



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

**MCPB**  
**Item No.:** 11  
**Date:** 10-12-2017

**McLean School Mandatory Referral-MR 2018002**

ET

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**Completed: 09-29-17**

**Description**

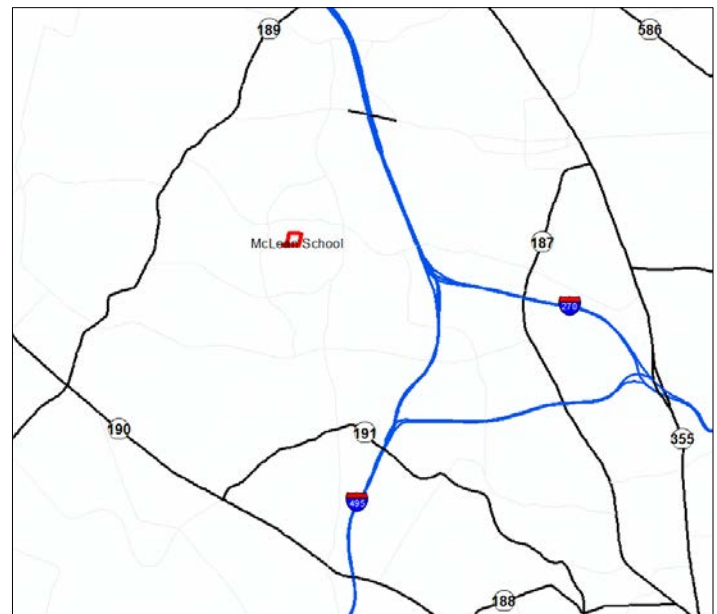
**McLean School-MR 2018002:** Mandatory Referral for proposed building modifications at the former Tuckerman Elementary School, also known as the McLean School K-12, a private educational Institution located at 8224 Lochinver Lane, Potomac, 300 feet east of Candlelight Lane, 9.13 acres, R-90 Zone, *2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan*.

**Staff Recommendation:** Approval to transmit comments to Montgomery County Public Schools

**Application Filed:** August 8, 2017

**Planning Board Hearing:** October 5, 2017

**Applicant:** The Board of Education on behalf of the McLean School



**Summary**

- Staff recommends approval of the Mandatory Referral, with comments to be transmitted to the Montgomery County Board of Education.
- The proposed modification to an existing K-12 School conforms to all applicable guidelines and requirements for approval of a Mandatory Referral Standards under the uniform standards for Mandatory Referral review.
- The proposed modification is consistent with the intent and requirements of the R-90 zone.
- The proposed use is consistent with the recommendations of the *2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan*.
- Approval of the proposed modifications will not cause undue harm or adverse impact on the immediate neighborhood.
- There are no adverse traffic, circulation, noise or environmental issues associated with the application.
- The application is in compliance with the Montgomery County Planning Board Environmental Guidelines:
  - Natural Resources Inventory and Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) was approved for the project on July 14, 2017.
  - The application is in compliance with Chapter 22A Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law; an exemption from the Forest Conservation requirements was approved on July 14, 2017.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

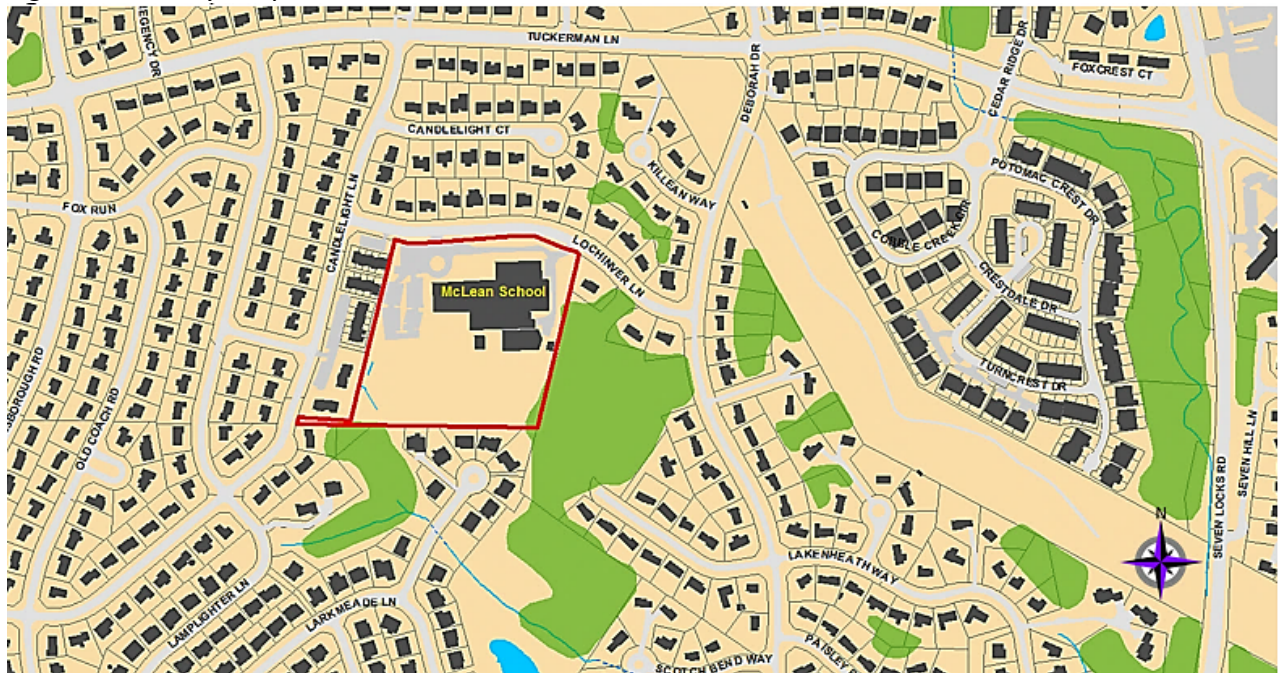
Staff Recommends that this Mandatory Referral proposal be approved with the following comments:

