



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

Submitted on:  
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Board of Supervisors  
Department No.:  
For Agenda Of: November 5, 2024  
Placement: Administrative  
Estimated Time:  
Continued Item: N/A  
If Yes, date from: No  
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Department Director(s) Bob Nelson, Santa Barbara County  
Board of Supervisors, Fourth District  
Contact Info: Aaron Hanke, Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Request Postponement of the Santa Maria City Council Decision for Orcutt Annexation of Key Site 26/Richard’s Ranch

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Other Concurrence:**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve sending a letter to the City of Santa Maria requesting a 90-day postponement of action on the proposed annexation of Key Site 26, also known as Richard’s Ranch, and request that the City appoint two City councilmembers to engage with County representatives to discuss the matter;
- b) Authorize Supervisor Nelson and Supervisor Lavagnino to engage in discussions with City representatives and staff on behalf of the County; and,
- c) Determine that the above actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), because pursuant to section 15378(b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines the actions consist of organizational or administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

**Summary:**

On October 2, 2024, the Santa Maria Planning Commission voted to recommend the annexation of Key Site 26 (Richard’s Ranch) to the Santa Maria City Council. This site, located within the Orcutt Community Plan area, has historically been viewed as an integral part of the Orcutt community. However, the property was not included in the City of Santa Maria’s General Plan update, and until recently, not part of the long standing discussions between the City and County regarding regional planning, making the proposed annexation a new development.

The annexation of Key Site 26 presents significant regional implications, particularly concerning water availability. Over the past few months, staff from both the City and County have been engaged in productive discussions about the potential sale of water rights to facilitate development within the County's jurisdiction. Moving forward with the annexation at this time would risk cutting short these important conversations and potentially disrupt future regional planning efforts between the City of Santa Maria and Santa Barbara County.

The County has a well-established history of collaboration with the City of Santa Maria on a number of projects, including providing annual library funding, addressing homelessness along the Santa Maria Riverbed, and developing Hope Village. In the spirit of continuing this partnership, the County seeks to ensure that any annexation of Key Site 26 is conducted in a manner that benefits both parties and respects the collaborative work already underway.

**Discussion:**

The County's request for a postponement of the City Council's decision on the annexation of Key Site 26 is intended to provide additional time for dialogue and cooperation between the City and the County. The proposed 90-day postponement would allow for discussions between two City Councilmembers and two County Supervisors, along with relevant staff from both the City and the County. This group would work together to explore the regional implications of the annexation, including water supply, tax agreements, and other infrastructure considerations that affect both jurisdictions.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

There are no direct fiscal impacts associated with this request. Any future fiscal considerations regarding water supply agreements or other regional issues would be addressed through the discussions between the City and County representatives.

**Conclusion:**

By postponing the City Council's decision on the annexation of Key Site 26 and appointing City and County representatives, both entities will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions to ensure that the annexation and its broader regional implications are fully considered. This approach will help to preserve the cooperative relationship between the City of Santa Maria and Santa Barbara County and promote a long-term solution that benefits both parties.

**Authored by:**

Bob Nelson, Santa Barbara County Supervisor, Fourth District

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Proposed letter to the City of Santa Maria