Long Range Planning Advisory Committee

Thursday, Oct. 15, 2015

Opening

Meeting began with Chris Gdowski's discussion on four points:

1. This April we must provide a plan to the Board describing a 3 – 5 year capital, long-range plan and address:

- What?
  - If we pass a bond next November – how do we assign the funds? A few examples: STEM expansion at NHS vs LHS expansion vs RTMS relief, $100M Deferred Maintenance vs IT vs Safety & Security etc.
- Why?
  - How do we explain and determine the choices?
- How and when do we accomplish this?
  - This group will meet over next few months to evaluate and determine what the best plan will look like.

2. The accountability of this group to the Board is to act in an oversight role.

3. If we don't pass a Bond, what do we do next? What is our Plan B?

4. Future planning – this committee will always be looping back to the top of this list to reprioritize and communicate on district needs.

Presentations

Themes/Priorities of the Work – Joe Ferdani

- The long-term plan of this committee is to focus on district priorities. This year it is mostly work to support a bond through the confirmation of a long-range plan. The next year might be accountability of that bond, or new work if it fails.
- This year, we will break into three subcommittees to determine this work: Student Population Shifts, Life-cycle Management and Ed Programming.
- These committees overlap in our themes, but they will drive the work.

Brief Overview of Schedule for Year – Mark Poshak

- Backwards planning from Board presentation
- Brief explanation of committees
- "Be thinking of which committee you might want to focus on"

Driver 1: Student Population Growth – Matt Schaefer

- 5-year planning process
- Build out plan
- Capacity Stress Points

Questions and Answers

Build Out Plan

Q – Are the K-8 and 2 elementary schools in the build out plan independent from each other?

A – The build out plan calls for 2 elementary schools. It also highlights a need for additional middle school capacity in the northern part of the district (Westlake and Rocky Top areas). The additional capacity needed is not large enough to warrant an additional traditional middle school. The plan states that the additional middle school capacity needed might be accommodated via a boundary change, addition, rebuilding Westlake with a larger capacity, providing niche programs that pull students from traditional middle schools, or constructing K-8 schools rather than K-5 schools in the north.

Q – How does class size impact capacity?

A – We use an ideal class size (24 per teacher at ES, 30 at MS, and 32 at HS) to determine school capacity.

Q – Do you take into consideration growth to avoid mobiles/modular classrooms?

A – Yes, we do attempt to consider growth so as to avoid mobile and modular classrooms however mobiles are a tool that school districts use in order to avoid "over building". Matt explained the growth curve in a neighborhood (using the whiteboard). In the first 10-15 or so years there is a growth of school-aged children. As the neighborhood ages, the number of school age children declines. The neighborhood school-age children eventually levels off. We are shooting to serve the number of students in the boundary when the enrollment levels off. This is why you will see mobiles at some schools during the peak enrollment period. Of course, this is a simplification as there are many other factors involved.

Had the bonds (in '08 or '14) passed, we would not have mobiles at Coyote Ridge, Meridian, Silver Creek, Arapahoe Ridge or Cotton Creek. Since the last bond passed in 2004, we have not been able to catch up to the curve of how many students are coming in. In addition, growing and changing programs and program delivery at the schools have decreased the program capacity at some of our schools. The additional programs and changes to the current programs have an impact on school capacities. Over time schools are able to serve fewer students as their programming grows.

There is one more factor that Matt neglected to mention that leads to mobiles at schools. This factor is related to the growth curve factor. Our elementary schools in the north and Rocky Top have larger boundaries than we expect at build out. Our plan is to reduce the Coyote Ridge, Meridian, Silver Creek, and Rocky Top boundaries when the area builds out. As the district has grown to the north, new schools were built, boundaries for southern schools were reduced and mobiles removed from more southern schools. If we had built our schools to serve either the peak enrollment of their neighborhood or their large, interim boundary, we would have more capacity than necessary. Therefore, modular classrooms are tools that school districts use to avoid over building brick and mortar capacity.

Q – Do you meet with home builders to determine the number of families coming in? How do you do this with multi-family housing such as apartments?

