



Tenleytown Community Meeting December 1, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Founded about 70 years ago, GDS was the first integrated school in a segregated city. Social justice has been important to us since the beginning. The school has had seven different sites. We have been on two separate campuses since 1970. GDS has been in Tenleytown for nearly 30 years, and we have strong ties to this community. Our campus planning is driven by financial sustainability and making tuition affordable to make GDS accessible for a wider range of students. Our goal is to unite our two campuses here.

Our planning thus far has been on two tracks:

- Educational Design Process - thinking about academic program and what are the most important things to this school today and in the future—and how that translates into physical spaces. Educational planners (Wonder, By Design) have been meeting with staff, parents, students and alums and will come back to us soon to present their educational program recommendations.
- Land Use Process - thinking about the school's physical needs and the community's needs. How do we balance what is right for the school and legitimate concerns for the neighbors. We have hired zoning attorneys, financial consultants, traffic consultants, and development consultants to help guide us through this process.

Notes on land use:

- Our intention is to file a PUD.
- We hope to use Wisconsin Ave. Marten's site as the retail/residential space and build the school facilities on the Safeway site.
- Our traffic consultants are studying traffic and looking at how many of our students use metro, how many have siblings, what are the options for pedestrians and bicycles, and looking at drop-off and pick-up and the possibility of moving this underground to have minimal impact.
- Our goal is to have a grocery store in the retail site on Wisconsin Ave. We are considering what kind of grocer could fit in the space and fit needs of GDS and neighborhood.
- We intend to have no reduction of parking on campus.
- We plan to have an open (not-walled off) campus.

What's next: In a few weeks we are getting information back from Wonder By Design, as well as preliminary findings from our traffic studies.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. Will there be a grocery store? How does this relate to the size covenant stipulated by Safeway sale?

- Safeway required that there not be a grocer on their site
- We can have a grocer on Martens site, up to 18,000 sq. ft., and we hope to.

Q: Are you intending to keep 42nd St. open?

- We are looking at two different options. Option 1 would essentially leave it as is, and Option 2 would change the stretch of road between Davenport and Ellicott to have no automobile traffic.
- If 42nd Street is partially closed to cars, it will continue to be a public thoroughfare, accessible to bikes and pedestrians.
- We have heard different views from community about whether or not to change 42nd Street.

Q: Currently, people come in and out of Davenport to access the school; will this still be the plan?

- Davenport (accessed from 42nd street on the south) would likely remain the central point onto the campus.

Q. What is the scope of your traffic study? Are you factoring in impact of the residential/retail that will be built?

- The study covers roughly five blocks in each direction.
- We are factoring in parking needs and traffic counts for future retail/residential building on Martens site.

Q. How will you mitigate traffic flow in neighborhood?

- Traffic study is not yet complete.
- Consultants are studying patterns, counting cars at both campuses.
- We will report back to you with findings, because this is our concern as well.

Q. What is the size of the student body?

- 500 students at HS campus, 575 at LMS.
- The traffic studies are being done with 1,200 students in order to maximize findings.
- We are not planning to expand beyond that.

Q. What is your target date for construction completion?

- An optimistic estimate is doors open in 2019.

Q. How long is Safeway going to stay?

- Safeway is currently leasing back the site from GDS. That lease runs through April.
- We have initiated discussions with Safeway to extend the lease.
- We very much want them to stay over the next couple of years until construction begins

Q. What is the height are you considering for commercial/residential buildings?

- Around 90 feet.

Q. What special efforts can you make to encourage more students to use public transportation?

- We subsidize public transportation for faculty and students.
- We will continue to consider other options to encourage public transportation use.

Q. Do you use school busses?

- Not to pick up students and bring them to school.
- We use buses for sports, field trips, and to travel between our two campuses

Q. Have developers reached out to GDS?

- Developers have contacted us to let us know that the Martens property is very viable.
- We are not presently in any serious discussions with developers about the site.

Q. GDS has been a good neighbor for the last 10 years, but what has the school done for the neighborhood?

- Our students volunteer at Friendship Terrace and other senior communities
- Students from local schools are tutored by our students
- We have made school available to other schools (like Wilson).
- We want to have more neighborhood interaction, because we believe the best education we can provide our kids is to be part of the community in an authentic way.

Q. Have you considered water run-off remediation? What work are you doing in terms of green building techniques?

- We have named sustainability as one of our operating principles.
- As we move forward, we will be considering this with our architect.
- We will meet all environmental requirements.

Q. Will your residential provide affordable housing?

- We have heard this as an interest of the neighborhood.
- We will be considering as we move forward.

Q. How will you be using the land for the Lower School and Middle School?

- We will likely build two separate buildings—one for lower school and one for middle school.
- We will build another field and a playground area, which are both necessary if we bring our lower and middle schools to this site.
- Intentional connections between divisions, but not having an “open” campus for lower and middle school students.

Q. What is happening with the WMATA Chiller Plant?

- GDS is talking with WMATA to have it moved.

IDEAS WE HEARD FROM YOU

- We need a grocery store.

- There were promises made by last head of school, which were not kept. It has improved for the past 10 years. Keep being open, don't make promises you can't keep, and listen to the community.
- Don't just think about parking issues. Think about increased volume of cars moving through the neighborhood.
- Take a broad scope when looking at traffic.
- Any traffic mitigation policies should be enforced. Drivers to GDS should be held accountable.
- Interests of close-in neighbors are most relevant and should be considered as priorities.
- Look into opening up vehicular access to/from school from River Road.
- On the subject of 42nd street:
 - concern about closing the grid so think about engineering it as a "shared road" accommodating automobiles, bikes, and pedestrians
- Be careful who you listen to. ANC does not always represent views of neighbors (i.e., mini-circles).