



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning

January 13, 2005

MEMORANDUM-MANDATORY REFERRAL

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JAC*

FROM: Glenn R. Kreger, Team Leader, Silver Spring/Takoma Park (301/495-4653) *GK*
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT:

1. Forest Conservation Plan: Northeast Consortium (Brookview) Elementary School – 1100 Corliss Street and I-495, R-90 Zone, East Silver Spring Master Plan
2. Mandatory Referral No. 04107-MCPS-1: Northeast Consortium (Brookview) Elementary School – 1100 Corliss Street and I-495, R-90 Zone, East Silver Spring Master Plan

FILING DATE: November 29, 2004

STAFF RECOMMENDATION #1: Approve Forest Conservation Plan (see Attachment 12)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION #2: Approve transmittal of the following comments to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

1. Re-construct the concrete stairs and railing leading from the site to Hedin Drive (via a path between 9822 and 9824 Hedin Drive) and the asphalt trail leading to the stairs.
2. Provide ramps for the painted crosswalk across the entrance to the student drop-off area, connecting Corliss Street directly with the front entrance to the school.
3. Replace approximately twelve evergreen trees (pines and hemlocks) along the southern edge of the student drop-off area with deciduous trees.
4. Dedicate 25' in additional right-of-way along the east side of Corliss Street to accommodate the reconfiguration of the street and indicate the ultimate right-of-way on the site development plan. Provide a crosswalk on Corliss Street at Hedin Drive.
5. Address any concerns identified by the State Highway Administration or Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation.

6. Finalize the shared parking arrangement with the Oakview Pool in a written agreement before seeking a building permit and record an access easement for the pool.
7. Clearly identify and label the park athletic field and access on the plans for the school and indicate a permanent maintenance access for the field.
8. Design and construct the permanent asphalt path that will be used for maintenance access to the park at the width (8' minimum) and thickness needed to support the M-NCPPC's large maintenance vehicles.
9. Delete the playground furthest to the east (i.e., closest to the ballfields), leaving four "fiber mulched playgrounds." At least one of the remaining playgrounds should be suitable for elementary school students (K-5) and be available to the community when school is not in session.
10. During construction, the MCPS should either maintain safe and consistent access to the park for the M-NCPPC's large maintenance vehicles or mow the site and collect trash according to the schedule prescribed in the attached memorandum from the Park Planning and Resource Analysis staff.
11. Ensure public safety on the entire park/school site during construction of the new school by coordinating with the Park Police, County Police and the contractor.
12. Reduce the intensity of the proposed parking lot lighting to levels more appropriate for a school in a residential neighborhood, in accordance with the recommended practices of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).
13. Coordinate with the M-NCPPC regarding the provision of permanent signage at the entrance driveway into the new school so that the identity of the park is maintained. During construction, a temporary sign should be posted at the project entrance with contact information for the project.
14. Resubdivide the remaining property along the east side of the reconstructed Corliss Street.
15. Provide a traffic study to identify any needed transportation improvements if enrollment or staffing exceeds the proposed program, including the add-alternates (i.e., 640 students with faculty and staff, and up to 6 combined staff in the health care suite, in child care or in a Before and After Care program).
16. Submit a new Mandatory Referral if the MCPS is unable to finalize the proposed shared parking agreement with Oakview Pool, or if the final agreement is substantially different than anticipated in terms of the total number of parking spaces or the shared parking arrangements.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Location

Brookview Local Park is located at 1100 Corliss Street in East Silver Spring. The property is a triangular site that terminates Corliss Street at the southwestern corner of the park (Attachment 1). It is bordered by I-495 on the north; single family residences on the south and east; and the Oakview swimming pool and parking lot on the west side. The 7.8-acre western portion of the park is the subject of the pending Mandatory Referral application for a new elementary school.

