



ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs

YEAR END REPORT 2015-2016



**Arlington
Public
Schools**



1. INTRODUCTION

This is the annual report of the Arlington Public Schools (APS) Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC) prepared for the School Board of Arlington, Virginia.

The FAC assists the School Board in the continuous, systematic review of school facilities and the biennial and long-range Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Members are appointed to two-year staggered terms, and may be invited to serve for up to three consecutive terms. APS staff actively assists the Council in its work, as do liaison officers from other Arlington councils and citizen groups. FAC meetings are held once each month from September to June. Additional work sessions are scheduled as needed. The Council appoints from its membership subcommittees, such as the High School Sub Group, that meet as their tasking requires. FAC members, who are seen as informed citizens, are regularly invited to serve as members of APS Building Level Planning Committees (BLPC), community and County groups, and on special task forces such as the recent South Arlington Working Group. FAC members also assist at APS Community Forums, typically as small group facilitators.

All FAC meetings are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are posted on the APS website. Each

meeting begins with a public comment period, at which interested citizens are welcome to briefly address the FAC on issues of concern. Community groups may request an invitation to brief the FAC on topics of mutual interest.

At the beginning of the school year the School Board provided Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) guidelines and requested that all APS advisory councils follow them. This somewhat limited the group's ability to communicate outside of meetings and via email. Chair Kelly King requested that APS set up an email account (fac@apsva.us) that could be included in correspondence among the FAC so that APS would have a record of all communications if FOIA requests were submitted. APS established this account and Kelly included the address as a recipient for FAC emails.

This school year provided a variety of opportunities for the FAC to engage with APS staff and leadership, and collaborate with parents and community members in wide reaching public meetings, such as the recent series of public community forums on the CIP. The FAC offered analysis and advice to the School Board on critical facility improvements, capacity and enrollment issues, and growth in the county, each of which impact the educational experience for our children. Working closely with our friends in Facilities and Operations, the FAC provided input into APS projects and planning efforts at all stages of development.

The past year's work and issues are summarized below, together with our observations and recommendations.



Interior at Discovery Elementary School

2. CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

This was another year of fast-paced activity to expand the number of seats available for the rapidly growing number of school-aged children through a combination of new construction, expansion of existing schools, and interior renovations.

Discovery Elementary School:

This highly anticipated 98,00 square foot building opened on 8 September just in time for the start of the school year, due to outstanding teamwork and cooperation between APS Facilities and Operations, the construction contractors, and County officials. The Labor Day weekend prior to opening, County staff worked overtime to complete inspections and issue the needed permits and approvals for the school to open on Tuesday for eager students, parents, and staff. Although some elements of the building—the gym and the playground—were not ready on opening day due to construction delays, staff worked to complete them in the following months.

The school is regarded as state of the practice, incorporating energy efficiency, non-traditional furniture, multi-use spaces, a robust data infrastructure, and innovative fun elements—most notably the slide connecting the 2nd and 1st floors. Student seating provides a choice of traditional or innovative designs, reflecting each student's preferred learning style.

Comment: The FAC hopes that lessons learned from this project are incorporated into future large-scale construction projects.

McKinley Elementary School:

Construction to expand and renovate the school began on schedule last summer and is in currently in high gear with steel erection and concrete slab installation almost complete for the three-story addition. The pentagon structure was replaced and occupied in the spring. The 3-story addition is now scheduled for occupancy in December 2016, four months behind the original schedule due to unforeseen conditions: discovery of an underground spring, discovery and removal of old building footings/foundations, and undocumented underground utilities. In order to perform necessary underground work, six relocatables were moved offsite. Four of the classes from the relocatables occupy the new wing and two were moved to internal classrooms in the main building. The six relocatables will return for the start of the next school

year given the construction delay and the boundary changes that move planning units to provide relief to Tuckahoe and Glebe Elementary Schools.

Comment: Again, lessons learned are critical; we need to recognize, discuss and learn from recent experience, given the amount of construction that will be taking place in the upcoming years. Although disappointed about the four-month construction delay, we were pleased that the delay was publicly acknowledged and communicated.

BLPC and Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) members invest a significant amount of time in these projects. APS should look at the process--from the brainstorming of ideas through the approval of the schematic design--to find improved ways for carrying out the work of these two groups. Pulling together a team of members from recent BLPCs (Ashlawn, Discovery, McKinley, Stratford and Wilson) to analyze and recommend process improvements could be extremely helpful for upcoming projects.



Construction of the Three-Story Addition at McKinley Elementary School

Abingdon Elementary School:

The School Board has approved the construction contract to renovate and expand Abingdon, adding 12 classrooms and 136 seats and improving current shared spaces, including the library, kitchen and gymnasium, as well as enhancing pedestrian and vehicle access to the school. Preliminary site preparation, including the installation of relocatables on the Abingdon field, has been completed, with construction scheduled to begin this summer and completed by December 2017.



Artists Conception of Expanded Cafeteria at Abingdon Elementary School

H-B Woodlawn/Stratford Programs at Wilson Site:

Planning continues to replace the currently underutilized Wilson School with a five floor facility to house the H-B Woodlawn and Stratford programs. The new school will provide seats for 775 students and will include innovative learning spaces for the H-B Woodlawn students and custom facilities to meet the special needs of the Stratford students. The Rosslyn community has taken an active and generally supportive interest in the building, which will anchor Western Rosslyn and provide much-desired shared public spaces. The proposed schematic design was presented to the BLPC and PFRC in May with School Board review and approval expected in June/July.

For further analysis and commentary on the Wilson project, please see Section 4 below.



Concept for Interior of the New Building at the Wilson Site



Design Concept for the Middle School at the Stratford Site

Stratford Site:

Detailed planning continues to repurpose the former Stratford Junior High School building, currently used by the H-B Woodlawn and Stratford programs, as a neighborhood middle school, once those programs relocate to the Wilson site in 2019. Funds have been approved to include memorial and interpretive building displays highlighting its role as the first racially integrated public school in Virginia. The County Board, despite ongoing public debate, recently approved the placement of a driveway connection between Vacation Lane and Old Dominion Drive.

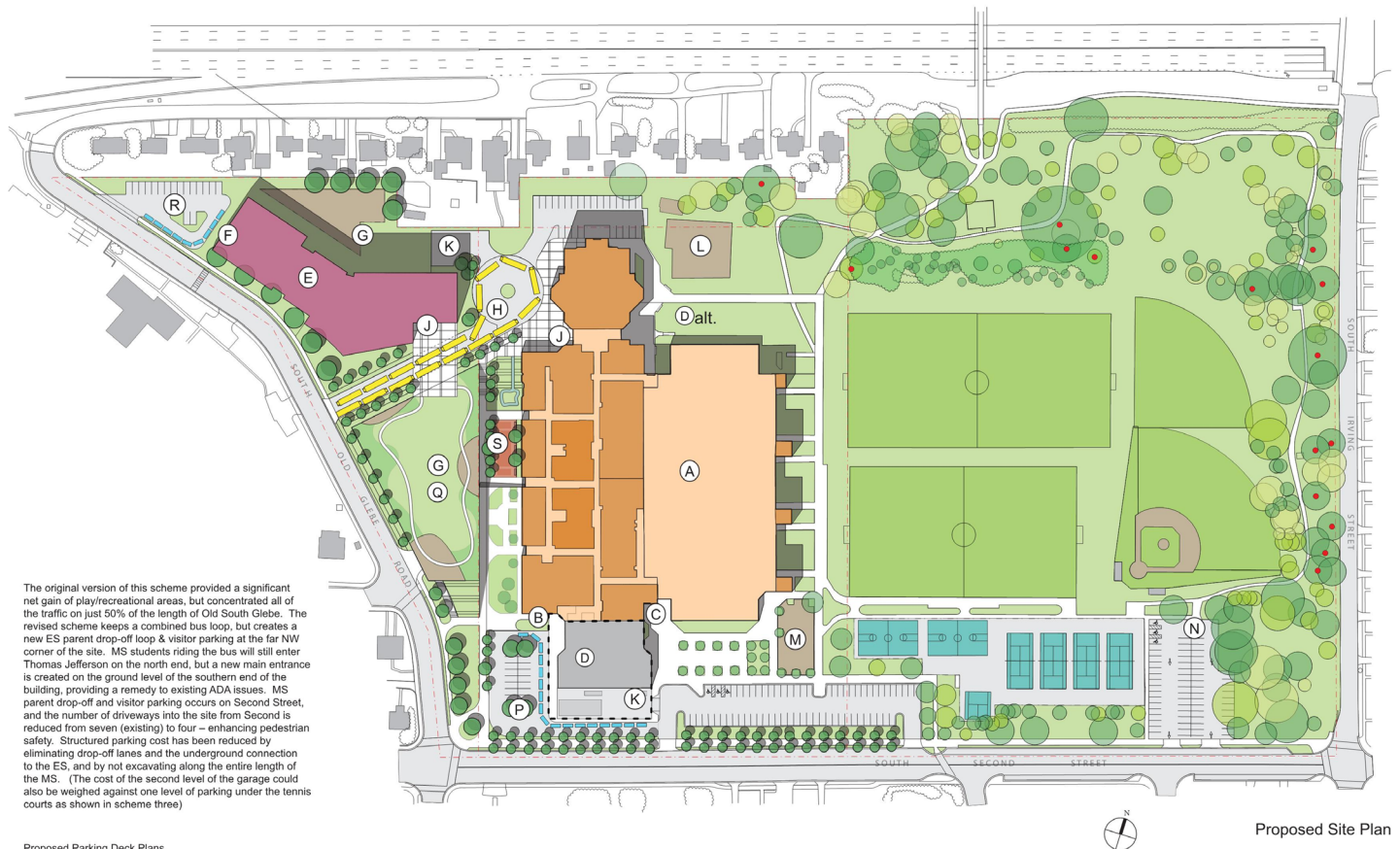
For further analysis and commentary on the Stratford project, please see Section 4 below.

Washington-Lee High School Renovation:

Earlier this school year, APS completed the initial phase of its renovation of portions of Washington-Lee High School to make space for an additional 300 students. Phase 2 of this effort is awaiting the issuance of a County permit. This work, which will be replicated at Wakefield and Yorktown High Schools as part of the CIP, will provide a bit of relief while APS grapples with how to expand the number of secondary seats to meet the expected flood of additional students.



