

THE USE OF MEASURE U FUNDS AT CARPINTERIA MAIN CAMPUS

SUMMARY

The 2017-18 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury (Jury) received a request to investigate the decision by the Carpinteria Unified School District's (CUSD) Board of Education to allocate funds from Measure U, a bond measure passed in 2014, to a closed school, the Main Elementary School. The Jury determined that the decision to use the bond proceeds was an allowed use under the terms of Measure U. The Jury also found that the Joint Use Agreement between CUSD and the lessee of the Main Elementary School complied with the State of California Education Code.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Carpinteria, which has a population of almost 14,000 people, is a coastal community of just over nine square miles near the southeastern end of the County of Santa Barbara. Employment is based largely in four industries: professional, business and information services, leisure services, and agriculture.¹ There are approximately 2,300 students in the CUSD who attend eight schools, including one comprehensive high school, two small alternative high schools, one middle school, and four elementary schools (one located in Summerland).

The ninth campus, Main Elementary School (MES), is now leased to a private contractor, the Hutton Parker Foundation. The request for investigation received by the Jury raised concerns about spending any Measure U funds at the MES, a property that is not and may never again be a public school.

METHODOLOGY

The Jury reviewed several years of CUSD Board of Education (Board) minutes and viewed numerous video recordings of Board meetings. The Jury also examined the CUSD Final Facilities Master Plan (FFMP) dated June 10, 2014, legal documents, and portions of the California Education Code. Interviews were conducted with key CUSD personnel and Board members. The Jury conducted a site visit to the Carpinteria Children's Project (CCP) located on the MES campus.

OBSERVATIONS

In 2007 the Main Elementary School was closed due to declining District enrollment and budget concerns. In 2003, CUSD student enrollment was 2,919 and by 2007 it was down to 2,660. In 2017 the

¹ The Carpinteria Valley Economic Profile, Volume 2, Page 6, July 2015.

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enrollment was 2,269. When the decision to close the school was made in 2007, the CUSD sought legal advice on options for either leasing or selling the MES property. The options were presented to the CUSD District Advisory Committee (DAC). On January 28, 2008, after reviewing applications from various entities, the DAC’s governing board endorsed the proposal of the Carpinteria Nonprofit Collaborative sponsored by the Hutton Foundation (now the Hutton Parker Foundation). A memorandum of understanding for a proposed joint use agreement was developed. Approval was needed from the City of Carpinteria as it would constitute a nonconforming use not in compliance with existing zoning requirements. Because the proposed use for education and related support services was consistent with its former elementary school use, final City approval was received August 25, 2008. A CUSD master joint use agreement was negotiated and finalized with the Hutton Foundation in September 2008. The renewed agreement expires in October 2018. The CUSD, in considering the use of the facility, looked at the California Education Code² and made the determination that the anticipated uses met the code.

The MES facility is now called the Carpinteria Children’s Project (CCP). The CCP is a nonprofit entity that serves as the principal sub-lessee to the Hutton Parker Foundation and administers the scheduling and other support for the many tenant organizations. During a site visit to CCP, the Jury learned that only a small fraction of the facility is utilized directly by the CUSD: one small office in the auditorium houses CUSD IT staff; CUSD uses one modular classroom several afternoons a week; and one-third of the pre-school students in one pre-school classroom are CUSD students. All other occupants and activities are non-CUSD and include a range of non-profit organizations and County entities. Occupancy of the facility at the time of the Jury’s site visit is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Occupancy of Carpinteria Children’s Project Facility (formerly Main Elementary)

Room #	Occupant Type	Occupant/Activity
Main Building		
100	Non-profit	CCP Director’s Office
101	County	1 st District Supervisor’s Office
102	Non-profit	CCP Pre-school
103	Non-profit	CCP Early Childhood Education Director’s Office
202A	Non-profit	Family Service Agency
202B	Non-profit	Child Abuse Listening Mediation (CALM)
203	Non-profit	CCP Infant Center
204	Non-profit	CCP Pre-school
205	Non-profit	Community Action Commission (federal Head Start Program grantee)
206	County	Santa Barbara County Education Office (infants and toddlers program)
207	Non-profit	Community Action Commission (Head Start)
208	Non-profit	Community Action Commission (Head Start)
209	Non-profit	Community Action Commission (Head Start)
Modulars		
310	Non-profit	CCP Family Resource Center (provides referrals to a range of services)
311	Non-profit	Carpinteria Education Foundation (fundraising)
312	Education	Adult ESL offered by Santa Barbara City College (CCP pays for room)

² California Education Code Sections 17527 (a); Article 9, Joint Use.

