



September 14, 2022

Crystal Caldera, PhD
Acting City Manager
City of Leon Valley
6400 El Verde Road
Leon Valley, Texas 78238

Brian T. Woods, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Dear Dr. Caldera:

Thank you for meeting with the Northside Independent School District ("District") on August 7, 2022 at Marshall High School to discuss the City of Leon Valley's traffic mitigation plan that included several options to address traffic issues around the John Marshall High School ("Marshall High School") campus. The District was made aware of numerous concerns that have been brought to the attention of the City of Leon Valley by some of the residents who reside in the areas adjacent to and behind Marshall High School along Thunderbird Drive and Bluebird Lane up to Huebner Road. The area behind Marshall High School is part of Monte Robles Park Subdivision and is known as the Monte Robles Park neighborhood or neighborhood.

The District understands the concerns of the Monte Robles Park neighborhood residents are as follows:

1. Traffic congestion during morning, lunch and evening hours
2. An increase in traffic through the neighborhood
3. Students racing through the residential neighborhood
4. Students throwing trash on neighbor's property
5. Students acting inappropriately in neighbor's property
6. School buses driving through the neighborhood

As a result of these Monte Robles Park neighborhood concerns, it is the District's understanding the City Council of the City of Leon Valley is contemplating adopting one of the options from the traffic mitigation plan that consists of permanently blocking through-traffic (by using a barricade) along (a) Thunderbird Drive from its beginning at the southwest corner of the Marshall High School property to its intersection with Chaparral Lane (which intersects with Huebner Road) with the barricade located at a point next to the southeast corner of the Marshall High School property; and (b) Bluebird Lane (eventually becoming Deer Lane) from its intersection with Eckhert Road to its intersection with Redbird Lane (which intersects with Huebner Road) with the barricade located at a point next to the northeast corner of the Marshall High School property ("the proposed Street Barricade Plan"). The proposed Street Barricade Plan was provided to the District during the August 7, 2022 meeting.

The District has several concerns of its own regarding implementation of the proposed Street Barricade Plan to address points of concern 1, 2 and 3.

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First, the consequence of the proposed Street Barricade Plan is that all vehicular traffic coming onto the Marshall High School campus, including vehicular traffic originating from the adjacent Monte Robles Park neighborhood residents, will have to exit Eckhert Road. If the current traffic circulation is maintained and the proposed Street Barricade Plan is superimposed on the current traffic circulation (*i.e.*, one-way in from Eckhert Road onto Robin Road to Lobo Lane and one-way out from Bluebird Lane to Eckhert Road), then all school buses, parents dropping off and picking up students, student drivers, school staff, visitors, several existing residents located north of the southeast corner of Marshall High School, and members and staff of the Grace Fellowship Baptist Church located across from and north of the northeast corner of Marshall High School can only exit at the signal light at Eckhert Road from Bluebird Lane. In short, one way in and one way out.

It is, therefore, the District's position that the City of Leon Valley's action and related consequence of having one way in and one way out of the Marshall High School campus will (i) negatively impact the operation of Marshall High School due to a high probability of creating a serious safety issue arising from the fact that the sum total of the traffic volume associated with Marshall High School has only one way in and one way out; and (ii) add additional traffic volume to Eckhert Road.

It is important to know and understand that the safety and security of the District's students and staff is a priority. Given the recent school tragedies in the Uvalde and Santa Fe Independent School Districts, the District is committed to providing the best options to keep its students and staff safe.

Consequently, it is also the District's position that the elimination of a secondary means of exit from the Marshall High School campus through public roadways south of Marshall High School will negatively impact the ability of Marshall High School to safely evacuate students and staff in case of an emergency to a safe location if an incident prohibits the use of Eckhert Drive and there is no other outlet provided. Marshall High School has co-existed with the Monte Robles Park neighborhood for several decades and vehicular traffic has not been a critical problem in the past. The District believes that prior efforts by the community working with the District and Marshall High School have overcome the necessity of blocking through-traffic along Thunderbird Drive and Bluebird Lane.

Second, the District is concerned about residents adjacent to the Marshall High School campus. There are several residents (*i.e.*, located within five (5) homes) that front Thunderbird Drive on the north side of the proposed blocked point on Thunderbird Drive that would have to deal with the increased traffic on the north side of the campus. The impact would also be felt by members and staff of the Grace Fellowship Baptist Church that fronts on Bluebird Lane. The District hopes the impact of the City of Leon Valley's proposed Street Barricade Plan on these neighborhood residents, and church members and staff has been considered.

Third, the District is concerned about residents in the Monte Robles Park neighborhood who are located south of the proposed blocked points on Thunderbird Drive and Bluebird Lane. Their vehicular access to Marshall High School will be longer and more circuitous.

Fourth and finally, the District is concerned about the inability of first responders to easily reach Marshall High School from all directions. This includes law enforcement and fire personnel. This will present a potential impact to the safety and security of students and staff the District is obligated to protect. The District hopes the City of Leon Valley shares the same concerns.

With respect to the implementation of the proposed Street Barricade Plan to address points of concern 4 and 5, the District is prepared to assist the City of Leon Valley with the District's resources to address these concerns.

Marshall High School can send out a communication to parents, staff and students to enlist their assistance in being courteous and sensitive to the surrounding Monte Robles Park neighborhood residents regarding adhering to posted speed zones and acting appropriately when they leave the high school. However, it is important to know and understand that while the District has control over students when they are on the Marshall High School campus, the District has no control over students once they leave the campus.

