

**Public Facilities Review Committee  
Abingdon Elementary School Expansion  
Meeting Summary  
Wednesday, March 18, 2015**

**Background**

Arlington Public Schools, the design consultant, Hord Coplan Macht (HCM) and transportation consultant Toole Design gave a presentation providing an update on schedule, project costs based on conceptual design, a multi-modal transportation update, and discussed recent BLPC meetings, parking, and schematic design.

**Project Updates**

Although delayed due to snow and ice cancellations, the Concept Design as recommended by PFRC will be adopted by the School Board on March 19. Schematic Design is the next phase of the project for PFRC on April 15 and possibly April 22, followed by the Use Permit submittal over the summer and expected approval of the Use Permit in September 2015. The project is on schedule to open in September 2017.

The cost estimate for the Concept Design is current running over the budget although many of those costs will shift around as the schematic design progresses. One example is that APS believes the cost estimate for the PV array is high and is expected to come in lower than projected.

**Multi-Modal Transportation Update**

Toole Design Group consultant Alia Anderson provided a presentation on parking and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) at Abingdon and stated that currently 93% of staff drive to school. Ms. Anderson gave an overview of TDM strategies such as subsidies for public transit use, carpool, or walking and biking, carpool ridematching and guaranteed ride home services, and commute coaching from Arlington Transportation Partners that will help reduce the number of staff driving to school and also reduce the number of required on-site parking spaces. Toole has given a survey and been working with Abingdon staff to find the most effective TDM strategies at this site.

**Parking Options**

The Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) requires 116 total parking spaces for staff and visitors. Additional modifications are allowed based on a variety of factors such as shared or on-street parking, Transportation Demand Management (TDM), or attempts to reduce impervious surfaces. Ms. Anderson gave an overview of two scenarios for providing fewer on-site parking spaces. Option A includes using a combination of 7 contiguous on-street spaces, 15 spaces in the Fairlington Villages Community Center lot, and 11 spaces reduced through TDM strategies such as paid incentives which resulted in 83 on-site spaces. Option B assumed the Fairlington Villages Community Center lot is not an option, and resulted in 98 on-site spaces.

PFRC members suggested counting non-contiguous parking toward the total in order to reduce the amount of on-site impervious space, since paved surface is not reversible, and also suggested the idea of using tandem spaces if possible.

The PFRC members took a straw poll regarding a preference for 90 or 83 on-site parking spaces, and with two exceptions generally supported the reduced number of on-site parking spaces. The 90 parking spaces proposed on-site (not including the 15 parking spaces at the Fairlington Villages Community Center parking lot) was the agreed upon number of parking spaces as approved under the original concept design for the project.

Additionally, there are two site plan scenarios for the 83 parking space option. One option (“Option A”) presented at the tenth BLPC meeting shows 83 on-site parking spaces configured to fit 67 parking spaces on the main parking lot and 16 spaces on a secondary parking lot on-site (adjacent to 29<sup>th</sup> Street South). Option A provides more green space north of the site adjacent to Courtbridge II. The second option (“Option B”) presented at the eleventh BLPC meeting shows 83 on-site parking spaces configured to fit 68 parking spaces on the main parking lot and 15 spaces on a secondary parking lot on-site (adjacent to 29<sup>th</sup> Street South). However, Option B pushes the parking lot to the northeast slightly and would reduce the green space north of the site adjacent to Courtbridge II.

The PFRC took a straw poll for support of either Option A or B. With the exception of one member with concerns about the reduced buffer space, the PFRC supported Option B which pushes the parking lot farther to the northeast.

### **Schematic Design Update**

HCM gave an overview of current building design and asked for feedback on the entrance façade, and the rear addition. PFRC members commented that a lighter color at the entrance and more vertical elements would help the entrance to be more prominent, as it currently seems that it would not be visible from the parking lot, and instead the gymnasium appears to be the entrance. Members and County staff added that the back feels “chopped up” and is very busy. A member asked if the color of the façade had an impact on energy use and the design team gave a short overview of current research related to albedo and the impact on the environment which shows that light colored elements on the roof are cooler at the surface but actually create an increase in heat at a plane above the surface. Currently there is no consensus of how color impacts the environment. PFRC asked for further detail on how stormwater infrastructure will be incorporated into the site.

### **Next Steps**

The next PFRC meeting for Abingdon will consider schematic design and be held on April 15 at Stratford school at 8 p.m., with a possible additional meeting for Abingdon held at Abingdon School on April 22 at 7 p.m.

### **Public Comment:**

Aristotelis Chronis, attorney representing Fairlington Villages and Courtbridge II, said that the PFRC voted to support shifting the parking lot to the northeast resulting in loss of one of few informal green spaces in this area in return for additional green space outside the track that is of little use. There should further consideration of more spaces used at the Community Center and pointed out that once green space is gone, it won’t be returned. He also asked for more detail related to traffic calming in the area.

Jim Hurysz, Fairlington resident, expressed concern about additional traffic and parking due to the project.