

Patrick Henry School and Recreation Center Design

Community Engagement Process

This document summarizes the iterative design process of the Patrick Henry School and Recreation Center project and the relevant meetings with the community, Advisory Group, School Board and City Council.

Formation of the Advisory Group

On September 1, 2015, ACPS Superintendent Alvin Crawley and City Manager Mark Jinks issued a memorandum to create a project Advisory Group to work within the framework of design principles established by ACPS and the City and to engage representatives of the community in the planning and design process. Group members were selected in November 2015 and the project team has held monthly meetings with the group since its inception. Early meetings through February 2016, prior to the development of initial design concepts, were focused on orienting the Advisory Group to the site specific program document, which was based on the School Board approved PK-8 educational specifications. Both the site specific program document and the PK-8 educational specifications were developed in consultation with the City.

Community Engagement

The project team has been fully committed to engaging with the Patrick Henry community since the start of the project. The project team has held eleven (11) public meetings with the Advisory Group and seven (7) public meetings with the larger community. Interpretation, childcare and food were provided at community meetings to enable broad participation across the community. Five (5) of the community meetings occurred in the spring of 2016, during the initial design phase of the project. In-meeting and online polling tools were used to gauge community priorities.

A project website was established to host links to all recorded public meetings, as well as the presentations from the meetings, and to keep the public informed of key decisions and progress made. An email listserv was established to enable interested community members to sign up for meeting announcements and email updates. Project updates were also provided through ACPS Express, an email newsletter distributed to more than 9,800 members of the ACPS community. Access to recordings of the public meetings, along with the accompanying presentations, including updated design plans, were shared with the community through these platforms.

In addition, several project updates were provided during public School Board and City Council meetings, which were also recorded and are available to the public. Further, the project team also held a small work session with parents in July 2016 to discuss the desired student experience, and attended Patrick Henry's Back-to-School Night in September 2016 to share designs and answer questions about the project.

The project team has also held collaborative meetings with two outside community organizations, the Playspace Technical Advisory Team ("P-TAT"), and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. These meetings were held to ensure that the project design meets the needs of the

community as much as possible, while working within the approved Educational Specification and Recreation Program documents.

Date	Meeting
December 9, 2015	Community Advisory Group Meeting + Community Meeting
January 13, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
February 3, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
February 10, 2016	Community Meeting
February 17, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
March 2, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
March 16, 2016	Community Meeting
April 6, 2016	Community Meeting
April 13, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
April 27, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
May 4, 2016	Community Meeting
June 15, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
June 15, 2016	Park and Recreation Commission
July 7, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
July 27, 2016	Playground Technical Advisory Taskforce
August 10, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting
September 13, 2016	Commission for the Arts
September 28, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting + Community Meeting
November 30, 2016	Community Advisory Group Meeting + Community Meeting

Initial Site Plan Options

The project team presented three initial site plan options for feedback, titled *A*, *B*, and *C*, to the Advisory Group and the larger community on March 2, 2016 and March 16, 2016, respectively. Community polling conducted in person and online after the meeting indicated that *Option A* was seen as favorable because of the scale of the building in relationship to the neighborhood, the access to and quality of outdoor play spaces, and for the way it distinguished the physical presence of the school and recreation center. *Option C* was seen as favorable because of the separation of the bus loop and student drop-off areas for safe pedestrian and bike access, and because it avoided the need for swing space and phasing since the new building footprint did not overlap with the existing one.

Development of Option A1

Based on the feedback received on the initial three options, the project team developed *Option A1*, which combined the best features of *Options A* and *C* and achieved optimal results in fulfilling the design principles established as those most important to the community through in-meeting and online polling.

Design Principles:

- Providing quality outdoor play spaces
- Providing distinguished physical presences of the school and recreation center
- Promoting safe access for biking and walking to school
- Accommodating the neighborhood scale
- Providing optimal access between the building and the outdoor play areas

Option A1 also avoided the need for swing space and phasing by avoiding an overlap of the new and existing buildings. The design was well received when presented to the community on April 6, 2016, although some attendees expressed dissatisfaction that the new design included vehicle access off of Latham Street.

Development of Option C1

During a project update to the School Board on April 7, 2016, the Board voted to explore additional design options that would place all vehicle access to the site solely off of Taney Avenue. As a result, the project team restored the existing *Option C1* to develop the design concept, which maintained the same two story massing and layout as the original *Option C*, but relocated all vehicle entrances and exits to Taney Avenue.

