

# L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

October 17, 2023

The Honorable David Fuentes  
Commissioner, Pct. 1  
c/o Jorge Pena RPIC  
1902 Joe Stephens Avenue  
Weslaco, Texas 78599

RE: County: Hidalgo  
RCSJ No. 0921-02-355  
Parcel No. 22  
MILE 6W: From :SH 107 To: Mile 14.5

Dear Commissioner Fuentes:

Attached herewith is a counter-offer as submitted by Mr. Arnoldo Garcia & Tomasita O. Garcia owners of Parcel 22 on October 16, 2023. L & G Engineering has reviewed the aforementioned and hereby recommends that counter-offer **be approved**. Also attached is the N-9, Administrative Settlement Evaluation and Approval Form.

L & G Engineering believes the counteroffer is a valuation, legal and cost savings issue. More importantly due to recent court awards on similar projects and the cost to litigate through the Special Commissioners' Hearing we recommend that the counteroffer of **\$7,900.00** be accepted.

Please review these documents and feel free to contact me at (956) 585-1909 if you wish to discuss this matter personally.

Sincerely,

Fernando "Fred" Herrera  
Right of Way Administrator

Attachments: As noted.  
cc: File



## HIDALGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE EVALUATION AND APPROVAL FORM

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ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

County: Hidalgo

Highway: Mile 6 West

Project Limits: From SH 1077 TO MILE 14.5

Parcel No.: 22

Owner's Name: Arnaldo Garcia & Tomasita O. Garcia

Approved Offer: \$4,168.00

Date Offer Sent: 10/11/2023

Owner's Counteroffer: \$7,900.00

Date Counteroffer Received: 10/16/2023

### Factors considered in evaluation:

1. Valuation Issues

- a.  Reconciliation of all available appraisals, including Owner's.
- b.  Other: Property Owner believes his land and improvements were under valued.

2. Legal Issues

- a.  Analysis of recent court awards on similar properties or projects.
- b.  Analysis of recent court decisions which may affect the outcome of a condemnation action.
- c.  Analysis of previously unlitigated issues.
- d.  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Cost Savings

- a.  Approximate cost to litigate through Special Commissioners' Hearing \$20,000.00
- b.  Approximate additional cost to litigate through jury trial \$40,000.00
- c.  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Timing Issues

- a.  Maintain project schedule: 3/26  
Possession of this property is needed by: 1/24  
Projected possession date, if settled is: 1/24  
Projected possession date, if condemned is: 3/24  
Letting date: 3/26
- b.  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Other Issues

It appears that the property owner's counteroffer is within an acceptable value. Subjecting this parcel through the process of Condemnation using the State's sovereign power of Eminent Domain would be time consuming and a costly approach.

\*\* The following documents have been considered and are incorporated by reference: appraisals, appraisal review form, owner’s counteroffer and supporting documentation, negotiator’s log, and \_\_\_\_\_

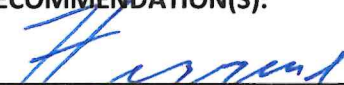
**Analysis and Conclusion:**

Our  approval/  disapproval recommendation is based on the items checked above and has been evaluated as follows: (attach additional sheets as necessary)

Being a 0.033 of an acre (1,424 square foot) parcel of land or 0.0564 of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being a part or portion of a 0.69 of an acre tract of land out of Farm Tract 465, West Tract Subdivision, according to the plat or map thereof recorded in Volume 2, Pages 34-37, of the Map Records, Hidalgo County (M.R.H.C.). On September 11, 2023, Acquisition Provider (L&G Engineering) made an offer of \$4,168.00 to purchase the property from Mr. Arnoldo Garcia & Mrs Tomasita Garcia. On October 13, 2023 the property owner submitted a counter offer of \$7,900.00. Mr. Arnoldo Garcia stated that property values have increased substantively and that he had not gotten any compensation for 5 mesquite trees that are on the take. Based on the information provided within the counter offer and discussion by the acquisition team it is recommended that the Administrative Settlement be approved. The difference between the approved value versus the property owner's counter offer (a difference of \$3,732.00) does not warrant the risk and added expenses associated with standard eminent domain proceedings. Accepting said counter offer will help avoid project time delays, and associated condemnation proceedings, thus resulting in a cost saving to the county. Based on the information provided within the counter offer and discussion by the acquisition team it is recommended that the Administrative Settlement be approved. We believe that the proposed counter offer is within a reasonable range.