Background

In 1955, the original Brookview Elementary School was constructed on a 7.8-acre property adjoining an existing 4.58-acre park. The school was closed in 1982. After the school site was declared surplus, it was deeded to the M-NCPPC in 1992 as an addition to the adjacent Brookview Local Park. The 1992 deed to the M-NCPPC contained the condition that the M-NCPPC would re-convey the property if the MCPS ever determined that the property was needed again for educational purposes. The deed further stipulated that Montgomery County would reimburse the M-NCPPC for the documented cost of recreational improvements and for the cost of demolishing and removing the former school building. Improvements made by the M-NCPPC to the site in 1998 and 1999 included a youth soccer field without goals, a playground, a multi-use (basketball) court, a paved trail and parking. Funding for this development included \$137,000 in Program Open Space funds and \$424,000 in Park and Planning bonds. (Note: Park reimbursement in the amount of \$560,550 was requested from the Board of Education and the funds were recently transferred.)

On December 21, 2001, the Board of Education (BOE) alerted the Montgomery County Planning Board that they would be requesting the return of the former 7.8-acre former Brookview Elementary School site for construction of a new Northeast Consortium Elementary School. The original 4.58-acre local park adjoining the school site was originally titled to the M-NCPPC. It includes a softball field which will have a soccer practice field overlay. This field area will serve the new school but stay in the M-NCPPC ownership. The MCPS is coordinating their development plans with the M-NCPPC to ensure that the new school design is compatible with the park recreational facilities and that the facilities remain accessible to the community.

On January 22, 2004, the Montgomery Planning Board approved a renovation plan for Broad Acres Local Park (Attachment 2)—to the south of Brookview Local Park—which included facilities that would replace the facilities to be lost at Brookview Local Park. The Broad Acres plan was developed in conjunction with the Broad Acres Elementary School and the community. The facilities to be removed at Brookview include the aforementioned youth soccer field (no goals), a playground, a multi-use (basketball) court, and a paved trail system. The replacement facilities to be constructed at Broad Acres include a new soccer field, a new playground (under construction), a new multi-use court, and a new paved trail system.

The FY 05-10 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) approved by the County Council for the M-NCPPC included approximately \$900,000 from FY 07-09 for the Broad Acres Local Park renovation, including the replacement facilities from Brookview. Playground construction is funded separately and is under contract. The park renovation is being coordinated with the expansion of the adjacent Broad Acres Elementary School. The school renovation is scheduled for FY 06-07. Park construction will begin in September 2006, following the completion of the school expansion. (Note: The staff has recently been informed that the MCPS may propose a more extensive school expansion than was covered by the two previous mandatory referrals for Broad Acres.)

Construction of the new Northeast Consortium (Brookview) Elementary School is scheduled for FY 05-07 with the new school to open in September 2006. The M-NCPPC expects to regain maintenance control for the park on August 1, 2006 in order to initiate refurbishing of the ballfield for the fall season. During construction of the new school, the MCPS should either maintain consistent access to the park for M-NCPPC's large maintenance vehicles or assume responsibility for mowing and collecting trash in the park according to the schedule described in the attached memorandum from the Park Planning and Resource Analysis staff. The MCPS should also convene a meeting with their contractor, County Police and the Park Police immediately after the construction contract is awarded to discuss and coordinate the provision of security on the entire park/school site during construction.

Zoning

The subject property is zoned R-90 (Attachment 3). The surrounding neighborhood is zoned R-60.

Proposed Land Uses

The MCPS proposes to construct a new elementary school to alleviate growing enrollments at the Burnt Mills and Cresthaven Elementary Schools. The new facility will provide space for Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2. It will be paired with Cresthaven Elementary School in White Oak (Attachment 4), which will serve grades 3-5 after the new elementary school opens.

The proposed elementary school is designed for an initial capacity of 541 students. It will accommodate a full-day kindergarten program and comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Six classrooms have been designed as an add-alternate to accommodate the class-size reduction initiative (Attachment 5). Portable classrooms (i.e., "learning cottages") may be utilized in the interim if funding for the additional classrooms is delayed.

Another four classrooms and a gymnasium have also been designed as an add-alternate to increase the future capacity of the school to 640 students. Schematic floor plans are included as Attachments 6 and 7. Day care may also be included in the add-alternates.

