

Item 3 - Correspondence

From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Dickel, Stephanie](#); [Hisel-McCoy, Elza](#); [Mencarini, Katherine](#)
Subject: French School S-862C Correspondence
Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020 1:57:27 PM
Attachments: [S-862C-FrenchSchool_Comments.pdf](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)
[image016.png](#)
[image017.png](#)

Please see the attached consolidated correspondence received this week for the French School Special Exception S862C, which will be discussed by the Board on 1/7.

Thank you,



Matthew Folden, AICP
Planner Coordinator

DownCounty Planning Division
Montgomery County Planning Department
2425 Reedie Drive, 13th Floor | Wheaton, MD 20902
matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org
o: 301.495.4539



WE'VE MOVED!

THE NEW PARK AND PLANNING HEADQUARTERS IS NOW LOCATED AT
2425 REEDIE DRIVE, WHEATON, MD 20902

Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

Folden, Matthew

From: david seid <davidseid3@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 9:47 PM
To: Folden, Matthew
Subject: French International School/FASEB

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Folden,

As residents who live on Alta Vista Terrace our house directly borders the proposed French School on the former FASEB property. We are writing with regards to two concerns.

1. Noise from cars/buses and playground, and lights from cars--The French School plans to have a road that circles the property that it will use as a que line for pick up and drop off. Inside that road where a barn currently exists will turn into a playground. Currently there are two fences. A wood fence inside the property and a metal fence that delineates the property line of our hose. To avoid hearing noise from cars and having the headlights shine into our bedroom windows the wood fence either needs to be maintained/upgraded, or some type of covering placed on the metal fence. In addition, there are currently very tall pine trees just inside the property line (between the current wood and metal fences) that are directly behind our house and several other houses on the block. These pine trees create a very good buffer from the planned road and playground. I understand that the school plans are to keep these trees, and I cannot overemphasize enough how important it is that these trees are kept.

Finally, we are concerned about the noise from the plan to park several buses diagonally behind our house and a neighboring house. Putting aside whether buses should even be stored on the property, the location of these buses should be moved so that we do not hear the busses when they start up each morning.

2. Traffic--We appreciate that the school has spent considerable time working on a traffic plan. Nevertheless, many concerns remain. In particular, we are concerned about cut-through traffic from parents' cars as well as the potential for a lot of buses on Alta Vista Road. Such traffic is a major safety concern in a residential neighborhood, particularly given that there are many school age children who use two MCPS bus stops on Alta Vista Road. Rather than using Alta Vista Road, the traffic from cars and buses should be routed to other roads such as Cedar Lane.

Moreover, as we understand, the current plans fail to address how Saturday and summer school programs will operate. In order to reduce the impact on our local roads the school should be required to have mandatory bus requirements for these programs.

David and Lisa Seid
9605 Alta Vista Terrace

Folden, Matthew

From: Erickson, Nathan <Nathan.Erickson@friedfrank.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 12:55 PM
To: Folden, Matthew
Subject: French International School

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Folden,

I live in the Maplewood/Alta Vista neighborhood, on Wickett Terrace just off of Alta Vista Road. I wish to submit for the record my opposition to any plans by the French International School to utilize Alta Vista Road as a thoroughfare for purposes of shuttling students from their separate locations, or as a route for vehicular traffic to and from the French International School. Any such plan has the very real potential to turn an otherwise quiet residential street into a high traffic area for which it was never intended, for the convenience of the school only and to the detriment of all who live on and off of Alta Vista. Understanding that the volume of students proposed for the school will bring with it significant vehicular traffic wherever it is routed, the burden of this should not fall on neighborhood residents, and to the extent that alternate traffic routes away from the Maplewood/Alta Vista neighborhood need to be mandated for the school and its patrons, they are the ones who should bear such inconvenience.

Best regards,

Nathan Erickson

Nathan.Erickson@friedfrank.com | Tel: +1 202 639 7091

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP

801 17th Street, NW Washington, DC 20006

friedfrank.com

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Folden, Matthew

From: Katee Neal <kateeneal@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Folden, Matthew
Subject: FIS and Alta Vista

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Greetings Mr. Folden,

As a long-time resident of Alta Vista Road, I am concerned with the impact of the French International School's traffic plan on the quality of life and safety of our neighborhood. Our local street Alta Vista Road is already faced with some speeding, cut-through traffic, since we are sandwiched between high traffic roadways. Adding additional bus and vehicle traffic to Alta Vista Road should not be part of the traffic plan for the school. Rather, they should be directed to arterial roadways, such as Cedar Lane.

If you drove down Alta Vista Road, you would note multiple speed bumps, signs cautioning motorists to slow down while children are at play and even a driveway with fencing at the end to protect the safety of children at play. Our daughter learned to ride her bicycle in Alta Vista Court, which is unfortunately often used to make U-turns by motorists avoiding a U-turn at the intersection of Rockville Pike and Alta Vista Road to go north on Rockville Pike after exiting the Beltway or I-270. If parents are encouraged to use our local street as they exit FIS, this habit would increase and we would likely seek restrictions for southbound right turns from Rockville Pike onto Alta Vista Road.

Please consider mandating busing for the French International School's Saturday School and summer programs. As you can imagine, those are times that many of our residents are out walking dogs, children are running to our local park and our elderly residents are enjoying a stroll. Increased traffic threatens the safety of our pedestrians and the quality of life for our residents. These buses should also be required to route to arterial roads and not cut through our neighborhood. The property access is from Rockville Pike and should be kept to these main roads.

Thank your for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katee Neal
5010 Alta Vista Road
Bethesda, MD

Folden, Matthew

From: Maureen Wilkerson <m.wilkerson@wap.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 12:15 PM
To: Folden, Matthew
Subject: Traffic plans for the French International School proposed location on Rockville Pike, route 355

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Folden,

I'm writing to express my concern regarding the traffic plans for the French International School's former FASEB campus.

Please ensure that all FIS buses will proceed to arterial routes, such as West Cedar Lane, rather than cutting through the Maplewood-Alta Vista neighborhood. Our residential street is enjoyed by families walking their dogs and children playing. The influx of traffic from FIS could adversely affect the quality of life and safety of our residents. It has been reported that 7 buses will conduct two sets of roundtrips between the Forest Road location and the proposed use on Rockville Pike.

In addition, the FIS diagrams indicated Alta Vista Road as a suggested route for parents. This proposed route must be forbidden. This traffic should only use arterial routes and not local roads. Further, the shuttle bus between campuses should only be used by families that have students at both schools, not as an alternative drop off option.

I suggest, at a minimum, that signage be placed on all the intersections of Alta Vista Road and Linden Avenue that no turns during 7-9 am, and 4- 6 pm be allowed except for local residents. These restrictions can be a challenge to enforce, but other nearby neighborhoods, i.e. Locust Hill, have had such signage for many years to eliminate cut through traffic.

My family has lived at our current address for over 35 years, and there have been several occasions when Rochambeau (FIS) buses seem to careen at unreasonable speed down our street. MCPS buses do not.

Thank you for your attention.

Maureen P. Wilkerson
5214 Acacia Avenue
Bethesda

Folden, Matthew

From: zhangxq4488@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 12:16 PM
To: Folden, Matthew
Subject: about the Alta Vista rd traffic

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Hi this is Sophia and Kevin , 5014

We have small kid, really concerned about our neighborhood safety, we are agree all five requirement.

Thank you for your hard work

Sophia

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Folden, Matthew

From: Stephen Roderick <snrkiwi@me.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 6:27 PM
To: Folden, Matthew
Cc: Stephen Roderick
Subject: Traffic plans for the French International School's proposed use of the former FASEB campus

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Folden,

I'm writing to express my concern regarding the traffic plans for the French International School's proposed use of the former FASEB campus.

I am a recent home purchaser in Maplewood-Alta Vista and the pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with so many children walking it was a major draw. I am concerned at the increased possibility of accidents, or even a tragedy, should buses make their way through the neighborhood streets, many of which do not have sidewalks. I am even more concerned about parents using the neighborhood as a cut through while dropping off or picking up students. Lastly, the local streets are even busier with foot traffic on the weekends, and additional traffic then will further increase the chances of something terrible happening.

I petition you to route all FIS traffic solely along arterial roads such as MD-355 and Cedar Lane, to include commercial traffic like buses, as well as parents dropping off and picking up students. Please ensure that the regulations cope with summer and weekend traffic, and that the only entrance (pedestrian or vehicular) is on MD-355.

Sincerely
Stephen Roderick
9631 Alta Vista Ter, Bethesda MD 20814

Folden, Matthew

From: Mary Gant <mary@gant.io>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 6:41 PM
To: Folden, Matthew
Subject: French International School Traffic in Maplewood Alta Vista

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Folden:

I am writing to express my great concern about the increased bus and car traffic on Alta Vista Road and other neighborhood streets due to the opening of the French International School on Rockville Pike.

With street closures, limited access during rush hours, and speed bumps, we have been spared having many cars, trucks, and buses cut through our quiet residential neighborhood. With the large number of French International School cars and noisy, polluting diesel buses using our streets that will change.

I am sure that you are aware of the special hazards of pollution from diesel buses to human health and the environment. Unacceptable high levels of nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter produced by diesel buses will be spewed into our air and end up in our homes.

This is a neighborhood where adults walk to work or Metro and for pleasure and children play and run to catch their buses to our Montgomery County Schools. We bought our homes here to be able to enjoy quiet, safe streets--not to have a stream of buses and cars go by every morning and evening.

In addition, it is essential that the mandatory bus requirements be required for all Saturday and summer programs. Those are times when more children will be out walking, biking, and playing.

I very much appreciate your time and effort in helping my neighbors and me with this issue.

Yours truly,

**Mary Gant
5202 Alta Vista Road
Bethesda, MD 20814**

From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: FW: FIS proposed Elementary School at 9650 Rockville Pike
Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020 3:41:35 PM
Attachments: [FIS project memo for Montgomery Planning Board 17 Dec 2020.docx](#)

Please enter this into the record for S862C on January 7, 2021.

Matt

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator
DownCounty Planning Division
301.495.4539 | matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org



Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

From: Janet Maalouf <janetmaalouf97@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 3:03 PM
To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: FIS proposed Elementary School at 9650 Rockville Pike

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please find attached my comments on the FIS proposed elementary school at 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda.

