

What's developing at ... **Whitaker-Adams**

March 2002

Issue 1

Portland Public Schools

Message from the superintendent

Jim Scherzinger
Interim Superintendent

During the community meetings held last November, I listened to the concerns of more than 80 community members, educators and parents regarding the future of Whitaker Middle School. I very much appreciated the input of so many individuals about maintaining a neighborhood school on the Whitaker-Adams site.

Based on those and subsequent conversations, I have recommended to the Board of Education that the district redevelop the Whitaker-Adams site. This decision is based on the three principals:

- Renovating the existing building is not cost-effective;
- Building a new middle school on the Whitaker-Adams site is the community's preference; and
- Identifying development opportunities that generate revenue to help fund building the school is supported by the community and the district.

Additionally, the community desires to remain informed and be involved in the future of the site and the school. To that end, several public meetings will be held in the coming months, and the district is establishing a stakeholders advisory committee for the Whitaker-Adams redevelopment project.

I invite you to attend the first public meeting Wednesday, April 3, 2002, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Vernon Elementary School. At the meeting, district staff and consultants from Parametrix, Inc., will provide an update on the progress of plans for the Whitaker-Adams site.

I hope that you continue to be involved as we move forward in redeveloping the Whitaker-Adams site in ways that best serve the community.

Public meeting to be held April 3

Portland Public Schools will hold a public meeting on the Whitaker-Adams redevelopment Wednesday, April 3, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Vernon Elementary School, 2034 NE Killingsworth. This is an opportunity for community members to learn about the decision-making process, to recommend advisory group participants, and to help identify important issues for the project.

For more information, contact David Stocker:
503 963-7891 • 503 233-4825 (fax) • dstocker@parametrix.com

The realities of redevelopment

The Whitaker-Adams site offers a unique opportunity to host a new middle school for the neighborhood as well as other services that meet community needs.

However, public funding to build a new middle school on the site is not available now, nor is it likely to be available anytime soon. Therefore, developing the property into a multi-use site will require creative thinking, community support, and a comprehensive development plan. That plan for the property must include a middle school and other uses that can generate revenue to help pay for building the new school.

To engage the community in this effort, a stakeholders advisory committee (SAC) is being formed and members are being recruited. Participants include, but are not limited



to, community organizations, elected officials, parents, school and district staff, users of the school buildings and others interested in the future of education in the Whitaker attendance area.

The SAC will be charged with exploring the feasibility of development options for the Whitaker-Adams site, and will make recommendations for consideration by the broader community, the district and the Portland Public Schools Board of Education.

Creating a financially viable plan for a mix of uses on the Whitaker-Adams site will require the SAC and the community to offer their best thinking and support to accomplish this challenging task. The public meeting Wednesday, April 3, (see announcement at the left) is the first step in the process. District and school staff and community groups will attend the meeting. Neighborhood residents are encouraged to attend the meeting and to get involved. We look forward to seeing you there!



Public Meeting
 Whitaker-Adams Redevelopment
 April 3, 2002, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
 Vernon Elementary School
 2044 NE Killingsworth

Portland Public Schools
 P.O. Box 3107
 Portland, OR 97208-3107



Advisory group participation

Do you know of a community group that should participate in the Whitaker-Adams redevelopment decision-making process?

To submit their name, contact David Stocker, project coordinator at Parametrix, by calling 503 963-7891 or by e-mailing dstocker@parametrix.com.

Parametrix, Inc., is the engineering and environmental sciences company serving as a consultant to Portland Public Schools on this project.

Project timeline

December 2001	District decides to redevelop Whitaker-Adams
April 3, 2002	Public meeting, 6-7:30 p.m., update and discussion
April 24, 2002	First SAC meeting, at Vernon Elementary School, 6-8 p.m.
June 2002	Public meeting, review plans
July-August 2002	SAC meetings
September - October 2002	SAC and public meetings, make recommendations for redevelopment



Frequently asked questions

Why does the district want to rebuild Whitaker if the overall enrollment is declining? While it is true that the district's overall enrollment is dropping, it is not dropping at the same rate throughout the district. Current and projected enrollment figures show there is a continued need for a middle school in the Whitaker-Adams area. Whitaker Middle School students now are in temporary locations at the former Rice Elementary School and the district's Lakeside property, which had been slated to be sold.

How can the district afford to rebuild Whitaker Middle School? Funding for the proposed new middle school will come from private and bond funding sources dedicated to construction and remodeling. Those funds do not take away any money from instructional programs. Those funds – like much of the district's money – can be used only for specific purposes and are not transferable to other areas, no matter how great the need. These construction funds are not available to use for operating schools, hiring staff or purchasing textbooks. For these reasons, it is possible to consider construction of a new Whitaker Middle School.

Did you know...

Did you know these facts about the Whitaker-Adams site, located at 5700 NE 39th Ave?

- ✓ Zoned for a mix of housing types.
- ✓ Encompasses 12.9 acres.
- ✓ Half of the running track is owned by the Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation, which will eventually take ownership of the entire track.
- ✓ Adams High School closed in 1981. Whitaker Middle School relocated to the building in 1983.