

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF NAPA COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE NAPA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE REVIEW

February 2007

Prepared by:

LAFCO of Napa County

Committed to serving the citizens and government agencies of its jurisdiction by encouraging the preservation of agricultural lands and open-space and coordinating the efficient delivery of municipal services.

Jack Gingles, Chair
Brad Wagenknecht, Vice-Chair
Cindy Coffey, Commissioner
Bill Dodd, Commissioner
Brian J. Kelly, Commissioner
Juliana Inman, Alternate Commissioner
Mark Luce, Alternate Commissioner

Keene Simonds, Executive Officer
Jackie Gong, Commission Counsel
Tracy Geraghty, Analyst
Kathy Mabry, Commission Secretary



This page has been left intentionally blank

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1963, Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) are responsible for administering the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code Sections 56000 et. seq.). This legislation empowers LAFCOs with regulatory and planning responsibilities to encourage the orderly formation and development of local agencies in a manner that preserves agricultural and open-space lands and promotes the efficient extension of governmental services. Principal duties include regulating boundary changes through annexations or detachments, approving or disapproving city incorporations, and forming, consolidating, or dissolving special districts. LAFCOs are also responsible for conducting studies that address a range of service and governance issues to inform and direct regional planning goals and objectives. LAFCOs are located in all 58 counties in California.

Among LAFCO's primary planning responsibilities is the designation of a sphere of influence for each city and special district under its jurisdiction.¹ California Government Code §56076 defines a sphere as "a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Commission." LAFCO establishes, amends, and updates spheres to indicate to local agencies and property owners that, at some future date, a particular area will likely require the services provided by the subject agency. The sphere designation also indicates the agency LAFCO believes to be best situated to serve the subject area. LAFCO is required to review each agency's sphere every five years.

California Government Code §56425(e) directs LAFCO to consider and prepare written statements that address four planning factors when establishing, amending, or updating an agency's sphere. These planning factors are:

- The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.
- The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
- The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.
- The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

In addition, when reviewing a sphere for an existing special district, LAFCO must also do the following:

- Require the existing special district to file a written statement with the Commission specifying the functions or classes of services it provides.
- Establish the nature, location, and extent of any functions or classes of services provided by the existing special district.

¹ LAFCOs have been required to determine spheres for cities and special districts since 1972.

Beginning in 2001, to help inform the sphere review process, LAFCO is responsible for preparing a service review. A service review can take on many different forms, including a review of a single agency, or a review of several agencies that provide a similar municipal service. The service review culminates in the preparation of written determinations that address nine specific service factors enumerated under California Government Code §56430. These determinations, which address factors ranging from infrastructure needs or deficiencies to government structure options, must be approved by the Commission in order to prepare an update to an agency's sphere.

Comprehensive Study of the Napa County Resource Conservation District

In May 2006, LAFCO of Napa County initiated its *Comprehensive Study of the Napa County Resource Conservation District*. The study comprises three distinct phases. The first two phases represent the service review portion of the study. These two phases included a description and evaluation of the services provided by the District along with the development of written determinations addressing the nine service factors enumerated under California Government Code §56430. This report represents the sphere review and is the final phase of the study

OVERVIEW

The Napa County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) was formed in 1945 to provide soil and water conservation services to farmers and ranchers in Napa County. Since its formation, NCRCD has gradually expanded the scope of its conservation services to benefit both non-urban and urban areas. This expansion has included working with citizens, organizations, and local agencies in developing and managing viticulture and watershed projects as well as facilitating volunteer stewardship programs. The majority of NCRCD’s services are provided in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service. This partnership, which includes the sharing of office space, equipment, and staff resources, is formalized through a memorandum of understanding and helps to coordinate and enhance local conservation activities.

NCRCD is governed by an independent board of directors that includes seven regular and seven alternate members that are appointed by the Napa County Board of Supervisors. NCRCD staff includes technical specialists with expertise in a variety of areas, including hydrology and erosion control. NCRCD’s adopted budget over the past three fiscal years has averaged close to \$1.5 million, with the majority of its revenues drawn from intergovernmental grants and contracts.