Thanks,
Janet Maalouf

SUBJECT: French International School's Proposed Elementary School at 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda. MD

To: Matt.Folden@montgomeryplanning.org

Consideration of the proposal by the French International School (FIS) to create an elementary school at 9650 Rockville Pike in Bethesda should include a comprehensive view how this location will not only increase internal neighborhood traffic but add to increased traffic congestion on major nearby roads such as Rockville Pike, I-495 and I-270 spur as well as Pooks Hill Rd.

In an attempt to take advantage of the existing FIS school on the opposite side of Maple-Alta Vista Rd neighborhood (one block off Rt. 187/Old Georgetown Rd and Beech Ave), the FIS proposal for the elementary school on the opposite side of the neighborhood (Rockville Pike) automatically brings to mind the adage, "the shortest distance between two point is a straight line". This intrinsically offers an opportunity for cut-through traffic which includes FIS buses as shuttles. The FIS plan to provide parents with a "map" of how to exit the neighborhood includes an exit at Rt. 187/Old Georgetown Rd. and Alta Vista Rd which has long been a very problematic intersection for drivers, pedestrians and bikers along the Bethesda Trolley Trail due to visibility issues and short turning radiuses.

One cannot ignore the accommodations that the community made to welcome the Naval Support Activity/Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (NSA/WRNMMC) with its increased traffic through the corridor. In addition, a major development of two high-rises has been approved on Pooks Hill Rd which will add significant traffic on a two-lane road between Linden Ave (has turn restrictions) and Rockville Pike and which is a planned FIS bus route. The intersection of East Bound Pooks Hill Rd at Rockville Pike is complicated and currently offers drivers unsafe traffic turns. Buses may have difficulty turning onto southbound Rockville Pike as well to reach the entrance of the property.

The FIS plan to use Rockville Pike as the only entrance/exit to the school property offers another potential for significant traffic concerns in that area. Southbound buses will, by

their very nature, slow traffic along Rockville Pike even with a planned deacceleration lane as they enter/exit the property. Drivers exiting east bound I-495 at Exit 34 or off the I-270 Spur onto southbound Rockville Pike are offered a U-turn light at southbound Rockville Pike and Alta Vista Rd to go north on Rockville Pike but a driver has to cross over several lanes of traffic in a busy corridor to reach that U-turn/left turn light. The planned entrance/exit to the FIS property will be in this immediate vicinity. In addition, one cannot guarantee that the northbound Rockville Pike traffic allowed to make a left turn at Pooks Hill Rd will not attempt to make a U-turn onto southbound Rockville Pike to enter the property.

The safety of pedestrians along Rockville Pike is a constant concern and evermore highlighted in the block between the property entrance/exit and Alta Vista Rd. Given the typical traffic speed in this corridor, pedestrian travel is always a concern.

All in all, it is important to consider this proposal with a comprehensive view of what currently exists between I-495 and NSA/National Institutes of Health and what has already been approved in the vicinity of the proposed FIS elementary school site.at 9650 Rockville Pike.

Janet Maalouf

5104 Benton Ave.

Bethesda, MD 20814

From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: FW: French International School in Bethesda
Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020 3:44:04 PM

Please enter this into the record for S862C on January 7, 2021.

Matt

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator
DownCounty Planning Division
301.495.4539 | matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org

Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Chacko <susan.chacko@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 2:41 PM
To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: re: French International School in Bethesda

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr Folden,

As a resident of the Maplewood district in Bethesda, I am very concerned about the latest traffic plan for the French International School on Rockville Pike in Bethesda.

Based on their last presentation, the FIS plans to have up to 48 buses that will cut through the neighborhood each day. In addition, FIS has explicitly provided their parents with a recommended route that cuts through the neighborhood streets, so that there will be a significant number of FIS parents who will be driving through the neighborhood each day, multiple times a day.

This will be a significant change to the neighborhood. At school start and stop times, we can expect that our own cars will not be able to get in and out of the neighborhood. Maplewood is currently pedestrian-friendly with many people walking and biking to NIH, Walter Reed and the Medical Center; having this large increase in bus and car traffic will be detrimental to walkers and bikers. It will also make it more dangerous for children to walk to Maplewood park or cross the road to Montgomery County school bus-stops.

It is quite possible for traffic between the two FIS sites to travel along Rockville Pike, Cedar Lane, and Old Georgetown Road. The FIS traffic plan needs to direct all traffic between the two FIS sites to use these major roads rather than cutting through the Maplewood neighbourhood.

In addition, any FIS traffic plan needs to address the significant amount of traffic for their Saturday and summer programs. There should be mandatory bus requirements for these programs, just as for the regular school programs.

Thank you,
Susan Chacko

9629 Alta Vista Terrace

Bethesda, MD.

From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [Jody Bleiberg](#)
Cc: [Mencarini, Katherine](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#)
Subject: RE: French School Traffic
Date: Friday, December 18, 2020 12:40:02 PM

Ms. Bleiberg,

Thank you for contacting staff with your concerns about the proposed French International School. Your comments have been forwarded to the Planning Board Chair's office and will be included with the packet sent to the Commission in advance of the public hearing on Thursday January 7, 2020.

In the meantime, I wanted to address the specific concerns you mentioned in your email.

Cut-through Traffic

Staff at the Planning Department, MCDOT, and MDOT SHA have been working closely with the Applicant to address traffic and safety concerns related to the Site. The Applicant will close access points onto the adjacent (northern) offsite parking lot and Alta Vista Terrace and will make significant improvements to the Site entrance along Rockville Pike. These improvements will direct all site generated traffic to the remaining Rockville Pike access point. Any buses traversing public streets between the proposed Rockville Pike campus (Subject Property) and the existing Forest Road campus will not be cut-through traffic as they are both leaving and accessing a destination within the neighborhood.

MCDOT has been made aware of the concerns brought forth by the community about potential increase in traffic volume and speed on the residential roadways near the Site. Local communities with these concerns can request a [Residential Traffic Calming Study](#) to evaluate existing traffic conditions within the neighborhood roads and determine if the results meet the thresholds required for deployment of traffic calming infrastructure. As a matter of practice, MCDOT does not install traffic calming devices until such measures are warranted through an engineering analysis.

Transportation Management Plan

Please be aware the Applicant will be required to submit a transportation management plan that will be reviewed and approved with the forthcoming Preliminary Plan Application. Once approved by the Board the Applicant enter a binding agreement with the Board and MCDOT that will have specific and meaningful penalties related to the school's enrollment if they are unable to meet the trip limitations. This document will be included in the submittal for a Site Plan for the Site, a critical next step for this project to move forward, and the document will be accessible to the public prior to the Planning Board's public hearing. Your comments about keeping buses to the higher-classified roadways such as W Cedar Lane, Old Georgetown Road and Rockville Pike are relevant to the development of the transportation management plan have been noted for the anticipated submission.

Respectfully,

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator



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THE NEW PARK AND PLANNING HEADQUARTERS IS NOW LOCATED AT
2425 REEDIE DRIVE, WHEATON, MD 20902

Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

From: Jody Bleiberg <jodybleiberg@grtkids.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 5:21 PM
To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: French School Traffic

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Folden,

I am a resident of Maplewood for over thirty years and have seen much. My house, on Linden Ave, directly faces Beech Avenue (you would run into it if you didn't stop heading west on Beech).

The traffic proposal by the French School does not make sense. Beech -Linden -Pooks Hill - Alta Vista would become a major artery between the two campuses for busses and parents. They literally have it planned to "teach" parents how to use this "artery." We, the residents and homeowners, are not cared about. A few examples:

1. There have been times during the school year, when due to busses and cars I can not back out of or get into my driveway.
2. There have been times when the continuous noise of busses have made it impossible to sit on my screened-in porch.
3. Drivers ignoring the "No Left Turn" sign at Linden and Beech as well as at Pooks Hill and Linden are continuous. We are told that police can not be assigned to monitor adherence routinely as that is not priority. Occasionally, police are there and they can't even catch all of them. Please look at the police logs.
4. When a commuter wants to "obey" the "No Left Turn" regulation at Beech and Linden, they simply turn into my driveway (or my neighbors) to do a "U-turn." There have been times that cars almost hit each other when U-turns are made. In order for my children to play safely in the front of their own house, I had to park my car across my driveway so my children wouldn't get hit.
5. It was not safe, due to the bus and commuter traffic, to allow my children to walk alone to or from their bus stop or to cross the street to a friend's house due to the amount of traffic (busses and parents).
6. My neighbors' children were not allowed to cross themselves to go to the park due to the traffic (they need to cross Linden Ave between Beech and Pooks Hill or Alta Vista Rd).

I can go on and I am not exaggerating to make my case. These are facts. Allowing the French School to use our neighborhood and "teach" their parents the streets in the neighborhood to use as a commuter route is unconscionable and abusive to use. The French School still is a business; we are the residents who live here and bear the burden.

I certainly hope you will be understanding and keep the busses and parent commuters on the main arteries (Rockville Pike, Cedar Lane, Old Georgetown Road) and allow us to live in a neighborhood.

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D. and Joseph Bleiberg, Ph.D.

--

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D., ABSNP

Licensed Psychologist

Diplomate, School Neuropsychology

9515 Linden Avenue

Bethesda, Maryland 20814

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Bethesda Neuropsychology

www.bethesdaneuropsychology.com

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D., ABSNP

Diplomate in School Neuropsychology and
named as a top psychologist for
consultation and diagnosis in

Washingtonian Magazine, July 2009.
With dual credentialing in clinical and
school psychology, Jody ...



From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [Carl Wilkerson](#)
Cc: [Mencarini, Katherine](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#)
Subject: RE: Input on French International School Traffic Plan for Proposed New School on Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda MD
Date: Friday, December 18, 2020 12:41:20 PM

Mr. Wilkerson,

Thank you for contacting staff with your concerns about the proposed French International School. Your comments have been forwarded to the Planning Board Chair's office and will be included with the packet sent to the Commission in advance of the public hearing on Thursday January 7, 2020.

In the meantime, I wanted to address the specific concerns you mentioned in your email.

Comprehensive View of Transportation Impacts

In accordance with the County's 2016-2020 *Subdivision Staging Policy* and the 2017 *Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) Guidelines*, the Applicant was required to conduct and submit a comprehensive transportation impact study (TIS) to ensure safe site access, to analyze the net increase in trips estimated to be generated by the proposed school, and to make a finding that there are no adverse impacts to the adjacent travel network. The study was reviewed by Montgomery County Planning Staff, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). The TIS was revised and revised several times over a period of two years, as all reviewing agencies provided substantial comments. Ultimately, the TIS was approved by all agencies.

