



PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE

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May 16, 2017

The Honorable Jay Fisette, Chair
The Arlington County School Board
1426 N. Quincy St.
Arlington, Virginia 22201

RE: Lubber Run–Concept Plan Design

The Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) held a meeting on April 19 to discuss the current concept proposals for the new Lubber Run Community Center. The PFRC consists of representatives from County Commissions, as well as project specific representatives.

The PFRC process for Lubber Run is different from recent reviews of school projects as the County project is not subject to a use permit. The Department of Parks and Recreation has been conducting a robust community engagement process during the initial concept development phase. PFRC review is one of many inputs in the concept design process.

Building Massing and Design

The Lubber Run architect, VMDO, presented four concepts designs for the new community center and asked PFRC members to comment on elements that they preferred or disliked about each design with the intent of bringing together preferred elements of each design into one preferred concept design. The four conceptual schemes are referred to as Compact, Portal, Embedded, and Woven.

Height

PFRC members were supportive of additional building height in order to maximize the use of space. There are ongoing needs for land for public facilities in the County and this is a good place to locate space for public use. PFRC members pointed out that the height should be located along George Mason Drive where it would provide a buffer between the busy street and the more tranquil park space. Height may also provide the benefit of a smaller floorplate overall which result in additional green space. There was also some discussion of the lower designs and the feeling that the lower designs were more inviting and more integrated into the site.

Transition to Park

There was an overall desire to connect the site to the natural areas at the site and have a transition from the more higher and more active areas of the site to the quieter natural areas.

Pedestrian Transition

PFRC discussed the importance of making the site welcoming to those arriving by all modes of transportation, not just single-occupancy vehicles.

Preserving trees

PFRC members would generally like to receive more information on the trees that would be lost for each of the schemes and generally believes that existing trees and landscape should take precedent over manmade landscape and newly planted trees wherever possible.

Ramps

PFRC members pointed out that public accessible green roof type spaces such as the ramps would require fences along the edge which would detract from the natural feeling of the site. Railings and fences should be included in the drawings for the public to get an idea of the actual appearance of such design elements. There was also a feeling that there is less active space on a ramp feature and often people will not make the effort to scale them.

Other

Notification for PFRC meetings should be distributed to the larger Lubber Run listserv as there is room for public comment at the meeting.

Additionally, Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) discussed this matter at its April 24, 2017 monthly meeting. Commissioners were generally supportive of the comments provided below, however, given the timing of the design decision, the Commission did not have the opportunity to formally include a vote on a letter in our agenda. Therefore, E2C2 is providing the following comments:

- 1) *Net-Zero* - We support the net-zero target and certainly hope that effective placement of geothermal and solar panels will continue to drive the site design, and we hope to hear more detail about this as the design solidifies.
- 2) *Trees* - VMDO did a great job graphically indicating the trees that will be compromised per layout, however, it would be helpful to include an approximate 'demolished tree' count per layout with the relative value of trees indicated.
- 3) *Green Space* - Preserving continuous, existing natural land and trees should supersede removing it to create "structured" man-made green space. The numbers that compare natural park space (from 46,800sf to less than half of that in some designs) give the best indication of parkland preservation, as well as looking at the continuity of the green space.
- 4) *Parking*- We were pleased with VMDO's underground parking solution and have no current objections.

Conclusion

PFRC would like to see a revised scheme that incorporates the feedback provided above, including focusing height away from the park, providing a proper transition to

the active uses along the park, preserving as many trees as possible, integrating energy efficiency measures, and incorporating the additional feedback provided by Commissioners. The PFRC looks forward to working with staff to refine the proposed schemes and provide feedback regarding the final concept plan for the Lubber Run Community Center. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the Committee's feedback about the project.

Respectfully submitted,

James Schroll, Chair
Public Facilities Review Committee

Cc: Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and
Recreation
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June Locker, DES
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