

L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

December 4, 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. 58
MILE 6W: From :SH 107 To: Mile 14.5

Dear Commissioner Fuentes:

Attached herewith is a counter-offer as submitted by Ms. Carmen Serrato owner of Parcel 58 on November 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 **\$23,922.00** 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

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

County: Hidalgo

Highway: Mile 6W

Project Limits: From SH 1077 to Mile 14.5

Parcel No.: 58

Owner's Name: Carmen Serrato

Approved Offer: \$17,505.00

Date Offer Sent: 09/14/2023

Owner's Counteroffer: \$23,922.00

Date Counteroffer Received: 11/16/2023

Factors considered in evaluation: _____

1. Valuation Issues

- a. Reconciliation of all available appraisals, including Owner's.
- b. Other: Property owner believes her property and improvements have been undervalued.

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 \$12,000.00
- b. Approximate additional cost to litigate through jury trial \$15,000.00
- c. Other: _____

4. Timing Issues

- a. Maintain project schedule: 3/2026
Possession of this property is needed by: 2/2024
Projected possession date, if settled is: 2/2024
Projected possession date, if condemned is: 5/2024
Letting date: 3/2026
- b. Other: _____

5. Other Issues

- None.

** 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 _____

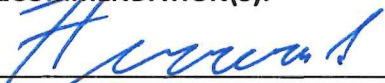
Analysis and Conclusion:

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

Parcel 58 is a partial acquisition containing 2,836 sq. ft., parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being part or portion of Lot 8 El Ranchito Acres. On September 14, 2023 Acquisition Provider (L&G) mailed an offer via certified mail of \$17,505.00 to purchase the property to Ms. Carmen Serrato. On November 16, 2023, the property owner submitted a counter offer in the amount of \$23,922.00. In her counter offer Ms. Serrato stated that she believes the \$3.00 per sq.ft. offered for her property was to low. She believes her land to worth no less than \$4.25 per sq. ft. She also asserts that the value of her improvements were too low and calculated with no added labor costs. Based on the information provided within the the counter offer and discussion by the acquisition team it is recommended that the Administrative Settlement be approved. The difference of \$6,417.00 between the county's approved value versus the property owner's counter offer does not warrant the risk of the added expenses associated with the 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. We believe that the proposed counter offer is within a reasonable range.

This administrative settlement of \$ 23,922.00 is / is not recommended for approval as being reasonable, justified, prudent and in the public interest.

RECOMMENDATION(S):


Project Engineer/ROW Administrator

12/4/2023
Date

RPIC/Authorized Pct. Representative

Date

COUNTY APPROVAL:

County Judge

Date

November 16, 2023

Carmen Serrato
11901 N. Mile 6 West
Weslaco, Texas 78596

RE: Offer Letter dated September 14, 2023

Dear Mr. Garcia,

I am in receipt of the acquisition offer package dated 9-14-23 in which the County of Hidalgo is offering me a total of \$17,505.00 for my parcel No. 58. This offer includes the land value, improvements and damages to my land remainder.

After a review of the appraisal report and consideration of the value set on my land and improvements; I have decided to not accept the county's offer. The reasoning and basis for my rejection is I feel that the per square foot value of 3.00 is low and not consistent with the land values of other comparable properties in the area. Furthermore, the values set on my improvements within the area of the proposed ROW acquisition are also low and do not show any cost for labor. The basis and reasons for my counter offer are as follows:

- Page 4.0 of the appraised report indicate that the value of my land is at \$3.00PSF. Local comparable properties in the area indicate a sale price of \$4.00 to \$4.25PSF. My land should be valued at no less \$4.25 PSF.
- The values of all my improvement are low and calculated with no added labor cost
- The damage to my remainder land after the ROW acquisition are not considered in the report due to the close ROW proximity of over 22 LF to my residence.

In view of the above information, please consider the noted calculation that are applied to my counter offer.