As required by the 2017 LATR, the TIS took into account existing travel conditions by conducting traffic counts, incorporated trips associated with approved but unbuilt development, and trips estimated to be generated by the proposed development. The TIS reflects a plan of operations that mandates busing for all students aged 5 and older (not participating in before- and after-school care), and for 30% of nursery school students. With these transportation management measures in place, the motor vehicle adequacy analysis indicated that the average vehicle delay along Rockville Pike, between I-495 and Pooks Hill Road, and at the two intersections studied at Old Georgetown Road would be below the congestion standard of 80 seconds during the morning and evening peak hours. Therefore, Staff determined that adequate transportation capacity exists to serve the proposed private educational institution.

In recognition of the complexity of the transportation network within the vicinity, the Applicant was also required to conduct both a queuing analysis and a weaving analysis along the Rockville Pike corridor in the vicinity of the school to identify potential back-up and safety concerns. Complying with guidance in the 2017 LATR, the Applicant submitted their evaluation, which informed the requirement for a consolidated driveway access on Rockville Pike. As you mentioned in your email, the Applicant and MDOT SHA reached an agreement on the design of the driveway which will include new acceleration and deceleration lanes to improve safety and traffic flow on Rockville Pike. To reduce the frequency of southbound U-turns at Rockville Pike and Alta Vista Road/Bellevue Drive, the Applicant has committed to routing buses such that this turning maneuver is not necessary. Parents will receive instructions and reminders emphasizing that this turning movement should be

avoided at the start of every semester, along with other traffic safety instructions.

Please be aware the Applicant will be required to submit a transportation management plan that will be reviewed and approved with the forthcoming Preliminary Plan Application. Once approved by the Board the Applicant enter a binding agreement with the Board and MCDOT that will have specific and meaningful penalties related to the school's enrollment if they are unable to meet the trip limitations. This document will be included in the submittal for a Site Plan for the Site, a critical next step for this project to move forward, and the document will be accessible to the public prior to the Planning Board's public hearing.

Cut-through Traffic

Staff at the Planning Department, MCDOT, and MDOT SHA have been working closely with the Applicant to address traffic and safety concerns related to the Site. The Applicant will close access points onto the adjacent (northern) offsite parking lot and Alta Vista Terrace and will make significant improvements to the Site entrance along Rockville Pike. These improvements will direct all site generated traffic to the remaining Rockville Pike access point. Any buses traversing public streets between the proposed Rockville Pike campus (Subject Property) and the existing Forest Road campus will not be cut-through traffic as they are both leaving and accessing a destination within the neighborhood.

MCDOT has been made aware of the concerns brought forth by the community about potential increase in traffic volume and speed on the residential roadways near the Site. Local communities with these concerns can request a [Residential Traffic Calming Study](#) to evaluate existing traffic conditions within the neighborhood roads and determine if the results meet the thresholds required for deployment of traffic calming infrastructure. As a matter of practice, MCDOT does not install traffic calming devices until such measures are warranted through an engineering analysis.

Respectfully,

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator

DownCounty Planning Division

301.495.4539 | matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org



Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

From: Carl Wilkerson <CarlWilkerson22@outlook.com>

Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 11:14 PM

To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>

Subject: Input on French International School Traffic Plan for Proposed New School on Wisconsin

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Folden:

I am writing in response to the traffic plan submitted by the French International School (FIS) for its proposed new site on Wisconsin Avenue. I have lived in the Maplewood community since 1965 on both Linden Avenue and Acacia Avenue. I'm very familiar, therefore, with the traffic patterns and pressure confronting the streets in Maplewood, including those fundamentally impacted by the proposed FIS zoning and traffic request: Beech Avenue, Linden Avenue, Pooks Hill Road, Alta Vista Road and Cedar Lane. The Maplewood neighborhood is circumscribed by numerous, profound traffic challenges, including:

- Voluminous traffic from the Route 495/ I-270 exit programs going southbound on Wisconsin Avenue at Pooks Hill Road;
- Congestive rush-hour backups at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Alta Vista Road due to cars making a U-turn to head North on Wisconsin Avenue after off ramping from Route 495 because there is no cloverleaf designed on the exit;
- Significantly increased traffic following the BRAC expansion of the Walter Reed Medical Center on Wisconsin Avenue;
- Anticipated traffic increases on car doors bordering Maplewood (Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue) due to the rebuilding of downtown Bethesda and the establishment of new headquarters for Marriott international on Wisconsin Avenue;
- Rush-hour traffic along West Cedar Lane associated with the National Institutes of Health; and,
- Increased traffic from new proposed housing development on the Pooks Hill Marriott property

Each of these factors increases the incidence of cut-through traffic in the Maplewood neighborhood. The planned FIS drop-off and bus routes to the proposed FIS elementary school would further exacerbate the traffic on the already over-burdened roads in Maplewood, especially Beech Avenue, Linden Avenue, Pooks Hill Road, and Alta Vista Road. These roads are unsustainably saturated with cut through traffic and cannot handle more traffic as proposed by the FIS. The FIS traffic study is defective because it does not address the proposal's traffic burden in a comprehensive fasion, and ignores the preexisting traffic demands and increasing cut-through traffic.

This neighborhood has many adults and children that walk along and cross these streets and would be endangered by added traffic. The Maplewood-Alta Vista Recreation Center is the site of many athletic and social activities (such as the Maplewood Football Program) that bring large numbers of children and adults to

crosswalks on Linden Avenue, Beech Avenue, Alta Vista Road, and Pooks Hill Road during the time periods that the FIS busses and individual pick-ups would occur.

While the proposed FIS traffic plan suggests that 50% of the proposed 700 students would commute by bus, the remaining 50% would be individually driven to the proposed new school. The routes proposed by FIS for staff and the 50% of the school population that will be individually dropped off recommend using Alta Vista Road, Linden Avenue and Beech Avenue. This level of increased traffic on these neighborhood roads contradicts the 1990 Master Plan for Bethesda Chevy Chase, which acknowledged the severe incidence of cut-through traffic and underscored the continued need for access restrictions. The increased volume on Beech Avenue would create further gridlocks on Beech Avenue as it approaches the intersection with Old Georgetown Road due to the confluence of the FIS High School on Forest Lane, the Bethesda Country Day School and the entrance to the BCC YMCA together with the already excessive volume of traffic on Beech from Linden Avenue and Pooks Hill Road. During the beginning and end of school days, this span is very clogged. It cannot reasonably sustain more. The residents of Forest Lane, Edgley Road and Montgomery Road have a very difficult time entering and exiting to and from their streets during the congestion from the start and end of the FIS high school day.

The FIS traffic plan for the proposed Wisconsin Avenue school conflicts with the core purpose of the access restrictions referenced in the 1990 master plan for Bethesda Chevy Chase. Currently there are access restrictions at the intersection of Beech Avenue and Linden Avenue, Pooks Hill Road and Linden Avenue, and at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Elsmere Avenue. Regrettably, even these access restrictions are rarely enforced. Cut through traffic during the restricted times generally disregards the access restrictions. Sections of Beech Avenue west of the Linden Avenue intersection are barely 18 feet in several places. Two bicycle fatalities recently occurred near the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and Beech Avenue. The increased traffic proposed by FIS for staff and dropped off students would increase the likelihood of other incidents. Many of the YMCA members walk along the Beech Avenue sidewalks and cross at Old Georgetown Road and could be endangered by increased traffic congestion. The significant impacts of the FIS traffic proposal on the Beech Avenue and Old Georgetown Road intersections have not been considered in the FIS traffic study. The report captures a snapshot of traffic in a limited vacuum without regard to the comprehensive impact of the enlarged FIS traffic and cut throughs specifically referenced in the 1990 master plan.

For all of these reasons, the FIS traffic plan should be rejected. No Added FIS traffic should be permitted on Linden Avenue, Pooks Hill Road, Alta Vista Avenue or Beech Avenue. Instead, if the County and State permit the requested FIS zoning exception, all FIS traffic should be restricted to Wisconsin Avenue, West Cedar Lane, and Route 495 for access and egress to the proposed new school. Additional access restrictions should be established for the Alta Vista-Wisconsin Avenue intersection and the Linden Avenue and Alta Vista intersection.

Montgomery County has failed the Maplewood neighborhood in several respects over decades. When the zoning was approved for the Promenade development on Pooks Hill Road, the County promised the installation of bollards at the intersection of Pooks Hill Road and Linden Avenue to mitigate the increased cut-through traffic. The Board of Zoning Appeals, however, chose instead to simply install access restrictions that are rarely enforced even today. It is time for Montgomery County to properly address the reality of the unlimited burden confronting Maplewood from the multitude of nearby traffic challenges as highlighted above

In sum, the increased volume of traffic that the proposed FIS plan would inflict is unacceptable, unsustainable, and contrary to the 1990 master plan. The FIS plan would irretrievably impair the quiet enjoyment and safety of the Maplewood neighborhood. The FIS traffic study is imbalanced and fails to consider the collective impact of the neighborhood's already excessive traffic challenges from Walter Reed, NIH, commercial activity on Pooks Hill Road and collateral cut-through traffic. The FIS traffic plan is unsafe.

Thank you for your valuable consideration of these views.

From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [M.W](#)
Cc: [MCP-Chair](#); [Mencarini, Katherine](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#)
Subject: RE: Maplewood Resident Comments for Case number S-862-C
Date: Friday, December 18, 2020 12:43:06 PM

Mr. and Ms. Wilkerson,

Thank you for contacting staff with your concerns about the proposed French International School. Your comments have been forwarded to the Planning Board Chair's office and will be included with the packet sent to the Commission in advance of the public hearing on Thursday January 7, 2020.

In the meantime, I wanted to address the specific concerns you mentioned in your email.

Cut-through Traffic

Staff at the Planning Department, MCDOT, and MDOT SHA have been working closely with the Applicant to address traffic and safety concerns related to the Site. The Applicant will close access points onto the adjacent (northern) offsite parking lot and Alta Vista Terrace and will make significant improvements to the Site entrance along Rockville Pike. These improvements will direct all site generated traffic to the remaining Rockville Pike access point. Any buses traversing public streets between the proposed Rockville Pike campus (Subject Property) and the existing Forest Road campus will not be cut-through traffic as they are both leaving and accessing a destination within the neighborhood.

