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TO: Peoria Public School Board and Administration
FROM: Roger Lakin, Chairman of the Board of Directors
J.R. Greeley, Workforce Development and Education Committee Chairman
DATE: October 18, 2007

We greatly appreciate that District 150 is soliciting input on possible locations for the new school in the Woodruff attendance area. There are many factors and many perspectives that need to be considered and balanced as you make a final location decision. We tried to evaluate the sites from the perspective that we know best – what would be the impact of putting a significant public investment at each of these locations in terms of the redevelopment or development potential in the surrounding neighborhood. To do that, we asked for assistance from several area real estate developers who have expertise in both residential and commercial development.

In our initial discussions, we quickly came to the conclusion that the greatest impact on neighborhood redevelopment from a new school would be on the residential properties rather than the commercial properties. If, however, a neighborhood is stabilized or improved from a residential perspective over time, that fact helps stabilize or improve existing neighborhood commercial properties.

One clear indication of neighborhood stabilization is increased owner occupied properties. That does not mean that rental properties are inherently negative, but many studies have shown that single family, owner occupied housing has a more positive impact on a neighborhood than single family rental housing does.

In evaluating the seven sites, (we disregarded the Morton Square site based on comments that it is no longer under consideration because of the national historic district designation) we looked at the housing patterns around each site. More specifically, we looked at the owner occupied vs. rental property ratios.

The Constitution Garden site and the Peoria Stadium site simply didn't make any sense to us from any perspective. Both are at the extreme edges of the attendance area. It is unclear if the Constitution Garden site would generate any additional development. The Peoria Stadium site has a fairly high level of rental property around it, but much of the rental property is in the form of apartment complexes rather than single family homes. Generally, neither seems to be a good location for a school.

The Von Steuben site is in what could be considered the most stable neighborhood based on that ratio. The Glen Oak School site has what appears to be a reasonably balanced ratio of owner occupied and rental housing. When looking at White School, Kingman School and the Woodruff/Lincoln campus, all have higher proportions of rental property in the neighborhoods surrounding the schools. Kingman has slightly higher levels of owner occupied than White or Woodruff/Lincoln but all three have significant single family rental housing.

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Both Glen Oak School and Woodruff/Lincoln have some reasonably adjacent neighborhood commercial properties (Wisconsin Avenue and Prospect Road). Von Steuben has some limited neighborhood commercial development but because the neighborhood already has pretty strong owner occupied housing stock, we don't feel that the investment in a new school would have much impact. White and Kingman don't have any significant neighborhood commercial in near adjacency.

We then tried to look at the Glen Oak and Woodruff/Lincoln sites from a traffic access point. Both have some positives. Certainly Adams, Jefferson and Abington are positives for the Woodruff/Lincoln site as are Wisconsin, Prospect, Nebraska and McClure for the Glen Oak School site. Kingman is isolated from a large part of the attendance area for traffic. That is in large part because of its adjacency to Glen Oak Park and Springdale Cemetery which serve as a major barrier. Adams Street is the primary access point for that school. The Von Steuben site also benefits from a reasonable traffic pattern with the redeveloped Wisconsin Avenue and Forrest Hill.

Finally, we looked at the issue of removing a school from a neighborhood on redevelopment. Clearly it will be a negative for all of the areas where schools are closed. There is no negative, however, from not putting the school at the Woodruff/Lincoln site. The two existing schools will remain and both are relatively modern and up to date. The housing demographics around the Glen Oak School site are reasonably balanced today. Because of that, we believe that this neighborhood would face the greatest negative impact from a school closing.

As we started this process, we anticipated that we would be indicating to you that certain sites would fair better than others. We did not, however, anticipate that we would end up with a single recommendation. What we found is that the Glen Oak School site comes out as the best option when looking at the factors we considered. The residential neighborhood around this site stands to benefit from the infusion of significant public investment. That would then help support both the Wisconsin and the Prospect neighborhood commercial developments. Additionally, the Glen Oak School site has reasonable traffic access. It is apparent to us that the Glen Oak School site is the most favorable from the characteristics we addressed.

We would ask that you include this information in your decision making process. As we stated at the beginning, we fully realize that there are many other factors that will go into your final decision.

Enc: Woodruff Attendance Map

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Sites considered for the new school in the Woodruff attendance area:

Peoria Stadium
Von Steuben School
Glen Oak School
Woodruff/Lincoln Campus
Kingman School
White School
Riverfront Park/Constitution Garden

Site Evaluation Summary

Peoria Stadium – too remote to consider

Von Steuben School Site – neighborhood currently stable so new school would not have a high degree of impact on stabilizing or revitalizing the housing stock. Additionally neighborhood commercial already supported by residential make up

Glen Oak School Site - Reasonably even mix of owner occupied vs. rental residential property surrounding the site. Infusion of significant public money/infrastructure could have a positive impact on the residential neighborhood. Stabilization of this neighborhood over time could better support both the Wisconsin Ave. neighborhood commercial development and the Prospect Ave. neighborhood commercial development. Loss of a neighborhood school in this neighborhood could push the residential into increased rental. This site has reasonable traffic access.

Woodruff/Lincoln Campus Site – Site has two relatively new and well maintained schools already thus the addition of a third would not likely have any additional neighborhood redevelopment. Additionally, there would be no negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood makeup if the school were not built there as nothing is being removed. This site has reasonable traffic access.

Kingman School Site – Surrounding residential neighborhood is already heavily rental in character. It is unclear if an infusion of public funds into a new school could have a positive impact on changing the residential characteristics of this neighborhood. This site is physically isolated from the rest of the attendance area because of Glen Oak Park and Springdale cemetery and thus has poor traffic access.

White School Site -- Surrounding residential neighborhood is already heavily rental in character. It is unclear if an infusion of public funds into a new school could have a positive impact on changing the residential characteristics of this neighborhood.

Riverfront Park/Constitution Garden - too remote to consider

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