



COUNTY OF SAN BENITO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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January 28, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
Committee
State Capitol, Room 5094
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget &
Fiscal Review
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Budget Priorities for San Benito County for the 2022-2023 State Budget Act

Dear Committee Chairs Skinner and Ting:

On behalf of the San Benito County Board of Supervisors, thank you for your work and commitment to improving the lives of all Californians. San Benito County submits this letter for your consideration to highlight some of San Benito County's most crucial budget priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

As you are aware, the State of California is expected to have a sizable surplus of almost \$46 billion. Unfortunately, the needs of our community continue to grow to the point that we have exhausted all of our local resources, with no remaining avenues for relief for needed significant capital improvements. We ask that the Legislature make a considerable investment in our County's parks, homeless facilities, and local governmental facilities, these improvements are beyond our local resources at the present time, but are paramount to our county residents' quality of life. For these reasons and many more, we ask for your consideration of the following projects when allocating resources as part of the State's budget process.

1. Parks: \$14,646,420

The first Regional Park in San Benito County has received much interest from the public. We request additional funding to complete the entire build-out of this park. Serving as a multi-use facility, this regional park will feature amenities such as bicycle facilities, sports facilities, a playground, and fitness facilities for our residents. Combined with the natural beauty of the location and an accessible trail system that doubles as the region's first official cross-country facility, Riverview Regional Park will attract both in and out-of-county visitors. Designed to accommodate all cultures, Riverview Regional Park will be the first park in the county to include bilingual signage for the convenience of our visitors/residents. Additional features include a "food court" area and a remote control racetrack, which offer our constituents private/public partnerships and local employment opportunities. The concept plan has been developed and approved by the Board of Supervisors, the County Parks Commission, our local partners, the San Benito County High School District, the San Benito County Health Foundation, and Recreation

Exercise & Community Health (R.E.A.C.H.). The remaining features of Riverview Regional Park can be realized for **\$9 million**.

The Regional Park will be connected on a future river trail to a second park to be developed. Sunnyside Park will be the first waypoint on the future river trail, on land which the County already possesses. Sunnyside Park is located on both sides of Hospital Road and is currently under design. The county has secured \$800,000 for the park's initial construction. This first phase will offer sporting opportunities, multiple playgrounds, and trails. The ultimate design is achievable with additional funding of **\$1 million**, which would allow the County to develop a dog park component and expand the picnic facilities. Future phases will create a pedestrian tunnel under Hospital Road, providing a grade-separated pedestrian access to both sides of the facility.

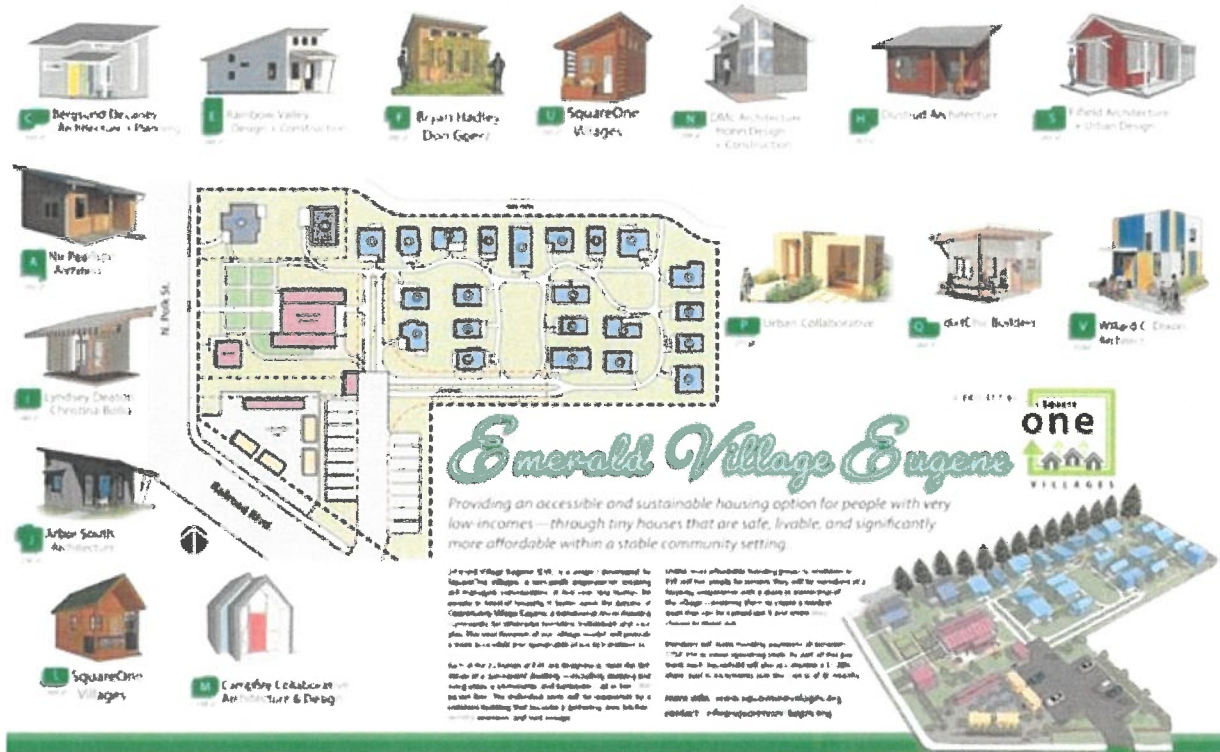
Veterans Memorial Park is in the heart of the City of Hollister and is very heavily used by our youth and many recreational teams. The fields are maintained by the community, as the soccer and baseball league, the current restrooms are outdated and on a septic system. In order to replace the bathrooms and demolish the current system, the County would need to add the required plumbing, water, and system to connect to the City of Hollister's sewer system at a cost of approximately **\$3.9 million**.