A – We review home builder's plans through the development referral process with the cities. Developers wishing to develop land must provide plans for the development to the city. They city sends them on to referral agencies for comment. We use those plans to predict how many students will be generated from a development (using yield data from other similar developments). Of note, we do not track individual students but rather cohorts of students. In

essence, we are tracking the enrollment change in a neighborhood over time. Every five or so years, the district conducts a student yield study to determine the yield of students from every neighborhood and housing type. This data is applied to new development to determine yield from new areas.

Q – How do mobile classroom costs compare to brick and mortar construction?

A - Cost of mobiles has increased tremendously and they are not very "mobile" Currently the cost for a 4 room mobile is approximately $700,000. The mobiles cannot be easily picked up and relocated as the cost is nearly $200K to move.

Q – How do you determine boundaries?

A – School boundaries are determined in one of two ways:

First, new school boundaries are determined through a public process that consists of a committee of staff and parents who develop a few scenarios to show to the public at public meetings. After seeking input on the scenarios from the public, the committee makes a recommendation the superintendent.

Second, existing school boundaries are adjusted through an administrative process which is guided by school executive directors, the Chief Academic Office with the final decision being made by the superintendent. The administrative process is used when we are faced with crowding that necessitates a quick decision or when there are not enough options to warrant a public process.

Capacity Stress Points

Q – How can Arapahoe Ridge serve 643 students if their capacity is 600 with mobiles?

A – The capacity figure of 600 is based on 24 students to a class. This is our ideal class size if space and funding were not an issue. The unfortunate reality is that many of our classes at elementary have more than 24 per class. Arapahoe Ridge has 30 classrooms (8 of which are modular). If the school serves just two more students per room the capacity grows by 60.

This is a good example of why capacity is not a black and white figure. The capacity of a school changes over time based on how it is being used and how large the student class size is.

Q – What about over capacity and correlation to student performance?

A – There is no correlation between school crowding and performance. Most of the overcrowded schools in the district are also higher performing schools. Research shows there is no impact to performance until class size drops to the range of 12-15 students per teacher. Teacher interaction, programming, and overall effectiveness create the biggest impact to student performance.

Chris Gdowski explained that last year's bond committee studied the impact to student performance from capacity relief and class size education. If we remove one student per classroom it would cost $6M in staffing costs. That does not include constructing additional space to serve the additional classes. That was estimated to cost in the range of $30-40M.

Kim Walsh mentioned that we have flexible space solutions at many of our schools to mitigate the impact of larger class sizes. These options include pulling students out into small groups and/or classroom para support.

Q – Can you explain how the capacity scales up to 5th grade and how you decide to implement an enrollment cap at a school?

A – At the beginning of each school year a committee meets in August and early September to review class sizes. We use a threshold that begins with 26/27 at kindergarten (24/25 for Title I schools) and adds one student per grade up to 31/32 at 5th (29/30 for Title I schools).

If a school is over the threshold (not just one student over but 2-4 or more) and has continued growth in the boundary and has no available classrooms to add a teacher we may cap the school. We use enrollment caps only as a last option when all other remedies have been exhausted. One issue is the overflow school must have smaller student teacher ratios to allow for additional students from the capped school.

Another issue is the sheer size of a school and the administration's ability to appropriately manage the student population. For example, we placed mobiles at Rocky Top to increase their capacity. While the school now has a larger capacity, this new capacity is larger than we would like to see at a middle school.

Legacy High also has a crowding issue. We placed 4 mobiles there in summer 2014 to increase the capacity.

A goal of the 2004 bond was to reduce our mobile stock. We went from 136 classrooms in 2004 to 72 in 2013. The last 2 years we have added back 16 mobile classrooms bringing us to 88.

Q – What is the cost of building 4 classrooms versus mobiles?

A – Mobiles cost about half as much as brick and mortar construction.

Q – What is the ideal number for mobiles?

A – Matt stated he is not sure….he believes zero would be ideal.

Q – Chris stepped in to explain that is an example of the type of question we will look to the committee for.

A – Last year's committee decided they were more comfortable with mobiles at high school rather than elementary school. This committee will tackle this question as well.

