

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 25, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 29: ACCELERATED SCHEDULE FOR PLANNING AND REVIEW OF NEW SCHOOL PROPOSAL

The new, joint City and School staff proposed CIP for ACPS is described in Budget Memo #23. This joint proposal includes funding for a new Jefferson Houston K-8 school building to be opened by fall of 2014 (FY 2015). In response to this proposed project, Planning staff has prepared an accelerated schedule for the planning and regulatory review, and preparation of construction documents, for a new school. Please see the attached process schedule, which represents a process faster than a typical private sector project process.

Under this accelerated schedule, the new school proposal could be docketed for review by the Planning Commission and City Council as early as December 2011. However, there are a number of caveats that should be taken into account:

- This schedule shows submission of a first Concept Plan by the Schools in mid-May. A concept plan includes basic site layout, two-foot contours, and a development program that includes uses, building footprints and parking. It does not include architecture or detailed engineering. It is optimistic to expect that a good Concept Plan can be prepared in the next six weeks.
- The period for review of the Concept 1 and Concept 2 Plan shown in the attached schedule is mid-May through the end of August. The Concept review phase is also the phase during which much of the community outreach takes places. For any new school, there will need to be significant community outreach. This will be particularly true for a new school at Jefferson Houston. Three and a half months for development of a plan with significant community outreach is optimistic. Additionally, the summer is not an optimal season for community outreach.
- The entire accelerated schedule is predicated on very fast turn-around times for the applicant, as well as fast turn-around times by City staff in the multiple departments that typically review DSUP projects. The architect and consultants working on this project will need to be very efficient and all submissions will need to be thorough and complete.

- If the project is approved in December 2011, an additional 6 to 9 months will be required for Final Site Plan and Building Permit document preparation by ACPS architects and engineers and review by City staff. This would mean that building permits would not be realistically released until September 2012.
- ACPS procurement procedures would need to occur concurrently with the Final Site Plan process and building permit reviews in order to begin actual construction in the fall of 2012.

Staff believes that the Jefferson Houston site – if it is to be the first new school constructed – has a number of particularly challenging features that could lengthen the review time. It is a complicated, constrained site in a dense urban neighborhood, with existing public facilities (Durant Center, pool, sports field) and a populated in-use school that will need to be taken into account, as well as an active community who will want to be involved in the planning process.

Understanding that there is a shared goal to produce an educational facility of the highest quality, to have community support of any new project, and to maximize the benefits of a major expenditure of public dollars, staff would caution that the facility planning review and implementation process should not be short-changed.

ATTACHMENT: Accelerated Schedule for New ACPS School DSUP – Spring/Fall 2011

CC: Dr. Mort Sherman, Superintendent, Alexandria City Public Schools

Accelerated Schedule for New ACPS School DSUP – Spring/Fall 2011

May 13	Concept 1 Plan Submitted
May 19	Concept 1 Plan Presented to Interdepartmental Review Group (IDR)
June 2	Concept 1 Plan Comments Released to Applicant
July 8	Concept 2 Plan Submitted
July 14	Concept 2 Plan Presented to IDR
July 28	Concept 2 Plan Comments Released to Applicant
August 26	Preliminary Plan for Completeness Review Submitted
September 16	Completeness Review Comments to Applicant
September 30	Preliminary Plan for Verification of Completeness Submitted
October 11	Verification of Completeness Determined
November 3	IDR Conditions Review w/Applicant
November 10	IDR Conditions Review w/Applicant – (Optional Second date)
November 23	Staff Report Due
November 28	Staff Report Released
December 6	Planning Commission Public Hearing
December 18	City Council Public Hearing
December – September	Review of Final Site Plan and Building Permits