



Testimony before the Montgomery County Board of Education
Facilities and Boundaries: Sligo Creek Elementary School to Parkside
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Two of my daughters and one granddaughter attended Sligo Creek Elementary School, aka Old Blair. I know the space pretty well. And working with Friends of Sligo Creek, I've developed a deep relationship with Montgomery Parks and have attended many meetings at the current Parkside Headquarters. So I know that area well too.

It doesn't come as a surprise that there's a space issue at the combined elementary and middle school. If that's accurate then the county should evaluate several options. Throwing out the existing site as one option to evaluate because of the Purple Line's location shouldn't be an obstacle, or not at least a recent concern given the Purple Line's been in planning for well more than a decade.

Friends of Sligo Creek is not per se opposed to considering Parkside as a possible site, though definitely it should not be the only site considered. It needs to be compared to larger footprint spaces. The existing building is really small for an elementary school, and it's been renovated to be offices. The footprint of the building is small. The parking lot is small. It's off a little two-lane road, and would significantly increase traffic on Sligo Creek Parkway. There's no real playground area except for down the hill abutting Sligo Creek. And it's surrounded by a forest and backs onto a pretty steep hill.

There is a recent trend that I support, of creating multi story school buildings to limit how much land is disturbed. That would be the only option here, including probably a parking garage. But you're still faced with carving out play space from existing forest and steep hillside within a couple hundred feet or so of the creek. It's a very environmentally sensitive space. It's not clear that this is even possible, much less desirable.

Finally, this school would be across Colesville Rd, Route 29 from the old school for much of the walking school populace. That's dangerous and complicated – the crossing guards would have to have combat pay.

Please don't set up a presumption that the Parkside site is the only option.

Friends of Sligo Creek is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving and appreciating the ecological health of Sligo Creek, the Park and its surrounding watershed.
