

**Public Facilities Review Committee
McKinley Elementary School Expansion
Meeting Summary
Wednesday, December 18, 2013**

Attendees

<u>PFRC Members (√ = present):</u>	<u>Arlington Public Schools (APS):</u>
√ Steve Sockwell, Chair	Ajibola Robinson, APS
Lander Allin, Schools	Scott Prisco, APS
Jeff Certosimo, Housing Commission	Kevin Moran, HCM
√ Christopher Forinash, Planning Commission	Jeff Hagan, HCM
√ Elizabeth Gearin, Parks & Rec. Commission	Peter Winebrenner, HCM
Karen Kumm, Planning Commission	Jim Elliott, TDG
John Miller, At-Large	Diane Lambert, TDG
√ Heather Obora, Schools	
Michael Perkins, Transportation Commission	
√ Terri Prell, At-Large	<u>County Staff:</u>
√ William Staderman	Justin Falango, DCPHD
Gabriel Thoumi, E2C2	Sophia Fisher, DCPHD
Jason Widstrom, Fiscal Affairs Adv. Comm.	Rob Gibson, DES
<u>McKinley Project-Specific PFRC Members (√ = present):</u>	<u>Other</u>
√ Jason Ackleson, Dominion Hills CA	Kelly King, BLPC Chair
√ Brian Hannigan, Dominion Hills CA	Colin Brown, McKinley Principal
Jenny Capone, Madison Manor CA	Claire O'Dea, E2C2 (substitute)
√ Anne Ladewig, Madison Manor CA	
√ Tim Bakos, Westover Village CA	
Craig Esherick, Sports Commission	
√ Ed Hilz, Urban Forestry Commission	

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Transportation

Toole Design Group provided an update on the transportation study and draft parking and transportation recommendations for McKinley school and can be found in the following presentation:

http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/105/Toole%20McKinley%20DRAFT%20Recommendations_PFRC%20131218.pdf.

Some of the comments related to the transportation presentation included:

- Will there be street trees along the school side of McKinley Road in the proposed streetscape?
 - Street trees may be more feasible because there are no power lines in front of the school.

- There is adequate space in that section of McKinley Road to provide adequate planting room for street trees.
- A concern was expressed about how the proposed street section would transition to the rest of McKinley and Ohio Roads.
- A concern was expressed that the proposed sharrow on the northbound side of McKinley may not be appropriate because a child cyclist may not be able to move at the speed of traffic.
- A concern was expressed that additional street trees could pose a hazard if leaves are not cleaned up promptly (kids may slip on wet leaves).
- How much speed mitigation will there be from the redesign?
- Would a HAWK signal or other pedestrian light be appropriate for the McKinley Road crossing?
 - The school is heavily used outside of school hours by the community; perhaps some form of enhanced crosswalk would be appropriate.
- Should there be a formal pick up zone on Potomac Street/11th Road?
- Would the warrants for stop signs at 11th Road and Potomac Street be met?

Staff response:

Rob Gibson, DES Transportation, gave the staff response: Toole Design Group has provided good information. It's critical to keep implementing recommendations in other plans and projects because not all of the recommendations are feasible to complete with the addition. Potential areas of focus for improvements with the addition could include the site entrance, including slopes, crosswalks, and paths into and around the school. APS and the County should look at all available tools, including bicycle facilities, TDM, and Safe Routes to School.

Placement/Massing

HCM presented the brown paper exercise that the community participated in at the December 4 BLPC/community meeting and identified which precedent images resonated with the community (as well as those that did not). HCM also presented the three concept designs that were reviewed by the BLPC at their December 17 meeting, and some preliminary findings from the arborist they have retained. The concept designs were all discussed in detail and can be reviewed in the following presentation:

<http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/105/PFRC%20-%2004%20-%20131218.pdf>.

BLPC Update

Prior to the PFRC discussion on the concept designs, Kelly King, the BLPC Chair, gave a brief overview of the process by which the BLPC came to a consensus on Option 3, which is the hybrid option that calls for an addition in the south (the location of the existing pentagon addition) and one on the east, towards McKinley Road. Ms. King noted that it was very important to the BLPC that people who live adjacent to the school and in the surrounding community had the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed concept designs prior to the BLPC making a decision. She also noted that the hybrid option was developed in response to a comment from a member of the community

who lives next to the school. She also expressed that the “gymnasium” (a combination of gym and auditorium) is the most important aspect of the addition for both the BLPC and the community because it provides a space for the entire school to gather. It also provides a place large enough to accommodate school plays and other programs. Finally, there is the desire in the BLPC that the addition fit with the context of the neighborhood. Principal Colin Brown noted that the school enjoys a great relationship with its neighbors, and that maintaining that good relationship is critical to the school.

Some additional reasons that the BLPC came to consensus on Option 3:

- Listening to the community.
- Makes the footprint of the addition on the south side smaller, eliminating the need for an extensive retaining wall on the south side of the site.
- Building the addition into the hill in front of the school makes better use of the land.
- Splitting the addition creates a better internal circulation pattern for the students.

Comments and questions on the concept designs included:

- Did the BLPC consider impacts to trees when selecting a concept design? Also, noted that there a concern related to replacing mature trees with small trees.
- The hybrid option may increase the square footage of the addition, which could lead to an increase in costs.
 - HCM is looking at ways to reduce the square footage in Option #3 and is charged to come in on budget.
- The end of the addition on the east side closest to McKinley Road should be a front entrance/welcoming place
 - Needs to be an active façade
 - Maybe a plaza, perhaps with play equipment
- Where is the service entrance?
 - Service/dining is not moving; will be mitigated through design
- Brian Hannigan expressed that the Dominion Hills board were opposed to Options 2 and 3 (anything that brings the addition closer to McKinley Road).
- Keep the option to build an addition that can support a second story.
- Is it more cost effective/safe to only have one construction area?
 - Regardless of the option, two construction areas will be necessary; safety will be maintained at all times.

After the discussion on the concept design options concluded, the PFRC took two straw votes to determine whether there was consensus on an option. In the first round, PFRC members voted on their favorite option, which Option 3 won by a narrow margin. In the second round, PFRC members voted on their second favorite option. Option 3 won that vote by a narrow margin as well. There was one abstention. With the exception of the abstention, Option 3 was either the first or second choice of all who voted.

After the voting concluded, PFRC members were asked to share their concerns related to Option 3 to help guide HCM as the schematic design is developed. The concerns included:

- Impacts on trees
- It would be shortsighted not to prepare the rear addition for a second story.
- The cost of two construction sites
- Building towards McKinley Road is not desired.
- Concern that there would be a surprise removal of trees similar to what happened at Ashlawn. APS and HCM responded that the arborist was retained much earlier in the process for McKinley with the goal of avoiding the situation at Ashlawn.

Next Steps

The next steps in the process include:

- January 14, 2014 – BLPC
- January 22, 2014 – PFRC
- January 23, 2014 – School Board information item on final concept plan
- January 28, 2014 – BLPC
- January 29, 2014 – Optional PFRC meeting on SB meeting feedback
- February 6, 2014 – School Board action on final concept plan
- February 19, 2014—PFRC

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.