

October 19, 2020

Norman E. Matteoni

Peggy M. O'Laughlin

Bradley M. Matteoni

Barton G. Hechtman

Gerry Houlihan

[Via Email to GeneralPlanStaff@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:GeneralPlanStaff@sanjoseca.gov)

Teresa Alvarado and David Pandori, Co-Chairs
Envision San José 2040 General Plan Task Force
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara Street, Tower, 3rd Floor
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: GP 4-Year Review, Coyote Valley, Meeting October 29, 2020

Dear Co-Chairs Alvarado and Pandori and Task Force Members:

I represent the Saso Family, a pioneer family in the Coyote Valley, dating back to 1927. In that early era, the family farmed their land in an agriculturally productive time. That all changed by late last century. The family today owns three parcels along the Monterey Corridor in Mid-Coyote Valley's Urban Reserve:

9690 Monterey Road (7.4 acres);
9760 Monterey Road (9 acres); and
9940 Monterey Road (20 acres).
(Aerial photographs of the properties are attached as Exhibits
1, 2 and 3.)

The Character of the Monterey Corridor

When you take a close look at the corridor you find several mixes of uses – some still ag or open, but others from north to south are as follows:

- Calpine power plant at Metcalf Road and a large PG&E electrification installation
- Wooden crate storage and truck and trailer yards in old Coyote
- The Coyote Bait Shop
- Mini-Mart
- Coyote Grange Hall for weddings and receptions
- Coyote Ranch Picnic Grounds

- Coyote Stage Stop
- Post Office
- Harvey's Grading Yard
- Fred Padula Lumber
- A ¼ interchange at Monterey Road as part of the Bailey Interchange with Highway 101
- Charter School of Morgan Hill
- Residences
- Coyote Creek RV Park
- The old 15 Mile Stop now Golden West Dry Wall Supply
- Coyote Creek Golf Course
- Cell towers
- Great Oaks Water facilities
- Shelton Pipe and Drainage Products
- A fruit stand
- A remnant cherry orchard
- A grass farm
- Parkway Lakes RV Park
- More residences and small residential subdivisions
- Isolated former agricultural parcels are barren

Along the west side runs the railroad tracks carrying Caltrain to Salinas with plans to upgrade to High Speed Rail, including a maintenance yard for trains south of Barnhart Road.

Trashing of Major Gateway

The Monterey Road once the gateway to San Jose from the south is now a long speedway, not often policed, of deteriorating road. Moreover, it has become a dumping ground of trash overlooked by the City Road Maintenance Department. See select photos attached as Exhibit A-F. The scattered commercial and residential properties are left to clean up the road. But there is an important lesson here, dumping typically occurs where there is no adjacent development – away from owner surveillance.

On September 14, 2020, the City in response to many complaints undertook a cleanup of the corridor. Attached as Exhibit G is a photograph of that work in progress just north of Bailey Avenue between the highway and railroad tracks. Unfortunately, in October, dumping, accompanied by RVs parked along the road, quickly returned to the area between Calpine at Blanchard Road and Emado Avenue (see Exhibit H). This was despite posted signage along the roadway advising of heavy fines for dumping, but they are only posted from Bailey north. Perhaps it does not practically matter, but my client's property and others to the south are in the City but are without similar signage.

History

In 1958, the family's main property at 9940 (see Exhibit 3) was annexed to the City and placed in a R-1 zone (classified R-1-B-1 and R-1-B-3). The owners were enticed into annexation with the promise of police protection, water and sewer and streetlights. These circumstances place the Saso property in a unique position from other adjacent lands in South Coyote Valley. It has paid increased taxes over what neighboring County land is assessed but never has received the benefit of those taxes. This property is the residence of Ken and Annie Saso and, while there is a mix of hay fields and fruit orchard on the back portion of the property, as well as a fruit stand that has grandfather status, these uses are carry-overs from a past era. In fact, the fruit stand was only maintained to provide agricultural experience to the next generation; they have gone on to other pursuits. Agriculture is now a form of gambling to break even.

The 9690 parcel (the smallest of the three) is zoned TM Mobile Home and north of the Coyote Valley RV Resort. The 9760 parcel is mostly in the City (the southern portion is unincorporated), south of the RV Resort and adjacent to the old Coyote Creek Golf Course entrance. All three properties have family residences.