1. Montgomery County Schools and the McLean School of Maryland, Inc., must make it binding, through a lease amendment, that the School must comply with the plans, drawings and floor plans submitted to the Planning Board and must complete the renovation/addition in accordance with such plans.
2. School enrollment is limited to 495 students. Any increase in the number of students above the 495-maximum enrollment must be subject to a further Mandatory Referral.
3. The Applicant and facility must comply with all applicable sections of the County Noise Ordinance (Chapter 31B of the County Code).
4. The Applicant must provide a lead-in-sidewalk and crosswalk across the drive aisle/parking lot to school sidewalks on both sides (near both west and east vehicular entrances) to provide safe and adequate pedestrian access to the building for students and staff walking to the building. These new facilities must be shown on the plans.
5. The Applicant must request the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to construct sidewalks on nearby residential roadways including the remainder of Lochinver Lane and Candlelight Lane to provide safe routes to the school.

## I. BACKGROUND

The McLean School of Maryland is an independent, coeducational, day school that was originally founded in 1954 as a kindergarten through grade 9 school. In 1978, the McLean School leased a portion of the former Tuckerman Elementary School, sharing the 9.13-acre site and a 24,244 square-foot space in the existing school building with Montgomery Public Schools (MCPS). By 1992, the McLean School became the sole occupant of the school with lease agreements that eventually extended to June 30, 2036. In the past two decades, the existing building has gone through a number of modifications that resulted in the transformation of the building from its original size of 46,904 square feet to its current size of 81,062 square feet.

*Figure 1: Vicinity Map*



On February 17, 2000, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the transmission of comments and recommendations to MCPS for Mandatory Referral No. 99402-MCPS-1 for McLean School. An NRI/FSD was approved on February 3, 2000 and an exemption from Forest Conservation requirements (4-99177E) was also approved for the school on January 1, 1999. In 2001 the McLean School constructed a three-story wing addition to the west side of the existing building and expanded the parking facility. The addition and the modification to the parking facility were needed to accommodate expansion of the “Upper School” to include grades 10 to 12. The 2000 modification also increased the School’s enrollment capacity from 391 to 495.

Increased traffic congestion, bus/car/van pools, queueing, circulation patterns near and at the school, development intensity on the property, adequacy of parking, and students and residents’ safety were major concerns raised by the residents of the immediate residential neighborhood at the time of the 2000 Mandatory Referral review and Planning Board hearing. The Planning Board approval of MR No. 99402-MCPS-1 included 23 specific comments designed to address the community’s and the Planning Board’s concerns. At the time, the Applicant agreed to meet those recommendations. To the extent that staff can assess current situations concerning the above



listed issues, it appears that the Applicant has followed through with most of its commitment to address the concerns and issues raised at the 2000 hearing. In response to staff's request on this review, the Applicant went through the 23 recommendations (attachment C-1) and provided information on each recommendation (Attachment C-2).

Based on the information submitted by the Applicant, site inspection, review of available records, and in the absence of complaints and concerns from area residents, staff concludes that the recommendations have been satisfied through various measures employed by the school, including working with the community, MCPS and county agencies. It should also be noted that the current modification would not affect the areas that were the subject of the Planning Board's 2000 recommendations.

