

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

LETTERS/COMMENTS ON BEHALF OF ORGANIZATIONS:

From: Jack Browand <Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2022 2:15 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Judy Lo <Judy.Lo@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Proposal

Alex,

The Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA) supports the City's initiative to ensure safe routes to schools and City parks, and in providing safe pedestrian routes for all pedestrians. RPCA appreciated the collaboration and coordination Transportation & Environmental Services implemented to ensure RPCA goals with preserving open space and in minimizing the direct impact on the City's tree canopy were considered in the final design. Although four trees will be removed from the City ROW, RPCA will identify locations within the park where four or more trees may be replanted.

Thanks
Jack

Jack Browand, Deputy Director, Park Services, CPM CPRP
Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria VA 22314
703.746.5504 (office)
202.497.7452 (cell)

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From: Polk PTA <talktopolkpta@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 7:13 PM

To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Carla Carter <ccarter@acps.k12.va.us>

Subject: Letter on Behalf of the Polk PTA re: Sidewalk Continuation on Polk Ave.

Dear Alex Carroll and City of Alexandria T&ES,

On behalf of the James K. Polk Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA), I would like to voice our membership's support for the sidewalk continuation project proposed on Polk Avenue as identified in the 2018 Safe Routes to School study.

One of our highest priorities as a PTA is to advocate for the safety of students and we see the proposed sidewalk as a way to ensure that our students, and the students attending Francis C. Hammond Middle School, remain safely out of the street as they walk to school.

We encourage the City of Alexandria to move forward with the proposed sidewalk continuation project. We are committed to supporting all students' right to a safe route to school.

Thank you,

Chaaron Pearson

President

James K. Polk Elementary School PTA

Email: TalktoPolkPTA@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JamesKPolkPTA

Twitter: [@PolkPTA](https://twitter.com/PolkPTA)

Friday, May 20, 2022

Greetings Ms. Carroll,

I am writing to express my strong support for the City's Polk Avenue Sidewalk Project. This project would increase safety for students walking to and from Polk Elementary School by ensuring that children do not have to walk in the street or cross the street when the sidewalk ends.

I participated in the Safe Routes to School Walk Audit the City led for Polk Elementary School, and I observed how the missing sidewalk on Polk Avenue between Pelham Street and Palmer Place forces children and families to make unsafe choices. School arrival and dismissal times are especially hazardous for children and families walking here, since traffic is heavier during these times. Many Polk students and families walk in this area and would greatly benefit from the proposed sidewalk.

Every year, Polk students take a class on safe walking and biking practices, but education alone is not enough. The proper infrastructure must also be in place to ensure that students arrive safely.

Thank you for taking the time to include me in this process and for moving this important safety project forward.

Sincerely,

Carla P. Carter
Principal

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From: Pierrette P. Finney <pierrette.finney@acps.k12.va.us>
Sent: Thursday, April 28, 2022 4:56 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Kristin M. Donley <kristin.donley@acps.k12.va.us>; Jane E. Davis <jane.davis@acps.k12.va.us>
Subject: Re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Project

Hi Ms. Carroll,

I've had an opportunity to review the flyer. Thank you for including me in the conversation. I fully support the Polk Avenue project as Hammond has roughly 220 students who are walkers. While all 220 don't walk from that direction, a significant number do as they head to and front school.

Finally, I would love to meet to discuss other safety issues listed below. Please let me know your best availability.

Dr. Pierrette Finney

Principal
Francis C. Hammond Middle School
Secondary Principal Lead

Alexandria City Public Schools
703-461-4100

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/fch>

Follow Us On Twitter - @fchammond and @fchprincipal

Like Us On Facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/FCHammondMiddleSchool>

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July 11, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Parkside at Alexandria Condo Association and its Board of Directors give their full support for the Sidewalk Project on Polk Avenue. We feel this important and necessary sidewalk project is a matter of safety for our resident's children and parents that use this road to get to and from school. Please let us know if you have any questions.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Lorenzo Walker", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Lorenzo Walker, CMCA®, AMS®, PCAM®
General Manager
Parkside at Alexandria

1425-B North Van Dorn Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22304 | parksideatalexandria.com
E generalmanager@parksideatalexandria.com O 703-931-1224 F 703-824-0322

parksideatalexandria.com

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LETTERS/COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDERS:

From: Margaux Denham <margauxdenham91@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 06, 2022 1:15 PM
To: Lorenzo Walker <lwalker@parksideatalexandria.com>
Subject: Re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Project

Hi Lorenzo,

I visited the website and could not see where I could provide feedback. Thus, I am sending my feedback to you!

I think it would be great to have a sidewalk there! it is dangerous without a sidewalk (we walk there everyday to walk our dog and sometimes bring our baby). If you want to use the sidewalk to access the south gate, it is very hard to see cars with the curvy road. There are also tons of kids walking, so it would be safer with a sidewalk.

thank you for sharing!

From: Bryan Bateman <bryman8692@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 07, 2022 8:23 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

[You don't often get email from bryman8692@msn.com. Learn why this is important at <http://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>.]

Good morning Alex,

I am all for this project. Especially since James Polk Elementary School is in such close proximity. My wife and I often walk down Polk Ave at around the same time children are released from school. We live in the Parkside townhome community that has gated access to Polk Ave.

Since parking is permitted on the side of the street with no sidewalk, we've seen children have to walk around parked cars and therefore into the middle of the street. My wife and I have had to do that as well. It can get dicey when cars are also coming down the street at the same time. This project will greatly improve the safety of all pedestrians in this neighborhood.

Thank you,
Bryan Bateman
201-835-5165

From: Andrea Schwartz Freeburg <alschwartzfree@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2022 4:51 PM

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To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

[You don't often get email from alschwartzfree@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <http://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>.]

Dear Ms. Carroll,

I am a resident at 1038 N Pelham St, and I strongly support the Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes To School Project. During my time working from home these past two years, I have seen many children walking up N Pelham St in front of our townhome, and then be forced to J-walk across the street right at the corner to connect to the sidewalk that exists on Polk Ave. This street has busses and parents driving their children to school at the same time. I believe it is imperative to give the children a safe and direct way to walk to school without making the choice of walking on a road without a sidewalk or crossing a busy neighborhood street to reach the existing sidewalk. I am a mother of a 2 year old and look forward to sending her to Polk Elementary one day. I hope that she will be able to do this walk safely too. I believe this is critical and demonstrates the city's commitment to children, safety, education, and the environment by providing a safe "green" way for children to get to school. I am excited about this project.

Best Regards,
Andrea Deitz

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse brevity (and typos)

From: Steven Deitz <stevendeitz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2022 6:03 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

Dear Ms. Carroll,

I received the flyer for the Polk Avenue sidewalk project today. As a resident near this area, I wholeheartedly support this project! It will have a great safety benefit for a relatively small project. Filling the sidewalk would help pedestrians, especially children walking to school, stay safe from traffic. Right now, because of the sidewalk gap, children walking to Polk Elementary from the far side of N. Pelham St are forced to cross the street at the very low visibility corner of Polk and Pelham streets.

I am happy to provide further comment if helpful. Can you please include me on any significant updates to this project? I hope it happens!!!

Sincerely,

Steven Deitz
1038 N Pelham St.

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From: Kathy Wahl <kathy.wahl@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 09, 2022 11:39 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

[You don't often get email from kathy.wahl@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <http://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>.]

Dear Alex

We are familiar with this route as we are the owners of the property pictured across from the proposed sidewalk. We agree that this added sidewalk would provide safer walking on this road. However we also have serious concerns about the project and road safety in general.

1) First, the terrain of the hillside is not level and this project will involve removing a portion of the hill. I see no retaining wall, and no indication if remediation to maintain drainage without initiating an erosion problem is properly planned. I note that a nearby recent sidewalk widening project on a hillside at Hammond on N Pickett (2years ago?) has resulted in serious erosion issues. These have included dislodging of large rocks onto the sidewalk. To date, the city's attempts to fix this have not been successful and the affected area grows with each storm and is repeatedly 'repaired' ineffectively. Sod will not grow on rocks. This does not inspire confidence for the proposed project across from our property.

2) I have reported several times on the daily safety hazard of the speeding school busses coming by along Polk Ave along where the sidewalk is proposed. Calling the bus supervisor accomplished nothing. The most dangerous times are around 3-3:30 pm when the schools are getting out. I'm not sure why this stretch of quiet road and very narrow corner/crowded street on Pelham is a bus route except that there are no speed bumps. The speeding busses are making for a very unsafe environment during school hours and particularly during the times children and families are walking to/from school. Addressing that issue would go a long way towards ensuring safety for our kids and citizens. I invite you to come here on a weekday afternoon and watch the traffic hazard caused by the busses.

Sincerely
Kathy and Bruce Wahl
1148 Palmer Place

Sent from my iPhone

From: Corey Patterson <cwpatters11@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:44 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

Hello,

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I'm writing to express my support for the sidewalk addition. In addition to being beneficial for school-age children, the sidewalk would make it easier for runners and walkers to safely get around the neighborhood.

With so many cars parked on the road and driving by, it's dangerous for pedestrians to have to move into the road in that area on Polk Avenue.

--

Thank you,

Corey Patterson
(770) 367-0578
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/coreypatterson1/>

From: Kate <kate.evans85@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 11:17 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

[You don't often get email from kate.evans85@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <http://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>.]

Hello Alexandria Carroll,

I'm a long time resident of Parkside at Alexandria and I'm hoping to provide feedback on the Polk Avenue sidewalk project. I have a dog that I walk daily around the Polk neighborhood. I have to come through the Parkside gate, and I am forced to walk into the street right at Polk and Pelham, where cars tend to speed around the corner. My neighbors with babies, young children, and their pets are forced to do the same every day. Having a sidewalk here would be much safer for us, and it is something we have wanted for years.

I could not find another way to submit feedback other than emailing you.
Please let me know if there is another way that I should be submitting this feedback.

Thank you for your efforts in this!

Sincerely,
Kate Evans

From: Erin Berry Philp <erinjberry@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 4:40 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Comment: Safe Routes to School Walk Audit for Polk Elementary School

Good afternoon -

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I wanted to submit my comment in support of the new sidewalk to Polk Elementary School. My family and I live on North Pelham Street and it is a chaotic mess every school morning, since many cars zoom up our street to avoid stop signs on other streets. It is VERY dangerous for students attempting to walk to school.

I not only support a new sidewalk, but I would also support stop signs where North Pelham and Polk meet. I would also support some kind of speeding deterrent, such as a speed table, since cars and school buses frequently reach speeds of around 45-50 miles an hour on our street. My husband and small daughter were almost hit by a speeding school bus one day as he was putting her in her car seat. Speed tables on North Pelham and Polk would greatly deter parents who are carelessly speeding to get their children to school. Pegram has speed tables, and so should these surrounding streets. I have my own child to get to school, and I do not appreciate other people endangering our lives as we try to make it safely to school.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support of the initiative.

Sincerely,

Erin Berry Philp
1002 N. Pelham St.
Alexandria, VA 22304

From: Aaron Thomas <athmsvt@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 06, 2022 7:38 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: RE: POLK AVENUE SIDEWALK SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECT

Hi Alex,

My community sent out a notice about the Polk Avenue Sidewalk project and I wanted to express my opposition to the project due to its ineffectiveness and the fact it diverts funds from walkways that have been in disrepair and closed for years. The closed walkways have a real impact on mobility in the community.

Note: The link in the flyer does not work and appears to be incorrect.

The proposed sidewalk does not accomplish the proposed goals, has unnecessary build and maintenance costs, and distracts from shutdown paths that have been in disrepair for years.

- The street already has a dedicated sidewalk to the school. As there are no houses or living units in that stretch, it is not apparent how the project would benefit any resident.
- It would require the destruction of additional trees and greenspace
- Other than the implementation of a small extension of the sidewalk to the exit of Parkside of Alexandria and a crosswalk to the other sidewalk on the other side of the street, there is no value in the project.

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- Given the lack of housing on that side of the street where the sidewalk is proposed and the fact it would allocate funds that could serve to repair closed pathways, the project runs counterproductive to the city mobility plan.

Respectfully,
Aaron Thomas
1657B N Van Dorn St

From: burnskathy1036@gmail.com <burnskathy1036@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 5, 2022 7:51 PM
To: james.calvin.lewis@gmail.com
Cc: Katie North <katie.north@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Submission for the Alexandria Parking and Traffic Board
Importance: High

June 5, 2022

TO: Alexandria Traffic and Parking Board:
James Lewis, chair, james.calvin.lewis@gmail.com
Ann Tucker, vice chair
Jason Osborne
Ann Ebbers
Casey Kane
Lavonda Bonnard

CC: Katie.North@alexandriava.gov
Liaison to the Parking and Traffic Board

FROM: Kathleen M. Burns, 1036 N. Pelham St.
Alexandria, VA 22304

Chair, on behalf of the BSVCA Open Space Committee
Burnskathy1036@gmail.com
Desk Phone: 703-824-1799
Cell Phone: 703-624-2097

Dear Mr. Lewis and members of the Alexandria Parking and Traffic Board,

We are writing to you about a matter of great concern to our neighborhood in the Brookville-Seminary Valley section in the West End.

