

Montgomery Planning

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB

Item No.

Date: 10.15.20

Takoma Montessori School, Local Map Amendment H-138

 Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, DownCounty Planning, Elza.Hisel-McCoy@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2115

Completed: 10.5.20

Description

Request to rezone the 1,400 square-foot R-60-zoned portion of a 4,435 square-foot Property split-zoned NR-0.75/R-60/CROZ to the NRF-0.75 H-50 Zone to construct an addition to an existing Daycare.

Location: 7212 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park

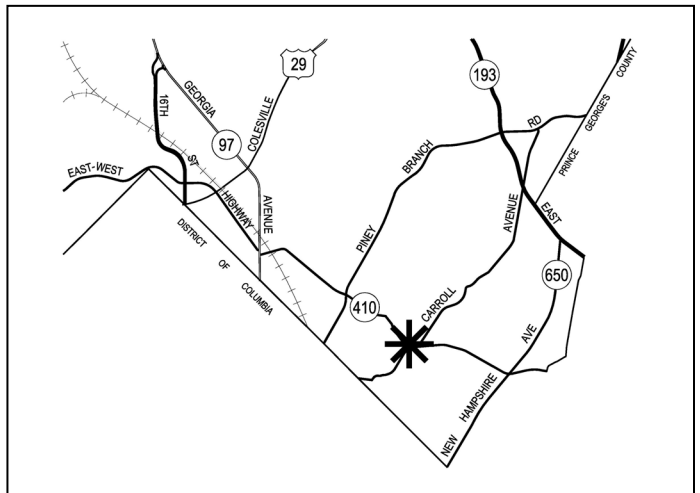
Master Plan: Takoma Park Master Plan

Applicant: Nachel Enterprises, LLC

Application Accepted: August 14, 2020

Public Hearing by the Hearing Examiner: December 11, 2020

Review Basis: Chapter 59, Zoning Ordinance.



Summary

- Staff recommends approval of the Local Map Amendment (LMA) to rezone the 1,400 square-foot portion of 0.1-acre Property from the R-60 Zone to the NRF-0.75 H-50 Zone.
- The portion of the Property proposed for rezoning is currently improved with a playground.
- The proposed development would allow the expansion of the existing Takoma Montessori School from 22 to 47 children.
- A subsequent Site Plan will be required if the Local Map Amendment is approved.
- Staff has not received any correspondence about this Application.
- The Property is located in the City of Takoma Park. City of Takoma Park staff indicated by email on October 1, 2020 that the City Council has not chosen to vote on the proposal at this time. The City will have another opportunity to review at Site Plan.

SECTION 1: STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of Local Map Amendment H-138 and the associated Floating Zone Plan.

At the time of Site Plan approval, the Applicant must address the details to satisfy the Alternative Compliance requirements for screening for the adjacent R-60 property.

SECTION 2: PROPERTY AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Vicinity

The 4,435 square-foot (0.1 acre) Property – only 1,400 square feet of which is proposed for rezoning – was recently approved via Minor Subdivision 620200030 as Lot 2 and is located at 7212 Carroll Avenue in the City of Takoma Park. This section of Carroll Avenue, between Ethan Allen Avenue and Philadelphia Avenue, is also MD Route 410. Surrounding the Property along this section of MD 410 are low-density commercial uses, including Roland's Barber Shop, Kinetic Artistry Dramatic Supply, the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Co-Op market, the Spring Mill Bread Company, and restaurant Seoul Food DC, the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department, and three automotive-related uses including the Takoma Auto Clinic, the Healey Surgeons, and the County's only fully electric vehicle charging "gas" station, RS Automotive. The blocks surrounding these uses are primarily occupied by single-family residential uses, as well as a 3-story office condominium building and several garden-style apartment buildings. The Property is also located in the Takoma Park Historic District.

Given the quite small area proposed for rezoning, the Staff-defined Neighborhood outlined in blue in Figure 1 below is limited to the immediately surrounding properties, bound by Grant Avenue to the east, Carroll Avenue to the south, Philadelphia Avenue to the west, and the boundary of the existing multi-family building property to the north.

