

# **Coyote Valley Specific Plan Status Report on Schools Issues**

## **Purpose**

The Coyote Valley Specific Plan is committed to high quality, “first class” schools as a key component of a livable Coyote Valley community. The Plan area falls within the Morgan Hill Unified School District (MHUSD) boundaries.

## **Process**

The City staff has formed a schools working group with MHUSD to discuss and collaborate on schools issues for the Plan. The Coyote Valley Specific Plan schools working group is composed of staff and consultants from the Morgan Hill Unified School District and the City of San Jose. The schools approach for Coyote Valley utilizes State standards school area, students per classroom, square footage per student, student enrollment and play field/hard court area per student.

## **Role of Schools**

The schools are envisioned as the focal point for the neighborhoods and safe pedestrian and bicycle routes to schools will be provided. Transit connects the collegiate-style high school campus and is located within a 1/4-mile walking radius of schools. The Plan proposes 2-story elementary and middle schools and two and three-story high schools, with some structured parking at the high school level. There is also an 80-acre site identified for the possible future location of Gavilan Community College, which may involve some shared use of fields and facilities.

## **Student Generation**

The schools working group researched student generation rates from exiting projects throughout the region. General consensus has been reached on the expected student generation rates for each of the residential building typologies in the Plan.

## **Student Attendance Boundaries**

The schools working group reviewed the existing and projected student attendance boundaries for the proposed school sites to verify that the school sites are appropriately located.

## Draft School Specifications

- *Elementary Schools:* There are nine 9-acre elementary schools (grades K-6), planned with just fewer than 600 students each. In addition, the schools are designed to provide for shared use of 5.9-acre ball fields. The schools would use the ball fields during school hours and by the public after hours and on weekends.
- Charter School of Morgan Hill (located at the former Encinal Elementary School) located on the east side of Monterey Road at Bailey Avenue is an additional facility beyond the 9 planned schools. It may continue to operate as long as desired by the MHUSD. When and if MHUSD would like to change the use of Charter School of Morgan Hill, any new private use would be required to be consistent with the City’s General Plan. The land is currently proposed to be designated on the CVSP Land Use Concept Plan for future workplace use.
- *Middle Schools:* There are two 15-acre middle schools (grades 7-8) planned with about 715 students each, which provide for shared community use of 8.5 acres of sports fields and facilities.
- *High Schools:* Two high schools (each with 1,500 students) are proposed to be located on a central 61-acre collegiate-style campus. The proposed collegiate-style campus with 2 high schools is a hybrid high school design, with standards that fall between the State guidelines for small and large high schools in terms of acreage and ball fields. Multiple high schools allow for smaller school enrollment, a lower student to faculty ratio and shared use of a gym, cafeteria and sports fields, etc.

## Comparison between the State Standards and CVSP Approach

SCHOOL TYPE	LAND AREA (acres)		TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS		PLAYFIELD SIZES (acres)	
	State	CVSP	State	CVSP	State	CVSP
<b>Elementary</b>	10	9.0	600	600/600	5.9	5.9
<b>Middle</b>	15.3	15	750	750/715	8.5	11ac.
<b>High School (2 small schools)</b>	32.2	31.5 each	1,500	1,500 each	20.4	29 shared use
<b>High School (large)</b>	52	61 <sup>1</sup>	3,000	3,000	29.2	29

<sup>1</sup> Collegiate-style campus with two to three high schools

## **Progress and Next Steps**

While initially there were some differences of opinion regarding schools specifications, the schools working group has reached general consensus regarding the grade configuration of the schools and the number and location of schools.

There is still some work to be done on the shared schools/parks concept, collegiate high school concept, traffic/circulation and drop-off system, design guidelines for the schools, and financing and implementation program. It is anticipated that the working group will continue to work on these issues over the next several months.

### **MHUSD Board's Comments:**

The working group presented the proposed schools approach to the Morgan Hill Unified School District Board at a workshop on August 16, 2005, and the Board's comments are summarized below.

- *Transportation and Traffic:*
  1. Concern about the potential for peak hour traffic circulation problems and drop-off problems in the Central Commons area (with 4 schools and the high school campus in close proximity).
  
- *Phasing and Financing Mechanisms:*
  1. Concern about the timing, phasing, financing and implementation of schools and potential impacts to the MHUSD. Would like schools to be in place before or at the time housing is built.
  2. Concern about changing the triggers and allowing housing to be built first. The project will “result in urban sprawl rather than the planned mixed use.”
  3. Recommend that there be a future meeting with the developers regarding school financing.
  
- *High School Concept:*
  1. Would like to see two designs: one for two 1,500-student comprehensive high schools on one campus and one for a school within a school on one campus (i.e. a comprehensive school and specialty school).
  2. Prefer a comprehensive high school curriculum approach rather than the multiple “magnet” approach.
  3. Concern about school rivalry, equity among high schools in the MHUSD, operation of two high school administrations, parking structure safety and overall campus safety and problems with gangs.
  4. Would like world-class high school facilities.

- *Teacher Housing and Affordable Housing:*
  1. Teachers may prefer to be scattered throughout the community rather than living together in one place.
  2. Support for District-owned teacher housing to allow teachers to rent for 5-6 years and build up their equity so they can afford to get into the housing market.
  3. Would like affordable housing units to be evenly distributed among all of the school areas.
  
- *MHUSD Board's Closing Statements:*
  1. Pleased with the progress of CVSP school facilities. Some issues still need to be discussed and settled.
  2. General support for shared schools and parks concept but would like to see how the details of operation and maintenance are resolved.
  3. The CVSP Land Plan Concept has wonderful potential. There are people who enjoy living an urban lifestyle.
  4. Concerned that Morgan Hill residents would be outnumbered and outvoted. The District might lose its identity.
  5. The Board is an advocate for future Coyote Valley school children. Decisions must reflect what is best for future students and administrators.
  6. Does not want to burden existing Morgan Hill residents and taxpayers with any of the CVSP implementation costs.
  7. Excited about the challenge and the potential the CVSP could bring to the District.