

**PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING**

**DATE:** December 18, 2013  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** McKinley Elementary School Library  
1030 North McKinley Road

**STAFF COORDINATOR:** Freida Wray, 703-228-3541

**Site Location:**  
McKinley Elementary School  
1030 North McKinley Road  
Arlington, VA 22205

**Information:**

**Applicant:**  
Ajibola Robinson  
Arlington Public Schools  
2770 S. Taylor Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22206

**Architect:**  
Peter Winebrenner; Principal  
Hord Coplan Macht (HCM)  
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 205  
Alexandria, Virginia, 22314

**Staff Members:**

Sophia Fisher	CPHD – Planning	703.228.0771	<a href="mailto:ssfisher@arlingtonva.us">ssfisher@arlingtonva.us</a>
Robert Gibson	DES – Planning	703.228.4833	<a href="mailto:rgibson@arlingtonva.us">rgibson@arlingtonva.us</a>

**SUMMARY:** Arlington Public Schools (APS) is proceeding through the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) and the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) processes for an addition and renovations to the McKinley Elementary School. The processes are in their conceptual stages, and major issues such as building placement, parking, and site circulation are currently being discussed.

**BACKGROUND:** The 2013-22 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) was approved by the County Board in July, 2012. The CIP included funding for 1,875 new elementary school students as a result of increasing enrollment within the school system. The plan includes funding for construction of additions at three (3) existing elementary schools, and the construction of two (2) entirely new elementary schools on APS property. The APS’ “Multi-Site Study” was completed in Spring 2012 and identified the locations and priorities for the construction projects. Use permits for the Ashlawn Elementary School expansion and the new Elementary School #1 on the Williamsburg Middle School campus were approved by the County Board in May and September 2013, respectively.

As with the two previous school projects that have been reviewed over the past year, the planning process for the McKinley addition will incorporate the APS process (BLPC) and the County’s process for public facilities (PFRC), and requires them to work in tandem in designing the school’s addition. The process will include three (3) phases: a conceptual phase, a schematic phase, and a final phase during which a use permit for the project would be requested and

reviewed by the County Board. The use permit is currently anticipated to be heard at the September 2014 County Board meeting; however, this date is preliminary and subject to change.

The BLPC consists of APS staff, teachers, parents and PTA members, representation from community groups, and County staff. The McKinley Elementary School BLPC website is <http://www.apsva.us/Page/21234>.

The PFRC is a County Board-appointed committee consisting of representatives of the Planning Commission (one of which is designated by the County Board as Committee Chair) and several other commissions, APS, and at-large members. It also includes project-specific members representing the Dominion Hills, Madison Manor, and Westover Village Civic Associations. The PFRC website is [http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Commissions/PublicFacilitiesReviewCommittee/pfrc\\_main.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Commissions/PublicFacilitiesReviewCommittee/pfrc_main.aspx).

**The following provides additional information about the site and surroundings:**

Site: The site is bound on the north by 11<sup>th</sup> Street North, south by 9<sup>th</sup> Road North and North Quantico Street, east by North McKinley Road, and west by North Potomac Street.

Zoning: The site is zoned “S-3A” Special Districts. Schools are a permitted use by provision of a use permit subject to [ACZO Section 4.15](#).

Land Use: The site is identified on the [General Land Use Plan](#) (GLUP) as “Public”

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Madison Manor Civic Association and is adjacent to the Dominion Hills Civic Association. The Highland Park-Overlee Knolls and Westover Village Civic Associations are located across I-66 from Madison Manor. Representatives from the Madison Manor, Dominion Hills, and Westover Village Civic Associations will be represented on the PFRC.



- Utilize universal design to ensure open and welcoming accessibility for all citizens.
- Explore adaptive reuse of significant existing structures and building elements and consider possible future reuse of new buildings.
- Optimize open space for public relaxation and recreation, and minimize building footprint and areas used for parking, on-site roads, and service drives.
- Support joint development and use of school and county facilities when in the best interest of both entities.

#### Siting and Orientation

- Orient the primary building entrance to the appropriate adjacent street or public space so movement and entrance to buildings are natural and intuitive.
- Emphasize pedestrians, bicycles, and mass transit over automobiles in building placement, entry, and architecture.
- Ensure building and site are functionally and spatially coherent, facilitating the flow of people to, from, and within the site.
- Create “positive” outdoor spaces with a pedestrian emphasis.

Addition Siting and Massing Options: Since October 22, the BLPC has gone through several iterations of the proposed concept design, going from a total of eight possible designs to the current three options under consideration. The December 4 BLPC meeting was also open to the community to give them a chance to review and comment on the concept designs before a final option is selected.

