

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

March 10, 2005

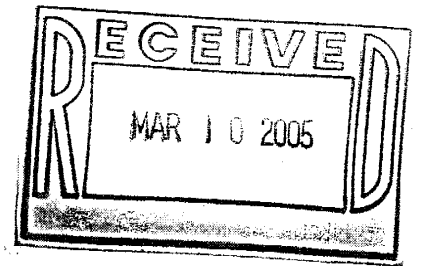
MEMORANDUM

TO: Kristin O'Connor, Senior Planner
Community-Based Planning Division

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

FROM: Ed Axler, Planner/Coordinator *EA*
Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 05201-MCPS-1
Garrett Park Elementary School Addition, Phase I Modernization
North Bethesda Policy Area



This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facility (APF) and access/circulation review of the subject mandatory referral.

FINDINGS FOR PHASE I MODERNIZATION

Transportation Planning staff recommends the following comments for the subject Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) elementary school addition. Staff recommends that comments 2, 3, and 4, be incorporated into the Park Development Division's construction permit:

1. Limit the mandatory referral for this elementary school addition or Phase I modernization to:
 - a. Meet current MCPS' guidelines by adding six permanent classrooms and two ESOL rooms on Parcel P990, while removing six of the seven temporary learning cottages on Parcel N020.
 - b. Relocate the paved play area from the southeast to the southwest side of the elementary school.

2. Coordinate the on-site construction activities and delivery times to ensure safe on-site pedestrian, passenger vehicle, and bus access and circulation that should be physically separated from construction activities; especially during the arrival and departure times to and from the four different land uses described below on the overall site:
 - a. The subject MCPS elementary school on Parcels N898, N992, and N020.
 - b. The child day care facility operating from the historic building located on Parcel N992 northeast of the elementary school.
 - c. The Garrett Park Cooperative Nursery School operating on M-NCPPC's Garrett Park Estates Park located on adjoining Parcel P900 northwest of the elementary school.
 - d. M-NCPPC's park with recreation facilities located on adjoining Parcel N073 south of the elementary school.
3. Provide off-site parking for construction-related vehicles in order to not take the on-site parking spaces now fully utilized by the four land uses above. Likewise, continue the current parking practices and circulation patterns of school buses and parents dropping-off and picking-up children by the elementary school, child daycare facility, and nursery school that now does back up off-site onto Oxford Street.
4. Proceed to enter into an agreement between M-NCPPC and MCPS to the use of the southern portion of M-NCPPC's Parcel 900, Garrett Part Estates Park, as a staging area for construction equipment and material used in building the MCPS' elementary school addition located on the adjoining MCPS' Parcel P990.

FINDINGS FOR THE PLANNED PHASE II MODERNIZATION

Transportation Planning staff recommends the following agreements associated with the planned Phase II elementary school modernization to assure long-term access and circulation for the existing land uses on the site:

1. An agreement between MCPS and M-NCPPC to permit MCPS' elementary school use per the following:
 - a. The cul-de-sac located on the eastern portion of M-NCPPC's Parcel P900 as a queuing area for parents dropping-off and picking-up elementary school students until the completion of the planned Phase II modernization.
 - b. The southeastern corner of M-NCPPC Parcel P990 for emergency vehicle access to the western side of the elementary school located on MCPS' Parcel P990.

2. An agreement between MCPS and M-NCPPC to permit the Garrett Park Cooperative Nursing School (i.e., operating from M-NCPPC's Garrett Park Estates Park on Parcel P900) to use the parking spaces located across the east-west property line between M-NCPPC's Parcel P900 and MCPS' Parcel N898.
3. An agreement between MCPS and M-NCPPC to provide access from Oxford Street to M-NCPPC's two landlocked Parcels P900 (through MCPS' Parcels N992) and N073 (through MCPS' Parcels N992 and N020).
4. An agreement between MCPS, M-NCPPC, and the Town of Garrett Park to provide access to landlocked MCPS' Parcels N992, N898, and P990 and M-NCPPC's Parcels P900 and N073 from Kenilworth Avenue through the Town of Garrett Park's Lot 11, Block 50.
5. An agreement between MCPS and M-NCPPC to:
 - a. Share the recreational facilities on M-NCPPC's adjoining Parcel N073 along the elementary school's southern property line.
 - b. Use the existing asphalt basketball court that cross the southern property line between MCPS' Parcel N020 and M-NCPPC's Parcel N073.

