

MEETING MINUTES

JUSTICE HS PARKING WORKGROUP

Date: Monday, November 27, 2023

Time: 6:30 – 8:00pm

Location: Justice HS Library

WORKING GROUP ATTENDANCE

Jeff Longo, Co-Chair

Ann-Marie Ward, Co-Chair

Kathleen Brown

Stacey Carter

Mark Doehnert

Mica Karotkin

Kim Lanoue

Bill Lecos

Matt Levi

Ben McKitrick

Jody McKitrick

Ariel Miller

Haile Russom

Emma Schrage

Victoria Sneed

Barbara Wolf

FCPS ATTENDANCE

Cristy Coffey

Christie Scott

GUESTS

Supervisor Penny Gross

School Board Member Ricardy Anderson

Supervisor-Elect Andres Jimenez

AGENDA

- Update to Elected Officials
- Survey Draft – Finalization
- Winter/Spring 2024 Meeting Planning

Meeting began at 6:38 p.m.

Visitors were acknowledged and welcomed.

Meeting minutes from 10/30/23 were approved with unanimous consent.

DISCUSSION

Agenda Item: Update to Elected Officials

The interim report was summarized by the co-chairs. The report represents the work of the group to date (attached).

Mr. Longo noted that the group had reached out to several subject matter experts for assistance, with varying degrees of success.

- Supervisor Gross explained that VDOT controls nearly all roads in Fairfax County and that FCDOT does not have authority to address any parking questions.
- Dr. Anderson and Supervisor Gross each encouraged the group to reach out to their respective offices if assistance is needed when requesting staff participation and/or responses.

Interim Recommendation Discussion:

Remote Lots

- The group recommends that talks with neighboring property owners be reinvigorated as a temporary parking solution.
- When presented with the idea of using eminent domain, Supervisor Gross and Dr. Anderson both recommended against including it as a final recommendation. Supervisor Gross provided a high-level explanation of the legal requirements for the use of eminent domain.

Low Capital Solutions

- Recommendation for a retaining wall to gain another row of parking on current surface lot was explained, including the \$1.75 M cost estimate and possible barriers with existing vegetation and conservation easement navigation.
- Recommendation to explore expanding Peace Valley Lane to allow for angled parking was discussed.
 - Supervisor Gross explained that Peace Valley Lane is a public access easement owned by FCPS. She suggests focusing on what might be done with portions of the roadway owned by FCPS, noting in the recommendation that there should be additional work done for potential engineering.
- The group explained that they have not reached out to FCPA to explore options based on the FCPS Facilities team response when asked about this idea. The group decided to focus on other options before returning to explore anything with FCPA.

Neighborhood Parking

- Recommendation to explore student/staff parking in the current Resident Permit Parking District 38, in coordination with the County.
 - Supervisor Gross agreed that this is a legitimate recommendation.

Long Term Solutions

- Discussion about structured parking as a long-term solution for the space-constrained site.
- Supervisor Gross shared that when the idea of parking deck was proposed years ago, she said, "absolutely not." She went on to say that the reality is that we are constrained in many places in county for high schools. She believes it would be wise to include this in the final recommendation to at least "plant a seed" for the future. She acknowledged that the biggest challenges would be budget and security.
- Parking fees - Dr. Anderson explained that 80% of the fee revenue goes into the FCPS operating fund, not to the school.

Other Discussion Items/Suggestions:

