

New Elementary School at TJ Community Comments - New comments since 7/26/16		
Name (First) Name (Last)	Share your comments with the staff team and committees:	Entry Date
Anne O'Brien	<p>I was reviewing the presentation from Aug. 31, and I had a question that is not clear to me from these designs: is the second floor a "floor of exit discharge"?</p> <p>I ask because I noticed that in the "Guidelines for School Facilities In Virginia's Public Schools" page 9 says:</p> <p>4.5 Location of Elementary Classrooms</p> <p>A. Classrooms for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, grade 1 and self-contained special education rooms in elementary schools should be located on the floor of exit discharge</p> <p>But in these drawings, some of these rooms are on the second floor. Can you please clarify the exit situation on the second floor?</p>	09/02/2016 0:00
Matt Barone	<p>So...it's now be over 2 months and I have received zero replies. I've even attended the August 10th Transportation Meeting and was told my questions are good and they have NO ANSWERS. Can someone anyone speak to the impact of the school on the 18 houses to the NORTH but more importantly the 9 that border the property and will bear the BRUNT of the construction. Katie Cristol has at least shared the existing sidewalk in the parking lot will be pushed 20 feet NORTH. This would mean a considerable amount of mature trees and green space will be LOST. What is the plan to provide a buffer to these 9 homes to the NORTH?</p> <p>If a parking garage is built beneath the school that will require serious excavation and that will be less than 40 feet from my neighbors foundation. What is being done to protect these home owners from potential damages to their foundations due to building a 4 story school with 2 underground parking levels?</p> <p>My understanding is that the current building code PREVENTS a 4 story school from being built that CLOSE to single family homes, but that the county and APS plans on secretly waiving these codes. However NO ONE has approached any of the impacted home owners!</p> <p>Lastly, I was specifically told by a member of the Transportation Committee that the hairpin turn as Old Glebe turns into the Service Road is dangerous and a new school will produce considerably MORE traffic around this dangerous curve. YET nothing is being done here, why NOT?</p>	08/24/2016 12:10
Molly Calkins	<p>While many residents were delighted to see a third option added to the designs proposed, we are disappointed by unattractive elements aspects unnecessarily tacked on to Option C to undermine support.</p> <p>Option C is a welcome addition to the other two designs because it places the entire parking garage completely underground – directly underneath the footprint of the school building. The architects drew up Option C in response to increasing concern about Options A and B's sprawling parking structures that rise above grade. A sprawling parking structure would dominate the campus, sacrifice existing grass and trees currently available as outdoor recreational space, and confine outdoor play space to a rooftop synthetic heat island on top of the parking structure. In addition, inadequate at-grade outdoor space hinders emergency evacuation of school children.</p> <p>Option C's fully underground garage adheres more closely to Arlington's Principles of Civic Design, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimizing open space for public relaxation and recreation, and minimizing building footprint and areas used for parking, on-site roads, and service drives.</li> <li>• Creating "positive" outdoor spaces with a pedestrian emphasis.</li> </ul> <p>Unfortunately, because APS mysteriously prefers a sprawling, above-grade parking structure instead of containing it under the building footprint, the architects tacked onto Option C some unattractive and unnecessary design elements.</p> <p>First, instead of preserving the existing grass and trees that the fully underground garage would save, Option C would bulldoze them anyway, to insert synthetic play space. Residents are baffled as to why APS and its architects insist on getting rid of existing grass and trees, even when the building and parking designs no longer require that sacrifice.</p> <p>Even more puzzling is Option C's proposed widening of Old Glebe Road, which eats into the very outdoor recreational space that the fully-underground garage was supposed to preserve. Specifically, Option C would cut into the west edge of the TJ site so that parents can line up their cars to pick up and drop off students. That violates the following Principles of Civic Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize pedestrian, bicycles, and mass transit over automobiles in building placement, entry and architecture.</li> <li>• Creating "positive" outdoor spaces with a pedestrian emphasis.</li> <li>• Optimize open space for public relaxation and recreation, and minimize building footprint and areas used for parking, onsite roads, and service drives.</li> </ul>	08/22/2016 13:00

	<p>Widening Old Glebe Rd to create a service drive for idling cars emphasizes cars over pedestrians and bicycles and negates outdoor space by substituting a car lane for grassy recreational space. Accommodating so many cars picking up and dropping off is not necessary for a true neighborhood school. By definition, neighborhood schools are located where most students in the neighborhood can walk or bike to school. Buses accommodate those unable to walk or bicycle, whether for distance or other reasons. Neighborhood schools are therefore supposed to minimize driving. The majority of households within walking distance of the TJ site will still have to cross dangerous 2nd St S, which is currently considered "uncrossable." If kids must be driven to this new elementary school in such high numbers as this road-widening contemplates, it does not qualify as a neighborhood school, and the community was misled by use of that label. APS should not be helping parents drive their kids to school by gobbling up even more parkland to accommodate queued up cars.</p> <p>Option C's added lane for a long line of cars is not inextricably linked to the fully-underground parking garage, even though APS has presented it that way. Option C would be vastly improved by letting the fully-underground garage serve the function that BLPC and PFRC members intended, which is to preserve grassy, tree-shaded outdoor recreational space. Throwing in a new street lane that further shrinks park and school space in favor of idling cars was a cynical move to undermine support for the fully-underground garage. We see through that, and request a revised Option C that keeps the grass and trees and abandons the car lane. If that's not possible, then another school doesn't belong on the TJ site.</p> <p>In contrast, Henry Elementary's current site is within safe walking distance of far more households than the TJ site. Plus its campus is much larger than the proposed TJ site, and features vast outdoor recreational space. Accordingly, the current Henry campus should remain the neighborhood elementary school. APS wants to spend over \$52 million to build a shiny new school at TJ. Why not devote those funds to build a shiny new school at Henry?</p>	
