

February 5, 2026 (Agenda)

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

## **Work Program for Fire/Police/Emergency/Safety Municipal Service & Sphere Review**

Dear Members of the Commission

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission discuss and approve the proposed outline for the upcoming countywide service and sphere review regarding fire protection, law enforcement, crime & safety and emergency medical services in Santa Barbara County.

### DISCUSSION

Pursuant to the direction by the Commission at the January 8, 2026 meeting, this report includes an outline and scope to conduct a report that will collectively analyze 13 agencies that provide such services. The report would include an analysis of the agency's ongoing operations, current financial performance, existing governance structure, ability to provide services, and its importance within its jurisdictional area. The report will include determinations required by State law.

A comprehensive service review analyzing multiple agencies that provide the same service may provide a better understanding of how agencies are financed, governed, and structured. Identifying best practices, regional issues and joint opportunities are key takeaways from service reviews.

The table on the next page illustrates the next volume and identifies the agencies that would be apart of the respective service review. The Commission also directed at your December 11, 2025 meeting that staff bring back a report discussion Isla Vista CSD and authorized powers. At your next meeting in March 5, 2026 a report will be presented. County Service Area No. 32 was removed because dissolution action will be taken at February 5, 2026 meeting.

Table A – MSR Program

MSR Document Volume	Community Included in Volume
Fire/Police/Emergency/Safety	Community Services Districts of Isla Vista
	Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria & Solvang
	County Fire
	Fire Districts of Montecito & Carpinteria/Summerland

**Proposed Outline**

**Table B** below provides an overview of the sections that will be covered in the upcoming countywide service reviews. Staff is suggesting three different chapters that will focus on various factors modeled after the previous MSRs. It is important to note that this is a draft outline, and the Commission is encouraged to identify any necessary modifications.

Table B – Proposed Outline for upcoming MSR Report

Chapters	Description
<b><u>Executive Summary:</u></b> Overview and Key Findings	This introductory section will specify the purpose of the report and how the comprehensive analysis will fulfill the state mandate outlined in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act (“CKH Act”)
<b><u>Chapter One:</u></b> Service Review Determinations	This section will fulfill the service determinations in accordance with the CKH Act for all agencies (Government Code Section 56430).
<b><u>Chapter Two:</u></b> Sphere of Influence Determinations	This section will fulfill the sphere determinations in accordance with the CKH Act for all agencies (Government Code Section 56425)
<b><u>Chapter Three:</u></b> Agency Profiles	This section will contain a review of each of the agencies within Santa Barabara County. Each profile will contain a summary of LAFCO’s findings, background information, and data regarding their operations and boundaries. The profiles will include tables and charts outlining the agency’s formation and duties, revenue attributes, types of service, infrastructure, conditions and maintenance for service. A

	map of the agency’s jurisdictional and sphere boundaries will also be included.
<u>Appendix:</u> Acknowledgements & Relationship to other Service Reviews	This section will provide a description and sources of data, outline the network of service providers within the County including other providers.

**Next Steps**

Starting in February, LAFCO staff will be sending out a survey to all the agencies in order to gather the necessary information for the countywide report. **Attachment A** provides a copy of the draft questionnaire. The agencies will have ~60 days to respond to the survey. The deadline to submit responses will be April 10, 2026. After LAFCO receives the requested information, staff will prepare an administrative draft of the service review. The draft report will then be shared with the agencies in August 2026 with a request for internal review and comments. This will be an opportunity to ensure accuracy in content and tone. Following the completion of the survey deadline and draft report, LAFCO staff will schedule to present the final version of the countywide service and sphere review in December 2026. **Attachment B** outlines the service review process and highlights key dates.

This service review will be a continuation of SOI/MSR Program taking a deeper look into Police/Fire/EMS Services evaluating mental health, dispatch, and fuel management for which the last 2021 MSR did not evaluate.

ALTERNATIVES FOR COMMISSION ACTION

After reviewing this report and any testimony or materials that are presented, the Commission can direct one of the following options:

OPTION 1 – APPROVE the Staff recommendation regarding the outline, scope, and schedule for the Fire/Police/Emergency/Safety municipal service and sphere review.

OPTION 2 – DEFER the municipal service review for another time.

OPTION 3 – MODIFY the staff recommendation and direct staff to proceed with a municipal service review with a different outline, scope, or schedule.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

APPROVE OPTION 1.

Attachments

Attachment A -Survey/Questionnaire

Attachment B -Tenetative Schedule

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Prater".

