

**Public Facilities Review Committee  
Wilson Secondary School  
Meeting Summary  
Thursday, May 14, 2015**

**Attendees**

<b><i>PFRC Members (√ = present):</i></b>	<b><i>Arlington Public Schools (APS):</i></b>
√ Stephen Sockwell, Chair	Ben Burgin, APS
√ Todd McCracken, Schools	Jennifer Xu, APS
Jeff Certosimo, Housing Commission	Sean Franklin, BIG
√ Elizabeth Gearin, Parks & Rec. Commission	Pierre Gendreau, Leo Daly
James Schroll, Transportation Commission	
√ Nancy Iacomini, Planning Commission	<b><i>County Staff:</i></b>
John Miller, At-Large	Richard Tucker, DCPHD
√ Steve Cole, Planning Commission	Arlova Vonhm, DCPHD
Heather Obora, Schools	Dennis Sellin, DES
√ Erik Gutshall, Planning Commission	Meliha Aljabar, DPR
Jason Widstrom, Fiscal Affairs Adv. Comm.	Michelle Stahlhut, DCPHD
√ Terri Prell, At-Large	
William Staderman, Disability Advisory Comm.	
<b><i>Wilson Project-Specific PFRC Members (√ = present):</i></b>	
√ Carroll Colley, North Rosslyn CA	
√ Paul Mulligan, North Rosslyn CA	
√ Gerry Welch, Atrium Condominiums	
√ Stuart Stein, Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights CA	
√ Joan Lawrence, HALRB	
√ Steve Campbell, Urban Forestry Commission	
√ Christine Ng, E2C2	
√ Katherine Elmore, Parks & Rec. Commission	

**Introductions/PFRC Charge:**

PFRC Chair Steve Sockwell opened up the meeting by welcoming those present. Committee members and attendees introduced themselves and gave the name of the organization or committee they were representing. Chair Sockwell gave an overview of PFRC, its charge, and the committee's standard review process. Chair Sockwell also gave an overview of the Principles of Civic Design.

**APS Presentation:**

APS staff introduced the design team, led by their consultant Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) and Leo Daly Architects. APS staff provided an overview of their capacity needs, recently adopted CIP, and proposed project budget. APS also clarified the roles of the various review committees that are simultaneously meeting to discuss this project. The proposed project scope would include a 775-seat secondary school, increasing current school capacity by 70 seats. The estimated project cost is \$80.2 million.

BIG staff presented the evolution of the design concept for the Wilson site, including the site feasibility analysis conducted last fall and their current work. The consultant also presented an overview of the process to date, including the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) meetings held on April 14<sup>th</sup>, April 29<sup>th</sup>, and May 13<sup>th</sup>. It is

anticipated that the concept plan will be complete by September 2015 and the schematic design phase will continue through April 2016. APS anticipates starting construction in April 2017 and being ready for occupancy in September 2019.

The consultants presented several concepts developed by participants at the second BLPC meeting for this project as well as the key objectives for the project. The interactive exercise at BLPC yielded several ideas which were further refined by BIG staff into five (5) design concepts, listed as follows:

1. Fanning Bars
2. Terraced Courtyards
3. Stepped Terraces
4. Shifting Courtyards
5. Stacked Bars

A diagram of each concept, including how it could be placed in different locations on the site, was provided in the consultant's presentation, which can be accessed from the APS website for the Wilson School project, located here: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/29273> The consultants indicated that the same five concepts were shared with the BLPC at their last meeting and that they intend to return with fewer, more refined schemes at the next meeting.

#### **Arlington County Staff Presentation/Comments:**

Staff gave a brief overview of the use permit process. After the BLPC and PFRC processes are complete, APS will file a use permit for the school, which will require final approval by the County Board. CPHD staff provided an update on the WRAPS process, which is scheduled to be completed in July. A link to the draft plan will be distributed to committee members. Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation Staff also discussed a one-page handout on Rosslyn Highland Park that was provided to committee members.

#### **PFRC Questions/Concerns:**

- Will the County Board and School Board meet again to discuss the draft Guiding Principles?
  - Staff will update the committee on this.
- Concern was raised with regard to the proposed schedule, which would include School Board review of the concept design in August. It is atypical to hold public meetings in August in Arlington and this will also only allow two additional PFRC meetings to provide input on the concept design.
  - APS traditionally holds one meeting in August and final action on the concept will not take place until September. APS staff will relay the PFRC's concerns.
- Please show the entire WRAPS Study Area for context on future plans. If possible also include the heights of adjacent buildings.
- How might the Stratford students interact with a terrace, as shown in one of the concepts?
  - The Stratford program would be located on the ground floor but all levels would have accessible terraces. It hasn't been decided if access to the terraces would be

- from the inside of the building only. The possibility to have outside access to shared open space areas will be explored.
- Did the School Board decide to eliminate solar panels from the budget from this project?
  - Not exactly. The initial budget was \$5 million dollars higher, which included funds for net zero improvements, like solar panels. However, the School Board ultimately approved the current budget and directed the design team to continue to study opportunities to include sustainability features.
- Is geotechnical planned for this site?
  - Study will be done. Parking garage is going to be underground but not thought to be a major issue at this point.
  - This site is the high point in Rosslyn so issues with bedrock experienced nearby may not prove to be an issue here.
- Keep historic school in mind as additional work is done with regard to design schemes for the site.

