

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
SCHOOLS COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2016**

PRESENT: Timothy J. Sargeant, Commissioner At-Large, Chairman  
Pete Murphy, Springfield District  
Ellen J. Hurley, Braddock District  
Julie Strandlie, Mason District  
Karen Keys-Gamarra, Sully District  
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District

ABSENT: NONE

OTHERS: James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large  
John Ulfelder, Dranesville District  
James Migliaccio, Lee District  
Jill G. Cooper, Director, Planning Commission  
Chris Caperton, Planning Division, (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning  
(DPZ)  
David Stinson, PD, DPZ  
Karen Corbett Sanders, Fairfax County School Board  
Kevin Sneed, Special Projects, Fairfax County Public Schools  
Sandy Evans, Fairfax County School Board

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Edition, Public Facilities, Policy Plan
- B. Board Matter, March 1, 2016
- C. Urban Schools Model

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Vice Chairman Frank de la Fe, Commission called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Board Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22035, pursuant to Section 4-102 of the Commission's Bylaws & Procedures. He indicated that the first order of business was to elect a Committee chairperson.

Commissioner de la Fe MOVED TO NOMINATE TIMOTHY J. SARGEANT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 2016 SCHOOLS COMMITTEE.

Commissioner Hurley seconded the motion which carried by a vote of 6-0.

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Chairman Timothy Sargeant called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m., in the Board of Supervisors Conference Room of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chris Caperton, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), and David Stinson, PD, DPZ, gave a presentation based on the Board of Supervisors recommendation which is in attachment B: Board Matters, March 1, 2016. The presentation included:

**Purpose**

Fairfax County's growth Strategy encourages new development in activity centers and will result in the need for additional schools. There are few available sites in the County's activity centers that can be developed at a low intensity. As a result, smaller sites developed at a higher intensity will need to be considered and it is necessary for the Policy Plan to reflect this need.

**Mission**

Develop locational and character criteria for urban/vertical schools in the Public Facilities section of the Policy Plan element of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

**Existing Policy Plan Guidelines**

Remove policy plan language that conflicts with urban/vertical schools  
Add policy plan language to support urban/vertical schools.

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Chairman Sargeant discussed future meetings and announced the dates for:

- May 4, 2016 – Presentation of visioning
- May 25, 2016 – Discussion of first draft plan text
- June 15, 2016 – Discussion of second draft plan text
- June 29, 2016 – Final review of draft plan text
- July 13, 2016 – If needed
- July 21, 2016 – Planning Commission public hearing
- September 20, 2016 – Board of Supervisors public hearing

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.  
Timothy J. Sargeant, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: John W. Cooper  
Approved: May 4, 2016



John W. Cooper, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission

**EDUCATION**

Fairfax County residents are offered a full and varied range of educational opportunities through the county's public school system and the presence of both a community college and a four-year university.

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS****INTRODUCTION**

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is the major provider of education in the county. This system, which has been nationally recognized for excellence and is one of the largest school system in the nation, has a wide range of educational facilities that accommodate instructional programs for county students from kindergarten through grade 12. In addition to accommodating educational programs, school facilities are used to meet the recreational and cultural needs of the county through programming by the Department of Recreation and Community Services. Generally, separate facilities are provided to serve three levels of education:

- Elementary ----- kindergarten to grade 6
- Intermediate ----- grades 7 and 8
- High ----- grades 9 through 12

Additionally, FCPS has an extensive adult education program, and many specialized educational programs. Special education programs serve mentally and physically handicapped students, ranging in age from 2 to 22. The Family and Early Childhood Education Program (FECEP), formerly known as Head Start, is a preschool program operated primarily in elementary schools for children ages 4 and 5.

