



**Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County**  
Subdivision of the State of California

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Napa, California 94559  
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www.napa.lafco.ca.gov

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*We Manage Local Government Boundaries, Evaluate Municipal Services, and Protect Agriculture*

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**Agenda Item 7a (Action)**

**TO:** Local Agency Formation Commission

**PREPARED BY:** Brendon Freeman, Executive Officer *BF*

**MEETING DATE:** June 7, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Policy on Spheres of Influence and Amendment to the General Policy Determinations

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**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended the Commission adopt the Resolution of the Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County Adopting a *Policy on Spheres of Influence* and Amending the *General Policy Determinations*, included as Attachment One.

**BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY**

The Commission’s policies currently exist in both stand-alone documents and in the more comprehensive *General Policy Determinations* (GPD) document. The Commission intends to revise its existing policies with a goal of creating a new, fully updated, single volume of policies. As part of this process, the GPD will be superseded by a single volume of policies and procedures.

On February 6, 2017, the Commission established an ad hoc Policy Committee (“the Committee”) to comprehensively review the agency’s written policies and propose amendments or new policies as appropriate. Vice Chair Mohler and Commissioner Wagenknecht currently serve with the Executive Officer on the Committee.

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires the Commission to establish and maintain spheres of influence (SOIs) for all local agencies within its jurisdiction in order to carry out its responsibilities related to facilitating the logical and orderly development of local communities as well as preserving agricultural and open space lands. An SOI is defined by statute as a “plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local government agency as determined by the commission”. Every determination made by LAFCO (e.g., approval of a proposed annexation) shall be consistent with the SOIs of any affected local agencies. Local agency SOIs are established and changed in part based on information in municipal service reviews, including adopted determinative statements and recommendations.

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Margie Mohler, Vice Chair  
Councilmember, Town of Yountville

Mariam Aboudamous, Commissioner  
Councilmember, City of American Canyon

Beth Painter, Alternate Commissioner  
Councilmember, City of Napa

Diane Dillon, Chair  
County of Napa Supervisor, 3rd District

Brad Wagenknecht, Commissioner  
County of Napa Supervisor, 1st District

Ryan Gregory, Alternate Commissioner  
County of Napa Supervisor, 2nd District

Kenneth Leary, Commissioner  
Representative of the General Public

Eve Kahn, Alternate Commissioner  
Representative of the General Public

Brendon Freeman  
*Executive Officer*

The Committee reviewed existing policies relating to SOIs contained in the Commission's GPD and determined substantial revisions are needed. The Commission's existing policies relating to SOIs are included in Section III of the GPD. The Committee determined the GPD are inadequate with respect to SOI definitions and in terms of prescribing a uniform process for the Commission to consider SOI amendments, reviews, and updates. With this in mind, the Committee recommends the Commission adopt a new stand-alone *Policy on Spheres of Influence* ("Policy") and concurrently amend the GPD to delete the policies in Section III relating to SOIs.

On August 6, 2018, the Committee presented a first draft Policy for discussion. The Commission directed the Committee to circulate the draft Policy to the general public for review and comment. The first draft Policy was made available for review and comment from August 7, 2018 through November 9, 2018. Several comments were received.

On March 11, 2019, the Committee presented a second draft Policy for discussion and noted the second draft Policy was made available for review and comment from March 8, 2019 through April 19, 2019. Several comments were received indicating a desire for a more collaborative discussion before the Policy is adopted.

On August 5, 2019, the Commission directed the Executive Officer to schedule a series of technical working group meetings with staff representatives from the local municipalities to address unresolved issues related to the draft Policy. The technical working group met in September 2019, December 2019, January 2020, and October 2020 to collaboratively review and revise the draft Policy. The technical working group had representation by the County and the Cities of American Canyon, Napa, St. Helena, and the Town of Yountville.

On February 1, 2021, a third draft of the Policy was presented to the Commission for possible adoption following incorporation of the technical working group's revisions. Certain issues with the Policy warranted one final round of revisions. With this in mind, the Commission directed staff to prepare and circulate a fourth draft Policy for public review and comment. The fourth draft Policy was made available for review and comment from February 24, 2021 through April 26, 2021. No comments were received, which suggests there are no remaining significant issues that can be addressed through the Policy.

Staff recommends the Commission adopt the draft resolution, included as Attachment One, to adopt the Policy and concurrently amend the GPD. The fourth draft of the Policy showing tracked changes from the third draft is included as Attachment Two. The proposed amendment to the GPD showing tracked changes is included as Attachment Three.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Draft Resolution Adopting the Policy on Spheres of Influence and Amending the General Policy Determinations
- 2) Proposed Policy on Spheres of Influence Showing Tracked Changes from Third Draft
- 3) Proposed Amendment to General Policy Determinations Showing Tracked Changes

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**RESOLUTION OF  
THE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF NAPA COUNTY  
ADOPTING A POLICY ON SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND  
AMENDING THE GENERAL POLICY DETERMINATIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County (“Commission”) has adopted policies on the topic of spheres of influence in its *General Policies Determinations*; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission desires to establish its policies on spheres of influence into a single stand-alone policy; and

**WHEREAS**, at the Commission’s August 6, 2018 meeting, the ad hoc subcommittee on local policies (“the Committee”) presented a draft *Policy on Spheres of Influence* (“Policy”) for discussion and the Commission directed the Committee to circulate the draft Policy for public review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, the draft Policy was made available for review and comment from August 7, 2018 through November 9, 2018. Several comments were received; and

**WHEREAS**, at the Commission’s March 11, 2019 special meeting, the Committee presented a second draft Policy for discussion and noted the second draft Policy was already made available for public review and comment from March 8, 2019 through April 19, 2019. Several comments were received; and

