

Memo

To: Mayor and City Council

CC: Tracey Nicholson, City Administrator

From: Jim Chandler, Assistant City Administrator and Director, Community & Economic Development
Kate Powers, City Planner

Date: April 14, 2021

Re: MR-2038F (Mandatory Referral – Hyattsville Middle School), Discussion Memo

Attachments: Applicant Presentation
Civil Site Plan
Circulation Plan
Landscape Plan
Stormwater Management Concept

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with a summary of the Hyattsville Middle School construction proposal and Staff's recommendations for the project.

Project Summary

- Prince George's County Board of Education is proposing the construction of a new middle school building, parking areas, and athletic fields at the existing school site on 42nd Avenue.
- The property is located within the "Traditional Residential Neighborhood" character area of the Gateway Arts District Approved Sector Plan.
- The project will include a four-story building of approximately 163,000 SF designed to accommodate 1,200 students. Additionally, the building will be designed to the equivalent of LEED Silver.
- The project proposes the academic building be constructed along Oliver Street and the athletic field be placed at the corner of Oglethorpe Street and 43rd Avenue

Site Description

Hyattsville Middle School (HMS) has been selected by the Board of Education for a replacement school where the new school will be built at the existing site located at 6001 42nd Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland.

Currently, the school building is located along the north of Oglethorpe Street and the athletic fields reside south of Oliver Street.

The site contains 9.41 acres and is zoned R-55 Residential. The surrounding area is made up of both single-family and multifamily residential units. The Courtyard Park Apartments lies to the south, Hyattsville House Apartments are located west, and Oliver Gardens Apartments are north of the school.

The project site is located within the Lower Northeast Branch watershed which is tributary to the Anacostia River. There are no wetlands, streams, woodlands, or floodplains within or adjacent to the subject property. Currently, the site contains large landscape trees on the edges of the property.

Project Summary

The project is proposed to construct a new middle school building and parking areas on the existing middle school site. The new four-story school building will total approximately 163,000 SF and be designed to accommodate 1,200 students. The building will be comprised of four simple blocks connected by a unifying common space housing the dining area and media center.

All existing site features will be demolished as part of the re-developed process. The site will be reconfigured, moving the academic building north along Oliver Street and the athletic fields to the corner of Oglethorpe and 43rd. See site comparison below.

