

Edgewood Neighborhood Engagement Meetings Questions & Answers, 16 December 2016

The following report provides questions and responses from the Neighborhood Engagement Meetings hosted by North Shore School District #112 (“D112” or “the District”) pertaining to the changes at Edgewood Middle School. Each meeting began with a review of conceptual plans that included comments related to set back requirements, landscaping, ring road features, and emergency access.

At the School District Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2016, a majority of the Board gave direction to delay Budget Deficit Reduction III (BDR3). Members called for a future special board meeting to have further discussion and to vote on the delay. It is not known at this time whether the entire BDR3 plan will be suspended or whether parts of the plan will be implemented. It is not known whether Elm Place, Ravinia, Green Bay and Lincoln will all remain open. In addition, increased class size guidelines, program consolidation, and building configurations (such as Dual Language Academies) need to be further discussed. The District will move forward with the proposed traffic improvements at Edgewood School. The following questions and answers address the preliminary plans to date.

Meetings:

Monday, December 5, 2016, 9:00 a.m.

Monday, December 5, 2016, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 6, 2016, 6:30 p.m.

Who attended the meetings?

Letters were mailed by D112 to property owners in excess of 800’ of Edgewood which includes properties as far north as Saxony Dr., east to Green Bay Rd., south to Roger Williams, and southwest to Crofton Ave. Residents in the subject area attended as well as other community members. School District 112 representatives and City officials and staff were in attendance.

City of Highland Park Representatives

Mayor, Nancy Rotering

Councilman, Alyssa Knobel

City Manager, Ghida Neukirch

City Engineer, Manny Gomez

Senior Planner, Andy Cross

NSSD 112 Representatives

Board President, Michael Chon

Board Member, Karla Livney

Board Member, Yumi S. Ross

Board Member, Jane Solmor-Mordini

Board Member, Samantha Stolberg

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Michael Bregy

Director of Operations & Facilities, Transportation, John Fuhrer

Nagle Hartray Architecture, Don McKay, AIA

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DRIVE LOOP (RING ROAD)

Attached are two conceptual plans prepared by D112 consultants pertaining to the proposed ring road.

- 1. Why is this ring road/emergency access improvement being done now?** While the need to improve traffic flow and safety access was identified as part of reconfiguration discussions, improvements should be made regardless of the increase in student population that may or may not take place next school year. The City's Police and Fire Departments recommend two points of emergency access to the school regardless of the increase in student population. Based on the KLOA Traffic Study prepared for the District in May 2015, D112 identified the ring road and emergency opening at Chaucer Lane as the optimal proposed plan.
- 2. How will these improvements mitigate the traffic congestion at Edgewood Middle School?** The ring road improvement would transfer car and bus queuing from the surrounding streets onto Edgewood Middle School property. The traffic level may also be mitigated with the help of traffic aides provided by NSSD 112, the manual controlling of traffic lights, and encouraging bus ridership and car-pooling. Incentivizing alternative methods of travel may be part of that effort.
- 3. What will prevent parents from dropping students off on the surrounding areas such as Chaucer, Mosely, and other nearby streets?** The ring road and bus lane improvements are intended to make the designated drop off / pick locations much more efficient so parents will be less inclined to use alternate drop off and pick up points. Much like the new parking lot at Highland Park High School, D112 and the City of Highland Park will work to educate and encourage parents to drive appropriately and adhere to local road laws. This effort will include signage, strategically placed traffic monitors, and outreach to further educate the public and change behavior.