What does this group think? What is the parent perspective on mobiles? Keep in mind that we only have dry mobiles with no running water or bathrooms (but we do provide drinking water). There is less oversight and potentially more security issues. These are all very high concerns.

Another consideration will be the cost to remove all modulars.

Q – What is the end date for the district build out?

A – The district prefers not to put an end date on build out as it is market driven. The Great Recession extended the build out. It appears it could be 30-40 years before the entire district is built out. North Park and the area in Thornton north of 136th look like they will be the last to develop.

A – When the district is built out this does not mean there will not continue to be change. Urban areas will experience population shifts and redevelop and the district will need to stay involved with growth and change planning.

While we continue to build out in undeveloped areas, urban areas will continue to change as well.

Q – What contribution do developers and builders provide to the school district?

A – There are five different cities and two counties in Adams 12. Each uses a slightly different process. Builders are not expected to pay for the construction of schools. They are expected to either provide land for schools or cash-in-lieu of land dedication.

We are reviewing the process with other school districts with a plan to approach Westminster and Thornton as a unified front with other school districts. The goal will be to increase the cash-in-lieu amount paid by developers in Westminster and to create an ordinance in Thornton so that it is a mandatory fee paid to the city during the development review process (like is in place in Westminster and Broomfield).

Q – Why not charge impact fees for new builders?

A – A Colorado State Supreme Court decision from the early 90s (Bainbridge Decision) found that school districts cannot directly impost impact fees on developers/builders. This is why the cash-in-lieu process goes through municipalities.

Q – Why doesn't the developer have to put money into the pool?

A – The developer is only required to participate in the land process with school districts. Developers are not expected to provide funds for school construction under Colorado and local laws.

Q – There is a rumor that the developer built Meridian. Is this true?

A – Meridian was funded through bond dollars and was not built by the developer. A portion of the proceeds of the Service Expansion Fee was used to fund part of the school however the majority of the money for construction came from the bond.

The Anthem developer did dedicate a school site but the land was difficult to build on and needed to be moved to allow for the construction of a K-8 school. The developer has been great to work with. They relocated the school site so that we can build a K-8 when funds are available. The developer also supported our bond campaign but has not provided funds to build the school (as this is not required by law).

Driver 2: Facility Life-Cycle Management – Art Dawson

- Replace end-of-life building components (including safety & security systems)
- Secure adequate IT core infrastructure (eg replace phone system, replace end-of-life network infrastructure, secure/expand dark fiber network, etc.)
- Renovate run-down facilities (eg. address aesthetics in addition to replacing end-of-life building components, update playgrounds, theater, music and athletic facilities, etc.)
- Replace old school buses to maintain optimal fleet age

Driver 3: Educational Program Evolution – Art Dawson

- Expand ECE program to accommodate more students
- Expand Career & Tech. Ed. program to accommodate more students
- Expand and upgrade STEM spaces
- Renew facilities with growing gaps between current state and Ed. Spec (eg furniture & fixture upgrades, increase collaboration space, add daylighting, etc.)

Questions and Answers

Q – What is the funding source for current facilities capital expenditures?

A – The district spend the last of its previous bond funds in 2014. Currently all work is funded by the Capital Reserve Fund and our recent Certificates of Participation (COP's). The total for COP projects is $27 million. This year's Capital Reserve allocation for facilities-related projects is approximately $5 million. No capital projects are funded through the district Maintenance budget. These funds are spent mostly on break-fix maintenance with some allocated to preventive maintenance.

Q – Does the district Maintenance budget include materials and labor for work done?

A – Yes, but only for break-fix and preventive maintenance. A contingency fund is maintained for emergency items but it is much smaller

Q – Does insurance cover catastrophic failure of building equipment?

A – Not if the equipment was past the end of its useful life (which is the case for most failures we have experienced in the past two years). Insurance covers damage caused by rain storms, vandalism and other unforeseen circumstances.

Quick closing and farewell – Mark Poshak

- Mark will provide all materials electronically
- Ash Mahajan will share one- page summary and will discuss next month.
- Kim Walsh – There are two schools, Centennial and Westview ES, that have broad community engagement activities as well as community forums if members are interested.