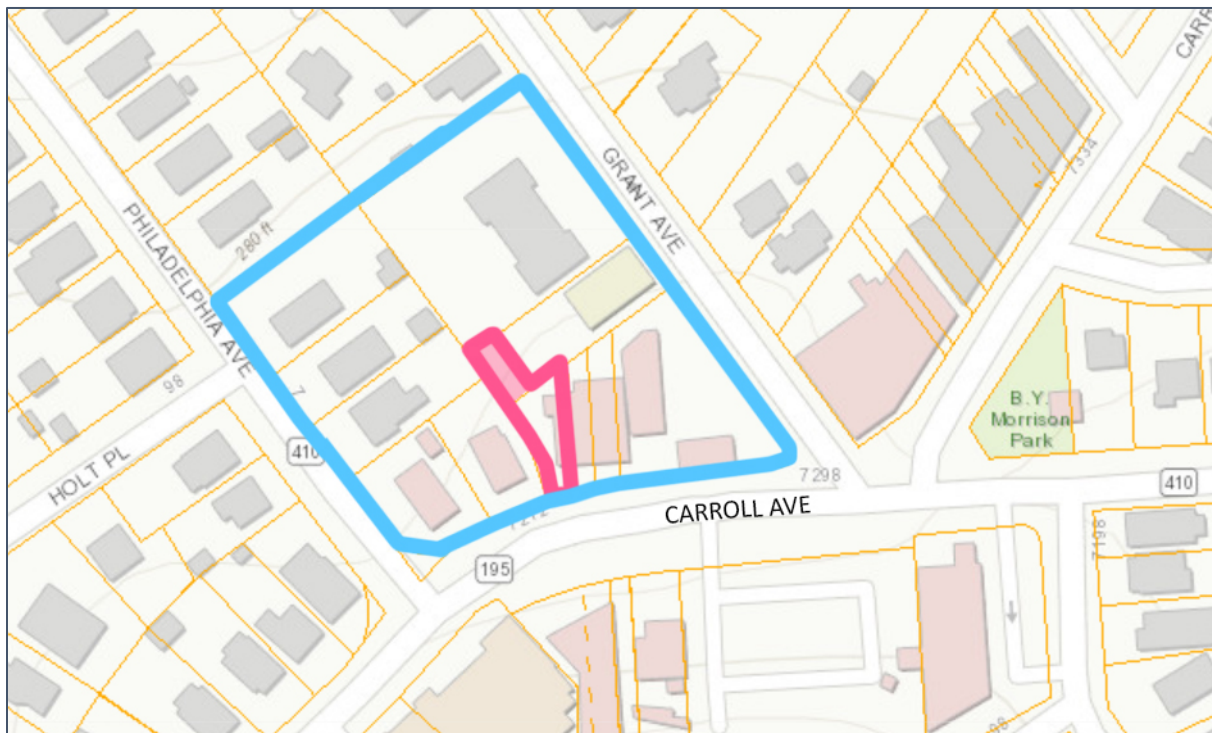


Figure 1: Vicinity Map/Staff Defined Neighborhood, with Property in red and proposed rezoning area in pink

Property Description

The Property is improved with a 960-square-foot one-story shopfront building that houses the existing Takoma Montessori School, a surface driveway and parking area, and a fenced play area. There are no forested areas, specimen trees, or steep slopes onsite.



Figure 2: Aerial View of Property, outlined in red, with rezoning area in white



Figure 3: Street View Showing Adjacent Properties – Carroll Avenue looking north



Figure 4: Street View Showing Playground Area to be rezoned at rear

Existing Transportation Access and Transit Service

Access to the Property is provided through a driveway onto Carroll Avenue. The existing sidewalk along the site frontage is five feet wide. There are five bus stops in the immediate vicinity of the Property. Metrobus routes F4 and F6 operate along MD 410. Ride On routes 12, 13, 16, and 18 operate weekday on MD 410 and Carroll Avenue beyond its coincidence with MD 410.

Zoning/Regulatory History

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approved a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) for a small rear addition and other site work in 2017. In May 2018, after multiple preliminary consultations, the HPC approved a HAWP for a larger, one-story addition at the rear, fencing, and other site work.