**WHEREAS**, at its August 5, 2019 meeting, the Commission directed the Executive Officer to schedule a series of technical working group meetings with staff representatives from the local municipalities to address unresolved policy issues; and

**WHEREAS**, the technical working group met on September 12, 2019, December 5, 2019, January 22, 2020, and October 27, 2020 to collaboratively revise the draft Policy; and

**WHEREAS**, at its February 1, 2021 meeting, the Executive Officer presented a third draft Policy for possible adoption. The Commission requested additional revisions to the draft Policy and directed staff to circulate the draft Policy for public review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, the third draft Policy was made available for review and comment from February 24, 2021 through April 26, 2021. No comments were received; and

**WHEREAS**, at its June 7, 2021 meeting, the Executive Officer presented a fourth draft Policy for possible adoption along with a concurrent amendment to the *General Policies Determinations* to delete Section III pertaining to sphere of influence policies.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County hereby adopts the *Policy on Spheres of Influence* attached hereto and concurrently deletes Section III of the Commission’s *General Policy Determinations*.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

The foregoing resolution was duly and regularly adopted by the Commission at a public meeting held on June 7, 2021, after a motion by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, by the following vote:

AYES:	Commissioners	_____
NOES:	Commissioners	_____
ABSENT:	Commissioners	_____
ABSTAIN:	Commissioners	_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Diane Dillon  
 Commission Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Brendon Freeman  
 Executive Officer

Recorded by: Kathy Mabry  
 Commission Secretary



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF NAPA COUNTY

### *Policy on Spheres of Influence*

(First Draft Presented on August 6, 2018; Second Draft Presented on March 11, 2019; Third Draft Presented on February 1, 2021; Fourth Draft Proposed on June 7, 2021)

#### I. BACKGROUND

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, beginning with [California Government Code \(G.C.\) §56425](#), requires the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO or “Commission”) to establish and maintain spheres of influence for all local agencies within its jurisdiction. A sphere of influence (SOI) is defined by statute as a “plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local government agency as determined by the commission” ([G.C. §56076](#)). Every determination made by LAFCO shall be consistent with the SOIs of the local agencies affected by that determination ([G.C. §56375.5](#)). The Commission encourages cities, towns, and the County of Napa (“County”) to meet and agree to SOI changes. The Commission shall give “great weight” to these agreements to the extent they are consistent with its policies ([G.C. §56425\(b\) and \(c\)](#)). Local agency SOIs are established and changed in part based on information in municipal service reviews, including adopted determinative statements and recommendations ([G.C. §56430](#)).

#### II. PURPOSE

The purpose of these policies is to guide the Commission in its consideration of SOI amendment requests as well as SOI reviews and updates initiated by LAFCO. This includes establishing consistency with respect to the Commission’s approach in the scheduling, preparation, and adoption of SOI reviews and updates. Requests to amend an SOI may be made by any person or local agency as described in Section VI of this policy. Requests to amend an SOI are encouraged to be filed with LAFCO’s Executive Officer as part of the Commission’s municipal service review (MSR) and SOI review process.

#### III. OBJECTIVE

It is the intent of the Commission to determine appropriate SOIs that promote the orderly expansion of cities, towns, and special districts in a manner that ensures the protection of the environment and agricultural and open space lands while also ensuring the effective, efficient, and economic provision of essential public services, including public water, wastewater, fire protection and emergency response, and law enforcement. The Commission recognizes the importance of considering local conditions and circumstances in implementing these policies. An SOI is primarily a planning tool that will:

- Serve as a master plan for the future organization of local government within the County by providing long range guidelines for the efficient provision of services to the public;
- Discourage duplication of services by two or more local governmental agencies;
- Guide the Commission when considering individual proposals for changes of organization;
- Identify the need for specific reorganization studies, and provide the basis for recommendations to particular agencies for government reorganizations.

#### **IV. DEFINITIONS**

Recognizing that an SOI is a plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local government agency as determined by LAFCO, the Commission incorporates the following definitions:

- A. “Agricultural lands” are defined as set forth in [G.C. §56016](#).
- B. “Open space” are defined as set forth in [G.C. §56059](#).
- C. “Prime agricultural land” is defined as set forth in [G.C. §56064](#).
- D. “Infill” is defined as set forth in [Public Resources Code §21061.3](#).
- E. “Underdeveloped land” is defined as land that lacks components of urban development such as utilities or structure(s).
- F. “Vacant land” is defined as land that has no structure(s) on it and is not being used. Agricultural and open space uses are considered a land use and therefore the underlying land is not considered vacant land.
- G. “SOI establishment” refers to the initial adoption of a city or special district SOI by the Commission.
- H. “SOI amendment” refers to a single change to an established SOI, typically involving one specific geographic area and initiated by a landowner, resident, or local agency.
- I. “SOI review” refers to a comprehensive review of an established SOI conducted as part of an MSR. Based on information collected in the SOI review component of an MSR, the Commission shall determine if an SOI update is needed.
- J. “SOI update” refers to a single change or multiple changes to an established SOI, typically initiated by the Commission and based on information collected in the SOI review.
- K. “Zero SOI” when determined by the Commission, indicates a local agency should be dissolved and its service area and service responsibilities assigned to one or more other local agencies.
- L. “Study area” refers to territory evaluated as part of an SOI update for possible addition to, or removal from, an established SOI. The study areas shall be identified by the Commission in consultation with all affected agencies.

