# M-NCPPC

#### MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

A-10

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July 21, 2004

## **MEMORANDUM**

JUL 222

TO:

Nkosi Yearwood

Community-Based Planning Division

VIA:

Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor

Transportation Planning

FROM:

Cherian Eapen, Planner/Coordinator

Transportation Planning

301-495-4525

SUBJECT:

Special Exception Case No. S-2604

Proposed Private Educational Institution – Winchester School 17320 Georgia Avenue, Olney (Parcels 171, 172 and 173)

Olney Policy Area

This memorandum presents the Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of the above Special Exception case to permit a new 175-student private educational institution with a maximum of 23 staff members to be located at 17320 Georgia Avenue (MD 97) in Olney. The proposed school will have students attending grades 1 through 6, and will be open on weekdays between 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The property is currently zoned R-200.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Planning staff recommends the following conditions as part of the transportation-related requirements to grant this Special Exception request (based on our review of the traffic study and Transportation Management Plan (TMP) submitted for the subject Special Exception case):

- Establish a 100 percent student-busing program that will mitigate the impact of site-generated traffic at intersection(s) along Georgia Avenue, and within the site. Alternatively, the applicant may explore, through coordination with staff, opportunities to establish a partial busing program with necessary *Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) Guidelines* trip reduction and/or physical intersection improvement measures that will permit limited drop-reduction and pick-ups at the school (without regard to the geographical location of student offs and pick-ups at the school (without regard to the geographical location of student residences). The busing program should include contingency plans to transport those students who may miss the morning inbound bus for any reason.
- 2. Identify and evaluate the feasibility of potential off-site student pick-up and drop-off locations that the proposed school may utilize to establish the 100 percent (or alternative partial) busing program.
- 3. Limit hours of operation of the proposed school, and number of students/staff at the proposed school to that described in the Petitioner's Special Exception Statement of Operations (Amended) dated June 10, 2004.
- 4. Manage all school-related vehicle queues, as well as any queuing/parking related to student drop-offs/pick-ups on-site within the school property without spillover to Georgia Avenue or adjacent local streets.
- 5. At the time of Preliminary Plan, consistent with the 1980 Approved and Adopted Olney Master Plan (and the May 2004 Olney Master Plan Planning Board Draft) dedicate adequate right-of-way along Georgia Avenue to provide 75 feet of right-of-way from the roadway centerline, and locate any proposed on-site improvements outside of the master plan right-of-way.
- 6. At the time of Preliminary Plan, coordinate with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) on design requirements and adequate sight distance for the proposed site access driveway. The driveway should be designed to permit the largest vehicle anticipated at the school, including a school bus, to safely enter/exit the site from/to Georgia Avenue.
- 7. Provide an eight-foot wide Class I bikeway (shared-use path) and an eight-foot wide tree panel on Georgia Avenue along the entire property frontage. The design of the shared use path at the proposed site access driveway should be Americans for Disabilities Act compliant.
- 8. Provide a lead-in sidewalk from Georgia Avenue to the proposed school building.
- Occidente with the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) and Department of Permitting Services (DPS) on meeting relevant on-site County requirements, and on demonstrating the ability of school buses and student drop-off/pick-up vehicles to safely circulate within the school site.

#### DISCUSSION

## Site Location, Vehicular Access and Pedestrian Facilities

The property is located along the west side of Georgia Avenue just north of the intersection with Rock Hill Lane (a private roadway, along the southern subject property line), between Prince Philip Drive/Hines Road to the north and Cherry Valley Drive and Old Baltimore Road to the south. It is currently developed with a single-family residential unit on approximately 2.0 acres, with driveway access to Georgia Avenue. Vehicular access to and from the site is proposed to be via a new driveway to Georgia Avenue, which is approximately 400 feet long, placed along the southern edge of the property. Staff parking is provided to the rear of the property, and general visitor/handicapped parking (three spaces) is provided near the entrance to the proposed school. The bus/auto queuing plan for the school proposes to queue/stack the buses/vehicles along the north side of the site access driveway, and is currently anticipated to provide queuing for three buses and 20 passenger vehicles.

Georgia Avenue, to the front of the property, is a four-lane divided major highway, and has sidewalks on both sides. Consistent with the master plan recommendations, the applicant will be required to upgrade the existing sidewalk along the site frontage to provide a shared use path and a tree panel, and to provide a lead-in sidewalk into the property. Georgia Avenue is also proposed to have a future express two-lane, bi-directional, bus-only roadway within its median that will connect Olney and Aspen Hill communities to the north with Glenmont Metro Station to the south. Currently, Metrobus routes Y8, Y9 and Ride-On bus routes 52 and 53 provide service along Georgia Avenue. Ride-On bus routes 52 and 53 also serve local communities via Prince Philip Drive and Hines Road.

