

CLAIM AGAINST THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT California Government Code Sections 900 and following

			Clerk o	of the Boa	ard's Da	ate Stamp			
	he completed form can be mailed, sent electronically					or SCVWD	Use Only		
or hand delivered. Mail or deliver to):		Date Received: 8/1/24			/1/24	ROUTING		
Clerk of the Board Santa Clara Valley Water District-HQ			☐ Via	u.S. Mai	il		K CEO		
5700 Almaden Expressway San Jose, CA 95118			☐ Ha	nd Delive	red			Counsel	
Or submit the completed form electron	nically	, to:	∑ Em	ail			X Risk Mar	nagement	
clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org	Illically	10.	☐ Oth	ner:			X COB		
							■ BOD (Dis	strict #):4	
With certain exceptions, claims for prise to the claim. Claimant must comuse additional pages if necessary. Plebelieve will be helpful to process your of	nplete e ease at	each section. If informattach itemized receipt	mation i ts, witne	is unknow ess staten	vn, write nents, p	e "unknown ohotos and	n" in the appro	opriate box. Please	
Name of Claimant: Brigitte Rince a	and M	lark Bolger	Email /	Address:	rober	t@estavi	llolaw.com		
Address of Claimant: 6411 El Pato Court				City: Carlsba	ıd		State: CA	Zip: 92009	
Address to which Notices should be Estavillo Law Group, 555 12th Street	,		ove: City: Oakland			State: CA	Zip: 94607		
Home Phone Number: (510) 982-3001		Cell Phone Numbe (510) 982-3001					Phone Number: 982-3001		
Is this claim being filed on behalf of ☐ Yes ■ No	a mir		If so, please indicate minor's date of birth: Relationship to the minor:						
Date and time of incident or loss:	Loca	tion of incident or lo	loss (address): Is there a police report?						
May 15, 2024 = Close of Escrow	967 (9513	Chynoweth Ave, Sa 36	an Jose, CA ■ Yes If Yes, Police Report Case #: 24-036-0159; 24-033-00308 □ No						
Describe how the incident or loss happened, and the reason you believe the Santa Clara Valley Water District is responsible for your damages (<i>Please attach additional sheets if necessary</i>):									
See Attachment 1.									



CLAIM AGAINST THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT California Government Code Sections 900 and following

Page 2 of 2

In detail, describe the damage or injury (Please attach additional sheets if necessary):	
See Attachment 1	
List Name(s) and contact information of any witness(es) or District employee involved (if any):	
 Brigitte Rince and Mark Bolger, who may be contacted through their attorneys, Estavillo Law Grosuite 1280, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 982-3001; Gregg Fussell, gregg.fussell@cbnorcal.com, (408) 857-0957; Robyn Powers, robyn.powers@cbnorcal.com, (408) 528-3785; Captain Steve Donohue, SJPD, Stephen.Donohue@sanjoseca.gov; (continued on Attachmental Control of Continued Control of Control of Continued Control of Contro	
DAMAGES CLAIMED: Basis for computation of amounts claimed (include copies of bills, invoices, photos, police case # or other documentation.) Note: If your claim is more than \$10,000, you need but must state whether jurisdiction for the claim would be in the Limited Jurisdiction (up to \$25,000) jurisdiction of the Superior Court. Is the amount of the claim under \$10,000? Yes In No	d not fill in an amount,
Court Jurisdiction: (Check One) Limited Civil Unlimited Civil	T
ITEMS	CLAIM AMOUNT
1. Difference between amount Property sold for v. amount Property would have sold for but for Valley Water's conduct	\$300,000
2.	\$
3.	\$
4.	\$
TOTAL AMOUNT	\$300,000
WARNING: IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE TO FILE A FALSE OR FRAUDULENT CLAIM (Penal Code	e Section 72 and 550)
I have read the matters and statements made in the above claim and I know the same to be true of except to those matters stated upon information and belief and as to such matters I believe the satunder penalty of perjury that the foregoing is TRUE and CORRECT.	
Signed this 25th day of July , 20 24 Claimant's Signature	6 J
Government Code Section 945.6 provides that with limited exceptions, any suit brought against a r	oublic entity must be

Government Code Section 945.6 provides that, with limited exceptions, any suit brought against a public entity must be commenced:

- (1) If written notice is given of a denial of claim in accordance with <u>Section 913</u>, not later than six months after the date such notice is personally delivered or deposited in the mail.
- (2) If written notice is not given of a denial of claim in accordance with <u>Section 913</u>, within two years from the accrual of the cause of action.