Mike Prater  
Executive Officer

**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**

**Comprehensive Fire/Law Enforcement/Safety/EMS Service &  
Sphere Review (Survey Questions – Deadline is April 10, 2026)**

**\*\*Please refer to page 7 for information on how to respond to this survey\*\***

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<p><b>A. Overview:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Administrative Office Address and Mailing Address (if different)</li> <li>2) Website Address</li> <li>3) Contact Information of LAFCO Liaison (for any follow-up questions)</li> <li>4) Number of Employees related to the service review functions. Please indicate whether employees are full-time, part-time, seasonal, on-call, etc.</li> <li>5) Staffing experience and tenure to the service review functions. Please indicate # years in the industry and years with the agency.</li> <li>6) Current Board/Council Members and Term Limits. Please indicate who is the current Board Chair/President.</li> <li>7) Board/Council Members background and years on the board. Background example indicate educator, finance, etc.</li> <li>8) Current Fire/Police Chief. Please indicate the number of years serving as the current chief.</li> <li>9) Regular Board meeting date and location.</li> <li>10) Would you be able to participate in an online short survey as well or encourage further citizen participation in an online survey?</li> </ol>	<p>If previously answered any question and there are no changes, please answer SAME AS BEFORE. A prior MSR Chapter Report and 2021 Questionnaire responses will be provided for information and comparison.</p>

**B. Boundaries:**

- 1) Does your agency desire to change its existing jurisdictional boundary? If yes, please indicate the area(s) and reason(s).
- 2) Does your agency desire to change its existing sphere of influence boundary? If yes, please indicate the area(s) and reason(s).
- 3) Does your agency plan to or currently provide services outside its existing boundaries? If yes, please indicate the area(s) and reason(s).
- 4) Are there any overlaps or duplicate services being provided by another agency within your agency's boundaries?
- 5) Have consolidation or reorganization with others been considered in the past 5 years? Would this evaluation benefit your agency?
- 6) Is there a plan to meet the service demand of future growth?

**C. Service Provisions**

Please indicate any new services your agency provides related to the service review of Fire/Law Enforcement/Safety/EMS.

Please indicate whether your agency provides these services in-house or by-contract with another agency within your boundaries, and whether your agency provides a service outside your boundaries.

**D. Dispatch & Mental Health Services**

- 1) Does your agency provide dispatch services in-house, by contract, or via Cooperative Dispatch Agreement? If by contract, please indicate which organization provides the service.
- 2) What is the department's current capacity to respond to mental health crisis, including substance abuse calls, in the community?
- 3) What are the most significant mental health challenges the community is facing and how has the departments call volume for these issues changed?

<p>4) Does your agency prepare reporting analysis or statistics related to mental health issues with staffing. If not, would you consider evaluating the issue in the future?</p> <p>5) What programs are in place to support the mental health and well-being of firefighters?</p> <p>6) What is the current approach to recruitment and retention, and how do mental health factors play a role?</p> <p>7) How does the department address the mental health impacts of climate change on its personnel, given the potential for increased stress and trauma from related incidents?</p> <p>8) Are there any procedures for identifying and supporting firefighters with pre-existing mental health conditions or those who may require medication that could affect their job performance?</p>	
<p><b>E. Population</b></p> <p>1) Please provide population estimates for the following years: 2025, 2030, 2035, 2040, and 2045. If a population forecast is unavailable, please provide the current population amount.</p> <p>Do you believe future population or housing will affect your agency's service capacity?</p> <p>2) Is your agency aware of any disadvantage communities within or adjacent to your boundary?</p>	
<p><b>F. Training</b></p> <p>Please indicate whether your employees' training has increased or decreased as related to department standards?</p>	

**G. Fire/Police/Sherriff Stations**

Please provide information for the following:

- 1) Any new stations added since 2021
- 2) Name and location of new stations
- 3) Built date of new stations
- 4) Current condition of new stations
- 5) Staffing and hourly positions for new stations

Are there any plans to upgrade current stations or construct new stations within the next 5-years? Are there any deficiencies with current infrastructure at existing stations?

**H. Finances**

Please provide information for the following:

- 1) Adopted Financial Statements (2021 to 2025)
- 2) Adopted/Proposed Budgets (2024 and 2025)
- 3) Capital Improvement Plans (if applicable)
- 4) Any Pension/OPEB Obligations and payments
- 5) Ending Fund Balance for 2025
- 6) Total Fund Balance/Annual Revenue for 2025
- 7) Provide any city reimbursements to the county and the county to the city for calls response, quantified through the Cooperative Dispatch Agreement.
- 8) List all Revenue sources

**I. Inventory**

Please indicate any new inventory added to your agency, type of vehicles or apparatus at each station: Examples include:

Are there any deficiencies in the existing equipment?

**J. Shared Services**

Please indicate whether your agency collaborates with other organizations through any of the following:

- 1) Automatic Aid Agreement
- 2) Mutual Aid Agreement
- 3) Memorandum of Understanding
- 4) Joint Power Authorities/Agreements
- 5) Other Contracts?

Are there any partnerships or collaborations with mental health agencies to improve service delivery?

How are existing mental health resources (e.g., mobile crisis units, mental health professionals) integrated with the fire department' EMS response?

Please name the organizations and purpose that your agency collaborates with and provide documents, if possible. LAFCO would like to highlight these partnerships and joint efforts.

