
Happy Valley Elementary School

Design Committee Meeting #8

PROJECT: Happy Valley Elementary

PROJECT NUMBER: 121-14011

MEETING DATE: August 27, 2014

MEETING LOCATION: Happy Valley Elementary

Members Present:

Anderson, Mike	Holland, Melissa
Angell, Dennis	Howard, Gretchen
Aperule, Tara	Lawyer, Curtis
Blankenship, Melia	Lin, Ming
Cowan, Ron	Love, Brian
D'Hondt, Mike	Moss-Owen, Jamine
DeJong, Jill	Prichard, Tony
Flanagan, Kevin	Rumbaugh, Matt
Gazow, Kurt	Scherrer, Wendy
Dominguez, Kristi	Sterling-Chue, LaVonne
	Tolliver, Karen

Members Absent:

Haberman, Mike
Brawley, Jackie
Caldwell, Thomas
Morse, Steve
Dalton, Mark

A. The agenda for the meeting was to cover three topics:

1. Review and discuss updates to the Building Design.
2. Discuss sustainability and specifically the use of solar panels.
3. Review and discuss site plan options.

B. Building Design Updates and Discussion

1. Matt Rumbaugh and Brian Love briefly reviewed the design process to date and what developments have occurred to the floor plans and exterior appearance of the building in the weeks since the last committee meeting.
2. The floor plans were reviewed and the committee had the following comments:

- The minor adjustments to the layout were appreciated. These included getting a hallway from the Commons to the covered play area, locating the two pre-school rooms adjacent to each other, and the layout of the administration area. The staff room was located on the end of the western classroom neighborhood with an adjacent roof deck. This location was preferred over a more central location that did not have much access to windows or a roof deck. The location of the OTPT space was also reviewed and the central location adjacent the kindergarten and pre-school area is desirable.
 - The covered play area was relocated to become attached to the building adjacent to both the administration and the commons. This change was appreciated and seen as an improvement.
 - The narrower shape of the courtyard between the commons/gym and the classroom area was seen as desirable and a good improvement.
 - The calming room was not shown on the current plans as it was on previous plans. It was noted that it should be added in the general area of the pre-school and kindergarten areas. NAC will re-add the room.
3. An update to the exterior form and some initial thoughts on the exterior materials were shared.
- It was discussed that the classroom and gymnasium portions of the building should be “quieter” and have a varied texture created by cement board lap siding.
 - The more active portion of the building – the connector – has a sloped roof that starts low over the classroom area, slopes above the perpendicular classroom bar (creating space for a mechanical attic), then slopes down towards the administration area and back up to terminate in the covered play area. This connector was shown as both a light (white) color and a terra cotta color (warmer). The general sense was that warmer was preferred but a final decision will be made at a later date when materials and colors are reviewed comprehensively.
 - Possible siding materials were discussed, but a final decision will be made in the future after further review of options for appearance, maintainability, and cost.

C. Sustainability was discussed, most specifically the considerations surrounding solar panels.

1. Matt shared information about the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (WSSP). WSSP is the state’s green building protocol that is equivalent to LEED Silver. The categories in the protocol include those related to Site, Water,
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Materials, Energy, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Planning and Operations. WSSP will be discussed in more detail at future meetings

2. Mike and Ron shared information about the cost and payback associated with solar.
 - Mike and Curtis visited Bellingham Technical College (BTC) to view the solar install and talk with BTC staff. In addition, there have been conversations with staff at Energy Solutions and Western solar.
 - The cost to install a 1,000 square foot (10,000 watt) solar array is approximately \$50,000 (\$5/watt). The payback for the system based on an average of 4 hours/day of solar light, \$0.11/kw electricity savings, \$20,000 in utility incentives (\$5,000/year for 4 years), and \$1,606 electrical savings per year is 18.67 years. To install a solar array that would cover the roof of the new school (approximately 30,000 square feet) the cost would be \$1.5 million and the payback would be 30.7 years, far beyond the warranty and life span of the panels. Based on this the district has concluded that doing a large solar panel array is not cost effective since, as a public agency, they are not eligible for tax credits. A smaller array (10kW or smaller) that can help support teaching and learning is still up for consideration.
3. Teaching staff indicated an interest in utilizing solar panels as part of the curriculum. Ron indicated that he is also reviewing this option with other District staff to determine if the best curricular fit is at the elementary or secondary level. If the better fit is at the secondary level then the Sehome project might be the best application for solar at this time as the \$5,000/year for 4 years incentive can only apply to a single district project.

