

# **West Ranch Area Town Meeting**

**Monday June 15, 2009**

**6:30–8:00 PM**

Stevenson Ranch Elementary School

25820 N. Carroll Lane in Stevenson Ranch

Multi-Purpose Room

## *Summary Notes*

*By Allison Sampson, Facilitator* ([www.allisonsampson.com](http://www.allisonsampson.com))

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Prepared

By

Allison Sampson Management Consultants

The logo for Allison Sampson Management Consultants features the name "Allison" in a large, red, cursive script. Below the name, the tagline "Celebrating a Decade of Consulting to Nonprofits." is written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.

Celebrating a Decade of Consulting to Nonprofits.

Sponsored by the Castaic Area and West Ranch Town Councils  
Any and all questions will be answered at the meeting

## I. **OPENING REMARKS**

Estimated attendance was:

The facilitator reviewed the plan for the evening and along with overall comments, reiterated that she does not live in the area and is completely unbiased towards tonight's subject matter. The focus of this evening's meeting is to provide an educational forum so that the communities involved in the current unincorporated Los Angeles County area can become better informed about the options to (1) form a city, (2) annex to the City of Santa Clarita, or (3) remain unincorporated in Los Angeles County.

Richard Berkson with Economic and Planning Systems was hired by a committee made up of the West Ranch and Castaic Town Councils, representatives of the City of Santa Clarita and the County of Los Angeles, to study only one part of this three-part question: *What is the impact of forming a new city?*

The various studies looking at the three options were paid for by both the City of Santa Clarita and the County of Los Angeles. The intent is that the County and City of Santa Clarita want to provide enough information to each of these communities to decide which option is best for them.

Speaker cards were distributed. To *recap, the focus for this evening's meeting is to look at one of the three governance options—incorporating into a new city.* The annexation study and the comparison report of annexation and incorporation, are not available tonight. We hope to have them for the fall meetings. *Tonight is only the first step in understanding these three distinct options, starting with, incorporating into a new city. The information tonight will be fundamental in making a comparison to the other two options.*

The purpose of this meeting is **educational and informational only. There is no decision to be made at these meetings.** There will be follow-up and dialogue throughout the summer. These notes are being posted and future questions should be directed towards one of the following web sites:

[www.westranchtowncouncil.com](http://www.westranchtowncouncil.com)

[www.westranchbeacon.com](http://www.westranchbeacon.com)

[www.castaicareatowncouncil.org](http://www.castaicareatowncouncil.org)

Once again, the additional studies of the annexation and the comparison report of the three options are to be ready for the fall meetings. There was an apology made that they were not ready for this meeting, and the City of Santa Clarita addressed this question, promising that the annexation study will be ready in September.

Upon completion of the fall meetings, an advisory, non-binding, **advisory vote will take place in November 2009**. The purpose of the advisory vote is to allow registered voters in the boundary areas to voice their opinion on the three options:

- Incorporation
- Annexation
- Remaining in unincorporated Los Angeles County

Ultimately, after the advisory vote is taken, a committee will make the final decision known as LAFCO.

## **II. AGENDA**

6:30 p.m.	Opening Remarks
6:45 p.m.	Consultant Presentation
7:10 p.m.	Form Your Questions
7:20 p.m.	Dialogue
7:50 p.m.	Clarification and Follow-Through Items
8:00 p.m.	Adjourn

## **III. PRESENTATION BY ECONOMIC AND PLANNING SYSTEMS, INC.: RICHARD BERKSON**

An Executive Summary of the initial fiscal analysis for the proposed incorporation of West Ranch/Castaic/Tesoro was distributed. A more detailed PowerPoint presentation was also reviewed with handouts available. The full 84-page report is posted on all of the websites for additional questions and dialogue.

