

**Draft LAFCO Resolution No. 3219**

**Attachment 4**

**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
FOR SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY**

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**PROPOSAL NO.: LAFCO 3205**

**HEARING DATE: APRIL 20, 2016**

**RESOLUTION NO. 3219**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION FOR SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY MAKING DETERMINATIONS ON LAFCO 3205 AND APPROVING THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE EXPANSION FOR THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (sphere amendment to include the entirety of the City of Needles boundary which encompasses approximately 20,998 acres (32.81 square miles)).**

**On motion of Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, duly seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, and carried, the Local Agency Formation Commission adopts the following resolution:**

**WHEREAS**, an application for the proposed sphere of influence amendment (expansion) in the County of San Bernardino was filed with the Executive Officer of this Local Agency Formation Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") in accordance with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code Sections 56000 et seq.); and,

**WHEREAS**, at the times and in the form and manner provided by law, the Executive Officer has given notice of the public hearing by the Commission on this matter; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Executive Officer has reviewed available information and prepared a report including her recommendations thereon, the filings and report and related information having been presented to and considered by this Commission; and,

**WHEREAS**, the public hearing by this Commission was called for April 20, 2016 at the time and place specified in the notice of public hearing; and,

**WHEREAS**, at the hearing, this Commission heard and received all oral and written support and opposition; the Commission considered all objections and evidence which were made, presented, or filed; and all persons present were given an opportunity to hear and be heard in respect to any matter relating to the application, in evidence presented at the hearing; and,

**WHEREAS**, a statutory exemption has been issued pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) indicating that the sphere of influence amendment (expansion) is statutorily exempt from CEQA and such exemption was adopted by this Commission

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on April 20, 2016. The Commission directed its Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption within five working days with the San Bernardino County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors; and,

**WHEREAS**, based on presently existing evidence, facts, and circumstances filed with the Local Agency Formation Commission and considered by this Commission, it is determined that the sphere of influence for the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District should be expanded to include the territory included within the boundaries of the City of Needles, as more specifically described on the attached Exhibits “A” and “A-1” to this resolution; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Commission determined on September 16, 2015 that a service review would not be required for this sphere of influence amendment as allowed by Government Code Section 56430;

**WHEREAS**, the following determinations are made in conformance with Government Code Section 56425 and local Commission policy:

**1. The present and planned land uses in the area including agricultural and open space lands:**

The land area proposed to be included in the sphere of influence of County Fire includes approximately 20,998 acres of varied land uses within the City of Needles. The City’s General Plan designates approximately 42 percent of the total land area for residential uses, 15 percent for commercial, 18 percent for industrial, six percent for Open Space, and three percent for parks/recreation. Approximately 11 percent of the City’s land area has no General Plan land use designation.

The chart, below, depicts the General Plan land use districts (in acres) within the City of Needles (proposed sphere expansion area):

<b>City of Needles Land Use</b>	<b>Acres (approximate)</b>
Residential – Low Density	5,050
Residential – Medium Density	2,020
Residential – High Density	1,414
Commercial - General	202
Commercial - Neighborhood	Less than 200
Commercial - Highway	1,616
Commercial - Resort	1,212
Industrial	3,636
Open Space	1,212
Parks/Recreation	606
Institutional	Less than 200
Others	606
No General Plan Land Use Designation	2,222
<b>TOTAL SPHERE EXPANSION AREA</b>	<b>20,998</b>

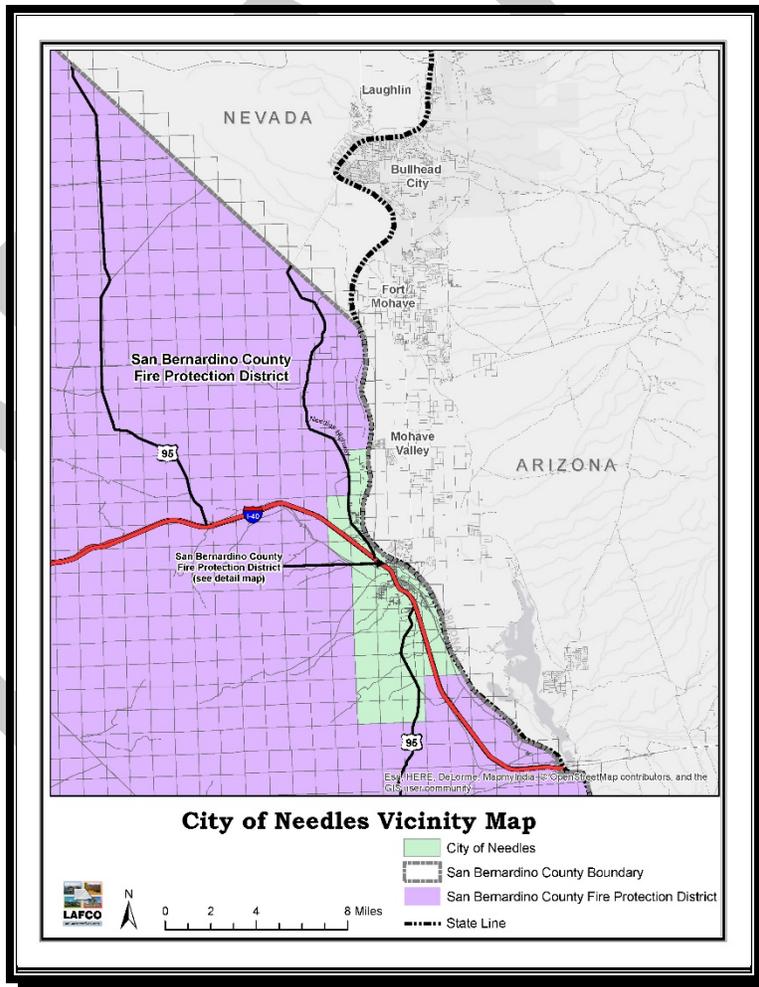
Source: City of Needles General Plan

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In order to fully understand the future of the City's population, a review of the historical population of the City and the nearby cities is needed. The information which follows was reviewed in the 2013 Service Review conducted by LAFCO for the overall Needles community and the map which follows illustrates the location. The community has long had an economic disadvantage in relation to the neighboring communities in Nevada and Arizona. As shown, the nearby areas in Arizona and Nevada have experienced vast and steady growth. Corresponding with this growth is a greater economic output. For the City of Needles, its population peaked in 1990, decreased in 2000, and increased by 0.03% by 2010.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
City of Needles, CA	4,051	4,120	5,191	4,830	4,844
City of Bullhead City, AZ	n/a	10,364	21,951	33,769	39,540
City of Lake Havasu, AZ	n/a	15,509	24,363	41,938	55,567
Mohave Valley/Ft Mohave, AZ	n/a	n/a	6,962	15,995	21,687
Laughlin, NV	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,076	7,323

Source: Census



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In the City of Needles, the 2010 Census count was 4,844. The annual growth since 2010 has been -0.1% through 2015. This figure from Environmental Systems Research Institute (“ESRI”) is statistically similar to that of the U.S. Census 2014 estimate.

<b>Year</b>		<b>Population</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>1950</b>	Census Count	4,051	12%	U.S. Census
<b>1960</b>	Census Count	4,590	13%	U.S. Census
<b>1970</b>	Census Count	4,051	-12%	U.S. Census
<b>1980</b>	Census Count	4,120	2%	U.S. Census
<b>1990</b>	Census Count	5,191	26%	U.S. Census
<b>2000</b>	Census Count	4,830	-7%	U.S. Census
<b>2010</b>	Census Count	4,844	0%	U.S. Census
<b>2015</b>	Estimate	4,820	0%	Environmental Systems Research Institute

There are two differing forecast figures for 2020. ESRI forecasts roughly 4,844, and the Southern California Association of Governments (“SCAG”) forecasts roughly 5,600. Comparing these figures to the 2015 estimate, the annual growth rates during this five year period are a vastly different at 0.1% and 3.0%, respectively. For the 2020 SCAG forecast to occur would require an increase of roughly 750 inhabitants. The 2020 ESRI figure is more in line with previous growth rates and is therefore more likely to occur.

