LAFCO

Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission
105 East Anapamu Street ◆ Santa Barbara CA 93101
805/568-3391 ◆ FAX 805/568-2249
www.sblafco.org ◆ lafco@sblafco.org

December 10, 2026 (Agenda)

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

Consider Adoption of Countywide Service and Sphere Review for Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Crime & Safety and Emergency Medical Services in Santa Barbara County

Dear Members of the Commission

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission take the following action:

a. Find, that the action is exempt from provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as "information collection" under Section 15306 of the State CEQA Guidelines and based on the determination that this action does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (Section 15061(b)(3));

b. Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, that LAFCO is required to develop and determine a sphere of influence for the 12 affected agencies, and review and update, as necessary;

c. Determine, pursuant to Government Code Section 56430, that LAFCO is required to conduct a service review before, or in conjunction with an action to establish or update a sphere of influence; and

d. Adopt a Resolution (LAFCO No. 2026-15) approving the 2026 Countywide Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Crime & Safety and Emergency Medical Services and Sphere Review with the following terms and conditions:

    1. Affirming the currently adopted Spheres of Influence of the Carpinteria/Summerland, and Montecito Fire Protection Districts as shown on Exhibits A and B;
    2. Amend the Sphere of Influence of the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District to include Hollister Avenue right-of-way along Santa Barbara Airport not currently within the boundaries of a fire protection agency, as shown on Exhibit C.

Commissioners: Roger Aceves ◆ Craig Geyer ◆ Joan Hartmann ◆ Dorinne Johnson ◆ James Kyriaco ◆ Roy Lee ◆ Jorge Magana ◆ James Mosby ◆ Bob Nelson, Vice-Chair ◆ Alice Patino ◆ Shane Stark, Chair **Executive Officer:** Mike Prater

DISCUSSION

State law requires LAFCO to periodically review and update the services and spheres of all cities and special districts. In accordance with the Commission's adopted Multi-Year Work Program, LAFCO staff has prepared a countywide service and sphere review (refer to Attachment A) for the 12 local agencies that provide Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Crime & Safety and Emergency Medical Services, as shown below:

Table A: List of Subject Agencies

AGENCIES	FIRE SERVICES	POLICE SERVICES	SHERIFF SERVICES	EMS SERVICES	Safety/Violent Crime Invest SERVICES
Special Districts					
Carpinteria/Summerland Fire District (CSFD)	✓			✓	
Montecito Fire District (MFD)	✓			✓	
Santa Barbara CFPD (SBCFD)	✓			✓	
Isla Vista Community Services District (IVCSD)					✓
Cities					
City of Buellton			✓		✓
City of Carpinteria			✓		✓
City of Goleta			✓		✓
City of Guadalupe	✓	✓		✓	✓
City of Lompoc	✓	✓		✓	✓
City of Santa Barbara	✓	✓		✓	✓
City of Santa Maria	✓	✓		✓	✓
City of Solvang			✓		✓

Key findings and recommendations are presented in the Executive Summary of the attached countywide report. The countywide report also includes Agency Profile Chapters which contain individual evaluations for each of the 12 local agencies - highlighting specific characteristics, ongoing operations, current fiscal health, existing governance structure, ability to provide services, and its importance within its jurisdictional area. The profiles assist with statutory determinations required for all service and sphere of influence reviews pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. This staff report summarizes the service and sphere review's findings.

Purpose & Key Findings

The goal of this analysis is to accomplish the Commission's direction to complete a service and sphere review for the Agencies under the Multi-Year Work Program and fulfill the service and sphere determinations under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. The following are the main conclusions of the report:

Spheres of Influence and Agency Boundaries

This Study covers approximately 2,737 acres containing lands that are serviced Fire, Law Enforcement, Crime and Safety, and Emergency Medical Service from 12 agencies. The Study Areas indicates that some areas may warrant inclusion/exclusion into their Sphere of Influence. The locations of the Study Areas are identified in a map within the agency's profile.

All three of the Fire Protection Districts have Spheres of Influence that match their district boundaries. Three Cities have Spheres of Influence that extend beyond their service boundaries: Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and Solvang. The Cities of Carpinteria and Lompoc have a small Sphere area outside of its boundaries, however, fire and law enforcement are provided by another agency for Carpinteria. All other agencies have a coterminous Sphere. These include Isla Vista CSD, Cities of Buellton, Goleta, and Guadalupe. The CFPD desires to annex Hollister Avenue which would need to amend its Sphere first.

Because the report does not address other services provided by the multi-service or Cities, no formal recommendations for Sphere of Influence updates are provided at this time. Sphere updates will be done once all future service review of the services and boundaries of the agencies have been completed and updated.

Firefighting Consolidation Mental Health, and and Cooperation

Fire protection agency services have historically been on the forefront of forging cooperative efforts. This tradition has been formalized into a network of mutual and automatic aid agreements and now a cooperative dispatch agreement between individual agencies through the Regional Fire Communications Center (RFCC). Today's fire agencies are operating under cooperative agreements to ensure timely, efficient, and coordinated emergency services delivery. The RFCC is funded through a cost-sharing model among the participating agencies. Each partner agency has an MOU with the RFCC. The RFCC has been operating since July 2025. LAFCO can play a vital role in helping agencies confront multiple challenges and plan for the future.

Montecito and Carpinteria/Summerland fire districts had been operating under a borderless response arrangement to provide the closest, most appropriate resources regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. Under the RFCC the borderless agreement continues. LAFCO recommends the next step should be "Conducting the necessary stakeholder outreach and

coordination to develop organizational structure/governance, cost, policy/procedure, training requirements and synchronization to determine if consolidating is acceptable to citizens."

Regional Dispatch Communication Center Cooperation

In Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara County Fire has led a consolidated dispatch effort to form the Regional Fire Communications Center (RFCC). This effort has transitioned all emergency response calls to a closest-resource dispatch model and regional deployment concept. This means that the closest and most appropriate available resource is dispatched regardless of agency jurisdiction. The RFCC is funded through a cost-sharing model among the participating agencies. Each partner agency has an MOU with the RFCC, and the agreements are substantially similar. The cost allocation methodology includes a base rate that is shared among all participating agencies, along with a per-call cost component.

Law Enforcement Service Cooperation

The Sheriff's Office contracts with the Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, and Solvang to provide law enforcement services. Each of these contracts are individually written to meet local needs. In 2024, approximately 20% of all calls for service to City Police Departments were for non-violent property crime offenses. Violent crimes make up about 6.3% of calls, while assault were 4.3%.

Based on the last five-year trends, crime is down, cooperation between agencies has been maintained. Reviewing the 2021 MSR and reflecting on this year's report, one trend remains consistent related to law enforcement and each respective police departments, which is the trend of how and what data is tracked remains largely the same, is some cases that a good thing to be able to analysis trends and draw conclusions, however, it appears it varies widely on how incidents are tracked or recorded or if at all by some departments. This disparity makes it difficult to evaluate service calls and type of calls, in turn, making if difficult to determine changes in incidents, accurate clearance rates, understanding relationships between service calls and reported crimes.

Finances

The current local economy has increased revenues for all local government agencies. All local ballot measures in November 2026 were approved by voters' other measures to increase revenue were also approved in recent years. The rate of residential and commercial development remains slow. The variation in revenue is due to a number of factors, including: 1) the date of a District's formation or City Incorporation and past taxation levels; 2) differences in assessed valuation; 3) land development and property sales within the agency's boundaries; and 4) the willingness of local voters to propose and approve tax measures.

In addition to needing adequate revenues, a local agency relies on its fund balance to provide a cushion for unforeseen expenditures or revenue shortfalls. A fund balance helps to ensure that resources are available to meet the cost of operations. As shown in Table ES-4 (page 19), the agencies reviewed in this report have fund balances ranging from 5.5% of annual budget to 107% of annual budget.

Public Accountability and Transparency

Two of the Fire Protection Districts, the one Community Services District, and one of the eight Cities (Guadalupe) are governed by directors'/council members who are elected at-large by voters. Isla Vista CSD also has two members that are appointed by UCSB and the County. In seven of the eight Cities the Mayor is elected at-large while the Council Members are elected by Districts. City of Carpinteria Mayor is selected by their fellow Council members.

The County Fire Protection District is a dependent Special District governed directly by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.

Ten agencies reviewed in this report have prepared up-to-date fiscal and operational information. The Cities of Guadalupe and Santa Maria last audit completed was 2022 & 2024, respectively

Of the 12 agencies providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services, twelve maintain websites listing information about the Board of Directors or City Council Members and postings of upcoming meeting agendas. These websites are maintained by the Cities, Fire Districts, or multi-service districts containing useful information.

Environmental Review

LAFCO staff has conducted an environmental review for the draft service and sphere review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has determined that the service and sphere review is exempt because the actions qualify as "information collection" under Section 15306 and any potentially significant environmental impacts pursuant to section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines would cover reaffirming the existing SOIs. The Clerk will file the Commission's Notice of Exemption following approval of the proposal and environmental determination. (Attachment B).

Agency Review and Public Notice

A hearing notice for this draft service and sphere review was published in the November 10th issue of Santa Maria Times (Attachment C). An administrative draft of the report was also shared with the Agencies. This allowed all 12 local agencies an opportunity to review and provide feedback before the report was finalized. Edits received were implemented in the report to ensure accuracy in staff's evaluation. Staff would like to thank each city manager, fire and police chief, general manager and their staff for their time and effort in helping fulfill this state mandate. Based on the analysis shown in the countywide report (refer to Attachment A), coupled with the fact that all 12 local agencies had an opportunity to review the report's findings, staff is recommending that the Commission adopt the attached resolution (refer to Attachment E) approving the countywide service and sphere review.

Comment Letters/Changes. The public and agencies has provided comments regarding the SOI Update and Municipal Service Review which are attached. The comment letters and more

detailed responses are found in Attachment D of this staff report. Staff has analyzed all comments since the public release and has prepared the change table shown in Attachment D addressing the issues raised. The few comments or changes help correct or make the report more accurate. The recommendation is to accept the changes as outlined in Attachment D.

Conclusion. LAFCO has completed all the steps necessary to update the affected agencies Sphere of Influence consistent with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act.

Attachments

Attachment A – Draft Countywide Service and Sphere Review for Fire, Law Enforcement, Crime and Safety, and EMS Services (online at www.sblafco.org) Previously Distributed

Attachment B – Notice of Exemption Section 15306. Class 6; Sections 15061(b)(3)

Attachment C – Public Hearing Notice

Attachment D – Comment Letters & Change Table

Attachment E – Draft Resolution

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mike Prater
Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT A

Draft Countywide Service and Sphere Review for Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Crime & Safety and Emergency Medical Services (online at www.sblafco.org)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Filing of Notice of Exemption in Compliance with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code

TO: County Clerk
County of Santa Barbara
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara CA 93101

FROM: Local Agency Formation Commission 105
East Anapamu Street, Room 407 Santa
Barbara CA 93101
805/568-3391

PROJECT TITLE: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW FOR FIRE PROTECTION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, SAFETY & CRIME AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:

Project Location:

The jurisdictional boundaries of Carpinteria/Summerland Fire, Montecito Fire, and Santa Barbara County Fire Districts, and Isla Vista Community Services District. In addition, the Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Solvang are included, all located in Santa Barbara County.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

LAFCO has prepared a Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update and Municipal Service Review for the 12 agencies identified above. The SOI is a 20-year growth boundary that includes areas that may be served by a City or District in the future. This SOI update and Service Review recommends maintaining the same boundaries for Carpinteria/Summerland Fire and Montecito Fire Districts which are coterminous. A portion of Hollister Avenue is recommended to be added to the County Fire Protection District's sphere of influence. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act calls for the Service Review to be completed either prior to or concurrent with, the Sphere of Influence update. The Service Review evaluates the public services provided by the 12 agencies and provides the information base for updating the SOIs.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project:

Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission

Reasons for Exemption. The proposed Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Services Review does not involve, authorize or permit the siting or construction of any facilities. The MSR is categorically exempt from the preparation of environmental documentation under a classification related to information gathering (Class 6 - Regulation Section 15306), which states: "Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded." CEQA Regulation Section 15061(b)(3) states "The activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA."

MP+-

Mike Prater, Executive Officer

October 23, 2026
Date

ATTACHMENT B

A Sphere of Influence is a plan for probable, physical boundary and service areas of a local agency or jurisdiction. As such, it does not give property inside the Sphere boundary any more development rights than what already exist. The Sphere of Influence Boundary is a long-range planning tool that assists LAFCO in making decisions about a jurisdiction's future boundary. The Sphere indicates areas that might be served by an agency. It is unknown if an area will ever be annexed to the agency. Also, it is often uncertain what type of precise land use is going to be proposed for a specific area. In the case of County Fire's Sphere of Influence Update, existing buildout development areas are recommended in the Sphere of Influence Update document.

The study of impacts associated with the Sphere of Influence is often speculative since it is unclear what type of project might be proposed or if an area will even be annexed in the future. The City and County studies impact comprehensively when a project-specific environmental review is completed.

The Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission will approve the above-referenced project on December 10, 2026 and has determined it to be exempt from further environmental review under the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and local Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

Exempt Status:

☐ Ministerial
☐ Statutory
X Categorical Exemption:
Information gather pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306. Class 6
☐ Emergency Project
X No Possibility of Significant Effect [Sec. 15061 (b,3)]

By: _____ **Date:** _____
Commission Clerk

SANTA BARBARA
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

NOTICE OF 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND INTENT TO ADOPT A SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW FOR LOCAL AGENCIES PROVIDING FIRE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, SAFETY, AND EMS SERVICES

Project Summary. A Sphere of Influence (SOI) is defined by Government Code 56425 as "…a plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency or municipality…" The Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review for the Fire, Police, Safety, and EMS Agencies identify the areas where future annexations might be considered and evaluated. The Agencies included in this Sphere of Influence and Municipal Services Review Update are; the Carpinteria/Summerland Fire, Montecito Fire, Santa Barbara County Fire Districts, , and Isla Vista Community Services District. In addition, the Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Solvang are included. The Municipal Service Reviews evaluate the jurisdiction's capabilities to serve existing and future residents and is the basis for Sphere of Influence decisions. The SOI for the Carpinteria/Summerland Fire and Montecito Fire Districts will not change from the existing SOI, which are coterminous. The Sphere of Influence for the County Fire Protection District is recommended to be amended to include the Hollister Avenue right-of-way along Santa Barbara Airport not currently within the boundaries of a fire protection agency.

Public Review Period. Runs through November 5, 2026 to December 8, 2026. Comments are due by 5:00 pm on Monday December 7th. Sent to: Santa Barbara LAFCO, 105 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara CA 93101 or by email at lafco@sblafco.org, Attention Mike Prater. Any additional comments can be made at the hearing.

Public Hearing. A public hearing will be scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. at the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room at 511 East Lakeside Parkway, Suite 141, Santa Maria, CA. 93455.

Environmental Determination. It has been determined that this project is exempt from CEQA because it either will not have any potentially significant environmental impacts pursuant to section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines and no substantial changes to existing SOI are proposed.

Disclosure of Campaign Contributions – LAFCO Commissioners are disqualified and are not able to participate in proceedings involving an "entitlement for use" if, within the 12 months preceding the LAFCO decision, the Commissioner received more than $500 in campaign contributions from the applicant, an agent of the applicant or a financially interested person who actively supports or opposes the LAFCO decision on this matter.

Persons participating in this proceeding who have made such contributions are required to disclose that fact for the official record of the proceedings. Disclosures must include the amount of the contribution and the recipient Commissioner and may be made either in writing to the Executive Officer of the Commission prior to the hearing or by an oral declaration at the time of the hearing.

ATTACHMENT C

The foregoing requirements are set forth in the Political Reform Act of 1974, specifically in Government Code section 84308.

Additional Information. – The following documents are available for review: Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review for Fire, Law Enforcement, Safety & Crime, and Emergency Medical Services. These documents can be downloaded from our website at **www.sblafco.org** at no cost, or may be viewed at the LAFCO office. Additional information regarding items to be considered at the meeting may be obtained by contacting the LAFCO office at 105 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara CA 93101 or by calling 805-568-3391. The agenda and staff report for the hearing will be available at the LAFCO website at www.sblafco.org. 5 days before the hearing.

Contact. Mike Prater, Executive Officer, (805) 568-3391 or lafco@sblafco.org.

Dated this 10th day of November 2026.

Mike Prater, Executive Officer
Santa Barbara LAFCO

ATTACHMENT D

PROPOSED CHANGES TO DOCUMENTS

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE
MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW

	Page/Line/ Commenter	Change or addition (Underlined) or comment	Comment
1.	Rebecca Campbell, Finance Director City of Santa Maria	Financial information has been updated to reflect known amounts per edits from Rebecca Campbell. A total of 9 pages were changed in the following sections: See all redlines Chapter Three K. Profile Summary pg. 317 Operations pg. 320 Opportunities & Challenges pg. 320 Financial Attribute Table pg. 332 City Revenue Table pg. 340 Fiscal Trends pg. 341 Pension & OPEB pg. 342 Public Safety Funding & Expenditure pg. 343 CIP pg. 343 -344 Long-term Debt pg. 344-345	Changes Made.
2.	LAFCO Staff	Revised Chapter 3 (H) Guadalupe Police Chief/Public Safety Director reflecting Interim appointment following resignation effective Nov 11, 2026.	Change Made.
3.	LAFCO Staff	Revised Chapter 1 Determination (3) Lompoc Fire added "staffing shortages will force Lompoc Fire to begin taking Engine 52 out of service due to insufficient personnel."	Change Made.

K. City of Santa Maria

Agency Office:	110 East Cook Street, Santa Maria, CA 93454
Phone:	805/925-0951 Ext 2200
Fax:	805/349-0657
Website:	www.Cityofsantamaria.org
Email:	drowlands@cityofsantamaria.org
City Manager:	David Rowlands
Fire Chief:	Bradley Dandridge
Police Chief:	Chris Williams

SUMMARY

The City of Santa Maria is located in the Santa Maria Valley in northern Santa Barbara County, situated just south of Santa Maria River and San Luis Obispo County. The City's boundaries cover a total of 22.78 square miles and include an estimated 113,041 residents (source: 2026 Department of Finance). The City expends approximately $72.1 ~~80.1~~ million per year (in 2024~~5~~) for public safety services. This allows residents to receive the services of the City Fire and Police Departments. The City Fire Department maintains an ISO Public Protection Classification of 2/2X within 5 road miles of a fire station where there is a credible source of water. Total fund balance has increased steadily from 2020 to 2024~~5~~. The General Fund balance in 2024 was$88.1 million, with an unrestricted fund balance of approximately $22.3 million, which can be used to offset short term funding lows. The City receives a portion of the County's 1% base property tax of 12¢/$1. The City has financial procedures in place however the preparation of timely agency audits are not keeping pace. The most recent audit by the City was for June 30, 2023[10]. The City's Sphere of Influence is larger than its boundaries including areas to the south (Orcutt) and a few parcels along the southwest. Plans to expand the Sphere are being discussed.

BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Maria was incorporated on September 12, 1905. The City was established under general law, but later adopted charter laws for Cities codified under Government Code Sections 34450 within California Constitution Article XI, Section 5(a). The majority of the City is situated west of State Highway 101. The City is governed by a five-member City Council with a Mayor elected at-large and four Council Members elected by Districts. It has a City manager form of government and is a full-service City, providing most essential City services.

[10] Note: The City's June 30, 2024 Audit is expected to be issued by the end of the year, greater than 24-month period.

Property taxes constitute approximately 9.3% of all City's revenues, while public safety represents approximately 31% of City's expenses. The City maintains separate enterprise funds for other services, meaning that charges for services are intended to pay for the costs of providing such services. The City also has $302.7 million in long-term debts with $203.6 million reported in governmental activities and $99.1 million in business-type activities.

The City has last authorized/budgeted (in FY 2026-27) to employ 703~~employee included 552~~ full-time positions that manage the following professional and technical municipal services: Road Maintenance and Transportation Planning, Bikeways, Pedestrian & Transit, Stormwater Management, Water Supply, Sewer/Wastewater, Engineering, Solid Waste, Planning & Land Use, Building & Safety, Code Compliance, Police & Fire, Recreation & Parks, Transit, Library, Administration and Finance.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The City remains heavily dependent upon economically sensitive revenues, particularly sales tax. Measure U continues to provide a stable local funding source that supports essential municipal services, including public safety, youth programs, and quality-of-life initiatives. The continued success of Measure U has enabled the City to maintain service levels while addressing community priorities. Despite positive economic activity, the City continues to face long-term structural fiscal challenges. Expenditures, particularly personnel costs, pension obligations, healthcare costs, and infrastructure maintenance needs, continue to outpace the growth of recurring revenues. Maintaining long-term fiscal sustainability remains a primary objective of the City Council and management team.

During 2024, the City continued implementing strategies to strengthen its long-term financial position in order to support informed decision-making to help position the City to respond to future economic uncertainty. In 2024, the City initiated its multi-year modernization of financial systems through the implementation of Workday Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). As implementation progressed, there was focus on improving financial reporting capabilities, strengthening internal controls, streamlining business processes, and enhancing transparency and operational efficiency across City departments.

Like many California public agencies, the City continues to experience increasing pension costs associated with the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). Pension contribution requirements, together with competitive labor market conditions and inflationary pressures, remain significant long-term budget considerations. The City continues to evaluate strategies to responsibly manage these obligations while maintaining essential public services and preserving long-term fiscal stability.

City management remains committed to sound financial stewardship through conservative budgeting, prudent reserve management, strategic long-term planning, and continuous improvement of financial operations. These efforts are intended to ensure the City remains financially resilient while continuing to provide high-quality municipal services to the

City of Santa Maria
Incorporation, Revenues, Attributes, Types of Service, and Resources

Attributes	
City Limits (est. square miles)	22.78
Population (2026 estimated)	113,041
Assessed Valuation (FY 24-25: Includes City only)	$11,918,066,694
Number of Stations	7 Stations
Dispatch	(Through City Police)
ISO Public Protection Classification: Within 5 miles of a Station and with a Credible Source of Water	2
Without a Credible Source of Water	2X
Regular Financial Audits	Every Year
Average Annual Revenue Per Capita (FY23-24~~FY24-25~~)	$2,537~~TBD~~
Average Portion of County 1% Property Tax Received	12¢/$1
Ending General Fund Balance (June 202~~45~~)	$88,115,264~~$Unknown~~
Change in General Fund Balance (from June 2020 to June 202~~45~~)	92%~~TBD%~~
Total Fund Balance/Annual Revenue Total (FY23-24~~FY 24-25~~)	31%~~TBD%~~

Source: District area estimated utilizing County of Santa Barbara GIS Data; Population estimated utilizing DOF Table E5, Assessed Valuation and Portion of County Property Tax Received are from County of Santa Barbara Auditor-Controller's Office; Fund Balance Information from City Audit; Other information from City.

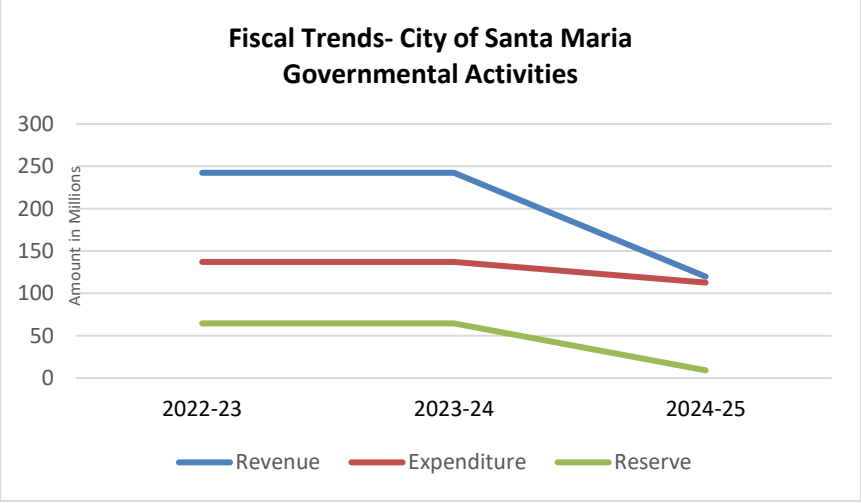
Types of Services	
Fire	X
Technical Rescue	X
Basic Life Support (EMT)	X
Advanced Life Support (Paramedic)	X
Ambulance	-
Police	X

City Revenues				
	2022~~23~~-2023~~4~~		2023~~4~~-2024~~5~~	
	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total
Property tax	$25,253,482~~$TBD~~	9.8%~~%~~	$26,723,569~~$TBD~~	9.3%~~%~~
Sales Tax Revenues	$71,307,668~~$TBD~~	27.8%~~%~~	$56,279,321~~$TBD~~	19.6%~~%~~
Franchise fees	$4,806,640~~$TBD~~	1.9%~~%~~	$5,077,185~~$TBD~~	1.8%~~%~~
TOT tax	$4,478,613~~$TBD~~	1.7%~~%~~	$4,021,567~~$TBD~~	1.4%~~%~~
Other Taxes	$1,078,634~~$TBD~~	0.4%~~%~~	$1,166,972~~$TBD~~	0.4%~~%~~
Charges for services	$115,021,676~~$TBD~~	44.8%~~%~~	$121,077,540~~$TBD~~	42.2%~~%~~
Grants & contributions	$25,149,353~~$TBD~~	9.8%~~%~~	$49,063,042~~$TBD~~	17.1%~~%~~
Other Revenue	$5,022,644~~$TBD~~	2.0%~~%~~	$356,223~~$TBD~~	0.1%~~%~~
Use of Money	$4,518,116~~$TBD~~	1.8%~~%~~	$22,996,622~~$TBD~~	8.0%~~%~~
Revenue total	$256,636,826~~$TBD~~	100.0%~~100.0%~~	$286,762,041~~$TBD~~	100.0%~~100.0%~~

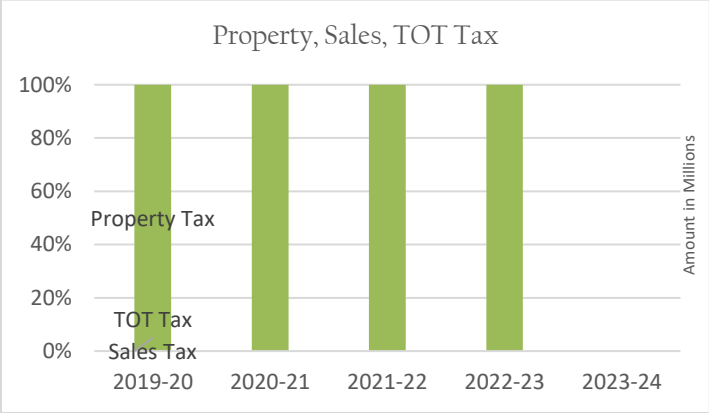
Note: The above numbers are Citywide, which include Government & Business-Type Funds

Fiscal Indicators

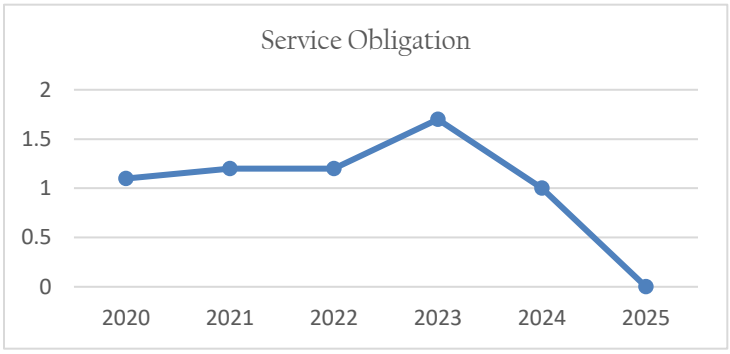
Select fiscal indicators are shown graphically below. Over the past three fiscal years, the City's revenues and expenditures from governmental activities have grown at about the same rate. However, it is important to note that revenues from governmental activities include special purpose revenues, Gas Tax and grants for example, that are restricted in how those revenues can be spent. The line graph below shows the current financial trend in millions. These indicators provide a measurement of the agency's financial condition over time.



