



MEETING MINUTES

PROJECT: Mercer Island School District Long-Range Facility Plan Update
PROJECT NO: 2023902.00
DATE: 04 May 2023
FILE NAME: MM002_FPC2_230501
SUBJECT: **Facility Planning Committee Meeting 2: Plan Development Information**

MEETING DATE: 01 May 2023
TIME: 5:00 – 8:00 pm

LOCATION: Library, Islander Middle School

ATTENDEES:

Facility Planning Committee

✓ Colin Brandt	✓ Linhui Hao	– Sandra Levin
✓ Debbie Burke	✓ Jenny Harrington	✓ Deborah Lurie
✓ Shoie Cartwright	– Ian Henry	✓ Brian Mock
✓ Julie Ogata Ciobanu	✓ Janelle Honeycutt	– Rich Nakatsu
✓ Jessica Clawson	✓ Andrew Howison	– Jamie Page
– Vickie Cleator	– Robyn Kimura Hsu	✓ Carrie Beckner Savage
✓ Susan Conrad-Wang	✓ Wen Hu	✓ Becky Shaddle
✓ Jennifer Crespi	✓ Ralph Jorgenson	– Toby Suhm
– Dave Cutright	– Jason Kitner	✓ Kim Thomas
– Marcus Engelman-Ost	✓ Kate Wise Knecht	✓ Lee Tortorelli
✓ Dan Glowitz	✓ Diana Lein	– Asha Woerner
✓ Matt Hall		

MISD Support Team

✓ Fred Rundle
✓ Matt Sullivan
✓ Tony Kuhn
✓ Andreeves Rosner
✓ Brandy Fox

Mahlum Architects

✓ LeRoy Landers
– David Mount
✓ Rebecca Hutchinson

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.

ITEM	DISCUSSION
1.1	Welcome and agenda presented by LeRoy Landers of Mahlum Architects.
1.2	LeRoy reviewed the Needs Summary that was presented at Facility Planning Committee Meeting (FPC) 1 for each of the MISD school facilities: Island Park Elementary, Lakeridge Elementary, West Mercer Elementary, Islander Middle School, and Mercer Island High School including Crest Learning Center. Needs were organized into the categories of educational program, facility condition, and capacity and enrollment.
1.3	<p>LeRoy reviewed the planning goals developed by the 2020 Facility Planning Committee.</p> <p>Committee member questions and comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> The goals are missing the arts. <i>This may be represented within the Program Needs theme.</i>> The goals are also missing College and Career Readiness (CCR).> Does field space need to be included? We now have another brand-new field since the 2020 LRFP. It does not seem that arts and athletics are being considered equitably. <i>There is one field left that needs to have work done to it.</i>> Have these been audited against the districtwide surveys that have deployed since the 2020 LRFP? <i>No, this represents where we left off in 2020. This is a synopsis of where the group was then, now we have you to help us determine where we should be now.</i>> The last committee did not talk much about the impact of enrollment. How do we best use our facilities with enrollment decreasing? <i>That is a big change from the last time and will be addressed in more detail later in the presentation.</i>> Sustainability is important. Looking back at previous bond measures that failed, those committees were critiqued for not making sacrifices and just including "wants." Community surveys could provide good input regarding what is important to them.> Financial sustainability and resilience are important, responding to climate change and disaster preparedness. Schools can be a safe haven and local resource for members of the community. <i>This is more easily supported with newer facilities that can meet the seismic code.</i>> Were teachers and staff also surveyed? <i>Yes, their inputs are captured in the 2020 LRFP report. In the early phases of the last plan, we spoke with both students and teachers. This committee's recommendations will be taken out to the broader community later in the process, if it is determined that some capital support makes sense, and that would be a good time to touch base with staff and students again.</i>> Fred Rundle noted that this process isn't about design, so staff is not the emphasis at this point. Need to know that the community will support it first. It is so important to build a coalition around the need and garner community support. As taxpayers, it is important that you're putting something out there that others can get behind.

1.4 LeRoy reviewed the facility alignment conclusions developed by the 2020 Facility Planning Committee.

- > No committee member questions or comments.

