



## APRIL 29, 2025 NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT #1

# APS POOL PROPOSAL

The responsibility of the VHCA is to make a recommendation to decision makers based on how a project will impact residents and the broader community of Virginia-Highland, while ensuring it aligns with the goals outlined in the VA-HI Master Plan.

For this particular project, the signed developer's pre-agreement is currently the only guiding document in the decision making process. In order to make an informed recommendation, the following questions and concerns should be addressed.

The VHCA received over 400 (and counting) questions from Virginia-Highland residents, which have been edited and organized into the following categories:

01	Accountability + Oversight
02	Pool Usage + Hours
03	Lights + Noise
04	Infrastructure
05	Safety
06	Traffic
07	Parking
08	Equity + Neighborhood Access
09	Long Term Implications
10	Educational Impacts for Students

### ACCOUNTABILITY + OVERSIGHT

**UNDER THE PRE-AGREEMENT, ONCE THE AGREEMENT IS SIGNED, APS GOVERNS ONLY THE ASSIGNED PRACTICE AND COMPETITION TIMES, WHILE THE DEVELOPER RETAINS FULL AUTHORITY OVER ALL OTHER PROGRAMMING, EVENTS, RENTALS, MAINTENANCE, AND ACCESS DECISIONS, WHICH HAVE YET TO BE DEFINED.**

Given that the pool developers have acknowledged they do not have prior experience managing a public-private project of this scale and no portfolio of past project success, **what criteria did APS use to evaluate their readiness and credibility** as developers and long-term stewards of this site?

How will APS determine—16 years from now—whether this property should return to school use? Will there be a formal feedback process at that point? **If the facility falls into disrepair, becomes a source of neighborhood conflict, or APS faces new financial or enrollment pressures**, will those factors be considered in deciding whether to renew the lease?

I see no data offered on the need for an aquatic facility in APS and it doesn't seem like a top priority for the neighborhood. **So is it a priority for APS or are they following the benevolence of the offer?**

What **safeguards does APS have in place** if the group managing the pool lacks the experience or structure to deliver on the promises outlined in the agreement?

Does the current agreement include any equity benchmarks or metrics to prevent a scenario where **APS students have theoretical access but limited real opportunity** to use the facility?

If APS is seen as giving control of public land to a partner who has not demonstrated readiness, how **does the district plan to respond to community concerns?**

Has **APS considered whether investing in or reopening existing, city-owned pools** could better serve a broader and more diverse group of APS students?

Since APS is not subject to standard zoning rules, **will the pool developer be exempt from zoning?** Will a parking / traffic study be required?

What has APS done to assess whether this location, tucked in a high-resource neighborhood, **provides equitable access to students across the entire district?**

Has APS evaluated whether this location is **accessible by public transit** for students and families who don't have access to a car? Specifically, has there been any analysis of nearby MARTA stations or bus routes to determine if this site is equitable for the broader APS community?

The Pre-Development Agreement outlines financial milestones required before a lease agreement can be signed, but it appears to **lack any binding commitments to community engagement or assurances of future input**. Once this agreement is signed, what guarantees do Virginia-Highland neighbors have that the developers and APS won't move forward with plans—such as building a pool—based solely on their own priorities, without genuine regard for what's best for the neighborhood?

What is APS's plan if this project becomes financially or logistically stalled mid-development? Since the land use would already be committed, would APS take over a partially completed private facility? **Who bears the reputational cost of an unfinished or failed project on APS property in Virginia-Highland?**



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### POOL USAGE + HOURS

ACCORDING TO THE PRE-AGREEMENT, THE POOL WILL SERVE:

- APS AQUATICS TEAMS
- APS STUDENTS
- PRIVATE MEMBERS
- GENERAL PUBLIC

What are the **operational hours** for the pool year-round (summer, school year, events)?

What is the **capacity** of the pool?

Will **priority be given to Midtown Cluster** swimmers? Or will this be for all of APS? And will the pool be for swimming, diving and water polo teams?

What is the **typical swim meet attendance**- including swimmers, coaches, staff, vendors and supporters? How long do meets last? What time do they typically begin and end?

The pre-agreement says the **Virginia-Highland Pool Association will set operating hours** and rental policies outside of APS use. Will neighbors have any input on policies around large gatherings?

