

Evergreen Residents - District 8 Roundtable Questions/Comments

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Evergreen Residents came to the District 8 Roundtable meeting on March 5, 2015 at 7 PM at the Evergreen Community Center to learn about the San José-Evergreen Community College District's (SJECCD) plans to develop the last 27 acres of land on the Evergreen Valley College (EVC) Campus with retail, high density housing, medical and dental offices and aquatic center.

Following are questions/comments and answers:

- **Evergreen Valley College was built to educate nearby residents. The land around the EVC Campus was set aside for expansion of the college in the 1960's.**

The acreage was made available to the District to support its education service mission within district boundaries. The college footprint was developed in response to an Educational Master Plan followed by a Facilities Master Plan. EVC's current footprint and capacity was established with curriculum design and enrollment growth in mind. It is also important to note that capital resources are the purview of the entire district and do not belong to a specific college per se.

- **The SJECCD is a basic aid district. Its funding comes from property tax revenue. Thus, they do not care whether EVC serves 14,000 students or 2,000 students. The high school district, ESUHS, has an enrollment of @ 23,000 students/year and not all of those students matriculate to State, UC or private colleges. Many go to affordable community colleges first and then matriculate to 4-year institutions. The SJECCD's job is to educate residents in Evergreen, East San Jose, and at least as far out as Santa Teresa and North San Jose.**

It is patently unfair to state that we “do not care how many students we enroll.” This is obviously a value-laden statement not based on fact.

Yes, SJECCD is a basic aid district. Enrollment goals continue to be applied to us from the State Chancellor’s Office and its Board of Governors. Our total budget is \$90M of which \$78M comes from property taxes; \$5M comes from the State of California; and \$7M comes from a variety of local sources including \$4.5 which is generated from student fees. Regardless of funding source, enrollment management (including growth and decline) is monitored closely by accrediting agencies, federal financial aid compliance agencies and statewide requirements in general.

- **Vice Chancellor Doug Smith of SJECCD says Vice Mayor Rose Herrera wants jobs in Evergreen and East San Jose. The underserved people of Evergreen and East San Jose want their children to have nearby access to equitable community college education, not low-wage retail jobs.**

This too is a very subjective statement based on hearsay. Our District will adhere to the policy established by its Board of Trustees and it formally adopted “Global Ends Policies” which reads as follows:

The San José-Evergreen Community College District exists to ensure all students, especially those with educational and/or socioeconomic challenges, will have the skills and capabilities to be successful in the next stage of their life, sufficient to justify the use of available resources.

SJECCD is committed to both quality education and high school, high wage jobs directly aligned with business and industry needs in the area.

If the comment about “low-wage retail jobs” is linked to the businesses that may be part of the development project, then the thing to recognize is that these entry level jobs make it possible for students who are currently enrolled to sustain themselves and their families while enrolling full time. In fact this is exactly the case with the current development at Yerba Buena and San Felipe.

- **You pay property taxes. Is this how you want your property taxes allocated?**

Not for me to answer/rhetorical?

- **Once the land is developed, there is no going back. Please go online and compare the degrees and course offerings of EVC to Foothill-De Anza, West Valley, and Mission Colleges.**

The best response to this question is to look at the resolution adopted by the Board of Trustees which anticipates and monitors every step of the leasing process now and in the future including safeguards for unanticipated consequences.

This question also mixes apples and oranges. Courses and programs at a given institution are a matter of curriculum planning, classroom capacity, faculty expertise. In the case of EVC, reductions in programs have NOTHING to do with facilities or classroom capacity. Recent cutbacks were directly an outcome of severe cuts to our budget; which is in fact what we are trying to avoid in the future through this public/private partnership that will yield an ongoing source of income to stabilize our resources in good and bad times.

California Community Colleges are NOT organized to provide identical curriculum. In fact, the State Chancellor's Office scrutinizes the development of new courses and programs very carefully. We must:

Demonstrate that there is a demand for the occupation

In cases where two similar programs are offered in adjacent colleges or districts, we must demonstrate that we are not "saturating" the area.

- **Why are degree and course limited here at EVC?**

Same as above

- **Why are classes impacted at EVC?**

The courses that are impacted are primarily in high demand, high cost areas (i.e. Nursing and pre allied health sciences, and some sections of ESL). The problem here is twofold:

1. Personnel that meet the MQs in the discipline; namely nursing faculty
2. Specialized Labs and Equipment.

With the South End Development of the Campus and the replacement of Roble and Acacia, several things have happened

- a. The new State of the Arts Auto Tech facility has turned out to be costlier than expected, and some trimming down has taken place.
- b. Roble and Acacia will not be replaced square foot by square foot; instead a revised design has been agreed to in consultation with the teaching faculty in the area. It is true that overall the space has been reduced, BUT NOT THE OVERALL CAPACITY OF THE CAMPUS TO OFFER COURSES.

It is also true that future needs for the college is in the area of specialized labs and equipment. This is then subject to future bonds and the availability of alternative sources of funds (seismic retrofit, private fundraising etc...)

In other areas, if there is high demand, the president has been able to open other sections and in some instances create a variable calendar to start courses after the start of the semester or during spring and winter breaks.

- **Level of Service (LOS) at San Felipe Rd and Yerba Buena Rd will degrade to an E or F.**

This is a matter that will have ample discussion including mitigation through upcoming and required traffic studies that are part of the city and county review process.

- **LOS E Represents operating road conditions at or near capacity level & LOS F Represents forced or breakdown flow in traffic.**

Same as above.

- **How will the revenue generated from Evergreen land be applied? What oversight is in place to see how the SJ ECCD spends the revenue?**

The revenue generated, as all revenue that is available SJECCD, is subject to very strict audit, statutory and fiscal oversight standards. Oversight is the ultimate responsibility of the board of trustees, and the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services are the key staff persons accountable for expenditures. In addition there are internal budget committee reviews at the college level and districtwide. The final compliance mechanism for the expenditure and oversight of funds is the audit process. The record of clear audits for the last five years has been exemplary. Our district fiscal stewardship of funds is so well documented that we have received a high ranking from Moody and Standards and Poor.

CURRENT RATING (2014)

Standards and Poor's **AA**

Moody's **Aa1**

- **The proposed project impacts sensitive habitat lands within the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan which supports threatened plant and animal species. There are noise concerns, pollution concerns, sewer concerns, water concerns.**

All development projects are subject to numerous and specific regulations and standards all of which address the environmental concerns raised in this question. In particular these matters are monitored by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- **The buildings would obscure our view of the Evergreen hills, creating a permanent eyesore and terrible sightline.**

The SJECCD Board of Trustees has established explicit guidelines regarding the facilities that can be considered by the developer. One specific guidelines reads as follows:

“Create a distinctive sense of place, compatible land uses, a high quality building space that serves as a destination for visitors, residents and employees.”

- **Existing Evergreen businesses will be impacted by the added retail.**

This was taken into account and was part of the studies commissioned by the SJECCD Board of Trustees in which a market analysis of existing businesses and the gap associated with other business and retail services was analyze.

- **A fault line sits at the back of the college, not where they want to build. Why not expand the campus to geologically safer ground?**

This is precisely what the college and Board of Trustees has done with a significant bond construction project that is called the

South End Campus Project.