



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Public Works  
Department No.: 054  
For Agenda Of: February 20, 2007  
Placement: Administrative  
Estimated Tme:  
Continued Item: Yes  
If Yes, date from: January 16, 2007  
Vote Required: 4/5

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Phillip M. Demery, Director Public Works Department  
Director(s) 568-3010  
Contact Info: Mark Schleich, Public Works Deputy Director  
882-3604  
**SUBJECT: Declaration as Excess; Portion of Baron Ranch  
Third Supervisorial District**

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** N/A

As to form: Select\_Concurrence

**Recommended Actions:**

A. Declare County-owned Land as Surplus by the following:

(I) Approve the attached Notice of Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines Re: declaring a 140 acre portion of the County-owned property known as the Baron Ranch (APN 081-150-032; hereinafter the "Property") as excess to County needs (see Attachment B1); and

(II) Adopt the attached Resolution Declaring Real Property as Surplus, which declares the above referenced 140 acres as surplus to County needs. The Property is shown on "Exhibit A." The 140 acre portion proposed as surplus (herein the "Portion") is shown on "Exhibit B." Both exhibits are attached to the resolution (see Attachment B2).

(III) Authorize the Real Property Division of the Public Works Department to initiate disposal of the Portion in compliance with applicable Government Codes; and

(IV) Authorize the revenue from the sale of the Portion to be directed to Department of Public Works, Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division.

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

- B. Approve the Baron Ranch Public Access Trail Plan Project Description and identify Santa Barbara County Parks as project manager.

**Summary Text:** The County owns Baron Ranch (the Property) in fee. A portion of the Ranch is improved with a single family residence. That Portion is unneeded by the County. If adopted the Resolution Declaring Real Property as Surplus will declare the Portion as excess to County needs and allow Real Property to commence proceedings to dispose of the Portion in accordance with applicable Government Code.

**Background:** Baron Ranch is a 1,092 acre County-owned property located at 14550 Calle Real, adjacent to and east of the Tajiguas Landfill. The Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division of Public Works (herein "RR&WM") purchased Baron Ranch for \$7,500,000 to provide a buffer between the landfill and private ownership, to allow flexibility for the RR&WM Division's existing and future solid waste operations, provide options for project specific mitigation, and for possible future public access for community uses. Purchase monies and incidental expenses were financed using 1991 Certificates of Participation in the amount of \$7,994,003.

The Property is zoned for agriculture, and is planted with approximately 100 acres of avocado and 7 acres of cherimoya which are professionally managed under contract. The 140 acre Portion is improved with a single family residence.

On May 24, 2005, in order to significantly reduce or eliminate RR&WM's debt service for the Baron Ranch property, or to pay for RR&WM capitol projects, your Board directed RR&WM staff to form a project team to study the feasibility of declaring all or part of the Baron Ranch as excess to County needs.

**On February 21, 2006, the Board received a staff presentation regarding potential surplus property at the Baron Ranch. The presentation and the Project Teams recommendation to identify 140 acres as surplus to County needs was based upon the need to reduce the fiscal impact of the Baron Ranch to the RRWM Fund, while maintaining maximum flexibility and potential use of the property for the RRWM into the future. The fiscal impact to the Fund was first identified in 2003 during an operation review conducted by an outside consultant. As part of staff presentation to the Board on February 21, 2006 the negative fiscal impact to the division was identified as \$702,000 annually. This represents an approximate cost of \$3.20 per ton disposed until the end of the Debt Service. The Debt Service is scheduled to be retired in 2011. The outstanding balance as of February 1, 2007 is \$2,890,000. The proceeds from the sale would improve the financial health of the fund and could be used to retire the Debt Service or offset capital improvements. At that hearing, several questions were raised by your Board as well as members of the public. The Board continued the item until March 21, 2006.**

On March 21, 2006, staff returned to your Board with responses to the concerns expressed at the prior month's Board meeting. At that time, your Board directed staff to develop a plan for future Board consideration to:

- sell the Portion including the drafting of potential deed restrictions,

- draft a public access trail plan including parking for the larger parcel (including an agreement from RR&WM to set funds aside for trail and parking lot improvements if the Portion sells), and
- merge underlying remaining legal parcels into a larger parcel.

This Board letter addresses each of the points raised at that meeting.

Property Transfer: Recommendation "B" above implements the process to dispose of the Portion. Adoption of the Resolution Declaring Real Property as Surplus will serve to declare the Portion as excess to County needs. If the Resolution is adopted, Real Property will offer the Portion to other Government agencies in accordance with applicable code. If none of those agencies are interested in purchasing the Portion, Real Property will return to your Board and set a bid opening date. Real Property will then market the Portion for sale and accept bids from the public. If your Board accepts a bid at the bid opening session, staff will return to your Board with a Sale Contract and Escrow Instructions signed by the buyer. After execution, escrow will be opened. If no acceptable bids are received, the Portion may be listed for sale with a local real estate agency. It is recommended that the proceeds from the sale of the Portion be directed to RR&WM. RR&WM has several options including paying off the debt or substituting another future capital project with the current debt arrangement. As the process moves forward, RR&WM staff will meet with the Debt Advisory Committee to ensure that the best financial outcome for the Division will be identified and recommended to your Board for approval.