Our concern is about a tentative scheduling by your board for June 27, 2022, for a public hearing on the very consequential removal of 9 parking spots on Polk Avenue. But any public details are lacking.

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Having served on the Parking Board myself, I am aware of certain basic rules, not only for the Parking and Traffic Board, but for most City boards and commissions. At the top of the list is a mandatory public hearing, and those requesting it, with the requisite "due diligence" in notifying all interested parties who may be impacted by such action.

This has not happened.

Similarly, it is generally required that public signs be posted in the neighborhoods involved in upcoming hearings, at least a month in advance.

This has not happened, so people have no way of knowing this very consequential could occur, without the mandatory input from neighbors.

The only way we tentatively knew a hearing was slated for June 27 was when I called the office of Bob Garbacz to ask the names of current members, he mentioned it to me.

The Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association (BSVCA) represents about 600 households. We have 10 members on our new board and the majority are people elected were not previous incumbents. They have energy, enthusiasm and an interest in the community, but it takes time and practice to learn the ropes for being part of a civic association's board.

As part of this transition, they are working to improve the internal communications within our large membership. We received our last all-member BSVCA Newsletter in conjunction with our Quarterly Meeting, held on April 30 via Zoom. While a some of the members read this newsletter online, many of our long-time community residents do not have computers or iPhones so they opted to get printed copies which were delivered in person by Block Captains.

Thus, none of the current BSVCA membership have received any written information on this proposed June 27, 2022, hearing before the Parking and Traffic Board and the complex underlying issues involved.

Similarly, the board is transitioning to a new online service, Mail Chimp, but we have not received any notifications thus far about the hearing for the before the Parking and Traffic Board, of the underlying issues.

Also, the BSVCA website is in transition with a new system. When I checked listings for BSVCA Events (on June 4), the site noted only four upcoming proposed events, for the remainder of 2022, but none had a date or any details.

This included: the Christmas Decorating Contest, the Thanksgiving Run/Walk, the Holmes Run Park Clean-up and the National Night Out.

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There is no mention on the BSVCA website of the June 27 Parking Board hearing, which is tied to a proposal by TES for a concrete sidewalk within the borders of the 5325 Polk Avenue Open Space Park. This is not a “new” issue but one which emerged in November 2021, and no information was provided to any of the local residents until April 8, 2022, with a random flyer issued by TES official Alex Carroll, with minimal information.

There does not appear to be the transparency and factual information that one would expect from a local government agency, which is doing little to inform the citizens about a proposed expenditure of taxpayer Money.

The only reason we became aware of the June 27 date was when I called Bob Garbacz, who was the long-time liaison to the Parking and Traffic Board and is currently the TES Division Chief of Traffic Engineering. I had called Bob because the Internet site only listed the names but no contact information, for members of your board. I was most grateful to him for supplying your name, Mr. Lewis, as the chair, as well as those of your colleagues. And I appreciate your ability to forward this note and subsequent correspondence to your colleagues.

As a long-time member of the BSVCA, I respectfully request that the proposed June 27 meeting be postponed until there is adequate time for the members to be notified on why this hearing was slated in the first place, before the requisite public hearing process had occurred. And that it cannot occur until the necessary mechanisms are operational and in full working order, such as the online newsletter; the provision for printed copies of it for those who request it; inclusion in the BSVCA website on the history of this issue; a listing in the Calendar of Events sections for our local papers: Alexandria TIMES, Alexandria Gazette, the West End Patch and the Washington Post METRO and/or Thursday Local Living section; and, significantly, in the City’s own E-News email service (which goes only to those who sign up for it so its distribution is limited and not automatically citywide.)

It would also give the Parking and Traffic Board members the opportunity to actually visit the contested site in person and assess what should be done. They would have time to review the essential background information tied to the proposed elimination of nine parking spots.

There has been a great deal of confusion generated by TES on solving a problem that doesn’t exist, and ignoring a practical solution that does. And they have repeatedly ignored various attempts by residents to obtain factual information

Instead of the invasive TES concrete sidewalk proposal, which could seriously destabilize the foundation of the 5325 Polk Open Space, we are fully in support of the alternative option.

That would be a striped crosswalk ---for children and adults---who wish to cross safely from the Parkside of Alexandria condominiums, which have 379 units, over to the 5324 side of Polk Avenue. The 1st option is that the crosswalk could be from the Parkside path in the Park,

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already in place, and link with the grassy median strip across the street, which the city already owns. With the 2nd option, a permeable surface could link the Parkside path to the Open Space Park drive way.

Either of these options do not damage the internal structure of the Park. They do not require massive tree removals. And instead of eliminating nine parking spots., it would more likely be only two. The space in front of 5324 Polk already has a “no parking sign from here to corner,” so there is no loss of parking there.

In using taxpayer monies, we want our officials to find efficient, effective and safe options for pedestrians and a crosswalk does that.

The difference is that a crosswalk is estimated to cost \$5,000. But the concrete sidewalk is estimated to cost \$100,000 for 250 feet. That does not include Additional monies that will be needed for drainage of water, lighting, maintenance and liability [The side walk would be City property and staff would have to shovel it every time it snowed, plus the additional liability if someone would fall on an unshoveled walk way.

Several city officials have already visited the site including City Manager Jim Parajon, #2 TES official Chris Ziemann, and several Council members and their aides.

Bob Garbacz estimated the cost would be about \$5,000, including materials and labor.

That is quite a contrast with the TES estimated of \$100,000

By way of background, I am a long-time member of the BSVCA and have been actively involved throughout the years. I also spent 8 years on the Board, including a term as president.

I do not casually submit this request to your Board to defer inclusion of our area on your June 27 hearing. I respect the work the Parking Board has done in the past and continues to do in the present. We were very grateful when we worked closely with the Board to get District 12 Parking for necessary regulations in our area. And the board and staff were equally helpful in working to set up a “private street” for the 1000 block of North Pelham because of the inability of residents to park in front of their own homes. We were already required by the City to pay for our own snow plowing each winter.

To put those two situations in context, with that of the TES efforts to remove 9 local parking spots, we need to stress that our small area is hemmed in by two multi-family complexes and the competitive parking situation that already exists. At the top of Pelham Street are the Parkside of Alexandria condominiums, with 379 units. The complex has extensive onsite parking available to their

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residents. But, at one point, the management was planning to levy a \$162 fee for a parking permit to show the driver of a car was indeed a Parkside resident. Instead, some who opposed the fee passed out a flyer, encouraging residents to come and park on Polk Avenue (or the adjoining streets of Pelham, Palmer Place, Pender Court) with the idea that 'they'll never know.'

Yes, we knew immediately.

And at the bottom of our street is the Willow Run complex with 399 units, and not enough parking on their site for their residents.

Losing NINE legal parking spots would cause huge upheaval in our neighborhood. We hope members of the Parking Board will come and look at the site for a better understanding of what this issue involves. And

It is much more than the parking problem. And I am happy to provide a guided tour of the Open Space Park

and note the potential damage that could be caused by a poorly researched TES plan, when other safer and convenient options for crossing the street are available.

I am happy to submit my comments for your public record.

And later this week, I will follow this letter to the board, requesting deferral, at this time, of the June 27 hearing, with a separate statement to provide a more detailed chronology of the conflict between a TES-imposed concrete sidewalk versus the 5325 Polk Avenue Park. This is a tangible asset for the City that was purchased in 2012 with \$1.5 million in mitigation funds from the DOD for taking six acres from the Winkler Preserve, in order to facilitate construction of the BRAC Building at #395 and Seminary Road. The City then added an additional \$400,000 in Open Space Funds for a total of \$1.9 million.

The delay in submitting the chronology today is because I need to scan various documents to be used as

Attachments for that letter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Burns, chair

BSVCA Open Space Committee

Burnskathy1036@gmail.com

Desk Phone: 703-824-1799

Cell Phone: 703-624-2097

From: Gill Abernathy <aberngi@msn.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2022 11:34 PM

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To: Emily Baker <Emily.Baker@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: FW: Polk Ave. Sidewalk Project- Oppose

This sidewalk project is a bad idea. I walk this route about 5 times a week regularly crossing the street in both daylight and after dark for many years, so I have much experience on this topic.

- a) Would have to chop down multiple mature trees, don't we need more trees, not less
- b) Would destabilize the steep hill, per Rod Simmons, Natural Resources Manager, why create a problem that does not currently exist?
- c) Irony- would have to pull up a sign saying "Native Plant Conservation Zone, Watershed Protection Zone" to pave over it
- d) Don't we want more ground to absorb water coming down that steep hill, instead of more concrete?
- e) There already IS a sidewalk, just on the other side of the street

This street is a lightly traveled, narrow side street- it is not dangerous to cross.

The Polk Ave Park is wonderfully unspoiled and has been a huge gift during the stress of covid- please don't pave over and destabilize it.

Thank you,

Gill Abernathy

1013 N. Terrill St.

From: Ashley Dalton <ashley.lynn.dalton@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2022 3:09 PM

To: Jim Parajon <jim.parajon@alexandriava.gov>; Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Polk Ave Sidewalk project

Mayor Wilson and City Manager Parajon,

First, I want to thank you both for your continued engagement with our neighborhood, the Brookville Seminary Valley Civic Association (BSVCA), and its residents. You've each met with individuals, groups, or our neighborhood recently, and we appreciate the opportunity to directly engage with our City officials. Having direct access to City leadership is one of the many great things about our city.

Second, it has come to my attention that one of our members, who has been actively advocating against the Polk Avenue Sidewalk near 5325 Polk/Polk Park, has been meeting with various elected and appointed City officials. I want to make clear that at this stage, neither the BSVCA Board nor its membership have taken an official position on this project. Thus, any opposition to this project is not on behalf of the BSVCA board or its members, but on an individual basis.

I emailed our former City Manager, City Council, etc., about the project late last year on behalf of the BSVCA Board, requesting that our neighborhood be involved and engaged in the project as it unfolded. We have had ongoing and direct access to City staff, including Alex Carroll and Chris Ziemann, as plans emerged. In my personal view, they have been very forthcoming in their time, transparency, and willingness to work with our neighborhood, and have even made some changes incorporating our feedback. I realize that there are two (or more!) sides to any issue, and we have neighbors on either side, or even neutral, which is why so far we have not chosen to take any action for or in opposition to this project. Any claims otherwise are inaccurate. I just wanted to make sure that you are both aware, and to give credit to City staff for being so approachable and transparent on this project and other

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recent ongoing concerns in our neighborhood. While there are always areas for improvement in community engagement, at least on this particular project, I do not find that to be a concern. In fact, as you may be aware, we are having a neighborhood meeting with City staff tomorrow, about this project.

We have many other community and pedestrian safety issues of greater concern to our neighborhood besides this sidewalk. I want to be sure that we maintain a good working relationship with City staff and representatives, as a board and neighborhood, to tackle those issues together.

Thank you again, and don't hesitate to call or reach out if you wish to discuss anything further. I look forward to hopefully seeing you at our National Night Out event at Polk Elementary if you are making the rounds.

Ashley Dalton
BSVCA President
301.437.0195

From: Dale Carson <dale2wheel@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 13, 2022 5:43 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

Thank you for clarifying on the drainage and the trees. It is better now, with I am estimating only about 200 square feet of non-permeable surface being added and keeping the largest tree. Still, losing the four trees is unfortunate.

Since you brought up the Hammond schoolchildren, many of them don't even use the existing sidewalks on Polk, as they just meander down the middle of the street playing games cutting over and back chasing each other.

They could cross at the crosswalk at Pegram, but they don't. They turn the corner then start wandering across the street to eventually turn left to go down N Pelham. Some of them don't even use the sidewalk on the much busier N Pegram until a vehicle comes along. Very few if any middle schoolchildren are going to use the new sidewalk on the north side of Polk. They will continue to play and/or cut diagonally over the shortest route, just as they do today. Using them to justify this is wishful thinking at best, as these are the same middle schoolchildren that I see riding scooters in circles on the street, ignoring stop signs and riding against traffic flow.

I frequently walk my neighborhood and I have never had an issue crossing Polk at the intersection with Palmer Place. I would think painting a crosswalk there and near the Polk and N. Pelham St. corner would be a good first step before spending \$100k on a new sidewalk that eliminates parking and trees.

In the end this will not impact me much outside of the wasted tax dollars. I will likely have to get used to vehicles being parked in front of my neighbor's house. Hopefully they will not block the visibility when leaving our driveways.

Dale.

On 7/13/2022 2:52 PM, Alexandria Carroll wrote:

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

Good Afternoon Dale,

Thank you for your message - I appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback.