All of the above agreements can be incorporated into one Memorandum of Understanding.

DISCUSSION

Considerations for the Elementary School's Planned Phase II Modernization

Based on the currently available information, the future planned Phase II modernization of the elementary school includes an additional wing on the south side of the elementary school and relocated parent drop-off and pick-up area. At that time, MCPS should consider developing the following plans to prevent adverse impacts to the operations of the elementary school and other land uses:

1. A "maintenance of traffic" plan to prevent conflicting movements of construction-related traffic with pedestrians and vehicles generated by the on-site land uses.
2. An on-site parking and vehicular circulation plan and any pedestrian improvements to provide safe pedestrian movement.
3. A parking and vehicular circulation plan to prevent overflow parking and parents' vehicles queued to drop-off and pick-up children from parking and backing up off-site onto Oxford Street, respectively.

The Elementary School's Site Location and Vehicular Access Point

The existing elementary school site is located on MCPS' Parcels N898, N992, P990, and N020 that are in the southwest quadrant of Strathmore Avenue (MD 547) and Kenilworth Avenue. The site access point is from Oxford Street that connects to Kenilworth Avenue. Oxford Street between the school site and Kenilworth Avenue is an existing functional 50-foot-wide tertiary residential street on land that is owned by the City of Garrett Park, but is not identified as a public right-of-way on the tax map.

Vehicular Circulation for the Elementary School

The vehicular circulation and parking for the elementary school are as follows:

1. School Buses: Buses enter from Oxford Street, circulate counter-clockwise around the school's parking area, and drop-off (i.e., at the starting time of 8:40 a.m.) and pick-up (i.e., at the ending time of 3:05 p.m.) students along the south side of the parking area.
2. Parents' Drop-Off and Pick-Up: Parents enter from Oxford Street, travel through the school's parking area, and queue up in the cul-de-sac located on M-NCPPC's Parcel P900 to drop-off and pick-up elementary school students.
3. Service Vehicles: The entrance to the elementary school's service driveway is from approximately ten feet from MCPS' eastern property line (i.e., or Parcel N992) at Oxford Street. The service driveway runs parallel north to south along the eastern property line.
4. Special Larger Events: Existing traffic generated by larger special events at the elementary school has not been known to overflow the elementary school site.

On-Site Parking for the Elementary School

The elementary school has 50 parking spaces currently on the site with no proposed increase in the Phase I modernization.

Location, Vehicular Access Points, Circulation, and Parking for the Adjoining Land Uses

For the adjoining land uses, their location, vehicular access points, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and parking are as follows:

1. Child Daycare Facility: The Montgomery Childcare Association operates a child daycare facility in a historic school building on MCPS' Parcel N992. The access point is shared with the elementary school from Oxford Street into MCPS' Parcel N992. The elementary school's service driveway is located on the east side of the historic building and parallel north to south along the MCPS' eastern property line. The existing vehicle circulation to drop-off and pick-up children and parking were not available. Inherently, parents using child day care facilities usually drop-off their children in the early morning before

traveling to their work place and before elementary school classes start. Likewise, parents using child day care facilities pick-up their children after their workday ends and after elementary school classes ends. Hence the traffic generated by child day care facility should not conflict with the traffic generated by the elementary school.

2. Nursery School: Garrett Park Cooperative Nursery School operates in the building located on M-NCPPC's Parcel P900, Garrett Park Estates Park that adjoins the elementary school site on northwestern side. The access point is shared with the elementary school from Oxford Street through the elementary school's parking area and bus loop on MCPS' Parcel N992 to a cul-de-sac. This cul-de-sac is located on M-NCPPC's Parcel P900 and is on the northeast side nursery school building. It serves as a parent drop-off and pick-up loop for both the elementary school and nursery school. Pedestrians walk along the outside of this cul-de-sac to the nursery school and elementary school entrances where the adjacent construction activities must be physically separated by fencing from the pedestrian path. Parking spaces for the nursery school are perpendicular on the outside western and northern sides of this cul-de-sac. The parking spaces on the northern side of the cul-de-sac are partially located on MCPS' Parcel N898. The nursery school starts approximately 15 minutes after the elementary school classes that helps minimize some of the conflicting traffic generated by the nursery school and elementary school.
3. Public Recreation Facilities: M-NCPPC maintains a softball and soccer field on their adjoining Parcel N073 on the southern side of the elementary school. The elementary school uses the M-NCPPC recreation facilities as a play area during recess periods.
4. Religious School and Other Facilities: Holy Cross Academy (high school) and church facilities are located along the adjoining northern and western property lines of the elementary school. The site access points are from driveways along Strathmore Avenue.

Public Transit Service

Bus service is available with Ride-On routes 5 and 6 operating along nearby Strathmore Avenue. Bus riders can walk to Strathmore Avenue via Oxford Street and Kenilworth Avenue (the distance between Oxford Street and Strathmore Avenue is approximately 800 feet).

Pedestrian Circulation and Available Sidewalks

The pedestrian circulation to, from, and within the site is as follows:

1. Into the School Site from Oxford Street: A four-foot wide sidewalk exists on the north side along Oxford Street between Kenilworth Avenue and approximately ten feet into the elementary school site (or MCPS' Parcel N992). From this sidewalk on the north side, a marked crosswalk crosses the drive aisle and connects to a five-foot wide sidewalk on the south side. The sidewalk on the south side starts approximately 20 feet from the eastern property line of the elementary school and continues westerly to the elementary school's entrance. The marked crosswalk delineates the pedestrian path so that trucks turning left

into and right out of the service driveway (located approximately ten feet from the property line) would not conflict with pedestrians walking between the sidewalks on opposite sides.

2. School Bus Disembarking and Boarding Area: After the school bus travel counter-clockwise around the parking area (or “ bus loop”), students disembark and board school buses along a five-foot wide east-west sidewalk located in front of the elementary school building and historic building/day care facility. This east-west sidewalk connects to three perpendicular sidewalks that lead to the entrances of the elementary school and day care facility.
3. From the Parents’ Drop-Off and Pick-Up Area: A four-foot wide sidewalk runs north-south for approximately 40 feet in front of elementary school’s entrance. This sidewalk is the only existing sidewalk from the parents’ drop-off and pick-up area/cul-de-sac, across an asphalt driveway (i.e., running along the western side of the elementary school building), and to the elementary school entrance. Pedestrian treatments are not proposed in this Phase I modernization to better delineate and improve the pedestrian path within the parents’ drop-off and pick-up area and across an asphalt driveway. Likewise, improved pedestrian treatments are not proposed between the parents’ drop-off/pick-up area and the nursery school’s entrance.
4. Into the Overall School Site from Holy Cross’ Facilities to the West: A four-foot wide sidewalk connects the adjoining Holy Cross property to M-NCPPC’s Parcel P900 (or nursery school site) or the overall elementary school site.

Functional Designations of the nearby Roadways

The nearby roadways are functional, designated as follows:

1. Oxford Street: The segment between the school site and Kenilworth Avenue is a functional tertiary residential street with a 50-foot-wide right-of-way that is on land owned by and within the Town of Garrett Park.
2. Kenilworth Avenue: The nearby segment south of Strathmore Avenue is a functional tertiary residential street with a 50-foot-wide right-of-way and is located in the Town of Garrett Park.
3. Strathmore Avenue (MD 547): Strathmore Avenue is designated as an arterial, A-272, with an 80-foot right-of-way and a Class II bikeway according to the *North Bethesda/ Garrett Park Master Plan*. The nearby segment is located within the Town of Garrett Park.

Adequate Public Facility/Local Area Transportation Review

The Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) component of the APF review for the subject Phase I modernization or elementary school addition was based on the following changes:

1. Adding six more permanent standard-sized classrooms while removing an equal number of temporary learning cottages.
2. Adding two ESOL rooms for dedicated learning areas that are now occurring in existing jointly used space.

The changes above to the elementary school would not generate any additional peak-hour trips during the weekday morning peak period (7:30 to 9:30 a.m.) and evening peak period (4:00 to 7:00 p.m.). Thus, a traffic study would not be required to satisfy LATR.

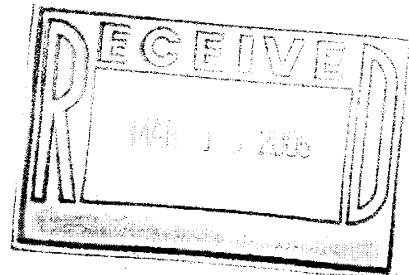
As a future mandatory referral, planned Phase II of the modernization would ultimately increase the school's capacity from 338 to 449 students to accommodate the current 459 students and the projected 507 students in September 2010.

Under the current *FY 2005 Annual Growth Policy*, Policy Area Transportation Review is no longer applicable (i.e., no review of the remaining transportation staging ceilings in the North Bethesda Policy Area).

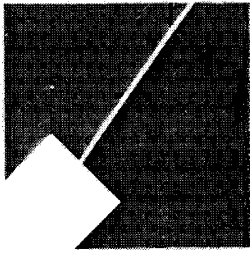
EA:gw

cc: Ned Majer, Jr.
Ray Marhamati
Mitra Pedoeem
Bill Gries

memo to O'Connor re Garrett Park Elem 05201-MCPS-1.doc



M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 8, 2005
TO: Kristin O'Connor, Community Based Planning
VIA: Mary Dolan, Countywide Planning Division, Environmental *MD*
FROM: Marion Clark, Countywide Planning Division, Environmental *MC*
SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. MR-05201-MCPS-1
Garrett Park Elementary School

The Environmental Planning staff has reviewed the mandatory referral referenced above. Staff recommends **approval** with the following conditions:

- A final Tree Save Plan prepared by an ISA certified arborist shall be approved by M-NCPPC, CWP, Environmental prior to approval of the sediment and erosion control plan or any clearing, grading or land disturbance of the site.
- A Storm Water Management Plan approved by MCDPS shall be submitted to M-NCPPC, CWP, Environmental Unit prior to issuance of sediment and erosion control permit.

Discussion

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is proposing removal and reconstruction of the existing Garrett Park Elementary School building. Construction of a small wing of the new building, the subject of this application, will be the first step in the process. The wing is to be located in an existing courtyard alongside the existing building. The existing building will remain for now, but will be removed and a new structure built that integrates the proposed wing.

This proposal sites the new wing over an existing playground. The playground will be relocated to the south side of the existing school building in an area that supports one specimen tree and three significant trees. These trees will be removed to provide space for the relocated playground. Mitigation for the specimen tree will be provided with 12 new 3-inch caliper canopy trees planted around the periphery of the site in areas where future construction is unlikely. Trees numbered 418, 419, and 420 (26" and 27" American Sweetgums) will remain protected by a fence until the existing building is removed and the new building constructed.

(24)

The storm water management concept plan is conditionally approved. The stormwater concept consists of on-site channel protection measures using underground storage and on-site water quality control using a Stormfilter. Approval is conditioned on MCPS obtaining an easement from the adjacent property owner to be able to discharge runoff onto an existing asphalt driveway and on MCPS verifying safe conveyance of all storm flows. The conduits draining the underground facility will cause removal of a 29" Box Elder located on Maryland National Capital Park and Planning property. MCPS is working with the Department of Permitting Services to reroute the conduit to preserve the tree and extend the conduit directing the runoff into to an existing curb inlet. The Tree Save Plan will show the 29" Box Elder saved and tree preservation measures in the critical root zone.

Forest Conservation

This site has an approved Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD). A Forest Conservation Plan exemption has been granted because this is a modification of existing developed property with no more than a total of 5,000 square feet of forest cleared; no forest clearing within a stream buffer or on property subject to SPA WQP requirements; and does not require a new subdivision plan. A Tree Save Plan shall be approved prior to issuance of building and sedimentation and erosion control permits.

Water Quality

This site is located in the Lower Mainstem Ken-Gar subwatershed of the Lower Rock Creek watershed. The Countywide Stream Protection Strategy (CSPS) classifies the stream and habitat conditions as fair. It is categorized as a Watershed Restoration Area. Every effort should be made to protect and improve water quality in this watershed.

