Fresno Sphere Expansion Creates Opportunity for LAFCo

Conditions require annexations of rural neighborhoods

By Jeff Tweedie, Former Executive Officer, Fresno LAFCo

The City of Fresno has long had some of the most irregular boundaries of any city in the state, a legacy of its agricultural past, ancient geology, laissez-faire County land use policies coupled with a western culture favoring large residential parcels, and City Council apathy. This wasn’t always the case. When it was first laid out as a stop on the Central Pacific (now Southern Pacific) Railroad in the 1870s, Fresno was a thing of beauty to any card-carrying city planner or LAFCO-ite: a perfect two-mile square, centered on the new railroad station. Fresno’s location in the San Joaquin Valley, midway between the rapidly developing San Francisco and Los Angeles areas, quickly made it the service and commercial hub of the region. Typical of many rapidly developing communities in those pre-LAFCO days, development of the City and its environs occurred with little heed for city boundaries, so long as service needs could be met by the County, private utility companies, or special districts.

A request to add 9,000 acres to Fresno Sphere resulted in a condition for the City to prepare, adopt and begin to implement a program for annexing rural residential neighborhoods within the City’s existing Sphere before any annexations are approved in the expansion area.

Agriculture flourished in the dry but fertile lands surrounding the City (incorporated in 1885) as canals were constructed to divert water from the Kings and San Joaquin rivers, and settlers poured in from all over the world to purchase five, ten, and twenty-acre farm parcels. Fresno County’s agricultural productivity soon began to rival that of earlier settled regions around Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. By 1952, Fresno County produced a higher value of agricultural commodities than any other county in the nation (some say the world), displacing Los Angeles County. It has maintained that distinction nearly every year since, despite one of the highest population growth rates in the state.

In the boom years following World War II, homesite parcels of one to five acres—to small to farm but large enough to accommodate a well and septic system—began to be created on the edges of farm parcels near the City. Such parcels had often been created in the past for family members or farm workers, but they were increasingly being purchased by urbanites who worked in the city but wanted to maintain ties to the family homestead, or who just enjoyed the rural lifestyle. Many of these rural parcels tended to occur in clusters reflecting areas of relatively non-productive soils that fell into disuse as farmers concentrated on the better producing portions of their properties.

By the mid-1960s, County planners recognized that such parcels were beginning to occupy areas within the foreseeable growth area of the City, and policies were enacted to contain rural residential developments (as they were now called) to areas already committed to the use. But the damage had already been done. Dozens of rural residential neighborhoods have already sprung up virtually bracketing the City to the east and west, directly in the path of planned growth.

Housing demand in the Fresno area escalated geometrically in the 1980s and 1990s, and really took off in the 21st century, extending the City limits northward to the San Joaquin River, a natural and political boundary between Fresno and Madera Counties. Thanks to a far-sighted
As always, summer is a busy place in Sacramento. While you've certainly been hearing about some of the important local government issues, like the passage of various infrastructure bonds, there are several important CALAFCO-sponsored bills also working their way through the legislative process. Much will be happening over the next three months as the Legislature is scheduled to adjourn for the year on 1 September 2006.

**LAFCo Legislation**

CALAFCO has sponsored three bills and is supporting three others which have direct LAFCo impact.

**Island Annexation Sunset Extension (AB 2223-Salinas)**

This bill will extend the island annexation sunset provision to 1 January 2014. Existing law requires LAFCos to approve an island annexation application from a city without a protest hearing, provided the size of the territory is 150 acres or less and certain other conditions are met. This provision has been popular with cities, counties and LAFCos, particularly since 2004 when the size was increased from 75 to 150 acres. In a survey completed in April, 26 LAFCos reported the completion of over 100 island annexations and another 79 in process. Among just those LAFCos, another 194 annexations could be completed with a sunset extension. This bill is cosponsored by CALAFCO and the City of San Jose. As of 30 May, the bill had passed the Assembly and is scheduled for its third reading on the Assembly floor before going to the Senate. No opposition has been recorded to date.

