

Update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Design Workshop – May 6, 2015



Clean Water Facility Project



The City of Oak Harbor is advancing architectural design of the wastewater treatment facility in the Windjammer Vicinity. On Wednesday, May 6, the City brought back a group convened last fall to showcase how design has progressed, and if their previous feedback was effectively incorporated. The workshop group provided input on the updated design that will be used by the team as they continue to develop the architectural “look and feel” of the facility. You may view the [presentation](#) and [display boards](#) from the workshop, presented by our design team, Carollo Engineers, architect MWA, and landscape architect Greenworks at <http://www.oakharborcleanwater.org/library>. The meeting was facilitated by our public involvement consultant EnvirolIssues.

Feedback provided at the May 6, 2015 Design Workshop used themes from Design Workshop #1 as a launch point. The November meeting had [offered a series of themes for consideration](#), which were incorporated into the May 2015 design (see link above for previous summary). After conducting Design Workshop #2, the team collected several key take-home messages that will be considered as architectural design continues to be developed.

The following attributes have been noted by the group as “well on their way” in terms of design achievement:

1. On architectural “massing” of the facility: Participants **generally agreed that the “campus concept”** put forth by MWA Architects should be the design moving forward. This was due to perception that the “Courtyard” would be less transparent.
2. The effect of current design is consistent with the goal of providing a facility that is **“open and light”**. All members enjoy the current amount of windows, but **favor increasing use of windows** in the design.
3. The group thought their value of **enhancing sightlines to the water, park, and windmill was beginning to take shape, but should continue to be emphasized as the design is further developed.**
4. **Varying heights of rooflines** will make the overall building structure less imposing. Jeff McGraw, with MWA Architects, explained that the building volumes are sized to accommodate the machinery and functions within. The taller building volumes are approaching the maximum height per code. Jeff suggested breaking up larger facades with landscape elements or roofed kiosk elements at viewing windows.
5. **Landscape elements are just being developed, and will be essential.** The group recognized that this is an opportunity to seize, in order to **integrate with the surroundings**. Two elements in particular resonated with the group: Water features and native landscaping. In particular, plantings should reflect the beach setting, complement certain design features, and help blend the building into the existing site.

6. **Most liked the level of “camouflaging” the wastewater treatment facility.** The group has challenged the team to continue to work on ensuring the facility looks like it belongs in the park. They collectively agreed that they did not want this facility to be an obvious “city building” or “sewer plant” from a distance. A future description of “institutional” would not be a welcome outcome.
7. The current design expresses a strong potential for **community interaction with the facility, especially with educational or interpretive features.** The idea of having the building radiate more of a museum feel to emphasize the educational aspects would only enhance this future community asset.
8. There is potential for this facility to **set the stage for a community design aesthetic** and should **set the tone for Oak Harbor’s downtown corridor** as it continues to develop.

The group encouraged the design team to continue working as follows:

9. The **City Beach corner** entrance to the park could be celebrated as part of the design by treating it as a **gateway into the facility and park.**
10. Any way to **break of the façade into smaller sections would be welcome.** This could include the use of louvers, more windows, varying textures, or building materials.
11. Heights of the new facility will be taller than the existing Windjammer treatment plant. **Continue to keep sightlines and views of the water and windmill top of mind.**
12. Think about methods to **offer respite or cover for pedestrians** (e.g., awnings).
13. Both **contemporary architecture and traditional northwest architecture** were previously favored by the group; this potentially could be enhanced with some horizontal elements rather than a strong vertical aesthetic.
14. The group was **split on the use of the exterior building materials.** Some favored stone and wood to better reflect traditional northwest architecture while others preferred brick in the current design concept, as it complements the community design aesthetic already seen in schools and other public buildings in Oak Harbor.
15. The project team needs to **stay on top of project updates to the community as the design evolves**—changes happen quickly. The more aggressive the team is with their communications, the less false information will circulate.
16. If parking replaces the old Whidbey Island Bank building, **consider building design and way-finding** from those that will park along S.E. Pioneer Way. Jeff McGraw noted **handicap parking for the training facility** should be placed as close as possible to the southwest corner of the site.