

# Shasta LAFCO Policies and Procedures

## CHAPTER 5

### SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEWS

#### Section 1. Spheres of Influence

##### 1.1 Legislative Authority and Intent

A sphere of influence is described by Section 56076 as “a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency as determined by the commission”. The sphere of influence is an important benchmark that defines the primary area within which urban development is to be encouraged. The Commission shall use spheres of influence to:

- a. promote orderly growth and development within and adjacent to communities;
- 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 public services;
- c. guide future local government reorganization that encourages efficiency, economy, and orderly changes in local government; and
- d. assist property owners in anticipating the availability of public services in planning for the use of their property.

##### 1.2 Sphere Review

Shasta LAFCO shall, as necessary, review and update spheres of influence every five years. If a local agency or the County desires amendment or revision of an adopted sphere of influence, the local agency by resolution may file such a request with the Executive Officer. The request shall state the nature of the proposed amendment and the reasons for the request, include a map of the proposed amendment, and contain additional data and information as may be required by the Executive Officer. Shasta LAFCO encourages any private individual desiring a revision of an adopted Sphere of Influence to request that the affected local agency initiate sphere reconsideration by resolution to promote consultation between the parties.

##### 1.3 Sphere Determinations

In determining the Sphere of Influence of each local governmental agency, the Commission shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

- a. Growth and population projections for the affected area;
- b. The location and characteristics of any disadvantage unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere;

- c. Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
- d. Financial ability of the agency to provide services;
- e. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities;
- f. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies; and Evaluation of Management Efficiencies;
- g. Any other matter affecting or related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy.

#### 1.4 Sphere Consistency

Spheres of Influence shall be a declaration of policy which shall be a primary guide to Shasta LAFCO in the decision on any proposal under its jurisdiction. Every determination made by Shasta LAFCO shall be consistent with the spheres of influence of the agencies affected by those determinations. Any proposal which is inconsistent with an agency's adopted sphere of influence shall not be approved until Shasta LAFCO, at a noticed public hearing, has considered an amendment or revision to that agency's sphere. Inclusion within an agency's sphere does not assure annexation to that agency. Shasta LAFCO shall evaluate boundary change proposals as they relate to all of the relevant factors listed in the Act.

#### 1.5 Sphere Types

- a. **Coterminous Spheres** – Shasta LAFCO may allocate a sphere of influence boundary which is “coterminous” to an agency’s jurisdictional boundary in the case where Shasta LAFCO determines, after due consideration of all factors, that insufficient evidence has been presented to support the agency’s ability to expand and provide services beyond its jurisdictional boundary within the next five years.
- b. **Expanded Spheres** – The Commission may adopt expanded spheres, as needed, to accommodate planned and orderly urban development.
- c. **Reduced Spheres** – Shasta LAFCO may consider removal of land from an agency’s sphere of influence if the territory consists of agricultural lands, open space lands or agricultural preserves whose preservation would be jeopardized by inclusion within the agency's sphere, and/or if the land is not expected to be developed for urban uses or require urban-type services within the next 10 years or more. If the land is inside the affected agency’s jurisdictional boundary, exclusion of these areas from an agency's sphere indicates that detachment is appropriate.
- d. **Zero Spheres** – Shasta LAFCO may adopt a zero sphere of influence encompassing no territory for an agency. This occurs if Shasta LAFCO determines that the public service functions of the agency are either nonexistent, no longer needed, or should be reallocated to some other agency. The local agency which has been assigned a zero sphere should ultimately be dissolved.
- e. **Consolidated Spheres** – Two or more local agencies providing the same service(s) may be allocated a consolidated Sphere of Influence to include the areas served by both agencies. This would be the case where Shasta LAFCO determines that the particular service(s) should be provided to the entire area by a single local agency.

- f. **Service-Specific Spheres** – If territory within the proposed sphere boundary of a local agency does not need all of the services of the agency, a “service specific” sphere of influence may be designated.

## **1.6 Overlapping Spheres**

Shasta LAFCO encourages the reduction of overlapping spheres of influence to avoid unnecessary and inefficient duplication of services or facilities. When possible, a single larger general purpose agency, rather than a number of adjacent smaller ones, established for a given service in the same general area will be preferred. Where an area could be assigned to the sphere of influence of more than one agency providing a particular needed service, the following hierarchy shall apply dependent upon ability to serve:

- a. Inclusion within a city Sphere of Influence.
- b. Inclusion within a multi-purpose district Sphere of Influence.
- c. Inclusion within a single-purpose district Sphere of Influence.

In deciding which of two or more equally ranked agencies shall include an area within its Sphere of Influence, Shasta LAFCO shall consider the agencies' service and financial capabilities, social and economic interdependence, topographic factors, and the effect that eventual service extension will have on adjacent agencies.

## **1.7 Islands or Corridors**

Sphere of influence boundaries shall not create islands or corridors unless it can be demonstrated that the irregular boundaries represent the most logical and orderly service area of an agency.

## **1.8 Sphere Planning Considerations**

Spheres of influence shall reflect city and County General Plans, plans of regional agencies, growth management policies, annexation policies, resource management policies, and any other policies related to ultimate boundary or service area of an affected agency unless those plans or policies conflict with the legislative intent of the Act.

