



August 26, 2024

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Reno
One East First Street
Reno, Nevada

Delivered electronically to:

Dear Mayor Schieve and Members of the Reno City Council:

Thank you all so much for reaching out for the Washoe County School District's input on your upcoming Title 18 update. At your next discussion of this topic (August 28, item D.1), staff is seeking your guidance on a number of topics, including those that affect the construction of new schools.

Our understanding is that a proposed update could change standards to require a Conditional Use Permit for all new schools with more than 400 students. It appears that such a proposed change is partially in response to the conversations the WCSD team had with City of Reno staff and Councilmembers. Thank you for understanding some of the holes in the system and your swift action to try to amend the zoning code.

To that end, we wish to offer some feedback for the proposal. Currently, the proposal would apply to public, charter, and private schools alike. However, public schools already are subjected to multiple, public hearings and approval processes through elected or appointed officials – all of which require outreach to the community and must follow Open Meeting Law. Additionally, public schools must report to a board that is publicly elected; projects must be reviewed and approved by the Capital Funding Protection Committee on which sits two City of Reno Councilmembers; and long-term planning for school siting must be approved by the TMRPA.

As such, while we believe it would be appropriate to apply public process to private and charter entities, which require no such engagement, we do not believe it is necessary to apply this to a fellow government within your jurisdiction. Nor do we believe that subjecting public schools to yet another layer of oversight beyond what you already provide is your intent.

To remedy this deficiency, WCSD proposes you mirror the TMRPA's recently adopted language on the same topic. This language would conform to your regional priorities (the whole board supported this set up, including all three of the City's appointees), allow stability in the language, and address the issues that came up at your last approval.



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550 West Plumb Lane, Suite B242 Reno, Nevada 89509



Thank you again for the opportunity to weigh in on this issue and to use the School District's expertise and knowledge in this area to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tess Opferman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tess" being more prominent.

Tess Opferman
Manager of Government Affairs