**LAFCo SOI and Policies in Housing Allocations (AB 2158-Evans)**

Councils of Governments (COGs) are responsible for determining the Regional Housing Allocation (RHNA) numbers for their cities and counties. These allocations are often very controversial. The allocations are based on a number of factors. Not considered at this time, however, are the spheres of influence of local agencies. This legislation would add LAFCo adopted spheres for all local agencies and LAFCo policies to the factors a COG must consider when determining RHNA numbers. It does not give LAFCos veto power over COG decision-making.

As described in the Assembly staff report, “…the stated goal is to promote fully informed, efficient land use planning. Given that LAFCos and COGs are, each in their own ways, equally empowered to affect local land use, it seems to be simple common sense to make sure that a mechanism exists that ensures that they are aware of one another’s policies before their conflicting actions put cities and counties between the proverbial rock and hard place.”

Co-sponsored by CALAFCO and the League of Cities, the bill has passed the Assembly and is in the Senate for consideration.

**LAFCo Review of Services to Unserved Territory Sunset Extension (AB 2259-Salinas)**

Current law (§56434) provides that a LAFCo may review service extensions for urban type development into previously unserved territory in unincorporated areas. Currently that provision will sunset on 1 January 2007. This bill will extend that sunset to 2013. As of 30 May, the bill had passed the Assembly committees and is scheduled for its third reading on the Assembly floor before going to the Senate. No opposition has been recorded to date.

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FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Island Annexations – Are You Proactive or Reactive?

By Kathy Long, CALAFCO Board Chair

Island annexations – long a burr in the side of cities and counties and LAFCos. These unincorporated areas have been pushed by development, boundary changes, and, in some cases, surrounded by city dwellers, much to their objection. Some island areas resist adamantly moving to incorporation areas – they have their own unique lifestyle and fight to protect it. Some may not realize their status but recognize the change in traffic patterns and services that differ from what they receive. What local government struggles with is the conflict with levels of service, efficiency of operations, and the feeling of disenfranchisement of the residents. In 2001, the State Legislature enacted through Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg a bill that provided the tools for local jurisdictions and LAFCos to allow for annexation of islands less than 75 acres, without requiring protest or elections. Then in 2004, the law was expanded to islands of 150 acres, which is set to expire January 1, 2007.

In April of this year, CALAFCO sponsored an Island Annexation Survey, so we could provide an update to the legislative leaders on progress and what additional tools local agencies may need to accomplish the task. The summary of the responses was important in getting support for an author to carry our request. AB2223 (Salinas) has now moved through the Assembly and Local Government Committee with support to extend the sunset date for Island Annexations to January 1, 2014. In the survey, 100% of the 29 LAFCo respondents supported this extended date, noting that 93 islands had been annexed, 79 were pending, 91 in process but without completed applications, and 194 potentially could be completed with the extension of the sunset date. There were still barriers identified such as political will, cost of infrastructure improvements, cost of resources to educate residents and weighing other priorities. There were also suggestions offered, such as local LAFCos helping cities with the public education and processing.

All of this brings us full circle to the questions raised by the Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century, which re-tooled our LAFCo rules – how to bring smart growth principles to island annexations. The basic principles of smart growth, efficiency of services and operations for local government, pointed to islands of limited acreage becoming a significant challenge in providing seamless, cost efficient services. Smart growth calls for communities connected with infrastructure, integrated services, integrated traffic designs, and community space that bring differences together, not fencing them off with invisible boundaries. Proactive policies and political will to bring islands into the community will go a long way in removing the unintended consequences.

Support of AB 2223 is needed to take another step, another tool, for common sense boundaries.

American Farmland Trust Issues New Central Valley Report

American Farmland Trust’s new report, "The Future Is Now: Central Valley Farmland at The Tipping Point?" is now on the web at www.farmland.org. The title is a reference to AFT’s 1995 report, “Alternatives for Future Urban Growth in California’s Central Valley,” to which this is a sequel.

The central conclusions of the new report include:

♦ Despite good intentions, local communities are not making enough progress at preserving farmland in the nation’s most threatened major agricultural region.
♦ Farmland is being developed very inefficiently and the best of it is being paved over the fastest.
♦ Another 900,000 acres will be lost by 2040 unless things change -- and soon.

With the continued pressure to preserve agricultural and habitat lands, this report is interesting reading for LAFCo Commissioners and staff. Since it is only available on-line, it is updated as new information becomes available.

In additional to providing a wealth of information about what is happening to farmland in the Central Valley—including analyses—of local general plans, it has features such as detailed interactive maps and a page that allows viewers to rank the counties according to the weight they themselves give various farmland preservation strategies.

Submitted by Edward Thompson, Jr., California State Director, American Farmland Trust
EL DORADO

Things are moving along in El Dorado County. The Commission selected Francesca Loftis as their new public member to LAFCo, succeeding Aldon Manard, who served on the Commission for 16 years. Prior to her selection as the regular member, Commissioner Loftis was the alternate public member and was deeply involved in various LAFCO projects and matters. In addition, the Commission also welcomes James “Jack” Sweeney as one of their regular County representatives and Carl Hagen as one of their city representatives. Both Commissioners served as the alternates for their respective category prior to their new appointments.

In the office, LAFCo staff welcomes Allison Parsons as the new Commission Clerk. Ms. Parsons brings with her an extensive background in accounting and finances. She is a great complement to the office and looks forward to learning about LAFCo and local government.

Submitted by José C. Henríquez, Executive Officer

SANTA BARBARA

Executive Officer to Speak at Special District Institute

One of the best known local government training programs in California is the Special District and Local Government Institute, now in its 37th year. This series of seminars and educational programs is scheduled for June 1-2 in San Diego. This year one of our own, Bob Braitman, Executive Officer of Santa Barbara LAFCo, was a special guest speaker. His topic: “Your Agency's Place in Local Government - A LAFCO Perspective.” Bob joined an outstanding faculty of speakers and presenters. This is the first time the Institute has featured a speaker with a LAFCO perspective. More information on the Institute is available at www.sdbmi.com.

SONOMA

Sonoma LAFCo is pleased to announce new members of the Commission. Our long-time public member, H.E. “Hack” Boyett, retired after the Commission’s April meeting, having served for 25 years, the last four as chair. Jean Kapolchok, the Alternate Public Member for nine years, was selected by the Commission to take his place. The Commission selected Mark Ihde, former Sonoma County Sheriff, as Alternate Public Member. Mark Bramfitt, a member of the board of directors of the Valley of the Moon Water District, was elected by independent special districts to serve as one of their two representatives on Sonoma LAFCo, and the City Selection Committee elected Steve Allen, from the Town of Windsor, as a new city representative. These members will assume their responsibilities as of the June meeting. Welcome to all!

Submitted by Carole Cooper, Assistant Executive Officer

RIVERSIDE

Celebrations abound at Riverside LAFCo. Wayne Fowler, our Senior Analyst is celebrating completion of an initial hearing on three controversial SOIs (depicted on the cake). The other is of our own CALAFCO University Extension Tamale Lab, led by analyst Adriana Romo (r). Also pictured, yours truly (l) and Elena Medina (c). Photos by Crystal Craig. Note to Commissioners—all functions are conducted at lunch or after 5:00. Our motto is ‘work hard, play hard and eat often.’

Submitted by George Spiliotis, Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

Welcome to these recently appointed LAFCo Executive Officers:

Butte: Stephen Lucas, Executive Officer
Fresno: Rick Ballantyne, Interim Executive Officer
Los Angeles: Sandy Winger, Executive Officer
San Benito: Art Henriques, Interim Executive Officer
Stanislaus: Marjorie Blom, Interim Executive Officer
City of San Luis Obispo Sphere Update Wins American Planning Association Award

By David Church, AICP, Senior LAFCo Analyst

The City of San Luis Obispo Sphere of Influence Update has earned an Award of Excellence for Outstanding Planning (Focused Issue Planning Award Category) from the Central Coast Section, California Chapter, of the American Planning Association.

Often LAFCo work is overlooked by the mainstream planning world because we do not have direct authority over land use. In this case, we worked closely with the City and County planning folks to create a Sphere that was agreed to by the City Council, the County Board of Supervisors, and LAFCo.

