

SANTA BARBARA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

November 8, 2001 (Agenda)

LAFCO 01-11: Countywide Unincorporated Area Annexation to Santa Barbara Coastal Vector Control District

PROPOSER: Board of Trustees, by resolution.

ACREAGE & LOCATION The entire County of Santa Barbara excluding incorporated cities and the territory already within the Vector Control District.

PURPOSE: To include in the District all unincorporated properties that would benefit from vector control services and ensure that problems arising in some areas are treated so they do not adversely impact other areas that may be in the existing District.

GENERAL ANALYSIS

Santa Barbara Coastal Vector Control District

The term “vector” describes an insect or animal that can transmit human diseases and cause significant discomfort or economic loss. The magnitude and types of vector problems may vary considerably, but some degree of vector control is essential in every community.

The Santa Barbara Coastal Vector Control District (VCD) was formed in 1959. Its name was changed in 1998 from Goleta Valley Mosquito Abatement District (MAD).

The Carpinteria MAD, that was formed in 1936, was dissolved in 1998 at the time its service area was annexed to the VCD (LAFCO 98-12). As a result of this change, the VCD boundaries include the Goleta and Carpinteria areas.

The District operates pursuant to the Pest Abatement District Law, specifically Health & Safety Code section 2200 et seq., and provides services that are designed to prevent or minimize the adverse effects of nuisance insects and other vectors that may cause disease in humans and animals. It provides services for approximately half of the unincorporated population.

Vector Management Task Force – 1992/1993

In April 1992 the Board of Supervisors authorized the formation of a task force to assess vector control needs and explore the ramifications of forming a VCD for the entire County, including the cities and the unincorporated area.

The draft report issued by the task force in May 1993 concluded that

Vector control services are an important but underfunded responsibility of local government. The most desirable method of providing and funding these services in the present fiscal environment is the establishment of a countywide vector control district with costs paid by a standard service charge imposed on all taxable parcels within the County.

It concluded further that the recommendations contained in the report are,

. . . based primarily on input from personal experienced in the field of vector control. Input from the cities has been very limited to this point. It is hoped that the report will provide the nucleus for a valuable, cost-effective program to serve the needs of all citizens and jurisdictions in Santa Barbara County.

In distributing the draft report in May 1993, Gary Erbeck, the County Director of Environmental Health Services, stated:

As the population of Santa Barbara County grows, it is increasingly exposed to animal and insect habitats, which in turn increases the potential for vectorborne disease.

Environmental Health Services is supportive of the task force's recommendation to pursue reliable funding for vector management through formation of a special district. If sufficient support exists, this Department would be interested in working closely with the cities and mosquito abatement districts toward formation of a comprehensive, countywide vector control district which meets the need of all concerned jurisdictions.

Application Denied without Prejudice - 1994

In 1994 the Goleta Valley VCD submitted a proposal (LAFCO 94-2) to expand its boundaries to include the entire unincorporated area except for territory within the Carpinteria MAD

In February 1994 the Commission unanimously denied the proposal without prejudice, with the understanding that further analysis regarding alternatives would be developed by the County and the VCD prior to further proceedings.

On February 14 the staff informed the District Manager that:

Denial *without prejudice* indicates that the Commission has waived the standard one-year waiting period for the submission of a substantially similar proposal.

From your attendance at the meeting you are aware of the concerns by the members of the Commission which led to the denial of the application. It became clear this matter had proceeded too quickly to a LAFCO hearing.

Members of the Commission expressed the need for the Board of Supervisors to be more involved in and familiar with vector control issues before proposals are brought forth. We suggest you work closely with County staff.

Countywide District Sphere of Influence – 1996 and 1998

In 1996 the District proposed a sphere expansion to encompass the entire County except for the Carpinteria MAD

Letters were received from the Cities of Lompoc, Santa Maria and Santa Barbara expressing no opposition to expanding the sphere, nor did the County oppose the expansion. The Commission unanimously adopted a resolution expanding the District's sphere as proposed in May 1996.

In 1998 the sphere was further expanded to include the territory that was in the Carpinteria MAD, and thereby was made countywide.

North County Vector Control Task Force - 2000

In 2000, at the direction of Supervisors Joni Gray and Tom Urbanske, the staff convened the "North County Vector Control Task Force." It was comprised of the Mayors and City Managers of Lompoc and Santa Maria, the President and General Manager of the VCD and representatives of the County. The purpose was to explore vector control service options for this area.

The staff concluded from the Task Force discussion that

- There is not much interest by the Cities of Lompoc or Santa Maria in annexing to the VCD or in alternatives such as contracting for services or forming a joint powers authority.
- The County is continuing to examine alternatives to fund vector control services for the unincorporated areas of the North County, including a property tax exchange agreement and/or extending existing VCD benefit assessments to this area

Montecito and Cold Spring School District Applications to Expand the VCD - 2001

The public schools in Montecito are experiencing yellow jacket problems that affect the safety of the students and staff. These nuisance insects do not necessarily nest on the school grounds but rather may migrate from nearby or adjacent properties.

Utilizing the new authority in AB 2838 that allows school districts to file boundary changes, the Board of Trustees of the Montecito Union School District on April 24, 2001 adopted a resolution initiating the annexation of the entire school district to the VCD. This is another indication of the need for vector control services in areas outside of the current VCD boundaries.

The school district application is incomplete, lacking a proposal questionnaires and processing fee. It has been set aside while the proposal from the VCD is processed since that proposal includes all of the territory in the school district's proposal.

The staff understands that the Board of Trustees of Cold Spring School District has also adopted a resolution of application to annex that school district to the VCD.

