

## County road to be taken over

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The Santa Maria City Council Wednesday night approved taking over maintenance of a Santa Barbara County road through 2012 while tons of contaminated sand is transported to the city's landfill.

Under the memorandum of understanding between the city and county, Santa Maria will be responsible for the upkeep of Philbric Road from East Betteravia Road to the end of East Main Street near the Santa Maria Regional Landfill. The city's responsibilities include regular operation and maintenance, reconstruction, fog seal and chip seal of Philbric, and the work will continue through 2012.

The MOU now moves to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors for approval. If the board supports the MOU, hauling the oily sand from Guadalupe to the landfill could start as early as August [as] part of the Nipomo-Guadalupe Dunes Restoration Project.

Unocal, which is now owned by Chevron, has been working to clean up the Nipomo-Guadalupe Dunes site since 1990. During the next five years, officials plan to move 860,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil from the site to the Santa Maria landfill, which has been permitted to accept this type of soil.

Since Chevron is considering using Highway 1 to haul the thousands of truckloads of the contaminated sand from a Unocal clean-up site in San Luis Obispo County, it will use Philbric Road.

The city will pay the county 35 cents for every ton, up to 2.5 million tons, of impacted soil transported to the landfill via the county's road system for a total of \$875,000. To cover Santa Maria's agreement with the county, the council Wednesday also approved amending the contract with Chevron to charge an additional \$2.35 per ton hauled.

Three residents spoke against the restoration project and MOU, citing their issues with putting carcinogenic sand in the city's landfill, they said. They also are concerned about the pollutants seeping into the groundwater.

Toru Miyoshi asked the council why other county roads that would be impacted by the truck route weren't included in the MOU. Tom Gibbons wondered why an Environmental Impact Report, which would spell out what an MOU should contain, was not completed.

The City Council meeting was moved to Wednesday night because the Fourth of July holiday fell on Tuesday.

Chevron, which was ordered by the Regional Water Quality Control Board to clean up the former oil field, had tried to remove the contaminants from the sand on site, but that solution didn't work.

Santa Maria officials will use the contaminated sand, officially called nonhazardous [hydrocarbon] impacted soil, as a capping layer to close the landfill. For taking the sand from the site, Santa Maria expects to receive \$6 million in fees paid by Chevron during the course of the project.

However, the project has been stalled since March when a Coastal Commission appeal was filed. In June, the California Coastal Commission rejected an appeal by four local residents who questioned the San Luis Obispo County decision to allow Chevron to haul the [material] to Santa Maria's landfill.

While trucks could start transporting oil from Guadalupe to the Santa Maria landfill in August, the local residents are contemplating filing a lawsuit. Even if a lawsuit went forward, the project would move forward until officials were told to stop, according to city officials.