In the past, there has been a fair amount of acrimony regarding County development on the City’s fringe. Updating the Sphere of Influence for the City of San Luis Obispo provided a unique opportunity for the City and County to discuss growth issues on the urban fringe of the City.

This constructive dialogue resulted in agreement between the City and County on what areas should be within the City’s SOI, and how the City and County would work together in the future regarding these areas. This discussion also involved the community in the unincorporated and incorporated areas in and around the City. The successful result was that the City’s SOI was expanded by about 3,400 acres and the City, County and Community had an in-depth and productive discussion about the future growth of the City on the urban fringes. The SOI was adopted by LAFCo on January 19, 2006.

The CKH Act allows for the development of an agreement between the City and County regarding the Sphere of Influence. This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City of San Luis Obispo and the County of San Luis Obispo was approved by the City Council and Board of Supervisors as part of the Sphere of Influence Update process. The development of the MOA was facilitated by the San Luis Obispo LAFCo. The Commission is required by law to give the MOA “Great Weight” when considering the SOI. The MOA formalized the relationship with the City and County and improved the level of cooperation between these jurisdictions. The MOA was used by the City and County to define the SOI, identify ways of working together on development projects in the fringe, and bring together key pieces of their respective General Plans. The MOA provides a framework for the City and County to discuss growth and development that impacts urban fringe areas.

The public was engaged throughout the process. A survey of property owners being considered for inclusion into the Sphere was conducted. This survey had a 68% rate of return and provided us with excellent feedback about the proposal to include certain areas. The survey also served as a notification tool and was completed early in the process. Publicly noticed hearings were conducted by: the City Planning Commission, the City Council, and the Board of Supervisors. The accessibility of the information through the LAFCo website, on CDs and at the various jurisdictions helped the public become familiar with the issues.

Thanks to the American Planning Association for selecting the City of San Luis Obispo Sphere Update for this award. It would not have been a success without the willingness of the City and County to sit down and work out the issues of the day.

I know it is corny to say “this was a team effort,” but it really was!
Fresno Sphere Expansion
(continued from cover)

feature of the County’s General Plan that has directed most urban development to incorporated cities since 1974, much of the new development occurred in the City as annexations kept pace with development. However, with northward expansion now constrained by the river, growth pushed to the east and west and clusters of rural residential parcels began to be encountered more often.

Barriers Encountered to Orderly Boundaries

Developers usually attempt to work around rural residential parcels instead of incorporate them into their projects because they are typically too small and encumbered with improvements to be economically feasible to include. Worse yet, from a LAFCo perspective, rural residents are generally unwilling to join in on annexations because they fear that the City would impose unacceptable limitations on their lifestyle. This is often well founded because cities rarely allow the types of land uses and relaxed development standards typically enjoyed by rural residents. The keeping of cows, chickens, and horses, for example, and lack of urban amenities, such as public water and sewers, curbs, gutters, sidewalks and streetlights are anathema to city councils with visions of pristine well-kept neighborhoods and high property values.

Another barrier to maintaining orderly boundaries for Fresno is that the City does not have a dedicated annexation program to address the issue. City staff assigned to annexations has its hands full simply processing proposals submitted by applicants, and Fresno’s previous Urban Unification program fell victim to budget cuts and a backlash from the County and disaffected residents who felt the program was insensitive to their concerns.

Consequently, the east and west fringes of the City now resemble an intricate filigree of substantially surrounded rural residential areas and City peninsulas instead of the orderly boundaries envisioned by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. A new approach to the problem was needed because rural residents rarely need services badly enough to give up their traditional lifestyle and seek annexation. The predictable result is that annexation proposals for urban developments near rural residential areas constantly place LAFCo in the position of having to approve applications that create ever-more irregular boundaries, or deny them, thus frustrating the development community and failing to provide for needed growth. The alternative is to include just enough rural parcels to somewhat “square off” the boundaries without triggering an inhabited annexation that would kill the proposal at the protest hearing. The latter approach has been used with some limited success, but it often results in divided rural neighborhoods and angry rural residents, who justifiably feel that they are being dragged into the City against their will.

