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[CE SBAC] Concept E Design Thoughts

1 message

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To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Mon, Apr 15, 2024 at 11:24 PM

School Committee,

I had the following thoughts on Concept E. The survey limited the amount that could be written.

I like the idea of a new Middle School and as a concept this seems to be the best approach, but the site plan and school location in Concept E lacks good pedestrian and bike connections to the community, creates poor connections by foot between the Middle School, the Elementary and Library and overall seems to prioritize vehicular parking and circulation over school related site usage and pedestrian and bike usage. In the Concept E design, from the Middle School entrance to get out to Scott Dyer by foot you need to cross the entrance drive to either the elementary school or Middle School or cut through a parking lot. A terribly uncreative design bordering on a lifeless shopping center rather than a center of community and a safe place for children to move about between playgrounds, fields, schools, homes and the community. This design makes those connections worse than they are now. They could be improved upon now, but they aren't half bad. The site design also takes the current soccer field and creates an unusable space to the south of the building in favor of an unnecessarily sprawling split wing design. Can we create better, safer connections with the community if a new middle school building is constructed closer to Scott Dyer as was presented in previous iterations? It is my understanding that it was pushed to the back of the site due to concerns related to how construction would impact the community as well as other factors? I would think that the community would put up with some temporary construction interruptions in favor of a long term design that positively improves connections. If the building needs to remain at the back of the site, what about moving the entrance from Scott Dyer to a central location around where the swings are now and then you can have parking of either side of this central drive with pedestrian and bike connections as well as the sports field around the western side of the site all uninterrupted by roadways. The same could be done along the western side of the Elementary school between the parking and vehicular circulation so all the vehicular movements are contained in an area between Scott Dyer and the schools and the area to the west, south and east of the parking and circulation will be schools and pedestrian connections only. Every day hundreds of kids and parents are moving around the campus to sports practices, after school programs, theater rehearsals, the library or to and from home. Let's create a safe place to do that that doesn't always require getting in a car (not a single student on the elementary and middle school campus drives after all, let's design it for them). Finally, The bus dropoff should not be a permanent roadway surface with curbing separating it like a road. It is used four times a day and otherwise sits unused, but is still a road that isn't safe for children. Make the whole area a plaza that is community plaza space at all other times. Then four times a day when the buses use it they enter a protected area that otherwise is closed off, they do their drop off and pick up and the area converts back to a large plaza. Other times it's a place for the Cape Challenge to end, for people to line up before a play, for kids to play 4 square at recess. A Woonerf type design.

Thank you,
Brian Harris

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