

**New Elementary School at TJ Community Comments**  
**As of July 26, 2016**

Name (First)	Name (Last)	Share your comments with the staff team and committees:	Entry Date
Lisa	Turcios	<p>Although with seconding Sarah McKinley's July 1st request for clarification on the funding available for the parking structure (i.e. \$12 M line item in 2016 County CIP), I have another funding question.  The 2014 Bond included \$50.25 M for the New Elementary School.  <a href="https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2014/09/9.-APS.pdf">https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2014/09/9.-APS.pdf</a></p> <p>Why do the July 1 and July 20 School Board presentation materials state that \$40.30 M is available from major construction bonds?  Slide 38  <a href="http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/arlington/Board.nsf/files/ABEQGB6867EC/\$file/H-1%20NES%20at%20Jefferson.pdf">http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/arlington/Board.nsf/files/ABEQGB6867EC/\$file/H-1%20NES%20at%20Jefferson.pdf</a></p> <p>Slide 13 (Exhibit K)  <a href="http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/arlington/Board.nsf/files/ABVPED643C1F/\$file/E-1%20Action%20-%20NES%20at%20TJ%20Concept%20Design%20Presentation%20v3.pdf">http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/arlington/Board.nsf/files/ABVPED643C1F/\$file/E-1%20Action%20-%20NES%20at%20TJ%20Concept%20Design%20Presentation%20v3.pdf</a>  Has the money been reallocated to other projects?</p>	07/26/16
Lisa	Turcios	<p>Reading through the July 27 Staff Report, I really feel like the County Staff is listening very closely to the committee member and public comments that have been submitted to date and have included many points that we have raised in the Staff Report.</p> <p>As an example on Zoning Implications:</p> <p>1. Height requirements  Current design is for three and four stories, heights from 45 to 65 feet.  Staff says, "The current zoning requirements would not support a school project at this height, on this site."</p> <p>2. Setback requirements  Staff says, " The conceptual site plan shown for NES at TJ appears to be inconsistent with the provisions specified in ACZO 3.2.6.A.1.(d.) and 3.2.6.A.2.(e)... APS and their design team still need to confirm the distance from the centerline of the street right-of-way and the setback distances from various points at the site. The current zoning requirements would not support a school project at these setbacks, on this site."  But I am very concerned that the Staff Report looks to be willing to change zoning requirements to meet the design (rather than change the school design to meet current zoning).  "In order to address the ACZO inconsistencies found within this and other similar school projects, the County is exploring potential zoning ordinance amendments to height, setback and parking requirements. Staff will conduct a public process to develop amendments to the ACZO to strategically allow the County Board authority to modify specific regulations for schools, subject to use permit approval, in a manner sensitive to existing and planned adjacent development. This process is in its initial stages and public review will begin in the fall of 2016."</p> <p>Page 8 covers topics that are near and dear to me and I am pleased to see them specifically called out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* exploring completely underground parking</li> <li>* pedestrian crossings</li> <li>* tree replacement</li> <li>* stormwater management</li> <li>* dense shade on playground</li> <li>* transportation improvements</li> </ul>	07/26/16

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Lisa	Turcios	<p>Below is transcript of my personal statement that I made to the School Board at their July 20, 2016, meeting (when they voted on the Concept Design as an Action Item).</p> <p>Good evening, School Board Members. I come before you to follow-up on some unsettling statements that I heard during the July 1st Presentation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In his introduction, Assistant Superintendent John Chadwick stated that “the whole Henry community is looking forward to moving.” (1:40) As Ms. Molly Calkins will explain there are many who strongly oppose the move and have signed a petition against the concept.</li> <li>2. During the design presentation, APS Consultant Mr. Wyck Knox said that “a four story elementary school is a new thing for all of us. It is something that is rare in the country in general.” (6:30) Land in Arlington may be at a premium but we are not Manhattan. Arlington Heights is not Rosslyn or Crystal City. I do not want my neighborhood’s elementary school to be the experiment and our children to be the guinea pigs. The recently completed Discovery Elementary is only 2 stories. I believe the additions at McKinley and Ashlawn are 3 stories with 2 of those having at grade access. Why should the young children in my neighborhood attend a 4 story school when no other elementary school in Arlington is so tall? Why should our elementary play ground be on top of a concrete parking structure when all others are at-grade?