



THE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT NOVEMBER OPEN HOUSE COMMUNITY COMMENTS

What would you like the Educational Design Team to consider as they plan for a new high school experience for our students?

I am a member of the George Mason Rebuild Task Force for the North Ridge Citizens Association. I greatly appreciated the briefing from the project leader on December 1. I am very concerned there is any interest in locating housing on Alexandria public school property. I think the colocation of housing on school property is a horrible idea. One issue I raised during the December 1 meeting was whether the High School Project team had investigated what instances trigger school lock downs. As a parent of two George Washington Middle School students, I know my daughters have experienced school lock downs when police are searching for suspects. My understanding is that medical events can also lock down schools. If there is housing on school properties and those residents experience medical events, will the entire school be locked down during that process? Are there other triggers for school lock downs that would increase by adding housing on school property? I would appreciate any information you all can find on this issue.

Outdoor space for students to gather outside of the classroom.

equity above all. more real-world education opportunities (personal finance; trades; entrepreneurship; etc.) efficient use of city resources to benefit the entire community. improved access for community members without access to a private vehicle via better walkability, bikeability, transit access, etc.

Make it child centered from beginning to end. Make it safe for students and teachers. And keep a handle on taxpayer dollars. Reported cost overruns at MacArthur before any tangible progress is made are a concern.

Drop-off, parking, and pedestrian safety.

Stop mixed use design. Stop increasing population density. Reduce risk to the entire community. Take responsibility for holding the position and office by ensuring the safety of the entire community and all people. COVID should have been a wakeup call to stop this type of thought process and planning.

Maximize use of space and look innovatively at building construction. Seek opportunities to increase heights of buildings with potential rec space on top and maximize use of fields adjacent to building (cars on first level (field on top). For future school (in 20 to 50 years) additional work is inevitable and need location to build new school while tear down old. As shown in evaluation for 2 high schools and recreation needs, space is a premium for ACPS build out and need to limit any other use outside of ACPS.

School and community use only - NO Housing!

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The city should absolutely in no way be considering housing on ACPS sites. We already have overcrowding on the limited space we have and now you are trying to dedicate limited land to housing. Mayor Wilson and Jinks are idiots to be pushing this agenda.

We need to project into the future what increased redevelopment, particularly in the West End, will mean in terms of having adequately large facilities to accommodate an ever-increasing school population.

While having to learn virtually full time is not ideal, given the space constraints, I love the idea of incorporating some version of online learning to all students schedules in the future. My 10th grader doesn't love learning from home full time, but if he had some days in school and some where he had the flexibility to work from home, he would welcome that! I think this is a great way to deal with having too many students in one building. Perhaps students could have rotating days in school? Or maybe half the day at home and half in person? Overall, I'm suggesting that when you consider what the new HS Project will look like, incorporating some online learning from home would be great.

Please clearly state estimated implementation dates in every announcement about this project. Also, please do not coopt students' time in classes or activities on this without their permission and choice. Please be specific with students when interacting with them about this project about how it will not include not current high school students.

Here is my experience that raises these concerns. One of my children recently attend an after school activity online and the time was taken up by Central Office staff talking to students prospectively about a special "academy" related to their activity and the exciting courses they could take. No one explained that these students will graduate before the new courses will be offered. I heard the discussion and thought it was really unfair and unkind. 1) The activity time was unexpectedly taken up to serve a Central Office need. It should be a choice to participate in this project planning. Plus, the students had work they needed to do during this meeting time but Central Office staff took away their time. 2) No one explained to the students they would graduate before any changes occur. So, it was really awful to talk to the students as if they personally were going to be given the opportunities discussed.

Please be considerate, transparent and kind to students. Respect their time and choices, and don't promise things they will "age out" of not be included in. I was really disappointed by what I overheard during this meeting.

Scarce school property should not be used for non-school purposes like collocating permanent housing on school property.

After learning about the proposed strategies to provide alternative field options during construction on the Minnie Howard campus, what are your major concerns, ideas or preferences?

I have heard about those strategies.

Parking, Traffic, Noise.

Continuance of available green spaces for students and community are paramount.

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Lack of acceptance and awareness of the risks to health, safety and the general population.

No co housing

No land owned by ACPS should be taken from playing fields for housing!

Locate alternatives at other schools and City parks that are closest to Minnie Howard.

What are your thoughts and ideas about the colocation opportunities being considered for the campus at Minnie Howard?

