

**Long Range Facility Planning Committee**  
**Final Report**  
 May 28, 2014

**Executive Summary**

In September of 2013, Superintendent Dawn Tarzian chartered a Long Range Facility Planning Committee to make recommendations on the major current and future property and facility needs of the Washougal School District. The committee consisted of 18 members representing Washougal area citizens, district staff, two School Board members and other individuals having professional expertise in facility planning. The goal of the committee was to evaluate the needs and conditions of School District facilities and prepare recommendations to the Superintendent that ensures school facilities support a positive environment for student learning and success.

The Long Range Facility Planning Committee reviewed nearly 300 needs relating to facilities and programs. Our evaluation broke down these needs into two basic categories.

- Facility needs which should be funded through voter approved bonds
- Facility needs that should be addressed in the annual budgeting process using general fund dollars, impacts fees, M & O funds and grants

The committee further identified two significant issues that were supported by our consultants, staff and feedback from area residents. The first was remodeling all school buildings to improve safety and security. This will require the district to remodel entrances; install additional lighting and security cameras as well as modify classroom doors and locking mechanisms. The second priority also relates to security, but will require a much larger public expenditure – replacement of the Jemtegaard Middle School. The physical layout and condition of Jemtegaard M. S. does not meet the District’s needs for improved security and a quality learning environment. The remaining facility issues that we addressed include:

- Adding capacity to accommodate student growth and all-day kindergarten
- Reducing the number of portable classrooms
- Addressing needed maintenance and repair of the District’s assets

To address these critical issues, the committee has identified 14 facility needs the District should consider for a bond election. Two important needs on the list, replacing portable classrooms and providing space for all-day kindergarten, are automatically funded if the first three items on the list are included in a bond election. The remaining facility needs, included in our study, should be addressed in the annual budget process over the next 2-4 years.

<b>Capital Project Needs</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost Range</b>	
Security upgrades for Schools/classrooms	\$950,000	\$1,250,000
Build new K-8 at Jemtegaard site*	\$46,500,000	\$54,000,000
Replace Excelsior HS with new facility at WHS	\$2,500,000	\$2,900,000

Replace roofing at Gause ES	\$95,000	\$120,000
Upgrade HVAC at Gause ES	\$275,000	\$330,000
Acid neutralization of pipes at Gause ES	?	?
Replace roofing at Hathaway ES	\$95,000	\$120,000
Upgrade HVAC at Hathaway ES	\$260,000	\$320,000
Acid neutralization at Hathaway ES	?	?
Upgrade Site lighting at CCMS & CH-S	\$40,000	75,000
Seal/repair parking lot at WHS	\$84,000	\$112,000
Repair sanitary sewer line at WHS	\$45,000	\$150,000
Remodel bus barn (for maintenance only)	\$1,000,000	\$1,300,000
Relocate bus storage to District office site	\$650,000	\$825,000
Total	\$52,000,000	\$62,000,000
Replace/upgrade Portables**	\$6,000,000	\$13,000,000
Space for Full-day Kindergarten**	No cost calculated	No cost calculated

\* Estimated cost for a stand-alone K-5 would be \$20 – 23 million (50,000 sf)

\*\* Estimated cost for a stand-alone 6-8 middle school would be \$31 – 36 million (80,000 sf)

\*\* Funding for these projects is not required if the first 3 projects (above) are funded

The biggest challenge to the District is determining what the greatest needs are, the dollar amount of the bond measure and the timing of the election. Although the recommended funding level is fairly high, there is a pending urgency to address these issues before the District reaches a crisis situation. We understand it is not an easy process to balance public cost against children’s safety and the quality of their education, but if the District can complete a thorough public review process by the end of the year, we encourage the District to set an election date as soon as possible.

### Methodology

The committee reviewed reports, prepared by LSW Architects, which surveyed the condition of all buildings and facilities within the District. In addition, we were presented with reports on demographics and growth projections, school enrollment and capacity, student/teacher ratios and projected bond costs. Each District school and support facility was toured by the committee. Facility and program needs were ranked in priority order for each building. Prior to preparing our final list of district-wide recommendations, cost estimates and their funding sources were added to this report. This data gave the committee an overview of projects that could be funded with bonds or projects that could be added to the district’s annual operating budget.

