Print Form

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Santa Clara
110 W Tasman Dr 1st floor
San Jose, CA 95134

From: (Public Agency): City of Santa Clara
1500 Warburton Avenue, CA 95050

(Address)

Project Title: Northwest Loop Capacity Upgrades Project

Project Applicant: Silicon Valley Power

Project Location - Specific:

See attached project location figure.

Project Location - City: Santa Clara Project Location - County: Santa Clara

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Silicon Valley Power (SVP) is proposing the Northwest Loop Capacity Upgrade Project (Project) that would replace approximately 12,000 feet of existing 60 kilovolt (kV) line with new conductor of the same rating (60kV) to provide additional capacity for a new data center.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Santa Clara

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: _____

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: CEQA Section 15302, Replacement or Reconstruction.
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed conductor and associated poles would have substantially the same purpose as the existing line. Additionally, the replacement conductor would have the same rating (60kV) as the existing 60 kV line. The replacement line would not significantly increase the capacity of the power line. Therefore, the proposed project would qualify for a categorical exemption under CEQA Section 15302, Replacement or Reconstruction.

Lead Agency Contact Person: John Davidson Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 408-615-2478

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: *John Davidson* Date: 8/29/2025 Title: Principal Planner

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

1 Project Description

1.1 Introduction

Silicon Valley Power (SVP) is proposing the Northwest Loop Capacity Upgrade Project (Project) that would replace approximately 12,000 feet of existing 60 kilovolt (kV) line with new conductor of the same rating (60kV) to provide additional capacity for a new data center.

1.2 Project Location and Site Description

The Project is located in the northcentral area of the City of Santa Clara, California. The Project would be entirely located within existing SVP rights-of-way. The Project would replace conductor along two segments of the Northwest Loop:

- **Northern Receiving Station (NRS) to Mission Substation.** The NRS to Mission Substation segment would be located west of San Aquino Creek Trail and east of Great America and would span the creek overhead at the creek crossings near NRS and Mission Substation.
- **Scott Receiving Station (SRS) to Central Substation.** The SRS to Central Substation segment would be located along the north side of Space Park Drive and Scott Blvd in commercial and industrial areas to the terminus at Bower Drive.

