



Helendale sphere grows

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Mike Rothschild



Terry Caldwell

Both Victorville and Helendale hoped to come away Wednesday night with expanded spheres of influence.

What came from the lengthy Local Agency Formation Commission meeting was a victory for Helendale and the first steps to potentially expand the area defined as Oro Grande.

“We’re elated,” said James Keoshkerian, president of Helendale’s Community Service District board. “This provides us with a commercial corridor to the freeway,” he said, with LAFCO unambiguously moving 173 square miles — including 3 miles along

Interstate 15 — into Helendale’s sphere.

That decision came in spite of Victorville Councilman Mike Rothschild asking LAFCO to deny giving Helendale any sphere of influence at all.

Victorville’s request to expand its sphere by dozens of square miles to the north was continued for consideration until LAFCO’s Sept. 15 meeting, because of a lawsuit over the city’s general plan that’s still being settled.

Though Victorville and Helendale had reached a compromise after lengthy discussions over 42 square miles they both hoped to secure Wednesday, Victorville Councilman Terry Caldwell tried to convince his colleagues Tuesday night to throw their support behind a map from private developer TRED. That map proposed taking more property from Helendale’s sphere, with Caldwell arguing it was “the best deal for everybody.”

Steve Kennedy, attorney for Helendale’s CSD, called the effort to “flipflop” literally on the eve of the hearing a “morally repugnant abuse of power by elected officials.”

Caldwell’s motion failed 3-2, with the other council members casting support in favor of another proposed compromise map — this time from LAFCO staff.

That map removed another 23 square miles of mineral-rich mining land from the center of the spheres both Victorville and Helendale were seeking.

For the full story, read Thursday’s Daily Press. To subscribe to the Daily Press in print or online, call (760) 241-7755, 1-800-553-2006 or click [here](#).

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