

Op-ed: 3 mayors: Jordan bond is premature, too large

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PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 26, 2013 01:01AM

UPDATED: OCTOBER 26, 2013 01:01AM

We in South Jordan, Riverton and Bluffdale have a significant tax burden. Additionally, we also have the responsibility to see our children and our grandchildren are well-educated. We recognize our cities' futures will be directly affected by the quality of education our children receive.

Economic development will be directly impacted if we do not have adequate educational opportunities. Our neighborhoods will experience decline and property values will decrease if school facilities are not properly located and constructed.

That being said, we have substantial concerns with the current \$495 million bond request from Jordan School District. The district has listened to the citizenry and started to develop several committees. If the school district is just starting the process of evaluation and study, the bond proposal seems premature.

The need for schools is critical; however, we must exercise great restraint when asking for nearly half a billion dollars. The passage of such a large bond would have a significant chilling effect on each city's development community.

This may cause many commercial developers to locate elsewhere, which would further exacerbate the lack of commercial tax base in the southwest corner of Salt Lake County.

We ask, instead, for a conservative bond request to construct only buildings that are immediately needed at a reasonable cost, especially considering the slow and yet fragile economic recovery.

We ask the Jordan School District to not only look out for our children and grandchildren, but to consider the parents and grandparents of the children as financial decisions are being made.

The planning committees have the opportunity to create a new paradigm in this complex era of meeting the requirements of education. We would be much more comfortable in creating these committees, designing frameworks that will allow for critical and creative dialogue to create this new educational paradigm. Additionally, we would expect a concise well-defined road map for the use of these funds.

We can all work together to find a workable solution which benefits all stakeholders in the Jordan School District and their highly important mission: "To Educate Children." It is critical for the financial sustainability of both Jordan School District and the cities within the district to attract appropriate commercial development.

In a recent presentation district representatives said the lack of substantial commercial development is the reason homeowners have such a substantial education tax burden. Higher taxes could make that situation worse.

We strongly support public education. The Jordan School Board faces a monumental dilemma, one of providing the education needs of our area while respecting the ability of all to shoulder the tax burden. We appreciate the hard work and time spent by school board members considering how best to meet those needs.

We look forward to supporting a future bond that would reflect the findings of the Jordan district committees after they explore creative and efficient types of building design and construction, and consider the advantages of creative and acceptable school schedules.

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