CITY OF SANTA MARIA



This indicator is important for fire and related services as they are heavily reliant upon property tax revenues. As this revenue source is relatively stable and lags about two years behind changes in market conditions, this indicator can potentially depict the stability of an agency's revenue base.



A Service Obligation ratio of one or more indicates if revenues were sufficient to pay for operations. It is calculated by operating revenues divided by operating expenditures

Fiscal Year	Operating Revenues	Operating Expenditures	Ratio
2020	$ 119,690,413	$ 112,630,553	1.1
2021	$ 137,455,601	$ 113,461,192	1.2
2022	$ 232,097,101	$ 118,896,159	1.2
2023	$ 242,221,012	$ 136,993,692	1.7
2024	$ 155,010,093~~$ TBD~~	$ 158,343,621~~$~~	1.00~~0~~
2025	$ TBD	~~$~~	~~0~~

Post-Employment Liabilities

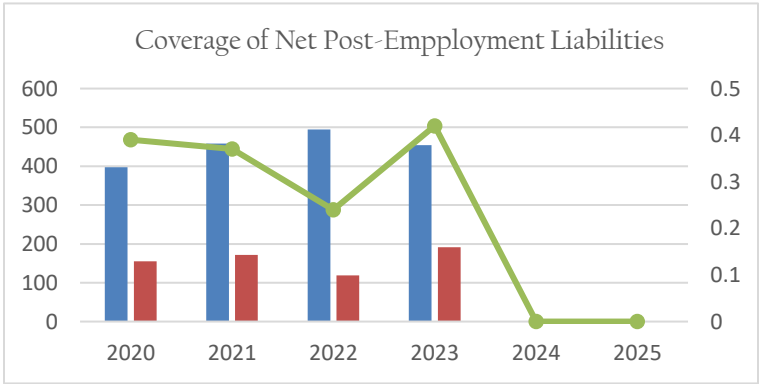
The two charts below identify the funding status and asset coverage of the pension and OPEB plans.

Pension	2022	2023	2024	2025	Trend
Funded ratio (plan assets as a % of plan liabilities)	84%	72%	%	%	
Net liability, pension (plan liabilities - plan assets)	$ 96,612,950	$172,000,169	$ TBD	$ TBD	

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)

Funded ratio (plan assets as a % of plan liabilities)	202~~3~~5 year of OPEB reporting	0%
Net liability, OPEB (plan liabilities - plan assets)		$ 18,879,971 ~~TBD~~

The net liability amounts are essentially unfunded liabilities of the agency. The figure below shows if the agency has enough assets (other than capital) to cover the liabilities. A declining trend indicates liabilities continuing to exceed agency assets.



	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Agency Assets (other than capital)	$397,540,699	$458,445,496	$494,800,000	$452,254,577	$TBD	$TBD
Net Liabilities (pension & OPEB)	$154,888,863	$171,586,124	$119,152,503	$191,082,651	$TBD	$TBD

Pension Obligations and Payments

The City contributes to CalPERS for a defined benefit pension plan for all qualified permanent and probationary employees. The City participates in one agent-multiple employer plan for its miscellaneous employees (Miscellaneous Plan), Safety (Police and Fire) cost-sharing employer plans (Safety Plan). Members with five years of total service are eligible to retire at age 50 to 62 with statutorily reduced benefits. Pursuant to PEPRA, the Miscellaneous and Safety "Classic" plans are closed to new entrants as of January 1, 2013.

The City maintains sufficient liquidity to ensure its ability to meet short-term obligations, while also providing for long-term needs of the City. As of June 30, 2022~~2019~~, the City reported a net pension liability for its proportionate share of the net pension liability of the Misc. Plan of $96,144,512 and Safety Plan of $75,855,657~~71,809,763 and Safety Plan of $54,641,276~~.

At the liability measurement date of June 30, 2020, the following employees were covered by the pension benefit terms:

	Miscellaneous	Safety
- Retired employees –	458	178
- Active employees –	373	171

OPEB Obligations and Payments

The City benefit payments are recognized when currently due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms on a pay-as-you-go basis.

The City provides post-retirement health benefits, in accordance with State statues, to all employees retiring from the City and enrolled in an insurance program under the California Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act (PEMHCA). The CalPERS PEMHCA Plan is a defined contribution, cost sharing multiple-employer defined benefit healthcare plan providing benefits to active and retired employees.

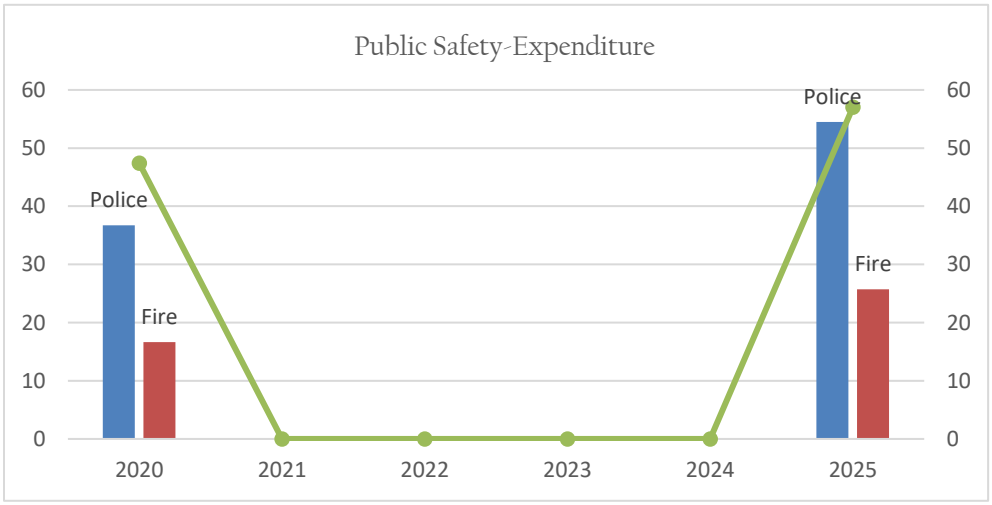
PEMHCA determines the amount contributed by the City toward retiree health insurance. The City was required to contribute $149 ~~133~~ per month during calendar year 2022 ~~2018~~ and $151 ~~136~~ per month during calendar year 2019 towards the cost of the retiree health insurance, which is the same amount contributed toward active employee health insurance. The contribution amount is calculated by using the annual consumer price index increase. During fiscal year 2022-23, expenditures of $281,843~~2020-21, expenditures of $255,743~~ were recognized for post-retirement health insurance contributions on a pay-as-you-go basis.

In addition to the direct City paid PEMHCA contributions, retirees covered under the City's plans receive pre-65 benefits that are subsidized as the cost of their coverage is based on blended (active and retiree) premium rates instead of normally higher retiree only rates. This implicit subsidy is also considered in the valuation for retirees electing City healthcare plan coverage. However, it does not apply to retirees electing coverage in non-City plans. As of the June 30, 2019 measurement date, the following current and former employees were covered by the benefit terms under the plan:

- Retired employees – 159~~143~~
- Active employees – 580~~533~~

Public Safety Funding

The City budget includes police and fire funding. In FY 2025/2026, the City budgeted $60,830,220 and decreased that to $56,182,028 for FY 2026/2027 for Police. In FY 2025/2026, the City budgeted $28,296,741 and decreased that to $27,366,679 for FY 2026/2027 for Fire~~FY 2024/2025, the City budgeted $80,171,029 and changed that to unknown amount for FY 2025/2026~~.



Asset Maintenance and Repair

The City budget, includes Mobile Equipment and Replacement budget for 2026-27~~2020-22~~, calls for 38 ~~71~~ pieces of equipment to be replaced ~~and twelve new pieces of equipment to be purchased~~ reflecting $12.8~~9.1~~ million in appropriations.

Capital Improvements

The City has a Capital Improvement Project (CIP), Maintenance, and Equipment Project (CIP-MEP) to systematically plan, schedule, budget, and finance capital projects to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency of construction. The FY 2026-2028 CIP-MEP Budget consists of 52 capital projects representing approximately $158.9 million in appropriations, comprised of $50.6

million in projects in the first year and $108.3 million in the second year. Projects include fleet replacements and expansions, water and wastewater infrastructure improvements, environmental and regulatory compliance, drainage and sewer upgrades, roadway and traffic safety enhancements, public works facility improvements, transit infrastructure expansion, parks and recreation renovations, and ADA accessibility planning~~The City has a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which is updated regularly and identifies and prioritizes system improvements and costs. The 2024-2026 Capital Projects Budget for 2020-22 consists of 64capital projects range from road maintenance or construction to the renovation of municipal buildings, recreation centers, and ball fields, to water main and sewerage system replacement, representing approximately $62.2 million in in projects in the first year and $53.6 million in the second year of appropriations~~.

Budgeted or Estimated 2026~~4~~ to 2028~~6~~

PUBLIC SAFETY CAPITAL PROJECTS

- ~~Construction/Relocation Fire Station 2 $12,000,000~~
- Fleet Replacement Police $1,234,031~~$1,556,000~~
- Fleet Replacement Fire $97,107~~$2,685,000~~

Long-term Liabilities and Debts

The City had $302.7 ~~292~~ million in bonds and other long-term liabilities outstanding at fiscal year-end in 2024~~3~~.

In November 2021, the City issued $35,685,000 of Water and Wastewater 2021 A Revenue Refunding Bonds (Bonds) to defease and refund the City of Santa Maria Water and Wastewater Revenue Refunding Bonds Series 2012 A. The term of the bonds are due in annual installments of $320,000 to $3,465,000 from February 1, 2022, through February 1, 2033; interest at 3.00% - 5.00%. The balance of the Bonds was $33,240,000 at June 30, 2024. ~~Subsequent to the 2021 financial statements, on November 17, 2021, the City of Santa Maria issued $35,685,000 Water and Wastewater Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2021A (the "Bonds"). The Bonds were issued to refund for savings the remaining outstanding principal amount of the City's Water and Wastewater Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2012A. The refunding resulted in a net present value savings of $11.54 million[i]. The Bonds have a True Interest Cost (TIC) of 1.46% and will be paid semiannually on February 1 and August 1 of each year and mature on February 1, 2036. The TIC captures the present value cost of the financing, factoring the future debt payments and the underwriter's discount. The Bonds generate an average annual savings of $845,073 and are issued and secured by a pledge of System Revenues~~

~~State and Federal laws and regulations require the City to place a final cover on its landfill site when it stops accepting waste, and to perform certain maintenance and monitoring functions at the site for a minimum of 30 years after closure. The City reported $29.1 million in landfill closure and post-closure care liability on June 30, 2023, and is based on the percent of capacity used (82.6%). It is estimated that the total cost of all closure and post-closure costs to be $30.8 million. The City will recognize the remaining estimated costs of $2.78 million in closure and post-closure care as the remaining capacity is filled, which is expected to be by 2032.~~

On March 22, 2013, the City entered into three lease agreements with Suntrust Equipment Finance Corporation for the acquisition of vehicles and equipment for the Fleet Services Fund in the amount of $4,905,000. The three leases have terms of seven, ten and twelve years with interest ranging from 2.14 and 2.68 percent. Payments are due semi-annually under the terms of the lease agreement. The final payment on the seven-year term lease occurred in fiscal year 2019-20 and the 10-year term agreement ended in fiscal year 2022-23.

On January 11, 2017, the City entered into a lease agreement with Community Bank of Santa Maria for the acquisition of a Computer Aided Dispatch and Records Management System (CAD/RMS) in the amount of $2,280,000. The lease has a term of ten years with interest rate of 3.1 percent.

The Water and Wastewater Fund has long-term commitments to purchase water from the State Water Project. The Fund has contracted for 16,200 acre-feet of water per year plus a "drought buffer" of 1,620 acre-feet per year at costs estimated between $12 and $20 million per year through 2035.

