

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date:

October 27, 2008

To:

Honorable Board of Supervisors

From:

John Baker, Planning Director and Deputy County Administrator

Re:

Conservation Easement for Fire Station 51, Lompoc area

Issue Summary

On September 23, 2008, the Board Supervisors considered a request from the General Services Department to create a 4.6-acre Conservation Easement over a portion of the 15.35-acre property that the County had recently purchased from Caltrans. The Conservation Easement was required as a mitigation measure pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to offset the loss of approximately 2.5 acres of Burton Mesa Chaparral habitat displaced during construction of a new Fire Station site. The item was pulled by Supervisor Gray, who had questions about the need to create a Conservation Easement and what restrictions would apply within the Easement area.

Recommended Actions

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt the Resolution making certain findings required by California Government Code Section 51056 to create and accept a 4.6 acre Conservation Easement on the 15.35 acre Fore Station 51 property in Lompoc (APN: 097-380-043), as well as approving and accepting the creation of the Conservation Easement (Exhibit A); and
- b) Execute the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Environmental Restrictions (Conservation Easement) creating a Conservation Easement on a 4.6 acre portion of the County-owned Fire Station 51 property located at the intersection of Burton Mesa and Harris Grade Roads in the unincorporated area of Lompoc Valley (Exhibit B); and
- c) Accept title to the Conservation Easement by authorizing the Clerk of the Board to execute the Certificate of Acceptance attached to the Conservation Easement (Exhibit C).

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Background

On November 9, 2005, the Planning Commission determined that the proposed land acquisition by the County for the purposes of construction a new Fire Department and Sheriff Sub-station would be consistent with the General Plan pursuant to Government Code Section 65402.

In March of 2006, a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was completed and released for public review. During the public review period, a letter was received from the California Department of Fish and Game raising several concerns. DFG argued that the mitigation requirement for lost Burton Mesa Chaparral habitat should be increased from 3.6 acres to 4.6 acres. DFG also argued that we should have conducted additional field surveys for Seaside Bird's beak, a California Endangered species and federal species of concern.

For expediency and to avoid the potential need for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), staff agreed to increase the mitigation requirement and conduct the Bird's beak surveys. Based these mutually agreed upon changes, a Final Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted without further challenge and the project was allowed to move forward. The Board approved the Final MND (including the mitigation monitoring plan that identified the need to create a 4.6-acre Conservation Easement) when it authorized funding for project construction.

Discussion

Need to Provide Permanent Protection of Habitat

On November 9, 1999, the Board adopted Land Use Element Interpretive Guidelines for the Lompoc Area. Guideline A- 8 (on Page 3) states:

"Where avoidance has been achieved to the maximum extent feasible, impacts to Burton Mesa Chaparral may be mitigated at ratios of 3:1 for high quality chaparral, 2:1 for moderate quality, and 1.5:1 for degraded chaparral. Mitigation may take the form of 1) habitat restoration either inside the State's Ecological Preserve or in a permanently protected area outside the Preserve, or 2) in-lieu fees that would fund habitat restoration and/or management in the Preserve. However, state and federal laws requiring protection of Threatened and Endangered Species may preclude such mitigation strategies in some cases."

Technically speaking, the Interpretive Guidelines apply only to the Northern Lompoc Unincorporated Urban Area. The Fire Station lies adjacent to the designated Northern Lompoc Unincorporated Urban Area but is actually in the rural area. As such, P&D raised no policy issues in the course of the General Plan Conformity determination process.

However, in preparing the CEQA document staff was tasked with having to identify reasonable, proportionate and defensible mitigation measures in order to reduce biological impacts to less than significant levels and therefore avoid the need for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Hence, staff borrowed from the Board adopted policy and suggested that lands be set aside for permanent protection based on the quality of the habitat that would be lost during construction.

The County General Services Department negotiated for and purchased the entire 15.35 acres from Caltrans in anticipation (1) that habitat loss would have to be mitigated and (2) that future expansion of the fire station facility may be desired. After subtracting the 2.5 acres that is now developed and the a narrow strip of ground along the Harris Grade Road where the 4.6-acre Conservation Easement area is proposed, there would still be 8.25 acres of useable area available for future use by the County.

Restrictions within Conservation Easement

Within the Conservation Easement area, the County could not authorize or allow activities that would "alter, impair or interfere with" the "preservation, restoration and/or enhancement of native species and their habitats." This would preclude such things as material and equipment storage, grading, removal of native vegetation, or the placement of buildings and structures (as more specifically described in Section 3 on Page 3 of the Conservation Easement). Although active recreational uses would not be allowed pursuant to Section 3(d) of the Conservation Easement, passive recreational uses such as interpretive walking trails and picnic benches would be permissible.

Conclusion

Recordation of the proposed Conservation Easement would finalize the successful completion of a new Fire Station and Sheriff's Department Substation in the Lompoc area. Said Conservation Easement was a requirement of project completion pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as a means to offset the project's impact on biological resources. The requirement to provide permanent habitat protection at specific ratios based on the quality of habitat displaced by development is consistent with policies adopted by the Board and consistent with what has been required for private development projects in the area.

Attachments:

Exhibit A – Resolution

Exhibit B – Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Environmental Restrictions

Exhibit C – Certificate of Acceptance

Exhibit D – September 23, 2008 Board Letter from General Services Department (w/o attachments)

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA STATE OF CALIFORNIA

| IN THE MATTER OF MAKING CERTAIN |) | | |
|------------------------------------|----|----------------|--|
| FINDINGS REQUIRED BY CALIFORNIA | Ś | | |
| GOVERNMENT CODE §51056 FOR APPROVA | L) | | |
| AND ACCEPTANCE OF A CONSERVATION | | · | |
| EASEMENT ON SANTA BARBARA COUNTY | Ś | RESOLUTION NO. | |
| ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER 097-380-043 | í | | |

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Barbara ("County") purchased approximately 15.35 acres of land ("Property") located at the intersection of Burton Mesa and Harris Grade Roads in the unincorporated area of Lompoc from the State of California for the purpose of constructing a new County Fire Station and Sheriff Substation ("Project"); and

WHEREAS, the Property includes critical habitat known as Burton Mesa Chaparral, and contains several varieties of endangered and protected plant and wildlife species; and

WHEREAS, an Initial Study and Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (06NGD-00000-00002) was prepared by County's Planning and Development Department and approved by the Board of Supervisors for construction of the Fire Station and Sheriff Substation on the Property; and

WHEREAS, the Project was approved and determined to be consistent with the General Plan on the condition that 4.6 acres of the Property ("Easement Area") be set aside by County for permanent protection by means of a conservation, or "open-space" easement; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Government Code §51056, prior to accepting an open-space easement, the County shall make certain findings regarding its consistency with the general plan and its importance to the public.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FOUND AND RESOLVED by the County of Santa Barbara as follows:

1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds and determines that:

- Preservation of the Easement Area as open space is consistent with the General a. Plan.
- Preservation of the Easement Area as open space is in the best interest of the b. County and is important to the public for enjoyment of scenic beauty because the land is valuable to the public as a wildlife preserve or sanctuary and the Conservation Easement contains appropriate covenants to that end.
- The Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Environmental Restrictions c. (Conservation Easement) presented herewith is hereby approved and accepted by

| the Board of Supervisors. | - |
|---|--|
| APPROVED AND ADOPTED Santa Barbara, State of California, this following vote: | by the Board of Supervisors of the County of, 2008, by the |
| AYES: | |
| NOES: | |
| ABSTAIN: | |
| ABSENT: | |
| | COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA |
| ATTEST: | Ву: |
| MICHAEL F. BROWN CLERK OF THE BOARD | Chair, Board of Supervisors Salud Carbajal |
| By: | |
| APPROVED AS TO FORM: | APPROVED AS TO FORM: |
| DENNIS MARSHALL | ROBERT W. GEIS, C.P.A. |
| GOUNTY COUNSEL | AUDITOR-CONTROLLER |
| By: Deputy | By: Med a Caul Deputy |

Deputy

Recording Requested by and When Recorded Mail to: County of Santa Barbara c/o General Services/Real Estate Services Will Call

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE
NO TAX DUE
APN: 097-380-043 (portion)

DECLARATION OF COVENANTS, CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTRICTIONS (Conservation Easement)

| Thi | s Declaration | of | Covenants, | Conditions, | and | Environmental | Restrictions |
|------------|----------------|--------|---------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------|--------------|
| ("Conserva | ation Easement | ") is | made this | day of | | _, 2008, by the C | OUNTY OF |
| SANTA BA | ARBARA, a pol | litica | l subdivision | of the State of | f Calif | omia ("COUNT" | Y"). |

RECITALS

- A. COUNTY is the sole owner of that certain real property in the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, designated as Santa Barbara County Assessor Parcel Number 097-380-043, containing approximately 15.35 acres and located at the intersection of Burton Mesa and Harris Grade Roads in the unincorporated area of Lompoc Valley; more particularly described in Exhibit "A", attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference (hereinafter "Property").
- B. COUNTY purchased the Property from the State of California for the purpose of relocating the existing Santa Barbara County Fire Station 51 and Sheriff Substation facility on Burton Mesa Road upon the condition that a portion of the Property (hereinafter "Easement Area") would be preserved by means of a conservation easement, as such is defined in California Civil Code Section 815, et seq.
- C. The Easement Area, consisting of approximately 4.6 acres, is described in Exhibit "B", attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
- D. Preservation of the Easement Area as open space has been determined to be in the best interest of the County of Santa Barbara and important to the public for the enjoyment of scenic beauty because the land is valuable to the public as a wildlife preserve, and the provisions hereof are appropriate to protect its scenic beauty.
- E. The Easement Area provides critical habitat to many endemic endangered and rare species as well as those of national and local concern in the region. This habitat, Burton Mesa Chaparral, contains a distinct strain of Central Coast Maritime Chaparral and was

recognized by the County of Santa Barbara as a sensitive plant community in 1995. There are numerous plant species in the Easement Area that have achieved protection designation, such as: La Purisima Manzanita, Sand Mesa Manzanita, Lompoc Ceanothus, Wedge-leaved Horkelia, Coast Live Oak, California Spineflower, and Lompoc Monkeyflower. Several species of wildlife that have also received protection designation can also be found in the Easement Area, including the Silvery Legless Lizard, California Horned Lizard, White-tailed Kite (nesting), Loggerhead Shrike, California Thrasher, California Horned Lark, and the American Badger. These rare species flourish in critical habitats, including Coastal Sage Scrub, Burton Mesa Chaparral, and Grassland areas found in the Easement Area. Several other rare and endangered species are assumed to inhabit the Easement Area due to its unique conditions and habitat.

- F. COUNTY desires to establish and hold this Conservation Easement in perpetuity to provide mitigation for certain impacts caused by construction of the Fire and Sheriff Stations on the Property pursuant to Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department Initial Study and Final Mitigated Negative Declaration For the Relocation of Fire Station 51 Project No. 06NGD-00000-00002 ("Comprehensive Summary of Mitigation Measures Required For the Relocation of Fire Station 51") approved by the County Board of Supervisors December 19, 2006, which was prepared pursuant to CEQA and certified by the County Board of Supervisors for Relocation of Fire Station 51, and the related Mitigation Plan.
- G. The Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department has determined that preservation of the Easement Area as open space is consistent with the General Plan for the Burton Mesa area.

COVENANTS, CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to California law, including Civil Code Section 815, et seq., COUNTY hereby voluntarily creates and establishes this Conservation Easement in perpetuity over the Easement Area, subject to the following:

- 1. <u>Purposes</u>. The purposes of this Conservation Easement are to ensure the Easement Area will be retained forever in its natural condition and to prevent any use of the Easement Area that will impair or interfere with the conservation values of the Easement Area, as such are set forth in the Recitals stated herein (hereinafter "Conservation Values"). COUNTY intends that this Conservation Easement will confine the use of the Easement Area to such activities that are consistent with those purposes, including, without limitation, those involving the preservation, restoration and enhancement of native species and their habitats.
- 2. <u>COUNTY Covenants.</u> To accomplish the purposes of this Conservation Easement, COUNTY hereby promises:
- (a) To preserve and protect the Conservation Values of the Easement Area; and

- (b) To undertake all reasonable actions to prevent the unlawful entry and trespass by persons whose activities may degrade or harm the conservation values of the Easement Area; and
- (c) To prevent any activity on or use of the Easement Area that is inconsistent with the purposes of this Conservation Easement and to require the restoration of such areas or features of the Easement Area that may be damaged by any act, failure to act, or any use that is inconsistent with the purposes of this Conservation Easement; and
- (d) To preserve and manage all mineral, air and water rights necessary to protect and to sustain the biological resources of the Easement Area.
- 3. <u>Prohibited Uses</u>. Any activity on or use of the Easement Area inconsistent with the purposes of this Conservation Easement is prohibited. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following uses and activities are expressly prohibited:
- (a) Unseasonable watering; use of fertilizers, pesticides, biocides, herbicides or other agricultural chemicals; weed abatement activities; incompatible fire protection activities; and any and all other activities and uses which may adversely affect the purposes of this Conservation Easement; and
- (b) Use of off-road vehicles and use of any other motorized vehicles except on existing roadways; and
 - (c) Grazing or other agricultural activity of any kind; and
- (d) Active recreational activities including, but not limited to, horseback riding, biking, hunting or fishing, except as may be specifically permitted under this Conservation Easement; and
 - (e) Commercial or industrial uses; and
- (f) Construction, reconstruction or placement of any building, billboard or sign, or any other structure or improvement of any kind; and
- (g) Depositing or accumulation of soil, trash, ashes, refuse, waste, biosolids or any other materials; and
- (h) Planting, introduction or dispersal of non-native or exotic plant or animal species; and
- (i) Filling, dumping, excavating, draining, dredging, mining, drilling, removing or exploring for or extraction of minerals, loam, soil, sands, gravel, rocks or other material on or below the surface of the Easement Area; and

- (j) Altering the surface or general topography of the Easement Area, including building of roads; and
- (k) Removing, destroying, or cutting of trees, shrubs or other vegetation, except as required by law for (1) fire breaks, (2) maintenance of existing foot trails or roads, or (3) prevention or treatment of disease; and
- (l) Manipulating, impounding or altering any natural water course, body of water or water circulation on the Easement Area, and activities or uses detrimental to water quality, including but not limited to degradation or pollution of any surface or sub-surface waters.
- 4. Reserved Rights. COUNTY reserves to itself, and to its personal representatives, heirs, successors, and assigns, all rights accruing from its ownership of the Property and the Easement Area, including the right to engage in or to permit or invite others to engage in all uses of the Easement Area that are not expressly prohibited or limited by, and are consistent with, the purposes of this Conservation Easement; and the right to grant licenses, easements, and other property interests in the Easement Area that do not interfere with the Conservation Values. County specifically reserves the right to make restricted access to the property available for educational and passive recreational uses, such as an interpretive trail and benches, provided that no substantial grading or vegetation removal is required.
- 5. <u>COUNTY's Remedies</u>. If COUNTY determines that any injury to the Conservation Values of the Easement Area has occurred or is threatened, COUNTY may bring an action at law or in equity in a court of competent jurisdiction to enforce the terms of this Conservation Easement, to recover any damages to which it may be entitled for violation of the terms of this Conservation Easement or for any injury to the Conservation Values of the Easement Area, to enjoin the violation (*ex parte* as necessary), by temporary or permanent injunction, without the necessity of proving either actual damages or the inadequacy of otherwise available legal remedies, or for other equitable relief, including, but not limited to, the restoration of the Easement Area to the condition in which it existed prior to any such injury.

COUNTY's remedies described in this section shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to all remedies now or hereafter existing at law or in equity, including but not limited to, the remedies set forth in Civil Code Section 815, et seq., inclusive.

If COUNTY or any subsequent transferee uses or threatens to use the Easement Area for purposes inconsistent with this Conservation Easement, notwithstanding Civil Code Section 815.7, any entity or individual with a justifiable interest in the preservation of this Conservation Easement shall have standing as an interested party in any proceeding affecting this Conservation Easement.

6. <u>Acts Beyond COUNTY's Control</u>. Nothing contained in this Conservation Easement shall be construed to entitle any third party to bring any action against COUNTY

for any injury to or change in the Easement Area resulting from any natural cause beyond COUNTY's control, including, without limitation, fire, flood, storm, and earth movement; or any prudent action taken by COUNTY under emergency conditions to prevent, abate, or mitigate significant injury to the Easement Area resulting from such causes.

- 7. Access. This Conservation Easement does not convey a general right of access to the public.
- 8. <u>Amendment</u>. This Conservation Easement may be amended from time to time by COUNTY so long as such amendment is consistent with the purposes of this Conservation Easement and California law governing conservation easements and does affect its perpetual duration. Any such amendment shall be recorded in the Official Records of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California.
- 9. <u>Termination</u>. If circumstances arise in the future that render the purposes of this Conservation Easement impossible to accomplish, this Conservation Easement can only be terminated or extinguished, in whole or in part, by judicial proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 10. <u>Transfer of Easement</u>. This Conservation Easement is transferable by COUNTY, but only to an entity or organization authorized to acquire and hold conservation easements pursuant to Civil Code Section 815.3 (or any successor provision then applicable) or the laws of the United States.
- 11. <u>Transfer of Property.</u> COUNTY shall incorporate the terms of this Conservation Easement by reference in any deed or other legal instrument by which COUNTY divests itself of any interest in all or any portion of the Easement Area, including, without limitation, a leasehold interest. The failure by COUNTY to perform any act provided in this section shall not impair the validity of this Conservation Easement or limit its enforceability in any way.
- 12. <u>Successors</u>. The covenants, terms, conditions, and restrictions of this Conservation Easement shall be binding upon, and inure to the benefit of, the parties hereto and their respective personal representatives, heirs, successors, and assigns and shall constitute a servitude running in perpetuity with the Property.

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| | the COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, a political a, executed this Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and day of, 2008. | | | | |
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| | COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA | | | | |
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| | By: Salud Carbajal, Chair | | | | |
| | Board of Supervisors | | | | |
| | County of Santa Barbara | | | | |
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| | ACKNOWLEDGMENT | | | | |
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| State of California | | | | | |
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| County of Santa Barbara |) | | | | |
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| On, 2008, bef | ore me,, personally | | | | |
| | who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory | | | | |
| evidence to be the person(s) whose | e name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and | | | | |
| | e/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized | | | | |
| capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument. | | | | | |
| entity upon benan of which the pers | on(s) acted, executed the institution. | | | | |
| I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of California that the | | | | | |
| foregoing paragraph is true and corre | ect. | | | | |
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| WITNESS my hand and official sea | . | | | | |
| MICHAEL F. BROWN | | | | | |
| CLERK OF THE BOARD | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| By: | | | | | |
| Deputy Clerk | | | | | |

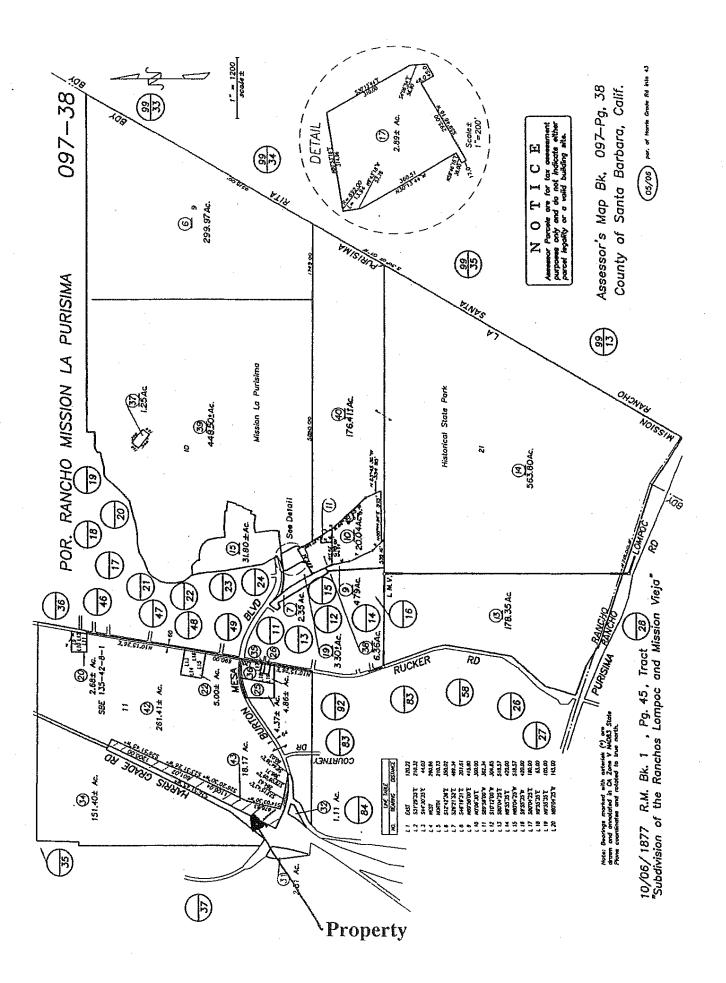
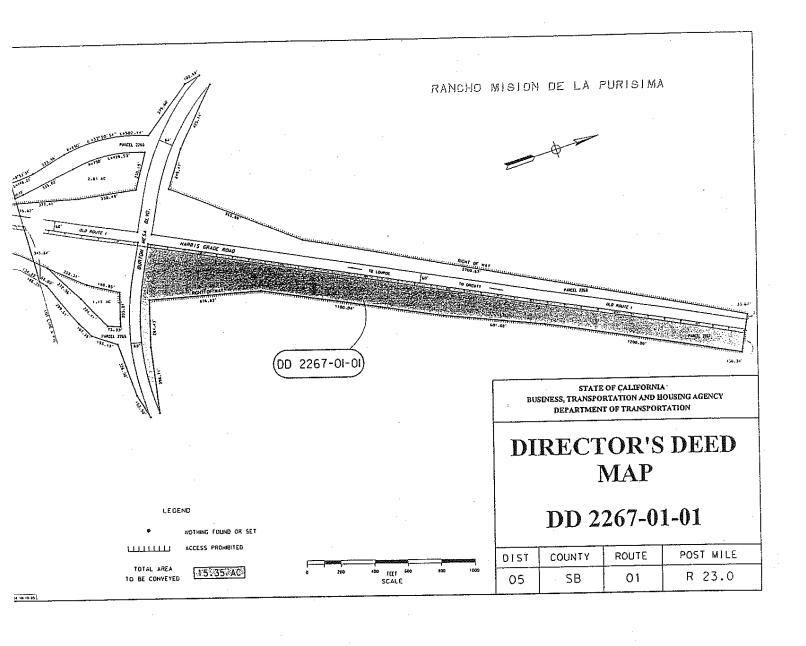


EXHIBIT A



That portion of the land conveyed to the State of California by the deed recorded June 6, 1974 in Book 2519 at Page 1324, Official Records of Santa Barbara County lying easterly of the easterly line of Harris Grade Road relinquished to the County of Santa Barbara in the deed recorded February 27, 1987 as Document No. 1987-015307 of Official Records of said County and northerly of the northerly line of Burton Mesa Boulevard described in the deed recorded August 28, 1959 in Book 1660 at Page 299, Official Records of said County.

END OF DESCRIPTION

This real property description has been prepared by me, or under my direction, in conformance with the Professional Land Surveyor's Act.

