



MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendent Greg Baker

FROM: Jeff Coulter, Principal on Special Assignment, Co-Chair
Analisa Ficklin, Director, Special Education, Co-chair

ON BEHALF OF: Community Transitions Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee

RE: Recommended Schematic Design and Site Plan

DATE: June 26, 2024

We are pleased to present the following document that provides information about the Community Transitions Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee process and outlines a set of recommendations related to the new facility.

This document is organized in five sections:

- I. Introduction and context
- II. Scope and schedule
- III. Summary of advisory group work, site plan and input from shareholders, neighbors, families, and district staff
- IV. Recommendations
- V. Conclusion

I. Introduction and context

In fall 2021, Bellingham Public Schools convened a Facilities Planning Task Force representing staff, students, parents, and community members from across our school district. The task force met regularly throughout the 2021-22 school year to continue the important work of identifying buildings with the highest need for replacement and reviewing projected growth in our district boundaries. One of the Task Force's recommendations was to build a permanent placement for the Community Transitions Program. The Community Transitions program serves students aged 18-21 who qualify for special education services. In the past, the Community Transitions Program was housed in portable classrooms on the Options High School campus. When Options High School was built at its current site, the Community Transitions Program was relocated to Bellingham High School. During the 2023-24 school year, Community Transitions Program was again moved to a former WECU branch at 1600 Birchwood Avenue. A subsequent shared lease agreement was reached with Whatcom Community College to relocate the Community Transitions Program to WCC's campus at 322 Calluna Court. This novel collaboration between

Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Public Schools allows for a building to be planned and built on WCC property to serve students in Community Transitions.

II. Scope of advisory group's work and schedule

A call for volunteers to serve on the Community Transitions Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee was shared with District staff, families, and the community in September 2023. The following members were selected:

- Jeff Coulter, Principal on Special Assignment, co-chair
- Analisa Ficklin, Director, Special Education, co-chair
- Andrew Krzysiek, Zervas Architects
- Dominique Lantagne, teacher
- Liz Madden, teacher
- Courtney Ross, Principal
- Curtis Lawyer, Director, Capital Projects
- Jessica Sankey, Chief Operations Officer
- Jacqueline Brawley, Executive Director, Communications and Community Relations
- Michael Copland, Deputy Superintendent
- Mark Peterson, Director, Facilities and Sustainability
- Brian Smart, Capital Projects Manager
- Kurt Gazow, Executive Director, Educational Technology
- Nathan Langstraat, Vice President Administrative Services, Whatcom Community College
- Brian Keeley, Senior Director for Facilities & Operations, Whatcom Community College
- Kerri Holferty, Director for Access & Disability Services, Whatcom Community College
- Sara Ullman, Planner, City of Bellingham
- Brent Baldwin, Development Manager, Bellingham Public Works
- Brenda Hill, Occupational Therapist
- Barbara Roxas, Community Member
- Phoebe Stockton, Teacher, Community Transitions
- Laurel Taubel, Paraeducator, Community Transitions
- Candice Lankhaar, Community Member
- Emma Gleckman, Community Member
- Terry Brown, Zervas
- Amy Zimmerman, Principal, Zervas
- Jed Ballew, Principal, Zervas
- Shannon Darnell, Interior Design Director, Zervas
- Les Reardanz, General Manager Whatcom Transit Authority
- Kelly Bashaw, Associate Director, Workforce Funding Programs, Whatcom Community College

III. Summary of advisory group work, site plan, and input from shareholders, neighbors, families, and staff.

The group began their work in December 2023. The first meetings were used to acquaint members with current District standards for schools, including guiding principles, followed by

site visits to the current Community Transitions site in the WECU building at 1600 Birchwood Avenue. Subsequent meetings in January, February, and March were held at the Whatcom Community College Foundations Building on WCC's campus. The advisory group's attention was focused on Design Goals, Keys to Design, Numeric Program, Narrative Program, including building adjacencies, and the creation of several Site Charettes as influence by the actual Calluna Court site. The outcome of this collaborative effort was the Educational Specifications Booklet.



Consistent threads throughout all design meetings included a focus on Program Requirements, the Bellingham Promise, Educational Goals, Functional and Space Requirements, and Aesthetic Requirements.

During the March 2024 Ed Specs meeting at Whatcom Community College, committee members engaged in a “gaming” activity where adjacencies within the building were explored and rearranged.