### Criteria

During the process of identifying and ranking facility needs, the committee developed the following criteria which were used to prepare our recommendations to the Superintendent.

- Life Safety and Security
  - Improve entrance security, add lockable classroom doors, address Building code issues

- Student Learning Spaces  
Improve school capacity and classroom size, reduce use of portables and maintain the support facilities necessary for a high quality learning environment
- Asset Preservation and Life Investment  
Maintain buildings and their infrastructure such as HVAC, roofs, paving etc. in good condition
- Community Support  
Assess community priorities and determine what cost they are willing to support

**Town Hall Meeting**

On April 17, 2014, the committee held a Town Hall meeting which was designed to provide education on facility conditions and obtain feedback on what the community felt was the highest priority for repair or replacement. Based on feedback from the Town Hall meeting, the committee identified the following facility issues as having the highest priority:

- Improve school and classroom safety
- Replace Jemtegaard Middle School
- Reduce the number of portables wherever possible
- Implement facility changes that address school capacity
- Protect district investments through proper maintenance and upgrades
- Replace Excelsior HS portables

**Bond Cost Analysis:**

As previously stated, one of the biggest challenges facing the committee is determining what district voters are willing to pay to upgrade their school facilities. A previous bond measure submitted to the voters in 2008 for \$55 million failed. That measure included approximately \$8 million in state matching funds. A preliminary analysis for a new bond measure indicates that the district would receive very limited state funding (approximately \$1.2 million) if a new bond measure was taken to the voters.

Staff was requested to provide a preliminary estimate of the tax rate and cost for a typical homeowner if a bond measure was submitted to the voters. Below is a brief summary of the tax rate and cost for three bond options.

Estimates for Bond sales in 2015-2016			
Bond Authorization Amount	\$50,000,000	\$55,000,000	\$60,000,000
Projected Tax rate / \$1,000	\$1.01	\$1.12	\$1.23
Home Value	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Projected cost per year	\$202	\$224	\$246

**Committee Findings and Recommendations:**

1. The committee finds that school safety and security ranked as a top priority for the District. This is a national issue faced by all school districts. Remodeling school buildings is typically addressed by changing access to the building entrances, controlling access to the school interior, improving visual controls including security cameras, changing/adding door locks, and putting in

place strong administrative and training procedures. We recommend that the District seek appropriate funding, including bonds, to implement the necessary remodeling of our school buildings.

2. One of the biggest and most expensive challenges facing the District is whether to remodel or replace Jemtegaard Middle School. The cost for renovation and upgrades is nearly as expensive as building a new middle school. The school's buildings are basically sound and their useful life could be extended for many years with minor upgrades and repair. However, the 1980's open design is not conducive to good teaching practices, security is difficult to manage and the school's image suffers resulting in student transfers to Canyon Creek MS. Jemtegaard MS is also inside the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and is therefore subject to special regulations. Remodeling or rebuilding the school is not prohibited, but a change in use such as a High School or administrative building is not allowed.

Included in our analysis of Jemtegaard MS, the committee also considered the need for an additional elementary school. The committee finds that building a new elementary school would alleviate overcrowding at other schools, eliminate a large number of portables and help to accommodate all-day kindergarten. Three options were considered for the location of a new elementary school. The options considered were adding a K-5 at the Jemtegaard site, building a K-5 school on the Kerr site or acquiring additional land on the north side of Washougal for a new school. The committee finds that a new elementary school on the Kerr property would be more expensive than combining it with Jemtegaard MS. The planning process and cost to acquire additional land to the north would add to the bond cost and delay the implementation of other critical facility needs of the District.

In 2008, the District put a bond measure on the ballot to build a combination elementary and middle school at the Jemtegaard site. Although it failed, the committee believes that building a combined new elementary and middle school is still the best solution. This solution also resolves other facility issues facing the District. Therefore, we recommend that a new K- 8 school be built on the Jemtegaard site. The school would accommodate 600 elementary and 600 middle school students.

