

FINAL

**County Board motion in response to
School Board request to allow construction of a new elementary school building at the
Thomas Jefferson site**

January 27, 2015

Informed by the findings and conclusions of the Thomas Jefferson Working Group (TJWG), understanding the important role of schools and parks in achieving a high quality of life for our full community, appreciating the pressures to meet growing school enrollment and respecting the long-term impacts of the placement of new school facilities in our land-constrained community, I move that the County Board

1. Affirm that the area generally east and north of the APS/County property line at the Jefferson site known as TJ Park shall remain essentially “as is” – dedicated to open space and recreational uses. The County Board may approve:
 - a. use of some portion of this area for necessary staging of any construction project at the site under appropriate conditions or
 - b. any park or recreational adjustments that may evolve through a collaborative County DPR and community planning process.Should structured parking become a component of a DPR/community plan, the parking should be designed in such a way that views and access into the park are maintained.
2. Not grant approval, at this time, for use of the Jefferson site for a new school. The County Board would be willing to reconsider the School Board’s request at any time if the following key information, essential to the County Board in exercising its land-stewardship and fiduciary responsibilities, has been provided to the Board for discussion with the community:
 - a. An analysis of county sites and/or school additions that will be needed to serve south Arlington’s projected students (using current long-range projections). Any feasible non-construction strategies that could reduce the need for construction should also be examined. While all public infrastructure investment is constrained by our adopted debt policies, from the land-stewardship perspective it is critical to conduct alternative analyses that allow accurate comparisons of varied impacts, such as traffic or green space.
 - b. An “as close to final” estimate of requested County funding, if any, to support a Jefferson elementary school project (as described in 3 below).
3. Find that, based on the conclusions of the TJWG, a new school building would be acceptable only on the northwest corner of the Thomas Jefferson site and only if structured parking, dedicated play areas, a multi-storied compact building footprint and adequate multi-modal traffic improvements are achieved by the design. In addition, the

County Board is very interested, should the School Board request reconsideration, in being fully briefed on any park impacts of proposed stormwater, environmental and energy features, ensuring that opportunities for future upgrades/expansions to the existing building are not limited, and providing clear information to users of the site about plans for continuity of their programs during construction.

4. Commit to partnering with the School Board to provide a minimum of 725 new elementary schools seats in south Arlington no later than September 2018, using a combination of interim and permanent facilities. The County shall provide technical support, should the School Board request it, to identify and evaluate County buildings in south Arlington with gym/cafeteria-like spaces that could, perhaps with the addition of appropriately sited trailer complexes, provide interim spaces for education for approximately 5 years. Private commercial space that could be retrofitted to meet school needs should also be part of this evaluation.