



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

January 10, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

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

FROM: Glenn Kreger, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader *GK*
Miguel Iraola, Planner Coordinator, Silver Spring Team *MIRAOLA*
Shahriar Etemadi, Coordinator, County-Wide Planning *SE*

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral

PROJECT NAME: Montgomery Hills Junior High School Reuse

APPLICANT: Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (Division of Facilities and Services)

CASE NUMBER: 02107-DPWT-1

REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Chapter 7-112 of the Regional District Act

ZONE: R-60

LOCATION: Linden Lane/Second Avenue/Brookville Road

MASTER PLAN: North and West Silver Spring Master Plan

FILING DATE: October 17, 2002

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL with comments:

1. The County should consider closing the Rookwood Road access to Montgomery Hills Junior High School (MHJHS) when the Jewish Primary Day School relocates. The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) should begin planning now for whatever building and site modifications would be needed for efficient and safe on-site circulation given access via Brookville Road and Linden Lane only. The County should provide a new internal traffic circulation design for safe pick-up and drop-off if the Rookwood Road entrance is closed. These changes would be subject to a future Mandatory Referral.
2. The existing gravel parking lot along the driveway from Rookwood Road should be replaced with landscaping to buffer the adjoining homes sufficiently from the school building.

3. The applicant should provide a sidewalk along the Brookville Road parking lot entrance connecting the existing sidewalk along Brookville Road to the proposed sidewalk along the west side of the building.
4. The surface parking lot should be landscaped with shade trees as required by the Zoning Ordinance.
5. The applicant should submit for Planning Board approval a Transportation Management Plan that accomplishes the following:
 - a. Establishes an operating plan for both routine school activities and special events that clearly identifies on-site access, circulation and parking rules and regulations;
 - b. Identifies means by which vehicular traffic associated with school dismissal activities will be contained on site;
 - c. Reduces the reliance on single-occupant vehicles; and
 - d. Establishes regular monitoring activities to facilitate identification and implementation of operational access and circulation improvements. Both the tenants and community associations should participate in these activities.
6. DPWT should expedite the traffic management assessment for this neighborhood.
7. Although they are not the applicants in the subject case, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) should prioritize Woodlin Elementary School as a Safe Access to Schools project. Consideration should be given to relocating vehicular access to Brookville Road pursuant to the guidance in the Master Plan and to consolidating such access with the Brookville Road access to MHJHS.
8. Any restrictions on community use of the playing fields during construction should be communicated in a timely way to Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF). The use of the fields as a construction staging area should be coordinated with CUPF to minimize disruption regarding use of the fields.
9. Future changes that might increase the intensity of use on the site will require a new Mandatory Referral. Student enrollment is capped at 501; any increase in enrollment beyond 501 would require a new Mandatory Referral. Any additional expansion of the facilities or re-use of the facility for other purposes will also require a new Mandatory Referral.
10. The lease for MHJHS should include the provisions cited on page 4 of this staff report to ensure neighborhood compatibility.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, Division of Facilities and Services, seeks to modify the former Montgomery Hills Junior High School in order to lease it to additional private schools. This facility was originally a public school with a design capacity of 1050 students. It has been leased to private schools since the public school closed in 1976.

The MHJHS site is an 8.67-acre property on Linden Lane at its intersection with Brookville Road in North Silver Spring (see Attachment 1- Vicinity Map). The property is zoned R-60 like the surrounding residential neighborhoods in the Linden/Woodside area (see Attachment 2- Zoning). Woodlin Elementary School adjoins the property on the

south side. Industrial uses on I-1 property exist along Brookville Road south of Warren Street. The 2.2-acre Montgomery Hills Neighborhood Park is located a block north of the site and the Montgomery Hills commercial area is located east of the site along Georgia Avenue.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed modifications to MHJHS include the addition of three elevator shafts (indicated by the three circles on Attachment #3 - Site Plan) and the construction of a second floor connection between two existing components of the building (Attachment 4). These improvements would increase the size of the building marginally from 117,828 square feet to 119,728 square feet. Other renovations include new windows, an improved fire protection system, additional lighting, and new mechanical and electrical systems. An existing basketball court behind the school would be converted to surface parking, increasing the number of parking spaces from 67 to 106 after the proposed modifications. The amount of impervious surface will not increase as a result of increasing the number of parking spaces. Existing, deteriorated tennis courts on the adjoining Woodlin school site would be converted to basketball courts.

Currently, the JPDS and a Montessori School occupy about a third of the MHJHS building. Together, they have 186 students (see Attachment 3- Current and Projected Enrollments). The lease for the Montessori School expires in June 2003. After renovation, the MHJHS would be leased to JPDS, the Yeshiva School and the Torah School for a total of 501 students, an increase of 315 students over the current student enrollment on-site.

Staff has been informed that the JPDS plans to relocate in the summer of 2003. If the JPDS relocates, this would bring the future enrollment on-site back down to 355, which is still nearly twice the current student enrollment on-site. The JPDS and the Montessori School have 186 students compared to the 355 students that would be at the Yeshiva and Torah Schools.

The operating hours for the JPDS, Yeshiva and Torah Schools are indicated on Attachment 5 in addition to the enrollments for each school. The site plan for the renovated MHJHS (Attachment 3) provides separate building entrances for the JPDS, Yeshiva and Torah Schools. (Note: The applicant has declined to revise their application to reflect the departure of JPDS since this is not yet considered a certainty; see below.) The separate building entrances for the three schools impacts the vehicular circulation pattern at MHJHS as discussed in Attachment 8 (Transportation Planning staff memo).

REGULATORY PROCESS

The applicant for the proposed project seeks to relocate the Yeshiva School and Torah School from the former Belt Junior High School in Wheaton to the former MHJHS in Silver Spring. This would enable Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to

reclaim the former Belt Junior High School and reopen it as a public school for the 2005 school year, thereby alleviating overcrowding at Parkland Middle School. (MCPS is essentially acting as the applicant's project manager for the modifications to MHJHS.) The Montgomery County Council is considering emergency legislation (Bill 20-02, introduced May 23, 2002) to enable the proposed changes to the Belt and MHJHS sites to proceed on an expedited basis.

DPWT is negotiating a lease for MHJHS based on the scenario described above. A draft lease is not yet available for review. Key issues to be addressed in the lease include the term, take-back provision, any possible provision for sale of the property, and provision for community access to the site. The staff recommends that the following be included in the new lease:

- Use of the site should be limited to education pursuant to master plan language (p. 86) stipulating that educational uses are the preferred uses for closed public schools;
- The term of the lease should be limited to 15 years with a take-back provision should the facility be needed once again for use as a public school;
- There should be no option for the tenant(s) to purchase the site except through the County's normal site disposition process;
- Provision should be made in the lease for community access to the playing fields outside of normal school hours and for coordination with Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) during and after construction;
- Tenants should be forewarned of, and be required to cooperate with, the potential closure of the Rookwood Road entrance to the site when the JPDS vacates the site. The same provision should be made for the possible consolidation of access with Woodlin Elementary School. (See "Circulation Issues," below.)
- The County, MCPS and tenants will cooperate and accommodate road improvements which may be programmed in the future, including reconfiguration of the Seminary/Linden/Brookville intersection.
- The tenant(s) should participate in a Transportation Management Plan for the site, including provision for more extensive busing of the new students to be added to the facility.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The emergency legislation referred to above would enable the changes to the Belt and MHJHS sites to proceed upon approval of the bill by the County Council and after review of the proposed lease by the Planning Board. The legislation prescribes certain provisions of the lease for MHJHS (e.g., provision for community access to the athletic and recreational facilities).