The Planning Director approved Administrative Subdivision No. 620200030 on December 19, 2019 to create two lots, including the Subject Property. The Property is split-zoned such that a 1,400 square-foot rectangular section on the northern end of the Property is zoned R-60, while the remainder of the Property is zoned NR-0.75 H-50 and the Silver Spring Takoma Park Commercial Revitalization Overlay Zone (CROZ). Staff was unable to find the complete record, but research suggested that the size of the R-60 portion of the site was the result of a 1988 rezoning of the adjacent property immediately to the east under case G-599, which rezoned all but a portion of that adjacent Property from R-60 to C-O (now CRT-1.5) for a condominium office building.

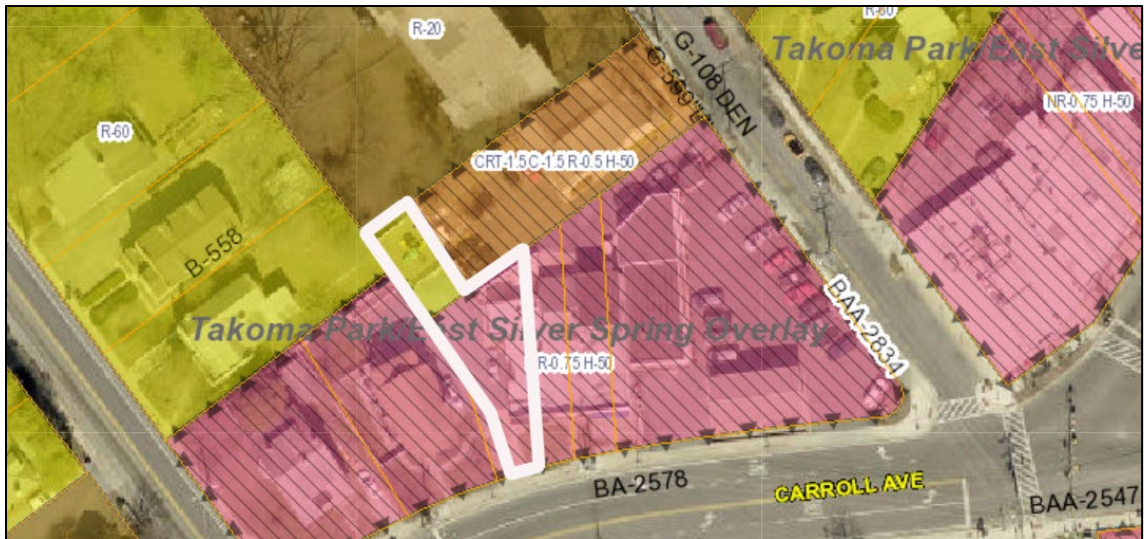


Figure 5: Existing Zoning Diagram

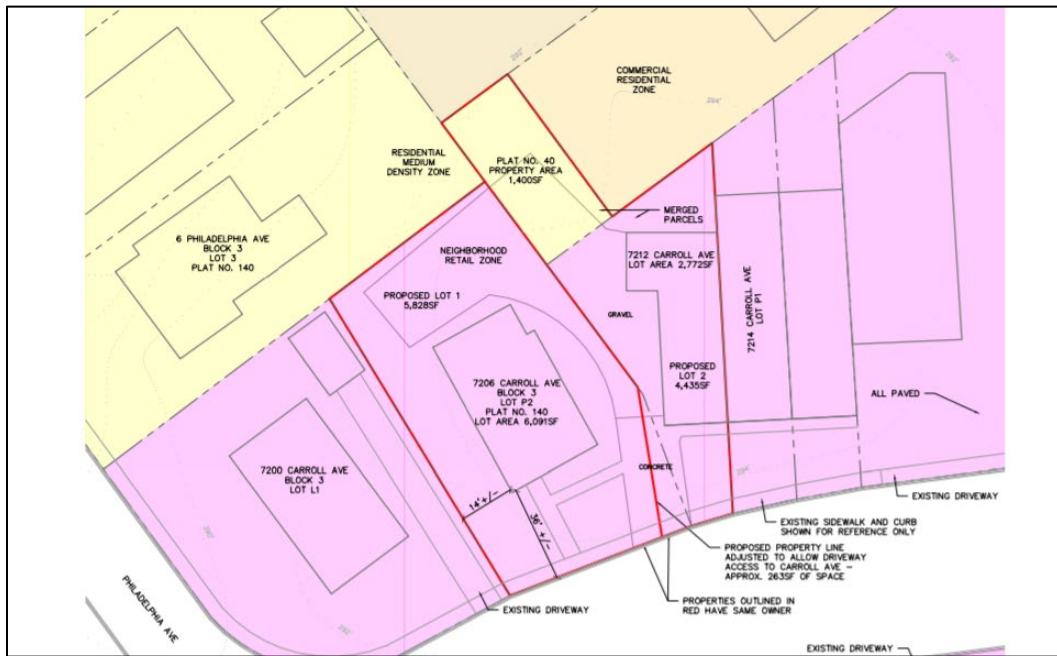


Figure 6: Administrative Subdivision 620200030

Proposal

The Applicant proposes to construct a 1,200 square foot addition to the existing school within the rear portion of the Property, to allow an increase in enrollment from 22 to 47 children. Access will remain via the existing driveway onto Carroll Avenue. The current use operates from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

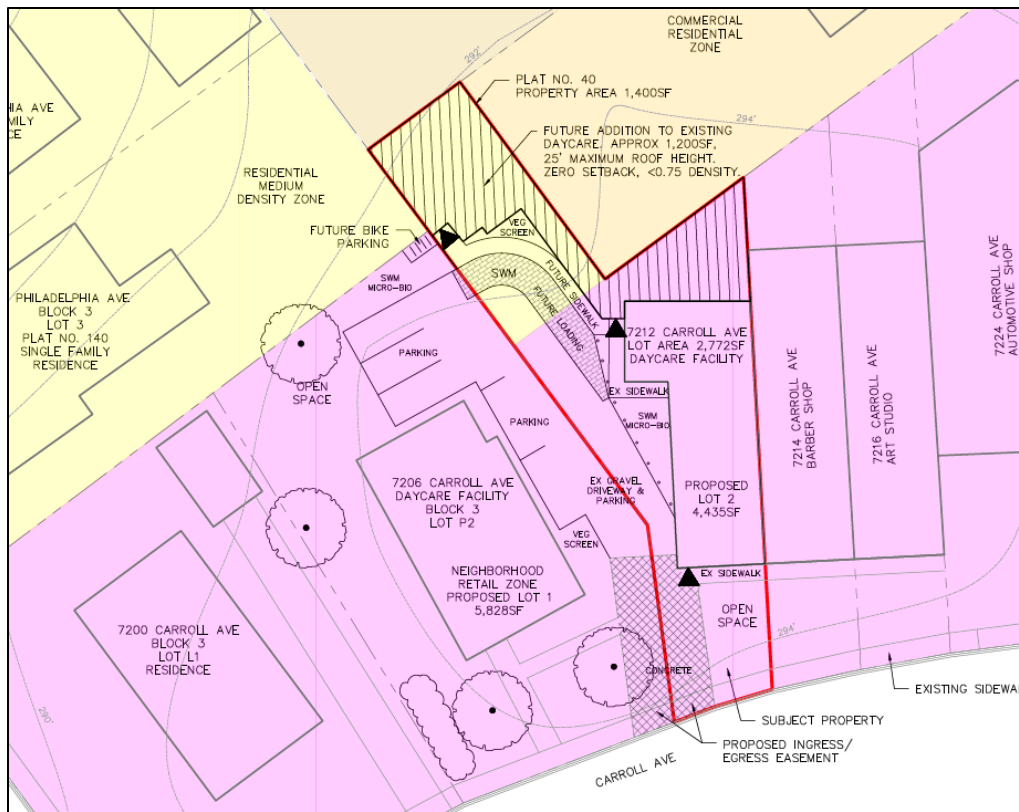


Figure 7: Proposed Floating Zone Plan (the yellow rectangle at the north end of the Property)