Each of the concept designs reviewed by the BLPC includes an option to replace the existing pentagon as part of the addition. The architect continues to study the pentagon, which is an approximately 5,000 SF addition constructed around 1971. Based on the preliminary studies, renovating the pentagon is expected to be significantly more expensive than renovating other areas of the building due to the building type. No final decision has been made as to whether the pentagon will be renovated or be wrapped into the proposed addition. Option 1 is the only concept design that would require that the pentagon be replaced; Option 2 shows the pentagon demolished and the square footage incorporated into the addition; Option 3, which is still under development as of the writing of this report, would either keep or replace the pentagon and have an addition on the east side that is smaller than the addition proposed in Option 2. All the options are discussed in greater detail below.

Note: all images are from the presentation given to the BLPC by HCM on December 4, 2013. The full presentation is available at: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/21234>.

#### *Option 1: Addition to the South*

Option 1 places the addition on the south side of the existing building. In this concept design, the 2-story addition replaces the pentagon which is currently located on the south side of the school. The existing parking area is expanded to approximately 60 parking spaces. At the December 4 BLPC meeting, residents who live on the south side expressed concerns regarding visual impacts on their property. Other concerns that were expressed related to the amount of light that students in the classrooms would receive, and the concern that they would be looking out of classrooms at the hillside or retaining wall.

# Option 1 Site Plan



### Option 1 NE Aerial Perspective



#### Desirables and Opportunities:

- Maintains existing pedestrian route around the school, especially from the entrance off 11<sup>th</sup> Street (southwest corner of the site).
- Provides for expanded open spaces and allows for two playgrounds (one in the existing location in the southeast corner of the site near the parking area and one near the open space to the north of the site)
- Reduces potential visual and scale impacts to neighbors to the east of the site.
- Provides the opportunity for an outdoor classroom or other passive open space between the new wing and the existing classroom wing.
- Maintains existing building setback from McKinley Road.

#### Issues and suggested improvements:

- Potential visual and scale impacts to the neighbors to the south and west of the site.
- The primary addition would be somewhat concealed, although there would be opportunities to improve the civic presence with the minor addition to the entrance and the expansion of the gym.
- A significant retaining wall and extensive site work would be required to site the addition in this location, especially given the existing drainage issues in the southern portion of the site today.

#### *Option 2: Addition to the East*

Option 2 places the addition to the east, and uses the existing topography to construct a two and a half story addition. In this option, the top level of the addition is at the same height as the existing building, and steps down into the slope for the additional level and a half. In this option, the pentagon is shown as demolished and the additional square footage is included in the addition. If the pentagon were to be retained, the proposed addition would be reduced in size. This option also expands the parking area to approximately 60 spaces. At the BLPC meeting on

December 4, there were a few comments related to the height of the addition at the point where it would be three stories.

Option 2 Site Plan:



### Option 2 NE Aerial Perspective:



### Desirables and Opportunities:

- Creates a new civic presence adjacent to McKinley Road
- Provides for expanded open space, especially in the event the pentagon is demolished.
- Allows for two separate play areas (one to the north and one to the south)
- Reduces potential visual and scale impacts for residences to the south and west of the site.
- Uses the topography of the site to reduce potential height impacts (the roof of the proposed addition would be at approximately the same height as the roof of the existing school).
- Good solar orientation.
- Less sitework required, including grading and retaining walls.

### Issues and suggested improvements:

- Potential visual and scale impacts to the residences to the east and north of the site.
- Pedestrian circulation around the building is impacted, especially for students who access the site from the 11<sup>th</sup> Street side.

### *Option 3: Hybrid Option*

In Option 3, the pentagon in the southwest corner is either renovated or demolished and an addition of approximately the same size would be constructed in the southwest corner. This option is currently under review by APS and the design team, and it came out of the discussion with the community at the December 4 BLPC. As discussed at the December 4 BLPC, the intent of Option 3 is to mitigate the impacts of the addition by splitting it into two smaller pieces, both of which would have impacts similar to those described in Options 1 and 2. As of the writing of this report, the design team is evaluating and developing Option 3; therefore, no images are available at this time.

Transportation: McKinley Elementary School is located along North McKinley Road which is identified on the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) – Map as a Type E – Primarily Single Family Residential Neighborhoods arterial street. Two curb cuts along McKinley Road provide vehicular access to the school and its associated main entrance, parking and bus loop. The drop-off and pick-up of students by family vehicles occur along N. McKinley Road along the school’s frontage. The location of drop-off and pick-up activities has recently been moved to the north side of the crosswalk, across McKinley Road, to the school’s main entrance. (Note: This change is still under review, however it appears to be a positive change to school operations.) There is also a narrow (5-foot wide) pedestrian path connecting the school to 11<sup>th</sup> Street North that functions as a secondary access point to the school. As a result 11<sup>th</sup> Street is frequently used by local residents to access to school, making it easier to walk the site while also providing access to additional on-street parking.

