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School District Partners with TAIT & Associates to Bridge Generational Gap



Developer TAIT & Associates will break ground on a brand new 233 unit senior living facility in Old Town Orcutt before August 2022, with phase one of the project scheduled to be completed sometime between June 2023 and April 2024. The facility will provide multiple levels of care for residents, workforce housing, a preschool and daycare facility, and a playground adjacent to an existing park.

Approximately eighteen percent

of Orcutt's roughly 29,000 person population is 65 or older. Seniors over the age of 65 make up 14.9 percent of Santa Barbara County's population, which numbers more than 448,000 people.

The 9.53-acre lot on Soares Ave. is between Dyer Street and South First Street. It lies two blocks south of Orcutt's downtown area, with schools, parks, a library, shopping, and fine dining all within a one-mile radius.

The Orcutt Union School District

acquired Key Site 17 in 2001 and initially planned it as a primary grade level school site. However, due to declining enrollment, the District conducted an asset management plan in 2006, focusing on utilizing vacant or underutilized district properties to generate revenue for future needs.

After May 2007, the District convened a 7-11 committee, which, after studying several options for the use of the parcel, recommended to the board of trustees that it pursue a ground lease to develop the parcel for use as senior housing. TAIT & Associates received Board approval to act as a lease agent in December 2019.

The project will bridge intergenerational learning environments for both students and senior citizens. According to Bill Young, OUSD Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, the vision may include junior high or high school career technical training, student work experience, internships, and opportunities for seniors to volunteer at OUSD schools.

Young says the District selected TAIT because it presented a concept that compliments Old Orcutt in design and function.

In a District press release, Trevor Tait (TAIT & Associates) said, "We are absolutely thrilled to have been selected by Orcutt Union School District to develop Key Site 17. Our goal is simple – to develop a project that will be cherished by the District and the entire community of Orcutt for generations to come. At every point in this journey, our team has been inspired by the mission of Orcutt Union School District. In addition to creating a vibrant and dynamic senior community, our project will seek to nurture, educate, empower, and inspire children of Orcutt Union School District."

A virtual walkthrough of the conceptual design is available online at orcuttschools.net. The architect's rendering of the site has yet to be approved. A final draft of the plans is still to come.

Kristen C. Tiessen reporting