



Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

Guidelines for Orderly Development

The “Guidelines for Orderly Development” have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors, all City Councils within Ventura County and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). They refine the guidelines originally adopted in 1969 and maintain the consistent theme that urban development should be located within incorporated cities whenever or wherever practical.

The revision of these Guidelines in December 1996 culminated an effort during the year by the County, Cities and LAFCO to improve the clarity of relationships between local agencies with respect to urban development projects.

Intent of Guidelines

- Clarify the relationship between the Cities and the County with respect to urban planning
- Facilitate a better understanding regarding development standards and fees
- Identify the appropriate governmental agency responsible for making determinations on land use requests

Jurisdictional Framework

The Guidelines are a unique effort to encourage urban development to occur within Cities; enhance the regional responsibility of County government; and facilitate the orderly planning and development of Ventura County by:

- Providing a framework for cooperative intergovernmental relations.
- Allowing for urbanization in a manner that will accommodate the development goals of the individual communities while conserving the resources of the County.
- Promoting efficient and effective delivery of community services for existing and future residents.
- Identifying in a manner understandable to the general public the planning and service responsibilities of local governments providing urban services.

General Policies

- Urban development should occur, whenever and wherever practical, within incorporated cities which exist to provide a full range of municipal services and are responsible for urban land use planning.
- The Cities and the County should strive to produce general plans, ordinances and policies which will fulfill these Guidelines.

Policies Within Spheres of Influence

- Applicants for land use permits or entitlements for urban uses shall be encouraged to apply to the City to achieve their development goals and discouraged from applying to the County.
- The City is primarily responsible for local land use planning and providing municipal services.
- Prior to being developed for urban purposes or to receiving municipal services, land should be annexed to the City.
- Annexation to the City is preferable to the formation of new or expansion of existing County service areas.
- Land uses allowed by the County without annexation should be equal to or more restrictive than land uses allowed by the City.
- Development standards and capital improvement requirements imposed by the County for new or expanding developments should not be less than those imposed by the City.

Policies Within Areas of Interest Where a City Exists

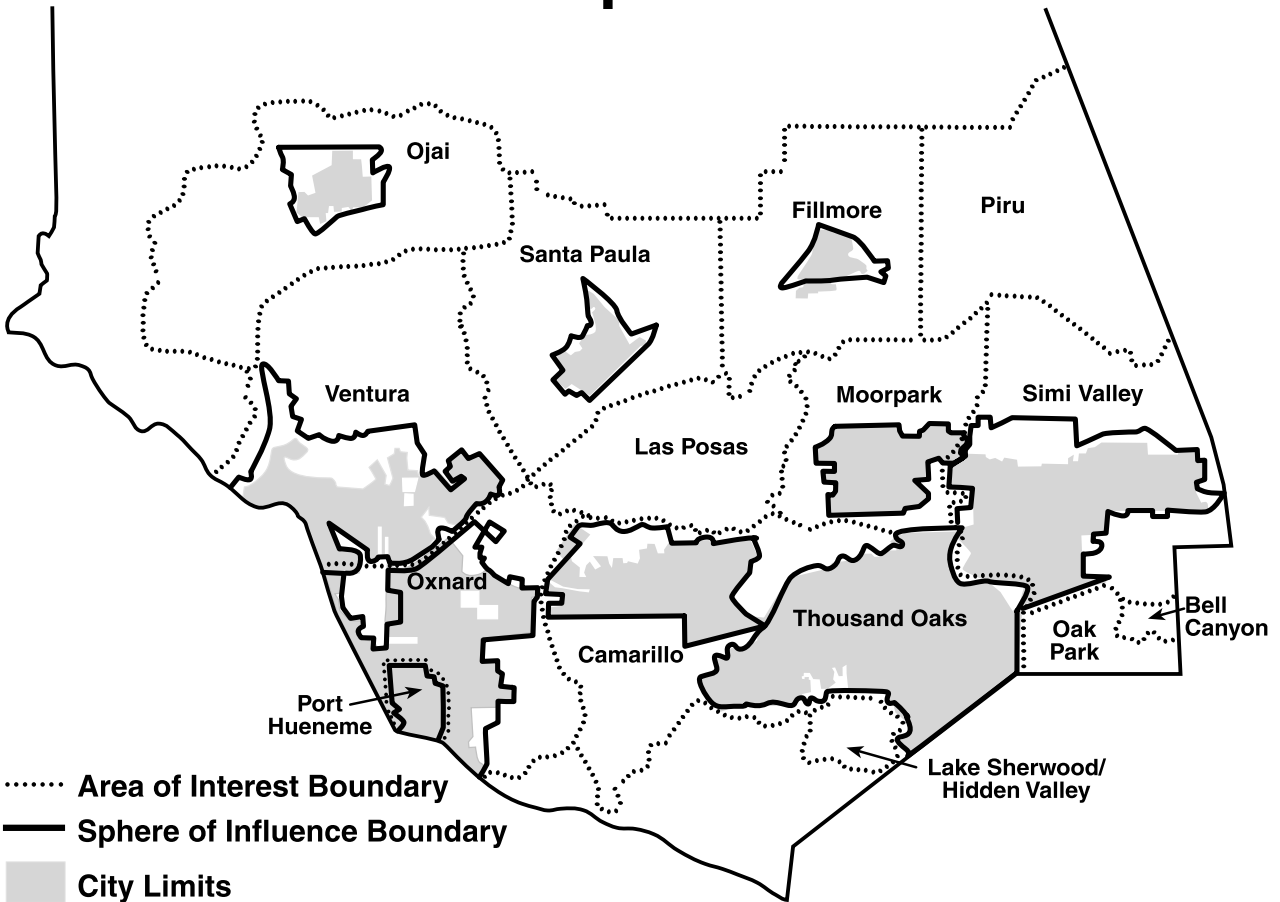
(outside that City's Sphere of Influence)

