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Clark County Schools Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Tuesday, April 13, 2023 – 1:00-3:00pm

Members/Alternates Present: Karen Dill Bowerman, Clark County Council; Michelle Belkot, Clark County Council; Kevin Jolma, Battle Ground School District; John Anzalone, Camas School District; John Boyd, Evergreen School District; Steve Marshall, Hockinson School District; Brett Blechschmidt, Vancouver School District; Mary Templeton, Washougal School District; Bridget McLeman and Ila Stanek, Neighborhood Associations Council of Clark County; Brandi O'Shea, Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance; Jennifer Baker, CREDC; J. Kimberly Walker-Norton, County Services

Staff, Presenters, Special Guests April Furth and Max Booth, Clark County Community Development; Gary Albrecht, Susan Ellinger, Jacqui Kamp, and Jenna Kay, Clark County Community Planning; LeAnne Bremer, Miller Nash

Members/Alternates Absent: Green Mountain School District, La Center School District, Ridgefield School District, Woodland School District, EOCF, Washington State University – Vancouver; ESD 112

1. Welcome & Introductions

- April 2022 meeting notes: adopted

2. Community Development Update

- Community Development Director, April Furth provided updates on residential development in the unincorporated areas of the county for each school district.
- A copy of the presentation and an updated interactive map with data of recent residential development in the unincorporated county are available on the county website: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/school-advisory-council-meetings>
- If there are questions about the permit data or need for additional permit information, please contact April at: april.furth@clark.wa.gov
- e-Plan has launched at the county and the Community Development is now completely paperless.
- For school development projects, Community Development requests that school districts provide a heads-up about upcoming school projects, so that staff can be ready to help shuttle school projects through the review process as quickly as possible once have all needed application information.
- April asked the group for feedback on two questions:
 - What information would you like Community Development to provide each year?
 - Do you need an interactive map?
- Discussion:
 - Steve Marshall noted that the presentation format worked well for him. He inquired

about seeing a lag between the numbers for some school districts and what you see in terms of construction and any building trends. April noted the county is starting to receive more multifamily applications in the Ridgefield and Battle Ground school districts compared to previous years. In the Vancouver urban growth area, Community Development is receiving more cottage development applications than ever before, which creates smaller single family homes.

- Jenn Baker noted that in the industrial sector, CREDC sometimes see developers file a permit and then not build the proposed development. She asked about residential development and if Community Development sees permits filed but not realized? April noted she has not been seeing that pattern. In the past two years, she has seen a lot of projects come off of hold and getting built. Jenn also thanked April as a liaison to CREDC when companies have questions about the area.
- Councilor Belkot noted she was surprised at the number of ADUs in the Vancouver School District, and that makes sense with the current housing shortage and affordability challenges.
- Chair Bowerman inquired about the implications of ADUs for schools. April noted that she counted all ADU applications as potential families moving in. Parking is considered as part of ADU applications, but that may change in the future with possible state changes.
- Mary Templeton inquired about the determination of whether a dwelling is for a family, an older adult, etc. April confirmed she counted any dwelling as a potential family.
- Councilor Belkot asked if county staff know if an ADU will be used for families, elderly family members, etc.? April confirmed that staff don't know that information unless someone applies for a hardship. A hardship permit requires certain qualifications, such as medical or financial eligibility.
- Mary Templeton asked if a family with limited economic means would qualify for a hardship? Community Development Deputy Director Max Booth clarified that a hardship permit could be for a younger family moving to a property to help someone who needs assistance, or it could be for a person who needs assistance moving to the same property as a family member who will help them.
- LeAnne Bremer noted that the mapping and permit data is very useful for school capital facilities plans. LeAnne tested out the interactive map and information provided last year and didn't have issues. She will check it out again, and will contact April if she encounters any issues.

3. Transportation Update

- Transportation Planner, Gary Albrecht, provided updates on opportunities for the school districts and county to collaborate on transportation planning and safety improvements.
- A copy of the presentation is available on the county website:
<https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/school-advisory-council-meetings>
- School districts are encouraged to reach out to county staff if there is interest in Safe Routes to School, school crossings, school speed zones, flashing beacons, pedestrian hybrid beacons, speed feedback signs, or new school siting. If unsure who to contact, reach out to Gary at gary.albrecht@clark.wa.gov