MCDOT has been made aware of the concerns brought forth by the community about potential increase in traffic volume and speed on the residential roadways near the Site. Local communities with these concerns can request a [Residential Traffic Calming Study](#) to evaluate existing traffic conditions within the neighborhood roads and determine if the results meet the thresholds required for deployment of traffic calming infrastructure. As a matter of practice, MCDOT does not install traffic calming devices until such measures are warranted through an engineering analysis.

Queuing on Beech Avenue

Thank you for your observations about queuing on Beech Avenue. The private school use at this location is approved and not subject to this Application's review. Your comments have been forwarded to inspection services for their evaluation.

As proposed, the Subject Property on Rockville Pike can accommodate 13 buses in the designated bus-drop off and over 50 passenger vehicles within the on-site parent drop-off loop.

Comprehensive View of Transportation Impacts

In accordance with the County's 2016-2020 *Subdivision Staging Policy* and the 2017 *Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) Guidelines*, the Applicant was required to conduct and submit a comprehensive transportation impact study (TIS) to ensure safe site access, to analyze the net increase in trips estimated to be generated by the proposed school, and to make a finding that there are no adverse impacts to the adjacent travel network. The study was reviewed by Montgomery County Planning Staff, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and The

Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). The TIS was revised and revised several times over a period of two years, as all reviewing agencies provided substantial comments. Ultimately, the TIS was approved by all agencies.

As required by the 2017 LATR, the TIS took into account existing travel conditions by conducting traffic counts, incorporated trips associated with approved but unbuilt development, and trips estimated to be generated by the proposed development. The TIS reflects a plan of operations that mandates busing for all students aged 5 and older (not participating in before- and after-school care), and for 30% of nursery school students. With these transportation management measures in place, the motor vehicle adequacy analysis indicated that the average vehicle delay along Rockville Pike, between I-495 and Pooks Hill Road, and at the two intersections studied at Old Georgetown Road would be below the congestion standard of 80 seconds during the morning and evening peak hours. Therefore, Staff determined that adequate transportation capacity exists to serve the proposed private educational institution.

In recognition of the complexity of the transportation network within the vicinity, the Applicant was also required to conduct both a queuing analysis and a weaving analysis along the Rockville Pike corridor in the vicinity of the school to identify potential back-up and safety concerns. Complying with guidance in the 2017 LATR, the Applicant submitted their evaluation, which informed the requirement for a consolidated driveway access on Rockville Pike. As you mentioned in your email, the Applicant and MDOT SHA reached an agreement on the design of the driveway which will include new acceleration and deceleration lanes to improve safety and traffic flow on Rockville Pike. To reduce the frequency of southbound U-turns at Rockville Pike and Alta Vista Road/Bellevue Drive, the Applicant has committed to routing buses such that this turning maneuver is not necessary. Parents will receive instructions and reminders emphasizing that this turning movement should be avoided at the start of every semester, along with other traffic safety instructions.

Please be aware the Applicant will be required to submit a transportation management plan that will be reviewed and approved with the forthcoming Preliminary Plan Application. Once approved by the Board the Applicant enter a binding agreement with the Board and MCDOT that will have specific and meaningful penalties related to the school's enrollment if they are unable to meet the trip limitations. This document will be included in the submittal for a Site Plan for the Site, a critical next step for this project to move forward, and the document will be accessible to the public prior to the Planning Board's public hearing.

Respectfully,

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator

DownCounty Planning Division

301.495.4539 | matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org



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THE NEW PARK AND PLANNING HEADQUARTERS IS NOW LOCATED AT
2425 REEDIE DRIVE, WHEATON, MD 20902

Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

From: M W <mwilkers_03@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, December 18, 2020 12:23 AM
To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Maplewood Resident Comments for Case number S-862-C

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

December 17, 2020

Dear Mr. Matthew Folden,

We are current residents of Maplewood neighborhood in Bethesda, Maryland. We are writing to communicate significant problems that would be caused by the proposed new French International School development on the FASEB campus (FIS-FASEB) within our neighborhood (Case number S-862-C). Maplewood is a quiet, residential neighborhood that provides housing for families, peaceful streets and sidewalks for walking and children's play, recreation and athletics in Maplewood park.

FIS-FASEB seeks to establish a new DMV commuter school within the Maplewood residential neighborhood. FIS-FASEB will have 900+ new students and staff, and operate from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. FIS-FASEB seeks to transport staff and students from the greater DMV area utilizing a complex system of buses and car traffic routes to accommodate the daily 1,800 person arrivals and departures. These car and traffic routes are designed to cut-through Maplewood neighborhood at high volume by buses, shuttles, and private cars.

We are concerned that FIS-FASEB development will be detrimental to the Maplewood residential neighborhood for the following reasons:

1. The daily, high-volume, cut-through traffic by FIS-FASEB will be hazardous for the safety of children and family walking in Maplewood. Further, Maplewood's narrow roads do not support daily, high-volume, cut-through traffic, such as would be produced by FIS-FASEB.
2. FIS has historically practiced unsafe traffic management with having a spillover queue on Beech Avenue for the FIS on Forest Road, halting traffic and blocking the Bethesda Trolley Trail.
3. Rush hour traffic surrounding Maplewood is already at capacity and will further increase with development currently underway (Marriot Pooks Hill, NIH/FAES housing, Wormald Wild Oak Homes). The current traffic studies are not comprehensive nor realistic given the future development within the Maplewood neighborhood.
4. Bus garaging on the FIS-FASEB site (15 buses) will further worsen traffic, cause significant air and noise pollution, and is entirely incompatible within a residential neighborhood.
5. **A school driveway entrance cannot be safely operated at the FIS-FASEB school property on MD 355.** Alarming, the proposed school driveway is immediately adjacent to major

highways and other large roads. An Interstate-495 on-ramp is within 500 ft. An Interstate-270 off-ramp is within 760 ft. Pooks Hill Road is within 160 ft. Northbound traffic on 355 is within 90 ft. This traffic mixture is high risk for accidents and injury. A safe entrance cannot possibly be operated on this property, regardless of future ingress lanes or other construction.

Sincerely,

Matthew and Loren Wilkerson

From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [Janet Maalouf](#)
Cc: [MCP-Chair](#); [Mencarini, Katherine](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#)
Subject: RE: FIS proposed Elementary School at 9650 Rockville Pike
Date: Friday, December 18, 2020 12:45:22 PM

Ms. Maalouf,

Thank you for contacting staff with your concerns about the proposed French International School. Your comments have been forwarded to the Planning Board Chair's office and will be included with the packet sent to the Commission in advance of the public hearing on Thursday January 7, 2020.

In the meantime, I wanted to address the specific concerns you mentioned in your email.

Comprehensive View of Transportation Impacts In accordance with the County's 2016-2020 *Subdivision Staging Policy* and the 2017 *Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) Guidelines*, the Applicant was required to conduct and submit a comprehensive transportation impact study (TIS) to ensure safe site access, to analyze the net increase in trips estimated to be generated by the proposed school, and to make a finding that there are no adverse impacts to the adjacent travel network. The study was reviewed by Montgomery County Planning Staff, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). The TIS was revised and revised several times over a period of two years, as all reviewing agencies provided substantial comments. Ultimately, the TIS was approved by all agencies.

As required by the 2017 LATR, the TIS took into account existing travel conditions by conducting traffic counts, incorporated trips associated with approved but unbuilt development, and trips estimated to be generated by the proposed development. The TIS reflects a plan of operations that mandates busing for all students aged 5 and older (not participating in before- and after-school care), and for 30% of nursery school students. With these transportation management measures in place, the motor vehicle adequacy analysis indicated that the average vehicle delay along Rockville Pike, between I-495 and Pooks Hill Road, and at the two intersections studied at Old Georgetown Road would be below the congestion standard of 80 seconds during the morning and evening peak hours. Therefore, Staff determined that adequate transportation capacity exists to serve the proposed private educational institution.

In recognition of the complexity of the transportation network within the vicinity, the Applicant was also required to conduct both a queuing analysis and a weaving analysis along the Rockville Pike corridor in the vicinity of the school to identify potential back-up and safety concerns. Complying with guidance in the 2017 LATR, the Applicant submitted their evaluation, which informed the requirement for a consolidated driveway access on Rockville Pike. As you mentioned in your email, the Applicant and MDOT SHA reached an agreement on the design of the driveway which will include new acceleration and deceleration lanes to improve safety and traffic flow on Rockville Pike. To reduce the frequency of southbound U-turns at Rockville Pike and Alta Vista Road/Bellevue Drive, the Applicant has committed to routing buses such that this turning maneuver is not necessary. Parents will receive instructions and reminders emphasizing that this turning movement should be

avoided at the start of every semester, along with other traffic safety instructions.

Please be aware the Applicant will be required to submit a transportation management plan that will be reviewed and approved with the forthcoming Preliminary Plan Application. Once approved by the Board the Applicant enter a binding agreement with the Board and MCDOT that will have specific and meaningful penalties related to the school's enrollment if they are unable to meet the trip limitations. This document will be included in the submittal for a Site Plan for the Site, a critical next step for this project to move forward, and the document will be accessible to the public prior to the Planning Board's public hearing.

Cut-through Traffic

Staff at the Planning Department, MCDOT, and MDOT SHA have been working closely with the Applicant to address traffic and safety concerns related to the Site. The Applicant will close access points onto the adjacent (northern) offsite parking lot and Alta Vista Terrace and will make significant improvements to the Site entrance along Rockville Pike. These improvements will direct all site generated traffic to the remaining Rockville Pike access point. Any buses traversing public streets between the proposed Rockville Pike campus (Subject Property) and the existing Forest Road campus will not be cut-through traffic as they are both leaving and accessing a destination within the neighborhood.

MCDOT has been made aware of the concerns brought forth by the community about potential increase in traffic volume and speed on the residential roadways near the Site. Local communities with these concerns can request a [Residential Traffic Calming Study](#) to evaluate existing traffic conditions within the neighborhood roads and determine if the results meet the thresholds required for deployment of traffic calming infrastructure. As a matter of practice, MCDOT does not install traffic

Pedestrian Safety on Rockville Pike

The Applicant will be required to improve the safety of the sidewalk along the Site's Rockville Pike frontage. Currently, the pedestrian pathway consists of a 5-foot sidewalk immediately adjacent to the outside travel lane. The Applicant proposes replacing the existing sidewalk with a 6-foot vegetated buffer and a 5-foot sidewalk.