Montgomery County and MCPS seek to expedite the proposed changes so that Belt can be reopened as a public school in time for the 2005 academic year. Residents in the North Woodside/Montgomery Hills area have indicated that they have concerns about the proposed reuse for MHJHS and want to have input into the ultimate decisions.

Representatives from MCPS and their architect met with community representatives on May 15, August 13, and December 16, 2002, to discuss the plans for MHJHS and to hear the community's concerns. MCPS has assured residents that the modifications to the facility will not change the current situation with regard to community use of the playing fields, although a portion of the field may be used temporarily as a construction staging area.

Community-Based Planning staff participated in the August 13 meeting between MCPS staff, community representatives and their attorney. Along with Transportation Planning staff, we also walked the site on September 30, 2002, with members of the community and Chairman Berlage. As required by the Mandatory Referral guidelines, the staff notified area civic groups in writing on November 27, 2002, that DPWT had submitted a Mandatory Referral application for MHJHS. The staff has received several messages from concerned citizens who wished to communicate their concerns regarding the proposed reuse for MHJHS. These concerns are reflected in the analysis below.

On December 16, the staff convened a meeting between the applicant and community leaders to seek mutually agreeable solutions to the community's concerns. While recognizing that the potential relocation of the JPDS could alter the situation at the MHJHS site, the County declined to revise their Mandatory Referral application given the uncertainty regarding JPDS.

PROJECT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Finding #1: The proposed project is consistent with the relevant guidance in the August 2000 *Approved and Adopted North and West Silver Spring Master Plan*.

The Master Plan contains the following generic recommendation for surplus public school sites: "Consider a public or private educational use for closed schools before the County declares these facilities surplus" (page 86). MHJHS has been leased to private schools since it closed as a public school. This would continue to be the case after the proposed reuse is implemented.

The Master Plan also includes the following recommendation concerning traffic congestion: "Analyze traffic management options for the North Woodside-Montgomery Hills neighborhood when the Proposed Concept for Georgia Avenue is implemented" (page 58). Although the State has not yet programmed the comprehensive plan for Georgia Avenue, the Montgomery County DPWT has initiated a traffic study for this neighborhood. This study should be expedited in order to identify any appropriate traffic management options that could be implemented prior to implementation of the overall concept for Georgia Avenue.

Finding #2: The proposed project is consistent with the intent and standards of the zone to the same extent as the existing facility.

As indicated in the table below, the MHJHS site is consistent with the standards for the R-60 zone with the exceptions of a) the maximum building height, and b) the minimum parking lot setback. However, the Mandatory Referral proposal reflects the existing building height and parking lot setback; no changes are proposed from the situation which has existed since MHJHS was utilized as a public school. *Although the parking lot satisfies the interior green space requirement in the Zoning Ordinance, these green areas should be planted with shade trees as required by Section 59-E-2.73 of the Ordinance.*

ZONING ORDINANCE CONFORMANCE

Existing Zone: R-60
Gross Site Area: 8.67 acres

Description	Required/ Permitted		Existing Condition		Provided		
Minimum Lot Area:	6,000	sf	378,023	sf	378,023	sf	
Minimum Lot Width:	At Front Building Line	60	ft	276	ft	276	ft
	At Street Line	25	ft	220.68	ft	220.68	ft
Minimum Setback From Street:	Main Building (Linden Lane)	25	ft	63.33	ft	63.66	ft
	Main Building (Brookville Road)	25	ft	59	ft	59	ft
Setback From Adjoining Lot:	One Side	8	ft	49.83	ft	49.83	ft
	Sum of Both Sides	18	ft	108.83	ft	108.83	ft
	Rear From Adjoining Lot	20	ft	260.25	ft	260.25	ft
Maximum Building Height:	35	ft	70	ft	70	ft	
Maximum Lot Coverage:	35	%	17.7	%	17.7	%	
Parking Spaces Required:	105* (N/A)	sp	61	sp	105**	sp	
Parking Lot Minimum Setback:	At Front Yard	25	ft	15.5	ft	15.5	ft
Parking Interior Green Space:		1,839	sf	628	sf	1,968	sf
		5	%	2.7	%	5.34	%

* Parking requirements are per MCPS standards

** Excludes gravel parking area

Finding #3: The proposed project will be compatible with the existing adjacent uses and standards if the recommendation identified below in italics is implemented.

Public and private schools are located in residential neighborhoods throughout Montgomery County. At the same time, schools should be “good neighbors” in terms of ensuring compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

The applicant for the subject case has been responsive in terms of addressing the staff’s initial concerns about landscaping and lighting. For example, the applicant has replaced proposed floodlights that could have negatively impacted adjoining properties. The staff continues to be concerned about an existing gravel parking lot along the driveway from Rookwood Road that abuts the rear of several single family homes along Second Avenue. *This gravel parking lot should be replaced by a landscaped area to buffer these homes from the existing driveway. The landscaped area shown on Attachment 6 (Landscaping Plan) as a long rectangle should be extended all the way to Rookwood Road.*

Finding #4: The circulation systems, landscaping, open spaces and recreational facilities will be adequate, safe and efficient if the recommendations identified in italics are implemented.

Vehicular Circulation Issues

The traffic study for MHJHS indicates that area intersections will pass Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) within the accepted congestion standard of 1650 CLV for the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Policy Area. There continues to be a widespread perception in the community that local roads are overly congested. The North and West Silver Spring Master Plan devotes an entire chapter to the transportation problems in the Montgomery Hills area, which acknowledges the extent of this concern. The improvements recommended in the Master Plan for this area have not been programmed by the State thus far.

At the request of the neighborhood, DPWT has initiated a neighborhood traffic management study. A tag survey was conducted by the community last fall and the County was working during December to identify the percentage of non-local traffic. Staff expect that DPWT will “ramp up” this effort during January. The resulting recommendations will not be known prior to the Planning Board hearing regarding MHJHS.

Staff discussions with community representatives have indicated two primary transportation issues: 1) reducing the number of trips destined for MHJHS and 2) redirecting trips to the Brookville Road entrance to the site.

A. Trip Reduction

The relocation of the Yeshiva and Torah Schools to MHJHS (and relocation of the Montessori School from MHJHS) will increase student enrollment at the site by 315 students. Few of these students will be able to walk to school and the Yeshiva/Torah Schools make minimal use of busing. *Staff recommends that DPWT provide for Planning Board approval a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the Yeshiva, Torah and Jewish Primary Day Schools that requires significantly increased use of non-single occupancy vehicles. A transportation coordinator should be designated to provide information about carpooling, van pooling, transit ridership, and coordination with surrounding communities regarding enforcement. The TMP should also provide guidelines concerning carpool operation, parking policies, delivery and service vehicles, and special event management.*

If the Jewish Primary Day School (JPDS) relocates from MHJHS per their plans, their space should not be released or subleased without Planning Board review and application of a TMP to any tenant that might replace JPDS.

B. Site Access

Woodlin Elementary School Access

The community has requested that MCPS expedite their effort to study and potentially reorient the access to Woodlin Elementary School from Brookville Road, as recommended in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan. Although Woodlin is not part of the subject application, this measure could be implemented in such a way as to consolidate the access to both MHJHS and Woodlin via Brookville Road. MCPS has indicated that the Woodlin access issue will be studied through the Safe Access to Schools program. This effort has not yet been funded. Consequently, the possible consolidation of access with Woodlin via Brookville Road cannot be considered as part of the current Mandatory Referral application for MHJHS.