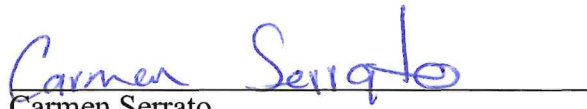
Calculations are as follows:

Land Value- 2,836 SF @ \$4.25 =	\$12,053.00
Concrete Driveway – 150 SF x \$8.50 PSF =	\$1,275.00
Chain link fencing – 44 LF x \$19.00 PLF =	\$836.00
Wood Fence w/ Grids – 124 LF x \$17.00 PLF=	\$2,108.00
Wrought Iron Rolling Gate – 1 x \$5,500.00 =	\$5,500.00
Asphalt Entrance – 100 SF x \$7.50 PSF =	\$750.00
Hackberry Tree – 1 x \$400.00 tree =	\$400.00
Ash Tree – 1 x \$1,000.00 =	<u>\$1,000.00</u>
Total Value and counter offer amount	\$23,922.00

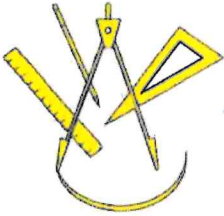
Note: No cost-to-cure damages are considered nor calculated in the counter offer since no depreciation was applied to some of the improvements within the row taking.

Please consider and approve my counter offer so we may proceed with the purchase of my parcel No. 58. Contact me if additional information is necessary. Thank you for your consideration to this most important matter

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carmen Serrato". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Carmen Serrato
11901 N Mile 6 West
Weslaco, Texas 78596



L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

September 14, 2023

***Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested
No. 7022 2410 0002 7168 4037***

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

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
Parcel: 58
From: SH107
To: Mile 14.5

Aaron Serrato & Carmen Serrato
11901 N. Mile 6 West
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Serrato & Carmen Serrato:

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 **\$17,505.00** for your property, which includes **\$16,335.00** for the property to be purchased and **\$1,170.00** 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. Driveway	Concrete	\$ 1.00
B. Fencing	Chain Link	\$ 1.00
C. Fencing	Wood w/Grids	\$1.00
D. Gate	Wrought Iron Rolling	\$1.00
E. Entrance	Asphalt	\$1.00
F. Landscaping	Trees 2 ea.	\$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.

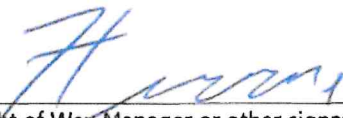
You have the right to discuss with others any offer or agreement regarding the County's acquisition of the subject property, or you may (but are not required to) keep the offer or agreement confidential from others, subject to the provisions of Chapter 552, Government Code (the Public Records Act) as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

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

TABULATION OF VALUES

Parcel: 58 Highway: Mile 6 West Road ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
 Taking Type: Partial District: PHR
 Size of Remainder: 0.868 Acres County: Hidalgo
 Type of Property: Res-SFR
 Contract Fencing: N/A
 Appraised by: Leonel Garza III
 Effective Date of Appraisal Report 5/19/2023

Date Appraised Report Signed: 8/8/2023

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	80%	ROW Acquisition Expenses
Hidalgo County Precinct No. 1	20%	ROW Acquisition Expenses

Interest Owner	Acquisition Interest	Land Area	Value	Lease (Y/N)
Aaron Serrato & Carmen Serrato	Fee Simple	0.065 Acres 2,836 sf.	\$8,508.00	No

I. Appraised Values

Land Value	Improvement Value	Sign Value	Damages/Enhancements	Total Value
\$8,508.00	\$7,827.00	\$0.00	\$1,170.00	\$17,505.00

II. Improvements

Item No.	Improvement Type	Type Construction	Improvement Value	Retention Value	Bisection Category
A.	Driveway	Concrete- 150 SF.	\$788.00	\$1.00	N/A
B.	Fencing	Chain link-44 LF.	594.00	1.00	N/A
C.	Fencing	Wood w/Grids-124 LF.	1,395.00	1.00	N/A
D.	Gate	Wrought Iron Rolling -1EA.	3,825.00	1.00	N/A

