mahlum

MEETING MINUTES

PROJECT:	Mercer Island School District Long-Range Facility Plan	**PROJECT NO:**	2019911.00
DATE:	19 December 2019	**FILE NAME:**	M002_FPC2_20191216
SUBJECT:	Facility Planning Committee Meeting 2: Enrollment / Capacity & Facility Condition		
MEETING DATE:	16 December 2019	**TIME:**	5:30 - 8:30 pm
LOCATION:	Quiet Dining Room, Northwood Elementary School		

ATTENDEES:

Facility Planning Committee

- **X** David D'Souza
- **X** Deborah Lurie
- **X** Julie Ogata Ciobanu
- **X** Janelle Honeycutt
- **X** Kristina Mehas
- **X** Steve Duncan
- **–** Amanda Stoffer
- **X** Kim Thomas
- **X** Susan Conrad-Wang
- **X** Kate Wise Knecht
- **X** Dave Cutright
- **X** Carrie Beckner Savage
- **X** Colin Brandt
- **–** Vickie Cleator
- **X** David de Yarza
- **–** Debbie Hanson
- **X** Jim Stanton
- **X** Bob Olson
- **X** Anne Hritzay
- **X** Kathy Morrison
- **X** Pat Turner
- **X** Lena Hardisty
- **X** Will Atkinson
- **X** Lin Hao
- **X** Robin Li
- **X** Gus Poole
- **X** Sandra Levin
- **X** Becky Shaddle
- **X** Zach Houvener
- **X** Tiffin Goodman
- **X** Sgt. Ryan Parr

MISD Support Team

- **X** Donna Colosky
- **X** Fred Rundle
- **–** Erin Battersby
- **X** Andreeves Rosner
- **–** Craig Degginger
- **X** Tony Kuhn
- **X** Ty Bergstrom
- **X** Brandy Fox

Mahlum Team

- **X** LeRoy Landers
- **X** Jennifer Lubin
- **X** JoAnn Wilcox
- **—** Marijana Misic

The following represents the architect's understanding of discussions held and decisions reached in the meeting. Anyone with amendments to these minutes should notify the author within five (5) days of the minutes date in order to amend as appropriate.

INTRODUCTION

On December 16th, 2019, the Facility Planning Committee (FPC) held its second meeting. This session included a review of the previous meeting (FPC 1), followed by a description and discussion of capacity/enrollment and facility condition need in the district. A PDF copy of the presentation, along with the video recording, can be found on the district website. For additional information, Issue Paper #2: Capacity and Enrollment and Issue Paper #3: Existing Facility Condition, can also be found on the district website.

REVIEW OF FPC 1

:: LeRoy Landers reviewed the long-range planning process, schedule, and the role of the committee. After this second FPC meeting, a high-level summary of all needs will be shared with the broader community, followed by three FPC meetings focused on developing long-range planning options for the District.

:: A brief review of FPC 1 content included district core values, vision, and mission, and school design environments that can support the Board goals.

:: The Committee identified and prioritized goals as a group during FPC 1. These goals were summarized and reviewed, and a complete list is posted on the District website. All goals will be maintained and used throughout the planning process. Major goal themes (in order by number of votes) include:

- Safety *(33 votes)*
- Flexibility and adaptability of spaces *(26 votes)*
- Diversity of space to support learning *(21 votes)*
- Athletics *(18 votes)*
- Program *(15 votes)*
- Outdoor space *(14 votes)*
- Occupational learning *(9 votes)*
- Teacher support *(9 votes)*
- Learning for all *(8 votes)*
- Sustainability *(6 votes)*
- Character and feel *(6 votes)*
- Food, dining, and social areas *(5 votes)*
- Technology *(1 vote)*

*Note: Committee members who were absent at the previous meeting added their votes during this meeting. Their votes have been incorporated into the above vote count.