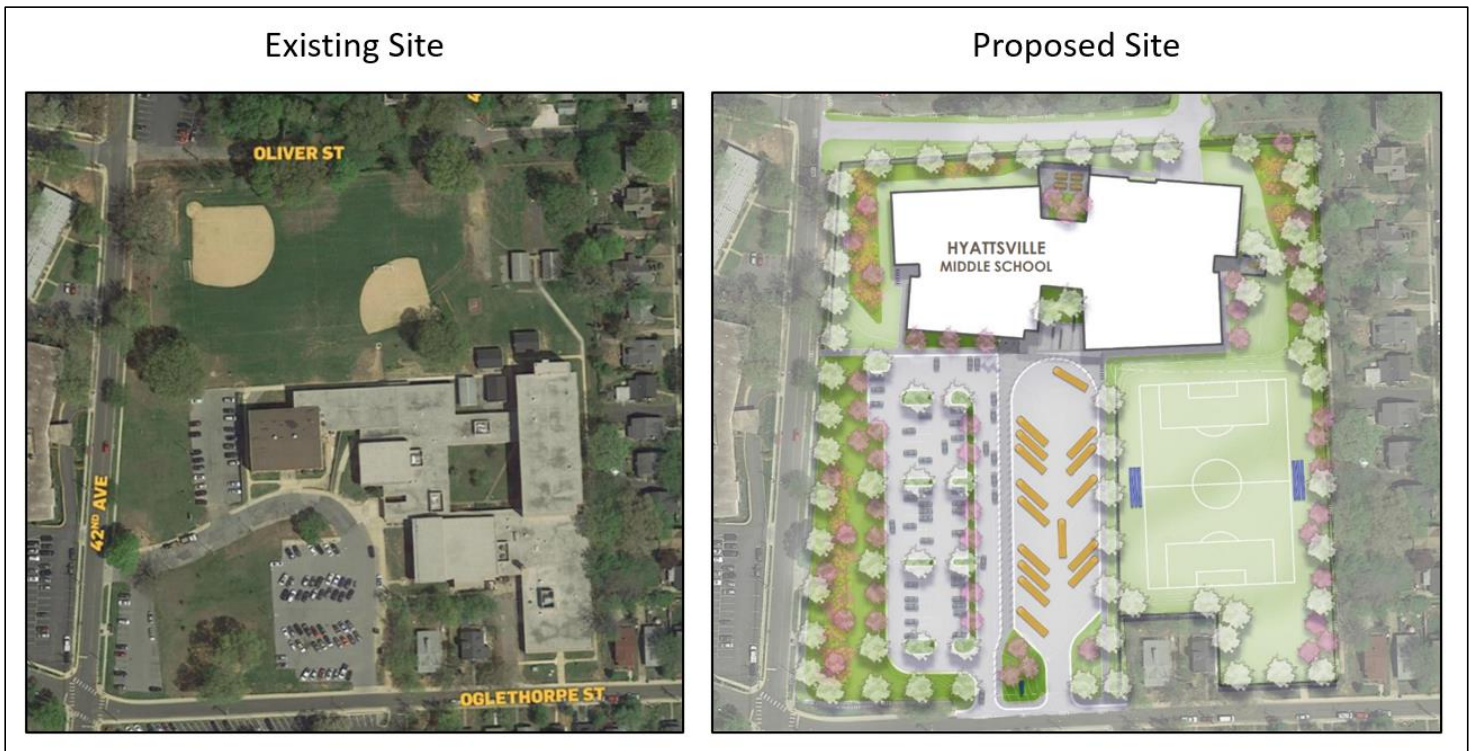


Figure 1. Site Comparison, Hyattsville Middle School

Architecture

The exterior shell of the building will consist of brick veneer, insulated metal panels, and glazed aluminum storefront. The insulated metal panel system will be arranged with varying textures, colors, and pattern.

The applicant has indicated that final exterior color selections will be coordinated with the school community. A rendering of the building can be seen in the image below.



Figure 2. Architectural Rendering, Hyattsville Middle School

The massing is comprised of four blocks connected by a unifying common space housing the dining area and media center. One half of the building will consist of the four-story academic and administration spaces. The other side will house electives spaces (physical education, creative & performing arts, etc.), food service, and utility infrastructure spaces. An outdoor classroom will be included along Oliver Street.

Additionally, the building will be designed to the equivalent of LEED Silver and meet requirements of the Maryland High Performance Buildings Program.

Traffic and Vehicle Circulation

This project does not propose any new public roads. Access to the loading and utility area is off Oliver Street, in the rear of the building. The roadway section will be a modified DPWT Urban Secondary Residential Road Standard.

Access to a new car parking lot with parent drop-off area and a new bus parking lot will be accessible from Oglethorpe Street. This differs from the current site, where parking is accessible from both Oglethorpe Street and 42nd Avenue.

With a singular access point for non-bus vehicles in the proposed design, heavy delays are anticipated to occur during arrival and dismissal times. Condensed peak periods of traffic are typical for all schools. To reduce queuing and enhance levels of service, the applicant has recommended that traffic be controlled by a police officer or crossing guard during these peak hours. This control will provide the functionality of traffic signalization by allowing for easier egress of vehicles and enhancing safety for drivers and pedestrians. ***Staff recommends that this measure (inclusion of police officer/crossing guard direction at school access points) be considered a necessary operational activity for the building as opposed to an optional school programming activity.***

The applicant envisions traffic direction occur at the school access points, pointed out in purple on the image below.

