

## REACH HUB AT A. MARIO LOIEDERMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

### MANDATORY REFERRAL NO. 2025021



#### Description

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is proposing a Resilience, Education, Action, Climate, Habitat (REACH) Hub at the A. Mario Loiederman Middle School, which will include the following: agrivoltaic and photovoltaic solar arrays (Solar Collection System); a community garden; a teaching farm plot; outdoor classroom areas for stormwater education; a resiliency hub/pod in a converted shipping container with battery storage; a market area, a welcome garden; ADA accessibility improvements for pedestrian circulation; stormwater management improvement; new wayfinding and environmental education signage; and artwork.

COMPLETED: 1/16/2026

PLANNING BOARD HEARING DATE: 1/29/2026

MCPB ITEM NO. 10

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### LOCATION/ADDRESS

12701 Goodhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20906

### MASTER PLAN

*1989 Master Plan for the Communities of  
Kensington and Wheaton*

### ZONE

Residential 60 (R-60)

### PROPERTY SIZE

17.07 acres

### APPLICANT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

### ACCEPTANCE DATE

December 4, 2025

### REVIEW BASIS

Md. Land Use Article, Section 20-301, et seq.,  
Chapter 22A (exemption)

### Summary:

- The Planning Board action on a Mandatory Referral is pursuant to Section 20-301 et seq. of the Land Use Article and the Uniform Standards for Mandatory Referral Review. Staff recommends approval and transmittal of comments.
- The REACH Hub at this site is a pilot project to help explore the installation of solar energy and resilient energy systems on County public school properties.
- No changes are proposed to the building's footprint, parking count, or vehicular circulation.
- The Project is consistent with the County's 2009 Climate Change Action Plan and the sustainability goals of *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, the County's General Plan.
- The Project is subject to Chapter 22A, Forest Conservation Law; however, it is exempt from the requirements to submit a Forest Conservation Plan.
- No public correspondence has been received.

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## SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

### MANDATORY REFERRAL NO. 2025021

Staff recommends approval of the REACH Hub at A. Loiederman Middle School, Mandatory Referral No. 2025021, and the transmittal of the following comments to Montgomery County Public Schools:

1. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) shall conduct a pre-construction meeting, as required by Forest Conservation Exemption No. 42025124E, after the limits of disturbance have been staked, prior to clearing and grading, and determine what tree protections are required per the approved Tree Save Plan. This meeting must be attended by MCPS, a construction superintendent, M-NCPPC's forest conservation inspector, a private Maryland licensed tree expert, and the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) sediment control inspector. The M-NCPPC forest conservation inspection staff may require additional tree protection measures.
2. The Solar Collection System is recommended for removal within 12 months of the date when the use is discontinued or abandoned by the system owner or operator, or upon termination of the useful life of the system. A Solar Collection System is presumed to be discontinued or abandoned if no electricity is generated by the system for a period of 12 continuous months.
3. The Project is not proposing any lighting changes. Due to the extensive shading that occurs with solar panels, consider evaluating the addition or adjustment of lights for the main parking area to aid pedestrian circulation. These lights could be timed seasonally.
4. Due to the proposed scale of production, it is recommended that maintenance equipment for the Production Garden is manual or walk-behind mechanical equipment and practices commonly used in residential gardening.
5. The existing on-site trail, east of the baseball field, should be improved to an 11-foot-wide asphalt path.

## SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

### VICINITY

The A. Mario Loiederman Middle School for Creative and Performing Arts (LMS) is located near the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Weller Road and within the area for the 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington and Wheaton*. The school is bordered on the west by Goodhill Road, the north and northeast by Dean Road, the east by Weller Road Elementary School, and on the south by Weller Road. The surrounding area is primarily residential with single-family detached homes on small lots and has various community assets and amenities, such as educational institutions and parks. Wheaton High School, Thomas Edison High School of Technology, and the adjacent Glenmont Local Park are located approximately 0.75 miles south of LMS. Sargent Shriver Elementary School and the Stoneybrook Local Park are located approximately one-half mile east of LMS, and Mattew Henson State Park is located less than one mile north along Connecticut Avenue. LMS is approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the Glenmont Metro Station near Georgia Avenue and Glenallan Avenue.

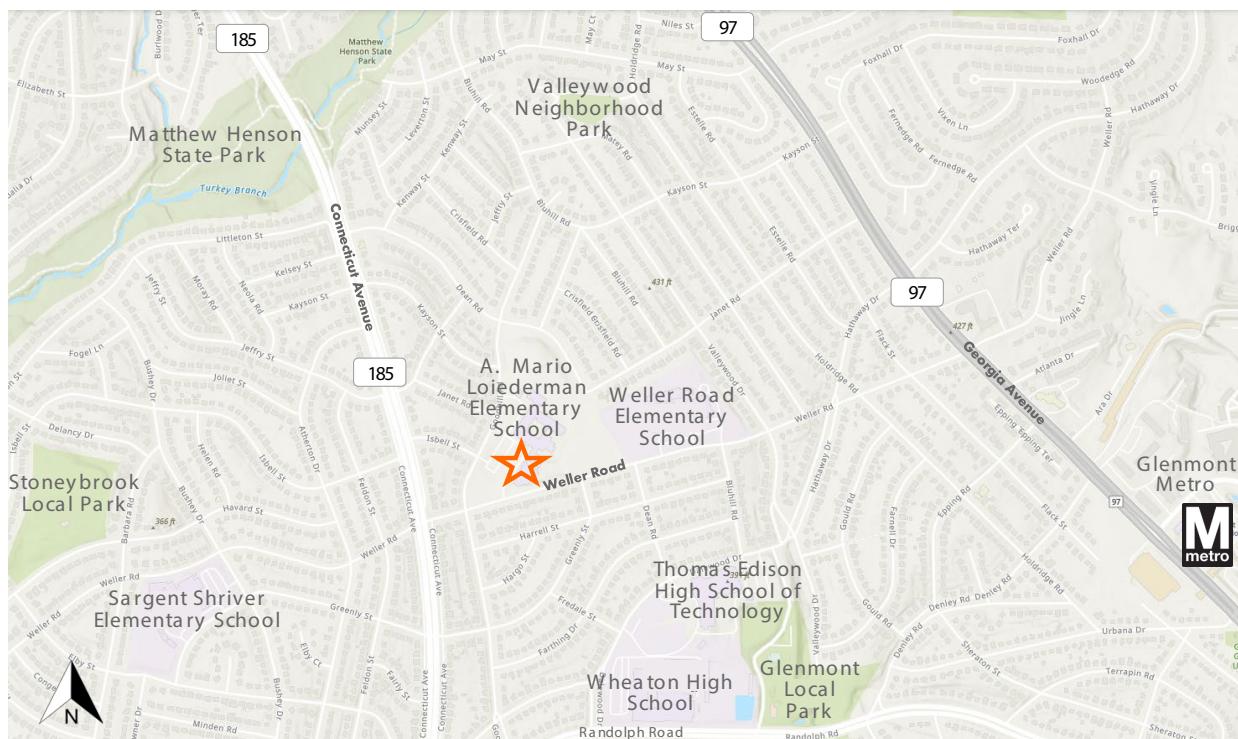


Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

## PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

As shown in Figure 2, the A. Mario Loiederman Middle School (LMS) (“Subject Property”, “Property”, or “Site”) is located at 12701 Goodhill Road in Silver Spring, Maryland and is known as Parcel P059 and Tax Map ID No. MONHQ563. The Site is zoned Residential 60 (R-60). The 17.07-acre Site is bordered on the west by Goodhill Road, the north and northeast by Dean Road, the east by Weller Road Elementary School, and on the south by Weller Road. The existing LMS is a 148,192-square-foot building with a core capacity of 1,001 students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The building was constructed in 1956 and underwent several additions and renovations, the latest being the Performing Arts Center in 2021 for a flexible 425-seat performance space. The Property consists of a currently operating middle school building with a bus loop, parking areas, grass play field, asphalt play areas, tennis courts, and baseball fields. Vehicular access is from Weller Road and Goodhill Road. There are several internal pathways that provide connections between the main building and the sports fields, including an 8-foot-wide trail that runs along the eastern side of the baseball field, connecting Weller Road and Dean Road.

The proposed Project will be located primarily to the north of the school building in the low point of the Property near the classroom wing, and also on the upper grass areas to the west and east of the tennis courts, with some improvements in the parking lot and courtyard.



Figure 2 – Subject Property

### SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Resilience, Education, Action, Climate, Habitat (REACH) Hub (“Application”, Project”, or “Proposal”) at the LMS aims to help the surrounding community prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters in a more collaborative way by providing focused support, investment, and resource delivery. The final design of the proposed REACH Hub reflects the culmination of intensive public input and several community visioning sessions.

Corresponding with Figure 3, the REACH Hub will include the following five (5) overall areas, some of which are already constructed as noted.

1. Welcome Garden/Center – To welcome the community into the Hub, a formal entry is proposed at the southeastern end of the Property near Weller Road, which includes an entry garden, a welcome arbor, and a tree allee, which is a path lined on both sides with the same trees.
2. Market Area – Located to the southeast of the tennis courts is the market plot, which is proposed to include a wooden entry arbor and signage, seating area with table and chairs, food mural and community boards, a market area, tree allee, terraced raised planters, and a 10-foot by 60-foot PV array/shade structure.
3. Teaching Farm Plot – This is located at the south end of the existing tennis courts and in between the market area to the north and the stormwater education area to the south. Construction is complete in this area.
4. Production Farm Plot – Located to the north of the existing tennis courts is a one-acre urban farm for food production, recovery, and waste reduction. Some programmatic elements include raised garden beds, a 40-foot by 30-foot greenhouse with Building Integrated Photovoltaics<sup>1</sup> (BIPV), a pergola, a tool rack, a solar panel meadow, a covered composter with solar, and a mass planting area to provide a transition between the community garden and the adjacent lawn area to the north. The Production Farm is estimated to yield \$20,000 worth of product each year for the community which will improve day-to-day food security and during emergencies. Construction is complete in this area.
5. Stormwater Education Area – Located to the west of the tennis courts, this area will consist of outdoor classroom areas for stormwater education and living schoolyards. Programmatic elements include flush composite decking, lawn berm, stormwater management, REACH walkway, an amphitheater with (120–150-person capacity), and an eight-foot-wide accessible path.

