

Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission

# Ventura County Service Area No. 29

Municipal Service Review



Prepared By:  
Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission  
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Ventura, CA 93003  
**Accepted by the Commission on February 16, 2022**

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## Introduction

### ***Purpose of the Municipal Service Review***

Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo) exist in each county in California and were formed for the purpose of administering state law and local policies relating to the establishment and revision of local government boundaries. According to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code § 56000 et seq.), LAFCo's purposes are to:

- discourage urban sprawl;
- preserve open space and prime agricultural land;
- ensure efficient provision of government services; and
- encourage the orderly formation and development of local agencies.

To achieve these purposes, LAFCos are responsible for coordinating logical and timely changes in local government boundaries (such as annexations), conducting special studies that identify ways to reorganize and streamline governmental structure, and determining a sphere of influence for each city and special district over which they have authority.

A **sphere of influence** is a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by LAFCo (Government Code § 56076). Beginning in 2001, each LAFCo was required to review, and as necessary, update the sphere of each city and special district on or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter (Government Code § 56425(g)). Government Code § 56430(a) provides that in order to determine or update a sphere of influence, LAFCo shall prepare a **Municipal Service Review (MSR)** and make written determinations relating to the following seven factors:

1. Growth and population projections for the affected area.
2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.
3. Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies including needs or deficiencies related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection in any disadvantaged, unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence.
4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.
5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities.
6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.
7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy.

MSRs are not prepared for counties, but are prepared for special districts including those governed by a county Board of Supervisors. Additionally, while LAFCos are authorized to prepare studies relating to their role as boundary agencies, they have no investigative authority.

LAFCo staff prepared this MSR for the Ventura County Service Area No. 29 (CSA or CSA 29) using information obtained from multiple sources, including, but not limited to:

- **MSR Questionnaire:** A questionnaire supplied by LAFCo elicited general information about CSA 29 (e.g., contact information, governing body, financial information), as well as service-specific data;
- **Budget:** The adopted budget provided information regarding services and funding levels;
- **General Plans:** The Ventura County General Plan provided information regarding land use, populations, and service levels;
- **District Documents:** Various CSA 29 documents provided supplementary information relating to service provision;
- **Historical MSR:** The 2004 MSR provided certain data that remain relevant and accurate for inclusion in the current MSR;
- **District Website:** The County's website provided supplementary and clarifying information; and
- **District Staff:** CSA 29 staff provided supplementary and clarifying information.

### ***Organization of the MSR***

This report is organized into several sections, as follows:

- **Maps:** A general location map and the official LAFCo map of CSA 29;
- **Profile:** Summary profile of information about CSA 29, including contact information, governing body, summary financial information, and staffing levels;
- **Growth and Population Projections:** Details of past, current, and projected population for CSA 29;
- **Review of Municipal Services:** Discussion of the municipal services that CSA 29 provides;
- **Sphere of Influence:** Discussion of the existing sphere of influence of CSA 29 and potential modifications to the sphere; and
- **Written Determinations:** Recommended determinations for each of the seven mandatory factors for CSA 29.

The Commission's acceptance of the MSR and adoption of written determinations will be memorialized through the adoption of a resolution that addresses each of the seven mandatory factors based on the Written Determinations section of the MSR.

