

LAFCO

Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission

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September 6, 2012 (Agenda)

Local Agency Formation Commission
105 East Anapamu Street, Room 403
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Possible Sphere of Influence Expansion for the Carpinteria Sanitary District

Dear Members of the Commission:

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Commission, after accepting public testimony, provide direction regarding the Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update for the Carpinteria Sanitary District and determine if it wishes to meet in the Carpinteria area to examine possible Sphere of Influence expansion areas.

DISCUSSION

Since July the Carpinteria Sanitary District and LAFCO staff have been conferring regarding a possible revision to the District Sphere of Influence. Sphere of Influence updates are required to be performed every five years by State law.

When the Commission in 2005 adopted the current Sphere of Influence the District expressed concern since the Sphere is essentially coterminous with its boundary and there are adjacent areas that are seeking or would benefit from community sewer services. Currently, any annexation to the District requires a concurrent case-by-case Sphere of Influence modification.

Areas likely to require sewer service – but not a change in land use – in the foreseeable future are located on land zoned for agriculture. Including such property within the District Sphere of Influence would appear to be contrary to a Commission policy that states:

It is the policy of the Commission to protect and preserve agriculture by avoiding the extension of potable water or wastewater services (sewers) to agriculturally zoned land because this fosters uses other than agriculture.

Commissioners: Jeff Moorhouse, Chair ♦ Lupe Alvarez ♦ Doreen Farr ♦ Craig Geyer ♦ Bob Orach ♦ Bob Short
Janet Wolf ♦ Roger Aceves ♦ John Fox ♦ Steve Lavagnino ♦ Roger Welt
Executive Officer: Bob Braitman

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Any LAFCO approval of a change of organization or out of agency service agreement that allows the extension of potable water or wastewater services to a parcel zoned for agricultural use will only be approved, if at all, if the approval is limited to that portion of the parcel that includes an approved use that needs potable water or wastewater services, provided the use does not compromise agricultural viability.

In the past the District agreed to serve sewer-dependent uses on agricultural parcels by means of out-of-agency service agreements. The District Board of Directors no longer considers this an appropriate practice. It sees this approach as inconsistent with State law, creating inconsistencies in its customer base and adding administrative and cost burdens without benefiting the public or the property owner.

Greenhouses or other structures that support intense growing operations in the Carpinteria Valley are located on parcels zoned for agriculture. The District indicates many of these areas have high groundwater where on-site wastewater disposal systems are not appropriate or no longer function well. Some of these parcels contain retail sales centers or showrooms, others have high worker densities, some have farm worker housing and many have on-site water treatment systems.

The District says its Sphere should represent its logical service area irrespective of zoning and the location of the Sphere is critical to meaningful capital facility planning and projections.

In discussions with the District, certain parcels or categories of parcels, have been identified that could logically be part of its Sphere except that they are agriculturally zoned. This presents a conflict with the LAFCO policy that generally prohibits the extension of sanitation service to agriculturally zoned parcels.

The District Manager indicates requests for sewer service have been received for agriculturally zoned property outside of its Sphere. While including this type of parcel within the Sphere may conflict with LAFCO's existing policy, sewers may be the environmentally superior method of protecting the groundwater.

As LAFCO staff prepares the statutorily required Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update for the Carpinteria Sanitary District it would be beneficial to receive input from the Commission on how to address the apparent policy inconsistency as outlined.

The properties in question differ dramatically from open field agriculture, and may require sanitary sewer service now or in the foreseeable future. The question is whether to include them in the District Sphere. It may be useful for the Commission to tour greenhouse areas to gain an appreciation of the character of these sites.

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If so directed we can schedule a tour to help in moving this matter forward and reaching the most logical decision regarding the District's long-term service area.

Please contact the LAFCO staff if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Braitman" followed by a long horizontal line.

BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer

cc: County Supervisor Salud Carbajal
Craig Murray, General Manager, Carpinteria Sanitary District