

September 30, 2008

The Honorable Judge Paul Marigonda
Santa Cruz Superior Court
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: LAFCO Response to 2007-8 Grand Jury Final Report

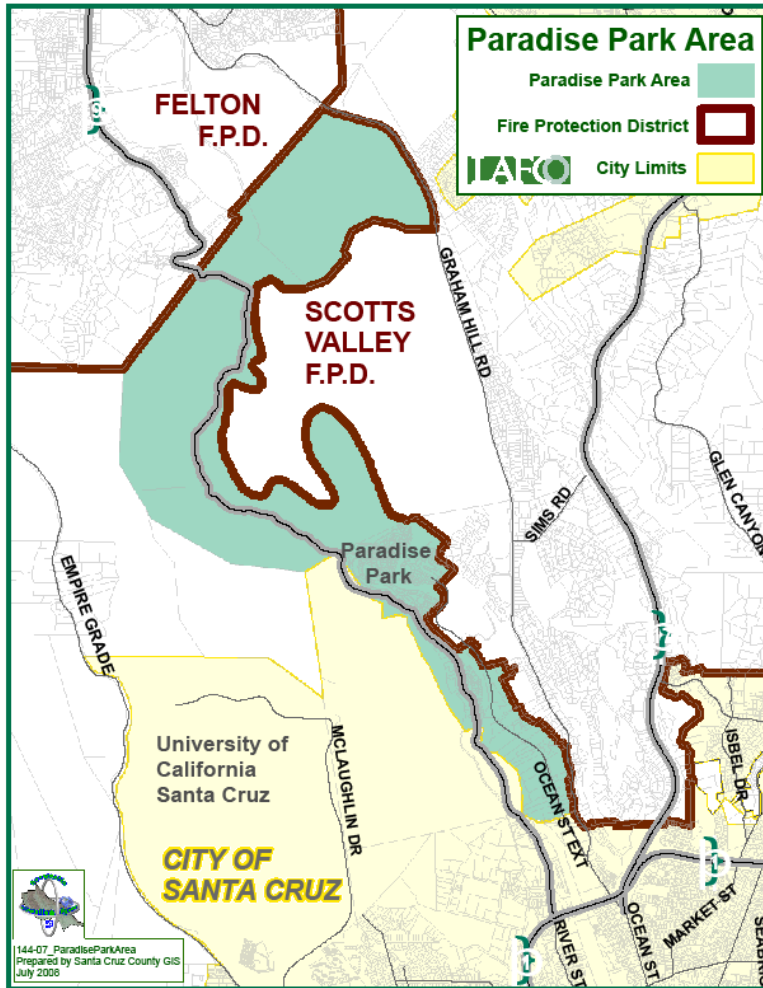
Dear Judge Marigonda:

At its meeting of August 6, 2008, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County discussed the Grand Jury's 2007-8 Final Report, and authorized the following responses.

Finding 21

1. Paradise Park, Page 103
2. LAFCO Response August 6, 2008
3. Grand Jury Finding:
 - a. The community of Paradise Park is located within the boundaries of CSA 48. (See Map, Appendix A.) Because of the distance to the nearest County Fire station, it is impractical for them to service this community, so Paradise Park's fire protection services are contracted out to the City of Santa Cruz.
4. LAFCO Response: AGREES
5. LAFCO also notes that the CSA 48 "island" along Highway 9/the San Lorenzo River comprises more than Paradise Park. It includes parts of Cowell Redwoods State Park, residences on the west side of Highway 9 across the road from Paradise Park, and Ocean Street Extension. See following map:

LAFCO Map of Fire and Emergency Response Agencies near Paradise Park



Recommendation 10

1. What is "County Fire"?, Page 108
2. LAFCO Response August 6, 2008
3. Grand Jury Recommendation:
 - a. Paradise Park should be detached from CSA 48.
4. Implementation:
 - a. LAFCO's response is that this recommendation requires further analysis.
 - b. The principal alternatives to provide fire and emergency services to the Paradise Park area are:
 - i. For the Paradise Park area to remain in County Service Area 48, and for the Board of Supervisors to form a Paradise Park Zone of County Service Area 48 to separately pay for the fire and emergency response services in the Paradise Park area.

- ii. Detach the Paradise Park area from County Service Area 48 and form a new Paradise Park County Service Area to pay for fire and emergency response costs in the Paradise Park area.
 - iii. Detach the Paradise Park area from County Service Area 48 and annex it to the City of Santa Cruz.
- c. Any analysis should include one-time process costs (such as LAFCO fees, State Board of Equalization fees, preparation of legal map and description, and the initial Proposition 218 election to establish a special tax or fire suppression assessment) and ongoing costs (such as occasional Proposition 218 elections to increase the special tax or fire suppression assessment). In the third alternative of annexing to the City of Santa Cruz, additional analysis should be done to look at the entire range of services (police, land use regulation, public works costs and liabilities, etc). Paradise Park is currently located outside the City of Santa Cruz Sphere of Influence.
- d. Concerning implementation of this Grand Jury recommendation, LAFCO believes that the lead agency for the analysis should be the County of Santa Cruz. The County has expressed interest in establishing Zones within County Service Area 48, and that may be the simplest alternative to separately account for the cost of fire and emergency services in the Paradise Park area. Under state law, establishing such Zones does not require a LAFCO hearing and authorization. LAFCO staff is available to assist the Paradise Park area property owners, the Paradise Park area residents, the County of Santa Cruz, and other interested parties in evaluating the alternatives.

The LAFCO Commission is interested in working with the affected parties on the matters raised by the 2007-8 Grand Jury, and available to address issues identified by subsequent Grand Juries.

Very truly yours,

James W. Rapoza
LAFCO Chairperson