

# **Saint Mary's College High School Master Planning Process**

## **Summary Report of Community Workshops Held on**

**October 19 and November 9, 2005**

## ***Background***

In preparation for the development of its master plan, Saint Mary's College High School hosted the first of a series of community meetings on October 19, 2005. To assist with this effort, Saint Mary's hired the Berkeley-based firm of Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG). MIG's role is to identify and implement strategies that would help improve communications between the neighborhood and the school and provide opportunities for neighbors to share their ideas and concerns about the master plan process. MIG will also document the process and provide meeting summaries and related reports.

MIG recommended that a series of community workshops be held to provide an opportunity to comment on the master plan process. It is anticipated that Saint Mary's will have a draft document to share with the community in early 2006. MIG also recommended that a survey be conducted to provide some baseline information about neighborhood opinions regarding the school.

Over the past few years, the school has directed resources toward managing issues such as such as traffic, parking, litter and noise. The survey was designed to identify which issues were of greatest concern to the community and to collect feedback on neighbor perceptions about how they were being addressed by Saint Mary's. MIG conducted a door-to-door survey on Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. Neighbors who were at home and willing to participate were asked to complete the brief survey that included eleven questions and an optional section that collected basic information about the responding household.

The survey was conducted all in one day and was intended to provide MIG a "snapshot" of neighborhood opinions and issues of concern. MIG surveyors visited about 230 homes on streets near the school. About 82 neighbors participated in the survey or a 35% response rate, which is considered a high response rate. MIG used these results to develop the agenda and format for the first community meeting.

## ***Community Workshop Approach***

The school sent a letter publicizing the meeting in mid-September and a reminder notice about the date change two weeks prior to the meeting to approximately 300 neighboring addresses. Approximately 35 people attended the first community meeting on October 19 including 24 community members and about 10 representatives from Saint Mary's, including staff and members of the school's master plan committee. The Council Member from District 5 in Berkeley and the Community Development Director for the City of Albany also attended.

Participants were asked to sign in and were given a name tag, agenda and a comment card. Participants were also asked to identify the location of their residence using a pushpin on a map. The map was designed to help participants see where the attendees lived in relation to the school grounds.

The purpose of the community workshop was to:

- introduce the community to the proposed master plan process
- share the results of the “snapshot” survey conducted on October 1<sup>st</sup>
- engage participants in a group exercise to develop guiding principles for the master plan

## ***Community Workshop Summary- October 19, 2005***

The workshop began with Brother Edmond providing a welcome and brief introduction to the master plan process. Lou Hexter, MIG, reviewed the meeting outcomes and process. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Joan Chaplick, MIG, then provided a summary of the survey results. The survey indicated the respondents issues in rank order were: traffic, parking, noise and litter; with traffic being the issue receiving the most responses. The majority of respondents rated the school’s efforts to inform neighbors about scheduled events and activities and maintaining the landscaping of the campus as good to excellent. The school’s efforts to manage traffic and parking and buffer surrounding properties from noise received poor to fair ratings from a majority of respondents. The survey results indicated that most of the respondents agreed with the statement, “ I believe that St. Mary’s CHS is helping to meet our community’s goals to provide a quality education for high school youth.” There was also substantial agreement with the statement: “As a neighbor of Saint Mary’s, I accept that I will periodically be impacted by school activities.” The survey also indicated there was a high level of awareness of the school’s efforts to develop a master plan.

Several participants expressed concerns about the survey technique and validity of the results since they were not able to participate in the survey on October 1<sup>st</sup> . Ms. Chaplick responded that the survey was intended to give MIG a snapshot of neighborhood opinions and that a 35% response rate was considered high. She also explained that the technique was selected because it had a higher response rate than a mail-back survey and could be completed in a much shorter time period. These participants continued to express their concerns about the validity of the survey and requested that the results not be distributed.

Next, meeting participants were divided into three discussion groups corresponding to the color on the name tag they received when they arrived. There were about 7-8 participants in each. Each group was asked to identify a facilitator, recorder and someone who would provide a report back to the larger group. Saint Mary’s representatives joined the groups so they could listen to the discussion and answer questions.

Using the comment card as an outline, each group was tasked with discussing the specific topics on the comment card – traffic, parking, noise and litter – and drafting a statement that could serve as a “guiding principle” for the master plan related to that topic. Participants could also add other topics. Participants were directed to craft statements that focused on the desired outcome or qualities related to the issues. Participants were given about 45 minutes to discuss the issues and develop the guiding principles. A representative from each group shared the results of their discussion and the comments were recorded on a large sheet of paper (or wallgraphic) that was visible to all attendees. Participants were also

encouraged to complete and turn in their comment cards. Eighteen comment cards were collected by the end of the meeting.

MIG staff compiled the results of the comment cards and the wallgraphic. Working with the summary comments reported by the group and the comment card results, MIG staff drafted a series of guiding principles that would be used for the development of the master plan. These draft statements were reviewed by Saint Mary's staff and were reviewed and discussed at the community meeting, which was held on November 9 from 7-9 pm. The guiding principles can be found starting on Page 5 in this summary.