- The presentation also included the following links that may be helpful for schools:
 - [School zone traffic control policy](#)
 - [Pedestrian crossing treatment policy](#)
 - [School Health & Safety Technical Advisory Group](#)
 - [Report a park or road concern](#)
- Discussion:
 - Chair Bowerman noted that no subject causes greater concern than fear for a child at a crosswalk or walking around a bus. She asked about county staff's preferred approach for someone to bring their attention to a road safety concern. Gary shared the county webpage to report a park or road concern: <https://clark.wa.gov/public-works/report-park-road>. The webpage also includes a phone number to call. Or, someone can contact the county traffic engineer directly, Steve Gallup at Steve.Gallup@clark.wa.gov
 - Gary also shared that as part of the county pedestrian crossing prioritization policies, staff have used GIS to look at over 7,000 intersections across Clark County. Every intersection has been ranked based on needs. If someone calls us and requests a crosswalk at a specific spot, staff can look at the ranking criteria and how that project fits into the countywide program. If it's ranked high enough, staff will seek funding and grants to implement the project. Eventually, the goal is to have this intersection tool posted on the Public Works website as an interactive tool.
 - Kimberly Walker Norton asked if Gary could send her the link to the intersection data once it is live on the Public Works website. She can then put a link to it on the School Health and Safety page too, as they also receive concerns from parents too.
 - Mary Templeton asked about the focus of the School Health & Safety Technical Advisory group. Kimberly clarified that the group is primarily focused on discussing fees and budget for the following year. They also discuss policy and WAC changes related to health assessments, to keep everyone involved updated on state changes.

4. Community Planning Update

- Susan Ellinger and Jenna Kay, with Clark County Community Planning, provided a few long-range land use planning project updates.
- Housing Options Study & Action Plan project:
 - In May of 2022, the Clark County Council approved the Housing Options Study & Action Plan. The purpose of the project was to understand local housing challenges in the Unincorporated Vancouver urban growth area, encourage creation of housing affordable to low and moderate-income households by removing regulatory barriers and consider other strategies, to provide access to affordable, quality, and flexible housing for future generations. A copy of the final document is available on the county website: <https://clark.wa.gov/housingoptions>
 - This project overlaps with the Vancouver, Evergreen, Ridgefield, and Battle Ground school districts and the WSU-Vancouver campus.
 - The Housing Options Study & Action Plan document includes a lot of background information on housing in the study area and the demographics of the people living in it, which may be of interest to the schools and community groups in the area. The document also includes a list of recommendations developed by a project advisory group.

- Now that the plan has been adopted, the county is working to implement an initial two batches of code updates.
- Code changes proposed to address middle housing and smaller single family standards include:
 - o Use existing land more efficiently
 - o Allow more variety of smaller scale housing throughout neighborhoods
 - o Maintain neighborhood scale for new development
 - o Expand options for more, smaller homes in new developments.
 - o Apply modest off-street parking reductions
 - o Permit more housing through streamlined permitting processes.
 - o This batch of changes is scheduled to go to the County Council this summer.
- The second batch of code changes will address multifamily and regulated affordable housing code updates and are scheduled to go to the County Council before the end of 2023.
- If you have questions about the project, contact Susan Ellinger at susan.ellinger@clark.wa.gov.
- Susan also commented on the previous discussion related to ADUs and noted that the housing code changes include some proposed changes to ADU standards, including a proposal to remove parking requirements for ADUs. Generally, the project focus has been to remove barriers to producing housing, and parking can save land for providing dwelling units. She also noted that there are generally only a couple of ADUs in a neighborhood, and in most cases there would be enough on street parking for an ADU. She also noted that many ADU applications the county receives do provide on-site parking.
- Aging Readiness Plan update project:
 - The Commission on Aging, with staff and consultant support, is updating the county's Aging Readiness Plan.
 - The plan covers the topics of housing, transportation, healthy communities, supportive services, and community engagement.
 - The plan is 10-years old and the update will refresh it with new information from the last 10-years and add a new health and safety chapter, including lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The Commission regularly hears from grandparents raising their grandchildren and hears about interest in more multigenerational opportunities throughout the county. While the Aging Readiness Plan is focused on older adults, many of the strategies in it could benefit people of all ages.
 - Project webpage: <https://bit.ly/agingreadiness>
 - Contact: susan.ellinger@clark.wa.gov or jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov
- Capital Facilities Plan updates:
 - Six school districts are working on updates to their capital facility plans: Battle Ground, Camas, Green Mountain, Ridgefield, Vancouver, and Washougal.
 - The County Council hearing on each CFP is scheduled for May 2, 2023.
 - Discussion:
 - o LeAnne Bremer commented that she is helping the districts with their CFP updates. Each district is unique and it is kind of incredible given they're all in southwest Washington. She explained that we are seeing the largest growth

in Ridgefield and Battle Ground, modest growth in Camas and Vancouver, and, for Green Mountain and Washougal, their plans show some growth, but not enough that would allow them to collect impact fees going forward based on a combination of projected enrollment growth and existing capacity. When those plans go to the County Council, we'll be prepared to discuss each plan in more detail, it's all pretty well laid out in terms of the enrollment projections, existing facilities, and facility needs to serve growth. Every city that these districts are in have already approved the updated plans, so the county is the last stop for these six.

