



Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division
800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 • 805 654-2488 • www.vcrma.org/planning

SOAR Questions and Answers

What is “SOAR”?

SOAR stands for “Save Open-Space and Agricultural Resources” from the title of initiatives submitted to several city councils and the Board of Supervisors.

Is there more than one SOAR ordinance/initiative?

Yes. The following jurisdictions have, by vote of their electorate or action of their legislative bodies, enacted SOAR ordinances/initiatives:

- San Buenaventura - November 7, 1995 and November 6, 2001
- Camarillo - November 3, 1998
- Oxnard - November 3, 1998
- Simi Valley - November 3, 1998
- Thousand Oaks - November 3, 1998
- Ventura County - November 3, 1998
- Moorpark - January 12, 1999
- Santa Paula - November 7, 2000
- Fillmore - January 17, 2002

What do the SOAR ordinances/initiatives do?

Adopted for the cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks, the SOAR ordinances and initiatives establish “City Urban Restriction Boundary” (CURB) lines around each city and require city voter approval before any land located outside the CURB lines can be developed under the city’s jurisdiction for urban purposes.

The City of Ventura has two measures; its original SOAR measure, which requires voter approval of any change to the General Plan involving the “Agriculture” designation, and the Hillside Voter Participation Act (HVPA), which requires voter approval of any urban development within the HVPA line.

The County SOAR ordinance requires countywide voter approval of any change to the County General Plan involving the “Agricultural,” “Open Space” or “Rural” land use map designations, or any change to a General Plan goal or policy related to those land use designations.

Are there any exceptions to obtaining voter approval?

Yes. Each of the SOAR ordinances/initiatives contains a list of limited exceptions to the general requirement for voter approval. Please refer to each SOAR ordinance/initiative for a list of exceptions for that jurisdiction.

Where can I get a copy of the SOAR ordinances and initiatives?

Copies of the County SOAR ordinance can be obtained from the County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division at the Ventura County Government Center, Hall of Administration, 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA. Copies of each of the affected cities’ ordinances/initiatives can be obtained from that respective city’s Planning Department or the respective city clerk.

How long do these SOAR ordinances/initiatives remain in effect?

- Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Simi Valley & Ventura County: Dec. 31, 2020
- Ventura & Thousand Oaks: Dec. 31, 2030

Does the County SOAR ordinance affect my ability to use or sell my land?

No. The County SOAR Ordinance does not change the County General Plan and Zoning regulations governing your property, nor do they affect the process by which property is bought and sold. For more information regarding the County General Plan and Zoning regulations affecting your property, please contact the County Planning Division (805/654-2488).

How do I obtain zoning and building permits on my property located in the unincorporated County area?

The procedures for obtaining zoning and building permits have not changed. All new or modified use(s) and structure(s) must be consistent with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance Code and County Building Code, and be consistent with the land use designations and goals and policies of the General Plan.





How do I change the County General Plan land use designation on my property?

SOAR added a major additional step to the County’s General Plan Amendment process by requiring voter approval of most changes to the Agricultural, Open Space or Rural land use designations. The County’s General Plan Amendment (GPA) process includes the following steps:

1. GPA Screening application and hearing before the Board of Supervisors.
2. GPA and other permit/entitlement applications (if approved at Screening hearing).
3. Environmental review & documentation.
4. Public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.
5. [Added by SOAR] If the GPA proposing to change a land use designation of Agricultural, Open Space or Rural is approved by the Board of Supervisors and is not otherwise exempt under SOAR; the GPA is placed on the ballot for a general or special election.

All costs associated with processing a privately initiated GPA are the responsibility of the applicant. The costs associated with placing an item on a general election ballot or the cost of conducting a special election can be significant. For information, contact Bruce Bradley, County Elections Division at 805/654-2700.

Can my property’s zoning be changed or can the County Zoning Ordinance Code be amended?

This depends on whether or not the proposed change is consistent with all of the goals and policies of the General Plan that apply to the applicable land use designation.

Do the city SOAR ordinances and initiatives affect city annexations of properties outside city urban growth boundaries?

No. The SOAR ordinances and initiatives do not change the annexation process or procedures. Annexation of property to a city can be initiated by the property owner(s) and/or the city, and is subject to approval of the Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

State law requires that LAFCO “consider” a city’s adopted general plan before it approves an annexation to a city.

However, even if property outside a city CURB line is subsequently annexed to that city, the property could not be developed for urban purposes unless it is approved by vote of the city electorate.

Can unincorporated property inside the CURB line of a city, be annexed to the city?

Yes, but only if approved by LAFCO. State law prescribes the process, procedures and criteria LAFCO must follow in order to approve annexations to cities.

In order for property to be annexed to a city, it must be located within the LAFCO-adopted “sphere of influence” for that city. A city SOAR ordinance or initiative does not change that city’s sphere of influence.

If you need further information regarding annexations or spheres of influence, please contact the Ventura LAFCO.

Is it true the city CURB lines encompass different areas than existing LAFCO sphere of influence boundary for those cities?

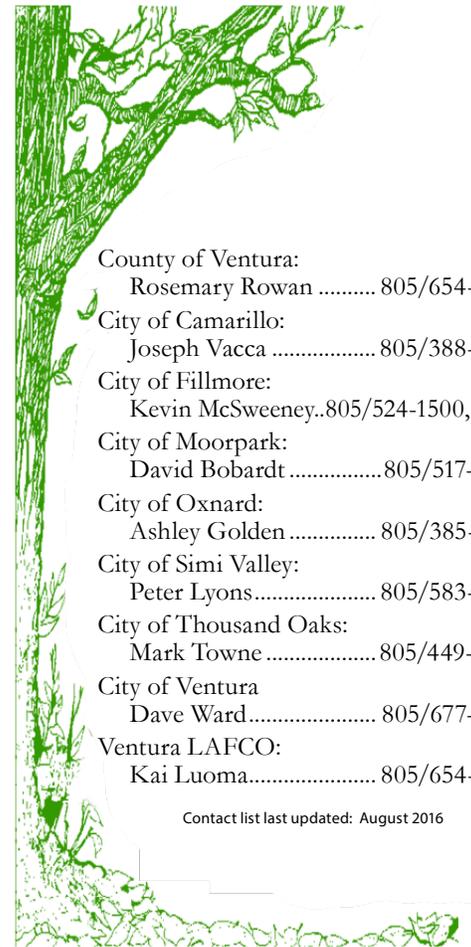
Yes. In most cases the city CURB lines encompass area(s) not currently within LAFCO-adopted Sphere of Influence boundaries. Conversely, some CURB lines do not encompass all area(s) within that city's spheres of influence.



Do the SOAR ordinances & initiatives affect Land Conservation Act (LCA) Contracts or otherwise reduce property taxes?

No. The SOAR ordinances and initiatives do not affect LCA contracts nor change the manner by which property taxes are assessed.

Who do I call if I have further questions about the SOAR ordinances & initiatives?



- County of Ventura:
 - Rosemary Rowan 805/654-2461
- City of Camarillo:
 - Joseph Vacca 805/388-5362
- City of Fillmore:
 - Kevin McSweeney..805/524-1500, #116
- City of Moorpark:
 - David Bobardt 805/517-6281
- City of Oxnard:
 - Ashley Golden 805/385-7882
- City of Simi Valley:
 - Peter Lyons 805/583-6769
- City of Thousand Oaks:
 - Mark Towne 805/449-2500
- City of Ventura
 - Dave Ward 805/677-3964
- Ventura LAFCO:
 - Kai Luoma 805/654-2575

Contact list last updated: August 2016