

Bremerton Collaborative School Siting/Co-Location Project

Stakeholders Workshop #3

September 22, 2008

Greg Stack of NAC|Architecture welcomed the group, asked new members to introduce themselves, and introduced the agenda for the evening.

The prioritized uses generated in Workshop #2 were reviewed. Seven uses emerged as clear frontrunners: Teen Center/Boys & Girls Club (19 votes), Daycare/Afterschool Care/Early Childcare/Early Learning Center (11), Senior Center (10), Environmental Center (9), Family Services (8), Multi-Use Activity/Sports Center (8), and Community Center (7).

Kevin Flanagan of NAC|Architecture reported on the status of various related projects in west Bremerton. He discussed this collocation project with representative from various other community agencies including the Parks Department, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, United Way and the School District. The meetings with these various group included discussions about initiatives that they are working on; he noted several correlations between planned community initiatives and the prioritized needs identified by this group at our last workshop. KCR and the School district are in the process of planning an early learning / childcare center on Naval Avenue, and the United Way is consolidating into a building downtown that will provide connection to community and health services, family services as well as providing office space for non-profits. Based on these conversations it appears that Early Childcare/Early Learning Center and Family Services needs will be met elsewhere in west Bremerton, so for the collocation project we will focus on the other top priorities identified by the committee.

*National talent,
local focus*

In looking at these priorities it is clear that their space requirements are very similar. For instance, the requirements for a community center will be very similar to the requirements for a teen center or a senior center. Based on this outcome the planning ideas presented this evening will retain flexibility in the exact co-location use and focus on how these similar uses would be accommodated on and typical urban and a suburban site.

Greg Stack reviewed the goals from Workshop #1:

1. Community pride, support revitalization of Bremerton
2. Part of a neighborhood center/support comprehensive plan
3. Create a great school/improve academic environment
4. Bring community together/expand opportunities
5. Project that gets broad support
6. Maximize capital, financially responsible
7. Efficient use of resources
8. Synergy of services working together
9. 360 degree service for students

10. Responds to population centers
11. Visible, public, central
12. Environmentally sensitive

The components of a co-located middle school project were then reviewed with the group. The various functions of a middle school account for approximately 91,000 square feet, with the community uses totaling 5,000 square feet. Given these general space requirements, the resultant building footprints were compared. The majority of spaces in a suburban development would be on the ground level, resulting in a footprint of approximately 75,000 s.f. For a more urban site, a three storey development was proposed with a footprint of 54,000 s.f. In terms of acreage required for development, 9.7 acres was used as the minimum size for a site that would include two sports fields, parking, bus drop-off, and the school itself. This 9.7 acre figure was used as a baseline when evaluating potential representative sites.

Boris Srdar of NAC|Architecture presented various ways of orienting and sharing the functions of a middle school and community/teen/senior center. Diagrams showed how simultaneous uses could occur and how activities could be segregated from each other when required.

Greg Stack then described the concept of representative sites. Since the scope of the study is not to identify specific sites for the facility, the team looked at sites that were representative of a variety of sites in two areas of west Bremerton. One group of sites is more suburban in that they are west of highway 3, while the other sites are more towards downtown. Using Highway 3 as a dividing line, three more urban sites were considered to the east and three more suburban sites were considered to the west. The urban sites east of the highway, while displaying diverse issues related to development, were commonly close to facilities, parks, and residential development. Similarly, sites to the west shared challenging topographies and limited access. A National Guard Armory site just east of Pendergrast Park was chosen to be representative of suburban sites; and the Westpark redevelopment was chosen to be representative of urban sites.

The team from NAC|Architecture then led an analysis of the various issues and opportunities related to the selected representative sites. Simple diagrammatic building, field, and parking layouts were shown to let people judge how the facilities would fit on the sites. Since development on an urban site is more out of the realm of experience for most people, character sketches to explain how the concept of the urban site could work were also presented. A facility using approximately 30 acres was presented for the suburban site. Two facilities requiring 9 and 6 acres, respectively, were presented for the urban site with each using an adjacent park for part of their field requirement. These are referred to in the comments below as options A and B.

The group was divided into three groups and asked to brainstorm pros and cons for each site option as well as which option, in their opinions, would be most likely to garner wide community support. Their responses were presented and are recorded below. The three groups had similar responses to the site options, and appeared to agree on the following points:

- The suburban siting option does not meet the goals the group defined at the beginning of the process.
- The urban sites better meets these goals.
- Urban Site A with more fields was preferred over Site B with fewer fields, but people understood that final resolution on an urban site would depend on land availability.

Prior to adjourning, the attendees were asked for their questions and comments and a general discussion occurred. Comments from this discussion were as follows:

