



Date: February 27, 2008 for March 5th Agenda
From: Patrick M. McCormick, Executive Officer
To: Commissioners
Subject: Spheres of Influence Reviews for Two Cities and Six Fire Agencies

Summary: State law requires each LAFCO to periodically review the Sphere of Influence of each of the cities and special districts subject to LAFCO's boundary regulation. Santa Cruz LAFCO has adopted a schedule to review Spheres of Influence of the 82 agencies located in this county. The next hearing, scheduled for March 5, 2008, concerns the Spheres of Influence of the:

*City of Scotts Valley
City of Watsonville
Ben Lomond Fire Protection District
Boulder Creek Fire Protection District
County Service Area 48 (County Fire)
Felton Fire Protection District
Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District
Zayante Fire Protection District.*

Recommendation: Conduct public hearing and:

- Adopt Resolution No. 2008-5 expanding the City of Scotts Valley Sphere of Influence to include Monte Fiore and Gateway South,*
- Adopt Resolution No. 2008-6 decreasing the City of Watsonville Sphere of Influence to exclude the Interlaken/College Road area,*
- Adopt Resolution No. 2008-7 amending the Spheres of Influence of the Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek Fire Protection Districts between Alba Road and Clear Creek Road,*
- Adopt Resolution No. 2008-8 confirming as unchanged the existing Spheres of Influence of County Service Area 48 (County Fire), the Felton Fire Protection District, the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, and the Zayante Fire Protection District,*
- Direct the Chairperson to send a letter to the County Fire Chief and the Boards of the four San Lorenzo Valley Fire Protection Districts urging the five agencies to negotiate new auto aid agreements to optimize fire and medical emergency responses in the valley, and urging the four valley districts to explore volunteer cross-training and response.*

Government Code Section 56076 defines "Sphere of Influence" to be a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as defined by the LAFCO. Government Code Section 56425 (f) requires LAFCO to review all spheres of influence every five years.

In 2007, LAFCO completed a two-phase Countywide Service Review that evaluated service efficiencies of all LAFCO-regulated agencies in Santa Cruz County. On December 5, 2007, LAFCO adopted the principles and schedule to proceed with periodic sphere reviews. On January 9, 2008, LAFCO reviewed and confirmed the existing spheres of two cities (Capitola and Santa Cruz) and 63 special districts for which no significant issues had been identified by the affected agencies or the LAFCO staff.

For its March 5, 2008 meeting, LAFCO has scheduled public hearings to consider sphere reviews for two cities and six fire agencies. The particular issues for these agencies are discussed below.

City of Scotts Valley

During the Countywide Service Review conducted by LAFCO's consultant, the City of Scotts Valley nominated two areas totaling 106 acres at the south end of Scotts Valley to add to the City's Sphere of Influence; the 90-unit Monte Fiore Subdivision and the Gateway South commercial area around the Hilton Hotel. These two areas are located inside the city limits of Scotts Valley, but were excluded from its Sphere of Influence when LAFCO adopted the City's first Sphere of Influence in 1985. At the time of LAFCO's action, the area was undeveloped and LAFCO felt that the City and the Scotts Valley Water District didn't have the ability to provide adequate services for new development in this area. Since then, Monte Fiore (Silverwood Drive, Shasta Park Court, Saddleback Ridge Road, Lassen Park Court, and Kings Canyon Court), has developed and is nearly built out. Gateway South on La Madrona Drive south of Mount Hermon Road, features the Hilton Hotel and the commercial plaza across La Madrona Drive. Three vacant sites remain, the 1.5-acre site for a fire station on La Madrona Drive south of the existing commercial plaza, a 2-acre residential site at La Madrona Drive and Altenitas Drive, and a 17-acre site south of the Hilton Hotel for which there is a Target store proposal.

Link to Scotts Valley Sphere Amendment Map:

[http://santacruzlafco.org/pages/notices/Scotts Valley City 2008.pdf](http://santacruzlafco.org/pages/notices/Scotts_Valley_City_2008.pdf)



Monte Fiore



Hilton Hotel in Gateway South

On February 20, the Scotts Valley City Council took action to concur with the adding Monte Fiore and Gateway South within the City's Sphere of Influence. The Council's action was based upon the principle that it was good planning policy to have the City's boundary and sphere of influence to be the same.

The subject areas were annexed to the City of Scotts Valley in 1972 by the Hanser-Rother Annexation, LAFCO Resolution No. 322. LAFCO adopted the first Sphere of Influence for the City of Scotts Valley in 1985 by Resolution No. 647-C.

Also, LAFCO has excluded Monte Fiore and Gateway South from the Sphere of Influence of the Scotts Valley Water District. LAFCO will consider the Water Districts' proposed sphere amendments, which include adding Monte Fiore and Gateway South to its sphere, at a public hearing later in 2008 (**possible schedule date).

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: It is apparent that both of these areas will build out within the City limits and will need continuing urban services, which the City is able to provide efficiently. Therefore, the LAFCO staff recommends that Monte Fiore and Gateway South be added to the City of Scotts Valley's Sphere of Influence.