There are but a few of these types of properties. Nonetheless, they should be distinguished from other County unincorporated land and allowed the opportunity for unique job development or cluster housing. There is a legitimate basis to classify these properties for development – adjacency to Monterey Road, existing modification of adjacent land, smaller parcels, together with a commitment made in the late 1950s that was suspended.

Over the years, farming has disappeared. IBM came to North Coyote Valley, the Coyote Creek Golf Course was developed and expanded, the Kirby Canyon Landfill was permitted. Each of these developments had an aspect of private preservation of open space. The IBM Santa Teresa Lab on Bailey Avenue was carefully developed on the lowlands of the site with green landscaping surrounding it and the hillside backdrop left in open space. Coyote Creek Golf

protecting a section of the Creek land and providing recreation to the general public. Kirby Canyon was permitted on the hillside above the Golf Course on approximately 700 acres to serve San Jose's waste disposal, but with conditions to operate in phases and restore hillside habitat.

These were exceptions to the agricultural character of Coyote Valley with distinct development purposes combined with private preservation of open space.

Another exception sits on the Almaden Hills next to Santa Teresa Park and overlooking the northerly edge of Coyote Valley. IBM established its Almaden Lab, including roads and parking on a plateau of approximately 60 acres of the total 600-acre landholding. Its lab structures were set into the plateau and architecturally designed to avoid visual impact. It was required to hold the balance of the land (90%) in private open space; it also provided a trail link from the McKean Road area along its southerly boundary to the adjacent County Park. Finally, it was granted a secondary access connection to the park's road on the condition of improving that road to serve park users. This is another example of preserving open space at the hands of a private party by allowing limited development.

There is also a Gavilan College facility at 560 Bailey Avenue currently serving as a public safety academy.

Understanding the Preservation Movement

The Saso Family understands that there is a preservation movement to withhold the Valley from further development, to protect open space and create wildlife corridors from west to east. The City and other entities cooperated to acquire two large holdings along Bailey Avenue and the Fisher Creek – Brandenburg and Sobrato. Those lands are drained by Fisher Creek providing a degree of flood control protection to urban San Jose to the north. Recently the Tilton Ranch in the western hills above the Valley has been acquired. These are good accomplishments, but all of it costs millions of dollars and require ongoing public maintenance.

When you look at the detail of an aerial in Central and South Coyote Valley you see patterns of rural residential development and other uses, interrupting what was agricultural land, from Sheller Avenue to Burnett Avenue and beyond into Morgan Hill. This checkerboard pattern of developed parcels indicates that agriculture is not economically viable. For years there has been talk of finding a means to support agriculture. But while the talks and studies progressed, ag disappeared.

Now, based on SB 940 the City of San Jose is encouraged to trade residential density in Coyote Valley for higher density in urban areas of the City. However, doing this with a broad

brush ignores the particular circumstances of certain properties along the corridor with adjacent residential or commercial uses already in place. Certainly, the southern reaches of Mid-Coyote and South Coyote Valley in rural residential development have a different character than North Coyote Valley.

Fairness in Treatment and Good Planning

As you study preserving open space in this area, you must also look for an exception mechanism that allows some economic development of private property such as the Saso land, e.g., cluster residential development, with private sewage treatment and interior roads, or campus industrial development providing jobs, or RV Parks to serve recreational needs, all of which can privately preserve and maintain care of land, and provide landscape strips along Monterey Road that would be privately maintained and offer those visiting the Valley a litter free, attractive roadway entrance to San Jose (see Exhibit I – a photograph of the landscape berm being installed by the Coyote Valley RV Resort). (This same situation prevails along the frontage of IBM’s Santa Teresa Lab, in contrast to dumping elsewhere on Bailey Avenue.) Proper development can assist in green belt protection along Coyote Creek

Second, restricting the corridor to agriculture or open space is not consistent with the existing development of the properties along Monterey Road, particularly for properties that have long ago been annexed to the City. Nor is it economically productive. Thus, removal of triggers for development that have been established for housing and industrial should remain for these lands.