Respectfully,

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator

DownCounty Planning Division

301.495.4539 | matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org



WE'VE MOVED!

THE NEW PARK AND PLANNING HEADQUARTERS IS NOW LOCATED AT
2425 REEDIE DRIVE, WHEATON, MD 20902

Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

From: Janet Maalouf <janetmaalouf97@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 3:03 PM
To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: FIS proposed Elementary School at 9650 Rockville Pike

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please find attached my comments on the FIS proposed elementary school at 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda.

Thanks,
Janet Maalouf

From: [Folden, Matthew](#)
To: [Susan Chacko](#)
Cc: [Mencarini, Katherine](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#)
Subject: RE: French International School in Bethesda
Date: Friday, December 18, 2020 12:46:55 PM

Ms. Chacko,

Thank you for contacting staff with your concerns about the proposed French International School. Your comments have been forwarded to the Planning Board Chair's office and will be included with the packet sent to the Commission in advance of the public hearing on Thursday January 7, 2020.

In the meantime, I wanted to address the specific concerns you mentioned in your email.

Cut-through Traffic

Staff at the Planning Department, MCDOT, and MDOT SHA have been working closely with the Applicant to address traffic and safety concerns related to the Site. The Applicant will close access points onto the adjacent (northern) offsite parking lot and Alta Vista Terrace and will make significant improvements to the Site entrance along Rockville Pike. These improvements will direct all site generated traffic to the remaining Rockville Pike access point. Any buses traversing public streets between the proposed Rockville Pike campus (Subject Property) and the existing Forest Road campus will not be cut-through traffic as they are both leaving and accessing a destination within the neighborhood.

MCDOT has been made aware of the concerns brought forth by the community about potential increase in traffic volume and speed on the residential roadways near the Site. Local communities with these concerns can request a Residential Traffic Calming Study to evaluate existing traffic conditions within the neighborhood roads and determine if the results meet the thresholds required for deployment of traffic calming infrastructure. As a matter of practice, MCDOT does not install traffic calming devices until such measures are warranted through an engineering analysis.

Transportation Management Plan

Please be aware the Applicant will be required to submit a transportation management plan that will be reviewed and approved with the forthcoming Preliminary Plan Application. Once approved by the Board the Applicant enter a binding agreement with the Board and MCDOT that will have specific and meaningful penalties related to the school's enrollment if they are unable to meet the trip limitations. This document will be included in the submittal for a Site Plan for the Site, a critical next step for this project to move forward, and the document will be accessible to the public prior to the Planning Board's public hearing.

Busing for the Saturday and Summer Programs

As conditioned, the Applicant will be required to adhere to both a limit on the maximum enrollment as well as a trip cap for the morning, afternoon, and evening peak travel hours. This cap is set for all school operations, which pertains to the academic calendar as well as the summer and Saturday programs. To meet the trip cap for the summer and Saturday programs, the Applicant will be required to provide busing once the enrollment in these programs exceeds 150 students.

Respectfully,

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator
DownCounty Planning Division
301.495.4539 | matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org

Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Chacko <susan.chacko@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 2:41 PM
To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: re: French International School in Bethesda

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr Folden,

As a resident of the Maplewood district in Bethesda, I am very concerned about the latest traffic plan for the French International School on Rockville Pike in Bethesda.

Based on their last presentation, the FIS plans to have up to 48 buses that will cut through the neighborhood each day. In addition, FIS has explicitly provided their parents with a recommended route that cuts through the neighborhood streets, so that there will be a significant number of FIS parents who will be driving through the neighborhood each day, multiple times a day.

This will be a significant change to the neighborhood. At school start and stop times, we can expect that our own cars will not be able to get in and out of the neighborhood. Maplewood is currently pedestrian-friendly with many people walking and biking to NIH, Walter Reed and the Medical Center; having this large increase in bus and car traffic will be detrimental to walkers and bikers. It will also make it more dangerous for children to walk to Maplewood park or cross the road to Montgomery County school bus-stops.

It is quite possible for traffic between the two FIS sites to travel along Rockville Pike, Cedar Lane, and Old Georgetown Road. The FIS traffic plan needs to direct all traffic between the two FIS sites to use these major roads rather than cutting through the Maplewood neighbourhood.

In addition, any FIS traffic plan needs to address the significant amount of traffic for their Saturday and summer programs. There should be mandatory bus requirements for these programs, just as for the regular school programs.

Thank you,
Susan Chacko

9629 Alta Vista Terrace

Bethesda, MD.

From: Jody Bleiberg
To: Folden, Matthew
Cc: Mancinini, Katherine; MCP-Chair; Dickel, Stephanie
Subject: Re: French School Traffic
Date: Friday, December 25, 2020 9:02:27 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Thank you for taking the time to reply.

I wanted to let you know in relation to your statement:

MCDOT has been made aware of the concerns brought forth by the community about potential increase in traffic volume and speed on the residential roadways near the Site. Local communities with these concerns can request a [Residential Traffic Calming Study](#) to evaluate existing traffic conditions within the neighborhood roads and determine if the results meet the thresholds required for deployment of traffic calming infrastructure. As a matter of practice, MCDOT does not install traffic calming devices until such measures are warranted through an engineering analysis.

Alta Vista and Linden both had traffic studies and received traffic calming measures (speed bumps) many years ago (about 20-25 years I believe). These "traffic calming" measures have been futile as the bumps are greatly distanced and are very mild. They have not at all "calmed" traffic. I travel them routinely and barely notice them.

Thanks for your willingness to engage in a discussion.

Jody Bleiberg

On Fri, Dec 18, 2020 at 12:40 PM Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Ms. Bleiberg,

Thank you for contacting staff with your concerns about the proposed French International School. Your comments have been forwarded to the Planning Board Chair's office and will be included with the packet sent to the Commission in advance of the public hearing on Thursday January 7, 2020.

In the meantime, I wanted to address the specific concerns you mentioned in your email.

Cut-through Traffic

Staff at the Planning Department, MCDOT, and MDOT SHA have been working closely with the Applicant to address traffic and safety concerns related to the Site. The Applicant will close access points onto the adjacent (northern) offsite parking lot and Alta Vista Terrace and will make significant improvements to the Site entrance along Rockville Pike. These improvements will direct all site generated traffic to the remaining Rockville Pike access point. Any buses traversing public streets between the proposed Rockville Pike campus (Subject Property) and the existing Forest Road campus will not be cut-through traffic as they are both leaving and accessing a destination within the neighborhood.

MCDOT has been made aware of the concerns brought forth by the community about potential increase in traffic volume and speed on the residential roadways near the Site. Local communities with these concerns can request a [Residential Traffic Calming Study](#) to evaluate existing traffic conditions within the neighborhood roads and determine if the results meet the thresholds required for deployment of traffic calming infrastructure. As a matter of practice, MCDOT does not install traffic calming devices until such measures are warranted through an engineering analysis.

Transportation Management Plan

Please be aware the Applicant will be required to submit a transportation management plan that will be reviewed and approved with the forthcoming Preliminary Plan Application. Once approved by the Board the Applicant enter a binding agreement with the Board and MCDOT that will have specific and meaningful penalties related to the school's enrollment if they are unable to meet the trip limitations. This document will be included in the submittal for a Site Plan for the Site, a critical next step for this project to move forward, and the document will be accessible to the public prior to the Planning Board's public hearing. Your comments about keeping buses to the higher-classified roadways such as W Cedar Lane, Old Georgetown Road and Rockville Pike are relevant to the development of the transportation management plan have been noted for the anticipated submission.

Respectfully,

Matthew Folden, AICP | Planner Coordinator

DownCounty Planning Division

301.495.4539 | matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org



Please note that I will be out of the office from Monday, December 21, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021

From: Jody Bleiberg <jodybleiberg@grtkids.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 5:21 PM
To: Folden, Matthew <matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: French School Traffic

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Mr. Folden,

I am a resident of Maplewood for over thirty years and have seen much. My house, on Linden Ave, directly faces Beech Avenue (you would run into it if you didn't stop heading west on Beech).

The traffic proposal by the French School does not make sense. Beech -Linden -Pooks Hill - Alta Vista would become a major artery between the two campuses for busses and parents. They literally have it planned to "teach" parents how to use this "artery." We, the residents and homeowners, are not cared about. A few examples:

1. There have been times during the school year, when due to busses and cars I can not back out of or get into my driveway.
2. There have been times when the continuous noise of busses have made it impossible to sit on my screened-in porch.
3. Drivers ignoring the "No Left Turn" sign at Linden and Beech as well as at Pooks Hill and Linden are continuous. We are told that police can not be assigned to monitor adherence routinely as that is not priority. Occasionally, police are there and they can't even catch all of them. Please look at the police logs.
4. When a commuter wants to "obey" the "No Left Turn" regulation at Beech and Linden, they simply turn into my driveway (or my neighbors) to do a "U-turn." There have been times that cars almost hit each

other when U-turns are made. In order for my children to play safely in the front of their own house, I had to park my car across my driveway so my children wouldn't get hit.

5. It was not safe, due to the bus and commuter traffic, to allow my children to walk alone to or from their bus stop or to cross the street to a friend's house due to the amount of traffic (busses and parents).

6. My neighbors' children were not allowed to cross themselves to go to the park due to the traffic (they need to cross Linden Ave between Beech and Pooks Hill or Alta Vista Rd).

I can go on and I am not exaggerating to make my case. These are facts. Allowing the French School to use our neighborhood and "teach" their parents the streets in the neighborhood to use as a commuter route is unconscionable and abusive to use. The French School still is a business; we are the residents who live here and bear the burden.

I certainly hope you will be understanding and keep the busses and parent commuters on the main arteries (Rockville Pike, Cedar Lane, Old Georgetown Road) and allow us to live in a neighborhood.

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D. and Joseph Bleiberg, Ph.D.

