

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB
Item # 5
9/13/01

September 6, 2001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: John Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JAC*
FROM: Glenn Kreger, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader *GK*
Margaret Rifkin, Planner Coordinator *MR*
Community-Based Planning Division

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral
PROJECT NAME: Oakview Elementary School Core Improvements with Minor Expansion & Parking Lot Reconfiguration
APPLICANT: Montgomery County Public Schools
CASE NUMBER: 01108-MCPS-1
REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Chapter 7-112 of the Regional District Act

ZONE: R-60
MASTER PLAN: East Silver Spring Master Plan
FILING DATE: June 29, 2001

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL with the following comments.

COMMENTS:

1. Maximize tree preservation by:
 - a. Relocating the drainage pipe so it does not disturb the critical root zone of the specimen white oak (20). If this is not possible, tunnel it under the roots. (Page 12.)
 - b. Relocating 11 parking spaces in the proposed parking lot to preserve greater amounts of the critical root zone of five specimen white oak trees. (Page 12 - trees 9, 10, 11, 13, and 17.) Shift the proposed stormwater management infiltration trench to better accommodate the relocated spaces.
 - c. Modifying the construction staging areas to ensure protection of the specimen white oak (22) at the southeastern corner of the school and of other trees along the west side of the school. (Page 14.)
 - d. Move proposed trees away from the specimen trees. (Page 12.) Obtain M-NCPPC staff approval of a Tree Protection Plan before obtaining the sediment and erosion control or building permit.

2. Comply with Department of Permitting Services requirements for stormwater management. Full water quality and quantity control should be provided.
3. Along the west edge of the exit drive adjacent to the stairs, provide a barrier free path, so that people who cannot use the stairs do not have to use the exit drive. It should meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. (Page 12.)
4. Between the front of the building and the street do the following: (Page 13)
 - a. Create a larger parking lot setback along the street and improve vehicular circulation, by angling the parking lot so it is parallel to the school building.
 - b. Add two islands within the front parking lot to guide circulation.
 - c. Maximize the size of all islands and landscape them.
 - d. Provide trees and a hedge or screen within the parking lot setback along the street.
 - e. Move the proposed trees from the west side of the proposed parking lot (see 1.d.) to the tree panel along the street and to the linear island in front of the building.
 - f. Narrow the three one-way entrances and exit drives to the minimum required to increase the green setback area and pedestrian space.
 - g. Provide wheelstops for the parking spaces to guide circulation and protect plantings.
 - h. Convert the asphalt area at the new entrance to the school building to an attractive entry area/open space.
5. Along the residential edge, provide screening where needed and shield the parking lot lights. (Page 12.)
6. Provide parking spaces for 3 bicycles and 1 motorcycle.
7. Should there be a change in plans that affects use of the ball field, provide M-NCPPC Park Planning staff with such plans to review.
8. Limit the project to the currently proposed modifications in phases one through five as shown on the plans. If student capacity exceeds 325 students, and additional classroom capacity is added, submit the proposed project for Planning Board review and comment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: NEIGHBORHOOD AND SITE

The neighborhood is an established neighborhood with single-family residences and the Long Branch Stream Valley Park bounding the site. The site is 11 acres and bounded on the south by East Wayne Avenue and on the north by Schuyler Road. See the vicinity map on page 7. Existing land use and existing zoning are shown on pages 8 and 9. The existing site plan is shown on page 10. The school is ideally located to provide a through-block connection for neighbors walking to the Long Branch Stream Valley Park, the library, or to the Flower Village Center.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT AND PROCESS

Overall Project:

The proposed site plan is shown on page 11. The project focuses primarily on making core improvements such as the expansion of the administrative suite, multi-purpose room and

academic support spaces. New classrooms will be built to replace temporary classrooms on the site. The total additional space is 11,000 square feet.

Other improvements are for better site circulation and to increase parking from 58 to 69 spaces. The core improvements to the site will increase the school's capacity from 325 to 640; however, classroom capacity will not change from the current capacity of 325 students. Some drainage problems are being solved. A subsurface drainage system will be added. There will also be re-grading to direct water away from the building. A six-classroom addition is master planned for future design and construction but is not part of this application. Its location is shown on page 11.

Project Phases:

The project consists of five (5) phases that will take two years to complete, beginning in September 2001 and concluding in December 2003. One new addition, which includes the new classrooms, will be completed by the end of 2002. Another new addition, for the new multi-purpose room will then be built in 2003. The site work, including the expansion of the parking lot, will occur last.

Previous Planning Board Actions:

There have been no previous Planning Board actions relevant to this review. The most recent modifications occurred in 1984, seventeen years ago.

Future Reviews:

There will be no future Planning Board reviews for specific phases of this project. However, any changes that affect ball field play should be reviewed by M-NCPPC Park Planning staff. If any additional classroom capacity is added, the new proposals should be submitted for mandatory referral review.

Community Outreach and Community Concerns:

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) formed a Facilities Advisory Committee which included staff from Oakview Elementary School, and five members of the community including the PTA co-presidents. This committee met four times last year with the final meeting in November in the evening to allow broader attendance. Nearby property owners were invited.

Because the landscape and tree save plans were not available last year, M-NCPPC staff recommended that MCPS contact the adjoining and confronting property owners at this time to show them the plans. However, MCPS is not planning to do so.

No outstanding community concerns have been identified at this time.

