

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Shad S. Springer, Director of Utilities

DATE: December 2, 2025

SUBJECT: Adoption of a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Santa Maria-Bonita School District for Utility Connection and Service Outside of City Boundaries

Description:

The City Council will consider approving an agreement for utility connection and service outside of City boundaries with Santa Maria-Bonita School District.

Environmental Notice: Environmental Review for this project was completed by the Santa Maria Bonita School District through the preparation of an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH #2024010761) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines. The Santa Maria-Bonita School Board of Education adopted the MND on May 8, 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt a Resolution approving an Agreement with Santa Maria-Bonita School District for Utility Connection and Service Outside of City Boundaries to permit connection for service of potable (domestic) water to Bonita Elementary School site, 2715 West Main Street; and
2. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute agreement.

BACKGROUND:

Bonita Elementary School, part of the Santa Maria-Bonita School District (District), is located at 2715 West Main Street. The school lies outside of City of Santa Maria (City) boundaries and outside the City's sphere of influence.

The school currently relies on an onsite groundwater well for its potable water. However, that existing water well source was found to have nitrate levels exceeding the maximum contaminant level, leading to a citation by Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services. Subsequently, the State Water Resources Control Board identified the system as a public health threat.

To mitigate the nitrate issue, the District requested to connect to the City's water system for potable water service. On June 4, 2024, the City Council authorized the Director of Community Development to apply and submit an application to the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for an out-of-agency domestic water service agreement with the District. On March 6, 2025, LAFCO approved the request.

On August 27, 2024, the City submitted a letter of intent to the State Water Resources Control Board to demonstrate the City's intent to supply drinking water through consolidation with the City's water system (Attachment "B").

DISCUSSION:

An Agreement for Utility Connection and Service Outside of City Boundaries (Attachment "C") has been drafted to allow the District to connect to the City's water system and provide domestic water service to Bonita Elementary School. The District approved the agreement at its meeting on November 12, 2025. The following are key provisions of the agreement:

- The District shall be responsible for installing all appropriate cross connection protection devices as determined by the City.
- The District shall connect to the City's utility services in compliance with the City's standards, specifications, and Municipal Code.
- The District shall be responsible for attaining all appropriate permits and constructing all necessary connections, piping, and appurtenances to provide service from the City's water system to the District's property.
- The District shall pay all costs of installation, connection, and use of a City meter and all fees applicable for a metered service to the City's water system.

In addition, the District agrees to waive its right to object to or protest any future annexation of the property into the City.

Alternatives

The City Council could choose not to approve the Agreement for Utility Connection and Service Outside of City Boundaries with the District. The District would then be required to pursue other potential options for potable water, such as drilling a deeper well or providing source treatment to the existing well. These options may be more expensive for the District. Furthermore, the City Council authorized the LAFCO application and LAFCO has approved the provision of City water service to the District.

Fiscal Considerations

In addition to mandatory connection fees, the District will be required to pay for and install all necessary infrastructure improvements required to facilitate the connection to the City's water system. These requirements will be a condition of their encroachment permit and fees collected at the time of application.

Impact on the Community

Approval of this agreement will eliminate a known public health threat by providing a safe and reliable potable water source to Bonita Elementary School, thereby protecting the health and safety of its students and faculty.

Impact on the City

The agreement addresses a public health threat to a public school in the Santa Maria Valley with minimal impact on the City's water system.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- A. Resolution
- B. Letter of Intent to Water Board
- C. Agreement