CAPACITY & ENROLLMENT NEED

:: Existing district capacity

- The district's Six-Year Capital Facility Plan establishes the capacities of each school in the district, based on target classroom capacities and utilization rates for each grade level, and classroom counts at each school.
- The existing capacity target for elementary schools in the district is 450-500 students. All existing elementary schools in the district are at or near the desired target capacity range.
- There is no district target capacity at the middle and high school levels, because there is only one facility for each.

:: Enrollment projections

- Enrollment projections quantify the expected number of students in the district over the next 10 years.
- High, medium and low projections were produced. Typically, districts use the medium range projections for planning purposes. The medium-range projection is currently being used for this long-range plan.
- Medium-range projections indicate that the elementary (K-5) level is expected to have a seven percent growth rate through 2030, the middle school (6-8) level is expected to have a one percent growth rate through 2030 (relatively flat), and the high school (9-12) level is expected to have a one percent growth rate (relatively flat).

:: Capacity and enrollment

- Using the medium-range enrollment projections, existing district facilities are adequate to accommodate projected enrollment through 2030.
- However, some elementary schools, including West Mercer, may need to manage enrollment with the use of non-permanent (modular) capacity that is already existing on the site.
- Based on this data, capacity and enrollment is not expected to be a major driver in this long-range facility plan.

DISCUSSION — CAPACITY & ENROLLMENT

:: *What is the logic for stopping the projections after 10 years?*
Demographers will tell you that the farther out you go, the fuzzier it gets. A 10-year projection is the standard that is used for most long-range facility plans. If enrollment appears to be problematic in a district, a straight-line extension of the projections can be done to help think about longer term property acquisition (typically in bigger districts).

:: *How do we accommodate students if the projection is lower or higher? The middle- range projection shows all facilities basically full, so there is not a lot of cushion.*
The LRFP is a "living" document that is reviewed annually to determine accuracy of the enrollment projections and building capacity.

:: *Is capacity the size of overall building or the size we will need?*
Capacity is calculated differently and varies per grade level. It is a planning metric that reflects the number of students that can be accommodated in a facility. For example, elementary level capacity is calculated by multiplying the number of general education classrooms times the target headcount per classroom (24) time a utilization/efficiency factor (95%). Donna Colosky indicated that the district is fully implemented for McCleary (17:1 student to teacher ratio) in K-3; this ratio also factors in specialists, so is not the same as the target capacity used for planning.

:: *How much warning did the district have before Northwood was built? How did the decision to build Northwood come about and how quickly was the district able to respond to that increase?*
Fred Rundle clarified that Northwood was built because the community was interested in having smaller schools, not as the result of an enrollment increase. Previously, the district's three schools were much larger. Part of the community's desire to add a fourth school may have been associated with the fact that existing elementary schools, originally designed to accommodate +/- 450 students, were overenrolled, serving +/- 600 students, far above their designed capacity. Each of these schools had multiple portables on site to accommodate the additional population. Northwood was built on district property that was a former junior high site and was being used as a rental.

:: *Is it possible to add second stories to existing schools or rebuild as two-story schools?*
This discussion will happen down the road. The Committee can determine if they feel if this would be an appropriate option or not. More broadly, two-story elementary schools are more the norm in most school districts, however it is not typically possible to add onto existing one-story school facilities, as they do not have the structure to support another level and there would be significant disruption.

:: *Enrollment is usually a big driver for school districts and communities. The Island has finite expansion options, so it is always a huge topic. Adequate attention needs to be given to this topic, and more details may be needed, such as superimposing historical enrollment data with real enrollment by school since 1997.*
The district will ask the demographer if he can provide this information for the Committee.

:: *There has had significant flux in the enrollment numbers in the past, and the projections were not always accurate.*
The demographer noted it is difficult to project accurately at this particular time. The Committee can decide how comfortable they are using the middle-range projection. It is important to understand that using the high-range projection may cause enrollment to become a driver and will have to be addressed in the long-range plan.