--

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D., ABSNP
Licensed Psychologist

Diplomate, School Neuropsychology
9515 Linden Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
(301) 493-4198

www.bethesdaneuropsychology.com

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Bethesda Neuropsychology
www.bethesdaneuropsychology.com

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D., ABSNP
Diplomate in School Neuropsychology and
named as a top psychologist for
consultation and diagnosis in
Washingtonian Magazine, July 2009.
With dual credentialing in clinical and
school psychology, Jody ...

--

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D., ABSNP
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Please note that Dr. Bleiberg cannot accept any responsibility for viruses and it is your responsibility to scan or otherwise check this email and any attachments.



Bethesda Neuropsychology
www.bethesdaneuropsychology.com

Jody Bleiberg, Ph.D., ABSNP
Diplomate in School Neuropsychology and
named as a top psychologist for
consultation and diagnosis in
Washingtonian Magazine, July 2009.
With dual credentialing in clinical and
school psychology, Jody ...

From: [Allen Myers](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Folden, Matthew](#)
Subject: Comments of Maplewood Citizens
Date: Wednesday, December 30, 2020 1:06:32 PM
Attachments: [Maplewood Citizens Association.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Attached is a letter, from the Maplewood Citizens Association, relative to the Modification of Special Exception S-862C, Rochambeau, The French International School. This modification is currently on the Planning Board's agenda for January 7, 2021. Please associate it with this item.

Happy New Year and Sincerely,
Allen Myers, President
Maplewood Citizens Association

Maplewood Citizens Association
Post Office Box 2483
Kensington, Maryland 20891-2483

December 30, 2020

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland National Park & Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

In re: Special Exception Amendment S-862C
Rochambeau, French International School

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I have read the Staff Report relative to the above-captioned Special Exception Amendment by the French International School (FIS) and feel that the analysis by the Planning Staff, in recommending approval, with conditions, fails to address pertinent statutory requirements applicable to the submitted plan. I have detailed these matters in the paragraphs below with the statutory requirements from the Old Zoning Ordinance in bold.

Will be in harmony with the general character of the neighborhood considering population density, design, scale and bulk of any proposed new structures, intensity and character of activity, traffic and parking conditions and number of similar uses. The Board or Hearing Examiner must consider whether the public facilities and services will be adequate to serve the proposed development under the Growth Policy standards in effect when the special exception application was submitted.

The Planning Staff has omitted commenting on several key components of this requirement. First, there is no discussion of noise associated with the playing fields and other outdoor activities planned for the site. Secondly, traffic has only been studied relative to the entrance to the site as well as parking on the site. There is no discussion of traffic that the special exception will generate in the neighborhood. FASEB was able to secure an exit to the north and Pooks Hill Road, via the parking lot of the Pooks Hill Apartments, operated by the Montgomery County Department Housing Opportunities Commission. This exit did not convey to FIS. There is, therefore, no way for traffic to

exit the site and proceed north. The effect is to encourage drivers to enter the neighborhood and either turn around on Alta Vista Road or proceed through the neighborhood to get to Old Georgetown Road. In addition, closure of the current access gate onto Alta Vista Terrace, while reducing traffic onto that street from the site, will, in all likelihood do little to prevent drivers from cutting through the neighborhood, which can be accomplished by making a right turn from southbound Rockville Pike onto Alta Vista Road.

Will not be detrimental to the use, peaceful enjoyment, economic value or development of surrounding properties or the general neighborhood at the subject site, irrespective of any adverse effects the use might have if established elsewhere in the zone.

There is no discussion of the impact on surrounding properties of cut-through traffic or of the 12 school bus trips through the neighborhood planned for each school day. The additional traffic and noise associated is significant enough to have an impact on property values along the affected residential streets. More generally, staff has not addressed any of the concerns voiced by Maplewood residents in Appendix D. Additional traffic and school buses through the neighborhood is especially alarming to our residents who have young children. Families with young children will find the affected streets less desirable than they are today where this adverse impact is not currently experienced.

Additionally, the Staff Report incorrectly states that the current traffic restrictions at Beech and Linden Avenues would not be changed. However, as MCDOT has stated in its letter to the Planning Staff, "modifications to these restrictions, pursuant to Executive Regulation 17-94AM Section VI REASSESSMENT, the Maplewood Community can pursue the modification of the previously mentioned restriction." With FIS staff scheduled to arrive prior to the 7:00 a.m. start time of the current traffic restriction, the Maplewood Citizens Association may request an earlier start time for the restriction.

The staff's analogy of the FIS school buses in the neighborhood to those operated by Montgomery County is unpersuasive. The County buses are on our streets to pick up and drop off children from within the neighborhood. They are merely taking the shortest distance between two points to avoid traffic on the main roads - the very definition of "cut-through" traffic that County discourages. FIS currently is operating shuttle buses from the Forest Road campus to its leased facility at Rollingwood Elementary School using major roadways during peak traffic. In May of 2018, FIS first presented its plans for the new school to our neighborhood. A shuttle service between the campuses was shown utilizing the major roadways of Rockville Pike, West Cedar Lane, Old Georgetown Road and the Capital Beltway. FIS has presented no justification for its change in the routes of the shuttle buses previously presented to Maplewood residents.

Will cause no objectionable noise, vibrations, fumes, odors, dust, illumination, glare, or physical activity at the subject site, irrespective of any adverse effects the use might have if established elsewhere in the zone.

The staff has predicated its response on that generated by the existing buildings and special exception use; staff has failed to address the significant change: the noise and pollution of thirteen school buses starting up and idling at 6:00 a.m. The current distance from the nearest residential property to the existing traffic loop by the Lee Building is 295 feet. It will be less when the loop is widened. The noise generated by the buses at that hour (amplified by their position in front of the buildings) may exceed the noise authorized at that hour under the County's Noise Ordinance. FIS states that other private schools, in particular the Bullis School, store buses on site. FIS used this same argument before Hearing Examiner Tierney in its attempt to gain authorization for its buses at its Forest Road site. The examiner rejected it there and it should be rejected here. While the FASEB site is larger than the Forest Road campus, the Bullis School occupies 101 acres - about 10 times the size of the FASEB site. . Finally, although staff recognizes that outdoor activities at the school will generate noise, there is no further discussion of this except that play will not commence until after 8:00 a.m. With a summer camp, there will likely be much more noise from outdoor activities than from a school.

Will not, when evaluated in conjunction with existing and approved special exceptions in any neighboring one-family residential area, increase the number, intensity, or scope of special exception uses sufficiently to affect the area adversely or alter the predominantly residential nature of the area. Special exception uses that are consistent with the recommendations of a master or sector plan do not alter the nature of an area.

The staff has focused its attention on minor Special Exceptions that exist within or surround Maplewood as well as that granted to the Boy Scouts of America headquarters, which due to its location, has no impact on traffic in the neighborhood. Staff has failed to consider several major Special Exceptions in the neighborhood. The YMCA has a Special Exception to operate from the corner of Old Georgetown Road and Beech Avenue. Its only authorized entrance is on Beech Avenue a few hundred feet from that intersection. While technically the same entity as the applicant, the staff did not recognize the current Special Exception for the FIS middle and high school on Forest Road. The school is currently authorized an enrollment is 730 students. While not a Special Exception, the Bethesda Country Day School operates out of the closed MCPS Alta Vista Elementary School. The lease for this facility authorizes 500 students. Also, the Department of Parks has leased the activities building in Maplewood - Alta Vista Park to the Rock Creek Dance Academy. The entrance to this facility is from Alta Vista Road. Lastly, while not Special Exceptions, there are two development projects that are going to increase traffic on our residential

streets. Seventeen new single-detached homes are being built in a development off of Beech Avenue and a 600-apartment complex will be built on Pooks Hill Road just east of its intersection with Linden Avenue.

Will not adversely affect the health, safety, security, morals or general welfare of residents, visitors or workers in the area at the subject site, irrespective of any adverse effects the use might have if established elsewhere in the zone.

Staff just parroted these words back. This is not a sufficient response to this required assessment.

There are a few other points that I believe are worthy of your attention. First, as of the date of this letter, the language for the TMP about Saturday classes and the summer camp commencing 25% bussing when enrollments reach 150 is not supported by any document currently on file on the Planning Board's website. Furthermore, the statement about road capacities on weekends and during the summer is not supported by any LATR, all of which are predicated on AM and PM peak weekday traffic. It is also confusing that while the school is proposing a staff of 126 people for its weekday school operations and summer camp with a maximum of 700 students, it is only proposing a staff of 50 Saturday staff while having the same number of students. I believe that the staff should have explored this discrepancy.

Finally, I believe that the school's traffic generation studies and conclusions are faulty and were not so recognized by the staff in its report. There is an attempt by the school to draw analogies between its trip generation as a school with that of the authorized trip generation of FASEB, in its previous use of the property for offices. In addition to its staff trips, the school's proposed busing operations will still result in 230 students arriving and 285 departing by POV. It also should be noted, no trips were previously generated on Saturdays when FASEB employees were not on the site.

I trust that you will give consideration to what I have written prior to the January 7th Planning Board meeting on this matter.

Sincerely,



Allen Myers, President
Maplewood Citizens Association

cc: Mathew Folden

From: [Lodge Gillespie](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Folden, Matthew](#)
Subject: Comments on Special Exception Amendment S-862C
Date: Saturday, January 2, 2021 10:02:07 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chairman Anderson,

As a resident of the Maplewood-Alta Vista neighborhood, I wanted to provide some comments ahead of the Planning Board's January 7 vote on the French International School's transportation plan (Special Exception Amendment S-862C).

As has been pointed out per prior communications from the Maplewood Citizen's Association, there are several deficiencies in the school's traffic plan.

In particular, there is no discussion of traffic that the special exception will generate in the neighborhood. The school should be required to use the major arteries surrounding the neighborhood to get to the school, specifically the Beltway, Rockville Pike, Cedar Lane, and Old Georgetown Road, rather than use the neighborhood for cut-through. For example, there is no way for traffic to exit the site and proceed north. This will encourage school-related drivers to enter the neighborhood and either turn around on Alta Vista Road or proceed through the neighborhood to get to Old Georgetown Road. In addition, closure of the current access gate onto Alta Vista Terrace, while reducing traffic onto that street from the site, will, in all likelihood do little to prevent drivers from cutting through the neighborhood, which can be accomplished by making a right turn from southbound Rockville Pike onto Alta Vista Road. Clearly, all of the additional traffic that the school bus and drop-off transportation plan will not be in harmony with the general character of the neighborhood.

