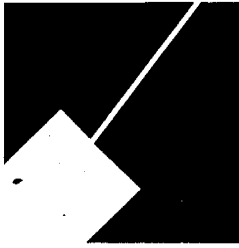


M-NCPPC



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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July 14, 2005

**MEMORANDUM – MANDATORY REFERRAL**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** John Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JC*  
Glenn Kreger, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader *GK*

**FROM:** Pamela Johnson, Planner Coordinator (301-495-4590) *PJ*  
Community-Based Planning Division

**SUBJECT:** Mandatory Referral No. 05105-MCPS-1: Broad Acres Elementary School Additions and Alterations - 710 Beacon Road, Silver Spring, R-60 Zone, East Silver Spring Master Plan

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVAL to transmit comments to the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

A. As part of the review of the Mandatory Referral, the following items should be incorporated:

1. MCPS should work with the adjoining property owner to provide an additional paved path to the school from the apartments to the south where there is currently an informal path.
2. MCPS should submit a new Mandatory Referral if there is a future building expansion or an increase of students above currently projected enrollment levels of 550.
3. Immediately notify the M-NCPPC if the construction schedule will change from what is currently proposed so that the Park Permit Office can adequately plan for ballfield users to be accommodated at other sites.

B. As conditions for use of Broad Acres Local Park, MCPS will be required to incorporate the following:

1. MCPS will be required to obtain a permit from Park Development and may be requested to modify its parking lot layout.
2. MCPS should work with Park Development to ensure that an appropriate path and surface for park vehicles is provided to Broad Acres Park from the parking lot.

3. MCPS should provide the following signage to be approved by Park Development:
  - a. During construction, signs indicating that the school and parking lot for the school and park are closed, that ballfields 1, 2, and 3 are closed for permitted games, and that the ballfields and park are open for walk-on use.
  - b. After the completion of construction, a directional sign marking the entrances to the school and park (cost to be shared with the M-NCPPC).

## **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The 6.2-acre site is located on R-60 zoned land on Beacon Road near its intersection with Northampton Road, and close to the boundary with Prince George's County. The property is bordered on the northeast by Broad Acres Local Park, on the east by St. Camillus Catholic Church and apartments along Beacon Road, on the south by several apartment buildings, and on the west by Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. Other apartment buildings and single-family homes are also located in the vicinity of the school. The school site is mostly flat, and has a grove of trees along its southwest corner at the edge of Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park.

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

MCPS wants to begin construction in mid-August 2005 on major renovations, modernizations and additions to Broad Acres Elementary School. The overall project will increase the size of the school about 21,300 square feet from approximately 66,500 square feet to 87,800 square feet. The proposal will move children from 11 portable classrooms now on the site to 13 new, permanent classrooms, and meet requirements for smaller class sizes and all-day kindergarten. A new kitchen/multi-purpose room will be added, the administration area will be expanded and relocated, and other building systems will be renovated and modernized. Circulation and parking, landscaping, and playground improvements are planned as well as improvements to utilities and stormwater management. The current Mandatory Referral involves a three-classroom Mandatory Referral addition and other related improvements. This Mandatory Referral is for portions of the overall project in addition to the segments already reviewed in Mandatory Referrals considered by the Planning Board and by administrative review.

Enrollment at the school is currently 519 students, with 200 being taught in portable classrooms. With the renovations and expansions, the enrollment is projected to be 550. The number of full-time staff is expected to remain at 80, with 14 part-time staff. The proposed structure will be a one-story, brick extension of the existing building, of a color blending with the existing building. The school entrance will feature an ornamental glazed glass tile.

The 6.2-acre site is adjacent to Broad Acres Local Park, owned by the M-NCPPC. Part of the northwest corner of the school grounds and parking area is within the M-NCPPC property lines. The proposal involves a transfer of .09 acres of the M-NCPPC land to MCPS. (The deed for this transaction was transferred on June 14, 2005.)