</li> <li>3. Mr. Knox explained that one of the significant changes from the TJ Working Group test fit to the current concept design, is that the bus loop has been moved to the north side. He stated, “I think that we have had a lot of good consensus on that. Haven’t had a lot of pushback on that idea.” (11:30) Are the neighbors who live on Arlington Boulevard being given a choice between either having a 4 story building towering over their homes or having idling school busses in their back yards? Neither option is acceptable.</li> <li>4. Mr. Chadwick said, “We are proposing a little extra height in the parking garage so that it can be used for an events space for community facilities when it is not being used by the school.” He said, “I think we are all kind of interested in ... How can we make the parking garage be more than a parking garage? How can we make it an asset to the community at other times?”</li> </ol>	07/25/16
Maria	Durgan	<p>I really think that the parking lot should be underground. It will be more expensive, but better in the long term. I really dislike the thought of having the playground on top of a parking garage. It feels like you're trying to cram too much into the space. The parking garage being above ground does not enhance the site at all, and it appears to take the site over.</p>	07/20/16

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Bruce	Boyd	<p>I am out of town for an extended period of time, and so will be unable to attend this evening's meeting I had intended to write a letter to the School Board. Perhaps you can use the comments that follow.</p> <p>First, the proposed location for the new elementary school is in the most remote location in Arlington Heights. Unlike the current location of Patrick Henry, which is accessible by several streets, the proposed location is accessible by only one street - South Old Glebe Road.</p> <p>Furthermore, because of its location, the proposed new school practically guarantees that there will be very few elementary school students who walk to school. Again, contrast this situation with the current location of Patrick Henry - a centrally located school, close to the homes of many of its students, and easily accessible by a number of sidewalks. The proposed new school is far from where most of its students live and is not easily accessible.</p> <p>This means that the new school will increase auto and bus traffic around the TJ property - and especially along South Old Glebe Road, 2nd Street South, and the 3600 block of 1st Road South. The bottlenecks - four times each school day - will be awful.</p> <p>If I understand the process so far, the two committees looking at relocating the elementary school have spent very little time looking at traffic, opting instead to look at location and design of the proposed new building and deferring serious consideration of traffic until after the location and design of a new building have (in concept) been approved. Indeed, recent agendas of the committees have included items about renaming the school (placed on the agenda, as I understand it, to remind committee members that the option of renaming the school remains "on the table"), but have completely omitted any agenda items concerning traffic.</p> <p>It seems to me that by locating the school and deferring serious discussion of traffic, the committees have done the residents of Arlington Heights - and especially those of us who live in the northwest section of Arlington Heights- a disservice. Additionally, anyone else who currently drives through the intersections of 2nd Street South and South Old Glebe Road, 2nd Street South and South Glebe Road, and the 3600 block of 1st Road South can expect to experience more congestion and disruption</p> <p>In sum, I am of the view that the relocation of the elementary school from its present location in the center of the Arlington Heights neighborhood to the proposed location in the far northwest corner of Arlington Heights is not well-conceived and will cause a degradation in the quality of life for a significant portion of our neighborhood</p>	07/20/16
Kelly	Maguire	<p>I support the concept design in the July 1 presentation to the school board. It shows improvements to the middle school space, uses creative ways to provide parking, and respects the neighborhood's preferences to avoid using the parkland space. I hope the School Board and County Board quickly approve the concept so that we can move one step closer to providing much needed capacity relief at the elementary school level. Thank you.</p>	07/13/16

