



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item #
4/26/07

April 12, 2007

MEMORANDUM – MANDATORY REFERRAL

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

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

Judy Daniel, Team Leader, Bethesda-Chevy Chase/North Bethesda Team
Community-Based Planning Division *JD*

FROM: Marilyn Clemens, Urban Designer (301.495.4572) *MC*
Bethesda-Chevy Chase/North Bethesda Team
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 07201-MCPS-1: Thomas Pyle Middle School –
Three-Story Classroom Addition Containing Nine Classrooms and
Improvements to Drop-Off Area, 6311 Wilson Lane, R-90 Zone,
Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan (1990)

RECOMMENDATION: Approval to transmit the following comments to Montgomery
County Public Schools (MCPS):

1. Limit the existing center driveway at the school to right-turn out only and work with the PTA to enforce this safety measure.
2. Remove the existing pavement for the decel/right turn lane into the center driveway off Wilson Lane and provide a new curb aligned with the Wilson Lane curb line to the east and west.
3. Coordinate with the SHA to install advance flashing warning signals on both eastbound and westbound Wilson Lane.
4. Coordinate with the M-NCPPC Transportation Planning unit, SHA, and DPWT on review of the LATR study. This final review will be completed by staff unless significant improvements are needed (see Attachment 5 – Transportation Planning memorandum).
5. Remove the proposed sidewalk from the critical root zone of tree no. 2, a 30-inch hickory.
6. Mitigate the loss of tree no. 3, a 32-inch hickory, on site, with one-inch caliper for each 1 inch in diameter breast height (dbh) replacement, or approximately 10-11, 2-3 inch caliper trees.

7. Consider providing additional October Glory maple shade trees between the curb and the sidewalk west of the reconfigured center drive to the bus access drive, if this can be accomplished without resubmitting the stormwater management plan to the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).
8. Replace the three October Glory maples in front of the new school addition with three redbuds, sited at least 20 feet from the face of building.
9. Provide final site and landscape plans to the M-NCPPC showing existing trees to remain, proposed landscape including additional street trees and trees planted as mitigation, new curb alignment, and corrected restriping of Wilson Lane.

THE PROPOSAL

Thomas W. Pyle Middle School was built in 1962 and modernized in 1993. The existing school building contains 136,548 square feet, and it is sited on 14.4 acres. Please see Attachment 2. Currently, 1,276 students are enrolled at the school, making it one of the largest middle schools in the County. The majority of the existing school building is two stories around a central courtyard. A lower level is incorporated into a change in grade, creating a three-story building facing the northeast side of the site. The proposed addition will be at the end of the three-story portion of the existing building and will be a “seamless” extension of the existing building. The existing elevator will be replaced by an elevator in the new addition, allowing the addition to be connected to the existing building on all three levels. The addition will provide eight classrooms and a science laboratory, and replace six portable classrooms currently on site. All existing and new classrooms will have exterior windows. In addition, the proposed plan will lengthen the student drop-off/pick-up loop for added safety and to avoid queuing along Wilson Lane. The proposed plans showing the addition are Attachments 3a-e.

THE SITE

Thomas W. Pyle Middle School is located on Wilson Lane between Whittier Boulevard on the east and Springer Road on the west (Attachment 1). The existing school building is located at the southeastern portion of the 14.4-acre site. There are currently three access points to the site from Wilson Lane, one for service, one for parent drop-off and pick-up for staff and visitors, and a third for buses and additional staff parking. The sports courts and fields are located at the north end of the site. The site slopes toward the residential area to the east. The addition will be located on the southeast portion of the site, towards Wilson Lane.

MASTER PLAN ANALYSIS

The school site is in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan area. The Thomas W. Pyle Middle School was not discussed in detail in the 1990 Plan. The Plan does endorse using public school sites as flexible resources to meet a range of community needs. The Thomas W. Pyle Middle School is in the Walt Whitman High School cluster.

CONFORMANCE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Development Standards for the R-90 Zone

Minimum Lot Area	Permitted 9,000 s.f.	Existing 628,560 s.f.	Proposed 628,560 s.f.
Setbacks			
Min. Front	30 feet	200 feet	125 feet
Min. Side	8 feet	53 feet	53 feet
Min. Rear	25 feet	500+ feet	500+ feet
Height Limits	35 feet	27 feet	27 feet
Coverage	30%	13.1%	13.8%

TRANSPORTATION

Local Area Transportation Review

A traffic study is required for the proposed school project to satisfy the 2004 Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) Guidelines, because the school will generate 30 or more total peak hour trips during the typical weekday morning and evening peak periods. Transportation Planning staff received a draft traffic study from the consultant for MCPS on April 4, 2007. Preliminary findings are summarized in the following:

The proposed increase in enrollment is projected to be relatively small, and staff continues to coordinate with other agency staff to complete the required interagency review of the LATR study.

Vehicular and School Bus Access Circulation and Parking

The proposed site plan lengthens the student pick-up/drop-off access lane and separates cars entering the drop-off loop from those exiting. This will partially alleviate blocked passage on-site and stacking on Wilson Lane. Currently, parents waiting to pick up students in the afternoon queue across the intersection of Wilson Lane and Whittier Boulevard, causing drivers traveling west to go around the queue into the path of on-coming traffic. The curb return on the center drive has been designed to discourage left turns out of the loop. The school administration and the PTA should regularly enforce the "right turn only" policy with notices to parents. Staff encourages the SHA to provide flashing warning signs on Wilson Lane at a specified distance from the cross-walk in front of the school for added safety for the students as well as the crossing guard.

Master-Planned Roadways and Bikeways

The 1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan designates Wilson Lane (MD 188) as A-83, an arterial from MacArthur Boulevard to the Bethesda CBD Boundary Line. It is a two-lane road with turning lanes at important intersections, such as Whittier Boulevard immediately to the east of the school. The Plan further recognizes that MacArthur Boulevard and Wilson Lane function as arterial roads, but it recommends that they not be widened to urban standards.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Planning recommends approval of the tree save plan with the conditions noted on page 1 and as described in Attachment 4.