PROJECT ANALYSIS/FINDINGS

1. **FINDING: This project is consistent with the East Silver Spring Master Plan.**
2. **FINDING: This project will be consistent with the general development standards of the zone, which is R-60, but not with specific standards for the parking lot as described here (see also pages 6 and 8):**

- Along East Wayne Avenue: The existing and proposed parking lot setback from the street is 5.9 feet, which is less than the 25 feet required in the zone. To create a larger setback, angle the parking lot so it is parallel to the school building rather than to the street. In addition, some of the shade trees that are required should be placed in the setback as well as in the tree panel. The latter should be done in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Transportation. A hedge or screening should be provided within the setback as required in the Zoning Ordinance. Wheelstops should be provided to protect plantings.
 - Along the residential properties: The Zoning Ordinance requires screening. Some neighbors have already added their own fences. To add a new fence or screen along the entire edge could unnecessarily stress the specimen white oak trees in combination with other construction. However, some screening consistent with the Zoning Ordinance requirements should be provided to any neighbors adjoining new portions of the parking lot who have not already built fences or planted screens.
 - Parking lot lighting should be shielded so as not to be a nuisance to neighbors.
 - Provide a minimum of three spaces for bicycle parking and one for motorcycle parking as required by the Zoning Ordinance.
 - Narrow the one-way entrance and exit drives to the minimum required to convert as much pavement as possible to landscaped setback area.
3. **FINDING: In order for the project to be compatible with existing and proposed adjacent uses and structures in terms of nature and size, shape, scale height, arrangement and design of structures, the applicant should do the following:** Change the proposed striped "islands" in front of the building to *landscaped* islands with trees, where possible. The islands should be as large as possible while still accommodating circulation to provide more space for landscaping and to compensate for the lack of an adequate setback for the parking lot along East Wayne Avenue. (Page 13.) Provide screening along the parking lot where it doesn't exist.
4. **FINDING: In order for the location of the building and structures, open space, landscaping, recreation facilities, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation to be adequate, safe, and efficient, the applicant should do the following:** Provide a barrier free path from the street to the front door of the school (not interrupted by steps) that meets ADA requirements. Two smaller islands should be provided to direct circulation; they should be landscaped if space allows. Wheelstops should be added for the same reason as well as to protect plantings. The angling of the parking lot to be parallel to the front of the school building as recommended above, will also improve circulation. It allows motorists entering the front parking lot to easily reach the entire row of spaces along the exit drive with fewer maneuvers and possible conflicts. Otherwise, internal circulation is adequate.

Additional open space should be provided by converting the asphalt area in front of the new entrance to the school building to an attractively designed entry area for the school. A small pull-off lane for dropping off passengers could be incorporated in the design.

5. **FINDING: The project is exempt from the requirement to include a Forest Conservation Plan, but must include a Tree Preservation Plan.** There is an approved Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation map. A stormwater management concept plan has been submitted to the Department of Permitting Services.

The Tree Preservation Plan will be forthcoming. It should be submitted to M-NCPPC staff for review and approval, and identify tree save measures including, but not limited to, pre-construction watering and fertilizing, fencing, root pruning and dead wood pruning of any trees impacted by construction activities; and a time frame for implementation.

In addition, several changes to the design should be made to increase tree protection. A minimum of eleven of the proposed parking spaces should be relocated to preserve greater amounts of the critical root zone of five specimen white oak trees. (Page 12, trees 9,10,11,13 and 17.) The stormwater management infiltration trench should be shifted to allow the greatest number of parking spaces to be moved out of the critical root zones.

The construction staging areas for phases one and three are shown on page 14. They should be modified to ensure protection of the specimen white oak (22) at the southeastern corner of the school and of other specimen trees along the west boundary of the school.

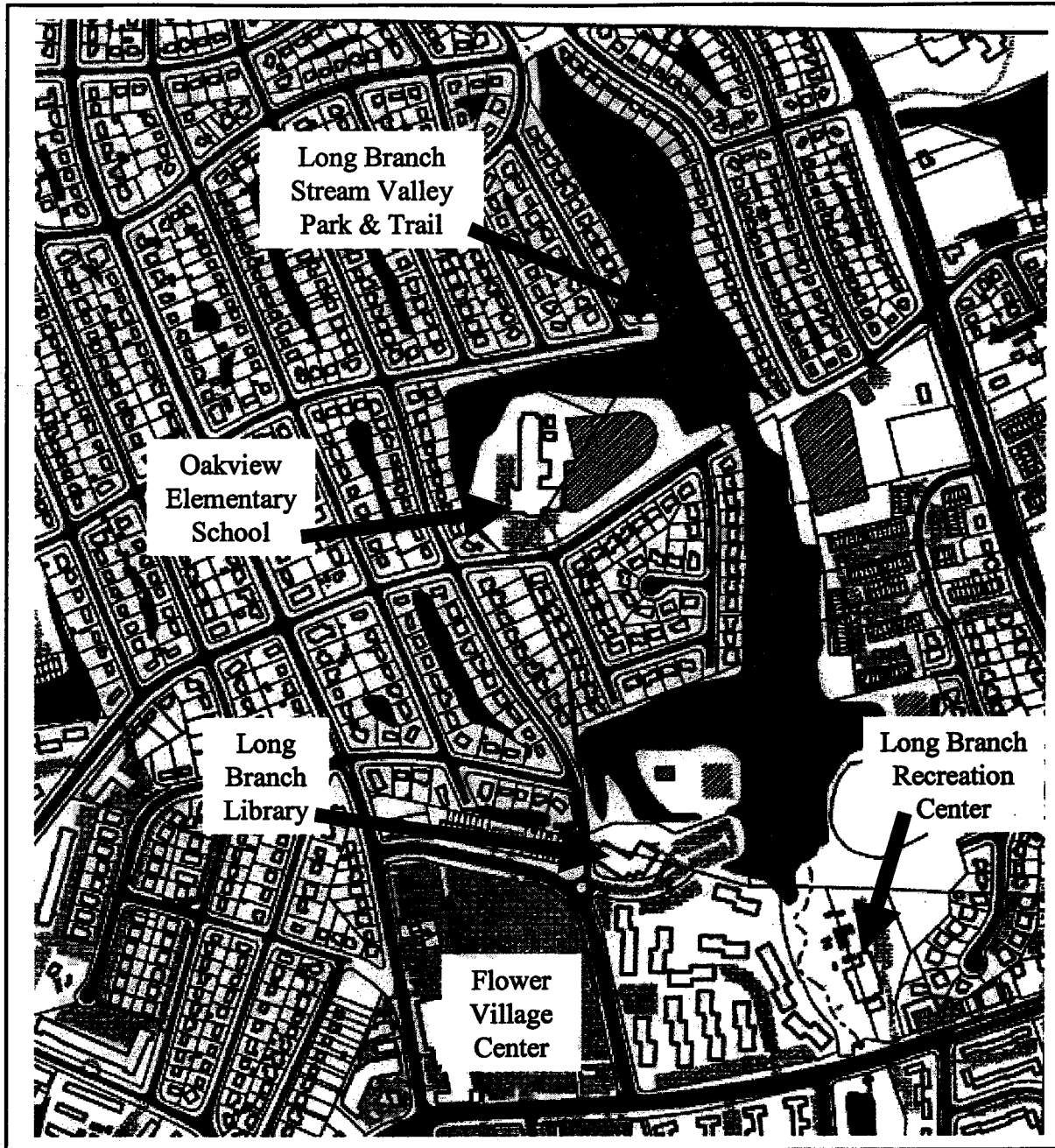
The drainage pipe should be relocated so that it does not disturb the critical root zone of the specimen white oak (20). If this is not possible, tunnel the pipe under the roots. The associated stormwater management infiltration trench that is proposed may need to be shifted to allow a path for the drainage pipe that does not disturb the critical root zone, as well as to better accommodate the parking spaces being relocated for tree preservation reasons.

