



09 November 2017

FCPS Rock Creek School

Replacement and Final Site Design

Design Meeting #4 - Notes

FCPS Project Information Webpage: <http://www.fcps.org/facilities/rock-creek-school>

Meeting Date: 09 November 2017 | 9:30 AM | Rock Creek School

Current Design Phase: Site Selection

Attendees:

FCPS Educational Planning Team

Roger Fritz – Director Construction Management
Brian Staiger – FCPS Construction Management
Beth Pasierb – Supervisor of Facilities Planning
Tom Mulligan – FCPS Construction Management
Mary Malone – Principal Rock Creek School
Meghan Mackay-Little – Assistant Principal, Rock Creek School
Rick McTighe – Lead Custodian, Rock Creek School
Michelle Concepcion – FCPS Special Education Programs
Therese Pelicano – FCPS Transportation Manager
Sara Scovitch – OTPT
Ted Gardner – Director of Technology Infrastructure

Design Team

Shawn Benjaminson – Adtek Engineers
Sandra Carpenter – Becker Morgan Group
Cathy Purple Cherry – Purposeful Architecture/Purple Cherry Architects
Kori Purdum Matheis – Proffitt & Associates

Members of the Public

Jim McGaughran – City of Frederick Neighborhood Advisory Council #3 Representative (NAC3)

Meeting Discussion Items:

4.0 Project Status Updates

- a. **Area Summary Update** (Note: No revisions proposed since the last meeting) –
 - i. Current Base Bid Ed Spec Area = 81,103 GSF
 - ii. All co-located spaces have been removed from the scope of work.

- iii. Potential Add Alternate Ed Spec Area = 17,221 GSF
 - iv. Three of the four add alternates (Greenhouse, Future Capacity, and Alternative Education Program) are currently pending final approval. Acceptance of the fourth alternate, Parks & Rec Gymnasium, is still under review.
 - v. Total Base Bid + Add Alternate Ed Spec Area = 98,324
- b. **Budget Update** (Note: No revisions proposed since the last meeting) –
- i. Total Project Budget (including soft costs) = \$46,959,762
 - ii. Total Site, Testing, & Construction Budget = \$37,070,262
- c. **Schedule Update** – Architect provided a brief project schedule overview. There are no proposed schedule changes since the last meeting.
- d. **LEED Update** – No updates since the last meeting.
- e. **Summary of Activities for the past Two Weeks** –
- i. Design team has continued gathering and analyzing information regarding existing site conditions.
 - ii. Proposed site rubric has been finalized and is attached for review.
 - iii. Meetings were held on Wednesday, Nov 1 to gather feedback and comments on the site selection process. The first meeting was held at 10 AM with Rock Creek Parents Advisory Board members and parents. The second meeting was held at 7:00 PM and was open to the public.
 - iv. Meetings have been held with Principals of the existing schools (except for Walkersville Middle, which is scheduled to occur after today's meeting) on each of the sites under consideration to review impacts of co-locating Rock Creek on their site.
 - v. Rough site concepts continue to be developed and rubric scoring has begun.

4.1 General/Admin. – No topics were discussed.

4.2 Site Selection and Design

- a. There were no questions or comments on the site rubric. It will be considered final as attached.
- b. There was discussion regarding the parking requirements for the new facility. The existing Rock Creek School has a current enrollment of 80 and a total of 98 regular staff members. This number includes Teachers, Admin staff, Aides, OT/PT staff, Custodial staff, and other support staff who are in the building on a regular basis. It also includes 14 private duty nurses, who typically accompany students to school on the bus, so that true daily parking requirement for regular staff is likely about 84 spaces. The proposed new facility capacity is 120, which is 40 more than currently enrolled. These additional students would add at least 16 more staff members (4 teachers and 12 aides). Additionally, the Alternative Specialized program would have a staffing requirement of 15. The total staff parking need will be about 115 spaces. Regular visitors to the building include participants in IEP meetings (up to 6 at a time), equipment vendors (up to 3 at a time), and parents. It is desirable to have additional visitor spaces, plus accessible drop-off/pick-up spaces, so the previously proposed total of 160 spaces should be maintained. This does not necessarily account for the additional staffing that would be required if the Future Capacity alternate were to be added. Some

consideration should be given in the design to flexibility for overflow parking, possibly by using the paved play areas or other means. There are certain times where the visitor load is higher than average, such as the quarterly CARE awards and it would be nice to have the ability for on-site overflow if there is no adjacent parking on the street or other location that could be used for overflow.