1.3 Project Components

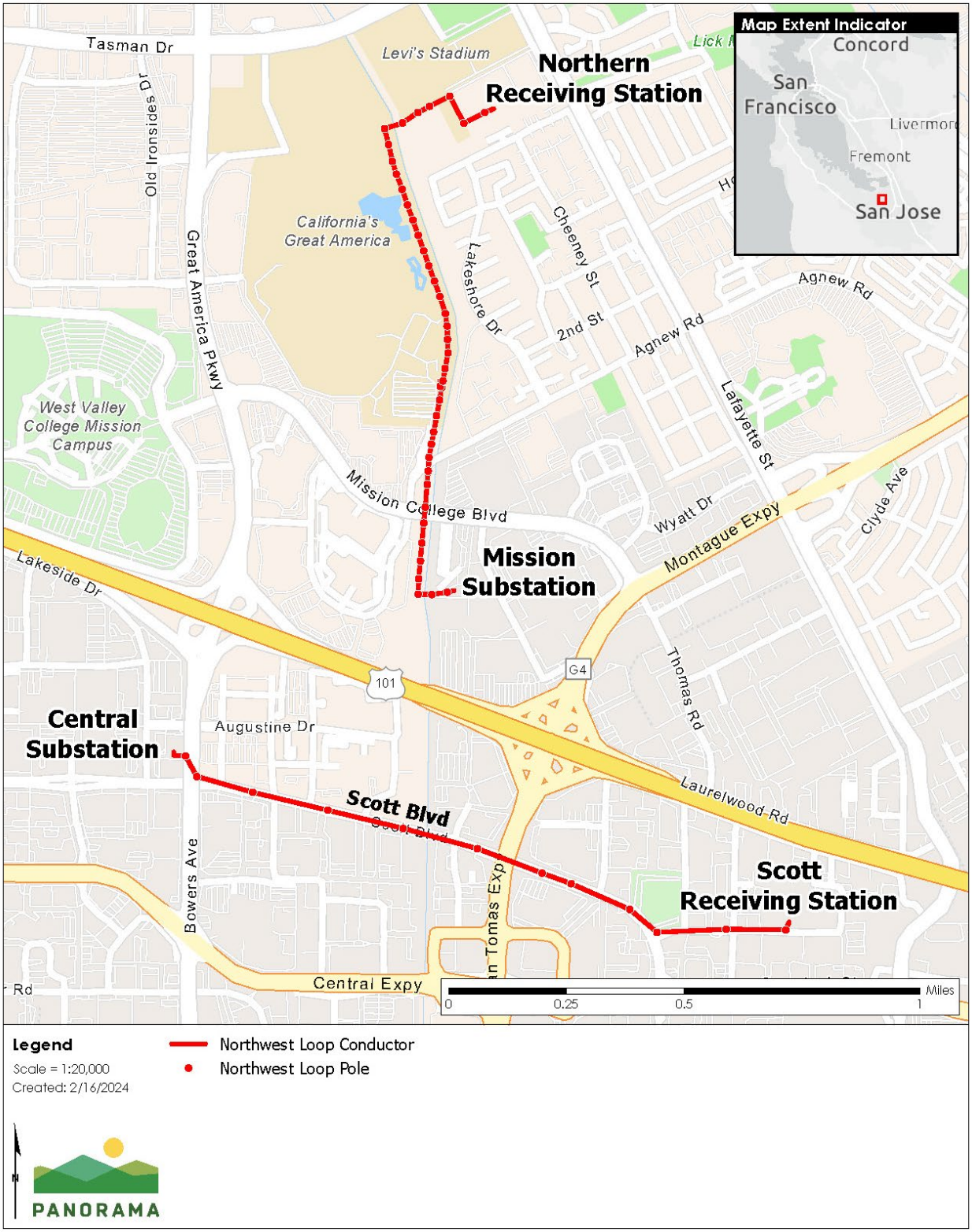
1.3.1 Conductor Replacement

The project would replace existing 60 kV electrical conductor with bundled 715 aluminum conductor composite reinforced (ACCR). The existing 12 kV distribution underbuild on the line segments would also be replaced/reconductored. In addition, the fiber optic cable at the top of each line would be replaced.

1.3.2 Pole Replacement

Some of the existing poles would require modification or replacement to accommodate the new conductors, which would have higher tensions and operate at a higher temperature than the existing conductors. Pole excavation depth would be up to 15-feet below ground surface to install an approximately 5 foot-wide pole. Ground disturbance for pole replacement could extend up to 30 feet from the pole to accommodate equipment access.

Figure 1 Project Location



1.3.3 Project Construction

Transmission Line Reconductoring

Approximately 12,000 feet of existing 60 kV transmission line located in an electrical easement would be reconductored. Reconductoring is accomplished by disconnecting an old conductor and using it to pull a sock line (rope) through travelers or sheave blocks (temporary pulleys) mounted on each tower, until the sock line reaches the end of the section to be reconductored. One crew would set up at a "pull site" near a tower at one end of the pull, and the other crew would set up a "tension site" near a tower at the other end of the pull. Once the new conductor is in place, it would be disconnected from the pulleys and permanently mounted to the end of new insulator strings.

Construction Work Areas and Staging

Construction work areas would be located within the existing electrical easement adjacent to the existing poles and along the existing line. Staging of equipment and materials would be either at the NRS, Mission Substation, SRS, or the Central Substation. Access to the work areas would be provided along existing public roads and the San Aquino Creek Trail.

Pull and Tension Work Areas

Pull and tension activities, in which the new conductor installed, would require guard structure installation where required (such as at road crossings), pull and tension equipment staging, and temporary pole anchor installation, followed by pulling and tensioning of the conductor. Pull and tension work areas are expected to be located within the existing SVP ROW. Construction vehicles and equipment needed at the pull and tension sites would be staged or parked within the project ROW or alongside access roads.

1.4 Operation and Maintenance

Once the Project is constructed, SVP's existing maintenance and operations group would assume inspection, patrol, and maintenance duties, as needed. No additional staff would be required after project construction work is completed.

1.5 Duration and Schedule

Project construction would begin in January or February 2026 and last approximately four weeks. Construction would occur Monday through Friday, from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M.

