

## **BFAAC Recommendations for Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facilities**

**DATE:** April 27, 2017

**TO:** MEMBERS OF THE ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** BUDGET AND FISCAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**SUBJECT:** BFAAC MEMO 5: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AD HOC JOINT CITY-SCHOOLS FACILITY INVESTMENT TASK FORCE

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BFAAC strongly supports Council's call for greater cooperation among City and school planners, and applauds the creation of the Ad Hoc Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force ("Task Force"). To ensure this new Task Force results in meaningful change and actionable recommendations, BFAAC recommends City Council:

- (1) Ensure any additional CIP funding for City and school facilities from the add-on real estate tax is not allocated until the Task Force's work is completed and its recommendations are considered by Council.** If Council adopts an add-on real estate tax to address City and ACPS facility needs, BFAAC encourages Council not to allocate those resources until the Task Force completes its work and its recommendations are considered by Council.
- (2) Focus on actionable recommendations** – The Task Force's recommendations must be clearly defined, actionable, and delivered by Fall 2017 if they are going to help guide the next budget cycle. The Task Force must have the standing to make recommendations that will give Council the confidence to make long term capital commitments.
- (3) Limit scope to core priorities** – Given the short-timeframe for the Task Force to complete its work, BFAAC encourages Council to limit the scope of the Task Force to core deliverables: developing a long-term CIP plan for City and school facilities; identifying opportunities for joint facilities/co-location for City and school programs (including co-location of City services) and public-private partnerships; and reviewing the governance and process for City and school CIP projects (*e.g.*, creating a single facility management office to handle City and school capital projects). Even these core deliverables will be difficult for the Task Force to accomplish in the limited timeframe. While BFAAC agrees with staff that it is important to review municipal facility planning and civic engagement principles as well as asset management practices, BFAAC is concerned that the Task Force will not have the time to address these issues and recommends limiting the scope of the Task Force to the above core priorities. In addition, given the short timeframe, the Task Force should have access to appropriate City and ACPS staff as well as outside consultants, subject to available funding.

- (4) **Review existing plans** – The timeline for the Task Force is very aggressive. Assuming the group is not officially established until June, the Task Force will only have 3-4 months to develop a long-term CIP proposal for City and school facilities. The good news is the Task Force need not start from scratch – this Task Force is not the first group to consider long-term CIP needs for City and school facilities. BFAAC recommends the Task Force review and consider the plans and recommendations of existing entities and take full advantage of their work and experience over the years. By coalescing work from multiple sources, the Task Force can identify opportunities for synergy; potential conflicts; needs not addressed; other parties that should be included; reasonable and complimentary timelines; and significantly, suggest priorities based on need and budget reality.
- (5) **Keep Task Force small and limited to individuals with core expertise** – BFAAC agrees the Task Force should be comprised of individuals with expertise in urban planning and design; education; facilities planning and construction; finance and real estate development. The group should not include members of City Council, School Board, or other current or former elected officials. Members should be chosen for their knowledge and expertise, rather than their reputation for advocacy. BFAAC supports the City staff recommendation for the Superintendent to provide input on the selection of Task Force members. We recommend keeping the Task Force small – no more than 7-9 people.
- (6) **Ensure the City Manager take ownership of the process with involvement from the Superintendent** – While the City Manager and Superintendent will not be members of the Task Force, their support and leadership will be needed to ensure the Task Force remains on track and delivers actionable recommendations to help shape the City’s and Schools’ approach to CIP going forward. The City Manager and Superintended should make available all City and ACPS staff needed to provide timely data and analysis to support the work of the Task Force.
- (7) **Develop long-term plan to ensure work of Task Force is carried forward** – BFAAC recommends Council and School Board identify the appropriate process/work groups to ensure the Task Force’s recommendations adopted by Council and the School Board are fully executed in out years and ensure a regular review of the long-term plan’s execution, with adjustments made due to strategic or fiscal concerns. This could include an ongoing City/ACPS steering committee for facilities. Lastly, BFAAC recommends Council consider asking the Task Force to reconvene one year after their report is submitted to evaluate the outcomes and make any additional recommendations.