# Maps

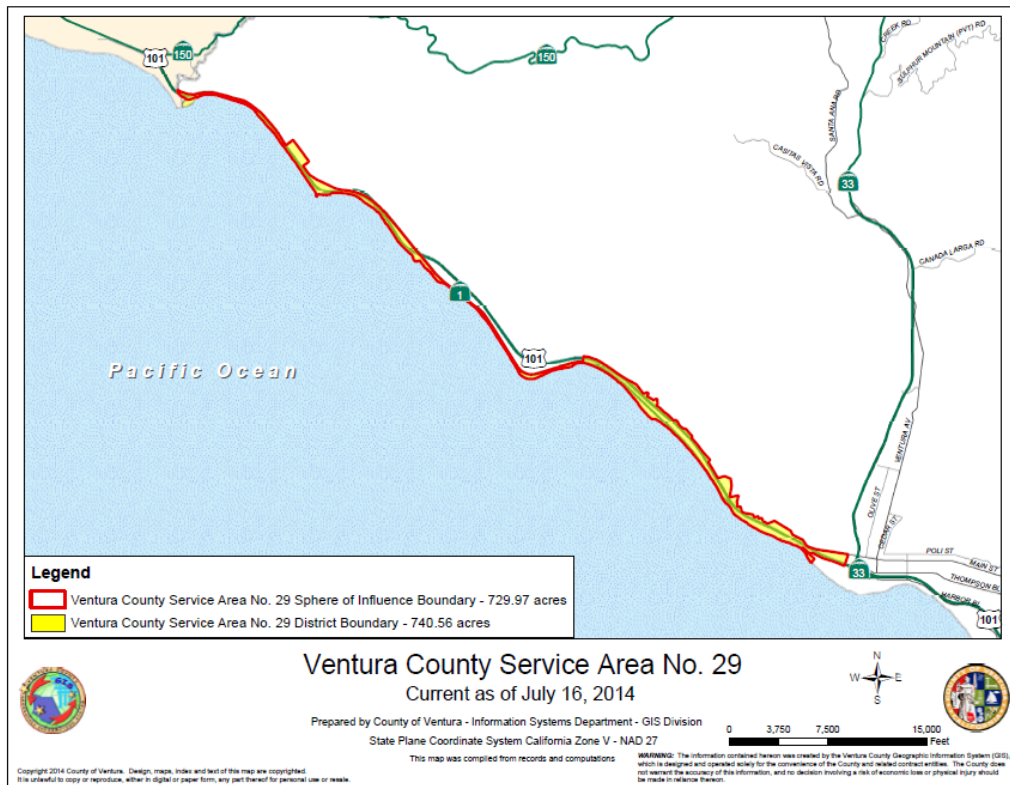


Figure 2: Official LAFCo Map

## Profile

County Service Area No. 29 (CSA 29), a dependent district of the County of Ventura, was formed on December 15, 1978, to construct, operate and maintain a sewer system in the County's North Coast communities along the Pacific Coast Highway corridor between the Ventura/Santa Barbara County line and Highway 33 (i.e., Solimar Beach, Faria Beach, Mussel Shoals, and Seacliff), as well as to the Ventura Beach Recreational Vehicle Park.

CSA 29's service area is approximately 740 acres (1.16 square miles) and its jurisdictional area is generally coterminous with its sphere of influence boundary, except that its sphere of influence no longer contains the Rincon Point community within Ventura County adjacent to the Santa Barbara County line, which since 2008 has been provided sewer service by the Carpinteria Sanitary District.

The mission of the Water and Sanitation Department of the Ventura County Public Works Agency (VCPWA) is provided as follows:

*To deliver efficient, responsive and cost effective public works services that protect and enhance the safety, health and quality of life in Ventura County.*

### Contact Information

District Manager	Joseph Pope
District Office	6767 Spring Road, Moorpark, CA 93020
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 250, Moorpark, CA 93020-0250
Phone Number	(805) 378-3000
Website	<a href="http://pwa.vcpublicworks.org/wsd">pwa.vcpublicworks.org/wsd</a>
E-mail Address	<a href="mailto:joseph.pope@ventura.org">joseph.pope@ventura.org</a>

### Governance Information

Formation Date	December 15, 1978
Legal Authority	<u>Government Code Section 25210</u> (County Service Areas)
Type of District	Dependent
Board of Directors	Five members. Board of Directors consists of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. Elected by voting district to staggered, four-year terms of office (elections held in even-numbered years).
Board Meetings	<u>Tuesdays as scheduled</u> , beginning at 8:30 a.m., in the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room located at 800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009. Webcast live on the County's website, and available for viewing anytime on the County's website.

### Services Provided

CSA 29 is authorized to operate and maintain a sewer system in the North Coast communities of Ventura County to serve Solimar Beach, Faria Beach, Mussel Shoals, and Seacliff, as well as the Ventura Beach Recreational Vehicle Park.

### Population and Area Information

	<i>Population</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Area (square miles)</i>
Jurisdictional Area	740	1.16
Sphere of Influence Area	717	1.14

### Staffing – Full Time Equivalent Positions<sup>2</sup>

Executive/Management	Professional/Support	Operational	Total
8	16	33	57

### Revenues

#### Primary Revenue Sources

Sewer Service Charges  
Interest Earnings  
Miscellaneous Fees

#### FY 2020-21 Revenues (Budget)

\$5,256,500

### Expenditures

#### Primary Expenses

Maintenance Contract with VRSD<sup>3</sup>  
Wastewater Treatment Costs  
Management/Administrative Costs

#### FY 2020-21 Expenditures (Budget)

\$5,179,600

### Public Agencies with Overlapping Jurisdiction

Casitas Municipal Water District	Ventura County Service Area No. 14
City of San Buenaventura	Ventura County Service Area No. 32
Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency	Ventura County Transportation Commission
Gold Coast Transit District	Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Ventura County Air Pollution Control District	Ventura Port District
Ventura County Fire Protection District	Ventura Regional Sanitation District
Ventura County Resource Conservation District	Carpinteria Sanitary District (Santa Barbara)

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2010 U.S. Census data

<sup>2</sup> The District is staffed by the Ventura County Water and Sanitation Department (VCWSD or Department). The duties associated with each of the positions within the VCWSD involve all of the projects and facilities managed by the VCWSD, including those associated with the District. Therefore, the number of employees identified above does not reflect full-time positions assigned to the District.

<sup>3</sup> Ventura Regional Sanitation District

## **Growth and Population Projections**

*LAFCo is required to project the growth and population for the affected area (Government Code § 56430(a)(1)).*

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated 2010 population within CSA 29's jurisdictional boundary was 740 and within its sphere of influence was 717. CSA 29 staff estimates a current population of 803 within both its jurisdictional boundaries and its sphere of influence, with minor increases in population occurring as a result of infill development. CSA 29's service area is largely developed and is not anticipated to experience notable additional population growth.



## Review of Municipal Services

The review of CSA 29's services is based on provisions of state law which require LAFCo to make determinations regarding the present and planned capacity of public facilities, the adequacy of public services, infrastructure needs and deficiencies, and the District's financial ability to provide these services (Government Code § 56430(a)(3)).

### Wastewater Services

CSA 29, through the Ventura County Water and Sanitation Department, manages the North Coast Sewer System, which is a Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) system that has been in operation since 1982. The STEP system involves the storage of wastewater at individual properties in tanks, followed by discharge from those tanks into CSA 29's collection infrastructure. The Water and Sanitation Department of the VCPWA<sup>4</sup> operates and maintains approximately 305 service connections (300 single family residential, 1 hotel/restaurant (Cliff House Inn), 1 Ventura County Fire Protection District operated fire station (Station No. 25), 2 County parks, and 1 private recreational vehicle resort (Ventura Beach Recreational Vehicle Resort)), 13 miles of gravity and force-main lines that have the ability to transport 0.91 million gallons per day (MGD), 3.6 miles of electrical conduits, 155 STEP pumps with electric panels, 160 tanks, and six lift stations. Collected wastewater is then conveyed to the City of San Buenaventura sewer system near Peking Street for conveyance and treatment to the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant (located at 3639 E. Harbor Boulevard at the delta of the Santa Clara River near the Ventura Harbor). CSA 29 provides administrative, billing, customer service, maintenance, operation, design, construction and inspection, laboratory, and regulatory compliance services that support the collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal of wastewater generated within its service area.

