

# Penrose Neighborhood Association



Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

April 26, 2018

Arlington School Board  
1426 N. Quincy Street  
Arlington, VA 22207

Dear Members of the County and School Boards:

I am writing to you as President of the Penrose Neighborhood Association and Penrose representative to the Career Center Working Group. Substantial outreach was made to our neighbors in Penrose during March and April 2018 using a survey. The survey results were reviewed at our April 24, 2018 meeting, and sending this information to you was unanimously approved at that meeting.

Based on our neighborhood survey, our top priorities are:

1. By a 2:1 ratio Penrose residents support building a comprehensive neighborhood high school on the Career Center site vs a choice or other focused high school.
2. Nearly all respondents (82%) would like to see transportation studies for the site.
3. Almost all (96%) want the Columbia Pike Library to stay within the neighborhood, with residents open to moving it to Highland Street and Columbia Pike.
4. Three-quarters would like Arlington County and APS to investigate options to purchase land to expand the site to Columbia Pike.
5. Most (59%) would like to see the entire site used for a high school.

A summary of all results from the survey are below.

- By a 2:1 ratio, Penrose residents support building a comprehensive neighborhood high school on the Career Center site vs. a choice or other focused high school (59% vs. 29%, with 11% undecided).
- Most (59%) respondents would like to see the entire site used for a high school. Likewise, over three-quarters would like Arlington County and APS to investigate options to purchase land to expand the site.
- Almost all respondents (82%) would like to see transportation studies for the site.
- Residents were strongly in favor (76%) of creating underground parking on the site to reduce the overflow parking burden on the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Residents indicated their support for various amenities on the site including a school library, auditorium, full size gymnasium, outdoor track, indoor swimming pool, and theater.
- Most (55%) would like to see dark sky lighting used to reduce light pollution, and there was also strong support (75%) for special landscaping to reduce noise.
- Almost all (96%) want the Columbia Pike Library to stay within the neighborhood, though residents are open to the library moving to Columbia Pike.
- Finally, on a related matter, almost all respondents (80%) were in favor of keeping all current planning units for Patrick Henry reassigned to the Fleet Elementary School, which will open in September 2019.

I strongly urge the county to consider the preferences of the Penrose neighborhood as the county determines what to do with the site. Our neighborhood will continue to offer input as the process progresses.

If you are interested in discussing this with us directly, we would be pleased to invite you to attend an upcoming Penrose Neighborhood Association meeting. Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Durgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maria "Pete" Durgan  
Co-President  
Penrose Neighborhood Association  
[penrosepres@yahoo.com](mailto:penrosepres@yahoo.com)

**Columbia Heights Civic Association**  
**P.O. Box 41501**  
**Arlington, Virginia 22204**



April 26, 2018

To: Arlington County Board  
Arlington Public School Board  
Career Center Working Group

Re: Recommendations for the Career Center

Columbia Heights Civic Association files these comments in support of the planning of the Career Center Working Group, in which we are participating. We appreciate the strong support by both the County Board and the APS Board for a bold vision for this site that could incorporate commercial properties south of the existing Career Center campus, with the potential of linking it to Columbia Pike.

The general discussions in the CCWG have been far-ranging, and have included the possibility of a fourth comprehensive high school. However, if the County moves forward to create a new high school at this location we hope that this new school will take advantage of the greatest educational asset at that site, which is the technical instructional opportunities and programs that already exist. Opting for this school would allow students in a high school setting to have easy access to a multitude of programs and career opportunities, both at the Career Center and the Arlington Tech program. In fact, Arlington Tech may grow beyond the 800 seats now anticipated and become the dominant program. As Senator Tim Kaine said recently, this program, which he supported as Governor, represents the educational future for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

We believe that the multitude of programs anticipated on this campus—the Career Center, Arlington Community High School, Arlington Tech as well as the public library—requires us to think about this site as an urban facility with the look and feel of a college campus. There will be a multitude of students and adults using these facilities. To encourage the most creative solutions we urge the County to conduct a juried architectural contest for the site, which will attract the talents of the best architectural firms in the nation. The contestants should be given a description of the programs (and possible growth scenarios), a rough budget, and a timeline for phasing in components. Let's see what the best and brightest of our nation can envision for such a project.