As said earlier, I am very opposed to colocating housing on school property. There are many other colocation options that I support, such as a teen health clinic, early childhood education classrooms and a rec center.

I love the idea of co-locating services, especially those that would serve students and their families like the teen wellness center, early childhood care, and affordable housing. I was disappointed with other attendees' dog whistling and overblown concerns over affordable housing, and hope the city knows that many of us strongly support the idea that Alexandrians in affordable housing are every bit as valuable and trustworthy as other citizens!

This is a horrible idea at any school. The added traffic alone would argue against, but there are so many other concerns. As someone who sent children through ACPS in past years, I can tell you I would be very, very reluctant to send a child to a facility that has adults with no ostensible connection to the school living in the same complex, 24-7. This city badly needs affordable housing, but this is NOT the way to approach it. Terrible, terrible idea.

NO housing. None. The access that adult residents would have to students is dangerous and irresponsible. It increases the chances of all manner of ills- truancy, drug dealing, abuse. Not to mention that it would not be a great living environment for anyone there. And would increase traffic and parking issues. No housing. Plus it reduces the possibilities for expanding or repurposing the site for ACPS in the future. NO CO-LOCATION. SCHOOL ONLY.

The city continues to say that space is limited for ACPS and growing population. Why would we increase growth and limit future development for ACPS on city property? In addition, there is limited green space, rec field and the city should be looking at expanding those and not limiting to allow all opportunities to fresh air, exercise and healthy body with paying huge fees to go find that elsewhere. Field space in this city should be treated on equal par with need for schools.

Terrible idea! Safety and security concerns. Provide open space for students and community.

No no no. Just stop it with the stupid co location nonsense. You are setting the city up for so many problems.

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NO HOUSING, schools should be for education not housing!

I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to building housing on the Minnie Howard site. Housing has no business being co-located with a school. Where are the safeguards?

I agree that we need to think creatively to address ways of maximizing available space and services for a community. However, schools are places where children are educated and congregate. There is no need to expose children to unnecessary danger by having inappropriate co-location uses taking place on school grounds. The impacts that must be considered for potential co-located services on school grounds need to be more expansive than those for other types of City property to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Accordingly, impacts that must be considered for potential co-located services on school grounds should include, but are not limited to, safety of children, loss of the ability for school building expansion, impact on the City green building policy (i.e. private housing has a lower greenhouse gas standard to meet than a City facility such as a school), increased parking demand/traffic, loss of outdoor play space, additional building height, school schedule impacts, and cost impacts. Having any type of adult housing on school property would not be appropriate since it fails to comport with any of the important considerations noted directly above. Among the many other adverse consequences, having adult housing on school property would allow adults to have easy access to school facilities and children. Putting housing on a school site will eliminate the possibility of further school expansion since it is highly unlikely the City would want to force residents to move and also incur the cost of demolishing a building. There is also no question that allowing commercial development to be co-located on school grounds will jeopardize the City commitment to reducing GHGs as envisioned under the Environmental Action Plan 2040 since commercial developments only have to meet LEED Silver. Putting adult housing on school property would certainly increase traffic in and out of school property as well as in the surrounding areas near the school. Given the typically large footprint required to build adult housing, it is foreseeable that there would be a reduction in outdoor play space to accommodate such housing. There are also school schedule impacts since certain school activities could negatively impact residents living in the co-located adult housing and have to be curtailed or terminated (e.g. night game noise, night lights outside activities, etc.). The City would also incur significant costs providing for the needed infrastructure to accommodate squeezing a large building on school property which costs might include having to redesign the school footprint. The likely additional building height that would be granted for adult housing co-located on school property could also negatively impact the character of nearby neighborhoods. Based on the above considerations, the types of co-located services (beyond having more than one school at the same location) that might be appropriate for a school could include (1) child day care facilities, (2) child after-school care programs, (3) community use of play space/fields on nights and weekends, (4) health clinics, (5) wellness centers, (7) libraries, (8) parks, (9) recreational programming/facilities, (10) small police satellite offices like the one at Ben Brenman Park or (11) other such similar public amenities or services. These types of services do not involve having adults on school property 24/7 and have the added benefit of providing a service directly related to schooling and/or a public service.