- Survey
 - Dr. Anderson stressed the need for a robust plan to ensure engagement of the neighborhood in the survey process – consider ideas such as creating a QR code to place on every door.
 - Dr. Anderson expressed that it is crucial to have "guardrails" for the survey so that only one submission is allowed for each person to avoid skewed results.
- Final Recommendation
 - In the introduction of the final report, it will be important to articulate that the priority is to ensure that all staff has parking - include numbers (current staff, current available spaces, deficit, etc.)
 - Supervisor Gross reminded the group that the audience for the final recommendations is the BOS and the School Board and they are looking at different things: land use and code vs. properties and student/staff issues.
 - Supervisor Gross suggested a final report structure separating short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals.
- Dr. Anderson and Supervisor Gross reminded the group to continue focusing on the mission and not be tempted to try to solve potential barriers. Identify the barriers, but keep it high level and let peripheral things be someone else's work.
- Keeping an eye on the Glasgow boundary process and how that may affect the needs of the high school.
- Safe Routes to Schools - future discussion to include WMATA, bike trails, etc.
- Supervisor Gross believes that shared parking arrangement discussions with County staff could happen in the near term.

Action: Jeff and Ann Marie reach out to Penny to discuss shared parking arrangement discussions.

The guests were thanked for their attendance and excused.

Agenda Item: Winter/Spring 2024 Meeting Planning

There was a brief discussion about dates for future meetings. The group agreed to continue Mondays, 6:30-8:00 on the third or fourth Monday of the month, based on availability and holidays, January – May 2024.

Discussion about ORSI process and timeline. Is it possible for ORSI to share their expertise and participate in the finalization process?

Action: Jeff and Ann Marie will work with Christie Scott to ask ORSI if they are able to attend the December 11 meeting.

Agenda Item: Survey Draft - Finalization

The group was unable to get to this agenda item and agreed to hold an additional meeting to finalize the survey on December 11, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., being prepared to go over time, if needed to finalize the survey.

Meeting adjourned 8:02 p.m.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

December 11, 2023

Jan-May 2024 monthly meeting dates TBA

Justice High School Pyramid Community Working Group Interim Report

November 27, 2023

To Supervisor Penny Gross and Representative Dr. Ricardy Anderson,

Since late Spring of 2023, the Justice High School Pyramid Community Working Group has been meeting to fulfill our proffered mission to meet to address and consider a broad range of options including the following:

- Student transportation survey;
- School faculty and staff transportation survey;
- Counseling for students on transportation needs and options;
- Additional parking options; and
- Green Transportation alternatives such as Bikeshare, scooters and carpools.

Summary

The working group is developing the survey and has reached out to various subject matter experts. Interim recommendations include

- revitalizing talks with neighboring property owners for use of their lots
- several reasonably low capital options for additional on-site parking
- additional long-term funding for real estate limited projects to include parking structures
- exploring the potential for permitted students and staff to park in residential parking permit districts

The group plans to continue work into 2024.

Survey Preparation

The working group has agreed that the survey should be administered via the FCPS Office of Research and Strategic Improvement (ORSI). The working group plans on distinct versions of the survey being distributed to students, faculty and staff (including itinerant staff), and the community. The working group is primarily focused on what data it wants to collect and the questions it is asking each group. More detailed survey administration issues such as duplicate response rejection are expected to be handled by ORSI.

The survey has gone through several drafts as of this report. The agenda for the November 27th, 2023, meeting of the working group includes draft finalization so that we can submit to ORSI prior to the winter break.

Data Collection with Subject Matter Experts

The working group has contacted various subject matter experts to answer questions and to provide insight into what solutions may be possible. Such subject matter experts have included:

- The FCPS Facilities project team that worked on the addition
 - o A large contingent of the project team came in person to our working group meeting, however many of our questions have gone unanswered.
- FCDOT
 - o FCDOT turned down a request to appear and help explain the various regulations regarding parking spaces along public roadways.
- Mason District Police
 - o Police provided responses via the co-chairs to questions regarding parking district enforcement and safety issues (i.e. student speeding).

We anticipate further interaction with additional groups as our work progresses, such as Safe Routes to School.

Interim Recommendations

The working group wishes to convey a few preliminary recommendations regarding parking options prior to a final report after survey results are available.

