



VENTURA LOCAL AGENCY  
FORMATION COMMISSION

# Constraints to Urban Development in Ventura County



# Land Use & Growth Management in Ventura County

- **City Incorporations** – Shifted electoral power from unincorporated County to the cities.
- **Constraints to Development in Ventura County**
  - **Greenbelts** - Areas between cities to be preserved for agriculture and open space.
  - **Guidelines for Orderly Development** - Urban development and services to occur within cities.
  - **SOAR Initiatives/Ordinances** – Voter control of city boundaries & County general plan amendments.
- **LAFCo** – Where does LAFCo fit in?



# Incorporation of East Ventura County Cities



## Cities Incorporated Prior to 1960

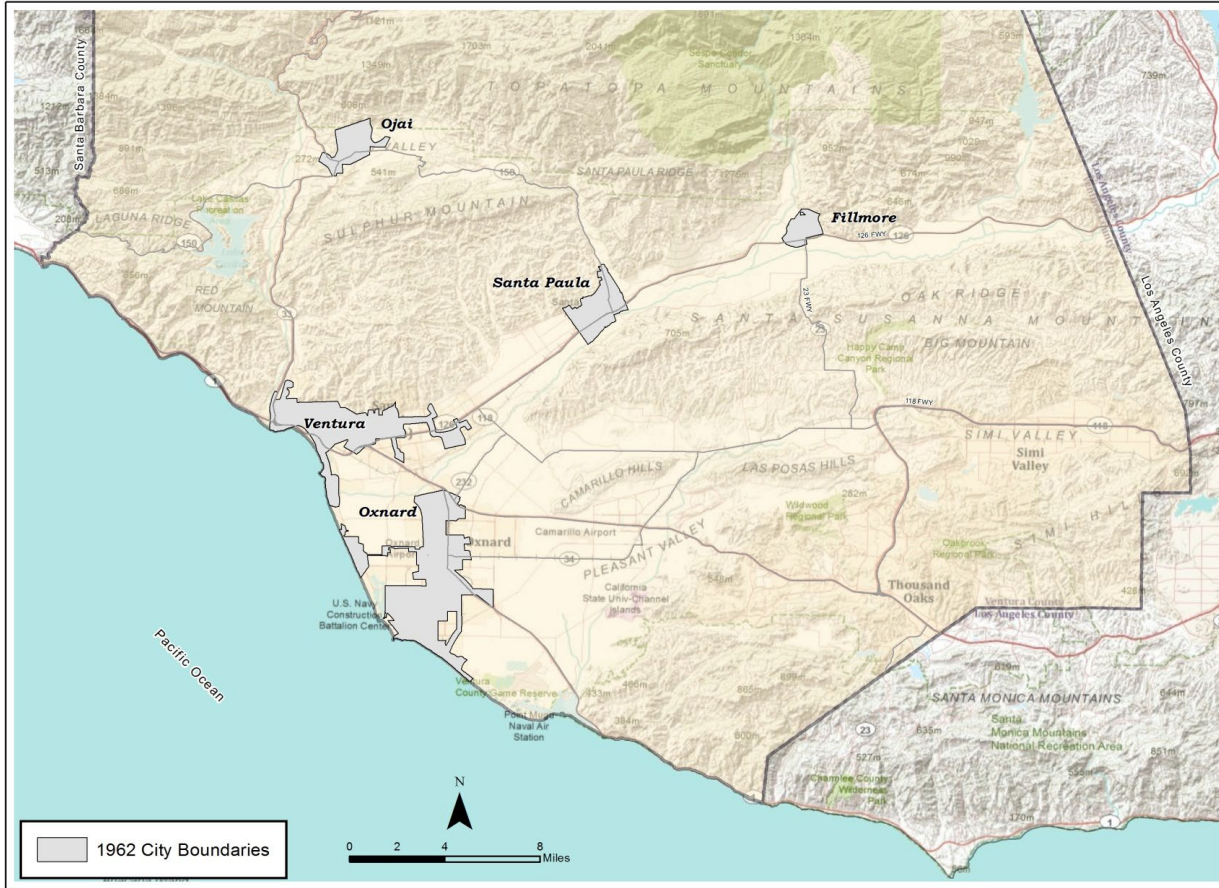
- San Buenaventura 1866
- Santa Paula 1902
- Oxnard 1903
- Fillmore 1914
- Ojai 1921
- Port Hueneme 1948



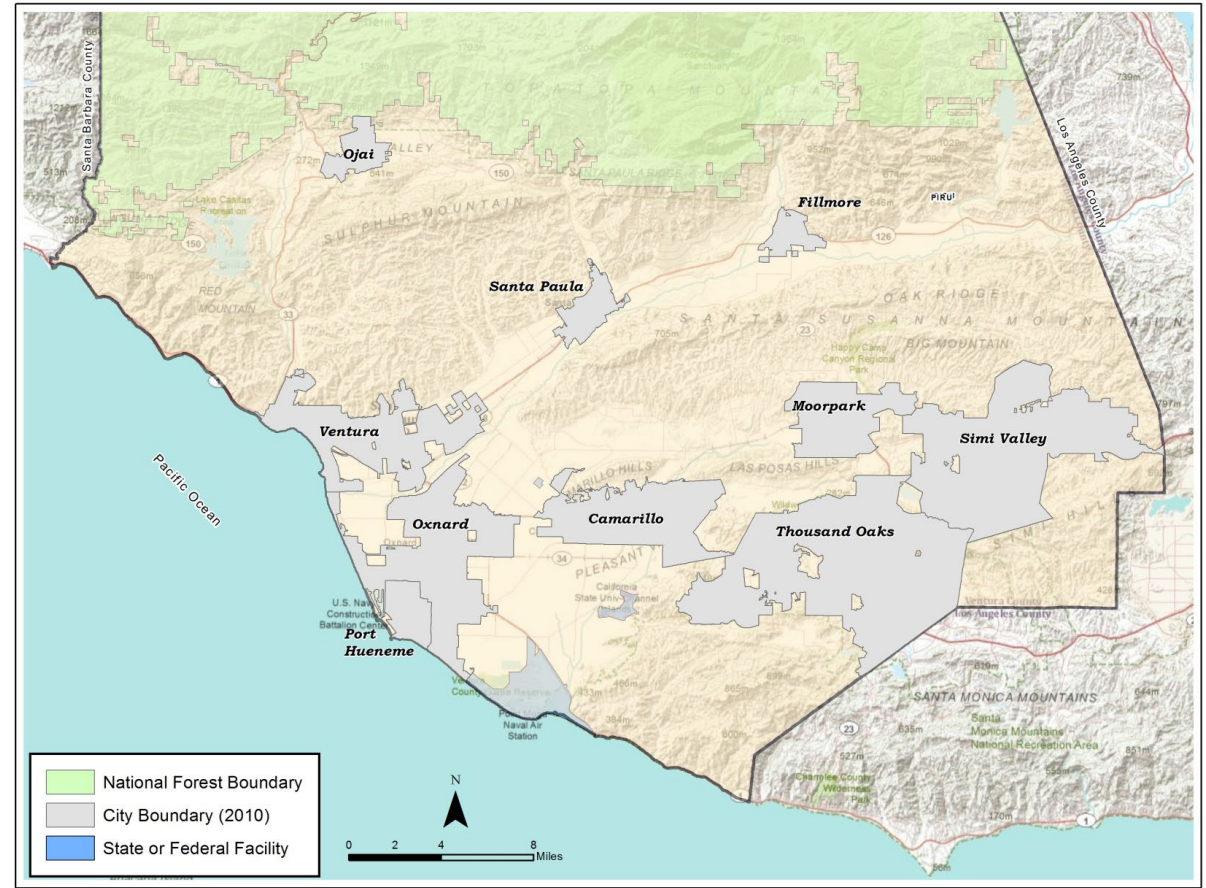
## City Incorporations After 1960

- Thousand Oaks 1964
- Camarillo 1964
- Simi Valley 1969
- Moorpark 1983

# 1962



# 2010





# Incorporations

- Significantly reduced the percentage of County residents living in the unincorporated area:
  - 1960 = 50% of County population
  - 1990 = 13% of County population
  - 2010 = 11% of County population
  - 2022 = 11% of County population
- Shifts electoral power and sales tax to the cities.