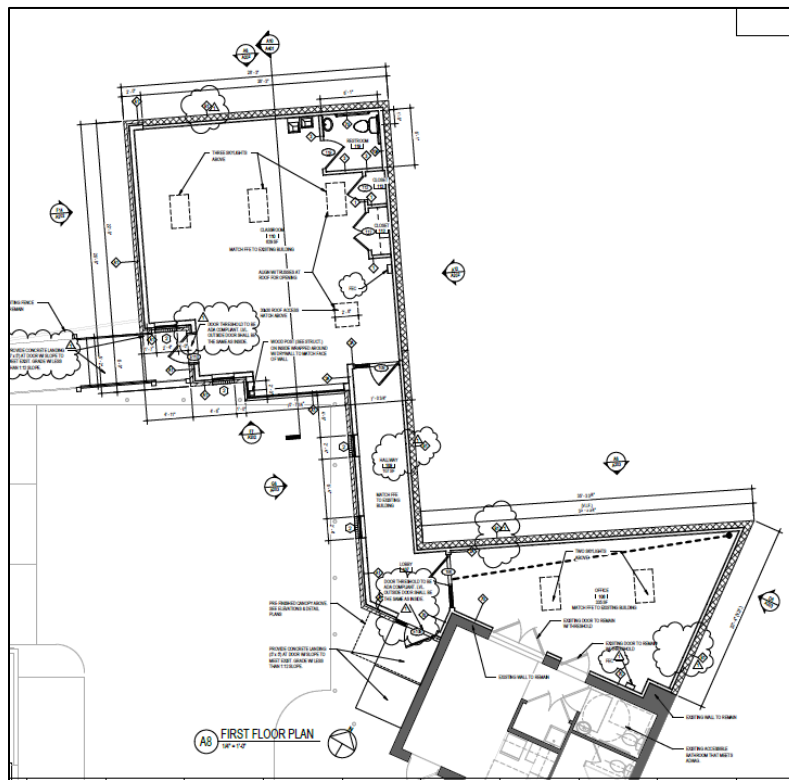


Figure 8: Building Addition Schematic Floor Plan



Figure 9: Schematic Elevation of Proposed Addition

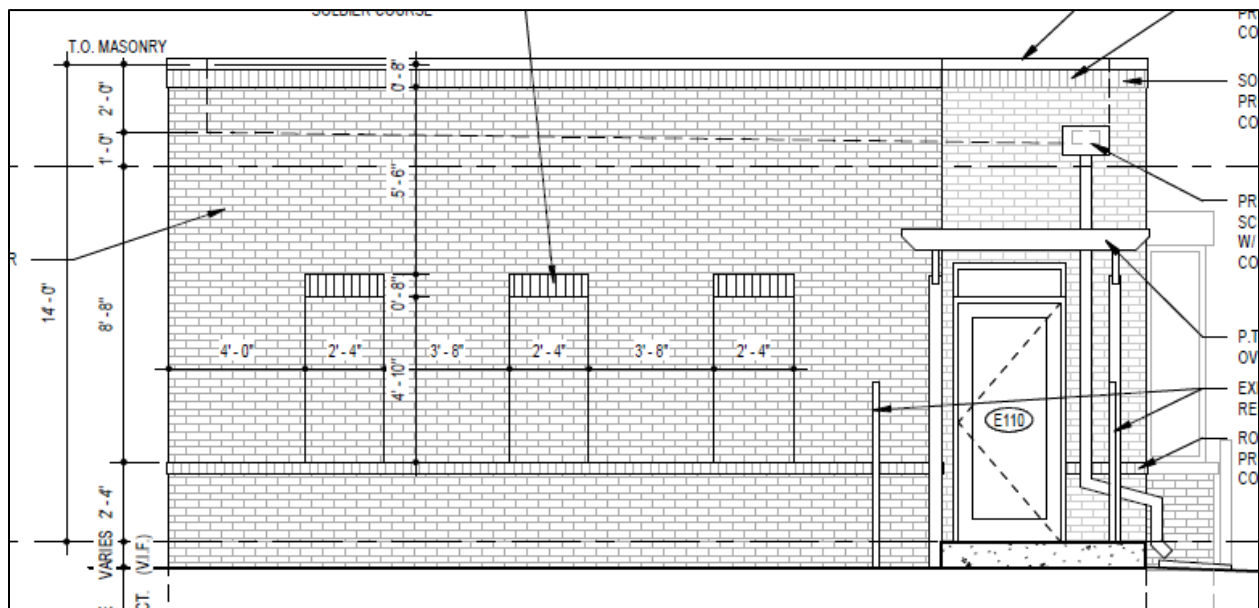


Figure 10: Schematic Elevation of Proposed Addition

As shown in Figure 8 above, the expansion is designed to occupy the entirety of the rear portion of the Property adjacent to the existing single-family home. The schematic building elevation in Figure 10 shows the building treatment along the shared property line to include a solid masonry façade with brick “window” detailing. At time of Site Plan, the Applicant will need to pursue Alternative Compliance under Section 59.8.6.1 for the Screening Requirements of Section 59.6.5.3. Staff supports the use of Alternative Compliance as the proposed expansion will minimize the noise associated with the current playground on that portion of the site, and the one-story structure presents a reduced visual impact for the adjacent homeowner. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant to finalize the treatment of that shared boundary at time of Site Plan.

Community Outreach

The Applicant has complied with the required notification signage and has informed all of the adjacent Property owners, community organizations and homeowners associations within one-half mile of the Property about the Application and the proposed Project. Staff has not received any correspondence about this Application.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS

For a Floating zone application, the District Council must find that the floating zone plan will:

Section 7.2.1.E.2.a. substantially conform with the recommendations of the applicable master plan, general plan, and other applicable County plans;

The floating zone plan substantially conforms with the recommendations of the 2000 *Takoma Park Master Plan* (Master Plan or Plan). The Master Plan identifies four goals (p. 23):

- **Community Preservation, Stability, and Character:** Preserve existing residential character encourage neighborhood reinvestment, and enhance the quality of life throughout Takoma Park;