3. Excelsior High School is currently housed in three portables. They are among the oldest in the District and in need of repair. The committee finds that the learning and safety environment could be greatly enhanced by eliminating the portables and constructing a new facility for Excelsior students. Because Excelsior students are dependent on their adjacency to the High School, we recommend a new building be constructed on the campus of the Washougal High School.
4. Given the resources available, and the age of the District's buildings, the District is doing a good job maintaining its assets. However, without an infusion of new voter approved funds, we find that it will be nearly impossible to resolve the capacity, safety and building preservation needs facing the District. Failure to address these issues, in the near future, puts the operation of these

buildings and program delivery at risk. Voter support of these needs will allow the District to allocate more annual funding to supporting the classroom learning environment.

Our research finds that all schools have on-going maintenance and repair needs. It is recommended that the District specifically address deferred maintenance issues related to HVAC systems, roof replacement, painting and infrastructure repair. The most critical areas include Gause and Hathaway Elementary Schools, Washougal High School and the Bus Barn. We find that some of these needs are best addressed with voter approved bonds. Those needs with smaller costs and less urgency can be funded with general fund or grant dollars. We urge the District to update the Capital Facilities Plan and use the Plan as a basis for funding these projects.

5. Our tour of school facilities focused much attention on the number and condition of portable classrooms. The District currently has 14 portables housing 27 classrooms. Because of their age, many of the portables are approaching their useful life span. In addition, they each have their own security issues separate from the main school buildings they serve. If the District chooses to fully implement the plan presented by the LRFP Committee, the majority of the portables would be eliminated or repurposed. Specifically, the building of a new K-8 school at the Jemtegaard site and new Excelsior classrooms are part of this solution.
6. The Bus Barn has reached a condition that is no longer meeting the transportation needs of the District. The building is in need of structural, mechanical and electrical upgrades. The roof, siding, doors, exhaust system and equipment used to service buses are also in need of repair or replacement. The committee recommends that funding for this remodel be included in the bond measure and that the bus parking area and dispatch be relocated to the administrative office site.
7. The Town Hall meeting, held on April 17<sup>th</sup>, reaffirmed many of the priorities under consideration by the committee. However, we recognize that the general public (voters) was under represented in comparison to the total turnout. While the meeting helped educate the community on what the needs are and identify priorities, it did not provide specific solutions or their cost impact. We are also concerned about proposing a bond measure that results in a large increase in property taxes, especially if there is an overlap of 3-4 years between the current bond measure and a new bond measure. Nevertheless, there is an urgency that was demonstrated in our review that suggests the District needs to consider a bond election as early as 2015. Prior to setting an election date however, there is much community work to be done. The District must develop a process that ensures the voters are well informed of the facility needs and are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to support the proposal. Specifically, we recommend that the District develop a community based process that carefully assesses public support before sending the measure to a public vote. The process should include:
  - Meetings at each school
  - Developing more accurate cost estimates for each facility need
  - Defining the scope of each project and what voters are willing to support
  - Conducting a voter poll
  - Holding one or more public hearings to finalize priorities and cost
  - A presentation to the board by a community group organized to campaign for the bond

8. The committee has not recommended the immediate acquisition of more land. However, it surfaced in several of our discussions. Our findings indicate that these recommendations can be implemented without purchasing additional land. However, growth within the District will occur to the north of Washougal. In coordination with the City of Washougal, the District should evaluate the opportunity to purchase or negotiate a land trade for additional land to accommodate this growth. We find that the acquisition of additional land is a needed future work item, but undertaking this task now could jeopardize the ability of the District to address the short term needs to improve security, accommodate all-day kindergarten and relieve school overcrowding.

## **Appendix**

Committee membership  
Demographic report  
Enrollment projections  
Facility conditions & survey LSW  
Facility / program needs and rankings  
Town Hall feedback  
Bond Issue Planning report