- c. The architect asked about the intention of the Future Capacity alternate. The way it has been discussed so far implied that the entire additional classroom wing was to be designed as an add alternate in the bidding documents. Beth Pasierb indicated that she thought when the Ed Specs were being developed that there was not necessarily an intention to fully design that wing now, but just to ensure that the core spaces were sized for the larger capacity (up to 160 if this wing were to be added) and that a master planned space was provided on the site for addition of another wing sometime in the future. FCPS will review internally and clarify what the desired scope is in terms of this alternate.
- d. Mary Malone provided a basic overview of arrival and dismissal activities at Rock Creek to help the design team better understand the site circulation issues. Buses start arriving at 8:30 AM. They currently are served by 20 buses and use two separate doors for bus drop-off, mainly because of the amount of queuing space and covered area available. There is not enough space at either door for all buses, so it is split up. It takes about 10 minutes to unload each bus if there are students arriving in wheelchairs. Dismissal starts at 3:15 PM. It takes about 5 minutes to load each student in a wheelchair at dismissal time. Some buses may have up to three students in wheelchairs. At afternoon pick-up time, the bus arrivals are staggered a bit based upon previous route timing. Both the arrival and dismissal windows are about 30 minutes long. If parking is provided along bus queuing areas, then anyone parked in those spaces is typically stuck until the end of the arrival/departure window, therefore overlap of parking spaces with bus stacking should be minimized. Therese Pelicano reported that a 40' length should be used when determining how many buses can be stacked in the loop.
- e. The walking path is one of the highest site amenity priorities for the Rock Creek program. The path should be about 10' wide, with enough space for students to navigate somewhat independently to encourage independence and awareness of personal space. The width could vary sometimes to encourage efficient travel but also allow opportunities for students in wheelchairs to pass one another or pull to the side to sit and enjoy a break from movement, to observe nature, etc. Students currently enjoy participating in scavenger hunts throughout the building – it would be nice to be able to extend this to outside, with some display areas or podiums along the path that could be used as stations for activities. Inclusion of some “real world” elements such as crosswalks and traffic signs would also be great teaching tools for everyday independence skills.
- f. A grass play/athletic field would not be widely used, but one with an accessible surface conducive to wheelchair and other mobility device use would be nice. It was suggested that a trip be scheduled with some of the students to go test out a local artificial turf field to see how well mobility devices can maneuver on that surface. There are also other alternative surfacing materials that can be explored. It is really important for the students to have motor breaks during the school day, so the outdoor play areas are used off and on throughout the day, not just for recess.

- g. River Terrace school in DC was visited during the Ed Spec development process while it was still under construction. They incorporated several interesting features, such as an enclosed courtyard with musical instruments and play areas. Brian Staiger and Mary Malone are working on scheduling a group visit to the school.
- h. Existing conditions and proposed concepts for each of the seven sites were reviewed with the following discussion:
 - i. Ballenger Creek Middle – The biggest concerns with this site have to do with traffic and site circulation. This site has only one main entrance off of Ballenger Creek Pike that serves both cars and buses. There is a second exit only connection to Ballenger Creek Pike at the north end of the parking area. Traffic along Ballenger Creek Pike is heavy and parent pick-up staging is not accommodated well on site due to inadequate queuing area. Beth Pasierb pointed out that there are plans to widen Ballenger Creek Pike back almost to the edge of the existing tennis courts and parking areas and that certain portions of the roadway will receive a new median. The design team will review the proposed development and determine what impact it might have on the ability to locate a new full movement entrance at the south end of the site for the proposed RCS parking access. She also noted that there are plans to rework the Butterfly Lane/Ballenger Creek Pike intersection which may help alleviate some of the traffic congestion in the area.
 - ii. Dearbought – This site has some potential flood soils and potential wetlands. Potential mitigation costs should be included in the cost estimates for these areas. It also has several easements that need to be verified and identified. There will likely be only one new entrance permitted off of Wheyfield drive, meaning that cars and buses would need to share the same access point. Ted Gardner also pointed out that this is the only site not currently served by telecom. The costs to extend the network to this location will be very significant because it will need to be pulled either from the Walkersville schools, Frederick High, or Gas House Pike connection points. The proposed design should be tweaked to maximize bus stacking on site and pull the proposed development as far away from Route 26 as possible to buffer against noise and safety concerns due to proximity to high traffic areas.
 - iii. Gov Thomas Johnson Middle – This site has fully separated bus loop and drop-off/parking areas. The bus loop is more than adequate to serve the existing school, however the parent drop-off loop has inadequate queuing space and creates occasional back-ups onto Schifferstadt Blvd. This site has less existing athletic field space than the other middle school sites being explored and will not accommodate replacement of as many fields as other locations once the RCS program is laid out. Michelle Concepcion reported that during her time as Principal there, they had several sinkholes adjacent to the play areas. The northwestern corner of the site was used as a permanent stockpile area for rock encountered during the initial construction, then was planted as a reforestation area. This site has an existing Parks & Rec gym program. Beth Pasierb noted that there is a Dog Park planned to go in across Schifferstadt Blvd from the site in the future.
 - iv. Monocacy Middle & Elementary – These schools each have only one existing access point onto their sites that is shared by cars and buses. This requires careful coordination of traffic and staff to be outside during arrival and dismissal times to help direct traffic and ensure safety. If RCS is