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Lisa	Turcios	<p>Text of my July 1, 2016, public comment given at the School Board Meeting.</p> <p>Good morning, School Board Members. My name is Lisa Turcios. I live at the Dominion Arms Apartments at the intersection of 2nd Street South and South Old Glebe Road across from the proposed site. I participated in the South Arlington Working Group as an alternate delegate and I currently serve on both the PFRC and BLPC for the new elementary school.</p> <p>I address you today to ensure that my personal views on the current concept design are known. I received copies of the separate letters from the PFRC and BLPC Chairs last night a few minutes before 11 pm. I am pleased that all of the major concerns with the inadequacy of the small site to accomplish the necessary multi-use objectives have been reported by either one Chair or the other, and sometimes both in their letters. It is my hope that after you have time to deliberate over the concept drawings, prepared materials, meeting minutes, and public comments that you will come to the same conclusion that I have - that you will declare the concept design deficient and deem the site incapable of serving a 725 seat elementary school.</p> <p>Contrary to Arlington's Principles of Civic Design, the concept does not minimize the building footprint and areas used for parking. It does not optimize open space for recreation.</p> <p>The outdoor play space shown in the concept is insufficient in size and quality for the two schools.</p> <p>Although the elementary school population will be greatly increased compared to current enrollment, the outdoor open space is halved compared to current conditions at the existing Patrick Henry site.</p> <p>Similarly, although the middle school population is projected to increase significantly, the spaces allotted for middle school recess are decreased from the current conditions.</p> <p>The pervasive use of concrete and pavement in the concept design is going to limit the amount of natural grass and large shade trees that will be capable of sustained growth. Synthetic materials will be unavoidable. The inescapable heat island will be unpleasant. Having elementary school children play on the roof caged in by fences or walls is unsuitable. Middle schoolers will exit their building and be met by the walls of the parking garage and a sea of parked cars, confined to a pedestrian plaza 50 feet wide with no space to run around or play a game of touch football, soccer, or throw a frisbee.</p> <p>Contrary to Principles of Civic Design, the concept does not emphasize pedestrians, bicycles, and mass transit. Instead the concept centers on the parking garage and makes travel by personal vehicle the optimal way to access the site and the schools.</p> <p>Contrary to the Principles of Civic Design, the concept does not respect the neighborhood. From street and sidewalk level of my apartment building we will lose view of the existing small hill of green with one significant large tree and a dozen other beautiful but more modest trees.</p> <p>From the sidewalk at South Old Glebe we will not be able to see the middle school or theatre which will be hidden behind the parking structure.</p> <p>From the ground level we will not be able to see the elementary school children playing on top of the garage structure 11 feet up in the air.</p> <p>3-minute timer went off [However, the Concept Design does provide an unobstructed view of the parking structure and parked cars.] Thank you.</p>	07/12/16
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Lisa	Turcios	<p>Neighborhood School Designation</p> <p>Some in the neighborhood have stated that they support the School Board decision to designate the new school at TJ a neighborhood school.</p> <p>I'd like to say for myself that designation as the "neighborhood school" is yet another reason why I dislike the TJ site concept.</p> <p>The current Henry location is central to the walk zone and allows many Arlington Heights and Penrose neighbors to walk. I believe that there are only 3 buses currently used for children with disabilities and 3 buses for children who are outside of the walk zone.  <a href="http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/161/ES2015_Henry%20Multimodal%20Map.pdf">http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/161/ES2015_Henry%20Multimodal%20Map.pdf</a></p> <p>The relocation of Henry to the extreme northwest corner of the school boundary will make it more difficult for children to walk or bike to school.</p> <p>We have not gotten into the nitty-gritty yet in the PFRC and BLPC meetings of proposals for making S 2nd Street walkable and bikeable. I don't have high hopes based on the April 2016 responses that we received from Arlington County Transportation Division (Rows 14-21).  <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6SBxBECQHovVFJ5TEpjOFJ5NVU/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6SBxBECQHovVFJ5TEpjOFJ5NVU/view</a></p> <p>I am aware that APS is planning to undergo a boundary change process, currently scheduled for the 2017-2018 school year. Slide 8  <a href="http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/110/SAWG%20Community%2002162016_v1.pdf">http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/110/SAWG%20Community%2002162016_v1.pdf</a></p> <p>I am also aware that current Patrick Henry PTA members have submitted a request to "Minimize boundary changes, keeping Patrick Henry's current attendance zone within its "new" school boundary." <a href="http://patrickhenrypta.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/PTA_Capacity_Letter_10212015.pdf">http://patrickhenrypta.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/PTA_Capacity_Letter_10212015.pdf</a></p>	06/29/16