6. **FINDING: The project is consistent with transportation policies and plans.** The current student population uses some temporary classrooms which are being replaced by the expansion. There will be no increase in student population. Therefore, the vehicular traffic is not expected to increase as a result of this project.

ZONING ANALYSIS

The items in ***bold italics*** are discussed in the staff report

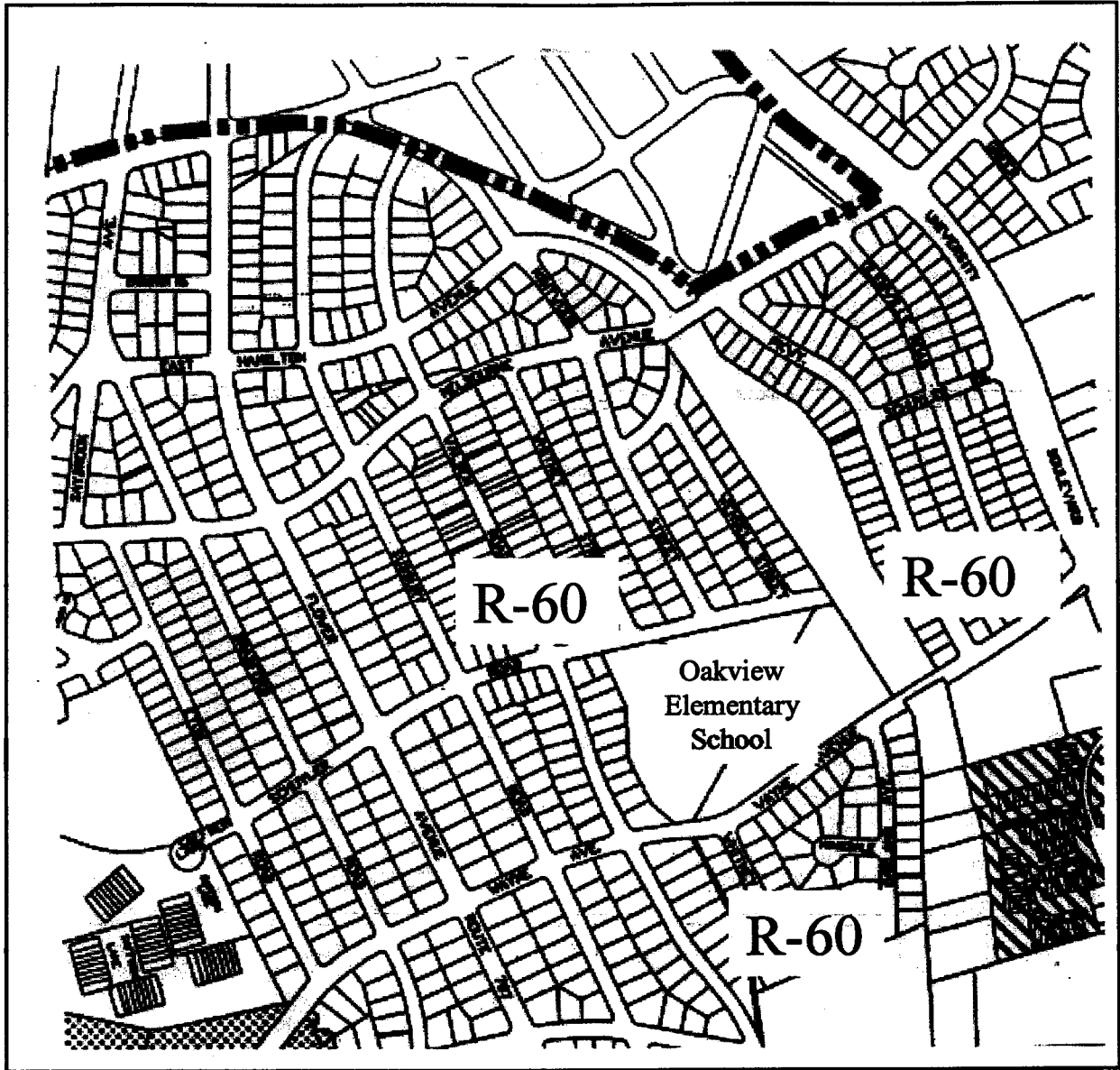
Feature	Required	Existing Conditions	Provided
<u>Building</u>			
Setbacks			
Front	25 feet	91 feet	91 feet
Side	8 feet	111 feet	95 feet
Sum of sides	18 feet	637 feet	600 feet
Rear	20 feet	NA	NA
Building height	35 feet	22 feet	22 feet
Coverage	35%	7.3%	9.6%
<u>Parking Facility</u>			
<i>Number of Spaces</i> (1 auto space required per employee for private schools)	<i>3 bicycle</i> <i>1 motorcycle</i> 60 auto	0 bicycle 0 motorcycle 58 auto	<i>0 bicycle</i> <i>0 motorcycle</i> 69 auto
Perimeter Landscape Area - one tree per forty feet (128 + 185 = 313 linear feet)	8 trees	6 trees	8 trees
Internal landscaping	5% (2011 sf)	7.9% (3047 sf)	13.6% (5488 sf)
<i>Setbacks for parking facilities within or adjoining a residential zone</i>			
<i>Setback confronting front yard</i>	<i>25 feet</i>	5.9 feet	<i>5.9 feet</i>
Adjoining rear yard	20 feet	22.6 feet	22.6 feet
Adjoining side yard – not applicable	NA	NA	NA
<i>Screening on each side that faces or adjoins land in a residential zone -solid wall or fence, or compact evergreen shrub 3 feet at planting: not required if already effectively screened.</i>	<i>313 if hedge/ screen</i>	none	<i>None</i>



