



ARLINGTON COUNTY  
SPORTS COMMISSION  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite  
414  
Arlington, Virginia 22201



March 20, 2018

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dr. Barbara Kanninen, Chair  
Arlington County School Board  
1426 N. Quincy Street  
Arlington, VA 22207

Re: Concept Design for the Reed Site

Dear Ms. Cristol and Dr. Kanninen,

The Arlington Sports Commission would like to provide input to the County Board and the School Board as discussions continue about a concept design for the new elementary school on the Reed Site. Per our charter, the Sports Commission advises the County Board on the adequacy and utilization of sports and physical fitness facilities, including fields and courts, owned by Arlington County and/or Arlington Public Schools.

Our community faces the difficult challenge of a growing population and limited public land. We need new seats and buildings for a growing school population. As the school-age population grows, so does youth participation in a range of indoor and outdoor sports and recreational activities, according to data from the Department of Parks and Recreation and our independent sports leagues. At the same time, urgent calls to preserve unprogrammed park land are increasing. Every decision about how to use public lands is a major decision worthy of a thorough community conversation.

Fortunately for Arlington, we are really good at having thorough community conversations, and the discussions about the Reed Site are no exception. While not members of the PFRC or BLPC, members of the Sports Commission have been closely following these discussions. At no time in our collective memory have so many constituents been so united on the preferred outcome. Multiple stakeholders, including educators, neighbors, various commission representatives, and others, consistently and overwhelmingly favor the so-called "integrated design" in which new construction replaces existing construction adjacent to the library. The reason for this

overwhelming support is a building that provides a superior educational environment for 700-plus students while preserving what neighbors and the community loves most about the surrounding park/casual use space and fields.

We, like others, are bitterly disappointed that the estimated cost for the “integrated design” exceeds the available budget. We appreciate the exploratory work by staff and the designers to find ways to make this design possible. We hope that the School Board and the County Board are willing to continue exploring all avenues to achieve what so many strongly believe to be the right long-term outcome. In that regard, we concur with the advice offered by the Park and Recreation Commission in their March 12 letter -- that our school build projects do not take into account the true costs of development when they treat as “free” our scarce undeveloped open space. Whether on school land or county land, such spaces have significant value to the entire community, and their removal should be reflected in the true economic costs of any public development project.

The Sports Commission respectfully requests that the School Board and County Board revisit the minimum number of students this school must accommodate, the budget available for this project, and whether any changes can be made to the interior layout and amenities to help reduce the estimated cost for the “integrated design.” We ask this equally for the preservation of open space and fields as well as what is best from an educational and safety standpoint.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important decision.

Sincerely,



Shirley Brothwell, Chair  
Sports Commission

Cc: County Board Members  
Arlington County School Board Members  
Mark Schwartz, County Manager  
Planning Commission Members  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Dr. Pat Murphy, Superintendent, APS  
James Schroll, PFRC  
Hans Bauman, BLPC