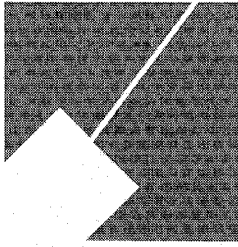


M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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June 15, 2006

MEMORANDUM – MANDATORY REFERRAL

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

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

FROM: Kristin O'Connor, Senior Planner *KO* (301.495.2172)
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 06202-MCPS-1: Gymnasium Addition for
Burning Tree Elementary School – 7900 Beech Tree Road, R-90 Zone,
1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan

FILING DATE: April 26, 2006

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with the following comments:

1. Submit an easement agreement to the M-NCPPC for the parking use.
2. Minimize impact on ballfield use during the construction of the gymnasium and the associated parking lot.
3. Prohibit the storage of materials or equipment on park property without prior approval from the Park Manager or Inspector.
4. Obtain approval by the M-NCPPC of the final Tree Save Plan prior to issuance of sediment and erosion control permits.

Incorporate the above comments into the application for the park construction permit to be issued by the M-NCPPC Park Construction Section.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposed gymnasium addition at Burning Tree Elementary School is designed to meet MCPS educational specifications. It is located in the northwest end of the existing building. The gymnasium is designed to have an entrance lobby, a physical education office, three (3) indoor storage facilities, and an outdoor storage area. Two existing doors, separating the school facility, can be locked during after-hour activities to provide security for the school.

The proposed gymnasium construction and associated parking lot expansion will increase the total gross building square footage to 67,265 square feet (up from 60,848 square feet). The expanded parking lot will add twenty-four new spaces for a total of sixty-two spaces, four of which are to be Americans with Disabilities Act compliant. The gymnasium will include six (6) basketball goals for multiple court arrangements, four (4) climbing ropes, a chinning bar, and a horizontal bar. Five (5) floor sleeves will provide anchors for volleyball poles in multiple court arrangements. The floors will be solid wood striped for basketball and volleyball courts, safety pads, painted sound blocks for the walls, and an exposed ceiling. All areas are designed to meet national and local building codes including fire, safety, accessibility, and health standards.

The MCPS will request an easement of the M-NCPPC to allow a portion of the expanded parking lot and storm water management facilities to occupy Commission property. The applicant's submission to the M-NCPPC states that the proposed design will also relocate a portable classroom onto the existing rear paved play area behind the school. The current location of the service vehicle access and delivery vehicle staging areas will remain unchanged, as will all student and visitor circulation patterns.

THE SITE

Burning Tree Elementary School is a park school located at 7900 Burning Tree Road in Bethesda in the Whitman cluster. The school's campus occupies land owned by the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The existing two-story school was built in 1958, and the site is improved with the school building, a bus loop, parking area, playgrounds, paved play area, four portable classrooms, and ballfields. The school is bordered on the west and south sides by residential properties. It fronts Beech Tree Road and Maryknoll Avenue on the east side and borders a local park owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) on the north side. Access to the school is through an entrance on Beech Tree Road.

The school site is 6.78 acres, and it contains two playgrounds and multi-use courts. The school currently has 18 classrooms, 525 students, a staging area for approximately ten school buses in the bus loop, and 38 parking spaces for teachers, staff, and visitors. Two softball fields with a football/soccer overlay, and two tennis courts are located on the adjacent park property owned by the M-NCPPC. The joint property line runs along the northern edge of the school property. Approximately 29 parking spaces are available for park patrons at Burning Tree Local Park. The MCPS and the M-NCPPC are discussing terms by which shared-use of the adjacent recreational fields and associated surface parking can be managed.

PARK IMPACTS

The MCPS initially planned to remove a tree on park property with the parking lot addition. Two other trees were in jeopardy of being lost due to the construction of the parking lot. The MCPS submitted a revised plan to protect the trees. The M-NCPPC staff encouraged MCPS to relocate the first five (5) parking spaces (in the proposed 5 grouping) and the first four (4) parking spaces (in the proposed 11 grouping) to maintain the health of the 20" and the 21" Sugar Maples. In addition, the 27" Pin Oak tree will also be saved with tree protection measures.

Stormwater management for the gymnasium and parking lot addition is proposed in the form of a water quality infiltration trench. Run-off from the new roof and parking lot will be directed to a catch basin. The catch basin will be designed as a flow-splitter structure to direct run-off to the infiltration trench. Staff from our Parks Department worked with MCPS to remove the facility from the Burning Tree Local Park site and locate the trench onto MCPS property. The use of ballfields at Burning Tree Local Park cannot not be interrupted during the construction of the gymnasium addition and the associated parking lot.

ANALYSIS

MASTER PLAN

Burning Tree Elementary School is located in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan area. The 1990 Master Plan offers the following guidance for school additions:

- The mandatory referral process should be used to ensure that proposals for school modernization, additions and reuse are compatible with the surrounding area. Issues to address include:
 - *Traffic and parking controls*
 - *Sensitive siting of additions*
 - *Landscaping and parking lot screening*

Traffic and Parking: The gymnasium addition is not expected to generate any additional traffic or parking challenges. The addition will not add more students to the school. The gymnasium and parking addition are being proposed for existing MCPS programs.

Sensitivity Siting: Stormwater management for the addition is proposed in the form of a water quality infiltration trench. Run-off from the new roof and parking lot will be directed downhill on MCPS property.

Landscaping and Parking Lot Screening: Three (3) trees screen the school's existing parking lot from the ballfields. The M-NCPPC staff worked with MCPS staff to relocate the parking spaces to preserve the trees that buffer the parking from the ballfield. The Plan recommends that the quality of the open space should be preserved by "examining ways to protect mature trees as a part of the [plan review] procedure prior to issuance of a permit to clear and strip trees from the site" (p.152).

