

THORP
PURDY
JEWETT
URNES &
WILKINSON, P.C.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

03-16-10 A03:12 1

1011 HARLOW ROAD, SUITE 300
SPRINGFIELD, OREGON 97477
PHONE: (541) 747-3354
FAX: (541) 747-3367

March 15, 2010

E-MAIL ADDRESS:
BMILLINGTON@THORP-PURDY.COM

Brian J. Millington

MARVIN O. SANDERS (1912-1977)
JACK B. LIVELY (1923-1979)
JILL E. GOLDEN (1951-1991)

City of Springfield
Planning Commission
c/o Gregory Mott
225 5th Street
Springfield, OR 97477

VIA EMAIL AND REGULAR FIRST CLASS MAIL

Re: **Springfield School District No. 19- Clearwater Property**
Our File No. 12585-22

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Springfield School District No. 19 (School District) regarding inclusion of the School District's Clearwater property within the Urban Growth Boundary as part of the Springfield 2030 Refinement Plan (Refinement Plan).

As you know, southeast Springfield (especially the Jasper-Natron area) is experiencing growth. The School District has identified a need for a future school site of 15-20 acres to accommodate this growth. The future school site will address the projected student population shift from the west side of Springfield to the east. The School District is looking at acquiring such a site within the Urban Growth Boundary. However, it may not be financially feasible to acquire such a site or a site may not be available.

If a site within the Urban Growth Boundary can not be obtained, the School District likely would address it need by building a school on the District's Clearwater property. The Clearwater property is a 19-acre site on Clearwater Lane (Tax Lot 1802-050-1909). The Clearwater property is contiguous to but outside the Urban Growth Boundary as proposed in the Refinement Plan. The School District cannot use the Clearwater property for the construction of a new school until it is within the Urban Growth Boundary. Accordingly, the School District requests that the Clearwater property be included within the Urban Growth Boundary as part of the final Refinement Plan.

Oregon Revised Statute 195.110(6) provides:

“If a large school district determines that there is an inadequate supply of suitable land for school facilities for the 10-year period covered by the school facilities plan, the city or county, or both, and the large school district shall cooperate . . . to add one or more sites designated for school facilities to an urban growth boundary pursuant to applicable law.”

As stated in the Executive Summary of the School District’s updated facilities plan, which is included with this letter, if the Urban Growth Boundary is moved south and there is additional development and population growth in that area, the Clearwater property would be a likely elementary or K-8 school site to address future growth.

As you know, expanding the Urban Growth Boundary after the Refinement Plan has been finalized would be a complex and uncertain process. By addressing this anticipated need now, the School District and Planning Commission can avoid having to readdress this issue in the future.

On behalf of the School District, thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this issue. By bringing the Clearwater property within the Urban Growth Boundary at this juncture, the Planning Commission can avoid having to revisit this issue at a future date and the School District can have certainty that the Clearwater property will be a viable option to address the growing population within the Jasper-Natron area.

Sincerely yours,

THORP, PURDY, JEWETT,
URNESS & WILKINSON, P.C.



Brian J. Millington

BJM:kdh
Enclosure
cc: Nancy Golden, Superintendent
Jeff DeFranco
(doc #202589)

January 1, 2010

Executive Summary

This Executive Summary is part of the administrative update of our working Administrative Facilities Plan. It provides up-to-date data related to school district facilities, sites and enrollment and provides updated information to supplement our 2006 Facilities Plan. This report addresses the items laid out in ORS 195.110 requiring school facilities plans for large school districts.

Population Projection by School Age Group.

The actual enrollment for the 2009-2010 school year (using the September 30, 2009 count) is 10,847, down slightly from the previous year. Information tracking enrollment over the last 10 years is attached in *Appendix 1*.

Springfield Public Schools student enrollment peaked in 2004 at 11,138 students. Since 2004 the district has experienced slight declines every year until 2008 when the district started to experience more dramatic declines. We attribute the current trend to lower birth rates in Lane County as well as job loss in our local community due to the sustained recessionary economic environment. The district believes the current trend will continue for the next two to three years as countywide birth rates and employment constraints continue to weigh on school level enrollment. Looking at future student enrollment over the next 10 years, we are projecting flat enrollment at or around 11,000 students district-wide, but a shift in student population from the west side of Springfield to the east.

Enrollment related to functional capacity is attached in *Appendix 2*. Note that schools on the west side of the district have lower student to capacity ratios, reflecting declining student population in that area. *Appendix 2* also includes the following additional materials: a list of all district schools with locations, and district boundary maps for elementary and secondary schools.

Identification of Desirable School Sites. Springfield Public Schools has identified a need for a future school site of 15-20 acres in southeast Springfield, specifically in the Jasper-Natron area to address anticipated development and student enrollment shift. The school could be designed as a K-5 or K-8 school, dependent on enrollment needs and population growth. The district is actively working to identify and explore the possibility of purchasing such a site.

Other site-related issues include:

- *Clearwater Site.* The district currently owns a 19-acre site on Clearwater Lane. This site is contiguous to but outside the Urban Growth Boundary. If the UGB is moved south and there is additional development and population growth in that area, the Clearwater site would be a likely elementary or K-8 school site to address future growth.
- *East Thurston.* The school district owns a 65-acre site in east Thurston, next to 11 acres where Willamalane Park and Recreation District located the Bob Artz softball fields. This site could be used for a potential middle school in east Springfield. This school would not be

January 1, 2010

an additional middle school but a potential replacement site for Thurston Middle School. This is currently not a feasible option due to lack of public utility service, specifically sewer service. Growth in the east Thurston area could result in additional utility service to the area.

- *High School Needs.* The District has a long-standing recommendation from past citizen advisory committees to acquire sites adjacent to the high schools, particularly landlocked Springfield High School.
- *Rainbow Site.* The District has declared the Rainbow site surplus because of declining enrollment on the west side of the district. The school district will not need to site an elementary school in this area.

Physical Improvements Needed in Existing Schools. Facilities staff regularly assesses school facilities related to maintenance and security needs. See the building-by-building assessments in *Appendix 3.* *Appendix 4* includes a spreadsheet of all major capital improvement projects completed since 2006, providing an update on progress made since the 2006 Facilities Plan. *Appendix 5* is an updated spreadsheet of anticipated priority of projects for the next 10 years. Of course, the potential exists for having failed systems that raise new physical improvement priorities.

Financial Plans to Meet School Facility Needs.

Sites and Facilities Committee Recommendation. The last three Sites and Facilities Committees have repeated a recommendation to the school district that any proceeds from the sale of land or facilities should be placed in a separate fund dedicated to land purchases (see below). We think this is sound practice and encourage the Board to continue to provide this funding for necessary land acquisitions needed as Springfield expands.

- 2006 – *“The committee strongly recommends that any proceeds from selling or developing sites continue to be dedicated for future land needs versus other District operational budget needs.”*
- 2002 – *“The District should reuse any monies or value created from the sale or trade of real estate and/or real properties to be used in advance the goals of these recommendations, especially site acquisition or land exchanges. The District should maintain the discipline of trading or selling property for property (capital fund) and not using the proceeds from the sale of property for General Fund purposes.”*
- 1991 – *“The District should reuse any monies created from the sale or trade of properties to help advance the basic recommendations of this report, especially the site acquisition and capital improvement projects for facilities.”*

Potential Funding Strategies. Potential funding strategies include:

- The school district will be looking at a potential future bonding for the following: to purchase of additional school site(s), new school construction to replace outdated facilities that are no longer cost-efficient to repair, and to fund major capital improvements for existing facilities with the goal of extending the life of the facility and protecting the

January 1, 2010

community's investment in schools. Currently, the anticipated time line is 2012 at the earliest and 2016 at the outside for local bonding for facilities.

- The district will continue to look at innovative bonding strategies (e.g., Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB), Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB) to provide ongoing funding for construction while minimizing the borrowing rate.
- The district will continue to advocate for federal funding for facilities needs and to search out federal funding.
- The district has received funds through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funded state energy programs and will continue to pursue funding opportunities.
- We will look to continue to partner with the City on the EECBG (Energy Efficient Conservation Block Grants) to improve district facilities and make them more energy efficient.
- The school district will continue to provide funding within the General Fund for repairs and maintenance of district facilities in our efforts to be proactive through ongoing maintenance to protect the public investment in school facilities. The school district will to continue to fund minor and major capital improvements.
- Excise Tax. A citizens committee will meet to explore the option of generating tax revenue from assessing a tax on new construction, as allowed by SB 1036 (2007). Funds generated from an excise tax must be dedicated to a capital construction fund. No decision has been made at this time, and the school board will review any citizens committee recommendation for future action.

Alternatives to New School Construction and Major Renovation. Springfield Public Schools is committed to evaluating costs of maintenance over time in making facility decisions. This process was used to inform the recommendation to construct replacement schools for Thurston and Maple elementary schools. At this time, the district has not identified another building for replacement, but a facility assessment would be required prior to making a decision to replace a facility.

- **Multistory Schools.** The district has been moving toward multiple story schools over the last 15 years, including Agnes Stewart Middle School which opened in 1997 and the replacement Maple and Thurston elementaries which opened in September 2009. Since limited acreage is available in Springfield, the school district will continue to look at constructing multistory schools in future.
- **Partnership with Willamalane.** The school district has made a conscious decision to partner with Willamalane related to facilities. At several of our sites (e.g., Guy Lee, Page, Douglas Gardens, Springfield High School, the east Thurston-Bob Artz site, and the Reed site) school district property adjoins Willamalane property, providing opportunities for sharing public space. As the school district is looking for a new site in southeast Springfield, one goal will be to find a way to seek to find a site that presents the opportunity to share with other public agencies.

Ten-Year Capital Improvement Plans. The school district hired the architectural firm of Dull Olson Weekes to review school facilities and make recommendations on high, medium and low

January 1, 2010

priority needs for each facility. This information is located behind the "Sites and Facilities Review Process" in the 2006 facilities plan process.

- The district's Facilities Department maintains an ongoing list of facility needs. *Appendix 5* is an updated spreadsheet of anticipated priority of projects for the next 10 years. Of course, the potential exists for having failed systems that raise new physical improvement priorities.

Site Acquisition Schedules and Programs. At this time, the discussion about land acquisition by the school district relates to the recommendation to purchase 15-20 acres site in southeast Springfield. The plan would be for that to occur in the next one to five years. The school district's Clearwater Lane site is contiguous to the UGB. Development in that area may require use of that site or similar site for a future elementary of K-8 school.