Here’s what’s been going on during the past week:

1. At their business meeting on July 30, the School Board voted unanimously to use the GC/CM process for designing the new Ferndale High School facility. This was the final step in the approval process. (As a reminder, GC/CM stands for General Contractor/Construction Manager. GC/CM is an alternative to the design-bid-build method that allows the general contractor to participate as an adviser during the architects' design of a major construction project. Although the GC/CM method will cost the school district a little more upfront for the general contractor's time, in the long run we believe the contractor’s suggestions about the affordability of different designs will save significant dollars. We shared more information about GC/CM process in a media release that can be found here: https://www.ferndalesd.org/news/1663631/key-approval-granted-as-ferndale-school-district-moves-forward-with-bond-project).

2. Now that we are approved to use GC/CM, we have begun the process of selecting a general contractor. We plan to (1) advertise our RFQ (Request for Qualifications) in the Bellingham Herald and the Daily Journal of Commerce on August 8 (first notice) and August 15 (second notice); (2) host a meeting and tour of the FHS campus for all interested contractors on August 19; (3) conduct interviews on September 23-24; (4) make our selection by mid-October; and (5) take our recommendation to the School Board to request their approval on October 29. This schedule will ensure that we have a GC/CM contractor on board in time to collaborate with the architects on developing the schematic design for the new Ferndale High School facility.

3. Even before we have published the first advertisement for contractors, we have already heard from four GC/CM firms who are considering our project. The greater the interest, the more likely we are to receive competitive offers from the most qualified contractors.

4. The City Council is still trying to decide whether or not to pursue turning Old Main into the new City Hall. As part of their process, they are soliciting community input through their Facebook page. On August 1, they posted the following note:

The City is at a crossroads and wants your input. We need a new City Hall, Courthouse and Council Chambers, and the city hired RMC Architects to assess the Old Main building on the Ferndale High School campus to see if it could be converted into a new City Hall, Courthouse and Council Chambers. The report, which we've linked in the comments, determined that yes, the building could be used for that purpose and at a comparable price to building a new facility. The question the City Council is considering at their August 5th meeting is whether or not the City should move ahead with this plan. There are good arguments to be made on both sides of the issue.

We want to hear from you - should the city move forward with this location or pass and find another location? Give us your two cents in the comments below.
As the City’s post indicates, the City Council will be voting on the Old Main issue at their next meeting on Monday, August 6, at 6:00 pm, in the City Annex. Everyone is welcome to attend.

5. Because one of the Bond Oversight Committee members is moving away, the Committee is recruiting a new alternate member. All those interested in applying for this position can access an application form at the following link: bit.ly/FSDBOCAplication.

6. Everyone who submitted an application to serve on the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) will be notified by August 6 about final committee membership. We had too many applicants to be able include everyone who expressed interest, so we implemented a selection process aimed at ensuring the committee is representative of a variety of stakeholder groups. Those who are not selected for DAC will have opportunities in the fall to participate in design focus groups, community Town Hall forums, and/or staff meetings aimed at providing input into the educational specifications (generally called ed specs) process.

7. A question came up this past week about the “numeric program” referenced in Bond Update #20. In that earlier report, I wrote the following:

   The numeric program consists of a list of spaces in the current Ferndale High School facility, along with any other spaces that are typically found in comprehensive high schools. Each space has been assigned a square foot number. The next steps in establishing the numeric program include: (1) confirming that all existing spaces/programs that we want to retain in the new school have been captured; (2) correcting any mis-labeling of spaces/programs; (3) identifying any spaces/programs that might be reduced in size or eliminated; and (4) identifying any new spaces/programs we would like to incorporate into the new school. When it is completed, this document will provide the architects with a “rough draft” starting point for [the architects’] design process.

The question was this: What is slated for elimination and/or reduction and how were those decisions made? I responded that we do not envision eliminating any programs, but we are looking at areas where we might be able to save space. For instance, in CTE, we are talking about whether or not there are ways to build labs that have multiple functions so they can be used every period of the day. We said we don’t need a hallway (like the current 500 hall) that is so wide you could land a small aircraft in it, so we so we should be able to save some space there. We said we probably don’t need lockers, since most high schools are being built without them, but we’ll see what the DAC thinks. And so on. The question about eliminating programs came from the architects as part of their standard protocol. Our general answer to the question was that we don’t plan to eliminate any programs. However, we are also considering that there could be some modifications to current programs. For instance, we are thinking about what the next iteration of our current small engines class might be. We also included in the numeric program some spaces we would like to have enlarged or added in our new school – like conference rooms and student lounge areas. Overall, it’s
important to know that the numeric program is a very high-level scan of the building. At this point, the architects are just trying to figure out a rough square footage number that will be big enough to fit in as much of what we want as possible, but small enough for us to afford. They need that rough number to include in our advertisement for contractors.

8. With dollars earmarked for upgrades and maintenance at Ferndale High School if the bond had not passed, the District is addressing facilities issues at other schools. This week, the exterior of Mt. View is being painted and a new gym floor is being installed at Eagleridge.

If you have questions or comments about anything in this update, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Linda