- **Commercial and Institutional Centers:** Improve commercial centers to better serve the needs of local and area residents and people passing through the area;
- **Community Facilities, Parks, and Environmental Resources:** Support the facilities and parks and protect the environmental resources that contribute to community identity and provide valuable services and programs; and
- **Neighborhood Friendly Circulation:** Accommodate local and regional traffic, while providing safe, pleasant, and convenient pedestrian access to places people want to go.

The proposed redevelopment will provide a valuable community-serving use that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and community. With the relatively modest 1,200-square foot expansion, the increased student population will have only a minimal impact on circulation through the area.

The Property is located in the Takoma Junction area identified in the Plan (p. 44). Recommendations for this area include supporting community-oriented uses in scale with the overall residential character of the neighborhood. The proposed rezoning will facilitate the expansion of a successful existing community-oriented daycare use on the Property. Both the expansion and the existing storefront commercial building on the Property are one story, and the Historic Preservation Commission has approved the design for the expansion. If the Local Map Amendment is approved, the expansion of the daycare use will be reviewed by the Planning Board for Site Plan approval prior to Historic Area Work Permit and building permit.

Master-Planned Bikeways and Bicycle Parking

Carroll Avenue along the site's south frontage (MD 195) is two-lane Arterial roadway with a master-planned right-of-way width of 55 feet. The 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* calls for conventional bike lanes, one on each side of the street. At Site Plan review, Staff will determine the extent and/or manner of the Applicant's proportional participation in the implementation of the master-planned bikeway on Carroll Avenue. Additionally, short- and long-term bicycle parking will be required on-site.