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313	Conference Rm	Used for unspecified support groups
314	County	Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program (nutrition)
315	Non-profit	Day care for children of adults taking ESL classes
316	County	Workforce Development Board (public-private partnership staffed by County)
Auditorium		
Office	CUSD	Houses CUSD IT Staff
Main	N/A	Largely unused; CCP uses one night a week; occasional use by other schools

Pre-Measure U Planning

The FFMP of June 10, 2014, states, “In early 2013, the CUSD Governing Board voted to prepare a plan that analyzes the District school facilities, to identify needed improvements and upgrades. The FFMP is a planning document that lays out the facility improvements and new construction needed to improve Carpinteria’s public schools and better serve our students.”

The Board of the CUSD approved the FFMP after input was received from over thirty public and staff meetings. The FFMP included a proposal for the use of the MES and the Jury found that the plans for the MES were sufficiently detailed, including budgets and investment plans for each sub-project.

Measure U

On November 4, 2014, voters in the City of Carpinteria approved Measure U, which read:

To improve schools, attract and retain quality teachers, and prepare students for college and careers by repairing deteriorating classrooms, bathrooms/leaky roofs, removing asbestos and lead paint, upgrading electrical wiring and classroom technology, repairing, constructing, acquiring educational facilities, sites/equipment, shall Carpinteria Unified School District issue \$90,000,000 in bonds at legal rates, requiring annual independent audits, citizens’ oversight, no money for administrators’ salaries or pensions, and all funds used locally?

Measure U requires that oversight committees be formed, including a Measure U Bond Oversight Committee and a site committee for each school property. Using the FFMP as a guide, the CCP at Main Site Committee forwarded its recommendation to the CUSD Board. The CUSD Board approved the recommendation at its meeting of September 22, 2016.

The Carpinteria Unified School District Board approved a budget, allocated from Measure U funds, of \$7 million for renovation and improvements of the Carpinteria Children’s Project (CCP) at the Main Elementary School in Carpinteria.

As noted on the Measure U website, carpmeasureu.com, the project states:

Unique to this site, CCP at Main has a large support network of programs, agencies, and resources on-site to assist children and families. New offices and classrooms are planned to accommodate the need. The campus is also reconfigured to provide dedicated,

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enclosed outdoor playground areas. A new 1,000 sf infant/toddler center is planned. Renovations include classrooms, restrooms campus-wide, kitchen and pantry remodel for additional storage. A new parking lot, preschool entrance gate and entry court will be located off Palm Avenue.

Budget

\$7 million

Project List

Phase 1

- Replace 7 portable classrooms all in failing condition with new modular classrooms. These portables are currently used for family counseling and a resource center for the school district.
- Construct new parking lot

Phase 2

- Renovate existing building
- Convert 2 classrooms to preschool classrooms
- Remodel kitchen
- Renovate multi-purpose room
- Remodel restrooms

The CUSD supports a “cradle to career” philosophy that includes infants, preschool children and entire families. Several CUSD staff and board members interviewed by the Jury strongly feel that the children attending CCP are “district kids” even though they are not currently enrolled as district students. The education that they receive in conjunction with the support services offered to parents will prepare them to succeed once they become district students. Those interviewed stated their belief that maintaining and upgrading the MES facility is necessary to this philosophy.

Project Update

The Project Update on the CUSD Implementation of Measure U funded projects dated October 10, 2017, referred to the “Carpinteria Children’s Project [CCP] at Main School” and included new preschool classrooms, playgrounds, parking, a stage, and staff facilities.

Although the Measure U website and the billboard on the campus list a \$7 million budget, the Project Update lists a budget of \$5,052,850 for the CCP, which is 5.6% of the total Measure U funds. The CCP budget is shown in Figure 2. Very little of the budgeted total had been committed or spent by the end of 2017;

Figure 2: Carpinteria Children’s Project, Budget Status (dollars), October 10, 2017

Category	Budgeted	Committed	Spent	Unspent
Fire Alarm	162,736	18,793	14,124	148,612
Site modernization	383,521	0	0	383,521

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Campus modernization	1,100,325	305,843	28,498	1,071,827
Modular classrooms	3,406,268	165,609	16,250	3,390,018
Total	5,052,850	490,244	58,871	4,993,979

CONCLUSION

The 2017-18 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury found the leasing of the Main Elementary School in Carpinteria to the Hutton Parker Foundation complies with the California Education Code. The Jury also found that the use of funds from Measure U to remodel the Main Elementary School is within the parameters of Measure U.

FINDINGS

Finding 1

The use of Measure U funds at the Carpinteria Children’s Project at the Main Elementary School is allowed under the terms of Measure U.

Finding 2

A significant part of the facilities at the Carpinteria Children’s Project at Main Elementary School is used by non-profit organizations and/or the County of Santa Barbara.

Finding 3

The leasing of the Main Elementary School in Carpinteria to the Hutton Parker Foundation complies with the California Education Code.

Under California Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, this report does not require a response.