N

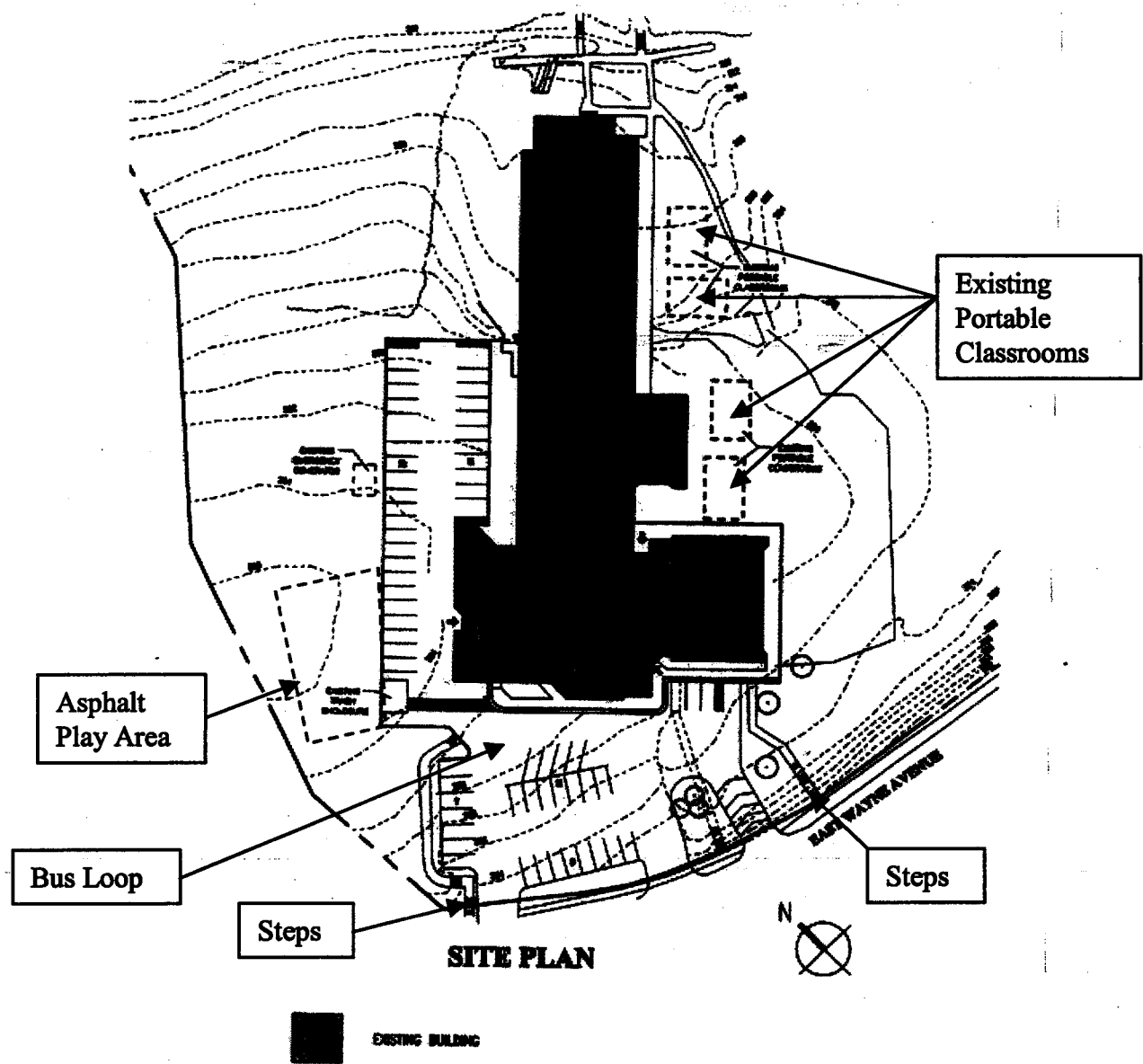
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VICINITY MAP