## Constraints to Development in Ventura County

- **Greenbelts** - Areas between cities to be preserved for agriculture and open space.
- **Guidelines for Orderly Development** - Urban development and services to occur within cities.
- **SOAR Initiatives/Ordinances** – Voter control of city boundaries & County general plan amendments.



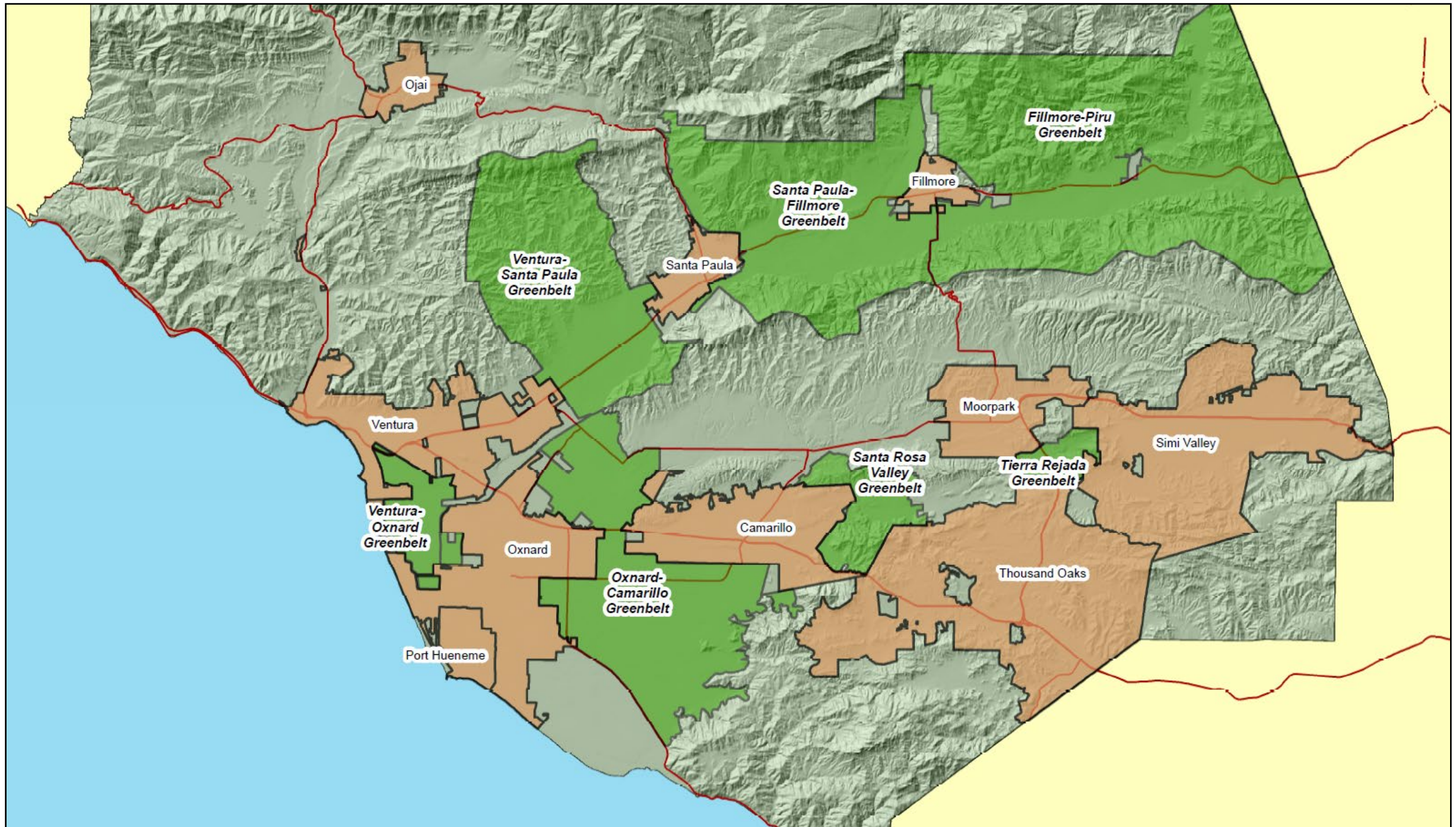


# Greenbelts in Ventura County



# What are Greenbelts?

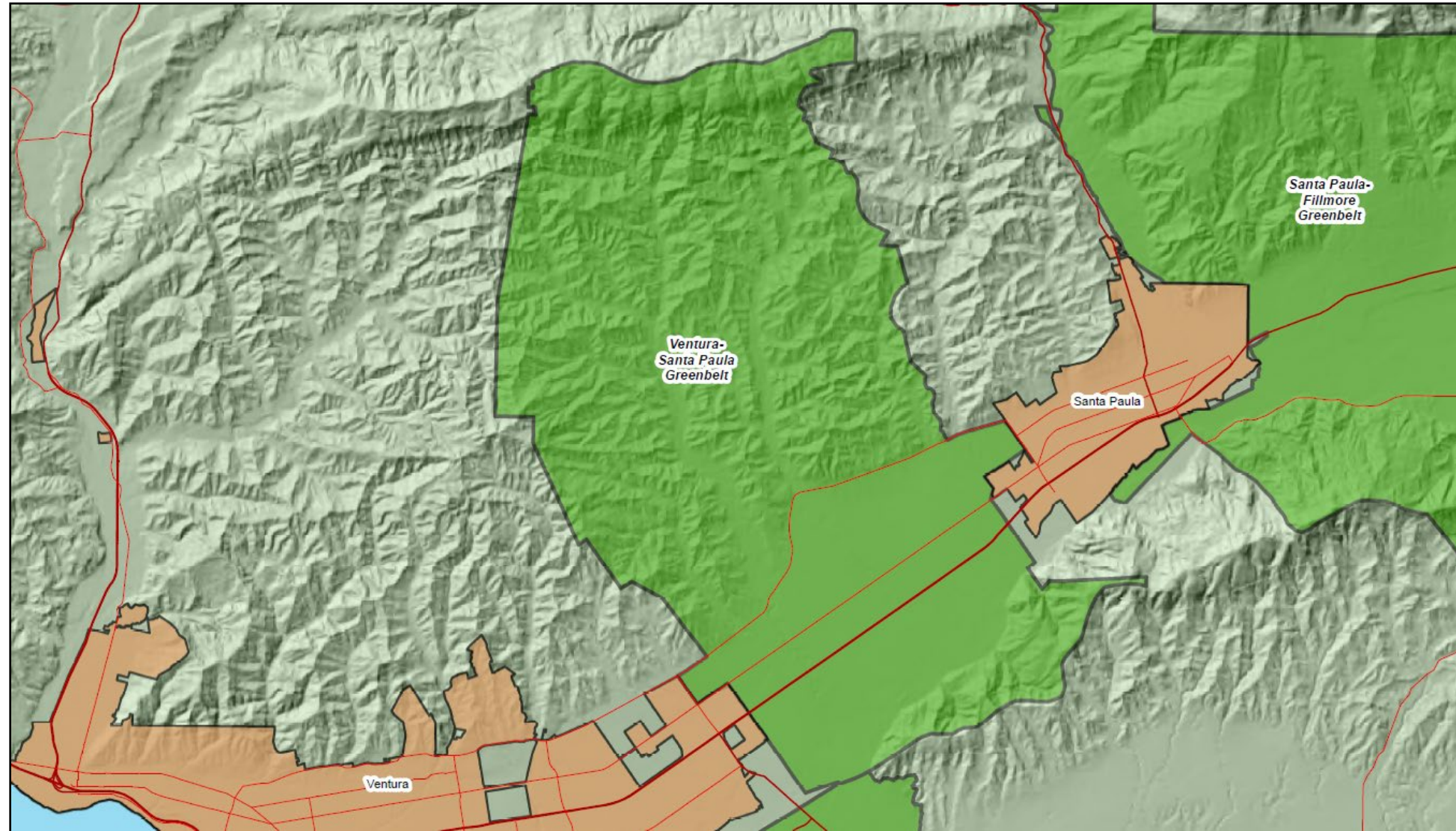
- Agreements between cities and the County:
  - Cities will not annex territory in a greenbelt
  - County will not approve urban development in a greenbelt
- There are seven Greenbelts covering approximately 162,000 acres of agricultural and open space lands