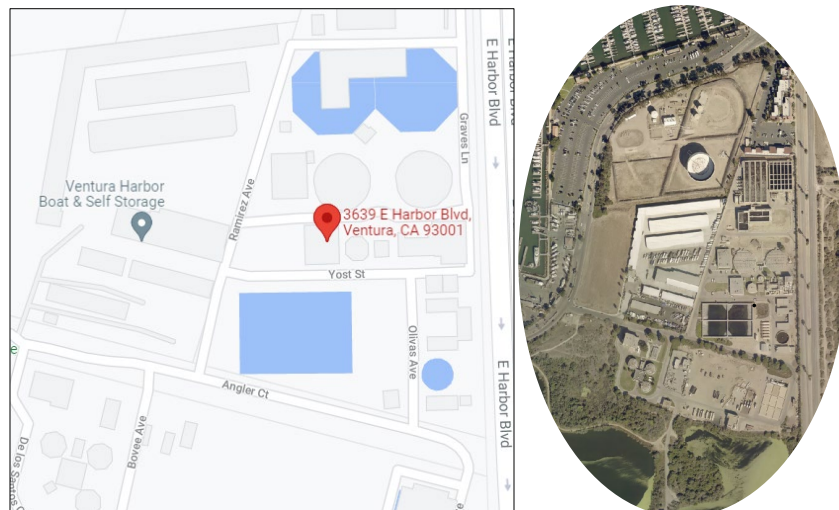


Figure 3: Location of City of San Buenaventura Wastewater Treatment Plant  
(Sources: Google Maps (2021) and Pictometry)

<sup>4</sup> On May 11, 2021, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors (acting as the Board of Directors for CSA 29) authorized the termination of the agreement between CSA 29 and Ventura Regional Sanitation District (VRSD) for the operation and maintenance of CSA 29's sewer collection system. Termination of the agreement will occur prior to March 31, 2022, by which time the Ventura County Water and Sanitation Department will have established three additional full-time equivalent positions to support CSA 29 facilities operation and maintenance.

CSA 29's jurisdictional area includes the unincorporated Rincon Point residential community, located at the northernmost point of the Ventura County coastline; however, this area has been provided sewer service by the Carpinteria Sanitary District (which provides sewer service to the adjacent area within Santa Barbara County to the north) since it was annexed to the Carpinteria Sanitary District in 2008 as part of a larger annexation that included the Rincon Point community on both sides of the Ventura/Santa Barbara County line. Pursuant to the provisions of Government Code § 56066, Santa Barbara County is the principal county for LAFCo purposes as it relates to the Carpinteria Sanitary District's service in Ventura County. CSA 29's jurisdictional area also includes the unincorporated community of La Conchita, south of Rincon Point, but the community's wastewater disposal is handled by individual septic systems that do not discharge into CSA 29's collection system. The northern reaches of CSA 29's service area includes the unincorporated community of Mussel Shoals, which is the community immediately south of La Conchita.

In 2020, the average system demand for CSA 29 was 67,612 gallons per day (GPD), and peak demand was 112,180 GPD. According to CSA 29 staff, design capacity for the collection infrastructure is consistent with the original design capacity of approximately 360 residential unit equivalents (RUEs). However, increased STEP tank sizes, and modifications to STEP tank pump settings and lift station equipment may increase the functional capacity of the system without modifications to pipeline infrastructure. Additionally, the general trend toward water conservation reduces sewer discharge volumes and therefore reduces demand on the collection system.

According to the Municipal Service Review for the City of San Buenaventura accepted by the Commission on February 21, 2018, the City's wastewater treatment plant is permitted to treat 14 million gallons per day (MGD) and treats less than 9 MGD. While flows are expected to increase to 11.4 MGD as a result of near-term development, buildout of the City's General Plan and demand within the anticipated service area is projected to generate 13.0 MGD.