4. **Has a traffic study been done that accounts for the number of students that will attend Edgewood next school year?** The District contracted for a traffic study of the Edgewood area in 2015 that accounted for a population of 1,000 students, which is a higher population than what Edgewood will have next school year. Per the City of Highland Park's planning process, City staff and an independent third-party consultant will review and opine on this study.
5. **What are the boundaries of the traffic study?** The boundaries of the traffic study include Edgewood Road and Green Bay Road from Roger Williams Avenue to the south and Bob-o-Link Road/Oakwood Avenue to the north.
6. **What time would the gates to the ring road be opened each day?** The ring road's only intended use will be for peak pick-up and drop-off times. There will not be a defined time for the operation of the gates that will control vehicular access for the ring road. Trends will be evaluated to determine the optimal times to get traffic off Edgewood whenever it is needed.
7. **Would the ring road be used for evening and weekend events?** The ring road will not be used during after-school events or on weekends.
8. **How will students walking to and from Edgewood Middle School cross over the ring road?** There will be designated cross points along the ring road. These cross points will be manned twice a day with traffic aides, employed or contracted by D112. The ring road will have a sidewalk on the side of the road closest to the school. The final road configuration will help determine where the designated cross points will be placed. The District will have traffic aides to help ensure safety of the children crossing the road.
9. **When will the ring road be used for buses versus cars?** The proposal for the road includes busses on the ring road during the morning drop off and parents/guardians on the ring road during afternoon pick up.
10. **Will the tree line that borders the Edgewood Middle School property be preserved to block the view of cars on the ring road?** The tree line will be preserved. The District proposes to fill gaps in the tree line by replacing vegetation that may be removed during construction as well as gaps that occur due to natural causes. Bushes will also be replaced with different species to ensure the health of the tree line and create a natural barrier. A landscape plan will be submitted to the City for review and approval. The District's proposed landscaping plan showing the tree line plantings will be available for viewing during the design review approval process with the City.

- 11. Will the District adhere to the City's Noise Ordinance? How will noise generally be buffered to minimize impact to the residential area?** The District will follow all ordinances during construction of the improvements. Cars and buses are not anticipated to violate the local noise ordinance.
- 12. In light of the increase of vehicles, how will air quality be addressed?** A major driver of vehicle exhaust on the Edgewood Middle School site is idling buses that currently warm-up in the west parking lot. Once the improvements are in place, buses will be relocated to another site.
- 13. How will water drainage issues be mitigated to prevent flooding of nearby residential properties when the improvements are in place?** The District will contract for engineering plans as part of the City's permitting process. D112 will be required to manage the water and provide a detention / retention plan as well as any additional storm sewers to manage the water as required by the City.
- 14. Has the City of Highland Park voted to approve the ring road/emergency access improvement?** The District is a separate unit of government than the City and the City does not have official purview over school operations. The City does not have jurisdiction to approve (or not) how the schools will be used. However, school districts in Illinois are subject to municipal zoning and land use regulations. D112 is and will continue to seek guidance from City representatives with regard to traffic, safety and zoning. Conformance to these regulations will be reviewed as part of the design review process that's required before the District begins the ring road improvements.
- 15. How will the zoning process for the ring road/emergency access improvement unfold from here?** The Edgewood area community engagement meetings were the first step to obtain feedback to help the District formulate a preliminary plan. D112 plans to file an application for preliminary plan review with the City in January 2017. Completion of the improvements is anticipated for the start of the 2017-2018 school year. The District has committed to developing a viable contingency plan in the event the road is not done in time for the start of the next school year. The City will review this contingency plan. The City's planning process includes staff review of preliminary plans and reports, review by the City's Plan & Design Commission and notification to property owners within the subject site. The Commission meetings are open to the public. The precise process will be determined after the District submits its application to the City for review.
- 16. What will happen to parking capacity at the school once the new roadway is in place?** With the reduction of parking on the east side of the school to allow for student drop off, there will be room to increase the number of parking spaces on the

west side with the removal of drop off / pick up that is currently happening there as it will be moved to a single circular drive in the morning and the ring road in the afternoon.

17. Will there be a dedicated fire lane on the ring road for emergency vehicles?

17. No, a dedicated fire lane is not anticipated along the ring road. A dedicated fire lane will be located adjacent to the school building.

18. How will students remain safe as they get dropped off in the morning and go to cars at the end of the school day?

Students will be dropped off in the front drive during the morning. During the afternoon pick up, students will be moving towards parked cars in a single line versus between them as in the current parking lot. With the cars in a single file line, it will be easier to manage where and how students are moving towards the vehicles. In addition, there will be a sidewalk where the vehicles will be lined up. The cars will be oriented so students can enter the cars from the passenger side.

19. Will the stoplight be altered at Edgewood and Green Bay Roads to help with traffic flow?

The District will advance recommendations that are set forth in the Traffic Study that will be prepared by the District's consultant, reviewed by City staff and reviewed by the City's independent traffic consultant. It is anticipated that the signalized intersection will be reviewed and lights may be adjusted to mitigate traffic congestion during peak periods.

20. Is the City willing to put a police car in the north neighborhood every day to avoid the issues of parents dropping off their kids?