- As a person who lives/has lived in more rural settings, I am initially inclined to favor those kinds of sites because of their natural setting and the absence of “bad influences” found in more urban environments.
 - o Also mentioned was the park land adjacent to the National Guard Armory site and the inherent advantage of locating near and utilizing those resources.
 - o This was followed by a brief discussion of the “suburban” site options evaluated, and all of the sites considered had parks/field located nearby.
 - o The location of the school could have a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhoods, and the areas around Pendergrast Park (as well as Westpark) could use the benefit.
 - Klahowya Secondary School (7-12) was mentioned as an example of the type of suburban development that should be avoided and the more suburban site reminded people of this school. Some criticisms of Klahowya were:
 - o The facility was built on a site isolated from existing development and used as a magnet to attract residential development to the area.
 - o The school lacks visible presence and does not contribute to a sense of community as defined in the Goals.
 - o One participant mentioned that she would prefer that type of school for her children because of the rural setting and availability of open space and playfields.
 - o Also mentioned was the grade 7-12 format, which was undesirable due to the potential “bad influence” of older students mixing with younger students.
 - While discussing the urban sites, it was mentioned that including the middle school project as part of the Westpark Redevelopment Master Plan was a unique opportunity and should be pursued in the future.
 - Traffic impact of the suburban site near Pendergrast Park was discussed. The main road leading to the site was not thought to be able to accommodate the additional traffic a school would create. Mitigating the traffic impact through infrastructure improvements was mentioned. It was also pointed out that there would be traffic impacts at the urban site as well.
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- Impacts on district bussing costs were questioned. It was noted that it is difficult to project the relative bussing costs of suburban vs. urban sites because the district would have to generally rearrange their routes and schedules to accommodate a new school. This question was left unresolved, but a school representative indicated that some ballpark figures may be made available.
- The desire to see the geographic distribution of middle-school aged children was reintroduced (this was also raised at the beginning of the workshop). This question was also left unresolved, but it was mentioned that that kind of information would be more appropriate and informative when considering actual sites instead of representative examples.
- A participant mentioned the increased likelihood of casual engagement with a facility/service in an urban setting compared to the concerted effort it takes to utilize the same service in a remote location.
- Concern was raised as to whether enough people knew what was going on in this study and that comments from a broad cross section of citizens are heard. It was noted that the next steps ought to be taking the conclusions of this committee to a broader audience at schools, community centers and through public meetings to get additional input.
- Concern was expressed as to whether the same conclusions would be reached if the choices the group considered were put to a larger and more diverse section of the community.

Pros and Cons of Site Options:

Group #1:

Suburban Site

Pro	Con
More fields	No sites that large are available
Easier construction	Increased cost for landscape maintenance
Synergy with Parks & Recreation	Further away from customers
More design flexibility	Increased bussing costs
Land is less expensive	Proximity to recreational areas
Plenty of parking space	Less likely to have utilities in place
	Can't walk to it
	Does not bring community together

Urban Sites

Pro	Con
Part of a neighborhood; community pride	Limited field space
Users can walk to community center	Increased cost for multistory building
Co-location increases use	Limited parking
Likelihood of greater services	Needs the nearby park to work
Infrastructure already in place	Underground parking creates a security concern
More building sites available	Are seniors and kids too close?
Greater opportunity to integrate adults and kids	
More efficient use of land	
Safer for after school activities	
Multi-story – better line of site	
Less cost for landscaping	
Less cost for bussing.	

Group #2:

Suburban Site

Pro	Con
A number of different fields	Lack of access/transportation issues
Facility More disconnected (sense of ownership yet can comingle when wanted)	Walking leads to safety issues
Room for More Growth	Layout- Parking to fields; too great a distance
Surrounding green spaces for environmental education	Classroom location in relation to gym – takes too long to walk between classes
Land is less expensive – easier/more traditional school set up.	Does not meet any of the goals.

Urban Site A

Pro	Con
Access to community	Parking too close to buildings
Neighborhood walk	Stairwells – no bridge
Use of existing fields	Gym is further away
Location of facility to fields; close to gym	Wasted space
More outdoor space	
Track would be used by all; elderly walk	

Urban Site B

Pro	Con
Small/Compact – less environmental impact.	Layout leads to concern for making trip between classes
Separate entrances for each use but they still share common space	Less outdoor space
Neighborhood walk	Takes away options for outside activity
Parking under field – good use of space	No track; overcrowding existing tracks.
Buses on street	
Cut down on transportation; walk or take city bus	
Meets goals	

Group #3:

Suburban Site

Pro	Con
More options for sports	Not part of a neighborhood center
Might have more options for growth	More kids would need to be bussed
Land costs less	Increased fuel costs
More options for housing growth and drawing people in to fix that neighborhood.	Practically invisible
Less costly option	Doesn't revitalize or encourage people to fix older neighborhoods
	Harder to link with community services
	Comparison to Klahowya
	Not broadly supported
	"Those nasty kids"
	Last 3 goals not met.

Urban Sites

Pro	Con
Walking distance	Fewer field options
Closer to neighborhood	Field lighting (impact on neighbors)
Easier to share	Music/performance in gym
Meets goals 1, 2 and 4	Condemned property
Uses existing streets.	Increased pressure/traffic for the neighborhood
Stories up; more integral part of the community/ownership	Less light for growing food
Parking: 75% underground and 25% visible would be a preferable arrangement	Less responsive to future growth

	Below ground parking requires walking too far for quick trips.
	Where do the portables go?
	So different from other schools people would be unwilling to try – no broad community support.

Type of Project Most Likely To Garner Community Support:

Group #1:

- Urban site A or B likely to be most supported (too close)

Group #2:

- Urban options A and B meet all goals
- Suburban option does not meet goals
- Community support greater for urban options

Group #3:

- Like the suburban due to access to fields and outdoors
- Practical – prefers less costly option
- Parents drive cars to school to be involved; needs to be accessible and convenient.
- Need safe, wide, level, non-slip walking paths and lighting for the walkways
- Stop and go without having to park.
- I want my kids to walk.
- What percentage of absentee landlords vote on levies? Some raise rent each time a levy passes.