## Sphere of Influence

Modification to the District's sphere of influence in four areas would cause the sphere to better conform to existing and anticipated service areas of the District, as described below and as depicted in Figures 4 and 5.

The reduction of the sphere would involve the exclusion of the area stretching north from the unincorporated community of La Conchita to the Ventura-Santa Barbara county line (consisting primarily of Highway 101), with La Conchita remaining within the CSA 29 sphere. County Water and Sanitation staff indicates that its existing service terminates at and includes the unincorporated community of Mussel Shoals, immediately south of La Conchita. While County Water and Sanitation staff does not foresee expansion of its system at this time, the potential need for sewer service to the La Conchita community (which is currently served exclusively by private septic systems) warrants retention of this area within the CSA 29 sphere.

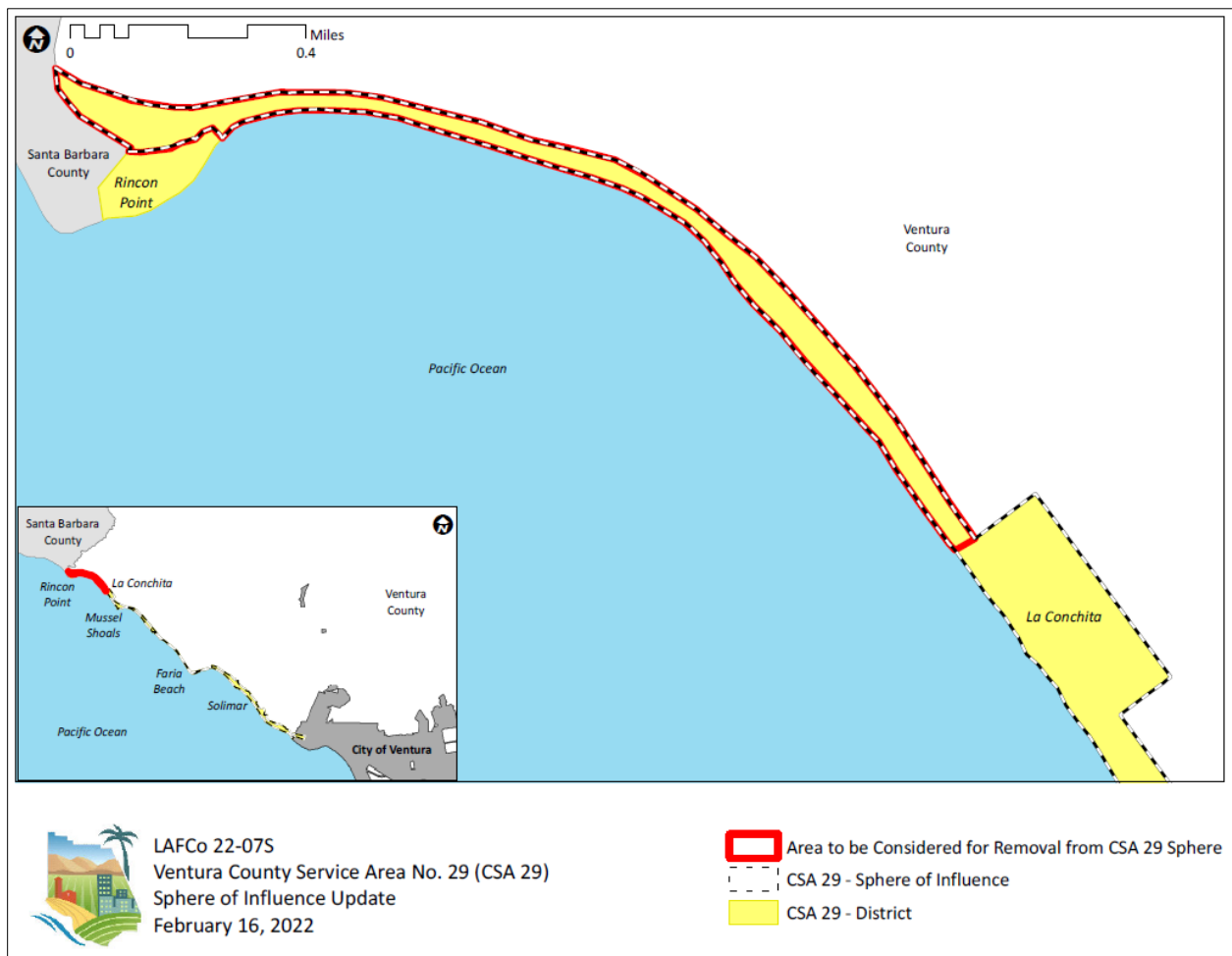


Figure 4: Area to be Considered for Removal from CSA 29 Sphere of Influence

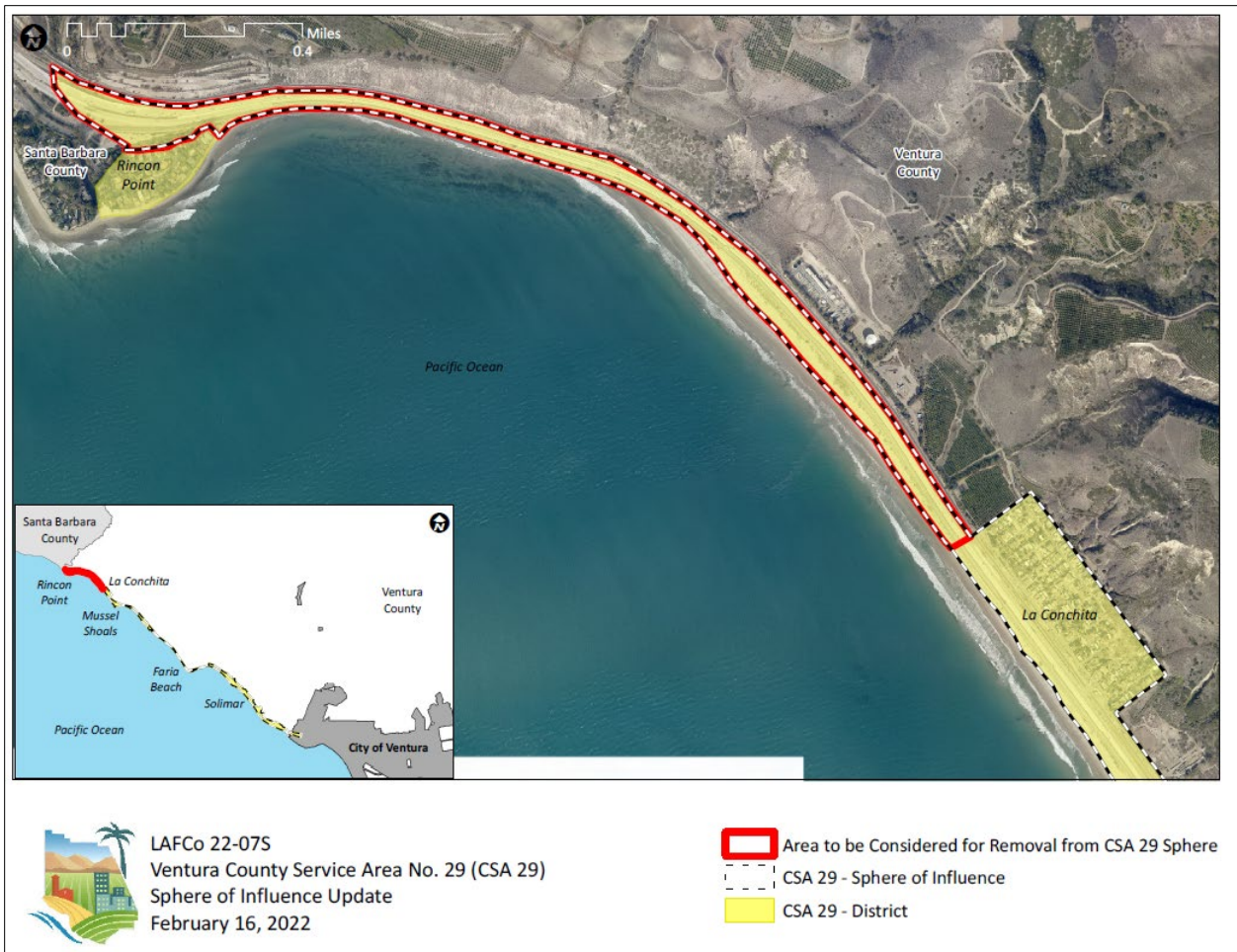


Figure 5: Area to be Considered for Removal from CSA 29 Sphere of Influence

## Written Determinations

The Commission is required to prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the subject areas provided below (Government Code § 56430(a)).

### 1. Growth and population projections for the affected area

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated 2010 population within CSA 29's jurisdictional boundary was 740 and within its sphere of influence was 717. The difference accounts for the fact that the sphere of influence covers a lesser area than the jurisdictional area (the sphere excludes the Ventura County portion of the Rincon Point