While not specifically addressing the addition to Burning Tree Elementary School or the improvements to the Local Park, the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan (1990) does acknowledge that "existing park and school fields should be preserved," (p. 153). The Plan recognizes that "as the down-County area becomes increasingly urbanized, it is even more important to safeguard the parks and open spaces that provide breathing room for the residents" (152). The Master Plan supports the preservation of all open space and recognizes "that parks and open spaces are essential ingredients of the quality of life in Chevy Chase" (p. 152).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR THE R-90 ZONE

	Permitted	Existing	Proposed
Minimum Lot Area	9,000	295,438 square feet	295,438 square feet
Setbacks			
Front	30 feet	30 feet	30 feet
Side	8 feet	39.6 feet	37.2 feet
Rear	25 feet	247.3 feet	247.3 feet
Height Limits	35 feet	24 feet	26 feet, 1 inch
Coverage	30% max	15.2%	17.4%

The proposed school modernization meets the setbacks, the height limits, and the coverage of the R-90 Zone.

TRANSPORTATION

School Location, Access, Circulation, and Parking

The proposed gymnasium construction and associated parking lot expansion will increase the total gross building square footage to 67,265 square feet (up from 60,848 square feet). The expanded parking lot will add twenty-four new spaces for a total of sixty-two spaces, four of which are to be Americans with Disabilities Act compliant.

The MCPS will request an easement from the M-NCPPC to allow a portion of the expanded parking lot to occupy Commission property. The applicant's submission to the M-NCPPC states that the proposed design will also relocate a portable classroom onto the existing rear paved play area behind the school. The current location of the service vehicle access and delivery vehicle staging areas will remain unchanged, as will all student and visitor circulation patterns.

The proposed parking lot design increases the number of available parking spaces. The M-NCPPC suggests that the MCPS discuss with the Parks Department how best to share the surface parking lot(s). One option would be to consider allowing school staff and visitors access to the park surface lot during normal school operating hours. In exchange, park patrons would be able to use the expanded school parking lot when school is not in session. In addition, staff recommends that the MCPS coordinate with the DPS to ensure all revisions result in efficient operational guidance regarding both circulation and shared parking arrangements for both staff and park patrons (e.g. appropriate signage and pavement markings) is included in the renovation.

Local Area Transportation Review

A traffic study to meet Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) requirements is not needed, as the proposed school improvements are not expected to increase peak hour trips to the site. The total number of students is to remain the same (currently 525 enrolled with facilities designed to accommodate 428 students). Future enrollment projections anticipate a student population of 438 by September 2011. A traffic study would be required if future expansion and renovation plans increase student enrollment or the number of anticipated peak hour trips above their current levels.

ENVIRONMENT

A two-acre forest stand dominated by mature Tulip Poplars was left after construction of the existing building in the late 1950's. Thirty-three trees (1 specimen and 21 significant) were catalogued on the Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD).

A Forest Conservation Plan exemption was issued for this site. This is a modification of an existing developed property with less than 5,000 square feet of forest cleared. No forest clearing is needed within a stream buffer or on property subject to Special Protection Area Water Quality Plan requirements. It does not require a new Preliminary Plan. A Tree Save Plan has been submitted as part of the forest conservation requirement and must be approved prior to the issuance of a sediment and erosion control permit. In addition, a stormwater management concept plan is approved for this project. There are no streams, wetlands, steep slopes, or erodible soils present on this site. This site is not in a Special Protection Area or Primary Management Area.

The MCPS submitted to the County Council a strategic plan entitled *Green Schools Focus*, as required by the County Environmental Policy. The MCPS pledged, in the strategic plan, to "improve system design through introducing latest high performance green building technologies (LEED) to improve sustainability and performance of buildings and reduce operating costs." The mechanical and electrical design of the new addition will incorporate the ANSI/ASHRAE/IES Energy Efficient Design for New Building.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

MCPS held a series of meetings with the Facility Advisory Committee (see Attachment 9). Several design alternatives were developed and evaluated. The proposed plans were reviewed and modified by the Advisory Committee as well as our Parks Department staff. Staff recommends that the MCPS ensure all revisions result in efficient operational guidance regarding both circulation and shared parking arrangements for both staff and park patrons. The community should not bear excessive parking in their neighborhood as a result of an evening or weekend school event that coincides with normal park operations. The Bradley Boulevard Citizens Association, Burning Tree Civic Association, Bannockburn Citizens Association, West Bethesda Park Citizens Association, Whittier Woods Civic Association, Riverway Homeowners Association, Woodhaven Citizens Association, and the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition were notified of the June 29, 2006, hearing by staff. To date, there have not been any concerns expressed by the surrounding communities regarding this project.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information provided by the applicant and the analysis in this report, staff concludes that the proposed project would provide Burning Tree Elementary School with a gymnasium and parking addition. Staff worked with the MCPS, the M-NCPPC Park Manager for Burning Tree Local Park, the Natural Resources Park Arborist, the Park Construction Section Manager, and Park Development staff. All parties worked to resolve the environmental, recreational, and park impacts of the proposed project.

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Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Existing Site Plan
3. Proposed Site Plan
4. Existing Floor Plan
5. Proposed Floor Plan
6. Proposed Floor Plan Enlarged
7. North and South Elevations
8. West Elevation
9. Faculty Advisory Committee/Membership Committee
10. Memorandum from Environmental Planning
11. Memorandum from Park Development
12. Memorandum from Transportation Planning

BURNING TREE E.S. (06202-MCPS-1)



Map compiled on June 14, 2006 at 4:10 PM | Site located on base sheet no - 210NW07

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Key Map



Research & Technology Center



1 inch = 400 feet
1 : 4800