Rookwood Road Access

The subject application shows separate student entrances for each school – indicated by arrows on the Site Plan (Attachment 3)-- and two vehicular pick-up and drop-off areas. Pick-up and drop-off for JPDS would occur at the parking area and driveway on the southwestern edge of the site with students entering the building via the Brookville Road entrances. Pick-up and drop-off activity for the Yeshiva and Torah Schools would occur on the alleyway along the east side of the campus, with the Yeshiva students walking to the front of the building along Linden Lane to enter the facility. Vehicles would enter from Rookwood Road on the rear of the site and exit the site via Linden Lane. (See Attachment 7- Site Circulation.) Pick-up and drop-off activity for the Yeshiva and Torah Schools would be staggered so that both did not occur at the same time. The proposed operations are likely to cause some vehicular queuing on Rookwood Road during the afternoon school dismissal period for the Torah School.

The community has requested that the Rookwood Road entrance to MHJHS be closed, thereby forcing pick-up and drop-offs for the Yeshiva and Torah Schools to access the site via Brookville Road or Linden Lane. Transportation Planning staff note (in Attachment 8) that closing the Rookwood Road entrance would reduce traffic on Rookwood Road and Second Avenue but would also have an overall adverse effect on operations and safety, as long as all three schools remain in the proposed locations.

The staff identified a range of options with regard to this issue, including:

1. Leave the Rookwood entrance open (two-way) and accept neighborhood impacts from traffic using this access. This is the least acceptable alternative to the neighborhood even though the traffic study indicates that area intersections would operate at acceptable levels.
2. Leave the Rookwood entrance open (in only) and accept neighborhood impacts. This is what the County proposes; it is only marginally more acceptable to the community than the previous alternative.
3. Close the Rookwood entrance and accept poor on-site circulation and safety. The staff has considered this request and determined that this would present unacceptable safety risks for the students who will be dropped off at the Brookville Road entrance for JPDS. Vehicles entering the site to drop off students for the Yeshiva and Torah School would also have no turnaround area.
4. Close the Rookwood entrance and have the applicant re-design the entire site to address on-site circulation impacts from reduced site access. Staff does not see an easy way to do this so long as the three schools to be located at MHJHS require separate entrances. Major redesign of the interior site (interior and exterior) would be needed.
5. Leave the Rookwood entrance open until JPDS relocates. This will provide safe access and circulation for the MHJHS site during whatever time that JPDS, Yeshiva and Torah Schools are all tenants and satisfy their separate access requirements. At the same time, it would provide the community with the certainty of knowing that the Rookwood entrance will be closed whenever JPDS relocates. *The staff recommends that the County begin planning now for whatever building and site modifications will be necessary for efficient on-site circulation and access consistent with the closure of the Rookwood Road entrance when JPDS vacates the site. These changes will be subject to a future Mandatory Referral. DPWT should also coordinate and, if possible, consolidate the Brookville Road access to MHJHS with the access improvements to Woodlin Elementary School as recommended in the Master Plan.*
6. Move the Yeshiva and Torah Schools somewhere else. This alternative is not acceptable to the applicant.

Pedestrian Access

In addition to maintaining community access to the play fields, the applicant should provide a sidewalk connection from Brookville Road to the fields to facilitate safe pedestrian access.

Open Spaces and Recreation Facilities

With regard to open spaces and recreational facilities, the applicant proposes to relocate the existing basketball courts to the area on the adjoining lot (i.e., Woodlin Elementary School property) where deteriorated tennis courts presently exist. The basketball courts will be converted to parking. The playing fields will continue to be available for community use. During construction, a portion of the fields may be used for portable classrooms and as a construction staging area.

Since Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) schedules the fields for community use, *any restrictions or closings of the fields should be communicated to CUPF in a timely way so that users can be rescheduled at other facilities. The construction staging area and size and location of portable classrooms should also be coordinated with CUPF to minimize field disruption.*

Finding #5: The applicant has met all applicable environmental requirements (see Attachment 9).

The site has an approved Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD). An exemption has been approved to the requirements of the Forest Conservation Law since the proposed project is a modification to an existing use that would disturb less than 5,000 square feet of forest. It does not clear forest within a stream buffer or Special Protection Area, and it does not require a new subdivision plan. The property is not subject to a Tree Save Plan because no specimen trees will be removed or have greater than 30% of their critical root zone impacted.

The site is located in the Lower Mainstem of the Lower Rock Creek watershed. This Watershed Restoration Area exhibits poor stream conditions and fair habitat conditions. Consequently, full water quality and quantity control in storm water management should be expected to promote the integrity of the watershed.

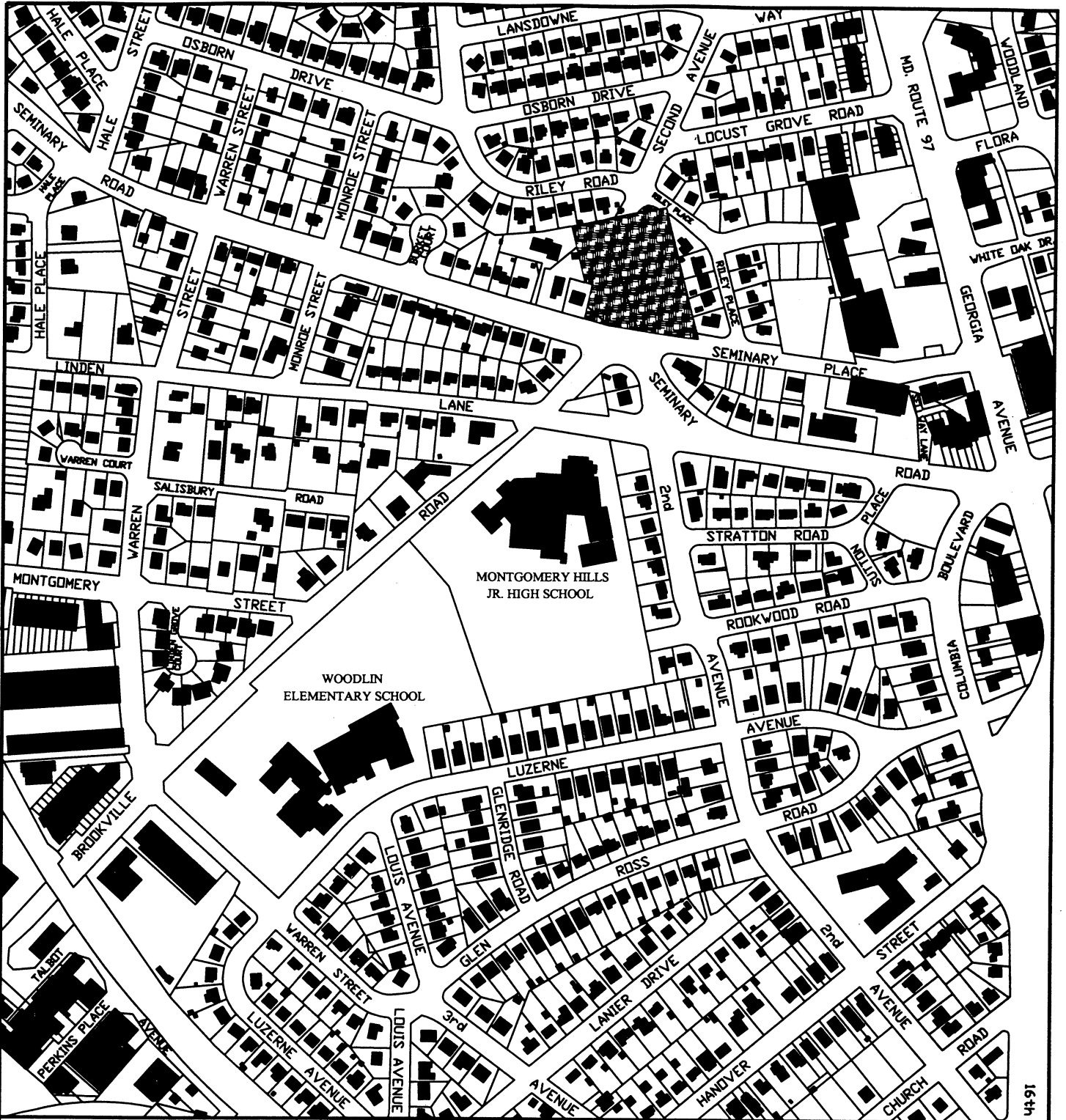
Most of the work associated with the proposed modifications includes interior renovations. Construction will be done in accordance with County noise standards. All of the areas to be renovated will have asbestos abatement.

