

District Advisory Council
Talking Points
October 18, 2012

- Future Bond Planning:
The district has contracted with Triangle & Associates, a public engagement company, to assist in communications about bond planning.
 - The board studied the results from the 2012 bond community survey and reflected on citizen feedback from June – September.
 - A future bond will need several new components: focus on immediate overcrowding issues, smaller bond amount than previous version, siting a new school on the north end of the island and a straight-forward investment plan that is easy to communicate.
 - The board decided against acquiring private land because it is too expensive (\$15 to \$20 million for 5 acres next to City Hall and Gallagher Hill) and may be unwise since the board would have to condemn the land that is already occupied.
- New bond will be one of three options for a new school on the North Mercer campus.
 - Option #1: A new 65,000 square foot elementary school for 500 K-5 students; redevelopment of 6 acres on Mega Block. *Ripple effects* to other schools: expanded middle school and high school STEM* addition for 4 science labs and 8-10 new classrooms.
 - Estimated cost range: \$55.1 - \$124.6 million.
 - STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The high school is growing and needs space for new, developing programs as well as housing existing students and programs.
 - Option #2: A new 120,500 square foot Middle School North for 775 students in grades 5-8; redevelopment of 8 acres on Mega Block; high school STEM addition; Existing IMS becomes Middle School South in grades 5-8 for 775 students. Existing elementary schools become K-4 schools of approximately 475 students.
 - Estimated cost range: \$69.1 - \$75.9 million.
 - Option #3: Build a new 267,000 square foot high school to house up to 1,600 students in grades 9-12; redevelopment of 10 acres on Mega Block.
 - Present high school becomes Islander Middle School (Grades 6-8). Present IMS is repurposed to become Elementary School

- #4. All four (4) elementary schools are K-5 with approximately 475 students.
 - Estimated cost range: \$125.6 to \$132.4 million
 - Option 3 is the highest cost in the short-term, but less long-term.
- Each solution (option) includes several *ripple effects* and other needs that must be considered as the district moves forward.
 - Ripple effects refer to the impact of choosing one option over another. For example, if school six is an elementary school, it alone will not solve the need for more space at the middle school and high school – hence the need to expand at those schools.
 - Other needs also refer to district-owned properties that require funds to maintain them for the future. For example, Mary Wayte Pool requires at the minimum, \$2.5 million to extend the life of the pool for ten to fifteen years. The high school stadium requires a similar amount to upgrade the facility.
- Enrollment patterns:
 - Between 1972 and 2012 the district has seen enrollment ebb and flow from a high in the 1970's, a dip in the 1980's followed by another slight dip in the early 2000's.
 - We are projecting a growth mode from now until 2020, with 500-600 more students expected.
 - We have the highest concentration of senior citizens of any area in King County.
 - Current enrollment numbers: 1,200 at MIHS; 1,030 at IMS; 680 at West Mercer, 610 at Island Park and 600 at Lakeridge.
- Key Points:
 - All of the options presented are complex.
 - All involve building a new school on the North Mercer campus.
 - NO schools will be torn down.
- Operating costs:
 - There will be additional cost, anywhere from \$250,000 to \$450,000 depending on the assumptions used.
 - This information will be available at the Town Hall meetings and online.
 - Option 2 includes over \$100,000 in transportation savings because there would be two middle schools – one north and one south. Students attend the middle school in their geographic location, thereby reducing transportation costs.

- YTN, Preschools and Fields:
 - The 2012 bond accommodated these services, but since the community voted against that bond, they will need to be displaced if one of the three proposed options is utilized.
 - A high percentage of citizen input suggests that we need to build a new school on district-owned property.
 - The board decided that the Mary Wayte pool is within the district mission.
 - The City of Mercer Island might assist with solutions for YTN and Preschools
- Parking: All the options include plans for more parking; presently there is a parking study by Transpro.
- Construction:
 - Even if the bond passes in 2013, construction will not start until 2015.
 - The new elementary school will be built on six acres, with two acres of shared use for playfields etc.
 - Six acres is not ideal, but adequate.
 - The new elementary school will be two stories.
 - This solution will eliminate elementary portables.
 - The other schools should last for 10-15 more years.
 - The elementary schools will need to be rebuilt sometime in the future (this is included in the district's Master Plan)
 - Lakeridge Elementary, for example, is 60 years old.
- Science and math teachers at MIHS have been meeting since last spring.
 - A new "Ed Spec" team from MIHS has been formed and meetings have been scheduled to discuss the proposed new addition.
- On Option 2:
 - It is estimated to cost \$33 million for a "substantially renovated school of 14 new classrooms plus enlarged commons to seat 400, a new gym to seat 1,200, and new admin/entry and expanded Student Center."
 - Option 2 will reduce pressure on the elementary schools since all 5th graders will now be in Grades 5-8 middle schools.
 - Many districts across the nation and the state including Battle Creek, WA have been using the 5th through 8th grade model successfully.
 - Tennis Courts remain in place in Option #1 and 2, but are reduced to four courts (from six) in Option 3.

- Other issues:
 - One goal of the 2012 bond was to stabilize tax rates over time, but since that bond failed, we are not sure if that is a value held by the community.
 - There won't be a new bond for at least 10 years. The community was promised that the bonds of the 1990's would last 30 years, which takes us to 2025.
 - Was "sticker shock" a primary reason the 2012 bond failed?
 - Yes, but tearing down schools was also unacceptable to many people. The charge to DAC members is to help the board determine how much people will be willing to pay.
 - The next bond to go before the voters will include one of the three options outlined today. The Long-Range plan is a separate issue.
- Additional Needs MWP and MIHS Stadium: DAC members should ask their constituents about the pool and stadium – how much are they willing to support for improvements? The choices are \$2.5 million to 7.9 million for the pool; 2.5 to 5.9 million for the stadium.
- DAC Charges:
 - Become informed, provide input, talk to neighbors, let us know how to reach out to more people.
 - The district facilities page and new "Mind Mixer" web page have extensive information about bond planning.
 - Please join this page and "like" the page if you are a member of Facebook: [www.engagemercerislandschools.org](http://www.engagemerцерislandschools.org)
- Town Hall meetings are scheduled as follows:
 - Weds, November 7
 - 1:00 to 3:00 pm at PEAK
 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm at Islander Middle School
 - Thursday, November 15
 - 7:00 – 9:00 pm at Crest Learning Center
- Discrimination lawsuit at Islander Middle School:
 - Gary briefly commented on the publicity surrounding an Administrative Law Judge's opinion on student-on-student racial discrimination that occurred in October of 2011.
 - The district recently posted a press release about the IMS lawsuit on the front page of the web site.

- October is National Bullying/Harassment Month
 - School events include: Unity Day at IMS, “Recognize, Refuse, Report” assemblies in the elementary schools and student-student discussions on racism at MIHS.
- Hazing at Mercer Island High School:
 - Jamie Prescott, Associate Principal, hopes that students will open up and talk more about this topic, which occurs off-site and rarely on school property, so the school can adequately address the issue.
 - Dichotomy of views on “a harmless tradition” and hazing makes the conversation difficult.
 - All coaches have undergone training in bullying/harassment.
- Calendar Survey: The survey is presently on the website. Once closed, results will be posted online. It is hoped, through negotiations, multi-year school calendars will be made available to staff, parents and community.
- The next DAC meeting is:
January 17, 2013, 12:30 – 3:00 pm, Board Room