### **Meeting Dialogue:**

#### **A. There were several questions about **Geographic Boundaries:****

- Valverde Park is included in the area.
- Follow-up is needed on the old Sunset Hills area at the next town meeting.
- Tesoro's inclusion is open for further discussion. The intent of the report was to be as inclusive as possible in this initial phase.
- There needs to be re-clarification on the jail's inclusion. This is a follow-up item.
- Castaic Junction is part of the overall "Castaic area." As a starting point for this report, it is included in the analysis.
- Schools are generally unaffected with incorporation.
- Westridge is included.
- Castaic Lake is not included.

- Boundaries can be modified in discussions later. This report represents a starting point.
- It should be noted that West Ranch includes many specific and separate communities which are not all specifically named.
- The group had many questions about who actually created or advised on the boundaries. This is a follow-up item with the town councils.
- There were questions about builder-owned land that continues to exist. Specifically, the power of those votes in the community. It is up to the property owners to pursue this issue with LAFCO.

**B. Risks/Cons/Pros:**

- A smaller city has political advantages because there is more local control. The disadvantage is often that there is also a corresponding smaller resource pool and therefore less of a cushion for unplanned economic cycles.
- Trucking traffic operations and the weigh station will not be affected. This is a Caltrans state function.
- Usually, a new city can play an important role in new business development.
- There was a discussion about how long in general does the revenue neutrality payment last? This is a variable. The consultant has seen situations where it can go anywhere from 15 years onward. It is a negotiated item.
- The subject of revenue neutrality is not evaluated in this report if the option is to annex. This report is limited to incorporation of a new city.
- A recap of the real benefits of incorporation were that the cities have more local control than being unincorporated or having elected officials handling very large geographic County boundaries. New cities often have five city council members. It is not necessary to develop a new charter immediately. There is some time that it takes to set up and start up town councils, and building a new city hall is not absolutely essential.

**C. Revenue Questions:**

- Tesoro has both a positive and negative impact on a city budget. There is more detail on revenues in the full report on the website.
- Wal-Mart and the Filling Station revenues are unknown at this point; however, the focus was on Magic Mountain, which is clearly substantial. That factor alone may drive the neutrality payment to the County.
- The landscape district in Stevenson Ranch would continue its management; however, it may change at some point in the future. State law requires segregation of funds to maintain the original purpose and intent of those funds, for maintenance.
- The revenue assumptions are that the County revenue situation is taken into consideration with no inflation. In the long term, the forecast is that there will be an increase in growth, which will drive a growth in tax revenue. In the

long term, there will be inflation in incorporation because there are also long-term staffing increases.

- There are a few scenarios in the report concerning sales tax revenue ranges. One scenario is that sales tax are flat in 2006-2007. A second scenario is a 15% decline in sales tax. A third scenario is a moderate growth in sales tax corresponding with population.
- With regard to the impact of the West Ranch area revenue, the consultant referred the group to Tables 2 and 4 in the detailed report.
- The first year of incorporation is considered as a “transition year.” The County will continue to provide services. The new city benefits during this year because it is accruing revenues without the full burden of running the city.

**D. General Comments:**

- The timeline for incorporation would most likely take place in the final phases in the end of 2010 to 2011 for the process. In fall 2011 to spring 2012, there would be elections. Implementation would most likely be delayed until about July 2012.
- Hospital healthcare emergency services are not affected with incorporation.
- Fire is completely separate and is not affected. There is no assumption that a new city takes on the firefighting function.
- An area in need of follow-up is tracking the new phases of development in Stevenson Ranch.
- The cost of the study being presented tonight is \$30,000.
- With regard to the new city experience that the consultant had, people asked if he could talk more about that. Generally, his experience and comments were positive about the incorporation of a new city, primarily because it brings control closer to the community and residents.
- The meeting attendees were urged not to wait until September to use town council meetings as a forum for questions.
- If West Ranch opted out of new city incorporation, more analysis would be required as it relates to this summary initial report.
- The decision on these options is a process which involves the residents first, then town council, petitions, a legal process, an application process to LAFCO and then a ballot measure.
- Tonight’s sign-in sheets will be used to communicate to all residents about town council meetings and agendas. Tonight’s attendance was exceptional, and therefore this new communicate technique should benefit the attendance at future town council meetings as well.