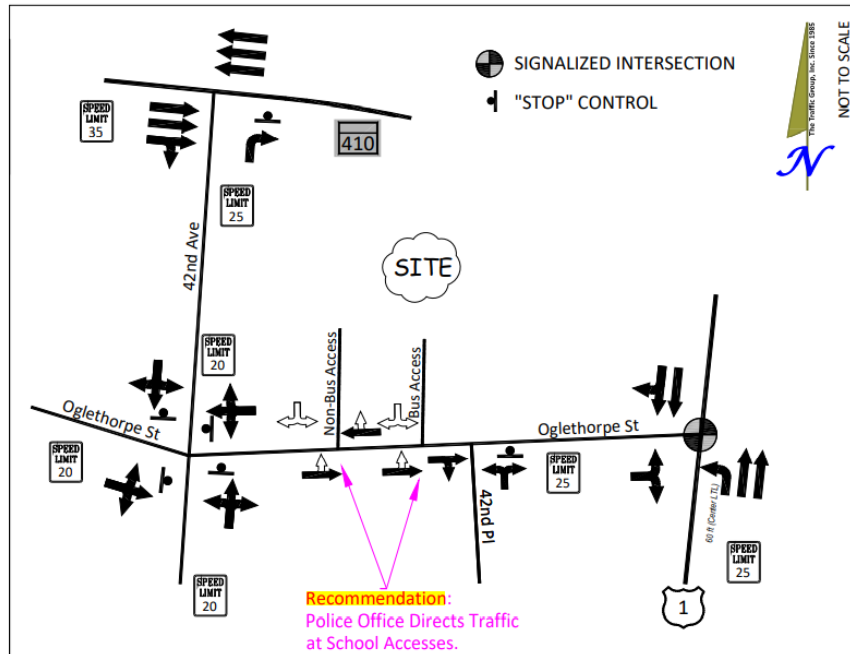


Figure 3. Applicant’s Proposed Traffic Controls

Staff is recommending additional measures be taken to reduce congestion. With a singular exit and entrance point for each of the parking lots, vehicles queuing to enter may block vehicles attempting to exit. **Staff recommends striping be placed in front of the access points to avoid blockage. The striping should include accompanying “Do Not Block” signage.**

Image below estimates the location of striping (in yellow) and signage (in blue). The inset picture shows an example of appropriate signage.