Sphere Request Provides Opportunity

The opportunity to address the issue on a broad-scale basis came with the City’s recent adoption of its “2025 General Plan,” which proposed an addition of approximately 9,000 acres to the City’s Sphere of Influence (the “Southeast Growth Area”). The area within the existing Sphere adjacent to the expansion area, as well as the expansion area itself, contains a significant number of rural residential parcels, which, if the usual opposition to annexation were to assert itself, would doom any possibility of rational annexation boundaries in that area. Making matters worse was the fact that about 25% of the expansion area is currently under Williamson Act Contract, and the 2025 General Plan contained only a conceptual planned land use map for the area. Nevertheless, based on the Environmental Impact Report and other documentation submitted with the proposal, the City demonstrated that it is rapidly running out of developable area within its existing Sphere. In addition, much of the apparently available land within the existing Sphere isn't really usable for urban uses even if it were annexed because of the difficulty in developing small rural parcels as noted above.

Fresno LAFCo Applies Innovative Solution

Fresno LAFCo’s solution was to approve the Sphere expansion, but impose conditions requiring the City to do the following before

Continued on next page
any annexations will be approved in the expansion area:

1. Prepare and adopt a community or specific plan for the expansion area. The plan must include specific policies for lands subject to Williamson Act contracts.

2. Prepare and adopt a Master Service Delivery Plan for the expansion area.

3. To provide for logical and reasonable development, discourage urban sprawl, preserve open-space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently provide for government services, and encourage orderly development, the City must prepare, adopt and begin to implement a program for annexing rural residential neighborhoods within the City’s existing Sphere of Influence in the vicinity of the expansion area. This program should emphasize the retention of characteristics that make the neighborhoods desirable places to live, while making provisions for appropriate improvements needed to incorporate such characteristics into the urban landscape. The program should also include an outreach effort demonstrating to residents that annexation to the City would provide for an enhanced living environment preferable to staying in an unincorporated enclave, surrounded or substantially surrounded by the City.

This program must also be applicable within the expansion area and must be reflected in the community or specific plan.

An additional annexation program is required for designated Open Space areas in the Fresno Air Terminal approach corridor to ensure that those areas aren’t bypassed just because they aren’t developable with intensive urban uses.

A Modest Beginning

This is a modest beginning, but by requiring the City to acknowledge the existence of a rural residential problem and accept rural neighborhoods into the City, complete with the uncity-like features that make them desirable living environments to the inhabitants, it is hoped that future annexations will be facilitated and more orderly boundaries result. If it is successful, the annexation program should become a model for application in other parts of the City as well.

Leadership

Changes at CSDA and RCRC

California Special Districts Association Executive Director, Catherine Smith has left CSDA to start her own firm, Smith Moore & Associates. She leaves after 16 years of service to CSDA. Catherine’s firm provides management services to associations. Among her new clients are the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) and the Fire Districts Association of California. Neil McCormick has been tapped as the new CSDA Executive Director. Neil previously served as CSDA Deputy Director.

Regional Council of Rural Counties President and CEO, Brent Harrington will be retiring June 2. Brent has served as RCRC CEO since 2001. We appreciate the support Brent and RCRC have given to CALAFCO over the last two years as our office host and support on shared issues. Executive Vice President, Greg Norton has been appointed as the new RCRC President/CEO.

We wish both Catherine and Brent all our best in their new adventures!

NEW CALAFCO UNIVERSITY CLASSES SCHEDULED

Water Issues, CEQA Featured

By Paul Hood, CALAFCO Deputy Executive Officer

The CALAFCO University has scheduled a class on water issues for July 21, 2006. The class will be held at the CALAFCO Offices in Sacramento and will feature Robert Shibatani of EPI Associates. Those of you who attended last month’s CALAFCO Staff Workshop in Lake Tahoe, will remember Robert from the “Water Issues at High (After) Noon” session. We are also looking to balance the instruction by including an ACWA representative.