#### *Design Concepts/Building Siting*

- Stepped Terraces
  - Concept takes up a lot of ground level open space.
  - Are terrace spaces large enough for basketball courts? They should be accessible by the public.
    - Not determined yet but possible. Larger terrace areas could be located on lower levels to be accessible by the public.
- Fanning Bars
  - Is there a practical way to use the triangular spaces in between the bars?
    - Yes, that is being studied further now.
    - This concept could accommodate secure open space for students as well as additional tree canopy.
- Desire expressed to have a civic presence along Wilson Boulevard.
- Was an L-shaped building considered for the site?
  - This was studied and found to be problematic due to the location of the adjacent uses (e.g., 7-11) and the impacts on building footprint.
- Future buildings will likely be very predictable here with regard to building form. Use this as an opportunity to do something different here. Provide something with more movement.
- Some members indicated a preference for having the school sited on Wilson Boulevard and among the five concepts, the most positive feedback was provided for the fanning bars and stacked bars.
- Are rooftop recreational activities still being considered?
  - Yes, to the extent that it allows more grade level space to be preserved. HB-Woodlawn program is not required to have regulation-sized athletic fields so there is some additional flexibility. However, they will still need to provide required space for physical recreation.
- Which concept best meets the project goals?

- No decisions or formal opinions have been formed yet, but the stepped courtyards might be a good option. There also has been a lot of interest, among the design team, in the fanning bars.
- Consider the potential need to build on top of this building in the future.

#### *Open Space/Recreation/Playing Fields*

- Can an ultimate Frisbee field be achieved by using County parkland?
  - A regulation size ultimate Frisbee field would not work, even with the use of adjacent County parkland, due to the current WRAPS concept for the Penzance property. However, the School Board has asked the County Board to continue to explore this further.
- Goal should be to have public open space clearly visible from Wilson Boulevard.
- Please provide information about the aggregate amount of open space, both at grade and above ground, for both APS and for general use by the public, associated with each future design concept or scheme.
- Committee members discussed the potential use of artificial turf vs. natural grass on the site.
  - DPR staff indicated that there is no official County position on either material. APS to coordinate with DPR on determining material for any shared field spaces. Most recent school projects included natural grass.
- Preference expressed generally for a concept that would optimize area for open space on both street sides, as a way to obtain additional tree canopy.
- Provision of an at grade basketball court was encouraged.

#### *Parking/Circulation/Transportation*

- What is planned for the underground level(s)?
  - About 10% of school programming could be located underground, including the auditorium, film studio, parking, and block box theater.
- Would you consider putting parking underneath the field?
  - Yes, this is being studied. It's easier to do under the field than under the building.
    - Look at parking underneath the National Cathedral and Sidwell Friends School as local examples.
- Alley/service road off Wilson Boulevard is worth additional discussion. Not preferred from major road — inconsistent with Master Transportation Plan policies.
- What do other schools in urban environments do about bus drop off?

#### **Public Comment:**

There were no speakers who provided comment at the meeting.

#### **BLPC Update:**

- BLPC has met three times so far and will meet twice again prior to the next PFRC meeting.
- The committee will likely review the next round of concepts/schemes by BIG – likely no more than three, which will also be presented at the next PFRC meeting.

### Next Steps

The next PFRC meeting will include a presentation of baseline transportation data from Toole Design Group, more ideas from BIG, and responses to questions raised in this meeting.

The proposed meeting schedule for the remainder of the year is as follows:

- May 27, 2015 – BLPC
- June 10, 2015 – BLPC
- **June 11, 2015 – PFRC**
- June 24, 2015 – BLPC
- **July 16, 2015 – PFRC**
- August 13, 2015 – BLPC
- September 1, 2015 – BLPC
- September 16, 2015 – BLPC
- **September 17, 2015 – PFRC**
- September 30, 2015 – BLPC
- October 14, 2015 – BLPC
- **October 15, 2015 – PFRC**
- October 28, 2015 – BLPC
- November 10, 2015 – BLPC
- **November 12, 2015 – PFRC**
- November 24, 2015 - BLPC

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.