D. The remaining time was spent discussing 3 alternative site plans.

1. Prior to reviewing the plans Ron acknowledged that there is a lot of energy from people who live on Mill and 27th regarding the plan to have buses and some staff parking access the new school via those two streets. He mentioned the July 21 Advisory Committee meeting (community update meeting) and a second meeting on August 1, where district staff and the architects met with approximately 10 neighbors to explain the district's perspective on the issue. The committee had previously been provided with a copy of the neighborhood petition. Ron shared the 'Guiding Principles' that the district utilizes in planning all school projects (these were also shared with neighbors at the August 1 meeting):
 - The most important is to build highly functional, safe, healthy, efficient buildings that provide strong support to teaching and learning. The district's primary mission is teaching and learning. Effective organizations know what their mission is, never forget it, and hold fast to it.
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- From a budgetary perspective, we try to devote as much of the project budget as possible to spaces that support the primary mission of teaching and learning. That means as much of the budget as possible to places, spaces, and systems where caring, talented staff work with students to help them learn at a high level. It also means to prudently reduce expenditures in other places and spaces and systems.
 - Separate bus and school auto traffic to some degree is a must. There are many private autos that come to school for drop-off and pick-up and when buses and cars vie for the same space it leads to congestion and creates potentially dangerous situations for students. The district has several schools where autos use a separate street from buses to access the school site.
 - Utilize existing public infrastructure as much as possible and build as little new infrastructure as possible in order to devote as much of the project budget as possible to spaces that support the primary mission of teaching and learning.
 - Develop property following all of the required rules and regulations. This is both a responsibility and a right, just as it is for other property owners.
 - Be a good neighbor to the best of our ability in light of competing interests.
2. The three plans differed primarily in how the buses and parking were configured, including which streets are used to access the sites for various functions.
- The current preferred site plan shows a large parking and automobile drop-off accessing the site from 24th and a bus and service access off of 27th including staff parking for approximately 7 cars. The amount of parking located adjacent to 27th was reduced based on previous feedback from the adjacent neighbors. This plan is the preferred direction of the school teachers and administrators as it reduces the total number of vehicles in the vicinity of school thereby reducing overall congestion, reduces the number of turns in front of the school onto 24th from 3 to 1, increases pedestrian safety at the school by reducing the number of driveway crossings from 3 to 1, and provides complete separation between school buses and school auto traffic.
 - The first alternative site plan showed the same large parking and automobile drop-off similar to the current plan, but located the bus drop-off as a semi-circular loop on 24th, similar to the current condition with service access still remaining off of 27th. No buses would use Mill or 27th. One of the challenges with this plan is getting the driveways separated appropriately to meet code while still aligning with existing
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Knox Street. This plan increases the amount of paving/impervious surface, conflicts with the current location of the public bus stop, keeps all the existing turns and congestion near the school on 24th, places bus loading and unloading far from the school (supervision), and moves the building further east creating longer utility runs and more paving.

- The second alternative site plan keeps the large parking and auto drop-off accessing the site from 24th and creates a long driveway along the north property line back to a bus and service loop on the east side of the site. This site plan does not have any vehicle access from 27th. In addition, this plan reduces the number of turns onto 24th from 3 to 2. This plan increases the amount of paving/impervious surface required to build a long driveway to the east side of the site, reduces the size of the grass playfield and does not reduce the number of vehicles on 24th street near the school.
3. Ron Cowan shared that he has reviewed the current plan with City traffic engineers and they do not believe that this plan would require the District to complete a traffic report because of how few vehicles currently utilize Mill and 27th.
 4. The committee spent time discussing this issue further and the people who work at the school and daily observe the morning/afternoon congestion on 24th street due to buses, parent vehicles, neighborhood/university traffic and WTA buses expressed serious concerns about keeping all of the existing traffic on 24th when the new school is built. Concern was expressed about reducing the size of the playfield. Others indicated that they also live on smaller, quiet public streets elsewhere in the city, public streets where school buses travel. They said they have raised children and pets without experiencing any problems from school buses.

E. Conclusions and next steps:

1. Further discussion about the project, including the site plan will continue at a community meeting to be scheduled for September.
 2. Ron will share all 3 plans with the city for feedback.
 3. The next meeting with the design committee will be scheduled for late September or early October.
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