The current application will not raise the maximum 495 student enrolment cap and no modification to the parking facility and the access driveways is proposed. The proposed modifications, a 700 square-foot entrance vestibule, and a second-story addition will increase the foot print by only 700 feet and the overall density by a maximum of 7,500 square feet, hence, the request qualifies for a Mandatory Referral review rather than the more extensive Site Plan review.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

*Figure 2: The Subject Property*

The subject property is located at 8224 Lochinver Lane, approximately 175 feet east of Candlelight Lane and 380 feet west of Deborah Drive in Potomac. The property consists of 9.13 acres and is currently improved with an 81,062 square-foot school building. The school building was originally constructed in the 1960s and later expanded to its current size to accommodate the needs of the



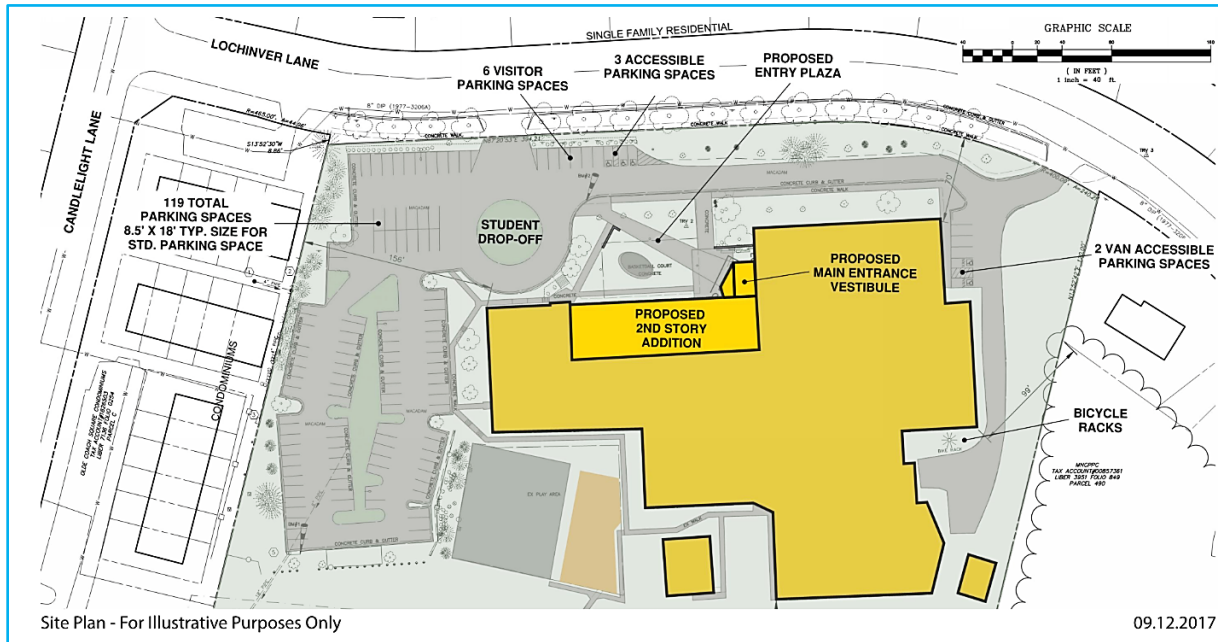
McLean School. The property also consists of surface parking areas, a basketball court, a soccer field, softball field, multi-purpose courts, and a playground. The property has approximately 600 feet of frontage on Lochinver Lane. Ingress and egress to the property is provided by two driveways located at the west and east ends of the property's frontage on Lochinver Road with drive aisles extending to the interior of the property. The property's road frontage is also defined by a berm planted with matured evergreen trees.

The subject property is surrounded by single-family detached dwellings, to the north (confronting the subject property) and south and attached residential townhouse condominiums to the west. A

neighborhood Conversation Area Park, owned by the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission abuts the school property to the east.

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Figure 3: Proposed Project (Illustrative)



With the current application, the Applicant is proposing modifications and additions that would add a total of approximately 7,500 square feet of area to the existing 81,062 square-foot building. The proposed modifications include:

- A 6,800-square-foot second story addition;
- A 700-square-foot entrance vestibule;
- An exterior modification to the building façade;
- Interior modifications.

The Applicant indicated that the proposed modifications are needed to modernize the existing building, to improve campus safety, and to accommodate new and expanded high school level programs including laboratories, science and art classes. The proposed addition would also help address the need for smaller classroom size that allow more individual student attention, which the school holds as its central mission.

The Applicant believes that the proposed *Entrance Vestibule* adds essential safety features that provides necessary physical security for the building. The justification statement indicates that the entrance to the building, as it currently exists, does not provide adequate building security because it does not have a well-structured monitoring system for screening and controlling visitors entering and exiting the school.