Moreover, there is no discussion of the impact on surrounding properties of cut-through traffic or of the numerous additional school bus trips through the neighborhood planned for each school day. The additional traffic and noise associated is significant enough to have an impact on property values along the affected residential streets (**the vast majority of which do not have sidewalks**). More generally, staff has not addressed any of the concerns voiced by Maplewood residents in Appendix D. Additional traffic and school buses through the neighborhood is especially alarming to our residents who have young children. Families with young children will find the affected streets less desirable than they are today where this adverse impact is not currently experienced.

Additionally, there is no discussion of the significant noise and pollution of thirteen school buses starting up and idling on the school grounds beginning at 6:00 a.m. The current distance from the nearest residential property to the existing traffic loop by the

Lee Building is just 295 feet (less when the loop is widened). The noise generated by the buses at that hour (amplified by their position in front of the buildings) may exceed the noise authorized at that hour under the County's Noise Ordinance. FIS states that other private schools, in particular the Bullis School, store buses on site. FIS used this same argument before Hearing Examiner Tierney in its attempt to gain authorization for its buses at its Forest Road site. The examiner rejected it there and it should be rejected here. While the FASEB site is larger than the Forest Road campus, the Bullis School occupies 101 acres - about 10 times the size of the FASEB site. . Finally, although staff recognizes that outdoor activities at the school will generate noise, there is no further discussion of this except that play will not commence until after 8:00 a.m. With a summer camp, there will likely be much more noise from outdoor activities than from a school.

I thank you for your consideration of this matter prior to the meeting on January 7.

Sincerely,

John Gillespie and family
5216 Acacia Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814

From: [Joanna Tice](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Folden, Matthew](#)
Subject: French School Special Exception Comments
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 11:14:45 AM
Attachments: [French School Special Exception Letter.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please see attached letter in preparation for Thursday's Planning board meeting.

Sincerely,
Joanna Tice

January 4th, 2021

TO: The Montgomery County, MD Planning Board

RE: Rochambeau, The French International School of Washington, DC – Special Exception Amendment No. S-862-C

As a resident of the Maplewood/Altavista neighborhood, I am writing to express concern about the apparent lack of comprehensive traffic planning in the Special Exception Amendment submitted by The French International School of Washington, DC. The plan appears to allow for only one entrance and egress from the school onto Rockville Pike, with no left hand turn permitted upon entrance coming Northbound on Rockville Pike or upon egress onto Rockville Pike. This will likely result in the cars during morning drop off and afternoon pick up trying to navigate a pathway to ultimately enter the school heading southbound on Rockville Pike, even if coming from the southerly direction, and a pathway ultimately for heading northbound after exiting the school. These cars will need to use local Maplewood/Altavista neighborhood roads to get themselves onto either Rockville Pike or Old Georgetown Rd. driving in the proper direction. In the Special Exception Amendment, it has been assessed how this will affect traffic at the main intersections off of Rockville Pike, but the document lacks a thorough discussion as to how this will affect traffic on the smaller Maplewood/Altavista roads that feed off the main arteries. There are plenty of ways to utilize the local neighborhood roads during both the morning and afternoon commute to get reoriented in order to head Northward or Southward. Besides the more obvious routes of Alta Vista, Beech, and Cedar Lane, and Pooks Hill Rd., these local roads also include Elsmere Ave, Camberly Ave., Locust Ave., Linden Ave., Milroy Pl., and Spruce Tree Ave. This type of local traffic will overlap and compete with the MCPS bus route morning pick up and afternoon drop off hours. In recent years the Maplewood residents have noticed a significant traffic increase on these smaller residential roadways due to new routing applications such as WAZE. Community residents already have significant concerns regarding the volume and speed of traffic during the morning and afternoon MCPS bus route hours, especially when coupled with the lack of sidewalks on most of the narrow residential streets. Parents fear that these factors are putting our children at increased risk of being injured by moving cars.

We request that this issue be specifically addressed in the Special Exception Amendment including an assessment of how the additional traffic flow will affect the more residential streets feeding off the main arteries, keeping in mind that any traffic study done now during COVID will not be anywhere near representative of our previous traffic. A group of neighbors did have a traffic study done prior to the pandemic, on a particular stretch of Locust Ave and Alta Vista due to increased volume and speed during the morning and afternoon bus route. This study was conducted along Alta Vista Road from Old Georgetown Road to Locust Avenue and along Locust Avenue from Alta Vista to Milroy Place between the hours of 4 PM and 5 PM on a weekday when traffic flow was anticipated to be the highest. Locust Avenue's study was conducted on Wednesday, 1/8/19 and Alta Vista Road's study was conducted on Thursday, 1/9/20. The findings revealed that for both segments of Alta Vista Road and Locust Avenue, the 85th percentile speed was 28 MPH. This means 85 percent of vehicles traveling along these portions of the roadway were doing so at or below this speed. Despite being over the posted speed limit of 25 MPH, the 85th percentile speed is still considered within a tolerable range and does not meet the county's strict criteria of 7 MPH over the posted speed limit for speed humps. But more importantly, the study also determined the traffic volumes along Alta Vista Road and Locust Avenue within the same hours. Along Alta Vista Road and Locust Avenue, 87 vehicles and 73 vehicles respectively, were recorded traveling along within the one hour long segments of the study. This is quite a volume of cars coming through - with 15% of them significantly above speed limit - during the afternoon bus drop off of the elementary children. So, in conclusion, we would like these pedestrian safety issues better taken into serious consideration in the Special Exception Amendment and overall school planning.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Joanna Tice

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Tice', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

9304 Linden Ave.
Bethesda, MD 20814

From: [Jennifer Barnwell](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Folden, Matthew](#); [John Barnwell](#)
Subject: French International School
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 11:54:09 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board:

Our family resides on Alta Vista Terrace and we are very concerned about how cut-through traffic from the FIS site will affect our local neighborhood roads. It will certainly affect our route to the Bethesda Country Day School in the mornings and afternoons, and will also affect the children during morning and afternoon public school bus routes. Even before this project came up parents were already concerned about the increase in volume and speed of commuter traffic throughout the neighborhood. The traffic plan for the school lacks a thorough discussion of these issues. Please be sure to press FIS on these issues because disruption to our neighborhood should not be acceptable.

Thank you,

Jennifer & John Barnwell

From: [JDK](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Folden, Matthew](#); [Allen Myers](#)
Subject: Special Exception Amendment S-862C Rochambeau, French International School
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 12:47:55 PM
Attachments: [JDK Comments On The Staff Report.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson,

Attached for consideration by the Planning Board are my comments on the Special Exception Amendment for the Rochambeau French International School. I am a resident of Maplewood-Alta Vista and would be directly and adversely affected by the grant of the amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey D. Komarow
9511 Linden Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814-1638

Jeffrey D. Komarow
9511 Linden Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-1638

January 4, 2021

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland National Park & Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

In re: Special Exception Amendment S-862C
Rochambeau, French International School

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I write to support and supplement the letter submitted by Allen Meyers, President of the Maplewood Citizens Association dated December 30, 2020, which demonstrates that the analysis by the Planning Board Staff is not adequate to support the grant of the special exception with the conditions proposed.

My house is located on Linden Avenue between Beech Ave And Alta Vista Road. My wife and I – and the other residents in the 9500 block of Linden Avenue -- therefore, will be in the path of the morning and afternoon shuttle bus traffic – twelve trips daily -- between the FAES property and the existing French School campus as well as the “cut through” traffic created by the new campus. TPresident Myers correctly points out that the Staff Report does not discuss the traffic, noise, and air quality impacts the Special Exception would impose on the neighborhood and particularly the residents on Alta Vista Road, Linden Avenue and Beech Avenue.

The Staff analysis fails to consider and meaningfully analyze several related factors in evaluating the amendment to the Special Exception. First, the Alta Vista Road to Linden Avenue to Beech Avenue route is increasingly being used as a vehicular cut-through between Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road. In addition to the shuttle buses, private vehicular traffic from the French School – weekday pickups and drop-offs, Saturday class pickups and drop-offs, meetings, assemblies, summer camp activities – inevitably will be funneling through the Maplewood-Alta Vista neighborhood using the Alta Vista Road to Linden Avenue to Beech Avenue route. Second, Beech Avenue is already heavily burdened with entry and exit traffic from the YMCA, Bethesda Country Day School, and the French School’s existing Forest Road Campus. Even with the reduced commuting traffic caused by the pandemic, the east bound lane of Beech Avenue is backed up from Old Georgetown Road to Montgomery Avenue on many afternoons due to vehicles waiting to make left turns from Beech Avenue into Bethesda County Day School and the French School’s Forest Road Campus entrance on Montgomery Avenue. Among other things, this backup makes it difficult and dangerous for vehicles traveling southbound on Old Georgetown Road to turn left

onto Beech. The commuter buses cycling between the Forest Road Campus and the FAES campus will have to make left turns from Forest Road onto Beech during these afternoon backups. Likewise, in the morning, the school buses leaving the Forest Road campus will have to make left turns in the face of the commuter and cut-through traffic in the westbound lane of Beech Road trying to reach Old Georgetown Road. By failing to address the likely negative traffic, noise and air quality impacts of the special exception, the staff analysis is insufficient.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment

Yours truly,

/s/ Jeffrey D. Komarow
Jeffrey D. Komarow

cc: Mathew Folden

From: [John Barnwell](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Folden, Matthew](#)
Cc: [Jennifer Barnwell](#)
Subject: Comments in Opposition of the French International School Plan for Alta Vista Terrace, Bethesda
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 1:03:47 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board,

In addition to my wife, I am also in opposition to the development and occupation of the French International School in the Maplewood neighborhood of Bethesda on Alta Vista Terrace. My family and I currently reside on this street. The presence of a school, or any business or commercial enterprise, in the middle of an existing residential neighborhood presents many risks to community residents:

- 1) Students, teachers, staff and other personnel of the planned school will have to matriculate to the facility, which will greatly increase vehicular (buses, cars, and trucks) traffic, require temporary parking, or parking for longer periods of time. The traffic and limits to parking will reduce parking for residents of the homes in the area.
- 2) Parking for any French School special events, extracurricular activities, concerts, assemblies, speaking events, meetings, award ceremonies and other school functions potentially will bring traffic and vehicles to park on the residential streets, particularly outside of business hours. This will inevitably lead to the need for street parking enforcement.
- 3) There is no dedicated parking structure for the planned school which will encourage parking on our residential streets for student drop off and pick up, for school maintenance, deliveries of food/supplies, or for other purposes. In sharp contrast, the non-residential Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), which occupies the property adjacent to the planned French School, has dedicated street access from Rockville Pike, dedicated parking spaces and a parking garage. These features adequately limit FASEB's impact on the Maplewood neighborhood.
- 4) The planned school will require trash/recycling disposal, bringing to the community trash collection vehicles. There will also be a negative residential impact from the planned school cafeteria operations/food disposal and its potential to attract rodents and other small animals searching for food.
- 5) Any planned French School fire drills or actual emergencies have the potential to negatively impact the neighborhood.
- 6) There will be a significant noise impact to the neighborhood from the presence of school bells, vehicular noise and traffic.
- 7) There will be a significant environmental impact (carbon monoxide/vehicle exhaust) to the neighborhood from the routine presence of vehicles.