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<sup>1</sup> For building installations, Photovoltaic (PV) systems fall into two categories, Building Applied Photovoltaics (BAPV) and Building Integrated Photovoltaics (BIPV). BAPV is located completely outside of the building envelope such as roof-mounted or ballasted solar arrays placed on top of the roofing material. A BIPV installation is when the PV collectors are an integral part of the building envelope and can either replace exterior shell components or be integrated into them. Examples of BIPV components and materials include PV glass windows, PV glass skylights, awnings, balustrades, canopies, shingles, exterior wall panels, and PV walkable surfaces. BIPV systems generate electricity while also adding visual interest and aesthetic design elements to the building. Source: Whole Building Design Guide, [www.wbdg.org](http://www.wbdg.org).

These five (5) proposed Hub areas will be used during school hours and after hours for the farm, amphitheater, market space, and outdoor classrooms. Except for the accessory greenhouse, there are no other proposed buildings as a part of this Project.



Figure 3 – Proposed REACH HUB Overall Components



Figure 4 – Proposed Stormwater Education Area Improvements

Other improvements that run along the western edge of the existing tennis courts include the installation of four (4) stump benches and two (2) shipping containers repurposed for emergency resource storage and battery storage, as shown in Figure 5.

The Project proposes improvements to the existing bus loop to treat existing site imperviousness from the parking areas and the main school building.

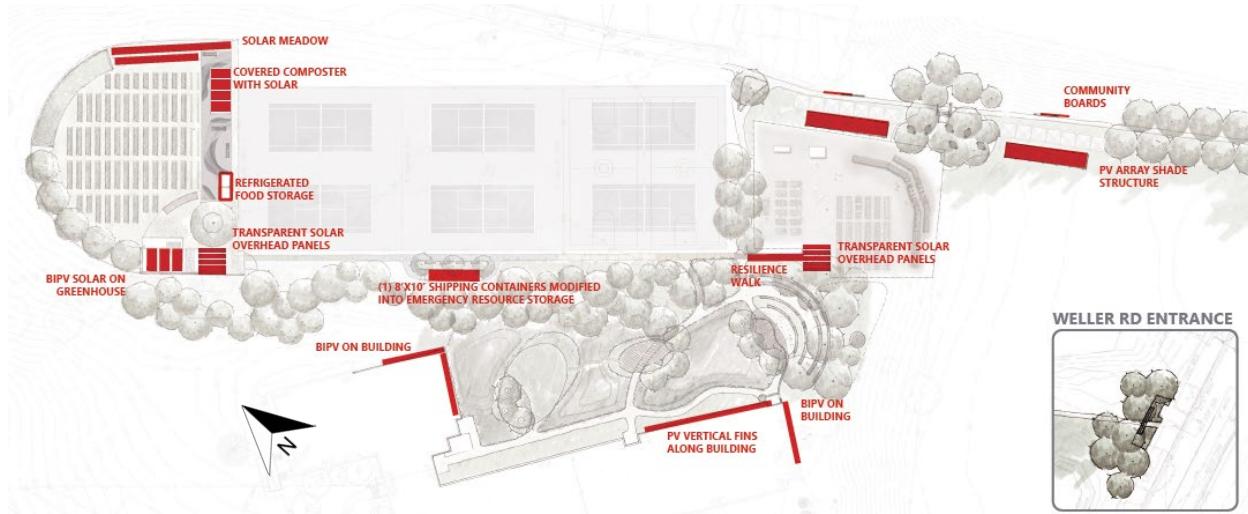


Figure 5 – Proposed Resiliency Overlay

## SOLAR ENERGY

Other elements proposed throughout the REACH Hub includes agrivoltaic and photovoltaic (PV) arrays, shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6. In addition to the solar improvements noted above that will be located within the production Farm Plot area (i.e. solar greenhouse, a solar panel meadow, and composter with solar), the Project includes roof-mounted, ground-mounted and parking carport canopies, and wall-mounted canopies along the northern and eastern side of the school building as shown in Figure 6.

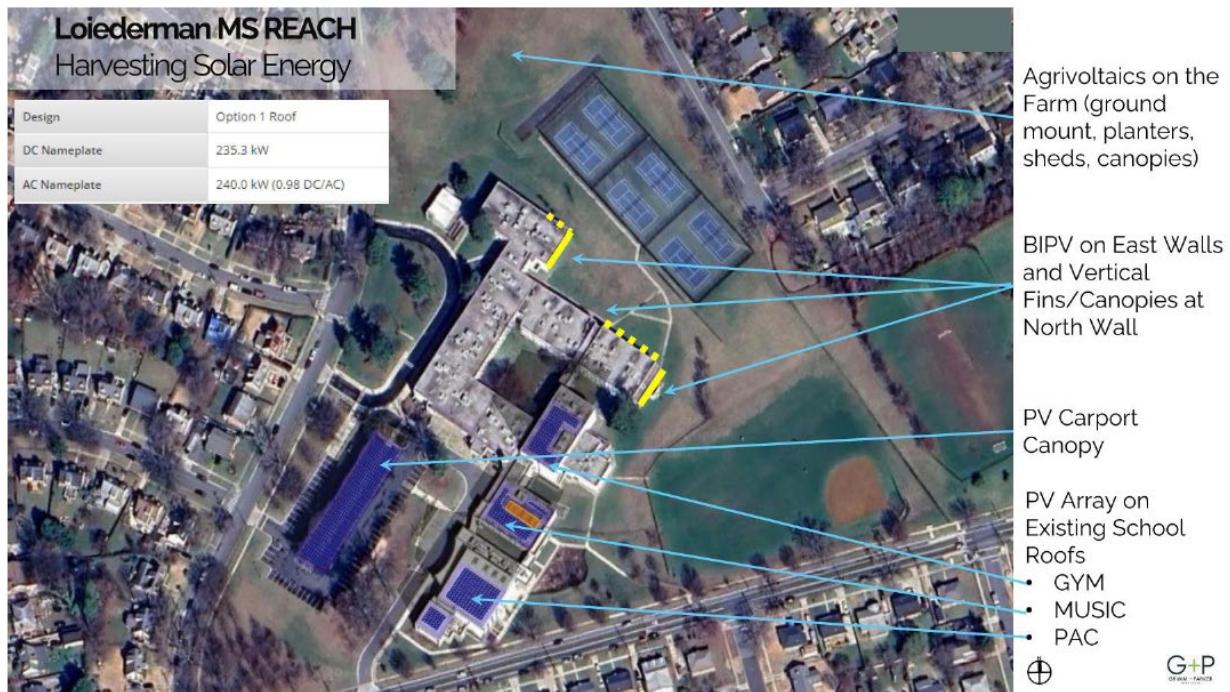


Figure 6 – Proposed Solar Energy Improvements

## TRANSPORTATION

The Property has frontage on Weller Road, Goodhill Road, and Dean Road. Vehicle access is gained via three (3) access points. Two (2) driveways are located on Goodhill Road, and there is a single driveway on Weller Road. There are no proposed changes to the access points with this Application.

Overall, pedestrian and vehicular circulation of the existing school is not being changed. Minor path additions are proposed, and some existing paths are being upgraded for ADA compliance. In conformance with the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*, Planning Staff has recommended that the existing on-site 8-foot-wide trail that runs along the eastern side of the baseball field, connecting Weller Road and Dean Road, to be upgraded to an 11-foot-wide asphalt trail. There is no additional dedication of right-of-way work proposed with this project. ADA accessibility to the new site features includes a sidewalk connection from the front of the school to the proposed Production Farm Plot. The existing informal

pathway (east of the ballfield) that leads from Dean Road to the tennis courts will be improved with new paving materials.

## EDUCATION & WAYFINDING

The Project also proposes outdoor wayfinding, environmental education signage, and artwork throughout the Site. Food murals and community boards are proposed along the walkway for the Market Area. Several resiliency demonstration stations will be installed that educate on all aspects of climate mitigation and training (including flood alerts and awareness, and air pollution and temperature indicators).

## OPEN SPACE & LANDSCAPING

The currently maintained lawn areas surrounding the existing tennis courts will undergo improvements to landscaping and tree plantings as part of the Project. As previously noted, the Stormwater Area is proposed to implement extensive green cover through the planting of native tree species and landscaping. As shown in Figure 4, the Project also proposes habitat enhancements through native plantings and tree allees.

The REACH Hub will serve as a community learning area and resiliency space. It will be owned by MCPS and maintained and operated through volunteers and the Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming (CKC). This proposed Project is also a resiliency pilot program that will be evaluated for application at other MCPS campuses and community buildings to be developed and operated through community and agency partnerships.

## SECTION 4: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

MCPS led a comprehensive stakeholder engagement effort by coordinating 13 site visits, meetings, and work sessions during the concept phase. In addition, the Project had an Earth Day Groundbreaking and Volunteer Build Event meetings that were advertised to parents, the public, adjacent neighbors, and neighborhood associations. After staff accepted the Mandatory Referral application for review, Montgomery Planning notified adjoining and nearby property owners, local civic and homeowners' associations, and other interested parties of this proposal. As of the date of this report, no correspondence has been received.