Two specimen trees will be removed with this classroom addition. The school will provide mitigation for this loss on site.

Stormwater Management

A stormwater management concept plan is approved for this project.

Forest Conservation

A forest conservation plan exemption was issued, because the proposed plan is a modification of an existing developed property with no more than a total of 5,000 square feet of forest cleared.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The MCPS had three meetings with the Facility Advisory Committee beginning on July 24, 2006. The plans have been reviewed and modified by the Advisory Committee which concluded its meeting in the fall of 2006. In general, the community and the parents are pleased to have the school addition and improvements to the student drop-off/pick-up loop. To date, staff has received 30 identical e-mails in support of the planned classroom addition from parents. A sample is Attachment 5.

CONCLUSION

The proposed addition will provide Thomas W. Pyle Middle School with long awaited classroom space and an improved traffic circulation system. The additional landscape proposed will help screen the addition and the on-site circulation from the adjacent properties and provide shade over the sidewalks for pedestrians. Staff recommends approval of the revised plans dated April 9, 2007.

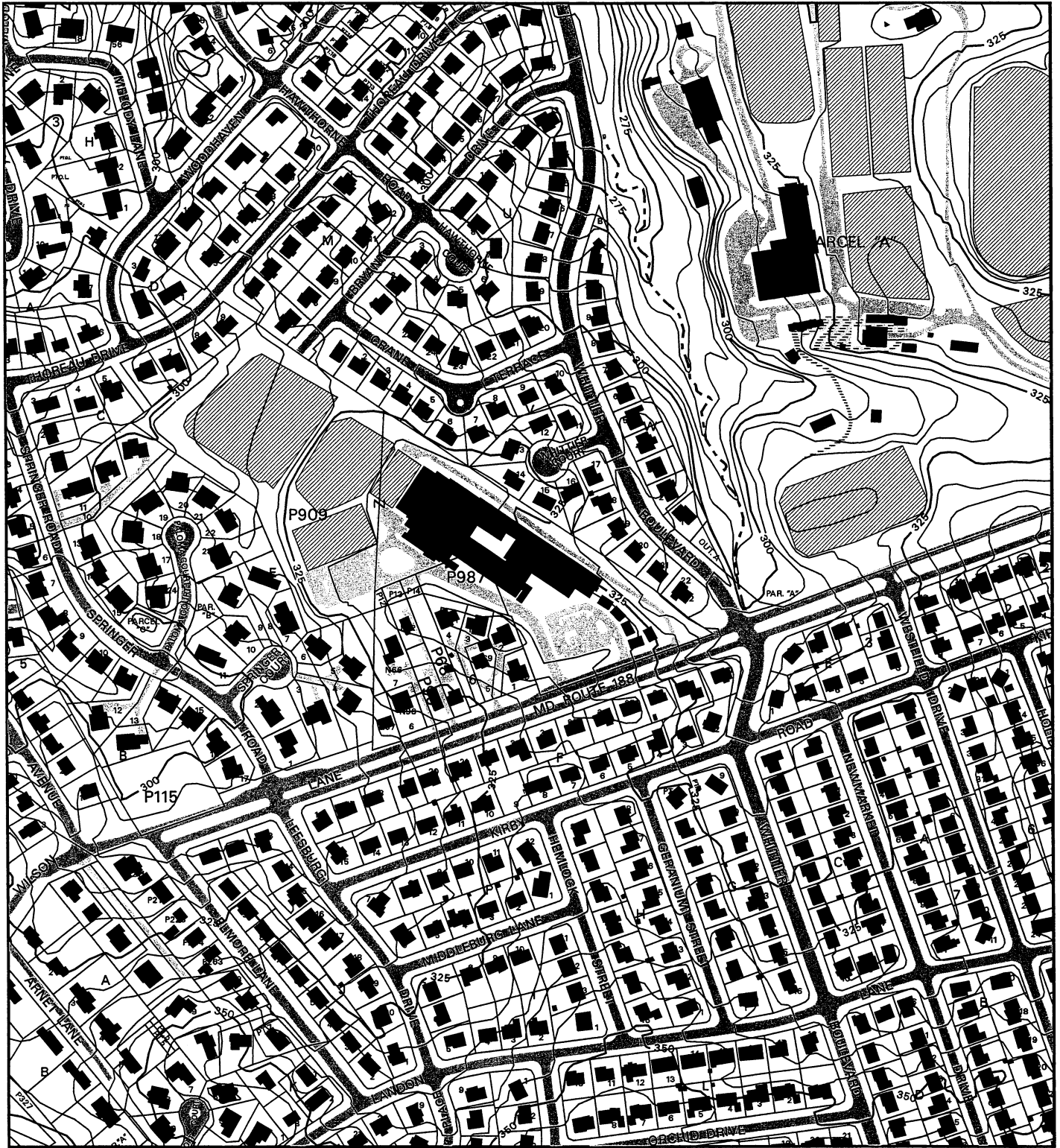
MC:ha: g:\Clemens\pyleapril2007

Attachments:

1. Thomas W. Pyle Middle School Vicinity Map
2. Existing Site Plan
3.
 - A. Proposed Site Plan
 - B. Proposed Elevation
 - C. Proposed Lower Level Floor Plan
 - D. Proposed First Floor Plan
 - E. Proposed Second Floor Plan
4. Memorandum from Environmental Planning
5. Memorandum from Transportation Planning
6. Correspondence

ATTACHMENT 1

THOMAS W. PYLE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Map compiled on April 11, 2007 at 10:40 AM | Site located on base sheet no - 210NW06

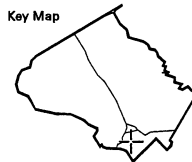
NOTICE

The planimetric, property, and topographic information shown on this map is based on copyrighted Map Products from the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning of the Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and may not be copied or reproduced without written permission from M-NCPPC.

Property lines are compiled by adjusting the property lines to topography created from aerial photography and should not be interpreted as actual field surveys. Planimetric features were compiled from 1:14400 scale aerial photography using stereo photogrammetric methods.