The fundamental element in capital facility planning for public schools is determining future memberships, a complex procedure which continues to be refined. The school system employs a combination of two statistical methodologies, a modified cohort-survival model and the cohort-component model, for projecting student populations. The cohort-survival model is based on expected birth and migration rates and the cohort-component model modifies survival ratio projections to account for special events that effect projections, such as students generated by new housing. The latter model employs housing student-generation yields using a computer-assisted geographic planning model, which aggregates estimates to attendance area level. These estimates are then incorporated into the cohort-survival generated attendance area estimates. These models are only effective with current data. Therefore, thorough knowledge of housing starts and use of appropriate dwelling-unit multipliers are essential. In addition to obtaining current housing start information, FCPS staff conduct both windshield surveys, to determine construction progress, and mail-out surveys, to determine current household composition. Enrollment is frequently projected to within a 1% level of accuracy.

Planning for schools is particularly difficult in areas with transient populations, such as Northern Virginia. This problem is compounded in Fairfax County by rapid housing development, and a multitude of variables which alter enrollment levels, such as transfers to and from private schools, in and out migration rates, and changing family compositions in existing housing stock.

FCPS strives for precise facility planning, in order to mitigate costs associated with over-estimates and yet ensure adequate physical space for students and programs. The need for new facilities and additions is determined by comparing available capacity in an area and the projected

students for that area. Capacity is an estimate of the number of student spaces available within an educational facility which takes into account the following factors: educational specifications for elementary, intermediate and high schools; program requirements; and appropriate student-teacher ratios. For example, program requirements can alter space allocations within a building if they utilize additional space, such as the addition of a room for computer training. Changes in student-teacher ratios can alter the number of classrooms required for a given number of students by modifying how they are organized into classes and scheduled into rooms.

Student membership forecasts, coupled with capacity estimates and facility standards, provide the framework for capital facility planning. Locational criteria assist in site planning, identification and selection.

The next 20 years will prove a significant challenge in maintaining and improving the county's high standards for educational facilities. In addition to keeping pace with technological advances and demographic fluctuations, FCPS must acquire schools sites in an ever-tightening real estate market. Land acquisition and construction of schools will compete with other community facilities for available land and funding resources. While providing for new facilities is expected to be a major focus for FCPS, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the rehabilitation of existing facilities will compete for limited facility funding. Therefore, every effort should be made to ensure that projects cost-effectively meet FCPS requirements.

The Constitution of Virginia delegates the supervision of public schools to the school board of each locality. Virginia school boards are not county agencies. The Virginia Supreme Court consistently has acknowledged that the power to select school sites and to determine the manner in which school properties shall be used is essential to the school board's supervisory role.

Pursuant to Virginia Code annotated Section 15.2-2232 when a proposed public school facility is not featured in the Comprehensive Plan, the School Board must submit the proposed facility to the Planning Commission for a determination of whether the general, or approximate location, character, and extent of the proposed facility is substantially in accord with the Comprehensive Plan. The text, objectives, and policies appearing in this portion of the Policy Plan are planning guidelines and are not intended to negate the School Board's constitutionally vested authority for school site selection, school design, or the most appropriate method to house and accommodate Fairfax County public school students. On the other hand, to the extent that the text, objectives, and policies of this section reflect land use rather than programmatic concerns, they will be implemented by the Planning Commission, as required by Virginia Code, Section 15.2-2232.

#### Location

**Objective 6:** **Acquire sites for future building through negotiation, dedication, or condemnation, which best provide efficiently located schools.**

Policy a. Place schools on parcels meeting the optimum number of general locational criteria. Sites should be evaluated by the following factors:

- Safe and convenient accessibility to pedestrian and road networks.
- Acresage to accommodate expansion, when the school is originally sized below the maximum efficiency standard for that type of school.

- Compatibility with adjoining planned and existing development and with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Aesthetically pleasing physical qualities with appropriate engineering features (e.g. soils, topography).
- Proximity to other public facilities, such as Police and Fire and Rescue services.
- Proximity of schools to commercial areas should be avoided, if possible.

**Policy b.** Locate school sites, when situated in areas conducive to pedestrian traffic, to take advantage of maximum walking distances of one mile for elementary schools and one and a half miles for intermediate and high schools.

**Policy c.** Locate intermediate and high schools, and when possible, elementary schools, where they can be served by public water and sewer. When elementary schools must be located in nonsewered areas in order to serve their target student population, well and septic can be utilized if no other alternative is available.

