

Riley, Kate

To: Peterson, Lisa
Subject: RE: Tobin School Project

From: Norma Finkelstein <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, December 9, 2019 6:11 PM
To: City Manager <CityManager@CambridgeMA.GOV>
Cc: Peterson, Lisa <lisap@cambridgema.gov>; City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>; SchoolCom@cpsd.us; ksalim@cpsd.us
Subject: Tobin School Project

Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager
City of Cambridge, City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Cc's: Deputy City Manager, City Council, School Department, School Committee, School Superintendent
Re: Tobin School Project

I have been a Cambridge resident since 1971 and a home owner on Alpine Street since 1980. I have had two children attend Cambridge public schools, both spending time at the Tobin School. I have a granddaughter who is now in kindergarten at the Peabody School. Therefore I am both a concerned neighbor as well as a past parent and current grandparent of Cambridge public school students. With this in mind, I have attended the few community meetings that have been held about the new Tobin School project. I have a great many concerns about both the process of planning for this school project as well as the 3 designs that we were just showed at the recent community meeting. These concerns involve:

The shortage of contiguous open space in all 3 of the designs. This is unfortunate both for the students at the school as well as the community which heavily uses the playground and fields now.

There appears to be no analysis, or I have not seen or heard one, of the impact of the almost doubling in size of the Tobin School, including the number of younger children who will require both more faculty as well as parents escorting them to school, on the already horrendous traffic conditions in and around this school community. As a neighbor and abutter I am requesting that a thorough traffic analysis for the proposed project be conducted, not one solely based on the current traffic and pedestrian situation. Shouldn't the city of Cambridge consider this new school design in the context of the larger issues of traffic already out of control in this neighborhood and develop a more realistic and safe plan for all, students, parents, neighbors, etc. within that context?

Neighbors and abutters were not consulted on the impact of having a new traffic/bus lane on Alpine Street which currently is a playground and field. There are many problems with this design and it does not have abutters' support.

Finally, the process of obtaining community input and support has been solely lacking. The few meetings that were held were mostly ones giving out information (which is important but not sufficient), but not allowing essential community input. During the last meeting many community members requested continuing the discussion in the large group but were instead shuffled off to numerous small groups, which prevented all concerned hearing and discussing multiple points of view.

I know that many others are bringing up these and many other concerns around the current plans for the Tobin School. We definitely need more meetings both with you, city council and school committee members, architects, as well as the broader Tobin community before going forward with any one of the current designs.

Respectfully,

Norma Finkelstein