CALAFCO University has also scheduled a second “CEQA for LAFCo” class for October 27, 2006. This is a follow-up to the University’s very successful inaugural class held last March. There is already a waiting list for those who couldn’t take the first class. We are looking for a location for the class somewhere in the Los Angeles area and would appreciate any suggestions.

So, please mark your calendars for these upcoming CALAFCO University classes.

☑ July 21st - Water Issues
☑ October 27th - CEQA
2006 CALAFCO Annual Awards Committee Seeks Nominees

Each year at the annual conference, the Association recognizes the outstanding achievements of LAFCOs, commissioners, staff, and our associates. With the San Diego conference coming up in less than four months, it is time to think about this year’s honorees!

There are nine categories of achievement awards:

- Outstanding CALAFCO Member
- Distinguished Service Award
- Most Effective Commission
- Outstanding Commissioner
- Outstanding LAFCo Professional
- Outstanding LAFCo Clerk
- Project of the Year Award
- Government Leadership Award
- Legislator of the Year

I encourage all commissions to consider nominating candidates for these awards. A formal letter describing the achievement awards and requesting your participation has been sent to all LAFCOs recently. Executive Officers have been sent this information electronically. Nomination forms and details are also on the CALAFCO website at www.calafco.org.

The deadline for submitting nominations is 28 July 2006, and the winners will be announced during the Awards Banquet at the CALAFCO Annual Conference in San Diego.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS CALAFCO Board of Directors

The CALAFCO Board Recruitment Committee has opened nominations for seats on the 2006-07 Board of Directors. Eight seats are up for election, two each for county, city, special district, and public members.

The CALAFCO Board of Directors consists of 15 members, elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting. Board members serve two-year terms. There is no limit to the number of terms a Board member may serve. To be eligible, a candidate must serve as a Commissioner or an Alternate Commissioner on a member LAFCo.

Nomination packets and information are available on the website www.calafco.org or from the CALAFCO office (916/442-6536).

Nominations must be received by Friday, 6 August for consideration by the Nominations Committee. Candidates may also be nominated from the floor during the Annual Meeting. Elections are held during the CALAFCO Annual Conference and Meeting on Wednesday, 6 September 2006, at 9:00 a.m. at the Westin Horton Plaza Hotel in San Diego.

CALLAFCO Board of Directors
Board Has Change in Membership

Long-time Board Member, LAFCo Commissioner and past CALAFCO Chair Tim Campbell gave up his seat on the CALAFCO Board when he was not re-elected to the Santa Barbara LAFCo this winter. Tim has been an important part of the leadership of CALAFCO, and his insight and perspective will be missed by the Board and staff. Tim served as a special district Commissioner. We thank him for his many contributions to LAFCo.

At its meeting in April, the Board took action to offer the vacant seat to the runner-up in the election held last September. It was a very close race for the special district seat. The Board is very happy to announce that Jocelyn Combs has accepted the seat and will complete the term through 2007. Jocelyn is a Special District representative on the Alameda LAFCo. She has represented special districts as a Commissioner for over six years and has served on special district boards for more than 14 years. Those of you at last year’s conference will remember her famous “comb” campaign!

The Board is delighted to have Jocelyn as a member and looks forward to her involvement in CALAFCO issues and activities.

In other actions at its April meeting, the Board:
- Finalized recommendations to the membership on the dues restructure
- Adopted support positions on five pieces of legislation (see page 2)
- Discussed a number of policies and procedures to improve the operations of the Association.
Executive Director: LAFCo Legislation
(continued from page 2)

VLF Gap Fix for Annexations and Incorporations
(AB 1602-Laird)

Since the passage of Proposition 1A in 2004, a gap has existed in state law that impacts the fiscal feasibility of incorporations and annexations of inhabited territory to cities. As part of the triple-flip of VLF, sales and property taxes to secure local government funding, a gap was created which results in almost no VLF or property tax allocated for new incorporations or annexations. This bill is designed to correct that anomaly and is essentially identical to the one that was not completed last year. It is sponsored by the League of Cities. As of May 30 this bill remains in the Senate Local Government Committee for hearing.

Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Annual ‘Clean-Up’
(AB 3074-Assembly Committee on Local Government)

Sponsored by CALAFCO, this is often referred to as the “LAFCo Omnibus Bill” and annually contains a number of non-controversial clean-up provisions to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. These are typically identified by Executive Officers and Counsel around the state and vetted through a group of stakeholders from peer associations and interested organizations. As of 30 May, the bill passed the Assembly on consent and will be heard by the Senate Local Government Committee on 7 June.

Other Legislation of Interest

There are a number of bills on the CALAFCO watch list. If passed, many of these will affect various LAFCo processes, such as CEQA review time, property tax allocation, and requirements for speakers at public meetings. A list of “Watch” bills is available on the CALAFCO website at www.calafco.org/leg.

Several other bills warrant attention from LAFCos because they have the potential to significantly affect future SOI, annexation, reorganization and formation activities of local governments.

Housing Opportunity Plans (SB 1800-Ducheny)

This bill would significantly rewrite housing planning law and, among other things, would require local agencies to adopt housing opportunity plans (HOPs) that include a ten-year inventory of adequate housing sites for all income groups. Housing sites for very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing must meet minimum density requirements and allow housing by right. Housing projects consistent with a HOP would be exempt from CEQA, and may not be denied or the number of units reduced except with at least a 4/5 vote of the local agency.

Housing and Infrastructure Bonds
(SB 1689-Núñez/Perata)

This is one of several bills that will implement the infrastructure bonds passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor last month. This particular bill will enact the Emergency Housing, Community Planning and Farmland Preservation Bond Act of 2006, which authorizes the issuance of a $2.85 billion general obligation bond for state housing programs, subject to voter approval in November (this will be Proposition 1C). Of interest to LAFCos is one section which provides $850 million to a Regional Planning, Housing, and Infill Incentive Account that can be used for grants to promote infill (including parks, infrastructure, transportation improvements), and cleanup of Brownfields that promotes infill. Next step is voter approval, followed by the sale of the bonds. It may be several years before these funds are available to local agencies, however LAFCos may want to consider how they will affect agency requests for annexations and reorganizations.

Similarly, AB 140 (Núñez) will—subject to voter approval in November—authorize the sale of $4.09 billion in bonds for flood protection and levee repair and improvement. This is likely to result in changes to those local agencies that provide these services, along with LAFCo review of those agencies and others who want to provide related services.

Legislation on CALAFCO Website

Information on current legislation, including links to bill text and CALAFCO position letters is all available on the CALAFCO website at www.calafco.org/leg.

Stay tuned!

CALAFCO Gold Associate Members
CALAFCO Staff Workshop A Success

Over 80 LAFCo executive officers, assistants, analysts, planners, clerks, and counsel attended the CALAFCO Staff Workshop in April. Held at the South Lake Tahoe Embassy Suites, the Workshop included three days of educational sessions, networking opportunities, and roundtable discussions.

Board member Josh Susman kicked off the Workshop with his welcome to Lake Tahoe. Highlights included a leadership practices seminar from Executive Director Bill Chiat, a discussion of current and potential LAFCo issues, and a roundtable on CALAFCO services.

Breakout sessions provided opportunities for clerks, counsel, and staff to have focused discussions. The Clerks’ special session was facilitated by Darleen Bloom, Clerk to the Orange County Board of Supervisors and President of the State Clerks Association, on clerking meetings. Clerks also examined CEQA and their role. The attorneys held several roundtable discussions facilitated by CALAFCO Legal Counsel Clark Alsop. Executive officers, assistants, planners and analysts participated in sessions on water issues, regional planning, and spheres of influence.

Of course there was also time set aside for networking and sharing ideas and challenges.