The City employs a School Resource Officer whereby their primary purpose is to preserve order and promote safety on campus. The City cannot dedicate a police officer for traffic management purposes, although the City will provide recommendations and provide training for District employed traffic monitors at various locations to help manage traffic around the school. The City will also conduct periodic enforcement throughout the area. There are three crosswalks and stop signs that will be promoted for pedestrian and vehicular safety purposes. Public safety is of utmost importance to the City and District. See #8 above pertaining to pedestrian crossing at the ring road.

21. What will be the speed limit on the ring road?

The speed limit will be 5 or 10 miles per hour.

22. Will the ring road be lit?

No, the ring road will not be lit. The road is only anticipated to be used during school hour for drop off and pick-up, and select other occasions to provide traffic relief to the site as determined by the District.

23. Will there be a follow up meeting once a final improvement plan is decided upon and finalized? The School District will coordinate another meeting once it has analyzed all of the feedback from the engagement meetings, Edgewood Middle School Administration and staff feedback, present the concepts through the City's pre-evaluation process, and finalize plans for the permit. The City's commission meetings are open to the public.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EMERGENCY ACCESS ROAD

24. Will the emergency road have traffic other than emergency vehicles? The emergency access road will not be open to any other vehicles except emergency vehicles. The emergency access road will be constructed of material that will allow vegetation to grow out of it while offering the stability that is needed to support emergency vehicles. This will mean that it will not look like a standard paved roadway. The District and City will place a condition of the roadway improvements that the access road will not be used for anything other than emergency access. The District would be prohibited from changing the use of this roadway. A binding action in perpetuity is not possible, but the District would be strictly prohibited from allowing the use of this emergency access for public use unless a new application and public review process has been considered and the new plan approved by the City.

25. Will the emergency access road be open during times of non-emergency? The emergency access road will be blocked by a locked gate controlled by a transponder that allows emergency response vehicles to have 24-hour access. Only non-emergency maintenance related vehicles will access the path for operations such as snow and leaf removal.

26. Will the emergency access road hamper foot traffic to and from school?
26. Currently there is a footpath at the end of Chaucer and the emergency gate would not impede any of the surrounding foot traffic.

27. What would be the width of the emergency access road? The District's consultant will prepare architect and engineering plans that will identify dimensions and other technical information for all aspect of the District's proposed improvements. The width of the access road will only be wide enough to accommodate emergency vehicles; it is anticipated that width will be 17'. The plans will be drafted and presented to the City staff for their review.

28. Is there any other area where an emergency access road may be built? Chaucer Lane is the only readily available and preferred option related to emergency access. The emergency access road cannot be moved further west than the

school's property line. The surrounding trees and location of the Chaucer Avenue connection dictate where the emergency access road can be placed.

29. **Can the emergency access road be moved further west?** The emergency access road cannot be moved further west than the school property line. The surrounding trees and location of the Chaucer Avenue connection dictate where the emergency access road can be placed.

OTHER QUESTIONS

30. **Can the District consider staggered start times?** The District cannot stagger times due to staffing impacts and education delivery.
31. **Will the District consider an incentive plan for busing?** The District is considering bus incentives as well as reducing the minimum distance a student can be bused from.
32. **What other changes were proposed to Edgewood School as part of the earlier referendum?** The referendum had a different use for Edgewood School that would convert it to an elementary school. Because it is remaining as a middle school those changes do not apply.
33. **What is the cost of the project and who is paying for these changes?** The District will pay for the improvements. The costs are being developed and will be finalized when the design is finalized.
34. **Which ring road option will move forward and why?** This has not been determined at this point. The feedback from the neighborhood meetings, the updated Traffic Report, City feedback and District assessment will determine the option that will be advanced.
35. **What is the timeline for this project?** The District proposes to complete the construction of the ring road by the 2017/2018 school year. To accommodate potential minor delays during construction, a contingency plan will be developed and reviewed by City staff in the event the construction is not complete. The emergency access road would be constructed first as part of the construction improvements to ensure it is complete for the start of school.

The District developed a timeline that identifies the public meetings anticipated as part of the review process. The timeline has been reviewed by the City and will be posted on City's and the District's respective web sites when it is complete.

The Transportation and Plan & Design Commission meetings are anticipated for the first quarter 2017. Notice of the City's Commission meetings will be provided to

abutters and a sign that indicates the time and day of the meeting will be posted along the frontage of the school property.