Based on staff's observations, many residents, including schoolchildren, walk on the north side of Polk Ave and either have to cross the street to continue on the sidewalk, or walk in the street. Both Polk Elementary School and Hammond Middle School have echoed the need for a sidewalk here, and staff have heard comments from several residents who want a sidewalk so they don't have to be exposed to traffic unnecessarily.

Please note, over 80 percent of the sidewalk would be built on the existing street footprint. As a result, there are no significant impacts expected for drainage or runoff. The City did also revise the draft concept to reduce the impact to trees from 5 trees (including an 18" diameter tree) to 4 trees (ranging from 3"-12" in diameter). You can see the revised plan here:

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.alexandriava.gov%2Ftransportation-planning%2Fproject%2Fpolk-avenue-sidewalk-safe-routes-to-school-project&data=05%7C01%7CAlexandria.Carroll%40alexandriava.gov%7C91b8b4e8d0934f6c171008da6518a54d%7Cfeaa9b3143754aeeadccc76ad32a890b%7C0%7C0%7C637933453771389986%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C&sdata=qlpmpuw5YYoA5IlgGTuuKyc%2FRYGHMrD6Q8YylsGfZDbI%3D&reserveid=0>

Thank you again for reaching out to share your comments, and have a great day.

Alex Carroll

(she/her)

Complete Streets Program Manager

Department of Transportation & Environmental Services

City of Alexandria | 301 King Street Room 3600 | Alexandria, VA 22314

alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Dale Carson <dale2wheel@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2022 4:12 PM

To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

I would think the number of Polk elementary school kids that would take advantage of this new sidewalk to no longer have to cross Polk away from the crossing guard is very small. Usually parents or guardians walk the elementary kids up to the crossing guard as well. If the city has researched or even made a good faith estimate of the numbers of elementary kids what would benefit from this new sidewalk, that would be a good place to start before spending our taxpayer dollars on it.

I just don't think the costs in tax dollars, lost trees, additional run-off into Holmes Run and lost parking spaces is worth the benefit in this case.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

Dale Carson

5205 Polk Ave

dale2wheel@gmail.com

From: Kenneth Peyton <ken956@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, July 13, 2022 8:32 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: RE: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

Hi Alex,

First let me say I agree with the sidewalk. Second, I think the whole tree issue is a red herring brought up by a few vocal neighbors who want to oppose the project.

Can I add background about parking? I live on Richenbacher. There was growing concern about street parking about 20 years ago. The neighborhood petitioned the city to make a neighborhood zone and the people at the apartments and in Brookville objected because they need street parking. The demand for parking is still growing judging by how cars line the streets more than they used to.

A few years ago a lady knocked on my door and asked if she could park in my driveway. Another winter about ten years ago one of the residents asked to park on my driveway pad that I had shoveled. I widened my driveway about ten years ago partly because people were parking so close to the edges that it was difficult to back out safely. When my neighbor on the Paxton side goes away for a weekend, he always parks an extra car in front of his house, so the spot will be available when he returns.

I don't like the loss of nine parking spaces anywhere in the neighborhood and hope we aren't losing them due to a vocal minority. Can the city somehow go ahead and cut down some trees and keep parking spaces? I'm seconding what the gentleman from Palmer said in this evening's meeting about how cars fill up the streets along Palmer.

Ken Peyton, Alexandria, VA

On 07/13/2022 2:46 PM Alexandria Carroll <alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov> wrote:

Good Afternoon Kenneth,

Thank you for your message. I appreciate you reaching out to share your feedback.

In order to preserve parking, the sidewalk would have to be built almost entirely outside the existing footprint of the street, closer to the park area. This would result in greater loss of trees, which we have also heard is a community concern. As in any project, staff considers the various needs and concerns and tries to present a balanced proposal that meets the goals of the project and minimizes impacts.

There are about 19 on-street parking spaces on this block, with one home that has a private driveway. Our observations have shown that even with the removal of nine spaces, there will be sufficient parking to meet demand.

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

Thank you again for taking the time to share your comments, and have a nice day.

Alex Carroll
(she/her)
Complete Streets Program Manager
Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
City of Alexandria | 301 King Street Room 3600 | Alexandria, VA 22314
alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov

From: Kenneth Peyton <ken956@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, July 08, 2022 7:25 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: re: Polk Avenue Sidewalk Safe Routes to School Project

If you build the sidewalk can you widen the space so we keep street parking which is becoming scarce in this area?

From: Alexandria Carroll
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2022 4:44 PM
To: Jeremy Hogg <jeremyhogg@gmail.com>
Cc: Melanie Hogg <melanie.m.hogg@gmail.com>; Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>; Hillary Orr <Hillary.Orr@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL]Polk Sidewalk Project - Feedback from Family Directly Across the Street

Hi Jeremy,

Thanks for your message, and thank you for joining the meeting last night. I appreciate you taking the time to share your input and contribute to a productive, thoughtful discussion.

I do understand your concern about parking, but I'm afraid installing the sidewalk closer to the park to preserve parking is not a viable option. Building further into the park area would have an even greater impact on trees and the natural space, and this would not be acceptable to the City's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, who is a partner in this project. Doing so would also require regrading the existing paths and installing a retaining wall instead of a simple curb, which would significantly impact project costs and exceed the project budget.

One item that I mentioned in the presentation yesterday but did not really make its way into the group discussion was the request for crosswalks at Polk Avenue and Palmer Place. I mentioned that we could consider crosswalks as a supplemental treatment. However, it would require up to six additional on-street parking spaces on Polk Avenue to be removed to ensure sufficient sightlines for people crossing. Given the concern you and a few others have expressed about the proposed reduction in parking, crosswalk treatments are something we could omit from our recommendation to minimize overall impacts to parking. Again, we are trying to provide a plan that balances all the various needs and concerns as much as is feasible.

In terms of drainage features, we can continue to work through the details of this as the design is finalized.

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

As a reminder, there will be an additional opportunity to weigh in on this project at the [Traffic & Parking Board Public Hearing](#) on July 25. If you wish to speak during the public hearing, please email Alex.Block@alexandriava.gov in advance of the meeting.

Thank you again for your continued engagement, and have a nice evening.

Alex Carroll
(she/her)
Complete Streets Program Manager
Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
City of Alexandria | 301 King Street Room 3600 | Alexandria, VA 22314
alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov

From: Jeremy Hogg <jeremyhogg@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2022 8:32 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Melanie Hogg <melanie.m.hogg@gmail.com>; Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]Polk Sidewalk Project - Feedback from Family Directly Across the Street

Hi Alex,

Thanks for attending yesterday evening. I know this a contentious topic and I commend your ability to stay composed among the vocal members of our community.

Mayor Wilson - thank you also for making the time to come out to review this project earlier this week.

I wanted to reiterate two things that were brought up yesterday evening:

1. The City should be able to preserve parking as part of this plan. Please note that community members come and park along that side of the road adjacent to the park to use the space. Users of the street parking that live here should *NOT* be negatively affected by this project and there should be parking retained for users of the park. There are many places in the City with much tighter parking situations with parking on both sides of the road (i.e. Del Ray) and it's critical the City figures out a way to maintain as much parking as possible along the park. Cutting 2 to 3' into the slope will not significantly change the cost of the project, but does eliminate parking in the current plan.
2. The City also should look at how drainage coming off of the sloped park area will be dealt with. While the run off will not significantly increase from this project, the plan does create a small retaining wall (even if only 1-2' high) that will trap water behind it if not properly dealt with. This could be addressed through a number of methods, but a recommendation could be a small swale behind the wall with stone and filter fabric and various drainage points that allow the water to make its way out to the curb. If not addressed, you will have debris and silt that will end up on the sidewalk in major storms. This same debris and silt ends up in the road now because there is no solution for this.

Thank you again - I look forward to seeing a plan that addresses the loss in parking and drainage concerns.

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

Regards,
Jeremy

On Tue, Jul 5, 2022 at 1:14 PM Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov> wrote:
Good Afternoon Jeremy and Melanie,

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your feedback. It is greatly appreciated. I apologize for the delayed reply – I was out for several days and am catching up on emails. Thank you for your patience.

I am glad to hear you are supportive of increasing pedestrian safety and access in the neighborhood, and I understand that parking loss is almost always a concern.

Per the City's [Complete Streets Design Guidelines](#), new sidewalks are typically 6' at a minimum. 5' is permitted if the sidewalk is a residential retrofit. In this case, the proposed sidewalk is already 5'. That said, staff can consider whether a narrower sidewalk is appropriate and whether it would make any meaningful difference in the impact to parking spaces and/or trees.

I have noted your interest in installing the sidewalk further back, closer to the park, to preserve parking. I should note that there has been concern raised by some about the proximity of the sidewalk to the park and the proposed removal of trees. As in any project, staff will consider the various needs and concerns and try to present a balanced proposal that meets the goals of the project and minimizes impacts.

Thank you again for reaching out, and have a nice day.

Alex Carroll
(she/her)
Complete Streets Program Manager
Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
City of Alexandria | 301 King Street Room 3600 | Alexandria, VA 22314
alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov

From: Jeremy Hogg <jeremyhogg@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2022 9:55 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Melanie Hogg <melanie.m.hogg@gmail.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Polk Sidewalk Project - Feedback from Family Directly Across the Street

Hi Alexandria,

My name is Jeremy Hogg and my wife and I are the residents that made the original request to the City to review a sidewalk across the street from our home. We have been at 5324 Polk Ave for 5 1/2 years and residents of the west end for 15 years. We also lived at Parkside for about 5 of those years.

Over the years we have witnessed close calls at the corner of our home. Residents from Parkside and others cross at that corner and oftentimes motorists are travelling too fast resulting in a dangerous combination. The gate that provides access from Parkside to Polk Ave is used daily and has been great to encourage walking to school and access to the Park for those residents for years. The sidewalk will get people off the road and is a common sense project that improves accessibility and

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

safety in the neighborhood. It was great to have our City manager out last month to review this situation (my wife attended) and I know we also have have a session coming up with City officials and the BSVCA board in the next few weeks (I'm on Board there as well).

As one of the principal stakeholders in the project, and the family that will be most affected, we are supportive of this project because it provides safe access on that side of the street. **With that said, we would request that the City please review the plan to remove 9 spaces and come up with alternate options. How do you balance the need for safety without elimination of 9 spaces?**

Options to consider:

1. Does the sidewalk need to be 5' wide? The sidewalk in front of our home is less than 4' and the sidewalk at the townhomes is about 3' 6".
2. Can the City look at cutting into the slope of the hill slightly more to prevent removal of all these spaces? This would cause a small retaining wall, but may mitigate the elmination of all the spaces.
3. The road widens just past the park entrance, so could parking be maintained in that area heading east of the Polk park entrance?

Parking is at a premium in our neighborhood. We also have many people that park their cars illegally on the street (we call 411 regularly (weekly) to deal with this). I would ask that we consider the above options in the final planning to ensure we maximize the parking while ensuring safe access.

If you have any questions I'd be happy to chat. As a trained civil engineer, I'm confident we can find a solution that balances parking and improves safety in the neighborhood. If possible, would you mind providing this email to others involved in the planning process at the City?

Thank you,

--

Jeremy Hogg
Alexandria, VA 22304
C: 571-344-4262

T&ES' proposed, city-funded sidewalk at 5325 Polk to connect to Parkside condominiums' private, haphazardly-built, DIY-designed, locked-and-gated path ending at Pelham to an existing public sidewalk a block away can best be described as (1) tone-deaf to the community's parking concerns, and (2) environmentally inept.

Two words describe the proposed sidewalk project: PATHetic and PATHological (puns intended).

PATHetic: Another, less expensive, less invasive way to improve pedestrian safety would be to build a minimal amount of sidewalk beginning at the Parkside path, remove only two parking spaces, and mark a crosswalk mid-block from the entrance to the 5325 park to the sidewalk on the opposite side of Polk. Instead of considering this option, the crosswalk concept was rejected because it would be located mid-block rather than at an intersection. Why? Go figure.... It's certainly not, as explained by staff, that mid-block crosswalks are not condoned by the city. Many examples exist to disprove that explication. Really...?

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

PATHological: This process has avoided transparency and circumvented existing protocols for creating new neighborhood sidewalks. The “gap” was first identified in a VDOT “Safe Routes to School” assessment. A couple of years later, a VDOT assessment of likely users identified approximately six school-age children on Pelham, who potentially would need to cross the street if attending Polk Elementary. VDOT funded a walk audit for Polk School... “but did not play any role in development of infrastructure recommendations” and the city “has no obligation to VDOT to implement this sidewalk project,” says T&ES.

When asked for data analytics about school children’s likely use of the sidewalk, T&ES had none. When 2016 VDOT data were cited by a questioner, the answer was that more than just Polk students would use the sidewalk - also adults and students going to other nearby schools. No data on that have been collected, either.