RE K. Letter from Principal of GPES
FEB 24 2005



Garrett Park Elementary School

4810 Oxford Street
P. O. Box 219
Garrett Park, Maryland 20896-0219

301-929-2170

February 22, 2005

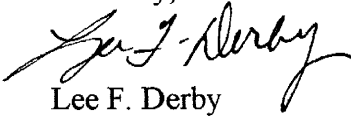
Kristin O'Connor
Senior Planner
Community-Based Planning Division
Montgomery County Department of Park & Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Dear Ms. O'Connor:

I am writing in support of the proposed removal of several "gumball" trees at the rear of our school so that adequate play space for our students may be created and safety can be increased. As you know, this new play space is needed due to our addition project, which will be built where our existing blacktop is and which will also cut off access to the soft play area adjacent to that blacktop. This loss of this play area will impact our student body greatly as it will severely limit what types of activities they can engage in at recess and during Physical Education classes. The small blacktop and soft play area currently located in the back of our school are not sufficient for the large numbers of students in grades K-5 that will utilize these areas.

In addition to these programming concerns, there have been longstanding safety issues with these trees as well. Over the years, students and staff have been injured by the "gumballs" dropped by these trees, either as a result of slipping on them or because they were intentionally thrown. The enclosed testimonials from many of our parents provide anecdotal evidence of the dangers these trees present and demonstrate the widespread support in our community for their removal.

I look forward to working with you as we move through our addition and eventual modernization process. If you need any additional information regarding this area of concern, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lee F. Derby
Principal

26

Printed by: FirstClass
Title: "Gumball" trees a danger

Monday, December 06, 2004 9:56:15 AM
Page 1 of 1




Monday, December 06, 2004 9:28:33 AM

Message

From:  "Karl & Mollie Habermeier" <kmhaber@verizon.net>

Subject: "Gumball" trees a danger

To:  Lee Derby

Cc:  <jill_joseph@hermanmiller.com>

Attachments:  Attach0.html

2K

Dear Mr. Derby,

Ê

From PTA emails, now I know what the spiky balls are that my children sometimes bring home from school. The "gumball" trees behind the school are a nuisance and somewhat of a danger.Ê They drop many seedpods shaped like spiky gumballs all over the grounds.Ê Children and, I have heard,Êadults slip on them. Children throw them at each other. They also bring them home on the buses, where they might be thrown at other children and distract the bus driver. If the children refer to them as "gumballs" this could result in young children who do not know any better putting them in their mouths.

Ê

Please have the "gumball" treesÊcut down, so that they do not pose a danger any longer.

Ê

Sincerely,

Mollie Habermeier

27



Friday, December 03, 2004 1:51:39 PM
Message

From: SHHolden@aol.com

Subject: Re: [GPESPTA] Supporting Outdoor Play

To: Lee Derby

Attachments: Attach0.html

1K

Mr. Derby,

Based on what we understand to be some safety issues with the "gumball" trees near the outdoor play space at school, we would like to request these trees be cut down to provide a safe play environment for the children during recess.

Thanks,

Steve Holden (Sammy's dad)



Monday, November 29, 2004 9:22:42 AM

Message

From: LinusHutton@aol.com

Subject: Re: [GPESPTA] Supporting Outdoor Play

To: Lee Derby

Attachments: Attach0.html

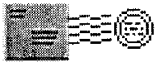
1K

Dear Mr. Derby,

I am writing to you concerning the gum trees that are located across the back side of the main school building. These trees and the resulting "gumballs" they drop each year pose a persistent danger to our children. Cutting these trees down would provide more play space for the children at a time when every inch of play space is precious and would improve the safety of our children by removing this hazard. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Becky Hutton

29



Monday, November 29, 2004 1:44:10 PM

Message

From:  sroll17@hotmail.com

Subject:

To:

Dear Mr. Derby,

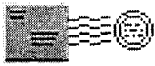
I support the other PTA members who are requesting that the gumball trees behind the school be removed. I agree that the seed pods are a nuisance and a danger to the children. Removal of the trees would provide needed space for outdoor play.