## **V. LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **A. General Guidelines for Determining Spheres of Influence**

The following factors are intended to provide a framework for the Commission to balance competing interests in making determinations related to SOIs. No single factor is determinative. The Commission retains discretion to exercise its independent judgment as appropriate:

- 1) Land defined or designated in the County of Napa General Plan land use map as agricultural or open space shall not be approved for inclusion within any local agency's SOI for purposes of new urban development unless the action is consistent with the objectives listed in Section III of this policy.
- 2) The Commission encourages residents, landowners, and local agencies to submit requests for changes to SOIs to the LAFCO Executive Officer as part of the LAFCO-initiated MSR and SOI review process.
- 3) The first Agricultural Preserve in the United States was created in 1968 by the Napa County Board of Supervisors. The Agricultural Preserve protects lands in the fertile valley and foothill areas of Napa County in which agriculture is and should continue to be the predominant land use. Measure J was passed by voters in 1990 and Measure P was passed by voters in 2008 and requires voter approval for any changes that would re-designate unincorporated agricultural and open-space lands. The Commission will consider the Agricultural Preserve and intent of voters in passing Measure J and Measure P in its decision making processes to the extent they apply, prior to taking formal actions relating to SOIs.
- 4) In the course of an SOI review for any local agency as part of an MSR, the Commission shall identify all existing outside services provided by the affected agency. For any services provided outside the affected agency's jurisdictional boundary but within its SOI, the Commission shall request the affected agency submit an annexation plan or explanation for not annexing the territory that is receiving outside services. For any services provided outside an agency's jurisdictional boundary and SOI, the Commission encourages a dialogue between the County and the affected agency relating to mutually beneficial provisions.
- 5) In the course of reviewing a city or town's SOI, the Commission will consider the amount of vacant land within the affected city or town's SOI. The Commission discourages SOI amendment requests involving vacant or underdeveloped land that requires the extension of urban facilities, utilities, and services where infill development is more appropriate.

- 6) A local agency's SOI shall generally be used to guide annexations within a five-year planning period. Inclusion of land within an SOI shall not be construed to indicate automatic approval of an annexation proposal.
- 7) When an annexation is proposed outside a local agency's SOI, the Commission may consider both the proposed annexation and SOI amendment at the same meeting. The SOI amendment to include the affected territory, however, shall be considered and resolved prior to Commission action on the annexation.
- 8) A local agency's SOI should reflect existing and planned service capacities based on information collected by, or submitted to, the Commission. This includes information contained in current MSRs. The Commission shall consider the following municipal service criteria in determining SOIs:
  - a) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by affected local agencies within the current jurisdiction, and the adopted plans of these local agencies to address any municipal service deficiency, including adopted capital improvement plans.
  - b) The present and probable need for public facilities and services within the area proposed or recommended for inclusion within the SOI, and the plans for the delivery of services to the area.
- 9) The Commission shall consider, at a minimum, the following land use criteria in determining SOIs:
  - a) The present and planned land uses in the area, including lands designated for agriculture and open-space.
  - b) Consistency with the County General Plan and the general plan of any affected city or town.
  - c) Adopted general plan policies of the County and of any affected city or town that guide future development away from lands designated for agriculture or open-space.
  - d) Adopted policies of affected local agencies that promote infill development of existing vacant or underdeveloped land.
  - e) Amount of existing vacant or underdeveloped land located within any affected local agency's jurisdiction and current SOI.
  - f) Adopted urban growth boundaries by the affected land use authorities.



## **B. Scheduling Sphere of Influence Reviews and Updates**

[G.C. §56425\(g\)](#) directs the Commission to update each SOI every five years, as necessary. Each year, the Commission shall adopt a Work Program with a schedule for initiating and completing MSRs and SOI reviews based on communication with local agencies. This includes appropriate timing with consideration of city, town, and County general plan updates. The Commission shall schedule SOI updates, as necessary, based on determinations contained in MSRs.

## **C. Environmental Review**

SOI establishments, amendments, and updates will be subject to the review procedures defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Napa LAFCO CEQA Guidelines. If an environmental assessment or analysis is prepared by an agency for a project associated with an SOI establishment, amendment, or update, and LAFCO is afforded the opportunity to evaluate and comment during the Lead Agency's environmental review process, then LAFCO can act as a Responsible Agency under CEQA for its environmental review process. All adopted environmental documents prepared for the project, a copy of the filed Notice of Determination/Notice of Exemption, and a copy of the Department of Fish and Wildlife fee receipt must be submitted as part of the application. Completion of the CEQA review process will be required prior to action by the Commission.

## **VI. REQUESTS FOR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AMENDMENTS**

### **A. Form of Request**

Any person or local agency may file a written request with the Executive Officer requesting amendments to an SOI pursuant to [G.C. §56428\(a\)](#). Requests shall be made using the form provided in Attachment A and be accompanied by a cover letter and a map of the proposed amendment. Requests shall include an initial deposit as prescribed under the Commission's adopted Schedule of Fees and Deposits. The Executive Officer may require additional data and information to be included with the request. Requests by cities, towns, and special districts shall be made by resolution of application.

### **B. Review of Request**

The Executive Officer shall review and determine within 30 days of receipt whether the request to amend an agency's SOI is complete. If a request is deemed incomplete, the Executive Officer shall immediately notify the applicant and identify the information needed to accept the request for filing.

**C. Consideration of Request**

Once a request is deemed complete, the Executive Officer will prepare a written report with a recommendation. The Executive Officer will present his or her report and recommendation at a public hearing for Commission consideration. The public hearing will be scheduled for the next meeting of the Commission for which adequate notice can be given. The Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or deny the request for an SOI amendment. The Commission's determination and any required findings will be set out in a resolution that specifies the area added to, or removed from, the affected agency's SOI. While the Commission encourages the participation and cooperation of the subject agencies, the determination of an SOI is a LAFCO responsibility and the Commission is the sole authority as to the sufficiency of the documentation and consistency with law and LAFCO policy.