Normal hours of operation for the new elementary school will be:

- Student drop-offs (by bus and car): 8:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
- School in session: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Student pick-ups (by bus and car): 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Site Layout

The new school will be situated in the southeast corner of the site to retain as much of the existing Brookview Local Park as possible, in accordance with the desires of the community. A new 5' wide asphalt trail will be constructed around the school and through the park (Attachment 8). In order to accommodate the M-NCPPC's large maintenance equipment, the portion of the asphalt trail between the gymnasium in Alternate 1 and the ballfields should be 8' wide (minimum) with an asphalt depth that is sufficient to support a fully loaded dump truck.

The MCPS will replace the existing tennis courts with new basketball courts in accordance with the community's preference. The soccer field to be displaced by the new school will be relocated to the east and overlay with the existing softball field in the park. The school will utilize the park field for any field recreation. The park athletic field should be shown clearly on the plans for the school and a permanent access easement for the field should be indicated. The playground closest to the ballfields should be deleted because it would be within the critical root zone of a significant tree and within striking range of balls from the athletic fields. At least one of the remaining four playgrounds should have play equipment suitable for elementary school students and be available to the community after school and on weekends.

Corliss Street will be re-constructed as a bifurcated road providing access to the school. The proposed road will have a 20' wide entrance lane; a 10' wide median landscaped with ornamental trees; and a 26' wide outbound lane. A median break will provide access to the residences on the west side of the street. The MCPS acquired the two houses on the east side of Corliss Street in order to construct the bifurcated road. A 25' wide strip of additional right-of-way will be dedicated adjacent to the current 60' right-of-way. The houses acquired by the MCPS will be demolished as part of this project and the remaining property resubdivided with one lot made available for resale in the northeast corner of Corliss Street/Hedin Drive. (An outlot will be used for stormwater management during construction and ultimately dedicated to Montgomery County.)

A student drop-off area will be located to the south of the new school. A bus loop and parking lot will be located in front of the school, along with a landscaped area with flagpoles. The MCPS will reconstruct the existing pool parking lot to current standards and lease it back during the school year (see Attachment 9A). Alternatively, the MCPS may purchase the parking lot from the pool and lease it back to the pool during non-school hours (see Attachment 9B). The pool does not operate during school hours during the periods when the school year and the swim season overlap, so the facilities should not compete for parking. The MCPS is in the process of negotiating an agreement with the Oakview Pool; they expect to finalize the agreement by March 1, 2005. A public access easement will also be necessary for people to reach the Oakview Pool.

Building Design

The proposed elementary school will be a two-story building with a steel frame structure, with brick and metal cladding on the exterior facades. According to the MCPS, the school will incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles, but it will not be formally certifiable.

The main entrance to the school will be clearly identified with a front canopy. The administrative offices will be located in the front portion of the building to facilitate supervision of the entry plaza, lobby and bus loop. The pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms will be located on the first floor. The second floor mainly includes standard classrooms for Grades 1 and 2; these classrooms will have computer outlets and be designed to facilitate flexible teaching spaces. An outdoor courtyard will allow natural light into the surrounding spaces and provide a secure play area in the rare event of a facility lockdown. The courtyard will have a combination of hard surface and minor landscaping.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The MCPS worked closely with a Facilities Advisory Committee on the design of the proposed elementary school. In addition to members of the project team, several members of the Cresthaven Elementary School PTA served on the Committee. A series of community meetings over seven months were attended by parents in the affected neighborhoods (Oakview, Hillandale and Burnt Mills); representatives of the Oakview Pool; and PTA members. Park Planning staff from the Countywide Planning Division also participated as needed.

On December 3, 2004, a letter was sent by the Community-Based Planning Division to 45 civic groups and interested individuals notifying them of the Mandatory Referral filing for the proposed elementary school. No public comments were received prior to the completion of this staff report.

PROJECT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Finding #1: The proposed project is consistent with the guidance in the *Approved and Adopted East Silver Spring Master Plan*.