1.5 LeRoy reviewed the facility approach conclusions developed by the 2020 Facility Planning Committee.

Committee member questions and comments:

- > I'm not sure I agree with full replacement of all three elementary schools given declining enrollments.
- > Do we need four elementary schools, or should we consolidate down to three?
- > Do we feel confident with the projections, Dr. Rundle? *Fred responds "yes." Even demographers will agree that 3-5 years has accuracy, but beyond that is susceptible to a lot of variables. Surrounding districts are seeing similar projections. Immigration is down from other countries because people are not moving to the area for jobs.*

1.6 LeRoy reviewed the project prioritization created by the 2020 Facility Planning Committee.

Committee member questions and comments:

- > "Doing something at every grade level" is not prioritization. It's hard to be strategic about where to invest resources to maximize value, crafting the intent and narrative. *That guiding principle is included to show voters that there's something in it for them.*
- > Wondering if that logic doesn't hold because 2/3 of the voters don't have kids.
- > The previous committee considered "do something at every grade level" when deciding between Island Park or IMS being the first priority, and decided on IMS in part because it impacts every student in the District.
- > Middle school first should be reconsidered because now that there is a lower enrollment projected, the existing new facility will accommodate a higher percentage of the total students. Also, work at the middle school doesn't provide anything for families with existing high school or middle school students at the time the bond is being voted on.
- > Can you explain the rationale behind the replacement of Mary Wayte Pool? *Advocacy for the pool was coming from a relatively small number of voices in the group. In the interim there has been work done on that building to address a number of the issues.*
- > Is the pool adequately sized to accommodate the functions? *It was noted that the pool is not large enough for all parents to watch the meets. It was also noted that the focus of this effort is for educational needs. Tony noted that the pool meets the District needs for sports, though it is inadequately sized to hold all of the spectators that would like to attend the meets.*
- > Where is the Administration Building landing and what is the rationale? It is a very old building. *Improvements fall into a small range of upgrades, to address life safety (sprinkler system) and accessibility needs.*
- > There is a need for clarification and an understanding of how to balance all the priorities: what we think the students need, what we as a community think the students need, and what we think bond voters will support? Did the 2020 project priorities include all these elements? *Regarding the 2020 committee work, there was no discussion about bond measures or capital projects. The question at that time was: "Let's look at need, at the facilities serving our*

programs. Do we have enough space? What's the overall condition?" Based on what they saw, they determined "Does anything need to be done?" and when things are ready to be tackled, "What's the priority for doing them?" The prioritization was their opinion on the sequence of projects, not specific timing or grouping for a bond. This time, the committee should consider what should be done and whether they require capital (a bond measure).

- 1.7 LeRoy presented the basis of cost for the Long-Range Facility Plan Update, including what is driving construction costs today. Northwood Elementary cost \$43M in 2015, which translates into \$74.4M in today's dollars.

Committee member questions and comments:

- > One-third of the cost increase has occurred in the last three years. The reason is very specific: the COVID pandemic. *Historically, we would see 3-4 percent per year. Current projections are now expected to be closer to 5 percent.*
- > Is there state funding to supplement bond dollars? *Given the state's funding requirements, Mercer Island does not qualify for state funding. Added note: The elementary sites would qualify for a small amount of State Match money. For the projects in the 2014 bond, the District received approximately \$3M, or the equivalent of the sales tax on the construction contract. Northwood was not eligible for any State Match money.*
- > Are there elementary sites that are easier to construct on than others? *Yes, Island Park is fairly challenging regarding both access and topography. There are slightly different costs for replacing each elementary school because of this, although these are just estimates and no designs have been done.*

- 1.8 LeRoy described adjustments to facility needs due to changes since the 2020 LRFP.

Committee member questions and comments:

- > How do we build for the "long term" if enrollments are not fixed? *The capacity that is built would ideally have some buffer for flexibility in case the enrollment was higher than projected. Middle schools and high schools are typically less sensitive to slight increases in enrollment because they are bigger facilities overall and can absorb some fluctuations. Facility designs can also be planned to accommodate a future addition in the event of significantly higher enrollment.*
- > What about grade configuration studies? Does considering a K-8 school model help us? It would be a huge change for us, but maybe worth mentioning. Or what about a K-2 or 3-5 campus? Research says the least number of transitions the better. *Fred noted that the conversation around grade configuration is interesting. K-4 models are also interesting, with 5-8 middle school and 9-12 high school.*
- > Is an elementary school at 600 more than the District target? *Fred stated that 450-600 is an optimal size for elementary schools and is the District target. The proposal to build new elementary schools at 600 is at the high end, but still in a good place.*
- > Is there a rule of thumb for cost to modernize versus cost to build new? *It typically costs as much if not more to fully modernize to a 70-year building as to build new. Contractors have to do detailed demolition to improve systems in an existing building.*

