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Subject: For Public Record, Property Value Impacts of Road Widening, Setback Changes, and Resulting Non-Conformities
Date: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 12:07:01 PM

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Subject: Property Value Impacts of Road Widening, Setback Changes, and Resulting Non-Conformities

Emigration City Council and Planning Commission,

I am writing to summarize research on the impacts that zoning changes and non-conforming status have on residential property values, and to highlight why Emigration City should budget for these impacts as it considers roadway widening and new setback requirements.

Multiple credible studies show that when a zoning change renders existing homes non-conforming, the market value of those homes typically declines. The Journal of Planning Literature (2023) found that downzonings and non-conforming classifications generally reduce property values by 10 to 20 percent, depending on the severity of the restriction. The EmpowerLaws Land Use Analysis (2024) reported 5 to 15 percent reductions in case studies where setback encroachments or redevelopment limitations created uncertainty for buyers. The Zoning Compliance and Property Value Report (2024) similarly concluded that legal risk, financing challenges, and limitations on rebuilding often result in double-digit percentage reductions in value.

Across these studies, the consistent range of impact is approximately 5 to 20 percent of home value, with the higher end applying when a home cannot be rebuilt or expanded under the new zoning rules.

If Emigration Canyon Road is widened, the City should anticipate several direct impacts on affected properties. These include loss of livability due to removal of vegetation, increased noise, reduced yard space, and diminished privacy. In addition, widening the roadway and imposing new setback requirements will create non-conforming conditions for many existing homes. This introduces legal uncertainty, reduces marketability, and can complicate financing and insurance. These factors all contribute to measurable reductions in home value.

It is also important to note that the setbacks first discussed in November 2025 were set most stringently in the very area targeted for widening. This creates a direct connection between the City's proposed roadway design and the non-conformity that would be imposed on existing homes. For this reason, the City should budget for the significant impacts of both the physical widening and the resulting non-conforming status created by the new setback requirements. A high-level budget estimate could reasonably include an assumed 10 percent reduction in value for homes made non-conforming, added directly to the roadway widening budget along with associated legal and negotiating expenses. This alone represents several million dollars that is not currently reflected in the City's roadway widening budget.

Finally, during the January 8, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, there was no public discussion of a 20-foot setback from the right-of-way during the public session. Given the

substantial implications of such a requirement, it is essential that any setback changes be discussed transparently and with full public participation.

I request that this email be added to the public record and that these issues be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Emigration Canyon public meeting.

Sincerely,

Robert Macfarlane

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