With respect to implementation of the proposed Street Barricade Plan to address point of concern 6 involving school buses, the District is concerned that the consequence of the City of Leon Valley's action is that the school buses will be limited to only using Eckhert Road to gain access to the Marshall High School campus. The proposed Street Barricade Plan will exacerbate this limited access situation by causing school bus delays as well as frustration of parents, students, staff and several of the residents that live in the area. To that end, the District anticipates potential conflict points; thus, a safety concern.

It is the District's position that school buses must be able to freely traverse public rights-of-way from all directions to get to and from their destination and to ensure safe passage for the District's students while being efficient in the District's transportation operation. It is important to point out the current count of buses for the 2021-2022 school year is 22 buses traveling through the Monte Robles Park neighborhood to pick up and drop off students who live in the general proximity of the school. The count based on the 2020-2021 school year was 38 buses which translates to a reduction of 16 buses. The District recognizes that bus traffic tends to impact the surrounding residents, but this necessary bus traffic has been ongoing for several decades and to the District's knowledge there have been no significant issues. One of the reasons buses are traversing the Monte Robles Park neighborhood stems from the traffic signal at Eckhert Road and Bluebird Lane. The timing on the current signalization is very short which, in the District's opinion, does not allow the adequate movement of traffic onto Eckhert Road. The District has reached out to the City of San Antonio to reconsider the timing, given it is their right-of-way. The District has been informed that the City of Leon Valley has also reached out to the City of San Antonio. It is also important to point out that there are students who reside within the Monte Robles Park neighborhood who are being picked up for the District's middle and elementary schools. Consequently, a total elimination of bus traffic south of the proposed blocking points on Thunderbird Drive and Bluebird Lane is neither practical nor reasonable. While the District can commit

to limiting the bus traffic if at all possible; it cannot eliminate bus traffic south of the proposed blocking points on Thunderbird Drive and Bluebird Lane due to the District's obligations to serve its student population.

There are a number of additional District concerns about the City of Leon Valley's proposed Street Barricade Plan that merit consideration and discussion.

First, there have been previous discussions between the District and the City of Leon Valley regarding the use of the District's police and their role in mitigating traffic issues. To reiterate, the District's police officers' primary role is to provide for the safety of the students and staff on school grounds. The District's police officers are not employed to perform traffic control on a routine basis. On occasion, the District's police officers do provide traffic control during large events, functions, etc. at a school. Given the current circumstances, the District can commit to providing some level of traffic control, but such commitment can only be successful through collaboration between the District, the City of Leon Valley and the City of San Antonio police departments as well as the Bexar County Sheriff's Department.

The District strongly believes the City of Leon Valley should reach out to the City of San Antonio to share the proposed Street Barricade Plan given the increase in traffic congestion which will materially and negatively impact Eckhert Road. As an example, you should know the City of San Antonio reached out to the District several years ago as a result of a council person's concerns regarding Culebra Road traffic issues that apparently came from traffic on Eckhert Road. The District subsequently and quickly reached out to the City of Leon Valley to bring them into the discussion given potential impacts on the City of Leon Valley's jurisdiction. Since the District has always been sensitive to the concerns of both the City of Leon Valley and the City of San Antonio, it felt compelled to bring both cities into any traffic discussions. Consequently, the District was willing to entertain a meeting to work out the logistics. Current traffic concerns and any proposed options such as the proposed Street Barricade Plan equally merit a discussion between the District, the City of Leon Valley, the City of San Antonio and Bexar County.

It is also important to know that the City of Leon Valley and the District have met at different times, especially during construction of the latest building, in a collaborative way to address concerns. We will continue our commitment in working together to address issues.

Second, given broader concerns over accessibility to the school and community, especially during a potential catastrophic event (*e.g.*, like the events at Uvalde and Santa Fe ISDs) that requires multiple agencies to respond, the District again believes that the City of Leon Valley should also reach out to its own Police, Fire and EMS Departments, the City of San Antonio's Police, Fire and EMS Departments along with the Bexar County Sheriff's Department and share the proposed Street Barricade Plan and seek their input. The District fully understands the City of Leon Valley has complete jurisdiction of their roadways. However, looking at the broader picture, the District feels certain the first responders from the City of Leon Valley, the City of San Antonio and Bexar County would want to weigh in since they

will be impacted when providing critical service to Marshall High School and the Leon Valley and San Antonio communities.

Third, the District is concerned about certain traffic engineering issues. The blocked points will, of course, require signage at both blocked locations and prior to the blocked locations. The signage will include either "No Outlet" or "Dead End" barricade signs that must meet the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. However, and more importantly, since each side of the barricade will not automatically be a cul-de-sac, Section 5C.11 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices states that "these signs should be placed at a location that gives drivers of large commercial or recreational vehicles an opportunity to select a different route or turn around." At the present time, neither Thunderbird Drive nor Bluebird Lane are wide enough for a turn-around movement by large commercial or recreational vehicles. Therefore, it appears that cul-de-sacs or other turn-around areas will need to be installed which will require the additional acquisition of right-of-way either through negotiation and/or eminent domain, which, of course, adds to the cost of the proposed Street Barricade Plan.

In essence, the District desires to encourage avoidance of actions such as adoption of the proposed Street Barricade Plan that could lead to potential liability.

Accordingly, the District is committed to continue working collaboratively with the City of Leon Valley to find reasonable, practical, effective and cost-conscious traffic safety measures for students and staff at Marshall High School, the surrounding residents and the community at large. The collaboration between the District and the City of Leon Valley, however, requires out of necessity, consideration and prudence that the proposed Street Barricade Plan be reviewed and discussed by all stakeholders including the City of Leon Valley, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County and the surrounding residents that will be impacted by the plan.

Should you like to discuss these matters in more detail, we will make ourselves available to you.

Sincerely,



Brian T. Woods, Ed.D., Superintendent

cc: Leroy San Miguel, Assistant Superintendent for Facilities & Operations