510-982-3001 (Oakland) 949-991-2057 (Newport Beach)

= 510-982-3002

robert@estavillolaw.com

August 1, 2024

Via Email and US Mail

Clerk of the Board
Santa Clara Valley Water District—HQ
5700 Almaden Expressway
San Jose, CA 95118
clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org

Re: <u>Brigitte Rince & Mark Bolger v. Santa Clara Valley Water District</u>

Our Clients: Brigitte Rince & Mark Bolger

Subject Property: 967 Chynoweth Ave., San Jose, CA 95136

Date of Loss: May 15, 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

This firm has been retained by Mark Bolger and Brigitte Rince to pursue legal action against Santa Clara Valley Water District. Please allow this correspondence and enclosures to serve as our clients' government claim pursuant to Government Code §§ 900, et seq.

We look forward to working with you in reaching an amicable resolution. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me robert@estavillolaw.com.

Respectfully,

ESTAVILLO LAW GROUP

Robert Martinez, Esq.

Encl.

Santa Clara Valley Water District Claim Form

Attachment 1

Exhibit A – Photographs: Views from Subject Property, Unhoused and Encampments

Exhibit B – Photographs: Subject Property

Exhibit C – Comparative Sales Analysis of Erikson Neighborhood (1/1/24-6/13/24)

Declaration of Gregg Fussell & Comparative Sales Analysis (1/14/24-5/13/24)

Declaration of Robyn McKeon Powers

ATTACHMENT 1

I. <u>Describe how the incident or loss happened, and the reason you believe the Santa</u> <u>Clara Valley Water District is responsible for your damages (cont.)</u>

A. Background

For over 20 years, Mark Bolger and Brigitte Rince lived in the Erikson community, at 967 Chynoweth Ave. Their home was the very last house at the end of Chynoweth Ave. It shares a fence line with Valley Water property and had (what used to be) beautiful views of the percolation ponds and the Guadalupe River Trail. An aerial photograph is below.



In recent years, however, Valley Water has allowed unhoused persons to inhabit, deface, and misuse its property, as well as Mark and Brigitte's neighboring property. Valley Water's unheeded policies and the free rein given to its unhoused guests to occupy and destroy the area undoubtedly caused a drastic decline in the value of Mark and Brigitte's home.

B. Santa Clara Valley Water District's Liability

Properties that are of significant deterioration and attract vagrants as a prime location to conduct their criminal activities—like that of Valley Water's neighboring property—cause instability and deterioration and substantially endanger the health and safety of residents of the surrounding neighborhood. The accumulation of filth, litter, garbage, dirty needles, shopping carts, encampments,

unsanitary debris, waste material, and human excrement on Valley Water property further constitutes a nuisance prohibited by law.

Valley Water's unhoused guests are engaged in theft, arson, prostitution, the possession and use of drugs, and other criminal activity—not only on Valley Water property but on the private properties of our Clients and their neighbors in the Erikson community. Your homeless guests knocked down Mark and Brigitte's gate and front door on several occasions and broke into the home. They have stolen water and electricity from Mark and Brigitte and their neighbors' homes. They yell at all hours of the day and night. They have started wildfires, discarded used needles and hazardous materials, destroyed trees and vegetation, and sullied the previously beautiful views from Mark and Brigitte's home with graffiti, encampments, piles of trash, shopping carts, and human waste.