Signature Robin N. Isa

Date 10-18-05 EXHIBIT A

2 of 2



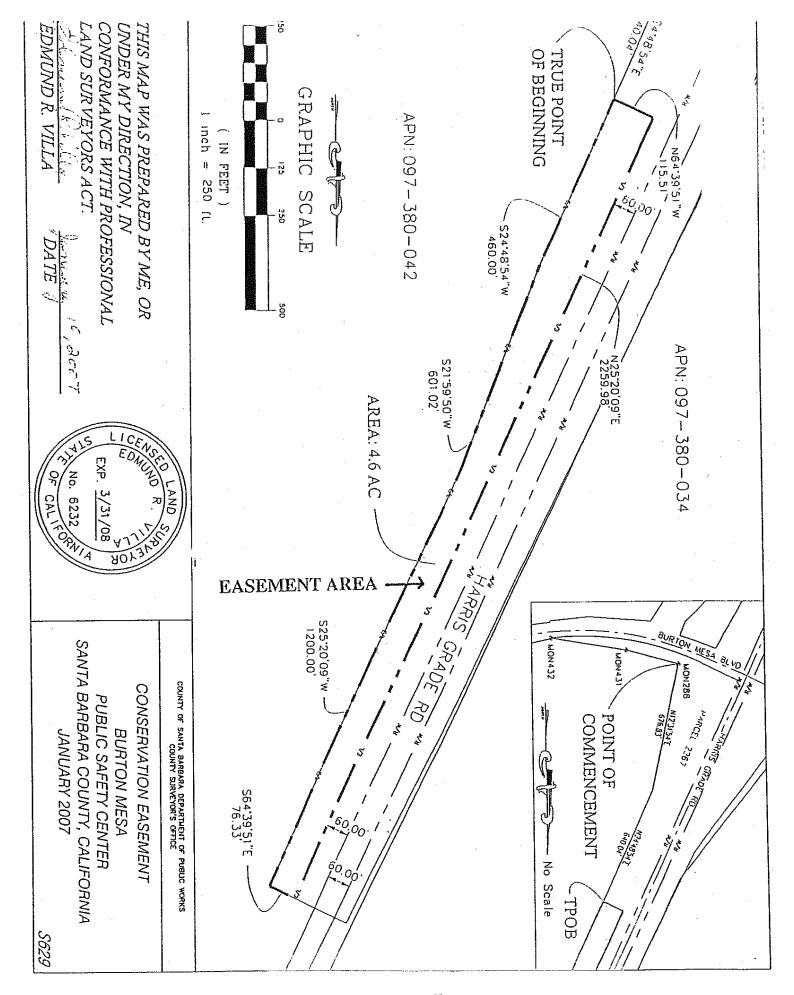


EXHIBIT B

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

A portion of Rancho Mission De La Purisima in the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, as shown oN State of California Transportation Agency Department of Public Works, DIVISION OF HIGHWAY-DISTRICT 5, "RIGHT OF WAY MAP" 1.0 Mi. S. of Route 246 to 2.0 Mi. N. of Santa Ynez River, PM 18.2-R23.4, County SB, Route 001, pages 21, 22 and 23, file in the Office of the County Recorder in said County, described as follows:

COMMENCING at a ¼ inch pipe with plastic plug marked "CAL DIV HGHWYS" offset right 310 feet from Station 232+40 as show on said "RIGHT OF WAY MAP", also note as monument number 288 on County of Santa Barbara-County Surveyor Office project number S629, file in the Office of the County Surveyor in said County;

- 1. Thence, N12°31'54"E 676.83 feet along the westerly line of Parcel 2267 as shown on said "RIGHT OF WAY MAP";
- 2. Thence, N 24°48'54"E 640.04 feet along said westerly line to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING;
- 3. Thence, leaving said westerly line N 64°39'51"W 115.51 feet to point 60.00 feet southeast of the southeast Right of Way line of 60 foot wide Harris Grade Road;
- 4. Thence, parallel with and 60.00 feet southeast of said southeast Right of Way line of Harris Grade Road N 25°20'09"E 2,259.98 feet to the northerly line of said Parcel 2267;
- 5. Thence, along said northerly line S64°39'51"E 76.33 feet to the northeast corner of said Parcel 2267, noted a Station 268+00 offset right 115 feet on said "RIGHT OF WAY MAP";
- 6. Thence, along said westerly line of Parcel 2267 S25°20'09"W 1200.00 feet;
- 7. Thence, continue along said westerly line S 21°59'50"W 601.02 feet;
- 8. Thence, along said westerly line \$24°48'54"W 460.00 feet to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING

END DESCRIPTION

This Legal Description was prepared by me or under my direction with conformance with the requirements of the Professional Land Surveyors Act.

Edmund R. Villa, PLS 6232

Expiration 3/31/08

EXP. 3 31. 28

Junicase: 16, 2007 Date: 1

COUNTY SIGNATURE PAGE

APPROVED AS TO FORM: DENNIS MARSHALL COUNTY COUNSEL

Denuty

APPROVED AS TO FORM: ROBERT W. GEIS, CPA AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

By: <u>VVVV</u> Deputy

APPROVED:

APPROVED:

By: Mon Carlentine, SR/WA
Real Property Manager

Ka Haa

Ray Aromatorio, ARM, AIC Risk Program Administrator

CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA: SS.

| Covenants, Conditions, and Environmental Restrict by the COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, a polit hereby accepted by Order of the Board of Supe | ical subdivision of the State of California, i |
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| thereof by its duly authorized officer. | |
| WITNESS my hand and official seal | |
| this, day of, | |
| | MICHAEL F. BROWN CLERK OF THE BOARD |
| | By: |