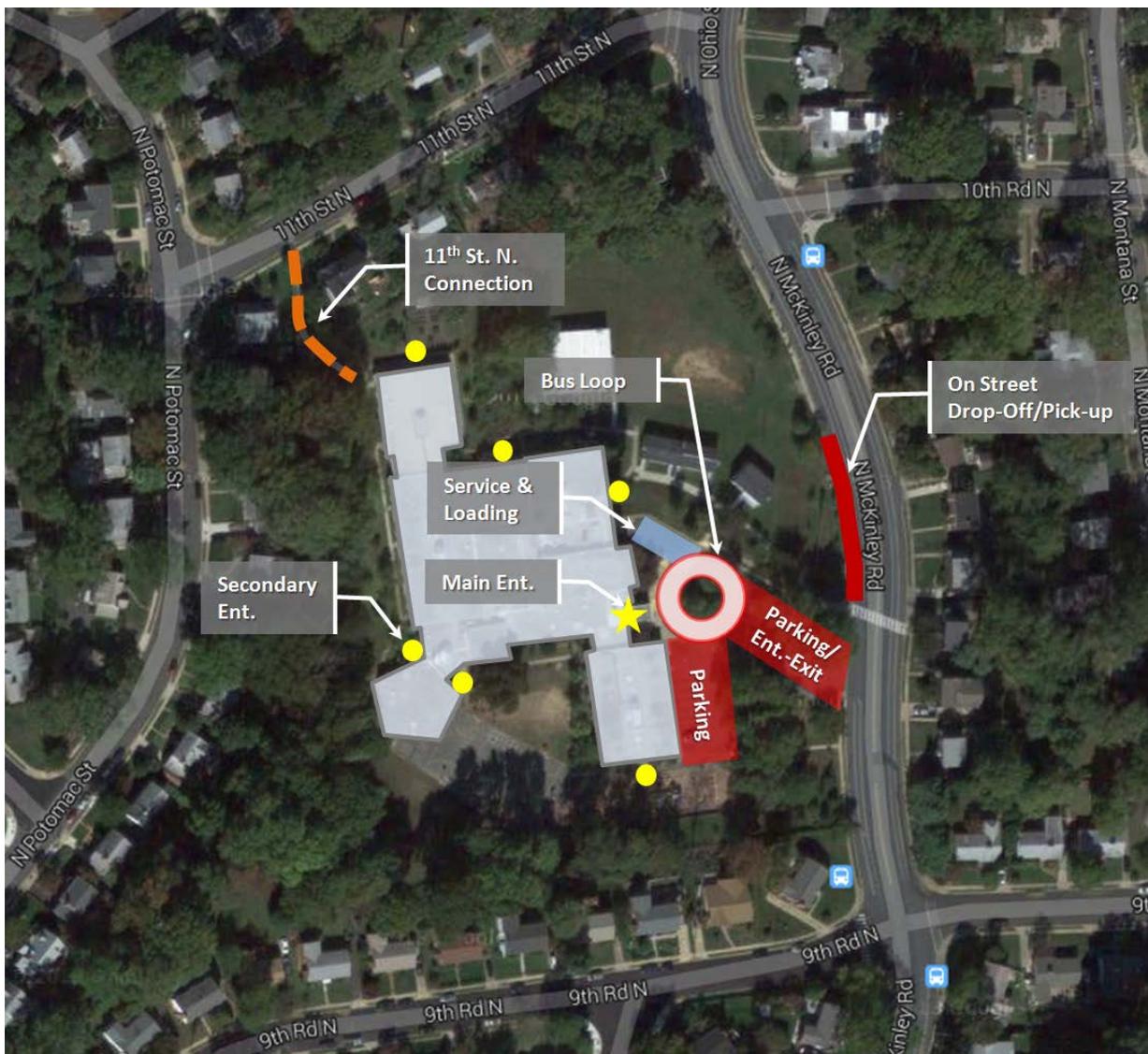


Figure 1 - Existing Site Layout.

Toole Design Group (Toole) has conducted a baseline study of the existing transportation conditions at McKinley Elementary, and is in the process of developing recommendations based on both the baseline study and additional surveys and data collection that are being completed this fall. The baseline study Executive Summary is available on line (<http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/105/Toole%20Multimodal%20Study%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>). Among their key findings are:

- According to the parent survey, a relatively good number of students (47%) living within 1 mile of the school either walk or ride their bike as their typical mode of travel to school.
- Staff travel to school is primarily via private car, with 93% of respondents reporting this as a primary travel mode. Four percent of respondents reported utilizing a carpool. Staff survey response rates were remarkably high, with 99% of school staff responding.
- There appears to be sufficient on-street parking within the vicinity of the school to accommodate staff and visitors.

