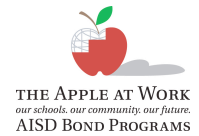


AISD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER COMMUNITY MEETING
Tuesday, June 21, 2011
Breakout Input Session Highlights



On Tuesday, June 21, 2011, the Austin Independent School District and Catellus Development, master developer of Mueller, hosted a community meeting to gather input on the AISD's future Performing Arts Center (PAC). The meeting included an [overview presentation](#) followed by breakout input sessions where attendees shared feedback on the orientation of the PAC site, design elements of the facility, and transportation and circulation considerations. Members of AISD and Catellus teams, including representatives from the City of Austin Transportation Department, were on hand to hear the input from the community and to answer any questions.

The district values the feedback we have received at this early stage in the process and looks forward to using it to develop a state-of-the-art facility that will not only serve AISD's students, but will also be an asset to the entire community. For additional information on the development of the PAC, visit [the PAC Task Force section](#) of www.austinisd.org.

Below, please find summarized highlights of the input received at each of the breakout sessions. Please see the [PAC Frequently Asked Questions](#) document for further explanation of some of the topics discussed and other items related to the PAC.

TABLE TOPIC: TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

- **Vehicular Traffic** – Participants shared various concerns about vehicular traffic caused by PAC patrons noting that 51st Street and Manor Boulevard are already congested. Some felt that 51st would naturally be the preferred route for many trying to get to the PAC and any future expansion of 51st Street would not be supported. It was noted that the construction of Mueller Boulevard and Berkman Drive should coincide with the development of the PAC to ensure roads are ready for increased traffic as well as the addition of any traffic lights on area roads. Many attendees wanted to ensure that appropriate studies are being done to realize the effect of the PAC on traffic on existing roads and, into the future, consider the traffic effects of additional future development in the area. It was also noted that emergency vehicle access needs to be considered given the proximity of the hospital. There was some discussion around the future addition of light rail and how that would impact traffic.
 - **Traffic Management Plan** – There was support for a traffic management plan for PAC events with possible ideas including: forcing traffic to disperse evenly instead of all using one road; hiring traffic control during certain events; having schools provide parents directions to get to PAC and how best to leave; scheduling events during optimal traffic periods; posting directional signage.
 - **I-35 Access** – Some participants familiar with the “jughandle” configuration at I-35 and 51st Street expressed interest in how TxDOT might change that to better handle access for increased traffic. Concerns about access due to the design of Barbara Jordan Boulevard were also raised.
 - **Truck Access** – Plans for the loading and unloading area to be located in the alley brought up discussion about maneuverability for semis delivering equipment and how many vehicles it would be able to accommodate at one time.

- **Vehicular Parking** – Participants had varying preferences on the placement of the parking garage, noting the advantages and disadvantages of the possible options. Some noted that 400 parking spaces in the garage will not be enough, and raised concerns for how overflow parking will be handled. Ultimately, some felt that garage placement needed to be determined based on which option would prevent congestion. It was also suggested that opportunities for shared parking with other area businesses be explored.
- **Bus Traffic** – Discussion about the routes buses will take to get students to the PAC indicated different preferences and feedback indicated that this is a topic of concern for surrounding neighborhoods. The proposed 290/1-35/51st route is a good solution for most. Some were concerned that taking Berkman Drive through the neighborhood would be seen as a more direct route by bus drivers and others and felt that this route should be avoided.
- **Bus Parking** – Bus parking was of a topic of interest for attendees and most participants favored the proposal to park buses transporting students to and from the PAC at Reagan High School during performances. Surrounding neighbors expressed appreciation for taking off the table an early possible idea to park buses at Blanton Elementary School.
- **Pedestrian and Bike Traffic** – With Mueller's vision as a walkable and bikeable community that connects with surrounding neighborhoods, attendees were interested in how to ensure the PAC site is pedestrian and bike friendly. Because the PAC is the first major development along 51st Street, it was noted that it could help set an approachable and pedestrian and bike friendly tone for the vision of the street. Secure crossing areas for streets around the PAC should be included in the plan. Wheelchair accessibility was also brought up as a critical access element.

TABLE TOPIC: SITE ORIENTATION AND DESIGN

- **Parking Garage Liner** – The “liner” use for the parking garage was well received and participants discussed what those uses might be, including potential retail and residential, although some noted that 51st Street doesn't seem like a place people would want to live. Some desire was expressed to look into the possibility of having a liner around the entire facility, not just the garage. Participants indicated a preference for a full-height liner if feasible and there was discussion about AISD's ability to incorporate the liner since they have no experience with non-educational facilities.
- **Site Orientation** – No orientation was overwhelmingly favored, but the groups discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the possible options. There was some concern that having the facility facing 51st may not be the best layout to promote an “active use” of the site, noting that having the liner along 51st might be more conducive to general community engagement. Some noted that the building orientation should be based on whatever would create the least congestion on adjacent roadways (and the greatest ease of access and egress for patrons, buses and trucks servicing the site). It was also consistently expressed that the site be planned in a way that encourages access and connectivity to and from the surrounding neighborhoods. It is critical that the site be inviting and engaging from 51st, Mueller Boulevard and Barbara Jordan Boulevard. As a part of the bigger 51st Street picture, the PAC site needs to be pedestrian friendly.

- **Facility Design** – Participants showed great interest in the exterior design of the facility and many were pleased to see the examples showing how exciting the building design can be. There was concern as to whether the budget is sufficient to support the quality of design and construction that was illustrated in these images. There were some concerns that the facility's aesthetic would look like a traditional school building design – there is a desire for the site to have a “wow factor” from the street. It was also noted that the look and feel of the building, including the height, should fit with the surrounding areas.
- **Site Design and Landscaping** – Whether through landscaping or structural methods, many participants expressed the importance of having shaded areas on the site, including walkways, drop-off area and entryways. Many agreed with the idea of incorporating an outdoor amphitheatre and outdoor plazas but wanted to ensure that they were within the project's budget. It was noted that any landscaping should be easy to maintain. Participants expressed interest in seeing landscaping on the site located on the building perimeter and not just in the interior. There was also some concern about safety at night in the green spaces. Participants felt that adequate lighting to ensure safety should also be included.

TABLE TOPIC: ADDITIONAL INPUT

- **Interior Space** – Some attendees were interested in learning about the elements of the performance space (orchestra pit, lighting, sound, risers, balcony, etc) and were pleased to know that a well-qualified acoustician has been hired to ensure sound quality. Many liked the inclusion of a “black box” theater to allow for a flexible performance space. It was noted that the space should have large doors throughout to allow props and scenery to be moved easily. Additional ideas included designing the interior wall space to display student art, include an area for a music library, installing a kiln for workshop use and incorporating a recording studio for students to use. Some participants expressed an interest in seeing multi-purpose/meeting spaces included in the plan.
- **Site Selection and Operating Hours** – Some attendees expressed reservations about the selection of this specific site at Mueller for the PAC facility noting that there might have been a better site within Mueller for it to be located. Some concerns about the potential noise the students will make were expressed – especially if that occurs too early in the morning or too late at night, which prompted questions about the operating hours of the facility.
- **Staffing** – Given the District's budget situation, participants wanted to ensure that the facility will be properly staffed. Some noted this might be a learning opportunity for students. Participants also suggested that the District recruit neighbors to volunteer as ushers or for other staffing needs.
- **Non-AISD Use** – Some participants wanted to know the availability of the facility for uses when not being utilized for AISD events noting that it could offer a great resource to the surrounding communities.