The December 2000 *Approved and Adopted East Silver Spring Master Plan* emphasizes the need to retain the existing single-family detached character throughout most of the planning area. The Master Plan identifies the subject property as Brookview Local Park and recommends that the M-NCPPC examine the feasibility of improving the entrance to Brookview Local Park to promote increased patronage. In light of the reversion of the school site to the MCPS and the location of the proposed elementary school, this recommendation no longer appears viable. The East Silver Spring Master Plan states that community facilities should be provided "at appropriate locations to meet the human service, educational, and other needs of the diverse community" (p. 47). The proposed park/school is consistent with this recommendation. The Master Plan is silent with regard to the rights-of-way and functional classifications for Corliss Street and Hedin Drive.

Finding #2: The proposed project is consistent with the intent and standards of the R-90 Zone.

	<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Provided</u>
Main Building from Street	30 feet	202'
Side Yard - One Side	8 feet	28'
Side Yard - Sum of Both Sides	25 feet	335' + 28' = 363'
Rear Yard	25 feet	66'
Max. Building Coverage	30%	16.40%
Max. Building Height	50'	35'
Parking Lot Setback from Residential	Same as side or building setback	25'
Interior Greenspace in Parking Lot	5%	6.60%
Required Parking Spaces (for full buildout)	70	82

Finding #3: The proposed project is compatible with existing and proposed adjacent uses in terms of the nature and size, shape, scale, height and arrangement and design of structures.

Elementary schools are frequently integral parts of residential neighborhoods. Construction of this new school essentially returns the site to its former use. The proposed facility will be a 1-2 story structure with surrounding green space and landscaping along the edge nearest the adjoining homes. The shared parking arrangement with the community pool is mutually beneficial and will help to minimize the amount of surface parking and impervious surface. The loading docks and parking for maintenance staff are appropriately located closest to the Beltway.

Finding #4: Circulation systems (vehicular and pedestrian), landscaping, open spaces, and recreational facilities are adequate, safe and efficient.

a. Traffic Impacts

The *East Silver Spring Master Plan* identified two intersections within the study area that were forecast to exceed the 1650 CLV congestion standard for the policy area by the year 2020 (Attachment 10). The Master Plan recommended road improvements, including an additional travel lane on New Hampshire Avenue and turning lanes on the approaches to these intersections.

A traffic study conducted by the applicant to determine the impact of the proposed facility on the local area traffic system was reviewed under the July 1, 2004 Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) Guidelines. It assessed the impact of the potential student enrollment if the proposed add-alternates are implemented – a maximum of 640 students – and included up to 60 children in potential day care facilities. These facilities would yield a total of 306 trips in the morning weekday peak period and 88 trips in the afternoon peak period.

In assessing future traffic conditions, the traffic study considered planned and funded improvements at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Oakview Drive. These improvements are included in the Montgomery County CIP as part of the Intersection and Spot Improvements Program (Project #50717). The improvements consist of the widening of the west leg of the intersection and improving the eastbound approach on Oakview Drive to provide a separate left lane, and a combination through and right turn lane. The CIP project is scheduled for construction in April 2005, and it is currently under review by the Transportation Planning staff.

The results of the LATR are that the existing and future traffic conditions will not exceed the current 1600 CLV congestion standard in the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Policy Area. As a result, staff considers the subject Mandatory Referral to meet the adequate public facilities test. Due to time constraints, the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) have not had time to review and comment on the LATR. Staff does not anticipate comments since the proposed project satisfies the adequate public facilities test. The MCPS should address any recommendations made by SHA and DPWT as the project proceeds.

b. Access and Circulation

Vehicular access to the school, the park and the community pool will be provided from the reconstructed Corliss Street. A median break will provide vehicular access to the existing homes on the west side of Corliss Street.

The student drop-off area has over 300' available for vehicles to queue up without impeding other inbound movements (staff estimates that only 225' is necessary). The bus loop has 260' of stacking length, which is greater than the 220' feet that the six buses are likely to need in order to avoid blocking traffic destined for the student drop-off or the parking lot.

c. Parking

The MCPS will enter into an agreement with the Oakview Pool to reconstruct the pool parking lot with 52 parking spaces built to current standards. The agreement will provide for shared parking between the two facilities, thereby reducing the amount of construction activity and the total amount of impervious surface. A public access easement will also be needed so that people can reach the Oakview Pool. Another 25 parking spaces will also be provided in the student drop-off area and several spaces will be provided for staff next to the service area in the rear of the school. The 82 total parking spaces at the school will exceed the 70 required parking spaces.

