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

AGENDA ITEM No. 10

DATE: September 10, 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 "high" level priority and "medium" level priority items. Three items have been completed or have been determined to be no longer desirable by the affected districts. Exhibit "A" that is attached lists these 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: Three community meetings have been held by the City of Fresno in three unincorporated areas, most recently on August 27, 2008 in an unincorporated neighborhood near Clovis and Belmont Avenues. LAFCo Staff were in attendance to address any annexation or other LAFCo related questions.

Status: The City has submitted its first island annexation proposal for a neighborhood located near Shields and Chestnut Avenues. This item is scheduled to be heard at today's Commission hearing.

2. **Agency:** City of Fresno; Bluffs Community Service District

Work Item: City Annexation of Bluffs Community Service District area

Description: Support City annexation of this County Island served by Bluff's Community Service District as part of City's Island Annexation Program.

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: City of Fresno staff and LAFCo staff met with three members of the Bluffs Community Service District Board of Directors on July 14, 2008, to discuss annexation of the District area, dissolution of the District, and the disposition of District assets following dissolution.

Status: The City of Fresno has tentatively identified the Bluff's CSD area as its third island annexation. A meeting between City staff, District residents, and LAFCo staff will take place prior to submittal of this application. It is anticipated that the City will submit an application within the next few months.

3. **Agency:** City of San Joaquin; Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District

Work Item: Annexation of a portion of the City of San Joaquin to the Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District

Description: Encourage the Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District to pursue annexation of territory located within the City of San Joaquin. Commission waived LAFCo related annexation fees.

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Discussion between LAFCo staff and Mosquito Abatement District staff. The District reported that some discussion between the District and

the City had occurred. On April 18, 2008, LAFCo sent a letter to the City's Mayor (copied to the City Manager) encouraging annexation to the District and followed up with a voice mail message to the City Manager a few weeks later.

Status: No response was received from the City. The District states it is eager to annex the territory within the City, but it has not yet received word from the City that the City desires to pursue annexation. The City's support is considered important in any attempt to annex the territory to the District.

4. 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: Attorney Nancy Miller has been retained to facilitate discussions and an agreement between the five cities and CID. A temporary agreement has been reached between CID and the cities of Fowler, Kingsburg, Parlier, and Sanger which allows development within these cities to continue until a long-term agreement can be reached. These four cities have also contributed a total of \$4,000 each toward expenses associated with this facilitation. The City of Selma has contributed \$2,000, but has elected to no longer participate in this process.

A number of meetings have been held between the cities and CID with LAFCo staff and LAFCo counsel participation as appropriate. LAFCo counsel reports significant progress has been made toward reaching this long-term agreement with the Cities of Fowler, Kingsburg, Parlier, and Sanger.

Status: Details of the long-term agreement are still being refined to each party's satisfaction. It is anticipated that the remaining four cities and CID will finalize the agreement within the next few months.

5. Agency: Fresno County Fire Protection District

Work Item: Financial Stability

Description: Work with Fresno County FPD to continue reviewing options for the District to achieve financial stability.

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Met with District to discuss including data related to projected District tax revenue loss data in LAFCo staff reports in order to keep Commission informed as to annexation/detachment impacts to District.

It is also Staff's understanding that the District is considering revisions to District/City transition agreements and that a consultant has been hired to help with this process.

Additionally, the District has called for an election asking property owners to approve an additional per parcel tax increase to fund District operations, and which is intended to allow the District to open three additional fire stations. All ballots must be received by the District no later than September 15, 2008.

Status: No changes.

6. 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: Agricultural Land Preservation workshop was conducted on May 9, 2008. Speakers included representatives from American Farmland Trust, four LAFCo Executive Officers, and local elected officials. Fresno LAFCo's Executive Officer continues to participate on the Model Farmland Conservation Advisory Committee and with the Valley Blueprint.

LAFCo staff and LAFCo counsel also attended an educational seminar on July 11, 2008, hosted by CALAFCO, concerning various agricultural land preservation issues and actions taken by other LAFCOs.

At its August 13, 2008 hearing, the Commission heard a Model Farmland Conservation Program presentation by Lynn Gorman, Fresno County's Deputy Director of Planning and Agricultural Commissioner Jerry Prieto, Jr. The Commission directed staff to continue to participate in the Model Farmland Conservation Program efforts taking place at Fresno COG, but also directed staff to begin developing draft agricultural preservation policies for the Commission's consideration.

Status: Staff will continue to work with Fresno COG and will begin drafting agricultural preservation policies for the Commission's consideration in the near future.

7. Agency: LAFCo

Work Item: LAFCo Independence

Description: Continue efforts regarding supporting LAFCo Independence

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Following much discussion, it has been determined that Fresno County could supply Fresno LAFCo with various necessary services should Fresno LAFCo become fully independent. A draft agreement has been written and supplied to the Fresno County Counsel's office for its consideration.

