

PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: February 20, 2013
TIME: 7:00 p.m. Meeting
PLACE: Ashlawn Elementary School
5950 8th Rd N.

STAFF COORDINATOR: Freida Wray, 703-228-3541

Site Location:
Ashlawn Elementary School
5950 8th Road North
(RPC# 12-041-033)

Information:

Applicant:
John Chadwick
Arlington Public Schools
2770 S. Taylor Street
Arlington, Virginia 22206

Architect:
Doug Gehley
SHW Group
11415 Isaac Newton Square
Reston, Virginia 20190

Staff Members:

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Dennis Sellin	DES – Planning	703.228.4805	dsellin@arlingtonva.us

SUMMARY: Arlington Public Schools (APS) is proceeding through the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) and the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) processes for the renovation and addition on the Ashlawn Elementary School campus. The concept design for the proposed school addition and circulation pattern endorsing the North Manchester Street entry option was approved by the Arlington County School Board on December 20, 2012. The schematic design stage is underway, which will concentrate on further development and details of the school’s building program, layout, and design. Discussions continue regarding traffic circulation (vehicular and pedestrian) as it relates to the proposed Ashlawn circulation plan. Department of Environmental Services (DES) staff provided preliminary comments to the Toole Design traffic report.

BACKGROUND: The 2013-22 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) was approved by the County Board in July, 2012. One of the projects listed within this plan included a renovation and addition to Ashlawn Elementary School for an additional +225 students currently located on relocatable structures on-site (approximately 700 students total). The addition would be approximately 27,000 square feet.

At a joint work session with the School Board held on July 24, 2012, the County Board endorsed a planning process for the Ashlawn project that incorporates the APS process (BLPC) and the County’s process for public facilities (PFRC), and requires them to work in tandem in designing the schools. The process would include three (3) phases: a conceptual phase, a schematic phase, and a final phase during which use permits for the projects would be requested and reviewed by the County Board. A follow-up, joint work session with the School Board was held on October 25, 2012 discussing the various conceptual design options and circulation patterns. Both the

County Board and School Board determined that more work needs to be done to further refine the conceptual design and circulation options, which is what APS and County staff are currently addressing. At the PFRC's November 27, 2012 meeting, the PFRC decided on moving forward with further developing and assessing the North Manchester Street circulation option. County Staff analyzed Toole Design Group's traffic report and devised comments and recommendations based on these findings. The Arlington County School Board endorsed the concept design for Ashlawn at their December 20, 2012 meeting. It is anticipated that the use permit for the renovation and addition at Ashlawn Elementary School would be submitted in late February/early March, 2013 and acted upon by the County Board in May, 2013.

The BLPC consists of schools staff, teachers, parents and PTA members, representation from community groups, and County staff. APS has chosen SHW Group, a firm with eight (8) offices nationally, two (2) in Virginia specializing in school design, to design the renovation and addition for Ashlawn and run the BLPC process. Toole Design Group, an engineering firm locally based in Silver Spring, Maryland, has been chosen to analyze infrastructure, traffic, circulation, and parking patterns for the site. Within the month of September 2012, various transportation surveys and other preliminary analysis have been performed on the site with the preliminary results presented to the PFRC at their October 17, 2012 meeting. A more detailed report has been posted for review and a presentation of that report's recommendations was given to the PFRC at their November 27, 2012 meeting.

The PFRC is a subcommittee of the Planning Commission and consists of representatives of several commissions and the schools, as well as at-large members. It also includes project-specific members representing the Boulevard Manor, Dominion Hills, and Bluemont Civic Associations.