d. Bicycles

The Master Plan does not recommend any bike trails that would connect directly to the subject property. Nearby Oakview Drive provides a bike connection between the Northwest Branch Trail and New Hampshire Avenue. Children who will attend the new school are too young to bike to school (i.e., pre-kindergarten through second grade). Consequently, no bike racks will be provided at the school.

e. Pedestrian Access

The MCPS will replace the sidewalk along the east side of Corliss Street as part of the reconstruction of this road. The sidewalk will connect to a sidewalk that loops around the student drop-off area, providing pedestrian access to the school and its recreational facilities. A painted crosswalk will be provided across the entrance to the student drop-off area to alert drivers to pedestrians who choose a more direct path from Corliss Street to the school's main entrance.

The sidewalk around the student drop-off area will also enable pedestrians to access the asphalt trail that loops through the property, providing access to both the school facilities and the park. The trail spur and stairs that connect the asphalt loop trail to Hedin Drive should be reconstructed by the MCPS.

f. Landscaping, Lighting and Signage

The landscape design provides streetscaping and landscaping in the parking lot. It also seeks to buffer the school from the existing homes to the south of the property. A potential safety problem could occur if the shade from the evergreen trees proposed on the south side of the student drop-off causes ice to accumulate during the winter on the sidewalk bordering the drop-off. The proposed evergreen trees are intended to screen the existing homes to the south of the school. Changing the tree species from an evergreen to a deciduous tree can accomplish this objective while mitigating the potential problem with ice on the sidewalk.

The lighting that is proposed for the school parking lot is intended to ensure a safe environment. The public safety objective can be achieved with lower lighting levels without compromising security. The lighting program for the parking lots should be redesigned in conformance with the recommended practices of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).

As a park/school site with the school fronting the property on Corliss Street, the signage should identify the park and the school. The current park signage is a brown, pressure treated board with white routed letters mounted on a post. Consolidation and design coordination is needed with regard to the new signage for the school and the park. The school and park signage should be located on one device near the entrance driveway into the school.

g. Public Use Space and Recreational Facilities

The multi-purpose room in the new school will be accessible to the community during non-school hours. If the 4-classroom and gymnasium alternate is constructed, the community will also have use of the gym after school and on weekends. The school design includes several fiber mulched playgrounds, a paved trail and a multi-use court that will be used by the school during the day, and be available to the community after school and on weekends. The MCPS will remove the existing playground equipment and replace it with new equipment that meets current design codes. Community access to the facilities at Brookview Local Park will be maintained during and after construction of the new school.

Finding #5: The proposed project is generally consistent with environmental guidelines and requirements.

A Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) has been completed and approved for the subject property. There are several small areas of steep slopes located on the periphery of the pool site and the lot upon which the school will be constructed. There is a stream formed by outfall from the Beltway with a 125' stream valley buffer on the M-NCPPC property east of the ballfields. There are no floodplains, wetlands, critical habitats, or erodible soils on site. There are approximately 13 specimen trees in good condition and one in fair condition. There are 39 significant trees. There are also 52- 4" diameter breast high (dbh) trees of various species planted by the M-NCPPC which are in good condition.

CONCLUSION

The staff recommends approval of the forest conservation plan. In addition, the staff recommends that the Planning Board approve transmittal of the comments stated in this staff report to the Montgomery County Public Schools.

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Attachments:

1. Brookview Local Park
2. Broad Acres Local Park
3. Zoning Map
4. Vicinity Map (Brookview, Cresthaven, and Broad Acres Elementary Schools)
5. Program of Building Requirements
6. Schematic First Floor Plan
7. Schematic Second Floor Plan
8. Site Plan
- 9A. Letter from Oakview Pool dated January 5, 2005
- 9B. Letter from Oakview Pool dated January 12, 2005
10. East Silver Spring Master Plan map of forecast intersection congestion
11. Memorandum from Transportation Planning staff
12. Memorandum from Environmental Planning staff (Forest Conservation Plan, etc.)
13. Memorandum from Park Planning and Resource Analysis staff