Property Tax Exchange Agreement - 2001

The Board of Supervisors and VCD Board of Trustees have approved a property tax exchange agreement for the annexation pursuant to the requirements of the Revenue & Taxation Code.

Under the terms of the agreement, the County Auditor-Controller will adjust tax rate area (TRA) allocation factors for the County General Fund in all tax rate areas within the annexation area to afford the VCD an amount of \$26,257 in property taxes for Fiscal Year 2002-03.

This amount will be the District's property tax "base" in the annexation area for FY 2003-04, and in future years the District will receive a corresponding share of the property tax from this area.

Extension of Existing District Benefit Assessments

The District's resolution of application proposes that the property tax revenue described above be augmented by extending the District's Service Zone 1 benefit assessments to the area being annexed. These benefit assessments are based upon land use according to the following schedule:

<u>Type of Land Use</u>	<u>2001-02 Per Parcel Assessment</u>
Vacant	\$ 4.62
Farmland	4.62
Single Family Residence	6.17

Apartments, 1-4 Units	7.71
Apartments, 5 or more units	9.25
Commercial	10.79
Industrial	12.34
Institutional, Recreational	12.34

Assessments can be increased at the discretion of the District Board of Trustees according to the increase in the Consumer Price Index, not to exceed \$20 per "benefit unit" for future years. The single family residence category equals one "benefit unit."

Since the annexation will extend a previously authorized special tax or benefit assessment to the annexing area, the Cortese/Knox/Hertzberg Act requires that a notice of the "protest hearing", which follows the Commission's approval, must be mailed to each affected landowner.

If written protests are submitted by 25% or more of the landowners or registered voters within the annexation area, a confirmation election must be held for the registered voters residing within the annexation area to decide the issue.

Discussion of Proposed District Boundaries

It is proposed that the District boundaries be expanded to include the entire County except for the cities of Buellton, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and Solvang. The City of Carpinteria is already within the District, having been part of the Carpinteria MAD.

Under State law, unincorporated territory may be annexed to a vector control district only with the consent of the Board of Supervisors. This was afforded by County Resolution No. 01-302 as adopted unanimously by the Board on September 18, 2001.

Likewise, incorporated land may be annexed to a VCD only with the city council's consent. Although this proposal does not include any city territory, the staff notified all city managers to determine if there is any interest by cities in being included in this annexation. Correspondence from the cities of Buellton, Lompoc and Santa Maria decline any interest in being included in the District at this time.

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Land Use, Planning and Zoning - Present and Future:

The annexation area is contained within the District's Sphere of Influence.

The annexation area consists of lands in open space, agriculture, residential, commercial, recreational and industrial use. No change in use will result from the annexation.

General and specific plans designate the annexation area as open space, agricultural, residential, commercial, recreational and industrial. No changes in land use plans or zoning are proposed or will result from this annexation.

Adjacent to the annexation area are urban, open space and agricultural uses, none of which are affected by this annexation.

2. Topography, Natural Features and Drainage Basins:

The proposed annexation area is a combination of level, sloping and mountainous terrain. No significant natural boundaries affect the proposal.

3. Population:

No change in of residential uses is proposed or will result from this annexation.

4. Governmental Services and Controls - Need, Cost, Adequacy and Availability:

The initiating agency's "Plan for Providing Services Within the Affected Territory" is on file in the LAFCO office as required by the Government Code.

The District states that the level and range of services, "including control of disease and nuisance vectors and the surveillance of vector-borne disease," will be the same in the annexation area "as are currently provided to properties within the existing District."

District services will be financed by the levy of an existing benefit assessment extended to the annexation area and the allocation of a portion of the general property tax as approved by the District and the Board of Supervisors.

5. Assessed Value, Tax Rates and Indebtedness:

The proposal is presently within numerous tax rate areas. Overall tax rates will not be affected by this change, nor will there be an effect on the assessed value of the area.

6. Environmental Impact of the Proposal:

LAFCO is the lead agency. There is a question as to whether the annexation is even a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), since no foreseeable change in land use is proposed and no physical change in the environment will occur. The District does not provide services upon which development is dependent.

This annexation has no effect on land use plans or zoning, and forecasting future changes in governmental regulation is not required by CEQA.

The annexation may also be categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Guidelines Section 15320, which applies to changes in the organization of local governmental agencies where the change does not alter the geographical area in which previously existing powers are exercised.

The types of services provided by the District were previously provided to the annexation area by the County of Santa Barbara's Department of Environmental Health. Those services however were curtailed following the enactment of Proposition 13 in 1978.

7. Boundaries, Lines of Assessment and Registered Voters:

The territory is inhabited, with more than 12 registered voters in the annexation area.

The boundaries are definite and certain and include the entire unincorporated area except for those lands already within the District. There are no conflicts with lines of assessment or ownership.

The property is contiguous to the existing District boundary.

ALTERNATIVES FOR COMMISSION ACTION

After reviewing any testimony that is submitted, the Commission should take one of the following actions:

OPTION 1 – APPROVE the proposal.

- A. Find that the annexation is exempt from CEQA.
- B. Adopt this report and approve the proposal, to be known as the Countywide Unincorporated Area Annexation to the Santa Barbara Coastal Vector Control District.

- C. Condition the annexation upon the territory being liable for existing or authorized taxes, charges, fees or assessments comparable to properties within the District.

OPTION 2 - DENY the proposal.

Adopt this report and deny the proposal.

OPTION 3 - CONTINUE the proposal to a future meeting for additional information.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve OPTION 1.

It is also recommended that if the annexation is recorded, the District be requested to modify its name by deleting the word "Coastal."

BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION