

**PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING**

**DATE:** July 24, 2013  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m. Meeting  
**PLACE:** Williamsburg Middle School Library  
3600 N. Harrison Street

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

**Site Location:** New Elementary  
School #1 (Williamsburg Campus)  
3600 N. Harrison Street  
(RPC# 02-005-001)

**Information:**

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

**Architect:**  
Wyck Knox  
VMDO Architects  
200 East Market Street  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

**Staff Members:**

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**SUMMARY:** Arlington Public Schools (APS) has completed the Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) process, and is working through the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) processes for a new elementary school on the Williamsburg campus at 3600 N. Harrison Street. The School Board has endorsed concept and schematic designs, which resolved major issues such as building placement, general parking numbers, site circulation, building massing and architecture, and site design and landscaping. The use permit application for the project was submitted on July 15, and will be heard by the Transportation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the County Board at their respective September meetings. PFRC review of the project is concluding with discussion of the use permit application and draft conditions.

**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) 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. The two (2) projects chosen for the FY2013 prioritization included an addition to Ashlawn Elementary School for approximately 300 students, and a new elementary school at the Williamsburg Middle School campus to hold approximately 600 students.

At a joint work session with the School Board held on July 24, 2012, the County Board endorsed a planning process for the two school projects 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 County advisory commissions and the County Board.

The BLPC consists of schools staff, teachers, parents and PTA members, representation from community groups, and County staff. The PFRC consists of representatives of several commissions, including the Planning Commission, and the schools, as well as at-large members. It also includes project-specific members representing the Rock Spring, Yorktown, Williamsburg, and Franklin Area (Fairfax County) Civic Associations. APS has chosen VMDO Architects, a firm from Charlottesville, Virginia specializing in school design, to design the new school at Williamsburg and run the BLPC process. In addition, APS has contracted with Toole Design Group (“Toole”), a national planning and design firm with expertise in the “Safe Routes to School” movement, to provide transportation planning and engineering services for the project. Toole was recommended by Department of Environmental Services, Transportation Planning staff due to their expertise with multi-modal transportation options for schools.

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

Site: The site is bound on the north and east by N. Harrison Street and on the south by 36<sup>th</sup> Street N. The site borders Fairfax County in the northwest.

Zoning: The site is zoned [“S-3A” Special Districts](#). Schools are a permitted use provided a conditional use permit is obtained 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 Rock Spring Civic Association. Representatives from the civic association are involved in the BLPC and PFRC processes. In addition, representatives from the Yorktown and Williamsburg civic associations are represented on the BLPC and PFRC. A representative from the Franklin Area Citizens Association in Fairfax County is represented in the PFRC.



**DISCUSSION:** The School Board approved Concept 1.5, which established the general location of the building on the site, the general orientation, placement and height of the building, general circulation pattern, and layout of athletic fields. On May 16, 2013, the School Board approved Schematic drawings for the project, which established building massing, orientation, and architecture, and site design and landscaping. Summaries of the meetings are located on the [PFRC website](#). An application for a use permit for the new elementary school was submitted on July 15, 2013 to be heard by advisory bodies and the County Board at their September meetings.

The approximately 1.1 million square foot site is configured with the existing one-story middle school at the northeast corner of the site with ballfields to the west and an open, grassy area to the south at the corner of N. Harrison Street and 36<sup>th</sup> Street North. There is a steep grade change from the subject intersection to the school. The new elementary school will be designed for a capacity of 630 students and approximately 90,000 square feet total, including a 3,500 square foot cafeteria, a 5,100 square foot gymnasium, and a 2,800 square foot media center.

Arlington Public Schools is also considering adding to and expanding the existing Williamsburg Middle School by 300 students of design capacity, bringing the total campus student population at full build-out to 1,900 students. While the addition/expansion of the middle school is not part of the current CIP, it is anticipated that it will be considered for the next CIP. As a result, planning processes for the new elementary school have taken into account a future expansion of the middle school and its impacts on traffic, circulation, and site design. Additions to the Middle School are not proposed in the use permit application.

Principles of Civic Design: The PFRC developed a document in December 2008 entitled [Principles of Civic Design in Arlington](#) which provides guidelines on building siting, form, and design.

Building Height and Placement: The [Zoning Ordinance Section 1](#) defines building height in all zoning districts, with the exception of “R” districts, as being measured from average site elevation. Average site elevation pertains to the average of a series of spot elevation measurements taken at intervals along the periphery of the site. In the “S-3A” district, in which the Williamsburg campus is located, building height is a maximum of 45 feet. The average site elevation of the Williamsburg campus is 322.5 feet.

Setback standards for buildings in the “S-3A” district are as generally defined in the Zoning Ordinance Section 3.2.(6), Bulk, Coverage, and Placement Requirements. The standards require that all buildings within the district be sited no closer to the street centerline than 50 feet, and no closer to the property line or street right of way line than 25 feet. These requirements are not flexible and cannot be modified by the County Board through the Use Permit process.

Toole Design Group Transportation Study: On November 28, 2012 Toole Design Group presented the final draft of the Williamsburg Campus School Transportation Plan. The Plan includes an analysis of current conditions at the middle school, as well as an analysis of the transportation impacts associated with the addition of a 600 student elementary school and a 300 student addition/expansion of the middle school. The study takes into account staggered bell times for the elementary and middle schools and the parent drop-off located at the southwestern portion of the site. Toole studied three separate time periods: elementary school arrival, middle school arrival, and middle school dismissal. The study provides recommendations for infrastructure improvements, transportation demand management strategies, parking, and site circulation. A copy of the full Plan is available on the [BLPC web site](#).

