
**FRESNO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCo)
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

AGENDA ITEM No. 8-A

DATE: December 3, 2008

TO: Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission

FROM: Rick Ballantyne, Executive Officer
Darrel Schmidt, Deputy Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Fresno LAFCo Work Program Quarterly Report: Report on Annual Work Program Accomplishments

Background:

On March 5th the Commission approved its "2008 Work Program". During consideration of the Work Program, staff indicated that numerous recommended follow-up actions resulting from approved Municipal Service Reviews and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Updates had been incorporated into the current year *Work Program*, along with several other recommended administrative actions needed to improve LAFCo operations.

The Work Program includes 46 work items that were identified and ranked as being high, medium, or low level priorities. Staff also indicated that it would present a quarterly progress report to the Commission.

Accomplishments:

Progress has been made on a number of items and a number of other items have either been completed or determined to be no longer desirable by the affected districts. Exhibit "A" that is attached highlights a number of projects, actions taken, and their current status.

Recommended Actions:

Informational/Discussion Item—No required action.

EXHIBIT 'A'

WORK PROGRAM UPDATE

1. **Agency:** City of Fresno

Work Item: Island Annexation Program

Description: Encourage City of Fresno to proceed with its Island Annexation Program. Support efforts in appropriate ways.

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: A number of community meetings have been held by the City of Fresno in different unincorporated areas. The Commission approved the first island annexation at its September 10, 2008 hearing. A second annexation is scheduled to be considered by the Commission in January. The City will be conducting the necessary pre-zoning for this island during this month.

Status: It is anticipated that the City will submit a number of additional island annexation applications in the coming year. Staff will continue to meet with City staff and residents to answer questions and support the island annexation program.

2. **Agency:** Cities of Fowler, Kingsburg, Parlier, Sanger, and Selma; Consolidated Irrigation District

Work Item: Groundwater Preservation

Description: Work with local agencies and the Consolidated Irrigation District (CID) to implement feasible strategies to eliminate groundwater overdraft in Southeast Fresno County.

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: LAFCo counsel reports significant progress has been made toward reaching this long-term agreement with the Cities of Fowler, Kingsburg, Parlier, and Sanger.

Status: LAFCo counsel will provide an updated status report at today's hearing.

3. **Agency:** LAFCo

Work Item: Agricultural Preservation Policies

Description: Work with Cities and County of Fresno in reviewing options for agricultural land preservation; Serve on Model Farmland Conservation Advisory Committee of Valley Blueprint; Work with other LAFCOs in reviewing agricultural preservation policies; Conduct workshop and invite LAFCo Executive Officers to share information.

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: At its October 8th hearing, the Commission heard a presentation by staff which identified agricultural policies considered and adopted by three other LAFCos. The Commission directed staff to use Yolo County's policies as a model, as they were considered the most "aggressive" of the policies considered, and continued the hearing to January, 2009, in order to allow staff to consider the recommendations stemming from Fresno COG's "Model Farmland Conservation Program", which is anticipated to be completed in December, 2008.

Staff continues to participate in the Model Farmland Conservation Program discussions facilitated by Fresno COG and the American Farmland Trust. At the Program's latest meeting on November 20, 2008, recommendations were presented which would allow the expansion of city spheres of influence only when certain criteria were met and would tie increased residential density to those standards identified in the Blueprint effort.

These recommendations, which will be revised based on discussion at the November 20th meeting, are expected to be presented to a Joint COG Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)/Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting on January 16, 2009. COG representatives have requested that they be able to provide a formal presentation before LAFCo on February 4, 2009. The Agricultural Preservation policies adopted by COG's member agencies (Fresno County and its fifteen cities) should be considered and incorporated, where appropriate, into LAFCo's Agricultural Preservation policies. Staff continues to work on a set of policies that also incorporate similar policies that have been adopted by Yolo County.

Status: Staff will return to the Commission during early February, 2009. A formal presentation by the American Farmland Trust and COG will be made. Draft Agricultural Preservation Policies will be presented by staff.

4. Agency: LAFCo

Work Item: LAFCo Independence

Description: Continue efforts regarding supporting LAFCo Independence

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: At its October 8, 2008 hearing, the Commission authorized the formation of a subcommittee including Chairman Lopez and Commissioner Fortune to further explore issues related to LAFCo independence.