#### Master Plan Roadways and Bikeway/Pedestrian Facilities

The 1980 Approved and Adopted Olney Master Plan describes the nearby master-planned roadways, bikeway and pedestrian facilities as follows:

- 1. Georgia Avenue: as a north-south four-lane divided Major Highway (M-8) with a minimum right-of-way width of 150 feet (between Emory Lane to the south and Spartan Road to the north), and with a Class I bikeway (shared-use path, SP-29, in the May 2004 Olney Master Plan Planning Board Draft) along the west side of Georgia Avenue.
- 2. Prince Philip Drive: as a two-lane Arterial (A-46) with a minimum right-of-way width of 80 feet (between MD 108 to the north and MD 97 to the south, and with a shared road bikeway [Class III bikeway], B-30, in the May 2004 Olney Master Plan Planning Board Draft).
- 3. Hines Road: as a two-lane Arterial (A-49) with a minimum right-of-way width of 80 feet between MD 97 to the east and Cashell Road to the west (and with bike lanes [Class II bikeway], BL-19, in the May 2004 Olney Master Plan Planning Board Draft).

- 4. Cherry Valley Drive: as a two-lane Primary (P-3) with a minimum right-of-way width of 70 feet between MD 97 to the east and Wellfleet Drive to the west.
- Old Baltimore Road: as a two-lane Primary (P-2) with a minimum right-of-way width of 70 feet between MD 108 to the north and MD 97 to the south. The May 2004 Olney Master Plan Planning Board Draft recommends adding a third approach lane on Old Baltimore Road at its intersection with MD 97.

Since this Special Exception case is required to submit a Preliminary Plan application, the applicant would be required to dedicate additional right-of-way, as needed, along Georgia Avenue. Associated with this requirement, any proposed on-site improvements should be located outside of the master plan right-of-way.

# Local Area Transportation Review

Per the *LATR Guidelines*, the applicant submitted a traffic study dated March 2004; Revised June 2004 (that assessed the impact of the proposed school on the immediate local area roadway network) for staff review since the school was estimated to generate more than 50 total peak-hour trips during the typical weekday morning/evening peak periods [50 total peak-hour trips since the Special Exception case was filed prior to July 1, 2004, under the FY 2004 Annual Growth Policy (AGP)]. The applicant also submitted a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the subject Special Exception case (received by Transportation Planning on June 14, 2004).

Staff review of the traffic study indicated that the study area, the traffic counts and the description of area pedestrian facilities as presented in the study complied with the requirements of the *LATR Guidelines* and the traffic study scope. The traffic study also identified existing/future roadway features/lane configurations within the study area correctly. In addition, Background traffic conditions presented in the study adequately incorporated traffic associated with background developments identified by the staff.

However, staff disagrees with the build (Total traffic) conditions presented in the traffic study since the assumed future student population distribution for the proposed Winchester School and the busing program (tied to this anticipated future geographical distribution of student population) cannot reasonably be expected to fully mitigate the anticipated future traffic impact of the school at the study intersection(s) and within the site.

The traffic study estimated that approximately 66% of the 175 students (the ultimate school capacity) would access the school from the south along Georgia Avenue (or in other words, approximately 117 students would "reside" to the south of the school). The busing plan presented in the traffic study proffered that these students to the "south" of the school would be bused, and therefore would not impact or add critical lane movements at the Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road intersection during the morning peak hour. The traffic study estimated that the rest of the student population, to the "north" of the school (or in other words, assumed to "reside" to the north of the school) would access the school from the north via Georgia Avenue as drop-offs/pick-ups.

Since a majority of these trips were assumed to be already on Georgia Avenue in the southbound direction as "pass-by" trips, and the remaining "new" trips were estimated to return north after the drop-off, it was determined that these vehicle trips from the north would not impact the Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road intersection during the morning peak hour. Based on the above, the traffic study determined that the development proposal met LATR Guideline requirements.

Though creative, staff finds that the above assumptions on the student population distribution and the proposed busing program tied to these assumptions that mitigate only those trips through a critical intersection cannot be reasonably supported. Minor changes to student population distributions to the "north" or the "south" could affect either the on-site vehicle circulation/queuing, Critical Lane Volume (CLV) at the Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road intersection during the morning peak hour, or both. For example, under assumptions incorporated in the traffic study, though an overall future increase in the percentage of students "residing" to the north of the school may not affect CLV at the Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road intersection during the morning peak hour, it could potentially create on-site queuing issues at the school due to additional drop-offs/pick-ups. Alternatively, if the future percentage of students "residing" to the south of the school were to increase beyond the 66% assumed in the traffic study, this will require additional busing of students so that CLV at the Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road intersection during the morning peak hour is not affected.

