

Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission

# Camarillo Sanitary District

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 Camarillo Sanitary District (District) using information obtained from multiple sources, including, but not limited to:

- **MSR Questionnaire:** A questionnaire supplied by LAFCo elicited general information about the District (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:** Ventura County and City of Camarillo General Plans provided information regarding land use, populations, and service levels;
- **District Documents:** Various District 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 District’s website provided supplementary and clarifying information; and
- **District Staff:** District staff provided supplementary and clarifying information.

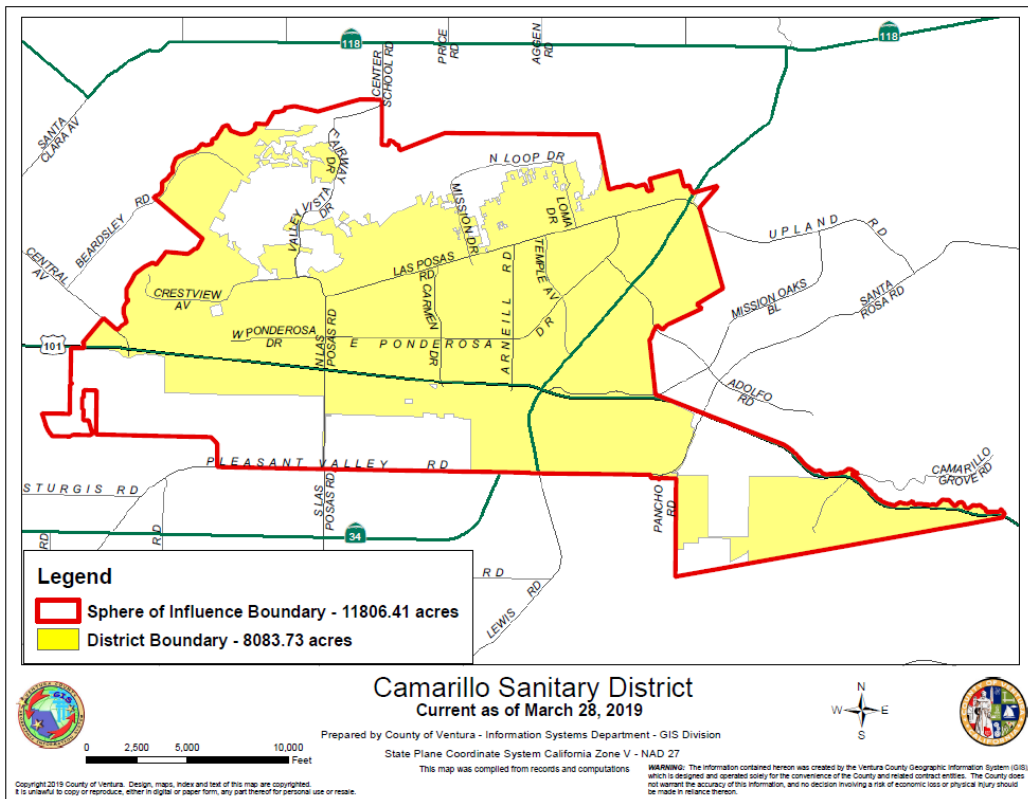
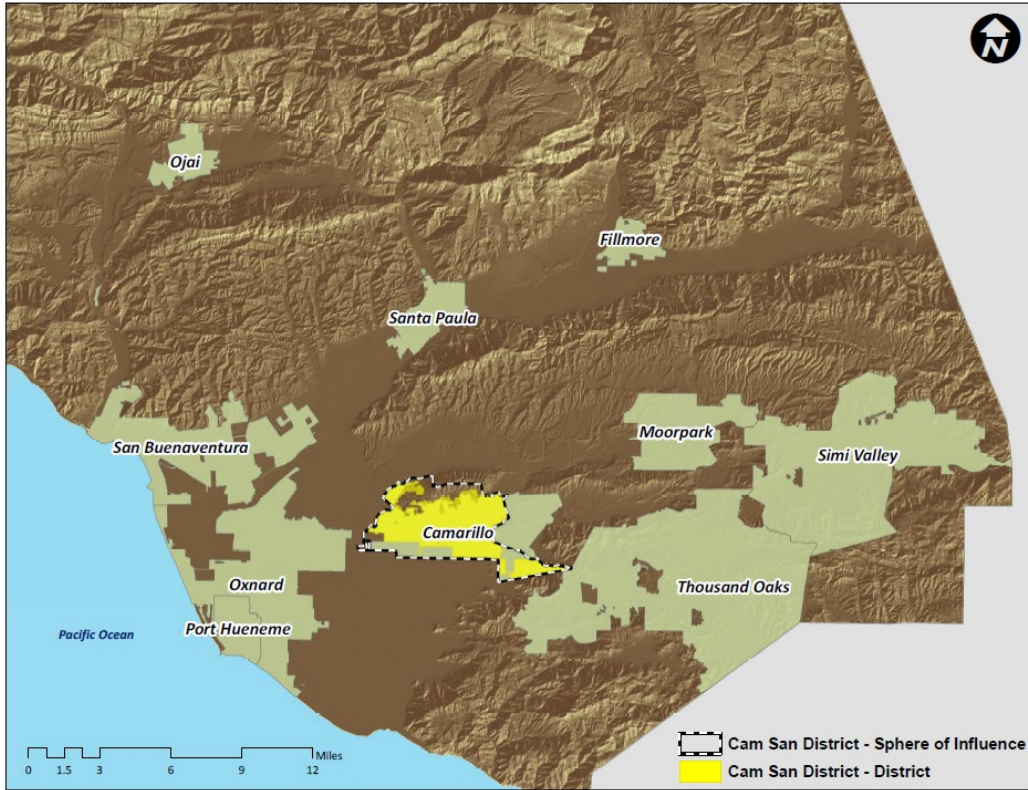
### ***Organization of the MSR***

