

L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

August 18, 2025

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

RE: County: Hidalgo
RCSJ No. 0921-02-355
Parcel No. 97
MILE 6W: From: Mile 14.5 To Mile 11

Dear Commissioner Fuentes:

Attached herewith is a counteroffer submitted by Damaso Fuentes and Yessica Ochoa owners of Parcel 97 on June 25, 2025. L & G Engineering has reviewed the aforementioned and hereby recommends that counteroffer **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. Therefore, as noted, we recommend that the counteroffer of **\$20,227.00** 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 Mile 14.5 to Mile 11

Parcel No.: 97

Owner's Name: Damaso Fuentes and Jessica Ochoa

Approved Offer: \$14,764.00

Date Offer Sent: 04/09/2025

Owner's Counteroffer: \$20,227.00

Date Counteroffer Received: 06/25/2025

Factors considered in evaluation:

1. Valuation Issues

- a. Reconciliation of all available appraisals, including Owner's.
- b. Other: Property owner feels her property has 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 \$15,000.00
- b. Approximate additional cost to litigate through jury trial \$20,000.00
- c. Other: _____

4. Timing Issues

- a. Maintain project schedule: 12/2027
Possession of this property is needed by: 12/2025
Projected possession date, if settled is: 12/2025
Projected possession date, if condemned is: 2/2026
Letting date: 01/2028
- 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)

Parcel 97 is a partial acquisition containing 0.085 of an acre (3,685 sq. ft.) parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being part or portion of a 1.50 acre of land out of Farm Tract 345, WEST AND ADAMS TRACTS SUBDIVISION, according to the plat or map thereof recorded in Volume 2, Pages 34-37, of the Map Records of Hidalgo County (M.R.H.C.). On April 10, 2025, Acquisition Provider (L&G) mailed an offer of \$14,764.00 to purchase the above mentioned property to Mr. Damaso Fuentes and Yessica Ochoa. On June 2, 2025 Mr. Fuentes called in to say he had received offer and that he was working in New Mexico at the moment but that he would get some estimates and turn in a counter offer. On July 25, 2025 the property owner's submitted a counter offer in the amount of \$20,277.00. In the counter offer Mr. Fuentes stated that he believes his land and improvements were undervalued. He also feels the "taking" will leave his land non-demensional thus devaulating his remainder. 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 between the approved value versus the properety owner's counter offer is a difference of \$5,463.00 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.

This administrative settlement of \$20,227.00 is / is not recommended for approval as being reasonable, justified, prudent and in the public interest.

RECOMMENDATION(S):


Project Engineer/ROW Administrator

8/18/25
Date

RPIC/Authorized Pct. Representative

Date

COUNTY APPROVAL:

County Judge

Date

TABULATION OF VALUES

Parcel: **97** Highway: **Mile 6 West Road=Phase II** ROW CSJ: **0921-02-355**

Taking Type: Partial

District: PHR

Size of Remainder: 1.415 Acres

County: Hidalgo

Type of Property: Res-SFR

Contract Fencing: N/A

Appraised by: Leonel Garza III

Effective Date of Appraisal Report 2/5/2025

Date Appraised Report Signed: 3/3/2025

Access will be provided or denied to the new facility. If access will be partially provided or denied, explain in the 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) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Damaso Fuentes & Yessica Ochoa | Fee Simple | 0.085 Ac/ 3,685 sf. | \$6,800.00 | No |

I. Appraised Values

| Land Value | Improvement Value | Sign Value | Damages/Enhancements | Total Value |
|------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------|
| \$6,800.00 | \$7,663.00 | \$0.00 | \$301.00 | \$14,764.00 |

II. Improvements

| Item No. | Improvement Type | Type Construction | Improvement Value | Retention Value | Bisection Category |
|----------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| A. | Driveway | Concrete-400 SF. | \$1,400.00 | \$1.00 | N/A |
| B. | Fencing | Chain Link-187 LF. | 2,525.00 | 1.00 | N/A |
| C. | Gate | Chain Link-1 EA. | 488.00 | 1.00 | N/A |

| Item No. | Improvement Type | Type Construction | Improvement Value | Retention Value | Bisection Category |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| D. | Landscaping | Ash Trees-2 EA. Plant-1 EA; | \$3,250.00 | \$1.00 | N/A |
| | | | | | |
| | | Total | \$7,663.00 | \$4.00 | |