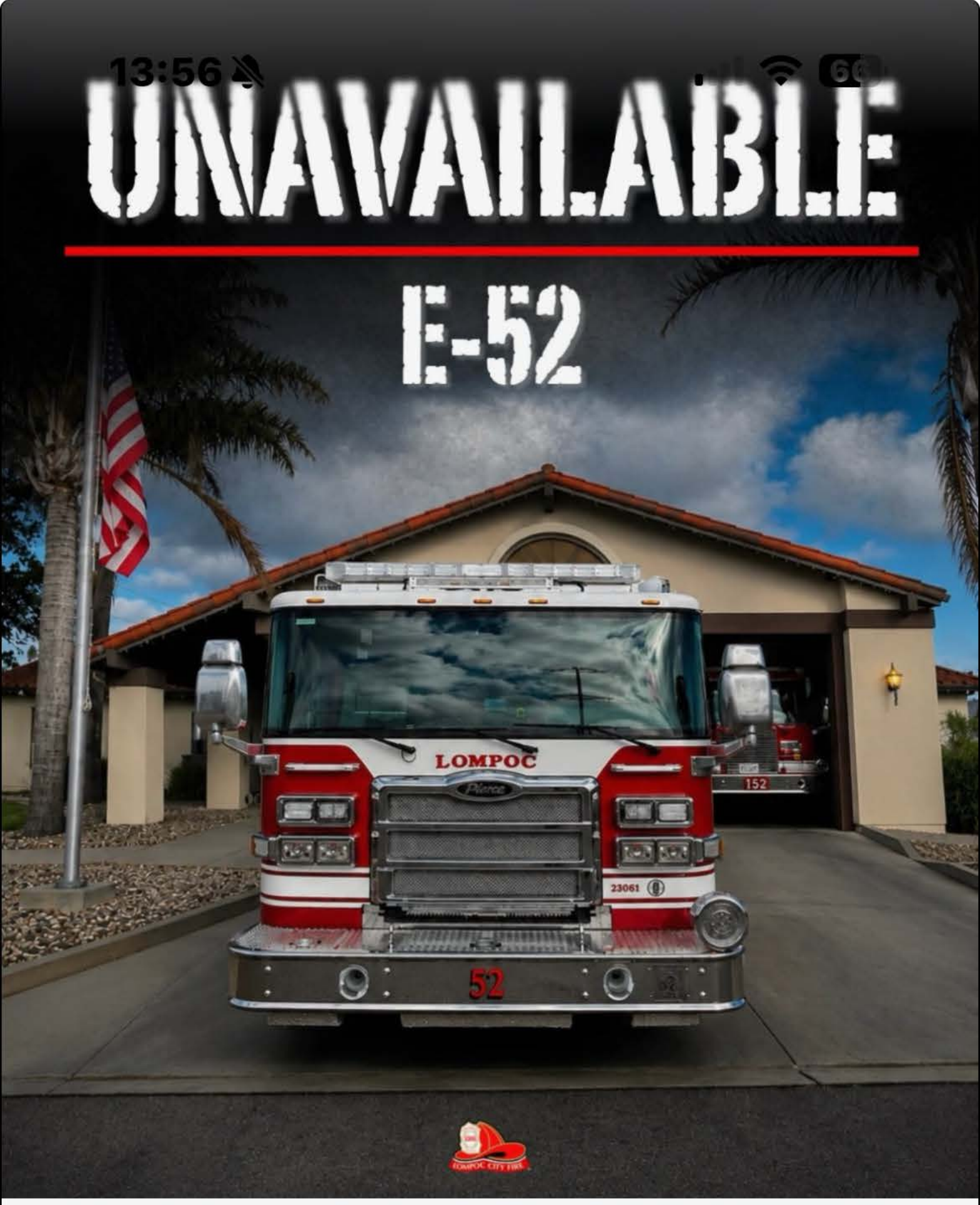
Opportunities for Shared Facilities

The City does not currently share facilities with other agencies. Limited dispatch and airport patrol is shared with the City of Guadalupe. The City of Santa Maria and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department (along with other member agencies in the county) have a Cooperative Dispatch Agreement. This agreement consolidates all fire departments under one dispatch center, creating transparency in the system and taking a "closest unit" approach. This means residents will always get the closest unit to their emergency. This agreement began May 12, 2025. No other opportunities have been identified by staff or in the preparation of this report.

ORGANIZATION

Governance

City of Santa Maria's governance authority is established under charter law for Cities codified under Government Code Sections 34450 within California Constitution Article XI, Section 5(a)). Cities are authorized to provide municipal affairs outlined in their charter. A five-member City



6 7

Liked by **jaymush** and **others**

lompoc_firefighters 🚨 STAFFING & SERVICE UPDATE 🚨

Starting next week, staffing shortages will force Lompoc Fire to begin taking Engine 52 out of service due to insufficient personnel.

Until now, Lompoc Fire has served 45,000 residents with two frontline fire engines. With one engine browned out, our capabilities will be severely reduced.

This represents a significant reduction in fire protection and emergency response resources available to Lompoc and the surrounding communities.

We believe residents should be aware of this change and its impact on the availability of fire resources.

Our members remain committed to providing the best service possible with the resources available

@ksby
@sbinde
@santamariasun

1 hour ago

ATTACHMENT D

LAFCO 26-15

RESOLUTION OF THE SANTA BARBARA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION MAKING DETERMINATIONS AND APPROVING THE 2026 COUNTYWIDE MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE FOR FIRE PROTECTION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, CRIME & SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCIES

WHEREAS, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, 56427, and 56430, and the Commission's duly adopted Policies for Spheres of Influence determinations, the Commission has initiated and conducted the 2026 Countywide Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Crime & Safety and Emergency Medical Services and Sphere of Influence Review for 12 agencies: Carpinteria/Summerland Fire Protection District, Montecito Fire Protection District, Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District, Isla Vista Community Services District, City of Buellton, City of Carpinteria, City of Goleta, City of Guadalupe, City of Lompoc, City of Santa Barbara, City of Santa Maria, and City of Solvang ("service providers").

WHEREAS, the Commission is required to review and update, as necessary, adopted spheres of influence not less than every five years, and

WHEREAS, the Commission is directed to conduct a review of municipal services not later than the time it considers an action to establish or update a sphere of influence, and

WHEREAS, the Executive Officer has given the notices required by law and forwarded copies of his report to officers, persons and service providers as prescribed by law; and

WHEREAS, the public hearing for this matter was conducted at 1:00 p.m. on December 10, 2026; and

WHEREAS, at said hearing, this Commission heard and received all oral and written protests, objections, and evidence which were made, presented or filed, and all person's present were given the opportunity to hear and be heard in respect to any matter relating to said Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review for the Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Crime & Safety and Emergency Medical Services Agencies; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED DETERMINED AND ORDERED by the Commission as follows:

(1) Finds this action is exempt from provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as "information collection" under Section 15306 of the State CEQA Guidelines and based on the determination that this action does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (Section 15061(b)(3));

(2) Has considered all factors required to be considered by Government Code Section 56425(e) and 56430 and hereby adopts such determinations as set forth in the Public Review Draft of the Sphere of Influence Update and Municipal Service Review with said determinations being incorporated by reference herein as though set forth in full;

(3) Adopts the Service Review Determinations, as shown on Exhibit D;

(4) Adopts the Sphere of Influence Determinations, as shown on Exhibit E;

(5) Adopts the 2026 Municipal Service Reviews for all 12 Special Districts and Cities providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, Crime & Safety and Emergency Medical Services in Santa Barbara County; and

(6) Reaffirms the currently adopted Spheres of Influence of the Carpinteria/Summerland, and Montecito Fire Protection Districts as shown on Exhibits A and B;

(7) Amending the Sphere of Influence of the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District to include Hollister Avenue right-of-way along Santa Barbara Airport not currently within the boundaries of a fire protection agency, as shown on Exhibit C.

This resolution is hereby adopted this 10th day of December, 2026 in Santa Barbara, California.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

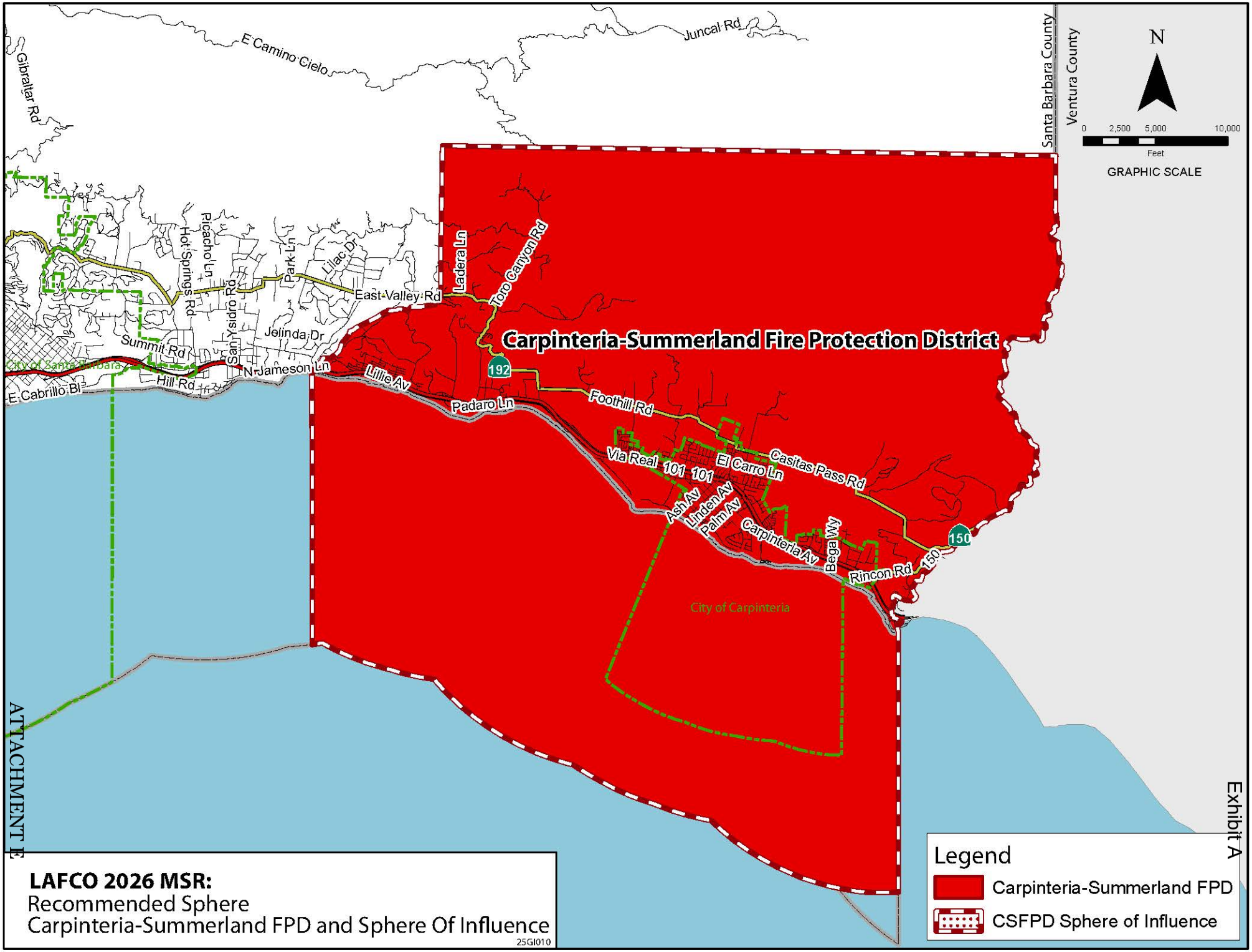
Santa Barbara County Local Agency
Formation Commission

