

LAFCO MEMORANDUM

SANTA BARBARA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

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October 5, 2023 (Agenda)

TO: Each Member of the Commission

FROM: Mike Prater
Executive Officer

SUBJECT: REPORT ON PUBLIC WORKSHOP STATUS FOR GROWTH PROJECTIONS
AND IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

DISCUSSION

The Commission has requested LAFCO conduct Public Workshops to better understand the issues facing the County related to urban growth pressures, anticipated regional housing need allocation in the coming years, and how this may impact agricultural land countywide.

In August, the Commission considered forming an Ad-Hoc Committee to look into Ag/Urban interface concerns, however, the discussion grew into a broader perspective of interest that would include the public, stakeholders, and interested parties. The scope of which is intended to explore best practices for evaluating quality applications for sphere of influence, annexation/reorganization of agricultural land, policy and determinations factors that LAFCO must consider when considering applications, contemplation of a framework for Cities, and core principles for LAFCO to consider.

The Commission requested that staff notify the various stakeholder of the workshop format for future participation into these public meetings. Staff has notified the groups of this direction on August 4, 2023.

LAFCO staff has reached out to seek assistance for facilitators to conduct these public workshops. During these discussions a number of approaches were outlined that could be possible. First, would the Commission support consultants to facilitate these public workshops. If so, an item can be agendaize for professional service contract to assist in the effort. Secondly, thoughts on direction regarding the activities outlined below would be helpful.

Planned Outreach Approach & Activities:

- Published Display Ad in local papers with target dates: 30-days advance notice including announcement on LAFCO website
- News media outreach (press release)
- English/Spanish Translation, Disability accommodations
- Outreach to all stakeholders on a list, general public, etc.
- Workshop preparation: Materials (agenda, discussion topics, fact sheets, etc.)
- Targeted dates/locations to conduct workshops (outside of holiday season) likely start of next year (North, South, Central County)
- Series of Public Workshops in various locations and time slots day/night, (Feb to April 2024) 90-min to 2-hrs sessions. Facilitated tabletop discussions with engaging questions, etc.
- Water & Refreshments
- Summary Report of community's input and options for consideration

The last Strategic Planning Retreat was held in 2013, a number of important topics were discussed and goals set for the Commission and staff to move towards. One specific topic covered the need to balance between providing space for growth with:

- Protecting the environment
- Cost of service and delivery
- Protect Ag lands
- Broad pattern & trends as growth occurs
- Water delivery and re-use
- Ag area uniqueness/differences
- Relations with tribes/Tribal consolidation area
- Gov't to gov't discussion of City and County plans
- University

The assignment and next steps that came from the retreat focused on the following: new website, work plan for MSRs, policy manual updates & Rosenberg's Rules, reimbursement policy. All of these topics have been addressed since 2013. It may now be time to tackle the challenges of balancing growth and protecting ag lands.

CONSULTING SERVICES

Staff will continue to reach out to various consultants to solicit interest in facilitating services. So far, staff has been in contact with a few firms to check availability to conduct future public workshops. We will continue our efforts and attempt to provide a range of costs based on the desired level of engagement plus incidentals and final report preparation and presentation needs. A proposal and scope of work could be brought back and presented to the Commission at an upcoming meeting for consideration or an RFP process directed. The cost could be covered by contingency reserves and would be covered by membership in next year's budget plan.

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.