



San Benito High School District

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DR. SHAWN TENNENBAUM
SUPERINTENDENT

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City of Hollister Planning Department
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RE: Policy Issues Public Input for March 23 GPAC Meeting

Dear Members of the General Plan Advisory Committee,

On behalf of the San Benito High School District, I would like to thank you for the thoughtful and transparent approach in which you are seeking public input on the Policy Issues for our General Plan.



As stated in the PlaceWorks' Memorandum dated March 18, 2021 to the Hollister General Plan Advisory Committee, the District strongly supports the City's adoption of New School Funding strategies 1-4 listed on pp. 3-4. The District has been in regular communication with the City around issues of severe facility overcrowding, which are well documented in its Facility Master Plan, demographic and developer fee studies. School overcrowding and lack of sufficient funding to develop viable alternatives and additional sites will compromise the District's ability to provide space at San Benito High School to accommodate new students. For that reason, the District respectfully requests the deletion of strategy #5 ("No further policies or actions are needed regarding provision of school facilities").



In addition, we request that the City consider establishing an overall General Plan goal that is supportive of the District's needs that serves to frame the listed strategies in support of the goal. A goal statement that the District would support could be very straightforward, such as:



GOAL: "The City seeks to ensure that Hollister youth have access to a quality school system with adequate facilities and funding available. Mitigating development impacts on the school system through the provision of school sites, imposition of statutory development fees and negotiated development fees, as well as providing information to the School District, are the primary methods to sustain quality educational services."



The Mission of San Benito High School is to educate all students to their highest potential so they will have the greatest range of personal options upon graduation.

Additional strategies that we request be added to this General Plan element include the following:

- "Provide information to the San Benito High School District when considering General Plan amendments, specific plans, zone changes, or other legislative land use policy decisions and ensure that information about school capacity contained in development and environmental analysis incorporates current information on school capacity and the cumulative impacts of individual projects on school capacity."
- "Promote and encourage development phasing and coordination of development with the County of San Benito so that the School District may plan, finance, and construct school facilities to serve new development."
- "Review proposed legislative land use decisions in the context of the adequacy of present and future school facilities and require all developers to confirm, prior to receiving any project entitlements from the City, that they have met with the San Benito High School District to discuss the impact of the project on school capacity and considered voluntary forms of mitigation, including placing the project into a community facilities district or similar forms of financing."

We believe that such strategies, when coupled with the listed strategies 1-4, are in our mutual best interest. The District already shoulders the cash flow burden of advancing developer fees and State funds needed to construct a new school. It is a widely accepted fact that developer fees are insufficient to mitigate the impact of new development. The existing community should not be asked to fund the unfunded shortfall caused by the influx of students from new development.

We understand more housing is needed to keep up with demand of new and affordable housing. The City may need to increase its housing density in order to accommodate housing needs for all residents. New residents will require access to school facilities, school programs and workforce opportunities. With our high school already operating at capacity, in order to meet anticipated growth, the District will need the City and development community to also support these policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment further.



Shawn Tennenbaum, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Cc: David Early, PlaceWorks
Carey Stone, PlaceWorks
Jeffrey Small, CapitolPFG