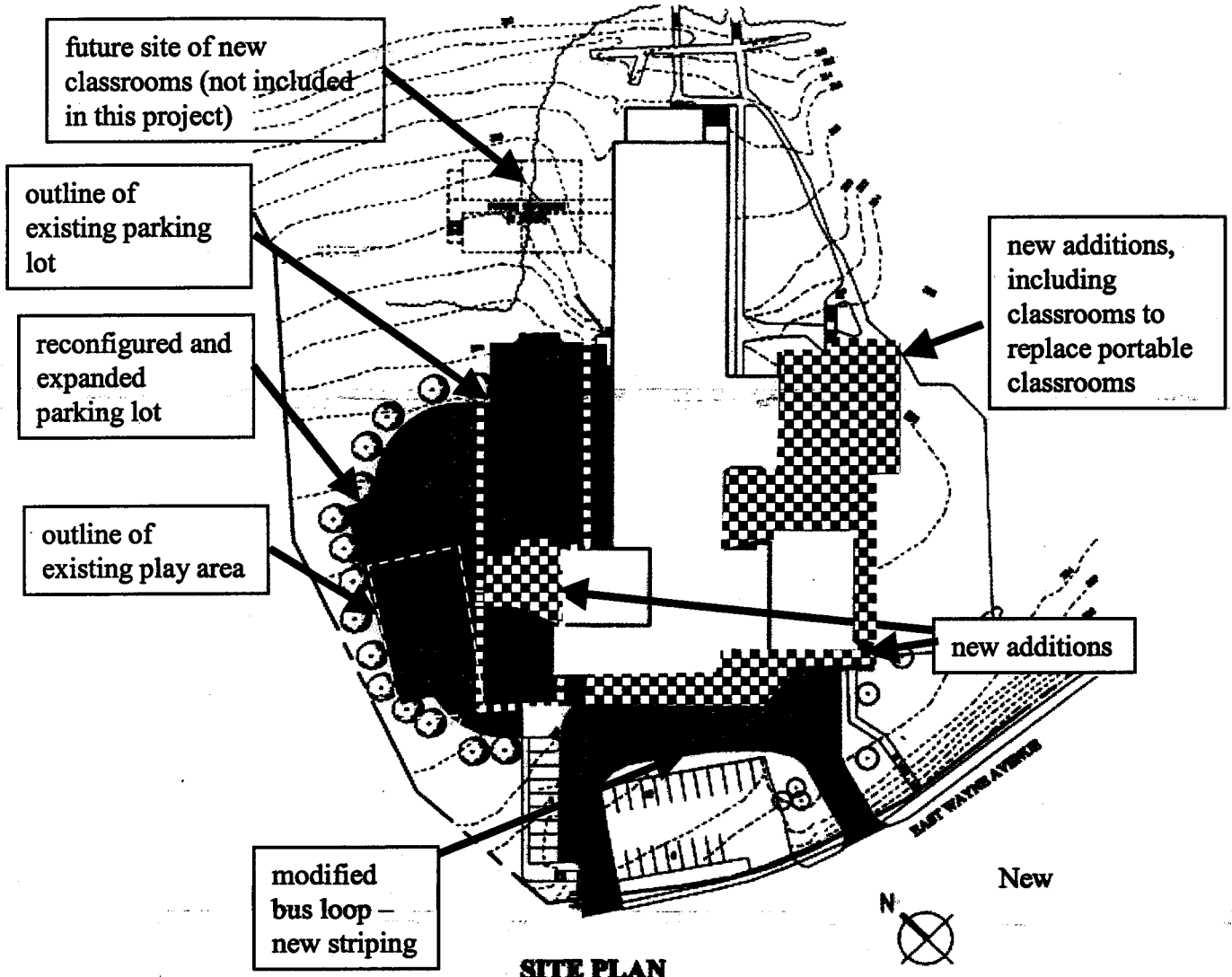





Not To Scale

ZONING MAP

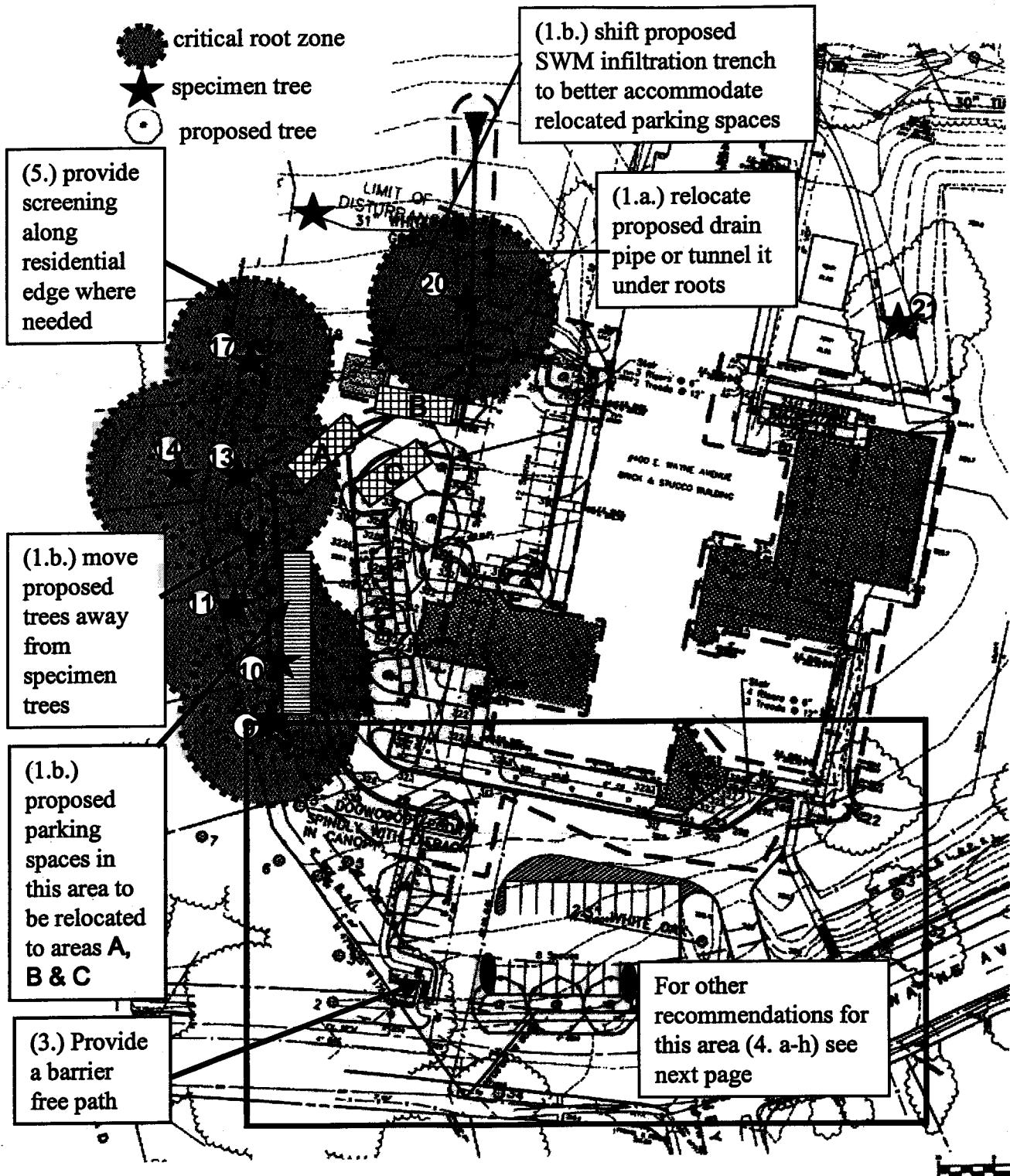


EXISTING SITE



-  NEW ADDITIONS.
-  NEW SITE WORK.
-  MODIFY BUS LOOP.






PROPOSED SITE PLAN

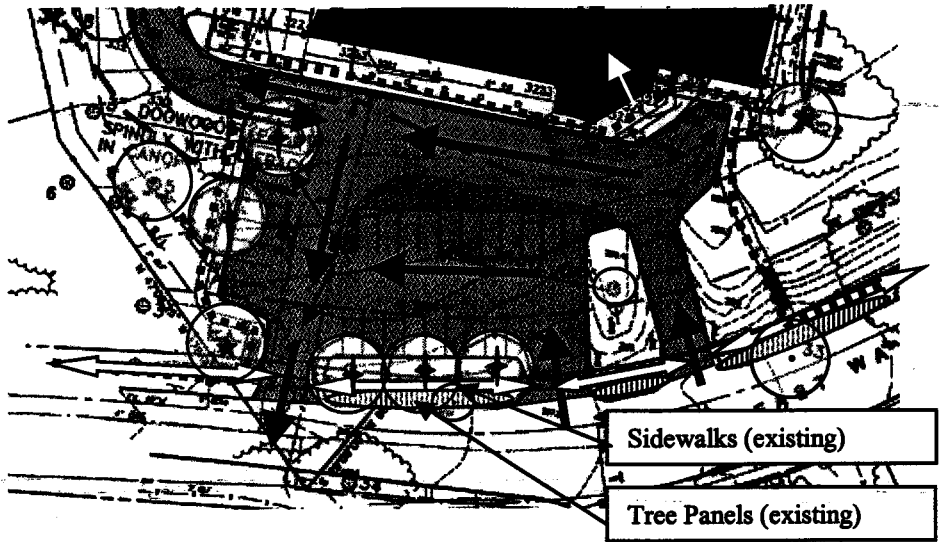