- Mary Templeton noted that the Washougal School District has interest in the next several years for more demographic and modeling information. Based on lower birth rates and the previous housing boom, we're in an in-between phase. Our demographer said they are anticipating 2000 more additional housing units. I don't know if that was incorporated or unincorporated parts of the district. About 1000 of those units are from apartments on port land. As a superintendent trying to plan for the future, I'm curious to know about projections on families moving towards this area? If you think about the 2000 new units, who are those new families? Our demographer says many of the new units won't be families with children.
- Jenna Kay, with Community Planning, noted that the county is starting its comprehensive plan update where we'll be looking broadly at population growth over the next 20-years. Staff will need to break down the growth by various demographics. While staff have not looked at that breakdown yet, and it will be countywide and not specific to each school district, that may be one useful data source.
- LeAnne Bremer also noted the CFPs are 6-year plans. The county has a rule to update them every 4-years, but, school districts can update their plans once a year. If something drastically changes in Washougal, we wouldn't have to wait to come back with an updated plan and impact fee calculation.
- Chair Bowerman discussed how the County Council has population decisions to make about the future. She noted that the question is spot on about the demographics of the population growth, such as by age? The county needs to use Office of Financial Management (OFM) data. Councilors are looking at the numbers now and are asking questions. For example, some say in business, the data is not being considered for the migration data coming into Clark County and for lack of that, it effects how the population would be diverse. We all have concerns that estimates on population be made well. If not, we don't do well providing space and land for jobs, affordable housing, all housing in Clark County. More on that coming up.
- Chair Bowerman noted that she sends out a weekly summary of what is going on in Clark County and what's coming up. If any of you would like to receive that, send Chair Bowerman your email address and she'll add you to her email list, which includes links and upcoming key dates. Email contact for Chair Bowerman: karen.bowerman@clark.wa.gov
- Jacqui Kamp with Community Planning confirmed the upcoming Council hearing on the population projection is scheduled for Apr. 18 at 6pm.

- If you want to see the county's Office of Financial Management 20-year forecast, data is available [here](#).
- Councilor Belkot inquired about school districts experiencing enrollment drops. She was aware of Camas and Evergreen with lower enrollment numbers and wondered about other districts. Statewide she understood there was about a 50,000 loss of students.
- Steve Marshall noted that the Hockinson School District enrollment has declined since the 2019-20 school year. It declined by about 5%. It was a bigger drop initially, around 12%. The district did recover some of those students, but not all. All the school districts have explored why, i.e. is it one factor or many? It seems like there are multiple factors including: drop in birth rate, families relocate out of state, online or private school choice, and homeschooling.
- Brett Blechschmidt noted that the Vancouver School District dropped 7-8% the first year of the pandemic. Now they're about 5% lower than pre-pandemic levels. They are starting to tick back up, but there's definitely a loss. Birth rates are impacting kindergarten cohorts. They are seeing some move-ins and returns at our upper grades.
- John Boyd noted that the Evergreen School District had the highest percentage of enrollment drop in state of WA, at almost 14%. The district has not recovered. They have a continued drop in enrollment, but it has stabilized. The district commissioned a demographic study and he is happy to share that with anyone interested in hearing the demographer's reasons for the district enrollment decline. Councilor Belkot expressed interest in seeing the study. Jenna will connect the superintendent and Councilor.
- Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045 Update
 - All of the local jurisdictions in Clark County have begun the process to update their comprehensive growth management plans. The updated plans are due June 30, 2025 and are long-range planning and policy guides for the years 2025 to 2045.
 - There are a few aspects of this project that overlap with school topics.
 - For instance, school district capital facility plans will need to be adopted by reference and incorporated into the updated plan.
 - The county also has a schools chapter in its comprehensive plan. This chapter includes background information as well as countywide planning policies and 20-year county policies related to schools.
 - The chapter covers K-12 and higher education topics.
 - In the last comprehensive plan update, Marnie Allen with ESD 112 and Todd Horenstein with Vancouver Public Schools were the main school representatives involved in review of the chapter. Since Marnie's role has changed and Todd has retired, we are interested in identifying a couple of school representatives who would be interested in working with staff as we review and update the chapter over the next couple of years.
 - Finally, since a comprehensive plan is a long range 20-year planning document, this is planning the future of what Clark County will look like when today's 10 year olds are 32. So, if anyone has a suggestion for how county staff might engage with students and their families to provide feedback on the comprehensive plan update, we are glad to figure

out how to do that. Please feel free to reach out or have your staff reach out to me if of interest. Contact: jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov

5. Other

- Mary Templeton thanked the councilors for the time and energy of having a partnership. We know high quality schools means a high quality community. Taking the time to support us this way and our CFPs is appreciated.
- Chair Bowerman shared that the County Council will be hiring someone connected with economic development directly, which should benefit all of us as well.

6. Next steps

- May 2, 2023 CFP update County Council hearings
- Community Planning staff will reach out to schools to collaborate on various pieces of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update.
- Schools are welcome to connect with county staff on population and demographic data information as more details are available. Staff contact: jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov.
- Once Public Works posts their interactive intersection data online, Gary Albrecht will share that with Kimberly Walker Norton in Public Health to post on the School Health & Safety Technical Advisory Group.
- Staff to connect Superintendent Boyd and Councilor Belkot on Evergreen School District demographic study.
- The Schools Advisory Council will next meet in November 2023

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:33pm.