Repurposed Interior Space at Washington-Lee High School



Proposed Parking Deck Plans



- A Existing TJ Middle School + Community Center
 - B New Middle School Entrance
 - C Community Center Entrance
 - D Area of future MS expansion
 - E New Elementary School
 - F Elementary School Entrance
 - G Dedicated ES play space
 - H Combined ES/MS Bus Queue/Drop
 - J Bus rider entry
 - K Service Yard
 - L Community Garden
 - M Community Playground
 - N Playfield drop-off
 - P Dedicated MS drop-off, visitor parking
 - Q Dedicated ES drop-off, visitor parking
 - R Existing "pits" on west side of MS are joined to create a plaza with an at grade opening into the parking structure
 - S
- Parking beneath elevated field, opening on to pedestrian plaza

Site Plan for New Elementary School at Thomas Jefferson Site Developed During the Thomas Jefferson Working Group

Thomas Jefferson Site:

The FAC members were greatly encouraged when the County Board, based on recommendations from the South Arlington Working Group and the School Board, approved construction of a new elementary school adjacent to Jefferson Middle School in the northwest corner of the site. Both APS and the County have appointed their respective oversight groups (the PFRC for the County, and the BLPC for APS), with a joint kick-off session held in April. Planning is underway for construction to begin later this year, with opening planned for the 2019-2020 School Year.

3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The FAC has been working closely with Staff and the School Board to develop the new CIP, which this year aims to address serious deficits in the number of high school seats as well as remaining elementary school needs.

As the FAC began discussing high school capacity needs, it became apparent that understanding the vision for Arlington Tech would be critical. One FAC monthly meeting included a presentation from the Principal of Arlington Tech, Margaret Chung, scheduled to ensure that FAC members fully understood the program, including its projected growth curve, space needs, and instructional goals. FAC leadership considered it important for FAC members to have the opportunity to ask questions, as there was confusion about the program and how it impacted the future capacity needs of the comprehensive high schools. We hope that APS will similarly thoroughly educate the public about this new and exciting program.

The FAC devoted extensive time during the past months discussing the CIP, with the topic dependent upon where staff was in the CIP process (depicted below).



During Stage 2 of the CIP process (Staff Develops Options with Community Input), a number of FAC members participated in Community Forums to gain insight into community concerns. FAC members assisted with breakout sessions and served as facilitators when needed. The FAC and its leadership provided feedback to staff on the community engagement approach as well as draft materials to be presented that were often not included.

Observation: The FAC members, with their diverse backgrounds and perspectives, could have been better utilized throughout this planning process. We recognize the value of community input in these processes as it can help confirm areas of concern and highlight unknown issues. The FAC believes that little was gained, however, from this year’s community engagement processes, with takeaways from these meetings never presented or discussed to the broader public. To highlight merely the number of meetings and participants

should leave us questioning the purpose and goals of the work sessions. There are many ways in Arlington to disseminate and gather community information that could have been better leveraged. The high level challenges with options need to be outlined and discussed upfront (i.e. funding, land).

Understanding that high schools seats would be a large portion of the CIP this year, the FAC created a sub-committee¹ of members willing to work outside of the regularly scheduled meetings to develop, study and access options for high school relief. The sub-committee dived deeply into the data and explored options, and then brought this information to the monthly FAC meetings, allowing the membership to be more focused on analyzing information.

After a number of discussions about high school capacity issues and options, the FAC requested to meet with the high school principals to hear their concerns, thoughts, challenges and issues. Staff arranged for two FAC members to attend a monthly high school principals meeting where overcrowding issues were discussed as well as options for near and long-term relief at the comprehensive high schools. All of the high school principals participated and offered insights for the FAC to consider. Ultimately the High-School Sub-Group developed a matrix of options that was shared and discussed with the FAC and subsequently shared with Staff for consideration as they developed options and ultimately recommendations for the CIP.

Comment: We do not know if Staff used any of this information while developing their options. It would have been valuable to have the FAC “in the room” while options were being developed.

As the CIP process was developing and discussions continued regarding the long-term goals for instruction, the FAC asked to present at a monthly Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI) meeting. The goal was to illustrate how instruction needs to be involved in CIP conversations and recommendations. The discussion with the ACI raised many questions and concerns about their historic lack of direct involvement in the CIP.

A majority of the FAC’s meeting in May was devoted to discussing the Superintendent’s CIP recommendations presented to the School Board on 4 May. FAC members analyzed the options and discussed key points to highlight in the School Board CIP Work Session. The Chair and Vice-Chair participated in the CIP Work Session and presented slides that highlighted the critical needs of the CIP. In addition, the FAC presented questions and concerns that we recommended be answered before the School Board makes final CIP decisions in June.

Below are highlights from the FAC presentation:

High School:

- Needs are greatest but along with long term needs there needs to be a near-term plan to alleviate capacity at Washington-Lee High School.
- Understand the limitation of common spaces and be sure solutions do not push beyond these limitations. For example, the 300 seats added at Washington-Lee provide little relief to the common areas, and in fact, may reduce the available common space.
- Instruction needs to drive the critical next steps for high school capacity by setting a vision for the future.
- Conduct a detailed look at the usability of the Ed Center and whether it is the best location from a cost, transportation and instruction viewpoint, or simply an easy fall back since we already own the space.