This report is organized into several sections, as follows:

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

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



## Profile

The Camarillo Sanitary District (District), which is a dependent district of the City of Camarillo, provides wastewater collection and treatment service. It was formed in 1955, prior to the incorporation of the City of Camarillo (which occurred in 1964) and its service area includes the majority of the City and territory to the north of the City. Its jurisdictional area generally excludes the area within the City that is east of Calleguas Creek and north of Highway 101, which is provided sewer service by the Camrosa Water District. The areas that are outside the District boundaries (but within its sphere of influence) are either already being served by the District or are contemplated by the City for urban development.

The District's mission is provided as follows:

*To protect the environment, public health and safety in a cost-effective manner, through the collection and treatment of domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater, and ensuring full compliance with federal and state regulations.*

### Contact Information

District Manager	Greg Ramirez
District Office	601 Carmen Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 248, Camarillo, CA 93011-0248
Phone Number	(805) 388-5300
Website	<a href="http://cityofcamarillo.org">cityofcamarillo.org</a>
E-mail Addresses	citymanager@cityofcamarillo.org

### Governance Information

Formation Date	June 30, 1955
Legal Authority	<u>Health and Safety Code § 6400</u> (Sanitary District Act of 1923)
Type of District	Dependent
Board of Directors	Five members. Board of Directors consists of the Camarillo City Council. Elected to staggered, four-year terms of office (elections held in even-numbered years).
Board Meetings	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday of most months, beginning at 5:00 p.m. Broadcast live on the City's government cable television channel, and available for viewing on the City's website upon conclusion of the meeting.

### Services Provided

The District is authorized to provide wastewater collection and treatment service, and recycled water service.

