (Government Code, Section 61000 et seq.).

It is located in northern Santa Barbara County, on both sides of State Highway 101 at its intersection with State Highway 135 and encompassing the community of Los Alamos.

A five-member board of directors, elected at-large, governs the District. A General Manager is responsible for administrative functions.

The District's boundaries and sphere of influence are coterminous. A map of the District and its sphere are included.

The District's Mission Statement is:

The mission of the Los Alamos Community Services District is to provide quality service for customers residing throughout the community of Los Alamos. The LACSD strives to provide services at a fair and equitable rate to the community to allow the District to maintain fiscal soundness today and in the future.

The LACSD believes in compensating its employees with remuneration and benefits competitive with other employers in the geographical area and in ensuring that employees are qualified to effectively run the operations of the District.

The LACSD's main focus is to employ current technology in order to operate and maintain water, wastewater and recreational facilities to create a healthy and safe living environment.

District Services

The District provides retail water delivery, the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater and public parks.

Other Governmental Agencies within the District

Local agencies that overlap the District are the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District, County Service Area 32 (Law Enforcement), Mosquito and Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County and North County Lighting District.

3. MSR DETERMINATIONS

This portion of the report addresses the factors specified in LAFCO's governing statute for the MSR for the Los Alamos CSD.

Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

Water Facility Needs and Projections

The District's Water Facilities Plan (April 2006) provides analysis of existing facilities, identifies deficiencies and recommends water system improvements for Los Alamos. The study area includes land within the District and adjacent areas within the Urban Boundary of the adopted Los Alamos Community Plan adopted in 1994.

Groundwater is the water supply available to the District. Annual demands are expected to increase from 118 MG/year to 147 MG/year by the year 2011. The plan recommends replacing the District's 500,000 gallon reservoir with one twice that size.

From the information provided in it appears the District is preparing to accommodate the added service demands.

Wastewater Facility Needs and Projections

Annual wastewater flow is expected to increase from 112,354 GPD to 14,967 GPD by the year 2011. The Regional Water Quality Control Board establishes the plant's capacity at not-to-exceed 225,000 gallons. The expansion to allow this capacity will be completed in August 2006.

From the information provided in it appears the District is preparing to accommodate the added service demands.

Public Parks

The District owns and operates Ferrini Park in the community of Los Alamos.

Growth and Population Projections

The District is within the Los Alamos Community Plan (1994), which defines and limits the District's potential for geographic expansion.

There are approximately 589 existing housing units within the District. Given current zoning within the Urban Boundary the expected number of dwellings units will be about 910 at build out. The District's water and wastewater facilities planning studies are based on these population and land use projections.

Financing Constraints and Opportunities

The District has adopted water and sewer master plans and a financial plan which projects needed revenues including developer mitigations for projects. It is reasonable to conclude these endeavors will avoid long-term, unfunded financial obligations for improvements or ongoing maintenance.

Cost-Avoidance Opportunities

There are no obvious cost avoidance opportunities. The most significant costs are related to obtaining water supplies and treating and discharging wastewater effluent.

The District participates with other California water agencies to obtain pooled health care benefits and in that Association's Joint Powers Insurance Authority for liability, property and workers compensation insurance.

Opportunities for Rate Restructuring

The District has opportunities for rate restructuring during the annual budget process and with the adoption of each rate ordinance.

Opportunities for Shared Facilities

There are no obvious opportunities for shared facilities in the operations of the District.

Government Structure Options

Los Alamos is physically isolated from most other local agencies, limiting the potential for governmental structure options.

The District reports that consideration has been given in the past to consolidation with the Los Alamos Cemetery District but concluded that it was not a cost effective change.

Management Efficiencies

The District exhibits the characteristics of a small though well-managed agency operating efficiently and serving its residents and customers effectively.

Local Accountability and Governance

The District is a relatively compact government, which enhances the ability of the public to participate in its activities. The Board of Directors is elected by and accountable to the voters who reside in the District. The District posts its agendas and minutes at its office and at the local Post Office (everyone in Los Alamos has a P.O. Box).

4. SPHERE OF INFLUENCE REVIEW AND UPDATE

Description of Current Sphere of Influence

The District's boundaries and sphere of influence are coterminous. A map of the District and its sphere are included.

No Proposed Sphere Changes

In response to the MSR Request for Information, the District states its boundary is correct at this time but a developer is planning to build 1,987 new units and some commercial development that will require annexation to the District.

The District is conducting a feasibility study to determine if the Los Alamos Commons Project can be accommodated and what improvements would be required to serve the project, which may result in a future request to amend the District's Sphere of Influence.

Sphere of Influence Determinations

Inasmuch as no changes in the sphere of influence are proposed at this time it is not necessary for the Commission to adopt or approve any determinations.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & REFERENCES

The Santa Barbara LAFCO staff prepared this Municipal Service Review. Responsibility for any errors or omissions rests with those who prepared the report.

The Los Alamos CSD provided the basic information and documents upon which the evaluation is based. The District staff, notably General Manager Kevin Barnard was instrumental in providing data.

Mapping services were provided by JDL Mapping.

Available Documentation

The "Request for Information for Municipal Service Reviews" submitted by the District and the supporting documents referred to therein are available in the LAFCO office.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of information gathered and evaluated during the Municipal Service Review it is recommended the Commission affirm the current Sphere of Influence and that it not be expanded or revised at this time.