DRAFT

**Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County**  
 1030 Seminary Street, Suite B  
 Napa, California 94559  
 (707) 259-8645 Telephone  
<http://www.napa.lafco.ca.gov>

**Questionnaire for Amending a Sphere of Influence**

1. Applicant information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (Primary) \_\_\_\_\_ (Secondary)

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the purpose for the proposed sphere of influence amendment?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Describe the affected territory in terms of location, size, topography, and any other pertinent characteristics.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe the affected territory's present and planned land uses.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 5. Identify the current land use designation and zoning standard for the affected territory.

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- 6. Is the affected territory subject to a Williamson Act contract? If yes, please provide a copy of the contract along with any amendments.

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- 7. If applicable, identify the governmental agencies currently providing the listed municipal services to the affected territory.

Water: \_\_\_\_\_

Sewer: \_\_\_\_\_

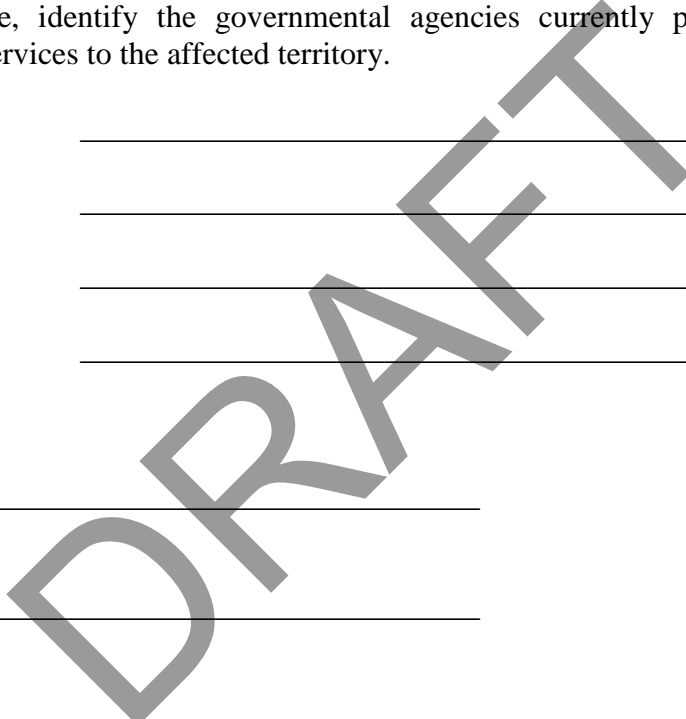
Fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_





## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF NAPA COUNTY

### *Policy on Spheres of Influence*

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#### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of these policies is to guide the Commission in its consideration of SOI amendment requests as well as SOI reviews and updates initiated by LAFCO. This includes establishing consistency with respect to the Commission’s approach in the scheduling, preparation, and adoption of SOI reviews and updates. Requests to amend an SOI may be made by any person or local agency as described in Section VI of this policy. Requests to amend an SOI are encouraged to be filed with LAFCO’s Executive Officer as part of the Commission’s municipal service review (MSR) and SOI review process.

#### **III. OBJECTIVE**

It is the intent of the Commission to determine appropriate SOIs that promote the orderly expansion of cities, towns, and special districts in a manner that ensures the protection of the environment and ~~natural working~~[agricultural and open space](#) lands while also ensuring the effective, efficient, and economic provision of essential public services, including public water, wastewater, fire protection and emergency response, and law enforcement. The Commission recognizes the importance of considering local conditions and circumstances in implementing these policies. An SOI is primarily a planning tool that will:

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- ~~D.F.~~ “Vacant land” is defined as land that has no ~~buildings structure(s)~~ on it and is not being used. Agricultural and open space uses are considered a land use and therefore the underlying land is not considered vacant land.
- ~~E.G.~~ “SOI establishment” refers to the initial adoption of a city or special district SOI by the Commission.
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- ~~H.J.~~ “SOI update” refers to a single change or multiple changes to an established SOI, typically initiated by the Commission and based on information collected in the SOI review.
- ~~I.K.~~ “Zero SOI” when determined by the Commission, indicates a local agency should be dissolved and its service area and service responsibilities assigned to one or more other local agencies.
- ~~J.L.~~ “Study area” refers to territory evaluated as part of an SOI update for possible addition to, or removal from, an established SOI. The study areas shall be identified by the Commission in consultation with all affected agencies.

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The following factors are intended to provide a framework for the Commission to balance competing interests in making determinations related to SOIs. No single factor is determinative. The Commission retains discretion to exercise its independent judgment as appropriate:

- 1) Land defined or designated in the County of Napa General Plan land use map as agricultural or open space shall not be approved for inclusion within any local agency's SOI for purposes of new urban development unless the action is consistent with the objectives listed in Section III of this policy.
- 2) The Commission encourages residents, landowners, and local agencies to submit requests for changes to SOIs to the LAFCO Executive Officer as part of the LAFCO-initiated MSR and SOI review process.
- 3) The first Agricultural Preserve in the United States was created in 1968 by the Napa County Board of Supervisors. The Agricultural Preserve protects lands in the fertile valley and foothill areas of Napa County in which agriculture is and should continue to be the predominant land use. Measure J was passed by voters in 1990 and Measure P was passed by voters in 2008 and requires voter approval for any changes that would re-designate unincorporated agricultural and open-space lands. The Commission will consider the Agricultural Preserve and intent of voters in passing Measure J and Measure P in its decision making processes to the extent they apply, prior to taking formal actions relating to SOIs.
- 4) In the course of an SOI review for any local agency as part of an MSR, the Commission shall identify all existing outside services provided by the affected agency. For any services provided outside the affected agency's jurisdictional boundary but within its SOI, the Commission shall request the affected agency submit an annexation plan or justification-explanation for not annexing the territory that is receiving outside services. For any services provided outside an agency's jurisdictional boundary and SOI, the Commission encourages a dialogue between the County and the affected agency relating to mutually beneficial provisions.
- 5) In the course of reviewing a city or town's SOI, the Commission will consider the amount of vacant land within the affected city or town's SOI. The Commission discourages SOI amendment requests involving vacant or underdeveloped land that requires the extension of urban facilities, utilities, and services where infill development is more appropriate.

