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To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Initial comments on Update on City/School Collaboration and Challenges
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Honorable Councilmembers:

I'm writing to you about the Update on City/School Collaboration and Challenges in my personal capacity as someone who is passionate about our public schools. As you all know, our local public schools and children have been my passion for over two decades, and advocating for increased funding to support them has been my avocation. I've played a leadership role in three parcel tax and five bond campaigns to support our schools, held officer roles in the two school foundations for nine years and was one of the original "Shoreline Six" lobbying for funding from the Shoreline Regional Park Community. Through my efforts along with those of hundreds of other community members, funding for our schools has increased over time, and our schools have improved dramatically. But more funding is needed, especially to plan for future enrollment, acquire land, build new schools and new classrooms at existing schools to serve residents who will move into the thousands of new housing units being planned in the coming years. I will continue to advocate for this funding for however long it may take.

To identify land for schools and funding to acquire the land and build the schools, we collectively really do need to think big picture, get creative and stop bickering! I, for one, wholeheartedly endorse the proposed negotiation process involving a joint kick-off meeting and facilitated subcommittee meetings.

As the Staff report acknowledges, our agencies have a long history of collaboration which has been tested in the current environment. The report repeatedly highlights that a major challenge is misinformation and lack of commonly agreed-upon facts. Agreed! This dispute about "facts" is highly distracting and should be a non-issue. Let's open an electronic data room and share all of our data. Let's include detail about the Shoreline tax revenues, both historical and projected, to include information regarding reserves. The subcommittee can review and evaluate this data.

Let's also brainstorm and try to identify innovative solutions. Below is a partial list of key challenges the schools face that the City may be able to help solve and non-traditional ideas to explore further:

- Identification of new school sites (perhaps in North Bayshore?) and sources of construction funding
- Ways to fully utilize currently leased sites for District students and replace the rental income streams
- Find new sites to relocate non-student uses (such as transportation, maintenance, operations and cafeterias) currently housed at existing school sites to enable school site "densification" and construction of more classroom space

Potential acquisition by the City for park space of District-owned space that is not in locations where new housing development is likely to be built (such as Sylvan Park and Cooper Park)

- Exploration of non-traditional financing vehicles, such as seller-carryback financing (if the City were to sell land to the Districts and provide financing for the purchase, the “payments” from the school districts could come in the form of Shoreline tax proceed funds that had been allocated to the schools being reallocated to the City so that actual funds would never have to be exchanged)
- Land swaps
- Undertaking joint borrowing facilities (through bonds or certificates of participation) collateralized by Shoreline tax revenue streams

The staff report is correct in that all of the new sites and schools do not need to come online immediately. But strategic planning needs to take place today and must include identification of new school sites and construction of new facilities on existing sites, along with specific sources of revenue to acquire sites, build schools and densify existing schools. The acquisition and funding plan will be phased to come online over time as the new housing units are built and occupied. Our community simply cannot afford to wait any longer to do this important planning.

Thanks for your consideration,

Laura Blakely