Is this pool designed to host GHSA-sanctioned meets or just local competitions? **What level of competition is this actually built for?** Will there be a diving well?

As an APS swim parent, **how will practices be scheduled for multiple schools sharing the same facility?** Is there enough capacity to accommodate current and future growth in APS swim and dive programs?

### LIGHTS + NOISE

THE PRE-AGREEMENT LEAVES LIGHT AND NOISE PROTECTIONS TO BE DETERMINED

What provisions will be made for **lighting and noise**, especially during private, late night events? Will there be permanent exterior lighting (such as stadium lights) outside of the seasonal pool bubble? Will they remain year round?

Will there be **permanent exterior lighting** (such as stadium lights) outside of the seasonal pool bubble? Will they remain year round? What is the final size and scale of the bubble during winter months, and how visible will it be from Virginia Avenue and neighboring properties? When is it typical to put up and take down the bubble?

In earlier versions, the developer proposed a two-story private event rental facility on site. If elements like this return in future designs, how will the noise levels be managed? Will we have to go through the city to get resolution on **noise ordinance violations**? If they get many noise complaints, will APS be informed or get involved?

### INFRASTRUCTURE

THE PROPOSED POOL DEVELOPMENT IS NOT IN THE VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND MASTER PLAN OR THE CITY OF ATLANTA COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP)

Currently there are number of **watershed issues** - what is the plan to repair and restore proper function to these down stream areas certain to be impacted by the pool?

Will APS require baseline maintenance standards for landscaping, cleanliness, and general curb appeal for this property throughout the lease term? What expectations will APS set to **ensure the site remains a source of pride rather than a liability**, especially since it's on APS-owned land?

In alignment with the VAHI Master Plan, Virginia Ave is set to have a **new bike lane on Virginia Ave**- what is the infrastructure plan to direct pool visitors from interfering with the bike lane? The developer's parking map shows Virginia Ave providing 22 parking spaces, but that lane will be taken by a bike lane for Midtown High and Virginia-Highland Elementary students.



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### SAFETY

THE PRE-AGREEMENT DOES NOT OUTLINE SPECIFIC APS SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR POOL OPERATIONS

What after-hours security will be in place to prevent children or teens from accessing the pool unsupervised? <b>Pools can pose a serious safety risk</b> if not properly secured at night. How will the site be monitored after closing?
With increased foot, bike, and vehicle traffic near a school campus, <b>how will pedestrian safety be addressed</b> —particularly during busy pool hours and events?
Will <b>lighting be added to the pool area</b> and surrounding paths, and how will it be balanced between safety and neighborhood impact?
What <b>safety expectations will APS include</b> in the long-term lease to ensure that maintenance, staffing, and security do not decline over time?
Will fire trucks and ambulances been factored into the site design? The parcel is small, and the roads are narrow. If there's a medical emergency during a meet, <b>can emergency vehicles access the pool quickly</b> and unobstructed?
Will pool drop-off or pickup times conflict with <b>Virginia-Highland Elementary dismissal or arrival</b> ? A pool user pulling into traffic during dismissal hours introduces new risks in an already congested corridor.
Precedent shows that APS is not always held to the same city rezoning and permitting requirements as private developers. Given that this pool will be built on APS land, <b>will it be required to follow City of Atlanta design and safety codes</b> —particularly for things like lighting, stormwater management, and egress?
Will APS require the use of APS-approved vendors for construction and operations, or will the pool developers have full control over selecting vendors? If the developers are selecting vendors independently, <b>what oversight will APS retain to ensure quality and compliance</b> with public standards?

### TRAFFIC

THE PRE-AGREEMENT DOES NOT INCLUDE A TRAFFIC OR EVENT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DAILY OPERATIONS OR LARGE EVENTS.

What are the <b>planned traffic mitigation improvements</b> at the already stressed Virginia Ave/Ponce Place intersection?
What specific traffic management <b>plan is proposed for drop-offs</b> , pickups, and large event days?
Has the plans for <b>the Monroe Road Diet</b> - and the potential increase of local and through traffic into the neighborhood - been studied? What about the addition of future traffic from Amsterdam Walk?
Some community pools in Atlanta <b>require police to direct traffic</b> because of cars and busses. Will this be a part of the VaHi pool plan? Who will pay for that?