On April 15th, Whatcom Community College and Cordata neighborhood members participated in a Community Meeting in the Syre Student Center auditorium. Approximately thirty attendees had the opportunity to both share concerns as well as provide feedback to the design advisory committee. Presentations about the project's scope were led by Curtis Lawyer and Andrew Krzysiek.

At the May 20th (Meeting #7) Committee Members reviewed the feedback from the Community Meeting, and reassessed the two plans that were identified from the March 18th, 2024, meeting. In addition, Zervas Architects then presented a “Combined Plan,” which incorporated key aspects of the previous floor plan iterations.



At the June 17th Community Meeting, Zervas Architects presented a schematic view of the revised floor plans and initial renderings of the Community Transitions building and the site orientation. Committee members in attendance approved the revised floor plans and site orientation.

IV. Recommendations

1. Site Plan

The recommended Site Plan below indicates the placement of the Community Transitions building adjacent to Cordata Parkway to the east and Calluna Court to the south.



The plan considers vehicular and foot traffic, a bus drop-off along Calluna Court and access to the Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) Cordata Bus Station to the east, across Cordata Parkway. In addition, the establishment of a positive connection to the greater WCC campus was a committee consideration and priority. This connection resulted in a second-floor doorway incorporating into an attractive exterior courtyard on the building's north side. Also, to meet staff and building needs, about fifteen parking spaces will be incorporated into the site design on the west side of the Community Transitions building. In addition, both WTA and WCC have committed to entering into shared parking agreements for additional parking, should that be needed (See renderings on following page).



2. Floor Plan

The proposed floor plan represents a two-story building, with classrooms on both floors. The First Floor includes the Main Security Vestibule, Administrative Offices, Welcome Area, Teacher Office Space, Conference Rooms, Life Skills Classroom, Motor Room, General Classroom, and the Culinary Classroom.



The Second Floor includes three classrooms, Conference Rooms, a Staff Break Room, and an Outdoor Gathering Space. Two stairways and an elevator provide access to the second-floor areas.

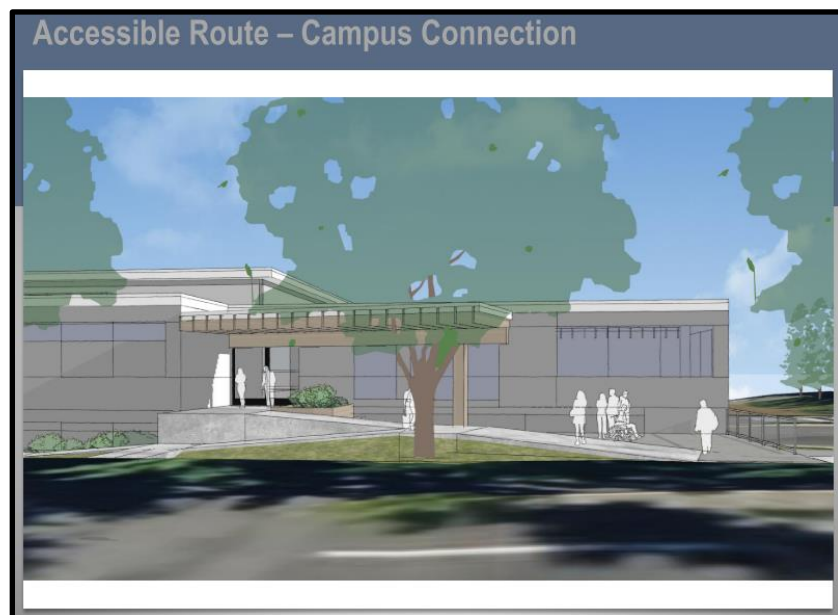


3. Campus Connectivity

A priority of the Community Transitions Committee was maintaining a strong connection to the greater Whatcom Community College Campus. To create and maintain that connection, improving existing access to Whatcom Transit Authority's Cordata Bus Station and creating building egress from the second floor on the north side of the building was important. The first image represents the creation of a sloping sidewalk and stairs on the north and east side of the building.



This second image represents an exit from the second floor; north side of the building, which creates an accessible route and provides a campus connection.



V. Conclusion

Following your approval, we will direct the team at Zervas Architects to proceed with the Schematic Design and then Design Development utilizing the recommended site and floor plans above.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need additional information.