We would also encourage a more reasonable approach to open space at this facility, preferring landscaping that complements the neighborhood and entices students to go outdoors, rather than focusing solely on creating the greatest space for sports fields. A high school at this site should instead focus on the unique characteristics and amenities that could be developed here. That could include indoor sports facilities, or facilities that could be accommodated on the roof of buildings—like a swimming pool, tennis courts, classrooms on urban farming, or terraced green space.

Space fronting Columbia Pike potentially would be ideal for the public library, providing an anchor for the entire community. Retail space could provide an outlet for the students who are perfecting their skills in Career Center programs like food service, car repair and hair care. The Columbia Pike frontage, with density up to six stories, could also support facilities for the performing arts.

And importantly, we encourage Arlington Public Schools to provide leadership in advertising Arlington Tech as the important program that it is, both on its web site, in educational brochures, in outreach to parents and students across the County, on proper signage outside the facility, and to the public. Currently this program is not advertised properly and few in Arlington even know of its existence. That needs to change.

As we plan for the next 50 years, let's make sure that we make this facility a jewel that all of Arlington can be proud of, for generations to come.

Sincerely,

*Sarah McKinley*

Sarah McKinley  
President

**ARLINGTON HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
RESOLUTION  
Passed April 10, 2018**

WHEREAS, Arlington Public Schools (APS) is planning for the expected growth in high school enrollment and approved the planning for 700-800+ additional high school seats to be added at the Career Center, and the Arlington Tech program is expected to grow to 800 students by 2022;

WHEREAS, the Career Center Working Group (CCWG) is charged with developing a plan that defines how APS can open 700-800+ additional seats to the Career Center site by 2022, within funding already approved by the School Board, and the CCWG will provide options for optimizing future development of public facilities within the study area through a phased development plan;

WHEREAS, Arlington's three existing comprehensive high schools have already been internally maximized, and their academic and extracurricular programs cannot support significant additional growth;

WHEREAS, schools are public facilities, jointly funded by all taxpayers, and therefore all of Arlington's comprehensive high schools should offer equitable academic and extracurricular opportunities;

WHEREAS, the 22204 ZIP code (in which the Career Center is located) has a higher concentration of low-income residents and families than many other areas of Arlington, and these families already face many resource challenges, such as: (a) childcare affordability, (b) affordable enrichment/tutoring opportunities, (b) scheduling conflicts due to working multiple jobs, (c) dependence on public transportation, and reliance on public facilities, like libraries and community centers;

WHEREAS, studies have shown that low-income and/or minority children have higher instances of drowning, but busing to offsite pools would cut into required academic instructional time;

WHEREAS, the Career Center/Patrick Henry site offers the rare combination of: (a) a physically large parcel of land, (b) a central-Arlington location, and (c) high-accessibility to public transportation; joint-use amenities would provide much-needed recreation, meeting, and

performance spaces for ALL of Arlington; and an improved connection to Columbia Pike would draw new and strengthen existing local businesses;

WHEREAS, inequality of funding and/or facilities by 2022 could ultimately result in substandard educational opportunities for 22204 students, which could, in turn, lead to a decline in business, community, and residential support for both this school and the 22204 ZIP code.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that:

- Arlington Heights Civic Association (AHCA) favors and supports a comprehensive neighborhood high school at the Career Center;
- AHCA opposes adding comprehensive high school seats to the Career Center without facilities equivalent to or exceeding those of the three existing comprehensive high schools, including but not limited to: an aquatics facility, art/music/performing arts/auditorium, library/media center, full-size gymnasium and auxiliary gymnasium, outdoor field space and commons, and structured (underground) parking;
- AHCA favors and supports the acquisition of properties south of the Career Center along Columbia Pike, that would (a) provide a needed connection between the Career Center and Columbia Pike, (b) provide additional space that could be used to house programs now located at the Career Center, and (c) free up space on the Career Center site for other uses;
- AHCA favors and supports the relocation of the Columbia Pike library to a new building to be built at or about Columbia Pike and South Highland Street;
- AHCA favors and supports postponing the addition of additional high school seats to the Career Center by two (2) years to 2024 in order to obtain additional funding during the CIP; and
- AHCA requests that any proposal to add high school seats at the Career Center should include a detailed plan, both physical and

financial, for construction and for the educational and extracurricular opportunities that will be offered to students attending school there.