While it is understandable that the planned French School site off Alta Vista Terrace is nearby to the Rochambeau French School campus, it is not exactly adjacent. It is in fact 1.2 miles away. Given this distance, there is no acceptable reason for the planned school to occupy the intended site. As a resident of a home on the street that would be directly impacted, I would strongly encourage the planning team of the French School to consider other sites that share commonalities with their Rochambeau French School facility, that are located next to other

businesses, have appropriate main thoroughfare access, have adequate space for dedicated parking, and that pose significantly lesser environmental impacts to nearby residences.

Thank you,

John Barnwell
9619 Alta Vista Terrace,
Bethesda, MD 20814

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jennifer Barnwell <jaw24jaw@hotmail.com>
Subject: French International School
Date: January 4, 2021 at 11:54:03 AM EST
To: "mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org" <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Cc: "matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org"
<matthew.folden@montgomeryplanning.org>, John Barnwell
<eschelon70@gmail.com>

Dear Planning Board:

Our family resides on Alta Vista Terrace and we are very concerned about how cut-through traffic from the FIS site will affect our local neighborhood roads. It will certainly affect our route to the Bethesda Country Day School in the mornings and afternoons, and will also affect the children during morning and afternoon public school bus routes. Even before this project came up parents were already concerned about the increase in volume and speed of commuter traffic throughout the neighborhood. The traffic plan for the school lacks a thorough discussion of these issues. Please be sure to press FIS on these issues because disruption to our neighborhood should not be acceptable.

Thank you,

Jennifer & John Barnwell

From: [Nancy Abeles](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Folden, Matthew](#)
Subject: French School Special Exception/Bethesda
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 1:15:46 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson (Casey),

You should by now or soon have comments on the French School plan from Allen Myer, President, Maplewood Civic Association for the plan you shall consider this coming Thursday. Mr. Myers succinctly arrays multiple reasons why the plan contradicts the planning department's own logic and precedent. The proposed plan would impose multiple negative impacts to Maplewood/Alta Vista internal roads, and preclude rightful enjoyment of their homes by residents. I support Mr. Meyer's comments and can elaborate no further. However, the plan equally deserves denial based on its direct location on Rockville Pike, MD 355.

I am actually aghast that this site would even be under consideration.

The siting of this or any school at this specific spot is dangerous in view of existing road conditions--that such an addition would make worse. I have been evaluating this road segment for over a decade; as a Maplewood resident who lives on 355; as current Chair of the BRAC Integration Committee; as a 355 BRT Community Advisory Committee member; (as well as outgoing Chair of WMCOG's TPB Community Advisory Committee). I am intimately familiar, through empirical and data-driven knowledge, of this segment and corridor from both transportation and land use perspectives. The school's inadequate solution of indenting 355 at its entrance would exacerbate the following already hazardous conditions posed to pedestrians, bikers, and car, transit, and commercial passengers:

- The school's proposed entrance would fall in an officially-categorized "High Sideswipe" Merge zone; 355 southbound cars combine between three lanes of existing through traffic plus a 270/495 Spur's Off Ramp. From personal experience on continuous basis, cars do not usually merge there without unsafe driving, risk taking, or even road rage behavior.
- The proposed entrance is where traffic bottlenecks from cars U-turning from 355 north from a 495 Jug Handle exit ramp to turn south on 355, or where cars simply turn from either direction to access Pooks Hill road or Maplewood roads barred by a median, plus a uniquely problematic intersection and unalterable MetroTrain infrastructure--and where the "Bethesda Mixing Bowl's" crazy highway ramps interrupt bike and ped 355 access.
- The school's entrance area includes a 355 RideOn/Metro bus stop, and, at the other side of Pooks Hill Road, where MD commuter buses often idle, increasing bottlenecks.
- Slated additional multi-family development on Pooks Hill Road, an already higher-density section of Alta Vista, will further increase vehicular traffic in all directions and congestion.

The solution to 355 impediments to the plan should not unfairly subject Maplewood residents to undue and excess noise and GHGs from added car and heavy vehicle traffic on internal roads. Consideration for this property as a school at all is unwarranted, from both transportation and land use standpoints.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.

Most Sincerely,
and with Warm Wishes for the New Year,

Nancy Abeles
Bethesda, MD 301-792-4580

From: [Ellen Schwartz](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Elementary French School
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 2:14:14 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board,

My husband and I are long time residents of the Maplewood Community in Bethesda. The French School which has been in the neighborhood for over 20 years has already greatly impacted traffic around the school site, but now there is the plan of an additional elementary school which will have a catastrophic impact on the quality of life in our community. The impact of the 14 buses 5 times a day and Saturdays, plus the shuttle buses between the school, AND the individual cars will make for a dangerous situation in our community. Most of the neighborhood is without sidewalks and the streets are not wide enough with parked cars to accommodate the flow of the additional traffic and buses. I implore you to insist the buses go around d the neighborhood and not cut through it.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ellen and Larry Schwartz

From: [Lucia Feliciano](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Folden, Matthew](#)
Subject: French International School - Traffic
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 2:14:27 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board members,

The addition of school buses from the new location of the French International School through Beech Avenue will cause headache-inducing back-up on Old Georgetown Road at 3:30 p.m. to coincide with the employees departing NIH.

I speak as a parent, who for two years, stood near the school bus stop at YMCA, across from the Bethesda Country Day School. There is a back-up of:

1. Buses coming from Wyngate Elementary School into Alta Vista neighborhood
2. Bus from Wyngate dropping off after school care at Bethesda Country Day School
3. Bus from Ashburton Elementary School dropping off after school care at Bethesda Country Day School
4. Cars picking up students at French International School
5. Cars driving through neighborhood from picking up students at Wyngate Elementary School
6. YMCA members departing parking lot and trying to make a left turn onto Beech
7. All the above exacerbated by traffic in both directions of Old Georgetown Road at the start of 3:30 rush hour - cars making left or right turns on Beech are stuck in this hairball of traffic.

During non-Covid time, all one has to do is stand at this school bus stop in the afternoon to see what a nightmare it becomes. Approving additional buses in this area will not only bring complaints from those involved in the above, the residents in Maplewood Alta Vista and Wyngate neighborhoods, but also the commuters on Old Georgetown Road.

Please find another route that doesn't involve Beech Avenue at 3:30 p.m. on weekdays. Just imagine an ambulance trying to get through this mess.

Lucia Feliciano
9711 Barrister Court

Sent from my iPad

From: [KB Mail](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: matthew.folden@montgomery.planning.org
Subject: Photos for Special Exception Amendment S-862-C
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 6:00:43 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am a homeowner on Montgomery Drive in Bethesda. I am writing to you concerning Special Exception Amendment S-862-C for Rochambeau French International School. Please find attached 2 photos and comments that I would like included in the record for this amendment. As I detail, my concerns are with the proposed TMP and the increased traffic it will necessarily generate.

The first photo shows the traffic backup onto Beech Ave from the French School entrance on Montgomery Drive [at 5:30 pm](#) on Tuesday Jan. 9, 2018. The cars in this long queue are French School parents entering school. The photo shows what is fairly routine (pre-pandemic) for the affected streets during the school's pick up (and drop off times). Traffic backs up along Montgomery Drive and west down Beech Ave all the way to Old Georgetown Rd. When this photo was taken a resident sat in her car for [7 minutes eastbound on Beech Ave](#) before traffic advanced to the point where she could turn left onto Montgomery Drive and advance to her driveway 2 houses in on Montgomery. These backups adversely affect all non-French traffic using these streets including residents coming to and from their homes, individuals traveling to the YMCA and Bethesda Country Day School, pedestrians and bicyclists using the Bethesda Trolley Bike Path (which crosses Beech Ave at this intersection; the Bicycle Trolley Trail hash marks are visible on the road in the photo), commercial vehicles and emergency personnel. Some drivers stuck in these delays have been observed to lose their patience and attempt to turn around or drive down the affected stretch using the wrong lane of traffic (thus causing more and potentially dangerous congestion). This and similar concerns have been brought to the attention of the French School administration on many occasions but pre-pandemic, the situation remained to the detriment of the community.



The second photo shows another typical scenario - residents on Montgomery Drive often feel that they are held hostage in their own driveways during French School drop off or pick up times such as seen here at 5:40 pm on 9/18/17. Knowing that these traffic back ups are routine, residents have been known to avoid asking guests to come by during these times and schedule their our travels to avoid the congestion, thus negatively affecting the general quality and enjoyment of their properties and lifestyles.



A Required Finding for approval of this Special Exception states that it “Will not adversely affect the health, safety, security, morals or general welfare of residents, visitors or workers in the area at the subject site, irrespective of any adverse affects the use might have if established elsewhere in the zone.” The Planning Staff’s response is “As conditioned, the proposed Special Exception will not adversely affect the health, safety, security, morals or welfare of residents, visitors or workers in the area.”

I find the Planning Staff’s response to be sorely lacking as the general welfare of residents, visitors and others is already suffering from traffic generated by the French School. The proposed TMP will allow for 12 more shuttle buses, running twice daily on this heavily trafficked stretch of Beech Ave during peak pick up and drop off times. This will negatively impact an already burdensome situation. It is difficult to envision how approving the Amendment with the currently proposed TMP will benefit the surrounding neighborhood and its residents. The proposed TMP will cause more congestion on an already congested Beech Ave.

Thank you for your time and attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

Karen & John Bowers