<b>2020</b>	Forecast	4,844	Environmental Systems Research Institute
		5,600	SCAG 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan
<b>2035</b>	Forecast	6,800	SCAG 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan

LAFCO staff has adjusted the 2035 SCAG forecast by using a conservative annual growth rate of 1.0%, which we believe is more realistic than SCAG’s annual growth rate of 2.3% from 2020 to 2035. The result is a 2035 forecast of roughly 5,613 as shown below, with five-year increments.

<b>2020</b>	Forecast	4,844	Environmental Systems Research Institute
<b>2025</b>	Forecast	5,091	LAFCO Revision
<b>2030</b>	Forecast	5,351	LAFCO Revision
<b>2035</b>	Forecast	5,613	LAFCO Revision

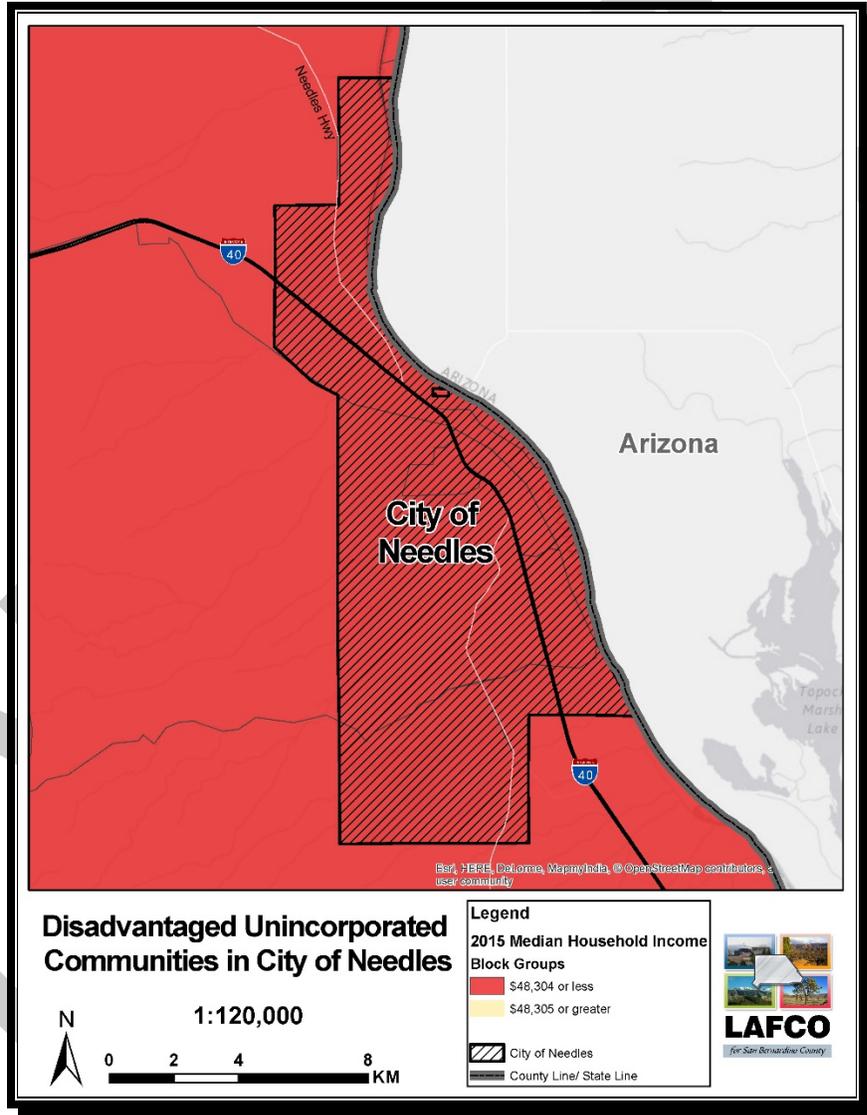
**2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area:**

Costs for the provision of contract fire protection and emergency medical services provided by County Fire for the City of Needles are expected to increase significantly in the coming years. Without a change in governance, reductions in service will be required to be implemented which may jeopardize public safety for residents and businesses within the City of Needles.

