

4J River Road/El Camino del Río Replacement School Project

Public Engagement Process

10.15.2014

The public engagement process for the replacement River Road/El Camino del Río School is organized into three parts; 1. Public meetings, 2. Updates at neighborhood association meetings, 3. Comments through conversation and email.

1. Public Meetings

Design Workshop on 03.06.2014

Participants included invited representatives from the River Road Community Organization, school parents, students, and the Design Committee. Community participants included Mellani Ocampo, David Langan, Barry Girt, and Kate Kelly.

Attendees generated 24 design schemes for potential building arrangements and at various locations on the site. 16 schemes located the new school west of the existing school and 8 schemes located the building on the east. This was the first opportunity to “test” the site’s capacity to accommodate a new building, and the larger site area west of the existing school lent itself to more options. The teams looked at options to design around the existing oak grove east of the school, as preserving the trees was a priority. However, it became apparent that proximity to the root zone will be a challenge with the east side options.

Second Public Meeting / Open House on 05.06.2014

First iteration of five refined building schemes from the Design Workshop were presented. One scheme located the building on the east side, and the other four schemes explored west options. The east scheme positioned the building around the east oak grove. Site constraints were discussed for all schemes. There was no clear preference for east or west. Many in attendance advocated for the east option to avoid perceived impact of the new building on their property and enjoyment of current existing open space. The project was put on hold until September, to allow the design team to focus on the Howard project over the summer.

Third Public Meeting / Open House on 09.25.2014

Second iteration of the east and west building schemes were presented. The design team focused on creating more separation from residential properties and existing mature trees. This emphasis eliminated some options presented in the spring. The design team also focused on a more compact layout than the building design developed for the Howard site, and to minimize adjacent residential encroachment by positioning the two-story portion along the street frontage.

The presentation included a detailed examination of the site constraints as a context to the design refinements. Two schemes were presented: one east and one west option. These options were both reconfigured from classroom clusters to more of the classroom bar along either Hilliard Lane (west option) or Marion Lane (east option) in order to "compact" the building configuration and provide maximum set-backs from neighbors in response to previous comments. The east scheme displaces the existing oak grove. Both schemes allow the entire existing school to remain during construction, which is mandatory given the 2014–15 enrollment and the implementation of full-day kindergarten in 2015–16. The design team determined that preserving all parts of the existing school as well as the east oak grove during construction on the east side is not achievable. Therefore, the east scheme that was presented requires removal of the oak trees. The east option also requires the

displacement of the current parking lot, the bus loading area, and the hard and soft surface play areas, which would require temporary mitigation during construction.

Most of the speakers at the public meeting identified where they lived. Generally, eastside neighbors preferred the west option and westside neighbors preferred the east option.

This is the last planned public meeting.

Neighborhood outreach and notification for each of the two open houses, May 6 and September 25:

- Postcard mailed to all residences in the River Road school attendance boundary (more than 5,800 addresses)
- Postcard mailed to all River Road Elementary students' families
- Invitation sent via email and paper to all River Road Elementary students' families
- 3 news releases sent to local television, radio and print media
- Article published in Register-Guard's weekly Education Extra section
- 3 emails to all 4J School News e-newsletter subscribers (featured in headline and as top-billed item in at least one of the three emails)
- 3 emails to all 4J staff, same information as e-newsletters
- 3 emails to all River Road School Design News subscribers
- Email to River Road Community Organization, asked to share with their neighborhood email list
- Email to City of Eugene Neighborhood Program, leading to event announcement in the Neighborly News publication in September
- Email to City of Eugene mayor and city council
- Posted on Twitter
- Posted on Facebook
- Article featured on 4J website homepage (<http://www.4j.lane.edu>) and linked from homepage after a new feature replaced it
- Information posted on 4J website page specific to the River Road school replacement project (<http://www.4j.lane.edu/communications/bond/news/riverroad>)
- Information posted on the design team's River Road & Howard project website (<http://www.4jnewschoolshoward-riverroad.org>)
- Information posted on River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School website
- Posted on district's online calendar

2. Updates at the River Road Community Organization Meetings

Representatives of the Design Committee present project updates to the River Road Community Organization, and remain in contact the RRCO Chair, Jon Belcher. This includes Beth Gerot of the school board and Curt Wilson of PIVOT Architecture. Meeting updates have occurred as follows:

November 11, 2013

The following is the summary of the report from the RRCO approved minutes:

Beth Gerot shared lots of information about the elementary school replacement projects for River Road Elementary and Howard Elementary. They plan to build to LEED Silver standards to obtain the most effective and efficient energy components. Beth is seeking two members from the neighborhood for each design team for upcoming siting meetings.

Howard is on the fast track with the first meeting on November 23 from 9:00 to 2:30. It is to be built first. The River Road meeting will be held in February. In early January, an open house will be held to obtain community input. A second open house will be held later with preliminary designs. They are meeting with students from Howard on Thursday to obtain their input. At a later point, the design information will be set up in the schools that you can come, see, and give input on. Contact Jon or Beth if you want to be on a design committee.