While the city’s Neighborhood Sidewalk Program sets forth extensive requirements and constraints for seeking a new neighborhood sidewalk project, the 5325 proposal avoids meeting them. Why? “It’s part of Safe Routes to School,” says T&ES. Isn’t that a VDOT program? Which trumps? Why? Whichever set of criteria is more convenient? Are six Polk students (as of 2016) enough? They will have to cross the street somewhere, admittedly. Polk School IS on the other side.

Says T&ES: “The City owns and maintains its own roadways,” yet there is no plan or commitments for maintaining the safety of the new sidewalk - expressly snow and ice removal and lighting. There are no neighbors whose property abuts the sidewalk.

Further, T&ES says that existing street right of way will be used for the new sidewalk, 82% of which will not add impervious surface. Question: will any of that other 18% - even tiny percentage - be built on 5325 Polk park property? If so, the City’s purchase agreement requires it to remit funding for the park to its donor, as stipulated at the time of the purchase grant. The city attorney’s opinion may be warranted prior to proceeding.

Carol L. James
1000 N. Vail Street
Alexandria, VA
July 17, 2022

From: burnskathy1036@gmail.com <burnskathy1036@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, July 17, 2022 12:27 PM

To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>; Jim Parajon <jim.parajon@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Christopher Ziemann <christopher.ziemann@alexandriava.gov>; Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]no time given for today's TES deadline for Comments. Please consider extending it. 5325 Polk

Importance: High

IF THERE IS NO EXTENSION FOR TODAY’S DEADLINE FOR THE TES Comment Period, CONSIDER THIS MY SUBMISSION.

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

July 17, 2022

Dear Alex and Chris,

I had no idea that TES had rushed to setting a Comment Period on 5325 Polk for July 17, 2022 until a neighbor mentioned it at 6 p.m. yesterday. It seems that moments after the July 13 “listening session,” Ms. Carroll contacted the Traffic and Parking Board to get things rolling.

There was no follow up notice to those who had tuned in to the ZOOM “listening session” on July 13. Similarly, there was another apparent violation of standard procedures for governmental public meetings, since no one was required to sign in (except for the Zoom call) and so there is no formal record on attendance for the Public Record, which would normally include a person’s name, address and email.

Having served on the Parking Board myself, I know it is highly unusual to allow for only two business days for a comment period on something of such great significance for the neighborhood.

Put this announcement on the comment period on E-News. Most people do not visit the TES website with regularity.

And my colleague who saw the notice said **no deadline time was given.**

That was a terrible oversight for a public announcement and should be corrected immediately on the TES website.. Put it on Facebook and other social media, presuming you really do want to address an interested audience attracting residents with diverse opinions and viewpoints, and not only the TES Party Line talking points. Also note that the meeting was recorded and let the public know when they can access that data orally, as well as via a written transcript from that tape, as part of mandatory Public Outreach.

Also notify BSVCA President Ashley Dalton (Ashley.lynn.dalton@gmail.com) to put the correction on the BSVCA website for her organization, and notification that the meeting was recorded, and how one can access that orally and when a transcript will be available. Notification of the correction and the tape and written transcript should also be immediately provided to the Federation of Civic Associations and to the West End Coalition of Civic Associations. You can do that through Ms. Carter Flemming, who is co-chair of both groups (carterflemming@gmail.com)

As the Washington Post so aptly notes on its masthead: “*Democracy dies in darkness.*” TES officials plus the City’s elected officials and the City Manager can shine some light on the

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

missing TES information as part of the usually essential Public Outreach process.

I respectfully also suggest that the **comment period be extended for at least two weeks**, which had been the usual time frame for most government agencies (not just locally, but regionally, statewide and federally when seeking comments. Even the House of Representatives gives 10 business days for people to amend or submit their remarks, following public hearings.)

I am sure there are many interested parties in this 5325 Park vs TES sidewalk controversy, including myself, who were not aware of the brief Comment Period and thus would be cut out of the process.

Below I note, I have not had the proverbial “spare minute to dash off any Comments for TES since 6 pm last night. I am very good at Time Management, but there are limits to having only 24 hours a day!

In my personal time frame since the end of TES on Wednesday, July 13 ‘listening session:”

After the July 13 hearing ended at 8:30 pm, I took some brief notes, had dinner at 9:30 pm, and then typed up my notes til midnight (unaware of the rapidly approaching Comment deadline.

On Thursday, I spent the major part of my time at a funeral in upper Maryland and returned home late in the day, to tackle my upcoming Friday tasks. That included teaching my first in-person class for GMU where I had not actually been on campus since the beginning of the Pandemic in early March 2020.

For the remainder of Friday afternoon and evening, I worked on academic notes for the class I will teach on Monday, July 18 at GMU and sent email updates to my students.

For the weekend, I went with my daughter to pick up the wedding dress she’ll wear on Aug. 20 and then to another location to get my dress. Ran errands and updated notes for my Monday, July 18 GMU classes I am teaching.

So I haven’t been sitting idly by, with little time to zip out my TES Comments for the “mystery” deadline.

Still part of this weekend, on Saturday evening about 6 pm

I dropped off some things for a sick friend who surprised me with the unexpected new of the rapidly looming TES deadline----and a sense of horror engulfed me ---about being shut-out of the TES Comment Period, because of poor Public Outreach processes by the agency.

And the weekend isn’t over yet----I ordered ticket for a 2 pm play at ARENA stage a year ago for TODAY.

Finding out that in less than 24 hours, the TES deadline would plunk down on all of us was one of the most upsetting

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

of moments of living in Alexandria for a long time. At this late date, I obviously can't change the tickets and I would lose the money. That's a poor choice.

And looking ahead to a very demanding week of July 18-23, I find little "open time" to dash off the TES comments by whenever the deadline is today.

On July 18, I have the day at GMU for classes. On July 19 and July 20, my husband has two "significant surgeries" with outcome unknown at present or how long the hospitalization will be.

I NEED AND EXTENSION OF THIS COMMENT PERIOD, and so do many others on the West End who just found out about the deadline and can't drop everything to meet the deadline, whenever it is, because of poor Public Outreach policies by TES and the City.

And, if I can't get it, please submit this document for the TES Public Record, since this is the only time they would have acknowledged comments from KMS and surrounding Palmer Place, Pender Court, Pegram and Richenbacher who oppose the TES plan as it is currently written and does not reflect any requested changes from neighborhood input.

And I/we don't need just a few hours, but we need at least a week. TES and the City officials need a full and fair opportunity to voice concerns from residents impacted by this \$100,000 sidewalk.

Ms. Carrol and Chris Ziemann have continue to ignore the historical, scientific, ethical and legal aspects of this parcel of ground, This is not the mandatory "due diligence" but bullying against residents and taxpayers.

Since the year 2000, many area residents were part of a coalition of 4 large West End civic associations that battled developers and some City staff for 13 years to ward off attempts to turn the pristine park into multi-family units ranging from 17 to 42 units, and permanently damage not only the Park for surrounding houses, with expected water seepage problems underground to our foundations.

We urge TES and the City's elected officials to **take a serious look at the LEGAL Aspects of 5325 Polk Park**, related to the creation, protection and preservation of this Park, instead of the repeated mantra "right of way" as the sole justification for this sidewalk, as part TES's unlimited powers in creating policies that are not subject to impartial review and input.

Start your immediate search with the City's own extensive research, documentation and vote on this property. It is not merely a pile of dirt and a few hapless trees.

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On Dec. 4, 2012, the City's Planning Commission voted unanimously [Docket Item 12, Planning Hearing Commission, City Charter Section 9-06. Case #2012—0003, 5325 Polk.]

According to an Alexandria attorney and expert on land use management and city regulations, he notes from the above document that the citation on PDF page 20, is

“a letter from Duke Realty to City Manager, “approved” by the City Attorney and voted on by the Planning Commission when it authorized the purchase. So it is binding. The letter also says that the City is required to show it used the money (\$1.9 million) for the express purpose (open space) by providing a copy of the executed purchase agreement or deed of conveyance ‘which contains the appropriate language restricting the use of the property for open space in perpetuity.’”

Adds the legal expert, “the issue boils down to whether [TES] plans are inconsistent with open space requirements. If it is inconsistent, [the City] cannot do it without returning the property.

In other words, the deed citation that the property must be for the ‘exclusive use’ as Open Space. “

We neighbors to 5325 Polk continue to wonder why City elected officials such as the Mayor and Council members, who have visited this fragile environmental site, continue to ignore a strong request for a striped crosswalk FROM THE PATH/DRIVEWAY UP TO THE TOP OF THE HILL? We are their constituents. This is NOT at the Parkside entrance but half way down, on a flatter part of the street, and a significant distance from the curve at Pelham/Polk. City Manager Parajon didn't give any assessment to the Crosswalk in the middle of the block, where the street is much flatter, and the access could use the basic driveway/path to the top.

The City can't arbitrarily rule out crosswalks in the middle of the block since it already has so many, just based on a random survey.

It is time for TES and the City to **“PUT UP OR SHUT UP”** and allow to do a professional survey of the Pros and Cons of the site in the middle of the block. There is no extra cost since this is part of his job. This striped crosswalk with appropriate signage could easily connect to the city-owned Median strip to cross Polk Avenue. Lately, we have seen a profusion of new and updated crosswalks in our part of town. marked by the Walking Pedestrian Signs, in bright colors.

And before we taxpayers **“SHOW YOU THE MONEY”** for the \$100,000+plus sidewalk (Carroll said it would not include any money for the drainage grids on a street where the curbs would be torn up,

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

and Parks and Rec Director said there would be ‘no extra money’ to maintain the City-owned sidewalk and do the snow shoveling etc. No surprise there since the Park has had minimal maintenance if its 10 years>0

City Manager Parajon, when he visited in May, noted the “speeding school buses” and promised ‘to do something about that.’ But nothing happened.

Make up for lost time. Cut speed there in the lead up to 5325 Polk and uphill to Pelham at to 15 mph as part of the School Zone as you’ve done on Pegram and Polk.

Parajon also promised “Curved Road Ahead” signs, and nothing happened. Do it now, as you did on Pegram near Polk, as well as other places in Alexandria.

the City spent a lot of money on the large Speed Monitoring devices on Pegram. Why not put that speed measuring either on going uphill on Pelham or Polk?

Whatever they cost, it would be a lot less than the \$100,000 sidewalk that does ZERO as a promised “safety enhancement” but with no documentation.

The “Routes to Schools” features lots of crosswalks in it plans, based on VDOT materials from 2014 and 2016

When the TES July 13 meeting ended meeting at 8:30 pm, I do not recall Ms. Carroll flashing up on the screen that “Comment Period will end at midnight on July 17” only 4 days later, or only two business days later. She merely gave her email address, and did not include that of Chris Ziemann, her supervisor, whom I assume would have to approve any such comments. Nor did she give the email for Yon Lambert, who would also have to approve not only any statements put forth by Ms. Carroll on 5325 Polk, but is also given some magical power to override any decision made in the future by what we thought was an independent Traffic and Parking Board.

Let me add that at the July 13 there was the perception of a ‘stacked deck’ in the audience. As residents, we want our governmental forums to exude transparency, fact-based information and a sense of accountability by those representing the City and its agencies.

At the July 13 ‘listening session,’ there were only 25 people in attendance, and 8 of them were City employees, and this was part of their job to attend. These were not neutral observers, but active voting participants in what TES should and would do.

Let me also return to the extraordinarily abrupt and limited TES Comment Period of 2 business days plus 2 weekend days.

There is no perceived urgency in rushing this decision through, except on the part of TES. I could understand if a gaping Sink Hole suddenly

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

opened up on Polk and demanded an immediate repair, or if any hurricane crushingly roared through, and TES needed to help. But that is not the case.

Unfortunately, it leads residents to wonder if TES is again hurrying to turn the proposed sidewalk into a “done deal,” and not lose outside funding.

We saw the TES Role Model foreshadowing earlier, with the very debacle on Seminary Road. The ‘prompt’ for such TES action was a State offer of significant money for a sidewalk near the Episcopal Seminary. The City pushed it through to the 4-3 vote, and on the very next day, it went to the top of the list for TES work projects. And then, ironically, the major funding from needed repairs for Holmes Run Park disappeared, and was shifted to Seminary Road [and this was verified by City employees.]

And so did the money from a Virginia State Grant. And the sidewalk has never been built and people walk in the streets, in this tiny stripped off area.[See Alexandria Times article, “Transparency Needed in grant funding,” by Frank Putzu, January 7, 2021]

It was also disheartening to hear from those familiar with the usual Parking and Transportation Board processes that TES and the City have scrubbed the usual Public Hearing format. In the past, there was a notification period of 2 weeks to 4 weeks, with diverse and extensive Outreach efforts. Those standing rules seemed to be non-existent for July 13. One glaring oversight was that

the were no posted signs at in front of 5325 Polk----the site of the TES controversy----both at the Parkside path entrance and along the driveway/path to the top, where users and interested parties would see them. That’s important since the main users by volume of any sidewalk would be from the 378 Parkside condo units, and this includes a preponderance of adults, and a small number of children.