community which is not served by CSA 29 and is instead served by the Carpinteria Sanitary District). CSA 29 staff estimates a current population of 803 within both its jurisdictional boundaries and its sphere of influence, with minor increases in population occurring as a result of infill development. CSA 29's service area is largely developed and is not anticipated to experience notable additional population growth.

### 2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence

A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80% of the statewide annual median household income (Government Code § 56033.5). No disadvantaged unincorporated communities are located within or contiguous to CSA 29's sphere of influence.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Present and planned capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services, and infrastructure needs or deficiencies

Wastewater services:

- CSA 29 provides wastewater collection service to most of the County's North Coast communities along the Pacific Coast Highway corridor between the Ventura/Santa Barbara County line and Highway 33 (i.e., Solimar Beach, Faria Beach, Mussel Shoals, and Seacliff), as well as to the Ventura Beach Recreational Vehicle Park.
- CSA 29's wastewater system consists of a Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) system that involves the discharge of wastewater into holding tanks from which it is periodically pumped into CSA 29's collection system and then conveyed to a sewage treatment plant (i.e., the City of San Buenaventura's wastewater treatment plant).
- CSA 29 is staffed by the Water and Sanitation Department of the Ventura County Public Works Agency.
- CSA 29 contracts with the VRSD for operation and maintenance of CSA 29's wastewater system; however, it is in the process of a transition to move all operation and maintenance services in-house, supported by the hiring of additional staff, except for occasional emergency services and period sewer line cleaning to be performed by VRSD.

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<sup>5</sup> According to Ventura LAFCo Commissioner's Handbook Section 3.2.5, Ventura LAFCo has identified Nyeland Acres (within the City of Oxnard's sphere of influence to the north of the city) and Saticoy (within the City of San Buenaventura's sphere of influence to the east of the city) as disadvantaged unincorporated communities.

- CSA 29's system has the capacity to handle 0.91 MGD of wastewater.
- In 2020, the average demand for the system was 67,612 gallons per day (GPD), and peak demand was 112,180 GPD.
- Population within CSA 29's boundaries is anticipated to remain stable, and CSA 29 has the ability to provide service at existing levels into the foreseeable future.
- CSA 29 does not have a master plan. Staff is currently considering development of a master plan, which would provide an overview of the capacity and condition of the existing system, as well as identify areas of focus for future infrastructure maintenance and improvement projects.
- Through the County, CSA 29 recently began using a utility management system (i.e., Sedaru), which allows staff to digitally view its mapped infrastructure as an overlay to the County's GIS data, and assists CSA 29 in analyzing its existing services and anticipated needs.
- Since 2008, the Carpinteria Sanitary District has provided wastewater services to the portion of the Rincon Point community located within unincorporated Ventura County (adjacent to the Santa Barbara County line). This area is no longer within CSA 29's sphere of influence.

