

L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

March 20, 2024

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. 34
MILE 6W: From :SH 107 To: Mile 14.5

Dear Commissioner Fuentes:

Attached herewith is a counter-offer as submitted by owner Timothy W. Wilkins, Kenneth Wilkins, Mark E. Wilkins and Bryan-Wilkins MANAGEMENT TRUST of Parcel 34 on March 20, 2024. 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 **\$41,460.00** 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 107 to Mile 14.5

Parcel No.: 34

Owner's Name: Kenneth Wilkins & Mark E. Wilkins

Approved Offer: \$30,916.00

Date Offer Sent: 11/14/2023

Owner's Counteroffer: \$41,460.00

Date Counteroffer Received: 3/20/2024

Factors considered in evaluation:

1. Valuation Issues

- a. Reconciliation of all available appraisals, including Owner's.
- b. Other: None

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 \$15,000.00
- b. Approximate additional cost to litigate through jury trial \$20,000.00
- c. Other: _____

4. Timing Issues

- a. Maintain project schedule: 03/2026
Possession of this property is needed by: 05/2024
Projected possession date, if settled is: 05/2024
Projected possession date, if condemned is: 9/2024
Letting date: 3/2026
- b. Other: _____

5. Other Issues



** 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 _____

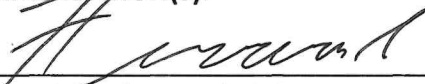
Analysis and Conclusion:

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

Being a 1.354 of an acre(58.995 sq.ft.) parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being a part or portion out of Farm Tract 463 , WEST TRACT SUBDIVISION, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 2, Pages 34-37, of the Map Records, Hidalgo County (M.R.H.C.), . On November 09, 2023, Acquisition Provider (L&G Engineering) made an offer of \$30,916.00 to purchase the property from Kenneth Wilkins & Mark E. Wilkins. On March 20,2024 submitted a counter offer of \$41,460.00. Mr. Wilkins states in his counter offer that he feels that his land has been valued to low and that he believes his property should be worth no less than \$35,000 an acre. He is also asking for a designated curb cut to access the remainder of his property. Mr. Wilkens also states that there will be damage on the corner clip therefore reducing crop production. Based on the information provided within the counter offer and discussion by the acquisition team it is recommended that the Administrative Settlement be approved. Accepting said counter offer will help avoid project time delays and the associated expenses with condemnation proceedings thus resulting in a cost savings to the county. We believe that the proposed counter offer is within a reasonable range.

This administrative settlement of \$41,460 .00 is / is not recommended for approval as being reasonable, justified, prudent and in the public interest.

RECOMMENDATION(S):



Project Engineer/ROW Administrator

3/20/2024
Date

RPIC/Authorized Pct. Representative

Date

COUNTY APPROVAL:

County Judge

Date

Law Office of Mark E Wilkins

*Attorneys at Law
P.O. Box 3609
McAllen, Texas 78502*

Mark E. Wilkins

Phone: 956-682-4551

Fax: 956-682-4554

Email: Wilkinslaw@wwqlaw.com

March 19, 2024

L&G Engineers

Attn: Mr. Rolando Gonzalez, Right of Way Agent
2100 W. Expressway 83
Mercedes, Texas 78570

**RE: Hidalgo County
Mile 6 West Road
ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
Parcel No. 34**

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

We have had multiple discussions since the receipt of the offer letter dated November 9, 2023, and have discussed the valuations of the property in the area including the fair market value of our subject property. In your offer letter dated November 9, 2023, the Texas Department of Transportation and Hidalgo County are offering us \$31,819.00 for a portion of our property needed for the improvement of Mile 6 West which includes damages to the remainder.

We have reviewed the enclosed appraisal report and have determined that \$29,500.00 per acre for our land is low. We feel that our property is worth no less than \$35,000.00 per acre. It is our understanding that you agree that the \$35,000.00 per acre valuation is reasonable.

Please let this letter serve as our agreement to accept \$35,000.00 per acre for the 1.056 acres needed for the road widening with the condition that we be allowed curb cuts to access the remainder of the subject property from Mile 6 West and Mile 15 ½. In addition, the ROW taking of the corner clip at the Mile 6 West and Mile 15 ½ intersection will affect/negatively impact the turnaround area for farm tractors with large implements. This will also reduce the remainder of the land used for crop production. It is estimated that the ROW taking will cause damages of approximately \$4,500 in damages.

In view of the above information our counter offer is for \$41,460.00. If agreed upon we are willing to execute the necessary documentation to finalize the sale of Parcel No. 34. We look forward to hearing back from you so that we can conclude this matter.

Best Regards,

LAW OFFICE OF MARK E. WILKINS



Mark Wilkins

TABULATION OF VALUES

Parcel: 34 Update Highway: Mile 6 West Road ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

Taking Type: Partial District: PHR

Size of Remainder: 63.646 Acres County: Hidalgo

Type of Property: Res-SFR

Contract Fencing: N/A

Appraised by: Leonel Garza III

Effective Date of Updated Appraisal Report 4/18/2023

Date Updated Appraisal Report Signed: 8/24/2023

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)
Kenneth Wilkins & Mark Wilkins	Fee Simple	1.048 ac.	\$30,916.00	No
Hidalgo & Cameron County Irrigation District No.9	Easement	0.306 ac.	903.00	No

I. Appraised Values

Land Value	Improvement Value	Sign Value	Damages/Enhancements	Total Value
\$31,819.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$31,819.00

II. Improvements

Item No.	Improvement Type	Type Construction	Improvement Value	Retention Value	Bisection Category

Item No.	Improvement Type	Type Construction	Improvement Value	Retention Value	Bisection Category
			\$0.00	\$0.00	

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 34 Update

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	\$0.00	\$0.00

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:	4/18/2023 Updated Appraisal	4/18/2023 Original Appraisal		Recommended Value
Appraiser's Name:	Leonel Garza III.	Leonel Garza III		
Value of Whole Property	\$1,909,376.00	\$1,917,500.00		\$1,909,376.00
Parcel Area: 1.354 Acres				
VALUE FOR PARCEL				
Land: per sf. 1.048 Acres Unencumbered @ \$29,500 ac.	\$30,916.00	39,943.00		\$30,916.00
Easement 0.306 ac @. \$2,950 ac.	\$903.00	\$0.00		\$903.00
Improvements	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00
Net Damages or (Enhancements)	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00
OAS Value(s)	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00
TOTAL COMPENSATION	\$31,819.00	\$39,943.00		\$31,819.00

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

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 34 Update

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 Updated Report: April 18, 2023
Updated Report Dated: August 24, 2023
Review Appraiser: Harvey L. Heerssen
Effective Date of Updated Review: September 11, 2023

Parcel 34 has been updated to include a value for the closed ditch HCCID No. 9 easement. The updated value now indicates a value of \$31,819.00 representing a decrease from the original report value of \$39,943.00.

Parcel 34 is a partial taking of 1.354 acres (58,995 sf.) parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being a part or portion of land out of Farm Tract 463, West Tract Subdivision, according to the plat or map thereof recorded in Volume 2, Page 34-37 of the Map Records of Hidalgo County, described in a deed dated March 1, 2000t to Kenneth Wilkins and Mark W. Wilkins and recorded in Document 855690, of the Official Records of Hidalgo County, Texas.

The whole property is located at the southeast corner of Mile 6 West and Mile 15 ½ North Road, Hidalgo County, Texas. The whole property is vacant land with no structural improvements.

The acquisition of 1.354 acres has 1.048 acres that is unencumbered land and 0.306 acres that is encumbered with the irrigation easement owned by HCCID No. 9. Since the easement is a closed ditch, it is valued at 10% of the fee value or \$2,950 per acre.

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 updated 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 the information contained within this updated appraisal report. It is recommended that the total updated value of \$31,819.00 be approved for continued negotiations and acquisition.

VII. Justification and Explanation for Credit if Retained.

Retentions are not applicable as the subject parcel is vacant land.

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: **34 Update**

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

John L. Johnson

Contract Reviewing Appraiser (if applicable)

9/16/2023

Date

Division Reviewing Appraiser (if applicable)

Date

X. Approval of Values

Ren R

County/City Representative

9/27/23

Date

ROW Staff Representative

Date

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



REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL REPORT - TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Address of Property: SEC Westgate Drive and Mile 15 1/2 North Road, District: Pharr
 Hidalgo County, Texas
 Property Owner: Kenneth Wilkins & Mark Wilkins Parcel: 34
 Address of Property Owner: PO Box 3609 McAllen, Texas ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
 Occupant's Name: Vacant 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 \$31,819 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 Kenneth Wilkins & Mark Wilkins, 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 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;

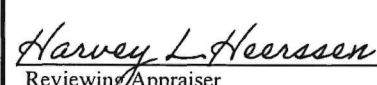
That the reported analysis, opinions and conclusions are limited only by the reported assumptions and limiting conditions, and are my personal, unbiased professional analysis, opinions, and conclusions;

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;

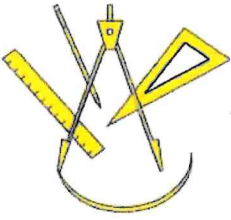
That my analysis, opinions and conclusions were developed, and this report has been prepared in conformity with the appropriate State laws, regulations, and policies and procedures applicable to the appraisal of right-of-way for such purposes, and that to the best of my knowledge no portion of the value 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 24, 2023

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


 Reviewing Appraiser
 9/16/2023
 Date





L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

November 9, 2023

**Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested
No. 7022 2410 0002 7168 3887**

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

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
Parcel: 34
From: SH107
To: Mile 14.5

Kenneth & Mark E. Wilkins
P.O. Box 3609
Mission, Texas 78502-3609

Dear Sirs:

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 **\$30,916.00** for your property, which includes **\$ 0,000.00** for the property to be purchased and **\$30,916.00** 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. N/A		

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*")