



Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus

West Campus Parking Lot (W-1) Fact Sheet

Background:

W-1 is a surface parking lot on the West campus of the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. It was acquired as part of the purchase of the Giant Bakery. Student fees financed the purchase. The state and county did not pay for the purchase. In the short term, easy access to parking is a paramount concern to our students. There are 84 parking spaces: 78 student spaces, five (5) handicapped accessible spaces, and a single reserved space. The lot area is 42,125 square feet or just under one (1) acre and given its location in the Silver Spring Central Business District is suitable for an urban or mixed use development.

The College studied the use of the parking lot:

SmithGroup JJR West Sector Plan

In 2005, the SmithGroup JJR (SG) prepared an “Interim Development Plan” for what they called the West Sector of the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. The SG plan references the site of the existing surface parking lot as a future unspecified building. A zoning analysis was conducted for the West Sector based on the zoning code in place at the time. The College asked SG to conduct a test of the surface parking lot site to explore what type of building might fit on the site.

SmithGroup JJR Test Fit

The test looked at four building types—laboratory or office, office, classroom, and residential—all with some minor retail presence on the ground level. The test did not take into consideration parking. The maximum height allowed in the zone is 120 feet and the total building area is 276,000 gross square feet (GSF).

Based on this analysis, the College determined that:

- Given the SG test fit, the building would have to be several stories taller than is efficient and affordable to deliver the math and science classrooms and labs.
- The College would lose parking spaces if this site is used solely for a math and science building. Adding parking would be cost-prohibitive.
- The College will reserve this site for future additional needs like classrooms and offices.

Is W-1 the “Right” Site for Math and Science Building?

- The site’s size and limitations force an unaffordable vertical building design.
- A building would have to be several stories taller than is efficient and affordable to deliver the needed math and science classrooms/labs.
 - Generally, vertical buildings are more expensive because of required material costs such as steel, concrete, and elevator functions.
 - Ventilation, lab equipment, and other costs escalate with vertical height.

- **A vertical building does not maximize opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning.**
 - Horizontal floors allow direct access among classrooms, labs, faculty, and students.
- **A vertical building is not efficient for laboratory operations.**
 - Lab materials and equipment need to be duplicated.
 - More lab technicians and coordinators are required to serve labs in a vertical building.
- **The College must still address aging buildings on the East campus.**
 - Falcon Hall, Science North, and Science South are in poor condition and beyond their useful lives.
 - VFA, a nationally-recognized facility condition assessment company, performed a facilities condition assessment of each of the College's buildings in 2002, 2006, and 2013. Falcon Hall, Science North, and Science South were each approaching the end of their useful lives.
- **Math and Science must be taught together to meet today's teaching and learning standards and ensure students are ready for the workforce.**
- **The W-1 site is the only affordable expansion option available to the College.**
 - Fiscal prudence is important. The College needs to maximize return on investment of student fees and maximize the development potential of the location.
 - The College limited its expansion capacity in the agreement to locate the Cultural Arts Center on Georgia Avenue.
 - The College will not expand into Takoma Park.
- **The parking lot is needed:** Removal of 84 spaces of parking from W-1 exacerbates the campus' parking deficit. Adding underground parking is cost prohibitive: current Montgomery County market rate for parking is \$25,000/space for above ground and \$50,000/space for below ground.

The following quote from the world-renowned architecture firm HOK summarizes the College's thinking:

Because today's science education is hands-on and lab-focused, teaching labs must be flexible enough to accommodate diverse disciplines, shifting priorities and new focus areas.

An emerging trend in STEM undergraduate learning is the incorporation of a true interdisciplinary curriculum when possible. This shift creates an environment where students are working in teams with other disciplines and learning about collaboration as they would in the real world.

The first year or two of a program may provide opportunities for courses to be redefined to integrate several STEM disciplines – including physics, math, chemistry, and biology – into the teaching lab environment.

By configuring utilities, gases and other core functions along the perimeter of a lab, the center can be left open to facilitate maximum flexibility of tables, chairs and lab stools. Designing all labs based on the same module enables any space to function as a teaching lab, a research lab or a classroom as needed. This same room can be a teaching lab, a team based learning classroom, a computer lab, a lecture classroom and/or a student project work room.

From THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING: DESIGNING THE STEM LEARNING FACILITIES OF THE FUTURE by HOK.

The College's Conclusions

- The W-1 site is not the right site for the math and science building.
- The W-1 site does not maximize interdisciplinary teaching and learning for student success.
- The W-1 site would be cost prohibitive to build an efficient math and science building due to premium for extra materials costs.
- The W-1 site does not meet student and Cultural Arts Center patrons' parking needs because of lost parking. Adding parking would be cost-prohibitive.
- The W-1 site would be best used for future affordable expansion.
- Using the W-1 site for the math and science building does not address the rapidly deteriorating Science North and Science South buildings.