RECOMMENDATIONS

Shown on Proposed Landscape Plan

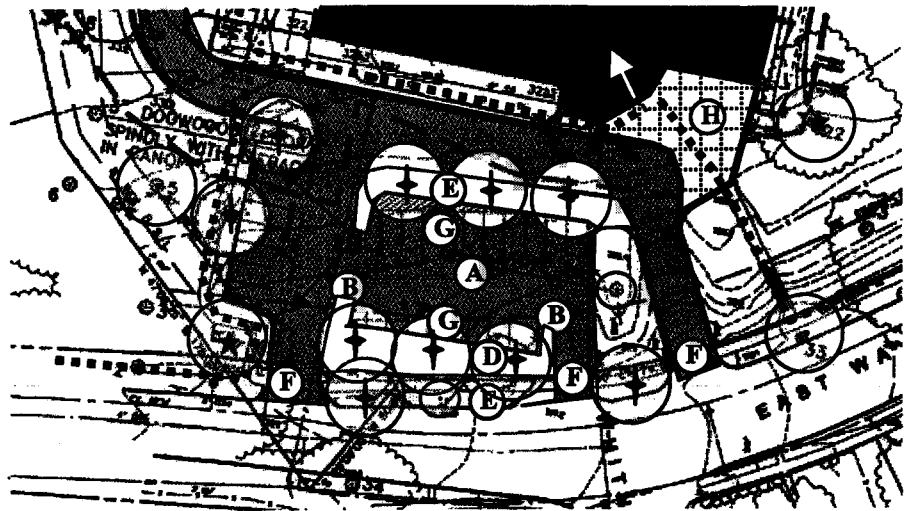
PROPOSAL

-  Paved Areas
-  Pedestrian Routes
-  Vehicular Circulation
-  Sidewalk along street
-  Tree Panels (existing)






