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Executive Officer

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Agenda Item #5

CONTRA COSTA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

April 8, 2026 (Agenda)

Dissolution of County Service Area R-9

SUMMARY: In June 2021, Contra Costa LAFCO completed its 2nd round *Parks & Recreation Services Municipal Services Review* (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) updates. The MSR covered all 19 cities, three parks & recreation districts, one regional park district, four community services districts, and eight County Service Areas (CSAs) including CSA R-9 (El Sobrante). Consistent with the recommendations in the MSR, the Commission adopted a zero SOI for CSA R-9 in June 2021 signalling future dissolution of CSA R-9.

In November 2021, the Commission considered initiating dissolution of CSA R-9, but deferred action for 6-9 months at the request of County Supervisor John Gioia and pending an update on the status of CSA R-9. In August 2022, the Commission adopted a resolution initiating proceedings for dissolution of CSA R-9 and requested an update from the County. Supervisor Gioia previously reported to the Commission that a working group was exploring a parcel tax for parks in El Sobrante. Supervisor Gioia requested an additional six months to continue these discussions which the Commission granted. In March 2023, Supervisor Gioia provided an update noting there was community interest and an active working group exploring improvements and a potential assessment measure. Supervisor Gioia requested a one-year extension to March 2024 to pursue these efforts which the Commission granted.

In February 2024, Supervisor Gioia and Contra Costa County Public Works staff provided an update and additional information to LAFCO staff regarding the status of CSA R-9. Supervisor Gioia and Public Works noted that in December 2023, the County Board of Supervisors allocated \$1 million annually from Measure X to fund County parks and recreation projects (capital and maintenance) in unincorporated areas. LAFCO staff is currently unaware of Measure X funds that may have been provided to CSA R-9.

Further, County Public Works staff note that funding for maintenance and capital needs for parks and recreation is not adequate, which limits facilities and services. Measure X funds could be used to augment existing revenue with a focus on equity to impacted communities. The approved allocation could provide consistent funding for capital improvements, deferred maintenance, planning and development of new park and recreation facilities, and increase ability to leverage grants.

As the park funding program developed, there was coordination with each Supervisorial District to determine their specific goals as it relates to parks and recreation. It was anticipated that each County Supervisor would prioritize funding based on their District's unique community needs and desires. The County recognizes that CSA R-9 and the El Sobrante community currently lack consistent park and recreation opportunities, and that Measure X funding is a potential source of revenue to expand and improve services.

Supervisor Gioia also previously noted that there is a countywide allocation of \$1 million per year countywide towards park capitol improvement and maintenance. Each supervisorial district gets \$200,000 per year. Supervisor Gioia's office is working on accumulating funds for park issues in El Sobrante. His office would like to keep the

options open for future revenue measures to add to this funding, if needed. Supervisor Gioia believes it is in the best interest of the community to not dissolve CSA R-9 at this time.

DISCUSSION:

Background: CSA R-9 was formed in 1974 to provide park and recreation services to the unincorporated El Sobrante community (see Exhibit A). Since formation, there were five detachments from and three annexations to CSA R-9. The CSA R-9 service area is approximately 3.1± square miles with an estimated population of approximately 6,000 (2025). CSA R-9 is almost entirely within the City of Richmond's SOI with a small portion in the north that lies within the City of Pinole's SOI, and an island to the southwest which lies within the City of San Pablo's SOI. There are no disadvantaged communities within CSA R-9.

Within CSA R-9 is the Children's Reading Garden located at the El Sobrante library. The Reading Garden was built with one-time park dedication fees, is designed to have minimal maintenance, and is maintained by volunteers and the library. Other than possible Measure X funding, CSA R-9 has no money and no funding source to fund maintenance of the Children's Reading Garden. Park improvements in El Sobrante were previously funded with one time park dedication funds collected on new development and with East Bay Regional Parks Measure WW funds. Also, the County notes that reliance on volunteer community members to maintain the Reading Garden is not sustainable due to liability and accountability issues. Further, the Reading Garden is 0.1± acres and does not provide sufficient capacity to meet current or future demands. There are limited opportunities for shared facilities given R-9's lack of resources.

Regarding financial ability of the district to provide services, R-9 lacks a secure source of revenue. Planned expenditures are expected to exceed revenues, which means maintenance and other expenses may need to be partially deferred. Two previous attempts to pass assessments (1985 and 1998) failed. County staff also noted that the public is likely not open to assessments without an educational campaign.

In 2021, LAFCO prepared a municipal service review which included CSA R-9. The LAFCO MSR identified two SOI options for R-9: 1) retain the existing coterminous SOI, or 2) adopt a zero SOI signaling future dissolution of R-9 whereby the County would be the successor agency. County staff noted that R-9 park maintenance duties could shift to the County Landscape & Lighting District.

In accordance with the MSR consultant and LAFCO staff recommendations it was recommended that LAFCO adopt a zero SOI as CSA R-9 is not currently providing services and has no secure source of revenue.

Commission Proceedings – A dissolution may be initiated by LAFCO if it is consistent with a recommendation or conclusions of a study prepared pursuant to GC §§56378, 56425, or 56430, and LAFCO makes determinations specified in §56881(b). Sections 56378, 56425, and 56430 require LAFCO to study existing agencies, make determinations regarding SOIs and conduct MSRs.

Section 56881(b) requires LAFCO to make both of the following determinations regarding dissolution:

- (1) Public service costs of a proposal that the commission is authorizing are likely to be less than or substantially similar to the costs of alternate means of providing the service.
- (2) A change of organization or reorganization that is authorized by the commission promotes public access and accountability for community service needs and financial resources.

Since 2022, the Commission has received annual updates regarding the proposed dissolution of CSA R-9. However, we are currently unaware of any new funding opportunities that could help support CSA R-9 services. As previously noted, in August 2022, the Commission adopted a resolution initiating dissolution of CSA R-9.

In April 2025, LAFCO brought this item to the Commission noting that this application has been pending since 2021 with no significant changes.

Before LAFCO can dissolve a district, LAFCO must hold a public hearing. LAFCO staff have deferred action on the proposed dissolution pending an update from Supervisor Gioia.

ALTERNATIVES FOR COMMISSION ACTION

After consideration of this report and any testimony or additional materials that are submitted, the Commission should consider approving one of the following options:

- Option 1** Direct LAFCO staff to schedule a public hearing to consider dissolution of CSA R-9.
- Option 2** If the Commission needs more information, CONTINUE this matter to a future meeting.
- Option 3** Defer further action regarding dissolution and request an update in six months (October 2026) regarding the status of CSA R-9 including funding.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Option 1

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CONTRA COSTA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

Exhibit A: LAFCO Map of CSA R-9
c: Distribution

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County Service Area R-9 (El Sobrante) and Coterminus SOI