Consequently, staff recommends that the applicant consider a 100 percent student busing program, or alternatively, pursue LATR trip reduction and/or physical intersection improvement measures that may permit some drop-offs/pick-ups at the school, while maintaining a certain fixed percentage/level of busing (without regard to the geographical location of student residences).

# Policy Area Transportation Review/Transportation Staging Ceiling Test

The subject Special Exception case was filed prior to July 1, 2004, under the FY 2004 AGP. Since the proposed use for the site was estimated to generate more than five weekday peak hour trips during the morning and evening peak periods, it was required to satisfy the Policy Area Transportation Review (PATR) test to determine adequacy of transportation staging ceiling. The site is located within the Olney Policy Area, which had a net remaining staging ceiling capacity of 1,924 jobs on June 30, 2004. With an estimate of 50 jobs for an elementary school, therefore, the proposed Special Exception use satisfies the PATR test.

# CE:gw

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#### The Winchester School

17320 Georgia Avenue Olney, Maryland

#### TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The following Transportation Management Plan (TMP) describes the transportation management strategies to be employed by The Winchester School in the implementation of its proposal for a new elementary school campus located in Olney for a maximum of 175 children in grades 1 through 6.

## **Background**

The site for the proposed Olney campus consists of approximately two acres and has one point of access that is located along Georgia Avenue. Plans for the campus involve retention of an existing residence that will be converted to educational use, and construction of an approximately 12,000 square foot, one-story extension to the rear of the existing structure. The existing residential entrance and driveway off of Georgia Avenue is planned to be widened for two-way vehicular movement and provides access to a twenty-two (22) space parking area located behind the school building along with a drop-off/pick-up area near the rear entrance of the school. Three (3) visitor spaces would also be provided along the drive near the front of the school.

The School will be staffed by a Director, an Assistant Director, a secretary, and twelve teachers. All fifteen staff members will arrive at 7:00AM and fourteen will depart at 3:15 PM. In addition, there will be twelve after-school staff members, eight of which will arrive at 3:00PM and the remaining four will arrive at 3:30 PM. Four of the staff will depart at 5:00 PM, and the remaining nine staff will depart at 6:00PM. Periodically, educational specialists (e.g., music teacher, arts instructor, etc.) will visit the school to conduct classes in specialized programs, but these visits will be outside of the peak periods.

All pupils will arrive between 7:00AM and 8:00AM. Approximately 36% of the students will depart between 3:00PM and 5:00PM, with the remaining children departing by 6:00PM (subject to final determination of bus schedules).

#### Personnel

The Winchester School will designate a minimum of one staff member to act as School Transportation Coordinator (STC), whose primary responsibility will be to manage and implement the TMP at the School. The STC will act as a liaison with faculty/staff, parents, bus operators, and other interested persons to facilitate the programs described in this TMP. The STC will also continually analyze the busing operation, the pick-up/drop-off operation, and staff schedule to implement improvements to the operation of the school in order to minimize the impact of the school operation on the surrounding area. The performance of the STC will be evaluated annually and

refinements made to improve the overall operation in light of past successful features and projected trends in school population and programs.

### **Program**

The TMP for The Winchester School provides strict guidelines and policies for managing the following elements of the school transportation system:

- Access and Circulation
- Bus Transportation
- Carpool Operations
- Queue Management Mechanisms
- Parking Policies
- Delivery and Service Vehicles
- Overall Safety Considerations
- Enforcement and Community Coordination
- Special Events Management
- Initial Assessment
- Monitoring for Compliance with TMP

The following sections present the specific guidelines for each of the above components of the TMP.

#### Access and Circulation

- Access to the School will be provided via a single right-in/right-out driveway onto Georgia Avenue, the driveway which currently serves the single family residence located on the site. Passenger vehicles and buses approaching the site from the south can make a "U" turn at the Georgia Avenue/Prince Philip Drive/Hines Road signalized intersection and then enter the School as a southbound right turn movement. All vehicles exit the site as right turns (since Georgia Avenue is median divided); these vehicles can then proceed southbound on Georgia Avenue toward Wheaton or make a "U" turn at the signalized intersection at Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road (or at the median break opposite Cherry Valley Drive) to travel northbound.
- No school-associated off-site vehicle stopping (except for turning movements in the left turn storage bays located in the Georgia Avenue median), waiting, or queuing within the Georgia Avenue right-of-way will be permitted to occur at any time.