**K. Call Data**

Please indicate whether your agency addressed the following call types during FY 2021 to 2025. Also indicate how many times that call type was addressed for FY 2021-2025:

- 1) EMS (non-vehicle)
- 2) False Alarm
- 3) Good Intent Call
- 4) Haz Mat
- 5) Mutual Aid
- 6) Service Call
- 7) Special Incident
- 8) Structure Fire
- 9) Vegetation and Trash Fire
- 10) Vehicle Accident/Fire
- 11) Wildland Fire
- 12) Other(s)?
- 13) Violent Crimes
- 14) Assaults
- 15) Property Crimes

Please indicate the target and average response time for each type of call.

## L. Other Information

Please provide the following:

- 1) Clearance rate of Crimes listed above.
- 2) ISO Rating
- 3) Does your agency have a Hazard Mitigation Program? If so, please provide a copy/link to review the document.
- 4) Does your agency have an evacuation and/or recovery plan? If so please provide a copy/link to review the document.
- 5) Which Hazard Severity Zone is your agency currently in?
- 6) How has the State fires affected your agency?
- 7) Has climate change affected your agency?
- 8) Does your agency take into consideration climate adaptation into its planning?
- 9) How is your agency preparing for future service needs/demands? What strategies are used to direct growth/service demands where infrastructure is or will be available?
- 10) Please provide or discuss any procedures, protocols, policies, and/or programs/studies and reports related to fuel management, debris collection & discard and prescribed burn operations or requirements.
- 11) What opportunities/challenges does your agency face?
- 12) Are there any new or pending laws that have affected your agency? If so, please provide information on such laws/bills.
- 13) List agencies to which your agency is required to report and for what. Do you prepare or receive annual reports or inspections?
- 14) Describe your agencies efforts regarding Public Outreach?
- 15) How are the operations of your agency

routinely evaluated, and by whom? Any procedures, customer feedback, etc.?

16) Are there any best practices or recent success stories you would like LAFCO to highlight in the upcoming service review?

17) Are there any specific topics you would like LAFCO to analyze as part of the upcoming service review?

## LAFCO Staff Comments

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**Survey Responses:** If the requested information is available on the agency's website or online, please provide the hyperlink and direct us to the proper location. We understand that your time is limited, and LAFCO staff can retrieve the information if pointed in the right direction.

Thank you for participating in LAFCO's survey. Please send your responses to LAFCO no later than **Friday, April 10, 2026**. Responses can be sent by email at [lafco@sblafco.org](mailto:lafco@sblafco.org). Feel free to contact LAFCO staff if you have any questions. The LAFCO office number is 805-568-3391.

**Fire/Police/Safety/EMS Agencies (12 in total)**  
**Proposed Service & Sphere Review Schedule**  
*(For Discussion Purposes Only - Dates Subject to Change)*

Action	Target Date	Description
<b>Pre-LAFCO Process</b>		
Survey Distribution	February 5, 2026	LAFCO will solicit comments and information from all affected agencies. This will be an opportunity to gather the necessary data to conduct a comprehensive report that will be a resource for the Commission, the affected agencies, and the general public.
Discussion with Representatives	Feb - May 2025	Prior to the development of the report, the Districts and LAFCO should schedule a meeting (virtual, conference call, or in-person) to discuss certain items, including but not limited to:  *Purpose of the Service & Sphere Review *Status of Agency (issues/concerns/future) *Retrieval of required documents (ex. audited financial statements)
Survey Deadline	April 10, 2026	This is the deadline to submit survey responses for each affected agency. Please notify LAFCO if more time is needed.
<b>During LAFCO Process</b>		
Develop Administrative Draft of Service & Sphere Review	Late-July 2026	LAFCO staff will develop an administrative draft of the report that will fulfill the requirements outlined in Government Code Section 56425 (sphere determinations) and 56430 (service determinations).
Distribute Administrative Draft to Agencies	Late -August 2026	LAFCO staff will provide the Agencies an advance copy of the draft report for feedback. The purpose of this internal assessment is to ensure accuracy of the information.
Submit Comments on Administrative Draft	September 2026	LAFCO encourages comments and questions to be submitted as soon as possible to ensure that the report addresses any discrepancies or issues prior to Commission consideration.
Determine Environmental Document	September 18, 2026	Pursuant to State law, and based on local practices, LAFCO files an environmental document regarding the service review. If LAFCO staff has determined that the service review is exempted from CEQA. A Notice of Exemption will be recorded after the LAFCO hearing date.
Advertise LAFCO Hearing in Newspaper	October 9, 2026	Pursuant to State law, LAFCO will advertise the consideration of the Service & Sphere Review in a newspaper at least 21-days prior to the hearing date.
Post Draft Service & Sphere Review on Website Hold a meeting announcing the release	October 28, 2026	LAFCO publishes the meeting's agenda packet, with all staff reports and attachments, no later than the Thursday before the meeting date.
Conduct LAFCO Hearing to Consider Service & Sphere Review	December 10, 2026	The Commission will consider the 2026 Service & Sphere Review in a public forum. The Agencies and members of the public will have an opportunity to address the Commission on this matter.
<b>Post-LAFCO Process</b>		
Distribute Copies of the adopted Resolution and Service & Sphere Review	December 2026	Copies of the signed resolution and 2026 Service & Sphere Review will be sent to the Agencies for their records. The report will also be available on the LAFCO website.