

Riley, Kate

Subject: RE: Follow Up Questions to Tobin/VLUS Abutter Meeting January 8

From: Robin Bonner <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, January 13, 2020 7:24:59 PM
To: Peterson, Lisa <lisap@cambridgema.gov>
Cc: City Manager <CityManager@CambridgeMA.GOV>; Gina LaRoche <[REDACTED]>; Eileen Woodford <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Follow Up Questions to Tobin/VLUS Abutter Meeting January 8

Dear Lisa,

Writing as abutters, we thank you for meeting last week with the neighbors of Callanan Park and Tobin School regarding the city's proposal to rebuild the school.

It became evident that the contextual information around the proposed programming for the reconstruction of the Tobin/VLUS is not generally known within the community. Sharing this information would help the neighbors understand the city's proposals for the site as well as be able to offer viable alternatives to what the city — both the School Department and the Department of Human Service Program — is proposing.

Total Proposed Usage:

- It is becoming clear that the site will experience a 12-hour program day, between early teacher arrival, early arrival of children, regular school drop-off and pick-up, and the end of after school programs.
- The city has not provided any details about the staffing that will accompany this 12-hour program day.
 - Please provide an estimate of all staff that will be on site, including part-time and after-school staff.
- Likewise, the city has not described any of the after-school programming that will be taking place at the schools and the transportation impacts of that programming.
 - Will the proposed increase in student population translate into an increase in after school participants?
 - What will the staff needs be?
 - Will buses be arriving from other schools to drop off children for after school?

Clarification of Pre-K Programs and Identified Service Needs:

- We are still confused about the total number of pre-K classrooms and number of pre-K students that city is proposing to house at the site.
 - Please provide a complete breakdown of all pre-K programs, number of classrooms and enrollment, that the city is proposing at the site.
 - In addition, please clarify whether this is a pre-K or a JK program and the ages of the children in these programs.
- What is the current number and distribution of DHSP pre-K classrooms around the city?
 - This includes classrooms located in schools and those in non-school buildings.

- What is need for DHSP pre-K classrooms across the city? Providing specific information about the locations and populations not served currently is crucial to our understanding and identifying possible viable alternatives to placing all of the identified need at the Callanan Park/Tobin site.
 - Has the city looked at alternative sites for at least part of the program? What were these sites and why were they not chosen?
- What is the administrative interface between DHSP and CPSD? As the DHSP pre-K program is under the jurisdiction of a different city department, does this mean that the school plans will have to include separate administrative space for the DHSP pre-school?
- Is there an alternative to having separate pre-K programs — in the structure and across the city? Multiple programs mean that there is redundancy in administrative functions.
 - What might a unified pre-K program look like for the city, programmatically, financially and from a physical plant point of view? Would it give more flexibility to the program? Would a unified program better promote our common goal of equity in education?

Self-Contained Special Education Program at Tobin and VLUS:

- Please provide a city-wide context for the Self-Contained programming and needs for the city.
 - What is the city-wide student population that the district program is intended to serve?
 - What other schools have self-contained programming?
 - How were the proposed numbers for Tobin/VLUS schools determined?

VLUS population and the “uncapping” of the cohorts:

- Please define what the term “uncap” means with regard to the feeder schools and VLUS.
- Please provide a detailed explanation of the stated need to uncap the grade level cohort population at VLUS. A premise of the Innovation Agenda was to have a three-classroom limit for each grade level cohort.
 - Is the uncapping a phenomenon that will occur at other middle schools in the city?

Because of the complicated nature of the topics, we ask that the city provide a written response as well as visuals or graphics that will explain your responses clearly. Juggling flows and numbers in one’s head can be challenging for community members who are not already familiar with your thinking.

Thank you for your willingness to answer the questions and for the time that you spent with the abutters last week. Our intention is to design a school that respects the underlying principal that this is a city park with a school building, protects the amount and integrity of the park and open space that serves the entire city population — including the children who will be attending the schools — and minimizing traffic burdens while providing an exceptional education facility.

Respectfully yours,

Gina LaRoche



Robin Bonner



Eileen Woodford



cc: Louis DePasquale, City Manager