# Ventura – Santa Paula Greenbelt

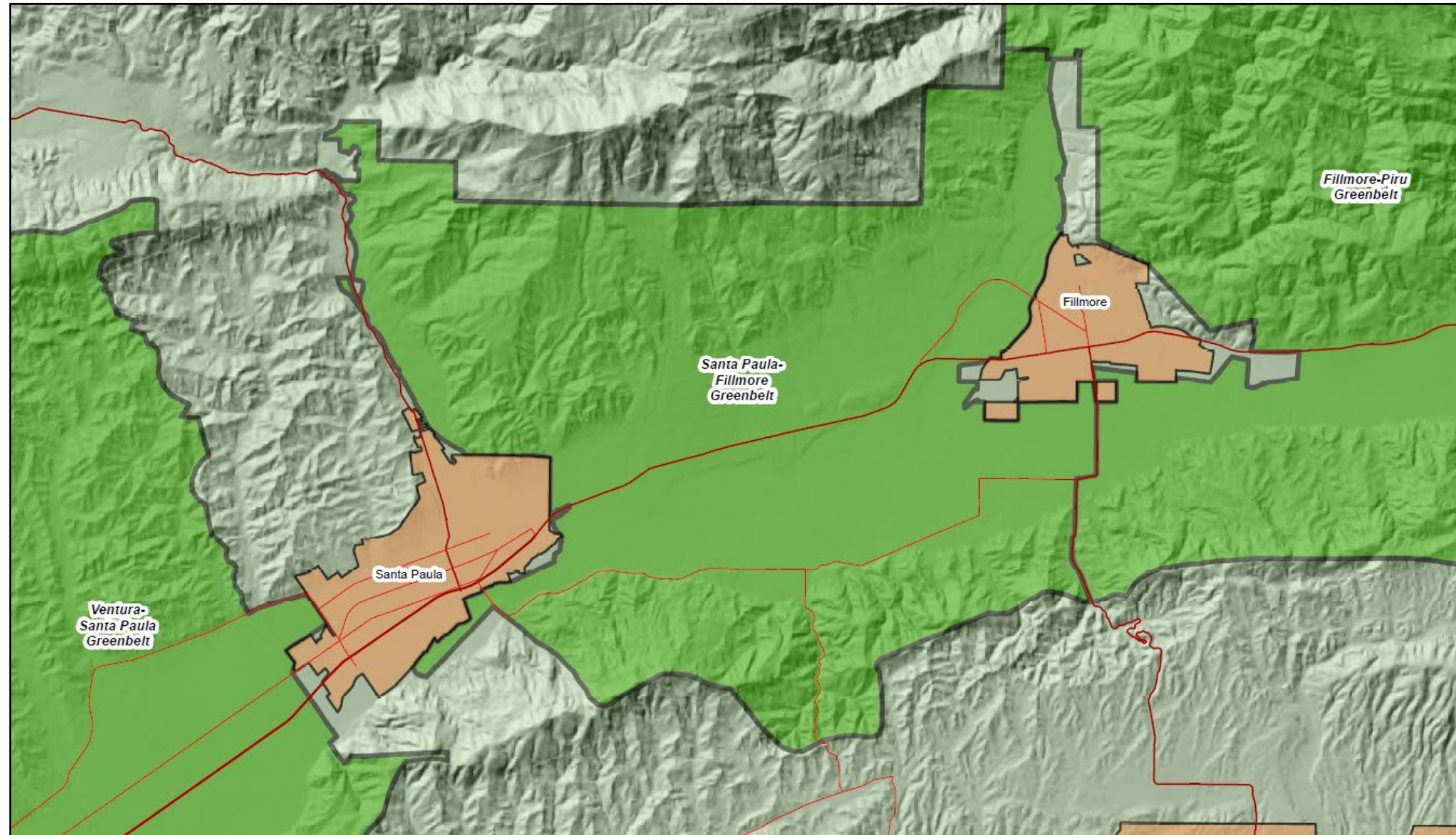
- 1967
- Ventura and Santa Paula. County added later
- 28,000 acres