#### **Bus Transportation**

The School proposes to undertake a significant busing program of approximately 117 children (at maximum enrollment), or two-thirds of the student body, in order to reduce site-generated traffic. Students will be picked up at multiple points in the County and will be delivered to the school by buses in order to reduce site trips

through the Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road and Georgia Avenue/Prince Philip Drive/Hines Road intersections during the AM peak period.

- The students whose residences are located south of the school site will be not be allowed to access the school via passenger vehicle during AM and PM peak periods. The school intends to provide three buses, which will pick up and drop off students at various sites located south of the site.
- These buses (a total of three (3) at maximum enrollment) will not be stored on the campus overnight nor during the school day; the buses will depart after the morning drop-off so as not to impact the Georgia Avenue/Old Baltimore Road intersection, and the buses will return in the afternoon for the PM pick-up. Their arrival and departures will be coordinated to avoid conflicts with passenger cars on the campus, and a separate loading area is designated for the buses along the eastern side of the rear parking area.

# **Carpool Operations**

- For the remaining one-third of the student body located north of the school that is
  expected to arrive by passenger car, the School Transportation Coordinator (STC)
  will implement a school ridesharing promotion program to meet the required car pool
  goals and to manage and monitor the school carpool operations.
- Vehicular access to the school during peak periods will be permitted only to vehicles that have a unique identifiable vehicle permit which is issued by the school only to those students whose residences are located north of the school. A staff member will record the permit number of each vehicle that enters the site during the AM peak period and will maintain these records in a notebook available for monitoring.
- The STC will maintain an updated list of all student residences for the purpose of issuing the Winchester School vehicular permit. The STC will maintain the updated list along with the corresponding vehicle permit numbers, in a format that is easily readable for monitoring to be conducted by M-NCPPC transportation monitors.
- The STC will promote carpooling by using address information to identify clusters of families north of the school that are close enough to each other to form a carpooling group. Once these groups are identified, the STC will contact the families to actively encourage these formations. The STC will stress the convenience factor and the traffic reduction impacts as benefits to carpooling. In addition, the STC will distribute school directories for parents to peruse to form their own carpooling groups. This process will be initiated prior to the school year and will be continued throughout the school year.
- As part of the formal parent orientation program conducted at the School prior to the beginning of each school year, the STC will make a presentation to the parents regarding adherence to the busing and carpooling policy, including the benefits of

carpooling. The STC will stress the convenience factor and the traffic reduction impacts as benefits to carpooling and use of buses.

- The STC will also distribute school directories to parents to assist them in forming their own carpooling groups. These directories will also provide specific student information about grade levels and activities that the children are involved in to help parents form their carpool arrangements. This process will be initiated prior to the school year and will be continued throughout the school year.
- Student pick-up, drop-off, parking, and queuing operations will occur completely onsite. No carpool pick-up, drop-off, parking or queuing operations will occur on Georgia Avenue, Rock Hill Lane, or Cherry Valley Drive. The proposed site configuration will accommodate all pick-up, drop-off, parking or queuing operations on-site.
- During the AM peak period, faculty and staff will be required to arrive before 7:00AM. Classes for all six grades will begin at 8:15AM.
- All vehicles enter the site via a right turn onto the site driveway and proceed to the
  rear of the school to discharge students from the passenger side of the vehicle, in a
  designated location selected to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and
  circulating vehicles. All vehicles then exit the site as a right turn movement onto
  southbound Georgia Avenue.

# Queue Management Mechanisms

- The peak afternoon student pick-ups occur between 4:00PM-6:00PM. Within the peak period and based on the traffic pattern at the existing school, it is anticipated that in the *peak hour* approximately 55% of the 58 students (or 32 students) transported by passenger vehicle to the new campus will depart after 5:00PM.
- As indicated in the Traffic Study, based on observations of pick-up queues at other private schools, queuing space for approximately 40% of the students departing in the peak hour has been determined as a reasonable measure of the required queue length, given the dynamic process of arriving and departing vehicles. Applying this percentage to the 32 students yields a required vehicle queue storage length of (32) x (0.4) = 13 vehicles. NOTE: The buses have there own storage area. This equates to a storage distance of approximately (20) x (13) = 260 feet that is required. The site provides for approximately 400 feet of storage between the Georgia Avenue right-of-way line and the rear of the bus pick-up/drop-off area, which could accommodate 20 (400/20) vehicles. Therefore, there is adequate queuing distance on site to accommodate the anticipated vehicle queues.
- During the PM peak hour, approximately 3 staff members will manage the pick-up operations, with two vehicles being loaded at a time. At least one staff member will be assigned direct incoming vehicles to maintain a storage distance of 20 feet per

vehicle. The STC will monitor the utilization of these staff members to efficiently manage the operations and adjust the number of these staff members accordingly throughout the year. One staff member will record the permit number of each vehicle which enters the site during the PM peak period, and these records will be kept in a notebook for monitoring purposes.