- Applications for discretionary land use permits or entitlements shall be referred to the City for review and comment. The County shall respond to all comments received from the City.
- The County is primarily responsible for local land use planning, consistent with the general land use goals and objectives of the City.
- Urban development should be allowed only within Existing Communities as designated on the County General Plan.
- Existing Communities as designated on the County General Plan should financially support County-administered urban services which are comparable to those urban services provided by the Cities.

Policies Within Areas of Interest Where No City Exists

- The County is responsible for land use planning and for providing municipal services.
- Urban development should only be allowed in Unincorporated Urban Centers or Existing Communities as designated in the County General Plan.
- Urban development in Unincorporated Urban Centers should only be allowed when an Area Plan has been adopted by the County, to ensure the proposed development is consistent with the intent of the Guidelines.

Areas of Interest/Spheres of Influence



Definitions

AREAS OF INTEREST- A plan adopted by LAFCO which divides the County into major geographic areas reflective of community and planning identity. Within each Area of Interest, there is to be no more than one city (but there will not necessarily be a city in each Area). Areas of Interest also serve as planning referral boundaries of the County Planning Division.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS - Local regulations which determine the provision of essential services and infrastructure within designated land use districts or jurisdictions and which control the architectural and engineering design of buildings, structures and roadways.

EXISTING COMMUNITY- A land use designation of the County General Plan which identifies existing urban residential, commercial or industrial enclaves located outside Urban designated areas (i.e., cities or Unincorporated Urban Centers). An Existing Community may include uses, densities, building intensities and zoning designations which are normally limited to Urban designated areas but do not qualify as Unincorporated Urban Centers.

This designation has been established to recognize existing land uses; to contain these enclaves within specific areas so as to prevent further expansion; and to limit the building intensity and land use to previously established levels.

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCO)- A regulatory commission empowered by State law to coordinate logical and timely changes in local government boundaries; conduct special studies which review way to reorganize, simplify and streamline government structure; and prepare Spheres of Influence for each city and special district.

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE - Plans adopted by LAFCO which designate the probable boundaries of each city and special district. The adoption of Spheres of Influence is required by Section 56425 of the Government Code.

UNINCORPORATED URBAN CENTER - A term of the County General Plan which refers to an existing or planned urban community which is located in an Area of Interest where no city exists. The Unincorporated Urban Center represents the focal center for community and planning activities within the Area of Interest, and may be a candidate for future incorporation.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT- Development shall be considered urban if it meets any of the following criteria:

1. It would require the establishment of new community sewer systems or the significant expansion of existing community sewer systems
2. It would result in the creation of residential lots less than two (2) acres in area; or
3. It would result in the establishment of commercial or industrial uses which are neither agriculturally-related nor related to the production of mineral resources.