Neighbor	22204	<p>I hope the school board has been made aware that although a vote was cast at the last working group meeting, the vote was only to show preference for the Lobster vs Biscuit shape. A number of voting committee members had objections to any raised parking structure, as did almost all members of the public. Please inform the school board of the opposition to the raised parking structure!!!</p>	06/29/16
Arbors of Arlington Resident	Resident	<p>Rather than move the Montessori program to PHE, and PHE to the proposed Jefferson site, why isn't PHE renovated to accommodate the larger population and then a SMALLER structure (one that is more appropriately sized and less obtrusive to the neighborhood) built on the TJ plot?</p> <p>A small building to accommodate the Montessori program and new green spaces would be better for both the neighborhood and for the students. The PHE site already includes green space for the students, green space that would be lost if students were relocated to the TJ site. And yes, I've seen the proposed plans -- A bit of green to disguise a parking structure isn't the same as a field or large shady trees.</p> <p>Why subject the neighbors and elementary students to a 4 story building? A 4 story building is not developmentally appropriate for young students! Yes it may be more expensive to renovate the PHE site and build a small Montessori building at the TJ site, but we are asking you to invest in our children and the future of the neighborhood.</p> <p>If the proposed plan moves forward, everyone loses out in the deal except the Montessori students : PHE students will lose a centrally located, developmentally appropriate building with at level play fields and green spaces, TJ STUDENTS will lose any visibility of their school from all sides of the street, TJ THEATER will be hidden and hard to access, and the NEIGHBORS will lose in the deal ( loss of street parking, additional noise pollution, additional traffic, additional safety hazards that come along with parking garages)</p> <p>Why not build a small Montessori school at TJ and renovate PHE?</p>	06/29/16

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Molly	Calkins	<p>Three clarifications to the posted 6/23 meeting notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A large number of PFRC members were not present at this meeting, because it was not one of the PFRC's regularly-scheduled Wednesday meetings. Rather, it was added after PFRC members requested more time to discuss the concept designs with their constituents before being polled. Members in attendance had rearranged their schedules to make this Thursday meeting, and got to conduct the first truly robust deliberation about the concept designs. Many of the "yes" votes counted in the straw poll were absentees who had sent in their preferences prior to meeting time. Consequently, they missed the robust discussion, the much longer list of "cons" that PFRC members listed about the Claw, and may have voted differently (either "no" to the Claw or "yes conditioned on exploring fully underground parking further") had they been able to attend.</li> <li>2. Among points emphasized during deliberation but not reflected in the official meeting notes is that the PFRC is required to adhere to the Principles of Civic Design that bind the PFRC along with all County civic facilities (available on the PFRC website under "Quick Links.") One of those Principles is that the facility must "Optimize open space for public relaxation and recreation, and minimize building footprint and areas used for parking." The Claw design that APS has ordained from the outset violates that mandatory principle, because it has the most sprawling building footprint, plus a long shallow parking structure that eats up an unnecessary amount of at-grade grass and mature trees that middle-schoolers and the public currently enjoy, but will lose to the Big Dig required for the sprawling concrete parking structure and paved plaza.</li> <li>3. Recognizing the mandatory Principle of optimizing open space and minimizing building footprint and areas used for parking, a PFRC member asked why the only concept design discussed at this 6/23 meeting was the Claw, and where was the option with compact footprint and all-underground parking that had been discussed at the last meeting? Answer: The PFRC Chair and APS had specifically told the architects NOT to explore that option any further. That question and unsatisfying cursory response are reflected at the bottom of the first page of the official meeting notes, confirming APS's disregard for the Principles of Civic Design.</li> </ol>	06/24/16