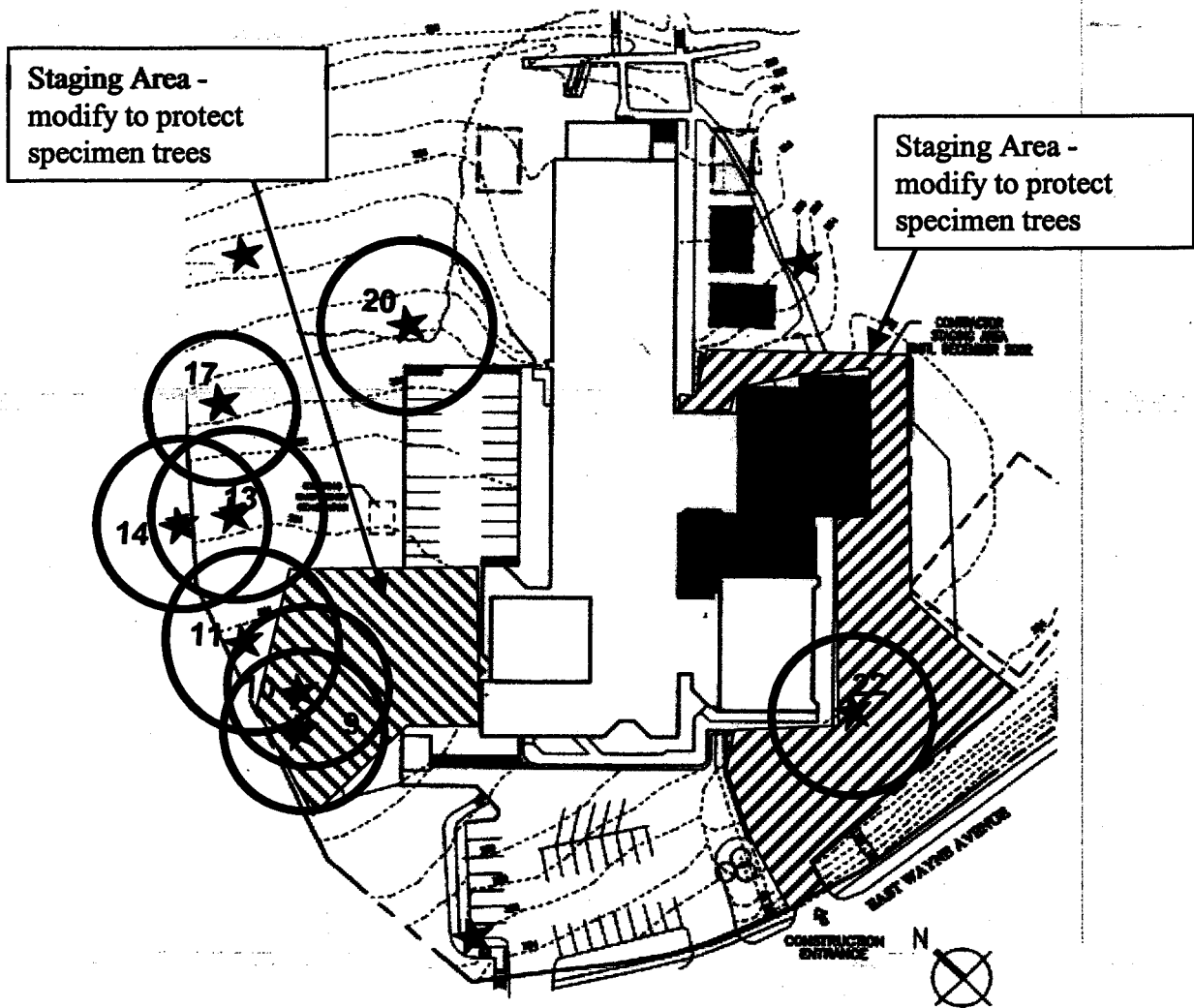
RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS

- (A)** Create a larger parking lot setback along the street and improve vehicular circulation, by angling the parking lot so it is parallel to the school building.
- (B)** Add two islands within the front parking lot to guide circulation
- (C)** Maximize the size of all islands and landscape them.
- (D)** Provide trees and a hedge or screen within the parking lot setback along the street.
- (E)** Move the proposed trees from the west side of the proposed parking lot (see 1.d.) to the tree panel along the street and to the linear island in front of the building.
- (F)** Narrow the three one-way entrance and exit drives to the minimum required to increase the green setback area and pedestrian space







- (G)** Provide wheel stops for the parking spaces to guide circulation and protect plantings
- (H)** Convert the asphalt area at the new entrance to the school building to an attractive entrance area/open space.

-  Proposed
-  Existing
-  Existing Specimen



SITE PLAN

-  PORTABLE CLASSROOMS, RELOCATED ON SITE.
-  PORTABLE CLASSROOMS REMAIN IN PLACE.
-  NEW ADDITION & OUTSIDE STORAGE.
-  Specimen tree with critical root zone

(Note: this base map reflects the phase one addition only – not all proposed changes).

Comment 1.c. – Modify Construction Staging Areas

'Gifted' Grow Even In Weak Schools

Neighbors' Fears Baseless, Family Finds

By BRIGID SCHULTZ and DAN KRATING
Washington Post Staff Writers

It was almost as if 8-year-old Lauren Teixeira had her own personal education plan.

There were six children in her Junior Great Books advanced reading group. Six in her advanced math class. And during Writer's Workshop, Lauren worked by herself on the next chapter of her "book" until her teacher came to check in and give what amounted to a private tutorial.

Lauren loves Oak View Elementary School in east Silver Spring.

"The teachers are really good," she said brightly.

But in the mornings, when the school buses made their rounds in her middle-class neighborhood, Lauren was alone. One friend's family moved away rather than send her to Oak View. Another friend attended private school. Two were bused more than 10 miles to a school that offered a Spanish immersion program, and two went to other schools with magnet programs.

Lauren took a short walk to the second-poorest school in the county—more than 80 percent of the children are lower-income. She helped make the school, whose average test scores were among the lowest of all county schools, 5 percent white.

"When Lauren started kindergarten, I would take her to the bus stop and want to cry. She was the only one going to the local school," said her mother, Robin Allen. "I used to have to drive to another bus stop because she didn't want to be alone."

Allen, an economist at the Justice Department, had heard neighbors' criticisms of Oak View: The kids were wild, the lessons were dumbed down and the teachers were terrible.

"A lot of parents thought the school couldn't possibly be good because there were so many poor kids," she said.

But on a practice test for a statewide standardized exam, Lauren registered a near-perfect score. She did far better than her classmates at Oak View, and as good or better than her middle-class neighborhood friends who took long bus rides every morning to other schools.

Indeed, a Washington Post analysis of individual student test scores in Montgomery County found that more-affluent children do well at high-poverty schools. The analysis found that the reading and math scores of wealthier children were highest in affluent schools but that they remained high, at or above the county average, even at the most troubled schools.