City of Watsonville

During the Countywide Service Review conducted by LAFCO's consultant, the City of Watsonville nominated the Interlaken/College Road area to be excluded from its Sphere of Influence. The purpose of the sphere reduction would be to recognize the Urban Growth Boundary adopted by City Measure U of 2002 and subsequently implemented in the Watsonville Vista 2030 General Plan.

This area is a developed, suburban community near the corner of Highway 152 (East Lake Avenue) and College Road. The area receives police protection from the Sheriff's Department, fire protection from the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, extraterritorial water service from the Watsonville Water Department, and sanitary sewer service from the Salsipuedes Sanitary District.

The Interlaken/College Road community is surrounded by prime agricultural lands, including the area between the current city limits (at the Vista Montana subdivision) and Salsipuedes Creek. LAFCO included the Interlaken/College Road community inside the initial Watsonville Sphere of Influence, which LAFCO adopted in 1983 by Resolution No. 610. In order to maintain contiguity between Watsonville and Interlaken/College Road, the Sphere included a narrow corridor of agricultural, agricultural service, and residential properties on the east side of Highway 152. In 1983, the Watsonville General Plan, with a horizon year of 1990, planned for additional residential growth along College Road and Lakeview Drive. ***Link to Watsonville Sphere Amendment Map:***
http://santacruzlafco.org/pages/notices/023-08_letter.pdf.

Measure U of 2002 resulted from the non-profit Action Pajaro Valley leading a multi-year dialogue among interest groups regarding community development goals in Watsonville. One key factor to Measure U was establishing an Urban Growth Boundary that would focus urban development in certain areas and maintain commercial agricultural production in many areas including along Highway 152 and Lakeview Road, northeast of Watsonville.

The County General Plan, which currently applies in the Interlaken/College Road community, does anticipate significant additional development. LAFCO's Countywide Service Review identified no major service deficiencies. Taking the Interlaken/College Road community out of the City's Sphere of Influence will have little or no effect on services. The service agencies are likely to continue to address their problems and opportunities for more efficient services if the Interlaken/College Road area remains within their responsibilities.

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: Since 1983 when Interlaken/College Road was first included in the Watsonville sphere, there has been virtually no serious interest by the residents, the property owners, or the City of Watsonville in initiating annexation of the area. No application has been filed with LAFCO. Measure U and the Watsonville General Plan direct future city growth in other directions. LAFCO staff recommends deletion of Interlaken/College Road from the Watsonville Sphere of Influence.

Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek Fire Protection Districts

The Ben Lomond Fire Protection District has nominated that its sphere be expanded to cover several parcels within the Boulder Creek Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence located north of Alba Road, west of Highway 9. The addresses are on Sweetwater Lane and Stanford Way. These parcels are accessed from the middle elevation of the mountainside via Alba Road and Western Drive. The Boulder Creek Fire Protection District serves this area from the north. Its access is from the low elevation of Clear Creek Road, which runs up the canyon west of the Brookdale Lodge. The road pattern on the hillside is complex. The two affected fire chiefs and LAFCO staff have identified one parcel that is in Ben Lomond's sphere that is more easily accessed by Boulder Creek FPD along Clear Creek Road. **Link to sphere amendment map:** [http://santacruzlafco.org/pages/notices/2008 Ben Lomond Boulder Creek Fire Spheres.pdf](http://santacruzlafco.org/pages/notices/2008_Ben_Lomond_Boulder_Creek_Fire_Spheres.pdf).

LAFCO adopted the first spheres of influence for the Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek Fire Protection Districts in 1994. The current sphere review represents the first effort to check those spheres.



Looking North from Sweetwater Lane toward valley of Clear Creek



Stanford Way off Alba Road

The recommended sphere adjustments are summarized in the following table:

Parcel No.	Owner	Use	Address	Within Current Fire Agency Boundary	Current Sphere	Recommended Sphere
79-211-32	Granger	House	280 Sweetwater Lane	County Fire	Boulder Creek	Ben Lomond
79-211-01	Valdivia	House	1090 Stanford Way	Boulder Creek	Boulder Creek	Ben Lomond
79-211-32	Valdivia	Vacant	none	Boulder Creek	Boulder Creek	Ben Lomond
79-401-01	Hayes	Timber and House	13060 Clear Creek Rd.	County Fire	Ben Lomond	Boulder Creek

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: The Chiefs of the Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek Fire Protection Districts have confirmed to LAFCO staff that they are in agreement that their spheres should be revised so that parcels accessed best from Alba Road are within the Ben Lomond Sphere, and parcels accessed from Clear Creek Road are within the Boulder Creek Sphere. The LAFCO staff recommends the changes in the preceding table and map.