**Policy d.** Purchase school sites, when land dedications cannot be obtained, as far in advance of construction as possible, to ensure availability of both the preferred location and the necessary site features. Implement a land acquisition plan through the Capital Improvement Program.

**Policy e.** Encourage site dedications which provide sufficient usable acreage to meet locational criteria.

**Policy f.** Coordinate the acquisition and design of the site's active recreation areas with the Fairfax County Park Authority as required to meet recreational standards and where feasible. This will ensure maximum opportunities for colocation and efficient use of recreational facilities.

**Policy g.** Encourage as part of the development and redevelopment process, commitments for school renewals and additions.

**Objective 7:** Distribute administration and maintenance facilities to conveniently serve the areas they support.

**Policy a.** Locate Area Administration buildings in the school areas they are intended to serve.

**Policy b.** Locate maintenance and operation facilities to afford greater convenience and reduction of travel time.

Character and Extent

**Objective 8:** Locate schools on sites which meet or exceed minimum state size standards.

**Policy a.** Ensure that minimum site size conforms to the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance F.A.R. requirements. This may require acquisition of acreage in addition to the state minimum requirements.

**Objective 9:** Design schools to allow for maximum site utilization while providing optimum service to, and compatibility with, the local community.

**Policy a.** Design schools to maximize a site's utility, while providing for safety and aesthetics. Provide for possible future expansion and allow for efficient flow of traffic. Provide adequate stacking space and circulation for school buses, and offstreet parking, as required. The impact of school traffic on local road networks should, to the extent possible, be minimized.

**Policy b.** Design and construct schools with appreciation for, and attention to, environmentally sensitive lands.

**Policy c.** Locate elementary, intermediate and high schools in relation to residential areas, the road network and traffic patterns to optimize the resulting safety and convenience for students, residents, and commuters. When possible, elementary schools should be located in, or on the periphery of, residential areas to ensure proximity and convenience for students and the local community.

**Policy d.** Provide for compatibility between schools and adjacent properties with appropriate screening and fencing, in accordance with the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. When designing and constructing schools, preserve as much mature natural vegetation as possible.

Other

**Objective 10:** Encourage full utilization of existing school facilities, whenever possible and reasonable, to support educational and community objectives.

**Policy a.** Build additions, when appropriate, to minimize the need for new facilities. Analyze carefully the costs and benefits associated with construction of an addition as compared to a new facility.

**Policy b.** Consider the expansion of existing school facilities identified on the Comprehensive Plan map, a feature shown of the Comprehensive Plan provided the proposed expansion has received prior approval by a public bond referendum, is included in the county's currently adopted Capital Improvement Program, and does not significantly impact on the character of the existing facility and its compatibility with the surrounding area.

**Policy c.** Provide temporary facilities as required to respond to short term student population accommodation needs.

**Policy d.** Promote equity between older and newer schools through the Renewal Program. Apply the same educational specifications used as a guide in the construction of new schools for planning the renewal of old ones. Consider expected future utilization rates when proposing renewal projects.

- Policy e. Continue the practice of serving local communities, for scouts, senior citizen programs and other neighborhood based activities, through the use of school facilities. Provide access to school grounds for community use of recreational facilities. Cooperate in the use of schools for the School Age Children child care program.
- Policy f. Continue the practice of allowing the Park Authority to utilize sites before school construction begins.
- Policy g. Provide space for other public service needs, when possible and reasonable, in underutilized schools.





**BOARD MATTER**

Agenda Item for Planning Commission Schools Committee  
March 1, 2016

As the Board is aware, Fairfax County's growth strategy is to encourage new development in our activity centers. Because some of the new development is residential, there is also a need for Fairfax County Public Schools to provide additional classroom capacity in those areas. The County and FCPS were able to take advantage of an opportunity to re-purpose a vacant office building for a school in the Baileys Crossroads/Seven Corners area, but the need for classrooms and facilities continues to grow.

In order to assist us in making future locational decisions about schools in our activity centers, I move that the Board request that the Planning Commission's Schools Committee, which is chaired by Commissioner-at-Large Tim Sargeant, develop locational and character criteria for such schools for potential inclusion in the Public Facilities section of the Policy Plan element of the County's Comprehensive Plan, and that this effort be completed no later than October 1 of this year.



