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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

9-15

September 26, 1994

To: Board of Directors (Engineering and Operations Committee--Info.)
(Land Committee--Information)

From: General Manager

Subject: Concerns of Property Owners Regarding Newport Road Construction
and Land Acquisition Activities at the Domenigoni Valley
Reservoir Project

Report

This letter has been prepared in anticipation of a number of property owners appearing at the October meeting of the Board to express concerns about the effects of relocated Newport Road construction and reservoir land acquisition on their properties. The property owners live in the Alamar Mesa community, comprising 23 privately owned 5 to 10 acre residential properties bounded by the relocated Newport Road and the adjacent Salt Creek Channel to the north, Warren Road and Metropolitan-owned lands on the west, and the Multi-Species Reserve on the south and east (see the location map attached).

Environmental documents describing impacts and mitigation measures for the relocated roadway, adjacent Salt Creek Channel, and reservoir have been approved and adopted. Despite these mitigation measures, about one-half of the property owners in the community have expressed concerns over impacts and are asking Metropolitan to buy their properties. Metropolitan has acquired only those properties necessary for project purposes, including the construction and operation of the reservoir, construction of the relocated Newport Road and its associated drainage facilities, and the management of the Reserve. Staff has stated that it has no justification to acquire additional property in this area.

Construction plans for relocated Newport Road and Salt Creek Channel are complete, and a Memorandum of Understanding for their construction, maintenance, and operation has been executed among Metropolitan, the City of Hemet, the Riverside County Transportation Commission, the Riverside County Transportation Department, and the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

Beginning in December 1993, Metropolitan held a series of meetings with the Alamar Mesa community to discuss and try to resolve owner-perceived concerns about the project. At the

conclusion of these meetings in May 1994, no opposition to the project or mitigating measures was expressed.

Project improvements near the community consist of:

- Constructing Newport Road on a fill from 3 to 6 feet above existing grade.
- Constructing a 3 to 5 foot high earth-berm sound barrier on the south side of the road to ensure that the noise level from Newport Road will be below the Riverside County maximum for residential communities.
- Landscaping on the sound berm.
- Erecting a chainlink or barbed-wire fence along the southern and eastern boundary of the community adjacent to the Reserve.
- Capturing local flood runoff by paving of east/west streets in the community to convey flows under relocated Newport Road to the Salt Creek Channel.

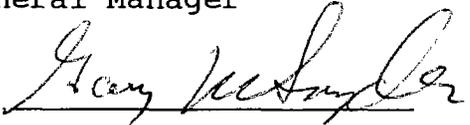
At a meeting with the community on September 14, 1994, Metropolitan was asked to buy additional properties in the community because of concerns about perceived seepage from the reservoir, noise from Newport Road, changes to community lifestyle, and reductions in property values. About half of the property owners do not want to sell and leave the community. A further meeting is scheduled with property owners in mid-October.

Property owner concerns appear to be fully mitigated under approved and adopted environmental planning documents. EIR and more recent studies show virtually no effect of the reservoir on groundwater levels in the area. Noise impacts, as stated above, have been mitigated to meet county standards. Metropolitan's purchase of surrounding lands assures an open space character of the area to the west, south, and east of the community, contrasted to a pattern of encroaching urbanization that would occur without the project. These factors support EIR conclusions that no additional property acquisition is warranted for the project in this area.

Recommendation

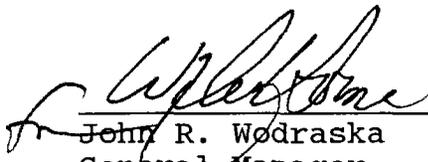
For information only.

John R. Wodraska
General Manager

By 

Gary M. Sndyer
Chief Engineer

Concur:



John R. Wodraska
General Manager

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