County Service Area 48 (County Fire)

During the preparation of the Countywide Service Review, SLV fire agencies nominated a couple sphere changes that would reduce the County Service Area 48 (County Fire) Sphere of Influence. These were unrelated to the pending proposal to form a fire protection district in Bonny Doon. Because these changes were still under study at the time of the public notices of the March 5th LAFCO hearing, LAFCO staff included CSA 48 in the notice of spheres to be reviewed. As discussed below in the section titled “San Lorenzo Valley Fire Agency Coordination”, the consensus of the fire agencies is that the issues would be more effectively addressed thorough coordination efforts among the agencies rather than through sphere amendments and boundary reorganizations.

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: Review and make no change to the County Service Area 48 (County Fire) Sphere of Influence.

Felton Fire Protection District

On January 9, 2008, LAFCO has previously reviewed and confirmed as unchanged the Felton Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence. During the early staff consultations for the sphere reviews scheduled for March 2008, SLV fire agencies nominated a couple sphere changes that would reduce the Felton Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence. These were unrelated to the pending proposal to form a fire protection district in Bonny Doon. Because these changes were still under study at the time of the public notices of the March 5th

LAFCO hearing, LAFCO staff included Felton Fire Protection District in the notice of spheres to be reviewed. As discussed below in the section titled “San Lorenzo Valley Fire Agency Coordination”, the consensus of the fire agencies is that the issues would be more effectively addressed thorough coordination efforts among the agencies rather than through sphere amendments and boundary reorganizations.

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: Review and make no change to the Felton Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence.

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District

With an abundance of caution, the LAFCO staff did not include the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Sphere with the “no issue” spheres reviewed on January 9, 2008. Its review has been noticed for March 5, 2008; but, still no issues have been identified by the Pajaro Valley FPD, adjacent fire agencies, LAFCO staff, or the public.

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: Review and make no change to the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence..

Zayante Fire Protection District

During the early staff consultations for the sphere reviews scheduled for March 2008, the Zayante FPD nominated several sphere changes that would expand the district’s sphere and reduce the spheres of adjacent agencies. These were unrelated to the pending proposal to form a fire protection district in Bonny Doon. As discussed below in the section titled “San Lorenzo Valley Fire Agency Coordination”, the consensus of the fire agencies is that Zayante’s issues would be more effectively addressed thorough coordination efforts among the agencies rather than through sphere amendments and boundary reorganizations.

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: Review and make no change to the Zayante Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence.

San Lorenzo Valley Fire Agency Coordination

After receiving some conflicting sphere suggestions, Chairperson Rapoza, Commissioner Begun, and I hosted a meeting on February 1st attended by Chiefs and Fire Board Members from:

- Felton Fire Protection District
- Ben Lomond Fire Protection District
- Boulder Creek Fire Protection District
- County Fire Department (CAL FIRE)
- Zayante Fire Protection District.

Boulder Creek and Ben Lomond agreed that the sphere amendment between Alba Road and Clear Creek made sense, and that the chiefs would identify the affected parcels and convey that information to LAFCO staff. On bigger issues,

the agencies discussed the challenges in maintaining the best fire and emergency response capabilities using the volunteers in the San Lorenzo Valley. The agencies respectfully discussed the operational issues that led to the early sphere amendment suggestions that were sent to LAFCO. All districts were concerned about budgets and potential revenue loss that might occur with sphere amendments and boundary reorganizations. The agencies discussed:

1. Response times to particular road segments,
2. Were auto aid agreements were in effect and where they could be expanded,
3. The potential of putting a GPS transmitter on each engine,
4. Volunteer responses, and
5. How cross-training among the four valley volunteer departments could improve the response.

An example of the fifth point is how to use a Boulder Creek volunteer who happens to be in Felton at the time of a Felton call, or vice-versa.

LAFCO staff comment and recommendation: Direct the Chairperson to send a letter to the County Fire Chief and the Boards of the four San Lorenzo Valley Fire Protection Districts urging the five agencies to negotiate new auto aid) agreements to optimize fire and medical emergency responses in the valley, and urging the four valley districts to explore volunteer cross-training and response.

Environmental Review and Public Comments

All of the recommended sphere changes qualify for categorical exemption; and, therefore, do not need additional environmental review. The particular exemptions are cited in each draft sphere review resolution. In response to the public hearing notice, the LAFCO staff has received no public comments on either the environmental review or the substance of the sphere reviews. The staff has included copies of some of the early correspondence from the San Lorenzo Valley Fire agencies. These provide the LAFCO Commissioners with some background; but please note that none of the agencies is now seeking any sphere amendment not recommended in this staff report. The districts intend to proceed with examining opportunities for more auto aid agreements and cross-training.

cc: Ben Lomond Fire Protection District
Boulder Creek Fire Protection District
County Fire Chief Ferreira
County General Services/Emergency Services Department
Felton Fire Protection District
Zayante Fire Protection District

Attachments:

- Draft Resolution No. 2008-5 through 2008-8
- Sphere of Influence Maps
- Staff Memo from December 5, 2007 Agenda Outlining Sphere Review Program
- Government Code Section 56425
- Public Notice
- Selected Agency Correspondence



Art on Clear Creek Road