

Community Identity Policy

I. PURPOSE

To establish policy and procedural guidelines to assist unincorporated communities to preserve their community identity.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. **Community Identity** – the historic, cultural, economic, physical, and/or social context that defines a community.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

The Commission recognizes the importance of preserving community and neighborhood identity as unincorporated areas are annexed or reorganized. Community identity, often developed over the years and sometimes decades, can enrich neighborhoods and serve as a source of pride for residents. The Commission also acknowledges that the proposed annexation of unincorporated communities sometimes results in concerns by residents that their neighborhoods will lose their unique character or sense of place. The Commission fully supports the preservation of community identity, whenever feasible.

IV. TOOLS FOR PRESERVING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The following tools have been identified by OC LAFCO as opportunities to assist communities and annexing agencies in preserving their community's identity as part of a change of organization or reorganization. The Commission encourages the use of these tools and can assist communities in their implementation, where feasible:

- A. Formation of a stakeholder/community "transition team" to serve as a liaison between the community and the annexing city and to collaboratively address any service-related issues.
- B. City adoption of existing specific plans or land use plans to preserve existing land uses.
- C. Use of signage to identify unique neighborhoods or communities.

- D. Seeking input from homeowner associations and/or community associations to ensure ongoing community dialogue.
- E. Preservation of current city street names and addresses, if feasible, and if emergency response coordination is not compromised.

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