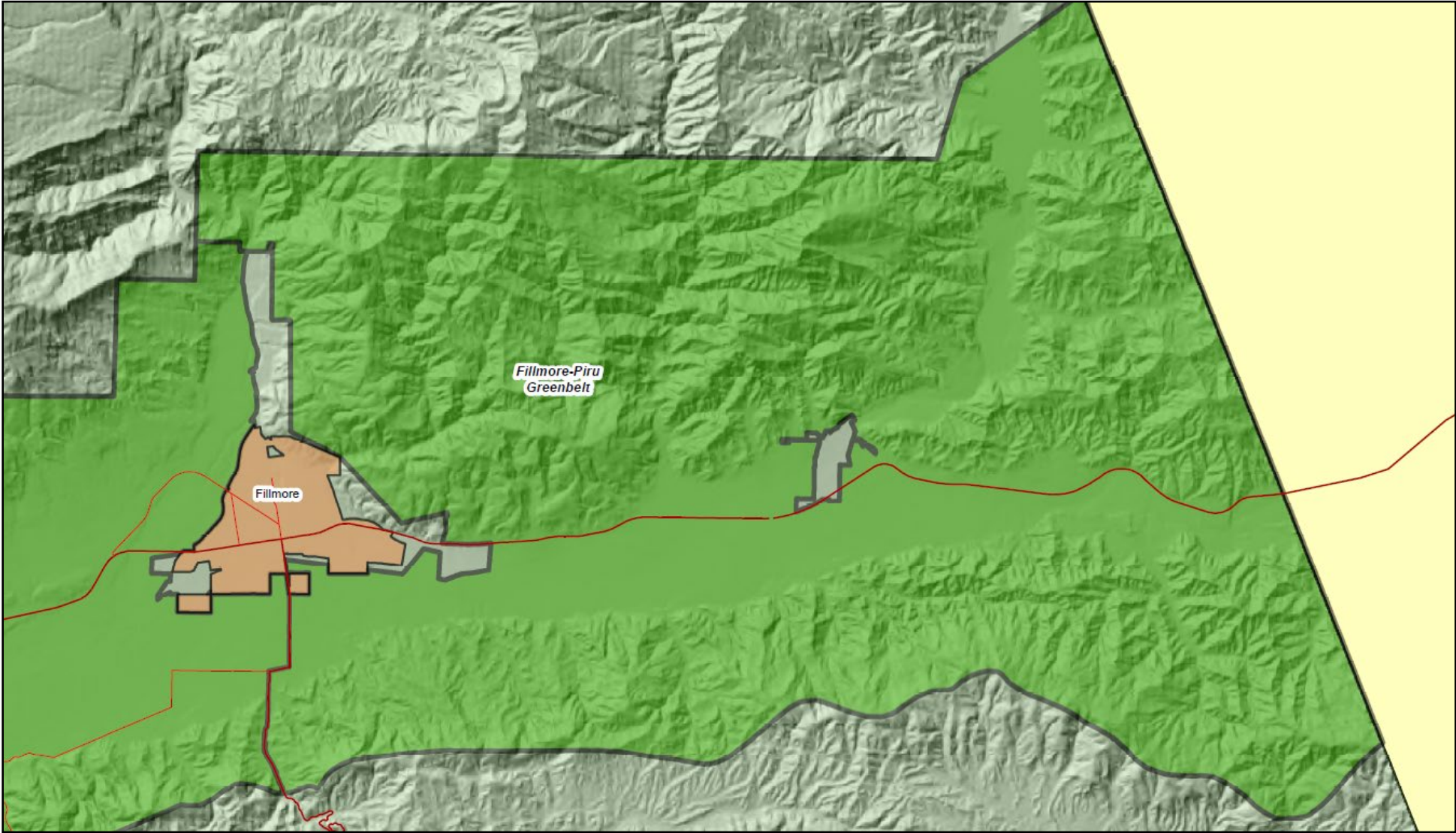
# Santa Paula - Fillmore Greenbelt

- 1980
- Santa Paula, Fillmore, and County
- 31,500 acres



# Fillmore – Piru Greenbelt

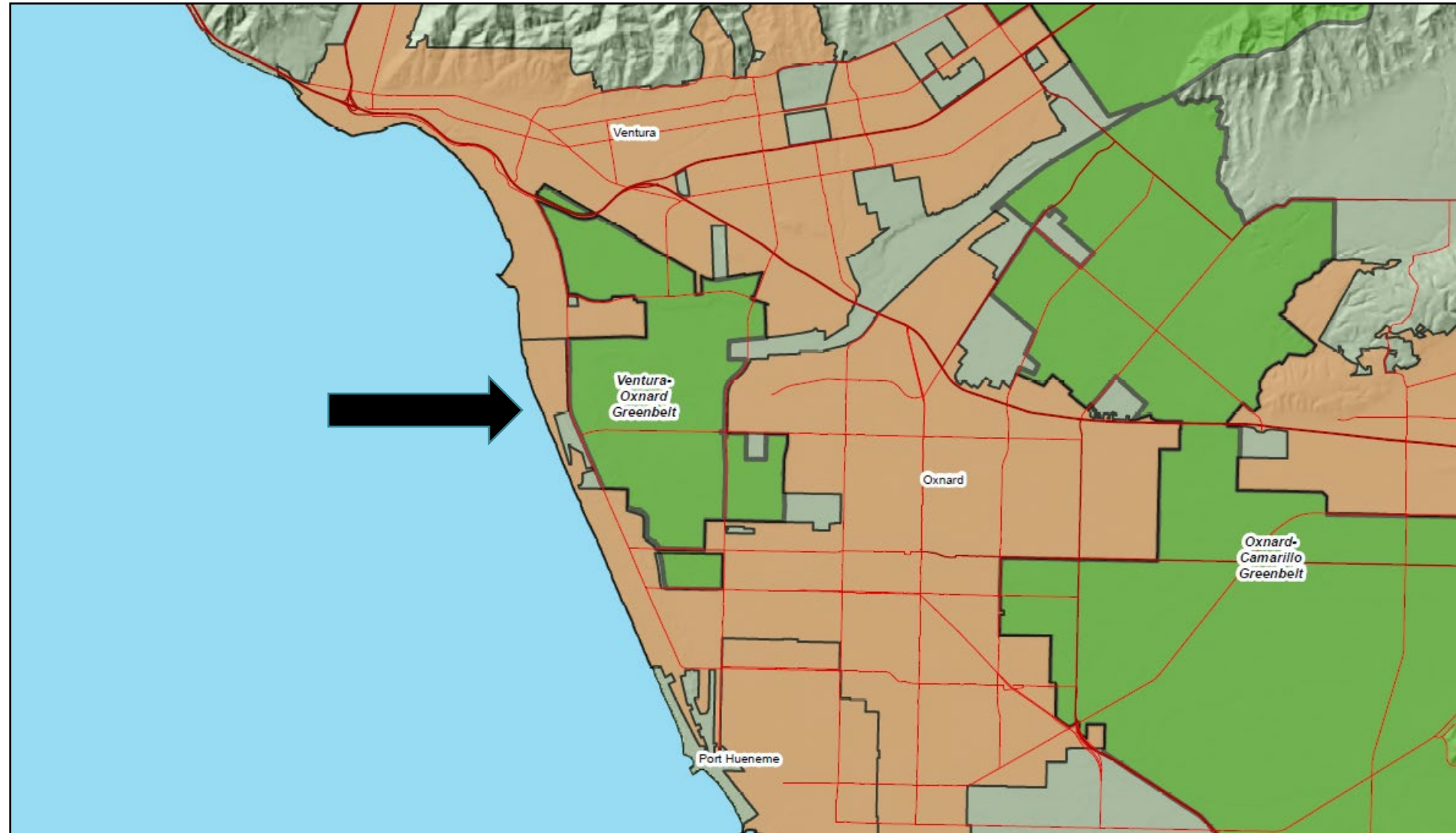
- 2000
- Fillmore and County
- 62,500 acres





# Ventura – Oxnard Greenbelt

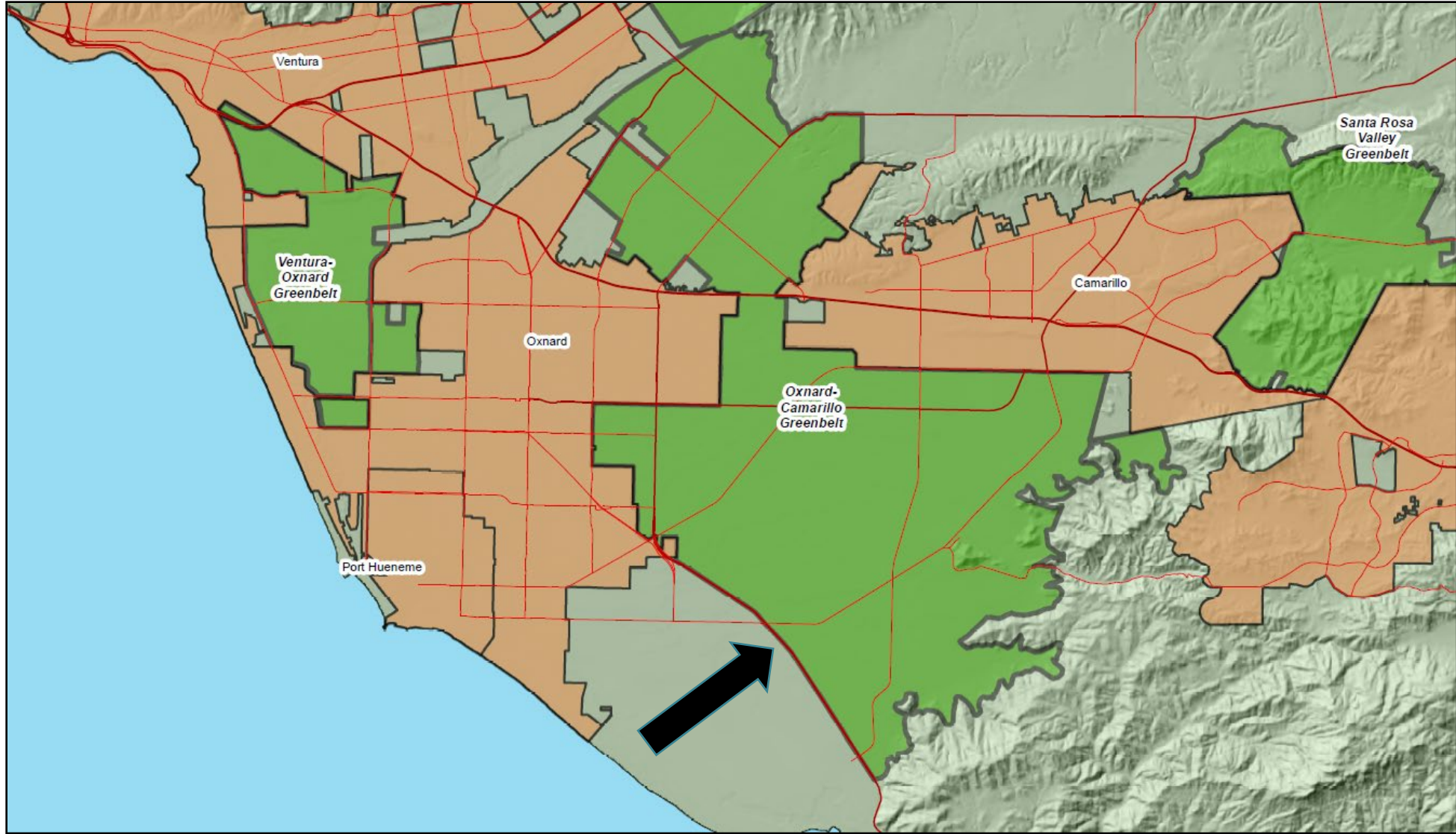
- 1994
- Ventura, Oxnard, and County
- 4,500 acres





# Oxnard – Camarillo Greenbelt

- 1982
- Oxnard, Camarillo, and County
- 27,500 acres





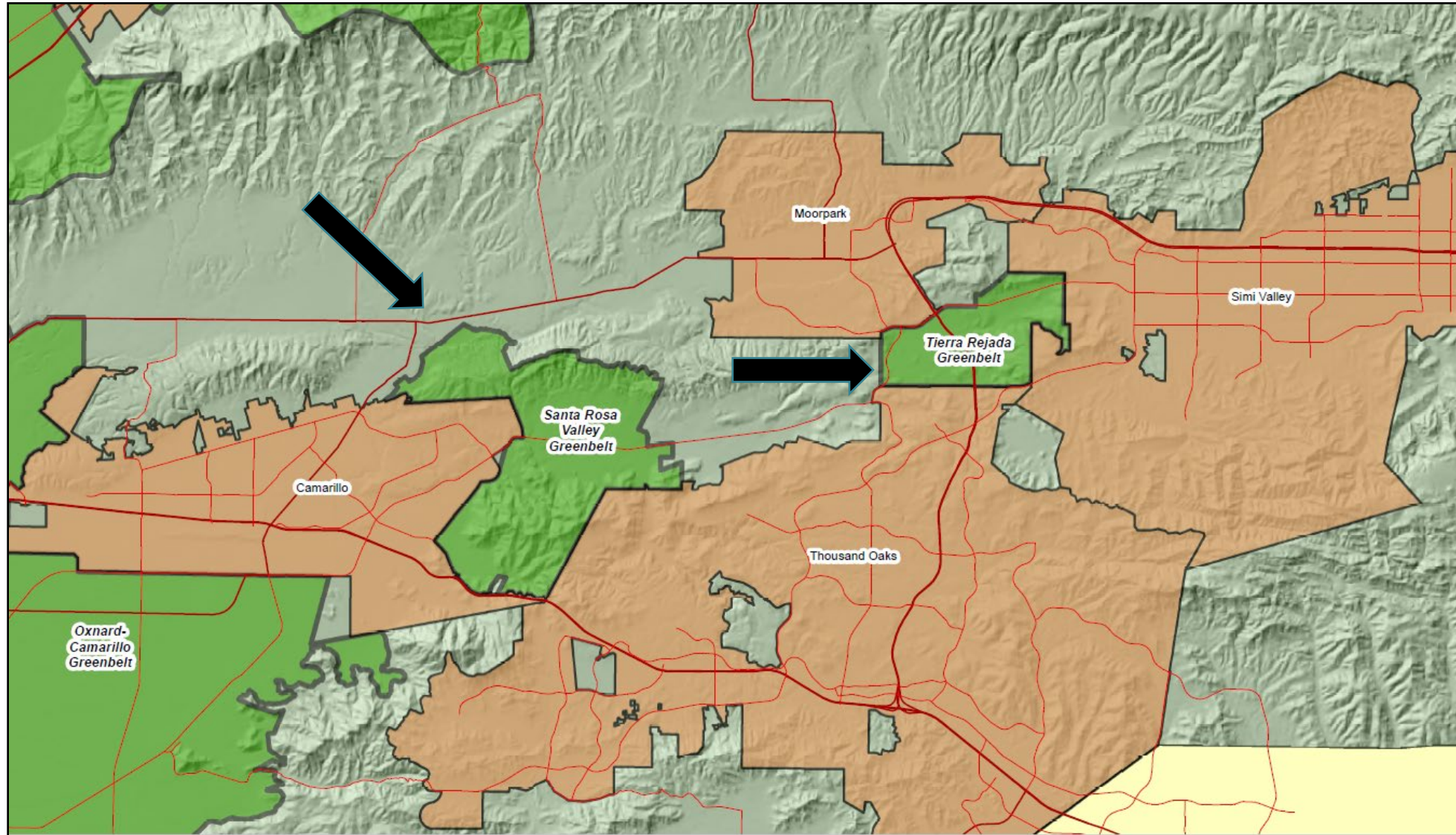
# Santa Rosa Valley & Tierra Rejada Greenbelts

## Santa Rosa Valley

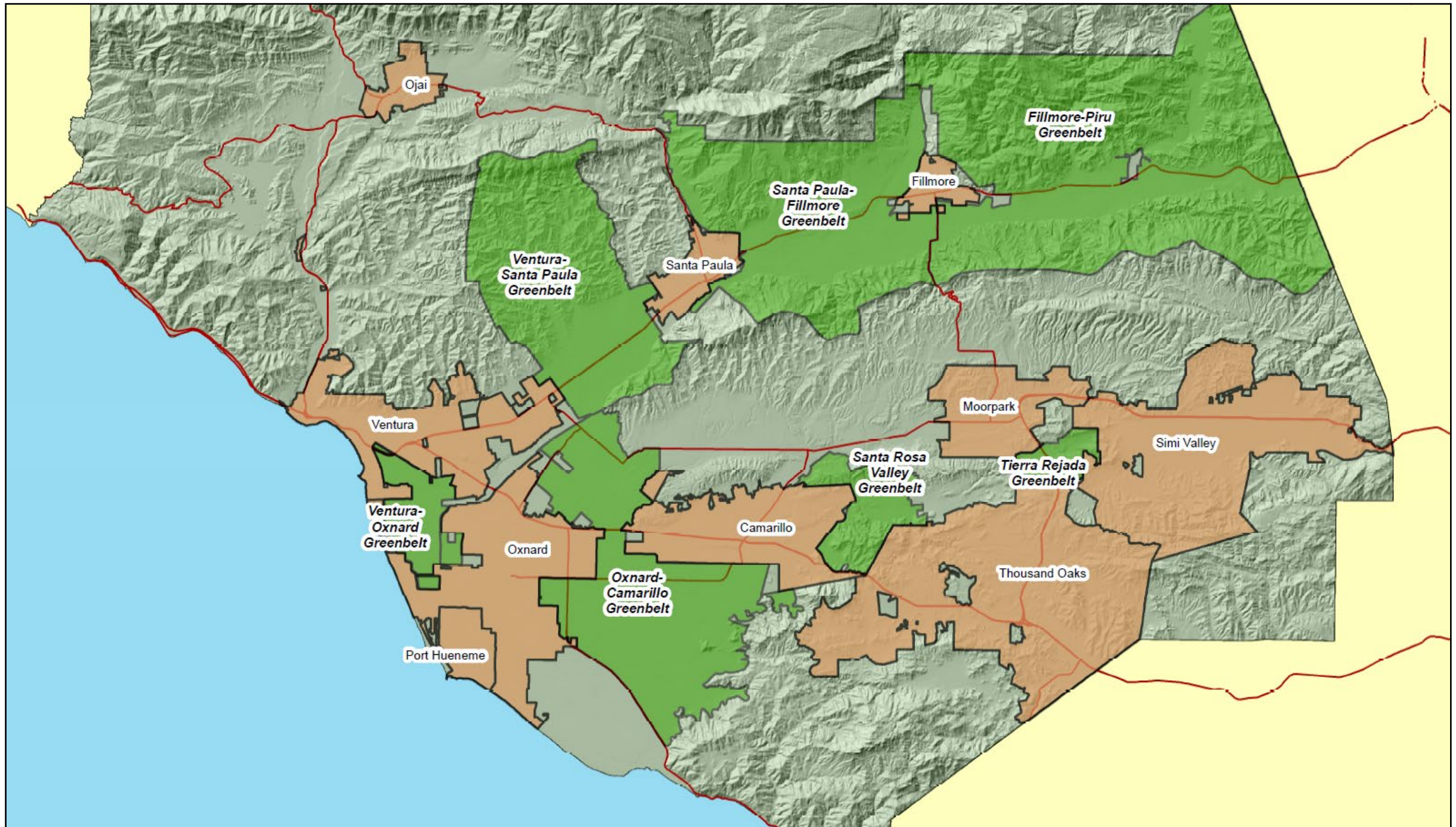
- 1995
- Camarillo and County
- 6,000 acres

## Tierra Rejada

- 1983
- Moorpark, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and County
- 2,500 acres









# Guidelines for Orderly Development (Guidelines)



# Key Dates

- 1969 – Adopted by LAFCo and County Planning Commission
- 1976 – Revised and adopted by County, LAFCo, and all cities (except Ojai). Established Areas of Interest
- 1983 – Revised and adopted by all jurisdictions. Included spheres of influence
- 1988 – Incorporated into land use policies of the County General Plan
- 1995 – Revised and adopted by all jurisdictions



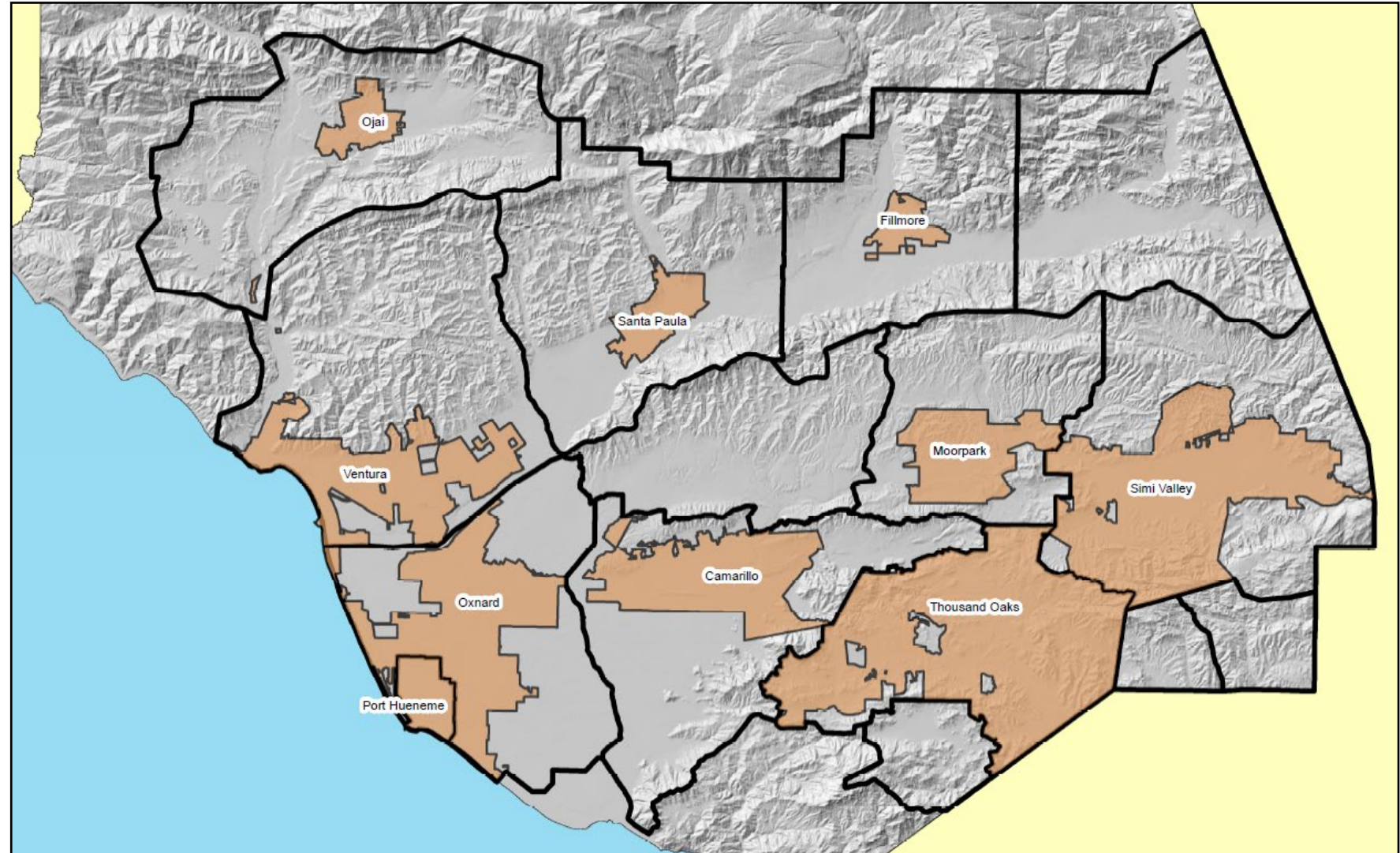
# General Policies

- 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.
- Cities and the County should strive to produce general plans, ordinances and policies which will fulfill these Guidelines



## Areas of Interest - Adopted by LAFCo

- Areas meant to reflect community planning and identity
- No more than one city in each Area
- Not all Areas will have a city
- Areas serve as planning referral boundaries for the County Planning Division







# Policies

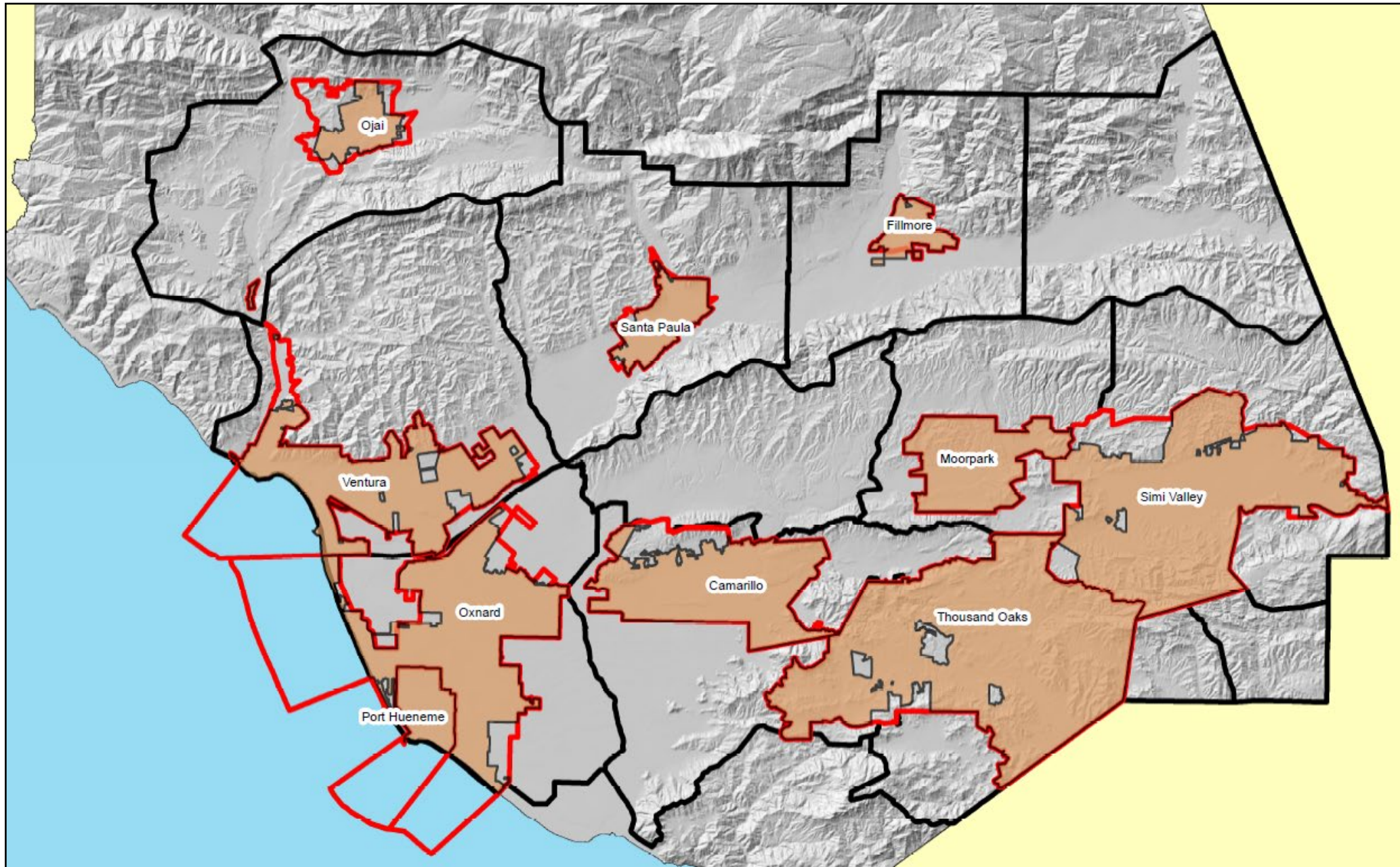
- Apply to territory within city spheres of influence
- Apply to territory within an area of interest where a city exists, but outside the city sphere of influence
- Apply to territory in areas of interest where no city exists



## Policies Within City Spheres of Influence

- Applicants for urban development projects should apply to city, not the County
- City is responsible for urban planning and services
- Land should be annexed to the city prior to development
- If not annexed to the city, development standards and infrastructure should not be less those of the city.

# Areas of Interest and City Spheres of Influence



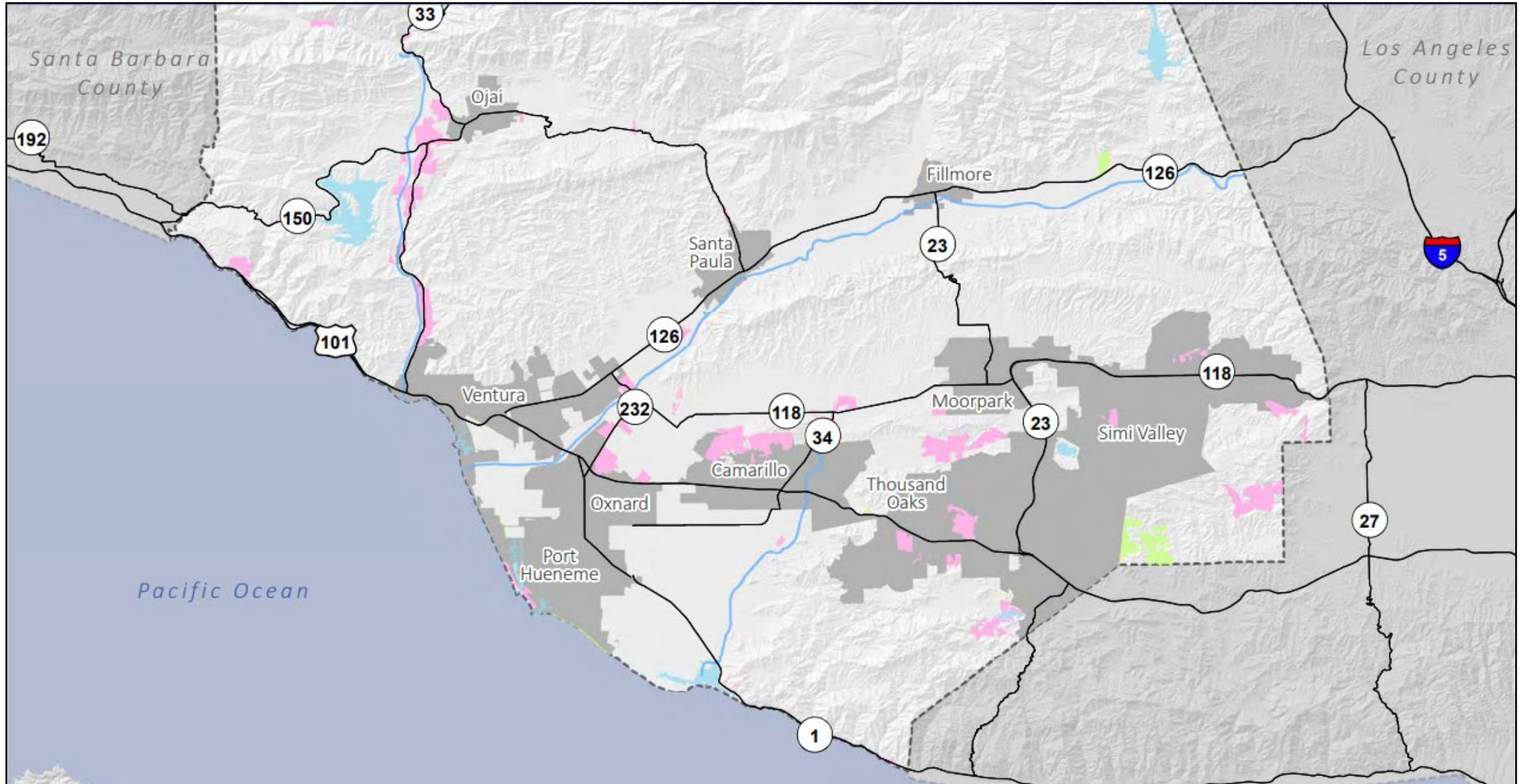


## Policies Within Areas of Interest where a City Exists (but outside City Spheres of Influence)

- Urban development projects to be referred to city for review and comment
- County is responsible for land use planning, consistent with city's land use goals/objectives
- Urban development allowed only in Existing Communities per County General Plan
- County to provide urban services to Existing Communities



# Existing Communities (1.3%)



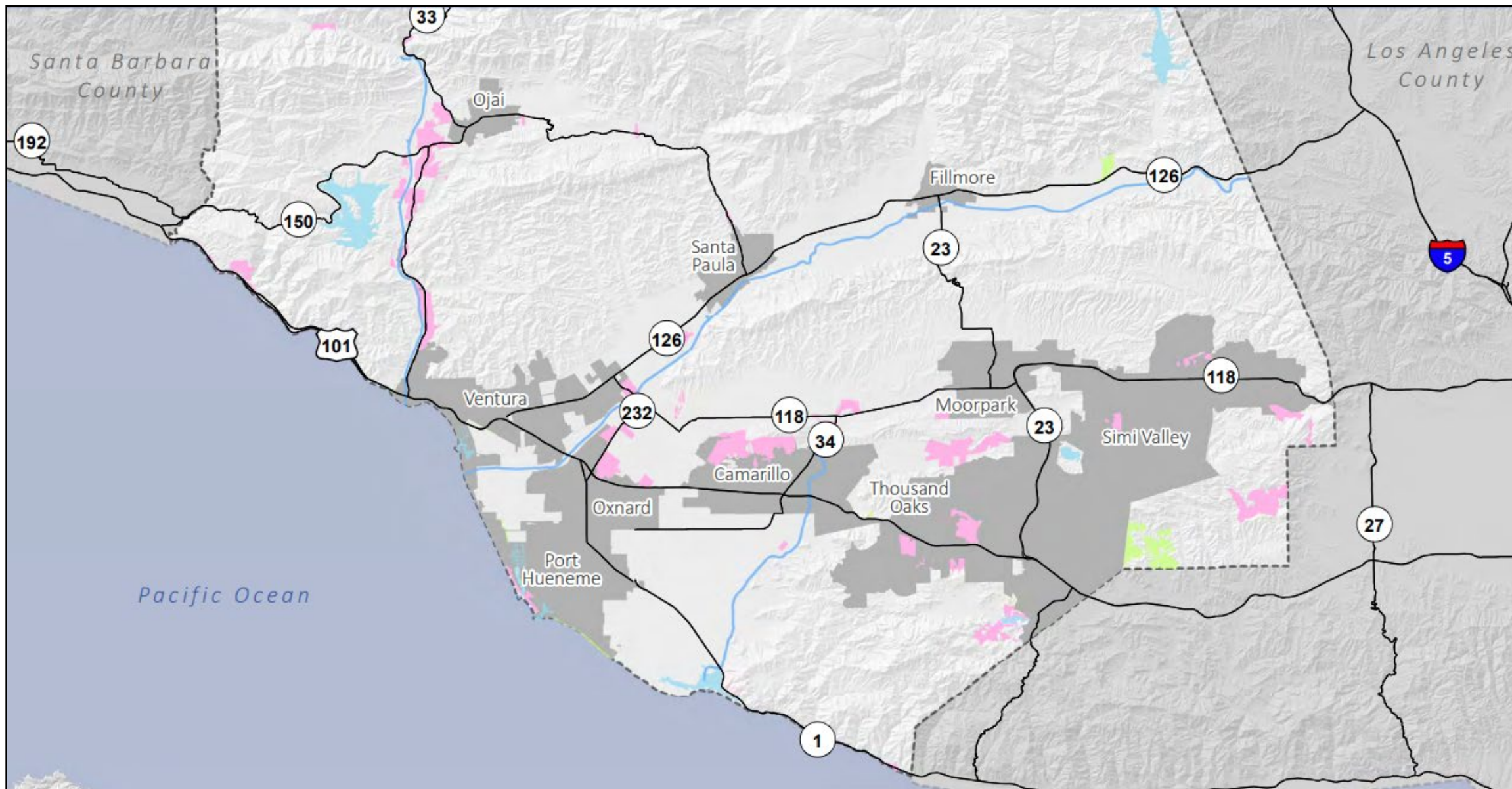


## Policies Within Areas of Interest where No City Exists

- County is responsible for land use planning and for providing municipal services
- Urban development should be allowed only in Unincorporated Urban Centers or Existing Communities per County General Plan
- Urban development in Unincorporated Urban Centers only allowed when Area Plan has been adopted.



# Urban Areas (0.2%)







# Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR)



## What is SOAR?

Voter-approved ordinances/initiatives generally requiring voter approval to allow for urban development in much of the unincorporated county:

- County SOAR - Applies to unincorporated County area
- City SOAR - Applies to each of eight cities (not Ojai and Port Hueneme)



# County SOAR

In general, and subject to certain exceptions, until 2050 SOAR requires countywide voter approval of any:

- 1) Substantive change to the County General Plan's Agricultural, Open Space, or Rural land use goals or policies, and
- 2) Re-designation of land with the Agricultural, Open Space, of Rural General Plan land use designations.

# County SOAR





# County SOAR

- 97.9% of unincorporated County is subject to the County SOAR (i.e. General Plan land use designation of Agricultural, Open Space, of Rural General)
- 2.1% of unincorporated County not subject to SOAR
  - 1.3% designated Existing Community
  - 0.2% designated Urban
  - 0.7% designated State or Federal Facilities



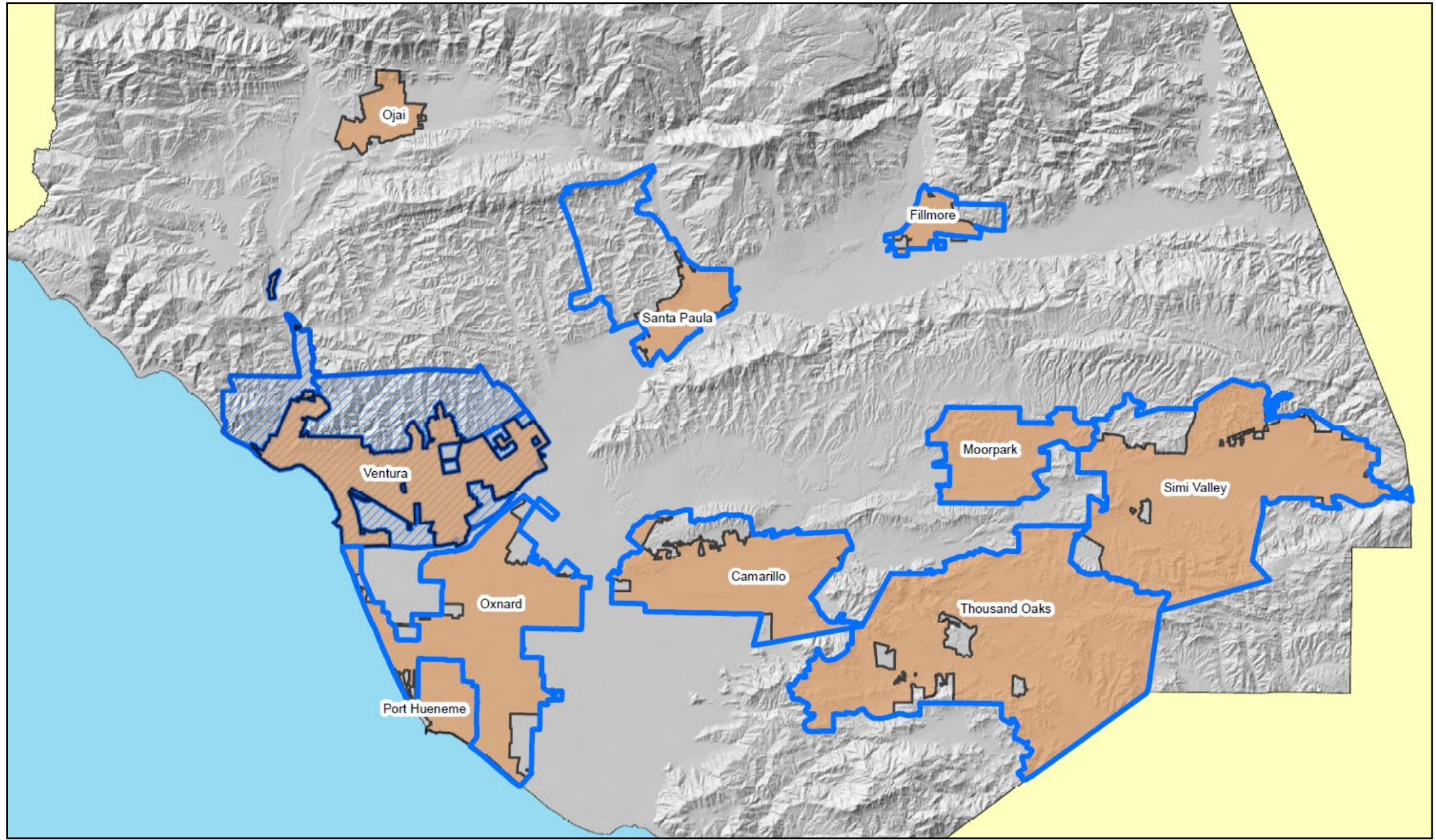
# City SOAR

In general, and subject to certain exceptions, until 2050 city SOAR ordinances/initiatives provide:

- 1) Urban land uses and urban services shall be restricted to within the City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB),
- 2) Amendments to the CURB require a citywide vote



# City CURBs





Greenbelts, Guidelines, and SOAR work together to guide urban development to cities and/or existing communities

- Urban Development in Existing Communities or Urban Areas:
  - Consistent with Greenbelt Agreements
  - Consistent with Guidelines (though may require annexation to city)
  - Not subject to voter approval under County or city SOAR
- Urban development outside Existing Communities or Urban Areas
  - Might be inconsistent with a Greenbelt Agreement
  - Likely inconsistent with Guidelines (unless annexing to a city)
  - Likely subject to voter approval under either County or city SOAR



# Where Does LAFCo Fit In?



# Commission Policy

**3.2.4.4 Greenbelts:** The County of Ventura and various cities in the County have adopted Greenbelt Agreements for the purposes of preserving agriculture and/or open space, providing separation between cities, and/or limiting the extension of urban services. The Ventura LAFCo is not a direct party to these Greenbelt Agreements, but has endorsed them as statements of local policy. As such, *LAFCo will not approve a proposal from a city that is in conflict with any Greenbelt Agreement* unless exceptional circumstances are shown to exist. LAFCo encourages that Greenbelt Agreements be amended by all parties involved prior to the filing of any proposal that may be in conflict with the Agreements.



# Commission Policy

**3.2.4.3 Guidelines for Orderly Development:** *LAFCo encourages proposals that involve urban development or that result in urban development to include annexation to a city wherever possible.* In support of this policy LAFCo has adopted Guidelines for Orderly Development, the policies of which are incorporated by reference (see Appendix A).





# Commission Policy

**3.2.4.2** Consistency with Ordinances Requiring Voter Approval: For cities that have enacted ordinances that require voter approval for the extension of services or for changing general plan designations, *LAFCo will not approve a proposal unless it is consistent with such ordinances and voter approval has first been granted*, or unless exceptional circumstances are shown to exist.



- LAFCo has no land use authority – cannot approve development projects

Only County or cities can approve development projects

- LAFCo cannot prezone territory

Only cities can prezone territory prior to annexation

- LAFCo has no authority to initiate annexations

Only County, cities, or districts can initiate annexations with LAFCo



# Where Does LAFCo fit in the Development Approval Process?



# Where Does LAFCo Fit in the Development Approval Process...

At the End





# City Process to Approve Development

- 1) Is the development project consistent with the Guidelines?
  - Yes - Annexation to city is proposed – Project review proceeds
  - No – Project cannot be considered by the city
- 2) Is the project area in a greenbelt?
  - Yes – Greenbelt must be amended by all parties
  - No – Project review proceeds
- 3) Is the project area within the CURB?
  - Yes – Project review proceeds
  - No – Vote by the city’s voters required per SOAR
- 4) Project approved by City – City rezones project area
  - City Council adopts Resolution of Application to apply to LAFCo
- 5) City submits application for annexation to LAFCo



# County Process to Approve Development

## 1) Is the project consistent with the Guidelines?

- Yes – Project site is within existing community or urban area - Proceeds
- No – Project cannot be considered by the County or GP amendment needed

## 2) Is the project area in a greenbelt?

- Yes – Greenbelt must be amended by all parties
- No – Project review proceeds

## 3) Is the project area within Agricultural, Open Space, or Rural GP designation?

- Yes – Countywide vote required per SOAR
- No – Project review proceeds

## 4) Project approved by County

- Board of special district (often BOS) adopts Resolution of Application to apply to LAFCo

## 5) District submits application for annexation to LAFCo



# LAFCo Process

1. LAFCo process to accommodate urban development begins only after the city or county development review/approval process ends with an approved development project
2. LAFCo actions on over 100 applications submitted since 2012:
  - 100% of city annexation requests approved
  - 100% of special district annexation requests approved
  - 100% of sphere of influence amendment requests approved
  - 100% of out of agency service requests approved





The map on the following page,  
*Ventura County Wildlife Corridors &  
Unincorporated Communities/Urban Centers*  
is provided as requested by the Commission.