Mark and Brigitte have pleaded for help from Valley Water on several occasions with no action by the water district other than exchanging condolences over email. While there have been talks and "plans" to keep the area clear of encampments, crime, fires, water pollution, and related nuisances, there has been no visible action by Valley Water to do so. Contracting with San Jose PD to conduct mere monthly check-ins has proven to be inadequate to stop and deter these issues. Because of Valley Water's failure to take action, Mark and Brigitte no longer felt safe in their community and were compelled to sell the Property.

II. <u>In detail, describe the damage or injury (cont.)</u>

Mark and Brigitte's damages are \$300,000, which represents the difference between the amount that the Property sold for and the amount that the Property would have sold for but for Valley Water's allowance of the aforementioned issues on its neighboring property.

The subject Property at 967 Chynoweth Ave is a 1572 sqft home with 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, on a 10,735 sqft. lot with a swimming pool. It had a newly remodeled open kitchen with all new stainless-steel appliances and custom cabinets, remodeled bathroom, a tankless water heater,

¹ Valley Water previously denied two claims (L2340008 and L2340009) regarding the reimbursement for the broken door and gate. This is *not* a resubmission of those claims but is only stated herein for context.

² See Exhibit A: Views of Unhoused and Encampments from Subject Property.

new copper plumbing throughout, newer A/C and furnace, a PebbleTec pool, gazebo and pergola sundeck, among several other high value selling points.³

In previous years when Valley Water maintained the percolation ponds and creek area and there were no encampments, crime, or filth, living in close proximity to the ponds and trails was a favorable selling feature. Being close to this area was a feature on most realtor marketing materials, along with photos overlooking the ponds with birdlife and fish in the creek.⁴ Reputable realtors with expertise in the Erikson community will testify that, but for the encampments, noise, vandalism, and pollution from the unhoused on Valley Water's adjacent property, Mark and Bridgitte's home would have seen multiple offers between \$1.6m - \$1.7m. This, too, is supported by recent comparative sales.

On or about February 15, 2024, based on recent comps in the area and with the guidance of an experienced brokerage, the Property was listed for sale for \$1,580,000.00 (= \$1,005 per sf).

The subject Property was on the market for 65 days, which was significantly longer than the 8.28-day average for other homes in a 0.8-mile radius *without* a view of the homeless. Mark, Brigitte, and their realtor, Gregg Fussell, witnessed the negative impact that the view of the unhoused on Valley Water's neighboring property had on several potential buyers. They saw prospective buyers park in front of Mark and Brigitte's home, look at the encampments across the pond, then turn away and leave. They saw the troubled looks on the faces of prospective buyers after witnessing the overrun of encampments from the windows and the backyard of the Property.

While the Property was on the market, an unhoused couple broke into the Property and spent the night there. Two days later, the same thing happened. Mark and Brigitte had to include the following statement in the disclosures: "There are unhoused persons in the area, they made entry into the house on two occasions, alarm system has been installed."

With 65 days on the market, the home received one single offer. The house sold on May 15, 2024 for \$1,350,000 (= \$859 per sf), from the sole offer.

ESTAVILLO LAW GROUP 555 12th Street, Suite 1280 Oakland, CA 94607 Telephone: (510) 982-3001 Facsimile: (510) 982-3002

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³ See Exhibit B: Photos of the Subject Property.

⁴ See Declaration of Robyn McKeon Powers, ¶ 12.

⁵ See Declaration of Gregg Fussell, ¶¶ 3-4; See also Exhibit C: Comparable Sales in Erikson Neighborhood showing average time on the market of 6.77 days, excluding the subject Property.

⁶ See Declaration of Gregg Fussell, ¶¶ 5-6.

⁷ See Declaration of Gregg Fussell, ¶¶ 7-8.

Below is a breakdown demonstrating the sale of the Property below market value.