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- 7) When an annexation is proposed outside a local agency's SOI, the Commission may consider both the proposed annexation and SOI amendment at the same meeting. The SOI amendment to include the affected territory, however, shall be considered and resolved prior to Commission action on the annexation.
- 8) A local agency's SOI should reflect existing and planned service capacities based on information collected by, or submitted to, the Commission. This includes information contained in current MSRs. The Commission shall consider the following municipal service criteria in determining SOIs:
  - a) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by affected local agencies within the current jurisdiction, and the adopted plans of these local agencies to address any municipal service deficiency, including adopted capital improvement plans.
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- 9) The Commission shall consider, at a minimum, the following land use criteria in determining SOIs:
  - a) The present and planned land uses in the area, including lands designated for agriculture and open-space.
  - b) Consistency with the County General Plan and the general plan of any affected city or town.
  - c) Adopted general plan policies of the County and of any affected city or town that guide future development away from lands designated for agriculture or open-space.
  - d) Adopted policies of affected local agencies that promote infill development of existing vacant or underdeveloped land.
  - e) Amount of existing vacant or underdeveloped land located within any affected local agency's jurisdiction and current SOI.
  - f) Adopted urban growth boundaries by the affected land use authorities.



**B. Scheduling Sphere of Influence Reviews and Updates**

[G.C. §56425\(g\)](#) directs the Commission to update each SOI every five years, as necessary. Each year, the Commission shall adopt a Work Program with a schedule for initiating and completing MSRs and SOI reviews based on communication with local agencies. This includes appropriate timing with consideration of city, town, and County general plan updates. The Commission shall schedule SOI updates, as necessary, based on determinations contained in MSRs.

**C. Environmental Review**

SOI establishments, amendments, and updates will be subject to the review procedures defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Napa LAFCO CEQA Guidelines. If an environmental assessment or analysis is prepared by an agency for a project associated with an SOI establishment, amendment, or update, and LAFCO is afforded the opportunity to evaluate and comment during the Lead Agency's environmental review process, then LAFCO can act as a Responsible Agency under CEQA for its environmental review process. All adopted environmental documents prepared for the project, a copy of the filed Notice of Determination/Notice of Exemption, and a copy of the Department of Fish and Wildlife fee receipt must be submitted as part of the application. Completion of the CEQA review process will be required prior to action by the Commission.

**VI. REQUESTS FOR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AMENDMENTS**

**A. Form of Request**

Any person or local agency may file a written request with the Executive Officer requesting amendments to an SOI pursuant to [G.C. §56428\(a\)](#). Requests shall be made using the form provided in Attachment A and be accompanied by a cover letter and a map of the proposed amendment. Requests shall include an initial deposit as prescribed under the Commission's adopted Schedule of Fees and Deposits. The Executive Officer may require additional data and information to be included with the request. Requests by cities, towns, and special districts shall be made by resolution of application.

**B. Review of Request**

The Executive Officer shall review and determine within 30 days of receipt whether the request to amend an agency's SOI is complete. If a request is deemed incomplete, the Executive Officer shall immediately notify the applicant and identify the information needed to accept the request for filing.

**C. Consideration of Request**

Once a request is deemed complete, the Executive Officer will prepare a written report with a recommendation. The Executive Officer will present his or her report and recommendation at a public hearing for Commission consideration. The public hearing will be scheduled for the next meeting of the Commission for which adequate notice can be given. The Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or deny the request for an SOI amendment. The Commission's determination and any required findings will be set out in a resolution that specifies the area added to, or removed from, the affected agency's SOI. While the Commission encourages the participation and cooperation of the subject agencies, the determination of an SOI is a LAFCO responsibility and the Commission is the sole authority as to the sufficiency of the documentation and consistency with law and LAFCO policy.



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF NAPA COUNTY

### *General Policy Determinations*

(Adopted: August 9, 1972; Last Amended: ~~February 3, 2020~~ June 7, 2021)

#### **I. Background**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 specifies the Commission's principal objectives are discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open-space and agricultural resources, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of cities and special districts and their municipal services based on local conditions. Regulatory duties include approving or disapproving proposals involving the formation, reorganization, expansion, and dissolution of cities and special districts. The Commission's regulatory actions must be consistent with its adopted written policies and procedures. The Commission must also inform its regulatory duties through a series of planning activities, which includes establishing and updating spheres of influence.

#### **II. General Policies**

The intent of these policies is to serve as the Commission's constitution with regards to outlining clear goals, objectives, and requirements in uniformly fulfilling its prescribed duties. The Commission reserves discretion in administering these policies, however, to address special conditions and circumstances as needed.

##### **A) Legislative Declarations**

The Commission acknowledges and incorporates into its own policies, the policies of the Legislature regarding the promotion of orderly, well-planned development patterns that avoid the premature conversion of agricultural and open-space lands and ensure effective, efficient, and economic provision of essential public services. The Commission wishes to specifically note the following declarations and policies contained in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000:

- (1) The Legislature recognizes that the logical formation and determination of local agency boundaries is an important factor in promoting orderly development and in balancing that development with sometimes competing state interests of discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open-space and prime agricultural lands, and efficiently extending government services. (G.C. §56000)
- (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that each commission, not later than January 1, 2002, shall establish written policies and procedures and exercise its powers pursuant to this part in a manner consistent with those policies and procedures, and that encourages and provides planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns with appropriate consideration of preserving open-space lands within those patterns. (G.C. §56300)

