

Walden School Project

Public Comment

July 6, 2026

Daniel Nakahara, AICP

From: Marc Zaslavsky <marczas@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2026 8:35 AM
To: Plan Commission Comment
Cc: Daniel Nakahara, AICP; Jeffery Ryckaert, AICP
Subject: [PUBLIC COMMENT] Walden Public Hearing

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Planning Commission (plancommissioncomment@deerfield.il.us),

We are writing to object to the proposed Special Use Permit for Walden Park located near our home on Cumnor Ct. Our kids have gone and do currently attend Walden and we are in support of improving the bones of the building, but we do not agree with the current development plans of constructing a two-story school building adjacent to the existing school building.

We just learned that construction is going to start earlier than next summer and start while school is in session in the Spring while kids are on site. The initial phase will include loud excavation and steel erection right next to the students and school. Ongoing construction and noise from the construction project immediately adjacent to the existing school will negatively affect students trying to learn.

Additionally, the construction project raises safety issues from all of the construction trucks, students, parents, teachers and buses trying to share the one road entrance. Walden is unlike any of the other elementary schools in terms of the size of the park, access points and being surrounded on all four sides by residential homes.

There are not sufficient roads or land area in this small park to squeeze in a new school adjacent to the existing school in a safe and responsible manner. Other than the noise, dust and daily chances of danger, in an extreme emergency, what is the evacuation plan and how will emergency responders be able to manage the problem? None of these issues are addressed in any of the plans published for the Planning Commission. DPS109 has not submitted sufficient information for these plans to be considered and approved as there are still considerable holes and concerns in their plans.

The massive school in the proposed location represents a significant change in land use and scale compared to the existing zoning and character of the current neighborhood park. The new Walden plans do not fit with the adjacent pre-existing residential homes and neighborhood. A two-story school does not belong so close to residences – especially when there are other options. A multi-story structure so close to residential properties will have negative effects on the property values of the homes that abut Walden Park.

Lastly, over the next several years, there will be no green space for recess, for the surrounding community, or for any DYBA or AYSO sporting events. While this may be short-term, the lack of recess for young students over a few years is vitally important to their learning, and the School District can consider other options to avoid this. By contrast, the plans for Wilmot (or the other schools) do not affect the green space for recess or the public parks, there are multiple access roads, and the new or improved school is not being squeezed-in adjacent to residential homes (it appears that the School District is even buying some homes near Wilmot to create more space and buffering). The safety, fencing and lack of green space for this neighborhood does not make sense. Additionally, the traffic and proposed parking plans during construction will not be followed and will result in chaos in the quiet neighborhoods with people parking all over and creating further gridlock.

We believe there are enough funds in the School District's budget (or the School District can value engineer the budget) to change the phasing of the school construction projects to address these vital community issues. Any new Walden school should be built in the current location of Walden (in the middle of the park) to alleviate these concerns. The School District needs to consider the long-term nature of the plans for the entire community, not just try to alleviate and address the short-term issues of the School District. If alternate third-party locations cannot be used to educate the students for 1-year periods, then the School District should consider using one of the other elementary school sites that has more free space so that they can (i) construct away from the existing students and residential homes and (ii) be faced with less safety concerns because there will be multiple access points and additional space to separate the kids from the construction. If the project takes a few years longer, the School District can safely invest the proceeds of the bonds in short-term investments to hedge against rising construction costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns.

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