located on this site, its design will need to incorporate one or more additional access points that will help to separate car and bus traffic and provide improved on-site queuing and circulation for both existing buildings. A new connection along Opossumtown Pike at the existing FCC interchange is feasible and the design team would need to explore whether or not a second connection to Hayward Road may also be possible. The biggest challenge with this is the presence of some existing wetlands and a potential stream buffer where the existing channel widens out at the north end of the site. The updated concept with the new RCS school pulled back closer to the two existing buildings and some shared play areas in the center is good.

- v. Tuscarora Elementary – This site is challenging due to the narrow street width along Alan Linton Blvd and the existing elevation difference between the original school property and newly acquired parcel. There are potential flood soils and a water and sewer easement along the eastern edge of the new parcel. Site circulation works fairly well, although queuing for the drop-off loop wraps through the parking lot, which means that cars cannot pull into or out of parking spaces during the arrival or dismissal windows. Recess areas are limited by the location of relocatable classrooms. This site has an existing Parks & Rec gym program. The proposed layout presents some challenges in terms of provision of an accessible route from the main parking area and field space to the school due to the existing elevation change. The existing on-street parking along the north side of Alan Linton Blvd would need to be removed for access to the proposed parking area and may create a challenge in terms of where to relocate that parking for the townhomes across the street.
- vi. Valley Elementary – Enrollment at this school is projected to increase greatly next year due to redistricting and the construction of new residential development across the street. Its bus loop is more than adequate to serve the needs of the current school, however it does not have a true parent drop-off loop. Parents come in through the loading area access and through a parking drive aisle onto the existing paved play area, however the transition from the parking drive to the play area is only wide enough for a single car at a time, not two lanes of cross-traffic. This creates safety concerns as they cannot drive through in a loop, but need to park to load students and then have pedestrian traffic crossing car traffic as vehicles try to exit. It would be preferred to extend the existing bus loop entrance over to the east so that it comes out across from the nearby intersecting street, which would allow for it to be more easily shared with the new RCS building, eliminating the need for a separate bus loop and allowing the two buildings to be moved closer together. Since this is a State road, SHA would need to be consulted for proposed improvements. A new waterline was required to be put in by the developer for the housing across the street. The design team will check with DUSWM to find out whether there are sufficient taps allocated for a second school to be approved for construction on this site. Therese Pelicano reported that this site creates the greatest challenge in terms of bus routing a minimizing travel times from students from around the County. Existing steep slopes, setbacks, and crossing of the gas line easement make the eastern finger of the site nearly unusable for proposed development. The existing baseball diamond is heavily used by the community and should be relocated if possible as part of the new RCS design.
- vii. Walkersville Middle – Existing bus access is off of Frederick Road and car access is split between Frederick Rd and Maryland Ave. The majority of staff parks at the rear of the building because the west side parking area is also used for parent drop-off queuing and bus parking. Some staff

park across the street along Nicodemus Rd so that they do not get caught in pick-up/drop-off traffic. The proposed design assumes that the bus access for RCS would come off of Frederick Road at the existing Library access point. Beth Pasierb asked the design team to consider what the impact would be on site functionality if that parcel was sold to another entity and that access was lost. It is feasible that the existing bus loop entrance could be reconfigured to allow for traffic to circulate around the west end of the building in this case. The proposed design needs to look more closely at parking distribution as the number of cars coming through the Maryland Ave access cannot be greatly increased due to the residential nature of that street. It is possible that new parking could be added along Frederick Rd to the east of the bus access drive or that additional parking could be fit in along the western property line. Replacement softball field(s) should be provided as part of the proposed design.

