



HILLBROOK SCHOOL

Dear Commissioners,

The following is our annual update to the Planning Commission. This update details our continuing efforts to remain in full compliance with the conditional use permit.

Background

The Town Council approved our current CUP in March 2015. The CUP allowed the school to increase enrollment by granting us a new enrollment cap (414 students), and also created a series of conditions to ensure that we maintained traffic levels consistent with our previous enrollment cap of 315 students. The key provisions included expectations that the school would implement a robust Traffic Demand Management program, limits on evening and nighttime events, limits on the number of sports events on campus, and a daily traffic count that is monitored by a third-party.

Since that approval eight years ago, the school has provided yearly reports to the Planning Commission outlining our compliance. Over the last few years, the Planning Commission has treated the yearly review as a consent agenda item.

This year, for the first time since we received the new CUP, we had several days where we violated the traffic count, a situation we will detail below.



How do we manage our CUP?

We have a robust set of systems in place to meet the conditions of our CUP. In particular, we have designed and implemented a robust and mandatory Traffic Demand Management plan (TDM plan).

Highlights of the plan include:

- A clear expectation for all families that they bike, walk, shuttle, or carpool to school each day.
- A Transportation Coordinator and an Assistant Transportation Coordinator who oversee our TDM and ensure that families understand the expectations and are given support in meeting the requirements.

- Four shuttles that bring students to and from school each day. Overall, more than 40 percent of students are consistently using the shuttles.
- An active carpooling program that includes online maps that help families identify carpool buddies. The Transportation Coordinator supports families looking for carpool matches.
- Extensive signage that reminds people to drive slowly through the neighborhood (25 mph on Lower Marchmont and 15 mph on Upper Marchmont).
- Active participation in Safe Routes to School. Hillbrook is the only private school in Los Gatos that is an active member of this important organization.
- Various measures to encourage employee carpooling and alternative transportation options, including financial incentives for using alternative forms of transportation. We also have daily shuttles for employees from off-site parking locations.

Information about the plan are available on our public website for families and for community members - [link here](#).

In addition to managing traffic, we also have taken steps to comply with other key parts of the CUP. In particular, the school has:

- Posted the exception days and a list of the evening events for the 2022-23 school year on our publicly accessible neighborhood section of our website as of August 1, 2022 - [link here](#). As is noted in the Spring monitoring report, we did shift one of the days after the August 1 deadline. We share additional thoughts below about the challenges of this process and our ongoing efforts to best manage it.
- Structured our athletic program so that we only have athletic contests on campus at most three days a week and only two days outside
- Installed and continued to monitor the traffic count monitoring system as approved by the Town of Los Gatos.
- Worked with the Los Gatos Parks & Public Works department to ensure approval of any new bus stops as explained in the CUP.
- Enrolled no more than the 414 maximum number of students for the 2018-19 school year. As of the first day of school, September 1, 2023 we had 350 students enrolled.
- Reduced our summer programs to be in compliance with the requirements described in the CUP.

As a school, we have shared with our families the history of the CUP and the reasons why it is important that they actively participate in our TDM. The following [document](#) provides a short background and reminds parents of the importance of being good neighbors.

The following are the exception days for the 2023-24 school year (days in which the school can have up to 480 cars exiting campus):

Family Fun Night - September 8, 2023
 Back To School Night - September 14, 2023
 Winter Concert - December 20, 2023
 8th Grade SIL Impact Summit - February 1, 2024

New JK/K Family Event - May 9, 2024
8th Grade Musical - May 16th, 2024
8th Grade Musical - May 17th, 2024
Alumni Celebration - May 31, 2024

The following are the evening & weekend events for the 2023-24 school year:

Family Fun Night - September 8, 2023
Back To School Night - September 14, 2023
Board/Employee Dinner - October 18th, 2023
Winter Concert - December 20, 2023
Open House - January 20th, 2024
8th Grade SIL Impact Summit - February 1, 2024
8th Grade Musical - May 16th, 2024
8th Grade Musical - May 17th, 2024
Alumni Celebration - May 31, 2024
8th Grade Recognition Ceremony - June 3rd, 2024

Traffic Challenges during the 2022-23 school Year

The Planning Commission will see when it reviews our traffic from the 2022-23 school year that we had six days when we exceeded the daily cap of 880 cars (one in the Fall and five in the Spring). The following are the results as reported in the W-Trans reports for the Fall and Spring.

