

HOUGHTON ROAD CORRIDOR
TUCSON, ARIZONA
ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION ISSUES
FINAL REPORT

Prepared for the
Arizona State Land Department

Task I-A-3 Deliverable

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to assess relevant issues and facts pertaining to the public education system within the Houghton Road Corridor (HRC) Project Area. As a result of this assessment, conclusions are to be drawn regarding the planning and provisions which are in place for the future public schools that will be needed to serve the projected residential development within the Project Area. Lastly, the report will provide recommended strategies for working with the appropriate school district and for insuring that needed public schools are provided for and accommodated by the ultimate land-use plan for HRC.

Executive Summary

The entire Project Area is served by Vail School District #20. This District has experienced incredibly rapid growth in the past fifteen years and has demonstrated a clear and consistent ability to keep pace with its expanding residential population by designing, constructing, and opening new school facilities at a rate commensurate with population growth.

In addition, the Vail District has developed and adopted a 20-year capital improvement program which identifies all projected new schools (elementary, middle, and high school facilities) within the 10-year and 20-year planning horizons. This capital improvement program is based upon a projected population growth of approximately 60,000 new residents in the area.

Conversations with the District to date indicate their interest in working closely with the HRC Planning Permittee during the land-use planning phase so as to insure the appropriate provision of new school sites and to insure that their location and placement are consistent with District criteria and operational requirements. The District is also keen on pursuing the possibility of shared facilities on or near its various school campuses, as well the possibility of integrating its academic and educational efforts with employment centers and other institutional uses.

With respect to post-secondary education, Pima County Community College (PCCC) indicates that, at this time, it has no clear planning program for expansion of its facilities into HRC. This reality is largely due to a current lack of funds, however, and PCCC has indicated its desire to work the Permittee to further explore this issue and to define potential future strategies.

PRELIMINARY STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General Conclusion

By any objective measure, the Vail School District has performed exceptionally well in planning for, and accommodating, its rapidly growing population. Its planning and capital improvement programming efforts have provided clear and detailed direction as to the anticipated new schools that will be required over the next twenty years throughout the District's service area.

This forward-planning work by the District provides excellent direction to the HRC Planning Team with respect to the particular new elementary, middle, and high schools that will be required within the Project Area. District leadership and planning personnel have also expressed a clear willingness to work closely with the Planning Team, on an iterative basis, so as to suitably locate and define new school sites as the HRC land use plan is developed and finalized, as well as to explore all possibilities for the co-location and integration of its schools and academic/training programs with other suitable public/private uses.

Strategic Assessment of Likely Needs for School Facilities within HRC

As mentioned earlier in this report, and in accordance with District's current Capital Facilities Master Plan, the following new school facilities will likely be required within the HRC Planning Area over the District's 20-year planning horizon:

Two (2) new Elementary Schools: one located in the general area north and west of the Valencia Road/Houghton Road intersection, and one located in the general area south and east of the same intersection. Each school facility will require a site of ten (10) acres.

One (1) new K-8 School: located in the general area north and east of the Valencia Road/Houghton Road intersection. This school facility will require a site of twenty (20) acres.

One (1) new Middle School: located in the general area north and west of the Valencia Road/Houghton Road intersection. This school facility will require a site of twenty-five (25) acres.

One (1) new High School: located in the general area north and east of the Valencia

Road/Houghton Road intersection. This school facility will require a site of forty (40) to sixty (60) acres, depending upon final design, attendant improvements, and planned extra-curricular programming (also see Section 4.2 of this report for further explanation of District high school types).

Supplemental Educational/Training Facilities: in addition to the above, the District has expressed its desire to explore supplemental academic and training facilities within HRC, optimally to be integrated into proposed employment centers and/or other planned institutional uses. The specific requirements of these supplemental facilities are not defined at this point, but can be developed further through iterative interactions with the District during the HRC land-use planning process.

Recommendations

In consideration of all of the above information contained within this report, the HRC Planning Team offers the following recommendations to the Arizona State Land Department:

1. That the HRC Planning Team formally engage the Vail School District, throughout the land-use

planning process, so as to: 1) review findings and progress as to anticipated residential land-use allocations within the HRC land-use plan, 2) review and refine residential/student population projections and any required modification(s) of the District's existing projections, 3) review and discuss the provision and placement of necessary new school sites within the HRC land-use plan, 4) explore all opportunities for the integration of District educational and training programs with proposed employment centers and institutional uses, and 5) explore the co-location of school facilities with other appropriate public facilities and institutional uses.

2. That the HRC Planning Team formally engage Pima County Community College (PCCC)

leadership so as to: 1) explore and identify potential future planning efforts and objectives by PCCC with respect to facility and/or program expansion into the HRC Planning Area, and 2) explore the potential for integrating any such facility and/or program expansion efforts with existing or planned Vail School District public school facilities.

3. That the HRC Planning Team formally engage the University of Arizona so as to: 1) identify and/or confirm whatever formal plans it has regarding the establishment of a satellite UA campus

at the University of Arizona Science and Technology Park, and 2) explore UA interest in expanding its educational facilities and/or programming into the HRC Planning Area.

4. That the HRC Planning Team formally engage the City of Tucson Fire Department, the City of

Tucson Police Department, the City of Tucson City Manager, and the Pima County Administrator so as to: 1) explore the potential for the co-location of public school facilities with future police stations, fire stations, public parks, and other public/institutional uses that may be contemplated by the City or which might operate as joint City/County facilities.