

## Riley, Kate

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**From:** Peterson, Lisa  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 14, 2019 1:28 PM  
**To:** Riley, Kate; Roy, Brendon; Black, Michael  
**Subject:** Fwd: Tobin/VLUS Project Concerns

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**From:** Jodie Siegel [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 14, 2019 1:05:26 PM  
**To:** Crane, Paula <pcrane@cambridgema.gov>; SchoolCom@cpsd.us <SchoolCom@cpsd.us>; ksalim@cpsd.us <ksalim@cpsd.us>; dbeard@cpsd.us <dbeard@cpsd.us>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>; Peterson, Lisa <lisap@cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>; City Manager <CityManager@CambridgeMA.GOV>  
**Cc:** Patty Nolan [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Tobin/VLUS Project Concerns

Dear Mr. DePasquale,

I am writing as a long-time resident of Alpine Street, a parent to one CRLS graduate and one current senior, and an abutter to the Tobin/VLUS. I am looking forward to seeing a thoughtful, healthy and safe new school built on this site. That said, none of the currently proposed options meet these criteria.

Open space has been shown to improve learning outcomes and health, and it also builds and fosters community. None of the current three options presented preserve the type of open space that a school of the proposed size requires. If the population of the school is nearly doubled, the open space should reflect that, and not drastically reduce the open space. The proposed plans call for reducing what is now three full ball fields plus an extra play field to a space that accommodates one ball field and one soccer field, which are overlapping and not able to be used simultaneously. The site is not just a school, but also a community gathering place, and the redesign suggests taking over the entire site as a "school campus" – that has never been its intended use.

It seems there have been no transportation studies done that realistically reflect the impact on the Concord Ave and rotary traffic patterns, nor the impact on the side streets of the neighborhood. Even without the school being accessed from Concord Ave currently, there is gridlock during critical times of day and speeding drivers on side streets to avoid Concord Ave. Increasing (more than doubling) the number of cars accessing this location would not only frustrate those trying to get to work in Cambridge from the suburbs, but will have a negative impact on the safety of students trying to get to school. Why build a net-zero building that will have hundreds more cars driving to and from the site? There has also been no attempt to propose alternative transportation options for this project. There needs to be a Parking & Traffic Demand Management (PTDM) plan implemented to significantly reduce the number of individuals arriving in cars in the course of the day.

The process to date has not been inclusive of the community. Supposedly there were 70 stakeholder meetings, but abutters and elected officials were never included as stakeholders. To date, there have been only three meetings to which the neighbors were invited. The first meeting was purely information sharing, the April meeting gathered comments (those comments were not actually addressed), and then in November, three plans were presented based on the assumption of a doubled school population (which had never been mentioned at any of the earlier meetings).

The plan to have such a large population and program density on this site, on the far west edge of the city, does not seem to take into account the distance that many students and families will need to travel, nor the aforementioned gridlock. Putting some of these programs in other sites throughout the city would seem to be a more sustainable and equitable option for the city's residents. In Alana Mallon's letter of 12/3/19, she suggests some options for locating the preschool program in other, more central locations. These and other options should be explored further before jumping to

final plans. Additionally, the current plans do not seem to align with the goals of Envision Cambridge or the Innovation Agenda, which were developed to help the city plan for growth thoughtfully.

I urge you to reconsider the many options before you before rushing to choose a design by the end of January. This is a project that will spend a quarter of a billion dollars of the school budget and take four to five years to complete – let's make the right choice for the citizens of Cambridge.

Respectfully yours,

Jodie Siegel