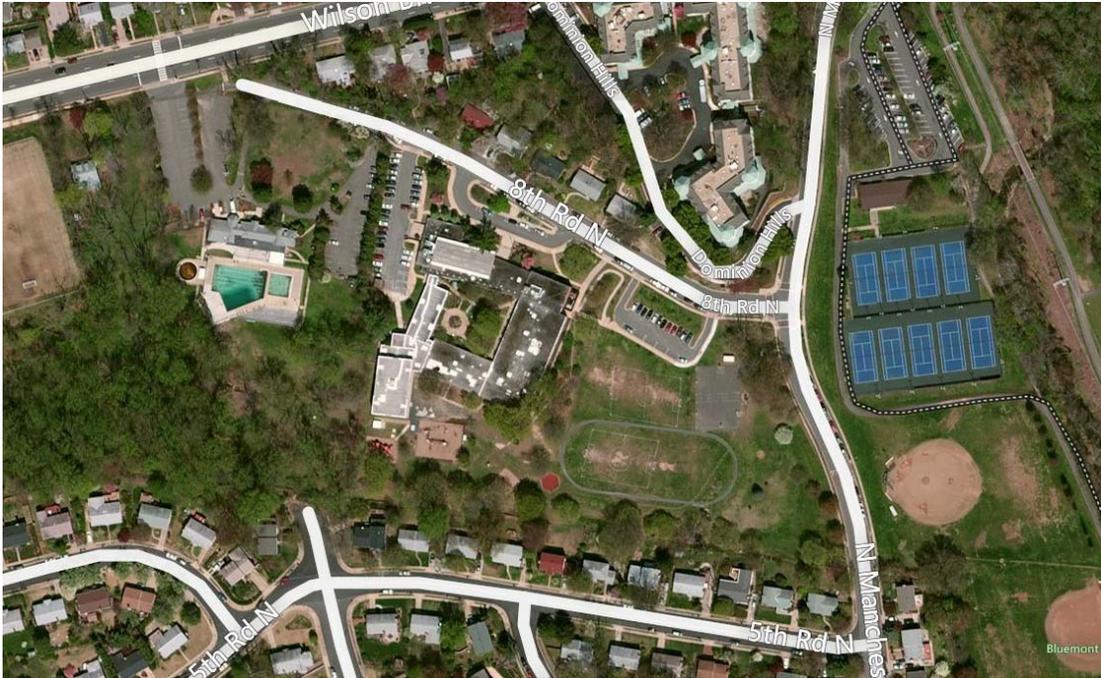
The following provides additional information about the site and surroundings:

Site: The site is bound on the north by 8th Road North and Wilson Boulevard, south by 5th Road North, east by North Manchester Street and Bluemont Park, and west by the Dominion Hills Pool and Powhatan Springs Park.

Zoning: The site is zoned "S-3A" Special Districts. Schools are a permitted use by provision of a use permit subject to ACZO Section 36.

Land Use: The site is identified on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as "Public"

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Boulevard Manor Civic Association and is adjacent to the Dominion Hills and Bluemont Civic Associations. Representatives from the aforementioned civic associations are involved in the BLPC and PFRC processes.



DISCUSSION: The BLPC has held eleven (11) meetings as of the date of this report, with the most recent occurring on January 22, 2013. The next scheduled BLPC meeting will be held on February 19, 2013. To date there have been five (5) meetings of the PFRC, which were held on July 25, 2012, September 26, 2012, October 17, 2012, November 27, 2012, and January 15, 2013. Several issues were identified, including further analysis regarding traffic, circulation, and parking (including potential vehicular and/or pedestrian connection options for the intersection of 8th Road North and Wilson Boulevard), visual impacts from the proposed new facilities, provision of adequate open space and recreation facilities, and creation of potential community facilities at the school campus. A summary of the meetings are located on the PFRC website. The *Principles of Civic Design in Arlington* provides the PFRC discussion points and guidelines on building siting, form, and design. The schematic design for the project will be discussed at the February 19, 2013 and February 20, 2013 BLPC and PFRC meetings, respectively.