A Memorandum of Understanding is now being prepared so that the M-NCPPC can continue to use this land. A Facility Plan for the park was approved January 15, 2004, for renovation of the park, with funding available for construction as early as July 2006. The renovation will replace the existing softball field #1 with a full-size soccer field, and provide a new circular trail, a plaza and seating areas, a multi-use court and landscaping.

### **Previous Mandatory Referrals**

Beginning in 2001, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has submitted three Mandatory Referrals in a major effort to upgrade and modernize Broad Acres Elementary School, to transfer students in portable classrooms to permanent ones, and to provide all-day kindergarten.

#### **1. Mandatory Referral No. #02102-MCPS-1, June 2002**

On June 13, 2002, the Planning Board approved transmittal of comments to the Montgomery County Public Schools on its proposed addition of about 11,580 square feet, expanding the school from an existing 66,500 square feet to 78,080 square feet. This addition (called the "base bid") included six classrooms at the southeast corner of the building, a new kitchen and multi-purpose room at the north end, and the relocation and enlargement of the administration area with three small front additions. This project was to accommodate the existing 570-student enrollment, including 210 students taught in ten portable classrooms (at that time) on site and all-day kindergarten. No enrollment increase was anticipated.

Related proposals included improved stormwater management, upgraded utilities, renovated restrooms, utilities, retrofitting for energy efficiency, and other modernizations. New sidewalks were to link the building and outdoor areas as well as connect Beacon Drive, the parking area and drop-off areas, and the entrance to Broad Acres Local Park. Other circulation improvements consisted of revamping the parking lot and increasing the spaces from 70 to 72, separating the school bus loop and faculty parking area from the parent parking areas, and extending Beacon Road to the private driveway of the adjacent St. Camillus Church. Also, nearly 5,900 square feet of public right-of-way was to be dedicated adjacent to Beacon Road at the school's entrance. An asphalt playground at the southern end of the site would be removed because of the classroom addition, but would be replaced by several nearby pervious playgrounds, including one within Broad Acres Park.

The Planning Board transmitted comments on the proposal in its June 26, 2002 letter to MCPS. These comments are summarized below with the current status of each indicated in italics:

1. Provide two additional paved paths to the neighborhood to the south. *One new path continues to be desirable, as indicated in the currently recommended comments. Staff agrees with MCPS that the second is unnecessary.*
2. Provide for a path to the park from Beacon Drive. *Complied.*
3. Provide additional trees in the parking lot, one for each 40 feet of the parking lot's perimeter. *Complied.*

4. Provide directional and entry signs for the park and school along Beacon Drive, and coordinate the location and design of the signs with the park and school facility managers. *Have provided most requested signs; others requested in the currently recommended comments.*
5. Modify the proposed grading to prevent intrusion on the root zone of major trees. *Complied.*
6. Submit a new Mandatory Referral, if there is future building expansion or an increase of students above current enrollment levels. *Requested in the currently recommended comments.*

As conditions for use of Broad Acres Local Park, MCPS was required to:

7. Prior to beginning of construction, finalize the conveyance of 4,175 feet at Broad Acres Local Park from the M-NCPPC to the Board of Education. *Complied.*
8. Prior to beginning of construction, finalize the conveyance of 29,300 square feet of M-NCPPC land during construction on the school property. *No longer needed. Broad Acres Elementary School will be closed from August 15, 2005 until June 21, 2006. Staging will be in school/park parking lot. The children will be taught at the Fairland Center.*
9. Provide for full soil and grass restoration of the staging area in the agreement concerning temporary use of park area, in accordance with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services standards for site restorations. *No longer needed. See response to #8.*
10. Revise the plans to include a minimum 10-foot permanent entrance to Broad Acres Local Park for maintenance and emergency vehicles. Such entrance is proposed in the extreme northeast corner of the parking lot with "No Parking" striping going directly north 55 feet long by 10 feet wide along the eastern curb line. *Discussed in preliminary manner with staff. Addressed in the currently recommended comments.*
11. Immediately notify the M-NCPPC if the construction schedule will change from what is currently proposed in order for the M-NCPPC Permit Office to adequately plan for ballfield users to be accommodated at other sites. *Addressed in the currently recommended comments.*
12. Obtain a construction permit for any construction or temporary use on M-NCPPC park property, including submittal of a Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) for Broad Acres Local Park and protection of any trees in the area. *Addressed in the currently recommended comments. The NRI/FSD has been provided and approved.*
13. Before the M-NCPPC conveys title to the 0.1 acre of parkland (see comment #7 above), MCPS shall enter into a use agreement with the M-NCPPC for the 19,266 square feet of Broad Acres Local Park that will be used on a permanent basis by MCPS to support school uses ("Parkland"). *.09 acres have been conveyed; a Memorandum of Understanding for Use is under preparation.*