It does include a significant number of parents with baby carriages, who struggle to come down that steeply sloped path to Polk.

And I understand there is no effort by TES to currently to post signs in front of the two areas of heavy traffic from Parkside (via their own residential path from the gated community) or the to correct that mistake ahead of the proposed July 25 hearing.

Why is that? Is the goal to make sure as few people as possible are aware of this controversy? Are you minimizing the usual requirements for Public Outreach? Is it simply an oversight by someone in TES who made a mistake and forgot to include it? Or is it deliberate.

There is a shifting dynamic on why TES has so vigorously pursued this sidewalk for years, only acknowledging one point of view, and adamant refusing any other aspects. Ms. Carroll made that abundantly clear in her remarks July 13 when she rebuffed engineer and resident of 5324 Polk, Jeremy Hogg, who revealed to the audience he had already had several private discussions

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

with her on the dire impact of removing 9 street parking sites. She dismissively noted she had spent “15 minutes” inspecting the site, and found the loss of 9 parking spots for tax-paying residents would be a ‘minor inconvenience.’ Is she crazy?

The timing of Ms. Carroll’s remarks on July 13 were even more sobering, since the next day TES posted signs for repaving Richenbacher, from Van Dorn up to Pickett, warning residents on either side of the street, in townhouses, apartments and single family homes, NOT to park on that street. This will cause chaos as the residents seek desperately needed parking on adjacent streets, where signs are also posted (but we didn’t get any explanatory letters as did those living on Richenbacher.” The upended Richenbacher residents will search out parking in our already very limited spaces. This includes the 92 KMS townhouse units on Van Dorn, Vale, Terrill, Pelham and Richenbacher itself. KMS units have NO driveways.

Kathleen Burns,
1036 N. Pelham St.

ALX, VA 22304

Desk Phone: (703) 824-1799

Cell Phone: (703) 624-2097

From: burnskathy1036@gmail.com <burnskathy1036@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, July 17, 2022 10:05 PM

To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>; Christopher Ziemann <christopher.ziemann@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>; Jim Parajon <jim.parajon@alexandriava.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]submissions for TES Comment period

Importance: High

Dear Ms. Carroll,

I would like this item below to be part of the TES submission for Public Comments / Public Record regarding the dispute between 5325 Polk Open Space Park versus TES sidewalk.

It is a Letter to the Editor, written by Kathy Burns, and titled “Your Views: Time to Shift Priorities.”

I have also included a Letter to the Editor by Carol James, titled “Don’t Pave Our Park,” which was published in the Alexandria TIMES on April 21, 2022. As members of the BSVCA Open Space Committee, we fully support the comments by Ms. James in her article. Other Committee members include: Shirley Downs, Dick Burris, Michael Moss, BJ Sullivan, Kathy Burns and Patrick Layman

Earlier today, I sent a longer statement to you and Chris Zeimann, which I would also like to be included in the TES Comments/Public Record.

I had written to you this morning since no deadline was listed for submissions on July 17. But I never heard anything back from you and I saw Ziemann was out of town.

So I am presuming the deadline is midnight on July 17. One wonders at the “Rush Job,” since there is no perceived urgency in dealing with this issue before there is a more

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

complete factual report, including the Pros and Cons for the sidewalk, versus the documented risks for the park from any construction along the foundational border.

A blanket justification by the TES magical power of “right-of-way” is not the same as a “due diligence” investigation by the City, that is neutral and transparent.

As also noted earlier today, I find it very odd that the Public would be given only 2 weekdays and 2 weekend days to provide comments on such an important and controversial issue regarding the TES stance. Essential to the upcoming Traffic and Parking Board hearing are Public Notice signs posted at 5325 Polk, at the Parkside Path entrance to Polk Street, and at the Driveway/Path to the top of the Park in the middle of that long stretch of the Open Space Park. I don't know if those two areas were part of your earlier site visit. It was highly unusual such signs were not in place for the July 13 meeting, since the major users of any TES street crossing options would be adult and youth living in the 379 residents of Parkside currently. They are your target audience and they were overlooked.

The posted signs should have been mandatory as they have for majority of Public Hearings on land use management in the past. Please correct that oversight for the July 25 session.

Sincerely,
Kathy Burns, chair, BSVCA Open Space Committee.

LINK: <https://alextimes.com/2022/07/your-views-time-to-shift-priorities/>

Letter to the Editor

Your Views: Time to Shift Priorities

Published in Alexandria TIMES, July 14, 2022

To the editor:

On July 1, the City of Alexandria leapt into FY2023. Earlier in May, City Council had approved the annual budget of \$849,213,971. And now the city staff of more than 900 employees – and their agencies – will oversee how the budget details are implemented and how that money is spent.

If a project pushed by the city's Transportation and Environmental Services costs nine and a half times the neighborhood's recommended alternative, wouldn't the latter be the better choice? Especially if the T&ES choice has the potential for damage, upheaval and destruction of a \$1.9 million asset the city agreed to 'protect and to preserve,' would unnecessarily remove nine parking places, and doesn't have a fact-supported safety reason behind it.

While \$100,000 for the city's proposed project may seem like a tiny pittance out of an \$850 million pile of money, it is a significant amount if you are one of the city's residents who just paid your taxes and you are being asked involuntarily to fund this unnecessary effort, spearheaded by T&ES.

The “target” for this T&ES effort is the 5325 Polk Open Space Park, where plans for a concrete sidewalk within its border could seriously damage the foundational structure of a site that has a slope reaching to almost 50%, with “expandable” clay soil and underground water sources.

T&ES is ignoring input from neighbors living close to this proposed project, which could severely impact their safety and that of their homes; remove nine available on-street parking spaces; create severe

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

damage to the foundations of their homes and streets; and upend a city park, funded with federal and Alexandria dollars. If you lived on the impacted streets, would you be willing to support this T&ES expenditure?

Described as an “Urban Oasis,” the park site triggered battles between developers, the city planners and residents, beginning in 2000. Four West End civic associations fought against dangerous encroachments for 13 years, when the property owner finally agreed to sell the 2.3-acre site. The DOD provided \$1.5 million in mitigation funds to compensate for the six acres DOD took to build the BRAC Building and Alexandria added \$400,000 in Open Space Funds. On Dec. 5, 2012, the city authorized the sale and promised to ‘protect and preserve’ this environmentally fragile site.

And, for almost 10 years, the transaction was considered “settled law.” But, suddenly, in November 2021, T&ES decided to ignore the facts from several previous public hearings by the Planning Commission, which had dismissed requests by developers for multi-family units, ranging from 17 to 42 units. And instead, T&ES has since pushed for an unwanted and unneeded impervious concrete sidewalk within the pristine borders of 5325 Polk Open Space Park,

T&ES avoids the consensus-preferred option by affected neighbors for a striped crosswalk, with appropriate signage, that would cost \$5,000 to \$95,000 less than the environmentally threatening sidewalk within an area designated as a watershed protection zone.

Why is there such a disconnect?

Regardless of where you live in Alexandria, all residents expect that our elected and appointed city officials will provide the requisite “due diligence” when weighing – on our behalf – which projects should move ahead and which shouldn’t. Measurement priorities should include the effectiveness, efficiency, safety and cost.

Drive by 5325 Polk and see for yourself.

-Kathy Burns, Alexandria

Facebooktwittermailinstagram

Kathleen Burns,

Desk Phone: (703) 824-1799

Cell Phone: (703) 624-2097

[Note: Link to above-referenced letter to the editor, titled “Don’t Pave Our Park” is available here: <https://alextimes.com/2022/04/your-views-dont-pave-our-park/>]

From: Shirley's Comcast <shirley-downs@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, July 18, 2022 11:08 AM

To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>; Christopher Ziemann <christopher.ziemann@alexandriava.gov>

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Follow up Questions after BSVCA Meeting with T&ES re the Grant Application to VDOT for funds for the Polk project

Hello,

My name is Shirley Downs and I have some additional questions re the application for funding. It would be very helpful to be able to talk to you as soon as possible. I am also preparing additional information relating to the Park at Polk, These include, parking problems within the KMS Townhomes, Parkside, the Willow Run rental properties to the south along Richenbacker, and the other surrounding communities to the North and the single family residences in this area. My additional comments will relate to the very real problems that local residents have had with water damage to their homes and properties caused by the sloping natures of the land in this area and the quality and characteristics of the clay soil. All of these issues are very relevant to this project. Finally I will provide information related to greenspace and the trees in the Polk Park.

Because local budgets are tight I know that Alexandria is seeking funding where ever it can be found to address the needs of our residents. As it happens during my career I worked to secure local, federal, state and foundation funding when I worked for both a rural and NYC Congressional Representatives. Additionally when I lived in the NYS capital I was also intimately involved in interagency reviews of applications for state grant funding for a wide variety of programs and initiatives. So I am very aware of what it takes to prepare grant proposals and the kind of criteria the states employ when awarding competitive grants. I would be interested in speaking to appropriate T&ES staff to see if I might make some helpful suggestions in the preparation of applications to secure state and federal funding.

Thank you I look forward to speaking to you about these issues.

Shirley Downs
1007 North Vail Street
Alexandria, VA 22304
Phone: 703-845-7958 Land Line no text.
Email: shirley-downs@comcast.net

[Attached Questions Below:]

Questions for The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services Relating to Grant Funding to Facilitate Investments in Infrastructure and provide other Resources to Enhance the Safety of School Children and Residents on Our Streets.

From: Shirley Downs
1007 North Vail Street
Alexandria, VA 22304

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

Phone: 703-945-7958

Email: shirley-downs@comcast.net

- 1) I understand that there are several potential sources of funding:
 - a) Funding via the Neighborhood Sidewalk Grants
 - b) Funding via the Safe Streets to Schools Grants
 - c) Other potential sources of funding such as the STP-Urban Program, and LoCip
- 2) Can T&ES provide information on how much potential funding is available to Alexandria via each of these programs?
- 3) What are the filling deadlines for grant applications for funding under each of these programs?
- 4) T&ES indicated they plan to apply for funding under the Safe Streets to Schools Grant. In reading about the kinds of initiatives that are funded under these grants and in looking at the proposal you attached there seem to be a number of elements you intend to seek funding for. Can you break down the projected budget outlays for improvements outlined for each of these elements including hardscape, the sidewalk, infostructure, signs, the trimming back of trees and bushes for greater visibility, improved lighting and any other elements in this application you hope this grant will pay for as well as the total dollars you hope to receive from this grant.
- 5) Are there any matching funds from the city or other groups required or encouraged in this application as an indication of community interest and support?
- 6) In your description of the data provided related to the number of children who would be walking to school it was indicated that this data was collected in 2014. It is now 2022 so the data is 8 years old. We know that as a result of the corvid pandemic local enrollment in some local schools has dropped. Some families have moved because they lost or changed jobs, because the death of family members or because the cost of housing has increased so much or because some families decided to enroll their children in a private or religious school. Has enrollment at Polk School increased, decreased, remained the same as it was when this data was collected in 2014? At the end of the summary of your plan about the number of children involved it was stated that this data would need to be updated. How do you plan to do this?
- 7) Some options to improve the data as it applies to Polk Street would be to survey the residents who:
 - a) Reside at Parkside -This could be done by asking the Manager of Parkside to survey the residents and ask how many of the families there had school age children attending Polk. It is possible that since this is a rental property, they already have this kind of data in the leases that residents signed or a letter could be sent to tenants asking for this information and listing why it was important.
 - b) Reside in the homes on Polk, the townhouses and single-family homes living on Pelham, and the single-family homes immediately below Polk and above Richenbacher
- 8) At the same time we are asking these home owners about the number of school age children who reside in these locations we could also ask these homeowners if they had drainage problems on their properties. If this required them to put in a sump pump, fix foundation cracks, install French drains, or pay for other improvements related to moisture, mildew, and water run off related to the steep hills built on clay that our homes are built on.

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

- 9) Can Additional Elements be added to this application for Transportation infrastructure funding? There are two other dangerous intersections which in our West End community.
- a)As you are aware from your conversations with BVSCA President Ashley Dalton you are aware of public safety concerns for children and local residents at the intersection near her home on Taney Avenue relating to cars speeding, not stopping at stop signs and the fact that foliage can obstruct a drivers vision of small children, pets and other residents along this route and at this intersection.
- b)A second very dangerous intersection is at the Corner of North Van Dorn and Richenbacker Ave. There is very, very heavy traffic along Van Dorn it is very difficult to turn from Richenbacker onto Van Dorn and vision is also obstructed for drivers coming via Sanger Avenue and attempting to turn onto Van Dorn. There have been many near accidents as well as actual accidents involving cars trying to make these turns. There is a major bus stop there right in front of the KMS Townhomes that face Van Dorn. Commuters, and children walking home from school in that area are at great risk as are the women pushing strollers with children who have been on the bus. The streetlight needs to be timed both to improve traffic flow and to improve safety. Additionally, there are gaps in the sidewalk all along the side of Van Dorn nearest 395 running North. There are also areas where bushes and tree limbs need to be trimmed back to improve visibility and provide safety from oncoming cars. There are also areas where the sidewalk has heaved so much that it is difficult to walk, ride a bike or push a stroller.

