

New Elementary School #1
January 9, 2013 Open Building Level Planning Committee Meeting
APS Response to Questions/Comments
January 22, 2013

Williamsburg MS parent: Has the new school plan been run by principals of existing elementary schools and the Williamsburg MS principal to ask if the plans seem to work for daily flow of students, particularly at lunch and recess, school wide elementary assemblies for new school?

APS response: Site specific educational specifications for the school were developed from the educational specifications approved by the School Board with APS Department of Instruction leadership. Several visioning workshops were held with elementary school principals. The Williamsburg MS principal has been involved from the outset and there will be frequent input from elementary and middle school educators as the design develops.

Immediate neighbor: I have two comments. First, the chairman of PFRC on Wednesday, December 19th polled the members, who represent all relevant County Departments, Commissions and Civic Associations, regarding their preferences between the Northwest site and the two Southeast sites. There was a near unanimous consensus to reject the Northwest site and to select the Southeast site. APS and, VDMO briefed the School Board on December 20 about your 6-2 vote on December 5 and the consensus preferences of the PFRC to reject the NW site. None of the School Board members objected to rejection of the NW site, and APS/VDMO concluded that the NW site was off the table again. We hope that the NW site stays off the table. The second comment is about the Toole Traffic Study. I commend to you an analysis by Steve Jensen of the Toole study dated December 13, 2012. The PFRC on December 19 expressed a number of concerns about the Toole Study in a letter to Mr. Chadwick. There were a total of 83 written comments about the Toole Study, almost all of which were critical about the data collections, methodology, analysis, results, conclusions and recommendations. We would urge APS to correct the errors in the analysis and provide a revised report for consideration by the BLPC and the PFRC.

APS response: The NW quadrant site is no longer under consideration. Toole Design's responses to comments from members of the PFRC and a number of citizens, including Mr. Jensen, are posted on the project webpage.

Comment: Where will 41 cars park on the street when leaves and snow occupy both sides of streets?

APS response: APS is exploring revisions to leaf and snow removal procedures with Arlington County to ensure that on-street parking is disrupted for as short a time as possible.

Parent: Will the school be a ref-zero-energy school? Not just electricity but total energy.

APS response: The APS goal is to construct a highly energy efficient, net-zero energy ready, school in which energy consumption has been reduced as much as possible to make provision of the remainder of the energy on a net annual basis by photo-voltaics feasible. The photo-voltaics are not currently included in the project budget.

Comment: Will the current flowering trees on 36th Street be retained? If possible, I would request that at least some be retained.

APS response: Despite APS's earlier goal of retaining the flowering cherry trees, it is now unfortunately clear that some, if not all, of them will have to be removed to make way for construction. The BLPC will be involved in the specification and location of new trees to replace them.

Comment: Will there be a space in the new school where the entire school can gather? Will this space include a stage? I would advocate that the new school include these features.

APS comment: There will be a space for all school events in the new school. It will have some form of modular stage that can be rearranged to accommodate a variety of different events.

Parent comment: I wanted to thank the members of the BLPC for all their hard work on ES1. I work in the Projection and Capacity Subcommittee of the Facilities Advisory Committee and I can tell you we will need this school; and another elementary school a middle school and another elementary school after that. We need these schools to house all the kids who are in trailers now and who will be in trailers in the future. So again, thank you BLPC for your work.

APS comment: Thank you

Past president of RSCA comment: Basic concerns: Whether the New Elementary School is to be located on the Williamsburg School grounds or on a different site (e.g., the Madison School grounds).

APS response: A new elementary school on this site is included in the APS 2012 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which was approved by the School Board and a majority of Arlington County voters. The School Board is expected to take action on the final concept design on February 7, 2013. The school will be submitted to the County Board for a Use Permit later in 2013. While, unlike the Williamsburg site, the Madison School is not located close to the elementary schools with the greatest current capacity needs, Tuckahoe, Jamestown and Nottingham, it will be reconsidered as an option in the 2014 and future CIPs.

Neighbor comment: About a week ago I received a note from Walter Tejada, which included a copy of a Joint School and County Board agreement dated December 1, 2011, regarding use of Arlington County Facilities in addressing capacity issues in our public Schools. This document advocates use of space in existing county facilities, including shared use of facilities where feasible. The criteria for consideration of joint use of facilities emphasize preservation of open/green space and minimizing traffic and other adverse neighborhood impacts among other factors. In tone and content it is the opposite of what we were told about the obstacles to reclaiming previously repurposed schools. Based on this agreement, the meeting we are having here at Williamsburg should be occurring at the Reed/Westover Building. I do believe this group is trying to make the best of a bad situation and I commend your decision to reject the NW quadrant as a location for the new school. As you move ahead, I believe student safety should be your number one concern. Toward this end, I urge you to attach safety and traffic related conditions to any decision to site a school on the WMS property, I urge you to make your approval of a site contingent on the following:

- *Recognition that flashing yellow signals often fail to stop traffic.*
- *Installation of a traffic light at the corner of Williamsburg Blvd. and Kensington Street. This corner is a blind intersection. You can't see oncoming Williamsburg Blvd. traffic from Kensington Street. Without such a light, accidents will happen and children will be hurt.*
- *Placement of the affected sections of Harrison, Kensington and 36th at the top of the list for leaf and snow removal. Many of you drove to Williamsburg during the fall when leaves piled on both sides of Harrison forced cars to navigate a single lane. Imagine what this will be like when the neighborhood attempts to accommodate a school population double what it is today. Every parent, every student and every neighbor deserves your support on these issues.*

APS comment: Like the Madison School, although the Reed/Westover building is not as close to the schools with the greatest current capacity needs and was not included in the 2012 CIP, it will be

reconsidered during the 2014 and future CIPs. The Kensington/Williamsburg intersection does not meet Arlington County's standards for installation of a traffic light, however we anticipate that discussions regarding safety at this intersection will continue. Please refer to APS comments regarding leaf removal above.