

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE ADVISORY PANEL  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** April 11, 2019

**Meeting #16**

**Project:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools- Cross Country

**Phase:** Schematic

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**Location:** 6100 Cross Country Blvd, Baltimore MD 21215

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**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Priya Iyer with ATI Inc. reviewed the project scope for the addition and renovation to the existing school. Original school built in 1960 with 2 additions to the existing school. The project entails demolishing 3 classrooms and a bank of restrooms and will rebuild within new addition with a new gym. Priya then reviewed the site circulation patterns for both pedestrians and vehicles. Most walkers arrive from the south and public transit stops are along Cross Country Blvd. and Park Heights Ave. Therefore, students will arrive from all directions. School bus drop is along the north (front) of the school. Priya then walked through existing conditions photos of the site and the building. Students will be relocated to another school for 2 years during the renovation/addition process. A more detailed site plan was reviewed showing the programmatic elements that occur on the site.

Priya then presented the proposed site plan highlighting the existing building to remain and the proposed addition to the south. A new access point within the gym addition sets up a new axis to this portion of the school and offers a connection to the existing building. This axis is then extending to the new landscape area. Pedestrian access onto the site and into the building was also highlighted. The pedestrian entry points were shifted to avoid the corner at Winner and Taney, which has a significant slope.

Heidi Thomas, Landscape Architect with MK Consulting then walked through the landscape plan in more detail. The goal is to treat the pedestrian walks in similar ways so because students will be arriving from all directions. Special paving is being used on the 'promenade' that extends into the new landscape and they are working to introduce playful elements into the landscape to encourage free play. A low band of native planting is introduced to address the runoff and stormwater that naturally falls towards Taney and Winner. This low maintenance planting treatment is continued along the front façade to highlight the pedestrian entry points in similar ways. A smaller paved area accents the promenade and then balance of the courtyard is more open for play.

Julie Soss from MK Consulting then reviewed the details of the 'destination' places within the courtyard. The existing play areas are maintained in the new plan as well. A fenced Pre-K/K area is created just outside of the accompanying classrooms for direct access.

Priya continued through the site sections and axonometric views showing the proposed school with addition. Front entry is proposed to be reimagined to tie back to the new addition through materials that will relate to the new promenade entry on the courtyard side. Materials will primarily be brick with storefront to match the existing. Team is investigating color variations to the new brick and are leaning towards a different color brick as to stand separate from the existing and not match. Inside the building, the media room and the new

gym work to energize the ground floor plan. The concept level elevations were then presented. The team is investigating large windows into the new gym as a way to add some playfulness to the addition.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Panel began with a discussion around drop-off and how the sequences works around the site and the purposeful attempt to disperse the drop off areas around the site. The team then worked to answer questions related to ADA and accessibility within the building and how the addition works to better connect the 3 interior levels. The Panel questioned the alignment of the promenade access with the existing EW corridor and asked if the Music/Spanish room bar could be shifted to move the promenade axis up to meet the existing hallway.

### **Site:**

- Distributing the drop-offs around the site is positive, however, the formal midblock connections were questioned. There seems to be an opportunity for the landscape to be manipulated to highlight the drop off zones and to organize the circulation around the site and the re-organize the crossings to the street corners. Restoring the corner access for the community to access the site seems to make sense to meet their needs as well.
- Work to develop the hierarchy of the pedestrian paths through landscape design and the gateways at the pedestrian access points to the site. If SWM is used to define one use within the site, then let it be that and develop an alternative landscape design that marks 'gateway' and 'entrance' to the site.
- If the location of the new axis is shifted north, it would better align with the proposed path system across the site and eliminate the weaving through spaces.
- Can the parking lot be a bit more compact to straighten the walk along the parking to intersect at a clear node with the EW path? It would clarify the system of walkways across the site.
- Are there site improvements for the balance of the site or are those all remaining as is?
- Winner Ave. should be considered as a secondary front to the entire school - can the new addition be cranked to align with the urban grid along Winner? Can the lockers be relocated so they are not the primary use/mass along the Winner edge and the new courtyard landscape?
- Clarify the street tree concept approach around the site.
- Investigate the edges of where the building meets the landscape.

### **Building:**

- Investigate the axial relationship with the new promenade and the existing hallway. A shifting of the use of spaces within the STEAM bar of classrooms all seem attainable to build on a strength of the concept.
- The corner of Winner and the new gym addition need to be investigated as a main visual into the school campus. Consider the view angles into the site from the approach from Winner and Taney.
- Attention is needed along the service side of the building and the second building entry sequence in both landscape and architectural treatment in order to improve the existing conditions.

- The concept for the improvements to the front entrance is successful and the work to allow the landscape to support the architecture.
- The overall approach to contrast the material color seems successful. Work to simplify the fenestration of the new additions to deliver one clean large move. Once simplified, investigate if masonry is even needed for the gym mass.

**Next Steps:**

Discussion Only.

**Attending:**

Heidi Thomas, Marianne Crampton, Julie Soss, Edy Ruano - MK Consulting Engineers

Priya Iyer, Ash Belci - ATI, Inc.

Kate Acker - MSA

Michael McBride - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

Messrs. Anthony, Meses. Wagner, O'Neill, and Ilieva - UDAAP Panel

Anthony Cataldo\*, Christina Hartfield, Jennifer Leonard, Mary Colleen Buettner - Planning