

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE POLICIES

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, LAFCO must adopt and maintain a Sphere of Influence (SOI) for each local governmental agency.
2. Santa Clara LAFCO shall use SOIs to:
 - a. Promote orderly urban development
 - b. Promote cooperative planning efforts among cities, the county and special districts to address concerns regarding land use and development standards, premature conversion of agriculture and open space lands and efficient provision of services.
 - c. Serve as a master plan for future local government reorganization by providing long range guidelines for efficient provision of public services; shaping logical government entities able to provide services in the most economical manner, avoiding expensive duplication of services or facilities.
 - d. Guide consideration of proposals and studies for changes of organization or reorganization
3. Inclusion of territory within a SOI should not necessarily be seen as an indication that the city will either annex or develop to urban levels such territory. The Urban Service Area boundary will serve as LAFCO's primary means of indicating a city's intention of development and provision of urban services.
4. Each adopted SOI will be reviewed as necessary, but not less than once every five years.
5. A service review pertaining to the SOI will be prepared prior to, or in conjunction with each SOI adoption, update or amendment unless LAFCO determines that a prior service review is adequate. A minor SOI amendment will not require a service review. A minor SOI amendment is one that does not have any adverse regional, planning, economic or environmental impacts.
6. LAFCO will consider service review determinations and recommendations when rendering SOI findings.
7. While LAFCO encourages the participation and cooperation of the subject agency, the determination of the SOI is a LAFCO responsibility.

B. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT POLICIES FOR SOI

1. LAFCO will require consistency with city / county general plans and SOIs of affected local agencies when adopting or amending a SOI. Joint City/County Specific Plans and factors such as density policies, development standards, geology, and future use will be considered by the Commission when establishing Spheres of Influence.
2. Pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, LAFCO will consider and make a written finding regarding the following, in adopting or amending a SOI for a local agency:
 - a. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands
 - b. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area
 - c. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, which the agency provides or is authorized to provide;
 - d. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.
3. LAFCO will consider fiscal impacts of proposed SOI amendments upon the County, affected cities, special districts and school districts. Where such amendments may have negative fiscal impacts upon the County or other local agencies, LAFCO may require mitigations thereof from the city / district proposing the amendment.
4. LAFCO will consider city annexation proposals outside the Urban Service Areas, but within the Sphere of Influence, only if such annexations will promote LAFCO's mandate to preserve open space areas, including agricultural open space and greenbelts.
5. Spheres of Influence for cities and special districts may overlap when both agencies expect to provide different service to the area.
6. Spheres of Influence for special districts which provide urban services will generally be tied to city growth plans.
7. LAFCO will discourage duplications in service provision in reviewing new or amended SOI proposals. Where a special district is coterminous with, or lies substantially within, the boundary or SOI of a city which is capable of providing the service, the special district may be given a zero sphere of influence which encompasses no territory.

C. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR A CITY SOI ADOPTION / UPDATE / AMENDMENT**

1. At least thirty days prior to submitting an application for a new city SOI or a city SOI update, city and County representatives must meet to discuss SOI issues, boundaries and methods to reach agreement on such boundaries, and development standards and zoning requirements within the SOI. The purpose is to consider city and county concerns and ensure orderly development within the SOI. Discussions may continue an additional 30 days, but no longer than 60 days.

If an agreement is reached, it must be forwarded to LAFCO. LAFCO will seriously consider the agreement when determining the city's SOI. If LAFCO's final SOI determinations are consistent with a city/County agreement, the city and the County must adopt the agreement at noticed public hearings. After the agreement and related General Plan amendments are adopted, County-approved development within the SOI must be consistent with the agreement terms.

If no agreement is reached, LAFCO will render determinations and enact policies consistent with its policies and the Cortese Knox Hertzberg Act.

- ** This requirement pursuant to Government Code section 56425 expires on January 1, 2007.

D. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR A SPECIAL DISTRICT SOI ADOPTION / UPDATE / AMENDMENT

1. LAFCO shall require the special districts to provide written statements specifying the functions or classes of service provided and establish the nature, location, and extent of any functions or classes of services provided.

Amended December 11, 2002