

Meeting #6 Summary – April 16, 2020

I: Welcome and Introductions

Penny Mabie welcomed committee members, provided a walkthrough on logistics and best practices for remote meetings via Zoom, and briefly explained the meeting’s agenda.

II: Draft recommendations

Penny led the committee through the drafted recommendations, put together by the writing team volunteers (An Tran, Tracy Boucher, and Martha Damon), based on discussion from previous FAC meetings. Penny asked the committee for their feedback for each section.

Section 1: When we plan

Comments:

- A baby boom may happen later this year and the data we’ve had presented to us may not account for that spike in births
- Maybe rather than making one set of recommendations we can look at two sets of recommendations: one for five years and one for 20 years out

Q: One of the recommendations stated "reduce need for new schools" – what did that mean? It seems conflicting to propose building/acquiring new space to accommodate high growth while also recommending reducing the need for new schools. Could we change “reduce need for new schools” to “utilize other strategies”?

A: Reducing the need for new schools is listed in the draft as a recommendation from the 2015 Long-Term Facilities Task Force (LTFTF). We’ll look back at the LTFTF recommendations and can revisit if this group agrees with the validity of the recommendation. We as the FAC will be working to develop recommendations that don’t require looking back to old materials to comprehend.

Section 2: When we build

The FAC had no comment to make on this section. **Barbara Posthumus** encouraged committee members to think about the current use of the word “expand” on the recommendations table and to differentiate when a recommendation is to build an addition vs. when a recommendation is to add portables.

Section 3: High school recommendations (all learning communities)

Comments:

- Concerned the FLO Analytics projections for the Lake Washington learning community did not consider subplots. Kirkland recently modified building codes for where townhouses can be built, which could increase growth rate even more. The subject of land availability is going to be important.

- FLO Analytics did do a land use and zoning analysis to identify developable plots of land. If the City of Kirkland recently modified their code then it might not be reflected in those projections. We will follow up with FLO Analytics and the City of Kirkland to confirm.
 - We can also consider a recommendation made by the LTFTF to plan for capacity needs above the current projections – to “future-proof” if capacity needs increase past current projections
 - Need to find a balance between providing space for high capacity needs and desire to keep schools smaller
 - Possible recommendation to have choice schools on opposite ends of boundaries
 - It would be helpful to have resource material to explain the current thinking about the best sizes for schools
 - There were a lot of choice school recommendations in the draft, we should be seriously considering urban schools
 - Concern with choice in that we need to mention accessibility for special education and students on 504 plans
- **ACTION ITEM: Confirm a development code change with the City of Kirkland and follow up with FLO Analytics to learn if a recent code change was included in their projections data.**

Q: There’s quite a difference in the 2015 projections and the projections from FLO Analytics. Has the district looked into why this is?

A: The district has been adding capacity (through portables, interior remodels, new schools, etc.) since 2015 to provide some space for our growing enrollment. In addition, enrollment growth and projections are updated each year. The shortfall numbers therefore shouldn’t be expected be the same as they were five years ago since the district’s capacity and enrollment has changed.

Q: One of the drafted recommendations was to increase capacity of Redmond High School to 2,500 students, though we’ve had discussions about that being too high of a number. What’s the typical high school capacity in this district?

A: This district typically builds for a capacity of 1,800, though many places around the country have high schools of 5,000 that are designed and staffed to feel smaller. The challenge to keep in mind with building for high schools is finding the land to do so.

Section 4: Middle school recommendations (all learning communities)

Comments:

- Do we want to recommend replacing old portables with new portables? There’s a lot of disdain in the community for portables, as we saw in the Thought Exchange survey
- We should not completely rule out adding new portables, we have to think of the cost benefit and other advantages of utilizing portables
 - Perhaps the recommendation should clarify that having new permanent space is prioritized over new portable space, if that’s what the group consensus is
- Northstar Middle School, Renaissance Middle School, and Explorer Community School are great examples of successful schools made entirely of portables – portables have a place

- Not a fair comparison as not all portables have air conditioning and other amenities like these schools were designed for
- We should consider the cost benefit of portables in relation to their lifespan – is it really that affordable in the long run?
- The term “portable” seems outdated – “satellite classroom” or “interim capacity facility” seems more appropriate
 - Changing what we call them may come across as trying to trick people into supporting portables
- Some areas have a smaller need, we should look at adjusting boundaries first – portables can then be a second option for short-term solutions
- The Rose Hill capacity shortfall is represented as a percentage and in the next sentence the capacity for Stella Schola is represented as number of students – perhaps we should use both percentage and student capacity numbers

Q: I remember discussion moving Environmental and Adventure School (EAS) to a new Kamiakin site, why wasn't that in the draft?

A: In the first round of the February 27 workshop both EAS and Stella Schola were discussed as possible schools to move. In the final round the recommendation was narrowed down to moving just Stella Schola to alleviate capacity needs at Rose Hill Middle School.