Figure 7 – Photo Gallery of MCPS Public Engagement for the REACH HUB

## SECTION 5: MANDATORY REFERRAL ANALYSIS

### MANDATORY REFERRAL CONSIDERATIONS

Mandatory Referral review is guided by Montgomery Planning's *Uniform Standards for Mandatory Referral Review* (December 2022), and the authority granted to the Planning Board in Section 20-301 of the Land Use Article of the Maryland Code. To ensure comprehensive review of public projects, the Planning Board has jurisdiction over applications filed by the State, Federal, and County governments, including MCPS, as well as municipalities located within the Montgomery County portion of the Regional District. This includes the following activities: (i) acquiring or selling land; (ii) locating, constructing or authorizing a road, park, public way or ground, public building or structure,

or publicly owned or privately owned public utility; or (iii) changing the use of or widening, narrowing, extending, relocating, vacating or abandoning any of the previously mentioned facilities. The Planning Board, or its Staff, must review such projects pursuant to the Uniform Standards and transmit comments to the applicant within the prescribed timeframe.

As described in the Uniform Standards, the Planning Board, or its Staff, considers all relevant land use and planning aspects of the proposal including, but not limited to, those listed below.

- 1. whether the proposal is consistent with the County's General Plan, functional plans such as the master plan of highways, environmental guidelines, the approved and adopted area master plan or sector plan, and other public plans, guidance documents, or programs for the area;**

The REACH Hub Project is consistent with the County's 2009 *Climate Action Plan*, Climate Emergency Resolution No. 18-974, and the sustainability goals of *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, the County's General Plan ("General Plan"). The Climate Action Plan is a strategic plan to cut countywide greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2035. The Climate Emergency Resolution, adopted in 2017, declared a climate emergency and set a major reduction goal of 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035. The General Plan has environmental sustainability goals to reduce sprawl, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and upgrade the environmental performance of buildings and sites. The Proposal is consistent with the above-noted climate and sustainability-related plans because it introduces best practices such as solar, stormwater, and urban community gardening, which reduce carbon impact through well-drained soils, reduced frequent irrigation, and reduced driving distances between producers and consumers. The Project also furthers the public interest, is a valuable public investment that will advance the County's sustainability goals through public school facilities, and it serves as a pilot project that will help inform and enable future improvements at other public schools. The Project location is well-suited for use by a wide variety of students and supported by farm volunteers from the Charles Koiner Conservancy (CKC) for Urban Farming, which is also located nearby. There are 20 schools within a two (2) mile radius of the Property, which serves over 17,000 students with an average of 90% minority demographics in an equity focus area.

The 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington and Wheaton* ("Master Plan") outlines a plan for school facilities and recommendations for various approaches, including building modernizations, additions, and reuse. It states that the Planning Board should utilize the site plan review and mandatory referral processes to ensure that proposals for school modernizations, additions, and reuse are compatible with surrounding homes. Through this Application review, the proposed improvements and their impacts (increases in noise, changes in circulation patterns, parking constraints, excessive light exposure, signage, etc.) were examined against the existing surrounding conditions in the neighborhood. The surrounding area has remained stable, with residential uses predominating. The Application is

not proposing to reduce the existing setbacks between residential uses or substantially change the viewshed of the school from those homes.

Like water quality controls, stormwater management controls to regulate the quantity and velocity of runoff were not in place when most of the development in the Kensington-Wheaton area occurred. Therefore, some of the environmental goals of the Master Plan focus on erosion, flood control, and stormwater management. The proposed Application satisfies the environmental priorities by protecting against erosion and flood damage through the construction of adequate stormwater management facilities on-site. The Project proposes new micro-bioretention facilities.

With respect to the Master Plan's community facility goals, the Project substantially conforms. The former Joseph Belt Junior High School on the Site was closed in 1983, and the subsequent 1989 Master Plan recommended the site for new low- and moderate-income senior housing, possibly combined with other community-serving uses. The Master Plan also recognized the need to provide operating public school facilities necessary to sustain high quality educational programs (page 136) and noted that future school needs for the area would be guided by MCPS' Master Plan for Educational Facilities, the annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and the Annual Growth Policy (now known as the Growth and Infrastructure Policy). Years of planning to transfer ownership and repurpose the Site never came to fruition. To address growing demands, in 2005, the former school building was reopened and renamed the Loiederman Middle School. This existing facility fulfills the goal of the Master Plan to serve a public purpose and provide necessary community facilities to meet the growing needs of the neighborhood. The proposed REACH Hub will complement the School's mission and enhance the students' educational experiences. The proposed Project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the 1989 Master Plan.

**2. *whether the proposal is consistent with the intent and the requirements of the zone in which it is located;***

The Project impacts properties located within the R-60 zoning district. The intent of the R-60 zone is to provide designated areas of the County for moderate-density residential uses with a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. The predominant use is residential in a detached house, and a limited number of other building types may be allowed under the optional method of development. There are no additional use requirements for the Project. The proposed Project is consistent with the intent of the zone because it will maintain the existing pattern of single-family detached homes in the vicinity and maintain the existing school use on the Property. The School is a permitted use and was previously assessed for compliance with the dimensional requirements for the R-60 zone as specified in the Zoning Ordinance, in relation to density, lot coverage, height, and setbacks. No change is proposed to the building footprint or intensity of development.

While the Subject Application is not subject to zoning, it does strive to meet various requirements of Chapter 59 of the County Code. Per Section 59.3.7.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, a Solar Collection System (categorized as a miscellaneous use) is a limited use within the R-60 zone and must follow additional standards. Per Section 59.3.7.2.B.1.b.i, structures for systems producing less than 120% of on-site energy use may be an accessory use under the following standards: (a) the system produces a maximum of 120% of on-site energy use; (b) solar panels may encroach into a setback as allowed under Section 4.1.7.B.5.C<sup>2</sup>; and (c) the panels may exceed the maximum height allowed under 4.1.7.C.3.b<sup>3</sup>. The Mandatory Referral proposes to maintain a solar collection system that will produce less than 120% of on-site energy. The solar array area and the BIPV solar improvements are set back from the Dean Road property line approximately 90 feet and 300 feet, respectively. The proposed solar carport will be set back at least 25 feet from the Weller Road property line. Therefore, the proposed Solar Collection System meets the intent and requirements of the use, and the R-60 zone.

Per Section 59.3.2.3 of the Zoning Ordinance, an Urban Farm is not permitted within the R-60 zone. However, the Proposal does not include all the activities that are permissible under this use, such as the keeping and raising of fowls or bees and the practice of aquaculture. The primary function of the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and ornamental plants makes this proposal less intense in this particular setting and compatible to the surrounding area. Per Section 59.3.2.10.C, an accessory Farm Market is a limited use in the R-60 zone and must satisfy the following standards: 1) All of the agricultural products for display and retail sale must be produced on-site; and 2) The minimum setback for the sale and display area is 25 feet from any lot line where the subject lot abuts property in a Residential zone. The Proposed REACH Hub satisfies each of these requirements.

- 3. whether the nature of the proposed site and development, including but not limited to its size, shape, scale, height, arrangement, design of structure(s), massing, setback(s), site layout, and location(s) of parking is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and properties;***

There are no new proposed principal buildings associated with the Project. Additions include a greenhouse accessory structure. Therefore, the Project will not impact the aesthetics or existing character of the surrounding neighborhood or individual properties.

The Subject Property is particularly suited for the climate resiliency project, including the solar collection system and production farm plot, with respect to the physical attributes of the

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<sup>2</sup> A solar panel may project a maximum of 3 feet into any side setback, or any side street setback of less than 25 feet and may project a maximum of 9 feet into any front setback, rear setback, or any side street setback where the side street setback is a minimum of 25 feet.

<sup>3</sup> The maximum height does not apply to solar panels and any roof structure listed in Section 4.1.7.C.3.a, except that in the TLD, TMD, THD, and R-30 zones, an air conditioning unit or similar structure or mechanical appurtenance may exceed the established height limit by a maximum of 8 feet.

Site and the surrounding setting. The Project is not expanding the school building, which aids in preserving the existing character of the school site, nor is it increasing the number of school buses arriving and circulating on the Site.

The surrounding properties are also zoned Residential 60 (R-60). This use on the Property has been an educational institution since its original construction in 1956, indicating that it has been well integrated into the area's land use landscape. Most of the improvements are proposed in an area between the existing building and tennis courts, and north of the tennis courts, which is largely out of view from the surrounding residences. The proposed additions for solar arrays facing the Dean Road right-of-way will have a negligible impact, as solar arrays are common community accessories within residential settings. Dean Road is a tree-lined street that provides some visual protection between the eastern edge of the school and the confronting residential uses. The existing Site's elevation with a berm and tree cover at the intersection of Goodhill Road and Dean Road provides visual relief for residential uses along those roadways. No excessive lighting or noise will be generated from the improvements that would impact the broader community.

The proposed solar arrays will be installed with a setback of more than 50 feet from the Property line. Overall, due to the strategic location of the proposed improvements, existing environmental conditions, and enhanced setbacks, the Project's impact will be minimal to the neighboring properties.

**4. *whether the locations of buildings and structures, open spaces, landscaping, recreation facilities, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems are adequate, safe, and efficient;***

There is one main existing building on the Property, including the more recent expansion of the Performing Arts Center along Weller Road. While the Proposal includes the addition of a community garden, education area, stormwater management facilities, solar arrays, and other resiliency equipment, the building location and footprint will not change. There are existing open areas on the Property to the north and northwest of the school building. The Project proposes to efficiently utilize available land by placing improvements in available spaces throughout an already developed area. No changes are proposed to existing landscaping (albeit accompanied by new landscaping), parking, or vehicular circulation. The existing tennis courts will remain. The Proposal is adequate considering how the improvements maximize available space on the Site and ensure vehicular and pedestrian circulation remain safe and efficient. Proposed new pathways through the community education plot and ADA improvements to pedestrian paths improve safety and circulation.