If these projects could be incorporated into the application for funding it would greatly enhance the safety of children going to school and the safety of local residents.

From: burnskathy1036@gmail.com <burnskathy1036@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 24, 2022 7:11 PM
To: Christopher Ziemann <christopher.ziemann@alexandriava.gov>; Ryan Knight <Ryan.Knight@alexandriava.gov>; Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Alex Block <alex.block@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL]July 25 T&B hearing
Importance: High

Mr. Block,

I just got a panicked call from Patrick Layman, who lives at 1040 Pelham, where it intersects with Polk. His email is: prblayman@yahoo.com

He has been delayed at work and had hoped to file a short statement for distribution at tomorrow's hearing, by the 7 pm deadline.

We have all had jobs where suddenly we are doing 'overtime' when we hadn't expected that to be the case.

And he hopes he won't be penalized with missing his submission. It will not be a long statement. His phone number is 832-797-4077.

Again, at some jobs, you can and cannot have personal phone calls while you are working and I don't know what his situation is.

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

So, if he doesn't answer, just leave a message.

Is there any kind of a brief extension he could get to the 7 pm deadline? he lives adjacent to the 5325 Polk Park, and is concerned about the removal of 9 Parking Spots will have on him and the others. With the July 13 deadline for filing comments from the TES "hearing session," the deadline was midnight. Maybe some kind of a similar waiver is available?

I am his neighbor who lives down the block and he called and left a message for me.

Kathy Burns, 1036 N. Pelham St., Alex, VA 22304

From: Christopher Ziemann <christopher.ziemann@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Sunday, July 24, 2022 5:44 PM
To: burnskathy1036@gmail.com; Ryan Knight <Ryan.Knight@alexandriava.gov>; Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Alex Block <alex.block@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL]July 25 T&B hearing

I'm including Alex Block on this so he can answer Traffic and Parking Board-specific questions.

Chris

Christopher Ziemann (*he/him/his*)
Office: 703.746.4083
Mobile: 703.819.7082

From: burnskathy1036@gmail.com <burnskathy1036@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 23, 2022 1:40 PM
To: Ryan Knight <Ryan.Knight@alexandriava.gov>; Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Christopher Ziemann <christopher.ziemann@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]July 25 T&B hearing
Importance: High

Gentlemen,

I am getting ready to send out a reminder to our neighbors about Monday's hearing. I notice that the announcement sent by City is different from the one sent by TES/TPB.

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Is there a consolidated notice with all the information one needs to participate? If so, please send me a copy

ASAP. We want to provide comprehensive but concise information so anyone who wants to participate can easily do so.

The deadline for anyone wishing to sign up to speak, either via Zoom or In-Person, is 7 p,m tomorrow. Is that correct?

Is that also the deadline for anyone who wishes to submit information for the Traffic Board members in general, and for the Public Record in particular?

Does that go to Mr. Block? or to Mr. Knight? Or to both? And does the requester just declare their intent and specify the format in which they want to speak? Do they separately file their written testimony, and with whom, if they want it on Record, but don't wish to speak.

Does everyone need to fill out the Webinar Form in order to participate?

Thank you in advance for clarifying any confusion on our part.

QUESTIONS on current City processes and procedures for Public Outreach and Community Involvement:

For all 3 of you, usually the City requires a certain amount of mandatory Public Outreach but 2 days out there has still been NO SIGN POSTED for the hearing at the pathway from Parkside Condos, adjacent to the 5325 Polk Open Space Park, at the corner of Pelham Street.

On Friday, July 22, I spoke to Ms. Natasha Molini, the assistant manager of Parkside [703-931-1224 or generalmanager@parksidealexandria.com], in person and she said that although she knew some residents of their complex do regularly use the entrance from Parkside, a private, gated community, to reach Polk and Pelham, Parkside had never received any notification from TES or from the TPB asking to Parkside to post such a notice on their internal residential website or internal email system. Nor had there been any request by TES or the City,

With 378 units, the residents of Parkside will continue to be the main users of any future crosswalk or TES sidewalk.

[For 10 years, that has been the case. I seriously doubt they will walk all the way down to Pegram to cross Polk Avenue.]

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But TES had done zero to post a sign there at the Parkside Path, at Polk and Pelham, and that is mysterious since they are the main target audience for any proposed changes to any pedestrian traffic pattern, from adults or children.

. There is no great cost involved here since it is a paper sign, on a wooden stick, with writing in magic marker. This is NOT a fancy “print job.”

We have notified officials of the Traffic and Parking Board several times about this oversight, and it seems that TES is responsible for this oversight.

There is still time to correct this mistake, so please do so immediately

As the masthead notes on the Washington Post, “Democracy Dies in Darkness.”

Since November 2021, TES has done very little to reach out to the neighbors impacted by their targeting of 5325 Polk Open Space Park. Instead, the apparent TES audience is the formal PTA at Polk School, although on this stretch of Polk from Pegram to Pelham, there are only 4 children who walk to Polk School, via the “Complete Street.” On Pelham, from Polk to Richenbacher, there are only two children who walk to Polk School on the “Complete Street.” There are two other children on that Pelham Street block who are home schooled and one who attends a private school and goes by car. This block includes 22 townhouses (that have no driveway and have to compete for parking on Polk) and 6 single family homes.

It seems odd to spend \$100,000 and demand a sidewalk for only 4 kids on the blocks of Polk and Pelham who walk to school. That is coupled with TES’s adamant refusal to do the usual census of potential users when the City is measuring for traffic with potential car users or potential pedestrians.

We respectfully request the sign at Parkside be put up ASAP. And contact Ms. Molini (entry gate from Parkside to Polk is locked and requires a passcode) and they can assist you with putting a sign on the Parking Lot exit before one comes to Polk.

Sincerely,
Kathy Burns

in a crusade for a sidewalk tied to the “Safe Streets for Schools” audit. We understand from Mr. Ziemann that was funded by the

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

Metropolitan Council of Governments, not by Alexandria funds. Will that Council be funding any portion of the \$100,000 the City has allocated for the TES sidewalk?

Kathleen Burns, Past President (2017-2019)

Washington DC, Chapter

Society of Professional Journalists

Desk Phone: (703) 824-1799

Cell Phone: (703) 624-2097

From: Shirley A Downs <shirley-downs@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 12:32 AM

To: Christopher Ziemann <christopher.ziemann@alexandriava.gov>; Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>; Jack Browand <Jack.Browand@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: Shirley A Downs <shirley-downs@comcast.net>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Docket #9 Polk Park Sidewalk Project for July 25 Parking Board Hearing

[You don't often get email from shirley-downs@comcast.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Hello,

Attached is my testimony re the proposed project and why we so strongly object to the sacrifice of 9 parking spaces, and the damage to the Polk Park that the removal of the trees will do in terms of destabilizing the very steep slope of the park because of the clay that it is composed of. I genuinely believe that the school children along Pelham, Polk and at Parkside can still walk safely to Polk School by using a painted cross walk to the south side of Polk at Mid Block to get to the side they need to be on to get to the Polk School. This can be done at far less expense \$5,000 vs the \$100,000 and these funds could be put to better use in other projects to help insure Safe Streets for our children and residents.

I spent several years as Legislative Director for Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, a Member of the House Education Committee and the first Black woman ever elected to Congress. I would never do anything to jeopardize the lives and safety of school children and residents. It is just that protecting the parking, also has value as does protecting the trees in the Polk Park. We need to balance out our priorities in the community and do our best to protect everyone. That is why we must have funds to clear any sidewalk of snow and ice and provide lighting for any sidewalk in front of a City owned park. During the first month that I moved into my KMS Townhouse on Vail Street I slipped and fell on the ice in front of my house and broke my leg and foot. I was in a cast for months. The danger of falling on an icy snowy walk is real and serious.

I am still also serious about collecting data on children going to school from the homes on Pelham, Polk and Parkside for you. I know you are short staffed but this is something I can do and I would like to help. When is the date that you are submitting the grant for? Good, up to date data is something Grant

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

analysts look for and these are competitive Grants. When applying for money you need every edge you can find to make applications stand out I have other ideas that could help the city in applying for funds, I have helped schools, cities, towns, business groups and advocacy groups of every kind develop grant proposals, for local, federal, state and foundation funding for years.

Also MS Carroll I know you visited the Pelham and Polk Streets during the day but the parking situation is at its worst at night. That is when a street audit for parking needs to be done in order to be accurate.

As my long testimony points out we fought for years and years to get parking for KMS residents and we also fought for many years to try to get funding to buy the land for what is now Polk Park before we were successful in getting the land with the DOD and Local funds. Carol James, Kathy Burns and I have worked on all of these issues for years and care deeply about the Park and want to protect and improve it so that people can walk thru it from front to back and rest in some benches at the summit. We need to do more to make it more user friendly. Maybe a first step would be to get some goats over there to eat the poison ivy that is filling the woods. Goats are good little workers and can handle the slope.

Hopefully we can also help the students who are trying to go to the rec centers, work on improving rules and regulations for scooters, and figure out a way to get bikes to children who have extremely low incomes.

I look forward to seeing you Monday night.

All the best,

Shirley Downs
1007 North Vail Street
Alexandria, Va 22304
Phone:703-845-7958Land Line no text
Email: shirley-downs@comcast.net

[Attached comments provided below]

To the Members of the Parking Board, Mayor and City Council, City Manager, and Members of Transportation and Environmental Services Department

Re: Parking Board Hearing on July 25, 2022, 7 PM

The Polk Park Proposal, Item 9 on the Docket

Those wishing to submit testimony to the Members of the Parking Board should submit written comments by 7 PM Sunday July 24th, 2022 to alex.block@alexandriava.gov. He can also arrange for those who wish to testify in person at the hearing to be able to do so by contacting him at this email address. Testimony is presented in the order that requests to testify are

Attachment 2: Compiled Community Comments

submitted. Mr. Block's Mobil phone is: 571-289-9135, his desk phone is: 703:746-4086. Try to get your testimony to him as early as possible so it can be shared with the Members of the Parking Board. EG 24 hours ahead of time.

From: Shirley Downs

1007 North Vail Street

Alexandria, VA 22304

Phone: 703-845-7958 Land Line, No Text

Email: Shirley-Downs@comcast.net

I hope that the Members of the Parking Board will have a chance to come and look at the site at 5325 Polk prior to reviewing this proposal on Monday to give you a better understanding of the site and the impact of this proposed sidewalk. I have been told that this testimony is too long but I wanted to give you an understanding of the history of parking issues and planning and transportation issues in this area. While Parking Board Members, City Council Members and T&ES staff may change many residents stay the same. We have the historical memory of these many policy issues which impact our community.

I wish to express my opposition to the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services recommendation to put in a sidewalk at 5325 Polk at the front of what T&ES refers to as Polk Park at a cost of \$100,000 dollars. This proposal would remove 9 parking spaces on the North side of Polk, and require 5 trees to be removed to accommodate the installation of a new sidewalk in front of Polk Park. I am only opposed to putting in a sidewalk that would remove 9 parking spaces and 5 trees at 3535 Polk. I also think it should be possible to put in a crosswalk between the North side of Polk and the South side of Polk either at the corner or somewhere in the middle of the block. This would cost about \$5,000. Please note that children going to Polk have to cross the block anyway to get to the Polk School which is on the South side of Polk.

Removal of the trees will also increase the likelihood of slope failure and collapse. This information comes from Anthony Fleming who was commissioned by the City of Alexandria to do an analysis of the soil and topography conditions in our city which is contained in the Geologic Atlas of the City of Alexandria. This is used by the city to provide information about soil, water, and environmental issues that can have an impact on infrastructure projects. This kind of information was used by opponents when developers were trying to build townhouses on this slope. Below is the link to the document which Anthony Fleming prepared for the City describing the composition of the soil and topography. You can look at the color coded map and see what kind of land our homes and the park are built upon.

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<https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/recreation/parks/plate=4=potomac=formation=map.pdf>

This section describes the Potomac Formation which is the history of how Alexandria's geography was formed starting in the Cretaceous period, and how and why our soil behaves as it does.

<https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/recreation/parks/plate=4=potomac=formation=expanded=explanation.pdf>

When asked about the lack of any maintenance plan for this sidewalk Jack Broward, of Parks and Recreation, indicated there were no funds in this Grant dedicated to snow and ice removal or lighting on this piece of proposed sidewalk in this project or in his department's budget. What happens if someone slips and falls on ice and sues the city on this sidewalk in front of a city owned property? Money needs to be provided for maintenance to Parks and Recreation if there is a sidewalk in front of a public park.

