

SANTA BARBARA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

February 6, 2003 (Agenda)

LAFCO 02-15: Robinson Reorganization: Annexation the City of Santa Maria/Detachment from the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District/Detachment from the Laguna County Sanitation District

PROPONENT: City Council of the City of Santa Maria, by resolution.

ACREAGE & LOCATION Area A - Annex to the City and detach from the Fire Protection District; approximately 79 acres about 665 feet south of Betteravia Road, between Berry Lane on the east and proposed extension of "E" Street on the west.

Area B – Detach from the Laguna County Sanitation District land already in the City and consisting of:

- Parcel 1 - The southerly half of the area being annexed to the City. Approximately 40 acres located about 1,358 feet south of Betteravia Road, between Berry Lane on the east and the proposed extension of "E" Street on the west.
- Parcel 2 - Approximately 120 acres located south of and including McCoy Lane, between Parcel 1 on the west and the Santa Maria Valley Railroad on the east.
- Parcel 3 - Approximately 43 acres (known as Country Club Gardens) located between South Broadway (Orcutt Expressway) on the east and Lorencita Drive on the west, south of Andrews Way and north of Cameron Avenue.

PURPOSE: To include the annexation area within the City of Santa Maria. No change in planning, zoning or land use is proposed at this time.

GENERAL ANALYSIS:

Annexation to the City of Santa Maria

The proposed annexation is unusual since there are no pending or proposed uses for the property and no demonstrated needs for City utilities such as domestic water or community sewers.

An adjacent 35 acres under the same ownership was annexed to the City (Annexation #80, 1992). The parcel was annexed to the City Berringer Vineyards was considering building a winery on the site. The winery located elsewhere and the property, although annexed to the City, remains in agricultural production.

The City application states

“The application is being made to bring the territory within the boundaries of the City of Santa Maria. Santa Maria annexed a 34-acre portion of the Robinson property in 1992 .

“Unlike the original Berringer proposal that had an economic urgency, the property owner has not stated any specific use or intention to develop the site. He requested that he City annex the property with the full understanding that the site is pre-zoned as open space. Ultimately, the property owner probably intends to request urban development and will seek land use and zoning designations that are closer to the Betteravia Road property that was annexed in 1992.

“It is understood that the site is constrained by the Santa Maria Airport and that low intensity industrial uses are likely to be developed. However, the interval between annexation and development will be used to prepare plans that identify the site constraints and market forces in which any development may occur.

“The proposed use is to continue the existing (agricultural) use until plans are developed and approved for another use. Beyond the two-year lock on the existing rezoning, the City has no knowledge of the plans of the property owner. The close proximity of the site to the Santa Maria Public Airport main runway limits the land to lower intensity uses that are agricultural and warehouse industrial in nature. It is expected that the property will be agricultural-industrial at some date in the future.”

The staff believes this annexation to be premature and should not be approved until there is an intended or permitted use other than agriculture or open space. The City rezoned the property Planned Development/Open Space (PD/OS) in 1992 and no applications have been filed by the owners to rezone the property to a different designation.

The staff is also concerned about the proximity of the site to the Santa Maria Airport and does not wish to encourage inconsistent uses that would encroach on the operations of the Airport. Until a more specific land use is known it may be preferable to postpone the annexation to the City.

Among arguments supporting approval of the annexation at this time are:

- The property is within the City sphere of influence and is therefore a logical extension of city boundaries.
- The City borders the annexation area on three sides - north, south and east
- The adjacent parcel in the City to the north has the same owner and this proposed annexation will increase the land available for development in the City by this owner.

Among the arguments for deferring approval of the annexation at this time are:

- The current "Open Space" zoning and agricultural land use do not require city services.
- There is no known project at this time. The land is near the Airport and potential impacts on the Airport should be known at the time the annexation is approved.
- Annexing property as "open space" when it is known the owner intends to seek a zone change to a more intense use after annexation raises questions of compliance with CEQA.
- The City application states that "Ultimately, the property owner probably intends to request urban development and will seek land use and zoning designations that are closer" to those of the adjacent property that was annexed in 1992. LAFCO should have the benefit of the information prior to acting on the annexation
- The City states the "interval between annexation and development" will be used to prepare plans and identify site constraints. Such planning should occur prior to the application for annexation so LAFCO is aware of those issues, constraints and mitigations.