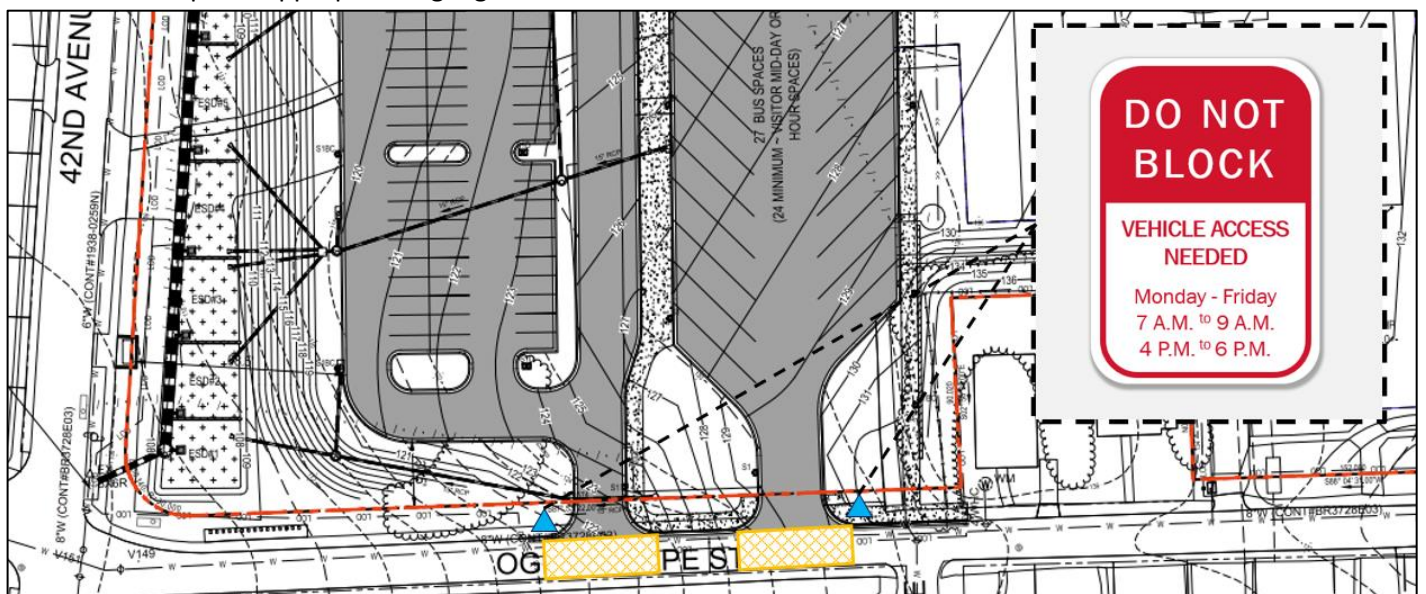


Figure 4. Recommended Signage and Striping along Oglethorpe Street

Additionally, Staff is recommending signage be placed along 42nd Avenue to avoid blockage and congestion. Adding “No Stopping or Standing” signage along this roadway will help reduce the occurrence of parents bringing children to non-designated drop-off areas during peak times.

The image below shows the general area these signs would be installed (in red) and the inset picture provides an example of appropriate signage.

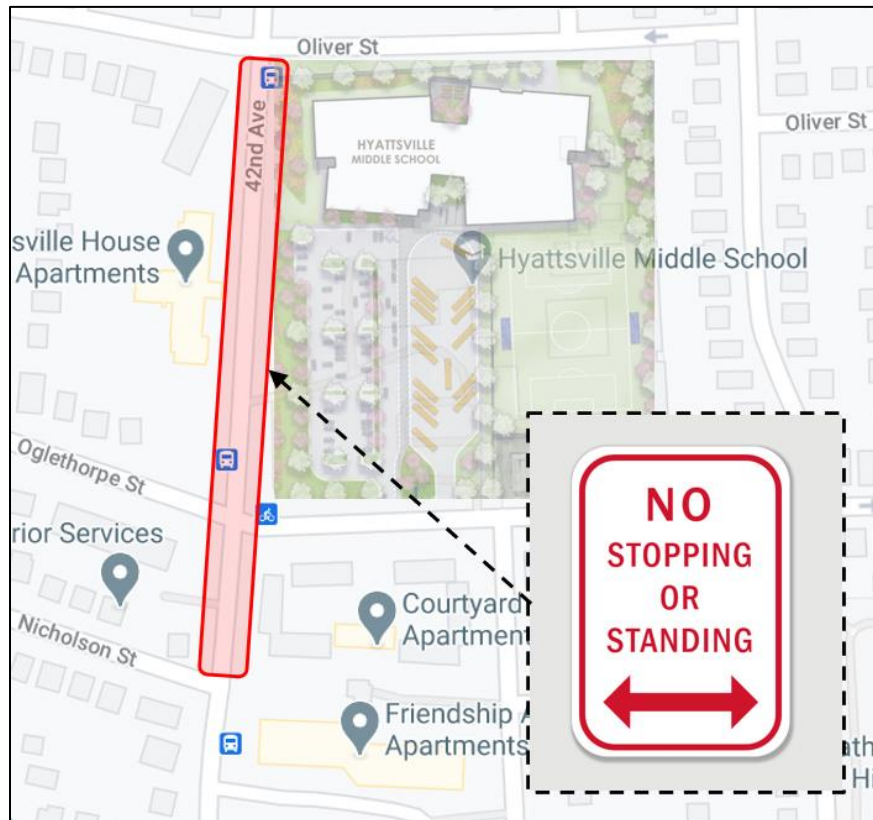


Figure 5. Recommended Signage along 42nd Avenue

Pedestrian Egress

There will be new sidewalk connections from Oglethorpe Street to the main entrance to the school on both sides of the bus loop. Existing sidewalks along Oglethorpe and 42nd Avenue will remain in their current condition.

Crosswalks and ADA curb ramps are placed at safety locations and meet the DPWT Concrete Sidewalk Ramp Type A or B Standards. All pedestrian walkways are concrete and a minimum of 6 feet wide.