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Attachments:

- 1- Vicinity Map
- 2- Zoning Map
- 3- Site Plan
- 4- Elevation: Proposed Building Modification
- 5- Enrollment Projections/Operating Hours
- 6- Landscaping Plan
- 7- Site Circulation
- 8- Transportation Planning staff memo
- 9- Environmental Planning staff memo

MONTGOMERY HILLS JR. HIGH SCHOOL SITE

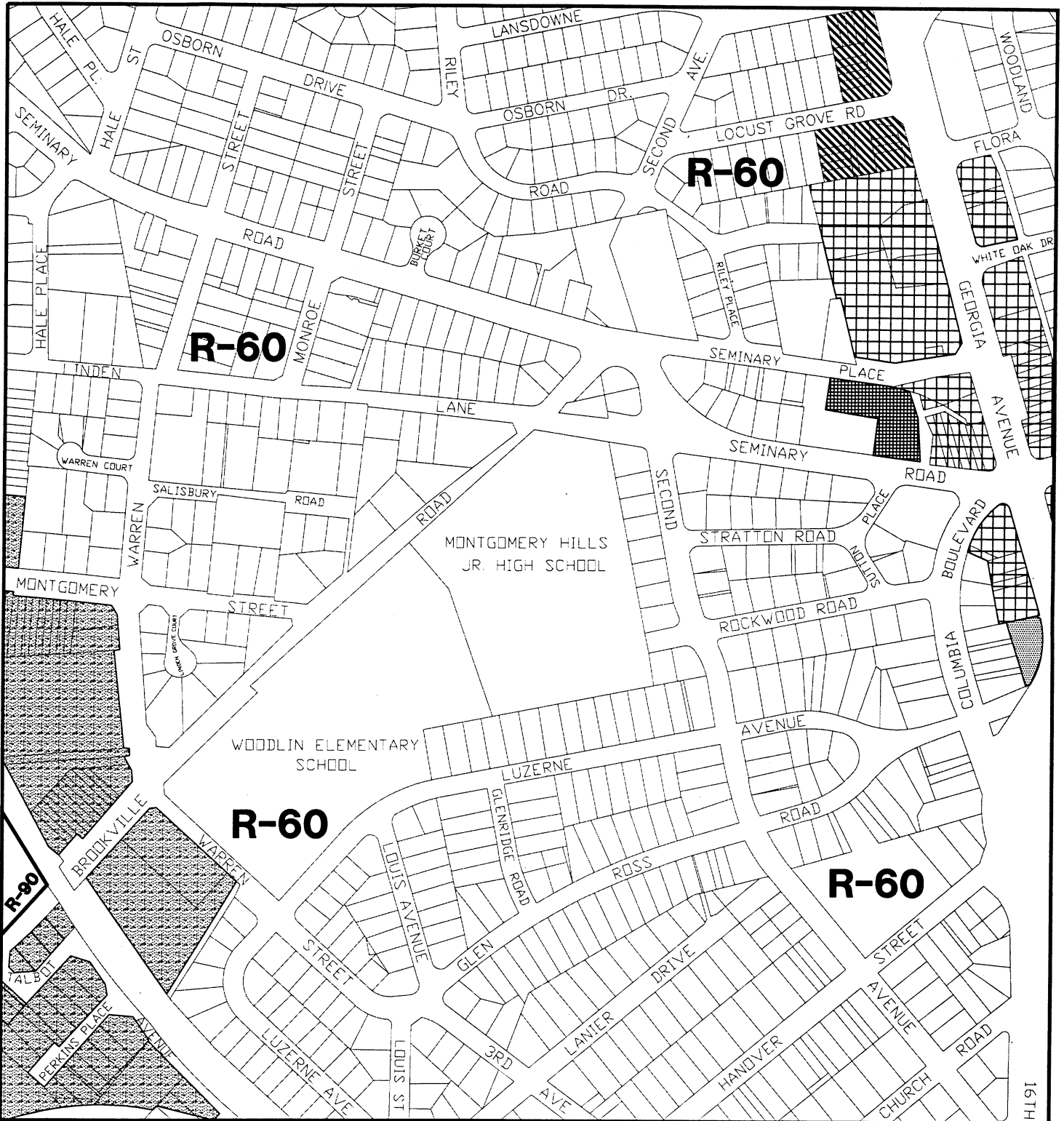


Montgomery Hills Neighborhood Park

0 200 400 800 Feet



MONTGOMERY HILLS JR. HIGH SCHOOL SITE



C-1 - Local Commercial



C-2 - General Commercial



C-O - Commercial Office



I-1 - Light Industrial



RT-12.5 - Residential Townhouses

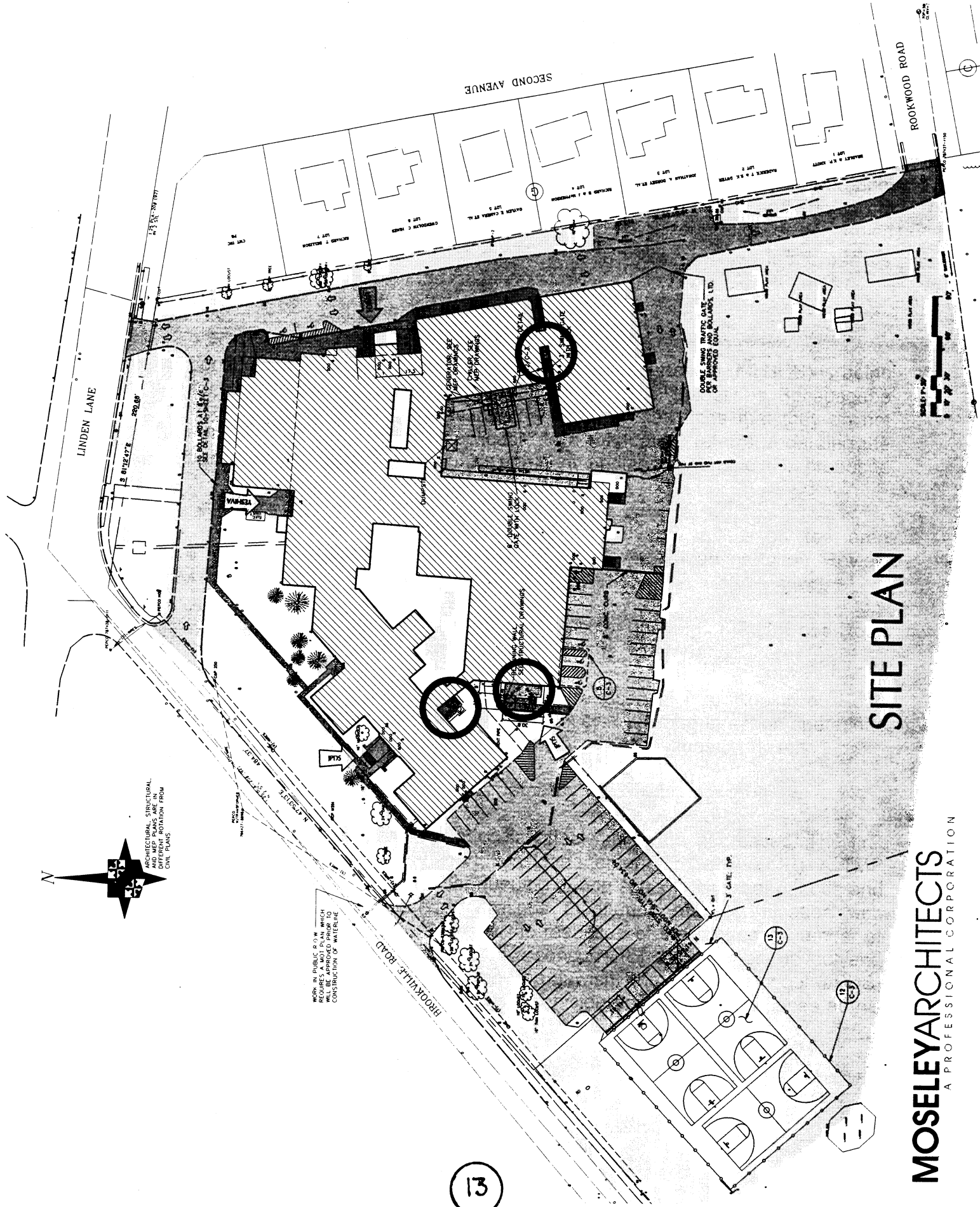


R-60 - Single Family Residential



R-90 - Single Family Residential





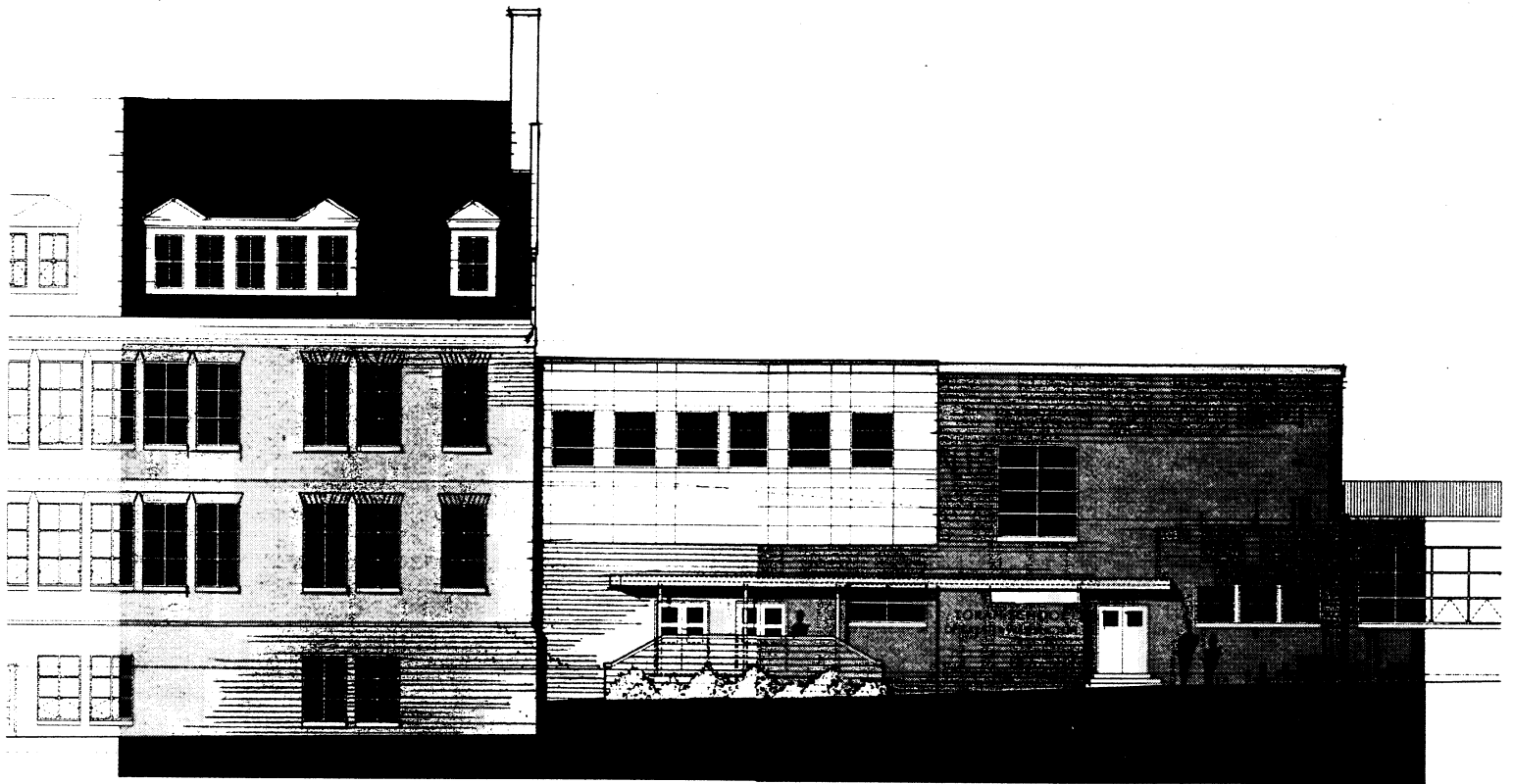
SITE PLAN

MOSELEYARCHITECTS
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ARCHITECTURAL, STRUCTURAL,
MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL AND
PLUMBING WORK SHOWN ARE IN
DIFFERENT PORTIONS FROM
CIVIL PLANS

WORK IN PUBLIC R.O.W. WHICH
REQUIRES A MOT PLAN WHICH
WILL BE APPROVED PRIOR TO
CONSTRUCTION OF WATERLINE

ATTACHMENT 4



MOSELEYARCHITECTS
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

50 WEST MARKET STREET HARRISONBURG, VA 22801 540.434.1346 FAX: 540.434.7982

Montgomery Hill Junior High School Modifications
Montgomery County Public Schools

Revised November 20, 2002

Current Enrollments at Montgomery Hills Junior High School

	Jewish Primary Day School	Spring Bilingual Montessori School	Yeshiva School	Torah School	Total
Student Enrollment	146 (1050*)	40	Currently Off Site	Currently Off Site	186 (1050*)
Full Time Staff	34	4			38
Part Time Staff	5	2			7
Hours of Operation					
School Day	(M-Th) 8:00am-3:30pm (F) 8:00am-2:15pm	(M-F) 7:30am-6:00pm			
After School Activities	Daily until 6:00pm				
Weekends	N/A				

* 1050 was student capacity when the facility operated as a public Junior High School