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Key Map



N

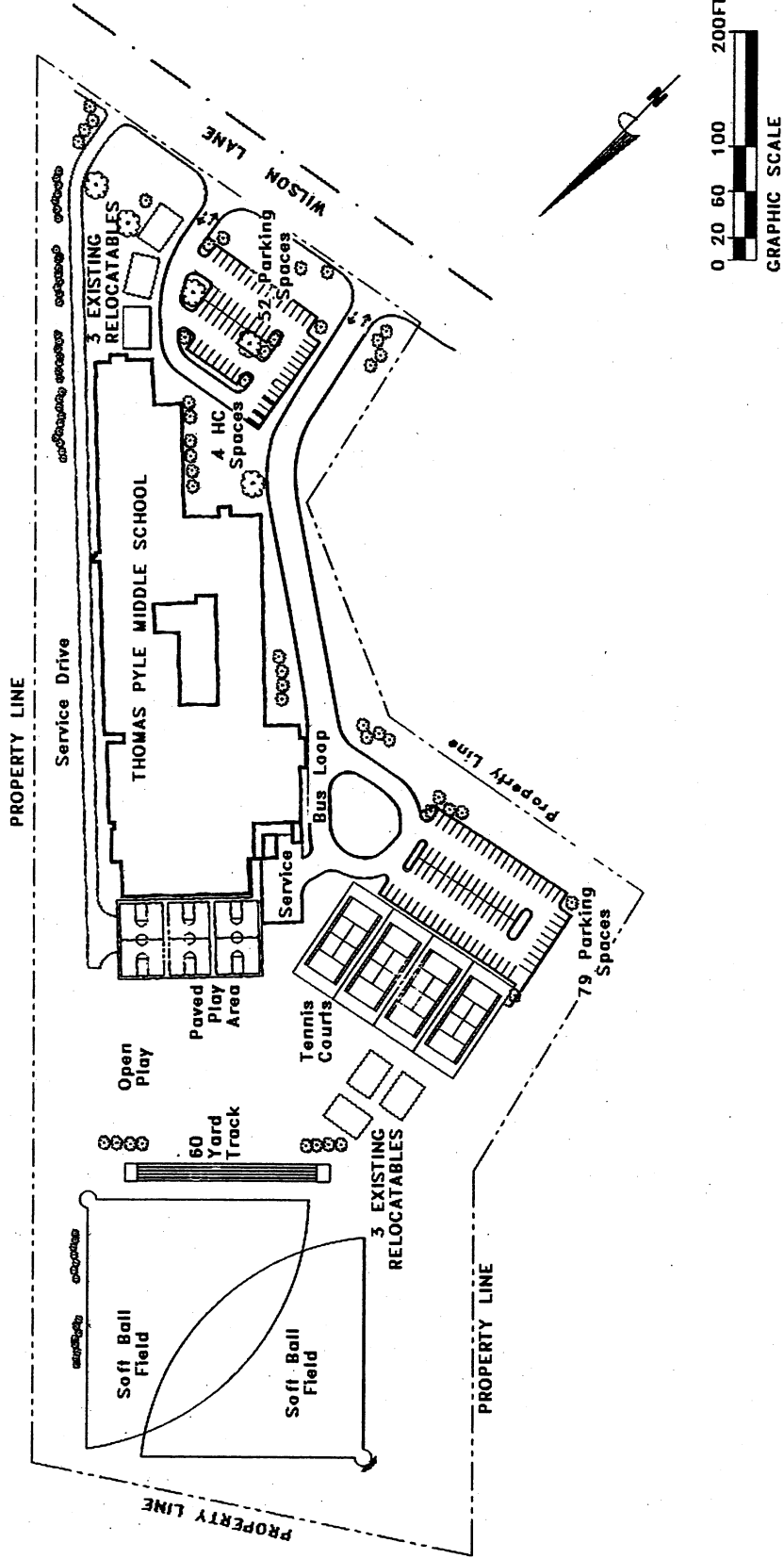


Research & Technology Center



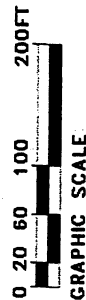
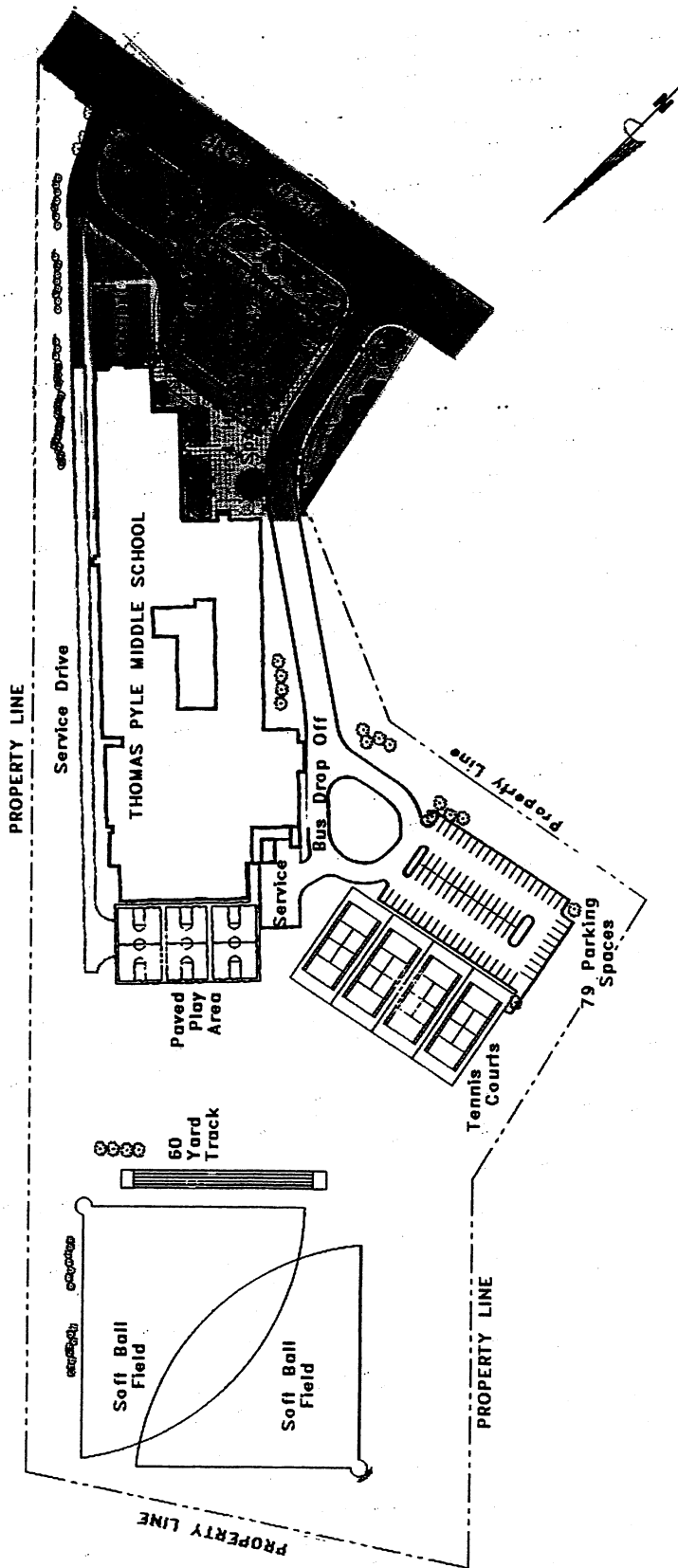
1 inch = 400 feet
1 : 4800