## TRANSPORTATION VEHICULAR ACCESS

The Subject Property has three (3) existing driveways along Goodhill Road and one (1) driveway on Weller Road. This Application does not propose any modification to the existing driveways, and therefore, adequate vehicle access is being provided.

## LOCAL AREA TRANSPORTATION REVIEW

The Project is not adding density or trips because no new buildings are proposed. There are no on-site personnel assigned to the REACH Hub due to the accessory uses proposed (solar and community garden). The Project is intended for use by the students and faculty of the school and the immediate surrounding community and will be frequented by volunteers. Therefore, there should be no, or only a negligible, increase in traffic to the Site. The 2024-2028 *Growth and Infrastructure Policy* (GIP) requires transportation adequacy tests for any project estimated to generate 30 or more net new peak-hour vehicle trips. Therefore, the Project is not subject to the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR).

## PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

Currently, the sidewalks are five feet wide (5 ft) on the south, east, and north sides of the Property. The 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* proposes a ten-foot-wide (10 ft.) sidepath along the segment of Weller Road that abuts this Property. The Applicant has provided a cross-section of Weller Road to demonstrate that sufficient right-of-way exists to accommodate the development of the ten-foot-wide (10 ft.) sidepath to be constructed by others in the future. In addition, the Master Plan identifies an existing eight-foot-wide (8 ft) trail within the boundaries of the Subject Property. The Applicant has stated that this trail will be redeveloped with this Application as it is a part of the pedestrian network that will be utilized by community visitors to the site. As stated in the transmittal comments, Planning Staff recommends that this sidepath be increased to at least 11-foot-wide in conformance with the Master Plan standards.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE

The School Property is roughly 1.5 miles from the Glenmont Metro Station located along Georgia Avenue. Local bus service is available along Weller Road via the Ride On 33 and the Ride On 41 lines. The Ride On 33 provides service between Aspen Hill and Friendship Heights via Kensington and downtown Bethesda with roughly 40-minute and 10-minute weekday peak-hour headways, respectively. The Ride On 41 provides service to the Site from points north in Aspen Hill at Bel Pre Road and Grand Pre Road, and from points south at the Glenmont Metrorail Station. The Ride On 41 provides service seven (7) days a week with weekday headways of approximately 30 minutes. No impacts are proposed to existing transit services within the vicinity of the Project.

## PARKING

No impacts are proposed to the existing parking area to the west of the school building, accessed from Goodhill Road, and that is currently utilized by faculty and for bus and parent drop-offs. No new parking areas are required or proposed. Any community member arriving at the REACH Hub by vehicle is permitted to park in the existing school parking lot; however, walking and biking are the preferred and recommended modes for those in the neighboring area.

5. ***whether the proposal has an approved NRI/FSD and a preliminary SWM Concept Plan, and meets the requirements of the Forest Conservation Law (Chapter 22A of the County Code). Forest Conservation Plan, if applicable, must be approved by the Planning Board, either before or at the time of the Board's mandatory referral review and action on the project. Unlike the mandatory referral review by the Board, the conditions of the Forest Conservation Plan are binding on all county projects and require a Resolution of Approval.***

## FOREST CONSERVATION

The Application satisfies all the applicable requirements of the Forest Conservation Law, Montgomery County Code, Chapter 22A, and is in compliance with the Montgomery County Planning Department's Environmental Guidelines. The Application is exempt from the requirements to submit a Forest Conservation Plan, as Forest Conservation Law was satisfied through Forest Conservation Exemption No. 42025124E confirmed on March 24, 2025, per Section 22A-5(t).

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Substantial stormwater volumes are not currently being treated onsite, and a goal of the REACH Hub is to manage the new impervious construction resulting from the REACH project, as well as some of the existing site.

DPS approved a Combined Stormwater Management Concept/ Site Development Stormwater Management Plan (SM File #: 297085) on May 16, 2025. The Project proposes to meet required stormwater management goals by constructing new non-Stormwater Management Micro-Bioretention practices for the purposes of MS4 credit to achieve what Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) believes will provide environmental benefit. This Project is not associated with new development; therefore, it is not subject to minimum stormwater management treatment criteria. The Project is subject to a final review and approval of a sediment control/stormwater management plan.

## SUSTAINABILITY

As previously explained in the project description, there are numerous robust sustainability features of the Proposal. The premise of the Resilience, Education, Action, Climate, and Habitat (REACH) Hub prioritizes sustainability through each scope of the hub.

- 6. whether a Preliminary or a Final Water Quality Plan has been reviewed by the Planning Board if the project is located in a Special Protection Area. In addition, for a Water Quality Plan for a project on public property, the Board must determine if the plan meets any additional applicable standards for Special Protection areas, including the standards of Article V. WATER QUALITY REVIEW IN SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS, of the County Code (pursuant to Section 19-65(d)(4));**

This consideration is not applicable as the Proposal is not located in a special protection area or subject to a Water Quality Plan.

- 7. whether or not the site would be needed for park use if the proposal is for disposition of a surplus school or other publicly-owned property.**

This is not a disposition of a surplus school site nor needed for park use; therefore, this requirement is not applicable.