Section 7.2.1.E.2.b. further the public interest;

The proposed rezoning furthers the public interest by providing “community facilities at appropriate locations to meet the human service, recreational, security, educational, and other needs of the diverse community.” (Master Plan, p.71)

Section 7.2.1.E.2.c. satisfy the intent and standards of the proposed zone and, to the extent the Hearing Examiner finds it necessary to ensure compatibility, meet other applicable requirements of this Chapter;

Section 59-5.1.2. Floating Zone Intent Statement

The intent of the Floating zones is to:

A. Implement comprehensive planning objectives by:

- 1. furthering the goals of the general plan, applicable master plan, and functional master plans;*
- 2. ensuring that the proposed uses are in balance with and supported by the existing and planned infrastructure in the general plan, applicable master plan, functional master plan staging, and applicable public facilities requirements; and*
- 3. allowing design flexibility to integrate development into circulation networks, land use patterns, and natural features within and connected to the Property; and*

As described above, the proposed development is consistent with the goals and recommendations of the *Takoma Park Master Plan*. The expansion of the daycare on the site will have minimal impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

The public facilities are adequate to accommodate the proposed use. The Project will not generate enough trips to warrant a traffic study. The Property is serviced by existing water and sewer and is located within water and sewer categories W-1 and S-1.

Electric, gas, and telecommunications services are also be available. Other public facilities and services – including police stations, firehouses, and health care facilities – are currently operating in accordance with the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) and will continue to be sufficient following construction of the Project.

B. Encourage the appropriate use of land by:

- 1. providing flexible applicability to respond to changing economic, demographic, and planning trends that occur between comprehensive District or Sectional Map Amendments;*
- 2. allowing various uses, building types, and densities as determined by a Property’s size and base zone to serve a diverse and evolving population; and*
- 3. ensuring that development satisfies basic sustainability requirements, including open space standards and environmental protection and mitigation; and*

Approval of the requested Local Map Amendment will allow the expansion of an existing community-serving daycare. Located in the mixed-use Takoma Junction area, the Takoma Montessori School occupies an existing one-story shopfront building in the Takoma Park Historic District. The envisioned expansion will retain the scale and character of the existing building.

Given the small tract size, no open space is required for the Property. Planning staff confirmed Forest Conservation Exemption 42020047E for the property on November 13, 2019. The expansion of the school will need to satisfy City of Takoma Park requirements for stormwater management and the City Tree Ordinance.

C. Ensure protection of established neighborhoods by:

- 1. establishing compatible relationships between new development and existing neighborhoods through limits on applicability, density, and uses;*
- 2. providing development standards and general compatibility standards to protect the character of adjacent neighborhoods; and*
- 3. allowing design flexibility to provide mitigation of any negative impacts found to be caused by the new use.*

The proposed rezoning proposes only a 1,200-square-foot addition to an existing community-serving use, in a one-story structure that echoes the scale and design of the existing masonry shopfront school. The Historic Preservation Commission has approved the design, and Planning Staff will continue to work with the Applicant and adjoining property owners during Site Plan review on the details of screening along the shared property boundaries.

Section 59-5.1.3. Applicability

The Property is currently classified in a Residential Detached Zone, rather than an Agricultural or Rural Residential zone, so a floating zone can be approved on this Property. A floating zone is not recommended for the Property in the Master Plan, so prerequisites are required for this Application. The Applicant is requesting an Employment Floating zone, NRF, so the property must front on a nonresidential street or must confront or abut a property that is in a Commercial/Residential, Employment, or Industrial zone; and the application must satisfy a minimum of 2 prerequisites for each of the categories under Section 5.1.3.D. The Property fronts onto Carroll Avenue, a nonresidential street. The Application meets the following prerequisites:

Transit & Infrastructure: The entirety of the Property fronts on Carroll Avenue, which hosts several Level 2 transit (bus) stops. Additionally, the site is served by existing water and sewer infrastructure that is not expected to require either an upgrade to the service line or installation of a pump station due to the proposed development.

Vicinity & Facilities: The R-60 portion of the Property that is proposed for rezoning is in a transitional location between property in an existing non-Residential Employment zone, NR, and property in a Residential Detached zone, R-60. Additionally, the sidewalk in front of the site provides access to an existing grocery store, the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Co-Op, within ¼ mile.