:: *Consider a planning strategy to plan for a future addition to add capacity and size core areas to accommodate the larger enrollment.*

FACILITY CONDITION: MAINTENANCE & RENOVATION

:: Life expectancy of various building systems
- How long are building systems expected to last? There are many varying sources for this, but systems and materials do have an expected lifetime. Some are replaced periodically by the district as it wears out, like carpet.
- Modern buildings typically have a 75-year lifespan. The Committee can determine what age is appropriate for replacement.

:: Age of facilities
- Age is only one factor among many that determine the condition of a building.
- Major overbuild / renovations were done in the 1990s (23 to 27 years ago).
- A building is a whole series of systems, each is typically scored separately. Scoring used in this plan was not destructive scoring, so cannot assess hidden systems, such as the structure. If all systems were replaced, it would be a full modernization, which would extend the life of the building.

:: Seismic condition
- There were a series of seismic evaluations completed for district facilities in 2011, 2013, and 2016.
- Seismic condition should be considered in the context of “rolling compliance.” New codes are issued every few years and there are some adjustments related to seismic every time. There was no seismic code prior to 1976. Over time, new codes coming out changed zones from low to moderate to high. A question to consider is: How far out of current code compliance is the building? (knowing almost every building is out of compliance) and: Are you comfortable with how far out of compliance it is?
- Some seismic upgrades have been done in the district over time.

- The seismic evaluation conclusions for district facilities indicate that collapse is not anticipated, however significant damage, that may not be repairable, should be expected. If doing other work at the high school, it is recommended to do additional upgrades there, in a portion of the gymnasium.

:: Facility condition

- ICOS scores were developed for district facilities in 2018. ICOS scores rate facility condition, with a higher score being better. The scale includes unsatisfactory, poor, fair, good, and excellent. It is not a reflection of the district's ability to keep schools maintained.
- District facilities scored very well in general, although not all facilities were scored (only schools). Facilities with the lowest scores were the older middle school buildings and Island Park Elementary, which is only slightly lower than other older elementary schools. Scoring for each school is also provided by system, rated from fair to poor.
- A list of significant maintenance needs for each facility was developed by district facilities staff. These are things that have been identified to address in the future.

:: Facility condition by school (some examples from each school are included below; see presentation slides for full list)

- Island Park ES – roof and mechanical system are the biggest issues. Safety on site / site access is not ideal.
- Lakeridge ES – roof is the biggest issue. Pick/up and drop-off is not optimal. Asphalt cracking throughout. Food carts stored outside during the day because cafeteria is used as a gym also.
- Northwood ES – this facility is new and scores are good.
- West Mercer ES – roof and mechanical system are the biggest issues. Also, lack of security on the site (open campus), storage issues, and accessibility issues throughout. Having a common way for everyone to get to different areas is the target for accessibility. The courtyard was recently redone and is very nice.
- Islander MS – the new building is fine. Scores are for the older 100/200/300 buildings. The roof at the 100/200 Building is a critical problem and needs to be addressed. Overall, scores are generally somewhat lower in these buildings. Work has been done to patch rotting soffits and other issues. Leaks associated with mechanical systems have been repaired.
- Mercer Island HS – generally scored higher than elementary schools and older middle school buildings. New addition areas are in good shape. In other areas, some flooring is wearing out, and exterior stucco in certain areas is in need of repair, which could cause water problems later on.
- Crest Learning Center – roof is the biggest issue. Stucco exterior needs some work.
- Comparison of all ICOS scores: Island Park and the older Middle School building are the lowest.
- Other facilities that were not scored: Mary Wayte Pool, administration building, and support facilities. Boys and Girls Club PEAK is a shared facility; the district does not own the building but has shared use of the facility.

DISCUSSION — FACILITY CONDITION: MAINTENANCE & RENOVATION

:: *What are best practices around efficient use of the whole site on existing school sites?*
MISD's elementary sites are not large for elementary school sites; they are appropriately sized. In general, the district is using school sites very efficiently, and should be evaluated on a site-by-site basis.