The applicant has proposed the inclusion of stairs mid-block on 42nd Avenue that lead to the front entrance of the school.

Staff has concerns about the handicap accessibility of the site for pedestrians as the main pathways to the school entrance are via the stairs on 42nd Avenue and the steep sidewalk on Oglethorpe Street. **Staff recommends the applicant reassess the ADA compliance of the site for pedestrians and take measures to ensure an accessible site design.**

In addition, Staff is recommending the addition of HAWK (High-Intensity Activated crossWalk) beacons at both the intersections of 42nd Avenue and Oglethorpe Street and 42nd Avenue and Oliver Street. The HAWK beacons will stop traffic as needed to allow for protected pedestrian crossings to the school site.

The circulation exhibit included in the applicant’s proposal can be found below. The recommended locations for the HAWK beacons are circled in red.

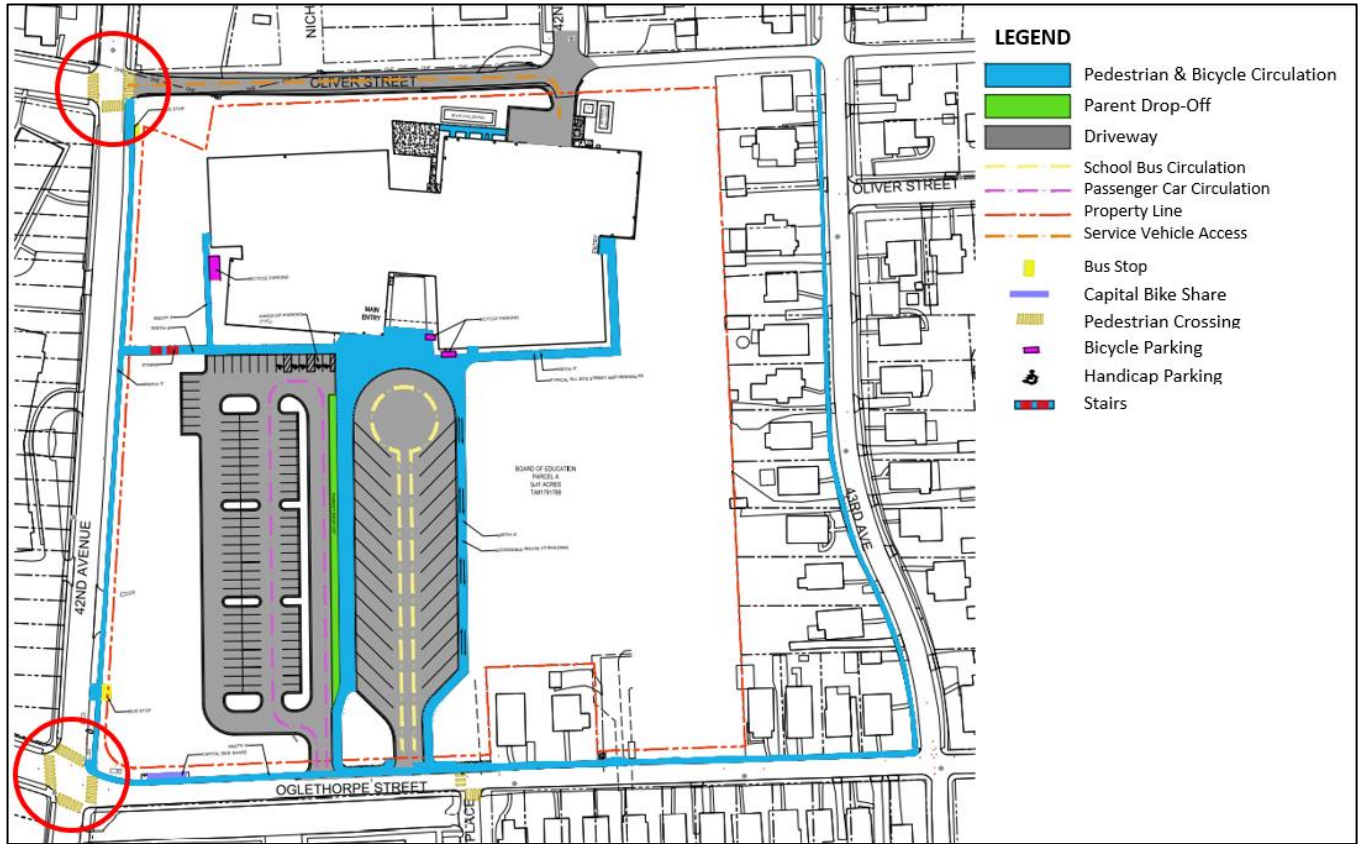


Figure 6. Circulation Exhibit

Signage

The applicant has proposed the following exterior signage be included on the property:

- Free-standing, monument sign that has the name and address of the school with a non-electric, protected message board, located on the site to be visible by cars on the main road in front of the school.
- Building-mounted sign indicating the school’s name mounted near the main entrance and visible from the visitor parking.
- Vehicular access control and wayfinding signage to direct passenger cars to appropriate parking and parent drop-off areas, to identify areas for Bus Only access and to identify areas accessible by service vehicles only. Signage will identify when bus drop-off areas are able to be utilized by passenger vehicles during non-peak bus drop-off and pick-up times.
- Other vehicular signage as required by code.

Landscaping and Fencing

As part of the Landscape Plan, the applicant is proposing the inclusion of 60 major trees, 33 minor trees, 31 evergreen trees, and 245 shrubs. A breakdown of these tree categories based on species can be found in the table below.

