

High School needs in regards to the Evergreen Visioning Project

Summary

Using ESUHSD published student generation rates, and conservatively accounting for currently approved development and the development proposed by the Evergreen Visioning Project (EVP), we can conclude that the serious over-crowding conditions already experienced by Evergreen's two high schools will become terribly worse by the time development is complete. By the end of development, Silver Creek High will very likely reach enrollment of 3,222 students and Evergreen Valley High will reach 3,420 students. Depending on final numbers of units approved for development, these enrollments could reach over 7,100 students combined at schools whose combined permanent capacity will be only 4,300. Possible boundary changes will have only a minor effect on the problem and leave the community very far away from a desirable enrollment below 2,000 per school.

The EVP development proposals signal the closing of the last remaining large parcels of land in Evergreen. The conclusion is quite clear. The EVP task force CANNOT let ESUHSD avoid the facts any longer. A land site suitable for the construction of a new high school in south Evergreen MUST be reserved *before* any EVP development can proceed. Each day that passes puts more kids at risk of permanent negative academic and social impact. To miss this opportunity will irrevocably damage the quality of education in our area, and therefore damage our quality of life, and our community.

Detailed Analysis

In order to arrive at the development impact on the high schools we need to arrive at a student generation rate (SGR). Using the ESUHSD "Projected Enrollments from 2001 to 2011" report, prepared by Enrollment Projection Consultants, we can follow groups of 4 grade levels through the Evergreen School District. Since we are planning for future impacts, we should follow back as far as possible so we can project into the future as far as possible. When analyzing the 2001 K-3 class we see a SGR of .23. The same report also indicates a SGR of .45 for K-8 in Evergreen School District. The analysis that follows will show the impacts using these values to demonstrate the range of possibilities.

The following high schools will be affected by the developments proposed by the Evergreen Visioning Project:

Site	High School	# units	# new students	
			SGR .23	SGR .45
Industrial site	Evergreen Valley	1,200	276	540
Arcadia	Silver Creek	2,000	460	900
Pleasant Hills GC	Mt. Pleasant	700	161	315
Evergreen College	Evergreen Valley	500	115	225
Miscellaneous	All 3 schools	500	115	225
Approved devel	Silver Crk/Ev Valley	500	115	225
Total		4,900	1,242	2,430
* student generation rates from "Projected Enrollments from 2001 to 2011" for ESUHSD by Enrollment Projection Consultants				

Student generation rates from this report could be even higher when one considers two factors. First, initial studies made assumptions about residences that have not proven accurate. Many single-family residences are in fact occupied by multiple families due to the high home prices in the area. Secondly, enrollment in these high schools is artificially depressed by flight to private schools due to the poor performance of the high schools. Recent grass-roots initiatives in the area are actively working to reverse this trend which should add to enrollments over the course of EVP development. To simplify this discussion though, we will use the numbers shown in the table as a conservative estimate. Additionally, for the sake of the discussion, we will assume the miscellaneous infill projects will be spread across all 3 high schools. The final row,

“Approved devel”, represents developments already under way or approved (for example, The Ranch and Evergreen Specific Plan projects). For purposes of this discussion the impacts of these approved developments is spread evenly across Silver Creek High and Evergreen Valley High. Lastly, the number of units shown is currently at the low end. Developers will push for higher numbers of units, and may get them, so these estimates, again, remain conservative, and, at the least, very realistic.

Evergreen Valley High Impact

Evergreen Valley High School (EVHS) was built (opened 2002) for 1,700 kids. By fall of 2006, when EVHS has its first full 9-12 enrollment, the student population will reach at least 2,700 students. Currently there are 12 portables on campus. A building planned for the site will increase permanent capacity to 2,100 students. ESUHS plans to accommodate the additional 600 students in portable classrooms either at EVHS or on the property of Evergreen College (if the magnet program attracts enough students). The development projects above will add 487-953 new students to EVHS, bringing the total to from **3,187 to 3,653 students** by the time EVP is fully built out. On the average, this represents over 1,300 students *over* the planned permanent capacity of 2,100. The *current* overcrowding at EVHS is unacceptable to the community, and the new students from EVP will make this unacceptable situation even worse.

Silver Creek High Impact

Silver Creek High School (SCHS) was built (opened 1969) for 1,800 students. For the past several years SCHS has had an average enrollment of 2,400 (enrollment was as high as 2,800 before EVHS opened). The bathrooms, locker rooms, lunch line (there is no cafeteria), and eating areas have *never* been expanded to handle the current overcrowding. Additional students have been accommodated in 30 portables that have been on the campus for over 15 years (not exactly “temporary” are they?). This systemic over-crowding has had a significant impact on the facilities. School grounds can best be described as “overrun”. Students have noted the appearance of the school at site council meetings. The community must not underestimate the impact of the environment on the students and how it affects their willingness to learn. A new building planned for the campus (thanks to 2002 Measure G) will increase permanent capacity to 2,200. The projects above will add 556-1,088 new students to SCHS, bringing the total to from **2,956 to 3,488 students** by the time EVP is fully built out. The *current* overcrowding at SCHS is unacceptable to the community, and the new students from EVP will make this unacceptable situation even worse.

Mt. Pleasant High Impact

Although exact data is not available, we can use typical building standards of the time to predict that Mt. Pleasant High School (MPHS) was built (opened 1965) for 1,700 students. For the 2004-2005 school year enrollment is 2,050 students, with overcrowding accommodated by 23 portables on campus. The projects above will add 199-390 students to MPHS, bringing the total to from **2,249 to 2,440 students** by the time EVP is fully built out. There are no planned building expansions at MPHS. This level of overcrowding is unacceptable to the community.