Building Massing –Schematic Design: Addition and Existing School



View at Front Entry

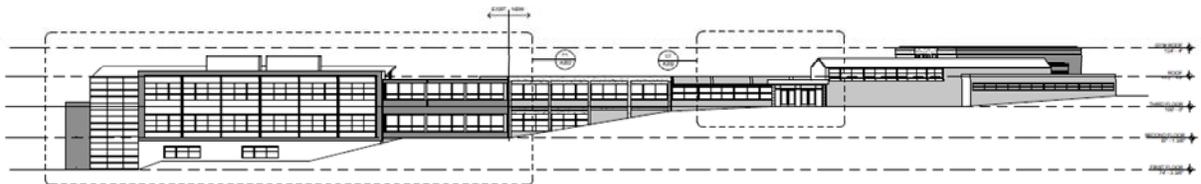


View from Approach up 8th Road

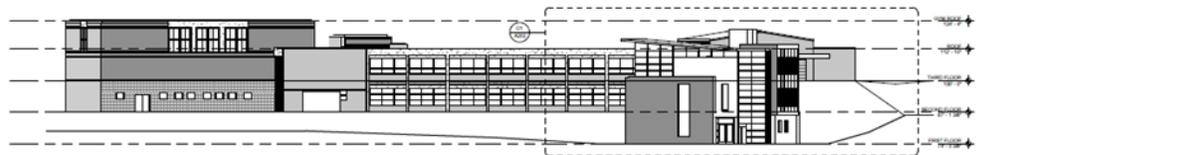


View of New Addition from the Play Fields

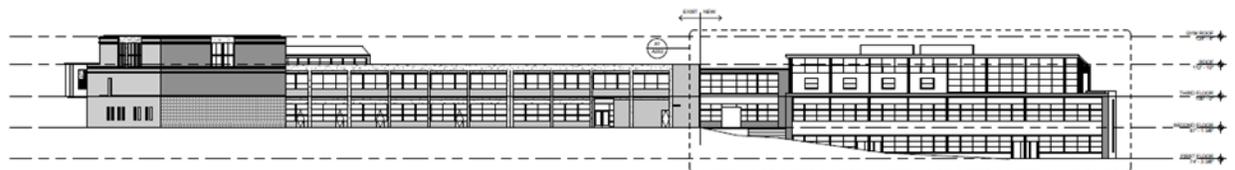
Proposed Elevation Drawings



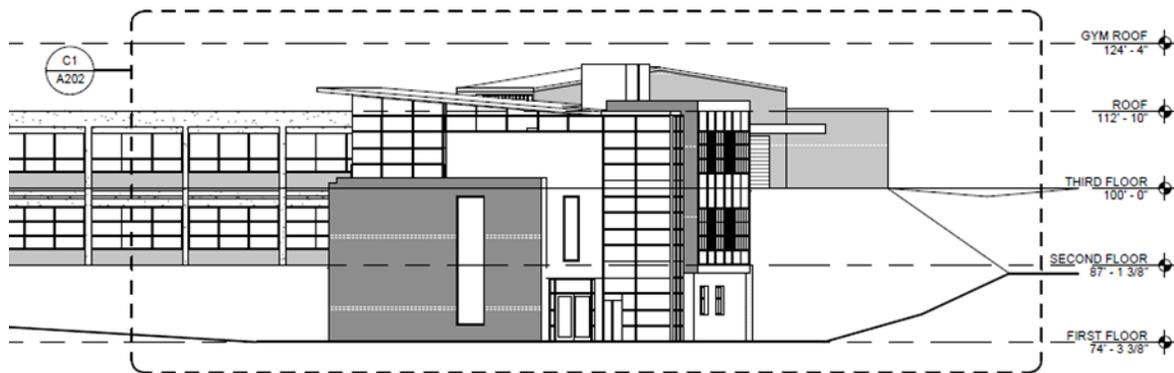
F2 OVERALL EXTERIOR ELEVATION NORTH



D2 OVERALL EXTERIOR ELEVATION EAST



A2 OVERALL EXTERIOR ELEVATION SOUTH



The building design of the new addition is inspired from the existing 1950's "mid-century modern" architecture. Materials found in the proposed schematic design reflect those found in the original architecture which includes brick, concrete, and glass. The original components in addition to the new materials, which include cast stone and composite panel, will provide a more updated appearance to the building addition. Sun shades and mechanical louvered screens will be added to the building's exterior façade. .

The use of glass in the three story volume provides an opportunity to bring significant daylight to the media center on the top floor. Wood glulam beams and wood roof decking will also be used within this space. An open stair found in the link between the existing and new spaces provides a light filled circulation space designed to encourage opportunities for break out learning and social interaction. This link provides direct access to the existing main corridor leading to the school entrance lobby and adjacent cafeteria. Core, instructional spaces (on the south side) and their support rooms emulate the architecture language of the existing classrooms. This includes the use of horizontal windows, red brick, and areas of spandrels above and below the windows. These areas are under a low-sloped roof, similar to the existing building.

The media center on the top floor of the addition is under a specially shaped roof, which reflects the use of a sloped roof over the existing multipurpose room. The support rooms on the north side are defined as a two-story block resting on a wall of a different material. This two-story block aligns with the existing brick elevation of the original building. The core classrooms on the south contain another two-story block which rests on the ground, creating direct access from the pre-kindergarten program to their enclosed play yard.