1.6 Equipment

The Project would utilize the following equipment to complete construction:

- Bucket Trucks
- Cable Pulling Trailer
- Forklift
- Mobile Crane
- Delivery Tucks

2 Environmental Analysis

2.1 Aesthetics

The Project would involve replacement of electrical conductors and replacement or modification of existing poles. The existing visual landscape would not be significantly altered, as the replacement transmission lines would be similar to the existing transmission lines. Equipment and excavated soils would be temporarily stored alongside the Project alignment or within nearby substations. All excavation required for the Project would be backfilled to existing conditions, therefore no permanent changes in the environment would occur.

Due to the short duration of the Project, nature of the Project activities, the aesthetic impacts to the environment would be minimal and short-term. Therefore, adverse impacts to aesthetic resources would not occur.

2.2 Air Quality

Project construction would take 4 weeks to complete. Equipment would be limited to bucket trucks, a cable pulling trailer, a forklift, a mobile crane, and delivery trucks. Ground disturbance would be limited to 10-feet deep by 5-feet wide for 60 kV pole replacement.

Given the Project would occur over a short duration with limited ground disturbance, the Project would produce minimal criteria pollutant emissions and dust. Therefore, adverse impacts to air quality would not occur.

2.3 Biological Resources

As stated in the Biological Resources Memorandum (Appendix A) completed in March 2025, the Project site is highly disturbed, with all areas being either developed (paved and actively used as a walking trail or maintenance activities) or actively maintained by mowing activities and/or what appears to be the application of herbicide. These disturbances reduce the likelihood of special-status species occurring onsite. Due to lack of suitable habitat and/or lack of known/recent occurrences on the project site and immediate vicinity, special-status wildlife species are not anticipated to occur or be impacted as a result of the proposed project (Panorama Environmental, Inc 2025).

2.3.1 Field Survey

A site visit was conducted on March 10, 2025 to identify plant and wildlife species within the Project site. The results of the field survey are analyzed below.

Special-Status Plant Species

A total of ten special-status plant species have been previously documented in the vicinity of the Project site (CDFW 2025; USFWS 2025). Per the CNDDB map and records, only one special status plant species polygon overlapped with the Project alignment: Hoover's button celery (*Eryngium aristulatum, variation hooveri*). However, no special status plant species were observed during the March 2025 field visit.

Hoover's button celery (California Native Plant Society [CNPS] Rare Plant Rank 1B.1) is an annual or perennial herb that blooms in July, is native to California and is found within wetlands and wetland-riparian communities. Since the Project is located outside of any wetlands or riparian areas, this plant species would not likely be impacted by Project activities. Panorama analyzed the potential for these plant species to occur, as well as species included in CNDDB and IPaC resource lists during the desktop review. The project site is highly disturbed and lacks the specialized habitats and substrates needed to support special-status plant species, with all areas being either developed (paved and actively used as a walking trail or maintenance activities) or actively maintained by mowing activities and/or the application of herbicide, reducing the likelihood of special-status species occurring within the project footprint. Accordingly, due to lack of suitable habitat on the project, no special-status plant species are expected to occur within the project sites.

Special Status Wildlife Species

A total of 20 special-status wildlife species have been previously documented within three miles of the Project site (CDFW 2025); however, no special-status wildlife species have been observed or mapped along the project alignment, and no special status wildlife species were observed during the March 2025 field visit.

Panorama analyzed the potential for these wildlife species to occur, as well as species included in CNDDB and IPaC resource lists during the desktop review. The closest special-status wildlife species occurrence was burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). However, this species was not observed during the March 2025 field visit, and suitable habitat does not occur within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project work areas (i.e., around the poles). Burrowing owl, a California state candidate for listing as Endangered, could potentially occur within upland areas of the nearby perennial San Tomas Aquinas Creek, especially given that California ground squirrel were observed during the survey. However, no burrowing owl or their burrows were observed within Project areas during the survey. Non-listed animals observed onsite included Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), California towhee (*Melozone crissalis*), California ground-squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), and golden-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*).

Although not observed during the March 2025 field visit, suitable habitat for nesting birds occurs within the trees and/or shrubs located along the Great America parcel boundary. As such, nesting birds and raptors that are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act could be present if work were to occur during the nesting season (approximately February 1 through August 31). If construction activities occur during the migratory bird nesting season, within 7 days prior to project commencement, a qualified biologist would conduct a preconstruction survey for nesting birds and raptors on the project site to within 250 feet (i.e., zone of influence) of project-related activities. This zone of influence includes areas outside the Project site where birds could be disturbed by construction-related noise or crew presence.

