

ATTACHMENT A DISCUSSION

The City of Gonzales has updated its General Plan and will be submitting an application to LAFCO to amend their Sphere of Influence (SOI) to allow future annexations that would accommodate the planned growth outlined in their General Plan. As required by state law, the city and county have met to discuss the effects of growth and development resulting from the proposed Sphere of Influence amendment.

The MOA details agreement reached on a number of topics, including the following specific sections. We were not able to come to agreement on two topics: the southern boundary along Gloria Road and the amount of land to be included within the Sphere of Influence. A summary of the terms of each section is explained following the section title:

Section 1 Logical and Orderly Development

This section describes the adoption of the City's General Plan, that the plan has set the basis for orderly growth and a recognition that urban growth needs to occur in the City. The General Plan the city adopted is long-term, much longer than the typical 20-year growth plan.

Section 2 Direction of Future Development

This section details agreement that the land use plan describes the areas to be developed in the long term. It further describes the City General Plan provisions for compact and sustainable growth patterns, establishing permanent urban edges, demonstrates a commitment for agricultural buffers, and mitigation of converted agricultural land. It also states that the County will work with the City to manage growth, consult with the City on development projects in the nearby unincorporated area, and preserve agricultural land to maintain physical separation between Gonzales and Soledad (and the prison) to the south and Chualar to the north.

Section 3 City/County Special Planning Area of Concern

This section describes an area on the south end of the city where agreement could not be reached on the permanent city edge. We have agreed to designate this area as a "Special Planning Area of Concern", but the County will not support inclusion of the area south of Gloria Road into the proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI) at this time. LAFCO will weigh these differences when they decide the Sphere of Influence boundary during the upcoming SOI amendment process.

Section 4 Development Phasing and Annexations

This section describes phasing provisions, but the parties were not able to reach agreement on phasing of the Sphere of Influence. The City desires to include the entire growth area in the SOI. The County position is that only the area necessary for the next 20 years of projected growth should be included in the SOI. As for the south edge of the City, LAFCO will analyze the proposal, the County's position, and ultimately decide how much land to include in the SOI as part of a public hearing process.

Section 5 Agricultural Land Compatibility

This section describes the City's commitment to keep agricultural land, within its growth boundaries, in production as long as possible, focus long term growth to the east, ensure that adjacent land uses are compatible with agricultural land, and work with the County to separate agricultural truck traffic from local traffic.

Section 6 Agricultural Land Conservation Program

This section states the intention of both parties to preserve agricultural land around the city to ensure viability of the agricultural economy and discusses permanent agricultural easements as a tool to assist in that goal. The section further clarifies City General Plan goals to mitigate loss of valuable agricultural land, provides guidance on how and when the program will be implemented, and describes a Committee to oversee the use of the mitigation fees. This provision also allows the cessation of the program if permanent agricultural easements are established on the City's North, West and South boundaries.

Section 7 Traffic Mitigation Fees

This section states that the County will prepare and consider a Traffic Impact Fee program for this area within 18 months and require consultation on development projects in the unincorporated area, and the requirement for a pro rata share of impact fees if impacts are identified that could affect City roads.

Section 8 Tax Sharing

This section describes that the parties agree to discuss the existing Master Tax Sharing Agreement prior to any annexation, except all land within the Sphere of Influence that exists today. The parties also agree that all local taxes, for any annexation that is not consistent with the MOA, shall not accrue to the benefit of the City.

Section 9 Sharing of Information and Continuous Cooperation

This section describes the commitment of both parties to share information, cooperate on development, and describes that comments from either party be consistent with their legislative body's direction or policies.

Section 10 Environmental Review, Public Hearing and Local Decision-Making

This section recognizes the need for California Environmental Quality Act review, public hearings, and public outreach prior to any binding decisions. It recognizes that the MOA is a document that states tentative policy commitments until all legal steps have been completed.

Unresolved Issues

If the Board of Supervisors agrees with staff's recommendation on the issues described below, the County will include a cover letter to LAFCO along with a copy of this MOA.

City Long-Term Southern Boundary

The parties have not reached agreement on the long-term southern boundary of the City. The County's position is that the edge of the City should not extend across Gloria Road, but be coincident with the road. As stated in the MOA, Section 5, it is the desire of both parties to keep local traffic and agricultural traffic separated. Gloria Road serves a large agricultural area to the east of Highway 101 and needs to be maintained as the truck route to Highway 101 from this large agricultural area. This truck route also serves Johnson Canyon Landfill from Highway 101, keeping the large transport trucks out of the City of Gonzales. If the City develops both sides of Gloria Road, they will install infrastructure that may provide a better road surface, but would also install barriers, such as intersections and stop lights to that traffic coming to and from the agricultural fields to the highway.

Sphere of Influence Extent

The parties also have not come to agreement on the amount of land that should be included in the Sphere of Influence at this time. The City of Gonzales would like their entire planning area included. The County's position is that the amount of land needed for the next 20 years of growth should be included, but not all the land.

As the City states in their recently adopted General Plan, the City of Gonzales added 600 acres over the last 13 years (1998-2011). The City is now a little over 1200 acres in size. This period included a significant increase in housing for cities in the Salinas Valley; this pressure has since subsided. Using the same rate of growth, which likely overstates growth in the current economic climate, the need over the next 20 years is approximately 900 additional acres of land. The City General Plan includes approximately 2,150 additional acres of land for urbanization and an additional approximately 2,130 acres of land for urban reserve. The City General Plan estimates that the residential growth in the plan would accommodate growth through the year 2050, approximately two 20-year periods. LAFCO staff will analyze and recommend the appropriate size of the sphere amendment, but we want the County position to be clear that the SOI should accommodate only the land necessary to accommodate the next 20 years of projected growth.