October 26, 2022 - 900 daily trips captured on Sensy, 895 on tube counter
March 17, 2023 - 898 daily trips capture on Sensys, 875 on tube counter
March 21, 2023 - 934 daily trips captured on Sensy, 882 on tube counter
March 28, 2023 - 940 daily trips counted on Sensys, 901 on tube counter
March 29, 2023 - 888 daily trips counted on Sensys, 835 on tube counter
April 18, 2023 - 884 daily trips counted on Sensys, 881 on tube counter

As a school, we have looked hard at the violations last year, the first time since the Town approved our CUP in 2015 that we exceeded the daily cap. First, we want to acknowledge that on four of the six days we recognize we exceeded the car count. As a school, we have worked hard to understand what happened on those days and to make adjustments to ensure as best as possible that we do not exceed the car count on future days. Looking at the days in March and April, we struggled to manage what was an incredibly rainy stretch of days. We are looking at ways to better prepare for the rainy season this year, including creating a new position at the school that is paying close attention to managing activities on campus each day.

We also want to offer insight into the dynamics of the Sensys counter. As W-Trans shared in its report, "It is noted that the normal daily vehicle trips from the houses located adjacent to Hillbrook School on Marchmont Drive have the potential to also be detected by the Sensys counters." To be clear, the

counters are outside of our gates meaning that they pick-up some cars every day that do not come onto campus (see Appendix A, diagram of traffic counters). The number of cars has increased over the last few years. A review of the data from the W-trans for both the Fall and the Spring shows that on all 6 days in which they recorded video, the Sensys Count was higher, with an average of 28 trips in the Fall and an average of 37 trips in the Spring. You will see a similar trend on the days where you compare Sensys to our tube counter, with every day showing a higher Sensys count.

In general it is not an issue, as we are under the 880 count on the vast majority of days. On days that we are close, however, the additional cars come into play. With that in mind, we would ask you to rely on the tube counter to more accurately capture the car count on those days. As noted above, we recognize that the tube counter shows we violated on four of the days (October 26, March 21, March 28, April 18). We would respectfully ask the Planning Commission to use the tube counter on the other two days (March 17 and March 29) to verify we did not exceed the car count. In addition, as we explain in the next paragraph, March 29 traffic was higher because we had to move an evening event from March 30 to March 29. Thus, we had an exception day on March 30 that was supposed to account for the increased traffic that took place on March 29.

As noted above, we also want to offer an explanation for the switch in our calendar following its publication on August 1. In particular, we moved our 8th grade SIL Impact Summit from Thursday, March 30 to Wednesday, March 29, in order to support an adjustment in our Reach Beyond Week travel plans that had not been clear prior to the Fall. In addition, we moved our Alumni Celebration from Friday, May 12 to Friday, June 2, as our 8th graders, who participate in the event, were on a class trip on Friday, May 12. While we do our best to have all plans in place by August 1, we want to stress how complicated that can be given the many moving parts of a school, and, in the end, we sometimes have to make shifts.

The Planning Commission will also note that we only listed eight exception days for the 2023-24 school year. The reality is that over these past seven years, we have found only a limited number of days that we can predictably expect to exceed the car count. We respectfully request that the Planning Commission consider allowing us more flexibility in managing our 10 exception days.

We continue to work hard to effectively manage the CUP, and, most importantly, we continue to make a concerted effort to be a positive member of the greater Marchmont neighborhood and the Los Gatos community.

Sincerely,

Mark Silver
Head of School

Shannon Hunt-Scott
Chair, Board of Trustees



289 Marchmont Dr.

293 Marchmont Dr.

Sensys Car Counters

Hillbrook Front Gate

Tube Counter

Construction Vehicles

Marchmont Dr.



HILLBROOK'S CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

A History & Overview

Many families have likely heard, at some point during their time at Hillbrook, about the CUP. Indeed, one of the most common questions we are asked is, "What exactly is the CUP and why does the Town of Los Gatos create limits on traffic coming on and off campus?" We wanted to take this opportunity to provide some background for families and to help people understand the history behind the CUP and the ways we can continue to come together as a community to both actively utilize our campus as a community hub AND comply with the traffic conditions in our CUP.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND

Every business (restaurants, stores, private schools) has a conditional use permit (CUP). Our current CUP was approved in 2015, after a lengthy process with the Town of Los Gatos. Under the school's previous CUP, we had an enrollment cap of 315 students, which significantly limited our ability to provide the educational program that we envisioned for our students.