If active nests, roosts, or burrow sites (for example, active burrowing owl burrows) are identified within the survey area, a qualified biologist would establish an appropriately sized no-disturbance buffer prior to commencement of any proposed project-related activities. A no disturbance buffer establishes an area in which project-related activities (e.g., vegetation removal, earth-moving, and construction) may not occur. A minimum buffer size of 50 feet for passerines and 100 feet for raptors would be implemented; however, sizes of the buffers would be determined based on the species, activities proposed near the nest, and topographic and other visual barriers. Buffers would remain in place until the young have departed the area or fledged and/or the nest is inactive, as determined by the qualified biologist. If work is required within a no-disturbance buffer, work would occur under the supervision of a qualified biologist.

With the inclusion of these measures, adverse impacts to biological resources would not occur.

2.4 Cultural Resources

The Project activities would be conducted in an urban area of Santa Clara. As stated in the Memorandum on Cultural Resource Assessment of the Northwest Loop Capacity Upgrade Project (Appendix B), the Project area and the surrounding area were orchard fields from the 1940s to the 1970s (Chronicle Heritage 2025). The San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail, west of the Project area, was constructed between 1968 and 1980, most likely as an access road to the surrounding orchards. However, by 1980, the Project area was surrounding by an amusement park to the west and suburban residential neighborhoods to the east (Chronicle Heritage 2025).

A records search identified one previously documented cultural resource was found within 0.25 mile of the Project area. The records search also indicated that no historical or precontact resources have been identified within the Project area. A pedestrian survey was conducted on April 3, 2025. The survey did not discover any cultural material on the surface of the Project area (Chronicle Heritage 2025).

In the event of accidental discovery of cultural resources during Project activity, the Project would follow the regulations and guidelines provided in Health and Safety Code 7050.5, California Environmental Quality Act 15064.5(e), and Public Resources Code 5097.98, which mandate the process to be followed in the unlikely event of an accidental discovery of any

human remains. If cultural resources are discovered during Project activities, the resource would be protected until a qualified archeologist assesses the resource in accordance with the criteria provided in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).

No cultural resources have been recorded within the Project area and no cultural resources were identified within the Project area. In addition, the Project would follow the appropriate regulations regarding accidental discovery of cultural resources and human remains. Therefore, adverse effects to cultural resources are not expected.

2.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Based on the State Water Resources Control Board's Geotracker and State Department of Toxic Substances Control Envirostor databases, there are no leaking underground fuel storage cleanup sites or other hazardous materials sites within the Project area (State Water Resources Control Board 2025; Department of Toxic Substances Control 2025).

The Project would comply with federal, state, and local laws regarding hazardous material use, storage, and transportation. Therefore, adverse effects related to hazardous materials would not occur.

2.6 Noise

Short term and intermittent noise would be generated by Project activities between 7 A.M. and 6 P.M. Monday through Friday. The closest sensitive receptors to the Project area include residential neighborhoods that neighbor the Project area 175 feet to the east, as well as multiple childcare facilities located within 1 mile of the Project site (the closest being Sunlight Bilingual Child Care, approximately 194 feet east of the Project area located east of San Tomas Aquino Creek), and a senior living facility approximately 0.4 mile northwest of the Project area. Project activities would comply with the allowable construction hours and noise levels in the noise ordinance provided by the City of Santa Clara. Due to the limited duration of work and the compliance with applicable noise regulations, no adverse impacts to noise would occur.

2.7 Recreation

The Project would be located adjacent to the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail, which a multiuse trail. The trail is located along the alignment of the poles being replaced by the Project. However, access to the trail would not be permanently restricted or altered as a result of the Project. Therefore, no adverse impacts to recreational resources would occur.

2.8 Transportation

Traffic generated by the Project would be limited to a number of vehicles, approximately 15 passenger vehicles, bucket trucks, cable pulling trailer, and delivery trucks using existing paved

roads. Vehicles and equipment would be parked and staged adjacent to Project work areas or nearby substations. The Project would not include the construction of new facilities that would require additional personnel. Therefore, no additional vehicle miles travelled would be generated by the Project.

Based on the limited duration of the Project, adverse impacts to transportation would not occur.

2.9 Water Quality

No work would occur within San Tomas Acquino Creek or Waters of the United States (WOTUS). Additionally, the Project would not include discharge of materials into surrounding waterways. The Project would cover storm drains, set up erosion control, and cover any stockpiles to ensure that Project activities do not alter any drainage patterns or adversely impact water quality. Therefore, adverse impacts to water quality would not occur.