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 97

Highway: Mile 6 West Road-Phase II ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

III. Damages and Enhancements

| Total Non-Exempt Damages | Enhancements | Exempt Damages | Net Damages |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$301.00 | \$301.00 |

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: | 2/5/2025 Effective Date | | | Recommended Value |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Appraiser's Name: | Leonel Garza III. | | | |
| Value of Whole Property | \$260,615.00 | | | \$260,615.00 |
| Parcel Area: 0.085 Acres | | | | |
| VALUE FOR PARCEL | | | | |
| Land: per ac. \$80,000 | \$6,800.00 | | | \$6,800.00 |
| Easement | \$0.00 | | | \$0.00 |
| Improvements | \$7,663.00 | | | \$7,663.00 |
| Net Damages or (Enhancements) | \$301.00 | | | \$301.00 |
| OAS Value(s) | \$0.00 | | | \$0.00 |
| TOTAL COMPENSATION | \$14,764.00 | | | \$14,764.00 |

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

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 97

Highway: Mile 6 West Road-Phase II ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355

VI. Comments and Conclusions on Values in the Appraisal Report

Appraiser: Leonel Garza III
Effective Date of Report: February 5, 2025
Report Dated: March 3, 2025
Review Appraiser: Harvey L. Heerssen
Effective Date of Review: March 10, 2025

Parcel 97 is a partial taking of 0.085 acres (3,685 sf.) parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas and also being a part or portion of a 1.50 acre tract of land out of Farm Tract 345, West and Adams 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 September 14, 2012 from Evangelina Rodriguez to Damaso Fuentes and wife Yessica Ochoa and recorded in Document Number 2358315 of the Official Records of Hidalgo County, Texas.

The whole property is located at the southeast corner of Mile 14 North Road and Mile 6 West Road, Weslaco, Texas. The whole tract is improved with a single-family residence that is not impacted by the proposed acquisition. The highest and best use is for residential use.

The appraiser has selected three (3) vacant sales to value the whole property at \$80,000 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 but there are cost to cure damages for the items 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 \$14,764 be approved for negotiations and acquisition.

VII. Justification and Explanation for Credit if Retained.

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

TABULATION OF VALUES (continued)

Parcel: 97

Highway: Mile 6 West Road-Phase II 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)

3/12/2025

Date

Division Reviewing Appraiser (if applicable)

Date

X. Approval of Values

Ram BL

County/City Representative

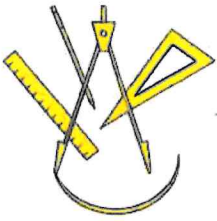
3/24/2025

Date

ROW Staff Representative

Date

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



L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

April 9, 2025

Hidalgo County
Mile 6 West
Limits: (Mile 14.5 to Mile 11
RCSJ: 0921-02-355
Parcel No. 97

RE: The purchase of an 0.085 of an acre (3,685 square feet) parcel of land situated in Hidalgo County, Texas, and also being a part or portion of a 1.50 acre tract of land out of Farm Tract 345, WEST AND ADAMS TRACTS SUBDIVISION, according to the plat or map thereof recorded in Volume 2, Pages 34-37, of the Map Records of Hidalgo County (M.R.H.C.).

Damaso Fuentes and Yessica Ochoa
1615 W Mile 14 N
Weslaco, Texas 78599-4200

Dear Mr. Damaso Fuentes and Ms. Yessica Ochoa:

Enclosed for your review and further processing are the following:

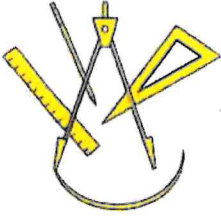
- Initial Offer Letter
- Metes and Bounds and Plat
- Appraisal Report prepared by: Leonel Garza, Jr., dated 3/3/2025
- Acknowledgement of Receipt of Appraisal Report
- Land Owner Bill of Rights w/Supplement
- Title Commitment
- Sample Deed
- Brochures ("State Purchase of Right of Way")

Please return the signed Acknowledgement of Receipt to our office at L&G Engineering, 900 S. Stewart Road, Suite 10, Mission, Texas 78572.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (956) 585-1909.

Sincerely,

Fernando Herrera,
Right of Way Administrator



L&G Engineering

Transportation Consultants

April 9, 2025

Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested
No. 9589 0710 5270 0706 0152 37

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

ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
Parcel: 97
From: Mile 14.5
To: Mile 11

Damaso Fuentes and Yessica Ochoa
1615 W Mile 14 N
Weslaco, Texas 78599-4200

Dear Mr. Damaso Fuentes and Ms. Yessica Ochoa:

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 **\$14,764.00** for your property, which includes **\$14,764.00** for the property to be purchased and **\$0.00** 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>Amount to be Subtracted if Retained</u> |
|---------------------------------|--|
| A. Driveway Concrete | \$1.00 |
| B. Fencing Chain Link | \$1.00 |
| C. Gate Chain Link | \$1.00 |
| D. Landscaping Ash 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 question 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")

June 25, 2025

Damaso Fuentes and Yessica Ochoa
1615 W. Mile 14 N.
Weslaco, Texas 78599

RE: Offer Letter Dated April 9, 2025
Hidalgo County
Highway: Mile 6 W. Rd.
Parcel No. 97

Dear Mr. Garcia,

We have reviewed the submitted appraisal report and your letter of offer in the total amount of \$14,764.00. This value is inclusive of our land in the proposed ROW taking and the value of our improvements. We have decided not to accept this offer due to the following:

1. The chain link fencing is appraised at \$18.00 per line at foot, when local values in this area indicate at \$24.00 LF.
2. The 2 mature healthy ash trees within the taking are appraised at \$1,500. Per tree. Our landscaping information is that both trees should be valued at \$2,000 each.
3. The corner clip taken at the corner of Mile 6 W. and Mile 14 N. will impact the value of my land remainder by approximately \$2,500.00. This "taking" will reduce my land remainder and leaves my property in a non-dimensional shape as before the take.

The above noted information is calculated as follows:

1. Chain link Fencing – 187 LF X \$24.00 = \$4,488.00
2. Ash Trees – 2 X \$2,000. Each = \$4,000.00
3. Land Remainder – Depreciation of \$2,500.00

The total difference of our values to the noted items 1, 2 and 3 are at an increase of \$5,089.00.

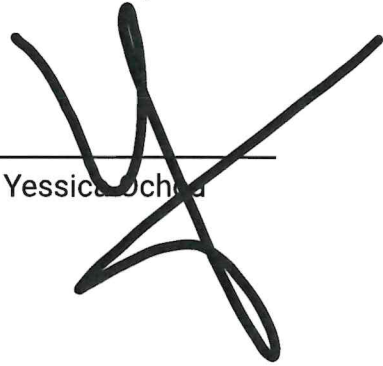
| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Appraisal Report at | \$14,764.00 |
| Increased values of items 1, 2 & 3 | <u>\$ 5,463.00</u> |
| Total Amount of Counteroffer | \$20,227.00 |

In view of the above information and calculations, our counteroffer is \$20,227.00. Please consider our counteroffer so we may proceed with the acquisition of Parcel No. 97. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Damaso Fuentes



Yessica Ochoa



REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL REPORT - TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Address of Property: 1615 W Mile 14 N, Weslaco, Texas
 Property Owner: Damaso Fuentes & Yessica Ochoa
 Address of Property Owner: 1615 W Mile 14 N, Weslaco, Texas 78599
 Occupant's Name: Damaso Fuentes & Yessica Ochoa
 Whole: Partial: Acquisition

District: Pharr
 Parcel: 97
 ROW CSJ: 0921-02-355
 Federal Project No: N/A
 Highway: Mile 6 West Road Phase II 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 \$14,764 as of February 5, 2025, based upon my independent appraisal and the exercise of my professional judgment;

That on February 5, 2025, I personally inspected in the field the property herein appraised; that I afforded Damaso Fuentes & Yessica Ochoa, 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 February 27, 2025;

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

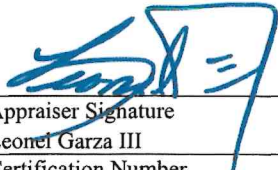
I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief:

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: March 3, 2025

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

 3/12/2025
 Reviewing Appraiser Date

