

TO: Dr. A. Crawley  
Members of the School Board

FROM: Judy Cooper  
1007 N. Van Dorn St.

RE: Patrick Henry School Project

DATE: May 19, 2015

After attending the majority of the Community Meetings on the Patrick Henry Project, reading the Feasibility Study (FS), and following the School Board's action to date, I have the following comments and questions concerning the proposed Option 2.

1. **TRAFFIC** - An overriding concern by many residents is the potential for increased local traffic on Taney Ave., N. Latham St., and Peacock Ave. All proposals put an unnecessary and increased burden on N. Latham St. and Peacock Ave., which are narrower, residential streets in our community. Other traffic options need to be considered.
2. **PARKING** - Configuration of the school building and the parking lots do not make reasonable use of the area. If you park along the proposed area parallel to Foxchase, you will have to walk an unreasonable distance to the main entrance of the school. This is not a good choice with any form of inclement weather. They will be walking over half of the length of the school area on Taney Ave.

It seems that the number of parking spaces has been underestimated. School car parking includes 70 spaces and 120 spaces for the Recreation Parking (FS, p. 10). Will classroom teachers, part-time teachers, administrators, custodial staff, kitchen staff, parents, and visitors be able to park in the 70 spaces? Currently the on-street parking on Taney for P. Henry ES and the same for J. Polk ES represent a huge overflow of vehicles that do not fit in the parking lot. If the plan is to increase the capacity of P. Henry from 600 to 800, then the proposed parking lot sizes are not sufficient.

3. **RECREATION CENTER** - Is the Recreation Center the elephant in the room? It requires the maximum of parking spaces and encompasses a huge area of the school lot. The School Board and City Council need to decide which is more important to the community – a viable school setting or a Rec Center. I'd much prefer my tax money be spent on a wise school choice rather than a mega Rec Center. Unfortunately, too much time was spent during the Community Meetings on the configuration of the Rec Center, which is under the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities.
4. **MARINE CLAY** - A study on the extent of marine clay in this area should have been completed before this process began. We should know the extent of any problems prior to making architectural plans.

5. MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD – If a multi-purpose field of the indicated size is to be located in front of the school, it should be fenced. This is needed for safety purposes. This location is not particularly attractive to the school grounds. Any proposal to put lights on this field would be unacceptable.
6. ELEVATORS – Any three-storied building should have elevators for the handicapped and to transport heavy items between floors. There are no elevators in any of the options, only stairways. Where would they be located and what is the additional cost?
7. TOILETS – The PK – 2 classrooms have individual toilets in them. There are three individual (?) toilets located on each level along the classroom side. Are the students in the special wing (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors) going to use those individual toilets? What facilities will the visitors use? When classes (grades 3 – 8) return from lunch are all students going to use the three toilets on each floor? This is an issue in all options.
8. SCHOOL DESIGN - There is too much glass. At the School Board meeting of May 14, 2015, the staff stated that the designs could be changed. Present designs do not fit the neighborhood. The architects seem to have difficulty understanding the school is in an established neighborhood with an ambiance that defines the area.
9. PK - 8 vs PK - 5 – The PK – 8 is an educational program that has not been employed in many areas even though Jefferson-Houston was recently opened as a PK – 8 school. Some have hoped that the successes and problems of Jefferson-Houston would be studied for a couple of years prior to consideration of replicating the configuration. I had hope that Dr. Crawley would have postponed another “Jefferson-Houston” in order to determine if this configuration is a fit for Alexandria. Is this organization educationally sound and economically feasible? Many question having 7/8<sup>th</sup> graders in the same facility with PK-2. Socially and emotionally they are quite different. The educational needs of 6-8 are quite different from the others and require more staff (cost) to educate daily (English, math, and science teachers require specific certification to teach at this level).

The above items reflect some of my concerns, but not all, regarding Option 2, and other options, as well as the educational program. I look forward to additional School Board meetings discussing the options. Thank you for your attention.