Note homeowners shovel the sidewalks in front of their KMS homes. This involves, shoveling snow, chipping ice, putting down snow melt, and relying on city street lights to provide lighting for pedestrian safety.

One of the reasons I am opposed to the removal of the trees to build the sidewalk is that the roots of trees and bushes help to suck up water and stabilize soil on steep slopes. Because of climate change we have had extreme swings in our weather with storms that dump large amounts of rain over short periods, and high winds that take down tree limbs and even upend trees when their roots fail. This is particularly a problem because our clay soil does not percolate well and water tends to run down the hill.

KMS residents know all about this problem. We have steep grades but they are nothing like the very steep grade at 5325 Polk. On my side of Vail Street heavy rains have sometimes caused basement recreation rooms to flood necessitating the replacement of wall board, and carpet at great expense. Two owners had to install sump pumps. Other residents had to install French drains to channel water away from the basement patio doors to keep water out of their basements. The owners of one home spent \$15,00 on French drains. I have drainage problems in

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both my front and back yards. Two different landscape designers said it would cost thousands of dollars to put in French drains in the back of the house and to put replacement trees and bushes in the front yard to help to retain the soil. Because of covid I kept people away and have delayed these construction projects.

At a zoom meeting hosted by the BSVCA on July 13, 2022 I asked Alexandria Carroll, the lead T&ES representative for the Safe Streets to School initiatives if the department had updated information relating to how many school children would use this route to the Polk School. The draft plan prepared in 2016 for this Safe Streets Grant Application indicated that the Last Travel Tallies and Parent Surveys were collected in 2014 and that updated information would be required to be collected for the application to VDOT for federal Grant funding under SRTS, the Safe Routes to School Program. This made the data referenced 7 years out of date. She said that at this time there are no plans to update the data and indicated that we submit any additional questions we had by Sunday July 17th. I did submit questions on July 18th but did not receive a reply to my questions and suggestions from Christopher Ziemann Chief of Transportation Planning, DT&ES or her until July 22, 2022. At that time, he indicated that they were applying for a Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Grant from the federal Department of Transportation not the Safe Streets to School Program that the original draft application referenced. The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program is part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure program recently passed by Congress. Note these are competitive grants and because of the passage of this legislation the federal pot currently has more dollars available. Both state and federal Safe Streets Grant applications we might apply for have grant analysts who are going to want such information. Below is descriptive information about the grant Alexandria intends to apply for.

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>

In the questions and recommendations, I submitted to T&ES I volunteered to survey all the residents along Pelham, Polk, and the single-family homes below Polk and above Richenbacker as well as Parkside to get a more accurate count of the number of children walking to Polk School. We could also ask how many children might be walking up to Hammond School using this route.

Among the questions I asked T&ES was what date the application needed to be submitted by to apply for the SRTS Grant? What were the projected costs of the other elements of the Grant outlined in the Draft Plan they plan to submit besides the \$100,000 sidewalk? Since their own draft application referenced in this hearing stated that the number of students projected to use the

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sidewalk had to, by their own admission, be updated why hadn't they surveyed the residents of Parkside Pelham, Polk and the single family homes below Polk and above Richenbacker about how many children who would walk to Polk School were living in the homes along this route?

In his email Mr. Ziemann indicated that while it would be nice to have such updated data, they were directing staff to collect other data addressing other safety issues like the ones I brought up in my questions and at this time he does not have the time and staff to do this. I again offer my services to collect such data from residents on Pelham, Polk, and the adjacent single-family homes and Parkside so that the department can submit this updated data as part of their application. My labor is free and I have collected such data before for other grant applications. I want to help.

All of the densely populated communities in this part of the West End have problems with the limited availability of parking. These include the Willow Run rental apartments, KMS, Hollandtowne, Parkside at Alexandria, Overlook, and Seminary Towers. The parking problems in the KMS Townhomes located across from the Willow Run rental apartments on Richenbacker are particularly acute. KMS includes, Townhomes on North Van Dorn, North Vail, Terril, and North Pelham. In the late 1990's I, together with other neighbors, began protesting to local elected officials, T&ES, the BSVCA about the problem. I coordinated the efforts of KMS neighbors in a long campaign to have our concerns addressed. It took about 3 ½ years of effort with multiple meetings with City Staff, local elected officials, and multiple petitions to the Parking Board. This was during the time that Kerry Donley was Mayor.

We originally petitioned for permit parking such as was available down in "Old Town" but this was denied. Part of the problem is that in 1968 when our KMS townhomes were constructed the service roads next to our houses were conveyed with a public right of way. This meant that although we were supposed to have at least one parking space in front of each house and we owned this land and paid taxes on it that anyone could park on our service roads as well as the street. We kept meeting with members of City Council and Rich Baier head of T&ES about this problem and finally secured approval of a plan that would convey the service roads to the KMS homeowners through the vacation of the public right away so that they could have the exclusive right to one parking space in front of their own homes.

The City also agreed to repave all of the service roads and the streets which had not been done since they were built in 1968, they also put in handicapped dips at each of the corners, signage indicating where it was safe to park, including sufficient space so fire engines could access fire hydrants and the right to come in under the City's paving contract, using their leverage for lower prices when we needed to pave the service roads in the future. The City remained responsible for the maintenance of the public roads, the curbs and sidewalks. As many KMS townhomes have two

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people working and thus two cars and sometimes have older children in residence who drive and use cars to go to work or go to school there is a great need for parking. Thus, KMS residents need to park on the streets as well as the service roads.

After these improvements to our streets we continued to petition for permit parking because in addition to the local competition for parking between residents we also have people who work in BRAC or downtown DC would come and park on our streets and then take buses to their destinations so that they did not have to pay for parking at work. We have also had problems where truckers, including freight trucks would park their rigs on our streets. We also had people performing vehicle maintenance on the street which is illegal. We did get a permit parking program which allowed us to apply and pay for a hang tag for visitors, and people doing work on our homes. But we were recently told that this program has been discontinued. However, conversations with the new City Manager give us hope that perhaps the permit applications system would be reactivated.

The “Parking Wars” were not a lot of fun particularly because Dwight Dutton who at the time owned the rental properties then called Jamestowne Village now called Parkside (they were turned into condos which could be bought by residents) also owned the parcel of land T&ES calls Polk Park. Dutton presented multiple proposals to the Planning Commission which were all vehemently opposed by local residents who felt that the slope was too steep, that such building would create yet another dense development and additional competition for parking because there was not sufficient parking included for the proposed townhouses. It was also stated that too many trees would be removed and this would create soil erosion and the run-off water which would impact the homes on the south side of Polk and in the single-family homes just below between Polk and Rickenbacker. What local residents wanted was to preserve the trees and greenspace. Residents also wanted this land to be used as a park.

If you look at Docket Item #12 for December 4, 2012 of the Planning Commission you will find the record of the transfer of the 2.4 acres of property at 5325 Polk was purchased for \$1.9 million of which \$1.5 million was received from DOD for the acquisition of open space land supplemented by \$0.4 million from the city’s CIP Open Space Fund. On page 4 of that document under Future Use of the Property the following was undictated as future improvements. Removal of a house foundation, improved trail access, park furnishing, including benches and a trashcan, as well as any need maintenance of the forested area. Costs were estimated at that time to be \$78,000 to \$170,000 and would require CIP funding and require the approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Department. To date such improvements have not been made. Local residents would very much like to have improvements made to the park to make it more usable.

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A hole was punched in the fence between Parkside and Pelham allowing more people to park down on Pelham. Thus, the people on this street face competition for parking from residents both from the 399 units at Willow Run and the 379 units at Parkside. At the BSVCA zoom meeting on July 13, 2022 several people indicated that they were strongly opposed to eliminating the nine parking spaces. Ms. Carroll indicated that this was not possible and the removal of the parking spaces was necessary to accommodate the sidewalk. She also said that she had visited this street during daylight hours and found that there was plenty of parking. The visit was for about 20 minutes as I understand it. But the real crunch comes at night when people come home from work or school. And KMS residents can only park in the one space immediately in front of their homes or on the street. T&ES has not done a recent parking survey of the Parking on Pelham and Polk as is normally done when a permit parking program is indicated or where parking is contentious.

History of the Development of this Sidewalk Building Parking Place Taking Proposal and Guidelines and Goals for Federal and State Grant Programs to Promote Safe Streets

This is the audit that was conducted and is listed on the T&ES website listing the history of the development of this sidewalk/parking proposal. It was part of a plan to make other infrastructure improvements in and around the Polk School re signage, curb improvements, cutting of tree limbs and overgrown bushes, public outreach etc. I had asked how much each of these plan elements were budgeted for.

<https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/localmotion/info/alexandria-walkabout-power-point-template=revised=8=7=17.pdf>

Nationally the various different Safe Streets Grants have been used to improve transportation infrastructure, limit accidents and fatalities, to improve the safety of walking, bike riding and facilitate the ability of residents to take buses and mass transit. This is because many bike groups and other civic advocates urged Congress and the USDOT to include programs and funding for a variety of initiatives designed to:

- 1) Make street intersections safer and reduce accidents.
- 2) Promote the use of bikes to reduce pollution and increase health and wellness benefits by encouraging biking, walking and taking public transport to reduce the number of vehicles on the road thus reducing air pollution.

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- 3) Promote equity and inclusion of benefits by encouraging programs which benefit low income residents, and minority residents which in the past have often been left out of initiatives to improve street safety and pedestrian safety because they lacked the political power to demand such improvements. The goal was to promote programs which helped these populations get to the places they needed and wanted to go such as schools, recreation centers, parks, work. Many of these residents rely on busses and mass transit to a greater degree than the general population so connections to these hubs was also important.

I have advocated for more money for mass transit including busses, circulator busses, biking, the expansion of bike racks in the West End, and increased opportunities for children to be able to walk and bike to school safely. I have advocated for more after school recreation activities both sports activities and arts enrichment programs. Enhancement of such enrichment programs are especially important for low income and minority students and equity promotion is one of the goals of the Safe Streets to School, and Safe Streets and Roads Grant Programs. Additionally, kids who have a place to go to play sports, learn to dance, participate in visual arts projects or get tutoring, are engaged, in a safe place. Their moms or grandparents may also be participating in a sport, yoga or dance class at the rec center. Studies show that kids that have such opportunities are less likely to hang out on the streets, get in trouble or get involved with guns.

Bikes are very expensive and the income of the average bike owner in Alexandria is over \$100,000 and most bikes can cost over \$1,000. I know about bike issues because my son worked his way thru school as a bike courier. Currently ACPS indicates that 83% of our students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches. This means their families have very low incomes. For example, if you have one child to be eligible your income may not exceed \$13,590. The amount of income increases according to the family size. If you have 5 children your income eligibility is \$32,470. These families have difficulty paying for food and rent and usually do not have sufficient income to purchase a bike. At Polk 78% of the 730 students enrolled at Polk are minority students but enrollment at the school (according to ACPS) has been dropping recently. This could be because housing is increasingly costly, and because people lost jobs or child care. Some family members may have died from Covid. All of these issues may have caused people to move. Some people have also taken their children out of school to send them to private and religious schools.

So, children, who might want to bike, probably cannot afford bikes, or helmets and other things they may need. I do think we have to focus on programs which would make bikes more affordable to lower income families. While there are a limited number of programs which rehabilitate donated bikes and provide them to lower income residents they are not enough to meet the need. Otherwise biking to school is only an option for children from wealthier families. I am mentioning all of this because I know that some members of the Parking Board are big supporters of biking. But right now most bikers are well to do. This does not fit the income

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equity goals encouraged by these grant programs. More needs to be done for low income students and residents.

Also needed are rules and regulations related to scooters as I expect they are going to become more popular. But not all such scooters are safe and we need rules and regulations to insure that they are safe and do not dump a child on the ground causing injury because of faulty scooter mechanisms (recent articles in the press have indicated such problems with scooters) and ways to insure that they are properly and securely locked at schools. I do think that we have to look very carefully at all of these issues.

The question is what are our highest priorities in terms of helping children to go safely to school and residents to feel safe walking in their neighborhoods both day and night? What are our priorities in terms of improving access to Recreation Centers and after school programs and recreational facilities that children and residents use? How can we facilitate this? Personally, I think instead of using \$100,000 for this sidewalk I would rather spend about \$5,000 to pay for putting in the crosswalk and signs, and take the balance and put it into other key intersections and routes in the West End where we know that students and residents are walking to school and pedestrian travel is unsafe. To me these would be a far higher priority to provide safety both for local residents and children going to schools and recreations centers and to get to bus stops that serve them and commuters safely. Two areas in the West End stand out as locations where local residents are very interested in making improvements. One is the Intersection of Van Dorn and Richenbacker/Sanger others are intersections along Taney and further down Richenbacker closer to the Polk and Patrick Henry school and Rec center which the BSVCA President has been discussing with T&ES. Bob Garbatz discussed ways that these streets could be made safer with the Civic Association in a zoom call.

