

School of its own for Redwood Shores

By Tyler Cunningham
STAFF WRITER

REDWOOD CITY — A new elementary school for Redwood Shores residents should be open by the 1997 school year, just in time to save a crowded Belmont Elementary District from bursting at the seams.

Plans for the Sandpiper Elementary School have been solidified, and the district is currently accepting bids from potential builders. Meanwhile, plans for two related projects — a community center and soccer and baseball fields — are nearing completion.

That's good news for a Belmont elementary district that is trying to cope with a growing population while reducing class sizes.

"Given the fact that we've had to use a shoehorn to get kids into classrooms this year, it's safe to say this is a welcome project," district Business Manager Jeff Keuscher said.



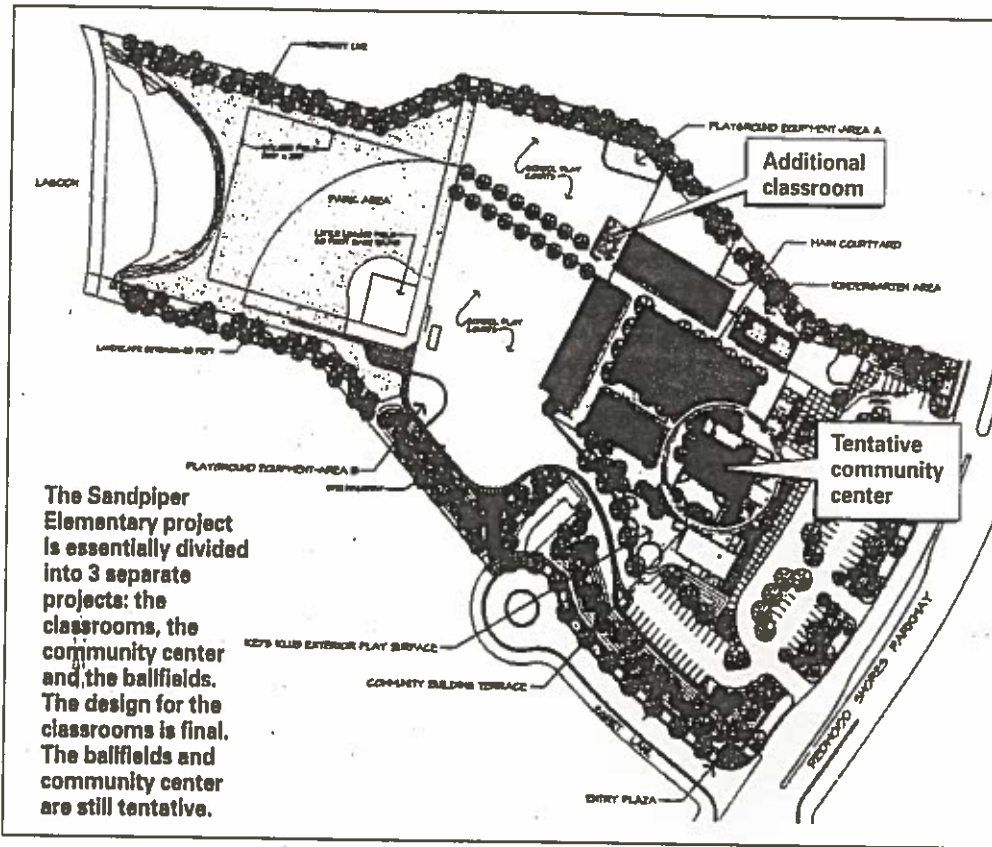
The Sandpiper project, which will be built on an 11-acre plot of land along Redwood Shores Parkway, is a collaboration between Redwood City and the Belmont School District. The city owns the land,

and will lease a portion to the district.

The district will pay approximately \$6 million to build 16 classrooms, which will be constructed in two phases. Phase one, which will accommodate 250 students, will be open in 1997. The district still hasn't set a completion date for phase two, which would boost the school's capacity to 405.

The city hopes to fund the school by issuing certificates of participation, a bond-like financing method that poses no risk to taxpayers, Keuscher said. The district is considering a general obligation bond measure to provide the \$1.25 million or \$1.5 million needed for phase two.

The city and the district will split the cost of a community center that will be used as a multipurpose room for students during the day and a community



Staff

San Mateo County Times

Section B
Monday
August 26, 1996

Continued from B-1

meeting place at night.

Finally, the city plans to landscape and build two sports fields for baseball and soccer. Since plans for the ballfields and the community center are not yet final, planners cannot cite a cost.

The school district hasn't yet determined which grades will be housed in the new school, and probably won't make that decision until it has a better idea of next year's enrollment figures, Keuscher said.

The new school is seen as a victory for many Shores parents, who have fought long and hard to win their own school.

"It's about time this happened," said parent Uta Doerssch.

Many residents said they were crushed when the district sold a parcel of land along Dory Lane that residents considered an ideal site.

Parine Fowler said she's been waiting for 30 years for a neighborhood school in the Shores. She is the parent of 8-year-old twins, and said the school will slice about a half-hour commute off her day, and will allow her children to visit the school and playground after hours.

"There are parents who were raised in this neighborhood, whose parents had hoped there would be a neighborhood school," she said. "The promise has been there for a long time, and there's just no reason we shouldn't have our own school."

The new school will help service one of the fastest-growing sites in the district. The Shores population is expected to rocket from 9,000 to an estimated 14,000 by the year 2000.

The current plan features:

► An enclosed kindergarten complete with its own playground.

► A community center with a stage, child-care facilities, a teen room and a number of conference rooms.

The new school should also help Shores residents gain a newfound sense of community, Redwood City Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services Peter Griffiths said.

"I think the whole project is something the community needs," he said. "Not only for its children but also in terms of showing that the city recognizes Redwood Shores, providing some public support."

Please see **School**, B-2