URBAN SCHOOL MODELS

As Alexandria becomes more urban, there are fewer vacant sites or sites developed at a low intensity that could potentially be used for school sites. In this changing environment, the City and ACPS are exploring urban school models. For purposes of this plan, urban school means a smaller school site than is the norm in Alexandria with a school building that is taller (3+ stories) than the norm in Alexandria. While an urban school can often serve as the center of a community through the co-location of other uses, such as a library, recreation facilities or senior center, such co-locations can occur on traditional school sites as well; co-location is examined in further detail in applicable sections of this document.

An urban school can also include completely separate uses within the same building. A school might occupy the first few floors of a building with offices or residences above, or a school might occupy a separate wing of a mixed use building. A school which included preschool or elementary grades would need to be on the lowest occupy-able floors, with consideration given to having the youngest students on the ground floor. In a mixed-use building, the portion devoted to the school would need its own entrances, and would likely require separate elevators and stairwells for security purposes. Separate alarms and HVAC systems would also be required.

The Educational Specifications that are part of this plan were developed with a traditional school in mind. With an urban school model, most of the specifications would remain the same. Given the limited size of an urban school site, however, some of the Educational Specifications might need to be provided in a non-traditional manner. Nearby community and private facilities could in certain circumstances be used to meet the specifications. Providing play space in an adjacent park is one case in point.

Table 4.3 lists Elementary and Middle School Educational Specifications that might be accommodated in a non-traditional manner in an urban school. In all cases, any nearby spaces or facilities would need to be within ¼ mile walking distance and the walk would need to be on a safe, continuous sidewalk or trail, through open space or along a roadway categorized as a primary collector, residential collector or local street. Students would not be allowed to cross or walk along Controlled Access Facilities/Expressways<sup>1</sup> such as I-395 or Arterials such as Duke Street, King Street or Route 1.

Considerable public input would be required at the early planning stages of an urban school to determine which of the educational specifications could be provided in an alternative manner or in an alternative location.

Note: (1) Street classifications may change as a result of the update to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and the development of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines. The intent would still be to keep children away from high capacity roads.

SPECIFICATION	POTENTIAL ALTERNATE PROVISION
Gymnasium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than full size</li> <li>Use of nearby public or private gym</li> </ul>
Auditorium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of nearby theater/ performance space</li> </ul>
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributed eating throughout school</li> <li>Lunch in classrooms</li> <li>Use of private catering company</li> <li>Use of nearby restaurant/cafeteria</li> </ul>
Media Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of nearby library</li> <li>Mobile library</li> </ul>
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobile art lab</li> </ul>
Administrative Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributed throughout school</li> </ul>
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of nearby public health clinic</li> <li>Partnership with a nearby private clinic (ex. Minute Clinic)</li> <li>Mobile health unit</li> </ul>
Early childhood (Pre-K)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located in a nearby facility</li> </ul>
Aftercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located in a nearby facility</li> </ul>
Outdoor playspace (hard and soft surface)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rooftop</li> <li>Use of nearby facility (must be fenced)</li> </ul>
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus drop-off location required</li> <li>Use of Bus Rapid Transit lanes for school buses</li> </ul>
Kiss and Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated on-street parking spaces</li> </ul>
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less parking if near Metrorail or Metroway (Bus Rapid Transit)</li> <li>Use of shared parking</li> </ul>

Table 4.3

**Early Childhood.** ACPS does not currently provide universal pre-kindergarten programs and, at some schools, early childhood education is provided either through a state funded grant (*Virginia Preschool Initiative*) or federally funded grant such as Head Start (provided by a community partner, The Campagna Center). In accordance with



national trends toward earlier schooling, ACPS desires to implement universal prekindergarten at every school. For planning purposes, this document allocates classrooms for early childhood at every school at 80 to 90 percent of the planned kindergarten classrooms. At schools that house Head Start, classes can be held in standard PreK/K classrooms described in this document.

**Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).** AVID is an elective course that targets students in the academic middle who have a desire to attend college.