T&ES indicated that this sidewalk on Polk was necessary as part of their commitment to provide “complete streets.” There was no huge local clamor by residents to do this. Rather it appears to be because this fits the Safe Streets template to put in sidewalks where they are missing. There are many places where sidewalks are missing that might be a higher priority in terms of the number of children and residents served.

Again, this is why we need updated surveys relating to how many children are going to use this route. Improving the intersections on Richenbacker and Van Dorn and Taney and would greatly enhance the ability for children to walk to school and provide safety for all residents and commuters. I would rather see these proposed funds used where residents have indicated problems and a need for transportation infrastructure improvement to improve safety.

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Near where I live on Vail Street residents have expressed great interest in improving the intersection at Richenbacker and Van Dorn for a very long time and have brought these issues up with T&ES and elected representatives many times. The traffic on Van Dorn is posted at 35 MPH but many exceed this speed. There have been both accidents and many near miss accidents at this intersection. The light needs to be retimed to make it easier to make the turn from Richenbacker/Sanger on to Van Dorn going left up to Landmark Mall. When on Sanger which becomes Richenbacker at the intersection with Van Dorn visibility is very poor in both directions. The cross walk for people on the bus is difficult because of the poor timing of the light and the fact that there is very little space to stand while waiting to cross the road. The bus stop on the other side in front of the KMS Townhouses on that side of Van Dorn is also important. People end up getting off buses and walking home via the service road in front of KMS homes because the sidewalk has badly heaved. You will see commuters, children, women pushing strollers with babies and toddlers walking down the service road where cars may be driving and there is a sharp curve in the service road making this particularly dangerous. The visibility is very poor because the bushes and trees there have to be cut back to make it easier to see people, as cars come around the service road curve. Similarly, the bushes next to the bus stop need to be kept pruned and the limbs of the trees in this area need to be pruned so that they do not break and fall on pedestrians and or cars. Finally, there are many places where there is no sidewalk on the side of Van Dorn closest to 395. Note these improvements would not only help students attending the Polk School but also the students attending the Ramsey School and Rec Center on Sanger.

Again, I invite Members of the City Council, The Parking Board, the City Manager, and City Staff and the BSVCA membership to come and view these locations and discuss with residents their concerns and recommendations for improvements to transportations infrastructure to improve the safety of our school children and other residents.

Thank you for your attention and interest.

From: Jeremy Hogg <jeremyhogg@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 6:34 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Melanie Hogg <melanie.m.hogg@gmail.com>; Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>; Hillary Orr <Hillary.Orr@alexandriava.gov>; Dalton, Ashley & Douglas <ashley.Lynn.dalton@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]Polk Sidewalk Project - Feedback from Family Directly Across the Street

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Hi Alex,

What I have suggested is not putting a retaining wall along the entire area, but rather west of the entrance to the park. I have marked up a plan which is attached. I believe that somewhere around 4-5 spaces could be maintained and it would drop the cost you note down to probably half or more.

Engineering for a small wall is nominal - the city already has these details on their site. I'm a trained civil engineer, and this is not a massive engineering effort. In fact, I pulled some quick field dimensions in a few spots and it appears the retaining wall would be 18" - 2.5' in locations, which is a very small wall with limited engineering. Considering the plan is for a 1' curb this is a nominal difference. There are ways to engineer this that finds a middle ground.

On the proposed plan the sidewalk actually jogs into the road which is also not required. You wouldn't have to rework the existing sidewalk that is further down on Polk either by simply keeping the same line for the curb.

We had 13 vehicles on the street yesterday evening, 6 on that side of the road. Where do they go when this parking is eliminated? Why are we not willing to look at alternatives that have limited impact yet solves the safety issue at the same time? Like many issues, this should not be an all or nothing proposal. The City is within it's rights to do this project but let's do it in a way that is smart and doesn't eliminate huge amounts of parking.

Thanks,
Jeremy

On Mon, Jul 25, 2022 at 1:51 PM Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov> wrote:
Hi Jeremy,

The concept plan with dimensions is available on the [project webpage](#). Here is a direct link:
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/PolkAvenueSidewalkRevisedPlan.pdf>

To preserve these on-street parking spaces, the sidewalk would have to be built outside the existing street footprint, having a much greater impact on the natural area. Consideration of impacts and community feedback aside, doing so could increase costs by \$60,000 or more, based on a high level assessment. This is due to the need for larger retaining walls, structural engineering services, geotechnical analysis, and reconstruction of the existing walkway between Polk Avenue and Parkside. As I mentioned, the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities is a partner in this project and would not support this alternative given the increased impacts to the natural area.

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Alex Carroll
(she/her)
Complete Streets Program Manager
Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
City of Alexandria | 301 King Street Room 3600 | Alexandria, VA 22314
alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov

From: Jeremy Hogg <jeremyhogg@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2022 8:09 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Melanie Hogg <melanie.m.hogg@gmail.com>; Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>; Hillary Orr <Hillary.Orr@alexandriava.gov>; Dalton, Ashley & Douglas <ashley.Lynn.dalton@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]Polk Sidewalk Project - Feedback from Family Directly Across the Street

Hi Alex,

We had a meeting yesterday evening of BSVCA. We discussed this project and it was brought up by a board member that the city right of way extends about 10 feet or more into the park space for this project. I did not notice this when I reviewed the plan before. I wanted to request a plan with specific dimensions and scale.

I understand your point about other stakeholders, but there is no reason why the city cannot look at preserving some amount of parking relative to this project based on ample room in the right of way. I would ask that this is reviewed (including what the cost of the small retaining wall would be) in order to retain some amount of parking.

Also, can you please clarify the exact dimensions required to preserve parking? This was was topic of discussion in our board meeting and its critical the community understands that trade off.

Thanks,
Jeremy

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From: Jeremy Hogg <jeremyhogg@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 19, 2022 3:48:54 PM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Melanie Hogg <melanie.m.hogg@gmail.com>; Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>; Hillary Orr <Hillary.Orr@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]Polk Sidewalk Project - Feedback from Family Directly Across the Street

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Hi Alex,

Thanks for the response.

Crosswalks would only worsen the problem. I would hope that we could look at ways to preserve some of that street parking as part of this. First, the slope is less in the area heading east, and second, it would ensure that some parking is preserved. Is there an engineering plan with dimensions that could be shared? The road heading east widens, and I believe there may be a middle ground solution here that isn't an all or nothing solution.

I plan to speak at the hearing, FYI.

Thanks,

Jeremy

On Thu, Jul 14, 2022 at 4:43 PM Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov> wrote:

Hi Jeremy,

Thanks for your message, and thank you for joining the meeting last night. I appreciate you taking the time to share your input and contribute to a productive, thoughtful discussion.

I do understand your concern about parking, but I'm afraid installing the sidewalk closer to the park to preserve parking is not a viable option. Building further into the park area would have an even greater impact on trees and the natural space, and this would not be acceptable to the City's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities, who is a partner in this project. Doing so would also require regrading the existing paths and installing a retaining wall instead of a simple curb, which would significantly impact project costs and exceed the project budget.

One item that I mentioned in the presentation yesterday but did not really make its way into the group discussion was the request for crosswalks at Polk Avenue and Palmer Place. I mentioned that we could consider crosswalks as a supplemental treatment. However, it would require up to six additional on-street parking spaces on Polk Avenue to be removed to ensure sufficient sightlines for people crossing. Given the concern you and a few others have expressed about the proposed reduction in parking, crosswalk treatments are something we could omit from our recommendation to minimize overall impacts to parking. Again, we are trying to provide a plan that balances all the various needs and concerns as much as is feasible.

In terms of drainage features, we can continue to work through the details of this as the design is finalized.

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As a reminder, there will be an additional opportunity to weigh in on this project at the [Traffic & Parking Board Public Hearing](#) on July 25. If you wish to speak during the public hearing, please email Alex.Block@alexandriava.gov in advance of the meeting.

Thank you again for your continued engagement, and have a nice evening.

Alex Carroll
(she/her)
Complete Streets Program Manager
Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
City of Alexandria | 301 King Street Room 3600 | Alexandria, VA 22314
alexandria.carroll@alexandriava.gov

From: Jeremy Hogg <jeremyhogg@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2022 8:32 AM
To: Alexandria Carroll <Alexandria.Carroll@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Melanie Hogg <melanie.m.hogg@gmail.com>; Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]Polk Sidewalk Project - Feedback from Family Directly Across the Street

Hi Alex,

Thanks for attending yesterday evening. I know this a contentious topic and I commend your ability to stay composed among the vocal members of our community.

Mayor Wilson - thank you also for making the time to come out to review this project earlier this week.

I wanted to reiterate two things that were brought up yesterday evening:

1. The City should be able to preserve parking as part of this plan. Please note that community members come and park along that side of the road adjacent to the park to use the space. Users of the street parking that live here should *NOT* be negatively affected by this project and there should be parking retained for users of the park. There are many places in the City with much tighter parking situations with parking on both sides of the road (i.e. Del Ray) and it's critical the City figures out a way to maintain as much parking as possible along the park. Cutting 2 to 3' into the slope will not significantly change the cost of the project, but does eliminate parking in the current plan.
2. The City also should look at how drainage coming off of the sloped park area will be dealt with. While the run off will not significantly increase from this project, the plan does create a small retaining wall (even if only 1-2' high) that will trap water behind it if not properly dealt with. This could be addressed through a number of methods, but a recommendation could be a small swale behind the wall with stone and filter fabric and various drainage points that allow the water to make its way out to the curb. If not addressed, you will have debris and silt that will end up on the sidewalk in major storms. This same debris and silt ends up in the road now because there is no solution for this.

Thank you again - I look forward to seeing a plan that addresses the loss in parking and drainage concerns.

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Regards,
Jeremy

From: Kathleen Burns <burnskathy1036@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 29, 2022 9:57 AM
To: Hillary Orr <Hillary.Orr@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: cjcomm <cjcomm@cjcomm.com>; Shirley's Comcast <shirley-downs@comcast.net>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]We would like to schedule a meeting and site visit with you

regarding 5325 Polk OPen Space Park versus the TES sidewalk.

We know you are a very busy person, but the complexity of the loss of 9 parking

spots in our area is being lost in the quest for a concrete sidewalk within the borders of

an Open Space Park, funded with \$1.5 million in mitigation funds from DOD to replace the

6 acres it took for the BRAC Building.

The Polk Parking issue is also tied to our location within Parking District 12, the largest of teh 14 Parking Districts, with over 500 households. On May 8, 2020, at a Quarterly Meeting of the Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association, Mayor Wilson announced he was suspending Police Enforcement for our District.

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It was not until the public hearing before the July 25 Parking and Traffic Board Hearing that we were made aware by one of the Board members that Parking District 12 was the ONLY district where that was the case.

This loss of 9 parking spots is an issue for our entire area, not just Polk Avenue. We are part of the 92 KMS Townhouse complex, including 22 KMS units on Pelham, between Polk and Richenbacher. These units have NO Driveways. They are bombarded by residents seeking parking from the adjacent Willow Run complex on Richenbacher, with 399 units, as well as by the Parkside Condo complex, at Polk and Pelham, with 379 units.

Even though that complex has abundant on-site parking, the management punched a hole in the tall fence separating Parkside from our neighborhood, and circulated a flyer telling Parkside residents to park for free on our already very limited parking---and they could bypass the parking decal fee for this private, gated community.

TES is failing to look at the Big Picture, in terms of geography and logistics, and demanding an unwanted and unneeded sidewalk, instead of a more efficient striped crosswalk, with appropriate signage.

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As taxpayers, we are also very troubled there has never been a cost-benefit analysis for the \$95,000 in costs between the two options. And we wonder why TES continues to obstruct requests presented by various City Council members, on behalf of Constituent Services, to do an neutral, fact-based survey of two sites for the crosswalk---on flat land on Polk, either at teh Path/Driveway to the top of the Park, or to connect to 5324 Polk side at Palmer Place.

Since November 2019, we have received little response from TES and thus we look forward to speaking with you at your earliest convenience.

We were happy to see last week that a neutral surveying team was hired to count the cars of Polk Avenue and surrounding streets to correct the mistaken statements by Ms. Carroll that 50 spaces were available on a 2=block area. The Public Record needs to be corrected regarding her comments that appeared July 27 in article by reporter Vernon Miles, which is attached.

We look forward to meeting with you to clarify some of the aspects of the complexity of upending our neighborhood (which stretches from Van Dorn to Pegram, and from Richenbacher to Polk. As you would know, this issue will

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be heard on APPEAL by the City Council on Sept. 17. So there is an urgency in having TES listen to other opinions of neighbors, and not just those of that department.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Burns, Carol James and Shirley Downs
members of the BSVCA Open Space Committee
and long-time Alexandria residents.

--

Kathleen M. Burns

Immediate Past President (2017-2019),

DC Chapter Society of Professional Journalists

Ph: 703-824-1799

Cell: 703-624-2097