Thus, in 2012, we approached the Town and applied to modify our CUP, with a request to increase our enrollment cap from 315 to 414. Over the next few years, we worked closely with neighbors and the Town to reach an agreement. Many long meetings at both the Planning Commission and the Town Council ensued, with members of our community passionately supporting our efforts and neighbors just as passionately raising concerns about traffic. The final result granted the school our request for the new enrollment cap in exchange for revised conditions limiting traffic, campus hours, nighttime events, and summer programming.

The dynamic program we have developed over the last 8 years, including our reach beyond programming inspired and led by the Scott Center for Social Entrepreneurship and our robust co-curricular program particularly in the Middle School, would not have been possible without the financial and programmatic development we were able to provide through growth. Expansion has significantly strengthened our program, our school, and our community.

At the same time, the CUP approved by the Town of Los Gatos in 2015 creates certain challenges for our operations that we have worked hard to manage. Under the CUP, the Town of Los Gatos requires Hillbrook to comply with the following key conditions:

- **We can have a maximum of 440 trips off campus each day.** A counter installed in the street outside our gates counts each vehicle as it leaves campus. This counter is operational throughout the year (24/7/365).
- **We are allowed 10 exception days** which are shared with the Town of Los Gatos in August. On those exception days we can have up to 480 trips off campus each day (960 trips total).
- **We are allowed 10 nighttime or weekend events each year** which are also shared with the Town of Los Gatos in August.
- **Summer programs are limited to 6 contiguous weeks** and summer hours for students on campus are limited to 9 am - 1 pm.
- **Hillbrook families are asked NOT to drop-off or pick-up in the neighborhood immediately surrounding the school**

Each year in late October or early November we have a public meeting with the Planning Commission of the Town of Los Gatos where we review our compliance with the CUP. As part of that process, the Town reviews a study produced by a transportation consultant that reviews our traffic from throughout the year. Over the past eight years, those yearly meetings have gone exceedingly well and the last few years they have been approved as part of the consent agenda, a strong sign of the positive relationship we have developed with our neighbors and our school's success in meeting the conditions.

HOW FAMILIES CAN SUPPORT

As a school, we have developed a robust **Transportation Demand Management** plan with two goals - continue to actively use our campus as a community hub for families AND comply with the CUP conditions required by the Town of Los Gatos.

The most important thing that all families can do is try to arrive and leave campus in the morning and afternoon in one of four ways:



Carpool



Bus



Bike/Skate



Walk

By minimizing traffic during those time periods, we have more flexibility to have families coming on campus for events and activities at other times of day. Put another way, the more we can collectively support these efforts, the more we can fully utilize the campus as a community hub.

In addition, as families know, we sometimes have Green Participation Days when we draw particular attention to transportation. These days are tied to events and activities where we

expect to have higher than usual traffic on campus, and thus on those days it is critically helpful for families to be mindful of their transportation choices.

We have a detailed [resource board](#) for families to help you better utilize one of the four preferred ways - carpool, bus, bike, walk - to come on and off campus. In the resource board you will find:

- **Tips for finding a carpool.** Please note that you can use Family Maps in the directory to find people who live near you. We have seen many beautiful, multi-grade, family friendships develop through the years through carpools! Need help approaching a family? Front Office Assistant Deborah McCollum or Director of Afterschool, Summer & Transportation Programs Nicholle Cabarloc will be happy to support.
- **Shuttle routes and times.** We have four routes serving Los Altos, Los Gatos, San Jose (Rose Garden, Cambrian, Willow Glen and Almaden), and Santa Clara and our Transportation Team works each year to design routes that best support families. Each route includes stops near campus which can be an ideal way for a family to not drive onto campus in the morning and afternoon.
- **Information about afternoon Shuttles** to Shir Hadash and our new Athletic Game Shuttles, which enable families to park at Shir Hadash and take a shuttle up and back from campus.

So what are the best ways families can support?

- **Actively participate** in our Traffic Demand Management (TDM) plan for arrival and departure each day. All children are encouraged to arrive and leave campus by shuttle, in a carpool, on a bike, or by walking.
- **Use the shuttle to the Shir Hadash** stop in the late afternoons, particularly if you are a Middle School student participating in afterschool activities. Lower School students in Extended Care or participating in afterschool activities are also encouraged to participate in the TDM plan when leaving campus in the afternoon.

In the end, our primary goal remains very clear - enable our community to utilize our extraordinary campus as a community hub for activities and events. With everyone's support and flexibility, we can make that happen.

