

# Tatum property gets paved pathway

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A dirt path used as an unofficial route to school by students of El Camino Elementary and San Marcos High schools has been replaced with a paved walkway, just in time for the new school year.

"We used to have a primitive dirt path here, and now we have a beautiful, paved all-weather surface pathway for the kids to use to go from their homes to El Camino, and to go from their homes to San Marcos High School," Santa Barbara County Public Works Director Scott McGolpin said, gesturing to the pathway behind him.

Mr. McGolpin said that the unimproved trail replaced by the pathway was often flooded and impassable during the winter. The pathway stretches 1,300 feet across the Tatum property, a 23-acre piece of vacant land that has become a haven for the homeless.

The ribbon was cut on the 10-foot-wide pathway on Monday by 2nd District County Supervisor Janet Wolf, who has been leading efforts to build the route for two years.

"This is Janet Wolf's project," said Santa Barbara Unified School District Superintendent David Cash. "She really made this happen."

Ms. Wolf said that she and others first began speaking of the need for a new pathway across the property when she was on the board of the Goleta Union School District. A series of crimes in the area in 2012 and 2013 led to a meeting between her, representatives Santa Barbara Unified and Goleta Union school districts and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department.

The school district was granted an easement across a small corner of land owned by San Marcos Growers, a wholesale nursery. General Manager Randy Baldwin said that he hopes that the greater visibility afforded by the wider pathway and the removal of some trees, as well as more traffic on the walkway, will prevent vandalism.

"It's good for us," he said.

The plan was finally approved in June, and a contract for \$170,000 was awarded to Rockwood General Contractors, Inc. of Arroyo Grande. The total cost of the project, including design work and administration costs, was approximately \$320,000.

The project was funded by Measure A, a half-cent sales tax approved by voters in 2008 to fund transportation projects.

"We always talk about how safety is the most important thing for our children and our families, and this is an exact example of putting that belief into practice," El Camino Principal Liz Barnitz said.

Various proposals have been made over the years to develop the Tatum property, which the school district purchased nearly 50 years ago as the site of a never-built middle school. Development plans were revived last December, when architect Detlev Peikert presented a conceptual plan to build senior housing on the site.

Last week, the Santa Barbara Unified School District Board of Education selected The Towbes Group Inc. and VinCal Senior Housing LLC to develop the land after sending out requests for proposal in April. Towbes representatives will present a plan before the board on Aug. 26.



Children on bicycles use the new paved walkway across the Tatum property in between El Camino Elementary School and San Marcos High School.  
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