Remote Lots

When the construction project was communicated to the public, FCPS Facilities had said they were going to look into the use of remote lots at the Church of Christ (6149 Leesburg Pike) or the nearby condominiums – both of which have underutilized parking lots during the school day. FCPS facilities notified the working group that such efforts ended without any agreement in place due to an unwillingness of the parties involved to provide parking rights, and staff recommended against using eminent domain. When the working group requested the rationale for recommending against eminent domain, FCPS staff claiming they could not provide legal advice.

It is the view of the working group that talks with nearby condominium owners and the Church of Christ should resume with the goal of establishing at least a temporary daytime student parking agreement. Such a solution would present an ongoing operational cost - partially offset by student parking fees - this solution is not an ideal long-term fix. Still, the working group strongly feels there needs to be more effort put into this solution even if it is only for a limited term. A negligible amount of capital expenditure may be required to increase lighting and enhance safety along the path from the lots to the school.

Regarding the aspect of eminent domain: if an agreement cannot be made in good faith with the land owners, the working group is in favor of FCPS utilizing its eminent domain power to acquire the right to use these underutilized lots for student parking.

Low Capital Solutions

The working group believes that additional parking may be achievable with existing FCPS owned real estate utilizing low capital solutions not previously considered. Specifically, if the existing parking lot is expanded through the use of a retaining wall along Peace Valley Lane on the south portion of the property, another row of parking may be achieved. The working group does not have access to civil engineers and received minimal cooperation from FCPS facilities on this matter. Waivers for a tree protection area would need to be sought. Engineering may discover that in order to maintain parking on Peace Valley Lane, it may need to be moved a few feet south-west presenting a small park encroachment. Should that arise, as long as there is minimal park encroachment and up-front communication with the community, the working group feels the solution will be much more agreeable to all involved.

Another option the working group has been exploring is the idea of expanding Peace Valley Lane to allow for angled parking. While the working group was told by FCPS Facilities project staff that angled parking is not possible along a public road due to safety concerns, the working group points to the long-established angled parking along Washington Blvd in Arlington by the Italian Store.

The working group believes either of these ideas can be executed within existing bonding capacity and encourages allocation of preliminary funds for further exploration to be enabled via the next Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) update.

The proposal for the retaining wall option is depicted via a rough sketch below, with the red line indicating the proposed retaining wall location.



Parking in Neighborhood

The neighborhood surrounding Justice High School is currently in Resident Permit Parking District 38. Resident Permit Parking Districts generally prohibit street parking except where permitted, with permits provided to residents and their guests. The working group proposes that FCPS Students and Staff with valid school parking permits be allowed to park in these parking districts, so long as FCPS – in coordination with the county – use reasonable limits on the total number of permits issued to students. This proposal would need to be analyzed by staff to determine any updates necessary to county code to facilitate this recommendation.

Long Term Solutions

The working group notes that surrounding jurisdictions such as Arlington, Falls Church, and Alexandria, which also have space-constrained school sites, have each budgeted for and utilized structured parking. While the working group acknowledges that a such a solution may not be feasible in the short or medium term given FCPS’s current capital outlook, it is the working group’s recommendation that facilities planning and budgeting consider structured parking as normative for space constrained locations. Proposals that recommend drastic parking reductions in lieu of structured parking present equity issues with areas of the county that are not space constrained.

Middle School Boundary Adjustment Process Impacts

The working group has been following the process of a potential Glasgow Middle School boundary adjustment with interest, as it feels any such boundary adjustments will have a material impact on the future parking and transportation needs at Justice High School. Since Glasgow Middle School is the primary feeder into Justice High School, the working group recommends that such boundary work consider impacts to the Justice High School parking and transportation situation.

Final Notes

The working group has worked with a can-do attitude – one where we believe that reasonable solutions exist and that barriers are not always insurmountable. Barriers need to be identified and action plans developed to overcome them. The first fruits of our work are present in this report. We encourage county and FCPS staff to work with us in seeking these solutions in the new year.

Best Regards,

Jeffrey Longo and Ann-Marie Ward
Co-Chairs, Justice High School Pyramid Community Working Group

CC: Supervisor-Elect Andres Jiminez