

Justice High School Pyramid Community Working Group Interim Report

January 22, 2024

To Supervisor Andres Jimenez 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 has 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 questions have been submitted to ORSI as of this report. The survey is expected to be distributed on or around April 1, 2024.

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). FCPS facilities notified the working group that that effort has ended without any agreement in place due to an unwillingness of the parties involved to provide parking rights.

It is the view of the working group that talks with the Church of Christ should resume with renewed vigor with the goal of establishing at least temporary daytime student parking agreement. Talks with nearby condominiums should be initiated with the same goal. Such a solution would present an ongoing operational cost so 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.

“Low” Capital Solutions

The working group believes that additional parking may be achievable with existing FCPS owned real estate utilizing relatively 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, however FCPS Facilities did note that waivers for a tree protection area would

need to be sought. The FCPS Facilities project group estimated that a rough-order magnitude cost of a retaining wall project would be in the neighborhood of \$1.75 million.

Engineering may discover that in order to maintain parking on Peace Valley Lane, the road 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 the dialog with the community begins early and is thorough, the working group feels the solution will be much more agreeable to all involved than previous publicized options that involved the park. Due to the potential for delays as well as further conflict, the working group recommends any option that touches the park be considered as a last resort.

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