Lisa	Turcios	<p>A note on the June 23 PFRC Meeting Notes. While the vote was 14-7 'yes' - it doesn't include how many people were not present, who submitted their vote ahead of time, and did not benefit from the discussion. Perhaps they would have voted differently if they had been there.</p> <p>To the PFRC Chair, In your letter to the School Board being, please be sure to capture the "yes, but only if they look at..." votes and the votes that were cast in absentia by missing committee members.</p> <p>I continue to be disappointed/confused as to why attendee records are not included at the top of each set of meeting minutes, like this one. <a href="http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/07/Stratford_Meeting_Summary_16July2015.pdf">http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/07/Stratford_Meeting_Summary_16July2015.pdf</a></p>	06/24/16
Matt	Barone	<p>As a homeowner of one of the 18 homes on Arlington Blvd that borders this project, I'm furious that no one from APS or the County has reached out. You are about to build a 4 STORY school that comes within feet of our property, removes trees and privacy, and no one has thought to even reach out? Is a School that high even up to code? How close to my property line will the building be? Is that even up to code? Did anyone consider approaching some of the homeowners to buy them out to expand the land. Buying out 3-6 of the homes on the NorthWest corner would allow you more land and the ability to create a SAFER exit and entrance from Old Glebe to Arlington Blvd. Are you planning on compensating us for the lost property value when you tear down trees and privacy and put up a 4 story building? I demand answers.</p>	06/24/16

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Eric	Lanman	<p>This is an addition to an earlier comment in order to add specific thoughts about the capacity issue. While there is no doubt that additional APS capacity is a very real need, I believe it is purposely being exaggerated as a burning platform issue with no alternatives or time to address it other than as proposed by APS. However, there are other alternatives - delays are not forever - and making a bad decision that appears to help in the near term is still a bad decision.</p> <p>Arlington has not previously shown a keen ability to effectively predict or address capacity requirements (witness almost brand new high schools now over or soon to be over capacity). Although many bemoan the use of trailers and make it an emotional issue - trailers actually represent a prudent and flexible way to address near and even mid-term capacity issues. They do so without the high cost, inconvenience, and irrevocable results of building a new school and they give us the time to properly and most effectively address this issue. Although many play on our parental heartstrings and push the idea that trailers will impact our children's learning, the facts don't support that. I would guess the education and quality of life of TJMS students is much more likely to be impacted by the construction of a new elementary school literally next door, then will be any elementary student who has to attend a class in a modern well furnished modular building (ie trailer). In fact, TJHSST in Fairfax used double-digit numbers of "not-modern" old dilapidated trailers for years without it impacting the quality or reputation of the education students receive there.</p> <p>In addition, while I know that some cite the need for additional trailers at the current PHE site as a reason for the new school and the move - isn't it a good thing that PHE actually has the space to address the additional capacity needs with trailers?</p> <p>Not only will the proposed new elementary school lack that flexibility - it will have the double whammy impact of taking flexibility away from the middle school if it needs future capacity increases and or room to effectively modernize or build on to the school.</p> <p>Building on the TJMS site and moving PHE is a bad idea and the impacts to the neighborhood and more importantly to the students will be much greater than whatever minor indignities suffered from the potential increased use of trailers.</p> <p>Although the easy answer is to continue on the path of moving PHE to a new building on the TJMS site that does not make it the right answer. The right answer will require deeper thinking and a willingness to work through hard issues that provide a result of greater and more comprehensive benefit to the local community and most importantly the neighborhood children who attend both PHE and TJMS - not to mention the large numbers who utilize TJ Park and the community center from across the county. It's time to come up with a better alternative...</p>	06/23/16
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