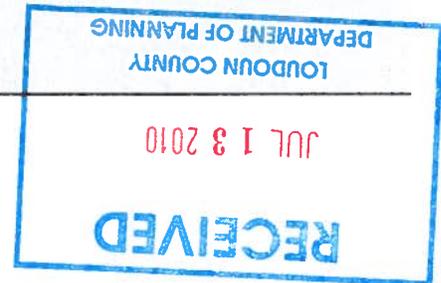


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**County of Loudoun**  
**Department of Planning**

**MEMORANDUM**



**DATE:** July 13, 2010

**TO:** Marchant Schneider, Project Manager  
Land Use Review

**FROM:** Joe Gorney, AICP, LEED AP, Senior Planner  
Community Planning

*JG*

**SUBJECT: ZMAP 2010-0001 & SPEX 2010-0003,  
HS-7 Dulles South and Elementary School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Referral**

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**BACKGROUND**

The Loudoun County School Board proposes a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone three (3) acres of land from PD-GI (Planned Development - General Industrial) to TR-1 (Transition Residential) and a Special Exception to allow a high school (HS-7) and an elementary school. The site is approximately 97.16 acres and is located on the east and west side of Goshen Road (Route 616), approximately 1 mile south of Route 50. The site is bounded by the Westport Subdivision to the south and west, a public park and open space easement to the east (abutting Route 659 Relocated) and planned residential uses to the north (Stone Ridge). The property is in the Ldn 60 1-mile buffer of the Airport Impact Overlay District.

A Commission Permit for the property (CMPT 2009-0013), known as the Goshen Road Assemblage, was approved by the Planning Commission on December 17, 2009 and ratified by the Board of Supervisors on January 5, 2010.

The applicant proposes a 2-story high school of up to 302,000 square feet, and a two-story elementary school, of up to 105,000 square feet, for a maximum of 407,000 square feet total, along with associated recreational facilities.

The high school is identified in the FY-2010-2014 School Board Adopted Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and is planned to be opened in the Fall of 2012. The high school would provide relief to Freedom High School, which had an enrollment of 1,609 students on September 30, 2009, a design capacity of 1,600 students, and a projected student population of 2,325 by 2012. The FY-2010-2014 CIP has further identified the need for three elementary schools to serve Dulles South and vicinity to the south of Route 50. The applicant proposes to identify this site as a future location of one of the elementary schools.

The property contains various Green Infrastructure resources including floodplain, surface waters, wetlands, forest resources, steep slopes, and moderately steep slopes.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Non-residential uses, such as schools, are envisioned within the Transition Policy Area along collector roads provided that they are developed at a scale that allows them to blend effectively (visually and spatially) into a rural landscape. Institutional uses, such as schools, will be compatible with the policies of the Transition Policy Area and serve to promote a rural character while serving both the rural and suburban populations.

The high school would provide enrollment relief to Freedom High School while the elementary school would help fulfill the needs of Dulles South. The schools are adjacent to the Suburban Policy Area and would be the focus of existing and potential future attendance areas. The proposed development has taken into account bicycle and pedestrian facilities, environmentally-sensitive areas, the use of low impact development techniques, and the use of sustainable building design measures.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Refer to Community Planning Referral 1, dated April 20, 2010.

The location of the proposed schools is in conformance with the general policies of the Revised General Plan and school uses are appropriate uses within the Transition Policy Area. To be fully consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, staff recommends that the applicant address issues regarding forest resources, buffers, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and lighting.

### **OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

#### **Forest Resources**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Referral, staff recommended that the applicant consider the replacement of the impacted forest resources within other portions of the Special Exception area, including the floodplain, other cleared areas within the Green Infrastructure Area, the proposed 50-foot Green Infrastructure Buffer, and buffer yards using indigenous plants. Staff recommended that the applicant coordinate with the County Urban Forester regarding these measures.

Two of the most significant reforestation opportunities include the open floodplain adjacent to the South Fork of Broad Run and the open sloped areas within the 50-foot Green Infrastructure buffer adjacent to the intermittent stream on the western portion of the site. Staff notes that the applicant submitted a Water and Sewer Facilities Map depicting existing and proposed water and sanitary lines. The north-south sanitary sewer line is proposed within the 50-foot Green Infrastructure buffer and through a wetland in the floodplain.