Existing Site Plan



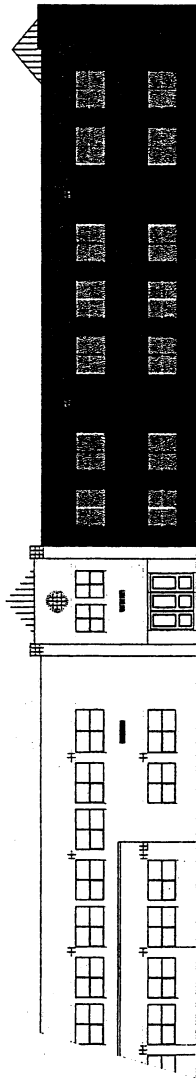
Thomas W. Pyle Middle School Addition
Smolen ■ Emr + Associates Architects

Proposed Site Plan

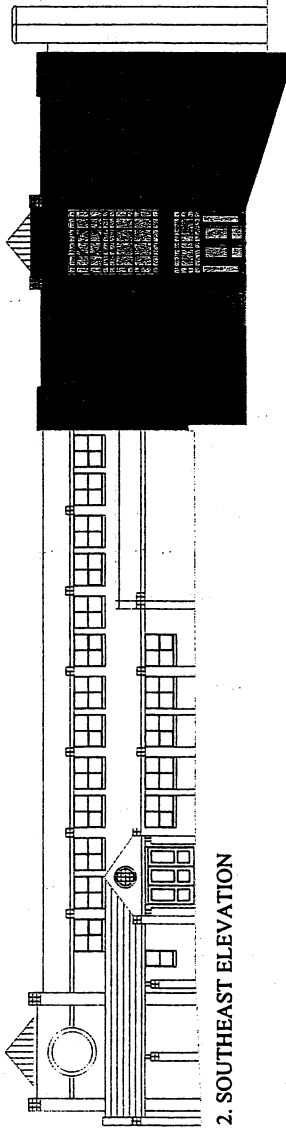


Thomas W. Pyle Middle School Addition
Smolen ■ Emr + Associates Architects

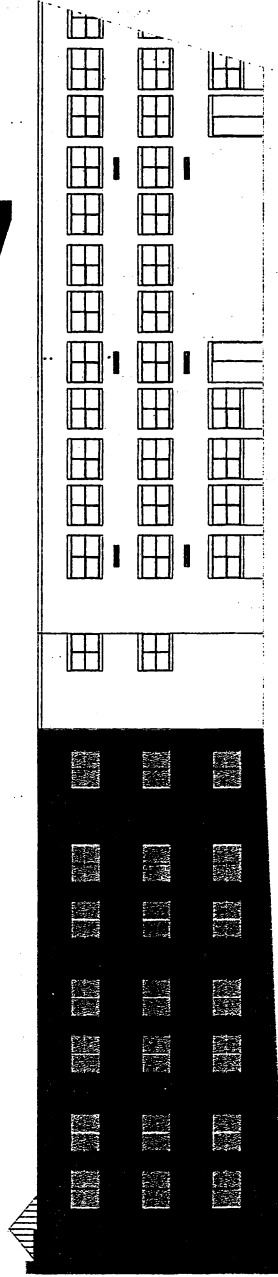
Proposed Elevation



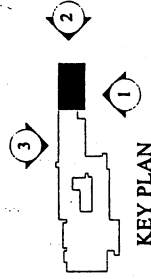
1. SOUTHWEST ELEVATION - PARTIAL



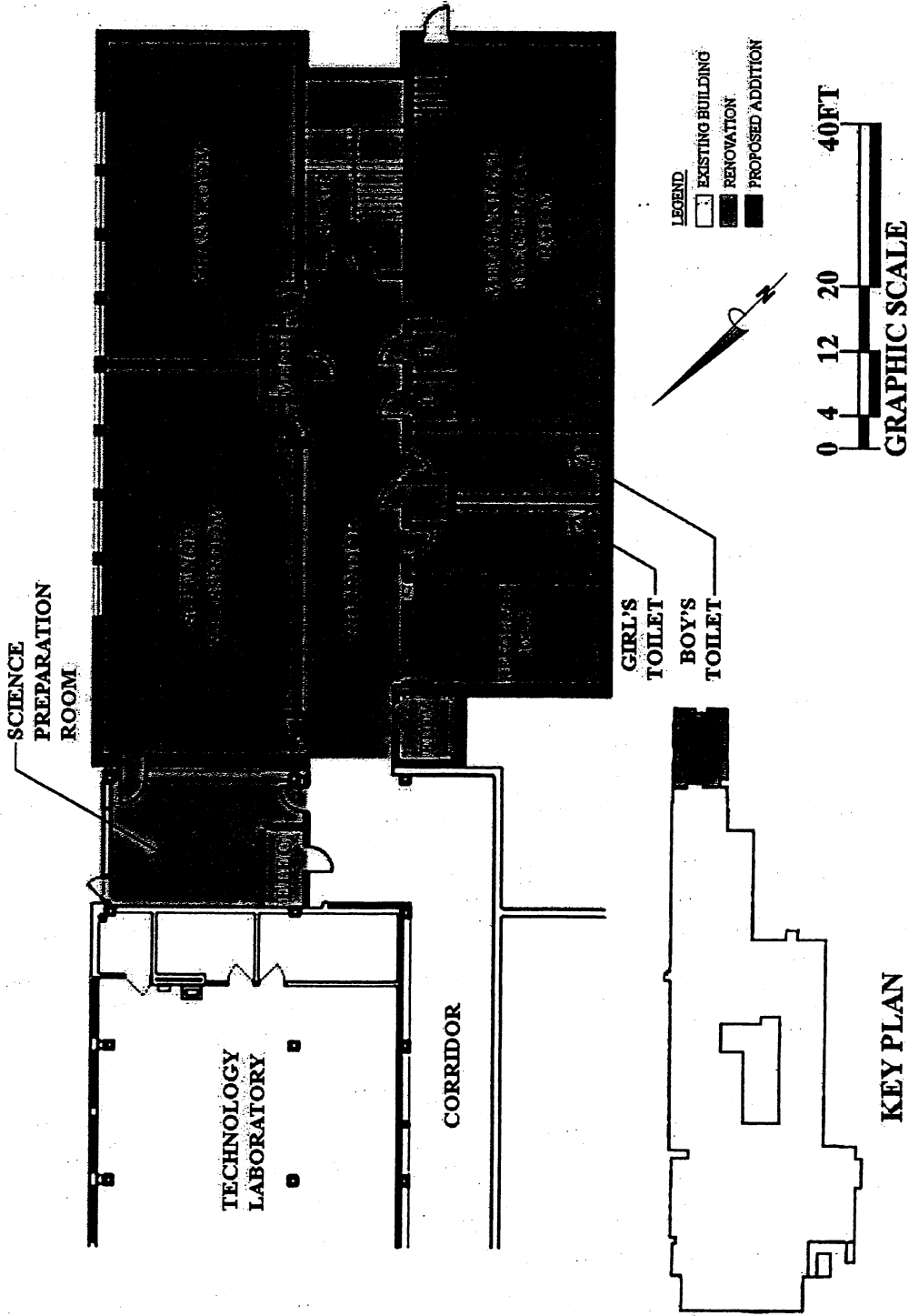
2. SOUTHEAST ELEVATION



3. NORTHEAST ELEVATION - PARTIAL

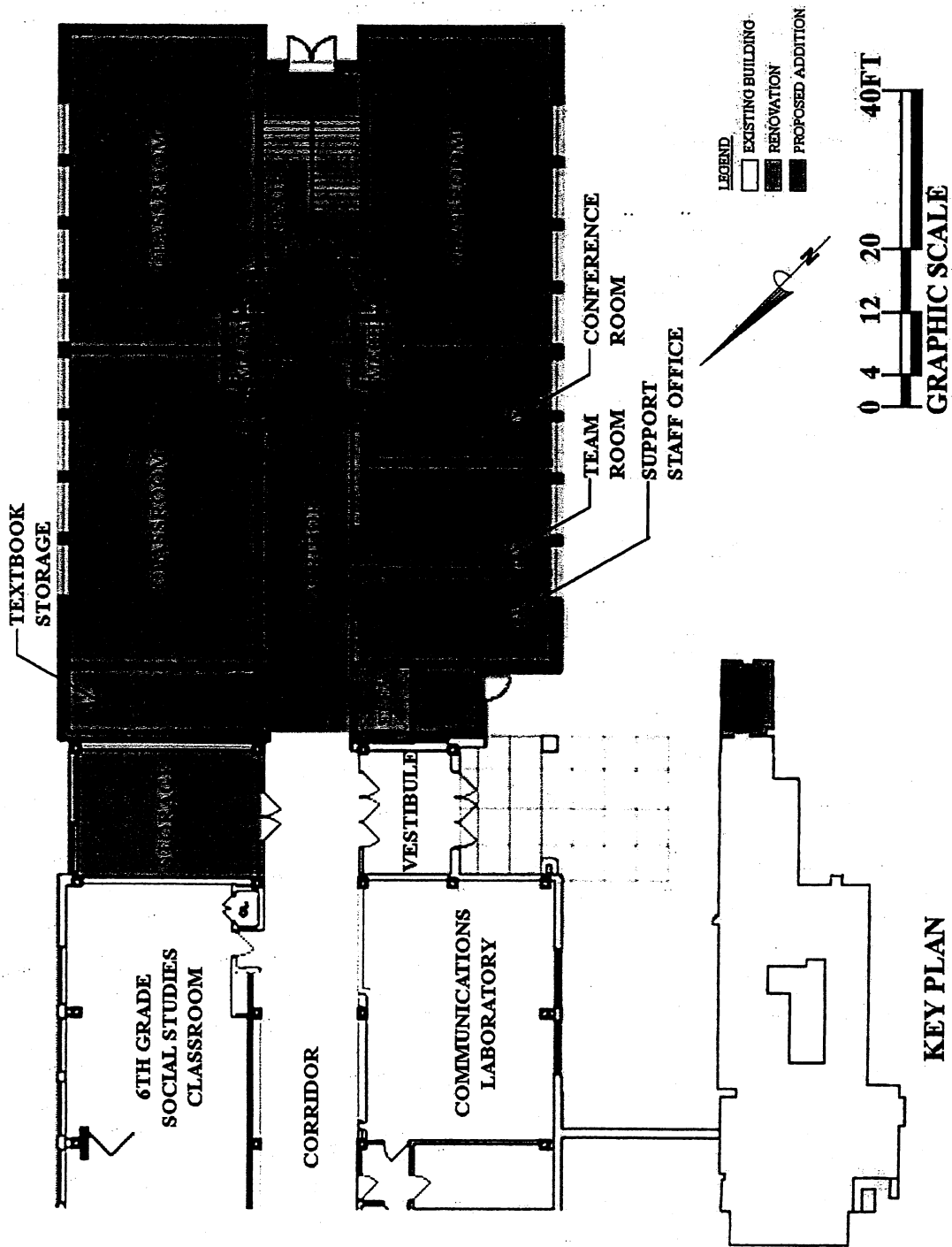


Proposed Plan