- The Island Park site is topographically challenged and part of the site is five to seven feet lower in elevation. Another area of the site has a natural area that is not usable for school functions.
- Lakeridge has a big play area. The principal says it is too big for good supervision.

:: *Why was extreme heat in the summer a complaint at the (classic) middle school?*
This is due to lack of air conditioning, and is also an issue at the older elementary schools. Older mechanical systems are notoriously hard to balance across the facility. Parts can be cold or hot, especially as systems get older, and more difficult to get replacement parts. Northwood does not have air conditioning throughout, but has a different mechanical system that has been successful in maintaining appropriate temperatures.

:: *How often is a deep building inspection done to determine condition? There is some concern that issues may be missed since it is not possible to see hidden systems.*
There are systemic things that are very difficult to deal with, such as mechanical, plumbing, and structural systems. These may be underground or inside walls. Tony Kuhns explained that the evaluation does not include scoping the sewers, but they do talk about things at a detailed level during the evaluations (not just a visual inspection).

:: *What process has been developed for talking to the teachers?*
As part of the upcoming community outreach sessions, there will be sessions to with meet with both students and staff. Mahlum will collect that information and bring back to the FPC at the first planning meeting. Two broader public outreach meetings will also happen during the same week.

- It would be good to have specific questions for Northwood teachers about how they are utilizing the new school.
- Also consider outreach to PTA councils. They may be thinking about projects and should be looped in. Someone from each school PTA is included in the FPC. Also hope to have other PTA members come to the outreach sessions.

:: *Want to know what is already being planned to be repaired, in order to inform Committee planning decisions. Some of these things can be deferred depending on what the long-range plan is. It would be helpful to know what has been spent by maintenance (beyond capital expenditures).*

:: *Is there an ongoing capital reserve fund?*
Ty Bergstrom explained that there is a specific bucket for capital improvements (the capital projects fund, which is funded out of cap/tech levy, up for renewal in 2022). Average collection is about $6.5 million, with $3.5 million to technology and $3 million per year for other projects. There is no state money to speak of. Out of the last bond, $3.3 million in matching funds was provided by the state. This is due to a complicated funding formula and is similar in many states. In Oregon, it is only in the last few years that has there been any matching program at all.

:: *Prior to 1993/94, there was no long-term plan for capital or maintenance in the district. It was a group like this that really got things moving*.

:: *How much time from the time the bond was floated to the construction of Northwood?*
The bond was passed in February 2014 and Northwood was occupied in September 2016 (2.5 years). Some substantial planning was done during the bond process (about six months of work). Typically, it is 3-5 years for design and construction. Facilities can take 18 months to two years to design and 18 months to two years to build.

FACILITY CONDITION: EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY

:: Area per student

- Square footage per student is one high-level metric that can be used to evaluate educational adequacy and equity across a district.
- National medians at the three grade levels are shown for comparison. At high school level, the national median is 172 GSF/student, middle school is 153 GSF/student, and elementary school is 137 GSF/student. Many new facilities in Washington and Oregon track with these metrics.
- Older district elementary schools are all below the national median. Older schools tend to have lower square footage per student, because they were designed to serve a different educational delivery model. The middle school and high school are also below the national median.
- Bainbridge School District's average square footages per student are shown for another, more local comparison, as it may be considered a peer district.
- What does SF/student really mean? As an illustration, a five square feet per student difference equals 480 additional square feet per four classrooms (at 24 students/classroom). A small amount of area per student can change the way education can be delivered in a school.