- viii. In general for all sites, the concept plans should be made a little looser. None of these layouts are final and are only an initial test fit to see what elements are feasible to fit on site. The site that is ultimately selected will undergo a more detailed analysis and the final design will likely look different the current layouts. Also, distinction should be made on the site plans as to which athletic fields are used for the schools' recess and physical education programs versus which are used predominantly by the community.

4.3 Building Design – Ed Spec Overview

- a. Michelle Concepcion provided a brief overview of the plans for the Alternative Specialized Program. Right now, it is anticipated that the program would serve only one or two age ranges (for instance, Elementary and Middle, or just Elementary, or just High School). They do not anticipate serving students from ages 3 through 21 like Rock Creek does. They are still working out the details of transportation and other program needs. Students arriving for this program may or may not be assigned to the same buses as Rock Creek students depending on the individual students' capabilities and needs. The design team needs to know whether or not any of the site amenity requirements will need to be modified or supplemented (i.e. additional buses, additional play areas, etc.) in order to meet the needs of this alternate program. It was noted that currently some of the students that may be served by this program are transported by bus to 25 non-public school sites outside Frederick County. There would be significant transportation cost savings if these students were able to be accommodated within a local public school.
- b. The design team asked whether it was feasible to design the Alternative Specialized program space similarly to the Rock Creek spaces so that in the future if that program were ever relocated, the captured space could be used for future expansion of the Rock Creek program capacity (perhaps as an alternative to a separate Future Capacity alternate. Michelle indicated that she does not anticipate this program being relocated in the future. A separate meeting will be scheduled to review the Alternative Specialized Program alternate requirements in further detail.
- c. It was noted that it is preferable for the Greenhouse to be attached to the building, due to ease of access and optimal accessibility. It will be easier to use year-round if it is attached and does not require travel outside of the building, especially when considering winter temperatures and inclement weather.

4.4 Four Week Projection

- a. Finalize Site Rubric Scoring
- b. Finalize proposed site concepts
- c. Develop site selection recommendation materials for submission to the Board of Education – submission is to be provided by December 1.

4.5 Public Comment

- a. The group was thanked for their thorough approach to the site selection process and attention to detail in reviewing the existing site conditions, challenges, and opportunities.

The next meeting is scheduled for **7 December 2017 at 9:30am at the FCPS Central Office Building in the Board Room.**

This summarizes the topics discussed at the meeting. Please review and address any comments and corrections to the Architect within 5 days of receipt of these minutes.

Kori Purdum Matheis, RA, LEED AP BD+C

Distribution via email – all attendees and Design Team Members
Rachel Ablondi - Parent of Rock Creek Student
Michelle Sclater - Parent of Rock Creek Student
Paul Lebo – FCPS, Chief Operating Officer
Keith Harris – FCPS, Executive Director
Stephen Raff – FCPS, Director
Amy Boehman-Pollitt – FCPS ACT Team Leader
Steve Buckley – Frederick County Gov. – OTPT
Robert Walsh - Co-Chair, Special Education Advisory Committee
Gloria Mikolajczyk – MSDE

Attachments: PDF of Meeting Presentation
Final Rubric as reviewed at meeting, dated 11/09/2017

Action Items:

- 1. FCPS is to provide feedback regarding whether or not the Parks & Rec alternate is to be included.**
- 2. FCPS is to provide feedback regarding the scope of the Future Capacity alternate design.**
- 3. Brian and Mary are to schedule a visit to River Terrace School.**

- 4. Therese Pelicano is to provide input regarding buses and transportation cost impacts for the seven potential sites.**
- 5. Shawn Benjaminson will continue to pull easement and utility information for all sites, will find the proposed plans for the Ballenger Creek Pike roadway improvements, and will contact DUSWM regarding availability of water taps at the Valley Elementary site.**
- 6. Brian Staiger and Michelle Concepcion will set a meeting date to review the Alternative Specialized Program alternate with the architects in further detail.**