Comps for Homes in 0.8-mile radius from 1/14/2024 - 5/13/2024:8

Address	Bed	Bath	DOM	SqFt	\$ per SqFt	Lot Size	Sale Price	Sold Over/ Below Asking
4425 Lynfield Lane	3	2 0	6	1,486	\$1,248.32	6,098 sf	\$1,855,000	Over
890 Mulcaster Ct	4	2 0	8	1,794	\$947.60	9,000 sf	\$1,700,000	Over
612 Banta Court	4	2 0	9	1,553	\$1,054.73	6,240 sf	\$1,638,000	Over
4378 Heppner Lane	4	2 1	5	2,039	\$796.96	7,841 sf	\$1,625,000	Over
1034 Rawlings Drive	4	2 1	4	1,514	\$1,063.41	6,000 sf	\$1,610,000	Over
4877 Fell Ave	3	2 0	13	1,192	\$1,325.50	6,111 sf	\$1,580,000	Over
611 Calpella Drive	4	2 0	13	1,640	\$953.05	5,663 sf	\$1,563,000	Over
AVERAGE	1	I	8.28	1,602.5	\$1,055.65	6,707 sf	\$1,653,000	-

		•10			***	10 - 2 - 0	** * ** ***	
967 Chynoweth Ave	4	2 0	65	1,572	\$858.78	10,735 sf	\$1,350,000	Below

Comps for Homes in Erikson neighborhood from 1/1/24 – 6/13/2024:9

Address	Bed	Bath	DOM	SqFt	Lot Size	Sale Price
4895 Tonino Drive	4	2 1	8	2,354	6,098 sf	\$1,801,000
4894 Tonino Drive	4	2 1	5	2,354	5,663 sf	\$1,785,000
1034 Rawlings Drive	4	2 1	4	1,514	6,000 sf	\$1,610,000
4639 Hampton Falls	3	2 1	7	2,049	2,049 sf	\$1,470,000
4728 Corrales Drive	3	2 0	7	1,192	6,098 sf	\$1,415,099
AVERAGE	I.	l	6.2	1,892	5,181.6 sf	\$1,616,220

967 C	hynoweth Ave	4	2 0	65	1,572	10,735 sf	\$1,350,000

 ⁸ See Comparative Market Analysis attached to Declaration of Gregg Fussell.
 ⁹ See Exhibit C, Comparable Sales in Erikson Neighborhood.

Local realtor Robyn McKeon was involved in the comparative sale of 1034 Rawlings Drive, a 4-bed/2.5-bath, 1514 sf home on a 6,000 sf lot in the Erikson neighborhood. 10 Ms. McKeon will attest that the close proximity of Mark and Brigitte's home to the encampments on your property and the visibility of the encampments from their home, as well as the noise from the unhoused guests on your property, had a detrimental impact on the desirability and sale of their home. 11

The overwhelming evidence demonstrates that Mark and Brigitte's Property would have and should have received multiple offers over asking price during the robust spring market with a strong neighborhood demand, likely between \$1.6m and \$1.7m. Without question, Valley Water's neglected property overrun by encampments and permissible trash, blight, and criminal activity was a direct and proximate cause of the diminished value of their Property.

Mark and Brigitte hereby demand \$300,000 to compensate them for their loss. This amount represents the difference between the \$1.35m that the Property actually sold for and the amount that the Property would have sold for but for Valley Water's allowance of the aforementioned issues on its neighboring property.

III. List Names and contact information of any witness(es) or District employee involved (cont.)

- 5. SJPD, Street Crimes Unit, (408) 277-4631;
- 6. Officer Dutra (#5092), SJPD;
- 7. Rod and Kathy Jensen, 928 Chynoweth Ave., San Jose, CA 95136, (831) 601-0955;
- 8. Lilian Dennis, Management Analyst II, Valley Water, Idennis@valleywater.org, (408) 630-2652;
 - 9. Jim Beall, Director District 4, Valley Water, board@valleywater.org;
 - 10. Rick Callender, CEO, Valley Water, rcallender@valleywater.org, (408) 406-5203;
 - 11. Jennifer Codianne, Valley Water, JCodianne@valleywater.org;
- 12. Mark Bilski, Assistant Operating Officer, Valley Water, MBilski@valleywater.org.