In response, the applicant stated that Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) will work with the County Urban Forester to develop a reforestation plan for recommended areas, to include the open floodplain associated with the South Fork of Broad Run and the open areas within the 50-foot Green Infrastructure buffer adjacent to the intermittent stream on the western portion of the property. The applicant stated that, depending on cost and budgeted funds, LCPS would reforest one of the areas.

***Staff recommends that the applicant commit to the reforestation of the open floodplain associated with the South Fork of Broad Run and the open areas within the 50-foot Green Infrastructure buffer adjacent to the intermittent stream on the western portion of the property, with priority to the floodplain. Also, to avoid or minimize further tree cover loss and to allow for the reforestation of the 50-foot Green Infrastructure buffer, staff recommends that the 8-inch sanitary sewer line and easement be located outside of the 50-foot Green Infrastructure buffer to the extent possible. Additionally, staff recommends that the line be adjusted within the floodplain to avoid wetland impacts.***

#### **Buffers & Planting Enhancements**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Referral, staff recommended that the designated tree save area be augmented with other forested areas and that the applicant consult with the County Arborist for plants indigenous to the area for use in the planting enhancement areas.

In response the applicant stated that the Special Exception plat has been revised to incorporate a tree save area within the 50-foot Green Infrastructure buffer east of the high school and that the side and rear buffers of the elementary school would be enhanced to incorporate additional evergreen tree plantings. Sheet 3 of the Plat depicts a landscaped berm along the length of the high school parking area to screen the parking from the adjoining park, side and rear buffer enhancements at the elementary school site, and a planting enhancement west of the high school bus loop. Plat 3 notes that side and rear buffer enhancements at the elementary site will use Leyland Cypress trees.

***Staff recommends that the applicant preserve existing tree stands and large individual trees where possible, including within perimeter buffers and isolated tree stands.***

***Given the prominence, size, and importance of the enhanced buffer areas as habitat, staff recommends that the applicant commit to the use of indigenous plants for these plantings in consultation with the County Urban Forester. Such trees could include American Holly (*Ilex opaca*), Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*), Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*), Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), and Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). Trees should be spaced to accommodate mature sizes.***

### **Bicycle & Pedestrian Accommodations**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Referral staff recommended that the applicant commit to several bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including the following:

- A sidewalk on the south side of Road "B" along with crosswalks at the associated intersections; and
- A sidewalk on the east side of the north-south internal road opposite the softball field (on the west side of the adjacent park).

In response, the applicant stated that they met with County Parks staff who advised them that they did not want a sidewalk on the south side of Road "B" or on the west side of the park. Staff notes that County policies state that sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of roads in the Transition Policy Area (*Bike/Ped Plan, Chapter 4, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Selection Guidelines Table*).

***To help meet the mobility needs of the adjacent residents, staff recommends that the applicant commit to a sidewalk on the south side of Road "B" with two additional crosswalks at the Route 659 Relocated/Road "B" intersection and one additional crosswalk at the north-south internal road/Road "B" intersection.***

***Staff recommends two additional sidewalk connections in the following locations:***

- ***Along the driveway adjacent to the discus field, which would allow people to safely walk from the high school to the stadium; and***
- ***From the 10-foot multi-use trail serving the Westport development to the sidewalk/crosswalk near the front of the elementary school.***

### **Lighting**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Referral, staff recommended that the applicant commit to lighting that is downward directed, is fully shielded, provides a glare-free environment, is confined to the site, and has illumination levels that are no greater than necessary for a light's intended purpose. All lighting should be designed to preclude light trespass onto adjoining properties, glare to passersby, skyglow, and deterioration of the nighttime environment.

In response, the applicant stated that lighting will be cut-off, fully shielded, and directed downward and inward and will meet the performance standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

***Staff recommends that the applicant's commitments be supplemented to address the following:***

- ***Reflector technology systems for athletic field lighting and the times that these lights will be turned off; and***
- ***Maximum heights for lighting fixtures and athletic field light poles.***

**RECOMMENDATION**

The construction of the proposed schools is in conformance with the general policies of the Revised General Plan and school facilities are appropriate uses within the Transition Policy Area. Staff supports the application but requests that the applicant address the issues raised above. Staff recommends approval of the application with conditions.

cc: Julie Pastor, AICP, Director, Planning  
Cynthia Keegan, AICP, Program Manager, Community Planning (via email)