

Elementary School #15
Ed Spec/Design
Advisory Committee – Community Meeting
Wednesday February 23, 2023

Welcome, Introductions and Purpose

[Elementary 15 Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee](#) co-chairs Jeff Coulter, principal on special assignment for Bellingham Public Schools, and Micah Smith, principal of Alderwood Elementary School, kicked off the meeting and welcomed everyone. They thanked everyone for coming tonight to hear about the future school which we refer to as elementary 15.

Micah shared that our purpose tonight is to share the project snapshot, givens and site characteristics, then ask for your feedback. Capital Projects Director Curtis Lawyer shared some information about the new school, including the estimated move in date is fall 2025. The new school will be approximately 58,000 square feet and cost about \$37.5 million.

Neighbors expressed concern about buffer zones for those living near the property line of the new school, noise, fences and traffic flow. Curtis shared that this is the purpose of this meeting tonight is for our district staff and design advisory committee to hear feedback and listen to your concerns.

Our project architect, Zach Ham from Dykeman Architects, shared that instruction drives design. He told the group that initial draft design concepts will be shared with the neighborhood later this spring/early summer.

Group Activity for feedback

Zach gave prompts so that each group can share and write down feedback.

Some feedback shared about characteristics to describe the neighborhood:

- Nature-focused, lots of trees
- Lots of retirees, quiet traffic, very connected to each other
- Young families, broad diversity of neighbors with mix of retirees and mixed generation homes
- Lots of walkers but many do not like walking on East Bakerview or James
- Quiet and desire to keep it quiet
- Safety is big issue as we have a lot of walkers and a quiet neighborhood
- Preserve natural elements and environment
- Tranquil neighborhood, privacy is valued
- Views of sunset, natural elements are important
- They love to see wildlife from cougars, bobcats and neighborhood peacock
- Less conspicuous building would reflect the values of the neighborhood
- Green space important, wildlife important
- Part of this neighborhood feels rural and please respect that
- Multi-generational families, bilingual families

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- The school is an important piece of the larger neighborhood not just those adjacent to the school
- There are parts of trails that exist for walkers and interest to connect to them better

Wonders/questions

- Logistics about when elementary 15 opens: will the school serve the neighborhood in any capacity initially or only serve as a swing space to other elementary schools?
 - The answer is we aren't sure. There are a lot of considerations when deciding which school a child attends and we try to prioritize keeping students and staff together with their neighborhood school.
- How does instruction guide construction? What are your guidelines you follow for BPS?
 - You can get some of those answers on the [Ed Spec/Design Advisory Committee website](#).
- Do you expect the new playground to look like the new playgrounds at Sunnyland, Parkview and Alderwood?
 - yes
- Do you think the new school could have similar layout to Cordata Elementary?
 - No, that site is challenging and heavily impacted by wetlands.
- Who got the invite to the meeting tonight?
 - Anyone who lives within 1000 feet of the building site, and those on the King Mountain Neighborhood Association email list.

Questions and Feedback

Any additional comments or question please use the QR code and/or contact [Curtis Lawyer](#)

As we move forward, we hope to share a draft schematic design this spring and bring folks together and ask for feedback.