

Valley High School Site Design Team Minutes – May 27, 2003

Present: Dr. Vicky Poole, Dr. Les Omotani, Dr. Donna Wilkin, Phil Hodgins (RDG/Bussard Dikis), Mark Brauer, Dan Nelson, Cindy Todd, John Clarke, Denny Linderbaum, Scott Hatfield, Drew McLellan, Katie Crane, Melissa Lersten, Jason Scales, Mary Whitaker, Ruth Henderson, Karen Downing, Bob Hardin, Sam Kranovich, Pam Wymer
Support members Dave Persons (CRG/Weitz), Eliz Erbes and Jeff Blosser (RDG), Galen Howsare, Kay Rosene, Dave Blum, Gordon Dahlby, Dr. Phyllis Staplin, Brian Abeling)

Absent Tom Murphy, Mark Marco

Welcome and Introductions

Vicky Poole welcomed all in attendance. She outlined the agenda for the meeting. All present introduced themselves and indicated their association with Valley High School.

Committee Charge

Dr. Omotani explained the role and responsibility of the site design team: to decide to recommend to the Superintendent and Board of Education the preferred design solutions for modernizing Valley High School. He said the Board of Education does have the authority to modify the recommendation. Dr. Omotani told the group that each represents his/his own viewpoint as well as that of the constituent group each member represents. The products from each work session will be posted in the Valley media center, Dr. Omotani said. Minutes will be distributed to Board members and committee members and posted on the district's web site (www.wdm.k12.ia.us). Dr. Omotani distributed the criteria and goals for the modernization of Valley High School as developed by the Board of Education in April.

Review

A. Original Master Plan

Phil Hodgins provided background information on the development of various approaches to modernizing and/or rebuilding Valley High School. He said the 10 year facility improvement plan for expenditure of school sales tax funds originally proposed a \$30 million renovation at the school. That option posed potential disruption to students and staff as well as a lengthy construction timeframe. The Board of Education then asked for an alternative approach. The "build new" plan was then developed and included in the final 10-year facility improvement master plan.

B. Design Down

Hodgins described the Design Down process as an effort to provide community listening opportunities and participation by many in discussing what is the best learning environment for high school students. He said the committee of students, staff, parents and community members proposed several scenarios for construction and operation of one and/or two high schools in the district. In August the Board voted to maintain the current high school grade structure. The Board action also called for Valley to be organized into smaller learning communities and for significant new construction on the current Valley site.

Hodgins distributed information outlining various proposals for remodeling and rebuilding at Valley. He described the remodel option developed in December 2002, noting the concept focused on getting all air movement out of the tunnels, remodeling the whole building equitably, phasing the work over four to six years and allocating just 15,000 sq. feet of new space.

C. Connections Committee

The recommendation from the Valley Connections Committee was distributed. The document drove much of the planning for proposed new construction at Valley as well as the December 2002 remodel concept, Hodgin said.

D. Referendum

With the defeat of the March 2003 referendum for building a new facility on the Valley site, the Board of Education began to re-examine the remodeling options, Hodgin said.

The question was asked “Is this the best that can be done with available funds?”

Board members asked for an alternate remodeling plan that placed more emphasis on new space and applied the criteria/assumptions distributed earlier.

E. Workshops

During recent Board workshops alternative approaches to remodeling Valley have been discussed. Hodgin reviewed a concept that applies the criteria and assumptions developed by the Board. A new three-story addition would be constructed on the northeast corner of the building. All “saved space” – the field house/fitness/music area, cafeteria/auditorium area and vocational education area – would only receive sprinklers and other safety code updates. The media center and some existing academic space would be demolished to make room for the addition. The project would occur in three phases: demolition and construction of new space, construction of a link between the old and new space and completion of demolition. Hodgin says this approach addresses concerns about disruption during construction. Students would not be attending classes directly in a construction zone. The parts of the building that need the most work would be demolished, he said. Approximately 158,000 sq. feet of existing space would only receive sprinklers; code issues would be addressed, but no other significant improvements would occur. This approach would take approximately three and one-half years to complete with the new construction portion taking 18-24 months. Hodgin emphasized that this remodel option is a concept only, not a design. Construction cost estimates are based a lower quality standard than originally proposed, he said. No furniture or equipment would be included in the cost estimate for this concept.

Questions/Comments

- During the time of construction, when the “T” wing of the building is demolished, where would classes be held? Students would shift to existing space. Details have not been worked out; alternate space may need to be found. Other locations (on site) for the new academic wing were considered but not recommended, Hodgin said.
- What would a new student commons be? Hodgin talked about school designs seen on tours conducted during the Design Down process. He explained the importance of and the many uses for the student commons space.
- Where would the bus drop-off be? Hodgin said those details would need to be worked out. Expanded parking space is a priority, he said.
- What feedback was received related to a multi-story facility during tours? Hodgin said most of the schools had multi-story academic space; feedback was positive.
- Dr. Omotani compared the “disruption factor” of the current proposed remodel with the plan presented during the referendum.
- Would this plan lead to cost savings in operating the facility? Hodgin says the new space would have less roof area to maintain. However, the long-term risks are unknown related to the space that would not be remodeled.
- Why is new mechanical space not in the proposed addition? Dr. Omotani said the current illustration is a concept drawing. More detailed discussions will occur as the site design team deliberates.

Small Group Discussion

The committee formed small groups for discussing advantages and concerns of the most recent remodeling concept and the December 2002 remodeling concept. Each group reported on their conversation.

ADVANTAGES	CONCERNS
Least disruptive to students and staff	Availability of PPEL \$\$ for HVAC and other repairs when the need arises
Creates a more pleasant atmosphere throughout the process. Decreased disruption during the process with better results after.	Less chance to develop creative classroom space (December 2002 plan)
More closely tied to what the Connections Committee envisioned	
More parking	
Logical choices of what is left as is (cafeteria, pool, etc.)	Art/drama are isolated. Should they be moved to the academic wing?
Minimal disruption	
Potential to try new things during transition time	
Student commons	
35 th to 39 th Street link	
We need to build new space	Are things going to change drastically in the future that we need to consider in a redesigned building; i.e. food court?
Private funding/partnerships for more space; i.e. auditorium	Is this design a quick fix rather than a long-term look at instructional needs for the future?
Is there a possibility to do food service in another way? i.e. partner with a business?	The map shared is too small. Each member needs one to look at while he talks.
Geothermal? Grant funding may be available for that.	
Prefer new space and phased construction schedule	

It was emphasized that the concepts discussed at this meeting are just another version, a starting point for conversation. Future work of the committee will be guided by:

- Criteria and goals developed by the Board of Education
- Available resources
- Minimal disruption to students and staff
- Maximized learning space

Committee members were encouraged to examine the information on criteria and goals in preparation for the next meeting **Monday, June 9 4 p.m. Valley Media Center**