

September 30, 2005

Excerpts from the preliminary plan of the Facilities Task Force



Members of the Spring Lake Park School District 16 citizen-staff Facilities Task Force, a group that has studied the needs of district facilities since January, are preparing to share its findings with the community.

Community meetings—each with the same content—have been scheduled to explain major components of the task force's Preliminary Facilities Improvement Plan. Time will also be provided for questions and comments from those in attendance. Though they will have the same content, three meetings were scheduled to increase the opportunities for community members to attend. The meetings are:

**Community Information Meetings
FACILITIES TASK FORCE REPORT**

Thursday, October 6
Wednesday, October 12
Monday, October 24
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Fine Arts Center, Spring Lake Park High School,
8000 Highway 65 NE, Spring Lake Park

Since January, the task force has toured and reviewed all district sites, prioritized current and future facilities needs, reviewed enrollment and demographic data, and reviewed state statutes related to renovation and new construction.

In the report to the community in October, the task force will discuss:

- Significant deferred maintenance needs on all facilities, buildings that are 35 to 50 years old.
- Projected enrollment increases of 800 students, that have already begun to take place (a nearly 18 percent increase), leading to the need for additional classrooms at several schools, the purchase of additional land, and a new elementary school in Blaine.
- Land-locked school properties, too small for today's state guidelines, limit district renovation options and choices. This may lead to a restructuring of the Spring Lake Park High School site and the closing of Kenneth Hall Elementary.
- A plan that combines major renovation and new construction at the high school.

**On Tuesday,
September 27,
John Stroebel and
Jodi Ruch, two
parents on the task
force, presented
a preliminary
facilities
improvement plan
at a School Board
work session**

Task force research and findings will not become recommendations until November. The school board will then review and discuss the recommendations, eventually agreeing upon a facilities improvement plan to take before district voters in 2006.

Stroebel reviewed the goals and challenges of the Task Force:

- Improve safety and security at all sites
- Provide for the correction of all health and safety and fire safety issues
- Provide for the actual and anticipated enrollment growth at all grade levels
- Provide for specific population growth in the northern portion of the district
- To the greatest extent possible, comply with federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, and guidelines to receive a favorable Review and Comment from the MN Department of Education
- Cost effective and academically sound
- Provide the district with facilities that meet present and future needs

The Task Force plans to recommend all deferred maintenance items identified as 1s and 2s, items that need to be done within the next two to five years, be addressed and funded. These items include:

- mechanical system updates
- electrical system updates
- heating, air conditioning and ventilation
- safety and security
- air quality
- roofs
- windows
- technology and infrastructure
- parking lot improvements, traffic flow
- playfields and grounds

The Task Force also considered comments and suggestions made by the Minnesota Department of Education Facilities Specialist regarding renovations.

The Spring Lake Park High School site is too small for the number of programs and students it currently houses.

The high school, alone, should be on at least 60 acres of land. It is not likely the Department of Education would approve a facilities plan that includes both Kenneth Hall and the high school on the same site. In light of that, the Task Force discussed building a new elementary school in the northern part of Blaine to accommodate the rapid growth in that area.

The Task Force is also considering relocating the District Offices and district maintenance garage to provide additional space for high school parking and bus drop off area. Also considered was the guideline for the renovation of buildings. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) reviews school district requests for renovation and/or new construction based upon what is best educationally for students and economically for taxpayers of the community.

Task force concepts from the preliminary facilities improvement plan

In a proposed renovation project, a school district is expected to bring the facility up to current codes and address educational deficiencies as well.

When the estimated costs of renovating/improving a school facility approach 60% of the cost of replacing the facility, a school district needs to replace the facility. There are a few schools in the district that are close to or exceed the 60% guideline and the Kenneth Hall renovation figure is at 75%.

Some of the task force preliminary facilities improvement plans include:

- The oldest parts of the high school complex should be replaced with a two-story structure to provide greater educational effectiveness
- Rezone the high school for greater security, accessibility, and program effectiveness
- Additional parking space at the high school
- Additional classrooms are needed at the middle school due to the enrollment growth to be completed as soon as possible
- Approximately \$90 million is required to meet the needs of identified items that need to be addressed for the future

In reviewing deferred maintenance needs, the Task Force toured each of the facilities. Many items from the Bond Referendum from ten years ago were cut from the plan and still need to be done and need to be done now. All buildings need significant updating and the estimated cost for deferred maintenance items is \$60 million. However, based upon the current preliminary plan, the actual cost for deferred maintenance items would be around \$33 million because of significant proposed renovation and new construction.