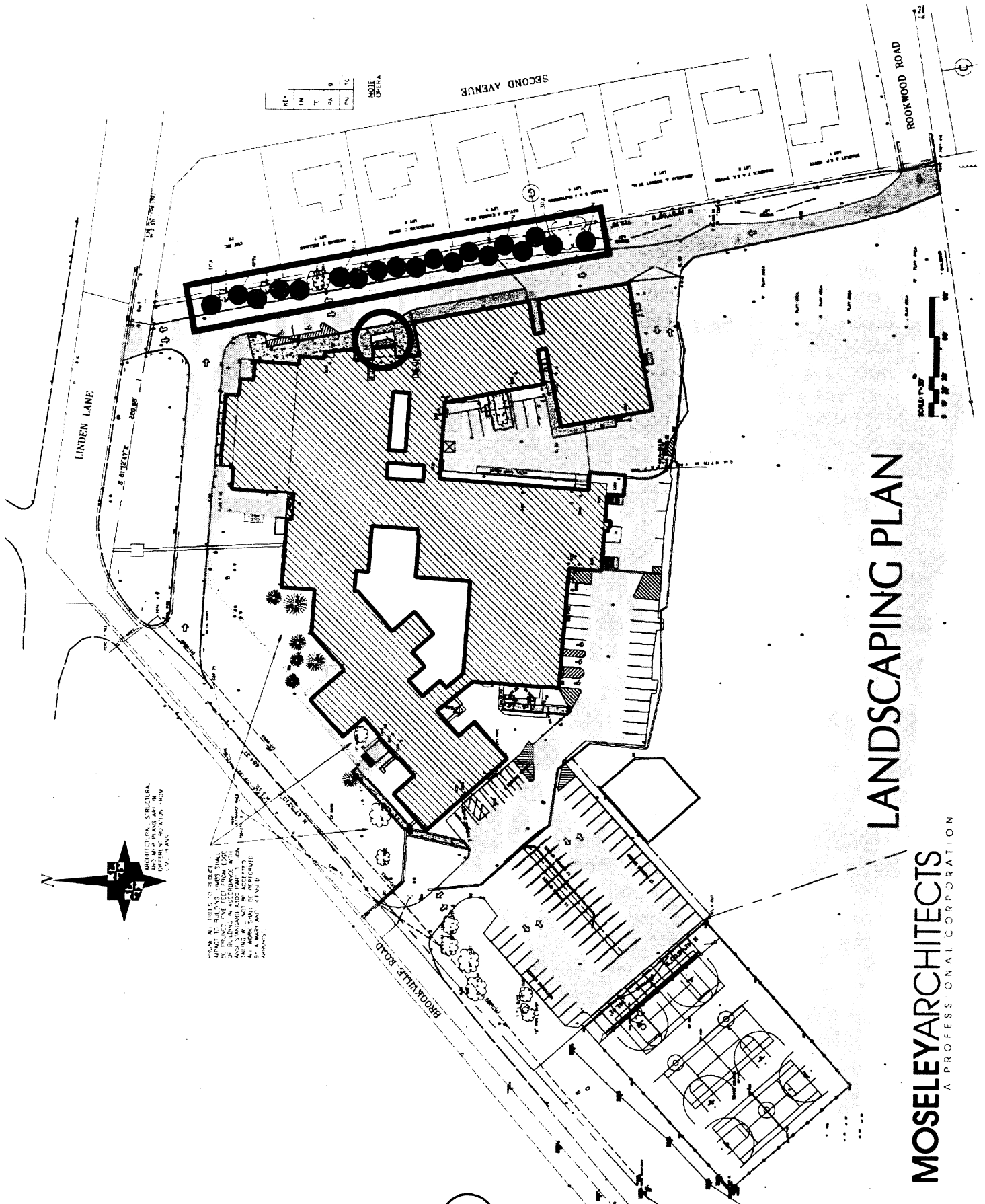
Enrollments After Modifications to Montgomery Hills Junior High School

	Jewish Primary Day School	Spring Bilingual Montessori School	Yeshiva School	Torah School	Total
Student Enrollment	146	School Moving Off Site	150	205	501
Full Time Staff	34		30	22	86
Part Time Staff	5		25	28	58
Hours of Operation					
School Day	(M-Th) 8:00am-3:30pm (F) 8:00am-2:15pm			(M-Th) 8:00am-5:15pm (F) 8:00am-12:30pm	(M-F) 8:15am-3:30pm
After School Activities	Daily until 6:00pm			Daily until 10:30pm	Daily until 6:00pm
Weekends	N/A		(Sat) 6:00pm-10:00pm	(Sun) 9:30am-11:30am	

Net Enrollment Increase of 315 Students

Traffic Impact

	Before Modifications	After Modifications
Visitor/HC Parking	0/4	0/5
Staff Parking	0	0
Total Car Parking Spaces	63 (+4 HC)	101 (+5HC)
Bus Parking	0	0

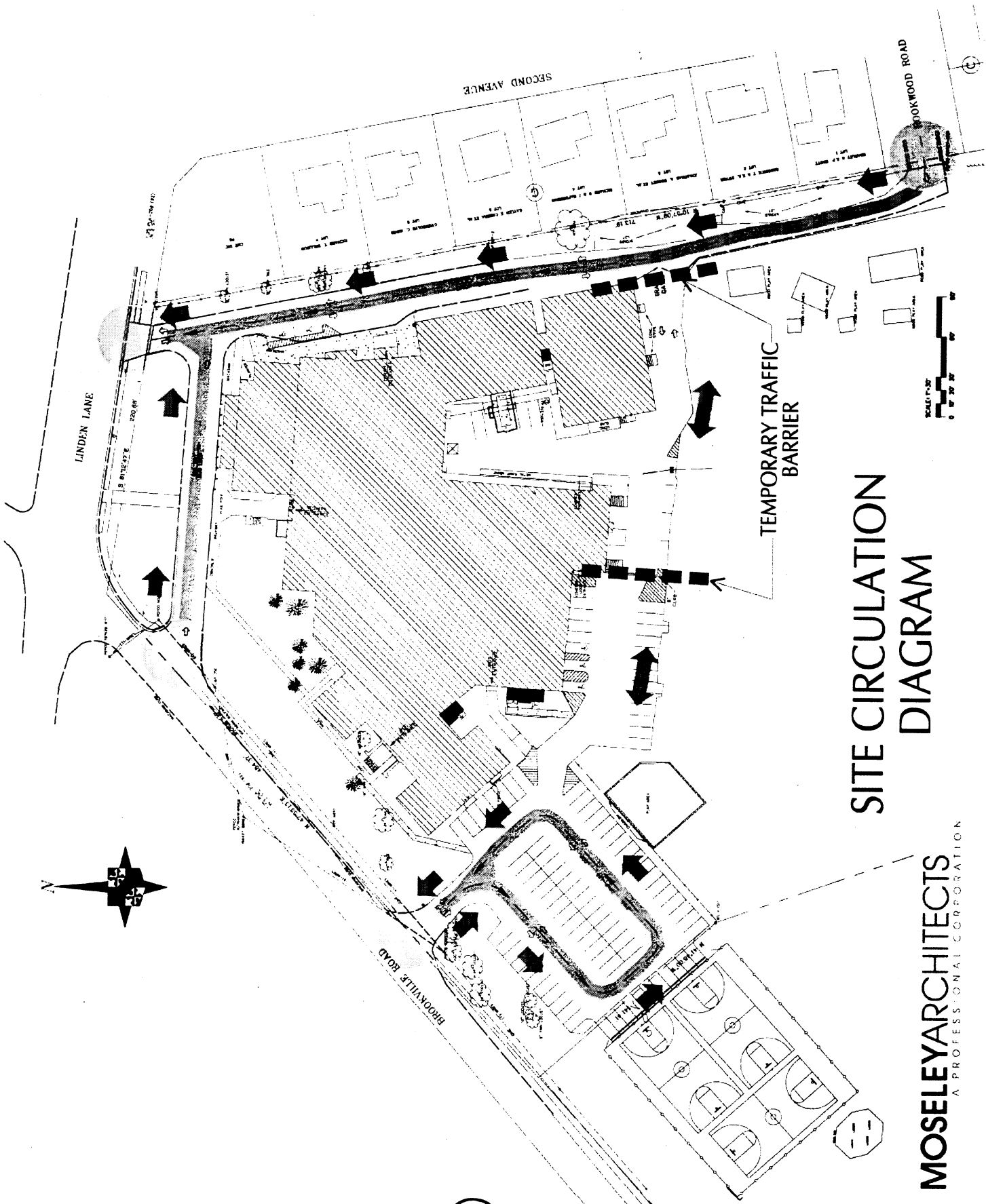


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SCALE
AS SHOWN

LANDSCAPING PLAN

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SITE CIRCULATION
DIAGRAM

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ATTACHMENT 8



January 8, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Glenn Kreger, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader
Community-Based Planning Division

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

FROM: Shahriar Etemadi, Coordinator
Jeff A. Price, Planner
Transportation Planning *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral #02107-DPW&T-1, Montgomery Hills Junior
High School Reuse, Silver Spring

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of the subject application

RECOMMENDATION

Transportation Planning Staff recommends the following conditions as part of the requirements related to the approval of this application.

