Subject: TLSE-2018-0008, The North Star School at CS Monroe Property

Staff Contact: Christopher Murphy, AICP, Senior Planning Project Manager

Applicant: Loudoun County Public Schools
21000 Education Court
Ashburn, VA 20148

Applicant’s Representative: Sara Howard O’Brien
Land Management Supervisor
Division of Planning Services
Loudoun County Public Schools
Sara.HowardOBrien@lcps.org


Planning Commission Critical Action Date: November 12, 2019

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval subject to the conditions provided on page 13 of this report.

Acceptance Date: August 15, 2018

Acceptance Modifications/Waivers: None

Web Link: A comprehensive listing of all application documents is found here:
Suggested Motions:

Approval
I move that Special Exception application TLSE 2018-0008, The North Star School at CS Monroe Property, be forwarded to the Town Council with a recommendation of approval subject to the conditions of approval as enumerated in the September 5, 2019 Planning Commission Post-Public Hearing Staff Report. This recommendation is based on the Approval Criteria of Zoning Ordinance Section 3.4.12 have been satisfied, and that the proposal would serve the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

-Or-

Denial
I move that Special Exception application TLSE 2018-0008, The North Star School at CS Monroe Property, be forwarded to the Town Council with a recommendation of denial on the basis that the Approval Criteria of Zoning Ordinance Section 3.4.12 have not been satisfied due to the following reasons: ____________________________________________.

-Or-

Alternate Motion
I move that ____________________________________________.

Public Hearing: Pursuant to Town of Leesburg Zoning Ordinance (TLZO) Section 3.1.9 Public Hearing Notices a duly advertised public hearing was held on August 1, 2019. A summary of that meeting is provided below.

Applicant’s Presentation: The Applicant noted that pursuant to LCPS protocols, they mailed notices to over 400 properties in the surrounding vicinity of the Subject Property, far exceeding the minimums required by the TLZO. In addition to mailings and project information pages on the LCPS website, three separate community meetings were held for the benefit of informing neighbors of the project.

The Applicant explained the proposed school will serve as the new location for the Alternative Education Program presently located in the former Frederick Douglass High School on East Market Street. The Alternative Education Program is a voluntary program for LCPS middle school and high school students and provides a nontraditional setting including smaller class sizes ranging from 10 – 12 students each. Last year’s enrollment in the Alternative Education Program numbered approximately 160 students. The enrollment numbers provided on the Plat are projected enrollment numbers and not Day 1 enrollment numbers when this facility opens for the 2020/2021 school year as planned.
In addition to the Alternative Education Program, the new facility will also house LCPS’ LPN - Licensed Practical Nursing Program and the Adult Education Programs encompassing GED, ESL, professional enhancement and general interest courses during daytime and evening hours.

The Applicant reviewed the proposed site layout details including improvements to the site entrance, new parking facility, parking/site lighting, landscaping and buffering, building setbacks, and building architecture. While discussing required frontage improvements to Childrens Center Road, the potential for a Variation from the applicable Subdivision and Land Development Regulations (SLDR) requirement to provide full frontage improvements along the entire length of the property was raised.

Public Comments: Four members of the public addressed the Commission during the public hearing. Another three residents submitted written correspondence. Of these seven, only one household expressly objected to the proposed use. The remaining comments focused primarily on concerns relating to student drivers and students parking off site in adjacent residential neighborhoods. Particular concerns expressed by the public included students leaving trash, rude behavior, unsafe driving behavior and noise in their neighborhoods. Some cited the LCPS parking fee as a cause for pushing student drivers off school property and into their neighborhoods where parking is free on public streets.

Commission Questions/Comments: The Commission discussed the issue of students parking off school property and in residential neighborhoods. The Commission viewed the parking fee charged by LCPS as a possible root cause of that issue. To this end, the Commission asked LCPS staff to look into whether this fee could be modified (reduced) or waived outright for The North Star School. When asked, LCPS staff affirmed that this same issue is experienced at other LCPS high schools in the urbanized areas of the county.

In relation to the off-site parking issue, the Commission discussed the possibility of not requiring the frontage improvements along Childrens Center Road that include on-street parking, a sidewalk and a crosswalk across Childrens Center Road leading to/from Wild Turkey Way in Parkview Estates. The Subdivision and Land Development Regulations (SLDR) Section 4.02(g) establishes the requirement that full frontage improvements, including curb/gutter and sidewalk, be constructed along the frontage of a property when a site plan is submitted. Because of specific conditions along the Property frontage, it is impractical to complete segments of these frontage improvements at the present time. The SLDR establishes the Variation process in Sec 6.03 whereby the Planning Commission may modify or waive specific improvements otherwise required by the SLDR when found to be impractical.

The Commission was satisfied by the enhancements planned for the buffer yards and landscape screening between the school and its neighboring properties. Buffer yards are being widened, trees are being preserved when and where possible, and denser plantings are being installed for more effective screening of the school from adjacent residential
properties. One outstanding concern of the Commission dealt with site lighting. The Commission asked the Applicant to consider lowering pole-mounted lights to a maximum of 20 feet versus the Zoning Ordinance maximum 25 feet as proposed.

On architectural design, the Commission was unanimous in its preference for the first design submitted for review (December 13, 2018) as enhanced by staff instead of the designs submitted for the public hearing and dated March 10, 2019. The Commission expressed its concerns that the March 10, 2019 design did not comport well with the traditional architecture found in Leesburg and sought after by the Town Plan within the Central Land Use Planning Sector, and was not sufficiently compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**Applicant’s Response/Revisions:** In a letter dated August 19, 2019, the Applicant submitted responses to the major issues raised by the Planning Commission during the public hearing. Those responses are provided below in italics followed by staff’s comments on the responses immediately after each.

1. **Student Parking Fees:**

   Applicant’s Response: At the August 1, 2019 public hearing, The Planning Commission requested that LCPS consider eliminating the parking fees at the proposed school (The North Star School). LCPS staff advised that parking fees are a School Board policy and that the matter would need to be presented to the School Board.

   The annual fee for parking is $200.00. School Board Regulation 4020, Student Fees and Charges, states that the student fees and charges schedule is provided for “consistent charging of student fees throughout the school division” and “no fees or charges may be assessed or collected that either have not been approved by the School Board or listed in the Policy and [...] Regulation 4020.” The Student fee schedule also provides that “Fees and charges will be reduced or waived for economically disadvantaged students and students whose families are undergoing economic hardships and are unable to pay including, but not limited to, families receiving unemployment benefits or public assistance such as Temporary Assistance by Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, families qualifying for the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program, Supplemental Security Income or Medicaid; foster families caring for children in foster care; or families that are homeless under the McKinney Vento Act.”

   The Planning Commission’s request was brought before the School Board’s Finance and Facilities Committee (Finance Committee) on August 13, 2019. The Finance Committee agreed to evaluate student parking fees. The Finance Committee requested additional information from LCPS staff and indicated that they would like to review this topic and ultimately forward to the full School Board for discussion during this year’s budget process.
Staff Comment: Staff notes that the amount of parking proposed with The North Star School exceeds minimum parking space requirement of TLZO Article 11 by 26% based on LCPS’s own experience with parking demand. As a result, the North Star School should not generate more students looking for off-site parking on the residential streets in the adjoining neighborhoods unless students choose to park off site in order to avoid the LCPS parking decal fee. Any action by the LCPS School Board to reduce the cost for parking permits will help guarantee fewer student drivers looking for such off-site parking. In an effort to address the off-site parking issue system-wide, the LCPS has created a “Project Let’s Go” Task Force charged with finding different ways to reduce traffic at schools. The “Hop on the Bus” effort is geared towards promoting bus ridership in student populations as part of this overall effort to reduce vehicle traffic generated by schools.

Staff notes that how the Planning Commission decides the variation request may also have an impact on the potential for students to park in the adjacent park View Estates and Ashton Downs neighborhoods as discussed below.

2. Variation Request:

Applicant’s Response: LCPS has filed a variation application to modify the frontage improvements on Childrens Church Road. The reason for the request is to address the physical limitations associated with the Bypass Bridge located just to the west of the property and the utilities, stormwater improvements, and mature trees situated to the east. More specifically, the request seeks to reduce the length of the road widening and sidewalk extension to recognize the existing constraints and to provide a cash-in-lieu for improvements not constructed.

At the August 1st public hearing for the Special Exception Application (TLSE 2018-0008), public speakers expressed concern for the widening of Childrens Center Road and the provision of the sidewalk suggesting that neither was necessary. The Planning Commission determined that a public hearing should be held for the variation request.

LCPS is willing to construct the modified improvements or provide cash-in-lieu as may be recommended by the Planning Commission.

Staff Comment: The Department of Plan Review has prepared a public hearing staff report to address the Variation requested. (Attachment 3) The report presents two separate options for the improvements to Childrens Center Road for the Commission’s consideration:

- “Option A” would limit the frontage improvements to curb and gutter only, without on-street parking, sidewalk or cross walk.

- “Option B” is essentially the same variation request presented at the August 1, 2019 Commission meeting that provides full frontage improvements (curb, gutter, sidewalk) with on-street parking along a segment of the south side of Childrens Center Road opposite of Wild Turkey Way with one major change: the crosswalk
link across Childrens Center Road to the Park View Estates neighborhood has been deleted.

Of these options, staff recommends “Option B”. Staff believes that the issue of keeping students from parking off of school property may not be completely solved by a possible reduction in the LCPS parking fees. By providing at least 15 public on-street parking spaces on Childrens Center Road adjacent to the school gives students an option to not park on site to avoid the decal fee without parking in a residential neighborhood. If these spaces are eliminated, students avoiding the fee will be more likely to park in neighborhoods because they have fewer alternatives. That is, Variation “Option A” is likely to exacerbate the parking in neighborhoods issue because it decreases the amount of available public parking outside of the Park View Estate neighborhood. “Option B” has been modified to eliminate the crosswalk to Wild Turkey Way, thereby eliminating a potential encouragement for students to park off site in Park View Estates. The sidewalk along school frontage on Childrens Center Road is retained to provide a safe and clean access for individuals who park along the road; without it, a path would be worn in the grass strip along the parking or people would walk in the road to get to and from the spaces.

Some Commissioners expressed the desire to maintain the existing trees on the Property along the Childrens Center Road frontage near the bridge over the Bypass. These trees will be left in place if “Option A” is chosen. Under “Option B”, the grading necessary to allow the widening of the road for on-street parking and adjacent sidewalk will require those existing trees be removed. Restorative landscaping would be required as part of the site plan for the frontage improvements.

The widening of Childrens Center Road is considered by staff to be inevitable. “Option A” only delays this widening, and does not prevent it. “Option B” will allow most of the ultimate improvements to Childrens Center Road be completed along with the development of the overall site. This will result in economies to the project. It will also allow for most of the ultimate landscape screen along the Childrens Center Road frontage to be planted with the initial redevelopment of the site and left undisturbed for the remainder of the trees’ viability. Whereas under “Option A” existing trees and new landscaping will be provided in those areas on the Property shown on the Landscape Plan sheet. However, when the ultimate widening of Childrens Center Road takes place in the near future, all existing trees, and most likely many of the new tree planted with the construction of the site, will be removed. This could result in up to five or ten years of new tree growth lost and reset to year one.

3. Architecture:
Applicant’s Response: The Planning Commission and Staff have expressed that the proposed May 10, 2019 building design is too modern. It was requested that consideration be given to a more traditional approach. The Planning Commission directed the Applicant to the H-1 guidelines as well as the recommendations (annotated sketches) provided by staff.
Since the August 1st public hearing LCPS has worked with our architectural consultant to redesign the building concept. The revision focuses on contextual references to historical elements found within the Town of Leesburg. Existing buildings recommended by staff were revisited and concepts from those buildings applied. The Staff recommendation to include “a more pronounced façade offering a clear three-part foundation – middle, cap, tripartite arrangement” is provided. The incorporation of columns, accentuated recesses, and detailed design elements combine to present a traditional approach in keeping with the H-1 guidelines. The revised design balances massing and traditional materials with the required functionality of the school building and its program arrangement. Variation in materials, including red brick, window openings, and the introduction of an arcade result in the desired human scale. (Attachment 2)

LCPS hopes that the revised design meets the Planning Commission and staff expectations. We will continue to work with staff as we refine the revised building concept. Building elevations will be available prior to the September 5, 2019 meeting.

Staff Comment: In staff’s opinion, the architectural renderings and materials presented in Revised Conceptual Design Presentation, (Revised Concept Design) prepared by Stantec, and dated August 22, 2019 (Attachment 2) are much improved over the design dated March 10, 2019 and presented at the public hearing as explained below.

Town Plan Central Planning Area Objective 1 recommends, “[E]nsure development reinforces the desired character of the Central Planning Area”, i.e., the pattern of the Old and Historic District as a guide for new development. (Town Plan pg. 6-11).

Turning to the recommendation of the Central Sector objectives to model new construction from the H-1 Design Guidelines, staff pointed out how the H-1 Guidelines strive to achieve human-scaled architecture for large institutional buildings through techniques to reduce massing. Those specific techniques that appear to be most effective in the present case are found in the H-1 Guidelines, Chapter VII.F Massing and Complexity of Form. How the present design addresses each is explained below:

a. **Vary the surface planes of the elevations.** Varying the surface planes of a large building may be a way to make structures more consistent with the design of smaller historic buildings. The differences in surface planes may be as little a one or as great as ten feet.

Details illustrated on pages 6-8 of the Revised Concept Design show the varied levels of depth added within each surface plane of the building façade.
The effect is also illustrated on Pages 4 and 5 showing each individual building façade with the addition of shadows created by the architectural variations added to this latest conceptual architectural design.
The changes presented in the Revised Concept Design more closely reflect architectural elements found in traditional styles throughout town and presented as examples in previous staff reviews.

b. **Break up the roofline.** *Breaking up the roofline of larger buildings into smaller components may help reduce perceived mass of large buildings*

Although the height of the rooflines is at a continuous height, except for where it is punctuated by the gymnasium on the west side of the building, the breaks created in the roofline at the entrances are deep enough to break up the roofline into smaller components. There is such great degree of depth created in this way that the building does not present itself as a monolithic box typical of commercial buildings of similar size in the town’s B-2 and B-3 Districts. This concept is illustrated on pages 2 and 3 of the Revised Concept Design showing perspectives of the north face of the building from two different angles.
c. **Use bay divisions on the elevations.** Create bay divisions on the façade of large buildings to allow the building to reflect the massing of smaller-scaled historic structures.

Bay divisions on the Revised Concept Design are more clearly defined as discussed above, and less drastically within the individual building planes. These bays are established by “columns” in the facades running from the base of the building extending up to the cornice/parapet at the top. The various styles of columns created in this latest design are illustrated in detail on Page 8 of the Revised Concept Design.
An interesting architectural feature has been added to the portion of the building where the 2nd floor overhangs the 1st floor by the creation of an arcade.

Staff views the arcade as an appropriate architectural element that is consistent with traditional designs found in town. In fact, the building
elements established as part of the Crescent Design District include arcades.

d. **Vary the materials.** Use variations in materials, textures, patterns, colors, and detail to reduce the visual impact of the mass of large buildings.

Staff acknowledges the materials listed on Page 6 of the Revised Concept Design are of the type and quality that is appropriate and consistent with traditional materials found throughout town.

![Figure 7: Materials](image)

**4. Height of Lighting:**

Applicant’s Response: A request was made for the parking lot lighting to be lower than 25 feet. The Special Exception Plan cites the Town Ordinance and provides that “light poles in parking lots shall not exceed a maximum height of 25 feet including the base.” (Reference Notes 1 and 4 on Sheet 11 of 20). The specifications for LCPS parking lot lights provide a base of 30 inches and a lamp pole height of 17 feet above the base for a combined height of 19 and a half feet above ground elevation. The proposed lights are under 20 feet in height. Lights will be LED, full cut-off, fully shielded and aimed downward.

Staff Comment: TLZO Sec. 12.11.3.E limits pole mounted lights to no higher than 25 feet above the ground including the base. The Applicant has explained that the heights of the proposed pole mounted lights will be less than 20 feet in height. Staff is of the
opinion that these lower standards combined with full cut-off fixtures that are fully shielded are not likely to cause impacts on adjacent properties caused by glare. A condition has been added to specify light poles shall be no more than 20 feet in height as shown on the Special Exception Plat.

5. Refuse Cans:
Applicant’s Response: For safety and security reasons, new schools are not provided with outside refuse cans. As noted at the public hearing LCPS staff will implement a “good neighbor” program at The North Star School which will include encouraging students to be respectful of our neighbors and school property, including placing trash in receptacles.

Staff Comment: There are no applicable provisions of the TLZO that require trash can be provided with this application. The safety protocols of LCPS to not install trash cans on or near school properties is a legitimate method for assuring dangerous devices are not hidden where they can do harm to students and/or school properties.

LCPS is mindful of the need to protect neighborhoods adjacent to its schools. In addition to the bus ridership promotion efforts intended to reduce students driving to school, LCPS is also instituting etiquette training/behavior awareness training (“good neighbor” program) district-wide. Through these efforts, LCPS hopes to limit/eliminate conflicts between students and residents, and end impacts on neighborhoods from students producing trash, noise, poor behavior, etc.

Findings for Approval:

A. The use is consistent with the goals and objectives of Land Use Policy type Major Institutional found in Chapter 6 of the Town Plan; and

B. Town Plan Land Use General Objectives 11 and 12 encourage infill development, and institutional uses, respectively, when found to be compatible with the character of the existing development in the vicinity, and;

C. The use complies with applicable regulations of the R-4 Single-Family Residential Zoning District provided in TLZO Sec. 5.4 and;

D. The proposal would serve the public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice.

Recommended Conditions of Approval: Zoning Ordinance Section 3.4.14 grants Town Council the authority to impose conditions and safeguards deemed necessary for the protection of general welfare and individual property rights. Such conditions may relate to topics including hours of operation, noise, and buffering. Staff recommends conditional approval of TLSE-2018-0008 subject to the following minimum conditions of approval listed below:
1. **Substantial Conformance:** Development of this property shall be in substantial conformance with the plan set entitled “The North Star School at CS Monroe Property TLSE-2018-0008”, dated July 31, 2018, revised through July 12, 2019, prepared by J2 Engineers, Inc. (herein referred to as the “Plat”), with reasonable allowances to be made for engineering and design alteration to meet Town Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Zoning Ordinance or Design and Construction Standards Manual requirements.

2. **No Waivers Expressed or Implied:** Approval of this special exception does not express or imply any waiver or modification of the requirements set forth in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Zoning Ordinance, or the Design and Construction Standards Manual, except as may have been approved as part of this application. Final plats, site plans, and construction drawings are subject to the applicable town regulations.

3. **Childrens Center Road Frontage Improvements:** Childrens Center Road frontage improvements required pursuant to DCSM Sec. 4.02(g) shall be provided per the results of the pending Planning Commission Frontage Improvements Variation Request submitted by the letter dated July 24, 2019 by J2 Engineering, Inc.

4. **Pavement Markings:** At the time of site plan review, in coordination with the Town Transportation Engineer, additional pavement markings shall be provided adjacent to the cross walk at the entrance of the site that meet applicable MUTCD criteria to clearly delineate the center lane as "Bus Lane Only".

5. **Bioretention Design:** The Bioretention designs (plan/profiles) and calculations shall be revised to meet the following criteria:
   a. Minimum Surface Area and Treatment Volume provided per the 2013 VRRM BMP Clearinghouse Specification No. 9 criteria.
   b. Top width of Bioretention B shall be shown with additional spot shots, labels, and/or half contours to provide the required 2 feet of freeboard in the maximum design storm (25yr. for Town Branch Watershed).

6. **Overland Relief:** At the time of site plan review, the Overland Relief design shall provide a pre and post development analysis of the On Site Contributing Drainage Area to the Southern property line am/ South Eastern Outfall as depicted by cross section A-A on the attachment. The site plan shall not have any adverse overland relief impacts to any downstream properties due to this development.

7. **Pre/Post Development Analyses:** At the time of site plan review, provide a pre and post development analysis to verify there are no downstream impacts in the 25 yr. storm due to the addition volume of water routed through the bioretention and into the storm sewer system.
8. **Lighting:** Light Poles shall be no higher than a maximum of 20 feet as shown on the Special Exception Plat.

**Attachments:**

1. LCPS Response Letter, dated August 19, 2019
2. *Revised Concept Design Presentation*, dated August 22, 2019, prepared by Stantec
3. Public Hearing Staff Report TLSV-2019-0001 dated September 5, 2019, prepared by the Department of Plan Review
   - 3a. Option A Exhibit
   - 3b. Option B Exhibit
   - 3c. Variation Request Letter, dated July 24, 2019, from J2 Engineers, Inc.
4. LCPS Letter to C. Murphy, dated August 28, 2019
August 19, 2019

By Hand Delivery
Mr. Christopher Murphy, AICP Senior Planning Project Manager
Department of Planning & Zoning Town of Leesburg
25 West Market Street
Leesburg, VA 20176

Re: Special Exception Application (TLSE2018-0008)
Subdivision Variation Request (TLSV 2019-0001)
LCPS The North Star School at C.S. Monroe Property

Dear Mr. Murphy:

LCPS is pleased to submit responses to questions raised by the Planning Commission at their August 1, 2019 public hearing.

Variation:

LCPS has filed a variation application to modify the frontage improvements on Childrens Church Road. The reason for the request is to address the physical limitations associated with the Bypass Bridge located just to the west of the property and the utilities, stormwater improvements, and mature trees situated to the east. More specifically, the request seeks to reduce the length of the road widening and sidewalk extension to recognize the existing constraints and to provide a cash-in-lieu for improvements not constructed.

At the August 1st public hearing for the Special Exception Application (TLSE 2018-0008), public speakers expressed concern for the widening of Childrens Center Road and the provision of the sidewalk suggesting that neither was necessary. The Planning Commission determined that a public hearing should be held for the variation request.

LCPS is willing to construct the modified improvements or provide cash-in-lieu as may be recommended by the Planning Commission.

Student Parking Fees:

At the August 1, 2019 public hearing, The Planning Commission requested that LCPS consider eliminating the parking fees at the proposed school (The North Star School). LCPS staff advised
that parking fees are a School Board policy and that the matter need to be presented to the School Board.

The annual fee for parking is $200.00. School Board Regulation 4020, Student Fees and Charges, states that the student fees and charges schedule is provided for “consistent charging of student fees throughout the school division” and “no fees or charges may be assessed or collected that either have not been approved by the School Board or listed in the Policy and […] Regulation 4020.” The Student fee schedule also provides that “Fees and charges will be reduced or waived for economically disadvantaged students and students whose families are undergoing economic hardships and are unable to pay including, but not limited to, families receiving unemployment benefits or public assistance such as Temporary Assistance by Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, families qualifying for the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program, Supplemental Security Income or Medicaid; foster families caring for children in foster care; or families that are homeless under the McKinney Vento Act.”

The Planning Commission’s request was brought before the School Board’s Finance and Facilities Committee (Finance Committee) on August 13, 2019. The Finance Committee agreed to evaluate student parking fees. The Finance Committee requested additional information from LCPS staff and indicated that they would like to review this topic and ultimately forward to the full School Board for discussion during this year’s budget process.

Architecture:

The Planning Commission and Staff have expressed that the proposed May 10, 2019 building design is too modern. It was requested that consideration be given to a more traditional approach. The Planning Commission directed the Applicant to the H-1 guidelines as well as the recommendations (annotated sketches) provided by staff.

Since the August 1st public hearing LCPS has worked with our architectural consultant to redesign the building concept. The revision focuses on contextual references to historical elements found within the Town of Leesburg. Existing buildings recommended by staff were revisited and concepts from those buildings applied. The Staff recommendation to include “a more pronounced façade offering a clear three-part foundation – middle, cap, tripartite arrangement” is provided. The incorporation of columns, accentuated recesses, and detailed design elements combine to present a traditional approach in keeping with the H-1 guidelines. The revised design balances massing and traditional materials with the required functionality of the school building and its program arrangement. Variation in materials, including red brick, window openings, and the introduction of an arcade result in the desired human scale. (Reference Attachment 1)

LCPS hopes that the revised design meets the Planning Commission and staff expectations. We will continue to work with staff as we refine the revised building concept. Building elevations will be available prior to the September 5, 2019 meeting.
LCPS Monroe Property
The North Star School
August 19, 2019

Height of Lighting:

A the public hearing request was made for the parking lot lighting to be lower than 25 feet. The Special Exception Plan cites the Town Ordinance and provides that “light poles in parking lots shall not exceed a maximum height of 25 feet including the base.” (Reference Notes 1 and 4 on Sheet 11 of 20). The specifications for LCPS parking lot lights provide a base of 30 inches and a lamp pole height of 17 feet above the base for a combined height of 19 and a half feet above ground elevation. The proposed lights are under 20 feet in height. Lights will be LED, full cut-off, fully shielded and aimed downward. (Reference Attachment 2).

Refuse Cans:

For safety and security reasons, new schools are not provided with outside refuse cans. As noted at the public hearing LCPS staff will implement a “good neighbor” program at The North Star School which will include encouraging students to be respectful of our neighbors and school property, including placing trash in receptacles.

We look forward to the upcoming Planning Commission Public Hearing on September 5, 2019. Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional information or copies. Thank you for your continued assistance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sara Howard-O'Brien, AICP
Land Management Supervisor

Enclosures

1. Revised Building Design Concept dated August 19, 2019
2. Parking Lot Light Base Pole Detail

cc: Beverly Tate, Director, Division of Planning (LCPS)
THE NORTH STAR SCHOOL
Revision in Response to Planning Commission/Staff Recommendations
August 19, 2019
BASE POLE DETAIL

NOT TO SCALE

LAMP POLE, 17' ABOVE BASE

HAND HOLE WITH COVER

BASE COVER

GROUNDING

POLE CLAMPING FLANGE

CLAMPING RING

1" CAMFOR

#6 B.S.C.U. GROUND WIRE

FINISHED GRADE

EXPOSED CONCRETE POLE BASE

ANCHOR BOLT, ATTACH TO REBARS

4" RE-BAR

6" O.C. BOTH WAYS (TYP.)

2" PVC CONDUIT

CONCRETE BASE

6' FROM EDGE OF BASE

24" DIA.

24"

30"

AT EACH, 3/4" X 10" GROUND ROD

NOTES:
1. REFER TO NEC 410.15 FOR BONDING, GROUNDING, AND OTHER CODES REGARDING LIGHTING POLE INSTALLATION.
Mr. Christopher Murphy,
AICP Senior Planning
Project Manager Department
of Planning & Zoning Town
of Leesburg
25 West Market Street
Leesburg, VA 20176

Re: Special Exception Application (TLSE2018-0008)
   LCPS The North Star School at C.S. Monroe Property

Dear Mr. Murphy:

I am writing to provide responses to the citizen letters submitted to the Planning Commission and staff. LCPS trusts this information will be helpful in the review of the application.

What is the Name of the Proposed School and What Programs Are Being Offered?
The name of the new school to be constructed on the C.S. Monroe property is The North Star School. There has understandably been some confusion over the school name. Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) will be relocating the educational program currently offered at Douglass School (407 East Market Street, Leesburg) to The North Star School; further The North Star School will also provide instructional space for LCPS’ adult education program including the General Education Development (GED) program, and the current Licensed Practical Nursing Program (LPN).

The North Star School name was proposed by a committee appointed by the School Board, which included current Douglass School students, LCPS school staff, Town residents (including a Foxridge resident), a Thomas Balch Library representative, and other interested citizenry. The North Star School name was approved by the Loudoun County School Board on January 8, 2019 following an opportunity for public review and comment.
The C.S. Monroe name continues with the Monroe Advanced Technical Academy (MATA) now located at the Academies of Loudoun on Sycolin Road. Further, given the historical and local significance of the Douglass School and the school building itself, including placement on the National Register of Historic Places, it is recommended the facility located at 407 East Market Street maintain the Douglass School name.