The construction documents submitted May 5, 2005 reflect the basic elements approved by the Planning Board in the first Mandatory Referral. These elements include the six new classrooms, the new multi-purpose/kitchen room, the relocated and enlarged administration area and other building improvements approved in 2002 as the "base bid" are shown in the construction documents. These construction documents

also show the proposed circulation improvements, including the retrofitted parking lot, bus loop and parent parking areas separation, Beacon Road extension, and public right-of-way dedication adjacent to Beacon Road. The construction application indicates that over two dozen dogwood and red oak trees, as well as shrubbery, will be planted in the general parking area, thus easily meeting the parking requirement.

## **2. Mandatory Referral No. 02102-MCPS-1 (June 2003)**

On June 16, 2003, revisions to the previously approved Mandatory Referral were approved through the administrative review process. This "add-alternate" revision provided for another four classrooms in the southern quadrant of the building complex, to expand the school by 6,340 square feet to 84,430 square feet; a total enrollment of 550 was projected. Along with its approval, the Mandatory Referral included the following comments:

1. Revise all plans to be submitted for review at the time of building permit application to reflect the changes agreed to and shown on the revised plans as well as other changes recommended in the following comments. *Complied.*
2. Construct an asphalt path from Beacon Drive to the Broad Acres Local Park. *Complied.*
3. Show and provide a path from the rear of the school to the apartment area to conform to Planning Board comment #1 in their Mandatory Referral letter of June 26, 2002. *Deemed unadvisable for security reasons; MCPS seeks to direct access to a single control point at the front of school.*
4. Establish the limit of disturbance area at the rear of the building to maintain the asphalt play areas, including retention of at least 75% of the root zone area around tree number 29, a Red Oak. *Mostly complied; determined probably infeasible for tree #29.*
5. The area shown for a "Future Addition" on plan number C.11 is not approved as part of this Mandatory Referral review. Any further additions to the building or changes on the site will require the submittal of a new Mandatory Referral application. *Complied through the current Referral. Comment applies to any future expansions or enrollment increases.*

As conditions for use of Broad Acres Local Park, MCPS is required to:

6. Provide a sign to inform the public that Broad Acres Local Park is open during construction. Parks staff may also request cautionary language or information about parking if needed. *Addressed by the currently recommended comments.*
7. Revise the construction drawing to state that the "contractor shall provide and maintain a 20-foot wide path for M-NCPPC vehicles use." *Addressed by the currently recommended comments.*
8. Resolve agreements concerning Planning Board comments #7-9 and #11-13 in the initial Mandatory Referral before school construction begins. *Complied or no longer needed. See responses to prior Planning Board comments #7-9 and 11-13.*

## **Status of Second Mandatory Referral**

The construction documents submitted by MCPS in May 2005 show the four additional classrooms (the "add alternate" design) approved in the June 2002 Mandatory Referral, the site and building improvements approved administratively June 2003, and additional improvements as proposed in the current Mandatory Referral.