Government Code Section 56425(e)(5) directs the Commission to evaluate the present and probable need for the delivery of structural fire protection within a disadvantaged

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unincorporated community. LAFCO 3205 addresses the incorporated City of Needles. However, the questions for assurance of service delivery to a disadvantaged community are real in this situation for both unincorporated and incorporated territory. The 2015 Disadvantaged Community Maps maintained by LAFCO identify that the entire area within the City of Needles and the immediate surrounding areas are disadvantaged, and the Commission has an inherent responsibility to assure the continuation of the critical public health and safety service. The entirety of the area shown on the map, below, meets the criteria for a disadvantaged community which is defined by State law as areas where households earn \$48,305 or less per year (80% of statewide median income).



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3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency to be expanded provides or is authorized to provide:

County Fire operates 75 fire stations serving approximately 750,000 residents in approximately 16,535 acres of unincorporated territory plus seven incorporated cities including Adelanto (by contract), Fontana (by contract), Grand Terrace, Hesperia (by contract), Needles (by contract) Victorville (by contract), and Yucca Valley. County Fire provides a full range of emergency services, including ladder trucks, fire boats for water rescues, snow cats for winter operations, heavy equipment for flooding and earth moving, ambulance transportation in seven ambulance operating areas, paramedics and large incident command and control capability. County Fire is the largest provider of pre-hospital care in the County and the second largest ambulance provider.

The current County Fire Station 31, built in 1953 at 633 Front Street in downtown Needles, is no longer adequate or large enough to serve the fire protection and emergency services needs of the Needles community. County Fire is currently constructing Fire Station 32 located at 1113 East Broadway (State Route 95) within the City of Needles. Scheduled for completion in the fall of 2016, the 6,300 square foot facility will allow room for future growth of fire protection and emergency services to the Needles area and the territory of the eastern County unincorporated area under its responsibility.



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The package of applications submitted by the City of Needles is intended to ensure adequate, long-term fire protection and emergency response services for the residents of the Needles. The City of Needles can no longer afford to continue funding these services at appropriate levels.

**4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest as determined by the Commission to be relevant to the agency:**

As one of the gateways to California, the Needles community holds a significant place in the fabric of California. However, its economic standing has suffered as the economies of communities in Arizona and Nevada have advanced. Social and economic communities of interest include the surrounding Indian tribes, Needles Unified School District, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad related businesses along Highway 40, and the Colorado River and its economic and recreational uses. The Colorado River Medical Center is the largest employer in the City, but its future is also in question due to its proximity to larger and varied facilities in the adjacent states.

**5. Additional Determinations**

- Legal notice of the Commission’s consideration of the proposal has been provided through publication of a 1/8<sup>th</sup> page advertisement in *The Needles Desert Star*, a newspaper of general circulation in the area. In addition, individual notices were provided to all affected and interested agencies, County departments and those individuals and agencies requesting special notice.
- The map and legal description for this sphere of influence amendment was prepared and certified by the County Surveyor’s Office.

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the provisions of Government Code Section 56425(i) the range of services provided by the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District shall be limited to the following:

	<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>SERVICES</u>
<b>San Bernardino County</b>	Fire	Structural, watershed, prevention, inspection, suppression, weed abatement, hazardous materials services, rescue, first aid, ambulance transportation, emergency response, and disaster preparedness planning

The nature and location of the provision of the services by the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District to the City of Needles community will be considered within the companion proposal, LAFCO 3206.