Item No.	Improvement Type	Type Construction	Improvement Value	Retention Value	Bisection Category
E.	Entrance	Asphalt-100 SF.	\$325.00	\$1.00	N/A
F.	Landscaping	Trees -2 EA	900.00	1.00	N/A
		Total	\$7.827.00	\$6.00	

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 58

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	\$1,170.00	\$1,170.00

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
		Total	\$0.00	\$0.00	

V. Recapitulation

Date:	5/19/2023	Effective Date		Recommended Value	
Appraiser's Name:	Leonel Garza III.				
Value of Whole Property	\$178,332.00			\$178,332.00	
Parcel Area: 2,836 sf.					
VALUE FOR PARCEL					
Land: per sf. \$3.00	\$8,508.00			\$8,508.00	
Easement	\$0.00			\$0.00	
Improvements	\$7,827.00			\$7,827.00	
Net Damages or (Enhancements)	\$1,170.00			\$1,170.00	
OAS Value(s)	\$0.00			\$0.00	
TOTAL COMPENSATION	\$17,505.00			\$17,505.00	

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

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 58

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: May 19, 2023
Report Dated: August 8, 2023
Review Appraiser: Harvey L. Heerssen
Effective Date of Review: August 9, 2023

Parcel 58 is a partial taking of 0.065 acres (2,836 sf.) parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being a part or portion of Lot 8, El Ranchito Acres, according to the plat or map recorded in Volume 27, Page 183, of the Map Records of Hidalgo County, described in a deed dated January 25, 2005, from Carl & Ellen Snyder, Inc. to Arron Serrato and wife Carmen Serrato and recorded in Document Number 1431996 of the Official Records of Hidalgo County, Texas.

The whole property is located on the west line of Mile 6 West Road just south of Mile 14 ½ Road and addressed as 11901 North Mile 6 West, Weslaco, Texas. The whole tract contains a single-family residence along with site improvements. The residence is not impacted by the proposed acquisition. Site improvements within the part taken are appraised accordingly.

Three (3) comparable land sales support the land value of \$3.00 per sf. There are no market damage to the remainder land. Cost to cure damages are calculated to compensate for the 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 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 \$17,505.00 be approved for negotiations and acquisition.

VII. Justification and Explanation for Credit if Retained.

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

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 58

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
[Signature]

Contract Reviewing Appraiser (if applicable)

Date
8/10/2023

Date

Division Reviewing Appraiser (if applicable)

Date

X. Approval of Values

[Signature]

County/City Representative

[Signature]
8/25/23

Date

ROW Staff Representative

Date

APPROVED BY
COMMISSIONERS COURT
ON: *[Signature]* 5/3/22



REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL REPORT - TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Address of Property: 11901 N Mile 6 W Road, Weslaco, Texas	District: Pharr
Property Owner: Aaron Serrato & Carmen Serrato	Parcel: 58
Address of Property Owner: 11901 N Mile 6 W Road, Weslaco, Texas	ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
Occupant's Name: Aaron Serrato & Carmen Serrato	Federal Project No: N/A
Whole: <input type="checkbox"/> Partial: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 \$17,505 as of May 19, 2023, based upon my independent appraisal and the exercise of my professional judgment;

That on May 19, 2023, I personally inspected in the field the property herein appraised; that I afforded Aaron Serrato & Carmen Serrato, 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. 1 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 SB 18 of the Texas 82nd 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;

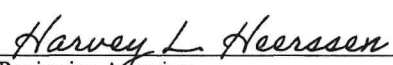
That my analysis, opinions and conclusions were developed, and this report has been prepared in conformity with the appropriate State laws, regulations, and policies and procedures applicable to the appraisal of right-of-way for such purposes, and that to the best of my knowledge no portion of the value 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: August 8, 2023

To the best of my knowledge, the value does not include any items which are not compensable under State law.	
	8/10/2023
Reviewing Appraiser	Date

