

Volunteers Help Stuff the Bus

Our Daily Bread is grateful to community members for their generous support for its annual Stuff the Bus Food Drive, which was held on Saturday, Feb. 13 at the Shoppers at Fair City Mall. The drive raised \$1,725 in cash and grocery store gift card donations, and 371 pounds of food and pantry supplies, valued at \$600. The drive was staffed by volunteers from Volunteer Fairfax's Volunteers for Change, which offers flexible weekend and evening volunteer opportunities for adults and young adults. Stuff the Bus Food Drives are sponsored by Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Service and the Office of Public Private Partnerships, and MV Transportation. The donations collected at the drive will help Our Daily Bread provide supplemental and emergency food assistance to struggling families who live throughout the Fairfax County area.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



From left, Volunteers for Change members Carrie Kurtz and Jake Himan and Our Daily Bread volunteer Elderen Lee collect donations at Our Daily Bread's Stuff the Bus Food Drive.

Roads

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"I think, once these projects get underway, they'll be embraced [by the residents]," said Silverthorne. And, added Hardin, "There'll be pre-construction meetings on all of them so we can discuss and let people know about the impacts."

Hardin also noted that the Fairfax Plaza Building is being marketed for sale "and we're receiving ideas for potential uses. The Castro property at 9715 Fairfax Blvd. is being marketed for sale, too."

Silverthorne asked if that property could be a potential site for a new fire department, and Sisson said it is. "Or we could tear down the existing fire station and rebuild it on site with more parking," said Sisson. "That might be more economical than building it elsewhere. An architect is looking at a feasibility study and will be ready to report back to you in 30-45 days."

Residents Discuss Paul VI Site Ideas

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over that 18.5 acres. But I'd like them to repurpose it for some community use; I just want it saved."

"I would love a community center to include a senior center," said Evie Ifantides. "And there's enough room for housing, too."

A Fairfax resident since 1986, Dave Gessert said he has "no problems" with the redevelopment. "My major concerns are increasing the density and the impact it'll have on traffic, City infrastructure – such as sewers and more students – and will the City schools be able to handle the growth?" he said. "What I find encouraging is that [the developers] are embracing the community residents surrounding the site and getting their input."

"I live on Cedar Avenue, right across from Paul VI, so it's going to affect me," he continued. "I'd like to see housing that's affordable and owned, because people take better care of homes and property they own – so no rentals. And I'm happy that so many of the Council members are here, as well. Our sense of community is very important to me."

Colin Greene with Streetsense said his firm is helping with the master plan. "The parcel's edges are all different in character from each other," he said. "So we need to treat them in different ways."

During his presentation, he pointed at a map showing the future site entrance off Fairfax Boulevard. A man asked if there's any plan to connect Cedar Avenue, and Greene replied, "Some neighbors said it's a horrible idea because of



Map of the traffic signals near Paul VI High School.

PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS THE CONNECTION

cut-through traffic."

"We've had 10 years of traffic-calming efforts on Cedar, which is the only left-hand turn off [Route] 123 north in the City," said resident Brian Cute. "So for us on Cedar and our neighbors on Oak [Street], the notion of X number of new residents coming out onto our streets would be a serious problem."

As for Ellen Brouwer, a City resident since 1972, she'd like to see the whole site City-owned and the current school building kept and used as a community center and/or senior center. "There's a theater there, an outstanding gym and full kitchen facilities," she said. "And I'd like to see the rest of the property used for parking for Pat Rodio Park for athletics."

"When the school got its special-use

permit to locate here, a condition was that there be parking there for athletic events at Rodio Park – and it's well-used," she continued. "If that parking's not there, where will people park?"

Besides that, said Brouwer, "This is the only historic building of this size on this side of the City which could be public space. And this side also has no community pools, large parks or large gathering spaces. So it seems that this would be a perfect location for all of that; it has a lot of potential."

Chris Turnbull with Wells & Associates showed his group of residents a map illustrating the location of the traffic signals, buses, pedestrian crosswalks and bike routes near Paul VI. "A couple weeks ago, we did traffic counts and [collected data on] traffic volumes at the intersections," he

said. "There are 1,600 vehicle trips eastbound in the morning and 1,600 in the afternoon, westbound. But when this use goes away, it'll dramatically change the morning-peak numbers."

DISCUSSING THE LOCAL ROADS, Turnbull said there's a possibility of extending Keith Avenue to Route 50. And resident Ed Calabria said, "At the three-way stop at Richardson Place and Cedar, you can't see traffic coming." Carlos Cecchi asked if people walk in that area, and Calabria said there are no sidewalks there and one is needed on Keith.

"If there were sidewalks, would people use them," asked Cecchi?"

"Absolutely," replied Calabria. "Along that whole perimeter, you need sidewalks." Regarding what he'd like to see happen on the Paul VI site, he said, "I live behind the school on Center Street. I wouldn't mind seeing low-density housing along the perimeter, with high density in the center and mixed-use, commercial [uses] along Route 50."

Anna Maas with Thunderbird Archaeology showed her group of residents photos of what was on that site throughout the years. Morillo asked if preserving the high school's façade is possible, and Maas said it's something the developers are "looking at."

Then, at the meeting's end, Enrico Cecchi thanked the residents for participating and said they received many good comments. This meeting was held at American Legion Post 177, at 3939 Oak St., and a follow-up one is set for March 10, at 7 p.m., at the same place. At that time, said Carlos Cecchi, "We'll present a framework for the master plan, including comments from [the first meeting]."