

**PRESS RELEASE**

Date: December 17, 2019  
Re: OCCORD v. City of Garden Grove,  
et al., Case No. 30-2019-01102770

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**Los Angeles Superior Court grants Preliminary Injunction, Stopping Garden Grove from Leasing 102 Acre Greenfield to For-Profit Developer**

Today (December 17, 2019), Judge Mary Strobel of the Los Angeles Superior Court granted a preliminary injunction preventing the City of Garden Grove from illegally leasing the Willowick Property, currently a municipal golf course, to a for-profit developer until the City complies with the Surplus Land Act. The Willowick Property is a 102-acre greenfield owned by the City of Garden Grove but located in the City of Santa Ana.

The non-profit Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development (OCCORD) previously filed this lawsuit against Garden Grove and Santa Ana on October 7, 2019, to require both Cities to comply with the Surplus Land Act. The Act requires cities to prioritize unneeded public land for use as parks and affordable housing. Garden Grove and Santa Ana are both experiencing an affordable housing crisis and each is considered “park poor.” Yet both Cities refuse to comply with the Surplus Land Act.

Two days after OCCORD filed the suit, Garden Grove announced that it was withdrawing any plans to sell or lease the Property until at least 2020. But in November, Garden Grove reversed itself and decided to rush through a lease of the property—without having any idea what the land will be used for—before the end of the year to avoid complying with amendments to the Surplus Land Act that go into effect beginning January 1, 2020.

This left OCCORD with no choice but to seek an injunction to prevent the illegal lease. Two judges have since ruled in favor of OCCORD. On November 26, 2019, Judge Mitchell Beckloff issued a temporary restraining order to prevent the lease of the Willowick property pending today’s hearing. Today, Judge Strobel issued the preliminary injunction. The Court’s ruling rejected Garden Grove’s interpretation of the meaning of “surplus land” because it “could render the [Surplus Land Act] meaningless.” The Court’s ruling further recognized that “the opportunity to develop the 100-acre parcel ... as parkland or affordable housing is lost once the City disposes of the property” and is “irreparable.”

**Hadsell Stormer Renick & Dai LLP**

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HSRD attorneys Tanya Sukhija-Cohen and Brian Olney along with their co-counsel, Robert Newman, have brought this lawsuit on OCCORD's behalf. Ms. Sukhija-Cohen stated that "[t]he Court saw through Garden Grove's attempts to avoid following the law, and her ruling today prioritized parks and affordable housing in line with the law over for-profit development."

Mr. Newman added that "[t]he Garden Grove City Council should listen to the residents who live near the Willowick Property. The Cities should first explore first the possibilities of using the land for parks or housing which are desperately needed by both communities."

The Garden Grove City Council was expected to vote on approving the lease for the Willowick property to a for-profit developer at a special meeting scheduled for this evening December 17, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. But, in light of today's ruling, the City cannot sign and complete the lease while the preliminary injunction remains in effect. The preliminary injunction will remain in place until the Court decides whether to issue a permanent injunction in the case. Mr. Olney said that "[t]he community has demanded that the Willowick Property be used for parks and affordable housing in light of the shortages facing both Cities, and we hope that, in light of today's ruling, the City will listen to its own residents and the wishes of the community."

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