<p>Juliet Hiznay</p>	<p>Feedback on Concept Design from Friends of Thomas Jefferson Park For Dissemination (Earlier Version Presented to the School Board on July 20, 2016): We understand this project is moving forward and are pleased to be part of the conversation of how the new school and its outdoor space will be incorporated into the functioning of the entire site. To date, the architectural team has been receptive to our feedback and has worked hard to address a number of concerns we have already raised. We take this opportunity to make the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The concerns expressed by many in the neighborhood are valid. We anticipate many long-standing difficulties relating to pedestrian safety, traffic flow, parking demand, etc. Therefore, we must be cognizant of these issues while designing the outdoor space on site.</li> <li>2. It would be very premature to view the design of the outdoor space as fixed based on the concept design because neither the BLPC nor the PFRC has had an opportunity to discuss design of the outdoor elements in any detail. Discussion to date has been focused almost exclusively on building footprint, parking and traffic flow.</li> <li>3. What we want is park space that will function well, and that will be inviting. We want park design on the western parcel of the site that naturally flows from the east side of the park (and the garden), is aesthetically inviting, that addresses the needs of both schools and also enhances the environment by creating spaces for flora and fauna. We want canopy trees and other plantings. We want edible landscapes and native plantings to be considered. In short, we want a process that will look at this space creatively so that it can meet the needs of the school community while also providing a treasured asset for the community. This space is large enough that it can be designed for both active and passive recreation, and it needs to be. Natural areas are shown to enhance mental health and the county has a great shortage of natural areas. (See, e.g., <a href="http://www.pnas.org/content/112/28/8567.abstract">http://www.pnas.org/content/112/28/8567.abstract</a> ("Natural areas may be vital to mental health in our rapidly urbanizing world.") Our students need these spaces as much or more than adults. Feedback from teachers at Jefferson Middle School is that afternoon learning was greatly enhanced after students were given the opportunity to play outdoors at lunchtime. The existing space in use includes a large natural grass area, shade from tree canopy, as well as picnic tables. The blacktop is used for sports.</li> <li>4. We note that the current concept design eliminates every tree on the western parcel. Replacement and enhancement with additional canopy trees is essential.</li> <li>5. Because the "Lobster" provides a gym space open to the public at ground level, and because the set back is more "neighbor friendly" to those homeowners living to the immediate north of the parcel, we do prefer it to the other design that was developed. We are concerned, however, about the negative impact on air quality and noise pollution that would result from idling school buses.</li> <li>6. We see the student drop off and pick up in the garage as crucial to addressing traffic flow on site and preserving play space.</li> <li>7. We vehemently oppose any parking lot between the bus loop and the garden on the basis that it would be a safety hazard for multimodal users, would operate as a visual and physical barrier for use of the garden by both schools and it would interrupt the flow of the parkland onto school property. This area should be for pedestrian and bicycle use only, with the exception of use required for building operation.</li> <li>8. We are skeptical that the use of the open space to create a U-9 field is the best option. There are other ways to address the need to move and to run that does not require a regulation-sized synthetic soccer field. We feel this concept forecloses too many opportunities for this space.</li> <li>9. We oppose installation of a synthetic field on the western parcel because it would create numerous issues for the school community and the neighborhood, and would require additional site management: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Synthetic fields are sterile places and are not environmentally friendly. Concerns have been raised about the exposure of children to the rubber balls that are in use on these fields which players are known to regularly ingest (mouth, nose and ears).</li> <li>b. A synthetic field would create an enormous heat island, thereby discouraging informal gatherings next to the school for several months during the school year. This would be detrimental to the school community, and in particular to Henry, which has a strong tradition of gathering informally after school at its current location.</li> <li>c. Once installed, sunk costs would be so high that the space could never be redesigned or reconfigured to add or change out recreation options to address functional needs on site. d. A synthetic field would draw a tremendous amount of youth and adult play after hours, creating enormous parking demand during those hours, as well as potential conflict between users. There is no staff to manage this and it runs counter to our efforts to address parking. It would set up a conflict for evening school events and for the theater. It is just not sensible.</li> <li>e. Any lighting of such a field would not be neighbor-friendly due to its proximity to homes directly across the street, so play time on any field would be limited to daylight hours, reducing the cost effectiveness of installing a synthetic field on the western parcel.</li> <li>f. Installation of a synthetic field limits our ability to plant canopy trees.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>If DPR wants another synthetic playing field, there are other and better options.</p>	<p>07/27/2016 7:56</p>