Staff continues to review Toole's transportation work and will work with APS and Toole to identify and review possible recommendations.

Site Circulation: The County Board identified site circulation as one of the main issues to be discussed during the public process for school design. Staff has identified a number of goals with respect to circulation and transportation that should be discussed during the public process for incorporation into the building and site design:

- Emphasis on multi-modal transportation opportunities
- Incorporate building access and circulation into building siting
- Examine existing/proposed transportation impacts to surrounding communities and incorporate into design
- Implement County standard for sidewalks, streetscapes, and driveways

The current design alternatives under review would not significantly change site circulation from existing conditions.

Parking: Section 14.3 of the ACZO requires one (1) parking space for every 7.5 students of design capacity for employee parking at elementary and middle schools, plus one (1) space for every 40 students of design capacity for visitor parking. The requirement may be modified by use permit per section ACZO as follows:

*The County Board may, through Use Permit approval pursuant to Section §15.5, modify the conditional and community service uses and retail and service uses regulations set forth in §14.3.7 or modify regulations to permit off-site parking to be used for public and private elementary, middle and high schools and for uses associated with public and private noncommercial recreational and community center buildings and grounds, where the County Board finds that:*

1. *Such modifications will preserve or create recreational facilities such as playing fields, open space, playgrounds, and the like, that will reduce impervious surfaces, minimize grading and preserve existing trees, and*

2. A transportation demand management plan submitted by the applicant demonstrates that the potential adverse impacts of parking demand and any potential disruption of parking patterns within affected neighborhoods that could result from the modification will be mitigated by utilizing available on-street parking contiguous to the site, and through the implementation of measures such as, but not limited to:
- (a) Utilizing, by written agreement with another party in terms acceptable to the County, off-street parking spaces at a site owned or controlled by that same party; and/or
  - (b) Utilizing a managed or shared parking program at times when parking demand is highest; and/or
  - (c) Implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies for the use, and/or demonstrating that transit or other transportation options exist that may offset parking demand.

Based on the ACZO the school would be required to have 85 parking spaces to support the current enrolment of 537 students. The school currently has 36 on-site parking spaces and 26 on-street parking spaces contiguous to the site’s frontage to support its current enrolment.

According the parking recommendations submitted by Toole (attached), 96% of teachers and staff report that they drive to school, with 55% of those reporting that they park off site, primarily on North McKinley Road and 11<sup>th</sup> Street North. 82% of peak hour visitors report driving to McKinley as well. The peak hour is defined as between 3 and 4 p.m., when the majority of staff are in the building, including staff for the extended day program.

Existing Conditions	Student Capacity	Required Parking Per ACZO	Parking Spaces				
			Existing Lot	Lot Expansion	Total On-Site	On-Street/McKinley Rd.*	Total
Existing Elementary School	443	71	36	-	36	26	<b>62</b>
Existing Elementary School w/Trailers	537	85					
Proposed Design Capacity	Student Capacity	Required Parking Per ACZO	Parking Spaces				
			Existing Lot	Lot Expansion	Total On-Site	On-Street/McKinley Rd.*	Total
Expanded Elementary School	668	106	36	24	60	26	<b>86</b>

\*Contiguous on-street parking along school frontage of N. McKinley Road.

Based on the proposed design capacity of 668 students, the ACZO would require without a modification approximately 89 employee parking spaces and 17 visitor parking spaces for a total of 106 parking spaces. Each of the proposed site options would accommodate approximately 60 parking spaces onsite by expanding the existing parking area, and up to an additional 26 spaces on McKinley Road in front of the elementary school for a total of 86 parking spaces under the current design, or 20 spaces short of what the Zoning Ordinance requires.

Based on the projected increase in staff and visitors, TDG projects that the demand for parking after the addition will be approximately 94 spaces (87 staff and 7 visitors). Given the 86 parking spaces currently proposed for the site (60 on site and 26 on McKinley Road), the parking recommendations anticipate that McKinley will implement transportation demand management (TDM) strategies such as carpooling and encouraging alternate modes of transportation to reduce parking demand by an additional eight (8) spaces.

Staff continues to review the information submitted by the applicant. The Zoning Ordinance allows the parking requirements for elementary schools (among other listed public uses) to be modified as referenced above. One of the primary goals identified by the community is the preservation of the existing ball field located in the northeast corner of the site and the preservation of other usable open space. Due to site constraints, accommodating all the parking required by the Zoning Ordinance on-site could have a negative impact on open space and recreational facilities. However, the 86 parking spaces currently proposed are 20 spaces short of the 106 parking spaces required by the Zoning Ordinance, and more information related to the justification for the requested modification is needed.