¹ All sub-group meetings were held at public library facilities and announced by the School Board’s office well in advance of the meetings.

Middle School:

- Many of our middle school capacity concerns will be addressed with the completion of the Wilson and Stratford projects. A plan was developed at the school level after several options were presented and reviewed by school leadership and PTAs.
- The FAC asked that a location for the Stratford program's temporary relocation during construction be included in the CIP discussions.

Elementary School:

- Options for the Reed facility should be discussed upfront (i.e. how will the building be used, neighborhood or choice, size of the building, likely boundary changes, and how it will solve the capacity shortages where they are needed). The School Board has noted Reed for several years as an underutilized facility.
- APS needs to identify for the public the true capacity ceilings for each school, including relocatables. This will assist in knowing when sites are truly at their maximum. The FAC has requested this for over a year now. It may be best to simply have certain schools permanently host as many relocatables as their common areas will support rather than build expensive additions.
- 10-year projections are difficult to use to identify elementary school needs as the projections are based on current trends that may or may not stay the same.
- Many FAC members believe that APS should study allowing all choice schools to have a certain percentage of the students come from the walkable neighborhood; this would increase walkability, reduce traffic and reduce transportation costs.

General:

- Leverage the County's Community Facilities Study Group's work to identify potential sites for APS.
- Staff needs to calculate and identify their internal resource needs to complete current and future projects.
- Need to determine how to address deficits and make better use of underutilized space throughout the County.

A second CIP Work Session was held in late May, but the FAC did not meet prior to this meeting. A number of FAC members worked to analyze information based on School Board direction from the prior Work Session and information was again presented to the Board. The major findings included the following:

- More high school seats are needed before additional elementary seats (even after implementing the proposed 600 Arlington Tech seats and internal modifications to Yorktown and Wakefield High Schools).
- The quadrant map prepared by APS may not be highlighting elementary school needs accurately.
- Until boundary changes are discussed related to the new elementary school that will be built on the Jefferson site, it is difficult to know exactly what schools will still need relief. While we understand that exact boundaries cannot now be set, it would be helpful for Staff, despite the controversy it may initiate, to propose "likely" boundaries so the FAC and community have a better idea of the relief that may be provided, the needs elsewhere and also so impacted parties can be engaged earlier.
- A number of elementary schools need relief now and cannot wait until 2019 as their site may have reached its true capacity.

The next step is for the County and School Boards to meet and jointly discuss the CIP.

Observations and Recommendations for Improvement:

Bringing planning concepts to the FAC at early stages of development could greatly ease and improve the CIP process. The FAC is a resource with broad levels of experience and deep community involvement. Failure to leverage its collective knowledge and insight much earlier in the planning process leads to missed opportunities and the under-utilization of the FAC. While the FAC recognizes that there may, at times, be constraints (legal or political) upon how much information APS Staff can share with the FAC members, the FAC urges the Board and APS Staff to refine their processes to reduce, and where possible eliminate, such constraints so that the FAC can work as a meaningful planning partner to APS, rather than as a “safe” check to vet plans that have already been cleared for advancement.

The FAC greatly appreciates the value that Instruction has for options to be considered for the CIP. We look to Instruction to guide the future of learning, whether that be how facilities are used, what programs should be offered or how technology plays a role. As we observed the CIP process this year, the FAC realized that the process should be driven collectively by Budget, Instruction and Facilities and Operations. The FAC therefore recommended to the School Board that future CIP development be managed outside of Facilities and Operations. The FAC requested that a resource be dedicated to bring the instructional needs, facility options and budget availability together to develop future CIPs. We are pleased that the School Board adopted a resource to support this work in the 2016-2017 budget.

Many of the critical decisions for the CIP happen late in the process allowing minimal input from the FAC or the public. Staff and the School Board should review the CIP timeline with more updates and input from the Board earlier in the process. This will allow opportunity earlier in the process for additional public input. The current process limits the discussion of options to mainly between the Board and Staff. The public only has the opportunity to be reactive to information presented at School Board work sessions and School Board meetings.



Work Session at a Public Forum with FAC Member John Peck Assisting



4. OBSERVATIONS ON THE STRATFORD AND WILSON PROJECTS

Stratford:

The Stratford Middle School project had its fits and starts this year. The project will increase the capacity of the facility to 1,000 students, up from a capacity of around 750-800 students today. The project includes an expansion to the west, a minor renovation to the existing building, and some substantial site work including moving the field, expanding parking, and improving local roads. The estimated budget is approximately \$36 million with \$4 million from the County through their joint funding model. The budget also includes \$250,000 to commemoratively honor the history of the building. The goal is to open the project in 2019, although there has been discussion about opening the building in two phases, with the renovation open in 2019 and the new construction opening in 2020. Quinn Evans is the architect and Turner Construction is the Construction Manager at Risk. The key player though, has been Toole Design Group, which is leading the traffic study for the project. Susan Cunningham has ably chaired the BLPC despite many obstacles.

The project has had significant challenges that have delayed formal concept design approval by the School Board. The first delay was developing a concept that was deemed acceptable to the Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB), recognizing that the building served as the first integrated public school in Virginia and that on 2 February 1959, the first four African American students were admitted into what was then known as Stratford Junior High School. Nine concepts were developed by the design team and one was approved by the BLPC; however, the HALRB had concerns about the approved concept and ultimately, after much debate, the building addition was approved on the west side of the building, which maintained the views to the existing south facing façade.

