

LAFCO

Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission
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March 2, 2023 (Agenda)

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

Water, Wastewater, Recycled Water, and Stormwater Services and Sphere Review

Dear Members of the Commission:

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Commission receive an oral staff report and set a public hearing for April 6, 2023 in order to consider accepting the service review.

DISCUSSION:

As part of the Commission's work program, the LAFCO staff has prepared a draft service and sphere review for 33 agencies that provide water, wastewater, recycled water, and stormwater services throughout the entire county. These include ten Water Districts (Carpinteria Valley Water, Cuyama Basin Water, Goleta Water, Montecito Water, San Antonino Basin Water, Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation Improvement ID#1, County Water Agency, and County Flood Control & Water Conservation), two being Countywide Districts, seven Community Services Districts (CSD) (Casmalia, Cuyama, Los Alamos, Los Olivos, Mission Hills, Santa Ynez, and Vandenberg Village), six Sanitary Districts (Carpinteria, Goleta, Goleta West, Laguna County, Montecito, and Summerland), one County Service Area (CSA 12), one Municipal Improvement District (EMID), and eight Cities (Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Solvang). The draft document is available at Santa Barbara LAFCO website www.sblafco.org.

The main conclusions are:

1. Ninety-seven percent of the County's residents live within the boundaries of a City or Special District providing water, wastewater, recycled water and stormwater services.
2. No Sphere of Influence change, or designation of a Future Study Area, is necessary or recommended for Cuyama Basin Water District, San Antonio Basin Water District, Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District Improvement District No. 1, Santa Barbara County Water Agency, Santa Barbara County Flood Control & Water Conservation, County Service Area 12 (Mission Canyon Sewer District), Casmalia Community Services District, Los Alamos Community Services District, Los Olivos Community Services District, and Vandenberg Village Community Services District. Their Spheres of Influence already well define their probable service areas. The recommended action for these districts is to simply affirm their existing Spheres of Influence.
3. A future study is recommended for the Goleta Sanitary District along with an addition. Future consolidation feasibility study is also recommended for community of Montecito service providers that may affect their boundaries.
4. Sphere expansions are recommended for Carpinteria Sanitary District, Goleta Sanitary District, Laguna County Sanitation District, Montecito Sanitary District, Summerland Sanitary District, Goleta Water District, Montecito Water District, and Carpinteria Valley Water District. The Study Areas may benefit from local services. These districts support this recommendation and anticipate future annexation applications to extend services to the expansion areas.
5. Many of the entities within the County have a long history of working together to resolve water issues, and a framework already exists for addressing key issues related to water resource management. There are multiple partnerships working together regionally to develop larger more cost-effective units of supply that can be stored and shared through transfer, in-lieu, banking and cost sharing agreements.
6. Wastewater service providers must address increasingly strict discharge limits for WWTPs, requiring increasing costs for wastewater agencies. Systems that discharge to surface water bodies (and the ocean) require National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. Treatment systems that discharge to land or percolation ponds are regulated by waste discharge requirements. Both kinds of permits are issued and monitored by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The SWRCB General Waste Discharge Requirement for Sanitary Sewer Systems also requires wastewater agencies to evaluate and rehabilitate sewer collection systems with a target of zero sewer overflows.
7. Currently, three agencies in the County treat all of their effluent to full tertiary levels. These agencies are the Laguna County Sanitation District, the City of Lompoc, and the Summerland Sanitary District. Two other agencies treat some of

their flow to tertiary levels for reuse as landscape irrigation: the City of Santa Barbara and the Goleta Sanitary District.

8. Stormwater services are typically handled by each municipality, by some Community Service Districts, and Water Districts. All the Cities have active street sweeping, storm drain inspection, and litter control programs as required by the NPDES permit and monitor these activities through performance tracking. Santa Barbara County has led the development of an Integrated Stormwater Resources Plan (SWRP), including eight Cooperating Entities: five cities (Buellton, Carpinteria, Goleta, Guadalupe, and Solvang), two water districts (Carpinteria Valley and Montecito), and UCSB.
9. Water and Sewer rates and connection fees and property tax revenues are the primary financing sources for water, sewer enterprises, and storm drainage in the Service Review area. The water and wastewater service providers rely to differing degrees on these and other sources for revenues. Water purveyors largely depend on water sales revenue to operate the utility. Compared with other municipal services, there are relatively few financing constraints for water enterprises.
10. Water and wastewater service costs vary between providers, due to differences in services provided, water source, treatment methods, service areas, infrastructure age, maintenance efforts and capital financing approaches. The providers vary substantially in size of operations. Comparisons may be drawn by focusing on costs per capita served. While none of the agencies appear to be in fiscal distress and at risk of financial failure, the smaller agencies are often less able to plan for and address fiscal issues.
11. Two of the Sanitary Districts (Montecito & Summerland), a Municipal Improvement District, two California Water Districts (Cuyama Basin & San Antonio Basin), one Water District (Montecito), six Community Services Districts (Casmalia, Cuyama, Los Alamos, Los Olivos, Mission Hills, Vandenberg Village), and one of the eight Cities are governed by directors/council members who are elected at-large by voters.
12. In seven of the eight Cities the Mayor is elected at-large while the Council Members are elected by Districts (Guadalupe is the only exception). Many of the District are either transitioning or already elect members by-district elections by 2024. This list includes Carpinteria Sanitary District, Goleta Sanitary District, Goleta West Sanitary District, Carpinteria Valley Water District, Goleta Water District, Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District Improvement District #1, and Santa Ynez Community Services District.
13. Of the 33 agencies providing water, wastewater, recycled water and stormwater services, Thirty-one maintain websites listing information about the Board of Directors or City Council Members and postings of upcoming meeting agendas. Casmalia CSD and CSA 12 do not maintain a website.

Additional Major Policies potential under consideration include:

1. Hope Ranch – Future Study Analysis. Pending applications.
2. Carpinteria Sanitary services for various greenhouse properties. Study Area #2.
3. Montecito area Consolidations.
4. Summerland Sanitary dissolution.
5. Out-of-Agency Service Agreements. Streamlining process and/or conditioning future annexation.
6. TBD.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft 2022 Service and Sphere Review for Water, Wastewater, Recycled Water, and Stormwater Services. **Available at www.sblafco.org**

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M Prater", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mike Prater
Executive Officer