



JIM DESMOND
SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: November 4, 2025

05

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

APPROVE AUTHORIZATION TO NEGOTIATE AND ACCEPT LAND DONATION IN BORREGO SPRINGS FOR FUTURE FIRE STATION AND HEALTH CLINIC OR OTHER HEALTH-RELATED USE AND CEQA EXEMPTION (DISTRICT: 5)

OVERVIEW

The unincorporated community of Borrego Springs is a rural community located in northeastern San Diego County. The community is relatively isolated, with residents having to drive long distances for groceries, medical care, and other goods and services. Historically, the community was serviced by outdated buildings for essential services. In the past decade, the County of San Diego (County) has been able to invest greatly in Borrego Springs, building a new library, Sheriff's Station, and a 13.5-acre park. These developments were made possible through a land donation.

The County now has an opportunity to expand on this prior work to include a new fire station and health clinic site. Undeveloped land has been offered as a donation to the County on condition it is used for a fire station and health clinic or other health-related use. The offered land donation consists of four acres for the new fire station and about two acres for the potential health clinic. The new site is along Country Club Road adjacent to the existing County complex consisting of the Borrego Springs library, Sheriff's Station, and park. This offer of donation coincides with the County Fire Strategic Facilities Plan for building a new fire station for Borrego Springs to replace the existing, outdated station. The site is preferred by County Fire and would serve as a great location for the new fire station. Replacement of Borrego Spring's Station 60 is currently within the Future Capital Needs Planned Projects list.

The other portion of the donation would be used for a health clinic or other health-related use, which aligns with the needs of the community. Borrego Springs lacks a hospital and many healthcare services, forcing residents to drive a long distance for medical care. The community and benefactor of the land donation have voiced a strong desire to see land dedicated to a health clinic or other health-related use for residents to address non-emergency medical needs.

Today's item authorizes the Director of the Department of General Services, or designee, to negotiate and accept a land donation in Borrego Springs for a future fire station and health clinic

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or other health-related use site. It also authorizes a letter of appreciation to be sent by the Chair on behalf of the County of San Diego for the generous donation.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND

1. Find that authorizing the negotiation and acquisition of a portion of APN 198-020-56-00 as a land donation is exempt from CEQA because it does not commit the County to a definite course of action with respect to construction of any project per CEQA Guidelines sections 15352 and 15004(b)(2)(A), which allows agencies to designate a preferred site for CEQA review and enter into land acquisition agreement when the agency has conditioned the agency's future use of the site on CEQA compliance. There are no development plans currently in place for the site, and any potential impacts would be too speculative to analyze at this point. The Board hereby conditions any future use of the site upon CEQA review and compliance.
2. Authorize the Director, Department of General Services, or designee, to negotiate and in accordance with California Government Code Section 25353 accept a land donation consisting of approximately six acres located at APN 198-020-56-00 for the purpose of using four acres for new fire station and approximately two acres for a health clinic or other health-related use.
3. Authorize the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter of appreciation on behalf of the County of San Diego to the current landowner.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Borrego Springs is a geographically isolated community with limited emergency response capacity, leaving residents vulnerable during wildfires, medical emergencies, and extreme heat events. The community lacks a modern fire station and could utilize a health clinic to improve healthcare access to the community. Investing in a new fire station would ensure faster, more reliable emergency response, improve disaster preparedness, and provide equitable protection for all residents, regardless of income or location. This is a necessary step toward addressing long-standing infrastructure gaps and promoting public safety in a high-risk, underserved rural area.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan in the Department of General Services (DGS). If approved, this request will result in estimated costs and revenue of \$80,000 for DGS staff time to process the donation. The funding source will be \$40,000 redirected from an internal agreement with San Diego County Fire and an existing internal agreement in DGS, both funded by General Purpose Revenue. There will be no change in the net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

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ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

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The six acres to be donated are located at APN 198-020-56-00. The property is roughly 23 acres in total. The north six acres will be donated to the County. Subject to future California Environmental Quality Act review, the western 4 acres will be utilized as a fire station by County Fire and the eastern 2 acres bordering the library will be deed restricted for a health clinic and related uses.

For fire protection, Borrego Springs was previously served by the Borrego Springs Fire Protection District. (BSFPD). In 2023, the BSFPD was dissolved, and the service area was folded into the San Diego County Fire Protection District. (SDFPD). This process was undertaken to provide better fire protection and emergency medical service to Borrego Springs. The merger allowed for increased staffing, a new ambulance, and a newer fire engine to service the community. The existing fire station in Borrego Springs, Station 60, is in dire need of replacement. The facility is a former lumber yard that was not built to house a fire station or accommodate a modern fire crew. While interim upgrades have been made to site since County Fire's annexation, County Fire has designated a new fire station for Borrego Springs as a priority. To ensure uninterrupted service to

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the community, a different site has been identified for the new fire station. This will allow the County to build a new fire station, while keeping the existing one operational. The new 4-acre site is an ideal location for the new fire station, with a portion outside the FEMA designated flood zone.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approval to authorize the negotiation and acquisition of a portion of APN 198-020-56-00 as a land donation is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15352 and 15004(b)(2)(A), as it does not commit the County of San Diego to a definite course of action with respect to construction of any project. Additionally, agencies are allowed to designate a preferred site for CEQA review and enter into land acquisition agreement when the agency has conditioned the agency's future use of the site on CEQA compliance. There are no development plans currently in place for this site. Any future changes to the Property that may result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment will be contingent upon CEQA compliance, once proposed. The development of fire stations, health clinic or other related uses will only occur after the required CEQA requirements have been met.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action to approve authorization to negotiate and accept the land donation supports the Community Initiative in the County's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by providing services that support the safety and quality of life our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Desmond", written in a cursive style.

JIM DESMOND
Supervisor, Fifth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A