Therefore, a significant portion of the bond would be for renovation and new construction to meet today's standards.

Stroebel also reviewed preliminary building plans, stating the key is to balance the cost of the overall plan with the identified needs. Among his comments were:

Woodcrest Elementary

- There is no space for additional growth. The MN Department of Education would not favor additional classroom space.
- Identified deferred maintenance items would be addressed
- Expand and renovate the kitchen and lunchroom area
- Reclaim the stage area for gym space
- Reconfigure the site layout to improve the parking and traffic flow

The Task Force would recommend that because the district is landlocked with limited space for growth, the district consider purchasing any property that is contiguous to the current schools as the property becomes available.

Park Terrace Elementary

This is an important facility to renovate in the southern portion of the district, particularly with the proposed removal of Kenneth Hall Elementary School. The school is located on a limited amount of space, but there are options available.

- Extensive renovation including reconfiguring classrooms so they are on the outside walls
- Add windows for more natural light to classrooms
- Address all deferred maintenance items
- Expand kitchen, lunchroom, and gym areas
- Reconfigure the site layout to improve the parking and traffic flow
- Added classroom space to accommodate increased enrollment

Because the school is located on a limited amount of land, the Task Force is confident the Department of Education would give favorable consideration to additional classrooms.

Westwood Middle School

- Address all deferred maintenance items
- Reconfigure the site layout to improve the parking and traffic flow, including addition of another entrance/exit road, if possible
- Infill area between middle school and elementary school providing a new common entrance to both facilities and relocate administrative offices
- Add classrooms at the middle school for increased enrollment

Westwood Elementary School

- Add classrooms to accommodate increased enrollment
- Address all deferred maintenance items
- Infill area between middle school and elementary school providing a new common entrance to both facilities and relocate administrative offices
- Add classrooms at the middle school for increased enrollment

Kenneth Hall Elementary School

Due to high maintenance costs, limited growth, and deferred maintenance costs at 75% of the cost to replace the facility, the building is, unfortunately, not worth renovating or keeping for the long term. The Task Force does not plan to recommend renovation of Kenneth Hall. It can be used as a temporary facility during the construction of other areas in the district. The gymnasium and cafeteria would be retained and the entrance upgraded for multi-purpose use by the district and the community.

New Elementary School

Purchase property and construct a new elementary school in the northern part of Blaine, one of the district's three cities and one that produces over 60% of its students, with multi-use capabilities to support 750 students.

Spring Lake Park High School

Jodi Ruch reported that Spring Lake Park High School has limited green space and should be situated on 60 acres of land rather than the 40 acres it currently shares with the District Office, Learning Alternatives Community Program, early childhood program, ECFE, and Kenneth Hall. The building has had numerous additions over time with some areas constructed poorly. The building is unsafe because it cannot be zoned off or locked down before or after school or in the event of an emergency.

The Task Force recommends the high school remain in Spring Lake Park at its current site and would propose significant renovation.

- Address structural and mechanical repair projects
- Demolish older areas of the building including the Early Childhood Family Education wing, the Learning Alternatives wing, the red and white gyms
- Construct a two-story addition for classrooms and programs with a link to the existing two-story section
- Prepare the first floor of the existing two-story section for the District Office, districtwide support staff, Community Services, and Learning Alternatives programs
- Keep and renovate the Fine Arts Center, including the pool area
- Construct an expansion for the physical education/athletics and music areas
- Add on to the current cafeteria
- Prepare existing science classrooms for Early Childhood Family Education, Preschool, and Early Childhood Special Education programs
- Improve parking and traffic flow and expand athletic fields and green space
- Addition of artificial turf on the football field to increase its usefulness for phy. ed. and other sports. This item may be separated from the bond.

Why should the facilities needs be addressed now?