Environment & Resources: The site does not contain any forest or rare, threatened, or endangered species or critical habitats listed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Section 59- 5.4.2. Purpose

The purpose of the Employment Floating zones is to:

- A. allow development of commercial centers and communities, at a range of densities and heights flexible enough to respond to various settings;*
- B. allow limited residential development and flexibility in uses for a site; and*
- C. provide development that is compatible with adjacent development.*

This Application proposes to allow the expansion of an existing low-density daycare use within the Takoma Junction commercial center. The scale and design of the proposed expansion is in keeping with the character of the original commercial storefront building and other similar buildings within the surrounding Takoma Park Historic District. As discussed above, the proposed rezoning proposes only a 1,200-square-foot addition to an existing community-serving use, in a one-story structure that echoes the scale and design of the existing masonry shopfront school. The Historic Preservation Commission has approved the design, and Planning Staff will continue to work with the Applicant and adjoining property owners during Site Plan review on the details of screening along the shared property boundaries.

Section 59- 5.4.3. Land Uses

The NRF Zone allows the same uses allowed in the Euclidean NR Zone. Daycare (over 30 persons) is an allowed use in the NR Zone.

Section 59- 5.4.4. Building Types Allowed

The NRF Zone allows any building type.

Section 59-5.4.5. Development Standards for NRF Zone

Standard	Maximum/Minimum	Proposed
Density	1.0 FAR Max.	0.75 FAR Max.*
Setbacks from site boundary	Set by Floating Zone Plan	0' Min.
Building Height	Set by Floating Zone Plan	50' Max.*
Minimum Lot Size	Set at Site Plan	Set at Site Plan
Parking	0.25-0.5 Spaces per Employee	Must Meet Minimum
Open Space	N/A	N/A

*The maximum density and height for the floating zone are proposed to match those for the current Euclidean NR zone on the rest of the property. The maximum density and height for the proposed addition will be less and set at Site Plan.

Section 7.2.1.E.2.d. be compatible with existing and approved adjacent development;

The proposed expansion will match the scale and character of the existing commercial storefront building housing the existing school. The Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the architectural design and voted approval in 2018. The expansion is designed to occupy the entirety of the rear portion of the Property adjacent to the existing single-family home. The approved building elevation shows the architectural treatment along the shared property line to include a solid masonry façade with brick “window” detailing. At time of Site Plan, the Applicant will need to pursue Alternative Compliance under Section 59.8.6.1 for the Screening Requirements of Section 59.6.5.3. Staff supports the use of Alternative Compliance as the proposed expansion will minimize the noise associated with the current playground on that portion of the site, and the one-story structure presents a reduced visual impact for the adjacent

homeowner. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant to finalize the treatment of that shared boundary at time of Site Plan.

Section 7.2.1.E.2.e. generate traffic that does not exceed the critical lane volume or volume/ capacity ratio standard as applicable under the Planning Board's LATR Guidelines, or, if traffic exceeds the applicable standard, that the applicant demonstrate an ability to mitigate such adverse impacts; and

The Project proposes a total enrollment of 47 students. Applying the methodologies in the 2017 Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines, the proposed total enrollment is estimated to generate 49 morning peak hour trips and 49 evening peak hour trips. Since neither the morning or evening peak hour trip estimates are greater than 50, no additional study of the potential impact on the adjacent transportation network is required.

Section 7.2.1.E.2.f. when applying a non-Residential Floating zone to a Property previously under a Residential Detached zone, not adversely affect the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The proposed expansion will match the scale and character of the existing commercial storefront building housing the existing school. The Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the architectural design and voted approval in 2018. The expansion is designed to occupy the entirety of the rear portion of the Property adjacent to the existing single-family home. The approved building elevation shows the architectural treatment along the shared property line to include a solid masonry façade with brick "window" detailing. At time of Site Plan, the Applicant will need to pursue Alternative Compliance under Section 59.8.6.1 for the Screening Requirements of Section 59.6.5.3. Staff supports the use of Alternative Compliance as the proposed expansion will minimize the noise associated with the current playground on that portion of the site, and the one-story structure presents a reduced visual impact for the adjacent homeowner. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant to finalize the treatment of that shared boundary at time of Site Plan.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The proposed NRF Zone complies with the standards and requirements for approval of a Local Map Amendment. The proposed zone and use are consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Takoma Park Master Plan, are in the public interest, and will not alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Staff recommends approval of the Local Map Amendment and the associated Floating Zone Plan with the proposed binding elements.

ATTACHMENT

1. Floating Zone Plan