- (3) In reviewing and approving or disapproving proposals which could reasonably be expected to induce, facilitate, or lead to the conversion of existing open-space lands to uses other than open-space uses, the commission shall consider all of the following policies and priorities:
  - a) Development or use of land for other than open-space uses shall be guided away from existing prime agricultural lands in open-space use toward areas containing nonprime agricultural lands, unless that action would not promote the planned, orderly, efficient development of an area.
  - b) Development of existing vacant or nonprime agricultural lands for urban uses within the existing jurisdiction of a local agency or within the sphere of influence of a local agency should be encouraged before any proposal is approved which would allow for or lead to the development of existing open-space lands for non-open-space uses which are outside of the existing jurisdiction of the local agency or outside of the existing sphere of influence of the local agency. (G.C. §56377)

## **B) Commission Declarations**

The Commission declares its intent not to permit the premature conversion of designated agricultural or open-space lands to urban uses. The Commission shall adhere to the following policies in the pursuit of this intent, and all proposals, projects, and studies shall be reviewed with these policies as guidelines.

- (1) Use of County General Plan Designations:  
In evaluating a proposal, the Commission will use the Napa County General Plan to determine designated agricultural and open-space lands. The Commission recognizes that inconsistencies may occur between the County General Plan and the affected city general plan with respect to agricultural and open-space designations. Notwithstanding these potential inconsistencies, the Commission will rely on the Napa County General Plan in recognition of the public support expressed in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Napa County for the County's designated agricultural and open-space lands through enactment of Measure "J" in 1990 and Measure "P" in 2008.
- (2) Location of Urban Development:  
The Commission shall guide urban development away from designated agricultural or open-space lands until such times as urban development becomes an overriding consideration as determined by the Commission.

- (3) Timing of Urban Development:  
The Commission discourages proposals involving the annexation of undeveloped or underdeveloped lands to cities and special districts that provide potable water, sewer, fire protection and emergency response, or police protection services. This policy does not apply to proposals in which the affected lands are subject to a specific development plan or agreement under consideration by a land use authority. This policy does not apply to city annexation proposals in which the affected lands are part of an unincorporated island.
- (4) Factors for Evaluating Proposals Involving Agricultural or Open-Space Lands:  
The Commission recognizes there are distinct and varying attributes associated with agricultural and open-space designated lands. A proposal which includes agricultural or open-space designated land shall be evaluated in light of the existence of the following factors:
- a) "Prime agricultural land", as defined by G.C. §56064.
  - b) "Open-space", as defined by G.C. §56059.
  - c) Land that is under contract to remain in agricultural or open-space use, such as a Williamson Act Contract or Open-Space Easement.
  - d) Land which has a County General Plan agricultural or open-space designation (Agricultural Resource or Agriculture, Watershed and Open-Space).
  - e) The adopted general plan policies of the County and the affected city.
  - f) The agricultural economic integrity of land proposed for conversion to urban use as well as adjoining land in agricultural use.
  - g) The potential for the premature conversion of adjacent agricultural or open-space designated land to urban use.
  - h) The potential of vacant non-prime agricultural land to be developed with a use that would then allow the land to meet the definition of prime agricultural land under the Williamson Act.
- (5) Encouragement of Reorganizations:  
The Commission encourages reorganization proposals as a means of coordinating actions of local governmental agencies involving, but not limited to, annexation of land to two or more public agencies. The Commission recognizes the usefulness of the reorganization concept as a vehicle designed to simplify and expedite such actions.

### ~~III. Policies Concerning Spheres of Influence~~

~~It is the intent of the Commission to establish spheres of influence that promote the orderly expansion of cities and special districts to ensure effective, efficient and economic provision of essential public services, including public sewer and water, fire protection and emergency response, and police protection.~~

#### ~~A) Legislative Declarations~~

~~The Commission acknowledges and incorporates into its own policies, the policies of the Legislature as they relate to spheres of influence. The Commission wishes to specifically note the following declarations and policies contained in the Cortese-Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000:~~

- ~~(1) "Sphere of influence" means a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Commission. (G.C. §56076)~~
- ~~(2) In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping the logical and orderly development and coordination of local governmental agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities, the Commission shall develop and determine the sphere of influence of each local governmental agency within the county and enact policies designed to promote the logical and orderly development of areas within the sphere. (G.C. §56425(a)).~~
- ~~(3) The Commission encourages cities and the County to meet and agree to sphere of influence changes. The Commission shall give "great weight" to these agreements to the extent they are consistent with its policies. (G.C. §56425(b) and (c))~~
- ~~(4) On or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall, as necessary, review and update each sphere of influence. (G.C. §56425(g))~~

## **~~B) — General Guidelines for the Review of Spheres of Influence~~**

~~It is the intent of the Commission to consider the following factors whenever reviewing a proposal that includes the adoption, amendment, or update of a sphere of influence.~~

- ~~(1) — The Commission incorporates the following definitions:~~
  - ~~a) — An “establishment” refers to the initial development and determination of a sphere of influence by the Commission.~~
  - ~~b) — An “amendment” refers to a limited change to an established sphere of influence typically initiated by a landowner, resident, or agency.~~
  - ~~c) — An “update” refers to a comprehensive change to an established sphere of influence typically initiated by the Commission.~~
- ~~(2) — The Commission discourages proposals from residents, landowners, and agencies proposing amendments to spheres of influence unless justified by special conditions and circumstances.~~
- ~~(3) — The Commission shall consider the following land use criteria in establishing, amending, and updating spheres of influence:~~
  - ~~a) — The present and planned land uses in the area, including designated agricultural and open space lands.~~
  - ~~b) — Consistency with the County General Plan and the general plan of any affected city.~~
  - ~~c) — Adopted general plan policies of the County and of any affected city that guide future development away from designated agricultural or open space land.~~
  - ~~d) — Adopted policies of affected agencies that promote infill of existing vacant or underdeveloped land.~~
  - ~~e) — Amount of existing vacant or underdeveloped land located within any affected agency’s jurisdiction and current sphere of influence.~~
  - ~~f) — Adopted urban growth boundaries by the affected land use authorities.~~