- > Where did the IMS track, field, and fencing proposal come from? *The track and field are nearing the end of life and require replacement, therefore the District added this need for consideration. Tony Kuhn explained the need for a fully fenced site at the middle school: the District is struggling to keep community members off the site, which doesn't meet current safety requirements.*
- > Is the Clean Buildings Act only required when renovating an existing building? *No, it's required regardless of your capital improvements plans. There is no funding from the State for this.*
- > What is the incremental cost to add capacity for 100 students? *That information will need to be calculated.*
- > Where did stadium seating and tennis court improvements come from? *These are condition-related improvements that were added by the District based on their understanding of facility conditions and needs.*
- > Does the Crest work include a second greenhouse? *It is not included. [Additional note: Greenhouse work is currently in progress using other funding sources.]*
- > There is a desire to hear more about the reasons why the District has projects on the list.
- > IMS fence:
 - *The fence is needed because there are many conflicts between community and school use during the day. This has been talked about this for some time. It is a safety issue for students. Number includes fencing the entire site, not just the track/field.*
 - *This is a site that is used by the community after hours, how would that be regulated? The community will continue to have access to the field during non-school hours.*
 - *This project is significant symbolically, even though the cost is not large. There was a lot of press around new fields. Focus on community perception; there will be push-back related to balancing capital spending on educational programs.*
- > Connect 100/200 Building at IMS: *If not replacing the older middle school buildings, there is a concern about security on the campus. This project connects the existing building to the new building.*
- > High school projects: *Many condition-related improvements have been managed through Cap/Tech dollars. The projects listed, such as the stadium seating and tennis courts, are too large to be covered with these funds. The stadium seating is a safety issue and expensive because it forms the retaining wall on the site. Failures are being seen in some places. It is a structural need, not a comfort need.*
- > What's a nice-to-have versus need-to-have? *The Committee and the community need more information on how to evaluate the choices.*
- > Parking lot reconfiguration at Crest for ADA: *how does this cost \$2.9M? There are accessibility issues. Rebuilding the parking lot requires that storm water treatment and water quality treatment be added, which adds significantly to the cost.*
- > When are we taking the adequate route versus the excellence route? *This can be an equity issue between types of programs. The goal is to strike a balance between the amount of need and what you think can be supported. We're getting all the items out in front of you, and we want to hear from you, as taxpayers, what portion of it can be tackled because these are the things that will resonate with the voters.*
- > Fred noted that there are separate conversations happening that are looking for other funding sources, such as CTE, to fund programming measures.

- > Deborah stated that it is sad, as a community member and as a Board member, to see people say, “they got this, so we deserve that.” We all deserve to have the best. Make the need known without putting down someone else’s need. What can we all get together?
- > MISD is a small district. Having been on the Board when we were in the last round of construction, the charge was to only manage two projects at any given time. There are a limited number of people, and it takes a lot of resources to manage projects. Completing all projects in one or two bonds may not be realistic.
- > Any bond needs to be able to stand by itself. There are no promises about future bonds.
- > Closing a school is HUGE – we all love our schools. It’s going to be hard to say, “vote for this.” Also, it is difficult to choose which one must close and which one gets rebuilt.
- > The 2011 bond failed (about \$250M) and the 2012 bond passed (about \$100M), once it was broken down into a smaller amount. The last bond anticipated that the District would come back to complete the middle school. There is a public expectation to finish it.

1.9 LeRoy presented follow-up information on tax rates asked at the last meeting and bond options for planning reference.

Committee member questions and comments:

- > For future reference, can we have the cost of the proposals without escalation? There is a concern about front-loading inflationary costs. To what extent is escalation another fudge factor? How can we be stewards of the dollars? *All of this time-based cost information for subsequent phases after this one is for future reference only. The focus is on the dollars for when implementation for Bond 1 is expected (shown as 2028, but could move). Must use escalated dollars to plan a bond that has an accurate budget.*
- > What was promised for the IMS second phase? There was no promise that IMS was the priority for the next round, but a master plan ensured that Phase 1 made good choices and was ready to build the next phase.
- > How long do people stay on the Island? *Mercer Island has many long-standing residents.*
- > How does the fact that the assessed values will continue to change (presumably increase) impact the model? *LeRoy and Matt explained that the bond model tries to take that into account. While the projection looks flat, the reality will have some variability.*

1.10 LeRoy shared the planning exercise that the Committee with tackle at the next meeting.

Committee member questions and comments:

- > Discussion about the logistics premium for facility replacement. It is a big consideration about whether the community will support relocating students for a year.

1.11 The next planning meeting is scheduled for May 15th and will include a continuation of plan development. It is very important that all Committee members come back for the next planning meeting, thank you!

1.12 A copy of the meeting presentation can be found on the District website, for additional information.