:: Educational adequacy by school (some examples from each school are included below; see presentation slides for full list):

- Island Park ES – multipurpose room usage for PE and food service, lack of flex spaces, centralized SPED area needed, general education classrooms are undersized and don't have enough storage.
- Lakeridge ES – multipurpose room usage for PE and food service, lack of flex spaces, students in modular cut through other classrooms to access, food are carts stored outside.
- Northwood ES – no direct access from health room to restroom, disruption of PE classes to access music room.
- West Mercer ES – multipurpose room usage for PE and food service, lack of flex spaces (would like to have two more pods), special education areas are disjointed, general education classrooms are undersized and don't have enough storage.
- Islander MS (old buildings) – detached buildings cause safety/security issues and make it difficult to create community, corridors don't accommodate break out areas very well.
- Mercer Island HS – older science classrooms should be larger to accommodate instruction, music program continues to grow and could use more space, counseling needs to be consolidated and reconfigured.
- Crest Learning Center– facility is too small for programs currently housed, need new larger greenhouse.

DISCUSSION — FACILITY CONDITION: EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY

:: *Consider that Crest is growing because students are not finding what they are needing at the main high school. Is there a way to improve the high school to create smaller environments for more/all students?* Many students at Crest only attend part-time. It is an alternative learning program for kids who want that small learning community environment. MIHS is a large comprehensive high school, but is trying to meet the needs of as many students as possible. Crest also includes online learning for students. The Adult Transition Program (ATP) is typically not located with a high school facility. Those are not high school students; best if located in the community.

:: *Crest area per student is very low, is this an issue?*
It is typical for alternative programs to have a smaller area per student because they do not have many specialized spaces, such as gymnasiums. Crest doesn't have the small break-out spaces that are needed in this facility.

:: *Is the Boys and Girls Club not being used by the district anymore?*
It is difficult to use the space during the day. Do use somewhat for meetings/professional development, but tricky. There is a preschool there. The gymnasium space is used all the time – used from 3-6 pm every day. Did try ATP program there but it didn't work.

:: *What is driving the special education need at the elementary schools?*
The issue is both a square footage need and a desire for closer proximity. Northwood meets the needs well, and these types of spaces were not part of older elementary schools. There are elevated needs for students in schools today.

:: *Is the district in compliance with special education regulations?*
Yes, the district is in full compliance, but of course can always get better.

:: *What is the amount of need for special education spaces?*
Special education enrollment numbers continue to grow, staying high even though overall enrollment is flattening. The direction of special education is to not be self-contained. Consider the ability of the entire facility to meet the needs of more types of students (autism, etc.).

:: *Where is there space in existing classrooms to meet these types of specialized needs? Provide some examples of what a well-designed classroom looks like as a comparison.*
Mercer Island is in the same position as most districts in this area. Biggest area that is changing. Northwood classrooms are L-shaped, create a safe space nook, and have both shared learning and the acoustic privacy of a small group room. Most peer districts have similar approaches. The closest thing in existing schools to this approach is the corner classrooms at West Mercer, which have a corner nook space that is furnished differently and well-used. Could you reconfigure existing schools to meet current needs? Yes, but would be a major modernization, including decompression.

:: *How much of the desire for IEPs is due to facility conditions and constraints?*
This is difficult to determine, but it is likely that the facility environment has some impact.

NEXT STEPS

:: The district will be engaging in broader outreach sessions in mid-January. Notices will go out before winter break. How many students would we like? As many as possible. The purpose is to use the first part of the session to provide a high-level overview summary of need. People can then ask questions and give other input on needs. All input will be captured and reported back to the FPC.

:: The next FPC meeting, scheduled for January 27th, will be the first of three planning meetings. The Committee will do exercises to facilitate dealing with planning questions and issues. Be aware it may seem chaotic at first, but we will do our best to lend a bit of order to the process.

:: It is very important that all Committee members come back for the planning meetings. The district values your input. You have invested time in learning about the need and can use this information to help develop the plan.

:: The Committee would like to see more examples of progressive local projects that are illustrate what is being talked about. Not knowing what is possible may inhibit the planning. Consider a field trip around Northwood, although there are privacy issues.