# **Parking Policies**

- Adequate on-site parking is provided to meet the parking needs of faculty/staff, parents and visitors driving to The Winchester School. Parent visits to the school will be limited to off-peak hours, except for those vehicles located to the north of the school which have Winchester School stickers that permit student drop-offs/pick-ups. Visitor periods will also be directed toward non-peak hours.
- Parking for faculty/staff, parents and visitors will be prohibited on Rock Hill Lane (a private driveway), or on Cherry Valley Drive at all times.
- During the AM peak period, faculty and staff will be required to arrive and park before 7:00AM and utilize the employee parking lot.
- Faculty and staff will be required to park in the employee parking area and not leave during the PM carpool operations.

# **Delivery and Service Vehicles**

 All deliveries and refuse collection shall be scheduled to occur between 9:30AM and 5:00PM, Monday – Friday, but not between 2:30 – 3:30PM.

# **Overall Safety Considerations**

- The Winchester School will coordinate with Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation to install appropriate signs (school zone, etc.) along Georgia Avenue at the approach to the school entrance.
- The Winchester School will provide staff on-site in front of the School to manage the AM and PM carpool operations and to ensure that there are no back-ups onto Georgia Avenue.
- All pick-up and drop-off operations will occur on-site behind the building and on the passenger side of the vehicles.

# **Enforcement and Community Coordination**

 The Winchester School will require parents to sign an agreement as part of the enrollment contracts that will require parents to obey local traffic laws and The Winchester School busing, carpool, and parking policies as detailed in this TMP. Disregard of the busing, carpool and/or parking policies in the TMP shall result in a consultation with school administration, including a possible conference with the Head of School. Violation of this rule will result in sanctions to be imposed at the discretion and determination of the Head of School, including potential expulsion. These sanctions will apply as well to the loading or unloading of children from School grounds indirectly to cars parked or stopped on Rock Hill Lane.

• The Winchester School will respond promptly to any concern or complaint expressed by a neighbor in person, by phone, or by mail. The Winchester School has operated for 33 years at four locations under four special exceptions and has never had a complaint nor violation notice lodged against it. The School intends to continue to operate in the same fashion in the future.

## **Special Events Management**

- There will be one "Back to School Night" that will occur annually at the Winchester School. Parking will be provided at a remote site with shuttle bus service provided, or "Back to School" will be provided one grade level (30 students) per night with parents car pooling in order not to exceed available on-site parking. Any other evening events that involve a large audience will be scheduled to take place in local churches or public schools. Parent/teacher conferences will be held during regular school hours, with conferences held for one class per day, outside of peak periods.
- The school building and facilities will not be rented out for non-school events.

#### **Initial Assessment**

• During the first 20 school days after school opening, the Winchester School is to fully assess the on-site peak hour vehicular operations in order to ensure full compliance with the TMP. This will include recordation of the Winchester School permit number of each vehicle that enters the site during peak periods. If necessary, the Winchester School is to undertake additional management and operational steps as may be necessary to assure reasonably prompt compliance with the TMP, which may include, but not necessarily limited to, one or more of the following: (1) additional on-site staff to manage morning and afternoon queuing; (2) changes in arrival and dismissal times (increased staggering of student arrival and departures); (3) enhanced efforts to increase student per vehicle ratios for those areas in which student car pooling is allowed; (4) modification of vehicular management operational requirements for parents (instructions to drivers); (5) use of off-site satellite areas.

# **Monitoring for Compliance With TMP**

• In order to ensure compliance with the provisions of this TMP, the school will post a bond to cover twelve (12) days of monitoring by the M-NCPPC staff designee.

Monitoring is understood to occur for three consecutive months once the School has completed 20 school days after the initial school opening. Once compliance with the

terms of this TMP has been verified by M-NCPPC transportation staff, the M-NCPPC monitoring will occur every three months, assuming the TMP goals are met. To facilitate this monitoring by the M-NCPPC staff, the Winchester School agrees to provide the updated student residence information and corresponding Winchester School permit information to the M-NCPPC on a confidential basis to assist in the monitoring effort. In addition, the Winchester School agrees to make available the logs of entering peak period vehicles as requested by M-NCPPC staff.