### **3. Mandatory Referral No. 05105-1, July 2005**

In May 2005, the M-NCPPC received the third Mandatory Referral from MCPS for improvements to Broad Acres Elementary School. This Referral included three more classrooms in the southwest quadrant of the site adjacent to the other proposed additions, and would expand the school by about 3,360 square feet to nearly 87,800 square feet. The projected enrollment would remain 550. The Referral also provides a replacement asphalt playground outside the northwest corner of the building. The Referral also includes the improvements approved in the other two referrals, plus refinements to these proposals. The improvements contained in the third Referral are shown in the construction documents submitted on May 5, 2005.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Finding #1: Staff finds that the proposed project is consistent with the Approved and Adopted East Silver Spring Master Plan.**

The East Silver Spring Master Plan identifies the subject school site as well as the adjacent local park. The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan recommendations on page 47 to:

"Provide community facilities at appropriate locations to meet the human service, recreational, security, educational, and other needs of the diverse community;"

and to:

"Renovate and maintain existing facilities and provide new facilities and recreational programs for a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and interests."

Also, on page 27, the proposal is consistent with the Master Plan recommendation to:

"Restore, maintain, and improve the infrastructure and other improvements as needed of older neighborhoods by providing sidewalks, curbs, lighting, and landscaping. Consider both pedestrian access and safety when planning improvements."

**Finding #2: The proposal is consistent with the intent and standards of the R-60 (single-family residential) Zone.**

	<b>Required</b>	<b>Provided</b>
Main Building from Street	25 feet	127 feet
Side Yard (One Side)	8 feet	26 feet
Side Yard—Sum of Both Sides	18 feet	26 feet
Rear Yard	20 feet	46 feet
Maximum Building Coverage	35%	31%
Maximum Building Height	40 feet	24 feet
Front Parking Lot Setback	25 feet	127 feet
Internal Landscaping, 5% minimum in Parking Lot	2,903 sq. ft.	14,988 sq. ft.
Parking Spaces	70	72

**Finding #3: The proposal is compatible with existing and proposed adjacent uses relative to the nature and size, shape, scale, height, arrangement, and design of structures.**

Staff finds that the proposed additions will enhance the existing structure. The proposed design is compatible with both the existing building and the surrounding neighborhood, which consists primarily of apartment buildings, but also some single-family houses. Also, the replacement of the existing portables with permanent space will be a notable improvement in the functioning of the school, and should be a benefit for the students. The modernization will also provide a number of other safety, accessibility features, and other modernizations that will benefit students, faculty and the community. The shared parking with the park is mutually helpful and minimizes surface parking area and impervious surface.

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

*Traffic Impacts*

The attached memorandum by Transportation Planning staff indicates that the proposal does not need a traffic study to meet Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) requirements, as the proposed school improvements are not expected to increase peak hour trips at the site. Since the number of number of students, which is now 519, is only projected to reach 550, the number of vehicular trips to the site should substantially remain the same, and thus will not have an adverse effect on the area transportation infrastructure. Staff requests that a LATR be submitted for future Mandatory Referrals if improvements are contemplated that would increase the number of students above the 550 students currently planned on site. Other comments from Transportation Planning are in the attached memo.

*Circulation and Parking*

Staff has reviewed the proposed circulation and parking. The proposal enhances on-site circulation and parking and provides increased safety for students and vehicles by separating the bus and faculty parking loop from the student drop-off loop, and by relocating the service and delivery vehicle staging areas. The proposal also provides

additional parking for handicapped patrons and improved access to the park/school for handicapped individuals. More detail concerning circulation and parking is provided in the attached memorandum from Transportation Planning staff.

Staff has discussed with MCPS several minor adjustments to enhance the on-site parking and circulation. Park Development staff notes that MCPS will be required to obtain a Park Construction Permit from Park Development before beginning construction and may need to slightly modify its parking layout as a result of the technical review.

As discussed with MCPS representatives and mentioned in previous referrals, MCPS should work with Park Development staff to ensure that an appropriate path and surface for park vehicles is provided to the park from the parking lot. This path should be resolved before completion of the technical review process and approval of the Park Permit.