1. Limit the enrollment of the site to 501 students.
2. Develop a Transportation Management Program (TMP) for approval by the Planning Board that accomplishes the following:
 - a. Establishes an operating plan for both routine school activities and special events that clearly identifies on-site access, circulation, and parking rules and regulations
 - b. Identifies means by which vehicular traffic associated with school dismissal activities will be contained on-site

- c. Reduces the reliance on single-occupant-vehicles, and
 - d. Establishes regular monitoring activities to facilitate identification and implementation of operational access and circulation improvements. Both the tenants and the community associations should participate.
3. Develop site plan revisions to improve access and circulation commensurate with a reduction in the number of students on site. These revisions should be brought to the Planning Board for mandatory referral review at that time and should not rely on access via Rookwood Road for routine school operation or scheduled special events.

DISCUSSION

The proposed reuse of the Montgomery Hills Junior High School (MHJHS) is being submitted for Planning Board review per the mandatory referral guidelines. Because the proposed actions are reviewed as a mandatory referral, staff finds that they do not violate the standards and guidelines applicable to a mandatory referral regarding the transportation network. Staff makes three pertinent findings regarding the proposed actions:

1. The proposed operations do not create an adverse affect on the area transportation system as defined by the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) guidelines.
2. The proposed operations will cause some vehicular queuing on Rookwood Road during the afternoon school dismissal period for the Torah School
3. Closing the Rookwood Road entrance would reduce traffic on Rookwood Road and Second Avenue but would also have an overall adverse effect on operations and safety, as long as all three schools remain in the locations proposed.

Each of these findings is discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

There are two means by which adverse affects might be addressed. The first means is the development of a Transportation Management Program (TMP). A TMP would both address reduction of vehicular queuing during school dismissal periods and provide a mechanism for continued operations monitoring and coordination with adjacent communities. The second means is the reduction of the proposed number of independent schools occupying the site, with a concurrent revision to site layout and operations. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Jewish Primary Day School (JPDS) may be departing the site, yet the evidence is insufficient for planning purposes at this time.

Staff therefore proposes that the TMP be developed and implemented to monitor and document school operations as proposed. Within the next two years, the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) should find a means to reduce the number of schools operating on the site (presumably through JPDS relocation), and submit a revised site plan for mandatory referral review.

Local Area Transportation Review (LATR)

DPWT conducted a Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) study to evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the area transportation system.

A total of nine intersections and three driveways were evaluated for their level of service traffic operation. The two studies did not include the background traffic because there were no approved but un-built developments within the study area. Therefore, the Critical Lane Volume (CLV) analysis includes only the existing and total future traffic that is the existing plus additional trips generated from the site.

Finding #1: The CLV results shown in the following table indicates that all intersections will operate within the congestion standard of 1650 CLV for the Silver Spring and Takoma Park Policy Area.

Table 1-Critical Lane Volume analysis for the intersections in the study area

INTERSECTIONS	Existing		Total Future	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
Georgia Avenue/Seminary Place	1177	1553	1215	1557
Georgia Avenue/Seminary Road/Columbia Blvd.	1415	1568	1461	1580
Georgia Avenue/16 th Street	1013	1153	1013	1153
Seminary Road/Seminary Pl/Brookville Rd/2 nd Ave.	672	887	718	896
Linden Lane/2 nd Avenue	666	889	735	921.
16 th Street/2 nd Avenue/Elkhart Street	840	658	936	676
Linden Ln/Forest Glen Rd/Capital View/Seminary Rd	893	1046	900	1047
Brookville Road/Linden Lane	757	910	843	916
Linden Lane/Montgomery Hills JHS Driveway	641	926	773	958
Brookville Road/Montgomery Hills JHS N. Driveway	Driveway is One-way Inbound			
Brookville Road/Montgomery Hills JHS S.Driveway	680	780	805	806
Brookville Road/Lyttonsville Place	392	579	451	592

Proposed Access and Circulation

The MHJHS site is located in the Woodside community of Silver Spring. According to the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan, site access is provided via the following adjacent and nearby roadways:

- The portions of Linden Lane and Brookville Road adjacent to the site are classified as an arterial roadway (A-60) with an 80-foot right-of-way and an on-road bike path.

Rookwood Road and the portion of Second Avenue south of Linden Lane are not classified in the master plan. Through Montgomery Hills, left-turns from Georgia Avenue (MD 97) are prohibited during peak periods, causing some motorists to use Second Avenue as an alternate route. The Master Plan recommends a comprehensive set of improvements to Georgia Avenue that would reduce traffic demand on Second Avenue. Currently, DPWT is conducting a traffic calming study on Second Avenue to determine if operational improvements are warranted.

The MHJHS proposal houses three institutions in different parts of the school. They are JDPS, Yeshiva and Torah schools. The site plan for the renovated MHJHS provides separate entrances for the JDPS, Yeshiva and Torah School to accommodate the religious customs for these three schools. The separate entrances for the three schools impact the circulation pattern at MHJHS as discussed below. The JDPS desires to have its own separate access to the building. Yeshiva/Torah School would access the building from the alleyway along the east side parallel to Second Avenue. The JDPS would access the building from the Brookville Road driveway on the southwest corner of the campus. There is a faculty parking lot just to the south of the Brookville Road driveway where vehicles circle to drop-off or pick-up the students at this location. A driveway connects west and the east sides of the campus along south of the school buildings. This driveway is currently chained off to prevent cut through traffic from Brookville Road to Rookwood Road and Second Avenue. The circulation plan submitted to the Planning Department shows the location of the drop-off and pick-up for Yeshiva/Torah students on the alleyway along the east side of the campus gaining access from Rookwood Road.

Staff has found that a relationship exists between the number of students being dismissed and the maximum length of vehicular queue that results. This relationship was developed as part of the Harbor School special exception case in 2000, based on observations of dismissal operations at six private educational institutions that do not provide bus service. Table 2 shows the estimated average queuing for each school and the queuing capacity at the three site driveways.

Table 2-Queuing Analysis

Queuing Area	Location	Adjacent to pedestrian entrance for	Projected use for loading students from	Staff Estimated	
				Queuing Capacity	Maximum Queue
1	North side	Yeshiva	None	9	0
2	East side	Torah	Torah (3:30 PM)	25	30
			Yeshiva (5:15 PM)	25	22
3	West side	JPDS	JPDS	21	21

As indicated in Table 2, the short driveway (labeled Queuing Area #1) adjacent to the Yeshiva School entrance will only accommodate nine vehicles. The schools recognize that this driveway is insufficient to serve as a location for school dismissal, and, therefore, propose that both Yeshiva and Torah Schools share the driveway (Queuing Area #2) along the site's east side. During school arrival and dismissal times, vehicles would enter this driveway from Rookwood Road and depart via Linden Lane.

Finding #2: Staff analysis of the sufficiency of the vehicular stacking, or queuing, areas for the three schools indicate that the Torah School queue will exceed the available queuing space. The Torah School queue would therefore be expected to extend onto Rookwood Road during the typical afternoon dismissal time. Typically, the maximum queue for a school dismissal operation only exists for a short period of time (perhaps five to ten minutes). Nevertheless, if the application were reviewed as a special exception, the site would not meet the criteria of Section 59-G-2.19- (a)-(4)-a-1-d, which requires "adequacy of drop-off and pick-up areas for all programs and events, including on-site stacking space and traffic control to effectively deter queues of waiting vehicles from spilling over onto adjacent streets".

