

Work Session on the FY 2017-2026 Capital Improvement Plan and Framework
January 5, 2016

The Arlington School Board convened on Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at 6:03 PM at 1426 N. Quincy Street, Arlington, Virginia.

Present were:

Emma Violand-Sánchez, Chair
Nancy Van Doren, Vice Chair
Reid Goldstein, Member
Barbara Kanninen, Member
James Lander, Member
Melanie Elliott, Clerk

Also present were:

Dr. Patrick K. Murphy, Superintendent
John Chadwick, Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operations
Connie Skelton, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Deirdra McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Management
Leslie Peterson, Director, Budget
Lionel White, Director, Facilities Planning
Zachary Larnard, Planner
Ben Burgin, Assistant Director, Design and Construction
Meg Tucillo, Planning

- Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Violand-Sánchez called the meeting to order, welcoming attendees. Dr. Murphy gave an overview of the work session goals.

1. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Process and Draft Schedule

Mr. Chadwick outlined the agenda and the CIP process, and Mr. White reviewed the draft schedule, highlighting community engagement opportunities and CIP development.

2. Enrollment Highlights / Current and Projected Seat Needs

Mr. White then shared enrollment highlights, noting that although the growth rate has slowed in the last year, the rate of enrollment growth is still considered high. Projected seat needs at the three levels, high school, middle school, and elementary school, were then reviewed in terms of permanent seat deficits and percentage utilized. Specific capacity data at each level was also explained in some detail. He confirmed the greatest projected needs through the 2025-26 school year will be seen at the high school level.

Discussion/questions

Responding to the Board, Mr. White confirmed that growth rates are based on rolling 3-year projections, and the group recognized that the students who will be in high school in 2026 are already APS students. Mr. White also provided a detailed explanation of how students who attend programs outside of their neighborhood schools are counted in the projections to ensure that students are not counted twice. Board members recognized the complexity of the projections and appreciated the efforts of the Advisory Council on School Facilities and Capital Programs (FAC) in helping identify information that would be useful to this process. Board members encouraged involving the FAC as much as possible in the CIP process. Recognizing that boundary processes will be initiated in the near future, Dr. Kanninen was interested in receiving as much detailed information as possible, and Mr. White confirmed that the current projections model is very detailed and looks at housing by neighborhood. He also confirmed that the staff is working with the FAC to consider various factors such as planning unit sizes in an effort to improve projections. Mr. Chadwick also confirmed that staff is collaborating with the County to ensure that all available information is being considered in this process.

The group also discussed how planned capacity is incorporated into the projections, and how this information relates to the current CIP. Mr. Chadwick acknowledged that projects included in the 2015-2024 CIP that have not yet begun will be re-evaluated as part of the upcoming CIP process. Noting that the projections information shared did not include planned seats consistently across the three levels, Board members requested that future projections information be standardized, and staff agreed to this approach.

4. Draft CIP Framework

Acknowledging that instruction should drive decisions, Mr. Chadwick presented the draft CIP framework, first outlining proposed capital projects to address high school capacity needs. This included developing capacity-generating renovation projects at Yorktown and Wakefield, and considering a number of options for the Career Center/Fenwick site. Options for capital projects at the elementary and middle school level were also incorporated into the draft framework. Mr. Chadwick then provided an overview of additional strategies to balance enrollment throughout the division to better accommodate growth at each level, including such strategies as boundary adjustments and expanding choice options, as well as implementing interim solutions as new capacity is being brought on board. Minor Construction/Major Maintenance (MC/MM) is also included in the CIP and Mr. Chadwick briefly reviewed steps included in the framework to address those needs. Finally, Mr. Chadwick described an alternative rolling option for moving students into the new middle school at the Stratford site.

Discussion

Responding to the Board, Mr. Chadwick clarified that the Framework will provide staff with direction on how to move forward in planning what to include in the upcoming CIP; he confirmed that as the CIP is developed it will take into account community feedback and options will be refined based on this feedback and on Board consideration of the options. Board members commented that the draft framework is more detailed than in the past, and suggested taking a broader approach that is open to consider additional options and ideas. The group also

discussed initiating a visioning process to consider all of the aspects related to planning for future growth, as this could include such a wide array of processes, such as boundaries, choice programs, and admissions policies in addition to capacity projects. Mr. Lander recognized the complexity of the decisions related to the CIP as well as the process which includes reviewing and reassessing plans every two years. He recognized that the Board must consider capacity, instruction, growing enrollment and debt as part of this process.