Thanks and appreciation to all the people involved in hosting and planning the Workshop. Hosts were Placer, Nevada and El Dorado LAFCos. Committee members and volunteers included Kris Berry and Linda Wilke (Placer), Peter Brundage, Don Lockhart and Marilyn Flemmer (Sacramento), Elizabeth Castro Kemper, Elisa Carvalho, and Terri Tuck (Yolo), SR Jones and Kate Duroux (Nevada), José C. Henríquez and Erica Frink (El Dorado), Joyce Crosthwaite and Kim Koeppen (Orange), Patrick McCormick (Santa Cruz), Amy Mickelson (Modoc and Shasta), Everett Millais (Ventura), Mike Ott (San Diego), Bill Chiat (CALAFCO), Elizabeth Baldwin, and Roseanne Chamberlain

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Upcoming CALAFCO Events and Dates

Details and registration materials for these and other CALAFCO activities are available on the website at www.calafco.org.

JULY 21
Water Issues for LAFCo
CALAFCO University Course, Sacramento

JULY 28
Deadline for CALAFCO Achievement Award Nominations

AUGUST 6
Deadline for CALAFCO Board of Directors Nominations

SEPTEMBER 5-7
CALAFCO Annual Conference, San Diego

OCTOBER 6
CALAFCO Legislative Committee, Sacramento

OCTOBER 27
CEQA for LAFCo
CALAFCO University Course, Los Angeles area

The Sphere
New Report Provides First Projections of California’s Potential for Infill Housing

California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, who commissioned “The Future of Infill Housing in California: Opportunities, Potential, Feasibility, and Demand,” unveiled a new report which provides the first statewide assessment of infill housing development potential for California communities. The report was prepared by a team of researchers led by Professor John Landis and Ms. Heather Hood at the Institute of Urban and Regional Development, a pre-eminent public policy research institute, housed at the University of California, Berkeley.

California is home to 37 million people and by 2025 the state’s population will be approximately 44 million. Meeting the housing demands of a growing population and workforce (annual need of 220,000 - 250,000 new housing units), while protecting California’s natural and agricultural resources, requires efficient use of land resources through increased infill development.

Secretary McPeak stated, “A key finding in the report is that California’s infill housing potential is estimated in the range of one to one-and-a-half million additional housing units given current site availability and market constraints. Additionally, if the amount of infill housing development could be doubled from this total, roughly 100,000 acres of undeveloped land could potentially be saved over the next 25 years.”

“This report also offers a statewide perspective on strategies to address a portion of California’s housing needs within existing communities and help rebuild the physical, economic, and social fabric in older communities suffering from lack of investment,” added Judy Nevis, Acting Director for the Department of Housing and Community Development, which collaborated with the California Department of Transportation to provide support to the report’s authors. “This information is essential to raising awareness of infill opportunities, so much so that we are already taking action to implement the report’s recommendation to update the database inventory periodically,” she concluded.

Professor Landis notes, “While we recognize encouraging infill will not eliminate the need for additional greenfield development, we hope this report will assist local officials, private and non-profit builders, community groups, and interested stakeholders to better evaluate the range of opportunities that exist in their communities through a balanced growth approach.” In the foreword to his report, Professor Landis outlines the uses and limitations of the study indicating it does provide: a statewide perspective on infill potential, analysis of the opportunities and limitations of infill, and a new web-based statewide parcel inventory. The study is a theoretical estimate and therefore does not recommend specific parcels that should or will be developed; represent current zoning or land use standards; nor provide information about the interests or intentions of specific property owners.

The effort was assisted by a Technical Advisory Committee composed of representatives from: local and regional government; transit agencies; affordable housing advocates; private associations such as the Building Industry Association, Environment Now, and the Great Valley Center; and state agencies including the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. The report presents findings on the potential for infill development to address a portion of the state’s need for housing, as well as a series of suggestions and alternatives for state policymakers to consider.

The report also produced a new tool, the pilot California Infill Parcel Locator, www.infill.org, a web-based statewide parcel inventory. The pilot website allows users to identify, screen, and further research potential infill development sites. Interactive maps allow ease of use. Copies of the report can be downloaded from the website. Questions regarding the website can be emailed to CAinfill@berkeley.edu or be called into (510) 643-7553.

For a summary of findings and policy suggestions go to: http://infill.gisc.berkeley.edu/report_vol-1.pdf, page 55.

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Submitted by the California Department of Housing and Community Development
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