On October 30, 2008, the subcommittee members met with: staff, LAFCo Counsel, John Navarette, Interim County CAO, staff from the CAO's office, and staff from County Personnel; to discuss outstanding issues and to clarify what, if any services and benefits, the County would be willing to extend via contract to LAFCo staff. Mr. Navarette stated that a decision had been made to not extend health and other benefits to LAFCo staff once they were separated from the County. Additionally, the County had determined that it could not provide payroll, risk management, or other related services to LAFCo. The County agreed that it would continue to provide some services including access to the County's GIS database, voter registration, and assessment information.

The subcommittee members directed staff to investigate costs of providing payroll, risk management, and other necessary services such as health and related benefits through another provider(s). Staff is in the process of securing cost information for the sub-committee.

Status: A second sub-committee meeting will be scheduled to review the cost estimates prior to making its recommendations to the Commission. The Commission must also authorize an actuarial study to be completed, as required by the Fresno County Retirement Association, in order to determine LAFCo's contribution to the retirement system.

5. Agency: LAFCo

Work Item: Access Database

Description: Develop an Access database

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Staff has entered 1,422 records into the database and developed multiple types of queries and reports, including allowing address labels to be produced, a report identifying projects that are due for extension by month, and the acreage annexed to each city by year.

Status: This is an on-going project with current and most recent files being input first. Staff believes this database will greatly improve efficiencies related to records searches and retrieving other historical documents.

6. Agency: LAFCo

Work Item: Archiving

Description: Archiving LAFCo Files

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: At its July 9, 2008 hearing, the Commission adopted new policies regarding document destruction and archiving of documents. Since that date, numerous files have been purged; and 107 files have been scanned, checked, converted from an image to text, and bookmarked for easy searching.

Status: This is an on-going project. It is staff's intent to archive existing hardcopy documents from 1995 through 2003 and then destroy the paper copies with some exceptions, as identified in Section 730 of Commission's Policies and Procedures. Documents dated 1994 and prior were microfilmed and hardcopies were destroyed in 1997.

7. **Agency:** LAFCo

Work Item: 2009 LAFCo State Conference

Description: Planning for 2009 CALAFCO State Conference

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Fresno LAFCo will host the 2009 CALAFCO State Conference October 28–30, 2009, at the Tenaya Lodge near Yosemite.

Status: LAFCo staff will be working throughout the coming year to plan and make all necessary arrangements for a successful Conference. The first Conference Planning meeting is scheduled for January 30th in Fresno. An item discussing the Conference has been included as part of the Executive Officer's Report on today's agenda.

8. **Agency:** Firebaugh, James, Panoche, Poso, Tranquillity, and Westside Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)

Work Item: Consolidation

Description: Consolidate all or some of the six western Fresno County RCDs.

Priority Level: Medium

Action Taken: In April, LAFCo staff met with staff from four of the six RCDs, California Association of RCDs staff, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff to discuss consolidation. At that meeting it was discussed that Westside and Tranquillity RCDs had a probable desire to consolidate. Other districts have been unresponsive related to discussing consolidation.

Status: Tranquillity and Westside RCDs have indicated a desire to consolidate. At this time, neither of these districts' respective Boards have enough members to form a quorum. As a result, they cannot take action to consolidate. The districts are working toward submitting a request to the Board of Supervisors to appoint additional members to their respective Board of Directors

9. **Agency:** LAFCo, City of Fresno, Pinedale County Water District

Work Item: Potential Dissolution of Pinedale County Water District (CWD)

Description: Confer with City of Fresno and Pinedale CWD regarding the best mechanism for providing services to the area, including potential dissolution of the District and transfer of District assets and service obligations to the City of Fresno.

Priority Level: Low

Action Taken: The LAFCo Executive Officer has sent a letter to the District requesting a meeting to discuss potential service mechanisms. LAFCo staff also met with City of Fresno staff who indicates that the City would favor investigating

potential dissolution of the District and transfer of District assets and service obligations to the City.

Status: Additional actions are on hold pending scheduling a meeting between LAFCo staff and District staff.

Additionally, the MSR and SOI Update recommendations included a number of “low priority” actions that require active cooperation between cities, special districts, and/or the County of Fresno. These actions include such things as investigating additional service provision options, including potentially dissolving certain metro area districts with the transfer of their assets and obligations to the City of Fresno, or discussing options whereby a city might participate with the County in providing services to certain County Service Areas.

While many recommendations came from one or more of the affected agencies, staff recognizes that some of these agencies may perceive some recommended actions as negatively impacting their agencies, or may not see a benefit to working jointly with other agencies. Staff is in the process of contacting affected agencies to determine whether they are willing to participate in following-up on these MSR and SOI Update recommendations.