Status: Staff is waiting for information from the County regarding insurance and other cost information. Once the County supplies this information, Staff will return to the Commission for its consideration for the spending of funds for an actuarial analysis required by the Fresno County Retirement System.

8. **Agency:** LAFCo

Work Item: Access Database

Description: Develop an Access database

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Staff has largely completed development of an Access database and is inputting data, developing queries, etc. as time permits.

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 records searches and retrieving other historical documents.

9. **Agency:** LAFCo

Work Item: LAFCo Website

Description: Improve Website

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Website is modified as new ideas and suggestions are received from staff and others. The website will soon include LAFCo's Pre-Application review policy as directed by the Commission at its August 13, 2008 hearing. Staff is in the process of developing a pre-application review checklist and determining specifics of how this process will work in practice.

Status: This is an on-going project.

10. **Agency:** LAFCo

Work Item: Archiving

Description: Archiving LAFCo Files

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: At its July 9, 2008 hearing, the Commission approved a new policy concerning destruction of LAFCo records. LAFCo staff is in the process of purging files of duplicate records so that these files can be scanned and stored electronically, and the original documents can be destroyed. Once they have been scanned, Staff intends to purge and destroy paper documents dated 1995 through 2003, with the exception of original, signed resolutions as well as files for any actions with an initiation date of 2003 or older, but which have been completed for fewer than two years. Prior to destruction of any documents, Staff will request authorization from the Commission.

Status: This is an on-going project.

11. Agency: LAFCo

Work Item: 2009 LAFCo State Conference

Description: Preliminary planning for 2009 CALAFCO State Conference

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Fresno LAFCo will host the 2009 CALAFCO State Conference in October, 2009. The LAFCo Executive Officer has participated in planning and developing sessions for the 2008 CALAFCO State Conference, held on September 3 – 5 as part of the preparation process of hosting the 2009 Conference.

Status: LAFCo staff will be working throughout the coming year to plan and make all necessary arrangements for a successful Conference in October 2009.

12. Agency: Navelencia and Sierra Resource Conservation Districts

Work Item: Consolidation

Description: Consolidate Navelencia and Sierra Resource Conservation Districts

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: Consolidation was approved by the Commission on April 9, 2008. Protest hearing was held on May 7, 2008.

Status: Revised maps and legal description have been approved by the Fresno County Assessor's office. The Districts are working to satisfy additional conditions so that the consolidation can be recorded.

13. 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. James RCD also potentially saw consolidation with Westside and Tranquillity RCDs as beneficial.

Firebaugh RCD indicated a potential desire to consolidate with Panoche RCD, but not with the other districts.

A second meeting was held in June between Westside and Tranquillity RCDs to discuss additional details of consolidation. Other districts were invited, but did not attend.

Status: Tranquillity and Westside RCDs have indicated a desire to consolidate.

Firebaugh, Panoche, and Poso RCDs have not responded to requests to further discuss consolidation. Staff understands that these districts do not believe there to be significant benefits to consolidation of the RCDs because these respective RCDs are inactive and their territories are generally well served by the overlapping water districts, which provide many of the services that could also be provided by RCDs.

James RCD's perspective on consolidation is unknown.

COMPLETED WORK PROGRAM ITEMS

1. **Agency:** Fresno County Fire Protection District and North Central Fire Protection District

Work Item: Annexation and detachments of six areas located within and north of Fig Garden.

Description: Detach six areas from Fresno County FPD and annex the same to North Central FPD.

Priority Level: High

Action Taken: The Commission approved this reorganization on February 6, 2008. Protest hearing was held on April 9, 2008.

Status: The reorganization is complete.

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2. **Agency:** Washington Colony Cemetery District

Work Item: Consider annexation and detachment and Sphere of Influence Revision.

Description: Pursuant to recommendations of the District's MSR, approved in August 2005, the District should consider annexing remaining portion of the Caruthers USD area not currently served and a large area north of its current boundaries, but within its SOI. District should consider removing substantial area within its current SOI, but not within its boundary.

Priority Level: Medium

Action Taken: The Commission approved a SOI revision on July 9, 2008, removing a substantial area from the District's SOI. SOI revision fees were waived by the Commission at its February 6, 2008 hearing. The District has decided not to pursue annexation of any additional area at this time.

Status: The SOI revision is complete. Since the District has decided not to pursue annexation of any additional area, no further actions are necessary at this time.

3. **Agency:** Kingsburg, Selma, and Sierra-Kings Hospital Districts

Work Item: Consolidation of the Districts

Description: Assist/participate in discussions with the Districts related to possible consolidation or other change of organization to better serve the region.

Priority Level: Low

Action Taken: The Sierra-Kings Hospital District and the Kingsburg Hospital District have indicated they have no desire to pursue consolidation with each other at this time. Sierra-Kings has indicated it intends to submit an application to expand its SOI and boundaries in the near future.

Status: Since the Districts have decided they do not desire to consolidate, no further actions are necessary at this time.