

Snoqualmie school district approves capital facilities plan

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A new impact fee, new middle school, and new elementary school, in that order, are all in the plans for the Snoqualmie Valley School District. The fee and construction projects were detailed in the capital facilities plan approved by the school board at its June 28 meeting.

The plan, which projects the district's capital facilities needs through 2017, based on student enrollment projections, will now be presented to the taxing agencies that collect school impact fees for the district, including King County, and the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie.

If the county and city approve the district's capital facilities plan, the school district will receive, beginning in 2013, \$8,688.48 in impact fees for each new single-family home to begin the permitting process, and \$3,220.38 for each new multi-family residential unit to begin the process. The fees represent an almost 2 percent increase in the single-family rate, and a 17.5 percent increase in the multi-family rate, although the multi-family rate is still almost 1 percent lower than the fee set in the 2010 plan, for collection in 2011.

The district is allowed to assess these fees to offset the cost of building new facilities that are needed as the community's population grows. In the plan is a new 650-student-capacity middle school, to be built in 2015, and a 600-student-capacity elementary school, to be built in 2017, and the annexation of Snoqualmie Middle School into the Mount Si High School campus.

District projections indicate that there isn't enough space in the elementary schools to house the 2012-13 population of about 2,800 students (K-5), and about 535 of them will be housed in portable classrooms. For the next three years, the district will add more portable classrooms to contain the estimated 950 students who will need them by 2016. With the portables, the elementary schools are not expected to exceed their capacity before a new school, planned for 2017, is built. By that year, elementary enrollment is projected to be 3,255.

At the middle school level, enrollment will exceed permanent capacity in 2013, when the district converts SMS to part of the high school. With the loss of space for 448 students, the district will place 302 students in portable classrooms. The following year, an estimated 334 will be in portables, leaving a projected 20 students to be crowded into the existing spaces. If a planned middle school is built in 2015 -- dependent on the outcome of a February 2013 bond vote the district will hold -- the district would have space for 1,880 middle schoolers, more than ample for the 1,577 students projected for that year. Middle school enrollment by 2017 is expected to be 1,611.

Like the elementary schools, Mount Si High School does not have enough permanent capacity to contain all of its students this fall, and will rely on portable classrooms to house students even after taking over SMS. The 2012-13 projected enrollment of 1,648 will push 357 students into portables, but the following year, with SMS, the capacity shortfall is projected to be only six students. The addition of SMS to Mount Si High School will expand the school's permanent capacity to just over 1,700 students, but enrollment projections suggest the student count will pass 2,000 by the 2016-17 school year.

For information about the school district, visit www.svsd410.org.

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