



October 19, 2015

The Honorable Emma Violand-Sanchez, Chair  
The Arlington County School Board  
1426 N. Quincy St.  
Arlington, Virginia 22207

*RE: Wilson School –Concept Plan Design*

In August 2015, the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) submitted a letter in support of a concept plan for Wilson School. In late August, the School Board held a work session to discuss the budget for Wilson School and directed Arlington Public School (APS) Facilities and Construction staff to present options that fell closer to allotted budgets for the project.

On October 15, the PFRC met to discuss and review cost saving strategies and changes to the concept plan. APS presented, and the PFRC discussed, two main issues at the meeting: building design and parking.

*Building Massing and Design*

APS presented differing designs for the Wilson School. One design was the “fanning bars” design, as embodied in the previous concept plan design, and a simplified “box” design for the school. PFRC members overwhelmingly preferred the fanning bars design. The primary reason was that the community would benefit greatly from an innovative design at this particular site and such a design was more consistent with the vision of the recently adopted Rosslyn Sector Plan and the WRAPs study. Also, the fanning bar design offered a more dynamic presence along Wilson Boulevard, a better design for development of 18<sup>th</sup> Street, allowed more open space and provided better access to natural sunlight.

*Parking*

In terms of parking, APS presented three options that included a parking garage wholly built by APS, not building any parking and leasing spaces from nearby garages, or exploring a partnership to share parking with Penzance, the adjacent developer.

PFRC members did not support the first option, under the circumstances, of APS construction of a garage as set forth in the original concept plan. In general, members felt that providing parking was important to both faculty and students, but felt the other options needed additional study because the overall costs and benefits were unclear. Some members felt that the simplest approach was leasing space from surrounding parking, but the capacity of such surrounding parking facilities was not known now, but could easily be determined. Some members felt that business use of surrounding parking could impinge on school parking use, but that leasing space could allow for more flexibility in park design. All were generally in agreement that the option of leasing additional space was worthy of further study. Also, the net costs of the leasing option (paying for leasing but saving money from no garage construction or loss of

space) versus costs associated with the Penzance partnership were not presented to the PFRC, but should be carefully considered. Members did support further exploration of a partnership with Penzance, but some members did expressed concern about how a partnership would work in operation with risk resulting delays or parking problems in the future. In general, members agreed with APS that parking was a likely source of substantial cost saving for the project.

Lastly, some members expressed interest in further dialog and planning with respect to recognition of the historic values associated with the site and future development of the adjacent park.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Sockwell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Stephen Sockwell, Chairman  
Public Facilities Review Committee

Cc: Mark Schwartz, Acting County Manager  
Gabriela Acurio, Deputy County Manager  
Bob Duffy, Planning Director, CPHD  
Arlington County Board Members  
Arlington County School Board Members  
Dr. Pat Murphy, Superintendent, APS  
John Chadwick, APS  
Ben Burgin, APS  
Jennifer Xu, APS  
Michelle Stahlhut, CPHD