



The Alpine High School Citizens Committee

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Stmt: THE ALPINE HIGH SCHOOL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
Subj: GUHSD Sponsored Public Meeting – Alpine Community Center, Alpine, CA
Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2009
Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report for the High School No. 12 Project

Good evening. My name is Sal Casamassima. I have resided in Alpine for nearly 10 years and have a daughter in the 2nd grade at Boulder Oaks Elementary who, one day, would love to attend high school in her home town of Alpine. I am here today presenting comments on behalf of the Alpine High School Citizens Committee. Our Committee is an organization of local citizens that is dedicated to the construction of a high school in the Alpine/Blossom Valley area that will serve the needs of our community and the Grossmont Union High School District.

The completion of the draft EIR by the District is an important step in fulfilling the District's unambiguous promise and our long sought goal of a high school for the Alpine/Blossom Valley area. The students, parents, teachers, and community leaders in Alpine have waited many years and have experienced numerous disappointments and broken promises regarding a new high school. We have also been dutifully paying property taxes imposed under Prop H and now will be paying additional taxes under Prop U. Prop H bond money was to deliver our school but so far has failed to do so and now, with the passage of Prop U, we have specific language and money dedicated to that same promise. It is now time for it to happen.

Just to remind everyone, the three sites that are the subject of the draft EIR were culled from an original list of about 18 potential sites. A web survey of Alpine and Blossom Valley residents was conducted that focused on a dozen of those sites and about 750 people responded. Based on the survey and other information, the District narrowed the dozen sites down to four. The Site Selection Subcommittee, that was part of the Bond Advisory Commission, subsequently voted on and recommended the top three sites out of the four and these three were then approved by the Grossmont Governing Board for the EIR process. The Site Selection Subcommittee had about 20 members, most of whom were Alpine residents. What this demonstrates is that the folks of Alpine have already had substantial input into the site selection process to date and we are now providing a final round of good faith input that will ultimately result in the selection of one of these three sites.

As to the Draft EIR itself, the Alpine High School Citizens Committee will say very little. Our position is simple and straightforward. The EIR itself appears to be very comprehensive and addresses the long list of issues related to the impacts associated with each of the three sites. We recognize that individuals and organizations from Alpine, Blossom Valley, and surrounding areas will have differing views on which site is the best or the worst. You will hear those differing views this evening and throughout the comment period. Some folks will have environmental concerns. Others will have concerns about traffic and noise and still others may have a very direct concern – that their property may be condemned. All of these concerns are legitimate and, in fact, members of our High School Committee may have differing individual points of view. We realize that whatever site is recommended there will be objections and concerns. However, the choice of "none of the above" is not an acceptable option and at the end of the day, after all comments are considered, a single preferred site will have to be recommended.

Because our Committee does not want to be a divisive force in this important debate, we are going to remain neutral about a preferred site. We will not favor one site over another or rank them in any order. We have but one simple recommendation that reflects the views of our members. The site that should be favored and ultimately recommended to the Grossmont Board should be *the site that will most quickly result in a high school for the Alpine/Blossom Valley area*. This school is long overdue and our community should not endure years of litigation or other sources of continued delay. The school opening is now scheduled for the fall of 2013 and families living in or planning to move to, our community will begin relying on that schedule. Therefore, we want that target date to be strictly maintained and, if possible, moved up by a full year. So get on with this important task. Consider all the comments you receive. Dot all your "I"s and cross all your "T"s and then, with due deliberation, move on as expeditiously as possible to issue a final EIR. Once the EIR process is complete, the Superintendent can then promptly make a preferred site recommendation to the Grossmont Board and proceed with the process of obtaining State approval and site acquisition.

The Alpine High School Citizens Committee has been and will remain unwavering in its commitment to get a high school for the Alpine/Blossom Valley area and we will do whatever we can to assist the District in fulfilling this long overdue promise.