Sharon Metro Roll


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<http://messenger.msn.click-url.com/go/onm00200471ave/direct/01/>

30



Monday, November 29, 2004 12:19:32 PM
Message

From:  Jill_Joseph@hermanmiller.com

Subject: Re: [GPESPTA] Supporting Outdoor Play

To:  Lee Derby

Mr. Derby,

I formally request that the "gumball" trees in the rear of the elementary school be removed. They are a danger to the children and adults walking in that area.

Thanks

Jill Joseph (Mother of Jessica - 1st grade)

Jill Joseph, MBA, IIDA, LEED-AP
Design Team Leader
Herman Miller for Healthcare
10901 Raleigh Ave.
P.O. Box 166
Garrett Park, MD
20896
PH: (301) 942-1307
Fax: (301) 942-1080
Cell: (301) 367-3122
jill_joseph@hermanmiller.com



Monday, November 29, 2004 9:36:35 AM

Message

From:  slawrence@ue.org

Subject: Re: [GPESPTA] Family Portraits-11/22

To:  Lee Derby

Attachments:  Attach0.html

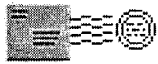
1K

Mr. Derby,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the "gumball" trees located at the rear of GPES. It is my understanding that these trees can be a nuisance and a potential danger in that they drop spikey-type balls which the children sometimes use as balls and throw them around. I would certainly be in favor of seeing these trees removed not only for safety purposes, but to allow a safe play area to be constructed for the children of GPES.


Thank you,
Suzanne Lawrence

Suzanne Lawrence
Associate Claims Counsel
United Educators - - "Education's Own Insurance Company"
Two Wisconsin Circle, Fourth Floor
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-215-9572 (Direct Dial)
301-907-0303. (Fax)
www.ue.org





Monday, November 29, 2004 9:44:01 PM

Message

From:  Dshriver79@aol.com

Subject: Trees Behind School

To:  Lee Derby
 jill_joseph@hermanmiller.com

To: Mr. Derby

From: Donna Shriver

Date: November 29, 2004

Re: Trees Behind School

I understand that a play space needs to be created to accommodate the GPES construction. If it is determined that the space behind the school would be ideal, you would have my approval to remove the row of "gumball" trees to make space for a play area. I generally like to keep trees growing as long as possible, but I also recognize the danger of overgrown trees and the need for modernization.

I volunteer during recess duty, and I have eye-balled the trees many times. I have often thought that it would take a heavy rain and a strong wind to knock one of the trees into the school building, which would cause considerable damage. I also fear branches flying into the windows at the rear of the school.

I have almost fallen myself on the spiked balls that fall from the trees, and I know they are irresistible to school children as throwing objects.

Perhaps some younger trees could be planted in an attractive setting. I do like the idea of having shade over a playground, and I like the idea of

planting smaller trees as a replacement for removing large overgrown trees.

Best wishes as we enter a new phase with the Garrett Park construction. I believe the community can work together to create a new and improved school setting for our neighborhood students.

We all appreciate cooperation to create a new playground so that children can continue to enjoy outdoor playtime.

Sincerely,

Donna Shriver
Parent of Garrett Park Elementary Student
301-933-0462
dshriver79@aol.com



Thursday, December 02, 2004 4:34:23 PM

Message

From: HamelWolff@aol.com

Subject: Outdoor play space

To: Lee Derby

Attachments: Attach0.html

1K

Dear Mr. Derby,

I'm writing to support the cutting down of the gumball trees on the back field as they pose a danger for children and adults. I'm hoping the space can be better landscaped or used for more play space for students. Thanks for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Juliet Wolff



Garrett Park Nursery School

March 8, 2005

Mr. Derick Berlage
Chairman
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 05201-MCPS-1

Dear Mr. Berlage,

We are writing with regard to the Mandatory Referral for Garrett Park Elementary School (GPES), six classroom addition.

The proposed construction could have a significant impact on the daily operation of the Garrett Park Cooperative Nursery School (GPNS) and the safety of the children in attendance.