~~(4) The Commission shall consider the following municipal service criteria in establishing, amending, and updating spheres of influence:~~

- ~~a) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services provided by affected agencies within the current jurisdiction and the adopted plans of these agencies to improve any municipal service deficiency, including adopted capital improvement plans.~~
- ~~b) The present and probable need for public facilities and services within the area proposed for inclusion within the sphere of influence and the plans for the delivery of services to the area.~~

~~(5) The Commission shall endeavor to maintain and expand, as needed, spheres of influence to accommodate planned and orderly urban development. The Commission, however, shall consider removal of land from an agency's sphere of influence if any of the two conditions apply:~~

- ~~a) The land is outside the affected agency's jurisdictional boundary but has been within the sphere of influence for 10 or more years.~~
- ~~b) The land is inside the affected agency's jurisdictional boundary, but is not expected to be developed for urban uses or require urban type services within the next 10 years.~~

### ~~C) City Spheres of Influence~~

~~The Commission shall adhere to the following policies in the establishment, amendment, or update of a city's sphere of influence.~~

~~(1) Location of Urban Development:~~

~~It shall be a basic policy of the Commission is that the sphere of influence shall guide and promote the affected city's orderly urban growth and development.~~

~~(2) Sphere of Influence to Reflect Service Capacities:~~

~~A city's sphere of influence should reflect existing and planned service capacities based on information collected by, or submitted to, the Commission.~~

~~(3) Use of County General Plan Agricultural and Open Space Designations:~~

~~The Commission shall use the most recently adopted County General Plan as the basis to identify designated agricultural and open space lands in establishing, amending, and updating a city's sphere of influence.~~



- ~~(4) — Avoidance of Inclusion of Agricultural and Open Space Lands:  
Land specifically designated as agricultural or open space lands shall not be approved for inclusion within any city's sphere of influence for purposes of urban development unless exceptions are warranted based on the criteria outlined in Section B(3) and (4).~~
- ~~(5) — Preference for Infill:  
The Commission will consider the amount of vacant land within the established sphere of influence of a city when considering amendments and updates. The Commission encourages sphere of influence proposals that promote the infill of existing vacant or underdeveloped land thereby maximizing the efficient use of existing city services and infrastructure as well as discouraging urban sprawl. Conversely, the Commission discourages sphere of influence proposals involving vacant or underdeveloped land that requires the extension of urban facilities, utilities, and services where infill is more appropriate.~~
- ~~(6) — Spheres of Influence as Guides for City Annexations:  
A city's sphere of influence shall generally be used to guide annexations within a five-year planning period. Inclusion of land within a sphere of influence shall not be construed to indicate automatic approval of an annexation proposal; an annexation will be considered on its own merits with deference assigned to timing.~~
- ~~(7) — Joint Applications:  
When an annexation is proposed outside a city's sphere of influence, the Commission may consider both the proposed annexation and the necessary change in the sphere of influence at the same meeting. The change to the sphere of influence to include the affected territory, however, shall be considered and resolved prior to Commission action on the annexation.~~
- ~~(8) — Cooperative Planning and Development:  
Spheres of influence shall be developed by the Commission in cooperation with input from the cities and the County.~~
- ~~a) The urban areas as delineated by the spheres of influence or other boundary adopted by the Commission should be recognized and considered as part of planning and development programs of the affected cities as well as any affected special districts and the County.~~
- ~~b) The Commission shall encourage cities to first develop existing vacant and underdeveloped infill lands located within their jurisdictions and spheres of influence to maximize the efficient use of available services and infrastructure and discourage the premature conversion of agricultural and open space lands to urban uses. The Commission shall encourage the development of vacant or underdeveloped infill lands located within cities' jurisdictions before the annexation of lands requiring the extension of urban facilities, utilities, and services.~~

- ~~e) No urban development should be permitted by the County to occur on unincorporated lands within a city's sphere of influence. If approval of urban development in such areas is legally required of the County, such development should conform to applicable city standards and be the subject of a joint city-County planning effort.~~

#### ~~D) Special District Spheres of Influence~~

~~The Commission shall adhere to the following policies in the establishment, review, amendment, or update of a special district's sphere of influence.~~

~~(1) Urbanizing Effect of Services:~~

~~It shall be a basic policy of the Commission that the establishment, amendment, or update of a special district's sphere of influence serves to promote urban development with limited exceptions.~~

~~(2) Sphere of Influence to Reflect Service Capacities:~~

~~A special district's sphere of influence should reflect existing and planned service capacities based on information collected by, or submitted to, the Commission.~~

~~(3) Exclusion of Agricultural and Open Space Lands:~~

~~Land designated agricultural or open space by the applicable city or County general plan shall not be approved for inclusion within any special district's sphere of influence for purposes of urban development through the extension of essential public services. Such designations shall be recognized by the Commission as designating the land as non-urban in character in regard to the existing use of the area or its future development potential. The Commission may consider exceptions to this policy based on evidence provided by the affected special district demonstrating all of the following:~~

- ~~a) The expansion is necessary in order to provide potable water or sewer to the territory to respond to a documented public health or safety threat.~~
- ~~b) The affected special district can provide adequate potable water or sewer service to the affected territory without extending any mainline more than 1,000 feet.~~
- ~~c) The expansion will not promote the premature conversion of agricultural or open space land to urban use.~~