Ms. McLaughlin provided perspective on past CIPs and how projects are re-evaluated in subsequent processes. She also reviewed the use of funds that are specifically laid out in bond referenda, and how funds are later identified for projects not included in the referenda. Ms. Skelton provided additional information about some of the options suggested at the Career Center/Fenwick site, noting the interest in supporting dual enrollment options for students at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). Mr. Chadwick explained the alternative option mentioned for Stratford, confirming that this plan would allow the Stratford program students to be moved out of the facility before the building is renovated. Board members appreciated the reasons this option is being proposed, but stressed that the community needs to have an opportunity to consider it before implementation. Mr. Chadwick also noted that, based on the projections for high school capacity, the Board may want to reconsider the previous decision not to look at an additional comprehensive high school. The group also briefly discussed if additional alternatives, such as moving the programs currently housed there and repurposing the facility, should be considered for the Career Center/Fenwick site.

Summarizing the conversation, Board members suggested that the framework should consider instruction, capacity and budget but should provide guidelines of options to consider, rather than specific actions, and should be concise and structured, focusing on needs. Staff agreed to revise the framework to reflect this input from the Board.

5. Possible Capacity Solutions

Mr. Larnard then shared possible solutions to address capacity that came out of the Master Planning committee report. These included looking at school day, school year and virtual learning options; review of programs, choices and admissions policies; and exploring partnerships and other collaboration. He also shared several possible solutions suggested by Facilities and Operations staff.

Discussion

The group briefly discussed these suggestions, recognizing that program changes can be difficult to implement. It was felt that, while many of these options are good ideas, none appear to provide much additional capacity. Board members agreed that these may tie in to some type of futures process in the coming year outside of the CIP, or could be added to the framework as alternatives to explore.

6. Finance

Ms. Peterson then presented the financial outlook for FY 2015-2024 CIP, noting that this is a snapshot in time. She reviewed the project costs by year and the bonding capacity, and included

an explanation of the deficit and how APS will borrow debt capacity from County. She then shared updated assumptions for projects that were not identified at the time the CIP was adopted, including the plans for Stratford and Wilson, repurposing space at crowded schools, and plans for the Fenwick site. The financial update was updated with this additional information, and Ms. Peterson reviewed the update, noting that the timing of projects as well as other factors have changed and have resulted in a lower debt service that previously expected. She noted that these figures are continually updated, but noted that overall there seems to be a better outlook for the upcoming CIP than previously anticipated. In closing the presentation, Ms. Peterson reviewed the status of the APS reserves and the joint fund.

Discussion

Ms. Peterson responded to questions, confirming that approximately \$13.8 million is from reserves, and that other funding sources are being used for these projects as well. She confirmed that more detailed information will be provided to the Board as the new CIP is being developed. The group acknowledged that it is important to explain to the public what reserves APS has on hand, and how the Board intends to use those reserves. The group also discussed how the current construction market has changed, with projects coming in at a higher cost than anticipated, and how APS will take this factor into consideration as the planned construction moves forward. Mr. Chadwick noted in particular the increase in the cost for the Career Center, and confirmed APS will need to look at this carefully. Board members also spoke to additional costs that APS may need to include in the upcoming CIP, such as funding for renovation of the Reed site and Lubber Run, as well as the cost for parking at Wilson. Finally, the group recognized that there are other current facilities that need to be renovated and updated, and while adding capacity is the top priority, the Board will need to consider how to address those needs as well.

7. Next Steps

In closing, Mr. Chadwick confirmed that staff will take the feedback from the Board and develop a draft CIP framework to be presented at the January 7, 2016 School Board meeting.

The meeting adjourned 8:22 PM.

ATTEST:

Melanie Elliott, Clerk
Arlington School Board

Emma Violand-Sánchez, Chair
Arlington School Board