*General Services Building News*

A newsletter summarizing project activities.

**Where will the new General Services Building be located?**

The design work for the new building is focused on the former human services property located at 3580 Pacific Avenue in Tacoma. Longtime residents also know this as where the former Puget Sound Hospital operated. The buildings were cold shuttered in 2010 with the intent to demolish.

**Why this site?**

County leaders set guiding criteria for the site that would house the general county services (besides law enforcement and courts). It has to be large enough to allow ample customer parking, easy freeway and arterial access, and good access to public transit. A first step was to look at property already in county ownership. While a number of properties were examined (more about that below), the former Human Services site rose to top consideration because the county owns four adjoining parcels for a total of 13.29 acres (and two parcels are unused). Because the properties are larger than is needed for the County’s one-stop facility, the properties were master planned. This effort showed that the former hospital site can easily meet the immediate facility needs while preserving ample land for the future.

This location meets all of the guidelines and benefits we seek for the location of the new general services building, including parking and access to mass transit and Interstate 5.
The team reviewed previous research, efforts, and proposals to bring county programs together on a campus or into one building. This research included a complete review of county land holdings, existing leases and the possible purchase of existing buildings and properties.

Here’s a quick look at the deep analysis of other possible locations.

**Pierce County Annex**

This project began with a focus on redevelopment of the Annex site. The site consists of a large parcel of land located near the Tacoma Mall and Costco. The existing building has exceeded its lifespan and requires millions of dollars in renovations and updates, so the most logical step is to tear it down. The land area is smaller than that of the Pacific Avenue site, and the access is much more difficult. The area is congested and becomes nearly gridlocked during the holiday shopping season. Access to public transit is poor and costly parking structures would need to be built to accommodate the public and staff.

**Tacoma Avenue**

Pierce County already owns property across from the County-City Building in downtown Tacoma, so analysis on this location was done. Because of the narrow footprint, it would be significantly more expensive to build in that location – a 28 percent to 32 percent increase due to site constraints and the need for a parking garage to meet requirements.
Understanding the site

When meeting someone for the first time, there is the exchange of names, shaking of hands, and histories eventually get shared. What do you do for a living? Where did you grow up? When looking to develop a property it’s sort of similar.

A Phase One report provides a history of the property and the neighborhood so that issues like soil contamination are understood and any cleanup can be factored into the timeline and costs. Understanding what’s underground is also useful and important. Wright Runstad’s soil engineer, Hart Crowser, recently did borings on the site. They needed to understand the type of soils and see at what depth groundwater might be present. This information guides excavation work and eventual placement of foundations. The design and development team is also learning about where utilities are located near the site, examining views, sunshine exposure for building heat loads and landscape selection and placement.

The developer would like to remove the brick facing on the northern-most building to determine its quality for potential reuse with the project. Our next issue of this newsletter will have more details about the brick removal, including a timeline.

Master Plan: Gazing into the future

One of the first activities for the development team was the creation of a site master plan, which looks at the entirety of the property and considers what the overall use of the land could become over time. By creating a master plan, utilities and open spaces are considered upfront in a logical sequence so this building does not hinder future development. In fact, elements will be located and sized appropriately to assist with future development.

The site has many advantages beyond large acreage and the attributes described earlier. Pacific Avenue frontage and commercial-type zoning are positive site qualities.

In addition, the plan is to construct the building on the east side of the property - tight to Pacific Avenue. This placement creates a buffer between the office function and the neighborhood to the west. Future development could then occur to the south and east in a single or series of buildings that have Pacific Avenue frontage. Efforts will be made throughout the site to maintain green space that enhances the experience of both workers and neighbors.

No one knows for sure what the future holds for the entire site and what or when anything else will be built. The purpose of a master plan is to avoid restricting future development with the current design.

General Services Building Project Status

What’s Happening

Development team meetings with departments to determine programming and space needs

Next Steps

Removal of exterior brick to determine its quality for potential reuse

Developer sets guaranteed maximum price

NDC submits proposed lease to Pierce County
Meet a Member of the Design Team

Serving as the lead role from Wright Runstad & Company for the General Services Building Project is Cindy Edens, Senior Vice President and Director of Development. Cindy’s responsibilities for this project include oversight throughout design development, entitlements, financing, and construction completion.

Over the past 17 years Cindy has worked on several notable 63-20 projects with Wright Runstad & Company, such as King Street Center, the Ninth & Jefferson Building, Redmond City Hall and Husky Stadium. Cindy draws upon her experience delivering numerous projects to help guide the design and building delivery process and realize buildings that meet client needs and are able to be maintained and operated in an affordable manner.

Why use 63-20 bond financing?

Some of the benefits to Pierce County include the following:

- Ability to start and deliver projects much more quickly
- Lowers the risk of the public entity
- Owner administrative cost are lower
- Allows for all team members to work together in the design and delivery of the project with costing of the design occurring throughout the design process
- Integrated approach creates opportunity to utilize long-term relationships between the developer and the construction community
- Reduction on design and construction costs from the use of design-bid-build contracts for subcontractors
- Increases coordination among subcontractors
- Increased project oversight due to transparency of all contracts

63-20...

What does that mean?

We hear this question a lot: “What does the phrase 63-20 bond really mean? For 63 years the cost has 20 percent interest?”

No, a 63-20 bond refers to tax-exempt financing that qualified nonprofit corporations may issue on behalf public entities, like the county. The 63-20 notation originates from Revenue Ruling 63-20 of the IRS code by the Department of Treasury in 1963.

(This ruling has since been updated in Revenue Procedure 82-62, but the 63-20 name stuck).

The non-profit selected for this project is the National Development Council (NDC). If approved, all of the bond proceeds are used for the construction of the facility and cannot be used for working capital. The bond funds would be repaid through terms of a lease. At the end of the lease, the county takes ownership of the building from the nonprofit.

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For more information visit the Project Webpage featured on www.piercecountywa.org/facilities