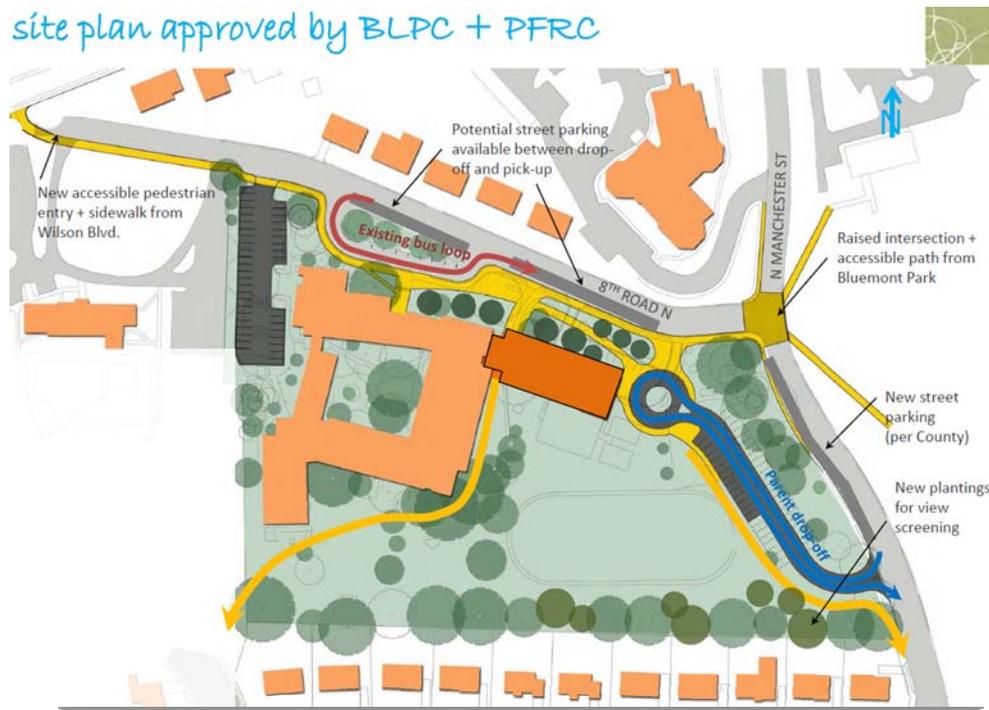
County staff will be providing guidance on the potential screening and/or aesthetic treatment of mechanical equipment, especially those located on the roof of the new addition.

Transportation and Circulation: 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:

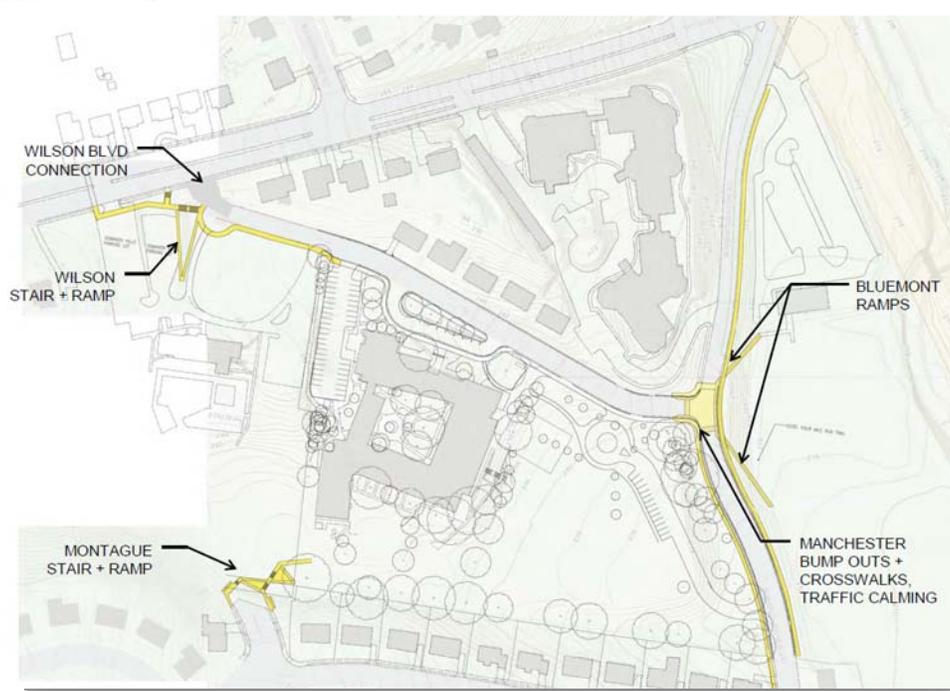
- Emphasis on multi-modal transportation opportunities
- Incorporate building access and circulation into building siting
- Minimize parking/drop-off adjacent to street and sidewalk areas
- Coordinate opening/closing times to manage traffic
- Examine existing/proposed transportation impacts to surrounding communities and incorporate into design
- Implement County standard for sidewalks, streetscapes, and driveways

At the January 15, 2013 PFRC meeting, DES staff stated they would provide preliminary comments at the February 20, 2013 PFRC meeting with regards to the Toole Design Group transportation study, which includes over 50 recommendations for transportation related improvements.