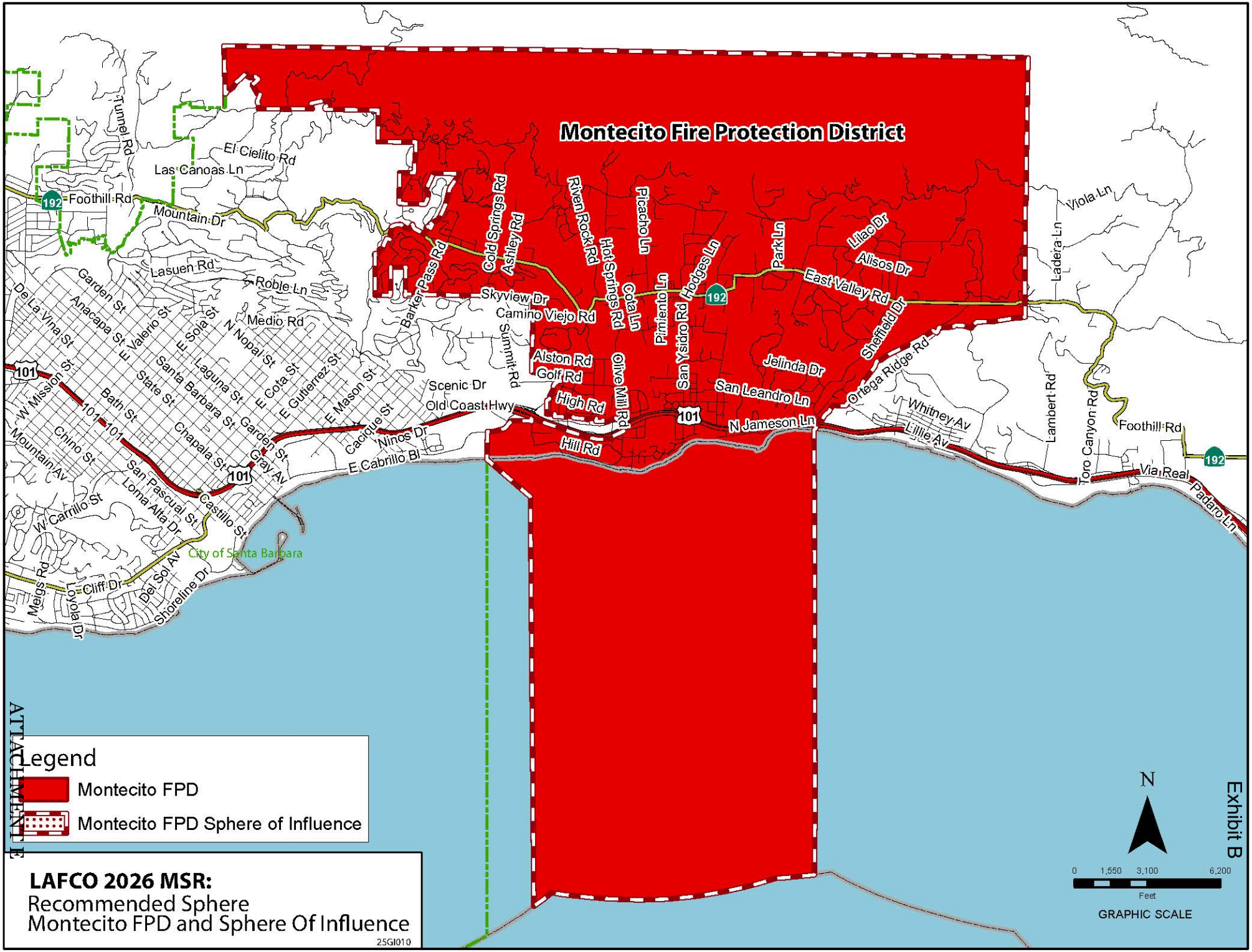
By:_____
Shane Stark, Chair
Date: _____

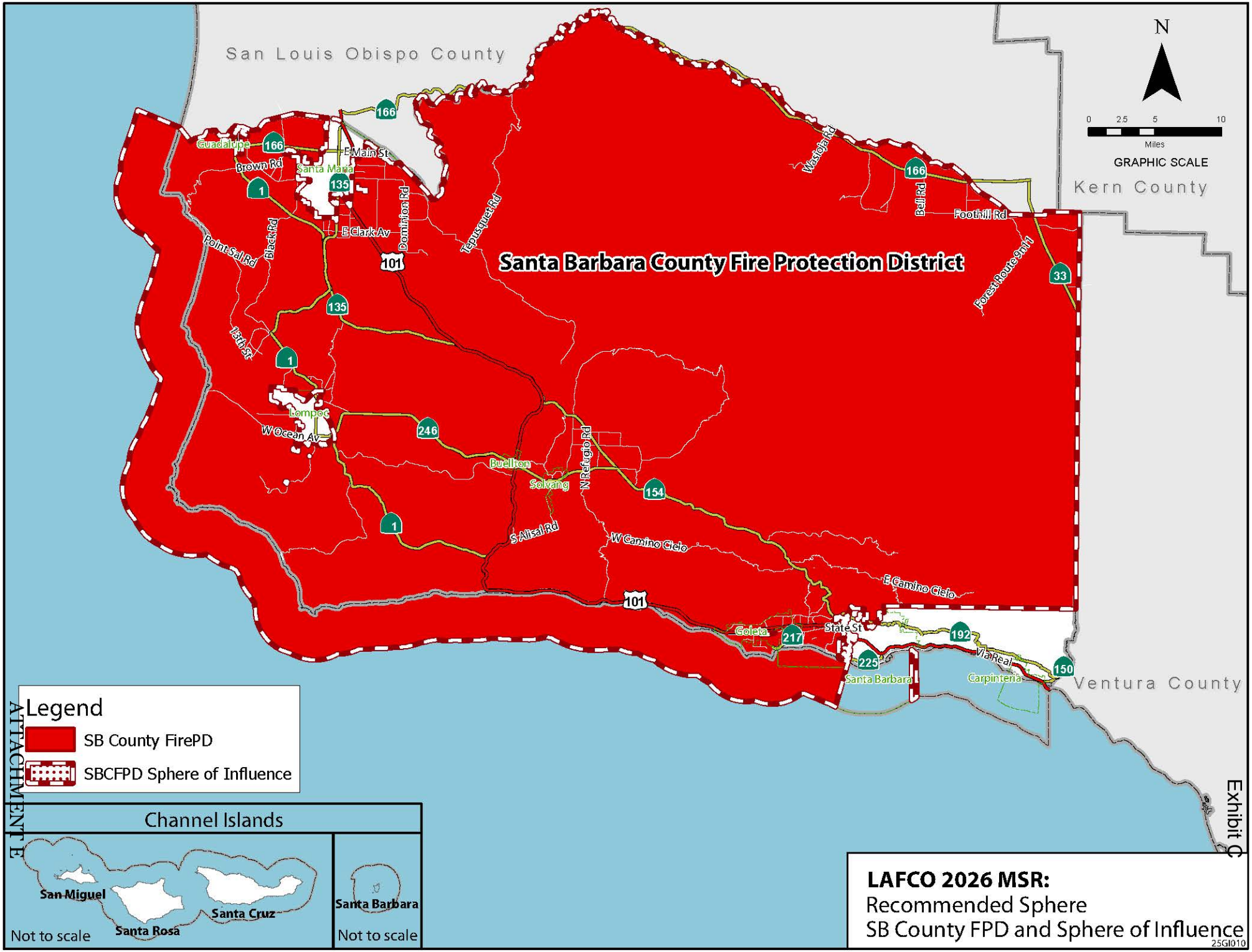
ATTEST:

_____

Ila Fennell, Commission Clerk
Santa Barbara County
Local Agency Formation Commission


Gibraltar Rd
E Camino Cielo
Juncal Rd
Santa Barbara County
Ventura County
N
0 2,500 5,000 10,000
Feet
GRAPHIC SCALE
Hot Springs Rd
Picacho Ln
San Ysidro Rd
Park Ln
Lilac Dr
East Valley Rd
Ladera Ln
Toro Canyon Rd
Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District
Jelinda Dr
Summit Rd
City of Santa Barbara
E Cabrillo Bl
Hill Rd
N Jameson Ln
Lillie Av
Padaro Ln
192
Foothill Rd
Via Real
101
El Carro Ln
Casitas Pass Rd
Ash Av
Linden Av
Palm Av
Carpinteria Av
Bega Wy
150
Rincon Rd
City of Carpinteria
ATTACHMENT E
Exhibit A
LAFCO 2026 MSR:
Recommended Sphere
Carpinteria-Summerland FPD and Sphere Of Influence
25GI010
Legend
Carpinteria-Summerland FPD
CSFPD Sphere of Influence


Montecito Fire Protection District
Tunnel Rd
El Cielito Rd
Las Canoas Ln
192
Foothill Rd
Mountain Dr
Lasuen Rd
Roble Ln
Medio Rd
Garden St
De La Vina St
Anacapa St
Valerio St
E Sola St
N Nopal St
Santa Barbara St
Laguna St
E Cota St
E Gutierrez St
E Mason St
State St
Bath St
W Mission St
101
Chino St
Mountain Av
Chapala St
Gray Av
Cacique St
Ninos Dr
E Cabrillo Bl
Scenic Dr
Old Coast Hwy
Summit Rd
Barker Pass Rd
Cold Springs Rd
Ashley Rd
Riven Rock Rd
Hot Springs Rd
Picacho Ln
Cota Ln
Pimiento Ln
San Ysidro Rd
Hodges Ln
Park Ln
Lilac Dr
Alisos Dr
East Valley Rd
Sheffield Dr
Skyview Dr
Camino Viejo Rd
Alston Rd
Golf Rd
High Rd
Olive Mill Rd
Jelinda Dr
San Leandro Ln
N Jameson Ln
Hill Rd
Ortega Ridge Rd
Whitney Av
Lillie Av
Viola Ln
Ladera Ln
Lambert Rd
Toro Canyon Rd
Foothill Rd
Via Real
Padaro Ln
San Pascual St
Loma Alta Dr
Castillo St
W Carrillo St
City of Santa Barbara
Meigs Rd
Cliff Dr
Del Sol Av
Shoreline Dr
Loyola Dr
ATTACHMENT E
Exhibit B
Legend
Montecito FPD
Montecito FPD Sphere of Influence
LAFCO 2026 MSR:
Recommended Sphere
Montecito FPD and Sphere Of Influence
25GI010
N
0
1,550
3,100
6,200
Feet
GRAPHIC SCALE



ATTACHMENT E

Exhibit C

CHAPTER ONE: MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW DETERMINATIONS

A. Scope

This Chapter contains the recommended Municipal Services determinations for the fire, law enforcement, crime & safety and prehospital emergency services provided by all 12 Special Districts and Cities in Santa Barbara County. These agencies are the County's three fire protection districts (Carpinteria/Summerland, Montecito, and Santa Barbara County Fire), one multi-service districts (Isla Vista Community Services Districts) and the eight Cities (Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Solvang). A complete review of all services provided by the multi-service Districts and Cities will be done in the future additional MSR's.

B. Summary of Recommendations

Based on the recommended determinations in this chapter, the Executive Officer recommends that the Commission adopt the Municipal Service Review for all 12 agencies providing fire protection, law enforcement, crime & safety and emergency medical services in Santa Barbara County.

Potentially Significant MSR Determinations

The MSR determinations checked below are potentially significant, as indicated by "yes" or "X" answers to the key policy questions listed and corresponding discussion on the following pages. If most or all of the determinations are not significant, as indicated by "no" or "blank" answers, the Commission may find that a comprehensive MSR update may not be warranted.

☐	Growth and Population	☐	Shared Services
☒	Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities	☒	Accountability
☒	Capacity, Adequacy & Infrastructure to Provide Services	☐	Other
☐	Financial Ability	☐	None at this time

C. Overview

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act requires LAFCO to conduct a service review of the municipal services provided in the County or other appropriate areas prior to updating the Sphere of Influence of a local agency. This chapter contains a recommended written statement of LAFCO's determinations with respect to seven areas as required by Government Code section 56430(a).

Each recommended determination applies to all 12 agencies as a regional group along with agency specific determinations for each of the following seven areas:

1. Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area;
2. The Location and Characteristics of any Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities within or Contiguous to the Sphere of Influence;
3. Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, and Infrastructure Needs or Deficiencies;
4. Financial Ability of Agency to Provide Services;
5. Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities;
6. Accountability for Community Service Needs, including Government Structure and Operational Efficiencies, and
7. Any Other Matter Related to Effective or Efficient Service Delivery, as Required by Commission Policy.

Individual profiles of each of the 12 agencies are provided in Chapter Three.

Essential Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services are also provided by the Federal and State governments personnel. LAFCO has no authority over the State and Federal entities. A brief review of their services is included in the Appendix.

D. Determinations

1. GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR THE AFFECTED AREA

REGIONAL

The preparation of this study was produced mid-way through 2020 Census and 2030 Census, with population figures based on the most recent available data from DOF. The 12 local agencies currently serve an estimated Countywide resident population of 444,974. This population estimate represents close to a two percent overall decrease or 1.5% annually over the last 10 years.

Santa Barbara County is predominately city-centered with slightly more than 68% of the current resident population residing in one of the eight incorporated Cities. Nearly 56 percent of all City residents reside in North County.

Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District serves an estimated resident population of 172,000, or approximately 38 percent of countywide population.

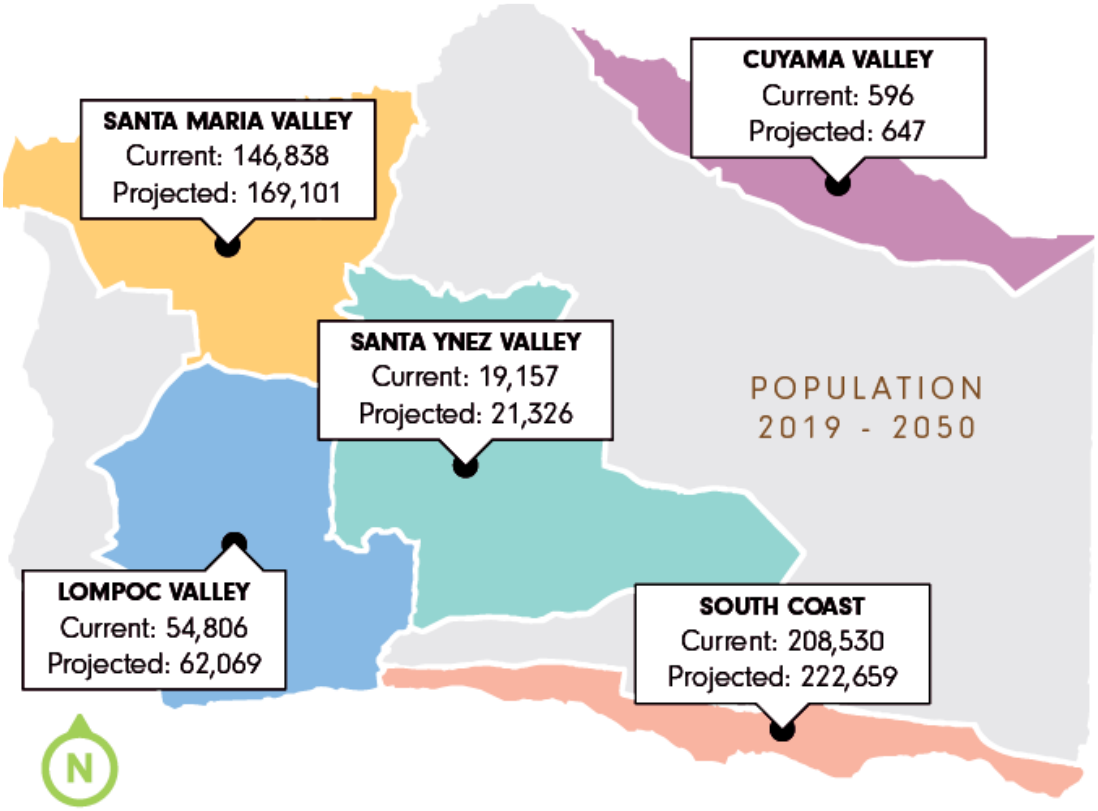
Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office serves law enforcement services to an estimated resident population of 198,701, or approximately 44.2 percent of countywide population.

