

October 7, 2021 (Agenda)

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

Fire, Law Enforcement, Safety & Crime, and Emergency Medical 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 December 9, 2021 in order to consider accepting the review.

DISCUSSION:

As part of the Commission's work program, the LAFCO staff has prepared a draft service and sphere review for 13 agencies that provide fire, law enforcement, safety & crime, and emergency medical services throughout the entire county. These include three Fire Protection Districts (Carpinteria/Summerland Fire, Montecito Fire, and Santa Barbara County Fire), the Countywide County Service Area 32, which provides funding for police services, the Isla Vista Community Services District, and eight Cities of (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. One hundred percent of the County's residents live within the boundaries of a City or Special District providing Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services.
2. No Sphere of Influence change is necessary or recommended for Carpinteria/Summerland FPD and Montecito FPD. Their Spheres of Influence already well define their probable service areas. The recommended action for these

districts are to simply affirm their existing Spheres of Influence. A future action could clean-up their overlapping boundaries.

3. Sphere expansions are recommended for and Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District. The four Channel Islands may benefit from local services.
4. A designation of a “zero” Sphere of Influence is recommended for the Countywide County Service Area 32. This Special District was intended to provide support for law enforcement services provided to unincorporated residents. The District’s Sphere of Influence and boundaries are identical to the boundaries of the County.
5. Fire protection agency services have historically been on the forefront of forging cooperative efforts. This tradition has been formalized into a network of mutual and automatic aid agreements between individual agencies and through the State’s mutual aid system. Today’s fire agencies are looking closely at cooperative arrangements to maintain adequate and cost-effective services.
6. There is a plan to move to a regional public safety communication center in approximately three years. The new regional center would provide dispatch services for all fire agencies in Santa Barbara County and will include an ambulance and EMS resources component.
7. Although all local agencies providing fire protection, law enforcement, and EMS services have been hurt differently by the pandemic, there are significant variations in the amount of revenue received by the agencies.
8. In addition to needing adequate revenues, a local agency relies on its fund balance to provide a cushion for unforeseen expenditures or revenue shortfalls. A fund balance helps to ensure that resources are available to meet the cost of operations. The agencies reviewed in this report have fund balances ranging from 2% to 140% of annual budget.
9. Websites are maintained by the Cities, Fire Districts, and CSD’s containing useful information that is needed to promote transparency and accountability, as well as allowing public oversight of the agency’s activities.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft 2021 Service and Sphere Review for Fire, Law Enforcement, Safety & Crime, and Emergency Medical Services. **Available at www.sblafco.org**

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Prater
Executive Officer