

Remarks to Alexandria City School Board Meeting

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Prepared and presented by Keith Kruse, 309 N Latham St, Alexandria VA 22304

Good evening Chair Graf, Vice Chair Lewis, Doctor Crawley, and School Board Members.

My name is Keith Kruse and I have spoken to you before regarding the Patrick Henry School Project. Tonight you are going to be presented with a revised site plan option C-1 by the Patrick Henry Project Team. This plan is compliant with the School Board's wishes to only consider plans that have no parking or street access off of N Latham St. However, I and many of my neighbors believe that is not the optimum plan for managing safe pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle access to the school.

Option C-1 was presented last night by the Project Team to the Patrick Henry Community Outreach Meeting. I appreciate that Ms. Lorber and Ms. Anderson ^{Mr. Campbell} were in attendance along with Vice Chair Lewis so that they could hear firsthand from many members of the community who expressed their doubts that plan C-1 would adequately assure the safety of children, parents, faculty and staff commuting to the school. The most significant concern was the fact that there would be two curb cuts for street access on Taney Ave in the southwest corner of the property—particularly since this is also the location where most of the pedestrian traffic for students and parents walking to school from the Foxchase apartments. Plan C-1 as it stands right now, would require students to cross through two very busy lanes of incoming/outgoing vehicle and bus traffic. The Project Team indicated that they believed that this represented an acceptable level of safety for pedestrian traffic under the assumption that school faculty and staff would have to be positioned at those parking lot and bus loop entrances to direct traffic and manage safe crossing by the children and their parents who would have to cross there. In the opinion of many of the community who saw the plan last night, plan C-1 represents an unacceptable trade-off of safety in order to satisfy the concerns expressed by a few neighbors about parking off of N

Latham St. We should not be putting forward a plan that requires our school faculty and staff to have to serve as crossing guards and traffic cops in order to assure safe access to the school. They aren't trained to do this, there are no ACPS standards that requires training and consistent procedures for managing traffic at the school, and it is a huge potential liability for the school and ACPS .

In fact, we know that plan A-1 represents a much better plan for managing safety, particularly because it includes a bus loop off N Latham St. I believe the bus loop represents a reasonable compromise for balancing neighborhood concerns of increased traffic while assuring the optimal design for traffic safety.

I have brought along a diagram of option A-1 since I know it will not be presented to you tonight.

Option A-1's best feature is that it allow the vast majority of pedestrian and bike access without the need to cross ANY lanes of vehicle or bus traffic to enter the school campus. Because the bus loop is off the back of the school, pedestrians from Foxchase can get to the school via sidewalk up the east side of the property around the parking lot and into the school without crossing in front of any cars or buses. Obviously, that is a much safer traffic pattern for the school. And the Patrick Henry community thinks so, too. Twice, the community was polled about their preference of A-1 over C-1 and twice A-1 was selected by the majority of those attending the community meetings.

You will hear claims from those opposed to Latham St access that the sky will fall if option A-1 is selected. You will hear that Latham St is too small to accommodate buses. But that is incorrect. ACPS school buses currently travel down N Latham St and Polk Ave every single day. But, please don't listen to me or the other neighbors and community members you will hear from tonight. Ask the experts you hired to provide you with their professional opinion on what represents the best option for safety. Ask probing questions and really analyze what the safety concerns are and how each plan mitigates those concerns. Please don't compromise safety. It is far too important for our children and the community.

Thank you for your time.