



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEWS**

**Adopted July 17, 2013**

### **1.0 Authority**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires the Commission to prepare municipal service reviews prior to or in conjunction with its mandate to review and update each local agency's sphere of influence every five years as necessary. The municipal service review process is intended to inform the Commission as to the availability, capacity, and efficiency of local governmental services prior to making sphere of influence determinations.

### **2.0 Purpose**

To establish policy and procedural guidelines by which the Commission prepares and conducts municipal service reviews.

### **3.0 Objective**

To proactively and comprehensively evaluate the level, range, and structure of local governmental services necessary to support orderly growth and development in Humboldt County. Municipal service reviews not only inform sphere of influence determinations but also identify opportunities for greater coordination and cooperation between service providers as well as possible governmental structure changes.

### **4.0 Policies**

#### **4.1 Area Designated for Service Review**

The Commission shall designate the geographic area for which governmental services shall be evaluated in the service review. Factors the Commission may consider in determining the designated area include, but are not limited to, spheres of influence, jurisdictional boundaries, urban growth boundaries, community planning areas, topography, and areas of shared facilities or services.

#### **4.2 Agencies Included in Service Review**

The Commission shall comprehensively review all of the agencies that provide the identified service or services within the designated geographic area. Only local agencies whose boundary changes are subject to LAFCo review, or are required to have a sphere of influence, will require preparation of service reviews. Services provided by other public and private service providers may be included in service reviews to provide broader understanding of service provision.

#### **4.3 Services Addressed in Service Review**

Municipal service reviews shall be limited to public services typically required by and associated with urban development, such as water, wastewater, drainage, roads, parks and recreation, police, and fire protection. General governmental services, such as courts and social services, are not required to be reviewed.

#### **4.4 Types of Service Reviews**

The Commission shall generally prepare three types of municipal service reviews as summarized below.

- A. Service-Specific. A service-specific municipal service review will examine particular governmental services across multiple local agencies on a countywide basis.
- B. Region-Specific. A region-specific municipal service review will examine the range of governmental services provided by local agencies within a particular area.
- C. Agency-Specific. An agency-specific municipal service review will examine the breadth of governmental services provided by a particular local agency.

#### **4.5 Sphere Updates**

The Commission shall generally schedule municipal service reviews in conjunction with sphere of influence updates. The Commission, however, may schedule municipal service reviews independent of sphere of influence updates. Minor amendments to spheres of influence, as determined by the Commission, will not require a municipal service review.

#### **4.6 Scope and Content**

The Commission shall determine the priority, schedule, procedure and content for service reviews. The scope and schedule of service reviews should remain flexible enough to accommodate legislative changes and changes in local conditions.

#### **4.7 Contracting with Outside Consultants**

The Commission may contract with outside consultants, as needed, to assist with the preparation of municipal service reviews.

#### **4.8 Stakeholder Collaboration**

The Commission shall encourage collaboration, cooperation and information sharing among service review stakeholders.

#### **4.9 Recommendations to Improve Services**

Service reviews shall contain recommendations for sphere of influence or government structure changes needed to implement positive service changes. Where more detailed analysis of service options is necessary, service reviews shall contain recommendations for special studies where there is the potential to reduce service gaps and improve service levels.

#### 4.10 Determinations

Service reviews shall include one or more determinations addressing each of the following governance factors required under Government Code Section 56430 and by Commission policy:

- A. Growth and population projections for the affected area. [56430(a)(1)]
- B. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within or contiguous to the sphere of influence. [56430(a)(2)]
- C. 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. (56340(a)(3))
- D. Financial ability of agencies to provide services. [56430(a)(4)]
- E. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities. [56430(a)(5)]
- F. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies. [56430(a)(6)]
- G. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy. [56430(a)(7)]

#### 4.11 Community Planning Considerations

Service Reviews shall consider community plan boundaries, General Plan land use designations and adopted development area boundaries, such as urban development area/urban limit line, and urban expansion area, etc. as indicators of where service expansions or changes in organization should be considered.

#### 4.12 Adoption

Service reviews shall be adopted by resolution.

### 5.0 Procedures

#### 5.1 Scheduling

At the start of each fiscal year, the Commission shall develop a compliance work plan of service reviews to be addressed during the fiscal year. The Commission may alter the annual service review work program at any time in response to changing circumstances or new information.

#### 5.2 Data Collection

The Commission shall provide a questionnaire to the agencies included in the service review. The questionnaire will request information pertinent to making the required determinations. Meetings with agency representatives may be held as necessary to discuss the service review process and data collection needs.

### **5.3 Administrative Draft Review**

The Commission shall prepare an administrative draft service review which includes draft determinations required by state law. Notice of availability of the draft service review will be provided to all affected and interested agencies for their review and comment.

### **5.4 Public Review**

The Commission shall incorporate agency comments identified during the administrative review and provide a 21-day public review period for the draft service review.

### **5.5 Commission Consideration**

The Commission shall consider and incorporate comments received on the draft service review and appropriate CEQA review, as appropriate. Service reviews typically qualify for a categorical or statutory exemption under CEQA, as they are planning studies not typically accompanied by specific development proposals.

At a noticed public meeting or hearing, the Commission may:

- A. Approve the service review, with or without modifications, by taking the necessary CEQA action, making the necessary findings that the draft service review report is adequate and final, and adopting the written determinations, or
- B. Continue the matter to a specific date and time and direct staff to address comments and/or further study issues raised in the draft service review.

### **5.6 Concurrent Sphere Update**

The Commission may also take action on a sphere of influence update or initiate a reorganization proposal based on the approved service review at the same hearing, if the service review supports the action and if LAFCo has complied with all required processes.

### **5.7 Final Service Review**

The Commission shall notify all affected and interested agencies that the final service review is available on the LAFCo website for use as a resource document.