



Mountain View
Whisman
School District

Jose Antonio Vargas Trees Replacement Project

August 18, 2022

Guiding Principles

Goal 5 Resource Stewardship

- Goal 5: Students, staff and community members will have access to various resources, such as technology, facilities, furniture, equipment, etc., in a fiscally responsible manner, to fulfill the mission of MVWSD.

Master Facility Plan 2019

- In December of 2019, the Board approved the Master Facilities Plan (MFP) which prioritizes the work of Measure T.
- The MFP prioritized safety and efficiency projects



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Current Status

Current Status

- Since the school opened in 2019, the trees along N. Whisman Rd. drop pine cones that damage cars and are a danger to people
- Nine (9) Canary Island Pine Trees, approximate height is 60'.
- Used to line a field, but now directly over parking area at the front of the school
 - This year, 9 pine cone incidents that damaged cars
 - 21 since Vargas opened
 - The District-paid cost to repair each car ranged from \$225 to \$3,000.
- Pinecones were harvested, but Vargas still experienced damage to cars
- Concern that a pine cone will hit a person.



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Project Overview

Initial Project Overview

- In 2020, the Board took action and approved the construction of a protective parking structure as a prioritized safety measure.
- Due to DSA requirements the project has ballooned to an approximate cost is \$814,917
- Trustees expressed the following concerns (June 16th meeting)
 - The cost of the project is high, as those funds could be used for student classrooms, upgrades or teacher housing
 - Community concerns about removing trees

Considerations

- Initial designs do not allow for “netting” to be installed and would create an ongoing issue for Maintenance and Operations
- While areas under the parking structure would be protected, the problem would still exist for pedestrians and require ongoing cleaning and maintenance of the new structure.
- Several plan iterations have been developed or employed to avoid the trees
 - Solar panels were moved to the inner campus, as opposed to creating a parking structure
 - Carport scope and design has doubled in cost and requires the removal of visitor and staff parking

Current Project Overview

- Cost to remove the trees would be \$30,000-\$60,000.
- More cost effective, solves the issue
- School sites are state property
 - Tree removal/replacement is exempt from the City tree removal permit or local jurisdictional requirements but must still comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements.
- Timeline: projected start of the project Aug/Sept

Current Project Overview

- In addition to other energy saving approaches, such as LED lighting and Solar Panels, MVWSD has planted over 118 trees.
 - Tree replacement is set at a two to one ratio districtwide
 - For Vargas, MVWSD would seek to plant more mature trees, that are not only drought-resistant but also native species



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Community Input

Notification of Community Meeting

- Postcards were directly mailed to 2700 residents within Vargas School boundaries
- Signs with link and QR code to register for meeting
- Nextdoor posts
- Social media posts
- Notification to the City
- School/ Supt newsletters
- Marquee sign announcements
- Construction email list

Board Updates

- May 19
 - Board discussion
- June 16
 - Board update and CEQA presentation
- August 18
 - Board discussion

Community Feedback

- Vargas teachers and staff via survey in May
 - Continue to express concern that they are putting their personal property at risk while at work
 - Would like to see trees replaced if possible
 - Some expressed concern that they were promised a carport, and now that project is scrapped

Community Feedback, con't...

- All residents in the Vargas neighborhoods via community meeting June 28
 - Attended by a few residents.
 - Noted concerns / opposition from residents (including Nextdoor)
 - bikers who routinely avoid the pinecones while using the bike lane
 - Staff who worry about their cars while at work
 - Diminishing tree canopy over the parking lot
 - Recently planted trees that are wilting under drought conditions
 - The trees planted in the swale in front of the field were more ornamental as opposed to native and drought tolerant
 - Lack of awareness of other options that were considered



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Recommendation

Final considerations

- Removing trees is always unpopular and is considered the last option
- MVWSD has repeatedly demonstrated that it takes into consideration the impact of its carbon footprint during construction projects
- Staff agrees with the majority of the board that the monies spent on a carport, coupled with the ongoing insurance increase and replacement of staff and community windshields could be used on facilities and students

Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends removing the 9 trees and replacing them with native drought tolerant trees
 - This should occur after August 15th (nesting season)
 - To address the concern about the loss of canopy, tree replacement should occur as quickly as possible