



DIVISION 4 – SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

CHAPTER 3 – STANDARDS FOR DETERMINING, UPDATING AND AMENDING SPHERE OF INFLUENCE BOUNDARIES

SECTION 4.3.2 AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

4.3.2.1 Findings and Criteria for Prime Agricultural and Open Space Land Conversion: LAFCo will approve sphere of influence amendments and updates which are likely to result in the conversion of prime agricultural or open space land use to other uses only if the Commission finds that the amendment or update will lead to planned, orderly, and efficient development. For the purposes of this policy, a sphere of influence amendment or update leads to planned, orderly, and efficient development only if all of the following criteria are met:

- (a) The territory is likely to be developed within 5 years and has been designated for non-agricultural or open space use by applicable general and specific plans.
- (b) Insufficient non-prime agricultural or vacant land exists within the sphere of influence of the agency that is planned and developable for the same general type of use.
- (c) The proposal will have no significant adverse effects on the physical and economic integrity of other prime agricultural or open space lands.
- (d) The territory is not within an area subject to a Greenbelt Agreement adopted by a city and the County of Ventura. If a City proposal involves territory within an adopted Greenbelt area, LAFCo will not approve the proposal unless all parties to the Greenbelt Agreement amend the Greenbelt Agreement to exclude the affected territory.
- (e) The use or proposed use of the territory involved is consistent with local plan and policies.

4.3.2.2 Findings that Insufficient Non-prime Agricultural or Vacant Land Exists: The Commission will not make affirmative findings that insufficient non-prime agricultural or vacant land exists within the sphere of influence of the agency unless the applicable jurisdiction has prepared a detailed alternative site analysis which at a minimum includes:

- (a) An evaluation of all vacant, non-prime agricultural lands within the sphere of influence and within the boundaries of the jurisdiction that could be developed for the same or similar uses.
- (b) An evaluation of the re-use and redevelopment potential of developed areas within the sphere of influence and within the boundaries of the jurisdiction for the same or similar uses.
- (c) Determinations as to why non-prime agricultural and vacant lands and potential re-use and redevelopment sites are unavailable or undesirable for the same or similar uses, and why conversion of prime agricultural or open space lands are necessary for the planned, orderly, and efficient development of the jurisdiction.

4.3.2.3 Impacts on Adjoining Prime Agricultural or Open Space Lands: In making the determination whether conversion will adversely impact adjoining prime agricultural or open space lands, the Commission will consider the following factors:

- (a) The prime agricultural and open space significance of the territory included in the sphere of influence amendment or update relative to other agricultural and open space lands in the region.
- (b) The economic viability of the prime agricultural lands to be converted.
- (c) The health and well being of any urban residents adjacent to the prime agricultural lands to be converted.
- (d) Whether public facilities related to the proposal would be sized or situated so as to facilitate the conversion of prime agricultural or open space land outside of the agency's proposed sphere of influence, or will be extended through prime agricultural or open space lands outside the agency's proposed sphere of influence.
- (e) Whether natural or man-made barriers serve to buffer prime agricultural or open space lands outside of the agency's sphere of influence from the effects of the proposal.
- (f) Applicable provisions of local general plans, applicable ordinances that require voter approval prior to the extension of urban services or changes to general plan designations, Greenbelt Agreements, applicable growth-management policies, and statutory provisions designed to protect agriculture or open space.
- (g) Comments and recommendations by the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner.