CV-24-003269 – KEYSTONE RANCH LLC vs CITY OF PATTERSON – Petitioner's Petition for Writ of Mandate – **GRANTED.**

Indicated Ruling

The Court's *indicated ruling* is to **GRANT** the petition for writ of mandate and to issue a **peremptory writ directing the City of Patterson to set aside its April 1, 2025, denial of petitioner's vesting tentative map (VTM) and to reconsider the application in compliance with applicable law**.

This indicated ruling is based solely on the administrative record properly before the Court and the parties' briefing and reflects the Court's preliminary conclusions as to the issues presented in this phase of the proceedings.

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1. Housing Accountability Act (HAA)

The Court is inclined to conclude that the City's denial of the VTM constituted a "disapproval" of a qualifying housing development project within the meaning of the Housing Accountability Act. The City did not make the written findings required by Government Code section 65589.5, subdivision (d), including findings of a specific, adverse public health or safety impact supported by substantial evidence or findings that no feasible mitigation measures existed other than denial. The absence of these mandatory findings constitutes a failure to proceed in the manner required by law.

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2. CEQA and the CEQA–HAA Interaction

The Court's indicated ruling is that CEQA does not independently authorize the denial of the VTM on this record. The governing Master Plan EIR remains operative, and the Court is not persuaded that the statutory predicates for additional environmental review under Public Resources Code section 21166 have been satisfied. Section 21166 permits further review only upon a showing of substantial changes to the project, substantial changes in surrounding circumstances, or new information of substantial importance demonstrating new or more severe environmental effects or the need for major revisions to the prior EIR.

As reflected in the City's opposition, the City relied on anticipated groundwater management measures discussed in the draft and not-yet-finalized 2024 Groundwater Sustainability Plan and related planning efforts. The Court's preliminary view is that such evolving or anticipated planning assumptions, standing alone, do not constitute adopted, project-specific new information or changed circumstances sufficient to trigger

supplemental review under section 21166. CEQA therefore does not excuse compliance with the Housing Accountability Act's substantive limits on local discretion.

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3. Housing Crisis Act (HCA)

The Court is further inclined to find that the conditions advanced by the City—requiring accelerated construction of recharge facilities and acquisition of supplemental water supplies as prerequisites to development—functioned as an unlawful constraint on housing development under the Housing Crisis Act. On this record, those requirements were not supported by the findings necessary to justify such constraints and operated as a de facto limitation on housing contrary to Government Code section 66300.

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4. Subdivision Map Act and Planning and Zoning Law

The indicated ruling is that the City also failed to make the findings required by Government Code section 66474 in denying the VTM. In addition, the City relied on standards or requirements not in effect when the application was deemed complete, contrary to the vesting protections afforded by Government Code section 66498.1. These defects independently support issuance of a writ setting aside the denial.

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5. Requests for Judicial Notice

The Court's indicated rulings on the requests for judicial notice are as follows:

1. **Petitioner's Request for Judicial Notice No. 1 (filed September 18, 2025):**
    - The request is **GRANTED IN PART and DENIED IN PART**.
    - Judicial notice will be taken of Exhibit A - the **2024 Delta-Mendota Subbasin Annual Water Report** - but the Court will take notice of the **complete report** as submitted by the City, rather than the partial excerpts submitted by petitioner.
    - Judicial notice will be taken of Exhibits B and C.
    - Judicial notice is **DENIED** as to Exhibits D through J, which consist of extra-record material or materials offered to support claims of pretext or retaliation not at issue in this phase of the proceedings.
2. **Petitioner's Request for Judicial Notice No. 2 (filed September 29, 2025):**

- The request is **DENIED**.
- The September 22, 2025, Housing and Community Development letter post-dates the April 1, 2025 decision under review and constitutes extra-record evidence.

3. **Petitioner's Request for Judicial Notice No. 3 (filed January 5, 2026):**
    - The request is **DENIED IN ITS ENTIRETY**.
    - All materials sought to be noticed post-date the City's April 1, 2025, decision and are not properly considered in this phase of the case.

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6. Evidentiary Objections

The Court's indicated rulings on the City's evidentiary objections are as follows:

- **Objections to the Lanferman Declaration:**
    - Objections Nos. **1–3** are **OVERRULED**.
    - Objections Nos. **4–10** are **SUSTAINED**.
- **Objection to the Francois Declaration:**
    - Objection No. **11** is **SUSTAINED**.

These rulings are consistent with the Court's determination that its review must be confined to the administrative record as it existed at the time of the City's April 1, 2025, decision.

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7. Scope of Relief

Although the Court is inclined to grant the petition, the Court does **not** intend to order approval of the VTM. In administrative mandamus, the appropriate remedy is to vacate the unlawful decision and remand the matter to the City for reconsideration under the correct legal standards.

The City must reconsider the VTM in compliance with the Housing Accountability Act, Housing Crisis Act, Subdivision Map Act, Planning and Zoning Law, and CEQA, based on standards and requirements in effect when the application was deemed complete.

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8. Unresolved Causes of Action and Motive

The Court's indicated ruling does **not** reach Petitioner's seventh and eighth causes of action, and the Court does **not** make any findings regarding the City's motives, intent, or alleged bad faith. Those issues are not necessary to resolution of the administrative mandamus claims in this phase of the case.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the Court's *indicated ruling* is to **GRANT** the petition for writ of mandate and to issue a peremptory writ directing the City of Patterson to set aside its April 1, 2025, denial of Petitioner's vesting tentative map and to reconsider the application in accordance with state housing and land-use law.