The County's Historical Park, located one mile south of Tres Pinos, serves as a recreational and educational gem in San Benito County. This park contains a historical village, a San Benito County Historical Society project, that allows visitors to transport back in time and visit an old schoolhouse, a dance hall, a firehouse, a bar, a livery stable and barn, and to view a wide variety of antique farm implements. An indoor model train track under construction will include a replica of the Hollister-Tres Pinos line, which was used to haul hay from the southern end of San Benito County into the "big city." The restrooms at the Historical Park are also in need of replacement. All needed improvements are estimated to cost **\$1.3 million**.

2. Tiny Home Project for the County's Homeless Population: \$14,579,900

The Tiny Home Village project would support homeless individuals and families with permanent supportive housing and transitional housing coupled with case management and supportive services. Although emergency shelters and encampments are a critical need, chronic homelessness will continue to be an issue without permanent housing solutions. A Tiny Home Village model has been discussed for years as a transitional housing option within the county. Homeless individuals housed in permanent supportive housing will also receive case management and supportive services to increase their probability of housing retention by addressing their personal needs. This project will follow the Housing First Model. Clients are provided housing and will also receive the necessary services to address their personal needs.

The Tiny Village Project consists of 50 units, 250 to 300 square feet of permanent housing in each unit, a 2,000-3,000 square foot office & multi-purpose room, and related infrastructure costs. In addition, the requested funds will be used to convert an existing building into temporary housing units for homeless families as transitional housing. Case Management, supportive services, housing navigation, job training, and housing placement will all be provided while clients are participating in the transitional housing program. An example of a Tiny Village project in Eugene, Oregon, is shown below:



The County's ultimate vision is to reduce homelessness by fifty percent (50%) in the next five years. To accomplish this, the County's low-income housing inventory and housing for homeless individuals and families must increase through more significant investments for permanent supportive housing.

3. County Facilities: \$137,943,000

The County would also like to improve the county's downtown campus due to significant existing needs. A new government campus would include the construction of two new buildings, which would house the new library, as well as offices for the District Attorney, Probation, Clerk/Auditor/Recorder/Elections, Treasurer/Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, County Counsel, and Administration departments. The proposed plan involves demolishing and replacing most existing facilities at this location except the Administration Building. The current Administration Building would be repurposed to house other departments, such as Information Technology. Both buildings would be 50,000 square feet. The first would include a new campus library, government offices, a parking garage with 253 spaces. The second would provide additional government campus offices. The total estimated cost for this project is **\$136.243 million**.

The San Benito County Free Library Building houses all the operations of the existing County Library, which also serves the City of Hollister. The County of San Benito owns the 15,570 Gross Square Feet (GSF) single-story library. A Facility Condition Index survey conducted in 2020 found this building condition in poor condition. A 2016 Library Needs Assessment has identified the current 7,000 GSF of service space as supporting an occupancy of only 43 individuals at a time. The Free Library serves more than 114,000 public visitors each year. Building one will include a new Library with a 25,000 square feet footprint and would cost **\$16.6**

million. The table below outlines the entire government campus in terms of facilities, square feet, and estimated cost.

New Government Campus			
Facility Type	Phase	Size Square Feet	Conceptual Estimate
Building No. 1 (Library, Offices, garage)	1	50,000	\$68,159,000
Building No. 2 (Offices)	2	50,000	\$65,363,000
Renovate Administration Building	3	10,879	\$ 2,721,000
Total Project Cost- in escalated dollars			\$136,243,000

The San Benito County Facilities Master Plan also identified safety and security concerns at county owned buildings that must be addressed. The safety improvement planned include adding secure lobbies in various facilities, adding electronic security systems, additional on-site and external (parking) lights, and improvements to doors. The assessment found **\$1.7 million is** required to address safety and security deficiencies.

As the State contemplates where to invest its resources, the Board respectfully asks you consider the lack of resources and funding historically allocated to San Benito County and the incredibly positive impact State investments to local infrastructure would have in San Benito County. The County hopes the State will partner with the County to continue to provide an equitable, sustainable, and bright future for our residents.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these requests, please do not hesitate to contact our County Advocate, Michelle Rubalcava from Nielsen Merksamer Parrinello Gross & Leoni, LLP at mrubalcava@nmgovlaw.com or (916) 446-6752.

Respectfully,

Bob Tiffany
Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors
Board of Supervisor, 4th District
San Benito County

CC: The Honorable Senator Anna Caballero
The Honorable Assembly Member Robert Rivas