Q: Is Stella Schola a separate building from Rose Hill Middle School? Would it make sense to move kids from Rose Hill to Stella Schola?

A: Stella Schola is a choice school that was built as one wing of the Rose Hill Middle School building, using 3-4 classrooms. Moving students from Rose Hill to Stella Schola would not alleviate capacity needs.

Section 5: Elementary school recommendations (all learning communities)

Comments:

- It's important to keep in mind the challenges of reboundary when considering it as an option, especially as more multi-unit housing is developed
- The draft mentions expanding elementary schools, but we should discuss how big they should be
 - A capacity of 1,000 seems too large for an elementary school – we should reword the recommendation for Redmond Elementary School, so it doesn't imply one large school but two smaller schools, perhaps one K-2 and one 3-5
 - The district's newest schools, Kirk Elementary School and Mead Elementary School, were built for 690 students
- We should consider the possibility of building vertically where we don't have a lot of space to work with
- We need to be consistent on where we stand with portables – are we recommending portables to alleviate permanent capacity needs or are we recommending them based off the capacity needs with existing portables?

Q: When writing the draft recommendations, did the writing team refer to the capacity needs projections that included use of portables?

A: Yes.

Q: There was previously a recommendation to add an elementary school in Lake Washington learning community, why was it missing from the table?

A: The writing team had referred to the capacity shortfall with portables, which is only 47 for elementary schools in the Lake Washington learning community. The recommendation of adding an elementary school was based on the permanent shortfall of 668. The committee agreed that this recommendation should be added to the table.

Q: Do we have access to information from previous reboundary efforts?

A: The LTFTF did already look at that information when making their recommendations in 2015.

Q: Can we add to the elementary school sections how many classrooms are being used by preschools at each school, since we talk about moving the preschools and using their spaces?

A: That's something the committee can further discuss for consideration. The draft recommendations include acquiring space for preschools in each learning community.

Section 6: Other facilities needs

Comments:

- I think we should look into leasing Redmond Town Center space for preschools

Section 7: If we can't build quite enough

Comments:

- We should document using capital levies as back up to bonds

III: Innovations in school buildings (urban schools, etc.)

Stephen Murakami (OAC Services) and **David Mount** (Mahlum) provided the FAC with a presentation showing examples of innovations in school buildings within the region and throughout the country. The committee was then asked to share any initial questions and comments.

Comments:

- I suggest we consider including sports fields and play space
- For elementary, I have also seen vertical play features in urban areas, that maximize the capacity in outdoor space
- In Dec 2019 LWSD gave us a great document about portables/buildable space. Could the land size for schools be added to this document?
- I'm curious what the safety implications are when sharing park or facility spaces
- I think at the high school level it is possible to have a hybrid model where students only come to school part of the time and some lectures and learning are delivered online. We can leverage our learning during this crisis – I do not think it would work well at middle or elementary school levels
- I liked the light/public spaces in many of the designs
- There were a lot of really interesting ideas in the presentation with a lot of potential options for this district – possibility for a smaller committee of people who want to talk about the alternatives
- I think movement spaces, particularly for elementary but really for every grade, is important

IV: Community engagement

Barbara and **Shannon Parthemer** led a discussion on alternatives for how the FAC could conduct community engagement and outreach, as in-person outreach is no longer feasible for April/May as originally planned. They shared that the next Connections will include an article about the FAC work continuing. Communicating the Thought Exchange results with the community was delayed due to the school closure. Shannon will be posting them to the website and sharing in a future Connections article. Barbara and Shannon asked for the committee's thoughts on the use of FaceBook Live or an online survey as a way to present materials and answer questions, as well as whether the committee would like to conduct outreach within the next couple of months or if they would rather wait until the fall.

Comments:

- I like the idea of doing a FaceBook Live to keep traction going
- We should keep online/remote accessibility in mind – we don't want to be exclusive of anyone who wants to participate
- The district was planning to host an event in the spring with the theme of celebrating the past and looking to the future – could do an early fall event and use this a possible venue to reach out to the community
- Now might not be the right time as a lot of people are feeling overwhelmed, particularly working parents
- I think community engagement in the fall might be better in terms of getting response, and closer timing to a bond/levy proposal
- I think a slide show/survey model could work in the near future to update the community and get some feedback, but I think any kind of open forum/town hall should wait until the fall – I think an opportunity to speak to the district would be co-opted by questions around online learning
- Maybe we could put out a draft, along with key questions for the community such as their thoughts on tolerance for portables, size of schools, etc., and then have further discussion in the fall
- Conducting community engagement now would send the message that business is continuing – that the district is still thinking about this

Final recommendation by the committee was to wait until fall as it might be challenging to get the community to engage or focus on this issue now.

V: Next steps

The next meeting will be held remotely on April 30.

ACTION ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

- ***Confirm a development code change with the City of Kirkland and follow up with FLO Analytics to learn if a recent code change was included in their projections data.***