County of Santa Barbara Housing Element (2023-2031) identifies an estimated growth rate of 4.0 percent along South Coast and 9.5 percent countywide. The population in these County areas will continue to grow, causing an increasing demand for services. (The relationship between projected growth and service area boundaries is discussed individually in each of the MSR sections.)

Growth in demand will be affected by the availability of alternative services like primary care, telephone-based service, and demand management practices, such as better fire prevention training, fire code improvements, and building rehabilitation.

The wildland interface areas where structures and development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuel are expanding as more people are building homes in such areas, this will increase demand for effective fire service.

According to the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), forty-eight percent (48.5 percent) of population growth is projected to occur in the Santa Maria Valley with an increase of 22,263 residents. Lompoc Valley is projected to grow by 13.3 percent or 7,263 residents, the second highest growth rate in the County. While the South Coast is projected to experience the lowest growth rate, population is projected to increase by 14,129 residents, the second highest total in the County. While all communities within the County are projected to grow, the City of Guadalupe is projected to have the highest population increase of 27.9 percent between 2021 and 2050, followed by the City of Buellton with a 19.9 percent total increase.



Except for the Federally-owned lands, the structural fire protection needs of the County are met by Cities and Special Districts.

Service calls for fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical providers have been increasing and are expected to continue growing as a result of population growth.

AGENCY SPECIFIC

The population of Carpinteria/Summerland between 2015 and 2025, the population of the Carpinteria/Summerland area decreased by 1,200 people (7.9 percent or less than 1 percent per year). Population growth within Carpinteria/Summerland is limited by a combination of zoning regulations, the area's natural landscape, and local infrastructure constraints. Any population growth within the district would be the result of development on existing undeveloped or underdeveloped lots.

The population of Montecito between 2015 and 2025, the population of Montecito decreased by roughly 700 people (7.4 percent; or less than 1 percent per year). Population growth within Montecito is limited by a combination of zoning regulations, the area's natural landscape, and local infrastructure constraints. Any population growth within the district would be the result of development on existing undeveloped or underdeveloped lots.

The Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District provides fire protection service to the great majority of residents in the unincorporated County. The 2026 estimated population of the unincorporated County is 143,594. County Fire also provides fire services to the Cities of Buellton, Goleta, and Solvang. An additional 9.5% of the population (43,383) live within the fire protection boundaries of the County's Fire Protection District.

City of Santa Maria between 2015 and 2025, the population of Santa Maria increased by 7,919 people (7.6 percent; or less than 1 percent per year). The City should monitor population projections and development plans to ensure they align with city planning efforts to adequately accommodate growth and the related increase in demand for fire and emergency medical services. The City of Santa Maria recently adopted 2045 General Plan establishes its land use foundation through a vision statement that captures the pledge to its residents. The General Plan creates policies and provides for the general distribution, location, and extent of present and future land uses that guide land use decisions that shape development of the City. Santa Maria's General Plan growth concept concentrates City growth into three areas designated urban growth areas, redevelopment sites, and annexed land.

City of Guadalupe between 2015 and 2025, the population of Guadalupe increased by 1,376 people (21.8 percent; or 2.2 percent per year). Under Guadalupe's population projections, the City's focus remains on sustaining current infrastructure rather than expanding services, prioritizing long-term reliability for its small community.

City of Buellton between 2015 and 2025, the population of Buellton increased by 170 people (3.4 percent; or less than 1 percent per year). The voters have adopted an initiative to amend the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) line of the City of Buellton. The measure was to fosters and protects the small-town character, encourage efficient growth patterns and protect the City of Buellton's quality of life by concentrating future development largely within existing developed areas, while allowing the City to continue to meet its reasonable housing needs.

City of Solvang between 2015 and 2025, the population of Solvang increased by approximately 400 people (6.78 percent; or less than 1 percent per year). The City anticipates considering carefully planned outward growth taking in the importance of preserving the character that makes the Valley unique.

City of Santa Barbara between 2015 and 2025, the population of Santa Barbara City decreased by 5,306 people (5.8 percent or less than 1 percent per year). The City's growth will be concentrated in existing areas of designated urban growth and redevelopment sites, with limited outward growth.

City of Lompoc between 2015 and 2025, the population of Lompoc decreased by 570 people (1.3 percent; or less than 1 percent per year). The City is undergoing an update to its 2050 General Plan that will establish its land use foundation. The City has expressed interested in outward growth potential.

City of Goleta between 2015 and 2025, the population of Goleta increased by roughly 1,000 people (3.2 percent; or less than 1 percent per year). City growth is expected in existing designated urban growth areas, redevelopment sites, with the potential to expand by annexing developed urban sites under County approvals.

City of Carpinteria between 2015 and 2025, the population of Carpinteria has decreased by approximately 900 people (6 percent or less than 1 percent per year). Under Carpinteria's population projections, the City's focus remains on existing infrastructure improvements rather than expanding services, prioritizing long-term reliability for its small community.

It is reasonable to assume growth rates for each of the 12 local jurisdictions over the next five years will parallel their respective growth rates between 2015 and 2025.

2. THE LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ANY DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES (DUC) WITHIN OR CONTIGUOUS TO THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

REGIONAL

In 2026, the California statewide median household income (MHI) was $120,200, and 80% of that was $96,160. LAFCO staff utilized the State DAC Mapping Tool and CalEnviroScreen 4.0 to verify disadvantaged status with other applications of the definition[6] to locate potential DUCs in the County. The County also prepared an update to its Integrated Regional Water Management Plan in 2019. Based on the criteria set forth by SB 244, staff's analysis indicates that the communities of Casmalia, Cuyama, New Cuyama, Sisquoc, Garey, Devon, Mission Hills, and Isla Vista were identified as qualifying disadvantaged communities.

The boundaries of the County Fire Protection District service area and Sphere of Influence cover a large portion of the County, including any disadvantaged unincorporated communities identified above. All other communities are currently receiving adequate essential municipal services of fire, water, and wastewater. Agency specific determinations are provided below.

AGENCY SPECIFIC

No identified disadvantaged unincorporated communities have been identified within or contiguous to the Spheres of Influence of Carpinteria/Summerland Fire Protection or Montecito Fire Protection districts providing fire protection service in Santa Barbara County.

The median household income (MHI) for Isla Vista Census Designated Place was $25,972 in 2026, which qualifies the community as a disadvantaged community. Isla Vista Community Services District (IVCSD) is also within the unincorporated territory of the County. The IVCSD's Sphere of Influence is coterminous to its service area.

The MHI for Guadalupe was $66,930 in 2026, which qualifies the community as a disadvantaged community. The City of Guadalupe is an incorporated City, therefore by definition would not qualify as a disadvantaged unincorporated community. The City of Guadalupe's Sphere of Influence is coterminous to its City limits.

The MHI for Lompoc was $72,004 in 2026, which does qualify the community as a disadvantaged community. The City of Lompoc is an incorporated City, therefore by definition would not qualify as a disadvantaged unincorporated community. The City of Lompoc's Sphere of Influence is greater than its City limits. Given, the City's interest in outward expansion, any disadvantaged community would need to be identified.

The MHI for Santa Maria was $74,986 in 2026, which qualifies the community as a disadvantaged community. The City of Santa Maria is an incorporated City, therefore by definition would not

qualify as a disadvantaged unincorporated community. The City of Santa Maria's Sphere of Influence is greater than its City limits. Any outward expansion, would need to be identified any disadvantaged communities.

All other communities analyzed in this report exceed the MHI in 2026 and would not qualify as a disadvantaged unincorporated community. In some cases, using various screening tools portions of Goleta, Santa Barbara having scores in the 75th percentile or 80 plus range. However, this would not qualify the City as a disadvantaged community under LAFCO's definition

[6] Government Code section 56033.5.

3. PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC SERVICES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OR DEFICIENCIES

REGIONAL

All of the residents of Santa Barbara County are currently within the boundaries of a City or Special District providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services. The smaller communities are within the County Fire Protection District's boundary. The CFPD also serves the State Responsibility Areas under contract.

Each agency providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services in the County provides public facilities and equipment as allowed by their financial means (see Determination 4, below). The 12 agencies reviewed in this report maintain a total of 38 fire stations, which the agencies describe as ranging from poor to excellent condition. A total of 15 police stations, ranging from poor to excellent condition. A few agencies plan to construct new stations. All agencies also maintain and replace fire apparatus as needed; however, some agencies have not made substantial upgrades since 2021 MSR reporting. An outline of the agency's attributes, types of services, and resources that describe the adequacy of public infrastructure needs and deficiencies for each agency is found in Chapter Three. Several agency stations are still in need of rehabilitation and aged apparatus are in need of replacement with little to no change over the five-year reporting period.

The 12 agencies collectively employ 298 fire personnel and 394 law enforcement personnel. Staffing levels overall for the agencies have remained relatively constant leaning less fire and more police, with the exception of Santa Maria adding 19 firefighters since 2021 MSR. The relative number of sworn officers produces a ratio of 0.67 and fire personnel ratio of 0.88 for every 1,000 residents in Santa Barbara County.

The Countywide average of annual calls translates to approximately 1 out of 4.2 residents generate one service call for services.

Property crimes, on average, represented approximately 80% of all incidents among the local agencies over the last five reported years. The remaining portion of incidents during this period are simple assault at 14% and violent at 19%.

Countywide clearance rates among the local agencies have significantly fluctuated over the last five reported years from an average low of 2.3% and a high of 11.5%. Property crimes are the lowest clearance rates at collective 14.6%, followed by 55.7% for assaults crimes, and 52.3% for violent crimes.

The local agencies have collectively cleared on average 2,752 of the 30,549 average total crimes occurring in Santa Barbara County over the last five reported years. This produces an average Countywide clearance rate of 9%.

Implementation of regional dispatch center has been in effect since July 2025. Annual statistical data should be more readily available to the public. This regional center provides dispatch services for all fire agencies in Santa Barbara County and includes an ambulance and EMS resources component. A Cooperative Dispatch Agreement is in place across the Operational Area, utilizing a closest-resource, priority dispatching response model to ensure timely, efficient, and coordinated emergency services delivery. This transition to a closest-resource dispatch model and regional deployment concept means that the closest and most appropriate available resource is dispatched regardless of agency jurisdiction. This change has improved response times and surge capacity, particularly in areas near agency boundaries. Dispatch services are provided by contract through the Regional Fire Communications Center operated by the County of Santa Barbara Fire Department for all public safety agencies. For EMS-related incidents, the cost of the call is split equally between the fire agency with jurisdictional responsibility and the ambulance transport provider. For incidents that do not require ambulance transport, the jurisdictional fire agency assumes the full cost of the call. LAFCO encourages all agencies to participate and track all costs using the allocation methodology and share this information with decision makers, public, and LAFCO.

AGENCY SPECIFIC

The County agency contracts for, and monitors, ambulance service throughout the County. This service is provided by American Medical Response (AMR), except at UCSB and in the Lompoc and Cuyama Valleys, where County Fire provides ambulance service. AMR has provided this service since 1980.

The Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, and Solvang contract for police services from the County Sherriff's Office. The Cities of Buellton and Solvang are considering contracting with the City of Lompoc for police services. Fire services are also provided by the CFPD, with the exception of Carpinteria who receives fire protection from Carpinteria/Summerland Fire District. Each City

contracts independently for these services. The existing agreement expires on June 30, 2027.

The Carpinteria/Summerland Fire and Montecito Fire Districts continue to operate under a boundary drop between the two Districts; however, all fire agencies operate under an MOU with the RFCC utilizing a closest-resource, priority dispatching response model.

4. FINANCIAL ABILITY OF AGENCY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

REGIONAL

The demands on a Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services from agencies vary due to the size and geography of the agency's boundaries, the area's employment base, the presence of students and tourists, the existence and length of local highways, whether the area is included within State Responsibility Area, and other factors. These factors help dictate the amount of money required to provide an adequate level of service.