At the time of drafting the document, the County Board held a work session on 14 May with a focus on determining whether to include a “driveway” / access road / high road to Old Dominion Drive. While the focus should be on “More Seats for More Students” this driveway is dominating the conversations with the BLPC recommending it and the PFRC against it, and basically dividing the community. All told, this project has held the record for the most meetings – with to date 22 BLPC, 12 PFRC, five HRLB, and two gallery walk meetings, prior to School Board approval of the schematic design.

This is one of the more complex school projects for the County. When the School Board voted to move the H-B Woodlawn and Stratford programs and make this a neighborhood middle school, they created difficulties for themselves by doing two projects instead of one. Further, with the severe overcrowding in the schools, the focus should be on “more seats” and not a driveway. If it was agreed to make this a neighborhood school, increased consideration should have been given to just renovating this school and trying to maximize the number of seats within the existing four walls, just like a similar project at Washington-Lee High School. The cost to build these additional 200 seats is quite high, and the money could conceivably be spent in another location, where the funding could probably yield double the amount of seats.

Wilson:

The Wilson BLPC met approximately 15 times starting in April 2015. Melissa McCracken chaired the BLPC and did a great job keeping it on task and moving forward. Two things that were important to the group were inclusion and community accessibility.

The biggest challenges were costs and transportation/parking. Another challenge was integrating the needs of both the H-B Woodlawn and Stratford programs without isolating the Stratford program students. The first concept design estimate for the project came in well over the original estimated costs. As a result, the team worked diligently to reduce the size of the building, including the size of classrooms, while maintaining the necessary instructional spaces that the school had at the Stratford site. The BLPC asked that the final design have adequate square footage to support both programs. The BLPC debated the siting, shape and use of the structure and settled on the “fanning bars” design fronting on Wilson, with the field on North 18th Street. The design features ascending terraces that allow for more light and outdoor use, as well as a better interface with the community. The BLPC generally agreed that the design team did a great job of creating a structure that used the space efficiently and enabled the greatest community use. The community should have access to at least one of the terraces, the theaters, gym and similar facilities.

The biggest challenge was parking. As anyone who walked the site could immediately see, and as APS transportation consultants later confirmed, there is no reliable street parking near the site. This site is unique: unlike sites such as Ashlawn, there is no neighborhood parking available within a few blocks of the school. If you drive and cannot find a spot in the school garage, you most certainly will have to pay for parking at one of the nearby private garages. Due to the expense of underground parking, and the fact that the project was already over budget without parking, the garage was limited to one level, or approximately 95 spaces--at least 50 spaces short of the minimum needed to support staff. This issue was debated at a number of meetings, and after consideration of all options, based solely on lack of available funding rather than need, APS Staff settled on the 95 space parking garage, with additional spaces to be leased by APS to be used by staff. The facility will not provide any spaces for student parking. APS Staff sent the BLPC a memo committing to the additional leased spaces, as well as committing to some type of voucher or similar program to provide paid parking for visitors at special events, but stated that since this was so far in the future, they could not now lock up the leased spaces. One of the great frustrations for the BLPC was the lack of consideration for this issue in advance. While hopeful, many expressed concern that there is still no guarantee that there will be adequate leased parking within a reasonable distance in the future and asked APS to continue to work with the developer of the building next door to access spaces in that building.

One other issue raised in our last meeting by a member of the immediate community was an effort to recognize the historical significance of the current Wilson building. The design team and APS suggested a model or similar permanent exhibit in the library to commemorate the Wilson building, which the majority of the BLPC supported. It was not clear that this had the full support of the community, though no viable alternatives were proposed.

5. MINOR CONSTRUCTION/MAJOR MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE BONDS

The FAC acknowledges the ongoing commitment APS has made to the Minor Construction/Major Maintenance (MC/MM) operation. APS has consistently provided an average annual funding of more than \$10 million between MC/MM and Bond Infrastructure funding. This commitment is reinforced through the current proposed CIP that resists any temptation to reduce the projected MC/MM and Infrastructure Bond program to free up further debt capacity for the 'more seats' program. This highlights the effort being made by APS to keep the right balance between properly maintaining what the school district already has and the pursuit of acutely needed additional space.

The FAC acknowledges the great collaboration and coordination between the Maintenance Department, Instructional Staff, Summer School, County Parks and Recreational Staff, and individual school teams that is enabling the volume of approved work to be completed, mostly over the summer, around significant ongoing educational and recreational activities. The balance of MC/MM projects generated from the proactive building condition analysis vs. individual school requests continues to grow. In the latest round of analysis, the ratio was around 90%/10% respectively, which demonstrates planning efficiency realized in the professional and comprehensive plan approach the Maintenance Department has established that has been supported and accepted by its customer base, the schools.

The FAC is pleased that the approved budget includes additional resources for HVAC Preventive Maintenance (PM) and contract Landscaping Services, two areas of particular challenges within the school district. The first, HVAC PM, will directly support the goal of creating optimal teaching/learning environments for staff and students. The second, contracted Landscape Services, will keep APS' growing inventory of trees healthy for increased canopy, energy efficiency and further help to achieve the requisite performance of all APS storm water mitigation mandates in which these trees play a major role.