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Among the many other adverse consequences, having adult housing on school property would allow adults to have easy access to school facilities and children. Putting housing on a school site will eliminate the possibility of further school expansion since it is highly unlikely the City would want to force residents to move and also incur the cost of demolishing a building. There is also no question that allowing commercial development to be co-located on school grounds will jeopardize the City's commitment to reducing GHGs as envisioned under the Environmental Action Plan 2040 since, unlike for City property, commercial developments only have to meet LEED Silver. Putting adult housing on school property would certainly increase traffic in and out of school property as well as in the surrounding areas near the school. Given the typically large footprint required to build adult housing, it is foreseeable that there would be a reduction in outdoor play space to accommodate such housing. There are also school schedule impacts since certain school activities could negatively impact residents living in the co-located adult housing and have to be curtailed or terminated (e.g. night game noise, night lights outside activities, etc.). The City would also incur significant costs providing for the needed infrastructure to accommodate squeezing a large building on school property which costs might include having to redesign the school footprint. The likely additional building height that would be granted for adult housing co-located on school property could also negatively impact the character of nearby neighborhoods.

In addition, there are practical considerations that make it undesirable to have adult housing co-located on school property:

How would the City be able to impose the current prohibition on firearms on public property if a resident or property owner of a facility co-located with a school had a firearm?;

How would the City be able to legally require that a resident or property owner of a facility co-located with a school were an Alexandria resident or an Alexandria teacher or employee? ;

Why would the City want to expose residents and children to serious health risks by greatly increasing density on school property during a pandemic?; and,

Given the fact that many of our school sites are very tight and do not meet minimum state standards for land area, why would it ever be advisable to put adult housing on the scarce land that we have in our city for schools?

In short, based on practical considerations as well as considerations related to the safety of children, the impact on the City's green building policy, increased parking demand/traffic, loss of outdoor play space, additional building height, school schedule impacts, loss of the ability for school expansion and cost impacts, having any type of adult housing on school property is not appropriate.

Based on the above considerations, the types of co-located services that might be appropriate for a school could include (1) child day care facilities, (2) child after-school care programs, (3) community use of play space/fields on nights and weekends, (4) health clinics, (5) wellness centers, (7) libraries, (8) parks, (9) recreational programming/facilities, (10) police satellite offices like the one at Ben Brenman Park or (11) other such similar public amenities or services. These types of services do not involve having adults on school property 24/7 and have the added benefit of providing a public service and/or a service directly related to schooling.

Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns?

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Unbelievably concerned about the suggestion to have low income housing built. There is already a facility being built on other side of King Street. There is not a enough transportation options, parking or infrastructure to support. Additionally, King St. is not conducive to foot traffic, which would cause danger for cars and pedestrians. I highly oppose low income housing units being built.

thank you for holding the open house, it was very informative!

Stop trying to jam housing into school properties. Save green space. Require the high-end construction going on all over the city to have a much higher percentage of affordable units; this relentless approval of high-end housing that has driven prices through the sky has been a massive failure of our city government for decades, and now it's trying to cover up a problem of years of its own doing by forcing these kinds of untenable housing ideas onto the schools.

What in hell are you thinking these days - this is Alexandria, VA - Northern Virginia, not Brooklyn or Queens, NY.

No Housing! No Housing! No Housing! No Housing! No Housing! No Housing!

ACPS needs to stand up to the City on the issue of co-location. How can anyone possibly think this is a good idea? It may be convenient, but that doesn't make it good.

Other than being opposed to having permanent housing of any type co-located on school property, no.

Again, please be explicitly clear about implementation dates for the transition in everything you share and do. Even if you don't know the dates, you can at least say ... "ACPS expects to implement this after 2023". It is only fair to students and smart from a PR perspective to do this.

Please also think about how it looks when you overhype how great things are GOING to be once your new "equity" and "high school" projects are implemented. You are making it look like you will only do these things well AFTER some special, upcoming date. Over-hyping new ideas does not instill confidence that quality and equity are being offered now.

Be careful when you are so excited about your "new" idea that you forget how many dozens of "new" ideas we have been promised that never delivered results. Parents who have been around for decades know much more than current Central Office staff or current School Board members about how many improvements we have been promised in grand ways yielded no change for students. I personally volunteered countless hours to help with several prior improvement projects. Sadly, I have never seen one of the dozens of "transformative" ideas cause improvements. I know that when you hype things up so much, kids feel like they are not worth investing in when the new ideas don't work. Please learn about this frustrating history and be thoughtful about it.

Dial down the flashiness of presenting your ideas as promises of future greatness. Just do great things today, and respectfully always work gradually towards doing better.