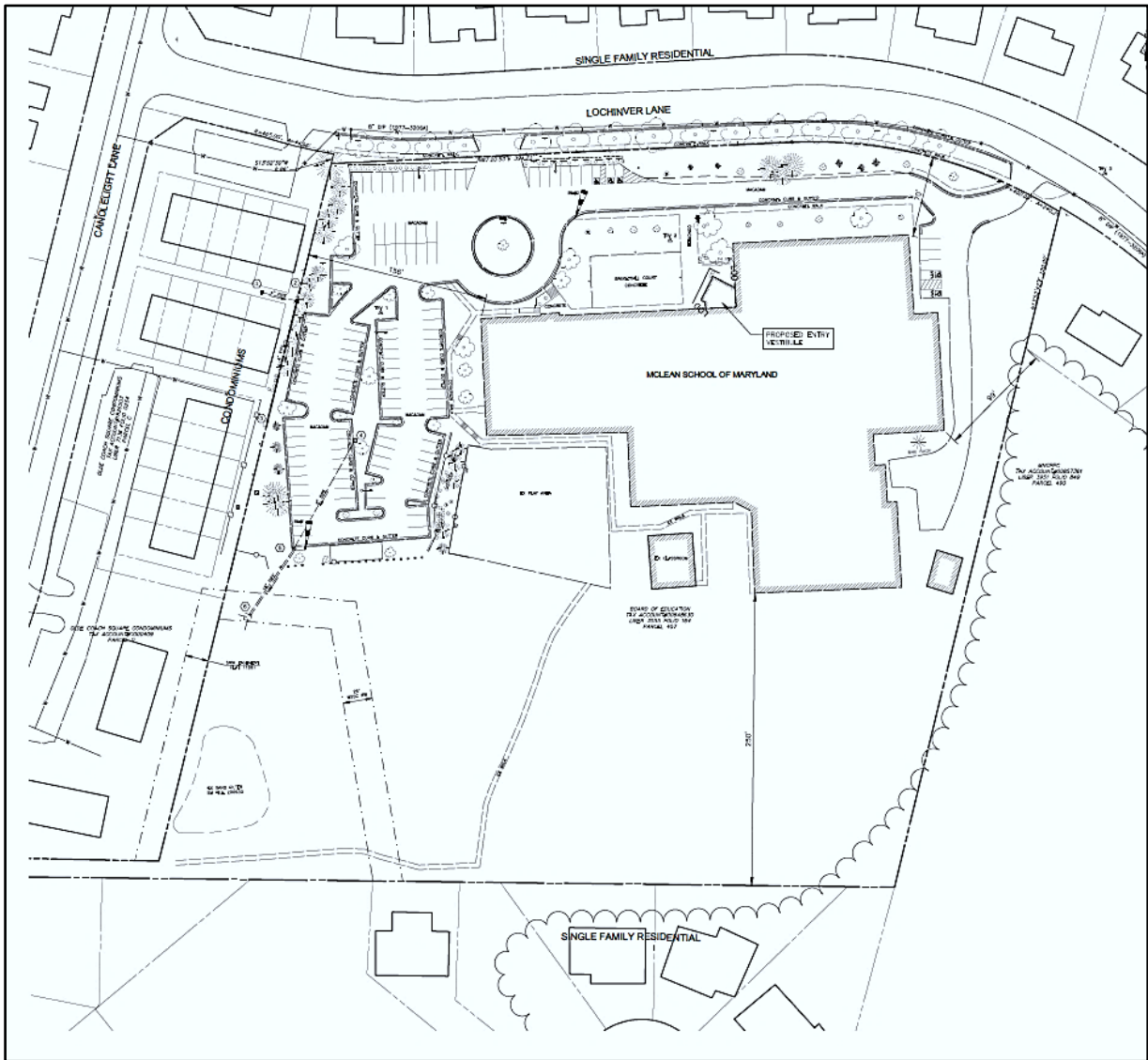
The Applicant's statement of justification further indicates that the proposed modifications will be constructed in one phase. The modifications will not result in an increase in the number of

students. Enrollment remains within the maximum of 495 students as authorized by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services. No additional parking spaces are proposed.

### III Project Analysis

#### A. Development Standards-Zoning analysis

Figure 4: Mandatory Referral Site Plan



The 9.13-acre subject property is zoned R-90 (residential, minimum 9,000 square foot lot size). A Private Educational Institution is allowed in the R-90 Zone by approval of a Conditional Use application pursuant to Section 59-3.4.5. Section 59-3.4.5.B.2.b exempts from conditional use review any Educational Institution (Private) that is located in a building or on land that has been used for a public school or that is owned or leased by the County. However, Site Plan approval is required under Section 7.3.4 for any cumulative increase that is greater than 15% or 7,500 square feet, whichever is less, in the gross floor area. The proposed modifications and additions

result in an increase that will not exceed 7,500 square feet of gross floor area. Therefore, Site Plan approval is not required for the proposed development.

As shown in Table 1 below the existing development along with the proposed modifications conforms to all applicable current development standards of the R-90 Zone.

**Table 1: Development Standard- R-90**

Current Development Standard	Required/Allowed	Proposed
Minimum Lot Area	9,000 sf	9.13 ac
Minimum Lot width: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At Front building line</li> <li>At Street line</li> </ul>	75 ft 25 ft	634 ft 70 ft
Minimum Building Setback- <i>Main Building</i> Front Yards Side Yards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One side</li> <li>Sum of both sides</li> </ul> Rear	30 ft  8 ft 25 ft 25 ft	70 ft  51 ft 207 ft. 250 ft
Minimum Building Setback- <i>Accessory Building</i> Front street line Side lot line Rear lot line	60 ft 5 ft 5 ft	330 ft 225 ft 250 ft
Maximum Building Coverage Including accessory building	30%	18 % (1.66 ac)
Maximum Building Height heights point of roof surface	35 ft	28

#### **B. Master Plan Consistency**

The property is in the Potomac Plan Area community of the *2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan*. The Potomac planning area consists 28.1 square mile of area. The Master Plan describes the Potomac area as having a large area of older and well established residential communities with access to major employment centers. At the time, the Master Plan estimated that the development of the 28-square mile area had reached 93 percent of its capacity with anticipated slow growth rate of future developments.

There are no specific recommendations for the subject property or the subject K-12 school use in the Master Plan. However, staff found that the proposed project is consistent with the general objectives and development policies with respect to applicable Environmental Principles and Design Principles (p. 33-34). In particular, the following principles are applicable with respect to the proposed project:

**Table 2- Land Use Recommendation Potomac Subregion Master Plan**

<b>Environmental Principles</b>	<b>Design Principles</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain and reaffirm a low-density residential “green wedge”;</li><li>• Retain the road system’s two-lane cross section and preserve the Subregion’s semi-rural character;</li><li>• preserve open space protect significant environmental features, and provide recreation and transportation alternatives.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create environmentally sustainable development</li><li>• Provide facilities that promote transit use, walking and biking</li><li>• Incorporate open space and community facilities into new development</li></ul>

### **C. Transportation and Internal/External Circulation**

The application will have no transportation/traffic impact since it does not generate new traffic to or from the subject property. The project does not need to be re-evaluated for Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) because the proposed enrollment with the addition will not exceed the 495-student cap recommended by the Planning Board as part of Mandatory Referral No. 99402-MCPS-1. In response to staff inquiries, the Applicant confirms that enrollment in the last school year was 406 students and the most students the school had to date had been 487, which is under the 495-student cap. If any future improvements will increase the school’s student core capacity beyond 495 students, a Mandatory Referral review will be required and must include a traffic study.

#### Master Plan of Highways and Bikeways

According to the *Potomac Master Plan*, none of the roads on which the school fronts or is adjacent to are classified, therefore they are Secondary or Tertiary Residential Streets. The McLean School fronts on Lochinver Lane, which has 70 feet of right-of-way, sufficient width for either a Secondary or Tertiary closed section roadway. Therefore, if this project was a subdivision, no dedication would be required.

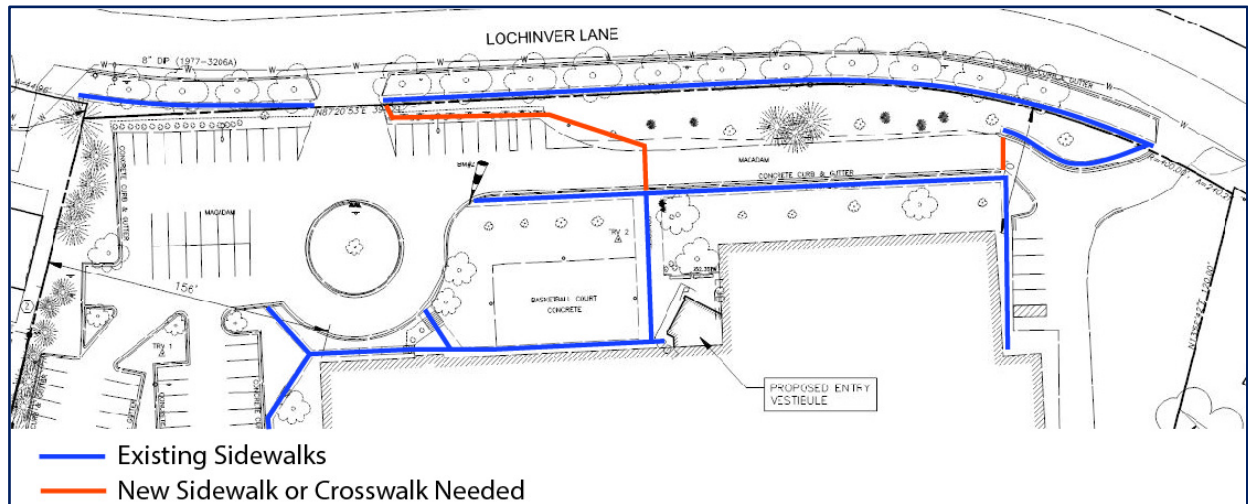
The *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan* designates no bike facilities on any of the adjacent roads (Candlelight Lane, Lochinver Lane, or Deborah Drive).

#### Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrians walking to the school from the west must cross through the grass or the parking lot to get to the school’s front entrance. They must also cross the main drive aisle. To ensure safe access for all students and reduce vehicular-pedestrian conflicts, a lead-in sidewalk should be added connecting the existing public sidewalk on Lochinver Lane near the west vehicle entrance to a point opposite or near the school sidewalk leading to the school entrance. Crosswalks should also be provided where pedestrians cross the vehicular drive aisle from the existing and future sidewalks to the school’s sidewalk (see graphic below).



Figure 5: Recommended Pedestrian crossings



In front of the school, Lochinver Lane has sidewalks along the south (school) side of the street between Candlelight Lane on the west and the school's eastern vehicular access point. East of the school's eastern access point, there are no sidewalks along the remainder of Lochinver Lane. On nearby streets, there are no sidewalks on Candlelight Lane to the west of the school and there are sidewalks on the west side of Deborah Drive to the east of the school. The Applicant should request Montgomery County Department of Transportation complete missing sidewalks on these roads as part of the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) *Transportation Improvements for Schools (P509036)*. There appears to be adequate dedication on the remainder of Lochinver Lane and on the west side of Candlelight Lane for implementation of 5-foot wide sidewalks and tree panels.

For adequate and safe circulation, staff recommends the following measures be taken:

1. Provide lead-in sidewalks and crosswalks from the public sidewalk across the drive aisle/parking lot to school sidewalks on both sides of the school (near both west and east vehicular entrances) to provide safe and adequate pedestrian access to the building for those walking to the school given the number of vehicles that circulate through the parking lot. Show these new facilities on the plans (Figure 5).
2. Request Montgomery County Department of Transportation to construct sidewalks on nearby residential roadways including the remainder of Lochinver Lane and Candlelight Lane to provide safe routes to the school.

## D. Environmental

### Forest Conservation

On July 14, 2017, the Montgomery County Planning Department granted an exemption (FC Exemption No. 42018005E) for the proposed project from preparing a Forest Conservation Plan per Section 22A-5(t) of the Forest Conservation Law because the project does not disturb more than 5,000 square feet of land area. The proposed project is in compliance with the requirements of the exemption and meets Chapter 22A.

### Environmental Guidelines

The simplified Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD No. 42018005E) prepared as part of the exemption request for the property, showed no streams or buffers, wetlands or their buffers, 100-year floodplains, steep slopes associated with a stream buffer, or known habitats of rare, threatened, or endangered species on the property. The Applicant's statement indicates that there will be no disturbance of natural areas on the property. Therefore, the proposal is in conformance with the Environmental Guidelines

### Stormwater Management

No new or additional stormwater management is needed.

### Noise

With regards to noise, the Applicant's statement indicates that the proposed project will comply with local noise ordinances both during and after construction and design measures have been incorporated to mitigate potential noise impacts. The statement further indicates that wall materials are selected for acoustic treatment on the interior to mitigate noise before it leaves the building and minimize acoustic distraction. Construction activity that may cause noise must be performed in compliance with Montgomery County Code Chapter 31B – Noise Control, observing appropriate hours and noise levels.

The statement of justification also states that heating and cooling systems are designed to minimize disturbance to students and neighbors. The project is designed to maintain existing exterior circulation areas and avoid added doors opening toward residential neighbors. Variation in massing, exterior materials, and layers of planting are utilized to control noise levels on the site.

## **E. Neighborhood Compatibility**

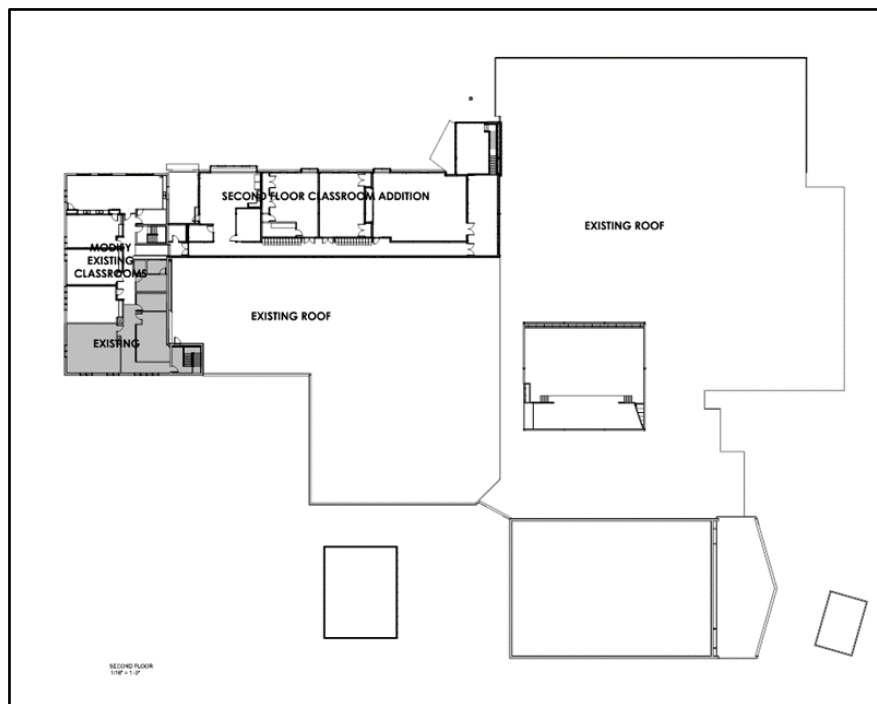
### **1. Building Scale and Architectural Design**

#### Second Story Addition

The Applicant's statement, plans, and drawings demonstrate that the proposed second-story addition, which combines wood panels and metal trim and cement panel sidings, wall or other surface for textures and materials, is designed to project a contemporary appearance. The statement of justification indicates that the addition will be compatible with surrounding residences. The statement further elaborates that the visibility of the second story addition to the closest residential properties across the street will be curtailed by a line of matured trees along Lochinver Lane right-of-way in front of the sidewalk as well as trees, behind the side walk and the berm that extends along the inside of the property line. The second-story addition will be aligned with the existing three-story structure that was the subject of the Mandatory Referral approved in 2000.



Figure 7: Second Floor Plan



### Entrance Vestibule

The Applicant's statement of justification indicates that the 700 square-foot vestibule at the main entrance is designed with the intention to distinguish the entrance from the rest of the building in order to better define and enhance wayfinding and complement the redesigned building façade. As noted, the construction of the vestibule is needed to promote safety at the school through more efficient screening and regulating processes. According to justification statement, the vestibules is designed as "a glass and wood clad structure, with a two story-expression to tie into the second-story building addition". The Applicant has indicated that in the future, the school intends to remove the existing multi-purpose court currently located directly in front of the School to provide an entry plaza. However, implementation of this plan depends on availability of funding and the project will be subject to a separate Mandatory Referral review when the school is prepared to proceed with the initiative.

### Modification to Exterior Architecture

The Applicant's statement indicates that the proposed architectural modifications have been designed to complement the existing school building and establish an aesthetic compatibility with the adjacent one and two-story single-family residences in terms of height, form, massing, and roof. The Applicant offers the following description of the proposed exterior modification and its compatibility with the existing building and adjacent residences:

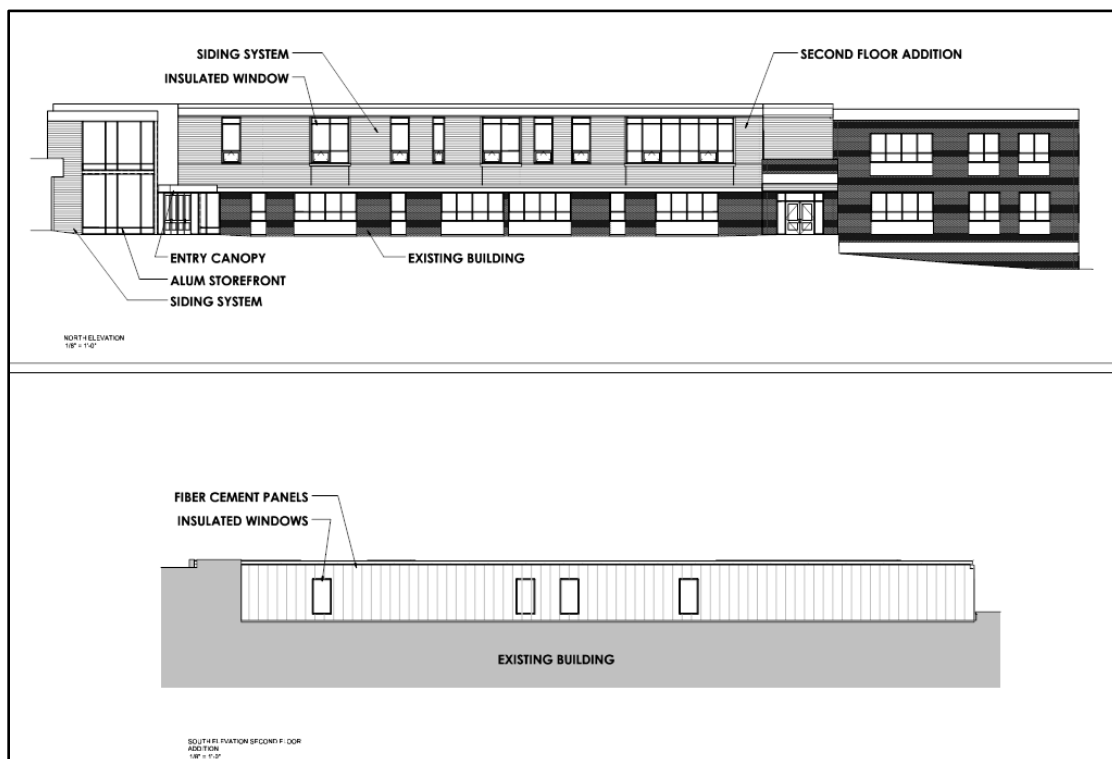
*The proposed architectural modifications have been designed to complement the existing school building and establish an aesthetic dialogue with the adjacent single-family residences. Houses in the neighborhood vary from one to two stories in height and utilize siding, masonry and gable roofs. The school design combines wood panels and*

*metal trim for textures and materials compatible with surrounding residences, while a flat roof integrates it with the existing school building. The design uses the comforting scale and textures of materials in the adjacent residential environment. The strength of this contrast with the existing masonry blocks provides a new vision of the building and its program.*

*Figure 8: Proposed Entrance vestibule and second story addition in yellow (illustrative)*



*Figure 9: Elevations*





## **2. Sustainability and Energy efficiency**

The Applicant maintains that although the size of the proposed addition, which is less than 10,000 square feet, exempts it from LEED Certification per Montgomery County Green Building regulations. The proposed building additions will comply with applicable Green Building requirement by incorporating energy efficient design elements. The statement further states that the thermal envelope of the new construction is designed to provide optimal enclosure to maximize the benefit of energy efficient mechanical systems. New lighting will be LED fixtures for reduced energy consumption and maintenance. Additionally, within the building, two green-walls are designed to reinforce the importance of student connections with the environment. The placement and design of the walls express the relationship between growth and the holistic program of the school. New construction will comply with all applicable requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **3. Landscaping**

There will be no change to the landscape plan resulting from the proposed modifications.

## **4. Parking**

Pursuant Section 59.6.2.4, the current Zoning Code the number of parking spaces requires a minimum of .25 space for every student of age 16 and above and 1 parking space For Every employee for a private Educational Institution. Based on information provided by the school, there are currently 62 students that are over the age of 16. And there are 114 full time, and 14 part-time employees (7 full time equivalent)

62 students X 0.25 sp=15.50=16 spaces

121x1 sp = 121 spaces

A total of 137 spaces are required.

Currently, there are a total of 119 (18 short of the required by the current Code) spaces on the property including 5 Handicap accessible spaces one of which is a van accessible. The number of spaces that are currently existing on the site were approved as part of the 2000 Mandatory Referral for a maximum enrolment capacity of 495. The 2000 application was also approved with a transportation management plan that was put in place to restrict the number of cars coming to the site. The applicant has indicated that the Transportation Management Plan was implemented as part of the approved expansion in 2000 and still is in effect. The current application does not propose any change to the parking areas nor that it proposes modification to the transportation plan. Given the fact that no change is proposed in the enrollment capacity, and the fact that the Transportation Management Plan is still in effect, staff concludes that the school's needs for parking accommodation is adequately satisfied.

### Motorcycle Parking

The site plan does not provide the required two-percent Motorcycle parking. The applicant indicated that There are no students or faculty that drive motorcycles, and McLean has not had any motorcycle use on the Property.

### Bicycle Parking:

The revised site plan provides a bike rack on site which can accommodate 10 bicycles. The applicant indicated that the school does not have any student riding a bicycle to school. Given the dispersed nature of the student population, bike riding is not a realistic option for students. The Applicant further stated that should there be a unique situation where a student does live close and can ride their bike to school, the existing bike rack would more than satisfy those students.

The proposed modifications and additions do not result in increased enrollment of students or number of staff. The parking facility was found to be sufficient at the previous Mandatory Referral for the school. No expansion or modification to the parking facility is proposed. Staff, however recommends that the school must provide a lead-in sidewalks and crosswalks from the public sidewalk across the drive aisle/parking lot to school sidewalks on both sides of the school (near both west and east vehicular entrances) to provide safe and adequate pedestrian access to the building (Also see Section III C Transportation). Staff also recommends that MCPS reach out to MCDOT to make necessary safe routes to school improvement.

## **F. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND NOTIFICATION**

In the justification statement submitted with the application and at pre-application meetings with staff, the Applicant has maintained that efforts were made to inform the community through HOAs and Civic organization in the immediate and surrounding neighborhood of the intended modifications and additions to the school. The Applicant' statement indicates that on April 18, 2017, the Mclean School sent an email notice to the area Home Owners Associations and Civic Organizations in an effort to inform the community on the proposed modifications to the school's building and offering to meet with the community to provide additional information; however, none of the Associations requested a meeting. The Applicant indicated that no public meeting was held and the community has not expressed concerns regarding the filing of the Mandatory Referral application. Staff have sent out a postcard notice to all adjoining and confronting property owners and all HOA and Civic Associations within one-mile. This notice was sent out on September 29, 2017, three weeks prior to the hearing. Staff felt this notice provides adjacent residents and all interested parties in the project area with an opportunity to review and comment on the plans.

## **G. Conclusion**

Based on the preceding analysis, staff recommends approval of Mandatory Referral-MR 2018002 with the recommendations found in page 2 of this staff report.

Attachments

- A. Plans and drawings
- B. Referral comments
- C. Supporting Documents
  - 1. February 25, 2000 Planning Board Transmittal Letter for Mandatory Referral No. 99402-MCPS-1 to Superintendent of MCPS
  - 2. Applicant's response on the status of the 2000 Planning Board recommendations
  - 3. Other supporting documents

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