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Major trees | Red Maple | 5 | Shrubs | Red Chokeberry | 36 |
| | Tulip Poplar | 2 | | Redtwig Dogwood | 77 |
| | Blackgum | 3 | | Smooth Hydrangea | 26 |
| | London Planetree | 12 | | Inkberry | 42 |
| | Scarlet Oak | 14 | | Compact Pfitzer Juniper | 22 |
| | Chinquapin Oak | 10 | | Fragrant Sumac | 8 |
| | American Elm | 14 | | Lowbush Blueberry | 34 |
| | Total | 60 | | Total | 245 |
| Minor Trees | Serviceberry | 3 | Evergreen Trees | Japanese Cryptomeria | 7 |
| | Paperbark Maple | 6 | | Nellie Stevens Holly | 19 |
| | Flowering Dogwood | 6 | | Eastern Red Cedar | 5 |
| | White Fringetree | 7 | | Total | 31 |
| | Sweetbag Magnolia | 5 | | | |
| | Sargent Cherry | 6 | | | |
| | Total | 33 | | | |

The applicant has also included figures on native species to be planted on-site:

- 80% of proposed shade trees are native.
- 91% of shrubs and perennials are native.
- 63% of ornamental trees are native.
- 77% of evergreen trees are native.

Artificial turf will be used for the sport field and a 100 ft buffer will be maintained between the school site and the adjacent single family detached residences.

The applicant is proposing a perimeter fence/screen along much of the property. Fencing has been excluded adjacent to the parking lot along 42nd Avenue. The area adjacent to 42nd Avenue will be steep, as the area will be graded to meet the higher, eastern part of the property.

In order to avoid pedestrians from entering the site via this steep area, Staff is recommending extending the fencing along the west side of the property (42nd Avenue). Fencing should be 4 – 6 feet. Plantings should be included along the fence line facing the street for aesthetic purposes.

In the image on the following page, the applicant’s proposed fencing can be seen in blue, while the fence extension recommended by City Staff can be seen in red. The green indicates the general area of plantings and the yellow highlights the steep incline from 42nd Avenue to the school parking lot.