2.10 CEQA Compliance

CEQA Guidelines 15300.2 states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility of a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. The Project is typical of other transmission and conductor replacement projects, and is not located in an area where an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern has been designated, mapped, or officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

Based on the analysis above, the nature of the Project, and the duration of the Project, the City of Santa Clara recommends that it is categorically exempt under CEQA Section 15302, Replacement or Reconstruction.

State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife

2025 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE CASH RECEIPT

DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/25) Previously DFG 753.5a

RECEIPT NUMBER: ENV25787

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER *(If applicable)*

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE
CITY OF SANTA CLARA	jdavidson@santaclaraca.gov	08/29/2025

COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING	DOCUMENT NUMBER
SANTA CLARA	

PROJECT TITLE

NORTHWEST LOOP CAPACITY UPGRADES PROJECT

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
SILICON VALLEY POWER	rdo@santaclaraca.gov	(408) 615-2478

PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
1500 WARBURTON AVENUE	SANTA CLARA	CA	95050

PROJECT APPLICANT *(Check appropriate box)*

☒ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	$4,123.50	$
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND)	$2,968.75	$
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW	$1,401.75	$

☒ Exempt from fee

- ☒ Notice of Exemption (attach)
- ☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)

☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only)	$850.00	$
☒ County documentary handling fee		$ $50.00
☐ Other		$

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☒ Check ☐ Other **TOTAL RECEIVED** $ $50.00

SIGNATURE	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE
X Mike Louie	Mike Louie, Deputy County Clerk-Recorder

ORIGINAL - PROJECT APPLICANT | COPY - CDFW/ASB | COPY - LEAD AGENCY | COPY - COUNTY CLERK | DFW 753.5a (Rev. 01012025)

Santa Clara County
Clerk-Recorder
(408) 299-5688
https://www.clerkrecorder.org

Receipt: 25-148471

Product	Name	Extended
CEQA	ENVIRONMENTAL FILING	$50.00
	# Pages	10
	Document #	ENV25787
	Document Info:	CITY OF SANTA CLARA
	Filing Type	E
Total		$50.00
Tender (Check)		$50.00
Paid By	CITY OF SANTA CLARA	
Check #	1748850	
Paid By	CITY OF SANTA CLARA	

PLEASE KEEP FOR REFERENCE

8/29/25 2:34 PM PST mlouie

Santa Clara County Recorder - Official Records
110 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134
408-299-5688

Source:	Phone Order (Card Keyed-In)	**Authorization:**	Paid in Full
Order Date/Time:	8/29/2025 02:31 PM PDT	**Agency Amount:**	$50.00
Order Number:	**207878602**	**Other Agency Amount:**	$0.00
Operator:	**MikeL**	**Shipping Amount:**	$0.00
Location Code:	*********615	**LN Service Fee:**	$2.50
		Total Amount(USD):	$52.50

Payment Information

Transaction Type:	Purchase	**Expiration**	##/##
Card Holder:	Elizabeth Elliot	**Transaction Ref #:**	211186631
Payment Method:	Credit Card (VISA **********7343)	**CVV2 Response:**	
Approval Code:	085467	**Auth Txn Id #:**	30524177607808
AVS Response:		**Val Code:**	LGV8

Merchant Copy

Agency Amount	Product	Product Detail
$50.00	Clerk Payment	

Santa Clara County Recorder - Official Records
110 West Tasman Drive, San Jose, CA 95134
408-299-5688
VitalChek Receipt - Phone Order (Card Keyed-In)
Cardholder Copy

Order Date/Time:	8/29/2025 02:31 PM PDT	**Transaction Type:**	Purchase
Confirmation Number:	**207878602**	**Approval Code:**	085467
Payment Applied towards:	**Clerk Payment**	**Transaction Ref #:**	211186631
Card Holder:	Elizabeth Elliot	**Payment Method:**	VI(7343)

Bill To
Elizabeth Elliot
United States of America

Authorization:	Paid in Full
Agency Amount:	$50.00
Other Agency Amount:	$0.00
LN Service Fee:	$2.50
Total Amount(USD):	$52.50

Refund Policy: Please contact the agency listed on the receipt to request a refund.