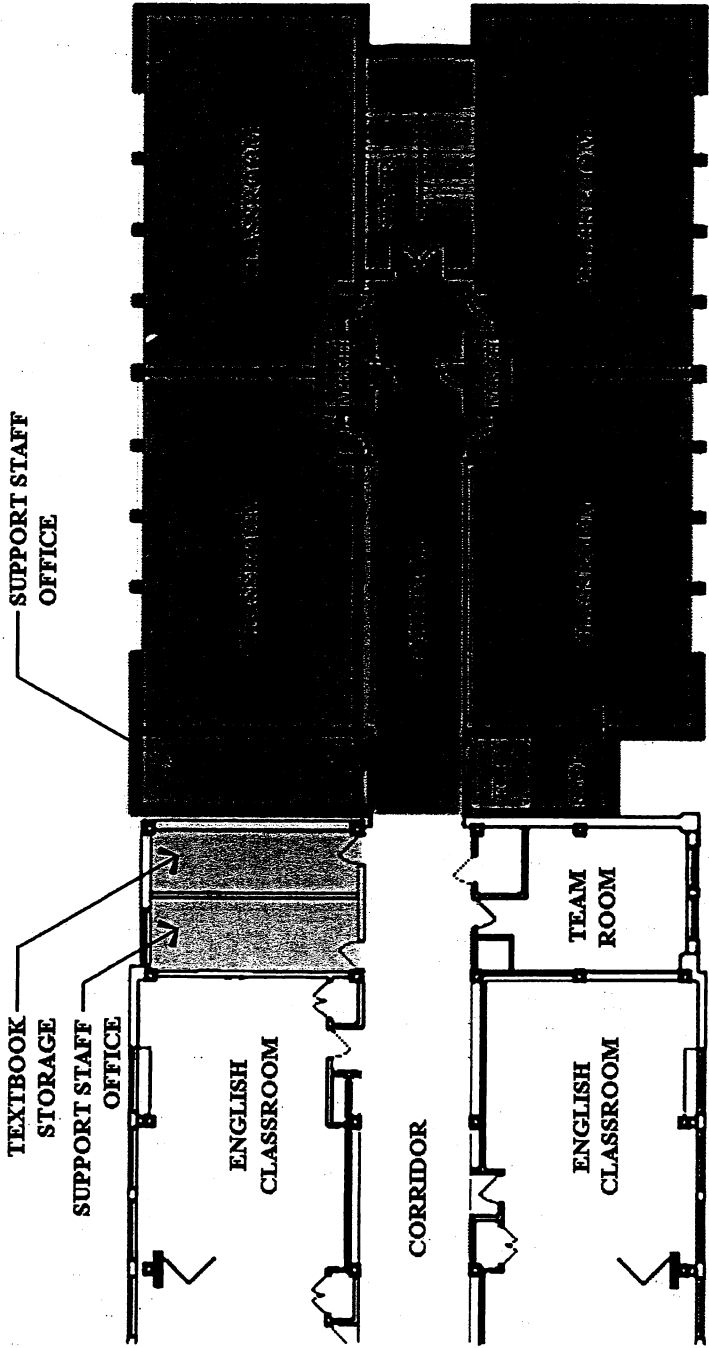
PROPOSED LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

Proposed Plan

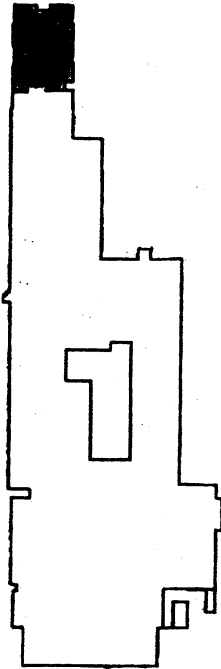


PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Proposed Plan



- LEGEND
- EXISTING BUILDING
 - RENOVATION
 - PROPOSED ADDITION

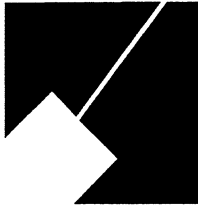


KEY PLAN

PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN

ATTACHMENT 4

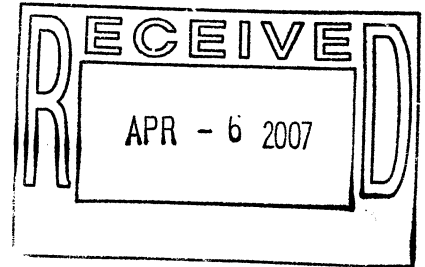
M-NCPCC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760
301-495-4500, www.mncppc.org



MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 3, 2007

TO: Marilyn Clemens, Community Based Planning Division

VIA: Mary Dolan, Countywide Planning Division, Environmental *MD*

FROM: Marion Clark, Countywide Planning Division, Environmental *(m)*

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. MR-07201-MCPS-1
Thomas Pyle Elementary School

Recommendation: **Approval of the Tree Save Plan with following conditions:**

- Remove sidewalk from critical root zone of Tree no. 2.
- Mitigate loss of Tree no. 3 on site with 1" caliper for each 1" diameter breast high (dbh) removed.

Discussion

A Forest Conservation Plan exemption was issued for this application (4-05218E), but a Tree Save Plan is required, because the approved Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation indicates two specimen trees (labeled numbers 2 and 3) in good condition. Both trees are proposed for removal. Removing a proposed sidewalk and using the existing sidewalk next to Wilson Boulevard for a short distance can save 30% of the critical root zone for tree 2. Tree number 3 is impacted by construction and must be mitigated on a 1" caliper for every 1" diameter breast high that is removed.

Forest Conservation

A Forest Conservation Plan exemption was issued because this is a modification of an existing developed property with no more than a total of 5000 square feet of forest cleared; no forest clearing within a stream buffer or on property subject to Special Protection Area Water Quality Plan requirements; and it does not require a new subdivision plan. A Tree Save Plan was submitted with the application and must be approved prior to issuance of sediment and erosion control permit.

Stormwater Management

A Stormwater Management Concept Plan is approved for this project.

Environmental Guidelines

There are no streams, wetlands, steep slopes, or erodible soils present on the subject site. The site is not in a Special Protection Area or Primary Management Area.

ATTACHMENT 5



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

April 12, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marilyn Clemens, Urban Designer
Community-Based Planning Division

VIA: Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor *DKH*
Transportation Planning

FROM: Cherian Eapen, Planner/Coordinator *CE*
Transportation Planning
301-495-4525

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral 07201-MCPS-1
Thomas W. Pyle Middle School – Proposed Classroom Addition and On-site
Traffic Circulation Improvements
Montgomery County Public Schools
6311 Wilson Lane, Bethesda
Bethesda-Chevy Chase Policy Area

This memorandum presents Transportation Planning staff's review of the subject mandatory referral to add nine classrooms and implement on-site traffic circulation improvements at Thomas Pyle Middle School located at 6311 Wilson Lane (MD 188) in Bethesda, within the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Policy Area. The new permanent classrooms will replace three existing portable classrooms at the school. The improved school will have a core capacity for 1,341 students compared to the current core capacity of 1,138 students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Planning staff have completed our review of the plans submitted for the subject mandatory referral and have no comments. The plan dated April 8, 2007, addresses all of the comments we conveyed to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). These included:

- Limiting the existing center driveway at the school to right-turn out only,
- Removing the existing right-turn lane into the center driveway (including pavement) from Wilson Lane, and relocating the curb line between the center driveway and the new eastern driveway (to match the existing curb line to the east and west), and

- Coordinating with SHA to install flashing advance school warning signals on both eastbound and westbound Wilson Lane.

We believe the above changes will address several of the concerns Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) staff has expressed during plan development regarding safety at the school driveways (see Attachment No. 1; SHA letter dated February 8, 2007).

Transportation Planning staff also received a draft Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) study from the consultant for MCPS on April 4, 2007. Our *LATR Guidelines* incorporate a minimum of eight weeks for study review by both our staff (for study completeness) and SHA/DPWT staff (to comment on study recommendations). Based on our involvement in the analysis to date, we expect that the study will be useful to allow staff to confirm the findings described above. To assist MCPS in meeting their construction bid schedule for this project the Department scheduled the Planning Board public hearing prior to receiving and reviewing the LATR study information. Therefore, we suggest that the following recommendation be incorporated into the Planning Board's comments to MCPS regarding this mandatory referral's APF test.

- Continue to coordinate with M-NCPPC, SHA, and DPWT staff on an administrative review of the LATR study. If the administrative review confirms that no changes to site design or offsite improvements are identified based on the increase in core capacity at the school, then this mandatory referral will be completed by a staff memo to that effect with a copy provided to Planning Board members. If the administrative review results in new technical comments by M-NCPPC, SHA or DPWT staff, then MCPS must resubmit a revised mandatory referral application for the school reflecting those changes.

DISCUSSION

Site Location, Access, Pedestrian Facilities, Parking, and Public Transportation

Thomas Pyle Middle School is located along the north side of Wilson Lane between River Road and Whittier Boulevard, and is open between 7:55 a.m. and 2:40 p.m. The school currently has approximately 1,294 students and 135 professional/support staff members. It has a total of 139 parking spaces, including four handicapped spaces. Twenty-one fixed route buses and six special education buses bring students to the school in the morning. In the afternoon, approximately 25 buses depart from the school between 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. A limited bus service is available for students participating in after-school programs. Three fixed route and three special needs student buses are provided following the end of after-school activities. According to school staff, approximately 85 percent of the students (over 1,100 students) ride the school buses. The immediate area is also served by RideOn routes 29 and 32.

Access to the school is currently facilitated through three driveways off Wilson Lane. Currently, the easternmost driveway is used as a service driveway, the center driveway is used for parent drop-off and pick-ups facilitated in a counter-clockwise direction, and the westernmost driveway is used for staff/school bus access.

Wilson Lane and Whittier Boulevard have sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Adequate lead-in sidewalks are provided/proposed to the school from Wilson Lane. Pedestrian connections to the school are also provided from Thoreau Drive and Bryant Drive, which are to the rear of the school. Marked crosswalks are installed at the two closest intersections to the school: Wilson Lane/Whittier Boulevard to the east and Wilson Lane/Springer Road to the west. A crosswalk in front of the school across Wilson Lane is manned by a crossing-guard in the morning and afternoon during the school opening/closing hours, and following the end of after-school activities. Pedestrian and school warning signs, and pavement markings currently exist along Wilson Lane on its approaches to the school.

The mandatory referral for the classroom addition was estimated by MCPS to increase core student capacity at the school from its current level at 1,138 students to 1,341 students. Other on-site changes include implementing a new one-way counter-clockwise drop-off/pick-up arrangement, restricting outbound movements at the center driveway to right-turns only, and removing an existing right-turn lane into the center driveway on Wilson Lane and relocating the curb line between the center driveway and the new eastern driveway (to match the existing curb line to the east and west).

Master Plan Roads, Bikeways, and Pedestrian Facilities

The Approved and Adopted *Bethesda/Chevy Chase Master Plan* recommends Wilson Lane (MD 188), along the school frontage, as a master-planned east-west two-lane arterial (A-83; between MacArthur Boulevard to the west and Bethesda CBD to the east). A signed-shared bikeway (SR-2; Class III, on-road) is recommended for Wilson Lane in the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan* between Elmore Lane and Aberdeen Road.

