LANDWATCH
MONTEREY COUNTY

October 6, 2026

Mayor Anna Velazquez and City Councilmembers
City of Soledad
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Re: LandWatch comments on Miramonte Fire Station/Police Substation and Citywide Parks Plan - October 7, 2026 Agenda

Dear Mayor Velazquez and Councilmembers:

At your meeting on Wednesday night, staff will be requesting your approval of the Miramonte fire station/police substation and a Citywide parks plan that includes the Miramonte parks. We urge you to provide direction to staff to present the developer's proposals on all elements of the Comprehensive Financing Plan over a series of Council meetings, on a schedule that allows sufficient time for the Council, staff, and the public to study the proposals and provide meaningful input. We believe the City's interests are best served by considering the elements of Miramonte together rather than one at a time.

Design decisions are cost decisions

The staff report states that approving the fire station/police substation and the parks is necessary in order to develop the Comprehensive Financing Plan. We see the sequence differently. Staff may need concept designs in order to estimate costs, but that does not require the Council to approve them. The Council could receive the concepts, direct staff to price their construction and long-term maintenance, and then act on the designs and the financing together. Approving the designs first fixes the size of the obligation and leaves open only the question of who bears it, which is the question on which the City most needs to keep its leverage.

These facilities are not separate from the financing

Staff also states that the fire station/police substation and the parks are separate from the development agreement. We read the City's conditions of approval differently. Condition 45 of the Miramonte Vesting Tentative Map Resolution, "Finance of Public Improvements and Maintenance," provides:

> "[P]rior to City Council approval of the first final map and improvement plans, the developer(s) shall have prepared, at their expense, a Comprehensive Financing Plan, subject to City Staff review and City Council approval. The Comprehensive Financing Plan shall identify capital improvements necessary to serve the Plan Area and shall allocate funding between impact fees, Mello-Roos Community Facilities District (CFD) bond financing, and may include other potential financing mechanisms. … At a minimum, the following items shall be included in the Comprehensive Financing Plan: Project-specific development impact fee study, including an assessment of ongoing governmental administrative and public safety costs customized to the Miramonte Specific Plan area."

A fire station and police substation are public safety facilities, and they and the parks are capital improvements necessary to serve the Plan Area. Condition 45 places their cost and funding squarely within the Comprehensive Financing Plan. We believe they are best decided together with the agreements on affordable housing, roads, and other infrastructure that draw on the same sources of funds.

Who pays is the question that matters

The Miramonte approval documents contemplate a community facilities district and/or community services district to cover some of these costs. Until the Council knows what the facilities will cost to build and maintain, and how those costs will be divided among the developer, the City, and the future Miramonte residents who will pay the district assessments, it will be difficult to evaluate the effect on existing Soledad residents or on the affordability of homes in the project.

As we explained in our letter of December 15, 2025, special taxes and fees imposed on affordable units erode their affordability. For both rental and for-sale units, the Affordable Housing Agreement must account for community facilities district taxes, community services district fees, and any other special district the developer proposes in order to shift infrastructure costs to future residents. That is hard to do if the facilities driving those costs have already been approved.

The Council and the public need time

We have previously raised concerns that the Council has not been adequately included in staff's negotiations with the Miramonte developer. This item is a good example of what happens when the Council is not consulted as the process unfolds: you are presented with roughly 400 pages of detailed material that will shape key elements of a project the size of a small town, one whose design will help determine whether Soledad remains one community or becomes two. Neither the Council nor the public has had sufficient time to read and analyze it.

Requested action

We respectfully urge the Council to defer action on these items Wednesday night and to direct staff to present the developer's proposals on all elements of the Comprehensive Financing Plan, including cost estimates and the proposed allocation of construction and maintenance costs, over a series of Council meetings that allows time for meaningful study and comment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael Delapa
Executive Director