Stroebel and Superintendent Don Helmstetter addressed the topic of why the task force felt it imperative that the District address facility needs now:

- The cost of construction continues to increase. In March, it cost \$80/square foot for renovation and \$135/square foot for new construction. Current cost today is \$100/square foot to renovate and \$175/square foot for new construction. Delaying the projects only increases construction costs.
- Now is the time to plan for the future. Addressing deferred maintenance alone is not a long-term solution. The Department of Education would not approve deferred maintenance while Kenneth Hall and the high school share the same site.
- \$30 million now buys a lot more for the future and would be a cost savings in the long run.

Jodi Ruch said the community will need to be reminded that:

- Operating funds cannot be used for capital expenditures
- Task force members are sensitive to the impact facilities improvements will have on taxpayers
- Timelines need to be such that construction can begin this summer

The Task Force plans to recommend a final plan in November that could cost around \$90 million.

Dr. Helmstetter credited Greg Dehler, WOLD Architects and Engineers, and Gary Benson, Kraus-Anderson Construction, for their input throughout the process and for providing credible and consistent cost estimates. The anticipated range of an eventual 2006 bond referendum, he said, is \$88-95 million.

**Anticipated cost of a
2006 Bond Referendum
based upon the
preliminary facilities
improvement plan**

At this time, it is estimated that the effect of a \$90 million Bond Referendum for homeowners would be:

\$150,000 assessed home value	\$12/month tax increase
\$250,000 assessed home value	\$20/month tax increase
\$500,000 assessed home value	\$39/month tax increase

Dr. Helmstetter said the Task Force will continue to refine the plan and present a final plan to the Board on November 8. It will consider input received at public information sessions scheduled on October 6, 12, and 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center. Members of the Task Force will lead the public presentations. John Ryberg, Minnesota Department of Education Facilities Specialist, will be available at the October 6 informational session.

The firm of WOLD Architects and Engineers was contracted by the district to conduct a deferred maintenance study in March 2004. In February 2005, WOLD Architects and Engineers and Kraus-Anderson Construction were approved by the School Board to assist in identifying the district's facilities needs, to assist the task force, and to remain involved if a Bond Referendum is successful. Greg Dehler of WOLD presented conceptual drawings of each site. These drawings are provided at the end of this report.

**Remaining timeline for
task force and school
board activities**

The remaining timeline for task force and school board activities include:

October 6, 12, & 24 Community meetings—each with the same content—have been scheduled to explain major components of the task force's Preliminary Facilities Improvement Plan. Time will also be provided for questions and comments from those in attendance. Though they will have the same content, three meetings were scheduled to increase the opportunities for community members to attend. The meetings are 7:00 – 9:00 pm in the district's Fine Arts Center, 8000 Highway 65 NE, Spring Lake Park.

Prior to Nov. 8, 2005 Task Force fine-tunes Facilities Improvement Plan, utilizing community feedback and survey results

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2005 Task Force presents its final, completed Facilities Improvement Plan recommendations to the School Board

Nov. 22, Dec. 6, or Dec. 13; 2005 (specific date will be announced). School Board decision on Facilities Improvement Plan, decision on 2006 date for Bond Referendum

Following the Board decision District prepares and conducts an informational campaign to inform residents of the Facilities Improvement Plan and the Bond Referendum vote

February 28, 2006 Probable date for 2006 Bond Referendum

Superintendent Helmstetter added that he would be meeting with staff from all buildings within the next two weeks. He said that the task force would use input from the community meetings as well as from a fall survey of community members to help develop its final to be presented to the School Board on November 8.