Nearly all funding for Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services provided by the eight local City agencies are generated from discretionary general tax revenues collected by the respective governing bodies, commonly referred to as "general fund" monies.

General fund monies collected by the eight local agencies have increased by an average of 13% annually rising from an estimated total of $266.1 to $388.1 million over the last five years. Increases in property tax revenues ranging from 13% to 26% combined with increases in transient-occupancy tax (19% to 48%) and sales tax revenues (20% to 70%) has helped fund services during this period.

Public Safety Expenditures from the eight Cities increased substantially by a composite average of 72.5% over the last five years rising from an estimated total of $169.3 to $233.3 million. All of the Cities increased their public safety budgets with Santa Barbara (23%), Buellton (28%), Santa Maria (28%), Lompoc (31%), Solvang (32%), Goleta (33%), Guadalupe (34%), and Carpinteria (41%) increases to their budgets for public safety services.

Property tax assessments are the predominate funding source for the Special Districts providing fire protection, making up approximately 60 to 80 percent of total revenues.

Pension and other post-employment benefit costs have increased over the last five years. Many of the agencies currently finance benefits on a pay-as-you-go basis. Montecito Fire, City of Carpinteria, and City of Goleta are the exceptions who have established a Benefit Trust and/or OPEB Trust for the purpose of reimbursement or to pay pension benefits.

While an agencies budget may expand due to increased service demands, the size of a budget is closely related to the availability of funds. The financial ability to provide fire protection, law

enforcement, and emergency medical service from some agencies have slowed in recent years. As outlined in Chapter Three, agencies providing these services within Santa Barbara County experience a wide range of revenue. Local agencies receive between $6,645 and $115 per resident (the median being $3,071). The amount of revenue received by a public safety agency is often determined by factors over which agency residents have no control: assessed valuation, the date of a formation/incorporation and past taxation levels, land development and property sales within the agency's boundaries. For a City or multi-service district, the competition for scarce resources among local government programs. Local residents do have the ability to propose and approve tax measures to increase local services. Although passage of tax measures is increasingly more difficult.

State law[7] requires that an agency file an audit with the State Controller and County Auditor within 12 months of the end of the fiscal year or years under examination. All of the agencies providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services, except for two, have provided LAFCO with the most recent audit as required by State law. Cities of Guadalupe and Santa Maria were not able to submit audits.

AGENCY SPECIFIC

When a district annexes an area, the Property Tax Transfer Agreement with the County typically matches the annexing district's 1% County property tax within the annexation area. On the other hand, when an area is detached from a district, through a City annexation, the district generally no longer receives any taxes from this property.

The safety net for a local district is its fund balance. According to the most recent information available to LAFCO, the fund balance of the 12 agencies ranges from $1,843,278 to $33,000,000. On the low end of this range are the City of Lompoc (5.5%) and City of Santa Barbara (5.8%). In some cases, the arrangements with City Fire and Police Departments preclude the need for a large fund balance. Because a large fund balance is more crucial for a large budget than one with a small budget, one important statistic is the ratio of an agency's fund balance to its annual revenues. The highest fund balance/annual revenues ratios are experienced in the Cities of Guadalupe (163%), IVCSD (102.9%) and Carpinteria/Summerland FPD (100.7%). Following these are the Carpinteria (51%), Buellton (46.7%), Montecito FPD (44.8%), Solvang (44.1%), Goleta (20.7%), Santa Barbara County Fire (25.9%), and noting Santa Maria City did not submit it audit.

Agencies with lower revenues strive to provide the highest possible level of service with fewer resources. They must sometimes rely on older, and fewer, fire engines and patrol vehicles. The contracting Cities meet the California Occupational Safety and Health Association's "2-in/2-out" requirement. Some Cities provide resources for one full-time salary for a Firefighter/Paramedic position and Sheriff services includes 8,760 hours purchased and cost of the Motor Deputy.

Each agency providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services maintains a schedule for conducting audits of agency revenues and expenditures and have

submitted these to LAFCO. The Cities of Guadalupe and Santa Maria should prioritize annual financial audits to ensure fiscal responsibility and transparency. Guadalupe has not conducted a financial audit since 2022 and Santa Maria since 2023, which limits the ability to fully assess its financial health and ensure compliance with best practices in fiscal management. Both Cities shall immediately assemble and make available as appropriate, their audits and financial statements to the State Controller's Office, the general public at their office and on their websites. Every agency shall strive to continue practice of completing audits within 6 months and no more than 9 months from the end of the fiscal year. For Cities of Guadalupe and Santa Maria, these audits are still being adopted later than recommended by best practices.

[7] Government Code section 26909(a)(2).

5. STATUS OF, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR, SHARED FACILITIES

REGIONAL

Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBCFD) acts as the Operational Area Coordinator for all fire agencies within Santa Barbara County. As the Op Area Coordinator, they are an extension of the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) which coordinates the statewide response of fire and rescue, hazardous materials mutual aid resources to all hazards, emergencies, and disasters in cooperation with local, state, and federal fire and rescue agencies.

The Regional Fire Communications Center (RFCC) provide dispatch services. County Fire also has agreements through the State's mutual aid system. Fire agencies are operating under cooperative agreement to ensure timely, efficient, and coordinated emergency services delivery. The RFCC is funded through a cost-sharing model among the participating agencies. Each partner agency has an MOU with the RFCC. In addition, some jurisdictions have shared service arrangements, which are outlined below and described in greater detail for each agency in Chapter Three.

Local firefighting agencies participate in a large number of other shared resources including fire insurance, workers compensation, the joint purchasing of equipment, fire training, mobile air support, urban search and rescue, and technical rescue. The agencies are also supporting personnel through multiple programs for mental health and well-being of firefighters. These include in-house Peer Support Program, a County-provided Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and confidential clinician services through One805 and The Counseling Team International (TCTI). These resources provide confidential counseling, critical incident support, and ongoing mental health services to promote resilience and overall firefighter wellness.

AGENCY SPECIFIC

The Carpinteria/Summerland Fire and Montecito Fire Districts are continuing to coordinate

efforts to locate an additional fire station in the area. These efforts have been delayed due to financial constraints, which are partially due to the District's lack funding options.

The IVCSD shares the 970 Embarcadero del Mar facility with the Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinic.

The Cities of Buellton, Solvang, Goleta, and Carpinteria all utilize Sheriff services to act as their Police Department to serve residents within their respective City boundaries. Unincorporated areas of the County are served by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's office from one of ten sub-stations in the County plus the Sheriff's office headquarters. The Cities contract for police and fire services, except fire service for City of Carpinteria, with the County. The Cities may desire to consider alternative options for one or both of these services (see Determination 6, below).

The Isla Vista CSD collaborates with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and UCPD who operates the Isla Vista Foot Patrol station.

Limited dispatch and airport patrol is shared between the City of Santa Maria and Guadalupe.

The City of Lompoc coordinates fire and policing services with the Vandenberg Air Force Base for services. The operations on their Fire and Police Departments are constantly challenged by increased demands, funding limitations and evolving technology.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE NEEDS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

REGIONAL

Santa Barbara County is served by a web of agencies providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services. This Municipal Service Review primarily looks at the 12 Agencies – three fire protection districts, one Community Services Districts, and eight Cities providing these services. Services are also provided by branches of the State and Federal governments. These organizations are bound together through the State's mutual aid system and agreements between neighboring agencies to provide mutual and automatic aid. These agreements and the natural impulse of first responders to provide service where and when it is needed help make the system work.

LAFCO staff sees value in local city agencies collaborating and exploring opportunities to improve delivery of municipal services. The City of Lompoc are in discussion with the Cities of Buellton and Solvang to take over law enforcement services. It is still unknown whether it is feasible for another local service provider to assume responsibilities within a given area. Therefore, LAFCO staff recommends that the Cities continue to discuss partnerships with the County and other neighboring agencies. If an agreement is made, in which all affected parties agree in the service

responsibilities, a change of organization, out-of-agency=service agreement, or formation of a new agency may be considered at that point.

AGENCY SPECIFIC

All 12 local agencies are managed by committed and responsive public servants dedicated to providing timely public safety services irrespective of personal welfare within their respective jurisdictions.

All agencies appear to guide activities based on established qualitative goals outlined under their respective strategic or general plans. It would be appropriate for the local agencies to also establish quantitative standards in informing their decision-making as it relates to these services. These supplements would help improve the public's understanding of how each local agency defines and measures success. All agencies abide by all legislative obligations for accountability and governance practices.

It appears there has been a continued cost increase to the Cities of Buellton and Solvang in contracting for law enforcement services from the County. A clearer picture of what level of service need to be determined if replacing an existing service of like kind. Since both Solvang and Buellton provide police services through a contract with the Santa Barbara Sheriff Office (SBSO), having another police department provide an alternative function may also be appropriate.

Each of the agencies fully cooperated with the MSR process and responded to all requests for information. Notably, the Cities of Santa Maria and Guadalupe were unable to provide the annual audits for past years, or requested law enforcement service call data due lack of data tracking practices. Similarly, the UCPD and Sheriff's Office were unable to provide specific data needs for the Isla Vista CSD service area or year 2025 statistics for Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, and Solvang.

Two of the Fire Protection Districts, Carpinteria/Summerland Fire and Montecito Fire Districts are governed by directors who are elected at-large by voters. The County Fire Protection District is governed by the County Board of Supervisors who are elected by supervisorial division. For all Districts fire service operates with high regard and efficiency for their constituency. All of the agencies attempt to inform constituents through outreach activities.

The City Councils of seven Cities – Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Lompoc, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, and Solvang are elected by district. The City of Guadalupe Council is the only City Council elected at large.

The City Councils of five Cities – Buellton, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Solvang the Mayors are elected at-large and Council Members are by Districts. For City of Santa Barbara there are six Council Members elected by Districts with term limits of eight consecutive years a candidate can run for re-election to the City Council. However, the City Carpinteria select their

Mayor and Vice-Mayor by their fellow Council members and serve a period of two years.

Isla Vista Community Service District has a seven-member Board of Directors with four members elected at-large to staggered four-year terms, and one member elected at-large to serve a two-year term. UCSB and County both appoint the remaining two members. The Board of Supervisors appointment is for a two-year term and the Chancellor of University of California, Santa Barbara for a term of four years.

Of the 12 Special Districts and Cities providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services, all of them maintain websites listing information about the Board of Directors/Council Members and postings of upcoming meeting agendas. The websites also provide access to minutes and packets to staff reports. These same websites also contain a wide range of useful organizational information, including agency budgets, audits, and plans. The specific websites for each agency, or related organization, are listed in Chapter Three.

Consistent with the public notice requirements of California's Brown Act, public agendas must be posted by all public agencies at a public location a minimum of 72 hours prior to the meeting. State law also requires that agendas be posted on the agency website, if one exists. All agencies must also allow the opportunity for members of the public to directly address the legislative body on any item of interest to the public at every regular meeting. As of January 2020, Senate Bill 929 requires all independent special districts to maintain a website, unless the district passes a resolution claiming hardship for particular reasons each year. All Special Districts in this Study currently maintain a website. The agencies maintain accountability and compliance in its governance and public meetings appear to be held in compliance with Brown Act requirements.

7. ANY OTHER MATTER RELATED TO EFFECTIVE OR EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY, AS REQUIRED BY COMMISSION POLICY

REGIONAL

The Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Barbara County has adopted Sphere of Influence Policies and Criteria within its Policies and Procedures relating to Spheres of Influence and Changes of Organization and Reorganization. These policies and criteria were adopted, in conformance to State law, to meet local needs.

These policies stipulate that the designation of Spheres of Influence shall seek to preserve community identity and boundaries and will urge the political and functional consolidation of local government agencies that cross-cut those affected communities. Adopted General Plans of the Cities and the County will be supported when defining Sphere boundaries. Duplication of authority to perform similar service functions in the same territory will be avoided. An economically sound base for financing services without including territories which will not benefit from the services will be promoted. Agricultural resources and support facilities should be given special consideration in sphere of influence designations. Sphere of influence lines may

be larger or smaller than existing local agency boundaries and may lead to recommendations for changes of organization. The proposed amendments to the Spheres of Influence of the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District are consistent with these policies. They are specifically designed to address service needs and the capabilities of jurisdictions related to the total system.

The proposed affirmations and amendments to the Spheres of Influence of these agencies are consistent with local policies and criteria. The Commission is interested in the delivery of effective services related to mental health issues, including substance abuse calls, effect on departments call volumes, any related mental health issues with staffing, recruitment and retention, and support programs that are in place to help first responders. Additionally, the how has the use of over-time pay and what percentage of employees utilizing authorized overtime effects the budgets.

Mental health is discussed in greater detail in Key Finding 2 and briefly in Determination #5 above. Overtime is outline in each Chapter Profile, it uses has had some effect on overall costs, with public safety expenditures increasing by 72.5% from prior 5-year MSR report.

CHAPTER TWO: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE DETERMINATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Scope

This chapter provides recommended Sphere of Influence determinations for the County's three Fire Protection Districts (Carpinteria/Summerland, Montecito, and Santa Barbara County Fire). This chapter does not include recommended determinations for the Isla Vista Community Services District or the eight Cities (Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Solvang). The current report addresses the fire protection, law enforcement, crime & safety and pre-hospital emergency medical services provided by these eight Cities and one multi-service district. It discusses, but does not update, the Spheres of Influence of these agencies. Sphere updates will be provided together with future reviews of all of the services provided by the Cities and multi-service districts.