MC/MM and bond funds continue to be incorporated with major renovation and addition projects where the opportunity arises. The most recent example is the construction project at Abingdon Elementary School. The Maintenance Department this summer plans over 100 projects that will bring at least one or two noticeable upgrades to every APS school. The FAC supports APS' clear commitment to provide the appropriate level of ongoing maintenance of its buildings. Such commitment will ensure that Arlington schools are in a "state of good repair" with learning environments that allow every student to be successful.

6. GOING GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE

APS remains firmly committed to building and operating environmentally friendly schools that are assets to the surrounding community. All new major construction is designed to be at least at the LEED Silver level. Of particular note this year was the opening of Discovery Elementary School, which was designed from the start to be "net energy zero" or better. The FAC was delighted to learn that in April the school was "net energy positive", meaning that in addition to what was required to power the building, it produced surplus electricity-enough to power a house for a year. Staff has made enormous strides in turning the MC/MM Fund into a proactive maintenance vehicle. Continuing this effort of preventive maintenance to increase the useful life and energy efficiency of buildings and equipment should be encouraged and expanded. The increased student population and joint uses of our facilities continue to put additional stress on our buildings. Recent headlines regarding Metrorail and the Memorial Bridge highlight the effects of deferring maintenance.

The Jefferson Middle School gym LED high bay lighting retrofit provides an energy savings of about 81% with an estimated 3.5-year payback period at 10 cents per kWh. The LEDs are warrantied for 5 years and are extremely low maintenance, meaning the custodial staff will not need to use a lift to replace burned-out

lights nearly as often. New switches were added to better control the lighting, including the ability to dim the bulbs. Sections of the gym, when not in use, can now be dimmed or switched off for additional energy savings. This is a great example of sustainability and spending money wisely to obtain long-term savings.



Solar Array at Discovery Elementary School

While it would be ideal if all of our facilities were net-zero, we know that it is not realistic, given our current installed infrastructure and budget realities. The net-zero Discovery Elementary School and the LEED Gold Wakefield High School, as well as the other certified buildings, are ‘crown jewels’ in our school system, and we hope that new constructions will conform to these exemplars. Those facilities make it easier to teach the concepts of sustainability, expanding on the idea highlighted by LEED CreditID4 “The school as a teaching tool”, which is intended to “connect the big picture environment lessons to the project building and its occupants”.

Our older existing building can still provide sustainable lessons and long term cost savings. Small upgrades like adding water bottle fillers at all facilities (they are currently only at some), looking at energy efficiency improvements, and how we recycle can lead to sustainability becoming an everyday occurrence and a natural way of thinking.

Supporting APS staff and their commitment to providing sustainable additions, new buildings and upgrades, should continue. It confirms Arlington’s commitment to environmental stewardship and preparing the next generation to ‘take the helm’.

7. PRIORITIES FOR NEXT YEAR

The 2016-2017 school year will bring a great deal of work for Facilities and Operations as they continue a robust capital construction program while maintaining existing facilities. The FAC looks forward to continuing in its role as advisors to the School Board. This coming school year should see completion of the McKinley addition and renovation, the completion of the Washington-Lee internal modifications, the start of construction at Abingdon, and approved designs for the new elementary school at the Jefferson site, the middle school at the Stratford site and the school at the Wilson site.

The FAC hopes that, along with the new Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, there is robust discussion early in the year on the future of instruction, especially at the high school level. Strategic thinking and the development of a long-term vision will help in developing the supporting facility needs. It is unclear at this point whether the School Board, the Superintendent, or Instruction will direct that vision in combination with Facilities and Operations. We cannot simply keep saying that schools will be different in the future without any guidance as to what we believe that future will look like and how our efforts are building towards it.

The FAC continues to voice concerns about the overstretched capacity of some APS facilities. For example, minor renovations were recently completed at Washington-Lee High School that gained seats within the building. Such renovations are welcome and applauded but it is important to recognize that as the buildings become more and more efficient, critical common spaces may be tightened. As such, it is increasingly challenging to utilize relocatables for capacity relief because the common spaces are near to or at their maximum² capacity. **The FAC continues to request an analysis of each APS site that includes capacity with relocatables so that as the School Board makes critical decisions they understand each site's limitations.** Some elementary schools are situated on parcels of land of over 10 acres, while our smallest elementary school site is merely 2.2 acres. The smallest site, therefore, cannot hold many relocatables and therefore will likely reach its site capacity well before other schools. Aiming for a certain percentage across the board is not practical. We encourage the use of the Community Facility Study's processes going forward.

APS annually produces a spreadsheet titled *Current and Projected Enrollment for School Years XX-XX* that becomes a tool used by Staff, the School Board and the public to understand current and planned capacity by school. Unfortunately this spreadsheet does not give a complete picture and is often used out of context. A supplement to this document is needed to help guide critical decisions and understand challenges, both current and projected, of each site. The FAC would gladly assist in developing such a resource in the upcoming school year.

As APS looks for possible locations to address capacity challenges, the FAC supports using the recommendations of the County's Community Facilities Study Group. Collaboration with the County will be important in the upcoming year as the County determines how best to use properties that have recently become available, such as those currently owned by Buck Associates and the Virginia Hospital Center.