Sept. 27, 2005
Preliminary Concept
Drawing

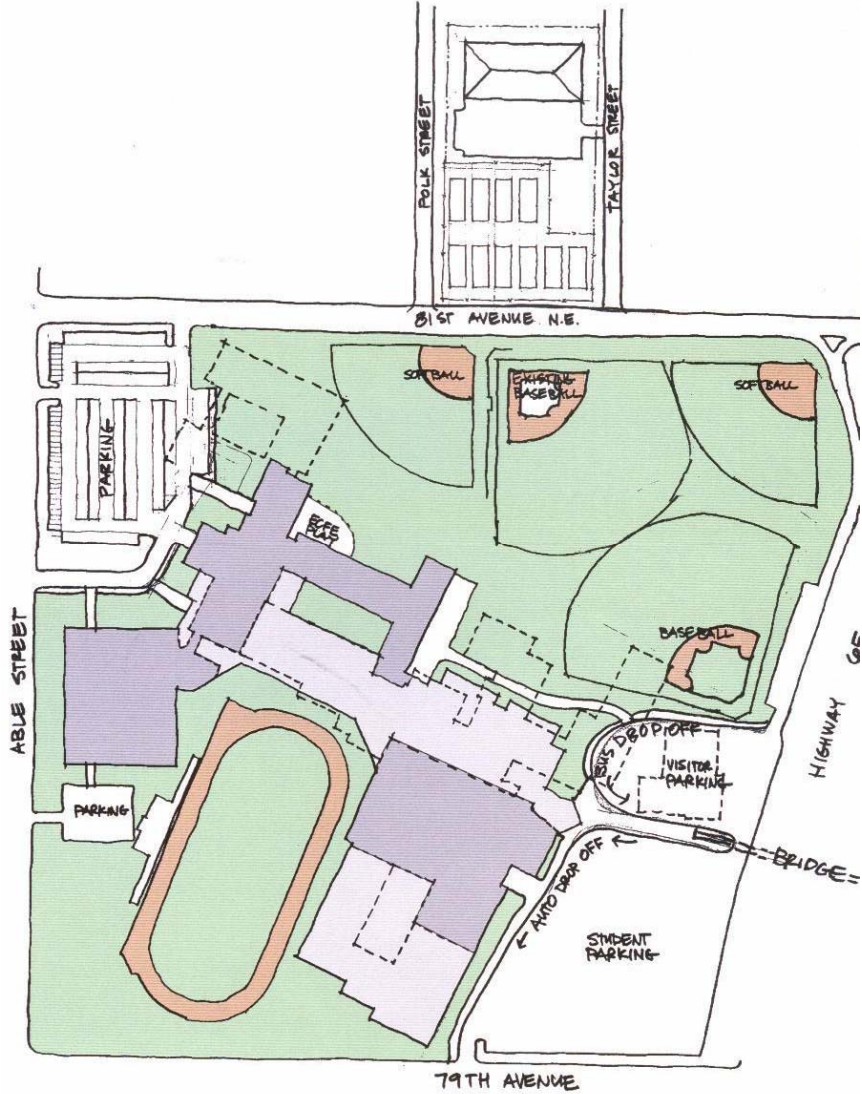
Spring Lake Park
High School

Kenneth Hall
Elementary

District Office and
Maintenance
Garage

Community
Services

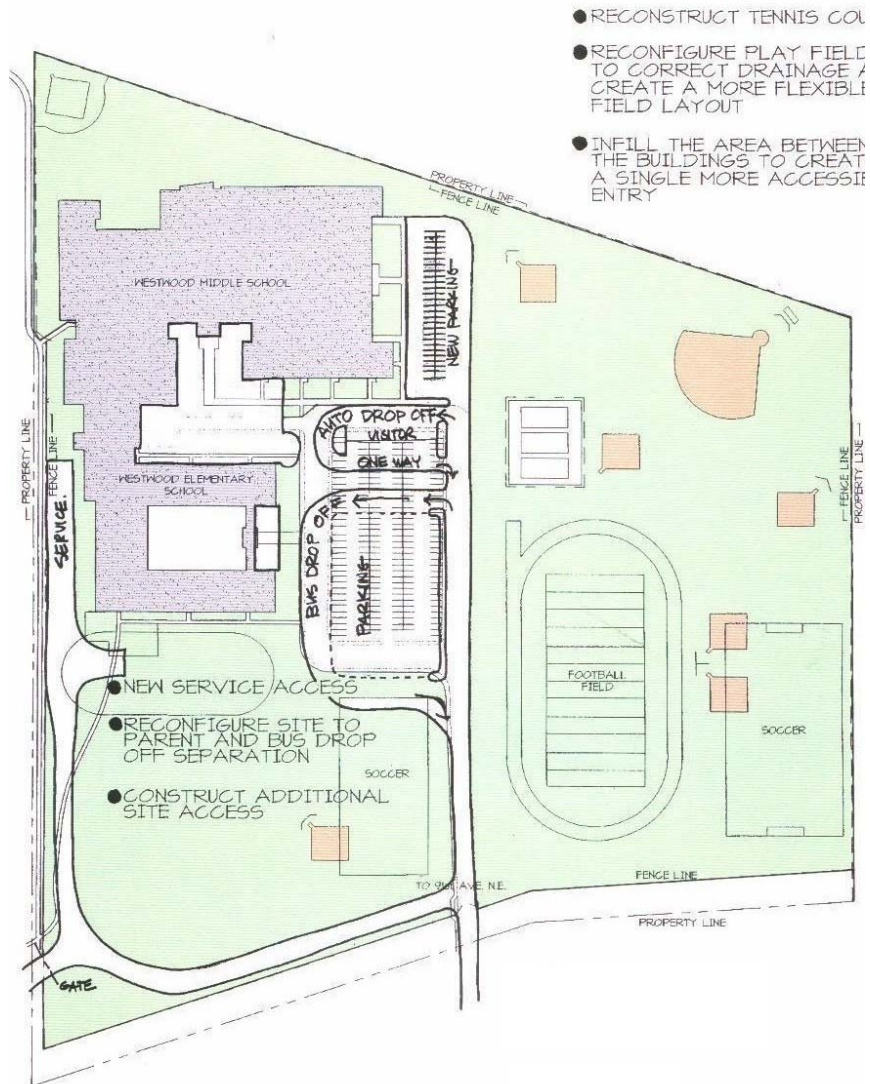
Learning
Alternatives
Community
School



Sept. 27, 2005
Preliminary Concept
Drawing

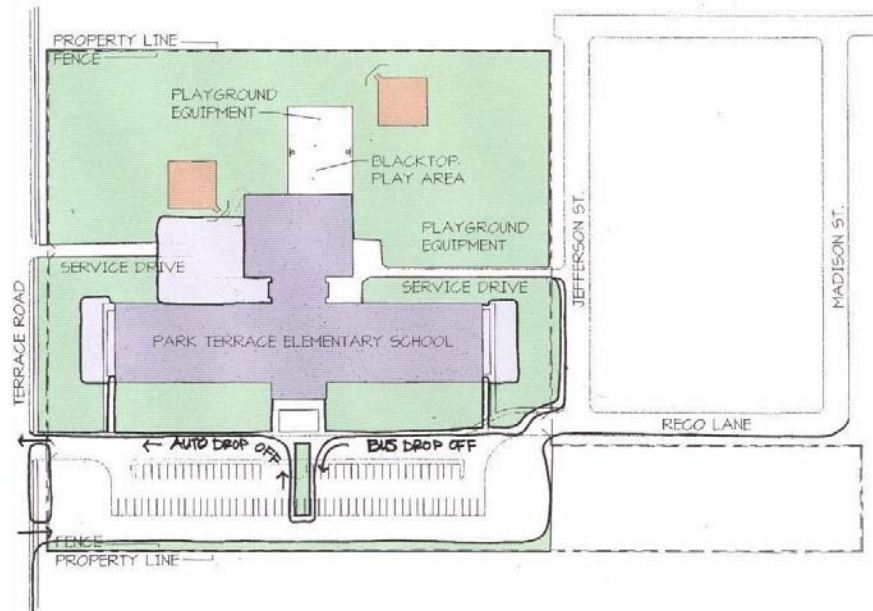
Westwood Middle School

Westwood Elementary



Sept. 27, 2005
Preliminary Concept
Drawing

Park Terrace Elementary



- ADDITION FOR NEW RECEIVING, KITCHEN AND CAFETERIA/GYM
- RENOVATE AND REORGANIZE THE EXISTING CLASSROOMS
- RECONFIGURE THE SITE VEHICULAR CIRCULATION FOR SEPARATION OF BUS AND PARENT DROP OFF AREAS

Sept. 27, 2005
Preliminary Concept
Drawing

Woodcrest Elementary

- REWORK MAIN ENTRY TO WIDEN THE MAIN CORRIDOR/FOYER
- RENOVATE KITCHEN AND CAFETERIA AND ADD STORAGE ADJACENT TO KITCHEN
- EXPAND THE GYMNASIUM INTO THE STAGE AREA
- RECONFIGURE ON SITE VEHICAL AND BUS CIRCULATION