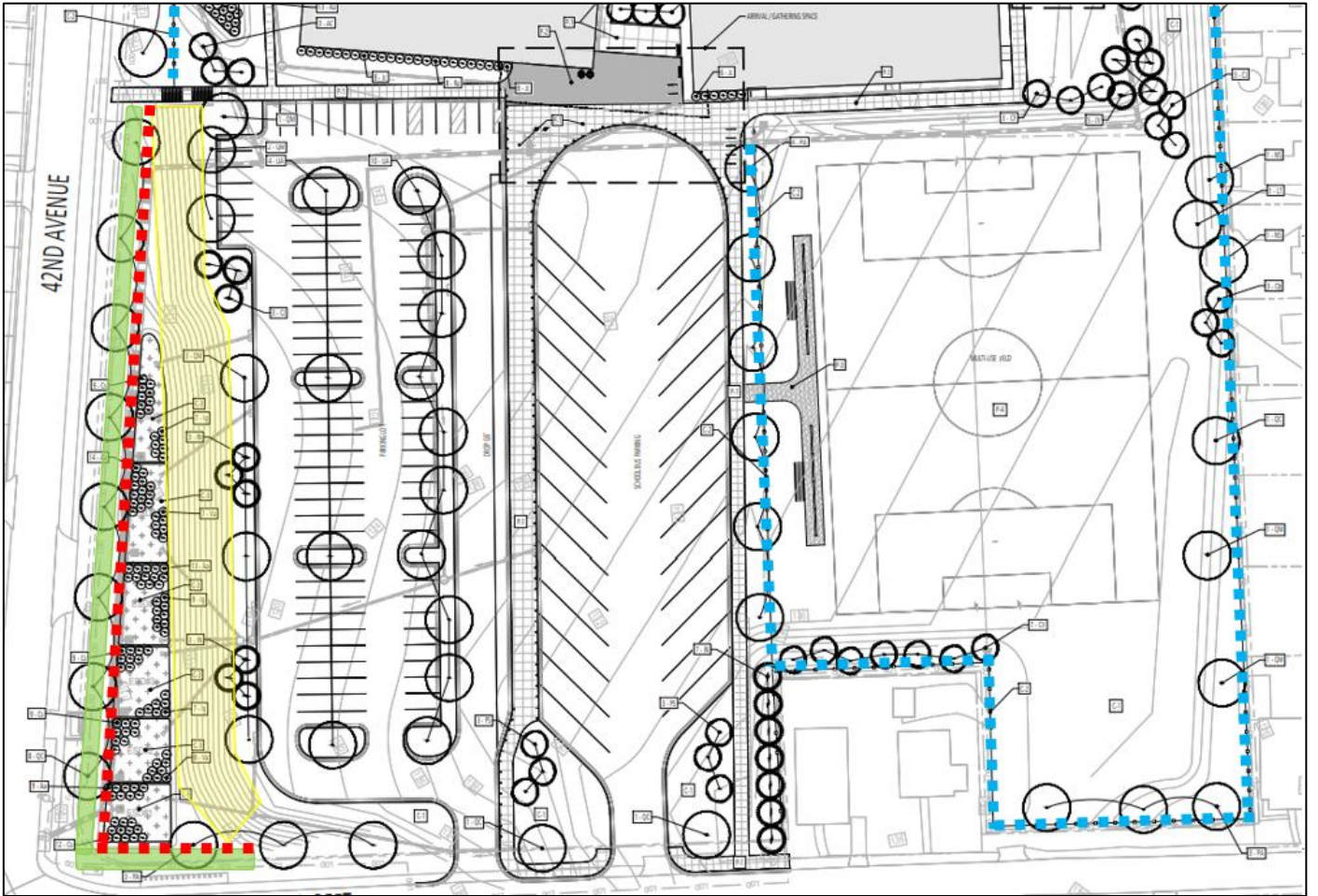


Figure 7. Proposed vs. Recommended Fencing

Storm Water Management

The applicant has proposed graded micro-bioretenion facilities at the northeast corner of the site as well as along the extent of the west side of the site (seen in green on the figure below).