Local Area Transportation Review

A traffic study is required for this mandatory referral per the *2004 LATR Guidelines* since the school currently generate **30** or more total peak-hour trips during the typical weekday morning (6:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.) and evening (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) peak periods, and an increase in activity is proposed.

Transportation Planning staff received a draft traffic study from the consultant for MCPS on April 4, 2007. As previously described, staff proposes to complete interagency review of the LATR study administratively.

CE:ft
Attachment

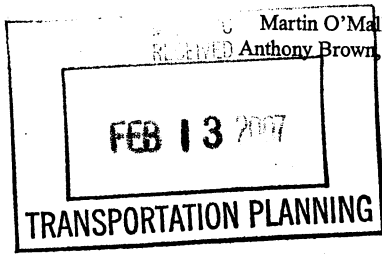
cc: Barbara Kearney
Ray Marhamati



Maryland Department of Transportation

Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony Brown, Lt. Governor

John D. Porcari, Secretary Designate
Neil J. Pedersen, Administrator



February 8, 2007

Mr. Nicholas C. Wilson
Associate and Project Manager
Site and Facilities Engineering
KCI Technologies
10 North Park Drive
Hunt Valley, Maryland 21030-1846

Re: Montgomery County
Thomas Pyle Middle School
MD 188 (north side)
Mile Post: 1.54

Dear Mr. Wilson:

The State Highway Administration (SHA) received your submission of existing and proposed site plans on December 4, 2006. Nine (9) new classrooms are proposed to replace five (5) existing portable classrooms, increasing the existing capacity of 1,138 students to a future capacity of 1,341 students. We offer the following comments:

- Three (3) entrances on Wilson Lane (MD 188) currently exist. The westernmost full movement entrance for buses and staff only, the right-in/right-out/left-in only middle entrance for parents and the easternmost full movement entrance for service vehicles only.
- The primary concern with the existing access arrangements is eastbound MD 188 motorists that turn left into the middle entrance. The westernmost and middle entrances are only 200' apart, with a vertical crest in MD 188 between these two entrances closer to the western entrance. Eastbound MD 188 motorists have less than 200' of stopping sight distance when a vehicle is waiting to turn left into the middle entrance. This concern is even greater when more than one vehicle is waiting to turn left.

Sight distance is ample for high profile vehicles (buses, etc.) utilizing the westernmost entrance. The only concern with the existing westernmost entrance is when both low-profile vehicles are turning left into & right out of the entrance and low-profile vehicles are approaching this entrance from the east. Sight distance is inadequate under these conditions.

The proposed paving, striping and signage plan include modifications to the existing access arrangements. SHA also received a December 8, 2006 letter from M-NCPPC's Transportation Planning Office that provides the scope for a required traffic study. We offer the following comments on the proposed plans and traffic study scope:

My telephone number/toll-free number is _____
Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech: 1.800.735.2258 Statewide Toll Free

Street Address: 707 North Calvert Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202 • Phone: 410.545.0300 • www.marylandroads.com



Mr. Nicholas Wilson
Page Two

- SHA requests five (5) copies of the required traffic study after M-NCPPC's Transportation Planning Office approves the traffic study.
- The proposed plans show conversion of the existing easternmost/service entrance to a one-way in entrance for parents. The existing middle entrance is shown as a future one-way out to MD 188. We offer **conceptual approval** of these proposed access modifications, providing that the middle entrance is converted to a right-out only. The left-out movement is currently prohibited due to the inadequate sight distance to the right/west and should remain prohibited. *Shifting the inbound movements about 100' further east, as proposed, should improve safety for the motorists turning left-into the school.*
- Please fill out the attached SHA sight distance evaluation worksheets, sign and seal the worksheets and return them with your next resubmission.
- The most desirable remedy for the existing sight distance problems would be a reduction of the vertical profile of MD 188 by a few feet. *We recognize that existing right-of-way constraints may render those type MD 188 improvements infeasible.*
- SHA will offer more specific comments after reviewing the required traffic study. For example, the total traffic trip distribution table will assist SHA in determining whether the existing westbound right-turn lane should be replaced; Or whether a eastbound left-turn bay will be required.

If you have any questions, please contact Raymond Burns at 410-545-5592 or our toll free number in Maryland only 1-800-876-4742.

Very truly yours,



for Steven D. Foster, Chief
Engineering Access Permits Division

SDF/rbb
Attachment

cc: Mr. Ray Marhamati / Montgomery County Public Schools
2096 Gaither Road, Suite 203, Rockville, Maryland 20877
Ms. Catherine Conlon / M-NCPPC
Mr. Shahriar Etemadi / M-NCPPC
Mr. Jeff Wentz *sent via e-mail*
Ms. Kate Mazzara *sent via e-mail*
Mr. Augustine Rebish *sent via e-mail*

ATTACHMENT 6**Clemens, Marilyn**

From: Seemeen Hashem [seemeen@patriot.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 10, 2007 11:29 PM
To: Clemens, Marilyn
Subject: Pyle Middle School nine-room addition

Ms. Clemens:

I strongly support the Pyle Middle School nine-room addition to relieve overcrowding and eliminate the portable classrooms on the smallest middle school site in the county. The 45-year old school building was intended to accommodate 1075 students. With a current enrollment of 1276 students, classes are held in six portable classrooms, which consume land intended for much-needed outdoor physical education. Three of the portables face a busy county road in conflict with MCPS safety guidelines because there is simply no other place to put them. The addition has the approval of the Whitman cluster schools, the Board of Education and the Montgomery County Council. Neighbors, parents and school staff have been involved at every stage of the planning to ensure that students' safety and education are the top priorities.

As a tax-payer and a voter, I urge the M-NCPPC to approve the Pyle addition and invest in this National Blue Ribbon School.

Sincerely,
Seemeen Hashem and Edward Doran
6508 Wilson Lane
Bethesda, MD 20817
301-229-4744

4/11/2007