At our May meeting, the FAC decided to work on the Educational Specifications (Ed Specs) during the next year, to include drafting a forward/preface outlining underlying principles and values to be considered when implementing the Specifications.

Boundary changes are imminent due to three new schools coming on board in the fall of 2019. **The upcoming school year provides an opportunity to take a look at planning units, choice admission policies, and the boundary process, and make some much-needed changes.** The process used to develop boundary changes for the opening of Discovery Elementary surfaced many challenges and limitations with the current planning units. For example, there is a wide range in size and density of planning units, neighborhoods are

² Common spaces could be hallways, cafeterias, libraries, lockers, locker rooms, parking, auditoriums, offices or any combination thereof.

separated, and boundary lines are down the middle of neighborhood streets, to name a few. APS could benefit from hiring a consultant to recommend how best to proceed with planning units and boundaries. As APS gets ready for major boundary changes at all levels this could be a great investment next year.

As stated, the upcoming year will bring about a significant number of major and minor projects. **The Board needs to ensure they plan for the staff needed to deliver the projects on time and in budget.** APS Staff has taken on more projects and needs the resources to do this important work. This applies not only to Facilities and Operations but also to entities such as procurement and human resources. We are also concerned about the County's ability to keep pace with APS in terms of permits and inspections.

The FAC encourages the School Board to continue to listen to public concerns but also recognize that competing stakeholder desires cannot all be accommodated. There is a perception, not entirely unfounded, that decisions may get easily swayed by small but very vocal groups to the detriment of APS and the communities it serves. APS needs to better understand the true impact of decisions and how they impact Arlington as a whole. Ultimately, the School Board and APS should be prepared to make the difficult, sometime unpopular, decisions that are best for all, not a vocal few.

8. LIAISON ACTIVITIES

The FAC continues to expand its outreach and interaction with other APS and County advisory groups. This year we introduced a closer working relationship with the Special Education PTA (SEPTA), welcoming George Buzby as their liaison to the FAC. We also regularly welcomed representatives from the County Council of PTAs, the Arlington Education Association, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, and the Sustainability Advisory Committee. Liaison officers ensure we have robust two-way communications with Arlington community and professional groups on topics of common concern.

To improve communications with the Budget Advisory Council (BAC), the FAC members this year took turns attending their monthly meetings, and the BAC Chair attended several FAC meetings. For the Advisory Council on Instruction, the FAC appointed one of our members—Bill Schimmel—to attend their monthly meetings. Bill reported monthly to the FAC. The FAC Chair presented at an ACI monthly meeting this year; this was discussed under the CIP section of this report. We hope to further increase our interactions with the ACI during the coming year.



9. FAC MEETING VENUES

The FAC continued its practice of regularly meeting at APS locations throughout the county to acquaint its members with representative school facilities, particularly those at the focus of current discussions. Each school's principal typically welcomed us and provided a tour of the building prior to the FAC business meeting, affording the opportunity to informally discuss how the facility's design and maintenance impacts the program of instruction.

This year the FAC met at the following locations:

Syphax Center: The FAC is greatly interested in how the commercial office building was configured to serve as both an adult learning center and as office space for the Department of Instruction, fostering a continuing discussion about the feasibility of multi-use facilities.

Discovery Elementary School: The FAC toured this state-of-the-practice facility shortly after it opened for use. Our members were thoroughly impressed with the innovative layout, flexible and open spaces, furniture, and net-zero energy design. There is a hope that future schools stay within budget and duplicate the design of this facility.

Washington-Lee High School: The interior modifications to increase the number of seats were of particular interest to the FAC, particularly as APS plans similar reconfigurations at Yorktown and Wakefield High Schools. The FAC members also noted how many of the aspects that make Discovery a learning center could be retrofitted to older buildings, such as the use of flexible furniture and seating.

Drew Elementary School: The FAC was interested in how multiple programs, including a community recreation facility, are able to smoothly share the same building.

Patrick Henry Elementary School: This building, which may be tapped as a home for the Montessori program, continues to be of great interest to the FAC.

Carlin Springs Elementary School: As the second-newest elementary school in Arlington, the FAC members were interested in the building's architecture and design. The dedicated science labs were noted by the FAC. Enrollment projections for Carlin Springs are challenging as they experience heavy student turnover throughout the year. The FAC was also surprised by the amount of land at that site that might be utilized in creative ways.

Education Center: The Ed Center is the venue of choice for the initial organizational meeting of each school year, and for special work sessions that are held as needed. It is being considered as a site to be used by APS for seats in both the short term and long term.

Tuckahoe Elementary School: The FAC was interested to see how this school, one of the first to experience significant overcrowding, was continuing to cope with a rising number of students. The FAC noted that Tuckahoe currently has relocatables for FLES. APS has procedures and processes that they follow before adding relocatables, including moving things to carts, such as FLES.

McKinley Elementary School: The FAC continues to monitor the on-going construction and modifications to expand and enhance the school.

10. CLOSING

The FAC has evolved over the past five years to become a more cohesive, dedicated team of citizens willing to look beyond the needs of their children's individual schools to do what is best for all of Arlington's children. Members are carefully selected to ensure various perspectives are brought to discussions. Our members are proud to serve.