At the March 21, 2006 meeting, the Board directed the project team to consider possible deed restriction for the 140 acre portion. RR&WM, Real Property and Planning and Development met to discuss possible deed restrictions. The focus was on protecting the view shed and over development of the Portion. Any future development, including the construction, reconstruction, demolition or alteration of the size of any structure, must conform to all applicable policies in the Comprehensive Plan, including the Coastal Land Use Plan, and the applicable regulations in the Coastal Zoning Ordinance and/or Inland Zoning Ordinance. Due to the comprehensiveness of existing development ordinances, only one deed restriction associated with the Portion is recommended by Planning & Development and Public Works staff. The recommended deed restriction is to limit any future subdivision of the Portion to prevent further residential development on the Gaviota Coast. This limitation would be included in the Portion's sale offering and deed at the time of final sale.

Staff studied the idea of eradicating the legal parcels underlying the remaining Property by merging them into one parcel. Based upon our research and public comment, staff recommends against such a merger at this time.

Public Access Trail Plan: Recommendation "C" describes and implements a plan for public access at Baron Ranch. A complete project description is available by contacting Claude Garciacelay at (805) 568-2469 at the County Parks Department or an electronic version of the document is posted at the County Parks Department Website at [www.sbparks.org](http://www.sbparks.org). Attachment C shows the proposed trail. It has been recommended that the trail be named after Thomas Diblee Jr., a renowned local geologist.

The Division supports limited public access at Baron Ranch. The Parks Department has estimated trail installation costs to be \$115,000 for the internal trail. A trail easement will be dedicated within the Ranch's property boundaries. The Division recommends that the trail be open to the public Friday

through Sunday each week barring periodic operational constraints. After a sufficient evaluation period, the Division may consider increasing the number of days per week that the Ranch trail will be open to the public.

The proposed internal trail is approximately 6 miles. From a parking/staging area at the Ranch’s entrance, the visiting public will be restricted to a designated corridor through the lower portions of the property where the agricultural operation is located, utilizing the main access road on the east side of Arroyo Quemado creek to the upper portions of the property beyond the agricultural area. Existing access roads can then be linked by the construction of a short section of trail allowing visitors to make a loop, ultimately returning to the agricultural area and then the parking/staging area. The possible future construction of a trail connecting this internal trail loop to the Camino Cielo Road at the crest of the Santa Ynez range via U.S. Forest Service Property, though supported by the Division, is dependent upon external funding and negotiations with the USFS.

County Parks will be the Lead Agency in conducting any required environmental review, and will be responsible for the installation of any required infrastructure and improvements. A Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) will be negotiated between County Public Works and County Parks for the maintenance of the necessary infrastructure associated with public access.

**Performance Measure:**

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Select\_Budgeted

**Fiscal Analysis:**

| <u>Funding Sources</u> | <u>Current FY Cost:</u> | <u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u> | <u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| General Fund           |                         |                                  |                                    |
| State                  |                         |                                  |                                    |
| Federal                |                         |                                  |                                    |
| Fees                   |                         |                                  |                                    |
| Other:                 |                         |                                  |                                    |
| Total                  | \$ -                    | \$ -                             | \$ -                               |

**Narrative:**

The requested actions do not obligate County expenditures or identify specific revenues. The recommended actions initiate the process for declaring the property as surplus and future steps in the process will highlight specific costs and revenues. These costs and revenues will include impacts related to the \$2,890,000 of outstanding principle (as of February 1, 2007) obligated for the Baron Ranch purchase via the 1998 Certificates of Participation (which refunded the 1991 Certificates of Participation.)

**Staffing Impacts:**

**Legal Positions:**

**FTEs:**

**Special Instructions:** After Board action, distribute as follows:

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Copy of executed Resolution | Facilities Services, Public Works, Attn: Jeff Havlik |
| 2. Minute Order                | Facilities Services, Public Works, Attn: Jeff Havlik |

**Clerk:** Please publish the above referenced Resolution once a week for three weeks in the Santa Barbara News Press and in the Santa Maria Times. Please deliver proof of publication of same to Jeff Havlik, Public Works.

**Attachments:**

Notice of Exemption (Attachment B1)  
Resolution Declaring Real Property as Surplus (Attachment B2)  
Baron Ranch Public Access Proposed Trail (Attachment C)

**Authored by:**

Jeff Havlik, SR/WA, Public Works, Real Property, 568-3073 Leslie Wells, Public Works, Resource Recovery & Waste Management, 882-3611 (G:\Survey\Realprop\Boardletters\Baron Declare Excess 1-29-07)

**cc:**

Claude Garciacelay, Parks Department