There is one school planned for the site which will continue as a secondary school and adult education facility.
The North Star School will serve Loudoun County secondary students. High school students voluntarily choose to attend the current program offered at Douglass School. Typically, students who elect to enroll are those who perform better in smaller classroom settings (i.e., 10+ students vs 23 students), and with diverse instructional approaches. Pathways to graduation include alternate class blocks, credit recovery for students who may be short a class, individualized educational plans (IEP) and preparation for a generalized education diploma (GED) coupled with job readiness skills. Students meet the same promotion and graduation requirements as other LCPS high schools. Despite the continued success of students enrolled at the Douglass School, rumors persist about the students who attend, and the programs offered. These misconceptions are a disservice to the school and, more importantly, to the students. If concerned citizens would like to visit the school, please let us know and we would be happy to arrange a visit.

It is planned to relocate the daytime adult education program currently held at the LCPS Staff Training Center in Ashburn to The North Star School. The nighttime adult education program currently held at Loudoun County High School, will be moved to this new school facility. In addition, the 20 student Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) class is proposed for relocation from the Academies of Loudoun to The North Star School. The nursing class was previously offered at the C.S. Monroe site.

Adult Education Programs are currently offered at various LCPS facilities. For 2019, classes are being offered at Loudoun County High School, the Staff Training Center in Ashburn, the Academies of Loudoun, Rock Ridge High School, Dominion High School, and Park View High School. The intent is to offer classes around the county for convenience and accessibility to the community. The Adult Education Program provides life-long educational opportunities and support services to adults 18 years and older. The major programs are Adult Basic Education, General Education Development (GED) preparation classes, English Learner (EL) classes, and a selection of general interest classes. For example, in addition to the major programs, classes offered this fall at Loudoun County High School range from Basic Drawing to Furniture Refinishing. The catalog may be found at https://www.lcps.org/cms/lib/VA01000195/Centricity/Domain/26267/2019%20Fall_AdultEd_Catalog.pdf.

**Building Height**

The proposed building is planned for two stories in compliance with the zoning height regulations. The surrounding homes are also two stories in height. There are significant advantages to the two-story design including increased setback from the adjacent residences (200 feet from Foxridge homes and 280 feet from Park View Estates homes). The increased setback allows the site to double the landscape buffer (from 25 feet to 50 feet) adjacent to Foxridge, and to provide significant on-site parking (365+ spaces).

**Parking in Residential Neighborhoods, Litter, Unsafe Driving Behaviors and Noise**

In part from comment received from Town residents, the Planning Commission voiced concerns at the August 1, 2019 public hearing about student drivers to The North Star School. The Planning Commission asked the School Board to waive the parking fees for students driving to
Special Exception Application (TLSE2018-0008)
LCPS The North Star School at C.S. Monroe Property
Information in Response to Citizen Letters
August 28, 2019

The North Star School. On August 13, 2019, the School Board’s Finance and Facilities Committee considered the Commission’s request and agreed to review parking fees. Further, the Committee stated that the request to review student parking permit fees will be taken to the full School Board for discussion during this year's budget review process. Individual Commission members also asked LCPS to install trash cans in the parking lot and at various locations on the school property. Due to safety and security concerns, new schools are only provided trash cans inside school buildings.

On September 5, 2019, the Commission will consider a variation request, TLVR 2019-0001, to modify the road frontage improvements for the proposed school project. The options before the Commission include, in part, widening Childrens Center Road to provide approximately 15 parking spaces on the school side of the road and to post ‘No Parking’ signs on the opposite side of the road, or not widening Childrens Center Road and posting ‘No Parking’ signs on both sides of the road. If the latter option is selected, LCPS would provide a cash contribution for future widening, or an alternate transportation improvement that would benefit the area as determined by the Town Council.

Last, as a part of the planning process for The North Star School, the school administration has committed to working with the students to promote the actions and behaviors indicative of being a good neighbor. LCPS recognizes these concerns and plans to be proactive in addressing them.

We look forward to the upcoming Planning Commission Public Hearing on September 5, 2019. Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional information or copies.

Thank you for your continued assistance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Sara Howard-O'Brien,
AICP
Land Management
Supervisor

Enclosures
cc: Beverly Tate, Director, Division of Planning (LCPS)