Population and Area Information			
	Population <sup>1</sup>		Area (square miles)
Jurisdictional Area	52,876		12.62
Sphere of Influence Area	54,383		18.44

Staffing – Full Time Equivalent Positions <sup>2</sup>			
Executive/Management	Professional/Support	Operational	Total
2	12	16	30

Revenues		Expenditures	
Primary Revenue Sources		Primary Expenses	
Service Charges		Facility Operations	
Property Taxes		Administration/Salaries and Benefits	
Fees		Capital Projects	
FY 2020-21 Revenues (Budget)		FY 2020-21 Expenditures <sup>3</sup> (Budget)	
\$ 18,492,227		\$ 21,364,957 <sup>4</sup>	

Public Agencies with Overlapping Jurisdiction	
Calleguas Municipal Water District	Ventura County Air Pollution Control District
Camarillo Health Care District	Ventura County Fire Protection District
Camrosa Water District	Ventura County Resource Conservation District
City of Camarillo	Ventura County Service Area No. 14
Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency	Ventura County Service Area No. 32
Gold Coast Transit District	Ventura County Transportation Commission
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California	Ventura County Watershed Protection District
Pleasant Valley County Water District	Ventura County Waterworks District No. 19
Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District	Ventura Regional Sanitation District
United Water Conservation District	

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

<sup>2</sup> According to District staff, the City of Camarillo staffs the District. The duties associated with the executive/management and professional/support staff within the City involve a variety of projects and facilities managed by the City, including those associated with the District; however, operational staff is entirely dedicated to District activities. Therefore, the number of employees identified above does not reflect full-time positions assigned to the District.

<sup>3</sup> Expenditures exceed revenues by approximately \$2.9 million, and the difference is anticipated to be covered by fund balance estimated to be \$45 million.

<sup>4</sup> According to the District, its rates consider fund balance and are designed to ensure that minimum reserve funds (consistent with the District's reserve policy) are maintained to meet operational and capital needs of the District. When expenditures exceed revenues, fund balance is tapped to cover the difference, with the intent to recover funds from future rate revenues.

## **Growth and Population Projections**

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

District staff estimates that the population within its jurisdictional area is 49,100. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated 2010 population within the District's jurisdictional boundary was approximately 52,876 and within its sphere of influence was about 54,383. The District's Wastewater System Master Plan Update (December 1999) includes population projections through 2010, which considered a maximum City of Camarillo build-out population of 78,013. Estimating that 85 percent of the City's population is contained within the District's service area, a maximum population of 66,311 would be anticipated within the City portion of the District's service area. However, given that the City's population was estimated to be 69,924 in 2016 and estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau to be 69,521 in 2020, the District's population estimate in 1999 for 2010 appears to have been exceedingly high.



## Review of Municipal Services

The review of the District’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

The District provides wastewater collection and treatment service within the western portion of the City of Camarillo (i.e., the portion of the City generally located west of Calleguas Creek and north of the 101 Freeway totaling about ¾ of the City, although some areas to the south of the freeway are included, as well).<sup>5</sup> Wastewater is treated at the Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant (i.e., treatment plant) (located at 150 Howard Road, Camarillo, as shown in Figure 3 below). The facility currently treats about 4.0 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater, with a maximum design capacity of 7.25 MGD. The District maintains an estimated 158 miles of sewer lines and four pump stations.

As a result of the wastewater treatment process, the District has the ability to distribute treated wastewater as recycled/reclaimed water, as described in more detail below. Treated

wastewater that is not reused for beneficial use is discharged into Conejo Creek. Discharged water totaled 1,626 acre feet (AF) in 2018 and 1,697 AF in 2019, and then decreased significantly to 304 AF in 2020, which generally corresponds with the increase in recycled water use in and surrounding the District’s jurisdictional boundaries. Additionally, biosolids generated as a byproduct of the treatment process are sent off-site to a private composter for further treatment and beneficial reuse.