This administrative settlement of \$ 7,900.00  is /  is not recommended for approval as being reasonable, justified, prudent and in the public interest.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Engineer/ROW Administrator

10/17/23  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
RPIC/Authorized Pct. Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**COUNTY APPROVAL:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Judge

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**TABULATION OF VALUES**

Parcel: **22** Highway: **Mile 6 West Road** ROW CSJ: **0921-02-355**

Taking Type: Partial District: PHR

Size of Remainder: 0.657 Acres County: Hidalgo

Type of Property: Res-SFR

Contract Fencing: N/A

Appraised by: Leonel Garza III

Effective Date of Appraisal Report 4/18/2023

Date Appraised Report Signed: 5/18/2023

Access will be  provided or  denied to the new facility. If access will be partially provided or denied, explain in comments.

Agency	Participating Percentage	Expense Description
State of Texas Hidalgo County Precinct No. 1	80% 20%	ROW Acquisition Expenses ROW Acquisition Expenses

Interest Owner	Acquisition Interest	Land Area	Value	Lease (Y/N)
Arnoldo Garcia & Tomacita Garcia	Fee Simple	0.033 ac. 1,424 sf.	\$1,320.00	No

**I. Appraised Values**

Land Value	Improvement Value	Sign Value	Damages/Enhancements	Total Value
\$1,320.00	\$1,412.00	\$0.00	\$1,436.00	\$4,168.00

**II. Improvements**

Item No.	Improvement Type	Type Construction	Improvement Value	Retention Value	Bisection Category
A.	Fencing	Chain Link 97 LF.	\$437.00	\$1.00	N/A
B.	Gate	Ranch Tube -2 EA.	975.00	1.00	N/A

Item No.	Improvement Type	Type Construction	Improvement Value	Retention Value	Bisection Category
		<b>Total</b>	\$1,412.00	\$2.00	

**TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)**

Parcel: 22

Highway: Mile 6 West Road

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

**III. Damages and Enhancements**

Total Non-Exempt Damages	Enhancements	Exempt Damages	Net Damages
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,436.00	\$1,436.00

**IV. Sign Values**

Item No.	Sign Owner	Type Construction	Improvement Value	Retention Value	Bisect. Cat.
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>			\$0.00	\$0.00	

**V. Recapitulation**

<b>Date:</b>	4/18/2023			<b>Recommended Value</b>
	Effective Date			
<b>Appraiser's Name:</b>	Leonel Garza III.			
<b>Value of Whole Property</b>	\$56,272.00			\$56,272.00
<b>Parcel Area: 0.033 Acres</b>				
<b>VALUE FOR PARCEL</b>				
<b>Land: per ac. \$40,000</b>	\$1,320.00			\$1,320.00
<b>Easement</b>	\$0.00			\$0.00
<b>Improvements</b>	\$1,412.00			\$1,412.00
<b>Net Damages or (Enhancements)</b>	\$1,436.00			\$1,436.00
<b>OAS Value(s)</b>	\$0.00			\$0.00
<b>TOTAL COMPENSATION</b>	\$4,168.00			\$4,168.00

Calculations for Net Damages or (Enhancements) considers Direct Access Denial damages.

**TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)**

Parcel: 22

Highway: Mile 6 West Road

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

**VI. Comments and Conclusions on Values in the Appraisal Report**

**Appraiser: Leonel Garza III**  
**Effective Date of Report: April 18, 2023**  
**Report Dated: May 18, 2023**  
**Review Appraiser: Harvey L. Heerssen**  
**Effective Date of Review: June 3, 2023**

Parcel 22 is a partial taking of 0.033 acres (1,424 sf.) parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being a part or portion of a 0.69 acre tract of land out of Farm Tract 465, West Tract Subdivision, according to the plat or map thereof recorded in Volume 2, Pages 34-37, of the Map Records of Hidalgo County, described in a deed dated March 10, 1983 from Guadalupe H. Garcia and wife Carlota Garcia to Arnoldo Garcia and wife Tomasita O. Garcia and recorded in Volume 1828, Page 201, of the Official Records of Hidalgo County, Texas.

The whole property of 0.69 acres is located on the south line of Mile 16 North Road, approximately 0.11 miles east of Mile 6 Road, Hidalgo County, Texas. The whole tract is improved with a single-family residence with related site improvements. The residence is not impacted by the proposed acquisition. The highest and best use is for residential subdivision development.

The appraiser has selected three (3) vacant sales to value the whole property at \$40,000 per acre. The part taken is properly valued as a pro-rata part of the whole value. There are no market damage to the remainder land. Cost to cure is necessary to compensate for the site improvements that were depreciated within the acquisition to replace these items on the remainder to retain the same utility.

The appraiser has considered access damages in accordance with Section 21.042(d) of the Texas Property Code, as amended by SB18 of the Texas 82nd Regular Legislative Session. The result of the findings is that there is no denial of direct access nor material impairment of direct access on or off the remaining property that affects the market value of the remaining property. Therefore, there are no access damages to the remainder property.

**The report was prepared by the appraiser Leonel Garza III. is an Appraisal Report presented on TxDOT form ROW-A-5 and appears to comply with USPAP and the Texas Department of Transportation's Appraisal and Review Manual. The appraisers' opinion and conclusions appear to be well supported by information contained within this appraisal report. It is recommended that the total value of \$4,168.00 be approved for negotiations and acquisition.**

**VII. Justification and Explanation for Credit if Retained.**

Retentions of \$1.00 are applied to each site improvement to encourage retention and removal.

**TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)**

Parcel: 22

Highway: Mile 6 West Road

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

**VIII. Conditions**

Values for signs, if any, are applicable only if sign owner has compensable interest.  
Fencing is applicable only to actual cost or lump sum fencing on 90-10 Right of Way projects and State cost participation in fences to be in accordance with State's Right of Way Manual.  
The values indicated hereon have been approved on the basis that all improvements within the taking will be acquired in the name of the State through negotiation.

**IX. Reviewing Appraisers' Statements**

**Reviewing Appraiser's Statement**

It is my opinion that the appraiser's report for this parcel appears adequately supported and in compliance with all appropriate appraisal standards, laws, and regulations, and I recommend this appraisal for use by the appropriate Agency Official and his/her assigns. I have no direct or indirect present or contemplated future personal interest in such property or in any benefit from the acquisition of the parcel. To the best of my knowledge, the value does not include any items that are not compensable under State law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewing Appraiser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*J. Henry L. Johnson*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Contract Reviewing Appraiser (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
6/9/2023  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Division Reviewing Appraiser (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**X. Approval of Values**

*RW 12*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
County/City Representative

*7/10/23*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
ROW Staff Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPROVED BY  
COMMISSIONERS COURT  
ON: *5/3/22 ms*



**REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL REPORT - TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Address of Property: Mile 16 N 0.11 miles east of Mile 6 Road, Elsa, Texas  
 District: Pharr  
 Property Owner: Arnoldo Garcia & Tomacita Garcia  
 Parcel: 22  
 Address of Property Owner: PO Box 616, Elsa, Texas  
 ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355  
 Occupant's Name:  
 Federal Project No: N/A  
 Whole:  Partial:  Acquisition  
 Highway: Mile 6 West Road  
 County: Hidalgo

**Purpose of the Appraisal**

The purpose of this appraisal is to estimate the market value of the fee simple title to the real property to be acquired, encumbered by any easements not to be extinguished, less oil, gas and Sulphur. If this acquisition is of less than the whole property, then any special benefits and /or damages to the remainder property must be included in accordance with the laws of Texas.

**Market Value**

Market value is defined as follows: "Market Value is the price which the property would bring when it is offered for sale by one who desires, but is not obliged to sell, and is bought by one who is under no necessity of buying it, taking into consideration all of the uses to which it is reasonably adaptable and for which it either is or in all reasonable probability will become available within the reasonable future."

**Certificate of Appraiser**

I hereby certify:

That it is my opinion the total compensation for the acquisition of the herein described property is \$4,168 as of April 18, 2023, based upon my independent appraisal and the exercise of my professional judgment;

That on April 18, 2023, I personally inspected in the field the property herein appraised; that I afforded Arnoldo Garcia & Tomacita Garcia, the property owner or the representative of the property owner, the opportunity to accompany me at the time of the inspection;

That the comparables relied upon in making said appraisal were as represented by the photographs contained in the appraisal report and were inspected on May 18, 2023;

That I have not revealed and will not reveal the findings and results of such appraisal to anyone other than the proper officials of L&G Engineering Transportation Consultants Inc., Hidalgo County Precinct No. 2 and or the Texas Department of Transportation, and/or their representatives, or officials of the Federal Highway Administration until authorized by State officials to do so, or until I am required to do so by due process of law, or until I am released from this obligation by having publicly testified to such findings;

That my compensation is not contingent upon the reporting of a predetermined value or direction in value that favors the cause of the client, the amount of the value estimate, the attainment of a stipulated result, or the occurrence of a subsequent event.

The appraiser has considered access damages in accordance with Section 21.042(d) of the Texas Property Code, as amended by SB18 of the Texas 82<sup>nd</sup> Regular Legislative Session and finds as follows:

1. Is there a denial of direct access of the parcel? No
2. If so, is the denial of direct access material? Not Applicable
3. The lack of any access denial or the material impairment of direct access on or off the remaining property affects the market value of the remaining property in the sum of \$ 0.00.

I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief:

That the statements of fact contained in this report are true and correct;

That the reported analysis, opinions and conclusions are limited only by the reported assumptions and limiting conditions, and are my personal, unbiased professional analysis, opinions, and conclusions;

That I have no present or prospective interest in the property that is the subject of this report, and I have no personal interest or bias with respect to the parties involved;

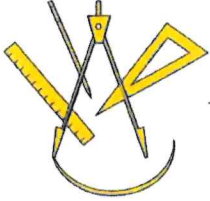
That my analysis, opinions and conclusions were developed, and this report has been prepared in conformity with the appropriate State laws, regulations, and policies and procedures applicable to the appraisal of right-of-way for such purposes, and that to the best of my knowledge no portion of the value assigned to such property consists of items which are non-compensable under the established law of said State, and any decrease or increase in the fair market value of subject real property prior to the date of valuation caused by the public improvement for which such property is to be acquired, or by the likelihood that the property would be acquired for such improvement, other than that due to the physical deterioration within the reasonable control of the owner, has been disregarded in estimating the compensation for the property.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Appraiser Signature  
 Leonel Garza III  
 Certification Number  
 TX-1328375 G  
 Date: June 5, 2023

To the best of my knowledge, the value does not include any items which are not compensable under State law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Harvey L. Haerason  
 Reviewing Appraiser  
 6/9/2023  
 Date





# L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

July 14, 2023

**Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested**  
**No. 7022 2410 0002 1891 0540**

County: Hidalgo  
Federal Project No.: N/A  
Highway: Mile 6 West

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355  
Parcel: 22  
From: SH107  
To: Mile 14.5

Arnold Garcia & Tomacita O. Garcia  
P. O. Box 616  
Elsa, Texas 78543-0616

Dear Mr. Arnold Garcia & Ms. Tomacita Garcia:

In acquiring property for the highway system of Hidalgo County (the "County") follows a definite procedure for appraising the land needed and for handling personal negotiations with each owner. As has been or will be explained by the County's negotiator, Fernando Herrera Right of Way Manager, a portion of your property located on Mile 6 West, as described in the enclosed property description, is to be acquired for the construction or improvement of the above-referenced highway project.

We believe at this stage of the purchase process it is mutually beneficial to confirm that, based on an appraisal, the County is authorized to offer you **\$4,168.00** for your property, which includes **\$2,732.00** for the property to be purchased and **\$1,436.00** for damages to your remaining property. This amount is the total amount of just compensation for all interests in the portion of your property to be acquired, as determined in accordance with State law, less oil, gas, and sulphur, subject to clear title being conveyed to the County. In accordance with State law, it is the policy of the County to negotiate with the fee owner(s) of the real property with the understanding that you will, in turn, negotiate with any lessee or other party who may own any interest in the land or improvements, with the exception of public utility easements, which will be handled separately by the County.

This offer to purchase includes the contributory values of the improvement(s) listed below, which are considered to be part of the real property. Since the improvement(s) must be removed, it is the policy of the County to permit owners who convey voluntarily to the County to thereafter retain the improvement(s), if they wish to do so. The retention values shown below are the estimated amounts the improvement(s) would bring if sold on public bids. If you wish to retain title to any of the following improvement(s) and remove it (them) from the right of way, the amount of the above offer must be reduced by the appropriate retention amount(s). This option to retain the improvement(s) does NOT apply should it become necessary for the County to acquire the real property by eminent domain.

<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Amount to be Subtracted if Retained</u>
A. Fencing	Chain Link	\$1.00
B. Gate	Ranch Tube	\$1.00

If you wish to accept the offer based upon this appraisal, please contact Project Manager Robert "Bob" Garcia or Fernando Herrera Right of Way Manager, as soon as possible at (956) 585-1909, so that the process of issuing your payment may be started. If you are not willing to accept this offer, you may submit a written request for administrative settlement/counteroffer, *setting forth a counteroffer amount and the basis for such amount, provided such settlement request is received in writing within 30 days from the date of this letter.* Please note that your opportunity to submit an administrative settlement shall be forfeited if such a settlement request is not received by the County within the 30-day time deadline. In the event the condition of the property changes for any reason, the County shall have the right to withdraw or modify this offer.

After the date of payment of the purchase price, or the date of deposit in court of funds to satisfy the award of compensation as determined through eminent domain proceedings to acquire real property, you will be reimbursed for any fair and reasonable incidental expenses necessarily incurred in transferring title to the property for use by Hidalgo County. Expenses eligible for reimbursement may include (1) recording fees, transfer taxes, and similar expenses incidental to conveying the real property to the County and (2) penalty costs for prepayment of any preexisting recorded mortgage entered into in good faith encumbering



the real property. Voluntary unnecessary expenses or expenses incurred in clearing questionable title will not be eligible for reimbursement. Eligible incidental expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of a claim supported by receipted bills or other evidence of actual expenses incurred. You may file a written request for review if you believe that the County failed to properly determine the eligibility for, or the amount of, incidental expenses to be reimbursed. There is no standard form on which to request a review of a claim; however, the claim must be filed with this office within six months after you are notified of the County's determination on any claim for reimbursement.

You may be entitled to additional payments and services under the County's Relocation Assistance Program. It is emphasized, however, that any benefits to which you may be entitled under this program will be handled entirely separate from and in addition to this transaction. You will receive a brochure entitled "*Relocation Assistance*" which will inform you of eligibility requirements, payments, and services which are available.

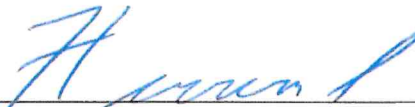
You have the right to discuss with others any offer or agreement regarding the County's acquisition of the subject property, or you may (but are not required to) keep the offer or agreement confidential from others, subject to the provisions of Chapter 552, Government Code (the Public Records Act) as it may apply.

Attached is a copy of the Texas Department of Transportation brochure entitled "*Right of Way Purchase*" which we trust will give you a better understanding of the procedures followed by the County in purchasing property. We respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you or to otherwise discuss and answer any questions you may have regarding the details of the type of facility to be built, or concerning the County's offer or proposed purchase transaction. Also, please do not hesitate to contact Project Manager Robert "Bob" Garcia or Fernando Herrera Right of Way Manager at the telephone number provided above regarding any questions you may have.

Please see the enclosed copy of the Texas Landowner Bill of Rights.

Finally, we enclose copies of all appraisal reports relating to your property being acquired which were prepared in the ten (10) years preceding the date of this offer and produced or acquired by the County, including the appraisal on which this offer is based.

Sincerely,



Right of Way Manager or other signatories

ENCLOSURES:

Appraisal Report(s)  
Landowner Bill of Rights  
Brochure ("*Right of Way Purchase*")

October 11, 2023

L&G Engineering ROW  
2100 Expressway 83  
Mercedes, Texas 78570

Attn: Mr. Rolando Gonzalez

This letter is to respectfully request a review and negotiation of price for your designated parcel of land sale for the property description as follows:

Owner: Arnaldo Garcia  
WEST TRACT 0.69 AC-N 5AC-W 20 AC FT 465 0.65 AC NET  
Elsa, Texas - Hidalgo County

Your current offer: \$4,168.00.

As aforementioned, we are requesting fair pricing based on the below facts and general information discussed with you at our in person meeting on Thursday, September 28, 2023. In addition, we are not seeking litigation issues nor eminent domain enforcement. However and foremost, our property has a long ancestral history and although we understand an emotional component for land ownership or sale might not be tangible for your company or Hidalgo County, we respectfully submit to you that this is our childhood home that we built from the ground up. Through over 50 years of migrant farm work and manual labor this land was developed by the Garcia Family (8 siblings). In addition, let it be clear that our property is not abandoned. Our father has end stage Alzheimer's Disease and we will make decisions as required in future for use of our property.

Points to consider for negotiation:

-Fair Market Value of property as stated in your PROPERTY VALUE SUMMARY = \$56,272 versus the HIDALGO COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT 2023 Notice of Appraised Value = \$69,796, Please review valuation of property accordingly.

-Include valuation of 5 mesquite trees = \$3,000.00 be removed-these trees are 50 years old and we planted them as seedlings. We also request removed trees during this project remain on property premises.

-We recognize Mile 6 will inevitably and in the very near future, be a major artery of infrastructure enhancement for the city of Elsa, Texas and Hidalgo County. Therefore, we ask you consider the commercial, residential, and financial growth potential for these two entities and factor in to your buying price.

-Request a fence (as current one will be removed) be rebuilt or compensation be provided as we will have to fence property.

Lastly, who will be responsible for the cost and process of filing new property deed once sale is complete?

In closing and based on the above listed we respectfully request \$7,900 for sale of property.

We thank you in advance for the courtesies extended to us and look forward to your response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zina M. Guerra", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Zina M. Guerra  
POA - Arnaldo Garcia  
& Garcia Siblings