Napa County Resource Conservation District	
Date Formed	1945
District Type:	Independent
Enabling Legislation	Public Resources Code 9151-9978
Services Provided	Resource Conservation

Adoption of Sphere of Influence

NCRCD’s sphere was established by LAFCO in 1985. The sphere was designated to include all incorporated and unincorporated lands in Napa County as well as approximately 2,070 acres in Solano County, which was annexed into NCRCD in 1952.² There have been no changes to the sphere since its adoption.

Adopted Boundaries and Land Use Authorities

NCRCD’s sphere encompasses approximately 507,489 total acres. Of this amount, approximately 1,300 contiguous acres are located outside NCRCD’s jurisdictional boundary.³ This portion of the sphere represents the City of Napa’s incorporated boundary as of 1945, which was excluded from NCRCD at the time of its formation. A map depicting NCRCD’s current boundaries is provided at the end of this report.

Napa County Resource Conservation District: Adopted Boundaries (Source: County of Napa Geographic Information System: January 2007)	
Sphere of Influence	Jurisdiction
507,489 acres	506,189 acres

² This area is known as “Cullinan Ranch” and is comprised of tidal wetlands that provide habitat for a number of native fish, plants, and wildlife species

³ Approximation calculated using the County of Napa’s Geographic Information System.

NCRCD operates under the land use authorities of seven local jurisdictions. These jurisdictions include the Counties of Napa and Solano, Cities of American Canyon, Calistoga, Napa, St. Helena, and the Town of Yountville. In addition, the federal government owns a substantial portion of unincorporated land in northeast Napa County, including the shoreline of Lake Berryessa. The State of California also owns a substantial portion of unincorporated wetlands in south Napa County. These lands are not subject to local land use policies.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this report is to identify and evaluate areas that warrant consideration for inclusion or removal from NCRCD's sphere as part of a comprehensive review. Underlying this effort is to designate the sphere in a manner that promotes the effective and efficient provision of conservation services in and around Napa County.

ANALYSIS

The analysis conducted as part of the service review portion of this study identifies that NCRCD is providing an adequate and effective level of conservation services within its jurisdictional boundary. These conservation services have been instrumental in enhancing and restoring natural resources for the benefit of both rural and urban areas and have contributed to the preservation of local agricultural and open-space lands. NCRCD has developed sufficient capacities and funding streams to continue to provide an effective level of conservation services within its existing sphere.

LAFCO recognizes that it may be appropriate to extend NCRCD's sphere to include additional lands that are outside its current jurisdictional boundary. Specific areas where the extension of NCRCD's sphere may be appropriate include lands that serve as drainage basins to and from Napa County that are not currently served by another resource conservation district. Additional information is needed to determine whether the extension of the sphere is warranted.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission affirm NCRCD's existing sphere, which includes all incorporated and unincorporated lands in Napa County as well as the Cullinan Ranch area in Solano County. It is also recommended that the Commission direct staff to work with NCRCD and other affected agencies to determine if the extension of the District's sphere is warranted to promote and enhance regional conservation services.

Statement of Determinations

Pursuant to California Government Code §56425(d), the following statements have been prepared in support of the recommendation to affirm NCRCD's existing sphere:

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.

The present and future land uses in the area are planned for in the general plans prepared by the seven land use authorities whose jurisdictions overlap the jurisdictional boundary of the Napa County Resource Conservation District. The exercise of the District's conservation services, which benefit both urban and non-urban areas, will not affect the level or type of development identified in the general plans of the land use authorities.

2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

The provision of conservation services helps to ensure the protection and restoration of natural resources, which are essential to the social, fiscal, and economical well-being of the area.