B. Summary of Recommendations

Based on the recommended determinations in this chapter, the Executive Officer recommends that the Commission:

1. Affirm the currently adopted Spheres of Influence of the Carpinteria/Summerland and Montecito Fire Protection Districts as shown on Map (pages 45 & 46);

2. Amend the Spheres of Influence of the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District to include Hollister Avenue right-of-way not currently within the boundaries of a fire protection agency, as shown on the Map on page 47, and

C. Overview

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act states that in determining the Sphere of Influence of each local agency, LAFCO shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to five areas[8]:

[8] These determinations are contained in Government Code section 56425(e).

1. The Present and Planned Land Uses in the Area, including Agricultural and Open-Space Lands;
2. The Present and Probable Need for Public Facilities and Services in the Area;
3. The Present Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services that the Agency Provides or is Authorized to Provide,
4. The Existence of Any Social or Economic Communities of Interest in the Area if the Commission determines that they are Relevant to the Agency; and
5. The present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing Sphere of Influence.

This chapter contains recommended Sphere of Influence determinations for the County's three Fire Protection Districts. Each of the five recommended determinations applies to all 12 agencies as a group.

The Executive Officer has found the Spheres of Influence of two fire protection districts to be appropriate to meet the needs of district residents. This chapter, therefore, includes the Executive Officer's recommendation to affirm the currently adopted Spheres of Influence, without change, for the following Fire Protection Districts: Carpinteria/Summerland and Montecito Fire Districts.

The Executive Officer also outlines the need for, and proposes amendments to, the Spheres of Influence of the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District (CFPD). This amendment would provide a Sphere of Influence expansion and boundary adjustment of CFPD. The District agrees with this recommendation. The Sphere expansion would be a step toward ensuring that the fire protection and emergency medical service needs of all County residents and property owners are met. If this amendment is adopted by LAFCO, a proposal by the District to annex all or a portion of the expanded Sphere is anticipated. Maps of the proposed Sphere of Influence amendment to the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District is at the end of this chapter on page 47.

As previously noted in the Adopted 2021 Municipal Service Review for Fire, Law Enforcement, Safety & Crime, and EMS Service, it was recommended that County Service Area 32, which had a "Zero" Sphere of Influence, should be dissolved in the future. The District was identified in the State Controller's office as being inactive and as such qualified for dissolution under the streamline provisions. LAFCO, in coordination with the County and the State Controller's Office, took the appropriate steps to dissolve the district pursuant to G.C. 56879. On February 5, 2026 the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission officially dissolved County Service Area No. 32 (CSA 32).

D. Determinations

1. THE PRESENT AND PLANNED LAND USES IN THE AREA, INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN-SPACE LANDS

Firefighters in Santa Barbara County face a variety of challenges due to a variety of land uses and topographies. The present and planned land uses of the County are guided by the General Plans of the County and the eight Cities within the County. A review of the materials provided for each of the agencies identifies a range of land uses including, but not limited to, urban, suburban, rural, commercial, agricultural, forest, and conservation as defined by the various General Plans. This represents the full range of land use designations. There will be no change in these land use determinations because of the sphere of influence recommendations.

As a moderately sized County in the State of California, Santa Barbara County covers more than 2,737 square miles and is comprised of diverse natural habitats and residential communities. The eight incorporated Cities comprise 68% of the County population and about 2.5% of the total land area. The Housing Elements for each of the jurisdictions are in compliance with State Housing and Community Development certification. The 6th Housing Element review cycle was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 5, 2023 and achieved substantial compliance with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Cities of Buellton and Santa Maria both recently revised their General Plans. The City of Carpinteria is undergoing revisions to their General Plan. The City of Goleta's General Plan was adopted in 2006 and has had 38 amendments since adoption with the most recent being on April 21, 2026. The City of Lompoc adopted its General Plan in 2013 and has had recent adoptions with an active phased expansion toward the Envision Lompoc 2050 General Plan update.

The region includes several cities located within or near some of the world's most productive agricultural areas. It encompasses the Santa Maria, Santa Ynez, Lompoc, and Carpinteria valleys and the cities of Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc, and Carpinteria. The South Coast Region includes three cities: Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria. In addition to the strong agricultural economies of the Santa Maria, Santa Ynez, and Lompoc valleys, the South Coast Region is a major tourism center on the Central Coast.

Over the next 20 years the County as a whole is likely to see a steady rate of growth. The Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, and Guadalupe, along with the Carpinteria/Summerland Fire, Montecito Fire, and County Fire Protection Districts have no Sphere of Influence beyond City boundaries. These communities have limited areas for future development and will be dependent on in-fill projects.

- The City of Buellton anticipates growing at a 8.9% growth rate over the next 20 years. Close to 84% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 78% already developed. The undeveloped area consists of 26 vacant parcels that collectively total 30.6 acres.

- The City of Carpinteria's projected growth rate is about 1.72%. Close to 73% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 81% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 44 vacant parcels that collectively total 25.3 acres with some areas not developable.
- The City of Goleta's projected growth is identified to be managed based on the maintenance of service levels and quality of life within the City. Most of the City or 78% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership and most of which is developed. The undeveloped area consists of 82 vacant parcels that collectively total 102 acres.
- The City of Guadalupe's projected growth rate is about 1.8%. Close to 83% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 65% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 49 vacant parcels that collectively total 93 acres.
- The City of Lompoc's projected growth rate is about 9.2%. Close to two- fifth or 40% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 74% already having been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 107 vacant parcels that collectively total 325 acres.
- The City of Santa Barbara's projected growth rate is about 1.5%. Close to 42% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with nearly all or 76% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 443 vacant parcels that collectively total 557 acres.
- The City of Santa Maria's projected growth rate is projected to decrease over time, with a projected annual growth rate of 0.9% from 2025 to 2040. Close to 64.3% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with approximately 75% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 257 vacant parcels that collectively total 186 acres.
- The City of Solvang's projected growth rate is about 3.3%. Close to 88% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 86% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 63 vacant parcels that collectively total 75 acres.
- The County's growth rate, covering the same period, estimates less than one percent growth in the surrounding unincorporated areas.
- For the three Fire Protection Districts; Carpinteria/Summerland Fire (CSFPD) growth rate will follow the City of Carpinteria at 0.7% and unincorporated County at less than one percent. Approximately 68.5% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 57% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 252 vacant parcels that collectively total 764 acres.
- Montecito Fire (MFPD) growth rate is projected at less than one percent a year within its boundaries. Approximately 82% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 75% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 391 vacant parcels that collectively total 1,737 acres.
- The County Fire Protection District is countywide, it encompasses all land use designations, including all types of urban uses as well as large areas of hillside, open space, and agricultural uses. Land uses within this District boundaries are under the jurisdiction of the County and Cities, and policies for Urban Growth Boundaries apply. Close to three- fifths or 4% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 42% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 1,755 vacant parcels that collectively total 4,295 acres.

- The Isla Vista Community Services District's long-term land use, development and growth, are provided under the County's General Plan and vision within the Isla Vista Planning Area. The County's growth rate is less than 1 percent within the surrounding unincorporated Isla Vista areas. Close to 71% of the parcel acreage is under private ownership with 97% having already been developed. The undeveloped area consists of 20 vacant parcels that collectively total 4 acres.

The land use zoning within the proposed Study Areas of the County Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence either recognizes prior annexation action into the City of Santa Barbara or right-of-way. The proposed SOI area aligns existing pattern of development and would promote the efficient provision of public services. The City's General Plan policies enable the City of Santa Barbara to effectively manage the growth and development within the airport area.

In general, Santa Barbara County's fire protection and law enforcement agencies have adequate Spheres of Influence and boundaries. All residents living within Santa Barbara County are within the boundaries of a local agency providing fire protection, law enforcement, and EMS services.

The Executive Officer recommends amendments to the Spheres of Influence of the County Fire Protection District (CFPD) that provide fire protection and emergency medical services. This recommendation would allow the CFPD to expand into adjacent properties that are already within the boundaries of a fire protection agency and remove an island strip.

The Executive Officer also recommends the clean-up action in the future for the CSFD and MFPD. This recommendation indicates that the area may warrant revisions in the District's Sphere in future years following a subsequent application.

A map of the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District boundaries and the proposed Sphere of Influence amendment is at the end of the chapter on page 47.

This designation is consistent with local LAFCO policy which states that "The Commission will consider area-wide needs for governmental services and evaluate individual districts serving the area as they relate to the total system of the existing local government in the community and alternative arrangements[9]."

[9] *Policies and Procedures Relating to Spheres of Influence and Changes of Organization and Reorganization*, Section 7 Policy II.

2. THE PRESENT AND PROBABLE NEED FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN THE AREA

All local fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency medical service agencies plan to meet current and future needs through annual budgets and maintenance schedules. Some agencies have adopted detailed strategic plans that pinpoint future actions required to meet community needs. The need for adequate future funding, staffing, equipment and facilities is great where significant residential or commercial growth is anticipated. Much of the urban growth anticipated in Santa Barbara County in the coming decades will occur within City boundaries or within close proximity.

As outlined in Chapters One and Three, the local agencies anticipating the most population growth are City of Lompoc, City of Guadalupe, and City of Buellton. These Chapters outline the MSR Determination for the present and probable need for services in each area. Even without growth, present needs are significant throughout the County. The probable need for public services will be greater when development occurs. It's likely that urban levels of development will be proposed at which time Sphere of Influence can be reconsidered. The future preparation of Specific/Development Plans as areas are proposed for development and by conformance to LAFCO policies requiring a comprehensive Plan for Providing Services at the time of each future annexation proposal will address the needs.

The Executive Officer recommends that LAFCO affirm the current Spheres of Influence for two Fire Protection Districts, Carpinteria/Summerland Fire and Montecito Fire, without change. Of these, only the County Fire (CFPD) has a current Sphere of Influence beyond its District boundaries. This District is also considering annexing lands within their existing or amended Sphere of Influence.

The Sphere of Influence expansions proposed for the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District will not add significant firefighting demands on existing District services. This District plans annexation within the expanded Spheres in the coming years, and are adequately funded and staffed to meet anticipated future demands within these potential annexation areas. Hollister Avenue right-of-way already receives multiple responses for calls under the RFCC model.

3. THE PRESENT CAPACITY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC SERVICES THAT THE AGENCY PROVIDES OR IS AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE

The present and probable need for public facilities and services varies for each local public agency providing fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency medical services. As outlined in Chapters One and Three, the level of service provided by each agency varies according to the service area's needs and available revenues.

Today's fire agencies are operating under cooperative agreements to ensure timely, efficient, and coordinated emergency services delivery. Operating under the RFCC borderless agreement response arrangement provides the closest, most appropriate resources regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

The dual response from both a fire truck and an ambulance help to ensure adequate response to medical emergencies, which are the majority of calls forwarded to fire agencies through dispatch communications.

As outlined in Chapter Three, each of the agencies have adequate revenues, equipment, and facilities albeit the station conditions run from poor to excellent. These agencies maintain fund balances that are available to meet unexpected demands, with the Cities of Guadalupe and Lompoc on the leaner range. The Cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara, and Santa Barbara County are either underway or will be soon on constructing new stations in their communities for these services. Goleta's Station 10 is researching funding mechanisms to fully implement the future endeavors as currently the full funds are not available.

The MSR information for each of the agencies within the report has identified that there are adequate stations, personnel, and apparatus to meet current demands but not at industry standards.

The Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, and Solvang all contracted with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department. The Cities of Buellton and Solvang are considering contracting for law enforcement services with the City of Lompoc's Police Department rather than remain with the County Sheriff's office as an effort to increase services and manage their expenses.

The Executive Officer proposes an expansion of the Spheres of Influence for the County Fire Protection District. The District has the financial and organizational resources needed to provide services to these areas. Since no changes to the Sphere of Influence are proposed for the CSFPD and MFPD, the current need for services will not change significantly.

4. 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 purposes of this review, a relevant "community of interest" is any group or entity in an unincorporated or incorporated area that shares common social or economic interests with an area served by an agency and that could be potentially annexed to that agency or added to that agencies Sphere of Influence.

The communities within the Carpinteria/Summerland Fire and Montecito Fire Districts have coterminous Sphere of Influence that appear appropriate for each District. The County Fire Protection District could include Hollister Avenue.

There is no single distinct community of interest for the area; however, these combined agencies address the incorporated and unincorporated territory of the county area. The Sphere areas would rely on the nearest agency for customers and employees if commercial development occurs. Where residential development is proposed, the agency provides places for shopping and services for the people living in those areas. Areas to recreate, schools, places of worship and cultural events would also be available to the areas in the Sphere of Influence that include development. The agency may also gain sales and property taxes advantages when these areas are annexed. The area residents also have an economic interest in the services provided as the agencies are funded through a portion of the one-percent property tax.

5. THE PRESENT AND PROBABLE NEED FOR THOSE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES OF ANY DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE EXISTING SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Based on the criteria set forth by SB 244, staff's analysis indicates that the communities of Casmalia, Cuyama, New Cuyama, Sisquoc, Garey, Devon, Mission Hills, and Isla Vista were identified as qualifying as disadvantaged communities. The boundaries of the County Fire Protection District service area and Sphere of Influence cover a large portion of the County, including any disadvantaged unincorporated communities identified. As outlined in Chapters One and Three, the local agencies that qualify for disadvantaged are discussed in greater detail.