## ***Community Workshop Summary – November 9, 2005***

The second community workshop was held on Wednesday, November 9 from 7-9 pm. About 22 community members attended. The workshop began with Brother Edmond providing a welcome. Lou Hexter, MIG, reviewed the meeting outcomes and process. The main purpose of the meeting was to review the draft guiding principles. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Joan Chaplick, MIG, introduced the guiding principles and asked participants to follow along using a comment card. The comment card contained a list of the principles and space for participants to indicate their level of agreement with the draft statements. Participants were asked to check if they agreed, disagreed or agreed with modifications. Participants were asked to share their comments and questions about the statements with the group. Saint Mary's staff were called on to provide information about current processes and procedures. Lou Hexter recorded the comments on a large wallgraphic which was visible to the entire group. Eighteen comment cards were turned in at the end of the meeting.

MIG will compile the comments from the meeting and comment cards. To provide an opportunity for neighbors who were unable to attend the meeting to comment on the guiding principles, a letter and questionnaire based on the comment card will be mailed to neighboring residents, with responses being returned to MIG. MIG will compile the results and depending on the comments, revise the guiding principles accordingly.

Hal Brandes, Dahanukar Brandes Architects, the architect for the master plan, provided a brief description of the process and next steps. Mr. Brandes described how the school had completed a needs assessment and would be drafting goal statements to reflect the school's needs. He would then work with the Saint Mary's master plan committee to apply both the goal statements and guiding principles to the facilities proposed in the master plan. The results of this process will be presented to the community in late January 2006 and provide an additional opportunity for comment and discussion.

At the end of the meeting, participants requested information about the status of the results of the community survey and when it would be posted on the website. Joan Chaplick responded that based on the concerns and comments expressed at the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, community members had indicated they did not want the survey results posted on the school's website and MIG had complied with this request. Meeting participants indicated this was not correct and requested the survey results be posted and shared with the group. MIG would post the results on the school's web site.

## ***Draft Guiding Principles***

Based on the results of the October 19 community workshop, the following guiding principles were drafted. The statements were reviewed and discussed at the November 9<sup>th</sup> community workshop.

### ***TRAFFIC***

#### ***A1: Implement programs to reduce traffic impacts.***

A1.1 Work collaboratively (Saint Mary's and neighbors) with local law enforcement officials to ensure consistent enforcement of speed limit and other traffic regulations.

A1.2 Work collaboratively (Saint Mary's and neighbors) with city officials to identify and secure appropriate traffic calming features for nearby streets.

A1.3 Continue to encourage students to use carpools and public transportation.

A1.4 Explore options for increasing public transportation services to the school.

A1.5 Continue current program of periodic reminders to faculty, administration, student and parent drivers to obey traffic rules; the school will seek strong enforcement by local police.

#### ***A2: Reduce and manage traffic impacts at school entrances***

A2.1 Examine alternatives that balance the traffic loads between the three entrances to the school.

### ***PARKING***

#### ***B1: Reduce daytime parking impacts on neighborhood.***

B1.1 Continue current monitoring of student parking on Peralta, Ordway, Ventura, West Place, Posen, Monterey, Albina, and Hopkins Court.

B1.2 Provide for more on-campus parking.

B1.3 Explore feasibility of centralized off-site parking.

#### ***B2: Reduce special event parking impacts on neighborhoods.***

B2.1 Manage parking during after school and weekend events in a manner that reduces impacts on the neighborhood.

B2.2 Continue to provide advance notice of special events to the neighborhood.

## **LITTER**

### ***C1: Reduce litter impacts from school.***

C1.1 Increase frequency of litter pick-up on Monterey, Posen and Albina on school days and after school events.

C1.2 Work collaboratively (Saint Mary's and neighbors) to identify other sources of litter and establish a litter remediation program.

## **NOISE**

### ***D1: Identify design alternatives that would serve to reduce noise impacts from school.***

D1.1 Explore feasibility of hardscape features designed to buffer noise around the perimeter of the school property.

D1.2 Design buildings and facilities to minimize noise from student events and activities.

### ***D2: Institute programmatic changes that reduce noise.***

D2.1 Continue to encourage event attendees to minimize their potential noise impacts as they depart the school, especially during evening events.

D2.2 Continue to encourage student and parent drivers to keep car stereos off or at low volume as they approach and depart the school.

D2.3 Continue to discourage informal student gatherings in the neighborhood after event activities.

## **DESIGN**

### ***E1: Improve the visual appearance of the school as it is viewed from public streets and neighboring homes.***

E1.1 Revitalize landscaping on Posen to provide a visual buffer for the gymnasium and sports fields.

E1.2 Locate larger buildings away from the campus perimeter.

E1.3 Design new facilities to fit with the scale and setting of the campus.

E1.4 Work collaboratively (Saint Mary's and neighbors) to conduct appropriate creek restoration activities.

E1.5 Explore opportunities for school buildings and facilities (current and potential) to support neighborhood interests in emergency preparedness and neighborhood safety.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### ***F1: Improve communications between school and community.***

F1.1 Provide and maintain ongoing opportunities for dialogue between community members and the school.