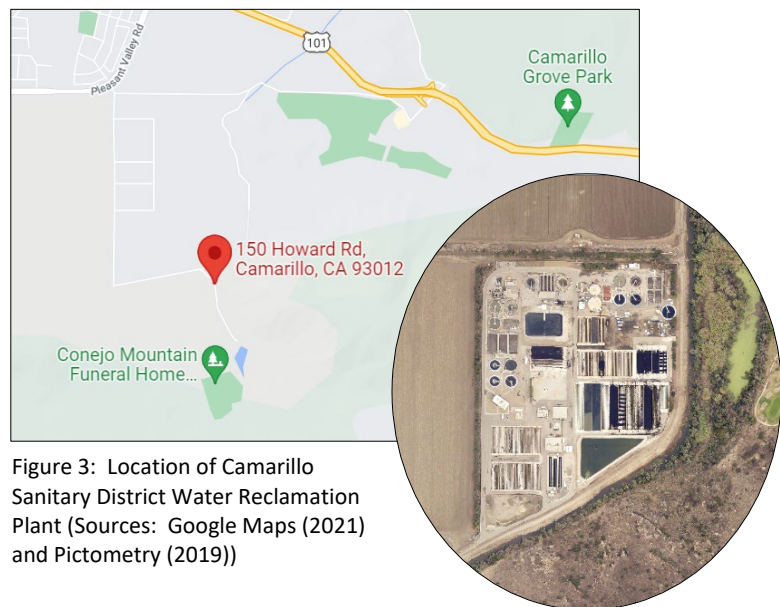


Figure 3: Location of Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant (Sources: Google Maps (2021) and Pictometry (2019))

The District’s current wastewater system master plan was prepared in 1999 (Camarillo Sanitary District - Wastewater System Master Plan Update (December 1999)). The District intends to prepare a new wastewater system master plan during 2022, which will provide updated growth and population projections, information regarding existing and anticipated wastewater flows,

<sup>5</sup> The Camrosa Water District provides wastewater services to the areas within the City generally located east of Calleguas Creek and south of the 101 Freeway.

details regarding wastewater treatment standards and future regulatory trends, and recommendations for system improvements.

According to the City's FY 2019-24 Capital Improvement Program, the District's Capital Improvement Plan, sewer system maintenance and improvement projects total nearly \$58 million, and include work to replace sewer lines, rehabilitate pump stations, improve flood protection and chemical systems at the treatment plant, and upgrade technology related to data gathering. The FY 2020-21 operating budget contains anticipated large expenditures including: (1) Daily Drive/101 Freeway sewer improvements (\$2,000,000), (2) Lewis Road to Flynn Road sewer replacement (\$2,310,000) and (3) flood improvements at the wastewater treatment facility (\$1,190,000).

### **Recycled Water Services**

According to the City of Camarillo 2020 Urban Water Management Plan, the District has served its customers with treated wastewater as recycled water since the treatment facility was constructed in 1955. The District distributes treated wastewater (i.e., reclaimed water) throughout the City as well as to farmland and Conejo Mountain Memorial Park located adjacent to the treatment plant. The District discharges excess treated wastewater into Conejo Creek. Until 2015, the District served approximately 1,428 acre feet per year (AFY) of recycled water to local agricultural land and to Conejo Mountain Memorial Park in the vicinity of the treatment facility. In 2014, the District began construction of a pipeline that would serve recycled water to customers along Pleasant Valley Road, including the Village at the Park community (i.e., landscaping and sports complex features). Recycled water use during 2015 was 1,757 AF. Deliveries totaled 2,209 AF in 2018, increased to 2,220 AF in 2019, and to 3,899 AF in 2020. Approximately 75 percent of recycled water is delivered within the unincorporated area, with the remaining deliveries occurring within the City of Camarillo. With the development of a recycled water storage reservoir planned to be operational in late 2023, the District will be able to increase its available recycled water service volume, anticipated to reach 4,497 AFY by 2025 and 5,014 AFY by 2035. The provision of non-potable/recycled water is exempt from Government Code § 56133, which otherwise requires LAFCo approval in order for a city or district to provide a new or extended service outside its jurisdictional boundary; therefore, the District is authorized to provide non-potable water outside its boundaries.

In 2019, the District completed the Camarillo Sanitary District Recycled Water Interconnection project, which allows the Camrosa Water District to receive surplus recycled water from the District. This project is mutually beneficial in that it provides an additional source of non-potable water supply to Camrosa's portfolio, reduces groundwater pumping, and imported water demand, and allows the Camarillo Sanitary District to reduce the volume of water discharged into Conejo Creek. Additionally, this program supports regional water supply resilience.