#### **4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services**

- For FY 2020-21, revenues are expected to exceed expenditures by approximately \$77,000, and a projected favorable fund balance of \$4,000.
- CSA 29 has a balanced budget and appears to have the ability to finance the services it currently provides.
- CSA 29 indicates that it has no long-term debt.
- CSA 29 has a steady stream of revenue through service fees collected from its customers. It has predictable expenses related to operation and maintenance services, as well as administrative and management services provided by the County. Over the last three years, CSA 29 has maintained reserves ranging between 29 percent and 69 percent of total revenue.
- CSA 29 anticipates necessary capital improvements in the foreseeable future, including the replacement of several pumps, the electrical system, and sections of the sewer force main. Development of a master plan may result in a list of desired capital improvement projects, for which funding sources would need to be identified.
- CSA 29 is independently audited on a regular basis as part of the annual audit of the County. The most recent audit (March 25, 2021) prepared for the County was unqualified. An unqualified report reflects fair and transparent financial statements in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and statutory requirements.

#### **5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities**

- No opportunities for shared facilities were identified, although CSA 29 receives operational efficiencies through coordination with other agencies (i.e., the County of Ventura, VRSD, and City of San Buenaventura).

## 6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies

- CSA 29 is accountable to its constituents through its elected Board of Directors (i.e., the Ventura County Board of Supervisors), adherence to applicable government code sections, open and accessible meetings, and dissemination of information.
- CSA 29, through the County of Ventura, has adapted to the changing needs of public access as a result of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, by providing live internet access and public participation opportunities for its meetings.
- CSA 29 achieves operational and management efficiencies by being managed and staffed by the County of Ventura. Additionally, it has arrangements with various service providers. For example, it receives the following services from the County of Ventura: office space, management, accounting/auditing, legal counsel, real estate, and insurance. Furthermore, CSA 29 receives wastewater system operations and maintenance services from VRSD (for the time being, until CSA 29's agreement with VRSD is terminated and three new County positions are filled to support CSA 29's ability to perform operations and maintenance activities in-house), and wastewater treatment services from the City of San Buenaventura. Upon termination of the contract with VRSD, CSA 29 will continue to receive assistance from VRSD in emergency situations and for periodic sewer line cleaning.
- CSA 29, through the County of Ventura, is a member of the California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network WARN (CALWARN) program (which supports and promotes statewide emergency preparedness, disaster response, and mutual assistance processes for public and private water and wastewater utilities in coordination with the State Office of Emergency Services).
- The County Public Works Agency's Water and Sanitation Department maintains a website that contains general information about CSA 29, contact information, a summary of services, and projects recently completed and under construction. The website offers a Spanish translation option. CSA 29 could improve its transparency by clarifying that it is a dependent district that is managed and operated by the County of Ventura, and by posting links to its history, mission, enabling legislation, boundary map, summary of facilities, Board of Directors meeting information (agendas, staff reports, minutes, and recordings), current and historical budgets, studies and reports, most recent municipal service review completed by LAFCo, and the State Controller's "By the Numbers" (agency financial reporting information) and "Public Pay" (employee salary) webpages. Much of this information could likely be provided by means of links to the appropriate webpages of the County's website. Additionally, to improve the public's ability to easily access CSA 29 information, the utilities pages of the Water and Sanitation Department could be organized to include all CSA 29 information (e.g., including rates and charges, construction projects, and citizens' advisory committee meetings) into one central location.
- Development of a master plan would allow constituents to have a more transparent overview of the capacity and condition of the existing system operated by CSA 29, as well as enable them to be aware of and provide input regarding future infrastructure maintenance and improvement projects.

- CSA 29 staff was responsive in providing information for this MSR during the requested timeframe.

**7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by Commission policy**

- No other matters were identified.