

PUBLIC FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: February 19, 2014
TIME: 7:00 p.m. Meeting (McKinley and Ashlawn ES)
PLACE: McKinley Elementary School
1030 N McKinley Road

STAFF COORDINATOR: Sophia Fisher, 703-228-0771

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

Information:

Applicant:
John Chadwick
Arlington County School Board
1426 N. Quincy Street
Arlington, Virginia 22207

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

Staff Members:

Marco Rivero	CPHD – Planning	703.228.3572	mrivero@arlingtonva.us
Dennis Sellin	DES – Planning	703.228.4805	dsellin@arlingtonva.us

SUMMARY: Arlington Public Schools (APS) is proceeding forward with a use permit amendment to address discrepancies between the County Board approved and post-use permit approved tree protection and landscape plans. The amendment may include proposing changes to existing condition language for “Public Facilities Use” and others as necessary to achieve the proposed development plan. County staff is collaborating interdepartmentally to review the use permit amendment documents, as well as address any comments/questions related to the progress of the North Montague Street ramp design and the revised environmental assessment submitted by APS for this project. The use permit amendment will be considered by the County Board at the March 15 or 18 County Board meeting (final date to be determined).

BACKGROUND: On May 18, 2013, the County Board approved two (2) use permits: (1) U-1217-56-1 for an elementary school addition approximately 26,160 gross square feet with modifications to parking regulations to permit the placement of required parking spaces at an off-site location, to reduce the required off-street parking, and other modifications as necessary to approve the proposed addition; and (2) U-3363-13-1 for secondary parking at the Dominion Hills Area Recreation Association (DHARA) parking lot for Ashlawn Elementary School. The project increases the school’s total gross square footage to approximately 96,000 square feet, and the student capacity to almost 700 students.

During this review process, the Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) held several meetings to discuss the conceptual, schematic, and final use permit designs. 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.

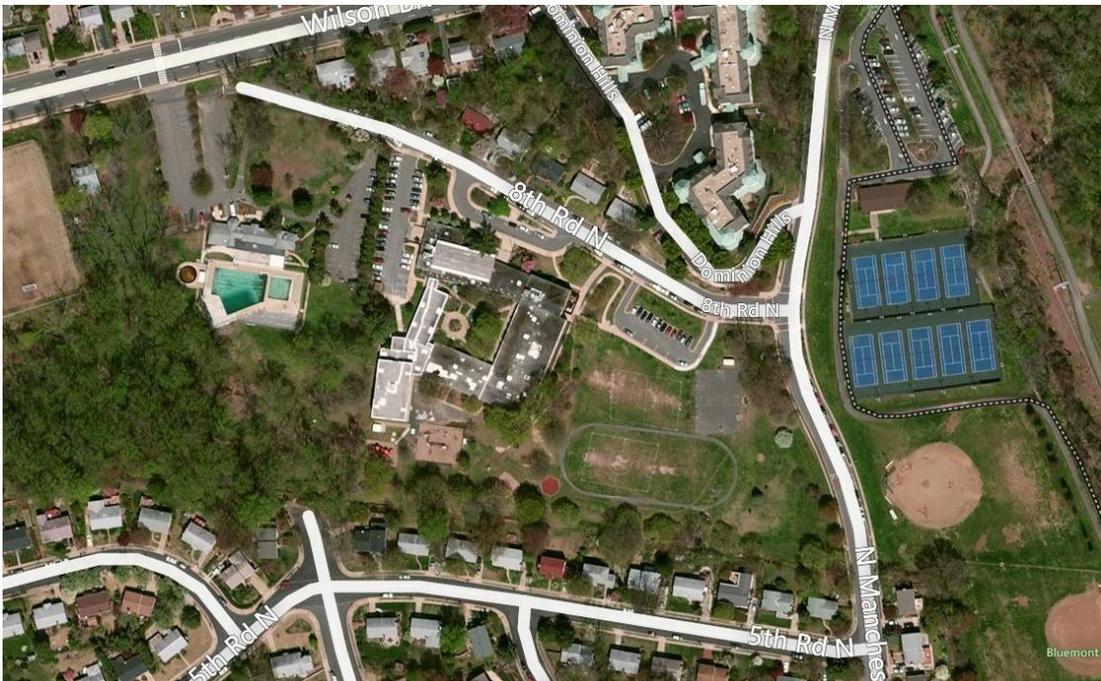
The following provides additional information about the site and surroundings:

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 Article 4, Section §4.1.

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 sixteen (16) meetings as of the date of this report, with the most recent occurring on January 7, 2014 (three (3) of those meetings occurred after the use permit was approved by the County Board on May 18, 2013). To date there have been seven (7) meetings of the PFRC, which were held on September 26, 2012, October 17, 2012, November 27, 2012, January 15, 2013, February 20, 2013, March 13, 2013, and April 17, 2013. All meetings occurred prior to final County Board action of the use permits associated with the Ashlawn Elementary School renovation/addition. 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.

Process Since County Board Approval on May 18, 2013:

After use permit action by the County Board, Arlington Public Schools (APS) and County staff met to discuss post-use permit plan submission, which shows what was approved by the County Board and reflects any changes made at the Board meeting. This meeting occurred in early August 2013 and soon after APS submitted post-use permit plans for review. The plans showed an approved water retention facility located on the southeast corner of the site. Furthermore, there were several trees that were identified to be removed which were not part of the Board approved, conceptual tree protection plan. Some of those trees were located at the site of the approved water retention facility, near the approved North Montague Street ramp, and in other areas of the site. When County staff signed-off on the post-use permit plans in September 2013, staff did not realize the discrepancy with the County Board approved conceptual plans.

Staff acknowledges the discrepancies and advised APS to file for a use permit amendment to mitigate the issues related to tree protection and future landscaping at the site. Condition #4.b. specifies that “trees designated to be saved on the tree protection plan, or those specified to be saved by the approved use permit and shown on any filing in connection with this case, will be protected...”. Any changes to the County Board approved plans related to tree protection and landscaping must be reconsidered by the County Board. APS and County staff met in January 2014 to discuss use permit amendment submission requirements, deadlines for the proposed application and plan submissions, and timing for County Board consideration. APS submitted a use permit amendment application and materials at the appropriate deadlines for County Board consideration at the March 15, 2014 regular meeting or March 18, 2014 recess meeting.

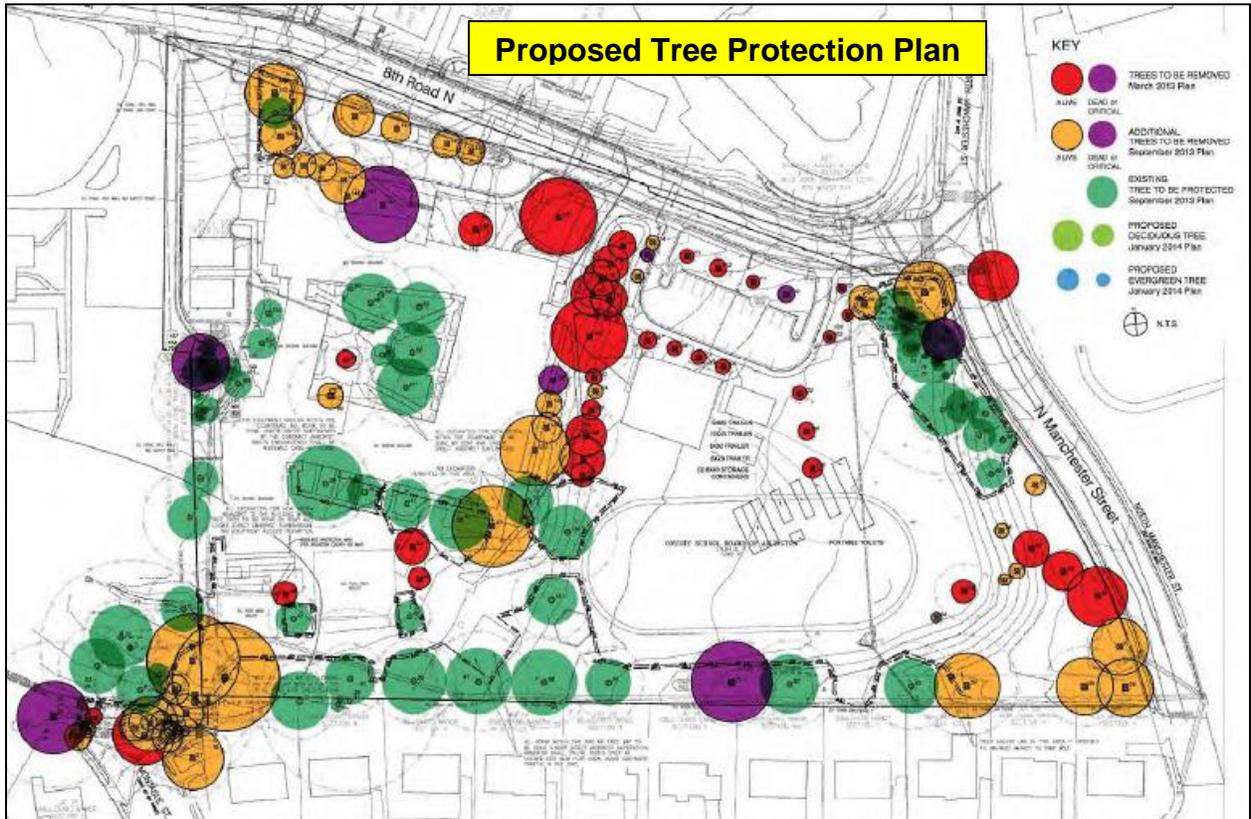
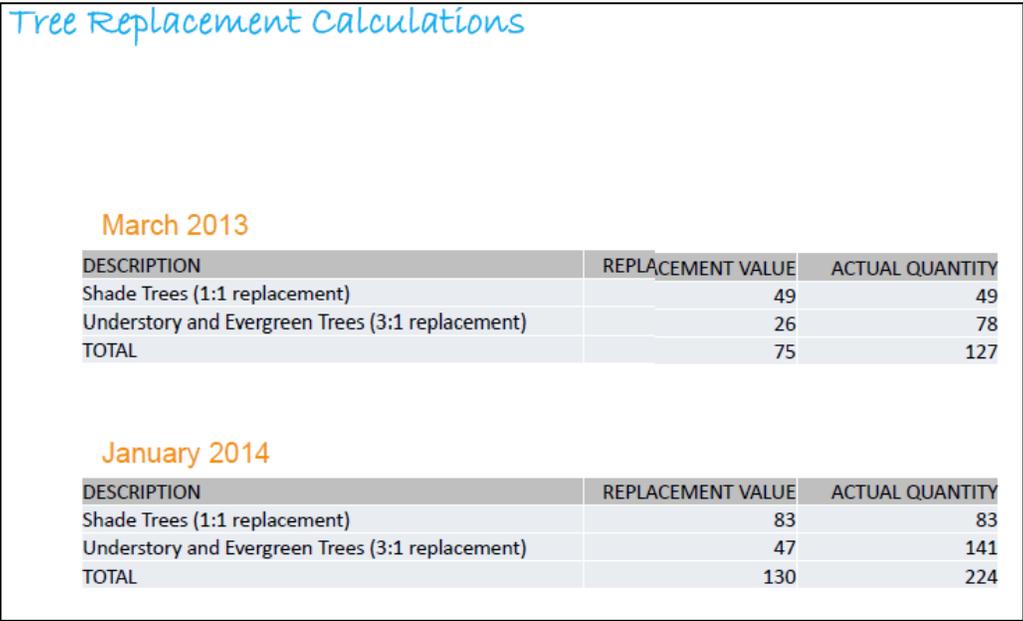
County staff is currently evaluating the application and plans interdepartmentally and provided comments back to APS staff for their consideration. On January 30, 2014, a community meeting was held at Ashlawn Elementary School to discuss the proposed use permit amendment to the approved use permit plans. APS staff will be considering the various questions and comments received at this meeting as part of their plan evaluation.

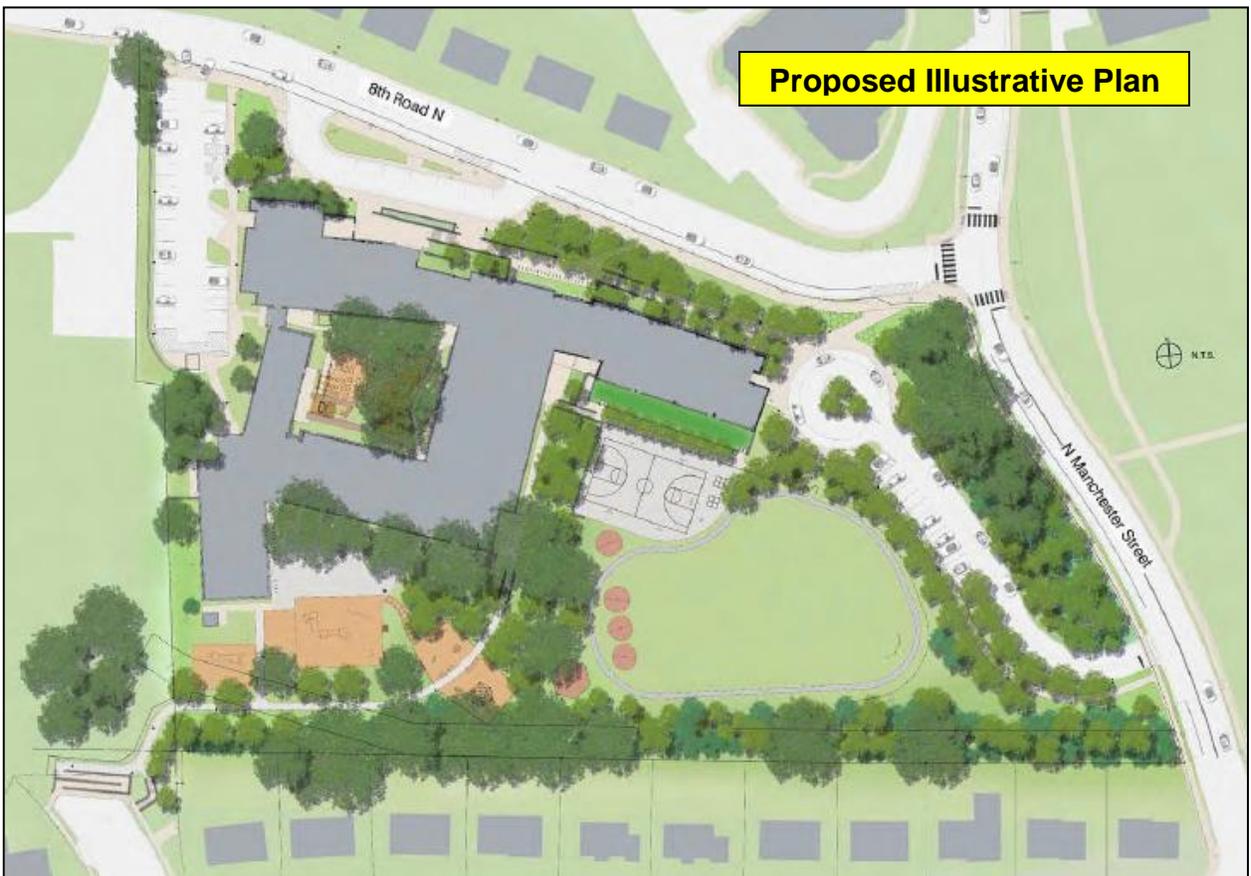
Use Permit Amendment Submission Graphics & Renderings:

The use permit amendment being considered consists of two (2) parts:

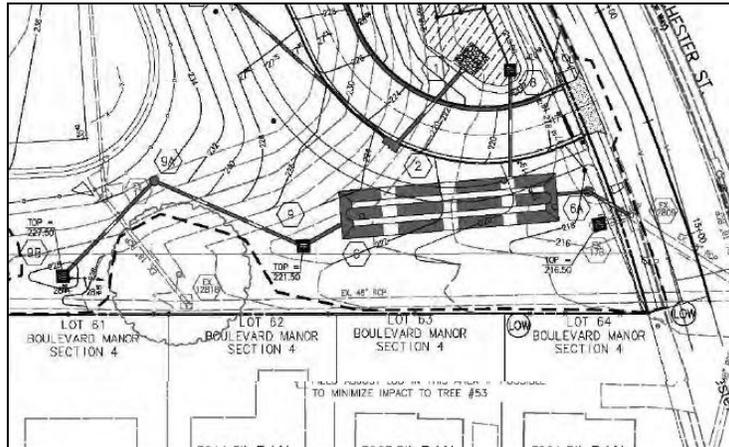
1. The revised tree protection plan (now developed by a certified arborist; the plans show more detailed information about tree conditions) and landscape plan which shows a total of 94 trees to be removed (compared to 54 trees in May 2013) and 224 new trees to be planted (compared to 127 trees in May 2013). When compared to the May 2013 approved use permit plans showing 127 new trees, a total of 97 additional trees are proposed to be planted on site as part of this amendment (224 total trees).
2. Amend Condition #58 of the use permit for “Public Facilities Use” identifying alternate restoration procedures for the existing grass field area and procedures for acquiring additional off-site parking at neighboring parks (particularly Bluemont and Powhatan Parks).

The following graphics show the proposed tree replacement calculations, tree protection plan and landscaping:

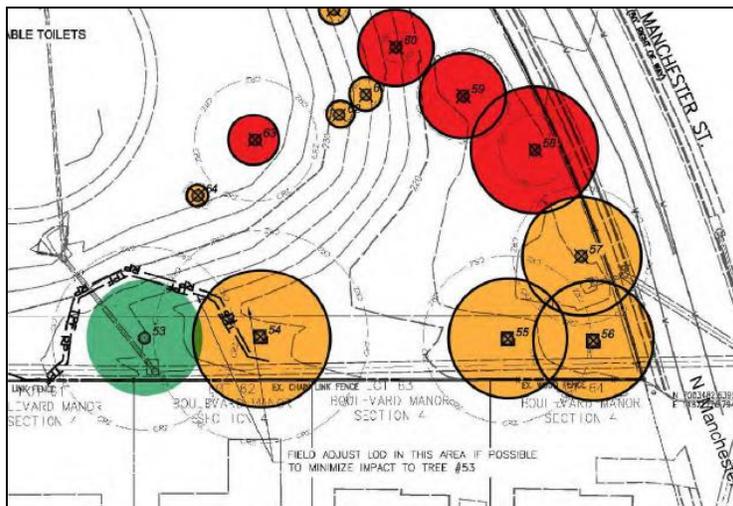




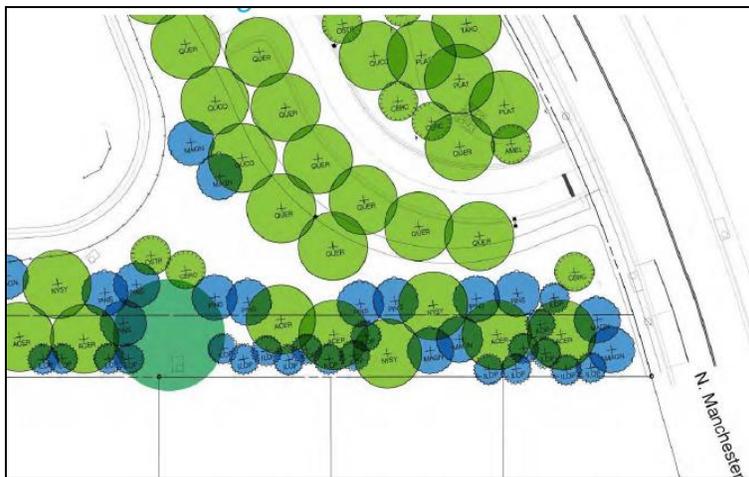
Water Retention Facility Area



Water retention facility will be underground.

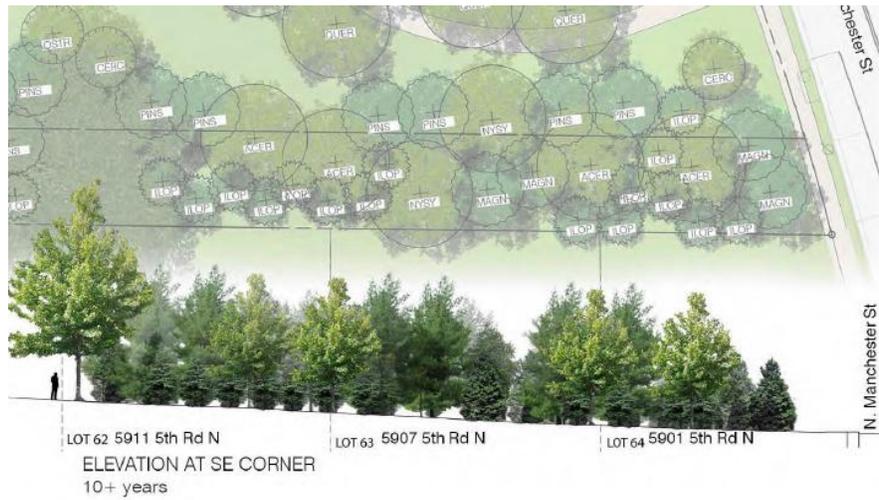
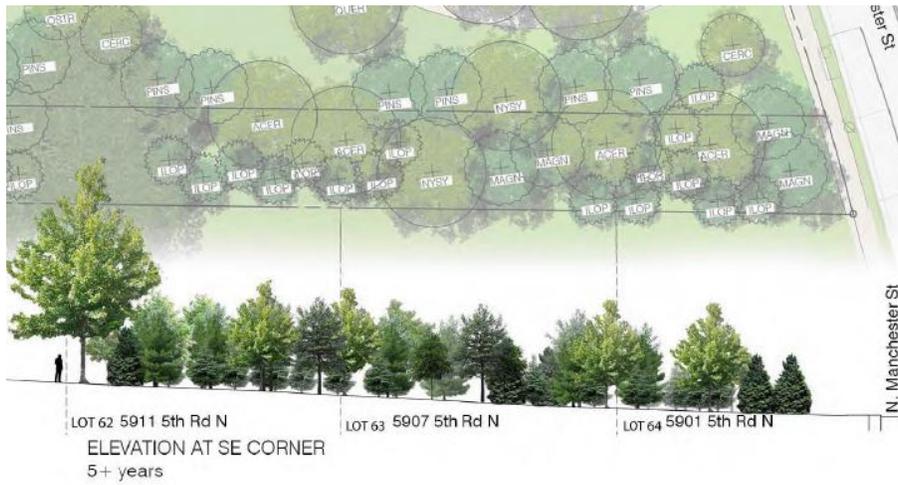
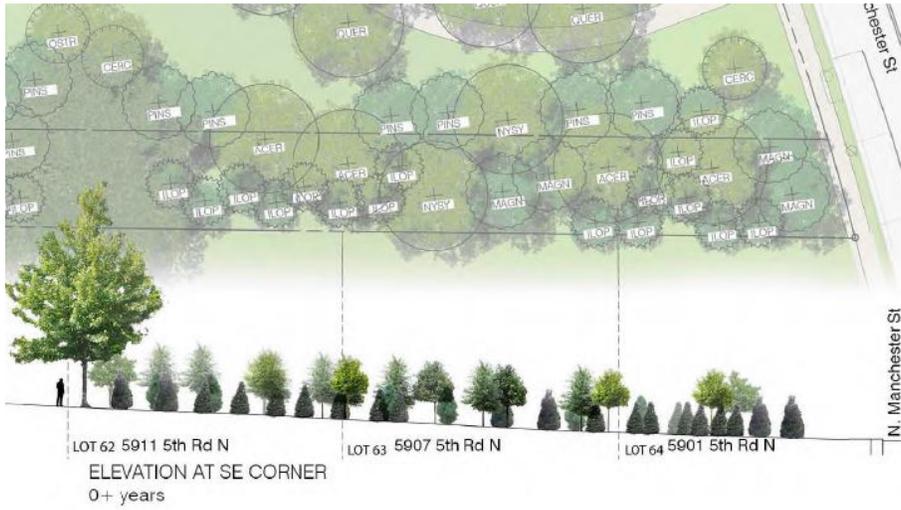


Red: Trees to be removed from May 2013; **Yellow:** Additional Trees to be removed per UPA (or already removed);
Green: Trees to be protected.



Green: Existing tree; **Light Green:** Proposed deciduous trees; **Blue:** Proposed evergreen trees.

Planting Cross Sections of Southeast Corner (1, 5, 10 years)



North Montague Street Ramp:

County staff has reviewed the revised civil engineering plans for the proposed North Montague Street ramp. There was previous concern that the proposed connecting ramp and staircase from North Montague Street (at 5th Road North) into the school grounds was insufficient to meet accessibility requirements. Some of the issues included the ramp being too narrow to allow adequate passage, and the handrails did not extend beyond the ramp and/or staircase far enough to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. However, since the most recent revision, these issues have been resolved. A slightly wider ramp (to meet the 6 foot width requirement as specified within the use permit conditions) and handrails that extend beyond the foot of the staircase and/or ramp are included.

Revised Environmental Assessment:

APS informed the Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) regarding their proposed changes to the Ashlawn plans at January 27, 2014 E2C2 meeting. The E2C2 is currently in the process of reviewing the revised environmental assessment for Ashlawn Elementary School. The Commission plans to discuss this item at the upcoming February 24, 2014 E2C2 meeting. On-going public comment and feedback continues to be sent to the Commission from interested residents. The E2C2 expects to receive additional commentary/feedback at the February 24, 2014 meeting and will discuss the revised environmental assessment in more detail. The E2C2 will submit a formal letter to the County Board prior to the March 2014 County Board meetings.

Next Steps

The next steps in the process include:

- Continued analysis and review of the use permit amendment by County staff.
- March 15 or 18, 2014 – County Board Meeting (exact date to be determined).