Proposed Circulation Plan and Off-Site Improvements



off-site improvements



Draft School Transportation Plan

The Toole Design Group has prepared a school transportation plan for Ashlawn elementary school (the final draft was issued on November 26, 2012). The draft report includes an assessment of transportation impacts of the proposed expansion project, as well as proposed infrastructure and programmatic recommendations. These recommendations, according to the draft report, are intended to mitigate demand for automobile traffic and improve safety for student pedestrians.

There are a total of fifty-three projects recommended by Toole. The recommendations are broken into six categories: pedestrian access and safety (29), signs and markings (16), traffic engineering and operations (4), bicycle access (2), parking (1), and enforcement (1). The majority (85%) of recommendations are those which are for pedestrian access and safety, and those which would add or change signage or roadway markings. Pedestrian access and safety projects include provision of new or improved pedestrian pathways and sidewalks, lighting, new crosswalks and raised crosswalks, curb extensions, reductions of curb radii, and removal of obstacles or visual impediments. Signage and markings projects include stop signs, regulatory and speed limit signage, crosswalk markings, and lane markings. Traffic engineering and operations recommendations include addition of school crossing guards in two locations, and a “road diet” for Wilson Boulevard between Patrick Henry Drive and George Mason Boulevard.

Matrix of Recommendations

DES staff has separated the draft recommendations into a matrix format. The DRAFT matrix (*please see the document entitled “DRAFT Transportation Recommendations Matrix”*) identifies the location of each proposed improvement (“adjacent” to the school or “offsite”), and also identifies five levels of priority, one of which is checked for each recommended project. Priority levels range from “required” to “discouraged”, with high to low priority in between. Priority rankings were done based primarily upon the urgency of the proposed project, and secondarily upon availability or possibility of funding. County staff has identified three (3) draft recommendations as “required”, 18 as “high priority”, 12 as “medium priority”, and 15 as “low priority.” While staff supports most recommendations, there are five (5) with which County staff disagrees, and the staff recommendation is to "discourage" those. These discouraged projects are those which staff believes would not improve student pedestrian safety, or which are not necessary to improve traffic operations.

The matrix also includes a color-coding of improvements, to identify those which County staff believes are the responsibility of Arlington County government, those which could be the shared responsibility of Arlington County government and Arlington Public Schools, and those which staff do not believe would be Arlington County government’s responsibility. Additionally, County staff has edited or re-worded some of Toole’s recommendation language, to more closely conform to a County policy or practice. Any text in italics is intended to show a variation from or amendment to Toole’s recommendation.

Additional County Staff Recommendation

Finally, County staff has added one recommendation to the matrix: Arlington County DES staff recommends that an intersection at Wilson Boulevard and 8th Road North be created, to allow one way (inbound) vehicular traffic to enter the school site. The only vehicular traffic to be permitted at this intersection would be school buses and emergency vehicles. The completed intersection would also allow for pedestrian and bicycle crossing and access.

Cost Estimates and Timing

The staff assessment of the Toole recommendations does not include cost estimates, or any indication of when or how the proposals might be funded or implemented. Nor is a cost estimate or time frame for the Wilson and 8th Road North intersection project included.

Parking: The Zoning Ordinance Section 33 requires specific parking ratios for elementary schools based on student design capacity and square footage of facilities contained therein (There is also a Zoning Ordinance requirement addressing facilities parking based on fixed seating for potential public facilities. As any new school would be subject to the use permit process, such standards cannot be modified by the County Board and would be required to be met on site. The County Manager directed staff to review standards with respect to County policy and recommend amendments as warranted. Staff reviewed demand for parking and practices in nationwide jurisdictions.

Staff is recommending that standards for schools be updated to reflect demand for the primary usage of the sites. Staff is also recommending that flexibility for the County Board to modify standards be incorporated for elementary and middle schools and aquatics facilities. For example, through the use permit process, staff would be allowed to analyze the proposed parking based on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, off-site parking alternatives, area circulation/parking studies, etc. to determine what the optimal requirement would be for the specific project. Final action by the County Board will occur at the February 2013 County Board meeting.