

## Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) New Elementary School at Jefferson

Thursday, June 23, 2016

### Meeting Notes

#### Recap of last meeting and Concept Design Options:

- The presentation today will address access improvements along South Old Glebe Road. This was taking in account comments since the last meeting (joint PFRC/BLPC from June 15<sup>th</sup>).

#### PFRC Clarifying Questions:

- Clarifying asked about the slides that specified the building heights and impacts to the neighboring community to the north of the site. Comparison between the “biscuit” and the “lobster” designs. Also had a clarifying question about the parent pick-up/drop-off area.

**VMDO: Explained the previous points in more detail.**

- Clarifying questions about the site elevations throughout the site. The whole NES plate area is at a site elevation of 214.5'. The parking garage area entrance is at 203'. Is there a way of making the height of the parking garage shorter (from 11' to maybe 9')?

**VMDO: The height of the garage may be lowered (7' 2" is standard) at different parts of the garage depending on the internal design and how much lower to the ground the garage may be. A shorter height would simply reduce the openness of the garage vertically.**

- Clarifying on the lobster design about the path to the school entrance. Figure out a gentler grade/entrance to the building, from where the steps begin.

**VMDO: Explained the flow of the entrance to the site from South Old Glebe Road further and the layout of the ramps leading in to the site.**

- Where are the parking garage schemes that were more compact on the site?

**VMDO: this was not explored further by request of the chairs and APS.**

- Question about internal circulation within the building to other areas of the site.

**VMDO: explained that further, especially within the school spaces.**

- In each of these schemes we have not seen a way in which the maximization of trees will be done on the site.

**VMDO: the tree preservation/planting on the site will be explored in more detailed within the schematic design phase and more consultation with the urban forester and landscape architects will occur. Especially street trees and interior outdoor space trees.**

- If a student is wheelchair bound, how do they access within the site.

**VMDO: the staff within the existing school will accompany students at the elementary school level to access the elevators.**

- Are you providing large enough elevators for students/staff use?

**VMDO: they are 10' clear in order to accommodate moving furniture and larger groups of people. The elevators will be 10' x 10'.**

- How much of the site design will be malleable at the concept level to the schematic level? Is there any way to add an elevator inside of the building closer to the theater area (that would benefit the middle school)?

**VMDO: things can change between now and schematic design; the design will be explored further, especially for outdoor spaces (50' wide strip from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South to the north end of the site).**

**APS: It is outside the scope of the NES project and should be considered further.**

- Is there \$ that can encompass improvements to the middle school area (installation of windows, site area improvements, etc.). Concerning the 50' area access for fire emergency vehicles, how would that work?

**APS: Through the TJWG process the carving of space for the 50' wide area was considered as part of the overall budget for the school. Other added costs will need to be evaluated and considered further.**

**VMDO: there is a 20' strip for fire access that is already incorporated within the design on the left hand side of the 50' pedestrian strip. Lander: It may be a little difficult to see how this design can separate what fire needs and what may be used for the school community.**

- Is there a reason why we are not looking at putting the parking garage deeper, is it mainly cost?

**VMDO:** The cost would be more significant, and the further you go down, more shoring is needed, and you may undermine the foundations of the middle school. Mitigating this potential effect would also be more expensive to resolve. The \$12 million allocated for the parking garage from the CIP is incorporated within the overall \$59 million project budget.

- Alternatives for parking, by logging in on concept design do we lose flexibility of losing/adding parking?

**PFRC chair:** No, the flexibility is not lost.

- TJWG's boxy design showed a parking garage that was partially above ground and underground with play space overtop of the garage.
- Likes the new design of the main entrance access. Can things be done to improve the stairs/access nearest to the middle school?

**VMDO:** Yes new/improved designs can be explored further.

- By placing the stage within the gym nearest to the South Old Glebe Road side then place a big blank wall on that side of the building?

**VMDO:** not necessarily, there are many design solutions that can be explored.

Discussion and Concept Design straw poll:

- Pros: design concept (lobster 4.3b)
  - Lobster pulls the massing and structure away from homes facing Route 50 and South Old Glebe.
  - First floor gym is great for civic use and for parks and rec use.
  - Opportunity to lower the garage further a few feet.
  - Likes drop-off/pick-up within the garage area.
  - Friends of TJ Park prefers this design.
  - Potential for a net-zero building with this design.
  
- Cons: design concept (lobster 4.3b)
  - Theater entrance may be invisible because of the design of the school building.
  - No lighted signs to the theater area.
  - The design of the school building/site is an “homage” to the design of the parking garage. Making the parking garage hidden would be better.
  - Elevated fields may not be easily accessible.
  - The design makes everything comfortable for vehicular access. The sprawling design impacts creation of open fields and other recreational spaces. The footprint is too large.
  - Partially above-grade garage is creating a very negative pedestrian experience. Parking garages should be underground and APS should consider this for future projects.
  - A large building may be daunting for elementary school students to navigate throughout (especially stairwells to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor).
  - No surface parking behind the theater, north of the site.
  
- Straw Poll (on lobster design 4.3b):
  - **Yes: 14** **No: 7**
  - Many “yes” votes with the condition to explore a fully underground parking garage option further.
  - As part of the letter that improvements as needed to the middle school should be noted for this project.

Public Comment:

- How much green space kids are giving up on the site? Much less play space that the kids will have, please maximize that space. As a resident of 1<sup>st</sup> Road South, she is adamantly opposed to having the entrance of the garage at 1<sup>st</sup> Road South and South Old Glebe, reconfigure the entrance to the garage minimize impact of traffic.
- TJ expansion possibilities with the “lobster” design, how feasible will it be? Does either one of these concepts reduce the ability for TJ’s expansion?

**VMDO: Possibly creating additions to the north of the middle school and one to the south end of the middle school with a possible expansion of the existing community center. Any addition would rise several stories. APS: either scheme would not intrude upon the design of the potential expansion of the middle school.**

- Representation from Matt Barone, resident north of the site. She asked several of his questions (which is captured from the comments box).

**PFRC Chair: Acknowledged the questions and it is on the table.**

- On street parking on South Old Glebe, will that be eliminated?

**VMDO: that will not be removed or adjusted in any way. Maybe some time restrictions will be adjusted.**

- How will the parking garage safety function?

**VMDO: These questions (including safety and access) can be assessed further during schematic design.**

- Parking enforcement in DES will assess the parking supply within the Arbors area and the street parking next to it to see if it qualifies for “zoned” parking.
- How will the regular traffic flow, bus flow, garage flow not affect the current infrastructure or improvement thereof of South Old Glebe Road?

**VMDO: Explained traffic flow and queuing further for all modes of transportation.**

- What the genuine surface area for open green space will be available for play?

**VMDO: That would be advanced during schematic design.**

Closing Remarks/Adjournment:

- Next meeting will be on Wednesday, July 27<sup>th</sup> and that will be a joint PFRC/BLPC meeting. It will be a predominantly transportation/traffic/parking heavy meeting.