

FAQs: Sunnyside School and Sunnyside Park

1. What is the Sunnyside property?

The Sunnyside property is a former elementary school site located at 880 Manzanita Drive in Los Osos. The site covers about 12 acres with school buildings, playing fields, and play areas. Some buildings are leased to tenants, including a Waldorf school. Sunnyside has become a central focus for local efforts to address the severe shortage of community park space in Los Osos.

2. Does Los Osos need another community park?

Yes. Los Osos suffers from a shortage of community parks, with just one six-acre park serving the entire area. The 12-acre Sunnyside School property, located next to the existing park in the heart of Los Osos, is for sale and represents a unique opportunity. If the community acquires it, most of the Sunnyside property would become parkland providing new fields, playgrounds, open spaces, and other park amenities.

3. Who is selling the Sunnyside property?

The property is being sold by the San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD), which recently declared it surplus. Sunnyside closed in 2002.

4. How much is the School District asking for the property and what will the School District do with the money?

The School District is asking \$6 million dollars. When sold the use of the proceeds is restricted by law. Proceeds cannot be used for ongoing salaries, operating expenses and other recurring expenses, nor for general administrative costs. They may be used for one-time expenses.

5. How is the Los Osos Community Services District involved?

The Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSA) is trying to acquire the entire Sunnyside School property from the San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD). Their goal is to turn the site into Sunnyside Park—a multi-purpose public space offering recreation, sports fields, community buildings, and open space for Los Osos residents.

6. How is the value of the property established?

The value of Sunnyside was established through a professional appraisal conducted on behalf of School District. The site was appraised at a value between five and half and six million dollars. The assessment considered market comparisons and potential redevelopment, in accordance with California state law and appraisal standards.

7. What will happen to Sunnyside if the LOCSA does not acquire it?

If LOCSA does not acquire Sunnyside, it could be sold for private development. Options include residential housing or commercial uses, but there is strong community concern that a sale to non-public buyers would mean the loss of a unique place for a community park.

8. Why do we have to buy Sunnyside when we paid to build it originally?

Sunnyside School is a valuable real estate asset owned by the San Luis Coastal Unified School District. Since Sunnyside is no longer needed by the School District, their priority is to sell the property to obtain revenue for the education of children. If the LOCSA does not make an acceptable offer to buy Sunnyside, the School District is legally entitled to sell the property to the highest bidder for private development. That is why the community will have to buy the property if it wants Sunnyside School for a park and other community needs.

9. Who will own Sunnyside Park if bought for public use?

If the sale goes through, the Los Osos Community Services District will own Sunnyside Park. The ownership will be public, with the LOCSA holding the title on behalf of the community. If Sunnyside is not sold to the Community Services District, it will be developed privately.

10. Who will manage Sunnyside?

If sold to LOCSA, management of Sunnyside Park will be the responsibility of the Los Osos Community Services District. The Community Services District plans to oversee ongoing operations, maintenance, and improvements for the site. They may collaborate with local nonprofits for some aspects.

11. How will the cost to acquire, operate, maintain and improve Sunnyside be paid?

These costs will be paid by the community through a parcel tax, if one is approved in an election.

12. How much will the parcel tax be?

A \$15 monthly parcel tax per household is the estimate to fund the purchase, operations, maintenance, and improvement of Sunnyside. The purchase cost component- about 45%- of this amount sunsets after 15 years, leaving an ongoing monthly cost of \$8 for operations, maintenance and improvements.

13. How will improvements to the property be decided and prioritized?

Improvements to Sunnyside Park will be decided through a combination of community input, advisory board recommendations, and technical analysis. The Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSD) and Los Osos Community Advisory Council (LOCAC) have held public meetings and are conducting surveys to gather feedback from residents on their priorities for park amenities, recreation needs, and site improvements. Engineering consultants like the Wallace Group are providing cost and feasibility analyses. Residents will continue to be encouraged to provide input through surveys and meetings. Ultimately, the LOCSD Board will consider this combined input and analysis in setting priorities.

14. What is San Luis Obispo County doing to help Los Osos acquire Sunnyside?

San Luis Obispo County has discussed Sunnyside, but due to budget constraints, it is not involved in any financial way with the purchase of the property.

15. Have negotiations with the San Luis Coastal Unified School District about Sunnyside been completed?

Negotiations with the San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD) are still ongoing.

16. Is there a proposed plan for development and improvement of Sunnyside into Sunnyside Park?

Preliminary concept plans by consultants, the Wallace Group, have been presented at a public town hall meeting. These proposals include options for sports fields, open space, community buildings, and additional amenities. The design and development plan is not finalized and will depend on further community input and budget considerations. Community members are encouraged to participate in surveys and town halls to shape the final plan. The preliminary concept plan is available at locsd.org

17. Will the property be connected to recycled or purple water?

While the County has undertaken projects to convert some Los Osos sites to recycled ("purple") water for irrigation as part of its broader groundwater management and sustainability effort, Sunnyside is not currently part of that effort. If acquired, the LOCSD will seek funding and assistance to connect to "purple water".

18. What happened to the "Pool Money" that was donated to build a swimming pool?

Back in the mid-1990's, there were two accounts set up to fund the community swimming pool. Approximately \$250,000 was collected by the County from a pre-Proposition 218 property tax which was terminated after one year and about \$50,000 collected from donations by a non-profit to support the pool building effort. A portion of the \$50,000 was used to fund a feasibility study for the location of the pool. The conclusions of the study were not positive, so the remainder of the money was donated to the City of Morro Bay to provide swimming opportunities for Los Osos at Morro Bay High School. The property tax funds that were transferred from the County to the Los Osos Community Services District were placed in a reserve account dedicated to recreational use. The LOCSD has added additional funds to the recreational reserve account, which has maintained a balance of about \$250,000 or more over the years. Some funds from this account are being used to obtain the information needed by the community for a decision about Sunnyside.

19. Will there also be an increase in the fire tax next year?

Yes, an increase of about \$10 to \$12 per month is likely. While fire and emergency services are essential for community safety, community parks are essential for physical and mental health, social connection and community well-being across all ages. Creating Sunnyside Park will provide accessible outdoor recreation, sports fields, open space, and social facilities. Acquiring and developing Sunnyside for public use is not just another expense; it is an essential investment in the future of Los Osos that cannot be replicated by private development.

20. Is there an online source for additional information?

Further information, including detailed survey results, will be available at locsd.org or locac.info.