Staff notes that two factors might be expected to influence the maximum queue lengths shown in Table 2, although the influences would likely offset each other. The first factor is that not all Torah School students are dismissed at 3:30 PM, as some percentage typically remain on site for after-school activities. At this time, insufficient information is available regarding the percentage of students remaining on-site or how those Torah School students remaining late would be dismissed without interfering with Yeshiva School dismissal operations. The second factor is that the site's east driveway intersects Linden Lane approximately 200 feet west of the signalized intersection of Linden Lane with Second Avenue. Based on a field review, staff finds that the driveway access point is not inherently unsafe or inappropriate, yet it is likely that departing vehicles will encounter sufficient delays to affect the efficiency of the dismissal operation and perhaps result in a slightly longer queue than calculated.

This queuing analysis confirms the need for student and parent operations and responsibilities to be clearly delineated in a Transportation Management Program (TMP). An effective TMP can improve the efficiency of dismissal operations, reducing vehicular queue length. The TMP should also include a monitoring program so that

operations are periodically reviewed by the school staff and shared with community associations to identify potential improvements.

Alternative Circulation Plan

Community representatives have requested that Rookwood Road be closed to reduce the amount of traffic using this road to travel between Second Avenue and Linden Lane. However, if Rookwood Road were closed, the east driveway would not be functional as a location for school dismissal operations because insufficient U-turn space exists for dismissal queue formation. If Rookwood Road were closed, staff finds the most effective operation would be for traffic destined for the Yeshiva and Torah Schools on the east side to use the Brookville Road driveway. The chained connector road on the south side of the buildings would need to be opened, at least during arrival and dismissal periods, to allow traffic to move from the west side to the east side of the campus. The Yeshiva and Torah School traffic would need to travel a circuitous path through the western parking area, adjacent to the JPDS queue.

The plan would address the Woodside community concern by reducing traffic on Rookwood Road Second Avenue and it would address staff concern regarding queue length by utilizing driveway space on the south side of the school. More important, however, the plan would create an operational problem associated with conflicting vehicle maneuvers near the JPDS entrance. Access to the Yeshiva and Torah school entrance would require vehicles to pass the JPDS entrance and travel across or around the JPDS vehicular queue. Staff finds the introduction of a “through” traffic stream into a student loading/unloading area unacceptable.

From a roadway network perspective, all studied intersections would still operate within the congestion standard of 1650 CLV for the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Policy Area. Table 3 shows the difference in the CLV at each intersection for which the CLV for Total Future traffic conditions would change if Rookwood Road were closed.

Table 3-Change in CLV due to closure of Rookwood Road

INTERSECTIONS	Changes in Total Future CLV Associated With Rookwood Rd Closure		Total Future CLV with Rookwood Road Closure	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
Linden Lane/Second Ave.	-42	-26	792	950
16 th Street/Second Ave/Elkhart St	-90	-16	882	680
Brookville Road/ Linden Lane	+125	+30	899	942
Linden Lane/Montgomery Hills JHS Driveway (north)	+112	+30	883	1042
Brookville Road/Montgomery Hills JHS (south)	+125	+34	879	884

As indicated in Table 3, the closure of Rookwood Road and the resulting shift of traffic to the Brookville Road entrance would reduce congestion slightly along Second

Avenue at both its Linden Lane and 16th Street intersections. However, congestion would increase slightly at the two remaining site driveways, as well as at the intersection of Brookville Road and Linden Lane.

Permanent closure of Rookwood Road would have two, relatively minor, effects. First, it would restrict the flexibility of the school to deal with unanticipated events, such as emergency operations or unscheduled driveway closures due to maintenance or incidents. Second, if Rookwood Road were permanently closed, an appropriate cul-de-sac treatment would be recommended; such treatment would need to be on the school site in order to avoid adverse residential impacts. Therefore, staff finds that even if a revised site plan for a reduced site mission can achieve routine access and circulation needs without using Rookwood Road, that maintenance of some Rookwood Road connection for emergency purposes is desirable.

Finding #3: The alternative circulation plan, including the closure of Rookwood Road, is undesirable due primarily to on-site safety concerns associated with conflicting traffic movements at the JPDS entrance. From the perspective of community protection, staff concurs with the Woodside community that shifting traffic from secondary and tertiary roads like Second Avenue and Rookwood Road to arterial roadways like Brookville Road and Lyttonsville Road is generally desirable. However, since all these roadways have substantial residential property frontage, staff notes that the effect of closing Rookwood Road is essentially to move the annoyance from one residential community to another. More important, staff finds the introduction of Yeshiva and Torah School traffic into the JPDS student loading/unloading area to be unacceptable.

Staff recommends that the circulation plan proposed by DPWT, with the traffic accessing the Yeshiva and Torah Schools via Rookwood Road is the most effective way to accommodate the needs of all three schools on the existing site. Staff recommends that this operation be implemented and monitored while the school develops a revised site plan for mandatory referral review by the Planning Board that reflects the relocation of one of the schools, presumably JPDS. The revised plan should either reflect the closure of Rookwood Road for recurring school activities or document the adverse impacts that prevent Rookwood Road closure.

Pedestrian Access and Circulation

Sidewalks exist along the roadways serving the campus to facilitate pedestrian access to the school. The applicant proposes to improve sidewalk connections on the campus. The internal walkway improvements include connecting the Yeshiva school entrance on the building's north side to the shared Torah/Yeshiva School loading area on the east side. It is also proposed to connect walkways between faculty parking and the JPDS entrance. In addition to maintaining community access to the play fields, the applicant should provide a sidewalk connection from Brookville Road to the fields to facilitate safe pedestrian access.

Transportation Management Plan

As described above, staff recommends that the school provide guidelines and policies for managing the following elements of the school transportation system:

1. Provide access and circulation plan for queue management
2. Designate a transportation coordinator to provide information on carpooling, van pooling bus and transit ridership.
3. Provide guidelines on carpool operation, parking policies, delivery and service vehicles, and special event management.
4. Provide means for operations monitoring and regularly scheduled meetings with adjacent community associations to identify and resolve transportation issues.

This Transportation Plan should be submitted to the Planning Board for their review and approved for implementation.

Policy Area Review/Staging Ceiling Analysis

The site is located within the Silver Spring/Takoma Park policy area, which has a remaining capacity of 1,238 jobs and 2,324 housing units as of November 30, 2002.

SE:JP:cmd

Montgomery Hills Jr.High School-MR #02107-DPW&T-1.DOC

ATTACHMENT 9



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Office of the Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 8, 2002

TO: Glenn Kreger, Community Based Planning Division

VIA: Mary Dolan, Environmental Planning Division *MD*

FROM: Marion Clark, Environmental Planning Division *MC*

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. MR-02107-MCPS-1
Montgomery Hills Junior High School

The Environmental Planning staff has reviewed the referral referenced above. Staff recommends **approval** of this mandatory referral.

Forest Conservation

This site has an approved Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD). An exemption of the Forest Conservation Law has been granted because the proposal is a modification to an existing use that is clearing no more than a total of 5,000 square feet of forest; does not clear forest within a stream buffer or on property subject to SPA WQP requirements; and does not require a new subdivision plan. The plan is not subject to requirements for a tree save plan because no specimen trees will be removed or have greater than 30% of the critical root zone impacted.

Water Quality

This site is located in the Lower Mainstem of the Lower Rock Creek watershed. The Countywide Stream Protection Strategy classifies this as a Watershed Restoration Area with poor stream conditions and fair habitat conditions. To the extent possible, conditions should be improved to restore stream and habitat conditions. Full water quality and quantity control in stormwater management shall be expected to protect the integrity of the Lower Rock Creek watershed.