- 8. whether alternatives or mitigation measures have been considered for the project if the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or other plans and policies for the area, or has discernible negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, the transportation network, the environment, historic resources (including burial sites) or other resources.**

As previously outlined under the plan conformance section, the proposed Project is in conformance with the County's General Plan and other plans and policies for the area.

Schools are inherently beneficial to communities. The proposed environmental enhancements to the site, such as the solar arrays, rain gardens, greenhouse, and community garden, are further beneficial uses and provide a positive environmental impact.

## SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

With the comments recommended by Staff, the Mandatory Referral application satisfies the applicable standards of the Land Use Article, Zoning Ordinance and the Forest Conservation Law and substantially conforms to the recommendations of the 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington and Wheaton*, *Thrive 2050 General Plan*, and the 2009 *Climate Action Plan*. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of Mandatory Referral No. 2025021 with comments as specified at the beginning of this report.

### ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Mandatory Referral Plan*
- Attachment B: Forest Conservation Plan Exemption*
- Attachment C: Agency Letter*



## ATTACHMENT B

March 24, 2025

Montgomery County Board of Education  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Forest Conservation Exemption: 42025124E  
Property Name: Reach Hub

Dear Montgomery County Board of Education,

Based on the review by staff of the Montgomery County Planning Department, the exemption request submitted on January 24, 2025 for Reach Hub Property, #42025124E, is confirmed. The project is exempt from Article II of the Montgomery County Code, Chapter 22A (Forest Conservation Law), under Section 22A-5(t) a modification to a: (1) non-residential developed property if: (A) no more than 5,000 square feet of forest is ever cleared at one time or cumulatively after an exemption is issued; (B) the modification does not result in the cutting, clearing, or grading of any forest in a stream buffer or forest located on property in a special protection area which must submit a water quality plan; (C) the development does not occur within an environmental buffer, with the exception of the allowable uses stated in the environmental guidelines; (D) the modification does not require approval of a preliminary plan, administrative subdivision plan, or conditional use/special exception; (E) the modification does not increase the developed area by more than 50%, and any existing principal building, as defined in Chapter 59, is retained; and (F) the pending development application does not propose any residential uses. Since the project will impact significant and specimen trees, the request includes a Tree Save Plan per Section 22A-6(a) of the Forest Conservation Law. The Tree Save Plan includes tree protection measures and required mitigation for the removal of specimen trees.

A pre-construction meeting is required after the limits of disturbance have been staked prior to clearing and grading to verify the limits of disturbance and to determine what tree protections are required per the accompanying Tree Save Plan. The M-NCPPC forest conservation inspection staff may require additional tree protection measures. Please contact Stephen Peck at 301-495-4564 and [stephen.peck@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:stephen.peck@montgomeryplanning.org) at least 7 days in advance to schedule your pre-construction meeting. The site supervisor, construction superintendent, forest conservation inspector, a private Maryland licensed tree expert, and the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services sediment control inspector shall attend this pre-construction meeting.

Any changes from the approved exemption request may constitute grounds to rescind or amend any approval actions taken and to take appropriate enforcement actions. If there are any



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

2425 Reddie Drive  
Floor 13  
Wheaton, MD 20902

MontgomeryPlanning.org

subsequent modifications planned to the approved plan, a new application must be submitted to M-NCPPC for review and confirmation prior to those activities occurring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Halley Johnson".  
Halley Johnson  
Planner II

cc: Jason Azar, Clark Azar & Associates, Inc.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

Christopher R. Conklin  
*Director*

December 5, 2025

Ms. Tamika Graham, Planner III  
Eastcounty Planning Division  
The Maryland-National Capital  
Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)  
2425 Reedie Drive, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

RE: Mandatory Referral No. MR2025021  
REACH Hub at A. Mario Loiederman MS

Dear Ms. Graham:

We have completed our review of the Mandatory Referral Plan uploaded in eplans dated September 30, 2025. Since the proposed improvements are located outside the public right-of-way and on private property, we do not have any comments.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Deepak Somarajan, our Development Review Team Engineer for this project at (240)-777-7170 or at [deepak.somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:deepak.somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov).

Sincerely,

Deepak Somarajan, Engineer III  
Development Review  
Office of Transportation Policy

SharePoint\teams\DOT\Director's Office\Development Review\Deepak\Mandatory Referral\ MR2025021-REACH Hub at A. Mario Loiederman MS\Letter\ MR2025021-REACH Hub at A. Mario Loiederman MS Itr

cc: Sharepoint Correspondence-Mandatory Referral

|                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| cce: Harris Trobman | MCPS                      |
| Sean Lindaman       | Clark   Azar & Associates |
| Atiq Panjshiri      | MCDPS RWPR                |
| Sam Farhadi         | MCDPS RWPR                |
| Rebecca Torma       | MCDOT OTP                 |

**Office of the Director**

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[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)  
*Located one block west of the Rockville Metro Station*