February 10, 2014

The following is the summary of the report from the RRCO approved minutes:

Howard School replacement. Neighbor and 4J Board member Beth Gerot introduced Curt Wilson from Pivot Architects. Howard and River Road Elementary Schools will be planned in tandem. He described the planning process for Howard thus far to identify needs and design a school that will be ready to be occupied by September of 2015. His presentation boards showed the current layout of Howard and Kelly, explained the interim processes to obtain consensus views, and the current design. He answered questions about the rebuild, lighting and energy efficiency, safety precautions, fences, pavement, fire lanes, classrooms and media center, community spaces, outdoor gardens, work with LTD, bike and car parking, and access by alternate transportation.

March 10, 2014

The following is the summary of the report from the RRCO approved minutes:

4J School Rebuilds. Beth Gerot, neighbor, 4J Board member and liaison to the design team, introduced Curt Wilson of Pivot architects. He displayed poster board of school designs for Howard and River Road, discussed the placement of buildings on the property, and pointed to the timeline for getting construction underway and completion. There will be an open house for Howard on April 8;

The River Road open House will be May 6 and at the end of September.

Curt educated us about Public Lands and building adjacent to existing neighborhoods. The height along the boundaries must match the adjacent area. At Howard, the set back along southern the southern property line is 60 feet. They are preserving trees, as much as possible. There is community path between Howard and Emerald Park to allow the LTD to drop riders on Howard and walk safely to the park. A multi-modal sidewalk is planned along Howard to be 10 feet wide. The setback for the River Road School will be 50 feet, and the oak trees will be protected. Along Marion Lane, the setback will be 10 feet.

Note: The presentation regarding the setbacks was more detailed than presented in the minutes, and focused on the distinction between setbacks from streets, and from residential properties. The statement in the minutes that the oak trees “will be” protected is more strongly worded than what was actually presented. The presentation focused on the need to look at all available site options, including development on the east and west, and the potential impacts to the east oak grove. Preserving all trees was represented as a goal, not a requirement or guarantee.

June 9, 2014

Minutes from this meeting are not currently available.

The presentation focused on the Howard project, and the report on the River Road project was that the Design Committee was no closer to making a decision on the site design than we were at the May open house, and we would re-engage the project in September.

September 8, 2014

Minutes from this meeting are not currently available.

The agenda time for the Howard and River Road project was very limited, so the report was focused on project schedules, including an invitation to the September 25, 2014 open house. One person in the attendance identified herself as a neighbor across from Hilliard from the existing school and she was there to represent and voice concerns for the neighbors from the west side. She commented that there are more properties immediately adjacent to the school site on the west side. Therefore, she believed, placement of the new school on the west would negatively impact more neighbors than a school on the east. She also questioned why the Design Committee did not include a representative from the neighborhood.

In response, 4J invited a representative from the neighborhood, Eileen Nittler, to join the Design Committee. Eileen and her family live on Hilliard, north of the existing school. The Nittler children attended River Road Elementary School.

3. Comments through conversation and email

Throughout the process, residents of the River Road area have been encouraged to contact Design Committee and School Board member Beth Gerot via email regarding their concerns. More specifically, the last September RRCO email newsletter provided a brief summary of the project status and encouraged residents to contact Beth.

Various public comments received subsequent to the last public meeting were mixed. Some prefer the east option to preserve westside open space and avoid west end encroachment, and some prefer the west option to preserve eastside oak trees and avoid east end encroachment. Other concerns were raised, such as visual security and safety that apply to any site scheme.

4. Follow up

The Design Committee acknowledges that, given the constraints imposed by the site, a decision for either siting option will not be supported by some neighbors and community members. One of the goals of the public engagement process is to listen to and understand the concerns of the neighbors and develop responses in the design solution that reduce the perceived and actual impacts.

The Design Committee continues to evaluate options and discuss pros and cons. The design team developed an evaluation matrix with priorities. Individual scores were tallied and are currently being evaluated. We expect this process to lead to a selected option as the best overall choice for moving the design forward.

The evaluation criteria established by the Design Committee are as follows:

Site

Car Parking/Drop Off
Bus Drop Off
Car and Bus Circulation
Service Access
Access to Cafeteria from/to Buses and Cars
Cafeteria/Recess Access to Hard Surface/Soft Surface Play
Hard Surface/Soft Surface/Grass Area Arrangement
Temporary Relocation Costs and Impacts
Visual Security (Exterior Safety)
Short-Term (Construction) Impacts on Neighbors
Maintains Existing Trees
Access to Athletic Fields
Long-Term Impacts on Neighbors

Building

Entry Experience
Location of Administration
Location of Media / "School Heart"
Classroom Arrangement
After Hours Access to Gym, Cafeteria and Media
Interior Safety
Design Flexibility
Connection to Outdoor Learning

Representatives of the Design Committee will continue to present regular updates (as invited) to the River Road Community Organization throughout design and construction.

4J River Road/El Camino Del Río Design Committee

Joel Lavin	Principal
Alexis Screen	Teacher
Karen Ramirez	Teacher
Marcy Hellman	Teacher
Beth Gerot	School Board Member
Sara Cramer	Director of Elementary Education
Cheryl Linder	Education Support Services
Jon Lauch	Facilities Manager
Ben Brantley	Capital Improvement Program Manager
Eileen Nittler	Community Liaison
Curt Wilson	PIVOT Architecture
John Stapleton	PIVOT Architecture
Scott Clarke	PIVOT Architecture
John Weekes	Dull Olson Weekes - IBI Group Architects
David Johnson	Dull Olson Weekes - IBI Group Architects