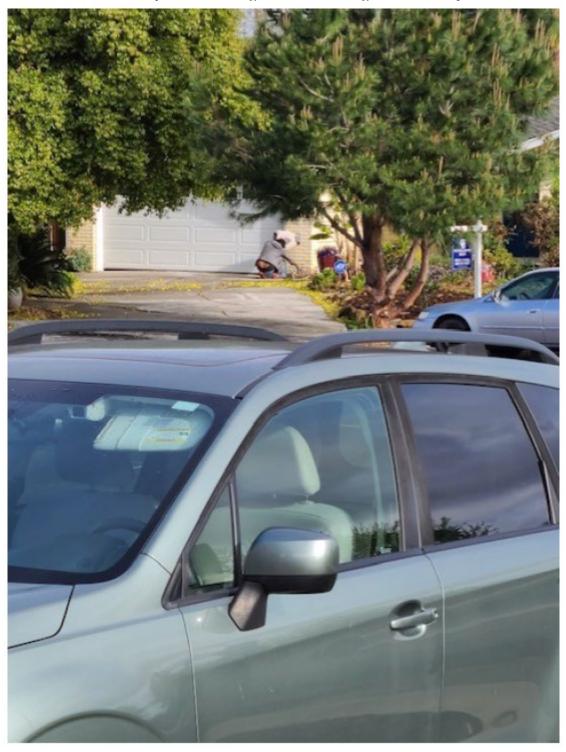
28 ¹⁰ See Declaration of Robyn McKeon Powers, ¶¶ 3-10.

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¹¹ See Declaration of Robyn McKeon Powers, at ¶¶ 9-10.

EXHIBIT A

Unhoused person stealing water from neighbor's front yard



Views of Tents/Encampments from Mark & Brigitte's Property



Views of Tents/Encampments from Mark & Brigitte's Property













Exhibit A

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EXHIBIT B



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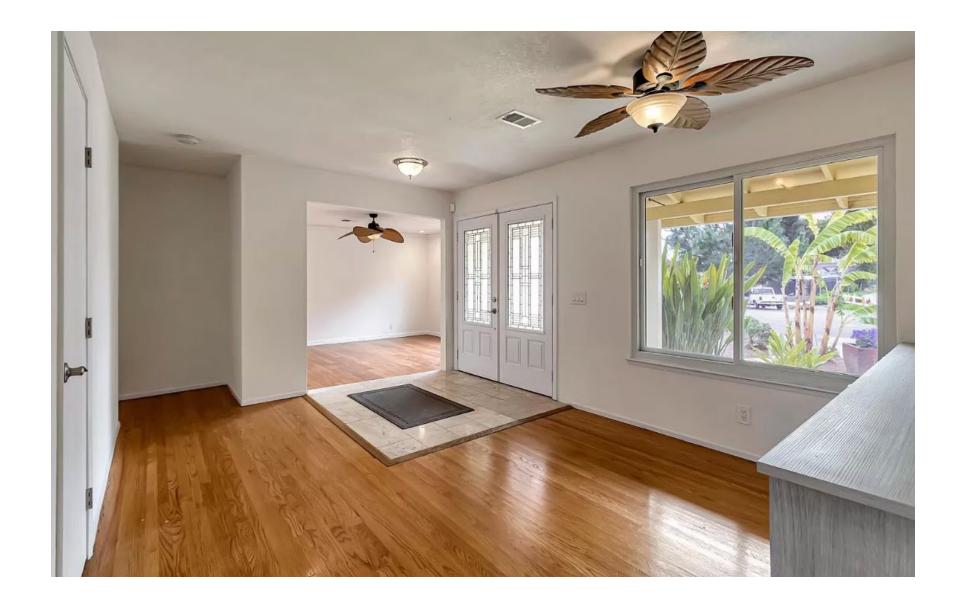


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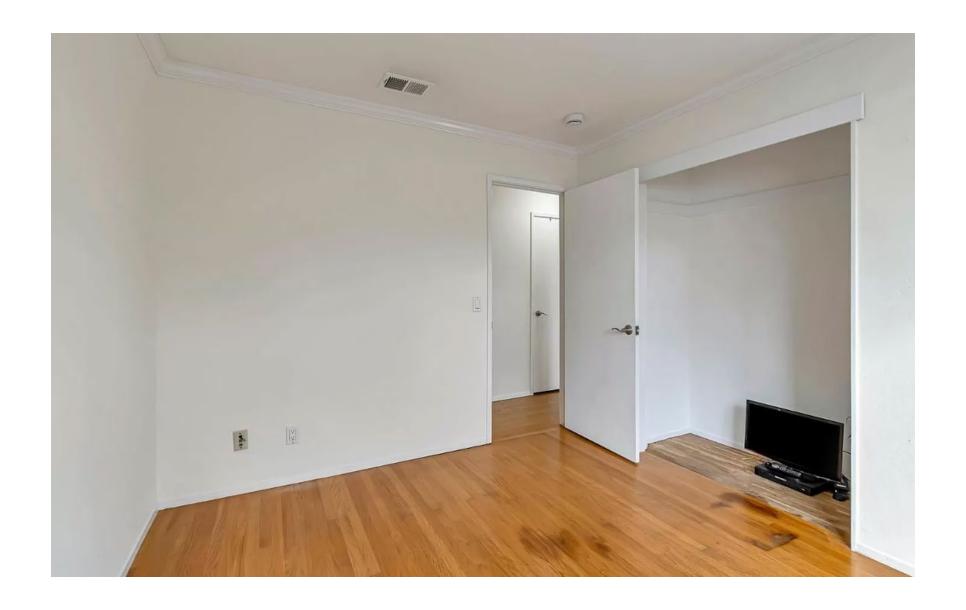


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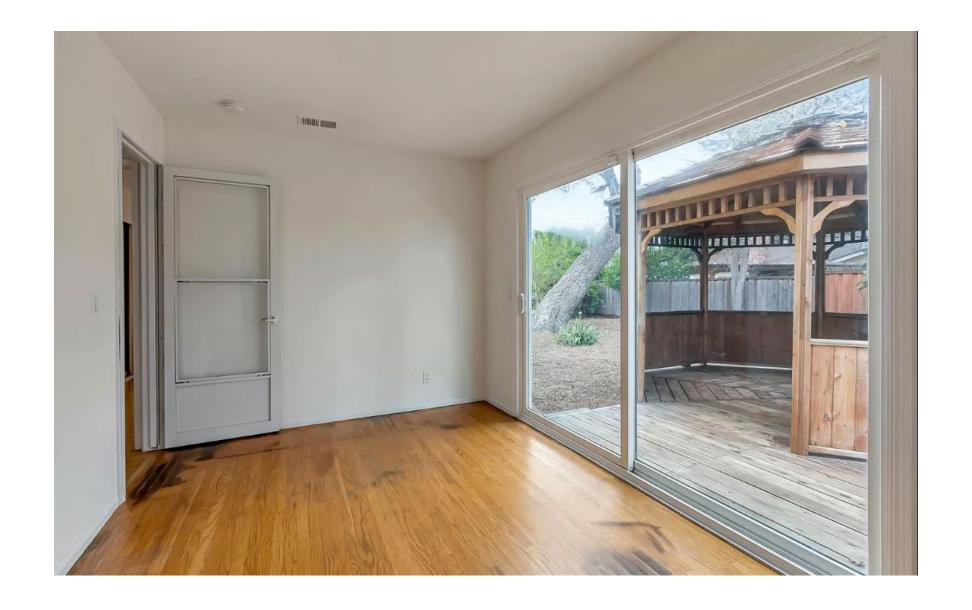


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Cross Property Agent 1 Line

	S	MLS #	Street Address	Price	DOM	Bds	Bths	SqFt	Lot Size Postal City	Class	Age
1	S	ML81961998	4895 Tonino Drive	\$1,801,000	8	4	2 1	2,354	6,098 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Single Family	59
2	S	ML81961830	4894 Tonino Drive	\$1,785,000	5	4	2 1	2,354	5,663 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Single Family	57
3	S	ML81951671	1034 Rawlings Drive	\$1,610,000	4	4	2 1	1,514	6,000 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Single Family	61
4	S	ML81955765	4639 Hampton Falls Place	\$1,470,000	7	3	2 1	2,049	2,049 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Townhouse	31
5	S	ML81958527	4728 Corrales Drive	\$1,415,099	7	3	2 0	1,192	6,098 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Single Family	54
6	S	ML81953686	967 Chynoweth Avenue	\$1,350,000	65	4	2 0	1,572	10,735 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Single Family	54
7	S	ML81959829	4762 Eagle Lake Drive	\$1,280,000	8	2	2 0	1,056	3,485 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Single Family	49
8	S	ML81962213	4641 Hampton Falls Place	\$1,234,000	5	2	2 1	1,805	Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Townhouse	31
9	S	ML81960657	4635 Hampton Falls Place	\$1,220,000	8	2	2 1	1,805	Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Townhouse	31
10	S	ML81965930	872 Corte De Blanco	\$1,005,000	9	2	2 0	1,056	3,049 Lot SqFt San Jose	Res. Single Family	49

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TAVILLO LAW GROUP 555 12th Street, Suite 1280 Oakland, CA 94607 Telephone: (510) 982-3001 csimile: (510) 982-3002

DECLARATION OF ROBYN MCKEON POWERS

- I, Robyn McKeon Powers, hereby declare as follows:
- I am a licensed California Realtor and have been licensed since 2003. 1.
- 2. I work in primarily in Santa Clara County and in my personal neighborhood of Erikson in San Jose, boarded by Branham Ln, Pearl Ave, Hwy 85 and Guadalupe Creek.
- 3. In February 2024, I sold a property in Erikson neighborhood, 1034 Rawlings Dr, a 4bed/2.5bath, 1514 square foot ("sf") home on a 6000+/- lot. The home was nicely updated. The list price was \$1,399,000 and we went into contract within 4 days for \$1,610,000 with 4 offers. Escrow closed on February 28, 2024. The sales price achieved was \$1,063 per sf.
- During the open house, potential buyers commented on our quiet location within the neighborhood and comfortable distance from Guadalupe Creek and the visible unhoused encampments. Some commented on their concerns about the number of tents under Hwy 85 and along the once well utilized bike trail.
- 5. The proximity of encampments has become a Real Estate disclosure to potential buyers.
- 6. Whilst I was not involved with the listing nor the sale of Mark and Bridget's property on Chynoweth Ave, I am familiar with its location and the potential saleability of the home.
- 7. The home is slightly larger but generally in comparable overall condition to my listing, with some remodeling and a significantly larger backyard (0.24ac lot) with a well-appointed swimming pool, paved patio area, and side gazebo.
- 8. The home is located at the end of Chynoweth Ave at the percolation ponds, with the city bike trail and Guadalupe Cr to the full side boundary of the property.
- 9. I am aware, along with other neighbors/residents, of the growing number of unhoused living in the creek and surrounding pathways. There are frequent reports on our neighborhood Facebook group of unhoused accessing water and electricity without permission from properties bordering the creek. This issue along with fires, noise, exploding gas bottles, trash/shopping carts blocking the creek, and destruction of trees/plants along the creek, etc. are regular topics of discussion with city, water district and police officials at our general meetings and by personal emails from residents.

- 1	
1	10. In my opinion, the close proximity of Mark and Brigitte's home to these encampments and
2	the visibility of the encampments from their home and yard, along with the noise from the
3	encampment residents, had a detrimental impact on the desirability and eventual sale of their home.
4	This is also reinforced by the length of time on market compared to other listings (67 days vs the
5	average of 6.7 days) and the much-reduced sales price.
6	11. In my opinion and based on recent sales, the home should have seen offers between \$1.6m -
7	\$1.7m and could have sold at the higher end with strong neighborhood demand during a robust spring
8	market.
9	12. As a footnote, in previous years when the percolation ponds and creek area were maintained
10	by the water district and city, and there was no public camping, being close to this area was a selling
11	feature—being able to easily access the bike/walking trail featured on most realtor marketing
12	materials along with photos overlooking the ponds with birdlife and fish in the creek.
13	I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
14	foregoing is true and correct.
15	Executed this 14 day of June, 2024, at, California.
16	12 n m 10
17	Robyn M. Powers
18	Robyn McKeon Powers
19	Realtor, CDPE, RCS-D, SFR
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VIEWED 00:15:37 UTC IP: 152.39.163.229

<u>▶</u> **06 / 15 / 2024** Signed by Robyn Powers (robyn.powers@cbnorcal.com)

SIGNED 00:19:59 UTC IP: 174.160.1.141

7 06 / 15 / 2024 The document has been completed.

COMPLETED 00:19:59 UTC

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ESTAVILLO LAW GROUP 555 12th Street, Suite 1280 Oakland, CA 94607 Telephone: (510) 982-3001 Facsimile: (510) 982-3002

DECLARATION OF GREGG FUSSELL

I, Gregg Fussell, hereby declare as follows:

1. My proper name is Martin Gregory Fussell, but I address myself as Gregg Fussell. I am a California licensed real estate salesperson. I have held my California real estate license since 2008 and have primarily practiced real estate sales since 2010. I am affiliated with Coldwell Banker Realty ("Coldwell Banker") out of its San Jose, California branch office. Coldwell Banker was the listing broker, and I was the listing agent, that represented Mark Bolger and Brigitte Rince in the sale of their home, the Property, this year.

- 2. The subject property is 967 Chynoweth Ave., San Jose, CA 95136 ("Property"). The Property dwelling was approximately 1,572 square feet with 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, a lot size of approximately 10,735 square feet, and had a swimming pool. The kitchen and the guest bathroom had been recently remodeled and it had a tankless water heater, newer A/C and furnace, a gazebo, pergola, and PebbleTec pool, among other selling features.
- 3. Attached is a Quick Summary of Comparable Properties report (the "Report") that I prepared from the Multiple Listing Service. The first page of the Report shows properties listed from January 14, 2024 to May 14, 2024, with a distance from the Property of 0.8 miles or less. The recent sale of the Property is included in the calculation of the identified average values.
- 4. As reflected in the Report, excluding the sale of the Property, 1) the average lot size of the identified properties is 6,708 square feet, 2) the average sale price of those properties is \$1,653,000.00, and 3) the average days on the market is 8.28.
- 967 Chynoweth Ave., on the other hand, 1) had a lot size of approximately 10,735 square feet., 2) sold for \$1,350,000.00, and 3) was on the market for 65 days.

1	5. The neighborhood surrounding the Property did have issues with unhoused persons in the
2	area. There were tents and encampments across the pond in the direction of Bass Pro Shop, which
3	could be seen from the primary bedroom window and the backyard of the Property. There were also
4	tents and encampments under the Highway 85 overpass that could be seen from the living room
5	window and from the front yard of the Property.
6	
7	6. During my listing of the Property I witnessed several potential buyers looking across the pond
8	at the tents from the backyard of the Property. I understood this condition to have caused pause to
9	potential buyers that were thinking of making an offer.
10	
11	7. Days after the clients moved out, an unhoused couple broke into the Property and spent the
12	night there. Our contractor found them there the next morning. Two days later, the same thing
13	happened.
14	
15	8. This statement was placed in the disclosures: "There are unhoused persons in the area, they
16	made entry into the house on two occasions, alarm system has been installed."
17	
18	9. In my experience as a licensed real estate agent, the presence of unhoused persons in the
19	neighborhood and the two break-ins likely had a negative impact on the selling price for this
20	Property.
21	
22	I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
23	foregoing is true and correct.
24	Executed this 22 day of June, 2024, at Cupertino, California.
25	Gregg Fussell
26	
27	Gregg Fussell
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20240621_UPDATED DECLARATION.pdf Title

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