## Sphere of Influence

Approximately 6.7 acres, most of which is owned by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, are located outside the District’s jurisdictional boundary but within the District’s sphere of influence, and are not anticipated to receive service in the foreseeable future. Nearly all of this area consists of Calleguas Creek. The District’s service area in this vicinity is limited to the west side of Calleguas Creek, and infrastructure on the east side of the drainage channel is not necessary or practical. A reduction in the sphere (as depicted in Figures 4 and 5) would retain within the sphere the portion of St. John’s Seminary that is within the City and west of Calleguas Creek, and would cause the District’s sphere of influence boundary to better conform to existing parcel boundaries and the District’s service boundary.

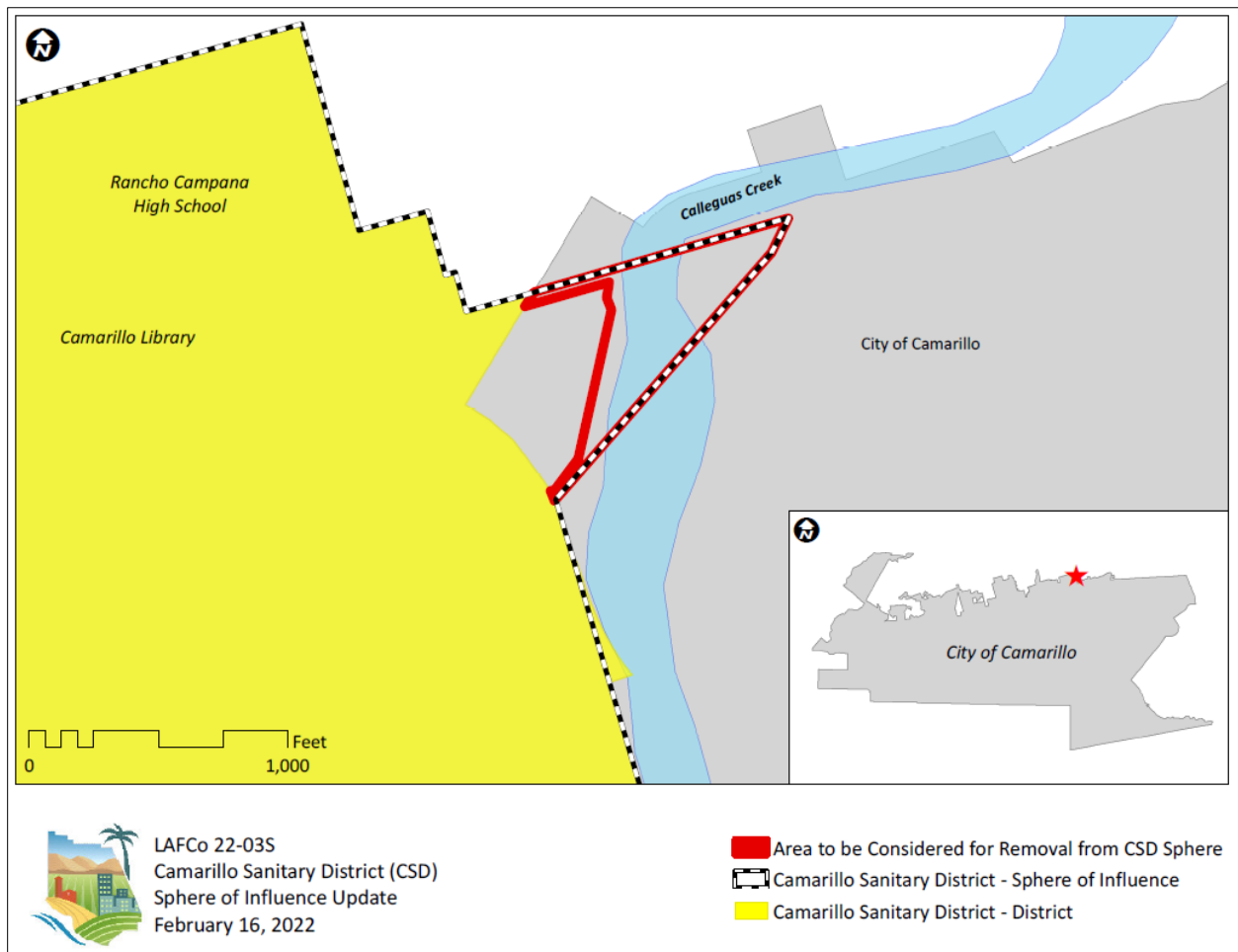


Figure 4: Area to be Considered for Removal from Camarillo Sanitary District Sphere of Influence

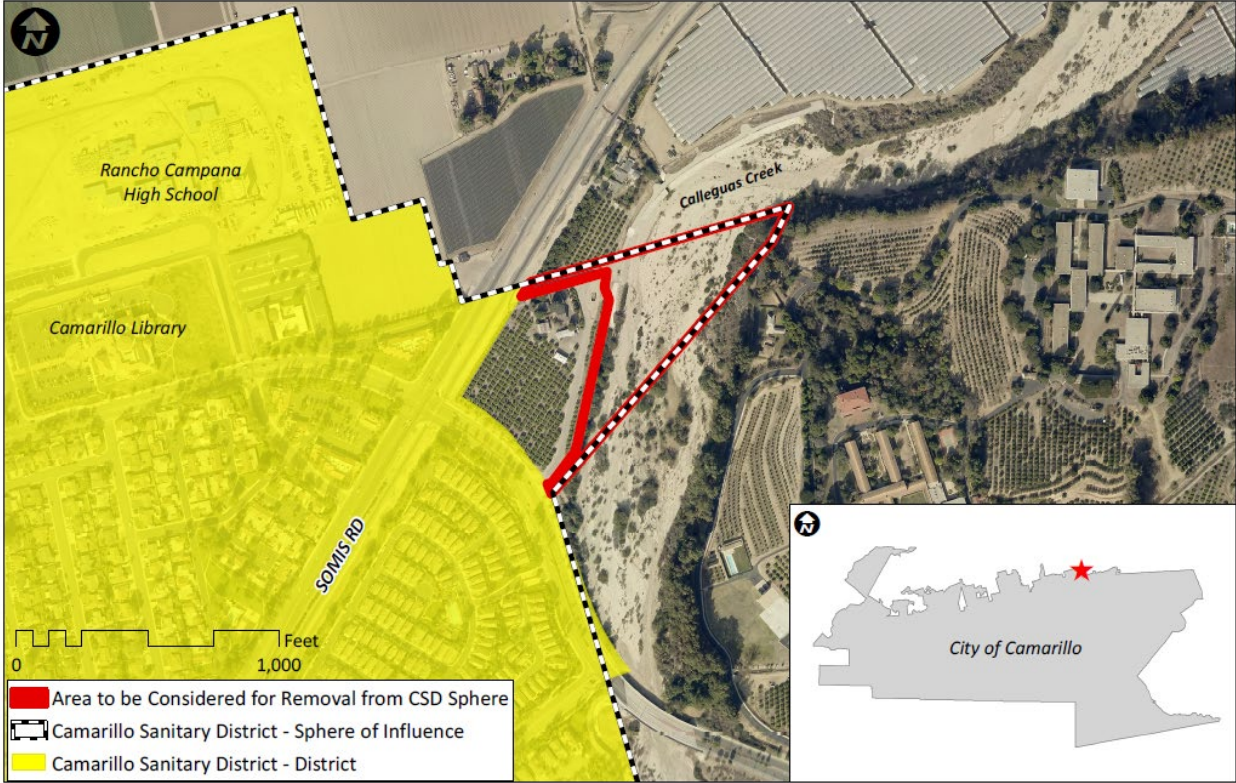


Figure 5: Area to be Considered for Removal from Camarillo Sanitary District Sphere of Influence

## 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

The District estimates that the population within its jurisdictional area is 49,100. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated 2010 population within the District's jurisdictional boundary was approximately 52,876 and within its sphere of influence was about 54,383. The District's Wastewater System Master Plan Update (December 1999) includes population projections through 2010, which considered a maximum City of Camarillo build-out population of 78,013. Estimating that 85 percent of the City's population is contained within the District's service area, a maximum population of 66,311 would be anticipated within the City portion of the District's service area. However, given that the City's population was estimated to be 69,924 in 2016 and projected to reach 73,923 in 2020, the District's population estimate in 1999 for 2010 appears to have been exceedingly high.