Conclusion

As economic hardship of the Covid pandemic is felt by our community, there should be the realization that there needs to be public-private cooperation for proper use of the Coyote Valley. The public cannot carry the burden of acquisition of all land. The Coyote landowners like Ken Saso and his family are asking to be part of the solution in partnership with the City. Ken asked to be at the table of the Task Force but was overlooked. As a forever landowner in the Coyote Valley who has seen the whole process of plans and rounds of modifications for the Valley since the 1950s, he has a unique perspective and right to have his views be considered. The Saso family has been a participant in open space preservation with adjacent lands made available to the Coyote Creek Parkway extending 21 miles from Anderson Reservoir to Kelly Park.

Thus, the Saso Family asks for a fair-minded approach to planning that affects its properties.

The corridor itself is unique, tightly banded by the railroad tracks and Coyote Creek. It has existing patterns of development that can be better planned and controlled. These are not large acreages as in North Coyote Valley, but smaller parcels with specific relationship to Monterey Road, that require their own distinct study.

Very truly yours,

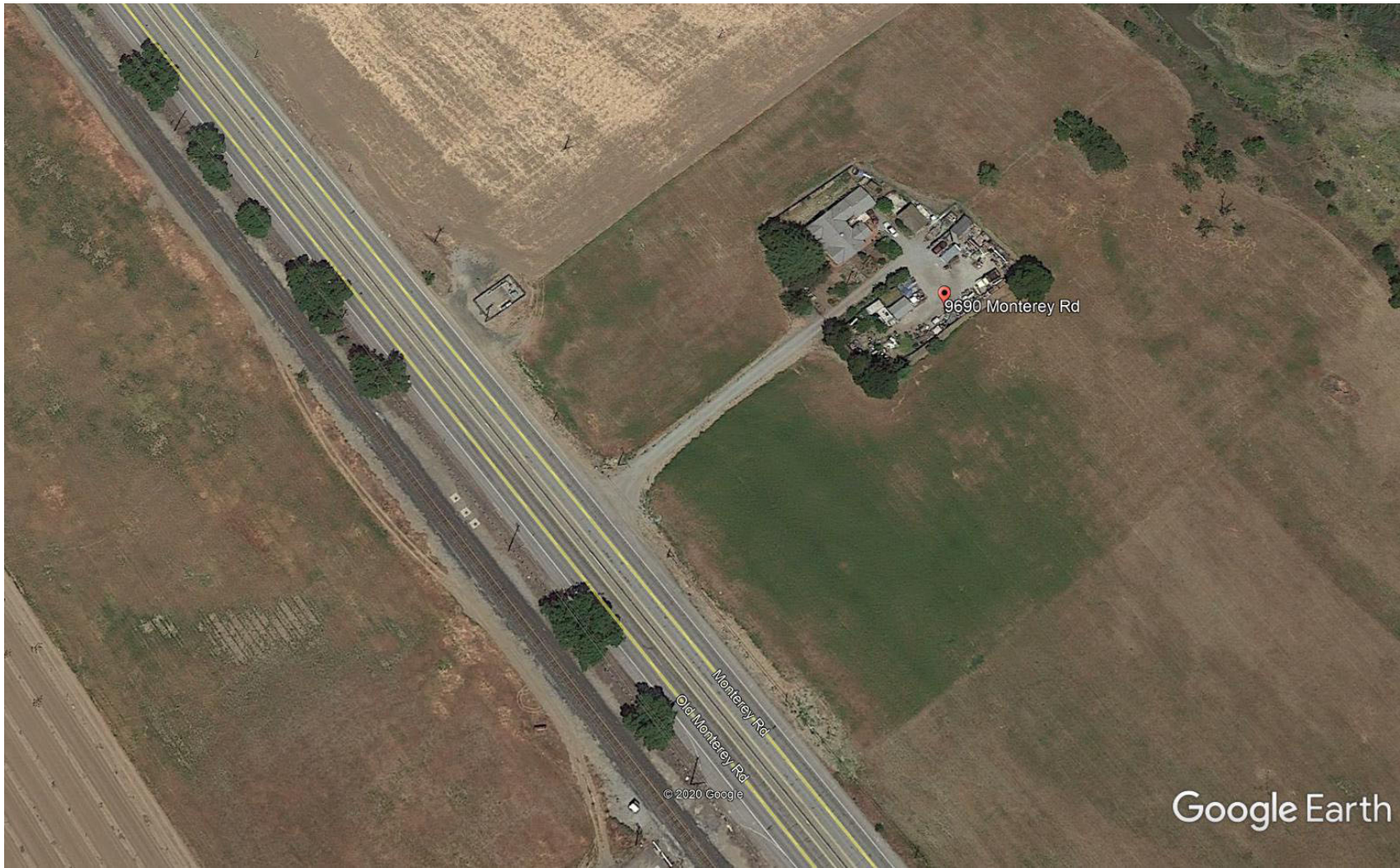


NORMAN E. MATTEONI

NEM:cab

Attachments

cc: Rosalynn Hughey, Director
Council Member Sergio Jimenez
Ken and Annie Saso



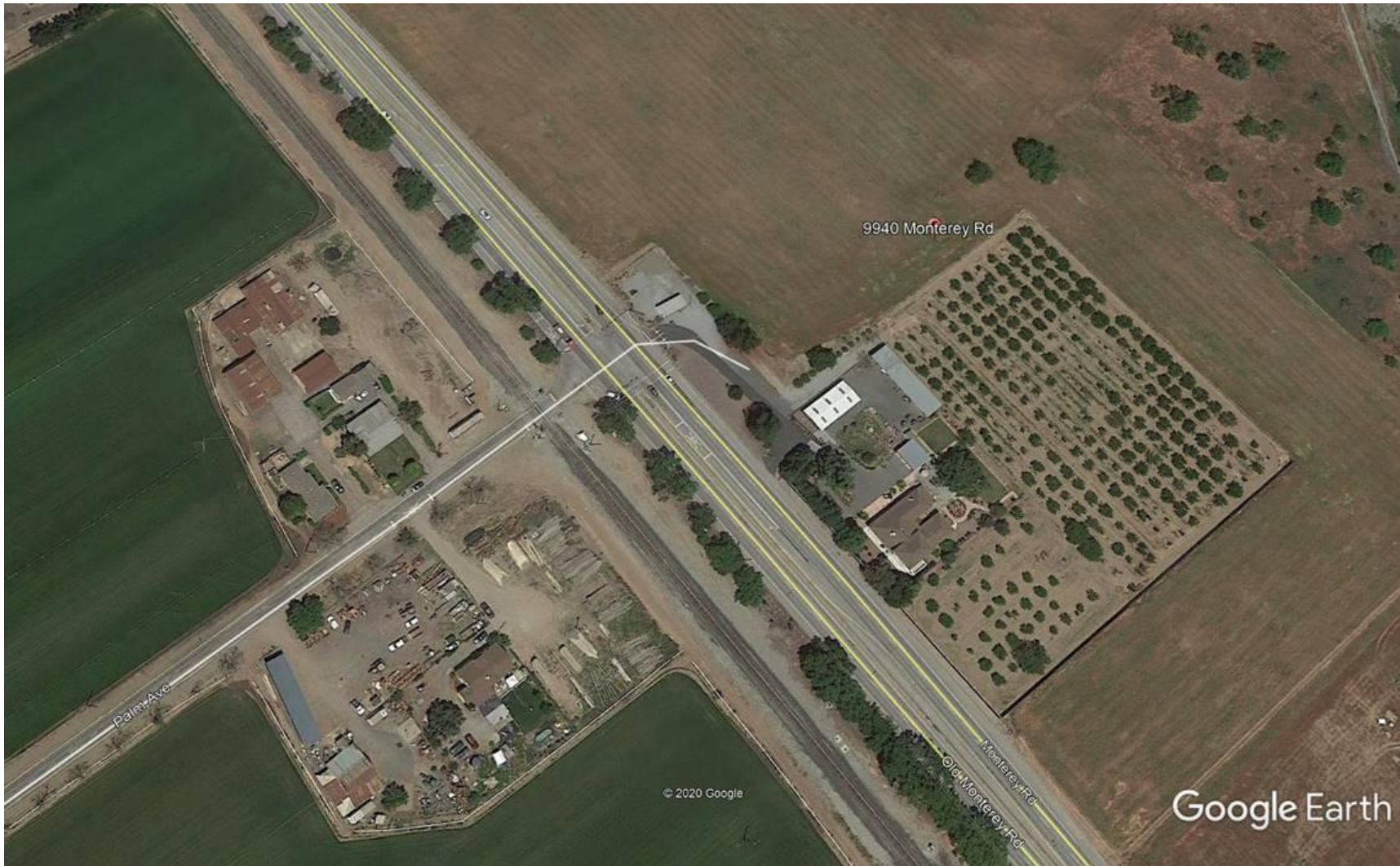
9690 Monterey Rd.

EXHIBIT 1



9760 Monterey Rd.

EXHIBIT 2



9940 Monterey Rd. at Palm Avenue

EXHIBIT 3



EXHIBIT A

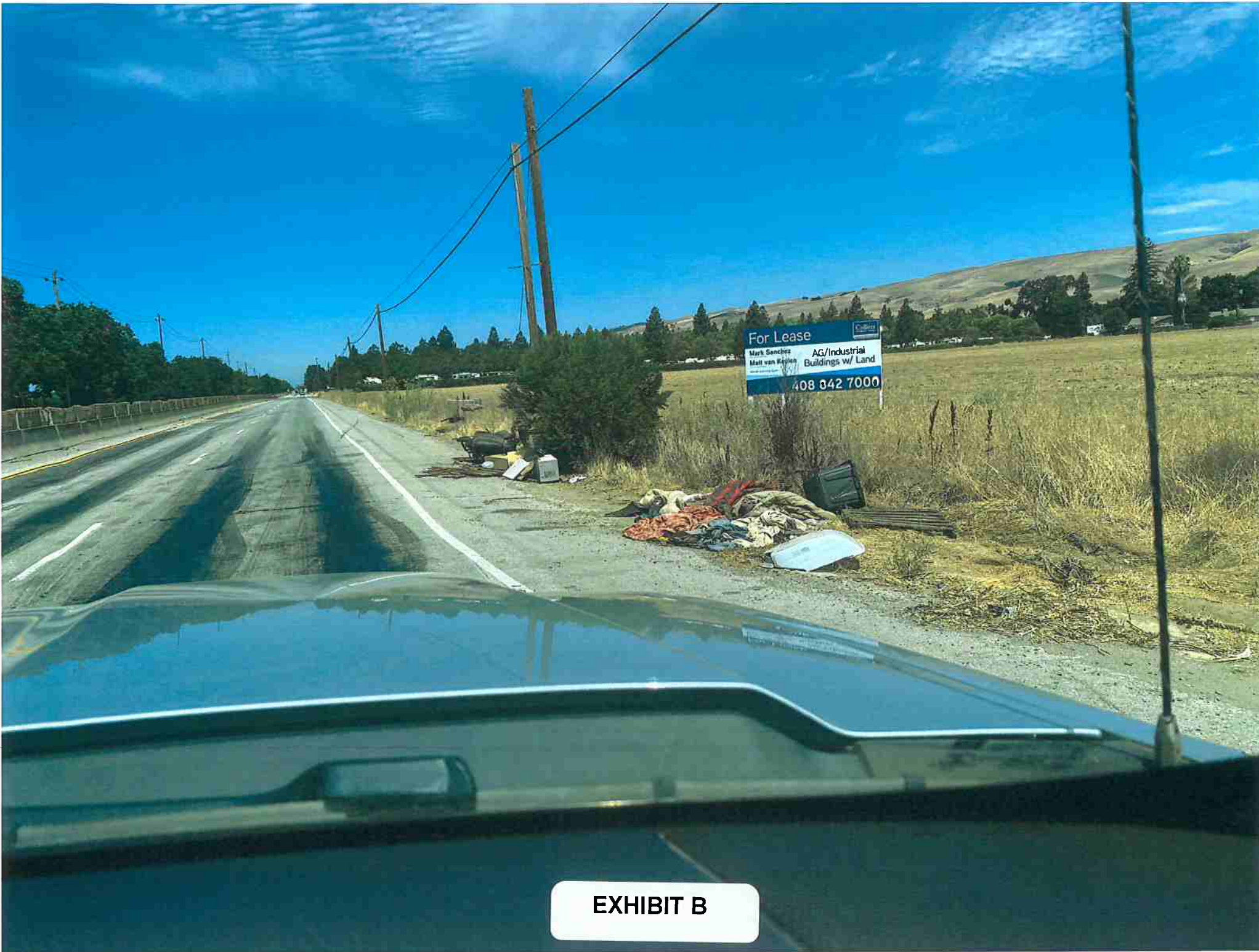


EXHIBIT B



EXHIBIT C

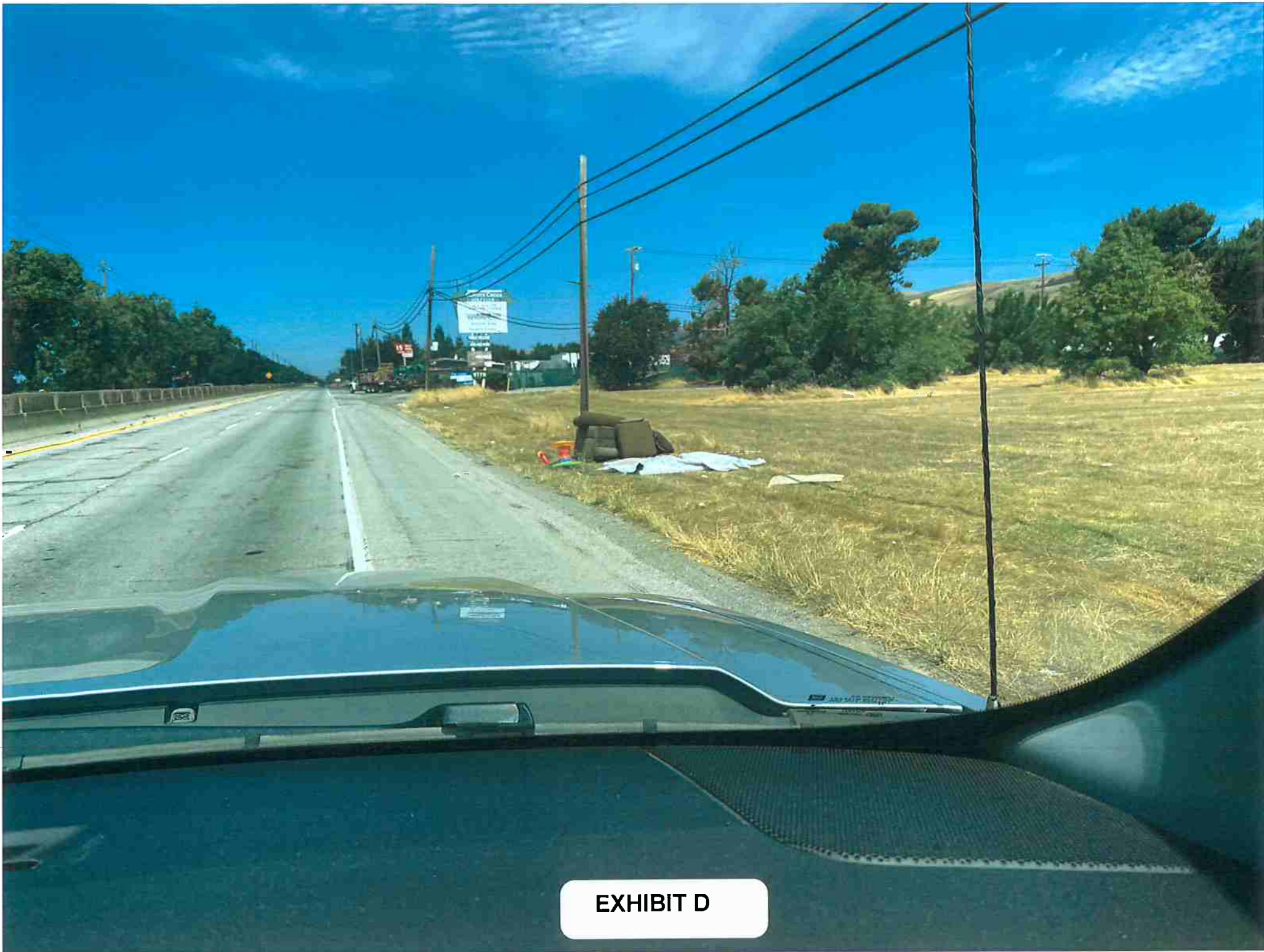


EXHIBIT D

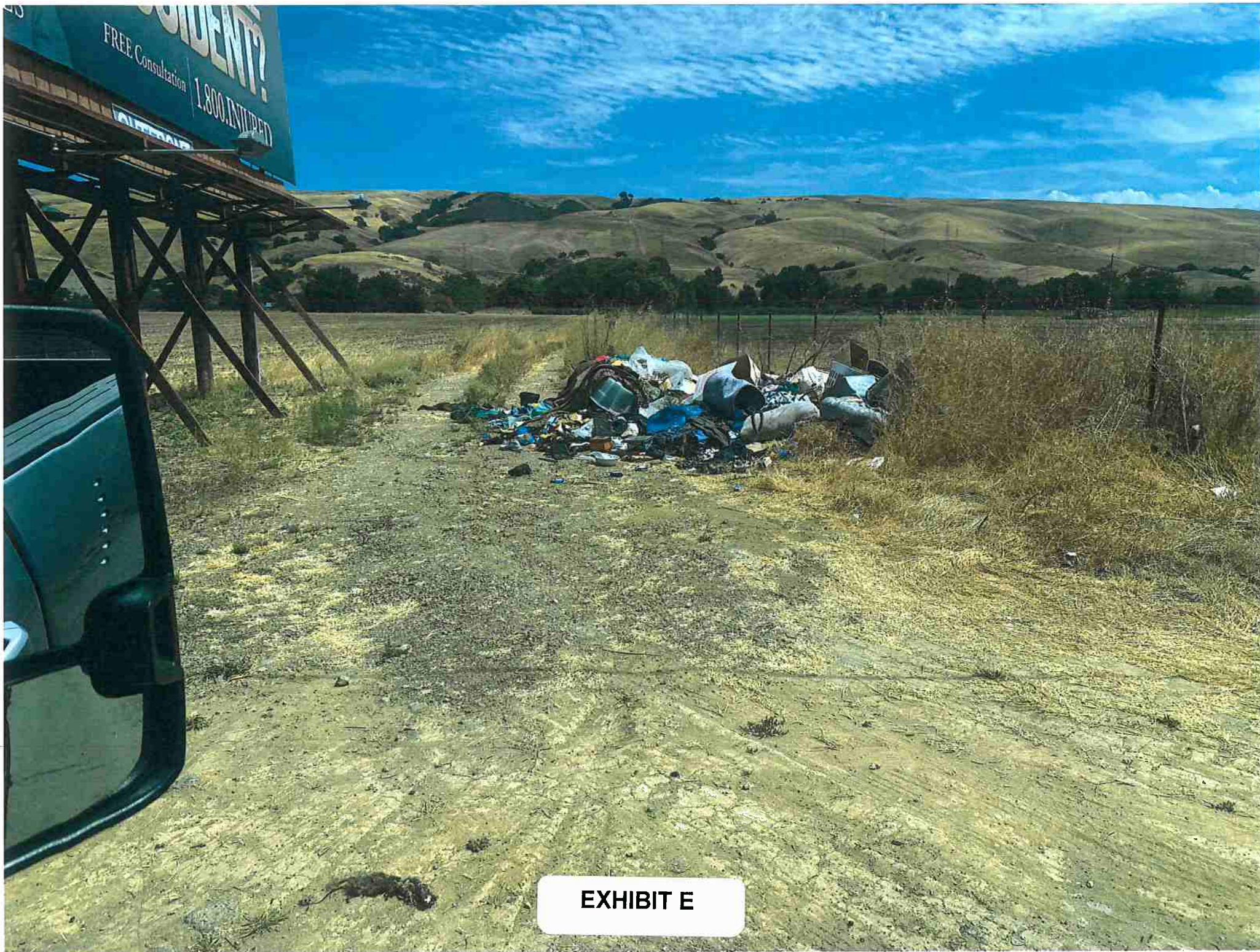


EXHIBIT E

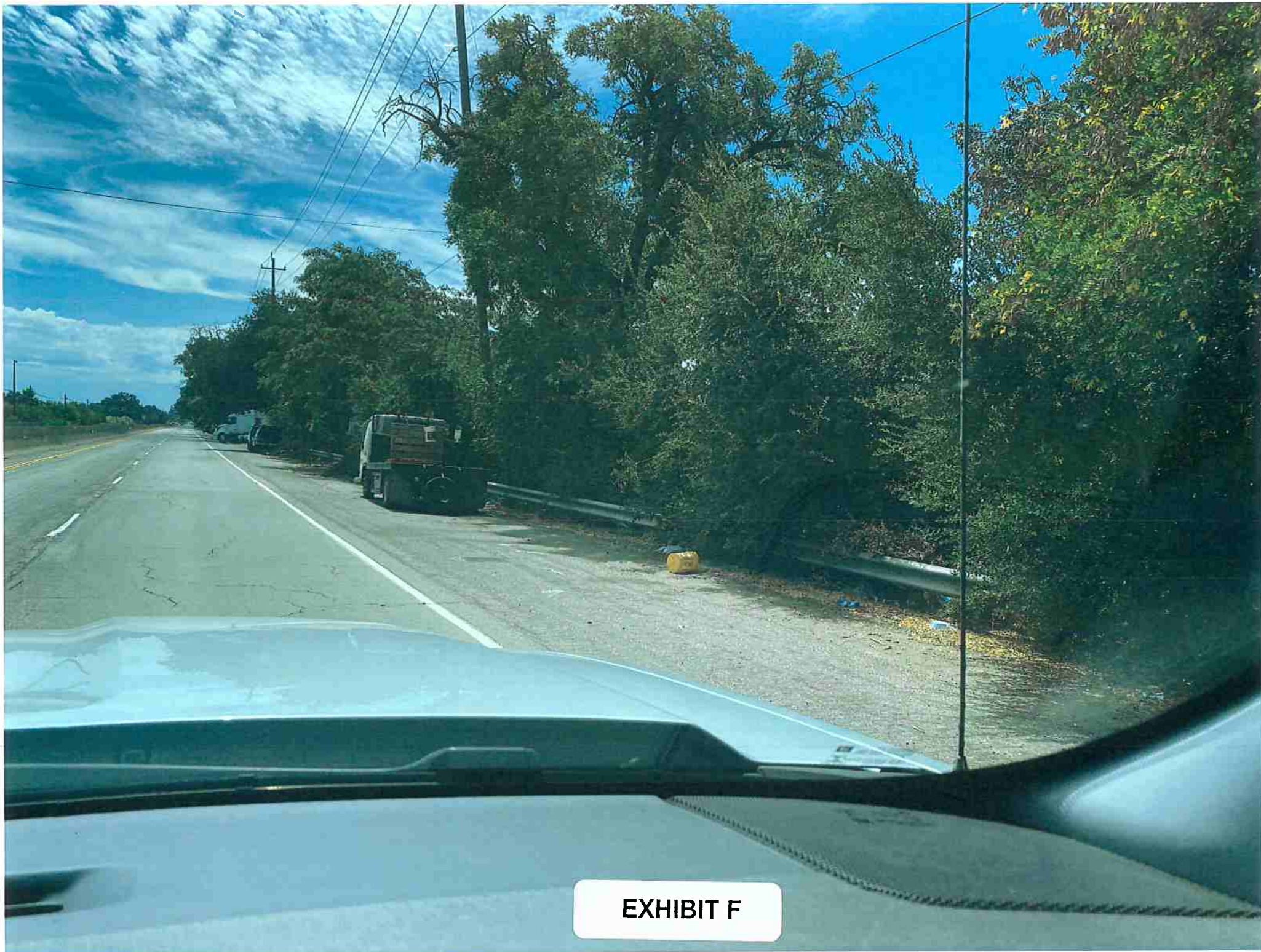


EXHIBIT F



City September, 2019 sponsored trash pickup along Monterey Road

EXHIBIT G



October 6, 2020 - debris and RV south of Blanchard Rd., north of Bailey Ave. on Monterey Rd.

EXHIBIT H



Landscape strip adjacent to Coyote Creek RV Park