11. APPRECIATION

We again wish to express our appreciation to the members of the Arlington School Board, especially our liaison James Lander, and to the APS staff members, including Benjamin Burgin, John Chadwick, Michael Freda, Amy Jones, Zach Larnard, Jim Meikle, Meg Tuccillo, and Lionel White, who contributed their time, experience, and energy to make this a highly challenging and productive year. The FAC also wishes to thank the following citizen liaison officers who regularly attended FAC meetings, actively participated in our deliberations and discussions, and in all ways contributed to our work: George Buzby (Special Education PTA), Gerry Collins (Arlington Education Association), Greg Lloyd (Sustainability Advisory Committee), and Bill Schimmel (Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee).

Notes:

All photos are courtesy of APS

Except as noted, all information is based on material provided by APS.

Recommendations, observations, and opinions are those of the FAC.

The citizen members of the Arlington Public Schools
Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs
prepared this report for the Arlington School Board

Arlington, Virginia

June 2016

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Miles Mason, Vice Chair

Donald Weinstein, Recording Secretary

Laura Saul Edwards
Gregory Greeley
Eric Harold
Lois Koontz

Steven Maguire
Miles Mason
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John Peck
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STAFF RESPONSE

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SCHOOL FACILITIES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMS

APS Facilities and Operations staff has benefitted from collaboration with the Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC) during the 2015-16 school year and is appreciative of the commitment of Kelly King, Chair, Miles Mason, Vice-Chair and the members of the council in working to meet the facility needs of the school system. Their involvement as active council participants, liaisons to the community, members of appointed APS and County groups and advisors to the School Board makes a positive contribution to the work efforts within the community as our school system grows and expands. We would also like to recognize the contributions of Paul McAree, Jeff Turner and Kelly King who are standing down from FAC this year, and particularly Don Weinstein who has faithfully written meeting notes for many years. The report of the FAC provides a detailed summary of their year's work and includes a number of suggestions and recommendations for consideration. Facilities and Operations staff members have reviewed the report and are pleased to provide this staff response.

Capital Construction

Staff concurs that incorporating lessons learned from each of the capital projects is essential to support continuous improvement, and to ensure that our projects meet our Strategic Plan Goal Number Four to provide optimal learning environments. There are a number of successful and innovative design features at the Discovery Elementary School project that we are excited to replicate in future projects and wherever possible in existing schools. These features include:

- Multiple informal/adaptable spaces supporting a variety of teaching methods;
- Flexible furniture and furnishings reinforcing multiple learning styles;
- Effective use of color, signage, and graphics coordinated with the Standards of Learning by grade;
- Maximizing use of natural light;
- Enhanced universal design strategies including low noise mechanical systems to allow all students to absorb more, not just those with hearing impairments, and LED lighting that helps students with certain health and visual conditions;
- Practical sustainability strategies that also function as teaching tools;
- Very high performance building envelope and mechanical systems; and
- Enhanced air quality and monitoring.

Staff also recognizes the importance of effective planning and execution of complex renovation, addition, and new construction projects. We agree with the suggestion that we seek comment from community process groups such as Building Level Planning Committees (BLPC) as a method of evaluating the process and achieving improvements. Staff has recently begun more formalized communication plans, which include evaluation as an output.

Staff has also sought to improve the predictability of construction quality, schedule, and cost by revising our procurement method for large capital projects. We are currently utilizing the Construction Management-At-Risk method for three of our current projects to reduce our risk of delays, cost overruns and to improve quality control. We expect that the value of early contractor involvement in the design phase will have an overall positive effect on project completion.

Priorities for Next Year

Staff agrees that there will be a significant amount of planning, construction and design approval during the coming school year. Collaboration between Facilities and Instruction has increased over recent years and we look forward to continued growth in that working relationship under the new Assistant Superintendent for Instruction as we look to the future of APS. This coming year we expect to introduce a targeted high school boundary refinement process that will advance collaboration with the Departments of Instruction, Admin-

istrative Services, Student Services and Special Education as we look at limited boundary adjustments and possible implications for related admissions policies. In addition, as part of the high school boundary refinement process and other upcoming boundary processes, there will be a review of current planning units.

As part of the commitment to provide the best possible learning environments for our current and future students, APS planning staff is receptive to the suggestion of creating a supplemental section to accompany the document *Current and Projected Enrollment for School Years XX-XX*, to assist in guiding critical decisions for each school site. Staff also agrees with FAC concerning the need to use recommendations from the County's Community Facilities Study Group to collaborate on best uses for newly acquired properties in the County. We are hopeful that these efforts will lead to additional dialogue with the County regarding long-term collaboration between the County and APS CIPs.

APS staff is in the process of compiling information on site size and other constraints that limit the number of relocatable classrooms at each site; this will serve as an update of the 2011 study which analyzed the maximum number of relocatable classrooms at each site. Staff is also developing a tool to assist in forming annual student accommodation plans for each school. The tool will be based on annual fall enrollment projections and room use surveys to ensure that existing space is used as efficiently as possible and that the minimum number of relocatable classrooms is added.

Conclusion

Overall, APS staff has benefitted from the input of this year's FAC, decisions have been informed by dialogue at meetings and suggestions of members have been helpful in working on various issues throughout the year. Next year promises to be a very busy one for Facilities and Operations and we look forward to the continued collaboration with the FAC.



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