Detachment from Laguna County Sanitation District

The Laguna County Sanitation District detachment will adjust District boundaries to follow actual service areas. The area proposed to be detached receive sanitation services from the City of Santa Maria and not from the District.

PROJECT INFORMATION

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

The area to be annexed to the City is in agricultural production. City rezoning is PD/OS (Planned Development/ Open Space). The City's Land Use Map designates the site as AOS-II (Secondary Agriculture Open Space). Existing agricultural uses conform with these designations.

The other area to be detached from the District is in light industrial and residential uses. It has industrial and residential land use plan and zoning designations.

County zoning for the annexation area is 100-AL (Limited Agriculture, 100-acre min lot size, Oil overlay). The County General Plan designates the site as A-II (Agriculture)

The uses surrounding the annexation are agriculture to the north, south and west, with a vocational training center, golf course and vacant land to the east.

2. Topography, Natural Features and Drainage Basins

The topography of the site and surrounding area is level. There are no significant natural boundaries affecting the proposal.

3. Population:

There are no dwelling units on the annexation area and none are proposed. The existing homes in the detachment area will not be affected by the change.

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

The City's "Plan for Providing Services within the Affected Territory" is attached and included as part of this report as required by Government Code section 56653.

It states in part, "There are no demands for services now. Eventually, as the land uses evolve from agriculture only to more industrial types of uses, there will be a demand for urban services. As demand occurs, the City will provide the urban services."

5. Assessed Value, Tax Rates and Indebtedness:

The annexation area is within tax rate area 87020. The assessed value of the annexation area is \$ 753,496 (2002-2003 roll).

Overall tax rates will not be affected by the reorganization. The City pays for existing indebtedness through water rates and the City General Fund.

6. Environmental Impact of the Proposal:

The City is the lead agency. The City is making subsequent use of the Final EIR prepared for the Santa Maria Sphere of Influence Boundary Adjustment and Concurrent Annexation Study (FEIR-88-10) and certified by the City Council

That document was distributed to Commission members for consideration in conjunction with previous annexations to the City and is on file in the LAFCO office.

7. Landowner Consent and Registered Voters:

Not all property owners have given consent. The territory is inhabited; namely, there are more than 12 registered voters.

8. Boundaries and Lines of Assessment:

The boundaries are definite and certain. There are no conflicts with lines of assessment or ownership. The annexation area is contiguous to the existing City and District boundaries.

A map sufficient for filing with the State Board of Equalization has not yet been received from the proponent.

ALTERNATIVES FOR COMMISSION ACTION

Following review of any testimony or additional materials which are submitted the Commission should consider taking one of the following options:

Option 1 Approve the reorganization as submitted.

- A. Certify it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the EIR as prepared and certified by the City.

- B. Adopt this report and approve the proposal, to be known as the Robinson Reorganization: Annexation to the City of Santa Maria, Detachment from the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District and Detachment from the Laguna County Sanitation District, with the following conditions:
 - 1. The territory being annexed shall be liable for any existing indebtedness of the annexing agency.
 - 2. The territory being annexed shall be liable for any authorized or existing City taxes, comparable to properties presently within the City.
 - 3. The territory being detached shall be exempt from payment of existing bonded indebtedness of the detaching agencies.

- C. Direct the staff to initiate and conduct subsequent proceedings in compliance with the findings of the Local Agency Formation Commission only upon the signing of the resolution by the Chair.

Option 2 If the Commission wants to deny the proposal.

- A. Certify it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the EIR as prepared and certified by the City.

- B. Adopt this report and DENY the proposal.

Option 3 If the Commission needs more information, it should CONTINUE this matter to a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve Option 2 and deny the proposed annexation such time a development proposal or zoning is known.

BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer
LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION