



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Grand Jury Road Report re LAFCO Response

Joe Serrano <Joe.Serrano@santacruzcountyca.gov>

Thu, Aug 8, 2024 at 9:30 AM

To: "Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org" <Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org>,
"grandjury@scgrandjury.org" <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Cc: Francisco Estrada <Francisco.Estrada@santacruzcountyca.gov>

Good Morning Honorable Katherine Hansen,

As requested, LAFCO has reviewed and provide comments to the latest Grand Jury Report titled "*Santa Cruz County Local Roads: A smooth path through paradise or a hell of a road?*" Attached you will find our response letter, which was approved by LAFCO during yesterday's Commission meeting. The following link also directs you to the August 7th staff report for your records: https://santacruzlafco.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/6c.0-Grand-Jury-Response-Staff-Report_Hyperlinked.pdf

Let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you.

-Joe

Joe A. Serrano

Executive Officer

Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County

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 8-8-24 LAFCO Response Letter (Adopted Version).pdf
224K



August 8, 2024

The Honorable Judge Katherine Hansen
 Santa Cruz Courthouse
 701 Ocean Street
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: LAFCO Response to the Grand Jury’s “Our Water Account Is Overdrawn – Beyond Conservation: Achieving Drought Resilience” Report

Dear Honorable Judge Hansen:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Grand Jury’s report titled “*Santa Cruz County Local Roads: A smooth path through paradise or a hell of a road.*” This report reviewed the current road conditions in unincorporated Santa Cruz County and requested that the Local Agency Formation Commission (“LAFCO”) provide comments. LAFCO’s statutory authority is derived from the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code section 56000, et seq.).

Among LAFCO’s purposes are: Discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing government services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances (Government Code Section 56301). The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act identifies factors that must be considered, and determinations that must be made, as part of LAFCO’s review of boundary changes and service reviews. These provisions of law are the legislative basis for LAFCO’s locally adopted Policies and Procedures Relating to Spheres of Influence and Changes of Organization. These policies establish guidelines for the Commission and staff to follow. The adopted policies are available on LAFCO’s website: <https://santacruzlafco.org/about/policies-procedures/>.

In order to fulfill the request to provide comments on the Grand Jury’s report, LAFCO’s comments will be based on the direction found in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act and the Commission’s adopted policies.

1. Finding (F6): The County of Santa Cruz has failed to perform resurfacing maintenance on many of the smaller unincorporated local roads, resulting in higher failure rates and at least a 10 times increased maintenance cost when and if those roads are resurfaced.

DISAGREE: It is LAFCO’s understanding that the County relies on Measure D funds to repair and maintain publicly accessible roads throughout Santa Cruz County. Based on LAFCO’s research, the County has completed over 200 road projects (totaling over 44 miles), which were funded or partially funded by Measure D during the last six years (2018-2023)¹. Below is a breakdown of the completed road projects found on the County’s website:

County Road Projects (2018 – 2023)

Year	Road Projects	Length (miles)
2018	28	6.56
2019	33	5.59
2020	30	6.26
2021	37	6.44
2022	36	8.31
2023	44	10.88
Total	208	44.04

¹ <https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/35/CDI/PublicWorks/Transportation/Completed%20Resurfacing%20Projects%20%282018-2023%29.pdf>

2. **Finding (F10): Minor progress has been made in seeking and securing additional funding sources. The additional funding is far short of what is needed to maintain and repair the road network.**

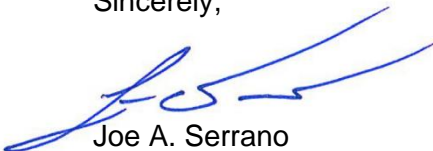
PARTIALLY AGREE: It is LAFCO's understanding that the County has been proactive in exploring funding opportunities. However, there is a lack of transparency on how these efforts are initiated, what funding sources are available, and why certain revenues are granted or denied. It would be beneficial for the County to provide this information on their website to increase public awareness.

3. **Recommendation (R4): The Grand Jury recommends that LAFCO issue a new County Service Area 9 Service and Sphere of Influence Review incorporating detailed data of expenditures for each 9D zone by March 15, 2025. (F6, F10).**

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE: State law requires LAFCO to conduct service and sphere reviews at least every five years for each city and special district in Santa Cruz County, including CSA 9. The last statutorily required analysis of CSA 9 was completed in August 2020. While the next service and sphere review for CSA 9 is tentatively scheduled for August 2025, LAFCO will move the date to March 2025 to comply with the Grand Jury's request. LAFCO's regular meetings are typically held on the first Wednesday of each month. Therefore, LAFCO's evaluation of CSA 9 and its zones (including 9D) will be considered by the Commission on March 5, 2025. The adopted version of the report will be sent to the Grand Jury before the March 25th deadline.

I want to thank you once again for the opportunity to comment on the Grand Jury's recent road report. LAFCO also develops reports that monitors the efficient and effective delivery of municipal services by local agencies in Santa Cruz County. These reports are available on LAFCO's website: <https://santacruzlafco.org/reviews/>. I encourage the Grand Jury to review our reports and continue collaborating with LAFCO on these important issues. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached by email (joe@santacruzlafco.org) or by phone (831-454-2055).

Sincerely,



Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer