

# DRAFT ACPS/COA Long Range Educational Facilities Plan

*Please comment on the Draft ACPS/City of Alexandria Long Range Educational Facilities Plan*

All Statements sorted chronologically

As of June 8, 2015, 8:41 AM



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# DRAFT ACPS/COA Long Range Educational Facilities Plan

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As of June 8, 2015, 8:41 AM, this forum had:

Attendees: 76

All Statements: 10

Minutes of Public Comment: 30

This topic started on May 27, 2015, 3:53 PM.

# DRAFT ACPS/COA Long Range Educational Facilities Plan

Please comment on the Draft ACPS/City of Alexandria Long Range Educational Facilities Plan

Janine Rubitski inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

June 7, 2015, 1:09 PM

Thank you for a thorough job on developing this plan, and the collaboration shown between ACPS and the city on the process. A few enhancements would be helpful in understanding how the plan will be implemented. 1) Showing how it links to the CIP budget just approved for FY 16 - 26 and to the facilities modernization plan. These are both mentioned but it is not clear on whether modernization and the recommendations in the report are one and the same, will happen at the same time or seperately etc. Chapter 5 could address some of this but does not do so clearly. 2) Show a summary of the status of each school in the executive summary along with a timeline of renovations/rebuilding.

Finally, the plan does not deal with the short term issues we have, with every school but 1 being already beyond capacity. It is not realistic to think this plan will address all of that quickly, so how are we going to address the worst over-crowdings now?

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Name not shown inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

June 5, 2015, 2:09 PM

I am very upset about the redistricting. My child is a kindergartener at Lyles Crouch. We have been extremely happy with the principal and teachers at Lyles Crouch. Now we are told that in a year our son and our daughter (she is in preschool, but will be entering kindergarten the year of the redistricting) will maybe attend a different school. I am beyond livid. We have started to connect with other parents and build a community at this school. We are extremely happy with Lyles Crouch. I feel like the School Board and others will tell us we understand, but this is going to happen so deal with it. I understand that some schools are overcrowded, but there must be another answer.

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Michael Carrasco inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

June 4, 2015, 4:15 PM

As ACPS is pursuing a modernization plan in order to address capacity and building conditions, I would strongly urge the work group to use the reference guide for building professionals in Virginia called the Accessibility Reference Manual. This reference manual has been compiled with the objective of identifying and examining the various accessible issues that Contractors, architects, local building/planning officials, and other building professionals face the most frequently and to identify areas of confusion among the existing building codes and the civil rights legislation. This document is designed as an easy reference for all building professionals. Accessibility is a universal concern and as building professionals become more familiar with differing accessibility standards and the options they present, the more our respective communities will benefit. It is a project produced jointly by the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living and the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities.

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Name not shown inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

May 31, 2015, 1:59 PM

This document clearly represents much research into emerging trends in educational facility design. It's worth noting that the old Jefferson Houston, Cora Kelly and other sprawling one level schools did as well, in their time.

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So we might do well to restrain ourselves from certainty that the Urban School Model will stand us well as communities become denser and denser. Of particular concern to me are the precepts around Open Space (inset, p. 3.12 and 3.13). Many schools are in the "chute" for renovation and Patrick Henry is well into its conceptual planning stages. Yet while the LREFP for Open Space specifically states that school sites should avoid any loss of open space on the site, this is precisely what appears to be happening based on the Feasibility Study for the school site, that has been presented to the School Board. It further states that the quality of Open Spaces shall be improved. What, exactly does this mean? Does a rooftop play area constitute an "open space quality improvement?" I shudder to think so. Perhaps in New York City but in Alexandria, where we have real grass and fields for joyful play and (free) community use around all our schools? Of particular concern to me is Public Open Space (POS) such as exists around Patrick Henry Elementary School. The City has already lost open space acreage at Jefferson Houston; let's not repeat that mistake with Patrick Henry or any other school site planned for renovation/replacement.

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Name not shown inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

May 30, 2015, 5:30 PM

While I recognize the need to accommodate the growing student population, any policy changes, including redistricting, needs to also accommodate the views of the diverse views of the community. As a parent from the Townes of Cameron Parke community within the Eisenhower Valley, I am concerned that the City's long-range educational plan could adversely impact on my community, particularly on our property values for our homes. Many of us have bought homes in our community because of the excellent elementary school of Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy (LCTA). Therefore, any recommendation to remove our community from the LCTA school zone would likely be bitterly opposed and contested by myself and my neighbors and it would, I fear, push many residents to consider either moving out of our community or enroll their children in private school. Furthermore, if our community is redistricted to a less-than performing elementary school, I fully expect it to lower our property values. Many parents would not only see their children risk being sent to a lower-performing school, but would also risk seeing the value of their homes drop as a result of the change in schools.

Therefore, before considering re-zoning of the school district, the School Board needs to consider other steps first, such as the reduction in school transfer requests outside of your zone. While I sympathize with parents that wish to transfer to good schools like LCTA, MacArthur and Maury, many of them have chosen to live in other school zones. If they want a better school zone for their children, they should move and not force others to give up living in a school zone where many have bought their homes for that very reason.

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Name not available (unclaimed)

May 28, 2015, 6:55 PM

Until there is a commitment by city council on a significant increase in long term funding to the ACPS budget any long term school plan requiring funding increases merely becomes an exercise in wish listing. Council has ignored properly funding ACPS existing maintenance and Infrastructure needs for at least a decade. Also a problem is the lack of proper planning by ACPS as to the real long term capacity needs of the system, examples are the construction of a too small TC Williams HS & a too large Jefferson Houston. There seems to be a pattern of poor planning no matter who the superintendent or school board members may be. Lets see how the Redistricting Plan currently in development works out before going to the city council and asking for structural funding for new buildings or a significant increase in building capacity and make a concerted effort to

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identify and address the long overdue maintenance items in our present structures. The construction of new facilities and the expansion of present ones without a long term maintenance funding plan in place is just plain irresponsible.

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Name not shown inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

May 28, 2015, 6:39 PM

Please consider a study of high school capacity and perhaps having satellite programs (STEM? International Academy? Career & Technical Programs?) located at satellite campuses built on the 2 smaller parcels in order to alleviate crowding @ TCW. And I know it might be difficult to admit, but maybe we need another high school. We already have the largest in the state & the # of students it serves continues to grow.

Please also consider the higher projections-- we are seeing a continued pattern of more children in existing housing, plus many new units of housing are being added as part of a Potomac Yard & West End redevelopment. Planners missed this trend 15 years ago when neighborhoods like Del Ray began to fill up with strollers even while ACPS officials were planning on enrollment decreases. Let's not repeat that mistake.

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Name not shown inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

May 28, 2015, 2:49 PM

My only question is how much is the City Council committed to this? The School Board is but will the City fund was is needed to make sure our students are not using hallways as classrooms? I urge the City to prioritize ACPS.

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Name not shown inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

May 28, 2015, 9:21 AM

Wow. What a lengthy report! While much of the background, forecasts and challenges that ACPS faces is on point and informative, I have concerns about the method in which the information about individual schools was gathered and the recommendations actually issued. First, on page A1.2, it states that all meetings of the LREFP work group and subcommittees were open to the public. I attended one such meeting and was relegated to an observer status - I did not at any point during the meeting feel welcome to participate in the discussion. Second, at that meeting, I came away to understand the task force would meet with each school (administration, teacher, parents, community) to discuss the preliminary findings about that school - that never happened. I tried to follow what was going on in this area and I was unaware of any community roadshows. Third, I have never gotten the sense that this task force ever communicated with or collaborated with the Long Range Strategic Task Force (about which I have other issues and concerns). At the end of the day, we have two reports with a lot of big ticket wish list items on them and no money to fund any of them. I also heard second hand from someone who attended a meeting with a sitting Councilman that said Councilman was unaware of either Task Force initiative. It is though different parts of the ACPS and the City are working in vacuums without the proper communication or collaboration necessary to make these efforts successful. Fourth, while I understand members from the Project Staff visited our local school last fall, I further understand that they spoke to one parent only when that parent asked what they were doing onsite and never even interviewed the principal of the school. The report on our school lacks input from the people who most intimately know the

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building, its infrastructure and the school's needs. While the report does identify some deficiencies, it misses some big structural issues that need attention but have been tabled for years - and are at risk of being delayed even longer because the City did not fully fund the ACPS budget request. When built in 1958, our building intentionally was constructed inferiorly. The roof leaks, the elevator often shows its age, and the HVAC is inconsistent. None of these are identified as problems. Band aid fixes no longer work and this particular school is not even slated to be "modernized" for another decade - if not longer. (Please note that the footnote for our school's report also directs us to the webpage of another school in the district.) Fifth, the report recommends that the school be expanded by taking up half its already too small parking lot and that the remaining half of the parking lot be used jointly by busses and kiss-and-ride. Really?! The report claims this is doable because there is street parking. Street parking already is hard to come by and is limited to two or three hour parking restrictions. Parents who volunteer to chaperone class trips already face challenges parking longer than two or three hours and the report suggests that the teachers and staff take on this burden. ACPS is facing a crisis with regards to its school buildings - in terms of capacity and physical condition. Something needs to be done, but sadly I don't see how or when given the funds required. At the end of the day, I wish the task force visited our school and spoke with all of us to accurately identify our needs.

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Name not shown inside City of Alexandria (on forum)

May 27, 2015, 5:09 PM

I have watched (and commented on) this process for quite some time. It has been frustrating in that the focus appears to have been upon refining and refining and refining how many students ACPS might have 4-5 years from now. It appears to be something like 3500 more than today. Where is the focus on where these kids are going to sit? Who is going to teach them? How are they going to be funded?

I gather the CIP budget includes close to the amount ACPS hopes to have for new facilities over the next ten years. There would appear to be a problem in that the City's funding schedule is back end loaded. How do "construction dollars" in years 7-8-9-10 provide classroom seats for kids arriving in the next 2-3-4-5 years?

This has the feeling of Fire Station 210 all over again. The plans need kids, classrooms and teachers "in sync" - not buildings years after the kids arrive. Or are we failing to understand the plan? The clock is ticking. The kids are coming. Where are the facilities and teachers? Where's the funding?

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