

Public Hearing on Redistricting
December 8, 2016

My name is Cindy Million. I have a 2nd grader at George Mason Elementary school. We live in Planning Block 72, which is not zoned for George Mason Elementary in any of the maps that the School Board is now considering. I understand that the School Board and Redistricting Steering Committee have a challenging job when it comes to trying to make student numbers match school capacities and in trying to meet the wishes of many people. But, even so, I think that there must be a way to keep Planning Block 72—an area in which the majority of students either walk or bike to school every day—at George Mason.

Every morning, my husband and son do the 10-minute walk to school. It's a time when my son is outside in nature, it's a time when he's physically active, and it's some extra quality time with his dad. It's probably one of the best times of day for both my husband and son. I'm sure the same goes for other families in Planning Block 72, too. By moving Planning Block 72 out of George Mason, you are taking away incredibly positive aspects from our children's lives. Our children are able to spend their travel time to school outside, which is wonderful. They are able to spend their travel time to school getting exercise, which is wonderful. And instead, you're advocating sticking our children in school buses and in their parents' cars to go sit in traffic on Valley while they wait to get dropped off at Charles Barrett. It makes no sense, and it's not fair to our children.

A [2011 study](#) in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* looked at 27 journal articles on how active travel to school (in which children were physically active) related to health-related fitness in children and adolescents. The overall conclusions said that there is “evidence to suggest that [active travel to school (ATS)] is associated with a healthier body composition and level of cardiorespiratory fitness among youth. Strategies to increase ATS are warranted and should be included in whole-of-school approaches to the promotion of physical activity.” I strongly agree with this study's conclusion. Being able to walk to school should be a priority in making decisions on which schools our children are zoned for.

Whether it be relocatable trailer units or redrawing lines of neighborhoods that already take the bus to George Mason, I'm sure that something can be done to keep Planning Block 72 at George Mason and to maintain the positive aspects that I talked about in our children's lives.