

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

c/o Department of Environmental Services

2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705

Arlington, VA 22201

November 18, 2015

The Honorable Mary Hynes, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Subject: Stratford School Addition

Dear Chair Hynes:

A member of the Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) has participated actively in the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) on the proposed Stratford School addition and apprised the commission of the process. We understand that by the time that you receive this letter, the School Board may have already approved a concept design that includes a specific building addition location and driveway option. However, we would like to express our preferences as the design continues to take shape in the schematic design phase. In recognition of the budget constraints that resulted in the revised design options titled "Link", "West", and "no build," we support siting the addition to Stratford School on the adjacent Stratford Park parking lot as indicated in the West option. However, we strongly oppose the addition of a road that provides vehicular access between Vacation Lane and Old Dominion/Route 29.

We also understand that the planned Stratford Park renovation will be possible since the proposed siting will be limited to the existing parking lot. Moreover, this site minimizes tree loss, minimizes impact to the Resource Protection Area (RPA), and satisfies the Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board, as well as provides the necessary expansion capacity. We recognize the efforts of staff in various County departments including Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation to address several documented land needs. However, we strongly believe that repurposing parkland for other uses should be a last resort and recommend that the County consider a land swap with Arlington Public Schools (APS) to ensure that net parkland is unchanged or positive through this development. We are also concerned with the new northeast parking lot's proximity to the RPA, an issue that we will follow as the design process continues.

As stated, the Commission strongly objects to the proposed road ('high road') cutting through the property from Old Dominion/ Route 29 to Vacation Lane. Site analysis by APS staff, APS's transportation consultants, and County Transportation staff indicate that the proposed road is not necessary for emergency vehicle access or to safely accommodate traffic for the expanded school. The proposed road would increase project costs (estimated to be at least \$2.4 million), as well as likely development time because it would require extensive hillside excavation. The road would increase the project's impervious surface footprint, and result in the loss of trees when the playing field is shifted to the east. Additionally, by facilitating parent vehicle drop-off, the road may induce additional traffic and reduce the percentage of students accessing the school by bus, bicycle, or foot.

We recommend eliminating the proposed road from the design options, thereby minimizing unnecessary impervious surfaces, maximizing tree canopy on the site, and significantly reducing overall project costs.

We appreciate having this opportunity to share our views with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Dicke".

Scott Dicke, Chair  
Environment and Energy Conservation Commission

cc: Arlington County Manager  
Director, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Members, Arlington Public School Board