

MERCER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #404
ALEDO, ILLINOIS
Bray Project No. 3495

Monday, February 8, 2021



MINUTES

1. An overview the proposed survey and community engagement timeline was presented.
 - a. A question was raised as to the March referendum and what other issues or elections might be up for vote at the same time. Scott Petrie provided a brief summary of other possible items and elections which will be on the ballot.
2. A draft survey document was presented.
 - a. The draft survey was created by School Perceptions after working through with Bray Architects and Scott Petrie through December and January.
 - b. A question was raised regarding the wording of the Base Plan question. It was stated that the tax impact to individuals should be integrated into the question so as to be clearer what this means for the voters. This question will be revised in a way which indicates the ranges of tax increase per \$100,000 within the question.
 - c. It was stated that the background information section should also provide the cost impact should voters decide to do nothing. The current cost is approximately \$14M, which includes maintenance, repair, and improvement items from the facility study, as well as items currently on Health Life Safety Amendments.
 - d. Question was raised if the Middle School project should be listed as an independent project apart from the Elementary School. The survey team has proposed that the committee and board consider the strategy of using a Base Plan. The proposed base plan outlines a solution which impacts PreK – 8, with some minimal work at the High School.
 - i. A follow up question was asked: ‘What if people want work to be completed at the High School but not at the other buildings/levels?’
 1. As an alternative, the district could ask constituents to rank/respond to their opinion of priority in the district. The concern is that responses often tend to be based on emotion or cost. If based on cost, the cheapest option will be identified in lieu of what might be more sensible and impactful to the district. Therefore, it is highly recommended to seek input based upon a recommended plan because this takes into account what is most sensible and impactful to the district. The

recommended plan is what is currently outlined in this document as the ‘Base Plan’.

- ii. The question was raised as to whether a second survey is ever sent to constituents. It was explained that a second survey can be a useful tool if the response data is unclear and does not provide clear direction for how to proceed.
- iii. The second question in the document asks whether constituents would support work at the High School in addition to the PreK through 8 base plan. This question should provide data to the board regarding constituents’ desire to support work at the High School building.
 - 1. A question was raised regarding outstanding HLS items at the High School as they will not be addressed in the current Base Plan. These could be addressed using HLS funds or included in a referendum effort. Additional budget planning will be needed.
- iv. It was asked of the committee and board members present whether they support the concept of proposing a Base Plan to the community.
 - 1. The general consensus of the group was that this approach feels appropriate.
 - 2. Other members of the committee and administration will need to review and provide their comment.

3. Concept diagrams were presented which illustrate an approach to how renovation and addition work could be completed at each building.

a. Middle School at current Intermediate

- i. Question was raised as to what will happen to District offices. It was agreed that the District offices could move to the Joy campus and either utilize space within the current building or utilized space within the nearby vocational building. In addition it was clarified that HLS requirements do not apply to District offices.

b. Elementary School at current Junior High

- i. Three options were presented which utilize the existing cafeteria, gymnasium, and existing adjacent educational spaces.
 - 1. Option 1 – provides a three story addition to the south
 - 2. Option 2- illustrates a two story addition at the south which extends to the west
 - 3. Option 3-illustrates two additions, one at south and one at the west of the existing.

- ii. Question was raised regarding the difference in cost of a single-story solution versus multi-story. It was explained that multistory buildings are not always more expensive solutions than single story buildings and often can provide better solutions and costs depending upon a variety of factors.
- iii. Question was raised if an addition could be constructed only as single-story. It was indicated that a single-story solution is possible, but the building addition would be very long and extend across the current football field.
- iv. Question was raised regarding location for playground and play space. It was discussed that the current football field would be used for recreation and that playground areas will need to be created.
- v. The committee was asked if the current track must be retained or if it can be removed. It was commented that the track is an old cinder track. It is not in good condition and is not regularly utilized. It was agreed that the track could be removed however the football field should be retained. Green spaces of the football field, at areas west of the track and the adjacent property at the northwest corner of property are important to keep. The district rents the adjacent property at the northwest corner of the property and utilizes for football practice.
- vi. Question was raised if an addition to the south, similar to Option 1, could be completed as a 2-story structure. It was discussed that this is possible and that the Bray team will explore this option further. This was agreed to be the most favorable option of the group.
 - 1. The roadway to the south of property will need to be investigated further to determine setback requirements and encroachment concerns.
 - 2. The access to back of building will need to be improved for ease of deliveries. It currently does not function well for larger trucks.

c. High School

- i. Two options were presented as possible approaches to the High School campus
 - 1. Option 1 – illustrates expansion to the front and rear of building
 - 2. Option 2 – illustrates an option which would reverse the front of building by providing an addition to the back only
- ii. It was discussed that the lane at the west side of the gymnasium could be closed or reduced to the minimum necessary for delivery trucks only.
 - 1. The lane is used for deliveries at the south side of building.

- iii. There is a concern with adding to south/back of building only. There is more consensus provide additions to both sides of the building. Adding to both sides is better for wayfinding, access, and use of site.
 - iv. At the current front of building, the circle drive and greenspace can be revised to allow for parking and moving of the driveway. Parking spaces should be integrated at the front of building to create a maximum of 10 visitor and ADA parking spaces.
 - v. There was discussion related to the adjacent City pool property to the East. It is under consideration that the pool could be moved to a different location. The pool is in disrepair and will need improvement, however, there have been discussions of a new pool being constructed elsewhere. Scott Petrie will contact the City to seek additional information.
 - vi. If the pool were to move, this could free up space which would make Option 2 more desirable. Time frame and ownership of that property would influence a decision in this direction.
- 4. Next steps**
- a. Board review of Draft Survey (tentatively February 17)
 - b. Revise and refine concept diagrams
 - c. Revise and refine survey document
- 5. Next Meeting**
- a. Tentative: 6:00 pm, March 8, 2021