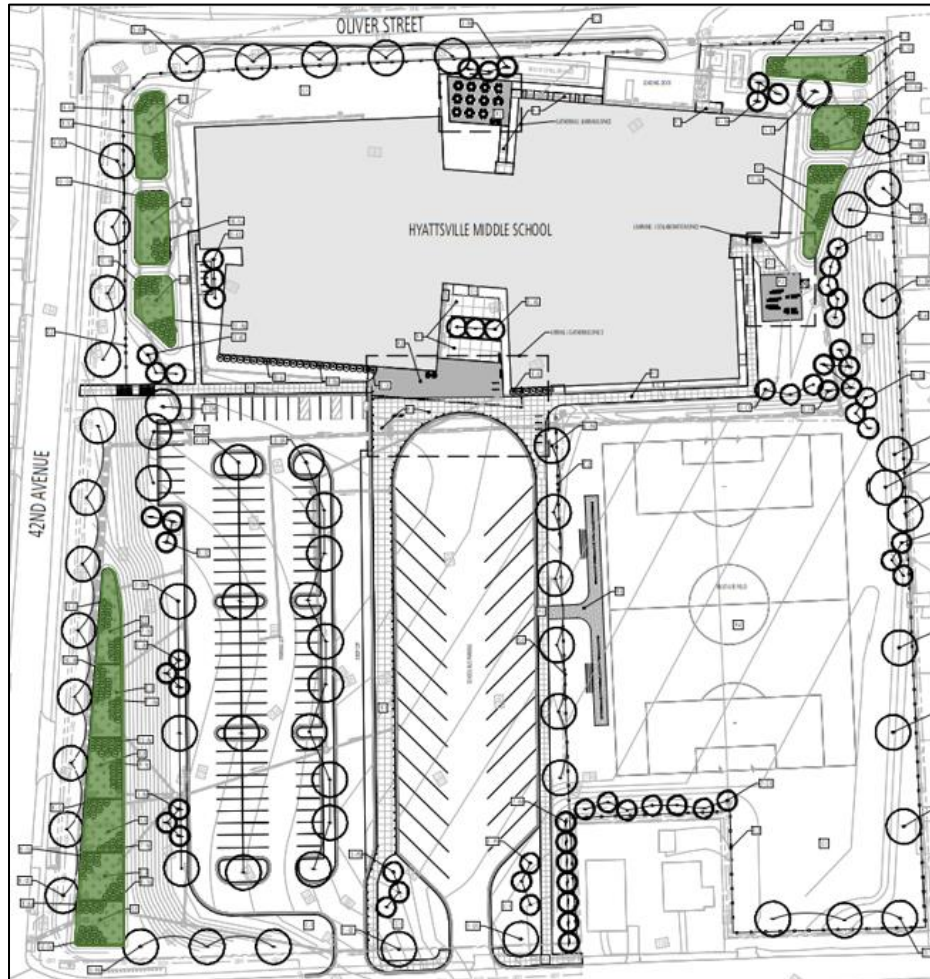


Figure 8. Bio-Retention Facilities On-Site

Drainage from the building and parking lot will be collected in storm drains and piped to these retention areas. Drainage from micro-bioretenion facilities will follow the existing storm drain system within 42nd Avenue, while sheet flow water will drain to Oglethorpe Street and 43rd Street.

To better manage stormwater leaving the site, Staff recommends the applicant repair the storm drain lines on 42nd Avenue and Oliver Street as part of the project.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Inclusion of police officer/crossing guard direction at school access points be categorized as a necessary operational activity for the building as opposed to an optional school programming activity.
2. Striping be placed in front of school access points to avoid blockage. The striping should include accompanying "Do Not Block" signage.

3. “No Standing or Stopping” signage be placed along 42nd Avenue to avoid blockage and congestion.
4. Reassessment of site for ADA compliance for pedestrians and institute measures to ensure an accessible site design.
5. HAWK (High-Intensity Activated crossWalk) beacons at both the intersections of 42nd Avenue and Oglethorpe Street and 42nd Avenue and Oliver Street.
6. Extension of fencing along the west side of the property (42nd Avenue). Fencing should be 4 – 6 feet. Plantings should be included along the fence line facing the street for aesthetic purposes.
7. Repair storm drain lines on 42nd Avenue and Oliver Street as part of the project.

Next Steps

This project will be a discussion item on the City Council’s April 19, 2021 meeting agenda and an action item on the Council’s May 3 meeting.

The Prince George’s Planning Board hearing for this application is scheduled for May 20, 2021.