#### *Pedestrian Circulation*

The proposal will provide a substantial network of safe and accessible sidewalks linking the existing and proposed buildings and outdoor areas. As previously indicated, the current referral does provide sidewalks linking Beacon Road, the front entrance areas, the drop-off, pick-up loops, parking area, and park as the Planning Board requested in its previous Referrals. Relative to the two sidewalks requested to the apartments to the south in the area of current informal paths, staff agrees with MCPS representatives that the path to the rear of the buildings is unnecessary, and that focusing student access at the front entrance is preferable. MCPS should provide the additional paved path to the neighborhood to the south where there is currently a popular informal path, if the owners of the adjacent buildings agree to this improvement.

#### *Landscaping, Lighting and Signage*

As already indicated, the proposal provides substantial new planting of trees and shrubs for the parking lot, which enhances the school and its surroundings, and meets the requirements. This landscaping complies with the comments from the previous Referrals and also provides some buffer from the apartments to the east and south. The proposed lighting will help provide security for the parking lots, school entrance areas, pedestrian areas, and park.

MCPS has responded to comments in previous referrals by providing a Plan for proposed signage for the school and parking lot. As discussed with MCPS staff, staff recommends that MCPS provide the following signage approved by Park Development: a) During construction, signs indicating that the school and parking lot for the school and park, and that ballfields 1, 2, and 3 are closed for permitted games during the school construction, but that the ballfields and park are open for walk-on use; and (b) after the completion of construction, a directional sign marking the entrances to the school and park (cost to be shared with the M-NCPPC).

#### *Recreational Facilities*

The existing gymnasium at the school will again be available for community use during non-school hours following the renovation and addition to the school. The school design replaces one asphalt playground with another asphalt playground and several new playgrounds of various materials that will be available for community use.



Renovation of the adjacent park is expected to begin in the summer of 2006, and it will be coordinated with the school construction. The ballfields will not be able to be permitted during the school construction period, but will remain open for walk-on use. The renovation of the park will replace one of the three ballfields with a full-size soccer field, and provide a new circumferential trail, a plaza with seating areas, a multi-use court, and landscaping.

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

*Forest Conservation*

An exemption of the Forest Conservation Law was approved for this project since it will disturb less than 5,000 square feet of forested area. In a previous submission, a Tree Save Plan was required to preserve one specimen Southern Red Oak. New classrooms shown on this plan will expand the school into the tree save area and will require removal of the specimen. MCPS is planting 23 Red Oaks in the front of the school. This exceeds the number of trees required for mitigating the loss of the specimen.

*Water Quality*

This site is located in the Lower Mainstream subwatershed of the Northwest Branch watershed. The County Stream Protection Strategy lists stream conditions as fair with good overall habitat conditions. Full water quality and quantity control shall be expected to protect the integrity of the Lower Mainstem subwatershed.

*Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)*

MCPS representatives state that the school design will incorporate many LEED sustainable design strategies, but will not seek the U.S. Green Building Council LEED certification. Staff encourages the use of sustainable building design in all public projects, in keeping with LEED principles and notes that future MCPS projects could go further in promoting green building practices.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Staff sent notices of the current Mandatory Referral and of the hearing date to local citizen associations and other interested parties. To date, no comments have been received on the proposal. MCPS representatives indicate that they discussed the latest proposal at several Parent-Teacher Association meetings in the spring of 2005, and that the Association was satisfied with the proposal.

More extensive project advisory meetings were held with the community between 2000 and 2002 on the feasibility, design, and detailed schemes for the site and building plans covered by the first and second Mandatory Referrals. No adverse community comments have been received regarding the project.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on its analysis, staff believes the proposal is consistent with the Master Plan, and meets applicable environmental and transportation requirements. Also, the applicant has responded to previous Referrals as noted. The staff recommends approval of this Mandatory Referral and transmittal of the recommended comments.

PJ:ha: j:\2005 staff reports\team 1\Broad Acres

### **Attachments**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Broad Acres Elementary School Additions and Renovations
3. Broad Acres Local Park
4. Land Use Map for Broad Acres Elementary School
5. Memorandum from Transportation Planning