County of Fairfax, Virginia
Planning Commission Meeting
May 20, 2026
Planning Commission Action

2232-2025-SP-00008– WILLOW SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
(Springfield District)

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:
On May 20, 2026, the Planning Commission voted 9-0 (Commissioners Cortina, Landgraf and Wang were absent from the meeting) to approve Application 2232-2025-SP-00008 based on the following findings and reasons:

- The subject proposal by Fairfax County Public Schools to renovate and expand Willow Springs Elementary School, located at 5400 Willow Springs School Road, Fairfax, VA, includes the renovation and expansion of the existing school facility, associated site improvements, and increased capacity to accommodate projected enrollment needs. The proposal satisfies the criteria of general or approximate location, character, and extent of the adopted Comprehensive Plan, as specified in Virginia Code Section 15.2-2232, for the reasons set forth on pages 12 and 13 of the staff report dated May 4, 2026.

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS:
Pages 12 and 13 of the Staff Report dated May 4, 2026

MJ

Land Development Services (LDS) – Forest Conservation Branch

Chapter 122 of the Fairfax County Code (Tree Conservation Ordinance) and Section 12 of the Public Facilities Manual (PFM), which contain requirements for tree conservation, have not been fully addressed in this 2232 application. Additionally, Zoning Ordinance requirements do not appear to be fully addressed either. All applicable requirements of Chapter 12 of the PFM as well as Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance will need to be fully addressed on future site plans.

- The applicant has stated that future site plans will meet all requirements of Chapter 12 of the PFM and Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The application does not fully demonstrate incorporation of Natural Landscaping into the design of the plan. In June 2020, the county adopted the Natural Landscaping at County Facilities Comprehensive Plan Amendment (PA 2018-CW-2CP), which promotes sustainable landscape design practices such as the use of native plant species, control of invasive species, reduction of maintained turf areas, improvement of soil health, and incorporation of low-impact development techniques. Incorporation of these principles is expected to be addressed in future site plans consistent with Comprehensive Plan guidance.

- The applicant has indicated that future site plans will incorporate natural landscaping principles consistent with Comprehensive Plan guidance.

CONFORMANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Va. Code Sec. 15.2-2232, as amended, requires the Planning Commission to determine whether the general location or approximate location, character, and extent of the proposed facility, as amended, are substantially in accord with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Location

The proposed renovation and expansion of Willow Springs Elementary School will occur on the existing site, which is identified in the Comprehensive Plan for public facility use. The subject property is zoned R-1 and R-C, which permits public uses by right. The majority of the proposed additions are located within the R-1 zoned portion, and the proposed floor area ratio (FAR) would meet Zoning Ordinance requirements. This is consistent with Objective 4, Policy d of the Public Facilities Element of the Policy Plan (PFEPP). The existing site accommodates expansion and continued operation of the school, consistent with Objective 2, Policy a, and Objective 13, Policy a, which supports the expansion of existing school facilities that are included in the adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The school will continue to serve the surrounding residential community, which is consistent with Objective 1, Policy a, which encourages siting facilities appropriately to the area they are intended to serve and Objective 3, Policy a, which recommends the construction of new facilities or expansions to existing facilities consistent with projected needs. The school is also located in proximity to adjacent parkland, consistent with Objective 8, Policy a, which encourages locating schools near other public facilities.

Character

The proposed renovation and expansion of Willow Springs Elementary School is compatible in character with the surrounding area, which consists primarily of single-family residential neighborhoods and adjacent parkland. The building additions are designed to be integrated with the existing school and maintain a scale consistent with surrounding development. Landscaping and buffering are provided along the site perimeter, with existing vegetation retained where feasible and supplemented with new plantings. These features are consistent with Objective 4, policies a and c and Objective 11, policies e and f, which support compatibility with surrounding development through appropriate screening, vegetation preservation, and building design. Additionally, the proposal is consistent with Objective 8, Policy a, which supports locating schools in areas compatible with surrounding development and in proximity to other public facilities such as parkland.

Extent

The proposed improvements represent a modernization and expansion of an existing public facility and are consistent with PFEPP Objective 13, Policy a, which encourages additions to existing schools to meet current and future needs. The project will increase the capacity of the school to approximately 1,050 students and improve site functionality. Improvements to on-site circulation, including the relocation of the bus loop and expansion of the kiss-and-ride area, will improve traffic flow and reduce conflicts within the site, consistent with Objective 11, Policy b, which encourages safe and efficient circulation and access for school facilities. Additionally, no significant transportation impacts to the surrounding area are anticipated. The proposed improvements will not result in significant noise or lighting impacts beyond those associated with the existing school use. Environmental features, including stormwater management, tree preservation, and sustainable design measures such as geothermal systems and energy efficiency strategies, support Objective 11, Policy c, which encourages environmentally sensitive and sustainable design. Overall, the extent of development is appropriate for the site and compatible with the surrounding area.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed renovation and expansion of Willow Springs Elementary School satisfies the criteria of location, character, and extent as specified in Virginia Code §15.2-2232, as amended. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find Application 2232-2025-SP-00008 to be substantially in accord with the provisions of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.