Please find attached comments from GPNS to be submitted as testimony at the March 17, 2005, Planning Board Meeting.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Brenda Artim
Director, GPNS

Angela Melton
President, GPNS



Garrett Park Nursery School

Testimony of Brenda Artim on Behalf of the Garrett Park Cooperative
Nursery School for 3/17/05 Planning Board Meeting
Regarding Mandatory Referral No. 05201-MCPS-1

I am Brenda Artim, the Director and a teacher at the Garrett Park Cooperative Nursery School (GPNS). I present this testimony on behalf of the 40 families who are the current members of our cooperative nursery school. We thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Mandatory Referral for the six classroom addition at the Garrett Park Elementary School (GPES), to begin summer of 2005. We recognize the GPES modernization is long awaited and much needed. Yet, because of our close proximity to the construction site, we want to ensure that there is no significant negative impact on the daily operation of the GPNS or the safety of our students. We want to take this opportunity to make you aware of our concerns and request that you consider our recommendations to ensure the continued safe operation of the GPNS during the construction process.

I would like to briefly describe our school to you. The Garrett Park Cooperative Nursery School was founded over 50 years ago, in 1953. The GPNS operates from 4812 Oxford Street in Garrett Park, directly adjacent to the proposed construction at Garrett Park Elementary School. Our building and surrounding property is owned and operated by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The GPNS has held classes in this location for over 40 years. We have a number of second-generation families in our school now. A grandfather of one of our students helped in the construction of our building in the late 40's, early 50's. Volunteers from Garrett Park disassembled and transported two old demountable barracks deserted at Fort Meade, MD to the school's current location, and, with the support of M-CPPNC, used them to build this community center.

We are recognized for providing the Town of Garrett Park and surrounding communities with high-quality educational programs for preschool-age children. Classes are taught by professional teachers. Parents of children in the school assist the teachers on a rotating basis, with 2 parents assisting in each class at all times. Parent participation is central to our program. We serve not just preschool children but whole families.

We conduct preschool programs for two-, three-, and four-year-olds Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 11:30 am, with no more than 30 students in the school at a time. Classes begin in September and continue through mid June. For up to five days a week, depending on enrollment, we conduct an Extended-Day program for our three- and four-year-old children. Up to 12 children meet from 11:30am to 1:00pm.

Today, the GPNS greatly appreciates the support from M-NCPPC in our effort to continue our long-standing programs as safely and with as little disruption as possible throughout the GPES construction process.

Please allow me to specify our issues and recommendations regarding Phase 1 of the GPES Modernization.

SAFE ACCESS AND DEPARTURE: Families who drive and walk their children to school must have safe, easy access to and from school each day.

GPNS parents drop their children off in front of our school between 8:55 and 9:15 and pick them up each day between 11:30 and 11:45. When Extended Day is held, another pick-up is between 1:00 and 1:15. Some of the children are walked to and from school by their caretakers. The most vulnerable location for walkers is between the elementary school and the nursery school. At this location, the children must walk across the access road over which MCPS has requested an easement for construction vehicle access to the construction site. There is currently no walkway and no protective barrier.

There is only one access road to the GPNS and that is from Oxford Street, which is also used by elementary school children to get to GPES, Montgomery County Day Care families to get to daycare, and the M-NCPPC maintenance crew to access the park property to the rear of the school. This is the same road the construction vehicles will use.

Currently, all vehicles follow a circular traffic pattern through the GPES parking lot, creating one-way traffic flow. The construction proposal shows a change in the traffic pattern for construction vehicles that is contrary to the current circular traffic flow.

Recommendations:

- **Restrict movement of large construction vehicles on the access road during scheduled drop-off or pick-up of children**
- **Provide full-time traffic control—flaggers**
- **Construct a fenced walkway between the elementary school and the nursery school**
- **Establish appropriate traffic flow patterns**

- **Limit the number of vehicles on site by providing off-site parking for construction-related vehicles**
- **Support a “maintenance of traffic” plan to prevent conflicting movements of construction-related traffic with pedestrians and vehicles**

PROTECTION FROM CONSTRUCTION SITE: Children and adults must have protection from the construction site.

The construction site is only a few yards from the GPNS. Children pass by this area each day.

Recommendation:

- Construct appropriate fencing around the entire construction site
- Designate the Director to represent GPNS at the pre-construction meetings and any other subsequent meetings regarding the classroom addition project.

NOISE: Acceptable noise levels

The construction site is just outside the GPNS classrooms. Loud construction could be very disruptive.

Recommendation:

- Adhere to the established noise codes for Montgomery County.

Thank you again for your attention to this very important matter.

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