The Transportation study made the following key findings:

- Peak traffic impacts only occur during a 15-20 minute period during the arrival and departure times for each school, not during the entire hour studied.
- The arrival period associated with the expanded WMS has the most impact on the adjacent roadway network compared to the other periods studied. This period was then used to analyze possible improvements to the transportation network.
- The existing transportation system can generally support the expansion of the middle school and in turn support the lighter load caused by the smaller elementary school on the campus.
- Striping and signal improvements are recommended at intersection of Williamsburg Blvd. and N. Harrison Street.
- A left-turn restriction from northbound Harrison Street to westbound 36<sup>th</sup> Street is recommended during the morning arrival period for the schools.
- Pedestrian improvements are recommended at Williamsburg Blvd. and N. Kensington St. with the addition of a HAWK style pedestrian signal or possible full intersection signalization.

Parking: Toole Design Group, as part of their overall transportation study, developed recommendations for parking specific to the Williamsburg campus. The study examined parking demand for school employees by examining current student:staff ratios at Williamsburg Middle

School, as well as comparable elementary schools. Toole then projected the number of spaces needed to accommodate staff for the new elementary school and the expansion of the middle school using the current ratios described above. The recommended number for total campus parking for Williamsburg is 274 parking spaces, providing for 57 of the total spaces to be located on street along the campus' frontage on N. Harrison Street and 36<sup>th</sup> Street N.

The Zoning Ordinance requires that 100 spaces be provided for the new elementary school, and 307 spaces be provided at final campus build-out. APS has committed to provide parking based on the requirements for the entire campus. The following summarizes APS' proposal for parking at the Williamsburg Campus after construction of the new elementary school (but before expansion of the middle school):

- 111 spaces existing on campus
- 92 new spaces in new ES lot
- 28 new spaces in south lot
- **231 spaces** on campus after NES construction.
- Request modification from **258 spaces to 231 spaces – remainder located on street**

The proposal will require a modification to parking standards by the County Board, subject to [ACZO Section 33.C.4.f](#). The modification will include reducing the required ratio of parking spaces provided to accommodate spaces on street.

Facilities and Recreation: Concept 1.5 preserves two (2) irrigated athletic fields, a combination baseball/athletic field, and a small practice athletic field. Fields are proposed to be constructed with irrigated Bermuda grass turf. Tennis and basketball courts are preserved. Coordination of joint County use of facilities will be discussed during the use permit review.

Use Permit: The final filing date for the use permit application was July 15, 2013, for public hearings in September, 2013. The Zoning Division is currently reviewing the filing to ensure all required information is included. Once accepted by Zoning, the use permit application and associated plans will be available for viewing by the public at the **Zoning Division, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1000**. The proposed use permit is scheduled to be reviewed by the Transportation Commission on September 5th, the Planning Commission on September 9th, and the County Board on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The following are the outstanding issues that will be resolved during the use permit review:

- **Transportation Matrix:** As part of the “*Williamsburg Middle School and New Elementary School #1 – School Transportation Plan*” Toole Design Group performed a non-motorized assessment for existing and future travel routes to the campus. Based on the assessment Toole Design Group developed approximately 50 recommendations to improve non-motorized access to the school. The improvements include sidewalk enhancements, changes to striping and marking, bicycle enhancements, and changes to intersection geometry. Staff has reviewed the proposed improvements and will work with Schools to implement the improvements as appropriate. To help inform the use permit review process, staff has developed a matrix assessing the potential cost of and prioritizing the improvements. As the

improvements cover the entire campus, staff has also identified improvements that may be implemented as part of the Elementary School #1 (ES1) project or later as part of the planned expansion to Williamsburg Middle School (WMS). This draft matrix will be updated further as more detailed project costs are developed for high priority improvements.

- **Transportation Demand Management:** APS will be required to submit a transportation demand management (TDM) plan for the project in conjunction with the use permit application. It will identify TDM measures that will be implemented by APS to encourage alternate modes of transportation to the site by students and employees. In addition, it will provide justification for the proposed modification to parking standards to build fewer employee parking spaces on site than required by the Zoning Ordinance.
- **Field Design and Phasing:** APS is proposing to reconstruct two (2) irrigated Bermuda Grass fields, and a combination soccer/baseball field in the western portion of the site. Staff is currently in discussions with APS on a plan for phasing construction with the aim of making a certain number of fields available for use during construction activities. Field design will be reviewed by the County commensurate with the Landscape Plan.
- **Indoor Community Amenities:** Staff is in discussions with APS on providing several indoor amenities to be publicly accessible by the community. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Public access to indoor restrooms
  - DPR storage equipment
  - A full Middle School sized gym
  - In-ground volleyball system
  - Improvements to basketball courts
- **Use Permit Conditions:** Use Permit conditions govern how the project will be constructed and provide site specific mitigation measures to address a number of potential adverse impacts that arise from construction projects. The following are a sampling of major issues regulated by use permit conditions:
  - Construction phasing
  - Tree protection
  - Construction trailers
  - Temporary circulation during construction
  - Community outreach during construction
  - C&D waste
  - Sustainable design elements
  - Coordination of Site-Civil Plans and Landscape Plans
  - Lighting Plan
  - Bicycle storage

- Façade treatment
  - Utility undergrounding
  - Transportation & Parking Management Plans
- **Other:** Several additional issues are being negotiated internally: undergrounding of aerial utilities, LEED Certification and other sustainability standards, extent of streetscape improvements, and shared use of facilities by APS and the County.

Scheduling: The following chart displays the next steps in the public review process for the project:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Transportation Commission	9/5/2013	County Board Chambers (2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300)
Planning Commission	9/9/2013	County Board Chambers
County Board	9/21/2013	County Board Chambers