A1 and C1 Analysis

As part of the project team's analysis of *Options A1* and *C1*, updated versions of both options were presented on April 27, 2016 to the Advisory Group, whose attendance was reduced but sufficient for a quorum. The focus was on how each design performed with respect to the design principles listed above. After deliberating, a majority of the group felt specific qualities of *Option C1* should be advanced in the design process; however, there was not a consensus between *A1* and *C1*.

In a community meeting held on May 4, 2016, and during the School Board project update on May 5, 2016, the project team stated that *Option C1* would be advanced. While this was well received by community members who opposed having any vehicular access off Latham Street, a large contingent of community members spoke out against *Option C1* in both meetings, expressing safety concerns about having multiple driveways on Taney Avenue due to the large number of students walking to school. They also expressed a desire for the project team to do additional analysis of *Option A1*. Recordings of both meetings are available for viewing online.

A special School Board Work Session was held on May 10, 2016 to review in detail the benefits of both *Options A1* and *C1*. During the presentation, the design team presented updated versions of both options and answered questions. At this Work Session, the School Board requested that the project team prepare a comparison of *Options A1* and *C1* with respect to the following criteria, so the Board could then make its decision on which option to advance in the design process:

- Site traffic circulation, vehicle & bus separation, and safe pedestrian & bus access
- Educational program functionality
- Project cost
- Outdoor open space

On May 19, 2016, the project team presented the results of its comparison to the School Board, and recommended that *Option A1* be advanced based on the following:

1. Site Traffic Circulation, Vehicle & Bus Separation, and Safe Pedestrian & Bus Access – *A1* was preferred because the separate bus and vehicle entries provided for slightly better levels of service to surrounding streets and required less school personnel to manage pedestrian traffic during arrival and dismissal. In addition, facility services, such as deliveries and trash pick-up, could now be accommodated away from the front of the buildings.
2. Educational Program Functionality – *A1* was preferred as its 3-story structure allowed for grades 6-8 to have their own floor, its central location for bus drop-off and pick-up, and for separating the area for students coming off buses from adults accessing the recreation center.
3. Project Cost – Given the early stage of design it was assumed that both designs would each be of a similar square footage and have similar basic construction costs. However, *C1* was projected to have approximately \$1.5-2 million of additional costs since its larger footprint would require more structural foundations, roofing and storm water management costs. Therefore, *A1* was preferred.
4. Outdoor Open Space – Both designs had approximately 7.2 acres of outdoor space. *A1* was preferred since it offered 4.5 acres of contiguous open space compared to 3.9 acres for *C1*.

After the presentation, the School Board voted six to two (6-2), with one Member abstaining, to advance *Option A1* in the design phase. At this time, the School Board was also aware that in order to keep the project on schedule for construction to begin in the spring of 2017, a design must be selected.

A memo summarizing this process was sent to the City Council on June 17, 2016.

Advancing the Patrick Henry Design

After the School Board vote on May 19, 2016, the project team began developing the Patrick Henry design (commonly called *Option A1*) to ensure that key milestone dates were met with the City's Development Special Use Permit ("DSUP") review process for construction to begin in spring of 2017. All of the milestone dates were met:

- Concept II Submission to the City: June 24, 2016
- Completeness Submission to the City: August 11, 2016
- Preliminary Site Plan Submission to the City: September 20, 2016

Throughout the development of the design, meetings were held with the Advisory Group in June, July, August, and September to review the *Option A1* design in detail and to obtain feedback. As a result of the group's feedback, several modifications, such as adding a staff lounge and moving stairwells for more efficient emergency egress, were made to the design.

The project team presented the updated Patrick Henry design in a community meeting on September 28, 2016, when community meetings resumed after being suspended over the summer. The design was well received by attendees.

Project Budget

As is customary with large construction projects of this nature, the project team is performing estimates on the recently completed design development documents to assess the project budget and determine whether or not additional capital improvement funds may be required before implementing the project. It is important to note that any additional funding which may be required to implement the current design would still be \$1.5-2 million less than funding needed for the *C1* design for the reasons explained in the “*A1* and *C1* Analysis- Project Cost” section above.

Next Steps

The site plan for the project was “deemed complete” by City DSUP review staff on September 1, 2016. The project team will present the site plan in public hearings to the Planning Commission on December 6, 2016 and to City Council on December 17, 2016. A successful result will keep the project on track to begin construction in April 2017 and be completed for the 2018-2019 school year.