



San Benito High School District

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DR. SHAWN TENNENBAUM
SUPERINTENDENT

June 22, 2021

City Council
City of Hollister
339 Fifth Street
Hollister, CA 95023

RE: General Plan Update Policy Options Discussion - June 22, 2021

City Council Members:

On behalf of the San Benito High School District, I would like to thank the City of Hollister and the City Council for your consideration of our comments on the updated recommendations developed by the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) for the City's General Plan update. This letter follows correspondence dated March 22, 2021 to the GPAC regarding an earlier set of recommendations, and correspondence dated May 10, 2021 to the City's Development Services Department in response to the City's Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR for the Hollister General Plan Update 2040 and associated actions. Unfortunately, neither I nor any of our Trustees or staff will be able to attend your meeting tonight as it conflicts with our own regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting this month. However, our consultants will be present to participate in public comment and answer questions you may have.

We have reviewed the updated New School Funding recommendations created by the GPAC, and we wholeheartedly endorse and support them as described in the June 11, 2021 Memorandum from Placeworks to the City Council. We urge the City Council to continue taking strong positions with regard to the demands placed upon our schools from new housing in the community and helping facilitate critical infrastructure discussions between the District, the City, and housing developers about school housing needs.

Since our last communication regarding the General Plan update process, the District has been provided with preliminary enrollment figures for the 2021-22 school year: *a staggering 3,487 students are expected to enroll at San Benito High School in the upcoming school year, an unprecedented increase of over 200 students in one year.* In a mere 2 months, our school will be over its maximum capacity of 3,437. We did not anticipate reaching this enrollment level for two more years and consequently, our need for both an interim housing solution and ultimately a second high school in Hollister could not be more urgent.

Unlike many public school districts in California, we did not lose students during the pandemic; in fact, it appears that more students than ever before are leaving private and parochial schools to attend our award-



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.

winning high school. We have no ability or desire to turn away any student who is a resident in our boundaries.

We have carefully reviewed the strategies developed by GPAC and proposed to be included in the Community Services and Facilities Element of the updated General Plan in the area of New School Funding. The strategies are appropriate and strong measures to motivate developers to provide additional funds or take actions that support our ability to build a second high school to serve students from that development.

We are aware that the Building Industry Association expressed concerns with an earlier version of a GPAC recommendation that it believed would unlawfully impose school-related mitigation obligations on developers in excess of what the law allows. However, our legal counsel has reviewed the recommendation as re-drafted and is confident that the recommendations as revised do not exceed the parameters of current law. Counsel also notes that formerly enacted but dormant provisions of the Government Code became operative upon the failure of the March 2020 state school bond measure ("Proposition 13") that again enable local agencies to condition environmental approvals of development projects on certain forms of school facility mitigation, such use of community facility districts under the Mello-Roos Community Facility Act of 1982 (see Gov. Code, § 65997, operative upon failure of Proposition 13 and replacing Gov. Code, § 65996, which became inoperative upon failure of Proposition 13.)

We understand more affordable housing is needed to keep up with demand; however, demand exists at least in part because we have excellent schools in Hollister that attract families. School quality and robust educational and vocational/workforce training programs are at risk if we lack sufficient space to educate our youth. Developers should have a vested interest in partnering with the District and the City to build and maintain strong communities, and we believe the policy options in the General Plan update reflect those values.

Respectfully, we ask that the GPAC recommendations continue to be pursued by the City as part of the General Plan update. We look forward to this ongoing discussion.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Shawn Tennenbaum, Ed.D.
Superintendent