Where inconsistencies between plans exist, Shasta LAFCO shall rely upon that plan which most closely follows the Legislature's directive to discourage urban sprawl, direct development away from prime agricultural land and open-space lands, and encourage the orderly formation and development of local governmental agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances.

## **1.9 Agriculture and Open Space Lands**

Territory not in need of urban services, including open space, agriculture, recreational, rural lands, or residential rural areas shall generally not be assigned to an agency's sphere of influence unless the area's exclusion would impede the planned, orderly and efficient development of the area. In addition, Shasta LAFCO may adopt a sphere of influence that excludes territory currently within that agency's boundaries. This may occur when Shasta LAFCO determines that the territory consists of agricultural lands, open space lands, or agricultural preserves whose preservation would be jeopardized by inclusion within an agency's sphere. Exclusion of these areas from an agency's sphere of influence indicates that detachment is appropriate.

## **1.10 Areas of Planning Concern**

Shasta LAFCO recognizes the many inter-relationships and impacts which one agency's land use, planning, and governmental decisions may have on other agencies even though they may be outside of the Sphere of Influence of the secondary agency. Consequently, Shasta LAFCO, when necessary, will seek to establish and identify Areas of Planning Concern with the assistance and guidance of the affected cities and the County. A "Planning Concern Area" will usually be larger than the adopted Sphere of Influence boundary and may take into consideration the planning area of the city as identified within their local general plans. Once established, Shasta LAFCO will solicit the cooperation and involvement of the affected cities and the County to jointly involve one another in planning decisions for these areas.

## **1.11 Future Study Areas**

Shasta LAFCO may establish future study areas outside of adopted Spheres of Influence. These areas indicate territory which may ultimately be appropriate for inclusion within an agency's sphere upon future study or modified conditions.

## **1.12 Memorandum of Agreements (for City Sphere Amendments and Updates)**

Prior to submitting an application to Shasta LAFCO for a new city sphere of influence or a city sphere of influence update, the city shall meet with the County to discuss the proposed new boundaries of the sphere and explore methods to reach agreement on development standards and planning and zoning requirements as contained in G.C. §56425. If an agreement is reached between the city and County the agreement shall be forwarded to Shasta LAFCO. The Commission shall consider and adopt a sphere of influence for the city consistent with the policies adopted by Shasta LAFCO and the County, and Shasta LAFCO shall give great weight to the agreement to the extent that it is consistent with Shasta LAFCO policies in its final determination of the city sphere.

## **Section 2. Municipal Service Reviews**

### **2.1 Authority**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires the Commission to prepare a municipal service review prior to or in conjunction with its mandate to review and update each local agency's sphere of influence every five years as necessary. A minor sphere of influence amendment will not require a service review. A minor sphere of influence amendment is one that does not have any adverse regional, planning, economic, or environmental impacts.

### **2.2 Sphere Updates**

The Commission shall generally schedule municipal service reviews in conjunction with sphere of influence updates. The Commission will consider service review determinations and recommendations when rendering sphere of influence findings.

### **2.3 Services Subject to Review**

Municipal service reviews shall be limited to public services typically required by and associated with urban development.

### **2.4 Agencies Subject to Review**

Shasta LAFCO has concluded that the following agencies in Shasta County provide services which are municipal in nature, and as such, are subject to the services review requirement: County, Community Services Districts, Irrigation Districts County Service Areas, Water Districts, Vector Control Districts Cities, Fire Protection Districts, Cemetery Districts, Resource Conservation Districts, Healthcare Districts

### **2.5 Types of Service Reviews**

The Commission shall generally prepare three types of municipal services reviews as summarized below.

- a. **Service-Specific.** A service-specific municipal service review will examine particular governmental service across multiple local agencies on a countywide basis.
- b. **Region-Specific.** A region-specific municipal service review will examine the range of governmental services provided by local agencies within a particular area.
- c. **Agency-Specific.** An agency specific municipal service review will examine the breadth of governmental services provided by a particular local agency.

### **2.6 Scope and Content**

The Commission shall determine the priority, schedule, procedure and content for service reviews. The scope and schedule of service reviews should remain flexible

enough to accommodate legislative changes and changes in local conditions.

## **2.7 Contracting with Outside Consultants**

The Commission may contract with outside consultants, as needed, to assist with the preparation of municipal service reviews.

## **2.8 Stakeholder Collaboration**

The Commission shall encourage collaboration, cooperation and information sharing among service review stakeholders.

## **2.9 Recommendations to Improve Services**

Service reviews shall contain recommendations for sphere of influence or government structure changes needed to implement positive service changes. Where more detailed analysis of service option is necessary, service reviews shall contain recommendation for special studies where there is the potential to reduce service gaps and improve service levels.

## **2.10 Written Determinations**

Section 56430 of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires LAFCOs to conduct reviews of municipal services and make written determinations with respect to the following factors:

- a. Growth and population projections for the affected area;
- b. The location and characteristics of any disadvantage unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere;
- c. Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies;
- d. Financial ability of the agency to provide services;
- e. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities;
- f. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies; and Evaluation of Management Efficiencies
- g. Any other matter affecting or related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy.

## **2.11 Adoption**

Service reviews shall be adopted by resolution.