### PARKING

THE PRE-AGREEMENT DOES NOT GUARANTEE ON-SITE PARKING, RELYING INSTEAD ON EVENT-BASED RENTAL OF THE VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY LOT

What <b>parking options</b> will be a part of the pool development?
Given that the proposed pool could have 600 members plus additional day-pass visitors, how do the developers plan to <b>manage the expected increase in on-street parking demand</b> in an already constrained residential area?"
Is there a plan for <b>bus parking</b> during events and meets?
How will parking be addressed for <b>neighbors in close proximity</b> ?



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### EQUITY + NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS

THE PRE-AGREEMENT DOES NOT PRIORITIZE OR RESERVE ACCESS FOR VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND RESIDENTS.

How will <b>APS students and the public</b> access the pool during peak times (summer weekends, after school) relative to private members?
What is the <b>real capacity</b> for "free access" for APS students during summer and weekends under the 30% rule?
<b>Will day passes be available during peak community times</b> , like weekends, or will those times primarily be reserved for members? Apart from June and July, what hours will community members have access to the pool? What after school hours in fall, winter and spring will be reserved for APS use?
What process will be in place to ensure that <b>day passes are fairly available</b> , and not consistently sold out due to member priority?
Has APS considered placing a pool in a neighborhood or cluster that could benefit more from the visibility and investment? A location in an underserved area could provide broader community uplift, and amenities like event concessions or a snack bar could even serve as fundraising tools to support local schools. <b>Is APS thinking strategically about how this asset could support equity systemwide—not just serve one neighborhood?</b>

### LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS

FIELD OF DREAMS WAS GIFTED FOR COMMUNITY GOOD AND IS CATEGORIZED AS APS INACTIVE RESERVE LAND WITH NO PAST OR CURRENT PLANS FOR SALE OR OFFLOADING; ANY FUTURE CHANGES OR RFPs WOULD REQUIRE PUBLIC INPUT

If APS needs to reclaim the land at the end of the 16-year lease, <b>what financial and logistical costs will APS</b> (and taxpayers) inherit?
How will the public have <b>recourse if the pool association fails to meet their commitments</b> ? If the pool struggles financially or cannot sustain operations, what happens to the property? Is there a plan to protect it from falling into disrepair?
What guarantees are there that <b>commitments made now will be enforceable over time</b> , especially once leadership in APS and the pool inevitably changes?
On the pool's website, it states that the pool is a "non-profit run by community volunteers." How sustainable is this project in the long term, considering this model? <b>Does APS feel comfortable supporting a project of this scale being managed by people in their free time?</b>

### EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

APS IS EVALUATING FACILITIES AND ENROLLMENT IN THE MIDTOWN CLUSTER, AS MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CONTINUES TO PUSH ITS CAPACITY LIMITS. ACCORDING TO THE PRE-AGREEMENT, RECLAIMING THE LAND COULD CARRY SIGNIFICANT COSTS. IF APS LATER DETERMINES THE SITE IS NEEDED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES, APS MAY TERMINATE THE AGREEMENT WITH 60 DAYS' NOTICE. BUT APS WOULD BE OBLIGATED TO REIMBURSE THE DEVELOPER FOR OUT-OF-POCKET PROJECT DEVELOPMENT COSTS.

Has APS formally studied whether this parcel could help meet future <b>Midtown Cluster educational needs</b> (classroom expansion, administrative space, resource offices)?
Given that APS rezoning discussions are active again across the Midtown Cluster – and recognizing that Virginia-Highland is unique in having two elementary schools within a small geographic footprint – <b>has APS evaluated whether keeping the Field of Dreams property available could offer future flexibility for educational use</b> , such as relieving overcrowding or adapting to enrollment shifts over the next 10–20 years?
Is it short-sighted to <b>commit this land to a private project before we know how the Midtown Cluster rezoning will impact school capacity needs?</b>
What's the rush? Shouldn't decisions about long-term land use in the Midtown Cluster—especially on scarce property like this— <b>wait until that broader academic planning is finalized?</b>