

May 5, 2016

School Board Chair, Vice Chair and Board members,

I am speaking as Chair of the Alexandria Pedestrian and Advisory Committee (BPAC) and as a concerned citizen to ask that you direct that the superintendent and staff move forward with a Project Henry site plan that maximizes safety and convenience for students and staff walking to school.

Four of you attended last night's meeting, so you saw the reaction: at every table, community members were concerned about the safety of kids walking to school with option C-1. During the wrap-up Q&A, nearly every question concerned walking safety. When asked to raise their hands about which option was safe for kids, an overwhelming majority raised their hands for A-1, and only a handful raised their hands for C-1.

The project team had a simple solution for making C-1 safe for kids to cross both the car and bus drop-off lanes. Just allocate staff to direct traffic to keep the kids safe. We are going to spend millions of dollars on a new facility where the site plan creates safety problems that require staff to keep someone from getting hurt. Is keeping 20 minutes of bus traffic per day off Latham Street more important than allowing the best design for walking safety?

BPAC decided a couple of years ago to work with City staff to eliminate barriers to walking to Alexandria schools. Our primary focus has been to ensure safe walking access to school property. Never could we have imagined the need to ask the school board to avoid creating new barriers on school property. But here I am: **Please ask the Superintendent for the site plan that best incorporates safety for people who walk, rather than a plan that creates safety problems that require mitigation.** Please also give parents, staff and residents additional opportunities to provide their inputs on both options, before the final DSUP submission.

Thanks,

Jim Durham

Chair, Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee