

Sunol Glen Unified School District – Measure J Frequently Asked Questions Handout

Faced with aging classrooms and the need to bring school facilities up to current standards, the Sunol Glen Unified School District (“SGUSD”) has placed Measure J, a general obligation bond measure, on the upcoming November 2022 ballot that will modernize and renovate Sunol Glen Elementary School. The following information is provided to assist voters in understanding the facts behind Measure J and how its passage will affect the District and our community.

What is Measure J? Measure J is a \$10.9 million general obligation (G.O.) bond program. This measure is intended to address the needs of the student population through modernization and renovation projects at Sunol Glen Elementary School.

How did the District come up with the project list for Measure J? Over the last several years with input from staff, teachers, parents, community leaders, and the District architect, the District has prepared a School Facilities Needs Analysis. The analysis identifies the major repairs and upgrades that need to be made.

Specific projects identified include:

- Preserving and renovating the main school building, which was constructed in 1925
- Making safety, health, and security improvements
- Repairing/replacing leaky roofs
- Replacing/upgrading infrastructure including electrical, plumbing, and sewer systems
- Constructing a new lab for technology, engineering, and math programs
- Modernizing/upgrading the 1950's cafeteria for school and community use

Why has the District placed Measure J on the ballot? Although well maintained over the years, Sunol Glen School is old, having first been built over 95 years ago with major additions in the 1950s and 1990s. Our school needs significant classroom, facilities, and infrastructure improvements to maintain the quality of education provided to students. Furthermore, it’s used extensively by residents. A local school improvement measure would allow the District to improve the quality of the school facilities provided to teachers, students, and Sunolians.

What is a General Obligation (G.O.) bond? G.O. bonds fund projects such as the renovation of existing classrooms and school facilities, as well as construction of new schools and classrooms. Similar to a home loan, G.O. bonds are typically repaid over 25 to 30 years. The loan repayment comes from a tax on all taxable property - residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial - located within the District’s boundaries.

Why not use a Parcel Tax instead of a bond as an outsider suggested? Parcel taxes are typically used for operational purposes and not for major school improvement projects. They are also considered a regressive tax that hurts lower income individuals more as every parcel pays the same regardless of its value. Furthermore, there are only 583 parcels in our small District. To generate the same \$10.9 million in proceeds under a Parcel Tax, every parcel in the District would need to pay \$1,007. This further shows how people who don’t live here don’t understand our district and haven’t studied what works best here. We believe that voters will be much more open to continuing to pay the same taxes they’ve been paying rather than take on a \$1,007 parcel tax.

What will Measure J cost? Measure J will not increase the current annual tax rate. Instead, it will extend the old bond program that expires next year and *will maintain the estimated tax rate that property owners are currently paying.*

How common are school improvement measures? Have neighboring districts also passed these measures? Every unified school district in Alameda County has passed a school improvement measure, and several districts in the county have passed five. Sunol Glen has passed one.

Furthermore, the District has nearly the lowest bond tax rate at \$52.10 per \$100,000 of assessed value. (If Pleasanton USD passes their \$49.00 bond this November, *SGUSD will be the lowest.*) By comparison, Dublin Unified has passed five bonds and a tax rate of \$196.40.

Finally, the table to the right does not include parcel taxes, which are different than bond taxes. SGUSD doesn't have any parcel taxes whereas nearly all of the County districts do including Piedmont City USD, which has a Parcel Tax of \$2,406 per parcel. (*SGUSD is clearly well below our county peers on investment into our schools.*)

Alameda County School District Bonds Passed & Tax Rates			
School District	Bonds Passed	2021-22 Tax rate	2021-22 Tax Rate
Dublin USD *	5	\$196.40	\$96.00
Albany City USD *	5	\$195.00	\$448.00
San Leandro USD *	4	\$173.20	\$39.00
New Haven USD	5	\$153.80	
Berkeley USD *	3	\$145.10	\$0.32/sq. ft.
Oakland USD *	4	\$120.20	\$435.00
San Lorenzo USD *	3	\$115.70	\$99.00
Hayward USD *	3	\$115.00	\$88.00
Castro Valley USD	4	\$97.00	
Piedmont City USD *	5	\$96.60	\$2,406.00
Alameda USD *	3	\$88.80	\$0.23/sq. ft.
Newark USD *	2	\$83.80	
Livermore Valley USD *	2	\$70.60	\$138.00
Fremont USD *	3	\$57.60	\$53.00
Emery USD *	2	\$53.20	\$0.12/sq. ft.
Sunol Glen USD	1	\$52.10	
Pleasanton USD	3	\$43.50	

Why can't the District meet its facilities needs with its current budget? Today, the scope of improvements needed at the SGUSD is far more than the current funding sources available. The funding which the District receives from the state is intended to be used for the day-to-day business of educating children and not the cost of upgrading and modernizing facilities.

What will happen if Measure J does not pass? If the measure does not pass, our classrooms and school facilities will continue to deteriorate. In addition, funds that would otherwise go to classroom instruction will be needed to make critical safety repairs and improvements at the school. Major repairs will need to be postponed and as a result will likely be more expensive to make. With the original school building as old as it is, the cost to maintain it could become too cost prohibitive resulting in it's closure. The classrooms and school buildings from the 1990's could still be in use however.

Has the School District passed a school improvement measure before? Yes. In 1999, District voters approved a measure with 84.2% voter approval. Funds were used to construct new classrooms and to upgrade and modernize some of the older classrooms in the District.

How can I be sure that funds will be spent on improving our local school? By law, all funds have to be *spent locally and cannot be taken by the state.* Furthermore, an independent citizens' oversight committee will be established to ensure that bond funds are properly spent. Also, by law, there must be annual audits and no bond money can be used for teacher or administrative salaries.

Why would someone suggest the bond is \$22 million instead of \$10.9 million? Education code requires the disclosure of the total combined principal and interest payments, which on our \$10.9 million bond is estimated to be \$22 million. Similar to a home mortgage, total borrowing costs are disclosed to voters under school bond measures. However, when someone purchases a home, they don't say "the home cost me \$2 million to buy when I factor in interest over 30

years”, we simply say “the home cost \$800,000”. Highlighting the total borrowing costs is a disingenuous and misleading tactic. The District will only receive \$10.9 million for improvements.

If we eliminated students that don’t live in Sunol from attending, would we need this Measure still? Absolutely. Measure J does not increase capacity to accommodate out of District students. It is to renovate and upgrade the existing school site. Whether there are 40 students or 400 students, the District still needs to improve infrastructure, make health and safety improvements, and modernize/upgrade the 1929 and 1950s classrooms and school facilities.