The findings conform with the landmark Coleman Report, commissioned by the



Gummy-bear candies are part of a lesson in statistical odds for Oak View Elementary classmates Jonathan Hayes, left, Merry Bong, Emanuel Canjura and Lauren Teixeira.

U.S. Department of Education in the mid-1960s to examine the effects of court-mandated integration. That study found that student performance was more closely linked to class rather than to race or ethnic background. And while the report indicated that school environment had a profound impact on poor children, that was not the case for middle-class children.

Such research is little comfort to parents who fear that their children will be lost in a high-poverty school, that the work won't be challenging and that disruptive students will distract overworked teachers.

"I would not send my own kids to a high-poverty school," said Richard D. Kahlenberg, of Montgomery County, who moved his children to a more affluent school.

"I don't think [middle-class fight] is merely a racist or classist reaction. There's something that goes on in high-poverty schools that is damaging to kids," said Kahlenberg, an education researcher at the Century Foundation who wrote "All Together Now," which argues for the economic integration of schools.

A number of Montgomery school officials said that the strong test scores of middle-class children in poor schools may reflect two things: savvy parents who know how to work the system and the system's long practice of catering to middle-class parents by creating special programs and policies.

Though test scores or teacher recommendations are supposed to determine who gets into gifted classes, parents routinely lobby successfully to get their children admitted.

By the end of the third grade in one recent year, 40 percent of the white and Asian American students in Montgomery had been designated as gifted. For black and Latino students, a higher proportion of whom are poor, the numbers are 15 and 13 percent, respectively.

"Are you going to tell me giftedness is skewed one way and ignorance another?" asked Pamela Hoffer-Riddick, an associate superintendent who recently joined the school system to run its new accountability section. "This ain't no accident."

At Oak View, Lauren is considered gifted and receives special instruction.

Her parents decided to send her there after Principal Joanne Busalacchi assured them that Lauren would always be challenged and said that she had hired teachers who could handle a classroom filled with children of differing abilities.

During a recent reading session at Oak

View, Lauren's class of 23 was divided into about seven groups. One group was learning the alphabet; others were writing rudimentary sentences and reading books called Easy Readers. Lauren sat at a small table with five other students and discussed "Little Daughter of the Snow," a long story from their Junior Great Books textbook.

Lauren's parents, Robin Allen and Ruy Teixeira, are both highly educated. They have read to her since she was 2 months old. The house is stuffed with books. Lauren was reading Harry Potter books at 6 and now reads Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the original.

In Lauren's math class, third-graders are taught fifth-grade math. While all six girls in the math class do well, Lauren has an edge.

"She came into class one day and all of a sudden could do two-digit by two-digit multiplication," said an amazed Kathleen Anderson, her math teacher. "She said her dad taught her on a napkin at a restaurant."

Many of Lauren's classmates go home to crowded apartments, where they must make dinner and care for siblings. Many watch hours of television. One of Lauren's classmates stays up late watching the Cartoon Network because his parents work two jobs and come home after midnight. He often misses the bus in the morning and an entire school day because he sleeps through the alarm his parents set for him after they leave the house at 5 a.m. for work.

Lauren's parents said they are nervous about her future. A new study by Hoffer-Riddick has found that the longer a child stays in a high-poverty school, the less likely he or she is to be exposed to advanced and rigorous courses. And that matters in middle and high school, the college-prep years.

"It's a constant worry that there's such a high concentration of poverty," said Teixeira, a policy analyst and an author.

But for now, they say they plan to remain at Oak View.

"I grew up in a small town outside Chicago, where I was one of three Jewish kids," Allen said. "I was different, and I was determined to live in a community when I grew up where there wasn't a tyranny of any majority. Lauren knows kids in need. In her classes, there have been Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Coptic Christians and Jews, and she's comfortable with all types. Not that it will, but I'm definitely willing to have 10 points knocked off her SAT scores for that."

Language True Role

By BRIGID SCHULTZ and D. KRATING
Washington Post Staff Writers

On a rainy spring afternoon reading in a fourth-grade classroom at Montgomery Elementary School, but Samuel and drew pictures of animals. "He can't speak English so my mate explained. "So the teacher pictures of book covers."

Next came a spelling test. Students diligently scribbled the letters, tapped his pencil on his desk and stared out the window.

Samuel's parents said they moved to Montgomery County for the schools. They have pointed to the decline of first-rate schools. They moved to El Salvador last year and speak English, and they struggle to read.

Samuel, a shy 10-year-old, is a county schoolchild who struggles because they speak Spanish.

The number of languages spoken in Montgomery County schools has risen from just a handful 30 years ago.

Samuel's teacher at the Kenilworth, speaks no Spanish. She relies on other children, who have been in this country only a few years, to translate her lessons.

"It's very new to me," said I. "I've been a teacher for three years, but for me to keep them occupied."

Like most of the county's children, Tabron has not received the same education as children who speak English.

Nearly 30,000 low-income children live in the "stripes," as educators call the crowded corridor that runs through the county, straddling major highways.

School Superintendent Jerry Chubb said that 10,000 of those children do not do well. The 11,000 low-income children comprise the largest population in the system, surpassing black children this year.

Some principals blame the lag on the influx of non-English speakers like Samuel, rather than on the high number of low-income pupils in their school.

But The Washington Post's analysis found that schools with high concentrations of poor students performed the worst, whether they have many non-English speakers.

In schools where poverty is highest, the fastest in the past five years—16 percent in some cases—test scores dropped.

In inner cities, low test scores on poverty schools are attributed to failure, uninvolved parents, low income, a lack of role models and too many students who are uncared for or uninspired.

Although wealthy, suburban Montgomery County is vastly different from inner cities, in some respects its schools are not. Teacher turnover is higher and teachers younger, school study found. Far fewer advanced courses are offered. And some parents that they spend as much time on as on education.

"The school becomes a focus