### 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 percent of the statewide annual median household income (Government Code § 56033.5). No disadvantaged unincorporated communities are located within or contiguous to the District's sphere of influence.<sup>6</sup>

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

Wastewater services:

- The District provides wastewater collection and treatment service to approximately 75 percent of the land area within the City as well as areas surrounding the City.
- The District treats an average of 4 MGD and has the ability to treat 7.25 MGD. Based on available information, the District's collection infrastructure and treatment facility are adequate to meet current and anticipated demands.
- The District anticipates an update to its 1999 Wastewater System Master Plan to be completed during 2022 which will provide updated information to guide the District's actions regarding system maintenance, improvements, and facility expansion.

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<sup>6</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.

#### Recycled water services:

- The District provides recycled water, which consists of treated wastewater generated at its wastewater treatment facility, for agricultural and landscaping irrigation purposes, in and surrounding its jurisdictional boundaries.
- Construction of a recycled water pipeline in 2014 has expanded the District's ability to reach customers in demand of recycled water.
- The District has provided consistently increasing volumes of recycled water to its customers, from 1,757 AF during 2015 to 3,899 AF in 2020. With the addition of a storage reservoir that is expected to be operational by 2022 the District anticipates that it will have the ability to serve 4,497 AFY by 2025 and 5,014 AFY by 2035.
- The provision of non-potable/recycled water is exempt from Government Code § 56133; therefore, the District is authorized to provide non-potable water outside its boundaries.

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

- The District has a balanced budget, when considering that it relies on fund balance to cover expenditures that exceed revenues. The District adjusts its service rates, when appropriate, to ensure that its administration and operations are sufficiently funded.
- It appears that the District has the ability to finance the services it currently provides.
- The District's bond rating is AA+ (Standard and Poor's), which reflects that bonds issued by the District are generally considered to be safe investments, and that the District has the ability to fulfill its financial obligations to its bond holders.
- The District is independently audited on a regular basis. According to the District, the most recent audit (November 17, 2021) prepared for the District 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**

- Although the District's operations are entirely independent of the Camrosa Water District, the District has the infrastructure in place and ability to treat a portion of the wastewater generated within the Camrosa Water District's service area during times of unscheduled interruptions in service or maintenance activities, or in an emergency situation.

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

- The District is accountable to its constituents through its elected Board of Directors (i.e., the Camarillo City Council), adherence to applicable government code sections, open and accessible meetings, and dissemination of information.
- The District maintains pages within the City of Camarillo's website that include basic information about the District, a summary of District services, current and recent Board of Directors meeting agendas and staff reports, live streaming of Board of Directors

meetings (i.e., City Council meetings), the Wastewater Master Plan and other documents, and an online tour of the District's facilities. The District could improve its transparency by clarifying that it is a dependent district that is managed and operated by the City of Camarillo and that its budget is contained within the City's budget, posting links to the District's history, enabling legislation, boundary map, summary of facilities, most recent municipal service review completed by LAFCo, financial audits, and the State Controller's "By the Numbers" (agency financial reporting information) and "Public Pay" (employee salary) webpages, and posting its mission statement on its website. Finally, the District may wish to consider inclusion of a Spanish translation option on its website.

- The District 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.
- The District achieves operational and management efficiencies by being managed and staffed by the City of Camarillo, and if necessary arrangements are in place with the Ventura Regional Sanitation District to provide temporary wastewater system operations and maintenance support services.

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

- No other matters were identified.