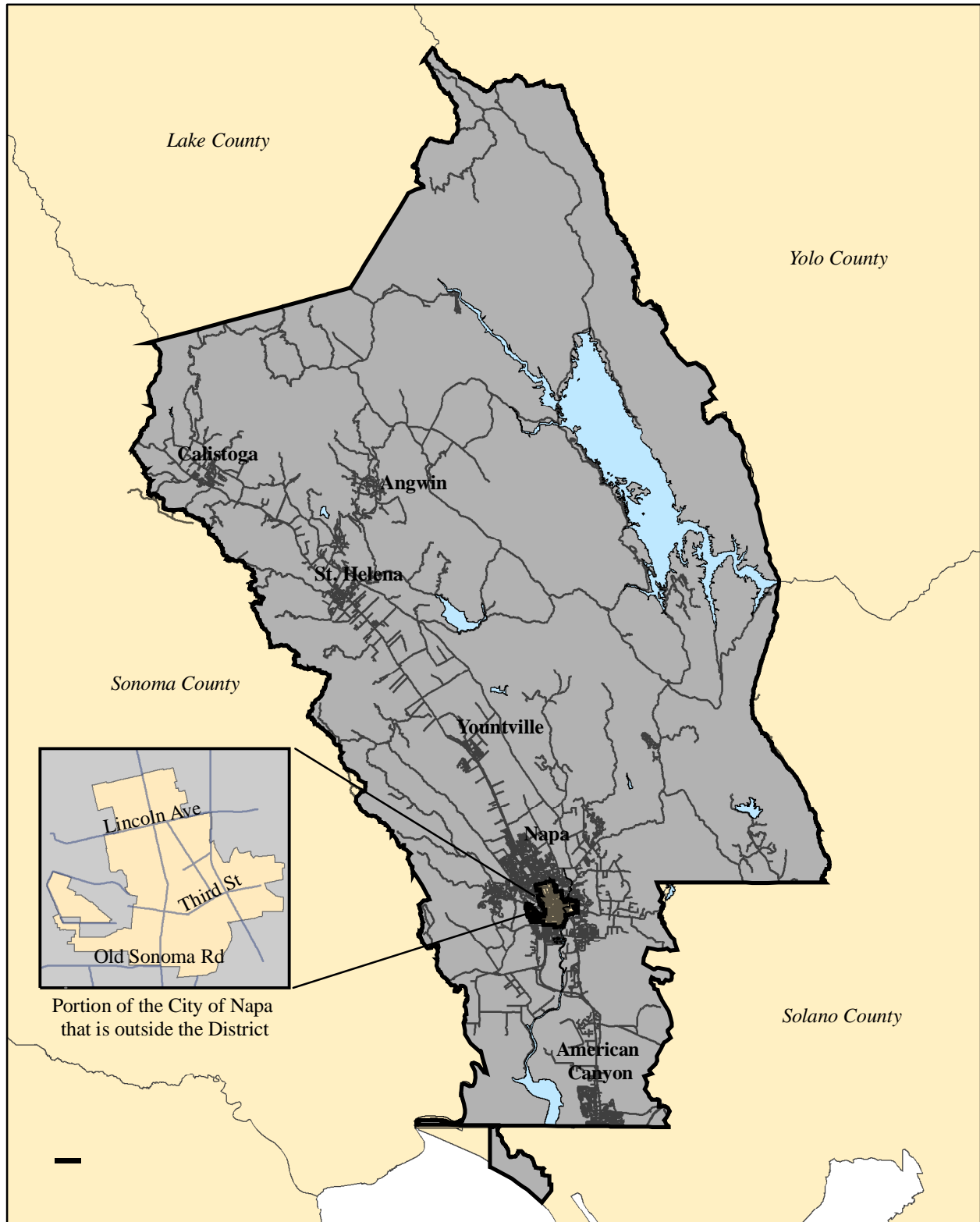
3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.

The Napa County Resource Conservation District has developed policies, service plans, and revenue streams to provide adequate and effective conservation services for the area.



4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

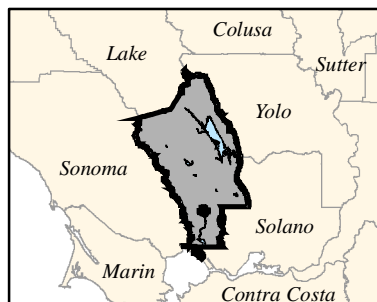
The social and economic well-being of the area is measurably enhanced by the conservation services provided by the Napa County Resource Conservation District.

Napa County Resource Conservation District



Legend

-  Napa County Resource Conservation District
-  Napa County Resource Conservation District Sphere of Influence



*Not to Scale
January 2007
Prepared by KS*



LAFCO of Napa County
1700 Second Street, Suite 268
Napa, CA 94559
(707) 259-8645