- ~~(4) — Sphere of Influence as a Guide to Special District Annexations:  
A special district's sphere of influence shall generally be used to guide annexations within a five-year planning period. Inclusion of land within a sphere of influence shall not be construed to indicate automatic approval of an annexation proposal; an annexation will be considered on its own merits with deference assigned to timing.~~
- ~~(5) — Joint Applications:  
When an annexation is proposed outside a special district's sphere of influence, the Commission may consider both the proposed annexation and the necessary change in the sphere of influence at the same meeting. The change to the sphere of influence to include the affected territory, however, shall be considered and resolved prior to Commission action on the proposed annexation.~~
- ~~(6) — Cooperative Planning and Development Programs:  
Spheres of influence shall be developed by the Commission in cooperation with any affected cities and the County.~~
- ~~a) The service area of a special district as delineated by the sphere of influence or other boundary adopted by the Commission should be recognized and considered as part of the planning and development programs of any affected district, city, and the County.~~

### **IVIII. Policies Concerning the County Of Napa**

#### **A) Location of Urban Development**

- (1) Development of an urban character and nature should be located within areas designated as urban areas by the County General Plan in close proximity to a city or special district which can provide essential public services.
- (2) Urban development should be discouraged if it is apparent that essential services necessary for the proposed development cannot readily be provided by a city or special district.
- (3) The Commission shall review and comment, as appropriate, on the extension of services or the creation of new service providers to furnish services into previously unserved territory within unincorporated areas.

#### **B) Use of County Service Areas and Community Services Districts**

- (1) In those unincorporated urban areas where essential urban services are being provided by the County, the Board of Supervisors should consider the establishment of county service areas or community services districts so that area residents and landowners pay their fair and equitable share for the services received.

**IV. Policies Concerning Cities****A) Incorporations**

- (1) The Commission discourages proposals to incorporate communities unless substantial evidence suggests the County and any affected special district are not effectively meeting the needs of the community.
- (2) The Commission discourages proposals to incorporate communities involving land that is not already receiving essential public services from a special district.
- (3) Any community proposed for incorporation in Napa County shall have at least 500 registered voters residing with the affected area at the time proceedings are initiated with the Commission as required under G.C. §56043.

**VI. Policies Concerning Special Districts****A) In Lieu of New District Creation**

- (1) Where a limited-purpose special district exists and additional services are required for an unincorporated area designated as urban by the County General Plan, the Commission encourages reorganizations to provide the extended services of the existing limited services special district.

**B) Preference for Districts Capable of Providing All Essential Services**

- (1) All new special districts proposed for formation in the unincorporated urban areas as designated under the County General Plan should be capable of providing essential urban type services which include, but are not limited to, water, sanitation, fire protection, and police protection.

**C) Establishing New Services or Divestiture of Existing Service Powers**

- (1) Commission approval is required for a special district to establish new services or divest existing service powers within all or parts of its jurisdictional boundary. Requests by a special district shall be made by adoption of a resolution of application and include all the information required and referenced under G.C. §56824.12.
- (2) The Commission incorporates the following definitions in administering these policies:
  - a) “New” shall mean activating a latent service not previously authorized.
  - b) “Divestiture” shall mean deactivating a service power previously authorized.

- (3) The Commission shall consider the effect of the proposal in supporting planned and orderly growth within the affected territory.

## **VII. Policies Concerning Annexations**

### **A) General Policies Concerning Annexations to a City**

- (1) Inclusion in Sphere of Influence:  
The affected territory shall be included within the affected city sphere of influence prior to issuance of the Executive Officer's certificate of filing for the subject annexation proposal. The Executive Officer may amend both a sphere of influence amendment and annexation application for Commission consideration and action at the same meeting.

### **B) Policies Concerning Annexation of Municipally-Owned Land**

- (1) Restricted Use Lands Owned by Public Agencies:  
The Commission shall disapprove annexation of publicly-owned land designated agricultural or open-space or subject to a Williamson Act contract unless the land will be used for a municipal purpose and no suitable alternative site reasonably exists within the affected city's sphere of influence.
- (2) Facilities Exempt from Policy:  
Municipal purpose shall mean a public service facility which is urban in nature such as water and sewage treatment facilities and public buildings, but shall not include land which is vacant or used for wastewater reclamation irrigation, a reservoir, or agricultural, watershed or open-space.

### **C) Concurrent Annexation Policies**

It is the intent of the Commission to promote concurrent annexations to cities and special districts whenever appropriate. The Commission may waive its concurrent annexation policies based on unique conditions or circumstances surrounding the annexation proposal which make application of the policy impractical and will not result in the annexation of lands designated agricultural or open-space by the applicable city or County General Plan.

- (1) City of Napa and Napa Sanitation District
- a) Annexations to the District:  
All annexation proposals to the Napa Sanitation District located outside of the City of Napa shall first be required to annex to the City if the affected territory is located within the City's sphere of influence as adopted by the Commission, is located within the City Residential Urban Limit Line (RUL) as adopted by the City, and annexation is legally possible.
- b) Annexations to the City:

All 100% consent annexation proposals to the City of Napa located outside of the Napa Sanitation District shall be required to annex to the Napa Sanitation District if the affected territory is located within the District's sphere of influence and if sanitation service is available.

(2) City of American Canyon and American Canyon Fire Protection District

a) Annexations to the District:

All annexation proposals to the American Canyon Fire Protection District located outside of the City of American Canyon shall be required to annex to the City if the affected territory is located within the City's sphere of influence as adopted by the Commission and if annexation is legally possible.

b) Annexations to the City:

All annexation proposals to the City of American Canyon located outside of the American Canyon Fire Protection District shall be required to annex to the District if the affected territory is located within the District's sphere of influence.

(3) County Service Area No. 4

a) Annexations to Cities:

All annexation proposals to a city shall be required to concurrently detach from County Service Area No. 4 unless the affected territory has been, or is expected to be, developed to include planted vineyards totaling one acre or more in size.