Impact Summary

Using the midrange of the values above, the following table provides a summary of impacts on each of the high schools affected by the development proposals:

High School	Enrollment		Permanent Capacity	Needed seats
	Without EVP	With EVP		
Mt. Pleasant	2,050	2,345	1,700	645
Evergreen Valley	2,700	3,420	2,100	1,320
Silver Creek	2,400	3,222	2,200	1,022
Total	7,150	8,987	6,000	2,987

ESUHSD Proposals

ESUHSD Facilities Chief Alan Garofalo attended an EVP meeting and asserted that the district has capacity in its other schools to accommodate as many as 2,500 more students. More recent published accounts show open seats (again mostly accommodated with portables) at high schools bordering the EVP impacted high schools: James Lick 600, W.C. Overfelt 800, Yerba Buena 800. Currently the district has no plan to adjust boundaries, but for the sake of argument lets assume they will eventually take action, even though their past track record indicates they will not.

James Lick's 600 open seats are dubious at best. Because this school is on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) list, any student transferred there has the immediate right to be transferred out. So, its 600 seats are useless unless, and until, this school is taken off the NCLB list. James Lick has been on this list for 2 years, and if it does not meet its growth targets this year it will be shut down completely, forcing the current 1,100 students into other ESUHSD schools, making over-crowding, again, even worse.

Yerba Buena's 800 open seats could take some pressure off of Silver Creek, but, a look at the map, and likely street boundary changes, indicates that Yerba Buena High is more likely to take some students from Overfelt High, and then Overfelt's boundaries could be extended southward to take pressure off of Silver Creek (for instance by dropping the boundary down to Capitol Exwy and Aborn). The Arcadia development lies just outside Overfelt's southern border, so the (midrange) 680 students from EVP/Arcadia could be accommodated at Overfelt, leaving only the miscellaneous infill sites to impact Silver Creek. This could mean that Silver Creek's enrollment would instead be 2,542 with needed seats at 342, although this enrollment level is still unacceptable to the community.

The best-case scenario still means that the developments above will generate over 1,200 new high school students, and already over-crowded Silver Creek High and Evergreen Valley High will bear the brunt of this impact. The most likely scenario is that these two schools will end up with over 3,000 students each, a level that is completely unacceptable to the community.

Community Goals

The communities surrounding these schools are grappling with struggling API performance. The October 2004 Hoover Institution of Stanford University report states that "larger schools had higher chances of being a failing school, as expected". While larger schools were trendy 30 years ago, conventional wisdom is that smaller schools are more conducive to proper learning environments than larger.

Additionally, smaller schools find it easier to garner community support to pass revenue support measures, like much needed parcel taxes. Its also easier for smaller schools to attract much needed parent volunteerism at the schools, and to support local fund raising efforts. Smaller schools also provide a safer environment. The more students you cram into existing spaces creates tension at gathering points like gyms, lockers, cafeterias, libraries, and rest rooms. Smaller schools also offer more students a chance to participate in athletic and social programs. At large schools larger numbers of students compete for the same few spots on sports teams, school plays, student government, and honors and advanced placement classes. President Bush, in his 2005 state of the union address, called for us to "expect more of our high schools". Recent grass roots efforts in the area intend to do just this, and school size is a primary target for improving academic and social success for all students.

Many believe that school size should be capped at 1,600. Even ESUHSD's track record of initial school construction size coincides with this level. Even generously increasing this level by 25%, to 2,000 would mean that Silver Creek and Evergreen Valley high schools are over-populated to the tune of 1,100 students *without* EVP development, and potentially 2,642 over *with* current developments and planned EVP projects. Even with potential boundary shifts and a halved EVP impact these two schools would be well over an upper limit of 2,000 students (and still will overflow their permanent building capacity of 4,300 combined).

Disappearing Opportunity

The EVP will usher in a closing of the last remaining large parcels of land in Evergreen (San Jose District 8). Once this project has the go-ahead there will be *NO* sites suitable for the full-size high school that the *current* population needs. The additional students to come from the proposed EVP developments will make an already intolerable over-crowding situation considerably worse, as you can see from the numbers above.

The Evergreen community cannot let the poor planning of ESUHSD continue. Councilmember Cortese has noted that when he was on the ESUHSD board, they knew back then that a new high school would be needed for our area by the time EVHS opened – he was right. That institutional knowledge seems to have left the board with turnover – new board members, a new superintendent, and a new facilities director.

The community currently has, and **MUST** take, the opportunity to step in and plan for ESUHSD what it lacks the will to plan for itself. While the board members appease the voters and parents of its other 20,000 students, Evergreen area students are made to endure in ever-worsening over-crowding conditions. Each day that passes puts more kids at risk of permanent negative academic and social impact. To miss this opportunity will irrevocably damage the quality of education in our area, and therefore damage our quality of life, and our community. The EVP task force must assert that a site suitable for a new high school not only be identified, a purchase (or lease) commitment must be made *before* any EVP permits are approved. Note that this assertion says *nothing* about building the needed high school, it *only* addresses the land purchase (or lease) – for this is the *last* opportunity to reserve the needed land.

This document has been prepared with input from many EVP task force and Evergreen community members. Its contents have been understood, and its recommendation to reserve a high school site has been agreed to, by the following EVP task force members:

Jenny Chang - Greystone
Dan Jacobs – Meadowlands
Lou Kvitek - SCVCO